

Semester Photo Project

COM 340 Final

Andrew DiMartino

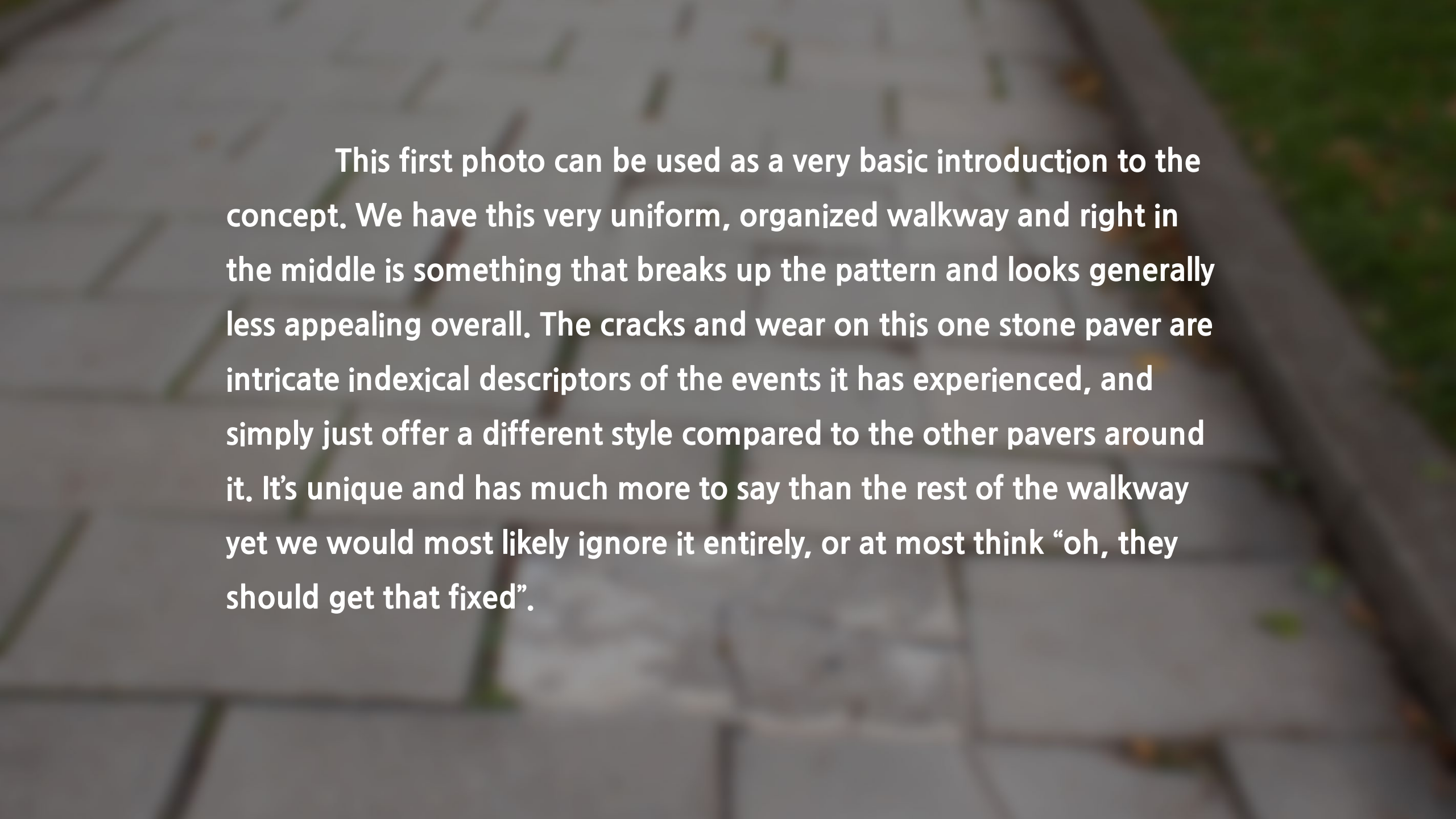
My goal with this project is to attempt to challenge or modify the way we perceive and define aesthetics. As a society we seem to have some discernable idea of what is and is not 'beautiful', though what makes up that idea is very hard to define and is often expanded with new artistic endeavors that push those boundaries. So, I wanted to explore the mundane and ordinary things around us that we tend to ignore or not include in an artistic perspective and see if they could be considered artistic and meet some of our aesthetic conditions.

I don't feel that I did the best that I could have with the idea in the end. I was bogged down by the general abstractness of the idea and was sort of lost on what to shoot to make the argument truly engaging. I decided to split the project up into two parts, one being centered around the themed project of aesthetics and the other simply a collection of the shots I considered to be my best out of the semester.



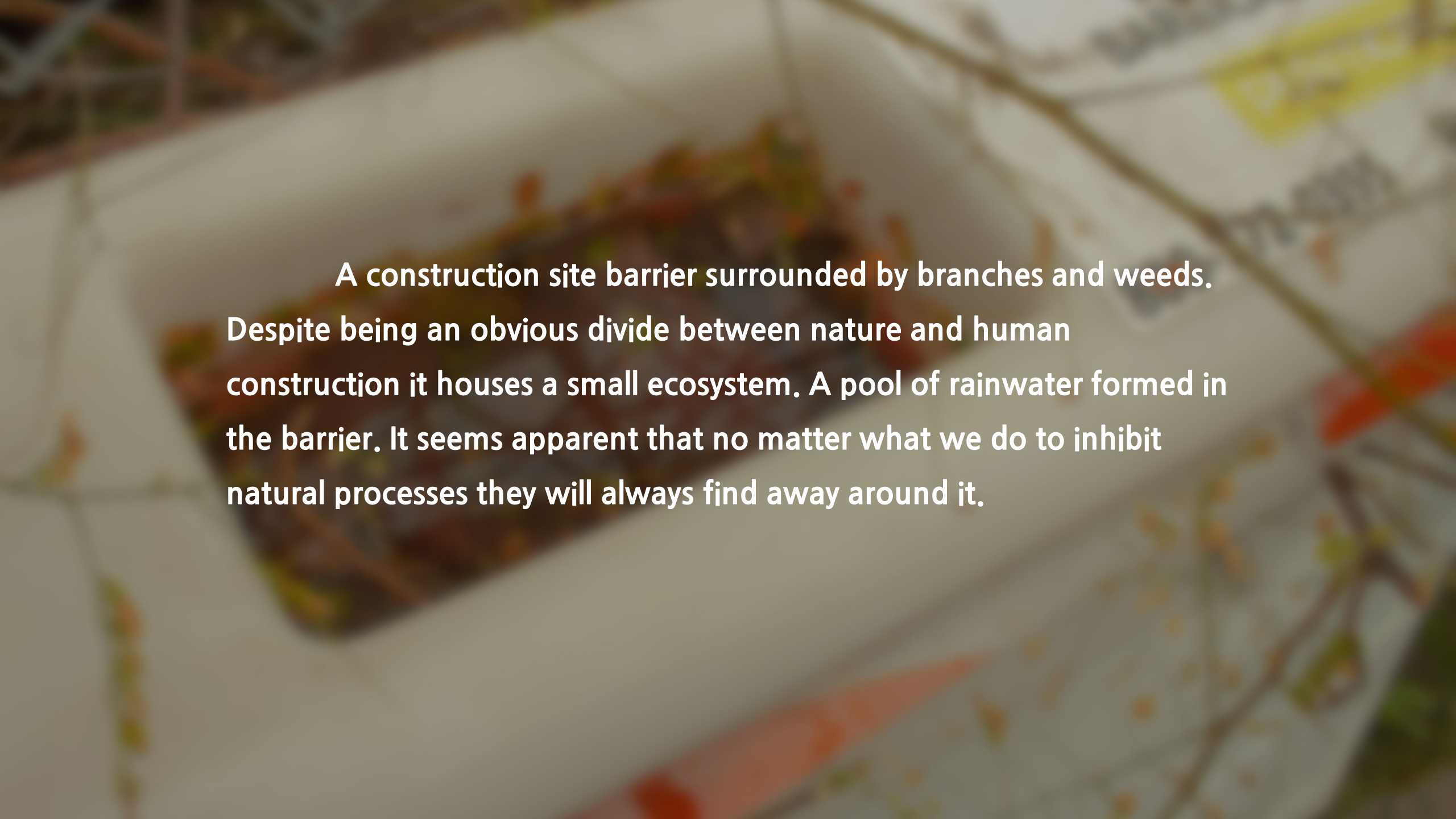
Themed Section: Things of Unordinary Beauty





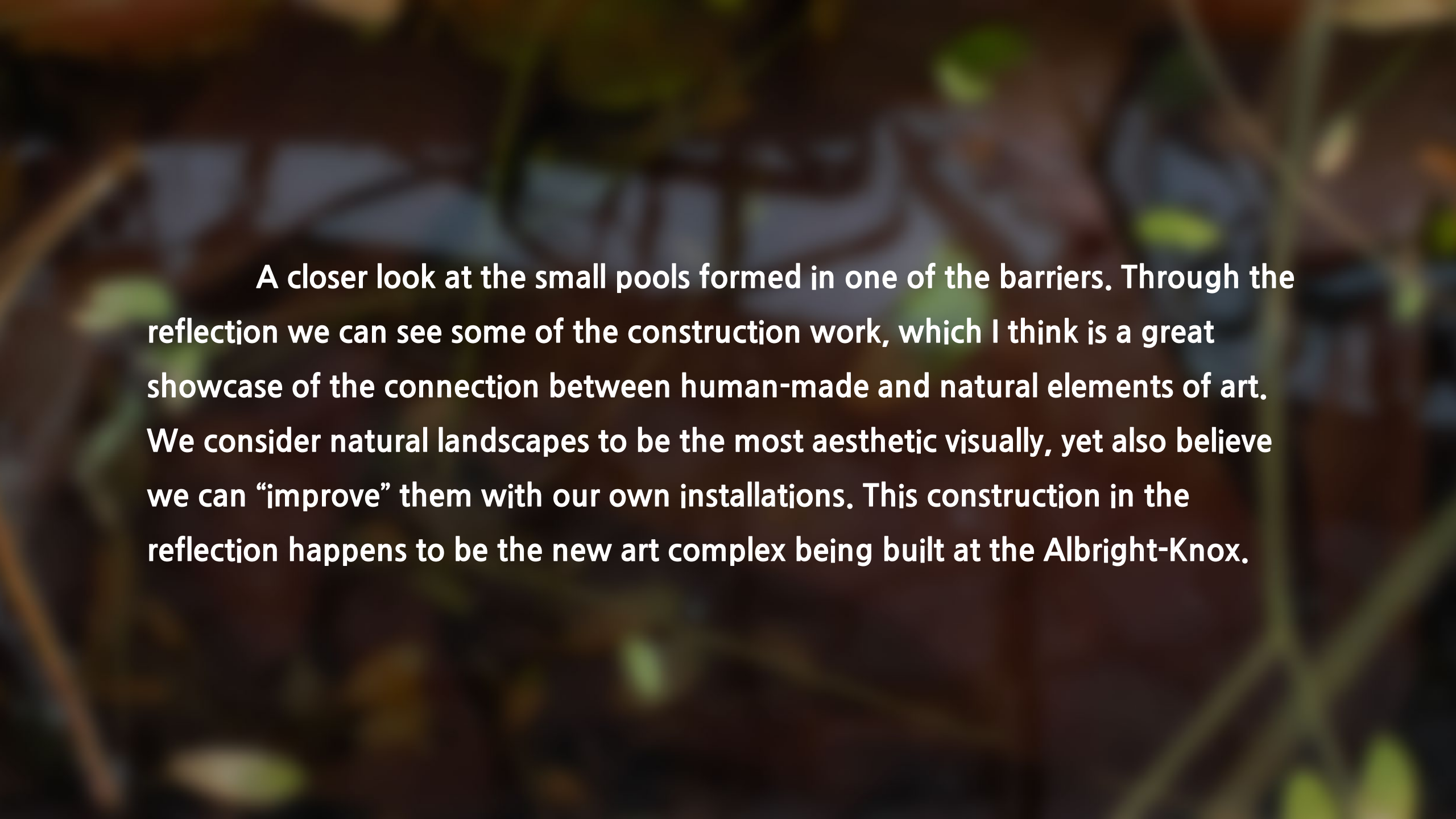
This first photo can be used as a very basic introduction to the concept. We have this very uniform, organized walkway and right in the middle is something that breaks up the pattern and looks generally less appealing overall. The cracks and wear on this one stone paver are intricate indexical descriptors of the events it has experienced, and simply just offer a different style compared to the other pavers around it. It's unique and has much more to say than the rest of the walkway yet we would most likely ignore it entirely, or at most think "oh, they should get that fixed".





A construction site barrier surrounded by branches and weeds. Despite being an obvious divide between nature and human construction it houses a small ecosystem. A pool of rainwater formed in the barrier. It seems apparent that no matter what we do to inhibit natural processes they will always find away around it.



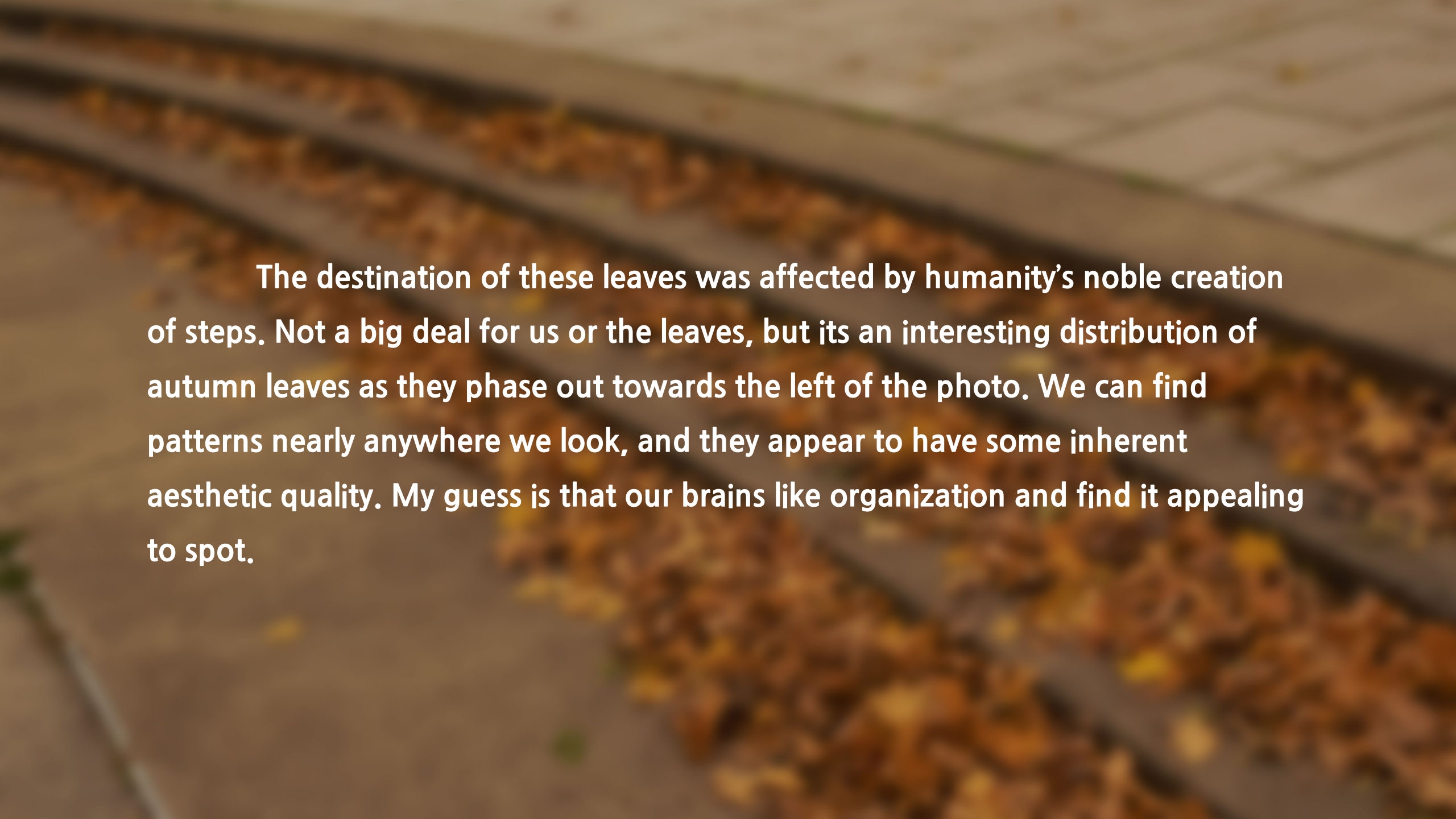


A closer look at the small pools formed in one of the barriers. Through the reflection we can see some of the construction work, which I think is a great showcase of the connection between human-made and natural elements of art. We consider natural landscapes to be the most aesthetic visually, yet also believe we can “improve” them with our own installations. This construction in the reflection happens to be the new art complex being built at the Albright-Knox.

