

Nature in the Eye of a Writer

By: Taylor Kreger



Who/ What am I?

Cardinal

Red dot in a sea of grey

Cool air chills this day

Small sticks mend the fray

Of a creaking nest withering away.

Feathers spread reaching far too each side
Even the white snow won't hide her fluorescent side
A bright flash with every stride
It won't run but it can always hide.
High in the air without a care
All red but its face giving a dark stare
Make a noise, it wouldn't dare
Because creatures surround with deep despair

Lion

Creeping crawling sitting stalking
See the beast slowly walking
And find the rest a big coffin
Because after one he won't be stopping
But here he comes so stop the talking



Imagist Poetry

Fire truck

Water hits the cement but there is no rain

People trudge down the sidewalk

Heat pulses through the air

An engine screams in the distance

Stop. Catch breath. Wipe Sweat.

Red enters the corner of my eye

Speeding past my withered body

Gold stains the number five onto my eyelids.

longboarding

Flashing pavement passing under

Hair flying in the crisp wind

Sliding with the sound of approaching thunder

Peaceful like a hippy's hymn

Waning World

Towers fall on stable ground

As the world thrashes calmly to the

Sudden lulling tone of prickling celestial

Bodies engulfing homely territory

Surrounded

Found by forgotten race stumbling on

What seems so terribly important but

Inevitably means nothing to surrounding
Planets of stupendous worth
Alone.

Whale

Floating islands plummet deep
To the place where nobody can see all
The happenings of tanking giants
Taking gulps of crowding krill
Falling deep to an endless bottom
Where parasites pick and teeth tear
At flaking flesh swaying in the
Rolling deep depths of a lost soul.

Running

Claps echo off of surrounding buildings
As the soles of my feet time after time meet with cement
What fun can be made with rules unbent?
Trickling breeze cools his nerve
Beware of allies with a creeping perve
Brace yourself for the approaching curve



Picture Story:

Runaway

Wires and tubes litter the floor in a small room where nothing speaks but the artificial tones of an electrocardiogram whose slowing beeps are an ongoing reminder of my weakening father. Steps into this room are always accompanied by a sorry shudder, my incoherent patient is only a mere shadow of the strong man he was before. Hinges creak as I open the big oak door and step into the old dark room; my father hunches over with a relaxed jaw and glossy eyes. I step through the scattered wires and toe my way over the cold hard wood to his bedside. Filling his water glass I kiss him softly on the cheek noticing once again how corpse-like his pale clammy skin is. Sitting by his side I hold his hand and peer deep into his soft hazel eyes thinking of the happy times that seemed so plentiful back when he was healthy and we carelessly strolled through the endless grassy plains. These memories are now all I have from my father's life and even though I know he is only a piece of what he once was, the thought of losing this once strong

man pierces my heart with a lonely spike. I was too young when my mother left to experience the pain then, but I could see it in my father. “Where’s mommy?” I used to ask him

“Mom found a different place to live and be happy, child.” He would answer with a sorry depressing glare that he practically never showed. His pain was evident which was rare and unusual because he always seemed so impenetrably stable to me. I used to think I shared his pain and sulked because of it sometimes, but now I know I am familiar with this feeling of loss and sorrow because it consumes me every time I look at his dwindling body.

I let go of his gentle motionless hand and stand up to check the machines. Twinkling lights and the slow rolling heart monitor seem functional so I evacuate the cold touch of the creaking floors and slip out the bedroom door. I tread down the hallway as reality attempts to wash away the saddening stains my father left, which cling tight to my fibers without release. Flowing golden light catches my eye as I reach the kitchen tile. Staring out the window I find the sun finally becoming too swollen to stay afloat as it sinks further and further below until the last remaining slice becomes consumed by the horizon. Fields of long flowing grass still possess their beauty for as far as my eyes can strain even when night drains the color from otherwise vibrant green. My body remains motionless as one by one bright splatters of light sprinkle across the pitch black canvas of evening. Birds and animals sleep and distinguish their songs as room is made for the high droning croaks of insects and critters who find comfort in the darkness.

