

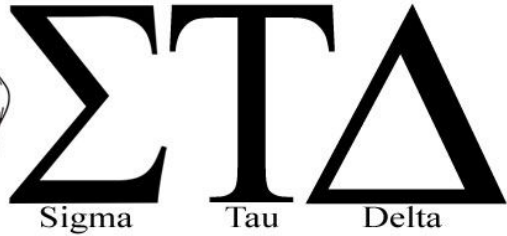
The Purple Patch



The Purple Patch

A Literature & Arts Journal

Volume 18



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Dakota Cantwell

The Purple Patch

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SIGMA TAU DELTA
INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH HONOR SOCIETY

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Letter from the Editor

Here is the 2017 edition of the *Purple Patch*, our school's literary and artistic publication. The *Purple Patch* allows for Missouri Valley College students to have their artistic and literary works published and shared with the school. Missouri Valley College has an incredibly diverse community, with students from dozens of different communities, states, and countries. Giving these students an opportunity to share their life experiences and artistic expression is important for all of us. In this edition, one will find a collection of poems, scholarly prose, creative prose, and artwork created by students from this institution.

Putting this edition of the *Purple Patch* together has been an exciting and challenging undertaking. While going through the process of editing this edition, I was able to see how skilled and creative my fellow students are. It made me proud to be part of this institution and to be in the position to present my peers' hard work. I would like to thank my co-editor Dakota Cantwell for his hard work, Dr. William Lombardi for his guidance and assistance in the editing process, Sigma Tau Delta, and Missouri Valley College's faculty for encouraging students to submit their works to the *Purple Patch*. Publishing the *Purple Patch* would not have been possible without all of you. Finally, my sincere thanks to the MVC Board of Trustees for underwriting this project. Hopefully our readers will find great pleasure in seeing the pieces put together in this edition!

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Poetry

Jolly Green Giant

By Anonymous

Police officers say you're a threat to safety in the streets,

I say you keep life sound.

With you I stand in the depths of the sea,

My mind and sight become profound.

And yet the right-wings scorn when they see us with you,

To them you are no good.

But still we keep you close to us,

By our side you've always stood.

Almost everywhere we go, difficulties arise for us to be together;

Why do they insist on keeping us apart when you have always

made hardships better?

I am just one simple life of the many you have touched,

But at least those of us who know appreciate you so much.

Wave of Love

By Lea Filali

As I sit here, staring at you,
while my gaze slowly is getting lost into yours,
pondering the significance of the universe

I wonder why people call it love making

People don't make love;

No one ever created it

People can't hold love;

No one ever contained it,

People shouldn't define love;

No one ever explained it

As human beings, we can only absorb it
Embrace the moment, embrace the feeling,
Embrace the doubt, embrace the longing

As love comes in waves,

shaking every pieces of our soul,

waking up every part of our senses

I wish not to drown, but to only keep swimming

Beauty and the Disease

By Danielle Linton

Beauty was all that she was,
Love was all that she showed.
Beauty was in her heart,
Beauty was in her eyes.
I remember when I use to not hear so many cries.
I remember when this Beauty was full of life.
But then one day,
The Disease came.
The Disease was dark,
And it consumed the Beauty's heart.
Beauty was all that she was,
Love was all that she showed.
When I looked into this Beauty's eyes,
I noticed that the Disease had made them cold;
Cold as a winter's night,
Dark as the sky.
I remember when I use to not hear so many cries.
I remember when this Beauty was full of life.
Damn this Disease!
It can go to Hell!
How dare you steal the Beauty?
How dare you consume her from the inside-out?
Beauty was all that she was,
Love was all that she showed.
No longer could I look into her eyes,
For now, her eyelids kept them concealed.
I bowed my head,
Cursing under my breath.

The Disease came.
The Disease was dark,
And it consumed the Beauty's heart.

If Nature's Eyes Could Swiftly Gaze Away (Sonnet)

By Gustavo Maccori Kozma

If nature's eyes could swiftly gaze away,
From men's endless search for eternal gain,
Of things with value only in human way,
To live life without ever feeling pain.
Then nature would embrace with its warm arms,
Men's continual quest for fictional wealth,
Which have great value in people's hearts,
But in the end takes its toll in mind's health.
What then should nature do to prevent men,
From destroying in vain its precious gems,
That have lasted since before the time when,
Human's will began to show its first stems.
With fear and fright doth nature seek to mend,
Human's will to make beauty find its end.

Life

What you see
Is what you get.
I walk this earth
With no regret.
I walked through hell
And came out strong.
Please tell me
If I am wrong.

Life is hard
And so is my soul.
I go through life
With only one goal.
To change some lives
And reach the end,
Where one life stops
another begins.

-C.F.-

The end to writing

For many years
In many words
I expressed myself
With adjectives and verbs

One line at a time
Feeling by feeling
To get myself
Through the steps of healing

As life goes by
My feelings become few
Running short of words

I don't know what to do

This pain inside
The hurt in my soul
I'll just shove them aside
Until I get old

For many years
In many words
I expressed myself
With adjectives and verbs

Line by line
Day by day
I lost myself
And things to say

Now I lay the pen down
And waste no more trees
Put my brain to rest
And heart to ease.

C.F.

Win or Lose

Walk out of the darkness
Into the light
One way is wrong
The other is right

You make the choice
And the path you choose
You either win
or You lose

So take your path
Either way
No matter what they want
Or what they say.

You make the choice
And the path you choose
You either win
or You lose

-C.F.-

Building Safety, If Only You Knew

By Christopher Contreras

Circular and rounded iris made from the depth of the ocean
As vibrant as the big blue sky during the warm summer
days

I wish you knew the way your blue eyes shine
If only you knew the way you create a certain vibe
You would never lose sight of me
It makes me, and others want to fly
The way you gently pass by
Your warmth, aroma and blond hair
My beautiful and selfless obsession
Never make you go; I would let you
Creating a magical wind all around me
Like birds by the clouds and butterflies by the trees
You have no idea what you cause in me
In the daylight, I give you my all
My vulnerability, soul, and authenticity
It's all about building safety
To create an energy that I want to transmit
To connect just our raw souls
Flesh to flesh, hearts to hearts
So when watching you sleep I know you dream of me
Just so you know your love is safe with me.

Feelings

By Cassandra Chism

Feelings are a really tricky thing, there's the ones that shine, that
sadden or sting.

There's the ones that you want but cannot obtain or the ones
you wish would wash with the rain.

There's fear of dampening another's mood, so hidden are those
feelings to rude.

Or hidden are those feelings to strong, to avoid sharing feelings
that could be wrong.

But who is to say what you should or could feel? Within yourself
is the place they are real.

So don't let others change your emotion, for people will make
you a wave in their ocean.

And their sea is no pleasant place to be,
If you're riding their rhythm you may never break free.

