Artist Statement for College (Important Details Changed)

Drawing is my favorite means to express my emotions, my appreciation for Korean culture, and my love for family. These themes give power to my art.

It's a cliché to say that "a picture is worth a thousand words." As an artist and an illustrator, I see the truth behind that cliché. I love drawing because it enables me to encapsulate so many of my ideas and thoughts in a single illustration. I strive to include emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects in all of my work. I can tell an entire story through a single picture. My illustrations show the angst, sorrow, or elation that I felt within my memories. I add hints of realism to capture the physicality of each moment, using a subtly-colored palette and soft shading. For instance, one of my favorite drawings is entitled "The Pastry." This self-portrait shows me eating a chocolate pastry. You can see my satisfaction, eagerness, and peaceful contentment for the tasty pastry. In order to create the soft stylistic elements that allowed me to express these emotions, I erased the bold colored pencil marks. As a result, the image looked blended and conveyed the lighthearted emotional message that I wanted.

My love of Korean language and culture is a common theme in my art. Although my family is Thai, I have spent 5 years studying Korean and volunteer as a Teacher's Assistant in the Local Korean Language School. I have also visited Korea. The Korean influence in my life comes through in my art. For instance, I often include Korean calligraphy in my art and share insights about my experience in Korea. In my illustration, "Hello Kitty," the focal point shows my hand holding a stuffed Hello Kitty animal that I bought at a Sunday market in Korea. Behind the Hello Kitty is a chalkboard with my friends' and my faces drawn (in a cartoon-like style) on it with explanatory text in Korea. This piece illustrates an inside joke that I shared with the four friends I became close to at Korean Language Summer School. During lunchtime, my best friend Jun would playfully whine, "You broke my heart!" every time a classmate who was sitting next to her would leave the cafeteria earlier than she would. Those classmates were nicknamed as "Victims," hence my friends Robert being "Victim #2" and Jeanne being "Victim #3" in the illustration. "Hello Kitty" encapsulates my joy of being a student in a Korea and the strength of the friendships I built there.

My love for my family is another common theme in my art. I grew up in a very loving Thai family, with a brother named Paul, who I treasure as one of my closest friends. My illustration, "Unalike Apples," shows the sharp contrast between red and green onions. The apples are a metaphor for my relationship with Paul. The contrast between the apples mirrored the contrast between my brother and me. We are similar in some ways and different in others. For instance, we are both soft-spoken and sensitive. My brother has a great sense of humor that I have always admired. He is a thoughtful and reflective person; I am more impulsive and intuitive. In a similar way, the apples have the same round shape and a different color. My family inspires me to draw.

In college, I will continue telling stories through my art. I plan to take advanced coursework in painting, drawing, and Korean culture. This will not only improve my technical art skills, but will also give me a broader base of experiences to inspire the content of my future art. I will use my education to build the confidence and skill to become a better artist.