

No Longer Home, but Rather Belonging

By: Adelaide Weber

Empty house, full of memories.

Filled boxes, empty of joy.

Roads and roads away,
from where one day.
You met the place you love the most.

You dance once more,
You take one more bow,
You sing one last time,

With the people you hate and love the most.

In the car,
Tension and nerves,

Dark,
Humid,
Stale.

Stale as the cookies you bought the last time you went shopping with your best friend.
Except now, you would only be “long distance,”
no longer just “best friends.”

Life moves on,
Like the car you’re in right now;
The blue-grey car.
The one your parents bought just months before you left.

Now you’re stuck.
Stuck where you know no one.

No Delaney to laugh with,
No Charlee to jokingly make fun of,
No Valerie to watch nostalgic movies with,
No Will to cry over.

You wonder who will be the first to talk to you as you walk through the studio doors.

“Sorry, door. I’m so use to there being more than one.”

Two rooms,
One study room,
Purple padded walls,
sparkle wallpaper.

“Or is it paint? I can’t tell.”

You walk up the stairs full of doubt and thoughts of being less of a dancer,
Less of a person.

You suddenly notice how the clouds are arranged in the sky.
The sky doesn’t look friendly,
Just like all of these people.

“I’m Lilah!”

“Hey!”

You examine her every feature;

Brown hair,
That’s also wavy.
Blue top,
The same color you wore yesterday.
Navy, but almost black booty shorts.
One ear piercing,
But you knew she would look good with two.

“I just moved here from South Carolina.”

She gave tips,
Helpful ones:

Restaurants,
Ice cream shops,
Malls,
Everything.

“Wow, she’s really nice.”
You say to yourself.

You’ve been down since December,
The month you found out you were moving.

But now it's July and you're back up and running.

The summer goes on and you talk to her more,
And more,
And more.

More than you would have dared to back home.

Well...

Home?

Back there, you would not have even uttered a word.
Not a sentence that you would even THINK just ONE person would find offensive.
It didn't matter when or where you were, or who you were with.

You realized you were too much for everyone.
You went silent.
You knew things would be so much better that way.

Once, you were at school, talking to your best friend about how Gracie was saying how stupid and loud you were, nothing directly about her.

Only, the next day, you walked through the grey, metal, bulletproof double doors, to see your best friend and Gracie talking—

Gracie then looks you up and down.

You wonder if Lilah will end up the same as you're texting her.

Before you left
You knew you were the problem, the issue.
You wanted it to end
But you knew once you left, it would follow you.

Yet Lilah made you think differently, because she actually values you, and the people around you act and talk the same way you do.

Lilah's the only person who has ever valued your true worth,
Your full worth.

You text everyday;

You vent...
You talk about emotions...
School...
Fake friends...
All of it.

She gave you glasses to see that there are good people, not just toxic ones.

You go to dance on a random Thursday and you say to yourself,

“I love life.”

It was the first time you ever truly meant it.

“It was the environment.”
Lilah said to you, as she was the only one who heard you.

She knows about your life with Sarah, who never celebrated you.
Your life with Gracie, who said you deserved to have your heart broken.
Your life with everyone at school, who just saw you as wasted product.

Tuesday, July 7th, 9:48 pm,
The first day you say anything to Lilah.

“It’s okay, I’m here, I’m real.”

Those words changed you,
The words changed your entire life.

You see that life is different...
Different but good.

You eventually have your first choreography session for a competition dance;

You’re wearing a black halter bra with two white stripes along the bottom and black Lulu pants.

You notice the 12 girls around you, you think they look nice and friendly, the opposite of what you thought two weeks ago.

“Stupid Deep”

“What if who I hoped to be was always me?”

“The love I fought to feel was always free?”

The part you're given, is so incredibly gut-wrenching for you.

You somehow force your way through rehearsal, even though you feel like bawling until you fill eight bath tubs.

You slowly realize that "home" was never your home,

Because you never felt welcome, but you do here.