

**WE OAK
ARE LAND**

**INTER
NATIONAL**



LA and this is my house now.



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ARE LAND**

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NATIONAL**

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INTRODUCTION

Imagine you are 14 years old. Hormonal changes, pimples, self-consciousness -- the works. Now imagine that all that is the **easy** part of being you. For you are an immigrant; you have left your home and friends, you don't know anybody at school your family is split between two countries, you don't know your way around your new city, and you don't speak English.

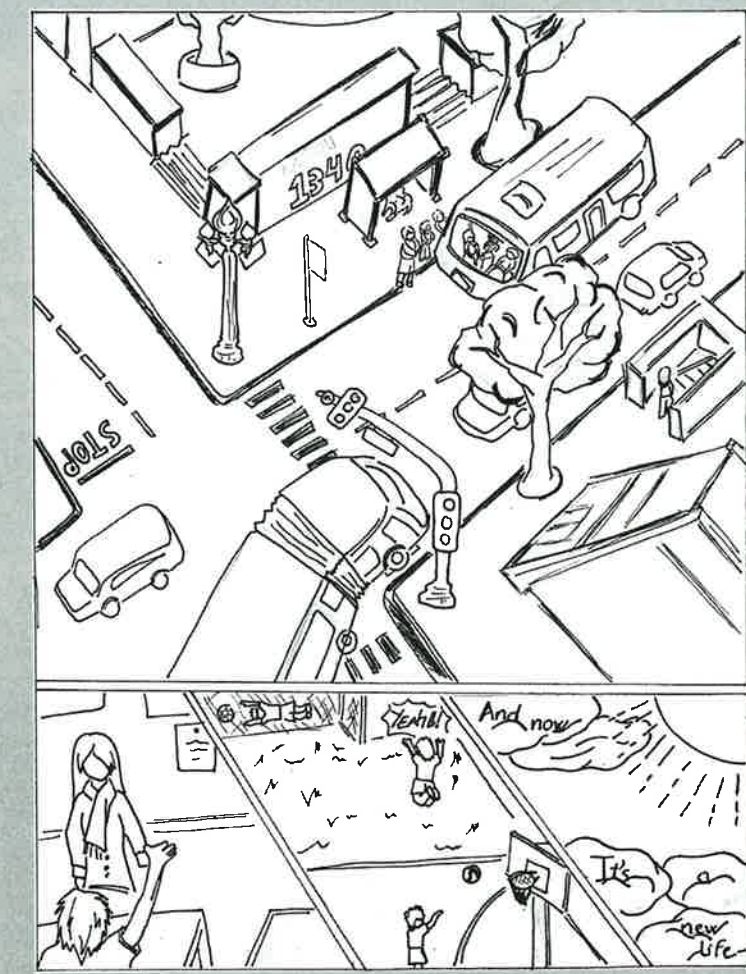
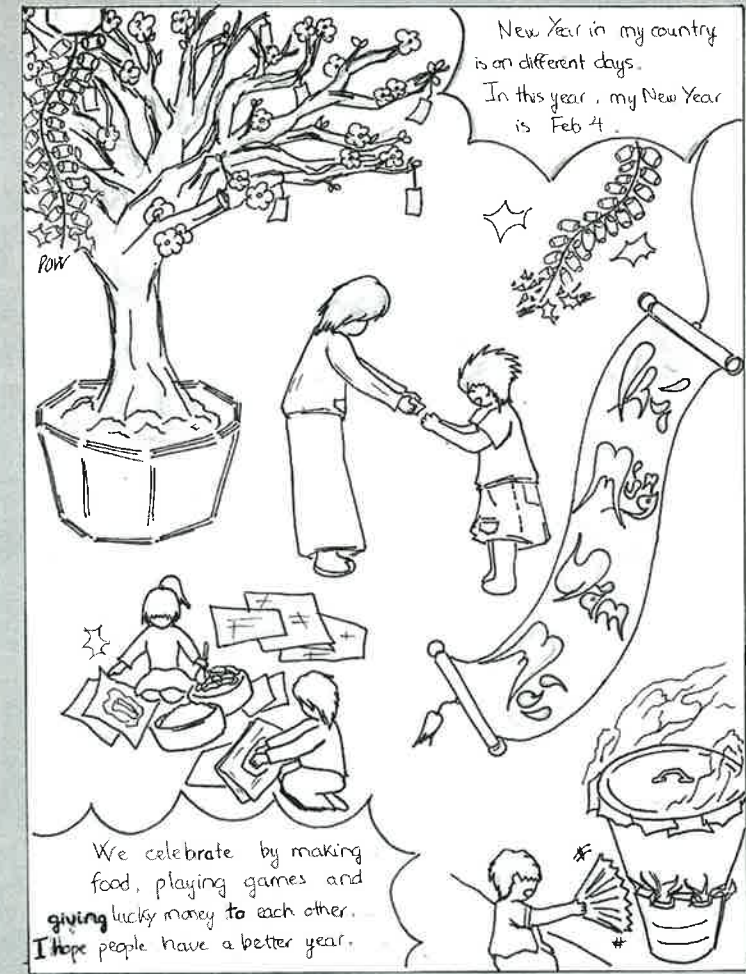
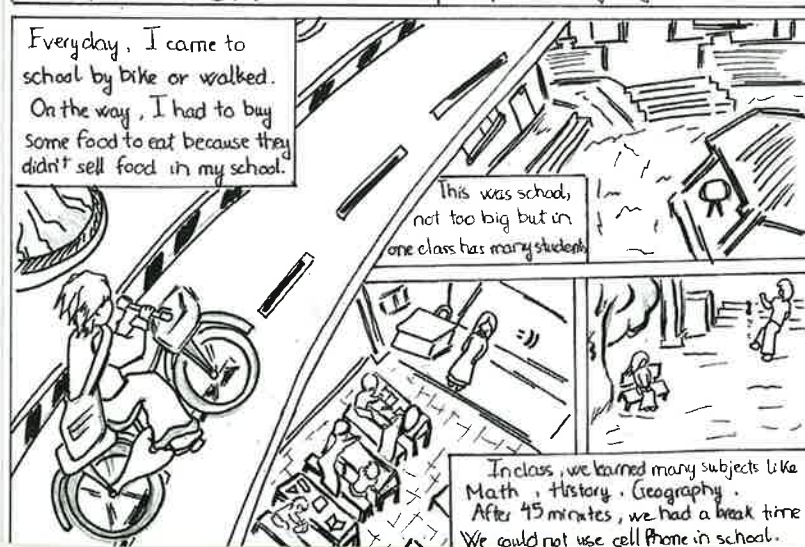
When I began teaching at Oakland International High School, I had lofty ideas about the world events and issues I would be able to discuss with such an international mix of students. I too am an immigrant; I left Vietnam as a refugee when I was a child. But what I quickly realized stood between us was a language gap wider than any ocean. My pseudo-command of three other languages didn't even begin to cover the multitude of languages that my students spoke.

The comics project began as a way for me to better understand my students. I found that if I taught everyone a new language, governed by a few simple conventions like panels and speech balloons, then we would have a common way of communicating that allowed students to surprise me. Over the years, as I learned to ask them better questions, my students have surprised, informed, inspired, and moved me to tears with their stories.

And these stories are just the tip of the iceberg. This year, an 11th grader named Bao rewrote the immigration story he did for me as a 10th grader. The original story, shown on these two pages, is undoubtedly beautiful but maybe just a little generic. Bao told me that the first time around, he was shy about sharing with other people the personal details of who he was. The second time, he said, he opened his mind a little more. He had more experience, and he reflected more deeply about his characterization. Bao's second version is on the pages that follow. It's a fantastic story about childhood, adolescence, and nostalgia that reminds me of Rob Reiner's film *Stand By Me* or François Truffaut's *The 400 Blows*. Here is a young man who is becoming a storyteller; he is learning by figuring out what his own story really is.

So when you read these stories, remember that they are the first attempt by a person still forming his or her identity in an environment and language that is not native. Look deeper to imagine what more surely lies beneath. Look forward to picture the future of these teenagers who have already experienced so much. Recognize in them their great potential.

Thi Bui
Art Teacher, OIHS



In Vietnam
I lived in
Vung Tau.



A
statue of
Jesus
stood tall
over
the city

very fun, bro
some more
toy

I spent / my days

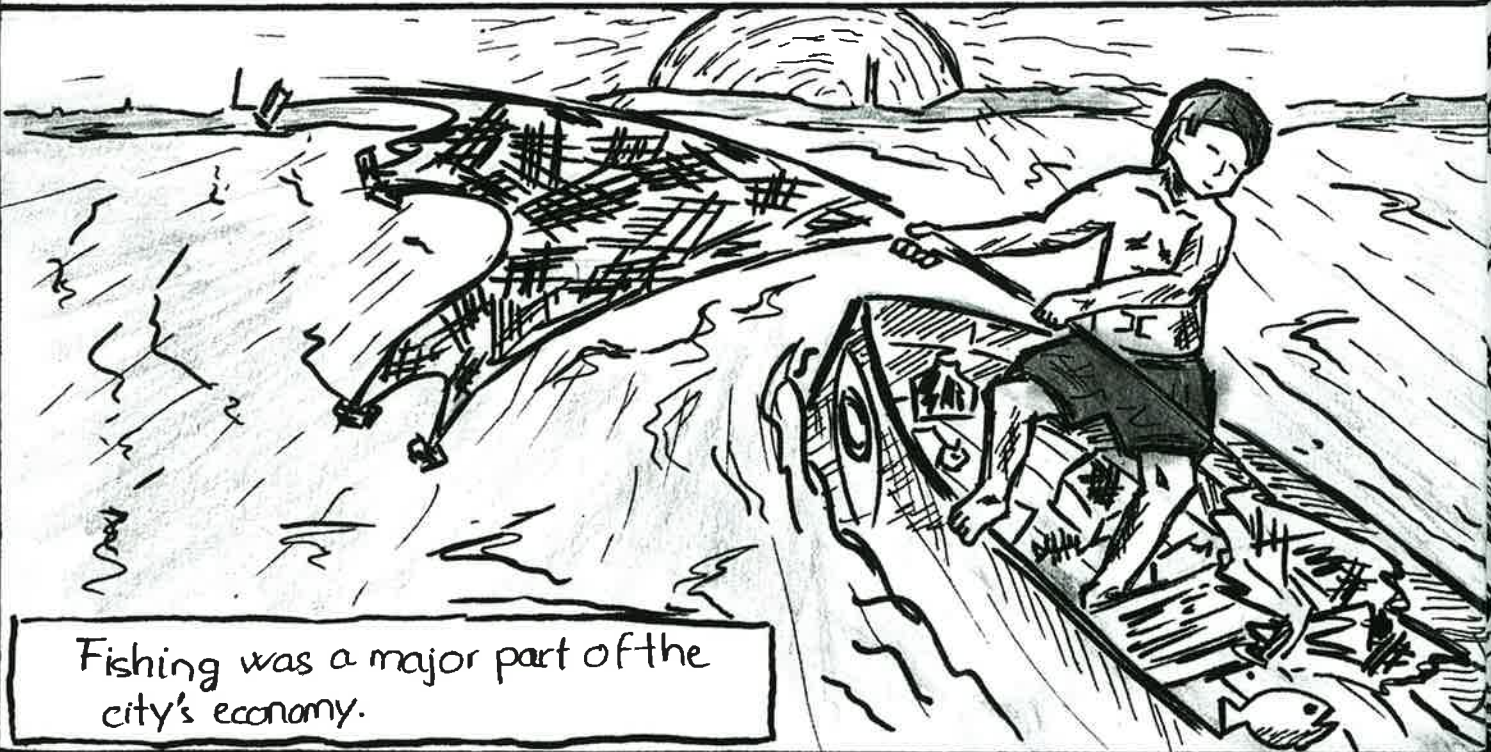


playing
King of Fighters
with my
friend.

It Was fun at the beginning



... and sad at the end,
always.

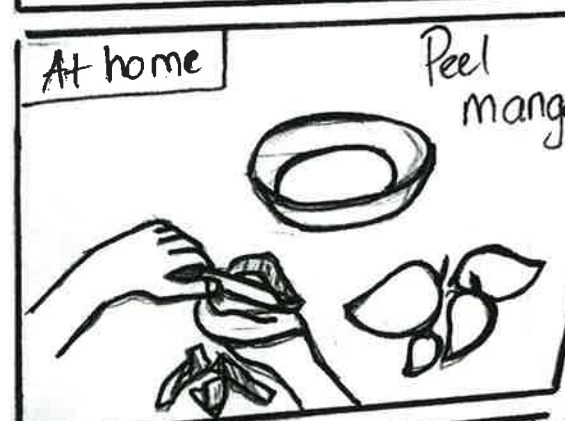
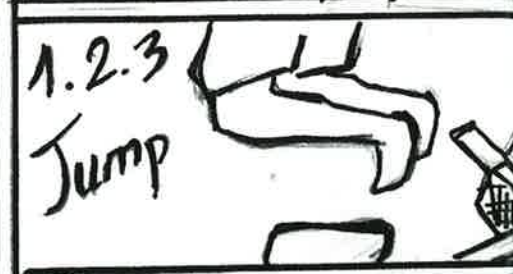
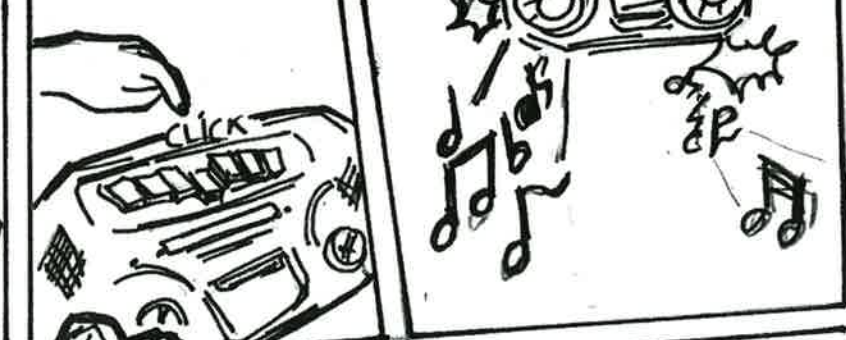
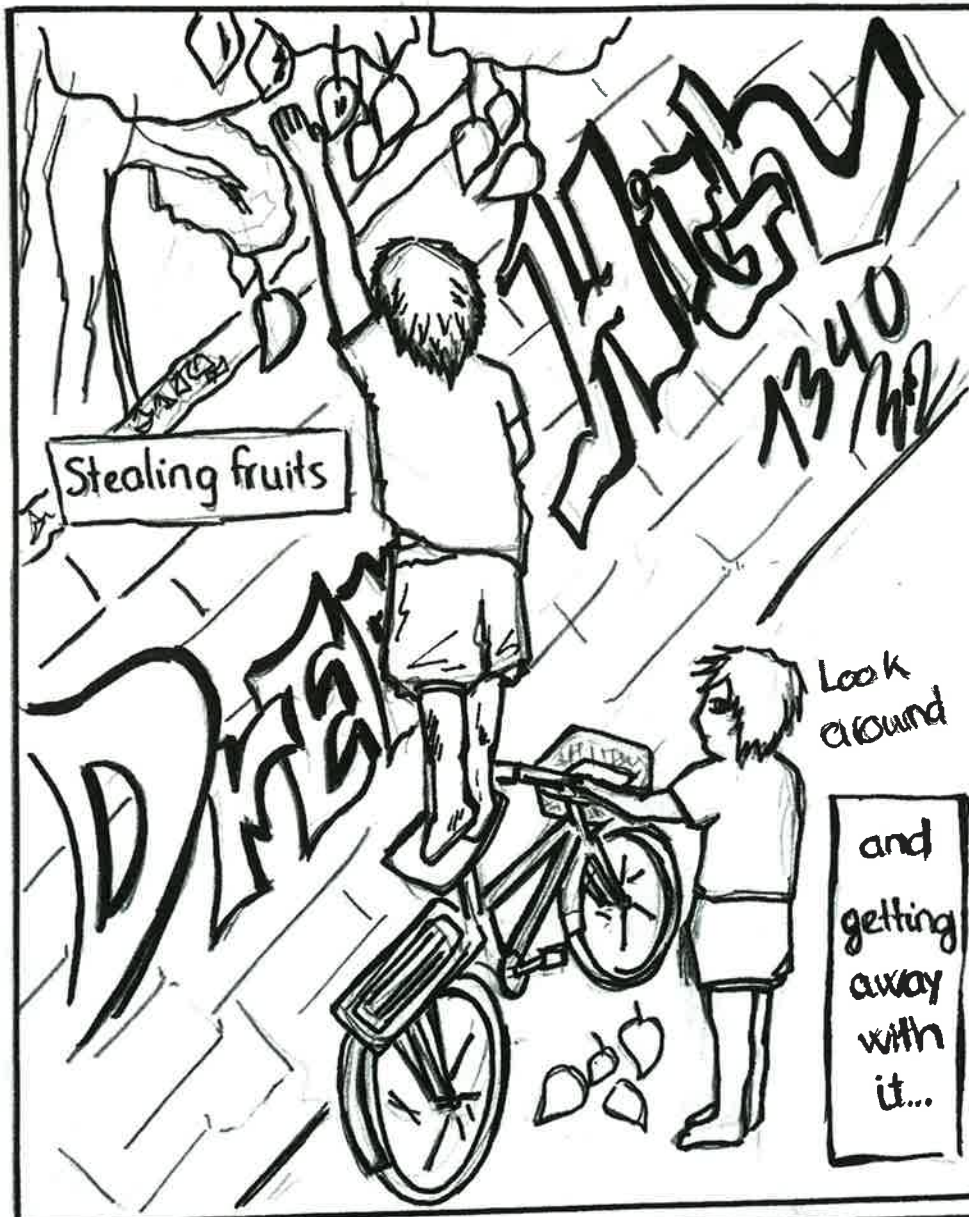


Fishing was a major part of the
city's economy.

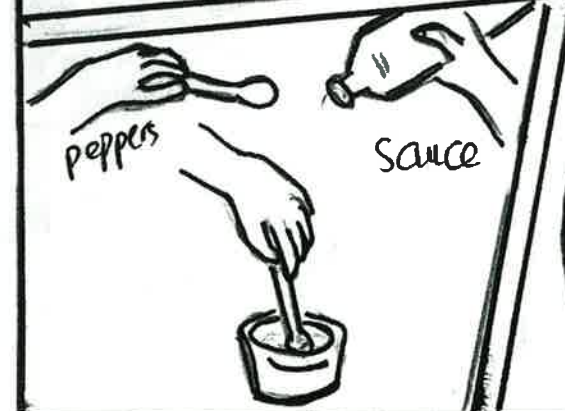


Oh lord
It's too late.

Looked
at



Afterwards, we went to the Soccer field when the lights were on.



...was fun and more important it was free. :)



One-time my buddies and I hiked up a mountain and cut down some trees. For what? We'll find out!

Dammit! It's too hot, man!

Sweet
Which one?

Lightbulb icon, tree icon

Haha
Got it

Grrr...
C'mon bab
Help me out you guys

I'm bring this baby
Y'all should watch out for me HA HA HA

We carried those trees the whole way back.
Don't need a rest, do ya?
Was it crazy?
There were up to ten of us crossing the streets with trees on our shoulders.

Those trees were very valuable.
First

Happy New Year 2007

We stole them anyway!!
Later

When we got our visas,

we sold our house and rented a small one to live in.

Still went to school. still boring as usual.

Still boring as usual.

I looked at the moon, wondering...

I looked at the moon, wondering...

How is my life going to be in the U.S?

we sold our house and rented a small one to live in.

Using that money, we booked our flights

Lying on my hammock,

Lying on my hammock,

Maybe
Hamburgers
Pizza
New clothes
Or
Teacher
HIGH SCHOOL
speaking English!!
30F

Using that money, we booked our flights

Using that money, we booked our flights

I went to sleep and tried not to think about tomorrow.

I went to sleep and tried not to think about tomorrow.

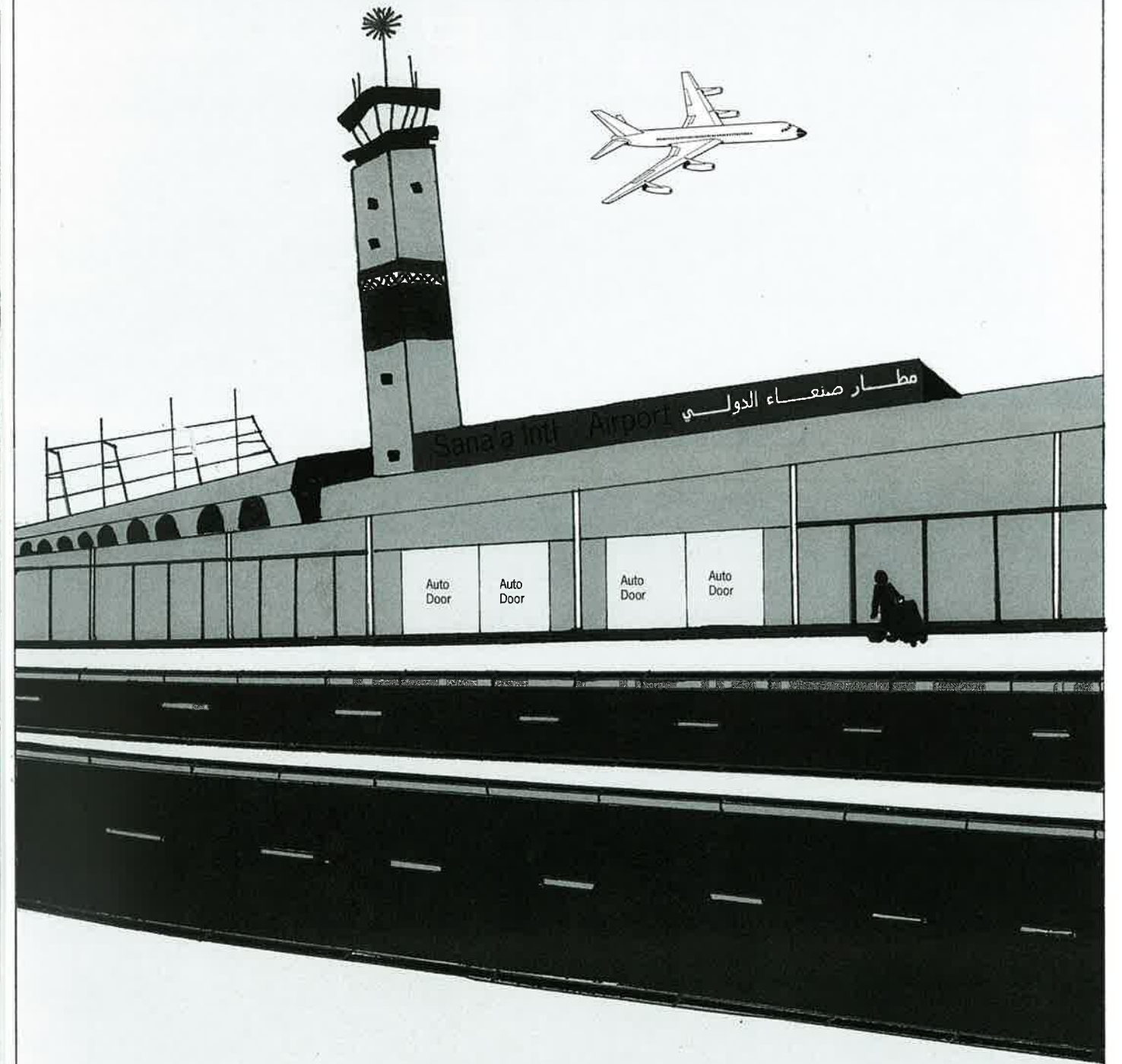
I went to sleep and tried not to think about tomorrow.

Slowly, slowly I closed my eyes and fell into darkness.

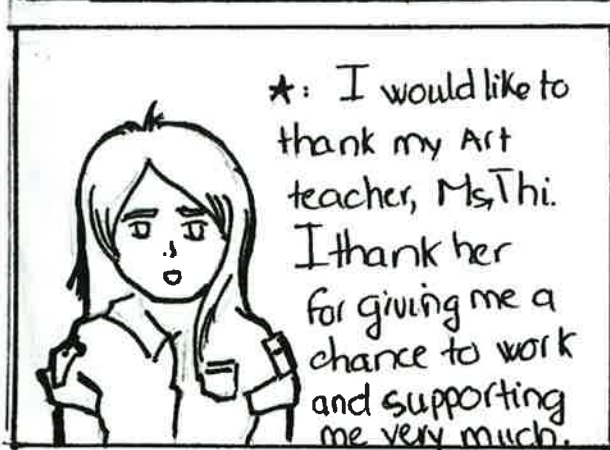
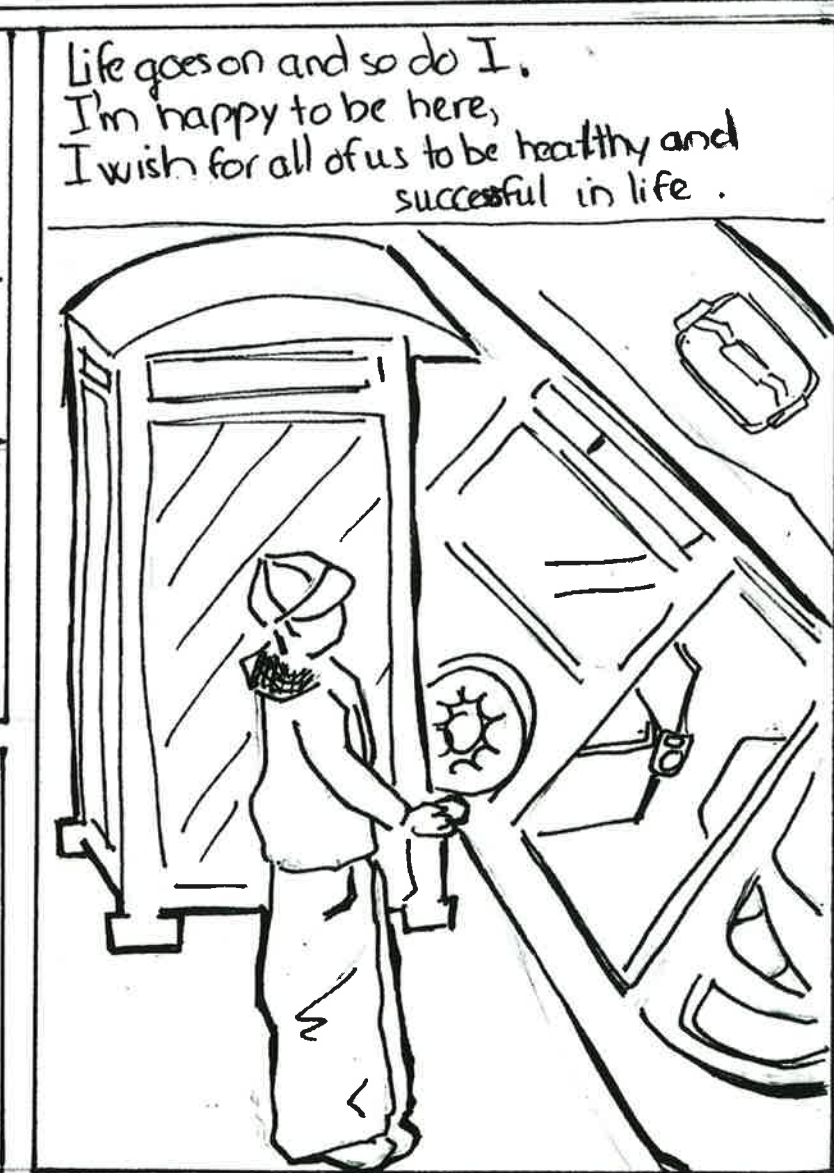
Slowly, slowly I closed my eyes and fell into darkness.

For My Father

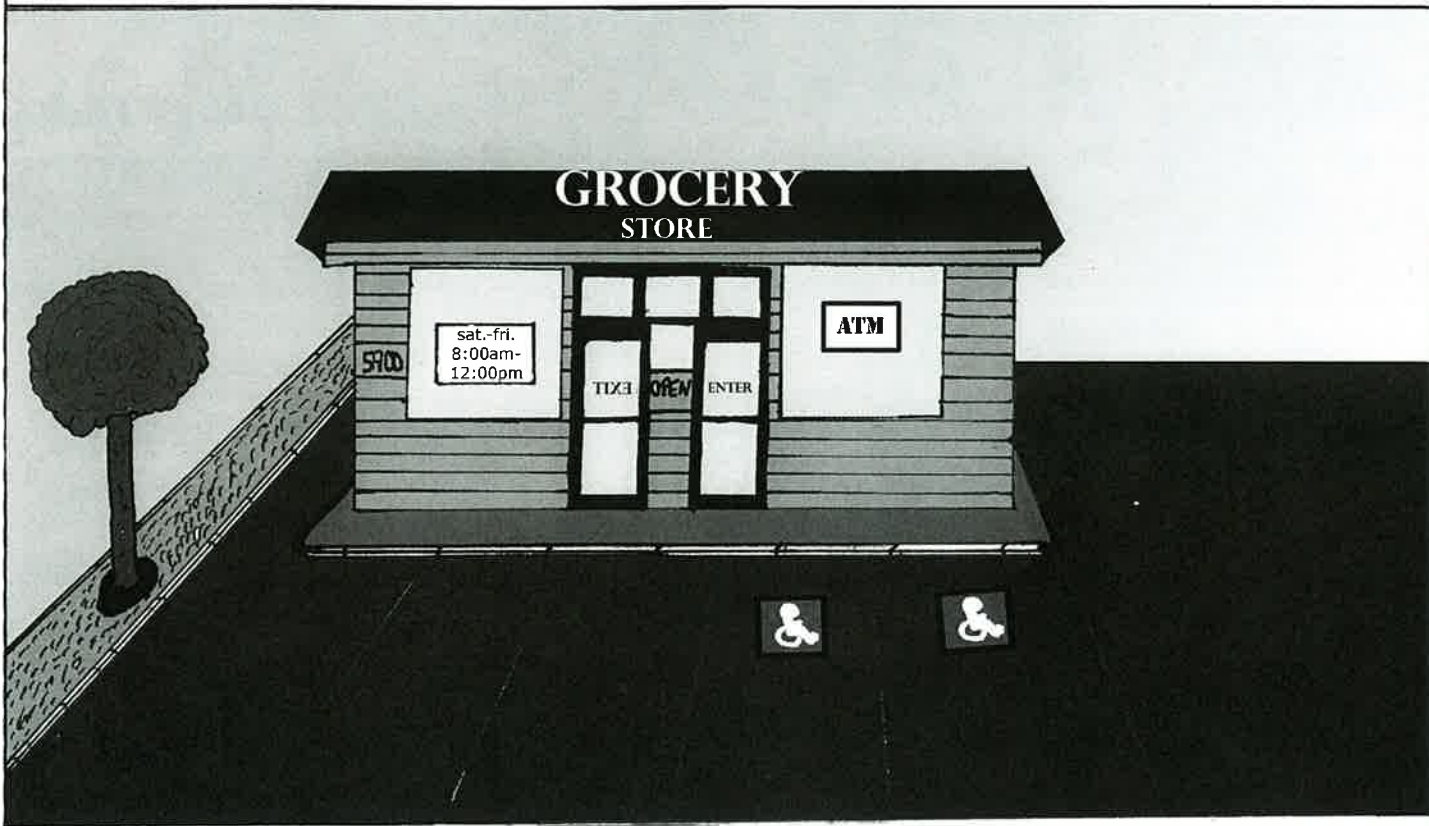
by Amar



My dad went to the U.S. to make his living when he was a young man.



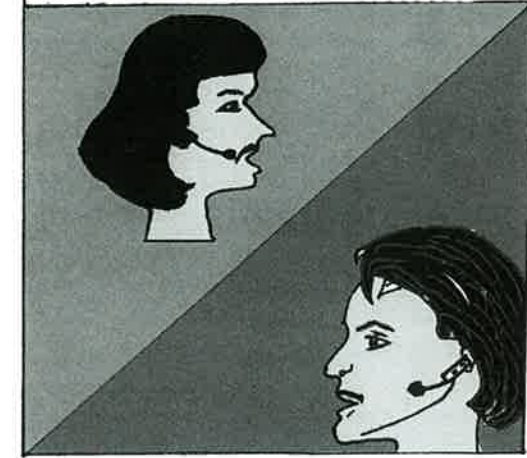
My Father worked hard and he bought a grocery store.



My dad died of a heart attack when I was 8. My big brother, who was working with my dad at the store, was too sad to tell us.



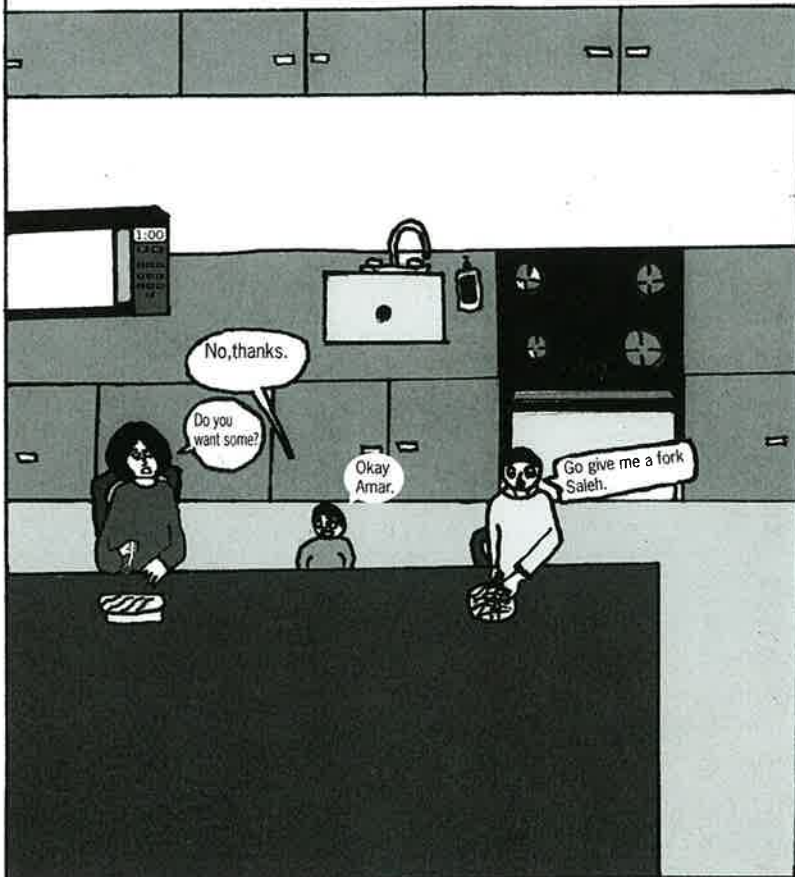
My uncle Ali called my uncle Ahmed in Yemen about what happened.



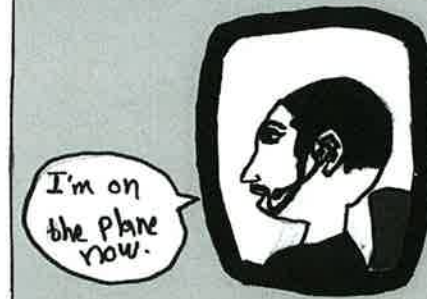
My uncle Ahmed came to my house to tell us the news. He sat for a long time outside my house.



