

The Best of Friends — Walter

The first three copies of this speech were *extremely* emotional. And that is no understatement. It was so emotional, in fact, that looking back, I don't really know what I was thinking. Was I crying? What happened that day? Did I reach nirvana or something? Honestly, I was probably hungry.

My own character had vanished; where was I in this jungle of wistful thoughts and sentiments, swinging on frail vines from memory to memory?

Somehow, I neglected to make the speech *personal*. In giving any speech, I think it's all too easy to generalize and reduce everyone to the same level, but this speech — *spoiler alert* — is about my best friend in the entire world. Quite possibly the best-fitting companion to have with me on this journey we call life. Someone who makes other people question my sexuality (which to say, the *best kind* of friend). How could I forget myself as half of this whole, this perfect friendship, musical all its own without us even composing (although we *are* both obsessed with music).

I think maybe that is the power of a perfect friendship: so blissfully blinding, you really forget yourself and your ego when you think about it. It's something so indelibly close to me that I *know* with absolute certainty no one else has the same thing, and that it will last indefinitely, all with a confidence that I scarcely have in anything else. Thinking on this friendship, I forget what anxiety even is. *That* is powerful.

It is my sincerest hope that everyone in this room and elsewhere, graduates and non-graduates and former graduates alike, are able to forge a friendship like this before they can't anymore. It just makes you feel so *full*, relieving that odd type of loneliness that leaves you hollow, no matter how many people surround you. There is always someone so oddly reliable pushing you on toward your greatest self—to push on against this current, towards that green light, and to *fetch la vache*, as my friend might say. There is always someone with whom to share your triumphs *and* your failure, and to help you sift out the lessons from them all the way.

Upon contemplation as I have done, you may notice that you are only ever the architect of a small fraction of yourself; you were built by the hundreds of people you've known, however long you've known them. In recognizing this, I want to make clear just how thankful I am for my sense of precision, my pursuits of music, and my general hunger for knowledge and love of life, which I believe were largely installed in me by my best friend. Unfortunately, I think there are few ways to repay this, but I hope tributes like this contribute something to the sentiment.

Please join me in welcoming your senior class salutatorian, resident genius, my absolute best friend, Tristan Reed Migoski.