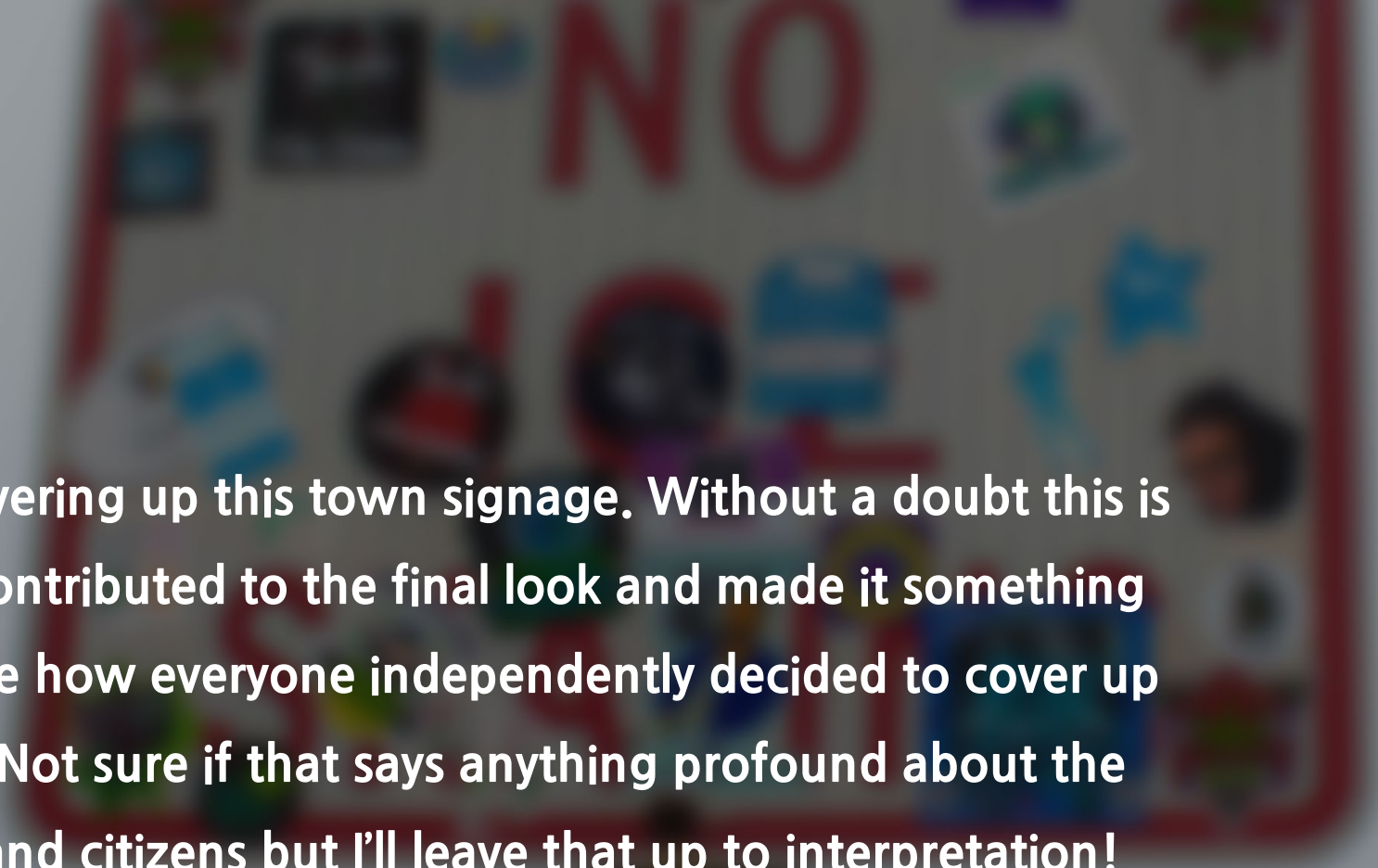


This was taken in our classroom during the second week of classes as we shot photos around the room. It stuck with me throughout the semester because of its simplicity and the random pattern. This photo is just about the most opposite thing to natural beauty as possible. It's blocky, plain, monochromatic and feels otherworldly. It's nothing more than a whiteboard reflecting overhead lights, but it looks so different than anything you see in everyday life.



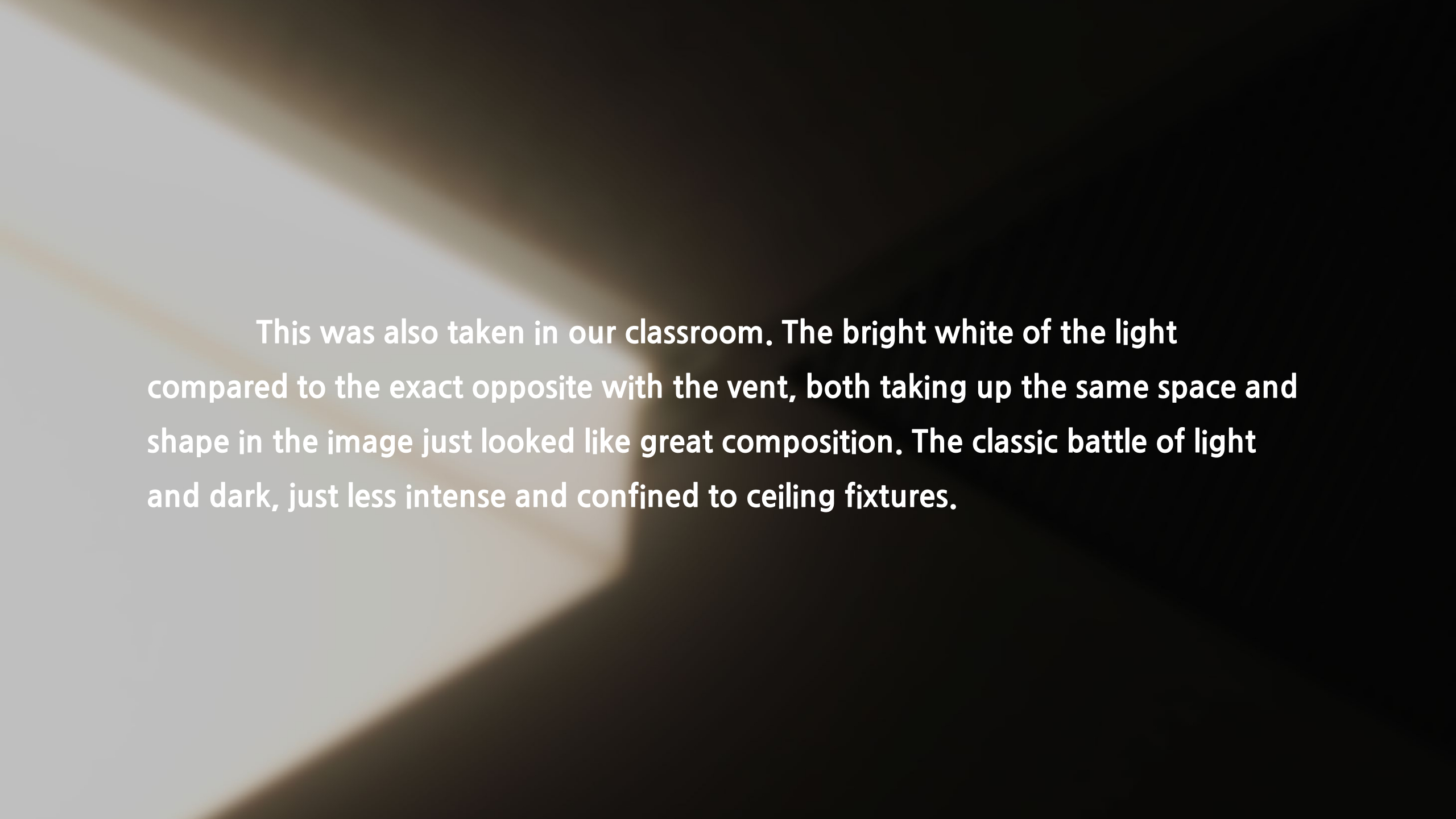
A photograph of a sidewalk with a diagonal line of fallen autumn leaves. The leaves are brown and orange, scattered along a dark, curved line that runs from the top left towards the bottom right. The background is a light-colored, textured surface, possibly concrete or stone. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

The destination of these leaves was affected by humanity's noble creation of steps. Not a big deal for us or the leaves, but its an interesting distribution of autumn leaves as they phase out towards the left of the photo. We can find patterns nearly anywhere we look, and they appear to have some inherent aesthetic quality. My guess is that our brains like organization and find it appealing to spot.

A photograph of a white rectangular sign with a red border, featuring the word 'NO' in large red letters at the top. The sign is covered with numerous colorful stickers of various shapes and sizes, including stars, hearts, and abstract designs. The sign is mounted on a dark pole. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with trees and a building.

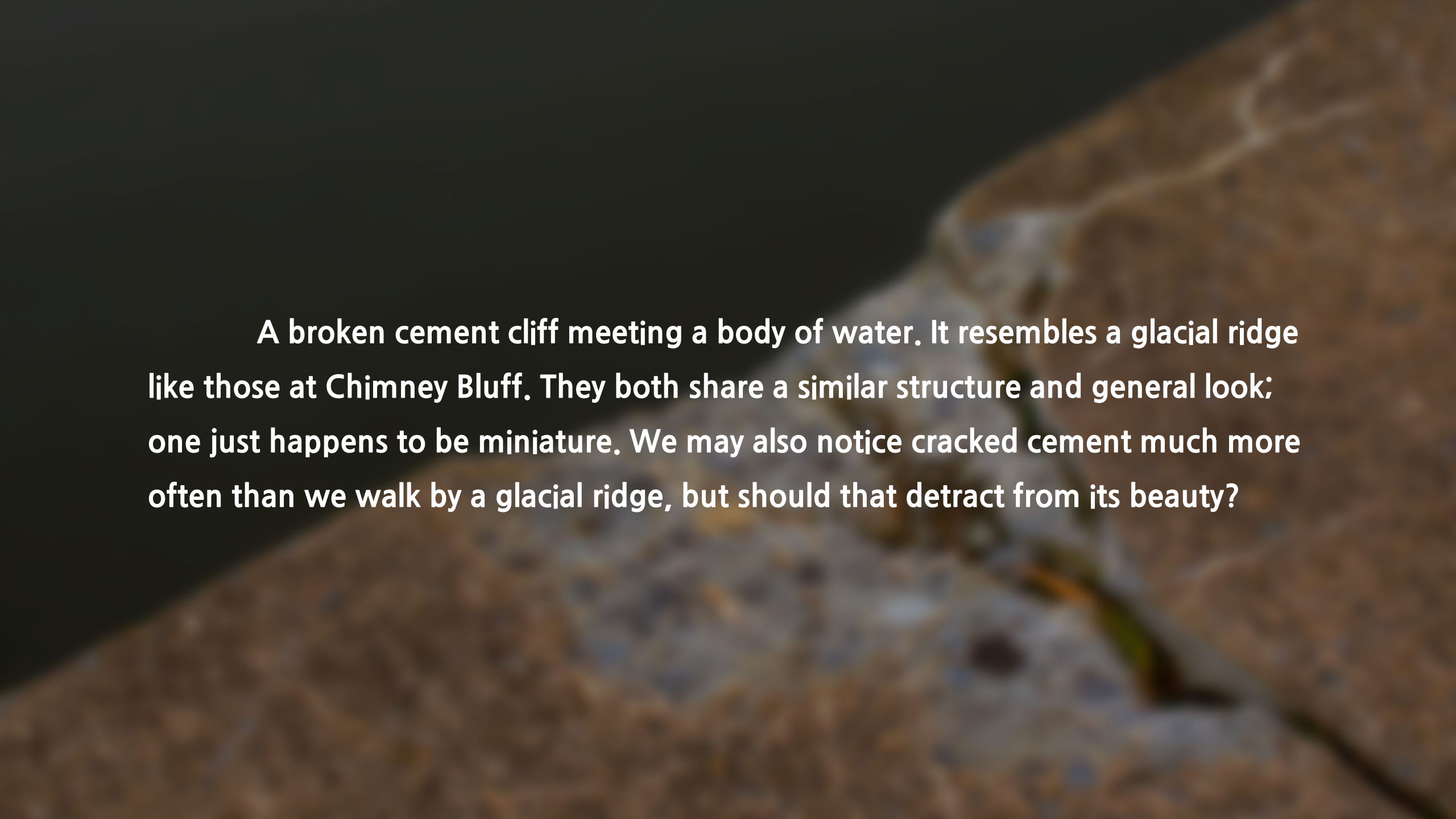
All these stickers covering up this town signage. Without a doubt this is public art piece. Everyone contributed to the final look and made it something truly 'Buffalo'. I especially like how everyone independently decided to cover up every word except for 'NO'. Not sure if that says anything profound about the relationship with authority and citizens but I'll leave that up to interpretation!





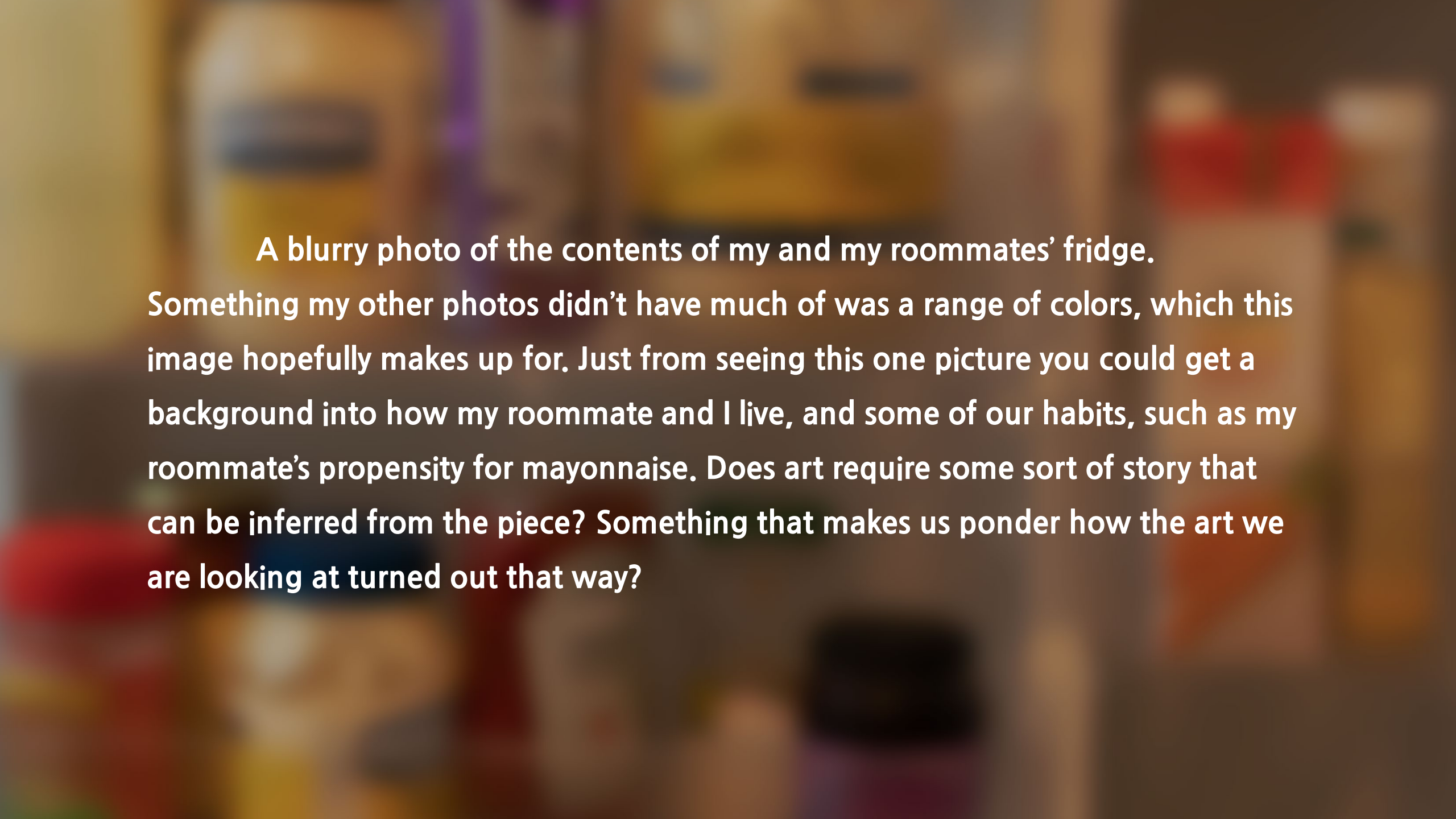
This was also taken in our classroom. The bright white of the light compared to the exact opposite with the vent, both taking up the same space and shape in the image just looked like great composition. The classic battle of light and dark, just less intense and confined to ceiling fixtures.



The background image shows a close-up of a broken, light-colored concrete or cement surface. A sharp, jagged crack runs diagonally across the frame, separating a darker, more textured area on the left from a lighter, smoother area on the right. The surface appears weathered and uneven, with some small pits and variations in tone. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the concrete.

A broken cement cliff meeting a body of water. It resembles a glacial ridge like those at Chimney Bluff. They both share a similar structure and general look; one just happens to be miniature. We may also notice cracked cement much more often than we walk by a glacial ridge, but should that detract from its beauty?





A blurry photo of the contents of my and my roommates' fridge. Something my other photos didn't have much of was a range of colors, which this image hopefully makes up for. Just from seeing this one picture you could get a background into how my roommate and I live, and some of our habits, such as my roommate's propensity for mayonnaise. Does art require some sort of story that can be inferred from the piece? Something that makes us ponder how the art we are looking at turned out that way?

$B \gg C$ Then

$H_0 = A\hat{L}^2 + B\hat{L}_z$, $V = C\hat{L}_y$

$H_0 |l, m\rangle = E_l^{(0)} |l, m\rangle$, $E_l = \frac{\hbar^2 l(l+1)}{2I}$

$l=0$, $E_0 = 0$

$\Delta E^{(1)} = E_l^{(1)} - E_l^{(0)}$

$\Delta E^{(1)} = V_{ll} = \langle m | C\hat{L}_y | l, m \rangle$

$\hat{L}_y = \frac{i}{2} [\hat{L}_+ - \hat{L}_-]$

$\rightarrow -\frac{iC}{2} \langle m | \hat{L}_+ - \hat{L}_- | l, m \rangle$

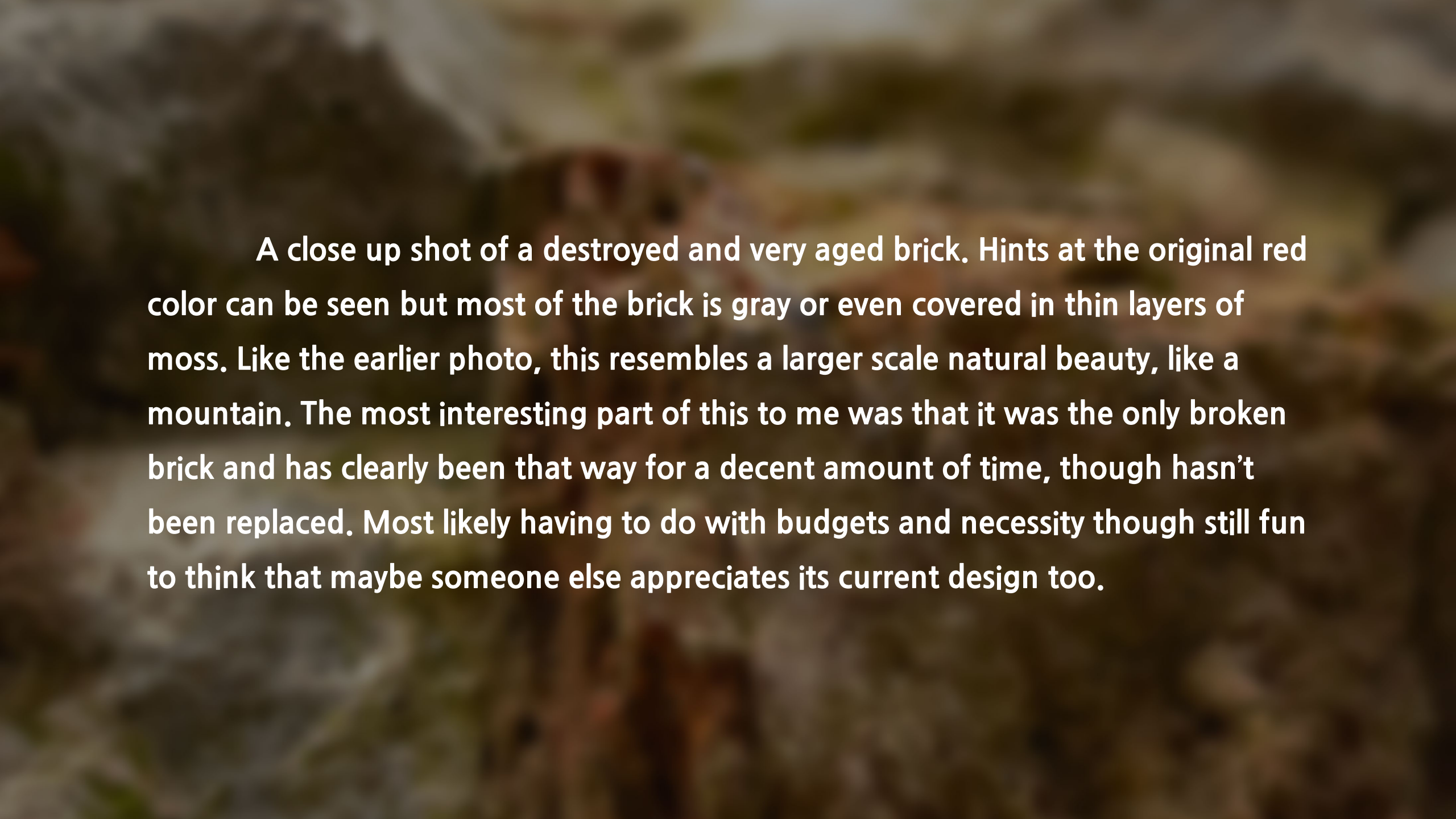
$= -\frac{iC}{2} [\hat{L}_+ - \hat{L}_-] | l, m \rangle$

$\hat{L}^2 |l, m\rangle = \hbar^2 l(l+1) |l, m\rangle$
 $\hat{L}_z |l, m\rangle = \hbar m |l, m\rangle$

non-degen
degen

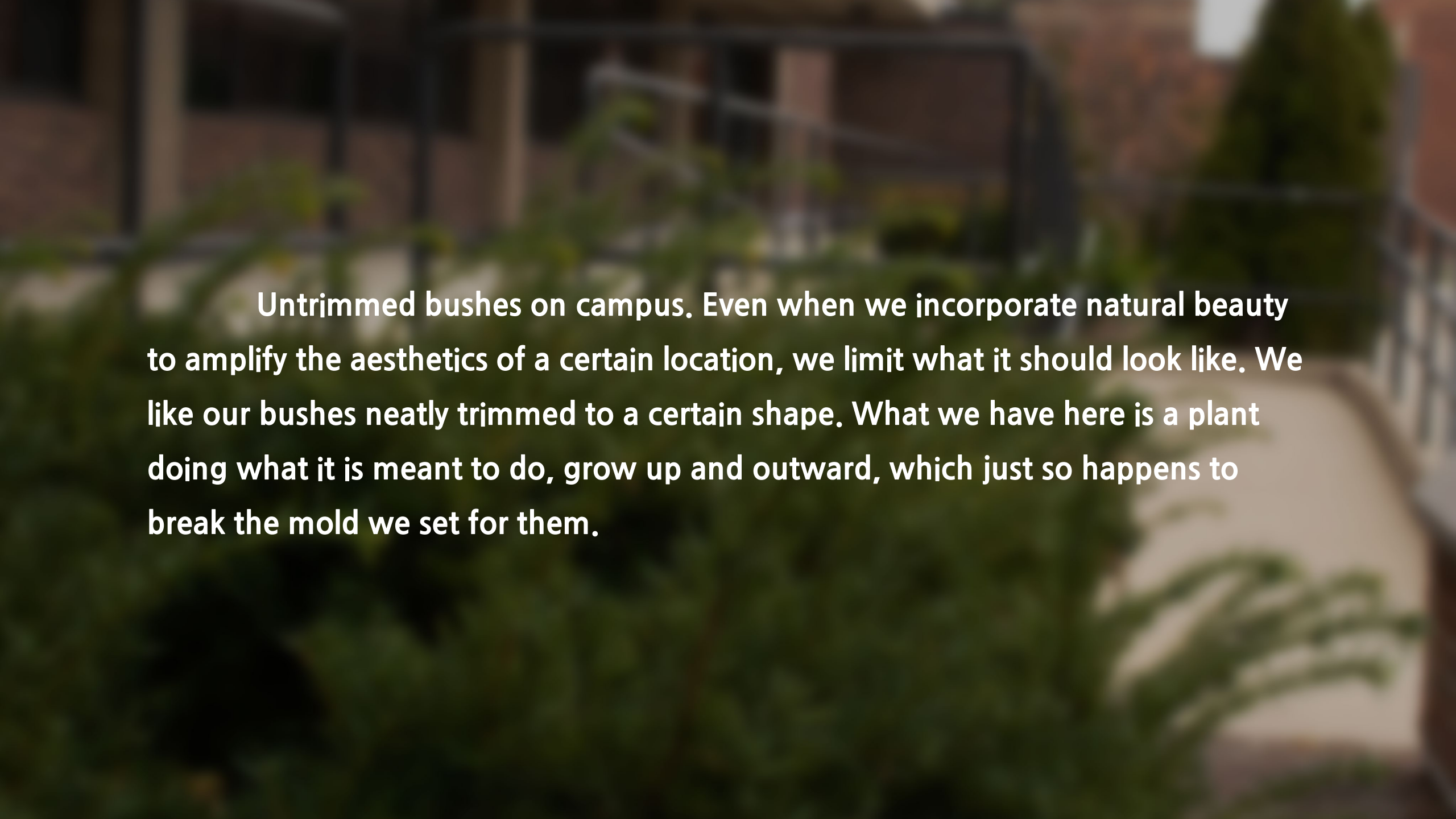
After discussing my photo project idea with my roommate, he suggested I snap a photo of the math he had been doing on our chalk wall for his physics courses. He attempted to describe the mathematical processes happening in the equations but sadly my brain is not wired for math in the slightest. Looking at all the work and complexity of it however I can't help but notice a neat set of shapes and symbols that tell a story. And even without a story there is clearly a sense of intentionality with each chalk line, regardless of if you can understand it.





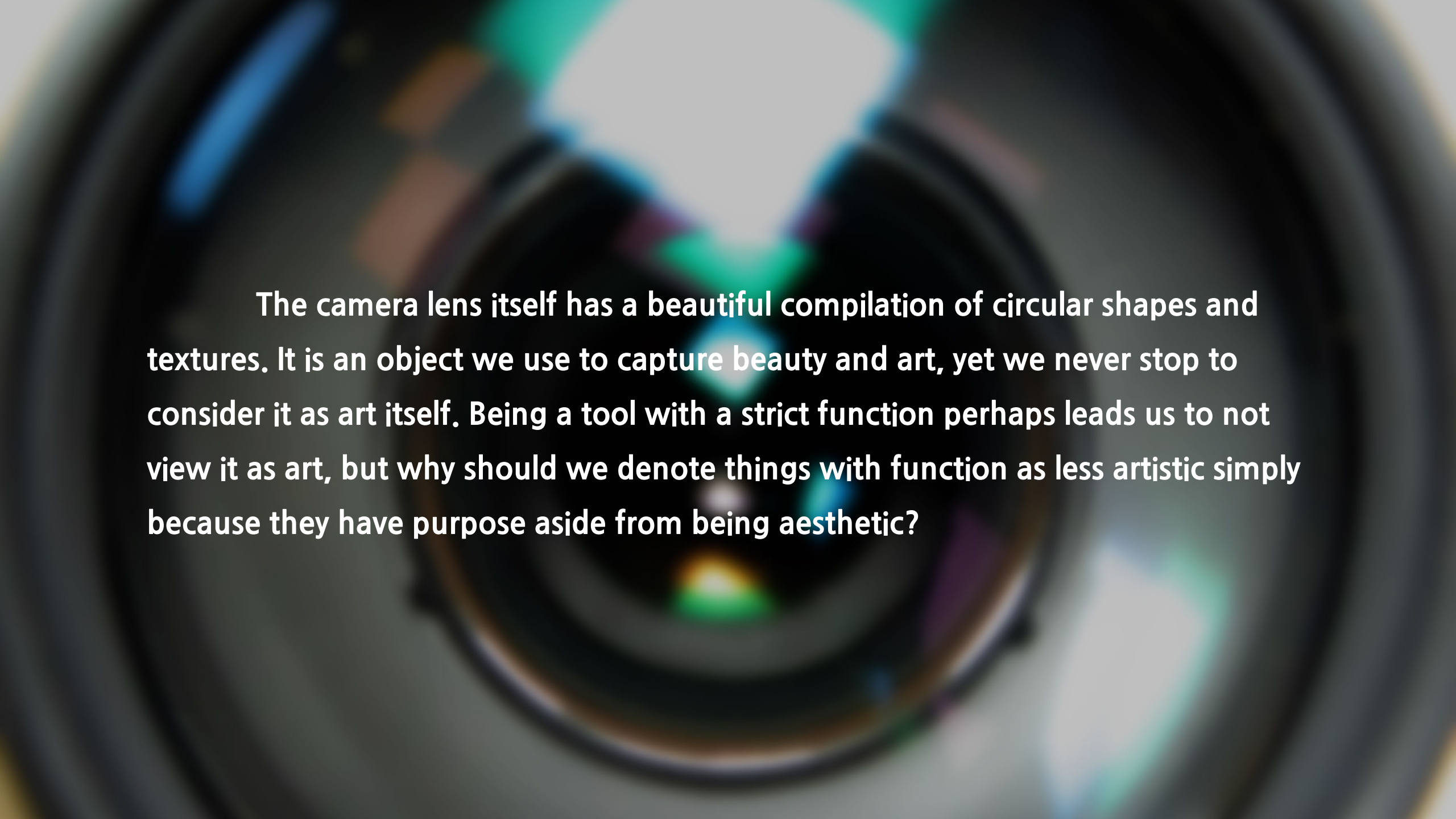
A close up shot of a destroyed and very aged brick. Hints at the original red color can be seen but most of the brick is gray or even covered in thin layers of moss. Like the earlier photo, this resembles a larger scale natural beauty, like a mountain. The most interesting part of this to me was that it was the only broken brick and has clearly been that way for a decent amount of time, though hasn't been replaced. Most likely having to do with budgets and necessity though still fun to think that maybe someone else appreciates its current design too.





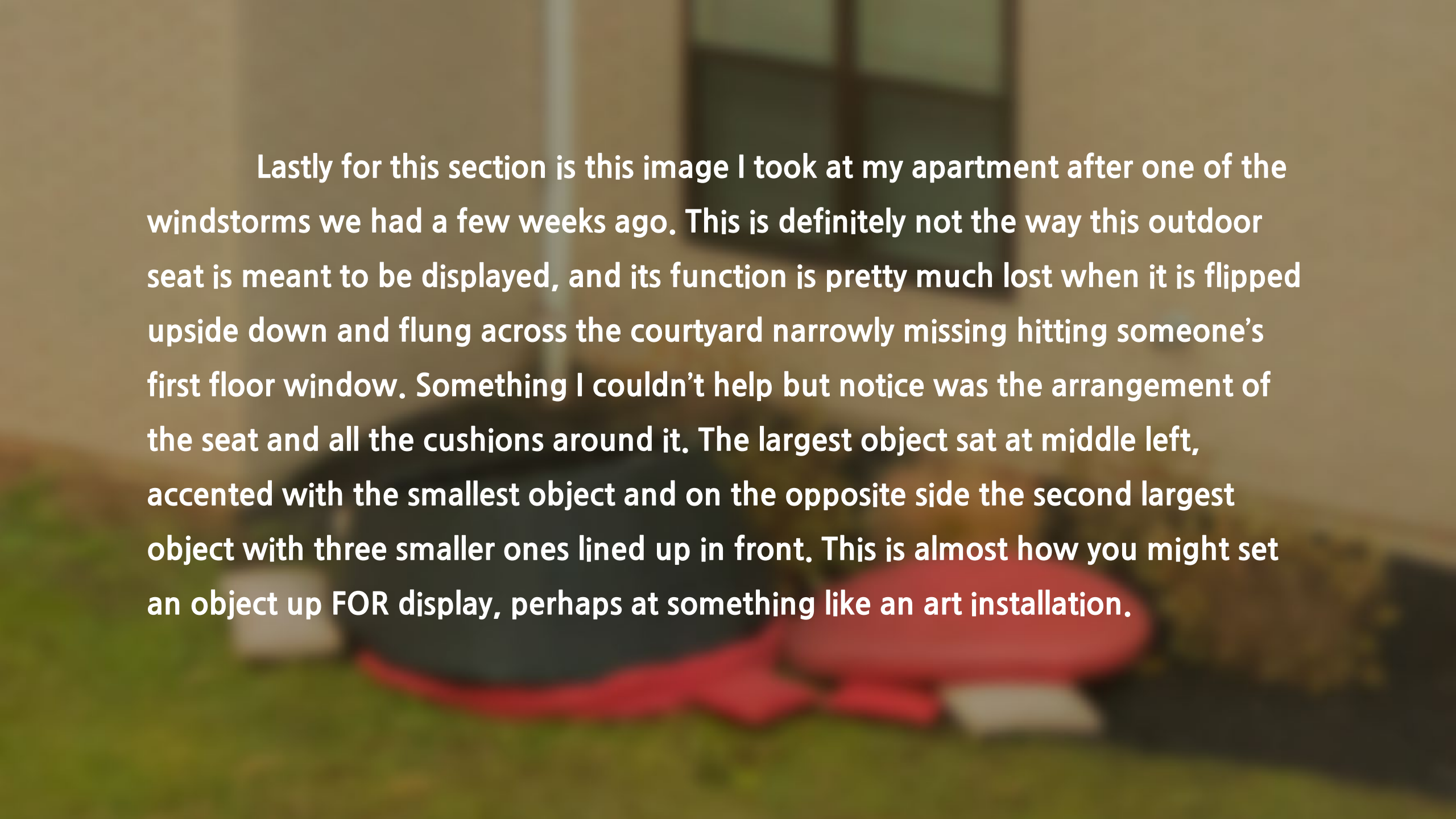
Untrimmed bushes on campus. Even when we incorporate natural beauty to amplify the aesthetics of a certain location, we limit what it should look like. We like our bushes neatly trimmed to a certain shape. What we have here is a plant doing what it is meant to do, grow up and outward, which just so happens to break the mold we set for them.



The background of the image is a blurred, artistic view of a camera lens. It features concentric circles and various colored light flares, including blue, green, and purple, creating a bokeh effect. The text is centered over this background.

The camera lens itself has a beautiful compilation of circular shapes and textures. It is an object we use to capture beauty and art, yet we never stop to consider it as art itself. Being a tool with a strict function perhaps leads us to not view it as art, but why should we denote things with function as less artistic simply because they have purpose aside from being aesthetic?





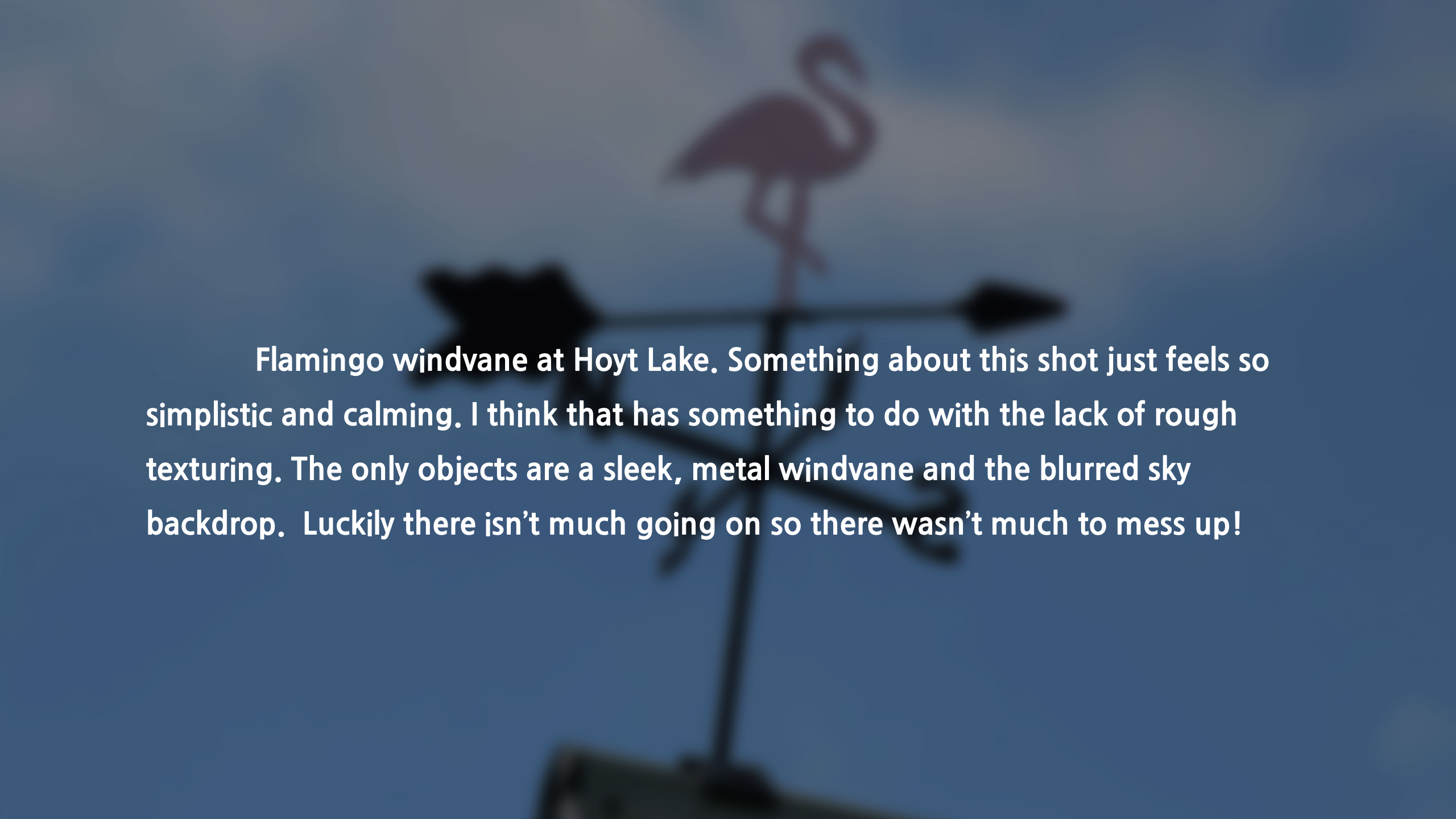
Lastly for this section is this image I took at my apartment after one of the windstorms we had a few weeks ago. This is definitely not the way this outdoor seat is meant to be displayed, and its function is pretty much lost when it is flipped upside down and flung across the courtyard narrowly missing hitting someone's first floor window. Something I couldn't help but notice was the arrangement of the seat and all the cushions around it. The largest object sat at middle left, accented with the smallest object and on the opposite side the second largest object with three smaller ones lined up in front. This is almost how you might set an object up FOR display, perhaps at something like an art installation.



Second Section: Highlights of the Semester

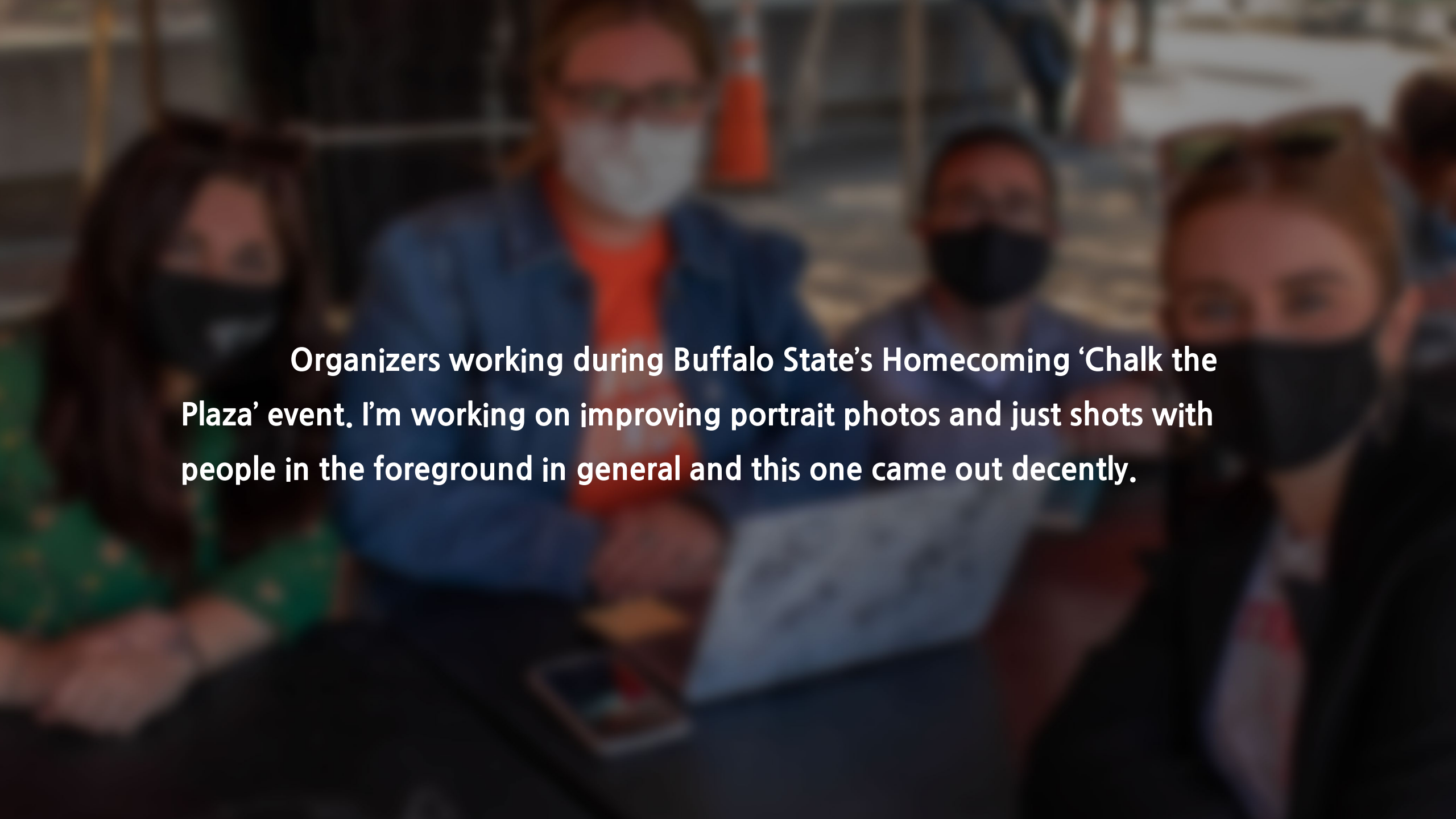
Now on to the second section which is simply just a collection of my favorite shots I took over the course of the semester. Some of these are from weekly photo projects for class, some for the Record campus news and others were just on my free time. Because they don't have any overarching reasoning behind them there is a lot less to explain with them.



A blurred background image of a flamingo windvane against a blue sky. The windvane is a sleek, dark metal structure with a central vertical pole and a horizontal crossbar. At the top of the pole is a stylized flamingo figure. The crossbar has four arrow-like shapes pointing outwards. The background is a clear, light blue sky.

Flamingo windvane at Hoyt Lake. Something about this shot just feels so simplistic and calming. I think that has something to do with the lack of rough texturing. The only objects are a sleek, metal windvane and the blurred sky backdrop. Luckily there isn't much going on so there wasn't much to mess up!



