

Jennifer Nascimento – Writing Samples
jnasnyc@gmail.com • 347-675-2315

An excerpt from a brochure on Afro-Brazilian religion:

Orixás of the Candomblé religion are human-like demigods who each represent the domain of a particular element of Nature. Note that this does not refer to the notion of four basic elements, rather, there are dozens of orixás corresponding to, for example, flora (Oçanhe), fauna (Oxóssi), and even concepts, such as power/morality (Xangô), birth (Ibeji), or sickness/health (Omolu). Each orixá is associated with respective traits, objects, dates and weekdays, foods and events, and is characterized by specific rhythms, chants and dances. Yemanjá, for example, is the orixá of saltwater in all its forms; her domain is the ocean, and she cries a mother's tears for children who reach adulthood and must leave the nest. One legend tells that when her son Oxóssi ran away from home, Yemanjá cried so much that she melted into a river that flowed into the oceans, where she now resides. Each orixá itself has a personality, and an extensive biographical history of myths and legends, but every human is also the "son" or "daughter" of certain orixás, and their influence can be seen in the personality of the individual. You can have your shells read by a Mãe-de-Santo or a Pai-de-Santo (priestess or priest of Candomblé) to determine which orixás oversaw your birth, and rule your mind and body.

A sample of ghostwriting, from a proposal for a biographical book about the founder of a legendary Long Island sea clamming company:

This book will be seen as a work of art, telling the classic American story of a local legend through various modes of expression, including: historical photos and newspaper articles dating over 100 years back, extensive current interviews by the author, and remarkable poems and art created by Robert Doxsee, Jr. himself. The beloved 84-year old is a dynamic and emotional character, and the success of The Doxsee Sea Clam Company of Point Lookout, NY represents his devotion to his lifestyle, his work and his family.

The Doxsee tradition embodies bravery and integrity. Of course the idea of the American sea-faring dynasty conjures up countless charming clichés, but what makes this biography enduring is the subject's creativity, sensitivity and candor. All this from the unique perspective of trusted friend and neighbor, visual artist Jan Auleta.

The biography also makes a broader social and cultural commentary. At a time when humanity's interaction with nature is a topic of heated discussion, the Doxsees are a living symbol of a sustainable, holistic environmental ideology. The life of Robert Doxsee, Jr. is a generational story of commercial success and personal fulfillment, built upon a symbiotic relationship with nature.

A more informal, blogging style:

The middle ground is a MYTH! There are two choices, at any given moment: be with someone, or be alone. There will ALWAYS be sacrifices. Isn't that what they've been telling us all along? Along with gems like Don't Just Settle, and When it's Right, You'll Know. I don't think, that when two people are happy together, that it is a Healthy Relationship, necessarily... not in the sense that they are two people who have resolved their bullshit, any more than you or me. I think it just means that they happen to have compatible needs at the time. I think any two people cause growth in one another. Sometimes by seeing each other, and sometimes by fighting, and quitting each other... every interaction teaches. When the interaction has whatever characteristics are deemed desirable by the community, they will praise you as "a great couple."

I do not mean to drain this of its magic. But Einstein was right. Either you see all the miracles of life, or you see none. So the magic of two living lovers is like the exquisite tension of a harmonious duet. Or a doubles figure skating routine. I'm serious! But it isn't That Love that you will find once you get over your childhood 'issues'... it's right now. What else could make the difference between stickin it out and hanging on too long? The difference is all in whether you want to be with them, or not. As long as you are REAL about what it means to be with them. Not what it could mean, not what it will mean, not what it doesn't mean—but just what it is.

So my words are not advice because, they can't make you happier. But I am here to remind you that there is no rational reason to expect there to be more good times than bad. This is the impossible standard we uphold our lives to day after day that crushes us and makes us feel like failures. We even feel like failures for growing old, and for dying. We stress and struggle over the very *passage* of *time*. Nobody realizes how futile that is? Well I can stand feeling sad, engulfed in loss, or raging anger... but I refuse to feel like a *failure* on top of it all!!! When we say we are trying to be happy, I believe it would help if we allowed for the full range of feelings, without scolding ourselves for losing control.