**Ravi Common App Draft**

A picture containing indoor, knife, table

Description automatically generated

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**Version 3**

**“How are you supposed to take a good picture with that beaten camera?” asked my friend in 8th grade. In part, he was right. It was a hand-me-down from my dad: a handheld camera preloved by scratches and visible dents. Nonetheless, I felt moved by the idea of creating a “masterpiece” with just the push of a button.**

**This was the beginning of my photography journey.**

**Back then, bringing my camera with me whenever I travel wasn’t a regular occurrence. At least not until our family decided to go to Australia during summer break.**

**As a curious 15-year-old, I felt the urge to travel the streets of Sydney alone and document all of it with my new camera – the Sony A6000. Actually, this major upgrade was only to be lent out by my dad for the trip, not expecting a permanent ownership of it afterwards. Little did I know, the camera kept me busy at all times, making me feel accompanied and comfortable. “This is the right camera for you,” I said to myself.**

**Obviously, a trip to Sydney wouldn’t be complete without a visit to the Sydney Opera House and its evening light show. The excitement that rushed through me at the “Click!” wasn’t dissimilar from the anticipation of opening a birthday present. The processed images which encapsulated the lighting so effortlessly moved me: a “masterpiece” of a beginner’s luck, a “beauty” of the Sydney Opera House.**

**Ever since that magical moment, I constantly brought “Sony” with me. I began to care about its features, and I started to seriously learn the “three musketeers”: Exposure, ISO, and Focus as I dove deep into the free content of the internet to up my flair.**

**After learning the fundamentals, I would photo in my metropolitan home capital of Jakarta on my way to and from school. During vacations outside the city, I would hunt for nature shots: beaches, mountains, and forests. An extreme contrast to my usual set of “grey” skies, tall skyscrapers, and heavy traffic, this iterative process of finding my favorite subjects has made me realize a trend.**

**Whenever I attempt to edit city shots, there would always be unwanted details, such as litter on the street or random people on the background. Wanting them to be seamless just like any other shots that I take, I would “heal”unwanted detail and color-contrast subjects. All of this masking may have made me feel accepted by the number of likes and positive comments on my social media pages. Yet deep down, I know that I have lost a touch of that magic that made me fall in love with photography in the first place.**

**The journey from having a hand-me-down camera and being in love with it, to using a more sophisticated camera and being careful enough to abuse it every day for my personal adventures of photo hunting, is a priceless joy.**

**Photography makes me feel free like a bird that finally learns how to fly out of its nest and explore new places, which doesn’t necessarily indicate real places, but also that of personal milestones in my process of maturing. I have become more independent mentally as I learn to prioritize what’s truly important to me, resulting in better time management and self-care. In short, photography enables me to love myself.**

**An equally important aspect that I believe I have reaped throughout the process is how it helped me express my authenticity. Every shot I take has a story: a story of hardship, patience, tenacity, and discipline. The integration of these factors resulted in one beautiful image with a meaning unique to my name.**

**That’s why photography has become a part of who I am. It taught me to love myself. It taught me to stay classy. But most importantly, it taught me to look forward no matter what.**

***Hi Ravi!***

***Essay looks great! The content flows beautifully and answers the prompt on point. Very minor edits here and there are just to ensure precision in the use of vocabulary to further solidify your essay. Good job!***

* *Matthew*