

Laura Boller

she / her

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Hello, my name is Laura. I was born in Minnesota and was given up for adoption a few months after I was born. I am a half-Korean American domestic adoptee. I have struggled with my identity for much of my life and expressing who I am and what defines me. Art allows me to connect with my Korean roots and to express myself in a meaningful way. I recently decided to go back to school as a non-traditional student to finish my Bachelor's degree in Illustration.

Submission 1: *Apology to myself*

I wrote this piece for a creative writing class. I really wanted to dive into exploring and explaining my identity as a half Korean American adoptee who was born in Minnesota. I was adopted trans-racially by my White parents when I was just a few months old. I was bullied for a good part of my childhood and into my teenage years. I felt like I was never Asian enough to the Asian kids and never White enough to my White classmates. I struggled with my identity while growing up and wanted to White pass. It wasn't until I was 18 years old that I started exploring my Korean identity and when I was 22 years old I went to South Korea for the first time. This poem is an apology to my younger self who didn't love themselves and didn't want to be different. I now celebrate and embrace my Korean identity with pride.

Submission 2: *Korean Tiger*

We are in the year of the tiger according to the Chinese zodiac. In Korea, the tiger is strongly tied to Korean culture and is seen as a symbol of strength that represents the Korean people. This watercolor painting was inspired by Korean minhwa folk art. It serves as a symbol for my longing to connect to my Korean roots.