

Misplacement of Belonging: Struggling Comfort

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Abstract: Jarenni Ambriz is a Latina born living in the United States. When she was nine, her sense of home was lost when, as a result of unfortunate events, she moved to Mexico. She was a foreigner there and a foreigner when she moved back to the U.S. years later, and she has struggled with her gender and ethnic identity due to the contradictions she faced in both countries. At the age of thirteen, she discovered metal music and has been able to find her sense of identity and belonging through her passion for music.

I managed to escape the grand enclosure I was contained in, but it only led me to a narrower opening. I can see a distant river covered by a wall with a streak of red, but when I take one step, I feel liquid running through my feet. My formal location was one of red, whites, and blues. Now, the red streak appears to have gotten lost to the distant river with a hint of green within my new location.

The narrow town I am in is not closed off. I am free to roam around, yet every time I try to walk, I slip. “I want to go home” are the words I often recite, hoping they will transport me to a place of belonging. But these words never bring me comfort. I cannot seem to understand what home feels like. I just know I want it.

I am near but I cannot seem to reach it. Perhaps because I am on top, or maybe inside it. Or under, for all I know. Home is what I hear in the distance and next to my ears. What does home feel like? I cannot reach it, yet I feel it soaking my feet.

I have enough room to stretch my arms within this narrow opening. Yet, I cannot seem to move back and forth. Every time I take a single step, I reach the distant river and my feet once again get drenched in liquid.

The brightest stroke of red paint on the pier mimics the length of the river. It brightens the entire land, but once I get close with a single step, it resembles more of a rose tint. I cannot reach the brightness of the red next to the blue hue of the river and the white wall it is painted on. For once I reach it, it becomes dull and the color green appears within the water.

I am stuck, yet I can travel a wide distance with a single movement. I do not belong here. I want to go home. But what does home feel like?

As the mixture of blue and green water runs through my ankles, I sense a hint of comfort. I am near the bright red streak and the blue river, but, at the same time, I am not.

When the river is distant, it is my formal confinement, but when I get near, it becomes a part of the narrow land. Darkness overcomes my sight as my eyelashes meet. I am not alone. I feel a large wooden object capable of creating sound resting in my arms.

As I run my fingers through the set of wired strings, a melody plays below my ears. There is a rough penetrating static. My spine shivers. I can feel the static puncturing at my inner beings. My hands caress the wooden object moving with the flow of its structure. As I reach the neck, the static fills me with vibrations; a state of neutrality. I am one with the instrument.

My heart sinks. My body debilitates. It follows the downward trajectory my heart has taken. The liquid from my ankles appears to have run through my eyes. As my sight widens, my stomach drops. My breath relaxes almost to a stop. I feel a sense of pain as my throat fills with dense liquid. Is this what it feels like to be full?

Comfort fills me from my arms to the rest of my shape, lifting a smile and glow to my front. This foreign feeling is not home. I notice both the redness and the rosiness of the streak of paint reflected on my guitar. I can see both of them, but I cannot touch them.

The sound vibrates, my physique relaxes. It is now supported by my guitar, introducing me to a state of tranquility. I am one with my instrument. I belong.