

Journey to America

Narrative Short Stories & Poems

Volume 7



Cover Art by Melvyn Chairez Magallanes

Ms. Juelke's EL English 4 Class

South High School
Fargo, North Dakota

2020-2021

For the last seven years, students at Fargo South High have written nonfiction narrative short stories about their journeys as refugees or immigrants to America. During Leah Juelke's English Learner English 4 classes, students were inspired to document their own journeys after Zoom presentations from Burundian refugee and CEO, Laetitia Mizero Hellerud, former students, and other community members. The South High EL paraprofessional, who is also a musician and business owner, Damber Subba, taught the students about the history of Bhutan and how he, and thousands of other refugees, ended up in the Nepali refugee camps.

Due to the COVID pandemic, students were online, hybrid and eventually back in the classroom by the end of the year. Despite the obstacles, students continued the project and made the most of the unique situation. This year, students were visited by a celebrity guest, Kalen Allen, in their Zoom class. Kalen Allen got his start in Hollywood by being discovered by Ellen for his food critique videos. He has now blossomed into tv correspondent, host, singer, actor and a social justice and LGBTQ activist. He talked about his life journey with students and inspired them to embrace who they are and to pursue their dreams.

During the writing phase, students drafted their own stories and went through multiple editing workshops to create a finished product. Volunteers from around the community provided technical writing support for the students during the Zoom workshops. In addition to stories, a poem by each student and a picture of their artwork are featured in this book. During the project, the students were visited on Zoom by an artist from the Plains Art Museum who talked about the importance of self-expression and painting. Soon after, students created canvas paintings that depicted a scene from their journey. Since students were not able to present their stories in person at the universities this year, students were filmed presenting in class and a video was compiled and uploaded to YouTube and the class website for family, friends, and volunteers to view.

This book holds the intriguing stories, poems & artwork of Fargo South High School EL refugee and immigrant students from around the world.

The following stories, as well as video and audio of the stories and more information about the project, can be found at:
www.ellfargosouth.weebly.com

Check out our other projects

We Are America: Fargo <https://www.weareamericaproject.com/school/fargo-south-high>

Green Card Youth Voices: Fargo <https://www.greencardvoices.org/books/gcyv-fargo/>

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2020-2021 Journey to America Project

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**An "I Am From" poem is featured after each author's story*

Dear Motherland
By Randell Yancy

"Cours, Rose cours, ne cherche pas!" my mama yelled to me as we ran. Soon, everything went silent and we got further away. The air felt tight, tender, and hot. The ground was still asleep, and only just waking up for the morning. The only thing I heard was the pounding of feet on the tender ground. Voices came and went with the sound of destruction. I looked around and I could see the tall mango tree and tall green grass. The leaves of the fallen tree crunched under my feet as we ran.

"Maman maman, je suis fatigué de ralentir," I said. I could hear and see the men of my neighborhood running behind us with *cutlass* and sticks. We ran to the church to ask God to help us with this situation that mama was in. At the time, I was young, I couldn't understand what was going on. We got on our knees and prayed to God. We ask God so many questions. What was going on? Why was mama wrongly accused? Was this a test of time?

It didn't take long for them to discover our hiding place. We slowly got up, rubbed our knees, and ran out of the church without our slippers. I could hear them telling us to stop, to slow down, but we couldn't, our bodies were in survival mode, I could hear my heart beating as I ran faster than a cheetah, the adrenaline pumping in my body. I didn't know what to feel or do. I stopped and grabbed mama's hands pulling her into a stop. My breath felt cold, I was tired, sweaty, hot and most of all, I was thirsty and hungry. *"Maman, je suis fatigué et j'ai faim. We need to rest. We could go home to see papa. I don't know what's going on. What's going on mom?"* I said. She got down to my level and kissed my head.

"C'est un bon bébé," she said. "Your big brothers are not at home, and I don't know where your papa is, and they know our house. We have to go to your grandmother, she will know what to do," she replied warmly, wiping away the sweat off my forehead. She stood up,

held my hands gently and we continued to run. We both agreed that we should go to my grandmother's house. They wouldn't dare to go there to find mama, no matter how much palm wine they drank. My grandmother was a powerful woman. No one dared to mess with her, and now they were after her last daughter. We continued until we got to my granny's house. Mama sent me to the yard to play with my cousins, my aunties, my elder stepsister, and the neighborhood kids, so she could talk with my grandma. We played fire on the mountain, jump rope, O.U.T, hopscotch and other exciting traditional games.

Later that afternoon, we drew water from the pump down the hill. After our bath, I put on my yellow pjs. My older sister dished up the food, put it in a big bowl, set it on the floor and called us to eat. Everyone came and we ate together as a family. After we ate, grandma called for a big family meeting, I remember my whole family was there. My little brother didn't understand anything at all. We sat on the floor while the elders sat on the big furniture. Mama had a scared look on her face. "I am calling for this meeting because Naba will be going to Guinea tonight. Nobody will say anything, we will act like nothing happened. You didn't see anything, and you don't know anything. When someone asks you, you don't know. What you don't know, don't kill you. After Guinea, she will go to America, and send for her *childrenne*," my grandma said. My mama went into the room and slowly packed her clothes and left that night.

The problem all started when my mama had sold her house to a wealthy man. Later, he claimed that he owned my mom and my family. He was an evil man that wanted to take advantage of my family. The only option was for mama to leave the country. I was only nine years old when my mom left me and my siblings with my grandma.

Two years later, it was January 1, 2016. I was 11 1/2 years old. My little brother was nine and my second oldest brother was twenty years old. My grandma was happily dancing to

Guinean music. We didn't know the reason why she called us, but we knew it was something good, because of the way she was dancing and laughing. We smiled and left her to continue dancing. We went to the kitchen to see my family cooking some *egusi* soup with *acoumay*. We sat down, washed our hands, and swallowed the delicious food. My grandma finally came out of her happy place, only to tell us that we're leaving for the embassy. We were going to get our passports and to answer some questions. She taught us the answer to every question they would ask us.

Four days later, we woke up extra early and got ready. My little brother and I had matching blue jeans, but different color shirts. My grandma reviewed the answers with us again. We got ready and prayed to God for safe travel, for good luck and many other things. When we got to the embassy, I was so scared that I was going to do it wrong and that would cause us not to go to the U.S. The lady that interviewed us asked for our passports, and our date of birth. We did fingerprints and took a head shot. She looked at us and smiled, "Welcome to America," she said congratulating us. We were so happy. We got home, had an amazing meal, played games with loved ones, and celebrated.

In the afternoon, my father called my grandmother and asked for my little brother and I to visit him. He was in his home, with his new wife. My grandmother agreed, and allowed us to go. We spent a week with my father, and I didn't want to leave because I hadn't seen him for a long time. My grandmother allowed us to stay there until we left for the states. My father's house was big, and comfortable but my stepmother was so evil. In front of my dad, showed us love, but when he was not there, she treated us like we were orphans. It was all the more reason why we wanted to go to America so bad.

In the middle of the night my father received a call that we would be leaving on March 3, 2016. I heard everything because I was only pretending to be asleep. In the morning, my dad got me ready and fixed my hair. He took us shopping for clothes and we spent a few moments together. Later in the afternoon, my dad cooked, and we ate as a small little and happy family.

It was 4:00 am when we got ready to go to the airport. For the first time, I was going to ride on a plane. We checked in, took some photos, prayed for safe travels, and took more pictures. It was time for us to board our plane. The plane looked gigantic, hot, but also comfortable. My father kissed me and my brother's head and told us he loved us. I was in tears, but I tried to hide it.

On the plane, I felt nervous. I realized, right there, that I was afraid of heights. My ear was blocked, I couldn't move at all. My older brother would laugh when the plane made a little noise or shake a little. He told me to fill my mouth with air and blow to help my ears. My head was pounding.

When we reached Morocco, we saw the most beautiful buildings. They had the most expensive food. We stayed in the airport there for one hour, and then it was time for us to board the plane. We took the trolley to go to the plane's gate. After boarding the plane, I fell back to sleep.

When we arrived at our destination, my older brother shook me awake. We got off the plane and went to check in. They checked our passports, and other things we needed. It was time for us to go to our luggage and to meet our mother. When we got on the escalator, it felt funny and my little brother started to cry. He ran, trying to get off it. My older brother and I were laughing our heads off. We got our luggage and went to meet our mother. We saw her standing there near the door, in all her glory. She wore a beautiful smile on her face. Her face shined with

so much beauty. We ran to her in tears, happy to finally see our mother again after everything. Right there, I realized how real all this was. I knew I was going to miss my home. I started to have flashbacks of all the fun things I was going to miss.

I still remember how my siblings and I would play in the night when the moon was at its peak. We didn't have electricity, we didn't have touch screen phones, but we were happy with all that we had. We would light the firewood, sit around, and tell stories and jokes. I also remember all the pranks we would pull on each other. We would run in the rain in our underwear and put our bucket and drums in the rain to draw water. I missed how the stars shined so bright, even without the moon. I missed all that. I didn't regret coming to America, but I knew that when I was old enough, I would visit my motherland again.

French/Liberian Language Glossary

“Cours, Rose cours, ne cherche pas.”

“Run, Rose run, don't look.”

"Maman maman, je suis fatigué de ralentir."

"Mum mum, I'm tired, slow down."

Cutlass

It's a big knife that we use to cut firewood and palm trees to get fresh palm wine

“Maman, je suis fatigué et j'ai faim.”

“Mom, I am tired and hungry.”

“C'est un bon bébé.”

“It's ok baby.”

“Egusi soup with Acoumay”

Egusi is made from dried, ground up seeds of an African plant
Acoumay is a different kind of fufu.

