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Drawing Hammers

Audrey Tolbert
aet007@bucknell.edu

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Drawing Hammers

I believe in drawing hammers. This is not a metaphor or a puzzle of any kind; it is simply what I have vowed to do with my life.

The last conversation I ever had with Chris was on a Friday morning during our AP Physics class. It was the first day of midterms and I was stressed out beyond belief because we had a Latin midterm the next period and those exams are notorious for making students cry. While I frantically tried to study any translation that might be on the exam, Chris calmly stood there, drawing a hammer.

We both survived the midterm exam, but Chris didn't survive to get his graded test back. He was in a speed-related car accident that Sunday night and died the following Thursday.

Though Chris' life ended before mine, his was truly a life well lived. Happiness and good humor were not experiences in his life, they *were* his life. Anger didn't exist in his world, just biting sarcasm said with a glimmer in his eye and an easy laugh.

Why did he have to die so soon when we all needed him so much? My question went unanswered for months until I realized that I had only learned from Chris after his death. Only then did I understand the futility of stress and how much of my life had been wasted on useless things, like Latin midterms.

Because of Chris I stop when I feel overwhelmed. I take a step back and I draw a hammer. While I draw, I can see Chris and hear him say things like "pfft, whatever" and "I'm just not feelin' it today, coach." Because of Chris I blew off studying for all my final exams. I knew, just as Chris did, that I would be fine, and I was.

I believe that in the simple act of drawing a hammer I can relax and feel joy seeping back into my life. That hammer reminds me that my happiness is dependent on my worldview and that most of my stress is unnecessary.

It hasn't been easy saying goodbye to Chris, but because of his death I have learned to embrace infinite amounts of joy.