

Through a Different Eye: An Honors Creative Thesis

by

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Abstract

This thesis is the product of three years of reading, researching, writing, and revising. This thesis presents research on writing in various perspectives, personas, and points-of-view, how the creative imagination is developed, and how I have used writing techniques within my own writing while composing my short stories. I was inspired by Edgar Allan Poe and Flannery O'Connor to create eight stories with different perspectives, personae, and points-of-view on various topics: military personnel and their families, a frame narrative set during a single day, remembering our history, and mental health awareness.

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1. Researching Creative Writing

1.1 A Look Behind the Writing: An Evaluation of Perspective, Persona, and Point of View In Short Stories

Introduction:

In his *On Stories: And other Essays on Literature*, C.S. Lewis wrote, “To be stories at all they must be series of events: but it must be understood that this series—the *plot*, as we call it—is only really a net whereby to catch something else” (25). The plot of a story is merely the center of a spider web, the whole meant to represent a sort of completeness, but the individual strings are what make up a story. Among them include the mastery of perspective, persona, and point of view. The project serves the purpose of exemplifying a more than basic view of perspective, persona, and point of view while also creating a foundation for this Honors Creative Thesis project. This essay will present the knowledge acquired to outline of the collection of short stories found in the body of this thesis.

Synopsis:

The most looked at elements of the story—perspective, persona, and point of view—take a level of skill on the writer’s part to master especially when the author’s understanding does not match the reader’s. The purpose of my research was to experience the same level of the professionals and master the skill of expression. Understanding these concepts allowed for the creation of my storyboard maps shown in the Appendices.

Research only does so much when it comes to understanding what one has read. To show one's understanding takes example and practice. The published works by Edgar Allan Poe, Flannery O'Connor, Tanith Lee, and Angela Carter were examples as to how I could plan and compose my short stories. Differing from original stories to retellings of fairy tales, these writers exhibited the very skills I was trying to understand. Each story presents elements that the human mind recognizes but incorporates them into their storylines to create stories like no others. Each writer has a pattern or style that reveals their stories as being their own. Poe is known for his darkness, O'Connor for her gift in incorporating her Catholic upbringing in her stories as well as forcing her readers to ponder on what makes a complete story. Lee and Carter are feminist writers who show how fairy tales would look with modern influence.

The focal point of this portion of my thesis is the perspective, persona, and point of view. I then utilized my research to outline a collection of short stories that exhibit these elements; there are multiple topics with different stories. My purpose was to take one topic and show it from multiple perspectives, with different personas, and provide the readers with different points of view. The collection consists of eight short stories that all reflect my research over the course of my thesis's composition.

Perspective:

Much of my research on perspective came from Daniel Frank Chamberlain's *Narrative Perspective in Fiction: a Phenomenological Mediation of Reader, Text, and World*. Narrative perspective is heavily based on the notion of perception. Perception is much like the window to the mind. According to Chamberlain, the human consciousness and perception have a connection

through a number of different elements including language, perceptions, and experiences (4). Language is the internal dialogue between the words and meanings through the formation of questions. The question begins as “What is it that I am looking at?” Narrative perspective focuses on a subjective-objective relationship, the subject being the mind and the object being the object of the mind—the “it” that the mind is centered on. Understanding what the narrative perspective is drives the reader to continue with an analysis of the words, leading to perception. Perception is based on the usage of the senses to present a time and space of the story for the reader to use experiences to develop. A reader’s experiences influence the direction the human conscious goes when understanding narrative voice. A reader with experience in being abused would recognize the voice of another abused individual before a reader of a completely different background would. Narrative perspective is established through perception and context because the perspective is not just the “it” of the question formed by language, but is *something*.

Understanding perspective involves focusing on perception because perception affects how one sees perspective. It is perspective that asks the question developed at the beginning, but it is perception that connects all the strings to make the whole web. Perspective is a combination of historical, personal, and faith-based contexts revealed by the language used. Perception is constantly changing as the current views switch to previous ones, because perception is a relation to something. There is a relationship between it and the character, the narrator's world, the reader’s world, among others.

Persona:

Mark Sadoski's review "Imagination, Cognition, and Persona" establishes that there is a connection between language and persona. Language creates an image for the reader to connect with. This image is painted using sensory details, and when combined, reveals a certain perception. The writer paints a specific perception that the reader should understand with the help of the created persona. Images give meaning to language especially through context from faith, social experiences, and persona among many other influences. Language is dissected by cognition which "consists... of two... interconnected representation systems...verbal [through language] ...imagery and all other nonverbal representations" (270). Representation is a "*re-present*"—a reminder of the past. Cognitive thought processes are heavily influenced by experience. These experiences are often triggered by verbal or nonverbal cues that are presented as language and images.

Persona is an identity adopted by a person to be a representation of who they are, or who they need to be based on situations. An individual may present a laid-back persona around personal correspondence, but present a different image in their professional life. In fact, Sadoski says, "In essence, a persona is a particular self-image, part of a multitude of personae, or self-images, which can be construed from our overall personality, or mental life" (272-73). Persona is an image projected from the self to the public. The persona is an extension of the writer's cognition that melds the author's identity with the reader's. The purpose of establishing a persona is so that the reader can think like the writer, understand where the writer is coming from.

The author's adopted persona does only so much when there is not a present audience and cannot influence the writer's words. Sadoski mentions that when we revise our words, we do not edit to better our words, but to better communicate to our targeted audience. The author must step back from the established persona to allow a view of the reader's mind. Persona mandates the author be both a writer and a reader.

Point of View:

In many cases, a misconception of point of view is the perspective of the narrator, of what is being narrated. In part this is true because perspective does involve different dimensions (Chamberlain 75). Every story has a specific angle, place, and depth and understanding in which the narration is told from. Point of view is one of those angles not where the story is told, but where the reader was experiencing the story. As Chamberlain argues, figuring out what the story's point of view is, one must question "'From where do we perceive what is shown to us by the fact of being narrated?' (2:99)" (75). Point-of-view is the ability for the reader to see through the narrator's eyes. The writer is able to direct the reader's attention with verbal and nonverbal cues.

Writing the Story:

The first important step to writing a story is understanding the concept of a story. According to C.S. Lewis, the story is meant to delight children and adults alike. More than that, stories are "partly a division of books (some stories can be read only in the one spirit and some only in the other) and partly a division of readers (the same story can be read in different ways)"

(2). There are stories that one can read for delight as a child but not as an adult, and the delight differs between different readers.

Delight. C.S. Lewis establishes the greatest importance of a story is delighting the reader. Delight comes in many different forms: excitement, historical context, danger, and fear. Danger and fear are interrelated in the medium of stories. Fear does not just come from being in danger, but can also be something like a thrill. Danger allows the cycle of tension-and-release to commence. This cycle is important within a story just as it is in music. Tension makes the heart flutter, the breath quicken, the pulse racing. Without a release, the reader—or listener—is left without rest to the point where the individual disconnects from the plot. The story is not meant to bore or overstimulate. Thus, presenting a release to the danger creates a steady delight.

Lewis also discusses the importance of the character. He says that there is a certain image attached to a character, especially characters that overlap through stories. He uses the examples of pirates and giants. The general understanding of a giant is that of an overly large, clumsy creature; a pirate is known for being a scallywag. The foundational images are what writers base their characters on. Not only are giants what children think they are—to adults, they may be ancient, wise beings who are connected to the Greek gods in some sort of way. Similarly, pirates are also known for wearing brass jewelry and being banished from society. In short, a character requires a memorable entrance; and each character deserves one that is unique to themselves.

Once the story is understood, one must consider the composition of a story. In “The Philosophy of Composition,” Edgar Allan Poe breaks down his thoughts on a story. He first discusses the importance of length. It is suggested that a story should be able to be read in one sitting else external interruptions will distract one’s attention from the work. The information

that could be broken is the impression or “effect” that is meant to be conveyed by the work. Poe tells writers to consider both what one wishes to impress on the readers and how one wants the reader to be affected. Behind these impressions is a “universally appreciable” element (Poe)—Beauty. Poe considers Beauty to be important not necessarily because of its quality, but because of the effect it has on the reader. Poe relates the experience of Beauty to the soul rather than the intellect or the heart. Beauty is reached through use of tone; he stresses the importance of establishing a perceived tone to create the desired effect of Beauty.

Poe next discusses the application of a refrain, an element that repeats. The refrain, while mostly unvaried, does have a variation to how it is applied. It may be that the refrain is repeated in a different context, or that its words were added to it. A refrain is a comfortable moment, an idea, a concept to which the reader can return. Another way to establish a refrain is to incorporate motifs in the stories that allow the reader to return to the main theme. While he is writing about poetry, Poe’s theories can be applied to short fiction.

Other elements required during the process of writing are originality, circumscription of space, effect of the denouement, and the complexity or adaptation and suggestiveness of a story. As Lewis said, all stories are essentially the same, but they all need a certain originality. The example Poe used was an original combination of rhythm and meter when constructing a poem. He continued with his description of circumscription of space. This space is much like a picture frame; and, within this space is the story’s central picture. This picture is the central image of the room, the message, the point. The reader’s attention should be concentrated on what is in the picture frame. Every story begins with an end image that the author intends to reach. When considering the end, the writer should introduce it quickly and directly, beginning with an

enlightenment of some thought, or idea. Poe's final point in the composition of a story is that in the end, it is a story's complexity and adaptation and suggestiveness that catches the reader's eye. The language draws their attention and deepens their interest in the plot as well as the implications within the metaphors, symbols, and other devices.

The next step of writing the short story is deciding on what perspective to use. Blogger and author, Nathan Bransford lists the important points when writing a story for beginners. In choosing that, one must consider the story's tense whether past or present. The importance of consistency in tense and perspective allows "a reader [to] know where to situate themselves within a scene" ("All about Perspectives in Novels"). After deciding on the tense, the writer should move on to understanding each perspective. First person narrative is "told from a specific narrator's perspective;" second person is "written as if the narrative happens from the reader's perspective, or as if it's a conversation with an invisible character" ("All about Perspectives in Novels"). The third person has two options: omniscient and limited. Third person omniscient means third person all-knowing. The narrator has access to all thoughts and perspectives. On the other hand, the third person limited narrator has access to only one character's thoughts and perspective.

Bransford tells his writers-in-training to consider the number of characters one wants to anchor in the story when considering the perspective. He also suggests looking at the pros and cons of each perspective. While the first person is more "intimate," it is more difficult to make it compelling. The second person is unique, but it is challenging and disorienting. Third person limited "show[s] what a character is thinking and feeling while still retaining some objectivity and distance," but it has constraints to it—we only observe what the narrator observes. Finally,

third person omniscient allows the writer to show everything but showing everything in a seamless way is difficult and sometimes disorienting.

The last sources on writing I wish to discuss are “On Writing” by Raymond Carver and “Writing Short Stories” by Flannery O’Connor. Carver’s “On Writing” gives considerable insight to a professional writer’s thoughts on other writers. Every writer has a style to their works; it is their signature that separates their pieces from everyone else’s (46). Writers are not successful because they have talent, but primarily because of their signatures. Poe’s signature is his talent: his ability to create beauty with such gruesome, dark pieces.

Further, in writing, there should be “no tricks” (47) as a means of covering oneself. Tricks take away from the piece of fiction as does trying to sound smart. These tools are not needed when writing an exciting, successful story. In fact, it is the normal “commonplace” (48) objects that catches the reader’s attention when the writer incorporates literary tools to make more than they may seem. Using language skillfully draws the readers in more than trying to sound smart. Diction and syntax should not be taken lightly but should be used lightly. As Carver put it, “If the words are heavy with the writer’s own unbridled emotions, or if they are imprecise and inaccurate for some other reason—if the words are in any way blurred—the reader’s eyes will slide over them and nothing will be achieved” (48-9). In every piece, only the most important words should be used. The writer should not waste time on the unimportant details. One word can say the exact same thing as three or more.

His last—and strongest—point about the writer of a short story, Carver says the story should start with a glimpse. This glimpse is the start of a life, the story. He says, “The short story writer’s task is to invest the glimpse with all that is in his power” (50). The glimpse is like the

first statement of a speech—it grabs the attention of the reader, forcing them to stop in curiosity or excitement. The title of a movie carries a certain weight on the viewer’s curiosity. A writer must give the reader the briefest and most engaging glimpse into the story as they can.

Writing skillfully is not the easiest task. According to Flannery O’Connor, “I have heard people say that the short story was one of the most difficult literary forms...” (87). While she disagreed, many do not know how to do it. The first thought is thinking about the plot, the characters, etc. but, O’Connor says that “a story is a dramatic event that involves a person because he is a person, and a particular person—that is, because he shares in the general human condition and in some specific human situation” (90). A story is more than just a constructive *thing*; it is centered on the person. A story has personality. A story requires judgment. A story is a sensory experience; it is an inclusive activity for the readers to participate in.

To allow for this participation, the writer’s duty is not to tell the story. Reader’s do not want to be told a story; rather, they want to be shown. O’Connor tells her listeners to let the story live on its own, to not force anything out of it. A story lives through sensory details. These details form an image, one that the readers can grasp and have added on to by the story (92-3). The image helps the reader find the concrete meaning within the story. A writer should not be suggestive, or leave out details because they believe the detail is implied. Abstract concepts should never be used within the story’s meaning. While “the fiction writer states as little as possible,” the concrete language does not allow for ambiguity (99).

O’Connor concludes her piece by providing her listeners with suggestions. She first states, “a story is good when you continue to see more and more in it, and when it continues to escape you.” The story is a living thing that grows on its own and guides the writers. What

creates this story is “the use of language” and only using images that leave impressions (102-03). She says that fiction has two qualities; “one is the sense of mystery and the other is the sense of manners. You get the manners from the texture of existence that surrounds you” (103). Mystery is easy to understand—it is connected to the concept of tension and release from delight that C.S. Lewis discussed. Manners are adopted through external influences. Societal, familial, and others influences provide examples of good or bad manners for the writer to adopt with their fiction. Her last point is to give the characters personality. Their personality “creates the action of the story” (105). The story is alive, because “if you start with a real personality, a real character, then something is bound to happen; and you don’t have to know what before you begin” (106). The story has a life of its own; the writer may not need to plan it all, because the story falls into place and grows on its own.

Conclusion:

This research assisted in developing my understanding of perspective, persona, and point-of-view as well as my storyboard maps and stories. In studying the composition of vital story elements, I was able to use the technical practice of creating a story to develop my own. The eight stories are examples of showing certain topics or themes with various perspectives, personae, and points-of-view.

1.2 The Art of Creativity: An Exploration of the Influence of the Imagination on Creative Writing

Fiction writers depend on their imagination to produce the creative images on which their stories are based. Creativity begins developing at a young age, when a child is most observant and innocent from the impact of reality. Children begin not knowing what is or is not true, but as they mature, the reality of how the world works starts to influence the imagination. Influence plays a large role in the imagination, because humans are social, learning creatures. We learn from others, and we mimic those we deem role models. This paper explores how reading, writing, social interactions, and instructions at a young age influence how the imagination develops the fiction authors that we know today.

Creative imagination is a layered concept that develops over time as the person matures and is influenced by external sources. In her thesis, Fatma Abubaker refers to Vygotsky's idea that the mind's imagination begins to develop in childhood. She points out that "socio-dramatic play is an activity in which children create imaginary situations, often creating a story, taking and giving roles, and making rules" before taking on these roles in play (35). Creativity is interactive and involves various developmental skills emphasized in education.

