A Writer's Struggle
By Logan Dejong

The light clicking of the keyboard beneath my fingers was useless. There was no point to the words that slowly unraveled into a sentence that formed a paragraph that would eventually turn out to be another story for me to print out and crumple into a ball to feed the trash can, like how I had seen countless times in movies. Pointless.

As a kid, it hadn’t seemed like being an author would be as difficult as it actually was. Coming up with ideas had been effortless then, back when my imagination seeped through every pore of my skin. It was easy to come up with a tale that captivated my peers and filled up several spiral notebooks. As an adult, all creativity had drained and countless cases of writer’s block had taken its place.

I paused the development of my so-called story to read over the last paragraph and critique it as much as my pessimistic heart would allow me. Another thing that had changed with age: my optimism. I had always had the dream of publishing a book and become a bestselling author, but as I grew older and the people around me grew more talented, all hope I had slowly ebbed away. Instead I ended up in an apartment by myself in the middle of Portland with barely enough to get by. Barely enough imagination to change up what I eat for dinner throughout the week.

I gently closed my laptop and sighed, standing up from the uncomfortable seated position I had held for the past hour at my desk. It wasn’t a long walk to the kitchen, where a teapot full of hot water awaited me. A soft sizzling noise bounced from the mug containing my teabag. I let the tea sit in the water for a few minutes, just as my mom had taught me back in middle school.

I had hopes that my short break from writing would regenerate my creativity, but to no surprise, my tank remained empty. I had no inspiration.

I highlighted the entire document and let my finger hover over the backspace button for a moment. My eyes scanned the page one final time as I pondered if what I was about to do was wise; could this have been a bestseller? No. The click of the button was no different than that of an e or a j. Just the same hollow noise that echoed through my vacant skull. The suspense I had built up to that moment was useless, for the action seemed as empty as the keyboard clicking.

I’d never considered the power of the backspace key before; one rectangular key is what separates your story from life or death, from being the next J.K. Rowling or an author whose books sit on the library shelf for months without being touched. That was a fear of mine: writing a book that sits on the shelf in the wrong section of the library because nobody picked it up to discover it was misplaced.
Maybe that's a story: the power of the backspace. I contemplated this idea for a moment.

No, I finally decided. Too stupid.

My fingers ran through my hair, pausing for a moment to massage my scalp as if it would loosen up my brain to release some sort of idea.

I needed a walk.

I shut off my laptop once again and snatched a large winter coat from the closet. The crisp November air was shocking, piercing my lungs for a moment when I stepped out onto the sidewalk. It was late in the afternoon, the orange glow of the sun slowly fading away to be replaced by countless little stars. That was all I needed at that moment, to stand in the slight autumn breeze and look up at the sky.

Maybe the stars could spare some creativity.