

第一名

## —METAMORPHOSIS—FR

普三丁

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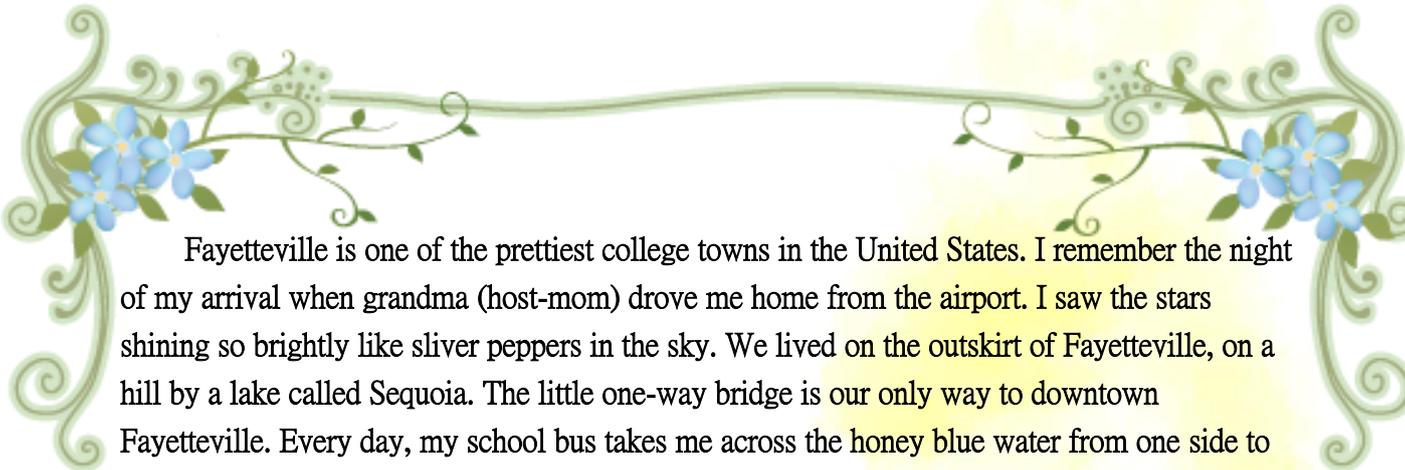
## From Coals to Diamonds

Who am I? What can I do to make a better change in the world? Who do I want to be? What's the true meaning of life? I see the path in front of me, but I don't know where it leads. Not knowing where I'm going is what inspired me to travel, and travel is what inspired me to dream and always strive to better myself.

Growing up, I've always been the quiet girl, the so-called "good girl" in the Asian society, the one who never asks many questions. I was tired of the world around me, tired of the "bulimic education system" that forced us to binge way too much information in, just to purge them out after an exam. It's like everything we study in school turns us into gluttons, but never gave us the nutrients we need. We deal in the educational landscape with an infatuation with the culture of one right answer, it stigmatizes mistakes and it made my heart "anorexic", because I was afraid of failure, I felt anxious and powerless, which led me to just give up and not try hard enough in the first place.

Two years ago, I decided to seek "recovery" for my emaciated soul that was slowly dying from malnutrition, so I left. I left the world I know best of reluctantly, to a place I've never been to, and live with people I've never met before. I was fifteen when I traveled half way across the globe with two over weighted suitcase and a heart overwhelmed with curiosity. My flight took me from Tokyo to Alaska, Minneapolis, ATL and finally my destination, Fayetteville, Arkansas where I lived for an entire year.

"I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion." — Henry David Thoreau

