

Sam Bussler

Mrs. Rutan

AP Literature & Composition

31 October 2017

The Day I Broke My Face

“Make sure you put your helmet on Samuel!”

For the short amount of time my first grade, seven year-old self had been riding a two-wheel bike, it was all I’d ever heard my mom say. I’d always obeyed. I trusted that she knew what was best, that wearing a helmet was the best thing for me, no matter how embarrassing wearing a helmet may have been to a child who had no friends who were forced to wear helmets!

“Mommmmm, no one else wears them..” That was always my response, knowing someday, I wouldn’t have to wear my stupid biking helmet.

It was a cool, cloud-covered Saturday in September, the first weekend after my first week of first grade. A rather cold day—aided by the constant rain showers and fog—I was ready for a fun-filled weekend, in celebration of the new school year; little did *I* know, I was in for so much more.

**\*11:15 am\***

I stood up on my bed, on my tippy-toes to be exact, and gazed out my window; Rain. Rain, and fog. The worst possible weather for the day I had planned.

I jump off of my bed and hightailed it down the steps onto the main floor. *Where’s my Mom?* I instantly remembered my mom saying something about having a jewelry show the night

before. As I reached the bottom of the steps, I looked to my left and saw my Dad sitting on the couch, his feet propped, watching College Gameday in preparation for the “big” Michigan Game later in the day.

“Good morning, Dad! You watching the game?” I shout with an ecstatic tone.

“It is a good morning Sam, and of course, it’s a big one! How’d you sleep?” He says back, his voice tired and hoarse. I can tell by the sound that he didn’t sleep well, if at all.

“Every game’s a big game (snickers) but I slept li—” I was interrupted by the cacophonous “*rrriinnngggg*” of our landline.

“I’ll get it!” I yelled, I’d forgotten it was just me and my dad at home.

It’s CJ—my best friend at the time—inquiring about our scheduled plans for later in the day. Our plan was to have a fun filled day outside, followed by a bonfire at dusk. But, due to the weather, our plans soon changed into bowling for the day, every first grader’s idea of a great time.

It’s a shame we never made it to the bowling alley.

“Dad, I’m headed to CJ’s! We’re leaving for the bowling Alley in about fifteen minutes, I should be home around five tonight.”

“Okay Son, be safe and have a great time, don’t forg—”

“I know, I know, don’t forget to put on my helmet before I ride my bike down to CJ’s” I say, a mocking tone hidden in my voice.

“Hey, not for me, for your Mother” he says with a laugh.

**\*11: 27 am\***

I shut the big blue garage door leading into our white-tiled kitchen behind me, more than excited to get the day started with CJ, a boy of laconic speech, but a brilliant mind. I took a deep

breath, the sweet musty smell of autumn, fallen leaves, and freshly cut grass filled my lungs. I opened the garage, rain pelting the driveway, immediately, my gaze fell upon my blue Trek bike helmet—it laid face up in the grass—soaking wet, with a pool of water just chilling on the inside.

My seven year-old mind began to race, I began to drown in my own thoughts; *Why is my helmet outside? Who left it out? How wet is it? Can I still wear it?* All these thoughts flew through my mind at once. *I can't wear my helmet now, can I?* There was no way I was going to put a soaking wet helmet on, that would have messed up my freshly showered hair! Maybe I just wouldn't wear my helmet this time; *Mom wasn't home, was she?* She'd never know.

**\*11:31 am\***

I stepped outside of the garage and grabbed the helmet, then turned around and sprinted up the steps, opened the garage door, and went inside. I turned to the right, my Dad still sitting there, *eating some potato chips now*, still watching football.

“Dad, someone left my helmet outside, and now it's soaking wet..”

“Well, are there any other helmets you can wear?”

I knew the right answer. “No” I said, confidently. That wasn't the right answer.

“Alright (sighs) just for today you can go down to CJ's house without a helmet, but you need to look me in the eye and promise me you'll be very careful, Samuel.”

“I promise Dad, straight to CJ's on the right side of the road.”

“Okay Sam, thank you. Have a great time, I'll see you later tonight!”

“Okay, bye Dad! I love you.”

“I love you too..”

In the blink of an eye I was out the door and on my bike, but for the first time, without my helmet on. It didn't last as long as I'd hoped.

**\*11:35 am\***

A few weeks earlier, I had been hanging out with a couple of older neighbor boys, right after I had received my first two-wheel bike. They had told me that the only way I could really be considered an *expert* at riding a bike, is if I was able to stand up on my seat, with my eyes closed.

As I was streaking down my driveway, rain pelted my face, and wind was flowing through my free (no helmet) hair. I thought to myself, *why not become an expert now?* As I reached the end of my driveway, I came almost to a halt, slowing *wayyyy* down, letting the rain soak my strawberry blonde hair. I continued riding—slowly but surely along the side of the road. I was ready for the title of *expert* to be in association with my name.

I stared straight ahead, no cars coming. I took my right foot off of my right pedal, then my left foot off of my left pedal, the rain suddenly subsided. I put both feet on the seat of my cherry red mongoose, and I propped myself into a standing position, my bike began to wobble but I didn't pay it any mind, I must become an *expert*. I closed my eyes, the bike began to wobble uncontrollably now, I swerved over to the other side of the road, I opened my eyes just as I hit a pothole.

For a moment, the world was at a standstill and I felt like I was the only thing moving. Catapulted over my handlebars I flew head-over-heels through the air, now completely detached from my mongoose. As I fell closer and closer to the rain-stained road, I put my hands up to

cushion my fall; they didn't help. My weight was too much for my hands to bear, instead my face is what cushioned the fall. My body hit the ground with a "thud" and I slid across the gravel for what seemed like an eternity. I let out a spine-tingling scream. My world suddenly went black, and my own screams became nothing but a distant memory.

**\*11:43 am\***

When I regained consciousness, I was being carried up my driveway by my neighbor, Rus, a tall, husky man with a shaved head, almost like a marines, and his wife Amy, also tall, with short dark hair, and at the time, very wide eyes.

They must have heard my screams.

I tried to thank him, but the pain was unbearable, I could feel the chunks of gravel sitting in their new home, my face. As we reached the garage I saw the big blue garage door shoot open, my Father ran out, swearing under his breath as soon as he saw my bloody face. The next thing I knew I was thrown into the back seat of the car and we peeled out of the driveway and onto the road, probably heading to the Emergency Room. Again, I was drowning in my own thoughts... *Will I be okay? Did I break anything? How mad is my Mom going to be? Will any of the damage be permanent?* I knew all of my questions would be answered soon, all I could do now, was wait. I began to cry.

**\*5:00 pm\***

We walked out the double-doors of the Emergency Room, my Mom, my Dad, and I. The diagnosis: A cracked skull, and a broken cheekbone.

As we approached the vehicles we would be driving home, I could hear my parents screaming at one another behind me in a whispering, almost hiss-like tone. My mother was livid,

not only at me, but at my father for allowing me to go out without a helmet on. As soon as my father would try to say something, my mother would cut him off, snap at him, not letting him finish a single sentence. I was forced to ride home with her.

**\*1 Week Later\***

This went on for about a week, the constant tension between me and my mother, as well as my mother and my father was almost unbearable. Constant arguments, apologies followed by unforgiveness, and silence between the three of us. For two weeks I picked chunks of gravel out of my face; the pain worsening with each piece.

I was picked on at school, as well as out of school, my injuries not only took a physical toll on my body, but an emotional toll as well. I'd acquired many nicknames throughout the healing process, each one hurting my feelings a bit more than the last. Since *the day I broke my face*, I've never been on my bike without a helmet.