So hold fast to feelings your own, and never fear to let them be
shown.

Memory Lane

By Jacob Halloway

Just another kid in the back of the bus
Intently he stares, he don't ever talk much
Instinctly he cares, though he doesn't speak up
A whole new world, and he's down on his luck

The rest of his life, it all starts today
Yet the same statement was true yesterday
The bus drives past his old junior high
He waves to his childhood farewell, goodbye

He recalls when he first saw that arrangement of bricks
Never knew in time he would grow fond of it
Memories of schoolyard games and tricks
Not knowing all he had was all he could get

All he ever dreamt about was girls and fame
Knowing one day him and those celebrities would be one and the same
One and sane, that was all he could ever hope to be
Contentness with life was all he really wanted to see
He just didn't know it then
After all he was just a kid

Now a young man in the back of the bus
Intently he stares, and he thinks about his crush
Instinctively he cares, though he's never talked much
A whole new world, yeah he's fallen in love

The rest of his life, could all start today
Yet the same statement was true yesterday
The bus drives past his old senior high
He waves to teenage years farewell, goodbye

He recalls when he first saw that girl he liked
He thought she was from God with his very first sight
Her eyes pierced through him every time they struck

And he knew that with her everything felt right

All he ever dreamt about was that girl
Knew one day he could treat her like a pearl
Madly in love with plenty of kids
Picture perfect life within the grids
He just didn't know it then
After all he himself was just a kid

A not so young man looking up to the sky
Intently he stares, thinks about a girl he would wife
Instinctively he cares, though he's worried she might lie
A whole new world, now he's in for a ride

The rest of his life, it all started today
Yet the same statement was true yesterday
He looks out from a place that's very high
He waves to his old life, farewell, goodbye

He recalls when he first saw the ledge he stands on
He was just a child and knew nothing at all
Standing here now he feels like a con
Waiting here now to be healed by a call

He used to dream about being able to fly
Today he was willing to give that a try
As he stepped off the ledge he got shortness of breath
Fell through the sky, felt the quickness of death

Just another kid in the back of the bus
Intently he stares, he don't ever talk much
Instinctively he cares, though he doesn't speak up
His father died before he was born, stuck in a rut

Scholarly Prose



Live in The Beauty: La Primavera

By Lisa Poletto

La Primavera is a painting made by an Italian artist, called Sandro Botticelli, during the Renaissance period. The English translation of the title is The Spring, in fact the artwork shows all the typical aspects which characterized that specific season: from the garden riches of fruits and flowers, to the beauty and harmony of the characters. The painting represents nine characters who hide different meanings and a background characterized by a light blue sky and a grove composed by orange trees. The artwork could be interpreted through a naturalistic way characterized by the mild weather and peaceful time typical of the Spring season, an erotic point of view emphasized by the figures of the pregnant women and Cupid, and an aesthetic perspective related to the Spring connotation of youth and beauty; the painting suggests to follow and enrich life with those three aspects in order to achieve a high and sophisticated style of life very important during the Renaissance period. By enriching the painting with many natural details, the artist emphasized the importance of nature during the Spring season which means beginning, time of serenity, and conservation.

The first thing that one can see in the artwork is the amount of flowers that are growing up on the land and among the leaves of the trees. Moreover, the flowers enhance also the figure

of Flora who is the third character from the right. She is holding different roses on her belly so, this attitude could mean love, beauty, perseverance, and protection in carrying on the maternity. Her dress is embroidered with cornflowers which describe the elegance and the refinement of the figure. One can notice that other different flowers enrich the painting from the maidenhair fern to the red poppy, from the violet to the chamomile and all of them have different meaning related to the birth of a new and beautiful season. Therefore, Spring means beginning with splendor and delicate beauty. The orange fruits painted in the trees are another important detail that symbolizes birth. Looking at the background, above all at the trunks of the trees and the leaves behind Virgo, who is the central figure, one can notice that there is no perspective. Therefore, Botticelli wanted to emphasize the figure of the characters and the nature that they are in contact with. In fact, the nature is also symbolized by the characters themselves, such as Zephyr, who is the first figure on the right, is the personification of the mild Spring wind; and Mercury, who is the first character on the left, is removing the clouds from the sky. The painting does not represent the storms that usually characterized the Spring season in Italy, but the artist just wanted to show the perfect time of peace and serenity emphasized by the concept of nature as friend of the human beings and also the preservation of that beautiful and peaceful time and place kept by Mercury. Sandro Botticelli did not only attribute Spring to the beginning of a new life through the natural details, but also through the figures of the pregnancy women and Cupid.

In the painting, Spring is also described as period of love and reproduction. Cupid, who symbolizes love, is throwing his arrow to one of the three Graces. Furthermore, Virgo, who is the goddess of love, beauty, and fertility, is placed at the center of the painting with a red drape in order to underline the meaning of Spring as period of reproduction and new births which are fruits of love between two people. In fact, all the women in the artwork are pregnant and they are dressed with few and soft clothes because the artist wanted to emphasize the importance of love during Spring, in which people want to enjoy the new beginning, the sunny days, the new births, and everything that is surrounded by love. The artwork seems to enhance the idea of the people who are enlarging their hearts in order to embrace the new emotions

and the energy of love which generates new births. Nevertheless, the artist gives also a materialist view of love through the aesthetic meaning of beauty.

The painting underlines the concept of Spring season related to the youth and beauty of the bodies but also of the spirits. The artwork highlights the beauty of the characters' bodies and the rhythm of the figures through the flow of the lines and the choice of the skin and dresses' colors. The lines draw beautiful and delicate women's bodies, while Mercury is depicted with decisive lines in order to underline the beauty of his athletic body. Moreover, the colors play an important role in the figures' representation: women have a light skin to underline their sensitivity, while Mercury has a more brown color of the skin in order to affirm his strong and beautiful figure. The bodies and the clothes seem to not have weight, so it looks like the characters are suspended from the land. This means that the painting represents the harmony of the figures who, although are isolated among each other in order to convey different meanings and concepts, they are in some way related. For example, the harmony and the elegance in which the three Graces are dancing and intertwining their hands, the refined Virgo's face with flowers in her hair, the veil of the women's clothes and their soft hairstyles. Everything of those aspects recall to a sense of youth and beauty, but not only aesthetic beauty, also the beauty of the spirit. Another important aspect about beauty described by the Graces is that: by dancing, they are representing the arts that is another important aspect of the Renaissance period. Athletic figures, dance, music, and sing are arts that one can figure out from the characters' attitudes and movements. The artist painted the characters with light colors in a dark background and drew their bodies with soft lines by linking the figures in a melody depicted during a fair and peaceful Spring day.

