

HELLESDON HIGH SCHOOL

# Lorna Capes Portfolio

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Creative Writing Prose and Poetry

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## Here She Is

Here she is: in all her glory, strutting down the corridor toward her minions. The beautiful, bad girl who is the heartbreaker of Saint Mayflower College: Karly Summers.

She has a reputation for being a troublemaker for not only Saint Mayflower but also society in general with her argumentative and flirtatious ways.

It's strange: she used to live next door to me for years and was a good girl until high school. Kicked out of home, in juvenile detention for a year and still the most desired girl in town - even with her anger issues and street fighting reputation.

She has the perfect, red hair and green eyes combo that she accessorizes with a cigarette and smoked eye shadow.

Allow me to introduce myself: my name's Jacob Carter, the quiet good boy whose idea of a fun Friday night is revision and the occasional gaming marathon.

After collecting my books, I close my locker and am suddenly met with the bad, beautiful creature herself.

She has her back pressed against the row of lockers, a seductive smirk on her face as she locks eyes with me: "Hello, Jakey Boy." No one has called me Jakey in years - the last person being Karly before she changed.

"H-h-hello, Karly." *Smooth.*

"Be a dear and tell me what we have first, will ya?" Her usual theme of dark clothing is maintained with black, ripped skinny jeans; her classic leather jacket and a tight crop top exposes her dangling belly piercing of a crystal skull and angel wings.

"Um, Psy-Psychology. Then S-Science." I stumble over my words and almost drop my books out of sheer embarrassment. Her troops of wannabes watch us and whisper to one another excitedly. I'd be worried if it weren't for Karly standing with me.

"You trip over your words more than I trip out at weekends." Karly stands at her full height, eyes looking me up and down slowly before regaining their fix on me once more. "But thanks anyways, babe."

And with that she turns around and leaves me standing alone, thinking that, if people were rain, I'd be drizzle and she'd be a hurricane.

Damn, I can be a great poet if I try.

Psychology is my all-time favorite subject; I don't really know why, but I always find it the most fascinating.

I make my way to the back of the class, invisible to everyone present and waiting. Paper planes fly around the class, soaring past the Gossip Girls. A few of Karly's friends are already here;

however they barely look up from their phones. Thankfully, the jocks don't notice me as I sneak past their table of gum and jerseys, and arrive at the empty table that I'm oh-so-familiar with. It's not that the jocks scare me - far from it. Their lack of brainpower and awful yellow jackets make them impossible to be seen as an object of fear. No, it's their annoying cologne and verbal abuse that pisses me off to the point where I never go near the soccer field.

"Yo, Jake." I look up to be met with the blue eyes of Jackson towering over my desk. "The hell were you talking to my girl about earlier?"

Jackson Hunter is the school's pride and joy for football and lacrosse and the apple of every chick's eye. He's nicknamed 'The Brute' by all the coaches for breaking the legs of three different guys in the NFL finals. The whole dark hair and blue eyes combination has almost every girl swooning. Key word is *almost*, as Karly humped and dumped him after finally realizing how idiotic he is.

I don't know why, but speaking to Karly earlier gave me a rush of confidence, which leads me to sitting up, leaning forward and grinning from ear to ear. "Your girl?" I began, "I thought she broke up with your dumb ass a few weeks ago?" The second those words leave my mouth I can feel my face burn with regret, as I see people snicker and observe us from the corner of my eye.

For a moment, Jackson stares at me dumbfounded, before grabbing me by the scruff of my neck, causing my face to be inches away from his. "What the hell did you say to me?" Every syllable he utters leads to more and more spit on my face that I'm too afraid to wipe away.

I don't move. I just tense up as I stare deeply into the ocean blue eyes of the boy that could easily snap me in two with his bare, sweaty hands.

"I said; what the hell did you say to me?" His voice becomes a harsh whisper that rattles through my skull, and I swear it knocks my gray beanie off my head.

“Leave him alone, Jackson.” Four words, one voice and a few seconds of silence and stillness. Out of the corner of my eye, I see everyone turn their attention to the door and away from us.

Jackson immediately lets go of my shirt, causing me to fall back into my seat. “Babe?” I can practically hear the smile in his voice.

“I’m not your babe anymore.” I can hear Karly’s voice clearly from here, venom dripping from every word. Finally, she steps to the side, allowing me to look at her fully. Even though it’s barely been ten minutes, she’s still gorgeous, and you can see she’s touched up her winged eyeliner and lipstick.

Jackson steps closer to Karly and therefore further from me. “But, babe-“

Karly raises her hand, gaining full control as she silences The Brute. “I said; I’m not your babe anymore.” Her voice is cold as she walks towards Jackson. At first, I think that’s the end of it all until Karly strolls past Jackson and straight to me.

“You okay, babe?” People have already lost interest in the whole conversation and resumed their previous activities of paper craft and complaining. However, Karly’s friends were still watching, all grinning from ear to ear. “Jakey? Are you alright?”