“Childrenne”

“Children”



I AM FROM
By Randell Yancy

*I am from the iris, wild, free, and delicate white flowing leaves
From super sunny, drizzly rain, and warm breezy winds
From playing lappa, kickball, and eating a feast
I am from beautiful Liberia with rich farms
From a concrete house, white painted walls like a warm blanket
From a cozy warm and fresh-baked smell that lingers in the air
I am from praying every night, and sitting together under the moon
From the bright cheerful glee of Christmas with dancing & singing
From colorful clothing and the loud sound of laughter
I am from Abdulaye Yancy, and Aminata Pahn, and Rodell Yancy
From full house, crazy loud, to prankster and bossy instant
From Yvonne Pahn, strong, independent, and beautiful
I am from Jibreel Renae, the joy of motherhood, friendly & happy
From Koko R. Yancy, bossy bee, irresistible, good cook
From going to church every Sunday
I am from always depending on myself, and being friendly
From This is Me, Criminal Mind and Grey's Anatomy
From kickball, volleyball, and drama
I am from 16 years full of laughter, craziness, sadness, and happiness*

About the Author

Randell Yancy was born in Guinea in 2005, but at the age of two, she settled down in Liberia with her family. She came to America with her older brother and younger brother in 2016. She is a sophomore at Fargo South High School. Her favorite subject is western civilization. Randell speaks two languages: English and French. She works at Hornbachers grocery store. Her favorite sport is kickball. When she graduates college, she wants to be a doctor.



Following a Different Path

By Pratikchhya Ghaley

Suddenly, I woke up and heard people screaming. “Mommy!” I yelled in a panicked voice, as I got up and went to the door.

“Hami Bahira janu parcha,” my mom said as she packed some things.

“What is happening?” I quickly asked.

“A few houses behind here, there is a big fire!” my mom yelled. Since my dad was working, I got really scared. I put my shoes on and went outside. When I was outside, I could see a lot of houses burning and black smoke. I held my mom's hands, and we ran outside the camp. When we got outside the camp, I saw my friends and their parents. When I saw them, I was really happy, and my fear went away. I talked to them about the fire and we played, since we really couldn't do anything else. We stayed outside the camp since it was very dangerous in the with all of the fires in the camp.

After the fire was out, we went back to our camp. As I was walking really fast to see what was left of the camp, I saw other people going to the camp too. When we all got there, I saw that most of the houses were burnt. Seeing that broke my heart. My mom and I went to our house to see the damage caused by the fire. My dad was already there. Sadly, our house was burned. It was not completely burned, but it was ruined. I looked around and saw my mom's half burnt wedding sari. That made me sadder, knowing how much that meant to my mom.

After a few days, the refugee camp officers gave us a lot of tools to rebuild our houses. We started to build our house with the tools and long bamboo. After a week, we were done with our houses, so we went back to our normal routines. Every morning, I awoke excitedly around seven and went to my neighbor's house. They made a small fire and I sat around and enjoyed the

fire on the cool mornings. Then, I got ready for school. After school, I played with my friends. My dad would go to work around seven in the morning and come back in the early afternoon.

I always wondered what the United States looked like, and how it was. A lot of people from the USA used to come to our camp. They would tell me and my friends about the United States. My aunt, who was in the USA, was always telling us to come to the United States. We wanted to go, but some things still had to be done. My mom still had to get a passport and we had a lot of paperwork to do. When we started the paperwork, a man came to our house and talked to my parents for a long time. After he was done, my dad told me, “We can get ready to go to the US now.”

“*Sachi?* I can’t believe it!” I said with a smile.

“Yes, really!” My mom replied happily. I was very excited and couldn't help but to smile. I went to tell my friend the good news and that I was going to the USA. They were very happy for me, but they were also sad that I was going to leave them.

After a few days, my dad got a call, and someone told him that we needed to go to the doctor for medical checks and we also needed to go to orientation. Our family did everything that they told us to do. We got our pictures taken, got shots, and did a lot of paperwork. It took us eight months to finish the process.

The day we were going to the USA was getting close, so my family decided to go shopping. My mom, her friend and I went to the market and we bought a lot of pretty clothes. The next day, I went to school early, because it was my last time. I gave some candy to my classmates and my teachers. During recess, I happily played with my friends and they told me to not forget them. Everyone was so nice to me since it was my last day at school. After school, I

looked at my large school and then up to the blue sky above it for one last time. I soon saw that my friends were coming towards me. We planned to hangout before I was going to leave.

The day before I left, my friends came over. I went outside to meet them. We all decided to go to a place near our school. It was outside of the camp, but it wasn't far away. They had a lot of different types of foods. On the way, we decided to buy *chatpate* and *chow mein*. We all laughed and talked while eating. When we were going back to our camp, we saw a man selling *pani puri*. I decided to buy that too because it was my favorite.

When we got to our camp, we all played until it got late. "Come to my place when we are about to leave," I told my friends, before going home.

"Kina janey yahi basana," my friend said.

"Hoina ma janai parcha tara ma timi lai birsinna," I said sadly.

The next morning, we had to leave, so I went to bed early. Around five in the morning, my parents woke me up. I was super excited because we were leaving.

My brother and my parents got ready, and we ate a meal that our neighbor had made for us. It was very good. Then, my friends came over. When we were all ready, we eagerly went to the place where the buses were. On our way there, we saw other people who were also going to be resettled. Everyone was crying quietly. Before going to the bus, I hugged everyone and sadly said goodbye.

My family got on the bus. I waved goodbye to my friends, one last time. The bus took us to a place where we had to wait for another bus. After a few hours, the bus came and took us to Kathmandu. We stayed in Kathmandu for five days. In those five days I met a lot of people, and I made friends who were being resettled in Australia, Europe and the USA.

On the fifth day, I got sad because it was my last day in Nepal. I also felt sad because I was leaving the only home I had ever known and going so far away.

The next morning, we went to the Kathmandu airport and got on the plane. We flew from Kathmandu to Hong Kong. There, we got on a bigger plane. The plane ride was very long. I didn't like the food on the plane. After about 20 hours, we landed in Chicago. The airport was very big, and there were lights everywhere. I felt very disoriented. Finally, we got on another big plane. On that plane, I looked out the window and saw the beautiful streetlights. I started to feel good.

We finally landed in Fargo, North Dakota. It was a very exciting moment. I was looking forward to my new life in Fargo. At the airport, it was very quiet. Our case manager and my aunt and our cousins came to pick us up. When I went outside, it was freezing cold! I could see my breath, and I could feel the wind on my face. Outside there was a lot of snow on the ground. Sadly, I didn't have time to play in the snow because it was night and we had to go to our cousin's apartment. Our family went in two different cars.

When we got to our cousin's apartment, I ran out of the car smiling, and jumped in the snow. I stepped in it all the way up to my knee. I was surprised that it was very cold. I soon took my leg out and I quickly went inside my cousin's apartment. I hugged all of them and ate *daal bhat* with side dishes. After we finished eating, we just talked a little bit because we were very tired. My aunt put blankets on the floor, and we all went to bed. My parents fell asleep very quickly, but I couldn't sleep because the time zones were very different in the United States and Nepal. Somehow, I eventually fell asleep.

The next morning, I woke up, washed my face, and put on some warm clothes. Then, I went outside to play in the snow. It was so fun playing in the snow. It was funny to think that I

was in Nepal just two days before. After a few days of staying at my cousin's house, we moved to our own apartment. We lived in the same building as my aunt. In the building, there were some Nepali kids that went to the same school as me. My family got to know them well.

My first day of school was very good. everyone was so friendly. On the bus ride there, I met a Nepali girl. I became very good friends with her. She was a very fun girl to hang out with, and she knew English. She helped me with my work when I didn't understand something. It was so nice to have a friend. In Nepal I always played with my friends after school and now I could do the same in the USA too, which is a great thing for me since I was new to everything.

I started to think that being in the United States wasn't so bad. I hoped my family would continue to enjoy life here for a long time. It was not a good thing that I had to leave Nepal, but for my future, it was a very good thing. I had many people who cared about me and wanted me to do well. I was happy that my parents chose this different path for me.

Nepali Language Glossary

“Hami Bahira janu parcha,”

“We have to go outside,”

“Sachi?”

“Really?”

“Kina janey yahi basana,”

“Why do you want to go, just stay here,”

“Hoina ma janai parcha tara ma timi lai birsinna,”

“Nope, I have to go, but I will not forget you guys,”

chatpate

Puff rice mixed with vegetables

chow mein

fried noodles with shredded meat or seafood and vegetables

pani puri

puff-pastry balls filled with spiced mashed potato and tamarind juice and then fried.



I AM FROM
By Pratikchhya Ghaley

*I am from breathtaking Nepal, with large lakes, deep forests
From tropical, cold, and sunny, big hills and waterfalls
From running in the river, rolling down hills and climbing the trees
I am from Lali Gurans and eating mangos
From a house with bamboo walls and a black plastic roof
From going to church, singing, and praying
I am from making ring shaped sel roti, visiting family, everybody
laughing
From Thapa Margar and Ghaley, my bright stars
From a loving and caring family, we hug like bears
I am from Jesus, teachers, and friends
From 'respect your elders' and 'I won't take you to the market
From Christianity, which helps me make decisions
From Bari Lai, Bari Lai and Teen Titans Go
From having a golden heart
I am from 14 years of joy, craziness, and sadness*

About the Author

Pratikchhya Ghaley was born in Nepal. She came to the United States in 2015, at the age of nine. She is a freshman at Fargo South High School. She loves to explore new things. Her favorite subject is art. She speaks two languages: Nepali and English. In the future, Pratikchhya wants to go to college.



