MOLLY ARNOLD

Molly Arnold graduated from East Peoria Community High School where she played soccer, danced, and was a member of the National Honor Society and the Student Council. At NIU, she majors in child development and is a member of Delta Zeta sorority. She also enjoys traveling. Molly aspires to be a child life specialist. This essay is special to Molly because it is a reminder of her personal strength.

Molly wrote this essay in Elizabeth Lamszus's English 103 course during the fall of 2010.
The Worry Stone
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It was my best friend Kate’s birthday party. She was turning thirteen, which is an exciting time in a girl’s life. We were no longer kids, but not yet adults. We were just entering our teenage years. This did not mean we were too old for goody bags, though. At the end of the party, everyone went home with a mystery goody bag in hand. I hastily looked through mine in the car and held up a strange stone. “Why would Kate give me a rock?” I thought to myself.

On the rock was a black, deeply engraved cross. I gripped the smooth rock in my hand; there were no corners and no cracks. The cross was carefully engraved deep into the rock as if whoever made it never wanted it to be worn down. It was as black as a clear midnight sky, and the corners of the cross were perfectly rounded. I read the tiny paper included in the rock’s package. It was called a worry stone. You were supposed to hold it whenever you were worried. I laughed to myself as I put it back in the bag, but I didn’t want to throw it away. There was just something so intricate about the black cross that still mesmerized me. When I was home, I put the worry stone in my desk drawer, not thinking that I would ever pick it up again.

Unfortunately, that was not the case. A couple weeks later, my twenty-eight-year-old brother was on his way home to visit when he was hit by a semi-truck. He was life-flighted back to a Chicago hospital. My family rushed into the car, and for some reason, I remembered the abandoned stone in my drawer and grabbed it. I held onto that stone so hard that my fingers were sticking to it with sweat. My brother was in critical condition and would have to stay in the hospital for quite a while. The hospital waiting room became my family’s home, and the worry stone became my pacifier. I never put it down.

On September 11, 2004, my family received news that would change our lives. The doctors were not watching my brother’s temperature, and he had a fever that sent him into cardiac arrest. It was because of the doctors’ carelessness that I lost my older brother—my protector and my friend. As I watched my
family fall apart in the waiting room after hearing the news, I still sat in shock. I felt something in my pocket hit me as I collapsed on the floor. I grabbed the worry stone from my pocket and threw it as hard as I could. It pounded on the wall along with my anger, my sadness, and my overwhelming emotions that I could not control. The stone did not serve its purpose; I never wanted to see it again.

A couple months passed by. My family and I were still recovering and trying to put our lives back together. We had a visitor one day. It was my brother’s very best friend who stayed in the hospital with us. It was so refreshing to see him again. When he left, he handed me something with a nod. It was my worry stone. It was no longer perfectly round; it was scraped on the bottom and scarred. It reminded me of myself. No matter how scarred the stone was, it was still the stone. It had scratches that could not be avoided, and it would never be the same. The black intricate cross was not touched. It still had its strength, and I knew I still had mine.

It has been six years, and I still have my worry stone. It was the very first thing packed into my boxes for college. It is still my pacifier, it is still my reminder of my past, and it is still my reminder of my strength. The scratches on the bottom from when I threw it still remain, while the cross is still untouched. My worry stone is worth more to me than any diamond, gold bracelet, or pearl necklace I will ever receive. It is just an object, but it is my everyday reminder that no matter what happens, I have the cross inside me that will never be scarred.