

The Magic of Moments Passing

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A moment of creation passes, and then another. Seconds tick, ferrying a writer along a stream of consciousness until she's embossed a textured, Technicolor universe upon a featureless, white page. I wouldn't have imagined that one common moment rolling into the next could make such a difference, but I'm getting used to the magic of moments hauling new worlds in their wake. The page is white, and then it's green and bustling with forest children wearing latticed, crystal wings. The page is white, and then a poor child in Ukraine, gray in a filthy bed, lies lost in acrylic dreams of flying. The page is white, and then it lights with my heroine's half-smile, the realization of her true identity dawning.

At the UW Madison Writers' Institute, moments passing likewise generate new worlds. A writer on the edge of her seat, listening to a master teacher speak of infusing tension on each page, of sculpting characters who spring to life, of rendering genuine dialogue, may well find herself closing her notes at the end of an hour, waking from a dream of learning into a state where her craft has been refined – a muscle toned. She goes back to the page, to a rut where her story stalled, and her fingers deliver a brilliant twist, or the satisfying resolution of a complex scene, tacking on a cliffhanger to boot.

And then, at Institute, the moment comes when a literary agent invites her to unveil her masterpiece. She does, placing a bold sketch mark on her future – a future that, until now has remained unimagined, safely kept white, for fear that such magnificent things might never be. Business cards are traded, and in the passing of mere moments, her destiny has changed.

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