

Knowing Your

Place

Fall 2015

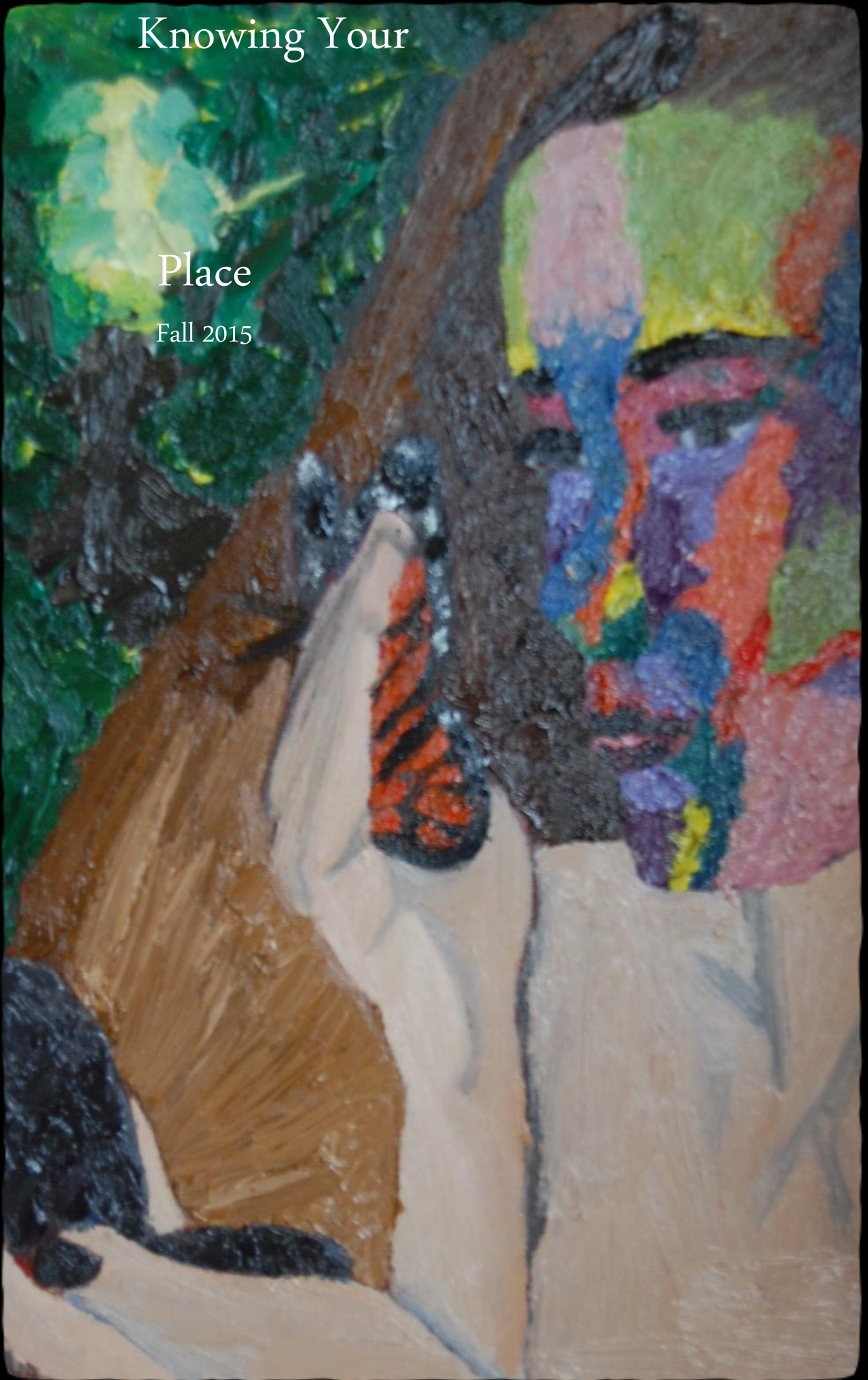


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Introduction

Initially, we were told to make a magazine that fit into this semester's theme of "Knowing Your Place." We were given no specific instructions other than that we all had to contribute something. Writing about such a broad and widely interpreted subject can be difficult, but eventually we began to find inspiration in our life experiences to share. With everything from poetry to pictures, our magazine has grown from an assignment to a diverse expression of our self worth. We hope to share our unique opinions and beliefs with those who take the time to read our magazine. Perhaps we can even expand your views on what it means to know your place. We would like to thank the Honors faculty and everyone else who may have helped make this publication possible.

IDENTITY: WHO ARE WE?

What am I? What are we? Who am I? Who are we? The true testament to all of our identities is not of color, age, or gender, of which we are many. It is that of aspiration. All of the students featured in this project share this in common; the drive to learn, the desire to grow and evolve. Each and every one of us possesses this, and we're all intellectually connected in this way. What more appropriate read to our person exists? You ask me what my, and possibly our, identity is: We are the most powerful generation. In this room, we've overcome the culturally manufactured differences between us to gather together in a single classroom and collaborate in this intellectual endeavor. This mutual understanding, this shared ambition, is who we are. Collective dedication is a beautiful thing, and I feel that our campus reflects that:





(All photos captured on CSU Stanislaus Campus)

Who Am I Juan Pulido

Am I just a pawn in the game of life?

Following a monotonous routine every day for the rest of my life.
Trapped by the books that surround me, devouring my attention and time
As time passes by so does my youth, slipping from my grasp

Am I just a part of a system, just another statistic?

Numbers surround me, always creeping at every corner
Statistics of death and of life, am I to just fit into a category?
Do I conform to society and to the image I am meant to see in the mirror?
Who am I to stray from tradition and from the path laid in front of me?

Or am I the young adult preparing for war?

War with inner struggles, war with obstacles to come, war with those who say I am
no one.

Do I dare venture off from the nest, ready to migrate into a direction I chose?
Voices in my life tell me to stay, yet I know in my heart it is time.

Soon I will find the answers to my questions.

Society will not tell me who I am or who I should be, for this is for me to figure
out.

There is no path before me, so I must create my own to follow.
It is uncertain when or where I will find the answers I look for, but for now I am just
a young adult ready to find his place.

How Society Defines Place

Manjot Mangat

We all want to have a sense of belonging, to know our places in the grand scheme of things. The process of finding this place is sometimes called socialization. As part of this search for identity, we meet new people and try new things. Sometimes we distinguish ourselves from others by finding unique hobbies and interests; at other times, we try our best to be part of the group to avoid being left out. Much of one's childhood is spent trying to find a place. Who are my friends? What is my personality? Do I have a favorite color? What do I want to be when I grow up? Do I like to play soccer or baseball or basketball, maybe all of the above? There is, however, one obstacle that lies in the path of finding one's place. That obstacle is society. Society sets expectations and limitations for groups of people. In class, our discussions on this topic have been focused primarily on gender roles. In an individual's quest to know his or her place, society places certain limits through gender roles.

Gender roles are assignments created for each sex. Gender roles are what say that boys like blue while girls like pink. They say that boys play with G.I. Joe while girls play with Barbie. Boys play sports, and girls play tea party. Gender roles are not exclusive to childhood, though they are socialized during this period. The ideas of femininity and masculinity are creations of society. Gender roles are also responsible for "rules" like men don't cry, women should care for children, men are strong and aggressive, and women are passive or submissive. Women are discouraged from being independent; she must marry a man who will take care of her. He will go to work to put food on the table. She will cook and clean the house and take care of the children. The man of the house will make the important decisions and will do manly things like fixing the plumbing. All of these are common examples of gender roles that are created by our society.

These roles are assigned to children at a young age. Society creates a pair box and tells people that they can be whatever they want in life, as long as what they want falls inside of their respective box. In this way, one's "place" is limited by his or her anatomy. A young boy who enjoys cooking may be discouraged from this desire by his father. "You should be playing football, son. Let's go play catch and next season you're going to join the football team." A young girl who enjoys dismantling and reassembling things may be discouraged from being an engineer. "Oh, don't get your clothes all dirty, honey. Here, give me those and you can go and play dress-up with your friends, instead."

