

2001 HSC Four Unit English Major
Work.

Short Story:

'Fall'

Candidate number:
10078482

Centre number: 8464

**'Have you ever lost your way,
Have you ever feared another day.
Have you ever misplaced your mind,
Watching this world leave you behind.**

**Have you ever worn thin,
Have you ever never known where to begin.
Have you ever lost your belief,
Watching you faith turn into grief.**

**In a world that is unwhole,
You have got to fight just to keep your soul.
Some would rather give than receive,
Some would rather give up before they believe.'**

I have observed Katrina for many months. Watched her eat, watched her bathe and watched her sleep. I have been able to see the pain, the stress, the joy and the compassion in her eyes like no other. I wonder as to Katrina's satisfaction at her performance as a nurse. I wonder where her mind constantly wanders.

I jogged down the hallway in my typical white nurse's shoes as I pulled my long black hair into a ponytail with my fingers. I pushed the locker-room door open with my foot and started to enter the combination of my locker. I changed my

clothes and noticed my mate Krystal's stuff on the floor next to me. I walked into the showers and yelled to her that our shift started in two minutes. I was greeted with a wave of her foot under the shower door.

I ran to the toilets and slammed the door behind me. I retched again and again into the sink in front of me, my face unrecognisable. I stood up shakily and wiped my mouth with the back of my hand. My knees gave way and I dropped to the floor. I curled up in a ball and vomited again. Tears streamed down my face uncontrolled. I felt a face and a hand in front of me but I could not see them. I talked, my voice coming out in harsh rasps that sounded like sandpaper on sandpaper. I whispered over and over, questioning wondering. Where had my composure gone? Why was I like this? Why did she mean so much? What had happened? Who was controlling this that they would let her talk animatedly to me about her future plans and then drop into a critical state the next second? It was an alarming thing to watch and it horrified me beyond explanation.

I walked behind Katrina and watched her face twist in indecision. Protocol said that she must have another nurse present when she removed drugs from the drug cabinet but Clare's dose was overdue. Katrina knows that her dosage was late because she was comforting Mr. Baker. Katrina squeezes her eyes shut as she places the key in the lock and turns it. I stare at her face and she turns. She takes the vial of medication, checks the label carelessly as a means of habit rather than safety and slams the cabinet. I watch the curve of her neck as she

lowers her head to attach the padlock. She picks up a syringe from the sealed box next to the cabinet and I notice that her actions are becoming slow and deliberate. I follow the unusually small and cautious steps, and am alarmed when her head whips round. I hold my breath, as Katrina's beautiful eyes are a mere centimetre away from mine. They remain unfocused on my face. She turns and continues to Clare's room.

Katrina curled a strand of black hair behind her ear and straightened her uniform. She is not aware of my presence and doesn't believe in me but I watch her. I don't try to make her believe in me but I do exist anyway whether Katrina is comfortable with my presence or not.

I strolled into F ward, which was the itsy bitsy ward of general patients that didn't fit or didn't really need to be in their specific wards. There was no room for Mr. Baker in the cardiac ward and he was one of my assigned patients. I had backed up to do a double shift because I was needed and this was the dreaded second. To revive myself I went into the kitchen and brushed my teeth. I wasn't into coffee as a get up and go. Caffeine is not our friend. Alison, the NUM or nursing unit manager of the ward came in to make herself a cup of tea and to give me the run-down on Mr. Baker.

The doors to the carpark of St Marks open with a gentle swish as I watch Katrina Roberts place her sunglasses over her blue eyes and step out into the heat of

the day. Her fast steps tell me that she has a longing to get home. Her shift was hectic and difficult today, I know, and in her mind, there are many things to ponder over when she gets home.

Katrina pulled up in her driveway and switched off the engine. Her head fell back against the seat and she breathed in deeply. She turned sharply as if confronting an unwelcome visitor in her back seat. She quietly scolded herself and heaved herself out of the car to try and conquer the stairs to her apartment.

