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Beautifully Scarred: The Journey through Recovery and Loving Thy Self

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“Beautifully Scarred: The Journey through Recovery and Loving Thy Self”

Abstract: A personal anthology in the form of a creative nonfiction story that follows the journey I took as a young girl to finding myself after a lifetime of feeling alone and misunderstood by my family and my peers.

The Early Years...

Thanksgiving 1996, I was five years old my family and I went to my Uncle Mike's house in Oakdale, Ca. That was my first memory of feeling unwanted by my own family. My brothers, cousins and I were playing in the living room when I broke a lamp that was on the corner table by the old black leather Lazy-Boy recliner. My uncle Pat and Uncle Mike ran into the room to make sure none of us were hurt, when uncle Pat saw what I had done he lost it. I vividly remember him standing at 6 feet 3 inches tall, over me as I was curled up into a ball crying my green eyes out. I was only five years old I was just a little girl, being called “idiot” by my forty something year old Uncle. My brothers and cousins were in shock and they didn't know what to do, so they ran outside to grab my parents. My dad rushed into the room and grabbed my Uncle Pat (his older brother) by his red flannel collar and threw him onto the glass coffee table, it shattered into a million pieces. They started screaming at one another; my mother, aunts and nana were all in tears. My Uncle Mike had to pull them apart, we left shortly after and it would another five years before we would see them again.

My Uncle Pat always terrified me and he always hated me, he hated me since the day I was born. His son Eric and I shared the same birthday even though Eric was ten years older than I was, My Uncle Pat and my Aunt Debbie always wanted a daughter but they couldn't conceive after their youngest boy Travis was born. In the eyes of my Uncle Pat and Aunt Debbie this is

somehow my fault so they decided to hate an innocent little girl. They decided to exclude me from their lives and act as if I never existed. Every holiday and every birthday my brothers got extravagant gifts from them, while I couldn't even get a call or a card from them. When I was ten years old we went to my great aunts funeral, this was the first time our families would see each other since that Thanksgiving. My Uncle Pat, Aunt Debbie and their boys were there, I was so happy to see my cousins Eric and Travis. I ran up to my Uncle Pat and Aunt Debbie with my parents, my Uncle Pat held out his hand and introduced himself. My heart dropped and I ran off crying, once again I was ignored and felt hated by my own blood. My Uncle Pat lite the match that ignited the flame of hate for myself, that was only the beginning of my long path of destruction and self-hatred I would soon encounter as the years continued on.

Hell on Earth...

When I was thirteen years old I started my freshman year of high school at Oak Grove in San Jose, Ca. I was not only a freshman I was also a transfer student from a different district and I only knew four other students on campus. While that can be difficult enough, I was also the minority at Oak Grove with the majority of the student population African-American and Mexican-American students. While that would not have been a problem in my former school district, but in East Side Union High School District the students were incredibly prejudice against the way I looked and carried myself. Thus began my four years of utter hell on earth, constant bullying, sexual harassment and physical threats I would endure for the remainder of my time at Oak Grove High School. I did my best to keep my head down and stay out of people's way, focused on my schoolwork and kept my eye on graduation day. Oh graduation day was bliss, I was so happy to be done with high school and never see these awful people ever

again! I thought that after I graduated things would look up for me, my life would fall into place and I would be happy for once in my life. Boy oh boy was I wrong on so many levels.

When everything changed...

When I was nineteen years old I was a full time college student at my local community college getting A's and B's, I had a great job in retail and I was just offered a second job as a barista at Starbucks. The morning I was supposed to begin training as a barista I was at a store meeting at the clothing store I had worked at. My phone was on silent for the entire two-hour meeting and it was in my locker in the back room. The store phone rang which was weird because the store didn't open for another three hours, my manager answered it and called my name. It was my mom. She told me to gather my things and when I got in the car to call her as soon as I possibly could. Something was wrong I could feel it, but she wouldn't tell me at the store. So I gathered my things, clocked out and walked to my car, as I was walking to my car I turned on my phone and the missed calls, voicemails and text messages from my mother and my best friend started pouring in.