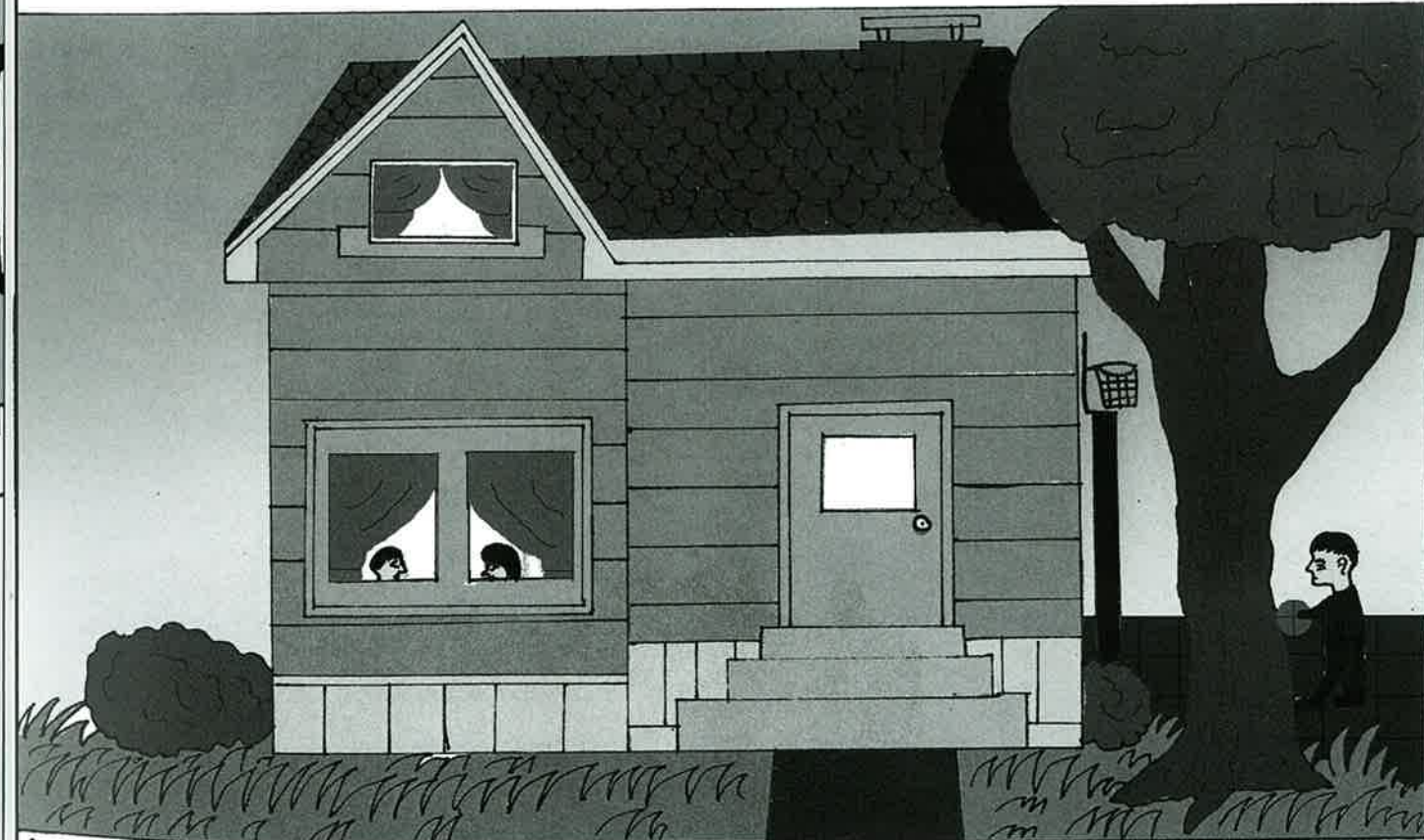
He had a family back in Yemen- a wife and 4 kids .



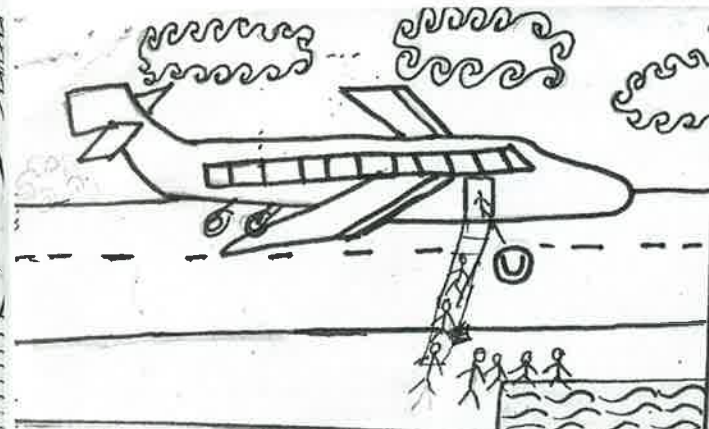
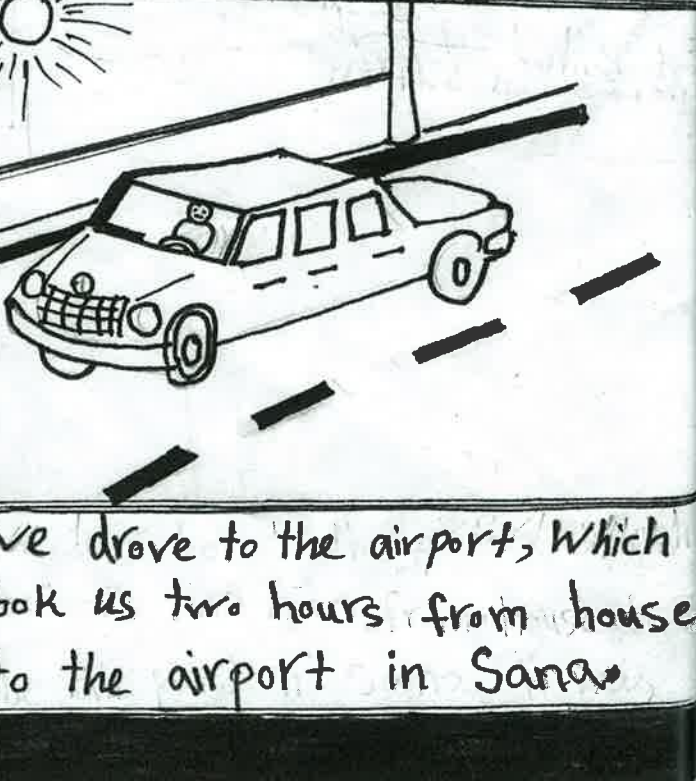
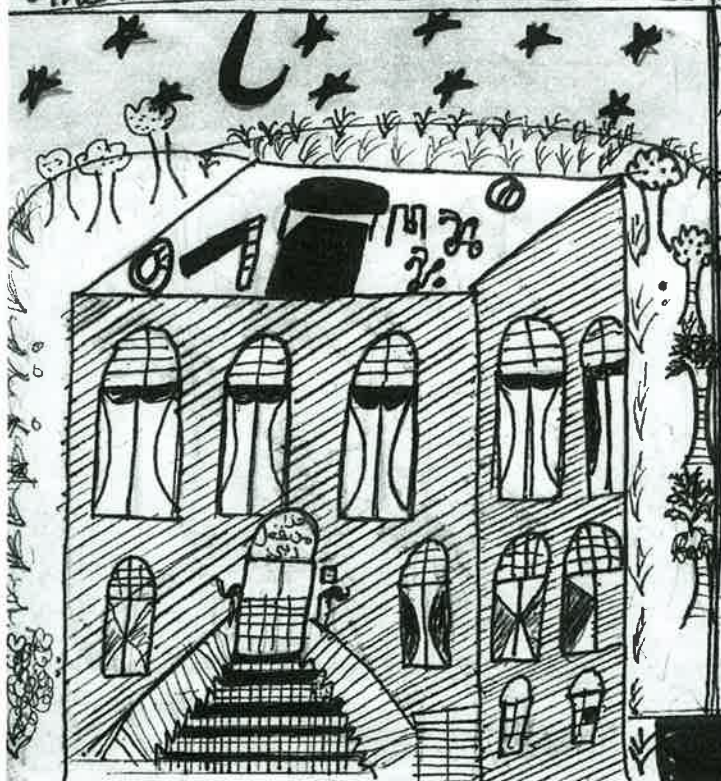
United States of America



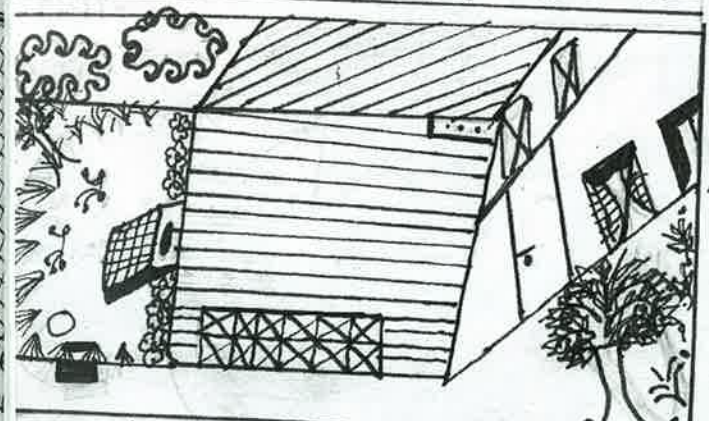
My dad called every day and he visited us twice a year.



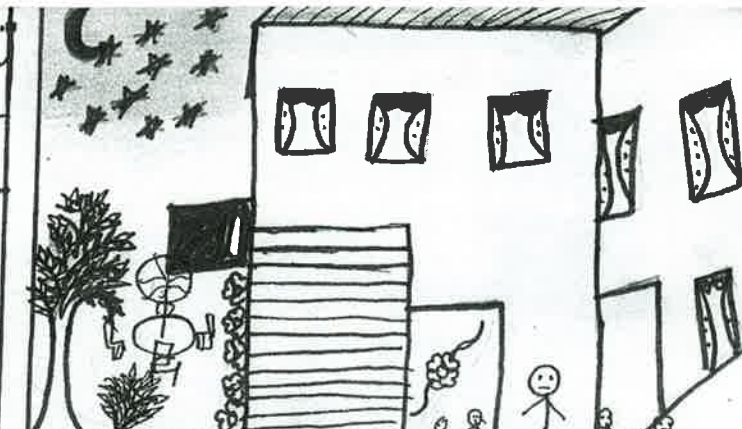
I still love my father as though he were still alive.



We went into the airplane and when we landed, we were in San Francisco. It was exciting.



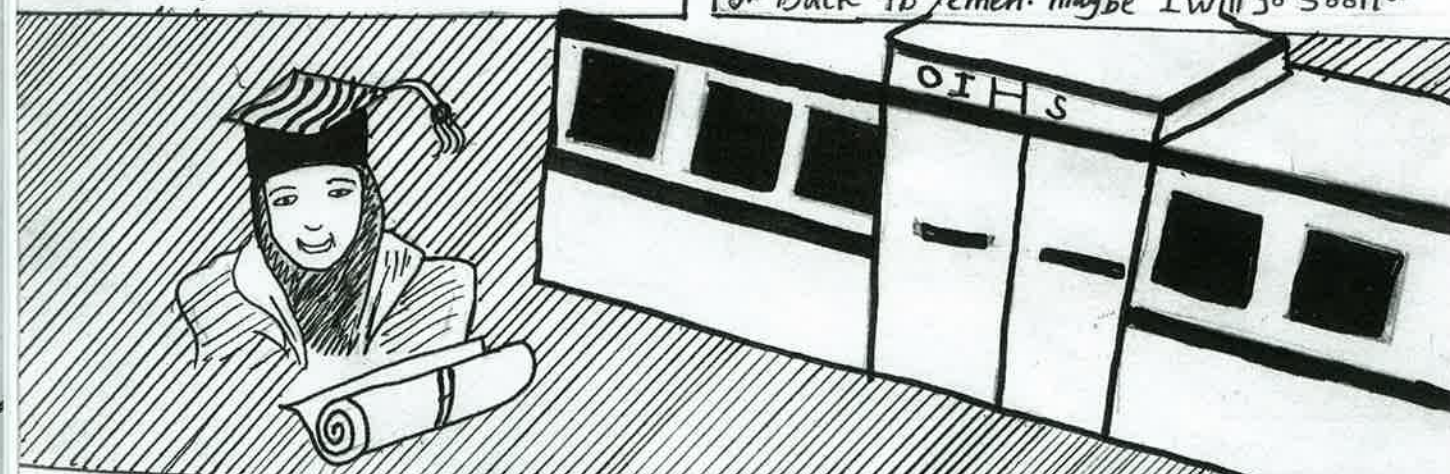
Now I live with my parents. I am having a lot of fun, and I go to high school.



My uncle drove us to his house. We had a lot of fun with my cousins. We stayed there for two weeks.

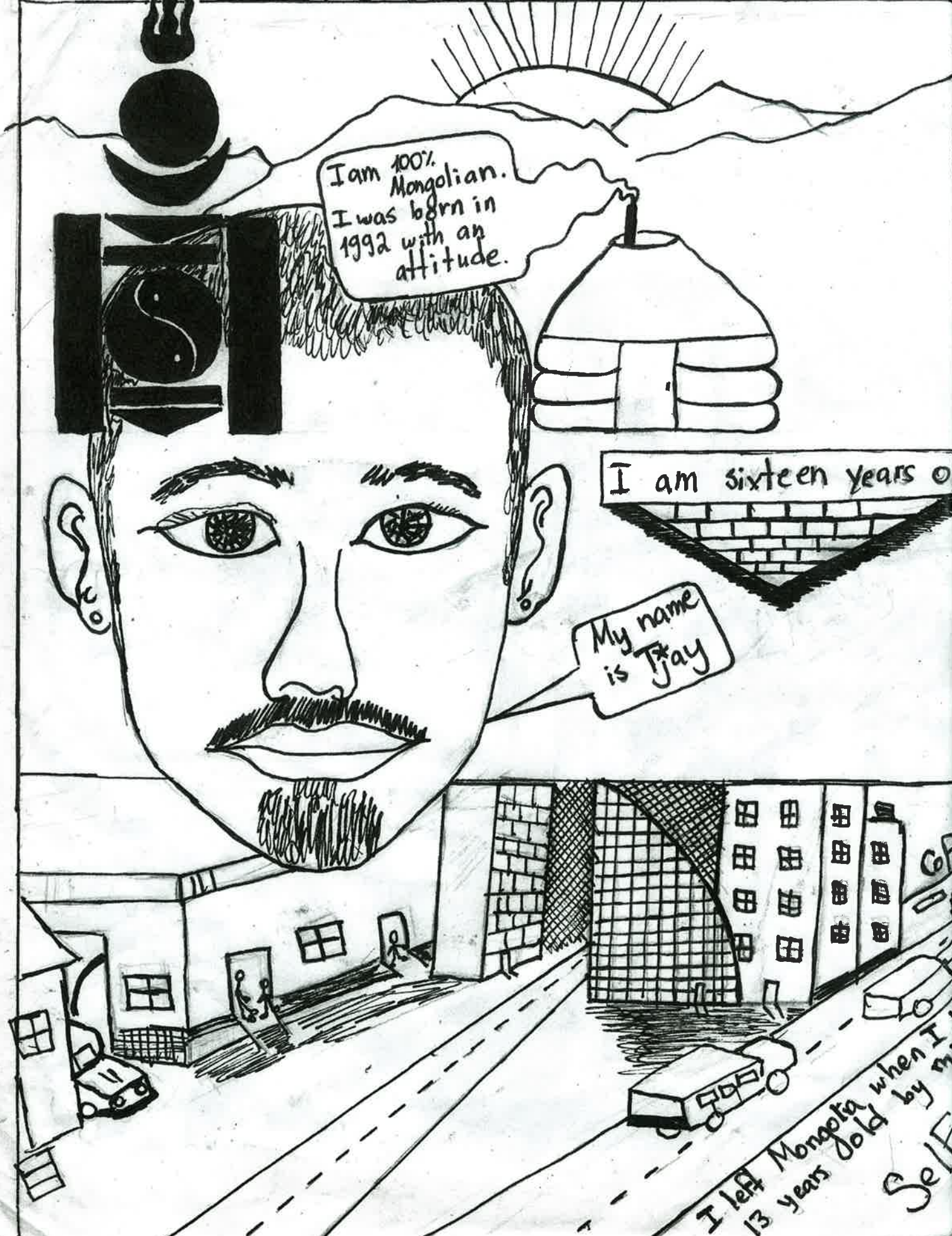


I have a lot of friends in the U.S. but I still talk to my friends in Yemen. I miss my friends and I want to go back to Yemen. Maybe I will go soon.



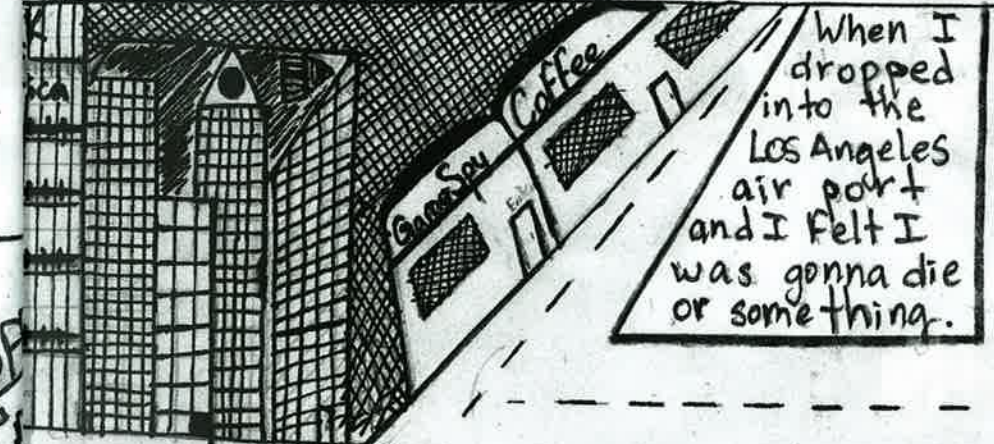
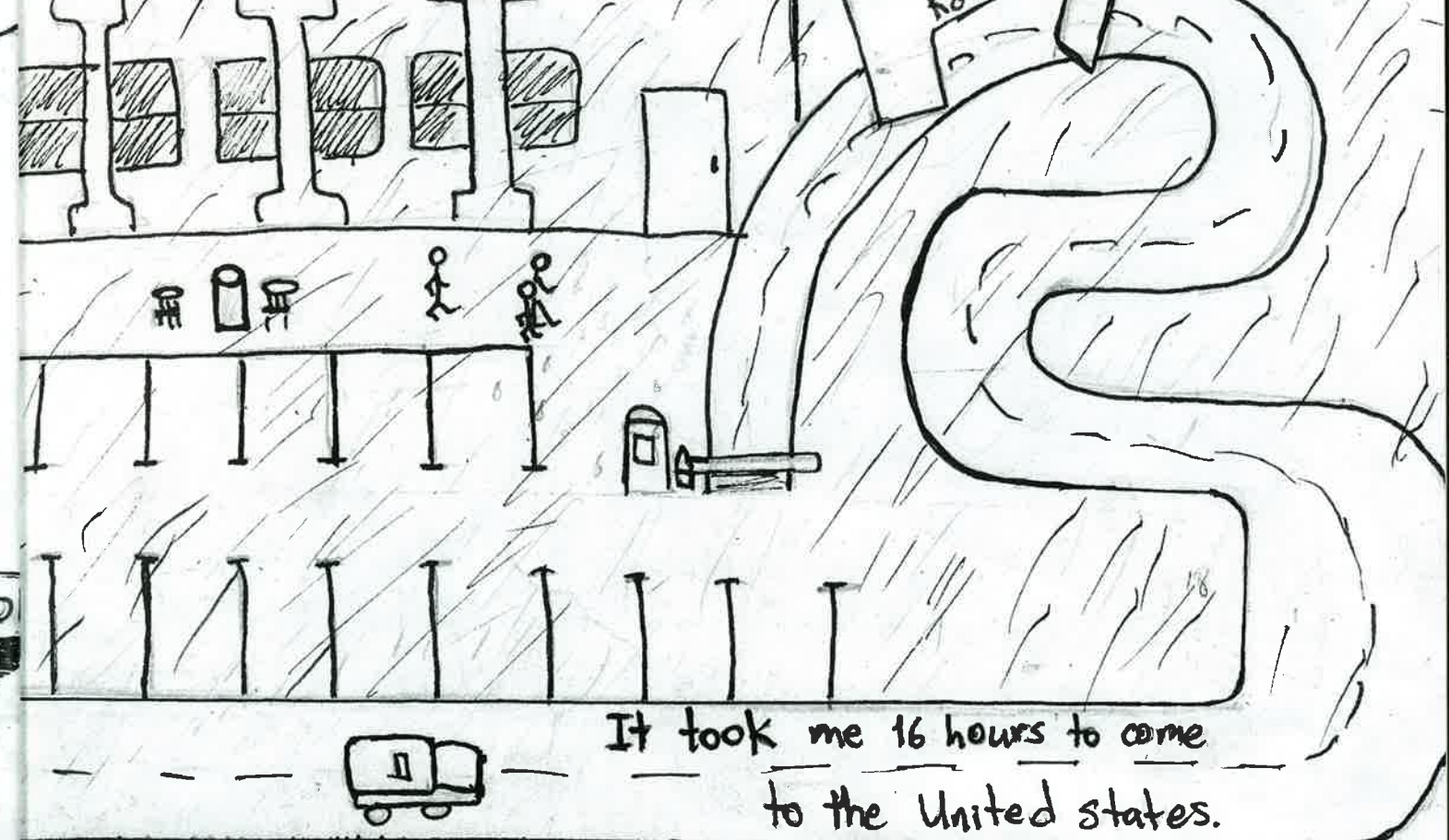
I want to finish high school and get my diploma.

Charles



...lew on a Korean airline
to the U.S.A.

Ulaanbaatar



Then I moved to Oakland and started to go to middle school. One year later I graduated from middle school.

Now I go to Oakland International High School with other students like me.

When I remember the day I left my country, I think I should have looked back one last time at my country's nature.

Although it's a little bit sad, when I reached the airport in GZ, I didn't say good-bye to my friends. Maybe it's because I don't want to see anybody crying. How selfish I am! Only one thing in my heart was regret.

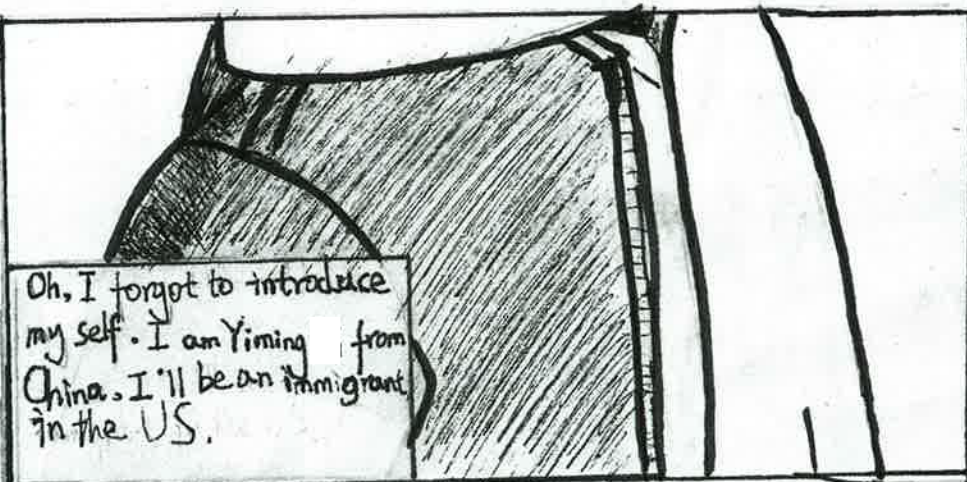
EXIT →



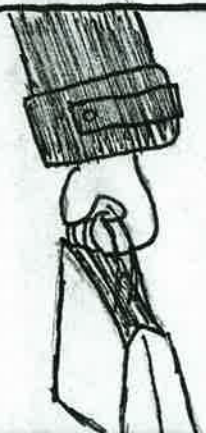
Even now, I can't have a chance to say good-bye because here is Tokyo, not GZ.



Here is Tokyo Japan. I came here for taking plane to the US. Maybe it's not funny at all, I have to leave China to the US.

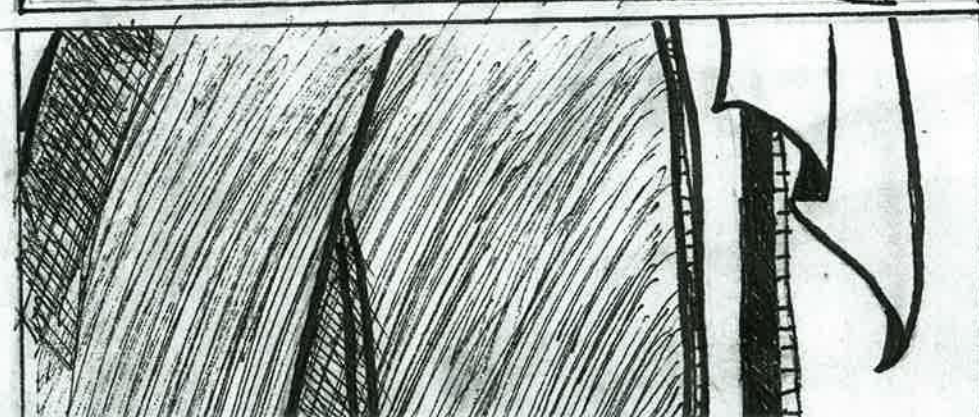


Oh, I forgot to introduce my self. I am Yiming from China. I'll be an immigrant in the US.

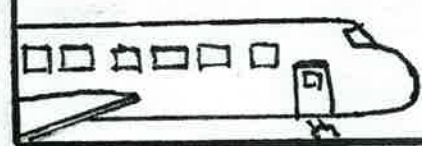


Just like traveling I bought something for me, for my friends. But..... who will get it?

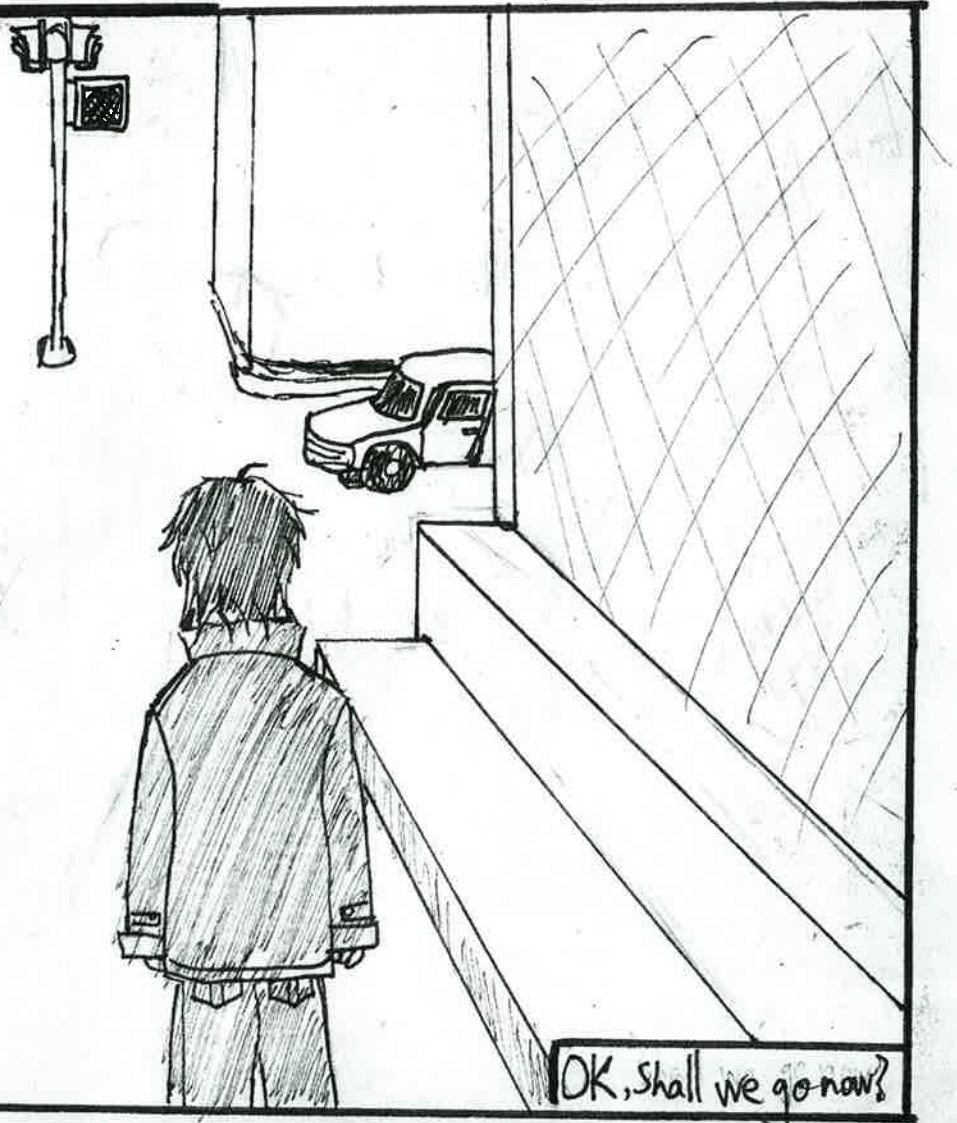
Thank you very much!



I come to Tokyo, Japan. I'll go to the United States. In the US, I'll have a new life, new friends, new experiences.



Maybe it's painful, but I want to have a try!



OK, shall we go now?



New Life, New Beginning.

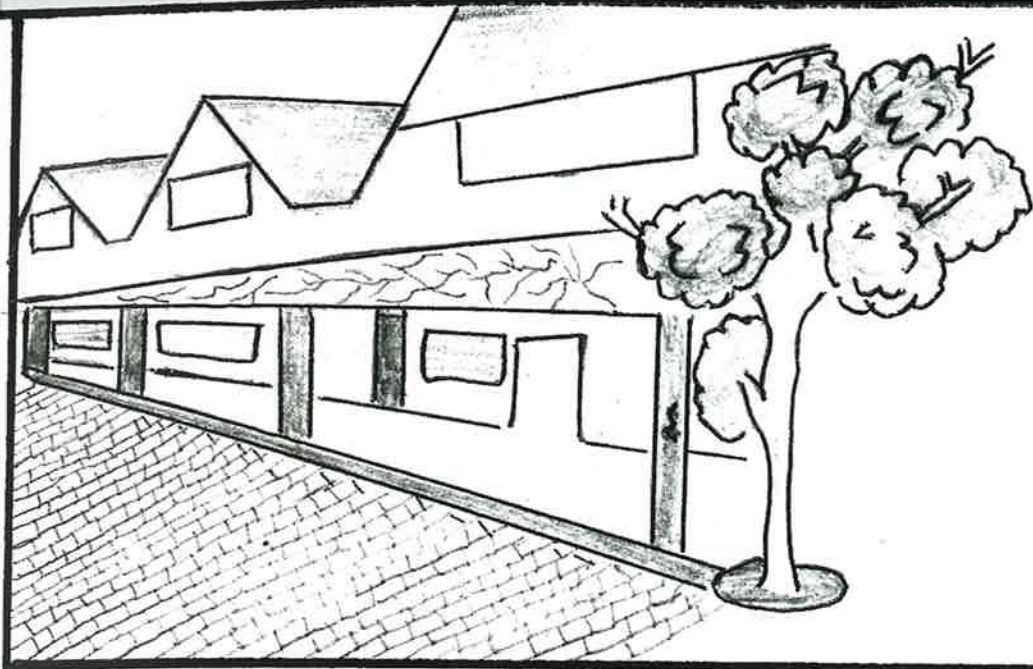
HOW MY LIFE CHANGED



HEY MY NAME IS LUIS, I AM FROM GUATEMALA.



THIS IS MY HOUSE IN GUATEMALA. REALLY I MISS MY COUNTRY, BECAUSE FOR ME EVERYTHING WAS NICE LIKE FRIENDS, FOOD, TRADITIONS, CLOTHES AND PARTY. I MISS MY COUNTRY.



THIS WAS MY SCHOOL IN GUATEMALA. IN THIS SCHOOL THE STUDENTS WERE HAPPY BECAUSE THE TEACHERS WERE REALLY NICE.



WHAT PLEASE NO!!!

MY FATHER DECIDED TO COME TO U.S.A BECAUSE HIS MANAGER CALLED MY FATHER, AND SAID 'I DON'T HAVE ANY MORE WORK FOR YOU; I AM SORRY.'

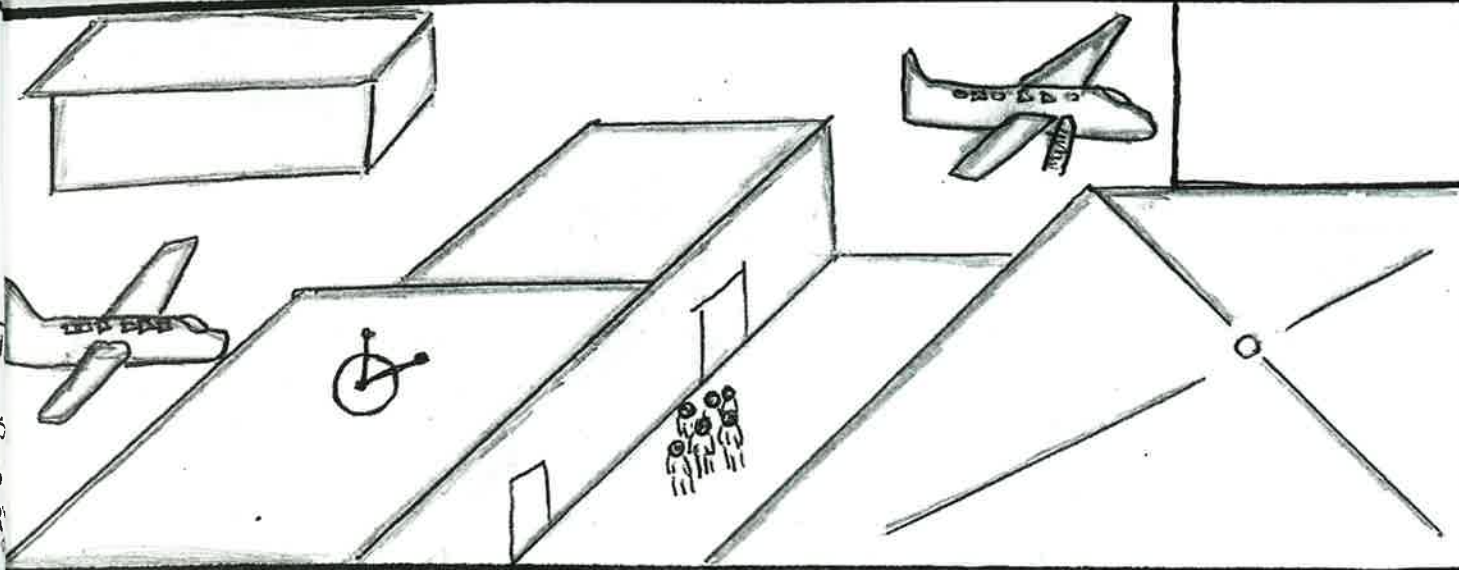


WHEN MY FATHER LEFT TO THE U.S.A ME AND MY FAMILY KNOW DIDN'T HOW MUCH TIME HE NEED TO STAY IN THERE WE WERE REALLY SAD AND SCARED BECAUSE WE ALREADY KNOW THAT GOING TO THE U.S.A WAS SCARY AND DANGEROUS.

