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Instructor's Name

ENGL 1013

Date

Tranquility

She steps out over the threshold through the heavy sliding-glass doors onto the rich blue tile, careful not to slip in her bare feet as she crosses into the dark summer night. Her brightly painted toenails stand out against the cerulean designs on the tiles of the patio as she moves to the stairs. Her skin is bronzed from hours spent poolside, and salt water from the day's adventures has dried in the hair, causing it to spill down her back in messy waves. She breaks out in goosebumps despite the mugginess of the July air. Across the courtyard, palm trees sway in the tropical breeze as if to dance along to the festive music. Despite the party happening in the distance, this spot is almost serene.

People walk by in groups or alone. Some are dressed sharply for a night out. Others are still scantily clad in the day's pool attire. They greet her jovially as they move through the night. Their voices fill the air as they come closer then wane as they move past her, hurrying along to their destinations. The party is just getting started in the distance, and she can almost picture the mariachi band, their colorfully embroidered outfits a stark contrast to the dark leathery faces shadowed by wide-brimmed sombreros. They switch from the slow, haunting number they have been playing to a jaunty polka, and she can hear whoops of excitement from the crowd that has gathered to watch and listen.

Along with the music, she notices the smell of chlorine mixed with salty ocean air as it wafts in the warm evening breeze, beckoning her into the water. She slowly descends the stairs, sinking deeper into the cool water with each step. Lightly gripping the black metal rail with one

hand, she carefully balances an almost-overflowing glass of amber liquid in the other, being careful not to spill a drop. She stops there on the bottom step and lights a cigarette from the pack she has brought with her. The smoke she exhales catches in the breeze and swirls thickly in the air around her head before moving upward and dissipating into the dark. She sips slowly from her glass as she enjoys the solitude of the moment. The cool, bubbly liquid feels fizzy on her tongue before sliding down her throat. As she finishes her drink, she becomes eager to fully immerse herself in the sparkling blue water.

The cool water is a stark contrast to the warm evening air, and she shivers slightly as she moves down deeper until it almost reaches her collarbone. Her now-empty hands move slowly under the water, feeling the weight of it slide between her fingers. She can feel her body start to relax as she moves further away from the dim lights of the patio into the shadows of the night. The water smells strongly of chlorine, and her nose burns as she reaches the other side of the narrow pool. She stays there, arms resting on the roughness of the concrete surrounding the pool. Water drips off her upper body, forming small puddles on the ground in front of her. She lowers her chin onto her folded arms and closes her eyes, savoring this rare moment of peace. The band playing in the distance switches songs again, and she briefly wonders if she should dry off and join the party. The idea is quickly dismissed as she turns back toward the water and sees the moonlight reflected across the surface.

The moon that had been hidden behind feathery clouds all evening now shines brightly in the dark sky, and its reflection shimmers across the blue pool. She heads toward the spot where moonlight meets water, her strong arms propelling her forward, her feet making small splashes behind her. As she reaches her destination, she rotates onto her back, letting the water cradle her. A small sigh escapes her lips as she gazes up at the silver moon.