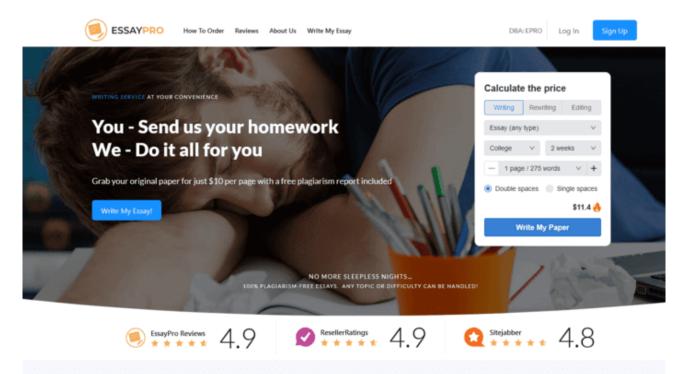
Paper Cranes



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| Paper Cranes |
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| 1. |
| From the Menninger Institute's seven criteria for emotional maturity: |
| The capacity to find more satisfaction in giving than receiving. |
| The capacity to relate to other people in a consistent manner with mutual satisfaction and helpfulness. |
| The capacity to love. |

In the opening scene of the film L.I.E., the main character, Howie, a fifteen-year-old boy with baggie jeans and hair that does a chipmunk <u>tail</u> flip at the top of his forehead, jumps up to stand on the railing of an overpass on the Long Island Expressway. Arms extended

2.

to the sides, he tightrope walks to the left. He stops, turns, and begins back. Then stops again and lifts one foot so he's balanced only on the tip of one sneaker, on a metal beam the width of a cassette tape. We, the audience, see him from behind: a thin figure in toobig clothes, car after car after car whizzing by beneath him, all oblivious to the boy who, with just the slightest sudden gust, could land, crumpled, on their roof. As you watch, all you want to do is wrap your arms around the boy and hug him to the ground, to safety, to chiding words about what could've happened, and keep on hugging him. And as you watch the rest of the movie, that feeling never leaves: Howie only seems more and more alone. You see the already motherless Howie abandoned by his father, abandoned by the boy he'd thought was his best friend, bullied at school, until the only person left to listen to him at all is a middle-aged man who also happens to be a pedophile. At first I was outraged that the director portrayed this pedophile as the only person willing to put a supportive arm around Howie's shoulder. After all, aren't pedophiles scum? But then I realized that maybe that was the point. It's easy to judge. And it's easy to keep speeding home, aware only of the other metal boxes zooming along next to you in tenuous synchrony.

3.

When I was little I got fevers. They were uncomfortable fevers that made it so all I could think about was feeling nauseous and anticipating the moment when I would feel well enough to eat the promised popsicle. But the worst part was at night, when I'd float somewhere in and out of consciousness: since I wasn't always sure if I was sleeping or not, I wasn't sure when I was dreaming or not, either.

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