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CBC Writing Competition
Senior Level Entry
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Postmark Forever

“What is that feeling when you drive away from people and they recede on the plain till you see their specks dispersing? It’s the too huge world vaulting us and it’s goodbye. But we lean forward to the next crazy venture beneath the skies.”-Jack Kerouac.

These words were some of our favorites from Jack Kerouac’s adventurous tale of *On The Road*. Not only did I find those words among Kerouac’s pages but among my best friend Elyse’s letters; she often included her favorite quotes found in literature she was reading or the recent music she was listening to. Elyse is my best friend. Until 4th grade we lived in the same town, but neither of us had begun to understand our friendship until later on. She is unique in every sense of the word; she has plans to share that to the eyes of Europe and to whatever other adventures are awaiting her. Ever since I moved away we have sent our stories and recent information across the state. I’ve kept all of them. Most in their original envelope, they’re stored in a gift bag that, ironically, Elyse and her mom had filled with a going away present inside for me. My bag is currently overflowing with all of my beloved postmarked letters.

What is now used less frequently due to telephone, email and text messaging, mail was more common during “simpler times.” The United States Postal Service was created in

Philadelphia in 1775. At first railroads were the means of transportation, but in 1918 the USPO incorporated air mail into the mix. Today, the USPO is the largest employer in the United States, still engaged in competition with cyberspace and companies like FedEx.

The gracious USPO has helped deliver from our past and continuing into our present. Our lives on paper, word for word, we have shared everything important in our lives. Reading back, we used to converse about boys we liked and foolish fights with our moms. But lately we search for meaning and truth found in the experiences we've lived and the ones we hope to be able to write about someday. We both argue over who writes the best letters, each thinking her own ramblings don't serve justice to the other's priceless piece of writing.

Coming home from work, my eyes wander towards the countertop hoping something is waiting for me. After a long day there is nothing better than enjoying the handwritten support and joys made possible by just an address and a stamp. The impact hits me from the moment it reaches the mailbox to the minute I realize there is nothing left for me to read. Page to page, the impact hits. The impact is forever, each moment and each thought explained on paper brings you closer. A lot of times I feel as if I can almost hear her reading them. She possesses those words, making them beautiful for my letter. On October 10, 2008, she wrote, "I'm so excited for what awaits you outside those Hanford halls," and goes on to say, "For me.. it seems like everything I've been doing lately has been life-changing." When I think of something that has changed my life it has to do with every detail around me. In my life and in that moment. Even something as simple as the direction the wind blows and where the sun has chosen to shine upon. Sometimes the people are the cause of the effect; the people that are able to rough it no matter the circumstances.

“Neither snow or rain, nor heat or gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds” is the Greek description by the historian Herodotus; talking about the Persians delivering mail by horseback . Not only are letters shared between friends but between famous writers like Charlotte Bronte and her professor, confessing her love for the first time. History has been documented in the letters Galileo wrote about the discoveries his telescope had unfolded among the stars. In 1881, passion is defined in Vincent Van Gough’s words about love saying, “ Life has become very dear to me, and I am very glad that I love. My life and my love are one.”

Our letters are about the life-changing moments and the impact it has on us. Often times we just plead for the future and an adventure. We never take a second to think the other won’t be part of it because we’re positive we will always be in touch. Panned out along the lines of our letters seem to be a combination of our dreams, hopes, struggles; a great display of everything our friendship has been through. The words are never restricted by red lines but rather allow room for our whimsical doodles and our creative minds at play.

November 20,2006. Elyse wrote, “You are lucky Rebecka Claire. Know that we don’t need boys, or school (school/education might help though), or even the ones that drive us crazy (but we love anyway), because I can’t think of times when I’d laugh harder or cry out of thankfulness than during the summer with you.”

August 16, 2006: “ Okay, let me just start out by saying what an amazing friend to me you are. Seriously no matter how long I take to write back, or call back you are still there.”

August 16,2006: “Okay, those ranger cookies, are seriously amazing, I think I fell in love.” My grandma had supplied her with a fresh batch for the bus ride home to Seattle.

October 10, 2008: “ I get you and you get me better than anyone.”

August 10, 2008: “ I believe love should be the foundation to which everyone bases their existence on.”

Before our letters, I lived in the same town as her. During, we live with the fact that we most likely won't ever live in the same place again, and our letters seem to make that a little bit more bearable. Forever, our lives will be postmarked. We will share each new day, introduce new friends, and never lose touch; and plan to wherever we are.

August 10, 2008: “Sorry this letter is coming to an abrupt stop. I'm going to say goodbye.”