FINDING HOME

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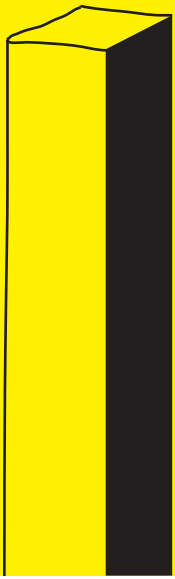

Home is a different Earth. It is a special place where you are free to be yourself

— BRAEDON

Home is a warm blanket in winter. It welcomes you in, keeps you warm and makes you feel safe

— TIMOTHY

Home is the gateway between reality and fantasy, into where I can be who I want to be myself

— CHLOE

Home is a memory box

— ANKANKSHA

Home is my heaven. The place where love and happiness float around, a secure and relaxing environment after a long, hard day

— SAM

Home is the star your eyes are drawn to

— MICHELLE

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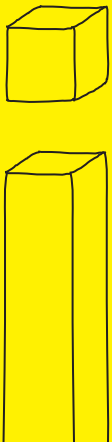
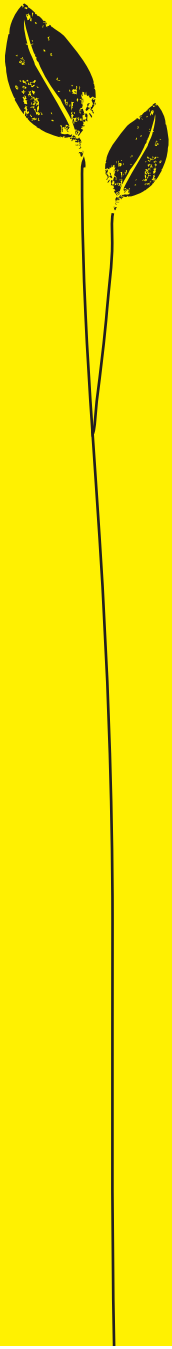




INTRODUCTION.

Home is not a faraway place or an alien planet, a dangerous adventure or a journey into the unknown, but a place where all the magic becomes possible.

— JON

The FINDING HOME anthology invites you into "rooms" of poems and stories shaped by Leumeah High School students and Genworth mentors during a special workshop series exploring themes and experiences of "home".

These workshops were made possible by a collaboration between the Australian Business Community Network (ABCN), Genworth, The Red Room Company and Leumeah High School from May to June, 2014. Assembled by ABCN, the workshops invited Year 10 students from Leumeah High School to Genworth's North Sydney Office where they were partnered with company mentors. Led by Red Room poet Candy Royalle, students and mentors were guided through writing and performance activities that mapped connections with family, community and the heart-strings that tie us to different places. The outcome is a collection of poems that celebrate home – the moments that make us laugh, cry, remember and a spectrum of experiences in-between.

As Candy Royalle observes, "Home has different connotations for everyone, but I think it's safe to say Leumeah, Genworth, ABCN and Red Room made a beautiful home for us all to create in. The poetry written in that 'house' is very special indeed".

We hope you enjoy inhabiting the home and rooms this talented family of students and mentors have shared.

PARTICIPANTS

POET

Candy Royalle

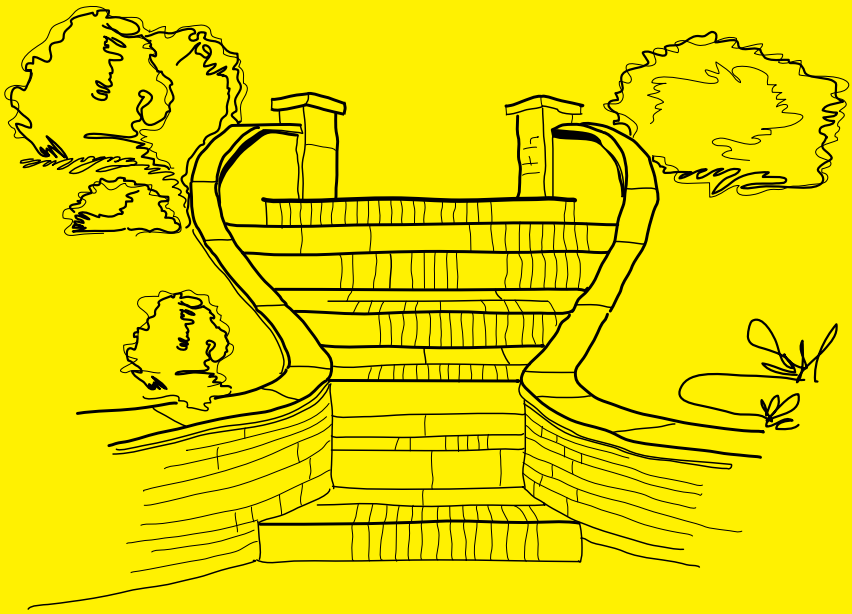
STUDENTS

Jon D.
Braedon F.G
Chloe S.Z
Ankanksha T.
Sam D.
Michelle K.
Alex M.
Timothy A.K
Edmond A.K
Kavisha S.
Jill B.
Jasmine S.
Sam D.
Madeline P.
Helena N.
Bianca K.
Tetsuya B.
Komal M.
Marie B.
Sophie R.
Shannon K.

MENTORS

Cassandra
Matt A.
Paul C.
Sam I.
Usman Z.
Vicki P.
Lyn S.
Yvette P.

PATHWAYS HOME



VICKI P.

My home is by the beach,
morning about to break stillness
quiet, peaceful, dark.
Early morning joggers, swimmers
surfers, fishermen awake.
Alone, calm. My favourite time of day.

My home is by the beach,
scorching summer day.
Sunshine, sparkling water
salt air, suntan lotion
tall buildings reflect white heat.
Crowd, excitement, traffic jams;
retreat to my balcony to catch sea breeze.

