

knowing your place



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Some Background to this Publication

This “Zine is a publication of the University Honors Program at CSU Stanislaus. The contents were produced by freshmen in our Honors Composition course (under the direction of their instructor, Shea Mester, Lecturer in English). The course readings, discussion and writing activities were organized around the theme of “Knowing Your Place.” The students were given free reign to determine the focus of the writings contained here, and are responsible for all content.

Jim Tuedio, Director

Ellen Bell, Co-Director

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The **University Honors Program** resides in the Innovative Center. For information on how to apply to the program, visit our webpage: ***honors.csustan.edu*** or call and ask to speak with our administrative coordinator (Becky Temple): **(209) 667-3180**.

Perspective

Royal Sandhu

I grew up in a house of desire.
Not one composed of greed
But one in which thoughts are freed.
Where a burning passion is fueled with fire

Through inconceivable support and love.
It's no wonder, I choose to create
My own path in life. I think of it as a trait
Inherited from the ones above.

Ambition, Strength, Aspiration
All so true in my life, my world, my nation.

Teamwork

Courtney Lewis



<https://www.asme.org/career-education/articles/team-building/teaching-teamwork-to-engineers>)

Teamwork: **Knowing your place** enough to be willing to get stepped on in order to reach the team's ultimate goal.

My Childhood

Nama O'Donnell

My childhood was an open, suffocating, welcoming, safe, frightening room.

Open because there was no lock on my door;

no way to keep others out of my head.

Attempts to prevent people from invading

caused confusion among my loved ones.

They demanded answers to a seemingly simple question:

“Why on earth would a little kid need privacy?”

But there is no way for a child to effectively explain

the heartache and loneliness that fills their soul.

The only response that comes to mind is

“I don't know”

But, I don't know is not an acceptable answer

so, it becomes easier to give up and let them in.

Suffocating because all those who entered

never seemed to find the exit.

Their voices reverberating against the walls.

Head pounding.

Heart racing.

Leaving me unable to fight the constant bombardment of insults

My self-esteem being pounded into dust

And hope for a bright future sounding more and more like a fairy tale.

Welcoming because bright colors and fake smiles

Encouraged friendships and love.

Only at night when all the color is replaced with shades of grey

and that smile fades

as tears cascade down water stained cheeks

is the truth of my mind revealed

Safe because my bed, like my mind

was a fortress for me to hide in

and escape the outside world.

Blankets to disappear under.

Stuffed animals keeping watch

empty promises of protection against Him.

Pillows, if pressed tight enough against my face,

could provide my long yearned for departure.

Frightening because in barricading myself from others,
the demons that reside in my mind come out to play.
They twist good friends into enemies;
turn happy memories, dark;
and morph hope into paranoia.
And when it is 12:37am
and all you have is your own fucked up brain to keep you company,
the pain and self-hatred
swell into a tidal wave of depression and anxiety.
Threatening to wash away your entire existence
with the sharp edge of a blade on young innocent wrists.
As crimson pours from porcelain skin,
that safe, welcoming, and open space
is tainted until nothing is as it seemed.

How do you live without a Smartphone?

Lauren Martinho

The basic necessities of life are food, water, and shelter.
But what do you do when you're bored and have nothing with you?

I think or I people watch.

Well what if you need to look something up?

I have never *needed* an answer the web can provide me.

What if you need it for class?

I've made it this far without one.

They're really useful.

Useful or convenient?

Everybody has one.

So what am I?

Defining A Place

Jacklyn Heslop

My house, or should I say my parents' house, is the second to last house on the street. Depending on the season, the field nearby is either a lush green field or a yellow fire hazard. My town is a glorified truck stop with about any fast food restaurant you could ever crave. Everything except pizza, there is not pizza.

The hotels at either end of my small town represent the limits of where I live, outwards are only cattle and trees. We are in Merced County, considered the Central Valley, in the middle of the sunny state of California. A state that I used to imagine could break off and just float away into the ocean. Still, we remain attached to the United States, a vast tundra above and a cultural wonderland below. Just across an ocean lies Africa or Asia, depending on which way you go. Going up further you see an empty expanse of space, the earth revolving, the moon not too far off now. Go explore the Solar System, the Rings of Saturn slowly turning, Pluto, the planet newly returned to planethood. As you exit our Milky Way Galaxy, you see an amount of space that you could not comprehend, not even think about properly.

SNAP

Now back in my neighborhood, in my room painted white with posters littering the wall. How should I define my place if I know how small I am. Should I just ignore the universe beyond my front door? If yes, I know I am a daughter, who is very important and plays a key role in the lives of those around me. In my town, my place is a customer who buys things, a resident who gets a single vote. My state — a vote, a citizen in the world, a single digit on the population bar. To space I am an inhabitant of Earth; beyond that, I live in the Milky Way Galaxy. After that, where is my place?

Untitled Story by Frank Carlo Mills

I walked into the town. Never mind what the town's name was, and never mind what mine is either. Those names aren't the important names of that particular event. The important names were Eliza, David...and Thomas. Eliza and David were the two people who changed my vision, albeit unintentionally.

I was nothing but a drifter, a stray with no home. I didn't even have any interest in having a home, for that matter. Having a home meant having bonds, and in my experience, bonds tie you down. With bonds, you didn't have any freedom. Some people talk about having freedom, and how it's good for you and all, but I view them as hypocrites, Being free means that you can do whatever you like, having no responsibilities or commitments, and everyone I met couldn't bear to give up those responsibilities. Don't take me for some irresponsible fool, though---I've had my share of commitment, serving in a war to make up for a crime. Yes, that's right. I joined the military to escape being imprisoned. I'm like that. But you don't need to know how or why I entered the army---although it might interest you to know why I *left* the army. It wasn't because I hated killing, or any of that flak. It was because I hated authority figures. One of my best friends was a general, sure, but every authority-flaunting son-of-a-she-wolf I've ever met has been in my face, with a high air of superiority, and ordering me around like I was a toy soldier to be played with and discarded. So I stopped binding myself to the law. I obey it, sure, but I stay just outside of society's reach so that I can't be dragged into the system and made a part of it. And the most important part of my lifestyle? I do it alone. I had a dog once, but that was it. He left me. It was better off that he did leave---I wasn't good at taking care of him. No one was. He was like me, a stray by choice, and because of that we had a mutual unspoken agreement between us of never getting too close to each other. I only fed him a few scraps and he just followed me. I never pet him, and he never saved my life for anything. I didn't even give him a name. He did, however, take my knife and my handkerchief, so I had no desire to take him with me anywhere anymore even if we did meet up again.

So I went into this town alone, ignoring the strange looks everyone was giving me. I didn't mind the fact that I had gone without shaving for a couple of days, but my clothes were worn out, and I had a habit of dressing heavily, so it's not hard to mistake me for a bum. But I was a normal citizen, just like any of them. It was perfectly legal for me to go into a fast-food restaurant, which I did. People instantly moved to corners of the room, afraid that I would pull a gun on someone. As a matter of fact, I did have my old military handgun on me, but that hasn't worked for years---it's been jammed for a really long time. So, ignoring everyone, I walked up to the counter.

"One hamburger meal, no lettuce," I said, offering up five dollar coins.

The attendant gasped. He was probably a teenager, by the looks of him.

"U...um, sir..." he said, sounding scared, "Do you even have money to pay for that?"

"Look at the coins. They're authentic," I said, "And they're rare too. There aren't many people in the world who have 'em anymore. Keep 'em safe."

"Ummm....right," he said, trying to smile. "It's just....well, I would've thought...."

"That I since I looked like a bum, I wouldn't have any money?" I asked, "Grow up. I'm not homeless because I can't make it in the world. I'm that way because I like it."

Instantly, the people began to relax a little bit, and talked about me amongst themselves.

“Did you hear that? He’s homeless *by choice!*” one of the strangers said.

“He’s just like Thomas!” another one said.

“Excuse me?” I asked, looking at the one who said that. Instantly, he cowered behind a trash can.

Typical. I sighed and settled down in a chair, listening to people outside. They hadn’t noticed me yet, so I watched them talk about things that aren’t me. Most people would get mad when they’re not being paid attention to, but I like it when people ignore me. It makes me feel like I’m a normal person, and one that’s not connected to anything on top of that. I focused on my attention on a couple, looking at the woman, who appeared to be crying about something.

“I can’t believe that Tom died!” the woman said, “It’s so tragic!”

“Eliza, come on. He was just a stray.”

“But I was so used to him, David! He was a part of our lives and now he’s gone!” the girl cried.

“He was a part of all of our lives, honey,” David said, “Every day, he’d sit on that corner, looking happy and relaxed. We’d walk up to him, we’d talk to him, and he was friendly about it. But he never let anyone touch him. And sometimes he’d even go further into town, so everyone knew him. But boy, he was a friendly mutt. He seemed to make everyone happy.”

Mutt. That was an odd term, I thought. It wasn’t uncommon to hear people come up with their own insults for homeless people, but these two seemed to hold him in a high regard. They genuinely liked him—I could tell by the tears on the woman’s face, the way her voice changed its tone, and the way that that David person sounded like he was consoling someone about the loss of a family member instead of someone they didn’t know. It was strange to hear them talking about a stray like that—not just because of the fact that strays weren’t a well-liked bunch in general, but also because they used “mutt” while still describing someone that they loved. It seemed like an obvious contradiction to me.

“I’m surprised they didn’t call the authorities on him!” Eliza said, “You’d think that they’d take him someplace because of him not having a home! If they did, he wouldn’t have been hit by a car, trying to cross the road!”

“No, Eliza, he wanted to be left alone,” the man said, “Thomas was always like that. Anyway, I’m surprised that they gave him a grave after he died. I didn’t think they’d do that for a stray.”

I’d heard enough. I rose from my table and left. Whoever this “Thomas” was, he seemed to have the trust of these people, and that was strange enough to merit my attention. These people loved him, which was unusual attitude towards a stray—I knew this from experience. He couldn’t be like me, that much I knew. He chose the life of a stray, just like me, but these people eyed me with the same distrust that I saw in hundreds of thousands of places. He had to be different.

I walked around, covering the entire area of town until I came to the edge of it, with two shops being the only thing that constituted gates around here. I recognized them both—they were RED and BrightStore, the two biggest supermarket conglomerates in the world. Clearly this town was on the verge of becoming a city, I noted. The two stores formed an unusual gate, beyond which lied the highway and desert that I was so familiar with. On one side of the road, at the corner of a makeshift block, was a crude grave, consisting of a stick in the ground with a piece of paper tied to it.

"Looking at Thomas's grave, are you?" a voice called behind me.

I turned around. There was an old Mexican man, with a moustache, balding grey hair, and a sky blue sweatshirt, watching me.

I paused, looking at the man. "Who was he?" I asked. "And why are you the only one who isn't afraid of me?"

"I can tell you mean no harm, sir," he said, "I was a stray once myself, but settled down when I met Thomas and saw how well the people were treating him."

"What made him different from the rest of us?" I asked.

The old man chuckled. "You mean you haven't figured it out yet?" he asked.

"What? What is it?" I asked. "Answer me!"

The old man nodded. "He was a *dog!*" he shouted, even though his face showed no enthusiasm. "That was why they liked him instantly! I cannot believe that you didn't know that!"

"So you were taking care of him?" I asked, not bothered by his unusual and unnatural expression and tone of voice. It was strange, sure, but once you're a stray, it's hard to show emotion to anyone, and my military days taught me that the best way to explain something was to shout so that people wouldn't get bored.

"I was," the old man said, calming down and smiling, "We had an understanding, that one. Carried around a knife and a handkerchief everywhere he went to show everyone he had an owner and would have no other. Brown and white, had a beard like a goat."

My eyes widened. I instantly knew what he was talking about. "That was my dog," I said, "I left him a long time ago, and he must've wandered over here."

The old man looked at me carefully. "Is that so?" he asked, "What was Tom's real name, then?"

"He didn't have one," I said, "He and I had the same kind of understanding that you did with him."

"I see," he said, "You were a bad owner."

"I'm not the type to be an owner," I said, trying to defend myself.

"He wasn't the type to have an owner," he said, "You know this."

"Yeah," I nodded. "Do you still have the knife?"

"Wrapped it in the handkerchief," he said, "I suppose you'll want it back. But I have something for you. Thomas went in heat a while ago. Went after my own dog. So, I have a puppy that's meant for my firstborn son, three others that have been sold, and just one left."

"You want me to take it?" I asked, "I don't need a companion."

"It's either that or stay in town," he said, looking stern. "You're still young as far as strays go. You don't know this, but it's a hard life. Your heart grows cold if you don't travel with someone."

“Who says I have to listen to you?” I asked him.

He pulled out the knife on me. “If you don’t, I’ll never give this to you.”

I sighed. “Well, I guess I owe Tom that much,” I said, “You mind if I stay with you for a while before I push off?”

“I reckon not,” he said.

Eventually, I left the town, taking the pup with me. But it wasn’t until the old man had died that I did so. I promised his son that one day, I would come back for him, and we would travel together. I owed his father that much.

My Hometown

Andrew Aceves

The place that set me apart

For I was the only one born away

My immediate family were all born by the bay

But I do not mind because this place will be in my heart

The town I am from is where all the cowboys roam

The house in Oakdale is slightly older than I

I wonder when I will have to say my goodbye

To the only place I have ever called home

Since birth I have never had to leave my hometown routinely

After high school graduation I now venture to the unclear

At this point in life new things should be tried frequently

It is time to explore these new things while in college

There will be many distractions as I spend my years here

But I am here to gain knowledge

In the end, the most important thing to remember is where you came from

Since it influences who you become

The Script in the Sky

Nathaniel Ah You

Are we governed by fate?
Is there a higher being?
Do we really have choice?
Do you understand what I mean?

we feel in control
but is my life really mine
and if this is so
with who might it be intertwined?

Those people we meet
the stories we live
might it all be a lie
some angels great fib?

A script in the sky
oh how I wish I could fly
up to this script
and make it all mine

But I now realize
that I am a falcon
and so easily I climb
up to the sky
to make the script all mine

Now I am the play write...
and the director...
I hold great might!

No power external
but all from within
I have the freedom
to dictate my sins

Fate is a figment,
a cage and a cell

We all hold the potential
To rule over ourselves...

A personal sketch from Cheyenne Appleby

When you lose someone, it changes who you are. Ten years ago my grandmother died of lung cancer. Since then I haven't been the same person. Losing someone while at such a young age is hard to comprehend. My younger sister was four and I was seven when she died and we didn't really know understand what was happening, other than she wasn't coming back. Being a kid you didn't know what would happen to you or your family, other than you'll get through this. It was probably one of the hardest things I've had to deal with, but it has shaped me into the person I am today.

My grandma — Mama was her name to my sister and me — was one of the best people I knew. She was my best friend when I was a kid. We'd do everything together from playing games together and taking naps on the couch to making chocolate milk. She was there when I lived through many of my firsts: first word, first steps, first curse word, first days of school. But she wasn't able to be there to experience many other firsts. She has missed me getting my driver's license, getting my car, being accepted into college, graduating high school ranked in the top 50, moving away and starting college. I wish she was here so she could experience all of this with me and the rest of the family. I'm sure she'd be proud of where I've gone and what I have accomplished, and for what I have planned in the future.

I decided to major in nursing when applying for colleges. Ever since I was a kid I wanted to be a teacher, but when my grandma was in the hospital there was always a nurse around and that kind of pushed me in the direction of wanting to pursue nursing. They were always helping her and trying to make her feel better. I want to give someone else, who may be going through a situation, like this a friendly face to come to and feel that they or their loved one are in good hands. The nurses took care of my grandma and I want to be able to take care of someone and make their life a little easier.

When my grandma was in the hospital, my grandpa would try to make light of it by playing around with my sister. He'd tap her on her opposite shoulder and then look away, and when she would say, "Why did you touch me?" he'd respond by saying, "It was the red-headed nurse!" I always remember that, and it's those little things that get you through tough times like that. There never was a redheaded nurse in the ward my grandmother was in, but the nurses did treat us very kindly and were always there for support. Those nurses would help brighten the trips to the hospital and not make it a saddening time. Another time nurses helped brighten our time at a medical place was when my great-grandmother, Nana, was in the convalescent home. We'd go visit her and the nurses there would come in and greet us. Nana would get ice cream with her dinner and the nurses there would always bring one for my sister and me. They would talk to us and always be friendly when we would arrive. When she was able to come home she got a traveling nurse, one who would come two or three times a week and take care of her. The nurse would spend a lot of the time with my sister and me since we

were on summer break. She taught me some Spanish and drew with my sister and me. She gave me a step forward on wanting to be a nurse.

I think becoming a nurse would make me a better person and would benefit many other people. I think heading this direction for my career will help me find my place. I've never had a place where I felt like my job is what I was meant to do. I've always wanted to help people, and being a nurse is what that will do. I always put other people's health and safety first and try to make sure they're okay before I leave them. I just wish when I was younger I would've been able to help my grandma more, and maybe made a difference. The only thing I can hope for now is that I can make a difference in someone else's life in the future.

Know Your Place...It May Not Be Here...

Jocelyn Hillberg

The neat thing about the California State University, Stanislaus Honors Program is that you easily become acquainted with some of your fellow students. When I started attending CSU Stanislaus in late summer, I met a nice young man who appeared in about three of my classes. We did not become best friends, but would say hi if we saw each other walking through the quad, or would stop and chat for a few minutes. Then, all of a sudden, he stopped showing up to classes. About a week later, he updated his status on Facebook:

It is after much thinking and late anxiety-filled nights that I have come to the decision that is best for me to withdraw from Stan State and take a break from school to focus on myself and learn how to be more happy in this life and figure out based on real life experiences where I want to head in this life and what I want to do here. I truly, truly feel that a four-walled room filled with a bunch of people listening to another person is not the ONLY place to learn about what to do in life. And I certainly feel it's not what my mind can focus on at this moment....

Although it is slightly disappointing to not be able to see him around campus anymore, I am very happy for him. He is brave enough to begin taking his future into his own hands and setting out to find his place in the world. Not everyone's place is the same place. I believe my friend has discovered a profound truth: the classroom gives us the opportunity to learn and discover many things, but there are some things that can only be discovered in the "real world." For myself, I have an idea of what I want to do in the future, and going to college to earn a degree is my way of getting there. But as my friend stated, his place is not in "a four-walled room filled with a bunch of people listening to another person." He is absolutely right, it is not the only place a person can learn about what to do in life.

