

Student	Jamiya Randolph, TECH, 12th Grade
Title	Autumn Born
Result	3rd Place

AUTUMN BORN

The head didn't suit him, it *truthfully* didn't. His body began to distort and unwind until a perfect shape had matched the canvas. His mouth opened and closed, his eyes blinked rapidly, and a world of monotony greeted him kindly.

“You sure love to play and embrace those martyrs, don't you?” A voice had spoken ever so softly, and the man in the suit raised a brow before looking down through the glass.

“What's your name now?” His head turned, speaking to the now young guy. He glanced around slowly, taking in the room. His eyes scanned in search of anything that could regain her memory. He grips the plain white clothing on his body, and chipped nails grasp his skin.

“My name is—” A flotsam image flashes across the mind of the born, and he cracks his head against his clenched hand. Grunting, he turns and begins to walk, no direction—— no way. No home. A cold fogged breath leaves his lips; the room reeks of guts and rat hybrids who reach out for helping hands. Every inhalation was a warning.

“Designation: Autumnborn 11-C and counting.” The man rang out on the intercom, his eyes flickering like the dying sun, a vortex of emotions rupturing the inside of a cold, dulled body. Color begins to flash like sparks within a cool night sky, white diluted flesh, and suddenly, he's alive again.

Something plagues the whiteblood's body behind the glass, and a scar is scratched on the guy's face. His mole twitches with each blink, and suddenly a heart stammers.

“*You’re staring,*” The Atumunborn speaks cheerfully, voice wrapped in static.

“I’m observing, there’s a difference.” The com glitches, and it sounds more condensed than the man in the suit makes it ring.

“Feels the same. My body says it’s the same.”

The whiteblood’s throat went dry.

“Do you recall anything?”

“Should I?” The boy stands, his white hospital gown flowing around the padded room.

“No. You shouldn’t.”

“Do you know what you are?”

“I’m an interdimensional threat — with a lame ass name like autumnborn. I swipe heads for a living— cool but not *that* cool.”

A snicker escapes from the white blood.

“Not quite. Do you know your purpose?”

“To live on,” A grunt forms and bubbles out a blazing red throat—— “hey, I don’t like this head. I think it’s rejecting—— and it freaking hurts.” He crouches, crashing his heels together.

“Fight it, change hurts.”

“Why?” Carmine meets cold grey; the glass is suddenly without oxygen. “Aghhhh— It hurts to breathe,”

“It’s what makes you real, human, I mean.” The white blood prevents his body from reaching out.

A veil of relief confounds the boy before he completely tumbles onto the floor.

“It’s....it’s funny, you remind me of someone I used to know.” He turns to glass again, his sharp, uneven teeth digging into a pale, desaturated lip. He’s not good-looking at all, and he’s hideous when he tries to smile, but something tugs— something small so minuscule, tugs at a dead, barely beating organ.

The boy's eyes flare like pixie dust, melting into gold. His hands shake as if leaves are brittle in the wind. His eyes almost feel encumbered at times, staring as his body goes through the necessary changes. His chipped nails scraped the gown to ground his body.

“Will I become closer to the breakthrough?” The boy taps at the chip in his head. Every breath was an explosion of pain.

“Most likely not.”

Stillness surpasses the charismatic behavior, and decay and rot begin to penetrate the boy's mind.

“You used to know me before; we weren’t close.”

The whiteblood pushes his glasses up more.

“Ah, is that why you feel warm? It smells of blood in here,” His nose twitches.

“If I remember correctly, your name was Moxie, your eyes carmine.”

This was wrong; he wasn’t supposed to do this. This wouldn’t provide any value to the BAREFLESH. “Moxie...” He mutters, he doesn’t ramble. He remains. The autumn reaches out for his face, dreading.

“Moxie.....” His name wavers in the Whitebloods, hovers over the com.

“I used to have this sentiment that he was favored by the angels. I realized that Moxie, like everyone else, was a complex person with flaws and moments of imperfection.”

A slick, dry breath was taken in before a continuation, “The idealized perception of him being favored by angels now seems naive and simplistic. It’s absurd to put it. Those aspects made him

who he was, pieces put together, his anger outbursts, his moments of peace, his silent struggles.”

“He was stronger than most individuals I met; he was more potent than some heroes.”

“Is that what made him human?”

“No, I....I think as humans, we were meant to question things— though sometimes curiosity may not have the best outcome. A lot of things in our life we take for granted; *inventions* we take for granted come from someone’s curiosity.”

“A majority of things make us up; many believe we’re amalgamations of gods.”

“I don’t have much.” Moxie suddenly speaks to Whiteblood.

“I don’t have much anyway, so why am I here?” The head is changing slowly; this is where it begins. The head is beginning to adapt to its user’s personality; **nevertheless**, the time period is unpredictable.

“Moxie, settle down. Recite to me what your purpose is.”

“Dad? What— wha, I can’t breathe.” A ragged inhale is heard, and for a moment, the Whiteblood begs the head not to burst--- just to *succumb* to raw blood rot like the *others*.

A curse is let out from the come.

“Don’t resist it, if you want to be human— if you want to give anyone hope, don’t resist it, Moxie.”

“Okay, Okay Dad— I’m okay.” He huffs, his mind staggering.

The white blood pushes his chair out, ever so carefully. A hand grasping over his locked jaw. It worked, it’s functioning. Moxie reaches for the glass, his sunken eyes brimming full of unshed tears.

A large popping sound is heard from the com; the glass is splashed, the rot isn’t what’s taken

him. It was brief, so fast the whiteblood descends the steel wall—— incredulity etched all over his face. It's all mistaken. He maintained it; he was so close.

Why? Why is it changing? Why can't the head adjust? Why can't it stay as exact as when it started? Why? Why did it become his son?

A large scripted mechanical hand is sent gradually to the glass. Swabbing the window, brushing the floor. Vacating the body of its intestines as if they were never there. A renewed head is placed on so carefully, and that damn Whiteblood cries.

Why him? *Why, Why, why.*

The body contorts, it's done.

“Your paper, sir,” A man tells, striding in, and a little lined paper is placed for notes. He shudders, sitting in the chair.

“State to me....your purpose.” He grunts.

The head pivots. And just like that, it's like his son was never there.