

Literary Anthology

Wayne
High
School
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Paetry

Growing Flower

By Lyca Balbuena

She is a small girl from a small town in a small country
She is like a house or a home that provides for people
Sure, her windows might seem broken
And there are tear stains on the floor
But once you are inside, you start to understand
Society has broken her, with its standard and its rules
Because the place where she lives are being run by fools
She has dreams about what she wants to do in life
And she would do just about anything to be able to strive
She writes stories and loves art
And ink runs through her veins
Even though you barely see her story
She's still got a typewriter for a brain
In her life, there are new people that are a blessing
And old ones that vowed to stay, but promises are a weapon
They had doubts about what she can do
And she'll do much to prove them wrong
To her, it doesn't matter where she's from
She works all day and all night long
But life is a one big puzzle
And she's trying to figure it all out
She knows there'll be pieces where she doesn't belong
But she'll do her best to get along.

Gifted and Talented

By Christina Clink

Stuck in the eternity between first and last,
A space between success and failure.
I think there's a word for that,
It's called mediocre.
When kids are younger, schools
Set the smart ones up for failure.
"Gifted and Talented" is a joke.
Telling children that they're geniuses and prodigies.
But by the time they're 18 adults scream: "You're just average"
They fill their heads with false hope,
Inflating their egos and dependency on "smarts."
They label themselves with grades,
And each report card is a folded piece of paper,
Creating the links on the chain.
Dragging them down and anchoring them,
On the belief that they were once "Gifted and Talented."

Just Because I Have A Big Heart

By Devan Hibbard

Just because I have a big heart
Doesn't mean I'm weak,
That I don't recognize the negative in the world.
It means that I see the good in people, even when others don't.

Just because I have a big heart
Doesn't mean that I trust easily,
That I forgive people just because I'm nice.
It means that I want to give people chances to do better.

Just because I have a big heart
Doesn't mean I won't stand up for myself,
That I let people push me around,
Or let people push any of my friends or family around.
Having a big heart doesn't mean I don't give people a piece of my mind.

Having a big heart doesn't make anyone weak,
Having a big heart doesn't mean that people are foolish,
Having a big heart doesn't mean people cower down in other people's shadows.
So don't think for a single moment, that I or anyone else, are any less of a person.

Just Because I have A Big Heart

Flame of Phoenix

By Sataiea Simmons

born of flame of phoenix and flight of bird
a dazzling macaw ruled this jungle world
they soared across the night sky, leaving it ablaze
burnt embers and seared vines in their wake
their caw is strong and lengthy, alerting their presence
to all those in the dense foresting below
alas, they are not to be feared
for they are a guardian from the world far from here
their wing span sheds light on he who needs it most
prey, to let them see; predator, to let them hunt
this shimmering macaw is but the flame of life
it grants its gift to all whom are clever enough to capture it
and those who fall short must watch their own flame extinguish
as this macaw may make its own choices
it makes none for others, only gives them guiding light
and from then only wits may preserve this delicate inferno

Seasons

By Sataiea Simmons

In the beginning, it's so unbearably cold
Icy and slick with a thousand little snowflakes
The trees are slumbering and their saps frozen over
But still bleeds out when pierced by claws
Of those few animals not in hibernation
The leaves are piled thick and crisp by winter's nip
When the frost melts away, grass graces the land
Flowers bloom tall and strong, bees and dragonflies zip in the sky
Animals crawl from their holes and turn noses to the wind
And good weather springs from the still-damp earth
Thick coats are closeted and boots are put away
As time goes on, the sun's heat grows
Now the beaches and lakes are crowded
Grass wilts in the deep heat and sunbeams beat
Down onto those below, unsuspecting of harmful UVs
Trees stretch high taking in all the light
Leaving none to the cold forest floors

Leaves begin to fall, covering all
In their flaky embrace and crackle
Under the pressure of hunting animal paws
Gathering nutrition for the season to come
With steadfast and hardy ambition
This season's temperatures are mellow
And as flowers wilt they exhale final breaths of pollen
But nothing lives and lasts forever
And soon the cold frost crawls back
Spreading its thick claws across the land
And plush flesh of those who voyage into it
Trees return to their heavy unmovable slumber
And the year soon comes to an end
And repeats this all again

Teenager

By Arizona Ridgway

Just Because I'm Sixteen
Doesn't mean I'm wild and reckless
Or that I live life on the edge

