



presents an experience with memorable details that allows us as the readers to draw our own conclusions about what she's gained from it.

The introduction attracts attention and is very relatable, as we've all had mornings in which we've ignored the beeping alarm clock and pulled the covers tighter. Lauren summons a little bit of mystery with the introduction because we don't know what's ahead of her. When she reveals that it is a Saturday morning, we wonder why she would want to wake up so early on a weekend.

The descriptions are extremely vivid, from the goosebumps ("Thousands of tiny bumps germinate on my arms, and the fine hairs stand alarmingly straight") to putting on her shoes ("... small crystals of ice fall gently to the floor as I tie a bow on each shoe"). We can almost feel the chill of the air, see her tired cabinmates getting ready and hear the crunch of her shoe laces. Details such as these draw us as the readers into the essay and make us feel like we're not just witnesses but active participants.

Then Lauren builds on the mystery of the story. Why would she put her winter coat on top of her bathing suit? When she writes, "No one said I had to do it," we as the reader wonder what "it" is.

After the plunge, it is notable that Lauren doesn't conclude with a moral or overriding message, but we've still discovered much about her. We've learned that she is a writer who can describe a scene vibrantly, a storyteller who can draw us in with details that touch our senses and develop a mystery and a person who forms meaningful friendships through actions not words. Lauren's essay is memorable and gives the admissions officers something to latch onto. They'll remember her as the student who took the frigid plunge in the water.

It's not a requirement to write an essay about a serious topic or one with a serious lesson learned. Sometimes it's just right to write a story in a memorable way. After reading this essay, the admissions officers probably felt that Lauren was a student they wanted to meet, one who had something to add to the prospective class.

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## **"Moving"**

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THE QUICK RIPPING OF THICK TAPE and the heavy thuds of cardboard boxes echo throughout an empty, unfamiliar, and lonely house. As the heavy boxes are slowly opened and their contents revealed, my young heart jumps for joy. There, within that scant and unexpectedly



durable shell of cardboard, lie my invaluable possessions. After removing the bubbly layer of protection from my valuables, I begin to place them, one by one, onto my familiar, yet strangely new shelf.

I first lift out my ragged and faithful stuffed animal Mr. Teddy. Though torn, dirty and missing his left eye, he reminds me of my youth and the one constant friendship in my life. He has traveled with me thousands upon thousands of miles to and from each of the seven vastly different living experiences that have defined my life. Mr. Teddy has been there with me throughout the difficulty of every one of the transitions in my life.

Next, I pull out a small, fragile lamp decorated with blue and white pinstripes. A small yellow duck lives at the bottom of the glass compartment. As I fumble with the rotating switch, I see that only two of the three different settings are properly working. Now, after years of travel, only the nightlight and brightest setting work. I leave the light on at its brightest setting and place it on my night table. The brightness comforts me.

I return to the box to pull out my thick, denim blue journal and my favorite ink pen. I flip through the pages, pausing to glance at my informal collection of favorite pictures of friends, articles, and tidbits of memories that I have compiled through the stages in my life. I open to the last section of the book and glance at my favorite quotations alphabetically sorted by subject and author. I look up Woody Allen and smile at his ridiculously funny honesty and place my journal on the ledge next to my window.

After refueling my ink pen I scoop up my carefully packaged Rosary and Bible. As I crack open the case, the pearl white beads of my Rosary glint in the sunlight and my ivory covered Bible, given to me on my First Communion, opens to the front page. There, written in my aunt's handwriting, is a greeting written in Spanish and signed by my now deceased grandparents. These two items represent one of my only connections to my relatives and the history of my family in Colombia: a common religion and a belief in Providence.

After saying a quick prayer of thanksgiving I pull out my final and most necessary possession. The dust flies off the glass as I blow across the surface. There, under the grime of travel, lies my own face fixed in time. Enclosed within a light maple frame, a color photograph captures my eleven year old self clothed in bright purple soccer shorts and a



white sleeveless uniform shirt. My hair is tightly pulled back in the quintessential ponytail, sweat dripping off my skin and dirt covering my socks. My face is frozen in an expression of relief, domination, and triumph after scoring the game-winning goal in the merciless sun of a Houston summer. I study the image and wipe a single tear from my eye. My knee aches sympathetically, and I prepare to hang the picture. As I pick up the hammer, I realize that although soccer is no longer a part of my life, I have filled the vacancy in my heart with other challenging and significant activities that I have grown to love with the same fervor. That picture, though simple, encompasses the passion that is my life. It will forever symbolize for me the love and dedication I have for everything I do.

With a last glance, I hang the heavy frame on the wall. The box is empty, unlike the room. Although the room is only filled by a few items, it is occupied by the only items I will ever need for the rest of my life: friendship, humility, self-expression, family, God, and passion.

### ANALYSIS

The framework for this essay provides a way to tie together a number of things that are important to Laura. She covers five different sets of objects; and through each of these, she reveals a part of herself.

What makes this essay especially effective is that Laura works her thoughts into the descriptions of the items. For example, she writes, “I begin to place them, one by one, onto my familiar, yet strangely new shelf.” By describing the shelf as “strangely new,” she reflects her apprehension about having her possessions in a new setting.

Through Mr. Teddy we learn that Laura has moved many times. Relocating is always difficult and requires acclimating to new surroundings, choosing different friends, and perhaps even adjusting to an unfamiliar culture. The admissions officers can conclude that Laura is probably someone who is flexible in new situations, adept at making friends, and willing to establish roots.

Laura shows her sentimentality when describing the lamp. We can imagine that at one point, all the settings worked. Her description makes us wonder for what adventures the lamp has provided light as Laura worked to see her way through them.

As someone who keeps a journal, Laura shows that she is self reflective. She is a person who is introspective and has a sense of humor, mentioning Woody Allen. These are qualities that probably piqued the interest of the admissions officers. They like to see students