Seoul Speaks

A poem by Amber Fenton

She told me: don’t be afraid

to cross seas,

there’s too many sights to be seen.

Don’t be afraid

to be seen,

there’re too many people in need

of your curiosity and creativity.

When soul speaks, I listen.

Decoding the ever-evolving conversations

is constant exploration that leads to more fulfilled being.

Irony and opportunity skillfully led

to thumbtacks through Seoul, South Korea

on my “to be” list,

venturous ideas coming to fruition.

I never desired summer school before this international view

of sunny courtyards and blossomed trees encompassed by the university.

Field trips through scenic nature and lively city

merely serve as catalysts for days of independent Seoul searching.

Like sky high views from Lotte World Tower

and hiking Bukhansan National Park,

the full picture of my desires

can't be framed—only felt through the heart.

Beating to Daehak-ro's energetic musical rhythms,

and softening to Cheonggyecheon Stream's subtle movements,

my veins pulse with gratitude for this once-in-a-lifetime moment.

Find me splashing in crystal pools lining Hangang River,

gazing upon greenery in Seoul's Botanic Garden,

and eating the finest Korean vegetarian cuisine there is to offer—

feeling like the royalty I am—

visiting palaces like Gyeongbokgung, Changdeokgung, and Deoksugung,

feeding my keenness of Koren historical context.

My highest form of nutrition resides in my expression—

why art museums are necessary investment.

National Museum, Leeum, and seMA—whichever ones I can pop in—

will enhance the artistic abilities already imprinted

on my soul.

Everyone we meet, every sight we see

are mirrors to new sides of being we may have suppressed

for our hometown's ideas of "normalcy".

I'm proud to be a first-gen college student

and the first to leave the country

as I've seen how transformative the reflection of resilience can be.

My eyes mimic the color of oceans and skies,

and follow their lead of venturing out as far and wide as I dare to dive.

My ears listen intently to the constant information,

being supplied through my soul's determination.

My lips reiterate the knowledge I intake,

and Seoul speaks to me—undertake any heartaches,

as there will always be another opportune daybreak.