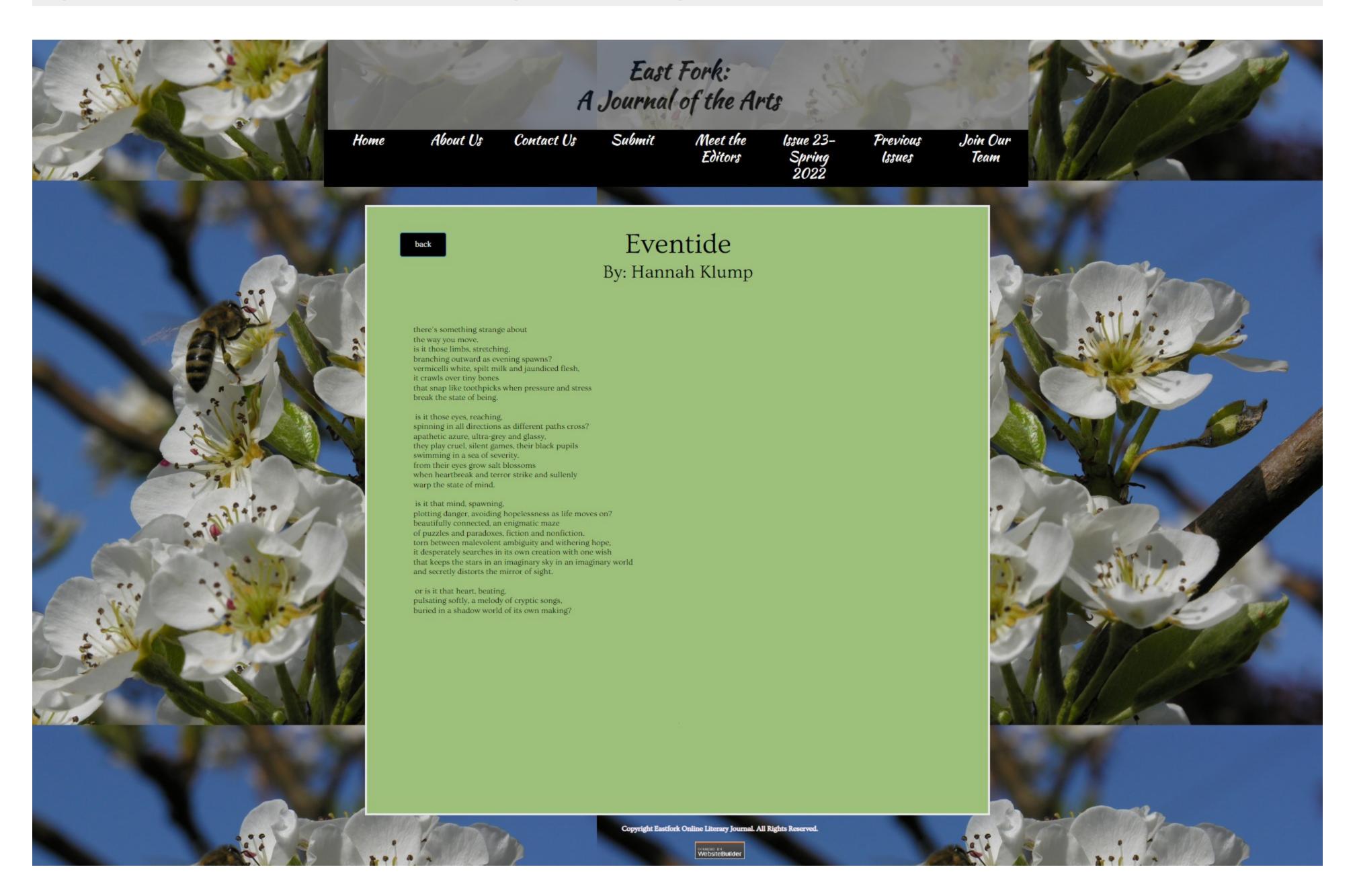


|  | S. A.   | East Fork:<br>A Journal of the Arts |                                  |                             |                    | 311.50           |  |    |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|------------------|--|----|
| Home   | About Us Contact Us   | Submit                              | Meet the<br>Editors              | Issue 23-<br>Spring<br>2022 | Previous<br>Issues | Join Our<br>Team |  |    |
|  |   |                                     | W                                | 2022                        | 4                  | V B TO B OF      | Thu lity   |    |
|  |   | Truc                                | 00000                            | 4.                          |                    |                  | 1 - 3  |    |
|  | back  |                                     | Poems                            |                             |                    | ~                |  |    |
|  |   | by: britt                           | any Allen                        |                             |                    |                  |  |    |
|  | If Weakness Were a Waitress   |                                     |                                  |                             |                    |                  | Same?  |    |
|  | If Weakness were a waitress,<br>One tear would slowly creep   |                                     |                                  |                             |                    |                  |  |    |
|  | It's way out of her colorless eye<br>And drag down her bony cheek<br>Leaving a stain on her unclean skin  |                                     |                                  |                             |                    |                  |  |    |
|  | And she'd look in her grimy, cracked mirror<br>And see her brittle, lifeless, straw-colored hair  | r                                   |                                  |                             |                    |                  | and the same of th |    |
|  | Fall out in small clumps As she slowly ran her brush through it.  |                                     |                                  |                             |                    |                  |  |    |
|  | If Weakness were a waitress,  She would be sliding one of her few, stained so  Over her aching, over-worked feet  | ocks                                |                                  |                             |                    |                  |  |    |
|  | And skinny ankles<br>Before heading to work   |                                     |                                  |                             |                    |                  |  |    |
|  | Just to try to earn enough money<br>To put at least a little food on the table<br>For her four-year-old daughter,   |                                     |                                  |                             |                    |                  |  |    |
|  | Sick with cystic fibrosis.  If Weakness were a waitress,  |                                     |                                  |                             |                    |                  |  | 23 |
|  | She would work through her lunch break<br>Just for the extra hours  |                                     |                                  |                             |                    |                  |  |    |
|  | And instead she'd snack on biscuit crumbs<br>Left on people's plates.<br>And on the bus ride home,  |                                     |                                  |                             |                    |                  |  |    |
|  | She would silently weep when she looked at h<br>Once pretty and always manicured<br>Now cracked, chipped and as dry as the desert   |                                     |                                  |                             |                    |                  |  |    |
| 231-127  | From hard labor and warm dishwater  |                                     |                                  |                             |                    | 7                |  |    |
|  | If Weakness were a waitress,<br>Her hand would shake from exhaustion<br>As she unlocked the door she had to keep lock   | ked                                 |                                  |                             |                    |                  |  |    |