“Um, yeah, I am. Thanks.” Call me butter, because I’m on a roll!

“Good. I know how much of an asshole Jackson is,” she says, tucking a stray strand of hair behind her ear. “Well, I’ll see you later, Jacob.”

For the second time that day, I watch her turn her back to me and leave, swaying her hips towards her table of leather-jacket-wearing followers who were watching us intently. She only calls me Jacob when she’s serious.

I guess she still does care about me, even just a tad.

Ten minutes late, Mrs Webb finally arrives to teach us the basics of Psychology for the third lesson in a row. Seeing as I've already revised this at home, I don't feel guilty about zoning out for the majority of my lessons. Being a straight A student like me, there isn't much you don't know about the subjects you study.

And that's exactly why I decide to leave halfway throughout the day. They don't keep tabs on students, so more often than not they leave when they want. I leave to go home and study – others, like Karly, leave to puff a few smokes or get high. My mother is used to me arriving home early, so when I stroll through the door she doesn't look twice.

Tossing my backpack on the counter, I take a deep breath before running upstairs to my room. It isn't anything extraordinary, but it's safe and cozy: four cyan walls; single bed; a wardrobe; two bookshelves; a single window and a flat screen with my Xbox One. Simplistic, but I don't want it any other way. I've also got a killer black bean bag that's over five years old with no splits.

Instinctively, I turn my Xbox on, ready to continue my Fallout 3 Wasteland saga. As I wait for it to load, my thoughts go back to Karly, trying to understand if she does care about me still, or whether or not she just felt like hazing her ex.

At least six hours have passed and during that time my mother has left for work. I'm just starting Fallout 4 when I hear a rhythmic tap on my window. Sighing, I stand up and open my window, ready to punch any bird that thinks it's funny back to its nest. However, I'm not met with a sparrow; instead I meet Karly standing under my window with pebbles in her hand.

For a moment, I freeze like a glacier until she throws a pebble again – narrowly missing my open window. "What are you doing here?"

Daintily, she climbs up the drainage pipe and steps into my room, eyes only on me. "I wanted to see what you were up too. You weren't in school at lunch." She takes a deep breath before continuing: "I also wanted to apologise for Jackson's behaviour. He's a prick."

I almost smile at her consideration for my wellbeing, but I don't. "I sometimes go home if I don't feel like I'm learning anything," I simply answer, not bothering to sugar coat the fact that Saint Mayflower is boring. "And it's cool; we all know Jackson's a dick."

She eyes my room, glancing at my possessions for no longer than a second before smirking. "Hasn't changed after all these years."

Karly brings in an icy draft with her, so I immediately close the window. "Well, what did you expect?" I chuckle, making an arch smile appear.

"A shrine to Justin Bieber and a few One Direction posters," she mocks, making us both laugh.

"Shut up," I joke, nudging her gently. She looks at me contently and I almost believe things are back to how they were all those years ago: when she still lived a few yards away and was by my side 24/7.

"So, what are you doing here all by yourself? I notice your mom's car isn't out front."

Karly quickly rips me back to reality. "She's at work. I'm just on my Xbox doing—"

"Oh my god, you're playing Fallout 4!" Karly's squeal almost makes me jump as she runs over to my bean bag and controller.

"Err, yeah. You play?" I ask, sitting beside her.

"Of course! This one's great!" A grin forms on her face that widens with every word she says, forcing me to reciprocate.

“Yeah, it is,” I agree, not taking my eyes off her as she jitters excitedly.

An hour has gone by and neither of us is bored. Every now and then I find myself sneaking glances at her, watching the enthusiasm and concentration on her face grow. She’s beautiful no matter what expression she has.

“Why do you keep looking at me, Jakey?” Karly asks, sitting up slightly with a mischievous smile plaguing her lips.

Heat rises on my face like a sunrise as my heartbeat quickens. “Er, just haven’t seen you in a while,” I lie through my teeth – I make sure I try seeing her every day.

Shifting my gaze back to the screen, I hear her sigh: “People always assume that I’m doing drugs whenever I cut classes.”

I’m slightly taken back by this sudden information. “What do you mean?”

“I’ve never done any drugs before. I’ve been offered, but I always refuse,” she answers.

I stay silent.

“Sure, I smoke, but most people do in Saint Mayflower. That’s a fact.”

“You’re right about that – almost everyone does.” I respond, trying to make her feel less alone about the subject.

She laughs bleakly to herself, shaking her head. “But of course you don’t, Jacob. You’re too smart to fall into that ring.”

I raise an eyebrow. “A smoke ring?”

“No, the ring of bad students. You have to smoke, have to skip school. I don’t want too, but my reputation says otherwise.” She almost looks tearful and I inhale sharply at the thought of her crying.

“You’re more than that, Karly. You’re naturally intelligent and beautiful.”

I swallow my fear as she looks at me. “Thank you.”

It was silent for a while; just me looking at her, her looking at me. “I missed you.”