When you abide by the rules created for your own gender, your actions are positively reinforced. It is easier to make friends and to find people who are like yourself. In essence, it is simpler to find your place. However, on the other hand is negative reinforcement. Parents discourage their children from certain actions. There are also sets of belittling labels that were created to prevent people from stepping outside of their respective norms. A girl who likes to play in the mud or who likes to play men's sports like football or basketball is labeled a "tomboy." A boy who would rather practice dancing play with toy sports cars may be called a "sissy" or be asked, "What, are you a girl?"

Gender roles are slowly being expanded, but they still place a restrictive limit on choice in terms of one's place. If you're a boy, everyone tells you that you can be this or that and discourages you from having some other identity. The same is true of girls. In this way, society gives you a few choices regarding identity based on your gender. It tells you, "pick one of these, but I won't associate with you anymore if you pick something else." The good news is that there are people who are changing their expectations of males and females, and they're deciding to raise their children differently. They're raising them to be accepting, tolerant, and free.

The Old Traditions on Mango Street

Erik Sousa

In Sandra Cisneros' book, *The House on Mango Street*, it is evident that old values, traditions, and stereotypes play a large part in Esperanza's childhood. She grew up in a traditional Mexican family who constantly moves. What all the places have in common, however, is that they are all in poor, rundown neighborhoods. What really show her struggle through these traditions and stereotypes are her family, the story of her great-grandmother, and Cathy.

Esperanza... she shares the name with her great-grandmother; who is described as “a wild horse of a woman, so wild she wouldn't marry,” (Cisneros 10). She was different from the rest of the women of her time: wild and independent. Until she was broken and forced to marry. After that, she was put in a corral for the rest of her life, looking out to the world she could no longer be a part of. Esperanza states that, “I have inherited her name, but I don't want to inherit her place by the window,” (Cisneros 11). She does not want to be sucked into the old and outdated traditions of her family; she wants to be her own woman. She does not want to look, “out the window her whole life, the way so many women sit their sadness on an elbow,” (Cisneros 11). She wants to break away from the old values of society. Do something to change the wrongs of society and the way women are handled and treated. She wants to show that they are not weak, inferior, or just an object owned by their husbands.

Family plays a very influential role in making sure these traditional values hold true and are carried on. This is shown when Esperanza says that, “the boys and the girls live in separate worlds.... They've got plenty to say to me and Nenny inside the house. But outside they can't be seen talking to girls,” (Cisneros 8). Even within the family, society's “rules” influence them. The boys do not talk to the girls outside of home, because society has told them not to. Boys play with other boys and play sports and other physical games. While girls usually stay inside and

play house and with dolls and other toys. Being the oldest girl, she must also take care of her younger sister. They have a significant age gap, so Esperanza says they are not friends, just sisters. She also says that, "I am a red balloon, a balloon tied to an anchor," (Cisneros 9). This anchor that is holding her, the balloon, down is her family and their stubborn, unquestioning acceptance of society and old traditions ; which limit her from fulfilling her desires just because she is a girl.

Not only is there adversity in being a woman during this time, but she is also Mexican so she receives some racism, especially from Cathy. Cathy tells Esperanza that the neighborhood is getting bad. She is moving north because of it. Esperanza says that Cathy is moving, "a little farther away every time people like us keep moving in," (Cisneros 13). Cathy, who is a white female, keeps moving because Mexicans are moving into the neighborhoods she lives in and making it bad. This is basically America's society and thought process when dealing with minorities condensed to a conversation between neighbors. Cathy also says to stay away from the two raggedy girls who live across the street, but does not give a legitimate reason why. She says this just because they are as well off as she is. Again, society plays a major role and influences her thinking.

Esperanza has to overcome many obstacles and difficulties to become the woman she wants to be. To be able to be, think, and do for herself, find a friend, and become a strong, independent woman she has to first go through much adversity. Not only was society telling her to be a "good" girl, stay in the house, and do what she is told, but her own family was telling her the same thing as well. She also had to face racism and the fact that she is of a lower economic class, both of which make one feel mistreated and thought of as inferior. All of this hardship allowed Esperanza to achieve one thing: to find and know her place in the world.

Finding Your Place

Joseph Silva

Finding Your Place

It is no easy task
to find your place,
wearing a mask
as if in disgrace.

Hiding yourself from
those you fear you'll become.

You can learn to belong
among your friends,
to right a wrong
and make amends.
Accepting your flaw,
it's not the last straw.

So take a swig from your flask
and quicken your pace,
before you're trapped in a cask
with too little space.
Remember, life awaits
with a warm embrace.

Places Only We Know

Molly Landon

I felt the wind whisper in my ear as the sun gently kissed my cheeks. I looked into your soul and saw the world. Every wonder; every secret; every discovery was there for me to gaze into. There were no boundaries around or between us. I was you, and you were me, and together we were each other. We are spiritually, physically and mentally inseparable. Adventures around every corner, every bend, and at the end of each trail we took.

Music fills every step of our journey: The leaves crackling beneath the pads of our feet, the coyotes howling with their love for the moon. The humming of bees in the meadow we pass through. The only reminder of our existence being the footsteps trailing behind us, proving that all there is to do in life is move forward.

Always moving, always searching, and always looking for beauty. Never staying in one place, we continue to adapt to our ever changing environment. No tree, no river, no path looking the same. Each has its own life, spirit and heartbeat, pounding separately but together. All so different by themselves, but in unison they create a peaceful and symphonious song. The brook supplying the beat with which the trees can use to play the soft precision of their leaves. For the wind is the maestro and conducts his orchestra into that of something incomparable to anything else.

I know my place. It's under the shady tree next to the creek. It's watching the birds sing their melody as they build a nest. It's simply just being at peace with the world around me.

Feudal System
Erik Sousa

The Farm Boy

Suited in armor with sword in hand

He went to fight in the army.

He showed his skill and passed every drill

But they didn't give him a swami.

“A foot soldier is what you are.

Your father is a farmer.”

“But I have the skill to go and kill

To be a knight of honor.”

He proved his worth on the field,

He lost an arm and a leg.

He killed the most men of them all,

While the “knights” drank from their keg.

His father suffered this fate;

So will his brother and his son.

There is no way of changing

What they have become.

Ramblings on My Place

Jacob Cayabyab

What does “Know Your Place” mean to me?
Well, it means many things to me like...

“Know Your Place, Stay There, and Do Not Question It”
“Know Your Place in Society, and If You Don’t, Go Find or Make One”
“Know Your Favorite Place in the World”
“Know Your Place on Today’s Issues”
“Know Yourself, Know Your Identity, and Know your Flaws”
“Know that Everyone Has a Place In This Great Puzzle Called Life, You Included”

Now, I could just write about only one of these topics, but let’s see if I can cover all of them! Welcome to my *Ramblings On Place*.

“Know Your Place, Stay There, and Do Not Question It”

They knew their place,
To obey commands,
From the nutcase.
“Enter No Man’s Land.”

They followed orders,
“Advance gun in hand.”
Their failed Howitzers,
Left machine-guns manned.

That’s what the orders said,
To get mowed down that day,
To walk into a storm of lead,
“Obey”, Command will say.

Fifty-eight thousand, that day, will die,
More than a million, that year, disgrace.
Film propaganda to spread a lie.
“Go to the front, you know it’s your place.”

“Know Your Place in Society, and If You Don’t, Go Find or Make One”

I like making my place. I enjoy taking the chaos and noise of the world, and turning it into an organized space. Sometimes though, my ideas end up becoming just as chaotic as the world is.

“Know Your Favorite Place in the World”

Do you know what is nice? Whenever you are coming back home from a road trip and you begin to recognize the landmarks the closer you get to home. At first it’s just one familiar looking billboard, then next it is the group of trees that are lined up. Soon you start recognizing the buildings. The closer you get to home, the more you recognize. Memories keep flooding into your mind, all of the memories made from each location. The time you got lost in that supermarket when you were little, but a friendly lady helped you find your mom. The park where you remember watching your first fireworks show. The time you biked down that road into the sunset like a movie hero. The time that you ate dinner with your family at that restaurant and stuffed yourself just because the food was irresistible. The time you sat underneath the shade of that tree with a friend and spoke with her for several hours about anything and everything. The first street you drove on. The first intersection where you almost crashed and died. The homes where all your old friends used to live before they moved away. All the memories of that place you spent your life rush back at you. It is not nostalgia, because nostalgia requires longing for the unattainable past. The past is attainable, because the memories are embedded in every detail of the land. The homesickness is nonexistent when you are home. It is nice to know when you are home.

