



Bevy of Bittersweet Gratitude by 9F

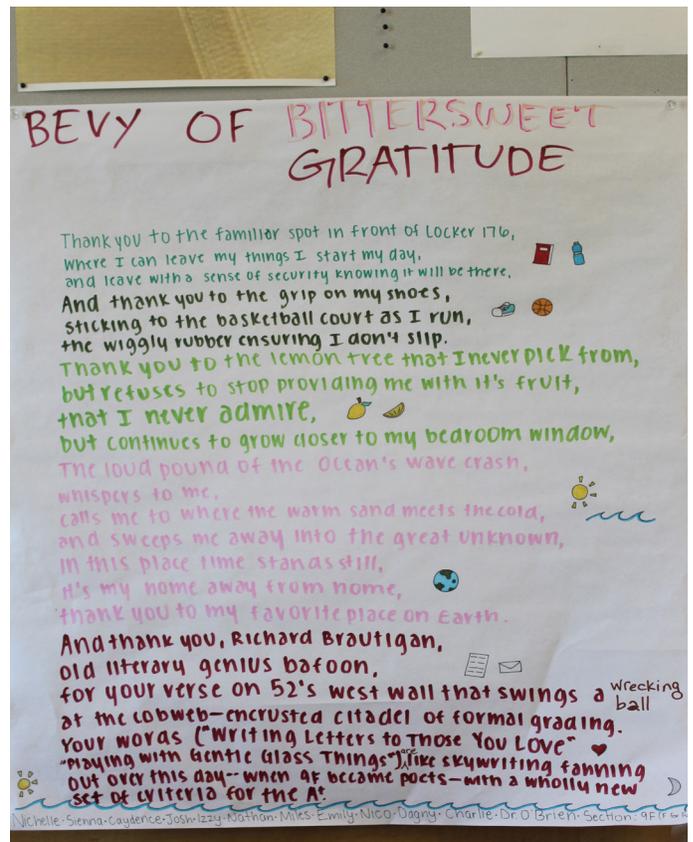
Thank you to the familiar spot in front of locker 176, where I can leave my things I start my day, and leave with a sense of security knowing it will be there.

And thank you to the grip on my shoes, sticking to the basketball court as I run, the wiggly rubber ensuring I don't slip.

Thank you to the lemon tree that I never pick from, but refuses to stop providing me with its fruit, that I never admire, but continues to grow closer to my bedroom window.

The loud pound of the ocean's wave crash, whispers to me, calls me to where the warm sand meets the cold, and sweeps me away into the great unknown, in this place time stands still, it's my home away from home, thank you to my favorite place on earth.

And thank you, Richard Brautigan, old literary genius bafoon, for your verse on 52's west wall that swings a wrecking ball at the cobweb-encrusted citadel of formal grading, your words ("Writing letters to those you love" "Playing with gentle glass things") like skywriting fanning out over this day--when 9F became poets--with a wholly new set of criteria for the A+.



Thank you Craig McKraken, for colorfully imaging what my life could have been like, for painting me a picture of lifelong success through your scratchy canvas.

Thank you, my friends, for when the otter pops melted under the sun, playing kickball in our flying jumpers, when the last chocolate milk was already drunk.

Thankful for the two cars in my driveway, allowing me to go to and from school, representing my hard work my parents achieved, inspiring me to do better in school, pushing me to my highest potential, thank you!! Car!!

Thank you for the road and the swaying trees lining it, the brisk wind whipping my face, the demands of life vanish over the horizon.

