


One Paycheck Away
Final Assessment Rubric

Name _____

Criteria	Possible Points	Points Earned
The author wrote creatively about the topic of homelessness.	0.....20 Not at all Completely	20
The author's writing displays empathy for homeless individuals and/or breaks stereotypes of homelessness.	0.....50 Not at all Completely	50
The author's writing contains few mechanical errors, such as spelling, capitalization or punctuation.	0.....10 Not at all Completely	8
The author's writing avoids the use of run-on sentences or sentence fragments.	0.....10 Not at all Completely	10
The author's writing is vivid, descriptive and imaginative.	0.....10 Not at all Completely	8
TOTAL	100	96%



Hello my name is David and I'm homeless. Yeah, yeah I know what you're thinking "go get a job" or "get off drugs" but I'm not a drug addict or mentally ill or simply lazy. I am a victim of circumstance.

I grew up in Brooklyn and had a fairly normal childhood. I had both of my parents and they were good ones. My mom was caring and compassionate and could make your day better by just being around and my dad was smart and always trying to teach me things. We lived in a modest three bedroom house on the outside of Brooklyn and that was the only home I ever knew. Everything was pretty much perfect until the fateful day. I was a freshman in school and I was in my third period English class when the school counselor walked in. She said "David can you please come with me" with apparent graveness in her voice. "Should I bring my things" I said. "Yes, you probably should". We get to her office a small room decorated liberally with all sorts of pictures and plants and things of that nature. The whole time I was thinking, if I were in trouble the principle would have been the one to pull me from class. Mrs. Gresham said " I have some bad news for you David, and I want you to prepare yourself," I said "What's going on" In my mind, I almost already knew, deep down, something horrible happened. "Your mom and dad were in a serious car accident and they have passed away" she said. First, disbelief. No she had to be lying. It's not true. Then a kind of profound emptiness almost like my body is hollow and only my exterior existed. Lastly, a realization she was not lying. Why would she? I am never going to see my parents again. "I'm very sorry, David" she said "I know that your parents were your only family and were trying to find somewhere for you to stay".

I got up from my chair quickly, the hollowness inside me feeling with horror and a sudden desire to get anywhere but where I was. Without a word, I ran out of the building, leaving my old life behind and trying to prepare for a new one.

That was ten years ago, I'm twenty four now. At first, it was very hard. I have a distinct memory of the first night I was in the shelter and the other homeless people beat me up and took my shoes and backpack. But I've grown up since then I spent four years dodging social workers and cops trying to take me to foster homes. When I turned eighteen I didn't have to worry about that anymore, just the extraordinary hunger and loneliness. I tried to get jobs here and there, but no one would hire me because of my obvious homelessness. Now I spend my time in soup kitchens and libraries around Brooklyn. Mostly I think about how different my life would be, if that cataclysmic event never occurred and I still had my parents.