I got in the car and called my mom as I drove out of the Valley Fair Mall parking lot. She sounded different like she had been crying, she told me something terrible had happened and I had to call my best friend Amelia right away. Something was terribly wrong and even though I didn't know what it was I knew it wasn't going to be good. I was a few lights passed the mall now when Amelia finally answered her phone. She had been crying too I could tell. She asked if I had talked to my mom yet and if she had no me what was happening. I told her what I knew. She asked what I was doing and I told her I was driving home from work. Her heart dropped and she told me to pull over as soon as I could before she would tell me anything. I pulled into the

Safeway parking lot and turned off the car. First thing she said to me as soon as she knew I was parked changed my life forever...

My best friend Christina, Amelia's older sister the one solid thing in my life, the person I could always turn to when I was going through anything I couldn't handle myself, had passed away. My heart had immediately dropped to the floor and the tears began to rush down my rosy red cheeks. Asking Amelia a million questions; how, when, why and tell me this isn't true? Coroner thinks it was a drug overdose, no that can't be true? As soon as I got off the phone with Amelia I called my new job and told them I needed some time to process. Once I got home I dropped to my knees and cried until I couldn't cry anymore. I packed a bag and ran outside and hopped into my parent's car and off to the BART station in Fremont I went. I was on my way to their small town Hickman that is just outside of Turlock. I had to catch BART to Dublin, which takes about two hours and then I had to wait for Amelia and her friend Courtney to arrive to drive me the extra hour in a half to Hickman to be with the family. I expected to be there for three days, yet once I was there with my second family I knew I couldn't leave so soon. I spent almost two weeks in Hickman after Christina passed away.

After a week of being in Hickman helping plan the service and making arrangements on bringing her back home to Hickman from Los Angeles where she had been living for the past three years. After about eight days we finally found out the truth about her sudden passing, a rare form of bronchitis, called *Acute Bronchitis*. Something so rare and something so deadly if let untreated can be deadly, and for Christina it was.

A few weeks after her funeral it really started to sink in that she was gone and she wasn't coming back, I was no longer going to be able to randomly drive to her place in Los Angeles to see her because I missed her face, no more hours spent on the phone talking about life and all the

amazing memories we shared together as kids. I wrote this poem about her, each time I read it I heal, I just try to think of the good times.

If you were still here...

The looks I got at your funeral from your younger sisters, it was almost as if they hated me because we were always so close. The secret yet not so secret crush you had on my brother. How you carved your names in your bedroom headboard with a heart around them when you were eight years-old. All the family camping trips we went on together playing in the lake, dancing and telling ghost stories like La Llorona around the bon fire. The day you guys moved to Hickman a long two in a half hour drive away from San Jose. We all cried that day, remember when your sister Ashley ran away to my house 2 blocks away and kicked and screamed because she didn't want to leave me behind. Hating me for visiting you so much, for seeing you just three months before you left this world and you left me. I was the only one who came to visit you the five years you were living in Los Angeles, I was the last one in the family, in our friends back home to see you before you passed away. What I wouldn't give to go back to that last night I saw your face, that last night you got me so high I felt like I was floating. One more toke, one more beer or just one more I love you best friend, the sister I never had. I wish you could tell them that you loved them too, that you were proud of them, even though you never expressed that to them like you did to me. I wish you could slap Amelia and Ashley across their face and tell them to grow up, tell them we are all family. I wish you could explain to them that life is short; we must cherish the time we have. Just as I cherished my quality time I spent with you as we got older, the quality time that I still hold onto today because those are the last memories I have of you.

I was slowly losing control of my life and my emotions. I sunk into a deep depression and I couldn't focus on anything in my daily life. I made the decision to drop out of community college to gain some sanity back and figure my life out.

The release turned addiction...

