Learning how to fix your house can also help you fix your own writing without even thinking about it. Hammering your walls too hard can make them fall down or can help you see what needs attention, but not hammering at all won’t ever let you see what your walls have behind them. “*The line of words is a hammer. You hammer against the walls of your house. You tap the walls, lightly, everywhere. After giving many years’ attention to these things, you know what to listen for. Some of the walls; they have to stay, or everything will fall down. Other walls can go with impunity; you can hear the difference. Unfortunately, it is often a bearing wall that has to go. It cannot be helped. There is only one solution, which appalls you, but there it is. Knock it out.”* (The Writing Life by Annie Dillard. Pg.4)

My whole life I was told to keep writing five paragraph essays, these essays were meant to be for my teacher’s enjoinment, rather than mine. I would always have to be pleasing them with my writing in order to get a good grade; it meant that I would have to really know their taste and perspective, “my walls,” in order for me to write a good paper for them. This year though I found something different on my walls. I found out that my strongest points are my own tastes and thoughts, my bearing walls and actually these walls are for me. To please me and express what I really want and have to say. Without these walls my writing wouldn’t mean anything or I would probably have stopped writing at all. Hammering my walls can help me see which walls are strong, which ones to keep, and which ones will fall down if I don’t work on them. In this metaphor the house is the whole essay, the walls are my essays structure, the bearing walls are my topic sentences and walls that fall down are the paragraphs that don’t have support, hammering will then be the editing process. I had to be a college student to see that deep inside I’m a good writer, and even after bad writing habits I can twist my writing skills to my own benefit. Pleasing my teachers is part of my past, now is just history, today I write for myself.

This metaphor really makes me think about my whole writing life. During my k-12 education I learned how to write basic essays and with many of them I couldn’t even express what I wanted to say. I would write and at the end I didn’t even know what the point of the paper was, I was always scared to hammer my walls and use them to my benefit. I would not want to see any of my walls fall down, so the only thing I could do was not even touch them, staying away from them though wasn’t the brightest idea because it made me fall behind. My senior year, I already knew which walls to touch and use with my writing and at the same time it would get me a good grade. This new school year was different, at the beginning of the quarter, Ginger taught me to hammer other walls, and knock them to see what was there, or what was really holding them for me.

When I read this metaphor it just really hit me and I thought of myself as a writer, I thought of how I used to write and I would just be trapped within my walls and always within the same boundaries. I was always scared to explore new writing techniques and to write something that would actually mean something to me or would reflect who I am. The first time I wrote for this class was answering the question if I liked to write and I remember saying that I did, but only letters because they don’t have to be formal. Today I can say that I feel a little more confident about writing a paper, but I still need to keep working on it. I need to keep checking my walls and I know what to listen for, I know what I should look for in order to become a better writer. I now have the ability to see I need to work on: my wording, sentence level, expanding my ideas and even the essay format.

It’s important to know how to hammer my walls in order to become a good writer, I know that it is not an easy task but once you do it once it will only keep getting easier or more doable. For example the second essay I wrote was about my family, and I knew that it was very important to me because I was writing about my grandpa, but I had to show the rest of the world what it meant to me. I was more enthusiastic about it and I did a good job, it was an essay that really makes me realize I was writing for me and not for the teacher or any other reader. While I was writing it I felt comfortable, happy and even proud. It’s been two quarters since I’ve been trying to improve and get better with the hammering of my walls with my writing, and I’ve learned a lot, but certainly not enough. It is just the beginning of a new writing journey, a better one, and more professional. I know that these new techniques will stay with me for the rest of my life, so it’s good to learn and keep improving every day and every time I write a paper, in fact I’m doing it right now. It’s so much that I’ve learned and I never realized it until now that I’m thinking about it.

Improvement is what makes me see I am learning and actually being educated. How I see improvement is on my essays feedback, at the beginning I used to get a lot more comments and they weren’t necessary negative but they were more meaningful and were major parts of my essays, now I get feedback on some words, maybe an idea but not a big deal. I know that I still have a lot to work on, that I am not the best writer but I can see that I’ve moved forward and I see big changes on my writing. I still have to work on my exordium. Hooking up the reader to my writing its quite hard for me, sometimes I feel like what I write calls my attention and sounds interesting but that is because it’s a piece that belongs to me, and I’m interested on the subject, trying to guess what my reader is interested on is quite a big task.

I promise I’m not lying to you ginger, and plus if I were lying I would actually be lying to myself and fooling my own brain. I did get to learn a lot from this class, not only for my writing but about college and life in general. In fact for this essay I could of try to brainwash you and try to guess what you want to read or hear from your students, but I didn’t. I wanted to be honest and really show what I got from this extended course. I know I have to keep practicing and maybe do free writing every now and then, read articles to get my vocabulary stringer and always stay open to different advice and opinions that will improve my writing.

Hammering sounds like something that needs a lot of energy and of course strength, that’s exactly how I see my writing now. I have to put energy to it, I have to be strong about it and I have to look for my weak walls and my bearing walls. Once I find my bearing walls I can hold on to them and make them useful for me and my writing. They are like the roots to my writing and from them something good can grow. Next time you’re working on your house try to relate the process to your own writing.