I write down the lyrics that are forming in my head and pick up my guitar. I walk over to the window seat that overlooks the city lights. My watch beeps. 1am. I open the windows and the breeze feels like a million light feathery fingers stroking my face. I play one of my old favourites and sing strongly out into the night sky. My thoughts and experiences of the day float out with the words and notes that I am singing and it feels almost as if they lift me up and out the window with them.

I walked into paediatrics 10 minutes before my shift. I put my bag in the locker, slammed the door shut as I devoured an apple bar and spun around right into Nurse Paul, the NUM of paediatrics. She apologised and my face turned scarlet. She smiled at me and told me to take my time or I'd get ill. She glanced at the half-eaten bar in my hand and said she'd walk me through the patients when I was ready. She was a lovely NUM and a fantastic nurse. She had told me on

many accounts how good a nurse I was, particularly when she observed me with the kids. She said I had a gift, a nature that children immediately trusted and bonded with and so she was glad to have me on the ward whenever she could.

I walked into Room 2 of paediatrics and glanced at Katie Marshall in bed 4. After I observed her pale face and the tube that had been placed down her throat that looked like it was choking her, I picked up her chart. That was the difference between doctors and nurses. Doctors went straight to the paper and then to the person.

Katie was a victim of an overdose. It made sense when I looked at her little body. She had taken approximately 15 of her grandmother's sugarcoated blood-pressure pills before she was found. The pills lowered her blood pressure, placing her into a coma.

I shut the door quietly and gave her family a reassuring smile. Her brother nodded and slid his arm around his mother. She was a lovely, motherly looking woman. Most patients' mothers are.

I turned Clare over and felt a tear threatening to slide down my cheek. Her back was a montage of coloured bruising, the result of her being struck with a baseball bat several times by her husband after an argument about feeding the dog. This was an aspect of nursing that I'd had the greatest difficulty in

mastering. Clare's face contorted in pain, her eyes squeezing tight as she tried to force a smile and say thank you. My face threatened to do the same as she reached for the mirror and used her hands to examine her battered face. I checked that she had everything that she needed and handed her the morphine button which, when pushed, delivered Clare a regulated dose of morphine to help her deal with the post-surgery pain.

**'Each heart is a pilgrim,
Each one wants to know,
The reason why the winds die,
And where the stories go.
Pilgrim in your journey,
You may travel far,
For pilgrim it's a long way to find out who you are.'**

Mr. Baker was a pretty critical patient but one of the cardiac wards was temporarily closed and the other was so backed up that only the most critical and specific were looked after. The rest were spilled over into the more general wards like ward F. Mr. Baker, 49, was overweight and had just had coronary artery bypass graft surgery which was pretty serious surgery. He'd come up form post-op and was awake but in a lot of pain. He had started to refuse the drugs and was doing it incredibly tough. He was at risk of having another heart attack

with the stress and had also signed a do not resuscitate order. This patient was what we dubbed a Rubik's cube.

I walked in to perform half-hourly obs on Clare and saw a smile creep over her face as she saw me. I sat on the edge of her bed and she reached to squeeze my hand. She looked so thankful for my care and seemed to be coping with the physical and emotional bruises. Then I played nurse, taking her pulse, checking her vitals and out of the corner of my eye I saw Clare blush which meant that she had to go to the toilet. I helped her out of bed.

I rolled the lollipop around in my mouth and turned the corner straight into Mitchell Peters. Mitch was the resident bus driver or ambo of St Marks and his lopsided grin matched with his total lack of seriousness reminded me of a puppy dog. He wrapped his arms around me in a totally unexpected hug before practically yelling to the hospital how gorgeous I was. I smiled. He had short sandy brown hair and a small mischievous face that was only one year older than mine. I regretfully told him that I had a date. I watched his face fall before laughing and finishing my sentence, mentioning that it was with my grandma. His smile returned and he yelled after me that he would take me out one of these days.