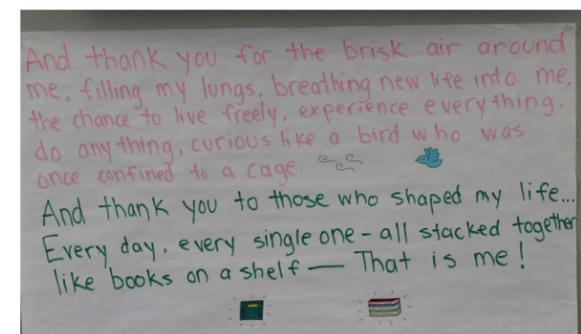
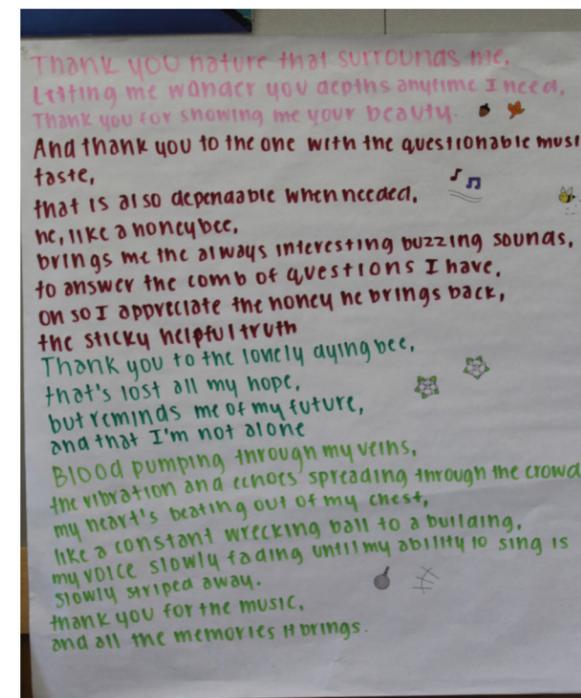
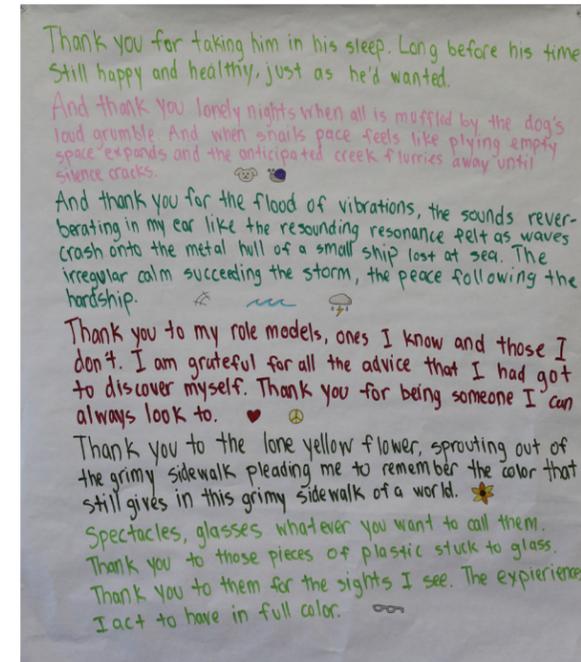
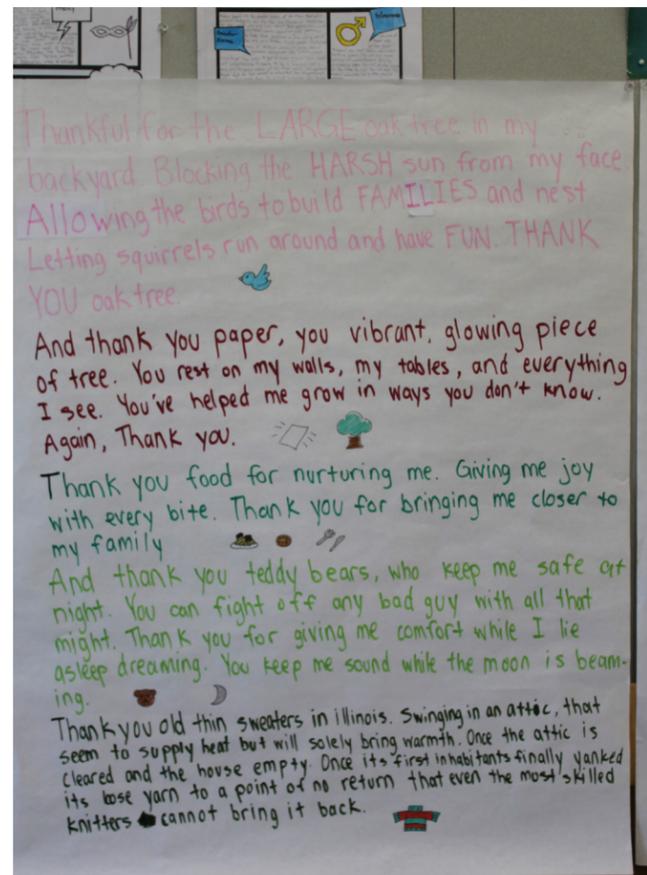
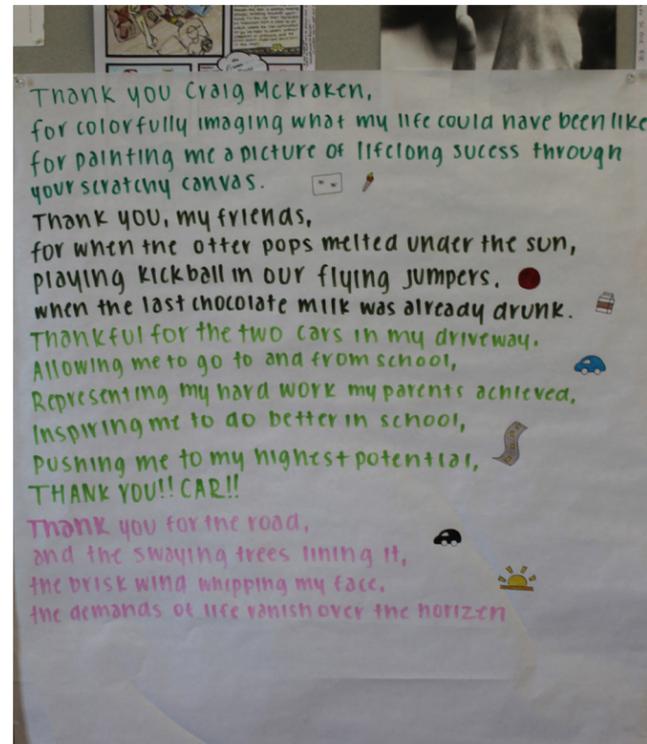
Thankful for the LARGE oak tree in my backyard. Blocking the HARSH sun from my face. Allowing the birds to build FAMILIES and nest, letting squirrels run around and have FUN. THANK YOU oak tree.

