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Growing Faster Than a Sunflower

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Growing Faster Than a Sunflower



By Mike Foley
12/10/20

I would like to dedicate this piece to my close friends and family who have not only helped me get to the place I am, but have shaped me to be the man I am. This piece goes out to my family; Dan, Tracy, Coleman, Callahan, and Sean.

Give Me Your Keys, I'm the Valet

A hot day, no clouds in sight,
You couldn't draw a better sky
I get to work around nine.
First day on the job, a lot to learn.
Give me your keys, as now it's my turn.

Driving the car over to the lot.
I love this job, it doesn't even require a thought.
Wrap the ticket around and place it on the board.
Give us back the claim ticket and the car will be yours!

What a great day, working hard for my payday.
A few weeks go by and what a summer it's been.
Pulling up fancy cars all day long, always with a grin.

Taking the SUV over to get a treat,
Cumberland farms are open all week.
Get some gas, make sure it's 93.
Fill it up with some diesel, that was stupid by me.

I walk back to work, as my boss yells loud.
"Start walking, and get back to work now."
Weeks go by, time doesn't stop.
The world didn't stop, but my time did.

The summer comes to an end,
Now working harder than ever.
The job that doesn't require a thought,
Now more than ever, I need to do a lot.

The Lexus' don't stop moving,
Rides up and down the town.
Now I work this job with a smile, instead of a frown.
My boss and I are friends now, he is the king
Of Chatham Bars Inn, this man deserves a crown.

Shattered, Pieced Back Together

A solid player.
Works hard on the ice, empties the tank every game.
Only cares about winning, not the fame.

A young freshman playing on JV.
How could the varsity coaches not see?
The grit, the work, the care. Everything he believed.

Sophomore year comes around,
Working harder than ever.
The coaches sit and say, “Wow he got a lot better”.

Finally my shot to prove,
Everything I have continued to do.

Junior year comes around,
It was a disappointment.
A loss in the first round, broke our confidence.

Senior year back for revenge,
Competing day by day to avenge.
Scoring goals and making passes,
The team was determined.

A loss in the conference finals left us broken.
It was the end of the road for eleven of us,
Broken and shattered, but we didn't make a fuss.
We kept our heads up, and pieced back the glass.
For all the fun in hockey, comes from making a good pass.

My Name

Foley or Folan?

We will never know why,
My grandfather has tried
But no explanation; he says Ireland was different in 1870.

*Does my name take your tongue's
otherwise unclaimed space?*

Once Tom Folan,
But died Tom Foley.

Something about coming to America,
Was a name change necessary?
Now as a blessing,
A 'new' last name that doesn't seem so new.

Ireland to Virginia, Folan to Foley.
2 letters might change the last name,
But the vast history behind sits still.
For you can change a name, but not a past.

All that work to get to the promised land,
Back two years later.
For the civil rights movement,
Moved my great grandfather a lot.

Born is his son, in the USA,
A dual citizen he's on his way.
His last name Foley never changed,
For he knew Folan was not his name.

So take both those names,
For that unclaimed space needs something to fill.
I have lots to learn, 150 years is a long time.
But I sure will do my best to try.

*(Does my name take your tongue's
otherwise unclaimed space?)* line taken from Dzvinia Orlowsky's "Swallow" from her book *Bad Harvest*

The Field Behind the School

The 4 soccer fields behind the school. Nestled away just far enough out of sight from the road. Tucked in the treeline tightly. Fresh every morning the new lines would come in. Fresh, clean and crisp white paint. As a young kid, they stretch for eternity; nowadays the end doesn't feel very far. They were a fun place to grow up next to. Fun to imagine and explore, as I would try to find the paths. I would always end up at the sand dunes, whether I meant to or not. The mounds were so tall you could see a quarter of a mile down the train tracks from the top of one. Everywhere is always scattered with little pellets, some red, blue, green, all sorts of colors. It was where the kids had airsoft battles. You have to make sure you don't go at the wrong time, you might get smothered with pellets if the kids have already claimed it. I would have rather explored. In the spring it's the best place to be. A vibrant blue skied 80 degree day was always spent at "the dunes". By the end of running around it was so hot out. We would walk right under a set of pines into my neighbors secret path. Hundreds of trees would hang from the sky above you. It was a quick walk, but everytime you seem to discover something new. Sometimes we would go over to the river, play hockey, or just stick our heads in the freezer for a minute because it felt just a little bit better. I took days like that for granted. You never realize how much fun being a kid was, until you grow up.

Not Always as it Seems

The time had come, after eleven and a half years of school I was finally going to pick my college. The process is extremely tedious and frustrating, but the reward is worth all of the suffering. For the last three weeks I have been uploading all of my information into my universal resume for my five different schools. I had decided upon University of North Carolina, Clemson, College of Charleston, University of Tennessee, and my favorite, University of Michigan.

For a kid growing up just outside of Detroit, University of Michigan was clearly my dream school since I was a kid. I really liked Michigan because my father graduated in the class of 89'. My father was an extremely smart, yet devoted man. Anytime he had a problem, he would fix it himself and that is what I admire most about him. He is most notably known for being the starting shooting guard from 86'-89'. My dad has the highest 3 point shooting percentage in Michigan basketball history. Unfortunately he did not pass his basketball skills on to me. Carrying on with his legacy would be the greatest honor of my life so far, and I know it would make him so proud of me.

