

Engl 1105

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My Daily Reading Expedition: a Story About Reading Spaces

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Reading is part of my day from the moment that I wake up to the moment that I go to sleep. It is a way to contextualize my day, and a way through which I can describe my day and the places that I went to in a day. Sometimes, I only travel to a few different places while I am reading and writing, and sometimes I go to almost a dozen different places.

In the early hours of the morning, I wake up to the blare of my phone alarm beaconing me out of bed. I then read for the first time that day: the time is displayed in white curved numbers on a dark screen which is too bright for my morning eyes. The time is 6:50 and I have ten minutes until I need to get out of bed. As I look around, my eyes are met with the crochet blanket on my lap. The blanket which I spent hours working the berry-colored threads into a masterpiece to the tune of an audiobook or a podcast. As I sit, I have to make a decision about how I am going to start my day. Today, I decided to read. Sometimes I flip through the pages of my book from last night, but I have been having trouble reading at night, so I turn to my printed out copy of "The Raven". As I read the prose of the poem, I nearly recite the first several lines from memory. I read the time again. My alarm clock reads 7:10 which means I need to get out of bed and get ready for the day.

As I brush my teeth, I look at a few emails or read another poem in the dusky lighting of the suite bathroom, my reflection also looking at her phone. I realize that I mentioned that I like to read poems, which seems strange to other people, but I find it to be an outlet for both reader and writer. I find that I have gotten into this habit because it is a good way to occupy my mind

during my free moments rather than letting my thoughts and perspective memory consume me. It is sort of a brief form of escapism. I finish with a minty taste in my mouth. I am as ready as I will ever be for my big day ahead.

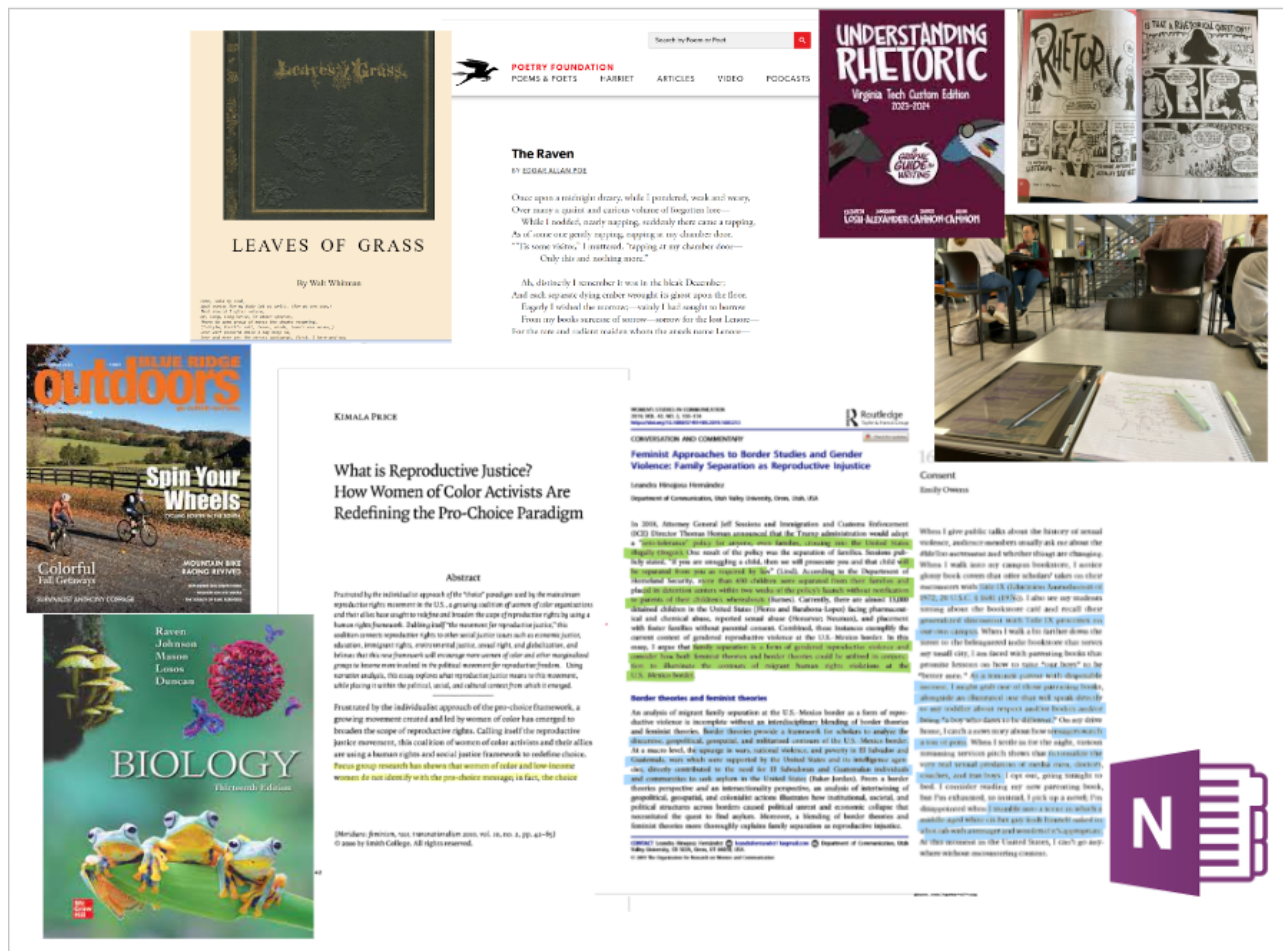
My real reading of the day starts when I trek across the foggy drillfield to “academic side” of campus. I am sitting in a lecture hall with nearly three hundred other students. The carpet is an interesting mix of purplish red and gray. There are seats all around me but I always sit on the second row on the right side of Davidson 218. The fabric on the chairs is the same color as the carpet, and the coarse fabric is pilled from the many people who have sat in it over the past several years. I am preparing myself for my lecture by reading through my notes from class from a few days before. I am reading my notes on my Dell laptop which is folded over backwards into its morning yoga pose. I read with my Dell pen in hand ready to make small corrections or revisions on my chemistry notes.

