

Laundry

8:27 a.m.

The sunlight illuminates my face. I turn to my left side in order to escape the heat, but I know I won't be getting any more sleep. After denying the reality of the situation for a few minutes, I finally decide to get out of bed and make something of my Saturday morning. Finish my Russian paper? Read King Lear? First I'll do my laundry, I think to myself. I get up and rescue my brown laundry bag from the black hole of my closet and tiptoe down two flights of stairs as quietly as I can in order to not wake my housemates. I close the door when I get in to the dusty old room lined with two white washing machines and two dryers. My head slightly brushes the orange cables behind me as I dump my load into the washing machine. I press "Whites" and the rumbling hum fills the room.

The efficiency with which laundry can be done and the current state of the laundry room calms and satisfies me. The space is clean, most likely because school started just two weeks ago. A wave of sadness hits me when I realize that the "Tragedy of the Commons" will soon hit the laundry room. Most of the girls in the house don't know each other well yet, so they continue to extend the courtesy of tidiness. As the year progresses, however, the laundry room will accumulate unclaimed socks and sweatpants, and dust bunnies will roam freely. People will lose their manners too; we will all be kind to each other, but when there is 30 minutes left in a dry cycle and someone urgently needs to dry their clothes, the damp load will be taken out; some socks won't be able to stay with the load and fall off the sides into the dusty abyss.

I remember the first time I did my own laundry. I remember going down to the old dark room with yellow walls and a dirty floor. This gloomy zone would be the site of my discovery of the joy of doing laundry. It would instill in me a love for the smell of hot, soft towels taken right out of the dryer and would also impart a unique sense of comfort—a feeling that I do, in fact, have control over my life. Riding the waves of Russian essays, statistics tests, environmental stewardship reflections, French projects, and King Lear analyses is tiring. Even my organic form structure seems to rebel against me. The reeds have their own mind and refuse to bend certain angles; even though I know that I should trust my materials, not being able to control my own sculpture further makes me realize that my life is out of control.

As silly as it may sound, I regain control when I do laundry. The job is done in a timely manner in the exact time it says that it'll take. The results are consistent. I know what to expect. There are no surprises. As my sagacious advisor Jonathan told me during our first meeting of my senior year, "Life is not about knowing outcomes, it is about being adventurous in the unknown and going through the unexpected." I agree, but having a sense of control in an otherwise unpredictable life is comforting; that's where laundry comes in.

Written by Emily Yeo

Concord Academy

Honorable Mention in 2017 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards