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The Vernal Pool

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Everything Is What You Make of It

By Faris Avdić

At the end of a long day, I drive myself down Bellevue until I make my right turn on Barclay St., then another right on Promenade Ave., then I continue cruisin' down Montage Dr. to my townhome. I remember when we first viewed it after signing papers electronically and the landlord telling us "it's the largest and most modern of these six, and these six houses are some of the most modern in the area". I've never resided in a house. I looked at it, it was something brand new to me. The front door is always unlocked, and a fridge stuffed with tons of Costco food for the friends and guests that come over is famished. I hit my garage door clicker that hangs on my car's sun visor. There is a satisfying feeling when my car's tires make contact with the clean, concrete garage floor. I always remember having to drive down the block to even find parking, let alone be able to park directly inside my home. After parking, I grab my things and get out of my car, heading for the door that enters to the 1st floor. I hit the button by the door as I enter my home and a shade falls upon me. The garage door blocks out any light still remaining of the day. The first floor is what I am greeted with.

My first floor is plain and drab on most weekdays. Rarely do my smoker friends meet there on school nights. The closet on the left houses our new Samsung washer and dryer machines as well as a storage area for other household utilities like a swiffer, extra rolls of toilet paper, etc. There is lots of uninhabited space on this floor because my housemates and I never found a purpose for it. We only use it for is storing some extra cases of Sierra Nevada IPAs, a sticky table, and some other random pieces of

furniture that include a foot rest, bean bag, and sofa chair. For the weekends, it becomes more interesting and lively, but for the most part, it remains a barren land. Located outside the glass sliding door on the wall furthest from the stairs is our private patio, but that's only a useful addition for my stoner friends and the smokers who come over for a social gathering.

I proceed with my journey to the 2nd floor, which is surprisingly two flights of stairs away. I pass my official front door where the well-acquainted delivery men know to leave my packages. Some delivery men just leave packages by the side gate near the garage while others take the time and put in the effort to leave the package here, where it should be dropped off. While passing it, I usually lock it depending on whether or not I have friends coming by, but most of the time it's unlocked. For the most part though, my front door is unlocked and welcomes all. I continue up with each step more satisfying. I've never had stairs, or stories in my home, so it's a first. I have reached the most well-furnished and lively area of the entire home, the kitchen/bar/living room/dining area. It is all of those because we have bar stools running along the granite island, a dining table in the corner, and a printer that resides on the T.V. stand in the further space with a couch and lounge chair. I've never had granite countertops, or a full kitchen let alone known what a "kitchen island" is, but now I have all of those luxuries. The fridge and our supply of beverages is also located on this floor. The best part though, is that my master bedroom with a connected bathroom is located here. Let me continue up the steps and explain the third floor. We'll come back to the second floor shortly.

As I continue climbing up the steps, we finally reach the literal high point of the home on the third floor. This is where we can find two more large, well organized rooms with two more connected restrooms. My two considerate housemates occupy this floor together. If you look westward or eastward, you will see the enormous, productive fields Merced prides itself on. These glass panes are absolutely breathtaking when viewed at the right times of day. Now then, I will return to my pride and joy, the second floor.

This is my lair, my personal space, my own home away from home. The second floor withholds the most luxurious of rooms and amenities. This is where I live. Only 5 paces from my room door is a door for another restroom. I couldn't have been more in shock when I first saw everything that would belong to me, myself, and I. If you thought I was done there, you were wrong. I have a walk-in closet the size of a full bathroom connected to my personal two-person bathroom. What would I even fill it with? In comparison, my room at my parent's home is the size of the bathroom and closet, it does not have any additions. For some, these are standard amenities, but for someone like me, this is complete absurdity. The idea of having my own house to call home still hasn't completely sunk in and I've had it for over seven months.

Now then, you might wonder why this has come as such a shock to me. This is the first house I've ever lived in and to think it's the result of solely my hard work is insane. I am only nineteen-years-old working two jobs on and off to pay rent, most of my bills, and living independently of parental finances. This was a decision I made on my own and probably the most important, life changing decision of my life. Why would I want to be an unproductive brat living on Daddy's dime? Well, some families have shinier dimes than others. This feeling of independence and self-reliance is what I pride

myself so greatly on. This life, this experience I live in Merced is like no other. It's not about the material things though, it's about what they have proven to me. I love this house and it loves me back. It has given me everything. All of the adult-like experiences I've had are because of this house and the responsibilities that came with it. It has given me the opportunity to learn and grow, to become the adult that I am expected to become by the end of my educational career. I know this isn't any sort of insane accomplishment, but I think it's a huge step in the right direction.

Most of my inspiration and drive comes from the people and things that surround me on a regular basis. Some things can mean the world to you if you invested the meaning within them, like I have with this home. I know it's shared and nothing crazy for some people, but it means the world to me to have this extravagant roof over my head. This retains its value through example after example. Some individuals are satisfied with what others would consider the bare minimum. All humans are equal, but they're also unique and special in their own ways. What I'm trying to say is, everyone and everything has a purpose, a meaning and it's up to you to make something of it all.

I am satisfied each time I enter my castle. I never thought I would be able to make it this far so quickly. Of course, many individuals have gone further in less time; nonetheless, I am still proud of my accomplishments and growth as an individual. I may sound delusional for saying this, but I am almost thankful each time I pay a bill. I am thankful to be able to pay for all of my commodities, for example, my excessive water use. It is satiating to know that I am not under every time rent is due, and therefore I am grateful. I have nothing to complain about, but I still find myself complaining and wanting

more. Nonetheless, I am far past grateful and satisfied with where I am today, and I only plan on further bettering myself as time goes on.