

Rachel

Fire

Cigarette in the Dark

He lights his cigarette
With the candle that we lit moments
before we made love
The light that guided our bodies
together
while we shared intimacy.
I lay beside him thankful for
our moments together
Truly,
I believe that we shall share this bond
for as long as the candle is burning and his cigarette
is lit.

Ash upon my Shoulder

He places the ash tray next
to my pillow the smell
creates my nose to turn up like a hog,
The bright orange glow
burns my retinas until
I can no longer stand the sight of it,
I long to reach out to him
and destroy his habit,
throwing
the flaming cigarette into the morning fog.
I no longer desire the stench of his persona in my life.

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Earth

Footsteps

Hand in hand
we walk towards our first meeting place,
the happiness
simply looms over us,
The warmth of his beloved being
turns my soul into an enriched source.
Watching
his gentle footsteps
gives me pride with every step that he takes,
For he is mine
I am his.

Broken Pathways

As he menaces his way in front of me,
the uprising chance to run
blossoms
in my mind,
The ground feels
lifeless and I am all alone with him,
As we continue to walk I feel the Earth
begin to acknowledge my silent fear,
The small yet mighty tree
Falls
to the ground behind me.

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Water

A Salted Smile

I feel youthful again,
united by the childish excitement that
the coast has brought out of us.
Sprinting,
with all our might towards the hurling sea
Yet I am safe
when he is by my side,
watching over me with tenderness,
The sea laps at us however
together we stand
Strong
against the fearful tide.

Poseidon's Wrath

The water is gripping me vastly;
I no longer feel
the control I once had over my
Body,
He's watching as
I struggle in the salted mass
of water and is refusing to help me,
I am waiting
for a stronger being to come to my aid,
setting me free of this pain,

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But he just

watches as I suffer breathlessly.

Aeris

The air is warm against the
pale complexion that my skin

Holds,

Gripping me gently with a
forceful pride,

I am happy when he walks
with me in

mother nature's creative world
of trees

and

broken leaves

Strangle

I thought that I was safe

I am always safe whilst

amongst clear pathways of cool air

But

Today there is a different

Atmosphere within the fog as though

it is reaching out to

strangle me

it is he who wishes me

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dead

lifeless

cold

forgotten in the wood

Finale

A sense of freedom overwhelms me

as I walk out

of the home that has

so often felt like a

prison to me.

He

can no longer attack

me when I am out of reach.

Never

have I known the morning

sun to be so beautiful.

Freedom.

Word Count: Approximately 500 words.

The Brochure to a Better Life:

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She's screaming down into my ear, I can almost feel her shrill voice wrapping itself around my brain making sure that it suffocates the brain from all of the concentration that I have left inside of it, meaning it leaves all of my focus ultimately dedicated to her. "Pick it up and actually read the fucking brochure Millie, do not just throw it into the bin! I'm sick to death of coming into this shit hole, to see that you have once again thrown it in there!" and with that charming greeting, Mum pulls out the brochure; places the unwanted item onto my bed and monumentally storms out of my room. I know deep down that going to the Mental Institute will prove me a better person in the long run; I just don't want to absurd my friend's opinions of me any more than they already are. I can't cope well enough with my friends around me, let alone if they were to completely disappear forever. I fear that it would almost end my tiny pieces of happiness that I have left inside of me.

I am 19: I cut myself on a daily basis; I am a complete fuck-up and I am also addicted to making myself throw up - bulimic - that is why my Mother wants me to go to this 'Better Life Sanctuary' and why she keeps forcing me to read the awful Brochure to convince myself that going to a 'Mental Hospital' will actually sort me out, when in fact it will completely fuck me up when I realise how much I really am messed up. I hate myself and I punish myself every single day for being who I am.

