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Journal 1: Campus as Text

On Monday, August 28, I visited the Ruffner fountain, a place I see every day as I go to classes but never get to get a feel for it. At around four in the afternoon, I walked over to fountain and sat on one of the benches beside it. The weather had been cloudy and cool in the morning but luckily had cleared and warmed up by the time I arrived. I looked around and saw quite a number of people just talking, doing homework, or just appreciating the scenery. The air was hot and humid and smelled somewhat wet; it reminded me vaguely of a community pool. I could hear the distant sound of cicadas making their unique sound that annoys everyone around them. Some students were dipping their hands into the fountain to cool off from the sun’s rays. As I glanced around, I noticed that the architecture was something to be expected from a small southern town. The bottom of the fountain was made of bricks that matched the building. The walls used as benches were sheltered by a roof with tall, white columns that matched the columns in front of Wheeler Hall, the residence hall from where I had come. I believe that the entire area is a piece of art that students get to use. The fountain water was falling gracefully into the water below and with just enough force to gently mist anyone walking too near.

After about twenty minutes, I spotted one of my very closest friends walking by on her way back from class. Her name is Dana; we went to the same private high school together and were included in the same senior class of a whopping 28 students. We talked for a few minutes about our day. She had just returned from her education class and was going back to her dorm for a nap. I asked what she thought about the Ruffner fountain, to which she replied, “I really like looking at it when I pass by. The people sitting around the fountain give me a homey feeling.” After she left, I decided the next two people I conversed with were going to be students I had never met. I walked up to a girl who was sitting on the edge of the fountain while drawing something. Her name was Emma, and she was also a freshman like me. She told me that she and her friends stood in the fountain after they received their scarves because she heard it was a fun tradition. She told me, “That’s what I like about Longwood, the traditions. There are so many that I’ve heard of that sound so interesting.” After we talked for a few minutes, she went back to her drawing and I walked over and sat next to another student who was sitting on the second bench. His name was Chris and he is also a Mathematics major like me. He told me, “Yeah, I love to just sit here and look at the fountain. I kind of brings me peace when I am feeling a little stressed.” We talked a little more, and then we parted ways. Getting to just sit down and get a feel for the fountain and its architecture was a pretty nice experience; I think I will be making more trips there in the future.