Firebird
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Sara Bonderud
Grade 12
Norkam Secondary

I had never known the true feeling of utter embarrassment until the day I danced on stage naked. It was the year end show of my dance studio, and it was the final night of performances. We had already been through the days of tech and dress rehearsal, and the first night of performances had gone off without a hitch. On the second night, we were all tired and comfortable with the routine of show. Part way through the show I had a quick change, meaning I had one song to change from one costume to the other. The first costume was an elaborate tutu with pointe shoes that were sprayed with hairspray to keep them on, and my second costume was a skin tight leotard that did up with buttons at the front. On the second night, I flew off stage as soon as the song was done, but a group of fifteen children dressed in feathery bodysuits stood in my way. I couldn't see a clear path to where my next costume was, and the song for the dance between mine had already started. I moved kids out of the way by nudges and "excuse me"s, but by the time I got to my costume rack, the song was already a quarter done. I ripped everything off from my first costume in record time, and hastily pulled on my next costume and quickly did up the twenty some odd buttons that held the front together.

I had just made it to the wing where I came on when the music started. I strutted onto to stage with the sass that was required of the dance, and carried out the moves perfectly, that is until I got to the middle of the number. The choreography was that each of us was to do a move across the stage, and mine was a firebird. This move is done by jumping straight into the air, and kicking my front foot straight in front of me, my back leg is in attitude behind me, and my body is in a back bend. This all happens in the blink of an eye. I prepared for this exciting jump with the

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general runs, bending into a plie, then finally letting all of my energy burst out in this amazing jump. However, as I was hitting the farthest back point of my back bend, I heard a rip. Coming back to earth I looked down at my costume. The buttons that held the costume onto my body had all fallen open from my clumsy fastening of them before my dance, leaving a huge opening right down the center. This left me standing on the stage, with nothing but my tan bra and underwear to keep me modest. I felt the warmth run up to my cheeks burning the darkest shade of crimson, as I made eye contact with the camera man. This was the night when they filmed the show. I rushed off stage, not bothering to finish the rest of the dance, pulling the thin fabric around me as I ran. After the initial shock had worn off I made a promise to myself. I would never let tiny children in feathers get in my way again.

She is ingénua.

so absent from reality
so unaware.

To be like that, would be a dream.

In my own little world, so unaware
but all I see is society,
and the truth
and I just cannot stop myself from wondering.

How did we ever get so vile?

They say the greed can stop
but I don't believe in that.
We can't change from something
we've grown so accustom to.
Something so deeply engraved in our societal culture.
Taking what we want and saying
"But I need it."
When we only want it.
While there's someone out there
who needs it rather then wants.

But forget that someone needs it, you want it and we live around people who say that the poor should just get a job.

Should go out and get an education, or just stop being poor all together.

But why try when they are only discriminated, looked down upon or not taken seriously.

Society is damaged.

No wonder everyone is so messed up,
hundreds of years of slavery and racism
sexism and discrimination can warp us so grossly
Prejudicial thoughts being embedded in out thoughts.
It can destroy and distort
everything that is beautifully diverse.

What fascinates me the most about the night sky is the would and wonder it holds, the mystery below.

The untold truth and story that lies beneath.

One's that we are only just scratching the surface of. That navy blue backdrop.

Those small flecks and dots of white that dance in the sky holding unknown answers of the universe.

But I think what fascinates me most of all, is that not a soul knows

- Cassandra Endean Westsyde 61. 12 He observed the young girl sitting across his desk, the wall clock's steady, resounding pulse filling the otherwise silent office. The psychiatrist's heart softly oscillated in his chest as his mind began drawing conclusions about this girl. She had come to him from the chief of police regarding a serial abduction investigation. The girl was found wandering aimlessly out in the swamp nearby most of the disappearance spots. Since her clothing matched the description of some of the missing children, the police thought she may have escaped from her abductor or witnessed an abduction and got lost. However, she apparently refused to speak to anyone, shunned from contact, and gave no indication to her identity; so there she sat, completely reticent and unmoving. The psychiatrist first noted her physical appearance: she was small of stature, likely no older than nine years old. Not one ounce of her skin was showing, covered by her wet clothing and a large blanket meant to keep her warm. Beneath her pink sweater's hood, her long, soaking black hair plastered itself to her skin and masked any physical features on her face. She had not moved an inch since sitting down; she was as still as death itself. The psychiatrist shifted in his chair and leaned forward slightly.

