Loaf With Me On The Grass

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My project began as an exploration of the flexibilities and limitations of the fourth genre, or the genre of non-fiction creative writing. I decided to write and then compile stories of my college years, including stories I had heard from my peers as well as more personal experiences. In each story I attempted to play with perspective, writing in the first, second, and third person. I also experimented with chronology and various prose forms. In beginning to review as a collection each of my non-fiction stories, I found links between the stories and themes common to many of them. Thus, the compilation became a novella with chapters and interludes rather than a grouping of unrelated narratives.

The novella follows a loose chronology, the stories interrupted by interludes which highlight a theme or introduce an idea. One of the themes explored in a couple of the stories is my continuing realization that my peers and I often find it easier to communicate with others through technology rather than in person. Related to that concept is the idea that stories are told in many ways and through various mediums: letters, journals, emails, instant messaging, phone calls, and in person.

I found that the most difficult aspect of writing creative non-fiction is defining one’s own ethical standards. Where does truth end and fiction begin? My novella is an accurate representation of my truth, though I never ignored my creative license. Just as a screenplay of a large novel must streamline its plot, so I found I could only present simplified and incomplete snapshots of my life.

Though it was not my goal, this narrative has become a coming of age story rather than just an experiment in genre.