

They were fascinating, full of mystery and magic.



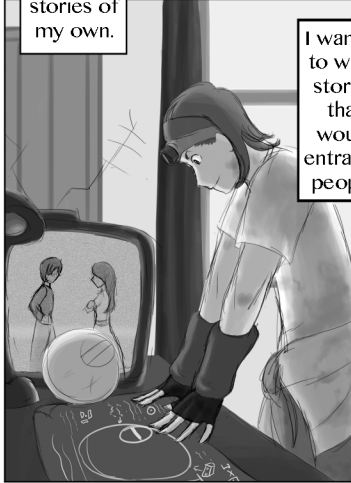
They took me away from the lull of normal life.



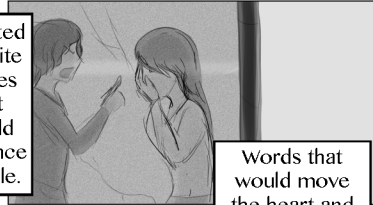
Eventually, my own head was filled with the same ideas.



I started writing stories of my own.

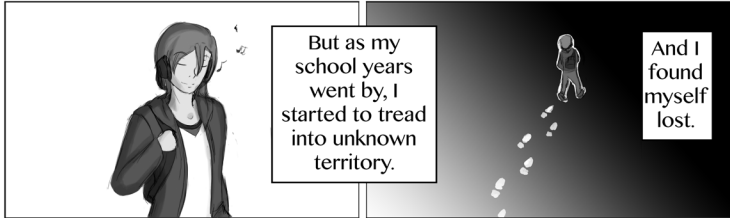


I wanted to write stories that would entrance people.



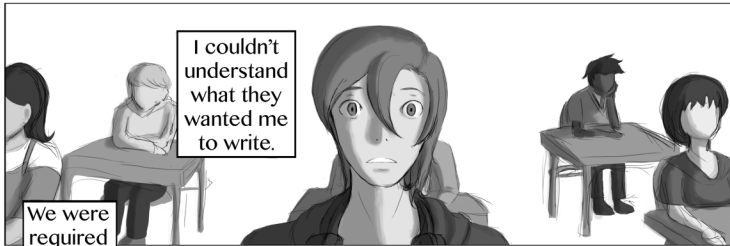
Words that would move the heart and make emotions swell.





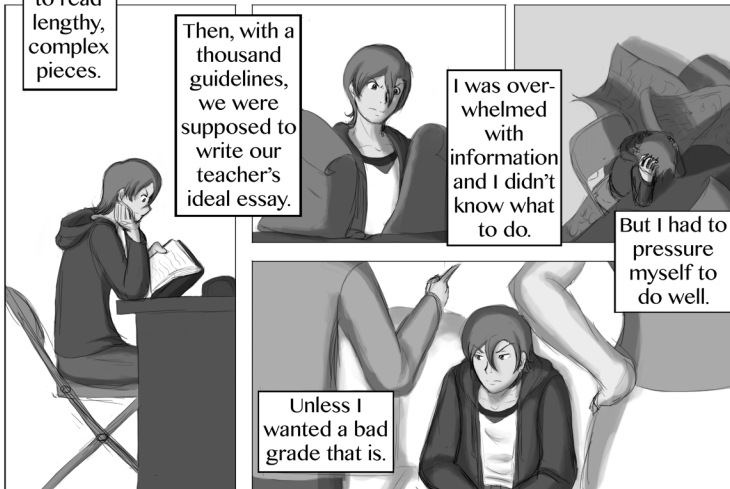
But as my school years went by, I started to tread into unknown territory.

And I found myself lost.



I couldn't understand what they wanted me to write.

We were required to read lengthy, complex pieces.