Know Your Place Haikus

Kelly Stahl

I stand here contained
In a room full of people
But feel so alone

To know one's purpose
Can make life so much sweeter
And end the searching

But thoughts of the planned
Will make the now disappear
And force the time by

I stand here alone
I stand here in confusion
My place is unknown

I control my fate
The storms are no match for me
For I choose my path

I go where I want
Where I eventually end
Is where my life starts

My place is unknown
Destiny undecided
Decisions ahead

It's a Musical Life

Alicia Montanez

I have always wanted to live in a musical. My life can already be defined as an action movie, but the musical part had been, up to that point, limited to my own family. I sang cleaning songs with my brothers on days we all had chores in the same room, and dinner cleanup always involved a song or two. But I wanted to get up with a group of strangers in a street and sing spontaneously, dance numbers included.

I got my chance earlier this year when I went on a two-month mission trip to Vietnam and Cambodia. I'm not entirely sure how the teams were chosen, but I think that everyone who requested those two places ended up going. There's no way a sane person would volunteer to go to those countries, and it kind of showed.

I learned very quickly after arriving in Vietnam that if you take a group of twenty-some-odd utterly insane artistic people who all know the same songs and put them together in a very small space for a very long time, the musical writes itself. Within a few days, we took any and all opportunities to link arms and sing our favorite songs at the top of our lungs. Whether we sang Christian worship songs after our morning war room meeting or Disney songs in a taxicab to who knows where, we had no shame.

One time, a few of us sat (and most of us danced) on the side of the road in the red-light district of Ho Chi Minh City with a couple guitars. An older couple, probably tourists, came up to us and asked us how much money we needed. This caught us so off-guard that we all stopped singing, trailing off in an uncoordinated way that left several people bellowing out lyrics for a few extra seconds. It didn't occur to us that people might think we were busking. Then Vanessa, our black-belt Costa Rican, told them that we were just having fun, but that we would welcome money because we had literally been living off of fifteen-cent instant ramen packets for the last two weeks. Despite what fancy churches around the world imply, being a missionary does not equal rolling in cash. We didn't have to eat ramen that night.

Anyway, one could conclude from this event that you don't really have to know what you're doing to get it right. You don't even have to be trying, sometimes. Live life to the fullest, be who you truly feel you are meant to be. Or maybe, God looks out for His people in the strangest ways. But none of those are the point I'm trying to make. If you take nothing else away from this story, please remember to sing as passionately as you possibly can with as many people as you possibly can in as many places as you possibly can. And don't forget dancing, either.

Ode to the Place of Security

Tylor Franklin

Everyone, everywhere always has a place,
Where they belong so closely
That their fears and insecurities cannot grace,
Or arrive too boldly.

To me this place has always been
Hidden away in my room within my bed.
Here even during a downpour that makes a horrible din
I feel safe to sleep deeper than the dead.
Under my blankets I feel so warm,
And as I hear a rumble from the storm
I can't help but have a big grin on my face,
As I look out from my comfort place.

Whenever I have to leave,
I always feel a pang of sadness
And I cannot help but to believe
That I am not alone in this madness
And that when someone else is forced
Away from their place of safety
They must feel a similar pull in their soul
And in that moment they become less hasty
To abandon the place that allows them to feel whole.

Fables of a Peacock

Anonymous

Peacock was a proud sort of fellow. One thing he was especially proud of was his very nice Limousine and every time he went out, he would have Cat drive him around the city so that everyone would be able to see how rich he was. On a very stormy night, as he was out in his limo, Cat suddenly lost control of the vehicle and hit a stout pole by the road. The driver was knocked unconscious by the blow and started bleeding profusely from the head. Unfortunately, the peacock, despite knowing how to drive, did not know where he was even though he lived in the city. As a result, he spent hours driving around the city looking for the hospital and when he did finally find a hospital, his driver had lost so much blood he almost died.

Always be aware of your location and surroundings.

There was a Peacock who decided that he would like to travel the world. So, he set off on his great adventure. After passing through many countries without a problem, Peacock came upon a barren and desolate land. He saw a very rundown structure that looked like a dwelling. Upon approaching the building, Peacock suddenly found himself set upon by many growling wolves. They caught him and bound him up and pulled out every single tail feather, humiliating him to no end. After repeatedly requesting that they free him, he was finally let go to return in shame to his family without any beautiful tail feathers. What Peacock did not know was that particular area was rife with crime and that peacock feathers were the most valued objects on the black market.

Be sure to plan your trips ahead of time.

Home

Heather-Anne Jaeger



Guilty

Stephanie Barragan

When I was young my mother always made it a point
to have my brother and I feel guilty for the many *things* we had.

And when I say *things* I meant the house we lived in,
the television set, the games, the books,

the school we attended and even the clothes on our backs.

“All thanks to us,” my mother would say, proud at having broken the law,
proud at having two smart and obedient children,

proud at the fact she was able to escape servitude under a man in a country she
abandoned

not in body, but in heart and soul.

So, I hope my legacy, my own children one day, will not have to feel

the embarrassment,

the shame,

the guilt,

and the dishonor

of having been born

to a family as proud as mine.

A Morning Routine

Katie Cedillo

5:30 AM A loud ringing occurs. Opening your eyes you realize that it is Saturday. You have to get ready for work. You turn around, stretching out your arm and pressing the off button on the alarm clock. Slowly turning away from the clock, you stare at the blank wall for a few seconds. A deep inhale, a deep exhale. Pushing away the blankets, you rise, resting your hands on your knees. *It's time to get up.* You rub your arms and search for your slippers as you get out of your bed and head into the bathroom to get ready.

6 AM Walking back into the room from the bathroom, you start putting your uniform on. You take off your undershirt and put on your black company shirt, slightly adjusting your collar. You reach for your light grey jeans and slip them on. Securing them, you sit down and put on your black shoes and fasten the laces. Walking over to the mirror, you look at yourself and brush back your hair into a high ponytail. You are sleepy. Walking over to the closet you find a warm sweater and pull it over your head. A familiar voice is heard outside the door.

Are you ready?

Almost.

I'll be in the car.

Okay.

You hear the front door shut and you begin to hurry. Finding your bag, you make sure it has your phone, wallet, extra change, bobby pins, and your water bottle. You grab it and take it to the water jug and fill it up. You exit the house and head over to the car.

6:15 AM You buckle your seatbelt and she reaches to the backseat and covers your legs with a warm blanket as she pulls out of the driveway.

Do you have everything?

I think so, do you?

Yes

Aren't you cold?

Don't worry, I'm fine, cover yourself well.

You pull up the blanket so it covers your arms, looking out the window you begin dozing off as you stare at the ocean.

7:00 AM You wake up as you pull up to a parking space. She turns off the car.

I'm late! Don't forget to lock the doors.

She gets out of the car and starts heading over to the building. You get your things and lock the doors. You enter the building and sit in the café where she is starting the coffee machine and starts counting money. She serves you coffee and a muffin as you wait for it to be eight.

8:00 AM Walking down the hall, you greet co-workers and clock in for work. You head to the store and unlock the doors, turn on the lights and count the money. After a while you finish fixing merchandise and restocking drinks and open the doors at nine for customers.

A personal note from Alejandro Alcazar

As a prospective politician, I am simply appalled that the United States only has two major political parties. Oh sure, there are other tiny political parties, but they have no real power. A bipartisan system is simply not working; there are more than two perspectives. For those with an independent political mindset, it is nearly impossible to gain office. My place is to become a politician with unique viewpoint unaffected by the agenda of a political party. People should be no means to be tied down to an ineffective system.

The two-party system stinks like a gang war. Politicians are looked at based on their party more than their policies. If a politician's policy runs in contrast with their party's value system, they are regarded as a traitor by the rest of the party. Politics were originally intended to help the people rather than pledge allegiance to a gang- er excuse me, political party. Even George Washington advised against "the baneful effects of the spirit of party," which are "founded in ill- founded jealousies."

This country needs more viewpoints, and a more diverse pool of ideas and policies flowing in. The childish squabbling over "which party" needs to stop, before real change can be incited. My place is to help make this idealistic way of thinking a reality.

- Sources: www.ushistory.org/gov/5a.asp

Self-Validation

Angel Mascorro

How many times can someone make you cry?

How many times until you stop lying?

How many times until you've lost your voice?

How many times can you truly rejoice?

The world keeps going round, but what about you?

Tossing and turning, until the fear darkens through.

Finding the walls that still hold you back.

These are the moments you'll never get back.

But still, deep within, a fire ignites you,

Burning and blazing, until the sky loses its blue.

Memories stay, people change, but will you,

Will you stay the same?

From birth, "Stay true to yourself."

Was the message we carried.

Out of pain and turmoil,

And our hearts sinking heavy.

How can we find that place where we belong,

If everything we love was taught to be wrong?

Math, science, and logic.

The paths that my parents and brother have chosen.

But I refuse to choose that which is not me,

Music theatre, and passion are what set me free.

Though there may be times when you feel you don't have a choice,

Look deep inside and follow your own voice.

A comment from Jonathan Low

People have always longed to find their place in this vast and unknown world. The lucky few that do eventually come across it have truly achieved self-knowledge and understand the society in which they live. In order for anyone to truly understand themselves, they must experience their full range of preferences to know what is exactly perfect for that individual. This is why knowing ones place is so difficult: there are so many places for one to fit in to! What makes each of us unique is how our experiences have changed our lives and how they form what we say, think, and do. Since no two people ever has the exact same background, we can assume that their experiences differ, and therefore their personality and place will vary. With each unique personality, there must be a place for everyone and most people can even fit in more than one place. With a variety of places to choose from, narrowed down from an even bigger initial pool, we can see how difficult it is to find a place suitable for one's personality. My point is this: don't rush to find your place. The more time you take, and the more experience you have in the world around you, the more educated your decision will be. As you make more mature decisions, more mature places will open up and you can advance. Most of us are rushing to find our places in this world, but I would suggest taking your time and let the opportunities present themselves on their own.

A poem about Place

anonymous

Knowing your place
It's reminiscent of
Drill sergeants and
The man, screaming

Get in your box
Not where you want
But where we put
You, don't complain

Appreciate our efforts.

Learning you place
Is reminiscent of
Teachers and
Counselors, guiding you with

What do you want
to do with your life?
What are your hopes
and dream? Your hopes and

Your desires?

Knowing your place
Is reminiscent of
Sleepless nights and
Coffee-filled days.

Never knowing if
You're in the right
But striving ahead
Anyway. Making your dreams

A reality.

Where It All Began

Amanda Woodhouse

Taking the first step is the hardest
The journey will be long
Deep down you know it will be worth it

You take in a deep breath
All the moments in your past have led to this
You have prepared months for this

All the hours, all the days
The long time spent working for it
The tears shed and the work put in for this

This is your moment
Don't let it pass you by
Be fearless, be strong

Go all in and you cannot fail
Feel that rush pumping in your veins
In a moment of chaos, your mind is focused

Time to take your place where you belong
On the field

Where it all began.

My Parents' Influence

Andrew Aceves

I was raised in a semi-traditional Mexican family; what I mean by this is that my family carried over most of the culture and traditions typical of Hispanics, but as the generations pass this family will become Americanized. I am the second generation in my family to be born in the United States, but I was still raised under the Old Country's values. I was brought up by my parents in a way that showed me what the expectations of my behavior would have to be. I was already a quiet and shy toddler, but my parents would always tell me directly or indirectly what they expected of their children. Therefore, I would have to say that I have an interesting view on the phrase "know your place."

What my parents instilled in me was that kids should always obey their parents, act properly whether in public or not, and behave well in general. In no way do I consider this some sort of snobbery, rather, these beliefs come from our heritage. It was just customary to have strict parents.

Now, my brother was the athletic child while I was the academic child. The differences between the two of us are numerous and I always felt like I did not belong. My mother would treat my brother differently than me. I always felt like I was at the bottom of my mother's priorities. Now, my relationship with my father was the exact opposite, but what is sad about this is that my brother does not get along with dad. It is kind of interesting how life sort of balances itself out.

My experiences growing up and my position as the youngest of my family made me think, literally, about knowing my place in life. I think that things would have been a lot different, were it not for everything that has happened to me growing up.

The Million Dollar Question

Amanda Woodhouse

Throughout life we ask one question

Who am I?

We then try to figure it out

Am I strong or am I weak?

Am I bold or am I shy?

Do I like to be loud or do I enjoy silence?

What kind of life do I want to have?

Do I want to be a lawyer or an artist who travels the world?

Do I prefer sports or art?

Am I who I want to be?

The truth is, we are all of these things.

We are strong at times and weak at others.

We all have moments of being bold and moments that we like to hide.

We all have moments to scream in excitement and moments to sit quietly and say nothing.

We want everything in life, whether it is to be successful or travel the world.

The absolute truth is: we are whatever we wish to be.

A letter to self

Dear Nathaniel Ah You,

This may come as a surprise, and at first I do not expect you to believe what you are reading but keep an open mind. This is you, I am you, but five years in the future. My name is Nathaniel Paul Ah You, and I have something very important to tell you, a piece of wisdom that I hope you cling to. But, before I get into that, please allow me to prove who I am. Our parents got divorced when we were in the 3rd grade. It hit us hard, but we looked at the bright side. In 8th grade we made a Facebook page about how we couldn't sleep because we were in love with Justine Limon. When we had to be dropped off early at middle school and neither Adam or Spencer were there, we would walk in circles around the gym because we had nowhere to go. We noticed the glances, we knew they knew we had nowhere to go. But now you're a freshman in high school and trust me it's going to get better... much better! Although I will not tell you exactly how.

Being in high school is going to be many things, many positive and some negative. But when all of those positives and negatives combine... it creates something unique. You are unique, you're not like everybody else, because nobody is like anybody else. So waste no time trying to "fit in". It will not work, trust me. Just be yourself and those who enjoy your company will gravitate to you. It sounds cheesy, I know, but it's the truth. It took me a long time to realize a little thing about friendship so let me save you some anguish and self pity.

"If you go out looking for friends, you're going to find they are very scarce. If you go out to be a friend, you'll find them everywhere." -Zig Ziglar

High school has many cliques. Your place is not with any of them. Your place is with love. I understand that this is an abstract idea but bear with me. Right now, if you are already dressed for school, I would bet a hundred dollars that you're wearing your Ariat lace up boots, a pair of wranglers, the belt buckle you got from Uncle Brian, and a blue or red plaid shirt. This is what you're wearing, not who you are. You are a loving young man. You will discover that this is your asset in life, not all your skills as a wrestler, or as a baseball player. None of them match your skill to love, so use it. Love everyone. Love those you don't know, love those who receive no love, and even love those who despise you in return. Once you understand how to do this.... then you will know where your place is, this is when things start to get better. Trust me. Push on.. Be strong.. Work hard.. Love long.. Be true.. And most importantly.. Be you...

Me, myself, and I

-Nathaniel Paul Ah You

P.S. You're not as good at driving in reverse as will think you are.

Apartment #2: A six year old's description of her childhood home

Katie Cedillo

House: Small room, bunk bed, bathroom, door.

I grew up in a very small apartment: it was just a room and bathroom, no living room or kitchen. There was a bunk bed on the side wall, my mother and I slept in the bottom, my uncle in the bed above us. The bathroom and shower are next to the door that leads outside into the hallway.

Outside of house: Hallway, washers, two flights of stairs, right door.

There is a long hallway which connects to many other apartments, and also the washers and dryers. Two flights of stairs meet up with the main entrance of the restaurant. The main entrance is a double door that opens to the café and the entrance of the restaurant and store.

Big Sur Lodge: Café, restaurant, store, front desk.

The café contains a few tables, they sell ice cream, coffee drinks, premade sandwiches, and drinks. The restaurant is to the left of the café, it contains an outside patio with a view of the highway. The store is large and to the right of the café it mostly sells toys, gifts and souvenirs. The front desk checks tourists into the hotel and answers most questions.

People There: Mom, Uncles, Employees, Foreign employees.

My mother works as a waitress in the restaurant. My uncles work in the kitchen, the employees fill in the rest of the positions in the café, the store and the front desk. The foreign employees arrive during the summer and live in the other apartments.

Outside of The Big Sur Lodge: Road, Hotel, Forest, State Park.

The main road goes off of the highway and breaks off into separate roads, one to the Lodge, another to the hotel, and one into the state park. The hotel contains a conference center and a large pool. The state park goes into the forest, there is camping, a small store, picnic areas, water holes, and a baseball diamond.

Making Life Decisions as a Teenager

Cheyenne Appleby

Deciding what you're going to do with your future is scary at any age; picking that at age seventeen or eighteen makes it even worse. As teenagers we have to decide where we want to go, what we want to major in, and what we want to do with the degree we intend on earning all while seniors in high school. Going through that experience has made me grow up faster. How do people expect teenagers to know what they want to do with their lives, when adults don't know what they want to do either? We are expected to know our place in the world and what we want to do with it, when we have been given our place and told what we should do in the world for the past twelve years while in school.

I think that to know your place, you have to experience life first, and at eighteen you haven't really experienced much. You barely just graduated high school and you're supposed to know what you want to do until you retire. People make mistakes and picking at eighteen can lead to a big mistake; you could head completely in the wrong direction and spend time and money doing things that you couldn't end up wanting to do. Yes, people do it for the experience, but it could be a hundred times better if you do it with purpose and get what you really want out of it. Choosing to attend Stanislaus was a major decision for me and I think it was a very wise decision for me to make when I was only seventeen. I hope all of the decisions I make while in college will help me in the future with my career and hopefully lead me the right way. I hope going to college will help me find my place and give me the right pathway to success.

Wait... Who are you again?

Royal Sandhu

Defining Yourself by Yourself

In a world consisting of approximately seven billion people, where do you fit in? The moment we are born, we are given one of two spoons, silver or plastic. We face many challenges in life but overcoming them define who we are. For some people situations define them, while for others they define the situation. What type of person are you?

Be Who You Want to Be Not What Others Want to See

Within these eighteen years of life, I have experienced countless situations in which knowing my identity came in handy. In spite of what others may think, I know exactly who I am. My actions speak louder than the words of those who doubt me. I have learned to define the moment rather than letting it define me. To be honest, there has been times when certain individuals tried to bring me down by passing judgments and negative comments towards me such as "Oh she's a vegetarian no wonder she looks so skinny" or "She's weird for not eating meat." It's amazing how many people chose to be narrow minded. Their words are used as a hateful weapon to thrash the feelings of others. I'm thankful for maintaining a strong mindset and having the ability to stand above those empty words that only gain purpose if we let them. I choose to be stronger than those negative thoughts. Instead, I focus my life and energy on what truly matters to me: my heavenly father, God. I am the daughter of God and am born with a purpose to please Him and follow His will. He gives meaning to my life. I feel blessed to have Him in my life. He is beyond the worth of winning any lottery. He is my lottery. Undoubtedly, life brings along many challenges in which I am compelled to ponder my importance in life. This causes me to question my own significance in life. In these situations, I make it clear to myself that: my name is Royal Kaur Sandhu. I am more than just a race; I am human. Only in God do I define myself and find my identity.

