

BEAT

NEWCOMER YOUTH VOICE + PERSPECTIVE



ISSUE 7

HOME, HEART, MEMORIES

Winter 2015



"I REMEMBER MY SHORT CHILDHOOD WITH ALL THE
LAUGHTER, MEMORIES, COLORS, AND INNOCENT FEELINGS.
I REMEMBER MY GRANDMA'S HOUSE IN THE SUMMER WITH
THE DELICIOUS CHERRIES IN THE YARD"

- Golsa Golestaneh

BEATS RECOGNIZES UNCEDED COAST SALISH TERRITORIES

FUNDERS AND SUPPORTERS OF THE PUBLICAITON



EDITOR'S NOTE

Jennifer Sarkar

Happy winter holidays to everyone and welcome back to another issue of BEATS Magazine: Newcomer youth voice and perspective. This is our seventh Issue and it is a proof of an amazing immigrant and refugee youth community coming together for past three years and pulling off this publication. BEATS started three years ago to open a platform for newcomer youth of Lower Mainland, BC.

In this Issue three young editors talk about Home, Heart and Memories they carry with them. It is our basic right as humans to have a safe place to call home. Unfortunately many families have to leave their own home, cities and countries because of war or political chaos and make a journey to an unknown land to make home and build a future. Though we all moved to this land for various different reasons, we all carry our own stories which shape us and make us who we are.

This is BEATS second time having all young women editorial team. Golsa, Nancy and Anastasiya three

amazing young women (originally from Iran, Congo and Russia) worked on this issue. Golsa (one of our editors) also interviewed five young women from the community and asked them the question, What is Home to them? We hope you enjoy this issue and if you are interested to learn more you can get in touch with us via email or facebook.

BEATS magazine issue 7 would not been possible without the funding opportunity from YPC (Youth Philanthropy Council, A committee of Vancouver Foundation), support from PeerNetBC and Pave the Road BC members. We also want to thank you our new supporter L.O.V.E (Leave Out Violence) BC.

We are always looking to collaborate. So, please contact us with any ideas or feedback.

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ISSUE 7

EDITORIAL TEAM



ANASTASIYA ELOKHINA

Editorial

My name is Anastasiya, I'm 16 years old. I am from Russia. I'm really into politics and economics. I like doing sports. I do Horse riding and I've been doing it since I was 10. I like traveling, I already have been to a lot of countries. I enjoy making friends all over the world. I'm friendly and I am always open to meet new people. How Paulo Freire once said, "Only through communication can human life hold meaning".



GOLSA GOLESTANEH

Editorial/Photography

I'm Golsa Golestaneh, 18 years old from Iran. I left my hometown 3 years ago and spent 2 years of my life in Turkey as a refugee. It's been a year since I arrived to Canada. I am a high school student. I consider myself as a human rights and social justice activist plus a feminist.



NANCY KÉREN-HAPPUC GAKWAVU

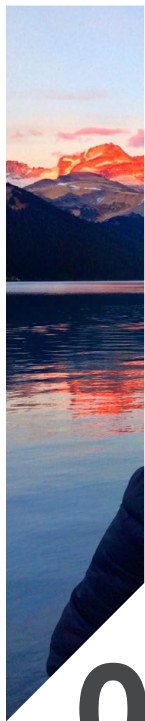
Editorial

Hi everyone! My name is Nancy. I was born in Congo and I came to Vancouver 1 years and 2 months ago. I'm currently attending Invergarry Adult Education Centre in Surrey and I'm working part time job. I like to try new things and gain new experience. I always like to do the different things with others and learn. I appreciate everyone's unique personalities.