"Don't be afraid" he began gently, "Everything is okay now. I'm Dr. Lamprocapnos. What's your name?" No response. The clock's pulse echoed, as though responding in the girl's place. Dr. Lamprocapnos glanced at the clock's hands, noting how late it had become. The air had become tense, almost pressing against his skin. Shifting awkwardly once more, his words prodded the girl once more. "I'm going to ask you some questions, but you don't have to answer if you don't want to." He sighed at the girl's silent response, somewhat disappointed. At this rate, she would never respond. Slivers of desperation, curiosity, and exhaustion chipped at his composure as Dr. Lamprocapnos continued his inquiry. Staring at his blank notebook, he decided to prod once more.

"Did you see anything?" he offered, not expecting a reply. The girl suddenly shifted in her chair.

Dr. Lamprocapnos's head shot up, his heart skipping a beat as his wide eyes met the child's figure. Like a deer in headlights, the frozen doctor became transfixed on the girl's sudden and unexpected movement.

His heart began pounding against the walls of his chest as she fidgeted and rose her head slightly, still hiding her expression.

"Lights." Her voice was delicate. Though a softer tone was to be expected from a reticent, traumatized child. Dr. Lamprocapnos was caught off guard by both her voice and the nature of the response. His breath was caught in the stagnant air; within the span of a moment it seemed an hour had passed by. "I saw lights."

Dr. Lamprocapnos snapped from his trance, "Lights! Um, I suppose those were flashlights?" He had become excited and scribbled hasty observations in his notebook. As his heartbeat pounded harder with adrenaline, the doctor became startled at his own sudden enthusiasm. But who could blame him? He was already so fascinated with this girl; her mysterious aura had caught his attention the second he saw her.

"My friends," she corrected, "They were my friends." Hesitation clung to her words.

So she was with her friends, "What else did you see?" he pursued. Dr. Lamprocapnos did not care about any other children, only what this girl saw. "What else did you see?"

"I saw a man,"

"And what did he look like?"

"He was dark. There wasn't any lights in him." Dr. Lamprocapnos mused at the girl's observation and speech. "He was dragging a little girl through the grass. It was really wet. She was screaming a lot and kicking..." her words wavered and her voice broke as she became emotional. "The back of her leg got cut up real bad."

So she was a witness, he thought. "And then?"

"He... put her in the water until she stopped breathing. He just held her there, like it was nothing. Then..." she stopped suddenly. Dr. Lamprocapnos's racing heartbeat refused to relent. "The lights. They got real bright." The doctor was taken aback as his fascination began to melt into dread.

"What do you mean? The flashlights?" he sputtered hesitantly. The girl shook her head.

"No flashlights. My friends. Their eyes." Any tension in the girl's voice or actions vanished. The doctor's heart nearly stopped. A bead of sweat ran down his face and a lump formed in his throat. Dr. Lamprocapnos's pulse quickened further as his attention fell to the subtle bloodstains peeking around the girl's partially exposed right pant leg. His gaze snapped back to the girl's head, desperately trying to make out an expression on her hidden face. The girl, sensing the helplessness in the doctor's stunned silence, rises from her chair with limp shoulders and a lowered head. Only now did the doctor begin to recognize this child."They had lights in their eyes. 'Cuz their hearts are dead and I know who killed them." She took a step forward, dropping the blanket and revealing the dripping, decomposing skin on her frail hands. Dr. Lamprocapnos's chest felt like it would burst; yet he could not draw his eyes away. From behind her soaked, stringy hair where her eyes should have been, two yellow lights illuminated the rotted facial tissues.

"You killed my heart," she growled through skeletal jaws and putrefied flesh, "so I'm gonna kill yours."

Kubler Ross by Jane Harestad

Deafening winds, collapsing drums.

I will not listen. I will not hear.

These lies you speak, a hushed scream.

Liar. Liar, I say.

Scalding flames, unquenchable sparks.

I do not care. I do not know.

Rage binds my eyes, twitching and writhing.

Suffer. Suffer like me.

Dust to dust, unattainable loss.

I will do anything. I will give anything.

