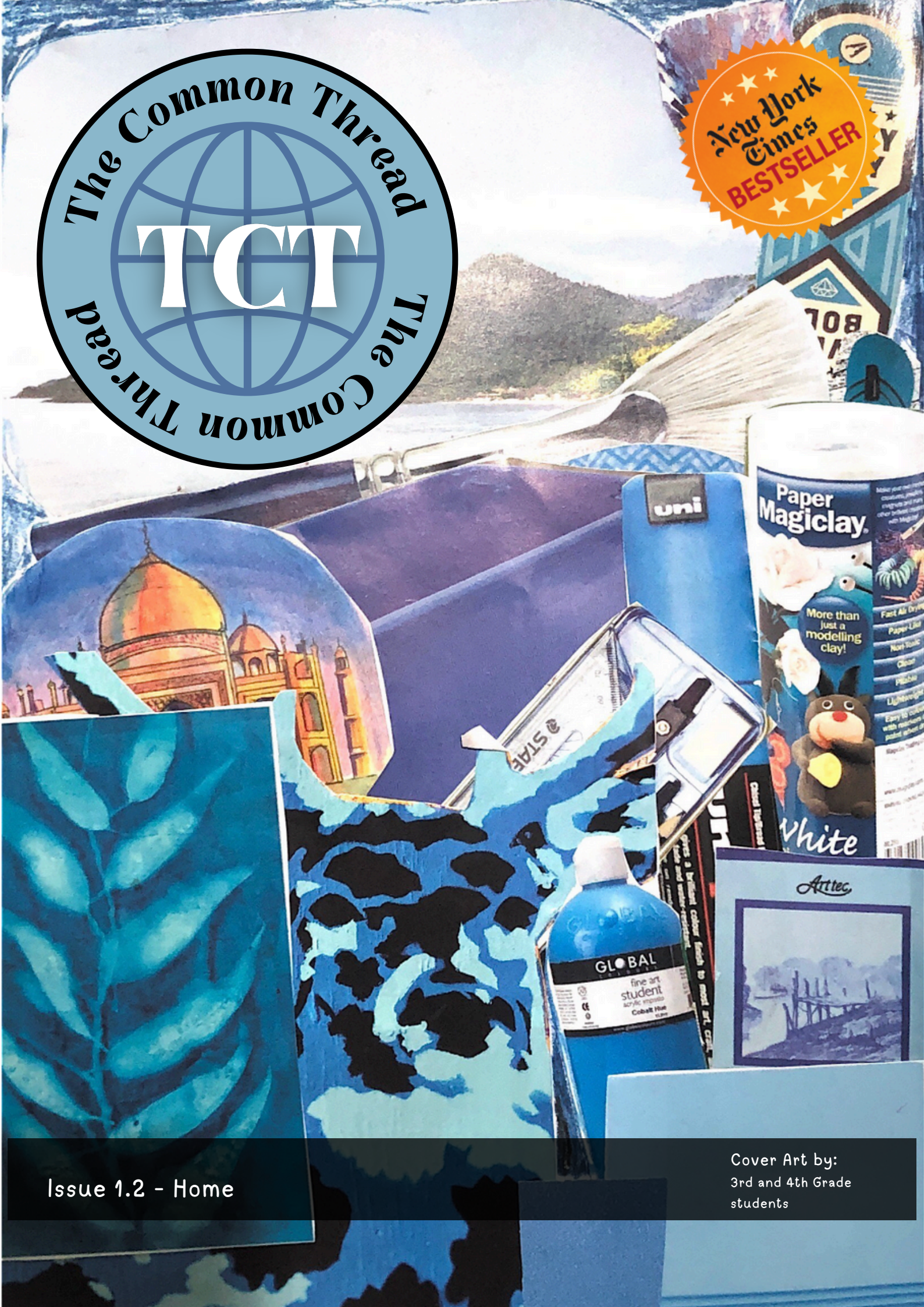


Issue 1.2 - Home

Cover Art by:
3rd and 4th Grade students

Home

The one-syllable that trying to box would be absurd.
Sometimes it's specific, sometimes it's not
All I know is
sometimes, it feels blurred.

Maybe it's the aroma of mom's cooking
The laughter coloring my childhood
The platform that accommodated my countless dreams
Or the vernacular I found expression in.

Taking the form of a feeling,
a scent you can't help breathing
or a sound that tickles your hearing.
It is altogether a word carrying so much meaning.

It is ever-evolving yet somehow fixed
found in both the animate and inanimate things.

A peculiar thing it is that feels like bliss,
radiating with unmistakable hues of warmth that
when absent, you'll surely miss.

The paradox is, that it is never absent.
Just hiding in the corners of an unfamiliar face,
an unrecognizable path, or an unknown accent.

Waiting patiently to be discovered
maybe looking discolored
yet somehow recovered.

So open your eyes and see.
Open your ears and hear.
Lay out your hands and feel,

Home,
is here.

