

5-31-2005

# ... And There Was Light. On Becoming a Writer: A Reflective Journey

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## Recommended Citation

Fesseha, Senait, "... And There Was Light. On Becoming a Writer: A Reflective Journey" (2005). *Critical and Creative Thinking Capstones Collection*. 104.

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*Appendix E*



# **Critical and Creative Thinking Synthesis Presentation**

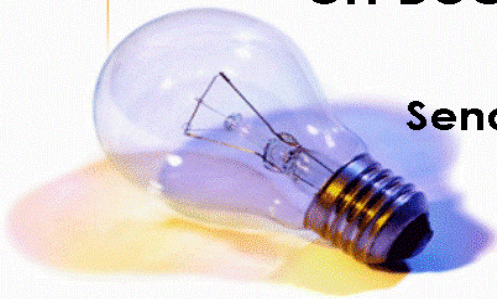
**April 25, 2005**

April 25, 2005 University of Massachusetts – Boston – Critical & Creative Thinking Program

# ...And There Was Light

## Journey Through Reflection on Becoming a Writer

Senait Fesseha



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Where I want to be!



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## Rules that governed my project

Established throughout the length of my Journey

- No idea is a bad idea
- No harsh self-criticism allowed
- It is OK to fail
- Be creative
- Take risks



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## Background

- I LOVE BOOKS!!!
  - Reading them. Writing them.
  - Started reading and writing early – in my native language.
  - I caught up with reading in English very fast.
  - Writing in English became a challenge
- ...Time to take stock



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## Taking Stock & Solving Problem

- I evaluated and found a great need to learn how to write in English
- Take lessons on writing for children
- Read, read, read, and read!
- Learn the value of re-writing.
- Through re-writing reflective thinking

... Takes me on my Journey



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## My Journey

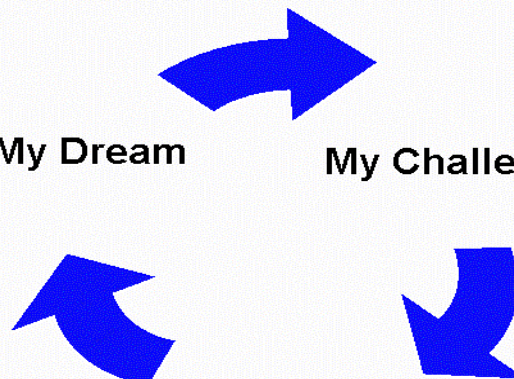
Revolved around :



My Dream

My Challenges

My Discovery



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## My Dream

- To write children's story picture books.
  - Books that are Engaging
  - Books that have Social Value
  - Not generic – Not common



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## My Challenges

- Language
  - Learn writing in English
  - Learn a new process for creativity – imagining in English
- Overcoming the restrictions of constant self-evaluation and feelings of inadequacy
- Learning and discovering what skills I have already



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## My Discovery

- Reflection is a powerful tool. Allowed me to look inside and discover why I was not practicing writing
- I was held back from achieving my dreams by my feelings of inadequacy, and my fear of failure – End of my dream ??
- Reflection allowed me to realize skills I already have and those I lack.
- Reflection allowed me to realize what genre I love.

“Multicultural Picture Books”



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## Excerpt from “When We First Met”

Hi Sosena,

I am very excited to be getting a *netela*. What is a *netela*? My favorite colors are yellow, red, and purple. I showed my letters to my teacher. We all tried to practice the words in class. It was fun. Everyone in my class is waiting to see my *netela*. They asked me what it was. Then we had fun guessing what it is. When do you think it will be finished? My mother said that I should say thank you and not be pushy. But it is hard not to be excited! Write soon.

Your friend,

Victoria

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## My Road Map

- Writing is a continuous learning process – keep the lessons fresh
- Keep the reflection process – make it part of everyday action
- Harness the self knowledge I have and fill with skills I lack
- Fear is a fortress with a barbed wire gate – know what it is and let go



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## What about my choice?

- Why Multicultural?  
Love & Interest of cultures
- Shortage of authentic multicultural picture books
- Benefits children to assimilate, to learn about their world



- Multicultural books need to be authentic to be beneficial
- Unfortunately the publishing world is not stepping up
- The need for such books is high!

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## Excerpt from “When We First Met”

Selam Victoria,

I know what you mean. I also get excited when I get something new. *Netela* is something you wrap to keep you warm or as a cover when you go to church or visiting. For children, *netela* is small. It is very thin white material and it comes with colored borders. My mother fluffs, cleans and then spins the cotton into very fine thread and then takes it to a *chewanhe* who weaves it into a *netela* and adds colored borders at both ends.