*The door to the gym clicks open and Katrina looks up at the clock on the wall.
1:52am. She has come straight from work. She always looks the part in a black*

Adidas crop top and black bike pants. She pulls her black hair tight into a ponytail high on her head. The tight feeling lifts her face and exhilarates her. She crosses the empty room and switches the stereo on. Her body starts to move as the dance music pumps out a hard, loud beat. Katrina pulls on a pair of jet black boxing gloves. Her face sets itself into a determined glare, at the blue punching bag in front of her. I look into Katrina's eyes. I see her opening the vault and taking out the pain, aggression and frustration of her day. She moulds it onto the punching bag. I watch with interest at the presence and clarity of her mind. The sharpness strikes me as she visualises with deep concentration. I jump as she strikes the first blow. Her small fists pound the bag and her sheer force fills the room. Her focus remains unshifted. I can see the tension flow down her arms and into the bag. The sweat gathers on her forehead, nose and hair and she pants. Her breathing is fast, gulping for air. The song finishes on the radio and Katrina feels drained and calm. Her breathing deepens and she picks up the towel at her feet. She wipes her face and neck and glances at the bag. I can feel the niggling inside her and the rush of adrenalin springs her to her feet and she jumps around the bag, kicking and punching.....faster.....faster.....fierce.....brick.....rock.....slamming.....force.....pain.

I had dealt with domestic abuse patients often but with every patient you were watching or, I guess observing, the consequences of the hell that they live in. Their lives were a scary place and a hell that I personally never wanted to visit.

As Clare swung her legs over the bed she reached for my shoulder. Offering it to her I reached for her wheelchair with my other arm and Clare's grip loosened as she fell to the floor and started convulsing. I hit the panic button on the wall and tried to check her vitals as her body pulsed and jerked.

Katrina drops to the floor gasping for air. Her body shakes with the aftershock of the massive force she exerted and she feels drained. Like she has liquified and melted into the floor. She pours water over her face and throws the towel around her shoulders as she shakily gets up and heads for the showers.

Katrina believes that she has control. She follows protocol, hitting the panic button and making room for the doctor to attend to the fitting body of Clare on the floor. Katrina believes that this fit is a result of a chemical imbalance in her brain or a malfunction of her body. It is actually an allergic reaction to the drugs that Katrina injected into her drip an hour ago. The drugs that I wanted Katrina to place in her body an hour ago.

Katrina writes such beautiful songs. They release so many emotions for her and it is such a sight to see. I sit on top of the building across the road and watch her face, listening to the beautiful strong voice carrying over the air. The words of her songs are so different from the person that she is. They are romantic and philosophical songs. They are songs that are all about me.

I turned Mr. Baker over and calmly reassured him that we were doing everything that we could to make him comfortable without the help of the drugs. He smiled and thanked me before reminding me softly that God had control of his body and he would not pollute it with mind and body numbing chemicals. I tried to explain to him that they were necessary or he would likely have another heart attack. He shifted his large frame and emphasised, rather angrily, that the drugs would dull the pain, which was quieting what his body was trying to tell him. I nodded and left him be.

Mr. Padriac Ford, CEO of St Marks stormed in and marched over to the main desk in ward F, demanding to know who was caring for the cardiac patient, Mr. Baker. I came out of the utility room and announced that I was that person. He turned and pounced on me demanding that we speak in the sunroom immediately.

One way leads to diamonds

One way leads to gold

Another leads you only

To everything you're told

In your heart you wonder

Which if these is true

The road that leads to nowhere

The road that leads to you.

Once he had me cornered, Mr. Ford asked me about the patient's condition. I informed him the in most medically profound voice I had that he was critical due to his refusal of medication. I watched the chief executive officer of St Marks hospital, fume, simmer, scorch and eventually explode. He demanded that I force medication into Mr. Baker and, between hisses and spits, demanded to know why I had let this happen. I turned and calmly explained to him that we did not force treatment of any kind onto patients that did not want it. I glanced up to see the steaming volcano crumple and fall into wracking sobs. He placed his head in his hands and whispered that I had to do everything I could to make his father comfortable and keep him alive. I stood and reminded him that that was exactly what he employed me to do, slightly annoyed at his treatment of me, and did a great impression of him storming out. I know that we accused Mr. Ford of not having any contact with the patients, but seriously this was ridiculous.