And thank you paper, you vibrant, glowing piece of tree. You rest on my walls, my tables, and everything I see. You've helped me grow in ways you don't know. Again, thank you.

Thank you food for nurturing me. Giving me joy with every bite. Thank you for bringing me closer to my family

And thank you teddy bears, who keep me safe at night. You can fight off any bad guy with all that might. Thank you for giving me comfort while I lie asleep dreaming. You keep me sound while the moon is beaming.

Thank you old thin sweaters in Illinois, swinging in an attic, that seem to supply heat but will solely bring warmth. Once the attic is clear and the house empty, once its first inhabitants finally yanked its loose yarn to a point of no return that even the most skilled knitters cannot bring it back.



Thank you for taking him in his sleep. Long before his time still happy and healthy, just as he'd wanted.

And thank you lonely nights when all is muffled by the dog's loud grumble. And when snails pace feels like plying empty space expands and the anticipated creek flurries away until silence cracks.

And thank you for the flood of vibrations, the sounds reverberating in my ear like the resounding resonance felt as waves crash onto the metal hull of a small ship lost at sea. The irregular calm succeeding the storm, the peace following the hardship.

Thank you to my role models, ones I know and those I don't. I am grateful for all the advice that I had got to discover myself. Thank you for being someone I can always look to.

Thank you to the lone yellow flower, sprouting out of the grimy sidewalk, pleading me to remember the color that still gives in this grimy sidewalk of a world.

Spectacles, glasses, whatever you want to call them. Thank you to those pieces of plastic stuck to glass. Thank you to them for the sights I see. The experiences I act to have in full color.

Thank you nature that surrounds me, letting me wonder your depths anytime I need, thank you for showing me your beauty.