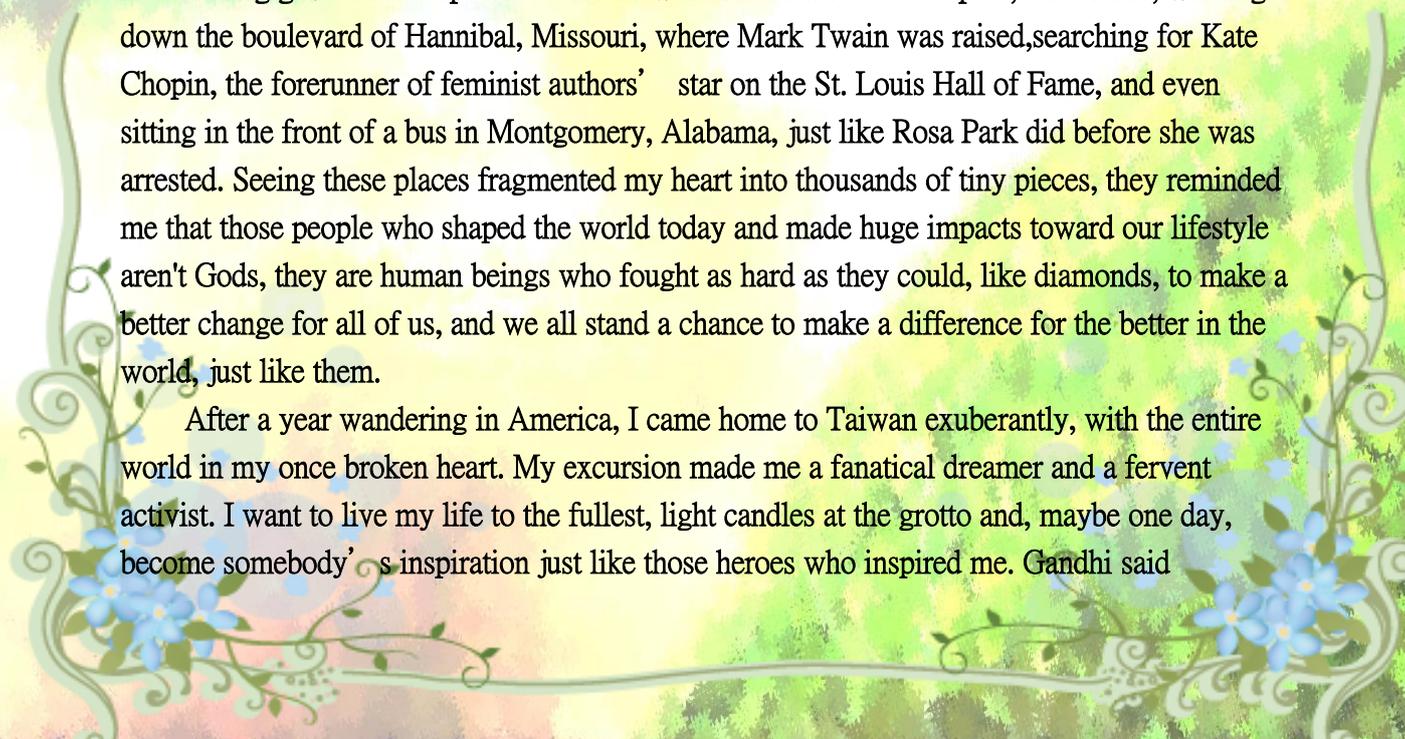


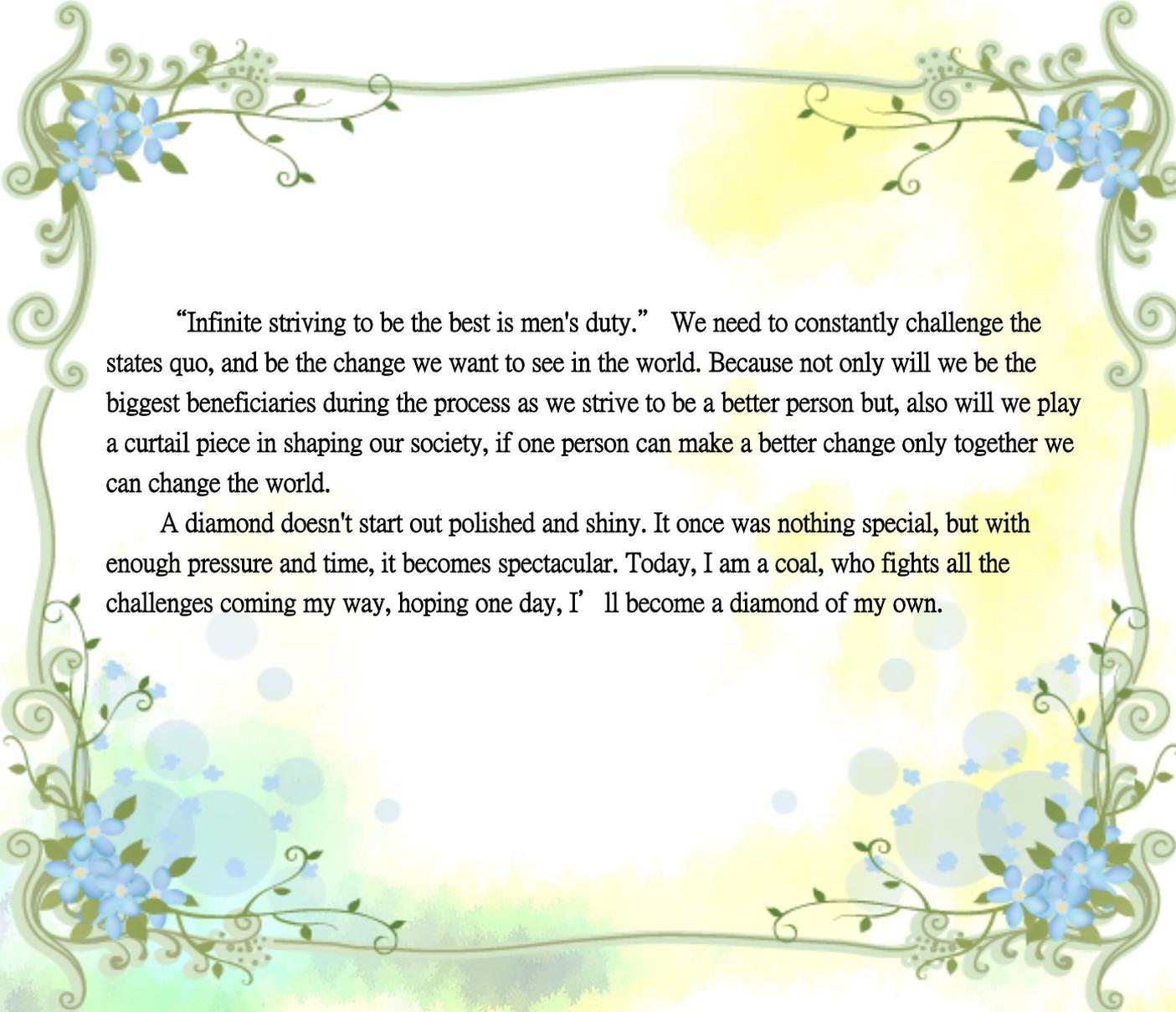
Fayetteville is one of the prettiest college towns in the United States. I remember the night of my arrival when grandma (host-mom) drove me home from the airport. I saw the stars shining so brightly like sliver peppers in the sky. We lived on the outskirts of Fayetteville, on a hill by a lake called Sequoia. The little one-way bridge is our only way to downtown Fayetteville. Every day, my school bus takes me across the honey blue water from one side to the other, when I'm on the bus, I always imagine myself as Gatsby, going from one era to the other, from the world of old ideas and traditional values to the world where we were able to look to the future instead of being held back in the past. The swing on our front porch is my favorite spot at home, I like to sit there in the dawn and watch the sun fall into the water and dye Sequoia into the color of red, orange and, purple. Sometimes during the day, I will walk down to the water side and see my reflection in this Mediterranean of Arkansas. Those days, I was surrounded by these envoys of beauty, they illuminated my heart, and detoxed my soul, they made me a better person, and taught me how to live.

Arkansas is a state which most people aren't familiar with, but in the center of the state lies the only active diamond mine in America today, the Crater of Diamonds State Park. Arkansas is where lumps of coal become diamonds, where a little grocery business became the largest retailer in the world—Walmart, it's where a boy whose father died three months before his birth and was raised in an abusive family turned out being one of the highest rated presidents of the USA—Bill Clinton, this is the land of opportunity, it's where miracles happen. It's where the diffident girl became the more gregarious person she is today.

