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# Two Worlds

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# Two Worlds

**BLAIR GULINELLO**

Blair is a double Special Education and Psychology major. After graduation she plans on working with severely autistic children. She wrote this piece in English 101 for Prof. Jane Rando's and presented her paper at the 2007 midyear symposium.

**A** musty smell fills the air, as the light shines through the tiny windows. The cement floor lined with dirt as the creases in the cement form a straight line from one side of the basement to the other. The atmosphere is silent, which everyone can appreciate if only for a few seconds. The lighting is dim but is just enough when you want a place to sit and think.

This basement to some people is just a place in which boxes sit and dust collects yet to me this place has memories, and is my quiet zone. Within each box is my family history. Each item served in my past. It's a comfort zone you can say. The tiniest collectable is a part of who I am, and if you were to take just one item, I could tell you a story.

My favorite part of this place is seeing the old pictures that lay in a dirty old box next to the water heater. This box has water stains on the sides, and dust balls that make you sneeze when opened. These stains are a symbol of the wear and tear my family has endured. The pictures could sum up my life, positive and negative if I had the time to tell you every aspect of what each picture signified. There's this one picture of my great grandfather and me. I couldn't off been more than three months old, but to me, it's who I am, and it is the stories that my grandma would tell as we sat on the cold cement floor of this little man that meant the world to her. Her humble voice and hand gestures made these stories come to life. His humor much like mine, could always keep a crowd laughing. His content manner always mellowed his wife, and his bright blue eyes and big smile always made you feel warm inside. "He was a man of few words, just like your father, but his impact could silence a crowd, with just the sound of his voice", she would always say. I could sit there for hours, collecting dirt much like the boxes, and not think anything of it.

In the corner of the basement right next to the door that leads to the back yard lies a tupperware bin, full of records. Adjacent to the bin neatly placed is the record player. This ancient form of technology is very familiar to me. My mother still loves to listen to all her records. She has Bonnie Raitt, The Temptations, Bruce Springsteen, Linda Lewis and Diana Ross playing. Even today. I can still sing every one of those songs by heart. Her taste in music has influenced mine greatly. Every now and then I have the urge just to jam to the record player. So I make my way down the shaky old wooden stairs and kneel down and set the record player up, and place a record on and just sing my heart out to songs such as; *She's The One*, *Rock and Roller Coaster*, *Love Hangover*, and *I'm On Fire*. This is my time, and I love it.

Across from the record player in a messy pile, sits all our pool supplies. In no particular order are the tubes, plastic chairs, pool toys, chemicals to clean the pool, and cleaning net. When looking at them I get a bubbly sensation. In early may we start opening our pool. The water fights we have as we hose down the chairs and contests we have with the tubes. Racing each other to see who can blow up the float first and the gratification of knowing you beat your opponent. The rule is whoever wins gets to be the first person to jump in the pool when it's finally set and opened. The anticipation makes your heart race, as the excitement builds up inside. Finally when we get to go for the first swim of the season, it's a rush. The freezing water against your body sends chills up your spine. Lips turn blue as goose bumps cover your body. Finally when your body is ice cold, the opening of the pool is official and it's been a success.

To the left of the staircase is a box labeled movies. Every Disney movie imaginable is within this box. *Bambi*, *Cinderella*, *Pocahontas*, *Dumbo*, *Peter Pan*, *Lady And The Tramp*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Chicken Little* and *Tarzan* are just a small list compared to what I own. These movies bring me back to my youth. The dress clothes I would wear to be a particular character, the cheap plastic rings that took up half my hand to make believe I was the queen, or the white glass slippers I just had to have to be Cinderella. When seeing them today I can still remember how excited I would get to dress up and be able to watch the movie in my dress clothes, it made me feel important. This was a huge part of my life; it taught me how to dream and gave me goals. Even though they were the silly goals such as wanting to be a princess, it taught me that I could be anyone I wanted.

Items are not all that makes this place significant to me. Rather the games that were played, the memories that were made underneath the pretend forts which were constructed with old blankets and chairs. The battles conquered within these walls. The countless hours spent running back and forth on the dirty floor, to duck from my enemies powerful arrows. Or when my

friends and I would play hide and seek I always would maneuver my way into the smallest space in the basement. As I became acquainted with the daddy long legs that I would usually push out of their homes. The dirt stained on my hands as my heart would race with excitement of being found; which I knew they never would because by six years old I was the best hider in my neighborhood.

By eight years old I knew I wanted to be a teacher. With that I created my own imaginary class room. I would spend most of my day just playing school in this place that most children believed monsters lived. The thrill I would get when I was teaching a lesson or giving out an assignment. The dress clothes I would put on and my mother's high heels that were twice the size of my feet. Yet, I just had to look the role of the teacher; it was what I thrived for. I wanted to change people's lives; I felt invincible. As I grew older I begged my nana to play school with me, I would give her work and she was to do it.

I outgrew the basement slowly. I went down less and less. Yet, this place is very much alive to me still. I still get the butterflies thinking of the times when I was the teacher or the racing heart when I was dodging arrows. The boxes still lie in the same places as they did years ago. Nothing has changed I just grew up. I still am that little girl that lived in her basement, the one who will become a teacher one day. Yet this time, my favorite place will be my classroom. The dodging arrows will be the hardships I will have overcome; the dirty stained box will be me one day. I will have come through life and have my own family pictures in a dirty old box where my children will play.