EXTERNAL CONTRIBUTORS

Narges Samimi
Priscilla Luk
Zena Nassra
Marcey Amaya
Ariam Yetbarek

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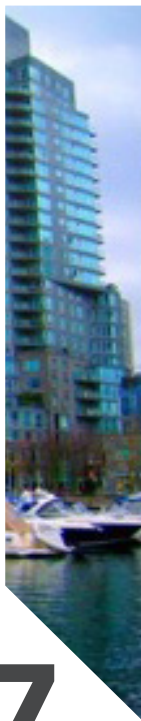
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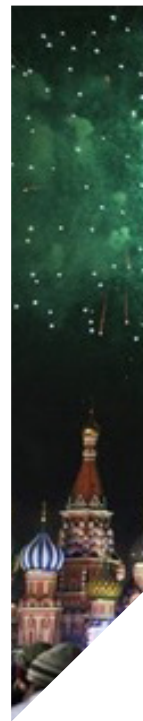
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I COULD NOT BELIEVE THAT I AM MOVING FOR A LONG TIME.

By: Anastasiya Elokhina



I want to tell you a story about my journey to Canada. My story began one year and a half ago. I remember it was warm and so graceful July, I still was in Russia with my family and friends. That sweet July turned into a merciless and emotional moment. I saw tears on my parents' faces and I heard timidity in my friends' voices. I was not as disappointed as they were. I could not believe that I am moving for a long time. So many things were happening so I did not even think about going to Canada. I thought it will last no longer than one month, like a regular vacation. After some time I started to come to my senses, I could see the whole picture of it. I began to understand how badly I will miss my parents, friends and I had to leave everyone backhome. What is more I could not understand how my life will be like in a foreign country in an absolutely different place. I had a lot of responsibilities. First of all I had to handle this moving. Second of all I had to get used to English

language, study as hard as I couldn't even imagine and finally start achieving my own goals.

I finally moved. At the beginning English was hard for me as for every international student. The first week I was crying all days and all nights missing my family and everything I left behind. Days seemed endless and I was counting every minute hoping that one year will go like one day. Yes, it was painful and sometimes I felt lonely but there were a bunch of advantages as well. I met so many good people from all over the globe. We all are still together and they will be always here for me. If something ever happens we will stand up for each other. We are all different, from different countries, with different interests, specialities, weirdness, etc and we love to learn something new from each other every day. They are not just my friends, they became my international family. Also I discovered lots of breathtaking and terrifying places that I couldn't even imagine in my mind.

One morning I woke up and started to smile, all seemed so familiar and kind. I was truly happy. I totally fell in love with Vancouver and everything that was surrounding me. All the pain and pessimistic thoughts were gone but it left a very big experience. I set free from a bad mood. I started a new life. I started to appreciate every day. Every day was so special for me, so unique. I have changed since that vital July. Life gave me a chance to become a better person. This moving made me more brave, wise, responsible for myself and self confident.

I am not that girl anymore but I will always remember her. I am so thankful that I have gotten such a chance to go through it all.

"HOME TO ME IS WHERE I'M NOT AFRAID OF ANYONE OR ANYTHING"

Home to me is a place where I find love, acceptance, safety, happiness and all the great and beautiful emotions that make me feel happy and comfortable to be myself instead of putting a mask on my face.

Home to me is where I'm not afraid of anyone or anything. Where I can trust and be confident.

Home is where I develop myself and learn from people around me. Home is where I can dream and plan about my future. A place in which I can be heard and listen to the people who matter to me. Home is where all my beloved ones are, where I can breathe, travel freely, dance and sing without fear. Home is where love resides, memories are created, friends are always there, and laughter never ends.

Narges Samimi

WHAT IS HOME TO YOU?

Interview & Photography by:
GOLSA GOLESTANEH



"HOME IS A STATE OF MIND"

Home is a state of mind. When I was younger I used to travel the world hoping to find a city to match my personality, so that I could build my home there. But the more I see and the more I explore, the more I realize I can be at home just about anywhere; that home is actually an internal state rather than an external place. I remember sleeping under thousands of stars on a rooftop in the Indian Jaipur desert late November in 2011, and feeling this light and fire in my belly as I looked up at the sky and saw how grand the universe was, how small I was, and wondering if I'd connect so deeply to a moment or a place like that ever again. My favorite writer Rebecca Solnit describes home this way: "The desire to go home that is a desire to be whole, to know where you are, to be the point of intersection of all the lines drawn through all the stars, to be the constellation-maker and the center of the world, that center called love. To awaken from sleep, to rest from awakening, to tame the animal, to let the soul go wild, to shelter in darkness and blaze with light, to cease to speak and be perfectly understood."

