Short Story Three

Wipe Your Eyes

Around 11:10 am, I remembered how I use to walk to the bus stop down the road and at the bend before the large greenish home that sat inside a polite bordering wooden, light colored fence. It bothered me that it was large and haunting compared to our smaller version sat especially kind next door to four other spacially positioned designed one to the likeness of the other. I lived in ours and my friends, neighborhood kids stayed in all the others. Our street became to hang out zone as shortly over pass the open field with tall grass were stationary playground things for us to play. Now, I and the others sat on top of them having aged and surpass that stage of interest in doing anything but running our mouths. It wasn't lonely but it was rather isolated around our section of town. Walking down our long road to town, we ride bikes, walk with long strides or run excited and limited in time get there for something we all wanted to participate in.

Mom take I and the others at times with her for company as she exercised some days pumping her arms and speed walking suggesting we were young and energetic but still obligated to take care of our physical health. As too, she wasn't raising lazy car driven kids who'd missed the mark when it comes to health and caring for their bodies. So, we walked and jogged and held family bike fun days up and down our lonely roads early mornings and early evenings. I never thought it was bad, it actually exciting and fun. The best part were the breaks rolling along the beautiful grassy land amongst field purple and yellow flowers that were odorous and a buzz with flying insects, bees, and colorful butterflies.

I'd remembered all of these things as I sat suddenly perplexed and I guess feeling intense taking the exam. That escaped calmed my angst questioning myself, my ability. I Thought I'd studied and felt well prepared. Evenstill I held this internal disconnect to the information I was reading. It was almost as if I was telling myself or challenging my original thoughts and interest in becoming anything beyond a towny. Why had I taken the bus out of town, leaving home onto the city for school. Why had it all suddenly not been enough. Was this stoppage fear or was I rating my ability much to high?? I didn't know that answer just as I wasn't certain about all the answers required to fulfill my obligation along each page. I breathed reread, picked my nails and searched the room for a window leaking the breeze seeping across the room. Willing a thing of beauty to flutter along it under the bright sun whose reflection had trapped a corner of the assigned desk as I'd been seated for the last hour suffering.

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I think it was the seat that taken it's toll upon my psychy encapsulating the past, the school year back home and English class where I sat in the same position each day reliving historical text, writing papers, and discussing things that feed something more for my teacher Mrs. Day than any of us. It gave her life, I used to think, as she seemed happiest and driven with Ulysses and Plato who'd been dead 1400 and counting years before our town became itself. Yet, I knew this was different. There was no teacher and the energy for learning and studying for this day had all been that of my own imagination and fruition. What was I thinking was all I was thinking then searching the room taking on the intensity and focus everyone had. Not a peep, so I dropped my pencil. Yup, it was clearly the only sound we all heard as it rolled slightly around on the floor. Yes, I made a couple others look, I disrupted them as I was being distracted in fear. I smirked proudly at the much needed break they'd gotten rather they liked or not, to glance and see what made that sound for three seconds somewhere around them.

First, in those moments I realized the floor was slightly unbeveled. Something I'd learned poking around in the garage with dad and learning about using it took with the water gages to figure out is something was leveled. That roll mean't the floor sloped a tad bit. And two, I heard my chair move, screech along the floor when I moved to regain control of my writing utensil. It was the one thing I possessed that'd come between me and that test, this path to a future my mother reminded me, was the pencil I re-clinched and placed calculatedly between pages 20 and 21. They were twenty pages before the God honest end I was struggling to reach.

Dad had taking time to discuss his career of building things and making sure they were configured such that they functioned to the fullest desire of people. The owners, the investors who paid hundreds of thousands or millions for unique shapes, styles, and designs as attraction to their potentials. No matter what, he beamed at the outcomes of constructing things that mattered and would be around for centuries. His career would make for a good beginning today financially for a young man such as myself. No real limits when it came to deciding on a career for myself though. He'd repeated this strongly for some time as I wracked my brain to choose college, trade, or a drifter for the future. They'd assured me that drifting be only for a year and after day 365 I'd drown in my own form of perilous fun.

I was going to begin again, I think breathing realizing I'd returned to the room with the twenty others surrounding me, bent down and working toward going onto the future. The job, the income, the comfort I could exchange it for back home or here living in the city. Successfully passing gave me automatic privilege and access to things and places. I could stay right here, get an upscale fancy apartment with a balcony and modern

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appliances of my own. Freedom to come, go and do whatever I wanted on down time to generate my own personal happening. I could go to a real gym and workout in classes like ever to popular yoga. I'd have an earned flex. Flex in material goods, a car, and money in the bank. That was called incentive, my father said at some point on morning when he was leaving home for work. I must of been fifteen thrown off a tad because mother was going back to work for the first time in years. We need money for school, my education and things on the horizon he said and it became "motivation and incentive" for her to begin working again. Sitting here today, I was seeking a reminder of that same kind of enforcement as to why I had to finish this boring test.

