

who am i?



Tiffany Zhang

*who am i?*

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*to everyone who has made  
an impact in my life, they  
make me who i am.*

## Preface

Something that went into to making of my book was plenty of hours sitting in front of the computer and some thoughtful walks home. I chose to write about home because it was definitely a topic many people in this class are writing about, and even if they it was, it was no where similar to what I was talking about. The layout of this book was kind of simple because there was a lot of content to go into it, but I made it match my website, which was black, white, and grey, but used red to put some color in. I continue to use the typewriter font to give a sense of the past. And also, for my website I used a lot of photos I had taken last semester in photography class, but this time I decided to go digital and did a lot of work on Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator to show some things that are more special, for example, in my memoir, I used things that represent Ingleside.

I think the most challenging part of this project was just the writing. The memoir was a bit of a challenge for me, and poetry was never

really something I was really good at. I can not exactly say anything went well, but I think the part that went the smoothest for me is the work I did in Adobe InDesign, and the work I was doing on the other Adobe programs.

The purpose of my memoir was to let my peers learn more about me and what kind of changes have happened to me in the past and how that makes me who I am. As I was constructing my book, I had a chance to think back about some things that have really changed me. I also got to learn more about using InDesign, which will definitely help me in the future.

# Contents

chapter 1 memoir . . . . .	p. 7
chapter 2 about writing my chapter	p. 13
chapter 3 poems . . . . .	p. 17
chapter 4 personal philosophy . . .	p. 20
chapter 5 artist statement . . . . .	p. 23
about the author . . . . .	p. 26
acknowledgements . . . . .	p. 27

# *chapter 1*

## Home.

Being at home can feel like being stuck in a jail cell sometimes, but sometimes it is **my most favorite place in the world**. A home should be a shelter where you feel safe. A place where you feel it is all right to be yourself. It may take some time, but eventually you realize it. I recently realized you could discover and learn a lot of things being at home; being at home can be a learning opportunity also.

The reason I say being at home is like being in jail sometimes is because like most first generation Asian-Americans, specifically an ABC (American born Chinese), **my parents are pretty strict** about things, they are afraid

that I am going to get myself in trouble, but sometimes it's just for my safety, knowing a little about our neighborhood. They know that I always want to go out and hang out with my friends at the mall and such, but then again my friends' parents have plenty of money, they do not work as hard as my parents do, and sometimes I feel kind of responsible for that, they are working hard so that my siblings and I can be happy, and **grow up in a better environment than them.**

Home is a place where you should feel safe; home is also a memory that can last forever. Good or bad. Lots of things happen at home everyday, sometimes they may seem like something little, but they can become a memory that can last forever. Getting into fights with my brother and sister, parties, family and friends coming over, the pets we have had, the list is never ending, and all the things that happen are things that **may become greatly missed when we grow up**, so I plan on cherishing it.

Sometimes when I hear about how it is at other peoples' houses, and when someone tells me that they would want to live at my house, **it makes me feel fortunate.** Fortunate that unlike many others, there is always plenty of

food for me to eat, and that my family actually cares about what I think and do. They influence me a lot; they are one of the reasons I think and act this way.

My family is always a host, we are always hosting people at our house, and we always have so many people over without even noticing. It was not a surprise when my cousins wanted to stay over at my house for an entire week; it's basically like a second home to them. It doesn't feel like a holiday or birthday unless **the noise**



**level is high** and the **same with number of people** in our house. The little kids are always doing their own thing **around the house**, and the adults **hanging around the mahjong table** or socializing in the living. This has become a large part of my lifestyle now, my parents' friends are always over on the weekends and there are always tons of people in the house on

holidays. It makes me wonder if it will continue to be like this in just a couple of years. **What will happen when we're all grown up?** What will those little kids do big kid things? Will they even come over? Will the adults finally quit mahjong? **Well I'll find out when it happens.**

Sometimes being at home does not just mean the house you live in; it can also mean school, San Francisco, or maybe the Bay Area. There are so many places you can call home, but the place I call home is San Francisco. Just **being San Franciscan is like a whole other culture**; I was born in San Francisco. San Francisco is my home. Most of my friends live in San Francisco, we grew up in San Francisco, there's no place we know better than our own hometown. And when you enter another city, you might feel like a guest, you are entering someone else's hometown.