Mother Teresa once said in her prayer, "May God break our heart so completely that the whole world falls in." I never really understand what this prayer means, but now I know. During my year in the States, I traveled from coast to coast and saw many places that reminded me of who I wanted to be. I remember standing in front of the balcony where Dr. Martin Luther King gave his last speech before he was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, walking down the boulevard of Hannibal, Missouri, where Mark Twain was raised, searching for Kate Chopin, the forerunner of feminist authors' star on the St. Louis Hall of Fame, and even sitting in the front of a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, just like Rosa Park did before she was arrested. Seeing these places fragmented my heart into thousands of tiny pieces, they reminded me that those people who shaped the world today and made huge impacts toward our lifestyle aren't Gods, they are human beings who fought as hard as they could, like diamonds, to make a better change for all of us, and we all stand a chance to make a difference for the better in the world, just like them.

After a year wandering in America, I came home to Taiwan exuberantly, with the entire world in my once broken heart. My excursion made me a fanatical dreamer and a fervent activist. I want to live my life to the fullest, light candles at the grotto and, maybe one day, become somebody's inspiration just like those heroes who inspired me. Gandhi said





“Infinite striving to be the best is men's duty.” We need to constantly challenge the states quo, and be the change we want to see in the world. Because not only will we be the biggest beneficiaries during the process as we strive to be a better person but, also will we play a curtail piece in shaping our society, if one person can make a better change only together we can change the world.

A diamond doesn't start out polished and shiny. It once was nothing special, but with enough pressure and time, it becomes spectacular. Today, I am a coal, who fights all the challenges coming my way, hoping one day, I’ ll become a diamond of my own.

### 評語

This is very well written. I thoroughly evyoged reading  
it.