A Home Between Homes

By Ahmad Hussaini

“Who loves mommy the most?” my mom asked us with a smile. “Who will help me out?” My mom used to ask us this whenever she wanted us to go get something for her. She would joke around with us when my two younger siblings and I were too lazy to help her out. Since I was the oldest one, I always ended up helping her.

I still remember my family having breakfast and dinner together every day. My mom would cook traditional Afghani dinner and we would wait for my dad to arrive home, so we could eat all together. Sometimes, my dad was home early so he had to wait a little while until dinner was ready.

I was 12 years old when I left my family and found myself in Indonesia. At that time, I did not know much about life and the challenges I would face being in a foreign country by myself. My mom wanted the best for me, so she made the decision to send me away to find a better life. At that time, I was not happy about the decision of leaving my family and taking a road that I didn't know, but I knew one thing, and that was that I trusted my mom. It was not only hard for me but for my family too. I still remember my mom and my younger brothers crying the day I left.

When I arrived in Indonesia and got off the plane, it was so hot that I felt like I was inside of a fire. The city was really clean, and a lot of cars and bikes were in the streets. The language in Indonesia is called *Bahasa*. It is not a hard language, but it took me a while to get used to it.

On the second day that I was in Indonesia, I went to the UN office. They asked me some personal questions. It was an interview. They knew that I was all by myself and had no one to live with in Indonesia. They took me to a place called The Shelter. At that time there were only two shelters, but now there are five. When I first entered the shelter, it felt like a prison. There were about 40 boys in the shelter, all of them were from Afghanistan. My first days in the shelter were challenging, since I did not have any friends. I had five roommates. After a while, I made some

friends. I got to know everyone very well. We were all like a family. We cooked, we did our laundry, and we cleaned the shelter twice a week.

After a while, it didn't feel like a jail anymore. It felt like home. Our shelter had about eight rooms, and there were about six people living in each room. We all had our own beds and fans. Since it was really hot, we wouldn't have survived without a fan or AC.

In Indonesia, there was a clinic in every part of the city, whenever someone got sick, the people in charge of us would take us to see a doctor. Sometimes the doctors did not really know what the problem was, so they wrote us a letter and then we could go to the hospital.

I spent almost three years in Indonesia. During that time, I never really liked Indonesian food. It was not like my food back at home. While I was there, I noticed that Indonesian people eat a lot of rice. They called it *nasi*. Almost everyone in the shelter knew how to cook, so we cooked our own food. After two months in shelter, I learned how to cook, I never really cooked before. I made food for our group for more than two years. We would go grocery shopping every week and buy groceries for the whole week.

After being in Indonesia for a year, I started going to *Roshan*. It was not a big school, but it was a good place. I had a good time and also learned a lot. Everyone was so friendly and welcoming. I loved it. The time went by and Indonesia did not feel like a foreign country anymore. I got used to the people and the weather. It did not feel as hot as the first months anymore either. I loved the friendly Indonesian people and all the friends I met in Indonesia.

After fifteen months in Indonesia, I got a call to go to the UN office for my interview. I didn't expect the call because I had about six more months until the interview. I went to the UN office the next day. The interview took about two hours.

Two days later, the UN called me and told me to go again. I was nervous because usually

they don't call for a couple months after an interview. My roommate told me he thought I might be interviewed again, that's why they called so soon. I went to the UN office the next day and they told me that I was accepted as a refugee and they were sending me to a new country. I was really happy, but I still had a lot to do before I was able to leave. It took more than a year of waiting again before I knew I was going to Fargo, North Dakota USA. When they first told me I was going to Fargo, I was really confused. "Where is that?" I asked my friend.

"I have never heard of Fargo," my friend told me. I had no idea where it was, all I knew is that it was in the U.S. and it had really cold winters.

When I arrived in Fargo, it was really cold. I had never been to a place that cold, but I kind of liked it because I was tired of the warm weather in Indonesia. I spent a couple of days just staying home.

My first day of school was not as bad as I thought it would be. After a couple of days, I started to get to know more people and made some friends. I always wanted to do a sport and be active. I really liked wrestling ever since I was a kid, but I never wrestled because I did not have the chance to. When I first told people that I liked wrestling, they told me I could join the wrestling team at school since it was the beginning of the season. I was so excited to join the team and to get to know everyone.

I met some really good people in Fargo. I felt good where I lived and at my school. After two years, it felt like I had been there for a long time. Things finally started to go right for me and I was happy.

Bahasa Language Glossary

Bahasa

The Language of Indonesia

Nasi

Rice

Roshan

The name of the learning center where I was a student in Indonesia.



I AM FROM

By Ahmed Hussaini

*I am from green lands and endless mountains
From four seasons with heavy rains and snow
From swimming in the river and making fire
I am from the smell of red flowers and the sound of birds singing
From a home full of love
From a joy of warm room and drinking tea
I am from celebrating Eid twice a year
From the endless talks, visiting friends, and cooking different foods
I am from a family of five with two younger brothers
From respecting our elders and caring for our families
I am from apple trees in front of our house
I am from helping people who are in need
From my mom waking me up every morning to pray
I am from working hard long days
From wrestling and never giving up
I am from 16 years of happiness, laughter, sadness and craziness.*

About the Author

Ahmed Hussaini (Yaser) was born in Afghanistan in 2004. He came to the United States in 2018. He is a junior at Fargo South High School. He speaks three languages: Dari, Bahasa (Indonesian), and English. His favorite subject is math. He is on the Fargo South High wrestling team and has been wrestling since his freshman year. He wants to be an MMA fighter in the future.



A Long Walk from War

By Kuei Chol

“Mama, what was it like living in South Sudan?” I asked my mom while my family was having dinner.

“*Kuei weec ka cam!*” my mom told me, changing the subject. We were eating *injera* with soup, which we usually ate for dinner. I wanted to know more about our culture and history and what it was like to come to the U.S from a different country.

“Living in South Sudan was very different from America. The food was healthier, and it was always hot outside,” she finally said with excitement.

“Did you like living there?” I asked.

“I liked living in Sudan because my family was there, but there were also some things that were not so great that happened there. I wished I could change some of those things,” she responded. I learned that living in South Sudan was difficult for my parents because of the war that happened between the two tribes, the Dinka and the Nuer. The Dinka are my tribe and is still the largest tribe in South Sudan.

“What was it like living there with the two tribes?” I asked my mom.

“People would get hurt and houses would get ruined,” she said.

“Is that why people had to go to refugee camps?” I asked.

“Yeah, your uncle, grandmother, cousins and me, we all had to go there to be safe,” my mom said. One of the camps they went to was called Tierkidi, which was in Ethiopia. My dad told me he was in the army, during that time.

“Why did you decide to come to the U.S?” I asked my mom.

“Well, because of the war it wasn’t safe anymore, so we came to start a new life and have a family. We also wanted you and your siblings to live better,” she said.

I understood where she was coming from. My dad told me that it was a good thing to learn about your country. Some holidays that we celebrated were Thanksgiving, Easter, Christmas, and Independence Day for South Sudan. Independence Day is after Christmas and it's a holiday that people celebrate because it shows that we care for each other and our culture. Sometimes on holidays, we would go to parties, dance to music, and eat food. My family would also talk about some things that I barely understood, because I only knew a little of my language. Luckily, every day I started to get better at speaking Dinka and Arabic to my parents. My older sisters and brother were better at speaking those languages than I was. My sister who was only three years older than me was also born in America. Growing up, we both had different perspectives than our siblings. We both grew up around people who spoke English, and we would only watch American TV. Sometimes, my sister and I would have disagreements with the rest of our family, but now that they are older, they understand. My mom told me about my family back in South Sudan. I would always hear my mom talking on the phone to her nephew and mother back in Sudan. My parents tried their best to also help them out financially.

"I like my culture," I said cheerfully.

"Well, I'm planning to go back to South Sudan in March, if you would like to come," my mom said happily.

"One day I will go, but not now," I said smiling back. "What kind of food do they eat? Is it similar to food in America?"

"Well, we would eat rice, *aseeda*, *wala wala* and *injera*," she told me. *Injera* was usually something that was made in Ethiopian and Eritrean restaurants, but now it's something that a lot of Africans eat. The soup is made with meat, carrots, peas, and more. *Walla walla* is a food that is made with spinach or collard greens. Something we also eat with it is called *akoup*, which is

made from flour. Sometimes I like to put spices in it, like my mom's special hot sauce which she makes with habanero chilies, lemon, and salt. Akoup is one of my favorite foods that my mom makes.

Holidays are very important to my family because we spend time with siblings, cousins, friends, aunts, and uncles. "Where does my grandmother live?" I asked my mom curiously.

"She lives in the village in South Sudan," she said. I wondered what it might be like in the village, what kind of house she was living in, and when I would get to see her.

"Will I ever get to meet her?" I asked.

"Yes, you will when we get the chance to go there," my mom said with a chuckle. My mom then continued to tell me what she was like and how my siblings and I resembled her.

"Well, you look a little like her," she added. I was very eager to see what she looked like. So, my mom showed me a photo. "This is your grandmother," she said.

"Wow! She does look like me," I said, surprised. "Now, I know where I get my cheekbones." Everyone laughed. I thought she was so beautiful.

"She's very tall," my older sister Amona told me. "A lot of people in Africa are really tall."

"Just like you," I said, making a funny face.

