



Forum: Writing Correction ([ä](#),[æ](#),[ʰē](#),[±æ](#),[-t̥ä½œæ-t̥,](#)[èt̥²å³,](#)[å±¥æ-](#),[ä¿ä»¶](#))

Topic: Please Help Me

Subject: Please Help Me

Posted by: aspirant

Posted on: 2007/4/16 17:49:25

To The Language Teachers On This Website.

I am applying to go to The University of Chicago and have been asked to write some essays, one of which I have attached hereunder.

Please help me to make corrections wherever necessary. Thank you very much.

QUESTION (OPTION 2)

At a crucial point in his career, the writer James Baldwin withdrew to a secluded spot in the Swiss Alps. “There,” he later wrote, “in that absolutely alabaster landscape, armed with two Bessie Smith records and a typewriter, I began to recreate the life that I had first known as a child and from which I had spent so many years in flight.” It was Bessie Smith, through her tone and her cadence, who helped me to dig back to the way I myself must have spoken—and to remember the things I had heard and seen and felt.

Inevitably, certain things - recordings, household objects, familiar smells - help us to "œdig our way back"• to our past. Write about something that has enabled you to return to a forgotten part of your past.

This is my essay.

THE KEYS

There they were, lying insipidly in a dark corner of my drawer, wearing a thin copper-hued coat of rust.

I took them out of my drawer and looked at them, amazed that they did not find their way into some rubbish dump after my family shifted its residence. I made a few half-hearted attempts to scrape off the rust with a coin, all the while thinking. Trying to remember. And as I continued to look at those keys, remember I did.

I grew up in an apartment in Taipei, in the midst of a housing estate that is relatively large by local standards. As a wide-eyed tot, I used to toddle all over the flat, admiring the pale yellow hues of the walls, and the colorful marble floor that stayed deliciously cold on those scorchingly warm afternoons. I was an exceptionally subdued baby (a fact that my friends now will never accept), and my quietness followed me into childhood. I was never autistic, just laconic, but my parents must have been a trifle worried that their only son was so hushed.

After I started schooling, I developed a habit of retreating into my own room once I reached home

after school. My room was my cocoon, my little shell of existence, and I ventured outside only for meals with my family, to play the piano, and to answer the occasional phone call. Apart from school, I hardly step out of my home. Put simply, I was a veritable recluse.

I took great pains to bedeck my room with paintings and ornaments, and great pride in keeping it neat. I still have many memories of that room - the copy of the Mona Lisa above my table, the whirring ceiling fan that always seemed as if it was about to topple, and the antiquated computer that failed to boot up ever so often. I also recall the amazing number of drawers I had in my steel cupboard, my closet and under my table. Before I left the house in the morning, I used to lock them one by one with my keys.

The intruding rings from the phone interrupted my reminiscence. It was my classmate. We chatted for about an hour before we hung up, and all the while, I was looking at those old drawer keys.

I guess I never would have remembered how quiet I used to be if I had never unearthed them, for them to evoke those precious childhood memories. Life really is fascinating. Who would have thought that my reticent childhood alter ego would emerge from that tiny cocoon, and mature into a confident, loquacious young adult? Indeed, that metamorphosis would never have occurred if I had not attended junior and senior high schools. Some unknown, and I suspect, instinctive force warmed me up towards socializing. In my first few months in junior high school, I made small talk and formed friendships with an alacrity that defied my hitherto hermitic tendencies. Perhaps it was a natural response to a new environment. In any case, as I plowed through the vicissitudes of junior and senior high schools, I kept my readiness to bond with my peers and as such, made many friends who braved the challenges of schooling together with me. While I treasure these priceless friendships till this day, I have, on the other hand, taken my extroversion for granted since a long time ago. I am glad that the keys brought me momentarily back to those morbid days of living in virtual if not actual solitude, for I want to remind myself never to return to that kind of life.

As I continued to hold those keys in my hand on that sultry warm afternoon, more fond recollections surfaced. I recalled the contents of the drawers with relish, chuckling at some of the oddities, like my collections of lollipop wrappers and peanut shells. Maybe my hermitic lifestyle did affect my sanity after all! Weird collections notwithstanding, those very drawers also contained items that held great meaning for me as a child. The most important of these were my diary and scrapbooks, which I devoted to enshrining my childhood dreams and passions. I vividly remember that after I watched the gadget-laden *Back to the Future*, I developed an insatiable interest for science and invention, and dreamt of becoming a scientist or inventor myself. Subsequently I began flooding my diary with entries addressed to the likes of Thomas Edison, Albert Einstein, and of course, Dr. Emmet Brown from the film. Concurrently, I scoured scientific journals for interesting articles to paste in my scrapbook., discovering a tremendous amount in the process. In retrospect, this was to lay the foundation for my enthusiasm towards science in my early years of schooling. Ironically, much of that ardor for science was gradually replaced by a deepening passion for economics, through a process so subtle that I never took notice of it. Indeed, I would have forgotten my previous interest in science, had those rusty keys not brought Dr. Emmet Brown back to me.

Keys would be keys. Rusty as they were, the ones that I re-stumbled upon on that afternoon opened the door to my past, and urged me to ponder about my future.

May God bless them.