Through *La Primavera*, Sandro Botticelli gave to the people three important concepts to be followed during that period in order to live in the beauty and achieve a sophisticated style of life. The naturalistic, erotic, and aesthetic aspects are depicted in this painting by different details: from the soft lines of women's clothes to the marked lines of Mercury's body, and from the flowers on the land to the flowers in the Virgo's hairstyle. Virgo, who is placed in the center of the painting, symbolizes the beauty

as spiritual lift through the arts and knowledge. However, because of the sadness in the characters' faces, one can understand that the aesthetic beauty will not last forever. Therefore, the painting depicted an ephemeral beautiful and peaceful Spring day and urges the Renaissance's people to enrich their lives through the arts in order to maintain their spiritual youth.

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Two Different Kinds of Fences

By Yelim Lee

Some people build fences to keep people out and other people build fences to keep people in. Rose wants to hold on to you all. She loves you. (1089)

In the play *Fences* by August Wilson, all of the characters have different kinds of situations and problems, and those problems were all relating to the main character, Troy Maxson. Through those problems, Wilson wants to tell the reader what kinds of “fences” those main characters are trying to build for the people and what those fences symbolize in the play. From Troy’s friend, Bono’s quotation, the readers can realize that and as an outsider, Bono is the only one who knows how Troy and his wife, Rose fences symbolize. First, Rose keep request Troy to build the fence so it could keep her family inside of the house. However, Troy is building the fences that makes people away from the house.

Bono is the only one who know how Rose and Troy’s fence symbolizes in the play. As an outsider, Bono is looking at all those problems for the Maxson’s family and trying to lead their situations in better ways. The quotation he said during the play were about the conversation between Troy and himself. From his speech, the readers can understand that as an outsider, Bono understands the symbolism of each fences and the importance of the symbols. He explains what kinds of fences were using in the play with the metaphor. From Bono’s quotation, the one specific thing is that the reader can notice that he already knows what the problem between Troy and Rose is and the big problem was that Troy cheated on Rose. Bono tells to Troy that he is making a mistake and doing wrong with his bad affair by pointing out Rose’s efforts. For example, he says, “Rose wants to hold on to you all. She loves you” (1089). Through her protection and love, Bono thinks Rose is a good wife and woman. He wants Troy to realize that Rose’s love is much bigger than he thought and she is trying to

protect her family.

Rose requests Troy to build the fence, which can keep her family inside of the house. In the story, Rose is one who knows really well, what is the big issue and problem in the family. For example, she knows that the relationship between Troy and his son, Cory are going to be crumble, and she would know Troy had a negative affair. Although, Rose requests Troy to build the fence near the house and try to keep Troy and Cory inside the house. In the quotation, when Bono says, “other people build fences to keep people in” in here, the “other people” is representing “Rose” and “keep people in,” these words represent that she is trying to build the fences to keep her family inside of the house and protect them to not going outside (1089). Rose’s fence symbolizes of security and protection that change Troy and Cory to having a better relationship as a father and son. However, Troy fails to support the love around him.

Troy is trying to build the fence to keep the world out of his lives. However, his fence makes people away from himself. In the play, there were many evidences that Troy fails to support the love around him and make them feel alone. For example, in Act Two, Troy does not want his son, Lyons to play jazz, also does not allow Cory to play football and neglect his dream, and lastly he made negative affair, which betraying her wife, Rose. As Bono says in the quotation, “Some people build fences to keep people out” the “some people” is representing “Troy” and “keep people out” these words represent that he is making everyone to be tired and away from him, even his 30 year best friend, Bono also left his side (1089). Troy builds the physical fence. However, in the end, he fails to build it and finally loses the people around him. Troy was not a really good and unskilled man as a father, as a husband, as a brother and as a friend.

As what Bono said, it was right how Troy and Rose’s fences’ symbolized their life and characters. First, Rose keep request Troy to build the fence so it could keep her family inside of the house. However, Troy is building the fences that makes people away from the house. Between those two different kinds of fences, what Wilson wants us to tell is which choice of fence is the best to build for our life and which is the right way to having a relationship

with the people. The bad example is Troy's fence, which kept the people away from him. However, if you want to keep people inside of the house, then you would better to choose build Rose's fence. This is why Wilson chose the title name, "*Fences*" and tries to make up serious meanings inside of the title and story.

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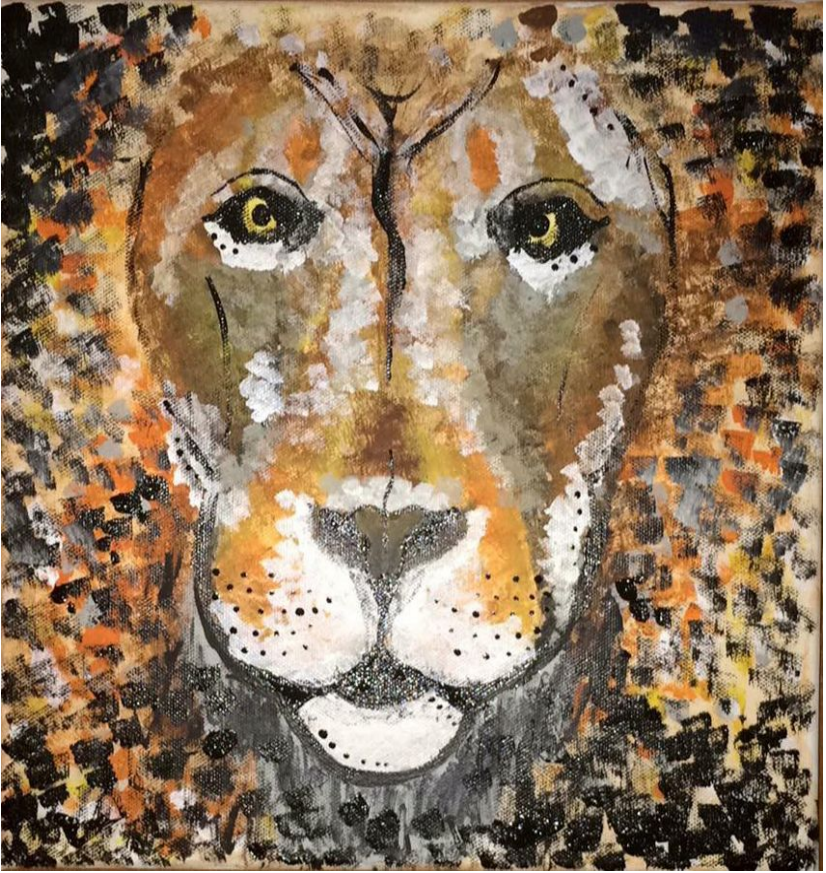
Art

