

Let Go

by Sabine Reiter, Gold Creek School - Judges' Choice, Year 7-8 category, 2025

1. Rain droplets begin to patter against my window, streaking the stained glass. The blank canvas stares me in the face, and I have half a mind to put my fist through it. Discarded tubes of paint lie unopened next to me, and my grip tightens on the wooden handle of my brush. The ideas that used to flow so easily have grown scarce, and time seems to stop, mocking me.

I sigh and lean backwards, face buried in my hands. This used to bring me joy and peace, and now…

Orientation to the world of the blocked, struggling creative through:

- First person **POV**, (allows for empathy and closer understanding of the protagonist).
- **Setting** is established through inference (painter's studio/bedroom). The rainy weather mirrors the character's mood and the scene's atmosphere.
- **Narrative voice** characterises frustration through inner monologue and character action.
- **Personification**: 'canvas stares me in the face' and time 'mocking' the protagonist.

The **characterisation** of the narrator is further developed through description of actions of leaning back and burying face in hands, and changes of state of mind.

2. I lie still for a while, yearning for the inspiring spark of hope that is so lost to me now. I need to do something, otherwise I have to face failure. If I could just get something…

The complication in the narrative arc is continually expressed through **inner monologue**: it is the inner conflict that the protagonist is experiencing.

'spark' is used for the first time: a recurring motif associated with the metaphor of 'fire' to represent creativity.

3. "Would you like to help with supper?"

The soft voice calls out to me from the woman leaning against my doorway. Relieved at the distraction, I eagerly stand, following her out into the kitchen.

A short **dialogue** exchange is used to introduce the only other character.

Author chooses to characterise the 'woman' ambiguously (partner/mother). This could be to foster engagement, asking the reader to reframe as more information is revealed.

4. A few minutes later, my spirits already lift in my mother's calming presence.

The muted ambience of rain fills my mind and I quietly hum to myself as I peel potatoes.

A hint at early **resolution of conflict** expressed implicitly through a change in character's feelings and behaviour. This is reflected in the '…muted ambience of rain'. This is also an example of **sensory imagery** of sound.

5. "So, what were you doing in your room for so long? You usually come out for tea."

She glances at my hands, which have turned stationary, before bending down to poke at the embers in the hearthfire oven. The quiet crackling of fire fills the room, clearing my mind as I try to articulate the complicated mess of feelings into a cohesive sentence.

Author uses **character behaviour** and **dialogue** to develop the **theme** of creative block and inner conflict.

The embers, hearthfire oven, and fire could be interpreted as a **metaphor** for the "kindling" of creative spirit.

Symbolism with fire and heat representing energy, transformation, passion, and the creative 'spark' of new ideas.

More **sensory imagery** (sound) with crackling fire.

6. "Well, I can't… I can't create anything." I breathe in and out, beginning to make sense of my words. "No matter how hard I try. And believe me, I'm trying, but… Nothing feels right."

Further revelation of protagonist's inner conflict expressed through **dialogue** and **actions**.

Breathing in and out is a **motif** related to inspiration and expiration.

7. She straightens up and dusts coal off her apron, gazing into my expectant eyes.

"You're trying too hard, my dear. Of course, no ideas will come if you lie in wait for them!" She places a hand on my shoulder. "You must let go." The words shoot through me like little arrows, piercing my soul and releasing something new. A revelation? I'm still unsure.

The character's physical actions indicate rising action, heralding the possible **resolution** of the complication in the narrative arc.

Combining character action and dialogue to produce a meditative tone and convey **theme** of intergenerational connection and mentorship.

Title of story 'Let Go' quietly referenced.

Layered **simile** and **metaphor**: words: 'shoot through me like little arrows, piercing my soul'.

Symbolism: 'little arrows' represent cherubs/angels/love. Talk of the soul relates to artistic pursuit and the subconscious.

8. "Take moonlit walks, breathe in and out, and take notice of the aspects of life that fill your heart with joy."

She smiles, like she knows a part of me that I don't yet understand.

Motif of breathing (see above). **Theme** of importance of wellbeing and its connection to creativity is expressed.

Theme of intergenerational connection and mentorship made explicit.

9. We sit down for supper together and listen to the sounds of nature from the window. I slowly bite into some chicken and the salty aroma travels through my body. This state of calmness envelops me in a warm hug and I wonder if this is what my mother meant. Taking time to notice; not expecting greatness. Already I feel a sense of contentment. "I think I know what you're talking about now."
I smile at my mother. "Thank you."

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Use of combined **sensory** imagery to convey emotion: sounds of nature; salty aroma.

Personification: calmness envelops me in a warm hug.

Variety of sentence types used, including effective example of the semicolon to express philosophical musing.

Story arc moving towards **resolution** of conflict.

Simple gentle dialogue maintains **tone** of narrative.

10. The next day, I didn't try to make anything spectacular. I sat by lakes and fed the ducks. I enjoyed a serene cup of tea in the yard. I simply let myself be.

The day after that, I began to notice small things, like birdsong, and the clouds in the starlit sky. And the day after that, I picked up my paint-brush again. The creativity seemed to burst from the bristles of the tool as I let my mind guide my hand through the canvas.

It didn't come back to me immediately, but slowly…

My spark returned.

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Further examples of how to mix up **sentence lengths** and **types** (simple, compound, complex) to create rhythmic prose and make the writing more interesting.

Theme of 'letting go' reiterated.

Denouement: **resolution** of narrative, told in gentle prose to maintain **tone** and reiterate the slow, gentle **rhythm** of the narrative.

Alliteration with 'burst from the bristles'.

Pace of narrative reflected in the writing.

Recurring **motif** of 'spark'/reiteration of fire **metaphor**.

11. The sun bathes the room in a warm glow as I stare at a simple image of a lake surrounded by a pine forest. I look into this painting and I no longer see imperfections. I see everything I yearn to be. The slight glint of the lake, the whistle in the wind.

Literary devices employed to create imagery:

- **Personification**: The sun bathes the room
- **Alliteration**: sun, stare, simple, surrounded; slight glint; whistle in the wind.

12. I feel a warm hand on my shoulder, and smile as I look up at my mother. "Thank you."

She gazes proudly down at me. "Now then, how about that cup of tea?"

Reiteration of **sensory imagery** of sun's warm glow with use of 'warm hand on my shoulder,' conveying the emotion of warmth.

Concluding sentence encapsulates the warm gentle **tone** of the narrative (including **symbolic** warm tea) and underscores the story's resolution .