Mother is alone, depressed and I am all she has left. She's 48 yet looking 58 because she has slowly let herself go by smoking a pack of twenty in the space of two hours every two hours, putting whisky into at least every cup of coffee she has and it is fucking heart-breaking because she is so beautiful underneath her sunken eyes that have seen a thousand unhappy times. Father left her because I guess he couldn't cope with what I was doing to myself, he needed a way out and leaving was the only foreseeable option in his eyes. However what he doesn't realise that by leaving has made everything worse, that is why you should never run from your problems. It causes an even bigger mess than what was there in the first place. He's run away with his 28 year old girlfriend, living in a gorgeous Villa in the derelict parts of Italy. What really broke Mum is that the 28 year old is actually her younger sister - Aunt Katelyn - bitch. I get the odd postcard reeling off how beautiful it is out there, even explaining to me that he's 'sorry for leaving things the way he did' and 'as soon as he's cleared his head he'll come back and see me for my 21st' - which is actually two years away. Does it seriously take two years to 'clear your head' when half of the time he's probably fucking Katelyn's sodding brains out on a blow up floating air bed in the middle of their very own pool. When Dad left Mum sold the house because she couldn't cope with living in the constant reminder of how Dad couldn't live with us anymore. We moved into a little Cottage just 30 miles from where we used to live, isolated yet a good isolated. I feel distanced from the horrendous past that I had, but with the friendly reminder that my true friends are just a little distance away if I need them or if they need me.

It all went wrong when I was 15. I was doing really well at school, A's and B's in all of my mock exams, good group of friends and a happy home life. It was January 17th, the gang and I were all sat in our usual spot and the sun was shining brighter than ever (unusual for January; that's why I felt happy I guess). We had all been sat around our table for at

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least a good 20 minutes when Ryan Faring came hurling up to us, his face was as red as a stereotypical example of a Heart: "Millie come to the locker room now." Then there was a delicate empathy that seeped through his voice whilst he delivered his next spoken sentence to me "someone has put pictures up of you." Instantly I knew who was responsible for such a disgusting and cold hearted action, it was Andrew. My first love, regrettably. Me and Andy had been together since year 7, however our relationship came to an end when he broke up with me after he found out that I had been diagnosed with depression. I guess nobody desires to have a mentally ill girlfriend to tell their companions about. I was depressed after the car accident which had taken place about a year before we broke up. Father, Mother, me and my newly born baby brother were in the car late at night coming home from one of Dad's award ceremonies for his business. We were just driving at a normal speed along a winding road when a man on a bicycle just came out of nowhere and nearly collided with the car head on, the cyclist had no lights on his bike nor did he have a fluorescent on his person. Dad had to swerve the car with so much power that it ended up causing the car to turn over. Peter was in the baby seat next to me, being only 12 weeks old he was delicately wrapped into his protective seat. I woke only to realise that we were upside down in the middle of a small ditch just across from the road itself, I couldn't hear any sound from Peter and as you can imagine you would expect a baby to be screaming after the impact. I just knew something wasn't right but I couldn't move, Mother and Father were moaning in the front of the car. After realising what had just happened Mother began to scream and repeatedly question if everyone was ok. I couldn't bring myself to tell her that I suspected that Peter was dead; I didn't want it to be real. I think the cyclist had realised what his foolish actions had done and called an ambulance, because within moments there were bright blue flashing lights surrounding us. The firemen went on to cut us out of the car, making sure that we were all remotely ok. Thankfully Mother and Father were not as bad as I suspected. Father had a broken collarbone, broken nose and a broken foot. Mother had broken legs and a broken wrist. I had broken my left arm and 4 toes on my right foot. Peter, our dear Peter had a snapped neck that occurred with impact. He had died just in that split second when the car turned over. Being so tiny not even the protective baby seat could keep his life within him. That was what hurt the most, that split second. Of course this all caused the family upset, Mother and Father had an exceptional strong nature to make the most out of life. They interpreted the few weeks that we spent with my Brother as a blessing, not to think over the life that he could have had but focus on the times that he spent with us and how much love we had for him. I couldn't see it that way, become very sad very quickly and dealt with things extremely badly. The one thing that kept me going was that I was doing well at school despite what I had been through, this gave me the hope that I could one day better myself and become a Doctor to maybe help children who do suffer from depression.

Ryan had always been a good friend, he was a part of Andy's friendship group yet I always knew that he had an acute sense of fondness for me; I was glad that it was him that had told me the sore news, because above all else he actually cared about me and the emotions that could become of this painful event. Anybody else would have delivered the bad news with a vicious curl to their voice, a jeer of sarcasm or even disgust. Instead all he had

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to offer was a rushed depth of sadness in his as though he was disappointed with the realisation as to what has just happened in our lunch hour. I understood why he was sad as soon as I got into the corridor of the locker room; Andy had stapled pictures of me in the shower all over the lockers.

