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### Reflection on *Spiders and Butterflies*

This creative process has been very intellectually challenging for me, which I have thoroughly enjoyed. Like my protagonist, the expectations of my project did not line up with reality, however for me it certainly worked out in my benefit. Initially when composing my project proposal for my midterm assignment, I had the preconceived notion that the letters would be purely creative and that the overarching messages that I hoped to communicate would be self-evident. My assumptions quickly were corrected once I began the process. I initially had several interesting points or stories that I knew I would incorporate into letters, such as a story about her capture, the ice cream, and the spider, but the majority of Rebecca's self-analysis, monologues about her predicament, and her perspective on what she has learned developed mid-writing. I did not realize I would have to work so hard to communicate her thoughts and feelings in just the right words in order to convey the themes and conflicts and messages that I intended.

Additionally, the symbol and overall allegory of the butterfly was not at all an initial aspect of the project. I knew that the family she would be staying with would have a daughter because it would provide someone for Rebecca to empathize with and it would successfully contrast with Rebecca's imprisonment, but I took time deciding on what the name would be. When I was researching Korean girl names, I came across "Cho," and it caught my attention because it was one of the few names on the list with the translation next to it: "butterfly." I liked the connotation of the name because of its meaning, and knew I would mention it its English counterpart in the letter. It was not until introducing the spider did I realize the connection and decide to weave it throughout the letters.

On that note, the research required for the project was another unexpected aspect that I enjoyed. I spent a significant amount of time looking at maps and lists of Korean names and images of street food, and I had to research about the political situation in order to understand the North Korean Worker's Party and its behavior, symbols, and typical courses of action. It incorporated my love for politics and history, which made my project that much more interesting to me.

My writing process kept me entertained, to put it simply. Often I would be falling asleep or in the shower and thinking about the project when a profound thought would come to me. I kept a note on my phone with a list of the ideas that I would add to if the thought came to me in a meeting or if I were otherwise occupied, but frequently I would immediately open my computer and write another section, even if it was the middle of the night. Although the individual letters are clearly all connected, the format of them being separated also allowed me to complete the project in many short sittings. I tend to procrastinate on large papers and then finish them all at once, but even though the length of my project exceeds most papers I have written, I was able to manage my time much more effectively and complete the project significantly early.

Developing Rebecca voice and delving into her psychosis was just as much fun as I hoped it would be. I put myself into her shoes and wrote how I would write in that situation, which was a rewarding exercise. Many of her memories of home are inspired by my own memories, and her syntax and sentence structure simulate my own journal structure. Originally, my intent was to use her experiences with the North and South Koreans to comment on the American Dream, but I realize now that the letters also comment on Rebecca's own individual "American Dream" and her desire to gain success through ambition and hard work. Although she feels acutely the pain of her supposed failure, the journal itself gives her the renown she craved.