

She got into many

Orney Jacques

Schools,  
going to  
Rhode Island

1/5/00

Mrs. St. John  
IB English IV

## Personal Statement

Anxiety engulfs me. A malicious hand crushes my chest, making each breath a struggle. The usual thought filters into my mind. Why do I do this? I look around for a familiar face, trying to ease this consuming dread. Where are my teammates? The girl next to me jumps up and down. I want to tell her it is useless. Nothing relieves this tension. She is feeling just like I do. They all are. We are each the source of another's fear. We are isolated out here. No one pats us gently on the shoulder, gives us a smile, and assures us we will do fine. I desperately search for some kind of relief to this uneasiness. I uselessly stretch my shoulders. The awaited moment inches nearer and nearer and yet the time moves at a sluggish pace. The starter finally appears. He mumbles his usual directions, inaudible over the sound of my pounding heart. Finally, we take our positions. My mind temporarily departs, handing its reign over to my body. Foot on the line, body arched over, my breath slowed.

The gunshot pierces the silence. My body jumps into action, pulled by the force of the stampede. As we round the corner we fuse into a single organism. The glaring fluorescent lights melt the distant surroundings into a mirage of dark hues, isolating us from reality. At the lap mark, the spell is broken and the mental battle begins. We slowly brake apart as the weaker fall back. I enter a place where nothing reaches me but the pounding of my spikes on the track and the methodic sound of my breathing. I use the beat of my breath to deliver motivation. In...nothing exists but this moment...out. I repeat this over and over again, making myself believe it.

Suddenly, it is no longer a race. It is my life. It is everyone's life. I am testing the will to succeed. I want to see how far I can go and how much I can take before I give up. At this moment, more than any other in my life, I am certain of one thing.

Ultimately, the success of my life is up to me. No one can achieve my goals and dreams for me. If I want to win this race, or if I want to succeed in life, I have to depend on myself. My teammates can cheer me on during the race. My coach can even shout advice, but they can not win the race for me. My teachers can give me the tools to learn. They can even make education interesting, but my educational success is up to me.

I have never won a race. I do not run to win the races. I run to explore my boundaries, uncover my limits. So far, I have not discovered any. If we put limits on our lives, than we will never reach our full potential. I take this knowledge and apply it in every aspect of my life. With it, I know there is nothing I can not do.

I 6  
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$\frac{36}{36}$

Clarkson  
Roger Williams  
Penn State Honors  
College  
Rhode Island

Is it possible to boil the "essence" of a person down into three short adjectives? This seems a daunting task to me. There are so many sides to me that I consider important that almost any choice of three would end up leaving some out. I'm a very complex person; I try not to be too predictable or even (gasp!) boring! Although to be sure, boring sometimes has its advantages. While contemplating word choices for this essay, I was forced to think about how I define myself. I came upon "complex," and decided that it was a pretty good fit. I have many varied interests; as an example, I don't feel that I fit the stereotype of any one social clique. On the surface I may appear as a generic math nerd. But how many math nerds are there that listen to the Offspring and Rage Against the Machine? I catch flak for my musical tastes from my friends often, but often I feel that the music I listen to serves to satiate the rebel in me.

As was evidenced by my initial statement in this essay, sometimes I tend to drift off into the philosophical. One of my favorite books, *Sophie's World*, makes a great analogy: Imagine all of the people of Earth as living in the fur of a rabbit, being pulled out of a top hat into the Universe by the Creator (God, a giant turtle, random quantum fluctuations, whatever). Normal people live their lives in the normal world, snuggled deep in the rabbit's fur. Philosophers, however, live as far up in the hairs as they can, straining to see and wonder at the outside Universe. Conclusion: All it takes to be a philosopher is the faculty of wonder. I consider myself to be a *philosoph* in the true sense of the word: a lover of knowledge. I love to learn, and I love to help other people learn as well.