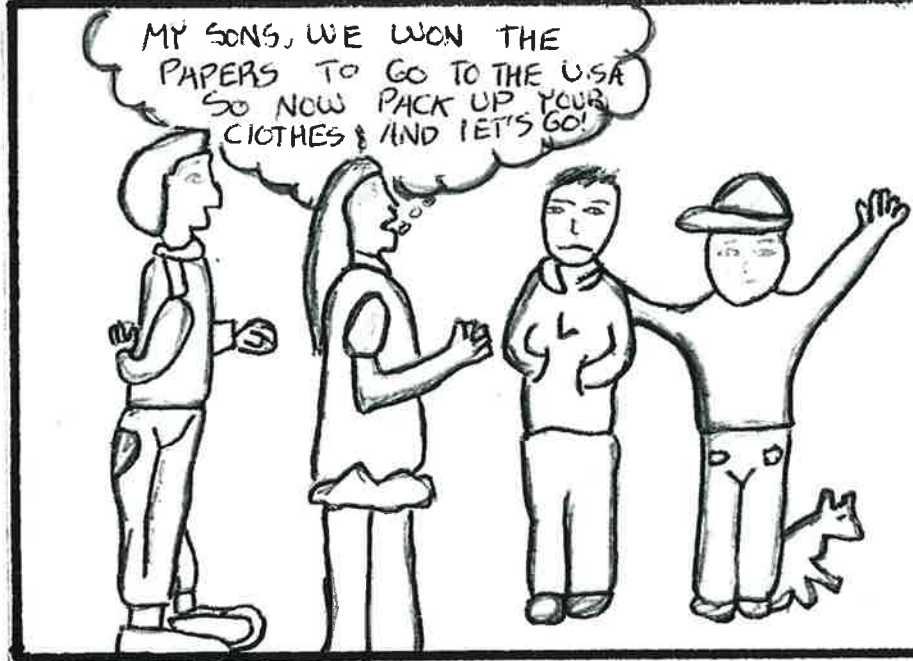
THIS IS HOW MY FATHER IMMIGRATED TO THE U.S.A. I DON'T LIKE THIS TIME BECAUSE MY FATHER SUFFERED SO MUCH.



IN 2009 MY FATHER CALLED MY MOM AND THE SURPRISE WAS: MY FATHER WON THE LOTTERY FOR MY FAMILY. TO COME TO U.S.



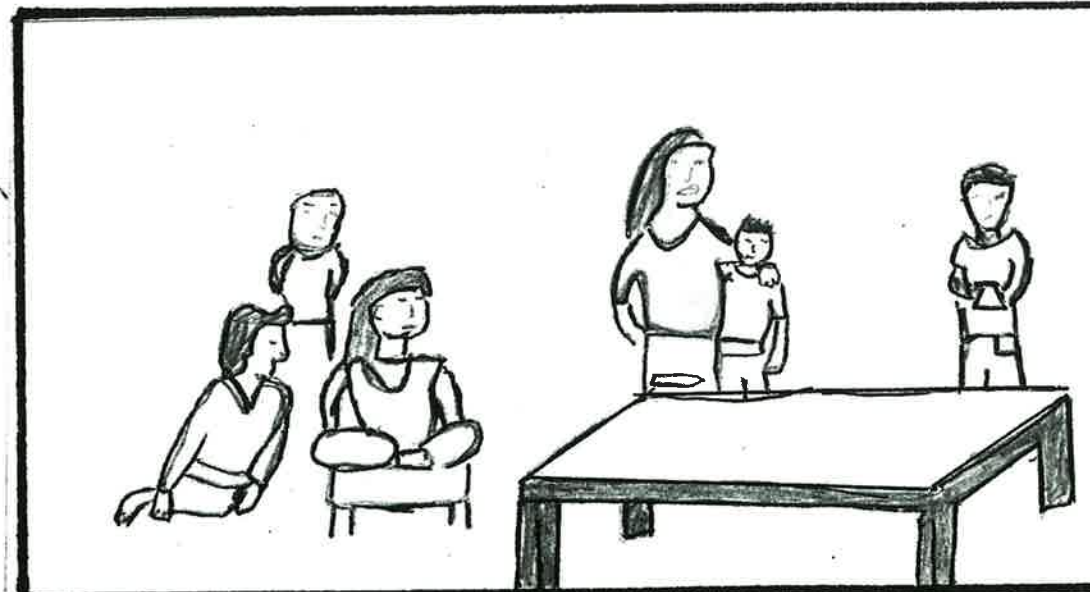
HERE IS WHEN ME AND MY FAMILY TOOK THE AIRPLANE FROM THE AIRPORT. THE REST OF MY FAMILY WAS SO SAD BECAUSE IT WAS OUR LAST DAY IN GUATEMALA.



MY MOM FELT HAPPY BECAUSE WE ALREADY KNEW THAT THE U.S.A HAS A BETTER FUTURE BUT WE WERE ALSO SAD BECAUSE MY RELATIVES STAYED BACK HOME.



WHEN WE WERE FLYING IN THE SKY MY BROTHERS AND SISTER WERE TALKING ABOUT THE U.S.A REALLY I WAS SO SAD FOR MY COUNTRY.

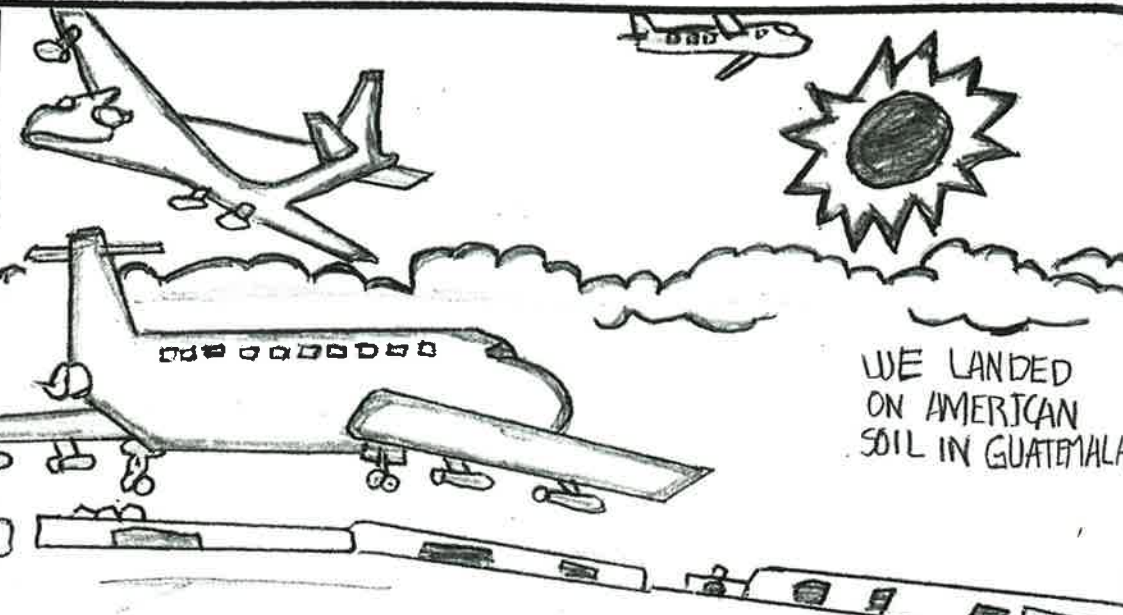


THIS IS HOW MY FAMILY DID THE LAST DINNER. MY MOM MADE OUR FAVORITE FOODS. REALLY THE FOOD WAS DELICIOUS AND WAS THE LAST DINNER IN MY HOME



HERE IS HOW MY FAMILY IN GUATEMALA FELT SO SAD WHEN WE MOVED TO OTHER COUNTRY

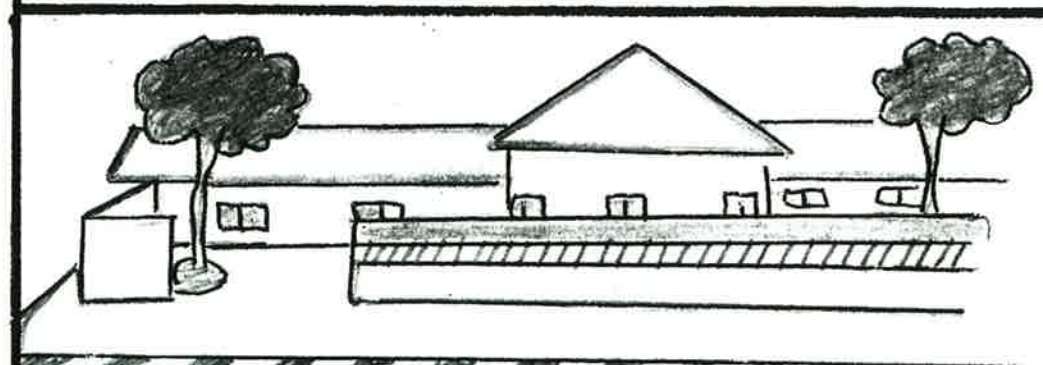
HERE IS WHEN WE CAME TO THE U.S.A IN THE AIRPORT.



WE LANDED ON AMERICAN SOIL IN GUATEMALA



NOW WE ARE LIVING IN OAKLAND, C.A. REALLY I LIKE THE NEW COUNTRY AND MY HOUSE BECAUSE THIS COUNTRY HAS MANY OPPORTUNITIES.

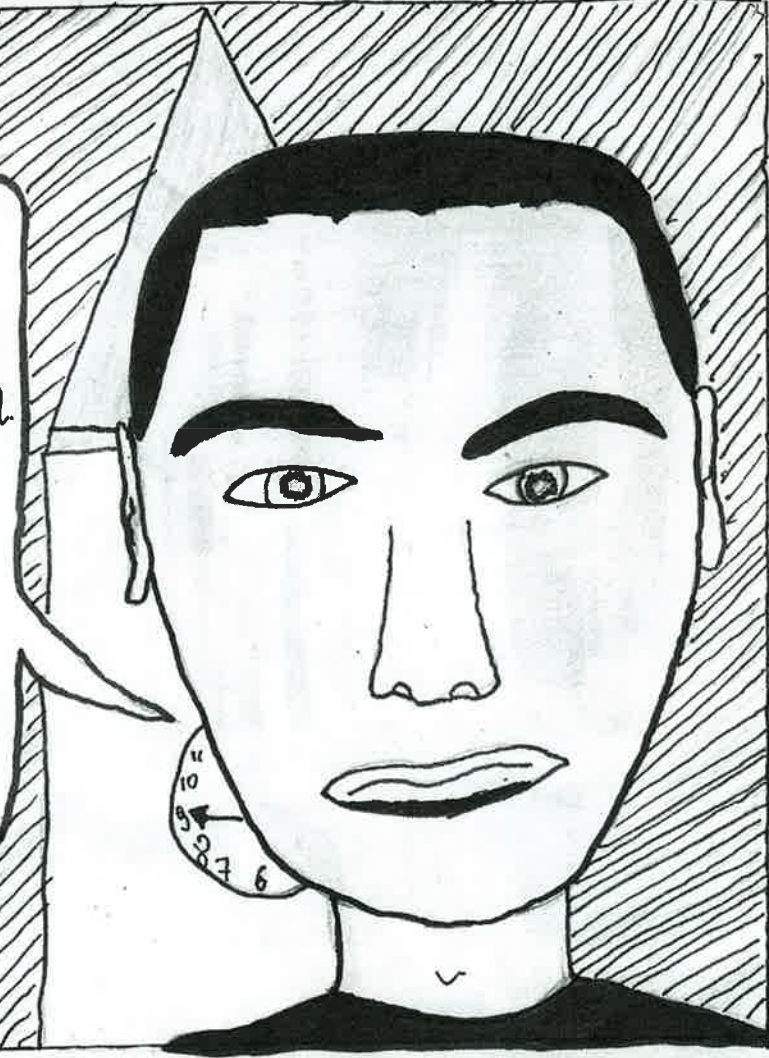


THIS IS NOW MY NEW SCHOOL. IT'S THE BEST, FOR ME THE BEST, BECAUSE NOW I AM LEARNING SO MUCH. GOOD FRIENDS AND NICE TEACHERS. I LOVE MY SCHOOL. NOW I AM READY TO FIGHT FOR MY DREAM TO BECOME IN U.S.A MY DREAM BE CHEF.



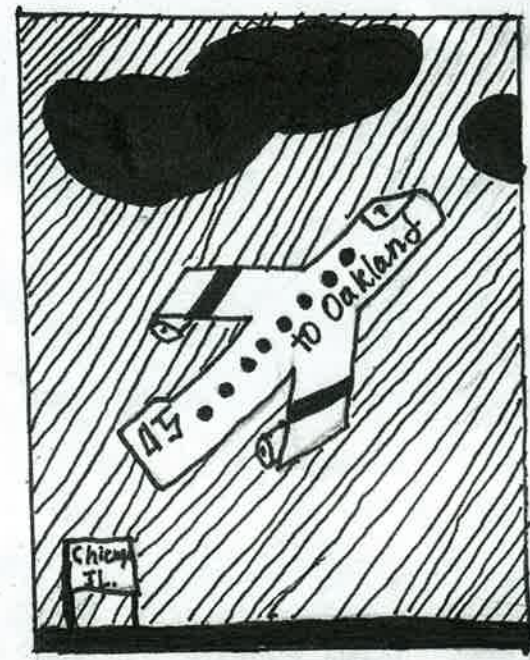
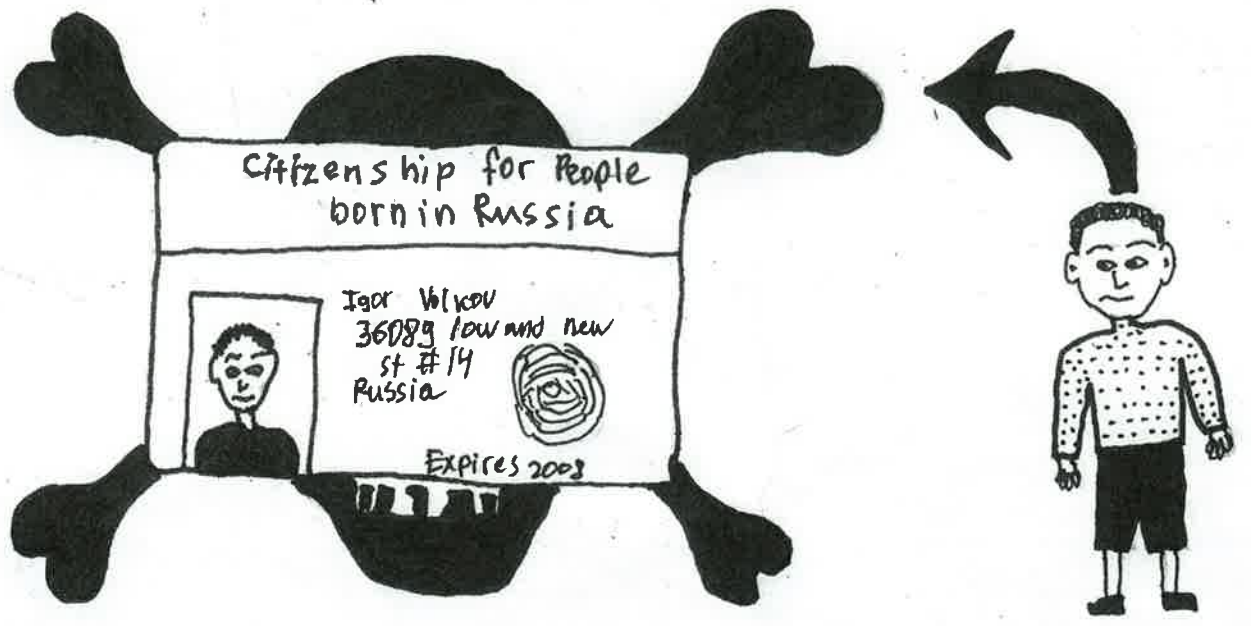
NOW I AM READY TO STRIVE FOR MY DREAM TO BECOME A CHEF IN THE U.S.A

Hello, My name is Rustam. I'm from Krasnodar, Russia.



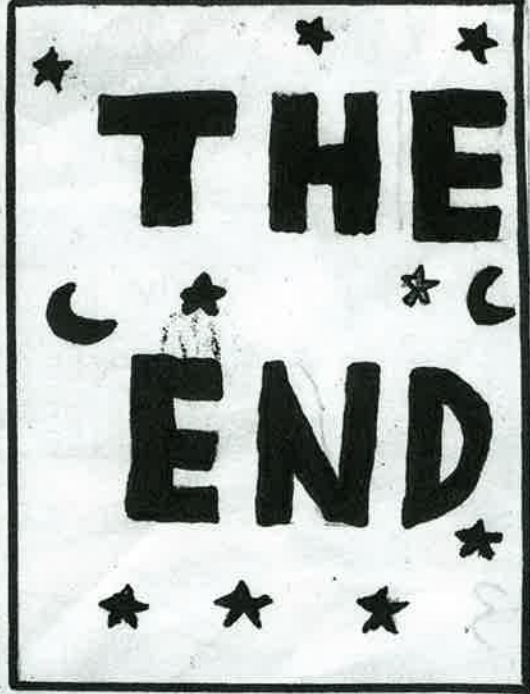
My story is about my Immigration from Russia to the U.S. When I was in Russia, a lot of people were racist to Turkish people.

When I left Russia, I was only 13 years old.
 Turkish people left because the government won't issue citizenship to Turkish people or kids who were born in Russia or outside of Russia

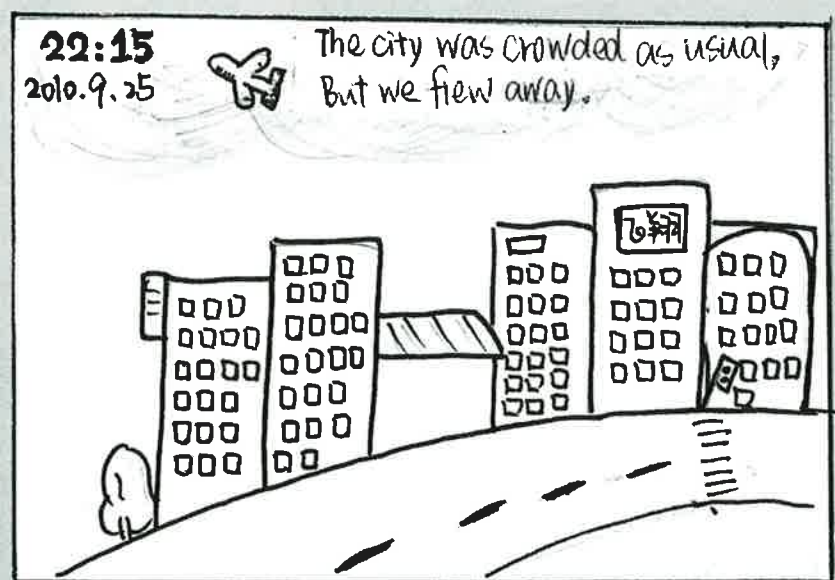
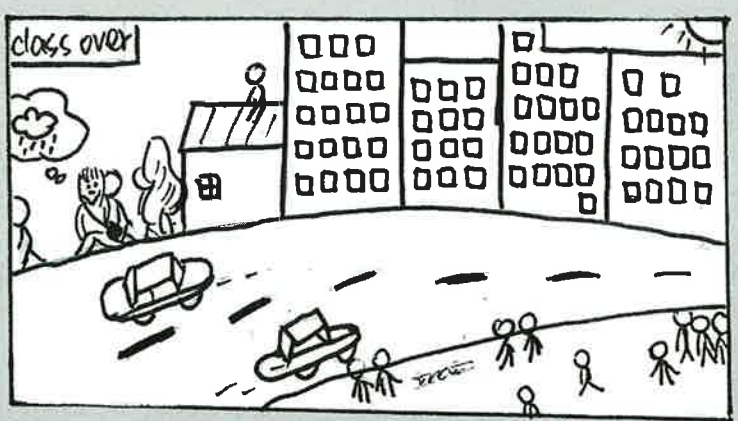
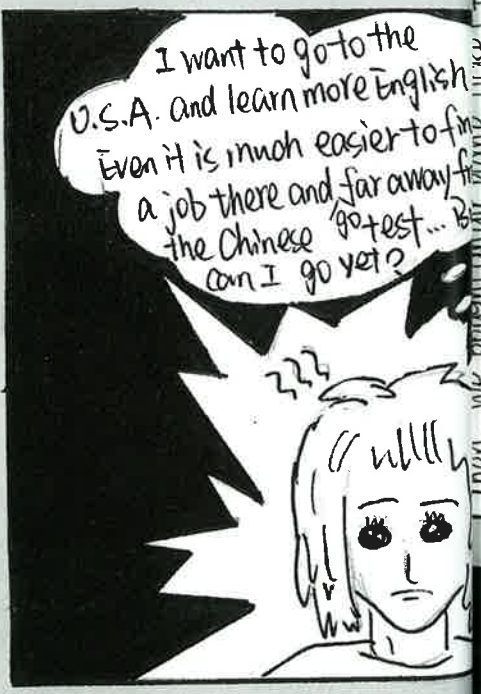
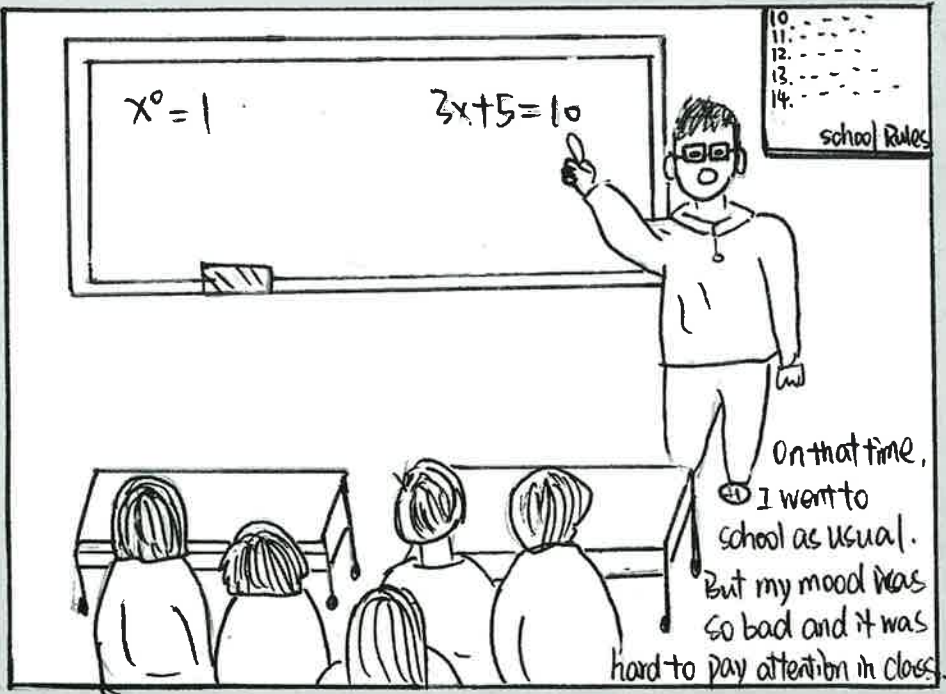
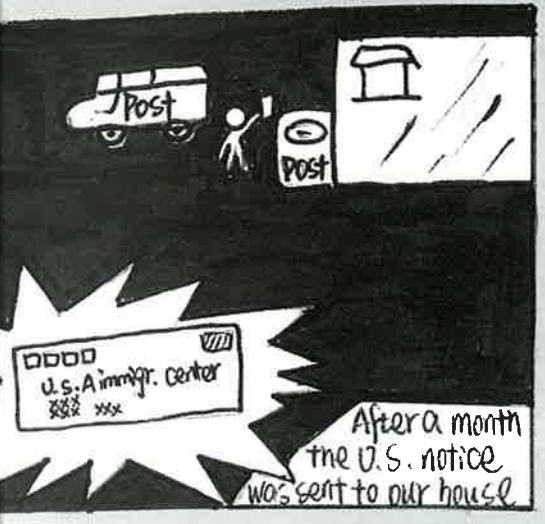


Me and my family felt happy when we saw all that.
 Later we took another plane from Chicago to Oakland.

One day someone came to our house and told us that we could go to the U.S as refugees. We signed up for that program. Three months later, the U.S accepted us.



My Memory By Liang Elaine





Golden Gate Bridge.

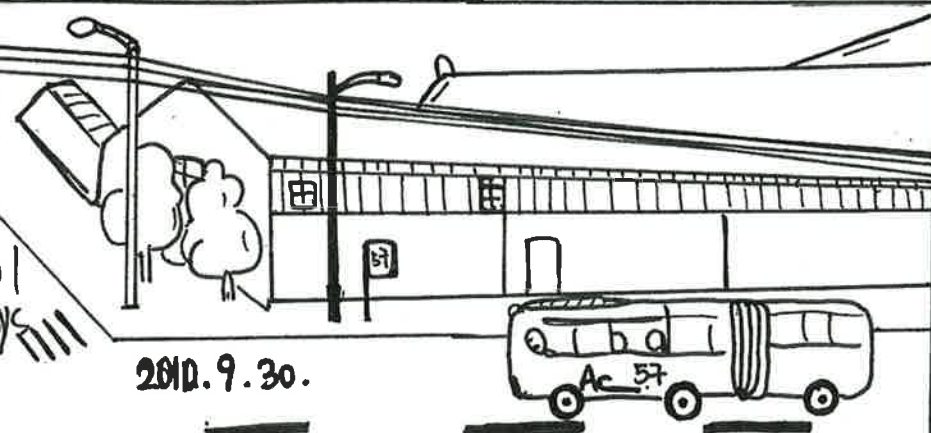
I was excited when I stepped on the land in the U.S. And it seemed like that I was in a dream when I saw the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco.



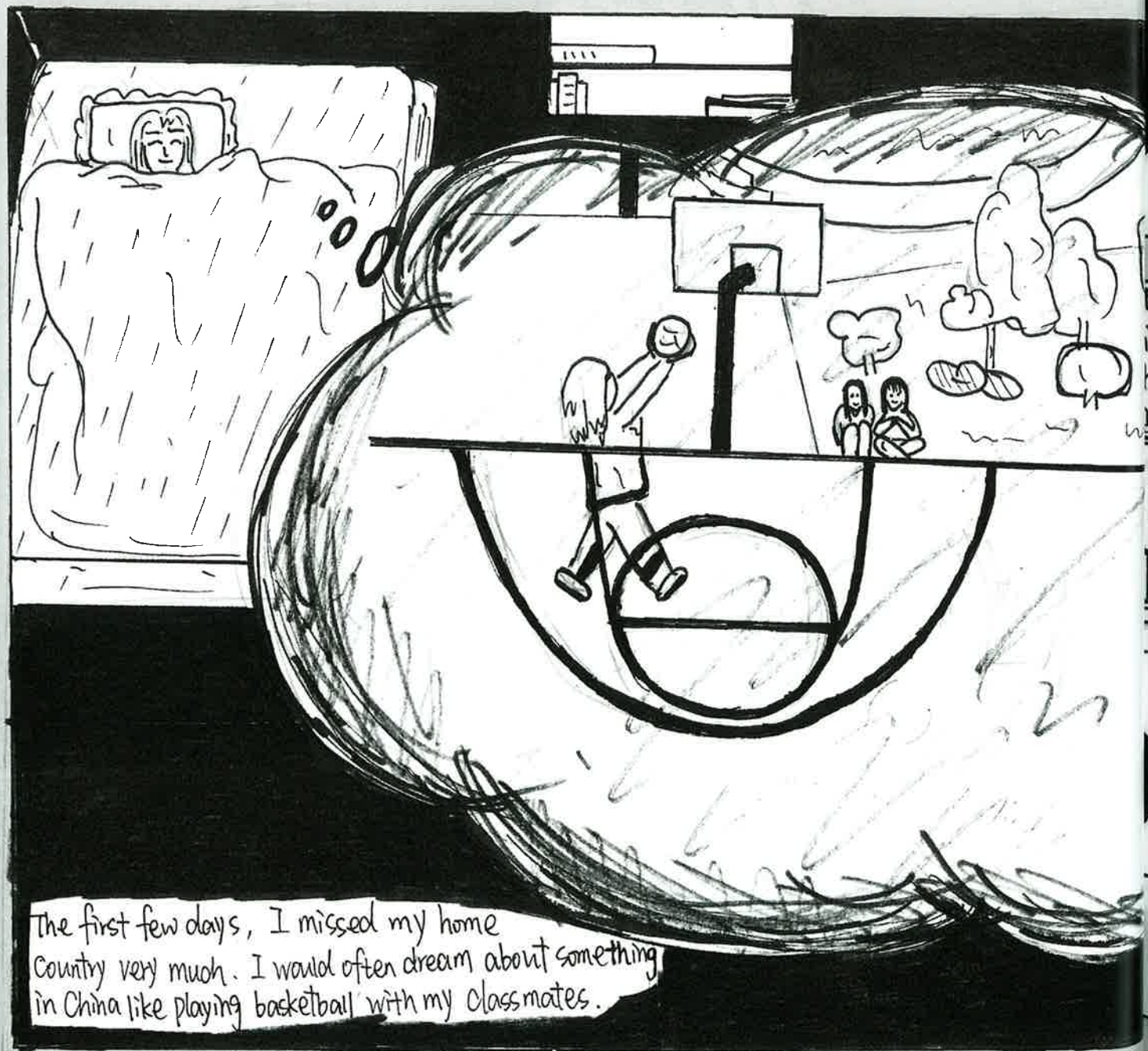
(The time difference between China and the U.S is 16 hours.)

For several days, I could not adjust to the new time. I felt listless and dizzy, so I slept all the time like a lazy boy.

OIHS Oakland International High School is the first school of mine in the United States. I take the bus 57 to go to school about half hour. But the 57 always is late and crowded.



2010.9.30.

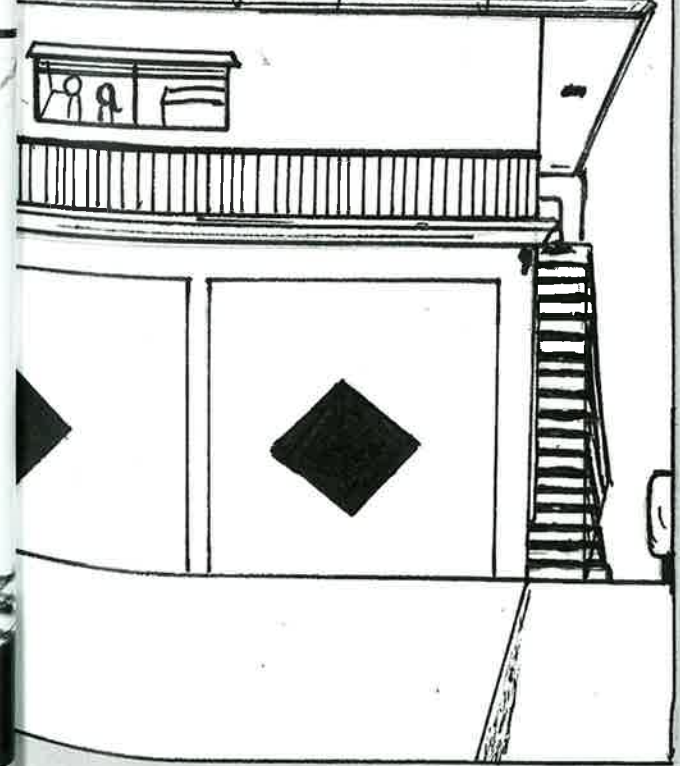


The first few days, I missed my home country very much. I would often dream about something in China like playing basketball with my classmates.



I felt scared and excited to come OIHS. Because there are many kinds of languages, different faces (skins)....

This is a part of my house in Oakland, in the U.S., it is smaller than my old house, but nice. Also I miss that I can hear birds sing every morning.

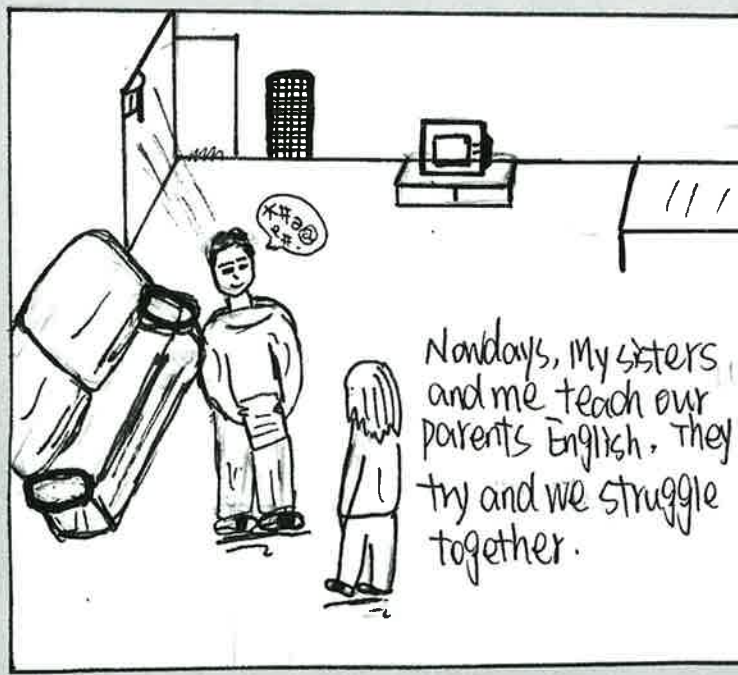


My parents don't know English. It is hard for them to communicate with others. They must find a job where the boss is Chinese.

Excuse me, Can... can... where is Chinatown??

I am sorry! I don't know what you mean...