Stabbing pains return in my heart when the beautiful view proves to be too weak to distract me from my hurt. The inevitable is coming soon and I will be alone in this mysterious and hidden world. I haven’t heard my father’s voice in longer than I can remember, but the stony rugged tone echoes through my mind on the daily occasion. “Remember to smile, Morgan,” he used to tell me. A smile in a house filled with so much sorrow and pain could never be natural,

but outside surrounded by the beauty and happiness of nature, smiles live happily without demise.

It has been four years since I had to stop going to school so I could take care of my dad. Nurses came and went, but my father's money, like everything else of his, is a dilapidated source and was short-lived. I am now the provider for us working when I can at the local diner so that we can remain comfortable. Although I am only seventeen I know what it is like to be a leader of a family and I know the ins and outs of heart-wrenching pain. My soul, one that was once full of happiness, is now saturated in bitter depression as I sulk through days and nights waiting for the day when my father can be released from his misery.

I shy away from our nearly-empty fridge as my saddened stomach refuses anything to eat. Comfort is found in the soft cushions of an old couch. Glowing television numbs my brain as I slowly drift off of my broken consciousness and into a dreamy realm of comfort. I am consumed in my thoughts as dreams pull me from my constricted body and into the world. Frozen tundra and whipping winds awaken my dreaming mind as I journey through the limits of my imagination. Visits to landmarks and golden sands of deserts shock my senses which are used to bland spring days overcast with thick dripping clouds. I perch high on a branch of the redwood forest when a screeching noise consumes the treetops. I rise from the couch and emerge from my dream. Down the hallway a high-pitched noise echoes the apparent danger of my father. Springing to my feet I race through the house and into my father's room where I meet him motionless and cold.

Color has escaped flesh as bones are revealed through the relaxing muscles in his face. Standing over him I panic to the sharp piercing tones of the cardiogram. Searching for some sign of life I grab his wrist to feel for a pulse, his digits seemed stiff and cold as my fingertips press

over his blood ridden veins. Explosive sobs thunder from my chest as I hold him close and feel his frigid cheek against my tear-soaked face. Letting go of his seemingly iron grip I stumble down the hallway to a telephone. Shedding tear after tear telling the ambulance to come I glance out the window. Seeing wide open fields of freedom dulls the lonely pain in my heart. Without meeting my father's side again I swing open the back door and run off into the fields of long grass. Running faster and faster I can feel the pain and loneliness escape my body. Becoming less a part of my old life and more a part of the new life I have been dreaming to fulfill. Taking each stride longer and fuller I realize I am now free, free to live.



One act Play

Toby the Titan

CHARACTERS

Toby: A teenage boy who is a recovering alcoholic

Mom + Dad: also recovering alcoholics. Going through Toby's same process.

Cynthia: an old friend of Toby's who becomes his main source of peer pressure.

Narrator: Toby is a former alcoholic returning to high school after two weeks of rehabilitation. His nerves boil as he enters the school. Traps are laced around each corner posing a threat for Toby to fall deep to the depths of his former self. Everyone will expect the old Toby, flask in hand as he downs six shots before taking a geometry test. He knows that he shouldn't fall to peer pressure, but Toby can feel the temptation rise inside of him as images of disappointed friends mist through his now sober and clear mind. Dreading his inevitable demise, Toby trudges down the hall avoiding eye contact at all costs in order to remain unnoticed and untempted.

Cynthia: Yo Tobes! Where have you been man?

Toby: Oh hey Cynthia, I've just been chilling out at home and stuff.

Frank: Really? That's good, I heard you almost died from drinking too much and had to go to rehab.

Frank: (shocked that the word had spread around) Where did you hear that?

Cynthia: yeah, people have been talking all about it. You can't be clean though Toby I'm throwing this giant house party Friday and you have to go!

Toby: I don't know Cynthia, I made a pact with my parents and they're both super serious about the whole no drinking thing. I just don't know if I can lie to my parents anymore, you know?

Cynthia: Yeah I definitely know how you feel, after my parents heard about your situation they've been cracking down on me. You should still come though, Toby it won't be the same without you there. (Leaves stage)

Toby: I guess I'll think... (His voice trails off as Cynthia walks further away.)