**"I am the
daughter of God-
I am not alone,
for my God is
with me and
All is well."**

Poem on Place (anonymous)

Do we still know our place
when we are alone?

The masses are gone and you are at home.

Do we know who we are
behind locked doors?

No one to judge the show we put on.

Do we lose our footing
and crash to the floor?

Did we lose the idea of who we really are?

Or

Do we find our place
when we are alone?

The people are gone, away from our home.

Do we know who we are
hidden behind built walls?

Locked away phones now left with only a mirror.

Do we find our path
and explore the world,
becoming who we need to be?

Your Place, Our Place

Nama O'Donnell

They say to know my place.
To sit; to smile; to nod politely.
My place is a silent role in the far back corner of the stage.
But I don't want to know my place.
Where I want to be is anywhere but here.
Clawing my way out of box they continually push me into,
Relinquishing the chains that bind me,
I am free.
They hold no dominion over my soul any longer.
My place is now nothing.
A fresh start with a scary past.
A closet full of cobweb-ridden skeletons
--reaching, grasping, clinging--
Attempts to shove me back in my place.
But no, I cannot go back.
I will not go back.
Where I stand now, is not where I was supposed to go,
And it is not even where I wish to be,
But from here I can see where I hope to one day reach:
A world where men and women stand on equal ground;
A country where we live in peace;
A state where we can marry whomever we wish;
A city where color does not determine hierarchy;
A street safe to walk along alone at night;
A home, where we are free to be ourselves.
It is our place now.
The new generation.
Don't let anyone tell you to "know your place".

Rising Phoenix

Angel Mascorro



I am fearless. I am perseverance. I seek to find myself in the interactions of others to keep growing and discover the true “me”.

Nothing can inhibit or limit me. People can try, fear can try, self-doubt can try. But I will not let anything stop me from reaching my highest potential to be who I am.

Those voice grenades, called words, my ceaseless desire to help others, even the best wishes of my own family won't stop me. I won't stop me.

Sometimes you have to let go of everything you've ever known to find who you are. And though outside forces and yourself may try to stop you, keep pushing. Because you'll be reborn in the ashes of your barriers and spread your wings in the breeze of your newfound freedom. And like the blazing phoenix rising from its ashes into the cerulean sky, the fire within me will take me to where I need to be. There will be struggle, there will be joy, and there will be pain. But as long as I believe there's a way, the open door will never cease to close. And my inner fire will never be stifled. Instead, it will spread, and the world will be caught on it. And even when all physical, mental, and spiritual traces of me vanish, the lives that I touch along the way will keep my fire close as it sparks their own.

The world is an endless expanse waiting for you to make your mark on it. What good will making your legacy be remembered if you lose sight of who you are?

Keep true to yourself and hold on to what you believe. For in the moment that we establish ourselves as our ultimate reflections, we become our own flaming and immortal phoenixes, which will never be forgotten, and always remembered in the hearts of those that hold us dear.

Spirited Away

Stephanie Barragan

When I went home after school,
I found my mother sobbing on the kitchen counter.
“Mama,” I said. “What happened? What’s wrong?”
My mother lifted her head slowly from her arms, crossed so tightly that they were white,
and in her softest voice, a voice reserved for when she tells me goodnight, she said
that 46 students, who wanted peaceful change in Mexico, were taken
against their will
away from their families
and given to the Mexican cartel gangs
who would then do as they pleased to them.
And my mother, my always loving mother, embraced me in a hug so warm
that she began to sob once more.
“Imagine if I had lost you,” she managed to say, “to those men who have no hearts, no souls.”
And I did wonder what if?
What if I was suddenly spirited away?
What if I was one of those 46 students?



— Kelly Stahl

The Best Friends

Wesley Manuel

I think it is safe to say that most, if not all of us, have a certain group of friends that we feel most comfortable with. It may be with a specific set of companions at school or maybe with the members of the band you belong to. As for myself, it was during this last summer that I realized that my church friends are my closest companions.

This past summer was a busy one for me. I did a lot of traveling and two of the places I spent the majority of my time at were a church conference in the state of Indiana and a youth camp in the mountains of Colorado, with both of these events consisting of people attending from all over the country. I hadn't seen any of my other-state church friends for a year, so I was pretty excited to get to see them all again. I had an enormous amount of fun both at the conference and the youth camp with my friends. I grew closer to my old companions and made some new acquaintances as well.

I am a person who has a group of school friends and a group of church friends. While I have to admit that I usually enjoy the company of my friends from school, it is my church friends who I am especially close to. I do not think it is possible for me to fully explain why I feel this way. There is just a special bond that exists among my church buddies. I feel that it is similar to that camaraderie between groups of soldiers that one reads about. Everyone is so closely knit together, something that I do not see outside of this group. And the funny thing is that we are all together only twice a year at the most. Yet, despite this fact, it is this specific group that I feel most connected with.

I think that part of the reason for this closeness is a shared core of Christian beliefs. For example, I cannot recall one instance of there being any contention among my group of friends. Everyone is willing to work problems out and because of the aforementioned common belief system, there are rarely any instances of even having problems. This creates a stress and conflict free environment, unlike the many days in high school where I experienced bickering by students over petty and unimportant issues.

Most people have that one group that they feel the closest to. Mine just happens to be my group of church friends that is only together twice a year at most. We all share the Christian faith and have a bond that holds us together like brothers.

Know Your Place: Starring in Your Own Life

Joslyn Hillberg

In the fall of 2013 (my senior year of high school), I was given the opportunity to be an extra in a movie that was scheduled to be filmed right here in Turlock – an opportunity that I gladly took advantage of. I had always wondered what it would be like to be in the same room as some of “The Big Names” and watch them work. I was incredibly excited to learn that I would be an extra in a film directed by Corbin Bernsen starring actress Lacy Chabert! *That’s so fetch!*

The first thing that I had to do as an extra was raid my closet for approximately eight outfits that would be acceptable in a winter café/restaurant scene. Taking my armload of clothes to the producers’ downtown office, I waited for a couple hours for a wardrobe consultant to come by and analyze my outfits. To the surprise of myself and the other 30 extras, the director’s assistant told everyone that the production team did not have time for us that day, but that they would be in touch.

They did not call me back for about a week, but once they did, I repeated the process. Thankfully this time, one of the wardrobe ladies came over and selected an outfit for me. They told me to walk on my tiptoes so that the heels on the boots they picked out would not click on the floors.

Once everyone was sorted out with their respective outfits, we were whisked off to a local restaurant, 10 East, where we all waited in the bar area until we were called onto the set. My older brother was also an extra, and he and I were finally called after another hour of waiting. We sat in a booth with another couple (who was not really a couple, they had only just met that day) that was directly behind the booth where the main filming was taking place! We had some beautiful dishes of food set before us, but were told not to actually eat them – just fake it. The glasses of drinks were also filled with crumpled cellophane – I learned that this is how they give the illusion of ice-filled glasses in movies to prevent condensation and excess background noise. We were instructed to smile and laugh and chatter, but completely silently. Our movements were supposed to look natural, but be completely in pantomime. It was definitely amusing, but actually much more difficult than it sounds.

I think this was an absolutely WONDERFUL experience, but I also realized that while it was fun for a night or two, it would be absolutely boring to live my life that way – always being told what to do, how to do it, what to wear, what to eat or what not to eat, how to walk, where to look, who to talk to and when, etc.... The sad truth is, though, that many people live their lives letting others direct them; they continue to be the “extra” in their own movie. It is important to know your place as a unique asset to society; to know that you are an individual worthy of being a star as well as your own director.

Untitled by Alicia Montanez

It's two in the morning and my teammates are finally shuffling in through the door. The smoky-salty scent of the streets follows them like a living mist. One of them is nearly in tears. I don't try to piece together the stilted bits of short-lived conversation they try to make. Sometimes it is just better not to know. So I sit back and watch in silence as everything crumbles.

Night after night they go out, dipping themselves into the waters and hanging on to a prayer in the hope that they won't go under. Sometimes the waters barely touch them, other times they drag themselves back drenched and gasping for breath. I don't know whether they can't feel it or just won't.

There are nights I feel ashamed that I'm not brave like them. I'm ashamed that I won't go out to the lowest of low, to stand in the mire and filth in hopes of maybe pulling someone out. It takes a while, but one night I wade in and stand among the fangs of the monster that picks its teeth with shards of broken souls. I watch as the dark waters lick around my brothers and sisters and that scares me more than the shadows themselves.

I don't go back out again. I can't. I want to cry out every night as they get closer to the waters that spiral maddeningly downward, but since I'm not swimming with them, they can't hear me. And I can't convince myself to join them.

They build kingdoms in the sand and sit back with pride, but all I can see is their hands getting dirty and the incoming tide. It's all I can do to keep my eyes open as I watch them drown.

But there's so much more that I can't see.

While I'm in slavery to sanity they're out saving humanity.

My Home

Tylor Franklin

Knowing your place will always provide
Something resembling a home of the mind,
And there you can always take an aside
Whenever you find life being unkind.

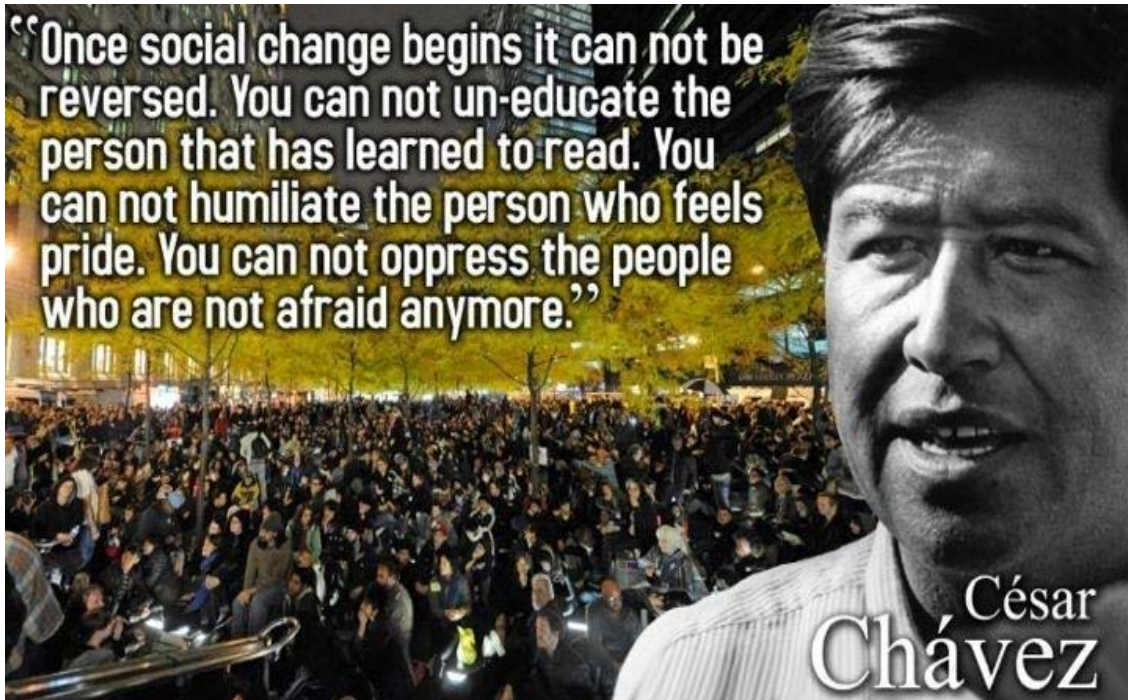
But when you do not have this home,
Then you cannot easily escape life's stresses
And are forced to continue your roam
Without a place to express your distresses.

This is why it is important to find or create
Something that can act as a mental abode
So all of your burdens you can negate
And your worries can unload

And so I can say without any fallacy,
That my place is home, with my family.

Power in Place

Alejandro Alcazar



Once an individual's eyes have truly been opened it is nearly impossible for those eyes to be shut once again. Education and the idea of pride in one's identity are the keys to reversing poverty. This picture has been my motivation to open peoples' eyes to the disparity between the rich and poor in literally every country in the world. As long as people remain ignorant and apathetic to the injustices in politics and this middle-upper class consumer based economy nothing will ever change. People need to take their power back and the best way to do so is lifting the toxic fumes of ignorance through education and a renewed sense of pride in being humble and accepting responsibility.

Surprises

Lauren Martinho

There is a certain comfort one can take in knowing their place. Sure, starting college left me a bit uncertain about some aspects of my life, but I was prepared and did not anticipate any big changes in my life aside from making some new friends and leaving behind some old ones. When I found out I was pregnant after the first week of school, I felt like I was floating in space and that it was up to me to make sense of a very different world. Would I still be able to go to school? Would I lose all of my support at home? I had no idea. I was not scared of the future, I was afraid of having to find my place all over again.

Getting over the initial shock took thirty minutes of staring at the floor in silence with my boyfriend. There just wasn't a lot to say. We decided to tell his parents first since we were at his house and again I didn't know where I would stand with them after I told them the news. To my surprise they were and are extremely supportive and our relationship has gotten stronger. But I was most concerned about telling my own parents because I live with them. At first they were angry but they quickly came to terms with the situation and have done everything to make my life as normal as it had been before.

I will admit that I was not happy or excited for a few weeks after I knew I was pregnant. I was mourning life as I knew it, I had forgotten that life is full of changes since my own had been very stable for the last few years. I was also disappointed that I could not meet my own expectations for motherhood. I wanted a "real" family, I wanted to live with my boyfriend and our baby and I knew that I could not make that happen. It took me around six weeks to realize that being sad about missing out on something you've never had is really doing a disservice to yourself. We can't always choose the places we end up in our lives but we can make the best of it.

The most important piece of advice I could give someone who has recently learned or done something life-changing is to take time and evaluate your place and whatever that means to you. When I think about how much my life has changed it is clear that it is still the same in many ways. I am still a college student and I will continue to go to school during and after my pregnancy. My place in my family has not changed, but I have gained a place in another family. My relationship with my boyfriend has gotten stronger, and soon I will be his fiancé (he can't keep a secret to save his life). By focusing on what I have gained I have embraced my new place(s) and I'm sure my future will be better for it.

Anonymous Poem

Knowing your place here
Something people think they do
So sure of themselves,

When tragedy hits
Their own world tilts sideways
Their place is destroyed.

Building it again
from the ground up, finding it,
knowing it, hardship.

They will succeed, if
it takes months, years, decades worth of sheer force of will,

If it takes mountains
of caffeine, scars of the mind and
body; it happens.

You know your place a
thousand times in your life, the
true hardship lies in

Discovering where
You want to fit in the world
and to be happy.

A Letter to My Future Self (#2)

Jonathan Low

Dear future self,

I hope you aren't too busy with you amazing life to read my letter. There are so many questions I want to ask you – well, us – but I know that I will discover the answers on my own as I progress in my life. Then years is a lot of time in which someone can change who they are. I am really curious especially about what we choose to do concerning our career path. Do we continue to follow our dreams and work towards the Federal job that we have always wanted? Do we fall into another niche that we feel will suit us better? At the moment, I really hope that we decided to stick with and follow our dreams, but as I learned in a book that I recently read, we should enjoy the journeys to our answers and not rush to find what may be a premature conclusion. As difficult as that is, I plan to take every moment as a new opportunity to work towards our goal. If we fall into a different place along the way, so be it. I know that with our gathered knowledge and wisdom from college and other life experiences beyond that, we will make a truly educated decision as to what we do with our life. One way or another, we will find a way to make money and get what we want out of our lives in that respect.

We have a whole lot to look forward to over the next ten years in each of our lives. I will graduate from college and begin my career, wherever it takes me, and you may be looking at the beginnings of a family and other adult, mid-life events and issues. We will find our place in the next ten years and make the most of whatever it may be. We will take it as it comes, because it is in our nature to make the best of these situations. Good luck with your future. Don't screw it up, because it's mine too.

See you soon,

Jonathan

Thoughts on Growing Up

Stephanie Barragan

Growing up is all about finding your place. As people age, their scenery changes, they go to different schools, and they meet different people. The places and people one experiences help mold the person they



become — i.e., their place in life. It is a universal adolescent feeling, trying to find your place. “The adolescent who is perfectly adjusted to his environment,

I've yet to meet.” (Roger Bannister). As a child, one is unsure of their place; children are still learning right from wrong and basic knowledge about their self. They are figuring out their likes and dislikes and forming an idea of what they want to do with their life. Finding and knowing our place involves many aspects of your life; some that you can change, and some that you cannot. This process is a natural constriction, but an inevitable part of growing up.

Some observations (anonymous)

I've been making observations lately, just small ones. For example, when did I stop liking a certain kind of music? This color? The smell of strawberries or the taste of garlic? I used to love garlic. I wondered if the people closest to me have noticed these changes, but so far they seem to be oblivious. Maybe I had begun to change long before this point, and in reality I was the oblivious one. I worry that one day I will look inside myself and see something ugly and frightening, but I won't be able to get it out. I want to run far, far away, but I can never outrun myself, can I? My legs can't carry me too far anymore. It's a good thing today's a beautiful day.

Days

Heather-Anne Jaeger

How I live my days:

Wake up, ignore the alarm for thirty minutes then force myself out of bed

Look at the closet, think hmm maybe I want to look cute but instead grab yoga capris and a shirt

Brush my teeth, got to make sure they are white, right?

Make sure the bag is packed for classes, hopefully I did the homework... I did.

Lock my door, both my bedroom's and dorm's

Walk outside, quickly regret not having a jacket but continue on my way because I already locked the door

Walk down the stairs, one two three eh never mind

Walk to class past all the grass, hope the lawn mowers don't get me

Get to class, early always to make sure I get the same seat and am comfortable

Listen to what goes on in class, participate a few times to seem interested even in the times that I'm not

Finish class, off to the next...

Follow same procedure, until it is over then,

Freedom. Be happy with whatever I do.

New philosophy, don't go to bed upset thinking there was something to do instead, or could have done something else because every day we live, another day is gone, and if we "waste" our days, we will wake up one day to realize it is our last.

A Poem to the Road

Katie Cedillo

The Road to my Hometown:

My road is lovely and sun kissed

With large blue waves, and hidden, untouched beaches.

The road is lined by bright green trees that extend to the sky

And the land is filled with wild animals that greet

The passerby's that come from far.

With their large vans and motor homes

Looking for adventure and nature's beauty.

There are bridges as well and strong dirt mountains

That hug the road that took me home.

The Road to my New Home:

Now the road is spaced with lanes

Filled by business men in lonely cars

Who pile up and wait and wait

Just to get past the turns and inclines

To reach their unknown destinations.