The third and perhaps most important adjective that I would identify myself with is "freaky-deaky." Life can't be all work and no play, or we would all go crazy ... just look at *The Shining* if you don't believe me. I love to have fun, and when I have to do work, I try to make it as fun as possible. This has given me a unique and positive outlook on life, which I enjoy sharing with others.

got into  
Caltech

(copy for teacher)  
(don't need to grade this)

~~Angela Robins~~  
College Essay

Got  
into  
TUFTS

GREAT

This past summer I fell in love with a pair of overalls, and it was love at first sight. We met in the back of my grandmother's welding shop; he was draped on an overwhelmed coat hanger, and I was in need of some coverage before our welding session began. He had long navy blue stripes accenting his shape with hints of forest green around the zippers and pockets. Meeting in my grandmother's welding shop. Wow. I still can't think of a better place to fall in love than a room filled with flying sparks, red-hot molten metal and steel-toed boots. Ever since the day we met, we have done practically everything together.

At Japanese *taiko* drumming classes on Mondays, there we were, me stretching my hamstrings while his straps pulled impatiently on my shoulders. As the sun started to set over Lake Champlain, the drums echoed a deep primitive rhythm that would put me into a trance. Sometimes I was transported to a world of aboriginal tribes, at other times I was alongside cave men wrapped in furs. It seemed endlessly evocative.

During the week we awoke before the sun and biked over pavement, dirt paths and puddles. As we approached the organic vegetable farm, we passed through sweeping fields and lingering mist. Flying through the overgrown paths, my overalls would get slapped by blades of grass drenched in dew. By the end of the day, soiled patches would remain on their knees.

Weekends we often welded together alongside my grandmother. My overalls and I loved merging the pools of glowing corten steel. Through my dark goggles, I would watch as the molten steel cooled to a warm red. Occasionally an aggressive spark would burn through the threads of my overalls, leaving a small hole with frayed edges. Fortunately, my skin was unscathed.

Although I am still a beginner, my overalls have been welding since the early nineties; the days when my grandmother was engaged in creating human-sized sundials and traveling the world. They even endured the long plane ride to Japan, where she planted one of her sundials near my home in Sendai. Loosely hanging onto her muscular build, the overalls accompanied us on explorations of bamboo forests and Japanese dumpsters.

I lived in Japan for three years, and back then, I never would have worn a pair of overalls. I already had to deal with my western eyes, pale skin and brown hair; I had no desire to add a pair of overalls to my anomalous appearance. Memories of the zoo still bring back images of young children gawking and pointing. "Look mom, it's a foreigner!"

After moving to New Paltz, I learned to embrace individuality and now my overalls and I can finally live in peace. This summer I fell in love with a pair of overalls, and it wasn't just a fling.

TUFTS

University of Pennsylvania—Question 5a.

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! My alarm clock incessantly blares until I can muster enough willpower to emerge from under my warm, comfortable sheets to shut it off and start another day. The sun is beginning to filter in through the blinds, illuminating my humble abode. I throw off the covers and run, shivering, to the shower to the muffled laughs of my roommate. An Arizona native and lifetime resident, I have yet to become accustomed to the chilly winter mornings in Pennsylvania. My Norwegian-born roommate, who is able to sleep comfortably in the dead of winter with nothing more than one thin sheet, finds my early-morning sprints to be an especially assuming form of entertainment. Nevertheless, after applying enough wool to ruffle the feathers of any animal rights activist and sufficient cotton to employ a farmer for an entire year, I am ready to wobble my now-rotund body out of the Quad and through the frosty expanses of snow and icy wind to my first class of the day.

Thankfully, I arrive at my European History class without succumbing to frostbite or any other nasty calamity. Within a matter of seconds, I am able to greet everyone by name, as the class consists of only ten people. Soon, I am immersed in a discussion on the motives of Napoleon in his quest to conquer Russia and how the fallacy of his immense undertaking relates to Hitler's failed Russian invasion more than a hundred years later. The small class size allows me to voice my opinions on the cyclical nature of history fully, as well as have ample time to ponder and debate my arguments with the perspectives of my classmates. The transfer of ideas among such an elite group of my peers greatly invigorates me and helps me to question my own beliefs when others expound effective and highly relevant counterclaims.