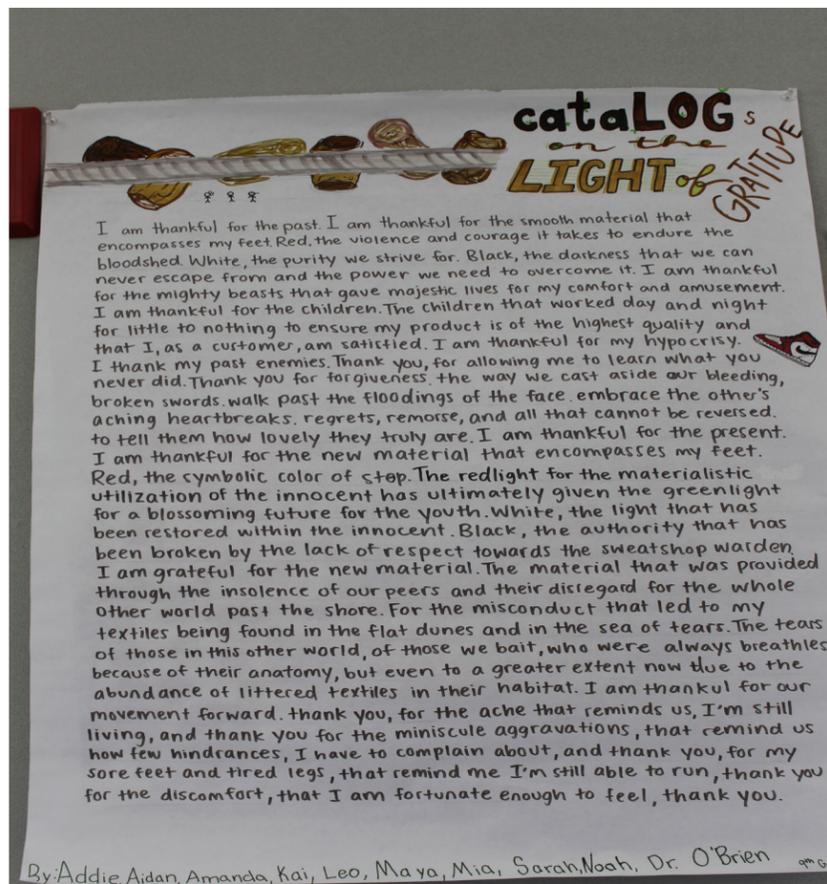
And thank you to the one with the questionable music taste, that is also dependable when needed, he, like a honeybee, brings me the always interesting buzzing sounds, to answer the comb of questions I have, oh so I appreciate the honey he brings back, the sticky helpful truth.

Thank you to the lonely dying bee, that's lost all my hope, but reminds me of my future, and that I'm not alone.

Blood pumping through my veins, the vibrations and echoes spreading through the crowd, my heart's beating out of my chest, like a constant wrecking ball to a building, my voice slowly fading until my ability to sing is slowly stripped away. Thank you for the music and all the memories it brings.

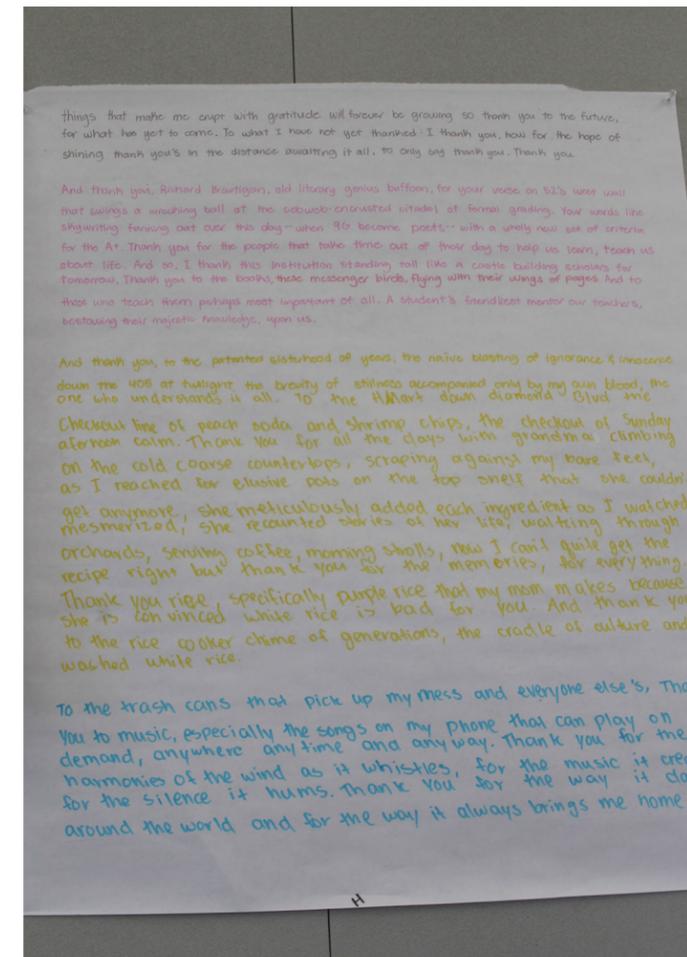
And thank you for the brisk air around me, filling my lungs, breathing new life into me, the chance to live freely, experience everything, do anything, curious like a bird who was once confined to a cage.

