

SOMEPLACE TO CALL HOME

I didn't want to go. Not foot-stomping-temper-tantrum-throwing-scream-at-the-top-of-my-lungs-not-want-to-go; I just plain *didn't want to go*. I even begged my parents to leave me with our neighbors. Anything would be better than going to second grade at Nativity.

But it didn't work. It never did.

I had gotten the same speech six times, and even though I was little, I still remember it. I knew it so well I said it in my head along with my parents:

“Shannon, we know you're looking forward to school with your friends next year, but Dad got a promotion! He's now a (insert job title here). We're really sorry; we know you'll miss your friends; we'll really miss our friends, too. (Insert city, state in which we live now) was a great place to live, but this is a great opportunity for our family. We know you'll make great friends in (Insert city, state to which we're moving), even though we know they will never replace (insert list of my current friends).”

I mean what a downer of a speech, right? At the time I can honestly say that I missed my friends in Ohio like crazy and I could not have cared less about making new friends. I thought that this move would be completely temporary like all the other ones. But, really, what was I supposed to think? By then, moving was part of life; I think we even used the same moving boxes we used when moving to Ohio while packing to move to Minnesota. How sad is *that*?

But what I really, really hated was that my parents took pictures of my sister and me posing in our new uniforms. (Well, if sitting around and pouting counts, then I was definitely posing.) The uniform jumper was scratchy and stiff and I ached for my old one which was soft and worn-in, like an old friend. After pictures, we all got in the car and drove to school.

The parking lot was full and crowded. The noise was deafening to me at that moment, and I couldn't stand it. Nothing would ever matter about St. Paul, Minnesota, just like none of those other places ever mattered. I had a sick, angry feeling in the pit of my stomach that felt like it was chewing on my gut (but I never throw up since moving has given me a strong stomach). I just didn't feel like I belonged there, in this swarm of people standing in Ms. Knowles' line. I belonged back in Ohio with all my real friends.

But thinking back, what I remember the most was that feeling in the pit of my stomach. It wasn't anxiety or excitement. No, it was the feeling that I didn't belong and the feeling that I never would. I wanted to cry. Maybe I did; I don't even know anymore. If I cried and showed weakness, or if I stayed strong and tough, doesn't really matter now. All of my whining and complaining also no longer matters.

What I care about now is that the feeling that I didn't belong left. It no longer invades that pit of my stomach because I do, in some sense, belong at Nativity and in Minnesota. All that matters is the fact that I, at last, have someplace I can say I belong.

By Shannon Silberhorn Grade 7

A WINTER OF MANY COLORS

In the winter, all people can think about is snow.
But every winter there are colors you
might not know.

The sun still shines bright and yellow.
It keeps me happy and mellow.

The sky still as blue as ever.

When do I stop noticing? Never!

Christmas trees as green as grass,

They cover land of great mass.

So, when winter comes don't only
think of it as white

or chilly with a touch of frostbite.

By Clare Fitzpatrick Grade 4

STAY HOME REQUEST

My feet are like two icebergs
full of lots of chill,

connected to a body
that's very, very ill.

“No,” said my mother.

She sent me off to class.

“You can go and learn and learn;

the sickness you can pass

to all the other people

that never harmed you still;

you can go and make them

most very, very ill.”

By Jacob Weinstein Grade 4