Priscilla Luk

WHAT IS HOME TO YOU?

Interview & Photography by:
GOLSA GOLESTANEH



PLACES THAT MAKES ME FEEL HOME



"THIS PARK MAKES ME FEEL SAFE AND HAPPY"

By: Nancy Kéren-Happuc Gakwavu

Queen Elisabeth Park is one of the places that makes me feel at home because it is a big beautiful place with lots of nature. I like to relax there when I am stressed. Also It is an attractive park, I really enjoy to be there. There are ponds, different kinds of flowers, trees, birds. It is also a very nice place to take photographs. December 2014 was the first time I ever visited there with my sister and my friends. We all loved the park and continue to go back almost every summer. It is a very peaceful place and far away from the main streets and on the hill. You can see the downtown Vancouver and Canada place from there. This park makes me feel safe and happy.



"AS FOR ME I FEEL AT HOME WHERE EVER I SEE WATER AND A GREAT SUNSET. I ENJOY BEING AT THE ENGLISH BAY ESPECIALLY IN LATE SPRING, SUMMER AND EARLY FALL"

By: Anastasiya Elokhina

Every person in the World has to have their own place. It means that they can go there when ever they feel like going there. It may be anything, it may be a bench in front of a pond with ducks, a field of wild flowers or maybe your favorite coffee shop. As for me I feel at home where ever I see water and a great sunset. I enjoy being at English Bay especially in late spring, summer and early fall. When I look at the water, I calm down, take a deep breath and feel safe. Looking at sunset makes me believe in the best, but water and a fascinating sunset together inspire me and give me more power. I totally forget about all problems and they just solve by themselves.

LIFE AT A REFUGEE CAMP

KIZIBA CAMP

By: Nancy Kéren-Happuc Gakwavu

Photography by: Jean- Théophile Barnabas



Top: Refugee Kiziba camp

Left side: Soccer field of Kiziba camp

In 2004 I lived in Rwanda at a Refugee camp. Our camp had a population of eighteen thousand people. We lived in a house. There was a school for children at the camp. The school started in daycare and continued through nursery, elementary and high school. The high school was up to grade nine. When we finished grade nine with good marks, sometimes we could get someone to sponsor us to go to study outside of the camp. Some families were able to send their children to a high school in the city. But now there is high school where students can complete their grade twelve. In October 31st 2015 they opened a university too. Twenty-five refugees started to do their online education and now studying courses offered by an American University called Southern New Hampshire.

Life at the camp wasn't really good; even though the United Nations did its best to provide us with food, firewood and clothes. There was playground for children and soccer, basketball, volleyball fields. There was even a karate room. We could play all sports for free. I lived there for ten years. I was eleven years old when I arrived there for the first time.

"WHEN WE FINISHED GRADE NINE WITH GOOD MARKS, SOMETIMES WE COULD GET SOMEONE TO SPONSOR US TO GO TO STUDY OUTSIDE OF THE CAMP."



Left: Students using solar light to study after dark



Right: Students help to build a new classroom that will expand the capacity of their secondary school grade nine to twelve

In Rwanda I was a grade eleven student specializing in Accounting. I studied in the camp from elementary school until grade six and then I went to high school until grade nine. After that I went to study in the city. During the holidays I used to help my mother to make the different crafts like earrings, bracelets, and Necklaces made with papers and African fabrics and also I used to sew. I really enjoyed practicing Karate and playing soccer in the camp. I have good and bad memories from that camp and I miss that place because it was home for me although it is a refugee camp.

The camp size is still growing due to wars in different countries in Africa; though United Nations is doing their best to bring refugees to other countries where there is peace and no war.