Just Because I'm Sixteen
Doesn't mean I think the world revolves around me
Or that I need the spotlight on me

Just Because I'm Sixteen
Doesn't mean I need to have a boyfriend
Or that I want someone to love me

Just Because I'm Sixteen
Doesn't mean I want to grow up right now
Or that I'm ready for the next stage

Just Because I'm Sixteen
Doesn't mean I'm mature
Or that I can always be perfect

Just Because I'm Sixteen
Means that I've come a long way
And I have even further to go

Just Because I'm Black

By Jordan Womack

Just because I'm black doesn't mean I only like rap
Or make money from selling crack.
It doesn't mean I hate whites
Or sell drugs under city lights or get in fights.

Just because I'm black
Doesn't mean I'm dumb
Or do bad things for fun.

It doesn't mean I'm from the hood and
Always up to no good. It doesn't mean I don't
Have heart just because I'm dark.

It means I'm another human being
Like the person in the mirror you're seeing.

Descriptive Paragraph

Living in Upstate New York

By Devan Hibbard

Living up north, where all the giant trees and mountains are, is a pretty incredible thing. The smell of rain engulfs my senses as I take in a deep breath, almost as if I'm already in the middle of the storm. The dirt cools my warm toes as I stand there among the trees, but it wasn't hard. I'm able to wiggle my toes into the earth underneath me, taking in my surroundings. There is a light breeze, tickling my skin as my hair moved across my neck. In the distance, I hear a clap of thunder, and a then bright flash of lightning shadowed that sound just moments after it rang out across the valley. The trees around me dance to the soothing sounds of the area, birds chirping happy, harmonious sounds as the rain got closer. My lips part as I look up into the sky, the rain beginning to sprinkle down now, the fresh taste of the water waking my taste buds as the droplets fall into my mouth. Nature is a force to be reckoned with, but it can be such a beautiful thing, too.

Old Gray

By Keston Rizzo

This gray mare has seen it all -- from branding cows and tripping cattle in the pasture in the beginning of spring to the hot summer days at the ranch rodeos to the cool summer nights at the jackpot team roping that went until 3:00 in the morning which might've meant her being saddled all night. To the end of fall checking wheat pasture cattle in west Texas or fighting the blizzards in northern New Mexico to the ever-changing climate in Oklahoma. She's seen it all but this isn't the end of her story she's only 6 years old now. She's got a long road of adventures left in her. In her eyes, she might just think that she's just another horse that I ride, but in my eyes she's the best to ride I never have to worry about her not doing what she's supposed to. She never gets a cold back. I know she is a horse but she's also my best friend simply because she's always there and always seems to realize me when I'm stressed about something.

Pasko

By Lyca Balbuena

Oklahoma Writing Project Contest Winner

You can tell that Christmas is around when you can catch a glimpse of the color of rainbows that are hung about on the walls that were once lifeless and dull, and that is a tradition that we have in my hometown. As the darkness arrives, people unite outside. You can detect the aroma that activates your taste buds that makes your stomach rumble. Preparations start as early as September. You can hear the young children go up front of your house singing Christmas carols. On Christmas Eve, nearly all celebrate Noche Buena and almost everybody is invited. There's also Simbang Gabi where you go to church at 4 in the morning for straight nine days. So what does Christmas truly mean to Filipinos. It is a time where "thank you" is heard everywhere, and a brief time period of love, wholeness, and understanding.

Fiction

Sleep

By Katlyn Powell

Oklahoma Writing Project Writing Contest Winner

She has dark circles under her eyes imitating half moons in winter, with a messy bun poised high on the back of her head. In reality, it's me. It's the truth told by a quick glance through the cracked glass of the plane's bathroom mirror. I haven't slept for the past three days. The hospital nurse said I'd be in shock and prescribed me sleeping pills, but I just now brought myself to take one. The accident took my mom and little brother Ashton away from me. They were my only family, so I have to go stay in a group home in South Dakota until next May, when I turn eighteen. I push this out of my head and let the medicine work. My drowsiness swallows everything around me as I walk back to my seat. I need sleep.

Enhancement

By Kynzee Johnson

“Hurry up, they're gaining on us,” Chance whispered.

“We can't go any farther. You have a fever, and we both know that means you are about to change,” Kaylee whispered back. They stared at each other until Chance cried out in pain. His skin was bubbling and then returned smooth.