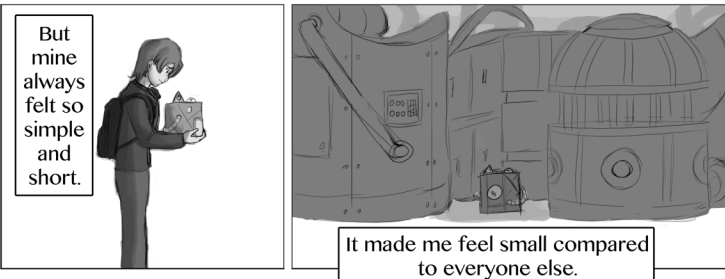
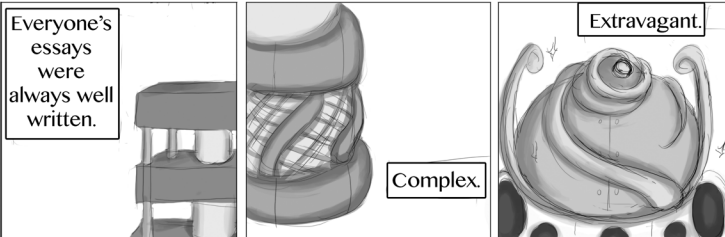


Then, with a thousand guidelines, we were supposed to write our teacher's ideal essay.

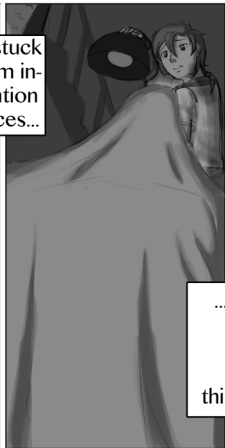
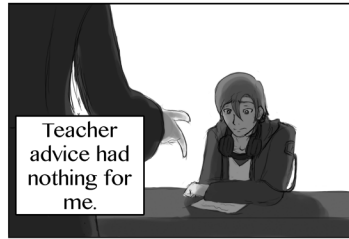
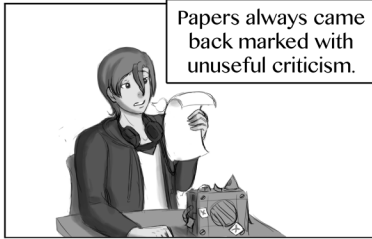
I was overwhelmed with information and I didn't know what to do.

But I had to pressure myself to do well.

Unless I wanted a bad grade that is.









But I never did well.



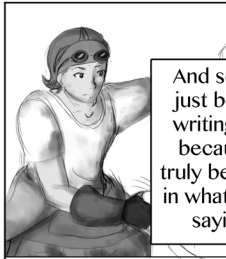
I became more and more frustrated with myself...



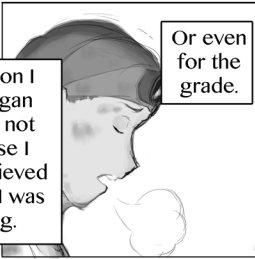
...and that's when the thought came to me.



**I'M NOT A GOOD WRITER**



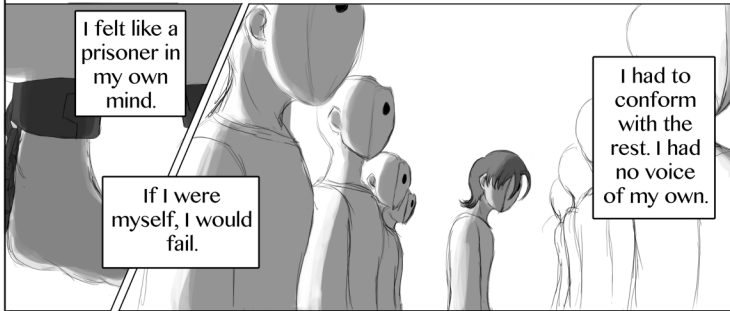
And soon I just began writing not because I truly believed in what I was saying.



Or even for the grade.



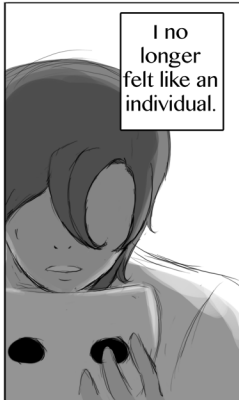
I just wrote to get it over with.



I felt like a prisoner in my own mind.

If I were myself, I would fail.

I had to conform with the rest. I had no voice of my own.

