



Passages Press

What if...

by Naomi Marr

I carried a cloud of rain inside me
Your presence took my tears away.
We were so close. Almost together.
Now your name is carved where you lie.
My pain grew like cancer
without you by my side.
I had friends that I called family,
they made me yet so strong.
One stood out
who made my heart swell.
They almost lost us in the crash.
Our arms were wrapped around one another
at last
Life was different, but we made the best of
what we had.
We had our ups, our downs, our smiles,
and we had our frowns.
You made me feel so alive and high.
The day your name was carved where you lie,
is the day I mentally died.
Life has been a struggle and so full of hate.
could it be a curse
or maybe it's just fate?
I am scared to love,
and I am scared to be loved.
What if...
What if it was to happen
again?
I keep this hate deep inside my soul
It's like blue ice, it is so cold

I see him standing
tall and handsome
Alone
I speak first
"What are you doing
this Saturday?" I ask.
"I have no plans," he
says.
"Come with me to the
Summer Solstice.
Give me your number
and I'll give you mine."
He chisels away at my
wall
Chip by chip
What if?
What if it was to happen
again?
I could grab his chisel
and go for his heart.
Or
I could ride a wrecking
ball
and demolish it all
I say, "yes" to be loved
and I open the door
and he sweetens the bitter taste
'til there is no more...

This poem is Dedicated to Jason L. Whitney



January 2010

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Interview with Jamie Bloomquist, Photographer

by Tiffany Howie

When I wrote these questions to Jamie I never thought he was going to answer them back. When Jamie did I was amazed by what a photographer could do. I have made my mind up I want to be a photographer.

Dear Tiffany,

Thank you for your note. I think it's great that you want to become a photographer. It's an exciting time for photography. We had four or five years where digital was still in development and the cost was high. Now the prices have come down putting excellent quality cameras within reach from several brands.

With digital being affordable and accessible, there are more people entering photography than ever. The competition is harder than ever but the good news is, photography will always be in demand. A career in photography is within reach. How hard you work at it will determine your success. It's not easy, but it's very satisfying work. You can take inspiration from the fact that a woman from Camden, Samantha Appleton, is now the official photographer for Michelle Obama!

On to your questions.

What kind of school do you have to go to?

School can be a great way to learn basic skills and I recommend some classes to learn how to operate cameras, test new gear, learn about lighting equipment and get some of the technical know-how that is necessary to move beyond the equipment so that you can concentrate on the images.

A college degree is not necessary for most parts of the photography business; many young photographers find that an apprenticeship is a better way to learn both the craft and the business of photography. If you are going into a very technical type of photography, like biomedical photography or forensics photography, then I would recommend college. If you want to be a photojournalist or a

portrait photographer then I would recommend following the path of apprenticeship.

What do you call a good photo?

What constitutes a good photograph can vary greatly. What you find beautiful I may find ugly. An image can be judged on its technical merits - well exposed, sharp focus, composed well, and those merits are often how we judge nature photography, but even those technical rules are broken in fine art photography and still be considered a good photograph. Does it taste good? You're a good cook. Does it look good? It's a good photo. Can you shoot photos under a deadline with an art director standing over your shoulder and a crew of models and make-up artists? You are a professional photographer.

Is this what you always wanted to be? Were you in yearbook in high school?

I knew that I wanted to be a photographer when I took an art class in 9th grade from a teacher named Mr. Prohaska. He taught me the technical skills of photography and inspired me by showing me the work of many great photographers. Mr. Prohaska kept pushing me, challenged me and gave me the confidence that I could succeed with a career in photography. I did work on the yearbook staff but it was the work in the art classes that really hooked me on photography. I had taken every photography class offered at school and since I had completed all my required classes, I convinced the school board to let me create my own photography course with Mr. Prohaska when I was a senior.

If I were taking a photo of my child, what would you suggest I do to get a good photo?

Photographing children is hard because getting them to cooperate is challenging but in some ways it's easier because they have no preconceived ideas of how they should look. They are completely at ease in front of the camera. Getting a great image

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of a child means taking a lot of photographs and practicing. What will come with time is looking through the viewfinder and knowing that moment to click the shutter. Anticipating the moment takes time and is one of the things I love so much about photographing people. I don't believe that some people are photogenic while others are not. I think there is a beautiful image of everyone, you just have to find it.

How long did it take for you to take the good photo?

How long? Like I said earlier, if you take a photograph that someone enjoys, then you can have a good photo. If you photograph your sister and she thinks it makes her look pretty, then it's a good photo. Getting good photos and making consistently good photos can only come with hard work, time and experience. Within a few years you should feel confident enough to know that you can take a good photo, but it may take twenty years before you think you've gotten to a point where you can take a great photo. Only you will know when you've achieved that, and it's not something that anyone else can take away from you if you feel good about the images you are making.