|  | Because of the neighborhood she lived in.<br>She would draw herself a bath<br>To try and relax  |                                     |                                  |                             |                    |                  | 72/11  |    |
|  | Before her mom brought her daughter home.  If Weakness were a waitress,   |                                     |                                  |                             |                    |                  | The Oil  |    |
|  | She'd silently cry as she laid her daughter in b<br>And slowly make her way to her own  | oed                                 |                                  |                             |                    |                  | 11-3   |    |
|  | Where she'd reach under her pillow<br>And pull out a solid gold watch her grandpa g<br>She'd hold it while she slept-   | gave her.                           |                                  |                             |                    | (5)              | 18 16 0  |    |
| The state of the s | And dream of being Strong.  |                                     |                                  |                             |                    |                  | 1000   |    |
|  | Because She's Brooklyne   |                                     |                                  |                             |                    |                  |  |    |
|  | Because her electric blue eyes sparkle when sl<br>And she growls when she's mad<br>And giggles when you squeeze her stomach   |                                     |                                  |                             |                    | 0                | MILL   |    |
|  | And cries when you tell her her hair's turning Because she loves the Land Before Time movie   |                                     |                                  |                             |                    |                  |  |    |
|  | And memorizes every word.  And wears tutus every chance she gets  And stick people are the only things she can d  |                                     |                                  |                             |                    |                  |  |    |
|  | Because instead of saying of course she says, " And thinks nobody and anybody is the same And responds to questions with a shrug and, " And her favorite excuse is, "he did it second!" | "sure,"                             |                                  |                             |                    |                  |  |    |
|  | And her favorite excuse is, "he did it second!"  Because she's brilliant.   |                                     |                                  |                             |                    |                  | f beautiful  |    |
|  | Because she's beautiful.  |                                     |                                  |                             |                    |                  |  |    |
|  | Because she's my little sister.   |                                     |                                  |                             |                    |                  |  |    |
|  | Because she's my best friend.  Because she's Brooklyne.   |                                     |                                  |                             |                    |                  |  |    |
|  |   |                                     |                                  |                             |                    |                  |  |    |
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|  |   |                                     | WebsiteBuilder                   |                             |                    | 315              |  |    |
|  |   |                                     |                                  |                             |                    |                  |  |    |

Page 4
Issue 4 Contest Winners Third Place Hannah Klump
http://www.eastfork.us/issue-4-contest-winners-third-place-hannah-klump.html