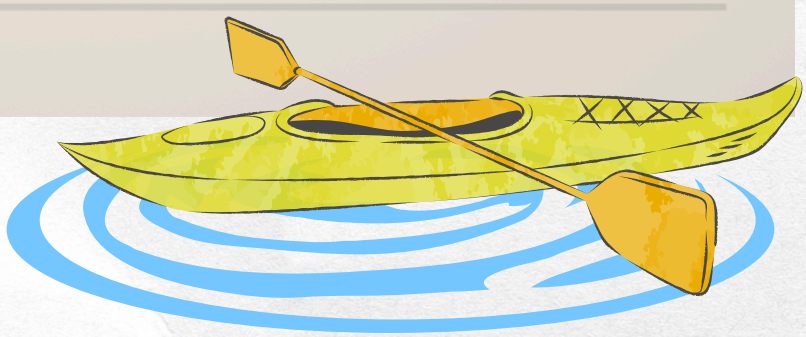
Hollaback Home

It never stopped. Rain and wetness was constant. The drops hammering into the bottom of our canoe were bouncing back up and hitting our faces. My rain jacket was useless. The goretex clung to my bare arms, which were drenched in cool sweat. I was soaked from the spray of my paddle gliding into the ice cold water. I dug my nails into the wood, forcing the same repetitive motion I had been enduring for hours.

The ten of us were silently synchronized moving our boat bit by bit across the fogged-over glass lake. Behind me, Kate had her toque drawn over her face, almost completely blinded, trying to avoid the bee sting of the water. Jake, at the very back, suffering from a nose-bleed that hadn't let up all morning. He had two fully-expanded jumbo tampons cramped up both nostrils that were redder than our cheeks. Poor guy. Shiloh, on my left, had a pounding headache from a terrible night under the tarps, and Savannah was regretting her life choices of only bringing a hoodie. Yet, not one of us complained. That's the expectation for us island kids. Some call us hippies, which we kind of are, but in truth we're just accustomed to the vicious west-coast weather.

Our shoulders were begging for relief from the strokes of the paddle. Empty cans of beans, and dripping bags in the hull seemed to be dragging us down. Out of nowhere, a voice starts bellowing the lyrics to 'Hollaback Girl' and we stop paddling looking confused as the quiet had been broken for the first time in hours. Savana laughs, and then yells, "five, six…five, six, seven, eight…STROKE!" I cram my paddle down into the lake and pull it back as hard as I can. The voice still continues to sing, so I yell out raspily, "a few times, I've been around that track" and everyone joins in. It's the most pitchy thing I've ever heard, but we were flying across that lake. Kate pulled her toque up, a smile strung across her face, and Jake's eyes weren't as bleak. The white girl acapella playlist continued on for the entire journey. Even if it hit your ear the wrong way, our voices still had a warm aura that powered our boat and melted our frozen limbs.

We were the first boat to arrive back. The only group laughing about our speed tactics and how hoarse our voices were. Jake was proud, Savanna was overjoyed to find shelter, Shiloh could finally sleep, and Kate was relieved to return to land. We were all whole and united from that stupid paddling and trashy song. When we returned back to school, we all brought a piece of the lake with us. Even though we weren't best friends, we found comfort in the glances and smiles exchanged in hallways. Shared-experiences bring out true character, but also create memories and empathy that lasted the rest of our time together as a cohort, and are part of our character today.



What is something you see, hear, or taste when you fly back to Thailand that lets you know you're home?

It's the language that immediately tells me I'm home. Most of the time, I have a layover in Dubai before catching my next flight to Phuket. As soon as I board that plane, I hear the flight attendants making announcements in Thai. And when I step off the plane, the greeting of the Wai from the people outside confirms that I've truly arrived home.



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While it can get quite irritating if you're sleeping, it is a very familiar and comforting sound that tells me I'm home.

Kind regards,
Manoa

What is a sight, sound or smell that instantly reminds you of home?

A sound that instantly comes to mind is the iconic bird that we will all hear living here. The bird is called The Common Asian Koel.

Is there a food from one of your "homes" that you miss when you are in the other? Do you have a recipe you could share?

Living in Thailand for 14 years and coming from France, I have cooked dishes from these places the least because I feel like cooking from these countries that have such a good reputation for good food is intimidating. However, when I am in France, I long for Pad Thai or Pad Kaprow, which I have made before but it will never taste authentic. When I am in Thailand, I long for French quiche or fresh bread which I have also made here, but it doesn't taste the same either.

What is home to a boarding parent?

1. What does the word "home" mean to you personally? Can you describe the smells, visuals, and sounds that make you feel at home?

To me, "home" is where I feel connected and surrounded by a sense of community. As a boarding parent living with students, home isn't just about a private space, it's a shared environment filled with energy and the sound of students' laughter and conversations.

2. Living on campus with your family, how do you create a sense of home in a place that's both your residence and a workplace?

Living on campus with my family, I've learned to create a sense of home by blending personal and shared spaces in a way that feels comforting and balanced. Even though the boarding house is both my residence and workplace, I try to establish a sense of routine and care that makes it feel like home for both my family and the students: creating a welcoming space for my family while making sure the students feel cared for and valued.