Madison Bradley

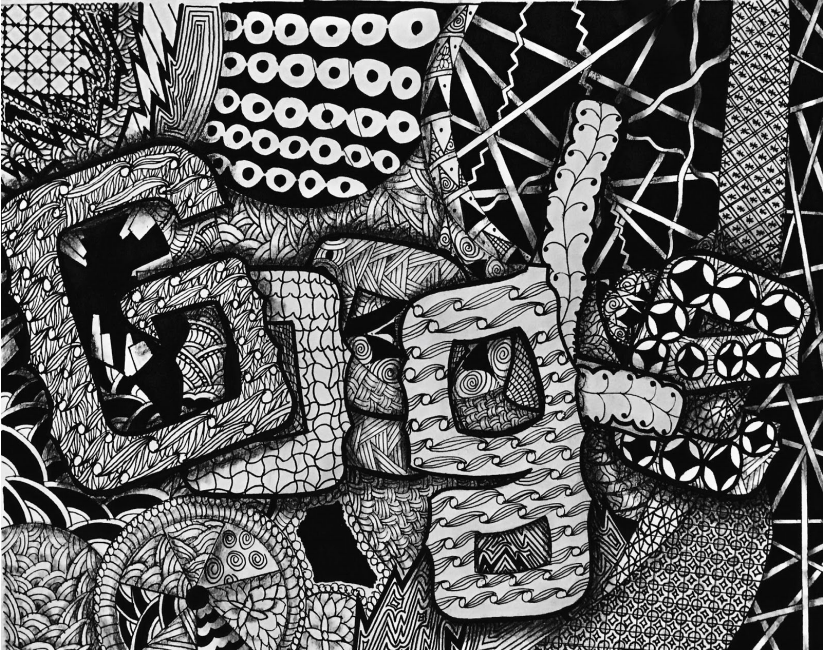




Kayleigh Barnes



Nicholas Grimwood



Brianna Dean



Tyler Wallenberg



Cheyanna Weaver



Hali Niceswander



**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2016
MARSHALL, MO**

Laura Bustos Martinez



More Scholarly Prose

Drown
By Asia Powell

“What the fuck are you doing? I asked, but he didn’t stop. His hand was dry. I kept my eyes on the television, too scared to watch. I came right away, smearing the plastic sofa covers. My legs started shaking and suddenly I wanted out.” (Diaz 432)

Everyday people face challenges whether it’s financial situations, school, or sexuality. In the passage “Drown,” a teenage boy is facing all of those challenges. The narrator lives in a poor neighborhood and he sells marijuana occasionally to take care him and his mom. At the school the narrator attends, the teachers don’t care about the students. One of his teachers states that some of them will succeed while most of them are going to fail. The narrator’s only connection is with his best friend Beto. The summer Beto is preparing to leave for college, he gives the narrator a handjob and a blowjob. The narrator has mixed emotions about everything because his body wants out but his mind is telling him something else. This passage shows that the narrator is confused about his sexuality. The conclusion that I draw based on this passage is that the narrator is a homosexual.

From the clues in the reading, the narrator might be homosexual. The narrator told Beto “What the fuck are you doing?” as Beto reached his hand down the narrator pants. The use of profanity shows that something serious is going on, and raises concern. Most people use profanity, especially the word “fuck” when they are upset. The word “fuck” is sexually related, and in this part of the story something sexual is going on. Beto did something sexually to his friend that really made him upset. The narrator asked his friend to stop but really did not take any further actions to stopping his friend. Therefore, the question I ask myself is the narrator homosexual or not? Many assumptions can be made from this passage about the narrator’s sexuality. The narrator’s sexuality can almost be determined from the textual evidence because the passage use vivid details when describing the things that happened between him and Beto.

However, it is not clear whether the narrator is homosexual. The narrator said he “kept [his] eyes on the television, too scared to watch” as Beto gave him a handjob. This is an open ended statement because the narrator was scared but didn’t do anything to prevent Beto from giving him a handjob. There are clues that point to the narrator being homosexual and

not homosexual. The fact that he was scared can be evidence of how the author was not homosexual. Fear relates to the narrator not being gay because he was afraid and did not like what was going on. If he was not scared, he would like what Beto was doing. However, the narrator could have been in shock and just froze, because the narrator did not prevent Beto from getting sexual with him. This suggest that the narrator is homosexual. Another piece of evidence is when the narrator says "I came right away smearing the plastic sofa covers". I feel that a straight man would not come if another man put his hands down his pants. A straight man would not come if he was not attracted or sexually aroused to another man. Also, I wondered why did the narrator come right away if he was not attracted to his friend Beto? There is not any clarity about the sexuality of the narrator.

The shaking, fear, and the desire to run in this passage suggests that the the narrator feels violated. The definition of violate is to break, fringe, or transgress (Dictionary.com). The textual evidence that his legs were shaking shows that something was wrong. When I think of shaking, I relate that to being afraid. The narrator was afraid of something because his legs were shaking. In the passage from "Drown", the narrator is really uncomfortable with the things that just happened. "My legs started shaking and suddenly I wanted out." The narrator did not want to be touched but he did not communicate that to Beto. Just because the narrator did not communicate that to Beto doesn't mean it was ok for Beto to proceed with what he was doing. To me it seems like the narrator wanted to cry for help but just did not know how. He was scared beyond measures and did not know what to do next, so he just sat there. This propose that the narrator was violated.

Sexuality is something that can be hard for some to identify, and that struggle can be seen in "Drown." The narrator was involved in sexual activities that were making him conflicted within himself. The complication that the narrator endured changed his perspective on sexuality because it opened the narrator's eyes with discovering his own sexuallity. The thoughts that are going through his head could be, "Is it ok to let my friend give me a handjob?" "Am I a pato?" The narrator is finding it hard to come to the terms that he is gay. In order to be true to himself the narrator needs to accept the fact that he is gay.

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Evils Unfollowed

By Zach Goodsell

The nation was in turmoil internally during Thoreau's time. With war at the doorstep and dehumanizing sitting at the table, the nation was being split by government and moral choices. Resistance to Civil Government offered an alternative path to self destruction. "I heartily accept the motto, 'That government is best which governs least;' and I should like to see it acted up to more rapidly and systematically" (Thoreau 964). To achieve this, Thoreau suggests, for people to stand up and overcome government norms, make the difficult decisions that the government can not, and to create a voice. Each will be explained and brought together to accomplish self realization and the grasp of the power of the people.

Thoreau begins with claiming the faults in the leaders of the nation. Politicians boast that they can solve the problems. With slavery and the Mexican-American War on their plate, solutions are needed. "There are thousands who are in opinion opposed to slavery and to the war, who yet in effect do nothing to put an end to them; who, esteeming themselves children of Washington and Franklin, sit down with their hands in their pockets, and say that they know not what to do, and do nothing" (Thoreau 968). Insinuating that the government has the answers, but sits back and does nothing, leaves a place for the people of the United States, at this time, to step in and take control of the direction the nation is heading. To abolish slavery, to end a war that will cost lives, these decisions needed to be assessed and taken care of.

