

Journal Entry
July 24, 2017
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During our days in Rwanda, I have slept well and my dream life has been non-existent. That ended last night when I woke up in a sweat at 1am. My stomach ached and my eyes were wide open. It was a dream more vivid and frightening that I have had in a long time. It began in a pretty benign setting. I was preparing for a presentation at a memorial site for victims of the genocide. It was a beautiful place with a stream of flowing water down the center and a very symbolic representation of the events during the genocide. I was practicing reading names over and over again so that I would say it correctly when I introduced people. Suddenly, I noticed that the water from the stream was overflowing into the side rooms where there were lots of archives. The side rooms looked just like the chapel in President Habyarimana's home. I decided that we needed to make sure the bodies of the victims that were buried outside were not affected. My mom was there. She was worried that she didn't know the proper technique for exhuming bodies. I assured her that I would show her how and we started digging. At first, it was just dirt. Then we hit something. Skulls. Thousands of skulls in various states of decomposition bubbled up from the ground and covered me. This is when I woke up.

What did it all mean? Was it just a reaction to eating lots of Chinese, banana cake, and reading about the genocide before bed? Or, as we get to the end of our trip, is it a call to reexamine the question that was posed to us by Kate at the genocide memorial site in Nyamata: "How will you teach about this genocide?" Perhaps I needed a subconscious reminder that even with this amazing trip, I am not the expert. I still need to practice what stories I share, practice the names of the people who lived these experiences, and use caution and care when exhuming the stories of the genocide.