http://www.eastfork.us/issue-4-contest-winners-third-place-amanda-adams.html East Fork: A Journal of the Arts About Us Submit Meet the Contact Us Issue 23-Previous Editors Issues Letters to Memphis By: Amanda Adams The warm sun beat down on my face as the pavement stung my bare feet. I walked along the boulevard glancing at the ocean line. The beaches were packed with teenagers running around getting an early start on their summer. There was only two more weeks of school for the year and then I was a senior. It was a scary thought, for the past year had sped by. It reminded me of Alie and Charlie in Memphis, what they would be doing to prepare for the summer. Where was their next big adventure? I was stuck here in Santa Rosa with no hope of going back home to visit my-a beach ball came flying from my right to hit me in the forehead before I could finish my thought. I looked up to see Evan Stiles running in my direction. I picked up the ball and tossed it back before he could reach me. Evan caught it with a confusing look and started to say something to me. I stuck my headphones back in my ear and continued on my walk home, not turning back. I walked into my house tracking my steps with sand. It was quiet unlike most days when my parents would leave us kids alone. When Taylor and Ronnie were around, there would always be chaos. All their friends spent every waking moment at our house. They had claimed it as their home too, which my Mom didn't mind, but our privacy was little to none. Now since they had graduated, it was just me and Kacie I pulled open the refrigerator door to be welcomed with a burst of cold air. I took out a Dr. Pepper can and walked into our TV Room. I plopped down on the couch, tapped on my can, and pulled out my notebook. I flipped on the TV as Kacie came running in. "Nattie! Nattie!" her little voice screamed. "Come play with me!" "Not right now Kacie." I responded as I opened my notebook. "But Nattie, you never play with me no more." "I said no Kacie. Go play with Gunther." Kacie dropped her head in defeat as she squeezed Gunther's squeaky toy. "Come on Gunther," she said exasperated, "Do you wanna play with me?" I surfed through the channels in a daze as Kacie half-heartedly tossed Gunther's toy into the air. Channel after channel passed by as I stopped on a random show. The actors moved and interacted but the entertainment was just a background noise. I dazed at the TV willing myself to pick up my pen. I didn't want to do this but it's something I had to do. I've decided that for everyday I go without you is a day I painfully endure. I live lifelessly, never truly smiling or laughing. Yeah, I fake it but everything seems to remind me of you. It's a happy place; I really think that you'd like it here. We always talked about coming here one summer and making real sandcastles. Now I live here. Every summer, every birthday, every holiday I'm here and you're there. I can't live being without you so I'm writing you letters. I don't know if you will ever read them but I need to tell you about my life now. Today there were kids on the beach. They are all living and I'm here, barely breathing. My heart is still heavy. Kacie likes it here. She runs in the sand constantly, and Gunther loves the beach. Alie hasn't responded back to my messages. I don't know if she has visited you or me away from there, but even more so I won't ever forgive myself for losing you. I closed my notebook and shoved it under the couch. I had no intention of anyone ever reading the letters. So no one would find it there and Gunther was too big to fit under the couch anyways. Speaking of Gunther, he and Kacie seemed to have disappeared. "Kacie," I yelled through the house, "Kacie where are you?" Silence. I searched through the house but it turned out that I was alone. I began to wander down the street, thinking Kacie had gone down to the beach. I was almost there when I ran right into Evan, literally. "Hey!" He said, "I was trying to find--" "Not now." I said, cutting him off. "I have to find my sister and I really don't want to talk to you right now." "Wow, okay. I get it you're tense about your sister but there's no reason for you to--" "Stop. Okay? I'm not tense. I'm just not in the mood." I cut him off and tried to navigate around him but then he stepped in front of me. "I'm Evan." He tried. \*Hi Evan, I appreciate, uh, whatever you're doing here but I don't need help. I don't need friends. I have plenty of those back home. I don't want a boyfriend. I just need to find my sister, okay? So I'll see you around." I walked