Throughout Thoreau explains that just because laws and government standards are set, does not mean the population must obey or follow. He does not advocate law breaking, he simply wants change. With the two extreme circumstances of slavery and war, differences must be put aside to make a conversion. "Unjust laws exist: shall we be content to obey them, or shall we endeavor to amend them, and obey them until we have succeeded, or shall we transgress them at once? Men generally, under such a government as this, think that they ought to wait until they have persuaded the majority to alter them" (Thoreau 970). Persuasion directed towards the populous, from the government, presents itself as the only way change can be made. Thoreau thinks differently. The persuasion should be people to government. Demand for change instead of requesting permission for change. He asks if drastic measures should be taken. In order to solve the

equation ahead action must be plugged in. Instead of disobeying the laws set, he asks for amendment. This doesn't particularly revolve around slavery, but all laws that seem unfair or unjust.

A man is free to his own thoughts. There is no filter or screening inside the head of any human being that resists thoughts or disallows ideas. Thoreau attempts to separate the transparent shadow that seems to hover over every citizen of the country. To make self more significant, removal of any rule that could alter the psyche is a must. "However, the government does not concern me much, and I shall bestow the fewest possible thoughts on it. It is not many moments that I live under a government, even in this world. If a man is thought-free, fancy-free, imagination-free, that which is not never for a long time appearing to be to him, unwise rulers or reformers cannot fatally interrupt him" (Thoreau 978). Ignorance to government is not the key to success, but to live life not thinking about the constant rule the politicians think they have is a win for any citizen. Thoreau respects the government and understands the reasoning for it. He proclaims "But, to speak practically and as a citizen, unlike those who call themselves no-government men, I ask for, not at once no government, but at once a better government. Let every every man make known what kind of government would command his respect, and that will be one step toward obtaining it" (Thoreau 965). This mention of the respect of men can be translated into voice. Reciprocating opinion and needs from people to politicians embodies an immaculate government. Something that is respected and can allow faith, to be had in, is ideal.

To complete the idea Thoreau has, a final question is asked. "Is it not possible to take a step further towards recognizing and organizing the rights of man?" (Thoreau 979). Thoreau then states, answering his own question, "There will never be a really free and enlightened State, until the State comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treats him accordingly" (Thoreau 979). Once government connects with the people and understands the power they hold, then major changes can be made. If politicians realize they are among the people, apart of the people, then a fluent message can be broadcasted between the two parties of State and inhabitants.

In order to create and obtain an ideal government Thoreau expresses that first, the people of the nation must wake up and realize the power they have and what must be changed. During this time one of the biggest topics and blunders of the nation's timeline was taking place, slavery. Extreme amounts of money was being made from free labor. Those who were reaping the benefits often supported politicians who agreed with their agenda and even took office to continue the constant flow of wealth. With the rich controlling the White House, the voices of those who opposed were often ignored and cast out. Money made the majority the minority. This made change difficult. Once enough citizens pushed for change, voice was created. Where politicians faulted, the people succeeded. When it came to the war at hand the people needed to trust in the government. The relationship needed to be strong. Faith that with the people being the engine and politicians at the wheel, controlling the path taken, a solution could be made without risking more American lives. Thoreau's ideals and thesis of power of the people is continued even today. Much like Lincoln's statement, "of the people, by the people, for the people," a strong government is only as strong as the people who are governed by it. Once the balance is interrupted and power is shifted towards government then a possible collapse is imminent.

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The Type of Player I Always Hated

By Andre Delgado

A few of you are going to make it. Those are the orbiters.
But the majority of you are just going to burn out. Going
nowhere. He dropped his hand onto his desk. I could
Already see myself losing altitude, fading, the earth spread
out beneath me, hard and bright. (432)

Junot Díaz

Whenever I read this passage from Junot Díaz's short story "Drown," it reminds me of my childhood. Since I was 7-years-old soccer has been everything to me. I always knew that when I grew up, I wanted to be a professional soccer player. The greatest dream of my life has always been playing for my favorite soccer club, Chivas de Guadalajara. And when I turned 15-years-old, the chance to accomplish this dream came along: Open tryouts for the club's youth academy. I did not hesitate and took the opportunity because it represented everything that I have always wanted, even though that would mean leaving my parents, my friends, my house, and basically my entire life in Mexico City behind. I arrived at Guadalajara confident, convinced of who I was and what I wanted, with the main and only purpose of demonstrating what I was made of and how good I could be but, unfortunately, things did not worked out the way I planned. I do not know if it was the pressure I was under or if it was my nerves but that day I did not perform at my top level and even though I scored two goals during the match, I failed to impress the talent scouts. When the match was over, one of the coaches gathered everybody around at midfield and told us "Boys, I have to be completely honest with you. Only one or at most two out of more than one hundred players that presented the tryout are going to be selected. The rest of you are just not good enough to play for Chivas. I'm sorry. You are free to go home now, thanks for participating..." and that was it. As a reader, this passage from "Drown" makes me feel frustrated and disappointed because it reminds me of my own failure. This makes me believe that Junot Díaz conveys the idea that one must face facts and be realistic, but also that embracing the idea of failure can transform and redefine one into a completely different person and affect one's perception of reality, producing personal insecurities.

In this passage Junot Díaz suggests that one must face facts and be realistic. Evidence of this is how by saying: "A few of

you are going to make it” the main character’s teacher implies that only a small number of students are going to be able to succeed. Then, when the main character’s teacher says that these small number students “are the orbiters,” he also implies that these students are special because they will be the ones who cross the sky with purpose and meaning, as they are seen and admired by the masses. The teacher is suggesting that these students are important, that they matter. However, by saying “But,” the main character’s teacher suggests that these successful students are just an exception. By saying “the majority of you are just going to burn out,” the main character’s teacher also suggests that, unlike the successful students, the average students are going to consume themselves. When the main character’s teacher says, “Going nowhere” I believe that he is not only talking about staying in the same place or getting lost in the way. The teacher is also suggesting that eventually, the average students will have to be realistic about their aspirations and give up. I can relate this passage to my personal experience because when I got rejected from Chivas, I was forced to face facts and understand that the reality is that only a very small number of boys manage to become professional soccer players. This was like a wake up call telling me that I had to be realistic and accept that there is a strong possibility that I might never be a professional soccer player and that I might never play for Chivas, and for me that was devastating. I did not wanted to be someone who watches the orbiters from below, someone who gave up and embraced failure.

