

5. Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal, that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family.

Set for 6:12, 6:15 and 6:20, my iPad mini alarm clock fails to wake me up on countless school days when I am tucked into my king sized bed underneath my multi-inch thick comforter, which protects me from the biting cold of my air conditioner, which saves me from the *alinsangan* climate of the Philippines.

But when I am at the farm, sleeping in the Bamboo Villa with my feet dangling off a mattress not much thicker than my multi-inch thick comforter, all it takes is the neighbor's chatter to make me leap out of bed like my roommate, the pregnant cat Jackie, leaps when I turn on the lights to go to the bathroom.

On those mornings, I rush to find my partners: Vincent and King. Pails full and pitchers ready, we walk to the pens. I fill up the feeders while the two of them grab the slimy, moss-filled water containers. Together we walk to the hose, wash the containers and add *Lactobacillus* to the feeds. Then we feed, repeat, and feed, and repeat, the same for every pen. You would think that after supplying 200 chickens with sustenance 2 times a day, I would be an outstanding chicken feeder, but the reality was quite the opposite. Careless mistake after careless mistake, pen after pen, the monotony made crave every possible schedule deviation.

As I walk back to the villa after feeding the chickens, Vincent and King run towards me, telling me to turn around. "17... the company needs 17," says Vincent. It takes a while to register what is happening. These chickens are meant to be eaten, and I'm meant to be assisting in that ultimate reality.

Before I know it I am outside Pen 13 in the animal farm, and Vincent is lecturing me. "Squat, move slowly toward the chicken, grab the legs as if they are one unit, drop the chicken in the sack. It is simple," Vincent explained in his thick Filipino accent.

As I pick the chickens up to put them into separate cages, my hands quiver at nearly the same frequency as the chicken I am holding. We are in this together. It is my first time to take a life and her first time to give one. I slowly pick her up - wings held and neck extended, as taught.

Knife in one hand, chicken neck in the other, I lose myself in a spiral of emotion and fear. I revert to Biology and Economics. What is the opportunity cost of cutting this highly pressurized vessel that allows this chicken to live? I glance at Vincent and know I must move forward. I plunge the knife into the chicken's neck. An unforgettable, gruesome image of a headless chicken uncontrollably shaking becomes permanently imprinted on my, until-then, somewhat innocent mind.

Although the chickens were merely meant to supply a far-away buyer, probably a restaurant somewhere in the city, they provided me with more than their lives; they gave me a better understanding of myself. While raising the chickens, I was appalled by my ineptitude as a chicken farmer. I woke up every morning on that same flimsy, bamboo bed with the single-minded objective of feeding chickens - and yet, I was terrible at it. This inability to do what I once considered below me humbled every bone in my body.

Killing the animals I raised made me shudder with discomfort. My thoughts and actions during those brief seconds of doing the deed made me realize the need to do what is required - the need to acclimatize. Two weeks as a chicken farmer made me see the ease by which one could abandon previously held beliefs and morals. Like my partners, who didn't even flinch when taking the chickens' lives, I had disregarded my prudence. From then on, I began examining my preconceptions and biases: letting go of some and proudly upholding others.



Arjun Chakrab...

5:14 PM Today

Resolve

Set to more appropriate common application prompt.



Arjun Chakrab...

5:27 PM Today

Resolve

change to alter - abandon has a negative connotation