The Quintessential College Student

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The Quintessential College Student

Abstract
In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"It is a beautiful autumn day. Colored leaves are falling as a young woman crosses the residential quad on her campus. She's a first semester freshman and is on her way to the mailroom, praying to Heaven that there is a letter waiting for her. She hasn't received any mail at all yet."

Cover Page Footnote
big brother is here
by
Jason Franco

Bureaucrats cling
to equivocal goals
and dreams in a world
where the truth lies untold
They claim they are helping
or so they tell me
but those hypocrites only
commit to the wealthy
They emerge from our cities
representing the epitome
do as they please,
behind the doors of Democracy

Missing a LanceCorporal
by
Cynthia I. Boyle

I sat alone in my room on that sorry day,
I heard your keys rattling in the hall.
Soon there was a pounding on my door.
I saw you so clearly because I wanted to.
I saw you walk over to my chair and look at my desk,
And I knew I felt the warmth of you behind me.
I knew how tender your hands felt on
my shoulders,
And how sweet your kiss was atop
my head.
I knew to not try to touch your hands,
And I knew why the pain was still within.
As I stared at your photo and your cover
I heard your keys rattling
in the hall.
I knew how empty this place is
--despite its furnishings.

The Quintessential College Student
by
Kristen Basi

It is a beautiful autumn day. Colored leaves are falling as a young woman crosses
the residential quad on her campus. She's a first semester freshman and is on her way to
the mailroom, praying to Heaven that there is a letter waiting for her. She hasn't received
any mail at all yet.

Earlier that day in her American History lecture, her mind started to drift back to
last year at this time. She pictured herself and about ten friends at a high school football
game. She thought about her house, her mom's home-cooked meals, and her dog Samson.
That all seemed far away now.

Five hours later, the sounds of screaming fraternity brothers and loud music ring
across the campus. There are about five kegs of beer inside the Delta Kappa Epsilon
fraternity house. With two kegs now empty, the night has just begun. The entire frat house
is filled with college students who are dancing and raising their beer mugs. The girl sits
alone in the corner, taking everything in. Wanting to have a good time, she can only sit and
miss her boyfriend back home, and wonder why she hasn't called. Soon, a senior fraternity
brother walks over with a beer and asks her to dance. Two hours later, he will kiss her
gently, and propose, "Wanna go back to your room?"

On Sunday, students all over the campus sleep in. A few of the motivated ones rise
early and head straight for the library. The majority of the campus, however, is recovering
from last night's bash until at least noon.

Around three o'clock, a lazy female student staggers into the library to study. She
has a psychology exam on Wednesday. She usually studies a week ahead of time for her
tests. She's a little behind, but what the hell. "We all have to live it up sometimes," she
thinks to herself. She plans on studying for the remainder of the day and evening, but then
she can't pass up an opportunity to go to the sorority rush with her friends.

Needless to say, this very same girl is cramming on Tuesday night for that Psych
exam. She has no choice but to pull an all-nighter. She ends up doing fair on the test, but
is extremely tired for the rest of the week, and even skips a few classes.

"Marie" is a representative of most college females. She is the homesick girl
depressed at the sight of an empty mailbox. She is a girl at a party trying to fit in and be
accepted. She is a student under pressure, who can usually succeed but sometimes has
trouble staying focused, because of outside pressures. To top it all off, her parents are
paying nearly twenty thousand dollars a year for her to attend this institution, so she damn
well better be happy and get good grades.

It is my belief that only college students themselves have the ability to realize the
pressures and perils that they have to face up to, and only experience can make coping
easier. No parental guidance or faculty counseling can make me feel at ease when I have
three papers due in one week, I can't choose a major, I'm trying to find a job and my social life is one colossal ball of confusion.

There seems to be a common myth shared by this society about college students, and that is that they have quite an easy life, with all fun and no responsibilities. This is an acutely unjust assumption, and for the majority of students I have ever seen, completely untrue. College students of this day and age are faced with numerous worries, such as maintaining an acceptable grade point average, keeping their scholarships, and making it through financial hardships.

The cost of a higher education is phenomenal, and equally so is the demand for one. Staying in school is difficult, and for those students who have plans for graduate school, it is a tough and competitive four years. The college classroom can be just as big a rat race as the working world.

Looking back on high school and recalling my college selection process, I see that I was extremely naive. I remember looking forward to college, but for reasons which are now so obviously foolish to me. Living away from home was immensely appealing. I figured I could stay out as late as I wanted, and sleep in whenever I felt like it.

It also seemed that the social setting would be ideal. Parties, dorm life, new people. It never occurred to me that I would someday feel the undesirable symptoms of homesickness, study burn out, and even some occasional peer pressure. These are ailments that I think every college student suffers from, whether they like to admit it or not. And the outside world probably has no clue as to what extent these problems exist in the life of the quintessential college student.

I have certain goals as a college student, and I assume that they are common goals among my peers. To me, the total college experience at its zenith would be to learn, to achieve, and to be completely exposed to life. Learning is a process; even when I go to class unprepared or with an incomplete assignment, I learn. I learn that simply reading my textbook will help me to pass the surprise quiz! And I learn that just because all my friends are going out, I can be a non-conformist and stay in and study, even if I am missing a good time.

Disappointment has become a part of life for me as a college student. I see it all the time. I get disappointed in my classes, in my friends, in my grades, and most unfortunately, in myself. Sometimes I wonder why I let myself do so poorly on a test, or how could I have overslept for English 251? Then I remember the pressure that I have been under. I remember that I had two exams last week, caught a nasty cold, worked at my workstudy job for twenty hours, and had a few problems in my social life. No one was around to help me out. In fact, I couldn't even get in touch with my parents.

The misconception that college students have the easy life really angers me. Last week, I finally went to see a doctor about the migraine headaches I've been getting off and on since freshman year. After evaluating my case, he concluded that they were severe tension headaches caused by stress. "But Doctor, I don't really have any major stress factors in my life," I said. His response was "What do you mean? You're a college student.

You're under more stress than any other patient I've had all week."

The doctor's attitude was refreshing to me, after I realized that my parents and other adults I know seem to think I go to school and strictly have a great time. They seem to think my life is one big party, and can't understand why all I want to do on my visits home is sleep in my own bed, and take hot baths.

The quintessential college student is not by any means a freewheeler. Life can be very difficult at times. The horizon can sometimes look bleak, and the road ahead very long and bumpy. For the student, life can be competitive, depressing, and confusing. I am just one example in millions.

Come Anytime
by susan montague

I found circus animals in my tub.
Just bathing.
Just giving refreshing sugar kisses to those who asked.

The lions, the bears and the midget horses were all laughing and splashing in my tub.
They invited me to join the fun, but I only stood and watched and felt.

My knowing friends made the crying hours dissolve down the drain. And down the drain they too were gone.
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The cost of a higher education is phenomenal, and equally so is the demand for one. Staying in school is difficult, and for those students who have plans for graduate school, it is a tough and competitive four years. The college classroom can be just as big a rat race as the working world.

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