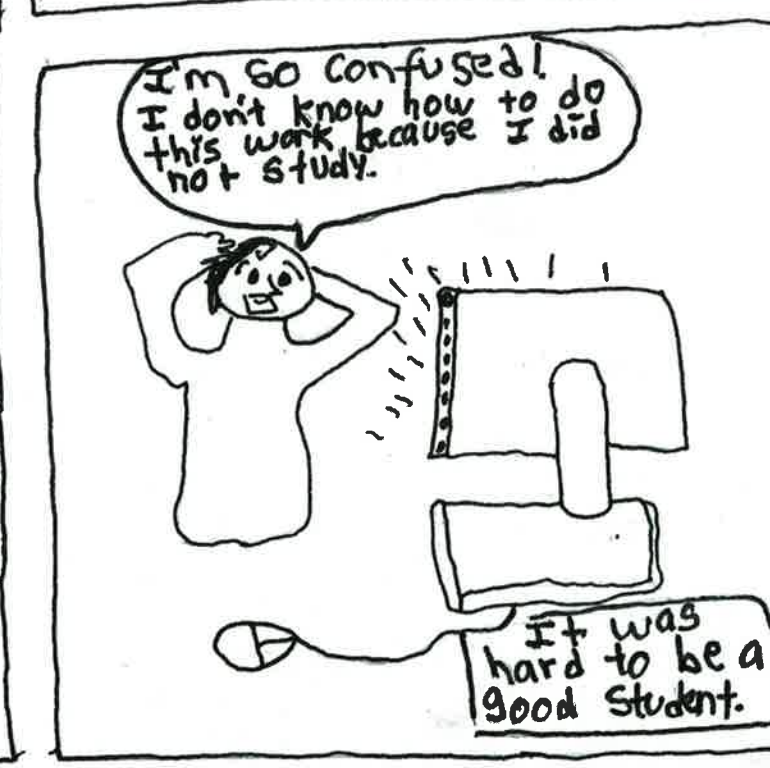
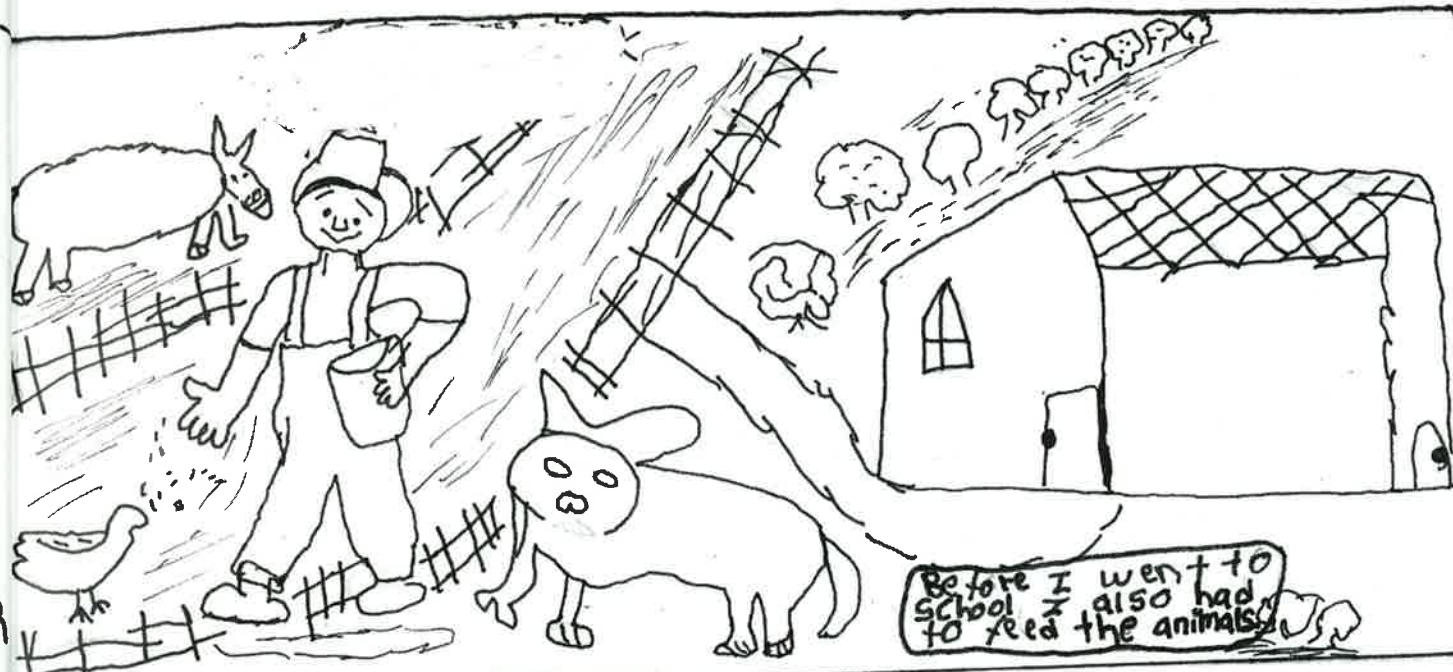
Can you say again please?



Nowdays, My sisters and me teach our parents English. They try and we struggle together.

FARMER TO SCHOOLAR Jonathan?

ELSALVADOR





History of Nepal & Bhutan

Story/Art by Jharna Subba

I am Jharna from Nepal. I immigrated to the U.S.A in 2010.

Hi, Now I will tell you the history of Nepal & Bhutan.

I wonder how many pages do I need to finish this story?

I was born in Nepal, but my parents were born in Bhutan.

My dad used to work in the forest department in Bhutan.

Can you pick up all the dust?

He took care of the forest.

They all were living fine, but suddenly the king of Bhutan told Nepalese people to leave his country because they didn't speak Bhutanese language, they had different culture & etc... People felt betrayed by the king, so they started to protest against the king.



Time passed, but the king instead started to torture our people & also killed some people.



They had no choice but to leave Bhutan to be safe.

We have to get out of here. What do you think?

Of course! so that we can start our new life somewhere else.

But what about our home & land?

Let's pack our things.



My mom & dad were sad because they had to leave all their properties that they have worked really hard on.

Then, everyone started to move to Nepal. My parents traveled by train with other people.



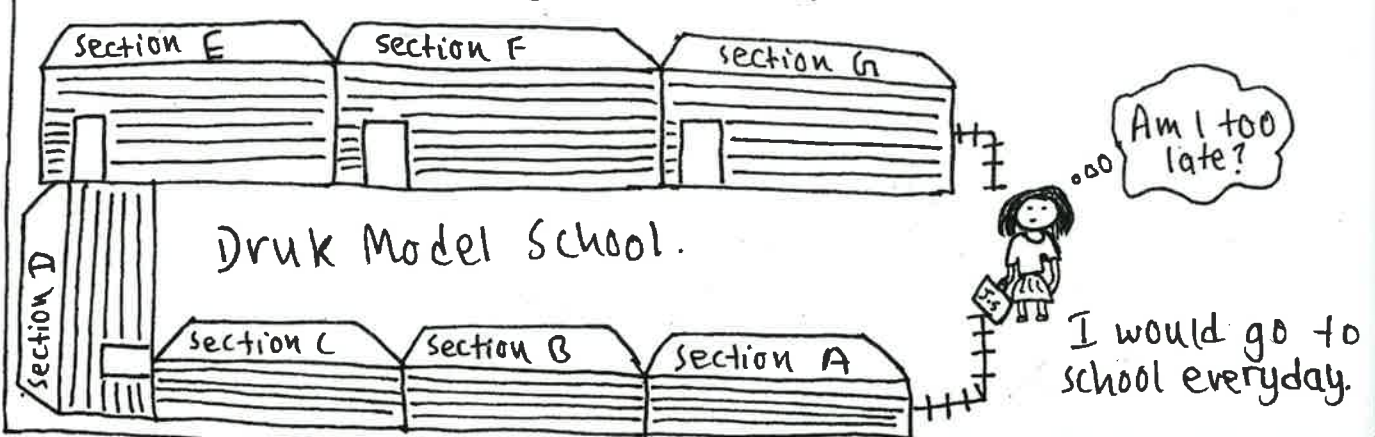
Soon, they found a place to live. They all started to live in a Refugee camp.



After that, my mom gave birth to my sister and brother and finally I was born.



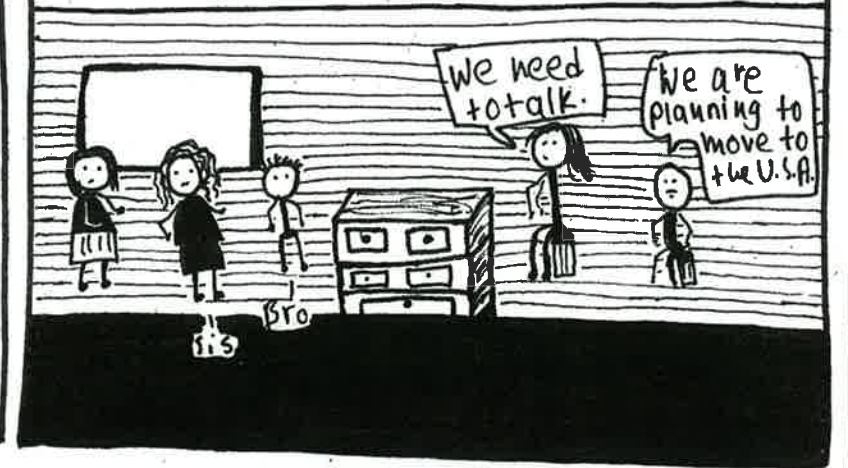
As we lived together with our neighbors, we became more close. It was fun living with them.



Many years later, there were rumors that the U.S. government would bring us here if we want.



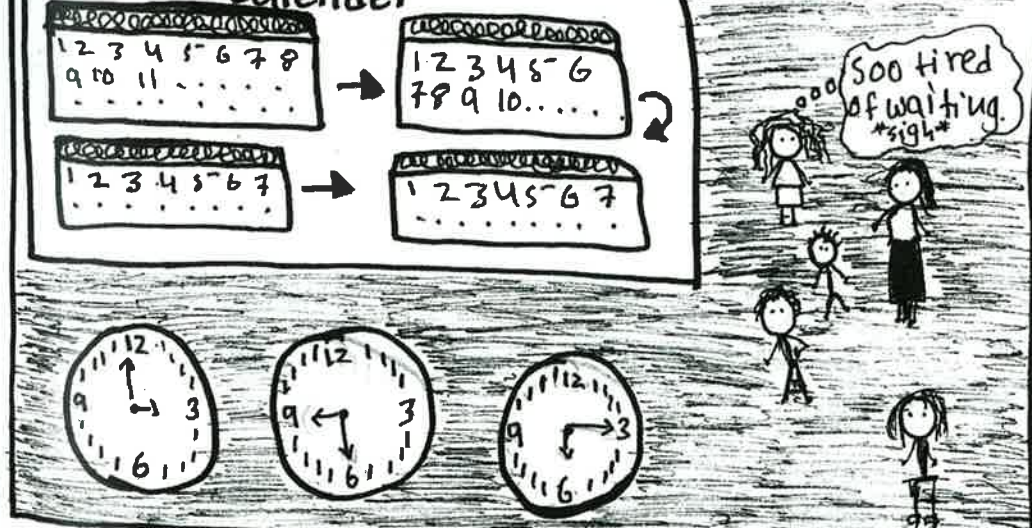
This moment was some thing I couldn't ever imagine.



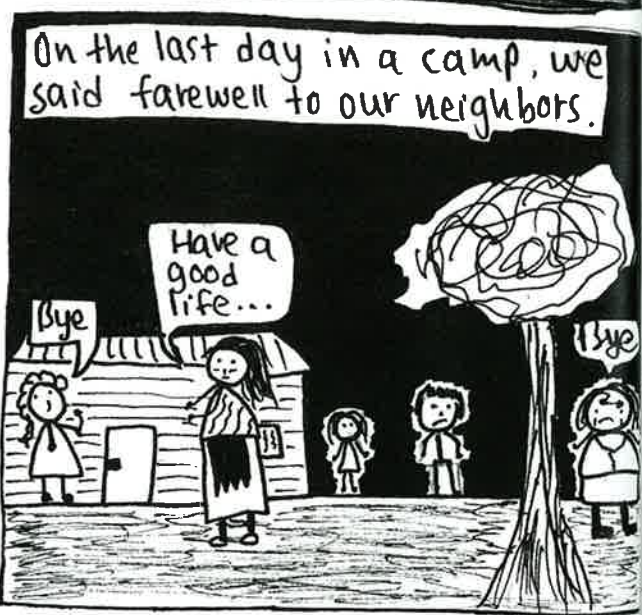
I felt terrible when I thought about leaving my friends and our neighbors.



We waited for more than 1 year before the paper work for us to move to the U.S.A was ready.



I knew why my parents wanted to move to the U.S.A. Every parent wants their children to have a better future.





Hi, My Name is Govinda Shrestha
Actually I was born in Bhutan
Bhutanese Government chased us to
Nepal as a refugee.....

This is my family
First one is my Dad,
Second one is my mom
and last one is me



Our house is made of
bamboo and thatched
roof. People bring some
firewood to cook food
from jungle.



This is a school of my country
Our school is made of bamboo
and thatched roof.



My mom
is cooking
rice

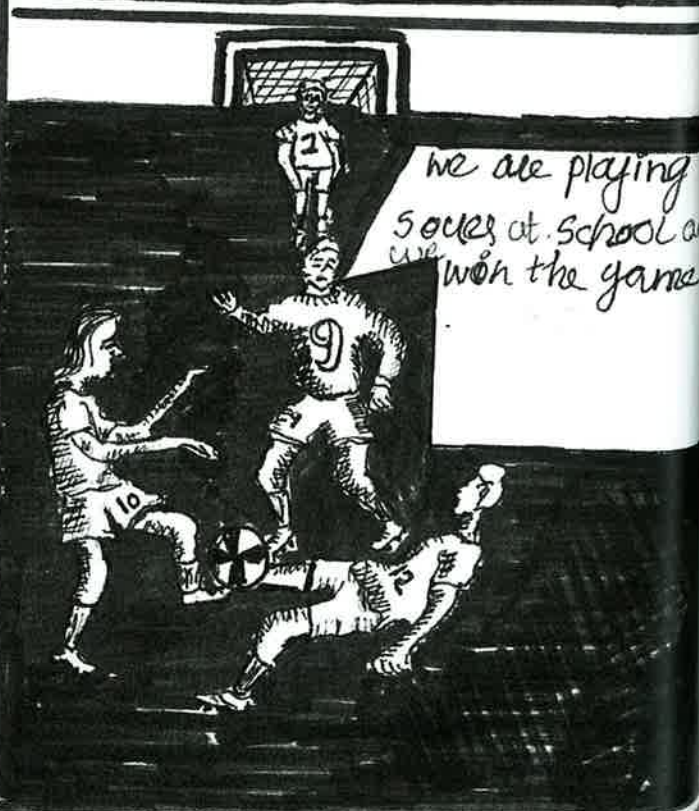
We are eating
food as a family



Ration store UNHCR
is helping us to get
food to eat.



This is a picture
of my school teacher
teaching in our
country



We are playing
soccer at school and
we won the game



In our country 1 person
gets 6 pounds of
rice.



People mostly
carry rice on
the bicycle
but poor people
carry on their
heads

This is the festival
in my country. We
use dancing in
a group with
my friends



My sister is putting
tika on my forehead



In our country
they use
fire to play
around with
friends.



They also
eat meat
at the
festival.



And we sell the meat to
others.



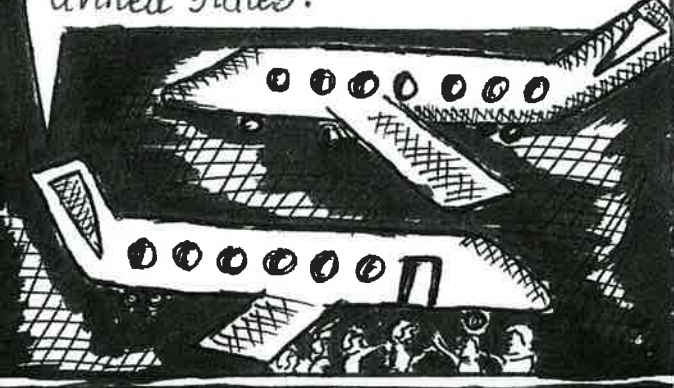
This is my first day in the I.O.M. so we
need to show our documents to the I.O.M
officer.



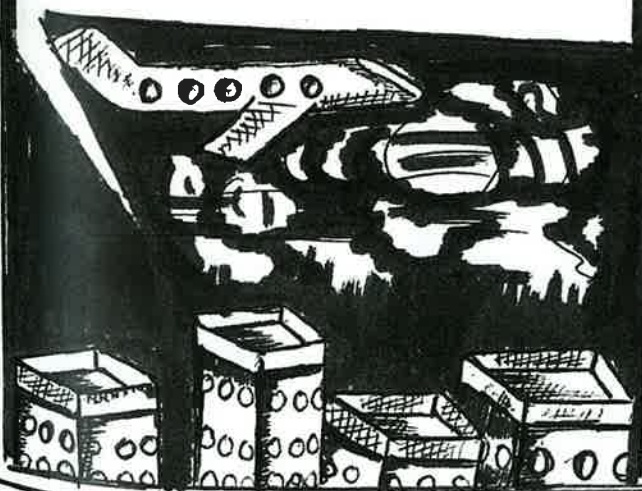
We are leaving our
camp and going
to the airport.



This is the airport of Nepal.
We are ready to come to the
United States.



We left Nepal and going to the
United States. are



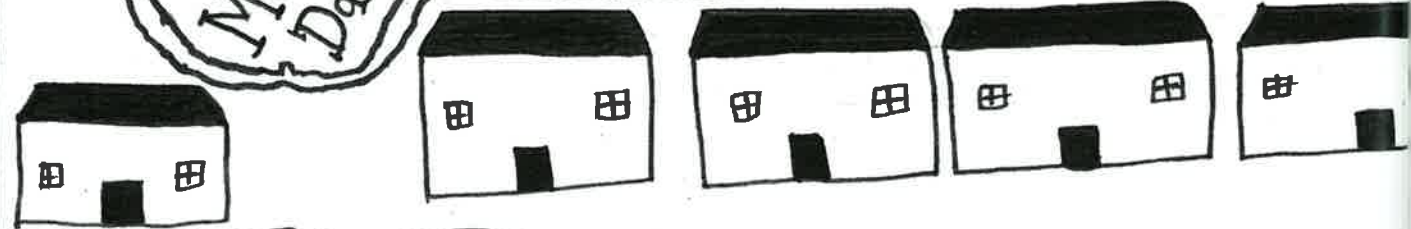
Finally, I ^{have} arrive
in the United
States my sister
are coming to
pick up in the
airport.



GOOD BYE NEPAL HELLO U.S.A

शुद्ध
बुद्ध
Madhavi
Dahal

We used to live in a Refugee camp because we didn't have a good house to live in. It was so sad because we were very poor.



She is my lovely mom

We have decided to go to the USA

Yes! Where are we going ??!!!!

We don't know that place, it is in Oakland CA.

OMG we don't know that place?

A few days later, we left for the US. I felt so sad when I left my house and my country.

bye

Good bye every one.

Good bye every one.

We arrived at the Airport with my little brother, little sister, my mom, and me.

OMG!

AirPlane

Soon, we were inside the plane. The airplane started to fly. I was so scared because it was my first time in an airplane.

OMG maybe the Airplane will fall down.

45 minutes later, we touched down at Kathmandu Airport.

MOM! Where are we now?

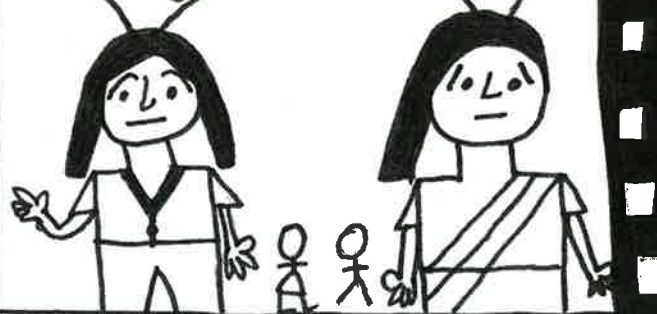
ohh! we are in Kathmandu Airport.

We stayed in Kathmandu for 3 days. It was so hard to live there because we didn't know the place. After 3 days we came to Oakland, CA.



Mom! What is that long thing?

ohh! maybe it's a tall house?



One month later, I had to go to school. The first day, someone from the IRC [International Rescue Committee] took me, but the second day, my dad took me.



We got lost. Luckily, my friend saw me and took me to school.



Finally, we arrived in Oakland. It is so different from my country

A = Apartment



Okay this is your house.

Okay thanks a lot.

Okay baby, let's go and see our house.

A=C	A=D
A=A	A=B

Later, in the classroom everybody was talking but not me because I didn't know English. When I needed help, someone who spoke my language had to translate for me. I felt so sad that day.



Oh my god what am I gonna do. I don't understand what they are talking about. I wanna know English.

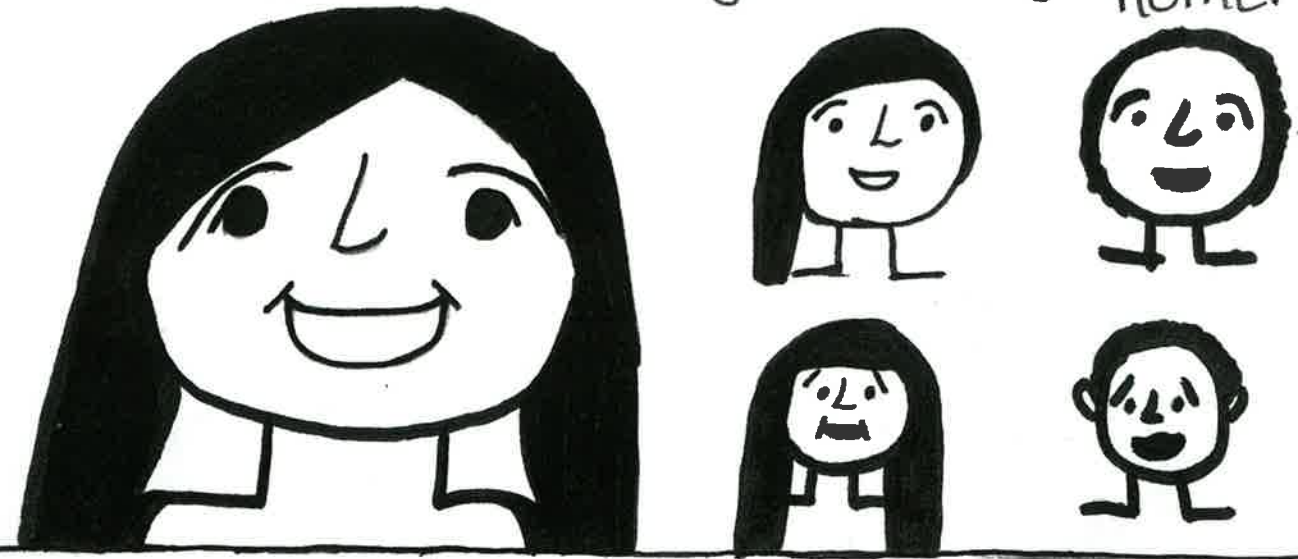
After school, I had to go home by myself. I didn't know where to go but my friends took me to my house. I'm thankful to my friends.



Hello my name is Tu Tu and I'm from Thailand Mae La refugee camp. My story is about immigration from Thailand to the U.S.



Later at home, I told my family I got lost going to school. They all laughed and I never got lost again. Every body is happy in my family. Everybody is in my home.



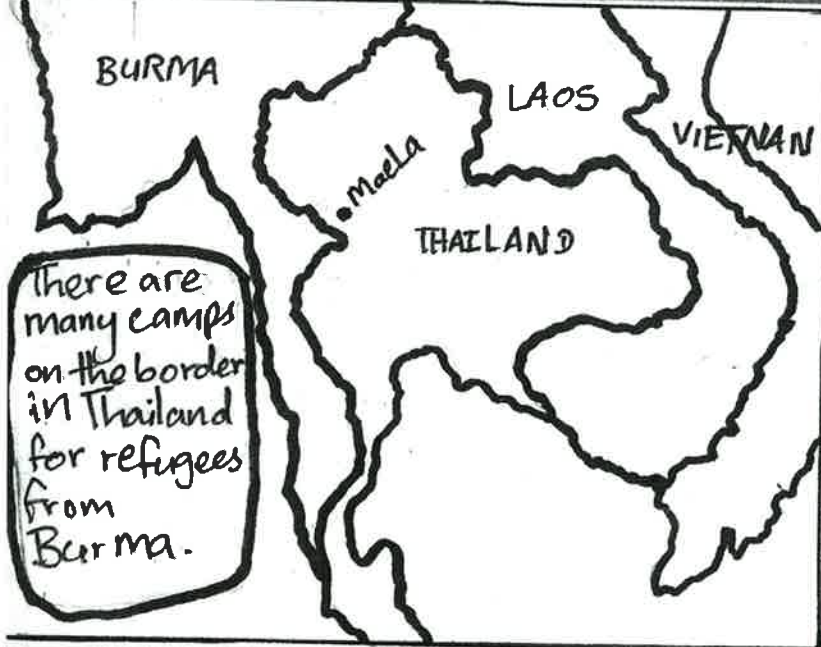
In Mae La camp sometimes the rain is too strong and knocks down trees onto the road. The trucks can't come through and we have no food to eat. Sometimes floods the houses and destroys our homes.



LIFE IN MAE LA CAMP

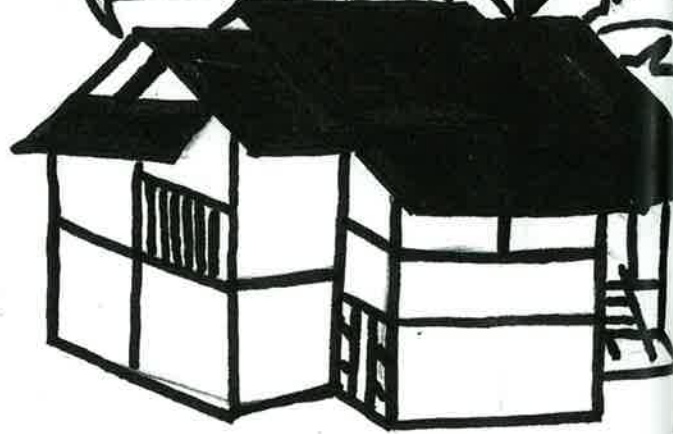


Maela camp is too big. There are many houses and too many people in the camp.

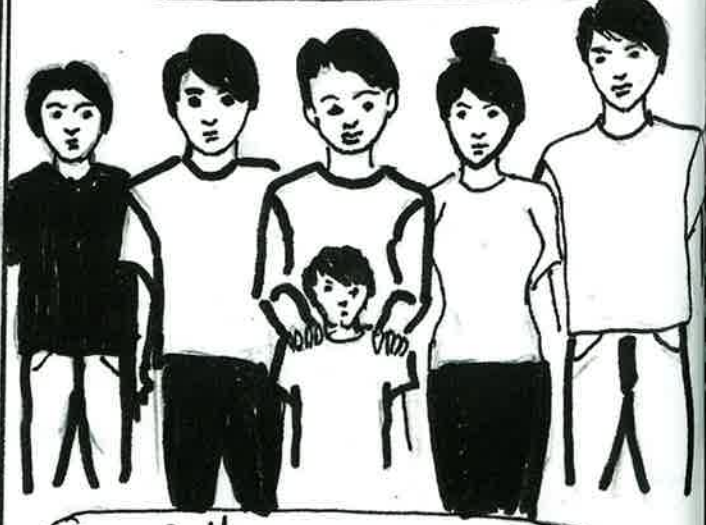


There are many camps on the border in Thailand for refugees from Burma.

I came to the camp when I was 9 years old.

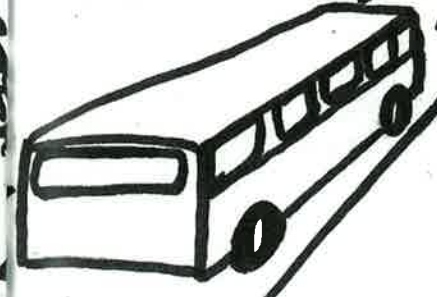


my family in Thailand



my father, mother and five sons.

We left for the U.S. on 7, 18, 07 I was 17 years old.



It was my first time in an airplane.



This a map to show you the places we flew to.

When I came to the U.S. I saw many things. I have a new life, new friends and a new place in U.S.



Right now I'm a student. I'm getting education. I hope when I finish high school I will go to college. My dream is to be a good person.



The UN gave food to people in the camp.



MY Life in Burma and Thailand Eh Mu.



In Burma, my family used to swim in the river.

In Burma, my mom and dad were farmers.



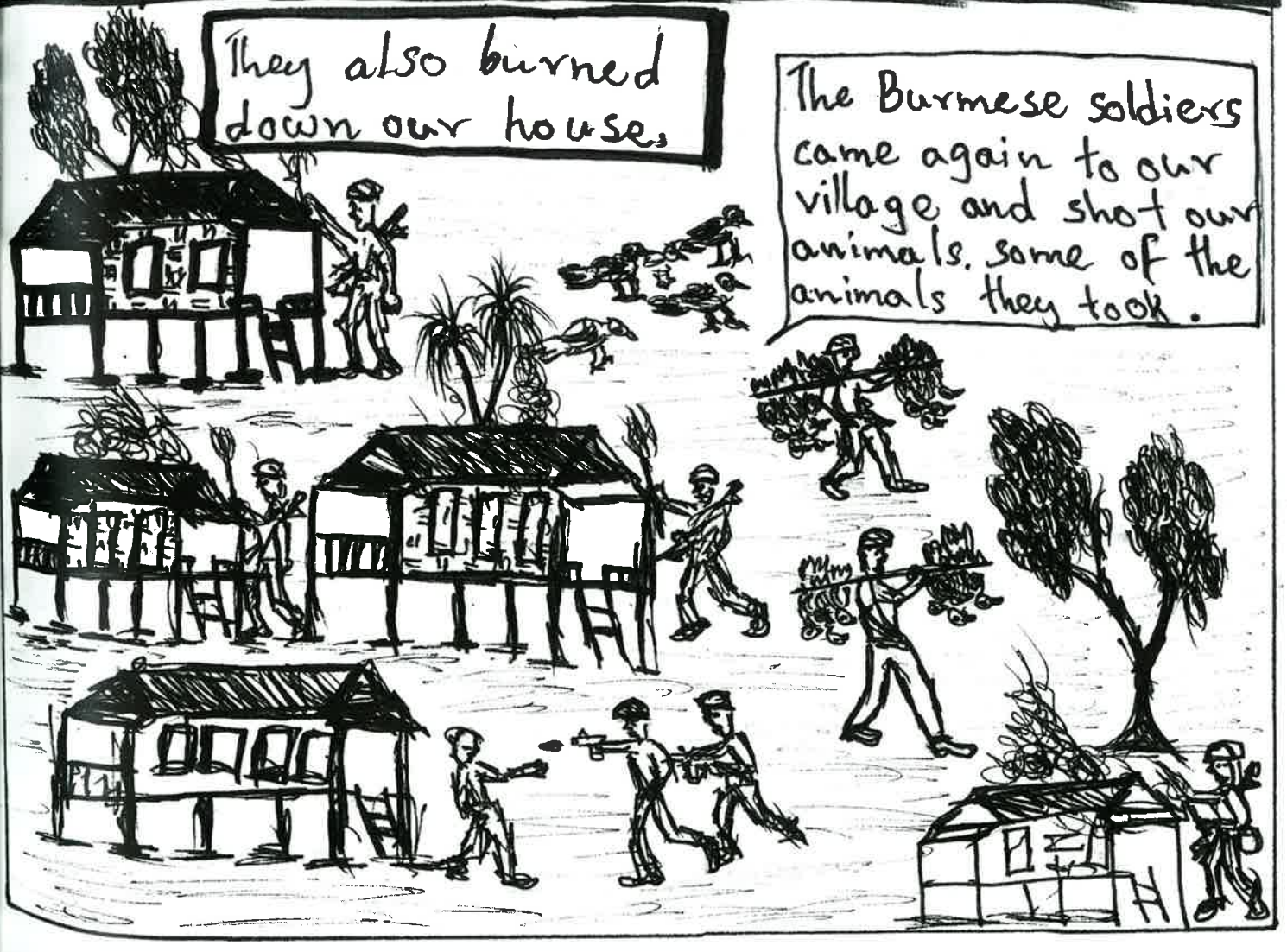
In Burma, we had chickens, ducks and cows.

My father herded the cows and came home in the evening.

Me and my brothers played soccer together.



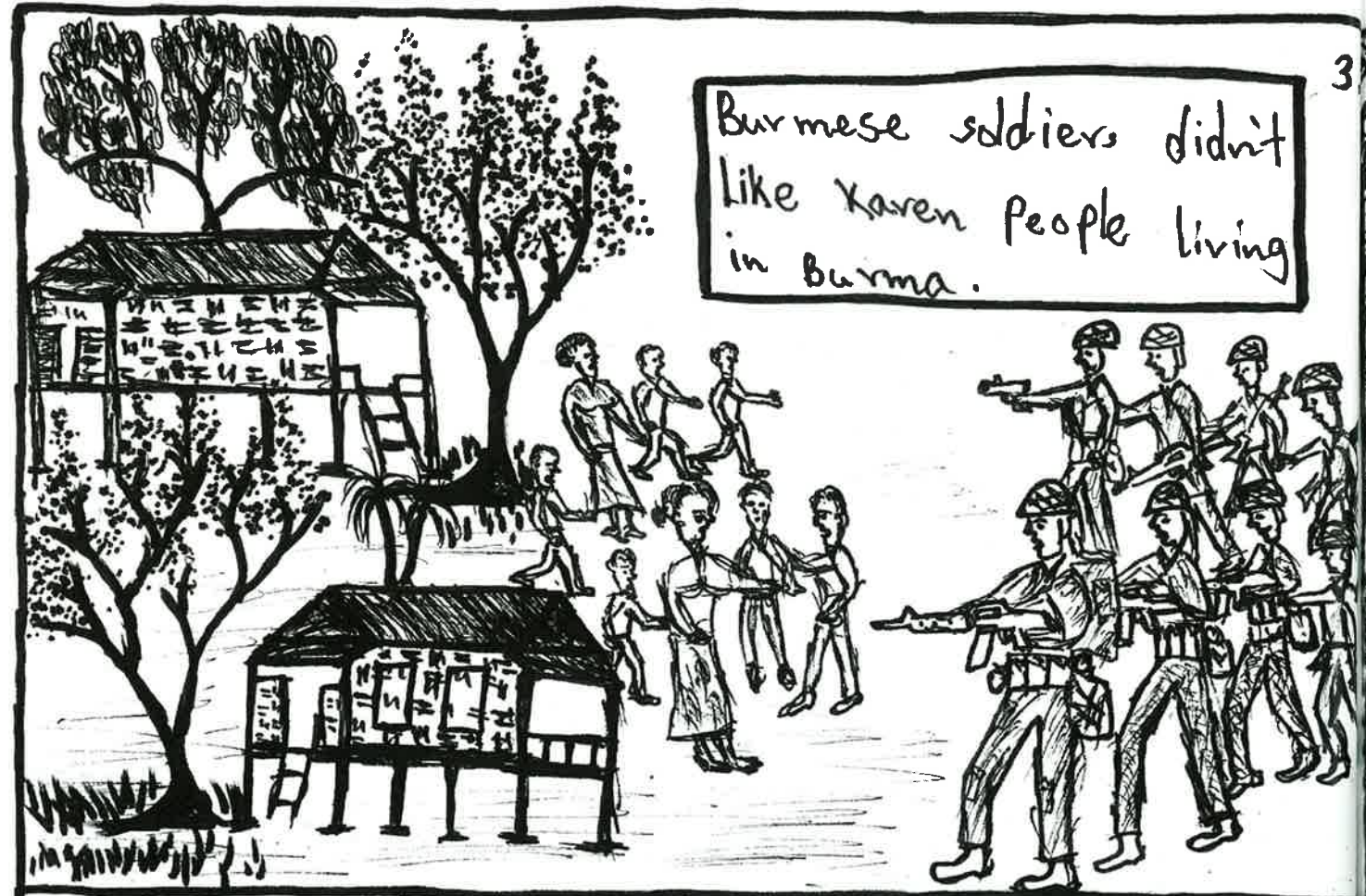
One day, Burmese soldiers with guns came to our house. They demanded money from my mom.