Living in America, not knowing much about my country was difficult. I had thought about how long my life could be and how much more I could learn, by just asking my siblings and parents. Some things that my family experienced were the things that Black people still experience today. That was another hard thing for them about coming to America. Racism is something that people of all races experience. I think of how my dark skin color is and how it is

so different from others. Sometimes, the things that people say to each other are mean but some other things that people say can often offend us even if just teasing someone.

Living in America had been a positive and a negative thing for my family, but sometimes it was not easy when we were treated a different way just because of our skin color. That was also something that made me angry. In 1865, Abraham Lincoln abolished slavery. That was 156 years ago but still, today, we experience racism and police brutality. It made me very sad that there were still people like that in the world.

One thing that is important in my country is the flag. The flag has six colors, and they represent different things in South Sudan. Black represents the color and people, red represents the people that died and fought for our country, green represents the land, wealth, and agriculture, and white represents peace in the country.

Another thing I learned from my mom about South Sudan was about the topic of marriage. Women in my country are expected to get married at 18 years of age, and men are expected to get married at 20 to 25. Some people disagree with getting married at a young age. I also think that getting married at the age of 18 would be too young for me, and so do my parents. I was really curious to know if my parents got married at that age. “Mamma what age did you and dad get married?”

“Well, I was 19 and your dad was 20,” she said.

Another fact about my country is that there are many children that are starving, with over seven million living with hunger. I wished that I could change that. Knowing people are dying in the country where my family came from made me sad. When I thought about some of my family living back in South Sudan, it pained me to see all these things happening on TV and I was so far

away. My parents would talk on the phone with my family members in South Sudan and they would also tell us of the bad conditions.

There are so many things that I wished that I could change for my family and friends in South Sudan. I thought about how far I had come and where I was. When I would think about all of the things that I had, which many people in South Sudan didn't have, I felt very fortunate. I will never forget the one thing that I learned from my family. They taught me to always remember where I came from, and to always embrace my skin color, as well my native country.

Dinka Language Glossary

“Kuei weec ka cam!”

“Kuei, gather up the food!”

Injera

A dish made of wheat flour, a lump of dough.

Aseeda

A thick porridge-like substance

Wala wala

Made with corn flour and sorghum



I AM FROM
By Kuei Chol

I am from hot and dry summers, the green swamps, and grasslands
From the white snow and the temperatures of -1°F
From South Sudan and Fargo, North Dakota
I am from celebrating, July 9th, Christmas and cooking lots of food
From going to church on Sundays
From dancing to African music and going to events
I am from the Tamarindus trees and the pink & yellow Hibiscus flowers
that are as bright as the sun
I am from watching cartoons and playing basketball
From getting teased by my brothers and sisters
From getting my hair braided
I am from a family of beautiful black skin
From a life full of ups and downs
I am from 14 years of positivity, success, and laughter

About the Author

Kuei Chol was born on July 29, 2006 in Fargo ND. She is a freshman at Fargo South High School. Her family is from South Sudan. She likes to play basketball and volleyball. Her favorite subjects are gym and science. She enjoys eating pasta. She wants to be a physician's assistant or a dentist in the future.



The Greatest Blessing

By Bishal Tamang

Suddenly, the floor started to move and all of the things in my house started shaking. I looked down at the floor to see what was happening. My aunt yelled “*झकझक!*” We all got out of the house as fast as we could. When we were outside, we saw the trees shaking and they looked like they were going to fall over at any second.

It was April 25, 2015 and I was in the kitchen helping my aunty. We were making *Sabji* as we had already cooked *Sel roti*. Then suddenly, the earthquake started. It lasted for about one minute, and it repeated three more times. The last two were not as strong as the first. After the earthquake, my body felt dizzy, anxious, and weak. The aftershocks of the earthquake lasted for weeks. The earthquake did not hit Jhapa as hard as it hit Kathmandu and the middle part of Nepal. When the earthquake was happening, I was scared that I was going to die at such a young age. I had heard lots of rumors about earthquakes. Some terrifying rumors I heard were that earthquakes made holes in the ground and if someone fell in them, they would die for sure. I also heard that during an earthquake, if someone fell on the ground, they would get paralyzed. That was not the first time I experienced an earthquake. The first time was in 2012, when I was eight years old. Fortunately, during both earthquakes, my family didn't get hurt. Since I lived in Southern Nepal, my house was okay. In the middle part of Nepal, the earthquake had hit the hardest. Tragically, the earthquake killed 9,000 people and left about 22,000 people hurt and 3.5 million people homeless. Thankfully, nobody I knew got hurt, killed, or left homeless.

Five months after the earthquake, I started fifth grade feeling lonely because my best friend had just moved to Canada. My mom woke me up at 7:00 AM and got me ready for school. I walked to school with my friends, as usual, because we had no school busses in the refugee camp. My camp name was called Beldangi. I remember it was a muddy, and dirty morning

because a day before school, it had rained. The classrooms were made with bamboo, bricks, cement and tin. During the rainy season, some classrooms had holes in the ceilings because of the rain and wind. The roof of the classroom was made with big plastic sheets and bamboo. Before classes started, we had to sing the national anthem of Bhutan outside of school with all of the students. The boys and girls had different lines and there were also different lines for each grade. The prayer lasted for 10-15 minutes every morning. We also had uniforms for school. The boys wore blue khaki pants, white shirts, and color badges attached to the shirt. The badge represented the grade each student was currently in. Girls wore a blue skirt, white shirt, and color badge attached in their hair. The school didn't accept long hair or long nails for boys. Girls had to comb their hair before coming to school, and boys had to make sure their hair was short enough. If it was too long, then the teachers would cut the hair themselves. The teachers were very strict, if we didn't do homework, we got punished. The punishment was that the teacher would whip us with a long stick, on our hand or back. If we were late after lunchtime, the co-principal and some teachers would whip us. On Saturdays, we had school, but only for four periods. After school, we had to clean the classrooms. The teacher had grouped the class into two groups and each group had a captain who would write the names of those who skipped out of cleaning the classroom. On Mondays, the teacher would collect the name sheet from the group captain and the teacher would look at who was there to clean the classroom and who skipped the cleaning session on Saturday. If someone's name was on the sheet, then the teacher would whip them four times on their hand and yell at them to stay after school. In the camp, we had classes for English, math, science, social studies. We didn't have gym class. Our English was weak because of a lack of education and no one talked in English in the camps.

One day, when I was walking home from school, I was stopped by my neighbor. "*Timi*

haru America jadai chau,” she said.

“*Sachi?*” I asked.

“It’s true!” she said. I thought she was joking because it was too good to be true. Later, when my parents got home, they told me our date had come to go to America and that we were moving. I was so excited, and I was jumping with joy inside because I would see my aunt and uncle again. It was my dream to go to America. My parents decided to go to the USA, since we had relatives in America who had made a better life for themselves.

The day came for us to leave the camp. I was sad and happy at the same time, because I was leaving my old memories there, but hoping for a better future. Before we left, we had a little party as our relatives and neighbors gathered, sang, and danced for the last time. In the morning, my parents woke up at 4 AM and packed our clothes and stuff. They woke me up at 4:50 AM. Our relatives and neighbors were there to help us with our stuff. It was an emotional moment for us. My mom and dad cried as they were locking our old house, and seeing the house and neighbors made their eyes fill with tears. We left our home and got on the *IOM* bus. My parents burst into tears and it made me kind of feel sad, so I cried too. We got on the bus. When we were about to leave, my relatives and friends said goodbye to us with tears in their eyes. The *IOM* bus took us to Damak, and from there they took us to the Bhadrapur airport. It was a thirty-minute ride. We waited for our flight, and after an hour and a half, our flight departed for Kathmandu. It was just a 45-minute flight, but it was terrifying. It was my first time flying and the plane was small. On the flight, I was totally terrified. When we were up in the clouds, the plane got a little bit shaky.

After we landed in Kathmandu, I had a headache. We stayed there for five days. They taught us about American bathrooms, bathtubs, and lots of useful things. I met other kids and I

played Legos and lots of new games.

The last day came and they took us to the Kathmandu airport at night. From Kathmandu, we flew to Hong Kong. Before we arrived in Hong Kong, the plane landed in Dhaka, Bangladesh for some reason and we flew from Dhaka to Hong Kong on the same flight. Since the plane was big, I didn't feel the plane shaking. On that flight, my mom gave me some oily food that made me sick. It made my stomach upset. I felt sick, hungry, and a little disgusted. The plane food smelled weird. I threw up in the Hong Kong airport because my stomach was hurting, and my ears were totally blocked.

From Hong Kong, we flew to Chicago. It was a long trip, and it took 14 hours to get to Chicago. I tried to sleep but it was uncomfortable, and I wasn't used to sleeping in the seats. I was awake for the whole flight and I was sick too. When the plane landed at Chicago airport, I just wanted to sleep. I was still hungry too. Everything smelled different in the airplane and in the airport. The smells were so disgusting and new for me. Some other refugees, like us, were traveling with us from Kathmandu, but in the Chicago airport, we were separated, and they went to their terminal. There were a lot of them, and they were going to Pennsylvania.

After a two-hour flight, we landed in Fargo, North Dakota on November 5, 2015. At the airport, I finally got to see my uncle and brother. They took us to their apartment. On the way, I saw the snow and felt the cold weather of Fargo. The apartment smelled really bad and the food smelled disgusting. I didn't feel sleepy that night because the time zone was different there, and my brain and body were following Nepal's time zone.