My mind slips through my fingers like sand.

Give them back. Give back what is mine.

Screeching rain, soundless cries.

I do not feel. I cannot feel.

Dead, cold eyes drenched in tears and rain.

I want to die. I want to feel.

Light. Bindings undone.

Burnt clothes and broken fingers.

Lunderstand, Lcomprehend,

Blossoms caress my healing wounds.

My battle scars, I wear them proud.

For I have been born anew.

Follow the Leader by Jane Harestad

Parade of two, I lead with pride.

But soon another is left behind.

Follow the leader, don't fall behind.

This line of one continues forth;

Marching along in a neat little line.

A windless journey heading north.

Listen to me, I know what's best!

So don't slow down, not even to rest.

My changeless march begins to slow;

Alone on a path I used to know

I turn around, we're down to three.

I realize, with fleeting pride,

Two had quit, chose to flee.

That they weren't the ones I left behind.

Cowards! I shout and turn away.

Follow your leader, so strong and brave.

The hero and leader I wanted to be

Could not comprehend their backs to me.

Moments later, footsteps few.

Alone and in pain, I begin to cry

I glance behind to see we're two.

As I was the one who was left behind.

You fell behind, to none I say.

The slow ones end up led astray.

St.Ann's Academy

Grade 12

The Chess Children

1

The Chess Children

Cer-ack!

Aaron yanked himself from sleep at the sound of splintering wood. He snatched at nearby branches expecting the limbs beneath him to fail. A moment passed without him plummeting to the ground. He sat up, surveying the night from his perch in the soft glow of the white tree. Only starlight prickled the horizon.

Aaron's eyes caught on a deep shadow. Darker than the midnight sky, a creature clawed over the fence. Viscous, black fluid splattered from its body. Again, it dragged its up. The wood groaned and buckled under its weight. A board snapped beneath it, flopping the thing forward.

Oil-slick eyes met his. The creature's tar form split and wrench open, a sticky maw of teeth and mud and sea brine that spilled onto the grass. Its efforts doubled. Arms erupted from its side. As one, they scrabbled against the boards, spattering it with dark flecks.

Tearing his eyes away, Aaron swung to his sister and frantically shook her awake. Lana woke with a murmur, as he slid to the ground. He darted a short distance away. She rubbed her eyes lazily, "Hmm? What? What's going on?"

Alerted by the noise, the sunken eyes glided to her. An ear-piercing howl creaked from the gape, hungry, angry. Lana snapped to full consciousness, nearly falling from the branch. The lithe form flowed over the fence. An army of arms scuttled across the ground, propelling the creature forward; it lurched towards the base of the tree.

Diontae Jaegli

St.Ann's Academy

Grade 12

The Chess Children

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Lana complied, and the woman tutted quietly. The hands relinquished her. "The frost guides you, and the white tree has stolen your sight," she paused. "You bring change and tragedy. I'm sorry."

Confusion played across Lana's face. The woman continued softly, "Children guided by Fate are destined to die."

Jager Mazurkewich
Grade 12
Desert Sand Community School
The Path of God

There once was a priest. He was a man of peace and god.

One day he came home to find that someone had killed his wife and daughter. He was devastated.

A year passes and the police find the killer. A man only twenty had committed the offense. The courts locked him up for life. The man regretted his crime with all his heart and turned to god to save him.

After being is prison for seventeen years they let him out, believing that he was a changed man and that he had chosen the path of god.

The priest heard of his release, and being a man of God, would not hurt him. Instead, he tortured him by following him everywhere the man went. Every time the man looked over his shoulder the priest was there, just standing there, haunting him. This went on for three years.

The man was going insane. the priest never stopped: every time he looked around the priest was there reminding the man of what he did.

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Jager Mazurkewich Grade 12 Desert Sand Community School The Path of God

Then the man had an idea of how to escape the vengeful priest. He remembered reading that the only way someone was guaranteed to go to hell was to die by their own hand. So he pulled out a straight razor and slit his throat.

As he lay there bleeding to death the last thing he saw was the priest pull out a razor of his own and slice his throat.