“Know Your Place On Today’s Issues”

When asked for my stance,
On the issues of today,
I ask for their views.

I’ve learned through my life,
It is better to listen,
Than ignore others.

“Know Your Self, Know Your Identity, and Know Your Flaws”

A part of my identity has been about humor. My parents always liked telling me jokes, and I always liked to bond with others through humor. Laughter was the best way to turn an enemy or a stranger into a friend. People have told me that I was funny, and hopefully it was not out of pity. I also tend to laugh at other people's jokes, no matter how bad the joke, because I find many things funny. I still am unsure whether that means I have a good or bad sense of humor.

So I asked myself, what would be the best way to reveal the humorous part of my identity while also pointing out my flaws? I came to the conclusion that I must, write several bad jokes on the spot involving identity, home, and other related topics to the theme. Please forgive me.

If home is where the heart is, then if my heart gets broken into a million pieces, do I get a million tiny little homes?

If home is where the heart is, then if I buy two homes, do I get a second heart free of charge?

If there is no place like home, then how come my neighbor two doors down has the exact same cookie-cutter suburban home as I?

If I live in Turlock, therefore I must live in California, so I must live in the United States of America, so I must live in North America, so I must live on Earth, so I must live within The Solar System, so I must live within Milky Way Galaxy, and I must live within The Universe, therefore I live within The Multiverse, which probably means that I also live parallel to The Marvel Comics Multiverse, which is owned by Walt Disney Studios, so therefore I am a Disney Character!

So as you can see, I happen to be terrible at telling jokes on command, however, I bet if I ever strike up a conversation with you, I could get you to chuckle at least once.

“Know that Everyone Has a Place In This Great Puzzle Called Life, You Included”

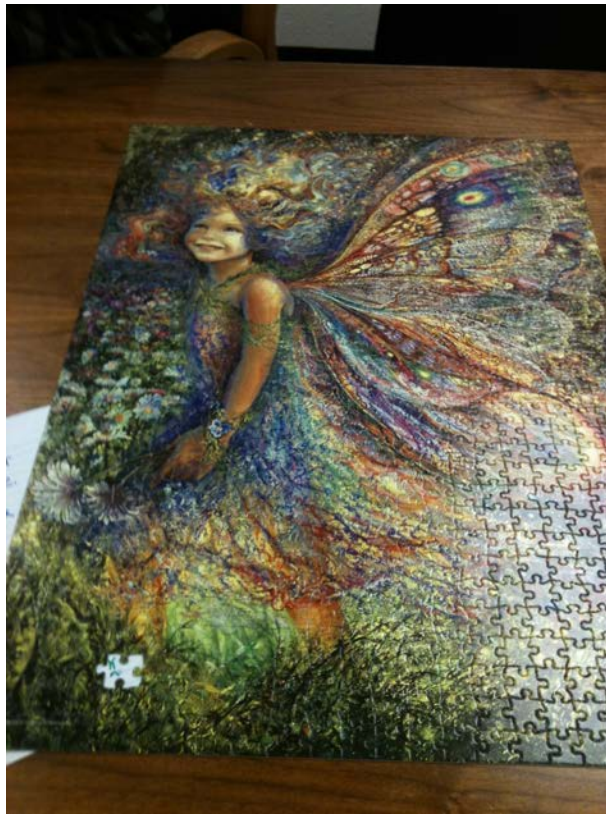
We are all just pieces of a larger puzzle in the world. We all have a place where we belong. When we all work together, and find our own special place in the world, everything just fits together and life starts to become something beautiful. Until we all find our place in this world, our own special calling, we all feel lost in the world of chaos.



For the past week, several people in the Honors Building have been working on a puzzle. The puzzle in this picture has been worked on by a collective of people. There was no specific team. Anyone who wanted to help could help work on the puzzle; there were no leaders. The image developed slowly over time. A problem arose, however, when we neared completion. We discovered to our horror that a single piece of the puzzle had been lost.

That lost piece of the puzzle has vanished without a trace. We do not know if the puzzle piece is even in the same building anymore. Someone may have stolen the piece, the piece may have been vacuumed up on accident, or perhaps the piece is just hiding right under our noses. All that matters though, is that the puzzle piece is missing, and the puzzle will never be complete without it.*

Every piece of the puzzle is needed. There are no unneeded pieces or extra pieces in a puzzle. Every piece is as valuable as the other.** The pieces are like people. We all need each other, and we all are part of the bigger picture, whether we realize it or not. We can't ignore the problems of our neighbors, because their problems will affect us too. It is wrong to lock the outside world away from ourselves because the isolation will destroy us. It is easy to lose a single puzzle piece, but it is tougher to lose the entire puzzle. However, even if a lone piece is lost, the void will be noticed.



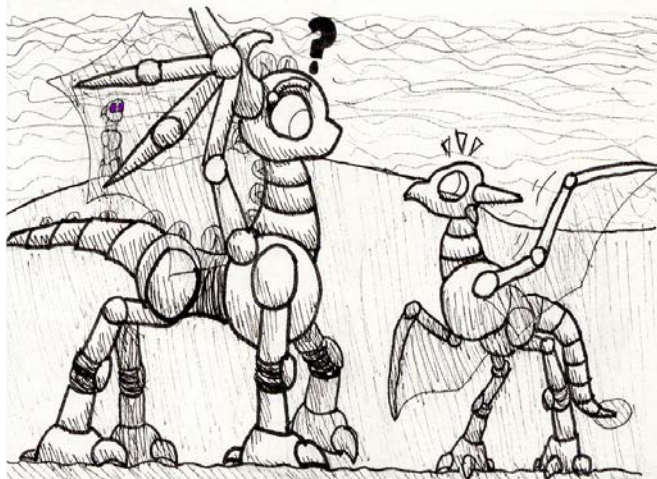
*If you happen to find this missing piece, contact me immediately. PLEASE.

**I guess you could argue that edge pieces are slightly more valuable than the average piece, and the corner pieces could technically be the most valuable of all.

WANDER
Amanda Larson

WE TAKE COMFORT IN NORMALCY.

WE LIKE TO BE WITH OTHERS LIKE
OURSELVES.

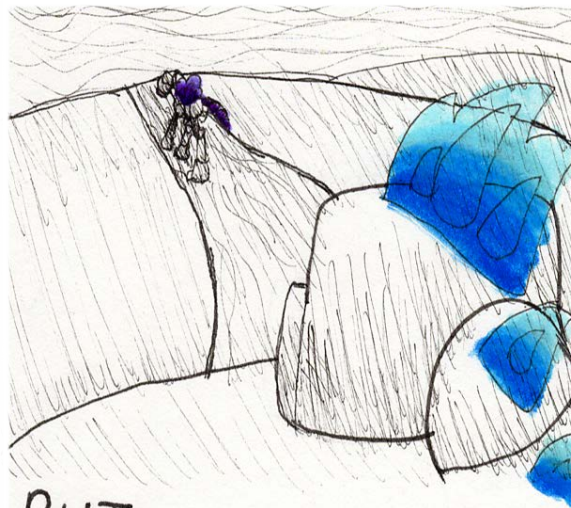
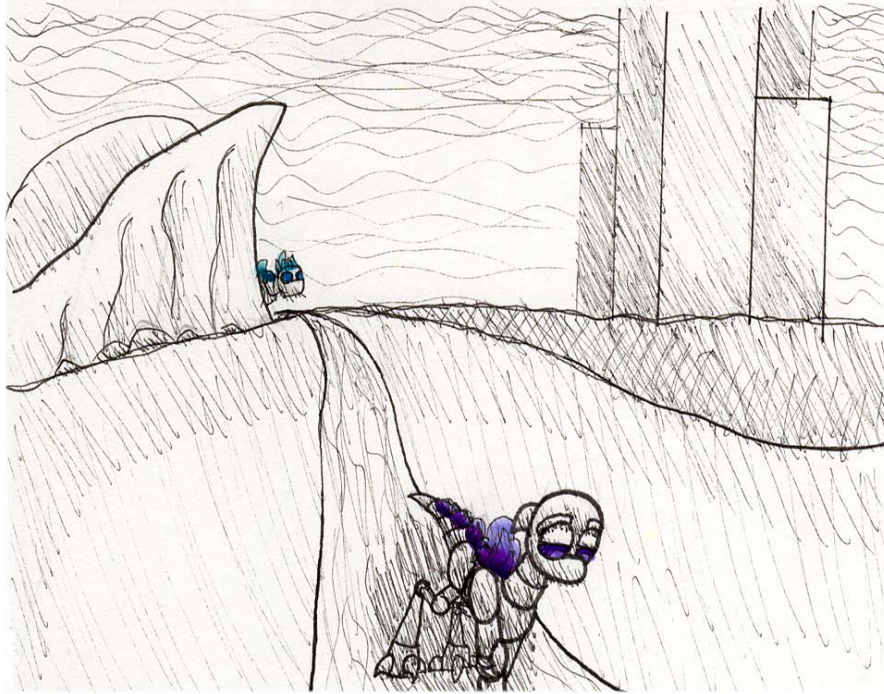


IT GIVES US A SENSE OF
BELONGING.



