

Personal Statement

My name is Danise Kuang. I was born and raised in Oakland, California. Growing up, I experienced neglect in a “dysfunctional” household. While my mother was mentally unstable, my father was physically unavailable to care for me. When I saw my friends having close relationships with their parents, I felt incredibly envious. I desperately wanted deep connections with my parents.

Because I was uneducated about mental illness and rarely saw representation that normalized it, I was always ashamed about my mother’s condition. I kept my feelings about my mother inside. I did not open up about her schizophrenia until high school. In my junior year of high school, I started to see an emotional health counselor. I decided that I needed assistance and support for what was occurring at home. At home, my mother did not allow my eldest brother to take his medication, which led him to have multiple seizures. This incident was causing me and my family immense stress. I could not contain my feelings anymore and I spilled out everything to my counselor. She was able to assist me in finding a way for my brother to receive his medication, lessening my exasperation and worry.

Additionally, I am a low-income first generation college student. My mother received her Associate’s Degree at Merritt College while my dad was only educated up to a high school level. For this reason, I am a participant in College Track (Oakland), a non-profit organization that aims to give underprivileged students an opportunity to go to college. Being a part of College Track really motivated me to study harder. At College Track, I received free services such as tutoring and mental health counselling. Since I come from a low-class background, my family could never afford to pay for a tutor or therapist. Because I was able to receive tutoring in subjects that I struggled with, which includes Precalculus, Chemistry, Geometry, and Physics, I passed my high school classes with mostly A’s and B’s.

During my senior year of high, I suffered from depression. Fearing that horrible things would occur to me at school, I rarely showed up to the last few months of school. I was frustrated and furious at myself for being unable to get out of bed. Depression enveloped me and left me feeling like I was eternally isolated from my family and friends. Luckily, I was receiving counselling at College Track before I fell into this deep depression, and my counselor supported me throughout my sorrow. If it were not for my counselor, I would not have slowly recovered from my poor state of mind and gotten into college.

Currently, I am a freshman at Cal Poly Pomona and I am currently majoring in English at Cal Poly Pomona. I am in love with English because I relish exploring complex ideas explored by authors, such as social norms. Literature and writing allow me to analyze complicated concepts and express my thoughts clearly, without judgement or concern for what others might think. In English, the possibilities are endless. Through writing, I can create whole worlds or even a new society, while literature assists me in exploring the world and critiquing society’s conventions.