They also burned down our houses.

The Burmese soldiers came again to our village and shot our animals. Some of the animals they took.

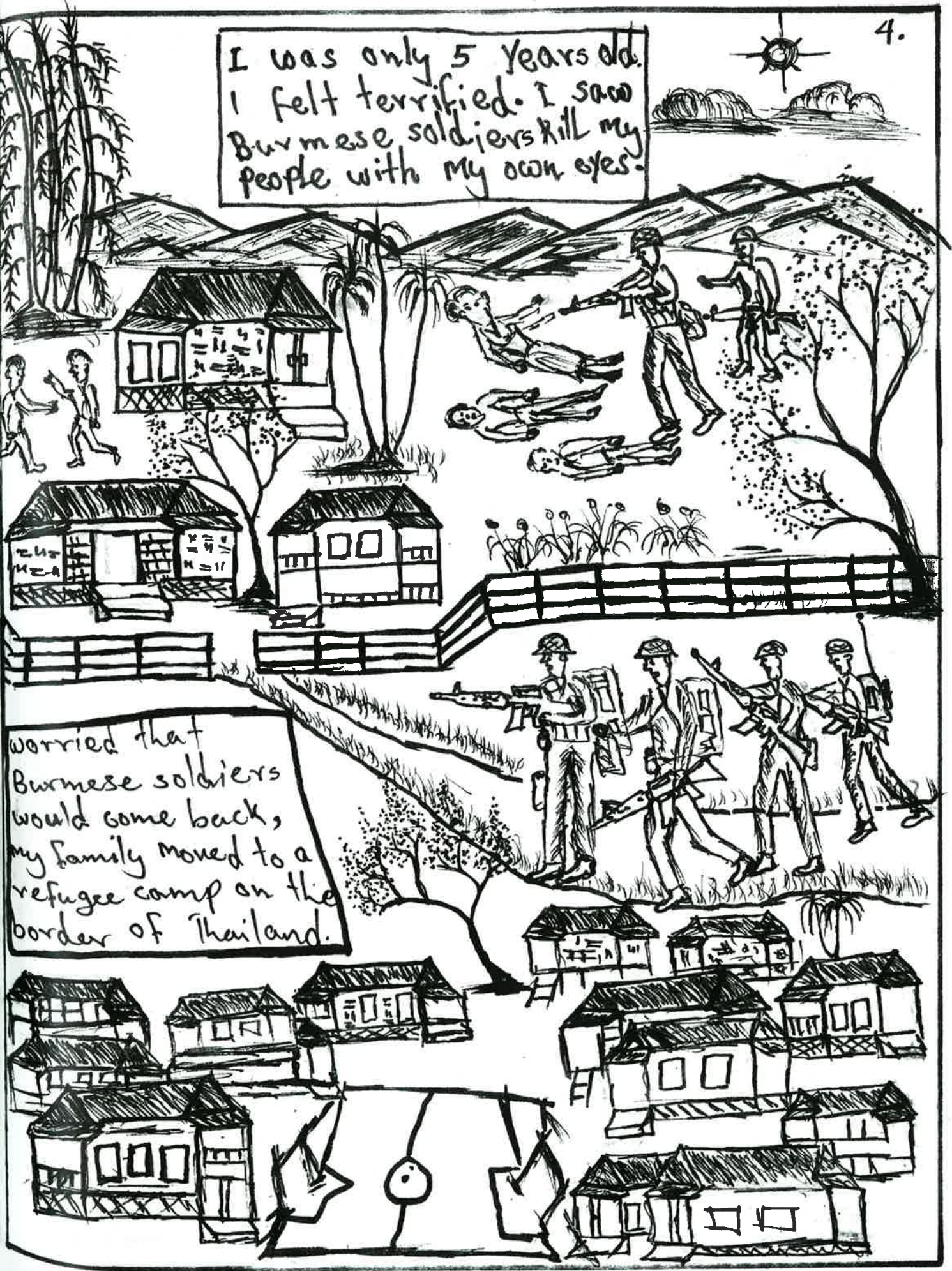
Burmese soldiers didn't like Karen people living in Burma.



The villagers had to run away from their own country.

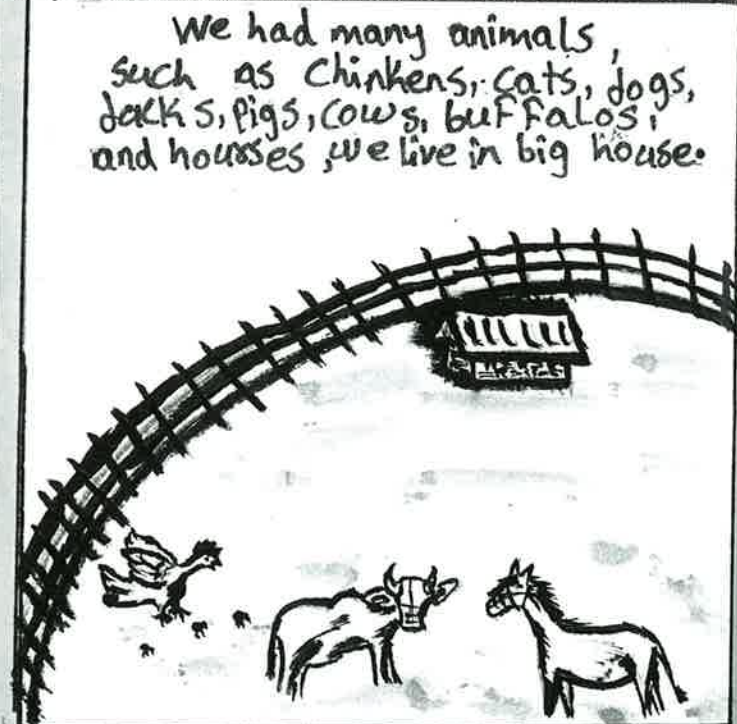
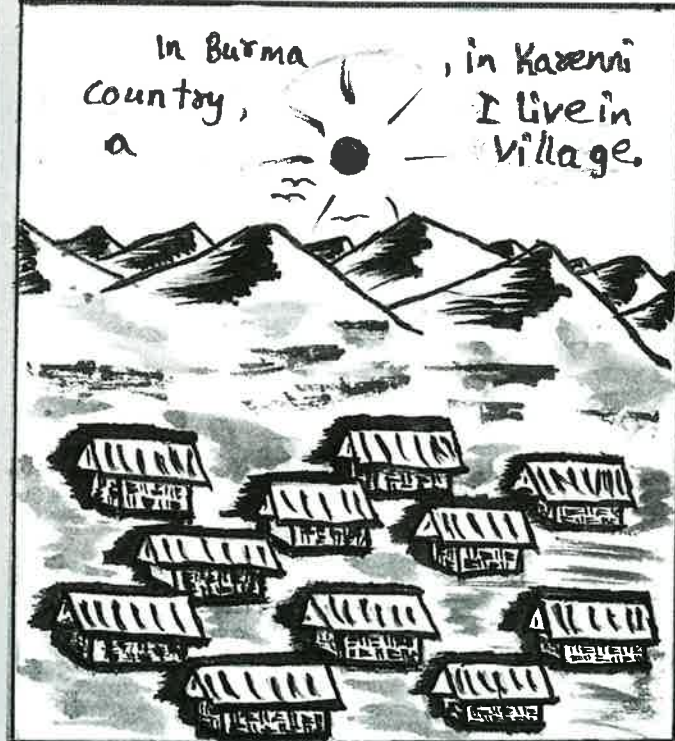


I was only 5 years old. I felt terrified. I saw Burmese soldiers kill my people with my own eyes.

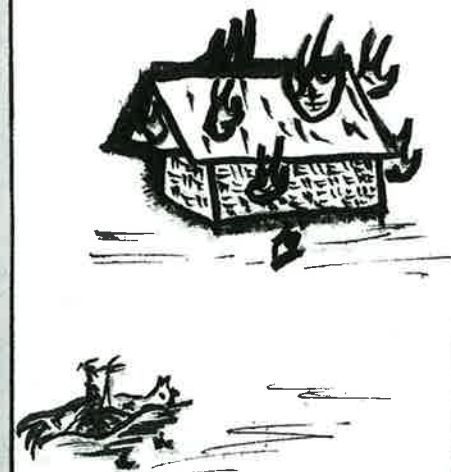


worried that Burmese soldiers would come back, my family moved to a refugee camp on the border of Thailand.

This is my immigration story.



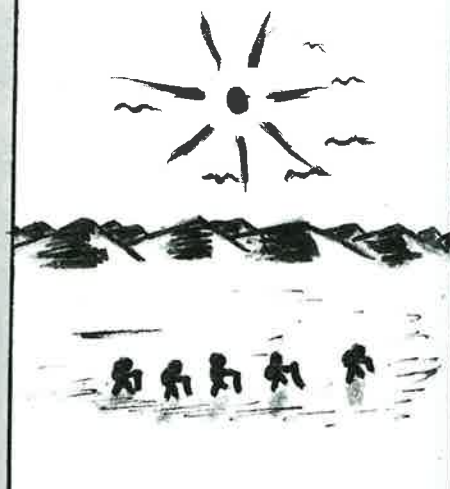
Then the Burmese soldiers burned our house and killed our animals.



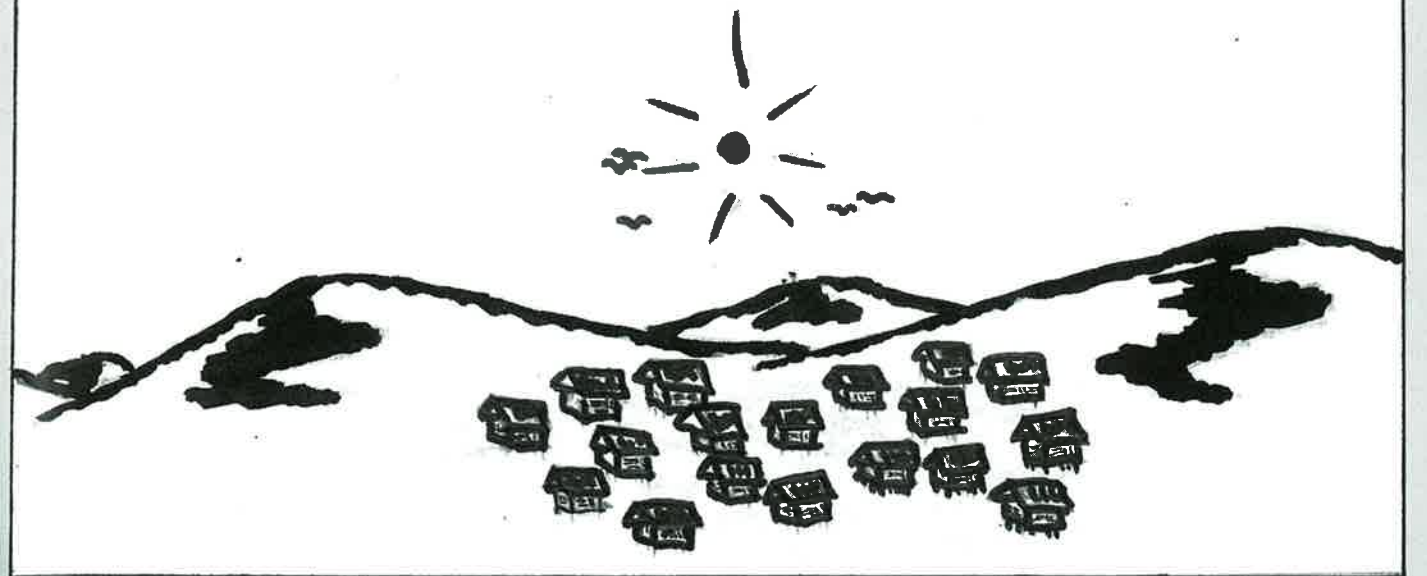
The Burmese soldiers took some of our animals and they sold them.



With no house and no animals, we had to move to a refugee camp in Thailand.



I lived in the Thai refugee camp for ten years.



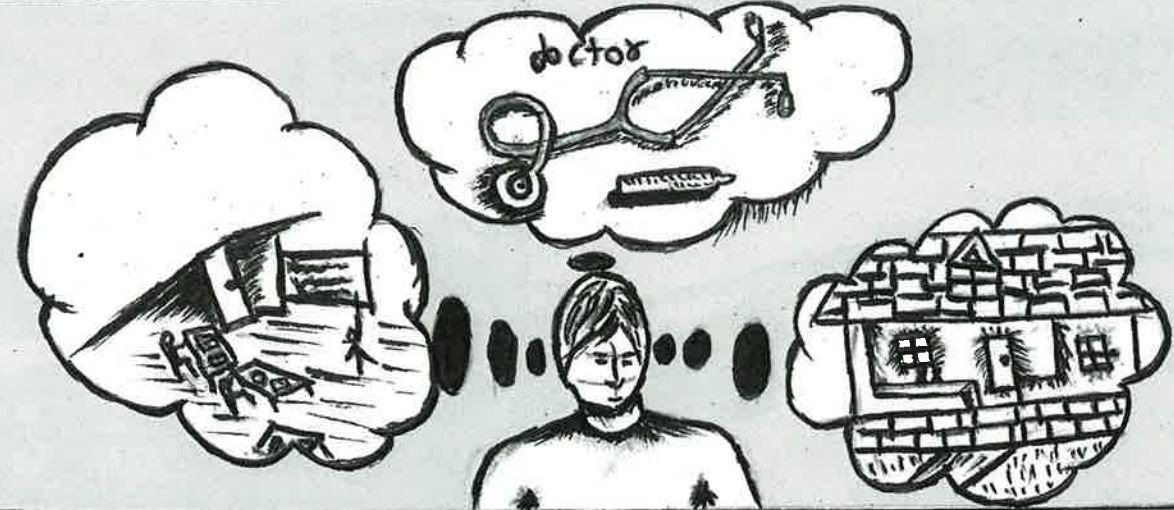
The people living here were very poor.



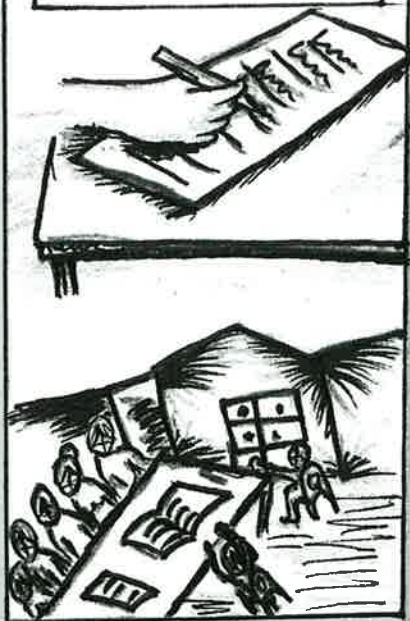
And the house looked very small and there were many houses close together. If one was on fire, the fire would go all around.



My whole family wanted to Leave the refugee camp because we needed more education, future, and a better house.



We signed our names to go to the U.S. I.O.M people asked you questions so many questions. The parents asked question, the children, a little bit.



We finished and they put your names on paper and put it on the tree.



The Thai teacher taught us about the U.S.



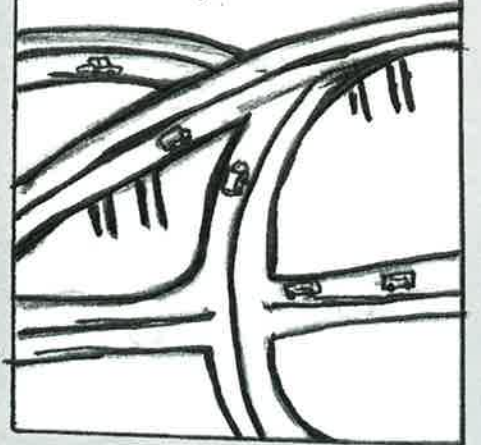
I felt worried when I came here because I didn't speak English.



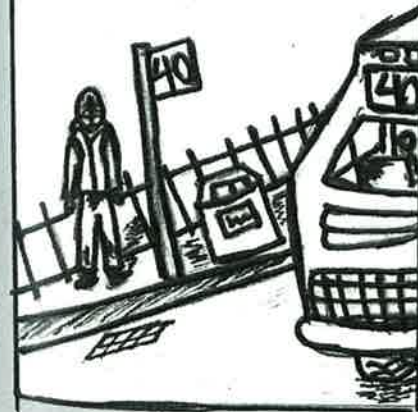
I didn't know how to go to school.



I didn't know the school name. There are many streets.



Sometimes I took the wrong bus and went to another city.



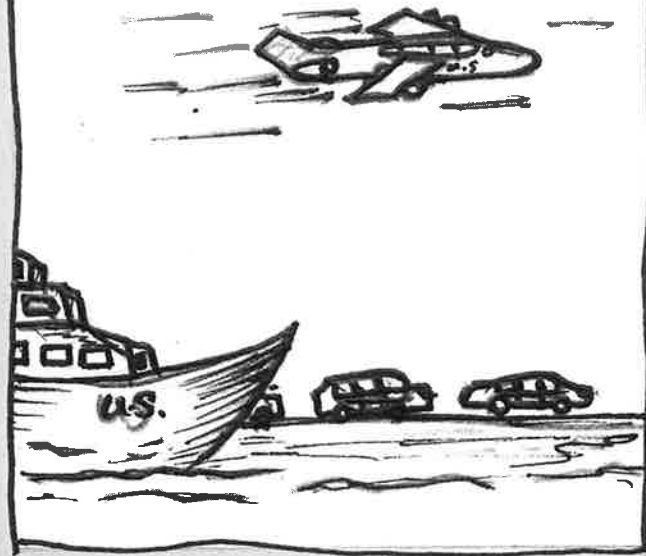
Sometimes people would call you on the phone and, speak English, and I could not speak English.



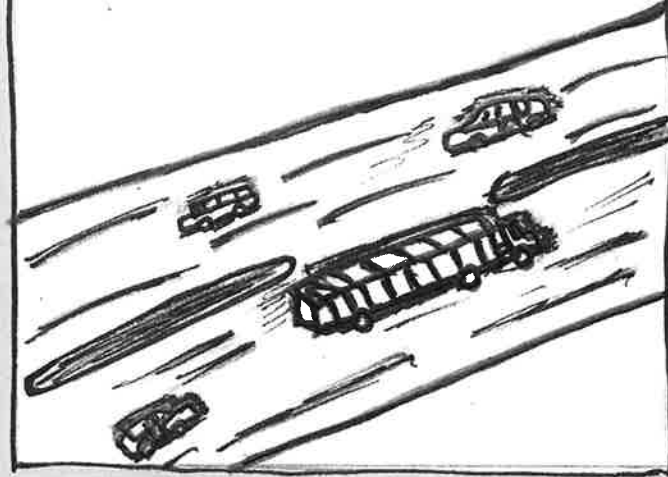
I felt sad, bad, and worried.



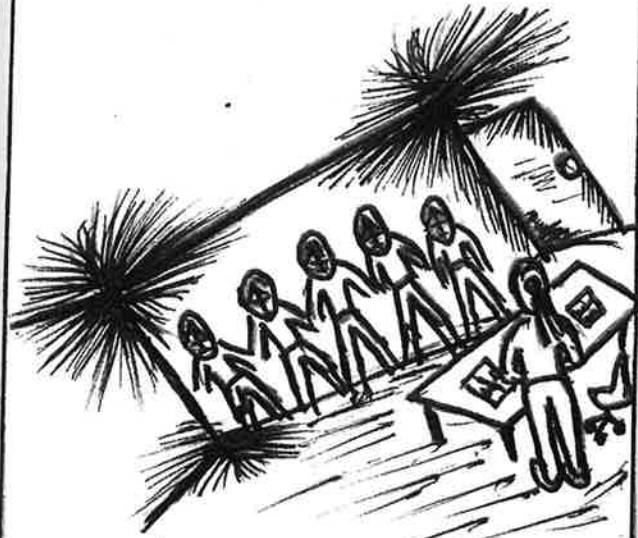
The house was so different, so many cars, big ships.



Many different streets.



When I got to the U.S. the first thing I did was to visit our case worker.



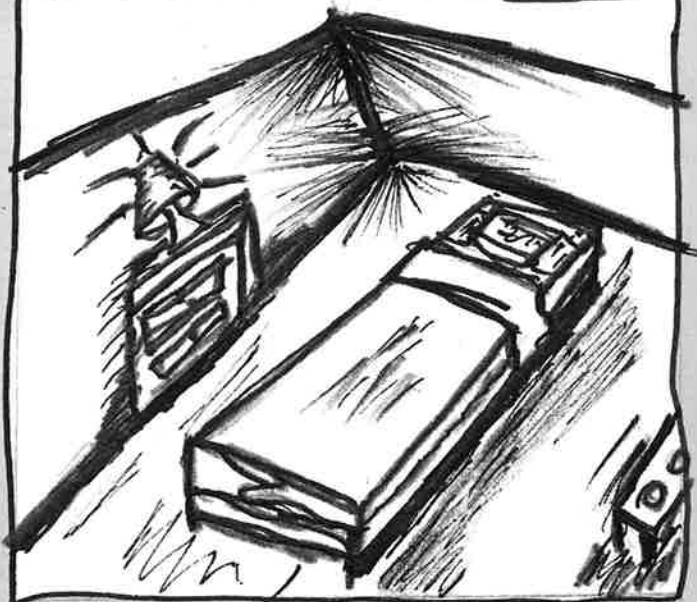
They helped me go to school.



Different places.



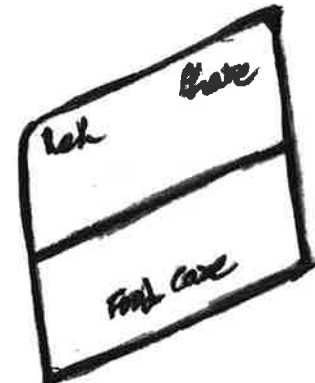
In the U.S. everything is different than in my country.



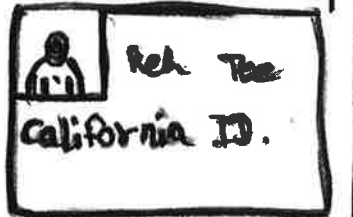
They made my medicare card.



Then made my food card.



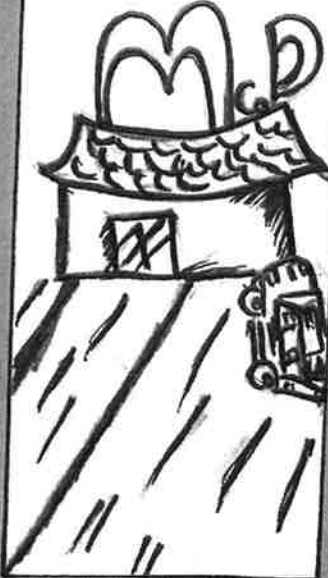
Finally, they helped and made my California ID.



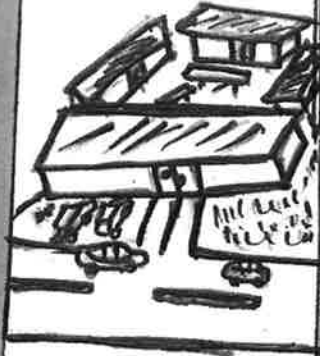
My life
right now is
a little bit
better.



Now, I am
able to
communicate
with other
people.



Right now,
I go to
high
school at
OHS.



At school
I have many
friends and
I feel
happy.



Right now,
my family is
a little worried
because my
mom and my
dad can't
speak English.



Right now,
my dad goes
to school
to study
English.



My dad
and my mom
don't have
job.



Forunately
my brother has
a job. I am going
to school so that
one day I will
have a good job,
make my own
money and help
my family.



THE YEAR I TURNED

14

I grew up in Asmara,
the capital of Eritrea.

I lived in a rented
house on Edag arbi street
with my mother.



Edag Arbi st

Eritrea

Asmara
Ever E

by Nathanel
A.F.
11/13/11

I Loved Soccer as
a child.

I used to play
Soccer with all
my friends in the
Streets.



My father was a general in
the army and his responsibilities
kept him away from the
family most of the time.

I was never close to
my dad the way I
wanted to be.



Life was mostly good, till the year I turned 14. A series of unfortunate events changed my life.

First, the owner of our house died. His widow decided she wanted us to leave.

My mother decided to move us all the way to the USA, where my grand father already lived. But the Eritrean government makes it hard people to leave. My mother had to go first, and alone, first to Sudan and then to Kenya.



Starting today you need to look for another house. I want my house back.

WELCOME

Asemera Entrea, when I was in sixth grade.

But I can't afford to pay more rents!



Mami, I heard what she said, we're going to move, Huh?

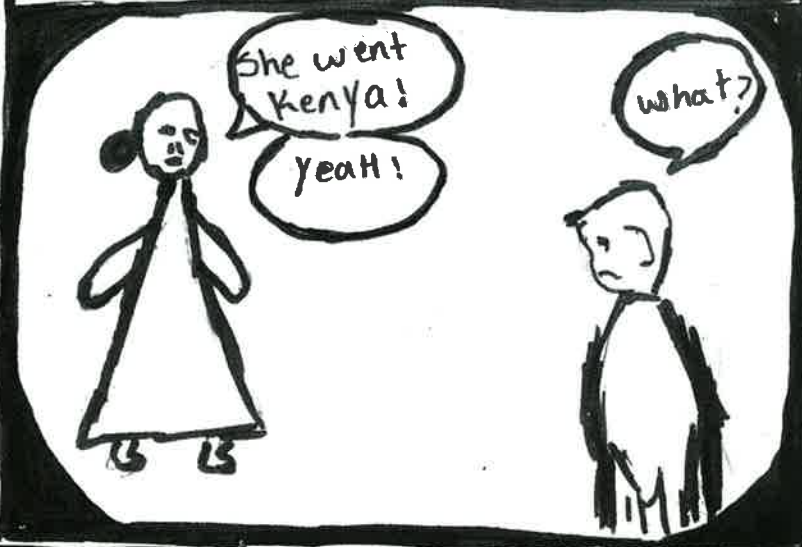
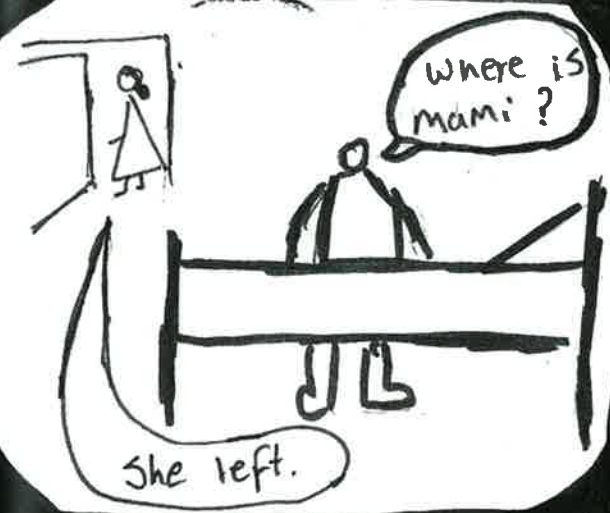
It's okay, don't worry!

It was hard to say goodbye to the home and the friends that I had grown up with.



She had to leave in secret. She didn't even tell me.

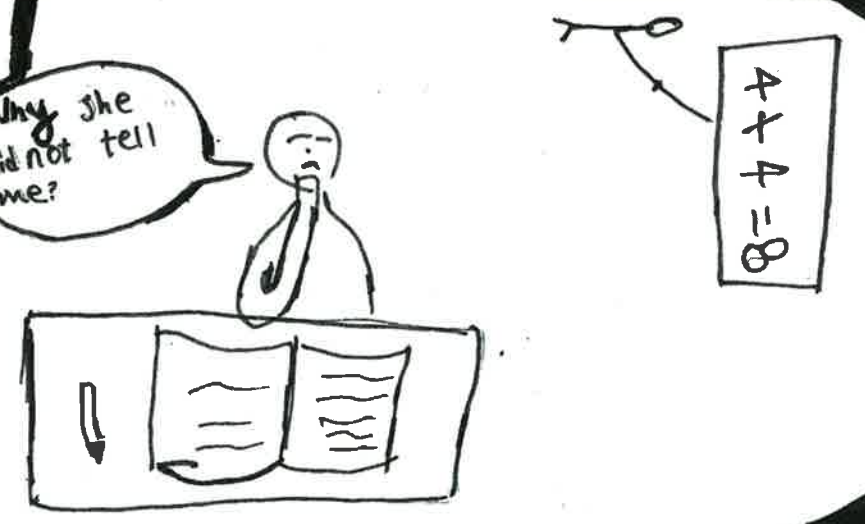
I was scared that I had lost her forever.



I MISS My Friends.

At school, all I could think about was my mom.

Why she did not tell me?



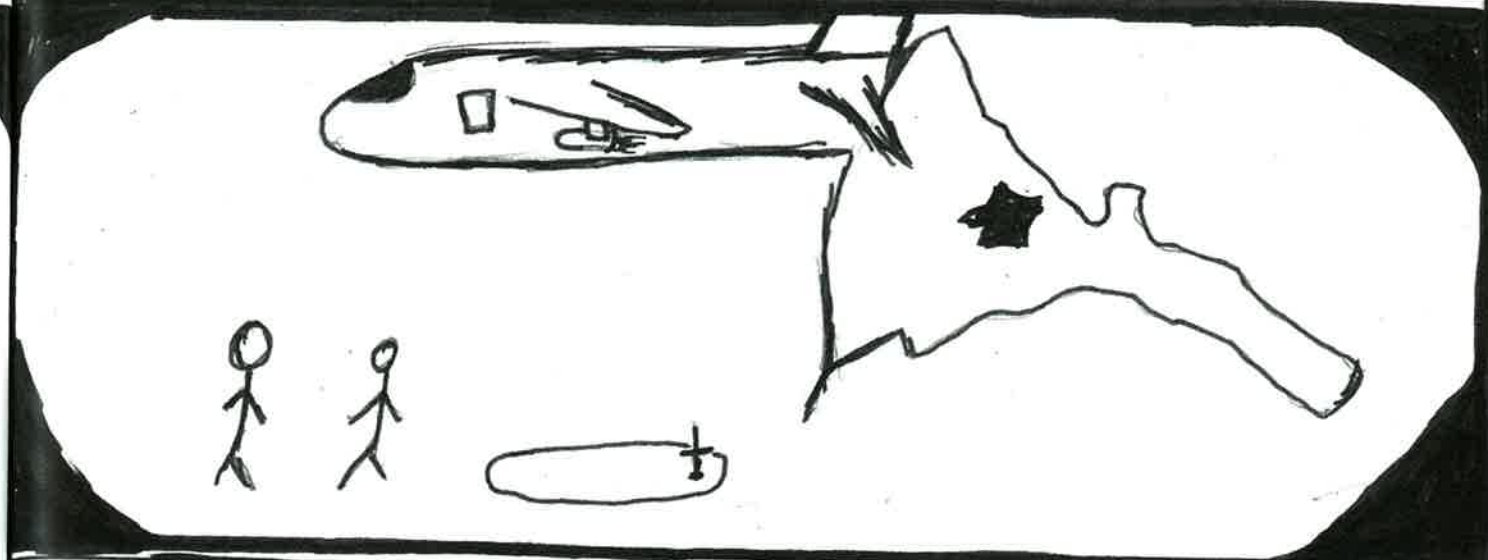
Then, without warning, my father died. He was working in akurdet, many hours away.



Emergency call from Hospital



That same year, through connections that my father and grandmother had, I was able to leave Eritrea.



I didn't know this, but he had been sick with tuberculosis.



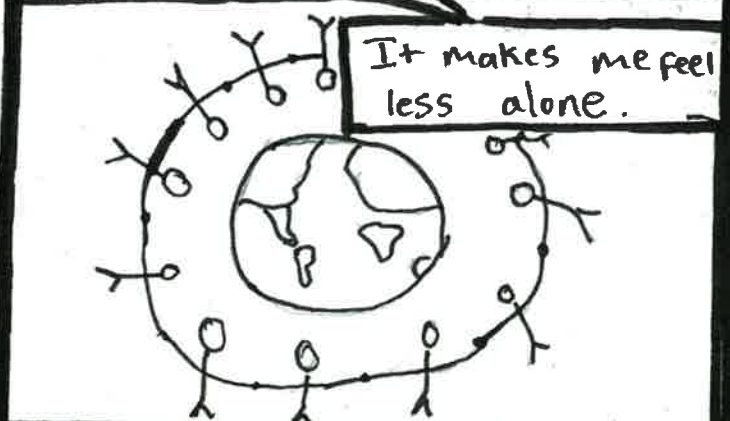
Even though I didn't know my father well, I felt sad because he was still my father.



I live in Oakland with my mom and my grandfather.



I go to OHS with other immigrant students. Many of them have had similar experiences.

