

Owen Mosley

Integrative Seminar

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My water bottle is rather unremarkable. It's a standard 32 oz wide mouth Nalgene with a grey body and a gold cap that screws on to the top of the bottle. If screwed on properly it never leaks. My friend Hatcher had hand picked about 20 stickers and stuck them to the bottle before giving it to me. Each sticker is wildly different and has some sort of meaning or connection to our relationship. Some of my favorite stickers include an orange bicycle, a pair of pink lips, an REI sticker for Washington state, an Olympic Outfitters sticker, the spelling of "OWEN (my name) FOR PRESIDENT" in different stickers all cut out from larger sheets making it resemble a ransom note much more than anything presidential, and finally a small green sticker with a white leaf and script spelling "Conserve School." Conserve was a semester-long program for highschool juniors with a curriculum focused on environmental sciences and outdoor education. It was financed from the trust of a wealthy steel executive who had donated his massive amount of family land in northern Wisconsin to the school he had designed. This strange but wonderful occurrence attracted 60 young hippies, hunters, and hikers, who's company Hatcher and I had found ourselves amongst for the school's 18th semester session.

When I first met Hatch I shortly found out that although we were the same age we did not come from the same reality (admittedly I'm still not totally convinced I didn't

imagine him). He introduced himself with the formal: "Suh (what's up) dude, I'm Hatcher from Olympia Washington." Which was followed by a handshake and a slow laugh. He was wearing what would later become his signature outfit: a Carhartt Beanie, Topo Designs windbreaker, and checkered Vans slip ons.

Later that night as all the students were getting to know each other Hatcher and I were hanging out with two other classmates talking about music. Without pause Hatcher said he did not listen to any music. Everyone fell silent in disbelief and after a short pause asked as many questions as we could to clarify. Hatcher genuinely did not listen to any music (except live music) despite, as we later found out, his family being deeply entrenched in their local music scene and hosting a large fairly well known music festival annually. After setting him up with a Spotify account and recommending a few artists, Hatcher, the other students, and I went our separate ways for the night. The next morning I groggily woke up and made my way to the entrance of my dorm to find Hatcher sitting there, wearing the same west coast skater uniform he was the day before, grinning ear to ear amplifying his boyish features.

"Duuuude, I was waiting for you."

"Ah sorry, I didn't mean keep you."

"Keep me where?" He asked.

"I... Just here... I guess." I stammered before being interrupted.

"Music! Tight man."

I laughed and responded with an affirmative as we made our way to breakfast for the first time. Almost every day after we would repeat the same pattern, walking to breakfast together and just chatting before our morning classes. As the semester drew

on Hatcher and I became extremely close and rubbed off on each other. Consistently I would have to tell him who a pop culture figure was, and he'd teach me a new snowboarding trick. He even ordered a pair of Apple AirPods which he tucked into his lion's mane of blond hair and played Kanye West far too loud during lectures. Although our realities did merge, Hatcher never totally belonged to the real world, often walking into class twenty minutes late and not understanding the issue, or simply leaving our massive campus to go fish at a new lake, he was entirely immune to rules and simply lived exactly how he wanted. Whether it was his upbringing or just personality no one ever knew totally why. Hatcher was always himself: unapologetically wild, hilarious, out of touch with humans but so in touch with the natural world, just a once in a lifetime person. The one thing that was consistent Hatcher did everything out of complete joy.

As our time together came to an end I was aware that I probably would hear or see much out of Hatch, but I had become content with the idea. I knew I would miss the infectious joy he brought with him but I also knew I would have all the memories we made together. Near the end of our semester Hatcher gave me my 32oz, pre-stickered, Nalgene water bottle.

Something immediately struck me as poetic about the water bottle. It was something very tangible from a very intangible person, carrying the basis of life. Water. Memories and inside jokes, in the form of stickers, stuck to the side of the vessel that I sip life from.

Since then the water bottle has come with me everywhere I can take it: school, local hikes, long camping trips, huge cities, photographic missions, snow, sun, shade, mountains, oceans, lakes, streams, and ponds. Each location with different memories,

sights, sounds, textures, smells, and tastes. Each location with the same universal life giving substance, with its own unique variations. Different mineral compositions ever so slightly changed the water I drank and the version of life I got to experience.

I have never quite been able to shake the feeling that the water bottle has its own memory running parallel to mine tying together space and time. Each time I refill it the memory has another layer added. Each time I take a drink a new moment passes, slowly sipping my way to a new chapter of life. The first memory of the water bottle was a joyful one. The first sip, a bittersweet end and a new beginning. Every time I take a drink I remember my joyous friend living life with an unparalleled carefree attitude. Whether Hatcher had intended it or not the water bottle serves me as a constant reminder. The point of this constant cycle is joy.