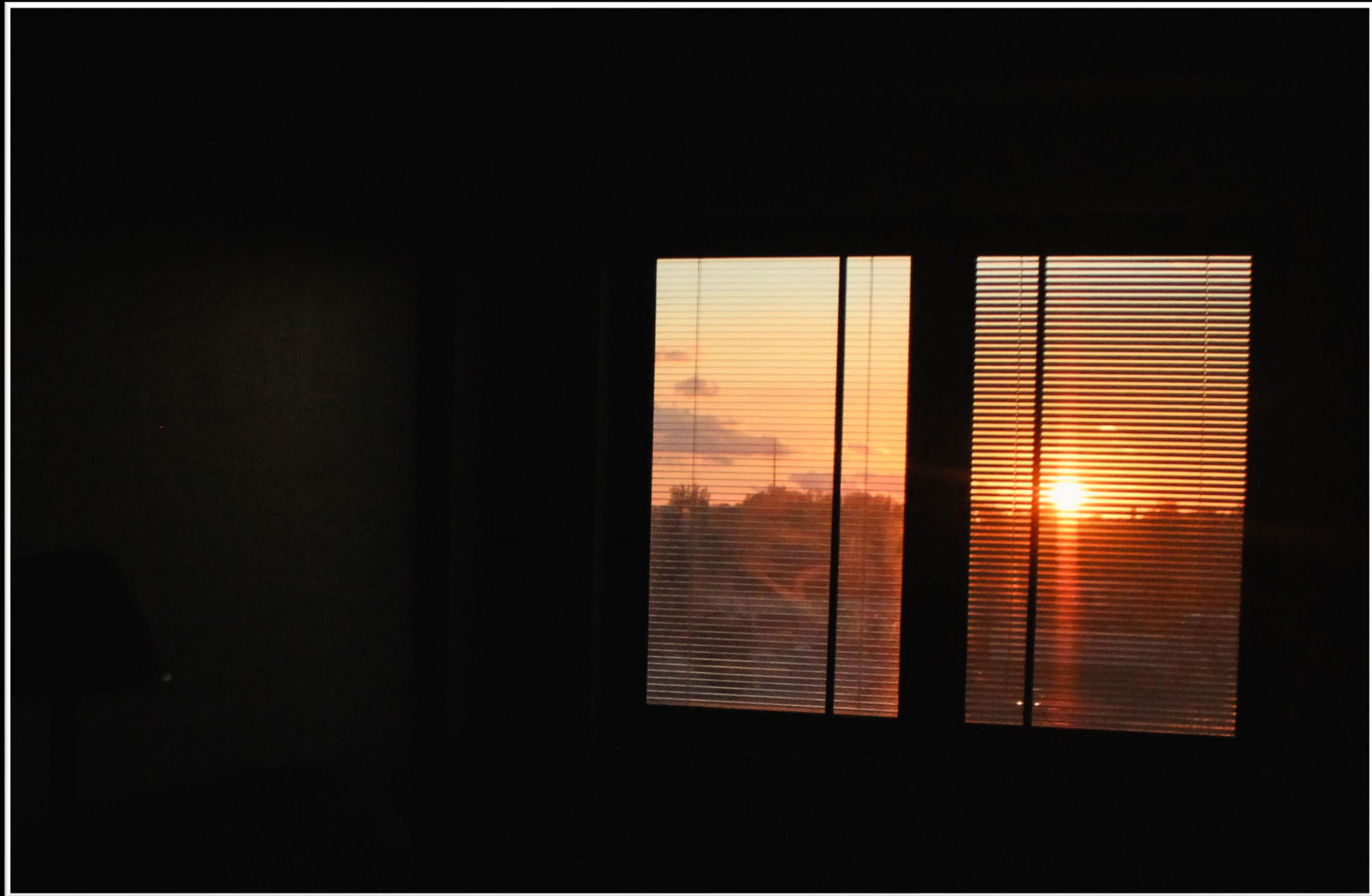


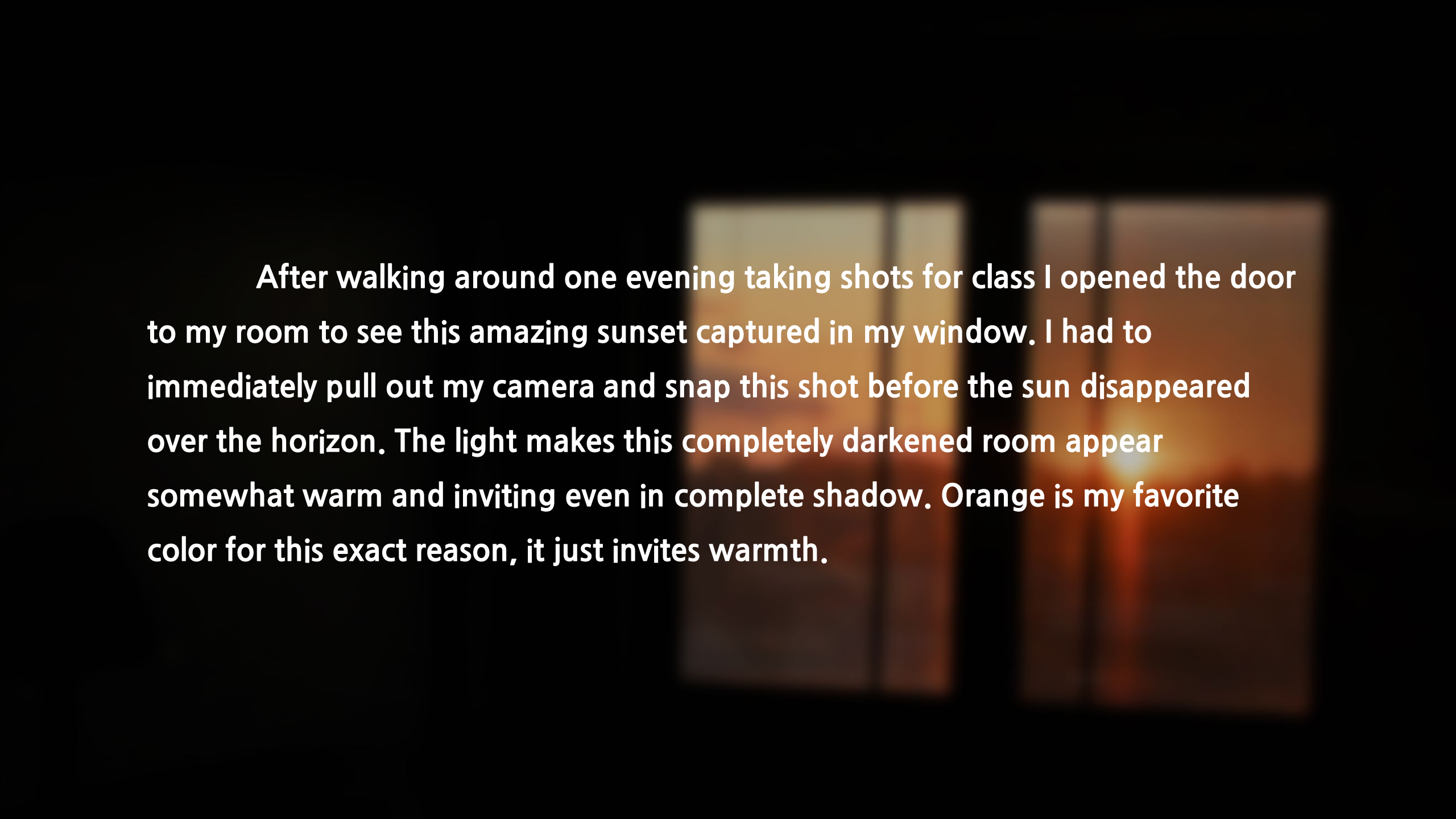
Organizers working during Buffalo State's Homecoming 'Chalk the Plaza' event. I'm working on improving portrait photos and just shots with people in the foreground in general and this one came out decently.





Hyena that was rudely awakened by its friend yelling. The yellow, dried grass against the hyena's yellow, tufted fur gives this shot a very arid feel. Hopefully, the hyena's feel the same and are at home in their enclosure.



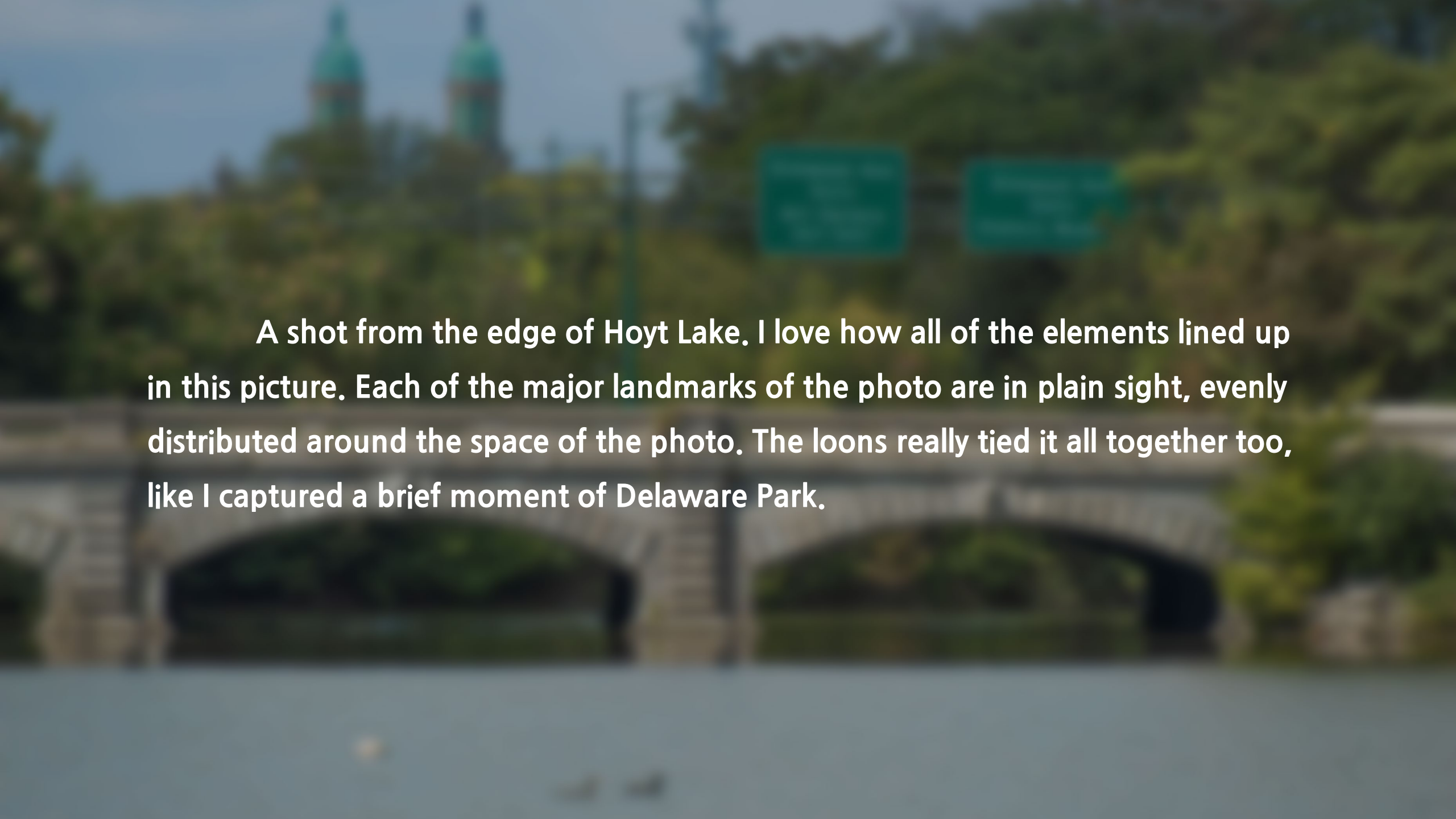


After walking around one evening taking shots for class I opened the door to my room to see this amazing sunset captured in my window. I had to immediately pull out my camera and snap this shot before the sun disappeared over the horizon. The light makes this completely darkened room appear somewhat warm and inviting even in complete shadow. Orange is my favorite color for this exact reason, it just invites warmth.



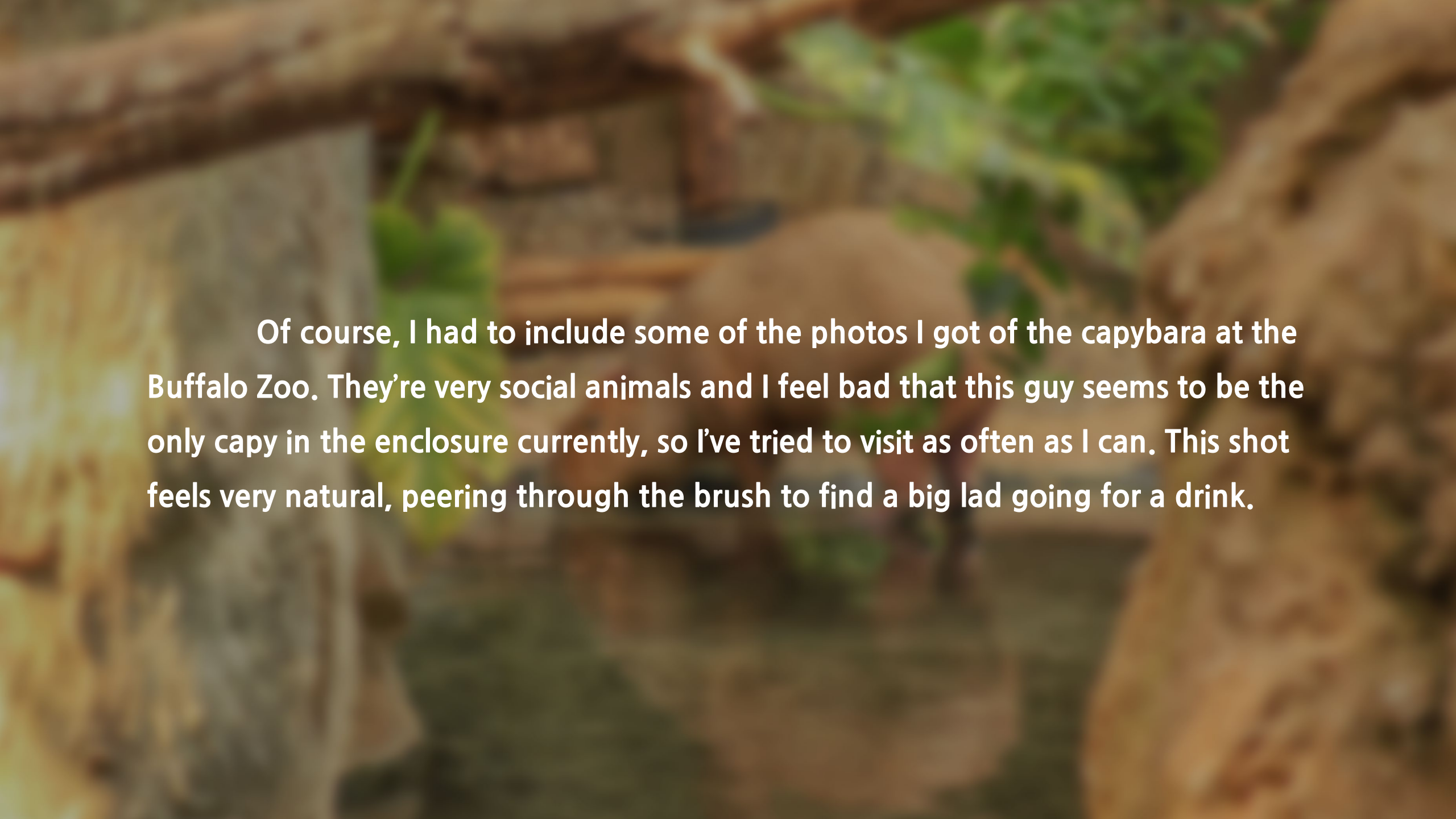
Elmwood Ave
SOUTH
Art Gallery
NEXT RIGHT

Elmwood Ave
NORTH
History Museum

A blurred photograph of a park scene. In the foreground, a stone bridge with two large arches spans a body of water. Above the bridge, two green rectangular signs are visible, partially obscured by trees. In the background, two green domes of a building are visible through the foliage. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.