The possibility for intellectual growth inherent in such cozy classrooms piques my interest in my next class, macroeconomics. Just yesterday, I turned in my paper on the significance of the tremendous rise in the GDP of the United States on the lives of a middle-class citizen. After class today, the professor calls me aside and asks me about some of the ideas I presented in my thesis. We agree to further speak of the more esoteric aspects of the issue over lunch. Our delightful conversation, filled with arcane references gleaned from my voracious reading on the topic is unfortunately cut short by my next class: Advanced Calculus.

In Calculus, as I try to understand the complex theories and ideas presented by the professor, I am reminded of a conversation I had the previous day with an old high school friend of mine who had enrolled at the University of Arizona. As I listened to his tale of woe, stuck in a math class with more than 100 students and no possibility of meaningful interaction with the professor, I had difficulty imagining how I could possibly survive in such an intellectual environment so detrimental to learning. I realize that my academic curiosity, dedication, and hard-working nature are best suited to this particular learning environment, one that is constantly enriched by the intelligence and insights offered daily by both peers and instructors.

Another mentally exhilarating day is over, and it is now time to relax. Today, I choose to engage in a few pick-up games of basketball in the gym before shooting pool with my roommate. Later on, my roommate and I return to our dorm to finish our essays for tomorrow's classes in Management 100 and Microeconomics. Afterwards, I joyfully read an e-mail sent by my mother explaining the latest news in the hectic lives of my three younger sisters. My mind drifts back to the stimulating conversation with my Macroeconomics professor over lunch, and I can only hope that my ideas in these two essays will evoke the same response.

It is now approaching midnight, but I am not yet ready to retire into my warm bed. Instead, I grab my cello and drift off to a practice room to calm myself. One of my favorite forms of therapy, I slowly progress through my scales, warming up my fingers and releasing the stress of a long day. I play new solos interspersed with old favorites salvaged from throughout by years on the cello. The minutes speed by as I relieve my tension, and what seems like mere moments has occupied an entire hour. As I pack up to go, I hear the beautiful melodies of other ardent instrumentalists lifting their spirits and those of others through musical therapy. As I slip into bed and begin to creep into the world of dreams, I can only hope that my lilting melodies and soft lullabies caressed the mind of my fellow classmates in the same manner as the lone pianist slowly and passionately practicing Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata* just below my resting head.

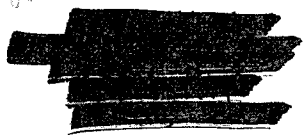
Excellent  
got in to  
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Business  
School

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Wharton School of Business

personal statement

overhead  
Excellent  
PI



STATUS: 23:47 MST; Downloading Remaining Files; 23% Complete

The last four years of my existence boil down to this moment. Today is my day of respite. No longer will I be burdened by the adversity faced by a pioneer International Baccalaureate scholar. No longer will I be hampered by the onerous course load, the ungodly hours, or the perturbed nights. I have juggled the burdensome curriculum, the extensive assessments, and the formidable demands. I have succeeded in succoring him through the most rigorous of times; all the while, I have remained devoted to my decree, focused on my objective and sympathetic to my desires. Today is the time for my long awaited breath.

STATUS: 23:49 MST; Downloading Remaining Files; 32% Complete

Never again will I be brought to the thresholds of my boundaries and then coerced to surpass them. No longer will I be plagued by his diligence and assiduity. Nevermore will I be besieged with the overheating of my circuitry as his ravenous intellectual appetite drives me into unsung depths of research and study of obscure topics, from immunotherapy to ethics. Ne'er will I feel overworked and unappreciated. I am more than an inanimate machine. Today is the day I am desired.

STATUS: 23:51 MST; Downloading Remaining Files; 37% Complete

Nevermore shall his sundry interests or his peerless attitude govern my existence. His cerebral inquiries will no longer have authority over my well-being. His intellectual maturation will never again evolve around me; we are now independent. Although his charismatic character, his mannerly demeanor, and his quintessential drive will no doubt lead him to affluence, I shall remain here, as I have and as I always will. Today is the day of my intellectual abandonment.

