The Beginning

 I grew up in the south-side of Columbus, Ohio in what was a pretty decent neighborhood…or at least it was not too bad. Our neighborhood had its characters though, just as any other did. By far the “**green-house effect**,” the prostitute who had to be in her **MID-SIXTIES**, and the guy with the oodles of bellies were the most interesting and intolerable. Usually these were the people who had the police called on them, for drugs or driving on the sidewalk drunk; you know, the usual crimes.

I remember one night distinctly. I was at home with my mom, dad, sister, and brother. We were all sitting outside on the porch in the front yard when the swat team had surrounded the “**green-house effect**.”We called it this because the house was green and the people that lived in it at the time were horrible. They were typically drugged out of their minds on a daily basis, and they never paid any attention to their children, and because of this the children ran the streets. They smoked and were out of control. One of them left a cigarette burning in their house and it ended up burning down.

Oddly enough this didn’t seem like such a terrible event to me at the time. I didn’t feel sorry for these people who had lost their home, even though it would leave their six children without one as well. Instead I was just excited that these “bad” people were gone from the neighborhood. My mom seemed relieved; it would seem I should be too. Because your parents are always right, right? Wrong!

Problem solved?

 Now that the “**green-house effect**” was gone, there was not much crime and safety issues, or at least ones to be concerned about. The other people kept to themselves mostly. Our neighbors ended up moving to Kentucky and we had two homosexual men move next door. My father, being the prejudice person that he is, was appalled. It was because of this trivial prejudice that we moved.

**Like mother, like daughter**

At first being around all the stereotypes and prejudices made me small-minded, and feel the same way as my parents. Coming to a quiet country town even added to it. I felt like I was better than a lot of people because that ideal was reinforced in my brain. The people in this tiny town thought, and some still think they are better than people because they are white. I of course do not approve of this outlook, but at the time I didn’t question it. It was what I knew and how everyone else around me seemed to feel. I conformed to fit in, largely because it was one of the few ways I did fit in.

 I learned that being so harsh and prejudice was an outrageous thing to do. People are better or worse people because of their skin color; they are good or bad people based on **what they do** in life. However, this does not stop the judging. Even with the people who lived in the house that burnt down…I was and am judging them. Sure, they were “hillbillies,” and didn’t care for their children in a proper manner. At the same rate though, does that mean their kids should be judged as the future convicts of America? No. I have met amazing people who came from crappy home lives and are successful. Everyone should be given a chance and not be judged based on their parents, or how they were brought up. I surely wouldn’t want to be judged for my parent’s mistakes.

**Silly, complex, evil world**

Despite trying to make judging people go away, it still continues and will impact people’s lives. I have learned to try and restrain from getting caught up in judgments and prejudices because some of the most interesting people are different from me. Thinking they are unworthy for some dumb, delusional reason would hurt me more than them, and would cause me to miss out on a lot of wonderful people in my life.

Always, always a black sheep

Even from an early age, or probably more so then, I have been shy and timid and considered the odd ball. I am not sure why I have always put myself in this **bubble**, **refusing** to get to know people and not letting them in, although the main reason is probably do to **fear**- fear of rejection and of being judged. I know this basically stems from my over-judgmental family, who criticize everything less than perfection.

Growing up I never was the favorite, or the one anyone in my family related to, with the exception of my grandmother. I was not what they considered the perfectionist. I was and still am **not athletic** and was not the popular social light in high school. My two older half siblings and two younger siblings have been these things. The irony of this is I grew up in the shadows of my younger siblings, instead of them growing up in my shadow. They never have looked up to me for anything else other than being the brainiac, who can help them edit their papers or come up with a workable thesis.

It sucks having to be the one who is seen as only that. Am I not more than a pile of straight A’s to my family? Am I not more than the weird girl who has yet to find her voice in other ways than writing? I wish these answers were a definite **yes**, but since they are my family members they tend to lie about thinking negative things about me. The rare exception would be if we were fighting. My sister mainly tells me how odd she thinks I am, and how out of touch with style and other “in” things I am when we are in midst of an argument. She becomes my best friend again, however, when she needs help spelling words.

The thought of being just a **helper** rather than an actual family member has always caused me to feel poorly about myself. In this aspect I wanted to fit in and be the older sibling that the younger ones look up to. I didn’t want to be the socially awkward “weirdo” who is only helpful when tough assignments come up. Not fitting in with others is one thing, but not fitting in with your family is another. Many Christmases, birthdays, and Thanksgivings pass with blank stares and the realization that I never will be the one who is interested in discussing the latest Ohio State football game, or how to apply spray on tan products. I understand that this makes me unique, but sometimes being different is **overrated** at times.

**The Marked Disappointment**

 Failing at sports when everyone else in your family is awesome at them inevitably creates a **disconnect**. I of course realized this when I played baseball when I was younger. When I was on a team my dad coached, I did not even play much, and when I did I decided it was boring. Instead of participating in the game, I sat in the outfield and **picked dandelions** and tried to come up with pictures in the clouds. Yes, yet another clue of me being an incredibly odd and self-contained individual.

 From the time I was around ten I have thoroughly enjoyed writing and drawing. I drew cartoons constantly and tried to impress my parents with my art, however my dad would always come up with a negative criticism. This continued even in my high school art class, and only somewhat bugged me at that stage in life. The **nit picking** of Bart’s skateboard being too tall no longer had much of impact on me. Nor did my mom’s constant lectures about why I do not tan, hang out with my sister, or wear makeup.

 My thoughts at this time were that I did not care what was expected of me. I didn’t have to fit into this ideal mold of impossible perfection. I became more of my own person and finally was comfortable with myself. I no longer thought I was “fat” as my sister had pounded into my head for years. In reality I never had been, and was merely an average weight…but as with everything in my family average is not okay. I must be perfect on all levels, including my weight. I was more worried about school, learning about politics, and figuring out what to do with my life. Even then I knew I wanted to do something with writing and art.

Internal Challenge

The second year at Capital I went through what most people go through at way earlier stages, like in high school. I finally had had my first relationship which started before summer ended my freshman year of college. I finally let someone in, let all the walls and barriers between me and other people that I create down..only with him. **Big Mistake.** I was dumped, **heartbroken**, and incredibly depressed. I ended up letting the sadness drag me down for a while, but then I finally saw the light. I was able to move on and accept that not all things in life work out, and that the reasons why things don’t work out is not because I have incurable flaws.

 I then decided to further embrace who I am, and let things go if they don’t work out. Moving on and letting go of people in life is not always simple, but it can be done and can be for the better. It is an inevitable thing that happens in life.

New Year

 College continues on, as does life. The stress becomes overwhelming between work, school, and all of the other things I am involved in, but I get over it. I realize what needs to be done to achieve my dreams, and try to have fun with life, attempting to escape the bubble again and walls that were reconstructed.