Manukyan, Catherine

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11/21/14

Person Number Three

I don’t really care much about my name, since I can’t imagine myself with any other one, but since I’ve been given a writing assignment on it for the millionth time, I thought I might as well pretend I care, for the millionth time. Honestly, I find names only useful to distinguish people from one another and “Person Number 1” or “Person Number 2” doesn’t sound too enticing. I always roll my eyes and laugh cynically at the absolutely compelling thought of kids having anything in common with each other; life is a fight to stay unusual for some people so when they have the chance to be different, they jump at it like hungry coyotes. So I guess that’s why the human race came up with “nicer” names like Bob and Joe and Norman. And although Norman doesn’t seem bad, I don’t see why anyone would prefer it -or why anyone would prefer one name over another in general.

We’ve evolved to having millions of choices for names and somehow, my parents seemed to choose the one-hundred and seventy-second most common name in America for me. In the past I’ve noticed that parents name their children for all kinds of reasons: the name could sound nice, the name could be different, or the name could actually hold some meaning.

I was named Catherine after one of the only relatives that actually enjoyed my father’s once childlike presence, his grandmother. Yes, the same grandmother that lived in Soviet Russia for several years yet never uttered a single Russian syllable. From what I have heard, we’re practically the same person, except she had four children and a different nose. I’m also quite sure that back in her day, people didn’t listen to rock or psychedelic bands. I can only hope that if she were with me today, we would bond over the bittersweet traits and features that we would have hopefully had in common, along with our name. However, I’m sure that in the Soviet, she wouldn’t have had as many weird names as I do now, thanks to my friends, family, and teachers.

Thinking about all of the different variations of my name is my favorite pastime (not really because I have better things to do), but my favorite would have to be the one nickname my best friend gave me before he had lost his two front teeth; Cath Cath. I’ve also had the pleasure of being referred to as Cathy, Cath, Cather, Ann (my middle name), Cam (my initials), Mac (my initials backwards), Cathyboo, Cat, Cat Man (the first three letters of my first and last name), and Caferine (since little children can’t possibly pronounce the “th” in Catherine, not even if their lives depend on it). However, when I think of my name and what it could have been or sounded like, I feel appreciative, since it could have been much worse.

Therefore, as I stare wistfully at the screen that portrays the past hour of my life, listening to the clicking as my hands fly across the keys of the laptop, similar to when I play the piano, I think to myself about how writing about this name that I’ve had for the entirety of my being - a whole thirteen years, mind you – isn’t as horrific as I originally thought of it to be, even if I have written it for the millionth time.