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Off the Path (Why)

Kelsey Johnson

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After we finished the movie marathon I offered to try teaching him to ride again but with a slightly different approach this time. I hesitantly suggested that he learn the same way I had learned years earlier from my father. "Well I guess if you think it's the only way," he responded.

That Saturday afternoon Ben sat down on the bike, I put one hand awkwardly next to his and placed my other directly under the bike seat. Side by side we slowly lurched forward. If he began to lean to one side I would help him regain his balance. We were starting to gain speed when I saw a small smile emit from Ben's face as he confidently declared, "Let go!" Off he went performing one of the best street curb wipe outs I had ever seen. He got up with a whoop and a holler saying, "That's the furthest I've gotten this month!" We spent the rest of the day practicing and practicing until he was able to ride around the block confidently and completely by himself.

To this day Ben and I remember and revel in that bicycle bonding time between us. All along the course of teaching Ben to ride, both of us had known what needed to be done if he wanted to learn. In later years we talked about the process of teaching him. We found out that when we had debated over him learning the way my father had taught me we had both let pride get in the way. We had immediately thrown it out because our egos told us it would be too awkward. However, in actuality that process of learning deepened our relationship even further. We no longer let uncomfortable situations keep us from helping each other grow. We had moved from shallow friends to humbled brothers.

Off the Path (Why)

KELSEY JOHNSON

I wish to drift downstream
to forever, enveloped
in the liquid fire of
yesterday's leaves. Forever,
where laughter of Hamlin's
lost children is echoed,
remembered, in birdsong.
Forever, where the children
we were smear peachy-pink
paint clouds across a graying
blue twilight sky. Storm-tumbled
air whispers through damp hair,
calling to life a joy
that usually sleeps. For this
moment alone, I can see
with closed eyes. I can see
where the vivid souls
of the leaves go.

New Year's, 2011

SABRINA MENDOZA

Morning sun rose like a toast to life
and I, like a child of light

The new day yields new joys,
and transition from whence I lived.

Armed with dreams, I smile at history,
liberated from its grasp,
but not its lessons.