

Sarah, you've made some strong revisions here, and I think your aims for the essay are coming through much more clearly and forcefully. I agree that personifying these battling emotions helps to make the narrative more concrete. Judging from your comments and reflections, I get the sense that you feel that the piece has come together for you! If you were going to attempt an additional revision, what do you think you would want to focus on? For me, though there are very few moments that jar or pull the reader out of the narrative, I would imagine that some distance on the piece might reveal further places where the language could be tightened or made more concrete – it will be interesting to see if this is true. Nice work.

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I wanted to chose a title that summarizes while also uses some alliteration. I'm hoping that this embodies what the story is really about so that people can refer to it while reading if they get a little lost in the emotional rhetoric.

### Fighting Fear with Faith

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"I'm going for the emotional prose rather than analytical." This is what I commented for the first paragraph in the draft, but after taking in advice from my peers and from Naomi, I concluded that 100% emotional prose isn't what this really is. I decided to rework a few things so that it's a very vivid analytical non-fiction piece. I say non-fiction because this is real for me. However, it definitely uses heavy metaphors and imagery to analyze that real life emotion.

I am lost. Lost in thought; lost in the world; lost in the idea of the chaos that surrounds each neuron being fired from my brain to the tips of my fingers as I type. Type to find some order, that is; write to feel some lucidity again because these dark images and these frantic thoughts keep looping in my frontal lobe. But the galaxy loves disorder and, in fact, craves it as though it would end should the day ever come when perfect order blankets over the land and sea. Entropy, the disorder in the natural world, is always favored to increase. This is how it has always been. This is how it will always be. So why should I go against nature? Who am I to stand against the current, fighting with every fiber of my being to keep from going under so that I can minimize my discomfort, my confusion? This defies all things that the biological and naturally occurring world strive for each second of my existence. It doesn't make sense that I should be doing the opposite. Although I find the words are forming, the picture remains unclear.

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Adding in this sentence that wasn't in the first draft was a choice I made in order to bring a little more explanation to what is about to come which is basically a narrative of my inner thoughts. I think this sentence sort of introduces that in a poetic way.

Here begins the terrorizing, nightmarish affair that robs my thoughts of all peace. And I know it's coming. The blackness rolls in and the suffocating air reaches deep into my larynx while I stare up into the beady, red eyes of Fear. I'm asking questions of things I already know the answer to. I

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I chose to personify Fear as a devilish figure in my nightmare in order to use some imagery around this character so that readers can picture a figure instead of an idea.

know I've known these unknowns before. Surely I know them now, too. [effective repetition here]

- nice]

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In general, the first paragraph is meant to introduce the images happening in my head before I begin to write. This is what I feel, this chaotic sense of uncontrollable life and that is why I write. The next paragraph details the sense of that lost control and puts Fear as the cause.

Fear is the one who's blocked out these things I know that I've known forever -- the truths. Those truths that seem like memories from a dream I'm trying to remember. I know they're there; I know they're real. The eyes staring at me seem to taunt me into thinking that I'll never grasp what is just beyond my reach. My fingers graze the edges of the breaths and words I'm searching for, but there's nothing I can say or do to make Fear release his grip. I can't see anything except for those red dots in a background of nothingness that are begging me to give in. I think for a moment that maybe I should. Just shut down. The current could just carry me safely downstream to a place, that in my subconscious, I know is owned by those beady eyes. Is that

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This series of questions and answers is my turning point. A very subtle and uneasy turning point at that. You're not really sure that it's definite, but it's what you're going with. I decide that I'm going with defying Fear.

what I want? Do I want to be where the darkness is never lifted and sorrow fills the air every minute of every day just because it would be simpler? No. I need more than that. I know that I don't have to settle. The more I think that I could stand up in that stream, all alone, and fight this beating current, the more I can feel those distant breaths and far off words at my fingertips. I think he can sense that I'm getting closer. He grabs my throat harder and it flashes before me. I see what I've forgotten and I can't let myself lose this battle again. I try to focus in on it, but that thick air filling my lungs and the grip he's got on me makes it harder to see my truths. Give up.

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These italics are meant to be Fear's words.

Just letting go would probably be easier; he's right about that. But I can't because I know something better is just beyond my reach. It's becoming more clear and the dense air is beginning to dissipate. I can't see what's dragging me down, but I imagine it is a river of chaos that I should've known would grow stronger as I tried to fight back. I'm glad I didn't back down because although Fear grows larger, somewhere in my conscience mind, those truths are playing out. Once I reach them this terrifying nightmare can be over. Breathing gets harder, but I've been

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Faith, again, is supposed to embody the fighter of Fear. The opposite entity. Light and goodness.