There is a remembrance day where they honor and remember the Congolese who speak Kinyarwanda. On August 13th 2015 hundreds walked the dusty streets of KIZIBA refugee camp in silent march commemorating those lost to the madness in Democratic Republic of Congo and the massacres in MUDENDE and GATUMBA twelve years ago.



August 13th, The remembrance day commemorating those who lost their lives.

"FOR ME HOME IS PALESTINE"

For me home is Palestine. It's a place where I feel peace, rest and belonging. I can visit it anytime and know that it will accept and welcome me and it will be the same as it is. The vibe of the people, the culture, the smell of the food in the old streets and the crowded stores remind me of the place that I grew up in. Home for me is a place where I can feel safe, happy and welcomed. It is a place that I am familiar with and can always relate to.

Zena Nassra

WHAT IS HOME TO YOU?

Interview & Photography by:
GOLSA GOLESTANEH



A portrait of Marcey Amaya, a woman with long, dark, curly hair and glasses, smiling slightly. The image is split diagonally from the top left to the bottom right. The upper-left portion is dark and out of focus, while the lower-right portion is in focus and has a teal color overlay. The text is placed on the teal background.

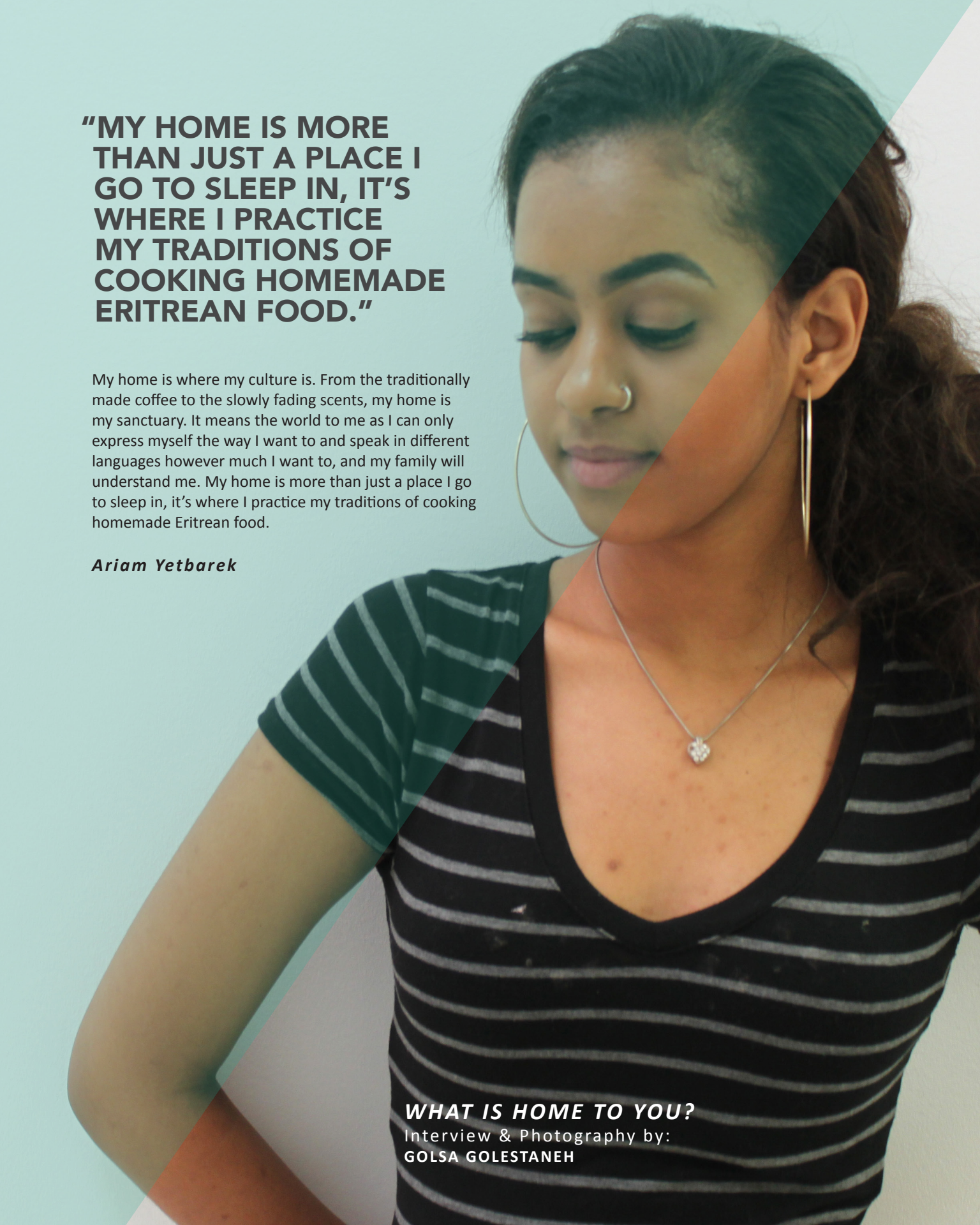
"HOME TO ME IS IS BEING ABLE TO EXPRESS MY OPINIONS"

