

The Picture of Marisa Sankey: Portrait of a writer

Marisa, 21 years old and a student at Penn State University, is what you could call "the creative type". Drama, drawing, playing the flute or the piano, she has tried it all. Some of these passions went by the way side, while some of them stayed with her. But one passion has been constant throughout her life: writing. Whether it is poetry, short-stories or journaling, it is by far Marisa's biggest hobby.

But for her and for many others, her passion for writing began as a passion for reading: "I pretty much lived and breathed books," she recalls. She grew up reading famous authors, and among her favorites, she mentions Charles Dickens, Emily Dickinson or Victor Hugo. Reading helped her find her style and develop her vocabulary as a writer. "Writing is also a way to keep your brain working," she says. In fact, as time went on and life offered her less and less free time, she chose to focus on her writing, and had to give up reading as much as she used to.



While Marisa loves all kinds of writing, her preference has always been poetry. For her, poetry is very therapeutic. It is a way to put her thoughts down on paper, but in a way that makes her much more comfortable, and allows her to share her feelings without feeling insecure. She often compares writing poetry to journaling, which is something she used to do often during times when she struggled with mental health: "it was almost like having a friend that was non-judgmental," she says.

If you kept a diary growing up, confessed your secrets, fears and anxieties, then, you know exactly what journaling is like for Marisa. She has struggled with anxiety her whole life, and depression at times too.

Writing became an outlet for her: "During my time of being severely depressed, it was a good way for me to write about how I was feeling and let out some of that negative energy, and it never solved any of my issues but it helped me give a voice to what I was feeling".

Now, Marisa uses her own experience with mental health to help others. With her talent for writing, she raises awareness by sharing her own tips on dealing with anxiety on her [blog](#): "I want to help others so that they don't feel alone like I did". This is a great example of how powerful writing can be.