



1. *Library of Memories. Living Room, Providence, RI.*

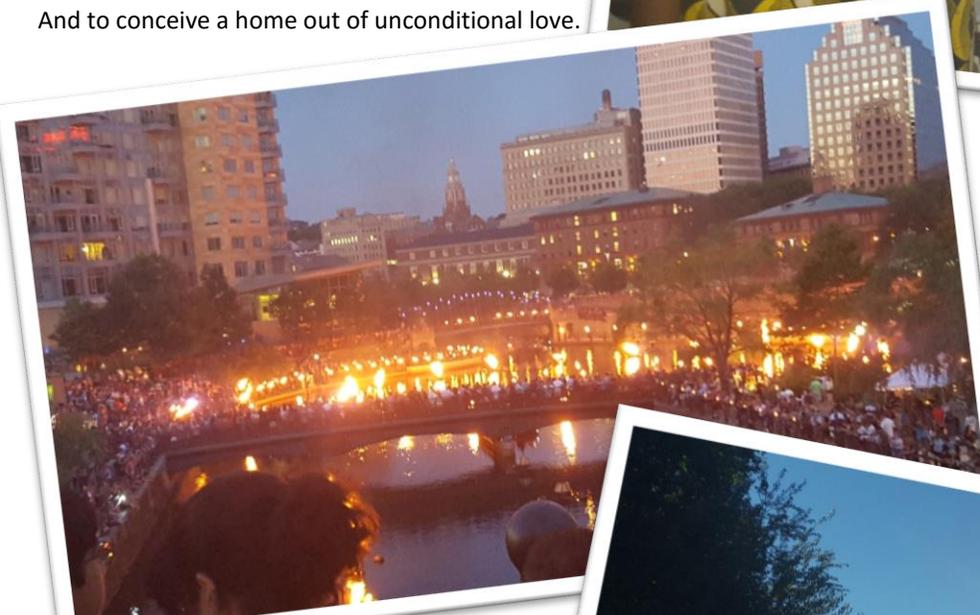
Even if I couldn't resonate with her definition of home, home was certainly whenever I was in the presence of her maternal care. I guess that's why I was always content when I found my way back to her, my missing piece to say the least. She taught me what it meant to create structure with resilience, To build a foundation out of endurance And to conceive a home out of unconditional love.

"It's what makes it a home," my mother would say every time she added something new to the stand. She was an avid collector of all things nostalgic. Old birthday cards, wedding favors, dated photographs and all, our living room was a blast of memories. I didn't really understand what she meant by the saying but then again, I never could quite *grasp* the pieces it took to build something so sacred.



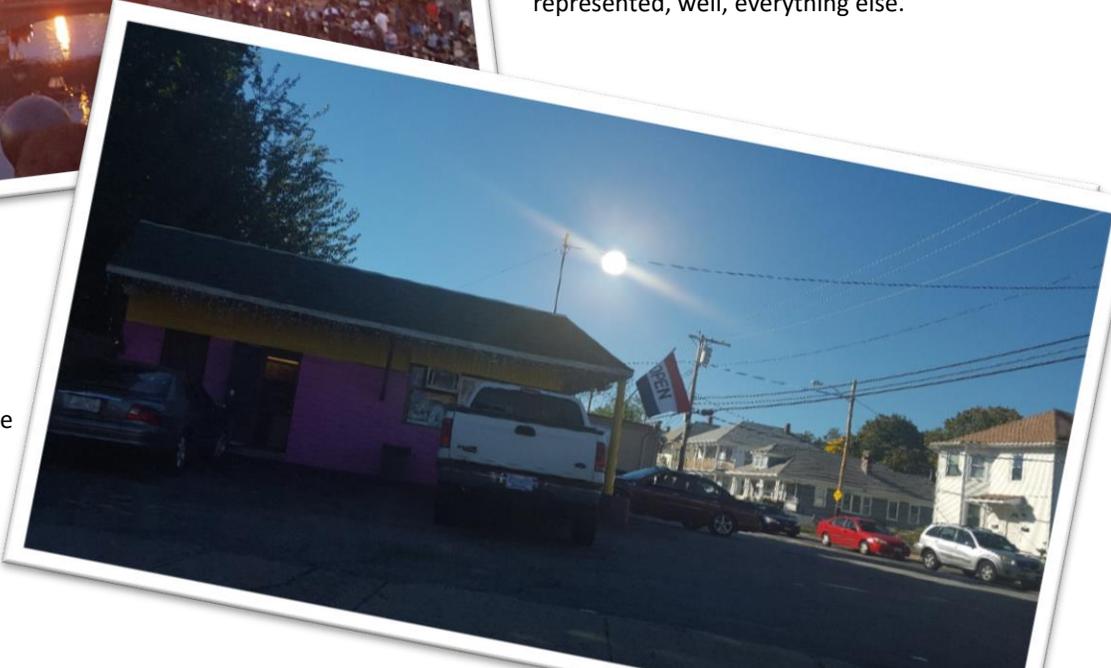
2. *Heart of the Home. Kitchen, Providence, RI.*