A Letter to Myself

Heather-Anne Jaeger

Dear Rufus,

I have been sitting here awhile, pondering on how to write to you. Notice I did not say what to write, because inside my head I have so much to share with you. It seems that I have been having this problem, call it writers-block, but even then I do not believe that to be the case. Lately I have just been wondering why I should write, and all that has been doing for me is lead me to even more questions. I know of course, if I want to just find the answer all I have to do is ask someone who knows or simply look it up through the internet, but it does not solve all my questions. I have learned the best way to solve questions is to just think them through and imagine the answer. As a great writer once told a young poet, "Do not now strive to uncover answers: they cannot be given [to] you because you have not been able to live them. And what matters is to live everything. Live the questions for now" (Rilke, 18).

If you have never heard of this quote, I think you would find a reading of the book, Letters to a Young Poet by Rainer Maria Rilke to be an interesting read. I say interesting because reading it the first time, it did not strike me as an important reading. I was just starting my college experience, being excited about anything, and wanting to do everything. At the time I first read it, I did not enjoy it. Rilke did have a few points that I liked, but in that moment in my life, I feel I was just not mature enough to understand what he was saying. Of course it has only been but a few months into college, and now having to do an assignment on the book, I realized I had forgotten what the beginning had said. I had to reread it. Never have I felt so connected to a book before, reading the words of Rilke to the young poet, it made me, no forced me, to take a moment and reflect upon myself. So with that, I come to you with my pondering question, in hopes that maybe writing my thoughts down will inspire my mind to an answer.

The question I come to you with today is what is my purpose in life? Yes, of course, it does seem like a very broad question, but I feel that Rilke makes wonderful points to the poet, making him think and reflect on what his purpose is, whether it is to write or not. I feel it is only proper if I too reflect now. What strikes me is something Rilke tells the poet. He starts off in the first of many letters, claiming that if the poet wants to know if his purpose is to write he should find out if it is his passion. However, Rilke acknowledges that writing is not for everyone, and so he writes, "Whatever happens, your life will find its own paths from that point on, and that they may be good, productive and far-reaching is something I wish for you more than I can say" (Rilke, 8). He makes me want to sit back and think what is mine? What is my purpose?

If I was in any way religious, I could figure that it is in God's plans and that it is He who knows my purpose, but unfortunately, I do not rest my fate with Him. I leave it up to me to choose, be as it may. But do you want to know the craziest thing? I do not know what to choose. I know heading into college many students do not know what they want to pursue, but I do. I know I want to study English, I want to teach it and be able to help others, but I also want to write. I have a journal just dedicated to the ideas of things I want to write, but I feel as a writer, I am not mature enough. I know if I want to write, I would have to know exactly what I want to write about, and as good as my ideas seem, I would not know where to start. So I go back to my teaching idea, but to be honest I am not completely sold. I tell people I want to teach high school

level, but to be around kids who stereotypically are like the peers I studied with, I grow a fear. High school is rough, and I know I have the back bone to do it, but who would want to put themselves out there like that? Plus, there is one thing that I know I should avoid thinking about, but it lurks in the corners of my brain, taunting me and reminding me that I do not have it, and that is money. My biggest wish, for my life is to be what I want it to be, would be to fall in love with a wealthy man, pay off my debts, and live a life aiding others, but it is just a dream. When I am taken back to reality, I realize I do not wish for that, I just wish for a world without money, but that would not happen either. What would though, is to just live life and pursue everything and anything no matter what the cost. Of course, we would need to be rational about that, but maybe that is just the mindset I need to keep. Just live life, and maybe, just maybe, that is the key answer. My purpose in life, for now, is to just live it. Who knows, it may help me as writer, or it may show me that I want to just live a casual life as a teacher, I have heard it is a self-enriching life.

I guess now you can see how thought-provoking Rilke is with his letters. He was smart to think upon what he is writing, it makes me wonder if he knew that centuries later his words to a young poet would inspire me, as well as many other readers? So I will leave you now with just a few words from him again, in hopes to inspire yourself to just live life, "...let life take its course. Believe me: life is right, whatever happens" (Rilke, 45).

Thoughtfully,
Heather-Anne Jaeger



Senses

Anonymous

golden hair, a smile that could melt icebergs
contagious laughter, unforgotten hymns on the piano
banana bread, date-night perfume
cool hands on my hot forehead
momma

sparkling eyes, fancy ties
teasing jokes, the click of crutches
tangy old spice, fresh clean shirts
big strong bear hugs
daddy

orange and yellow, blue and green
sound effects, Beatles, drumming and strumming
chocolate axe, hard-earned sweat
sandwich squeeze
bubbas

perfect makeup, the blue of the sky, selfies
piano compositions, voice of an angel
vanilla brown sugar lotion, the outdoors
thumb wars, smooth gentle touch
sissy

happiness, contentment, unity
laughter, chatter, encouragement
exotic cuisine, home-cooked meals
hugs, prayers, feather-light kisses
family

You are my Place

Kelly Stahl

Over seven billion people occupy this world and make it their home

Population forever changing and multitudes of people to meet

Out of all the people you were the one that contacted me through the phone

Glancing down at the message that I had received made my heart skip a beat

I never thought that it would be you who would make me feel this way

See, there was a time that we didn't even know each other all throughout school

And yet our lives unknowingly lead us down to crossing fields every day

I finally realized that you were the only one I wanted and felt like a fool

I should of blurted it out sooner and told you everything that I needed to state

The words finally entered the air and you verified that you felt the same

Looking back to how we became proves that maybe it was really fate

Ignoring the how and focusing on the now, I am so grateful for our flame

You are the one who I adore and understand me like no one I know

Through all the good and all the bad, I know you will always be by my side

Out of the millions of locations I could be being with you is my tomorrow

Whatever we encounter along the way I know that we will enjoy the ride

With you in my life I can finally stop searching and simply see

You are my love, my home, and my place where I can happily be.

How To Be A Hero

Alicia Montanez

1. Choose a cause.
2. Champion said cause.

At some point in their life, nearly everyone who knows what a superhero is wants to be one. We like the idea. Whether this stems from a true desire to save people or a desire to be famous and looked up to depends on the person. Not a lot of people carry this desire into adulthood. Maybe they do, but they rarely do anything other than keep it in the back of their mind as an unachievable daydream. Maybe you can't get to the point where you can shoot lasers out of your eyes, but you can take a step out and be a hero anyway.

Every legend, every hero, is famous for *changing* something. From heroes of old fairy tales slaying the beast that plagues a town and *changing* the atmosphere of fear and oppression to the modern-day champions of human rights, the people we elevate in society do something to make a difference.

Having a goal is an essential element of becoming a hero. A set, clear-defined cause, a reason that you throw yourself into one hundred percent. There can't be some vague 'make the world a better place' slogan. You must decide something certain, set, and achievable.

Your goal does not have to sound sane, it just has to be possible. Ridding the entire world of slavery is a goal that sounds good but is not practically achievable. That could easily be your long-term goal, yes, but don't start out your journey with that as your sole goal. Start in a place where you can build up. Do not forget that larger goal, do not dismiss it outright, but keep in mind that you do not live in a comic book. Heroing takes work. Choose a single country, a people you love. Make it your goal to shut down one bar in Vietnam that sells women into the sex trade against their will. Find something you are truly passionate about. Start small, but always have your bigger goal in mind.

Try not to idolize your goal. It is not the end of the world if you only free six people from oppression or modern day slavery or sex trafficking, rather than an entire country full. You have changed those six lives forever, and those six people will never forget you for it. Those two siblings who were going to be placed in separate adoptive homes? Well, they still have each other because of your efforts to keep them together. Every step, no matter how small, gets you closer to your goal. Remember that these are real people you are working with and for. They are not a number you tack up on your wall to pat yourself on the back about.

Share your goal with others. Stir up in them the passion that keeps you going. Build the base behind your goal, and bring on the people. Even if they might seem useless, unless they are actively pulling you down, let them join you. Be charismatic, be excited and determined. No matter what stands in your way, the people you work with are every bit as essential to achieving your goal as you are. No man is an island, and a bundle of sticks is harder to break than a single one.

Be willing to sacrifice. You are going to have to put your time, energy, and money towards your goal if you have any desire for anything to actually happen. People are going to resist you, especially if your

work is controversial. Depending on how invested you are and what the people around you think, you may even end up severing bonds between you and your friends or family. You are going to go through pain to get where you have to be. Keep this in mind before you start. Do your best not to drop out half way and leave people you were helping in the dirt.

Know that you are willing to commit. You cannot back out half way. You have to be in for the long haul one hundred percent. How many superheroes and legendary historical figures have you heard of quitting and going home before the battle is won? Your project should not be something you think up over the weekend and implement immediately. You have to plan and be certain that you are going to give your life to your cause.

So, do you want to be a hero?

Acrostic

Tylor Franklin

Knowing one's place is sure to bring
Not just a temporary moment of pleasure, but one
Of permanent ease and peace.
When we look inside ourselves and
Instinctively know who we are,
Nothing should distress us, as we have
Genuinely found our place.
Myself, I feel closest to my place at home.
Yes, home. Where things are quiet and I can think
Philosophically, on whatever comes to mind, and
Learn about any topic that I stumble on.
And at home I will always feel peace and
Calm, and so I can only hope that
Everyone will eventually find their own place.

"We The Waters"

Nathan Ah You

"Who are you?
where did you come from
you are not like us
to our ways you won't succumb
you are not meant to be
you do not belong
your colors are bright
but you are wrong.
let's get this clear
you must empty yourself of all that's within.
Can you not hear?
We said empty!
you must be the same!
so you can fit in,
and we can put out that flame..."
-Waters



Letter to My Sister

Amanda O'Donnell

Dear Sister,

I need to tell my story. It is a long one, but I have learned a lot from it, and I hope you can as well. My story consists of three parts: self-harm, eating disorder, and abuse. Although my story has three parts, they are all intertwined.

I remember self-harming starting as early as six years old. Yes six. I don't know how a kid that young could hate themselves that much, but I did. I told my mom once when I was eight my head hurt. She asked if I felt sick. I said no. I had hit myself in the head repeatedly because I could not play a song on the piano correctly. She kind of laughed it off and told me not to do that anymore. Because of that, I simply kept it to myself whenever I self-harmed again.

I am not positive when my eating issues began. Most likely as early as elementary school, but they were definitely a problem by sixth grade. I binged a lot. Whenever I was home alone I would eat anything and everything. I didn't care what it was. I only purged once, although I had the urge to many other times. I just could not bring myself to do that again. Purging is not glamorous. It is painful. It makes your eyes water and causes you feel even worse than how you did for eating in the first place. I have always hated the way I look and starting in ninth grade, I would ping-pong back and forth between bingeing and restricting. I would sometimes try to eat normally, but I could never keep that up for long. I would hate myself for how much I ate at one meal and, consequently, restrict, only to later give in and binge because I was literally starving. My uncle, Josh, abused me openly since I was twelve, and had been "grooming" me since I was eight. (Grooming refers to "actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child, to lower the child's inhibitions in order to sexually abuse the child"). My uncle and I were always close. He's only eight years older than me. I loved him so much, but I didn't think he really loved me because he would never show he did. So I fought and fought for his affection for years. When I was twelve that changed. Josh and I went on a walk one night and he held my hand. That was the first sign of real affection he had ever given me. I relished that moment.

After that, we texted a lot more than we had previously. At first he just told me about sex and about his sexual experience. Later he said the next time he saw me he would teach me how to kiss and even how to have sex. If I wanted. He was very careful about that. To always make it "if I wanted to." From there things escalated and he eventually coaxed me into sending him inappropriate pictures. I felt used, but I was scared if I stopped doing what he wanted, he wouldn't love me anymore. I knew I loved Josh. But how much did I love him? He said he was in love with me. I thought I was in love with him, too. I was extremely confused. He reassured me, though, that "some people just fall in love with people they aren't supposed to." So, I went along with it and enjoyed the feeling that someone loved me.

Just before Thanksgiving, he disappeared for over a month. I was completely lost without him. He had convinced me my parents didn't love me and without him I had no one. I didn't know what to do without his help and support. I struggled the whole time he was gone. I became suicidal that December and came close to killing myself. The thing I remember most

about that point in my life was how guilty I felt. I felt so bad about wanting to die because I had promised Josh I would sleep with him the next time I saw him. How manipulated and conditioned did I have to be to actually feel guilty for not keeping a promise like that? I was terrified of him.

Fast forward to January: Josh resurfaced. We started talking again, but not as much because he was in a rehab center with limited phone access. He constantly reminded me my mom would kill him, and me, if she found out what we were doing. I believed him. He made me believe it was all my doing. I was the bad guy. Later that year, Josh was thrown in jail. While he was there, we wrote letters back and forth. Some letters consisted of normal day to day stuff, but most included more explicit topics. He kept bugging me about having sex with him once he got out. I felt responsible for him to get better. He told me again and again the only reason he was going to come home and get his life together after he got out was because of me. He told me if anything ever happened to me he would kill whoever hurt me. (*Side note: Looking back, I find this extremely ironic because he is the one who hurt me and he hasn't killed himself yet so...*)

December 2012: Josh gets out on probation and comes home. The September before he got home I had sent him one last letter stating I was done with this "relationship" and didn't want to do this anymore. He said that was fine and reminded me "it would always be up to me to how far things would go." Once he got back, we were really close again. By April, our texting became more and more reflective of his desire to sleep with me. He would make little comments about how I was beautiful and how much he loved and missed me. He would make other more inappropriate comments, as well.

By June our conversations became deals. I gave in to his wants. He could do anything he wanted to me as long as his pants stayed on. He kept pushing me to do more, but I refused. I decided to make things stop completely after one bad night. He held me down and wouldn't let me get away from him. I begged him to stop, but he wouldn't budge. He laughed at my pathetic attempt to stop him. I was on the verge of tears and was terrified things would go even farther. I stopped fighting and stared at the ceiling. Eventually, he stopped. I felt disgusting. I wanted to take a shower, but knew if I did, it would wake up my grandma and I would have to explain why I was taking a shower at 5am. Yes, 5am. My uncle had raped me for almost three hours. I still don't remember all of what happened that night. I only remember being scared and wanting to get away, but not being able to. I told him later I didn't want to do that anymore. He responded the same way he had back in September: "it was always on me as to how far things would go." This only further reinforced my fear that everything was my fault and if I hadn't wanted to do anything I should have said no. So, I didn't tell anyone. Until November.

The panic attacks started in September. I had still decided not to say anything. My uncle continually reinforced the idea in my head that I was the one who started everything and I was as much to blame as him, if not more, for everything. So, I kept quiet.

One day, I broke down about what happened to my friend, Mckenna. I knew I could trust her because she had gone through something similar. She encouraged me to tell my parents, but I was terrified, so she suggested I talk to a teacher the two of us were close to. November 7th, 2013, I spoke up. I told my teacher what had happened. Very vaguely, but I told. He told my parents the next day. I was so scared. Thankfully, my parents were on my side and they didn't

blame me for anything and they still loved me. I filed a police report against my uncle the following week. After everything was said and done, the police decided there was not enough evidence to charge my uncle with anything and the case was dropped.

That is my story. It has been almost a year since I spoke up about what was happening to me. A book I read for my English class recently, *Letters to a Young Poet* by Rainer Maria Rilke, has helped me begin to accept what happened to me. Rilke speaks about how “the only sorrows which are harmful and bad are those one takes among people in order to drown them out. Like diseases which are treated superficially and inexpertly, they only abate, and after a short pause break out again with more terrible force, and accumulate inside and are life, un-lived, rejected, lost life--from which we can die” (38). I used to try and hide from what had happened to me. This caused me a lot of pain, which in turn fueled my anxiety and depression. If I had not spoken out about my experience when I did, I could have become suicidal again and possibly taken my life. You must understand this, Sister. You are not alone in your unhappinesses. There are many of us who know what you are going through and so you must speak up and tell your story. Do not suffer any longer. Another thing I have learned from Rilke’s letters is “that almost all our sadnesses are periods of tautening that we experience as numbness...because everything familiar and accustomed is taken away from us for a moment; because we are in the middle of a transition where we cannot stand still” (38-39). What happened to me does not define me. It was simply a catalyst for a transformation into a new person. That does not mean what happened to me is in any way okay. It means I can move on and be better because I have accepted it. The suffering and confusion you are feeling now will pass as you come to terms with what happened to you. You will get through this. You are a survivor. I believe you. It’s not your fault.

Love Your Sister,

Nama

The Four Senses of Knowing Your Place

Anonymous

Knowing your place looks like confidence on the inside and out

Knowing your place sounds like voicing encouragement to others

Knowing your place tastes like the bitter or sweet security of an identity

Knowing your place feels like being comfortable exactly where you are

A Long Car Ride

Jacklyn Heslop

My place in life is related to where I sit in the car. When I was young I would sit in the back, staring out the side window. I spent my moments in the present not worried about the destination. I could lean over and stare out the front window but that was never fun. Pit Stops were places of magic where I had no rules or limitations, I would run free but being young meant I stayed close to my parents. I had times where I would stray a little too far and my father would chase me back to the car where everything was secure. Getting older meant I was now allowed to sit in the front seat where I could spend my time in the moment but also steal glances at what was ahead. I could watch the blur of the passing trees or look to see what was before us. I stayed mostly in the present but I started to get curious, I could now look to my future. I was even allowed to navigate, my parents would allow me to give the directions, set the way we would go. Sometimes I went I sent them in the wrong direction but they would quickly show me the right way. Then I reached a fragile age, where I could now be the driver. My mother would sit next to me with the pale death grip on the window while she pounded her imaginary brake. I would nervously drive trying to get a hold on my life, while I controlled the car my mother was still right next to me. When I finally drove alone, I picked the destinations and took my own route. I do still had to take my parents advice, but I no longer have to listen. Someday I will know where I am going and might have my own child stealing glances out the front window, but for now I am still finding my way.

A personal observation from Jonathan Low

In my room, I have a place for everything. My clothes belong either in my dresser or hanging in my closet. All of my books line the backside of my desk up against the wall. My blankets are folded neatly and stacked at the foot of my bed. Each pair of shoes is organized neatly along the wall adjacent to the door. I am an organized person and I have put all of these physical objects in their place. But where do I belong? Can I be placed somewhere like a shoe or a book? Who really determines what I do with my life? In a world of uncertainty, we cannot always be sure of the future. One does not always know what awaits them around the next bend in life. It could be a natural disaster that derails everything, or a miracle that catapults things far beyond what anyone could have expected. We are always unsure of where our next place will actually be. To me, this uncertainty is what makes life the interesting and unique thing that it is. There are only certain aspects of the journey that we can influence and even then, we are not able to be totally certain of what our life will involve. It is a journey that is out of the hands of every mortal creature and for this reason, I believe that people cannot be put in a place, they need to find it. People always say that life is a journey, but a journey towards what? What is our end goal? Where are we actually heading? We are moving towards our final and permanent place — the place we truly belong and where we will be the most impactful. On our long journey through the uncertainties of life to learn where our place actually is, we learn more and more about ourselves and can enjoy where we end up to the fullest.