After two weeks, I went to Jefferson Elementary School, I started fifth grade. On my first day, I was shy and scared. No one spoke the same language as me. Everyone spoke English. I had a hard time understanding the teacher and everyone else. The good thing was that I made

two friends. They helped and taught me a lot about the school rules and things. Later, I had summer school and I made lots of new friends who spoke the same language as me and I learned more English. After the summer break, I went to Carl Ben Ellison Middle School. I didn't know much English, so everything was still tough for me, but teachers and my friends helped me. The locker combo situation was new for me, so the school staff had to help me unlock the lock from the locker. I still remember that on my first day of school at CBE, I went to the 3rd floor instead of the cafeteria for lunch. On that day, I ate nothing. Luckily, my friend showed me the lunchroom later in the day.

Going to America and starting a new life was the greatest blessing because life in a refugee camp was not good. Nepal's government never accepted us as Nepali citizens since my parents were forced to live there after they were kicked out of Bhutan. The Nepali government saw us as outsiders. My future looked dark in the refugee camp, because of poverty and the unemployment in Nepal. But America gave me opportunities to become a better person and to get a good job in the future.

Nepali Language Glossary

“भूकम्प!”

“Earthquake!”

Sabji Sel roti

Curry and a type of Nepali bread

“Timi haru America jadai chau,”

“You guys are going to America,”

“Sachi?”

“Really?”

IOM

International Organization of Migration



I AM FROM
By Bishal Tamang

*I am from peaceful and gorgeous Nepal
From the humid and rainy season
From hide & seek and football
I am from the Rhododendron: tubular, funnel, and bell-shaped
From tall, big bamboo, plastic, and white tin houses
From Kali River, Mechi river, and Sagarmatha
From Tamang, Lungi, Jewelry, Patuka, Cholo, Mala, and Ghalek
I am from the Sonam Lhochhar
From visiting monasteries and stupas
From where special rituals with masked dances are performed to drive
away evil spirits in the Tabitan new year
From Tamang, Lho, Moktan, namaste and fafula
I am from Bagmati, Phul Maya, and Chhatra
From 'don't talk too much' and 'you are a man and have lots of
responsibilities'
From Buddhism; calm and peaceful.
From Cid, Balveer and a lovely mom.
I am from the 16 years of chill memes and manners.*

About the Author

Bishal Tamang was born in Jhapa, Nepal on December 29, 2004. He came to the U.S. on November 5, 2015. He is a sophomore at Fargo South High. He speaks two languages: Nepali and English. His favorite subjects are math and science. His favorite football team is Barcelona. In the future, he wants to be a doctor.



A New Chapter

By Patience Princess Toh

In 2007, my mom was given an amazing opportunity to go to the United States. My mom wanted to bring me along with her, but she couldn't. At the time, I was just three years old when my mom went to the United States. I had to stay back in Liberia with my grandma.

Living with my grandma was great, but we also had to live with other family members. Some of my uncles, aunts, and cousins lived with us. There were eleven people living in one house. Sometimes, I felt lonely even though there were a lot of people there. My grandma was scared to let me go out alone at night. People would steal stuff or try to hurt others. If someone had anything expensive, like a watch, they would try to take it away. If someone would put up a fight, then the attackers would brutally beat them up.

In my grandma's house, there were a lot of rules. I did not like the rules at all because they were intense. Kids shouldn't talk back to parents or anyone who is older. When your parents tell you to do something, you don't say no or talk under your breath. If a child ever talks back to her parents or anyone that is older, then she would get beaten. Children are to do household chores without being told or they get punished.

On a normal day, I would wake up at about five or six o'clock in the morning. I would get dressed, and quickly start walking to school. We had to wear a uniform and braids in our hair or put it up. The uniform we wore was red and white. We were not allowed to let our hair down. In Africa, kids would have to help their parents get dinner ready after school. I usually got money from my grandma and I went to the market to buy the food. I also had to buy coal that we used for cooking. We were lucky because my aunt sold coal at the busy local market. I would carry the coal to the market for her. She would stay there and sell the coal, while I went back and took care of my little cousins. When my grandma was cooking, I would gather all the dirty

dishes and wash them. When she was done cooking, I would carefully place the dishes in front of her for the food to be dished up. Whenever I helped her in the kitchen, she would give me more food. We had no well in our yard to get water from, so my uncle and I would go across our neighbor's yard to get water until my grandma decided to build a well in our yard.

Years later, in 2013, was the first time that I heard that I would be going to America. I was nine years old when my mom put in the paperwork for me to go to the U.S to live with her. I remember when I went home from school, my grandma was on the phone with my mom. She had an excited grin on her face. "Why do you look so happy?" I asked.

"Nana, you are going to the U.S.," said my grandma joyfully. I was so excited, and I could not wait to see my mom again!

The next morning, I woke up at 5:30 AM to get ready for school. I absolutely hated waking up that early. I woke up and bathed my auntie's three children, got them dressed, and made breakfast for them before going to school. When I got to school, I told all of my friends that I was going to the U.S. and they were all happy. Some of them had sad expressions on their faces. I remember one of my friends said to me, "Remember us when you go to America *maco*."

In Liberia, the houses were a lot different from the ones in Fargo. I lived in a *zinkround* house, before my grandma built a blockhouse for us to move in. The bathrooms were built out of blocks outside of the house. There were no showers in them. We had to put water in a bucket, take it into the bathroom and bathe. We only had one toilet there. If it were busy and someone else had to go, they would just go outside of the bathroom and cover it up. In the yard, there was sand and green grass. There was no cement to walk on. We washed our clothes by hand and hung them up. Across from our yard was a church that we went to. Every Sunday, my grandma would cook a lot of food, when she had the money.

My grandma would usually braid my hair for school. At school, we would sit in one class and different teachers came in and taught us. Some of the schools that went to when I was little, provided food for us, but most didn't. At my school, students would have to bring their own food or money to buy food. There was a lady who sold *cookbowl* and it was so good. We didn't have computers in school, but we always had a student week. During student week, we would have a hat day, sunglasses day, swimming day, culture day, queen contest day, and a dress your best day. I remember every Christmas at my school, we would do a school play about the birth of Jesus. I once played Mary, Jesus's mother, in the school play. I was also one of the three wise men. When it was Christmas in Liberia, everyone would dress their best and go *walkkobo*. We would go from house to house and tell people who were older than us that 'our Christmas is on them'. When we said that 'our Christmas is on them', we were referring to the fact that they needed to give us a present or money.

It was a long time from when I first heard that I was going to the U.S., until I actually left. Months and months passed and my excitement about going to the U.S. died down. I thought it was going to be a much faster process, but it took longer than I expected.

Finally, in 2016, I finally said goodbye to my friends and family and hopped on the plane to America. When I got on the plane, I wasn't that scared at all. The only weird thing was that I felt like my body was floating in the air. I really didn't get to sleep on the plane because I was uncomfortable. I just wanted to sleep on a bed. I arrived in America on February 5th. When I got off the plane, I was amazed by how big and clean everything was.

I looked around at the airport and I saw a very beautiful woman standing nearby with a man and a girl. The woman had the most beautiful smile I had ever seen. They were all smiling at me and it made me a little confused at first until they walked towards me and hugged me. This

was the first time I saw my mom, after all those years of being apart. I was very happy to see her again. When I stepped outside of the airport, I saw little white things fall from the sky. My mom told me it was snow. It was very cold outside, at least for me since I was from a very hot country.

We drove for a long time in the car. My mom stopped on the way to buy me some Chinese food. When she got me the food, I only ate the noodles and left the shrimp because it tasted nasty to me. When we got there, I was completely amazed by how big the apartment was. Everything was very new to me. It was my first time to see a stove, sink, dishwasher, bathtub, and microwave. Apart from being amazed by the apartment, I was amazed to see my siblings for the first time. They were all very happy to see me too. But I didn't quite meet their expectations. They really expected me to be bigger and taller considering the fact that I was older than all of them. But I wasn't. I looked like a six-year-old, even though I was twelve years old. I was very small.

I started middle school on February 10th. It was my first time riding a bus. I thought it was cool. Back home we didn't have buses for school. When I arrived at school, the first thing that came to my mind was "I'm going to get lost in here." The students and teachers helped me when I needed help. One of my favorite subjects in middle school was music, but I got made fun of by other students for not knowing how to sing well. After some weeks, I started to get used to the school. I made some friends, but not a lot. Two of my friends and I auditioned for the talent show. I did a dance routine to the song *Fitness* by Bruno Mars and performed it in front of students and parents. During my eighth-grade year, I joined a dance team with my friends because I really loved to dance. Joining the dance team was one of the best decisions I ever made in middle school. The dance team was very fun. The dance style was jazz, but I did add in some hip hop too. My dance competition team won second place.

In 2019, I started high school. When I got to high school, I expected it to be more like in the movies, but everything just looked the same to me. The teachers started to give a lot of work. One of the best parts of my freshman year in high school was during lunchtime when my friends and I would bring traditional food from home and have a big feast at lunch.

Even though coming to America had been such an amazing opportunity for me, I still felt homesick at times. I missed my culture, food, the sand, and the people. I also missed the weather, the rainy season and the dry season. I missed the sound of the rain that would put me to sleep. I missed not having to dress warm for winter because it was always summer. Even though I missed all of these things from my country, I was still very grateful for all of the amazing opportunities America had to offer me and I was happy that I was able to reunite with my mom and start a new chapter of my life.

Liberian Language Glossary

“Maco”

Friend

“Zinkround”

Materials we used to build our house with.

“Cookbowl”

A food that is cooked outside of your house.

“Walkkobo”

Going from house to house but not exactly.



