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Yes, I Can:

A Summary & Response to “The Myth of the Good Writer”

In the article "The Myth of the Good Writer," the author, Erin Mcnulty, discusses the problems that we can run into if we think that writers are born and not made. She claims, "The solution, of course, is not to retreat by avoiding good writing or shying away from sharing our work. Instead, we should relish these opportunities. We should also change the ways we think and talk about writing itself." Mcnulty also says that often we think good writers are born—natural at it, not like the rest of us. We don't think they struggle. However, she shows us that even well-known writers can feel like imposters, and she gives an example of the famous writer Neil Gaiman being at a party with other famous people and feeling like he had not contributed anything to society. On the other hand, she also points out that many of us often don't like writing because we have bad past experiences, but she says, "even if previous experiences have led you to believe that your writing is not up to par, this does not mean that your writing can never be good, or that you don't have the potential to be successful in a writing course." Overall, her article is meant to encourage us to write and understand that good writing is not done just by people who seem to be natural at it, but also people who struggle and worry about it. The key to getting better, she claims, is not natural talent, but practice.

I agree with Mcnulty; I worry about my writing too. Even after years of schooling and practice, I still have moments where I'm just not sure. However, like Mcnulty I take hope from writers I've seen who also second-guess their writing. I remember in college going to a reading by Susan Twight, a biologist and nature writer from our area. As I watched her read from her shiny, newly-published book, I was shocked when she paused and said, "Oh, I shouldn't have written it that way." It gave me such hope! She showed me that it's never perfect. It's not even about that. It's about getting better at it, and in the meantime sharing your thoughts and ideas with others. So, yes, I do think the idea of a "good writer" is a myth. While some may have different advantages than others that get them there faster, we all can be good writers.

Work Cited

Mcnulty, Erin. “The Myth of the Good Writer.” *Purdue Online Writing Lab*, Accessed 11 Jan. 2022, https://owl.purdue.edu/research/owl_conversations/Essays/The%20Myth%20of%20the%20Good%20Writer.html

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