A Bittersweet Story
This essay is about how my older brother and I found our little brother Felix through Facebook. This is a story that is very touching to me; it makes me cry every time I tell it. In fact, I am crying now. This story is what I call “bittersweet.” As you read, you will see why.

When I was six, my father went to jail. I didn’t see him again until I was about 12 and my mother took my older brother and me to visit him in a North Carolina prison. Before my father got incarcerated, he was very promiscuous. One of his relationships led to the birth of my little brother Felix Laurent.

My older brother and I didn’t know about Felix until I was about ten. He wasn’t my mother’s son, but I didn’t care. All that mattered was I had a little brother. I wanted to meet him right away! But we lived far apart from each other, so I never got to meet Felix in person.

Many years passed. Suddenly one day I heard yelling in my house. Then there was a loud knocking on my door. It was my older brother. He was so excited it looked like his eyes were about to pop out his head. He was jumping up and down saying, “I found Felix! I found Felix!” (They had found each other on Facebook.) I got excited too. I started jumping up and down with him.

We made arrangements for Felix to visit us in New York that weekend. When he arrived, he finally got the chance to meet his paternal side of the family. Getting to know Felix was one of the best times of my life. He was tall and hand-
some, intelligent and funny. He was a wonderful person.

From the very first moment I met him, my heart was bursting with love for my baby brother. I couldn’t stop staring at him; he was the spitting image of my older brother and father. It was so crazy to me. We were so happy to finally have Felix so close to us; we took him everywhere and showed him off to everyone. The feeling was amazing. For some strange reason I had a feeling of completion. I felt whole.

After Felix’s first visit, he continued to come to New York about twice a month. I spoke to him about everything, and he didn’t mind me talking his ears off about girly stuff. I loved him so much.

This argument led to me not speaking to my younger brother for a couple months. There wasn’t a week that passed that my brother didn’t try to reach out to me. But I am stubborn. I didn’t pick up any of his calls or reply to any of his texts, and I unfriended him on Facebook.

A few months later, I read a post on my aunt’s Facebook page that said, “Rest in peace to my nephew Felix.” I found out through Facebook that my little brother, my heart, one of the main reasons I smiled, was gone.

He had been stabbed in his back and released from the hospital earlier than he should have. Because of health insurance issues, he did not get all the right treatment. Felix was found eight hours later in his bed, deceased.

Take it Further

What stood out to you about this story? Discuss why the author uses the term “bittersweet” to describe it.

Describe the various ways that Facebook had an impact on the family in this story.

Use these writing prompts to do some free-writing. When you free-write, try to silence your inner critic. Don’t worry about handwriting, spelling, or grammar. Just get your thoughts down on paper. Share them with others. Or not. The idea is to express yourself!

1. Write about the word “bittersweet” or share a bittersweet experience that you had.
2. Look at the picture of Felix and his son. Describe what you see.
3. Write about what makes you feel complete or whole.