

mama

OLIVIA M.

TEEN SHORT STORY WRITING CONTEST: FIRST PLACE – GRADE 10 TO 12

Notes from the author

This is a true story of suffering and survival, of finding the light at the end of the tunnel. This is a true story about how a mother, *mama*, is the light at the end of that tunnel, and a lamp in the darkness. This is *my* true story, and my message to my younger self. A message of hope. A message of survival. A message from the future.

The story is written with creative spacing, to show how thoughts slow down, speed up and stop when the world starts to cave in. Every sentence formatted to land on the right side of the page and found in italics, are my personal thoughts. All that is formatted to land on the left side of the page is an action or an event. I hope you enjoy, but more than that,

i

hope you

feel

everything.

mama, i'm so scared

The last thing I remember is turning the lights off. The last time I was scared of the dark was when I was
8. But the darkness

ate

me

up,

so all I could do was fall backwards, into all of the laundry I was meant to fold.

mama always tells me to fold the laundry. (And I
never do)

I remember fumbling for the lamp's light switch. I remember the lamp fighting away the darkness.
Because

I couldn't

I couldn't s e e

And I couldn't *mama, i can't do it* Breathe

And then the darkness ate up my voice

m

a

m

a

mama, i'm so scared

And when you find me, I'm on the floor

Crying.

Shaking.

Gaspings.

Sweating.

I'm Sinking.

it's not pretty

You turn on the lights. And you hold me. And you tell me to breathe.

mama I'm trying.

in. hold.

out.

hold. in.

hold.

out.

hold. in.

hold.

out.

hold. in.

hold.

out.

hold on

mama

Just wait for me, because I'm going to be ok. It's all going to be ok. First you help me up. You need to hook your arm under mine. I'm shaking too much.

That's ok.

It's ok.

I'm ok.

ok

We walk out of the room and I leave the lights on behind us. The electricity bill will be ok.

Every light switch.

I leave my sweaty prints on every light switch. If this

was a crime scene, the police would have caught me already.

mama and I go up the stairs. Each step is a goddamn mountain. mama and I climbed twenty two mountains together. And when I get to the top

i

am victory.

i

am

almost

ok.

The darkness used to really like me

It would eat me up every week

On the floor

Wet cheeks

Shaking hands

Closed eyes

But

Then

the darkness started to

l

e

t

m

e

g o

But i'm still so scared

but in the process of being let go, by what has been holding onto me for so long I think

I was finally found

By myself

And you

And mama

but the darkness never really

leaves It still eats me up

And leaves me on the floor,
just almost breathing. just
almost seeing. just almost
speaking.

But then mama finds me

and mama always finds me

It's been three months

In the light

And It feels like a marathon of

Therapy and pills and doctors

and mama on my side

The darkness hasn't gotten me yet.

mama still holds my hand when it's too much.

mama still counts my breaths. mama

still climbs my mountains. and i think i

might be ok

thank you mama