At a young age, children do not understand what is or is not understood by the human mind, but they learn from experience how pieces of imagination are put together. This is active imagination where the child learns how to take what they know and change their stories by adding new information. Furthermore, their imagination is spurred on by their desires in daily life such as driving cars, or being a princess. To satisfy these needs, they create whole worlds

where they are race-car drivers or are Sleeping Beauty (Abubaker 36-37). Once a child reaches puberty, their imagination and reasoning combine to create more complex stories that exhibit morally difficult situations, or extensive plots. The mind develops as the human person does, and so, the imagination is at its greatest maturity when a person reaches adulthood.

Vlad Petre Glăveanu's "Children and creativity: A most (un)likely pair?" relates to Abubaker's reference to Vygotsky who states that the imagination develops as the person grows. He states:

In the collective imaginary (of people from the Western world and our present day at least) there seems to be a strongly held conviction that children are much more free and creative in their expression than adults. This theme has been well reflected in psychology too, in the work of several distinguished authors.

If maturity suggests an understanding of reasoning, it does make sense for the child's imagination to be more free and creative because the child's mind does not know any barriers. On the other hand, the maturity of the mind produces a comprehensible language and story while children seem to ramble on about nonsense.

Developmental skills are a vital piece to maturing the imagination. Ozgur Babayigit references Temizkan who suggests that "the creative writing process can be thought of as problem solving ability by individual approaches based on the experience, knowledge and attitudes of the authors" (1). This shows that creative writing involves critical thinking skills as well as the inclusion of emotions. The princess stories turn into damsels being saved by the prince from a dragon to the prince and the princess falling in love. The plot of these stories become more complex as the prince has to travel from his kingdom to the hidden castle to battle

the fire-breathing dragon with only a sword and a shield. The stories reflect an increase in complexity overcome through critical thinking skills as well as emotion with the inclusion of romance between the prince and princess.

The complexity of a story is the product of an active imagination and external influence. Ron Padgett suggests that writing is considered to be an active activity. In this essentially true but oversimplified view, the words flow from the writer onto the paper. Writers know that the words originate either inside or outside the writer, go into the writer's conscious mind, move out onto the paper, and then affect what words come next, forming a kind of rolling cycle (3). This cycle is taught through instruction and influence. Glăveanu also considers the idea of novelty versus originality which are the suggested “two-factor criterion” in the formula of creativity (14-15). He points out that novelty does not remain new indefinitely and thus cannot be the factor that makes an idea, or work, creative. In fact he says, “in the end, nothing is truly original in the absolute sense of the word since, as we know, creative products don’t emerge out of thin air, but out of the (re)combination of whatever exists” (15). And so, writing is a form of expression that does not “inform but influence” (Babayigit 2). Babayigit suggests that writing skills are taught at an early age, and that when individuals attend college, as soon as the General Education classes are completed, some students stop writing creatively. Exceptional writing depends on the writer’s enthusiasm on the subject.

Walter Libby points out that “the teacher of composition can exhort the pupils to select in writing a certain point of view, but in imaginative writing the magnet that draws to a center the details of the work of art is the emotion of the writer” (250). This may concur with the negative outlook on writing, as the student loses their ability to think freely and express their own

emotions. A person's feelings contribute to their writing in that they influence how the writer thinks about a concept, their writing style, and more, but in educational composition, there are rules and guidelines the writers must follow. Technical writing is used in the General Education courses, and it might be these specific rules that are typically constricting that might cause students to lose interest in developing their writing skills and imagination.

Some suggest that surrounding oneself with like-minded individuals increases one's interest in and dedication to a certain subject matter. "Reading in Company Boosts Creativity" suggests that reading and writing in a group makes one more creative, while doing these alone makes the imagination more likely to follow rules and guidelines. The key is in the 'like-mindedness' of the individuals because one would then feel encouraged to improve. The idea of a mob mentality is similar. If one student is working hard to complete an assignment, the other readers and writers will feel just as obligated to show the same amount of effort. In some cases, this may not always be true because some students work better alone rather than around others. Again, this is attributed to the 'like-mindedness' of individuals working around each other.

Creative imagination is a biological tool developed from the earliest stages of childhood. Critical thinking and active learning are vital ingredients in the recipe for the imagination. From a young age, children use their observation and lack of understanding of reality to create implausible stories that always confuse adults. It is at this stage that the mind is most free to create and imagine whatever the individual wants to. As the individual matures, so does the imagination. Rules and guidelines on how the world works set up perimeters for the imagination to stay within. Similarly, writing instructions within the education system can be very constricting. The mind will never stop knowing how to produce a story because of the simple

guidelines of a beginning, middle, and end; but, if one stops stretching and using creative imagination, one will not be able to use it effectively. There is no such thing as writer's block, because the imagination is capable of forming an infinite number of ideas to write about, but if practicing is non-existent, a person will feel stuck. It is important to understand where the creative imagination comes from and where it goes through a person's life. People who interact not only with others, but also their own minds, will be able to follow the progression of their creative imagination's growth.

1.3 The Art of Fiction: A Reflection on Fiction Craft Book Techniques Used in My Own Writing

During my journey through creativity, I came upon a craft book in my Advanced Fiction Writing class that addresses five elements commonly crafted in creative writing: Lightness, Quickness, Exactitude, Visibility, and Mobility. Italo Calvino's *Six Memos for the Next Millennium* explains these writing elements that are all vital in fiction writing. In fact, some I had been using without knowing it; others, I struggled to utilize correctly. Regardless, Calvino helped me continue to learn about myself as a writer through reflections. He had planned to write the sixth one, Consistency, but he died before accomplishing this task. Calvino identifies and explains how to use each memo with various literary examples. Calvino dedicated these memos "to certain values or qualities or peculiarities of literature that are especially close to my heart, in an effort to situate them with a view to the new millennium" as a way to show how the "future of literature rests on knowledge...that only literature...can give us" (1).

Although Calvino seems to disregard weightiness in literature, he argues that it is no less important. Instead, lightness is the virtue he desired to discuss more. He begins with the different uses of lightness and weight, saying that some writers use lightness as "a weightless element that hovers over things like a cloud, or, better, a fine dust, or better still, a magnetic field" while others use weight as a way to "imbue language with weight and thickness and concreteness of objects and bodies and sensations" (18). To achieve this lightness, Calvino alludes to the myth of Perseus and Medusa (4-7). Perseus used the sandals of Hermes to fly high above the clouds, and used Athena's shield to gaze at Medusa's reflection so as to not be turned into stone. Perseus

represents the ability to remove himself from worldly restraints and perspectives on language as represented by Medusa.

Calvino identifies three types of lightness that writers can craft within this mindset. The first is “a lightening of language by which meanings are carried by a verbal fabric that seems weightless, until they take on that same rarefield consistency” and uses Emily Dickinson’s writing as an example of such lightness (19). And so, according to Calvino, one can use words with ‘light’ connotations to lighten the work: dew on the grass, a breeze on the air, the petals on flowers.

The second type of lightness is “the narration of a train of thought or psychological process that involves subtle, barely perceptible elements, or any description involving a high degree of abstraction” (20). An example of this is Ambrose Bierce’s “An Occurrence At Owl Creek Bridge” in the following passage:

As Peyton Fahrquhar fell straight downward through the bridge he lost consciousness and was as one already dead. From this state he was awakened—ages later, it seemed to him—by the pain of a sharp pressure upon his throat, followed by a sense of suffocation. Keen, poignant agonies seemed to shoot from his neck downward through every fiber of his body and limbs. These pains appeared to flash along well defined lines of ramification and to beat with an inconceivably rapid periodicity. They seemed like streams of pulsating fire heating him to an intolerable temperature. As to his head, he was conscious of nothing but a feeling of fullness—of congestion. These sensations were unaccompanied by thought. The intellectual part of his nature was already effaced; he had power only to feel, and feeling was torment. He was conscious of motion. Encompassed in a luminous

cloud, of which he was now merely the fiery heart, without material substance, he swung through unthinkable arcs of oscillation, like a vast pendulum. Then all at once, with terrible suddenness, the light about him shot upward with the noise of a loud splash; a frightful roaring was in his ears, and all was cold and dark. The power of thought was restored; he knew that the rope had broken, and he had fallen into the stream (14).

Bierce begins this passage with the weighty language of the character being hung transitions into more abstract language. He relates internal sensations that create a fuzzy lightness that Fahquhar experiences as he loses consciousness.

Lastly, Calvino defines the third type of lightness as “a visual image of lightness that takes on symbolic value” and uses Boccaccio as an example of this. The character, Cavalcanti, leaps over a tombstone to avoid confrontation with a group of men. By doing so, the symbolic nature of leaping presents the writer’s ability to leap over the obstacles the world places on language as mentioned before. Another image that symbolizes this type of lightness is the moon, and Calvino strives to reduce the weightiness of language to resemble the moon’s lightness (29).

In transitioning to his next memo, Calvino mentions important qualities to identify in creative works are that they are light, in motion, and provide information (15). He says, “the story is a horse” (47) because “a story is an operation on duration, an enchantment that affects the flow of time, contracting it or expanding it” (41). It is this motion that can be crafted into quickness with its “nimbleness, mobility, and ease” or into delay, that extension of time (55). The journey of time always ends with Death; Calvino personally goes towards it directly while others wind around the path to delay the end as long as possible. In explaining quickness, Calvino quotes a passage from Giacomo Leopardi:

A quick, concise style is pleasing because it offers the mind a host of ideas simultaneously, or in such rapid succession that they appear simultaneous, staggering the mind with such an abundance of thoughts, or of psychic images and sensations, that either it is unable to encompass all of them and any of them fully, or it has no time to remain idle, empty of sensations (50). And this reveals that there is a “relation between the physical and mental speed” in the language’s overall rhythm (49).

In looking at two passages from my short fiction “The Uniform,” I considered the different rhythms of quickness in each one. Firstly:

The outside is beautiful. The sunrise is prominently pink and orange with a hint of purple. The trees rustle in the warming wind, waving to me from high in the sky. I see the birds are flying together, calling out to their mates. The grass feels cool under my bare feet. The clouds take on all kinds of shapes and sizes like a dragon! It was unfurling its wings to catch the wind. The small lake shimmers and glistens. The dragonflies startle the water but for a brief moment, and then they depart, leaving the fading ripples behind. It really is quite beautiful.

And secondly:

There’s a pressure on my chest. The outside is now warm. Heavy. The trees, oppressive. They shake at me. Violently knocking. They’ll uproot and chase me. The birds cluster together. Surround me. They’ll peck me until I bleed. The grass is prickly. Itchy. Sticky. They’ll grow around my ankles. Pull me down to Hell. The clouds darken. Expand. Fill my vision. They’ll swallow me up. Crush me. The lake darkens. Deepens. Stills. Solidifies. It’ll drag me under. Drown me. The outside is terrifying.

In the first passage, the rhythm is more poetic, gentle, light, while the second passage utilizes fragmentation to give it a choppy rhythm.

Quickness can also relate to the memo for Exactitude that Calvino discusses next. Similar to *Lightness*, *Exactitude* has three different definitions. Firstly, it is “a well-defined, well-considered design for the work” that can be related to how in the Fiction Writing and Advanced Fiction Writings courses utilize image workshops. By using three images, the writers are able to create a design, a foundation, to what the story will present to the audience. Secondly, it is “the evocation of clear, sharp, memorable images” which points to the use of sensory-heavy details to create the images that the audience is engaging with. And, finally, it is “a language that is precise as possible in its choice of words and its expression of the nuances of thought and imagination” which is where the writer contemplates over the diction, the syntax, and if they will be using a fragmented or a poetic rhythm in their writing (67-68).

In using *Exactitude*, Calvino argues that there are two paths writers can take: “the reduction of incidental events to abstract schemes that could be used to perform operations and demonstrate theorems,” or, “the effort of words to convey as precisely as possible the perceptible aspect of things” (91). In this, Calvino returns to *lightness* in writing where it can either be abstractly presented to give it a feeling of *lightness*, or it can be precisely written with objects and actions to evoke this sensation. The craft of doing so is *Exactitude*.

The final two memos, *Visibility* and *Multiplicity*, work hand-in-hand as Calvino relates them to the imagination. He says, “The imagination is a place in which it rains” (99) and that the imagination is an “encyclopedia, a library, an inventory of objects, a pattern book of styles, in which everything can be constantly remixed and rearranged in every possible fashion” (151).

While all of Calvino's memos are important and vital, *Visibility and Multiplicity* have stuck out to me as the most important for writers to understand first-and-foremost. It is important to understand that our imaginative processes are "one[s] that begin with words and end with the visual image" (102) that our mind can multiply into an infinite number of combinations to create a story. Without acknowledging that

The poet must imagine visually both what his character sees and what he thinks he sees—what he dreams, what he remembers, what he represented, what he hears described—just as he must imagine the visual content of the metaphors he uses to facilitate this visual evocation. (101-02)

The writer will not only be able to fully appreciate the art of writing, but also understand their role as writers and observers. What I mean by this is that a writer cannot control the story. A story takes a life of its own if the writer lets it, because of the multiplicity of writing. This was extremely evident in my workshop on Tuesday, November 15, 2022, where I mentioned a dissatisfaction in what I had created because "it had not gone to plan." I obsessed over the ideas I had created, that I had planned to the last detail, and I lost sight of the truth in the story. The story I had planned is a different story in-and-of itself from the one I wrote, and I did not recognize that my story had a different truth to share until others pointed it out to me. Once I had acknowledged this, I accepted my role as both a writer and observer, and once again, learned that I need the story to take life on its own.

A final thought that I left the class with during my Craft Presentation, that I will continue to think about is this quote:

What if it were possible for a work to be conceived beyond the self, a work that allowed us to escape the limited perspective of the individual ego, not only in order to enter other similar selves but to give voice to that which cannot speak – the bird perched on the gutter, the tree in spring and the tree in autumn, stone, cement, plastic... (151-52).

Every time I read this passage, I cannot help but try to imagine all the possibilities that lie before me, all the stories I have to write whether I know it or not. It is impossible. It is a number, an amount, an image that cannot be conceptualized. The beauty of writing is escaping as Calvino called it “the limited perspective,” to fly high above it like Perseus, to escape it like Cavalcanti, and yet to also embrace it, because without limitations, writers would not face the challenges that develop and mature them into great writers.

1. Through a Different Eye: A Collection of Short Stories

2.1 Military Personnel and their Families

The Eagle

Lines of boys and girls make their way to the front of the stage. Standing alone at its center, the statue of an eagle stares at these silently terrified faces. Soon their confidence will soar like the eagle.

Here are people who are willing to sacrifice their lives on behalf of their families, their states, their country. Their multi-colored shirts and pants will become matching uniforms. Today they are individuals, tomorrow, comrades. There will not be “he” or “she;” no “us;” or “them”; no “you” or “I”; there will only be “we”!

They are brothers and sisters. They will carry each other through this endeavor. No one will be left behind! There will be no giving up! It will be a hard, trying, bloody, horrible struggle, but they will make it through. They will be as strong and resilient as the eagle.

They will make their mothers and fathers proud. They will set an example for future recruits. They will protect this nation’s values of justice, equality, and freedom!

They look at this eagle, the symbol of freedom, and will promise to uphold the Constitution of the United States of America. They will promise to protect, respect, support, defend, and take care of all persons. They will promise to sacrifice their time, their bodies, their minds, their wills; their strengths, their weaknesses, their laughs, and their tears; their pain, their

dreams, and their nightmares to the United States of America, its freedom, its democracy, its justice, and all those who uphold such beliefs.

The Mission

A wise man once told me Truth can only be found through great contemplation and understanding that comes from one source. The same man took care of me and the boys. He saw us through many dangers, keeping us out of harms' way as best he could. He was the first to the wounded, and the last to leave. He mourned those he lost and rejoiced in those who lived.

