

2025 ADULT CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST WINNING ENTRIES



First Place

The Echo Between the First and Last



I am stitched together by so many factors
Sweet tea and homemade biscuits and gravy
Bunny shaped cakes on Easter
Gravel roads and hiking mountains

Strong women
Real men
Southern hospitality
City slicker

We are the sum of our parents
Their parents
The kids at school
We soak up everything, creating our own life experiences

How we live is up to us
We shape our own direction
Making our own choices

Make it the most enjoyable experience you can
We are on borrowed time
If you are afraid of something, do it
If everyone says you can't, do it twice

Do the things you want to do
Create a life you don't need an escape from
Love hard, make mistakes
In the end, live with no regrets
This life is meant to be lived, treasured, savored

You cannot choose your first memory
But you can choose your last

About Christy Granger

Christy is a Michigan-based writer and poet. Author of *Broken by Beauty: The Beauty of Broken Bonds*. Trying to change the world, one word at a time!



Second Place

Lighthouse

There are times you don't know something and then you do.

It's a moment when we're woken from our routine lives – sometimes by a blast, others by a whisper – demanding to know why. But questions like this mean nothing in a world refusing to surrender meaning.

My wife has terminal cancer. But this story is not about my wife...

The story I want to account for here is about my dad and our relationship and how for the six decades of my life he was alive and the six years that passed since he passed I never felt closer to him than I do now.

You think you'll have words for this sort of thing but you don't. You just start explaining from the beginning and hope it gives shape to what you feel.

We buried my mom together – my dad and me. My mom had a stroke and died – slowly – about four months later after first spending time in the hospital and then coming home for a bit and then finally and inevitably entering hospice in an assisted living facility.

Through it all my dad knew she was never going to recover and now that it's my turn to be home every day and every night and watch my wife die – slowly – I feel a depth of understanding between my dad and me that we never reached until now and maybe never could without each of us sharing that raw feeling of being alone in a room with someone you spent most of your life with and one of you is dying.

That's what this story is about.

After all these years, my dad and I – peers.

This is the first thing I'll tell him when I see him again...



ABOUT PETER POULOS

After earning his Master of Arts in Organizational Communications & PR from Wayne State in 1995, Peter has spent the next 30 years in leadership positions while marketing and fundraising on behalf of local nonprofits including the Michigan Humane Society, United Way for Southeastern Michigan, and the Detroit Historical Society among others. He currently serves as the Executive Director of the Trenton Educational Foundation, and is on the Board of the Trenton Rotary Club and the Open Book Theatre.

Third Place



Never again will I cook you a meal
Never again will you bring me to heel
Never again will I hear you say
"You read too much." Oh, why did I stay?!

Never again will I hear that spark
Or smell the marijuana from dawn until dark
Never again will I always put first
YOUR needs over mine—hunger, sex, thirst
Never again will I fetch you a beer
For you I will never again shed a tear
Never again will I change my hair
Just to be met by your angry glare
Twirling around for you, smiling, waiting...
"If it were any shorter, we wouldn't be dating."
That's what you told me, word for word!
I looked at you, thinking I must have misheard
But nope. I should have picked up on the signs
I should have seen through your ridiculous lines
"Just being honest, babe, you really can't hate
Would you rather I lie to you, tell you it's great?"
Never again will I have to say STOP
To sexual advances you wouldn't drop
Never again will you being high
Justify you being such a bad guy
Never again will I curl in a ball
You towering over me, a screaming waterfall
Never again will I walk on a shell
Wandering around, trapped in your spell
Never again will you make me feel dumb
I'll never again be Under Your Thumb
Never again will I write things for you
'Cuz grammar was something you just didn't do
Never again will I let out a sigh
Seal for you an envelope, 'cuz you were just too high
Never again will I take your dirty plate
And wash it...and dry it...and put it away
Never again will I prepare your burrito
Ask you to put it together...veto
Never again will I vacuum your floor
...Windex and execute every single chore
Never again I'll put sheets on the bed
Do all of the shopping, from lightbulbs to bread
"My life," you declared, "is exactly the same
As it was before I met you." (in my head: LAME)
Never again will I follow routine
Clear table, wash dishes, everything clean...
A single pot soaking is left in the sink
And you, after I had just brought you a drink
Removed that one pot and put it aside
To rinse out your PIPE, your joy and your pride!
Never again will I wash all your clothes
Up and down three flights of stairs—every load
Never again will I fold to a t
Sort in your closet by color – OCD
Never again will I do all of that
With a painful sprained ankle, you maleficent rat
I fumbled, I know, I made MANY faults
And each time I took it, the verbal assault
"NOTHING is what you were before me
You're selfish and terrible and BAD, can't you see?
Waaaa I'm lame and I don't like it when you yell
I'm weak and pathetic and fragile as hell."
I wish I could say it's exaggeration
But I quote from my journal's exact narration
Never again will you make me believe
I wouldn't survive if I chose I leave
Never again will I clean up your puke
Tolerate condemnation, reproof
Never again will ANY excuse
Justify physical or emotional abuse
So thank you, ex-boyfriend, for tearing me down
For every single tear and for every single frown
Thank you for pushing me down to rock bottom
I stayed there through spring and through summer and autumn
But guess what? I finally rose from the ashes
Shielded with strength to repel any lashes
I rose, and I rose, and now I stand tall
With anchors in place so that I'll never fall
It's funny, 'cuz now I look down upon YOU
For the way that YOU are and the things that YOU do
I mourn for the fact that this isn't new
My story is one of a million #metoo
I'm better than I've ever been in my life
Thank GOD there's no baby...thank God I'm not your wife
I'm so far above you I barely see
Eyes that scowled, mouth that howled FINALLY
I'm free.
'Cuz now I'm saying this and this I say with certainty
That never, ever, EVER again...will any of that happen to me.

--Anonymous