My home is by the beach.
Night time, night life, dark side
People laughing, bottles smashing;
smell of seafood cooking, partygoers
dodging cars, sirens nearby.
Turning seedy, midnight approaches.
Back home, clean sheets welcome me
to my cocoon.

BIANCA K.

My journey home:
dad's car, always listening to 2GB,
boring political stuff, as we drive down
the main road towards our house
past the park, where mums are running
after their children; past the primary school,
where students are walking home.

The constant hum coming from people
mowing their soft, plump green grass.
People walking their dogs – even dogs
uncontrollably barking through the side
fence, as dad's car *putt putts* up
our street.

Our house, white, red, and yes – a flat
roof, like our own little Mexican cottage.
As I enter, I smell mum's vanilla candles,
sometimes even a fruity smell.
The kettle is steamy, the pan is sizzling.
I wouldn't feel at home without mum's
home-cooked spaghetti, baked dinner
or comforting hot chocolate. *Mmmmm.*

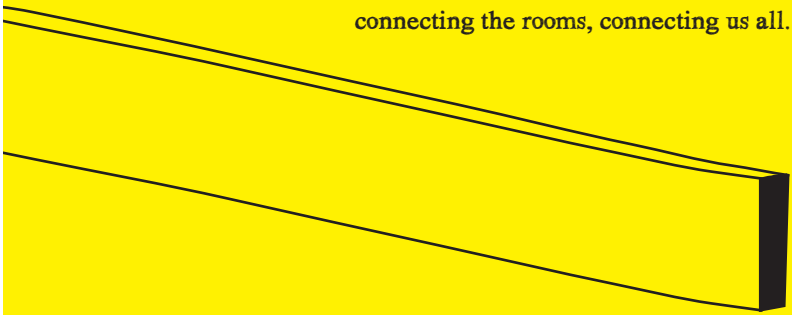
My house is a home
which holds warmth and love.

MADELINE P.

Sitting in English class, thinking
of what to do that afternoon.
So many reminders of home that day,
clockwatching, the time will come soon.

The sunrays would hit the table
like they did in my room. All the colours,
smells and sounds. From the unwashed
dog, to my new perfume. I could hear
people laughing, phones ringing
and dogs barking. My stomach rumbled
as I thought of homemade potato bake,
followed up with a chocolate cake.

I walked down the corridors at the end
of the school day. They remind me
of the long hallways in my house,
connecting the rooms, connecting us all.



IN THE GARDEN

ANKANKSHA T.

Home is the root of our memories,
the memories that bring us back
the memories that remind us
of the good times, but also the bad.
which holds warmth and love.

JON D.

A house standing proud where a young
sapling grew,

a breeze rustling leaves, laughter and
music

roots spreading, happy roses
fading

broken windows are firewood.

BRAEDON F.G

A house is not just a person's home,
it is another addition to the community.
It starts off as a seed and it grows with
the town as the tree welcomes new life
and spreads its seeds, its leaves as it
welcomes families to their new life.

MICHELLE K.

You were once a seed, but now a flower
just like this house, you grew old
and soon you'll be in history
with an untold story.

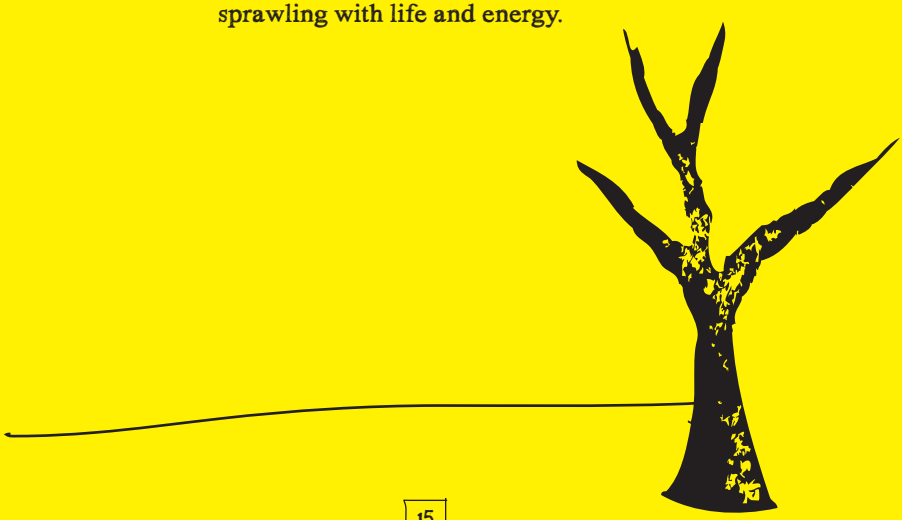
MADELINE P.

The roots of our house grow
deep with our past, present
and futures lived out here.

The house keeps us together.
It is our little family tree.

TETSUYA B.

Home is the set foundation,
the roots of my growing family tree
sprawling with life and energy.



ALEX M.

The grass is cut to a perfect length,
as I breathe in the beautiful scent
of the smell that makes me feel content.
As I see my cat run to my side,
meowing and looking at me with
his deep, green eyes,
as I touch the water, in its calming flow,
it reminds me of my pool, pure like snow.

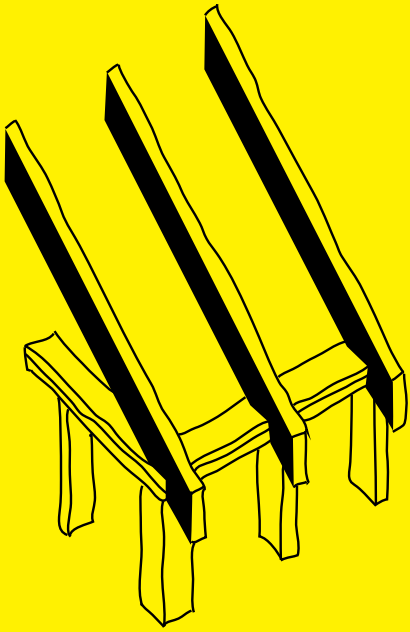
Maybe not completely pure –
it's kept clean by chemicals, though.
For a relaxing escape,
there's no place I'd rather go.

