



4-21-2016

# Home

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## Recommended Citation

Hart, Madison V. (2016) "Home," *Cedarville Review*: Vol. 16 , Article 5.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/cedarvillereview/vol16/iss1/5>

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## About the Contributor (Optional)

Madison Victoria Hart is in her fourth year studying Theatre Performance at Cedarville University. She aspires to bring vitality to the stage, hope to fellow humans, and worship to Yahweh.

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# HOME

*BY MADISON HART*

Home is not an eloquent language.

Doesn't speak in complete sentences

Or always refrain from

(Home is far too real for that.)

interrupting.

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Home speaks my life in stanzas like strands of Russian dolls.

Different faces and shapes and versions of myself stack between the walls, consonants and vowels filling the spaces where home first conversed with me.

Its alphabet finds architectural shape in wooden beams that my mom would have always loved to paint a different color, in new carpet that we bought after our dog died, in doorless frames that resist the tendency to close off between kitchen and dining room and living room because living life together means sharing it.

Home sounds like muffled conversation from the other side of my parents' bedroom door at night, like a verbal reminder to be safe as the screen door swings haphazardly closed behind us, like laughter reverberating through lips and souls as we catch snatches of why it's good to be alive, like cries finally freed after the strain of being tucked behind social smiles, of silences that we don't feel pressured at all to fill.

Home punctuates in French doors, staircases, and picture frames; in ceiling fans, antique cabinets, and window panes.

Yet more clearly than home's structure of sound rings its resonance—what home says, the heart of what home communicates.

And that is safety. That is release.

That is faces first thing in the morning and words last encountered before falling sleep.

That is compassion. That is care.

That is the quiet of eternity unfolding and the subtlety of moments in between and unaware.

That is challenge. That is probing.

That is the questions I don't want to be asked and the grace to wade through the risk of not knowing.

That is empathy. That is togetherness.

That is the relief of an embrace worn by memories and the life emboldened with the confidence

That no matter who rejects or disregards or diminishes me,

Here is a place of people who have seen the best and worst in me

And yet they remain.

In the pregnant void of sentences unsaid, I sense the sound of their steadiness.

The same love that birthed me sees the worth in me—and helps me see it when I can't.

For the words of home lead me to know not only who I'm not but also who I am—

I am Brave.

I am Kind.

I am made in the image of the Divine.

And I am loved.

This is the language the walls of home have opened wide to breathe.

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And I am home now megaphoned,

Carrying this language into every other word I will ever learn to speak.