

Imani Chapin, WA -- 2018

Cars are meant to take us places. They have wheels to move and engines to energize, windows to track progress and a steering wheel to guide.

I sat in the passenger seat on the way home from the airport, listening to the Washington rain spatter across the windshield, internalizing my week-long trip to our nation's capital. The wipers clicked back and forth like a metronome, clearing the window of water residue and allowing my mother to see where she was going. I rested my weary head against the glass, watching the droplets collect in small clumps, then, together, trickle down the outside, pulled by the compelling nature of gravity.

Rain causes so many problems. When the roads are wet, cars must drive more slowly, and when the skies are fogged, seeing- in any direction- is a challenge. A car honked as we slid in front of it, almost missing the turn onto the freeway. I felt exhausted from the day of travel, and was ready to get home and truly, comfortably breathe, for the first time that day. Up ahead, cars collected- traffic had just begun. Frustrated, I glared at the rain, the sky, the wet roads, the vehicles, then tore a bit of paper from a shopping list floating along the floor of the car. I had so many thoughts about my adventures with the United States Senate Youth Program, but I also felt so confused. Everything - my senior year of high school, my college, my career, my relationships - seemed to be up in the air, undecided, inconclusive. So, torn by my choices, but inspired by my opportunities, I made one decision: to write a poem.

Insanity

Doing the same thing over and over, but expecting different results

Freedom from insanity New,
spontaneous, sane Fear

Hiding from the truth, hiding from yourself

Freedom from fear Bold,
real, fearless Confusion

Not knowing which is which, who is who

Freedom from confusion

Clarity?

I don't know who I am

I know this now, more than ever before

That is okay

Time will reveal my inner light

Your inner light

We will shine with knowledge and wisdom

Clarity

So unattainably beautiful Where
is my clarity? Where is my

gravity?

It is there

It is all there

We all have the power, just trust what you do not know

And for now, we will grow Feel our
feet on the ground Walk with a
purpose Strengthen our legs, our

minds Our hearts, too

Smile with grace Shine light on
the past Make light of the
present Bring light to the future

I am still insane

I am still fearful

I am still confused

But I will learn, and learn to lead

And feel the wind lift my heavy wings

The traffic was still thick. The rain, too, was unstoppable. Since I had first gotten in the car, nothing had really changed - nothing, except my attitude. As I wrote, my perspective shifted, and I thought more deeply. Why am I confused? More importantly, why do I so desperately yearn for clarity?

My mom threw her head in her hands, drained with the sluggish travel. The windshield wipers whipped back and forth, but the water stuck, and the misty fog rising from the ground obscured any line of sight we still had.

The car was stationary, humming and clicking. I leaned over and flicked the engine off, and with it, the wipers. We sat there in silence. I decided that clarity was beautifully unattainable, and today, we weren't going to place too much emphasis on the destination, even on the drive. Instead, we would watch the rain roll down the windows, together, and relish in the confusion.