

Innocence

Her bright blue eyes shone with imagination. Her beaming smile complete with dreams. Her hair was messily braided in pigtails, as though she had done them herself. She wore a pastel yellow dress and her favorite pair of worn out sneakers. She was skipping around her backyard picking flowers and smelling them, blowing out dandelions and making wishes. Her sweet, rosy cheeks were full of warmth and happiness. She smiled her big beaming smile.

Why shouldn't she? She didn't know her future. I put the picture frame back on the shelf and quickly dried the tears which suddenly appeared. "That was the past," I told myself. "It's over, focus on your future." But it was no use. My eye was drawn to that little girl. Happy and wide eyed. Eager to learn more about herself, and to understand the world around her. I wish I could go back, go and tell that little girl to stay just the way she was. To never grow up. Another tear abruptly rolled down my cheek. "Stop it!" I yelled. "You have no reason to cry. Don't be such a wimp, or you'll be late for work," I scolded myself. I then hid the picture under my pillow and grabbed my bag. I locked the door to my crappy apartment in the heart of Queens, New York, and ran down a long flight of stairs. I never wanted to move here, I had to. I had to escape. The tears started to come again, but I was done with stupid tears. I slapped myself back into reality and continued towards the front door.

"Momma, is she the one you said to stay away from?" A little girl whispered, loudly. She pointed at me. Her dark brown hair was done in two braids, and her big, brown eyes glared at me naively. Her mother quickly pushed down her hand and gave me a stiff smile. I forced a smile back and did my best to look friendly as I passed the girl. I quickly opened the front door and walked out into a beautiful jungle of cement. My home. I didn't even attempt to hold back the tears this time. I was done, and I knew it. I will never forget it, no matter where I am or what I do. I am an awful, atrocious, depressed being. What am I doing here? What have I done wrong to deserve this? I let out a scream. It felt good. I have been holding in too much. My face and hands were a hot, wet chaos, and the world around me seemed to spin. I felt disconnected, as I looked at the girl and her mother in the distance. The girl stared at me with her big, brown, innocent eyes. "Never grow up," I whispered, and I followed my feet, which led me forward into the lights and blaring sirens. The memories flashed before me. I heard a loud screech and felt a sharp pain in my side. My pounding heartbeat accelerated throughout my chest. Tears streamed down my face, panic burnishing my eyes with a thick, translucent glow. Bright lights were flashing in every corner. The agitated, wailing cries echoed through the frenzied streets. A vigorous, piercing scream alarmed me. I looked around to see

where it was from, but then realized that it had come out of me. I felt anguish, a huge spasm of pain. My body throbbed, oppressive pounds of agony aching throughout me. I frantically lifted my head, and quickly inhaled a few frenzied breaths. I squinted, only to see blurry shades of red, white, and blue. I tried to get up, but the outbreak of pain was too unbearable. I lay back down, unsure of my future, the world began to turn black. My mind became detached of my thoughts, I became isolated from everything. The world was blank, until the memories returned.

She wore a black dress, and her hair was neatly brushed. A few years have passed, and she was glaring at her father disapprovingly. He lay in bed sobbing, his restraint abandoned, and his dignity draining away. She had recently lost her mother. All her father could say was her mother's name. He repeated it over and over again. She had to care for herself; smiling became a distant dream, and she hadn't skipped in years. Her childhood was over. This time with her father traumatized her. She promised herself this would never happen to her, that she would keep herself together no matter what came.

And here I was laying in a hospital bed. I lost control and followed the atrocious example which my father set for me, and now I had set the same example for others. Why? Maybe it was just a sudden pang of vast hysteria, a precipitous downfall of acumen. But this is not who I wanted to be. I wanted to be different; this is the last thing I wanted to do with myself. I wish I could go back and change, go back to my smiling self and stay that little happy girl forever. I gritted my teeth, trying hard to force my grim menacing frown into a slight smile. I couldn't do it. Suddenly, the little girl from my apartment building ran in, Her dark brown hair was still done in two braids, and her big brown eyes glared at me, this time with concern. Her mother chased after her, worried as if I was going to harm her. To tell you the truth, I didn't blame her.

"Hello," I managed to spit out weakly

"Are you okay?" she asked me

"Yes, I will be okay," I replied, hoping that it would be the truth.

"I'm sorry for what I said," she told me, as if she had been to blame.

"Its not your fault," I said.

She smiled at me and skipped up to my bedside. Yes, she skipped. I didn't even know her, yet she cared about me.

I laughed at this; it felt good, I haven't laughed in a long time.

She laughed back, until our laughs joined into a harmonious chorus of happiness. It felt incredible. Sometimes, you mess up big time. If you don't try to recover, you never will, like my father. But if you try, there is a chance that you will make it out alive. Sometimes you just need to forget the past, and laugh it off. My bright blue eyes shone with imagination. My

beaming smile complete of dreams. I can't go back, but deep inside of me still lives that little girl. That little girl that believes in me, that little girl that tells me to smile and to dream.