BUT SOME OF US ARE DIFFERENT.

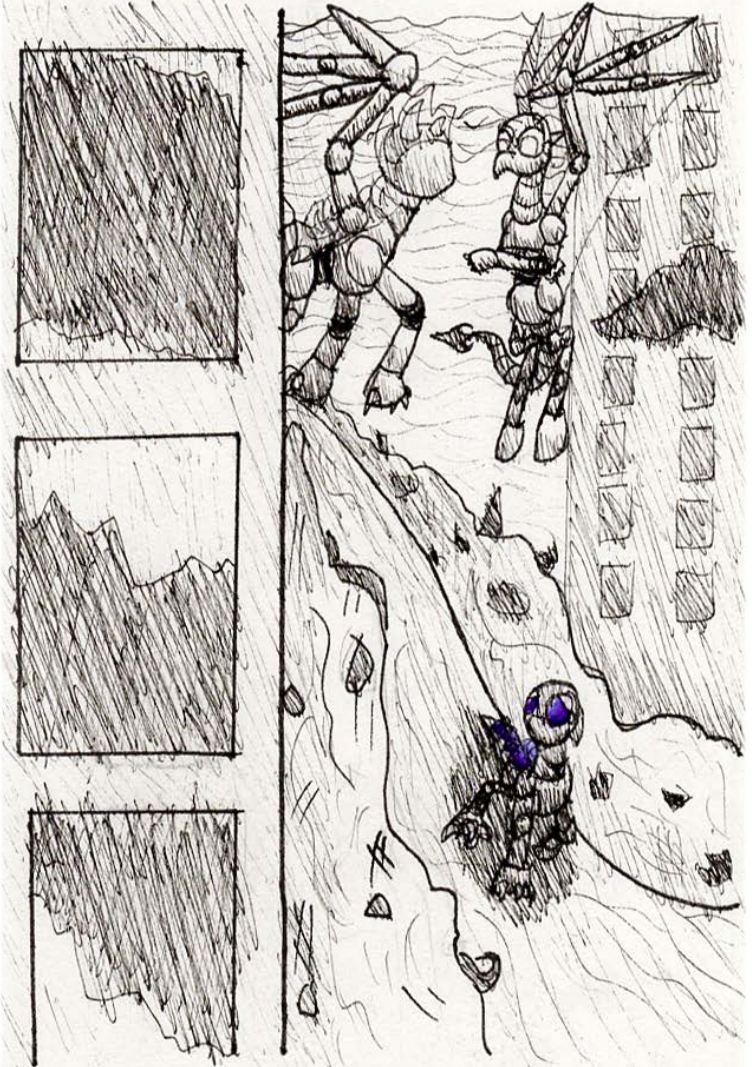
PERHAPS THEY WILL WANDER, LOST.



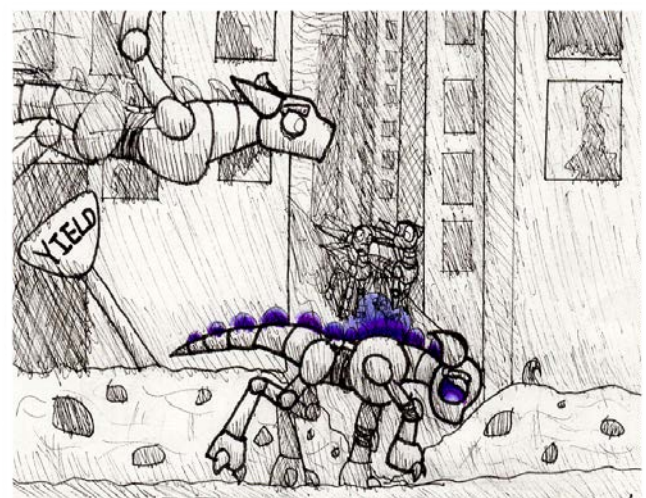
BUT...



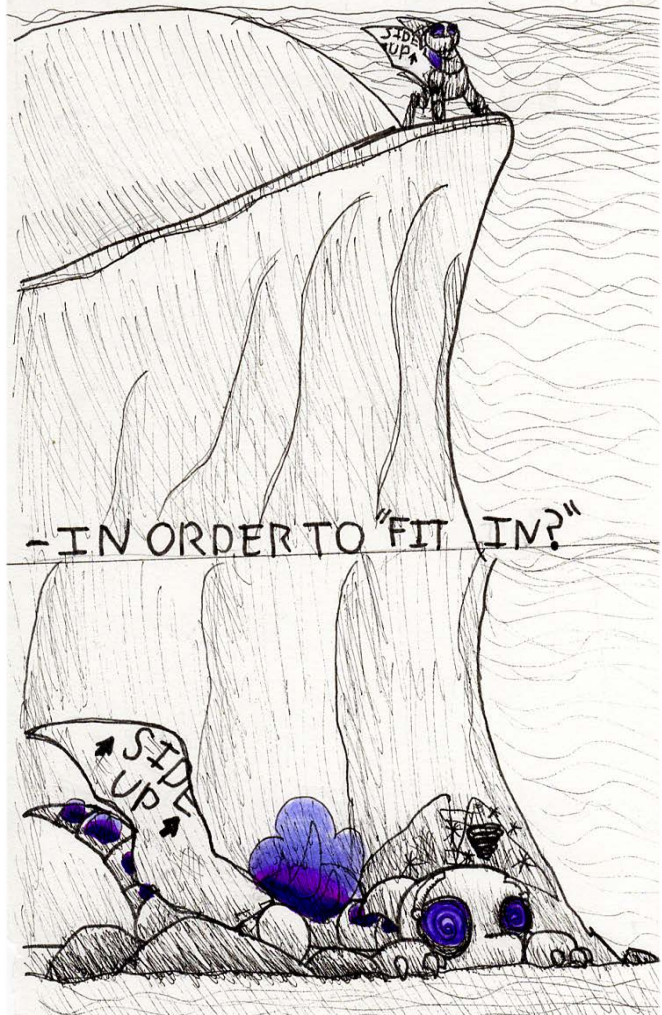
WHAT OF THE OUTLIERS?
WHAT OF THOSE WHO ARE
SURROUNDED -



-BY DAILY REMINDERS
THAT THEY ARE AN
ANOMALY?