He wasn't just our leader; he was also our teacher. We learned more about ourselves with him than we did in school. The unruly adolescents of our youth would not recognize us after all our training. He taught us to be loyal to him and each other. Only then could we have his trust and him ours. We learned to be obedient, listening to orders that could very well save our lives. We learned to be prudent with our decisions, to be just towards ourselves and others, to be courageous in all things, and to live in moderation.

We followed him with undying love and loyalty while he kept us well-provided for. The chances of any of us getting hurt under his care were slim, but never impossible. The chances of him getting hurt were impossible; we wouldn't allow it. Ever. Not until he gave us no choice: his final lesson. Sacrifice.

My commander, my leader, my brother. He was my entire world until it all came crashing down. I thought I knew the world. I thought I knew my life. I thought I knew where to look. Always and only at him. I didn't know where to turn when he was gone. We fought and survived many battles together; but we didn't die together. I regret not dying with him.

My days are dark at my home away from home. Whereas the mess hall was always crowded, full of companionship, my living room is empty, lonely. No large tables and benches to

sit at with your brothers, no food and drink being shared while laughter filled the halls, no head table for all of the commanders. Just a single table with its lonely chair. Desolate in the corner. A sofa in the living room. Empty. A kitchen with barely enough food to sustain.

My uniform stands tattered in its case. A sign of honor. My reminder of disgrace. The blood stains remain unwashed as a keepsake. A relic of my commander. A constant wish for his return. But I know that won't happen. I carried him, running to the medics, his blood seeping into my clothes, begging them to save his life. A once strong man brought to his knees when he watched his leader fall.

The worst part of it? My brother's crystal-clear eyes. They found mine amid the blur of death and he said, "This was my choice" before taking his last breath.

Coming back from the war wasn't easy. Everyone treats you differently. A hero. Honorably discharged. I failed my commander. A weakling. An abandoner. A traitor. Left to my own devices without his guidance and support. I don't know what to do without him, he was my everything, the hall my home! I don't want anyone's pity! I just want an answer! Stop asking me about my experiences, stop looking at me like I'm broken, stop looking at me with hate because I survived, stop trying to reach me! I don't want you; I want my brother!

I sit in the ruin my life has become. No patience for the world. Oh, how I wish to be dead! Drinking my life away. Going through my days living in my head. Replaying it over and over. Looking at how terribly I messed up. Holding my gun to my head. Hearing the explosion. I can't. I just can't... Why can I not just die? I cry out for my commander. I see him in my uniform's arms. I reach for him. He's too far away. I can't reach him. I can't live without him, but I can't pull the trigger. The gun falls from my hands, and I collapse onto my sofa. Misery

consumes me as I fall into a deep sleep. The world is so lucky not bearing the weight I have on my shoulders.

A blinding light shone forth from the heavens, and a dark shape came thundering towards me from below. A choice for me to make. Salvation or damnation. The fiery caves open like a chasm, ready to suck me in; but the angelic light surrounded me, lifting me from harm's way.

"Do you not remember my lessons?"

That familiar voice brings life back into my heart. My life stands there before me, alive and well, coming to lead me again! My commander's presence is a great comfort to me, until I see his eyes. His eyes are lit with fury.

"If there was anything you should have learned from our comradeship, it should have been the lessons I gave you and the boys. Did you not understand them, you who wished to use the gun against yourself? Brother of mine, look back at yourself. There is someone greater than I who will fulfill you. Remember, a wise man looks at the world through a different lens, he practices the virtues, he understands."

He turns to leave me, taking my heart with him once more, and I fall. I fall into the burning flames, suffocating as it all happens, again.

The boys pack their gear quickly and quietly. I'm just finishing when the commander calls me to him. Side-by-side we stand, gazing at the expanse of trees before us. Our orders: to scout the expanse before us. I listen silently as my commander discusses our course of action.

The trees are tall and wide, blocking the sun from our sight. The moss grows thick, stifling the air, threatening to choke the life out of us. Their limbs poke us trying to break our

guard. The undergrowth is thick and obscure, grabbing at our ankles like the souls stuck in the River Styx. *Blasted trail. I watch myself continuously tripping over the roots, stumbling up against my leader so I wouldn't fall on my rifle. I wanted to stop watching, but I couldn't.* The animals hiss at us foreigners, threatening to attack at any moment. But with our commander at the lead, they dare not attack us.

The path is so tight, we walk shoulder-to-shoulder, alternating positions so every other person points their gun at the ready in either direction. Only the commander stands forward; and I behind him, watching his back. Every thirty minutes we stop for a break, our green camouflage sticking to our backs from the humidity, our helmets holding back rivers of sweat. Our legs shake from the weight of our full packs, our guns, and our ammunition. I sling mine down in front of me, handing my commander a MRE that I had already prepared for him. He sits behind me as I take the first watch.

Holding my automatic, I point the rifle away from the boys, towards the surrounding trees, deterring any attack. I would not let them get hurt. The sun glimmers through a small opening in the trees, revealing an opening ahead. My commander tells me to scout ahead, saying it's fine, they won't be exposed for long. I walk away. *I cannot get myself to hear my cries. I called to my idiot self, telling him to turn back, but he could not hear me. I watched helplessly as my doom came to pass.*

The clearing is like that of a dream: the grass is perfect, not a single blade out of place. The birds sing, flying through the sky. The squirrels chitter, dancing through the trees. The smell of flowers fills the air, a relief on my restricted lungs. A drug. The lotus flower clouds my mind, and everything blurs into a daze.

An explosion.

Flames fill the air and my heart drops as I see the commander cut off from the body of the squadron. He heads over to my position. The boys are under fire and on fire. Their screams echo through the air as bullets fly through their bodies and as the fire sears their skin raw.

The animals had dragged us into the middle of their territory and ambushed us.

I watch as the boys are cut down, one by one. I watch as our fearless leader throws himself into the array of bullets and flames, trying to get the survivors out. All the while, I stand frozen, as if a million miles away. I cannot not move to help my leader; I am too far away. His shout of pain shakes me out of my stupor. He takes the first bullet to the chest. He stumbles. I see my injured brother desperately trying to save the boys and I run. I run into the crossfire and shoot those animals until they bleed. I run to my brother and pull him from the flames. He refuses. He will not leave the others. I tell him we are nothing without his leadership. I tell him I will get the others, but he is adamant.

So, I cover him while he carries the lifeless bodies from the flames. He tells me to get out of range, but I won't. He orders me out of range, and I finally move. I dare not disobey his orders.

Tears fall from my eyes as I move out of harms' way. Just as I am safe, a grenade shrieks through the air, landing some yards away from my commander. He looks at it lodged between the trees' roots and a split-second passes as he looks straight at me.

He smiles softly, putting his fist on his chest right above his heart.

The grenade goes off.

He flies through the air, still holding onto the last boy he was retrieving from the flames.

A scream resounds from the chambers of my chest.

I throw myself into the danger zone, firing at will, not caring if I miss. Screams echo through the trees. My sudden, desperate fury frightens off the enemy. All I can hear is the blood pounding in my head.

The boys are dead. All of them are gone. Their bodies charred beyond recognition. Their dog tags gleaming against their necks as I realize we will be sending them back home to their families wrapped in red, white, and blue. No more mess hall jokes. No more training sessions. They depended on me, and I failed them.

My commander coughs up blood. It dribbles across his lips.

The blood's in his lungs. He takes weak, raspy, wet breaths.

His uniform is burned to tatters; the metal pieces melted against his skin. His skin. He is burned raw. It is charred. Some parts black, brown, and red. The wounds. There are too many for me to take care of. His chest laid open by gunshots, his arms, and legs bleeding profusely from the burns. Unrecognizable except by his face. His face was protected by the boy he was carrying when he was struck.

"It is called sacrifice for a reason," he croaked. "I was willing to sacrifice my time, my strength, my life to the cause, I would do the same for you boys."

I order him to stay with me. He tries to order me to leave him with the boys. He can't get the words out. He slips out of consciousness.

I pick him up. I throw him over my shoulder. I run.

I run as fast as I can. Every time his lungs gasp for air, they expel more blood. My uniform is soaked. Each wheeze, each numbing cry in pain, each moment of broken silence pushes me forward. I keep running.

I make it to the medics just as the sun is going down. I scream for their help. I beg them to save the one thing that matters to me. I offer my own blood for a transfusion. They ask me to leave. I will not leave until I know he is on the mend.

The medics need to know what happened. I have to move from my brother's side. The clatter inside quiets down.

It's too quiet.

I run to his side.

His breathing is more shallow.

I scream at the medics to save him.

He reaches for my arm. The movement causes him obvious pain. His crystal-clear eyes find mine amid the blur of death.

"This was my choice."

He closes his eyes. The medics give him morphine through the IV. And we wait.

It does not take even five minutes. He takes one last ragged breath before going still. The medics cover him with a white sheet. And, I stay by his side, watching his blood soak through.

My saddened soul watches numbly as the image fades away. I floated there between Heaven and Hell with my brother standing next to me. I can't see the light, just darkness. And suddenly, I am alone. Lost.

My eyes open to a new world. I can't stand the darkness I sit in, so I open the windows. The motion sends dust flying through the air. The sun gives me warmth, prompting me to check the room's temperature. Sixty-four degrees. I turn it up. The room looks so lonely. I can't stand it anymore. I have to get out.

I pass my uniform. I stare at it through the glass. My commander isn't there anymore, and I keep walking.

I turn on my car for the first time in months and I drive. I drive down the road. It's a lot shorter than it used to be. There are new stores open with crowds of people shuffling in and out. Children jump over the cracks in the concrete. Their parents follow lazily. An old couple waved at me from their chairs in front of the old cafe. I don't know who they are.

I stop at the crossroad. To the left, is the bar I drink my life away in. To the right, the support group I have avoided for so long. Behind me, my empty home. I don't know what's ahead. I keep driving straight.

I come to a dirt path. It's too small for my truck. The path is surrounded by flowers and small trees. I can't see through them. There isn't any other car here except for a battered black Ford truck. I walk through the trees, staring at my feet. I walk in my daze down the path until it ends. I stand, one foot on the dirt path, the other in the grass, staring at a small, old chapel. The wood has chipped paint and there are ancient stained-glass windows.

The rusted hinges catch on the door. The metal screeches as they scrape against each other. I walk on the red carpet. The wood creaks under my weight. My feet take me to the front. There's an eerie silence. I can hear my heart beating.

A door opens in front of me, and an old man waddles his way to the pew behind me. He grunts softly as he sits on the old wood.

"You depend on humanity way too much. If you place your trust solely in mankind, you lose sight as to what the Truth is."

I turn around quickly, but the old man isn't there. I'm all alone in this chapel. The heavy weight on my heart lifts ever so slightly. I feel like I can breathe again. My guilt does not go away, nor does my pain, but it's bearable.

I exit the chapel and return the way I came. Only now do I notice the beauty before me. The trees are full of blossoms. Bees buzz around the bushes. Squirrels chitter above my head. And above that, the sun glimmers through the branches.

I still mourn the loss of my brother, but I finally understand his lesson.

The wise man looked down at me from Heaven, smiling as I finally understood. Now, he could rest in peace knowing he completed his mission.

The Uniform

The uniform was not how I remembered it. The tan fabric was always hand washed and starched, devoid of all wrinkles and blemishes. The shined medals glistened brighter than the sun. The polished boots were deep, black mirrors. The uniform was not touched by anyone but Father and his personal servant. If Father was not wearing the uniform, it was hung up out of reach of fouled hands. The uniform was the perfect display.

Father was not how I remembered him. Father was born to wear the uniform. He wore it with pride and valor. He was the embodiment of a warrior god with his groomed hair and beard, his tall muscular, invincible stature. His bright blue eyes shattered the strongest will, and his set frown deterred all conflict. His large hands handled a gun with ease. Father was an intimidating man, even the other uniform-clad men feared him.

I didn't fear him. He was my Father. I loved him and he loved me. I was his little cherry blossom, his anchor, his everything. Those same hands that ended men's lives held me with the most gentle touch. The eyes that crushed dreams gazed at me with tender love. His lips formed nothing but smiles for me. His stern demeanor melted away into laughter. Even when the other uniformed men were present, he would make time for me. He held me in his strong arms during his meetings; I got to join him at his dinner parties. My Father and I were inseparable; we did everything together.

The hardest part of Father wearing the uniform was that he went to war. My constant anxieties over his safety rattled me. In the days leading up to his departure, it was difficult to remain happy and positive. But we managed. We talked amiably, we laughed, and we played chess. I was constantly reminded of my greatest lesson, because Father didn't give in easily: I

was not going to be handed any easy win. I had to earn my victory. I knew that my Father would not return to me without a struggle, a struggle I was determined to overcome.

The first time he left me for service Father woke me before dawn. I climbed into his arms, still in my nightgown, and he carried me to the dining hall. Together, we ate our last meal until he returned: porridge with fresh fruit, and water. Sometimes, Father allowed me to sip his wine or have a bite of his braised meat. Times like this were the most special moments for my Father and me, because he would dismiss the household so that we could be utterly alone.

After breakfast, Father brought me to his room where his servant waited with his uniform. While he readied, I stared at my Father's face, desperately trying to memorize every detail. I agonized at the thought of him being gone, not knowing when, or if, he would ever return to me. I couldn't bear to see the stress in his eyes, but he still shone like royalty.

The uniform had a single crease above his heart where a folded handkerchief rested. In that silk was a sprig of dried lavender, my favorite scent, and a dried carnation, my favorite flower. A lady's token for her champion. It bothered me, that crease, but Father said he wouldn't give up my gifts for anything.

He said there were terrible men who wanted to hurt me. That he must leave to protect me. That he would not leave if he knew a better way to keep me safe. That he promised to return. And so, I stood at the top of the staircase, watching my Father depart. It was a bittersweet moment, watching Father leave just as the morning sun was rising. The colors were too beautiful for this somber moment, but I couldn't help but love it. Sitting on the top stair, I watched the red sun inching her way over the wall of trees. Its rays like spotlights could be seen through the thick clouds. Oh, the colors! The red blended into an orange; there were purple and pink, too! My

Father stopped to gaze at the sun, too. That was our hope. We would see the morning sun together again.

Day after day I waited for Father's return. Oh, the waiting was torture. Torture, I tell you! Walking around the estate with its hundreds of bedrooms, dining halls, play areas; with its acres of rolling waves of green grass and outdoor toys. I hated it. All of it. The world's beauty mocked me. How dare it try to please me when Father is gone!

I hated my silk dresses and heels. I hated the servants who came to do my hair and makeup. I was dressed and undressed by specially picked hands. Father made sure I had nothing but the best: the biggest room in the house, the best servants, pets. He gave me everything, but it doesn't matter now. When he left, he took everything with him.

What was the point in enjoying those things without Father? I dressed magnificently for him, I laughed for him, I played for him, I sang, I sewed. Everything was for him. Now that he's gone, it doesn't matter. I dismissed my servants for the time being. I wore drab clothing and let my hair fly loose, throwing away my beauty as my governess said. I could barely eat, concerning my personal physicians. I didn't listen at church services which definitely grabbed the attention of the religious fathers and sisters at the convent. All I could do was worry about Father.

Every morning, I'd wake up before dawn and eat a small bowl of porridge. I'd stare blankly at Father's chair, expecting him to appear before my eyes. When he didn't, I'd sit outside and watch the morning sun rise. Afterwards, I'd sit on that top stair for hours. Watching, waiting. Father was going to show up one day, and I'd be the first one to see him. I waited every day, refusing meals, gradually losing weight, and falling into a depression. I began to lose myself. I needed Father. Without him, I was an empty shell of his little girl.

