

## The Final Project

We knew from the beginning of the seminar that there would be a Final Project to do. What exactly the project would be was our choice, but it could be either a compilation of assignments completed throughout the semester or something completely new that we wanted to represent and share with the rest of the class (and perhaps the world). Holly and Graham advised us to start thinking about our projects early on and to pay attention to assignments that really struck a chord with us. I did both of these things, but alas, neither of them really helped me a whole lot with my own Final Project. I had a lot of ideas for possible projects, but when it came time to execute my plans and put my sketches into a three-dimensional form, I found myself with a creative block the size of Massachusetts, or perhaps even Alaska. A continuous flood of work from other classes also kept me from sitting down and really focusing on my Final Project.

I knew that writings would be important in my representation, but I couldn't decide what form they would take. One of my first ideas was to write a series of letters. The list of possible "recipients" for the letters included my father, my future self, my past selves, and a friend with whom I keep a regular mail correspondence. I thought it would be so simple to put down words because I was writing either to myself or to someone that I love and trust. No matter how many times I tried to write these letters, no matter how many different topics I chose as a focal point, I just could not make the words feel, look, or sound genuine. They were contrived and awkward, conceived for an artificial dialogue. The letter-writing idea got thrown out the window, but I decided to continue writing.

Of course I eventually found my muse and completed my Final Project. It started with a few old photos that I had picked out when I went home for spring break. One of them was a picture of me when I was eight years old, sitting and poking at my keyboard (the musical instrument, not the computer accessory). Looking at this picture made me remember and reminisce, and thus I really began to write. I wrote about how I used to play the keyboard and why I don't anymore. For this attempt, the words flowed, and they were simple and honest. They echoed my voice and reflected me and my past experiences. For me, it was like magic. That essay was my first piece. The second piece of my project was a catharsis in graphite, allowing me to release all my emotions and thoughts about my grandmother's death. Again, it was just like magic.

For me, the road to the Final Project was long, filled with ideas and failed conceptions, and at times, frustrating. However, I would not trade the trip for anything else because I learned a lot about myself from the results of my project. One of the most important ways to know yourself is to be aware of how you present yourself to others, both knowingly and subconsciously. This project and in fact, this class as well, were both a great exercise in improving this awareness.

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