That song came to mind about something like this, just in case you need parental pity, "Afraid I gotta do what I gotta do, if I let go, where am I going to go...." It went something like that I say smiling on the inside.

Yet, I softly sat continuing afloat, adrift buried inside memories of the past days of ease while still fighting to regain focus. If I just walked out today, I know there be a uncompromised forgiveness regardless of the disappointment it would bring. They'd both spend days chatting about it and asking me questions with offers of help and assurance I'd make the mark somehow. I'd be urged to rethink my decision cause I was young and had time and I won't be the first to drop the ball on something. Dad would probably silently lose it sensing he might very well have his first quitter in the family. His face would change from pity for me to plausible disgrace of his failure to lead. All while I basked with plans using the days ahead to loaf and eat home cooked meals with no worry for place to shut a bedroom door, comfortably watch movies or even ask for money for heading into town to hang out. But who was I fooling? Work would once again become a priority and wasting money on this level for an education an issue. This course had cost a little and they both agreed to pay and house me at The Loft apartments for two years. It was a breeze. I guess I owed it to myself and them to finish to think this through despite my feeling pressured for the right answers. I could also, retake it twice if I failed today; so it wasn't that terrible nor should it feel this intense.

I thought this observing the ticking clock which was hung before us all, toward the ceiling as always with it's black hands and white background. It was just as all the other community clocks I'd seen around schools, banks, and other places people gather. This was procrastination I said breathing again loudly as I repositioned myself to stretch and grab my pencil from the crevice of the exam booklet but instead I flip my mind to page 45 and 70 of my favorite car magazine. On those pages, picturesque, were the MINI Cooper Pink and color striped, Audi A3 Baby Blue, and a Volkswagon EOS Red. I

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dreamed of which one suited me best after I saved a down payment. It could only compliment and poise me as a perfect fit of a modern middle class community. An attraction which answered many questions about my person I thought intrigued with the idea I held for months now waiting for this time to come. All I had standing between everything I'd waited and hoped for were the next twenty pages of black print to prove I had learned, no mastered my material. Passing meant I'd grasped a hold and solidly learned. I have the necessary tools to do the work and earn a good living. It all begins with this lead pencil, I say to myself.

"Upm," I say outwardly and begin to re-read the question. It was 11:25am I see glancing at the clock knowing there was a noon hour deadline. Still, I paced myself carefully assessing the verbage of the case studies of issues and handling problems. I chuckled at things that were trivial and nonsense sames and I quietly said, "shucks" to those I had to ponder and provide the best answer wroped as resolution. At 11:40am, the intimidation began. Pages turned, arms stretched and people stood then walked toward the Procter smiling, I noticed, turning in their booklets. I failed to look-up again and barely heard the polite chatter outside the door which suddenly emerged as chairs were emptying. I didn't have to see to feel the lightness within the surrounding air quality. Though closer, I realized time per remaining question I had. I'd make it.

"Ten minutes," she uttered "please recheck your answers and make sure all marks are clear," the directive the others certainly heard individually before leaving the emotionally stifling room. "Ten," I say viewing my last page and the count of four questions. I was unpanicked, I was conclusive, I felt good about this projected ending. There was know way, I'd fail, no way I'd barely make it. It wasn't class where the linger of question about answers surmounted, it was pure knowledge and know how that I'd remembered. Filling in the last bubble, I was eager to leave and begin searching for a job. I had prospects, I had options, and I would be in control once the scores arrived via mail I could apply for my license. I line it up; lined it all up in order of my takedown. License, job, apartment, and car for me, myself, and I. Though this given a four week waiting period, despite the time, I knew I was so close and yet so far away from it all. I also knew I could go home and taken in the flowers along the roads, the great houses backed with trees, breathe the air as I wait for the the moment I would pack and leave permanently for the city.

Walking and smirking in pride, I waved to a few test takers I chatted with before it all began and wondered if they were feeling the same euphoria I had inside. Just knowing it was finally over lighted my body and eased the cringed state of mind I had the past weeks preparing, studying for it. I looked at their faces relieved and quick

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steps boppy and not the draggy kind they come using part fear and part hesitation. I knew what it was well as I had the same emotions flowing, yet, I knew that no matter the outcome, my mom and dad be there to "wipe my eyes" my crying disappointed eyes and coax me onto the next step or move.

I picked up what I remember of the song lyrics....."remember if you need to cry, I'll be here to wipe your eyes....."

Wipe Your Eyes

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