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11<sup>th</sup> Grade

### **The Moon and Me**

In my eighth grade English classroom, I stared blankly at a laptop. On it stood an article on how to deal with your teenager's rebellious phase. I didn't think about it much. When you're young, you never think about things like phases, because you're going through them, but in reality, the life of a human can be compared to that of the moon. Each month, the moon is born and dies. It takes on several faces, several identities, yet finds nothing that lets its true potential show until the full moon arises. People are like moons: we try on different clothes, different personalities, until we find the one that fits.

My crescent was the bad boy phase. Years of watching television, of seeing the girls want the skinny white boy with "good" hair, had taken its toll on my self-esteem. That was pretty evident by the scars scattered carelessly across my body like confetti. I would skip class, lie, not do any work, tell girls I smoked, drank, and did anything that made me seem edgy. My brother, Andrew, was a phenomenal rapper, so I spent hours watching BET Cyphers on YouTube, copying flows to later be performed by me—a 5-foot 2-inch chubby little black boy with a light Caesar fade. Alas, my soul and this phase were oil and water, in constant conflict. At the

height of my identity crisis I would find myself alone in the dark, crying, as a knife danced across my unscarred flesh. If this phase didn't fit, what would become of me? I would never be anything worth the life I've been giving if I could not force myself into this mold. If I wasn't what I had seen on TV, I was nothing. These thoughts dove deep into my chest, causing emotions so real I could feel the pain in my heart.

Throughout the years I've changed phases, I've gone from hell-raiser, to bully, to bullied, to jock, to artist, and nothing could fit just right. If I couldn't be any of the things society deemed "good" I'd be doomed to live my life as bad. But, just as the moon's phases show more light, my phases started to show more and more potential.

As a jock, I found I was a talented football player. As an artist, I was surprised at my ability to conjure words from the labyrinth of my mind, and to make them rhyme and flow in ways most people couldn't. My phases are nowhere near completion. This I've known for as long as I can remember. The difference is that instead of being petrified at the thought of not being done growing, I am both intrigued and excited to meet the person I am becoming. For I am the moon, and I have no doubt that the world will view me with the same admiration when I reach my final phase.