Embracing the idea of failure can redefine and transform one into a completely different person. When his teacher finishes talking, the main character completes the metaphor about space travel as he says “He dropped his hand onto his desk. I could already see myself losing altitude, fading.” In this line by saying “already” the main character exhibits a great despair as he embraces the idea of failure almost immediately. This suggests that the main character is giving his teacher the power to define him as a person as he is allowing his teacher to tell him that he is not good enough. By saying “losing altitude,” it is obvious that the main character means falling, he is weakening. When the main character says “fading,” he refers not only to the act of disappearing but also to the fear losing himself while he falls. I can relate this line to my personal experience because, just like the

main character of “Drown,” I let another person to tell me that I was not good enough and I believed it. After failing in the tryout, I found myself in a very difficult situation where I had to start looking for other options besides soccer and to think about my future while, at the same time, I was trying not fall apart. Being rejected from Chivas was the lowest point of my life because for the first time ever, I had to contemplate failure as a possibility. Having to face the disappointment of not being selected was more than just frustration or sadness; it was a reevaluation of identity. Facing rejection to the thing that I care the most in the whole world transformed me into a different person.

Kenneth Baum and Richard Trubo argue in their book titled *The Mental Edge*, that one can “learn from frustrating and discouraging experiences and use them as springboards to improve your performance the next time you compete. Rather than looking at “failures” as major disappointments, turn the loss into gain” (39). However, in the short term and based on my personal experience in Chivas, I thought that transforming into a different person was something negative, as I ended up transforming into that type of player that I have always hated. Nevertheless, in the long term I was able to realize that this experience also made grow. It transformed me into someone more mature and eager to try again because my story is far from over. I was able to turn the loss into gain.

Just like embracing the idea of failure can transform one into a completely different person it can also affect one’s perception of reality, producing personal insecurities. When one embraces the idea of failure, one is also accepting a negative perception of reality and that can easily affect one’s self-confidence. Evidence of this is how after the main character of “Drown” embraces the idea of failure imposed by his teacher, he says “the earth spread out beneath me, hard and bright.” By saying “beneath me,” the main character implies that he is above the ground and when he says, “spread out,” the main character probably means that he is getting closer to the earth, which suggests that he is about to land. By saying “hard and bright” that the main character refers to something tangible, something clear and based on the evidence, I believe that the main character is talking about putting his feet on the ground, as well as the main character’s perception of reality, which suggests that the narrator

is not only embracing failure but he is also embracing and accepting reality. Ronald Adler and Russell Proctor argue on their book, *Looking Out, Looking In* that one's perception of the world around us is "affected by who we are. A simple walk in the park would probably be a different for companions with different interests" (78). This suggests that reality is not something static. On the contrary, it can be changed and mold by how does one perceive things, whether it is in a positive or a negative way. Evidence of this, is the Marcus Samuelsson memoir *Yes, Chef* where Samuelsson writes, "I sometimes, think of myself more as a failed soccer player than as an accomplish chef" (qtd in Shulman). This statement by Samuelsson demonstrates the importance of perception and this where I can relate my personal experience to the text because, after I got rejected from Chivas, I started feeling really insecure about myself. Insecurity comes from reality because if one perceives the situation around him as negative, then one's reality will be also negative. When that coach in the Chivas tryout told me that I was not good enough, I believed him and that is what I perceived as real. It was a negative feedback taking over my reality and this change of perception made me lost a lot of confidence in myself. Suddenly I was full of doubts about myself, afraid of being exposed to failure and avoiding anything that could bring rejection to my life. This major lack of self-confidence affected not only my athletic performance but it also affected other aspects of my life such as my social life and most of my relationships. However, this was not the worst part. I also started questioning all of my qualities on the pitch because I was failing to perform at the level that I was used to. I was too afraid and I stopped trying to do the things that I was great at until reaching the point where I even considered my retirement from soccer.

In his short story "Drown," Junot Díaz conveys the idea that one must face facts and be realistic, but also that embracing the idea of failure can transform and redefine one into a completely different person and affect one's perception of reality, producing personal insecurities. Even though one may conclude that a person is helpless when it comes to face facts and being realistic, I believe that Junot Díaz also suggest that there is a choice. Embracing the idea of failure can be catastrophic if you are realistic but why would anyone want to be realistic? Being

realistic not only implies maintaining realistic goals but also being exposed to insecurities. Insecurity comes from reality and if one keeps his feet on the ground then one is vulnerable to suffer from insecurities. However, if one is unrealistic enough to keep his feet off the ground and resist gravity while at the same time admitting that exists, then one is safe. One is confident. One is secure.

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Creative Prose

Playing with Plastic Dolls
By Lindsey McMillan

Summer 1997

As the big sister headed down the giant hill in her family's back yard, the little sister yelled from the deck, "How long you gonna be?" The big sister spun around shading her eyes with her hands from the bright June sun looking up at her. She shrugged her shoulders and impatiently called back, "Like an hour. Just go back inside and don't tell Mom if she calls."

"Will you play with me when you get back?" the little sister called back to her. The big sister knew this was a ploy. The little sister would never tell either parent that the big sister was sneaking out, but she entertained her and said she would. She waved the little sister on and headed to the street below.

The sun was burning the big sister's scalp as she walked but she didn't seem to notice because of the excitement building in her. Earlier in the morning a senior boy called her on the phone to go cruising around with him. She couldn't believe it was his voice on the other end of the phone when she answered it. This boy always liked her best friend, so when he called she assumed that was who he wanted to talk about. But when he asked her if she would meet up with him to hang out she was ecstatic. The big sister had never hung out with an older boy alone before. She'd always been the tagalong when any boy wanted to hang out with her best friend. She thought of what they would talk about and how funny he was and just how crazy it was for him to ask her to hang out. Maybe he did just want to talk about her best friend. She knew how much he liked her. Maybe he wanted to know if she liked him back.

When the big sister arrived at the meeting place, he was there waiting for her in his pick-up truck. He smiled when he saw her and told her she looked beautiful. The big sister blushed. No grown up boy had ever called her beautiful before. She hopped in the truck and they started on their way. They talked about how he had just graduated and what he planned on doing after high school.

The big sister thought it would be lame to talk about her entering the 8th grade that fall so she decided to listen. The big sister felt like all the high school girls she always saw after school on her walk home from the bus.

The senior boy asked her if she'd ever been down the county roads they were now driving along. "I have no clue where I am," the big sister giggled. The senior boy reassured her he knew these back roads like the back of his hand. She was glad he said that because it made her feel safe. The senior boy slowed to a stop, "I gotta piss, you need to go?" The big sister shook her head and messed with the radio while he stepped out of the truck. When he climbed back in the truck, he patted the space in between them and asked her to sit closer to him. The big sister looked at the clock on the radio and said she needed to get back home so they really should go. She didn't know where they drove to, but she knew it took them a while to get where they were sitting. The senior boy looked at the big sister and gave her his best puppy dog face that made her laugh, but he still didn't convince her to move closer to him. Just then he swooped down and grabbed her legs. She was wearing black mesh gym shorts and the seat of the truck was leather so she slid across the seat easily. He spread her legs open and was in between her, laying on to of her so she couldn't move. It happened so fast, the big sister didn't know what to think or do. She was in shock. The senior boys face was inches from hers. She could smell the sweat coming off him and the cigarettes on his breath. He told her he wanted to kiss her. She said no. She said she had never kissed a boy. She knew this is not the way she wanted her first kiss to be and now definitely not with this boy. He said she would like it if she'd just try it. She tried to push his upper body back, but he held her arms down over her head. He came down on her hard, but she turned her head and he kissed her ear. She didn't want to cry, but she was scared. She couldn't move. She was scared. He let go of her arms and ran his hand up her leg, inside her shorts, and tugged at the hem of her panty's. She started kicking as much as she could and screamed, "I'm only thirteen!" Finally he climbed off her and she rushed out of the Truck.