I grew so depressed that life itself began to become too much for me to handle so I only saw one release... Taking a sharp metal blade to my wrists was my only option I saw at this point in time. At that point in my life I hadn't wanted to die really, I just wanted to have some sort of release and control over my life. Things quickly grew out of control from there. I always thought I could control my cutting but with every new cut, my mind was set on the ones that would follow. Every chance I had, every opportunity I found myself alone and away from others I spent it with a blade to my flesh. I started off doing it only a few times a week, that led to every

day that turned into multiple times a day and whenever I had the chance. It quickly turned from a quick release to a deadly addiction. I was so naïve to think that I could control such an addiction, that I could somehow contain it and somehow I wouldn't go to far. If only I had knew how strong my addiction would become, how it would affect those around me...

About four months after my best friend Christina died and after I began my addiction with self-harm I had two close calls that almost ended my life under my belt and I was getting close to the third one, when something was soon to change my future forever...

In June of 2011 I was up stairs in my bedroom of my house where I lived with my parents, eldest brother, sister-in-law, two nephews and my cousin who slept on our sofa. I had had a bad day at work and the guy I had been dating found out about my new deadly addiction. He freaked out and ended it in a matter of seconds. With him breaking it off and the pain I still felt from the loss of my best friend Christina, I needed a big release. I said hi to my family and headed up stairs to 'go to bed,' my family had no idea at this point what I had been doing to myself. As I sat in my queen sized bed I reached into my five-foot high dresser that stood to the left of my bed and grabbed my four-inch hunting knife from the top drawer. As I placed it to my wrists I wasn't sure what was going to happen next, I wanted to die and I didn't want to feel this pain anymore but yet I wanted to live. I made a few deep cuts to both wrists and my brain began to clear, yet it wasn't enough. So I took the blade to my flesh one last time, this time I was at the crease of my arm carving an "X" over my veins making it difficult to sew up if need be. My mom rushed into my room and saw what I had done...

She came to the edge of my queen sized bed, very gently covered my fresh cuts with a rag and asked me how long I have been doing this and why I couldn't tell her when I started. She started asking me what seemed like a million questions, but one to this day has still remained

clear. "Do you want to die, and leave behind the people who love and care for you the most?" Immediately I cried and begged her to get me help. She hugged me tight and told me everything would be okay, then she said we needed to have a family meeting so she followed me downstairs. As I sat in our living room, arms all bandaged up trying to fight back the tears that seemed to continuously flow from my eyes. My family slowly began trickling into the room, first my brother and sister in law and then my cousin, they all sat around me. My sister in law, Angee looked at my arms and began to cry, she told me how much she loved me and that she has already lost one family member to suicide she refused to lose another. My eldest brother and my cousin were starring at me in shock, they couldn't believe what they were seeing and hearing. My brother Jason began to cry and if you knew my big brother the Marine, you would be just as shocked as I was to watch him sit in front of me with tears rushing down his cheeks.

He grabbed me by my hands and told me how amazing I was, how much I had yet to learn and see in this world and that he couldn't imagine life without me. He told me to think of my nephews, the ones that were 4 and 6, the ones that looked up to me and loved me unconditionally. My cousin Derek was a wreck, he isn't the sharing his feelings type of guy, he had a rough past and he is covered head to toe in tattoos. He looked at me with this blank stare, he told me I needed to make a change and that he would do whatever he could to help. He told me how much he loved me and that he didn't see me as his little cousin, he saw me as his little sister. None of them wanted me to end my life, they wanted me to be strong and overcome my issues. My mom called my two other brothers and told them to come by in the morning, that we needed to all talk. My middle brother Joey couldn't make it until the weekend because he was three hours away at his military base, so telling him would have to wait until then.

I was just starting to feel a little bit better and I had finally stopped crying for a moment until my dad walked in. He looked at all of us then he looked at me and immediately lost control of his emotions, which was no surprise to any of us. He knew what I was doing and he didn't like it so he lashed out and said some very hurtful things. He couldn't understand why anyone would want to take their own life, especially his own daughter. My father is and always has been old school when it comes to taking care of oneself. He never went to the doctors and he didn't believe in mental illness either, he was totally against me getting professional help. The next morning he was gone before I woke up, I was beyond relieved that I didn't have to hear how disappointed in me he was this early in the morning. I went downstairs and poured myself a cup of coffee and sat in the backyard to get some fresh air. My nephews Nate and King came running outside with the biggest smiles on their face as they handed me cards that said I was the best auntie in the world. I cried but this time they were tears of joy as I looked at their adorable faces. They always brought me joy.

