



This original photo was taken by middle school student Trae Jones.

### Forever Changed

from Austin, eighth grade writer



Gasping with fatigue, Sydney stopped running. Waves of nausea swept over her as she steadied herself and tried to catch her breath. Trying to stand upright only caused orange stars to burst into her vision and her knees to weaken. As the warm wind whipped across the surrounding hills and across her face, she thought of the terrible circumstances she was in. Fear gripped her chest, and her throat constricted as she thought of what was behind her and what could lie ahead. To anyone else, it would seem she had lost her mind, running for miles without end, even without any noticeable threat behind her. But there was, and there always would be.

Usually, she would walk along this gravel road and admire the very nature of the place: the bees humming around her; the gravel crunching underneath her feet; and the wispy clouds in the bright blue sky that spanned overhead like a vast expanse of never ending ocean. She would stare in wonder at the road that seemed to last forever, and of course she had never walked the whole length of it, until now. Now, she was running for her life along the road that she had gone down in her truck too many times to count. Each step now caused her legs to scream out in agony and constricted her breathing. Her knees threatened to give way as she stood, and she steadied herself against a wooden fence post along the edge of the road.

It couldn't be much farther, could it? Of course, she no longer had time to think about what had been, for now her life would be forever changed. She tried not to think too hard about the situation she was in, but she couldn't help it. Attempting to hold back her fear was like trying to contain a starving lion in a cage with no lock. Despite the screaming complaints she received from her legs, she began running. She couldn't escape the agony she was in, and she felt like she was trying to travel along a never-ending road.

**What do you like about Austin's writing style? Which writing trait(s) does he excel with?**

**What story or poem might you write inspired by this photograph?**