

I don't think I've ever looked at the world in quite the same way as everyone else does. As I child, I just went with the flow, never realizing that I was looking at the world in an entirely different way. My parents knew early on that I wasn't like the other kids, but they didn't explain anything to me. After all, they were oddballs themselves. My Dad works in a think-tank for the government. Even I don't really know what he does. My mother is a Lawyer. Why? Who knows? She wanted to be a housewife. My sister joined Mensa on a whim one day - there was absolutely no doubt that she would score high enough to get in. It goes all the way back to my grandparents . . .

And I am considered "the weird one".

The world is a different place for me than for everyone else. Patterns pop out at me. I can tell you when the carpet in the hotel was designed specifically for their hallways. Listening to music in the car, I'll come to the conclusion that the singer was an alcoholic, I can tell you what he drank and when he kicked the habit. Later I come to find out I'm right. My fingertips run along anything with texture. My keyboard was chosen specifically because the keys have the greatest curvature and hug your fingers.

None of this is because I will it. I wasn't concerned about the singer or the carpet. The keyboard gets rubbed like a worry-stone when I'm not writing, so it made sense to get the curviest keys. My brain is like the National Debt: you can just keep feeding it and it never gets fully satisfied.

I keep hold of trivia like a steel trap. Information comes in chunks, workable 3D puzzle pieces, and stays with me, until it meets a partner somewhere in the back there. They gather buddies, and form clubs. Then they come out as a story.

My brain is overly fond of creating: I particularly like to cook, dance, and paint. But I love to write. I wrote my first novel at the age of eight. (Notice that I didn't say it was a good one.) And I have been spending evenings with my computer screen and an open Word document ever since.

I went through other phases, particularly in college. But writing always found me. Again, there I was seeing the world another way, when a class was handed a writing assignment: 15 minutes, write about a bladeless knife without a handle. Others in the honors lit class described it, analyzed it, or tried to figure out just what *it* was. I produced a short story about a dying woman with papers to implicate the mafia hit men who had put her in the hospital. My professor refused to sign my enrollment for the next term if it didn't include his prose poetry class.

I was going to be his latest star, but I didn't want to write poetry, I wanted to produce *novels*. So after several semesters of poetry courses, I pursued my own writing. While I did this I also created, edited, and published an undergraduate psychology journal. I: earned my master's degree in bioscience, spoke in front of the American Psychology Association, apprenticed as a pastry chef, got a patent, and started a dance company.

By winning awards and accomplishing things, people seem to think I am "eccentric", "unique", or "maverick" rather than crazy. Those closest to me know 'crazy' to be a fact. But it's a good crazy.

It shows in my writing style, in the way that I view a story and can fit the whole thing together. I can link tales out of all the things I do, and the things I've done feed reality into the characters. Even while I write this, pieces of information are congealing in the back of my head and sewing together new plots. There's a twenty-year-old assassin hell bent on finding the man who keeps killing her victims, a young woman

whose story is told simultaneously through three different timelines in her life, and a town populated by Mensa IQ inhabitants who can't get their own heads out of their butts. Then there's *The Bobble*, a bible for those aren't sure if they want to believe or not.

The experiences have given me many threads to follow. The poetry classes shaped me, and fed me with the ability to share the odd and happy angles of my life. They have allowed me to put textures on smooth papers, so that it isn't just the relay of the plot, but the true telling of the characters. It's getting crowded in my brain, and the characters are fighting their way out. Lord help them, they all want homes of creamy paper and thick covers under the protection of dust jackets. They should develop a little patience. As I align the proper points of view, one by one, they'll all be set free.