

MLK Design Seminar
17.922 IAP13
Assignment 3 – Autobiography
M.I.T. Student

I have had a pretty plain life. I grew up in a cute, small home on the water only about fifteen minutes away from here by car. I never dealt with divorce or unexpected death or tragedy. My parents never went to college. My mother gave up her career when my sister was born, and never returned. We were by no means rich, but until around high school, I thought my parents could and would buy my sister and I the moon if we really wanted it badly enough. My sister and I would not have dared to miss family dinners, which happened every night until my grandfather became ill. Sundays were church and family days. We'd all pile into the car after mass; I'd fall asleep and wake up hours away from where we started. Whether it was to explore a new city in New Hampshire or just simply a new breakfast place in Maine, it was one of my favorite activities as a child. We'd always somehow make it back in time for dinner at my grandparents, just a few streets up from my own home. As I got older, I realized most of my friends were not as lucky as I was with a "plain life." Divorce was almost as common as families who ate dinner around the television. More than one of my best friends moved multiple times a year because their families could not afford the rent. This is not to say that these situations did not raise strong, brilliant students: my friends went off to great schools: it just made me realize that maybe I took for granted what I had, and the values it instilled in me.

I am by no means plain. Whether it be my fiery red hair to match my somewhat feisty (or so I am often told and am still trying to decide if it is a good thing) personality or my education in my poor, urban high school to my belief in loyalty above all, I am unique. I am a pinch of my dad's witty humor, a dash of my mother's extreme determination, a splash of my aunt's independence, a hair of my grandmother's calmness, a sprinkle of my grandfather's need to stand up for what is right, and a handful of my sister's confidence and advice.

I was molded by my surroundings: I woke up to the sunrise over the water and fell asleep to the waves crashing on the rocks. I now do research with coral reefs as I study environmental engineering! My friends were from all different walks of life and cultures. We spent time joking about stereotypes, discussing culture, playfully arguing about religion, and more. Our conversations were so open that I did not always realize that not everyone would be ok with my voiced opinions. It still has not quite stopped me from voicing what I feel. I find that my closest friends are not easily offended and love to discuss these 'difficult' topics.

I am a product of my surroundings, my family, and my self-proclaimed plain life and I love where it has brought me.

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