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It is quite obvious that this paragraph is long-winded. This is definitely meant to be this way. I wanted to portray the feeling that this dark part of the storyline might never end. Similar to how I feel sometimes when my brain throws itself into mania.

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Right here is where it all comes to light (no pun intended.) It's really the clarity moment and the outcome of writing for me. By the end of this paragraph, I acknowledge that writing has led me out of the darkness and into a more understanding and clear mind.

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Here I decided to keep the parallel structure that mirrors the opening sentences of the paper. I added the sentence following these 4 to express explicitly that writing changed these sentences from lost to found.

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This last paragraph is the summarization of what writing does for me. It expresses that I find writing to be a sort of savior in a world of chaos. This paragraph serves to separate the narrative from the evidence so that anyone with an unclear idea of what happened in my nightmare (mind) can be brought up to speed.

told everything gets worse before it gets better. Steady focus will shed the light on my seemingly unknown truths. How on Earth do I know this? It's Faith I guess. Faith believes in everything I cannot see or feel or grasp. I have Faith now; and he knows I've caught on.

Faith breaks through the ashy clouds that compose the darkness behind Fear. Those beady red eyes turn around to see the blinding light that's shining clarity through the hazy sky. I can feel him loosen his grip. The suffocating air starts to release and I take my first deep breath. Fear looks back at me and then again at the light that is now filling the vacant background of my nightmare. It's suddenly apparent that my truths accompany that light; they accompany Faith. While Fear is cowardly regressing into the small portion of blackness that's been left in a corner of this nightmare, I feel an overwhelming sense of relief. I'm encompassed by the light and it's power to make me feel joy. I almost completely forget that Fear is still present; he's hiding away in the blackness that represents my disordered mind. He just waits. There will be another opportunity for him to emerge and take my insecurities by storm and my chest will tighten and my mind will be lost.

But for now, in this light, in this beautiful and perfect light, I forget that he exists. I remember the truths that I'd lost and I know that I am safe here. Fear's dark corner disappears even more now. Undoubtedly I am found. Found in my thoughts. Found in the world. Found in the idea that the chaos that surrounds each neuron being fired from my brain to the tips of my fingers as I type is a fantastic gift of Faith. Thank God for writing -- my clarity.

This is the nightmare I live out periodically. It's dark and gloomy, but it's my mind. Faith floats inside me somewhere deep and sometimes it takes what seems like all I have to find what seems lost. I might have a hard time getting started and Fear embodies a devilish figure who

taunts me to the point that I feel like giving up in daily life. [this is the one sentence that stands out to me as feeling a bit awkward in its formulation, breaks the flow a bit – I think it may have to do with the more colloquial phrasing, esp. in the first clause...] But then a sense of clarity emerges simply from Faith that comes from only one source of joy. It's my therapeutic way of dealing with the naturally chaotic world around me. Writing is Faith; it forces Fear into his corner. The mess that was random neurons all firing at once becomes something beautiful. It shines in my eyes and it seems so irrational to have lost it before. I am not lost. Writing brings everything into perspective. It brings my mind ease; it brings my life clarity; and it reminds me that I don't have to face Fear alone. I will always have a blank page waiting for my thoughts and dreams and nightmares to run across for the sake of freeing my mind.

#### Reflective Note:

I was surprised at the feedback I got because I was really afraid of this piece at first. I hadn't ever written anything like this for others to read. I do some poetry type writing in my free time, but never show anybody else. So for me to write so expressively and open and have others not only read it, but critique it was really intimidating for me. However, my peers and Naomi reassured me that this route was a good one and so I stuck to it.

I made some changes about the details primarily in the beginning and end to clarify sort of what the reader was about to dive in to. I wanted to make sure they could understand that this was something going on inside my head so it needed a bit of an intro. That's something I

received from my peers. They liked what I was saying and understood it once I explained it, but it wasn't apparent in the essay what my true purpose was in writing this way.

I also changed the nightmare into a fight between Fear and Faith as personified characters. Before, Fear was being pushed down by an idea, but I liked the imagery more of a fight with Faith and the alliteration followed nicely. Some feedback I got was that it was sort of messy, which was understandable for the stream of conscious approach, but I wanted to make it a bit more concrete. I think the fight scene makes this possible.

Another piece of feedback I got was that I had some good ideas about what writing does for me, but it didn't really come out very strongly. I realized after reading through it countless times, putting it away, and going to bed, that writing is Faith for me. All I needed to do was spell that out at the end, and the purpose of writing in my life would be instantly clear and concise. I'm pretty happy with how this paper developed. It started as too steam of conscious. Now it's more analytical as well as creative. Putting the creative and analytical together was best.