END SCENE ONE

Narrator: After a day full of hidden stares and pity smiles from teachers; Toby returns home where his parents sit in the cool fall breeze waiting for his arrival. Seeing that his parents were even more addicted to alcohol than he was before their family rehabilitation, Toby decides to ask them how they are coping without their old habits

Toby: Hey mom and dad.

Both: Hi Toby.

Mom: how was your first day back to school?

Toby: Not too bad, but I have a question.

Dad: sure bud what is it?

Toby: Well I know no matter what I need to stay far away from alcohol, but the temptation is killing me already, and Cynthia invited me to this house party and I tried to say no but... (parents cut him off.)

Mom: honey we know how hard it is to stay away from drinking, but you just need to do what you know is right! Don't listen to what others are saying is cool or what isn't. The only thing that should matter to you when it comes to this is your own feelings.

Dad: (chuckling) letting a girl boss you around I see... Just tell her to go brush her hair or something!

Mom: (looking disgusted in her husband and coming closer to Toby) don't listen to your father Tobe, just do what you know is right.

Narrator: Feeling a little more prepared now, Toby strolled through his daily routine of chores and homework storming up something so say to Cynthia tomorrow in school. The longer he thought of what he wanted to tell her, the better he felt about turning her down. Beads of sweat form on his forehead as Toby sits in his bed at night and remembers the pain of rehab and his withdrawals. The thought of returning to his old ways now repulses Toby as the slightest thought of alcohol causes him to gag. Closing his eyes, Toby sleeps contently knowing he will be able to cleanse himself of this pressure in the morning.

END SCENE TWO

Narrator: The next day Toby walks into school with a new shine of confidence and barely flinches even as Cynthia walks over.

Cynthia: Hey Toby.

Toby: hey Cynthia, are you still having that house party this weekend?

Cynthia: Yeah as long as my parents are still going out of town, why? You're not getting cold feet are you?

Toby: Actually I am, I don't think it would be the best idea for me to go I'm really really sorry.

Cynthia: (annoyed) Damn Toby I thought the other kids didn't know what they were talking about when they said that you changed, but I guess it's all true. (Turns to walk away)

Toby: (grabs cynthia's shoulder) Hey don't give me that. You don't even have the slightest clue of what I've been through in the past couple of weeks. The fact that you aren't supporting my decision is enough to tell that you aren't a good friend, but now you're telling me that I've changed? I may have changed but it was for the better and I'm glad I did because now I don't have to live with alcohol as my constant crutch. Friends are supposed to do what's best for each other and I know going to your dumbass party isn't going to do me any good, so maybe you aren't really my friend at all. (Cynthia's jaw drops as Toby takes a deep breath and walks away.)

END SCENE THREE



Story Ending Narrative

Syme's Time

Eyelids sag and blur the vision of an already incapable driver. Syme, an inebriated broken soul, steps hard on the gas pedal of a steel grey 69' mustang he had inherited from his father. Roads wind through the dark evergreen forests and pose a formidable threat to predictableness, but Syme's alcohol-induced confidence drive him deeper and faster into a whimsical labyrinth. The constant passing of leaning green trees hypnotizes Syme into a head bobbing mist. Yellow lines become impossibly hard to keep track of as he slowly drifts off the road and onto the bushy soil. Tires jam beneath the metal frame of his car as it speeds over a thick stump. This sudden rocking jolt brings Syme back to reality as a sharp curve approaches. Slamming hard on the breaks he begins to drift and lose control as thick rooted trees come closer. Closing his eyes Syme chokes down a helpless breath and braces himself for impact. A bark-covered pillar smashes through the passenger side and sends debris flying everywhere as the sudden halt cracks Syme's head off the door. Finding himself falling through a tunnel of unconsciousness, Syme sinks into a deep hardening sleep.

Emergency room flashing lights enter Syme's dreams as the border between reality and subconscious becomes fainter and fainter. Throbbing pains coming from all over reassure Syme that he isn't dead. IVs dangle over his motionless head and screens beep signifying a healthy heartbeat as eyes strain to see the extent of his injuries. Bandages cover elbows and knees where the pain lays deep in his bones. As he sinks deeper into the hospital bed a doctor appears in the window of his door. Seeing that Syme is awake, he pulls the door open and enters the small white disinfected room. "I wasn't sure if you would ever wake up!"