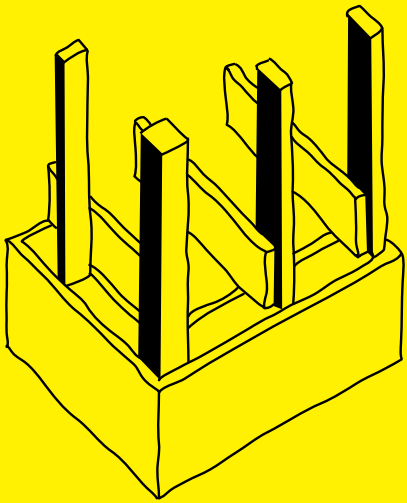
I see a long stretch of green
in the form of a hill, where my dog runs
around and around until he gets tired
and collapses on his unique smelling bed,
breathing heavily and weighing
like a ton of lead. But don't worry,
he's not dead.

He's very happy when he sees
the birds fly overhead, his ears perk up
and he raises his head, rustling leaves
as he chases and chases, then instead
he stops, lies down and goes back to bed.

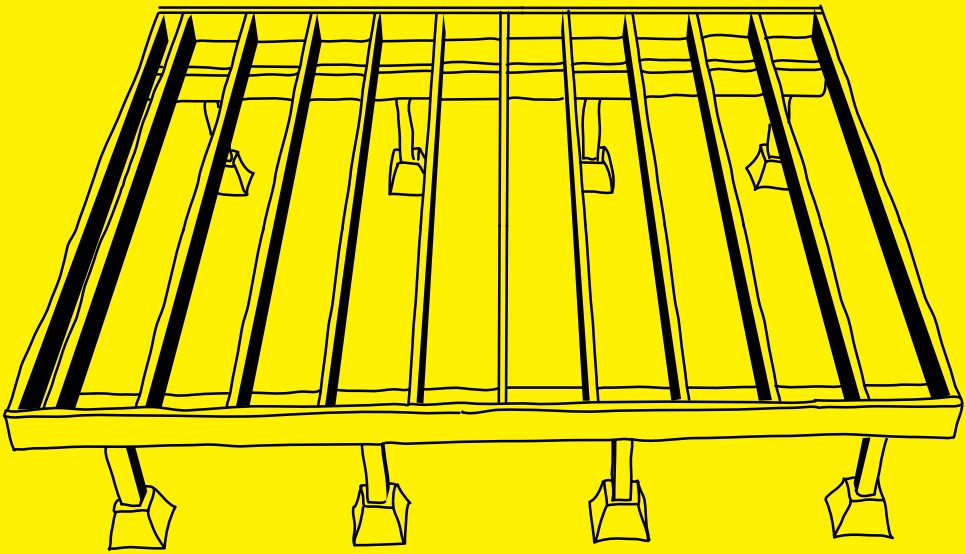
As I touch a soft pillow, it causes me
to remember the bed I sleep in everyday,
from January to December.
I taste the meat off of a barbecue, cooked
to perfection, good all the way through.

As I look out my window, I see
everyone's fences – from those long owners
to this month's new renters. At that moment,
the sun chooses me to shine on.
I have five senses, and these
are what I experience through mine.





FOUNDATIONS



BRAEDON F.G

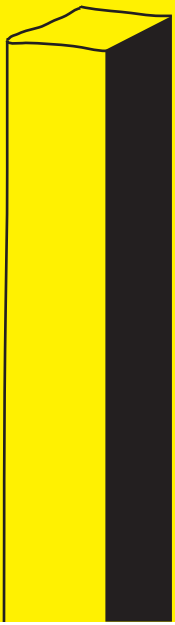
Home is a whole different universe.
Home is a place where you are free to feel
and finally be yourself. Home is filled with many
different senses, safely guarded by fences.

Home is a place to see the world in your own
personal space; where you can do what
you want, at your own pace.
So how does home feel to me?

In my world, home is a place where
I have my own space, filled with fresh air
and many different thoughts. This place
where you can witness children
running around and playing with their friends.
A place where everyone tries to fit in with
the constantly changing trends.
This place called "home".
What does it mean around the world?

Is it a place where you can retreat,
relax or even a place to reach for
your highest goals? Home is a place
where you have your own rights.
Home is a place where you are free
to be yourself. Home is a place
where even pets have a place to belong to.
But this place called "home" has some
dark spirits within,

It's a place surrounded by noise, pollution,
and it is also a place where criminals think
they are allowed to destroy someone's
space and freedom.
Luckily home wouldn't be "home"
if there weren't a few disruptions
throughout the journey.



SOPHIE R.

Home is an unlocked treasure,
a key to open my heart
that warm glib of my mother's
leisure, a feeling that can never
tear me apart.
Something as soft as a wind chime
can easily remind me of the memories
built over time or even a simple cup
of tea to keep me company.

It's funny how a piece of hair
from a little teddy bear makes
me feel the nurture and care
felt at home. Something so precious
to never make me feel alone.

ANKANKSHA T.

I am a home carrying all the memories
of my family and our journey;
the journey of how we grow and learn.
My windows are the glasses that give
you a vision of my world and how I live,
my doors welcome you inside,
but that is all I will give.

MARIE B.

A home that holds
my family and culture;
doors that open to love
and care, hidden away in
my room, where my secrets
are locked away; where I let
out all my emotions that
no one would ever know.
The dripping tap that cries
out my tears; my future is
what holds my fear.

MICHELLE K.

I am a home
The windows shine the light
that holds my hopes
and aims my sight.
The walls are the layers
that keep me together
and hide secrets of the past.
I was once empty,
now full of hope, ready to cope
with what the future brings.

LYN S.

