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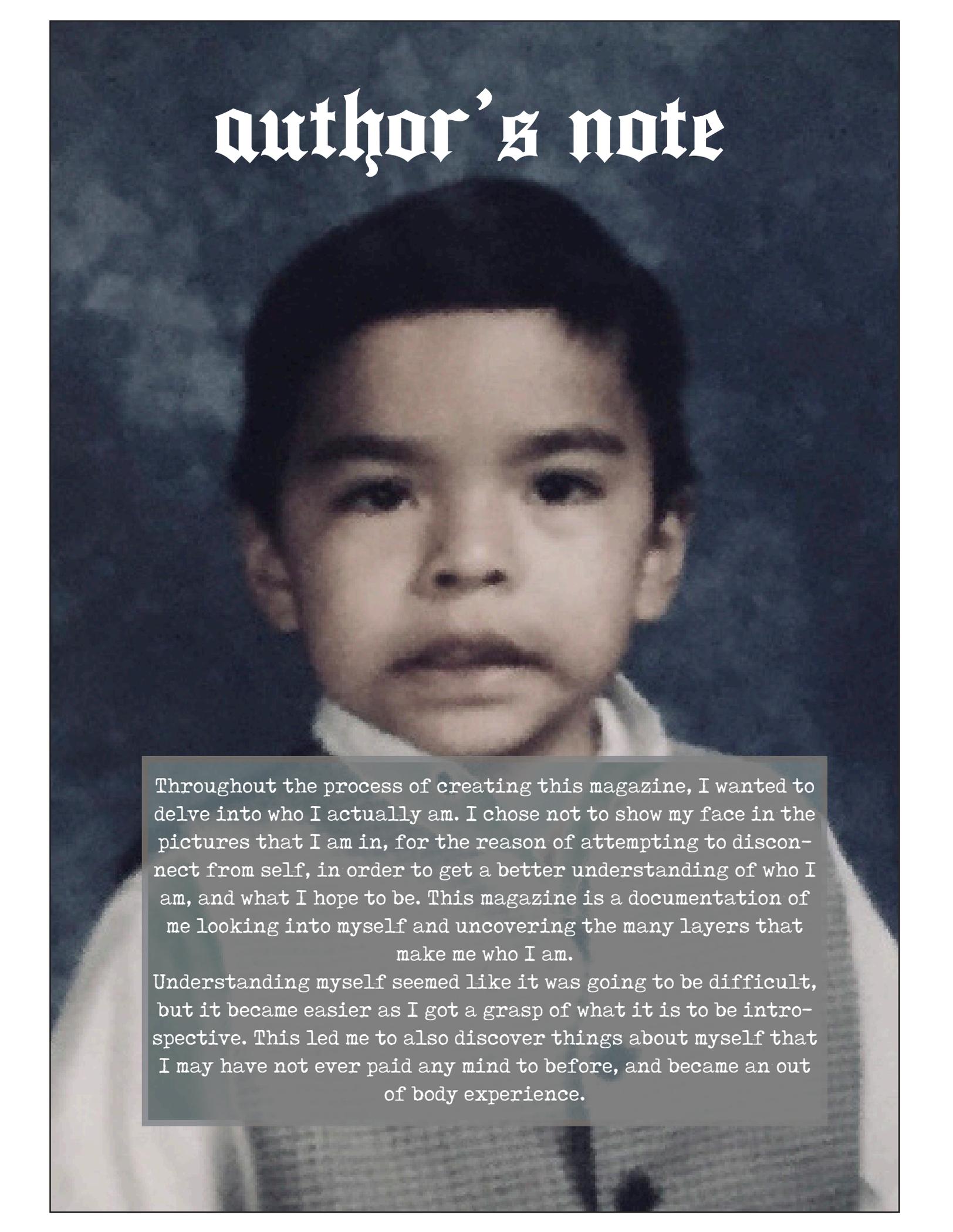
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author's note



Throughout the process of creating this magazine, I wanted to delve into who I actually am. I chose not to show my face in the pictures that I am in, for the reason of attempting to disconnect from self, in order to get a better understanding of who I am, and what I hope to be. This magazine is a documentation of me looking into myself and uncovering the many layers that make me who I am.

Understanding myself seemed like it was going to be difficult, but it became easier as I got a grasp of what it is to be introspective. This led me to also discover things about myself that I may have not ever paid any mind to before, and became an out of body experience.

I think that where I am right now as an individual, is where I am supposed to be. I truly believe that everything that happens in one's life is for a reason. Following high school, I made an attempt to dissect who I am, and work on the things I disliked most about myself. It has been a long and treacherous journey to get to where I am, but I know that I still have so much to go.