At this point, we are just around the corner from Christmas. Usually, with applying early decision, students are expected to hear back just a few weeks before Christmas, sometimes even just a few days before. The house was quiet because everyone knew that the decision from Michigan could be coming any day now. Every passing day I wake up trying to figure out how to get my mind off of this decision. It consumes me over this winter break, and I constantly wake up hoping for good news. Honestly, at this point I would take any news just to be able to

make it stop. Never in my life have I had so much riding on one decision. A decision that is completely out of my hands now. All I can do is wait.

My parents try to distract me by having family dinner, followed by the classic movie *It's a Wonderful Life*. My parents make us watch this movie as a family every year. Since it is so old, it is only available in black and white. As I layed down on the couch and watched this movie for the 13th time I began to realize something. I realized from this movie that sometimes the things we think are so important, in the end, don't actually matter. I realized that if Michigan didn't want me, that's ok. It's ok because they are not the only school out there. The moral that I learned from watching that old black and white film with my family, is that the things that seem so important, in the end, don't seem very important. Wherever I go I will get a good education, and my family will still be proud of me. Life is much bigger than just the University of Michigan.

A few days later I received a letter in the mail. It was not a very big package, and in the back of my mind I knew what was coming. I did not get into Michigan. I was distraught for a moment, but I picked my head up and continued moving forward. The following month later I received a few letters from the other schools I had applied to. To my surprise, I had gotten a scholarship to Tennessee, Clemson, and North Carolina. While Michigan would not let me pay to go there, I still had 3 unbelievable schools that actually want to pay ME to go there. Sometimes, in the end, the things we think are so important end up not being so important in the end. Next fall, I have decided to attend the University of North Carolina. Go Tar Heels!

1 Month Later

Ring, ring, ring.

“Dad! Hey are you watching the game?”

“Yeah, did you see Marcus Paige hit that 3? Not seeing anyone on Michigan doing that today.”

“Well maybe they need you to come back for one more game!”

Michigan Wolverines: 58 North Carolina Tar Heels: 74

I think I made the right decision.

Dreams and Nightmares

It was the first day of 5th grade, at my brand new middle school West Lake Elementary. I was the new kid so my nerves were high. I didn't want to take the bus on the first day so my mom dropped me off at the front doors. I received my schedule from the vice principal and was sent off with a pat on the back and “Good Luck!” I began walking down the hallway vigorously searching for Art 101 in room 215. As I walk down the halls I began seeing some of my new classmates; some of them must be 6th and 7th graders I tell myself. The older kids are always scarier if I have learned anything.

Nonetheless I find room 215 and promptly sit in the middle of the classroom. *Lets just sit down and try not to draw attention to yourself* I say to myself. In an instant, Ms. Dunbar begins class by saying,

“All right folks we have a new student, let's give a warm welcome to Tyler!”

Uh oh. This is worst case scenario. I stand up and after a warm awkward silence I squeak out the words, *Uh hi everyone I'm Tyler.* As I looked up I laid eyes on a beautiful girl wearing a purple button down. I froze and silently walked back to my seat.

After a boring lesson about the Mona Lisa, the girl wearing the purple button down approached me.

“Hi, I noticed you were new here, my name is Monica. Welcome to West Lake!”

“Oh hi! Thank you so much, it looks like a really fun place!” I said.

“I have to get to my next class, but if you need anything let me know!”

This was not the start I was expecting at all, I thought I would be the new kid coming into school and kids would pick on me for that, I guess this place is different I encourage myself.

Then I met Trevor in second period gym. He was one of those kids, words just would not stop coming out of his mouth. They weren't nice words either, he was usually calling someone either stupid or butthead. *Lets stay away from him.*

“This new kid looks like such a dweeb” Trevor says to his friends.

“Let's welcome him to West Lake.”

Trevor constantly felt the need to show people that he was better than them. Sometimes he would trip kids in the hallway, knock people books out of their hands, and even shove kids in lockers. Tyler wondered why he did some of these things, and was sure there was a bigger reason. But as the West Lake school quote says, “Treat everyone the way you would like to be treated,” so Tyler was obviously going to give Trevor another chance. Just as he thought that a green missile of a dodgeball hit Tyler in the side of his face. *Well if that's how he wants to get treated, fine by me.*

“Oh sorry about that, Skylar!” He obnoxiously says.

“Ow! And my name is Tyler not Skylar you jerk” I yell back.

I was so embarrassed, I was a new kid at a new school and I am already a loser. With all my emotions rattling me to my core I pick up the green dodgeball. My teacher is in the utility

closet looking for some cones so I take my chance. Trevor is bent over laughing still. Screw this school I don't want to go here anyways. I wind up and like an MLB player and throw the green dodgeball as fast as I possibly can at his head. BEEP, BEEP, BEEP.

“Honey, time for your first day of school you don't want to be late!”

Wow. Lets hope I don't meet any Trevors today.

Foley is a 3rd year student at Providence College trying to earn his degree as an English major. Foley is an avid hockey player, who competed in high school hockey, but now just plays for fun. He is originally from Medfield, MA but spends the majority of his time now between Providence and Cape Cod. He has 3 other siblings, one of which is a sophomore at Providence College. He likes reading a lot, but enjoys being the storyteller a little bit more.



“Mike’s words jump off of the paper. They pull at the reader’s imagination and curiosity, making them yearn for more. He does a phenomenal job of grabbing the audiences’ attention and never relinquishes throughout any of his writing’s. Mike’s style of prose speaks directly to the heart and soul of the reader. Every piece is extremely gripping and enticing.”

-Zach Kapstein

“Mike Foley’s _____ encapsulates many wonderful works created from his life experiences. His creativity and raw emotion shines through each piece with flying colors. I admire the talent and dedication put into each poem and story that caters to the audience’s feelings and allows them to relate in their own ways.”

-Maeve Conway