And thank you to those who shaped my life...Every day, every single one - all stacked together, like books on a shelf-That is me!



Catalogs on the Light of Gratitude by 9G

I am thankful for the past. I am thankful for the smooth material that encompasses my feet. Red, the violence and courage it takes to endure the bloodshed. White, the purity we strive for. Black, the darkness that we can never escape from and the power need to overcome it. I am thankful for the mighty beasts that gave majestic lives for my comfort and amusement. I am thankful for the children. The children that worked day and night for little to nothing to ensure my product is of the highest quality and that I, as a customer, am satisfied. I am thankful for my hypocrisy. I thank my past enemies. Thank you, for allowing me to learn what you never did. Thank you for forgiveness, the way we cast aside our bleeding, broken swords, walk past the floodings of the face, embrace the other's aching heartbreaks. Regret, remorse, and all that cannot be reversed to tell them how lovely they truly are. I am thankful for the present. I am thankful for the new material that encompasses my feet. Red, the symbolic color of stop. The redlight for the materialistic utilization of the innocent has ultimately given the greenlight for a blossoming future for the youth. White, the light that has been restored within the innocent. Black, the authority that has been broken by the lack of respect towards the sweatshop warden. I am grateful for the new material. The material that was provided through the insolence of our peers and their disregard for the whole other world past the shore. For the misconduct that led to my textiles being found in the flat dunes and in the sea of tears. The tears of those in this other world, of those we bait, who were always breathless because of their anatomy, but even to a greater extent now due to the abundance of littered textiles in their habitat. I am thankful for our movement forward. Thank you, for the ache that reminds us, I'm still living, and thank you for the miniscule aggravations, that remind us how few hindrances I have to complain about, and thank you, for my sore feet and tired legs, that remind me I'm still able to run, thank you for the discomfort, that I am fortunate enough to feel, thank you.

