

The Colors of Individuality

Have you ever tasted meals seasoned with tears? Have you ever punished and blamed failure on yourself? Have you ever tried to be optimistic in public to hide expression of sadness to your parents? Have you ever tried to honor you parents' wishes and hopes for your future? Have you ever had a nightmare where your parents are crying for you to wake up yet you're mute? Have ever contemplated the day you would tell your parents about you sexual orientation? Or how they would bleed tears from their hearts to see their son or daughter hide the truth from them? These question inflamed when my brother declared "...more like he's failing!" to our mother. Although, David, my brother is born in the same year but ten months apart from me, we are the opposites. My brother and I may be born from the same mother but our philosophies contrast. But when David declared that I had failed, I contemplate whether I did fail as a son, a brother, a role-model, and a student?

As my mother slowly strings the thin milky thread through the opening on top of the slim sharp needle, I stare and follow every single step the sixty-year old parent of two sons takes to patch up the tear on the beige Nautica cargo pant. Like every Chinese parent, she wishes for harmony and respect between siblings even if they were born in an American atmosphere. David and I are two different worlds that exist in one universe. We argue our differences and debate in an uncivilized manner but love each other. I recall the time when he and I went to after school tutoring at Holy Cross in sixth grade. He told me that he was going to walk the six-block trip from I.S. 131 to Holy Cross and meet me there. When I reached the school my brother wasn't there. Overwhelmed with discomfort and fear, I began searching for him. Tears poured like a river down my face as I blamed myself for losing my only brother. Walking back to my aunt's restaurant, I slowly entered the greasy setting and getting ready to confront my parents I saw David. Breaking out into tears again, I grab my brother and hugged him.

As the open wound of the cargo pant slowly mends close with the stitch of the needle and thread so does the gap between David and I. For seventeen years, I kept this secret from the world and family. Frightened by society and the bias opinions from friends, I hid a big secret even from myself. Five months after my seventeenth birthday at a family reunion outside the Eastern Royal Restaurant in Flushing, Queens, I dragged my brother aside. There was a cool summer night breeze, silently whispers through the compact street, full cars waiting to be park

and impatient customers waiting for an available table. Nervously, I summoned the courage and expelled the declaration, "I am gay". As angry and relieving tears ran down my face, my mind repeated "I failed to be a brother and a son. I betrayed my brother and took off into a selfish world where all my responsibilities are thrown on him".

Although I live in a submerge environment and family that believes gays are immoral, I still have a brother that cares for me and treats me as a role model. I learn that being different is what makes us the same. The contradiction of human nature is what makes us so human because we are all special. David and I have our different views but nevertheless, we are still brothers and love each other. I guess the bitterness of my tearful identity is a sweet taste of an understanding and caring brother.