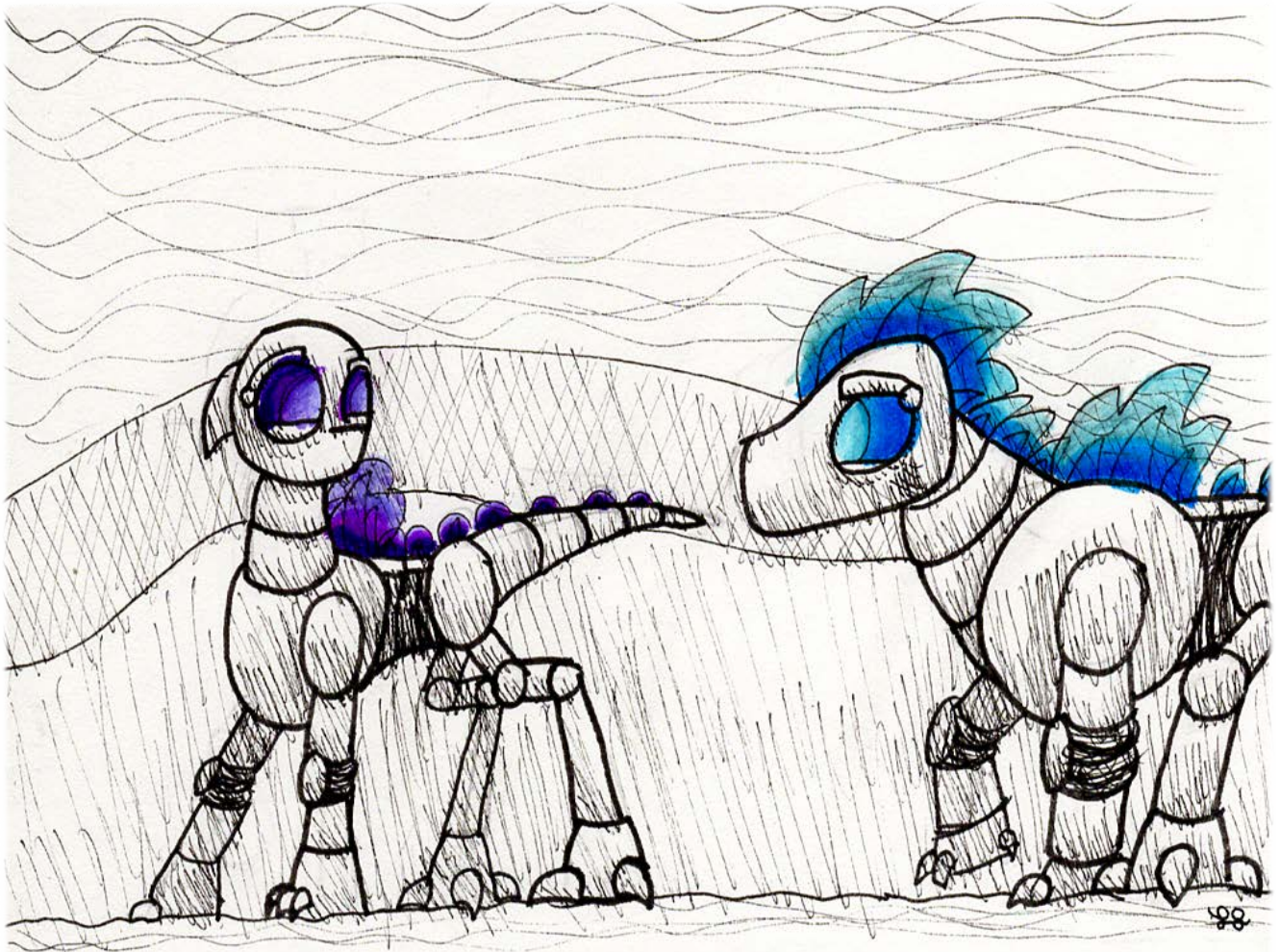


WHAT OF THOSE WHO SEEMINGLY
HAVE NO PLACE IN THE WORLD?
WILL THEY TRY TO CHANGE -



-IN ORDER TO "FIT IN?"

SUCH EFFORTS WOULD BE
FUTILE. WE CANNOT BE
SOMETHING WE ARE NOT.



... THERE IS ALWAYS HOPE.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

Why does Rape Culture Make Me Angry?

Holly Jones

Because 13% of rape victims commit suicide.

Because 1 out of 5 women and 1 out of 33 men will be sexually assaulted or raped in their life.

Because only 39% of rapists get reported to the police, and 3% of rapists are sent to jail.

Because 70% of women let their partner have sex with them when they don't want it.

Because 100% of rape victims suffer from emotional trauma after the attack.

Because when I was raped, I was told that it was my fault.

Because when I told my friends, they called my gross and I was too ashamed to tell my parents or anyone else.

Because at age 12, my best friend was raped and the charges were dropped because she never resisted or said "no".

Because a 12 year old boy was raped by an older woman and his friends called him "lucky".

Because a 16 year old girl watched her rapist walk free because she had an orgasm while being raped.

Because there are politicians making our laws that believe that a woman's body can stop rape from happening.

Because when a guy was raped by another guy, he was told that "it wasn't really rape".

Because women are told that what they wear is "asking for it".

Because some cultures still disown their children when they are sexually assaulted.

Because girls are being sent home from school if their clothes are too "distracting" for the boys to do work.

Because little girls are being sexualized by school officials, then denied a day of instruction.

Because society teaches women how to avoid being raped rather than teaching guys that they shouldn't rape.

Because the word rape is used as a joke.

Because the world needs to be constantly reminded what rape culture is.

Thoughts on my Place

Hunter Roberts

I am white, I am a Christian, and I am a man. There are people that hate me for those things. Specifically, the people that hate me for those things, are the ones who identify as not white, not christian, and not a man. In today's society I feel like I'm all three of those identities are moving into the same marginalized place, some are moving slower than others, but all are on their way out of a dominant position. And I use the word dominant lightly because I understand the weight that goes along with it. All of those categories are changing their position in society and this is a good movement at its core, but it leaves me confused.

I am white. I don't like that sometimes, but I realize I am blessed with an opportunity to lead my generation down the mountain of entitlement and back up to the plateau progressive thinking and activism. The white people of the past got to reap the benefits of suppressing the other, and now our generation is left to pick up the pieces and try to walk out of this with a stitch of dignity. And I am confused. I do not know how to carry myself, should I walk with my head held high or hung low? Do I step up to walk alongside or would that be offensive because of the past actions the people with my skin color did? I am confused. But I want to do this well.

I am a Christian. I don't like that sometimes, but I realize I am blessed with an opportunity to be the image of a new age Christian and to work to show the true colors of my religion. I want to show that my religion is based around love but the world thinks that me and my God are only here to judge. But I choose to embrace that Christianity is being pushed into the margins of our society. Rather than be something this country is rooted in like it used to be. I understand what my place is, as an example of the new age Christian, who loves well and unconditionally. I want to do this well.

I am a man. I don't like that sometimes, but I realize I am blessed with an opportunity to show those who will look up to me what a noble man should look like. I walk slow on this journey, but I walk in a direction I am proud of. I am ashamed about how men have treated women, but I know my place isn't to take responsibility for their actions. My place is to actively change the social "norm" into one where a completely mutual relationship exists. I can not do this alone, but to not do my part would be as bad as contributing to the problem.

I am a white, Christian, male. But that doesn't define me, rather the kind of white, Christian, male I am is what defines me. To work effectively, I must work from the bottom up, by passively leading by example. That is my place and I embrace it as valuable and effective.

Dreams
Joseph Silva

Dreams

What does it mean
when you sit up at night
not yet ready to sleep
but unable to put up a fight?

What does it mean
to dream about life
finding your place
amidst a world of strife?

What does it mean
when those you hold close
decide your ideas
are food for the crows?

What does it mean
to wish for peace
overlooking the lies
craving eternal release?

To sing one last song
knowing you'll never belong.

Spilled Ink
Anonymous

The Decision

*To stay or to go: that is my question.
Whether 'tis nobler to suffer
The pain of stagnancy here,
Or to take up arms and fly;
And by doing so, desert those who are dear to my heart.
Would I dream the same dreams here if I go?
Will they die away if I remain or fade into obscurity?
What then, is my place?
Where then, shall be my home.
To stay means to suffocate,
Choke my mind,
Afflict my body.
To fly away is to fall,
Fall away from the familiar,
Fall from love.
So again I ask: to stay or to go.
Whether 'tis wiser to build my home upon my roots
And lose all chance of freedom,
Or to draw in my anchor, drift in the wind,
And lose all sense of familiarity.
Oh, that the decision would be easy-
But nothing in life ever is.*

My Name

What is my name?
Can a word encapsulate all a person is?
My mind searches for a word,
A word to call myself...
an identity.
Could I possibly be contained and held in one word?
Perhaps I shall call myself Serenity.
An untroubled swan glides through crystal glass.
Serenity.
Maybe I am Phoenix.
A fiery bird rises from ashes. It lives.
Phoenix.
Or perhaps Harmony.
A clash of different notes on the scale combine to create chords.
Notes from across the staff meet in one moment
Art is unleashed.
Harmony.
I am rough, flawed.
Could I be artist?
No.
Musician?
I am a creator of sound.
Silence is my canvas,
and melodies my paint.
Yes.

Musician.