How much money does it take to get started (Camera, school, everything you need)

A good digital camera with interchangeable lenses starts at about \$600. You can begin learning with a camera that costs much less. A course at the Maine Media Workshops in Rockport can cost \$750, but working as an assistant at the Maine Media Workshops costs you \$0 and might even pay you something, although I don't expect that it would pay much. College courses at the Rochester Institute of Technology can cost you between \$50,000 and \$100,000 for a four year degree. If you decide that college is the best way to go, then you should have a plan to build a career on that expense. I chose the college route to learn photography. I learned from some excellent teachers, school provided many great life experiences and I met friends that I've had for twenty years now, but if I were to do it all over again I may have chosen a different path to a career in photography. I have a good friend that went to college for a career in photography and now he runs

a successful advertising agency. While he does not work behind the camera, he oversees all the photo shoots and video shoots for television commercials. He's an excellent photographer but doesn't get paid to push the shutter. Keep an open mind about the many different careers in photography that don't include you actually taking the photos. Here are other jobs that may interest you:

- Make-up artist for fashion photography
- Food styling for food photography
- Still image editor
- Photoshop editor
- Film/Video editor
- Multimedia developer

All of these require you to have some photography skills and understand what makes a great image, but not all careers mean you are the one pushing the shutter. If your dream is to be a National Geographic Photographer, then don't let anything stand in your way, but if you don't know exactly what you want to do, then keep an open mind about the other jobs that may make you happy.

And to expand on that last sentence, I would say the best thing about being a photographer is that you will love to go to work every day and that's what makes a great career. I got to travel to far away places, climb mountains, snowshoe across a desert, ride in a glider plane, and sail from Maine to Florida in my career as a photographer and I have loved every minute of it. I now make my living working with photography to create a great magazine and that is just as exciting for me as all the adventures I found while clicking the shutter.

When taking a photo of a waterfall would you take it at sunset or sunrise?

As an outdoor photographer I can tell you that noontime I was rarely out taking photos. The best images come at sunrise and sunset. Generally speaking, you have about an hour after sunrise to get great images before the quality of the light starts to decline. The window of opportunity before sunset is longer. The great light can extend as long as three hours, but the magic light is always within the last thirty minutes before the sunsets and sometimes another fifteen minutes after the sun has

dipped below the horizon. If you want to be a nature photographer you better be a morning person because that comes with the territory.

How much money do you get paid per job?

Looking at all the different types of photographers in a general sense, the average day-rate for a professional photographer is about \$1,200 + expenses. Magazines pay less, some advertising clients pay more. Some photographers like Annie Leibovitz make considerably more. She might get paid \$30,000 per day. Much of how that price is determined is based on your skills as a photographer and how the company will be using the images.

Let's do some math. You need to advertise your work, discuss the details of the job, negotiate the price, account for the weather if you are an outdoor shooter and finally you get to shoot the photos and get paid. For every day of shooting you've got at least three days of preparation. That being the case, the maximum number of days you are actually getting paid is only about 85 in any given year. $85 \times \$1,200 = \$102,000$. Subtract out the costs for equipment, paying an assistant, office expenses, marketing expenses and you should be able to take home 1/2 of that. You won't get rich in this scenario, but you can make a good living. That's just one look at how a photographer makes money. You could resell images from your archive, sell calendars, postcards, you could offer courses to other photographers. There are many different ways that photographers price their work and how they get paid. If you want to know more I would be happy to expand on the topic at another time.

If you wanted to be a photographer, do you need to be a wedding photographer?

Wedding photography is just one option. Its biggest advantages are it doesn't require leaving Maine to make a living and it's fun. You photograph people on one of the happiest days of their life. There are over 10,000 weddings in Maine each year so you can usually find work right in your hometown. If you want to be a fashion photographer you will need to move to New York, Milan Italy or Paris to have the best chance for success and the most available job options (I can count the fashion photographers that I know of in

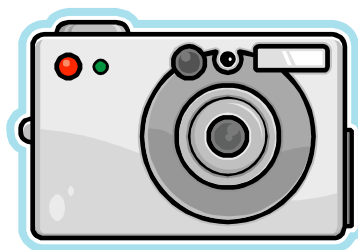
January 2010

Maine on one hand). If you want to be a National Geographic photographer the chances are good you are going to be on the road much of the year (my friend David McLain travels 150 days of the year as a Nat. Geo shooter). What kind of photography you choose will determine where you need to be to succeed. If you want to live in Maine (it's a great place to live), then you can be a wedding photographer, or a nature photographer, or a photojournalist.

It's all where you want to be and what you like to photograph. I did photograph weddings for a few years and they are fun but also a lot of pressure. You have one chance to get it right and no re-shoots. The center of the photography universe in the United States is New York City. I never wanted to live there but you will learn the most and find many photography jobs in the bigger cities around the country. You don't have to live in NY to be a photographer, but if you think you might like living in a big city, you will find more career options.