Home to me is being able to express my opinions without feeling that I will be in danger or I will have to stop myself or change the way I feel because someone else might not like them. Home to me is being able to go somewhere and feel safe and feel like my experiences and my voice will be heard.

Marcey Amaya

WHAT IS HOME TO YOU?

Interview & Photography by:
GOLSA GOLESTANEH



**"MY HOME IS MORE
THAN JUST A PLACE I
GO TO SLEEP IN, IT'S
WHERE I PRACTICE
MY TRADITIONS OF
COOKING HOMEMADE
ERITREAN FOOD."**

My home is where my culture is. From the traditionally made coffee to the slowly fading scents, my home is my sanctuary. It means the world to me as I can only express myself the way I want to and speak in different languages however much I want to, and my family will understand me. My home is more than just a place I go to sleep in, it's where I practice my traditions of cooking homemade Eritrean food.

Ariam Yetbarek

WHAT IS HOME TO YOU?

Interview & Photography by:
GOLSA GOLESTANEH

SIBIR NOVOSIBIRSK

Сибирь Новосибирск

By: *Anastasiya Elokhina*



Sibir Novosibirsk (1974-1982)

Montreal Canadiens

Canada is known for its Poutine (traditional dish), bears and Hockey and Russia is also known for its Putin (the President of Russian Federation), bears and Hockey. It's well known that Canadians can't imagine their lives without hockey and also heart of Russians beat from game to game. I mentioned Poutine(Canadian dish) for a reason. This exotic dish takes its place in Quebec. Montreal is the biggest city in Quebec and the second largest city in Canada. There is a very famous Hockey team Montreal Canadiens. This team established on December 4th, 1909. The Montreal Canadiens won 24 Stanley cups

the most in NHL history. The symbol of Montreal Canadiens is two letters CH, which means Canadian Hockey.

I am from Siberia, Novosibirsk. Siberia is the heart of Russia. There is one of the most famous hockey team called Sibir Novosibirsk founded in 1962. All Siberians are proud of its hockey team. We always go to all games and support them all together. The symbol of Sibir Novosibirsk is also CH Сибирь Новосибирск with means in Russian- Sibir Novosibirsk.

I want to say that it doesn't matter where you are from, to me Hockey unites everyone together and it reminds me of home. Hockey is a separate world where time stops. If you haven't gone to a Hockey game yet, you must go there and you will understand that magical atmosphere where all people are equal, where all people stand together, where all people become whole and cheer.

ELL

English Language Learner

As a newcomer learning a new language has been a big part of me. I struggled but I continue to practice this new language. If you also struggle with English, don't worry you will improve it. Here are some important tips for ELL students based on my own experience.

