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[Prof. Casey Ellis]

English Composition

Poverty is a construction of our minds, not a reality of our surroundings. Growing up in Honduras as a mere living statistic of our nation's struggle with poverty, my grandmother sacrificed and raised me for thirteen years. When I was four years old, my parents left Honduras to chase the American dream. It took thirteen years for my parents to secure a golden ticket for me so that I could chase and live that very same dream.

 Living thirteen years without my parents and having tackled more obstacles than the average teen, I had become accustomed to achieving things the hard way. With that in mind, I began to prepare for my journey. That journey would be the encounter between my parents and me. Every day I went to the library to look for books on earth science and biology. I took the books into my backyard and performed all sorts of experiments with either plant, rocks, or any other materials I could find; and when I wasn’t experimenting, I was reading English books and dictionaries in English, for I knew that it was the language of “America.” I did not want to be intimidated by the language, nor that people discriminate me, nor would they avoid me for not speaking English.

 At the age of four, and as I was growing up, I dedicated myself to write letters for my parents, since it was the only way in which we could communicate. (I did not have a phone or computer). I used to sit at the top of the trees where I was "inspire" and felt that it was the only place where I could be at peace. I wrote a lot and put all my feelings in each letter I wrote. At an early age, I discovered poems, books, and texts that were not assigned by my school, but I looked for them for fun and curiosity.

My grandmother, who lived with me, always told me not to worry so much, that whatever it is, I would go far in this life. Such words of my grandmother were like the clips that connected the words to make a new poem that soon would have in my mind. A new story to tell. My poems were mostly of human nature, simply describing how we are common, how we are people -- of what we are subject to experience every day. Exposed to many changes and at the same time exposed to the stability of certain things that remain in us for the rest of our lives.

I loved reading books in English because I always had in my mind that someday I would see my parents again and therefore I thought that they would no longer speak Spanish, our language, but English. So I struggled to learn the language. With practice, I was learning little by little, not to perfection since I did not have someone to master English well, so it was a little difficult for myself. At that time I was the only child in my family, I did not have siblings. So I was practically alone most of the time. However, the time passed quickly, without realizing it, the time had come to leave my country.

When I arrived in the United States, after thirteen years of self-teaching, learning, and practice, I was for my new life, and I was finally able to meet my parents in the United States. When I arrived, I was started by the different climate, language, lifestyle, and education. I felt that I was prepared for what was coming, but at the same time, I felt that I was not ready for the changes I would have. When I entered my new school, everything was different: the educational system, how classes are taught, writing, formats, essay structures, poems, etc. I had to adapt myself to such changes, but in a way that I could reflect my efforts, yet anxiety, and the pressure was on me.

It was really difficult for me, especially because I did not know anyone. I did not give up so easily. I kept reading advanced English books, although they were difficult to read and I almost did not understand, it helped me to expand my vocabulary for a better academic performance in my school and my daily life in this country. My terminology in the language of English was low, nevertheless, with determination, it grew every day.

I still have to improve, but I have not stopped. Every day I learn something new, and it enriches my writing more and more. The poems have not ceased to exist in my book of life. I know new people and I see in their eyes and their way of acting that each person is unique. And that shows me that even though we are all human, we are individuals that express their being in a different way from each other. That inspires me too much to write and read more about human nature and the actions of each person. So if next time anyone sees me that I am staring at them too much, it is because I always look for the best and uniqueness of each person.

I took it upon myself to bear the responsibility of working toward keeping the American dream alive. It was my window to tell, remind, and educate others that this land is one of freedom and opportunity, not contempt and biases. Life is a gift; I do not doubt that. I will take what life gives me and use it to both help myself and the people I live among. I will continue to shape, refine, and confirm my dream at a high level.