Essay Subject Profile Snapshot

Language Arts 7—Kaye

She sat on the hard wood chair staring[[1]](#footnote-1) out at the birds congregating around the dozen feeders spread across the backyard. Her back porch was[[2]](#footnote-2) her sanctuary—her escape from the loaded calendar, packed full of doctor’s[[3]](#footnote-3) appointments; from the mirror that betrays her loss of youth; from the hair falling out in clumps not strands; from the dentures that have been ordered, not yet in her mouth.

The sparrows and finches and larks and swallows wait patiently on the branches of the yard perimeter for space to open up at the feeders. There’s a system and an order unbeknownst to humans that dictates feeding protocol: who feeds first and for how long? Songs fill the air, as lovers make plans to dine together and friends call others to join in the feast.

The hum of the lighter fires to life and ignites the cigarette. Defeating the purpose chemotherapy serves, my Mom inhales and savors the nicotine. The birds and the cigarettes: her only release from the reminder of the cards she’s been dealt. Escape from the realization her current predicament—her “situation”—is a product of her choices and her habits and her addiction that she feeds. The smoke from the cigarette billows in a suffocating cloud, stings my eyes, and scorches my nose. Quelling the urge to gag, I ponder the ease my mom handles the toxins.

It’s no wonder this chemo is nothing to her. She’s been filling her body with poison for years.

INGREDIENTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL SNAPSHOT

1. Change to present tense: “sits” & “stares”. Change from passive to active. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Change to “is” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. change to “doctor”. No possessive needed for this plural. If I kept: doctors’ [↑](#footnote-ref-3)