

Dear Readers,

The following piece by Hannah Fuller, “Wrong, Right, Dark, Light,” as well as the letter written to her 7th grade self, inspired the editorial board to include this fun section.

It occurred to us that anyone who considers him/herself a writer had to start by writing something. Moreover, it’s highly likely that those writers still have those old gems lying around somewhere. So, we put a call out for faculty members to send us their crappy, angst-ridden, and embarrassing teenage poetry. What we collected from the bravest of those souls is compiled here, for your enjoyment.

*Sincerely,
The Cornfield Review Editorial Board*

Wrong, Right, Dark, Light

Confused...Bemused
No true understanding.
The wind whips my hair...
I linger around the oceans of the dumb,
And rest in the blinding heat of the sun.
No Land is My Land.
That fact is but a fact.
Born and raised uncertain,
Curiosity and be Fulfilling-like,
Like
Mama's bread, fresh and warm.
But, I still glance back at the
Road,
For which I have traveled.
And scoff in the face of wrong...
And right.
Still uncertain,
Like a rooster not knowing to screech
When clouds block the sun.
Of
Right.
And Wrong.

—*Hannah Fuller, 2009*

DEAR 7TH GRADE ME,

A Letter to 7th Grade Me

HANNAH FULLER

How you went so long without talking to the guidance counselor is beyond me. Her name is Michelle, knock yourself out while you still get therapy for free. I'm sure she'd love to hear about your existential crisis over the mice you find in the girl's bathroom. "Winter is coming!" You cry. "Who cares!" She cries back while writing on a Maltese off-brand Post-It to buy glue traps.

It's me, seven years into the future. Yeah, it's one of those letters. An intervention to years past. Real Marty McFly. But you don't know who that is because you're too busy reading. Good for your vocabulary, bad for your social skills, kid. And, tip from the future: Twilight? Yeah, just don't.

Now that I've gotten all the horrible clichés out of the way, let's talk about why I'm here. This poem, man. This effing poem. What. Were. You. Thinking?! Let's discuss just that. You will one day make \$8.50 helping people with their college level writing projects. Good thing you didn't put this in your resume.

Let's get started.

Your title. Not pretentious at all. Not in the least, I think it's a bit underwhelming, actually. How could one poem 25 lines long encompass all the emotions of what is Right and Wrong and the Light within us and the Dark? Yeah, you were into the whole "Grey" thing. Multitudes within everyone, how no one is all evil or pure or is always right or wrong, take that parents! I know in 7th grade you were just brimming with answers to these philosophical mysteries and thus this poem was born.

So, capitalization. That's a thing you know how to do on a keyboard, but not so much in a poem. Capitalizing just because you can is an interesting writing choice, I guess. If you can call it that. But props for not using ellipses a lot!

Like your Team Edward shirts, using unneeded punctuation is now reserved for the ironic or avant-garde. Word to the wise: be cautious when figuring out which in people.

Question: “oceans of the dumb”... I mean, do I really have to say anything about that? I remember that you tried to look up synonyms for “mute” to seem more mysterious. For obvious reasons, I think that backfired. Your classmates weren’t too pleased, either. Look at you, taunting your peers through a poetry book. You sure showed them?

Going line by line, I can see that you were trying to accomplish many things with a single poem. Too many things I don’t think you really knew a lot about.

I mean, what is this “Road” that you’ve travelled on? In the physical sense you barely leave the house. In the metaphorical sense, I suppose you’ve gone to elementary school. That’s a path, in a way. A weird path that led you here, writing this poem, but here we are. How do you travel “for” a road? It’s an interesting idea but not one that I think you were aware of. Advice: stop writing “for” in random places.

I respect this whole “writing as you go” poetry, but it’s becoming very obvious that you’re just lazy. “Fulfilling-like. Like”? Did you really just do that? Copy-editing man!

Right towards the end you finally have this great set up for a

simile! I like it, I really do. It seems unfit with the rest of this mysterious poem that you’re trying to build, but you’re doing a good job! Keep it up!

But I know that you won’t. You’re not going to keep it up, and not because you get a letter from the future, either. You stop because in eighth grade you realize that you’re going to have to make a decision. What to do with the rest of your life.

It’s not going to be an easy one. And every day that you spend in high school you’ll be dreading your choices to where they have led you. You get awards, scholarships, even, but you still don’t feel like it’s the right choice.

As I’m writing to you, you’ve decided that you want to write a novel. You want to be a teenage novelist; you’ll even change the words to Bruno Mars’s “Millionaire”. It’s a great party trick, but the years have passed. It became harder and harder to put words to paper. It was all you’d ever wanted. You wanted to be an author. Every year became a delay. “I’m sure next year – I’m sure of it then!”

It didn’t happen. Even when you’re in college, the one place where you thought you could grow into your full potential, the one place that you thought you could finally achieve your dreams.

It didn’t happen. It still hasn’t happened.

The reason that I wrote you this letter wasn't just so I could critique you or pretend like I could teach you something smart or profound about writing. I wanted to give you a chance. Yes, you. The one with more acne than friends. The one who has a bigger vocabulary than her English teacher. The one who looks timid but is so loud on paper and in song that they can't help but to sit and listen.

I'm doing this for you. I may have failed you in high school, I may have failed you in college, too.

"Do you think 5-year-old you would be proud of you today?" Oh hell no. And you bet that the day that I get my teaching license I'm going to fail you then, too. But with that teaching license I'm going to do what no one else did for me. I'm going to help kids like you with your writing. I'm going to make writing groups; I'm going to listen to kids who put goals on themselves that are sizes too big. I'm going to listen to their words, I'm going to help them grow, and I'm going to help them realize what you never did.

Hannah, you don't need a title like Author to give you self-worth. You don't need to prove yourself to anyone. Not your teachers, not the local newspaper, not your fantastic family, and not you. Especially not the you that thinks the only way you'll ever be happy is to see your name on a book's spine.

I'm here to give you a gift. Your poem? "Wrong, Right, Dark, Light"? It's getting published. The part of you that always wanted to be a novelist, I've given her a different gift. The title of a Published Poet.

How does it feel, Marty?

Begrudgingly affectionate,

Hannah ~~Cullen~~ Fuller

(NO! Of course you didn't marry Edward, you're still a spinster at 19. Deal with it.)