



MOUA, KOU

Kou Moua graduated from D.C. Everest in 2003 and will be attending the University of Eau Claire in the fall. Her interests are painting and martial arts. Her hobbies are reading and sleeping. She enjoys exotic foods. She hopes to one day be famous.

The immense reality of what I had done finally hit me while I was staring at the bright hospital lights. The neck brace kept my wandering head sedate, while wild thoughts raced in my head. "What have I done?" I kept berating myself through gritted teeth while both my arms throbbed heavily, the pain making me unbearably hot. It happened so fast, a red haze that threatened to consume me overwhelming all my emotions. I wanted to pass out, to fall into the black abyss of oblivion, but my body wouldn't allow it. I had to bear the red-hot, excruciatingly painful lancing; I was surprised that I was even still alive. My cries for something to stop the pain weren't heeded either. I needed to be examined further and the paperwork had to be done first. I had survived a nine-foot free-fall landing directly on both my arms. It's amazing what the human body can endure.

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As the ground rushed toward me in a great roaring 'whoosh,' I turned my head to the right and closed my eyes through my arms, as I stuck them out tensing for impact. A sickeningly loud crack echoed in the quiet room followed by several gasps and screams. I was in shock for a second and tried to get up, but realized I couldn't move my fingers or my arms. At first it didn't hurt much. My arms were just numb, and a tingling sensation spread throughout my body. Then the onslaught of tremendous pain rushed through my sides at the same time, but all I heard was a roar in my ears engulfing everything in pain and chaos. My right forearm suffered the most with both of the bones breaking, a compound fracture jutting out, and my ragged skin laying in a pool of my sweat, tears, and blood. On my left arm only the ulna, the smaller bones in my forearm, had broken, but it had been contorted and lying motionless at an awkward angle.

It's strange how a second can last forever by being re-lived every once in a while. I still lie in bed sometimes at night and think back on that fateful day. Whenever I recall what happened, it all comes back in slow motion, every movement and sound. It's like a movie where everything is slowed down for a moment. I had that moment, that moment when everything goes wrong and lives are changed forever. I know my moment really took only about 5 seconds, yet it seemed like a lifetime to me, changing everything entirely. Every precious moment of life is counted for, and I mean to use each one wisely. I still love gymnastics and the uneven bars, even though I get goose bumps every time I see someone on them gracefully swinging.

This all happened in the winter of my junior year, near spring. While winter's cruel grasp began to thaw and melt away, I was still frozen in time. It took me most of the remaining school year to recover. This incident really made me think about my future and my mortality. I've decided to continue my education after high school. I was always planning to go to college, but now I'm even more determined to reach my dreams. The three plates and 16 screws in my arms prove that.

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