

I woke up to the fragrant smell of cooking vegetables and the stench of animals and sweaty humans packed together into a hoard. I am grateful for food, but I long for something like meat or milk. I don't exactly know if wanting is selfish, but my grandmother says I should learn to be without. I walk into the dimly lit, hut-like space, loathing the claustrophobic atmosphere. I say good morning, and I wonder if I'm lying or not. I eat slowly, loving the feeling of anticipation leading up to school. Not everyone in my house likes school, and my grandfather says I should work more. "I want to be a doctor." I tell him every single time as if he's gone senile and forgot. He probably has.

I love school, and I do very well. General information excites me, and even the dullest of gossip enralls me. I wander the halls with my free time, memorizing each and every poster, class number, and tile. An easy task to be honest. "Bikram! Slow down! We cannot hear you," Apparently I recite pi too fast for the teachers taste. I hate with a passion being told to slow down, but I don't like being punished much more. I love long school days, because I don't have to go home to critique, or in the worst circumstances, another lecture about how wanting to be a doctor is a "hopeless dream," and I am a "fool worth less than a goat" whatever that means. I don't loathe my family, I just loathe the way they see success.

I know I don't have much of a chance, and even with determination it seems hopeless. I hold out hope every day that my circumstances will be bettered; maybe I can be one of the lucky kids who gets pitied, and is helped. I really want everyone I know to be helped. I wish people like me could be helped. My name is Bikram. Do you want to help?