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My Home

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My Home

Victoria Ramirez

My mother always told me that home is where your family is. When I was young, I found that phrase comforting because home couldn't be easily defined, and at that time in my life it made sense. I think she said this because growing up we moved around a lot, and I would ask her where she thought home was, that phrase was her answer.

Sometimes we would live in communities where minorities were the majority, and other times we lived in suburban areas where it almost seemed like my family and I were the only brown people within a 10-mile radius. In Los Angeles, I remember hanging out with all the kids from the neighborhood, running around causing mischief and not going home until dark. The elotero couple that would come down my grandma's street every afternoon with their young daughter under the cart. In Guatemala, I remember the sky always being grey and gloomy and tones of homeless families on the streets. Moving to Bakersfield; to our first white suburban neighborhood and waiting for my parents to announce when we would pack up and leave, but they never did. Realizing we were never going to leave Bakersfield I started developing close relationships with friends.

All these places were so different from one another, but it represented my family's growth. My parents worked hard to give my siblings and I a better chance at the game of life, and it required a lot of sacrifice on their part. Moving away from cities and countries where they had their family for support. My parents grew up surrounded by family, and I know to some extent it was hard on them to leave. They didn't want to be broke, but that meant leaving behind everything they knew. That meant moving into a culturally shocking environment and having to adjust to the micro aggressive racism and comments.

It's been two years since I have last lived with my family, I'm now twenty years old and going onto my third year of college. The phrase "Home is where family is" doesn't feel right to say anymore; it can't just be defined by one phrase. All these Spaces and people that meant

so much to me growing up are no longer available at hand. I live in Humboldt, and there are no elateros or Ice cream trucks nearby. I am about five hours away from a decent taco or torta. All my friends that still talk to me time and time again are busy building their lives and careers, as am I. More importantly my family lives 10 hours away from me, and I'm only able to see them for Holidays. All I have are memories left behind from these spaces. So, I ask myself now that I have lived on my own and about entering my third year of college, what is home?

Home to me now is where my family is, where my loved ones are, where I am. It's the United States, El Salvador, and Guatemala. Every place and memory that's shaped who I am, my bed after a long day, home is the feeling of comfort my parents provide, its pain, and love; home is everything.

Dedicated to my First Home: Mom and Dad.