STATUS: 23:53 MST; Downloading Remaining Files; 44% Complete

Yet I will never again experience his comprehensive scope of interests that have guided me for the past four years. No longer will I be able to encounter such a complete view of our encompassing realm. Never again will my interests be so varied and diverse yet so in depth. Without his presence, I will no longer be admissible to the infinite possible fields of study. No longer will his interests in microbial genetics, polymer engineering, and politics expose me to the various marvels of our world beyond the palpable. Today I must resort to a one-track vision.

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good - W. Western  
I think

Northwestern

EXCELLENT! (p2)

got into  
a great  
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*STATUS: 23:54 MST; Downloading Remaining Files, 57% Complete*

No longer will I be touched by such diverse fingers. Never again will I be apt to appreciate his unique blend of distinct heritages. Nevermore will I encounter the Turkish tongue and the Australian culture within one form. From who shall I conceive the afflictions of migrating into a distinct culture? Who else can guide me through worldly eyes to the enlightened perspective of each and every faith? No one can supplant him. Today is the day I turn reclusive to the world.

*STATUS: 23:57 MST; Downloading Remaining Files, 68% Complete*

Never again will I share his exalted accomplishments, his past glories. He will no doubt continue to excel; then who will serve as his unflagging companion? Who then shall avail his attainments? It was I who 'Spellchecked' his dissertations, formatted his treatises, and conferred his projects. It was I who underlined his aggregation of math and science honors, his various service scholarships, and his academic and social erudition. Who will be there for him now? Today I conceive my insignificance.

*STATUS: 23:59 MST; Downloading Remaining Files, 83% Complete*

Ne'er will my services be employed. Never again will I be utilized to correlate his acumen, to supplement his ideas. My time has ended; I have fulfilled my purpose. He will now move on without me. He will now employ some other insentient contrivance to transform his ideas into tangible commodities. My role in his life has been made clear: his qualities alone were the true grounds for his achievements, I was a mere pawn in the temporal academic realm of high school. Today he leaves me; today my duty is done.

*STATUS: 01:03 MST; Downloading Remaining Files, 100% Complete*

Here I shall remain, upon the completion of this final download, my final task, on the desk of my former user, as he not only departs for college, but relinquishes the life we shared. It is lamentable to watch my user, the individual for whom I have always stood alongside through the most daunting of times, take his first solitary step into the larger collegiate world. Then again, I am consoled in knowing he will now be presented with the opportunity to fulfill his dream, the dream of contributing to the medical field and aiding the eradication of humanity's malignant ailments. Finally his interests in biomedical research and immunology will be put to work; now society will prosper. Today he leaves me behind as nothing more than his old computer; but today I leave him as my profound mentor.

----- SHUT DOWN -----

36/36! (may I have a copy?)

sent to: Harvard ← he got INTO HARVARD!

EXCELLENT

### A Bebop Redemption

Personal Statement — ~~Alexandra~~ — 11935 N. 102 St Scottsdale, AZ 85260  
— 601-46-3807 Desert Mountain High School

#1

I first met, first was *saved* by Jazz at the universally awkward age of 13, and I am forever indebted to the old man's genuine benevolence, patient disposition, and of course, his *incredible* coolness. Seventh grade — the whole panorama of adolescence lay outstretched before me, and from where I stood, such a vista was *not* among the most beautiful to behold. I was stuck in that middle-school mire of pre-teen angst, my faux-hipster persona contrived to the nth degree and replete with torn black garb and badly cropped hair. Obnoxious and offensive were prevalent themes in both attitude and attire, and I was a rabid fan of the obligatory punk-posturing music which exhorted the country's suburban youth to buck the authoritarian rule of the Man (ostensibly parents, teachers, pedestrian police officers, and other fairly benign folk) and rage against the status quo. But for what, exactly, and why? I was confused and disoriented, a lost Israelite wandering aimlessly in search of the promised land of utter "coolness" where I could live out the remainder of my days in Zen-like equanimity. I aspired to the perfect amalgam of James Dean, Marlon Brando, Jim Morrison, and Kurt Cobain. My idealized Kings of Cool were toppled in one fell swoop, however, when Jazz burst upon the scene.