Three, simple words that could make your heart stop spoken by the person who takes your breath away. In a second, your life has ended, but in a second more it starts again. It begins with a kiss from someone you’ve loved since you were young and innocent. A kiss from Karly Summers, the girl next door, who became the bad girl who secretly wants to be good. It’s not fair for her, but a nice, good boy can’t do anything about it but comfort her.

Can you be professional whilst kissing someone?

I don’t get to think of an answer, as Karly suddenly rips herself away from me; looking at me as if she’d won the lottery. “Today’s been eventful. I’m gonna crash here tonight, Jacob,” she says, before getting up and making herself comfortable on my bed.

She kissed me, Karly Summers kissed me... What did I do to deserve this? One day she forgot who I was the next she was all over me. Confusion sweeps over me, and even though I should feel blessed I can’t help but be slightly apprehensive at the whole situation. Thinking about it makes me nauseous. Nevertheless, I watch as Karly’s eyes close and her body relaxes – no longer tense and jittering.

Smoke is a horrible smell, and is usually caused by horrible reasons. Thankfully, it's weak, so my stop-drop-and-roll instinct won't kick in. I stretch my aching legs and open my eyes; remembering the reason I'm on the floor. Glancing at my bed, I notice that my alarm is missing and so is Karly. I should've woken up at 6, like most mornings, but the linked absence of the bad girl and my clock didn't cause the need for questions.

Begrudgingly, I roll on my side, looking towards the window to see a blurred, fully clothed image of a girl with fiery red hair, sitting on my windowsill; cigarette in one hand and my unplugged alarm clock in the other.

"Don't smoke in my room," I say, my voice scratching like a broken record from the increasing smoke.

Karly's head slowly turns to me and I'm expecting her to be cheerful. She isn't. "Don't tell me what to do."

I flinch at her cold voice and sit up. "Damn, you're grumpy in the morning." I laugh at myself, hoping to break the ice, but she just stares at me – eyes dead inside.

"You really don't get it, do you?" She turns her head away from me.

Now I'm confused. "Get what?"

She doesn't respond; she just opens my window a crack and drops her cigarette bud out.

"Karly," I'm worried now, worried that I've messed up.

After a few never-ending seconds, she looks back at me with a grin that almost makes her look hideous. "That this is all for show."

"What?"

She stands up and walks closer to me, an air of evil about her. "This is all a play, dumbass."

"What do you mean?" My pulse races, but not from excitement.

Karly almost rolls her eyes at me, but restrains herself. "You know exactly what I mean. This happened before to that other freak, James."

Everyone knows the story of the sexually-frustrated James Douglas and how Karly played him like a violin. She tricked James into thinking she was actually into him, and made a fool of him in front of everyone when he bought her 100 roses last quarter in return for 'sexual favours'. He lost everything because of her, and she got loaded from her mates that paid her to give them something to laugh at.

If I didn't do regular exercise, I would have a heart attack right now from anxiety. "What?"

*I feel sick.*

"You've been played, Jakey Boy,"

*I feel dizzy.*

"And you've helped me get rich,"

*I'm gonna pass out soon.*

"All because you're a nice guy with a hopeless little crush on someone who's way out of your league." Her eyes are almost black in the dark; her shoulders are hunched forward; her makeup is smeared over her pasty face. She's hideous.

I'm too numb to cry at this point; her disgusting image is all I can see. "Why?"

She scoffs, rolling her eyes at me as if I were an oblivious child. “Are you deaf? I want money,” she says, “I have big dreams and I need cash to fuel it. My story and your pathetic attitude is another building block towards my fame.”

If I were a normal guy I’d yell – hell, I might even throw something. However, I’m not normal, so I just stand here, listening to her break my heart. “So you really are a cold, heartless bitch.” It’s a fact. I always thought it wasn’t true that she was selfish; I always thought she would change.

“You guessed it, baby.” Her sickening smile makes me want to hurl. “I got a lot of help for this, you know?”

I can’t be bothered anymore – I’m too numb to really care.

“Jackson agreed to show you up; make you stutter and oogle at me. My friends thought it was hilarious to see you blubber.” She blocks out the sunlight from my window, casting a shadow over me and half my room.

“You’re evil,” I spit, finally feeling anger.

“You’re nice,” she pauses briefly, looking me up and down before continuing: “and everyone knows nice guys finish last, Jacob. You can’t get through life with your head down, keeping the peace; you need to fight for yourself, show you aren’t weak. Stop being a pushover.”

And with that, she exits hastily through the window, not allowing me to respond.

*Pushover?*

Karly Summers, you’re a real bitch.

That's Who She Is

That's who she is,  
Close your eyes and she'll be there.

That's who she is.

Cold lips, cold kiss,

Silent voice.

That's who she is.

Her blood did boil and fizz,

But now she's frozen.

That's who she is.

Bitter blade did this,

Stole her beauty, her spark.

That's who she is.

Her amethyst eyes are like his:

Empty and Alone.

That's who she is.

She was young, didn't want this,

But now she's broken and lost.

That's who she is.

That's who she is.

Runaway

Today is the day,

I can be free and safe.

I will run away.

Forget what they say,

Leave my home.

Today is the day.

Attacked like prey,

Gagged and left.

I will run away.

I'm gone, do what they may.

Find myself and live again.

Today is the day.

I was moulded like clay;

Twisted and groped.

I will run away.

I'm barking mad, they say.

But now I'm out and ready.

Today is the day,

I will run away.

### Poetry

Poetry never really meant much to me

Not heard on my daily routine

Can't wait to be done and free

Some are French 'oui oui oui'

Some are boring 'blah blah blah'

Poetry never really meant much to me

Signore, ti piace la poesia, sì?

A fair bit of time went into this

Can't wait to be done and free

I honestly hope I don't get an E

I now care about *all* my grades, but

Poetry never really meant much to me

I think I did quite well, don't you agree?

Sure this is no A\*, but I tried sir

Can't wait to be done and free

Rhymes come easily to others  
 Happily, I try to keep up  
 Poetry never really meant much to me  
 Can't wait to be done and free

The Pecking Order

She's always on his Insta,  
 And he's tagged in her Twitter.  
 But you hear those bitches saying:  
 "Are they really dating?"  
 "Why though? He'd be better with me."  
 "Show him how I dance then he'll see."  
 "He's hot and she's lame!"  
 "If he likes her then he's goin' insane."  
 "Her hair is mank, unlike mine."  
 "Don't worry about it. Just give me time."  
 Cruel girls only sit and complain,  
 But he's the only one to see her pain.  
 He sends her love notes in class,  
 And stares at her likes she's a piece of art.  
 The boy with a million dollar smile,  
 Head over heels for the girl with no style.  
 But then one day she stands up tall,  
 Upon the table she declares to all:  
 "He's mine, can't you see?"  
 He is all I will *ever* need.

So back the hell up, get out my face.  
I'm so done with this; give up the case!"  
She catches his eye and flashes a grin,  
Feeling a sudden relief from within.  
The bitches back up, and leave them alone,  
Allowing the King and Queen to return to their throne.

### Today

Today we forget our mistakes.  
Today we move forward.  
Today we remember love,  
Today we begin again.

## **Creative Writing Commentary**

### Prose

'Here She Is' is a short story about American teenagers experiencing adult situations such as smoking, drug abuse and sex. Melanie Martinez is an inspiration for this concept due to her album telling the story of a young child that would undergo situations that even some grown-ups wouldn't go through. I wanted to write something that didn't have a happy fairy-tale concept, as I never believed in the typical Disney idea that everything was, or would be, okay.

Jacob doesn't necessarily experience any of the above situations; however, he does see it happen around him – allowing a connection to be formed between the reader and Jacob himself. Seeing as all characters are only 17 years old smoking is against the law, so the main protagonist has to see Karly Summer's purposely go against the rules which is discomfoting for him. Jacob represents the majority of teenagers whom don't smoke and don't wish to go against the rules they've been brought up to follow, which was one of my aims when creating this character.

I also had a particular song in mind - Dollhouse - when trying to develop Karly's character later on in the story and show how she's not all that she seems. The song Dollhouse by Melanie Martinez states how a family are perfect on the outside, but corrupt on the inside: mother is an alcoholic; the father is a cheater and the brother a drug addict. For Karly it's the reverse of this: she's corrupt on the outside, but actually a good person on the inside. I decided to do this as I wanted my characters to be as original as possible and not make any typical character clichés.

Another use of reversal I used in my work is the genders of my two protagonists: the original idea for my coursework was a story called 'Bad Boys Game', where a young, good girl falls for the bad boy and vice versa. Every short story I had read that involved a 'bad' character always portrayed them as cold-hearted males, and it struck me half way through the book how interesting it would be if the boy was the nice guy and the girl bad. Therefore, the original idea for 'Here She Is' was formed and later that day was acted upon. I wanted to combat the stereotype that boys only did bad, and show how cruel some girls can really be.

Compared to 'Bad Boys Game', my writing is similar with its characters (minus gender switch) and its use of first person and tense, however, the endings are very different – mine being an unhappy one. This was the effect I wanted, as my third draft had a happier ending which felt very anti-climactic, and less satisfying than the ending for my final draft. Having the feedback helped me create a new ending which fitted my story more, as it shows there aren't always happy endings, which is what I wanted to prove to my readers.

A main issue I encountered during the creation of 'Here She Is' was the continuous struggle of remaining in the present tense, as previous writing I had done before were all past. Overcoming this was difficult, however, I made sure I proof-read my work regularly and got others to keep me from drifting back into old habits. Thankfully, I managed to get used to the change of tense later on into my writing and I found myself having to edit my work less and less the more I wrote and adapted.

'Here She Is' definitely measured up to my ambitions, as the characters aren't similar to stereotypes and are more relatable to audiences that don't quite fit in. And, as stated before, the unhappy ending gives a better twist to my writing and realism, as to make my work representative for more people (being played, hurt etc.). Even though I didn't set out for an unhappy ending originally, I did warm up the idea the instant it was suggested, as, I too, felt the original ending was lacking.

Thanks to producing my work, I have come to appreciate the time and effort it takes for an author to create their work. 'Here She Is' contains 5 parts and took me a total of 3 days to fully complete (over 12 hours of writing and editing) whilst most books/novels contain more than 10 chapters. It is difficult to imagine how many hours were spent slaving over their work, so writing yourself really makes you appreciate every word on a page. I've also learned when to identify half-arsed writing because of this due to the lack of enthusiasm the writer had when

working and how under-edited their final pieces are – I find myself thinking *‘this technique would have been better’* or *‘if they made them do that’* a lot now after finishing my own novella.

Overall, writing something for yourself is an experience you learn from in all aspects: you learn about editing, the use of drafts, the effort put in and how you reach your targets and ambitions. There is no greater feeling than being proud of something you have created and fully finishing it to the best of your abilities. It gives you a sense of awareness of your own work and common ground for other writers. It’s something you have to go through yourself in order to really appreciate and *‘Here She Is’* helped me realise this. Writing in Prose is an escape from reality for me and helps you see the bigger picture. I’m sure if you spoke to a scriptwriter or poet then they would say something similar. Even though *Karly* is based on people I see around me (no one specific just flaws and truths in others), she still helps me take my mind off of everything that happens in the real world. That, in my opinion, is the real beauty of writing.

### Poetry

My poetry was originally inspired by Sylvia Plath’s *‘Mad Girl’s Love Song’* and is the reason I wrote both *‘That’s Who She Is’* and *‘Runaway’*. The theme of someone whose mind has escaped them was completely taken from Sylvia Plath’s villanelle and used for the insane runaway in my poem.

*‘Runaway’* touches upon the issue of abuse in mental homes or care homes in general – something which I look down at with disgust. I wanted to bring light to the issue, yet also show people the whole picture. You’ve seen the news reports on the abusers, but what about the victims? I wanted *‘Runaway’* to show the effects of this abuse; how, even though they’re mad, they still know what is happening around them: “I can be free and safe”, “I was moulded like clay; Twisted and groped.” The Victim knows this isn’t supposed to be happening to them; they have a sense of awareness like the protagonist in *‘Mad Girl’s Love Song’* does. She knows that he isn’t real, “(I think I made you up inside my head.)”, and possibly accepts the fact she is insane in some respects.

However, the resemblance between *‘That’s Who She Is’* and *‘Mad Girl’s Love Song’* is a little harder to see; I enjoyed the heartbreak that the girl in her poem experienced (coming to terms that her boyfriend isn’t real) and used that similar sense of pain in my work. I wanted not only that character to appear to feel something, but also for the reader to feel something with them. What happened to the protagonist in *‘That’s Who She Is’* is unknown, – even I don’t know what happened to her- however, the main idea for that poem is for the reader to sense how something is wrong and the feelings you experience after this. I wanted to get across that the experience in a tragedy isn’t the worst part – it’s what happens after to the victim.

*‘That’s Who She Is’* and *‘Runaway’* were both written within the same day just minutes after reading Sylvia Plath’s most famous villanelle. Seeing as the idea for both poems were fresh in

my mind, I found they were quite good and lived up to my expectations. Could they be better? Yes. However, further editing may remove or alter the message I was originally trying to convey. I chose to use villanelles for both poems, as that's the format I am most comfortable in. I wanted to use a comfortable format for topics I am comfortable addressing: pain and abuse.

*'The Pecking Order'* isn't inspired by any poems or script, but from some drama on social media. My friend and I worked on it together; however, the original idea came from me in my room watching hormonal girls complain that some guy got a pretty girlfriend. I had written the first 8 lines on my own, but left it for dead until my friend stumbled upon it and asked me to continue it. With her help, I managed to fully complete *'The Pecking Order'* to the best of my abilities. Although I feel it could undergo some editing, I believe *'The Pecking Order'* gets its point across that it doesn't matter whose with who just as long as they're happy. Rhyming couplets seemed to be the best choice of format for me, as it allows me to use as many lines as I wish, as well as making my poem seem more like an old wise tale – showing that hate for love has been around for a substantial amount of time.

*'Poetry'* is the first ever villanelle I composed, and was the first ever poem I completed that I felt proud of. It was written at a point in my life where I didn't care too much about the idea of poetry, and I had just come out of a rough patch in my life. It was based on the sour mood I was in due to a squabble with a controlling family member and how they didn't like my 'I don't care' attitude. I used my anger from that argument to my advantage in my villanelle; however, I feel it also hindered my original poem. Some grammatical errors were made during the first draft of this poem such as misused commas and missing semicolons. The original also wasn't very formal, so in my re-draft I changed 'did quite decently' too 'did quite well' and 'Happily, I try keeping up' too 'Happily, I try to keep up'. Even though this change was slight, I was told that it gave me poem a sensible vibe, which increased its validity and made my work more meaningful. Also, I remembered learning that villanelles were from Italy originally, so, with the help of my mother, I added in a bit of Italian to make a link: "Signore, ti piace la poesia, sì?"

