There is, in each of our lifetimes, a time to flourish and express our full potential.

However, we will each have our moment in our own time.

My mother’s a gloomy figurine, wearing black often with glasses so ancient they invade half of her face. Her hair is like an overused rug, dark and frizzy. Usually, she sleeps in her bed under a tube light that glows above my parents' bed. Sometimes, she comes out of her room, sits at the head of our petty table we happened to “save” from the dumpster, and stares mindlessly out the window. I have different memories of what awaited outside the window: warm sun and wet grass, freezing snow and platinum sky. Today, raindrops race down the window. The sky is pale and the backyard drowns in mini flood patches. She sways back and forth in the steel chair with her fingers intertwined over her belly. A mixture between a sigh and a moan releases from her thin, poignant lips.

“I think Sheila is retarded,” she proclaims, leaving her mouth open.

My gaze floats back to stuffed animals and Barbies. Bernadette's porcelain hands hold a blonde Barbie doll in her right and a retriever pup in her left. She controls them, elaborating their speech and gestures, fully living out their personalities. I, on the other hand, limply clamp onto a brunette Barbie and a tan pup with an unrealistic smile and an irritating red bow with white polka dots. Being distracted, I lose track of the dialogue in our game. Simply, Bernadette snaps her head at me.
“It's your turn.”

I continue on with my part, trying my best to be as animated as Bernadette. My speech is quiet and unnoticeable; only my siblings understand me. There is nothing that prevents me from speaking louder, but the house is already screaming and whenever I hear a loud voice of rage, fear consumes me, forcing me to cringe.

I cringe in a closet, hugging my knees as I rock back and forth. She's coming. I can hear her march right past the bathroom where Berna and Joe are safe behind a locked door. Damn, I should have hid in there with them. Berna told me to hide with them, but I darted to the closet instead. The doorknob turns. Immediately, I wish I was small enough to be unnoticeable in the blankets, but the wish is useless. The door opens. She loses her authenticity as I stare into her eyes: lucid and murky. I forget I call her mother.

“Are you going to call Dad! Are you!”

Naturally, I cringe farther into the closet. My eyes shut as I pretend I didn't see her waving the steel bar in the air, the steel bar she just smacked my brother with moments ago.

My eyes open. I'm curled up on the couch, holding my abdomen. It's two in the morning, and I have moved from my bed to the couch in hopes of comfort. My gut feels like it's splitting open, and despite being in pain for two days, my dad is convinced I have Joe's “sickness.”

My mother emerges from her bedroom toward me. Her eyes are filled with concern as she murmurs, “We'll take you to the doctor right when it opens. I don't care what Dad says.”

I nod halfheartedly, rolling onto my left side. I'm back in my room, except I'm on the floor, pulling at the carpet. In my feeble attempt to shut out the world, I lock the door. I can hear everyone yelling at each other: Berna, Joe, Emanuel, Dad, Mom. My earphones are in, but I can
still hear the chaos. A sigh spills out of my mouth, ripping each bud out of each ear. As I hug my knees closer to my chest, I linger on my mom's words, “I should have listened to Dr. Goode and used contraceptives or aborted you!”

_She didn't mean it_, I try, in hopes of convincing myself of some truth. Instead, my memories are trapped in all the times she's told me how Bernadette and I triggered her sickness to come back, how our pregnancy had somehow been cursed.

Why was it always my fault?

The tears come before I know it. I feel like I'm drowning over spoken words. The screaming grows louder, and I let out a cry. The cry blocks out some of the noise, relieving some of my pain. My cries become continuous, and eventually, my mind is free. As my prison collapses, a single light emerges. I watch it in awe as my thoughts fall into place.

Nothing was my fault.

I push my knees away from my chest, extending my legs. Then I roll onto my stomach, pushing the floor away from me into a plank.

I am worthwhile; I don't need to convince anyone of it either except myself.

I lift my hips high, stepping my right leg in between my hands. The carpet is replaced by gravel as I push up onto my fingertips. A single light now bleeds through the mountains, growing in intensity each second I count down.

Three...Two...One

Pushing off my back leg, I sprint toward the single light. My breaths even out the farther I run from home. The adrenaline spikes up within me as if I had chugged a cup of coffee. I lift my chin higher as the light spills over the mountain peaks, kissing my skin.
The time I flourish is now. The time to express my full potential is now.

However, I will never have my moment in my own time. Instead, I will endure it unto infinity.