around him and this time he didn't move. His feet were still planted firmly on the ground when he shouted, "She's at Fresno." I turned stopped in my tracks and tilted my head sideways. No making eye contact but showing that I was listening. "The little blonde hair girl with the big Golden Retriever?" he continued on, "That's what I was trying to tell you earlier. But you don't seem to like me for whatever reason. I don't know what I've done to you but your sister should still be there so good luck." I turned around to protest. To tell him I was sorry and thank you or maybe I would've just looked at him. Maybe I wouldn't want to say anything because I might like him. He doesn't seem to understand that I didn't want to open up. But I wouldn't know what I would've done because when I turned around to face him, he was gone. I walked down to Fresno Beach and sure enough, Kacie and Gunther were sitting on the sand watching the families play. Her head was resting on Gunther's back and his toy lay at her feet. I pulled her up into my arms and she buried her face in my shoulders, gripping me tightly as I walked her home. Summer began but the routine stayed the same. Every day I would write one more letter. Some days would be long letters and some would be even longer but I always wrote a letter. I stayed in the house most of the time. I didn't have any desire to go out to the beach. I only went out when Kacie would run away and I tried avoiding others at all costs. But nearly every time I went out, Evan would find me. He would always stop me and try to get me to play along in a Volleyball game or go surfing and each time I would decline. I got nicer with my responses though. Evan really wasn't that bad but I still couldn't let myself be happy here. After what I had done to screw our lives up, I didn't deserve to be anything but dazed. One hot, sticky day in August, the air conditioner broke. Our house felt like it was at least a hundred degrees if not more. I sat by the fan and even sat in a cold bathtub but no matter what I did, the house got hotter. I decided that my only option was the beach. I packed a lunch for Kacie and me, got Gunther on his leash and headed down our street. Fresno was the closest beach we had but it was always packed and full of families so I decided to take Kacie down to Walton. It was the furthest from town but it was quieter. I wouldn't have to worry about Kacie getting lost in a sea of people and there was a playground nearby The sun beat down on the sand making it unbearable to touch. I laid out my towel while Kacie ran to the ocean and splashed around with Gunther. The beach was quiet today. There were a group of kids kicking around a soccer ball towards the pie (one of which I believed to be Evan) and a family off to the side near some picnic tables. I knew Evan would come down eventually to try out some new line to get me to play along but I dismissed the thought and concentrated on the family. There were two little girls making a sandcastle. They carefully carried buckets of water to their moms who were patiently sitting in the sand. Bucket by bucket, the Moms and daughters built up their sandcastle. They laughed and smiled as the little girls proudly dug a moat. I imagined myself as those little girls. Only it was a sandbox in Memphis on the patio of an apartment complex. And instead of getting water from an ocean, it was water from the hose. And it wasn't my Mom, it was my Aunt Lilly. We sat on opposite corners, digging our feet into the cold wet sand. We had sandwiches and Dr. Pepper every day. Lilly taught me how to make PB& J without having soggy bread and that tapping on your pop can will make the fuzz go away. And every day after working hard that on whatever wing of our fairytale castle we had completed we watched the sun set. Every week we would finish a new castle, different design but same routine. Me and Lilly, turkey and cheese, castle and moat. Always. But I grew up and instead of me and Aunt Lilly; it was me and Alie. Instead of turkey and cheese, it was burger and fries. And instead of castle and moat, it was mall and movies. I had so quickly given up on those moments that I would give anything to have back. Now I had lost Alie as my best friend. I had lost Memphis. And worst of all, I had lost my Aunt Lilly, my fairytale It had happened last summer. I was driving home with my Aunt Lilly