**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 crappy camera?” asked my friend in 8th grade. In part, he was right. It was a hand-me-down from my dad: a handheld camera covered with slight scratches and visible dents. Nonetheless, I felt moved by the idea of creating a “masterpiece” with just a 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 yet 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, I had borrowed this sophisticated camera from my dad not expecting a permanent ownership of it. Little did I know, the camera kept me busy at all times, which made 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. So I went there right after dusk. I figured the show would be an incredible shot, but I really didn’t anticipate the excitement.**

**The excitement that rushed through me at the “Click!” wasn’t dissimilar from the anticipation of opening a birthday present. The aftereffects of these clicks moved me: a “masterpiece” of a beginner’s luck, a “beauty” of the Sydney Opera House.**

**This time was different. 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 basics, I photo-hunted in my metropolitan city of Jakarta on my way to and from school. There is something about Jakarta that’s different than other cities. During vacations, I hunted for nature shots: beaches, mountains, and forests. Meanwhile, my home city is totally different as it is filled with “grey” skies, tall skyscrapers, and heavy traffic. This was part of my journey in finding my favorite subjects. In the process, I find it interesting how different it is to edit the city vs. nature. When I attempted to edit city shots, there were always unwanted details, such as trash on the street or sewage or smog. Even if I got the best possible city shots, I’d always spend more time editing those than that of nature shots. By my preference, I wanted my city shots to be seamless, just like any other shots that I take. I can achieve this by “healing”unwanted detail, color-contrasting subjects, and Voila!**

**The thing I love the most about photography 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.**

**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 personal milestones in my process of maturity. I’ve become more independent mentally as I learn to prioritize what’s truly important to me, resulting in better man management and self-care. In short, photography enables me to love myself.**

**The process 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.**

**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.**