“Shhh,” Kaylee whispered, “They will hear you.”

“Sorry,” Chance said sarcastically. He flew forward and black hair grew out of his back, arms, and neck. His fingernails turned into claws and his hands to paws. His nose changed to a snout. His arms and legs shrunk. Kaylee couldn't believe what she was seeing, Chance was actually a wolf.

“Are you okay?” Kaylee whispered. Chance just stared at her.

“Right, right. OK. Can you walk? Because we need to go.”

Chance got up and started to walk. He was cautious at first but then got the hang of it. While Kaylee walked beside him, Chance started to also. They started to run full sprint. Then Chance stopped in front of Kaylee. When she stopped she ran into Chance and he flew forward. When Chance got up he growled at her.

Chance continued walking, and when he turned around he growled at Kaylee and jerked his head toward a nearby bush. Kaylee started to walk over to the bush and heard a yelp. When she turned around she couldn't find him. Finally she saw him on the ground trying to get up. Kaylee ran as fast as she could to see what happened. When she got closer she saw him lying there looking almost asleep other than the fact that she could see the darts that dug deep in his neck. She wanted to just stay there with him until he awoke, but she heard a stick crack. When she turned around there was a group of people, she tried to look at their faces. But the only thing she seen was a blur. When they took a few more steps towards her, it took only a split second to realize that The Mead Group found them. She tried to take off running. But the second she turned around there was a gun on her chest. Before she could react the gun went off and she fell to the ground completely limp.

When Kaylee awoke, she felt dizzy. It took her only a few seconds to take in her surroundings. The smell was like chemicals and flowers. It took her only three more seconds to realize where she was. She looked around for more evidence where she was. The bed sheets were the same, her clothes were the same. The only thing different was that there was a welcome sign, the only time she has ever seen that when she first came to this house. She heard a small knock on the door, and she remembered exactly where she was. The same place that made her believe she was schizophrenic. When she didn't answer the door it slowly opened. There stood the woman she feared most, the one that shot her.

"Everyone this is Kaylee," the woman she kept forgetting her name said behind her. "So go about your chores then you can talk and introduce yourself." Everyone started to get up and then she realized that this didn't make any sense. She had already been here. Already meet these people. Because she remembered this is where Chance and her had meet. She looked over to the right side of the house and there he was just standing there just like when she first saw him, his hair in a cute little mess like he hadn't brushed it this morning--

"Britt!" The woman behind her called out before she could finish her thought about him.

"Yes?" The girl named Britt called back.

"You and Kaylee have the same chores from this point on. So show her around where she is sleeping, the rules about this place, and you have heard it all before." the woman said.

"Yes, Mrs. Harper," Britt said. Then she turned to her and said "Hi, my name is Britten but everyone calls me Britt. I will be showing you around. Also this is my friend Jaimee," she said.

"Hey, freshie huh, cool. This is our other friend Kynzee." Jaimee said.

"What's up my new homie," Kynzee said.

"I already know who you all are," Kaylee said back to them all.

"If you want to live I would say you shouldn't say that so loud," Jaimee hissed. All Britten and Kynzee did was stare her down as if to say you best listen to her, if you know what's good for you.

That's how it all started. Again.

Personal Narrative

Personal Struggles

By Devan Hibbard

Standing in front of the mirror, I see that I have so much further to go. There's so much more work that I have to do, and I know that it's going to be a long and hard process. But a smooth sea never made a skillful sailor. I know that I won't ever be labeled a 'skinny' person, like society would call fit individuals, but that's not even my goal. In fact, I'm honestly trying my best to ignore society all together, because can you remember who you were, before the world told you who to be? I can, but that's because I refuse to put myself in the midst of all the labels.

I'm sure that most people in the world have personal goals, things they want to change, or just struggles they have with themselves. My struggle sounds like your everyday lazy person, because that struggle is my weight. I have always been a bigger person, for as long as I can remember actually. When I was of Elementary age, I was quite active. But when I got into Middle School, stress overwhelmed my poor mind. I am a very emotional person, and if you've known me for any time at all, you know that important trait very well. I try not to be so emotional, but I can't help it. With being emotional comes ways to deal with those emotions, and my way of dealing with them was to eat. I would stress eat, I would happy eat, I would eat with just about any of my emotions, which was not a good thing, because as the days went on, I was becoming more and more inactive. I wasn't in sports; I was the band nerd who played clarinet. Looking back at myself from where I am now, I am upset. I am so mad at myself for doing this to my body. At the age of 13, I realized that there was something wrong. I realized that I didn't look like the other girls in my school, and that it was really hard for me to go out and buy clothing.