I AM FROM

By Patience Princess Toh

*I am from hot sunny days and green grass and a raining season
From palm trees with sweet palm wine, plum trees, and grapefruit
From black pepper in my back yard to a sweet purple sugar iris
I am from playing silly games like lulu, O.U.T, Lapa and house-call
From Liberia and a 'Thinker village'
From unpainted blockhouses, yards full of sand and green grasses
I am from an emotional rollercoaster
From going big on every holiday with a feast at every party
From Christmas day and dressing my best, and cultural day at school
I am from organic delicious smelling food and beautiful mother nature
From Gladys and Frank, a nurturing mother, and an agreeable dad
From an affectionate and devoted family
I am from an encouraging and uplifting Gladys Frank
I am from being told 'to be respectful be it young or old' and 'stay in school'
From going to church every Sunday and to bible study
From living very humble and seeing good in people
I am from Black panther to K-pop and Backstage
From a great upbringing, making me a great person
I am from 17 years of crazy friends, happy times, and a loving family*

About the Author

Patience Princess Toh was born in Liberia in 2003. She came to the U.S. on February 5, 2016. She is a junior at Fargo South High School. She speaks Liberian English and American English. Her favorite subject is English. She loves dancing, singing, and fashion. In the future, she wants to be a nurse.



A Learning Experience

By Krishika Rai

When I first heard about people going to America, I didn't think anything about it. I only started to understand what it really meant when my mom's family and my best friend, Kalpana, left me behind in Nepal. I was living in the Beldangi 3 Refugee Camp. The year Kalpana left our class, I was sad. At one point, I moved to a new school, where I made a new best friend. Her name was Meena. Her house was kind of close to my house. We used to go to school together and we used to hang out a lot. Meena and I would go to the playground to watch people playing *football*, volleyball, and ping pong. We really didn't play many games together because she was a shy girl. One day, she didn't come to school and I missed her that day. I wanted to go to her house to find out if everything was fine with her or not.

After school, I went to her house, and I saw her laying on the bed. She looked so weak and tired. I got so worried after seeing her. I hoped that she was just tired, and she would be fine after resting for two or three days. I soon found out that people believed that she was made sick by the witch. I was afraid to stay with her, so I decided to leave and go home. All of the sudden, she grabbed for my hand and called my name again and again. "*Krishika, malai chodey ra na jana na,*" she said. I felt compassion for her, so I stayed with her. I stayed with her for more than two days. Knowing how painful it was for her and how she was becoming weaker and weaker, made me cry. After a few weeks, she started to feel better. When she was in good condition, we went to the bridge that was made up of wires and rope. The bridge was one that people walked on. It would shake and swing, but it was fun to walk on and play on. Meena and I enjoyed many good times together. I was so happy that she fully recovered from her sickness.

Four years later, I decided that I wanted to go to the U.S. because some of my relatives were also there. The problem was that my dad's side of the family didn't want to go to the U.S.

because they wanted to go back to Bhutan. In the end, my grandpa agreed to go to America because my dad's sister went to the U.S. and ended up calling and talking him into it. My dad and others agreed and our U.S immigration process started in 2016.

Before I knew it, I was on a plane to my new home in America. On the plane, I felt nothing because they gave me vomit medicine, so I slept the whole trip from Nepal to the U.S. When we arrived in America, we got off the plane and my ear hurt. I saw a Nepali man at the airport. I asked my sister who he was, and she said it was our case manager. Our cousins came to get us at the airport. They brought us to a large building. "Is this whole building just for our family?" I asked. I thought the whole building would be just ours to live in.

"No, it is for a lot of people. These are apartments," my cousin said with a laugh.

A few days later, I missed my best friend so much that when I closed my eyes, I always had visions of her. We came during summer break, so I did not have any friends. I just stayed home with family and cousins. When I did not have friends, I used to miss my old best friend and sometimes I cried thinking of her. I did not like America at that time. In Nepal, I used to think that I would get to stay in a place like I had seen in the movies, where there were a lot of people and I would make friends fast. My cousins took us to travel to many places. I liked all the places we went. I was so happy when I got to ride on a boat. My cousins went fishing while we were on the boat. I was shocked to see the fish because they were big.

When the summer break was finished, I had to go to school. At school, I saw my cousins and Kalpana, my best friend from the refugee camp! I felt so excited, but she didn't talk to me. I felt sad. When my sister, Kripa, and I went to the school for the first time, the counselor gave us a locker number. The counselor taught us how to unlock it, but only my sister Kripa remembered. I didn't remember very well. The next day, when Kripa went to the hospital I was

alone at school. I didn't know how to open my locker. I saw Kalpana and she helped me open my locker. I felt so happy when she helped me. Then, she stopped talking to me. I still don't know why. It was hard for me to speak English. I was struggling and nobody helped me. The only new people who were at my level, were in class with me, but there were about 1,000 kids in the school. The kids in my class came a year before me and they did help me a little. I didn't talk to the Nepali people who knew English, and they also didn't speak to me. I really don't know why. Knowing that the Nepali kids didn't want to help me, or my sister made me feel like not going to school.

Finally, I started to make new friends and I also met a nice teacher named Mr. Damber. He was also from Nepal and he was the assistant in the classes. He helped me a lot. One day, I wore a traditional dress to school. I wore my *saree*, and I felt a little weird. Students looked at me because they were not used to seeing students wearing their cultural clothing. Many people asked questions, but they were nice. One day, during lunch time, I brought Nepali food for my lunch. Someone asked me if she could try my food. I gave some to her and she really liked it. She said it was spicy, but it was good.

It was very hard to understand other students. I had difficulties speaking English. Sometimes when I spoke English, I mixed up my languages. I started speaking and learning English much better, thanks to my great teachers, cousins, and friends.

One summer, I went to meet my grandparents from my mother's side. I had not seen them for almost seven years. When I met my grandparents, I got emotional and I cried. We stayed at their place for one week and when we had to leave, it was so hard for me. I didn't want to leave them, but I had to because my school was starting. When I went back home, I started to practice driving.

One day, we decided to drive on the highway, when we entered the highway, there was a truck and I was driving close to it. Since I thought the truck was moving close to me, I felt my hands getting sweaty and I was scared it was going to bump into us. I turned my wheels and it hit the offline on the road. It sounded so dangerous. Eventually, I got better at driving and I helped drive my mom and dad to work.

I experienced a lot of changes in my short life. It was not easy living somewhere that was completely new for me. Even though it was hard, it was a great learning experience. It made me realize that I can do things, even if they are difficult. I still miss my friends in Nepal, and I hope to go back some day.

Nepali Language Glossary

Football

The game that Americans call soccer.

“Krishika malai chodey ra na jana.”

“Krishika don't leave me.”

Saree

A traditional dress worn by women in Nepal and India



I AM FROM
By Krishika Rai

*I am from muddy streets and rainy days
From street foods and cultural clothes on a wedding day
From Mount Everest with people climbing the snowy peak
I am from green trees and flowers of many colors, like a rainbow
From bamboo a house with a roof of dark mud and sticks
From fun and helpful family members and my mom making roti for us
I am from Dashain, sisters putting tikas on their brothers' foreheads
From Dil maya and Moni Raj and the Rai family.
From a loud and helpful family
From 'I love you' and 'don't touch my stuff'
I am from Guru Maharaji, my parents going to temple on Sunday.
From this God, who my parents believe in, wants us to be vegetarian
From soccer with my friends after school
I am from the 18 years of happiness*

About the Author

Krishika Rai was born in Jhapa, Nepal. She came to the U.S. on June 7, 2017 with her family. She is 18 years old and a senior at Fargo South High. Krishika has five members in her family, including her. She speaks three languages: Nepali, Hindi, and English. Her favorite subjects are English, science, and mathematics. She hopes to go to college and become a nurse.



A Completely Different World

By Yasir Omer

“Ahhhh!” I heard someone screaming. I was slowly walking from the bathroom to class when I saw people in the corner fighting. Students were crowded around them. I noticed that the students who were fighting were older than me, in seventh grade. As a fourth grader, I felt frozen and didn’t know what to do. All of a sudden, two male teachers came and broke up the fight. It was violent.

“Stop what you are doing,” one teacher yelled loudly.

“He started it!” one student yelled back angrily.

“*Hada jooji!*” The other teacher said as he broke up the fight.

School in South Africa wasn’t always that exciting. There were fights once in a while, because students would try to mess with each other, just like typical kids. School in South Africa was different from those in America. For lunch, they made us eat outside. They did give us an umbrella in case it rained. The school named the older students as the hall monitors. This title was for only a handful of students. If the other kids tried to leave the school grounds, they sent the eighth-grade hall monitors to bring them back. Also, they would call the parents and the student would be suspended immediately. Also, the principal would take matters into his own hands sometimes. That is a lot different from the American high school style of having an open campus, where students can come and go from school whenever they want.

My school in South Africa had subjects like math, gym, and English. They let us choose our classes. We also had to wear uniforms. The shirt had to be tucked into the pants. The school system was different in America than in South Africa. In South Africa, they use numbers to grade students. The grade levels went from 1st to 7th grade and there were a lot of students in my school. The school I went to did not have a library and the class hours were about one hour per

class. My school did not have sports teams. In South Africa, they did not have parks, so we sometimes played soccer in the streets. When we were at school, we had to sit quietly and wait for the teacher. Sometimes, we stayed in one class and the teacher would come to us or we would have to move. We also were with the same students for each class.

Sometimes, either Saturday or Sunday, I hung out with my friends. We all went and jumped over walls or played soccer ambitiously on the street. Some days I wouldn't go outside. I just sat and watched TV for hours. After school, I had to go to *dugsi*, which is where we learned about the Quran. We also practiced Arabic and Somali and we stayed there for about three or four hours. A *Mililani* job was like an assistant teacher. She watched the class and helped correct the papers.