My saxophone and I were introduced to him by my band teacher. I had heard of Jazz before, and was well aware of his stature in the music world; however, his outward appearance belied his venerableness. He was not the swaggering, bombastic Rock and Roll to which I was accustomed, nor the subtly-pretentious Classical which had been force-fed to me throughout the years. Jazz was an old black man, nattily dressed in a three-piece suit, hat on head, cane in hand, clever smile on face — quite the dapper gent. With an easy charm and an irreverent sense of humor, he presented himself to me, and we hit it off immediately.

Jazz taught me more than music. I do not quite know when his tutelage began to broach other areas; initially, my affinity for jazz music seemed superficial, just a shift in taste. But the old man had begun to change me, both inside and out. Outwardly, I gave up the pretense of being "cool" via the music which I listened to. There was no more outrageous dress or loud proclamations of how "non-conformist" I was. Inwardly, Jazz sparked an intellectual curiosity the likes of which I had not before experienced; he showed me the mathematical intricacies of musical theory, the social relevance of jazz history and the music's place in the patchwork of American culture, and the beautiful, jazz-inspired writings of such literary luminaries as Langston Hughes and Jack Kerouac. My early acquaintance with Jazz instilled in me a love of learning which is now very much a part of who I am, fueling my studies on a day to day basis and driving my intellectual passions in a broader sense. It was Jazz that turned the light on inside my mind, and now that he has taken up residence there, that light will remain aglow.

So it is that I credit the impeccably styled, genial old man with my personal deliverance. By nature, jazz is not a prescribed art form; it is improvisational, spontaneous, and above all, straight from the heart. Jazz taught me to live life as it is played. I now bridle against the reigns of conformity for the sake of fitting in, or as I practiced before, token non-conformity. Jazz did not make me who I am today, but he led the way there. I can have divergent opinions and tastes that are truly my own and not feel as though I should be ostracized, or that I deserve reverence as a radical intellectual or trendsetter. On top of all this, I am finally cool. *Damn* cool. Thank you, Jazz, for all that you have done for me. May my squareness keep forever distant, and may I stay one wickedly cool, hip cat for a long while to come.

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## Princeton University

### Optional Essay

As a high school student, I have completed a plethora of research papers and assignments. Several of which evoked the typical student query of "How is this ever going to be useful to me in real life?" However, there has been one assignment that sticks out in my mind as being quite meaningful and "useful" to me. That assignment was that of the Genealogy project completed in my third year English class. For this assignment, we were to research our family tree. However, this assignment did not simply entail a drawing of a family chart, but a synopsis of each family member's life. At first, it seemed to be a very tedious assignment. My parents are immigrants from (omitted) and the rest of my family members are incommunicado overseas. However, through stories from my parents, I was able to learn a great deal about my family's heritage. I can now almost see the Imo river in which my father would play and work as a boy. I can imagine the cement-floored church that my grandmother helped build. I was given a glimpse as to where my parents were actually "coming from." I understand better about the hardships they overcame and the beliefs they were raised with that were responsible for making them who they are today. I have gained a sense of pride and appreciation of how hard my parents worked to achieve all that they have. They have come from a couple of poor (omitted) to a couple of independent-minded, strong professionals raising a family. The project also allowed me to become acquainted with the grandparents that I either vaguely remembered or never had a chance to meet due to the oceans separating us. It has been said that to fully understand who one is as a person now, he needs to look back at who his ancestors were. This assignment enabled me to do this. I now have not only a firmer grounding on who my ancestors were, but a better understanding of who I am.

## Stanford University

*Write a note to your future roommate that tells something about you.*

Hey Roomie!