My other brother Chris and his pregnant fiancé Tanecia came into the backyard followed by my mom, they sat down and I took a deep breathe in. I couldn't say it anymore so I decided to just show them. I lifted up my sleeves and rolled up my sweats then showed them what I had been doing to myself since February. My brother's fiancé Tanecia began to cry and my brother Chris just looked at me in shock. He didn't know how to react, all he said was: "*why did you do this? What pushed you to cut so deep last night?*" How was I suppose to explain to him that someone he had known since he was in elementary school had broken my heart into a million pieces, had called me crazy and said he hoped I would die? I couldn't tell him that so I just said I couldn't take this pain any longer, I wanted to be with Christina... That weekend my middle brother Joey came up from base and when I told him, he had the least to say yet that's okay

because he is a man of very few words and always had been. All he said was he loved me and that I needed to get help.

Three days a week...Therapy...

The Monday after my family found out, I went to my first two appointments. I started with Dr. Jacobson my Kaiser appointed therapist I would be seeing once a week for as long as it takes to get my mind right and back on track. Then I met with Dr. Chen my psychiatrist to be officially diagnosed. Dr. Chen had no doubt in his mind on what I was suffering from. He said as monotone as he could, *"You have clinical depression, social anxiety and a slight case of PTSD."* He put me on Zoloft a medication geared towards depression and anxiety patients.

Hearing the news that I was clinically depressed really hit home for me, my mom was in the office with me and she couldn't believe it. Seeing her reaction to what he was saying really hurt me and I instantly broke out in tears. Dr. Chen asked us if we had a family history of depression, to my knowledge we didn't. My mom put her head down and began to fidget as she looked up at me and replied, *"my mother was very depressed when I was in a teen, she was placed in a mental institution for a few months. So you are telling me my mothers illness was passed down to my daughter?"* Dr. Chen tried to explain what this meant, *"clinical depression is a hereditary mental illness, but with the advancements and the resources we have in medicine today your daughter can get better with hard work and dedication. She needs to want to get better if she is going to survive this disease but I think she can do it as long as she has the necessary support from her family and friends."*

Those first few weeks on Zoloft I felt like a zombie, and I was sick to my stomach, I lost about 15 pounds within those first two weeks on that medication. My cutting had decreased a bunch but my doctor did warn me that, *"while on this medication you may have the urge to*

cause yourself harm, which may need to death.” That was terrifying for my mother and I to hear, and kind of a contradiction when you think about it... Take this medication to help control your emotions and your urges, but be careful because you may want to kill yourself and cause harm to yourself in the beginning.

Once I got into the swing of therapy and I was on my medication for a month or so I finally started to feel somewhat normal, I hadn't felt that way in a very long time. I dedicated my whole life to getting better and to living a life that my family and myself could be proud of. I went to see my therapist Dr. Jacobson once a week for sixteen months. With each visit I found another answer to how my life got so off track, how I had let things get so out of control. Most importantly Dr. Jacobson led me to the realization that I was the only one who had the ability to affect my life, I was the only one who could turn my life around and be free. My determination was fueled by my love for my nieces and nephews; I wanted them to understand that even though life tears you down sometimes you can always overcome life's difficulties with hard work and dedication. I never wanted them to doubt that they couldn't do something or have them live in a world where their Auntie Quel wasn't there anymore.

Scars

Locked herself in her room each night,
she carved away. Flashbacks of all the
bad and words of hate, trapped in her head.
Searching for an escape, she found it one night
at the edge of a sharp metal blade.
Crimson drops leave her veins, a moment of
peace clears her mind, at least for a moment in time.
She found a way to rid her of all the pain,
pain from years of self hate.

