

I felt my phone buzz

I felt my phone buzz and I whipped over to turn off my alarm so that the sound didn't play for more than three seconds. I slid out of my ridiculously tall extra-long twin bed and gathered my things so as to not wake my roommate. I made a B-line for the tissues as my sinuses were not yet used to the dramatically increased altitude. I stood leaning against the sink, looking out at my tenth-floor view while I let myself adjust to the morning... and everything else. I wore the outfit that I'd had set out for weeks now and prayed to God that one of my roommates would be awake to go eat with me. They weren't. I ate a granola bar and walked an awkward distance behind the other girls on my floor to get to the first event of the day: a group picture that took hours to organize and left every single one of us with an uneven farmer's tan. I ate lunch with a boy who was from an hour away from my hometown. We talked about our high school rivalries and the malls that we were going to miss while we ate overcooked rice and undercooked pasta under the patchy shade of one of the many unique trees of campus. When I stood up to leave I tripped over my chair. I left before everyone else because I can't be late. So instead, I was so early that I paced through the halls trying to act so natural that it looked unnatural. When I returned home my roommate was still asleep, tangled in her rainbow tapestry duvet. I climbed into my bed and buried myself beneath my own pale pink covers and closed my eyes.

I felt my phone buzz and looked up to see headlights outside. I hoisted a duffel bag onto my shoulder along with my backpack and extended the handles of my two small suitcases. I maneuvered my way through the doors that seemed a good 20 pounds heavier than usual, finding myself in a downpour. It felt so cliché. My friend popped her trunk, and I loaded my belongings in before buckling myself into the passenger seat and falling asleep until we arrived at the terminal. I unloaded my things and did my best impression of someone who didn't need any help so that no one would come up to bother me. The airport was empty. Like never before. I sat in a gate with no more than ten other people at four in the morning. No one said a word, only half of us were even awake. A new season of my favorite Netflix original had just come out so I sat with my feet up on the seat like a brat, both earbuds in although only one even worked, sunglasses perched atop my head as if it wasn't dark outside and raining, watching an underrated show about teenage gang violence. I looked out the towering glass windows to my left and tried to decipher the outside world. I could barely make out anything besides my own reflection. I stood in line to board. I apologized to the lady behind me for being such a mess of bags. She understood, told me she was flying out to pick up her daughter from school. We commiserate. I turned around and closed my eyes.