“A Conversation It Was”
Bahar Taş

What is a Carleton experience? Carls for Carls. Carls help Carls. Carls marry Carls. Sorry to lower the stats on that, by the way. Technically you could still ask me out, if it’s okay for you to meet my parents on the first date.

So… going back to the question: What is Carleton?
300 N College St/ Northfield, MN 55057/ United States of America. Is that it?

What about when you saw that one film in the Weitz Cinema and forgot where you were in the world for just a brief moment, only to be reminded of Northfield when you left the theater and the freezing cold licked your face at midnight? What about the times you went to see a Shakespeare play or an art exhibit in the twin cities? Or went to another state for the weekend for a frisbee tournament? Oh, or the times of the pandemic, Spring of 2020! Like when I was in a mandatory state quarantine in Turkey while taking Experimental Studio Filmmaking over Zoom and had to treat my prison-cell-room like one of the fully equipped studios we have on campus.

What about when you were in Australia, Mexico, or Czech Republic for an OCS program, and on one of those days were lucky enough to catch a beautiful sunset that gave you that strong urge to write a poem, draw a little something, or text or call a Carleton friend, because you were too full of exciting sensations for them to go waste. You had to engage, you had to express, you had to have a conversation. Whether it was a solo or a collective one. So, a conversation it was… Carleton for me. No matter where I was. No matter when. A non-stop, inspiring, and a growing conversation.

From the very first classes we took in the fall of freshman year, we were constantly reminded of the importance of how to properly conduct research, make a clear argument, and do citations. Because that was the way into taking part in a larger conversation. A conversation with some faces elsewhere and also with the ones that came before and will come after us. Pardon the analogy, but I see academia as this timeless gathering of intellectuals – alcohol might be present – passionately exchanging and building off of each other’s ideas. Non-stop. Getting excited about small discoveries. Getting lost in the details. Without obsessing much about full clarity. Celebrating the unknown. Cheers. Going in circles. Prost. Limitations. Salud. Areas for further research. La Cheim.

As long as you know some basic rules for entry and can keep up with the lingo, you are good. That is more important than actually knowing what you are saying. The secret is to throw in some magical words every now and then to remind the reader and to yourself that we will never fully know anything. Just a brief list of those words that can save a paper that is due within 10 minutes: dichotomy, simultaneity, juxtaposition, ontological, and my personal favorite, simple but noble: archaeology. Also, use colons – just adds more spice. Blaming The Weather:
Is it possible to get emotional to leave behind the things that we once very passionately complained about? Is that a sign of love? Of comfort? Of belonging? The audacity to criticize because you feel safe and because you want to make things better; because you care, because I care. And let’s BeReal, to be able to accomplish all the things we did in these last 4 years, we needed a little fun to keep us going, so we complained every now and then, so what?

Well yes, this is indeed the end of an era. Not the end of Carleton. As it’s been proven before, Carleton exists in and outside Northfield. Carleton is when and where you have the best conversations. With people who you might or might not have met yet. With a book you haven’t yet read. With the films you haven’t seen. But also with your best friends and families who you might think you know so well. And with yourself. With a new blank page every day. With a beginner’s mind and soul. Wake up, forget what you learned, relearn, go to sleep, repeat. And celebrate it like a scholar!

Cheers to 4 years at Carleton! Cheers to liberal arts! Cheers to the cold weather that gave us something to talk and complain about! Cheers to the weddings where I will get to see some of you again soon! Cheers to tears and cheers to laughters! Cheers to the unknown! And, of course,

Cheers to the class of 2023!