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Upon Searching Within

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Ambar Zobairi University Honors Program Senior Honors Thesis Spring 1996

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Wrapped in my shroud of memories, all good, thoughts of sad, unfinished love soak through something like osmosis into every pore of my skin-a perfect love, round like a sphere, enclosing hope, imploden and with a rush of pungent cold, sucks the breath of love away into its blackness, and carries with it that silent joy suddenly dead: its death lingers exposed in the bleak, exhausted air that surrounds my mind. 4/15/96

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Mother Love

The most vivid colors of early morning orange splash you with a richness deeper than a Titian Red. Just a few moments stolen from my own sleep to stare: my stained glass, glowing in the pink hues of innocent repose, illuminated by the warm light of new life which shines through you to produce a brilliant rainbow, lovely, evoking a response of tender pride, because I see you with the eyes of God-a beautiful creation of love.

4/21/96

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With Apologies

This is the time of dying, beating of bewildered, fearful hearts, driving down long, lonely highways, away from the sick friend not seen in ages. I weep, I drive, I curse myself for not coming earlier in health when hair had just started to turn white at the roots, when limbs still moved without pain. These years have taken a toll on tired bodies, left maps on faces, maps of roads left long behind. My friend, I could not recognize you, nor you me. For that, I am sorry.

2/19/96

You have dragged me to this unfamiliar place, left me by myself and all alone. The room is full of strangers, full of noise, but I hear, I feel, I fear the silence.

Across the room, you stand surrounded by temporarily important people. Your face is a guarded mask, smiling carelessly.

A wary glance from you leaves me wondering how long it will be before you find your way back through the crowd--if ever. It's not as if you enjoyed the distance, even though you prolong it, thinking foolishly that it may somehow benefit us both.

Your selfish needs and your mysterious way of doing things are a painful irritation. You make me feel more lonely and abandoned because you are just a few small steps away.

I consider leaving this room and driving the long road to some other place. But then I see you looking at me anxiously and I realize that I am here, standing silently to help you learn to stand a little straighter.

I smile at you and wait, a little longer.

3/4/96

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A Sister's Wedding

My new, flawless Indian silk clings and molds itself to a not-so-perfect body-soft, cool, and airy, an advertiser's delight. Bangles jingle half-way up arms that have painlessly and meticulously avoided a merciless sun to achieve the creamy white look that will eventually attract young males who will send marriage proposals and a photo through their mothers. Black kohl makes my eyes seem larger and more innocent-it will not smudge if only I can perfect the art of applying the right amount. The henna on my palms has been beautifully and intricately molded by expert hands into designs that would put Van Gogh's Starry Night to shame. My black hair has been brushed exactly one hundred times so that it shines like unmined coal. Tonight, I must be beautiful so that the sisters of the mothers of the cousins of the bridegroom may notice me and perhaps be pleased.

4/29/96

At dinner, something suddenly sent you into a spiral of memories-how you came to America with a hundred dollars, bought an all-wool suit for twelve dollars in New York, paid a nickel for a cup of coffee. Remembering always animates you; turns you into someone younger than you usually seem to be. Sometimes, you become the boy who left home at twelve, who started smoking at thirteen, who was an actor, a philosopher, a progressive. Sometimes, you forget that you are the man who climbed the Pyramids of Egypt, who sat in gondolas in Venice, who looked down at the world from the top of the Eiffel Tower-but sometimes, you remember. Why now do you often tell us your life is a tragedy? Was ten years in Africa not long enough? Was the glory of the Taj Mahal not satisfying enough? Or is life in the Midwest just not dramatic enough? You never walked the Great Wall or saw the Hanging Gardens. You never ran a marathon or danced a tango. Is this your tragedy? A million men have dreamt about your life; A million men have desired your adventures. You have hit life like a tornado. Why does all that have to change? We have grown up and your heart feels sad when we are not always what you want. This is your tragedy. We have to run our marathons and dance our tangos, and go where you have not gone. We mirror you, but you cannot see. You deny our creations, denounce them. But our memories are being made, and one day we will see how they intertwine with yours to create an endless spiral.

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You were not as refined then as you are now, not quite as pretty, not quite as neat. Your hair was shorter, and you wore less fashionable clothes. Still, it was the eyes that I noticed most-that indefinable hazely-greeny-yellow color, kind, melting, truthful eyes that spoke hope without speaking. Sometimes then, when I looked at you, shyness invaded my whole body and I had to turn away. You smiled and said you liked the uncommon innocence which made the whole thing so different and so easy.

Two years ago yesterday, we took pictures at a lake-you and I-laughing obliviously into the camera. Somewhere above us we heard ducks, but we couldn't see them, so we dubbed them "spy ducks." It was a cold day, and you gave me your navy-blue sailor coat with the anchors on the buttons while you sat shivering, your back hunched up against the bitter wind. You didn't seem to mind the chill. And as you pulled me closer into the warm circle of your arms, I looked up and saw myself reflected in the smiling mirror of your eyes.

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Upon Searching Within

Stretched between worlds, torn by words and thoughts that divide you from inside, a loneliness sets you apart from living life while you sort through the tangled jungles of the mind. Evolution is hard. unmasking the new personality and discarding the heavy shell that holds you down to expose the myriad colors hidden inside your bursting cocoon, a rainbow that illuminates all that surrounds you. Hold out your hand: others will grasp it, will hold you up and allow you to soak, steep in the warmth of a common sun. You can mold yourself out of the distinctions and similarities that clash, blend, and hold their own to create a beautiful new you. The strength for survival stretches through the universe between those worlds, across the deepest divides-you are the thread that binds.

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New Blades

I am flying across a concrete parking lot hardly knowing how to stop, realizing I can fall anytime but not caring. Eight wheels hold me up; they are my carriage, and I am their passenger for these few hours of swishing and swaying and trying to stay balanced. It is an unreal rush-this delicate game of keeping in touch with the ground when my body is soaring through space, slicing it into many incongruent shapes, and my mind is dizzy with the desire to perfect a million fancy moves before my legs give out. It is the most alive I've felt in months, in weeks, in days; everything is centered in the now, in this moment; in this moment, I will be balanced; in this moment, I will be happy; in this moment, I will truly live-all without thinking, an impulse to which every pore responds and propels me forward.