A shot from the edge of Hoyt Lake. I love how all of the elements lined up in this picture. Each of the major landmarks of the photo are in plain sight, evenly distributed around the space of the photo. The loons really tied it all together too, like I captured a brief moment of Delaware Park.





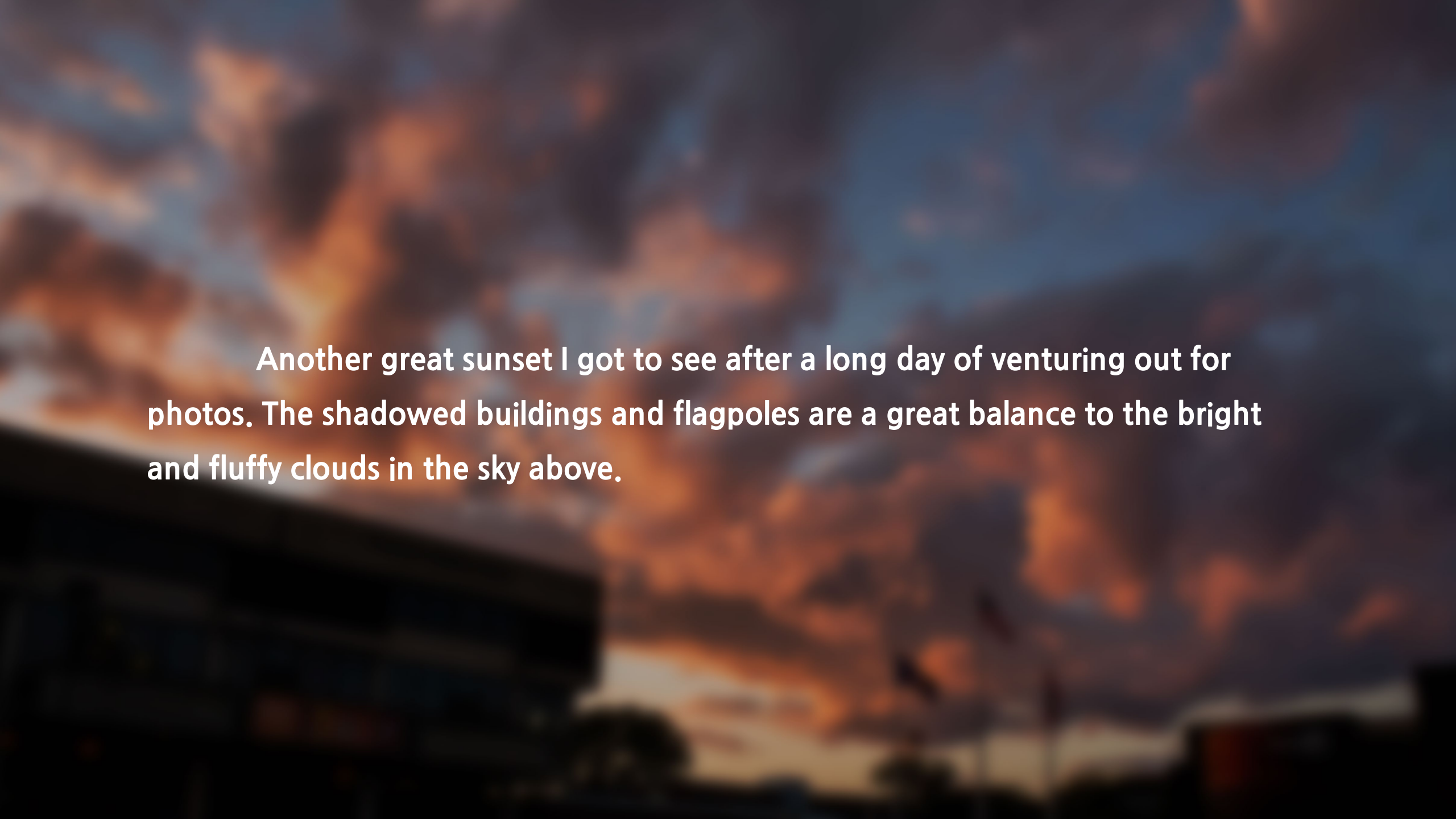
Of course, I had to include some of the photos I got of the capybara at the Buffalo Zoo. They're very social animals and I feel bad that this guy seems to be the only capy in the enclosure currently, so I've tried to visit as often as I can. This shot feels very natural, peering through the brush to find a big lad going for a drink.



A blurred background image showing a couple sitting on a beach. The couple is in the center, with the man on the left and the woman on the right. They are sitting on a light-colored surface, possibly a towel or blanket. In the background, there are several beach umbrellas in various colors (yellow, pink, blue) and some greenery. The overall scene is a beach picnic setting.

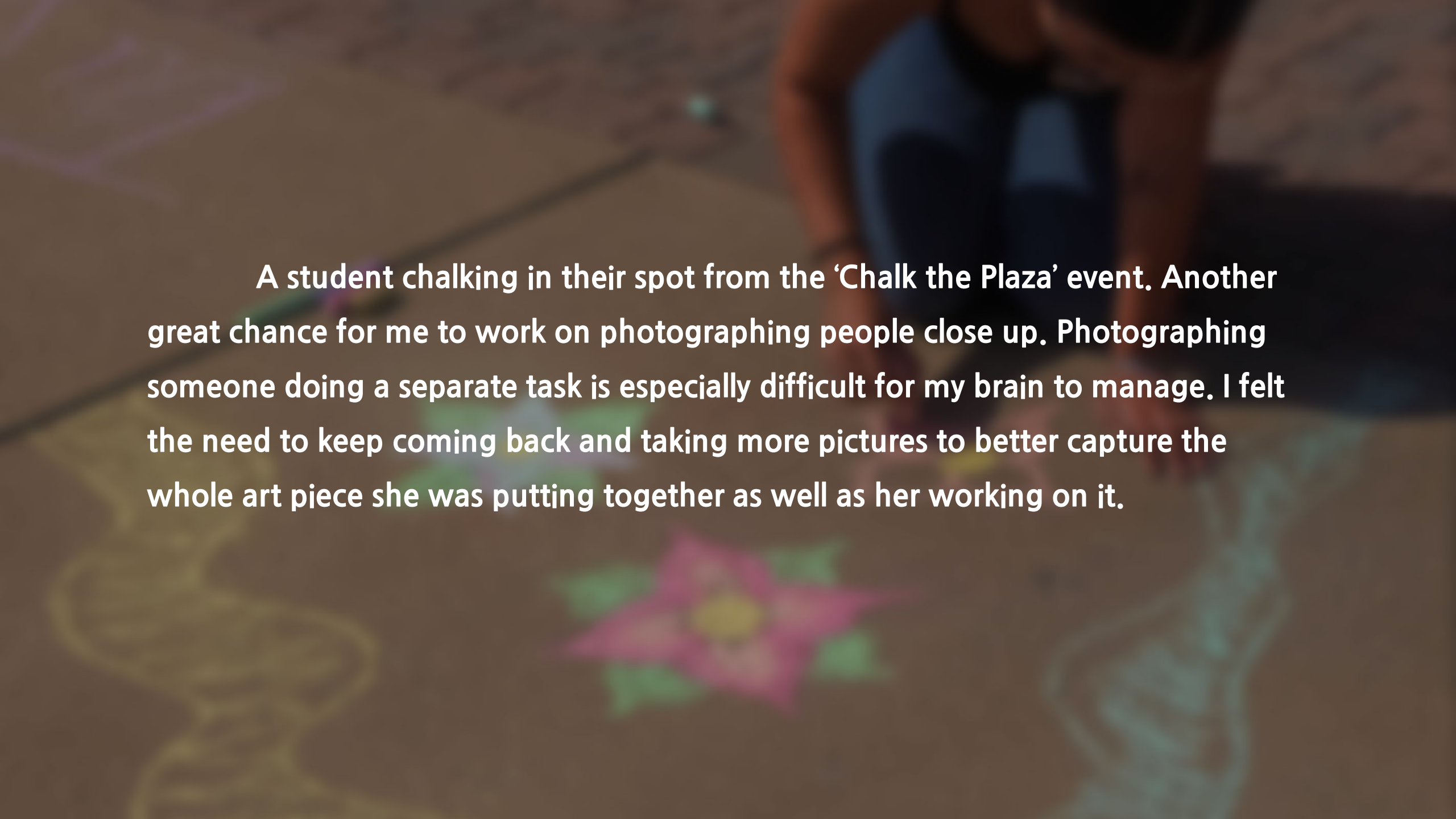
A couple who rented out this 'glamour picnic' spot for the day playing cards. There's a lot of different textures going on in this photo from water to glass to strangely fluffy pillows. I tried to make sure each different element still looked its best. This was also a very helpful experience for familiarizing myself with approaching others to take their photo.





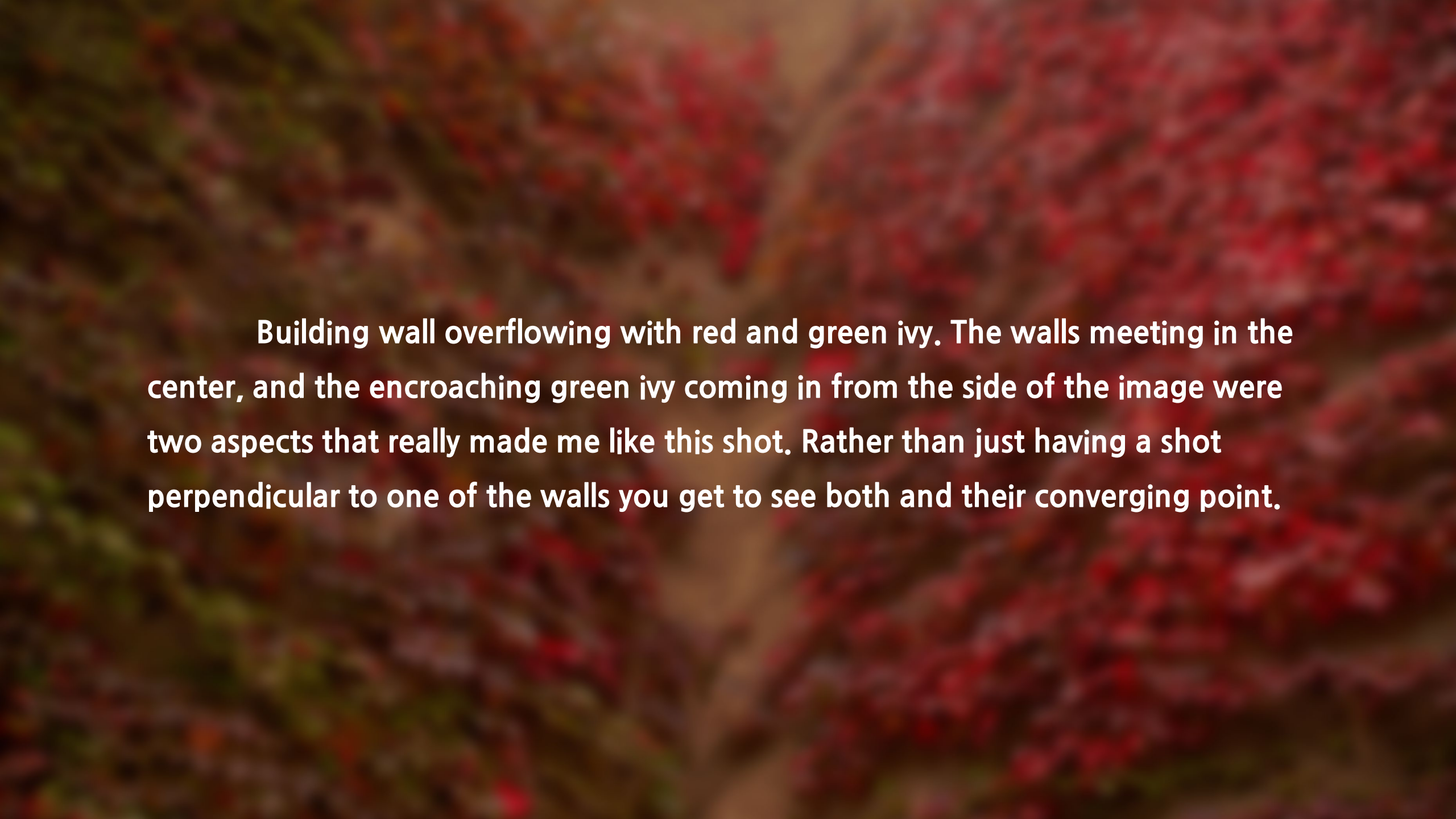
Another great sunset I got to see after a long day of venturing out for photos. The shadowed buildings and flagpoles are a great balance to the bright and fluffy clouds in the sky above.



A blurred background image showing a person from behind, wearing a blue shirt, kneeling on a sidewalk and drawing a pink flower with chalk. The flower has a yellow center and green leaves. Other chalk drawings, including a yellow swirl and a blue swirl, are visible on the sidewalk.

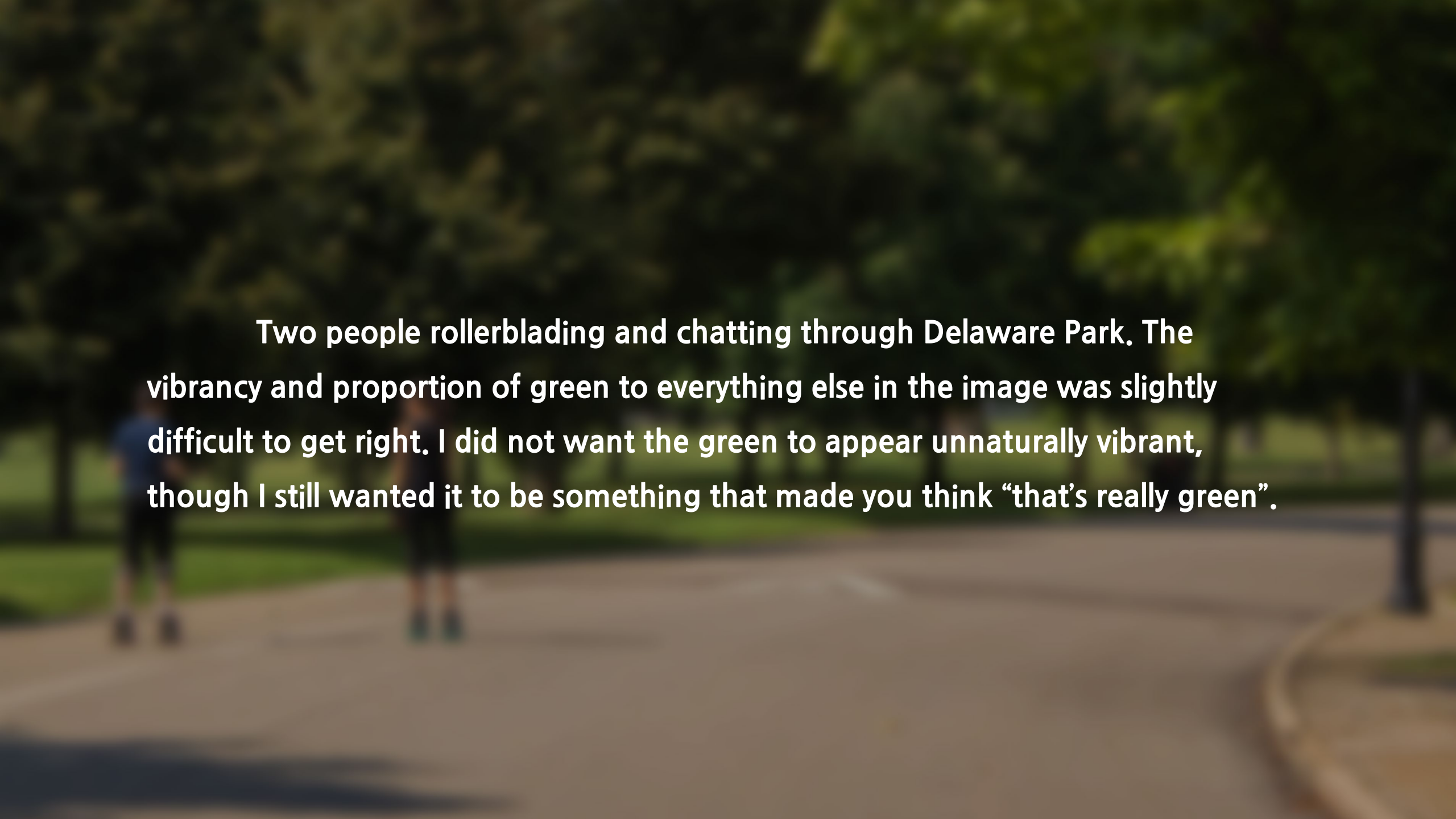
A student chalking in their spot from the 'Chalk the Plaza' event. Another great chance for me to work on photographing people close up. Photographing someone doing a separate task is especially difficult for my brain to manage. I felt the need to keep coming back and taking more pictures to better capture the whole art piece she was putting together as well as her working on it.