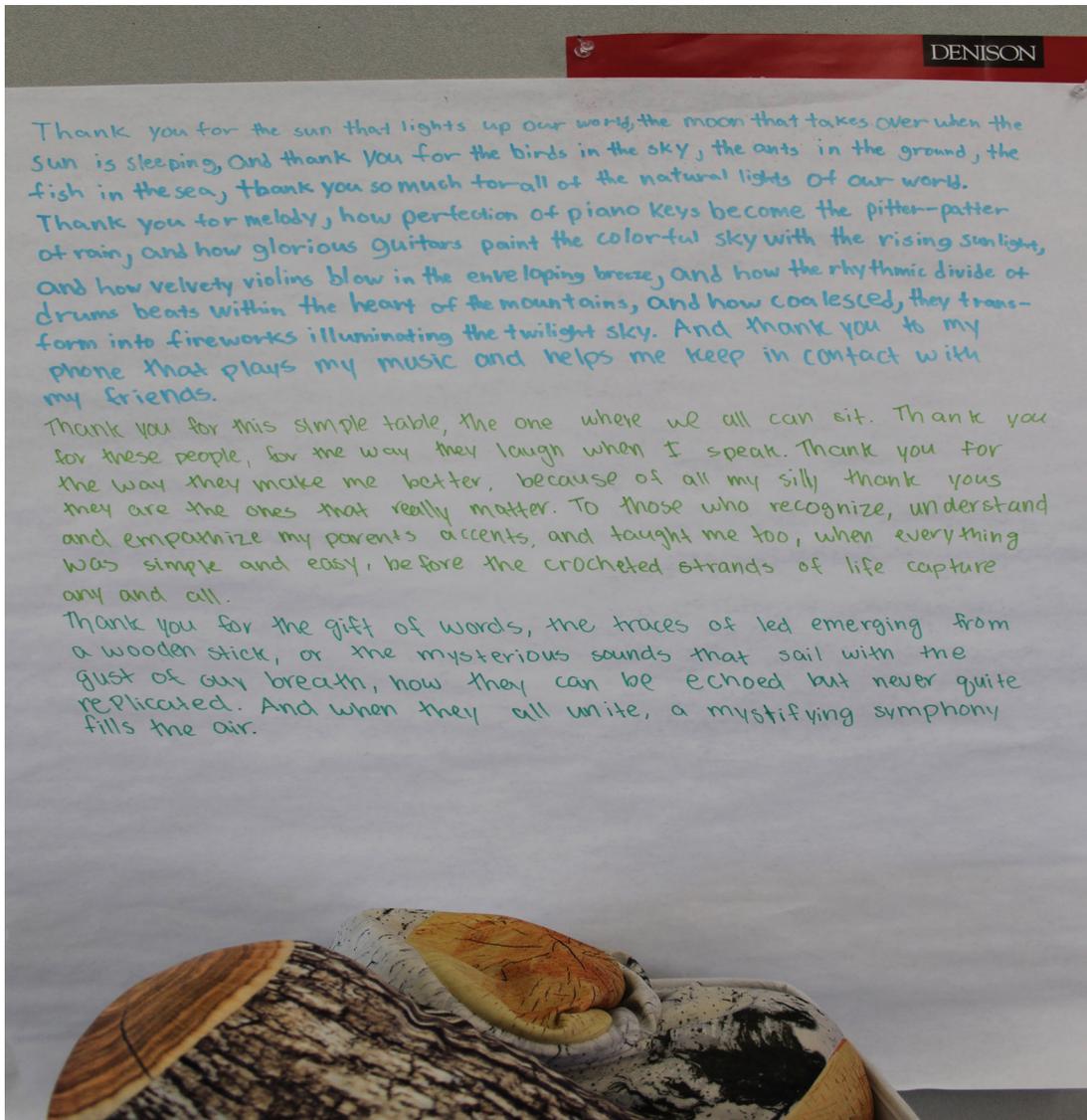


Things that make me erupt with gratitude will forever be growing so thank you to the future, for what has yet to come. To what I have not yet thanked: I thank you, how for the hope of shining thank you's in the distance awaiting it all, to only say thank you. Thank you.

And thank you, Richard Brautigan, old literary genius bafoon, for your verse on 52's west wall that swings a wrecking ball at the cobweb-encrusted citadel of formal grading, your words like skywriting fanning out over this day—when 9G became poets—with a wholly new set of criteria for the A+. Thank you for the people that take time out of their day to help us learn, teach us about life. And so, I thank this institution standing tall like a castle building scholars for tomorrow. Thank you to the books, these messenger birds, flying with their wings of pages. And to those who teach them perhaps most important of all—a student's friendliest mentor our teachers bestowing their majestic knowledge upon us.

And thank you to the patented sisterhood of years, the naïve blasting of ignorance and innocence down the 405 at twilight, the brevity of stillness accompanied only by my own blood, the one who understands it all. To the H Mart down Diamond Blvd, the checkout line of peach soda and shrimp chips, the checkout of Sunday afternoon calm. Thank you for all the days with grandma climbing on the cold coarse countertops, scraping against my bare feet, as I reached for elusive pots on the top shelf that she couldn't get anymore. She meticulously added each ingredient as I watched mesmerized, she recounted stories of her life, waiting through orchards, serving coffee, morning strolls, now I can't quite get the recipe right but thank you for the memories, for everything. Thank you rice, specifically purple rice that my mom makes because she is convinced white rice is bad for you. And thank you to the rice cooker chime of generations, the cradle of culture and washed white rice.

To the trash cans that pick up my mess and everyone else's. Thank you to music, especially the songs on my phone that can play on demand, anywhere anytime and anyway. Thank you for the harmonies of the wind as it whistles, for the music it creates, for the silence it hums. Thank you for the way it dances around the world and for the way it always brings me home.



Thank you for the sun that lights up our world, the moon that takes over when the sun is sleeping, and thank you for the birds in the sky, the ants in the ground, the fish in the sea, thank you so much for all of the natural lights of our world. Thank you for our melody, how perfection of piano keys became the pitter-patter of rain, and how glorious guitars paint the colorful sky with the rising sunlight, and how velvety violins blow in the enveloping breeze, and how the rhythmic divide of drums beats within the heart of the mountains, and how coalesced, they transform into fireworks illuminating the twilight sky. And thank you to my phone that plays music and helps me keep in contact with my friends.

Thank you for this simple table, the one where we all can sit. Thank you for these people, for the way they laugh when I speak. Thank you for the way they make me better, because of all my silly thank yous they are the ones that really matter. To those who recognize, understand, and empathize with my parents' accents, and taught me to, when everything was simple and easy, before the crocheted strands of life capture any and all.

Thank you for the gift of words, the traces of lead emerging from a wooden stick, or the mysterious sounds that sail with the gust of our breath, how they can be echoed but never quite replicated. And when they all unite, a mystifying symphony fills the air.