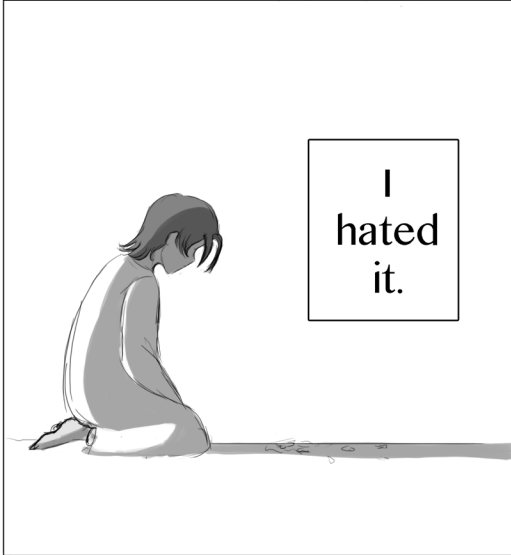


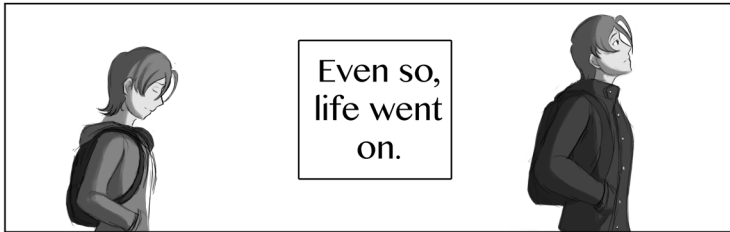
I no longer felt like an individual.



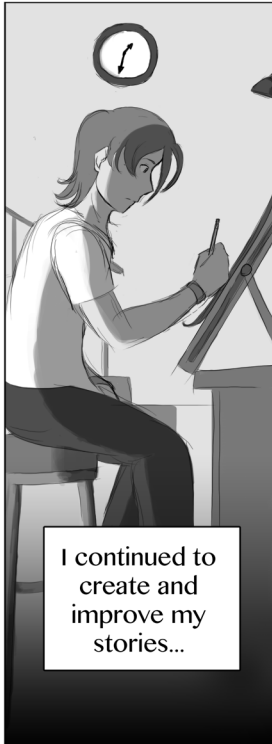
And I...



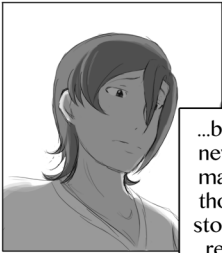




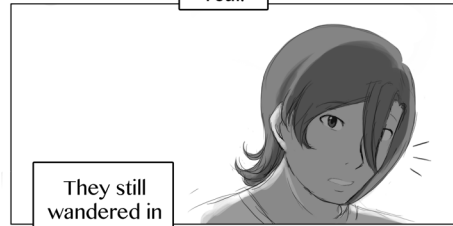
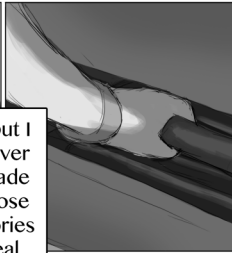
Even so,  
life went  
on.



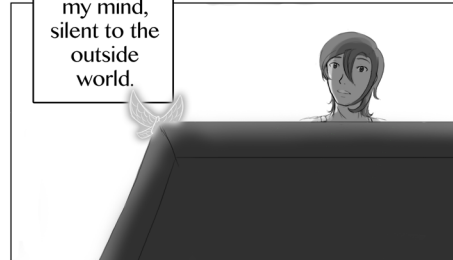
I continued to  
create and  
improve my  
stories...

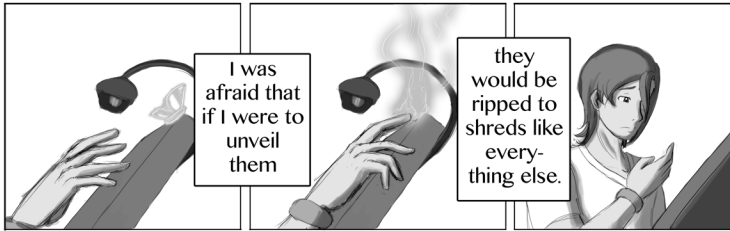


...but I  
never  
made  
those  
stories  
real.