He convinced her to let him take her home. The drive was long and silent.

The little sister was waiting for her with a barbie in hand, "Said you play with me." The big sister took the barbie and followed down the steps to the makeshift playroom in the basement.

“Do you think it’s weird that you're thirteen and still play with barbies?” the little sister asked.

“I like dressing them up and creating houses for them.” the big sister said quietly.

“Why are you crying?” asked the little sister.

“I don’t know.” replied the big sister.

Winter 2009

The big sister was finishing up her nightly duties at work and made her way up to the front desk. She called a few patients to confirm their appointments for the next days check ups when she heard her co-worker gasp, “Oh my God, I cannot believe this!”

“Whats wrong?” the big sister asked.

“You remember the senior boy?” the co-worker asked, showing her phone to the big sister.

On a local news site was a mugshot of the senior boy with bold letters underneath, “Arrested for Child Pornography”.

“I can’t believe this.” the co-worker said in shock.

“Yeah, me neither” the big sister lied.

Click

By Dakota Cantwell

Click. The shutter sounds off and forever captures this moment. You look at me. Half in frustration, half in irritation. Frurrirration? Is that even a word? I don't think it is.

Perfect. Words that exist don't seem capable of describing us. Two things coming together that don't make sense, that's us. Perfection in lackluster logic.

You beg me to see the camera, but I don't want you to. It's not a bad photo, but you will inevitably think it is. You don't see how beautiful you really are and always want me to delete it. I never want to delete it. Call it an album, call it a shrine, call it an altar. Your beauty is heavenly and I want to honor it.

Still, there's something more than that. They tell me that a picture is worth a thousand words, but they're wrong. A picture is worth a thousand memories, made up of a thousand words to a thousand different minds and I can't help but wonder if this doesn't destroy what the picture means. If it doesn't steal the reason it was taken in the first place.

That's why I don't want to show it to you. The reasons of the photo are indescribable. I don't even understand why I took it. If I show it to anyone I risk it making sense. With a single click I captured our relationship and with a single look it could all be explained away.

Inedible Candle

By Lea Filali

Food is my life. I could not survive without eating -obviously-, but literally, I cannot skip a meal, or snacks. I love food too much. Sometimes I am so used to eat food, that I just stuff myself without even enjoying the food, which happens too often. Thanks to the cafeteria with those huge lines that gets me too hungry by the time I am seated. I think I have always been a *pig* as far as I remember with food. Pretty ironic when you think half of my family are Muslims (bad joke, I know). In Belgium there is a word to describe people like me that eat too fast and too much; *goulafe*. Even the sound of those letters together, makes me think of the noise I would make while swallowing a big chunk of food. As far as I can remember in all the memories related with food, my seven year birthday family party would be the most memorable one. I always had a birthday family party, until my twentieth birthday when I moved abroad, and when a Skype meeting became the closest thing I could get to a family reunion. But back then, on my seventh birthday, everybody was around the big wood table inside of the house I grew up. By everybody I mean my mother, father, brother, sister, and me. This is the only family I have in Belgium since my dad's side of the family is in Morocco and my mom's side of the family is in France. To be honest, by having my roots in Europe and in Africa with my heart in America, sometimes I like to think I am a citizen of the world. Anyhow, while having what is my whole close related family around the table, it was my time to blow the candle and make a wish.

A wish I do not remember, but I won't be surprised if it was about a stupid little doll. Do wishes really come true? Maybe no, Maybe yes. But if they do, then my wish would be to everybody on earth to wish for peace, health and love. I believe that it would be the best remedy of the sickness of this world. But back to my seventh birthday, blowing my unique candle looking like a big fat 7 and doing my useless wish. I guess the excitement got me, -and even if it was not, we will just pretend it was-, because after blowing my candle, I suddenly grabbed the big seven candle on the chocolate cake, and took a bite of it. Please, do NOT ask me why. I still cannot recall the reason. Maybe I thought I could eat it because it looked sugary enough to be eatable. Never judge a book by its cover. There are a lot of good looking fake things out there; welcome to our society. So yes, I had that weird feeling in

my mouth, halfway tasting like a hard dough, and like little chunk of crayon. Close your eyes and imagine how disgusting it was. Because it was; the grossest thing ever. I immediately took the first drink that was on the table, and the closest to me. Guess what it was? My mom is French...Not so hard to guess. It was white wine (that one was a given). Although as much as I love white wine today, I totally hated it at seven years old -can't blame me for that. Everything happened so fast, and although I wanted to spit everything that was in my mouth at that time, weird candle crushed and disgusting wine, I kept it in my mouth and ran to the kitchen sink. Don't think it is done. It only gets worse. I opened the tap, spited everything in the sink, and opened my mouth as big as I could to get some water. Before realizing the water was at its hottest. I swear, it was boiling in my mouth, worse feeling ever yet to discover. I could not feel my tongue anymore and I still don't know what I preferred; a tongue touching weird candle chunk or no tongue feeling at all? It was probably my worst birthday ever, for a couple of years, but it turned out to be the one I remember the most, and became my favorite one. I laugh back on my story, thinking how great of a time it was with my family. How ironic is that? I guess I did not learn much because I still eat like a *goulafe* (i.e. pif). My attitude did not really change beside avoiding eating not eatable candle. But I surely did learn something out of that whole experience; it is that my big seven looking candle was NOT edible.

Are there even edible candles on the market?

