



the best midwestern
high school writing:
a celebration and
recognition



BY WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Western Michigan University
ScholarWorks at WMU

Best Midwestern High School Writing 2014
Winners

Best Midwestern High School Writing: A
Celebration and Recognition of Outstanding
Prose

5-2014

Six Feet Under

Farzad R. Razi

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/hs_writing_2014

Portage Northern High School

Portage, MI

Grade: 11-12

Genre: Creative

Third place winner

WMU ScholarWorks Citation

Razi, Farzad R., "Six Feet Under" (2014). *Best Midwestern High School Writing 2014 Winners*. 7.
https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/hs_writing_2014/7

This Eleventh - Twelfth Grade Creative Writing Winner is brought to you for free and open access by the Best Midwestern High School Writing: A Celebration and Recognition of Outstanding Prose at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Best Midwestern High School Writing 2014 Winners by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.



Six Feet Under

I stood there, hands clasped respectfully in front of me, head tilted downwards in front of the black coffin that would soon be immersed inside the earth. People stood encircled beside me, bidding farewell to the person inside the coffin. It was a circle of life, paying homage to the sacrifice of the dead. This was the 25th funeral I had attended; one for each year of my life. Funerals tied me to reality, reminding me that one day, I too would take my own trip into the crust. I stood there wondering, my mind lost in thought; above the gaping hole in the earth a tombstone read, “Here lays David Parker Jones, a formidable opponent when it came to chess, a loving father, and husband. David died of a single gunshot wound to the head. May God’s wrath fall upon the animal who destroyed our family.” “Rest in Peace” was engraved close to the bottom of the stone slab along with the date: August 26, 2023. David would rest six feet under dirt until the end of time. When I died, I would be six feet closer to Hell.

Fridays were always hectic. My only fragment of peace was the time I spent reading the newspaper, which would occasionally offer a story worth looking into. When I heard a thud on my front porch, I knew that the paperboy had passed my house, and opening the door confirmed that hunch. The *Stony Brook Gazette* glared back at me in big bold letters. Beneath it was the date: October 13, 2023. Today was my birthday. It was also Friday the 13th, I thought as I laughed to myself. This birthday would be no different than any other birthday. I would attend to my duties as the county sheriff, hang out with a couple of buddies at the local pub, and then... but I didn’t let that last part trouble my anxious mind. It would have to wait.

Just then, my phone started to ring. What an annoying ringtone, I thought to myself and made a quick mental note to change it. The name on my screen read “Mom”. She was probably calling to wish me a happy birthday.

“Hi Mom,” I said into the receiver.

“Hi Glenn! Happy birthday dear!” she exclaimed enthusiastically.

“Thanks Mo-”, I started to say, but didn’t get to finish because the line was abruptly cut off. I looked down with disdain at my good-for-nothing phone. It momentarily showed the symbol for an empty battery, before the screen went black. I cursed myself for not charging it last night and grabbing my keys from the dining room table, put on my deputy jacket and headed out the door.

My 2006 Dodge Charger sat in the middle of the driveway, with Stony Brook Sheriff emblazoned in gold on both side doors. The deep blue body of the car was shining in the morning sunlight. I trudged down the driveway and unlocked the driver’s seat door, checking to see if there were any scratch marks from last night’s police chase. To my satisfaction, there were none, so I started the engine, backed out of my driveway, and headed to the local donut shop, taking care so as not to hit my mailbox on the way out. The driveway was narrow, and I have had bad experiences with backing into mailboxes before.

Stony Brook, New Jersey, was a relatively mid-sized city; it was neither extravagant with tall buildings, nor was it composed of barren farmland. “Natural” was the word that came to mind when I looked at the numerous trees lining the streets as I cruised along. A small sign indicated that NJ’s Finest Donuts was located at the next right. I put my indicator on and turned into a small strip mall. All the parking spaces in front of the donut shop were empty, so I parked

my car in front of the shop and went inside. The jangle of chimes alerted the person at the register to my presence.

“Ahhh Sheriff Frinley! How are you today?” the woman at the register asked. She looked to be in her mid-twenties, not much older than I was. Her smile was warming and put me at ease.

“The police work is hectic, but other than that, doing pretty well, Shannon. You’re looking great yourself,” I said returning the smile. Six empty tables were set across the shop, and five stools lined the counter where Shannon was organizing the register. I made my way towards one of the stools and made myself at home.

“You know what Sheriff? You’ve been stopping by almost every morning for three years and I still don’t know your first name. I think I ought to get to know you better,” she said.

“It’s...Steven,” I said after a moment’s hesitation. I usually didn’t like telling people about myself. Exchanging personal information with other people created strong bonds. Strong bonds were that much harder to break when fate decided it was time to be done.