I hope my comments were helpful and I wish you all the luck in the world in your pursuit of a photography career. If I can answer any other questions just drop me a note.

All the best,
Jamie Bloomquist
<http://www.jamiebloomquist.com/>



A directory of many Maine photographers on the web:

<http://jimdugan.com/maineph.html>

Click on any of the photographers names and then on their website and you'll be able to see samples of their work.

How Not to Be a Wicked Stepmother

by Amanda Thornton

I met my husband while working at McDonalds. He was the assistant manager who was married with three boys. The twins Ethan and Dylan were six and Nathan, who we also call Booboo (no idea why), was two. The reasons I agreed to go out with Shane were (1) I knew that his marriage was rocky and both he and his wife were unhappy; (2) I knew that he was a very good guy who had never done anything like this before and wasn't just trying to use me, or rather my body; and (3) I really liked him. The whole affair only lasted nine days because he felt so guilty that he had to tell her. She kicked him out and told him he was never going to see his kids again.

Now if this happens to you, don't do what she did. She made a huge scene at his work, which got him fired (there goes any child support for her). Worst of all she made sure the boys saw her crying and told them that daddy didn't love them anymore because of me. *Daddy is evil; Amanda is evil.* She wouldn't let Shane see them, but cruelly told the boys he didn't want to. This furthered their distress over their broken home. Once she finally allowed him to visit, instead of letting him play with the boys, she always wanted to talk about their issues. Since she was drinking heavily, all the boys got to see of their father was he and mommy screaming and yelling at each other, which obviously made them upset. Then she told them that it was their job to help her win him back. When that never happened, they all felt it was their fault.

Her badmouthing me and telling them they didn't need to listen to me or mind what I said, made them resent me and they made sure I knew it was my fault their lives were ruined. I felt so guilty, and I still do to this day. We were all so hurt by the situation - the anger, badmouthing, etc., that in my need to control it I guess my expectations were a bit unreasonable. I was becoming a wicked stepmother! Thank God Shane is a great father. He pulled me into another room and helped me realize

how I was coming across to them. He told me that unless I became more understanding, they were going to hate me and grow up into damaged adults behind bars, just like my half brother and sister became because of their stepdad (my father). That thought killed me, but that didn't stop me from becoming frustrated and angry when they were throwing their fits and challenging me. After their tantrums were over I would see that they were acting like that because their lives had completely spiraled out of control. Their little hearts and minds had never experienced anything like this, so they didn't know how to deal with their feelings. They were doing the only thing they knew how to do to feel as though they had some control over their own lives. I was doing the same, but it wasn't working. For a while we were all miserable.

I remember this one time when I was helping Ethan with his homework and because he needed help with at least one word on every other page he just lost it. I mean he cried his eyes out - gushing tears, howling, collapsing, the works. They were just beginning to learn how to read in first grade and no matter what I said to try to make him feel better and help him realize that he wasn't stupid, it didn't get through. He didn't stop until his daddy came in and told him that he thought he was doing an excellent job, way better than daddy did when he was first learning. You see, even though Ethan said he got upset because reading was too hard, it wasn't that. The reading had just triggered the emotions he had been bottling up all day. All he needed was for daddy to make him feel better. Not mommy, not me, or anyone else. It had to be Shane and I had to respect that and not feel hurt that I was ineffective or unaccepted.

Things like that happened a lot and it took me a while to step out of my own way. I had to learn to accept that there was nothing I could do except support father and son through this process. I had to train myself to realize what the triggers were - some were avoidable, but sometimes they were just inevitable. When I noticed one of Ethan's breakdowns coming on I would take the other two boys for a walk and give Ethan the one-on-one time he needed with daddy. You see, when you enter into an existing family you have to make it all about

January 2010

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the kids, especially during the time you have them, otherwise the kids will hate you and believe me, if they hate you, they will do everything in their power to drive you crazy! Kids in this situation, where the adults feel guilty, usually win.

I learned a lot from this experience, particularly that my patience meter is almost nonexistent. I didn't realize that until Shane pointed it out and that is when I had a revelation that if I blew up all the time, I'd always be apologizing and the boys would hold it against me. How could they ever trust me? It's important that you apologize, and when you do, you have to really mean it. Kids know when you're insincere. I've learned to acknowledge when I'm out of line now and have asked the boys to let me know when they think I'm being too hard on them. They really like that; it shows that I honestly respect them. I tell them it's going to take some time for us all to adjust, but I'll do whatever it takes to be the best stepmom to them because they deserve it.