- Don't be afraid to make mistakes. Be confident. People can only correct your mistakes when they hear you make them.
- Practice everyday. Make yourself a study plan and stick to it. Establish a routine.
- Once you have a basic level of English explore the different ways you can say the same thing. This

makes your English more interesting to the listener. For example, how many ways can you say the word *beautiful* in English?

- Watch movies in English, it will help you to get used to correct pronunciation.
- Write a diary every day. Just buy a copybook and start recording your emotions maybe worries etc. Spend only five minutes on it. It will help you to improve your writing skills.

By: *Anastasiya Elokhina*

I AM A DAYDREAMER.

By: Golsa Golestaneh



Life is a complex, filled with adventure, dream, pain, love, hope, and disaster. To me, it's been spinning all the time. I remember my short childhood with all the laughter, memories, colors, and innocent feelings. I remember my grandma's house in the summer with the delicious cherries in the yard. I remember my toys and books, and the basket that I used to put them in and take it to the middle of our alley and invite other children to take some books or dolls with them as a gift from me. I remember fighting with my cousin who I loved like a sister. I can hear the song that my brother and I used to sing on our way to my mom's village. I can feel the coolness of springwater on my skin as we were playing in it. I remember the big bee, that bite my brother's ear and left him crying for a while, I started singing a song to calm him down, he sang along... Oh.. sweet childhood...

colorful dream... too pleasant to be so short... After turning 8, those moments disappeared... I was too young to understand anything and realize how my life is going to change... I feel like my childhood was sacrificed to allow me to have a better future. I can remember how lonely I was at some point in my life. I remember watching cartoons in German and memorizing the commercials. I remember everything. I remember the terrible car crash on our way to the village that still scares me once I am in the train or a car with a fast speed. 6 years of my life passed as if I had lived in a dark whole, no matter how much fun I had sometimes, I'd still not like those days. I remember shouting on the streets, asking for our rights, watching each other being arrested. I can feel the awful pain on my face as the pepper spray was sprayed behind my head and my eyes burnt and ached as if it was filled with broken glass... Years passed... I remember how terrified I was when police arrested me for the size of my dress! Not long enough in their point of view, no matter if I wore jeans beneath the dress! The fear, the darkness, the disappointment will never be forgotten or forgiven.. But amongst all these moments, one breaks my heart the most... The day of farewell... I can still feel the pain, my eyes would still go wet... My cousin's silence on the phone, my aunt's tears, my grandma... My grandma... I will never forgive myself for leaving her alone while she begged me to stay a bit more... I lied to her, I told her that if she keeps crying, the police would become suspicious and won't let us go... I can feel the headache as I was sitting in the airport, putting my head on my mom's shoulder.... I remember the first days in Turkey and how terribly I feared the policemen for no reason but the past... REFUGEES, THE MOST MISUNDERSTOOD PEOPLE ON THE PLANET; PEOPLE WHO ARE BLAMED FOR



My Grandmother's Back Yard, Tankaman village, Iran

RUNNING AWAY, WHO ARE JUDGED FOR WHO THEY ARE, THE ONES WHO ARE NEVER HEARD. I remember the first few months, when there wasn't enough money for us to buy food and we used to eat eggs or potatoes for several days in a row.... I remember the places that I worked at and never got paid... I remember the pain in my back, the wounds on my

"I AM PROUD OF THE PAST THAT I HAVE EXPERIENCED, BUT I'M NOT GOING TO LET ANYONE ELSE EXPERIENCE IT, I WILL NEVER ALLOW THE PAIN TO DIG INTO ANOTHER HEART"

fingers, the tears in my eyes as I was working with the sewing machine. I remember everything. I remember how painful it was to see my dad and brother doing the most backbreaking jobs... I remember my loneliness, merciless loneliness... It's my first year in Canada, the loneliness faded away. Despite all the overwhelming struggles, I am happy that the past wouldn't come back anymore. To be honest there is a whole in my heart which is filled with the pains and every time I hear about refugees drowning, starving, or hardly surviving, the pain spreads deep into my thoughts and every single action of mine. My mind is a mess and while writing about the past

