

Sticky Hands

Ana Kim, Class of 2024

My goal this summer was to attempt writing my first ever longer-form fiction story, *Sticky Hands*, with the guidance of my faculty mentor, Professor Janmohamed. *Sticky Hands* was meant to pull elements from the various English and Asian Studies courses I have taken during my time at Bowdoin, with the crafting of the narrative itself supported by the intro and advanced fiction writing courses I have also taken. I ended up with a 42 page draft that is, while technically a complete story, still growing and changing as I continue to work with the plot.

These 8 weeks also taught me a lot about the writing process — both in a craft sense, as my faculty mentor and I read through and discussed works such as *Please Look After Mom* and *Letters to a Writer of Color*, as well as in a personal sense, as I found out more about how I operate as a writer, and what I needed to do to keep myself accountable when working on a creative project. I found that it was not quite as simple as sitting down and telling myself to write for some 4 hours like I could for a more research-based paper. Rather, I had to work with the rise and fall of my own inspiration, avoiding burn out by allowing myself to acknowledge when I was stuck, or when I was feeling ready to write (even if that moment was at 3AM). Additionally, I learned the importance of letting ideas change and breathe as needed. My own plans for the story derailed pretty early into the summer in terms of characters and plot arcs, but the central themes of handling guilt, loss, and the echoes of childhood in a Seoul-centered setting stayed throughout the 8 weeks.

I hope to continue working on *Sticky Hands*, possibly carrying it over into an honors project that either expands on the original story or marks the beginning of a collection of separate works under the same theme. With my current aim of applying to English graduate programs in the fall semester, getting the chance to focus on expanding my selection of submittable writing was an incredible opportunity.

Faculty Mentor: Zahir Janmohamed

Funded by the Surdna Foundation Undergraduate Research Fellowship Program