

Lisa Floading Interviewed by Blessing Uwisike

Interview conducted on Microsoft Teams

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Lisa Floading is a Milwaukee-area educator, writer, and typewriter collector, and the Coordinator of Tutoring Services at the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design. In this interview, she discusses her collection of 63 mid-century portable typewriters, including models in her collection like those used by writers William Faulkner and Sylvia Plath. She discusses the benefits of typewriting for curbing perfectionism in creative writers, and about the necessity and pleasure of basic typewriter repair, including why you should never, ever try to disassemble a Swedish typewriter. She is interviewed by Blessing Uwisike, a UWM graduate student who also has long experience with manual typewriters.

Note: Recording reference times are approximate

Blessing Uwisike 0:09

I'd really like to hear about your experience, what's your earliest memory of using the typewriter?

How old were you and what was the experience like?

I would like you to introduce yourself, your name before you answer the questions.

Lisa Floading 0:29

Sure.

My name is Lisa Floading and I'm from Milwaukee, WI.

I'm 46 years old.

My earliest memories of using a typewriter were at home.

My parents were landlords and they would often be typing up their forms for their tenants, rental agreements and such, on our giant Brother typewriter.

And it was an electric typewriter.

And I remember it.

My mom typing very quickly and my earliest memories are of the hum of that very large machine.

It was very imposing. Once I got into high school that's how I typed my papers, and I was

one of the last classes to use IBM Selectric typewriters to learn typewriting in high school, and after that semester they moved to a computer-based keyboarding instruction.

So my earliest memories go back to hearing really sensory details with the typewriter, seeing that it was a practical item, and hearing my brothers type papers when they were in college on it as well.

This would have been the, you know, mid 80s.

And I remember typewriters being something that you would see in someone's house, like people had them, or offices had them.

And in my earliest jobs, I remember offices still had the manual large electric typewriter, and that would have been again the early 90s.

Blessing Uwisike 2:15

That's really interesting because when I learned how to type, this was all.

First of all, I'm an international student from Nigeria and I learned how to type in secondary school and it's interesting that I just got to see the electric typewriter only two weeks ago during an event we had here in school.

So back at home we have the manual one where you had to put the ink and use your hand to move it and when you're done with class, you're stained with ink all over your body, red and black ink and all that.

Lisa Floading 2:43

Yes.

Absolutely.

Blessing Uwisike 2:52

That that was my experience using it.

So it's quite interesting that your first experience was your mom using the electric typewriter to write that. Really.

Lisa Floading 3:04

It was.

Blessing Uwisike 3:07

Yeah.

So can you say more about the one you used and your experience using it?

How did you learn to use?

Was it through watching your mom or did you have specific sessions slated for you?

And yeah, I would like to know how you used it.
What model was it and what features did it have?

Lisa Floading 3:28

Sure.

So the model I'm just going to see if I can check this out.

This would have been, I believe, a...I believe it was something in the Deluxe 760 variety that my that my parents had.

I remember using that quite a bit to write papers my senior year of high school, which was the mid 90s.

I got a word processor for Christmas and that was kind of like the hybrid of computer and typewriters.

So it was electric.

It saved on 3 1/2 inch floppy disks.

Which of course, nobody really uses those or knows of those today, but it had a tiny little screen.

That was kind of like the early Game Boy Color green and you could see maybe 20 lines of text on there and you could delete before you would type and before you would print, I should say.

And so that was kind of the best of both worlds for me.

So when I went to college, I was using that, but I brought with me a Royal Arrow from 1946 that I found in a Goodwill store. And I was kind of a kooky artsy teenager, so I had this thing in my dorm room and would sometimes type things on that as well.

So I didn't learn to type on a manual typewriter, but I learned to love manual typewriters.

That was the first one that I ever had, and I actually still have it to this day. I have a pretty large collection of mid-century modern typewriters, but I'm sure we'll get into that a little bit.

My experience with typewriting now is really harkening back to what it values about the experience of writing; it values, putting things down on the page, not having that perfectionistic streak in erasing, deleting, cutting and pasting and sort of always nudging it.

It just kind of allows you to put things down and it allows me to generate a lot more text than if I was typing on a computer screen.