Thanks to this poem, not only have I come to realise the joy of writing poetry, but I've also learned not to dismiss poets themselves as I had previously done. *'Poetry'* lived up to my expectations and is the reason why I chose to do poetry for my portfolio. I learned that I could be laid back, yet creative at the same time, which are two things I very much am.

*'Today'* is a short poem I composed after watching a movie. I wasn't paying much attention, as my father was the one watching it at the time, however, I did suddenly hear the motivational speech which happens at the climax in movies. I always wondered what it's like to write my own speech, so I thought: "why not write it as a poem?" I went for a one stanza, no rhyme scheme to try mimicking the feel of a real wartime speech. I felt like I achieved this, as the repetition for the word 'Today' makes the poem memorable (like a speech) and creates an atmosphere of emergency (must be done today). It was quite sad to write, as I had to imagine a

scene where everyone was afraid and weak. This scene in my head helped make my poem stronger, in my opinion, as it helped me portray the feeling of desperation and determination in my writing. I certainly feel this lived up to my ambitions.

### First Draft: Here She Is

Here she is: in all her glory, strutting down the corridor toward her minions. The beautiful, bad girl who is the heartbreaker of Saint Mayflower College: Karly Summers.

She has a reputation for being not only a troublemaker for Saint Mayflower and but also society in general with her argumentative and flirtatious ways.

It's strange: she used to live next door to me for years and was a good girl until high school. Kicked out of home, in juvenile detention for a year and still the most desired girl in town - even with her anger issues and street fighting reputation.

She has the perfect, red hair and green eyes combo that she accessorizes with a cigarette and smoked eye shadow. Every Friday night rave, Karly's there and nothing begins until she arrives. Or so I've been told - I haven't been invited to a party since my cousin's fifth birthday last fall.

Compared to her I'm nothing. Compared to anyone I'm nothing.

My name's Jacob Carter, the quiet good boy whose idea of a fun Friday night is revision and the occasional gaming marathon. I'm not popular, but I at least have two friends: Ryan and Derek.

We're the social rejects that society chews up and spits right back out, thanks to us being at the bottom of the pecking order. However, we don't give a fuck - it keeps us out of trouble from

Karly and her badass clichés.

Psychology is my first lesson of the day followed by Additional Science, which leads me up to lunch. I think Karly's meant to be in both of those classes, but she hasn't turned up since the start of the semester.

After collecting my books, I close my locker and am suddenly met with the bad, beautiful creature herself.

She has her back pressed against the row of lockers, a seductive smirk on her face as she locks eyes with me: "Hello Jakey Boy." No one had called me Jakey in years - the last person being Karly before she changed.

"H-h-hello, Karly." Smooth.

"Be a dear and tell me what we have first, will ya?" She now turns to her side, so I get a full frontal look at her. Her usual theme of dark clothing is maintained with black, ripped skinny jeans; her classic leather jacket and a tight crop top exposes her dangling belly piercing of a crystal skull and angel wings.

"Um, Psy-Psychology. Then Additional S-Science." I stumble over my words and almost drop my books out of sheer embarrassment.

Karly giggles, tossing her wavy hair over one shoulder. "You trip over your words more than I trip out at weekends." She stands at her full height, eyes looking me up and down before regaining their fix on me once more. She licks her scarlet lips before winking quickly at me, solidifying her image of beauty in my mind. "But thanks anyways, babe."

And with that she turns around and leaves me standing alone, trying to adjust my fallen beanie, thinking that, if people were rain, I'd be drizzle and she'd be a hurricane.

Damn, I can be a great poet if I try.

Psychology is my all-time favorite subject; I don't really know why, but I always find it the most fascinating. Probably because I like finding out why we think and behave the way we do; but I don't put much thought into it!

I make my way to the back of the class, invisible to everyone present and waiting. Thankfully, the jocks don't notice me as I sneak past their table of gum and jerseys, and arrive at the empty table that I'm oh so familiar with. It's not that the jocks scare me, far from it. Their lack of brain power and awful orange and yellow jackets make them impossible to be seen as an object of fear. No, it's their annoying cologne and verbal abuse that pisses me off to the point where I never go near the soccer field.

Out of breath, I sit down in my cold chair and take deep breaths, my heart still racing from the close encounter of the hot kind earlier. Books out, pens ready and Karly forced to the back of my mind - typical, daily routine for me.

"Yo, Jake." I look up to be met with the blue eyes of Jackson towering over my desk. "The fuck were you talking to my girl about earlier?"

Jackson Hunter is the school's pride and joy for football and lacrosse and the apple of every chick's eye. He's nicknamed 'The Brute' by all the coaches for breaking the legs of three different guys in the NFL finals. The whole dark hair and blue eyes combination has almost

every girl swooning. Key word is *almost*, as Karly humped and dumped him after finally realizing how idiotic and self-centered he is.

