

Finding Homes Away From Home

MARISHA AZIZ

"You guys go ahead," you tell your friends, "I just need to go home and get..." The rest of your sentence fades away as you feel the weight of your words. At what point of your limited time in university did your dormitory earn the title of "home"?

One of the most exciting aspects of university is definitely dorm life. It brings a sense of freedom and independence, but also the urge to be more responsible. People take various amounts of time to settle in and adjust to the new environment. Naturally, one's dormitory will at some point provide a sense of home. However, one truth won't sink in until your first visit to your family: Your house is no longer your home.

Of course, children will always have a place at their parents' homes, especially in the Bengali culture. The fact remains, though, that once you start living at a dormitory, you must resign yourself to the fact that your house is now a visiting place for you.

At the beginning of your visit, you'll dismiss the changes for what they are, instead choosing to enjoy the extra attention and benefits. Your food preferences will be given top priority. It is quite relieving to not be forced to eat food you dislike. Your workload will also be close to non-existent. No chores will be assigned to you, and you'll be able to watch (and gloat) as your siblings do everything around the house.

However, part of you will be constantly uneasy. It'll take some time for you to understand that you actually miss your parents' insistence on your daily activities. You'll catch yourself longing for some-

thing to do to help out your parents (even your siblings, if you're a softie) with household work. Friends and relatives will stop by for the sole purpose of meeting you, which in some cases can be a bit overwhelming. The questions of "How long are you staying" and "When are you leaving" will constantly ring in your ears. Reality checks will present themselves while you plan meet ups with friends, because your days with them are numbered.

Feeling unfamiliar in your own bed will come as a shock. If you visit after a very long interval, you might not even know where things are being kept. Overall, this transition of sorts will heighten your sentiments. Going back might seem quite difficult, maybe even impossible, depending on your fondness for your university or boarding school.

Soon you'll realise, though, that not going back would hurt just as much, because of all the new people you've met and grown fond of. At a certain point, you'll understand that home is more about the people around you and not the location, and so can be in more than one place. As a very special friend of mine often says, "Our homes are scattered across the globe, along with the people we love."

It's not about the beds, or the food, or even the bathrooms, to be honest; home is a place where you feel comfortable and loved. And it's okay if places like that exist both in and outside your house.

Despite being a hopeless fangirl, Marisha Aziz lives under delusions of awesomeness. Contact her at marisha.aziz@gmail.com to give her another excuse to ignore her teetering pile of life problems.



WRITING MEMOIRS YOU'RE DOING IT TOO

TABEYA AZDASIH

At a wedding where I hardly know the bride or the groom, I am introduced to a hundred (or what feels like a hundred to me) people. I take pictures of the stunning venue. But the aesthetics – the claustrophobia that I do not have, triggered by the sound of the friction of gold and gold imitation jewels that I do not care for, bored people revealing too much of themselves to people they hope they will never see again, a colorful blur – is not captured completely until I take a Snapchat video of my surroundings. It will be on my Instagram too by the time I get back home.

I was there, and I was not impressed.

When we go through social media profiles, most of us are met with the sensation that we are being presented a sort of decorated wall – impersonal, polished, and only bearing the things the person wants us to see about their lives, all their achievements in the right lighting and none of their flaws. Concerned critique floats around – on other social media platforms, ironically – that being so obsessed about the image we present to the world is making us more and more anti-social and vain. The phrase "this generation" is thrown around haphazardly, painting people with almost immaculate social media profiles into some laughable parody of Cruella de Vil.

While many a "concerned" adult will corner us with a "you kids, always on your mobile phones" the minute we even look at them (and maybe for some of us, this comment is well-warranted), an angle these critics may not

be looking at is the sentimental side of it all. Here I am, in my happiest moments, in the best light, sharing all of this with you leaving it behind someplace that will outlast us all. I want to be seen. When I am gone, I want to be known.

Recently, Facebook has developed a method to memorialise accounts that belong to the deceased, as a sort of long tribute to these people, displaying their best posts for anyone who wants to come and visit their page. Facebook, and other social media of course, are means to stay connected in an increasingly disconnected world. Rather than the superficial values one may think social media present and seem to promote, they are only a means of remaining in each other's lives beyond time, distance and at this point, planes.

They are kind of like memoirs. Kind of.

According to Wikipedia, the word "memoir" comes from the French word *mémoire*: *memoria*, meaning memory or reminiscence, and the difference of memoir from autobiography is due to the fact that autobiographies are known as "the story of a life", whilst memoirs tell "stories from a life". It is the same game we have learned to play with our audience on all the social media platforms, the art of hide and seek.

Social media allows us to create a window into our lives for people we want to keep on the outside. Why we want to create a window to begin with, is different for each individual – but for some it is truly an act of compulsive happiness – here are my best moments, for all.