

Slade Dupuy

Instructor's Name

ENGL 1013

Date

Diving In Head First

For as long as I can remember, I've always been able to swim. As a result, my favorite sport has always been swimming. When I was fifteen years old, I experienced one of my favorite swimming memories. I will always remember this event in my life as a moment of glory and self-satisfaction.

The event was the state swim meet. The event that I was most looking forward to was the fifty-meter freestyle. If I would win any event, it was going to be that one. I just knew that the gold in the fifty-meter freestyle would be going home with me. There were a few boys there that I had never swum against before, but I still felt confident that I would have the quickest time.

I remembered my father's words, "You're not racing them, Slade. You're racing the clock." I tried to keep those words in my mind as I got to the pool.

On the intercom came the announcement telling all the boys in my division to report to the swimming deck. As I heard this, I became very nervous and could feel my stomach starting to become heavier as I became more anxious.

As I made my way towards the deck, I could see the boys from my division start to emerge from the crowds of people and head the same way. As we left the crowds of people, we formed an unintentional line that was bound for the swimming deck. We looked around at each other; however, we never spoke to one another. As always, I found this odd because we were

very familiar with each other. Some of us had swum against each other for years.

Once at the deck, we all received the lane we would be swimming in for the race. After I received my lane number, I went and stood at my diving block. I waited for the lane judges to finish their calculations on the race that had just ended. We were then told to get ready.

I pulled off the wind pants I wore over my swimsuit and pulled my swim cap over my hair. I pulled my goggles, which I wore around my neck, over my eyes. As I did this, the room became slightly darker from the tint on my goggles.

I stepped onto the diving block in front of me. As I stood tall on it, I did my routine stretches. There was no more being nervous because I was in my environment. What I was about to do I had done a thousand times before.

“Swimmers, take your positions,” the head line judge said.

I bent down to take my position, and as I did, time seemed to slow down. All of the noise coming from the crowd was now silence in my head. I set my position and looked up at the lane in front of me. In my peripheral vision I could see the other lanes beside me. Like the noise and the cheering, the other lanes disappeared, leaving only my own.

I waited for the bang of the gun that would signal my start. What seemed like forever finally gave way to the unmistakable fire of the gun. At the sound of it, I flung myself into the air.

I went through a checklist in my head: body erect, head tucked, arms to a point. My dive was perfect. When I hit the water, it hit me back with its cooler temperature, but it did not take my body long to adjust. I was now gliding just a little over a foot under the water's surface. As I felt my glide start to slow down, I began to kick like a mermaid. This kick brought me to the surface, and I started to freestyle.

The freestyle swim was natural to me, and before I knew it, I was at the other end of the pool. I executed my flip-turn and headed toward the finish. I tried not to look at any of the other swimmers that I might be able to see, so I focused on the line at the bottom of the pool in my lane. It would lead me straight to the finish. My stroke was so second nature that the only thing I had to think about was my pattern of breathing: one, two, three, breathe, and repeat.

The finish was now in my sight. And as I went for one more pull in the water with one hand, I raised my other up to be the first to touch the wall. I raised my head and looked up at the scoreboard. I saw my time in comparison with everyone else's time. I had won.

All my training had paid off. I was very satisfied with myself. I made my way, with the other boys from my division, into the crowds of people to find my family who had been watching, knowing that my family would be proud of my accomplishment.

I knew I would never forget the last half-minute of my life. I was very satisfied with myself and could feel the glory I had achieved for myself.