I don't know why, but speaking to Karly earlier gave me a rush of confidence, which leads me to sitting up; leaning forward and grinning from ear to ear. "Your girl?" I began, "I thought she broke up with your dumb ass a few weeks ago?" The second those words leave my mouth; I can feel my face burn with regret, as I see people snicker and observe us.

For a moment, Jackson stares at me dumbfounded, before grabbing me by the scruff of my shirt, causing my face to be inches away from his. "What the hell did you say to me?" Every syllable he utters leads to more and more spit on my face that I'm too afraid to wipe away.

I don't move. I can't move. I just tense up as I stare deeply into the ocean blue eyes of the boy that could easily snap my neck with his bare, sweaty hands.

"I said; What the hell did you say to me?" His voice becomes a harsh whisper that rattles through my skull, and I swear it knocks my grey beanie off my head. Where is Mrs Webb? I need her; I need someone.

"Leave him alone, Jackson." Four words, one voice and a few seconds of silence and stillness. Out of the corner of my eye, I see everyone turn their attention to the door and away from us.

Jackson immediately lets go my shirt, causing me to fall back into my seat. Turning around, he looks at whoever interrupted his moment – blocking my view of my savior. "Babe?" I can practically hear the smile in his voice.

"I'm not your babe anymore." I can hear Karly's voice clearly from here, venom dripping from every word. Finally, she steps to the side, allowing me to look at her fully. Even though it's barely been ten minutes, she's still gorgeous, and you can see she's touched up her winged eyeliner and lipstick.

Jackson steps closer to Karley and therefore further from me. "But, babe—"

Karley raises her hand, gaining full control of the situation as she silences The Brute. "I said; I'm not your babe anymore." Her voice is cold as she walks towards Jackson. At first, I think that is the end of it all until Karley strolls straight past Jackson and heads toward me.

"You okay?" It takes me a few seconds to process what she's saying before I even think of a reply. People have already lost interest in the whole conversation and resumed their previous activities. Even The Brute himself has sat down and forgotten what has just unfolded. "Jake? Are you alright?"

"Um, yeah, I am. Thanks." Am I on a roll today or what?

Karley smiles; a smile that reminds me of when we were kids running around my back garden playing hide and go seek. When we were young, free and innocent. When we were friends...

"Good. I know how much of an asshole Jackson is," She says, tucking a stray strand of hair behind her ear. "Well, I'll see you later Jacob."

For the second time that day, I watch her turn her back to me and leave, walking towards her table of leather-jacket-wearing followers. She only calls me Jacob when she's serious. I guess she still does care about me, even just a tad.

After being ten minutes late, Mrs Webb finally arrives to teach us the basics of Psychology for the third lesson in a row. Seeing as I'd already revised this at home, I don't feel guilty about zoning out for the majority of my lessons. Being a straight A student like me, there isn't much you don't know about the subjects you study. Honestly, I learn more at home than I do at Saint Mayflower seeing as it's a boring learning environment.

And that's exactly why I decide to leave halfway throughout the day. They don't keep tabs on students, so more often than not they leave when they want. I leave to go home and study – others, like Karly, leave to puff a few fags or get high. My mother is used to me arriving home early, so when I walk through the door she didn't look twice.

“Hey Honey, remember I'm working a night shift today and tomorrow, so make sure you don't stay up late and get yourself something healthy for dinner.” Even though I'm nearly eighteen she still treats me like I'm seven.

“Yes, mom; I'll be asleep at eleven like always and I'll have the leftover mac 'n' cheese later.” I say reassuringly, earning myself one of her signature smiles from her spot on the couch.

Tossing my backpack on the counter, I take a deep breath before running upstairs to my room. It isn't anything extraordinary, but it's safe and cosy: four cyan walls; single bed; a wardrobe; two bookshelves; a single window and a flat screen with my Xbox one. Simplistic, but I don't want it any other way. I've also got a killer black bean bag that's over five years old with no splits.

Instinctively, I turn my Xbox on, ready to continue my Fallout 4 marathon. As I wait for it to load, my thoughts go back to Karly, trying to understand if she does give a shit about me still or whether or not she just felt like showing up her ex. Forcing her out of my mind once more, I begin my afternoon fallout marathon, starting from newest to oldest.

At least six hours have passed and during that time my mother has left for work. I'm just starting Fallout 3 when I hear a rhythmic tap on my window. I swear if that bloody blue tit is back...

Sighing, I stand up and open my window, ready to punch a bird back to its nest. However, I wasn't met with a blue tit, instead I was met with Karly perching on my window; an innocent smile on her face.

For a moment, I am frozen like a glacier until she taps again, seemingly impatient. Opening my window, confusion begins to set in: "What the hell do you think you're doing here?" I almost yell at her, but something stops my outburst.

Daintily, she steps in my room, eyes only on me. "I wanted to see what you were you too. You weren't in school at lunch or in science." I almost smile at her consideration for my wellbeing, but I don't.