Letter to a Future Self
Amanda Woodhouse

October 23, 2014

Dear Future Self,

As you are graduating from college and starting the life you have worked so hard for. I hope you have achieved everything you wanted to achieve at your years here at Cal State Stanislaus. You now get to move on and live the life you have dreamt of. I hope you have met plenty of people who have impacted your life, both for the better and for worse. Remember there will be people that come into your life as a blessing and some come as a lesson. Sometimes you need the hard times to enjoy the sweet ones that much more. You are strong and always have been and let me be the first to tell you I am so proud of you and I know you have gone through so much to get where you are today and the

fact that you are walking across that stage to receive your diploma makes me so proud and hopeful for the future you will have.

I am very curious. Did you stay with the same major all four years? Did you receive your bachelors in Biological Sciences or did you switch at some point? Will there be a class that impacts me, and is it because of the class, or just the professor? Have you met the love of your life yet, or is it the same person you have thought it would be since you met him? If I have to remind you who it is then it probably is not him. Have you started to look at the future as a bright life that is beginning or is it still scary? I know that at this moment in time, life seems like

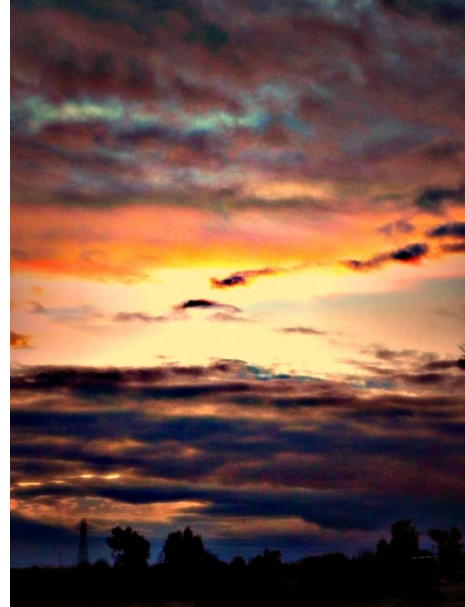
the great unknown and it is really scary. Have all your dreams come true? Are you who you want to be right now?

I know what you have been through and I just want you to know that I love you and no matter what people say about you, you are strong and you are beautiful. Never let anyone dull the fire in your soul, because you are a beautiful soul and anyone who says otherwise does not know how pure of a soul you are. I love you and I cannot wait to see you in the mirror in four years. Congrats Mouse, you did it!

Love Forever and Always,

Mandy Woodhouse 2014

Pictures in Place — Wesley Manuel



These are photos taken directly in front of my home in Merced, CA. Sometimes, when the weather and the lighting are just right, you can get spectacular shots, just like these ones. The gorgeous sky is merely one thing I appreciate about where I live. The reason why I am able to capture the beautiful sky is because I live a couple miles outside of town, which means there are no tall buildings or structures to impede my view of the clouds and sunsets. The country is where I love to live and I would not trade anything to live in the city instead. As Bryan Adams says in one of his songs “This is where I belong...”

Invisible Struggle

Alejandro Alcazar

The shade of my skin is brown
Eyes so dark you may drown
When I look around I see the same
When I watch television I feel shame
“I am different.” I say to myself
Not a rotting stereotype on a shelf
Camouflage like a chameleon
Yet I swear I am one in a billion
Image is important you see
Not only to you, but sadly, to me

Untitled Poem — anonymous

Being told to know your place
is not a solution,

Someone does not learn their place
and become stationary,

Standing there, a sentinel, for life
is an impossibility, unfeasible to
creatures who achieve boredom so easily.

Places are ephemeral things and life
happens to the best of us.

This, in of and itself, is terrifying
to all of us.

For humans spend their lives grasping
for permanence in a world
where there is none to be found.

Reaching into the landscape
desperate for a claim,

Unaware that finding your place in
this transitory world is a lifelong endeavor.

My Home

Andrew Aceves

What I define as home is the physical representation of the word; it is the place where I sleep and also where my immediate family resides. Two years before I was born, the house I would call home for my entire life was constructed. After I was born, I grew up in just one city and one house. I have never moved to a different house or even changed rooms in my house. As a result, I have grown strongly attached to my only home. My house will always be my favorite place to spend time. Since I have spent my entire life in only one house, I have come to regard my house as my place in life. Furthermore, for as long as I can remember, my house has always been my place of accommodation. I have gone through many important occurrences in my house, some wonderful and others regretful. I have a strong connection to my house and when I inevitably have to leave my hometown, I will feel like I have lost my place of solitude, comfort, and a part of my place in life.

Home: House, Shelter, and Mirror of the World

Angel Mascorro

Home is often written as the house or type of building that you make into your household, a place where you feel secure and that nothing could happen to you there, a suitcase, or even as people who you take security in when you have no abode to call your own. I used to consider my home to be my house where I lived until I moved here for college, but yet I do not exactly think of just my house as my home. My home is not only my house, but it is also the encompassment of my house, the inability to integrate into my community, my neighbors' aspects of their personalities, and knowing my place. Sandra Cisneros's character Esperanza from *The House on Mango Street* perfectly explains how I feel about my home. My home is the place "I belong to but do not belong to" (Cisneros 110). If my home should symbolize who I am, why do I feel as though it is not enough?

The town where I lived most of my life, Los Banos, is a small agricultural community so based on farming that all schools would have a week of early release because the county fair would open that week. Growing up, I leaned toward art, music, and theatre, none of which was prevalent or thought of as a practical career. It wasn't until I performed in my high school theatre production of "Rent" and saw a professional theatre production of "Wicked" in Fresno that I realized that I could not belong to my town because there was no source of interest for me to connect to. I gained a deep and restless hunger to venture outside my hometown and pursue my own happiness in art that could not exist from where I came from. I needed to break away from what I had always known to bring forth my inner muse around a world of uncertainty and be myself. Los Banos may be the home I have known, but it is not where I belong to.

Growing up as an introverted child who preferred reading to sleeping, my eyes became red, and as a result, some children began to tease me. As the insults became like blows and my self-esteem shattered, I viewed my home as a shelter from the other children. While I was inside the tanned walls of my house, I felt safe enough to cry and release my inner pain, taking comfort that nothing could harm me there. Not even when my best friend emotionally abused me or my parents' impending divorce at the time could make me view my home as nothing less than my guarded castle. It was the safe cave I took refuge in to escape both internal and external worlds of stormy emotion and horrific torment. Though my home was my shelter from the external world and myself, my neighbors introduced me to a world no one spoke of.

My neighbors introduced me to the meaning of a double life of how one presents themselves to others, and how they truly act. A neighbor and her family behind my home presented themselves as a wealthy, family-oriented household when secretly they were just the opposite. They forced their nieces, whose mother was currently jailed in a Mexican prison, to complete all the household chores while their own children were allowed to laze around and treat them as less than equal. The children had experienced a hardship so difficult that their grandmother had to kidnap them to give them a better life. Even though this was happening behind closed doors, my neighborhood thought of them as a wealthy and happy family, not knowing what went on behind our sightline. Though my neighbors were not seen as constant, good people, not all of them were deceptive wolves in sheep's clothing.

Other neighbors, some of whom I'd known since 4th grade, were always open and made me feel as though their home was simply an extension of my own. For example, while I was on the verge of revealing my sexuality to my family, I confided in them my hopes and fears of my parents' possible reactions. They did not tell me what I should do or what I could do, they simply gave me a mug of hot cocoa, warm hugs, and listening ears for me to pour my soul to. I didn't see any forced smile, wandering eye, or judging heart, only warm spirits that made me feel at home when I feared I didn't have one.

All of these experiences while seeking to form my own only reinforced the feeling that I "belonged to but didn't belong to" (110) my hometown. I realized my place was so much more than staying and hating my life in this provincial town. If I wanted to find where I truly belonged, I had to make the effort of taking a chance and following through by applying to college and seeing where it would take me. Staying and earning my education at CSU Stanislaus makes me wish to go out into the world, live my life, and turn it into a continuous and memorable work of art which will not only reflect that of what I admire, but what I also want to be remembered by. Though my place is temporarily here in Turlock, I know it is well beyond this town, the Central Valley, and perhaps even more than this nation. Who knows what the future will bring?

Through Esperanza's desire to leave Mango Street in *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros, I connect and reflect to how she "belongs to but does not belong to" (110) her home as I do to mine. My home was the box I didn't fit into, my shelter, and the sides of people I thought were true and what they actually turned out to be. It is the place I must leave to search for my identity, and the core of what makes me who I am. Home is the building that I have made my shelter into and the people who viewed me as one of their own. Home is who I was, who I am today, and who I will turn out to be.

Wordplay — anonymous

Know Your...

Personal

Liability

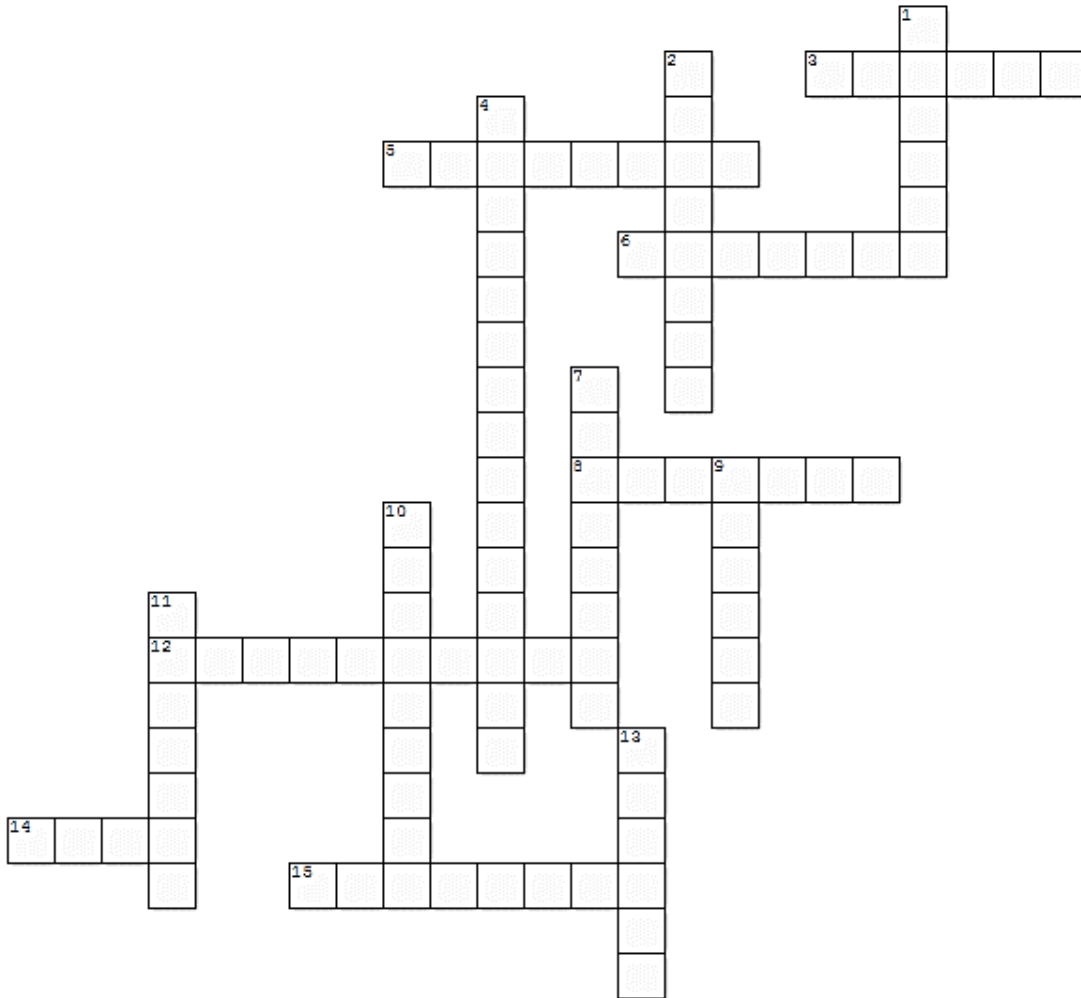
Acceptance

Considering others

Experienced

Finding Your Place

Lauren Martinho



Across

3. It is impossible to predict your _____ place.
5. Your perception of your own place.
6. Contemplating your place is a _____.
8. There are many _____ of your place to consider.
12. This prevents a group of people from changing their place.
14. You can benefit from considering your _____ place.
15. How you feel when your place is challenged.

Down

1. Examining the place of _____ can help you understand your own.
2. Internal and _____ influences shape your place.
4. A set of tools for communicating your own place.
7. _____ your place is a gradual process.
9. Your place will _____ over time.
10. Seeking your place can produce more _____.
11. What attempts to define your place?
13. You need to be _____ with yourself to effectively assess your place.

A Personal Snapshot — Cheyenne Appleby



My roommates. These five girls, Alexandra, Mackenzie, Nancy, Jessica, and Betsabe, have become my best friends and some of the closest people to me. This picture was taken the time we went to the corn maze. Becoming roommates with these girls has changed my life for the better and I'm glad I live with them. They have become my sisters and I don't know what I would do without them.

I'm Lost:

Heather-Anne Jaeger

The compass turned South,
My plan hid from me
My path disappeared

Where was I supposed to turn?
Left, right, up or down?

I stepped one way,
And the turn would change.
Everything changes each time,
How could I find my destination?

Now that's the trick!
Go with out worries,
Turn here and then there!
Who cares if it is a good or a bad?
My destination is my own idea;

The Power of a Lion

Royal Sandhu

The enormous paws of a lion represent strength, the echoing roar of a lion depicts courage, and the ferocious lifestyle of a lion encourages overcoming difficulties. The presence of this feline instills connotations of power. It lives by its own way of life. In its pride, the lion determines its own place and fights to defend its own right. They are the essence of royalty among the jungle kingdom.

These precious creatures remind us to hold our heads up high and brace ourselves with dignity. They remind me to fiercely defend what I genuinely feel passionate about. Because of these creatures, self-definition takes on a new more dynamic meaning. A lion makes standing up for oneself a meaningful life value.



Bonds and Freedom

Anonymous

In this world, there are things
That bind us to one another.

They are called “friends”, “family”, and “virtue.”
But are these things really what we want out of life?

Yes, they give us a place and a purpose in this world.
However, they stifle our freedom as well.

They’re shackles that give us responsibilities that we must live our lives by.
We have no choice with them around. We have to do everything we can to fulfill the
responsibilities they give us.

By this logic, we shouldn’t make friendships or hold ourselves by any moral code.
But if we are the ones who choose to wear these things,

Is it not an exercise of our freedom to do so?
There is no shame in being in a golden cage if you are the one with the key,

Because you are the master of that cage.
In fact, there is no denying the pleasure that bonds bring us.

We are happy because we have other people by our side
So, yes, there is freedom in being locked to some things

We are free to choose them and bind ourselves to them.
And although it’s true that sometimes there is no going back,

We all have to have something that binds us down so that we have a purpose.

Where Are Our Values?

Wesley Manuel

One thing that society today constantly drives into our minds is the need for more and more. You don't have a good enough phone therefore, you absolutely must have the iPhone 6 or 6 plus. Your 2006 Ford Mustang is so outdated now, how could you possibly even show your face in public when you don't have the latest model? And when we see people who have that kind of money, then we think better of them than we do of the person who doesn't.

I think it would be safe to say that if someone is driving a Porsche, often times, most people will automatically think better of them than a person who is driving a 1996 minivan. Our initial reaction is to rank the status of people in our minds and to automatically place the people we see in a specific class or order. We have the saying "Money is power." When we see someone who seems to have money, we instantly assume that they also have some weight in the world. The problem with this is that we also associate the person with wealth to being better than all the other people who are not as well off. Does this mean that Bill Gates is better than the other 7 billion people in the world? Is he more deserving than the man that slaves away in a third-world country 12 hours every day?

When we start comparing people based on their income and what they have, we lose sight of the non-material values that these people may possess. How do you contrast the lower class man who never lies when doing his taxes against the millionaire who skimps out by questionable means? This is not to say that all rich people are always dishonest and that all poor people are always honest but that we can lose sight of the real values in a person.

Our society needs to come to the realization that money is not everything. There is a story of a king who wanted to find the happiest man in the kingdom. He commanded his servants to bring him the shirt that the man was wearing, but when they found the happiest man, he was so poor he didn't even have a shirt to wear. With an emphasis on "money equals happiness," true happiness is lost in the stampede for "stuff." Focusing on the real values of life, such as honesty, integrity, and perseverance will help us see that money is not everything, and that we need to appreciate the values that actually endure beyond our lifetimes.

Keys To A More Productive Economy

Alejandro Alcazar

The great recession is over in the United States, but for which Americans exactly? 57% of American adults were shown to believe that the recession was still ongoing in a Wall Street Journal survey. That shows the level of confidence Americans generally have following the worst recession since the Great Depression. What is needed is a rise in the level of investment by large companies. With more land, capital, and investment more labor is necessary to produce. With a general level of pessimism amongst today's economy, now would be the time to buy. Buy low and sell high, goes the wise investor's adage.

While a 6.3% unemployment percentage is smaller than the unemployment during the height of the recession, the percentage climbs to an eye popping 9.7% when discouraged workers are factored into the equation. Discouraged workers are workers who are no longer actively looking for jobs and have dropped out of the labor force. The disillusionment with job market must be squashed with a larger demand.

The college graduates must also be properly acclimated to the work force in jobs relevant to their major. Almost 80% of college graduates do not have a job lined up for them after they graduate despite around 70% of them looking for active employment. Half of all recent college graduates with a job are underemployed. College graduates are the future of this country and must be given the necessary opportunities through implementing young talent programs throughout firms and companies. Unpaid internships and low level positions are not helping our economy.

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Once a Victim

Amanda O'Donnell



Once a Victim

Now a Survivor



Forever a Protector



Amanda O'Donnell

Siblings

Stephanie Barragan

When I was little, I was really good at playing marbles. I always won against my older brother by using my special two-in-one hit that always shot two of his marbles outside of the barrier without sacrificing any of my own. My strategies were flawless, and every time my brother tried to think of a strategy of his own to trump me, I was already two steps ahead. Our relationship was always like this: my brother trying to fit the role of the older, wiser, and much more intelligent sibling, but always failing to his kid sister. It was needless to say that most of our childhood was spent as rivals fighting for first place with fists, tricks, or wits rather than two loving siblings.

