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## Trail of Breadcrumbs: College Admission Essay Sample

My eyes were greeted by the luminous glow of fluorescent lights and sterile white walls of Rumah Sakit Bunda (Bunda Hospital). This was a stark contrast to the escalating chaos and barbarity in the dilapidated Indonesian streets. In due time, the quagmire of rape and murder that pullulated the streets, spawned the notorious 1998 Indonesian Reformation. These white walls did not shelter me for long. I could not hide behind my own race. I was born a Chinese Indonesian, the ultimate scapegoat for the devastation to come. In 1998, this heated pocket of conflict finally burst, bludgeoning my homeland. Amidst death, life was thrust upon me in the form of a shrieking wrinkled baby girl, my sister. In an instant, if possible, the one-year-old me felt a moment of pure and raw happiness.

Almost half a decade later, the happiness I reveled in was dashed by so called 'disagreements'. The unfortunate differences between my parents had slowly ruptured their love. One cannot be a squabbling child in the midst of crossfire. It was not a premeditated decision but a necessity for me to then become my own parent. I was orphaned on that day. I was abandoned. I was thus obliged to be the father and mother to my sister and myself. I learned to become my own person, I had to. This was the 10-year-old me; tall and lanky, walking through the muddy aisles of the wet market, treading across the linoleum floors of school, wandering through life on my own.

I refused to succumb to the suppressed anger that infested my home. I refused to spew the same venom my parents have. I refused to take up the gauntlet of revenge upon my parents. I thus tamed the raging child within me to persevere and shoulder the responsibility of becoming a father to my little sister. This engendered a quiet strength that has become unique to my character and persona. I drew upon this strength to shelter my sister from my parent's blunders and fight for a future untainted by my past. In time, I too garnered the patience and capacity to forgive the flaws of my parents. By transforming my childlike mentality and adopting that of a father, I learned that forgiveness is a contribution from the soul and maturity of the mind is an ongoing journey.

Spurning my childhood and accelerating the process to adulthood was painful, but I was roused by the fear that my sister would be consumed by the same grief I faced. It took patience to have the small tête-à-tête's with my sister, grasp the hair raising issues of a girl's adolescence and handle the nauseating "boy issues". Upon reflection, I realize perhaps my greatest achievement is my sister, her childhood is a product of my perseverance and struggle. As such my first decade of living has taught me my first life lesson; the difference between existing, surviving, and living. I existed in the silence and shadow of my parents' loveless marriage. I survived a

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broken home. I am now finally living.

Ultimately, I became the Hansel from my own Brothers Grimm's folktale. I was trapped in a gingerbread house, and was expected to be devoured by the witches and demons of my past. But I refused to stoop so low that my lips would kiss the grounds of my predestined fate, for it would mean my voice would forever be but vibrations through this earth. I thus followed the trail of breadcrumbs home. Although all there ever was, was a house. Not a home. But that is not where the story ends. The story ends when I build my own home on the tainted grounds where the hollowed house stood.

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