From Keri Smith’s *Finish This Book*

Please read through the beginning sections of this book, “Instructions” through “Secret Intelligence Training”, especially the “The Story.” We will spend most of our time working through some of the exercises in “Documenting and Observation Methods” and beyond, but I see the exercises in the first sections as ways to help to engage parts of your brain that we often let go dormant. I urge you to have fun with these exercises and see if you can complete them over the course of the semester.

This book is designed as a detective story in which the reader—a.k.a. you—has to solve the “mystery” of an abandoned “Instruction Manuel.” In “The Story” Smith says, that she was headed home after a day in the library with her head “filled with images from the book I had been reading” when she comes across scattered papers. She then poses the challenge that *you* must become a sleuth and figure out the mystery of the book. In “Becoming a Sleuth” she says, “Sleuths are required to notice, observe, and make sense of the world around them—all traits that will help you solve the mystery of this book.”

I want you to think of your blog and course project as the “mystery” you are solving. You are the sleuth who must sort through all the information you have been gathering over the course of your time here at Dickinson, and over the course of your life, and start to try to make sense of it. In the same way that Smith’s head was “filled with images” from the book she was reading, your heads are filled with images from the lives you lead: What are your interests? What do you read? What kinds of things do you want to talk about? How will you begin to make your mark on the world? It will require some sleuthing to figure out how to articulate answers to these questions and even more work to figure out how to create an ongoing project that addresses one or more of these answers.

**Assignment for Thursday 9/5:**

Read the S.O.L.F Manifesto (a few pages into the “Instruction Manuel”) and think about how points from this list resonate with the things we have talked about in class so far.

Complete **three** Operations (your choice) in the “Documenting and Observation Methods” section. No—these are not online and yes, they might seem silly. But remember, we are opening ourselves up to possibility and we are stretching some mental muscles that have atrophied. Have some fun! (NOTE: at a later time in the semester, I will ask you to reflect on these assignments from *FTB* and I may collect the journal)