ASS - U - ME |
the one thing i absolutely hate /

Name: Donovan James McLellan School: Chase Secondary

Grade: 12

Assume: the one true enemy of mine. I hate the concept of it. It leads to stereotyping, call outs, sexism, racism, accusing... everything relating to the word "assume". If you split the word apart, you will get "Ass U Me" which means "making an ASS out of U and ME". I've done it, and I regretted it every time. I'd rather be absolutely sure of something than to use stereotyping and overanalyzing, thinking I know them purely because of that. The one thing to remember is you only know as much as your own mind does; putting yourself in the perspective of someone else will only read what you assume is true. Sure, people can lie, but they will eventually screw up and reveal that they were untruthful. I've lost friends because either I assumed them too much, or vice versa. A good friend of mine had me further realize this because of my experiences with her, concluding why I despise this concept.

Very often my trust is difficult to obtain. Play with it, and it'll break like a worn-out tool used extensively. Assumptions leads the breakage of believing in somebody's judgement; trust isn't believing in someone to do what you want. Before, I actually was probably the most assumptive person out there, thinking I know a person's actions based on the way they act... until one moment didn't add up.

As a high-school student, I usually spend time just working to pass my grades. I barely have any friends because I never trusted a lot of people. When I do hang around with people, it's usually with classmates or hanging with one weirdo of mine that I found an oddly relatable

ASS - U - ME |
the one thing i absolutely hate /

Name: Donovan James McLellan School: Chase Secondary

Grade: 12

she's dealing with the aftermath of illness. Later that day, I snuck out of my long break to get a few practices in, only to hear her act in the next room. I knew it was her because there was a window between the two of us. She sounded fine, which seemed very suspicious. Later on I met up with her again at lunch hours, and asked if she had lied to me. She said that she shouldn't have done it, but she loves acting that much. She didn't want to talk to me afterwards, which put a little guilt because I assumed she lied because she couldn't communicate earlier. Really, she can speak, but it's hard on her throat. I made up for it on Wednesday by not only admitting guilt, but I also invited her to act in front of a stage that the school set up. When I apologized, she admitted she was a little insulted... But she was happy to join me on Friday. We had a lot of fun on stage.

You see, this example I gave is why "assuming" is the #1 thing I hate. It can disguise fake ideas with logic, conclude things with no reason, and even destroy you mentally when you aren't prepared of the dangers ahead. It's true that assume means "making an ass out of you and me". Heed this story as a warning.

Plane To Catch

A fake smelling air-conditioned breeze bursts onto my face and body the moment the sliding doors open before me. It's a welcome sensation after being outside in the humid muggy heat that radiates off the black concrete outside and compared to the exhaust and smog filled stagnant air that occupies the parking lot it feels fresh and inviting.

Multicoloured suitcases packed with every possession they could possibly hold and bursting at the seams from the pressure are being being dragged all over the polished, organized airport by the most diverse group of people I have ever seen in one building. College students in sweats and scarfs with headphones in their ears looking miserable in the crowded space are juxtaposed by slick businessmen in suits with cell phones glued to their ears and their eyes constantly straying to the large ticking clock above the help desks. A family of five in matching Hawaiian shirts is pioneered by an overbearing mother herding her flock towards the X-Ray machines and occasionally shooting her compliant puppy dog husband the odd "get it together" glance if he fails to keep up while lugging the families carry on bags.

I join the swarm of people clustering towards the ticket desk like ants and get in line behind a woman who makes me uncomfortable just through looking at her. Her silky hair is pulled tight at the nape of her neck and up into a stylish chignon, huge gold hoop earrings dangle from her earlobes and a leopard print scarf is wrapped and tied around her neck. She wears a white blouse unbuttoned to reveal her obviously pushed up fake boobs and a matching leopard pencil skirt that cinches her waist and covers over her cheap plastic nylons that eventually lead

down towards her sky-high strappy heels that wobble with every motion she makes. Her overpowering vanilla rose perfume chokes me. It's so strong I can taste it and can barely resist the urge to gag.

I wait a painfully long time behind the woman while cheesy elevator style music drones in the background only occasionally interrupted by the almost robotic voice of a female flight attendant announcing flight boarding times. Time seems to stretch turning minutes into hours as I creep slowly up the ribboned lane towards the glass ticket booth manned by a insanely cheerful looking pudgy bald man whose constant fake smile and rosy cheeks are seemingly never ending. I finally reach the glass safe haven as the perfumed woman walks away and I take a my first real breath of the last 20 minutes. I tell the ticket guy my flight number and get my ticket in a matter of seconds and I'm finally on my way.

