

Picturing Literate Activity: Lights, Words, Writing after Dark

Rachel Gramer

What does it look like when you're writing after dark? Rachel Gramer shares her after-dark writing space full of lights and words that each have their own stories to share, too.



Figure 1: My desk in the living room as my writing space after dark.

I took this picture a while ago when I was working on co-writing a research article for publication. Specifically, on my screen in this moment are a Google Doc window where we revised our writing together and a Finder window on my Mac laptop where I was working with images for the article: selecting, cropping, renaming, and placing them in our collaborative text. Looking at it a few months later, I notice a couple of things about my literate activity after dark.

I add a lot of soft lights whenever I'm writing after dark, and it shows. There's a lovely little lamp on my desk (which just broke last week), the light of the screen, the reflection of another lamp in the background (IKEA from when I lived in Michigan, going strong), the reflection of the TV (probably watching "CSI" and thinking about trips to Las Vegas), and even the light from the church sign across the street.

I also have a lot of words around me at my desk. I have an inspirational quote set in a little gold and white striped box (from Target); a Louisville, KY, coaster (from a place I've lived, loved, and miss); an Effin Birds daily calendar offering a sarcastic swearing bird image; and my work calendar/planner—all in addition to what's on my screen.

Not pictured: My little doggo Benson, just out of frame, next to my desk on the floor in his doggo bed whenever I'm writing. While I'm writing after dark, he's waiting for bedtime.



Dr. Rachel Gramer will tell you she doesn't usually write after dark, but that's when she's writing this PLA narrative. So she has another story about writing to interrogate. Right now, she's recovering from COVID (also after dark), and in 2023 she's also committed to fully enjoying her dog Benson.