(Featuring the one and only Gemma!)

3. Have there been any challenges for you to balance the feeling of home and working responsibilities?

Yes, there have definitely been challenges in being a boarding parent. In a typical home, a mother focuses on her own children, but in this unique environment, I'm responsible not only for my family but also for the well-being of all the students under my care. It can be difficult at times to separate work from personal life because my "work" is living alongside the students and ensuring they feel supported and safe. This responsibility extends beyond normal working hours, and sometimes I have to prioritize the needs of the students over my own family or personal time. At the same time, there are so many rewarding and heartwarming moments that remind me how welcoming our community is. One of the best parts of being a boarding parent is watching the students grow and seeing how they begin to trust and rely on us as part of their extended family. It's those small, everyday moments that stand out like when a student stops by just to chat or seeks advice, or when they achieve something and are excited to share it with us.

4. How do you create a warm and welcoming environment for students who are far from their own homes?

We try to establish a personal connection with each student, get to know their individual needs, interests, and concerns. It's important that they feel they can come to us with anything, whether it's something big or small, so they know they have someone they can rely on. We help them build relationships with their peers and staff, making sure they know that this is their home-away-from-home.

Home is not the place, it's the people.



Home is inseparable from family.

I grew up in my grandmother's neighborhood in Timor-Leste, I lived surrounded by relatives on family-owned land. It was more than a house; it was a communal space where cousins, grandparents, and extended family lived close by. The constant sound of laughter and the warmth of shared gatherings defined my sense of belonging.

Although my family has since moved, I treasure the memories of that neighborhood. In Timorese culture, family is central, with children often staying with their parents until they pass away. In my home everything is special, friends are more than friends, they become part of the family and we call them "primo," or cousins, in Tetum, reflecting the deep bonds formed in our culture.

Wherever I will go home is rooted in those connections, the family support, shared experiences, it is not just about the place, not just about Timor-Leste but all of these interactions.

My Homeland Timor-Leste owns sacred properties, certain areas hold spiritual significance and no one can simply walk through them without local guidance. When I speak about home this element comes to my mind because this deep respect for ancestors for the land and ancestors shapes connection to my country in a profound way.

After almost one month in Thailand, it still feels unfamiliar. However, I believes that, in time, the friendships I am forming will help me feel at home again.

The memories of my home I used to find in the little things, a smell, a noise and music that are well placed in my brain which embodies my feelings about my homeland.

Ultimately home is about family, community, and tradition. Wherever I go, I carry the sense of home within her, built on the love, memories, and connections I cherish.

BAAN KWAI

Home is such a powerful word for most people. For some, it evokes a specific place filled with loved ones, belongings, and perhaps even pets. For others, the concept of home is more abstract and may require clarification.

For me, home is a reflection of who you are—an extension of personality, so to speak. My home is a place where, even if someone has never met me before, they could spend time there and feel as though they already know me. It resonates with my character. I've always been unconventional yet practical, and my home reflects that. It's a Thai-style house situated in the middle of buffalo fields, and it floods several times a year during the monsoon season. Built on stilts, the house stays dry when the floods come, allowing me to live surrounded by both fields and water at once.



"Maybe home exists in multiple places, or it doesn't quite feel like home because they're always on the move, or perhaps home has lost its sense of comfort.."



SCAN ME

On the first floor, my kitchen and dining room are open-air, sheltered by the floor above. I also have a workshop under the house, giving me the freedom to create anything my imagination desires. On the second floor, there's a porch that faces west, where I get to witness some of the most majestic sunsets while sitting on an old rocking chair overlooking the buffalo fields. To the east, there's a back porch where I can watch the sunrise over the fields. This is also where my bathroom is, and it's open-air—meaning I can watch the sunrise while using the bathroom, then take a shower, all while soaking in the tranquillity of nature. As I mentioned, my house is an extension of my personality: unconventional, yet practical. Inside, there's almost no furniture, just beanbags and hammocks. This gives me the flexibility to rearrange things as I like, without the hassle of dirt collecting under furniture. The windows are usually open, eliminating the need for air conditioning. The cool air from the first floor rises through the floorboards to cool the second floor. I once had a water heater, but it broke two years ago, and I haven't felt the need for a hot shower since. There's something wonderful about staying connected to the elements—feeling the wind blow through the house, smelling the buffalo in the fields, and enjoying the cool water drawn from the well outside.

So when I say that home is a reflection of one's personality, I mean it wholeheartedly. I know my home isn't for everyone, but it's genuine and grounded, just like I hope to be. And I'm grateful to have created a place I can truly call home.



I have five dogs, all over ten years old, and this place has become a refuge for them in their old age. They roam freely over the land, with no walls or chains—just the open world to explore before they return home, muddy and happy, as it was always meant to be.



The Common Thread

Uniting our individual worlds



Grade 4 and 5 students used collage to express home in their own way, home as a form of identity, home as a color and mood, as well as the places that we consider home in our hearts.

-Kru Amanda O.

(Primary Art)

