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English Composition

30 September 2017

### Tennis Balls and Caterpillars

In second grade, my friends and I decided to climb further up the hill from our school to find some other place to play. All we had to play with was a tennis ball. We never really went up that hill before, but we found a place.

The first time we got there it was sunny and warm, almost a perfect day. The sun was coming down, showing a light orange across the sky. Clouds were sprinkled throughout the sky.

There was a small space in the school's brick exterior. In the architecture of the building, there was an opening where you could walk in. It was a rectangle without one of the shorter sides, acting as the entrance. Between the open field and the indent was a giant wall. Well, I guess it was a slightly large wall, but back in the second grade it was huge. It was our Green Monster. Ours was red brick all the way up. It had the effect of old brick where it starts to turn different shades of maroon and red.

My friends and I came up with this game called "Wall Ball". You threw the ball at the wall, and when it bounced off, you couldn't let it touch you. If it touched you, you had to run to the wall while the other players threw the ball at the wall. We were so proud of our invention. We set up tournaments, but we didn't really know what we were doing. Our 'round robins' devolved into the usual free-for-all.

One day, my friends told me that they were not going to play Wall Ball that day, no one brought a tennis ball. But on the way home from school, I turned to look at the wall again. From where I was standing on the sidewalk, the sun almost hid behind the wall, almost like the wall was wearing the sun as a crown. Then I heard kids laughing and screaming.

My friends were there, playing Wall Ball. With a tennis ball. I kept walking home. As I started to leave, I looked back at the wall one final time that day, it cast a large shadow over the field. The bricks seemed to be growing old to me.

One day, I saw them playing Wall Ball after school. This time, it was spring time. Not a cloud in the blue sky. The sun shining down, flowers and dandelions sprung up all over the field. Dragonflies and butterflies filled the area, almost like a crowd watching the intense game of Wall Ball. I walked over and I asked if I could play. They didn't really say anything. One of the kids just kinda nodded and threw the ball. I continued to play that day, but I was confused.

The next year, I was in the third grade. I moved from the second floor of the building to the third floor. That's where I met KC.

She lived a block away from me, the new kid in the neighborhood. Every time I saw her, she had a different book in her hand. Because she lived near me, I would walk her to school sometimes.

Our third grade class took a trip outside of the school. It was a stereotypical spring day. It was cloudy, might have been raining a little bit. There was a light fog that lay overhead like a New England Patriots game. The ground was slippery and muddy, the smell of dirt becoming stronger. The sky itself wasn't dark, it was more of a light gray, like the sun was trying to shine but there were too many clouds.

The trip was to the indent in the school. In the indent, right next to the Wall, was a little garden. It had flowers of all colors, bordered by grass and laying in dirt. It was simple. There were bushes in all of the corners of the garden, about as tall as we all were.

I was just kind of staring at the flowers. Because of the weather and my short-attention span, I got bored rather quickly. KC grabbed my arm and came up behind me.

“How cool is this?” she asked me enthusiastically.

“Eh. It’s cool I guess.” I said.

Our teacher called us over. She had in her hands, a container with a branch and leaves in it. She told us to look closer. One of the kids pointed and shouted. “CATERPILLARS!!!!”

Right there, in the little container, two little caterpillars crawled around the container. Everyone started freaking out, trying to get a glimpse of one of the coolest animals to a child. Back in the classroom, our teacher said that she would give the caterpillars to the kids who she thought would take care of them best. She ended up choosing me. And KC.

After school, I went to the indent, carrying the container of caterpillars. Wall Ball was less popular. No longer were kids spending their time throwing a tennis ball against the wall; kids would rather stay at home playing Call of Duty.

KC was already there, sitting on the grass facing the flowers. I sat down next to her. She asked if we could name the caterpillars, we could each name one.

“I wanna name this one Rowling!” KC said. I had no idea what that name was at all. It was time for me to name one of them. I didn’t really have an idea.

Even back then, I was a big Steelers fan. All I knew about caterpillars is that they liked to eat a lot. So I named my caterpillar after the biggest Steeler on the team at the time.

“I’ll call that one Hampton” I said. KC chuckled. She leaned back on the way facing the flowers. I leaned back too, putting the caterpillars in between us. We just kind of stared at the flowers together for awhile. It was...peaceful. It was beautiful.

KC and I traded weeks taking care of the caterpillars. They turned into cocoons at my house, they became butterflies at her house. She called me and told me to meet her at the indent garden to release them.

When we got there, she finally let Hampton and Rowling go. They flew off in separate directions, but they flew up and high. I remember watching them fly away. The first thing I thought of was how great it must’ve been for them to just get the chance to fly wherever you want and start a new life.