My governess must have written Father, because before dawn, a letter was waiting for me next to my porridge bowl. A letter from Father. It read:

My dearest cherry blossom ,

Your governess has expressed her concern for your health. How worried I am for you. She said you aren't eating, you're not cheerful, you dress as though in mourning for the dead. Am I dead, my sweet? No. Do not mourn for the living.

I miss you dearly, but I cannot come home for some time. Do not forget my promise, though. I will return. We will be together again. It kills me to hear you have broken down since my departure. Please know I am well. The battle goes on with great difficulty, but I remain unharmed as of today, October 26, 1916.

I have not lost hope, for you are my hope. But, if I lose you, then where will my hope be? I need you to do something for me, child. I need you to be my sunshine both when I am at home and when I am away. Will you stay well for me? Sleep in, don't sit, and wait for me outside. When I return, I will come straight to you. Let your servants do your hair and dress in vibrant colors. Play, read, sing. Be my little girl, whom I strive to return to as quickly as possible.

If you do this, I will make a promise to write you once a month. We will have a new special something to do, you and I. All will be well, my child. Do not fear for your father, because then I will fear more for you. I am here fighting for you. I always will. Write me when you have the chance.

All my love,

Father

With that letter, my whole world changed. I slept until the morning sun shone through my open windows. I listened to the singing birds outside my window, watching the sun's rays

bursting through the clouds. I smelled the fresh air and smiled. I smiled at the day. I ate the porridge and fruit my servants brought me and drank my tea. We spent hours laughing as they formed perfect ringlets out of my hair and dressed me in bright reds, pinks, and yellows. No longer was I sitting outside for hours watching the road. Rather, I was running in the grass with my friends and servants. I visited the orchards to pick cherries and peaches off the trees, letting their ripe juices run down my arm. My squeals of enjoyment rang through the open air, bringing smiles to everyone who heard. I was my Father's daughter once more.

My governess had me do an interesting thing. She handed me a beautiful leather notebook, telling me to try writing in it every day. What to write! There are so many options! On my first page, I decided to draw Father. I had memorized his face, and having it drawn would allow me to see him without having to close my eyes. Staring down at his face, seeing his smile I knew I wanted this journal to be about Father.

It was hard to write. The journal was lying open before, a pen resting on it. I looked at that page for hours, wondering how to even write out my thoughts. I blinked. I grabbed the pen and let my thoughts guide the strokes. Letters became words, words became sentences, sentences became paragraphs. I couldn't stop. There were so many emotions that I wanted to tell Father. I wrote of the sunrise when he left, I wrote of my great demise, I wrote how his letter saved me. I told him about the change. It was freeing, writing.

One bright morning, I was feeling quite down and decided to write. I figured it would help me work my way through the mood swing:

The outside is absolutely beautiful. The sunrise is prominently pink and orange with a hint of purple. The trees rustle in the warming wind, waving to me from high in the sky. I see the birds are flying together, calling out to their mates. The grass feels cool under my bare feet. The

clouds take on all kinds of shapes and sizes like a dragon! It was unfurling its wings to catch the wind. The small lake shimmers and glistens. The dragonflies startle the water but for a brief moment, and then they depart, leaving the fading ripples behind. It really is quite beautiful.

There's a pressure on my chest. The outside is now warm. Heavy. The trees, oppressive. They shake at me. Violently knocking. They'll uproot and chase me. The birds cluster together. Surround me. They'll peck me until I bleed. The grass is prickly. Itchy. Sticky. They'll grow around my ankles. Pull me down to Hell. The clouds darkened. Expanded. Filled my vision. They'll swallow me up. Crush me. The lake darkens. Deepens. Stills. Solid. It'll drag me under. Drown me. The outside is terrifying.

The outside is not full of the sunshine, but heavy with this warm light. The magnificent trees seemed more oppressive. They shook at me in the wind. Their violent knocking had me worrying they'd uproot and chase me. The birds grouped together in a cluster and began to surround me. A pressure fell on my chest. They'd peck me until I bled. The cool grass was not comforting. Rather, it was prickly and itchy. The clouds were huge, they seemed to grow closer and filled my vision. I'd be swallowed up. And our small lake, yes it still shimmers and glistens, but I can't help but fear it. There is something underneath the surface waiting to drag me to the bottom. It is no longer a beautiful day. The day is against me.

I looked back at my thoughts and smiled. I could compare two different views from one mind. The day was beautiful, yes, but also dangerous to me. I felt better seeing my thoughts out on paper, and remained inside. Yes, writing's freeing; being able to write out my thoughts and leave them there was freeing. Once they had been written down, I did not allow them to bother me any longer. I released them to live in pages.

I woke up before dawn one morning to see candles lit by the window. A figure sat in the shadows. His face was cast downward as he flipped through the pages of a book. At one moment, I was able to see his face in the candlelight. He hadn't noticed yet that I awoke. An ecstatic cry escaped my throat. Father was back! I couldn't believe my eyes as he jumped at my shriek and looked at me. He was here in my room! My Father! Laughing, he opened his arms for me to run into. He held me close to his chest. Relief flooded through my body. There we stood in each other's arms. Even the world couldn't have separated us then.

The war hadn't finished, but Father was able to return home. He could stay home to study the patterns of enemy troops and plan with other officers. Maps became the new wallpaper in his office. His desk was littered with piles of papers and notes. The large, round table at the room's center held one large map with red pins and other figures I could not understand. I would pass the door to see him and his officers standing around the table like *King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table*. Leading his men was difficult for Father, but he carried the burden with honor. He fought side-by-side with his men, until they felt he needed to return home. War is a terrible time to lose a leader, and I was most grateful to have my father home. Father. What a sweet word on the lips.

The uniform wasn't the same. Its tan fabric was riddled with stains and full of tears and wrinkles. It smelled of blood, dirt, and other foul scents. Father's medals were barely hanging on by a thread. Some of them looked to have broken; others were matted with dirt and dust. The boots were atrocious. They, too, were matted in mud. I could not see my reflection in them. The boots were torn and broken. It was a terrible display, an insult. And yet, it still hung on display. When I passed it, I refused to look at the uniform, but I wrinkled my nose in disgust.

Father was different, too. His men and servants did not notice, but I did. When Father looked at his uniform, he no longer stood tall and proud. Rather, he was hunched over with a great weight. It was as though he feared the uniform. His hair and beard became unkempt. He had lost weight, enough to make him look less than the man he was. He had bags under his once piercing eyes. Father was constantly tired. His eyes no longer hid smiles, but pain. He faltered a lot, my father. He was not the Father I knew before his departure.

He no longer held me gently; he held me urgently. He didn't laugh as much. He was always preoccupied with something. His hands shook. His eyes glistened with tears. He scarfed down his food. He twitched. He flinched. He gasped. He cowered. He looked broken. I don't understand. My father was the strongest man in the world, nothing could break him. And yet, there he was: broken.

Father turned to drinking. After his officers left, dinner had been eaten, and the servants began their nightly routines; Father would go to a separate office and drink. I'd check on him from time to time and find him drunk. I couldn't bear watching him in this state. Father would mutter under his breath. The trenches. The screams. The rats. The dead. The world was a dangerous place to him, too. I was losing my father to the war. All I could do was write in my journal and observe.

Father jumped at loud noises. I ordered the servants to not make sudden, projecting sounds. The dogs were sent outside. Father became agitated in the day's prolonged silence. I played the piano; sometimes the servants would play, too. In the silence that rang through the night, I'd listen for Father. For his nightmares to start. Once the cries started, I'd grab my journal to write my observations of his behavior as well as any words he'd say. I tried singing. I tried reading. None of them worked. So, I let him drink.

He drank heavily, but it helped him. If I could control him, I wouldn't allow him to get drunk, allow him to fall that low. A lady shouldn't know about the horrors of war, but I wasn't going to let him suffer alone. And so he drank. He drank enough that his tongue was loosened, and he spoke to me freely. He would lay in his bed with me at his feet and while staring at the ceiling, he would relate his experiences. I sat in silence, writing them all down in my journal.

His best friend was in the squadron under his command. The war proved to be an almost impossible feat, but our soldiers had to continue to fight. England had to be protected. They were in the trenches. He barely made any sense, but it didn't sound that bad until he raved on their conditions. Imagine this: crudely shaped rows in the ground full of ankle-deep sloshing mud. The air was heavy with gunpowder residue and tainted with the sour smell of human waste. The sky was a grey mist with no sign of sunlight. It was cloudy with the planes' exhaust. The land was full of shells screaming through the air, the cries of wounded men, the orders to advance. And then silence. Both sides would take deep breaths before plunging into the deep sea. In the silence, the men would see who was dead. In the silence, the men would reflect on their life choices. In the silence, the men would see who they really were weak, meaningless, horrid animals. Killing each other after they could obviously live peacefully together after their communion on Christmas Day.

One night, in the trenches, Father's best friend was killed. One moment firing next to Father and then a moment passes. Father hears an ear-splitting explosion. It grazes past him. He cheated Death by sacrificing his best friend. Father looked to his left. The bloodied, decapitated body fell lifelessly to the bottom of the trench. Blood seeped from the open neck and mixed with the brown water. All Father could do was stare. His best friend gone. Dead. No one comforted him. No one had time. They tossed the corpse out into No-Man's Land. The battle continued.

I felt my father's loss and suffered my shame. I drugged my father with alcohol to get him to speak. Once he told his story, the alcohol would knock him out and he'd sleep soundly until the morning. He'd feel better but not realize how much I heard. I was my father's anchor and I'd suffer so he could heal. I had my own nightmares after Father fell asleep. I carried the weight of knowing he killed men or was almost killed. The weight of the dead. Their bodies floating in front of my eyes. I could hear the gunshots. I could see, hear, feel, taste, and smell everything he described.

Over time, Father began to recover and heal. His stammer stopped; his shaking lessened. He could walk through the estate without fearing Death lurking behind every door. He didn't need his brandy anymore. He had told me everything.

I was broken. I hid most of it, but I started to show signs of weakness. My eating lessened, the bags under my eyes showed how little I slept. I lived my days fighting my nights. I turned to the piano more often. I was constantly playing mournful tunes for the dead, and violent tunes for the shells. I played music as I shifted through the details to escape their pain.

I wanted to forget what I couldn't. I wrote in my journal, but I couldn't release the stories like with my other thoughts. Before, I could write and be done with those thoughts. Now, I'm obsessing over the images, the emotions, the sensations. When I sat to write, I watched the war flash before my eyes. I saw what happened through Father's words. They came to life. I wrote them, but couldn't stop reading. I couldn't let it go.

Father knew something was wrong. I would not tell him. I couldn't. He has no need to know about his drunken nights. Regardless, he spent more time with me. I wasn't alone for more than five minutes a day. He was with me. My governess. My servants. Constant talking and crafts. Walks and carriage rides. Delicious treats. Father slowly distracted me, bringing my

attention back to reality. The pattern helped me control my thoughts. While the horrors never went away, I was able to cope. No one allowed me to daydream, so I couldn't dwell on the thoughts. I ate with Father, who refused to eat unless I did. Whenever I got scared, someone stayed the night with me, or Father would sit up and read to me as I did with him. He wouldn't leave until I was sound asleep.

I remember the first morning I woke up feeling in control. I felt the urge to curl my hair and dress prettily. I wanted to play the piano and sing with the servants. I wanted to laugh. I missed laughing. I got up and hailed the servants who had my breakfast. And I saw my journal on my table. I looked at it long and hard. And I moved on. I put it away, knowing when I was ready to write, I would. I knew I wouldn't have it easy, but I was going to earn my peace.

This last time he left was the worst experience. Father was supposed to be released from service in a month, but the war worsened, and England needed him. Father was to adorn the uniform for a longer period of time than he signed up for. He received a new uniform, this one pristine like his old one before going out into the field. His medals were sturdily fastened, his boots shined. But it wasn't the same. My father was physically the same, but mentally he wasn't the same man.

We followed our same pattern the morning of his departure. I felt like my heart was being broken into small pieces as I watched Father's weary face. I knew he didn't want to leave, again. His men needed him, though. And he had a duty to them. So, I kept my silence and watched him eat. I couldn't bear to touch my own food.

He put on the uniform once more. It had been cleaned, starched, and sewn back together. It bore the scars of battle. His medals had been fixed and shined. His boots were repaired and

polished. Father had gained his weight and muscle back. His hair and beard were crisp. His face was stone, but behind his eyes I saw. I knew he was afraid. His hope was faltering.

The servants were waiting along the stairwell. Father's officers sat on horses outside, waiting for him. He handed his servant the gun and pulled me into his arms. Tears flowed freely down my face. I buried them away into his uniform for him to carry. I could feel Father's heartbeat under my hand as I gazed into his face. He whispered he would be back as soon as he could. That he'd see me again. I saw Father's eyes falter and his hands shook. I was afraid of returning to that hell. So, I put on my brave face, letting the last of my tears fall onto his chest, and hugged him fiercely. And I let him go.

I released my Father to the world, knowing he would return, but would be even less of the man my Father originally was. His hands would shake, his eyes would be full of fear. I knew he would turn to drinking even more than usual. He wouldn't be broken. He'd be shattered. His uniform would come back in tatters; so stained, it would be unrecognizable. There would be no saving this uniform. It would remain in its case just like the other one: the reminder of the terrors of war.

Father and I would try to rebuild our lives together. We would play chess. We would go on walks. We would both sit at night, drinking away our horrors. We'd suffer the same hell because we did everything together. We'd burn in the tormenting flames of our war.

The Eulogy

The day of the funeral was dark. It wasn't raining, but the sun was hidden behind the clouds. Mary didn't remember waking up that morning; she didn't remember being coaxed into eating oatmeal with brown sugar and a banana; she didn't remember being helped into her simple black dress with a cardigan pulled over it; she didn't remember being driven to the funeral; and she certainly didn't remember the caravan of cars heading to the service.

But Mary remembered the car stopping.

She looked out the passenger seat's window to see her son's casket being taken out of the hearse. Her car door opened, and she was helped out. The Honor Guard laid the American flag over the coffin; the tears in Mary's eyes blurred red, white, and blue as she walked up with her son's dog tags in one hand and freshly picked daisies in the other.

Everyone stood in silence. Waiting. Mary placed the daisies on the flag, hesitating to make contact, but a tremor caused her index finger to graze the edge of the flag.

All those years before her son moved further and further away from her arms; all those times, he got measured at the doctor's office, growing bigger every day, just as he did in her womb; all those calls where Mary heard her son's voice but wished to see his face; all those memories came crashing down.

She threw herself over the casket, her wails echoing in the air.

Blood dripped from her hand, the dog tags cutting deep into her hand.

Behind her, the rows were being filled with people wishing to give their regards, but Mary couldn't look at them. All she cared about was her son. Her dead son, her little boy, her baby. It felt like yesterday was the first time she held him in her arms. His wet skin against her

sweaty, exhausted body. His cries echoing in her ears. His heart pulsing against her chest. But now, he was lifeless, cold, silent.

She couldn't hold him anymore; she wouldn't hold him again.

At 2:40 a.m. on June 15, 1998, Thomas James Rileigh was born to Mary Ann Rileigh. The unexpected pregnancy left her working two jobs as a waitress at Jim's Diner and as a housecleaner for the Johnson family to afford the medical bills. Despite the morning sickness and inability to eat her favorite Chinese takeout, Mary was fascinated with that little life inside of her. She measured her growing belly every week.

Her water broke in the middle of her twelve-hour shift at Jim's. The water puddled around her feet. She stood in shock while her female customers flocked around her. There was so much shouting. Some were shouting for people to call an ambulance, others were asking her if she felt any contractions in overlapping voices, and all of them were ordering their husbands to give the poor girl a seat. All Mary heard was the ringing in her ears as her baby decided to come into the world three days early.