My family has moved from four different houses before we finally moved to the one we are living in right now, and I was so young I don't even remember the first two. We rented, which meant these houses weren't really ours, there would not be enough room after a while, and the owners could also kick us out. But no matter how many times we moved, it was always between two districts, Sunset, and **the OMI (Oceanview/ Merced Heights/ Ingleside)**. These two places have

become one of the areas I know the best, and seven years ago, when we finally bought a house here in Ingleside, my entire family was so happy we finally had our own house.

Over the years, it has been like watching a house that started as a fixer-upper, it continuously is being remodeled and fixed up. When we moved to the house we are currently living in, I was only ten-years-old, but still went to school in the Sunset-Richmond area, and I had no idea about the history behind the area we just moved into. A few years later, when I was about thirteen years old, there was an **OMI History Day**, this was where a lot of people living in the OMI went to the Voice of the Pentecost to watch a documentary about the OMI and learn a little about this special neighborhood.



There were a lot of things to learn about through that documentary we watched. They interviewed a lot of the **residents who have lived in the neighborhood for a long time now** and watched everything transform. I had no idea this neigh-

borhood had such interesting history behind it! All these streets, and houses, and buildings that we always walked or drove by every single day, they all had so much behind them. It just immediately became a part of me; I was so interested in everything about the OMI. In my head, home went from one house, to an entire neighborhood because that one afternoon.

The one thing I think of, when I think of home now is Ocean Avenue. Like those residents who grew up or grew old in the OMI, I watched it be reborn. I watched what once was a dull and old street that had lost all its youth, be transformed to the way it is today. It is the one thing I remember the most, from when I was three until now.

I lived in this neighborhood 12 years ago. I still remember the red glowing sign of Walgreens and the yellow and blue Blockbusters across from the



Safeway. Years later, when I came back, the Safeway has become a Rite Aid, but that bright and red Walgreens is still glowing, then palm trees were planted, the lines on the streets were repainted, brighter street lights, and even the **K-Ingleside** came back to life!

A home is a place where someone lives, a home is place where a group of people lives together, a home is the place where someone was born or raised, a home is **a place where someone feels like he or she belongs.**

## chapter 2

### about writing my chapter



I had a lot of trouble writing my chapter and it did not go as smooth as I thought it would, I guess it takes some time to get back to exhibition mode, since our last exhibition was almost half a year ago. This exhibition snuck up on me a bit. At first I was just doing the work were assigned, the smaller assignments, but when I heard that our first exhibition was a book project, I was thinking, "Oh shoot! I better get

caught up!" we did a lot of brainstorming activities that lead up to our memoir writing, but my bad memory was definitely not helping me.

At first, I thought I wanted to write about influences on my inner self, but after about one and one quarter of the page through, I ran out of things to write about. I needed something even more recent or even bigger. I was walking home, and that was when the idea struck me, why not talk about something that means a lot to me, but I never really get a chance to talk or write about? My home. My neighborhood. My city. Forget everything I wrote before, I'm starting over.

Alright, so I admit, my memoir isn't exactly one of my best pieces of work, in fact I'm not even satisfied with it, but then again, it made me realize that there is one thing I don't talk about enough, even though it is something I am fortunate about, a place I love. So why not share a little about my experience growing up here, in such a special place. Three pages about something was a lot, but I challenged myself, because I don't talk about it enough, there would definitely be lots of things I want to share. It wasn't very hard to think about something to write about home because I definitely spend almost 20 hours in this neighborhood on a normal

day. I spend plenty of time walking in it. But one thing I noticed when I was trying to write this was the lack of imagination, my lack of details, it was sort of **hard to imagine**, lack of selection in vocabulary was not helping me either. I can't explode a moment because there was nothing I could make use to make it explode.

One thing I learned from doing this is that doing these kinds of projects, I have to keep up with all the work otherwise I'll have trouble later. I also learned that **focusing and concentrating** could help me bring out some thoughts and ideas, which I could use in the writing. I definitely did not do a very good job with the time we were given to work on it, but when I realized that, I immediately picked up the pace, I had to catch up. In the end, I guess I can say I somewhat caught up, but it still lacked a lot.