It wasn't until my brother was older that his interest in beating me wavered. No more marbles. No more races. No more fights. My brother had no more interest in first place and

relinquished it willingly to me, the beaming victor. But now that I had won and secure my place, I made it a point to look for another competitor who, unlike my brother, actually posed as a challenge. I was cocky and my mouth, too loose and wide from gloating, repeated - I'm embarrassed to admit – the horrible, horrible things I would say to my brother to the kids I defeated. I got into some heavy trouble because of that mouth. The older children in my neighborhood were not nice or tolerant to my insults. So when I won against them in a game of marbles, I wasn't so well received as the winner.

They pulled my hair, pushed me around and spat in my face. I, already sobbing, could not find the strength to run or scream for help. It wasn't until my brother came to help that I found a break in the beating to run to a safe place. My brother found me afterwards and didn't say a word, not that I expected him to say anything comforting or reprimanding, but an "I told you so" would have given me an excuse to be angry at him. He walked ahead, without turning back, towards our home and I followed behind him, quiet and meek, always two steps behind.

Dear Jacklyn – Angel Mascorro

Dear Jacklyn,

Yes, I do love all forms of creativity. Drawing, painting, acting, singing, all of it! I thrive in it and it is just so liberating to make something so authentic and yet so meaningful.

To answer your second question, yes, I would feel vulnerable if I had to explain and elaborate on the meaning of my work. For example, I created a painting of a mended heart with wings at a very trying part of my life. I had experienced realizing my sexuality, conquering the fear of telling my parents of this new discovery, in the midst of a possible divorce. I had also tasted the feeling of unrequited love for one of my dear friends at the time, all during my junior and senior years. Everything was just too much to bear at times. Now when I think about those bitter memories, I put them behind and tell myself that I don't have to give in to bitterness and agony. I created the painting as a way to show everyone who sees it that though times may seem exceptionally troubling, dark periods in your life do not define you. I tend not to explain the meaning behind it when people ask because they either misinterpret the painting completely, or simply because, as you said, it is too personal to explain. It is a part of me, and when it is rejected, I myself am rejected. However, rejection is not the biggest fear that I have for my future.

Jacklyn, what I fear above all is that I may have to give up what I love in order to live. I fear that I will not be able to keep my art the same in the impending future, just as you fear your stories will not remain the same. I dread that my love for creativity will be

destroyed, dissected, regurgitated and become such a bland and faded shadow of what it used to be. Now I know and realize that it will be an empty shell of a life that I will endure if I choose to not do what I love. That is not what I want for myself. I want to make something of my life and live it by my own values and decisions, not worrying about what others want from me. By choosing to live my life on my own path and not based on the whims of others, I feel that I am one step closer to knowing my place.

Jacklyn, like you, I am also finding my place, through art, and it is still a tentative road to follow. I found a majority of it in painting, and theatre, and I am even more impassioned to discover more. I may not know what I wish to do, but I do know that anytime I create or perform art, I want people to not just look at my creations but I want them to experience them. Whenever I sing, whenever I act, whenever I paint, I want to convey powerful emotion and meaning in these performances/pieces for other people to feel. To feel intimately connected and moved is the ultimate goal of art and artists that wield it. We convey the aspects of the human condition that cannot be put into words, in ways that math and science can't explain.

Though we are both on a clear yet uncertain road, I can tell you this, Jacklyn: you will not need to sacrifice your stories in order to be accepted in the place where you truly belong. If your stories begin with you, then their limit should reside in you. You should never strip away what makes you who you are in order to belong. In fact, I will ask you to "trust yourself and your instincts; even if you go wrong in your judgement, the natural growth of your inner life will gradually, over time, lead you to other insights" (Rilke 13).

There is still so much to discover, my sweet troubled friend. I implore you to not fret. By fretting, we waste relishing the simple joys of life that are ours to indulge in. As a last piece of advice, my dear Jacklyn, I suggest that you "be patient towards all that is unresolved in your heart and try to love *the questions themselves* like locked rooms, like books written in a foreign tongue. Do not now strive to uncover answers: they cannot be given you because you have not been able to live them. And what matters is to live everything. *Live* the questions for now. Perhaps then you will gradually, without noticing it, live your way into the answer, one distant day in the future" (Rilke 18).

With all my deepest and warmest regards,
Your Caring and Supportive Friend,
Angel Mascorro



— Unknown

Acceptance

Jonathan Low

You hear from above, "What have we here?
Such a curious thing to see you appear.
Many men have come, but none have stayed.
What keeps you from retreating afraid?"

Your response will lead their heads to burst
Not an easy thing to admit at first.
But you've made a decision and it shall stay,
As long as you will wish it that way.

You say, "I have come under my own power,
Hoping only to indulge myself in that shower
Of knowledge and pleasure I'm sure you possess,
Hoping for self-betterment as I must confess.

I have travelled long and I know what I desire,
So I will remain until I can kindle that fire.
This is where I belong, that is plain to see.
The journey has made my place clear to me."

Making a Difference

Cheyenne Appleby

You never know your place in someone's life until you make a change in it. I think that I have helped out many lives, whether it is another person's life or an animal's life. Being able to help animals makes up a big part of who I am and my place in this world. At home, I have nine animals: four cats, three dogs and two guinea pigs. Just this past weekend we adopted a new kitten. I have either rescued or adopted or found my animals outside, never bought one from a breeder.

There are too many animals that are in shelters, and I think adopting from shelters is making a big change in the world. There are so many animals that are homeless and looking for a forever home, and adopting one makes a big deal in that animal's life.

Adopting an animal makes a big difference in your life, too. Having an animal can make you a better person. It teaches responsibility, caring, and compassion. Animals are always there for you whether you are lonely, sad, happy, or bored. When you come home, they're so excited, it's like you've been gone forever. Adopting is such a simple thing to do, but it makes a giant difference, in your life and the animals. I would love to adopt more, but I don't have the space or enough attention to give to more animals. I wish that more people would go to shelters and adopt to save a life. You could never know the person you could be without getting something to enrich yourself, such as a new pet. Animals bring out the best in people. You may only think you're changing the animal's life, but they usually end up changing yours.

My Place

Jacklyn Heslop

My place in life is related to where I sit in the car. When I was young I would sit in the back, staring out the side window. I spent my moments in the present not worried about the destination. I could lean over and stare out the front window but that was never fun. Pit Stops were places of magic where I had no rules or limitations, I would run free but being young meant I stayed close to my parents. I had times where I would stray a little too far and my father would chase me back to the car where everything was secure. Getting older meant I was now allowed to sit in the front seat where I could spend my time in the moment but also steal glances at what was ahead. I could watch the blur of the passing trees or look to see what was before us. I stayed mostly in the present but I started to get curious, I could now look to my future. I was even allowed to navigate, my parents would allow me to give the directions, set the way we would go. Sometimes I went I sent them in the wrong direction but they would quickly show me the right way. Then I reached a fragile age, where I could now be the driver. My mother would sit next to me with the pale death grip on the window while she pounded her imaginary brake. I would nervously drive trying to get a hold on my life, while I controlled the car my mother was still right next to me. When I finally drove alone, I picked the destinations and took my own route. I do still had to take my parents advice, but I no longer have to listen. Someday I will know where I am going and might have my own child stealing glances out the front window, but for now I am still finding my way.

Chris

Andrew Aceves

I only have one sibling, a brother named Christopher. Chris was born twelve years before me, way back in 1984. This twelve year separation had a heavy impact on the relationship we would have as brothers. In my younger years, I never felt close to my brother; we were more like strangers than siblings. To put things in perspective, when I started kindergarten, Chris started his senior year in high school. There was never really any chance back then to not be strangers because of the predicament we were in. This predicament was that there is only so much a six year old and eighteen year old can and would want to do together. I had different interests and hobbies than my brother did at the time for instance.

The following year, Chris went all the way to Norwich University in Vermont to get a college degree. Now, since I still felt like a stranger to my own brother, this transition in my house changed my view of my place in my family. For the next four years, I practically considered myself an only child. It was nothing against my brother, it was just that the room next to me was now empty and daily life had changed. Even though Chris returned home during breaks, everything was still the same between us. Eventually, Chris went on to flight school for the Army after he graduated college.

As I got older, I gradually gained a few things in common with my brother and we had a stronger bond but I still felt like I was talking to an adult instead of a brother. When I was in the last year of middle school, my brother told everyone that he was being deployed to Afghanistan for a whole year. I did not know what would become of my brother in a place half a world away, I just wished that he would come back alright. The morning that he left was full of uncertainty. He woke me up and said goodbye, and I did not see him for a whole year. That was the start of what would ultimately become the current, normal connection we have now. When Chris returned, I was old enough to get along well with him. We had a lot more to talk about; it was like we were finally brothers. Sometimes I do wonder what it would have been like for us to grow up closer together, but in the end, everything still would have been the same: we will always be brothers and that bond can never be broken.

First Time Now

Alicia Montanez

The first time I actually thought I might die was a car crash in Italy. We were headed home from a weekend out at Carney Park, and we hit a semi. The entire side of the Suburban was ripped off, but nobody was badly hurt. I came away from the accident with a burn down my neck and a long-lasting fear of cars.

The first time I slept outside with nothing but the clothes on my back, I didn't actually sleep. It was a cold winter night outside a German castle, and I had a tarp and cardboard. The cardboard soaked through within a half hour, so I moved over to the fire with a couple other people. One guy went right up to the edge and passed out. The sparks from the fire dug holes in his sleeping bag, but it didn't wake him.

The first time I saw a riot, complete with tear gas and helicopters, I was barely aware enough to care. I'd picked up some illness or another in Cambodia, and I'd woken up that morning hallucinating that I was back home. I managed to call my parents to give them a heads up about the situation, but I don't think I was very coherent.

The first time I was responsible for feeding, housing, and transporting other people was when I led a service project team to Italy. My team stayed with some missionary friends of my family, and we did what we could to help in the community. We also learned that there was a reason why our parents wouldn't let us eat candy and soda for actual meals.

The first time I attended a public school class was the first day of my first semester in college. It was a lot easier than I thought it would be. I talked to all my professors after class. I planned to be out in two years.

Two years is the longest I've ever lived in one place.

The first time I decided I'd rather be teaching English in a third world country than staring at a PowerPoint presentation was a couple weeks ago. The first time I realized I'd rather be sleeping in a pile of friends in an airport in Hamburg than sleeping between classes was a few days ago. But college is where I'm at right now.

And sometimes the greatest adventure is the one you're having.

Untitled Story — Frank Carlo Mills

There once was a girl who lived in a family in which the women hardly ever went to college. This is because of the patriarchal society inherent in her family's culture. I am sure you have heard of similar male-dominated societies and customs. It happens in nearly every society, really. Some look down on women, others force their women to wear veils to cover their bodies, and the largest civilizations—both historically and currently—have also forced it throughout history in ways that are both subtle and clear. Of course, most of the gender discrimination is absent in today's world, due to the human race's maturation over time.

However, her family still held on to their stubborn beliefs about women. Women, in their minds, exist only to be married, and a girl who spends too much time studying is not an appealing idea to a potential husband.

But, she was different. She was a promising student from day one, always being the best in her class. She was an honor student, voted most popular, and graduated as valedictorian. But her family didn't care about all that. They only wanted her to be something specific, something that fit in with their expectations, and expectations are not fulfilled by anything other than exactly what they demand—a girl whose parents think she's fat can become an honor student, maybe even a valedictorian, but this doesn't make her any less fat in her parents' eyes. It was like this for her as well—her family thought that going to college was irrelevant to what she should be focused on, and

That was why she would never tell her parents that she got accepted into Watcher University. Of course she was elated by the discovery, and she accepted gladly. She made all of the plans in secret. She couldn't tell her mother anything, because she knew what her mother would say.

"*Conoce tu lugar*—know your place!" her mother would shout. "Going to college? Hmph! That is a stupid dream!"

"No, mama," she would say, "*No es estúpido*—it's not stupid! Going to college would let me learn much about the world!"

"And why do you want that?" her mother would say, "No hombre would want a woman who knows too much about the world! That information is *inutil*—useless! It does not help you be a good wife! To be a wife, you need to know only a few things, and it is better that you know nothing more!"

"*Soy libre!*" she would scream. "Is being a wife the only way I can live? The only way I can exist?"

And so, she wouldn't tell anyone of this. It was better that she left without saying goodbye anyway. Her family was a curse upon her freedom. It was better to follow the words of her favorite author, Francisco Merlo. "Bonds are the one thing that keep a person from being truly free," he would say in all his books, "These bonds can be anything—they can be friends, they can be family, they can even be the law itself. Only those who tear these bonds away can stand truly on their own, at the top of the world."

She knew that she wanted to stand on the top. And she knew that Merlo was right—he had written many books about the subject, and studied in a lot of places. But the one thing that made her want to follow Merlo the most of all was the fact that he lived in the same area as she did and left to pursue his own way in life. She wanted to be like Merlo, and leave her home to explore the world and become great in her own right.

She made no hesitation. She did not waver. She knew that she would be leaving her life behind. She didn't need anyone with her. Not her father, not her older brothers.....

.....Not her uncles? Not her *younger* brother, Gato, whom she loved more than anyone else? Not even her boyfriend Arthur Williams?

So there would be some heartbreak after all. And she did love her parents and her older siblings, no matter how hard she tried to deny it. And how would she even begin to figure out how to live on her own? True, she had applied for enough scholarships and won enough scholarships that she wouldn't have to worry about money, but how could she stay anywhere over the breaks, when the university closed down? Also, what would happen when people asked about her family? She'd be heartbroken that she would not be able to tell the truth, but telling the truth that she ran away from home would be far worse. And how could she possibly avoid the police if they found out....? She didn't know much about the law, but she had a suspicion that rushing away on her own would be illegal. She would later find out that this was not the case if she was of age, but at the time she hadn't bothered to learn that much about the law—she was always more focused in the sciences.

She went rushing to her mother, crying. "*Lo siento, lo siento tanto!*" she cried, "I was accepted into Watcher University. I didn't think that you would accept, so I never told you!"

"Slow down, child," her mother said, "Tell me the story from the beginning, so that I may understand."

She told her everything. How she first got the acceptance letter, why she never told her about it, and that the time to go was three days from now.

"It is right that you told me first," her mother said, "If you hadn't, we would have been worried about you, and when we found you, your father would have forbidden you to go. Nothing would have come out of that."

"I didn't tell you about it because I thought you wouldn't agree," she said, "But if you don't want me to go, then I won't."

"No," her father said, coming into the room, "I knew about your desire to go for a very long time. I kept secret about it until now, because I thought that you would have come clean about it sooner."

"But he did tell me about it," her grandmother said, following him, "And I think you should go. Firstly, you are quite right in thinking that you are free. Secondly, it would be wrong for us to decide for you anymore, as you are an adult now. And thirdly, if Arthur doesn't like it....then you can find a new future husband in college, hmm?" She smiled.

"But....but I...." the girl stammered, this all seeming sudden to her.

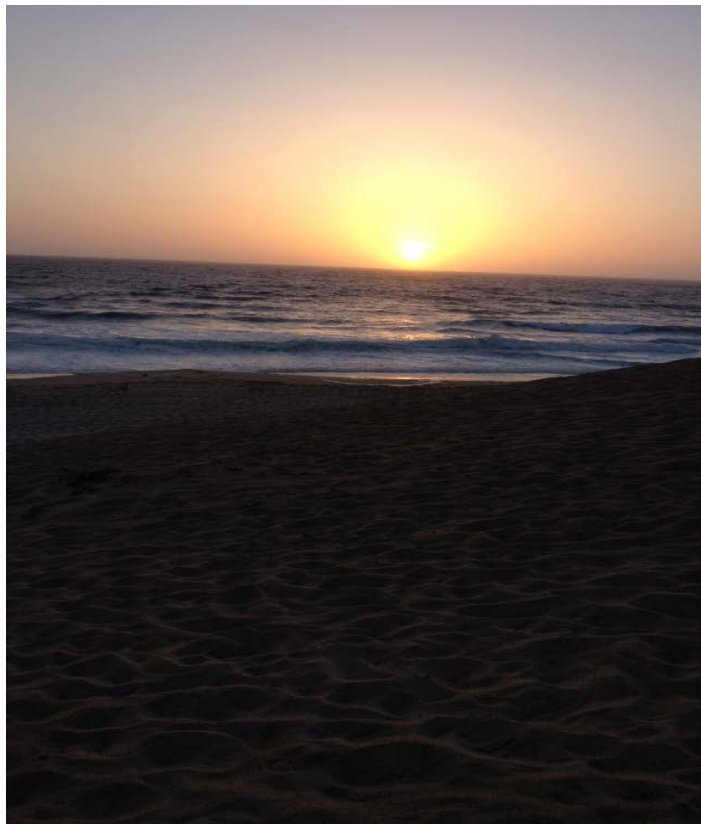
"Gato would cry if he thought you were upset about not being able to go," her father said, "So we decided that we would let you do what you wanted from the start. There was no changing that."

The girl started to cry even more. "You....you don't know how much this means to me...." She said, "I don't know how to thank you."

"You could leave Francisco's books here, yes?" her grandmother said, "That is the only punishment you shall receive. And in any case, you will not need them in college. He has nothing left to say to you."

“W....what do you mean?” the girl asked, not understanding what her grandmother meant. She had read all of Francisco’s books, of course, but she didn’t know that her grandmother read them as well. As far as she knew, her grandmother didn’t know anything about Francisco Merlo.

“I met Francisco when he was a boy,” the grandmother said, “He was like you in many ways. He didn’t want any influences corrupting his life, and he wanted to leave so that he could achieve greatness. But he also recognized that it wasn’t right for people to force their own thoughts and beliefs on others, even in an act of kindness or self-liberation, because everyone has their own beliefs.” She chuckled. “He said you had to give up bonds to be free, but that is simply how *he* thought of things. They are not the truth. He recognized this---he told me, once, that he knew that many things he said were not the truth but rather what he said to himself so that he could deal with the world, and that since those beliefs were his he had a duty to hold on to them. So, what are your beliefs?”