Tom's first breath of life came after Mary went through thirty-six hours of labor, alone with her OB-GYN and the labor-and-delivery nurses. No husband or mother to hold her hand while she pushed. No friend or companion to wipe the sticky sweat from her pale face. No one familiar, just a random nurse holding her hand while another wiped her brow. She just kept begging her sweet child to come out, each minute longer than the previous one. They offered an epidural, but Mary refused, determined to feel her child come into the world. So she kept pushing until she heard his cries over the beeping equipment. His cries were the only congratulations she needed and wanted. Her baby boy.

After Tom's birth, Mary tattooed his name into her skin. Her artist, a wise old man, suggested she not get any names. A lot of girls wanted their boy's name on their skin, and they'd come back crying for a cover-up because they were dumped. He didn't know that her boy was her little child who would never leave her.

She walked out of the smoke-filled shop with her arm wrapped in cling-wrap. The swollen lettering spelled "Thomas James Rileigh, 06/15/98" on her left forearm. Tom didn't like it at first. He'd squirm if she left the cling-wrap under him while he nursed. He'd stare at her arm while she burped him, patting the cling-wrap as if wanting it off. It was better after the two-week healing period. Tom liked to touch the Carolyn Pro Black-font letters. It was something he did up until middle school.

Tom's first day of school was on August 12, 2003. He was so excited to start elementary school, he woke Mary up at 5:00 a.m. He begged her to bathe him in a bubble bath and then to comb his wet, blonde hair flat against his forehead. He wanted to dress in his khaki pants with a light blue button-down shirt, his brand-new polka-dot bow tie, and his brown dress shoes. Tom also wanted an extra special breakfast for his first day of school: oatmeal with brown sugar and bananas, orange juice, and a scrambled egg with a bacon slice. Mary had smiled sleepily at his big appetite while she sipped her coffee. Mary told him to go watch his morning shows while she got ready for work.

Tom could barely contain his excitement as he burst into Mary's room, thirty minutes later. He told her how pretty mommy looked. He liked her skirt, and how she put her own blonde hair up into a bun. He told Mary that he wanted to see mommy's tattoo. She rolled back her sleeve, and he traced each letter. What does it say, mommy? Thomas James Rileigh. That's my

name, mommy! He giggled like he did every time she told him. His smile was contagious. Mary had tickled him and said they needed to leave.

The trees were losing their green leaves, and the sunrise was not as bright as it normally was. All the reds, blues, and pinks were muted, pastel. Tom sang along to VeggieTales as Mary drove the couple of miles to his new school, but this time she didn't sing with him. She was holding back her tears as she realized her baby was growing up. No longer was he just going to daycare, but was starting his education. Soon enough, he'd be heading to high school. Mary wished the drive was longer, she wasn't ready to let him go just yet.

When they got to the school, Mary parked her black sedan out front. Tom saw the teachers waiting at the front doors and tried to jump out of his car seat without being unbuckled. Mommy, hurry! Mommy, I gotta go! Mary unbuckled him and watched him leap out of the car. He started to run toward the teachers, leaving his mother in the dust. She stood there, starting to go numb with anxiety, when Tom turned around. He dropped his backpack and lunchbox, ran to his mother, and wrapped his arms around her legs. I love you, mommy! I'm going to miss you so much! Tears dropped out of Mary's eyes as she knelt to hug her son. Don't cry, mommy! It's going to be okay! I'm going to have a great day, and I will see you after school! Bye, mommy! Mary didn't want to let him go. It was the first day she watched him leave her. It was the first time felt like she lost part of herself. The first time the tattoo on her forearm ached.

Whenever Mary and Tom went on walks in the woods, he'd ask her to carry him. He'd say his legs were tired and that he wanted a piggyback ride. When he got older, he'd tell her that he was too big for her to carry. He'd run alongside Mary, holding her hand as he kicked up leaves, dirt, and snow. He'd giggle when he saw birds. He'd run after butterflies, flapping his arms like their wings fluttered. His favorite ones were the ones with yellow and black. A Tiger

Swallowtail. In the spring, he loved searching for flowers. He would pick every daisy in sight with his chubby hands. He'd rip them at the stem, sometimes pulling them straight from the ground. Dirt would dust his pants, staining them, but his oblivious joy wiped Mary's frustration off her face. He'd give them to her to hold. He'd pick enough to make a bouquet. Mary always wondered how there were always more daisies for Tom to pick every time they walked.

The day Mary found out was May 15, 2014. Tom walked into the kitchen while she was preparing dinner. He had graduated high school two weeks prior, and they had just finished the leftovers from the celebration. She was making teriyaki sesame chicken over rice. His favorite. She knew something was up. He had been locked up in his room all day. Mom. Mom, I need to talk to you. Mary put down the spoon, looking at him with a sad smile on her face. I am not going to college. I am going into the military. The bomb dropped, and he waited for the explosion, but it never came. He watched his mother smile through tears.

Graduation Day had come too soon. He was leaving the next day. Mary was not ready for him to leave, but she held back her tears. He stood at attention as she walked up to him. His brown eyes stared straight ahead, but Mary could see the smile cracking. The side of his lips twitched ever so slightly when she finally came to a stop in front of him. She had to look up at him, he had grown so much. He wasn't the small thing he used to be. Now he could pick her up. She reached out and took his hand. He squeezed it twice. Their way of saying I love you. Tom wrapped his arms around his mother, his nose buried deep into her shoulder. They stood in silence. They knew. Mary had only so much time before he had to get ready to leave. She had so much to say. Tom squeezed her. He knew.

It was time for Tom to leave for Afghanistan. He didn't know when he'd come back. He loved her very much and would write to her as much as he could. He had a picture of them at his

graduation inside his hat. He pulled out a necklace. His dog tags hanging at the end. He wanted her to hold onto them. Mary shook her head. He knelt as she unclasped the hook. She put the chain around his neck. Now you come back to me. Mary looked into his eyes, feeling the same way she did when he was first put into her arms after the long labor so many years before. Yes ma'am. It was the last time she saw her son.

At 5:00 p.m. on March 18, 2019, a knock echoed off Mary's ash-wood door. A man wearing an Army dress uniform stood a few feet away from her with a letter in his hands. Thomas James Rileigh was dead. The man kept talking—Tom's squad had been hit by an IED—but all she noticed was the tunnel of clouds crashing toward her.

The darkening clouds covered the sun, a chill wind rustled her graying hair while images flashed before her eyes—Tom died trying to drag the other men out of the debris just as the red and yellow flames licked his skin—the air soured, and it started to sprinkle. His body was burned so badly, you couldn't see his blonde hair or the freckles on his face. Tom died clutching his dog tags. The ones that his mother clasped around his neck the day he left for Afghanistan. The man handed Mary those charred tags. She didn't look at them. She couldn't bear to look at this man watching her. Her ears rang, obscuring his question of if she needed him to call anyone else. She couldn't speak. She clutched the dog tags, feeling her child's last gasping breath.

Tom's body was brought back to the U.S. a week after his death. The families of the other dead squad members huddled together on the air strip. Mothers, fathers, siblings, wives, and children, all in black, awaiting the arrival of their loved ones. The women wept in each other's arms while the men stood in a silent circle; wives held their children, trying to keep a brave face. But Mary stood alone, her eyes trained on the spot in the sky inching closer and closer. Her swollen eyes had tears falling from them, tracking down the rivulets the other tears had made.

Her shaking hands held the dog tags just as they had for the past week, their imprint stamped into her thin skin.

When the charter jet landed, there was a heavy silence that hung over the families' heads. The Honor Guards marched up, and one-by-one the flag-covered caskets were taken off the craft. The rolling cut into the silence, and then the women began shrieking in anguish. Some even fell to their knees, or threw themselves onto the caskets. The families flocked around their loved one's casket, crying over it, but Mary stood alone by her son's casket, her hand still clutching his dog tags. She didn't touch the casket. She couldn't move. She could only stare at it with dark eyes as empty as she wished the casket to be. Mary was so focused on the red, white, and blue that she didn't notice a young Honor Guard member had walked up to her. They had to move the caskets. She wasn't ready to let him go. Not just yet.

Mary's arm kept aching. She had to arrange the funeral. She had papers to sign. She had flowers to pick out. She had to send out letters. The Honor Guard had taken her son away in his coffin, Mary trailing behind. He was her whole world; she had no other family. It would be a small affair with his friends and their families. He always liked the outdoors; the funeral would be outside. He'd be buried at Arlington. There would be a 21-gun salute. He was a hero and would be given the greatest honors. She didn't want roses, or lilies, or carnations, or tulips. She wanted daisies. She wanted Daisies freshly picked off the side of the trails in the woods. She wanted them with long stems, with their roots covered in dirt.

It was time to bury her son. They told her she didn't have to stay for this, but she remained glued to the spot. Her bloody hand was limp against her side, her other arm was numb from the pain. Mary watched as the ground opened to consume her son and she told them to stop.

Wait. She wasn't ready yet. She just wanted one more moment with him. She wasn't ready to bury her only child. Just one more moment.

She didn't want his face to fade from her memory. She didn't want his voice to disappear into the void. Mary held the daisies in her free hand, staring at them through teary eyes. A Tiger Swallowtail landed on one of them. It fluttered its wings, sitting quietly. It didn't move when Mary involuntarily flinched. Her arm burned as it had while she was getting her tattoo. She looked at the butterfly and then it flew away. For the first time in weeks, Mary felt a twinge of something other than sadness and complete emptiness.

She put the daisies on top of the casket, her hand lingering against its sleek finish, and said her final goodbye. Her pain was worse than that of her 36-hour labor; her heart was being ripped out of her chest. Her son was dead, and he took everything she had with him, but he had lived the life he wanted. He poured his heart out to help other people; he sacrificed so much time, sweat, sleep, and blood to protect his country. He wore his heart on his sleeve, and his dog tags that his mother put on him.

Mary walked away from her son, knowing her heart and soul was in that ground. Mary knew she would count down the days until she joined him. Mary knew that she would be there to see him every day, wishing his life hadn't been taken from him. Mary knew she would never let go.

She thought back to her tattoo artist and his suggestion against getting a name inked onto her skin. He said it would cause her nothing but pain. But Mary proved him wrong again.

Thomas James Rileigh was her little boy. She would love him forever.

2.2 Night

The Paths of Apollo and Diana

Sunset

In the west, Apollo prepares for his setting, moving closer to the horizon. As he sinks farther behind the mountain tops, he lingers, reveling in his radiance. His hues of pastel reds and purples stain the sky as he sinks lower and lower. His final light stretches far across the horizon, his desperate attempt to remain in sight. The receding light dims. Apollo forces his light to grow a thicker, deeper, impenetrable golden hue. His anticipation of returning to the east.

A House and A Family

The house's shadows lengthen. The rays drown out the details the father carved into the logs of wood; the door melds in with the background. The children look to the sky as bats flutter above their heads. The porch lights flicker on, calling the children inside.

They run through the grass, barely able to see the ground beneath their feet. An expansive black field between them and their warm beds. The holes catch their feet. They trip and stumble, scraping and bruising their hands and knees. Their laughs mix with their tears. The door slams shut.

The house locks into place, protecting its occupants from the outside. The door's latch stiffens, the windows thicken. The chimney coughs and smokes as the father throws wood into the fire, warming the children's toes after their quick baths. Their mother cautions them from getting too close. Their father tells her they need to learn by themselves. Straightening their legs

on the rock base of the fireside, they feel the heat prickles against their skin. They scuttle back bouncing on the balls of their feet. Their bare toes grow cold again, and they inch closer to the fire. Repeating the cycle.

The wind howls outside the house. The trees knock against the windows leaving their leaves stuck against the misty glass in the shape of a misshapen face. A long nose, poofy hair, and pointy chin. The children gasp, threatening to wake the baby in the next room, and hide in their parents' arms. The dim light is just barely visible with dark patches of clouds pushing it away.

Diana is coming.

The children climb into their bed, squeezing between the space between the wall and cushion. Tucked into bed, they snuggle up together, pulling the covers up to their chins. Sharing their body heat against the chill, they close their eyes as the last of light fades away. Apollo sleeps and the world sits in total darkness for but a brief moment.

A Nighttime Routine

The father huffs on a cigar, flicking ash onto the spotless floor. His beer sits on the bare coffee table, the condensation forming rings. The mother grinds her teeth in silence each time the drink clinks on the tabletop. He burps and says he is going to bed, leaving behind an empty glass and full ashtray. He walks past the dirty dishes in the sink, climbs into bed, and promptly starts snoring. The nighttime routine.

The mother walks to the sink, her feet throbbing with each step. The beer bottle clacks against the other twenty-three in the trash. She opens the window above the sink, letting the cool air whisk the cigar-air into the night. She shivers and grabs the first pot.

She turns off the hot water. It's receding steam fogs up her glasses. She takes one last look around the living room and gives up. The baby starts fussing as she walks into the bedroom. Her diaper is full. Her mother wrinkles her nose as she carries her to the bathroom. Sighs. The baby is asleep before she is even done.

The mother cracks the curtain slightly before climbing into bed and completing the family sandwich.

The fire burns down to cinders, sparking every now and then. Silence envelopes the house.

A Beetle, A Spider, and A Nightingale

A small black beetle crawls its way up the house. It struggles to stretch across the cracks' canyons. Just before it reaches the windowsill, the spider catches it in her web. She opens her beady eyes to the struggling beetle. Chelicerae clacking. Abdomen vibrating. The shelob slowly crawls down to the insect. Four legs strutting in front and behind the other four. The beetle's wings flutter frantically. Lessen. Still. Venom paralyzes it and the spider wraps her meal up to save for later. To let the blood brew like a mulled wine. Sweet and tart. Thick and luscious.

Before she can enjoy her feast, the nightingale scoops her off her web. Broken fibers dangling from her spinnerets. Struggling in the bird's beak. Desperately trying to bite her. Poison her. Paralyze her. Another meal for her feast. She died overly confident. Small. Insignificant.

The nightingale, but a mere shadow, flits up to the top of the tallest tree. Her throat bobs as she swallows her triumphant meal. An occasional leg sticks out from the side of her beak. While preening herself, a small light catches. Cuts through the darkness of the horizon. Illuminates the rough bark of the trees.

Moonrise

The ice-cold light reaches into the forest causing the night creatures to shiver. The bugs, moles, and chipmunks churn the leaves. The owls' hoots echo through the trees. The coyotes yip from their dens.

Diana is here.

The goddess floats high into the sky, ascending to her celestial throne. The Queen of the Night. Nothing below hides from her sight. Not the deer under the canopies munching on the English ivy; not the fawn taking its first shaky step; not the mother, half-off the side of the bed, trying to fall asleep. Diana's eye watches the fawn and mother especially. Her light warms at the sight of this new life reaching a new milestone while her heart saddens at the sight of an unappreciated, overworked woman.

At her zenith, Diana sits on her icy throne, inspecting her kingdom below with her bow and arrow resting by her side. A crescent moon necklaces her throat. Her hunting dogs, Sirius and Phocion lay at her feet.

A Rat

The house lay bathed in Diana's light. Through the crack in the curtains, Diana looks upon the family, smiling at the children, pitying the mother, and glowering at the useless father. Her attention turns to the innocent baby sucking her thumb in the crib. Then, a movement nearby catches her eye.

A rat.

It wiggles its way through a hole in the wall. Its matted fur riddled with disease. It shuffles forward. The mother-figure jolts from her seat in the sky. The baby is unaware of the danger. Her hands turn white from grasping the chair's arms so hard. Her dogs sit up, alert. Their eyes follow hers, staring at the rat move closer to the cradle. A growl emits from deep within their chests.