Years of losing herself and the faces of
ones that were taken too soon, she couldn't cope.
The loss of family and her best friend,
all too much for her to take. So she just carved away.

She reached the brink of death three times to be precise.
She realized she couldn't live life this way,
she must find a new escape. So she began to write.
Locked herself in her room each night.
Taking that sharp metal pen to the paper,
finally finding an escape to truly rid her of all the pain.

Writing, my new release...

When I started group therapy for my addiction I wasn't sure if I would stick with it, I didn't want to sit in a room with a bunch of other self-harm addict's, crying about how life has done us so wrong and has brought up to the brink of death. To my surprise I looked forward to those meetings each and every week. Not only did the meetings help me realize that I wasn't the only one with problems like mine, they shined light onto another type of release... Writing. They encouraged us to write in journals, poems, stories, or just things about our day whenever we felt the need to harm ourselves when things started to become uncontrollable.

Writing became my new addiction and to my surprise I was really good at it. Once my love for writing began, my life began once more. This wasn't the first time I used writing to escape my harsh reality, I use to write poetry when I was a teen but I lost my love for it when I began losing those close to me. I finally found a new direction in life and I was determined to pursue an English degree at my community college and then I would transfer to a 4-year university to further my education. That is what led me to California State University Monterey Bay and where my new journey began. I would be going to get my Bachelor's in Human Communication degree and get my concentration in Creative Writing at Social Action.

The writing I have done thus far at CSUMB is not just another assignment for me, another grade on a piece of paper. It is a continuous therapy session. I have learned that writing is a powerful thing, my professors and my fellow classmates have taught me that and they

continue to teach me just that each and everyday. I never thought I would relate to people on such a level as I have here on this campus. My professor's and my classmates push me each and every day to become a better writer and a better person. They push me to write about the things in my life that I have yet to deal with, the things that have hurt me along the way. A lot of my writings have to do with those in my life that I love who are no longer here.

Is it a Bikers Paradise?

It's been 4 years Big John, how the hell you been? Life isn't the same without you, my dad has some what changed. He talks about you like you are still here today, reminiscing on all the drugs, wild parties, and all the chicks you two banged.

A part of him died when you rode off on your Harley to Bikers Paradise in the sky. I don't remember how to live on without you. For as long as I can remember you have always been right by my side.

When you were locked up, you never missed a 'happy birthday Pookie,' or the always amusing, 'your dad said your raising hell again kid, now that's my girl. Raising hell and taking names just like your Big Uncle John.'

I wish I could sit and talk with you, share a beer or two and reminisce on how grown up I am, or how much I look like my mother and act just like my old man. Ask if you are still proud of your little Pookie, the daughter you always wanted and wished you could've replace your son Joey with.

Big John what's it like up there in the sky? Can you see us and can you hear our cries, can you hear me break down each time I look at a picture of you? Is Christina up there, can you recognize her now? Do you guys kick back and laugh at all the shit I do today? Are you watching over me each and every single day?

Tell me what it's like up there in Bikers Paradise....

I find myself in class sometimes breaking down crying and not because I am upset, but because of the continuous support I get from those around me. I found that the key to recovery for me has been the emotional support of those around me, a constant reminder that I am never alone. I always felt alone growing up, I was never good enough and I always felt I would never

amount to anything. I have realized that no matter what you go through in life, you are the key to the light at the end of the tunnel.

CSUMB has been one of the best decisions I have made since I chose to live instead of continuing my deadly addiction with the blade four years ago.

Synthesis Essay

A middle class white female from a blue-collar, middle class family.

The daughter of a former rock and roll band member who had a serious drug and alcohol problem up until I was five years-old. The daughter of a woman with a heart of gold and a fiery spirit. I am a former addict, with the addiction that could have ended my life by a single cut too deep. A single cut in the wrong spot. I am the youngest of four and the only girl in our family. I am an aunt. They are my heart and my soul. All seven of them hold a piece of me. My capstone creative nonfiction project is an illustration of the journey I took from a young girl to the woman I am now and my how I made the decision that CSUMB was the right place for me to continue my education.