Thrashing, moaning, wailing and a scream that pierced the air emerged from Room 5. The patient was 18, a high-class snob of a teenager from the northern suburbs with a richly exotic name to match. Sorcha's body pulled and jerked against the restraints on her bed, her long slender legs and arms straining to loosen the grip that the orderlies had on them. I injected a dose of tranquiliser into her thrashing thigh and her screaming died down to a whimper. She sniffed and her chest heaved as her body tried to regain some oxygen. She slowly fell asleep.

I pulled up in St Marks car park 15 minutes early. I decided to skip my muffin and start early because I wanted to spend some extra time with Katie Marshall, the accidental overdose in paediatrics. I walked up the stairs, changed in my locker room and took the elevator up to paediatrics. I hadn't seen Katie in quite a while because I hadn't been called up to paediatrics in about three weeks. Katie was still up there in room 2 bed 4, I checked with the nurse at the desk. I was disappointed to learn that she was still unwell but glad that she was not back with her parents.

As I watched Katrina I saw that she had the right compassionate nature for her profession. Her standard of care was excellent but she didn't fit into her life. A round peg in a square hole.

Mr. Baker's daughter, Beth was standing next to the window. Katrina walked in the room and went over to Mr. Baker to check his pulse. Beth looked up from the park view and smiled. I always thought of the consideration that the builder of this hospital had in making all of these rooms a window with a view of the park across the road. It made such a difference in the moods and spirits of the patients and their families. Beth leaned over her father and gave him a kiss on the cheek. She then settled down in a chair next to the bed and grasped his hand. Her face was much calmer today and more accepting of her father's situation. After the outburst of Mr. Ford, it was comforting to know that Beth was here, being the controlling and calming woman influence that was usually the key

in helping families hope in the hospital. She had gone to take her brother for a coffee and together they had talked out their father's choice not to take drugs. It had been the best thing for Mr. Ford. Both Mr. Ford and his sister were having a great deal of trouble dealing with their father's choice but it was one that they had to accept. Mr. Baker had been unconscious since she had arrived so it had been impossible for any of us to get a reason for his choice but he had signed an order not to administer medication. There was nothing we could do. Their father was dying right in front of their eyes. Unless he woke up and revoked the order then there was nothing we could do to keep their father alive for them. There wasn't much chance that he was going to wake up either. His heart was getting very weak, his pulse fading more and more each day.

My keys clattered on the dish as I collapsed on the bed that afternoon. I rolled over and hit the PLAY button on the answering machine.

Katie was still in a coma, I observed as I approached bed 4. It would take so long for her to recover, she was so ill. I realised that what had happened with her grandmothers blood pressure pills was an accident but that didn't lessen the pain or the anger that I felt when I held the hand of the little girl that might be lost to the world. I was still sitting there 30 minutes later when her parents walked in. They stared angrily at the intrusion. I introduced myself and explained that I was a nurse at St Marks and that I had nursed their daughter a couple of weeks ago. I also explained that I had not been called back to this ward and so wanted to

visit Katie and see how she was doing, hoping that this would dissolve some of their anger. Katie's father placed an arm protectively around his wife and they moved over to guard their daughter. His words were as sharp as knives when he explained that they needed no more compassionate nurses coming up to chide them on their parenting and offering counselling to stop the neglect of their child. I calmly stated that I had no such intention and Katie's mother looked slightly regretful. She whispered a thank you as her husband bellowed at me to get out. I walked out of the room and jumped at the slamming of the door behind me. I glanced at my watch and groaned. My shift started 45 minutes ago. God, what the hell was I thinking? I was never late for a shift and didn't know what was happening to me.