One of the many things that I chose to work on was my confidence. Learning to be confident in myself and my work has made an immeasurable difference in my life. Now I can actually do what I put my mind to, without the fear of self-doubt creeping from around the corner.

Becoming self-aware is not an easy thing to do. To be able to even attempt to state "who you are" and be somewhat certain of that statement sometimes seems impossible, but I'm working on it. I know that I love myself. I am certain that that much is true. When I look at myself in the mirror, I can certainly say that I love who is staring back at me, and I think that is a huge milestone for anyone.

Who I am now is not who I am going to be five years from now, and I have learned to accept that. I have a very hard time of letting go--it's a fear of time, and how it is an immovable force--and allowing time to take control, but I am beginning to be okay with the thought of change. I embrace change, but sometimes it is still very hard for me to process. I know that I am destined for greatness, and that I will continue to evolve.

who am i?

positivity
patience
persistence

progress

I get inspiration from many different places. Most of my inspiration comes from people that I admire, or my peers, but I also get inspired by the world around me. Everything that I see is locked away somewhere in my mind, so that I can reference later in life.

Music really moves me. I can listen to music for hours on end, and I think this is one of my biggest inspirations, outside of physical beings. Music guides me in ways that are indescribable, and takes me to a nirvana that I cannot explain. I know that when I have nothing left, I will have the inspiration of music.

My family inspires me. They push me and believe in me more than anyone I know, and I only want to make them proud. My mother is a huge inspiration for me. Her work ethic has never ceased to amaze me,

and every great characteristic that I have, I have gotten from her. She has taught me to keep going, even when times get the hardest and I feel like I cannot keep going.

My friends also inspire me. They are all so ambitious and want so much for themselves, that when I am ready to give it all up, the thought of them keeps me going. They encourage me to continuously push myself to do things that sometimes I convince myself I cannot do. They take me away from reality sometimes and they always show me how to have a good time.

Lastly, my younger brother is also very inspiring to me. He has been through some tough times, but he still came out of it, and has no plans of stopping anytime soon. I don't always reassure him, but he's probably my biggest inspiration.

who inspires me?

making sense of self

Over the last few years I have undergone an internal transformation. This transformation transcends this of my physical being and was a constructional effort on the inner workings of what makes me--me. I have realized more things about myself within the past year alone, than I have ever in my life. Most importantly, I have begun a journey that will continue to guide me in working towards the best Cristian. To begin my dissection of self, I had to step back and make sense of what it is like to be me. More specifically, what is like to be Cristian on the day-to-day. First, I realized that I work a lot. I constantly am on the go, and over the past 3 years have become a workaholic. I sometimes feel as though I can never truly relax. Every time that I try, I start thinking about the next thousand tasks that I must complete. It has become cyclical.

Self-doubt is something that I have had to really attempt to change about myself. I often doubt my abilities and my strength. As I have begun to work on this aspect of myself, I have noticed I feel lighter and happier. The end goal is to find eternal happiness, and ridding myself of self-doubt is a leap in the right direction.

