

Scatterbrained

“Do you think in your head?”

“Think in your head?”

Where else do you think?

Surely, not in your heart, that would be silly.”¹

As the pitch black of night greets your neighborhood, the air turns crisp, the birds return to their nests, and the sleepwalkers emerge to satisfy their cravings. Unlike your slumbering family, however, you lay wide awake. Your mind is racing across vast distances that your conscious can't keep up with. A neglected to-do list on the floor creeps upon you like a predator, threatening to kill all sense of peace within you. The only solution you can find lies in a drawer, hidden from all eyes other than yours, a guard of your deepest secrets.

You begin your escape; into another dimension, an empty landscape awaits for you to fill up with a magnificent city. Your emotions are buildings. The stresses you hold are cars, traveling atop of roads of responsibilities. To create order when your world feels like it's in chaos² is the mission you seek.

You reflect on the events that had occurred throughout your day. There is nothing to cry over. So why do you feel such a burden? Was it the bad grade you received on your math midterm? The approaching college application deadlines? Every single negative moment of the

¹ Charissa Vesurai, n.d., n.d., accessed December 10, 2020.

² Watson, L Renee, et al. “Journaling for Mental Health.” *Content - Health Encyclopedia - University of Rochester Medical Center*, 2020, www.urmc.rochester.edu/encyclopedia/content.aspx?ContentID=4552.

day suddenly piles up into a looming skyscraper, ready to crush everything you have worked hard to create.

*Is there a fear that's holding me back right now?*³

The thought of the future pops into your mind. You enjoy the irony of whatever choices you make today being meaningless to the future you, who will reflect upon this and laugh at it. This mindset of your actions becoming insignificant gives you a sense of calm. You understand your problems won't last forever, and however you face your stresses today won't affect your life in ten years. You look around to the city of sentences you have built, and the bustling traffic of anxiety has finally died down to a hum.

The end of the page has arrived. The scattered thoughts are now orderly, and a sigh of relief escapes your lungs. The soft singing of crickets returns you to your ordinary world. You close your journal, set down your pen, and go to sleep, knowing you'll return tomorrow, ready to rebuild your city.

³ Gray, Sophie. "Journaling Helped Me Rebuild My Life-Here's How to Start a Journal Practice That Can Help You." *SELF*, 2019, www.self.com/story/how-to-start-a-journaling-practice.

Intention Statement:

“Scatterbrained” is a lyrical essay about the journey of journaling, consisting of taking your thoughts and feelings and converting them into writing. I chose to write this lyrical essay because I only recently started journaling during quarantine, and it has helped me through some tough experiences. When I first began writing, I pictured my nightly routine and attempted to portray it in a more lyrical manner with a lot of sensory imagery. Throughout the piece, I used extended metaphors and imagery to connect with the audience and portray what I envision while writing. The essay follows a lyrical structure, as the events that I write about in my journal are often chronological from how they occurred throughout my day. The empty landscape represents the empty pages of the journal awaiting my writing, and the city I build are my thoughts and experiences. The city is full of bustle as my thoughts are scattered (hence the title). The opening lines are quoted from Charissa’s personal journal, which inspired me as the thoughts in my head come from the heart, but are so complex that it requires much work to form them into sentences on a page. My research sources were helpful in gathering other perspectives on journaling and the mental health benefits that come with it. I decided to give space to every direct quote in order to signify their importance, as well as italicize them to make them appear as my thoughts. During peer review, my readers enjoyed the content and imagery, but suggested that I reveal what the essay was about (a journal) at the very end rather than at the very beginning. I adjusted the layout as well as added in research sources and footnotes in order to make the essay more lyrical rather than a story. I was inspired by my film I created recently for college applications about a young woman being transported into the world of her diary, and wanted to convey the mystical feeling I got when journaling myself.