**'My care for you,
Is from the ground up to the sky.
It's over, under, up above,
Down below and to the side.'**

She arrives at Clare's room to find she is asleep. She checks the chart at the end of the bed, reassures herself that Clare is due for a dose of medication and moves over to Clare's drip by the bed. She stares at the syringe in her hand. Her eyes roam over it and she is confused as to why she picked it up and brought it with her. Clare's medication is to be injected into her drip. Then her hands pick up the syringe and extract the drug from the vial into the syringe. She

injects this into Clare's drip and forgets the confusion. I take a few steps back and sit down.

Sorcha awoke from her sleep, looking better but in no better mood. I was thankful that she was no longer screaming. She glared at me, her stomach retched and she threw up all over me. She grinned as I left.

I reemerged in surgical scrubs to a smirking Sorcha reading a Cleo magazine. She recited from her bible that nurses were supposed to be the number two turn-on for males aged 17-25 if they were naked under their uniform. She looked me up and down in my blue scrubs and mentioned that I must have missed out. The men, she said, didn't go for surgeons, knowing full well what my job was.

Fate: 1) A supernatural power which supposedly designs an unchangeable and unavoidable plan for the course of a human life; fortune, lot, destiny. 2) death, destruction or ruin.

Clare's room was quiet and empty and Katrina was peacefully at work but I could feel what was about to happen and I knew what it would do to Katrina. I could do nothing to stop it, she wouldn't respond to me and I couldn't talk to her through her mind. So I sat back on the chair at the opposite end of the room and watched. Katrina folded Clare's blanket back up after administering the dose and patted it gently. Clare woke up from her long sleep and looked gratefully at

Katrina. Katrina raised the jug of water from the bedside table and poured Clare a glass. Katrina's thoughts moved back to nursing school and the importance placed on not developing relationships and friendships with patients as they were too difficult to continue with and led to a decrease in professionalism. Katrina smiled. She couldn't help this friendship. It sprung from Clare's neediness and Katrina's willingness to lend the extra hand and spend the extra time with Clare to help her get through the rough times she was experiencing. Their friendship was nice, it comforted both in their times of need, no matter how long they had known each other. Clare started to chat to Katrina about her plans for when she left the hospital and her face was as radiant as I had seen it. Then it happened. Her eyes rolled back in her head and her talking smile disappeared. She fell from the sitting position she was in, back onto the bed with a thump. The heart monitor flat-lined and Katrina felt for a pulse. There was none. Panic entered Katrina's brain and she clouded over. The other doctors entered the room and surrounded them. No, Katrina whispered to herself, you can't take her she's fine. Katrina turned her blank eyes to a doctor that asked her to perform CPR or move out of the way. The doctor threw a shocked and annoyed glance over his shoulder as Katrina backed away from the bed. She fell to her knees and vomited all over the floor.

'Places that we go

Feelings that change,

Although it seems so wrong

Together never again.

I miss you so much,

I want you to know.

Your words struck so deeply in me

And will never let go.

Yet they feel untouchable

And almost never said

Constantly changing their meaning

With thoughts inside my head.'

My throat ached and my eyes streamed. I watched Katrina's face curled up on the bathroom floor. It was the most pitiful sight I had seen and I ached to reach out and touch her. She had the worst news yet to come. Clare had become important and had meant something to Katrina as a nurse. I probed my fingers into her mind. The pain there was raw and harsh and hot to the touch. It was a sensation that was extreme, I wanted to leave myself there so much to feel and to comfort but my fingers were burnt. I pulled them away in pain.

Katrina walks into psychology with the same anticipation . . . or rather hesitation that all people walk into psychology with. She scans the walls that change each week. It is strange to see finger-painting on the walls and bright colourful

paintings describing up-coming events. She feels pity for the men and women of the ward who are mentally as young as the five and six year olds in the children's wards. She walks past two rooms and glances in them as she walks past. She slowly turns from the direction that she was walking and enters the room. I move into the room in front of her and sit in the chair to watch her face. Her expression changes to one of fear when she sees the pitiful writhing figure in the bed. She glances at the chart to find out how old he is. I reach out the fingers of my mind. 17. Was brought in from a party the night before and suffered from schizophrenia. The doctors didn't know what he had taken to trigger the attack and therefore they couldn't explain why he had constant fits and his medication, the normal medication prescribed for patients with his condition wasn't working.