I wish that I had started doing something about it at 13, but I didn't. I kept on, because I thought there wasn't any hope. I thought that I was the way I was, because God was punishing me for caring about the world around me too much. By the time I got into High School, I was maintaining the weight of 200 pounds. Then though, I was in the Wayne Bulldog Marching Regiment, and that was all the activity I was getting. I became a hermit; I was overly lazy, though I did walk the whole two blocks to and from school every day. That wasn't enough, especially considering my eating habits didn't

change. All throughout my Freshman and Sophomore years, I was beginning to realize that I had to change something. It wouldn't magically happen overnight, no one else would do it either, I had to be the one to change myself.

Finally, at the end of my sophomore year, I did something. I got my first job, and boy was I nervous about it. I got a job at the Braum's in Purcell, and I still work there now. Within my first month of working there, I lost 10 pounds. I felt a sense of, happiness? I saw a glimpse of hope for myself, and so I kept going. You might think that working at a place like Braum's, I'd be gaining weight rather than losing it. That couldn't be any more of an incorrect thought. I move around so much, I lift so many different heavy things, even scooping ice cream is hard (I mean, it IS a frozen item..). By the end of the summer, I lost 20 pounds, and I actually dropped 2 jean sizes.

When school was around the corner, I realized I was only going to be able to work 2 days a week, and that would be on the weekends. I became the Drum major for the year, but something else incredible happened. I got accepted into the Criminal Justice course at the Mid America Technology center. Now this course is very difficult, and a lot of people are pushed too far. There is a lot of mind work, but there's even more physical work and that's really hard for me.

I, again, was thrown into something that I wasn't able to do all that well. Push-ups, pull-ups, sit-ups, crunches, wrestling, and even polishing my boots prove to be a hassle.

Here I am, today, almost two months into my school year. We have Physical Training twice a week, and each time it kills me (figuratively of course). Being Drum Major is great, but I don't think it's for me, I'm thinking that next year one of the two girls that tried out with me, should be the Drum Major. I'm still working at Braum's, but only on Saturday's and Sunday's. I haven't really lost anymore weight since school started, and I haven't gained it back either. I've at least managed to maintain the weight. My body isn't where I want it to be yet, but I'm getting there. Slow and steady wins the race, right? I stand in front of my mirror at home, just looking at myself. I can barely see how far I've come, but that's because I know how much farther I have to go.

Important

By Caitlin Mantooth

Oklahoma Writing Project Contest Winner

Janis Cramer Personal Narrative Award Winner

Needed. Vital. Crucial. Critical. Essential. Paramount. What do all these words have in common? They all have the same meaning. Important. Just the word makes you feel that surge of power and adrenaline. Important. You know the feeling, it's almost as if you're soaring. Even if it's just for a moment, it's amazing. I'm sure at one time or another, you've felt it. For me, it was in my 6th grade year.

I'm good at math. Always have been. It just makes sense to me. So you can imagine my surprise when I grab schedule off of the table stacked full of them to find that I've been placed in a second math class. A remedial math class. Confused and upset, I went straight to guidance counselor's office. I knocked twice on her large, heavy wooden door. "Come on in," she said through the door. As I started to explain my situation I could feel tears welling up in my eyes, as if I had accidentally gotten shampoo in them while taking a shower, but I kept my tears at bay. As I finished, the guidance counselor took one look at my big, sad eyes and broke out into a smile. I was about as confused as a duck that couldn't figure out how to swim when she finally spoke up.

"Honey," she said. "You aren't in that class on accident. You're in that class as an aid."

"An aid?" I asked, still a little confused.

"An aid," she confirmed. "You're going to help some of the students that struggle on their work."

I looked at her, in shock at first, then a huge grin spread across my face, high enough to reach my eyes. I carried that smile around for the whole rest of the day,

even though I was still a little unsure. What if I wasn't ready? What if I messed up and everyone laughed at me or they decided I couldn't be an aid and kicked me out of the class? Or worse, decided to place me in it as a student? Even with these scary thoughts swimming in my head, I was still as excited as mouse at a cheese tasting convention.

