

The brilliant rays essay sample



The brilliant rays of the early morning sunshine penetrating through the single, splintered window in the room abruptly roused me from my deep contemplation. They ricocheted off the bleak walls, adding some colour and optimism to what were otherwise very dismal surroundings. As they danced, scintillating radiantly off the jagged edges of the fragments of glass scattered on the floor, I was flooded with a rare moment of fleeting inner calm - a feeling I had seldom experienced since the conflict broke out in my homeland.

I hoisted myself up, and offered my daily prayers, escaping into a spiritual illusion - a fleeting mirage - of contentedness. But it wasn't long before I was faced with the mundane reality I faced every day. Cautious not to wake the sleeping forms of my room-mates, I inched my way to the bathroom we shared. I commenced washing the threadbare garments, each wring of cloth inflaming the multitude of blisters on my calloused hands; yet this was the least of my worries. As I prepared myself for the day ahead, my thoughts were continuously distracted back to those whom I was forced to leave behind.

Sifting through the few, meagre essentials I could afford to bring, I took a fleeting glance at a photograph of my mother taken years ago; her impromptu pose and beaming smile make her almost unrecognizable, bringing back memories of what now seems a distant, intangible fairytale of the past. I fight back tears at seeing this stark contrast with her present state - she has aged beyond her years since the outbreak of war, and was too frail to accompany me. As a refugee, I, and all those in my situation remain on a relentless journey to find safety, and to discover our true selves.

Our lives are suspended in a constant realm of uncertainty, held by a mere delicate fine thread – ready to snap at any instant. We live in perpetual fear of ultimately getting discovered. Again, I am brought back to the present reality with the rousing of my fellow room-mates. We are essentially like one large extended family, united over having to face the same hardships, regardless of our cultural differences. But, as any household does, we also have our fill of complications – especially given the frugal resources we have.

As a scuffle ensues over the order of priority for using the bathroom, I am thankful for the several minutes of tranquil reflection that I had managed to acquire. Briefly bidding my farewells amongst the trivial commotion, I sigh as I brace myself mentally for the day ahead. I remind myself that given my situation, I was lucky to be able to find any form of employment whatsoever. But that didn't camouflage the fact that there were times when I would have been incapable of even envisaging myself in the situation I currently faced – that phase of my life has become an inconceivable, almost legendary, parable of the past.

I pass through a labyrinth of narrow alleyways, backstreets of the city enclosed in a veiled, obscure world of their own. I follow the winding paths of this city concealed within a city, navigating the familiar route effortlessly. My thoughts flow uncontrollably, escalating like the intertwining weave of the successive paths I take – and those that I have taken in my incessant journey for an oasis of perpetual refuge. An ongoing journey of regret and loss, of pain and realization; of identity.

Eventually, I draw nearer to the looming workhouse that is my sole source of income and employment. In spite of its rundown appearance, the hastily set pallid grey bricks that it is composed of fabricate an austere and imposing aura. I quickly settle down to commencing another day of arduous labour. I and my fellow workers work in synchronized harmony. My hands move nimbly and efficiently, effortlessly following the sequence of designs that have been so deeply ingrained in my mind.

As the thread weaved in, and out, in, and out again between the interlacing strings of the loom, I realized its action bore an abstract parallel with my own life - I too was in a relentless endeavour to escape, arriving and subsequently being forced to flee in an unceasing attempt to seek a haven of sanctuary. Just as the bird takes its migratory flight to warmer lands to escape the bitter cold, and as the nomad persistently relocates his shelter. I remain blissfully unaware of orders given to our collective group of labourers to "work faster", accompanied by threats of "no food, or water the whole day" in the case of failure to do so.

My determination pulls me through what could otherwise be essentially a very monotonous task. I make light of the situation, allowing the innate sequence of colours: 'pink, black, orange, cream, crimson, pink.' to course their way through my hands and onto the loom. The coarse fibres cut into my bruised and calloused hands, but I have developed immunity to the pain, managing to temporarily ignore it as I absorb myself in the intricate work. A bell resounds, indicating the beginning of lunch.

I pull myself away from the loom, and saunter to the rear of the dwindling queue to receive a frugal portion. Conversing with the fellow weavers of my nationality is one of the few treasured sanctuaries of my daily life, and our discussion inevitably leads to us yearning longingly to be able to relive our former lives. Our lives as they were before the volatile outbreaks of instability in our homeland. I retreat back to my work, the rough skin of my sore fingers bleeding. As the blood seeped through my clothes, leaving an obstinate crimson stain, I thought of my country.

A country with its land now steeped in the blood of its civilians; a country brutally marred and tarnished like an adamant blemish, contaminated through the evils of human greed and avariciousness. Dusk now approaches, and I am drawing nearer to accomplishing my task. The rhythmic patter of rain drumming against the corrugated metal roof rekindles my feelings of persistent determination to support my family, embark on a new life, and escape an oppressive regime. I am overwhelmed by unfathomable guilt when I think of those I have had to leave behind, but I know that this is the only way I have any hope of improving their future.

The sky and heavens burst down glistening droplets of rain, brining life onto the barren earth, much the same way a person's tears and hardships fuel eventual success. They interlace the path of the sun's illuminating rays, casting a vivid spectrum of colour reflected in the interweaving hues of the painstakingly woven carpet before me. Each individual shade reflects an emotion, each interweaving thread telling a unique story of its own. The deep red represents the blood shed by the innocent. The fiery orange

epitomizes the optimism and ceaseless determination which holds the power to penetrate through the blackest of situations.

The warm, glowing tones of yellow, radiant in their hope. Fresh and lush green, symbolic of a new start and of taking risks. Serene blue, of ultimate purity, able to heal wounds and rinse away the contamination of earthly desires and corruption – capable of eradicating the entire past with a single swell of the new tide. Finally, rich and luxurious violet, reminiscent of prosperous times in the intangible past; periods without such asperity and desperation. The entire spectrum of hues converge to form a brilliant, pristine white light – like a blank canvas, it held infinite possibilities for the presently unwritten future.

Darkness stealthily begins to encompass the horizon, with the sudden approach of twilight. Aching, fatigued and sore throughout, having exceeded the day's quota of work, I commenced my journey home. In the remaining light of the day, I glimpsed my hazy reflection in the puddles of water at my feet. I barely recognized the face gazing back at me; the troubles of everyday life under cover had aged me beyond my years. The experiences I have gone through as a refugee have in many ways, tainted my previously comparatively innocent and naive perspective on life.

The warbling siren of a passing police car freezes me dead in my tracks. Paralyzed numb with fear, I am flooded with the same involuntary panic I feel each time I see anything related to police and the law. I was not guilty of harming any other individual, yet my crime is fleeing to another country to escape persecution – only to rediscover it, albeit disguised in a different

form. Newspaper headlines blaring out yet another act of terrorism committed by some foreign immigrant reminded me that, beneath the illusory blanket of polite formalities and flowery euphemisms, people such as myself are effectively not wanted here.

The vehicle passes as a blur, and as I stare intently into another puddle, I question my identity; over the past months, I have had to keep my identity safely concealed, in fear of ruining my aspirations to build a new identity and life. In the process, I have lost many aspects of my identity, and like my current personality, it remains intricately hidden beneath obscure, forged shadows. To this day, I still strive to recover my true identity, aspiring to relive life as it used to be, on a relentless search to find a place I can truly call home.