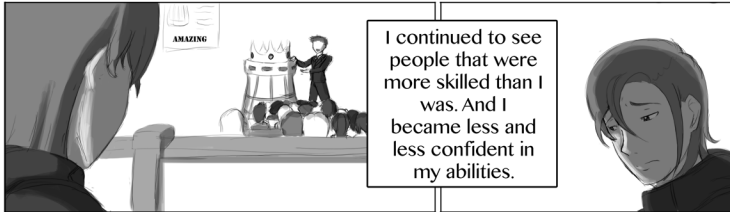
They still  
wandered in  
my mind,  
silent to the  
outside  
world.



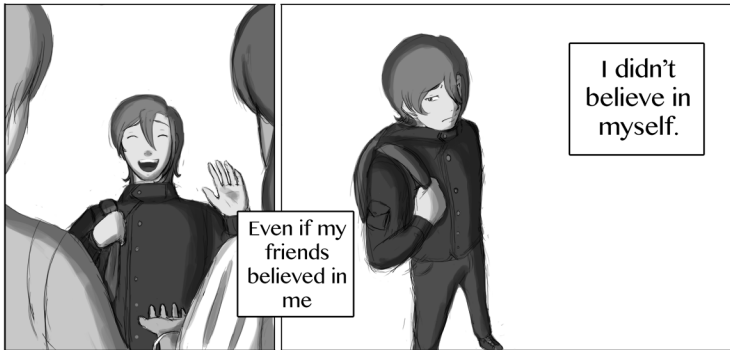


I was afraid that if I were to unveil them

they would be ripped to shreds like everything else.



I continued to see people that were more skilled than I was. And I became less and less confident in my abilities.



Even if my friends believed in me

I didn't believe in myself.



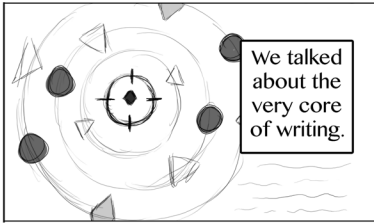
I thought I would wind up staying like this forever

but something tipped the scale recently.



In my third year of college, I took an academic writing class.

I thought it was going to be like all the other writing classes I took. But I found myself relieved.



We talked about the very core of writing.

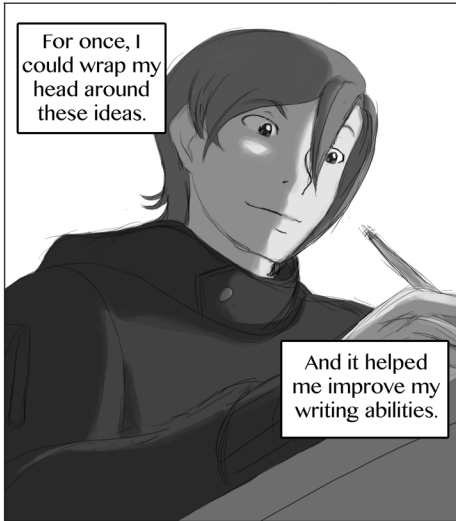


Something that was never clarified for me.

Understanding the reason why people write the way they do.

Learning about the ideas of purpose and audience. Finding the ways language changes based on the genre you choose to write in.

Being able to communicate effectively using different practices and conventions.



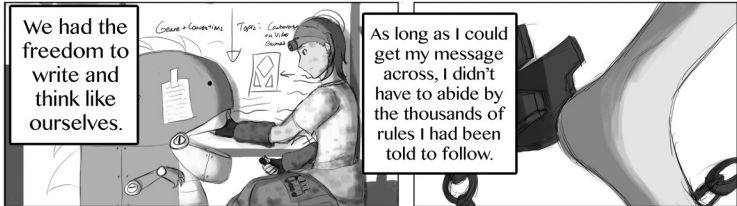
For once, I could wrap my head around these ideas.

And it helped me improve my writing abilities.



It was like a breath of fresh air.

There were no grades to compare each other with. Only effort. And I actually knew what I was saying.



We had the freedom to write and think like ourselves.

