
The Mystery of Loneliness: College Admission Essay Sample

Even though I ostensibly lack talent in the fields of drawing or painting, my appreciation and enthusiasm for art is unquestioned. Starting from a young age, I insisted on going to the Art Institute every time my family took a trip to downtown Chicago. Wandering around the museum to ogle at the endless display art, one painting always stuck in my mind. As a child, I did not know this painting was *Nighthawks*, by Edward Hopper, or that it is one of the best-known American paintings of the 20th century, but I felt inexplicably drawn to the painting. Even though the painting is displayed in a large busy museum, surrounded by thousands of other works of art, I always felt alone each time I studied it. It was as if all the other visitors and all the other art had disappeared, and the massive Art Institute had been built just to house this one painting

The room is starkly lit, clinical, and bare. The people are still and stiff, frozen in their own worlds. A wall of glass separates us from them. The man and the woman are almost touching, yet separated by a seemingly unbridgeable space. A third customer sits alone, hunched and shadowed. The attendant looks beyond his customers, through the polished windows, and at the bleak, empty street outside. The building next door appears barren and uninhabited. However, these are merely the facts and the picture begs for interpretation.

It is an uncommon situation: four people enclosed in a small diner at an unusually late hour. Yet their eyes and minds stray past each other. Physically, they are together. Emotionally, they are worlds apart.

The picture wants attention. The brightness of the light in the diner draws the eye to the painting and sharply contrasts with the streets outside. The sheer vastness of the canvas demands that no one walk by without giving the painting at least a glance. Once I look, I am hooked. Every picture tells a story, yet *Nighthawks* does not give a narrative to its main characters, inviting me to wonder and imagine. Perhaps the man and the woman have run out of things to say to each other. They have come a long way; unwilling to give up on each other, they've met at the diner to talk. The conversation is awkward, then halting, and finally nonexistent. Perhaps the third customer was on his way home after a long and monotonous day at work. Intending to make only a short stop at the diner, he gets lost in his own thoughts, wondering what his life could've been like. Perhaps the attendant is jovial. He loves music and dancing, and he is too loud for the quiet, muted diner. He wants to entertain, but no one at the diner seems to be in the mood tonight.

Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

[GET HELP](#)

The picture wants to be relevant. Such a striking and despondent portrayal of loneliness and solitude in the modern city demands consideration. Even though Edward Hopper painted the canvas in the 1940s, issues of isolation and separation are ever more pertinent today. Our means of communication have multiplied: instant messaging, text messaging, email, voicemail, chatrooms, Blackberries. But have any of these rapidly proliferating new forms of communication really improved the quality of our conversations? Maybe the Nighthawks diner of today is a sparsely visited internet chatroom, full of missed connections and disjointed exchanges.

The picture wants to be reinterpreted. Having inspired countless parodies, Nighthawks encourages reinterpretation and adaptation by leaving its main characters without context. For my curious and inquiring mind, an idea struck me as I studied the painting. Spending hours everyday researching international politics and public policy, I naturally wanted to reinterpret Nighthawks in the context of international relations. In a rapidly-globalizing world, the brightly lit diner represents America, the most significant contributor to global carbon emissions and energy usage. As the rest of the world looks in through the glass panes of the diner, scrutinizing every detail, the customers are isolated, unresponsive, and oblivious to the world outside. Each party in the diner is uninterested in the thought of the others, bent on their own agendas, mirroring the partisanship in American politics.

As a child, I stared up at the vast Nighthawks canvas and took in all the lines and colors, unable to explain the feelings conjured up by the painting. Today, I still cannot resolve my special affection for the picture, but being able to see the picture in a new light allows me to make connections where I saw none before, adding a new level of meaning to my understanding of Nighthawks.

Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

[GET HELP](#)