I find the computer screen somewhat paralyzing.

Blessing Uwisike 5:57

I find this very revelational, you saying that you prefer to use the typewriter than typing

on a computer screen?

And since you mention it already I would really like to hear about your collection and how you started collecting it, what fascinated you about the typewriter, then?

You have the manual typewriters and you're interested. Basically, how it was grown and how you just came about to having this collection.

Lisa Floading 6:30

Sure.

So I was an English nerdy kid and I was really fascinated by writers who use typewriters. So the first typewriter that I got I was this was pre-internet so I was like well probably someone wrote high school papers on this.

But I can imagine that writers, you know 35-40 years ago again—this would have been the 90s looking back 35-40 years from then—it was probably a more standard device.

So I had that one typewriter for about maybe 15 years, and as I said, I still have it.

I'll tell you what it what it is used for in a few minutes. And I came across another typewriter in an antique store and I like to say that that's where the you know, when you go from one to two because you don't really need one.

So when you have two, it's kind of like: Well, now I guess I'm a collector! And two...

Blessing Uwisike 7:29

Exactly!

Lisa Floading 7:29

And it kept growing...and my other joke is I like to say that they're kind of like Pokémon, got to catch them all, understand a little bit about their, their mechanics, where they were made. It's an interesting subculture, and because a lot of the folks who knew them intimately to repair them have passed on, it's really something that, ironically enough, technology has allowed us to keep typewriters alive.

And by that I mean as I started collecting typewriters.

And I'm up to like 63 of them now.

Blessing Uwisike 8:04

What??

Lisa Floading 8:10

And I know it's kind of disturbing.

As I as I would collect them to learn how to how to fix them, I would watch YouTube videos and really and truly there's somebody on YouTube that can teach you to do something if you want to learn.

And for me, it is delightful old men with GoPro cameras strapped to their foreheads as they repair old typewriters.

And I learned a bit about the mechanics by reading about them, and I felt really empowered because if my computer breaks, I'm not fixing that, right.

My husband's an IT guy.

He might be able to fix it. But if a mechanical object isn't working, there's a reason why that key isn't going down.

There's a reason why it's not pressing its ink into the page. So learning to do that really became part of the passion for them.

With any kind of collection, you have to decide what it is that you love about them, and for me, I love portable typewriters and I love that they can be, you know, obviously brought to different places and used so the majority of my collections save three or four, I think, are all portable typewriters that are from the mid-century.

So the 1950s and the 1960s, I like to think of that as the Golden Age of typewriters.

Quite a few American machines, followed by number of really good German machines and a few Swedish machines and a few Italian machines. And they all have slightly different engineering elements and, you know, working at an art school as I do, appreciating the value of design with different typewriters, has really been a fascinating discovery since I started working at MIAD [Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design], appreciating how some of the lines correspond to their place in history and recognizing, for example, like an Art Deco style in the 1920s and 30s versus something that might look a little bit more curvier a little bit.

You know more brightly colored in the in the late 50s and 60s. I often compare using typewriters to folks that collect and restore classic automobiles because it's kind of the same philosophy that this is an object that was well made for its time and is still practical if you can take the time to restore it or, you know, find something that's in good condition.

Blessing Uwisike 10:33

Oh I have a big smile on my face just listening to you talk about the typewriters and what you said about when you bite through it. Collection reminds me of how I started buying vintage wedding dresses, 1950s, nineteen 30s old wedding dresses and I was like, I would just buy this from Goodwill.

Lisa Floading 10:48

Oh. I love that yes.

Blessing Uwisike 10:56

But I bought 2, 3, 4 and now there's not even space in my closet anymore.

And I'm like when I moved to a bigger space...Maybe I don't have enough room. So it's nice to hear you.

Lisa Floading 11:05

I love that.

I love that.

And again appreciating that that object was so important to someone you know the history is part of the object and you know certainly with a wedding dress.

Blessing Uwisike 11:12

Yes.

Lisa Floading 11:20

You know, there's something very human about it, you know, whether it's, you know, whatever the shape of the body, you know, whatever.

Blessing Uwisike 11:24

Exactly, exactly.

Lisa Floading 11:26

And I think about, you know, people that would have used these typewriters, and I don't know their stories.

