All the Things the Mohawk Stole [1]

February 25, 2015 Flash Nonfiction [2]

Flash Nonfiction by Tracy Roberson-Woolard

This Is Where It Begins



Today he got a Mohawk.

No dollar amount can cover what it cost. When he sat in the chair, he was my twelve-year-old baby. By the time the last clip of hair fluttered to the floor, he was a teenager.

It's funny—not so much—how a cut close on the sides snatched the roundness from his face, leaving a slenderness that showed me the man he will become. I swear I can see the slight beginnings of a mustache. Was this hiding somehow beneath the curly kinks of the small Afro he'd been sporting uncut, mostly unkempt, for the last six weeks? He's taller,

(function(i,s,o,g,r,a,m){i['GoogleAnalyticsObject']=r;i[r]=i[r]||function(){ (i[r].q=i[r].q||[]).push(arguments)},i[r].l=1*new Date();a=s.createElement(o), m=s.getElementsByTagName(o)[0];a.async=1;a.src=g;m.parentNode.insertBefore(a,m) })(window,document,'script','https://www.google-analytics.com/analytics.js','ga'); ga('create', 'UA-18260536-1', 'auto'); ga('send', 'pageview');

too, it seems, and his eyes appear browner against his naturally golden brown skin. He has that walk, too. You know, the one all the lanky, basketball-playing, confident boys have on and off the court.

I stand at the bottom of the stairs, watching him come down.

“How does it look?" he asks.

The stairway seems narrower now.

“You look like a teenager, not my baby,” I say, knowing my time to fuss over and coddle the last of my three children is racing to an end. I can hear the clock ticking.

I don’t like this. We are too alike. Everything’s debatable. We have to get our points across using colorful and often misunderstood words and tone. Both of us know everything there is to know about absolutely all things. Who will I spar with?

He is my duplicate, a carbon copy, my clone. Once he told me we were one. He was eight. Now, I’m the person who takes things: cell phone, game consoles, privileges.

“Come sit with me in the recliner and watch TV like we use to do.” I hear the pleading in my tone.

“Ah, no,” he says.

This is where it begins—our lives changing. Pretty soon, the nighttime requests to come up and tuck him in will be over. Trying to get a kiss in public will be met with rolled eyes. It’s already starting. The constant texting with friends, the silent retreat to his bedroom to play video games and blast loud music behind a closed door, the stiff *hurry up and get this over with* body language when I put my arms around him, squeeze real tight, and plant a kiss on his check. Our conversations are different.

“If I’d had my own cell phone, I could’ve called you to let you know I was locked out of the house instead of having to go to the neighbor’s to use the phone. You wouldn’t have to worry about where I am ‘cause I could call you.” I get the raised *you know what I mean* eyebrow as he methodically justifies needing a phone. He gets the phone, but I’m not the one he calls.

“If you leave me at home, you won’t have to hear me complain,” he says seriously. This should be obvious to me. When I return home, he wants to know if I brought food, as if I were his Girl Friday.

When I want more than he is willing to give, I feel him slipping farther and farther away from me toward manhood. I wonder where this will land me.

“Did I give him a good cut?" my husband asks.

“Yeah.”

I try to wet my throat, which is a desert now. I imagine myself putting my hands over his mouth to push his words backward between his lips. My insides are screaming.

Do you know what you’ve done?

Art Information

- Image of young boy [3] © Soulfull; Creative Commons license.

(function(i,s,o,g,r,a,m){i['GoogleAnalyticsObject']=r;i[r]=i[r]||function(){ (i[r].q=i[r].q||[]).push(arguments)},i[r].l=1*new Date();a=s.createElement(o), m=s.getElementsByTagName(o)[0];a.async=1;a.src=g;m.parentNode.insertBefore(a,m) })(window,document,'script','https://www.google-analytics.com/analytics.js','ga'); ga('create', 'UA-18260536-1', 'auto'); ga('send', 'pageview');

Tracy Roberson-Woolard won the *Firefly Ridge Literary Magazine* 2015 Women's Writing Award for "Involuntary Choices," a memoir excerpt. Her article "Days to Destroy, Years to Recover" was published in the *Rocky Mount Telegram* in 2009.

Tracy resides in Elm City, North Carolina, with her husband and son. She's currently working on her memoir (*Be Committed: Holding on to Self in the Grips of Mental Illness*). It's the story of a mother struggling to raise a son diagnosed with bipolar disorder while working to maintain her own mental well-being and self-identity.

What makes this flash piece nonfiction?

> It is my present truth, no matter how much I want it not to be.

Source URL: https://mail.talkingwriting.com/all-things-mohawk-stole

Links:
[1] https://mail.talkingwriting.com/all-things-mohawk-stole
[2] https://mail.talkingwriting.com/tw-channels-and-categories/flash-nonfiction
[3] https://www.flickr.com/photos/soulfullshots/128621008/in/photolist-cndxA-74cNhe-oKTyND-5reCwB-6rQgbz-diTnVr-75sfAr-e3jNbJ-5LjQud-dCwcG1-dCwcaY-6WrYbN-699mRE-dCqKYr-dCwccL-dCwbCm-dCqLB8-dCqL6X-dCqLSX-dCwcCm-dCwc5N-dCwbM9-dCwcgG-dCwboy-dCwbxq-dCqKz8-dCwbKo-dCqLzR-dCwc9q-dCqKN4-dCqKRz-dCqLyB-dCqKEt-dCqLPp-dCqLvg-dCqLcx-dVVn8x-9NDy6B-aWPTWt-dDNWKm-9NJfwE-dTasAP-kmwbmK-kmwfRX-cndwg-4Ywf78-9NFmxc-pFmdgn-qeEasP-cga1oL

(function(i,s,o,g,r,a,m){i['GoogleAnalyticsObject']=r;i[r]=i[r]||function(){ (i[r].q=i[r].q||[]).push(arguments)},i[r].l=1*new Date();a=s.createElement(o), m=s.getElementsByTagName(o)[0];a.async=1;a.src=g;m.parentNode.insertBefore(a,m) })(window,document,'script','https://www.google-analytics.com/analytics.js','ga'); ga('create', 'UA-18260536-1', 'auto'); ga('send', 'pageview');