**Sacrifice**

Taken from “The Kite Runner” on 9-30-13

Pages 71-79

I held my breath

Paralyzed

Biting my fists

Eyes shut

I saw the blue kite

The key to Baba’s heart

A rusted- cast iron stove tilted against a wall

“I’m letting you keep the kite.”

Twirling his brass knuckles

Relaxed

“Reminding you of what I’m about to do.”

Confident

I watched them close in on the boy I’d grown up with.

Hassan hurled the rock

Assef yelped as he flung himself at Hassan, knocking him to the ground

“Amir agha and I are friends.” Hassan said

“Friends?” Assef said, laughing. “You pathetic fool!”

I almost said something

Almost

I had one last chance

To step into the alley

To stand up for Hassan

I blinked

Stopped

Ran

I was a coward

Afraid of getting hurt

Afraid of what Assef would do to me

Hassan found me 15 minutes later

Snot

Tears

He handed me the blue kite

Turned

Limped away

That’s as close as Hassan and I ever came to discussing what happened in the alley

It’s what I feared most

I wished things had turned out some other way

Paralyzed

I exhaled

I felt my body clench up

Then I understood

Nothing is free

Not even the key to Baba’s heart