Growing Up Through Food

By Simon Hansen

Being an international student in the US is exciting and educational in many ways. There are a lot of new things to get used to, and it takes a while to get used to new norms, culture and the people surrounding you. One thing that is really different from where I'm from is the food and the food culture. In my family food is something that brings people together. It connects the family, and it is at the dinner table the deep conversations take place. It is a very common to sit down and enjoy a good meal together with your family where I am from. Growing up in a busy everyday life, where school and work are a big part of our lives people often tend to forget to talk to each other. In my family it is almost impossible to avoid being part of a conversation. This perhaps sounds like we are forced to sit, eat dinner, and talk daily together with our families but actually it is totally optional. The way I have been raised, I look forward to eat dinner with my family, and it is something that I enjoy. After a long school or workday it is here where I have the opportunity to hear what my relatives have experienced throughout the day, and we often find ourselves sitting there at the dinner table for hours. Of course it can be a little bit boring when we all sometimes feel that our lives are like trivial lifecycles, and we don't really feel that we are experiencing anything new. I try to enjoy it as much as I can because as your life goes on you will experience a natural transition from a young person to an adult so the time you spend with your family will automatically be reduced. I am a stage right now where I will not see my family for a whole year or possibly more. This means no more of my mother's lovely food. Now it is Cafeteria food instead, and maybe when I graduate I will be cooking my own food. Even though the cafeteria food is a little bit different from the food I am used to, this is not what surprises me the most. One thing that really differentiates from the food culture I am used to is the fast food. I have never, in my life, experienced as many fast food chains in a relatively small town. Aside from a high amount of fast food chains, where I'm from most of the fast food found here doesn't exist. In my hometown we have a few McDonald's, Burger Kings, KFCs and a very small amount of Wendy's and Subways but that is pretty much it. I could name thousands of other fast food chains that exist here but that will just take me too much space. This is something that surprised me. In my point of view

the eating habits here are a lot different from where I am from. For me it seems like eating food here in America is something that needs to be done as fast as possible. As oppose to what I grew up experiencing where it is normal to cook food it seems like Americans are too busy too cook, so instead of cooking they buy different kinds of fast food. This of course has something to do with different food cultures and traditions, and it is very interesting for me as an international student to share my view on the American food culture.

I have been taught to eat my food slowly while sitting but through my life as a student I sometimes find it beneficial to eat quickly or on the go. However eating on the go is something that happens rarely for me but here it seems surprisingly normal. Not only do I feel a difference in the eating habits I also feel a difference in the portion sizes. As a part of growing up we experience not only mental growth, but physical growth as well. This means that our bodies naturally need more food. Before I came to The US I was used to eating portions which were half the sizes of the meals I eat now, but the physical and mental growth I have obtained since I've been here have required me to intake more food. For me it is normal that whenever my family and me are done with dinner there is no more food but here there are always unlimited opportunities for eating all the time because the amount of fast food restaurants that exist. Sometimes I even catch myself considering going to MacDonal'd's 2 hours after I had dinner. I think this happens because I know that I have the opportunity, and sometimes it is hard to resist the temptation of a cheeseburger before bedtime.

Now that I consider America as my new home for a while I am starting to get used to these new eating habits. I like to experience new cultures and for me it is an educational experience to see how food cultures can be so different.

I stared down at the essay I was asked to write. The essay stared back at me. “101 Questions I Thought I’d Never Ask”, it said back to me. I was supposed to reflect on 101 things I never expected myself to ask over the course of my four years in high school, but nothing was coming to mind. I mean, 101? What the heck? That’s an awful lot. Why are they making me come up with so many? I closed my eyes and tried to think back on my four years of high school: images passed through my mind of me leading a dull high school life, slacking off and making no friends, laying my head down on the cold, hard brown wooden desk, making an effort to ignore the teacher’s lessons. What questions would I have asked then? Maybe “Why am I not on a tropical island that I own being fed piña coladas on the beach?” My high school life sucked and it wasn’t about to change.

I leaned back in my chair and stared at the ceiling. No ideas came to my head; I considered sleeping but I knew I wouldn’t want to wake until 15 minutes before class. So I wrote down my piña colada question and continued onward. 100 to go.

Why am I even trying? I thought to myself. I usually blow stupid assignments like this off. Why am I actually doing this one? Then I remembered my teacher said if I didn’t do this assignment, I wouldn’t graduate. Bullcrap. I couldn’t just BS something and turn it in; I had to actually try. I picked up my phone and called my friend Aaron. Maybe he could tell me how he did his. When Aaron didn’t pick up, I realized it was because he was at my doorstep.

“Hey, dude,” I said when he invited himself in. I didn’t mind, I was used to the way Aaron was.

“Hey, I couldn’t write my essay so I came here,” Aaron explained.

Great, my only resource.

“That sucks, I was going to ask you for help,” I sighed.

“Yeah, I just came over to play Fallout.” Of course he did. Aaron was a worse slacker than me. Naturally, considering the situation I was just in, I let him play.

After burning two hours of valuable time, I looked back at the clock and saw it was just past 10:00. I sent Aaron on his way, saying I was tired, and then plopped myself back in the chair at my desk. Looking back at the essay, and the one question I had written, I banged my head down on my desk and groaned. I then

erased my one question, considering it may be thought too “inappropriate” for school.

I paced the room, watched an hour of TV, indulged in some salty popcorn and even broke into my stash of the last-known Girl Scout cookies. It was all just burning time, I knew, but I really just didn’t understand this essay. Why would she make us write something so difficult? Then I realized: she wouldn’t. I began to write away at my essay, the words coming easier and easier once I realized the concept.

The next day at school, my teacher asked us all to get up in front of the class and explain how the essay affected our outlook on the end of the school year, and read a part of theirs. I was stunned when even star students didn’t do the assignment. They all claimed it was impossible, and read off the 15 or so questions they had come up with. Aaron, whom no one was expecting to do the assignment, got up and simply said “I didn’t do it,” and sat back down. Everyone expected me to do the same, but they were in for a surprise when I got up and began reading from mine:

“I ask myself questions I never thought I’d ask every day. One can’t keep track of all the miniscule questions you ask, to yourself or to others, that you had never in a thousand years expected to ask. From simple questions like “Why can’t I make myself stay up all night to do this project?” “Why does my entire future rest on one test?” to “Why did that student kill himself?” “Why can’t I just get over my depression?”, everyone is haunted by questions. I don’t think any of us knew what to expect when we entered high school. No one knew what we’d become. Whether we’d be the popular kid everyone wants to hang out with on the weekend, or the loner who fights to get noticed. We all made it to the end though, and we all went through our share of struggles and issues, asking questions along the way. “What did I do to deserve this?” “Why can’t life be easier?”

We all find ourselves lost and confused at times, but one thing I’ve learned is that we’re all here for ourselves. You don’t need anyone in your life. You might think you do, but you don’t. You can stand alone strong. That’s something I never thought I’d ask: “Why do I have to do this alone?” The answer is, “Because you can.”

After I read the excerpt from my essay, I looked back at my class. They all stared with their ears perked, eyes wide. No one knew something so deep could come from the kid who never does his work. I guess that's one more question I'd asked myself: "Can I prove myself wrong?"

My teacher was shocked and pleased with my work. She gave me 100% on my paper for being the only one who saw the meaning behind her assignment. From that day onward, I always observed the questions I found myself asking, and noticed that, even the ones left unanswered, led me to being a stronger person.