The creature of sickness, the weapon of her brother, would not take another step. Sirius snaps at it with his startling white teeth. Phocion sits guard next to the sleeping babe. The rat scuttles back towards the hole from whence it came to no avail. A silver arrow blocked its path. Up above, Diana's bow sits empty in her hand, the other grabbing another arrow from her quiver. Sirius growls. The rat hisses and swipes at the hound. Its greatest mistake. Its last mistake. The rat squeals as the dog's teeth sink into its flesh piercing its heart. Phocion and Sirius look at the cradle as the baby stirs.

Syrius removes the rat from the house while Phocion pushes his nose against the crib, rocking it slowly. The baby awakens and stares at Phocion with her curious eyes. He licks her drool-covered hand and returns to his master. Through the crack in the curtain, the baby sees a

sliver of moonlight. She lifts her hand to grab it, giggling at the smiling face of Diana. She yawns deeply and falls back into her slumber.

Diana's gaze moves to the house's foundations to find there are cracks between the wood and mortar. A trail of ants climbs up the wall carrying small balls of mud on their backs. A natural mortar. At Diana's command, they fill up all the cracks, patting down the mud with their legs. No more nighttime creatures will enter the house; not under her watchful eye.

Moonset

The goddess shifts closer to the west as the night progresses. The house rests in silence, but the forest rings with the songs of the night. Mice squeak as owls scoop them up in their sharp talons. The coyotes howl as they venture through the forest. The leaves rustle and crunch as the centipedes crawl their way from rotten log to rotten log.

Restless from the long night, Sirius and Phocion race the wolves by the mountain side. Alpha males wrestle. The cubs yip in excitement. Diana fires off an arrow far into the forest for them to hunt. Sometimes Sirius brings it back, other times, Phocion. Lastly, a wolf-cub proudly trots to her side, the long silver arrow in its mouth. The goddess's praise rings in its ears as it returns to its pack.

A Dream

The moonlight no longer illuminates through the whole crack in the curtain but through the bottom-half of the curtain. Rests right on the little boy sleeping close to his father. Shadows take shape around the boy. At his head. His feet. His sides. One pokes his left side. Another

pokes his right. They all look at the doorway. A large black shadow with beady red eyes walks forward. It has claws growing out the tip of its fingers. Its smile has a thousand teeth.

The shadow floats right above the boy. Places one claw right above his heart. The boy opens his eyes. A weight settled on his chest. He could not breathe. Could not see. The darkness consumes him. Pulls him out from his bed. He cannot grab the bed frame. He cannot scream. All he feels is that pressure suffocating him. He vomits. Cannot turn his head. Chokes on it. He starts losing consciousness.

But the weight lifts.

Diana stands by the boy's side, her hand on his forehead. He still lies in the bed, beside his father and sister. The shadows are gone, and there is not any vomit. It was just a dream. Just a dream. She soothes the boy, wiping away his tears. She moves him closer to his father, and places him in his father's embrace. He needs a good father; at the very least, he can hold the boy at night. Diana closes his eyes and pulls the covers back up to his chin. And he sleeps.

A Descent into Darkness

At the horizon in the west, Diana knows her time has come. Her duty is complete. Daytime will be coming soon, her descent into darkness. The slight moonlight fades softly into the background. Uncomplaining. Sirius and Phocion return to their kennels below the horizon, curling up next to each other. Their snores echo in through the air as the goddess gathers her belongings. Her silver bow and arrows dim, the shine taken out of them. Her crescent necklace turns black, and Diana herself no longer emits any radiant light. Once again, her brother sucks all the light from her, casting her aside into the darkness.

Dawn falls over the forest. Diana's time is up.

Dawn

The house sits surrounded by the morning fog. The thick mists cover the grass with sticky dew, the haze in the east warns all the nighttime critters. He is coming. Diana's followers retreat into the forest floor. Into their burrowed dens and their hollowed-out trees, as far away from the sight of the sun as possible. As the last vole digs deep into the earth, silence reigns over the land. The leaves still and there is not a whisper in the wind.

Apollo is here.

Sunrise

The ball of fire rises from beneath the earth. Barely above the horizon, the rays lengthen as he rises higher into the sky. Apollo desires to shine, is impatient to shine. His colors encompass the grove of evergreens; reflect in the lake water; create shadows of all shapes and sizes. The cicadas' tymbals flex and click as the mating songs echo with erotic fervor.

His rays push any memory of Diana away. Shoves her presence off the celestial throne. His light forces her further into her receding darkness. The throne is enveloped by the sunlight. Glowing gold. Glimmering glitter. Glistening gems. Apollo sits on his throne for a king. Overlooks his domain. Awaiting the people's adulations. Each word of veneration invigorating.

The rays consume the house. Warm it up for the waking inhabitants. They shine through the mist. Through the windows. Apollo demands attention. He illuminates her naked celestial body bathed in his glory.

A Morning Routine

Rachel opens her eyes to the stinging light shining through the crack in the curtains. There is a knot in her back. Her children start stretching and shifting in their sleep. Her husband is still snoring. That is her cue. She slowly inches off the rough mattress, her feet searching for her slippers. She stubs her toe on one of the floorboards she has asked her husband to fix five times. Their children are going to trip over it.

Matthew opens his eyes first. His father's arms still holding him. He looks up at his mother and tells her he had a bad dream. Angie hears this and opens her eyes too. She had a bad dream too. The children start arguing over who had the worst dream. Rachel shushes them. They are going to wake their father. They relocate into the living room. Faith coos from behind the bars of her cradle. Her diaper is clean. Rachel carries her out of the room. Her husband sleeps on. The morning routine.

Matthew and Angie want two different breakfasts. Matthew wants French toast with eggs. Angie, pancakes with bacon. Faith does not care as long as she has her daily bottle of refrigerated-and-warmed-up breast milk. Rachel settles the fuss by offering pancakes with eggs. Something she knows David would not mope about. As the pancakes cook, Rachel starts the morning coffee. Its smell fills the air, masking the residual cigar smell from the night before. But not completely. The mix of smells is nauseating. The children start munching.

David's fart resonates through the silence. Rachel sighs. The children giggle. He gets out of bed. Faster than normal. Rachel quickly sets his plate on the table and pours him some coffee. Her heart beats. Has she forgotten anything? Fork. Knife. Napkin. Food. Coffee. No. Everything is ready. The sunlight is directly in her eyes. Inconvenient. Rachel prefers the moonlight. The

only thing that gives her peace and quiet. Confidence. Individuality. The only time of the day when David is not condescending. Arrogant. Haughty.

When he sits at the table, she cannot help but notice how their children look so much like him. Tall in stature. Blonde-haired. Dimple-chinned. Even Faith in her infancy looks like her father from his baby pictures. She even has the same ears sticking out. Their love dwindled after she bore these children for nine months. She swore not to have more after Faith. She lives for these children but cannot bear to have David objectify her any longer.

Zenith

As the sun reaches its highest point, David points out that Rachel should clean up the cigar ashes. It reflects her quality as a housewife. She grits her teeth. One day. One day she will walk out and leave. She grabs a wash rag. Throws it on the floor. Gets on her hands and knees. Starts scrubbing. Apollo watches from his celestial throne. The sun beats hotter on the children's bare necks as his sexual urges consume him. He reaches from high above to grab her by the hips.

The Final Straw

Rachel throws the remaining coffee in David's face. He did not stop when she said no. He pulled her towards his groin. Desperately tore at her cleaning-clothes. She looks at him in horror. Matthew and Angie stand in the doorway. David lies on the floor. Apollo sits stunned on his throne and Diana walks up from behind. Her glowering silence radiates. Her brother has gone too far. The disease-ridden rat, not being the averter of evil dreams, and starting to rape a woman. The final straw.

A new decree. Even in daylight, Diana will monitor her brother. He sits in a wooden chair next to the icy throne, dimmed by the presence of his sister. Sirius and Phocion growl at him. David crawls on the floor, cleaning the coffee stains from the carpet. In the next room, Rachel lies with her children deep asleep.

2.3 Difficult Topics

Remember

The churning waves under our feet. *Boom*. The crying women and children, begging for food, water, air. Bodies packed with chains bolting us to the floor. Our necks weighed down. Waste dripping down the legs, tears swelling the eyes, sweat spotting the face. Heads pounding for freedom, but our only freedom is to be forgotten.

Too much crowding. Too much wailing. Too much whipping. Beaten down. Kept from the sun. Oh, where is the sun! Where is its warm comfort! Our sun is far away. Under this sun, we bleed. We cry. We are nothing. Dead. Forgotten.

The relentless pounding of our feet. *Boom*. We had cried. We had begged. We had fought. Our homes are far away behind our trail of tears. Exhausted from the forced march. Blisters under our feet. The sun beating down on our necks. Children strapped to our backs; wet clothes fused to our skin. The weight almost unbearable. Families huddling close at night to keep warm. The exhaustion incapacitating. They keep pushing us to live in desolation. They keep pushing us away from everything we know. They keep pushing us to relinquish our identities. They keep pushing us away to be forgotten.

Empty-handed fathers. Starving children. Despairing mothers. One-by-one, dying off. Sick. Hungry. Overcrowded. We demanded rights; pleaded for our families. Buried our language. Rejected our culture. Assimilated our children. Forgotten.

The chugging wheels under our feet. *Boom*. Cowering. Shoved into train cars. Packed like dogs. Saturated by our own excrement, moldy hay clinging to our clothes, spoiled perspiration dripping down our faces. Dragged into lines. Families split apart. Stripped of all our belongings, our identities lost. Women and children screaming in the gas chambers. Men begging for their labor to end. The struggling fathers. The begging mothers. The screaming children. Piles of ash. Forgotten.

A number for a name. Skin and bone. Unrecognizable. Fists pounding. Cries echoing. Abandoned by our faith. We didn't matter. Starved. Shot. Burned. Hated by the world. Prayed. Shot. Burned. Dead. Forgotten.

The Forgotten. Their pain and suffering left to History. Only a matter of time before that too is forgotten.

Every cracked whip.

Every relocated person.

Every murdered body.

Every cut.

Every sore.

Every assault.

The blood will wash away,

the cries will fade,

the gas will dissipate.

Rows lined up. Looked down upon. Unworthy. Still beaten. Still oppressed. Still unheard. They continue to fear. They stand in the back; truth invisible to the blind eye. Like their dead. Forgotten.

The survivors do not forget the whips. The cries. The dead. Bent double, they watch the world forget... But they will not be forgotten. They will die, but they will not let their story die. They will be heard. They will be remembered.

The silent auditorium rustles with uncomfortable tension. The suits are not used to such close quarters. Packed shoulder-to-shoulder. Breathing down each other's necks. Their gleaming hands growing numb. Their faces glistening with perspiration. Impatient grumbling. Eyes glaring at the stage. Waiting.

A lone music stand is positioned at the stage's center. A sharp, metal baton rests atop a blank piece of paper. A reminder of the voices lost to the beatings. The doors open. Eyes follow the conductor as he strides to the stage's center. He could be one of the suits with his tailored tuxedo, his groomed hair, his shined shoes. But he does not stand with them. He leers down at the suits.

Bom. A deep note resonates through the hall. The suits hold their breath; deep male voices hum behind them. Silence. The conductor raises his arms. A signal. Silence. The suits taste hesitation in the air.

The baton slashes through the air. *Crack.* Those gathered in the back wince. They remember the thrashing whip against their flesh. They hesitate at the back of the hall. Unsure of their courage. The suits make them nervous.

Crack. Boom. The whip drives them forward a step. *Crack. Boom. Boom.* The slash of the baton. The crack of the whip. The memories of suffering drive them forward. They march down the aisles in unison with a greater force. The suits find themselves surrounded by the survivors, the stomping echoing in their ears. *Boom. Boom. Boom.*

Come!

The suits are startled out of their thoughts. The bass voices leading the thunderous throng. Pain. Misery. Death. Swirling memories. Heads held high; the men send out their war cry. They will be heard! *Crack.* The baton slashes. The suits watch in fright as the women wail, echoing their men's cries. They will be heard! Their harsh tongues cut through the air. They will be heard!

The men bare their backs to show their scars. The whip lashes overlapping; some reopening others. The women throw up their hands, calluses visible. Those hard blisters from their continuous work; ripped open when she fought off her assaulter.

Witness!

The pain. The injustice. Racism, Sexism, Anti-Semitism. Condemnation flashes in their eyes! The suits flinch.

Listen!

The men's volume increases. The women hold up their children—the children who lost their childhood—adding screaming to the already deafening pounding.

The churning, the beatings; the ships.

The stumbling, the crying; the trek.

The pounding, the screaming; the gas chambers.

Slavery,

Trail of Tears,

Holocaust.

Their sufferings.

Never to be forgotten.

Beware!

The air fills with menace. They will not be forgotten. The baton slashes down on them, again, but they stand tall. Glaring at the suits, no longer laid low. Now the suits flinch at the stomping; now they wince from the slashing baton.

The rounds of voices wail for their losses. Upraised arms reach for their dead. Men shout for their lost families. Mothers sob for their dying children. Children scream over their parents' bodies. Girls cry out against their assaulters. Boys shout their hate at their laborers. Families call for justice. The survivors refuse to be ignored. Refuse to be cast aside. Refuse to be forgotten. The deaf ears will no longer be deaf; the blind eyes will no longer be blind.

Hear!

The suits watch the violent stomping and hear the suffering cries.

Drowning.

Starving.

Choking.

The suits cannot escape. The survivors point accusations.

Remember!

2.4 Mental Health Awareness

There's a Comfort in Nothingness

There's comfort in the nothingness of your own mind. The dark expanse is empty and safe, a place where nothing can reach you. You sit in a death-like trance, escaping from reality.

They say there is sound even in empty space, but here, there's nothing. It's just you and the dark. It's almost peaceful except for that feeling of being smothered.

It's like sitting under the showerhead for hours. You don't even feel the water beating against your skin. Sometimes all you can feel is the wave that rushes to your face, building up until tears overflow from your eyes. The silent, numb tears are the only show of how much pain you are in.

The pain fades away. You slip into the dissociation. Not feeling. Not seeing. Not hearing. There's a completeness and emptiness to this place. You lose all sense of life. Nothingness offers you security, and you leave your thoughts behind; but it also makes you forget reality. This place allows you to forget your efforts to make you feel something. Cutting. Drugs. Suicide. The darkness envelops you until you almost let go, but then flashes of light cut through the void.

A flash of pain from the blade. A flash of desperation from your lungs. A flash of desperation from your body. A slim desire to live. That thread that keeps you alive. Nothingness is what makes you want to give up, but fear is what keeps you going. Fear of who would find you. Father. Mother. Brother. Sister. Partner. Who would find your lifeless body and see the damage you inflicted upon yourself? As much as you want to stay in the dark, the flash pulls you back.

The water temperature changes from hot to cold and your fingers and toes are pruned by the time you get out. You wipe away your tear stains, brush your hair out of your eyes, and put a smile on your face before opening the bathroom door.

The Cycle of Flashbacks

It's constantly being triggered by the stress of a traumatic event. Or in my case, *events*.

I live my days fearing my past. Everywhere I look, there is a memory.

Going for a walk at night. *Oh, this looks like that spot where I was grabbed from behind.*

Hearing a classical song. *I'm back in the room where he hit me.* Watching *Guardians of the Galaxy II*. Remember when you had 911 called on you for a welfare check? Look out, you almost ran into someone. *He looks exactly like the guy who abused me.*

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder has a number of symptoms.

"Intrusive memories." That's a nice way of putting flashbacks at random times during the day. I was sitting in class, watching a presentation. My classmate had done some research on classical music. I think she was playing some Schubert.