For as long as I can remember I have been different. In the eyes of my parents, brothers, aunts, uncles and even friends. I was always too much like a boy since I had three older brothers I always tried to be just like them. I was never good enough in school, my grades were mediocre and I was always in and out of trouble. School came easy to my three older brothers and not so easy for me. When I was in fourth grade I was placed in a special education class because I wasn't doing well in regular paced classes, I brain didn't work the way it was suppose to. I had to work twice as hard then the other kids in school just to get passing grades. My sophomore year of high school I finally started to get better in school and my grades were finally improving. Writing was my coping method of choice for when I needed to run away from my problems at

home and at school. When I needed to escape my harsh reality at home, especially when my dad's drinking got out of hand. Days like that I learned to avoid him at all costs and writing was my out. Locking myself in my room at night and staying up for hours creating stories, logging journals and attempting poetry for the first time. Writing was my escape when my days in school were more like a slow death of torture, the whispers in the halls and the looks of disgust directed right towards me each and everyday. I never really fit in when I was in middle school or high school. When I did find a group of people I got along with, they always ended up hurting me in one way or another. Once I graduated high school I was determined to become a better person for my family and for myself. My first semester at community went fantastic until spring semester came around and my life took a turn for the worst.

My best friend we were like sisters passed away of a rare type of bronchitis at the age of 23 years-old. My life started to spiral out of control, I started doing things I had never thought I would do. I started drinking everyday to get through the pain. I smoked weed from the time I woke up to the time I went to bed. I dropped out of school and I even quit my job, I couldn't function anymore. As if all those things weren't taking me down a bad path, I took it one step further. I began hurting myself, cutting myself to put it bluntly. It started with just a few cuts to my wrists each night, then it quickly grew to multiple times a day. Self harm (cutting) was my way of controlling my pain and controlling my life. Nobody in my family and none of my friends knew what I was doing, they didn't even notice things had changed in me until my mom walked in on me cutting myself. One night I was in my room, I had a four-inch hunting knife to my wrists and I was determined to end it that night. That night was my third attempt at ending it all, all my pain and suffering. Once she found out everyone found out, then I began going to get help for my problems. I was at the psychiatrist's office three days a week for one on one and groups

therapy meetings. My therapist diagnosed me with Clinical Depression, severe anxiety and a slight case of PTSD. I think the reason I never went through with ending my life was I always had this thought in the back of my mind that one day things would get better. That one day things would go my way and these scars would be a distant memory.

Things have changed. My life has gotten better. I have gotten better. I have been clean of cutting for almost three years now, I no longer need to take my medications, I haven't taken them in two years. I have learned to deal with my emotions and my thoughts in a much healthier and safer way. That is how I got where I am today, it all started with a story I wrote during my dark days in community college after my best friend Christina passed away. It is a story that I have continued to work on for the past four years. That story brought me to change my major and become a better student and person. That story pointed me in the right direction to attend CSUMB and pursue a Bachelors Degree in Human Communications with a concentration in Creative Writing and Social Action. I think the most beautiful and touching thing I have learned in my life, that I have learned as I develop each day as a writer is this, "no one's story is finished, no story truly has one ending, and my story is still being written.

Reflective Essay

I was in community college in Saratoga, California at West Valley College for just about six years. I changed my major three times before I settled with my degree in English. While I was at West Valley College for six years I always felt as if I didn't connect to the work I was doing and that the majority of the faculty just didn't care enough about their students enough. I wasn't really fully engaged in what I was learning or what the teachers were saying honestly, I would just stare at

the clock and wait until I could leave. The only classes I really cared about or paid attention too was introduction to creative writing and poetry 101. My love for writing was fueled not only by my journey to recovery but also by the attention my two professors' gave me, and how they also aided in my recovery. This love for writing stories and poetry led me to California State University Monterey Bay.

