

2019 Love All Means All Essay Contest

Name (Last, First): Vieten, Indigo

Age: 18

Grade: 12, Graduated June 10, 2019

Country or U.S. State: California

Section 1. How and why I flourish when I live by the Deep Golden Rule

A Poet

Being a poet is important. If I have learned anything throughout my life, it is this. I'm not talking about the kind of poet that writes or speaks poetry. Though those poets are needed too, more than we know. I'm talking about the kind of poet that lies dormant within each one of us, that breaks out in moments of discovery, moments of love, moments of kindness, moments of humanity.

When I was in seventh grade, I kept a journal, off and on. Recently, when I was in the process of moving my life to the opposite end of California from the one I was born and raised in, I found it. My home looked like it had been taken apart and put back together again by someone under ten years old. Piles of clothes, shoes, files, even kitchen appliances thrown amiss on the floor, waiting for someone to pack them into boxes so tightly that one object could barely be told apart from another.

In one of these piles was where I found it, a sequined, black covered book that held all my secrets from the darkest part of my life. The book swam in front of me, tempting me to open it. Like Pandora's box, it held something, I didn't know what at the time. I didn't know that this

book was holding the proof I had been waiting for, the proof of poetry, and the proof of darkness.

I picked it up with such carelessness, like pieces of my mind that I hid from myself weren't waiting behind that dark, illuminating cover. I opened the book to the first page, nonchalant. One line faced me; Being a poet is important. I started reading one page of that journal, every afternoon, around 4:00 pm, after getting home from school, so I wouldn't think myself to death during those long days, and before my free time, so I could have time to ponder before homework overtook me, and then, possibly sleep.

I read things, things that didn't matter, things that probably mattered to me back then, but don't anymore, and the most moving things that have stayed with me through the years. Beliefs, worldviews, pains, joys. That book was filled with poetry, full of boats crossing vast oceans. Broken pieces of my life back then treated as separate problems. Their solutions barred through paper, just a few short pages away. I've learned from that journal what I thought I was, a monstrous destructive beast tearing hopes down like they were cities to conquer. I showed myself no kindness, the poet inside of me had been entrapped by my pain, my fear, and what through my pencil was a window into her cell.

Section 2. How Will I Use My Talents To Pursue a Career That Contributes to the Lives of Others?

It is important to know that I've wanted to help people for as long as I can remember. This is essential when you are a poet, finding an outlet to share yourself with others when they need you. You can do this in almost any profession, in big ways or small. I am choosing a clearer path, to become a therapist. A job where I won't have to go far to find ways of being a poet.

Where I can live the deep golden rule in each day, each encounter, loving others without conditions.

Finding healthy ways to be a poet in everyday life is hard. Most of the time, things that really matter happen by accident. Too many people wander around either not caring, or actively looking, obsessing over ways to be better to the people around them. These are both fear responses, brought on by being pushed down or told something harmful for so long they begin to lose themselves to cope with the lack of space. Bringing poetry into the world through strength, kindness, and love have been happening less and less as our society has gotten darker.

When in the city, people walk by each other. Now this may not seem like a big deal or anything at all to most, but it means something. It means that although people are looking at each other, they haven't been seeing each other for a long time. People move on completely different wavelengths, and will likely never meet everyone from the town they live in, no matter how big or small. As the connections becomes less and less, meaning dwindles right along with them. Our poetry is dampened.

People my age now see a new darkness, like no other before us, or at least we think we do. We see it clawing its way up through our streets, we see it in our homes, in our schools, in our food, we consume it, and we see it inside of ourselves when we do. All the events that catch our attention for being too awful to conceive have been seeping into our bodies since we were born, same with our parents, and their parents. This trauma has been passed down to us, even though our world is more progressive than it has been before. Our hearts are consumed by it. Some of us are even lost to this darkness.

But we see each other, in the poetry, in the poetry that seeps its way out of us and touches others, even when we mean it not to. We have strength in us, we have light, love, tolerance. We have medicine inside of us, so why do we so often expel it back into the darkness? If it is because we are afraid, it's our bravery that can pull through and win this fight. For me, the only way for us to start pulling our planet, our life, our species, back into the light is to be a poet, and be a powerful one.

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