Whenever I pick one up, I try and get a little bit of information from the person that is selling it to me or giving it to me, and sometimes all they know is well, this was my grandfather's or I once picked up a beautiful typewriter from a woman who was cleaning out her husband's closet.

He had passed on and she said I never knew all these years that he had one of these. And she was like, I don't know what the story is, and so that was kind of mysterious.

Blessing Uwisike 12:00

I know.

Lisa Floading 12:02

And so, you know, thinking of it as an object that is meaningful for both its historical value and its practical value really makes typewriters something that I enjoy.

And I really try to bring that to other people.

When I was a high school English teacher, I would have a few in my classroom, and although you know they usually would collect the stray four-letter word (because that's funny!) and, a lot of students were fascinated by the mechanics, and I had students that were, you know, tech ed, auto repair folks that were really fascinated by the innards of the machine.

Blessing Uwisike 12:33

Yeah.

Lisa Floading 12:44

And then I had other folks that were writerly types that wanted to write poetry on them, or I had students that would say, can I, you know, with the short answer type of quiz or something on paper?

Can I use a typewriter for it?

And I was like, no, because it got it one typewriter in a room is going to be distracting if everybody in the room wants to use one.

But that's where I started putting together creative writing classes with typewriters.

And so now I teach creative writing typewriting at The Bindery in Bay View, and 18 to 23 people show up, and I show up with enough typewriters for the whole group, and we do some creative writing, and it really just frees us from the idea that what you're typing has to be perfect. And there's something really special about taking the words that you put to the page away with you.

Blessing Uwisike 13:24

Wow.

Lisa Floading 13:39

And that reminds me of one of my favorite moments.

Years ago I had a typewriter in my classroom and a student came up and pressed a button on it.

And then went, "Oh, it prints!"

And I said, well, yeah, that's really all it does because this was a student that had never

seen an object create words on the page except for a printer.

So thinking of the typewriter as this magical kind of object really got me to think about it that way too.

He's like, "Yes, it prints."

Blessing Uwisike 14:11

Yeah.

I mean, I think that's one thing that's going to stick in my mind after this conversation.

Like you're printing directly on the typewriter.

Really interesting.

Yeah, you said something about the practicality of using a typewriter, and I just want to ask, I'm curious how this has influenced your productivity or affected how you work.

Because I would like to hear a little more about the creative writing class as well.

If some of the enthusiasm or values you share concerning the typewriter has also replicated, or you see it in your students as well.

Lisa Floading 14:42

Sure.

So the basic idea is that a typewriter is anything but practical today, right?

Because as we were talking about before, you have the ink on your fingers.

You know, there are occasionally moments where two of the type bars will bunch up and jam together, and you have to take your finger and push them back.

And maybe get ink on your fingers.

Then it's a more laborious process to put words on the page, but the reality is that it's actually more efficient, I believe, for creative writing. And so obviously you know, at work I have a laptop and multiple screens and I of course have computers at home.

But if I want to, I say really right?

Something if I write poetry and dabble in essays.

If I want to really write something, that's where the typewriter comes in, and so it influences me to not have the tabs open both metaphorically and literally, right.

So literally, if I'm writing, I find it very difficult not to check email on the computer, and obviously on a typewriter there are no tabs.

So you are just with the writing and you're very present as you're in that process.

So in terms of what that's been valuable for—perfectionistic tendencies. It's been extremely helpful for and giving students the opportunity to see what it looks like to just put words down on the page and recognize that maybe the book that we're reading might have been penned on a on a typewriter, and writers who pen books today on typewriters obviously have that technology piece come in later.

So they use like scanning or you know some sort of, you know, electronic upload of that document in order to do the heavy revision that happens with writing.

But to get your initial ideas down, as Annie Lamott calls the shitty first draft to get that down on paper, it's very difficult for many people to accept that it's going to be humbled that it's going to be just the start of your ideas.

And so I find it as kind of a cure for, for perfectionism with creative writing.

And you know, certainly for many years it was, it was the way that we wrote.

But in talking to people who had to write their academic papers on typewriters, many of them say how stressful it was.

