

Hannah Pak

Anna Fridlis

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Room Observation- Draft 2

Looking down onto the barely visible floor, my focus bounces around the room urgently, observing my current state of being. I am in my dorm room, and yesterday's late night furniture reorganization solidifies a place in my memory. Thinking back to yesterday, this messy room was neatly organized and in my memory- everything was correctly placed. But I know my memory leaves out recollections of the trash, and perhaps that's why I regret reorganizing. "The present is indeed haunted by a memory and by what will soon become the ghost of a memory: the phantom of a phantom" (Stamelman, Richard). Just as the initial layout of this room was once an unwelcome stranger to me, this room will familiarize itself with me.

The white walls are mostly bare except for the makeshift wire glasses holder placed almost exactly in the middle of the wall opposite the window and my roommate's Kali Uchis poster beside the door. On my side of the room, there are no posters. I never saw the appeal of decorating a place I would call home for a contracted amount of time. I was a visitor in this space, and I would soon be gone as well. Looking down, I had made a trivial yet permanent mark on this place. On the ground, there now lay four donut shaped indents where my dresser was once positioned, along with multiple box cutter scratches from late nights working on projects without a cutting mat. Besides a single poster, these four walls know nothing, the belongings of three girls within, yet entirely separate. Minimal time is spent within these four walls, however, my life resides within.

Poking out of the piles on the ground is a brown paper bag with black stripes from DSW when I purchased rain boots. Another bag is from Uniqlo, although I returned that purchase days later, the bag stayed. Other scraps include every museum ticket of the last seven months, amazon boxes, and boarding passes. Every single one of these objects has already fulfilled its intended purpose; trash such as my boarding passes and museum tickets are rendered completely useless, but paper bags are reusable. Intended to counteract the negative impacts of plastic bags, paper bags are significantly better for the environment and in my opinion more suited for transportation and reuse ability. Unlike plastic bags, the rigid nature of paper forces the contents of a bag into its shape; however, the use “an even greater technological masterpiece: the square-bottomed paper bag” (Petroski, Henry) results in a greater accommodation of items that require standing upright. Their ability to stand upright also encourages my organization and storage of things. My room lacks enough surface area to effectively sort my belongings, but in these bags, I can conveniently transport and categorize clutters of junk.

Opposite my dresser, my desk sits perpendicular to the window, a perfect position to hear the daily commotion of the hospital just across the street. Periodic siren noises and frequent car horns flooding the room incorporated themselves into the normalcy of the room. Rarely would the windows be locked closed, seeing that especially then, the hushed intimacy of the room without the city buzz made me uneasy with a tinge of paranoia.

Along the backboard of the desk, sticky notes are scattered reminding me of everything ranging from wishing my brother a happy birthday, which was months ago, to taking a pencil to class. There is also a Polaroid of my mom from the “Blue Man Group” show back in August hanging by a strip of blue painter’s tape. The surface of my desk is completely covered with things, yet with nothing on it. Although useless, most things on this desk stay for the sheer

purpose of having sentimental value: a pug-shaped measuring tape that has never been used, a broken mechanical pencil from my brother's all-state concert, and a call bell gifted from my younger cousin. Aside from mementos, a single notebook is placed on the left side and the illusion of space is gone. No work can be done in this space and although I never intended to do any real work in this room- some breathing room would be nice. Slanted on the right side of the desk is a binder with a white folder inside, practically empty, yet I keep it on my desk because of the shiny metallic dollar store stickers from back home; keeping the binder upright is a single strip of blue painters tape and a small 4 oz candle I've lit just once. The candle's delicate citrus yuzu smell was overwhelmed by sweet undertones which only added to the stuffy and nauseating inhale created by an absurdly warm thermostat setting.

The small, constant reminders of this room being a shared space often overcrowd my headspace. My little moments of privacy in this not private space, rely on the makeshift fort underneath my bed. The opening is covered with a dark gray flat sheet so the inside is not entirely visible. Christmas lights are hung, unsurprisingly held up by what seems to be the only thing keeping this room together, blue painter's tape. The space underneath the bed seems to be the only refreshing part of the room, as skin touches the bare floor and the majority of the room is out of sight, still cramped but intentionally so.

Bibliography

Petroski, Henry. "The Evolution of the Grocery Bag." *The American Scholar* 72, no. 4 (2003):

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Stamelman, Richard. "The 'Presence' of Memory." *L'Esprit Créateur* 36, no. 3 (1996): 65–79.