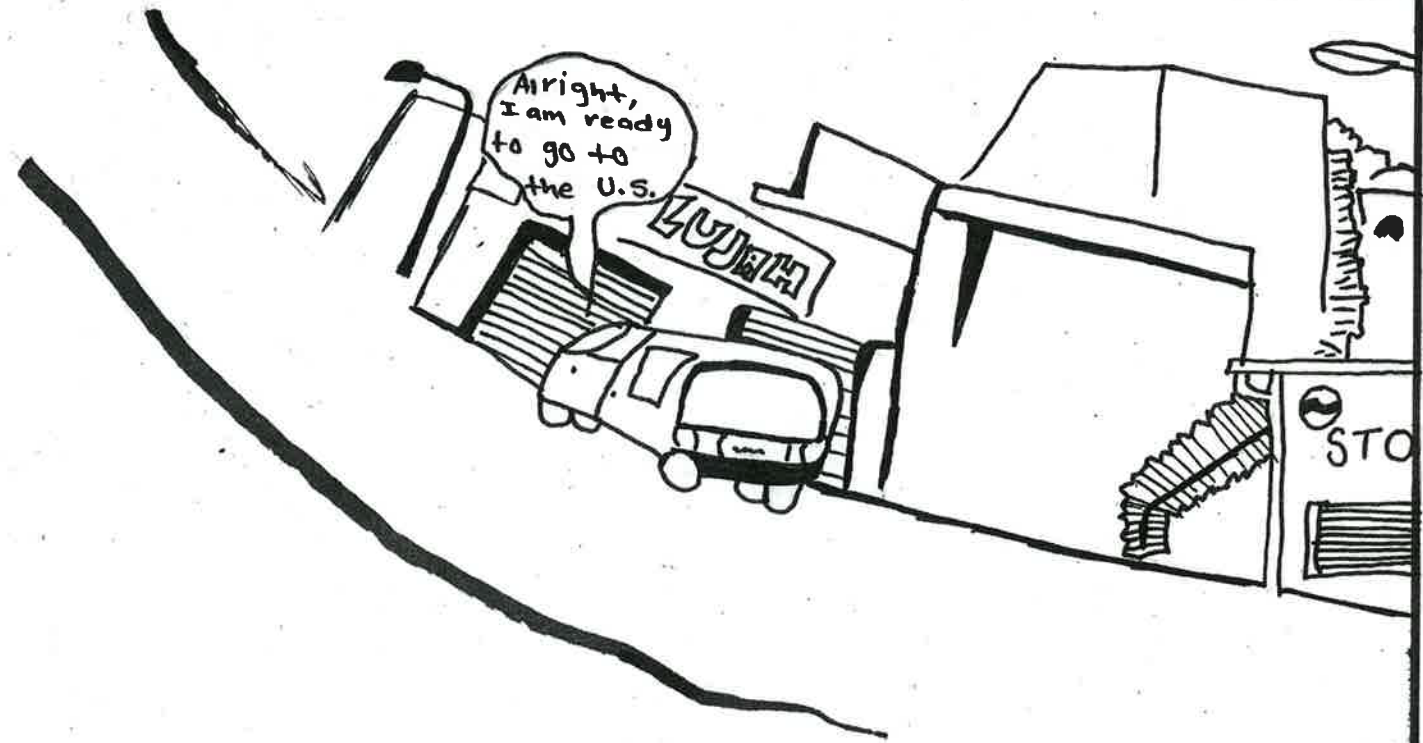


THE END

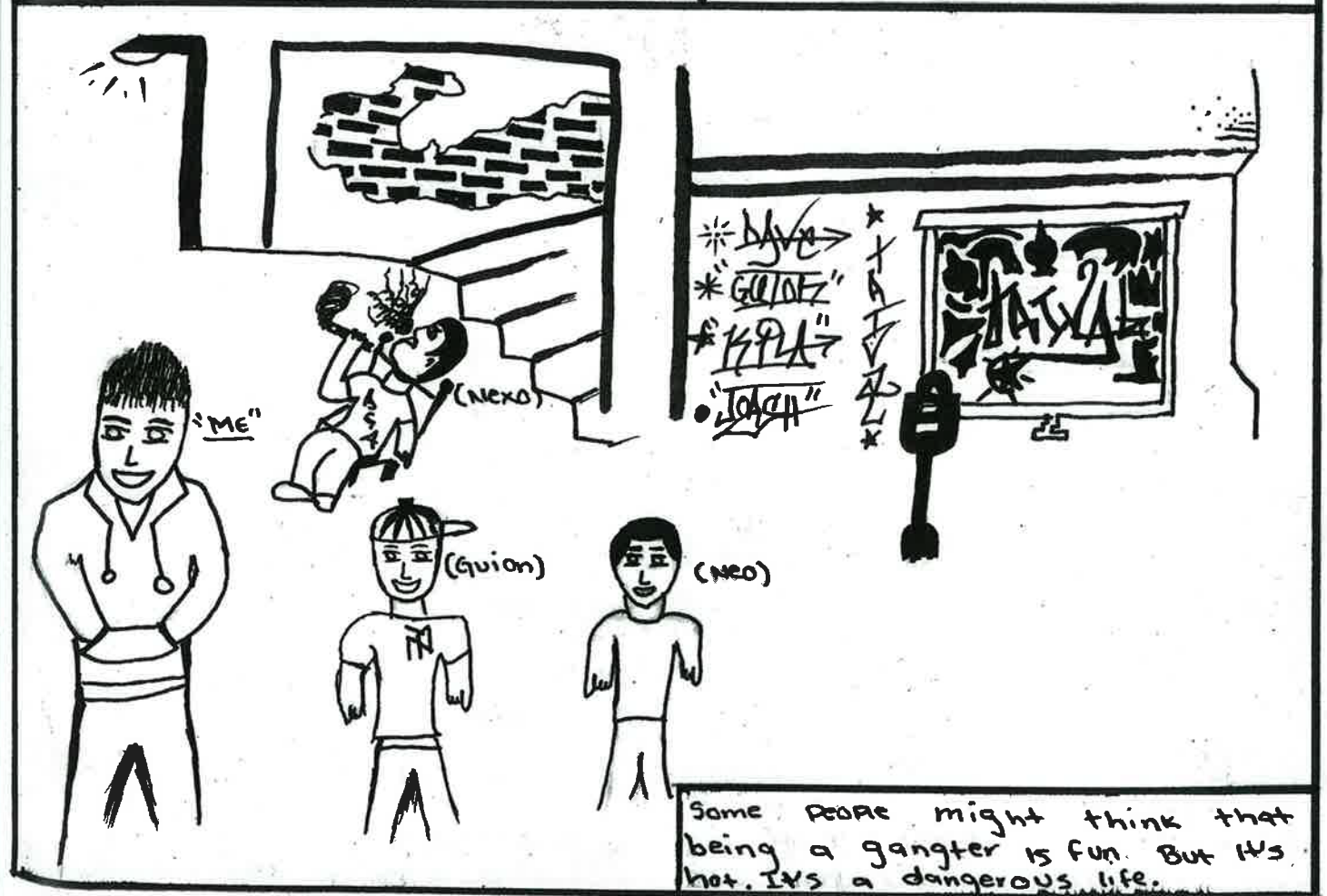
मेरे नाम जॉर्जे लोएरा



JORGE LOERA



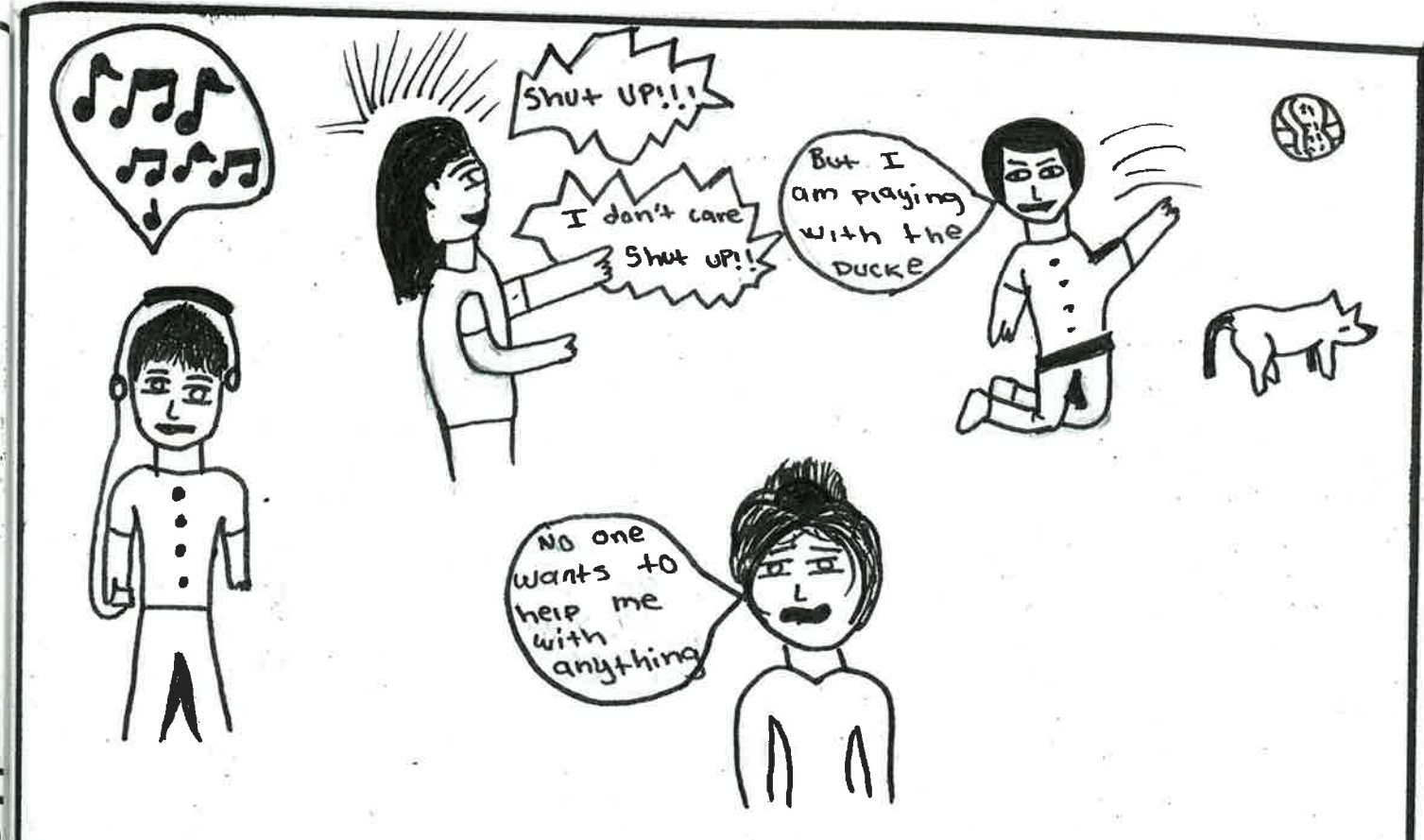
In Mexico, I was a Gangster. I lived in Ciudad Juárez, the most dangerous city in the country.



Some people might think that being a gangster is fun. But it's hot. It's a dangerous life.



When I was 14, one of my best friends was killed in a drive-by shooting.



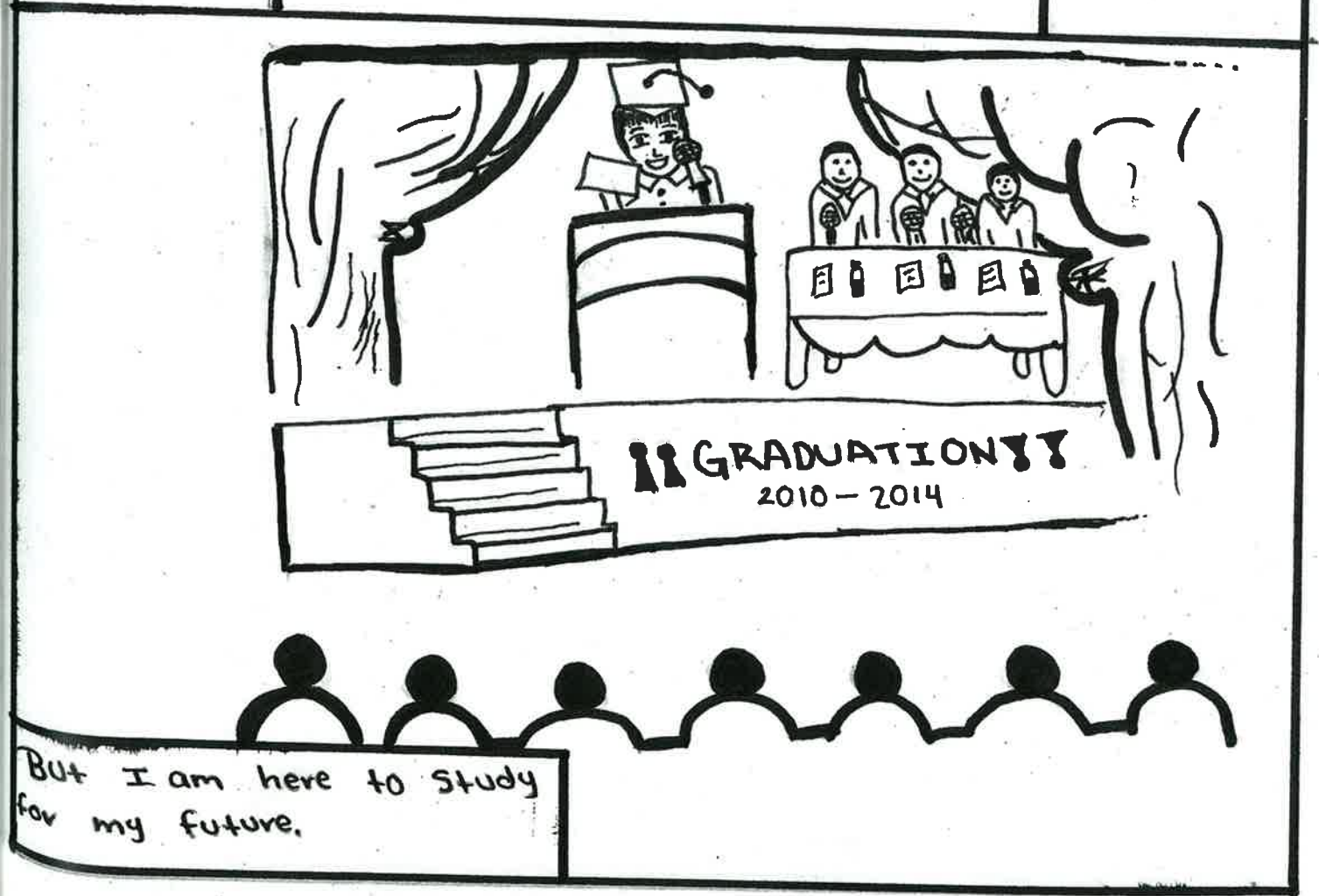
Sometimes I don't like where I live.



The next year, my family sent me to start a new life with my aunt's family in Oakland.



I wanted a fresh start, but it was very difficult to say good bye to everything. I know



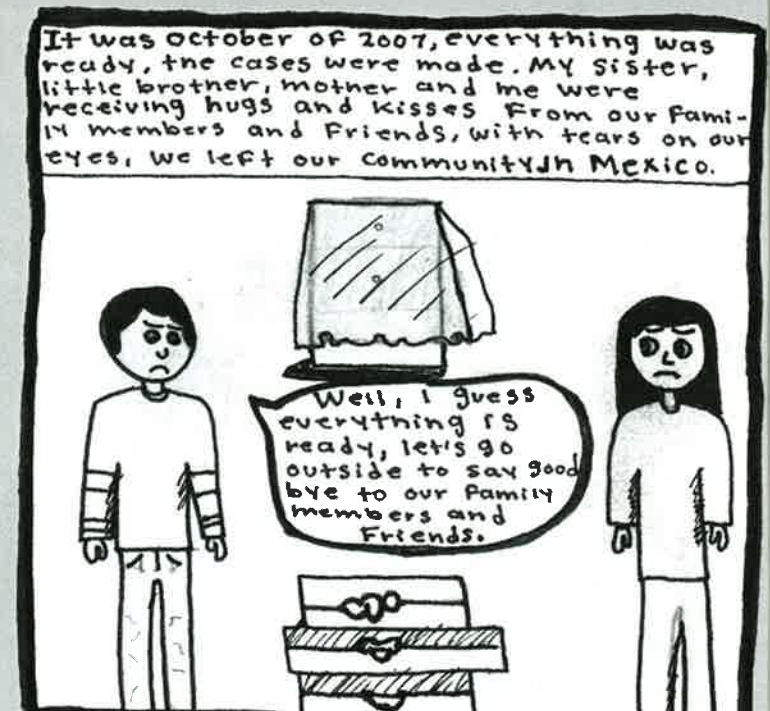
But I am here to study for my future.



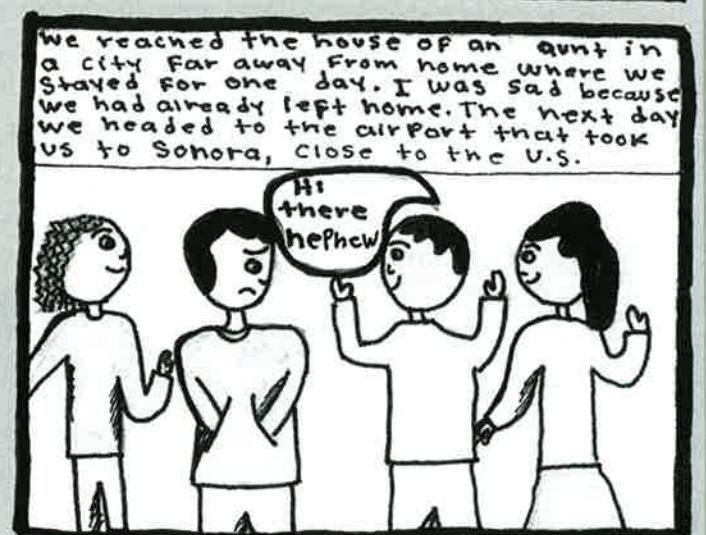
One day, I hope to have an exciting future. I will work in the "FBI"



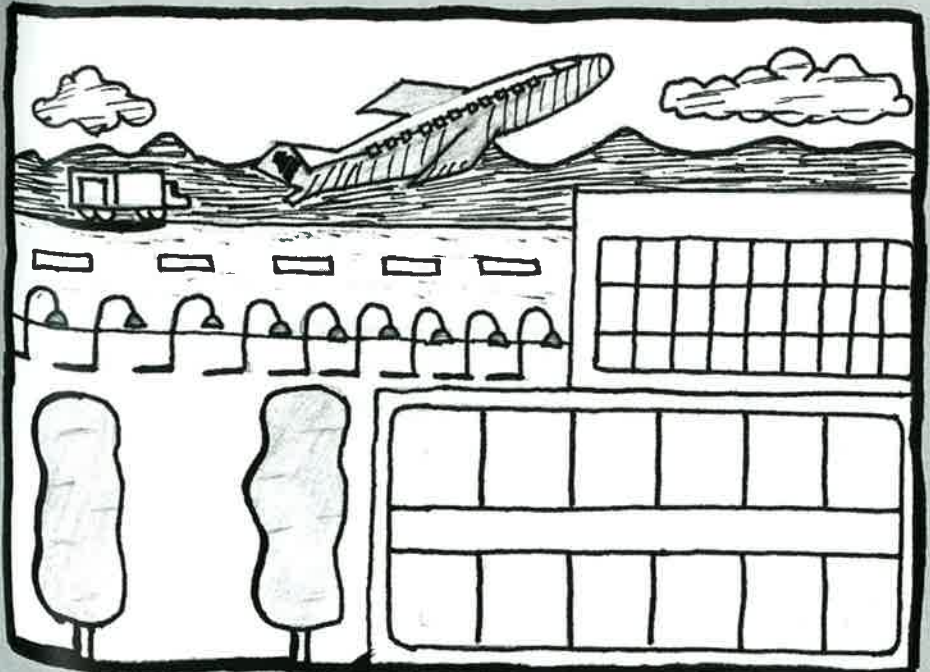
And I want to raise a Family.

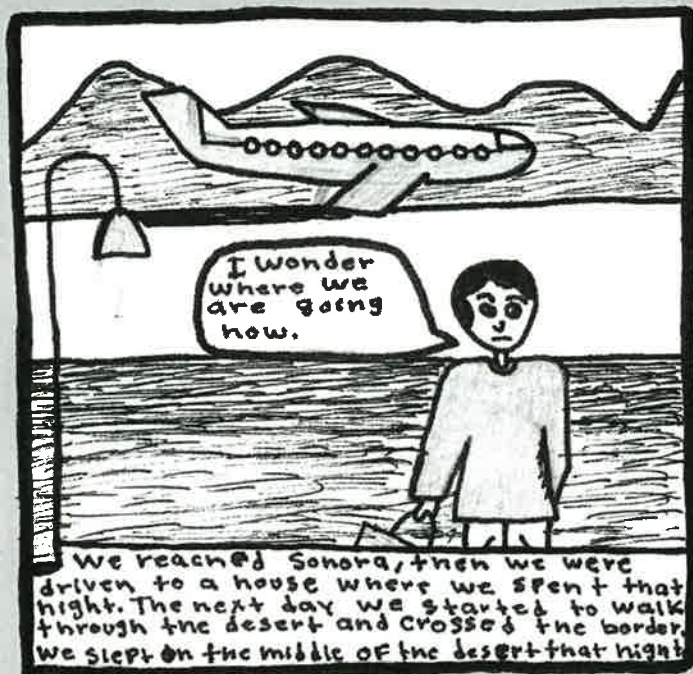


It was October of 2007, everything was ready, the cases were made. My sister, little brother, mother and me were receiving hugs and kisses from our family members and friends, with tears on our eyes, we left our community in Mexico.

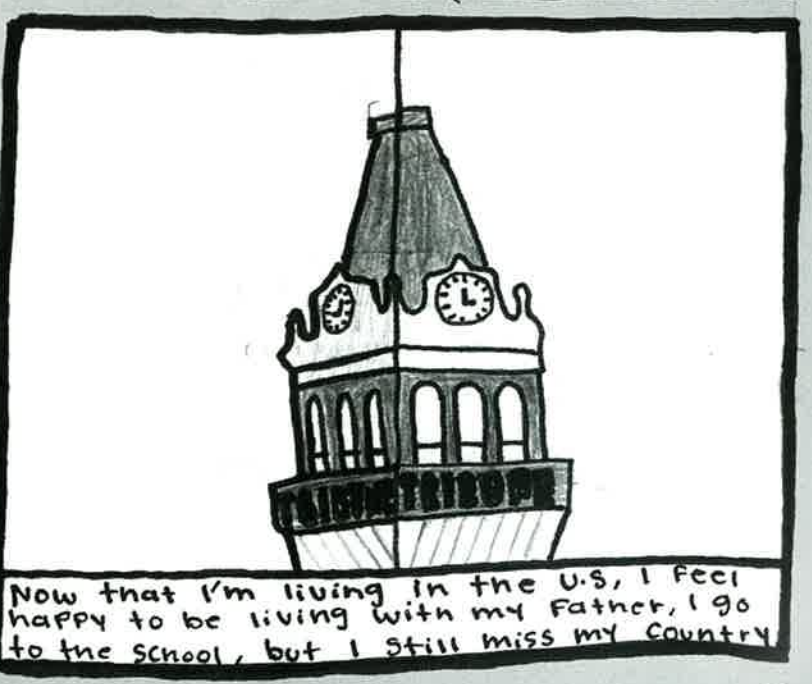
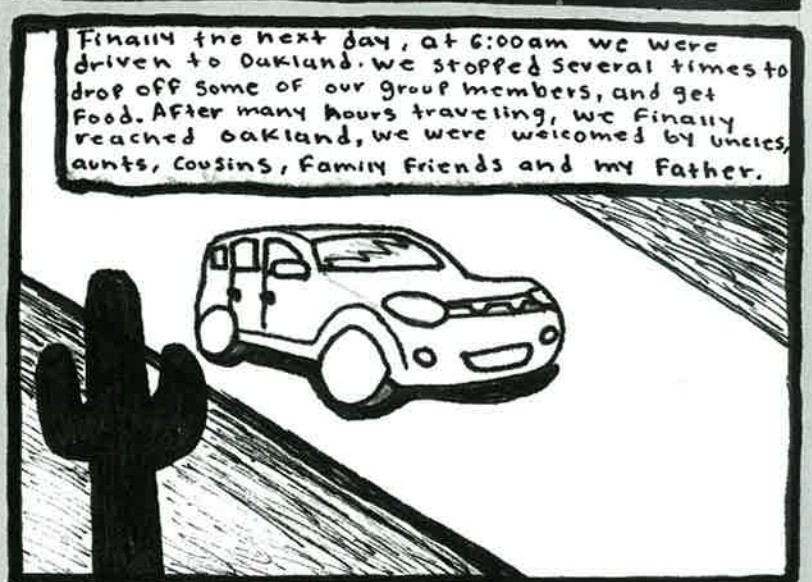
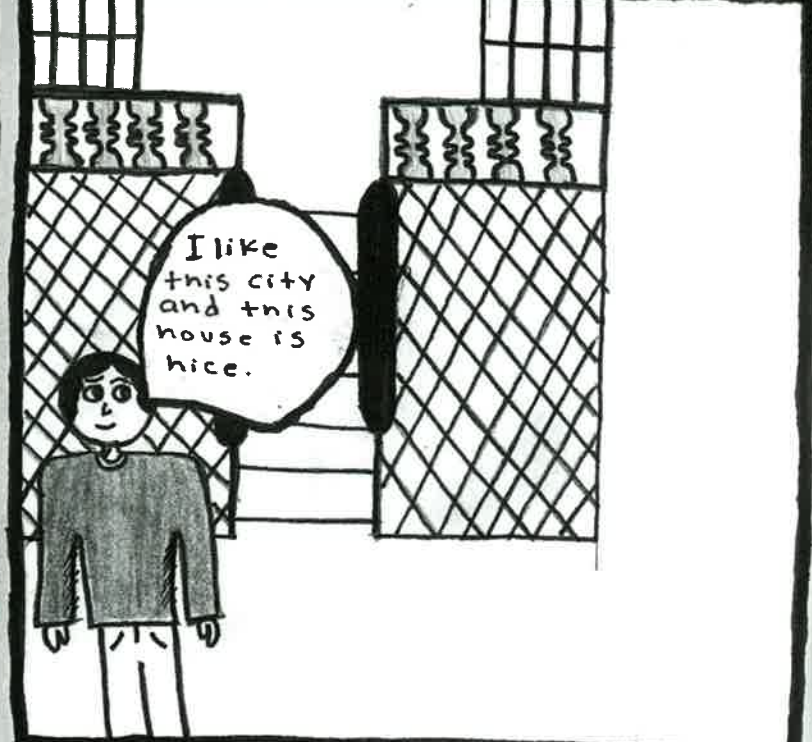
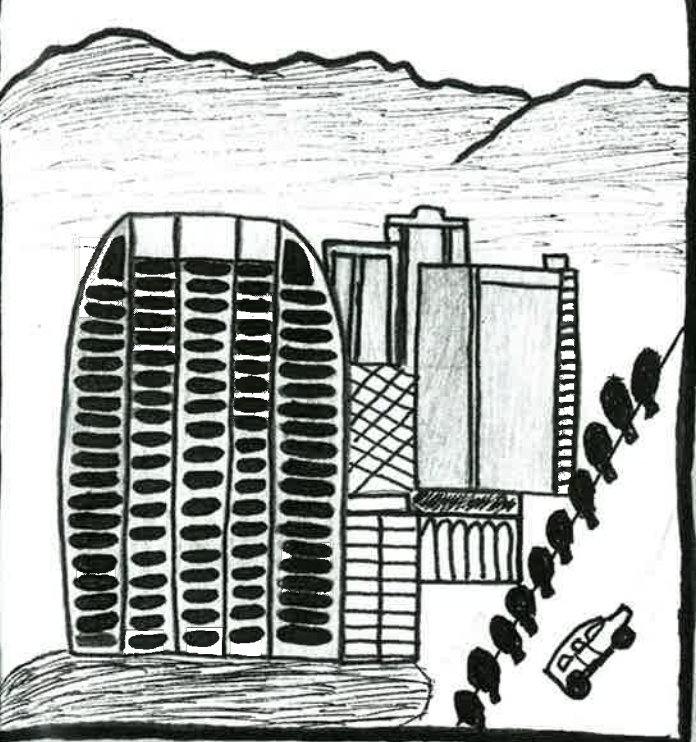
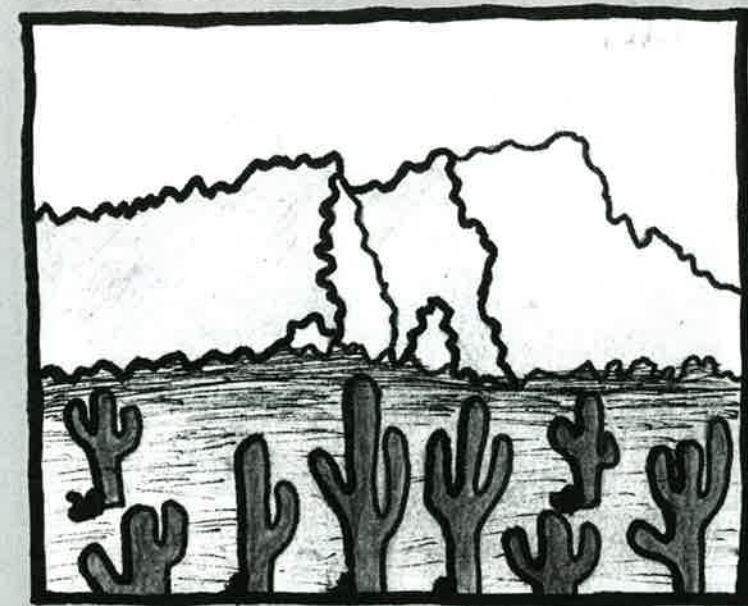


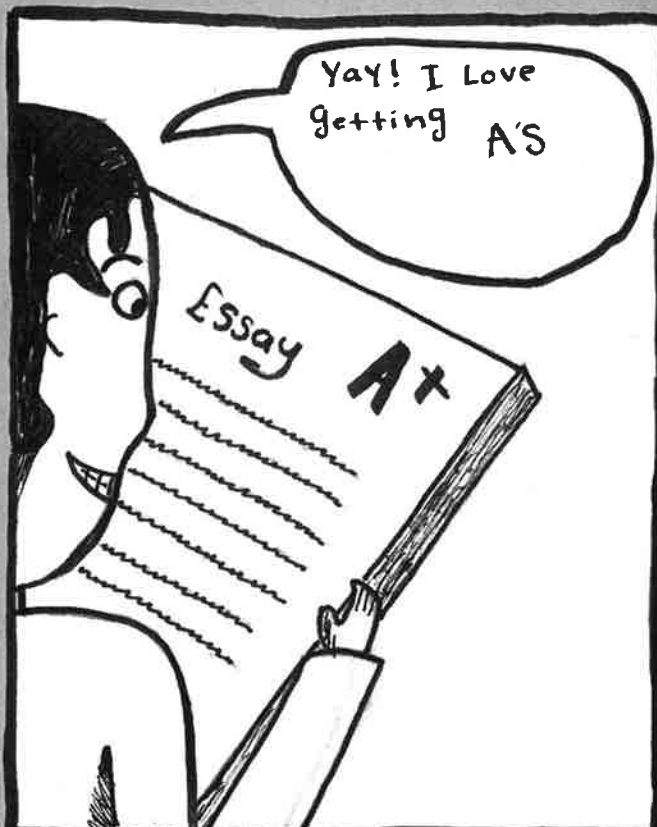
We reached the house of an aunt in a city far away from home where we stayed for one day. I was sad because we had already left home. The next day we headed to the airport that took us to Sonora, close to the U.S.





We reached Sonora, then we were driven to a house where we spent that night. The next day we started to walk through the desert and crossed the border. We slept on the middle of the desert that night.





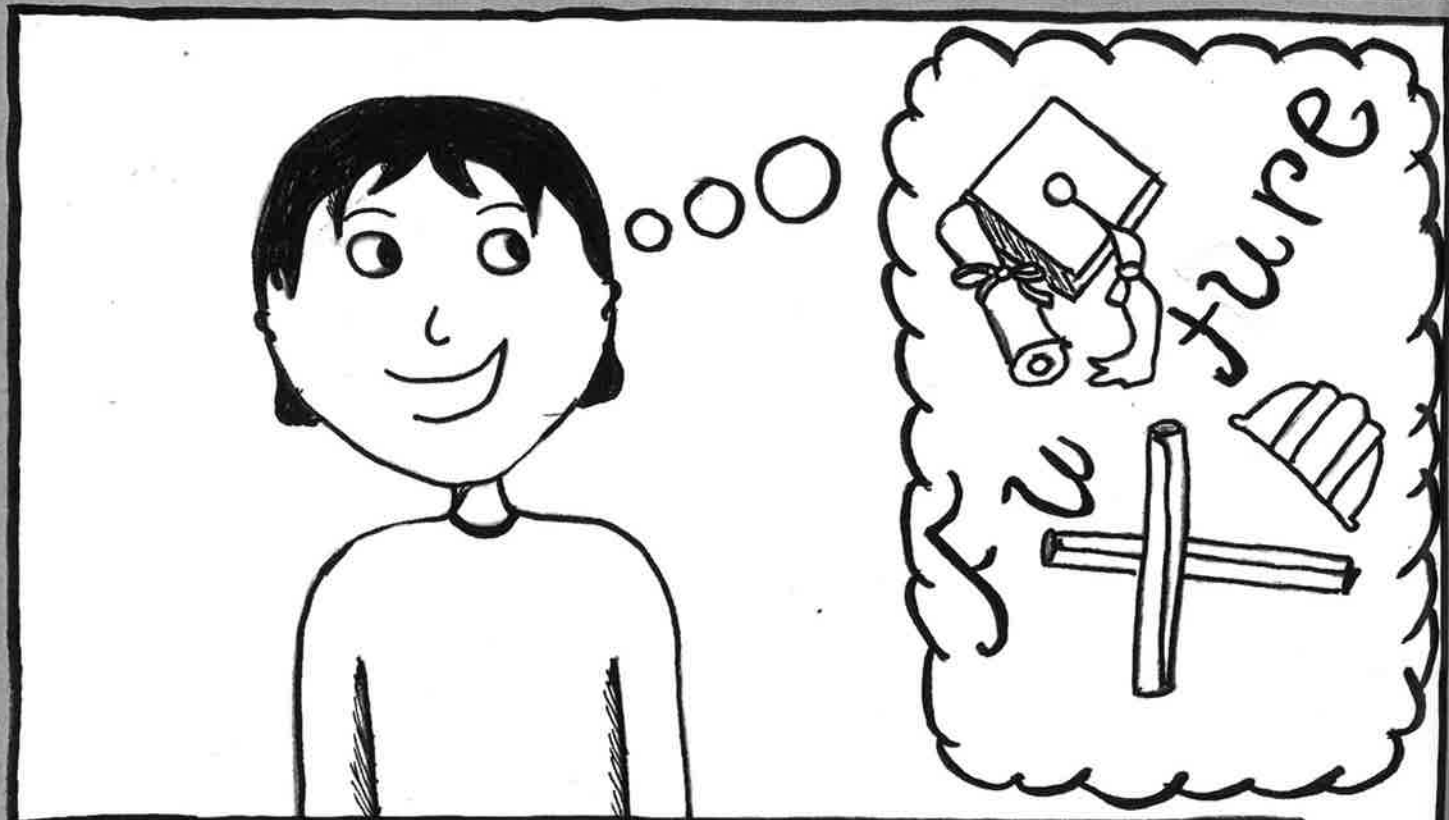
Yay! I Love getting A's

At school, I believe I'm giving my best. I have good grades and I'm really happy and proud of it. I'm hopeful that I can achieve my goals.



I'm afraid of not achieving my dream of becoming an architect.

But sometimes I feel sad because I realize that an immigrant's education in this country is limited. It's really hard to get into college. That is what's difficult about being an immigrant, that our dreams can't be achieved and we stop believing about our future...



