



Introduction to a Personal Experience

My “essay” is a story told in the first person about an extremely disastrous journey from Colorado to Vermont. I began my first draft with the intent to entertain readers and offer a chance to think, “I’m glad that wasn’t me!” I also wanted to make clear how utterly horrid the whole ordeal was without sulking or actually emphasizing what our opinions were at the time. I succeeded in entertaining, though not quite to the degree I had hoped, and I had mixed success conveying a general air of disaster.

My first rewrite was admittedly completely uninspired. I had practically no idea where to take the story beyond where I’d already ventured but the second draft was not a total failure. I did lengthen the story to include more detailed events beyond where I stopped the first draft per everyone’s requests. I partly intended the second version to sound a bit “sad” or at least straightforward – something not as blatantly sarcastic as the first. I achieved that to some degree, though a sarcastic layer still clearly sits underneath the simple account.

The third version was by far the most fun to write, inspired by the examples read in class. The story retold in poetic form is intended for readers who already know the original story. I don’t believe a reader experiencing the story for the first time in its poetic form would appreciate that I was not only carrying the tone of the original piece but also extending the sarcasm to reflect on the writing itself. Even sharing the poetic piece with the same people with whom I shared my first draft the reception was not nearly as warm.

I summed these three pieces to create my final product, taking the basic elements from each that seemed to work the best. I had selected the style of the original piece very carefully at the time; I elected to return to that version of the writing to derive my final telling. I cut a substantial amount from the first draft and changed virtually everything else, keeping primarily the overall tone on which the whole paper is ultimately based.

From the second draft I pulled some specific events that I felt seemed particularly interesting and rewrote them to fit properly into the wry wit the rest of the writing showcased. I hesitate to suggest the third rewrite was “useless,” for it was undoubtedly a fun challenge, but I barely returned to it in writing my final draft. It was a fun piece of writing in itself but did not ultimately contribute much to the final paper.

Overall I had the most difficulty leading into and out of the body of the story. It would have been difficult to *not* tell the story itself in the style I selected. My introduction grew from essentially the same few lines throughout all four drafts, expanding slightly in each. What amounted to two or three paragraphs in the first draft became almost a full page by the final copy.

My conclusion, on the other hand, simply wandered. Only the two last drafts of the piece share remotely the same elements; even then the comparison is vague. I was trying to find a boundary between turning it into a soap-opera lesson of morality and just leaving the paper in the open as if part of it was simply missing. I believe in the final copy I was able to successfully end the *story* without necessarily ending the *experience*.