Growing up in Providence, the juxtaposition between real and illusionary illuminated, even in the pitch black. When I was not with my mother, the different sides of the city became my home. One side of the city represented affluence and the other side represented, well, everything else.

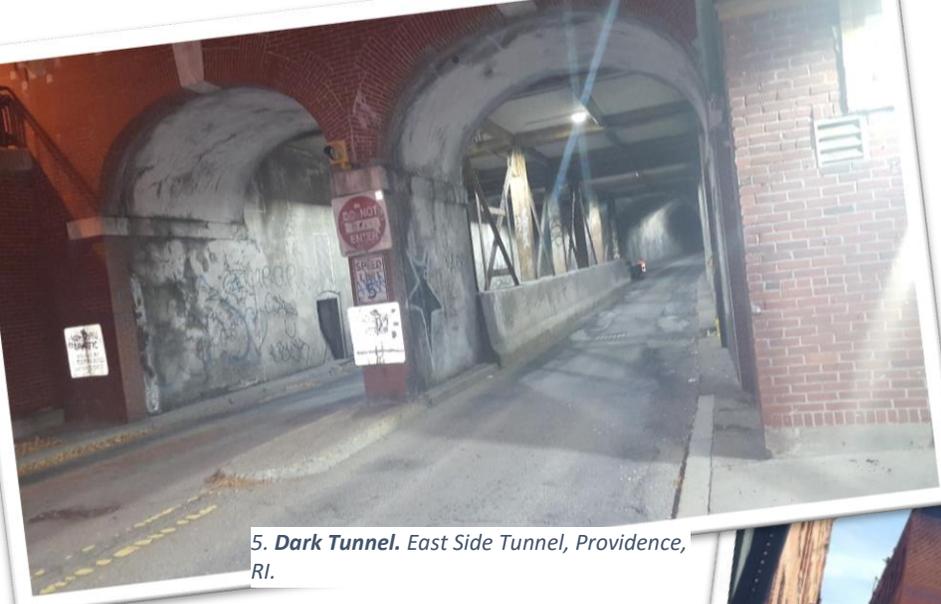


3. *Bright Lights. Waterfire, Providence, RI.*

I often times caught myself trying to escape one by going to the other. Trying to picture how nice it would be to live in the part of the city that embodied bright lights and opportunity. I was tired of having that dark cast looming over me.



4. *Intersection. Corner of Glenbridge, Providence, RI.*



5. *Dark Tunnel.* East Side Tunnel, Providence, RI.