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### Excerpt from “When We First Met”

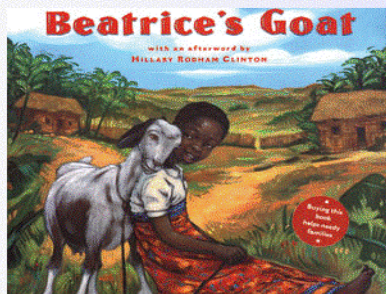
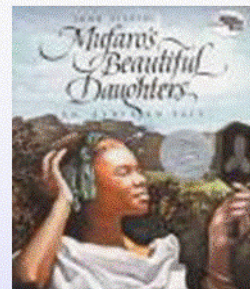
Then my mother twists the cotton at the end of the borders, which makes it look like it has thin white tassels. I helped pick up the colored patterns for the border of your *netela*. I hope you like it. It is almost finished. We will bring it to The NGO next week. My mother said that she hopes you like it. I told her you would because I liked it. Write as soon as you get your *sitota*. *Sitota* means gift.

Your friend,  
Sosena



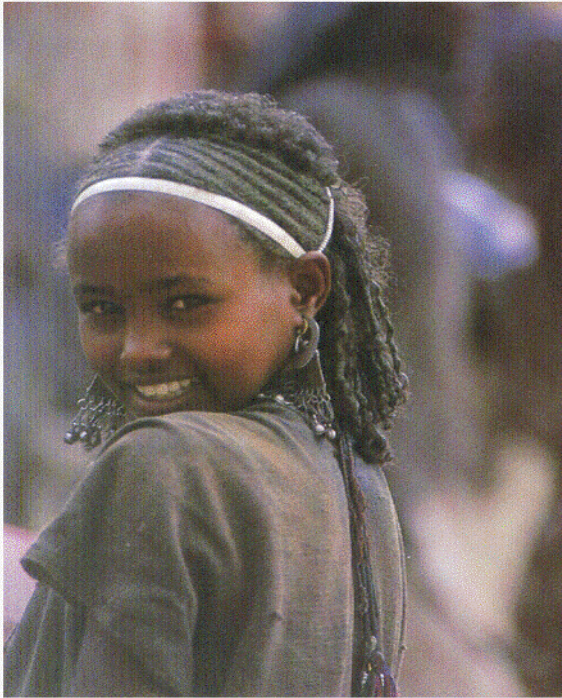
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Are these multicultural??



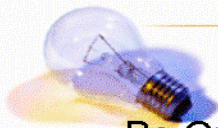
Apply  
Critical  
And  
Creative  
Thinking

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- What Do You See?
- What Can You Tell Me about the Girl?
- Can you picture her life?
- What do you think about her background?
- Can you imagine a conversation with her?

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### Take-away points from CCT

- Be Creative
  - Rules or boundaries are to be explored
- Be Critical
  - Things are not always what they appear to be – So be reflective and question
- The Future is open for exploration, innovation, and change – Take risk!
- Success doesn't happen without taking risk



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## *R e s o u r c e s*

ALA [www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org)

Author link about Publishers, Writers, & Literary Agents [www.authorlink.com](http://www.authorlink.com)

Children's Book Council [www.cbcbooks.org](http://www.cbcbooks.org)

Children's Literature [www.childrenslit.com](http://www.childrenslit.com)

The Children's Literature Web Guide [www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/index.html](http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/index.html)

The Children's Writing Supersite [www.write4kids.com](http://www.write4kids.com)

Directory of Children's Publishers [www.childrenswriters.singaleader.com](http://www.childrenswriters.singaleader.com)

Institute of Children's Literature [www.institutechildrenslit.com](http://www.institutechildrenslit.com)

Multicultural Children's Lit [www.lib.msu.edu/corby/education/multicultural.htm](http://www.lib.msu.edu/corby/education/multicultural.htm)

New Horizons for Learning [www.newhorizons.org](http://www.newhorizons.org)

SCBWI [www.scbwi.com](http://www.scbwi.com)

Smart Writers [www.smartwriters.com](http://www.smartwriters.com)

The Purple Crayon [www.underdown.org](http://www.underdown.org)

The Writer [www.writermag.org](http://www.writermag.org)

Writers Digest [www.writersdigest.com](http://www.writersdigest.com)

Writer's Guild of America [www.wga.org](http://www.wga.org)

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