

## Home. A Journey.

I remember a time that I dreaded coming home. I would arrive home from school everyday and hear my brother throwing a temper tantrum in the next room. My dad, growing tired of my twelve year old eldest brother's shenanigans would then proceed to throw his own temper tantrums. This is what someone with a psychology degree might tend to call a toxic home environment. The thing about toxins, at least in biology, is that you either must expel them or they risk taking over the whole body. My mother decided to expel my father from the body of our home and ever since my family has been on a constant road to recovery, a journey to some ever distant location called stability. Over the past eight years we have have been slowly walking to this destination. We went through grief counseling, tore apart our house and put it back together. Through graduation and parties for my brother and moving to a new house at a new high school, my home has been in constant change ever since my father left. It is fitting that the house we bought is a fixer upper because it parallels my family dynamic. The first thing we did was to bring all of our old stuff into the house, and then we started tearing out wallpaper and painting walls. We then put up crown molding, built a deck, refurbished our mantle, created a custom bookshelf, made flower boxes, treated our yard, decorated, built a pergola and much more. By each project we undergo, we take a step forward as a family. By leaving our old house behind, we left our past as a broken family behind, but by bringing in our stuff to this house we also acknowledged our past. Though it is behind us, it is still part of us. By painting the walls and giving the old house a breath of new life we also were deciding to put a fresh coat of paint on our lives, bringing them too, back to life. By building countless things to make the house nicer we were adjusting to and getting comfortable in our lives. Eventually, though recovery seems to be an ever far off concept, our home grew into more of what could be called stable. This is what homes should strive to be. Home is where we spend our time. Our homework, our fun, our fights. Home is where we live, and lives often prosper off stability. Sometimes if I'm really busy for weeks on end my mom might say that it feels like I'm never really here, as though I'm just passing through and onto the next thing. But when my schedule settles down I'm back

to the routine. Wake up, say hi to mom, eat cereal, say hi to my brother, make coffee, go to school, repeat. Routines often can feel mundane and insignificant. But it is this very triviality that provides stability for our lives. A skyscraper never loomed over any city without a firm, constant, solid foundation. My home is now that foundation for me. The constant of my family comforts me wherever I stretch up to, whether to church, one high school or another, or college next year. I may not be able to come see it all that often but when I come back I will know that my roots are still in rich soil. Home to me, means a place that I can now expect to be stable, most of the time, and give me a solid foundation to build my life on.