

THE WRITER WRAITH

by
Dortell Williams

I salute the Writer Wraith! I honor this eternal living spirit because she has sustained and influenced my life more than any one person, let alone any one writer. For nearly three decades of incarceration, she has been the one constant in my life; teaching me, instructing me, and guiding me toward a more enlightened path.

No one has ever seen this apparition, but I know her gender because of her precious feminine qualities: she is a good listener, a wonderful listener who never interrupts. She is loyal, always there assuaging my very real fears of abandonment and desertion. She is a nurturer, providing comfort and assurance at each and every rendezvous with her. She is my every woman!

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The Writing Wraith is a service, pure and generous, giving liberally to both writer and reader (and employing a multitude in between: editors, sub-editors, typesetters, publishers). She is the inspiration behind the earth-realmed ghost writers.

All hail the Writer Wraith!

During this three-decade journey of concrete and steel, this incredible spirit introduced me to great works of writing such as *Disgrace*, by J. M. Coetzee, *Notes Underground*, by Fyodor Dostoevsky and the book that has probably had the biggest impact on my life, after Alex Haley's *Autobiography of Malcolm X*, which was *Man's Search for Meaning*, by Viktor Frankl.

These writers taught me history, a subject I loathed in high school. They helped me appreciate and have fun while at it. They taught me the importance of literary treasures and the various techniques that make these treasures shine. They taught me the richness of writing, and the power and versatility of language. But above all, they served as curtain to my broad ignorance and maladaptive thinking.

Hail to the Writer Wraith!

Crime Victims: An Introduction to Victimology, by Andrew Karmen and *Waiting Together*, by Karol Kent, helped me understand the impact of crime from survivors' perspective; these taught me the importance of empathy toward others and how compassion helps man in his fallible condition remain civil in a sometimes callous world. These readings helped fortify my moral code.

The Pains of Imprisonment, by Robert Johnson and Hans Toch, along with *Reforming Punishment: The Psychological Limits of the Pains of Imprisonment*, by Craig Haney, PH. D.

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J.D., described how long-term incarceration can damage and traumatize the offender, admonishing me of the types of coping mechanisms I must adopt to endure and survive my own, self-made lot.

The Writer Wraith moves in all languages. Through her inspiration, and through the hand of myriad faceless writers, she taught me the flowing, rhythmic language of Spanish. This new ability has opened unforeseen doors and opportunities for someone confined and locked down tighter than a drum. It enables me to enjoy Spanish literature, such as *Poncho*, by Jose Antonio Villareal, and self-help books such as *Ayudame, Siento Miedo*, by Joyce Meyer.

My journey hasn't been limited to academics, but also fun-filled odysseys and adventures as well. Though confined to a bathroom sized cage, and a human kennel the size of a football field. I've had the pleasure of

traveling Homer's *Odyssey*; I've transversed time and geographical lines through Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*, and laughed out load at the absurdity of Johnathan Swift's *A Modest Proposal*.

I owe my great escape, in mind and spirit, to this great phantom of verbal feats; I owe my very sanity to this wise and majestic queen of text, the Writer Wraith, the inspiration of all writing known to man – generously granted to us by Father Time. The Writer Wraith is the breath, depth and width of words and wisdom, teaching it liberally to all of mankind.

All hail the Writer Wraith!

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