

Let there be light
By Gabe Cobzaru

My parents said my education would be spread by light,
My brother said my education would be hindered unless I chose to stray,
My university said their education lets there be light,
My brother lost the his influence over my days.

If I had to choose again,
Even if I hadn't chosen right,
I would still pick light,
Despite needing to make amends.

Enlightenment comes in varying degrees,
Some feel enlightened after an intensive sneeze,
Others when they wake and discover it was just a dream,
But this education enlightens me.

My old problems seem rather banal,
As important as a baby who has yet to crawl.
The world I stepped out of
Led me to a culture I absolutely love.

Not just mere acceptance,
A massive moment of celebration.
Not just tolerance,
No more moments of dreaded anticipation.

Do not look for the me of the past,
I am not who I used to be,
Do not weep for the changes that last,
For I am happier and still me.

Realize that UCSD can hear,
Do not feel sad to be away from home,
Realize that UCSD cares,
Do not dread the thought of a new home.

We begin our adult lives
In a perfect environment,
With music in the ears
Of all the starstruck students.

The reading definitely had a profound impact on me, due the unique portrayal of Asian students presented. I already knew that all stereotypes were harmful, but the amount of damage the model minority stereotype caused was unknown to me before. Not only does it increase the amount of pressure on the students, but it also makes all their other problems seem utterly irrelevant. While other groups have consideration for a large amount of scholarships and help from every corner, this basic support system seems to be lacking at even the most fundamental level for Asian americans. The reading also showed me that even in an extremely tolerant and diverse community, acts of hatred can still exist. It's not necessarily the fact that individuals don't understand the realities of a group of people, but more like they can't understand the realities of a group of people that are different than their own.

Individually, UCSD has offered a welcoming experience where our differences aren't just respected, but celebrated. It's a place where every mind works a bit differently, yet these differences lead to an experience which extends beyond just what the classroom teaches. In my first weeks at UCSD, I've met people from faraway lands and realized we share more interests than I do with my neighbours. These experiences have led me to realize that every person, regardless of where they originate from, has a story to tell. We should not suppress these stories and shove them into a textbook, forcing them into a form of binary. A world with no grey is dangerous, as it creates a simple yet incomplete story. For me especially, there's a huge wealth of information which is open in the world, for those who are willing to chase it. In the same way that you can't learn math without solving problems and you can't learn how to climb rocks without going to real rocks, you certainly can't learn about people without speaking to them. You can't learn about other cultures without experiencing them, you can't appreciate diversity without realizing it's worth, both inside and outside of the classroom.

Works Cited

Kong, Angela Wai-Yin. *Re-examining Diversity Policy at University of California, San Diego* :

The Racial Politics of Asian Americans. Diss. UCSD, 2014. N.p.: n.p., n.d. Print.

Frost, Robert. "Fire and Ice by Robert Frost | Poetry Foundation." *Poetry Foundation*. Poetry Foundation, n.d. Web. 28 Nov. 2016.