Because if you made a mistake, you had to go back and, you know, use, you know, the white out strips or, you know, use some kind of product to make it look right.

And so obviously computers have the beauty side down to writing, but I think that the best writing starts really messy and you can see that on the page.

Blessing Uwisike 18:10

Thank you for saying that because sometimes I definitely do not have it typed right out, but I write on a paper or a book, first of all to just have all my thoughts out.

Lisa Floading 18:12

Yes.

Blessing Uwisike 18:23

Then before I start outlining on my laptop and you're right as well as we speak, I have over 100 tabs open on three different tab groups on my laptop and so I completely understand what you're saying about having no tabs and just being able to write creatively and I think it's very rewarding because people can go back to see, oh, this was my first thoughts and maybe if my writing is not as bad as they think it is? And it's something they would always cherish.

Lisa Floading 18:47

Yes.

Absolutely.

Blessing Uwisike 18:52

Thank you so much for sharing that I'm just curious.

Have you had any challenges?

Umm, I want to hear about this story.
Do you have this typewriter in your house?

Lisa Floading 19:03

Yeah, I do.

Blessing Uwisike 19:04

How do you store them?
How do you maintain them?

Lisa Floading 19:08

So it's hard to believe, but they are displayed artfully.
There are twelve of them in...we have a library den, so it's, you know, wrap around bookshelves and big comfy chairs.
And I have what was originally—it's a mission style—it's actually a stereo holder which, you know, we don't have one of those anymore, so it's about the perfect size to hold six type writers.
So I have six of them displayed there and then I have six of them in their cases and so the really beautiful cases, the typewriters are inside of them in a short pile.
So those live in my house on the main floor.
The rest of the collection is actually in a room upstairs that is called the typewriter room.
Of course, right? We do repairs, and it's where I have...it's kind of beautiful mess up there of just typewriters, stuff.
And if I need to clean something for someone or refresh a machine, that's where I go with it and all my, all my tools and all of my cleaning supplies are up there and I can open a window which is very important because some of the cleaning supplies can be kind of kind of noxious.
Um, but yeah, they're all along the walls and there it would definitely looks horrifying to someone who doesn't know that that's my sideline and my passion.
You know, what are all these?
These strange boxes piled up in there? But the reality is that for many years I was bringing them to my classroom.
And so I had, you know, I think I at the most I had a dozen in the classroom.
And when I left the K12 classroom and moved to a smaller office and student services, I do have three here.

Lisa Floading 20:55

One is for use and then the other two are actually displayed on the wall as art, as the case may be.

Blessing Uwisike 21:02

That that is amazing.

I don't know if you can, if you would mind sharing pictures.

That would be really good if you have...

Lisa Floading 21:10

Ohh sure.

Blessing Uwisike 21:11

Yes, yes, thank you.

I'm actually itching to see because the description was very graphic, so I'm like I need to see what this looks like.

Lisa Floading 21:14

Oh, happy to.

We need to see this right.

You're like, I don't know if I buy that this looks that artful, but it does.

No, I would love to.

I definitely have pictures and I try to rearrange so that I'm using them.

I mean that would be the next logical question, right?

Like why in earthly hell do you have this many typewriters?

And I mean like any collection it becomes difficult to say no and when people know that you collect something, they often will seek you out.

And typewriters, especially, you know the kind of come in a case people want to get those out of their attic out of their garage and of their basement.

And I usually say no to anything that says like a standard like a large desktop.

You know those big monster ones?

They're lovely.

It's not my, not my collecting interest, and they truly do take up a lot of space. But in terms of having all of those, I really do try to use different ones every day.

And I tried to type every single day, even if it's something really day-to-day.

Kind of quotidian, and you know, lists of grocery items or I might type up, you know, things that I that I need to say the next time I talk to my doctor or, you know, whatever it might be on the like everyday aspect of it.

I'm in the process of typing up recipes from books and from handwritten notes that I have from relatives.

You know something to put together there and I decided to do it on a typewriter because that's an easy way to just sit down and work on it.

It doesn't feel like I'm doing work.

It feels like I'm doing play when I do things on a typewriter and I try to do some creative writing every day, not always to finish, and that's important to remember as well.

It's not always a task, that is that is bounded.