Holidays are great,
but there is nothing like home.
The racing heartbeat of the dog,
the sounds of the kookaburras,
the cockatoos. The familiar view
of the shrubs, the trees, the water,
the front door – it all looks kinda new.
Walking through the door,
the light hits you straight away,
then as you move through
the house, unlocking the windows.
You get to reflect on the pictures
each view paints for you.

The wallabies playing in the backyard,
the boats moving along the water...
It's all new again.
Each room grabs you
with its unique smell, the scented candles,
the familiarity, the comfort
of being home. Once unpacked,
it's always time for tea, the luxury

to boil the jug, choose tea, get comfy
on the lounge.
Nothing like home.

All can breathe easy, no airs
and graces, just be ourselves
being home. This means
What's for dinner?
What's in the fridge?
and being creative
with what you've got.

It's always a surprise. A casual family meal,
having favourites, not fancy menus,
just being ourselves.

The best part of being home
comes at the end of the day,
that amazing feeling at getting
into your own bed. We're home!

KAVISHA S.

Let me describe to you my home,
my home is the sight of
trucks, rushing and hustling
through the freeway.

Sight of orange floorboards
with dark brown spots.
Sight of the red paint
on walls through different
doors and hallways,

My home is the smell of strong,
intense spices flowing
from the kitchen. Smell of a new, lit
incense that rushes through the house,
covering each corner with its smell.

The regular aroma of coffee
at 6 in the morning as people
leave my home.
My home is the sound of dogs,
cats, crying for attention
from the step into the front door.

Loud crackling laughs heard
from the people down the street,
the piano playing out of tune
as fingers attempt to find
their place on the keys.
My home is the taste of chilli,
meeting the tip of your tongue,
crunchy toast filled with hot, melting
cheese burning your mouth.

My home is the feel of silk
from my mother's soft, recently
ironed saree. Cold air from secret
windows left open overnight, giving
us midnight chills.
My home's a bit of a mess
but it's my mess – and that's
my home.

EDMOND A.K

When I see a beautiful garden,
when I smell all different types of spices,
when I hear a rugby commentator
screaming from the top of his lungs
on television, I am home.

The peace and security I feel
within my home makes me happy.
The association I have with my family
is very strong. At first, I thought it could
never be broken. But one day, all these
happy thoughts came crumbling
down like a shattered glass window

when one of my most beloved
uncle's life was taken away from me.
He suffered from cancer
for a very long time. His strength
and willpower to surge on, even
with his condition, encouraged me
–inspired me to think,
"No matter what happens in life,
be happy and make the most of it"

When my beloved uncle passed away,
the thought of living didn't matter
to me anymore. But I had a dream.
A dream that I would reunite
with my uncle and mend
all the broken pieces together again.

That thought is pushing me everyday,
and I hope that my dream can become
a reality.

CHLOE S.Z

It's the sweet aroma of scented candles
wafting out of the store.
It's the strong, awakening smell of hot
coffee in the morning.
It's the exciting sound of my favourite song
playing on the radio.
It's the warm, hearty taste of my mother's
pasta, even on the next day, wherever
I may be, as leftovers.
It's the love I see between other lovers,
families that love so strong.
I swear I can feel it too.
That's what home is.
That's' what home is to me.

TIMOTHY A.

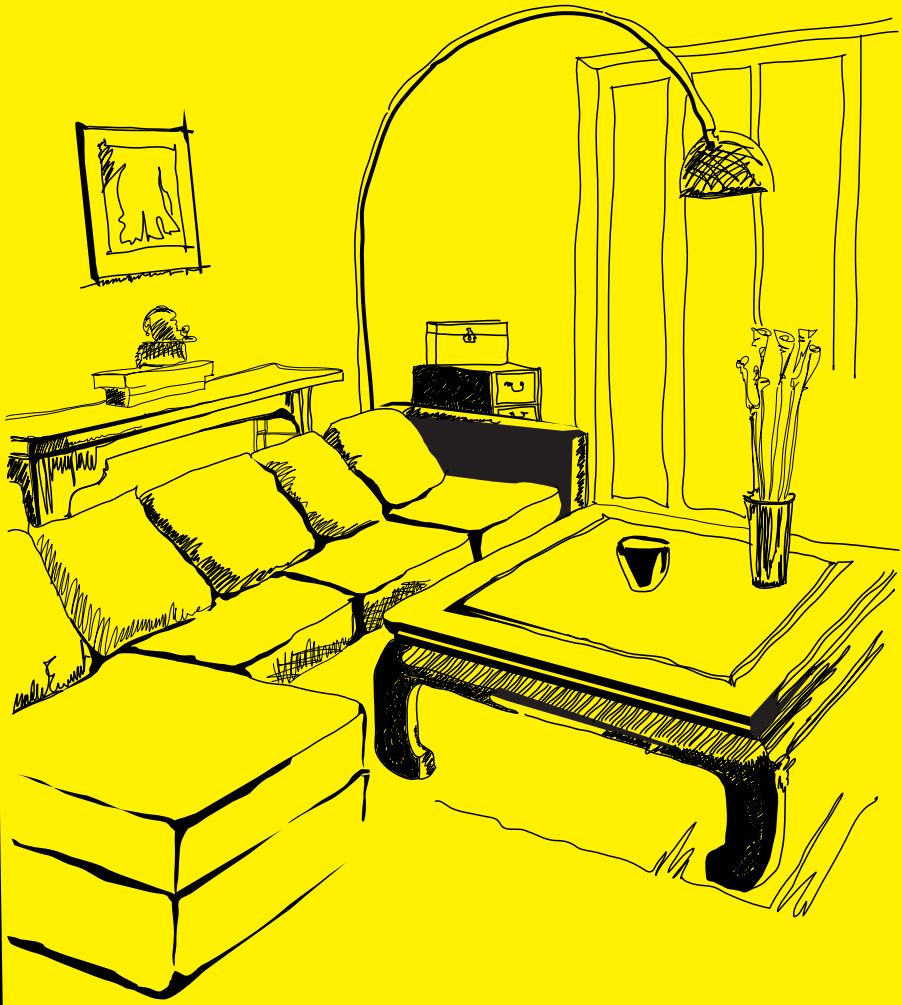
'HOME'

To be loved, to be cared for
by your parents, family and friends
is the best feeling in the world.
Although in life, there may be
numerous ups and downs,
don't be afraid. Get back up
and give it your best shot.