I know what's wrong with you Katrina. I walk from her favourite window ledge to the bed and set myself next to her where I can stare into the deep blue of her eyes. I read them. I read the pain and the hurt that is coming from within. I wish that I could tell her. I wish that I could reach out and touch her. Maybe then she'd understand. She would know and could escape before the damage got any worse.

The figure on the bed writhed and pulled at the restraints that were holding him. His body jerked and twitched just like Sorcha had in Ward F but this body was straining to escape from itself. It was dying and had to be released. I moved over to the bed and examined his face as he quietened down. His face was quite

beautiful for a young man and he had very gentle features. It was calm and in control. His eyes were closed but the long lashes on top of them fluttered and screwed up tight. I jumped as the bed started creaking and he was fitting again, saliva frothing at his mouth and the muscles in his neck straining so hard that I thought they would snap. Why did no one come? I ran out of the room and looked around the ward. It was deserted. I ran to the desk and found no one there. I started to panic. My heart trashed against my ribs as I thought about all the deserted patients and the boy and how he might be dying in there and my nursing skills had completely failed me. I ran back into the room and glanced at the equipment. It was a jumble of pieces and tubes, machines beeping frantically and I strained to remember which button did what, which I called for help, what drugs was I to administer to him, where was the drug cabinet, where was the drug key and WHY WAS THERE NO-ONE HERE TO HELP ME? I moved over, closer to the bed and reached for the restraints under it, my mind suddenly clear. I reached for the strap and released one side, feeling the force of his body lash out at the freedom that I was granting it. I moved around and unfastened the other strap on the other side of the bed. An arm flew out at the speed of light and smacked me in the face. I slumped onto the floor and watched as the monster I released jumped out of bed and ran down the corridor screaming. I lay there on the cold, hard floor and could taste my own blood in my mouth. Why would I release a patient, a schizophrenic patient who needed to be restrained so as to ensure the safety of the other patients? I glanced up at the panic button on the wall. It was Friday. There was skeleton staffing in the wards on Fridays and the

nurse in charge might have had to rush out for an emergency in the ward next door or a nurse may have been in the other room. She would have paid no attention to the fitting as the boy did it all the time. I was back. My eyes closed and I was out.

I flinched at the words that the young girl's father had used when speaking to Katrina. I felt the hurt that stung her when they reached her ears. It was a terrible thing to be misunderstood so badly when there was nothing but the best of intentions at heart.

**'Life is short and if you're looking for extension,
With your time, you had best do well.
Cause there's good deeds and there is good intention,
They're as far apart as heaven and hell.'**

I grabbed my soiled uniform from the sink and cursed brat teenagers. I felt exhausted and overwhelmed with the urge to weep. I ran into my bedroom with a sudden sense of urgency and threw myself onto the bed so hard I nearly bounced off but I couldn't laugh at myself. Pain and misery surrounded me and the tears flowed so quickly and with such force that I surprised myself. Then I started to scream and wail almost as loud as Sorcha but this pain was sorrow and unknown. Sorcha's came from an overdose of ecstasy. I felt as if I wanted

to melt into the bed. I longed for someone that knew me better than I did so that they could stare deep into my eyes and tell me exactly what was wrong with me.

I was sitting on the bed. The machines were turned off. The silence in a patient's room proved much more difficult to deal with. I had lost them.

I watched Katrina. She was changed. I reached out my hand and closed it around hers as she sat on the bed. She didn't feel me. I don't know if that or the cold blank stare in her eyes was more painful. I stretched my fingers into her mind. I released them out into the darkness. There was nothing there. I pulled them away. Clare, Katie and Mr. Baker had gone.