Sometimes it's like I've begun something and I have that piece of paper.

I can come back to and I can write on it and I can continue to type on it if I put it back in the machine. But truly I do have probably about twenty-five of them that are that are just for bringing to events, the QWERTYFest, for example, or to my creative writing workshops.

And you know, sometimes people contact me because they would like to buy one and so I'm like, yeah. I definitely have some that I'm that I'm in the process of, you know, not using what I what I am teaching.

So the ones that maybe aren't on the A-Team? I tend to give those a little bit of attention as sales items.

Blessing Uwisike 24:04

OK, that is.

I don't know, like every response you give.

I don't like.

Wow, really?

It's so fascinating.

Really.

Yeah.

So in all of this, what challenges have you experienced with your collection with your, with using it and maybe with teaching in the classroom with it in different spaces?

Have there been any challenges or things in which all maybe you wish was different in your use of the typewriter?

Lisa Floading 24:37

Sure.

I would say the biggest challenge is the space in the house for them and justifying their acquisition.

My husband is extraordinarily tolerant of this collection and he is himself a kind of mechanical, mechanically minded person.

So he gets it.

Maybe not to the tune of 60 some machines, but he's very tolerant.

The other challenge I think is just the physical movement of them and you know packing twenty-two typewriters in a Chevy Equinox is not an easy thing to do, because you don't want them sliding around.

And you know, depending on where you're driving, if the road is very bumpy, older machines can get slightly out of alignment.

So again, that mechanical object can be, you know, damaged, not necessarily, you know, in a way that makes it difficult to use, but it's a challenge to think about.

Like I have to watch out for these machines in there and then I have to physically move all of them, but I like to say that that's a labor of love and the hauling them about is not too terrible.

The only other challenge that I would have is just not having enough, well, time because I'm a dabbler.

I would love to be able to spend more time with them, but be able to do more in terms of repairs.

I would say my knowledge of repairs is confined to American machines.

They tend to be pretty easy to get into the guts and they tend to be pretty straightforward. Once you start moving into things that are designed by Germans, Italians, Swedish, these are beautifully engineered, one might even say over-engineered objects. You know, you really don't wanna take anything apart that's Swedish, because I've learned that lesson the hard way.

There's ball bearings where you don't expect there to be ball bearings, and then you have ball bearings all over your floor.

But as a challenge, you know it's learning that hands on kind of kind of mentality and not being afraid to take something apart.

I think that's something that has been really helpful for me, that if I take something apart, I can learn to put it back together.

I can do it in a way that's responsible.

I can keep track of it.

I often take pictures when I take machines apart step by step, what's happening.

Because though it seems incredibly logical when you're unscrewing something, when you're putting it back, it doesn't always feel that way.

So keeping track of things that way.

But yeah, those are really the only challenges that I find and just justifying the acquisition of them and justifying the ownership.

And by that I mean using them because I can't think of anything more sad than a working typewriter sitting in a case of a collector that doesn't use it.

And to that I say they should absolutely be out there.

Fingers should be on those keys and ribbons should be inky and they should be at the ready. Because though they are collectible objects and though they are antiques, they are also still usable.

And so, so letting them, I mean, not to anthropomorphize them too much, but, you know, letting them be of use.

And so a challenge for me is justifying that.

So that's why I teach the classes.

That's why I've given typewriters out to students here at my head where they're fascinated by, you know, using printed text from a typewriter and their artwork. And great, let me let me bring you one; keep it as long as you like and bring it back.

So just being able to access them I think is important.

Going to type-ins. Bayview Library is a place where I've gone to type-ins, and you know, various people show up with various machines.

And the idea is not for us to use them, but for patrons to come into the room.

And usually people hear the click-clack and are just fascinated and they want to come in and: "here, try, use, touch!"

When I was at Zinefest, I had five machines there and people would look over and say, oh, that's really cool.

Can we touch them?

Yes, brought lots of paper.

Please use them and just getting people to appreciate that they're very different from what you're used to.

But if you're a writerly type, they're really not that different at all.

And why there's something incredibly cathartic about mashing away on those keys in a way that laptop typing for me has never has never felt like.

And I occasionally go to coffee shops with them and annoy people.

