

Repudiation

The feeling of home is quite hard to explain. It's like having your mother cradle you in her arms for the first time and the sheer look of love on her face as she adores your entire existence. It is a place where you can strip away your most outermost levels and *truly* be yourself. Home is more of a feeling than a location; a destined place of residency, a permanent location that you could find on a map — or at least that's how I see it. Home is when you feel engulfed in warmth and comfortability, where one feels safe enough to shed droplets of rain from their eyes or shine brighter than a sunny day.

My eyes slowly opened to the bright beaming sunlight that greeted my morning days. The four grey walls in my room towered over me as my body remained glued to my bed, making my ceiling seem so far out of reach.

To the left, my floor to ceiling windows displayed high-rise buildings and chaotic drivers fighting for their dominance on the road. When I first moved here, I would spend my nights staring at the glowing lights that'd make everything seem like a bokeh blur if I stared for too long. To my right is the door leading to my living room. There contains memories about the past and as time still continued to proceed within the present. Marble tiles filled the kitchen area's floor, leading into a dark oak that complimented the simplistic yet modern furniture within my apartment. Further down is where my roommates rest. Funny, charismatic, odd, yet all accepting in their own ways. They're people I like to call my second family, to be frank.

This is the place where I return to every day after school and work. The place where I would get a goodnight's sleep and be the ugliest, sloppiest yet most beautiful version of myself. Despite all that, I refuse to call this place my home.

I laid there in my bed, still trapped inside those four walls. I felt warm inside my blanket, feeling the soft fabric weigh itself down onto my presence, yet my existence felt cold. My heart shivered a little from the lack of warmth, like the feeling of your skin being greeted with an air conditioner after a long hot day outside. Nonetheless, I was forced to pry myself off the comfort of my bed. I didn't want my self-indulgence to get in the way of me doing something with my life, no matter how much to sulk in bed for a couple more minutes.

Most of my high school life was dedicated to moving away from my hometown and leaving my parents behind to a well-known college and my career of god-knows-what. Growing up in the suburbs, I craved the idea of the city, where everything seemed so convenient. The high-rise buildings with restaurants at the bottom of condominiums — how could anyone *not* want to live here? I used to think that once I moved to the city, everything would be so different. I would live my ideal lifestyle and I could always experience new things. This dream only made me more frustrated with myself. I wanted to rip every single strand of hair off my head when the feeling of being miserable suddenly overthrew this what I had worked so hard to achieve.

Deep down, I felt shitty that I dedicated so much of my time in the past to be in the spot where I am today. I was willing to literally die for this, yet now, I suddenly hate it with every inch of my body. These past few months felt extremely dreading to me. Though I had my moments where I'd be laughing to the point of suffocation or gleaming from ear to ear because of my friends, there was always a voice in the back of my head screaming how this place wasn't my home. It was as though a faceless dark figure was following me around my everyday life, staring at me in silence yet screaming simultaneously that I was ungrateful and a selfish human being.

Like an onion, my outermost layers would claim that I am content living in the city. That I only miss home from time to time and sometimes even forget that I grew up in the suburbs. But the more I peel away those layers, the more I begin to cry to myself as I become vulnerable with the truth: I miss the feeling of home and I'm ever so desperate to achieve it again.

After countless hours of thinking, at one point I thought to myself I was perhaps just homesick. That I needed to go home to visit and once I returned to what is now my 'new home,' everything will feel okay again. I eventually did so, feeling nostalgia and sentiment weigh down onto my shoulders. I was able to regurgitate the exact routine of the small town without even having to think.

The neighbourhood I grew up in remained the same. The small elderly lady who would always offer me the freshest oranges that she hand-picked from her yard, still sat on her front porch in the mornings, and is still the sweetest soul I'll ever know. The low houses with exteriors consisting of warm colours, giving a welcoming feeling to almost anyone that would enter that neighbourhood. Lastly, my parents greeted me warmly without words, but instead, with a huge hug and tears in their eyes. And with that, I felt at home again.

When I returned home, the pain of missing my hometown was no shock to me. I was expecting it to happen as it's only normal for one to do so. Warm tears flushed my vision as I left what I used to call my home once more and returned to a place I couldn't give that same title too. The tears seemed endless, as they slowly grazed the skin of my cheek, leaving their wet essences behind on whatever it touched. I felt sad, and I wasn't surprised at that.

Anger and frustration began to grow when the feeling of missing home wouldn't go away. The more I lived in the city, going to college and trying to pursue some random career I had no interest in, the more I felt like I was wasting my time. It made no sense to me. I dedicated so much of my life to be in the position I'm currently in, so why am I now hating it all? I felt as though me visiting home only meant I wasted time and money in a place I thought I would love when I could have just stayed there to begin with if I wasn't so selfish. If only I knew myself better then, perhaps I could have avoided this. But what if I go home and claim to miss the city? What if I go back to the suburbs and I'd want things to go rewind again? I suddenly couldn't trust myself anymore leading me to break down numerous times. I had a feeling of repudiation against the idea of

how the city isn't my home. Despite all the things that I wanted out of this city that filled my motivation and determination to get here to the brim, I emotionally felt empty.

And perhaps one day I'll come to the acceptance that this place actually isn't my home. I'll call my parents one day and explain to them everything that I've been feeling. I'll cry to them and go on a rant of how my ideal life suddenly wasn't so ideal the moment I had it. I'll confess that I regret moving away from home and be able to tell myself that my mistake of moving here is completely okay. I'll come to a point where I'll grow trust with myself once more and realize that if it weren't for me moving to this city, I wouldn't have realized how much home actually means to me.

When I do go home, the small elderly lady will still be sitting on her front porch offering oranges to me. The houses will still be painted in warm hues and the sun will be glistening through the windows of those houses. Most importantly, my parents will greet me once more with their arms, engulfing me their warmth as I'm welcomed back into my old home. By then, I'll truly feel like I have a place that I can call home.

But for now, I remain a coward as I refuse to come to terms with those emotions. I allow for the faceless dark figure to follow me and scream how I'm the biggest liar I know. I'll continue to claim how I feel fine in the city and how I love it here despite my contradicting emotions. Nonetheless, I'll continue to routinely pry myself off the comfort of my bed in a place I refuse to call home.