**'And a heart is not a stone,
And is fragile when alone.'**

Clare's body fitted and shook on the bed right before my eyes. I had left Katrina in the bathroom. I felt that I owed it to her to see Clare's body off and bid it farewell. I could not reach Clare's mind the way I could Katrinas. I could not feel what death was like. Her eyes were closed. The room was empty of family or anyone that cared about Clare and why she was leaving. Maybe that was why Katrina developed that bond. She could not be here either. She slowly lifted off the bed and slipped away. You could see the mark that death had left on her skin. The doctors shocked her lifeless heart over and over. It was brutal. I knew

that she didn't want to leave but she had resigned to the fact that she would have to and went somewhat willingly. I moved over to the bed. I placed my hands on her chest where they kept shocking her. Her body lurched with each shock. Acceptance passed over the men and women that surrounded her. It was the most dismal of funerals that day in Room 102 of St Marks hospital. The traditional glancing at the clock and her death was sealed.

Katrina was in the bathroom. His children surrounded Mr. Baker. I felt that he should be wished a farewell. The machine that read his heartbeat was slow. The beating of his heart was the only sound that echoed. Here there were men and women surrounding his body waiting for him to leave. His eyes were closed, his mind untouchable. His daughters mind was hesitant but willing him to depart. He left here willingly. He had no desire to stay. At last content that he was in harmony with his body and his family, slowly he lifted off the bed. His large frame was touched with the long silver fingers of death but no cries were uttered. The paddles were ordered to remain still. He had no need for the shock of electricity and had known in life, how painful it would be. They remained still and slowly a sheet was drawn over his face. Relief poured over the gathering. It would have been a funeral Katrina would have loved to attend. His life was celebrated in the looks of affection he was passed as his family was leaving. His death was not regrettable. It was more of a relief.

I walked down the hall from the ladies toilet. Katie Marshall's parents were standing by her bed. Their faces were twisted with grief. Their shoulders heavy with their decision. Katie remained still for her 40th day. No voice rang out singing songs. Her heart was slowed. I could not reach into her mind, her eyes were closed. I knew it was blank. Not like a child's should be. Her mother looked at the men and the women that surrounded her daughter. Through their eyes they all passed their judgement. Her hands were shaking as she reached them toward the plug. Her eyes squeezed shut and released a current of tears. She could not do this alone. Katrina appeared at the door. Her eyes were wide and her face pale. She moved over to place her hand over Katie's mothers. Katie's mother turned and nodded. Katrina closed their hands around the plug and pulled. Katie's life resisted for a mere second and then came free. Slowly her body lifted off the bed. There were no paddles in the room. The shock would have been too much for her to bear. Nothing could be done. Katie resisted death with all the strength of her little body. It was already gone. She had already departed. A scream of grief erupted from her mother. The men and women in the room shed their tears in silence. They could not bear the screams of agony from the mother who had killed her child. She turned on Katrina and beat her face and chest with small fists. She cut and scratched and pulled until she had Katrina's blood on her hands. Katrina remained silent and still. Her face was cut, I could feel the cuts going deeper and deeper but still she remained standing there. One arm by her side, the other holding the lifeless plug, attached to the lifeless Katie. She moved and plugged it back into the wall. Katie's

mother glanced up and stopped her fight, a glimmer of hope appearing on her ragged features, futile as it was.

I left Katrina in that room, comforting the mother. She was beyond help and had been damaged badly. I had only wished to watch her and share her. I do not know where she will go now. I don't think it appropriate to watch her further. I move down the stairs to the exit. The doors open with a swish and I am gone.

Reflection Statement: 'Fall'

'Fall' was composed as an exploration of the profession of nursing and in particular an exploration of the main character Katrina. Over the writing of the major work many investigations influenced the course of the story and the development of the character Katrina. It's intended audience is not constricted but would be mainly suited to adult audiences.