Which is, which is fun.

I mean it's a mixed bag.

You know, sometimes people will come by and be like, "Are you really using that?"

And other people will share their own experiences with when my parents had a typewriter like that or I had a typewriter like that.

And you know, you do get a fair amount of dirty looks, especially if it's a quieter place.

But I tend to choose louder coffee shops and places where the din is welcoming to that sound.

Blessing Uwisike 29:51

Yeah, that's wonderful.

I mean, I remember just I think two weeks ago we had a [inaudible] where we just put typewriters at the entrance of the library and student came to type.

It was amazing.

And there were two students that stood out.

One of them was so excited.

It was like, wow.

And were like oh if you type you even get to compete in this raffle draw. Like he doesn't even need the raffle draw.

He's just so excited to get his hands on the typewriter and just click-clack away.

It was quite interesting to see the excitement.

Lisa Floading 30:24

Umm yeah, absolutely.

Blessing Uwisike 30:28

Yes and yes.

So my last question is just do you know what you said about teaching students about typewriting...and how did your current student, when you introduce it to every new set of students, how do they receive it?

Do you think there are specific skills that that are lacking today that people who use typewriters have mastered and what is your own experience as well in this space is when you teach typewriting to today?

Lisa Floading 31:04

Umm, sure.

So couple different ways I could look at that.

When I brought typewriters to school, I had the but I honor of being able to teach creative writing.

So it was kind of a natural thing and being known as kind of the kooky teacher with the typewriter is delightful.

And sometimes I would just come around during class when we had work time and students were putting some ideas together and I'd be like, "Want to use a typewriter?"

And if they were offered, they would be like, yeah, I think I wanna try that.

But they wouldn't necessarily go and procure one. That started to grow then and there were, you know, students that had their favorite machine that they would go and grab at the beginning of class and use.

So that was a lot of fun in terms of skills.

I think that I mentioned before the idea of not having the distractions.

I think that having the willingness to go into that, that flow state of being focused on your writing and stopping looking over what you've written, you know not scrolling up, but just looking at the physical page or the pages that you've created so far and continuing that. I think that's a skill that that everyone gets better at the more they do it. And so I always think about when I'm writing on the typewriter that it's not like I'm used to, like I have to sort of put on a different persona then and focus on the words that are that are coming to mind.

There's also a, you know, a physicality of removing the just constant typing, and you have to return the carriage, unless you're, you know, Jack Kerouac and you have a giant ream of, you know, of paper that you just type on, like a giant toilet paper roll. You have to stop and put more paper in. You know, so like there is that kind of natural pausing in the process.

So that's certainly part of it.

And the reality is that when I teach these classes, I have to remember the curse of knowledge.

Meaning like I know how that machine operates and I know how you have to press the keys to get them to mark the paper.

It's a lot harder than you know, physically more pressure than a laptop.

And so I have now started beginning with, you know, just kind of the basic concept of like you are pressing a key, a button, and mechanically a spring, a type bar is, you know, hitting the paper.

And so you have to give it enough pressure to do that.

If you're a very good touch typist with all ten of your fingers, you have to be okay with using, for example, just four fingers or two fingers to start, because it's physically kind of demanding. And so that that skill, the physical demanding part of typing—I always remind students that to be an excellent touch typist, there was actually a lot of ergonomic detail involved. Chairs were a certain height, you know, typing stands for a certain height, so that you weren't developing carpal tunnel syndrome and you were, you know, comfortable with what you were you were doing on that machine.

When you think about how we use laptops today on couches and on beds and, you know, sort of, as I'm sitting with incredibly terrible posture in this chair right now, being visible, I think about how far we've come from that type of writing.

And in some ways, that's very good, right?

Like you can write anywhere with a laptop, you can send it anywhere you have the immediacy of that. But there's a different kind of immediacy when you use a typewriter, and that immediacy, I think, is much more sensory and much more, I would say, authentic.

So yeah, I would say those are some of the challenges that are just inherent to the object being used for its purpose today, but also just the object being used. Writing is hard, writing is a lot of work.