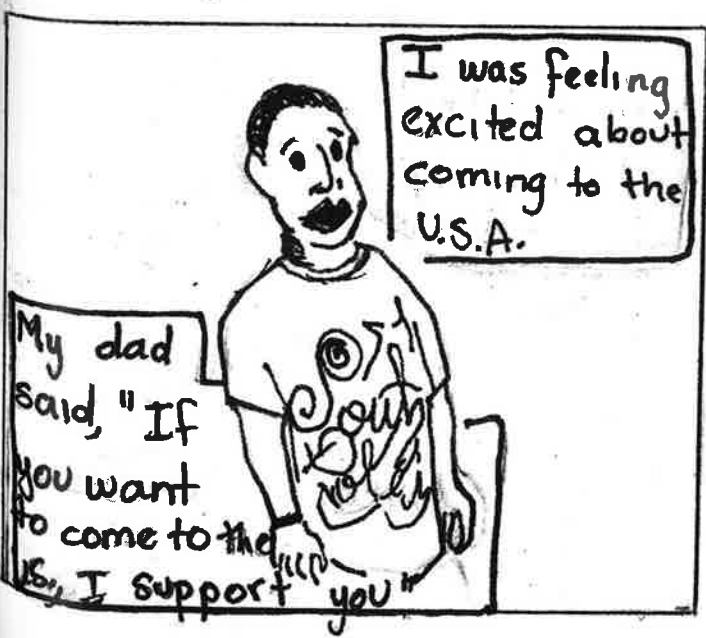
...But hope is last thing to be lost. We immigrants are strong and we are always willing to work to achieve our dreams. I'm hopeful I'll be someone important in this world and I'm sure about it. I have the tools to do it. I will fight and I will succeed.



My name is Juan
I am from Guatemala!!



I was born in this small city that is called Todos Santos



I was feeling excited about coming to the U.S.A.

My dad said, "If you want to come to the U.S., I support you"



This is my house where my journey started on June 2007



I took many buses when I crossed Mexico



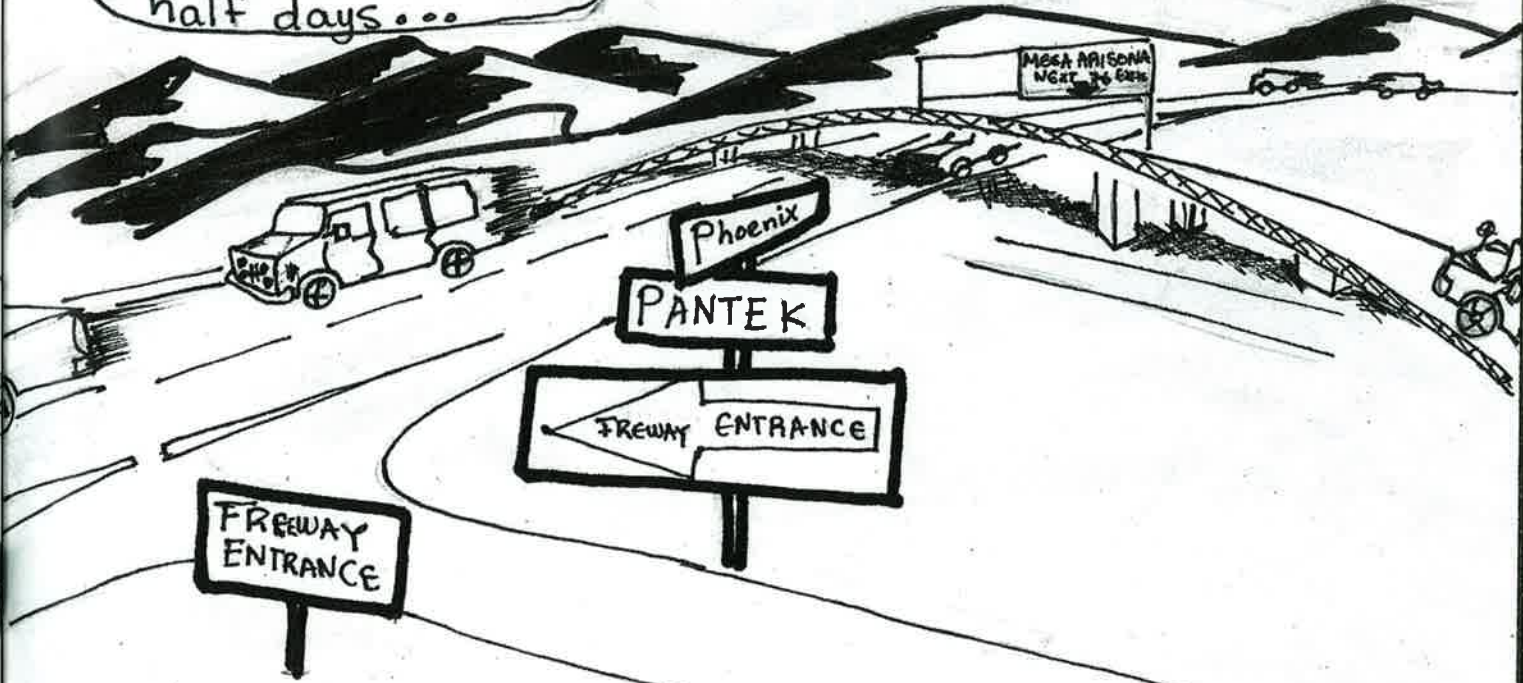
I walked through the mountains.

I remember that it was very hot.



When I was walking at night it was cold, very cold!

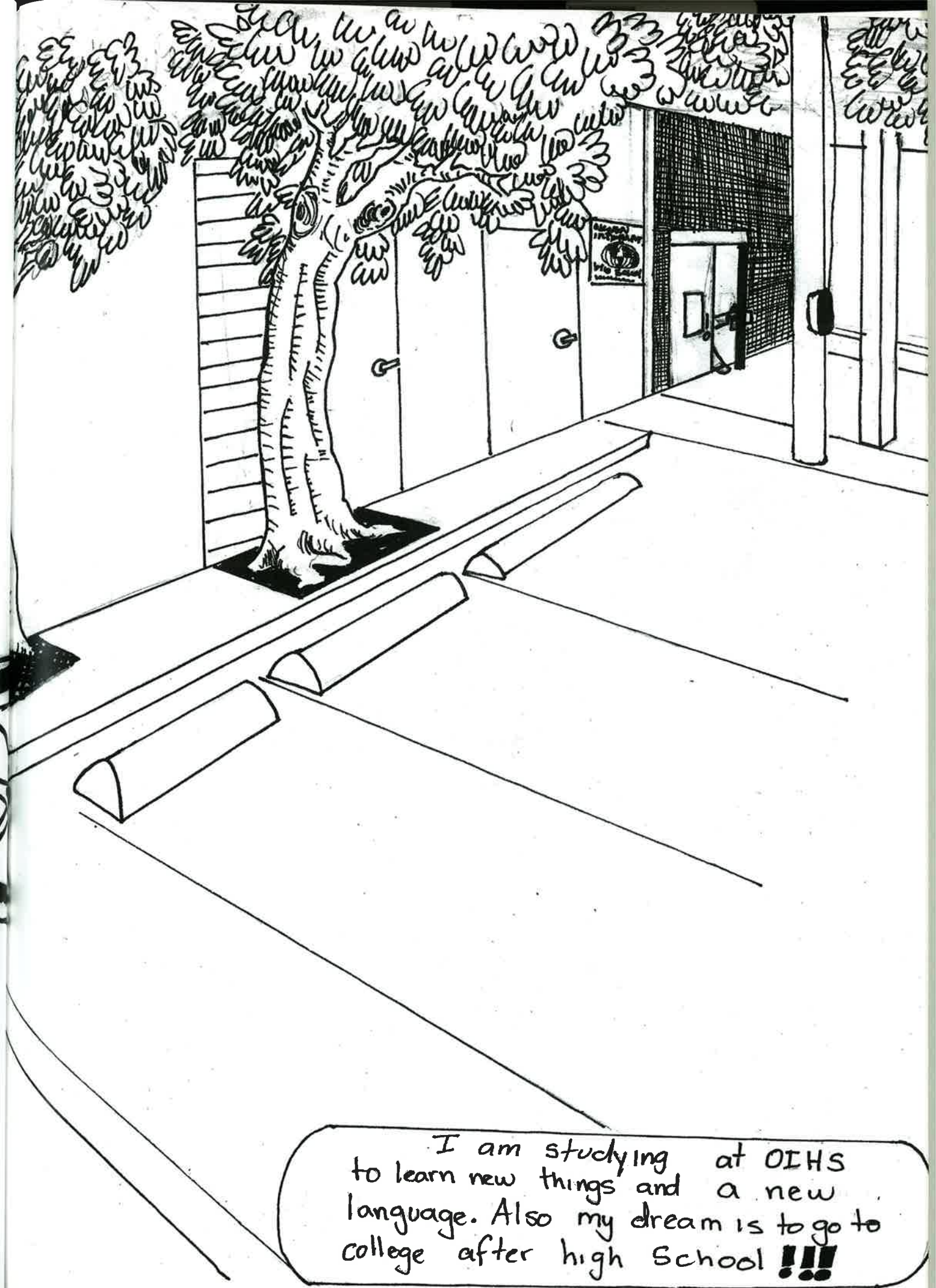
I was walking through the night for about 3 and a half days...



Finally I come to a place called Pantek and a family who lived there brought me to Mesa Phoenix Arizona.



Today I live in Oakland, CA and this is my house now.

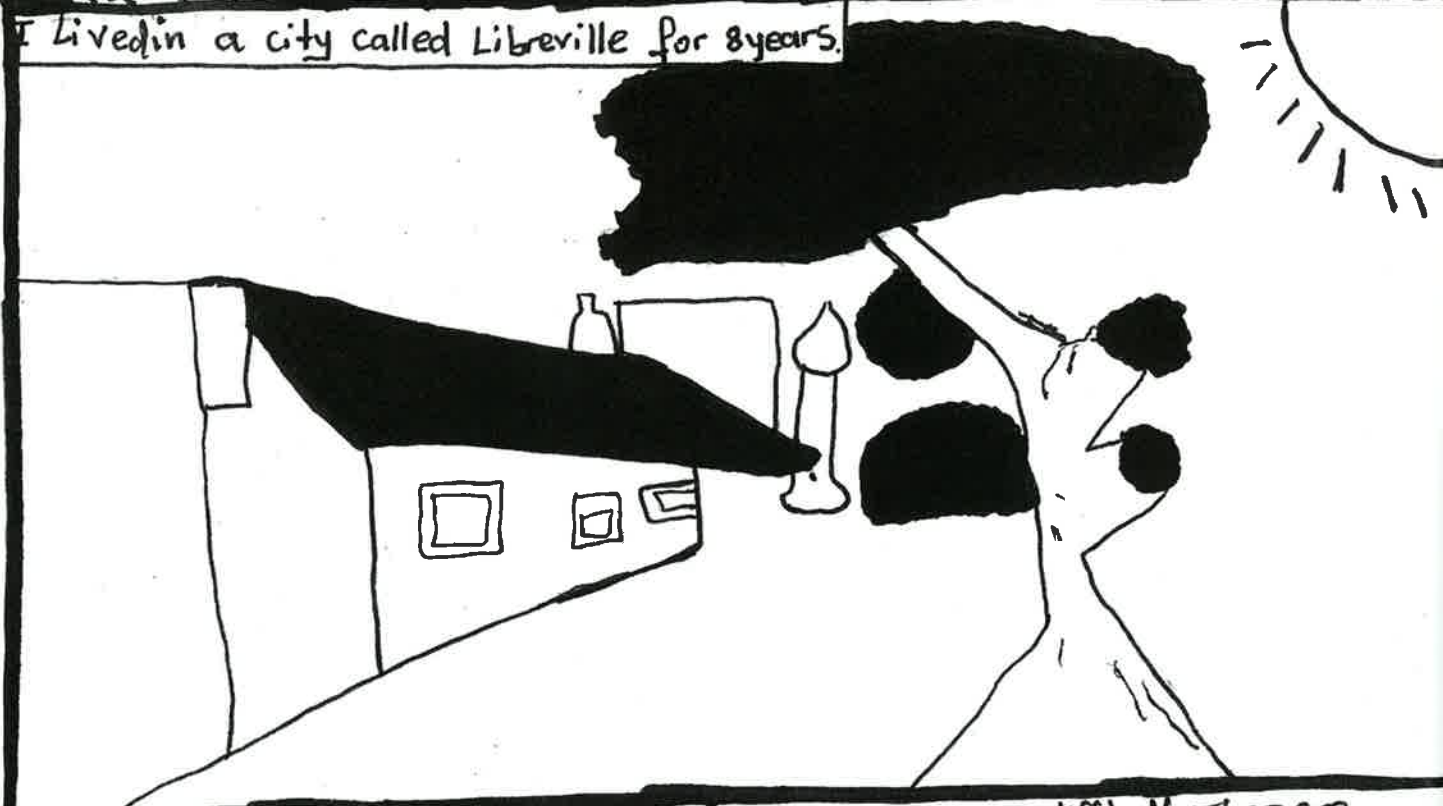


I am studying at OIHS to learn new things and a new language. Also my dream is to go to college after high school !!!

LIFE GOES ON

by Dyeudonné Longuela

I lived in a city called Libreville for 8 years.



I was born in Congo but I moved to Gabon when I was 5 years old to have a better life.



I'm so happy to move!

Life in Congo was difficult. There are thousands of children in the street just asking for money.



And others are selling cheap things.



Sometimes parents take all the money and the poor children starve.

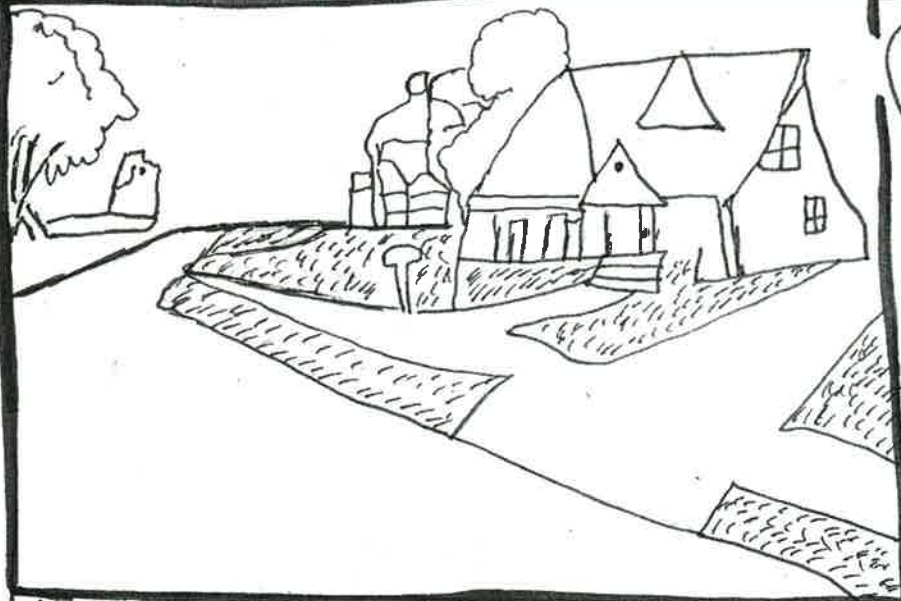


My parents went to school and they know that school is the key to a better life, so they send me to Gabon. I felt lucky.

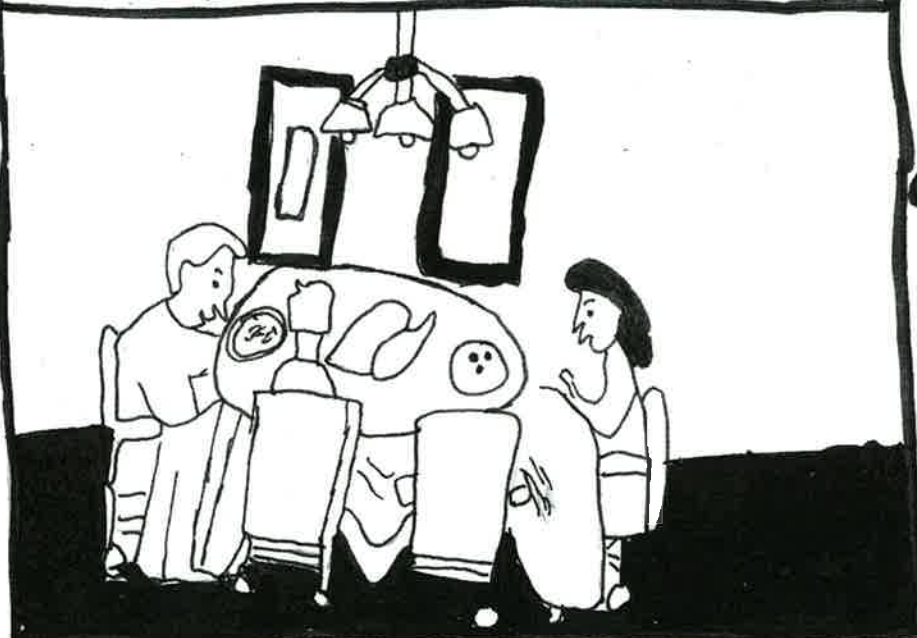
Life in Gabon was difficult too. But there are more opportunities there than Congo. I was glad to be in Gabon.



I lived in a big house. It had 3 rooms that we shared, and one big living room, kitchen & bathrooms.



We were a lot in one house but nobody was starving. we ate 3 meals a day, in the morning, afternoon and night.



I went to a catholic school, the same school my dad used to go named Bessieux and we prayed before a lesson.



We had conflicts in the house we were not perfect but we always tried to resolve them because we like peace



Later



Me and one of my best friends Hono used to play together and talk about what happened to us at school.



one day people told me that she passed away and I was shocked!! She went to the beach with her friends and never came back.



My family is catholic and my dad's little brother is a priest so we went to church and thanked god for everything. I used to go with my friends and family every Sunday.

My dad's brother



our church where I used to pray



one day my dad sent us a letter and said that my brother and I were going to the USA. I felt very sad to leave everyone I knew again.

Even though I miss my old life, I am glad to be here with my family all together for the first time.



I want to stay with my friends.

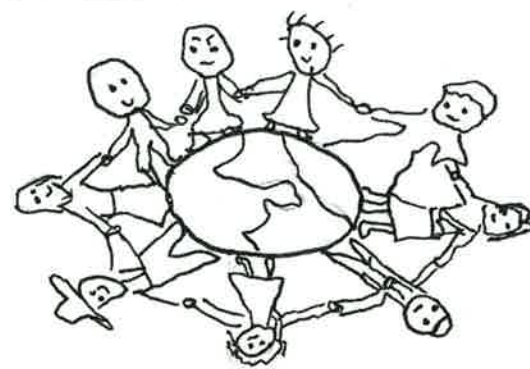


The united states is very big. Buildings are so tall and the weather is so good. The first time I arrived here, I felt in love with the country.

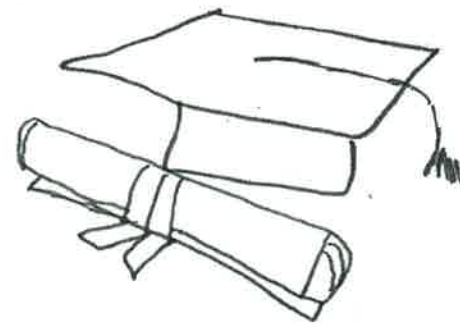


I go to a new different school named Oakland International High school. It's especially for immigrant students.

In this school we have students from almost all around the world.



I want to graduate from high school go to a 4 year college.



I want to be an educated person so I can help people from my country resettle to new countries and believe in their dreams because I believe that we were all born with a dream and anyone can do it.

me old


Let's make this world a better place.




Santos

MY IMMIGRATION HISTORY

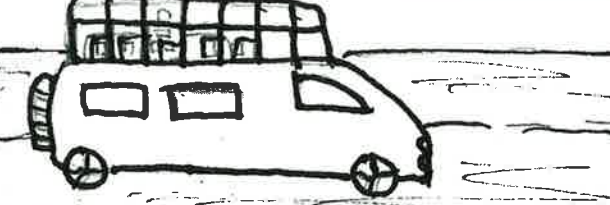
I was 16 when I left El Salvador to come to the U.S.

This is the home that I left. I spent my whole life there.



In the night, the "coyote" came to take me away.

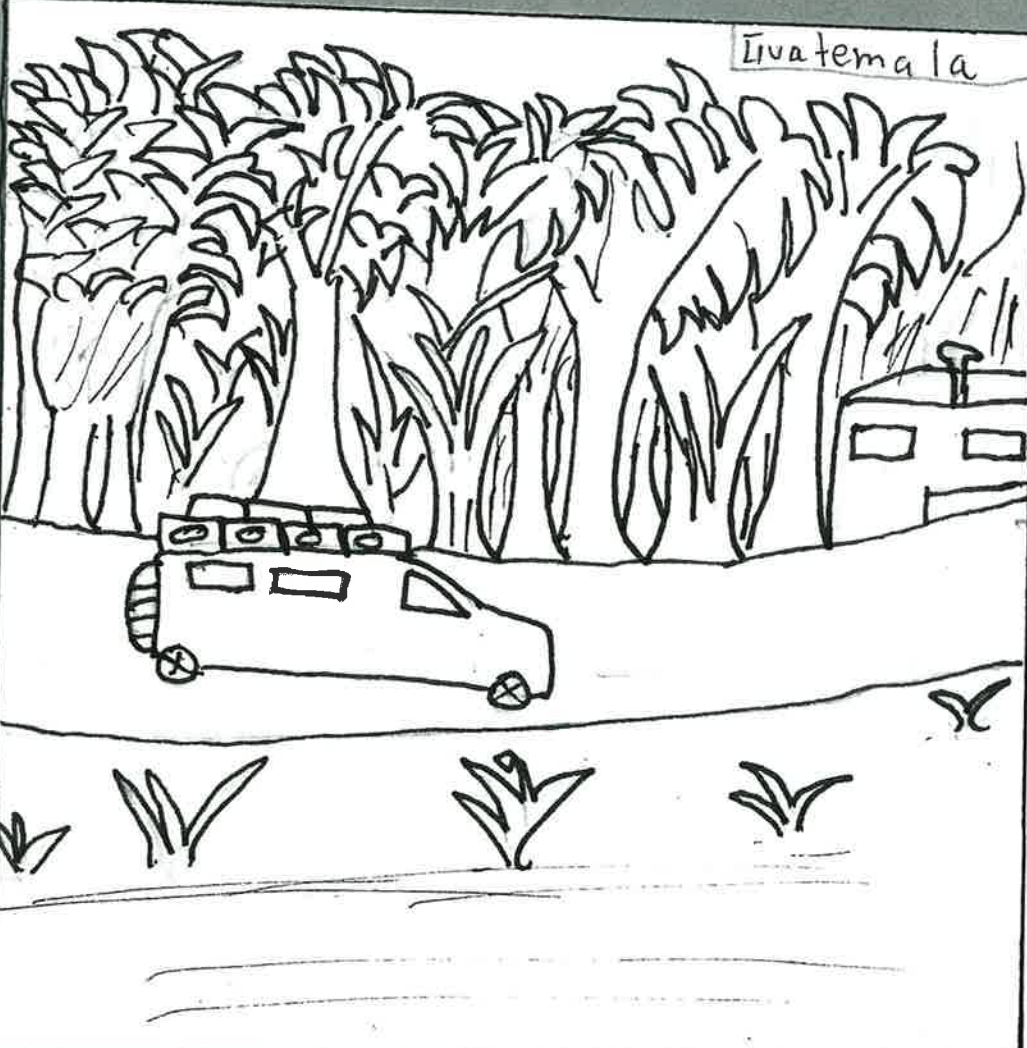



When I left, I felt so sad because my mom was crying.

EL Salvador



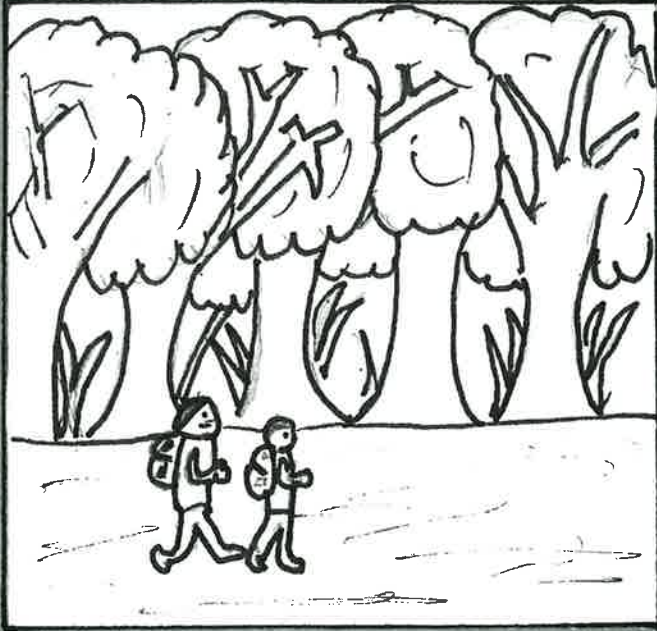
When we arrived in the capital, I wanted to take a bus and go back to my home because my mom was crying.



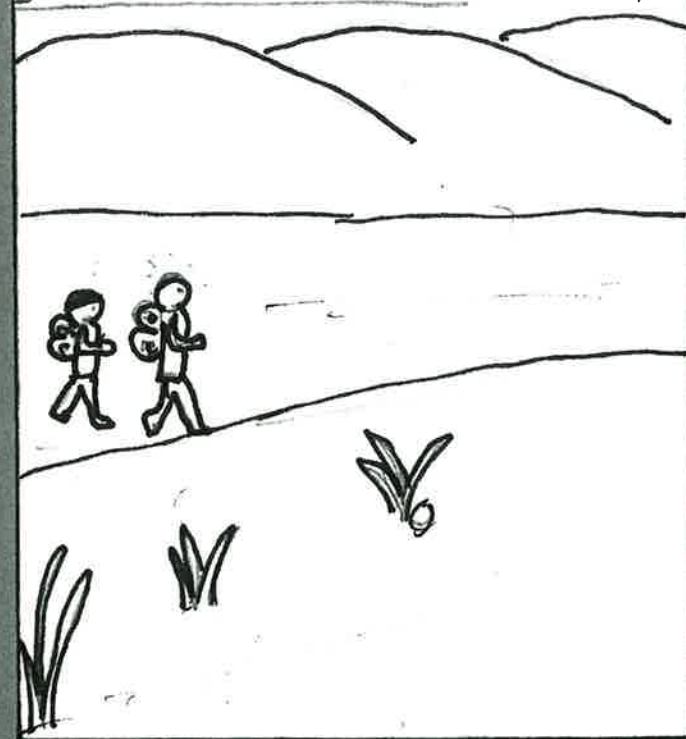
When I was in the forest in Guatemala, I felt sad and scared because there was no one else in the forest with us.

MEXICO

When we traveled to the border, we felt scared and tired.



Two days later, we reached the mountains. We felt tired from walking so much.



When I finally saw the buildings of Phoenix, Arizona, I felt so happy.



U.S.A



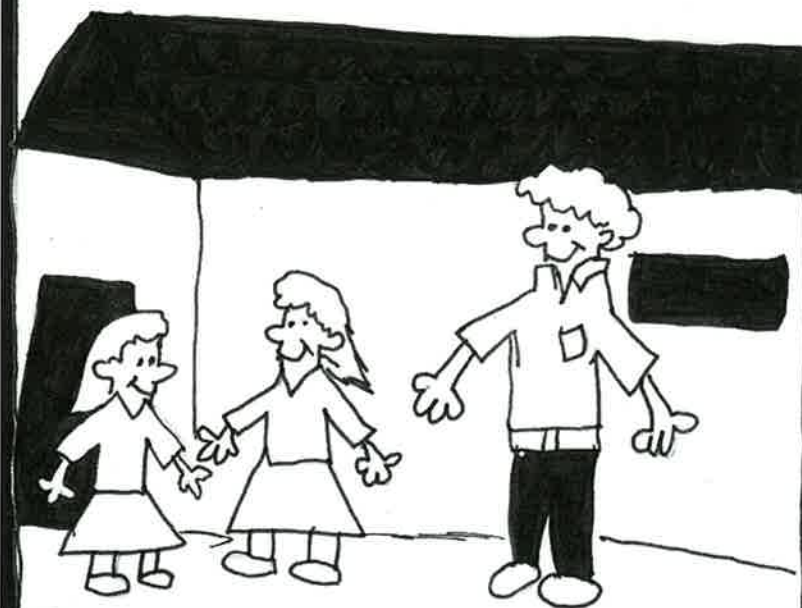
When I arrived in San Francisco, I felt happy because I was in the U.S.A.

One week later, I came to my ^{brother's} house in Oakland. I felt so happy.



MY: MY ODYSSEY

BY: MARIA URBINA

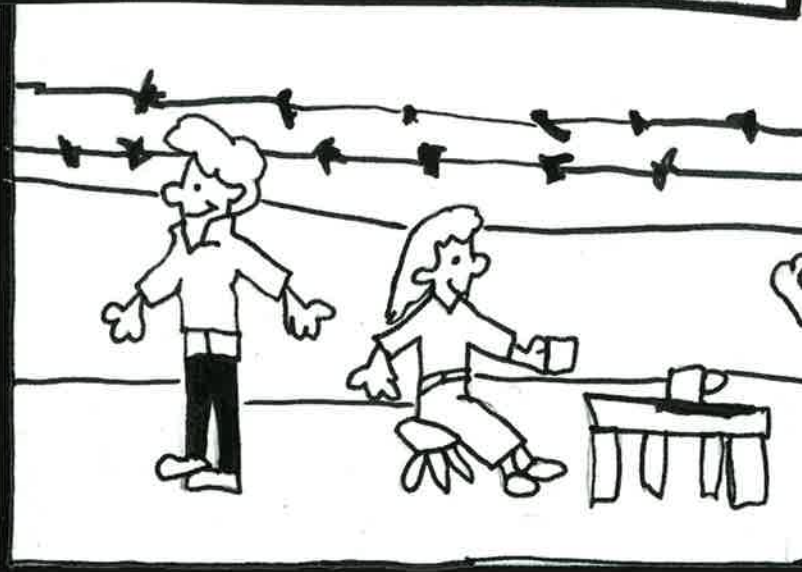


Hi! My name is maria u. I was born in El Salvador. I grew up with my grandma brothers and sister.

But sometimes I would play Barbies with my sister and cousins.



When I was young used to sell avocado and tamales to help my family with the bills.



one day my mom decided to bring us to Oakland C.A. The coyote talked to us about it.

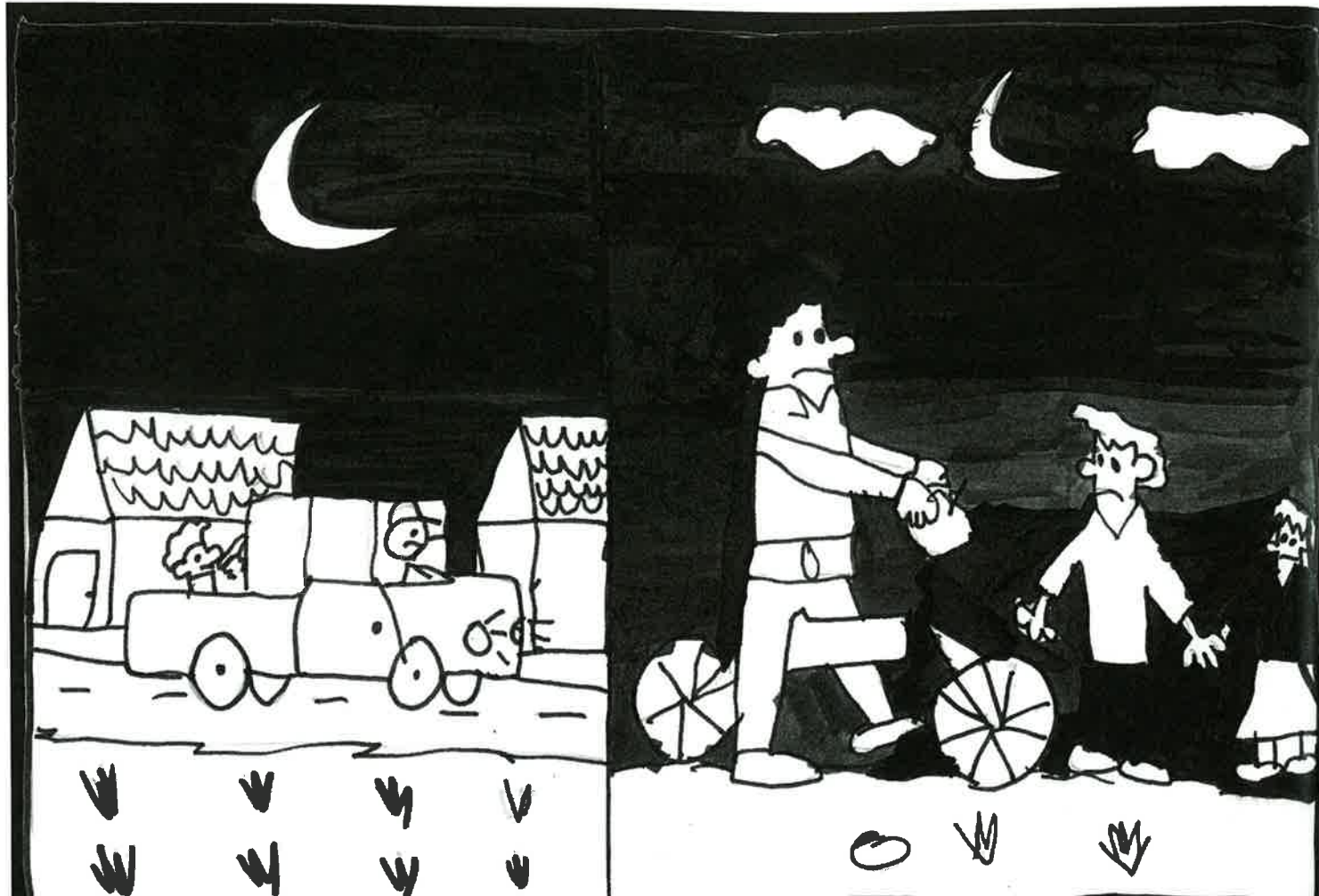
We started to pack our bags with clothes because the coyote would take us next morning at 2:00am



We were sad because we wouldn't see my grandma and sister any more. They decided not to come to the U.S.A.