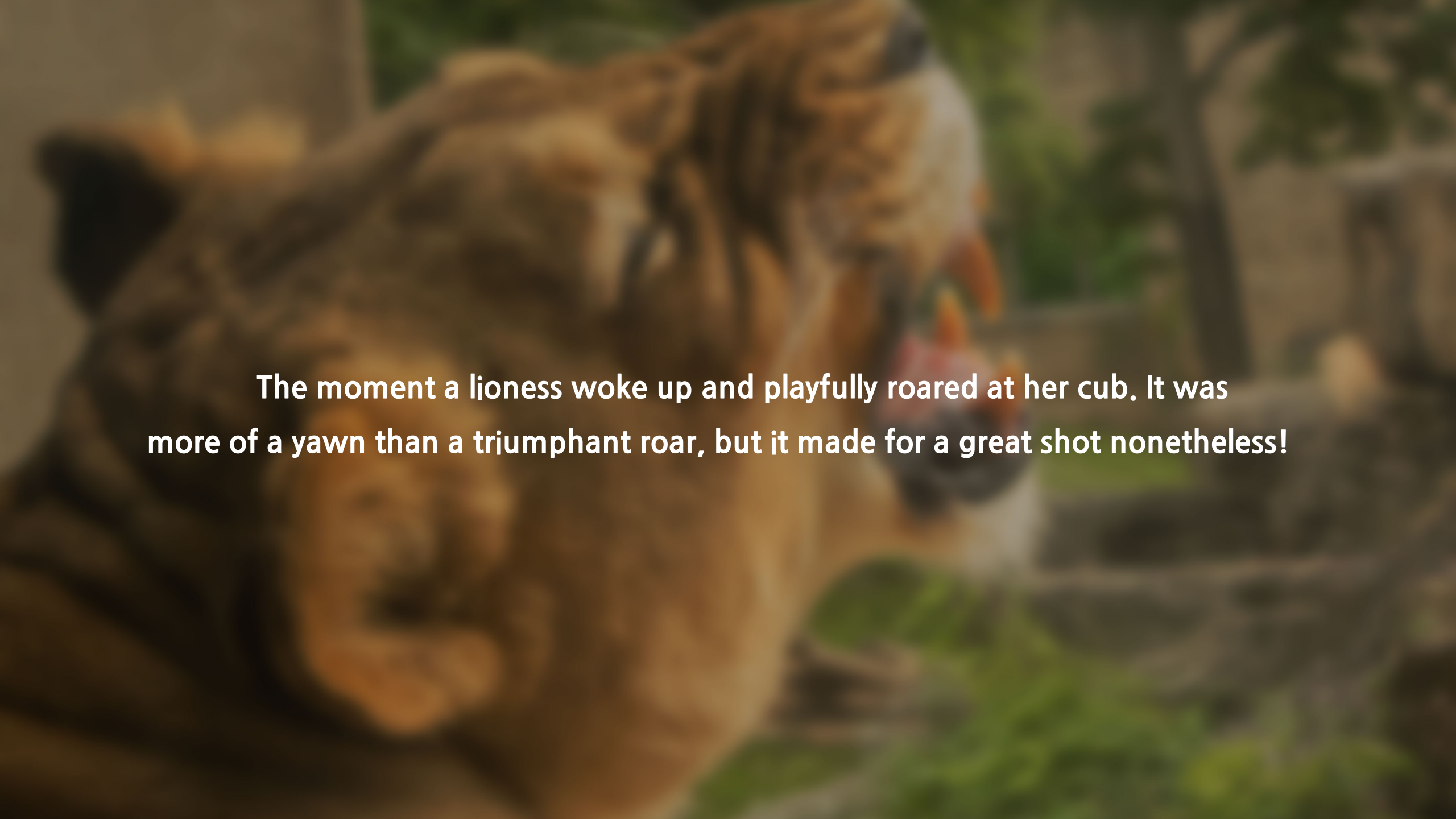
Building wall overflowing with red and green ivy. The walls meeting in the center, and the encroaching green ivy coming in from the side of the image were two aspects that really made me like this shot. Rather than just having a shot perpendicular to one of the walls you get to see both and their converging point.





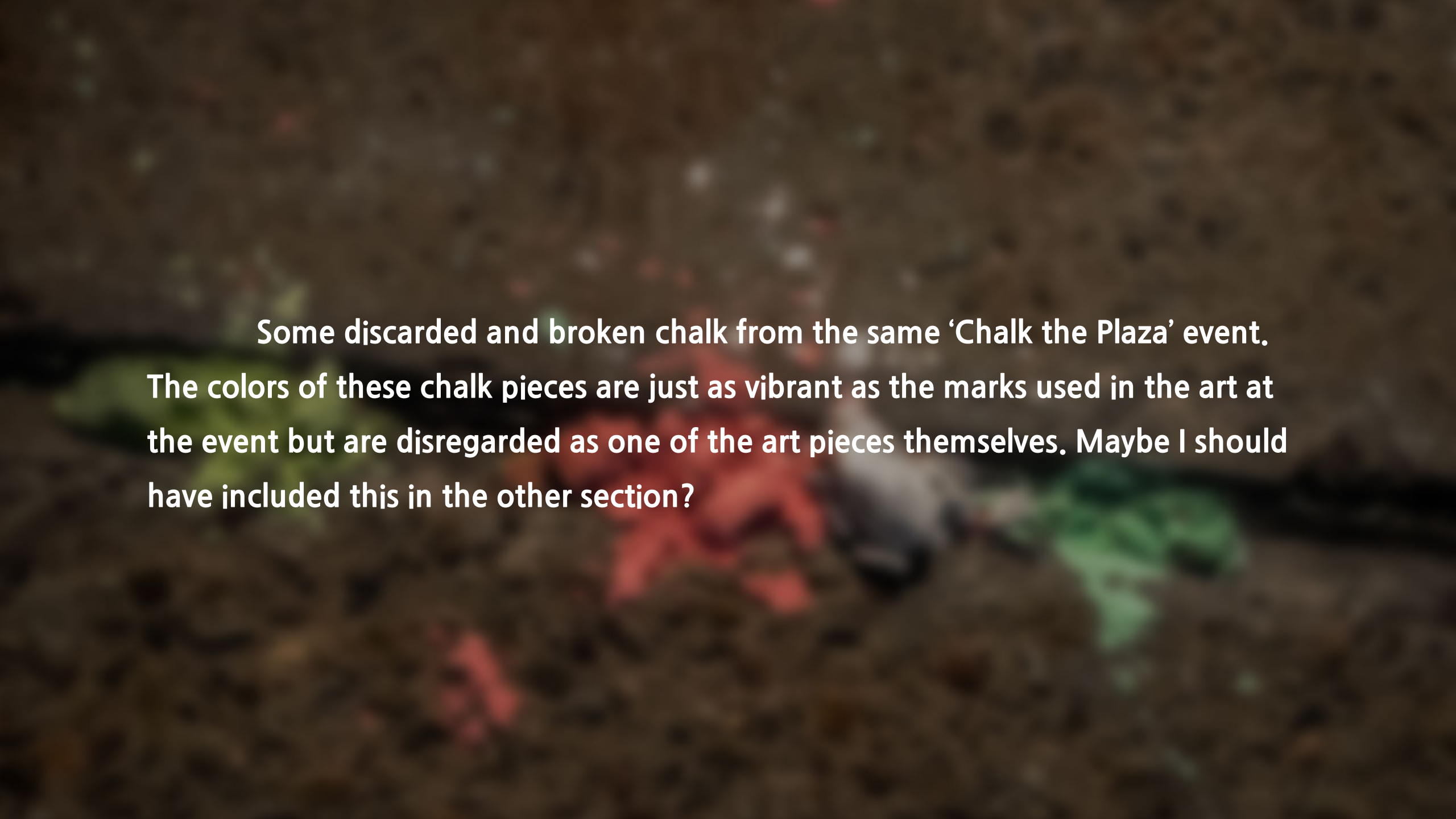
Two people rollerblading and chatting through Delaware Park. The vibrancy and proportion of green to everything else in the image was slightly difficult to get right. I did not want the green to appear unnaturally vibrant, though I still wanted it to be something that made you think “that’s really green”.



A close-up, slightly out-of-focus photograph of a lioness yawning. Her mouth is wide open, revealing her pink tongue and sharp, orange-tipped teeth. The background is a soft-focus natural setting with green foliage and a tree trunk. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

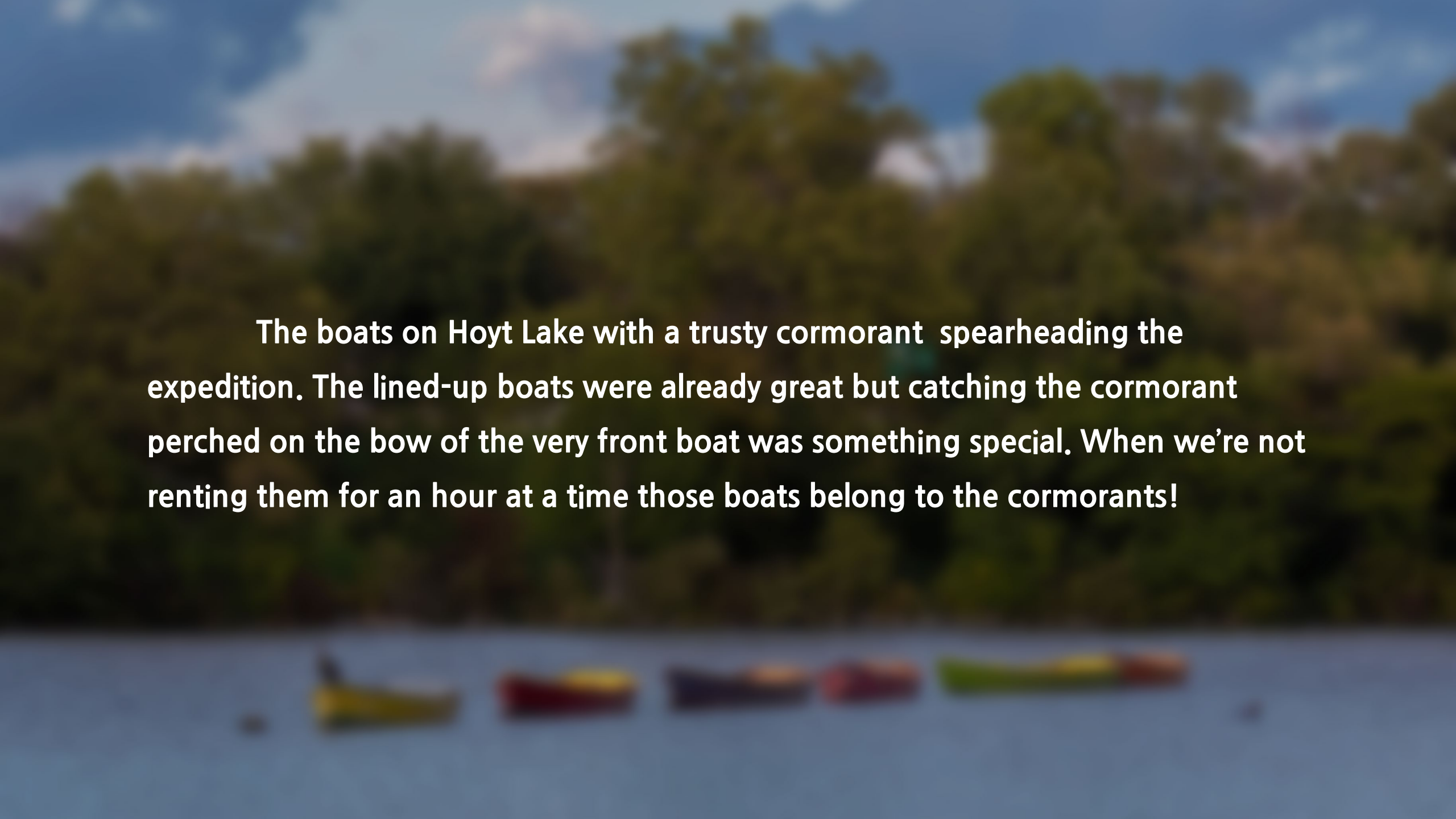
The moment a lioness woke up and playfully roared at her cub. It was more of a yawn than a triumphant roar, but it made for a great shot nonetheless!





Some discarded and broken chalk from the same 'Chalk the Plaza' event. The colors of these chalk pieces are just as vibrant as the marks used in the art at the event but are disregarded as one of the art pieces themselves. Maybe I should have included this in the other section?