After trying to focus my attention on the lecture as best I can, I take the trek to McBride, where I have my next class. I pull out my computer in the classroom filled with peers. I flip to my OneNote tab open with my readings from the night or so before class, and pull out my pink spiral notebook with my critical arguments about the readings. I reminisce on how it was too difficult to do the dense, analytical readings in the form of a PDF, without the ability to make notes on the reading. I find that this system which allows me to make marks directly on the text and synthesize them in my notebook allows me to get more out of the reading, and interact with it more. With my notebook and computer open, I review my notes and highlights in the margins, and compare them to my critical arguments in preparation for my lecture.

A few hours and a biology lecture later, when I am finished with my classes for the day, and I have eaten lunch, I will take the walk over to Newman library. The massive wooden doors

emit me to my fortress of learning and serenity. I will glance around the first floor, sometimes pausing to watch for a moment before circling around to find the stairwell. I climb up the shaft overlaid with glossy mint tiles, feeling the indentions of the worn stair treads beneath my feet. Once I climb to the third floor, I walk around the corner and I find my favorite spot to read. In front of the elevator, there are four box-shaped arm chairs which are facing each other in a circle as if they are having a conversation with one another. My favorite of the four overlooks a window and a globe. The stacks of the library are behind me, encouraging me in my pursuit of knowledge. The chair has an orange tint to the fabric cushions which are nestled in a blonde-wood box-like chair.

I then sit down and let the time fly by. I can read for hours and hours. There is not a clock on the wall. I just ignore my watch for the time being and read. Just sit and read. When I am reading I do not like to be interrupted by the prospect of taking notes. I used to struggle to really focus on my readings. I am constantly distracted, looking at how many pages I have left in the reading. I know that if I look away from the text to focus on something else for even a minute, I may not turn back to reading. Thus, I have developed a system which works well for me. I will download all of my texts to OneNote, and pull out my Dell pen. As I am reading, I will highlight things which fit the theme I am looking for in the writing, and support the overall argument for the piece. After I read, I will open my notebook and go back through my important quotes and write the significance down before they escape my mind. Slowly but surely, I work through my readings, and cross more tasks off of my "To-Do" list.



[A collage of my reading materials throughout the day is shown above. The texts depicted include from left to right, *Leaves of Grass*, by Walt Whitman and the poem, "The Raven" by Edgar Allen Poe are shown as my leisure texts; *Blue Ridge Outdoors*; *Biology* a textbook; "What is Reproductive Justice? How Women of Color Activists Are Redefining the Pro Choice Paradigm", "Feminist Approaches to Border Studies..." and "Consent: Keywords" for my Women and Gender studies class; and finally, *Understanding Rhetoric* is shown for my writing class. Also depicted is the logo for the OneNote app, which is my online reading app of choice for its annotation features. In a way the collage circles around clockwise from top left as my day progresses, ending back up at pleasure reading.]

After about an hour of reading I will get up and take a lap around the shelves of books, wandering a little bit. I may pick up a book and read a page or two and put it back. I like doing this because it lets my thoughts wander a bit, and I can have a break from focusing. I may take my water bottle on this journey to refill it at the water fountain at this point.

Eventually, I wander back to my chair and open another reading or other assignment which I need to get done. I will continue working for another few hours until I feel like I simply cannot put anymore work in. I joyfully pack all of my materials back into my backpack and fly down the stairs back to the crisp autumn of the outside. I feel accomplished because I got so much reading done.

On the way back to my dorm room, I may notice that there is a new issue of *Blue Ridge Outdoors* in the periodical boxes lining the sidewalks. I pick one up and leaf through the pages, reading a few snapshots of other people's adventures, glancing ahead at the sidewalk every few steps.

Several hours later, after I have eaten dinner, done more assignments, and taken a shower, I will crawl into my loft, surrounded by blankets and familiar objects. There I will read some of my books. I may also write something in my journal, or leaf back through older pages filled with blue, purple and black fountain pen ink. The pages are sometimes filled with a cursive scrawl-hinting at calligraphy and sometimes small print letters. Sometimes I will be met by poems and lyrics of other writers, and sometimes my own narratives of days past. I will reach for my phone, already dumbed down to "sleep focus", and make sure that my alarms are set, so that I can be greeted with the task of reading numbers first thing the next morning.