

Liz Rohan.mov

“Okay, my name is Liz Rohan and um, I guess my literacy story, although it seems kinda like a boring story because it’s something I’ve told it over and over, it was um, how I came to be interested in writing and that was from being a diarist and um, I have actually just written a memoir about this so I don’t know why I’m tongue tied about the topic but um, my uh I began writing in a diary when my grandma gave me a diary for Christmas when I was in 7th grade, I remember it was blue and um it had this kind of gold on it, engraving. And uh, that same period when I got the diary was also when I had my very first boyfriend, David Flemming. He was a year older than me and he chose, kind of, chose me as his girlfriend on the way back from this trip to Toronto. Am I supposed to be looking at you or the camera? Doesn’t matter? Um, we, 7th and 8th grade math class, advanced math class took this trip to Toronto and um, I was kind of popular that day for some reason. Um and uh, I was kinda fooling around with this kid named Charlie Tazia, and um, Dave’s friend Ernie, who I knew, tapped me on the shoulder and said this guy wanted my phone number, so um, like probably that, later on I got a phone call from Dave and so it was like 10:30 at night when he called me so my dad the whole time was like hanging over the should screaming at me to get off the phone, but anyway he became my topic. Dave became my topic in my journal. And for good for ill, um, guys became my topic in my diary. So whether or not that’s feminist or not, um I’m trying to argue in this memoir that I wrote it’s a little more complicated than not being feminist but that’s kind of how it all started that Dave um, ended up being my topic. And um, we, he, uh, was an exciting boyfriend in many ways but most of it was just because he was older, he was cute, um, probably my first kiss and then also there was a lot of drama because he was popular and then um, his girlfriend that he broke up with to date me and so she got all of these 8th grade girls to be angry at me so there was drama in that first diary, there was lots of drama. So, um, if I really think about sort of how David influenced my writing and he also influenced my high school career, coincidentally he was also a writer. And since my dad was a newspaper reporter, um be attracted to a writer was a little bit Freudian but um, also I think that we were sim, similar in the sense that we lived in a wealthy community but we didn’t necessarily have a lot of money and so we both sort of knew that if we were going to ‘make it out’, quote unquote, we had to work hard. Where we lived with people where their dad literally owned car dealerships or in tool and die and so he became my role model. And so in that sense, but it was also painful too because um, he also, my um, my best friend actually, um, ended up dating him, so there was a lot of pain. But in any case, this was what was in these diaries, ok, the story of Dave. And um, I think, um, and in a way to kind of wrap up the story but, um, years later, so this was in 2006 I was at the Detroit, the um, the, the Lions, no, no, the SuperBowl was in Detroit. And I was walking around and they were having this Winter Fest and I thought, ‘well whom would I know who would have tickets to the game?’ and I thought ‘Dave’ because he is a writer for ESPN. He has these columns called the “Flem File” which basically is, now I’m, see, I’ve done this, now I’m giving you Dave’s literacy narrative. So, * laughs * so he ended up having this column in high school called “The Flem File”, no the “The Railways of Flem” and now he has a column with ESPN called “The Flem File”

so basically it's just taking his high school career and just, writing about football. So I ended up, and now this my literacy narrative is going to be getting a little more serious. So I thought about him and his column, I went and composed his column in my head, I know him so well I know what he is going to say, and I went home and I read the column and I um emailed it to our friend Bill and I said 'Oh, look, Dave is talking about Detroit' and I went to sleep and I had a dream, a nightmare actually, about these baby boys and um they were dying one by one on an operating table so it was this nightmare. And I got up and I had just happened to check my email for something to do and Bill had sent me 'Isn't that too bad about Dave's son?' Dave's son had died and he had written this memoir about his son died when he was, when he was in the womb, basically right before he was supposed to be born. So that kind of freaked me out because I almost had a high school flashback literally it's almost like, as much as I wrote about it I didn't remember the feeling of what it was like to have this connection with him. It's just, it's like a, strong. So, so fast-forward um, about maybe, 4 months later um, I was going through my notebooks from Graduate school, in Graduate school I didn't keep a diary. And I had jotted out the dream that I had about Dave and in the dream, his, he ran up to me with his son and his son was very sick and I offered my condolences. And um, I had the dream in 2001 and that's exactly when his son died. So that was another one of those sort of experiences remembering the connection that Dave and I had. So um, I ended up reading Dave's, Dave's memoir and um, it was very emotional to read that, I mean I know when we were in academia you know people who write books but not people we kind of grow up with, so it, it was a weird experience reading this sequel. So um, I do feel like, um since we're both writers there's still that competitive spirit because I really feel like he kind of beat me by writing his book first so * laughs * so I've got to write my book um, but his book was literally kind of structured as a rainbow of when his um, basically of when his son died and then when his daughter was born. It was very well written, he's a very, very good writer. Um, so basically in the memoir I wrote, recently that I complete is, I tried to get the bottom of that relationship between my diaries and writing about guys and then also about my intuitiveness and how all of those things were a source of strength and but then also a source of pain. Um, and I'm not really necessarily sure about the gender implications of it but you know, these were my topics and this was the world that I grew up in is that, you know, we write about boys. So..."