

# [Creative writing on bitter is the pill](https://assignbuster.com/creative-writing-on-bitter-is-the-pill/)

[Life](https://assignbuster.com/essay-subjects/life/), [Friendship](https://assignbuster.com/essay-subjects/life/friendship/)

Mondays aren’t usually known for their sunny weather and bright blue skies, but there they are. I also wasn’t known for wide smiles on my way to school, but there it was, too. A grin played across my face from the backseat of my mom’s convertible as I watched the neighborhood houses slide by with their freshly manicured green lawns and pops of colorful flowers. Somehow, what had looked like a suburban dungeon the day before didn’t look so bad this morning. With the top down and the breeze in my face, I didn’t even mind the soft rock my mom always insisted on me to play in the car on our way to school.
“ What’s going on?” My mom commented as she glanced into the rearview mirror. “ Wait, don’t tell me. You’ve finally got a girlfriend!”

## “ Mom! No.”

Her eyes questioned me in the mirror. “ Is it Sarah? She’s such a nice girl.”
“ No, Mom, stop!” I slunk down into the seat to get out of the mirror’s range. “ It’s just a good day, that’s all.”
Luckily, at that moment, we hit a patch of slow traffic and that pulled my mom’s attention away so I could enjoy my good mood in peace. After a bit of stop and go, we finally pulled up to the school gate and I jumped out, slamming the car door shut. A quick good-bye to mom and I turned to face the day.
Kids swarmed the entrance, laughing and joking in their few minutes of freedom. As I pushed my way into the classroom, I felt everyone’s eyes were on me. For once, I felt like looking back and smiling. It was a good day.
I had just finished my best essay ever the night before. I was reminded to show it to Jimmy, my best friend, who was an ace at composition.
A tingle of excitement accompanied my mental anticipation of what he’d to say. I slid into the desk and pulled the pages out of my pack.
“ What’s that?” It was Sarah. She didn’t look too bad this morning, either.
Suddenly, I didn’t want to talk about it. “ Nothing,” I said as I folded the papers in half and hid them under my hands.
“ Where were you last night? We missed you at the game.” She smiled. I could feel my face smiling back, an involuntary flush rising in my cheeks.
“ I was just . . . busy.” Come on, it’s nothing to be ashamed of. Tell her. I said to myself. “ Writing. I was busy writing my essay.”
“ Oh, yeah. That essay’s due today, right?” she said. “ Thanks for reminding me, I gotta put something together in study hall.” I glanced down at my essay and quickly pushed away the memory of the hours at my desk, weighing every word. When I looked up, Sarah was still there smiling at me, my face smiled back at her, and she looked beautiful. “ Well, I hope you can make the next game,” she said over her shoulder as she took a desk in the back of the room. “ I’ll save you a seat.” “ Okay. Thanks,” I said.
Seconds later, I let out the breath I had been holding as Jimmy rushed in. I grabbed the desk next to mine. “ What did she want?” he asked, glancing back at Sarah who was now in a noisy discussion with a couple of her girlfriends. For the second time that morning, I had no desire to discuss it. I was just too engrossed to show my essay to Jimmy and see how he would react to it.
“ Nothing. Just something about the game.”
“ Oh.” He glanced at the papers in my hand. “ Is that your essay? Want me to take a look?”
Eagerly, I slid the papers over. I was more than ready to hear the good feedback from my best buddy in town, Jimmy. He took them and smoothed out the crease with a flourish. His brow furrowed as he scanned the lines. I took in his concentration and leaned toward him, as if by doing so I could see what had him concerned. Jimmy looked up and laughed. I was surprised. I thought he found something that had entertained him a bit.
“ Don’t worry, just giving it my best read.” I nodded and sat back, letting Jimmy have his space. Time moved at a crawl as the class filled with chattering students. Talk of the game and next weekend’s parties rang shrilly in my ears as I waited for Jimmy’s final verdict.
“ It’s not bad,” he said, holding it out to me. “ But it’s got a way to go if you’re going for breath-taking.” He smiled to take the sting off, but his words bit through to the pit of my stomach anyway. “ I’d be glad to help.”