# *chapter 3*

## poems

### *i am*

I am the descendent of a powerful race.

I am a proud Asian-American.

I live to represent my people.

I want to show everyone what we can do.

I understand that I am still young,  
But I have a long future ahead of me.

I believe that I will be successful and  
achieve what I live for.

# yo soy

Yo soy la descendiente de una raza poderosa.

Yo soy una Asiática-Americana orgullosa.

Yo vivo para representar mi gente.

Yo quiero mostrar todos lo que podemos hacer.

Yo contendo que yo soy todavía joven,  
Pero yo tengo una futuro largo delante de mí.

Yo creo que yo voy a tener éxito y conseguir  
todo para lo que vivo.

# *where i'm from*

Where I'm from smells like pork chops, chow  
mein, and Pasta Roni.

Where I'm from tastes like the world in a stew.

Where I'm from looks like snowflakes,

Nothing is exactly the same.

Where I'm from sounds like birds chirping,

pens clicking,

and veggies being thrown into the wok.

Where I'm from feels like a rock,

There are multiple textures.

Where I'm from,

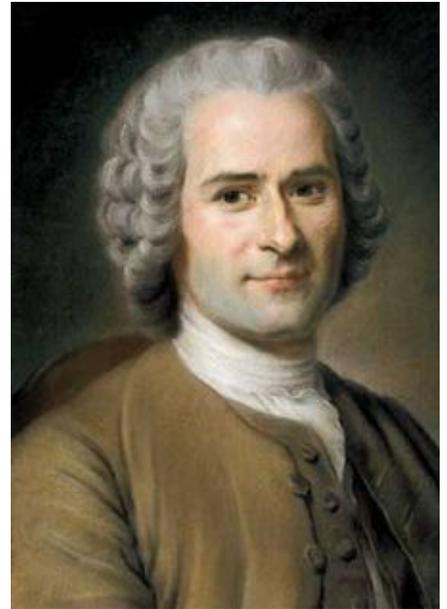
Differences is both hated and appreciated.

# *chapter 4*

## personal philosophy

### testimony speech

I am Jean-Jacques Rousseau; I was born in Geneva, Switzerland. My mother passed away when I was 13 and my father was a failed watchmaker, he was forced to leave Geneva to avoid imprisonment. I was virtually abandoned. I was forced to serve a man who brutally mistreated me, so to free myself from this, and to embark on an adventure, so I fled the Swiss capital at the age of 16, and traveled Europe. While I was traveling, I met some wealthy people, they were nice enough to take me in and provided me with an education in music and philosophy.



I believe that the best form of government is direct democracy. People are born good,

independent, and compassionate, in a society with no government or laws, people would naturally live happily and peacefully. Modern society I unfair there is too much inequality. The luxury, corruption, and greed of modern society harm the individual. We give too few people too much power over so many people, decisions should be made locally, small villages/ districts of people to do the decision making together, vote for vote, that way we will have a sense of freedom also.

I oppose with Thomas Hobbes' philosophy. We cannot give all the power to a king or queen; they do not represent each and every one of us and our ideas and opinions. Equality does not lead to competition, if we were free, and we would not need competition.

## testimony re fl ection

The views expressed in the above speech represent the perspective of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and not my own. I only agree with some parts of Rousseau's philosophy. Yes, we are all good, but not independent, we were all innocent until we face the society around us, that is when they go from happy and peaceful to corruption from things like greed. I also agree that in monarchy too few people have too much power, which is why in a democratic government, there is the checks and balances system, but they still do not know every person's perspectives on a situation.

# chapter 5

## artist statement

Good evening, my name is Tiffany Zhang, I am a 10<sup>th</sup> grader here at CAT, and like everybody else has been doing, I am going to talk about what was in my memoir.

**The title of my chapter is Home.** Through my chapter, I want to convey that home is a place to cherish, a place to remember. **Home is a place you learn to love, a place you learn to appreciate.**

I talked about the events about home that has changed me. Home not only in the sense of the house I live in, but the **neighborhood**, the district, the city, that I live in. The excerpt I am reading is about things around me as I am growing up that make an impact on me. I will be reading a part from the beginning of my memoir, and a part from the end of my memoir.

