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End of Summer Report

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Over the course of the summer, I have been writing a novella that explores perspective. As a writer, I am very interested in perspective as a key concept of the craft and was interested in learning more about this concept through a novel that explores the same story from two different points of view. At the beginning of the summer, I already had a draft of the first part of the novel (Adam's perspective) finished. My intention was to draft the second half of the novel from the other character's perspective (Hazel's). It was intended to be about the same length as the first draft: an 80-100 page double spaced, 12 point font novella.

I started the summer with a different story in mind than the one I ended up writing. Originally, the second half of the novel started at the very beginning of the story, where the first character's part began. However, throughout the process, my faculty mentor and I discovered that this was not the best plan for moving forward and I shifted the timeline of the story to begin where the first, Adam's, perspective ended. In terms of story, this meant that because Hazel leaves at the end of Adam's perspective, the second half of the novel would be jumping between her story in the present and her memories of Adam from the past year. In relation to craft, this meant that I would be exploring not just point of view but the three major types of stories: linear, modular, and reflexive. Hazel's perspective has elements of all three. Her story is modular because she shifts between past and present which are connected by theme instead of cause and effect. It's linear because there is a chronological story and reflexive because the novella centers around an author writing a book about a time frame she was unable to write. It has been really

exciting to learn more about these methods of storytelling and see them all together in one story. This discovery was particularly exciting because having these three methods of storytelling overlap adds another dimension to what I was originally exploring: perspective. In many instances, we are given a side of the story and claim it as the truth, but our world does not exist in black and white. Morality is often far more complex than right and wrong and can depend entirely on whose perspective is heard. The beauty of multiple perspectives is how they invite writers and readers to investigate the limitations of single-POV narratives and realize the impossibility of telling any story from a truly neutral perspective. The idea of all three methods of storytelling overlapping gives another layer to the concept that it is not just one thing; it's multiple methods of storytelling, it's multiple points of view, it's multiple truths.

I also learned a lot about the writing process, most importantly, that is largely about discovery. In character driven stories, it's a mistake to hold the plot above the characters. I discovered this summer how incredibly rare it is for the plot a writer begins with to be the exact plot they end with. The more you get to know a character, the more they will guide the events of the plot. Hazel started out as an odd but relatively simple character, but over the summer, evolved into an incredibly complex character with a deep, tragic backstory. In response, the plot started out as a quirky romance, but with the development of Hazel's character, morphed into a tragic story centered around dealing with childhood trauma and the reality of second chances and missed opportunities. I realized this summer that ignoring the direction a character points creates mechanical, uninspired writing. As my faculty mentor and I discussed, sometimes the only way to figure out what the plot is is to write it and fill in the holes later.

The novella I wrote this summer will be my Honors Thesis. I will continue to work on it throughout the year and turn it into the committee this April. I will also be presenting my work at

Elkin Isaac. Beyond Albion, I hope to one day publish this work and I am incredibly grateful to the Richard L. and Barbara J. Meyer Student Research Endowment for giving me this opportunity to spend the summer working on this. It was a once in a lifetime experience and I really enjoyed it.