

The Things We Never Say

It is very difficult to pick out one person and say that they are a hero; life is full of bumpy roads with little miracles all along the way. There have been many people that I have felt made all the difference to me--that without those people my life would have been completely and utterly different. However, without a doubt, I believe that my friend Matt is the one who rises highest amongst my peers, and he does not even know it--but that is the thing about spectacular people: they change lives without ever once taking credit for what they deserve. I am forever grateful for Matt's selfishlessness.

When I came to Quantico two years ago, Matt was one of the first friends I had. Even then he had contained within his frame an incredibly dynamic personality. He let me in his group of friends even though I was female and one grade his senior, and he always included me in his activities, such as group discussions about trivial things at lunch. We had much fun chattering during lunches when I was simply 'one of the guys', and I miss those simple times.

Looking back, my junior year seems like it was such a breeze. I know that if he had not been there I would have made other friends, yes, and it is true that I did have other friends, but there would have been an empty void lacking his personality. His persona is like that: it is so powerful that even if I had gone through my junior year without Matt as a friend, I would have seen him out of the corner of my eye, and felt a certain jamais-vu, and Joseph Heller would say, and would have known that I was missing something.

My life became more and more hectic as the school year's end approached and summer drew nearer. The Student Council Association, or SCA as it is so fondly called, was preparing its campaigns for the next year's officers. I wanted desperately to be a member, the treasurer, actually, but my family was being forced to move from Quantico and I had no idea if I would even be allowed to go back to Quantico High School again. That very real possibility meant that I couldn't in good conscience have run for the treasurer and won (at that moment, I had been uncontested) and then move away and have left the school without a treasurer for the next year. Matt once more came to the rescue. He, too, had wanted to be in SCA. He promised me that if I was allowed to come back to Quantico High School for my senior year, that



we could be joint treasurers and share the office. He, in his selfless act of compassion, helped to make my life at that moment seem a little less out of control. If I had nothing else of certainty, I had his promise.



Sometimes, life is rather ironic. Sometimes it is just that we make our own mazes and demons. I was able to back to Quantico High School for my senior year, but I had changed over the summer. Matt was still quite willing to share the treasurer office, but out of pride or stupidity or possibly even both, I never accepted. I was a little more hostile to him, even though deep inside of me, I still thought of him as a good friend. My senior year was very emotionally rough, and I yelled at him many, many times for no reason at all, and yet despite everything I did to him he still came back to tease me about my art (we always claimed that our own art was best) and to put a smile on my face. He stuck out the rough times with me, and never once hated me--which within itself is a miracle.



I never told Matt how grateful I am and was for his friendship, and I really regret this. He saved my sanity though some really tough times, and I never once said thank-you. I know that if he had a choice, and if I asked him, he would readily go through those two years with me again without any qualms or reservations--Matt is just an awesome friend like that. Therefore, the only thing I can say that would even come close to paying the debt I have to Matt is: Thank you. Thank you for being an awesome friend. I will miss you in college.

The Task:

A summary of the task is provided:

Senior students were asked to write and videotape a “swan song.” They were to recall a time when someone helped them accomplish something difficult. In small groups they were to share their reflections and discuss the definition of a soliloquy. After writing the first draft, students were to return to their group and receive feedback before recording the soliloquy. (N.B. The Commentary here is restricted to the written part of the assignment.)

Circumstances of Performance:

The student work is produced under the following conditions:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alone	<input type="checkbox"/> In a group
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In class	<input type="checkbox"/> As homework
<input type="checkbox"/> With teacher feedback	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> With peer feedback
<input type="checkbox"/> Timed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Extended project
<input type="checkbox"/> No opportunity for revision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Opportunity for revision

What the work shows:

Speaking, Listening, and Viewing

E3c -- The student prepares and delivers an individual presentation in which the student:

E3c.1 shapes information to achieve a particular purpose and appeal to the background of audience members **(A)**

E3c.2 shapes content and organization according to criteria for importance and impact rather than according to availability of information and resource materials

E3c.3 uses notes or other memory aids to structure presentation

E3c.4 develops several main points relating to a single thesis **(B)**

E3c.5 engages the audience with appropriate verbal cues and eye contact

E3c.6 projects a sense of individuality and personality in selecting and organizing content and in delivery **(C)**

Writing (related standard)

E2f – The student produces a reflective essay that:

E2f.2 analyzes a condition or situation of significance (**D**)

E2f.3 develops a commonplace, concrete occasion as the basis for the reflection, e.g., personal observation or experience (**E**)

E2f.4 creates an organizing structure appropriate to purpose and audience

- A.** The writer 's use of the common high school scenes like the lunchroom appeal to her viewers. This appeal to common high school events continues with her discussion of the SCA elections.

The purpose of the writing becomes clear because of fine organization around the idea of Matt's kindness.

- B.** The writer first paints a view of arrival at a new school. Her life becoming more hectic and her becoming unkind to Matt follow this. At the end she recognizes that she owes Matt an apology. Throughout she keeps a consistent theme by portraying Matt as kind, patient, and helpful.

- C.** The writer has a strong voice. Her personality comes through in phrases like "I would have seen him out of the corner of my eye," and "out of pride or stupidity or possibly even both, I never accepted."

- D.** The significance of the events is clear because of strong reflective comments. The comments lead to the overall idea of regret at not telling Matt of his importance. The piece begins with "and he does not even know it," continues with the reflection that Matt is important to her security ("a little less out of control.....I had his promise), and ends with her regret at not telling him of her gratitude.

- E.** The writer recalls everyday events from her last two years of high school and draws from them an important reflective idea about friendship.

DODEA Rubric Bank Traits Used: Organization, Word Choice, Voice