Another thing I did was include them on making family rules. They felt like they were a part of things and had some control over their own lives. It makes it easier if they help make the rules because they are able to remember them better and can take responsibility for themselves. I also reassured them that I'm not trying to take their father away from them and I'm not trying to replace their mother. I always give them time alone with Shane when they visit. It's also important not to badmouth their mother (at least while they're in earshot). If they miss their mom I'm the first one to dial her phone number. This helps them realize it's okay to miss her and we aren't hurt by it.

I've learned that you have to put yourself in their shoes and realize that they didn't ask for this, so it's unfair to ask them to be adults about it. If you want this to work, you have to put the time and energy into it, not expect the kids to solve the problem. Just do your best. Remember that some kids will never be 100% happy until their parents are back together, but they need to know it's not their fault and that they are loved.

Book Corner



You Look too Young to be A Mom

edited by Deborah Davis

reviewed by Anna Martz

This is a book that every teen mother can understand. It is great for encouragement and inspiration. I know that when I got pregnant at age 15, I was scared to death. I thought, *How am I going to be able to finish school? I have to finish. What about college? What about my job? What about my friends? What is going to happen to my life? The life I'm so happy with right now.* I felt this way for the longest time, about until I was six months pregnant I felt like this. That's when I heard about Passages and I knew I had to apply. I had been kicked out of school and so far had nothing. This was my opportunity to finish school, go to college, get a great job. By then my friends knew, had known for a while, and a lot of them stayed with me and are still with me. I wish I had this book when I was pregnant, though. It would have been so reassuring and saved me a lot of nights and days thinking, *What is going to happen now?*

When I did get to read it, I was happy; I learned a lot from it. It made me feel like I was doing everything perfectly for my son Joshua. It gave me more determination to finish my schooling, apply to colleges and live my life. It made it easier to ignore and deal with the looks I would get when I was shopping or just out enjoying the day. After being judged for being a teen mother Allison Crews says, "Girls like me have raised Presidents. We've raised Messiahs... Girls like me won't compromise and we won't fail." That quote was so powerful; it made me think of all the times I had been given that look, the look that every teen mom knows- the horrified look, the shocked look, the you-should-be-ashamed-of-yourself look.

It doesn't bother me now what look I get. I know that I am a great mother for Joshua and that he might someday be somebody who's on the news and is somebody great! This book was an inspiration and encouragement to live my life to the fullest, to help Joshua live a wonderful life. All the girls in this book lived and are still living a great life and so will I.

"Don't tell me my life is over when I have a baby at seventeen. I didn't believe you then, and I certainly don't now. My life story starts at age seventeen."

-Jackie Lanni

What My Mother Doesn't Know

by Sonya Sones

Reviewed by Anna Martz

This book is a story in verse about a girl, Sophie, who is in high school and thinks she's found her love twice. Both were the popular guys that every girl might want. Their names are Lou and Dylan, but when she falls for the school geek, Murphy, everything changes.

A lot of girls in high school have a time when they think that their boyfriend is "it". He's the one she loves. She might not say it to him, but it does cross her mind. Sometimes she might really love him, and sometimes she really just loves his body.

Loving somebody for them is completely different than loving somebody for their body. To try and see the difference is hard, especially for a teenager. Sophie learns the difference when she ends up dating Murphy. Her feelings for him are completely different than the ones she has felt for Lou and Dylan. I would recommend this book because it's funny and it's perfect for a teenage girl. I think almost every girl can relate to the feelings Sophie has.

On Reading and Writing

by Renee Grey

When reading others' writing you are either reading their idea, opinion on something or reading a story. When reading their opinion this can spark an idea of your own. For example, your opinion on the subject or similar subject may differ from theirs. This can encourage you to further explore the subject for your own curiosity or may push you to write your own argument on this subject.

Reading someone's story, whether fiction or non-fiction, can give you ideas on a story you would like to write. Or if you are anything like me, I like to read stories and maybe try some of the things in the story as long as they are safe. It may also encourage you to do research on the story or a particular part of it. Say you read a story about a pilot, it may interest you to want to learn about pilots, what they do and different types of pilots.

I find that writing fiction is easier because I can go anywhere with it. I like writing little stories for my kids because I can write about mythical dragons, talking animals – really, all sorts of things. You do not have to worry if it is going to be correct because it does not have to be. Some people find writing non-fiction is easier. To some doing the research is exciting and writing about things that have really happened is their way of expressing themselves. Writing opens your imagination to all different things, because you have to open up your mind and see the dragons flying or the people that are living in poverty and how their day to day life is so different from ours.

I prefer reading poetry the most. I like it because with so few words you can make someone feel happy, sad, mad - a whole array of feelings. I like a lot of fiction books and certain kinds of non-fiction books. I enjoy fiction books so much because it puts you into a fantasyland. When you can get into a book so much that you can forget about different stresses in your life, then that is a good book. I tend to find myself more attracted to reading sad stories and non-fiction stories, sometimes I think that is because it reminds me that my life is not so bad after all.

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