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Convergence

Listening to instrumental music can give a person a lot of time to wander through their thoughts; thoughts that, like old graves, should be left undisturbed. Art on the other hand was my sanctuary. Paintings, drawings, sketches were a window into other souls and the purest form of expression. Different interpretations allowed one material object to hold and convey thousands of unique stories. All of which was a welcome distraction from my own story. In honesty, I was exhausted by my family crumbling around me. My mother had crawled into her silent cave months ago: longer than she would probably care to admit, and my father was a drunken, washed-up painter.

Trying to steer my mind away from my grim surroundings, I dragged myself into bed to start a new piece of artwork. It was a painting of a girl. I adored the way her face still glowed from the reflection of the tangerine setting sun and the way her mahogany brown eyes twinkled with youthful innocence. The clutter of colour on the paint palette fell in a disarrayed, disorganised and unsettled splash. But in the confusion of colour, every unstable stroke of my brush felt like an alleviation from the pain that had been gorging away at my core, as I slowly allowed my mind to indulge itself in the unfolding narrative of the painting.

We can all agree that childish ignorance is bliss and free of regret, most of us spend those precious years looking forward to our dreamt-up futures, only to realise that the best chapter of our insignificant lives had just slipped through the cracks of our fingers. In actual fact, most of my childhood had been spent studying the different possible mediums in art, how to effectively portray meaning behind my artworks and simply pouring undefined emotion into my pieces. This was always significant to my father. Every layer of paint and every careful blend of colours had to have a story, a background. One could not help but question if art imitated life or if life imitated art.

It had been, what felt like an extended day of tireless labour. All I craved was to take a warm and soothing shower whilst listening to the melodic sounds of Slash playing his legendary guitar solos. It was midnight, and finally being able to take a break from my taxing summer work, I dragged myself into the shower noticing the sounds of drunken stumbling downstairs. I knew this was my father, due to the fact that this was his nightly routine. I rushed downstairs to say a simple "goodnight" and ask him about the ten day trip to the Philippines that he was to take tomorrow. "I'll be gone at seven in the morning" he explained.

"So, I'll see you in the morning before you leave?"

“Hopefully. If not... please wake me up” he said, jokingly. I clambered up the stairs, trying to ignore the awkward silence until he blurted “Thank you for taking care of me.” The sentence rang in my ears, deafening me. I opened my mouth but words ceased to come out. What could he have possibly meant, besides the glaringly obvious?

My father and I had not had a full conversation in the months leading up to that moment. We were strangers in our own home. The last time we had spoken, it was clear to both sides that we had lost our sense of purpose in a home that used to ring the sounds of the thought provoking lyrics of Cat Stevens and Sir Elton John. A home that used to flow with the smells of a fresh pumpkin pie. A home that used to echo the sounds of conversation and laughter.

It had not always been this way. It feels like only yesterday that I was four years old, splashing around in the silky luke-warm bath whilst my father read me thrilling stories of knights and princesses and occasionally blew some bubbles in my bath which, I must admit, I found exceptionally amusing.

My mother, by contrast, was non-existent in my daily life starting from the moment I was introduced into this world, so I had every right to never look back at her once I was old enough to be on my own in the world. No one ever understood this, but I didn't really care. Why would anyone care about a woman that you've never actually had the chance to know? Even less care or love was given knowing that this woman was the only person in the entirety of your life that was supposed to love you unconditionally. However, it was a different story with my father.

Even though, through the later years, my father and I had many riveting plunges in our relationship, I knew I would never allow myself to turn my back on him. This was a result of endless hours he spent pushing my swing, teaching me to read and write, reading to me every night and organising the most special birthdays and, especially, the way he meticulously taught me to paint. These were a few of the scarce signs I received from either of my parents to show that they cared and loved me so I always held these memories dear to my heart.

The most cherished memories from my adolescent years undeniably were the countless hours my father and I spent studying the artistry of Jackson Pollock. He was my father's favourite artist and understandably so. It caused me to develop an infatuation with his works; the way that they conveyed so many different stories and emotions through simple strokes of brush and paint. To any average passer-by, his art looked like meaningless scribbles but to me they elevated the idea of interpretations. One could see a happy-go-lucky artist trying to pay his monthly rent but the next moment, they could view his art as a desperate cry for help and attention. In this sense, one could say that life *does* imitate art. This is what I always hope to achieve with my art.



Convergence by Jackson Pollock

Turning back to my freshly-painted portrait, I could not help but notice that the young girl's deep, brown eyes had lost their innocent sparkle which I once had found so admirable, and the paint that had once seemed smoothly blended together was now coarse and undesirable. It made me wonder about the horrible and gruesome reality that this young girl, and many others, had been prematurely exposed to. If we only realised the extent to which our thoughts and memories shaped our identities, we would be able to see any version of 'Convergence' that we desired.