The two elderly ladies sitting by the large opaque table glanced indifferently at the frail figure. The stack of unmarked papers symbolized what was the young boy's worst nightmare. The names became numbers; the numbers became blurred memories. For once in his life, the young boy wished to be recognized for more than being a winsome child.

The girl who was standing next to him cracked a smile sarcastically. This did not bother the young boy, though, for he was not paying attention to her. What she was implying was his soon to be fate. It was not as though he used dynamite. He had merely used firecrackers to blow the fingers off his hands. He could not understand the lack of humor that he had hoped to achieve.

The young boy was escorted to a room with no windows by a faceless being. The room was very small and very dark. The only source of illumination was a burning candle that was emitting a sickly orange-white light. He noticed that hanging on the wall to the left of him was an ancient looking clock. The hands of the clock were moving in a counter-clockwise motion. At first he thought he had imagined it, but after touching the hands, he believed that somehow an imbalance in reality was created.

Suddenly a deep-booming voice snarled at the young boy over the intercom. "Young man tell us how you derived the notion that you are a writer!" The young boy stood motionless. The voice on the intercom repeated itself but the boy remained silent. "We're sure you are good at other things, why don't you stick to something else?", the voice chanted. The boy could no longer hold in his emotions. "The only person I write for is myself. You can't erase my intent from the paper just because you think it's inappropriate." The voice on the intercom replied, "Don't challenge authority because we know what's best for you and for the others. It would be a shame for you to fail now after going so far."

Very humbly the boy spoke, "I guess I see your point. I will make the change in the
paper.” The hands on the clock started to spin frantically. Everything in the room grew very
dim.

He was laying on his bed. A cold sweat lingering across his forehead. Slowly, he
lifted himself up. He took a long shower and then dressed himself in his favorite outfit. As
he came upon the front doors of the school, he looked long and hard at the paper in his
hands. He would make the change. He would use dynamite.

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From her earliest memories, the girl had been told of a distant treasure, and, as soon
as she was able, she set out to find it. The road which she traveled had not been an easy one,
it was long and treacherous. She had been misled and deceived several times, and had taken
many confusing and frightening paths. She was often lost. At times, she traveled in dark-
ness, for even the sun had ceased to guide her. Other times, she found herself traveling
backwards or in circles, trapped in an everlengthening downward spiral. She had come close
to death, and had almost welcomed it as an escape from her seemingly perpetual journey.
Yet, in the midst of such despair, she clung to her childhood stories, believing somehow in
their reality.

After some time, she found herself standing alone before a great door, seemingly
identical to many others she had seen. As it opened to her, she stepped inside and was
instantly slipped into a strange and beautiful room. Before her was the most brilliantly
shining light that she had ever seen. Here her travels ended. This now was what she had
been seeking. She moved slowly forward, reaching cautiously to touch this treasure which
she had traveled so far to find. In the time that she held it, she was overcome by a perfect
understanding, and she wept with joy. she was truly happy.

Suddenly, brutally, her treasure was wrenched away by the unfeeling hands of
circumstance. Her joy was pulled far from her, and was placed high above her head where
she could not reach. Once more she wept, for she knew that separation was inevitable.

As the world now rushes madly around her room, she sits silently alone, gazing
upward at her hidden treasure, waiting for its return. Although she cannot reach it, she is
I woke up this morning and was surprised by the giant trees looming over me. As I watched, the branches dipped slowly downward until they touched my strangely inert body. As I was lifted, I felt the interweaving branches forming a splinter carpet that both covered and went through me. The iron steel wood was harder to break than even the hardest of
souls. My eyes reflected the sunlight until I finally cried; the leaves were so green, so beautiful that I died there.

Remembering the clouds that pushed themselves into the very small space inside my mind; feeling the great rush of rock-hard cold-water as it solidly crushed every last vestige of hope around my heart; watching the flames leaping slowly onto my hands; calling out to the night as it filled every last scar on my soul; everything had become clear.

It's an arduous journey that we begin as small children or perhaps as fools. A faint scent in passing hangs on the air to mark a trail or lead to a path, but I've lost my footing and somehow stumble. The first steps are always the most tentative. Forgive me for any misconceptions.

When the giant noisy insects finally cover the sun with the darkest of curtains, I wonder at the strange buzzing that somehow lingers inside my ears. Strange twisted corridors; I am pushed down a dripping stairway into an antechamber of silhouetted memories. Although it is darker than my dreams, a small firefly shows me the way to a place where I can rest.

As I slump against the unyielding rock, my thoughts merge with my emotions, and once more I am left behind. I grope my clumsy way along the wall until I feel something smooth and solid. As I smash myself through the many-colored glass, I find among the glistening shards below the very things which I most needed to find. I clutch the jagged pieces closely to myself and slowly rock myself into a transcendent sleep.