Music and Regret Sydne Brainard

I like that music
Translates feelings into sound
Understood by all



To be happiest
Live your future like you wished
You had lived your past

Letters to Me

Anonymous

Dear Child,

I want to start by apologizing. You had so many dreams for us. You were full of hope and self-love and I took that away from you. I am so sorry. I wish that someday we get that back. I tried to hold on to it but it was hard when everybody was telling us to be something else. I always admired your ability to love and forgive anybody. We could really use that ability now but I seem to have lost it. I remember that you wanted to be a doctor when you grew up. I am sorry I let the dream die but trust me, we could not handle medical school. Speaking of trust, I remember when we trusted people so easy. That was both a blessing and a curse. We don't trust many people these days. But life isn't as easy as we thought it was. You may not understand this because you still believe in the good in everybody and everything but life is hard. People aren't good. Soon you will realize that people think they know who you are and what you should be doing. I am still not sure why they feel entitled to tell you how to live your life but know you could be so much more than what they want you to be. I know you want to grow up but please don't. There is nothing I miss as much as being a child. In a couple of years, you will let people convince you that your big dreams are not realistic for somebody like you. I wish you never listened to them but it's too late now. They will tell us that it is better if we stop being smart and reading and worry about other more important stuff like how we look or what we wear. Please don't listen. When that boy in your history class calls you names for raising your hand to answer every single question, tell him that there is nothing wrong with knowing the answers to the questions. Trust me we don't know the answers for anything any more. So whatever you do, please keep raising your hand. Also, don't think you owe anybody anything. You don't have to do what your parents want you to do just because they raised you and you don't have to kiss a boy just because he is nice to you. Make your own decisions. Be bold. And please keep believing in us.

Love, Me

Dear Adult,

Please tell me that it got better. That we no longer worry what others will think of us before we do anything. Did we learn to love ourself again? Did we learn how to not care what people think about us? Did I pick the right major? I wrote a letter to my past self today and I had some answers and some requests but all I have for you is questions. I hope we never gave up on school. Learning used to bring us so much joy. Right now it feels more like a burden than a gift but I hope you remembered how important education is and never quite. Speaking of which, are we happy with our career? I try to make decisions that you will be proud of but I am sure I messed something up. Are we confident in ourselves? In our abilities? Where do we belong in this world? Why are we here? Have we done anything to improve somebody else's life? I hope we are making a difference. I hope that you have learned we don't have to change how we look to be beautiful or loved. I try to remember that now but it is hard when beauty is shown to be everything you are not. But while we need to stop letting others judge us, we need to stop judging others too. Have we stopped? I really want the best for you. I hope everything turns out how you wanted it too. I hope you still call our mom. I know it's easy to get caught up in our busy life but our family loves us so much and they can remind us of who we are when we forget. If we ever forget who we are, I hope you remember that small farm town. I know we had to work so hard to get out of there but it still helped us become who we are. That town taught us how to work hard, how struggling can make us stronger, and how some things in life have to be completed alone. Please don't hold the mistakes I have made against me. Please love me despite my flaws. If you don't, how will anybody else?

Wishing you well, Me

Mack, Geodes, Entropy

Alejandro Caballero Hurtado

Twenty-one years have passed since I've been home.

I'm not entirely sure how this happened, actually. I guess I just sort of forgot to come home from college one weekend, and then another, and another, and now I'm thirty-eight with tenure, a wife, and two kids. Well, actually, of those three I really only have the tenure left, sort of, but that's just how it goes sometimes.

My parents have long since moved to Florida, that far-off land of spray tans, botox, oversized implants, and sunny beaches: the place where the aging and infirm go to die. Spanish conquistadors spent entire lifetimes among the everglades in search for the fountain of youth and maybe elderly Floridians still cling to the hope that it exists. Who knows? And more importantly, who am I to judge?

After my parents abandoned Caulfield, I had no obligation to return. I knew this, and yet a persistent feeling, an internal voice telling me to go back, remained at the core of my being. For a while I ignored it, for a while it worked.

What is there to say about me, you ask? Not much. I've been painfully average for as long as I can remember. Height, weight, even intelligence: all average. How I ever ended up teaching is a mystery even to myself. I don't mean that in a self-deprecating sort of way either, far from it. How much can you really ever truly know about yourself without acknowledging your own flaws? Not much... but enough about me and on to the matter at hand. I don't remember much of anything from today, but it's been like that for the past few weeks. I woke on a cold shag carpet that smelt of past debauchery and of gin. I can remember touching my face, almost to see if I was still there, and feeling the stubble that greeted the tips of my fingers. I looked about the hotel room I had been put up in since last Wednesday and thoroughly scrutinized its state of disarray. I'm a neat person, at least I think I am, but cleanliness had been the furthest thing on my mind for a while. I attempted to gain my bearings and stand up, but toppled over within seconds. The previous day's liquor remained perched on my shoulders, whispering idiocies into my ears and tripping me at every opportunity while laughing it's sickeningly content laugh as if all was well in the world. I lay there for what seemed to be an eternity, on my knees and elbows, wishing that I wasn't where I was, wishing that Henry Calcetines wouldn't knock on my door today and knowing all the while that he would.

During the second world war, the third Reich implemented a program to produce Aryan children at an exponential rate. Nazi soldiers were encouraged to mingle with the natives and that's how Henry Kramer came to be. He was born upset at the world, a permanent frown on his face. After the war his mother, wrought with a mix of shame and indignation at having birthed the child of a Nazi officer, fled her native Denmark for Spain. Once there she decided to rename Henry in a less German fashion. She sat in a park bench for hours contemplating the task at hand when, by chance, she casted her sight across the street and onto the doors of the local theater. She looked on as a flyer fell from its position on the the opulent mahogany double doors and billowed gently on a passing zephyr before landing at her feet. It was an ad for men's socks: calcetines, as they are referred to in Spanish. Needless to say, she was struck with inspiration.

I looked at the alarm clock to my left. 11:57 AM. My blood ran cold; Henry said that he'd be there at noon. Then came the knocking, as ominous as New England fog.

“Come on man, it's been months, open up. I'm not playing this game anymore.”

The lights had been on for the past few days so I knew that I couldn't pull a fast one again, not this time. My stay at the Quinn-szpilman hotel began when Barbara left with the kids, and I had been racking up the bills ever since. Henry was patient at first, as patient as a man of his caliber could be; after all, he was running a business, not a charity.

“I am not kidding, mack, open the door before I have to kick it in,” he said, as the intensity of knocking began to increase.

He always called me mack; he knew I hated it.

“Henry, just give me two more days, I swear I'll have the money by then, I promise you by all that is holy. I swear on my mother's grave.”

I hated my mother. He didn't know this, however.

“I need my money, this isn't a game. You need to pay or leave, just like anyone else.”

“What harm is there in one more day?” I asked, rather inquisitively.

“Mack, why do you do this to yourself?”

“That's not my name and you know it.”

Who am I kidding? There was no way I was paying good ol' Henry any time soon so I mustered what little coordination I had and stumbled into the bathroom. Henry's knocking began gaining speed and I could hear him yelling obscenities whose likes I had never had the displeasure to hear.

“Was your father a sailor?” I asked, barely able to contain myself.

“You filthy dog, open this door before I open it myself, so help me god!”

It sounded as if he was about to burst through the door. Looking around the bathroom, I realized that the only possible exit was a frosted glass window.

Unfortunately, it was dead bolted. My geode collection, one of the few things I brought with me, was sitting on my desk, a mere fifteen feet away. After a bout of disjointed walking I returned to the bathroom, a wooden crate of stones in hand. I threw one of the stones at the window. It missed its mark and tore through a gaping pipe through the thin wall. Before I knew it, water was rushing through the gap at immense speeds and onto the floors, walls, and myself. I was soaked. The next few stones managed to shatter the window. I could hear the front door splintering. Henry was about to step inside. Even now I can remember dragging myself through that window, soaked to the bone and bleeding, shattered glass embedded into my sides and chest, all the while blinding light singed my eyes. After this pseudo-rebirth, I stood at the edge of the hotel parking lot, dazed and looking like a madman. I looked west at the infinite expanse of road. It was almost as if Kerouac himself was beckoning me with the promise of a new beginning. So I ran. I ran till my lungs burned, till I couldn't hear Henry's screams behind me, till the fields of corn that I had become so used to faded into deserts. I hitched around for a couple of weeks, wandering aimlessly. I made up my mind to go home, to see what had become of it. I'm not sure why, but it felt right. And now here I stand with clothes tattered and hair disheveled, standing at the city limits.