Apparently it was unusual for car crash victims to sleep in until after noon, "Well I figured a little bit of sleep would fix me up in no time." Syme played along.

"You're going to need a little bit more than just some sleep," he said with a deflating smile. "The pain killers probably numbed the pain pretty well, but your condition is worse than you think. When you crashed you flew straight through the windshield of that old mustang and clocked your head on something pretty hard. You've been out for almost two weeks." Shock sinks deep into Syme and he becomes speechless. After a minute of uninterrupted silence the doctor continues with: "Your injuries have healed a lot since the crash though, you'll be able to go home by the end of the week now that you're awake." A slight chuckle escaped his mouth, "but for now rest is your friend; I'll be around every little bit, but if you need anything there are nurses all over this place." Without waiting for a response he turned and walked out the door.

The thought of sleep turned Syme's stomach as he entertained the advice given to him. Thinking of the time wasted in his hospital bed made lying down unbearable. Sitting up he braced himself for pain which undoubtedly found refuge in all of his joints. Syme braced himself with the bed frame as he strained to erect his soar body, now standing straight up he felt better. Short impish hobbles started to Morph into full streaming strides. The longer Syme stretched his tired and bruised muscles the better they felt. Looking down Syme realized he was wearing an old tattered hospital gown. Disgusting thoughts of old sick people wasting away in his gown forced him to take it off and search for his old clothes. Syme left no drawer unopened as he vigorously searched the room looking for a shred of his old clothes, but he found nothing. "They must have gotten shredded in the crash." He thought to himself. Even though he had no clothes, the thought of staying in his room was unbearable to Syme. A questioning hand reached for the doorknob as he shuttered at his nakedness. A quick glance into the cracked door revealed an

empty hallway. Syme toed his way out of the room and onto the cold white tile. Syme streaked down the hallway in search of any form of clothes. After sneaking around several corners and avoiding multiple curious doctors, he stumbled upon a box labeled "lost and found". After outfitting himself in a stained orange shirt, pale blue jeans, and a pair of gently-used converse Syme left the small box and travelled even further away from his room. Deciding that he needed to leave this terrible place, he searched for an exit out of this sanitary confinement. He avoided the questioning looks of passing doctors and headed for the main foyer, here he was unnoticed in the busy crowd of hustling people. Giant glass doors marked his destination as he pushed and shoved through the bustling mob.

Finally reaching the doors Syme grabbed for the handles and pulled them open submerging himself in the crisp air and warming sun. He strolled down the sidewalk of a quaint residential neighborhood as ideas bounced around his head of what to do next. He walked further along the road and spotted a yard sale. He walked up to the mounds of unorganized goods and pondered his options. Pulling together a backpack complete with a sleeping bag and survival equipment Syme felt prepared for a journey into the woods, but when he went to ask about the price, nobody was around to take his money. The day was winding down and Syme needed to get a move on if we wanted to make any progress into the woods by nightfall. He left seven dollars and twenty five cents on the checkout table and began his trek. A small path at the end of the neighborhood marked an entrance into the woods.

Syme enjoyed the singing birds and fresh smells of the woods and became entranced in his surroundings as he journeyed further and further into the woods. Paths became thicker with greenery as the day spun closer and closer to an end. Finally Syme came to a small clearing near a small running stream, as the moon rose higher in the sky he became more and more tired. He

set out his sleeping bag and stared at the gleaming stars until finally he peacefully drifted off into sleep.

[Limbs and digits twitch as sunlight pours onto a sleeping face. Eyelids flicker open as Syme begins to wake up. His sleeping bag swishes as he stands up and takes a deep breath of fresh morning air. He walks barefoot through the short crinkling grass to a small creek and crouches by it to drink the cool crisp liquid. Light glistened off the flowing water as he carefully brings handfuls of cool liquid to his chapped lips. Syme gets up and approaches his campsite to pack his supplies, as he jammed his little amount of supplies into a backpack he yawned and dreamt of a foreign land unlike the places he's seen before.]