Here at this beautiful sunset, I feel so free and alive being surrounded by this breathtaking scenery. My toes in the sand and the cool ocean breeze can clear any thought from my mind and grasp my complete attention here in Monterey, California. Photo Credit: Kelly Stahl

The Essence of Knowing Your Place

Royal Sandhu

Home Sweet Home:

I believe that a place to call home is essential to many. A pleasure in having a home is created by the sensation of peace and comfort associated away from the outside world, the feeling of warmth and contentment shared with the presence of our loved ones, and the feeling of relief derived as soon as you come home from a long tiring day of school or work. For me, a “home” has been many places because I have been constantly moving. However, the appreciation of having a home is defined by blissful moments like these. It is an escape from the increasingly public world in which we learn to hold onto some private situations. The security a house provides allows one to truly express themselves without dealing with or caring about the world’s critique. A home provides a domain for me in which I know I have some “place” of my own.

Capitalist Society:

In the United States, a free market nation, it is a wonderful ideal to acknowledge the poor and wealthy as a united force. In contemporary times, the wealth of an individual does matter. However, even more impressively their education takes the spotlight. Our society encourages us to be educated. This is a gracious gift in which I am tremendously thankful for. It is through education in which one truly learns their place. We are able to understand that we decide our own “place” in this land of opportunity. We are blessed to look beyond judgments and move on from seeing red and blue states, or black, brown, and white skinned people, and perceive each individual based on the content of their character. In this nation, we decide our own fate by working hard and knowing we have a possibility to succeed.

Gender Role Dynamics:

It is quite strange that the people of our world are constantly taught to remain in their place. There are many aspects of double standards across the globe. It is a tragedy to realize that in 2014 there are still countries that degrade and think less of women. They snatch education from them and feed it to the men. They shove women into stereotypical realms in which they find no escape from the kitchen. In nations much like those exploited by political corruption are the ones most impacted by this injustice. Reading about these situations make me that much more thankful to be part of a nation which pledges: “justice for all.” It is paramount to consider that we shouldn’t let the world determine our place because it will only try to force us into a predetermined, systemically created place. We must arise above that and determine our own place by our own means.



Letting Go

Joslyn Hillberg

He didn't know his place until his hands let go of the rail.

Spiraling down into a darker and darker place. He was a failure, a loser, always messing up, never good enough. They would be better off without him. His wife could meet someone really great; she would forget he ever existed. His daughter was only three. Eventually, she would forget him too.

Nothing messy, nothing ugly. He didn't want them to experience that. The bridge, it was perfect. He would jump, he would be gone. The tides would carry him out, there'd be no trace.

Count to ten and jump. Didn't happen. Try again...seven, eight, nine, ten and over.

Wait, this is wrong. They will miss me, they'll blame themselves. They'll never understand. Why did I do this? I want to live. Now I want to live.

On Wednesday, November 12th, 2014, I had the opportunity to hear Ken Baldwin speak. He is one of about 30 people who have survived jumping off the Golden Gate Bridge. Since it was first built, about 2,000 people have jumped from it.

His message was both heart-wrenching and hopeful: the darkness of severe depression and the hope of life restored. Ken shared transparently about his journey through his suicide attempt to a life of meaning. He clearly spoke about the value of life and the tragedy of suicide, which is a "permanent solution to a temporary problem." His comment that "the moment my hands let go of the railing, I knew I'd made a mistake" resonated with me as we've considered the phrase "know your place." In a moment, a brief second, Ken went from feeling that he had no place to knowing his place. A husband, a father, a son, a brother. Life is precious, don't waste it.

Home

Amanda Woodhouse

The sound of laughter from everywhere around.

The serenity of being surrounded by family.

Feeling comfortable in your own skin.

Love radiating from everywhere in the room.

Home is a place a peace.

Home is a place of happiness.

Home means being yourself.

Home means love.

A true home is not a house.

It is a place where one is happy and feels safe.

It is not a place, so much, as a state of being.

It is where you always come back to.

Find your home and keep it in your heart.

It is your salvation and your place of being.

Know Your Place

Nathaniel Ah You

"Know your place" a phrase that many children have heard when they stepped out of line, or beyond the boundaries that were given to them. A phrase that naturally does not instill positive emotions, and a phrase that has many meanings. For many children though their parents never use the phrase "know your place" because knowing ones place within their family is natural. For instance the youngest sibling in a family may have, not few, but fewer responsibilities than their older siblings. This creates a hierarchy, or pecking order within the family. The youngest usually has the least responsibilities, so they are also the lowest in that hierarchy. Knowing ones place in the family is about respecting one another and respecting ones place in the hierarchy. This concept of family hierarchy is culturally universal, though not universally instilled.

As the youngest sibling I looked up to my two older brothers. They seemed to know everything and have all of the confidence in the world. When my father had us complete a task such as raking leaves or doing general yard work, he normally would tell my oldest brother the job at hand, and he in turn would delegate tasks between the three of us. It was something I had grown to expect. I never argued with my brother because there was no reason to. He always seemed to delegate fairly and would often put the harder task on his own shoulders. Whether the reasoning for that was chivalries or plainly because he didn't trust me with the task I will never know; but either way I respected my oldest brother because of his knowledge, work ethic, and because showing respect was mandatory within my household. So when it was time to take a drive in my dad's truck and if my mom happened to not be going; Brandon sat in the front seat, no questions asked, no argument. I knew that the front was not my place. I had not earned that luxury like my oldest brother had.

People should apply this same concept of respect and hierarchy to their everyday life, it will make school, work, friendships, all work so smoothly. For example, if a student is a freshman in college and has just arrived they don't necessarily know the ins and outs of college. So when they see a senior walking around campus barefoot and think to themselves "I really enjoy walking barefoot, maybe I'll walk around campus barefoot as well", it might help to understand that since they are a freshman and the "new youngest sibling" they should probably wait to do such socially peculiar activities since they may be frowned upon. When someone gets a new job they are immediately the "new guy" so they should probably stick to the harder more laborious tasks at first because they have not proven themselves yet and if they took the easier tasks it might mean a senior employee would have to perform the laborious tasks. Thus making it seem as if the new guy believes he/she is better than the senior employee which would be a sign of disrespect. With friends however this is the time that there are no

such prejudices as present in school. This is when a person should not need to earn any respect because each friend respects each other for their different qualities. But all the same it will grow the friendship if they follow a hierarchy. This particular hierarchy is based off of favors and good deeds. For example if one friend had volunteered to drive the group to a drive through it might be appropriate to buy his lunch or at least maybe their drink because he used his gas to get them there. It simply shows respect for the driver and shows appreciation towards him.

When nobody knows their place within a hierarchy or pecking order, disorder and confusion are prominent. Imagine a football team where nobody listens to the quarterback and everybody does what they want without following a common goal. With the same image in mind imagine a football team where everybody was trying to act as the quarterback, all shouting commands, all telling different plays. Nothing would be accomplished and both of these teams would be demolished on the field. The same goes in life. Many managers of various work places would describe a set of employees who work smoothly together as a "good team." The reason for this definition is that a good team has many individuals working towards a common goal, all with different positions, but all working in unison.

Whether in school, at work, with friends, or on a sports team, knowing your place and respecting those who have earned their place is imperative to a life that runs smoothly. Those parents that instill a hierarchy within the members of their family have forever provided their children with a trait that will carry them through many struggles. Knowing ones place is not a scold. knowing ones place is about understanding yourself, showing respect to those who have earned it and realizing who you are as an individual.

Didactic Cinquain on Place

Tylor Franklin

My Place

Peaceful, quiet

Molding, Relaxing, Comforting

Allowing me to realize who I really am

Home

Going Home

Lauren Martinho

Going home is
hiking in flip-flops
or taking a walk
or drinking Sleepytime tea
while watching a Studio Ghibli film

Going home does not require
driving somewhere
or money
or other people

Going home gives me
a sense of peace
and contentment
and comfort

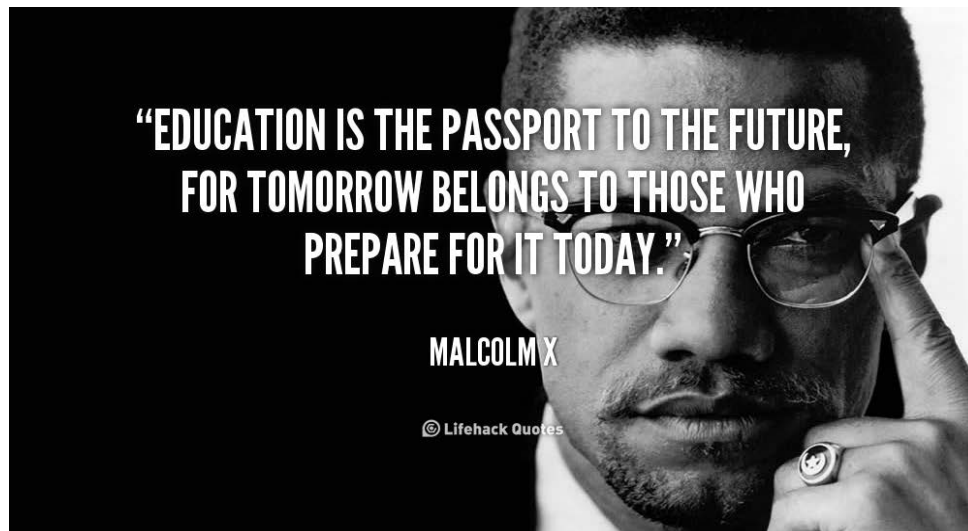
Home is simply
wherever I am,
as long as I can be myself.
Because all I am
is all I need.

Head of the Family

Stephanie Barragan

When my brother was fourteen years old, I remember my father taking him to Mexico, in order to have my brother grow as a person and as a man. My father truly believed that my brother would grow up to be like him – tough, hardworking, and willing to do anything for the sake of family. The thought of it was nice at the time, but we all knew my brother would never meet those expectations. He was too shy and soft; traits that were a result of a childhood with no responsibilities. Yet, my father was a stubborn man, and took my brother – despite my mother’s protests – to the countryside where our family originated in the solitude of a small village, surrounded by nothing but cliffs, stretches of land and one city five hours away on bus. It was there that my father thought my brother would learn to be a man by participating in the hard, back-breaking labor all villagers had to do in order to get food on the table. They were gone for three months in the summer and by the time they came back, my brother was skinny, tanned and calloused.

He never elaborated on the things he did in Mexico, but when I turned fourteen, my brother sat me down and told me that the toughest thing he had to do was when our maternal grandfather handed him a butcher knife and told him to kill a nice, fat pig for dinner. I won’t explain the gory details of the process, but when my brother began to cry as he told me this story, I couldn’t find any reason not to call my brother a man.



This quote reflects the last my entire life, for when you stop learning you start dying. Every conflict in the world can be eradicated through the destruction of ignorance through education. When the people everywhere in the world are truly educated we will have a much better tomorrow.

(ALEJANDRO)

"The board game of life"

Nathaniel Ah You

We come from different worlds
we come from different places.
Yet when those dice roll
we all move the spaces.



Cycle of Life

Cheyenne Appleby

When you're a kid,
All you want is to be a grown-up.
You pretend to drive,
Pretend to have a job,
Pretend to get married,
And even pretend to pay bills.
As you slowly grow older,
Those things become a reality.
You learn to drive,
You get a job,
You get married,
And have a few kids.
You hit a certain age and think,
"Where did the time go?"
As a kid, time passes so slowly,
Hoping for it to go faster.
As an adult, time passes so fast,
Hoping for it to slow down.
When you're an adult,
All you want is to be a kid again.



A Personal View on Freedom and Order — Frank Carlo Mills

There is a distinctive difference between freedom and order. Many people claim that we can and do have both in our society, but this is a lie of those who do not know how nuanced reality is. Freedom and order are opposites, and are mutually exclusive. Freedom is the very antithesis of order.

Why do I believe this? Because freedom means that people can be free to do as they please, without worrying about right and wrong. Freedom means that we, as a people, are able to live without the interference of anyone. It seems instantly appealing, and this is why people favor it. However, there are other sides to freedom. Freedom, if pure enough, can lead to anarchy and chaos, because without anyone dragging you down to earth, you have the choice to sin, to hurt, and to kill. It also leads to a disharmony of the people when you realize that everyone is merely pursuing their own agenda. Without a single person or concept to gather behind, we cannot come together very easily, and this is where order comes in.

Order is the idea that we must strive to always do the right thing and work together. It is living under a powerful and just authority that gives us a driving force in our lives. This authority may have varying degrees of power, depending on the need to dominate its citizens (which can happen if its citizens are unruly or violent), and it will always enforce a code of life that, if effective enough, leads us to becoming better people. However, it does not forbid corruption entirely, but simply allows only the people on top to be corrupt, and if those people are corrupt, then they will become tyrants over their subjects.

Freedom and order are not only polar opposites, they are also the driving force behind all wars. In the Revolutionary War, freedom won over order, with the Americans claiming their independence. In the American Civil War, it was order that won, as the United States of America defeated the Confederacy, a rebellion of states. And in the Cold War, different political systems clashed, with capitalism representing freedom in its highest form and communism representing a supreme form of order. The war between freedom and order even spreads into our political parties, although it is now fragmented by the polarizing issues Republicans and Democrats argue over. The Republicans argue for pro-life, a form of order, and believe that we should act without regard for the environment (due to their belief that everything is fine), which is a form of freedom. The Democrats have it in reverse, although people like Barack Obama and his policies of universal healthcare and NSA spying lead me to believe that this party leans more towards order.

Freedom and order are always opposites, yet it is crucial to remember that neither side of the argument is correct. Rather, each side has its merits, but in real life, it is impossible to say what is right and what is wrong in hard times, because when there is an extreme conflict, the winner is written in the records of history as being righteous and the loser as being wicked. The conflict between freedom and order is permanently ongoing, without any end in sight. This is because everyone favors both sides equally, or else an equal number of people support one side over the other, and we have yet to be completely united under either of these ideals. As such, it is my belief that a permanent victor cannot be decided. It would be far more realistic for there to be a balance

between freedom and order, a universal standard that everyone can agree on. It is crucial that there be a balance, I think, because either side by itself would quickly become flawed and diseased as a system, with the results being either anarchy and chaos in the case of freedom or tyranny and oppression in the case.



Women! Know Your Place! – Amanda O’Donnell

During the 1930’s, every woman was given a specific place. Their sole purpose was to make babies, and stay home to cook, clean, and take care of the children. The men were the breadwinners and providers; this placement put men on pedestal, making them viewed as superior in society. The women would obey their husbands as if they were their fathers because they did not realize they had a voice. Once men went off to war in the 1940s, women had to step into

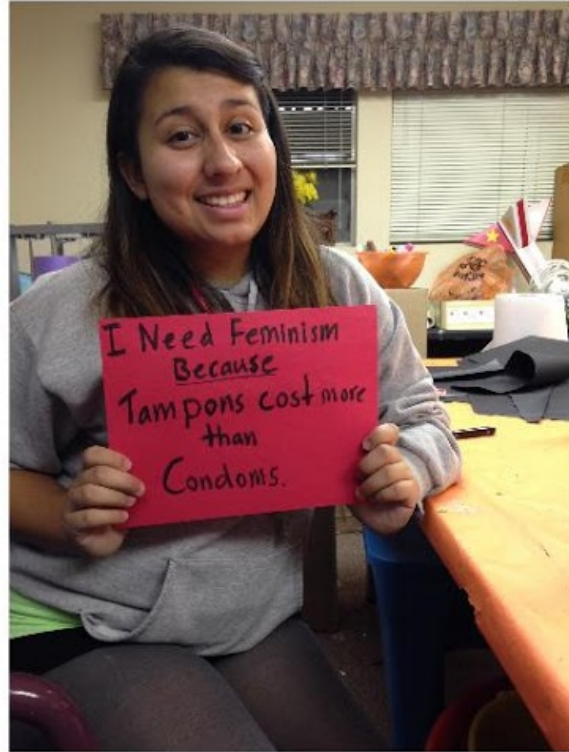
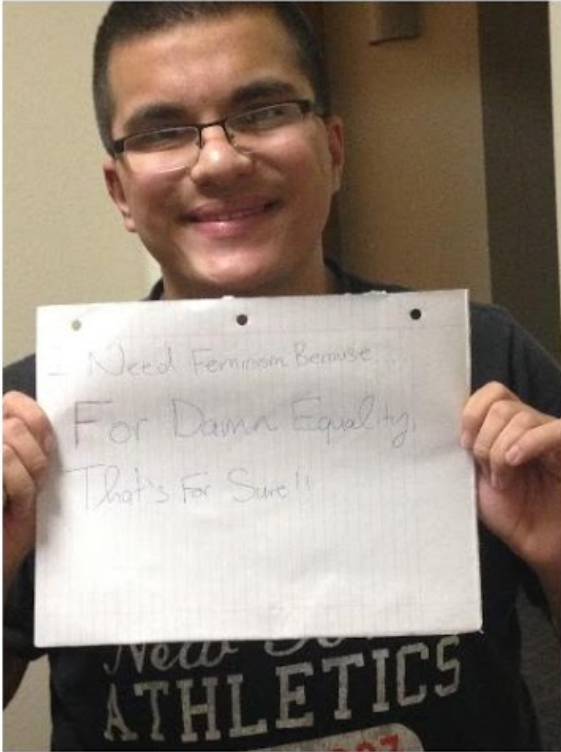
the role of a man to support their families and fulfill different jobs. Women started to work in factories, play on sports teams, and even join the military. The war grew so large that they needed women’s help. Thus, the Women’s Army Corps (WAC) and the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Services (WAVES) were established to aid the men in war. This led to Congress authorizing women to serve in the U.S. navy. This prosperous time in women’s history transitioned women from fragile, timid, and passive wives to strong and independent leaders of our country.