I recognised the bathroom where these photos had been taken; it was my own bathroom in fact. Andy would always be at mine waiting for me once I had gotten home from Running Club on a Saturday morning, he would stay at mine on the Friday night after school, Running Club started at half past 7 in the morning and would end at half past 9. I'd come in and get in the shower straight away (I did not want my boyfriend seeing me in a state of sweat), Mother and Father would always be downstairs making a cooked breakfast for me and Andy; Andy would just about be awake for when I got back, we would all have breakfast together and discuss the events that the week had given us. I loved our Saturdays, they were gentle and peaceful. This had been like this for a year because my parents loved and trusted him, and there was no issue in him sleeping over. That particular Saturday, I must have accidentally left the bathroom door ajar in a hurry because you can slightly see the blurred pine edging of my bathroom door-frame in the photos. These photos seem to be the most revealing collection of photos of anybody I have ever seen and the photos are of me. Numb. I am absolutely numb with the pain of what I am witnessing. My naked flesh has been filtered around the busy corridor; now everybody who desires to can see my every freckle, every tiny imperfection that my skin has carried over the years that I have lived. Those freckles and imperfections are mine to see and recognise they were not made for the eyes of jeering peers. There are at least ten different photos, each one of me in various different positions: washing my back; bending over to get the shampoo. All of them completely revealing - there's no part of my body that has escaped this mass of uninvited photos.

It felt as though my lungs had been overcome with a colossal weight upon them, making me feel breathless and in an overwhelming sense of panic. All of my friends were stood around me in a compact protective casing, attempting to block out surrounding comments that were being made by the popular fools around us. Comments such as: 'I never realised Millie had a heart-shaped birthmark on her arse?'; 'I swear she was skinnier than that. She must have put on the pounds during the summer break.'; 'No wonder she goes to running club with thighs as big as those.' Fortunately most of the Year 11 boys were commenting on 'how nice my arse looked', which I guess I can only interpret as a seedy compliment underneath. What I'll never forget is how Andy stood amongst the judging crowd, with a prideful smirk across his dangerous face as though he had done the most honourable deed any teenage boy could do. My tear filled emerald eyes search amongst the idiots for Ryan's empathetic face, he's nowhere to be seen. I wish I could just see his face of reassurance and be filled up with the Fatherly sense that 'everything was going to be alright'. I turned and noticed that my peers had begun to tear down the photographs that surrounded us, throwing them into every vacant rubbish bin that was near to us so that nobody was available to stare at the photos any longer. We only had half an hour for our lunch break, this ordeal had taken a good ten minutes. Thankfully the loud alert of the school bell, signifying that our short half an hour had ended went off. It was over for now. Luckily my friends had kept a few copies of the pictures therefore our argument stood strong whilst providing evidence for

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the event that had just happened. After what seemed like 20 drawn out hours of vivid questioning, the school authorities came to the conclusion that Andy was to be expelled for his vicious actions. The school had never been so ashamed in a pupil. The teasing stopped after a week or so, once everyone had realised how nasty they were being. I didn't pass my exams; I got a few D's and one E. I think that it what truly killed off every inch of hope that I had left inside of me. Every day I began to go over what had happened inside that car, longing and everlastingly wishing that it was me who died in that car and not my innocent Brother.

My parents couldn't forgive themselves for allowing such a cruel natured young man to stay in their loving home, let alone capture obscene photos of their daughter in such an intimate way. My depression escalated extremely badly which is what pushed me to do all the dreadful things that I do to myself. That's what caused Father to leave and that is why I have to go to the 'Better Life Sanctuary'. I'll get Mother to call them in the morning to explain that I will be staying with them until I am not fucked up anymore. Maybe one day I will be able to make my life a pleasant life, prove to my parents that I am sorry for causing them to separate so bitterly after all I owe it to them with all the support they have given me over the years of my childhood. I am hopeful that where I shall be staying won't be too intimidating and make me even worse than I already am because I fear that I will kill myself.

Happiness is essential to life and I have been selfish to take that away from so many as a result of my selfish actions. I love my family, I have hurt them yet I am willing to repay them with the courage that I will need to endure the fearful time in a Mental Hospital. However above all else, I am doing this for my Brother who I never got to know. I love you.

Approxiamtely 2,507 words.