I'm not normally the type of person to wake up early unless it's required of me, but on the first day of school I was awake a solid half hour before my alarm, which was set for 6:00 a.m., went off. I just laid in bed squirming with excitement over how amazing my first day of middle school was going to be. All day, I patiently awaited 6th hour, and classes seemed to fly by. In my 5th hour athletics class, as soon as my coach blew his whistle, signaling that the class was over and it was time to change clothes and get to 6th hour, I practically sprinted to the locker room, and changed in what must have been record-breaking speed. I stopped in the hall, just before I reached the classroom to catch my breath and gain my composure, and then I walked slowly into the classroom. As I took my seat next to the teacher's desk, she smiled at me. After that, I couldn't have wiped the smile off my face if I had tried. Every time she asked me to do something, or help someone with something I could feel it. I felt important.

Memorable Moments

By Arizona Ridgeway

There are days in a person's life that you can't erase from your memory. Some you don't want to remember and some you can't forget. Either way, I've found that these are the days that end up shaping your life. For better or for worse, I can't say. It all depends on what happened to you and more importantly, how you responded to the event. I believe I behaved in the normal fashion, however I believe the normal reaction may not be the best response.

It was a morning like any other, the skies cleared and May 14th promised to be a beautiful day. I was up, and anxious. My family, which includes my brother's girlfriend, piled into our car and we left for the church in the early afternoon. Aforementioned girlfriend (Rachel) and I grabbed our makeup bags and our dresses and went to a small room for us to get ready in.

"I'll start on your hair first, and then I'll do mine," Rachel grabbed a comb as she spoke and began dragging it through the mass of blonde tangles I call my hair. She forcefully sat me down on a chair and handed my makeup bag to me.

I obligingly took the pink saddlebag containing my makeup and set to work on making my skin appear to be clear. This is always a long, and difficult process as acne has declared war on my face. We talked idly, she burned my scalp with the curler a few times, and I stabbed myself in the eye with my mascara. I almost started on my eyeshadow, but her sister walked in, and instantly halted me.

"Okay, I'm going to finish you up, Zoe. What eyeshadow do you have?" I pointed at my two pallets and she spared us any more pleasantries, going to town on my eyelids. She drew on my eyeliner, mostly because it always ends up thick when I do it and she liked me too much to let me go out looking goth. After that, she took my completed hair, and Rachel watched and curled her ginger locks as my hair was pulled in to small french braid to hold my bangs back. The bottom half of my hair was down, and the top in an elegant braid. At some point during all of this the bride had entered, basically ignored me, and began to prep. I had Rachel help me into my bridesmaid dress, the black fabric slowly enveloping my figure as she zipped up the back, and placed the see-through black shoulder wrap around me.

The dress was lovely, the silver embellishments contrasting beautifully with the dark material. Its beauty did nothing to ease my nerves and anxiety as this event drew

nearer. The room slowly began to fill with people preparing the bride, or simple loitering about. I was scarcely spared a second glance and I soon left, Rachel and her sister, Logan, had left earlier.

I wandered the hall, stopping in the sanctuary to speak with my father and my uncle who were presiding over the ceremony. I did not announce my fears, but I believe they could see in my eyes all of my trepidation towards this event. I continued my trek through the church, getting vaguely lost in the unfamiliar halls. It didn't matter to me, I was just wasting time and trying to calm myself before I left.

I visited the kitchen, the reception hall, my brothers who had just started their usher duties and couldn't talk, and Logan and Rachel sitting in a pew with their family and my Mother. I went back to the dressing room, now deserted, and examined myself in the three way mirror. I looked very old, and very scared. The dress was flattering towards my figure, but even so I pulled my lace covering tighter around me. I looked straight at myself in the mirror and resolved to myself that I would get through this smiling.

"Arizona, there you are!" My other bridesmaid ran in and handed me my bouquet," Come out now, the wedding starts in ten, and you walk in first."

I followed her obediently to the entryway, and at her signal I gathered my wits about me, attempted to calm my thumping heart, put a smile on my face, and walked down the aisle.

A sea of unknown faces turned to stare at me. My father and uncle smiled encouragingly at me and that helped me tremendously. The endless walk through sanctuary was eerie, and I felt as though I was in a movie. Everything felt unreal, the stained glass windows towering above me, and the grand piano playing the processional. When I finally reached my designated position I began to breathe normally. The other bridesmaid and the flower girl soon joined me but I took little notice of that. I found my brothers eyes, and he did what he always does to make me feel better. He gave me a wink, it's kind of our way of saying," Everything is okay, and I think you are doing great." It's just a little supportive thing he does for me, and it never fails to make me feel better.