Love is wet clay,
able to be moulded together
to form a masterpiece
that will hold together
forever, or a structure of disaster
that will fall apart piece by piece,
from the elderly to the young,
we all need to be loved and
to feel a sense of belonging.

This can only be found
in one place. Home.
We cannot see what is hidden
within, but we can tell how it looks
inside by the flowers blossoming outside.
This all began from its roots, which keep it
standing strong and steady, ready
for whatever life throws at it.

LIVING ROOM



ALEX M.

The entrance and exit
of my dreams and ambitions,
where I can freely channel my emotions,
no conditions
where I face daily hardships ahead,
where I think about what has happened,
and all that I've said
within its four walls,
I am protected from all.
Whether it be a physical or mental assault,
our footsteps inside, slowly thudding around
creates a rhythm of a heart. Yes,
that is the sound. The affection inside
is powerful, like a lion's roar.
It uplifts and shaped us. On the wind
we will soar.

We have low times, still our love
spreads afar, like our house is the moon
and our love is the star. Seeing and being
with all my closest family and friends.
There's a saying, "There's too much
of a good thing", but I hope this never ends.

SHANNON K.

I know I'm not home when
my room is small and compact
or when my walls are cracked

My TV cuts out for no apparent reason,
while the whole village
think I've caused treason.

I'm not home when I feel unsafe
and scared and feel that nobody
has ever cared. I need to leave
this awful place leave nothing
behind, not even a trace.

USMAN Z.

I know I'm not home when
I'm not being creative
it's when I'm not among my
heroes, my friends
the comforting smell from the
dampened floor,
the familiar sounds of my
favourite tunes

I know I'm not home when
I sing out loud,
where the TV doesn't have
a voice louder than mine, hoping
someday I could act like them
and don't have to dream
in the day again.

PAUL C.

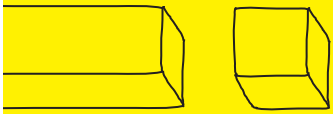
As a thimble of light radiates
through the window,
a new day begins.

Wipe the tiny droplets
of sleep from your eyes,
push back the warmth of
the night's sleep.
Crawl out of bed, pull on
your cold, stiff clothes.
A new day begins.

Check your schedule. Busy
yourself with chores, kids,
partner, shopping – meal time.

Tick tock. Tick tock; time
goes by. So much to do before
the thimble returns with darkness.

MICHELLE K.



Memories bring back
the broken past,
being raised by my father
with no recollection of my mother,
sleepless nights,
hearing about past fights,
yet still with happiness in sight.

I'd always be alone
when I was at home.
Life was my kryptonite,
until I saw a hidden light,
a hidden hope,
a hidden sight.

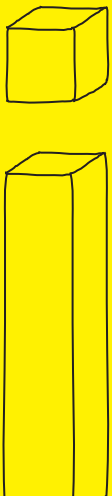
Things were getting better;
I was making friends.
At this time I realised
everything has its end.
Sometimes I'm happy,
sometimes I'm sad.
But I've learnt
through existence, I'll always
be glad. I've learned that
my family is my home –
they're all I have.
They're the heart to my existence
and the only heart I'll ever have.

KAVISHA S.

I woke up that morning
to the sound of loud sobs,
walking out to see my sister on the floor,
crying, my mum all flowing tears,
pouring. Immediately I knew.
I screamed, sliding down the wall
next to my sister and hugged her
in my arms.

He was closer to me than my own father,
the most important man in my life,
now gone.
Just like that.

He used to tell me he couldn't
wait for me to become an actress,
that he knew I would make it.
That he would be the one
to give me away on my wedding day.
Only him, no one else.
I remember always sitting
in his lap, laughing as he made jokes
that were never worth laughing at,
I never cried when I was told.
I sat quietly, because I didn't believe
what I had heard. Then it hit me.
I broke. I snapped. I screamed.
I would never sit on his lap again,
never see his face again, never
hug him again. I had lost my uncle.
My hero.



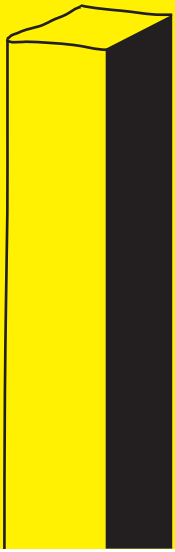
ANKANKSHA T.

Stepping off the plane,
entering my second home
filled with fresh memories
of my cousin. I'm surrounded
by a happy dome.

I look forward to when
I might see him next,
as the phone goes
ring ring ring
interrupting my text.

My dad whispers
to my uncle on the other
line, as we sit quietly,
he reassures us
that everything is fine.

But fine is the complete
opposite of what he said.
As my cousin had drowned,
we began to drown in tears.



YVETTE P.

I had two grandmothers
One thin, one fat
One tall, one short.
They both spoke
their own languages,
but not each other's.

Nanna loved footy
"Go the Bulldogs!"
Nene loved Wheel of Fortune
"I'd like to buy a vowel!"
They both liked games and sport,
but I never, ever saw them
wear sneakers.

Nanna liked pink floral dresses.
Nene wore black.
Nanna smelled like April violets
Nene smelled like olive oil
and lemon juice.

Saturday mornings in bed,
sugary cups of tea
re-runs of Fat Albert.
Those Saturday mornings with
each grandmother we the same,
but different.