"I sometimes go home if I don't feel like I'm learning anything." I simply answer, not bothering to sugar coat the fact that Saint Mayflower is boring.

"Oh, okay." And with that, the subject is dropped. She eyes my room, glancing at my possessions for no longer than a second before smirking. "Hasn't changed after all these years."

Karly brings in an icy draft with her, so I immediately close the window. "Well, what did you expect?" I chuckle, making a cocky smile appear.

"A shrine to Justin Bieber and a few One Direction posters." She mocks, making us both laugh.

"Shut up, Karly." I joke, nudging her gently. She looks at me contently and I almost believe things are back to how they were all those years ago: when she still lived a few yards away and was by my side 24/7.

"So what are you doing here all by yourself? I notice your mom's car isn't out front." Karly snaps me back to reality and I run a hand through my fluffed hair.

"She's at work. I'm just on my Xbox doing-"

"Oh my god, you're playing Fallout 3!" Karly's squeal almost makes me jump as she runs over to my bean bag and controller.

“Err, yeah. You play?” I ask, sitting beside her.

“Fuck yeah! This one’s classic, but the new one’s great.” A grin forms on her face that widens with every word she says, forcing me to reciprocate.

“Yeah, it is.” I agree, not taking my eyes off her as she jitters excitedly.

“Let’s play something together then. For old times’ sake.” She suggests, making my heart race.

“Y-yeah, sure. What game?” I ask, fiddling with the games disk.

Smiling, Karly eyes up my games before quickly taking one. “Gotta be Left 4 Dead 2, Jakey Boy.”

“Alright then.” I say, loading up the game and resuming my spot next to her, occasionally getting whiffs of her perfume.

An hour has gone by and neither of us is bored. Every now and then I find myself sneaking glances at her, watching the enthusiasm and concentration on her face grow. She’s beautiful no matter what expression she has.

“Why do you keep looking at me, Jakey?”

Heat rises on my face like a sunrise as my heartbeat quicks. “Err, just haven’t seen you in a while.” I lie through my teeth – I make sure I try seeing her every day.

Shifting my gaze back to the screen, I hear her sigh. “I hate how people assume that I’m doing drugs whenever I miss school.”

I’m slightly taken back by this, as I always thought she was on some kind of high whilst I was buried deep into my school subjects. “What do you mean?”

“I’ve never done any drugs before. I’ve been offered, but I always refuse.” She answers, making me more confused.

I stay silent.

“Sure, I smoke, but most people do in Saint Mayflower. That’s a fact.” The whole room suddenly felt fuller and smaller. It was almost harder to breath.

“You’re right about that – almost everyone does.” I respond, trying to make her feel less alone about the subject.

She laughs bleakly to herself, shaking her head. “But of course you don’t, Jacob. You’re too smart to fall into the loophole.”

I raise an eyebrow. “The loophole of smoking?”

Karly laughs again, genuinely this time. “No, the loophole of being a bad student. You have to smoke, have to skip school. I don’t want too, but reputation says otherwise and my status is all I have now.” She almost looks tearful and my I inhale sharply at the thought of her crying.

“You’re more than that, Karly. You’re naturally smart, kind and beautiful.” I swallow my fear as she looks at me. “You’re more than what they say.”

It was silent for a while; just me looking at her, her looking at me. It’s comfortable, yet full of tension until she spoke: “I missed you.”

Three, simple words that could make your heart stop spoken by the person that takes your breath away. In a second, your life has ended, but in a second more it starts again. It begins with a kiss from someone whom you’ve loved since you were young and innocent. A kiss from Karly Summers, the girl next door who became the bad girl who secretly wants to be good. It’s not fair for her, but a nice, good boy can’t do anything about it but comfort her.

After we part, she looks at me for a second before smiling and yawning. “Today’s been eventful. I’m gonna crash here tonight, Jacob.” She says before getting up and making herself comfortable on my bed – leaving me stunned.

She was out straight away – from a hundred miles an hour to a halt in a nanosecond. I’ll do anything to wrap my arms around her and sleep. Not as in fuck; just sleep, in the most innocent sense of the phrase. But I lack the courage as I am gawky and she is gorgeous and I’m boring and she’s endlessly fascinating. So instead, I get comfortable on the floor and think of how right now, here she is.

#### First Draft: Poetry

Poetry never really meant much to me,  
 Not heard on my daily routine.  
 Can’t wait to be done and free.

Some are French ‘oui oui oui’  
 Some are boring ‘blah blah blah’  
 Poetry never really meant much to me

Signore, ti piace la poesia, sì?  
 A fair bit of time went into this  
 Can’t wait to be done and free

I honestly hope I don’t get an E  
 I now care about *all* my grades,  
 Poetry never really meant much to me

I think I did quite decently. Don't you agree?

Sure this is no pass, but I had a go

Can't wait to be done and free

Rhymes come easily to others

Happily, I try keeping up

Poetry never really meant much to me,

Can't wait to be done and free.