Suitably calmed, I returned my attention to the groomsman across from me, who just so happened to be my younger cousin. He was stiff as a board, and clearly as uncomfortable as I was. I only hoped I wasn't as obviously awkward.

The throng of onlookers stood to their feet as the bride began her journey down the aisle. She was flanked by two grown men, her grandsons, and my soon to be cousins.

My grandfather's eyes lit up as she walked serenely towards him in her silver dress. He stood a little straighter and his best man, my great uncle, gave him a pat on the shoulder.

I couldn't truly tell you what my uncle said for the welcoming. I was preoccupied with trying to smile charmingly, and also blink back tears. It was all happening so fast. My grandmother had died just under four years earlier, and I had met my step-grandmother, Wilma, a few months earlier.

My breath hitched in my throat and my vision blurred. I tried to stay calm, but all I wanted to do was start crying as the pain of missing my grandmother, and the knowledge that would change everything filled me. The pain was crushing, and as the congregation bowed their heads in prayer all I wanted was to run, to flee this cursed building. And not return until my grandmother returned to me.

But then I looked at my Papa. He was holding Wilma's hand and looked happier than I had seen him in years. It struck me then that however much I missed Grandma, Papa, must feel that tenfold. But Wilma brought him happiness. I did not matter in this, it wasn't about me. It was about the happiness of my family, and I knew that was all I truly wanted. With that my tears dried up, and I began to smile from my heart.

I managed to enjoy myself, laughing quietly when the rings fell and had to pick up. We ended the ceremony and I exited with my cousin as gracefully as I was capable of. I didn't trip in my heels until after I had exited the sanctuary, and I was grateful for that. My father and I left soon after the ceremony and started towards home. I was quiet because I had realized something again.

Just because I had a new grandmother didn't mean I had to forget my old one. She lived forever within me, and in heaven, with God.

I stared out the window, watching the unadulterated prairie roll by me. I gazed upon the sun as it slowly began to sink beyond the horizon. As the last vestiges of light reached my face I let a tear roll down my face, in memory of my grandmother.

I am different than I was before this event. I see clearer than I did before. I know Wilma was just anxious on the wedding day, and didn't truly have time to talk, she wasn't ignoring me. Her family has reached out to us several times. She is my grandmother and she has changed my life and my grandfather's. And I have accepted that.

My Big Break

By Hunter Trejo

Oklahoma Council of Teachers of English Writing Contest Winner

Have you ever wanted something so badly that you would do anything to get it? I mean like sell your soul to the devil -- just kidding! Seriously though, you push yourself so hard that you're in physical and mental pain. The saying is "No pain. No gain," and that's exactly what I had to go through to get where I am today, and I wouldn't trade a single minute of the blood, sweat, and definitely tears that it took for me to make history here and be able to called myself Wayne's first ever male cheerleader. I was so excited -- until the first game.

The whole bus ride to Healtton seemed to take a lifetime and a half, and I was listening to my playlist I have for Friday nights. It's pretty much any song that's fast and loud. With each and every passing mile, I felt the butterflies fluttering deep in my stomach. It wasn't until we entered Healtton that I realized this was my first game ever as Wayne's first male cheerleader. What if people had high expectations, and I didn't show them what I was capable of that? Then was I inadequate for the new title? I finally calmed my nerves down enough to walk off the bus where we put our bags at and our run through, and the moment smelled of the sweet aroma of the proper looking field, and the chattering voices up in the stand. I think I stopped breathing for a moment, and I was ready to give this all I had and just be the best I could be. The

bright lights are enough to blind you, and my heart beat ..1 Mississippi...2 Mississippi, and now I'm so nervous I feel like I might even faint. My heart is in my throat, I have to blink to hold back the tears, this is too much for to handle I just want to give up, but if I was to quit then all my hard work I've put into three years would just be wasted time. From the outside I looked cool, calm, and collected, but on the inside I was like a little kid separated from their mother at the supermarket. I was trying my hardest not sweat through my uniform, but that didn't help the more the tried not to sweat the more perspired I got.

