

Topic: What would you bring to Colgate?

He is my companion, my trustworthy partner. As challenges have arisen in my life, he has been there to guide me.

I was a sickly child, my illnesses a perpetual drain on my parents' meager savings. I lived in fear of the regular injections administered by a stony faced nurse. At those times, he was the one who alleviated my nerves. I learned to face the treatments stoically. In primary school, my wan figure made me the target of bullies. They played "beat the little guy." I ran, but they ran faster. I learned that fleeing just egged-them on.

In junior high, my family left Hanoi for New York City, where my dad worked at Vietnam's mission to the United Nations. Manhattan stunned me—massive buildings, cavernous avenues, kaleidoscopic diversity. I enrolled in MS. 104. How could I survive with my hesitant English? Again, he stood firmly by my side, helping me to scale the wall separating myself and this new world. I made great friends. Extracurricular activities exposed me to my new environment. Two years later, when I faced the challenge of reintegrating into a Vietnamese education system which prized rote memorization and punished originality, I was unphased. I staged plays and established a "big sibling" mentor program at an orphanage in Hanoi. Now, as I am about to embark on a lone journey, to really get the first real taste of this world- an adventure at Colgate, I will not shudder. With him along, we will surpass all obstacles. He is my confidence.