In South Africa, we owned a small store that sold some essential items. I would spend time at the store when I wasn't in school. I would hang out in the front of the store and my friends and I played a ball game called "four corners." I would always get sad when I had to say goodbye and head home. I loved playing with my friends. I remember I would always walk home slowly and watch the sunset. It would be nighttime before I actually reached my house.

One day, I brought a friend home after school. When I got home, my family members seemed excited. "Why are you all so happy?" I asked.

"We are moving to America!" my mother told me. I didn't say anything, because I was stunned. Time went by so fast after that and even though I didn't believe it at first, we were actually going to move to America.

When I left to go to the United States, five people came with me on the flight. I was with my mom, dad, brother and two sisters. The journey to get to America was long. We had to board four different planes. When we landed in Chicago, I saw a bunch of lights and cars. I remember

that it was loud. I also saw a McDonald's for the first time. We took another flight and landed in Fargo, North Dakota. I was ten years old when my family made this life changing journey to a completely different world.

When we arrived in Fargo, North Dakota, it was in the summer and we moved into an apartment. Life in America was different because we had to go to school earlier and stay at school later. Most days, after school, I just watched TV at home. For fun, I would play Pokémon, Dragon Ball Z, Ben 10 and Avatar on the Nintendo console with my cousin. Once, I had to take food to my dad's job. I remember that it was during Ramadan and we couldn't eat from 3:00 AM to sunset. I liked helping my family. Sometimes I also had to go to the store to buy groceries for my family. It was hard to understand people when I first came. They didn't understand me either. Sometimes, when I walked to the store, I would see dogs walking slowly on every street. I always tried to avoid them because I didn't like dogs. If there were dogs walking on the sidewalk, I would go another way.

When I moved to America, there were many challenges. I moved in the summer and I did not know about winter or fall. When winter hit, it was so cold and I didn't really know how to dress. I never wore big jackets before. The extreme cold was so unusual. I wondered how people could actually like living in a place that is cold for so many days of the year.

When we came to America, my cousin helped my parents with things like paying bills and driving lessons. When I first went to school, I had to walk but it didn't take that long. I was fine with my parents not being able to drive me to school at first. On my first day of school, I introduced myself to the class. "My name is Yasir and I am from South Africa."

"Did you have to hunt for food?" a student asked.

"Did you have water?" another student asked.

“No, we didn’t hunt for food and yes, I had water. You know that some parts of Africa are modern,” I replied. I couldn’t believe they asked me those questions. Right away, I felt out of place. The students seemed to have ideas that people from South Africa were not like them and lived without houses. Another challenge was trying to learn new subjects, like math. It was hard because I had to learn new ways of doing math problems because math was taught differently. Also, I had to learn new things in social studies and history because people in America studied a completely different history than what I had learned. It was hard for me to use my English and it was especially hard to talk to people.

Even though I missed my family and friends in South Africa, I was still happy that I was able to move to America. The journey on the plane was scary and after the first flight I did not want to go on another plane. I had to go on two more planes since and it was terrifying. I am glad that I don’t have to move and that I found a new home in a completely different world.

Somali Language Glossary

“hada jooji”
“stop now”

Dugsi
School

Mililani
Assistant teacher



I AM FROM
By Yasir Omer

I am from South Africa and Fargo
From the hot plateau and swimming in the oceans of South Africa
From sunflowers in a warm place
From my house and neighborhood that was covered with vines
I am from Ramadan, where we fast together as a family
From waking at 4am to eat
From Eid and prayers in a large group of people
I am from smelling the air of fragrant flowers
From 'learn to forgive others' and 'don't stay out too late'
From Islam; fasting during Ramadan
I am from Toy Story and Cars
I am from 17 years of happiness, sickness, and laughter

About the Author

Yasir Omer was born in South Africa in 2004. His parents are originally from South Sudan. He came to America in 2014. He is a junior at Fargo South High. He speaks Somali and English. His favorite subjects are science, math, and government. His hobbies are playing games and playing basketball. In the future, he would like to be an electrician or a mechanic.



The Reunion

By Amberly Freeman

“Hello? Is this Mrs. Freeman?” the voice on the phone asked politely.

“Yes, it is. Who is this?” my mom said in a confused voice.

“I am just here to tell you that you won the *DV!*” the voice on the phone joyfully said.

“Oh my! I’m going to America! Thank you so much!” my mom yelled loudly.

Later that day, when I was playing baseball, my beautiful *mama* came to the field and told my sister and me that we were going to America. I was so happy. I started to go back to play baseball with my best friend, but before my mom left, she quietly told me not to tell anyone that I was going to America. My mother said it was bad luck if I told anyone. I was really excited to go to America. My aunt told me that cars could fly and that made me even more excited. I was so happy to go to America after she told me that.

A few days later, we started cleaning out the house and organizing to get ready to go to America within the month. My *mama* gave a lot of my things away. She said that I didn’t need them. Life went on as normal, after that, and I continued to play baseball. I went to school as usual and I was able to pass all my tests.

One month later, my mother told me that we were leaving the next night. I was happy to leave but also sad because I was leaving all my friends there. My mom told me to go say goodbye to them, so I went to visit my best friend, Kona. I told her that I was going to miss her and I would come back in a few years. I also told my other friends that I was going to miss them.

That night, we had to sleep on the floor with my comfy blanket. The next day, I went to play one last time with my friends. We happily played baseball and I won. Then, I went to tell my teacher goodbye. I was sad. Two hours later, we got all our things into the car that was taking

us to the airport. My godmother came with us to the airport and then went back home. On the way to the airport, I slept the whole time.

A few hours later, we got to the airport and my aunt gave my sister and me food to eat, while my mama went to check something. Then, we had to stand in the line and wait. It was so long, and I was tired. My feet were hurting, and I was nervous. I did not know what the U.S. would be like, because the only other time I went to America was when I was a baby. Before we got on the plane, we had to wait in a very long line again. My mama said her feet were killing her, but she reminded us that would soon be on the plane. One hour later, we checked in our luggage so we could get it when we arrived at our destination. Finally, we told our auntie we would miss her, and we said goodbye.

As we were boarding the plane, my sister and I were very happy. My mama was tired and couldn't wait to get on the plane. When we got on, I was a little scared. A few hours later, we were almost at our destination. The plane stopped at the airport in New York. The pilot said we had one hour until our next flight, so my mom's sister and I went to go get food. After we were done getting the food, we all sat down to eat. My sister kept complaining that she didn't like the food, so my mama said, "*Na ba ta mo!*" I laughed. Fifty minutes later, we were done eating and waited for our next flight.

My sister and I were playing on my mom's phone, when we finally heard the flight attendant call our flight number. My mama took her phone from me and my sister and we started walking to the plane. Two hours later, my sister and my mama were sleeping, and I was listening to music with my headphones that the flight attendant on the plane gave to me. It was getting dark outside, and I was sleepy, so I took the headphones off, got a pillow and a blanket to cover myself. I quickly fell asleep. When I woke up, it was a little lighter outside. The sun was up. My

mama and sister were still sleeping. A few hours later my sister and my mama were up, and we were eating the food that the flight attendant gave us. "I want rice, I don't want this green thing," my mama said, pointing to her food. My sister and I laughed, but my mama just looked at us and continued eating. My sister and I talked about how America would look and about how many of our family members we would see. Later, my mama told me that we were almost there and that the plane would land in three hours. I was happy because I was a little scared of heights. The bottom of my feet was hurting from sitting from the position that I was sitting in on the plane.

To pass the time, I started to read a magazine. While reading, I saw a picture of a beautiful car and I loved it. It was so cool that I had to show my mama She liked it, too. Later, we didn't notice that the plane was landing until the pilot that was driving the plane told us that we were landing. He also said that everyone should put their seatbelts on. I was happy because this was the last plane for us. I just wanted to get off the plane because it was a little scary. When the plane was landing, it felt like I was falling. I just kept thinking about how planes could actually fly.

When I got off the plane, I couldn't feel my bottom. It was numb from sitting so much! My mama happily told us that we were finally in America. I couldn't believe that the airports were so big and beautiful. There were a lot of people everywhere. For a moment, I looked around and couldn't find my family. I was lost. Eventually, I heard my mama calling my name. I looked around and I saw my mama and sister taking our suitcases, I went up to them to help. While we were walking, my sister saw a cafe and she said "Mama, I'm hungry!"

"Ok, we can stop and get some food," my mama said. We went looking for fast food. When we were done, we started walking again and I asked my mama "Mama, where are we going?"

“We are looking for your dad,” she answered. I was so happy. As I continued walking, I saw my dad standing there and I ran right into him. My mama and sister just kept walking.

“Why are you guys still walking? I found dad. He’s right here! You passed by him,” I said. When I said that, my mama looked back and saw my dad. While my sister ran and hugged my dad, I laughed. We all hugged my dad and then headed to take the train to get to Fargo. I was jumping around because I had never been on a train before. “When is the train going to be here?” I asked.

“In an hour, let’s go to the toy store and get you something while we wait,” my dad responded with a smile. Then, my sister, my dad, and I walked to a store that was beside the train station. I held my dad’s hand while my sister held my dad’s other hand. When we entered the store, it looked amazing. I loved it. There were toys everywhere. My sister ran to a teddy bear and while walking, I saw a yellow Pikachu, at least that was what it said on the little sticker then I picked it up. “Please daddy, can I get this?” I asked my dad.

“Ok, fine,” my dad said with a smile. and he said ok when we went to the checkout, I saw the bear that my sister wanted. It was cute and had a little pink bow. “Let go girl, let’s not keep your mama waiting.” Soon, I saw a train coming our way. When it stopped, we got on the train and found a seat. After the train ride, we got into one of my uncle's cars. He started driving, while my sister, mama and I were at the backside. The next thing I knew, my dad told us that we were finally at our house. I saw a big building and we went in. I saw my aunt's cousin. It was fun meeting some of my family members, who I don’t know. I enjoyed my journey to America. I was so happy that I was finally with my family. Although I miss Liberia, I love my new home.