from Alie's Sweet Sixteen. Lilly had picked me up after the party but I begged her to let me drive. I was getting my license in week or two and wanted to show her how good of a driver I was. We were going down Smith Avenue, two blocks away from Lilly's apartment, and we were singing to "Thriller" at the top of our lungs. It was around 8 O'clock and starting to get dark. I was reaching down to turn on my lights as I crossed through the intersection. I hadn't realized that the stop light had turned red and I began to drive right through it. I looked up in time to see the big red truck coming straight at her. Not at me, her. It was honking its horn and its lights shown through my passenger window right into my eyes. The next thing I knew I was laying in a hospital bed. Beeping and needles were everywhere and my mom sat next to me. She looked tired. Almost like she should be the one in the hospital bed, but then I thought of Lilly. I started to stir and my mom opened her eyes. Tears began to roll down her face like buckets of water rolling down a window. She hugged me so tight I thought I would burst. I kept asking "Where's Lilly?" But all my Mom did was hug me tighter. I started to cry, I was scared. I wanted to go home, go back to when everything was okay. But all we did, was cry. Nurses came in and started messing with me since I was awake. They made my Mom leave. When the nurses left she came back with my Dad and sisters, Ronnie and Taylor. They both hugged me and cried with me too. Then my Mom brought in Kacie. She ran to me and snuggled her little body against mine in the hospital bed. I grabbed her tightly and she fell asleep in my arms. That's when I finally got my My Mom recapped the accident, trying not to cry. I had run a red light and a driver had hit my car. The car was totaled. I had been in the hospital for two weeks. I had missed my sixteenth birthday. I broke my arm in two places and a few ribs. Other than that, I was okay. The other driver got out without a scratch and his truck was barely damaged at all. But that still didn't answer my question. "Where's Aunt Lilly?" I asked, more afraid than I had ever been in my life. "Natalie," My mom paused, "the side of your car that the truck hit was the passenger side." "Where's Aunt Lilly?" "It caused a lot of damage to your car. The paramedics couldn't open the door when they arrived. It was completely smashed in." "Where is Aunt Lilly?" "Honey, Aunt Lilly, she's in a coma, Natalie." They told me that they weren't positive when she would wake up. I knew enough to realize that they meant she may never wake up. Ever since that moment, my world was at its end. I didn't take my driver's test. I didn't drive in any car at all. I didn't smile anymore. I didn't laugh. Everything about me was different. I wasn't me anymore. That's why Alie stopped talking to me. She couldn't handle how I had changed. She was becoming more social and I was becoming more secluded. I was in my own coma of sorts. I didn't ever want myself to feel that kind of hurt again so I stopped living my life too. Lately I had begun to feel happy again. I began looking forward to running into Evan on my days when I had to find Kacie. I knew that if my Aunt Lilly were here right now she would yell at me for acting so stupid. I knew that there was a chance that would never happen. I knew that I may never get to see my Aunt Lilly smile again or hear her soothing voice. And I knew it was all my fault. That's what hurt me most was that I was responsible for what happened but I knew that she wouldn't blame for anything in the world. "Nattie! Nattie! I heard her scream as Gunther jumped on my lap sending sand all over my towel and notebook. \*What Kacie?\* I answered while I searched for her. I got worried though when I couldn't see her. Gunther's loud barking got me quickly to my feet. I whipped my head around. "Kacie!" I yelled, "Kacie, where are you?" Gunther took off running towards the playground and I began to run after her when I heard my name. "Natalie! Hey wait up. Is everything okay?" Evan panted from running all the way over. "No it's not I can't find my sister again but this time she needs me." \*Do you want my help?" He asked as he kept up pace with me as I searched the playground. "Yes, actually that'd be-" I stopped mid-sentence and when I saw Kacie lying on the ground holding her left arm under the monkey-bars. I ran to her side with "I'll go get my car and we can take her to the Emergency Room." Evan offered. "No!" I responded loudly. "Why? She needs to get help, like now!" I looked at my little sister. Tears filled up in her eyes and her bottom lip quivered. She looked so small as she lay helplessly in my lap. \*Nattie, my arm hurts real bad.