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Response Paper 5

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Vulnerability

The story that stood out to me from the book The Celestial Omnibus is the story by Flannery O’Connor. He tells a story about a girl named Joy who seems to live her life in some misery until the bible seller comes along. When he comes along she opens up to him and then sadly he steals her leg. I wish there was more included about the reaction of Joy at the end of her story and if she had felt betrayed, or just on a high from the fact that she was finally vulnerable with someone. When Manley Porter steals Joy's leg out of the loft that they had climbed into, I would imagine that she had a time in which she felt very low, but eventually, I would think she may have turned to God with her defeat and found some sort of faith to get her through. In my life, I have had my fair share of vulnerability, and often, when being vulnerable, there is not always a positive reaction to it. I do not know if these reactions are negative because other people are not so comfortable with their own vulnerabilities? Too often, I think I took vulnerability as something that made us weak when in reality it is what makes us incredibly strong.

Looking back on middle school and high school, I experienced a great amount of bullying and mistrust throughout my life. I have shared a little about it in past papers but what I have not ever really shared about is the strained relationship I have with my mother. Although I love my mother very much, she has been someone who has not always been the strong support that you need in a parent figure. I have realized as I have grown older that she most definitely has some sort of mental illness and she does not realize the immense pain she can sometimes cause. She is someone who I can guarantee is not good with being vulnerable and so growing up, she has always tried to make me push my vulnerability inward. However, this is something I can not do.

In high school, I was on an anti-bullying committee and we had a huge assembly every four years for the entire student body where students gave presentations and told real-life stories and everyone was to open their eyes and their hearts if only for the day. I got elected to be on a panel in which I spoke about some of the bullying and stress I had been put through by others. I told the story about being bullied for my weight and how hurtful words can be. I shared about times when I felt that I did not want to be alive anymore. The most interesting part about all of this when I look back on it is the fear that I had. Not about being vulnerable to the entire student body and several teachers, but scared that my mother would find out that I shared all of this. One of the hardest, most vulnerable times in my life as a developing teenager, I hid from my own parents because I was afraid of getting in trouble for making myself look weak. This is so incredibly sad to me.

The vulnerability is what can connect us to one another, even though in the story of Joy there is a con artist, it is a beautiful thing that she was able to open up. I just hope that she took it as a freeing moment in her life, rather than held shame for her vulnerability as I have with my family for so long. Vulnerability takes so much strength, and in showing we are vulnerable we show we are strong. As a sophomore in high school, I stood up for myself by being vulnerable. It felt powerful, and it also was a time in which I turned to my faith. All through the struggles of my life, I would lay in bed and pray to God to be with me. I would pray for guidance and strength. I truly feel that without God's guidance and a little faith I would have never been able to be so vulnerable in my life.

As I have gotten older, I realize that my Mother views vulnerability as a weakness because she really struggles with her own vulnerability. She struggles with getting in touch with her emotions and growing up she knew I was sensitive and so I truly believe she was trying to protect me. I commend myself for my strength though. I think it shows immense bravery that I went and did something so difficult all on my own, with not a whole lot of support. I knew that my story was something that deserved to be heard, no matter who wanted to support me through that.