and the refugees I am thinking of home and what it might mean to me... You might be able to guess! To me, home is my grandma's warm hands, the cherries in the yard of her house, the cheerful springwater, the delightful fruits... When you are a child, you don't have the struggle of getting along with all of the people, so you wouldn't realize the differences between human beings and the flaws of the world, that is what makes you feel free and happy. To me, home is where I am as happy, free, innocent and hopeful as a child. I might never experience being home anymore, you might say, and I admit that, but that doesn't matter to me! You know what can make me feel as happy as a child? Making others feel home. That is what I consider to be my duty and the purpose in life, that is what identifies me. I am proud of the past that I have experienced, but I'm not going to let anyone else experience it, I will never allow the pain to dig into another heart. I might not feel like home, but I can and I will try to make the world as peaceful and comfortable as home. People say I am a dreamer.. well, I am a daydreamer and to be honest, my dreams are happening one after another, therefore I have decided to dream big!

DEAR MOTHER NATURE,

By: Anastasiya Elokhina



Creative Commons Flickr collection

I want to say sorry from our Generation. We are alive but life is ending every day and most of people don't even notice it. We live in a "perfect" World, we have everything we need. We can buy anything we want. We can go to anywhere we want but have you ever thought about nature, about animals that die every day?

Did you know that the amount of trees cut in a second can be compared to a football field? People are stopping to care about nature. Forests play a fundamental role in combating rural poverty, ensuring food security and providing decent livelihoods. More than 150 billion animals are being slaughtered every year. Between 10 000 and 100 000 species are becoming extinct each year. We are losing animals.

People go crazy, people go cruel, people deprive animals of life. Isn't it injustice? it is so painful and dreadfully sad. We must think about it and try to change it.

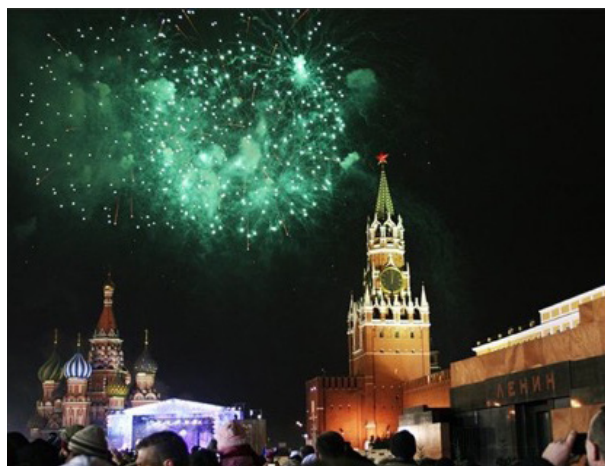
Dear Nature, sorry for hurting you. Sorry for poisoning oceans, sorry for killing animals, sorry for cutting trees, sorry for pollution. I feel ashamed for all of us. We can't imagine how far we went. We are the foundation. It is our Planet, it is our home. To save nature is to save us. Let's stand for trees. Let's save animals. I'm saying sorry from the whole Generation. Our life will end without trees, animals, fresh air, clean oceans and seas. We are contributing to this suicide.