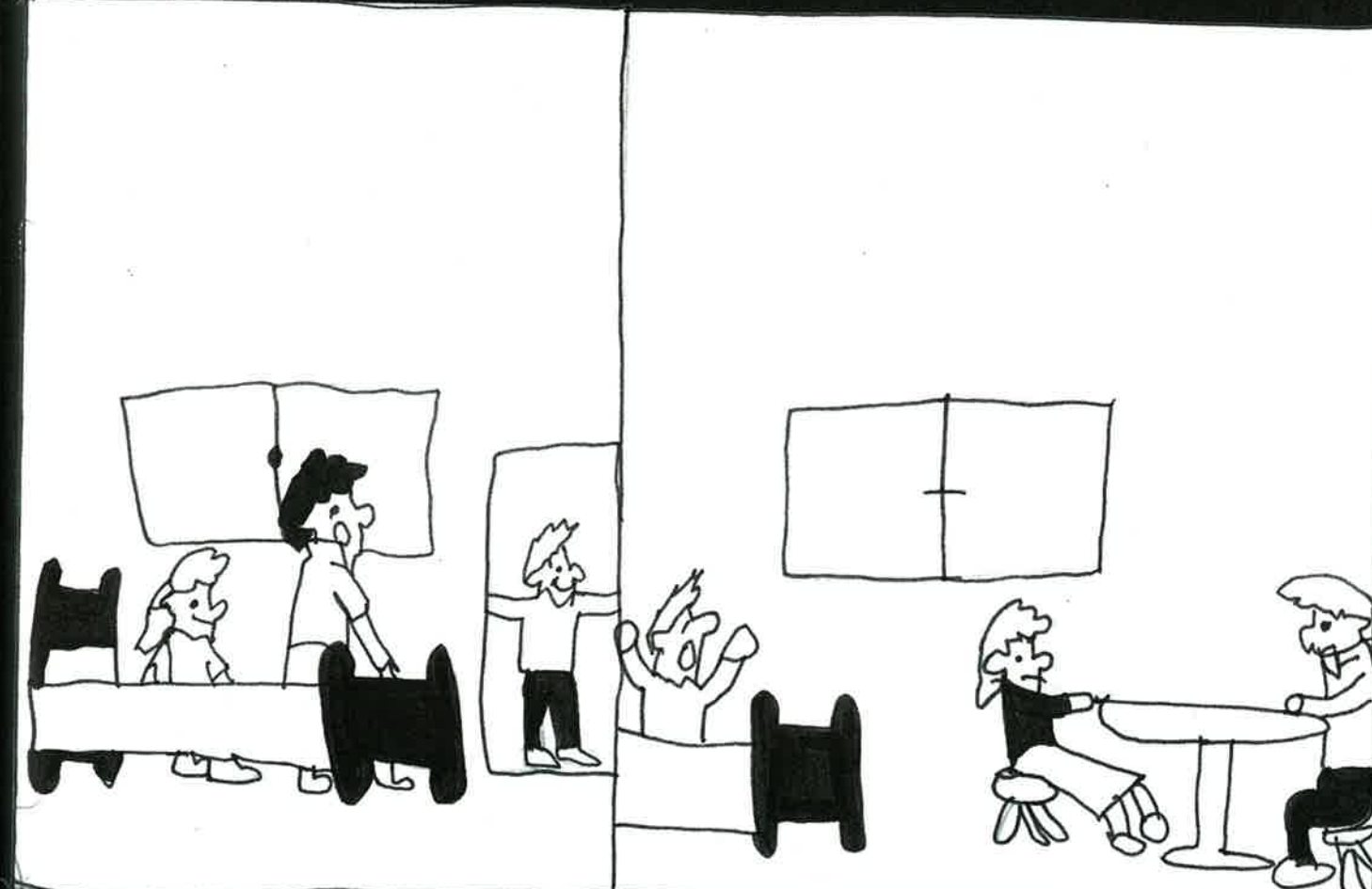
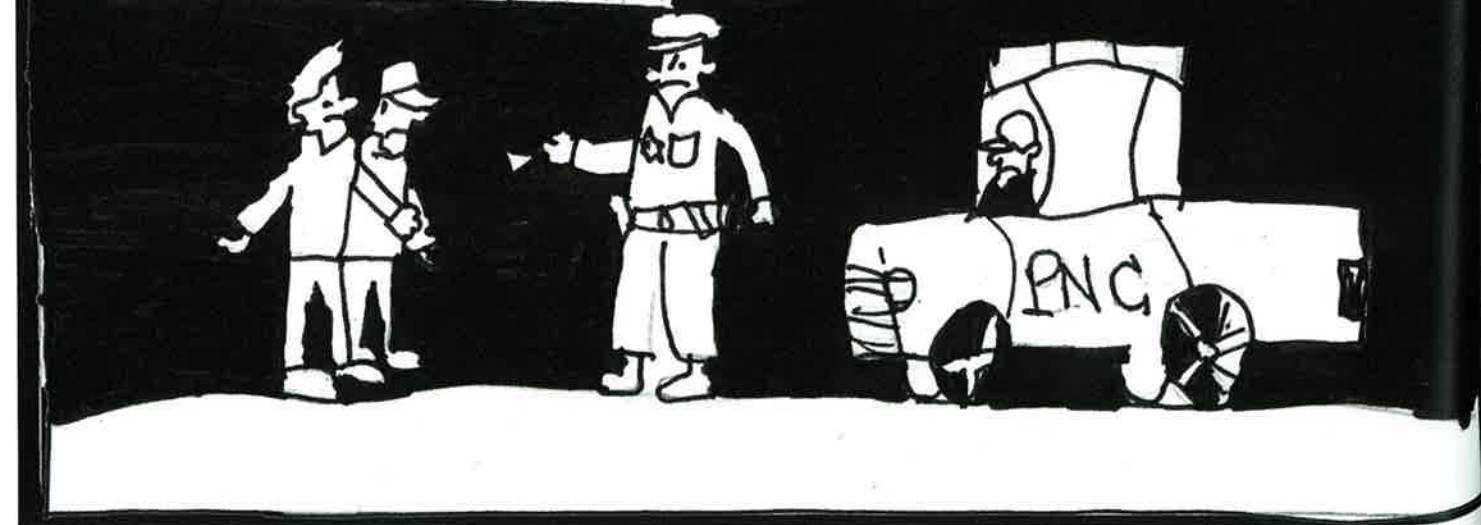
In the morning, the coyote took us. We were crying but at the same time we were happy to see our mother after a long time.



then the coyote took my brother and me to the border of Guatemala in the early morning

When we got to the border, the coyote separated us. my brother rode a bike in to Guatemala and I walked.

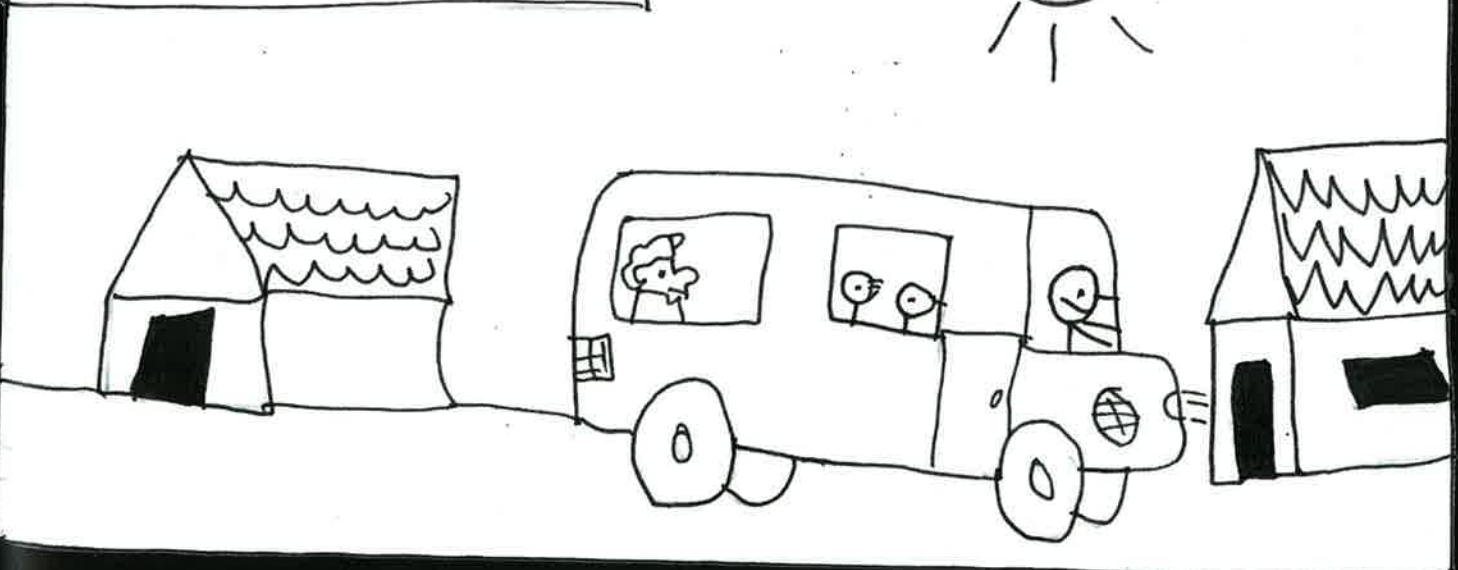
When I got to Guatemala the police arrested me and asked me many questions. But they let me go after the coyote paid them money that my mom sent.

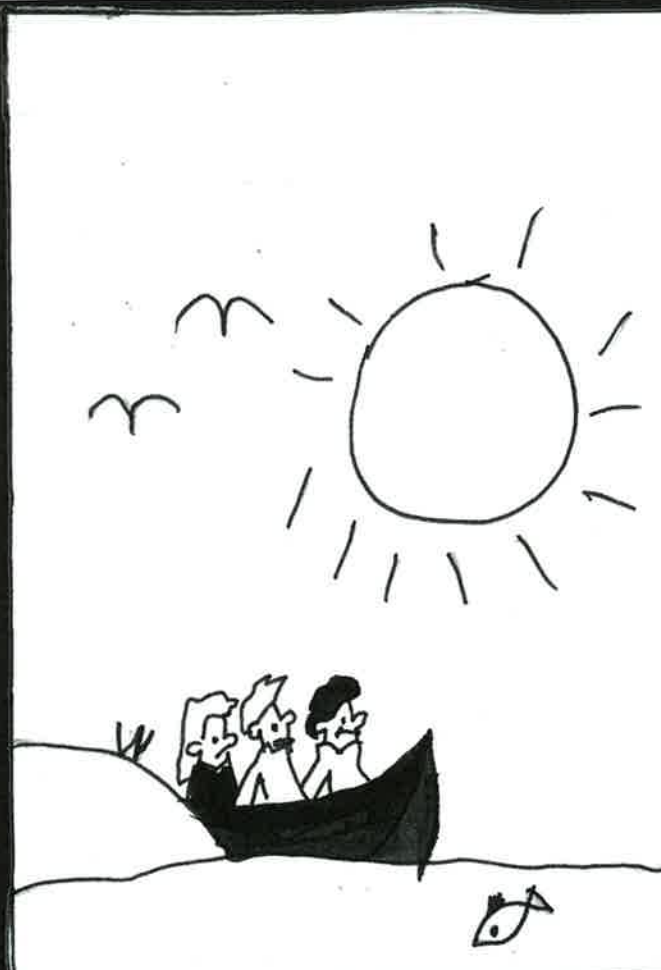


Then I joined my brother at a hotel. We waited like 6 hours for my other brother to arrive.

The next morning, we rose at 6:30 am to get on a bus that would take us to the Mexican border.

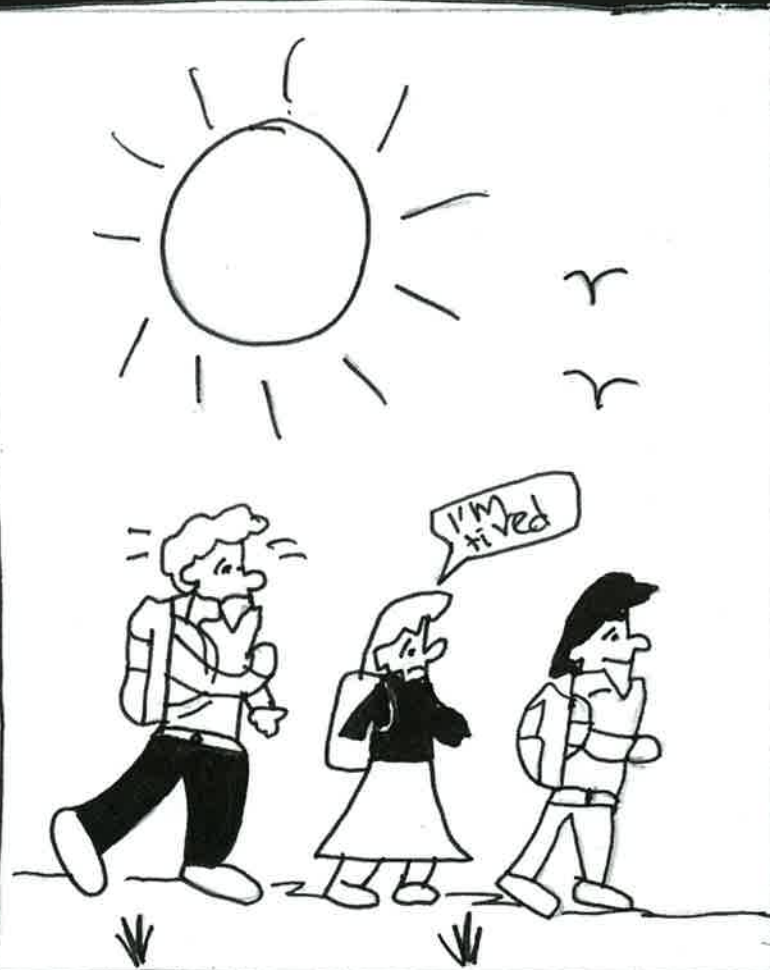
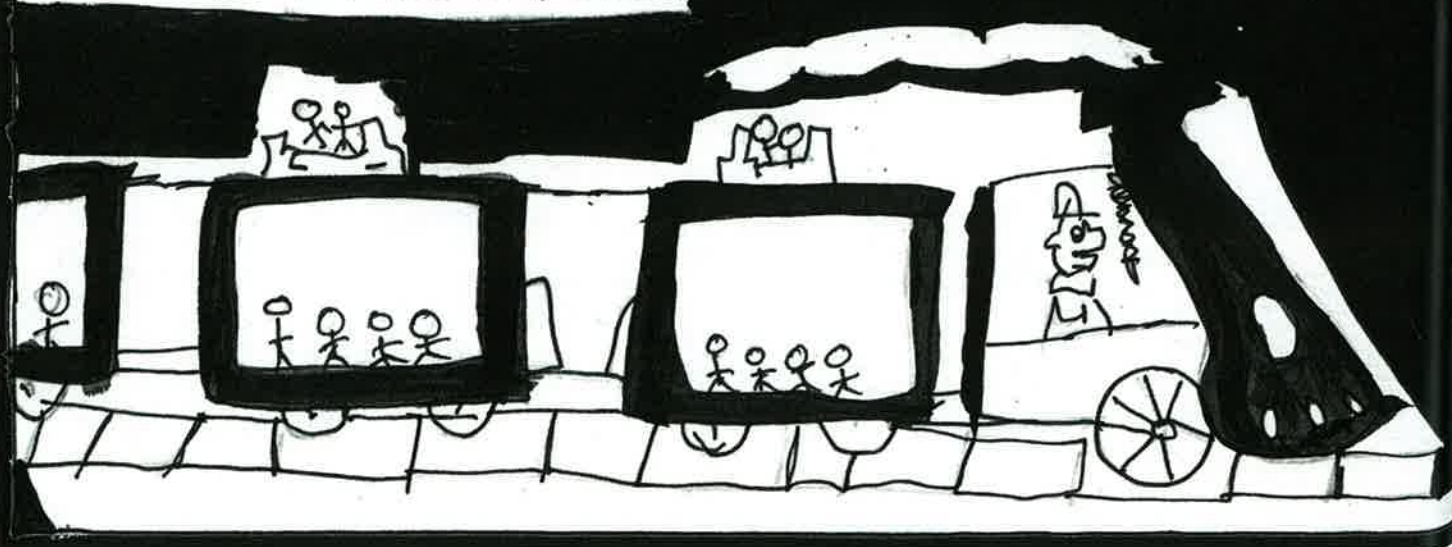
We rode the bus for 14 hours. We were so tired, sad and happy.





After that we came to a river. To cross in to Mexico we had to take a boat. The river was big and the water was nasty.

We were on the top of the train. The train was running fast. A lot of people didn't reach the top and they died.



After that, we walked for a long time. We rode a train. We were on the train for 3 days without eating.

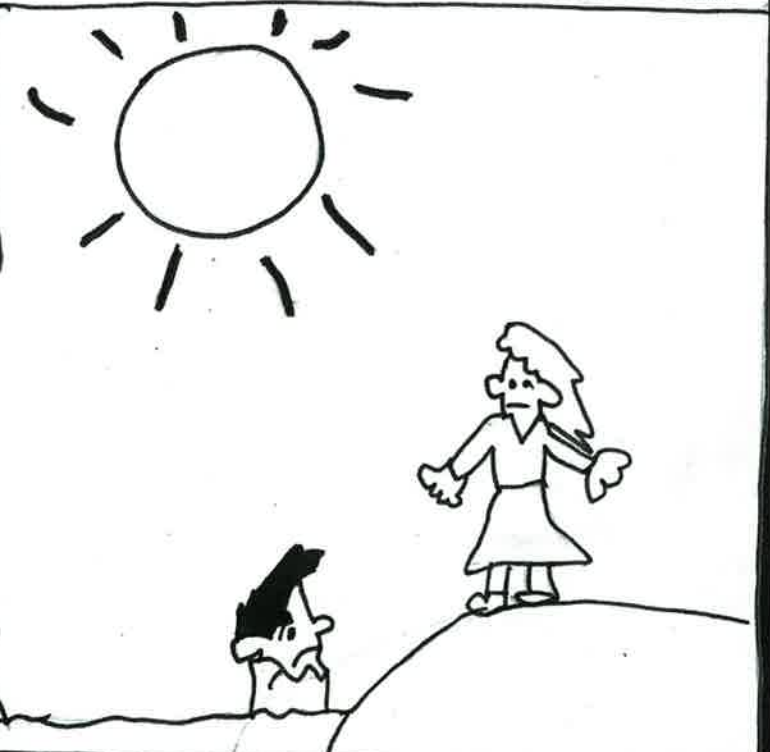


Immigration saw us and we ran away but they followed us.

My brothers ran and they crossed a river where a lot of people died. My brothers lost our backpack because the immigration police shot at them.



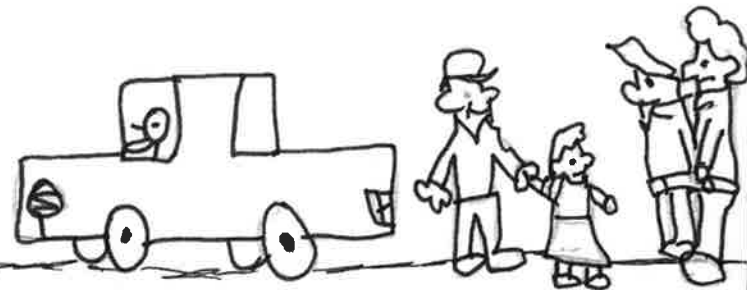
The coyote and I hid underground for 2 hours. The immigration police had dogs and guns and they were shooting at us. We were worried.



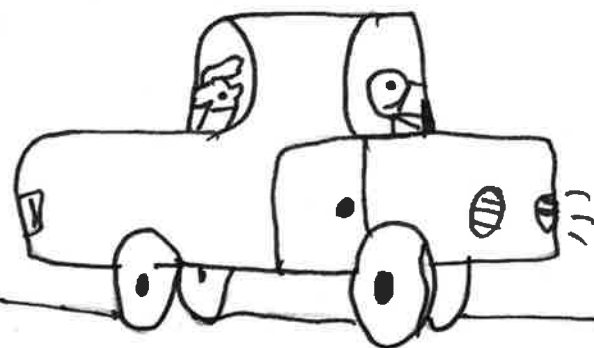


Then finally I got where my brothers were, an immigration house. We were dirty, worned and sad.

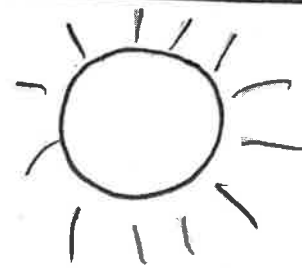
When finally I got to Texas, I was sad because we didn't know nothing about my brothers.



Then the coyote separated us. My brothers walked in the desert for 12 days and I drove to the line.

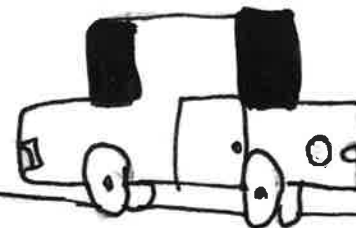


Welcome
To
Houston

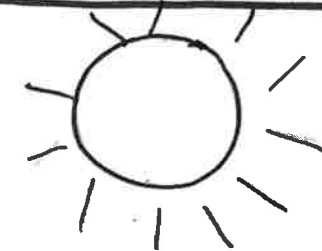


After a long time my brothers got to Houston too, then after two days my mom paid money to some people to take us to Oakland.

Finally we saw her... we were so happy. That was the most special moment of my life.



The people drove us from Houston to Oakland. We were excited because we were going to see our mother for the first time in 9 years.



My children
I'm so glad
to see you.

FROM PULCERAS TO HAMBURGER

Hello, I am Daniel, and I'm from El Salvador. As you may know El Salvador is a small country. That's why it's called "El Pulceroito de America" The Thumb of America.

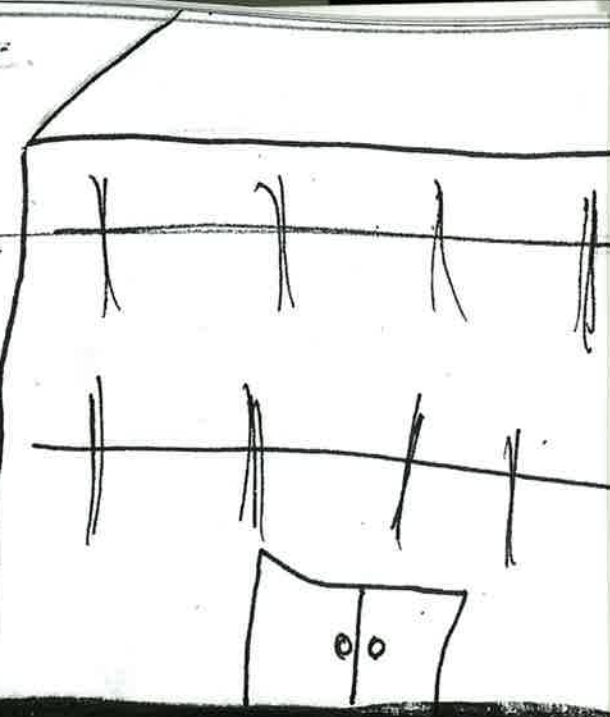
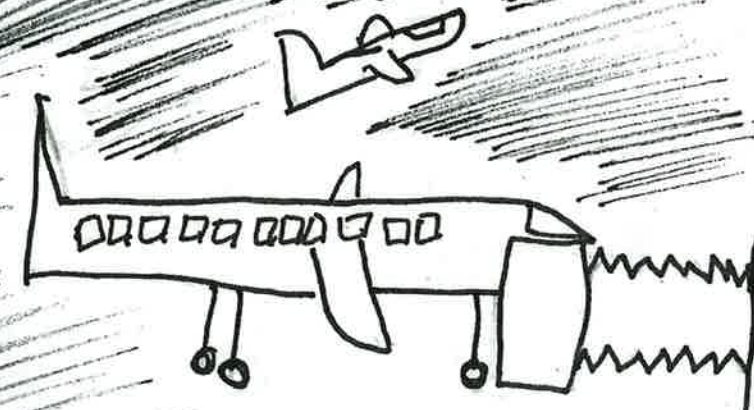
My story is about when I came to the U.S.

I felt really Sad and happy when I was in the airport because I left my brothers and my mom but I will start a better life here.

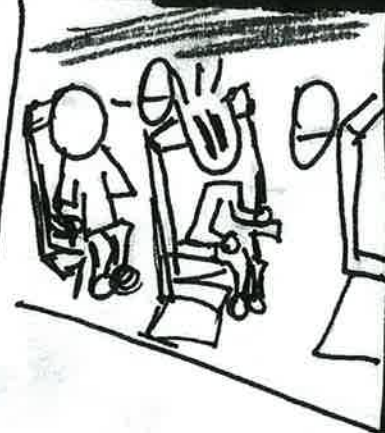
I immigrate to the U.S because I had a big Problem In El Salvador. However, I feel really good living here because I like the weather.

NOW ENJOY MY DRAWINGS!!!

El Salvador 18.9.2009

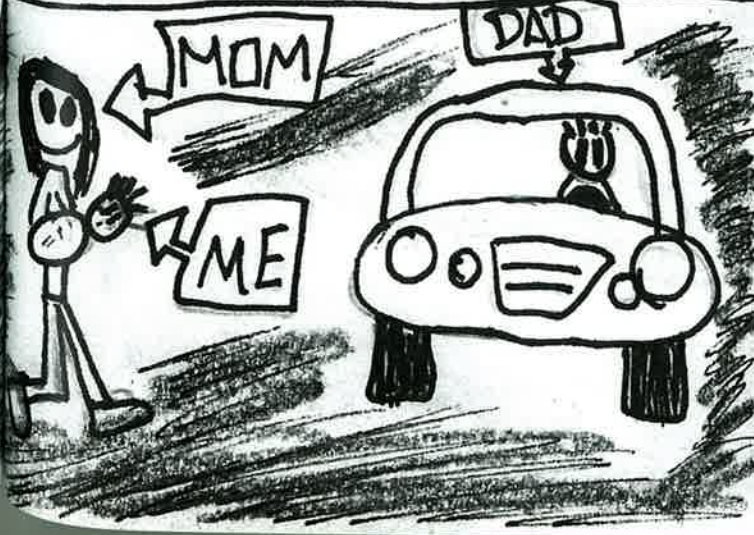


... was the 2nd time I flew in an airplane. I don't remember what the cities looked like from so far up.

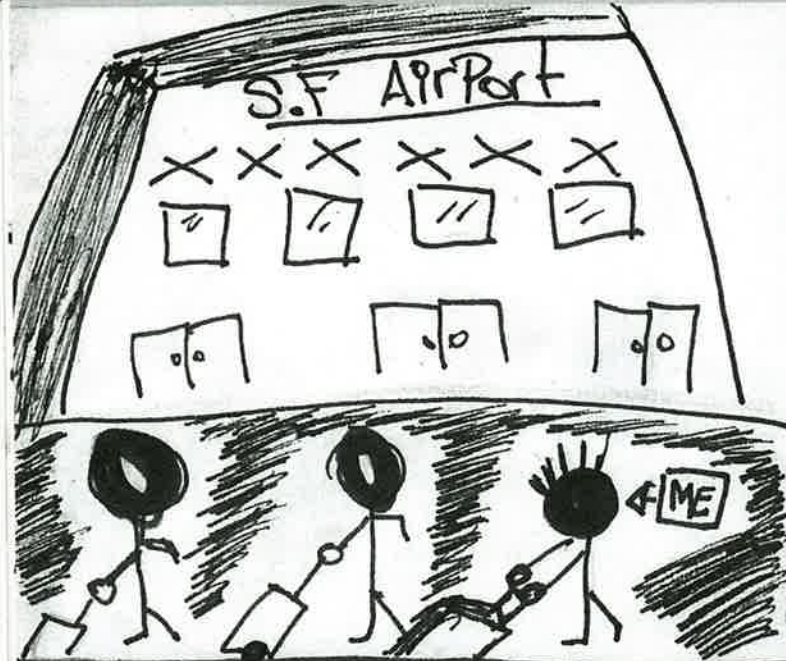


The first time that I flew was when I was 9 months old.

September, 1996: Me and my Mommy were going to El Salvador.



We are arriving to S.F Airport. Finally I'm getting closer to my new home.



I was feeling Nauseous Inside the car



ooo IN OAKLAND, CA ooo

My New Home looked very beautiful and big



whoa. This city looks better than El Salvador

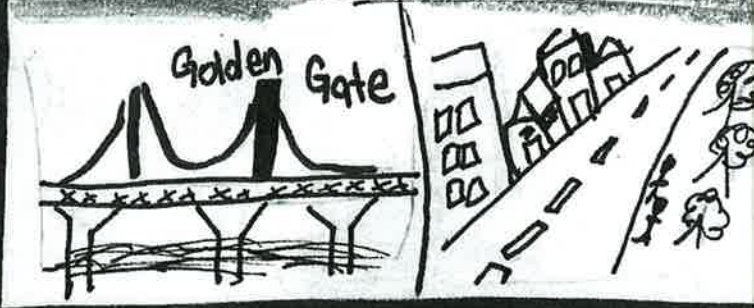


I was surprised of how big a city Oakland is.

I was happy to be at home



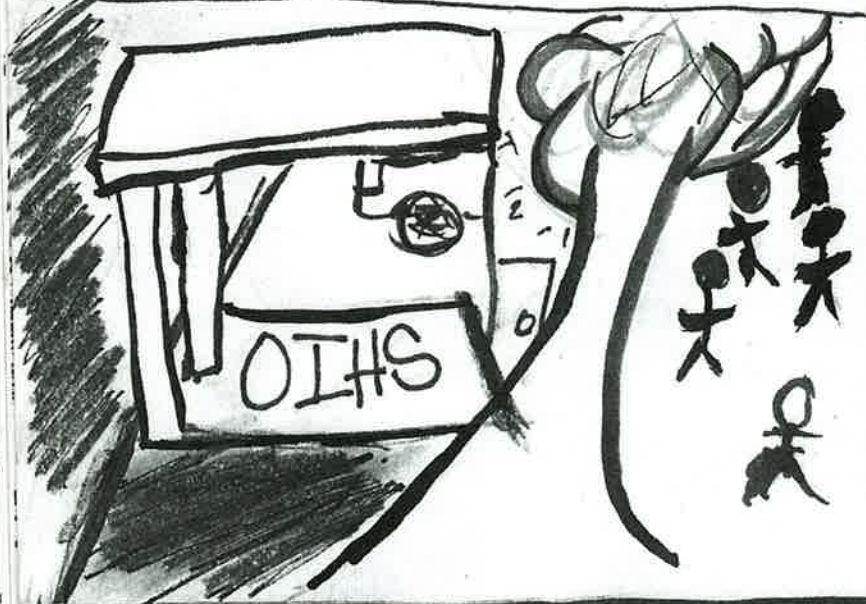
When it's raining in the U.S. the climate is very cold and also windy
when it's raining in El Salvador It's lighting and Thunder. But is good because it refresh you.



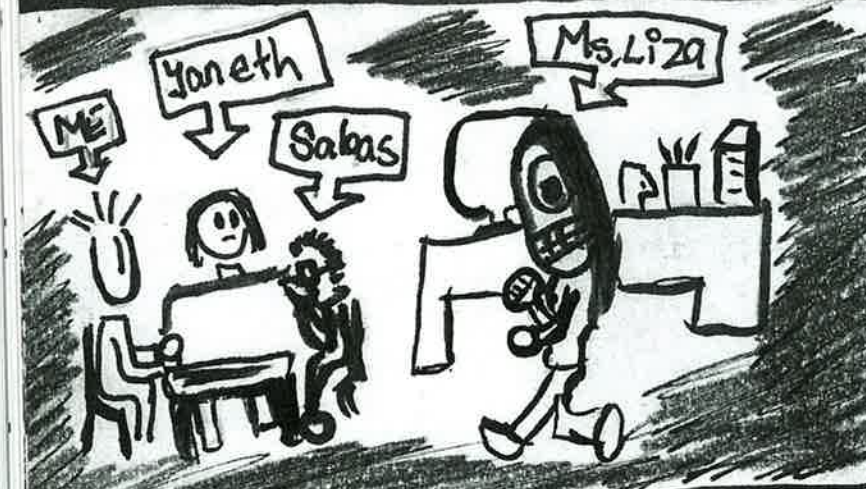
This means different kinds of clothing!!!



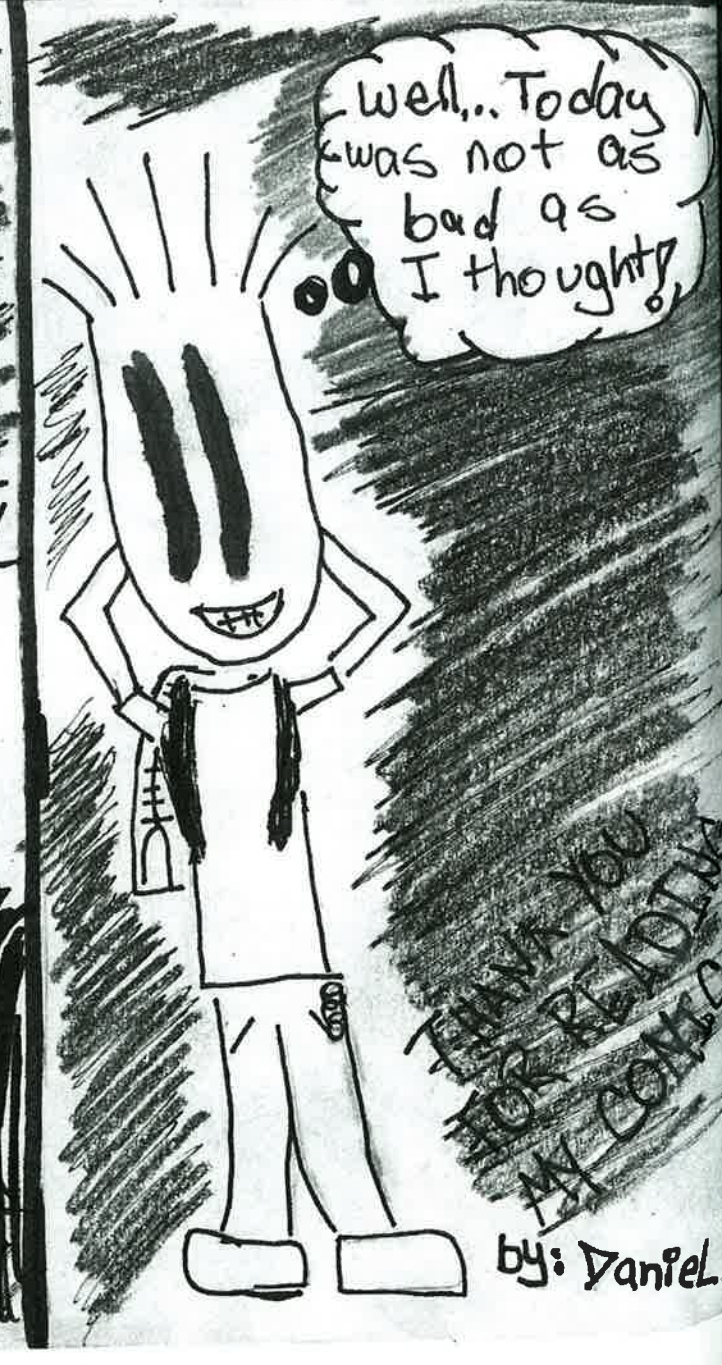
The first day I went into OIHS. I felt really worried because I thought that the classes would be hard



I took a seat in the cafeteria hoping that somebody will try to talk to me...



THERE WERE NOT MANY PEOPLE THE 1st DAY



THANK YOU FOR READING MY COMIC

by: Daniel





WE ARE OAKLAND INTERNATIONAL is a collection of the very best comics written and drawn by students at Oakland International High School from 2009 to 2012. During this time, this small, alternative public school for English Language Learners grew from a freshman class of 60 to a four-year comprehensive program designed to help recently arrived immigrant teens overcome the challenges of learning English, passing the California High School Exit Exam, and preparing for college and work.



The stories contained in this book are a sampling of the wide range of experiences with which these young people came to Oakland. Some were well-educated in their home countries; others were running from war or living in rural areas where school was beyond their means. For many, comics was one of the few ways in which they could begin to communicate their motives, dreams and challenges.

All proceeds from book sales benefit Oakland International High School to continue its mission of providing quality alternative public education to recently arrived immigrants.

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oaklandinternational.org

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