

Emerald Medrano

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Almost Taylor Swift

I stared at the wall in front of me, silently cursing my English teacher. I looked at the empty page on my screen, "Write about something that means something to you," my English teacher had said. *What the heck means something to me?* I sighed, slinking down lower in my chair as I considered dropping out. *This is impossible.*

Realizing I won't find anything just sitting here, I stood up and headed to my room, avoiding my family on the way so they wouldn't try to talk to me. As I entered my room, I went into a frantic search, darting my eyes around looking for anything that stuck out. First, I stared down at all my jewelry, looking for any interesting stories. *Nah too cliché.*

Next, I tried my stuffed animals, but I couldn't find any good stories in my brain. After searching around looking like a crazed detective for about an hour, my eyes finally landed on my bookshelf. I walked closer, examining all my journals, hoping one of these is worthy of being my object. The second I saw it, my hand reached out to touch it. My purple notebook.

I quickly grabbed it off my bookshelf and smiled. *This could be my object.* The front cover had fallen off many months ago, and the back cardboard was wrinkly and felt almost fuzzy to the touch. The metal spiral on the side had a big part of it sticking straight up in the air, so I had to be careful to not prick my finger. Inside the spiral an old red Tony Hawk pencil was stuck, the pencil I wrote my first song with.

I ran my fingers over the yellowing pages, and I opened it in excitement, careful not to let any of the loose pages that had been sticking out fall. The first thing I saw was my first song. As I read the words, the memories came flooding back. It was about 7 o'clock in the afternoon, and I had another one of my famous ear infections. I had been sick for a few days and my brain felt like mush.

While watching a musical on TV, I suddenly got inspiration to write what my eight-year-old self thought would be the greatest song ever. I practically jumped out of my bed and ran to my bookshelf, almost tripping over myself in excitement. "This is it," my brain screamed at me. "You're going to be the new Taylor Swift!" I hastily grabbed the first notebook I saw. It was purple, and I'd never written in it before.

I had it for about a year, yet it was in perfect condition. I turned around to my shelf and grabbed the first sharpened pencil I saw, a red Tony Hawk pencil. Backtracking to my bed, I opened my notebook and started writing. It took no longer than fifteen minutes to finish the song. I looked at my song and smiled, proud of myself for what I accomplished.

Now in the present, I shook my head at my younger self. *I used to be so happy.* I turned the pages, my smile faltering as my songs got darker and darker. I read all the words I wrote, every song meaning something completely different for each part of my life. I had fifteen songs, all of them spread out through a seven-year period of writing them.

Some songs were unfinished or just thoughts. I reread them over and over as if my whole life would change just by looking at these words. I turn to the worst of all my songs, "Broken Place." This time the memories hit me like a brick wall. I couldn't make sense of just one thought, all of them mushing together into one nightmare.

I slid to the floor still clutching my notebook. I heard noises from the past echoing through my brain: yelling, crying, and hurtful words mocking me. "It wasn't your fault," I whispered to my younger self as if she could hear it. Every word on the page felt like a knife through the heart, edging me closer to a full-on panic attack. I saw the images in my head, glass shattering, a person hitting the floor, holes punched through the wall.

All at once my life started replaying in my brain, as if I was in a horror movie. I shook my head trying to get those thoughts away. My palms started sweating, tears filling up my eyes with a burning sensation as my breathing became more frantic. I closed the notebook, shutting off all those memories, I put my hands to my face, leaning against my bookshelf, taking slow breaths, and calming myself down. I looked down at the notebook, everything I ever knew was in my hands.

I flipped through it one last time, counting the teardrops, and realized this is what I wanted to write about. Even though it looks like trash and has a few bumps and bruises, it holds more about me than anyone would ever know. I slowly stood back up, picking up my notebook in the process. Putting one foot in front of the other, I walked back into the kitchen, holding my entire life in my hands.