**No Place Like Home**

I lay on my bed, silent yet still conscious, the bed smoldering like a furnace. I tossed and turned, unable to drift away. The chronic ticks of the clock, the loud clicking of cicadas outside, the stealthy spider scuttling up my bedroom window were all uncomfortable reminders of what would happen tomorrow.

Dread fogging my vision, I crept down the stairs. I had to check. Just one more time. I rustled through my bag, jammed with clothes, books, a gift, my device and a carefully inserted miniature toy dragon in between a spare set of clothes for comfort. I prayed that nobody would notice it.

Soundlessly creeping back up the stairs, screeching in protest, as a cat would if I stepped on its tail. The salty tang of sweat polluted my nose as I pulled the cover over my head, and after the everlasting fight between consciousness and drowsiness, I finally drifted off.

The next morning, I woke up as the scream of the alarm clock assaulted my ears. Today I was prey, being hunted by the icy touch of homesickness and judgement. I reluctantly swung my bulging bag of possessions into the boot and stepped into the car, feeling like a criminal being escorted into a police car. The light rain drummed an artistic rhythm on the windshield, before being swooped away by the wiper immediately.

I nervously figured with my soaked hair, an earthy taste plagiarizing my nose. Shuffling towards Dylan’s front door, I rang the doorbell, triggering a melodic tune from a Mozart concerto that greeted my ears. The delicious smell of his mum’s lemon tarts wafting into my nose.

“Welcome!” Exclaimed Dylan, showing me my appointed room for my sleepover.

Dropping my bag down on the bed, I followed Dylan through the tour of his house, each room having its distinct scent, a unique personality - My room smelled of roses, Dylan’s room smelling of mint, and so on. Captivated by the attractions in the house, I completely forgot that I would be going face to face my troubles, a tug of war between who could crack the other first.

At night, I studied the light grey ceiling, taking in every detail, fault and layer, an unfamiliar map compared to my own ceiling. I took in the new feeling of the mattress, the new atmosphere within the room, an unfamiliar territory, weird but fresh. Maybe being away from home wasn’t so bad after all, I thought.

I then took out my purple dragon. Hugging it, I quickly twisted my body so Dylan , who was walking past, wouldn’t see, but it was too late.

“Hey, can I see your plushie?” He requested.

I froze. I anxiously nodded my head, and revealed it. Dylan unexpectedly nodded in approval, then complimented my plushie.

“Hey, I didn’t know that anybody had on of these anymore!”

Dylan paused, and showed me his collection.

The next morning, I drove home, and leapt on my bed. Adventures are great, but there is no place like home, I thought.