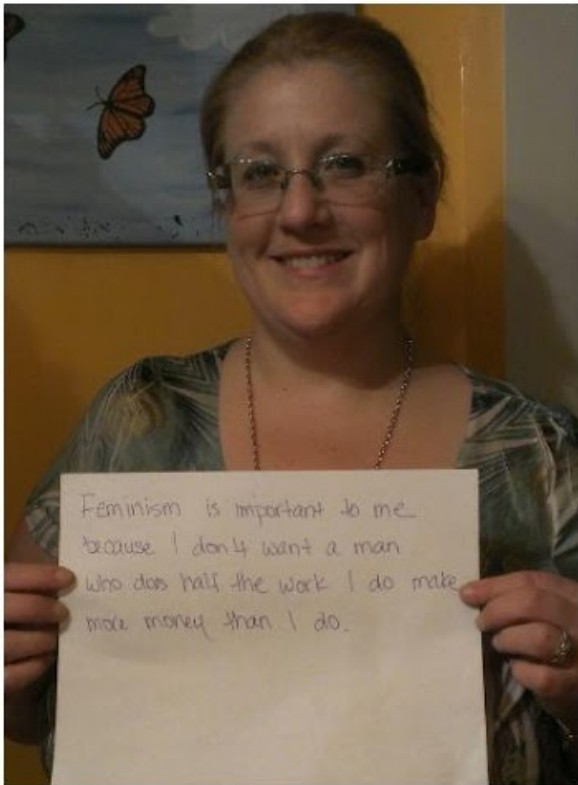
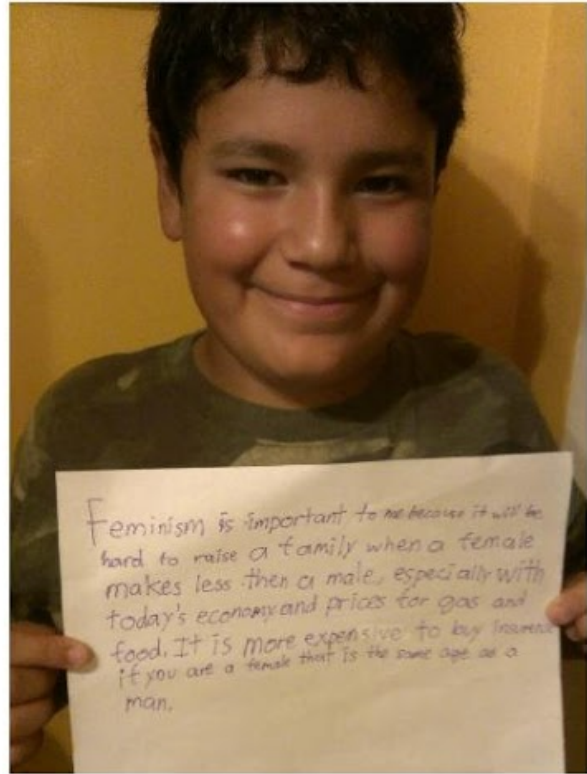
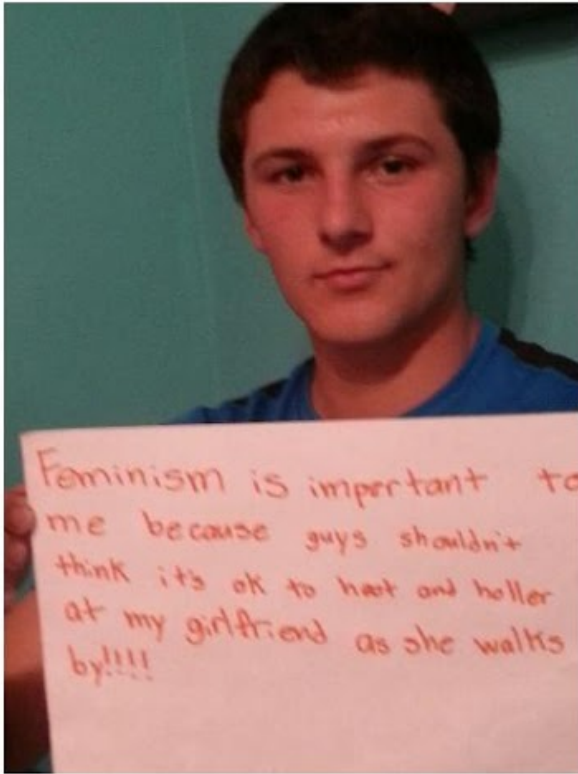
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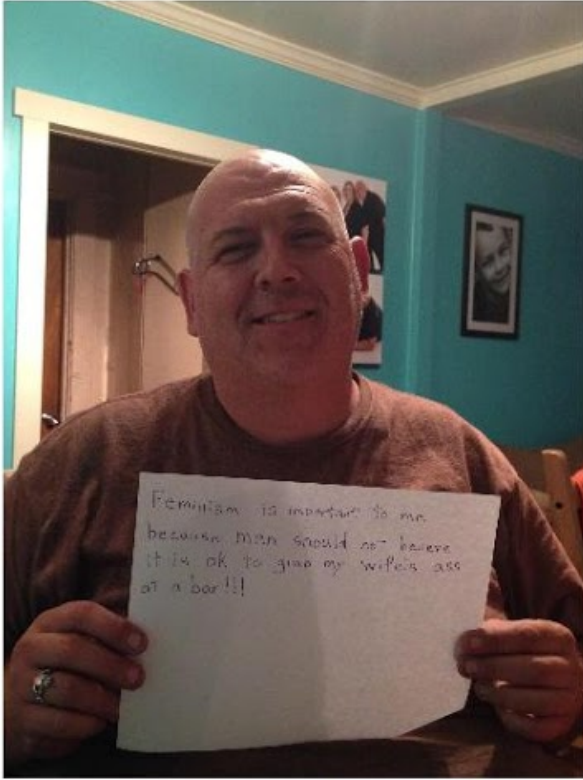
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Why We Need Feminism — a photo collage

















My Poor Little Pup

Jacklyn Heslop

My dog has a hard life. All he usually does is eat, sleep, and force people to pet him. When he is home alone, he wanders from bed to pile of pillows waiting for his owners to return. He sleeps in a king size bed that he allows my parents to warm up for him. We bought him a dog, bed but he only uses it when he is pouting. He loves to garden, his favorite thing to do is to taste the berries before my mom picks them. His only official job is to help my mom cook; he pays extra attention to the floor making sure it is spotless. While I know that you must be thinking that this does not sound like a hard life, you must look at his place. During a thunderstorm, he can't help but hide under a bed. When his paw is hurt he can only cry and limp, hoping to find some loving arms. When someone is sick, their body glued to their bed, coughing, and sneezing he can offer no comfort but his body against our feet. When one of his people are grieving he can only curl up on their chest and try to stop their tears. His loved ones had to leave for a few days, so he waited by the door and whimpered, almost as if he was screaming at the universe for his limited ability. Then, ever so often, there have been times when one of his loved ones have never come back and he can't ask where they have gone. He sits at our feet and tries to take our pain away; he lies in our laps and lets his people absent-mindedly pet him. What can he do? He is just a dog who has only the ability to eat, sleep, and force people to pet him. When it comes to showing the people he loves them, or that he is just as sad so them he can only howl at the moon and hope some other dog gets it. He has a hard life because he is alone, limited to his own mind and the few sounds he can make to express himself. It is in those cold nights when we catch him looking at old pictures of his fallen masters that we wonder if he knows they are never coming home.

A Personal Note from Jonathan Low

So you have found the end. The journey is complete. You have found where you're supposed to be, and there's nothing standing between you and your true place in life. Your entire life, you have been taught to go with the flow of things and let your place come to you. But there was nobody there to tell you what to do once you find where you belong. Can you just continue to let things fall as they may, leaving most of what happens up to chance? Or must you change your ways so that you have more control over what happens? I believe that there needs to be a change in attitude once you realize what your true place is meant to be. In most cases, there is a career or a job that is helping to define a large part of ones place in society. At that point, we cannot leave things to chance

anymore. That is when the real journey begins. It is one thing to know your place and understand your role in the world, but what you do with it is more than half of the struggle. We need to be strong, contributing members of society no matter what our role is. Once we have defined it, there should be nothing else in mind other than making sure that we are doing our job to the best of our abilities. This is not just for our own good, but also for the good of society. A community is like a big machine, where each individual is a significant piece to the machine that allows it to run. When one or more of those pieces malfunction or fail to do their jobs properly, then the machine will not be able to do its job. While there are times where people will think that they have defined their place and then decide to change their mind, I think that the temporary place should still be filled to the best of that individual's ability. There is no excuse to not be a contributing member of society. I know that once I find my place, there will be nothing standing in my way of doing what I believe to be best for myself, and best for the people around me.

Time, Place, & Circumstance

Joslyn Hillberg

I've recently had the opportunity to transcribe some wonderful stories that were written by an elderly friend. Her memories include attending a one-room schoolhouse, horseback riding adventures with her older sister, living away from home to attend high school (because the school in her little town only went up to the 10th grade), and eventually teaching in a one-room school herself. All of these indicate that she has lived a very long life.

I'm sure that if she'd been born the same year that I was, she'd be in college studying elementary education. She was always an excellent student, loved school, and was determined to become a teacher. She met that goal, but circumstances changed dramatically for her when her mother became seriously ill. While in college, her parents had moved out of state for a new job for her dad. After only two years of teaching, she moved to be near her parents and to take care of her mother.

She was very sad to give up teaching; relocating to a new state meant that she would need a new teaching certificate. While she made plans to begin working on it, an amazing thing happened. She (very reluctantly) went on a blind date and met a terrific guy. This was not in *her* plan. *Her* plan was to be, in her own words, "an old maid school teacher." She absolutely knew her place – but circumstances changed, and her life changed with them. She married Charlie and they shared an amazing 73 years together.

We can know our place, but just as circumstances change and time goes on, our places will also develop and lead us in many unforeseen ways.



Thinking about attending college for the first time was a scary but exciting thought to invite. The first time I saw CSU Stanislaus, I fell in love with its beauty and the community of people that reside here. Being a freshman in college, I can confidently say that Stanislaus is my place, where I will be happily dwelling every day for the next four years. Warrior Pride forever.

Photo Credit: Alex Senior

Friends

Tylor Franklin

If someone is without a place to call their own,

I can only hope that they are not lacking
someone that will never leave them alone
on this task that they find so daunting.

This friend would hopefully help them find a space,

Where they do not feel that they are stressed
and here, where their friend helped them make their place,
would be where they realized they were blessed.

If every person can find at least one such friend

Whom they can fully trust in
and on whom they can always depend,
then they have found their own spiritual kin.
And with their own self-chosen family member,
they will have created a place to share together.

Interview — Wesley Manuel

The following is a brief interview with Major Jack Sheridan, USA, Ret. about the importance of knowledge of the battlefield and terrain.

Question: Why is knowing the terrain and the battlefield so important?

Answer: Well, all we have to do is look at an example from history to see why. An excellent one would be the Battle of Thermopylae where threehundred Spartans fought against superior Persian numbers. They held off King Xerxes' army because they chose a mountain pass as the place to fight. This prevented the Persian army from completely surrounding them, forcing them to engage only the front of the Spartans. Thus, the Persian numbers were significantly negated. This only goes to show how an understanding of the battlefield can help swing the odds closer to your favor.

Q: What advantages does an awareness of the terrain grant to a commander?

A: A commander must be conscious of the best way to place and to arrange his men. Nowadays, terrain does not matter as much due to all the relatively recent technology. Only sixty years ago there weren't satellites or remote control missiles. A commander had to be aware of how to use the terrain to his advantage. During the Battle of Fredericksburg in the American Civil War, Robert E. Lee simply maintained his lines behind a stone wall at the top of a hill, letting the Union general Ambrose E. Burnside come to him. As a result, the Confederates only lost a few thousand men as opposed to Burnside's losses, which were about twelve thousand. Because General Lee had a greater awareness of the battlefield, he was able to soundly defeat the opposing general.

Q: So, how does certain terrain provide an advantage? For example, how would a hill give an advantage to a commander?

A: That's a very good question. A hill provides height, and what does height provide? A better view, of course! Before airplanes and such, the best way a general could get a picture of the battlefield was to find the highest point possible. It would enable him to obtain a greater grasp on the situation plus making it easier for observation of any enemy movements. A hill also gives your weapon a greater range while providing protection to the shooter. The enemy would have to shoot upwards, thus reducing their accuracy and range by a considerable amount. The soldiers possessing the hill would be able to lay behind the crest which would give them a place to steady their weapons and to hide from enemy bullets and artillery.

Q. One more question, what type of terrain do you think is the most important to be aware of?

A. It depends on the situation, but I will say that every commander, no matter what their rank, should be aware of what kind of conditions their men are fighting in. I think back to something I read a long time ago. There was an officer in World War I, and for some reason or another he found himself on the front lines. He was absolutely horrified to find that the soldiers had been forced to fight in terrible mud and conditions. A commander should lead by example and if he isn't willing to put himself through what he commands others to do, then needs to think twice before making an order.

To learn more about Major Jack Sheridan, visit Iwanttolearnmoreaboutjacksheridan.com or call 1-800-555-1234.

A New Era

Royal Sandhu

Nowadays, finding a school, business, home, or any other public building in America that does not have internet is quite uncommon. It is no surprise that the internet is among the most significant technological developments that have come with many benefits. It facilitates communication through social media, it creates new businesses and ways of online shopping, and, in a sense, it brings the world closer together. Within minutes I am able to connect to someone sitting across the globe to ask them how their day is going. The internet is no doubt an amazing innovation that has created a platform for many individuals to express themselves in a form of online entertainment.

However, this new development has only been around for less than fifty years. To imagine a world without the internet today seems like an underdeveloped, foreign place. Each day I witness countless individuals immersed in their technological devices. They may be studying, playing games, doing research, or even using their device to make it look like they are simply doing “something” similar to a security blanket from the eye of others who think they are alone.

For as long as I was alive, technology has always been around. However, as stated previously, what seems so common to me only developed some time ago. For my parents, being able to look up answers using Google or even being able to video call someone across the globe using Skype is a sort of phenomenon. Even today, they are easily amazed by the impacts of technology. To be honest, by trying to see this technological era from their lens, enables me to understand the true value of technology. I really appreciate it and understand it comes with many pros and cons. However, what “thing” doesn’t? A simple tool such as a pencil can be used to unlock creative ideas that enhance human life. Simultaneously, the same wonderful pencil can be used to stab or even seriously harm an individual causing a negative impact toward the human race.

All in all, technology has created a new era for our generation to discover and explore themselves in a new and broader way than ever before. Fortunately, with it, we are given many advantages than without out much like our parents or even grandparents generation, who were limited from most of its benefits. Technology has provided us a “place” to further enhance for future generations. It gives me time to think about the awe-inspiring creations that have developed as a result. I am grateful to be living in this day and age.

A Retrospective on Our Time as Students

Andrew Aceves

Usually, around age five, each of us begins kindergarten. At this point, a journey that should last at least thirteen years has begun. Not only do we gain knowledge from schooling,

“Unedited”

Heather-Anne Jaeger

We were driving down a road, about 50 miles per hour. *Haleigh don't you think you're going a bit fast?* I mean we were going down a windy road anyway... *Heather you worry too much, you know I have a handle on.* This I do trust her on. *Haleigh do you ever wonder what would happen if we died right now?* *No not really, but at least right now we would die together.* She looks at me, and we both just end up laughing our asses off. The car keeps winding down the road and frankly we just don't care. In the car, creepy music is playing. I grab her iPhone that is connected to an aux and change the song. All of a sudden Miranda Lambert was playing. *I'm going home, gonna load my shot gun, wait by the door and light a cigarette...* Together we are blasting this song, thinking of all of those who have wronged us, thinking the same thoughts, even though in reality we never would do it. *Haleigh I'm leaving soon.* Awkward pause. *What do you mean leaving? You're in a moving car?* yup, she is starting to see what I mean... *Haleigh I'm leaving home, I'm leaving this town, and with it I'm leaving you in it.* The car swerved right, left, right again. Got to love sharp turning paths. *What are you saying?* *I'm saying that you and I, this is our last adventure, and when I get home, that is our good-bye.* The car swerves again but this time to the other lane, all the way off the



street, she brakes and parks the car. Turns to me and studies me.

What did I do? Did I do something to make you not want to be friends with me? Her eyes were getting bigger and bigger by the second, and tears were starting to form. *Haleigh, it's not you,* tears were falling down my cheek *I just need to leave here. I can't keeping waking up and wondering what I am doing with my life. I just can't.*

Who would I be if I just wake up, go to work, and go to bed? That is not living. So you're going to leave me, just like that? What the fuck? She is pissed now, I could tell, she wasn't about to cry now in front of me, she thought I was betraying her, and in a way I was. I felt horrible. *"I have known you since seventh grade, and this is how you want to end this friendship? 'I need to live my life'? That is the line you want to use? That's bullshit! Bullshit! Heather you have been there for me, like I have been there for you, we basically are sisters, and you want to just end this?"*

...no I can't even look at her anymore. I feel like a backstabber, I know this is hard to take in, but what was I supposed to do? She wouldn't need me anymore. *But I can't just take you with me. You have boyfriend to think about. He is there for you always, and I know if I was to leave, he would be there to take care of you. I don't want to leave you. You are my best friend, partner in crime and every other cliché. You mean everything to me, and I don't want to leave you but if I don't leave all of this behind, I'd come back and I can't simply do that now.*

She looks at me dumbstruck. *I cannot believe you.* It is all she had to say, all I truly deserved. So we just sat there for a while and then she spoke again. *I would leave if you ask me you know?*

I think about it, *what about boyfriend?*

He would follow me or simply accept that I am no longer at home anymore. Heather we have been through too much to just simply end like this. Too many adventures to do, and this life, I'm like you and unsure as to whether it is the life for me.

*I sit there awhile in her car, until I finally realized what I had to do. **Haleigh**, would you leave with me? She put the car into drive, and pulls back onto the road.*

We are best friends for life, and there is nothing that can change that. If you leave, I leave too.

As she turns again on the windy roads, I study her. We have been through so much, our phases when we wouldn't speak for six



months, to when we were inseparable. How far we have come along down this road, and never did we ever look back. Together we have been through everything, and together we will face the uncertainty of life together. As the road comes to an end, we came upon a four way stop. She presses on the brake, and looks left and right then at me.

So what is it going to be?

Straight ahead, let's just continue down this path, it's

been working for us so far. She smiles, and I do too. I know from that point on, whenever I had a decision to make she would be right there with me, to fail or succeed, we would do it together. Forever ;



Best Friends with a story unedited, but continuous all the same;

Nameless

Alicia Montanez

I only loved the little stars, the ones I couldn't see unless I was out in the country, away from the city lights. I thought that maybe if I picked one of the smallest ones, one of the tiniest, faintest pinpricks, it could be mine and mine alone.

I was certain that everyone else would pick the biggest stars, the ones that pierced the black-velvet sky to let in heaven's light from the other side. Who wouldn't want one of those stars with names like Sirius, Rigel, Arcturus, and Capella? Any epic fantasy writer would be proud to use one of those for their hero's name.

The smaller stars probably have names, too. Scientists are like that. Everything has to have a name and a place and it has to be explained. Whose job is it to go and name all of those little stars? Who maps them? We humans like to explore and find out new things, but what happens when we figure everything out? Will that happen?

Why do we ascribe so much importance to categorizing things? The theme for the Honors program is "*know your place*", and not once this semester have I thought anything positive about that phrase. It makes me feel like we're being encouraged to define ourselves and put ourselves in a box that fits nicely into what society wants from college students.

I don't know my place, and I'm fine with that. I think I'm always going to be on a journey to find out who I am. I'm not going to fit myself into a group of people or a stereotype. I don't even mind if I don't fit in with my friends.

I never looked up the name for my star. I don't know if it has a name. But I have my own name for it, and that makes it special.



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