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...And There Was Light. On Becoming a Writer: A Reflective Journey

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Critical and Creative Thinking Synthesis Presentation

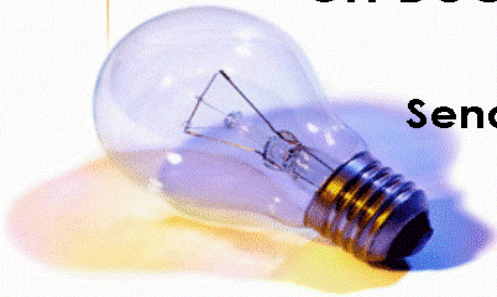
April 25, 2005

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...And There Was Light

Journey Through Reflection on Becoming a Writer

Senait Fesseha



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Where I want to be!



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Rules that governed my project

Established throughout the length of my Journey

- No idea is a bad idea
- No harsh self-criticism allowed
- It is OK to fail
- Be creative
- Take risks



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Background

- I LOVE BOOKS!!!
 - Reading them. Writing them.
 - Started reading and writing early – in my native language.
 - I caught up with reading in English very fast.
 - Writing in English became a challenge
- ...Time to take stock



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Taking Stock & Solving Problem

- I evaluated and found a great need to learn how to write in English
- Take lessons on writing for children
- Read, read, read, and read!
- Learn the value of re-writing.
- Through re-writing reflective thinking

... Takes me on my Journey



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My Journey

Revolved around :



My Dream

My Challenges

My Discovery

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My Dream

- To write children's story picture books.
 - Books that are Engaging
 - Books that have Social Value
 - Not generic – Not common



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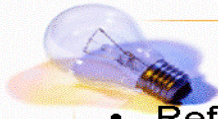


My Challenges

- Language
 - Learn writing in English
 - Learn a new process for creativity – imagining in English
- Overcoming the restrictions of constant self-evaluation and feelings of inadequacy
- Learning and discovering what skills I have already



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My Discovery

- Reflection is a powerful tool. Allowed me to look inside and discover why I was not practicing writing
- I was held back from achieving my dreams by my feelings of inadequacy, and my fear of failure – End of my dream ??
- Reflection allowed me to realize skills I already have and those I lack.
- Reflection allowed me to realize what genre I love.

“Multicultural Picture Books”



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Excerpt from “When We First Met”

Hi Sosena,

I am very excited to be getting a *netela*. What is a *netela*? My favorite colors are yellow, red, and purple. I showed my letters to my teacher. We all tried to practice the words in class. It was fun. Everyone in my class is waiting to see my *netela*. They asked me what it was. Then we had fun guessing what it is. When do you think it will be finished? My mother said that I should say thank you and not be pushy. But it is hard not to be excited! Write soon.

Your friend,

Victoria

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My Road Map

- Writing is a continuous learning process – keep the lessons fresh
- Keep the reflection process – make it part of everyday action
- Harness the self knowledge I have and fill with skills I lack
- Fear is a fortress with a barbed wire gate – know what it is and let go



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What about my choice?

- Why Multicultural?
Love & Interest of cultures

- Shortage of authentic multicultural picture books

- Benefits children to assimilate, to learn about their world



- Multicultural books need to be authentic to be beneficial

- Unfortunately the publishing world is not stepping up

- The need for such books is high!

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Excerpt from “When We First Met”

Selam Victoria,

I know what you mean. I also get excited when I get something new. *Netela* is something you wrap to keep you warm or as a cover when you go to church or visiting. For children, *netela* is small. It is very thin white material and it comes with colored borders. My mother fluffs, cleans and then spins the cotton into very fine thread and then takes it to a *chewanhe* who weaves it into a *netela* and adds colored borders at both ends.



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Excerpt from “When We First Met”

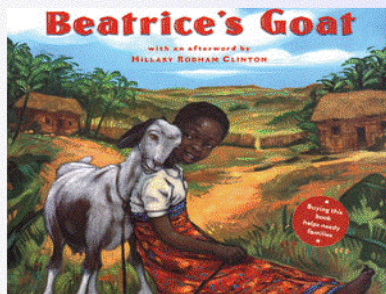
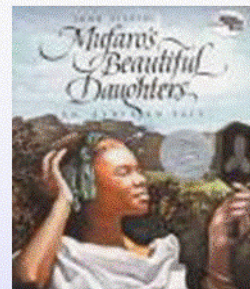
Then my mother twists the cotton at the end of the borders, which makes it look like it has thin white tassels. I helped pick up the colored patterns for the border of your *netela*. I hope you like it. It is almost finished. We will bring it to The NGO next week. My mother said that she hopes you like it. I told her you would because I liked it. Write as soon as you get your *sitota*. *Sitota* means gift.

Your friend,
Sosena



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Are
these
multicultural??



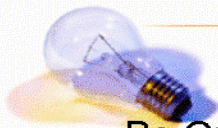
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- What Do You See?
- What Can You Tell Me about the Girl?
- Can you picture her life?
- What do you think about her background?
- Can you imagine a conversation with her?

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Take-away points from CCT

- Be Creative
 - Rules or boundaries are to be explored
- Be Critical
 - Things are not always what they appear to be – So be reflective and question
- The Future is open for exploration, innovation, and change – Take risk!
- Success doesn't happen without taking risk



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R e s o u r c e s

ALA www.ala.org

Author link about Publishers, Writers, & Literary Agents www.authorlink.com

Children's Book Council www.cbcbooks.org

Children's Literature www.childrenslit.com

The Children's Literature Web Guide www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/index.html

The Children's Writing Supersite www.write4kids.com

Directory of Children's Publishers www.childrenswriters.singaleader.com

Institute of Children's Literature www.institutechildrenslit.com

Multicultural Children's Lit www.lib.msu.edu/corby/education/multicultural.htm

New Horizons for Learning www.newhorizons.org

SCBWI www.scbwi.com

Smart Writers www.smartwriters.com

The Purple Crayon www.underdown.org

The Writer www.writermag.org

Writers Digest www.writersdigest.com

Writer's Guild of America www.wga.org

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