Liberian Language Glossary

Mama
Mother

Na ba ta mo
Don't bother me

DV
Diversity Visa Lottery



I AM FROM
By Amberly Freeman

I am from Liberia, a beautiful place in Africa
From beautiful palm trees and wonderful green grass lands
From dry, hot weather and mango trees
From children playing around and climbing coconut trees
I am from playing lapa and eating delicious food
From the sweet mango, a yummy fruit
From a kind and beautiful family
From the warm and loving feeling and dancing around
I am from jollof rice
From the bright sun and happy little kid playing around
I am from Louiza and Moses and Freeman
From crazy and being together with family on Christmas and laughing
I am from Louiza, who helps me to grow, be nice, strong, and grateful
From Moses, who was there to help me have courage and to fight my
enemy and people that bully me
I am from "stop eating too many sweets" and "go dance and have fun"
From Christianity and the teachings of how to be a loving person
From SHE-RA and getting a driver's license
From a mama and father that took care of me
I am from 14 years of laughter and happiness with my wonderful family

About the Author

Amberly Freeman was born in Liberia. She has two sisters. She doesn't play any sports but she wants to join cheerleading. Her favorite subject is math. She likes to read and go on her phone. In the future, she wants to be an obstetrician to help people.



Following Along **By Anisha Sunar**

“Oh my God!” my mom yelled with excitement.

“*K vayo?*” I asked.

“*Hami America jadai chau,*” my mom said. I couldn't believe her words, so I had no reaction at all. I just went inside my room and did my homework. Later, when my dad got home, we were eating dinner. I decided to ask him if what my mom told me was true.

“Dad, are we really going to America?” I asked.

“Yes! But don't tell anyone. Keep it a secret for now,” he told me.

“Okay, dad!” I replied. I was so excited, and in the end, I couldn't keep it a secret. The next day when I was at school, I shared it with my friends, and they were happy for me.

Three months later, everything started to happen so quickly. The *IOM office* started to call us week after week. The process was going quick. Our friendly and nosey neighbors eventually found out we were going to America because they saw my family go out and come back with lots of shopping bags and clothes. It was not a secret anymore, but it was not a big deal. Most of the people in the camp would be leaving sooner or later. In the Beldangi Refugee Camp, almost all the neighbors were very close and spent a lot of time together.

One Saturday evening, right after dinner, our neighbors gathered together to talk about America. They were happily asking each other which state they were going to. Some of them were actually going to the same state. I sat and listened to everyone, just imagining how it would be.

In the Beldangi Refugee Camp, the way we lived was different from how people in America lived. When we went to school, we would walk there. We had eight periods of classes. For lunch, we would walk back to our homes, eat and go back. The lunch breaks used to be half

an hour. Students also had the option to bring food and eat it at school, but not a lot of students did that. If we were late to school after lunch, the teachers would hit us with sharp sticks. One rule at our school was that we had to wear proper uniforms. The girls had to wear white t-shirts and blue skirts that went below the knee. The boys had to wear a white shirt and blue pants. Boys also had to cut their hair. The girls needed to braid their hair in two sides with white ribbons. I thought that it looked ugly on me. We also couldn't grow our nails out long or wear designer nail polish.

I remember before the week my family left refugee camp, many people invited my family to dinner. We went as a family to their house. It used to be so exciting because they had so much food, music, and games. They served us bhat, dhal, masu, achar and papad. My favorite was papad because it is very crunchy, and it went well with bhat. People from America would probably have liked it too because it was not too spicy. It was very plain and easy to make. After dinner, the guests gave gifts to each person in my family. Most of the time, the gifts would be expensive clothes from other neighbors or relatives. They also gave us their phone number and told us to call them and send money to them. For a few nights, it was noisy and crowded because my dad's relatives from India and Nepal were in our small house and we had only two bedrooms. Half of them had to sleep on the cement floor. We had to be careful those nights because there were thieves in the camp and we had many gifts in our house.

Finally, the next morning, everyone woke up at 6:00 AM. It was still dark and it was freezing outside. Some of my aunts were cooking breakfast for my family. My mom told me to get ready, and I did. I had a calm and empty feeling at that time. Then at 7:30 AM, we took our black bags and packed all the things we had to take to the bus stop. When we had to leave on the bus, that was the hardest moment. All of our relatives slowly walked us to the bus stop. All of them

had tears in their eyes. I remember from the bus window putting my head out and saying goodbye to my relatives, as everyone was crying.

After four hours, we got to the Chandragadhi Airport. I was so nervous when I saw the small planes. I told my mom that I didn't want to get on the plane. She calmed me down and told me that she would sit with me. Inside the plane, I was okay, but my mom was so scared and that started to make me scared. Finally, we arrived at the Kathmandu airport. At that time, I already wanted to go back to the refugee camp. It was a long ride because there was so much traffic, it was boring, and it was very hot. We stayed in a hotel in Kathmandu for five days. Those five days were the most beautiful ones during the whole journey. I got to make lots of new friends. The food they gave us was so tasty. They also had fun games to play like cards and ludo.

After we left Nepal, I got nervous, scared, and confused. I just wanted to go back to my home. It was my first time seeing such huge airplanes and lots of people. I felt excited when we got to Hong Kong because we got to rest there, and the blue ocean was beautiful. It refreshed my mind, even if it was just for a couple of hours. Again, we got on the plane and I noticed the plane was bigger and there were not many Nepali people. I didn't sleep at all, neither did my family. I was talking with my dad the whole time about America. We talked about what we would do when we got there. He told me to study hard and become a 'big somebody' someday. I told him I would study well and go back to Nepal one day. The food they gave us was so different from what we normally ate, so I didn't even try it. I was so hungry, and I kept on vomiting. I just wanted to get off the plane.

Luckily, after that long flight, we landed at the huge Chicago airport. The fresh air and hot weather looked good to me. I was telling myself that America looked okay. I changed my clothes, finally, to something baggy and comfortable. While we were waiting, they gave us an apple and

orange juice. When I saw the apple I was shocked! It was so big, I couldn't even finish it. "Why is the apple so big, mom?" I asked.

"Because we aren't in Nepal anymore and this isn't from Nepal," she replied. We walked inside the airport with the guy who was our helper. It was a good feeling, even though we couldn't understand a word of what he was saying. I was enjoying just seeing the rails, roads, cars and flags. Once again, for the last time, we got on a plane. It was a very small one with less people. When I looked down, there were lights everywhere.

We finally landed at the Sioux Falls airport and we didn't know where to go. We just followed a random person. I looked over and I saw my cousin smiling. "*Hernu dada,*" I told my dad. We went down and took some pictures and got our bags. When I was walking to the car outside, it was so cold, and I saw snow.

"How do you feel?" my cousin asked me.

"I'm confused. It was sunny and nice in Chicago and now there is snow," I said.

"I will explain it to you later," he said with a smile.

We finally reached my cousin's apartment. We cleaned ourselves and went to eat. It had been such a long trip. When I saw the rice and Nepali curry, I was ready to eat. I couldn't eat much because it didn't taste very good at all.

The next day, I woke up and went outside. All I saw was snow and other apartment buildings. In my mind, I thought that Nepal was better because I was expecting to see the ocean and tall buildings. It was nothing like what I thought.

After one week, my brother and I started school. I never thought about how an American school would be. On my first day of school, there was a Nepali girl whom I talked to. I asked her to not leave me alone. Sadly, she did because she had to go to her math class. I was sitting down

when a short girl came and talked to me in Nepali. I was happy but I couldn't wait for that day to end because I was so nervous.

“How was school?” my mom asked.

“Shocking!” I said.

“Why?” she asked.

“Because I thought that in America, there would only be White people, but today I saw some other races too and even Nepali people!” I said.

Eventually, I started liking school. I went to Washington High School in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. After my freshman year, I moved to Fargo. There were not a lot of differences between the two states. I still liked South Dakota better because I had my close friends there and lots of good memories as well. I hope someday that I can see my family and friends who are back in Nepal.

Nepali Language Glossary

“K vayo?”

“What happened?”

“Hami America jadai chau”

“We going to America”

IOM office

International Organization for Migration office

“Hernu dada”

“Look dad”



I AM FROM
By Anisha Sunar

*I am from sunny hot weather, full of beautiful hills and mountains
From eating dal bhat every day
From wrestling, playing cards and gucha with my friends
I am from the red laliguras flowers in the hills
From a homemade of bamboo and mud with neighbors living so close to
each other
I am from having dance competitions on Christmas day and wearing
new clothes while playing loud music
From sharing food on the same plate with 100 church members
From eating a lot and adding more achar to the momo
I am from Lal Sunar and Tirtha Sunar
From respecting my elders and always choosing the right path
I am from Lal Sunar, who taught me not forget my identity and culture
From someone who needs to know how to do the housework
From Christianity and celebrating Christmas
From being nice and kind to others and helping people
I am from watching Meri Bassai and listening to Lal Dupatta
From dancing and playing soccer
I am from the 17 years old of happiness, laughter, and sadness*

About the Author

Anisha Sunar was born in 2003 in Nepal. She came to the U.S. in 2016 with her mom, dad, and brother. She is a junior at Fargo South High School. Anisha speaks Nepali, Hindi, and English. Her favorite subjects are math, science, and history. She likes to sing and dance. In the future, she wants to become a pilot or an actress.

