Prompt:

For this post, please start by writing in response to these questions, then completing the reading, and responding to the second set of questions. You can do this all in one post.

- What is writing—the definitions, ideas, thoughts, expressions, etc.—that you associate with writing?
- What makes writing good to you?
- What type of writer do you see yourself as, and why?
- Create a list of 5-8 key terms you believe define good writing.

Now, read Billy Collins' commencement address, watch the video, "This is Water?", and read the intro to MH Handbook; then, answer these questions:

- What might we learn about writing from each of these texts?
- Are these texts "good" according to the criteria you defined earlier? If so, how? If not, why not?
- What major similarities do you notice across these texts? What differences? How do those similarities and differences affect your classification of each text?
- Do you want to revise your list of key terms based on this reading? Explain what you would revise (or not) and why (not).

Response:

When I think of writing, my first thought is school. Most of the writing I have done has been for school which leads me to my second thought, ugh. Writing for me has always been a struggle because I can never seem to fully express my ideas. Which is exactly the point and definition of writing- to express one's ideas in the form of words. To make writing good, it has to be interesting or relatable. It should be so good that I actually want to read it and show it to other people.

Key Terms
- Understandable
- Engaging
- Relatable
- Knowledgeable
- Inspirational
- Solid

I found myself today engaged in what Billy Collins called the "empire of speed." I rushed to my Psychology class, to rush to finish my notes so I could rush to keep up with the professor's lecture. To then rush back home to start this assignment so I could go out this afternoon. Our world is in fast forward and it is something that has caught the attention of both Billy Collins and David Foster Wallace.

I see it now, the leisure pace of college life that Collins mentioned. Students casually walking, cars waiting unimaginable amounts of time as masses of students stroll across the street, oblivions. At first I disagreed with Collins because I was so engrossed with the typical fast

forward setting my life was accustomed to that the slower college life hadn't even made a crack in my hard shell of go, go, go. Collins made me take a second look at life and it change my perspective. That's what good writing is. I learned that writing has the potential to do incredible things, like change my perspective. Writing does not have to sound mature or have lots of big words to make a point.

        I would have to say that both Collins and Wallace's pieces were: understandable, engaging, relatable, inspirational and solid. Collins piece was more knowledgeable because of all the references than Wallace's. I would not classify the McGraw handbook as any of those elements except for knowledgeable. In addition, I would classify Collins and Wallace's piece as the same because they were so similar. Major similarities that stood out to me were the content and how both authors grabbed the audience's attention in the beginning.

        Lastly, I would not add any words to my key terms list but rather remove knowledgeable. A piece does not have to be knowledgeable to accomplish greatness, which is exactly what Collins and Wallace did.

        The first thing that stands out to me in my wordle is the word knowledgeable. This term was first on my key term list, then after reading the selections I decided to remove it because I did not believe that writing had to be extremely knowledgeable to be great. I then expected to see a lot of little meaningless words like: the, because, and for, but surprisingly only saw one or two. The next thing that stood out to me were all my key terms. It was interesting to see that wordle picked them all out to use as bigger words because it means that I used them more often. At first it surprised me but then I realized that it just reinforces the fact that I explained my reasons for having those terms on my list. The most intriguing conclusion from my wordle is all the words I did use like, accustomed, perspective and engrossed. They are interesting words I do not use in my everyday language but make my writing sound more respectful.

        To making writing good, it has to be understandable. If you can read and comprehend it, then it has to be engaging. If you are not interested, you will not be able to relate to the text. If you can relate to the text, it has the power to inspire you. Finally, if writing inspires you, it has done its job and it is good.