After a quick walk through customs I decide I should buy some food before boarding. I walk towards a Mexican style restaurant and the robust cheesy salty smell that flows out of it is tantalizing. An older woman with kind eyes fringed with lines and a sweet yet raspy voice hands me an enchilada once I've ordered and the first bite is mouthwateringly delicious. The spiced meat and veggies wrapped in the cheesy tortilla seem to lull me into a kind of stupor.

Before I know it a prolonged beep of the loudspeaker sounds throughout the terminal followed by the announcement that it's the last call for boarding of flight 207. That's my flight! I leap up and dash to a run dragging my heavy leather suitcase behind me. The sights and sounds of the busy airport swirl around me as I jog towards the pretty flight attendant with mocha skin and blonde corkscrew curls who quickly ushers me inside of the huge aircraft. A hum of

noise meets my ears and eyes the moment I'm inside:The sound of every passenger discussing their plans for their trip with one another, a pair of matching redhead twin brothers playfully

jostling and shoving each other laughing and squealing with the excitement; and a single mother quietly hushing her wailing baby.

I move in between the crowded rows towards my seat next to an Asian couple who quickly smile at me before resuming their rather heated argument in Cantonese. I sit down and close my eyes just listening to the sounds of the people all around me. The captain's deep rumbly voice comes on over the loudspeakers announcing our take off and the engine comes to life, it's vibration hitting me with force and echoing all throughout my body which is momentarily pinned to the back of my velvety blue seat as we take flight. Once the airplane steadies itself the suction releases and I shift to stare out the window into the silky aqua blue sky and watch the strong wings gently cut through the soft puffy clouds surrounding us. The soft vibration of the plane relaxes my muscles and I rest my head against my pillowey headrest until dark silence finally envelopes me and I drift off to sleep.

How proud the human race must be to see the world we have morphed and changed growing into a beautiful, modernized home. Out with the greens and the rivers, in with the metals and roads. Building after building goes up and up, reaching higher than the oldest and tallest trees could have ever dreamed. When the sky goes completely dark, with no light, not even the light of stars, from a great metal bird, I can see the divine view of a million city lights. Reaching for the sky they give the world around an amber glow, much like the glow from heated coal. In the day, the city is awake and always making noise. I never have to feel alone. The towering cement above stands utterly still in the strong and overbearing winds, not like the tall trees that would sway and swing, so unsteadily.

The world of skyscrapers and stop signs has become the perfect human ecosystem, providing fresh air, clean water and shelter that every family man desires and needs. It is known that most of the world cares little for the small number of forests that surround the glorious industrialized and shiny cities. It is a waste of space that environmentalists save because they say we need the trees and all the animals that call it home so that we can survive and all that nonsense. There is a small number of animals that still surround our cities in the little bits of greens we have left alone and that should be enough for the whole of the human race to live off of.

Unfortunately animals are not reproducing as fast as we are consuming, same for the trees that we are cutting down. It makes sense that we are moving faster than the world can handle, there are a lot of us. Thankfully we can still view wildlife in zoos and aquariums, so the children of the future will be able to see them. One day they might have to visit a museum, but that might even be better, easier to get pictures if the animals are not moving.

Humans are continuing to reproduce and grow at a rapid rate, leaving little space for us to move around and live our lives. Plus the more of us that are around, the more waste we are producing, which is also taking up some space. We would never let a clean and gorgeous baby sit in its own filth, so we push out all our sewage and trash into the water and land surrounding our homes. Who cares if a baby bear has to sleep in our own garbage. Humans are at the top of the food chain, so the animals and plants that we are affecting are of little concern. One of the biggest problems in developing cities today is having to wait to start building new homes simply because the environment has to be checked for ecosystems. So what if there is a big chunk of wood with leaves and it is supporting tons of birds and maybe some bugs that are also feeding a cougar or a monkey. People need homes! We need to constantly take and take from the environment! We live off of it!

