

Recovering The Self

A Journal of Hope and
Healing



[Home](#) [About](#) [Meet the Staff](#) [Advertise with RTS](#) [Book R](#)

[Get Your Copy!](#) [Store](#)

WRITING

My Hero's Journey Through Words

Posted on April 19, 2024 by RTS Editor in Writing · 0 Comments

by Julie Mariouw

I buried words throughout my childhood. I knew it was my only way out. Sometimes I buried words in sentences, but often just in clusters, or even single words. I put them under rugs, in corners, and in the back of closets.

I have spent a long time uncovering these words. Writing swings a searchlight over each scene, slowly revealing what I am meant to find. This does not happen all at once, but rather in layers. I must return to the same scenes many times before collecting enough words to describe.

Because of this, I get to re-live my childhood. I will often find myself in a six-year-old's body, enjoying my surroundings for the very first time. Because when I was originally there, I was not safe. I live through my senses. My imagination soars. The words have created magic.



I'm not sure why I buried the words in such a cryptic fashion. They seem to be in code. Even my characters participate in their unfolding, tapping their fingers in long chains of meaning that I am only now learning to decipher.

One of the first times I saw the words was in an early childhood memory. I am four or five, playing under the piano. I ride on an imaginary friend's shoulders. Chausey is his name. I laugh as he dips and swirls. On one pass I glance at myself in the mirror over the hearth. There, floating around my head, are phrases and sentences, single words too. Even a letter here and there. They swirl around me like the rings of Saturn. I laugh and laugh in delight.

Another time my character told me about her love of words. I saw, while she was speaking, crystalline words inside her body. They were glued together to make complex structures. I knew they were not just words as I understood them, but something from another dimension.

I have had many conversations with characters about words. I am fascinated to hear what they have to say. I may not understand completely, but I make progress each time the searchlight sweeps through.

Once, I heard a character say, "We had to be clever or we would never have gotten away. Look close, we're in the details. Movement matters. We leave tracks." Since then, I've paid close attention to the movements of my characters' bodies. If they repeat a movement and make a pattern, they are leading me to something I need to know.

I have learned, too, to notice what my own body does as I write. Sometimes I find myself imitating a character's movement, and realize later that my body was sending me a message. It's as if the universe has conspired to bring me hidden treasure.

My writing teacher once told me that my work was blessed, that I was like a knight on a quest. I believe she is right. This is my hero's journey.