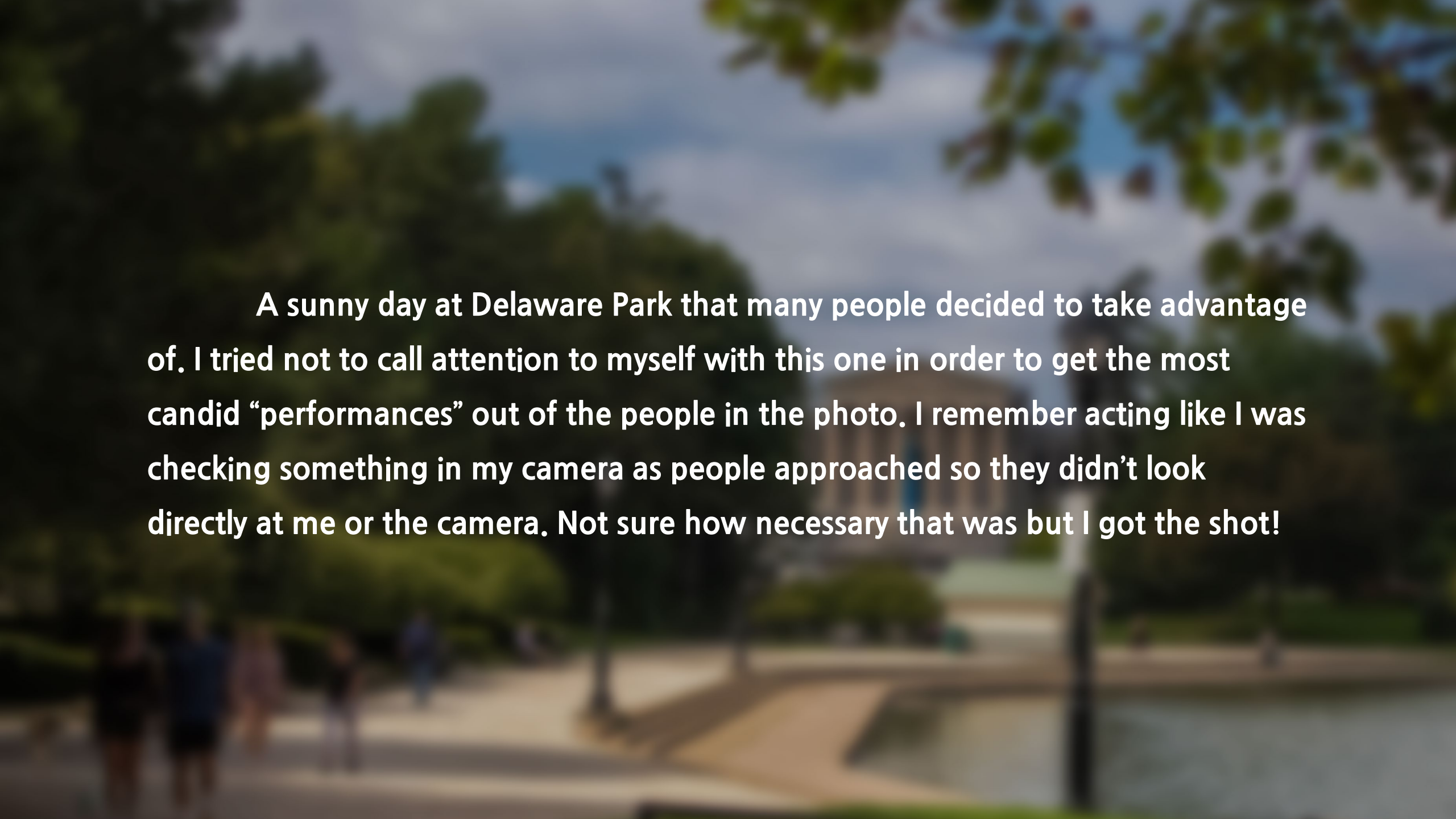
The boats on Hoyt Lake with a trusty cormorant spearheading the expedition. The lined-up boats were already great but catching the cormorant perched on the bow of the very front boat was something special. When we're not renting them for an hour at a time those boats belong to the cormorants!



A photograph of the Benji mascot, a large white tiger with orange stripes, wearing a white jersey with the number 4. The mascot is standing next to a young woman with dark hair, wearing a grey jacket and a blue and green patterned face mask. They are outdoors on a paved area with trees and a building in the background. The image is slightly blurred.

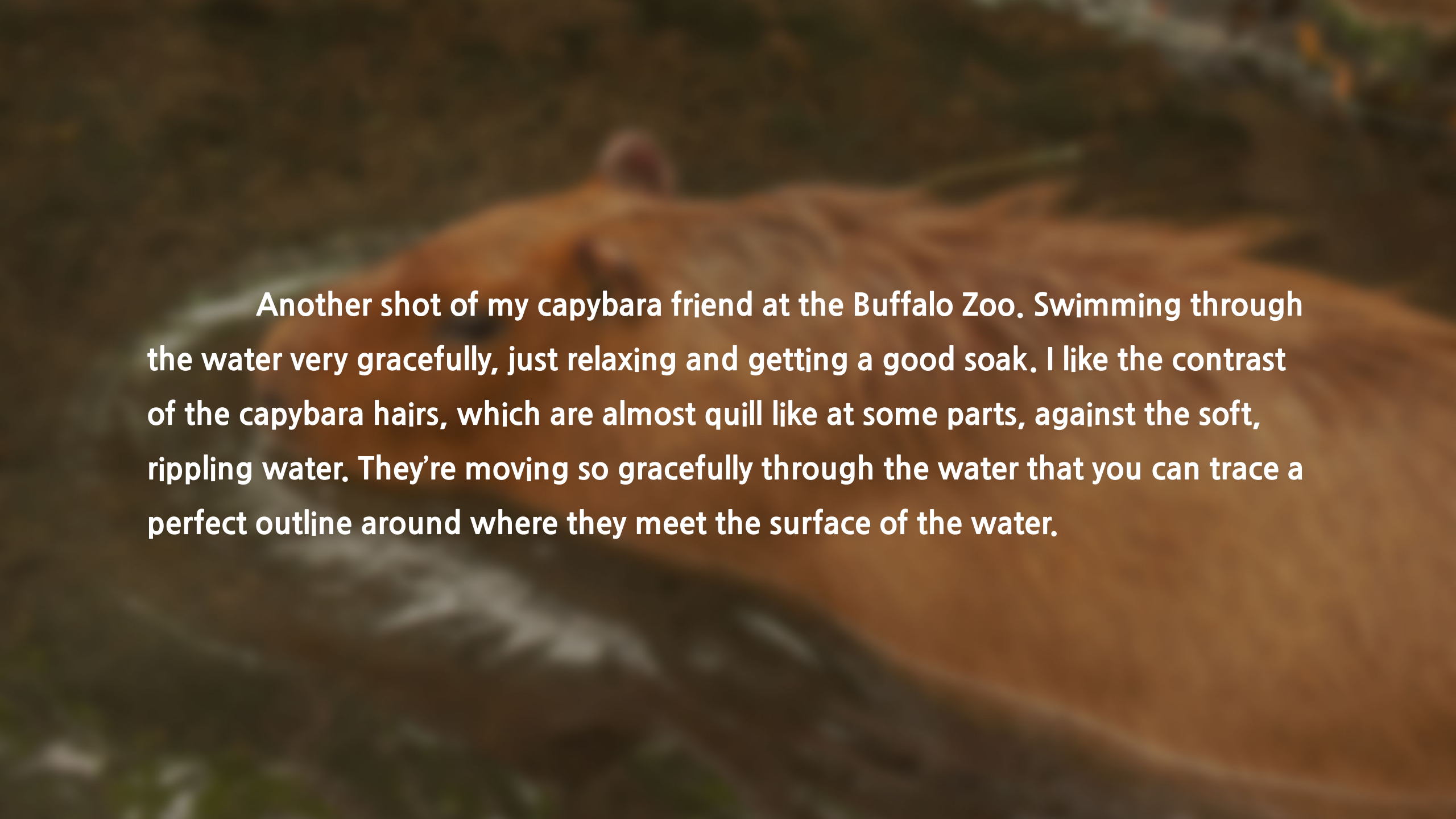
Benji and a student during Homecoming Week 2021. A very front page feel to this image, though that may be a little biased.





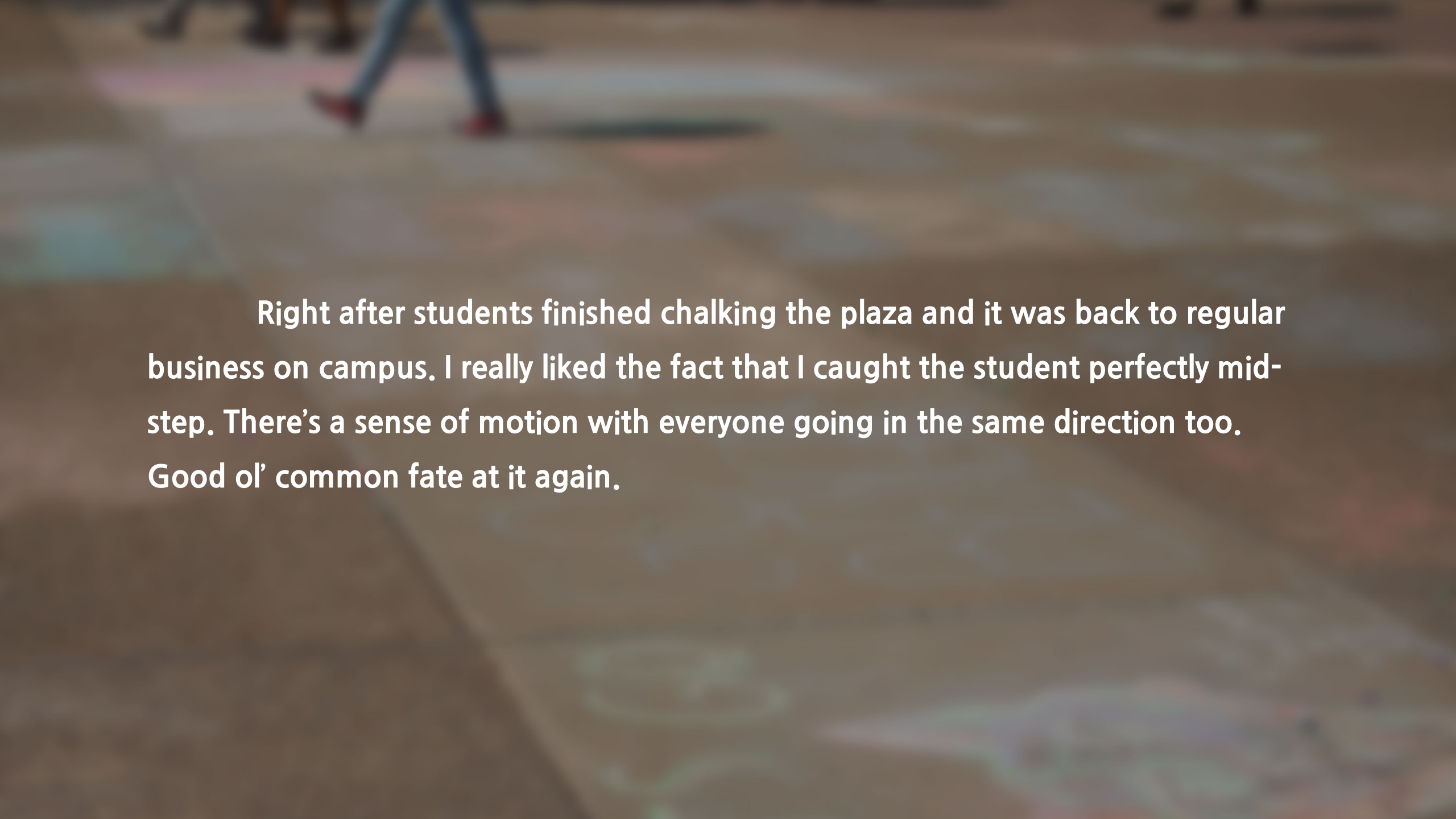
A sunny day at Delaware Park that many people decided to take advantage of. I tried not to call attention to myself with this one in order to get the most candid “performances” out of the people in the photo. I remember acting like I was checking something in my camera as people approached so they didn’t look directly at me or the camera. Not sure how necessary that was but I got the shot!



A capybara is swimming in a body of water, its head and back visible above the surface. The water is dark and rippling. The background is a blurred natural setting with green foliage and a brownish ground.

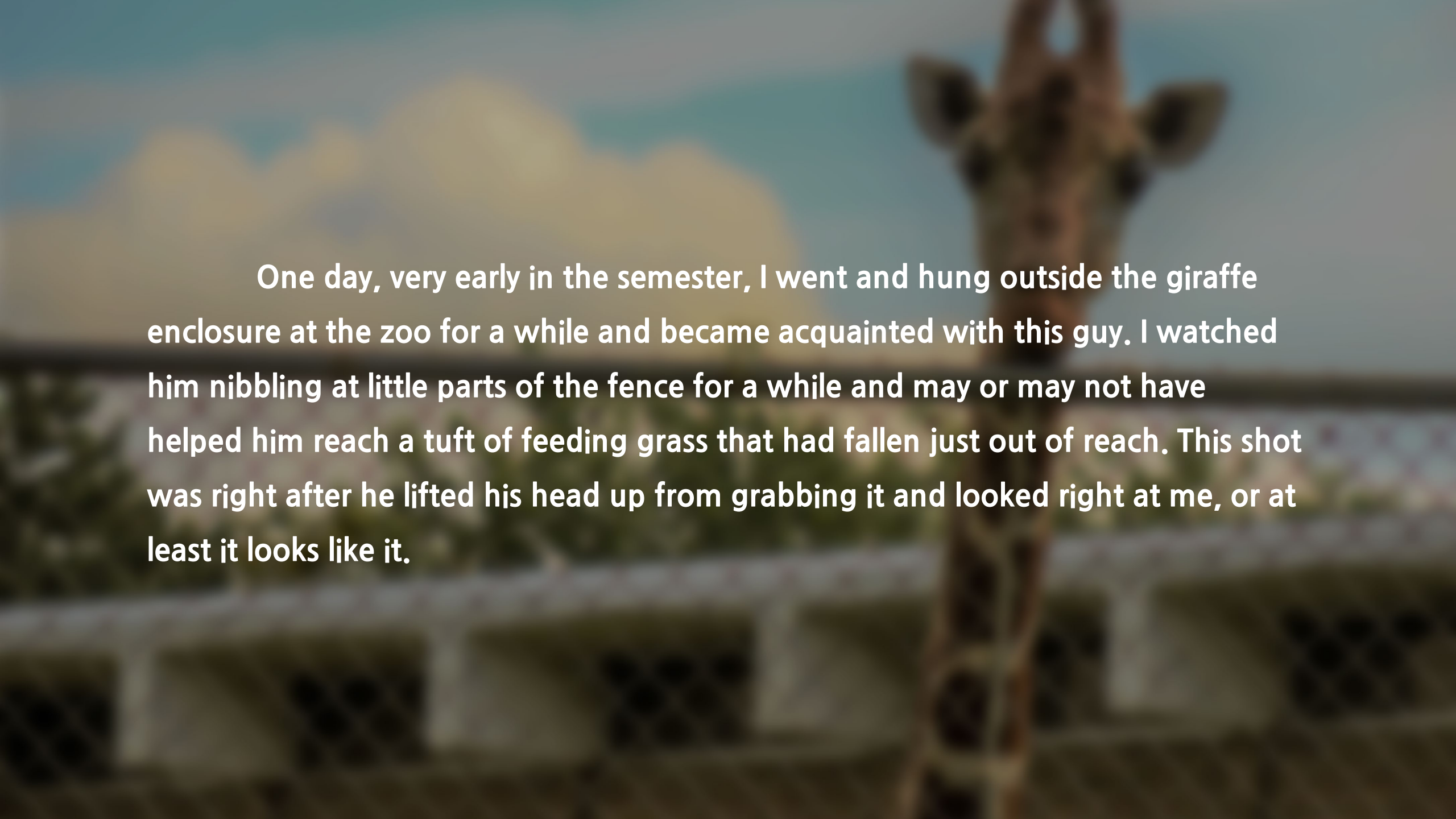
Another shot of my capybara friend at the Buffalo Zoo. Swimming through the water very gracefully, just relaxing and getting a good soak. I like the contrast of the capybara hairs, which are almost quill like at some parts, against the soft, rippling water. They're moving so gracefully through the water that you can trace a perfect outline around where they meet the surface of the water.





Right after students finished chalking the plaza and it was back to regular business on campus. I really liked the fact that I caught the student perfectly mid-step. There's a sense of motion with everyone going in the same direction too. Good ol' common fate at it again.



A giraffe is visible in the background, looking over a white fence. The giraffe's head and neck are prominent, with its long neck extending downwards. The background is slightly blurred, showing a clear sky and some distant trees or structures. The text is overlaid on the image, centered horizontally and vertically.

One day, very early in the semester, I went and hung outside the giraffe enclosure at the zoo for a while and became acquainted with this guy. I watched him nibbling at little parts of the fence for a while and may or may not have helped him reach a tuft of feeding grass that had fallen just out of reach. This shot was right after he lifted his head up from grabbing it and looked right at me, or at least it looks like it.



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