And if you're adding a physical component to it, umm it, it can be more challenging. So it's sort of like they say that, you know, boundaries can create a kind of creativity. You know, you give yourself boundaries, you have to work within those boundaries. And I think of how the typewriter in many ways is a boundary right, like it's a physical boundary and it's a way you have to do this.

You really can't lay on the couch and type on your typewriter.

You have to be sitting somewhere on a hard surface.

You have to have the angle of your hands such that you know the slope of the of the keys isn't going to make your hand cramp up.

So once you a sort of accommodate those physical needs, it can create a real authenticity and a real immediacy with writing that I think I've lost the ability to do on a computer screen.

It feels like I'm writing a paper for a class, or it feels like I'm doing something like an email.

You know which these are all important forms of communication and important types of writing.

But if I want to put something down that I want to come back to and read and feel something, it has to be the right environment.

And for me, that's the typewriter.

Blessing Uwisike 36:32

That is so amazing.

And as you were speaking, I was thinking about how the typewriter forces one to be disciplined in ways that the laptop and computers today do not.

Lisa Floading 36:43

Beautifully put, yes, absolutely.

Absolutely, yeah.

Blessing Uwisike 36:47

Yeah.

Yes, that's wonderful.

Yeah.

So I just, I'm just curious what's the oldest model and what year?

I don't know if you remember everything for all your all the time frames in your collection.

Lisa Floading 37:08

My oldest is a 1938 Royal Stamp Standard and that is the same machine. Not literally the same machine, but the same model that William Faulkner wrote *The Sound and the Fury* on.

Blessing Uwisike 37:25

Woah

Lisa Floading 37:25

And I have a collection of typewriters that I sought out the model because of the writer who used it.

So I have a Hermes 3000 and a Silent Super by Smith Corona...those are both machines...and a Lettera 22, now that I think about it... those are all machines that at some point in her writing career, Sylvia Plath used.

And so just, you know, having those machines be a reminder of the writer that would have used them and put their ideas to paper.

But yeah, 1938 Royal Standard with a matching advertisement from a I believe it was a *Life* magazine.

It's the original ad and it is to our eyes today, just horrifically, you know, kind of retrograde because it's like, "Ohh, every girl wants one of these!"

So I have that framed above the machine in my library.

I'll take a picture of that and send it to you too.

So you can see it.

Blessing Uwisike 38:28

Thank you.

But yes, very so amazing.

I'm reading a book, a biography of Sylvia Plath, and it's so interesting that the author actually talked about her use of the typewriter and.

Lisa Floading 38:40

Yes, absolutely.

Was it *Red Comet*? Is that the one?

Blessing Uwisike 38:43

Yes, yes, yes, yes.

Lisa Floading 38:44

Yep, Yep. It's.

Yeah, it's brilliant.

I'm actually in the process right now of reading the letters that were just published in the last couple of years.

It's two volumes.

Each volume is something like 1000 pages and so I can't just read the letters.

I have to have the letters out and the *Red Comet* biography and also the journals and a copy of the poetry because I find myself reading a letter and then being like, you know what? Actually I know a bit more about this and then going to one of the other books.

It's a really delightful, immersive little process for no one other than myself. I just look kind of crazy with, you know, five books open every once in a while.

It's not an everyday thing.

You dig into the letters.

Blessing Uwisike 39:25

Yeah, that's amazing.

And maybe I'm just going to do what you're doing to.

I mean, during the summer break, maybe I will... and that book actually is, I don't know it.

I feel like that's the best sophisticated work I've read, because even before, I'd never heard about Sylvia Plath before then, but I saw that...become like, who is this person?

And I even read it from the very first page, the author's notes, and all of that amazing work. Really.

So it's nice to hear that you have similar typewriter to what she used at the time.

Lisa Floading 40:00

OK, you're so welcome.

Blessing Uwisike 40:00

Thank you.

Thank you so much, Miss Lisa Floading.

I am grateful for your time.

I appreciate your efforts and thank you for keeping the time.
Thank you.

Lisa Floading 41:16

You're so welcome.

Take care.

Blessing Uwisike 41:18

You too, ma'am. Have a wonderful night's rest.

Lisa Floading 41:20

You too.

Blessing Uwisike 41:21

Bye. Alright.

Lisa Floading 41:21

Bye bye.