
Why I'm Me

Ellie Zimm

12-14 Age Group Overall Winner

Before

Bubbly, talkative, joyous,
A smile permanently etched onto my youthful face,
Paired perfectly with a nose always buried in a book,
Fingers that deafened ears with "music,"
And feet that just couldn't seem to hold still no matter how hard I tried.
I always believed that people were good at heart,
Loving and trying their hardest.
The dark side of people I was oblivious to,
Attributing their faults to their "unique personality,"
Always willing to give people a second chance.
Appreciating the beauty in the simple things:
A drop of rain on the roof,
A gust of wind,
A nod in my direction,
Warm dinner on a cold night,
Life.
Where did that girl go?
I want her back.

During

What just happened to me?

1 Year Later

Tears flow down my cheeks,
Fists clutching tangled hair,
On the floor of my sister's old bathroom,
Memories of a place and time too terrible for words flood my mind,
Leaking into the hole in my heart.
This secret was my own, never to be unearthed -
Dug up by prying hands,
Looked upon by curious eyes.
But the hands would scramble to cover up something so terrible,
So disgusting,
The eyes would be yanked out by the prying hands,
Longing to go back and erase the dreadful scene played before them.
This weight on my chest is too heavy to bear!
This loss of innocence and the person I used to be,

The grief of what happened,
The facade of normalcy,
It's all too much.
I'm too much.

2 Years Later

I'm sitting in an office,
Hands folded in my lap,
Nervously clasping and unclasping,
Wrung back and forth.
The sweat makes them stick,
I stop,
Looking up at the man with concerned eyes.
He comes to a conclusion.
About me.
About my life.
I nod my head,
My lips form the fatal word,
Yes.
The concerned eyes are wet now,
Dripping even,
All because of my life.

Now

Now, I'm a thief.
Stealing back the pieces of my heart that were stolen,
Taking back what was mine.
I'm not finished yet.
I'm a work in progress.
I walk with my hands at my sides,
Wary of people and the promises they make,
Suspicious of everything.
But lighter,
Joyful,
and healing.
I still visit the man with the concerned eyes sometimes.
Now, he smiles when I come in,
Excited to talk to me,
And I, him.
My cares aren't in my hands anymore,
The hole in my heart is still being taped up.
Sometimes the tape begins to peel,

And the hole in my heart ruptures.
I do things to help, and I get back to normal.
Whatever that is.
All I know is that I couldn't have gotten here,
Couldn't have made it,
And lived,
Without people to love me for me,
And not judge me by the bad things that have happened to me.

Future Me

Taller, kinder, and a little bit wiser,
Independent,
Mature,
Whole.
I walk into a room with my head held high,
Stroll to the front,
Prepared to tell my story to other hurt little girls.
Pain is always going to hurt,
But it doesn't have to go to waste.

To the Hurt

Take a breath.
You're loved,
We're getting there.
It will get better.
Bad guys hurt little girls,
Creeps will be creeps,
I'll sing for you this lullaby,
While tears stream down your cheeks.
We'll always care for you,
Though what happened was so wrong,
Your gift for "him" was stolen,
But we'll fight for you.
You're never alone.