Course + Comments  
Tips: Customers are like...  
Quality

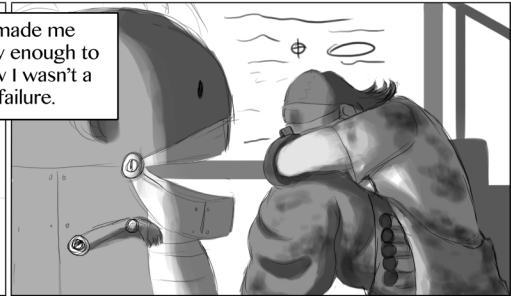
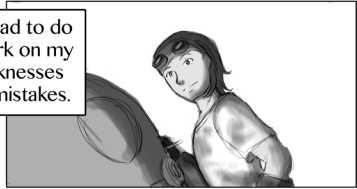
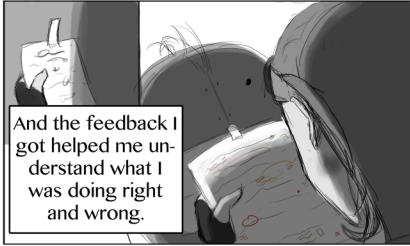
As long as I could get my message across, I didn't have to abide by the thousands of rules I had been told to follow.



I didn't have to constrain myself to be like everyone else.

I finally felt it was okay to be me.

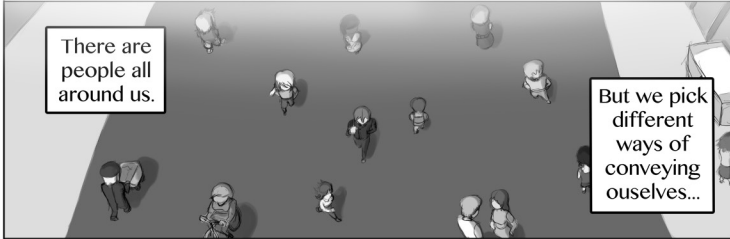




And now, looking back, I'm starting to see the world in a different way.



There are people all around us.

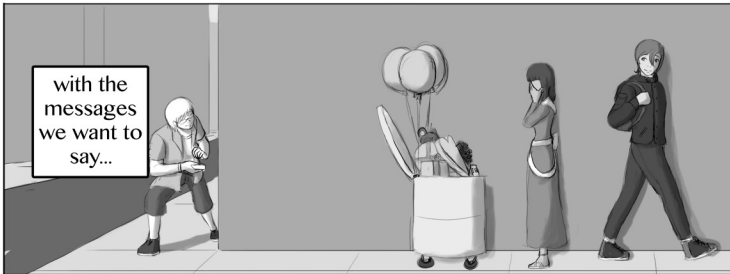


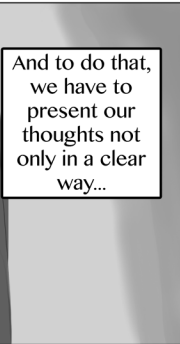
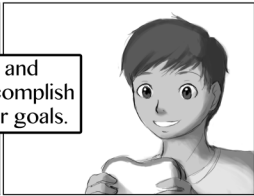
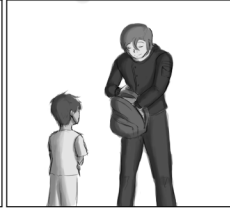
But we pick different ways of conveying ourselves...

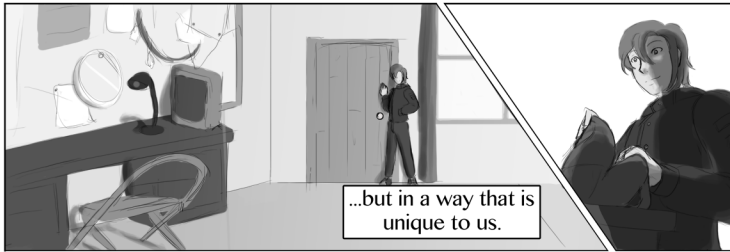


depending on where we are...

with the messages we want to say...



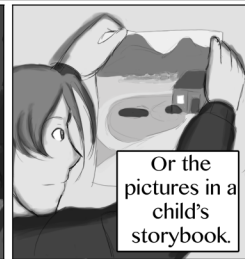




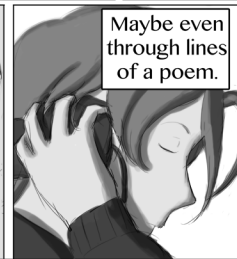
...but in a way that is unique to us.