"Home is a place where you should feel safe; home is also a memory that can last forever. Good or bad. Lots of things happen at home everyday, sometimes they may seem like something little, but they can become a memory that can last forever. Getting into fights with my brother and sister, parties, family and friends coming over, the pets we have had, the list is never ending, and all the things that happen are things that may become greatly missed when we grow up, so **I plan on cherishing it**. Home can be a place of surprises and disappointment."

When we moved to the house we are currently living in, I was only ten-years-old, but still went to school in the Sunset-Richmond area, and I had no idea about the history behind the area we just moved into. A few years later, when I was about thirteen years old, there was an **OMI History Day**, this was where a lot of people living in the OMI (Oceanview/ Merced Heights/ Ingleside) went to the Voice of the Pentecost to watch a documentary about the OMI and learn a little about this special neighborhood.

"There were a lot of things to learn about through that documentary we watched. They interviewed a lot of the residents who have lived in the neighborhood for a long time now and **watched everything transform**. I had no idea this neighborhood had such interesting history behind it! All these streets, and houses, and buildings that we always walked or drove by every single day, they all had so much behind them. It just immediately became a part of me; I was so interested in everything about the OMI. In my head,

home went from one house, to an entire neighborhood because that one afternoon."

"Who Am I?" is this exhibition's theme, so in Spanish class we wrote a poem called "Yo Soy" or "I Am" to go along with it, and this is my poem.

Yo soy la descendiente de una raza poderosa.

Yo soy una Asiática-Americana orgullosa.

Yo vivo para representar mi gente.

Yo quiero mostrar todos lo que podemos hacer.

Yo contendo que yo soy todavía jóven,

Pero yo tengo una futuro largo delante de mí.

Yo creo que yo voy a tener éxito y conseuir todo para lo que vivo.

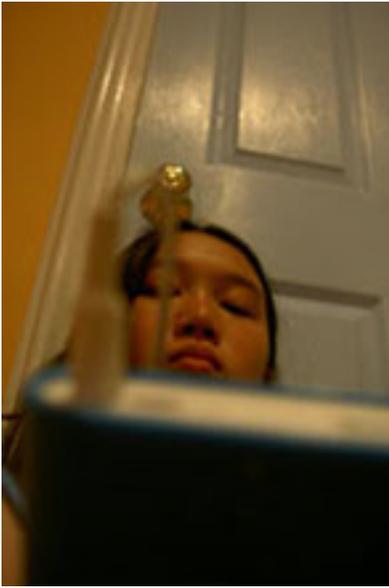
Thank you very much for listening and enjoy the rest of your evening.

# about the author

Tiffany Zhang was born in San Francisco, California. She enjoys Black and White photography and also enjoys doing community service on a regular basis to giving back to her community. She may seem like a busy person sometimes, but she would definitely push things aside to go out and have some fun with her friends. One of her goals after high school and now, is to just enjoy life, but still go to college and get a job. Her opinion on life is unique, it is different than what most people think about life, and that is exactly what she is trying to express through this book.

# acknowledgements

First and foremost, **for being the biggest influences in the world to me**, all those good-hearted, caring people around me. **My friends** Emily Mak, Juliana Liang, Lindsey Fong, Ivy Leung, Taylor Wong, Jonathan Mak, Sarah Jane Calub, and everybody else. All the **teachers** I've ever had, including Emilio Banuelos, Bayete Ross-Smith, and Jenifer Wofford, for not only teaching me photography, but also teaching me about life. And for **all the support** they have given me my entire life, my life-long friends, Manda Luu, Didi Luu, and Michael Luo, my cousin Daphne Zhang, my parents, my grandparents, my godfather, and my aunts and uncles, especially my aunt, Sandy. She has taught me so many things, **she taught me what is right and wrong**, she is like a friend to me. If it weren't for all these people, all the things that have ever happened to me would not have happened, and I definitely wouldn't be like the way I am now.



this book was made for an exhibition project at City Arts and Technology in November 2006. the theme for that exhibition was "Who Am I?" everybody wrote a memoir and a couple of other pieces for it, and put it in a book.

the memoir in this book talks about home. it talks about things that happens at home are things to cherish and appreciate and that they become moments we will miss when we grow up.