Once I finally got in formation I was as cool a cucumber, I danced to our schools proud fight song with the grace and agility of a gazelle. My smile was fun, flirty, and cheerful, and I was oozing with pride and joy as I cheered my first game as Wayne's first male cheerleader.

Funny Memory

By Hailey Watts

I will never forget the day that I thought my best friend Lilly Alvarado died. We were in Mrs. Barnes fifth grade class, so we were around the age of eleven. We were standing outside on a cool fall afternoon playing on the playground after lunch. We were standing underneath our favorite tree by the playground fence. The leaves were a beautiful deep orange color, and the air smelled sour like it was about to rain. As we stood there looking up at the clouds trying to make shapes out of them I told Lilly that the one in the center of the clouds looked like a tiny bunny, but she insisted that it was a fire breathing dragon. Ten minutes into watching the clouds, we noticed that the sky was turning grey. Within three minutes, the sky was a dark grey, almost black, and the wind was gusting. Lilly and I started to get scared because we thought that we were having a tornado. The teacher on duty blew her whistle and told us to line up so that we could go inside. I turned my back to her and I bent down to pick up my jacket that was laying across the roots of the enormous tree. After picking up my jacket, I turned back around to face Lilly and tell her to hold my hand so that we would not blow away and get lost, but she was not standing there. I looked around the playground to see if I could find her, but I could not see a thing with all the dirt blowing around. I started to shout her name out as loud as I could, but I got no response from her. After five minutes of walking around to find her and screaming out her name, I thought this is it,

my best friend got sucked up in a tornado. I started to cry while walking toward the door to line up with the rest of my class. My teacher asked me why I was crying, but I did not tell her. Mrs. Barnes propped open the double doors for us so that we could go back to our classroom. When we got back, I sat at my desk in the far corner of the room and cried. Everybody wondered why I was crying, but I would not talk to anyone because I was so upset that my best friend died. All of a sudden, the power went out and I asked Mrs. Barnes if we were having a tornado and if we needed to take shelter in the hallway. After five minutes of her trying to convince me that there was no tornado, I finally believed her and sat back down in my seat and laid my head down on my desk when I heard the classroom door open. I looked up, and Lilly was standing in the doorway. I got so excited and I jumped up out of my seat and ran to her. I gave her a big hug and she asked me why my face was so wet. I then proceeded to tell her what I thought happened. I started to laugh at myself because of how ridiculous it sounded coming out of my mouth. She started to laugh also and informed me that she had just went to find her jacket. I started to laugh even harder at myself, and the whole class joined in laughter with Lilly and I.

Best Day Ever

By Jordan Womack

There I was starting out a new chapter of my life, new school, new friends, new everything. That's all I could even think about sitting in this crisp cold room, nothing but silence in the air. I'm thinking about how crazy it is just coming from such a small school, 300 people in the whole school, to being here where there's more kids than that in just my sophomore grade. As I sat there in pure silence, there was a knock at the hard wooden door of that geometry class, and two of my new friends called me outside to ask me questions for yearbook.

“How are you feeling about this year?”

“How do you think the football team will do?” Just a barrage of questions. One-by-one the questions came in seeming endless, but finally they came to a halt because the first hour bell had sounded.

I made my way through the densely crowded hallways, weaving through kid after kid. As I walked through, I bumped into this girl, and she dropped all of her stuff. Papers everywhere. I felt terrible. My face turned red as I said I'm sorry and leaned in to help collect the stack of papers off the floor. I looked up at her, not really having to get a glimpse of this woman. And as I looked up, I saw these eyes that you could get lost into, this beautiful smile that just lit up the world. Just that smile could turn the worst day ever into a dream. I was speechless at the sight of this girl; she was

absolutely beautiful. I finally had collected all the scattered papers and handed them back to this amazing-to-the-eyes woman and introduced myself. I was so embarrassed that I just did such a thing.

As she went to tell me her name, the words almost slipping out of her mouth, the late bell had rung. She quickly said, "I'm sorry. I gotta go to class. Thank you for helping me with the papers."

Man this sucks, is all I could think. I don't even know this girl's name. So here I am walking to my class kinda stunned by what just happened. After I talked to her, I got this feeling that I knew her. It was a crazy feeling. Just a feeling like we've met before. I arrived at my class with thoughts flying through my head, so many questions left unanswered. I went throughout the day kinda stuck in thought about that same girl.