When I transferred to California State University Monterey Bay in fall of 2015 I was enrolled as an AA-T in English student. The AA-T program was something new in the California State University system. The AA-T (Transfer) program/degree is like a contract between California Community Colleges and CSU's. It basically guaranteed me to get my Bachelor's in a two-year period. With this program my MLO requirements were a bit different then my fellow classmates. The main difference was I do not have an MLO 7, I was to take SBS 350 instead of picking from the list of MLO 7's. With the approach of graduation in May 2017 I have found my time here at California State University Monterey Bay is sadly coming to a close. I have learned so much since I transferred here in fall of 2015 and embarked on my new journey.

That first month was definitely rough to get use to because I had been commuting and I just wasn't use to it. If it wasn't for the dedication and the attention my professors' here at California State University Monterey Bay gave me and how they showed me they cared I wouldn't have come this far. I wouldn't be

this close to getting my Bachelors degree and graduating in just two years that is only four semesters. My professors' have been one of my main support systems here on campus and they have always supported my work and the honesty that I put into the work that I do.

My wide variety of MLO required classes have ranged from two research and theory intensive (RTI) courses those have prepared me for my capstone project because I was well equipped and prepared to do a project that required a lot of attention and thought before I was able to complete it. In my research and theory intensive classes I have been enrolled, in the past semester here in Monterey Bay I have learned that you must be organized and have a detailed plan in order to succeed. I definitely needed to be organized and have a set plan for this senior capstone project. With all of what I needed to include in this paper and how I wanted to organize it as well. Our senior Capstone class is probably one of the most important courses I have been enrolled in since I began my college career back in fall of 2009.

In particular my intro to creative writing and my woman's poetry writing workshop courses here at California State University Monterey Bay are two very important MLO's and extremely important for my concentration in Creative Writing and Social Action. Since my senior capstone project was the creative project option. I used my skill and the techniques I learned in my intro to creative

writing class I took in spring of 2016 with Diana Garcia and applied that to this project. Professor Garcia's creative writing class was one of my favorite courses thus far while I have been in attendance at California State University Monterey Bay. Professor Diana Garcia taught me how to perfect a personal narrative, which is what my senior capstone is, a personal narrative of my life through learning how to live and be happy since I have been going through the recovery process. Professor Diana Garcia also introduced me to poetry and the various form of it. Although while in her class I avoided writing poetry at all costs, and it wasn't until my poetry class I had to drive and determination to actually write poetry.

Professor Melissa Sipin, my writing poetry workshop professor is the woman who made my love for creative writing expand to a love for writing poetry as well. Which definitely came in handy for this senior capstone creative project, I added various poems throughout my piece that I believed to relate to various sections of my life and what I was going through at that moment in time. I walked into that class on that first day of instruction and I was fully ready to just glide through it and I was determined my feelings about poetry wouldn't change, yet I am very glad that they did. I went into that course dreading poetry, but she taught me that poetry could be another escape for me. Professor Sipin taught me that I could write poetry and that I was actually really good at it. That my poetry could not only help me move on, but it could also help others get through difficult times

and connects with my writings. Writing has always been my way of releasing and coping with various things. Professor Melissa Sipin is the one who really made this senior capstone creative project come to life, aiding me and pushing me to put more heart and soul into my poems.

Although I didn't need to use these skills I have learned in cooperative argumentation or interracial communications for this specific project, they have still prepared me for my future. They have prepared me not only in my future career but with any future obstacle I may come into contact with. I didn't need to use my skills or argument preparation nor my skills I learned in interracial communication either. I believe if I was

With all of the assignments, all of the papers and all of the all nighter's I have gone through this far and especially on this course; at California State University Monterey Bay I believe each and everyone of them has prepared me for a very successful future, a successful life after I walk that stage and receive my bachelor's degree. I would have never expected that I would have learned so much while only in the short amount of time I have attended California State University Monterey Bay. Words can not describe how thankful I am to have the opportunity to study and continue my education on this campus, the professors here on this campus are extraordinary, and they really truly do exceed the expectations I had originally had in my head on what it was going to be like. This senior capstone

project was extremely healing for me, I was able to fully come to terms and realize how far I have come in the past four years. Recovery is a never ending process, but it is a process that is constantly ongoing.