

My best wish since leaving my country has come true, and I would love to start my story with that. I was the girl who tried to find a quiet place in the past. A place without noisy people and society is very rare in my hometown. Especially in high school, I liked spending time with myself and reading books. In my culture, we had special roles for women, making it difficult to find my dream place. I always thought that if I were a bird, I would like to go to the ocean, my favorite place. In my country, we have rivers, but we do not have an ocean. I just watched videos of the ocean in the past, but they were not interesting until I came to the US, and I found my dream place, and now I can freely walk on water, watch the sunshine, and play in the sand.

When I walk into the water, it is more than just taking steps for me. As the waves move up and down, I see things I never find in a crowd of people. For example, I feel brightness, purity, joy, and pride, leading me to contemplate life's secrets. As I walk, I understand that we must be like a stream of water, flowing stubbornly against the rocks of our trouble and joyfully continuing on our way. It is interesting because I see my footsteps following me when I look back. That is when I can be far away from people and the problems surrounding me, like mountains. The most beautiful image of nature is the sunsetting and reflecting in the ocean. When I was a child, I used to go to the river and play with the water. When the light shone on the lake, it seemed like a doll, dancing when I tapped the water with my finger. I was happy with every movement I made. The sunset occurs quickly in Afghanistan, a mountainous country. I asked my father why the sun hid behind the mountain and told him we should go to the top and watch it. My father used to chuckle at everything I said. When I grew up, it became a big dream to see the sun on the water, but in my

hometown, that was an impossible dream to come true. When I arrived in America, and at the University of Delaware after a month, I read the ELI event that they wanted to have a trip to the ocean city. I was so excited, like someone looking for her lost treasure; I was searching for my inner calm. Today, I am glad that I have realized my dream, which had remained a fantasy until coming to Delaware.

The University of Delaware is like a mirror that reflects my future. I like this place as home despite the difficulty. The best aspect of my destiny is that I can pursue higher education. For me, knowledge is like sunlight. I strengthen and enlighten the meaning of life with each word I learn. Despite this beauty, I miss my mother's smell, warm embraces, gentle hands, and optimistic voice. In my country, whenever I came home, I could hear my mother singing in our home, which inspired me to appreciate how wonderful life is. I also miss my dad's-tired voice and his soft smile. I miss my close friends who got together and shared our deepest secrets. I miss my friends the most when I see university students laughing and joking with their friends.

However, I accept everything and love my new life with all my passion. I love the cultural diversity among UD students. At this point, I can re-emphasize to my international friend that our English proficiency level is similar, and we usually laugh at the simplicity of each other's language. I love student talks; when they are everywhere on campus, students of different races and ideas bring beauty, like flowers to a garden. The hard part of being here is the language; sometimes, I feel lost. I love to write, but it bothers me that I cannot express myself properly in English. I did not have any problem with the culture because I accepted that I would face different habits in a new country, and maybe I won't like it, but I had to respect it. But I felt the difficulty of the

language more, especially the American accent. When I arrived, I told my host mom that the students were talking very fast, and sometimes they sounded like rap songs, and I was trying to understand what they were saying. Now it's the best place for me, and as each month passes, I do not have as many language problems as I used to have.