

Elizabeth Lawlor

Dr. McKetta

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### Proposal

In my short story, “Wild Atlantic Way,” Anne O’Donnell is a middle-aged woman who narrates a single day in her life in 2010. Although the story only spans half a day, Anne flashes back to moments in her life, her husband Tom’s, and her daughter Celine’s, that form the exposition for the plot. The reader learns that Tom died a few years ago and Celine has expatriated to Chicago to find work, leaving Anne alone. The setting, the West Coast of Ireland, plays a central role in the plot. Notoriously stormy and rugged, the area is full of a wild beauty that shapes those who live there. The time period plays an equally important part: the country is deep in a true-to-life economic depression that began in 2008 and cast a pall over the entire island. After laying out the exposition, Act 1 ends with a complication: Anne hears news of a tragedy that leaves her bereft and lost. In Act 2, Anne finds herself alone and questioning her future as well as the future of Ireland. Though I’m still building the arc, I’d like to introduce the sea mythology of the selkie in this act. By framing the myth as a story Anne told Celine when she was a little girl, the retelling of it will act as a narrative tool to foreshadow Anne’s decision in the final scene of the story. (I’d also like to tie in symbolism between the selkie myth and Anne, but I don’t want it to come across as cliché.) In Act 3, Anne attends the wedding of one of Celine’s childhood friends. After the ceremony, Anne has an important decision to make as she weighs her fate against her faith.

Since we've read so many wonderful examples of craft this semester, it is difficult to pinpoint the influence of one author. Initially, however, Russell's "St. Lucy's Home for Girls Raised by Wolves" gave me the creative license to write fiction. Russell does not shy away from abandoning traditional forms and using the absurd to craft a well-written tale. I've also been inspired by the way Russell juxtaposes this absurdity with religion to insert commentary into her text. She employs the constructs of faith to provide both levity and deeper levels of meaning. Additionally, Russell's adept usage of varied sentence structure keeps the pace rolling. Russell isn't afraid to break the rules of traditional grammar in order to make her point. Finally, I was inspired by the way Russell's story ends with a climax and no resolution. Russell allows the reader to draw his or her own conclusions and meaning from the text. This choice made me consider my own audience; not all readers need a resolution, and some stories are stronger without one.

I've been heavily influenced by other authors, as well -- notably Percy's "Refresh, Refresh" and Atwood's "Bluebeard's Egg." Percy conveys powerful imagery of the rugged setting of the Pacific Northwest to create tension in the narrative and to influence the characters' actions. Atwood uses fairytales to provide insight into her protagonist's internal conflict. Since the protagonist is not forthcoming about her own inner turmoil, the way she unpacks the symbolism in "Bluebeard's Egg" speaks for her. I also admire the way both Percy and Atwood use flashbacks to provide context and pacing for their stories. They are able to seamlessly transition between scenes without letting the action drag. Neither author uses thick passages of dialogue. Instead, the authors insert snippets of dialogue when it helps to move the narrative along, but the reader spends a great deal of time paying attention to the inner monologue of the protagonists. I've also been influenced by the many authors Prose uses as examples in her book.

Specifically, I'm considering Prose's suggestions on detail and gesture; when used correctly, these tools can be used to create an authentic world and add a dynamic element to a scene.

Reading such incredible examples of craft while writing this semester has provided me with a freedom and expansion in my personal writing style. I'm excited to see how the stories we read in the future might continue to influence and advance my own story.