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## Seeking Fellow Invisibles

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## **Abstract**

This piece is a creative non-fiction piece. The monologue is centered on a question that my mentor and HDEV 100 Professor, Myra Sabir, asked the whole class in the first couple weeks of the semester. "What is your enough?" The question goes deeper than most; it causes you to really look at your life, the world around you, and who you really are. If you were to die tomorrow what is your enough? What would allow you to die with the feeling of accomplishment and happiness? "Seeking Fellow Invisibles" is about what this question made me realize, how it opened my eyes. I compare myself to others and society and what their enough would be. I dig into my past and portions of the dark times in my life. It's a painfully personal piece but the whole point is to give clarity and inspiration to those whose visions are still blurred by what others want from them. It goes beyond materialism and challenges the readers to search deeper and look inside themselves. The whole point is to understand who you really are and what you really want.

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Not many professors take the time to make their course personal, and honestly when you are lecturing to a hall filled with over four hundred students, it is more than understandable. Not being personal doesn't make you a bad professor. But this professor is one of a kind. You sit there, eyes open and ears ready and you cling onto every word spoken. There is no need to take notes because it is clear that these are words that will be near impossible to forget. But as if you still weren't attentive enough, she throws out the question, the perspective altering question: "What is your enough?"

There are things we all want in this world, and there are things that are asked of us all. The opportunities are endless and every person expects something out of you. But this question isn't about any of that. It is not about what you put on your Christmas list, what your friends tell you to be, the image society has designed for you, and not even about the expectations your parents have set and insist you fulfill. This question is asking you a dozen other questions.

It's asking you who you really are, asking you to look deeper than what is on the outside. What do you see when you look past all of the molds that are set before you by everyone but yourself? Death is inevitable, but we all believe—or at least hope—we will live a long life where we can experiment, explore, and fulfill as many wishes as we want. But questions like these aren't

interested in such a long period of time. With so much time you aren't pressured to think about what is really important. You aren't pressured to look past the obvious and the easily achievable. It's not about every little interest and all the small things we want or all the big ones. When someone asks you "what is your enough," they are cutting your time short.

This question locks you in a room where there is no longer anywhere to run. In that room there is nothing but a chair. Why a chair? Because when you are asked about your enough it makes it easier to answer if you sit down and take a deep breath. The room is empty because without distractions you can clear your head. When your head is clear and you are alone there is no outside pressure. Your parents aren't looking down at you and there aren't any friends who can whisper into your ear. Media, with all its expectations and stereotypes is shut off for a moment. With all that quiet, without distractions, your brain can now grasp what is truly being asked of you. If your end were around the corner, what would allow you to die with a sense of accomplishment? What thing would take away the "would- have, could-have, should-have" feelings and the "what-ifs?"

I first think about how for a long time there was nothing in my world but dark. I was invisible. I'd lay in bed awake while my father and mother yelled. I watched as my father packed his bags and stormed out the door. I eventually lost track of how many times I was witness to this. While I was discovering my first razors in the sixth grade, my brother was being sent home every other month for another fight in school. My sisters' cries echoed off the walls of the upstairs as they finally escaped the name calling and exclusion they experienced each day at school. As damage-controller it was my duty to build them up from the rubble they created. Looking at them I could see the pain and fear in their eyes. I had no room for my own pain, my own demons, or my own life. This is not because no one would care, but because no humane person would add another helping onto a plate that is already full and beginning to stain the tablecloth. Outside, we mastered

the poker face. But when our front doors closed and there was no one left but those of our own blood, knees would break and tears would fall. But unlike my poker face, theirs only lasted for so long. The pain became too heavy for them, their hands trembled, and they had no more strength to hold up the curtain that their nightmares and shadows hid behind.

My sister was sick. I watched as her skin began to cling to her bones and listened as she spent hours in the bathroom shoving her fingers down her throat. Her bulimia was consuming her. It was terrifying. Everytime I saw her I was convinced each step she took would leave her shattered. My brother was gone, living with his girlfriend because my parents' judgment and expectations grew too heavy for him to bear. I remember the nights clearly, watching as they stepped closer to one another, ready to jump in if they touched. My brother grew sick and tired, he packed his bags and left. My sisters are twins, so when one fell down the other followed suit; it was the domino effect. My brother was needed but that was an impossibility. He was gone, out of reach and filled with an anger that would not allow him to return. Our home was not his home any longer and it would stay that way for a while. My parents had to learn how to carry on. So then there were three.

For six years I stood by the side of those who needed me the most. The eleven-year old girl soon became fourteen as she pushed her demons further and further down and broke her own bones to save her family. Then she is sixteen, and she, too, has mastered the poker face. For six years instead of breaking down in my parents' arms and telling them about the things kids said and did to me that day at school, I held my father's hand while we waited for my sister outside the clinic. I sat by the bathroom door listening to my other sister cry just so I would know she was alive. When my own body was becoming scarred and my own brain was beginning to decompose, I wore long sleeves and put a smile on my face. When you are a family of six and five of you break down,

it would just be selfish to follow suit. Then you discover that your brain is not the only part of you that is no longer on your side. While I wore my suit of armor and rode in on my white horse to save the day, my insides decided to stop working and throw me off that horse. We learned my muscles were doing the opposite of what they were supposed to and my stomach wouldn't digest anything. I was stricken with a crippling pain. I wasn't eating, I wasn't sleeping and I couldn't even perform basic functions like going to the bathroom. It's strange being the one who is sick when you thought you were immune. So strange, that your pride gets in your way and doesn't allow you to mourn for yourself, doesn't allow you to accept the help because you are so used to giving it. My family grew scared and shed the tears that I refused to cry. They held my hand and drove me to the doctors and filled all my prescriptions while I was stuck in my own head planning the funeral that my family refused to accept.

People always say that it is easy to give up; this is the furthest thing from the truth. Giving up is hard, just as hard as sticking around to fight. I am eighteen years young, and in these eighteen years there were many times that I wanted to give up. But at the end of each night I didn't. Giving up was too hard. In all that time, the only places I was visible were in the novels on the shelves and in the journals under my bed. Then, somehow, here I am, sitting in one of my first college classes like it is a dream—pencil in hand, notebook opened to a fresh page. I never thought that this class could give me such a sense of clarity.

For such a long time there was nothing I wanted more than to just end it. I had thought about it every day for years and even tried a few times. Each night ended the same. I would sit on that cold, uncomfortable tile and cradle myself. The tears would fall and I would shake with fear and indecision. The end was right in front of me, a simple arms length away. But alongside the razor sat the novels, and alongside the novels sat the journals that made me see in the dark, even

if it was just for two quick seconds. Reading and writing were the sword and shield I needed to fight the monsters that jumped out at every corner.

Now, I think, what *is* my enough? What is my big thing that I want done more than anything else in this whole entire world? The answer is simple, the answer is clear. My enough would be to save one life. Not with a scalpel or by pulling them from a raging fire. My enough would be to save one life the same way my life was saved. To be clutched by the shaking hands of a fellow invisible. To take away the pain long enough and show enough light so that one person is given the strength and the encouragement to push the end out of reach and continue living. For now, however, I think how I am sitting here typing this, sharing this with all of you and watching as my chest rises and falls, this is as close to a miracle as I think I'll ever get. And, for now, this is enough.