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*Puppy Love*

Paperback book

For my final project, I researched corporate publishing vs. self-publishing and the flaws in the industry. *Puppy Love* is a book of poems inspired by the breakup I went through this summer. I love being vulnerable in my art so people can relate to and see themselves in my work. I changed a lot through this process and wanted to show that through each poem. My favorite poet Rupi Kaur inspired me to start writing poetry because her books have helped me so much. I decided to self-publish my book through Amazon because it is beginner friendly and widely accessible. All the art including the cover is my own hand-drawn work which was scanned into photoshop, darkened, and placed with the poems. I started the poems during my second elective block and wrote new ones up until I did the formatting for Amazon. The book you see here is a book bound by me as the proof is still being shipped. That being said *Puppy Love* is not available on Amazon yet, it would be greatly appreciated if you leave your email below to receive an update along with a link when it becomes available!

# Mary Doyle's Life Work



Victoria L.

The Oxbow School

OS47

*Writers note: This tells the story of Mary Doyle, an aspiring author who dedicates her entire life to her writing career only for it to never take off due to the exclusivity of corporate publishing. She is a black woman who isn't writing about black pain which is typically what white publishing companies want to publish if publishing black work. They don't want to publish stories that are diverse unless race is a part of the plot. Mary's daughter later self publishes her mother's work as she has more resources and information about self publishing than her mom did in the 80s.*

"I walked through Broadway street, taking in my surroundings. The light beamed down making my coily hair which looks black to the naked eye appear honey-brown. On my hands, you could see the gray where I didn't put lotion on my knuckles. I shove them in the pocket of my puffer jacket that hadn't been replaced since my freshman year of high school. My mother always told me to surround myself with people who I want to become, so there I was near some of the biggest publishing houses in New York City looking for a coffee shop. I came across a shop with a free wifi sign plastered across the front and walked inside. I sit down at the booth that looks out onto the street. Zoning out, I watch people who look nothing like me walk by. White men with trench coats and briefcases, blonde women with strollers and Chanel bags. I open my laptop and stare at the keys mesmerized by the difference in this device I had used back in school; back when I fell in love with writing. I would sneak down past my bedtime and climb ]]into my mother's office chair. The blue typewriter was placed in the middle of the desk. I quickly memorized the placement of the letters as they were rubbing off. My mother wasn't a writer, and for the longest time I wasn't sure why she kept it but looking back she definitely kept it for me. In our penthouse paid off by my absent father who thought money

was worth more than his presence, the bottom two stairs still creaked. She was an incredibly light sleeper and I'd like to picture her getting up after hearing my shuffling around standing at the top of the stairs and watching me write; watching me fall in love with the words on the page.

I put my jacket on the back of my chair and cracked my knuckles before hitting the power button. Inhaling in for 3 out for 2; doing a brain reset. I open my manuscript's word document when there's a tap on my shoulder. I look up, adjusting to the dimness of the shop compared to the screen. A man probably in his late 20s or early 30s is standing beside me.

"Is anyone sitting here?" He asks, gesturing to the seat beside me. I quickly glanced around the shop and it was getting busy, but not let me sit with a stranger busy.

"No, no one is," I say reluctantly. He smiles and sits. I turn my attention back to my screen and get to writing.

I look up at the clock. Four hours have passed, and none of the same faces from when I sat down are still here besides the guy who asked to sit next to me. I get up to use the bathroom not because I have to but just to stretch my legs. I push the door open and a lady is standing in the mirror with a distraught look on her face. We make eye contact and she turns to me, mascara smudged under her eyes.

"How old are you?"

Confused, I say "19, why?"

"You still have your whole life ahead of you. Never let a man stop you from following your dreams. Don't have his kids. Don't settle."

I smile an empathetic smile.

"I mean it." She starts shoving her things back into her purse. "Because when you get to be my age and you look back to what you would've accomplished, don't let that be your legacy"

At a loss for words, I stare at her wondering how her life looks to everyone else. I realize I probably should say something or go into the stall or something but my feet don't move.

"Never settle" she mumbles passing me and walking out of the door. I walked over to the mirror where she was standing. I stare at my bare face with nothing but mascara on it, studying it.

"I won't," I smile at myself. "I promise,"

Ever since then I went to that same coffee shop. Multiple times I debated if it was worth it. Taking the bus from 22nd 40 mins to Broadway. My mother's words rang strong in the back of my mind. So I got up and I came. The man that asked to sit next to me two weeks prior came in every other day and we sat in silence buried in our computer screens for 6 to 8 hours before he left. Then I typically take that as my cue to head out as well. He came in every other day including Fridays but one Friday I had been sitting in my spot for an hour finally looking up he wasn't there. I looked around and it was me, the barista, and two non-regulars in line. I wondered if something had happened to him for a moment that worried me. But then I remembered I'd never exchanged words with him after he asked to sit next to me and I shouldn't care if I ever see him again.

My book was coming along well. I hadn't had writer's block yet and I had been writing more than I ever had before. My protagonist, Meave's conflict was being resolved and the story was coming to an end. I had outlined this book in the 5th grade for my English language arts class. Obviously, refurbished this is my life's work. I had never been so committed to anything ever. It showed in the way I rotated through hobbies. I was a dancer and gymnast,

and I played tennis and badminton, but I always came back to writing these characters and this story.

Rolling out of bed, the heat-blasted through my room. I drag myself to the kitchen. The sun is warming the handle of my fridge. I crack two eggs and scramble them in a pan. I decided I wasn't going to go to the coffee shop and I would have my first day off in a while and hang out with my friends. After breakfast, I order a taxi and head out the door. I arrive on time and my friend Charlotte is already there. We start catching up and more people start arriving. Out of the corner of my eye, I see the guy from the coffee shop. He came up and hugged Charlotte. "This is Malcolm, we went to high school together and he just moved back from Atlanta." Charlotte smiles looking at me.

And that my dear is how I met your father. We hung out almost every day after that and he asked me to marry him six months later I said I would marry him after I published my book"

Emma Doyle

I stare at my mom lying in her hospital gown. My dad died in a car crash 15 years ago and they never got married because mom never got published. I know that was her biggest regret in life but I'm also proud of her. She held herself to a standard. I've read her work and it's beautiful. I kiss her forehead before dimming the lights in her room. I walk out of the room and exhale knowing this could be one of the last times I see my mom. The doctors gave her 6 months to live 7 months ago. Which should give us hope but her condition has drastically decreased since then; so in a way my mom did die a month ago.

Receiving the email I reload my screen. There it was, my mothers pride and joy, uploaded for the world to see. It saddens me she's not around to see it or that she didn't have

access to the same self publishing now that she had then. But I am beyond grateful to have done this for her.

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