Me? I like wearing pink florals
and black. I like tennis and game shows.
I am somewhere between thin and fat;
I am perfectly medium height.
I am both of them at once.

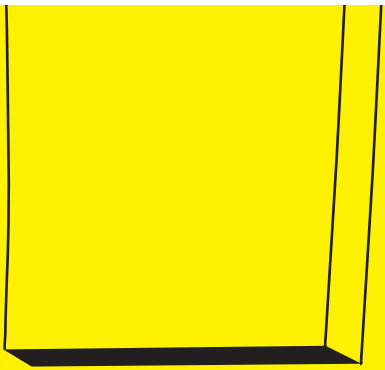
JILL B.

It is a cold day.
Dad's asleep, mum's at work;
we're grounded... for the week.
Maybe we didn't do our chores,
maybe we were too noisy.
We were stuck inside for a week.
We pulled out the craft box, full
of art supplies that hadn't
been used. We got lost
in our imaginations. We crafted
together sock puppets and stage sets.
This looks like it's as good as it gets.

We grabbed the video camera,
full of old home videos. We set up
a scene and recorded our
sock puppets. We did it
all in silence, fearing another
week of being grounded.

We held in our giggles, as we made
our sock puppets dance,
we held in our screams
as we made them turn evil.
Our week of grounding
became something fun.
We created a world,
all in silence. We got lost
in our own imagination.
Before we knew it,
the grounding was done.

The next week came.
We ended up begging mum
to ground us again.



MADELINE P.

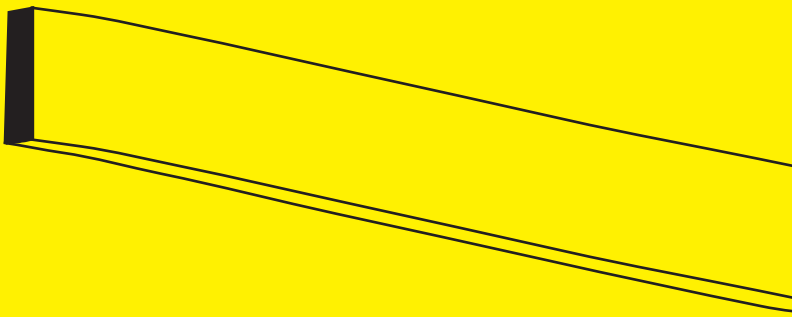
A normal winter night, sitting around that large wooden dinner table with my family. My parents, siblings, and grandparents come around to enjoy the meal.

We await the amazing roast, sizzling in the oven, dozens of smells waft into our nostrils. Baked potatoes, lamb, carrots, even the beans smell delicious. We know our family dinner is on its way.

Laughing, chatting, bickering around the table of each other's interesting days, enjoying our usual Sunday feast.

A normal winter night, sitting
in our huge, open lounge room,
we watch our favourite TV shows.
Getting comfortable in front
of the heater, running
to get the best spot is how
the night goes.

A normal winter night, Sunday,
spent together; no work, no school,
no homework. The perfect lazy day.
Sitting together on that big, comfy
lounge I am reminded that the floors
and walls make a house, but
family makes a home.




KITCHEN

TIM A.K

My home
ssssssssssss
The sound of sizzling oil in a frypan.
It's a lottery – you feel
like a winner straight away. You know
what's coming. A nice piece of a half-cooked
egg, along with 2 rashes of sizzling bacon
sitting on a beautiful piece of toast.

Home.
What's better than eating your favourite meal
with people who truly love you?
Fun and laughter too, being at home
makes you excited and happy.
It's like having goosebumps from
something good, or simply the good
smell of food. Can you hear it?
Can you smell it? That's my home!

CASSANDRA

A house becomes a home
for many reasons: lush green trees
line the streets and my family with me.
Opening the door to the sweet warmth
of cookies almost ready to eat.
I take a bite and feel the chocolate
melting on my tongue, to remind me
I am finally home.

I hear the lawn mower rumbling outside,
smell the earthy, freshly cut grass.
Kids out playing in the street with
infectious laughter.

It's almost time for dinner.
I smell a roast that's ready to eat.
Delicious roast lamb with gravy.
With a warm and satisfied belly,
off to bed I head. Snuggled in my
favourite pajamas, I slide into my bed.
It feels the same as I remember:
cozy, safe and warm.

Sam D.

Home is a private palace
where the heart belongs.
Spices and onion crackle
and fizzle in a hot pot.

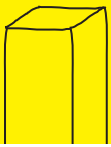
A steaming hot, freshly cooked
roast lamb straight out of the oven
with a hint of rosemary. Annoying
neighbours cutting their grass
at 7am on a Sunday morning.
Howling winds, chirping birds
colourful flowers smiling at me,
the sun shining bright like a
diamond kissing my skin.

TETSUYA B.

First you need land.
Some bricks and cement
steel, copper and rooves –
can't forget the tradies!
But now it's time to get
to the heart and soul,
like they say, home is where
the heart is.

Add truckloads of love
and a sprinkle of sadness,
just so it's enough. Throw
in a cup of light and a wisp
of dark, but not too much
detail so you can make your
mark.

Throw in some quiet and add
a splash of laughter. Now it's all
up to you. Make of it what you will,
so you can live happily ever after.



BIANCA K.

Gather all your patience.
This recipe may take a while
to perfect. You will need 3 family
members to dissect;

freshly pick them from your garden,
wash them up to make them clean.
Your pan will heat up with a dash
of anger–let this simmer for a while.

Add some calm, one clove
at a time; this will get rid of the spicy
anger. No family home is complete
without a pile of bad dad jokes.
Once those are added and stirred,
your lifetime of laughter will fall
into the pan. Complete this dish with
a beam of sunlight to enjoy life
while it's hot.

HELENA N.

What a good home needs
is your undivided attention.
A sprinkle of selflessness and
happiness;
a mountain full of generosity;
throw in the laughter and joy
but don't forget to add motivation
and inspiration. Mix it all up together
and you got a good home.

