

November 9, 2010

### Seek to Belong

It's not that I hate the world, I don't. But I want to leave. I have come to see that earth is not for me, that I will fit in somewhere farther away, somewhere like Mars. I know you think I'm crazy, I'm not. I'm a science nerd and I know that it's livable there and that aliens won't hate me, they'll accept me. Maybe that's why I'm such an outsider. Yeah that's it: the science is what makes humans hate me. That's the only conclusion I can draw, because other than being a science nerd I'm completely normal.

I dress like everybody else; a flannel shirt, skinny jeans, and vans. I go to school, ride my bike, and play at the park: everything a normal kid does. But I still don't fit in. I'm not going to lie, I do have one friend. Her name is Caridad. She has the brightest hazel eyes in the neighborhood and golden brown skin to complement them. Her long black hair flows in the warm winds of Arizona. Her choppy, but welcoming English makes me feel at home. However, not everyone sees her this way. As she is my only friend, I am hers. I blame it on myself though. There's a reason why no one else was captivated by her goddess like appearance, and that reason is me. See, as soon as she moved here I latched on to her, scaring everyone away from her. I know how to fix this though, I'll move to Mars.

I walked home from school because nobody wanted me on the bus. Even the bus driver himself would call me names. Besides, walking allowed me time to think. I was destined to tell my mom what I wanted to do, I'm sure she will think I'm foolish but I can talk her into it. The walk home feels different today. Maybe it's the newly, long overdue, paved road that leads to my trailer park neighborhood. Or maybe it's the cooler air blowing the leaves from the trees.

Sometimes I wish I was a leaf, flowing endlessly in the wind until I landed somewhere where I would be accepted.

I walked inside my house. It used to be beautiful, but now it has a big patch of black on its bright yellow exterior. The patch is from when our house caught on fire. My family says that the Republicans did it but I think it was an accident, why would anyone try to hurt us? Regardless of how the outside looks, the interior makes up for it. The tones of red, yellow, and orange warm up the house, and the Jesus sculptures and crosses remind me of my abuela's house. But there's something distinct about it today. The couches are missing, the television is gone too. Big, brown boxes labeled "Juan's room" take the place of my bed. I was confused for a little, but my mom filled me in. We are moving to Florida: relocating our whole lives to somewhere more understanding. I guess my transfer to Mars will have to wait a while.

We packed all of our belongings into a rusty, yet reliable Ford pickup truck and went on the road. It was a long drive and I was hungry, but my dad would not stop at any of the countless diners because he said we will receive mean glares from the locals. I nodded in understanding. However, I never understood. I learned at an early age that my parents would become annoyed if I continued to ask questions, so I pretended to understand. I pretended past the cactuses, the very neatly planted pines, and the palm trees that grew alongside the roads. I pretended all the way to the driveway of my new home. I pretended that I fully understood the reason why we were moving so far away when in reality I didn't.

I now live in Boca Raton, Florida and attend Spanish River High School. My house is beautiful once again. The exterior is now a warm tan color that matches the striking palm trees all over the neighborhood. Something is different about this neighborhood though. I have friends

now. I go to school, ride my bike, and play at the park with everybody else. At school I have three best friends apart from my many friends; Abigail Kennedy, DeShawn Jones, and Jose Garcia. I feel a special attachment to Jose though; he very closely resembles Caridad, which pleases me. I love this place.

My mom was right, I am accepted here. I just don't know why though. I still wear my flannel shirt, skinny jeans, and vans. I still act and talk the same way I did back in Arizona. Everything is just so different, but I remain the same. Sometimes I think of Caridad and how much I want her here with me where we both will have many friends, but then I think of how many friends she has now because I left. I know that she is doing well and I'm doing well, so I'm sure she's happy.

There is one thing that I keep concealed inside though. Most days I scurry home from the bus, run upstairs and lock myself in my room. I very carefully take out the box labeled "Science" from the very top of my closet and begin to take out my materials. On this particular day I'm figuring out how global warming could be slowed. Whenever I find out nobody will know, as I will not ever again disclose my liking of science. I'm still sure that that's the reason why I was the outsider in Arizona. My mom thinks differently, she tells me that I wasn't accepted because of my character; that most people don't care to see the inside of a person. I choose to think otherwise.