



Issue #2 | 9 June, 2017

WRITING PROGRESS

This week something special happened: The voice that whispers my stories started speaking to me again.

Even though I've been writing fairly consistently for a number of years—sometimes every day for a week, other times just a few times a month—for the longest time I've been a fraud. Yes, I've been writing, but I can't remember the last time words leaped from my hand with such a fiery passion.

For the most part, since 2012 at least, writing has been a struggle. Four hours at a word processor might amount to 1,000 words, perhaps 1,500 on a good day, which isn't a bad effort, but it isn't breaking any records. I also had to fight for each word, to wrestle it from my subconscious, prying it away and stapling it down before it filtered back into the unknown.

SLICE OF LIFE

I spent most of my weekend on my feet, cleaning my gutters, trimming my trees, bundling branches for a council collection. It was an enjoyable two days, and I had some great male-bonding time with my grandfather-in-law. At the end of it all, though, I had several totes full of dirt from the gutters, about eight bags of clippings, and something in the range of fifteen bundles of branches, yet apparently all of this green matter doesn't qualify my home for an organics rubbish bin.

It's quite baffling. Whoever decided that a townhouse doesn't need to be green?



I'm considering writing a letter to the council, but all previous correspondence with issues regarding our homestead have met a dead end. I anticipate a similar result if I go ahead with this.

It just breaks my heart to send all of this to a landfill.

LINKS

Mirage Stories:
<http://miragestories.com>
Kevin's Blog & Website:
<http://kevinjjcarpenter.com>

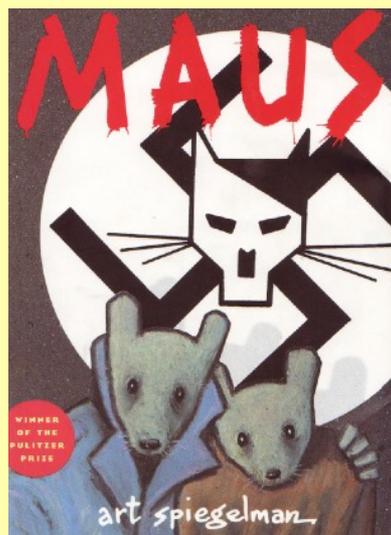
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Then, after I finished in the garden on Saturday, the voice started speaking again. I don't know what prompted it, but it was like hearing an old friend calling to you from a crowd, their voice stark and unforgettable against the noise. I knew what it was as soon as I heard it. You should have seen me. I was giddy with joy!

As soon as I was able, I went to my office and started writing, and it was like the days of yore, when I didn't care so much about grammar, punctuation, or appropriate word usage, and the only thing that mattered was telling a damn good story. The last few writing sessions this week have been averaging almost 1,500 words an hour. I'm ecstatic.

The rest of June will be a busy and tentative time for me. I'll be working at my night job for most of the next two weeks to fill in for a fellow worker, then I've got my wedding on the 23rd, so time will be strictly limited. Yet with the voice there, loud and clear, even if I can only find an hour a day, the first draft of the next entry in *Mirage* should be finished sometime before the end of the month.

READING HABITS



This weekend I had the pleasure of reading one of, if not the greatest graphic novel I've ever come across. As cliché as it sounds, *Maus* was not just a story, it was an experience; all-consuming to the familiar reader; life changing to the uninitiated.

I bought the book almost a year ago, and it went straight on the ever-expanding and eminent pile. I completely forgot about it until I finished with *Casino Royale* last week. As soon as I picked it out of the pile, I sat back and read the whole thing in two short sittings. The clever design of *Maus*, with a frame story depicting an honest account of Art and Vladek's relationship while Art is creating the book, is one of its crowning features. The realism brings a tear to your eye.

Vladek's account is touching and personal. His broken English offers a veritable, unfettered vehicle for exploring the past, which breathes so much life into his character. It's such a unique and beautiful use of language. Likewise, the artistic decision to depict the Jews as rodents and Nazis as Cats is not only genius, but it removes the layer of human prejudice, which inspired *The Final Solution* in the first place.

Everything about *Maus* is about as perfect as a book can be. I can't understand why something like this, brimming with history and metaphors, was passed over in High School English in favour of *Strictly Ballroom*. Just another mystery of the universe, I guess.

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