

You are in 5th grade, you take a deep breath and exhale onto the window. Drawing stick figures until the bus comes to a complete stop, you look up and realize that this is your house. As you jump down the steps onto the ice cold pavement you glance in your driveway and realize your father's car is parked oddly, almost as if his approach took him right across the lawn.

You stop...

You feel an all-too-common sensation in your chest, and realize that your heart has begun to pulsate.

faster

and

faster.

As you approach the front door your heart stops, the world is silent. You noticed the door was not completely shut and you feel the warm air leaking out. You enter, setting down your backpack and taking off your new snow jacket that you just received from your grandma not too long ago.

Hello?

A faint sound of mumbling in the background echoes through the house

You cautiously make your way to your brother's room. He just turned 6. You see him play with all his new toys he received from his birthday two days earlier. You ask him

"wanna play hide and seek?"

He springs up and runs to hide in the bathroom.

You count down

20, 19, 18, 17, you slowly get up and begin to leave the room knowing the only safe place for him would be there. You lock his door, sliding the key into your back pocket.

You begin to make your way to the room echoing the mumbles, you notice the shoes and bottles lining the dark hallway. As you reach the door the mumbles become more clear, a mixture of english, grunts and moans. You try and turn away before you are noticed but it's too late

Hey. Get in here.

You open the door and proceed to do as told, fearing the reaction if you were to disobey. You stand next to his bedside, the blood has rushed from your face and limbs leaving you ice cold. He reaches out, grabbing your arm, his hands as hot as the fire burning in the fireplace, searing your frozen body. He asks you do do something, you hesitate. The jumbled and slurred words coming out of his mouth frighten you.

Dad, I can't understand you...

Minutes go by before he responds, but not with words as he tried before but with actions. Still grasping your arm he begins to stand up. With little balance he tosses you across the room; landing on your shoulder and arm you feel the tears swelling. You start to stand back up and inch towards the door ready to run. You glance back at your father barely being able to keep himself upright.

Thud. Crash!

You look and see your father on the ground unconscious, the bed post lamp shattered along side him. Still tense and hurting you walk over to his body limply lying on the ground. You begin to lift him up one limb at a time back into bed, your arm still in pain, but no matter how much you wish to just leave him there you push through until he's on top the bed. You bend over and place your head on his chest to ensure he is still breathing, then you leave. Shutting the door.

Click.

The sound of your brother's room door unlocking. You seem him standing there, all alone –

“Wow you are *really* good at this game,” you say as you try your best to fake the smile.

Hours pass, you revisit your brother's room, tucking him in and giving him a kiss goodnight. As you enter your room you get into bed and turn off your light. Sitting restlessly you hold back the tears, knowing you need to be strong for both you and your brother, wishing you could explain it all, but you can't. So you lie there, thinking, wishing for this all to be just a bad dream.

But it's not –

It's your life.

Rubric for the Lyrical Essay:

| | <i>Needs further revision</i> | <i>Satisfactory</i> | <i>Outstanding</i> |
|--------------------|---|--|--|
| Focus | Identity subject is not clear enough and/or the treatment of the identity subject seems surface-level. Reader cannot really empathize with the interviewee's experience. | Identity subject comes across clearly, but the writer could provide a deeper/more complex view to inspire deeper critical thinking and a more powerful empathetic reading experience. | Lyrical essay delivers a clear and complex portrayal of the identity subject, inspiring deep critical thinking and a powerful empathetic reading experience. |
| Poetic Language | Poetic language is vague or missing. Or, metaphors or other poetic language fall into cliché territory. Or, metaphors or other poetic language are not appropriate representations of the subject matter. | Writer employs a couple of clear and effective poetic techniques, but they could be more varied. Some specific parts of the lyrical essay would benefit from more poetic language or different poetic techniques. Apt metaphors are present, but could be more specific or original. | Writer employs a variety of poetic techniques (eg. imagery, description,, figurative language, sound, allusion, etc.) to challenge the reader to interpret meaning and enhance sensory experience. Metaphors are fresh, original, and apt representations of the subject matter. |
| Narrative Elements | Narrative elements are lacking or they are disjointed in a way that obscures the reader's ability to engage in the interviewee's experiences. Narrative perspective is not yet effective. | Narrative elements are present, conveying the interviewee's experiences clearly. However, narrative elements could be further developed to enhance the reader's engagement in the interviewee's experiences. Narrative perspective sustains the reader's attention consistently. | Narrative elements (exposition, conflict, characterization, dialogue, etc.) engage the audience in interviewee's experiences. Narrative perspective is highly effective, lending cohesion to the overall piece and allowing the reader to "step into the shoes" of the interviewee(s). |
| Mechanics | Lyrical essay contains a many errors of | Lyrical essay contains a few errors of | Lyrical essay is free from errors of |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| | spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation. Errors affect the reader's ability to understand the meaning the author is trying to convey. Significant editing will be necessary before this text is ready to be published. | spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation, which can easily be fixed with one final round of editing. | spelling, grammar, and punctuation. |
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Grade: A-

