

Based off my publication in *Epiphany Magazine* in 2014
*Current writing sample

The Garage

Once when I was little, before I could paint my nails but after I could tie my shoes I played basketball outside. It was a quality sport, one where I'd bounce the ball and such. That day, it didn't suffice. You see, my brothers had an affinity to do bad things. Like set up a trap to hold a rabbit that never worked or spray painting the basement without permission. But I was the youngest and therefore my mother was always on a permission kick. It worked out, but it didn't that day. Maybe my mom was doing the laundry or sewing too loudly that she stopped hearing the basketball. But I left the yard and went to the back of the garage.

Once, behind that garage I saw a brother smoking- I was yelled at. There were bad things behind that garage. This I knew. Of course I was later caught with a guilty look on my face. "Were you... *behind the garage?*" But nonetheless. There was a huge bucket of water. That's what I found. She told me to go back outside that day. Kick over the water. I'm sure I agreed. Anything to get me out of a behind the garage lecture, but I was in wonderland.

Behind my day dreaming and such: I forgot. You would think I would remember, but those days didn't have much of a foreseeing sight into the future. Like paying rent or finding a job that you enjoy. It had team nicknames like "lightning bolts" instead double entendres like "spikers." That day, I forgot to kick over the bucket. The very next day, I went outside and found a baby raccoon.

I don't know what happened, but I blamed myself. Upset, I got my mom. She said, "It is okay," and took care of it. I still don't know where she put it, but I still feel bad. I would have dumped it out had I remembered. I don't know where she put it, or buried it. I've never asked.

The Garden

Published 2014

When I was small I asked my mother if I could garden in the front yard where it was bright, sunny, and angelic. We didn't have pearly gates leading to our door, but we did have a walkway that I wanted to line with flowers. Mom said, "Eh... I don't want you messing it up." I was given seeds and my own dirt plot in the backyard, and I was disappointed. I planted sunflowers that reached much higher than my fingertips- higher than the roof gutters.

The sunflower pedals yellow-er than Charlotte Perkins Gilman's wall paper. The leaves flimsier than Warhol's perception of Edie Sedwick. Stalks stronger than Lance Armstrong's EPO dosage. I loved my plot like most children like a Light Bright.

I loved my unmarked grave of innocence.

The backyard was half-light and half dark because of the shadows from the house. My plot complimented the atmosphere, not too light and not too dark purgatory-esque. One day, prideful, enthralled of how beautiful my flowers really were, I decided to see them from a different perspective. I went to the back of the garage to get a view of the backyard.

Behind the backyard, there was darkness from the back of the garage- where we weren't supposed to play, but did. I walked out of the half sunshine of the back yard, and into the darkness. For the purpose of this essay- I'll call it Dante's Lair, although it was the debauchery (or gangster's) paradise. I saw a large container of rain water- and the next day I knew there was no hope for a rainbow.

Then I climbed on the roof to look at the back of my sunflowers. When I looked closer there were hundreds of ants destroying my flowers. From the outside they looked completely healthy but inside they were slowly dying in my plot. Later in life, I was upset when my mom had to cut them down from the infestation, but they were too deep to be able to pull out from the ground. Then they were short, jagged, and yellow like yellow celery.

My mother came out, and I told her about the bucket of water. She said, “Before you come inside, dump out that water” then she let out the dog. Our dog said, “Bark bark.”

In my narcissistic sadness about my flowers, I forgot about the bucket of water. From being bummed out about my sunflowers, or scared of the ants eating my hard work, or being small, or petting my dog; I forgot. I forgot about the bucket of water. The next day, I returned to my plot. I guess I wanted to go on the roof again, maybe to see if the ants went away. Or if my flowers were getting prettier from the inside and not just the outside. Nonetheless, I wanted to go on the roof. So I went to the back of the garage. I and passed the bucket- but my heart sank.

I realized it was my fault that I forgot.

When I looked in the bucket there was a dead raccoon suffocated in the rain water. She was small like me. I don't know what happened even now. Maybe she wanted a sip because she was thirsty, or lost her way, or fell.

Upset, I got my mom. She said “it is okay,” and took care of it. I still don't know where she put it, but I still feel bad. I would have dumped it out had I remembered. I don't know where she put it, or buried it, but we didn't bury it in my plot.

Over ten years later I didn't know the person I would become. That I would be making graphite stencils on a school night. Or that I would live a life for seven years filled with buckets

of water that I simply forgot about. As I get older, I think about all of the other things I have hurt and had I known, I would have dumped out the water and I would have seen a rainbow. And I would have played in the front yard instead of playing with fire.