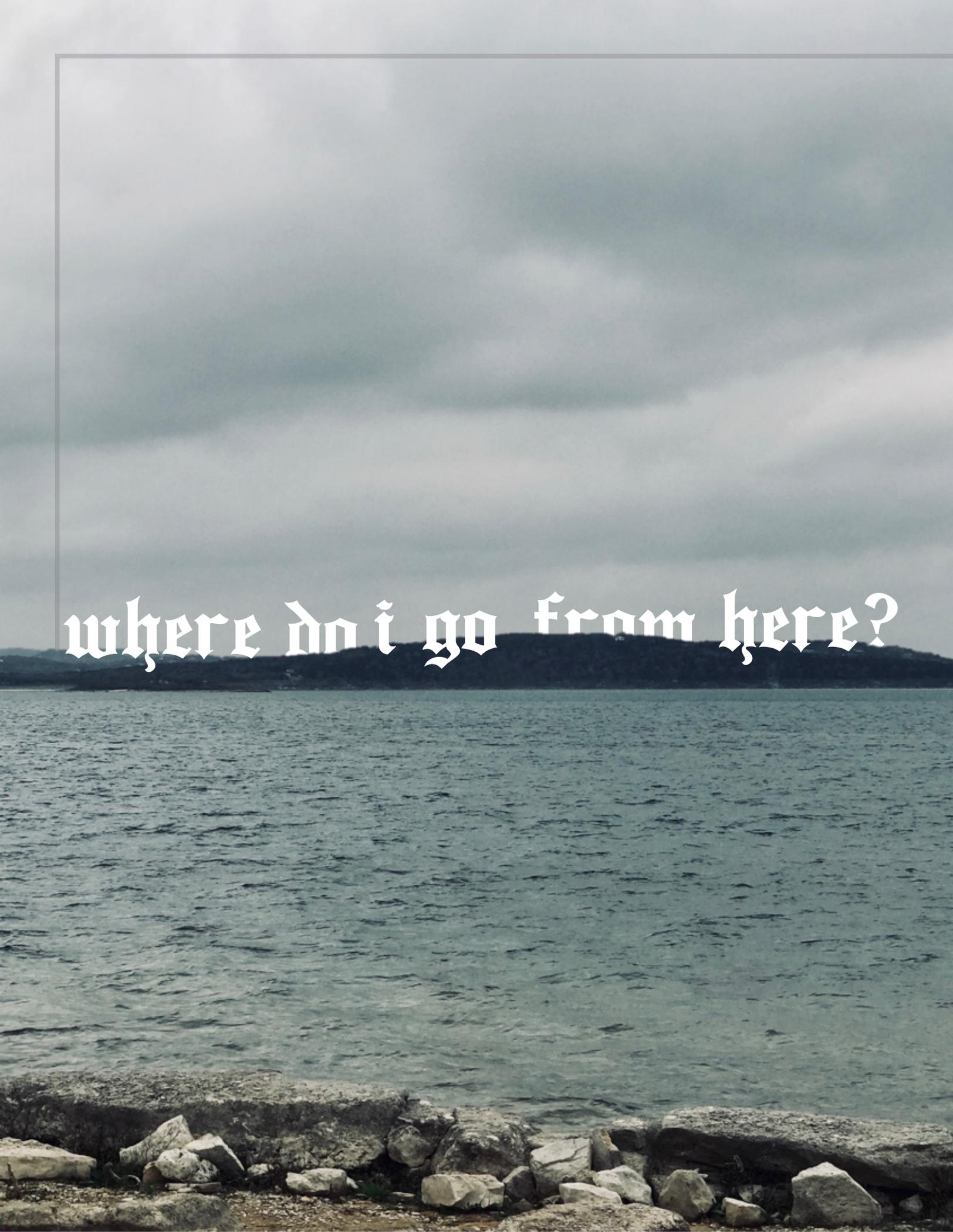
Becoming aware of who I am has also been a journey in and of itself. I am aware of what I like, what I want, and what I don't want for myself. It is hard

to analyze what you are, and who you are, but it is essential. Understanding myself and coming to peace with who I am has to be one of my biggest overall life goals. When I can sit down and explain who I am is when I know that I have come to understand who I actually am. Being able to analyze one's self and having the ability to be on the outside looking in, is what I aspire to have. I want to be able to step out of myself and analyze what works and what does not work, as need be. Doing so is important to work towards the best me, and I know that my potential is great if worked towards correctly.

I listen to myself. I talk to myself in a healthy way. I work through problems that I do not feel comfortable sharing with others, and I think this is a great trait to have. When no one else is around, all you truly have is yourself, so why not become comfortable with that person? If you have the ability to work through hardships yourself without having to depend on others, I believe is when you have true understanding of yourself.

Happiness. Finding complete and wholesome happiness is all I want when I leave this earth. I will work towards this goal until I have achieved it, and I am confident in the fact that I will achieve eternal happiness with myself.





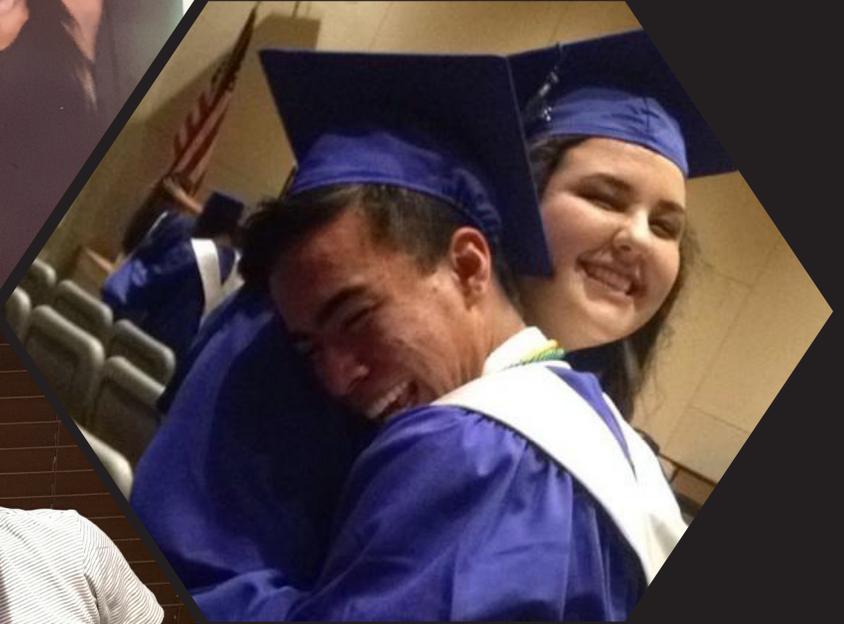
where do i go from here?