\* She whispered "I know baby I know. Nattie is going to make it stop, okay?" "I'm not gonna cry though Nattie." "It's okay to cry though Kace." \*But I wanna be strong like you. You don't ever cry so I'm not either.\* Tears filled my eyes and slowly began to roll down my cheeks. I carefully picked up my fragile sister. "Go get the car." I told Evan. I carried Kacie to Evan's car and sat her gently on my lap as we drove down the road to the hospital. I rubbed her forehead and she pet Gunther with her good hand. Kacie still didn't cry. She was much stronger than I was. I had let my fears take me over, and I had let myself feel sorry for myself for too long. I was going to change that starting with this moment. After arriving back home, Kacie asked me to tuck her into bed. She had a pink and yellow cast on her arm which I had proudly been "I love you Kacie, more than you know." I said kissing her forehead. "I love you too Nattie." She smiled sweetly and then drifted off into her dreamland. I went downstairs and looked under the couch to pullout my notebook. It was nowhere to be found. That's when I realized that I had left it at the beach. I started to panic but then I realized that I didn't need my notebook. It was all part of my moving on. So I left my notebook on the beach and pulled out a piece of paper. At the top I wrote, \*Dear Aunt Lilly, I know that you will never be able to read this letter but I hope that you will hear it. I am sorry that I have been so blind lately. I have shut out everyone that ever mattered to me. I know you are disappointed in me but I hope that you can forgive me. I will never be full again but I can try my best to make the best of what I have and live my life like there is no tomorrow. You always told me that tomorrow was no guarantee so to make the most of today. Well I have lived for too long in the past and now I am going to live for today. I love you so much and I always will. I will always and forever keep you in my heart. This is my last letter to you but you already knew that didn't you. I love you, I sealed this letter in an envelope and carefully addressed it to Memphis Community Hospital. I walked it out to the mailbox at the end of my street. But instead of going home, I turned around and headed to Fresno. Evan was there, just like I had thought he would. He was alone this time though, sitting on a bench watching the sun set over the water. I approached quietly and took my seat next to him. We sat there in a peaceful silence for what seemed like forever. Then he turned to me. "I'm sorry for pushing you to go in the car today but I knew that if Kacie didn't get to the hospital-" "Thank you." I said, cutting him off. "You're welcome." He smiled at me, and this time I didn't look away. This time, I smiled back. We looked away towards the water watching the waves roll in. All of the sudden, a beach ball hit me in the head. "Last one to the water drives home." He yelled. I turned towards Evan and he was already running away from me laughing. He glanced back as I picked up the beach ball. "It is so on." I yelled to him. So I got up and ran towards the water; throwing the beach ball, laughing, and smiling all the way there. School had been in session for about two months when I pulled into my driveway. "Are you sure you don't want me there?" Evan asked me over the phone. "No thanks, I need to do this myself." I responded. \*Okay, well I'll pick you up at seven?" "I'll be ready." I hung up the phone and walked into my front door. It was the same door I had walked into a few days ago when I saw my parents sitting on the couch crying. I knew it had happened. It was hard but we were okay. We all knew it was long overdue. Evan was helping me through it and I was grateful to have him by my side. I walked into the kitchen and pulled out a Dr. Pepper can. I tapped on the top as I went upstairs to get dressed. She would've loved to be here tonight, she always loved attention. But I knew even as I walked into the Funeral Home, that she was already there.