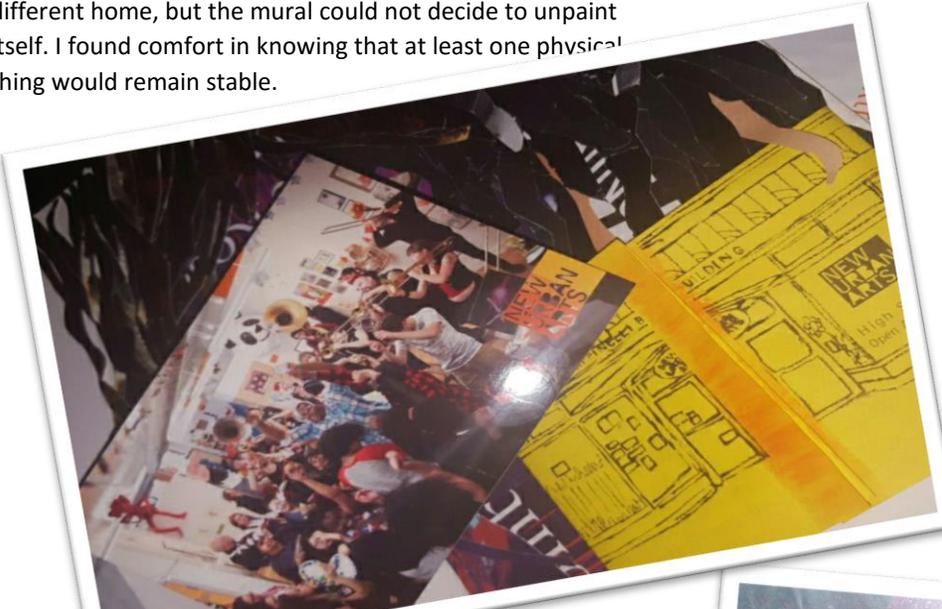
Everything that I was told to strive towards was reachable by a short bus ride through the tunnel. There I would find opportunity, whether it'd be in the form of an Ivy League school or as simply as SAT tutoring, there I could make a change. As if it could possibly be that easy. As if I could possibly make a difference by ignoring the part of town that nurtured me. It may not have been the best part of town, but it was my part, and I serve as living proof that you can always do without, and prosper. It was silly to think I would find my home away from home by escaping into a land I was not familiar with.

From a short bus ride to escape, to a long bus ride where I could contemplate, public transit became a routine for me. The hour long commutes to school were nothing less than a drag, but once I exited the bus, I knew that the fifteen minute walk to school held promise. There was no doubt in my mind that I would cross the street, walk for about six minutes, and see the large mural of the man who mirrored my thoughts. In the midst of uncertainty, I had one thing that I knew would not change. The bus could take a different route, my parents could decide to move into a different home, but the mural could not decide to unpaint itself. I found comfort in knowing that at least one physical thing would remain stable.



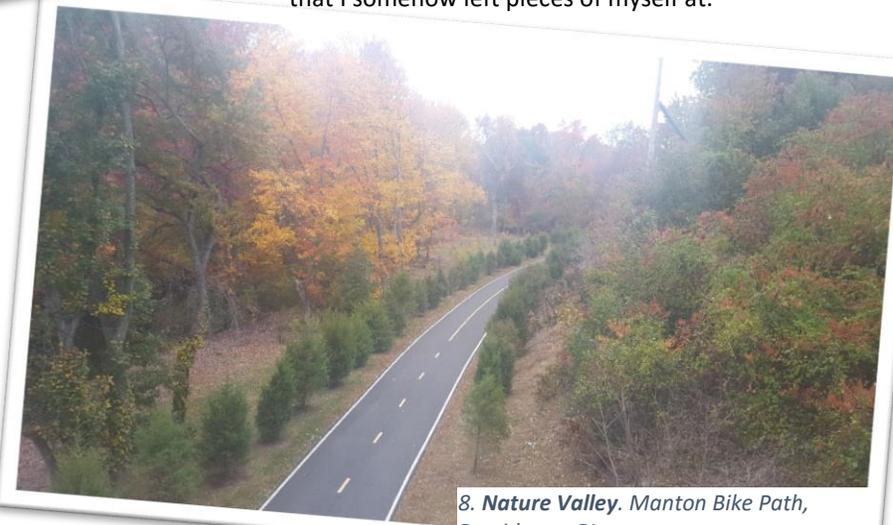
6. *Contemplation.* Mural, Downtown Providence, RI.

Home is meant to foster growth, so that was probably why I had always felt like I had walked into a cocoon when I entered. I found transcendent peace within the chaos that New Urban Arts created. Everywhere was adorned with creative expression, forcing me to step outside of my old self. My first artistic piece was a mosaic that I never got around to finishing. I thought it showcased my lack of commitment, but when I went back to pick up the piece, I came to the understanding that a mosaic could never truly be finished. There would always be another piece that could fit in between the cracks. It was at New Urban Arts that I found out that home was a mosaic; home embodied the multiple places that I somehow left pieces of myself at.

