

The Christmas I Became a Writer

By Ebony Pollard

Some gifts fade over time.

The plastic breaks, the batteries die, the novelty wears off. But every now and then, someone gives you something that stays with you for a lifetime, a gift that gently shapes who you become.

I was about eight or nine years old when my grandmother gave me a typewriter for Christmas. Not a toy one, either. A real, clunky, grown-up typewriter.

At the time, I didn't quite understand why she'd given something so serious to such a little kid. But I'd like to think it was because she saw in me the writer I would one day become.

As an avid reader with a growing appetite for storytelling, using that typewriter helped deepen my love affair with words. My mother, a skilled typist, made sure I knew my way around a keyboard early on. I'd sit for hours, pecking out run-on sentences and elaborate stories.

I didn't realize it then, but the typewriter was more than just a gift; it was an invitation to take my writing seriously, even as a child. I still remember the thrill of pressing those keys, the satisfying clickity clack as the words appeared, and a story began to take shape on the page. It was in those moments that I sensed something meaningful unfolding, even if I couldn't name it yet.

I've wondered about that gift a lot over the years. It wasn't exactly the kind of present most people would pick for a little girl still losing baby teeth. But my grandmother, God rest her soul, wasn't the type to buy things just to be cute. She was practical, the kind of woman who believed in giving you something you could actually use.

Maybe she saw how drawn I was to words; my nose was always in a book. Or maybe she just wanted to make sure I had the tools to create my own stories.

That typewriter is long gone now. I don't even remember what happened to it. But I never forgot its influence on my life.

I've spent many years chasing that feeling that typing out a story gives. And truth be told, I still do. Every time I sit down to write, a tiny part of me goes back to that unforgettable Christmas. Back to the little girl with big dreams and a grown-up typewriter, figuring out how to let her words take up space.

It's funny how a simple gift can stay with you long after the wrapping paper is gone. I may not have it anymore, but what that typewriter stirred up in me—the confidence, the determination, the belief that my words mattered—never left.

I believe Granny knew exactly what she was doing that morning.

I hope my writing made her proud.