

## Creative Submission: Prose



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### I am the older brother.

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I don't know how many moments I had spoken that statement, etched it into my burrowed, ever working forehead and wore it like a name tag that says, "Hello my name is..."

Hello my name is:

Perfectionist, legalist, slave, guilt driven, ever judging and critiquing and ever fearful of the Fathers wrath. Ever comparing, and ever in torment of the fear of failing, the fear of becoming...

Becoming.  
The younger brother.

The Brother with the 'legit testimony', the one whom I secretly envy for having a rock bottom experience upon which God mightily plucked him from that pig pen miry mud. A testimony that is tempting in charisma, and yet a testimony one wouldn't dare hope for, for fear of that kind of exposure, that kind of failure, that kind of *helplessness*.

But also that kind of grace. Mercy. Forgiveness.  
It must be nice to not have to desperately work for it and fall into it instead.

Sometimes, the thought crosses your mind that perhaps it *would* have been better to choose the rebellious side. Perhaps grace *does* increase all the more when sin increases, and just possibly might actually be worth the intense driving fear of failure that forces your hand on the plough day in and day out with no turning back.

Perhaps.

Perhaps true grace would be worth sacrificing all of our pompous deeds, your bloated reputation of the 'good kid' that represents your fathers hands, but not his heart.

Perhaps.

But the choice is not one you could possibly make. Intimacy with the Father isn't really all *that* far away. If you just work a little harder, obey with an ounce more of clarity and hasten your urgency up a notch, then maybe you could feel his embrace.

Maybe.

Oh, but YOU asked for grace. You asked for intimacy. You asked for that embrace that every other wild eyed, late night fireside testimony entails.

Until that moment when the story flips.

Anonymous, I am the older brother.

And in a mere moment, *you* are the one flailing and at the point of surrender, *you* are the one with nothing to give and nothing to use to cover up what *must* be hidden for fear.  
And you didn't *choose* to be living this narrative, or *choose* to be the one in a state of utter weakness and helplessness.

He chose it. He chose *you*.  
He chose you first, *above* the fruit of your labour, the harvest of your own crop.  
He longed for you to come to him, *not just what your calloused hands could offer as a sacrifice*.

*But you wouldn't come empty handed.*

So, he stripped you of your pompous gifts, and left you bare, naked, helpless.  
So there was nothing more to fill up your arms in replace of His.

You weren't the one that squandered off not only the money, but the honour of your father's well-kept name, the legacy of your families hard working reputation.

You weren't *that* one.

You were the one that questioned His intimacy. You were the one that questioned if His arms could really open to you. You were the one that asked why there was no celebration in your name, why the calf hadn't been slaughtered for you, after your whole life of dedication?

*Oh Child it has. You just didn't accept it.*

*"Son, ALL I have is yours!"*

Yet you couldn't believe Him.  
*So He had to show you instead.*

Showed you how to see the sweet face of grace, where before only achievement and striving reigned.

He pulled your clenching white knuckles off the plough so that they may open to his ever-reaching arms.

*He humbled you. He brought down your pride, with tender loving mercy and grace, and he exposed all your innermost thoughts for the world to see.*  
*He took your twisted perceptions of "Those who have been given much, much will be asked of" and he turned it around to, "Yes. Now I have given you much grace. Now you have let me give you much love, much mercy. And now, and only now, are you able to see with the eyes that can possibly do the same.*

Yes, you are right. Maybe this wasn't your fault. Maybe this wasn't your choice.

And yet, maybe his whole desire was for us to have a heart like the younger brother, who can actually accept the open arms of a father reaching wide.

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#### ARTIST BIO

Author is a Vanguard College alumnus that wrestles with accepting the ways that things have always been done and seeking to live life in a way that challenges cultural norms. They do this by living cross culturally here in Canada and sharing the ways and life of Jesus with youth from various religious and cultural backgrounds. They have chosen to remain anonymous to protect those youth and this ministry.