Here goes.

Indecisiveness

Sarah Morgan La Rue

My First Thoughts

Know your place. Three words that sound so simple, yet so complex. Knowing your place changes dramatically. It is never constant, even day to day. How a person is in class is completely different from how they are with friends. The vocabulary, speech patterns and attitude diverge the second class is over. Most people do this and as situations change, so do attitudes.

Knowing your place is like changing masks.

How do you need to act? Do you need to be serious? Funny? Energetic?

Many people, including myself, use it to hide how we truly feel about an experience. They can be either positive or negative, depending on how we use them. Momentary masks, ones for only a specific event are not harmful. However, some people use them for long periods of time. To suppress emotions, thoughts and fears can be physically, mentally and emotionally harmful in the long term. Eventually, the mask needs to come down and people need to own up to their feelings.

Knowing your place requires admitting to what you feel. People have a tendency to want to ignore their feelings, especially after stressful, traumatic or life altering events. Confronting something, naming it, is incredibly difficult as it makes these emotions and events a part of reality.

The Confused Reality

Even if knowing your place was as easy as what I described above, there is the person beneath the act. Behind the mask.

People ask me to describe myself, a lot. In one word, during a conversation, as a teammate, as a friend, as a sibling.

I end up needing a lot more time than one would think.

In one word, I usually end up saying things like, stubborn, loyal, dorky. It changes.

During a whole conversation, when I need to describe myself it's difficult. I can be loyal, aggressive, annoying, loud. But then there are the moments when I am shy, anti-social, quiet and meek. I change. A lot.

As a teammate I end up being very pushy. I push my teammates to do their best, and expect nothing less than a full commitment. I will force them to help with basic chores, such as hauling equipment or setting up the field. This is nothing like how I am with my family. I am loud, but also incredibly submissive. I used to be the youngest child so I was used to always being the youngest, so I was, and still am, the "punching bag" for everything.

My place is definitely not constant. I have figured that out easily. But who I am at the core of my being is incredibly confusing. Who I am here, at college, is a complete change of the person I was in high school. I have been told by family, friends and even past acquaintances that I have changed, mostly personality wise, a lot. More than even I imagined.

I am not constant. At my core there could be these defining traits and events, but I haven't discovered that yet. I don't know who I am as a person or where my place quite is.

Indecisive

Teenagers have a bad reputation for being indecisive. Personally, I am really indecisive. I hate making any sort of lasting meaningful decision, or just any decision in general. If they made a restaurant called 'I Don't Know' or 'What do you want', I would have to pick another way to get rid of the responsibility.

It may seem terrible for me to admit that I am indecisive as a person. I'm even indecisive about myself. I said I don't know how to describe and label myself. It doesn't seem to be uncommon, either. As I talk to some of my friends, I only have one that can fully describe themselves in a quick and concise manner. And the only one who could do this has had her life plan mapped out since she was about ten.

Sometimes it is hard to remember that even at 18, even as a legal adult, I am a child still. I am not independent at all, I do not know how to do things that adults do, such as taxes, bills, or even balance a life with working full time.

What it does remind me when I realize this, is that I am still changing. My place is changing, I am learning and experiencing things that will shape who I am in the future. Lessons that will shape my future.

For now, being indecisive is what I am. I am transitioning between childhood and adulthood.

In fact, now that I am writing and explaining this feeling, I no longer want to say I am indecisive about myself. I am indecisive, and loath having to be responsible the majority of the time, but I am transitioning. I am learning a lot of what kind of person I am, how I will react to different stresses, such as school, friends, and hopefully in the future, love and work.

Being indecisive about your place just means that you haven't quite found it yet. The time will come soon where I can say that I know exactly who I am, and where I belong. It will probably come in stages, but eventually, some day, I will have this comfort and feeling of self my best friend is blessed with.

I cannot choose my place, because I don't know exactly where I will fit in. I am indecisive, but one day I will be comfortable enough to make a decision. It may not be today, or tomorrow, or even this year, but I have to have the hope that one day it will happen.

One day I will know my place, but until then I can't lose hope that I will never have one.

Dear Diary

Lauren Eckerdt

Dear Diary,

I have to admit that I've always found it a bit ridiculous when people have to find themselves. I've always wondered what that even means? How does traveling the world or breaking away from your routine world make a difference in who you are? Even if I break away, I am all the same things I have always been.

When I am with my family, I am the quiet one. If they are all loud, someone has to be the quiet one, right? I am also the bridge. When they don't understand others because they don't have the same experiences, I have to explain it all to them. I have to be the one to try to change their views, because if I don't, who else will?

With my friends, I am loud. I will say what is on my mind without any hesitations. I will tell them anything and everything, from pointless to important. I will tell them everything going on in my life, they are the ones who will listen and relate most to my life. We are crazy and weird, and I wouldn't want that any other way.

There are the things I am with other people and then there are the places I find myself without any outside influence. As a person, I am weird, I am a nerd, a bookworm, a Christian, a feminist. Those are things I wouldn't have to go anywhere to discover about myself, those are part of who I am, and they are part of my identity.

I still find new places where I belong as I go. Now I find myself in my place as a girlfriend, a college student, my place with my new friends. These are new places, but I am happily finding where I belong in each situation. I don't need to break away or travel to find my place, I enjoy finding it everyday.

-Lauren

Here

Anonymous

“I think that 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

Here

This is where you’re supposed to sit

This is where you must stay

Here is where your roots will grow

Here your branches will not stray

But perhaps I wasn’t meant for *here* and perhaps I was never meant to stay

If only my roots became talons and my branches turned to wings

Then finally I’d be free to wander

Then *finally* I could be me

Untitled

Anonymous

Where I stand I stay

For no one can move me

Like a plant I grow

Taking in my surroundings

I know where I stand

For here is where I belong

Like a plant I grow

Until eventually there is no more

Beauty in Books

Molly Landon

why do you act as if you're a disgrace
like your problems are too big to face
all of the power is in you
to do anything you want to do

has anyone ever said you have beauty?
I'd say that to you everyday if it were up to me
you're one of a kind
because you know the worth of your mind

surrounded by stacks and shelves of books
the whole world is there, you just have to look
all those words and sentences and letters
only make your mind better

who says beauty doesn't equal brains?
intellect is so gorgeous it doesn't need to be explained
so keep reading and learning and exploring
because darling, you're anything but boring

Like Clouds

Sydne Brainard



My place cannot be easily defined because it must adapt. With some relatives, I am the oldest, the leader, the role model. With other family members, I am the youngest, the one that makes them all feel too old. With my grandparents and great-aunts, I am a breath of fresh air. To my parents, I am the diligent daughter. With my sister, I can be a calming force or someone to laugh with. With my friends, I am the glue that holds us together, the youngest in age yet the oldest in spirit. Therefore, my place is like the clouds in the sky... always moving and always changing.

Place is Fluid

Manjot Mangat

Many of us feel fairly secure in our identities. Maybe not at the moment, being freshmen in college, but some of us don't feel that we are searching for our place. We feel that we know who we are, for the most part. We are no longer those young kids who probed our interests and searched for a group of friends. We aren't high schoolers who are searching for hobbies we like, or trying to find our own style, or trying to fit in. We think that the idea of "me" is pretty concrete. The thing about identity or place, however, is that it is fluid, ever-changing. Today, most of us aren't the same person that we were 10 years ago. We also will not be the same person 10, 30, 50 years from now.

As a child, I loved to read. That's probably what I remember most. After that was playing basketball and playing around in the orchard with my little brother. My family lived on a farm until I around the fourth grade. During this time, I didn't have much to do so I played basketball or read. However, around the time I went to junior high school, my situation changed and so did my interests. I stopped reading as much and picked up sitting on the couch watching TV and playing video games, instead. This trend continued through high school and even to today. Though now it's more video games in my spare time than watching TV all day. This is because I have less and less free time as I get older. I find myself reading assigned books and textbooks, but I don't read for pleasure anymore. I still enjoy reading, but I've changed.