I took a deep breath and felt a physical pain stretching from my lips to my groin. A fire had been lit and trailed down my body.

I walked into his room as I had done numerous times before. His roommate's bed was empty as usual, but his things were still there. It was pitch black. Midnight. I could barely see the piles of clothes on the floor in front of me. I stumbled my way to his bed where his computer was propped up, waiting for us to press 'play.'

It was always cold in his room. Three different fans blew cold air around the clock. His roommates' bed was stacked high with quilted comforters and blankets. His bed was bare but for

one fitted sheet and one fuzzy blanket. It was one of those blankets that left you covered in bits of fuzz. My black shirts turned white every movie night.

When I sat down, the lumpy mattress deflated a bit. It really was not a comfortable bed. I kept telling him he should get a new one. I stared at the computer screen, barely able to see the words '*Lord of the Rings*' while he took off his dress shirt. He was always hot. He preferred t-shirts and shorts no matter the weather.

The mattress sank further as he sat beside me, but instead of pressing 'play' he put his arms around my waist. I figured he was trying to comfort me. I did look like a dead zombie with my puffy eyes and messed up hair. I remained limp.

He started kissing my neck. I turned quickly to look at him. Confused. Dizzy. Tired.

"I'm leaving," I heard myself say.

"No, you're not," he replied a million miles away.

I was on my back. Him on top.

The room started spinning.

I was frozen solid.

I wanted to claw at my clothes. I wanted to scream. I was desperate for this pain to go away.

My teacher was staring right at me.

I was frozen solid.

My teacher was talking to me.

I was mute.

Breathe.

Speak.

Move.

I couldn't do anything!

My teacher touched my shoulder, and I jumped three feet in the air. Everyone stared at me. Their faces showed a mixture of shock and confusion.

My face burned red. I ran out of the room. Sprinted in the bathroom. Just barely made it to the toilet.

By the time I was dry-heaving, class had ended. My teacher knocked on the bathroom door. I didn't want her to come in. She did anyway. She pulled my hair back, wiping the back of my neck with a cool, wet paper towel. Once I calmed down, she stepped out to let me 'freshen up.'

My eyes were puffy red. I looked like a rough puff pastry. My skin was clammy. My hands were shaking.

She handed me a glass of water to wash out my mouth. A mint to help soothe my nausea.

"Negative changes in thinking and mood." There are constant feelings of shame and self-faulting, and the mood swings. One moment you're fine and then you're sobbing on the floor.

October 17, 2014. The day that made college *not* the best four years of my life.

It was bright outside. I had considered bringing my sunglasses with me, but left them on my desk right as I went out the door. I was running behind schedule. I typically get to class ten to

twenty minutes prior to class starting, but I was going to be lucky if I made it to class five minutes earlier. And so, that Friday, I was having a rough start.

Walking out of class at 11:15 am, you never would have thought that the sun was out that morning. The clouds were thick and heavy. The wind bit at my heels. The trees drooped with the heaviness in the air. The signs of a storm, a premonition.

I knew I had depression. I don't remember what caused my mood to swing. It just happened.

Everything was all a blur. I wanted to end my life. I decided to stay out of my room. Away from my own thoughts. Some of my friends had gathered in the lobby and were chatting with one another. One pulled me aside asking if I was okay. I started crying. Heavy tears streamed down my face. Trails of running mascara stained my skin.

"Arousal and Reactive Symptoms." NO, you are not aroused all the time. It's just that your senses are a lot stronger at times, making your memories more surreal. You can also show a lot of physical reactions to sound and touch which happens to be *another* symptom of PTSD.

I ran back to my room, hugging my clothes closer to me. They didn't seem out of place. I was covered in fuzz. There was an imprint of his arm on my skin. I could not rub it off fast enough.

My room looked the same as his, but mine was full of color. It looked a lot darker than it was yesterday. My glasses still sat on my nightstand, but they were more black than reddish-brown.

I caught my eye in the mirror, but I didn't know who I was looking at. The girl in the mirror looked scantily thin and withdrawn. Her arms were wrapped around herself. A small shield. Her eyes were black, empty shells. Her skin was still stained with mascara, but it looked ghastly pale. She looked like she was going to collapse.

I have all of these symptoms and more. My worst symptom is disassociation. I lose all sense of reality and my memories are so real, it is like I am reliving it. For me, the effects are more prominent than most in that I have memory gaps. Like momentary blackouts.

I opened my eyes, and the sun was out. His clock said 9:49 am. Saturday.

I was on the left side of the bed, right up against the wall. He was on the right. His thick, tan arm still wrapped around me. I wiggled away from him, perching myself at the end of the bed.

He stirred.

An inexplicable fear settled over me. He looked at me. I looked at him. His dark brown eyes showed more white than they did the night before. Before, they had some red.

"How did you sleep?"

Silence.

"Are you okay?"

Silent tears.

I...

Wondered...

Wished...

Hoped...

Hated...

Knew...

Realized...

This all happened three years ago, but it felt like yesterday.

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Appendix A: Military Personnel and their Families Storyboard Maps

The story set consists of four stories revolving around military personnel and their families and the unseen struggles they encounter. The first story map briefly summarizes what each story will be narrating. The second story map focuses on outlining the perspectives the narrators will be presenting to the readers. Similarly, the third story map focuses on the narrator's person—the type of character the narrator presents to the readers. Finally, the last story map outlines the point of view, or from where the reader will perceive the story.

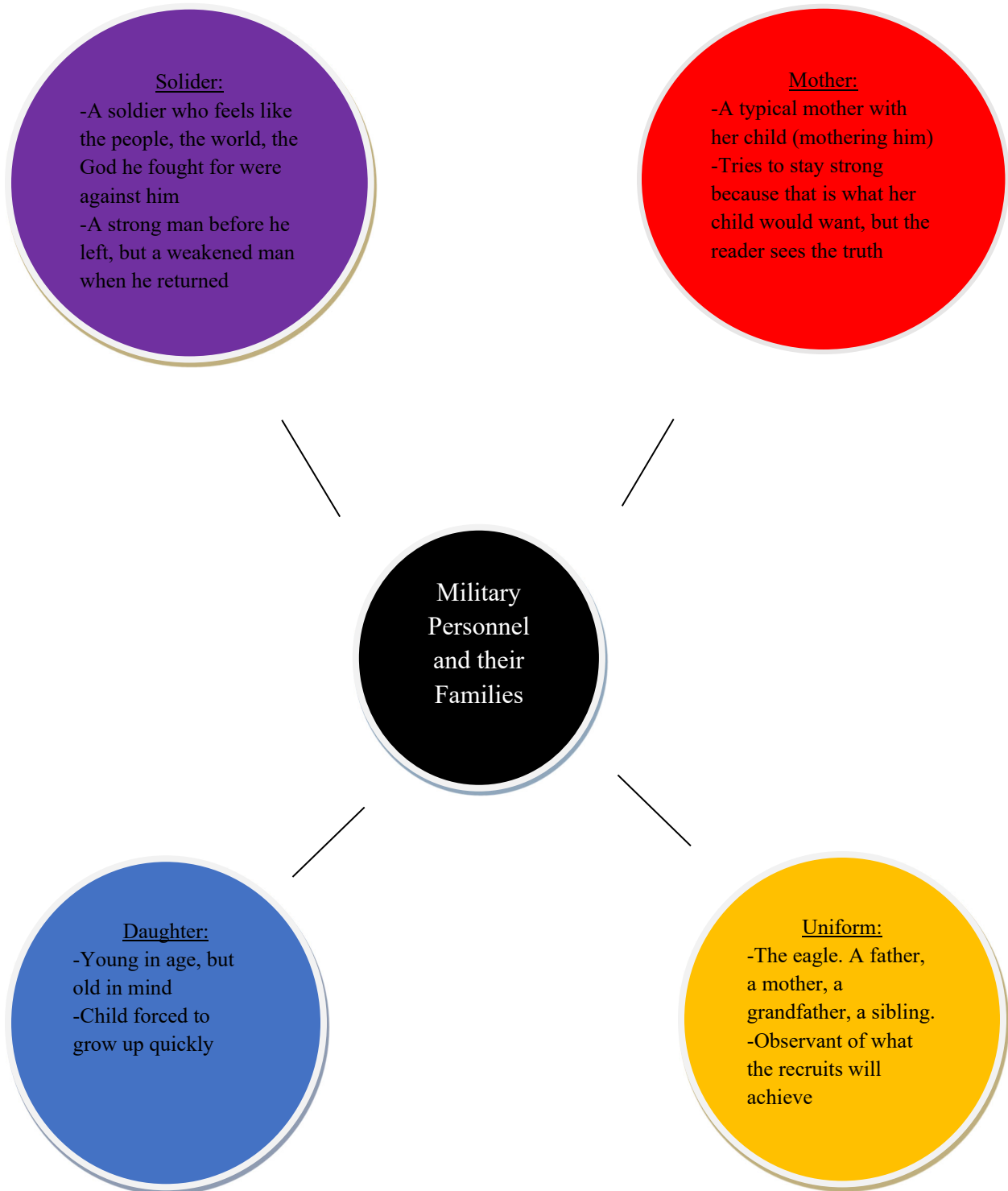
Story Map 1: Descriptions



Story Map 2: Perspective



Story Map 3: Persona



Story Map 4: Point of View



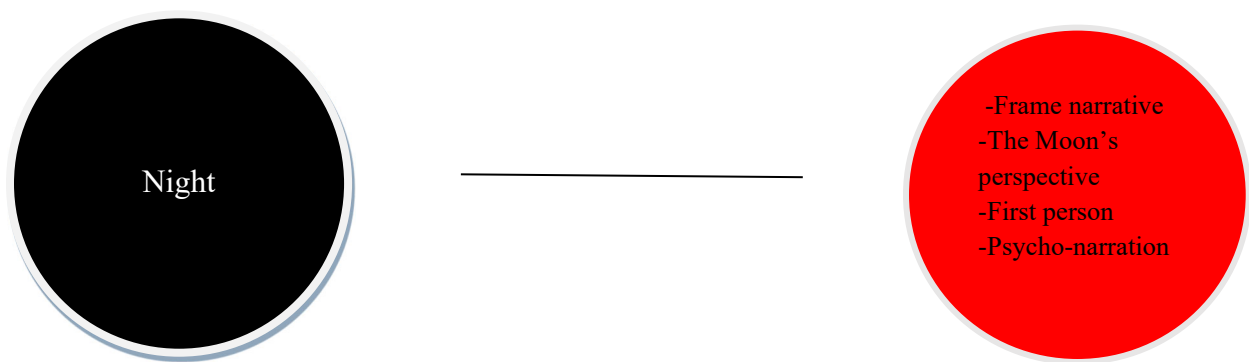
Appendix B: Night Storyboard Maps

The story map consists of six parts that make up one single story. The frame narrative is divided into six parts. Story map 1 describes each part that further reveals the development of the narrator. The narrative perspective remains the same throughout the story as shown in the second story map, but the narrator's persona changes as each part changes. The outline shows who the narrator's character develops to be. Story map 4 is similar to the second story map as the point of view of the reader is constant throughout the whole story.