As the final bell sounded, I walked to my car, glad that my first day went well. I saw that girl again and she was parked right by me. I ran over to my car and started a conversation with her about the incident earlier that day, and it led to a great conversation. As she told me more about herself, that feeling like I knew her got stronger. She then began to tell me how she used to live in Oklahoma City and lived by this kid named Jordan when she was a kid. She told me how he got taken away from his family, and how they moved to Norman later that year. And we both looked into each other's eyes in shock, just realizing that we had known each other from years ago. It was a crazy feeling! How did this even happen? We then became really good friends and started dating a few months later. We have now been dating for a year.

Handling Failure

By Michelle Waters

Oklahoma Writing Project Contest Winner

Sometimes we create goals for ourselves without realizing we've set the treadmill too fast. Before we know it, we're gripping the handles and hoping we don't slide off the end and slam into the wall. Talk about a big fail! Speaking of... I experienced a stunning failure shortage of success earlier this year when I decided to start running. Some people might think I'm nuts for wanting to run after 25 years of sitting on my rear in an office chair followed by doing nothing more strenuous than walking around a classroom. But I figured it's never too late to get in shape. Not to mention, I knew the struggles I'd face on my journey to fitness would mirror the struggles many of my student writers also face. Even better, my efforts would enable me to connect with my more athletic students via writing-related metaphors. So I spoke with a teacher friend who lost 90 pounds over three years -- and who recently ran her first half marathon -- and set up a plan to train for my first 5K.

I originally set a goal to run a mile. Surely a measly little mile would be easy! I based this assumption on my junior high school days, during which I spent a year practicing with the high school softball team. Each day of practice at Moore High School, we had to run from the softball field to the brick wall of the school and back -- twice. The coach assured us this distance equaled a mile. The first time was hard, but not so bad. Of course, I wasn't carting around 30 extra pounds, and I was significantly younger. So after just a semester, running had gotten much easier, and friends had noticed that I looked slimmer. Naturally, I thought running two decades later would be relatively easy. Boy, was I wrong!

The very first time I tried to run, I went to the park, turned on my Map My Walk app, and then proceeded to run for about 10 feet before I felt like I was going to die.

I considered giving up.

I considered deciding that I wasn't meant to run.

I seriously thought about shutting up my inner fitness nut with a handful of M&Ms.

But then I thought about my students -- the ones who I require to write for five minutes at the beginning of every class, the ones who struggle to squeak out even one sentence in those five minutes, the ones who dread writing every single day. What would I tell them if I gave up? How could I ask them persevere through their drafting, revising, and editing difficulties if I can't keep fighting through my own failure?

I decided that I am stronger than that. When I resolve to do something, I get it done. When people (including myself) try to stuff me into metaphorical boxes, or build fences around my goals, I break through. I overcame debilitating shyness as a newspaper reporter in my previous career by forcing myself to interview people -- Student Council Presidents, high school baseball stars, police chiefs, bull riders, firefighters, mayors, governors, senators and representatives, business owners, and scary homicide detectives. If I can overcome my own fears and later spend six hours a day speaking in front of groups of middle and high school students, surely I can power through my lack of strength and conditioning.

Instead of giving up, I talked to my running coach/mentor and adjusted my goals. I decided to walk a half mile first. Whew! This goal was much more doable. Once I'd walked a half mile three times (I walk on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday), I added another half mile. This was not fun. I sweated. (Eew!) I huffed and puffed like the big bad wolf, though I could not have knocked down any houses, unless I fell on them. I persevered and powered through the pain. Because I was willing to work through the discomfort, I am now able to walk five miles at one time. Every time I work on running, I can run just a little bit further. I also share my journey with my students, so they can both learn from my experiences and commiserate with me.

I have also returned to my original goal of running a mile. While I have been able to increase the distance I can walk, running for half a mile still eludes me. But I'm not going to give up. I guess you could say this is my mini-goal. My ultimate goal, for now, is to be able to run an entire 5K, which is 3.1 miles. Once I have achieved this goal -- and I will! -- I will set a new goal.

As I continue my journey, I'll share with my students so that they can see writing, like running, is a process, and just because reaching a goal might hurt, just because it might make you sweat, just because it might take what seems like a hundred years, doesn't mean we give up. We work through it, we work together, and we seek help when we need it. If we discover we've set the treadmill speed too high, we readjust. We don't roll over and play dead because we don't meet that initial goal. We set new goals, and keep striving to reach them.

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