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1-1-2014

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Recommended Citation

"Do The Write Thing Essay, 2014" (2014). *Do the Write Thing, Boston*. 41.
<https://scholarworks.umb.edu/dtw/41>

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Long Sleeves in the summer

(A fiction story)

Sweat ran down my back, sprinting all the way to my calves. I swipe my eraser against my desk like a wet paintbrush.

Mrs.Un's sharp heels click on against the floor, making her way up to my desk. "Jeremy, i think it's time i call your mother. She's ought to be worried with you trapped in this heat."

My stomach drops. "No! She working at the diner from 5-10 today and she really doesn't care if i'm out."

She raises an eyebrow. "She won't care?"

My palms get sweaty and swell up. "I don't mean it like that Mrs.Un! She just cares about me a lot, but trusts that i'll go home soon enough."

Mrs.Un refreshes her posture and licks her top lip. "Speaking of your mother, i have yet to meet her."

There was an awkward silence, and once again she broke it. "Jeremy, are you sure that's not a scar?"

That was my cue. "Just a birthmark! I ought to be on my way now, thanks Mrs.Un!" I grasp my bag and walk out of the room, flinging myself off the staircase and into the raging heat. My sweat drips down my back and forehead. I look around before rolling up my sleeves revealing scars and my rash.

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I swing the door open, collapsing on the couch. There's a funny smell and i know right away that it's alcohol. She lied. She always does. Why did i think she would change? Why did i think i would change? Why wasn't i someone everyone wanted for their child? Why was i that last rotten pumpkin in the pumpkin patch after Halloween?

Tears swelled up in my throat, *no.not now you baby! If you cry Richard can hear you and then he'll know you came back!* But the choked sobs came out like a volcano, and no Richard was there.

I blindley open my subscription , written in bold letters; **Haney, Richard 16 years of age:Diabetes**. Did everything have to have a label on it? I thought as i popped in three of them. Most kids with diabetes my age would be taking one pill, but due to my weight i take 3 pills. The first thing i notice is that there's only 2 pill left after the one's i took, and my heart sinks realizing that my mother has been taking them.

At night i sleep on the couch, just to wake up from the slamming of a door. "I thought I told you not to come back here!"

My heart stops because there in the corner is Richard. His long dreadlocks are tied back in a bandanna and he has tattoo on his left arm. "I'm sorry, i really am but i didn't know where to go, and i started to panic." I begin sobbing. He checks my pill jar and he scowls angrily. "you took them? There's only two left, you fat idiot! Why did you take them?!"

"I-"

"WHY DID YOU TAKE THEM?!" Richard lurches towards me and take a broken beer bottle throwing it at me and punching me in the face countless times. Blood is all over his fist as he kicks me on the floor before screaming. "You-you better leave kid i won't let you live if you come

back here i don't care about your stupid needs, GET OUT OF HERE! When your mom comes home, oh she's gonna-"He didn't know what to say. "You're gonna be in deep trouble" Then, he just wiped the blood on his fists and walked out into the cold, dark night.

The next morning i woke up with dried blood all over my clothes, and i had bruises and scars from being kicked and punched. On my shoulder there was a mark from the broken beer bottle Richard had attacked me with.

The door swung open again, my heart began beating a million miles an hour. *This is it.* I thought. *Richard is actually going to kill me.* But to my surprise, my mother opened the door. "Mom?"

My mother look in my direction and gave me a smile. "Oh Jeremy." She sits across the floor from me. "My baby, what happened to you?" Her hands shake as she touches my face.

"I just got um a little hurt." Each word that comes out of my mouth aches my entire body. "Mom, i thought you said you were going to stop drinking and-" I was hesitant to say drugs.

"Oh honey i've been doing great i haven't drinken in a fully week." My mother lies, for i can smell the strong scent of alcohol on her breath. "But i need your help, you know your pills, i need to borrow some."

I open my mouth but nothing comes out. "Mom i need those pills, Richard already has taken most."

"Darling. There is something terribly wrong with you, and i believe that God gives us what's best for us, but i don't think it is right that you are my son. I've raised you and helped you but you don't even help your poor mother."

I stopped breathing. In my life i have been punched, kicked, and thrown down, but never had anything hurted so much in my entire life. I nodded my head through tears, and without a word she gets up, takes my pills and leaves me.

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I didn't go to school, i couldn't, with my dried blood all over my shirt and me looking as bad as i did. There was only one pill left on the counter my mom had dropped, but i walked past it and into the street. I had walked for what seemed like miles, when i only noticed that i was right near the school. I hid under the bridge across the street, where i stayed for a couple of hours. I felt so weak without taking my pills, it felt like my life was slipping through my fingers.

I had been depressed for the past few days, not wanting to eat, or move, or go to school, but still no one cared and everything remained the same. I wished i could run to Mrs.Un and have them take Richard away, but Richard would find a way to get back at me, he always does. When the students came outside, i stayed hidden, even though i felt like i couldn't move. In a couple minutes i became oddly cold, even though it was blazing heat and i was wearing long sleeves. I began to hallucinate, and that was when i noticed that i actually need those pills. It only hurts a little, but for the most part it was a strange feeling; was i dying?

I was pretty sure i was dying, and i felt peaceful and at rest for once until i heard Richard screaming and running towards me. I was nervous of course, and something came across my mind; i've never had a happy life, and at the same time i was seriously considering suicide, but how could i here? I'd want it to be quick and fast, not long and painful.

But Richard was extremely close and without thinking i ran towards the school. Everyone turned their heads, and all of a sudden a tattooed arm reach across my neck and pushed me

down. "WHY DID YOU TAKE THE PILLS?!" He shouted and threw me against the wall. As painful as it looked i felt nothing- no pain. Or maybe i did and it didn't matter. I knew he was going to win, and how horrific it was for the students to see. He ripped my sleeves off, revealing my scars and wounds.

My face was against the ground, with Richard kicking my ribs, when 2 people threw Richard off of me, and then i just remember being in a white hospital with Mrs.Un staring at me. A spanish nurse with short back hair was right next to her. "You were in diabetic shock for almost 2 hours."

Mrs.Un looked upset and pitiful. "You should have told me Jeremy, you could have been killed from that dangerous man and all your wounds, not to mention not taking your pills."

"I know."

"We have to do many surgeries on you and you have a while to heal in this hospital before we can send you home."

"I can't back to my mom." Is all i said.

"Ah, yes you are arranged to be living in a foster care." The nurse smiles. "We'll make sure your safe, Jeremy, that's what we're here for."

"And i have arranged a program at the school for kids who are abused." Mrs.Un adds. I don't know if i look like i'm smiling, but i was. When the nurse and Mrs.Un left me alone. I closed my eyes. *Here that?* I thought to myself. *That is silence.* And silence and peacefulness were a beauty only one can truly appreciate.

"You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, 'I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along'." -Eleanor Roosevelt