

No Title, I
Guess Not
Yet

Hannah Fuller

IN 2004, UNDER THE PSEUDONYM PENNY MULLER, I wrote my first piece of fiction titled: *A Cat Who Could Read!*: the story of a dog who is constantly upstaged by an intelligent cat. This was most likely my version of *Animal Farm* in which I'm the loyal dog and my little sister is the cat, who's very rude and who we should have returned to the stork, or so I wanted to do at the time. Though only roughly 300 words and largely exposition, it was well-received by the critics (AKA: Mom and Dad) and was my first stepping stone to becoming a "real" writer, something I still haven't, apparently, achieved. Unfortunately, *A Cat Who Could Read!* didn't have a sequel or even an ending – a theme that continued throughout my writing career and continues to this day.

I have all the beginnings and yet no endings:
117.

And that was just within the first two shoeboxes I could get ahold of.

It's an experience, recovering writing that you've forgotten, trying to revive a part of you that has been dormant for years. You find parts of yourself in whatever you used to create. Even in the smallest of ways. Even in the ways that didn't seem to matter then.

The titles weren't much help either, not every one of 117 story ideas had a title, but the ones that did didn't disappoint:

Kangaroo Katie – a girl moves to the city of Down Under, Australia. With the setting alone, I was clearly out of my depth.

The Other Red Wine – Twilight fan fiction, essentially

Marcus, Tempted – it only talks about teenagers who are also cats?? None of them are named Marcus?

The Known and the Memoir – I honestly have no clue, but to my credit sounds deep

Danielle and the Bog (Gee This Could Be Fun) – Spoiler: she does not have fun

The Nickle Krickle Koo – a parody of *Ickle Me, Pickle Me, Tickle Me Too* by Shel Silverstein

Besides obscure and nearly meaningless titles, apparently I had a penchant for unique names when I was a young. With the name Hannah, the #7 ranked girl name of 1996, who could blame me? Renata, Layla, Marissa, Rita Ritz, Jamie Lame-y, Juneau, Wanda Jenkins, Mr. Mopps, Rodney, and other such fantasti-

cal names. Sheets and sheets of cast lists, scribbled on notebook paper, are left for me to decipher what story I was writing about. One of these character outlines might be hands down the worst character outlines I've ever read.

• [Redacted] Her name, I'm not kidding, is actually the name of someone I now know in real life thanks to the predictable name combination I chose. Please let me share a snippet of what seems like an embellished police description:

- o Drop dead lovely/Sexy
- o Shoe size: 6 1/2
- o Job: bar tender/hooker
- o Dreams: to stop being sexual
§ I have so many more questions than what I did before. When did I think that a legitimate career choice was illegal prostitution? And why was it her dream to stop being sexual? What fun is that when you're a legally licensed bartending prostitute?

My naiveté is a recurring theme in a lot of these writings. I was writing about scenarios and emotions I absolutely did not grasp at the age of eleven, besides my lack of knowledge about the law system surrounding solicitation. My lack of legal expertise aside, looking back it's nice to see how easy I made the world seem, how I thought the world worked when I was still a kid. Some of the ideas I'd had at eleven or twelve still sound great to me now. Though I may have had a couple of whacky ideas I still respect my younger self for the dedication she showed; every single one of these pages is either hand written, the product of a typewriter, or are printed from computers I didn't have Internet access to from my home. Oh yeah, I knew how to operate a floppy disc in my day. Asking my parents about this now, they still insist I was the perfect pre-teen to raise: I went up to my room and wrote after school, never ending, until I had to eat dinner and go to sleep. How on

Earth did I do that? What took hold of me so tight and refused to let go? And why has it let me go now?

There was a reason why the protagonists in my stories were different, or special, just like so many of the books I had read. I was holding on to a truth that I had coveted from the first time I had opened a book: I was the main character of my own story and just because I was different from the rest of my classmates, my friends, or my family didn't mean I was defective. In a way, many of these story ideas stemmed from the same resounding arc: the main character is special, is told not too subtly by those around them that they're normal or should be just like them, and then the main character makes that decision.

Even though I may have added some fancy misspelled words to those stories or was purposefully "mysterious" and brooding, I think this is still something we all look for in our stories. The cygnet mistaken for a duckling, the hard working girl whose hard work pays off in the form of glass footwear, or the nerdy Brit who lives in a cupboard under some stairs only to save a world he never knew he was a part of. While I am absolutely not Harry Potter, Cinderella, or the Ugly Duckling, I wrote myself into these roles in my stories every time. One hundred and seventeen times, it was me against the world, every time I put my pencil to paper or my fingers on a keyboard.

I did share this writing with a few trusted teachers and friends, and it's their kind advice and words I'd like to leave you with as you read through this collection of art, poetry, photographs, prose, and pieces of themselves. The following was inscribed within a writing self-help book:

*Though people may tear you down
– remember that you are strong and
have a strong voice. Δ*