ALEX M.

A small drop of peace to get this recipe going,
countered by droplets of tears which will soon
be flowing, with a galaxy of warmth and
fulfillment ahead, it makes sense there
will be whispers of sadness and dread.
A crescent of your deepest and darkest fears,
a lifetime of happiness that will last you for years.
Mix it, bake it, cut one massive slice.
Made fresh to order, this is my life.

CHLOE S.Z

Firstly and most importantly,
take family and add them right
into the mix with a truckload of
love. Throw in a lifetime of dreams
and hopes; stir it all into a whirlpool
of emotions.

Add in a load of the loudest laughter
imaginable, an ocean of endless fun
along with a hint of late night movies,
chocolate, hugs and fluffy marshmallow
socks. Be sure

not to forget the avalanche of tears,
disappointment and failure –
but also the bundle of excitement,
forgiveness and success.

KAVISHA S.

Have ingredients laid out
on the kitchen table.
A large bowl should be
placed out in front of you.

Begin with adding bitter
ingredients first.
A sprinkled of hatred
stirred in with a handful
of anger, and two cups
of loud yelling.

Now with the sweet.
Chuck in a sea of laughter,
a tablespoon of kindness;
beat in a cup of warmth,
with a carton of tight hugs.

Finish it off with a truckload
of tears, best with both
tears of happiness and
sadness. Then sew with
a lifetime of love and
a pinch of never-ending
happiness.

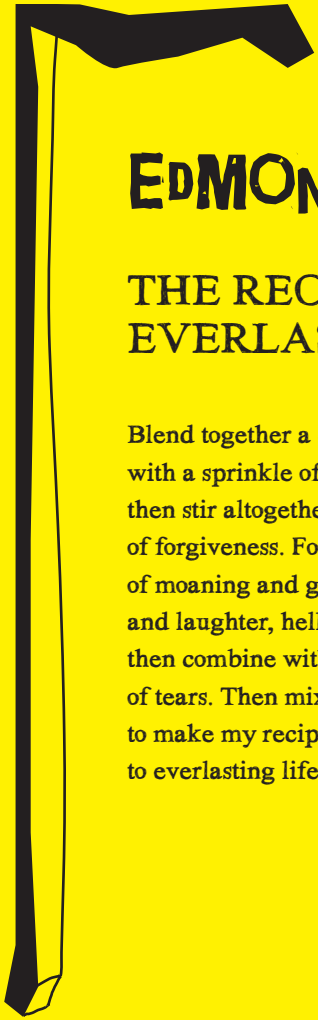
JASMINE S.

THE BEST KIND OF FOOD

Get out the bowl, pour
two handfuls of consideration;
stir with 3 cups of love
add a pocketful of laughter
to the mixture on the bench
-top, beside the bowl stands
a pinch of aggravation, sadness
and anger. Throw it away –
it doesn't taste good.

Apply a cup of pastry to
the tray that has within it
a carton of care, serenity
and devotion. The pastries
have been in the oven long
enough. Once hardened, pour
in the first mixture, adding a
pinch of forgiveness.

In the oven it goes again.
It's finished.
Eat while hot.



EDMOND A.K

THE RECIPE TO EVERLASTING LIFE

Blend together a drop of happiness
with a sprinkle of love;
then stir altogether with a pinch
of forgiveness. Fold in a lifetime
of moaning and groaning, anger
and laughter, hellos & goodbyes
then combine with a teaspoon
of tears. Then mix altogether
to make my recipe, the recipe
to everlasting life.

BEDROOM

CANDY ROYALLE.

HOME IS...

Lying beneath blankets
breath bouncing back at me
the cadence of the ocean
lulling
along with the patterned
        inhale
        exhale
of the dog at the foot of the bed
seeking warmth from my feet
and I from her body

Darkness sits
light is lurking
morning stirring
I am almost awake
eyes closed
chasing sleep through
lucid dreams

Home is this doona
pulled up past my nose
my warm breath
        inhale
        exhale
a drawing of strength
for whatever comes next
...

KOMAL M.

As I saw the dusk setting in at night
and heard the steaming kettles
at the speed of light, my red, fluffy
socks, so deeply missed
as I fell asleep in the warmth of my
bedsheet.

As I tossed and turned, I heard
a sound, a sound so familiar it made
me pounce. It was the ringing of an alarm
which made me remember it wasn't too long
when we all were together.

Now it's just the memories
that remind me of home,
as I lay alone in a world
so unknown.

MICHELLE K.

When I see chalk,
it brings me back to the days
when I'd be drawing on the big,
brown, brick walls, amazed
by the art I had just created.

When freedom meant imagination,
meant there was no devastation
'cus the world was blocked out.
And all I knew was all,
but about the world ahead of me.

When I see the colour blue,
there's a reminder of my home.
The old cracked wall, the lines
drawn to check how tall we'd grown

– but now those lines are untraceable
because we've grown too much,
with no remainder of the old home
only memories to clutch.

SAMANTHA D.

I lay in bed
on my back,
gazing up at the roof.
Rays of sunlight shine brightly
through my purple laced curtains.
I get out of bed, wear my dressing
gown, head downstairs.

I walk through the hallway,
heading towards the kitchen.
All the memories hang
on the wall. A tear rolls down
my cheek as I stare at the photos.
I miss my older brother. I wish
he was still here. We did a lot together.
Just remember that everything in life
happens for a reason. It can
either make or break your day.
If it breaks your day, hold on.
You'll get through it,
I promise.

WINDOWS

SAM I.

A home purchase at 19. I was
too young to understand this adventure,
but excited to own real estate. My friends
out partying, drinking and wearing
cool clothes. Sitting here at home,
watching DVDs, eating popcorn
under my parents' roof whilst having
little money to join friends.

Years have passed, my mortgage reducing.
A second job in a club. I ask myself,
Why should I miss out partying?
I start making friends, enjoying
the loud music, dancing and pouring
drinks whilst I stand here,
behind the bar, earning money.