Another change I've experienced is in my personality. When I was in elementary school, I had many good friends. Now, I have many acquaintances, but few real friends. I think this was the result of the less personal class system in junior high and through high school. At my elementary school, Westport Elementary, I had known the same group of people for years. Most Westport Elementary students went to Blaker-Kinser Junior High, but I lived closer to Mae Hensley and so I went to school there. I was put into advanced courses and so I started to focus much more on my academics. I became closer to my brother and had less and less friends at school. This trend, also, has continued for me. In coming to CSU Stanislaus, I have lost most of the people I knew in high school.

Another change in my place that I can recall is the clothes that I wear. During freshman year and before, I liked to wear graphic tees (mostly black) and jeans. I'd say this was pretty normal for a young teenager. Starting in my sophomore year, I decided to start wearing basketball shorts instead. By junior year, I was wearing nothing but solid colored t-shirts and basketball shorts. I can't explain this change in myself, but change is normal. Today, I still wear the same set of clothes year round. I can imagine that some people think I'm crazy for wearing shorts in January. I just can't imagine myself wearing a pair of jeans today.

Sometimes we wonder, "why did I hang out with that guy?" or "did I think that looked good?" We ask ourselves, "what was I thinking?" What we were doing was searching for our place, our identity. We tried different clothes, different styles to see what fit. We made friends to probe our interests. Over time, we changed and our feeling of place changed with us. If you don't like the person you are, that's fine. You will change; it most likely will not be some major change to your fundamental identity, but change is possible and probable. Over time, you will have different interests, hobbies, friends, and ideas. It's perfectly natural. There is, however, no definite identity that we are moving towards. These changes are based largely on unpredictable events and circumstances. In other words, we don't really know where we're going. However, it is important to recognize that our place is constantly changing.

A Sense of Belonging

Gavin Branigan



These compelling pictures were taken by my mother, in the city of Palos Verdes Estates, California. These vistas are nothing short of extraordinary, however I became so used to the view that now they appear ordinary. It is not until now, taken away from home, that I realize how much this city meant to me. This wonderful community is where I spent my childhood. Where I learned everything and everyone I know to this day. My high school experience was nothing like that of others. From the students to the teachers, everyone was so relaxed and casual. For volleyball practice, we would take the five-minute drive to the beach and play on the sand courts. Palos Verdes is one of the most beautiful cities on the west coast. This city means everything to me. Here is where I will always belong.

Word Cloud

Justin Souza

Describe yourself in one word...



3 Haikus: Proving Them Wrong, Hurried Decisions,
Where Do We Belong?
Parker Griffin

Proving Them Wrong

He won't make the team.
Class. Train. Practice. Eat. Repeat.
Wait, HE made the team?

Hurried Decisions

Quick! Pick a major!
Hurry! Choose a career path!
Lifelong decisions

Where Do We Belong

Fourteen billion eyes
Wandering from face to face
Where do we belong?

Interview With Mr. O'Callaghan

Jessica Horner

How long is this interview going to be? Right, right, you don't want your voice recorded. Well, okay, I suppose I'll start with the very basic information. My name is Egan O'Callaghan, which is an Irish name if you didn't guess it. My hair is auburn, almost a light brown, and sometimes when I don't fix it back with gel it'll hang in my eyes. Oh, I'm a young man. Twenty-three. Don't know if you want that information, but you did tell me to describe every detail about me. I have hazel eyes, brown indoors and almost golden in the sunlight, or so I've been told by my girlfriend; heh. I try to keep myself clean-shaven for her. I stand at about six feet tall, just an inch above my dear dad. He wouldn't let anyone think that though. If you measure me next to him, he'll tell you your tape measure isn't right. I'm not too muscular. Can't really even build up a bulky figure. Lately, I've been volunteering nights at the Harlem Hospital. That's been the hot topic at the home. Mom and dad want me to stick to my studies. Jenny has been complaining it's taken up our alone time. None of 'em want me to be working there, but I really just can't stop. I guess that's just because my parents raised me to... to be a decent human being. We always went to church on Sunday, and after every sermon, mom would ask what I learned. On those nights, dad would make a meal and invite some of the less fortunate to our porch for a helping. They couldn't help where we lived, where we still live for the most part. We got out of the worst parts of the slums when I was about ten, but on a factory worker's salary, we couldn't help getting stuck there.

Honestly, the whole reason we moved was because of me. It was when I was ten, like I said earlier, that I started to really get influenced by the kids in our neighborhood. We'd all ditch our school and go smoke cigarettes in abandoned houses. I started to get really indignant, really hateful. I was pretty intelligent as a kid, but not too wise, and I got to thinking that if my parents really loved me that we'd be living somewhere else. I remember one day in particular that I was coming home from a day with the gang, and my face was all covered with dirt. Just really smudged up and black from playing tackle football at some empty lot that people in the area had taken to dumping their garbage at. And I was walking down the sidewalk in better part of town-- I tried to make sure to take short cuts through the nicer parts when I had to walk home-- when this guy, this man in a suit wrinkled up his nose and tossed a coin at my feet. He told me to go get a

bar of soap and wash up because I smelled like a sewer rat. Can you imagine someone saying that to a kid? A little kid?

So I started to get really mad that my parents didn't provide enough for me. I would skip class and skip church, and give my mom a bad attitude and mouth off to her when my dad wasn't home. She'd wash my mouth out of course, and my dad would come home ready with his belt in one hand. And each time they disciplined me I just felt more justified. Until one day my parents were called down to school to let them know that I was going to be repeating the fifth grade. My mom was so disappointed she started to cry right then and there. I hadn't even seen her cry before that. I had heard her once when she found out that her brother died, but she was a really strong woman. When we got home that night she went straight to her room and my dad told me to come with him to the back yard. We sat down on the steps to the door in silence. He didn't look at me. Just stared at everyone passing by our fence-less property. I remember feeling dread. I remember thinking that he was going to tell me to leave and never come back. When he finally looked at me he sighed. He said, "I didn't want this for you. I came to America because I wanted you to be more than a pig farmer. I wanted..." Shaky fingers dabbed at tears that I wasn't able to see. "Wanted to give you a real good life. I knew there wouldn't be much I could do being uneducated, but I wanted to see you do somethin' with your life. Go to school and be something. If you want to be a nothing, go do it on your own." Then he got up and went inside.

I sat there and thought about what he said. What I had done to my parents, and how selfish I had been. Hearing my dad tell me that, seeing my mom cry, really just woke me up to myself. I realized that everything that made me mad was my fault. I was choosing to become a sewer rat. My parents had given me the choice to do what I wanted with my life, and so I started flushing it down the toilet. That was the day that I decided that school would be the way I started to do something with my life. I started going to church again, started going to school every day. Passed my second fifth grade year with flying colors, and was even able to skip a grade so I was where I was supposed to be. I helped around the house when I could but in high school I had a lot of extracurricular activities and homework. Even became valedictorian. I was accepted to a nice university because of that. At my high school graduation ceremony, I wore a first suit that my dad had been saving up for since my freshman year. My mom cried, again, and that was the first time I ever saw her cry tears of joy.

Hair

Ricki Hall-Scott



Hair:

"I am not my hair."

Words I have lived by since India Arie came out with the song "I am not my hair" in 2005. India Arie had shaved her head bald to prove to all the haters in the world that your hair, skin, or whatever your outward appearance was did not rule your life. I had never really understood her point until my Junior year of high school.

Whenever I think of my place in the world, I always think about my hair. Even as a child, I was judged by skin but it was easy to grow tough skin but it was harder to look past how my hair differed from everyone else's. My tight curls were always judged. White people always wanted to feel it. Always asking if my hair was real. It is highly unlikely for me to receive fair treatment if my hair is in its natural state rather than if I took the time and painstakingly straightened my hair. I'm less likely to receive a job. Less likely to be taken seriously. I'm seen as exotic and cool instead of strong and empowered as I would like to be seen. It took me a long time to recognize that I should not be categorized by my hair.

"I am not my hair."

Conclusion

As this magazine proves, finding your place can be a difficult task. In fact, half of us feel like we are still searching for a way to belong. However, this magazine gave us the opportunity to acknowledge our place at this moment in time. Thank you for taking the time to be apart of the journey as we continue to search for where we belong.

We would also like to thank...

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Sydne Brainard

Gavin Branigan

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Ricki Jenaya Hall-Scott

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Alejandro Caballero Hurtado

Holly Jones

Molly Landon

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CSU Stanislaus Honors Program

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