

Section 1

#1 - Opening paragraphs through "She firmly picked herself up"

Strengths: Your opening immediately establishes a strong emotional connection through vivid sensory details like "wet hands, wet from hours of crying" and "shaking from nights of alcohol." You effectively contrast the protagonist's pain with moments of care, creating depth in her emotional experience.

Weakness: Unclear narrative transitions → Your writing jumps between different moments and memories without clear connections. The shift from "I'll always love you, no matter what" to the bank statement scene leaves readers confused about who is speaking and when events are happening. The phrase "She shook her head to clear the memories" doesn't adequately bridge these disconnected scenes.

Exemplar: *She remembered his voice saying "I'll always love you, no matter what" as she stared at the red numbers on her bank statement, his hand no longer there to cradle her head.*

#2 - "Days passed" through "driven by the crying sky"

Strengths: You create a powerful extended metaphor comparing the protagonist's emotional state to drowning, which effectively conveys her overwhelming despair. Your description of the physical environment mirrors her mental state well, particularly with the broken bottles as "battle wreckage."

Weakness: Repetitive sentence structure → Many of your sentences begin with simple subjects and follow similar patterns, making the writing feel monotonous. Phrases like "They were destroying her" and "Friends were turned away" use the same basic structure repeatedly. This limits the emotional impact of your powerful imagery.

Exemplar: *Rather than friends turning away at her door, she drove them off with demented screams, her desperation growing more violent as her sanity crumbled.*

#3 - "Him. Blue eyes, sunny skies" through the ending

Strengths: Your dream sequence effectively uses repetition and contrast to show how the protagonist's insecurities twist her memories. The parallel structure of "She's prettier than you" creates a haunting rhythm that reinforces her self-doubt.

Weakness: Rushed resolution → Your ending moves too quickly from despair to hope without showing the emotional journey. The transition from "she was crying" to "crying is good, because it

heals" feels sudden and unearned. The seed's growth lacks connection to the protagonist's actual healing process.

Exemplar: *As her tears mixed with the rain flooding through her door, she began to understand that this pain, unlike the numbness from bottles, might actually help her grow.*

■ Your piece demonstrates strong emotional writing and creative use of symbolism through the seed metaphor. You effectively convey deep pain and trauma through vivid imagery and sensory details. However, your narrative structure needs improvement to help readers follow the emotional journey more clearly. Additionally, your writing would benefit from varying sentence lengths and structures to create better rhythm and flow.

The connection between your protagonist's healing and the seed's growth needs strengthening - currently, they feel like separate elements rather than unified symbols. Also, your ending feels too abrupt after such intense emotional buildup. Consider showing more gradual steps in your character's healing process rather than jumping straight to hope. Finally, work on smoother transitions between different time periods and memories to help readers stay oriented in your story.

Score: 44/50

Section 2

#1 Healing From Hurt

The seed was cradled by wet hands, wet from hours of crying, shaking from nights of alcohol to numb the pain that always came back.

Always.

"I'll always love you, no matter what."

~~A hand cradling her head as she stared at her bank statement.~~ [She remembered his hand cradling her head as she stared at her bank statement.]

Red-rimmed eyes and sleepless nights, punctured by warm hugs, warm drinks, and borrowed happiness.

She shook her head to clear the memories. She had to be strong. Stronger than him who couldn't even...

She firmly picked herself up. There was no use dwelling in the past. She did her breathing exercises, recommended by her therapist. She knew they were like the drinks [—] the pain would only come back even stronger.

The seed seemed to sense her pain, reaching out. A tiny sapling, barely more than a speck, had risen out of her tears. The sadness turned to anger.

How dare it sprout from my tears? How dare it grow while I wither?

She felt an almost overpowering urge to crush it. But with a sigh, she dropped the spade [and] headed back to her house.

#2 Days passed. The fan slowly rotated, adding bit upon bit to her ever-increasing debt. Yet she couldn't bring herself to turn it off. It was the only ~~alive~~ [living] thing in the room. She was barely more than a husk waiting for her finances to break. Shattered bottles were strewn around her like battle wreckage, not letting her leave without injuries.

They were destroying her, physically and mentally. But to her, those few hours of not caring, those few hours of that wonderful numbness [were] her salvation.

Friends were turned away at the door, and that was putting it lightly. At the very least, demented screams would ~~show~~ [drive] them away. At most... well she could always go further, the more she sank into insanity.

Yet none could bring themselves to report her. They knew trapping her in a straitjacket in a white room would only make it worse. And the seed stayed where it was, the cheery sun doing nothing to help it.

She was drowning. In waves of her own tears, drinks, memories lost to time. Waves of sorrow and regret crashed over [her,] drowning her. The seed was washed away into a lone gutter, driven by the crying sky, crying like the broken woman inside the house.

Dances under the moonlight.

Love letters.

A funny first date.

The line of time moved, but she was stuck in the past, reliving painful memories [—] happy but long gone. It was nostalgic, but it was like rubbing salt into an old, ugly wound.

Fractured. Her sanity, her emotion, her life. ~~It was~~ [Everything was] crumbling.

And she stared at a ring of blood on one half of a bottle, jagged edges coated in fresh crimson like a sunset. She pushed it over, making it twirl hypnotically, before shattering into a million pieces as it collided with the floor. Just another bottle. Painful, yes, but forgettable.

She raised a shard to her throat. Who cared for her in life? Her friends had abandoned her. Or she had driven them away. She'd had one thing to live for. Not a thing~~~ [.] but a person.

And the memories ~~bring~~ [brought] her to her knees. She tumbled down, feeling like she was drowning. She had to reach the door... fresh air...

And she collapsed. A fever dream overcame her, and she succumbed to the welcoming darkness.

#3 Him. Blue eyes, sunny skies. A smile on his face [and] careless lips. Wrapped in silk.

She knew what would happen. A beautiful ring, soft words, happy smiles. But it was a face. A face in the ring [—] the face was her...her... the person she could not face. The same words came out of his mouth, the same, but twisted somehow.

"I know it's not as pretty as you."

She's prettier than you.

"I know it didn't cost much money."

She's wealthier than you.

"And I'll always still love you."

She's more loveable than you.

And the door smashed open, and the rain poured in, and she was crying.

And crying is good, because it heals, and it seemed to break her delusions. She was still hurt, but she had a chance to heal.

And the seed spouted out of the gutter, the gutter being flooded with rain. A sprout had grown, small, but there. And the earth shifted to cover it. A shimmer of yellow, ready to push through to the surface, to see the sun it so desired to follow. It would take time [and] work, but it would push through.

And the sun shone again.