More years have passed;
my emotional attachment now
comes alive. I can see my house
and finally reside in it. I move in,
all alone, no one to cook, clean,
wash or talk to me!

Now I'm excited, the realization:
my own home, my own money,
my own life, my own decisions
and my own responsibilities.

Furniture shopping, picking
my own lounge, my own
double bed, my own dining
table and chairs. Shopping for food.
Walking through isles, lost, pushing
an empty shopping trolley.
What do I buy, how do I cook,
what should I use to clean?

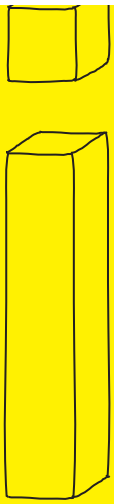
Years have passed. A long day
at work, cooking chicken stir fry
for dinner. The kitchen table
and chairs are occupied by my
husband. The washing machine
is on with a full load and the TV
is blaring in the background.

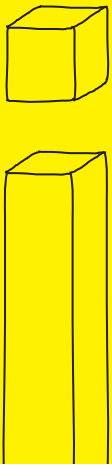
My mortgage still reducing,
discussions start about a bigger
home, bigger mortgage, a new
location, and a brand new
adventure ahead.

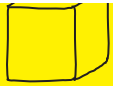
JASMINE S.

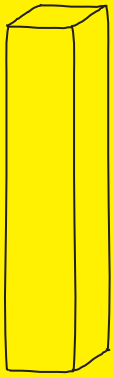
Warm and cozy,
full of love and internal serenity
nothing could shake the beauty
of it all, except for one person
who corrupted my mother
someone with no compassion,
no regard for the feelings
or wellbeing of others.

The years where I am
supposed to grow, branch out
and live – I can't.
Motionless in a stream
of constant worry, this once
Garden of Eden.
Now an inferno of confusion
and resentment. I know
I can break free, only if
I deny the ones who mean the most
to me, leave them in an abyss
of fear, where they will waste away,
having fallen too deep
for me to catch them,
too far for me to hear them weep.
They're out of my reach and I
can't save them. So I can never leave
this once Garden of Eden.









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'Finding Home' is indebted to all the students and mentors who opened the doors and windows of their hearts to share stories of home. The creation of this collection was made possible by the imaginations and generosity of ABCN and Genworth. Deserving of special thanks are Caroline Dodson, Samantha Luck and Becky Robertson for their coordination of the workshops and to Lyn Stroud and all the Genworth mentors for hosting the workshops, supporting students and the production of the publication. Leumeah High School Principal Paul Zielinski and English teacher Yvette Poshoglian are also to be thanked for encouraging this creative opportunity and taking care of the students on each trip to the city. The Red Room Company for their workshop facilitation and finally, poet Candy Royalle for climbing both physical and metaphoric mountains to inspire students and mentors to share their experiences of home.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.

The Australian Business and Community Network (ABCN) is a not-for-profit organisation that partners schools with business through the development and delivery of structured mentoring programs for students. A coalition of 35 member companies, it is led by an experienced body of CEOs from well-recognised organisations, who represent a breadth of industries. Visit www.abcn.com.au

Genworth is a leading provider of Lenders Mortgage Insurance and credit enhancement product solutions in Australia. Working closely with our partners, our aim is to make homeownership more accessible to borrowers through the provision of Lenders Mortgage Insurance solutions. Reach Out, Give Back and Have Fun is the motto that Genworth employees embrace as together with our partner organisations we are helping to bring the meaning of home to life for all, including disadvantaged and/or disabled individuals. Visit www.genworth.com.au

THE RED ROOM COMPANY

POETRY IN UNUSUAL AND USEFUL WAYS

The Red Room Company is a not-for-profit arts organisation that creates unusual and useful poetry projects to transform expectations of, and experiences with, poetry. Our education program inspires students and teachers to create, perform and publish poetry. We aspire to make poetry accessible to all, especially those who face the greatest barriers to creative opportunities.
Visit www.redroomcompany.org

LEUMEAH HIGH

STRIVE TO SUCCEED

Leumeah High School is a comprehensive, co-educational high school that ensures a quality education for all students. Our school provides a happy, supportive and safe environment where all students are encouraged to strive to succeed. The diverse academic program is enhanced by artistic, cultural and sporting opportunities. We are very proud of our caring environment where every student achieves.

NOTES FROM GENWORTH MENTORS.

I felt privileged to be part of the 'Finding Home' program. The program technique is well designed and makes writing a poem a lot of fun. A very authentic and humbling experience for me.

Exploring my creative side with my work colleagues and the students from Leumeah High was a fantastic experience for me. I could almost feel my mind opening as I strived to describe my feelings about home. I was struck by the honesty and power of the stories told by all in our group.

I knew nothing about poetry when I first joined. This safe theme brought so many emotions into the room: laughter, happiness and tears. It was such an amazing experience working alongside such enthusiastic, talented and positive young students – I thoroughly loved this program and would do it all over again in a heartbeat!!

This collaboration of storytelling has opened up a whole new "Home" and everyone is "Welcome" to share it with family & friends.

Home is so many things...where I live, where I come from, who I live with, past and present, triggering every sense...Poetry and Storytelling provided a compelling place for us all to share our journeys.

Home is serenity. It is the sound of laughter and tears. It is a place full of love. Home is where you can always find yourself

— KAVISHA

Home is a zoo, every family member in their own habitat rushing about, doing their own thing

— JILL

Home is like a garden

— USMAN

Home is a sacred temple. It acts as a shell, a place of peace and takes my mind away from problems that I face each day

— EDMOND

Home is a chair, the people keep it warm and it's comfortable and provides support

— JASMINE

Home is the air that I breathe and those who share it. Home is a long time ago

— MATT

Home is a calm harbour protected from rough seas

— VICKI