

NO ONE JUST LIKE HIM

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[Assignment: In your essay, describe an extraordinary person who has made your life larger, richer, more interesting. In your portrait, make this person come as alive to your reader as he or she is to you.]

(1) When I called yesterday he answered the phone. When I said "Hi" he excitedly told me the latest news from home and school. He asked me if we would watch Hunter and eat popcorn in our pajamas, our Saturday routine, when I came home for Christmas vacation. As he asked me that question with anticipation and enthusiasm in his voice, I realized something that I never had before.

(2) When I got off the phone I started thinking about the past fifteen years and especially that September day at O'Hare airport. I was four years old and I sat waiting as what seemed like hundreds of people disembarked and then finally I saw him. I recognized him from the picture that my mother had shown me. He was in the arms of his escort. His eyes were darting around capturing every sight there was to see. He trembled from all the foreign noises that invaded him; yet at the same time he was struggling to break free of his escort. He looked so scared and yet so excited; there was interesting new life waiting for him but I do not think he understood that. He was only three. My mom cried and my father took pictures and suddenly my sister and I were holding our newly adopted brother from Korea, Hyung Suk Kim, now known as David.

(3) For the next few years David was a threat to my place in the family. I was the younger of two girls and got most of the attention from the neighbors. All that changed when David came. People brought him presents and cooed over him. No longer did people say "Oh, isn't Johanna cute," or "Johanna, you are so adorable." I hated him. All I wanted was for him to be sent back home, but how? I asked the mailman and he said "No." My only remaining hope was the UPS man, but much to my disappointment he also said, "No, that is not possible; he is your brother now." Great! I thought sarcastically.

(4) David was seeing a lot of doctors and seemed to be spending long hours in testing rooms when we were younger, and I was never really sure why. It turns out that David was hydrocephalic, retaining excess fluid in his brain. The effect of this was damage to some of his motor skills. Because of this, when David was about five until he was about nine, he spent a lot of time in special sessions with a therapist. Once in awhile I would go to the sessions with my mom and I would watch David through a one-way mirror. I watched him try to put blocks into the appropriate holes of a bucket, trying over and over without much success. Sometimes he would try

catching a ball or throwing it at a target. Usually his attempts were to no avail. The more time I spent watching him the more I knew he would never be a football player; he didn't have the build and he would never be president of his class and he would have a hard time in life. But I also knew he would be one special person.

(5) Because he wanted to be active and my parents wanted David to be active, he got a paper route three summers ago. That same summer David worked up the courage to join the boys' swim team at school. As the summer progressed David began to show muscle and really found himself involved and excited about getting up at 6:00 a.m. for practice. No longer was David a weakling. Today the once scrawny boy can beat me in an arm wrestling match.

(6) Even though David achieved some athletic prowess, he still was unable to do well in school. He will never be a terrific student. He most likely will never go to college. However, David has a computer for a brain if he really cares about something. Actually David is a walking sports encyclopedia. Ask him who wears #15 on the Detroit Tigers and his RBI's and David can tell you in less than 30 seconds. Ask him about football, hockey, basketball and he'll be a winner every time. Definitely he is not a scholar; however, he is a sports fanatic with Sports Illustrated forever imprinted on his brain.

(7) David's slow growth and his relative lack of popularity at school have led him to be fairly private and self-reliant. If I am looking for him I often look outside in the driveway because he could be playing basketball playoffs with the teams of the week. Or I look in his room in case he is playing baseball-card baseball. I have never been able to truly comprehend the game, but it keeps him occupied for hours on end. Once in a while he can be found in the basement playing Intelelevision Sports games. No matter where you find him he will be talking to himself and enjoying himself immensely.

(8) No matter how different he may seem, he is more loving than many people I know. David is always hugging me and complimenting me. He loves to do kind things for people. For example, many times he will make dessert for my mother or clean out the dishwasher. He plays with the kids across the street while their mom runs to the bank. David has always been wonderful to me. If I am crying he tries to comfort me. He writes me letters here at college and tells me that he knows I can get good grades if I try and that I am special. The nicest thing he has ever done for me happened about a year and a half ago. I had been home from Switzerland for about two months and was craving Swiss Gummy Bears. That day David walked one mile to the store and bought me Gummy Bears and wrapped them up and put them at my place for dinner. It did not even matter to me that they were made in Wisconsin.

(9) The phone rang again and I was pulled from my daydreaming. As I let the phone ring I had a picture of David in my head: David, my still somewhat underdeveloped, not very popular, and not very personable brother who, despite his early physical deficiencies, has become a loving, caring, considerate person. He is a one-of-a kind person; there is no one just like him. No longer do I want to send him back to the orphanage in Korea. I want to UPS him here to me at school.