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English 3 5<sup>th</sup> Period

Ms. Feher

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I never realized how important beer bottles were to red necks until I was shot at over one. I had been waiting for months for this one night. I could tell the foster mother was suspicious, because of how excited I was. Never once, had she seen me this happy, but I was going somewhere that was going to make everything better: “respite”. My case worker pulled in the driveway, and I could just smell the refreshing breeze of freedom. It was pure. Getting in the car felt even better, like a bliss kind of feeling. As we approached the home of my childhood best friend, I was uncontrollable. When I leaped out the car everything else seemed to be unimportant. I ran down the hardly lit driveway pulling my brother and two best friends in-between my arms. It felt like when a song harmonizes. I felt complete for the first time in months.

My caseworker then backed out of the driveway scarcely as if she knew something was going to happen. Who knew that me being on this hell hole of an earth another year would be my key back into my comfort zone? I didn’t need a cake or a song. All I wanted was to have these people with me for the rest of my life. It’s funny how my 14<sup>th</sup> birthday was the day that I started having appreciation for life. Most fourteen-year olds are somewhere trying to fit in with the rest of the high schoolers, but not me. I knew how to enjoy the little things in life. We decided to do for my birthday the same thing we did every other time we hung out. We walked to the park.

Who told us it would be okay to walk to the park in the middle of the night? I would never know, but that was better than what everyone else was doing at our age. Being in the city that we were in; we were constantly surrounded by drugs and horror stories at the threshold of the place we call home. We each had our own ways of escaping from our reality; ours happened to be the park. As we walked down the dark and trench-like street, we screamed Eazy-E's "Boyz N The Hood" at the top of our lungs. Even though we looked like the rejected mix of emo and ghetto kids, we didn't have care on earth.

As we approached the park, we ran down the steep hill that lead from the tennis courts to the playground. This was the same playground; I had gotten my first kiss, played my first game of "hide and seek in the dark", hit my first baseball. We didn't do any of those things tonight. We sat and talked. We talked about; life, thing that we were going through, our struggles, our goals, things that we could do to get out of our situation. Tonight felt a little different, I realized they were not the same people that I had left behind. I begin to drift off playing with the shiny silver sequence on my shirt. Janice noticed that there was something on my mind. Knowing not to pry, she pulled out a pack of Marlboro's "Want one?", she asked. I shook my head and put everything that was on my mind to my lips, inhaled them and blew them out into the world. Chris, being the annoying brother that he was, didn't show any pity – instead – he picks up a hand full of mulch and throws it at me. Somehow, he always knew how to bring me back to myself. At this point we weren't in our mental's anymore. We were kids again, throwing mulch back and forth. We began to hear the roar of our stomach over our laughter, so we decided to head back to Samantha's house for some noodles.

As we were walking, Chris decided to pick a beer bottle from off the side of the road and casually shatter it on the hard, black pavement. Chris, being the only guy in the group, made him

the big brother or farther figure of the group. If he said not to do something; we didn't try it. If we saw him do something; we followed right behind. So of course, we started to do the exact same thing. There was something about the sound of the shattering glass that was pleasuring to the ear. Not only was it pleasuring to the ear, but I think it was touching a part of my soul in a since. When that bottle was in your hand you had the power. Depending on how you threw that one bottle would determine how many pieces it turned into. Maybe it was just the crystal-like sound speaking, but it didn't feel like destruction. It was a different kind of creation. This creation was almost revolutionary in our minds. The crashing of the bottle was almost equivalent to the rush we got from hanging out at the park. When the glass shattered it was so majestic. It happened fast yet lasted longer than a movie. Of course, us being only 14 and being dumb, we turned it into a competition.

It was then one bottle after another; as if someone was playing a record on repeat. From a distance there was a big, "What the fuck are you doing?". So, we ran. Everything turned into slow motion after that. I could hear my heart leaping out of my chest, boom boom, boom boom. The adrenaline was worse than riding the tallest rollercoaster. The rednecks, at this point, had leaped from their porch where they hibernated every night: "We're calling the cops" Fear had filled my face. "Dip off", I heard Chris scream. My first instinct was to head for the most wooded area I could find. So, we all ran behind the houses of the elderly community. Turning around for a split second, there was one behind us. The redneck had followed us into the closed off community. Chris gave me a sly look and decked the hillbilly in the face. Samantha, Janice, and I then jumped over the fence and ran the rest of the way home. We heard Chris scream from the distance: "Come here old bitch." In seconds, it was as if they had multiplied and a group of old backwoods men had surrounded him. We weren't scared though; we knew Chris could get

away. As we approached Samantha's doorstep, we heard a familiar sound, but this time it meant something. That sound of that gun pulsating through our brains is something we would never be able to forget..