“Steven...,” she pondered on the name for a moment and looked at me for a while. “You definitely look like a Steven,” she added with a smile. I honestly didn’t know how to respond to that so I kept my mouth shut. After a couple seconds of awkward silence, I spoke.

“Shannon, do you happen to have a copy of today’s paper? I haven’t had a chance to read it,” my voice awakening the still air.

“Of course I do. You know, I usually have my customers buy them, but in this case, I guess I could make an exception,” she said winking. I didn’t answer. There was nothing to say. She reached underneath the counter and pulled out the wad of papers. “You wouldn’t know anything more about the Mayor’s death would you?” she asked, pressing a response from me. Shannon pointed to the headline: Who Killed Mayor Jones? The sub-heading confirmed confirmed my fears: Murderer still at large; authorities are looking for clues.

“The paper says it all, Shannon,” I replied. “We haven’t found any promising leads.” I looked long and hard at the words in front of me, trying to find any discrepancies, but I could think of none. It was perfect.

“So?” Shannon asked, interrupting my train of thought as she set a hot cup of coffee in front of me. A glazed donut rested on a plate next to the coffee. She studied my face, and I saw it in her eyes. There was a sudden movement that gave away her thoughts. Of course I knew more, and she understood that too. “You police have more information, but the public can’t know that, right? Why is that?” she questioned, piercing me with the look on her ice blue eyes. I didn’t say anything...not immediately that is.

“You know what curiosity did to the cat?” I asked with a little smile as I set a ten dollar bill on the counter.

“It...killed it,” she replied, her eyes displaying genuine shock at my question.

“Yeah,” I said, nodding my head as I walked towards the exit. “I’ll see you later Shannon.”

The last three hours were probably the best time I had spent in a couple months. There weren’t very many cases to look into, because I had handed down Mayor Jones’ case to the officer second in command. Instead, I went on rounds in my car looking for speeders and responding to emergency calls on my radio until about 4:21 p.m., when one of my friends called.

“Hey Steve! Happy birthday man! You ready to check out that new club in town?” he asked a little too enthusiastically.

“Thanks Will. Is everyone else coming?” I responded.

“Yeah, ready when you are. Just pick us up. See you in bit,” he said.

“Alright I’m coming,” I hung up and started for each of my friends’ houses in turn.

Needless to say, after three hours of hanging out, my four friends and I were passed out in my car. Well...they were passed out. I never participated in the drinking. A guy like me always has to stay alert, and besides, I was the one driving.

Thankfully, by the time I reached their respective houses, each of them had woken up, but their speech was slurred, and I had to help them walk up to the door. By the time all was well and done, it was 9:00 p.m., but I still had one last thing to attend to. I had to pay my respects to Mayor Jones.

The Stony Brook Cemetery was eerily quiet in the dead of night, and the dense fog only added to its ominousness. Armed with a silenced pistol and a flashlight, I parked my car around the block, and headed into the sea of tombstones. Each step I took chilled me to the bone and the cause of death written on some of the tombstones grew increasingly worse with the next one I saw.

As I neared the location of Mayor Jones’ grave, I noticed a dark figure hunched over the tombstone. The figure wasn’t moving, but as I approached, it stood up quickly and turned around. I quickly turned on my flashlight and pointed it at...Shannon? She was just as surprised as I was and made a startled jump at my presence.

“Why are you here?” I asked

“I might ask the same of you, Sheriff,” she shot back. I didn’t respond. An acquaintance once told me not to say anything if I didn’t have to. After a few moments, she started to speak again, her blue eyes and stern gaze tearing apart what little good I had inside my heart. “David was my uncle,” she paused for a moment before going on, and I could see her tears welling up. The ice had begun to melt. “I come here every night to give him flowers,” she added, trying hard not to break down in tears.

I couldn’t help but tell myself that I truly cared, but there was no way I could let her go; not after what happened the last time. It was purely by chance that Shannon and I met for the last time in a cemetery; an ironic ending to a complicated friendship that started in a donut shop three years ago. Why her? I kept thinking to myself. It could have been anybody, but when fate comes knocking, you have to let it in.

Time was running out, and I had to remind myself of the death that took the people I cared about years ago. It was the same death that drove me insane. I was a psychopath, and I knew it, but self-control was difficult.

“I’m sorry, Shannon,” I said with genuine pity, drawing my pistol and aiming it right at her. She was surprised again, and as she looked straight into the barrel of my gun, the realization hit.

“You did it didn’t you? You killed him!” she yelled with malice. Again, I didn’t say anything; my face was hard stone. There was no need to talk. In the distance, the wail of police sirens sounded, but they weren’t coming for me. They never did. I would be going to my 26th funeral in a couple of days.