Since we are to spend a great deal of time together, I want to share with you a little bit about whom I am. Well, in fifth grade, I was leaning back in my chair, as all who were "anybody" did. You can probably guess what happened next - I fell. In front of thirty pairs of wide-eyes, I lay sprawled on the floor, entangled in the legs of my chair. Besides the absolute embarrassment felt, the fall had given me something invaluable. With that fall, I realized that no one is perfect and anyone can make themselves look stupid. I used to think that only certain people had that innate talent of humiliating themselves, my own mishap showed me that if that were the case, it would be a very large group, one that I would be apart of. I have now learned to laugh at myself. I can make a mistake without the world crashing down around me. I have not become complacent - I still have a perfectionist streak running through my personality. Instead, I have become content with whom I am, "falls" and all.

Excellent  
She got into Princeton & Stanford  
She goes to Stanford

got into  
Wharton  
School  
Business

Excellent

prompt was to  
write a page of your  
autobiography

University of Pennsylvania—Question 6a.

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and suddenly, I saw it. All of my petty cares and worries slipped away as I stared dumbfounded into the mirror. My hands began to tremble as I concentrated with all my might on that fateful sign of my impending mortality. Yesterday, it had been one of many; just another nameless keratin string buried deep in my forest of hair. For upwards of 45 years, they had all grown faithfully and reliably in a light brown tint, but this strand had disrupted the pattern I had vainly hoped would continue forever. Its rebellion of gray shocked me like I never imagined such a miniscule strand of head hair could. I felt a sense of impending dread, as I began to reflect on what I planned to do with the remainder of my life, which seemed to be glaring menacingly at me in the shimmering, silvery reflection from my bathroom mirror.

In an attempt to receive a reassurance that I had not been suddenly transformed from a vibrant young idealist into a middle-aged man, I decided to call my old freshman roommate Erik from my delightful college years at the University of Pennsylvania. Although our lives had diverged since we had shared our first fretful months away from home, scraping up our meager monetary funds for the occasional excursion to Broadway, shivering in the cold of our first New England winter, or desperately studying for an approaching exam, our friendship was just as strong as it had been so many years ago. We were able to talk for hours about the multitude of intelligent, interesting, and ambitious fellow students we met during those days, the engaging professors who often invited us to stay after class to further discuss the day's lecture, and the overall atmosphere of vigor, youth, and the incredible, nearly tangible drive produced by such a large collection of goal-oriented, dedicated people. Surely, although I had not spoken to him in six months, Erik would be able to offer a comforting word or two to an old friend. As I dialed his number into my videophone, I was startled to see a man appear who shared the same physical features as Erik, but with one outstanding difference: his once-jet black locks were now completely white. I suddenly lost all desire to approach the issue of aging, as now my heartfelt fear at the appearance of one gray hair in my own head seemed entirely trivial when compared to the drastic changes in my good friend. After a few minutes of conversation, I realized that Erik was the same jovial, exuberant, and energetic person that I had always known. Despite the maturation of his physical features, Erik had lost none of the youthful spirit that had characterized him throughout the years, a clear sign that the approach of middle-age did not imply the abandonment of the driving force of ambition that I had always cherished.

As I sat there, staring at myself in the bathroom mirror and contemplating what lay ahead of me, it became increasingly clear that the approaching onset of middle age was not something to be feared or avoided. Rather, age had already begun to teach me lessons that I had taken for granted earlier. The importance of receiving a degree in Business Management from the premier institution in the United States could never fully be understood until I was face to face with intense pressure in real-life situations in which my acquired skills gave me the insight and power to make the correct decisions. The significance of the series of goals I had set before entering college was not realized until they successfully provided the necessary courage to separate myself from the established corporate world and forge my own enterprise when the opportunity arose at the age of 30. Furthermore, I realized that the person looking right back at me, sitting on the brink of middle-age, was in large part able to reach success by engaging with the exceptional professors, the intelligent and creative fellow students, and the challenging curriculum of the University of Pennsylvania. The frightened teenager, faced with the entirely new world of college was essentially the same as the frightened 45-year old man visually confronted with evidence of his approaching demise. Gladly, both men overcame their self-doubts to confront the unknown, battle through trials and tribulations, and persevere to the end. Now, if I only I could find my toothbrush, I might forget about this gray hair, brush my teeth, and drive the kids to soccer practice...

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got into  
Wharton