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Hard to Define Home

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About the Contributor (Optional)

Amber Young is a senior integrated language arts major. An attention-grubbing middle child, Amber writes because she always has more to say than anyone wants to hear.

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Hard To Define Home Amber Young

It is hard to define home
without being away from it.
I would have guessed it all wrong.
Thought I'd miss my bed, my car, my cell phone.
But it is the shape of the driveway
familiar feel of uneven bricks tilting
under the arch of my foot,
under the calloused parts and the toes.

Or going through the mulch,
chunky pieces stuck for a temporary ride
till tree roots gently scrape them loose.
The imperfect grass, not totally soft,
not totally safe from doggie mines.

The single step down into the road.
Moment of compounded suspense:
reaching into the mailbox,
my hand and arm a postal spatula
scraping the remains of advertisements,
personal notes, and missing children cards
from the deep back and sides of the white metal box.
To turn and see my home. Then-
Fingers on the handle of the door.
I didn't realize walking on a back street in small town Ohio
could bring on a rush of past and present so exactly or so
instantly.

Hard to Define Home

My life never flashes before my eyes
in times of danger or dismay, but always
when I am somewhere I have been before.
When this foot that I have traveled on for two decades
touches crunchy leaves and kicks up the smell of sweet sawdust-
so that I remember a gazillion other times I've touched and smelled.

How many autumns did we jump from the gray branches
Soaring on renewed faith, wishing, really wanting
the pile of leaves to be thick enough this time.
Same hard fall.
And after work, and warm armpits,
and maybe some blisters on our hands,
rough wood rubbing tender palms,
to blow our noses and always find the dark snot-
dependable black and brown of leaf particles suspended in goo.
Now I sniffle clear transparency.
Aiming to hold back from any late night emotional exhibits.
But wishing, really wanting
to see you, and rake with you and feel
the roots under my feet.