Katrina's development drives the narrative of 'Fall'. The setting of St Marks hospital was due to a personal investigation of the medical profession as a result of a career consideration in that field. The focus of the major work shifted to be a more close analysis of the central character and the deterioration of her mind. This deterioration of her mind influenced the structure of the major work. The structure of the major work is fractured. Pieces of the work are mixed up and discontinuous, interspersed with song lyrics and extra pieces that emphasised the issues and emotions that Katrina is facing. The discontinuous nature of the work is designed to highlight the fractured nature of Katrinas mind. The sections were separated and spread out on a table, their order carefully chosen to make it easy for the reader to understand. The alternate voice, presented in italics, has no concrete purpose and I do not present who or what that character is. This is mainly due to the characters ambiguous nature in my mind also. During the course of the writing of the work the character had no need to identify himself and this carried through to the conclusion whereby he leaves Katrina and his audience still captivated by his presence and its meaning. He is the key insight to Katrinas development and mind and develops a slightly mysterious relationship with Katrina that provides a great source of interest. This interest was also present in the writing of the work, as I had no real control over the voice.

The language of the work is predominantly evocative and includes medical jargon. This was due to the focus on Katrinas development and self-exploration, the setting secondary to this. There were sections e.g. the boxing scene, where the language became even more fractured and ran in a continuous line. There were a number of sections where Katrina asked repeated questions but these were vital to a view of the anguish she was suffering.

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Short Story: 'Fall'

There were many investigations I undertook that influenced the course of the work. I visited the New Children's Hospital at Westmead and was guided on a tour by the student liaison officer. This investigation allowed me to visit many of the wards and observe the staff there. The difference in dress, attitudes and facilities of the wards were catered to the specific ages and condition of the patients. This influenced Katrina's treatment of her patients. I interviewed two nurses in the course of my writing and the two conflicting viewpoints of their profession moved me to write about the effect the profession has on Katrina. The nurse I interviewed was a psychology nurse and emphasised the hardships and futility of her profession. This was the source for the psychiatric patient. The other nurse had high praise for the merits of the medical profession and the two extremes of opinion demonstrated the influence of a nurse's personality and personal qualities in the handling of hardships in her job.

The film 'Bringing out the Dead' starring Nicolas Cage was a major source of inspiration. This film stimulated Katrina's fall into a madness that was a result of her not being able to cope with the hardships of her profession. The fractured nature of the film transposed onto the work, though the film achieved this through a series of flashbacks.

The investigations I undertook during the course of my major work influenced the structure and ideas of the work. The investigations suggested in my proposal proved to be influential in a different way than originally intended and Katrina came to drive the narrative, shifting the focus from the patients to Katrina. The discussions with the nurses and 'Bringing out the Dead' influenced this. The language and characters remained the same as was proposed at the beginning of the course but Katrina's relationship with them changed.

The progress of the major work included many periods of writer's block. This was usually followed by inspiration from many different sources and this would trigger a period of rapid writing and ideas. These ideas were refined and edited when I reordered the work. The descriptions of the setting were also revisited and heightened after my visit to the Children's Hospital. I read many pamphlets on surgery from hospitals and watched many hospital shows to gain inspiration. The progress of the major work spanned the whole time frame of the course but the bulk was completed in the last half of the course when the visiting of the Children's Hospital and

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the film 'Bringing out the Dead' provided me with a shift in focus and a great source of inspiration. I did investigation as I was writing and I could identify many of the pieces as written after a specific investigation. This progress was aided by the use of my journal. My journal contained every element and idea that I had when writing the major work and I wrote all the pieces of the story in my journal. It was my main reference, containing character profiles and a collection of lyrics I could refer to.

The purpose of the major work is to entertain and provoke thought in its audiences. Its confusing nature has been minimised as much as possible but I have retained a small element of that confusion to emphasise the change in Katrina and provoke further contemplation of the major ideas of the work.

The focus and main ideas of the major work proved to be more interesting for the audience and to write than the original proposal. I am extremely pleased with my work and it has proved challenging yet rewarding. The investigations that I undertook and the continual changing focus of the major work proved to develop my writing talents a great deal. The amount of research and time invested in 'Fall' was time well spent.