“ No, thanks,” I said quickly to him. Thanks for nothing, I thought as I snatched my essay away. My disappointment flashed to a red-hot anger. I had worked so hard on it. Had a way to go, didn’t I? For me, it is my best essay – and he is my best friend. I was really surprised to learn that he had responded those ways; considering that, I worked hard to polish and finish it. I really became dismayed. My day turned from good to not-so good today.
I picked up my pack and moved several desks away, feeling the hurt down to my toes. Jimmy looked surprised at my sudden move. I saw him shrug and turn toward the teacher. I never again glanced at him during the whole session. The bell rang. We moved out to our next class. “ Have it your way,” were the last words Jimmy said to me that school year.
For the remainder of the school year, the time I had spent with Jimmy became time spent with Sarah. I still thought of my best friend Jimmy a little less each day. I went to games with Sarah. I tried to fit in with her glittering friends and mimic their nonchalant approach to school. Sarah disdained school. Yet, every time that we said good-bye to each other, it was torture for us. Nonetheless, I found my mind wandering while we were together.
Writing began to grate on me as I was working harder than ever. By the time I finally got the courage up to give her our first kiss, it was clear I was not getting kissed back. The shine was gone and I looked forward to college with a franker relief. Mom was more disappointed than I was when Sarah broke up with me the night before I left. That’s how the fact of relations turn out to be, sometimes.
I jumped into the world of publishing with both feet. I was lucky enough to land as an agent who pulled the strings for a book deal. Thus, there it all started.
Several years later, I was sitting at a table at a book conference, signing copies of my latest work. The conference was going well. A reading of an excerpt had been received positively and the pile of books on my table was shrinking at a heart-warming and wallet-filling rate. I was still new enough to the game for conferences to have fun. I just often thought of looking forward to meeting those who liked my writing enough to spend their hard-earned cash on my books. As I finished signing a book for a woman who reminded me strongly of my mom, I glanced up at my next fan. I saw a well-dressed guy about my age in a sharp navy-blue suit. He stepped forward. I looked at his face once more. A sharp pang of guilt accompanied my recognition – it was Jimmy, my former best friend.
“ Jimmy. Thank you so much for coming out to see me.” I felt my throat tighten with tension, having been reminded when he critiqued my essay way back then.
“ I saw you were coming on the Internet. Couldn’t let the chance to see you again slip by.” He grabbed the top of a book off the pile next to me, flipped it open, and slid it in front of me to sign.
“ So what are you doing these days?” I asked. My pen poised above the blank page, waiting for his answer.
“ I’m in finance. Working here in town.” That was Jimmy, great with words and numbers.
“ Must be lucrative.” “ It’s a living,” he said. He took a deep breath. “ Listen, I want to congratulate you. I read your last one and you’ve obviously reached breath-taking all on your own.”
“ No. It wasn’t on my own.” It was amazingly clear to me, clearer than it had ever been. That day at school had been the start. “ Maybe I wasn’t ready to face it then. But eventually I did and put in the work. Thanks to you,” I said with a delightful tone.
I saw the same shrug I had seen so many years before, but inside a well-tailored suit rather than a t-shirt. And instead of it stinging, it lifted me up. “ Like I said. Glad to help. I’m proud of you,” he said.
I couldn’t meet his eyes. Instead, I trapped the book pages open with my hand and gulped down the lump in my throat. It tasted bitter, but sweet.

## “ So, can I make this out to my best friend, Jimmy?”

“ Sure. As long as you’re sure,” I nodded and signed the book. We exchanged e-mails and shook hands. I knew where I would send my next manuscript once it was ready for outside eyes. Friends like that were too precious to waste and I had already let ten years get by me with Jimmy.