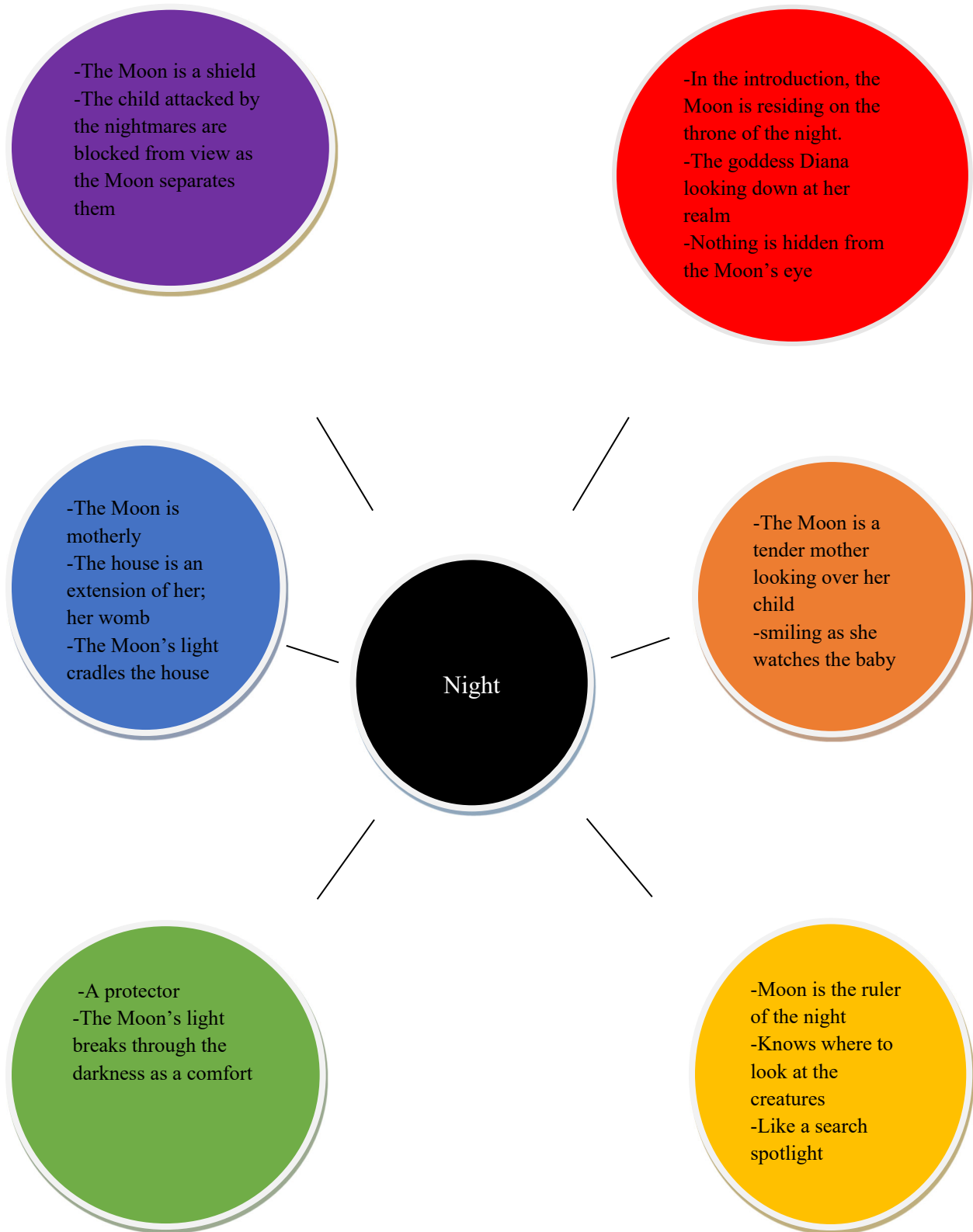
Story Map 1: Descriptions



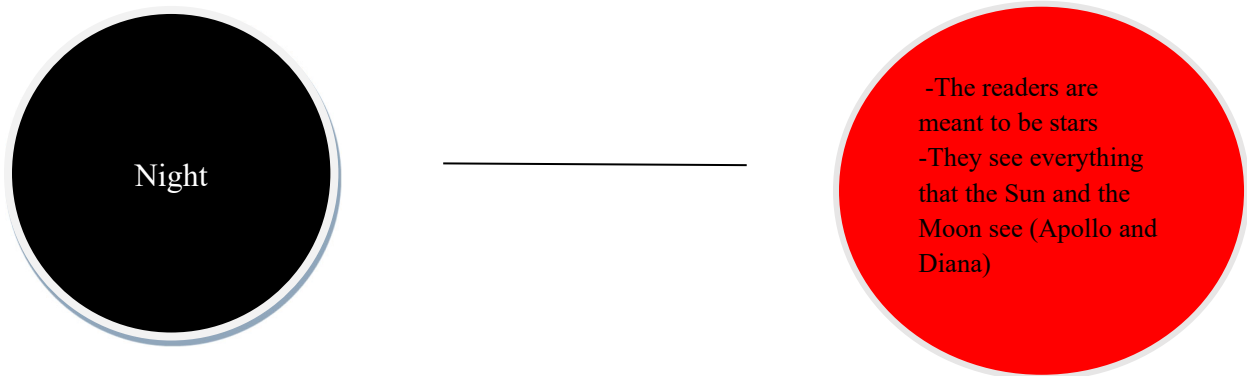
Story Map 2: Perspective



Story Map 3: Persona



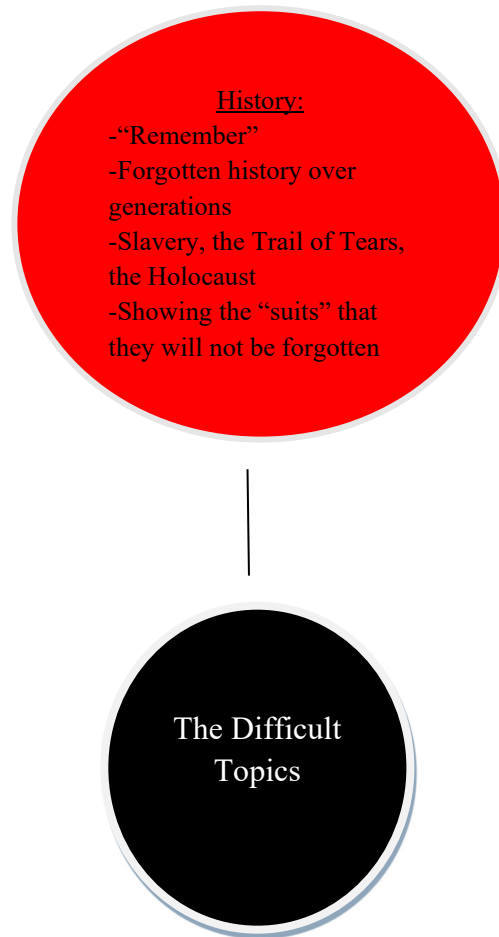
Story Map 4: Point of View



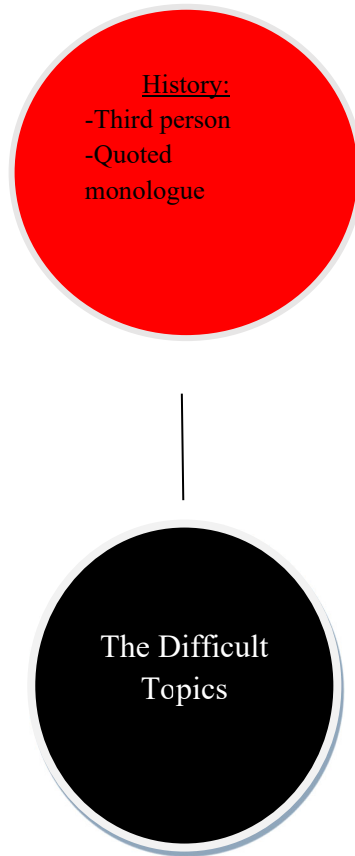
Appendix C: Difficult Topics Storyboard Maps

The story maps focus on a topic that most people avoid talking about due to confrontation. The story maps outline some prevalent topic to the time. The descriptions in story map 1 are labeled based on the issue. Story map 2 discusses the perspective the narrator will present and the tenses that will be used in the story. The narrator presents a unique persona tailored to the scenario. On top of the persona, the point of view is outlined in story map 4 and is meant to force a reaction out of the readers.

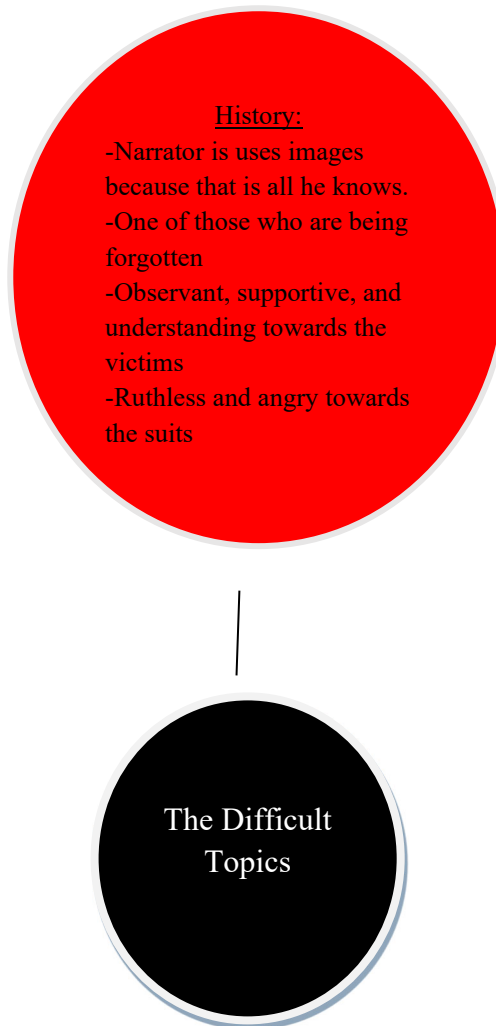
Story Map 1: Descriptions



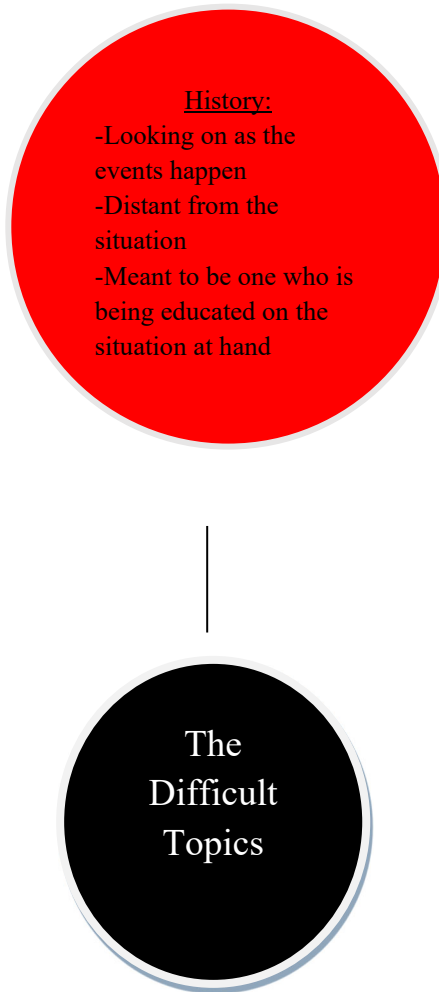
Story Map 2: Perspective



Story Map 3: Persona



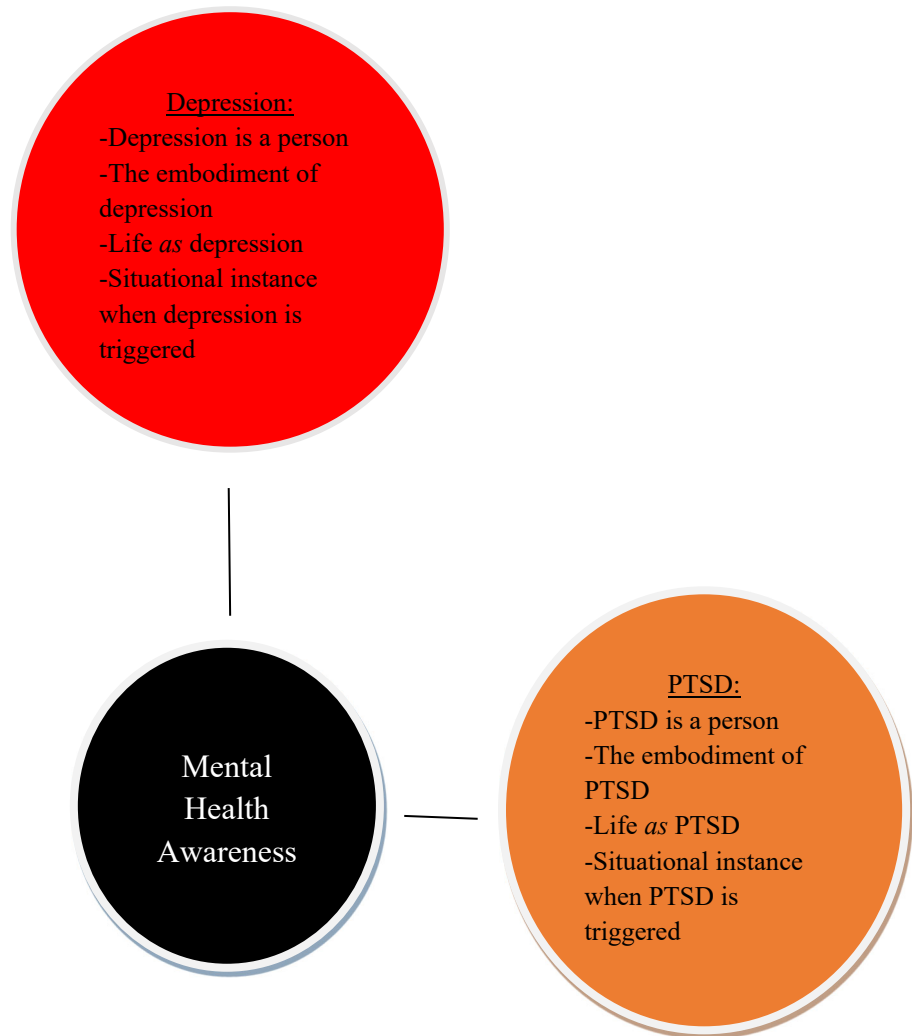
Story Map 4: Point of View



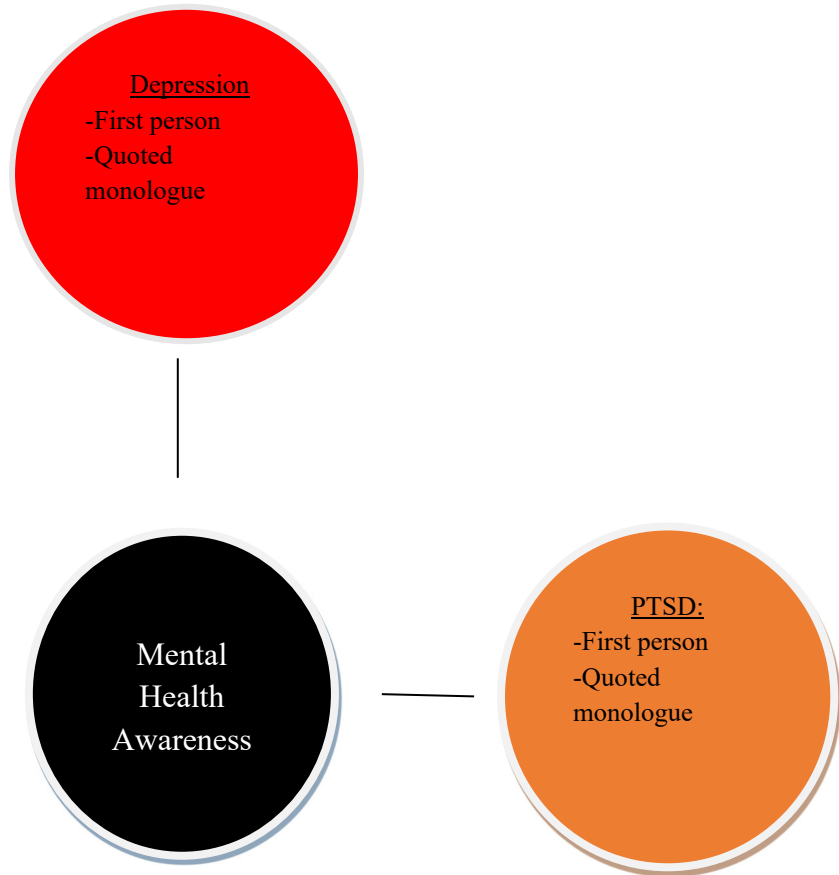
Appendix D: Mental Health Awareness Storyboard Maps

The set of story maps focus on mental health issues. The stories present mental disorders in a personified manner. The first story map briefly outlines each story as a personified mental disorder. The second story map focuses on the narrators' personas. Each persona is a representation of the disorder in such a way that the reader's point of view may have insight to what a mental disorder is like to have.

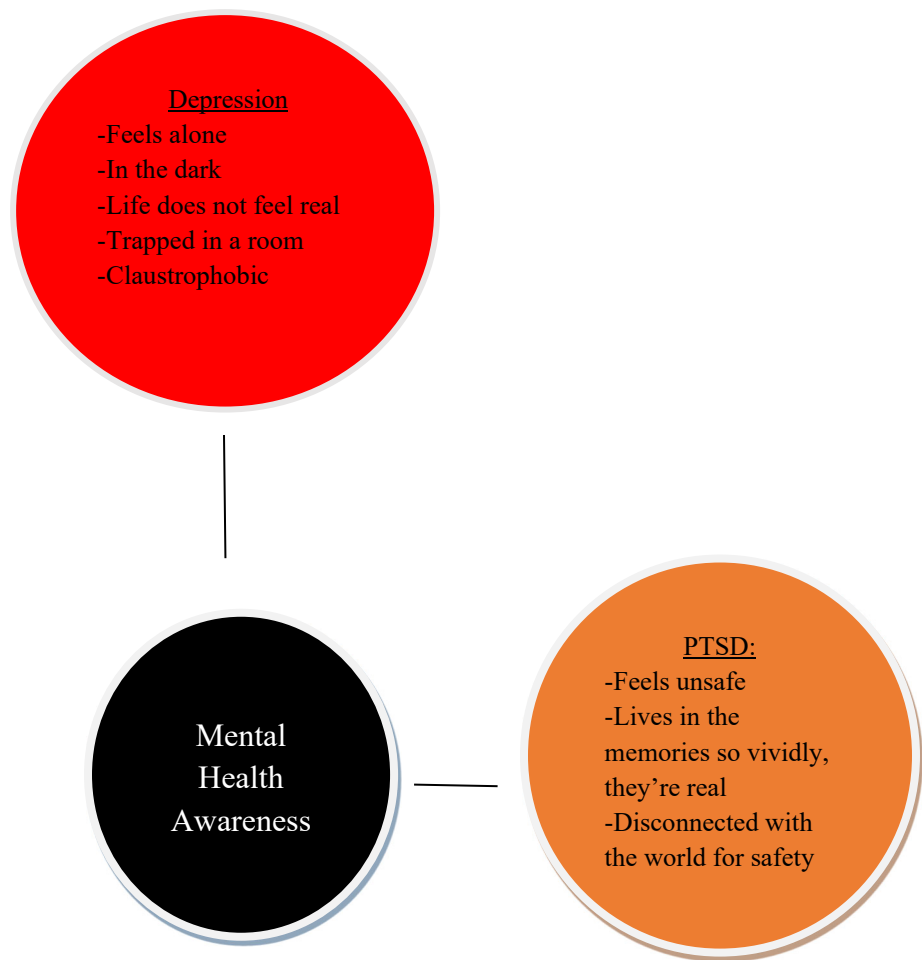
Story Map 1: Descriptions



Story Map 2: Perspective



Story Map 3: Persona



Story Map 4: Point of View

