

## Twelve

I was twelve when I saw it. Twelve—my last year in the “roaring tweens”, that strange time in which the young mind feels forty, but the hormonal imbalances of puberty say otherwise. A time in my life where coffee was for parents only and middle school felt like the pinnacle of academic hardship. When drama meant recent crushes and flag football losses... that was my tweens. It was my birthday, the beginning of a new year. Forget January, 1st—it was February, 15th! The first day of my year, inside my bubble everything revolved around the only thing it could—me.

My parents had arranged a trip to Washington D.C. for my birthday. They believed I would enjoy the many historical attraction in the capital—they were right. I adored every minute of it. From the Smithsonian to the Lincoln Memorial, all of it seemed to instill national pride I thought non-existent within me. For the first time in my life I felt love for something other than a human or an animal. I felt love for my country, and I was proud to say I was an American. I was twelve when I saw it. Walking past the White House, my mom quickly turned to me with a concerned face. She stood in such a way as to block my view of something. “Bud, there’s some pictures behind me.” She said. “I think you’re old enough to see them, but they’re very disturbing so I want you to be ready.” I looked at her confused. “I want to see them.” I said. She moved aside.

My face, I’m sure, must have been rosy red from the cold but in that moment—it was bloodless. “THIS IS WHAT ABORTION LOOKS LIKE” dawned the top of an enormous street sign. Below the caption were images that need no depiction. I had heard about abortion, spoken

about it with my parents, seen debates on TV, but I regarded it as an “adult” issue—not for tweens like myself. In that moment however, it became my issue. My newly found love for my country twisted into confusion. I looked at the White House, the Washington Monument, the Capital—how could my country allow this? How could the nation I just learned to love become so distant and estranged to me in one moment? I needed no debate, no lecture, no parent to tell me that what I saw was wrong. I knew that from the moment my mother moved aside.

I am pro-life because on that day I was ashamed of my country, my fellow humans, and myself. I am pro-life because I will not have my generation remembered for such an atrocity against human life. America’s history is stained by the blood of those in bondage, it is my generation’s duty to ensure it is not further stained by the blood of the helpless. I was twelve when I saw it.