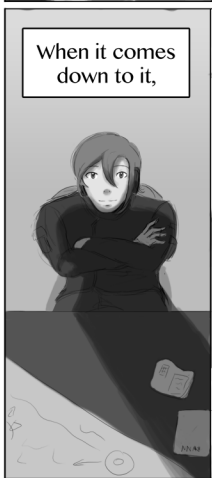
Sometimes it's through an entire novel.



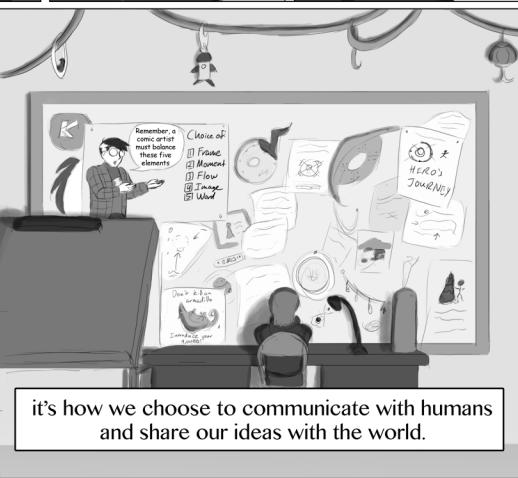
Or the pictures in a child's storybook.



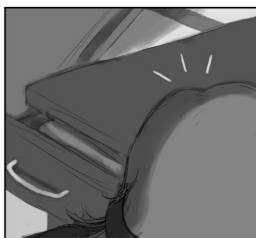
Maybe even through lines of a poem.



When it comes down to it,



it's how we choose to communicate with humans and share our ideas with the world.



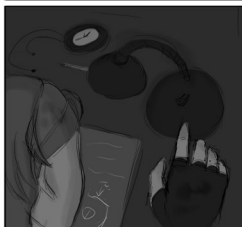
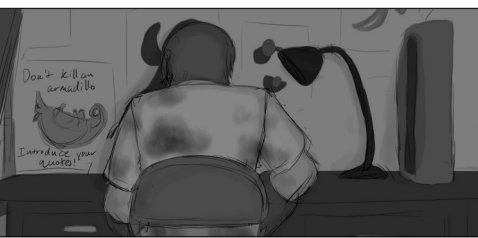
And I shouldn't be afraid to communicate the way I want to.



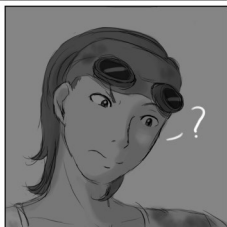
Now that I know these things, I feel like I can improve myself as a writer.

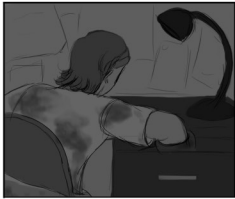


It won't be easy, though.

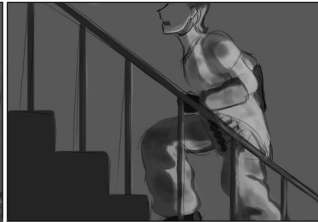
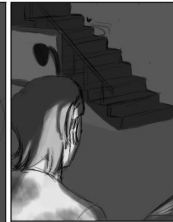
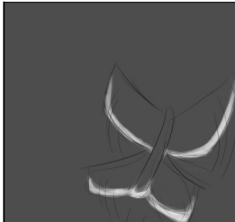
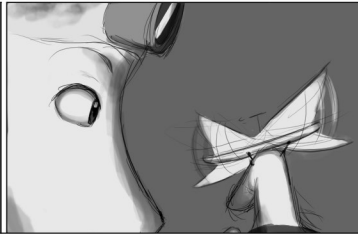
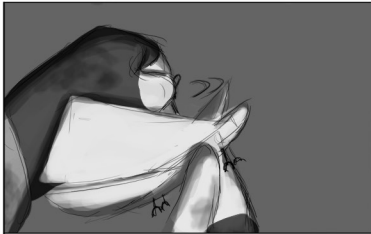
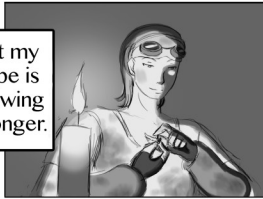


The doubt still lingers.





But my hope is growing stronger.



I finally feel like I won't be stuck in a rut forever.



Someday I'll get there.