Every part of the natural world is used in human lives to help create one thing or another. Paper, cars, food, tables, homes and heat. We use every substance at our disposal, and it is presumed that we will soon run out, which goes back to the whole overpopulation theory. Too many people too fast; the earth isn't getting the time to heal itself. We need more constantly so we will continue to take constantly. There are scientists all around the world helping to make the resources we need. They are artificial, so not as good as the real thing but at least we will live and remain the ultimate species. It seems the goal of the human race is to live like kings atop of the world. Some of us today are already there, living the most pampered lives and flying across the country for one meal then home for a quick movie with a side of popcorn. While some live this life of luxury others are living with the animals who are closer to the end of the food chain. There are campaigns to show we care, but the less fortunate around the world are still suffering. The same goes for saving the environment. We advertise to "go green" and save the world, yet we pollute and continue industrializing and sickening the planet. The bright side is humans are still thriving.

Our buildings are the new trees and our streets the new rivers. We are the animals that rule the earth and use every one of its resources to our advantage. We drain the resources until there are none left and blame the earth for not providing.

We should be blamed for taking when we shouldn't and having the knowledge that our planet can no longer support us but still living as if our race will survive when at this moment in time it is doomed. If someone were to go up into space and look down at the world and compare what she sees to an image from a hundred years ago, she should be ashamed. The green will be gone and grey and brown will replace it. Children will no longer colour the earth green and blue, it will be more of a brown and murky green colour. It is not the question of whether or not we will survive the earth, it is a matter of the earth surviving us.

I ask myself – What would Jesus wear?

A dress code

Or

Not

A dress code

This is the question

I scream restricting; they shout modesty

I cry uniqueness; they yell unity

Words divide free will

Like Moses' Red Sea

I ponder

What would Jesus wonder?

Wearily, rockets blast us

Bombs silencing the opposition

The battle wages

Destroy the crusader

Or not

I ponder

What would Jesus think?

Does Jesus care if I flaunt sapphire hair

Or an emerald sparkle in my nose

I ask myself – What would Jesus wear?

Or shoes revealing painted ruby toes

Elite

Categorized

Arbitrary

Uniform

Is this what He wants?

Who can undress this cloaked code?

Expose its true purpose

Or will ambition conceal motive

Still I ponder

How would Jesus feel?

No!

Censorship won't style my words

Nor alter my fashion flair

As resistance gathers, designing tactics

Forming allies, recruiting members

I ask myself

What would Jesus wear?

The war rages down our runway

The "dress" is our fate

To dare the catwalk others shun

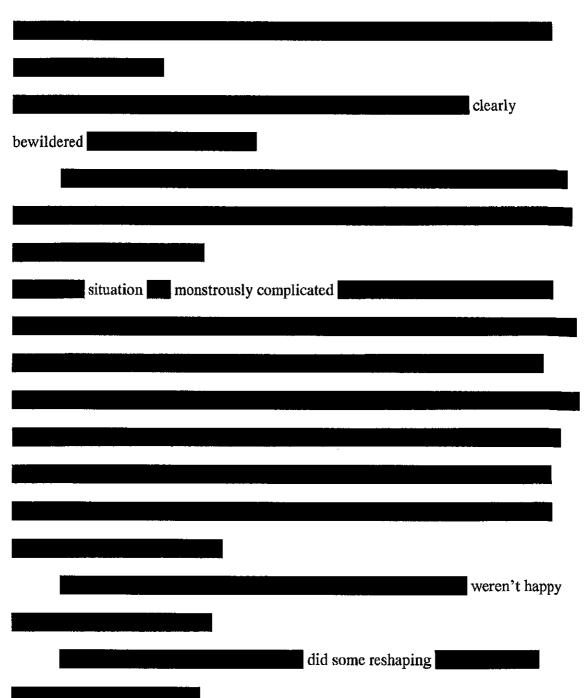
I ask myself - What would Jesus wear?

Or to stand cloaked

Lastly, I speculate

Would Jesus care?

watching someone fall out of with you, recognizing					
what's going on, struggling to stop it promising to be kinder					
vowing to change remake yourself. But the heart wants what it					
wants					
done nothing wrong					
got better more powerful					
yet no stopping that train bearing					
down There hardly ever is.					
felt the momentum shift					



	tried everything			
				there were
signals	that so	mething had cha	nged	
			emotions running	high Ta
everything	seems to hold such we	eight nggle	chasing a dream t	-

