

INSPIRATION FOR ANY WRITER

By John F. Hall

Ernest Hemingway was a war correspondent, a big game hunter, and a bull fighter. He was fearless, but he was scared of failure and afraid of death. His writer's block came from looking at a blank page. In 2006, Stephen King wrote this in The Washington Post: "There may be a stretch of weeks or months when it doesn't come at all; this is called writer's block. Some writer's in the throes of writer's block think their muses have died, but I don't think that happens often; I think what happens is the writers themselves sow the edges of their clearing with poison bait to keep muses away, often without knowing they are doing it."

Muses in Greek and Roman mythology are the nine goddesses, the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne. Three years ago, my niece, Gabrielle "Gabby" Hall was a Christmas guest at my old Antebellum home. I decided to show her Nashville, Tennessee. The first place we went to visit was the Ryman Auditorium. It is also known as the Grand Ole Opry House and Union Gospel Tabernacle. It has wood pews with the capacity to seat 2,362 people. We took the paid tour. I told Gabby a story when I was a 17 year old paratrooper in the 101st Airborne Division. I had no car and little money, but I went to see a Gene Pitney Concert in the convention center. I traveled by Greyhound bus from Fort Campbell and I rented a room at the Nashville YMCA. I was walking by the Ryman and there was a small one-engine fire station next to the auditorium. A fireman was sitting in a chair in front of the station. I was looking up at the three-story auditorium.



I was 17 but looked like I was 15. The fireman, a heavy set, middle age man, asked me this question: "Son, have you ever been to the Grand Ole Opry?" I told him no. I asked him what did it cost because I was about to run out of money. He replied: "Son, you follow me" We went to the back of the fire station, then across the drive to the auditorium. He had a key to a side door. We went inside and down some steps that led back stage. We went on stage and he said: "Find you a seat and enjoy the show." I often wonder about that fireman. Did he once have a son who passed away?

I told the Ryman Auditorium tour guide that I had to leave the tour. It was getting late and I wanted to show Gabby a full scale replica of the Parthenon. Inside the Parthenon is the tallest indoor statue in the United States. The name of the statue is Athena, the Ancient Greek goddess of wisdom, craft, and strategic war. She is also the patron goddess of the city of Athens, Greece and the protector of all heroes. In mythology, she is the daughter and first-born child of Zeus. She is the favorite child of Zeus and carries his armor into battle. In 1990, the 42-foot, plain, white statue was unveiled to the Nashville public. In 2002, the statue was gilded in real gold to more closely resemble the original that was lost in 336 AD. The statue is located in Centennial Park in Nashville. I took a picture of Gabby standing in front of the stature. The pagan goddess has creepy eyes and a giant companion snake. I don't believe in mythology. I'm too old to study journalism to

improve my writing. I believe that Jesus Christ loaned me the talent to write short stories based on my experience and observations.

Ernest Hemingway also said: "I always wrote until I had something done and I always stopped when I knew what was going to happen next. That way I could be sure of going on the next day..." Like Hemingway, I always try to work on a story every day. If I can accomplish one story every week, which is incredible for this old man, than I feel that Christ continues to give me grace upon grace upon grace. That is saying a lot. Like Jesse Stuart, writing has become my life. I admit that, years ago, I had a dry spell, a writer's block that lasted about four months.

Emily Temple wrote an article in 2018 about writer's block. She quoted 25 other writer's opinion about writer's block. I will quote just one opinion. Jhumpa Lahiri, in answering a reader's question for The Times, wrote: "I think 'writer's block' is a natural part of the creative process for almost all writers. There are times when one is bursting with ideas and inspiration and all the necessary components-time, focus, etc.-are in place. But there are other times when one or more of those elements is missing and writing is more difficult as a result. I have written for long enough to accept those patterns, and to understand that blocks are temporary, that eventually, if one sticks to a schedule and tries to write on a regular basis, something will eventually come. I think a lot of what people refer to as 'writer's block' is the period during which ideas gestate in the mind, when a story grows but isn't necessarily being written in sentences on a page. But it's all necessary, in the end. If I am feeling stuck or uninspired, I usually take a break and read. That always gets me going again."

During the past year, I became a prolific writer of non-fiction short stories. I did this to leave stories for my grandchildren to read after I am gone. Also, to give my extended family consisting of Jade, Skyler, Lexie, Trish, Audrey, Mike, and Dr. Butler, a weekly story to read. Some people create their extended family, as I did. I stay connected to my extended family by my stories, and except for Dr. Butler, by text. Some times I'll give them a heads-up that a story is coming their way.

In my stories, I try to find a popular song or hymn to enhance my story. I found a hymn written by Jeremy Camp called "Overcome." I feel that a writer can overcome his limitations and receive inspiration if what he writes gives honor and glory to Christ. These are just a few of Jeremy Camp's lyrics: "Seated above, enthroned in the Father's love, destined to die, poured out for all mankind. God's only son, perfect and spotless one, He never sinned but suffered as if he did. Savior, worthy of honor and glory, worthy of all praise, You over came Jesus, awesome in power forever. Awesome and great is Your name, You over came. Power in hand speaking the Father's plan. You're sending us out, light in this broken land. Savior, of honor and glory, worthy of all our praise, You over came Jesus, awesome in power, forever. Awesome in power and great is Your name, You over came...). In 2 Timothy, Chapter 4, Verse 7 are these words: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith." My inspiration to write comes from Jesus Christ and not from a mythological muse inside the Parthenon in Nashville.

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