TRADITIONAL NEW YEARS



NOROUZ by: *Golsa Golestaneh*

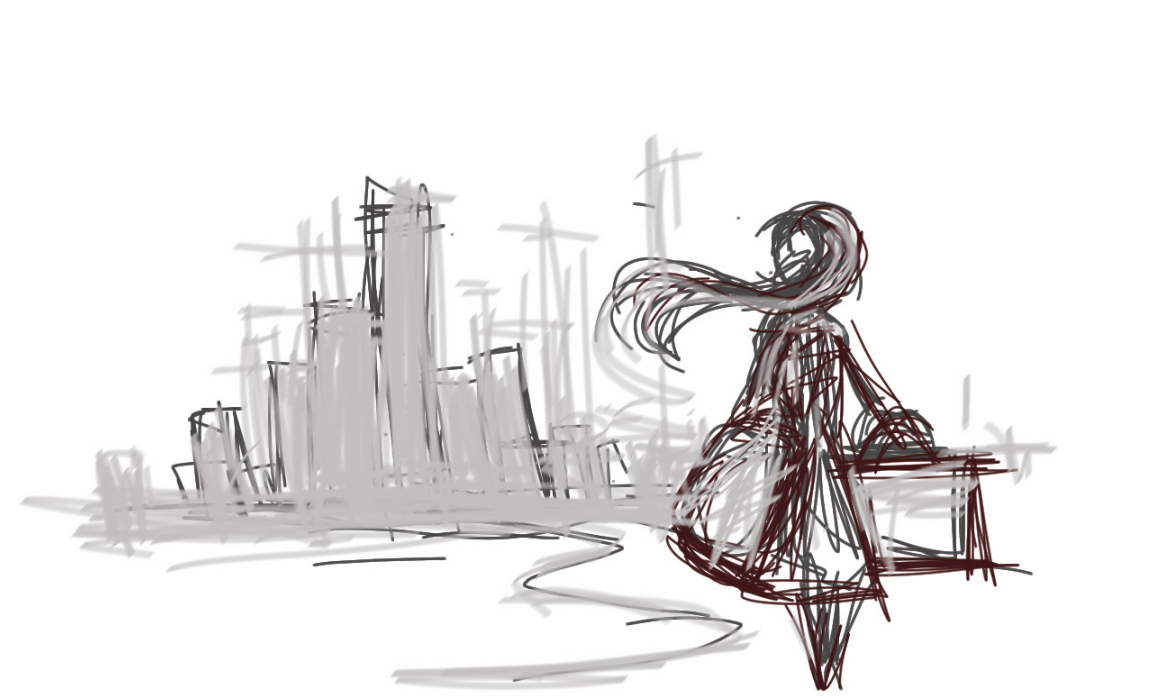
The biggest traditional and historical event for us is Norouz (Persian New Year). We have to clean our home before the eve comes which is a symbolic action to remind us that we should clean our hearts from anger, sadness, blame, and all other negative emotions. The first day of spring is the first day of our new year. Before the new year comes we prepare a table with seven objects that starts with letter "s" in Farsi therefore it's called "Haft Sin" (seven s). Each object represents the requirements for a good life: health, peace, wealth, nature, happiness, wisdom, justice. We all gather in our elderlies' house, we sit around the Haft Sin and pray and wish for a good year. The Earth is finished with going around the sun in a different time each year, this is called equinox and our new year happens during this time. We all hug each other and wish a good year for all. Elderlies give money or gifts to younger ones and all sibilings buy gifts for each other. For 13 days we go visiting everyone in the family even the distant relatives. And of course lots of eatings causes a big gain in our weight. On the thirteenth day we take our "Sabzeh" with us and tie them as we wish for something to happen and hang out together for the last time before the break is over.



**"NEW YEAR IS THE MOST
FAVORITE HOLIDAY OF
RUSSIAN PEOPLE"**

By: *Anastasiya Elokhina*

Late family dinner, fireworks, sparkling tree with different color lights at midnight are some of the traditional way of celebrating New Year's Day in Russia. New year is the most favorite holiday of Russian people. We all come together, play fun games, make traditional dinner, get and give gifts. Someone dress up like a Ded Moroz(Russian Santa) and ask if everyone was good during the year. If there are any children, they have to tell him a poem, sing a song or dance and only after that they will get a gift. Just before midnight, the President addresses the nation a short speech in which he reflects on the past year and thanks the people for their support. The chiming clock on the Kremlin's Spasskaya Tower is shown counting down the last few seconds of the year, at that time all people write their wishes on the paper, burn it, put it in their glasses and drink it. After that people all over Russia go outside to see fireworks, play snowballs and wish all people a Happy New Year!



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