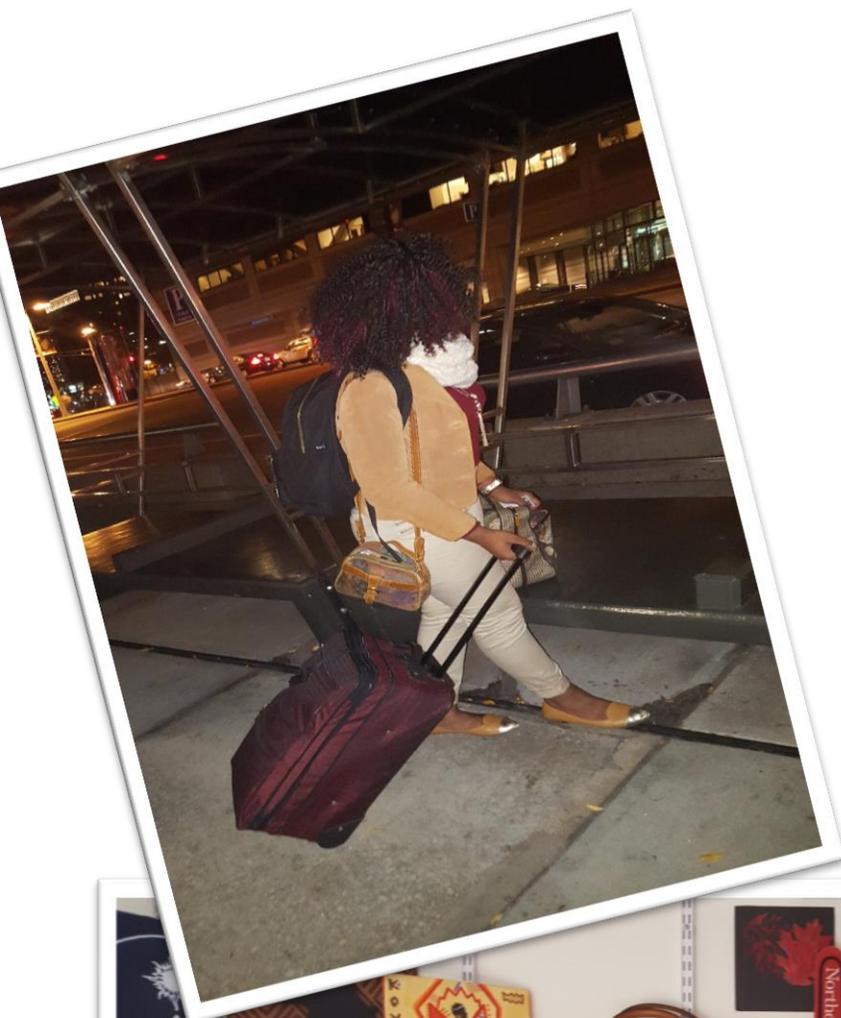


7. *Perfect Chaos.* New Urban Arts, Providence, RI.

On one of my daily jogs, I realized how ironic it was to have a nature preserve in the middle of one of the city's poorest neighborhoods. Perhaps it was to remind those that one could find beauty in the midst of the undesirable, but I declared that it was meant as a different outlook. I could go into my backyard and suddenly be transported to a place where everything was left untouched. There were no stores, barely any people, just the calm aura that nature provided. It was through this path that I began to understand the process of change, as the trees surrounding me gradually shifted colors alongside my evolution as a person. I never exited the bike path feeling the same as when I entered, and that was finally okay.