The future is coming fast, and to be completely honest I am scared at the thought of it. One of my biggest fears is growing up not in the sense of getting old and dying, but in the sense of losing things I have become so comfortable with having. I know that in my lifetime that I want to accomplish so much. I am confident that I will be able to achieve most of my goals, because I am an overly ambitious workaholic. I enjoy seeing my dreams into fruition, and I will not stop until I have gotten what I want most out of life, and that is happiness. Nothing else in this world matters to me more than happiness. I work myself until I can no longer work, because the people around me are happy with what I am able to accomplish, and I am also happy with what I am able to accomplish.

First and foremost, I would like to own multiple businesses. I want to own my own marketing firm for sure, but I also want to span into music and fashion. Why should I limit myself to just one career field? I want to utilize all of the talents that I have discovered and undiscovered. I truly believe that I will be able to accomplish these goals. I also want to be able to travel and explore. I have never been outside of the United States, and there are so many places that I know I will want to see in my lifetime.

Before I leave this earth, I really

want to become a philanthropist. That is the legacy that I am deciding that I want to leave behind. My main goal on my journey to being able to become a philanthropist, is opening community centers across the globe for impoverished children to be exposed to the arts. I want children that are not able to afford guitar, singing, dance, and photography lessons, to have a chance to pursue the dreams that they want most. Too often children that lack resources fall through the cracks, and their dreams are never able to see the light of day. I want every child to have a chance to chase what is it they want. Growing up poor I understand what it is like to want and not being able to receive. It becomes discouraging, and I never want my children, and other children to feel like they are in a hole that they cannot escape from. Every child deserves a chance, and before I die, and long after I am gone, I want to give those children an opportunity. I also want to be able to give my family a life that they have never had. I want to pay off any debt that any of my brothers or sister might have, and give them opportunities to see the world. I want to see everyone else around me be happy that is when I will find my happiness.



It is only right to start off my thank yous to the woman that matters most in my life, my mama. Without her as a whole-- her strength, her wisdom (that I may or may not listen to), and her endless love that does not always come in the vessel of the phrase 'I love you'--I would not be the person that I am today. She makes everything worth it, and the only thing that I want to prove to her before either one of us leaves this world (I bet I'll go first), is that everything I do is for her and in honor of her. I do not think I would have made it this far, and will keep going, without her. She is the most beautiful soul that I know, and I just wish one day everyone will know it. I love you, mama.

My brother Marc, is my little. I love him to pieces and I don't think I would work as hard as I do, if I wasn't the one preceding him. He motivates me, even though he doesn't know it. His work ethic is admirable, and I cannot wait to see everything I know that he is capable of accomplishing. Thank you, Marc. You are an endless motivation, and I pray one day you will see that you are worth the world and then some.

I want to also thank my sister and her husband, Edward. They have believed in me since I can remember, and they continue to motivate me to kick down any closed doors in my way. They hold a special place in my heart, and the love they provide me with will fuel me for the rest of my days.

Special thanks to Kasandra Diaz. To think that I met her almost 7 years ago as little Freshman in high school astounds me. She has always been a great voice of reason, and her wisdom is beyond her years. She took almost all the pictures of me for this magazine, and I cannot thank her enough. Without Kasandra I would not still be at UIW, or even a Communication Arts major for that matter. Thank you, lil mama.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my friends. I want to thank them for their endless love and support. They make every day worth living, because they are the most wholesome people that I know. They motivate me in ways that they do not understand. Their ambition and drive keep me going, and keep me feeling young. The memories that we have created thus far are the ones that I will keep and cherish forever. Thank you all for sticking by my side through some of the toughest times in my life, and for always believing in me. I love you, Carolina, Nicolette, Kasandra, Edward, and Emily.

THANK

you.

