Alyssa Cheng

Dear Mr. Ray Bradbury,

Thank you for writing the short story "The Drummer Boy of Shiloh". It taught me the real meaning of patriotism and the fact that there is no such thing as an insignificant job.

The dictionary defines patriotism as love of one's own country. Your story showed me the true meaning of patriotism through a young man named Joby. Joby fought in the civil war for what he believed was the right decision to make. He was the drummer boy in the battle of Shiloh which was known as the bloodiest battle in the Civil War. Joby was very young when he ran away from home to answer the calling of patriotism. By doing this, he put his life on the line. As a drummer boy you had no shields or weapons. All you had were two drumsticks to drum a rhythm. Joby knew the probability that he would die in this war yet he did not run away. He stood his ground and faced the troubles as they came.

From this story, I realized that the freedom we often take for granted does not come without a price. A price that would cost the lives of many brave men. Men who were at different stages of their lives. Some were young men who had a bright future; others were a middle age men who were just starting to build a family. These were the men who answered the calling of patriotism. They fought for their love for this country called America.

Usually when we think of the Civil War we think of the soldiers who sacrificed their lives for the freedom we have today. But has anybody bothered to think and thank the people whom we may have forgotten? Like the messengers who risked their lives to deliver messages or, maybe the drummer boys who kept the army together.

The role of the drummer boy is the heart of the army. They had to keep on beating their drums through all the blood shed. They had to keep on drumming and kept the pace for the soldiers.

Earlier, I mentioned that Joby faced the troubles as they came. I meant that he had made a promise. He promised that he would keep on drumming no matter what happened; he promised he would keep the army in line even when the general died; he promised he would keep this army running. Joby said this bravely; even though he had nothing to protect himself. Even though he was in the front line of this war and that he could be the first to die.

Mister Ray Bradbury you have created this story to acknowledge the drummer boys, whom people really don't think about. The drummer boys who get left out of the text books. The ones that people think have no significance in history. Yet these were the boys who ran away from home to answer to the calling of patriotism. These were the boys who fought in the front lines for what they thought was right. For that, they needed bravery and that is what I want. The job that we think is the most insignificant may be the most significant job of them all.

Thank you Mr. Ray Bradbury for you have opened my eyes to a whole new world. You have taught me not only the true meaning of patriotism through your story but also the fact that no job is a small job no matter how small it seems. For, if you add it all together it just might be the biggest piece, the most important piece of all. Thinking back not only did you teach me that but you also taught me the true meaning of bravery.

You have showed me the hardships that people went through to gain the freedom that we may enjoy today, for that I thank you. I truly appreciate the veterans and the soldiers fighting in the Middle East for the protection of the country they love, America. Thank you for telling the story of the drummer boy of Shiloh.

Sincerely yours,

Alyssa Cheng