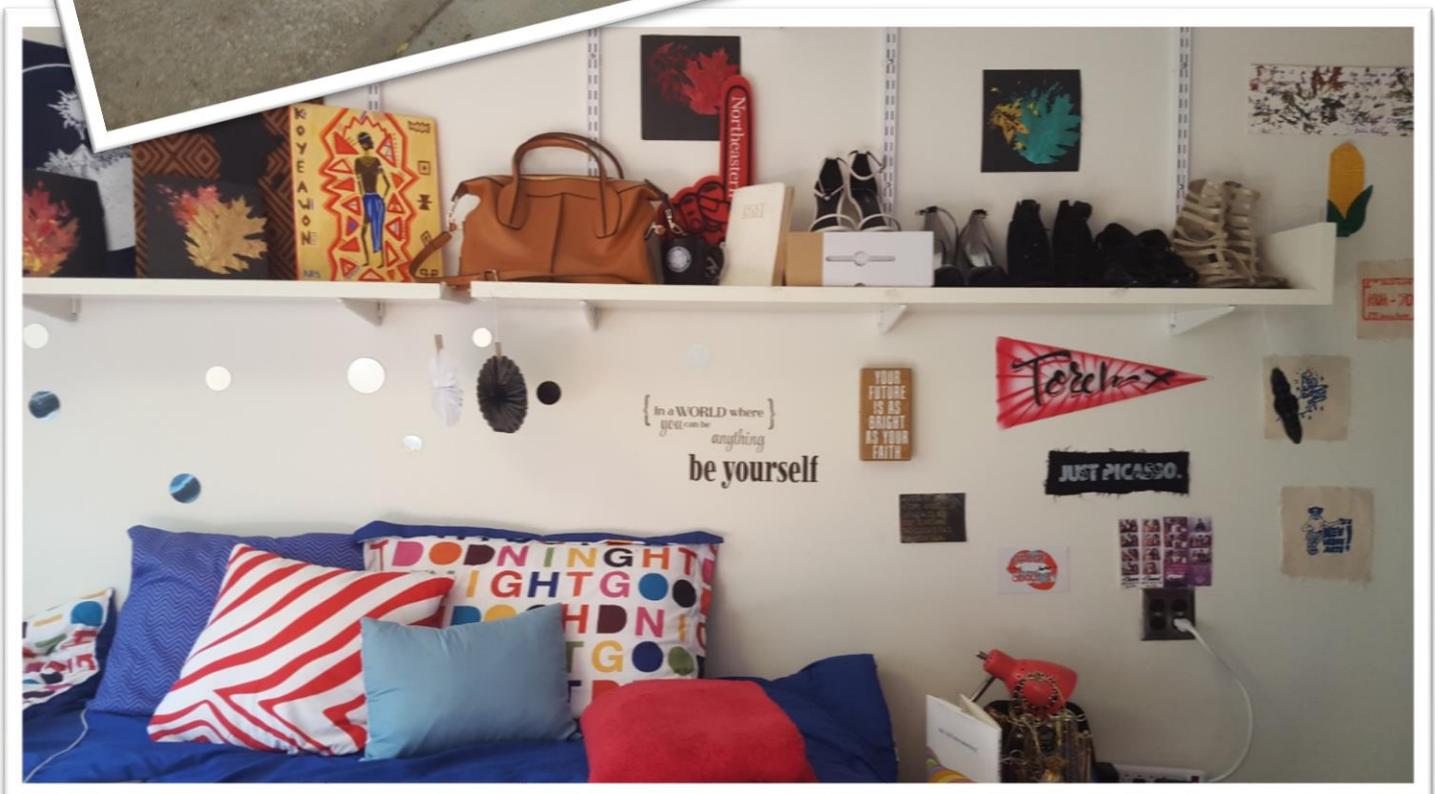
8. *Nature Valley.* Manton Bike Path, Providence, RI.



Although I gave all the credit to my mother, there's no one who could tell me I didn't think of home like papa. I was for sure a rolling stone and wherever I laid my bags was my home, so I guess that's why I was always travelling in between two sides, two concepts, two cities. It did not matter where I ended up, as long as I resonated with something.

With *anything*.

9. *Woman in Flight*. Back Bay Station, Boston, MA.



10. *Mosaic*. Stetson East, Northeastern University, Boston, MA

I never quite thought of myself as an avid collector of all things nostalgic, but I guess that's something that comes with time.

Home is really whatever you perceive it as, but I did not want to simply *denote* one thing as a home. See, home is change.

The only thing truly stable about a home is the physical conception of a home  
And that left with my first big move away.

All I have are the pieces of myself.

The foundation in which is being molded by the different experiences that I have gone through.

The growing mosaic that remains unfinished.