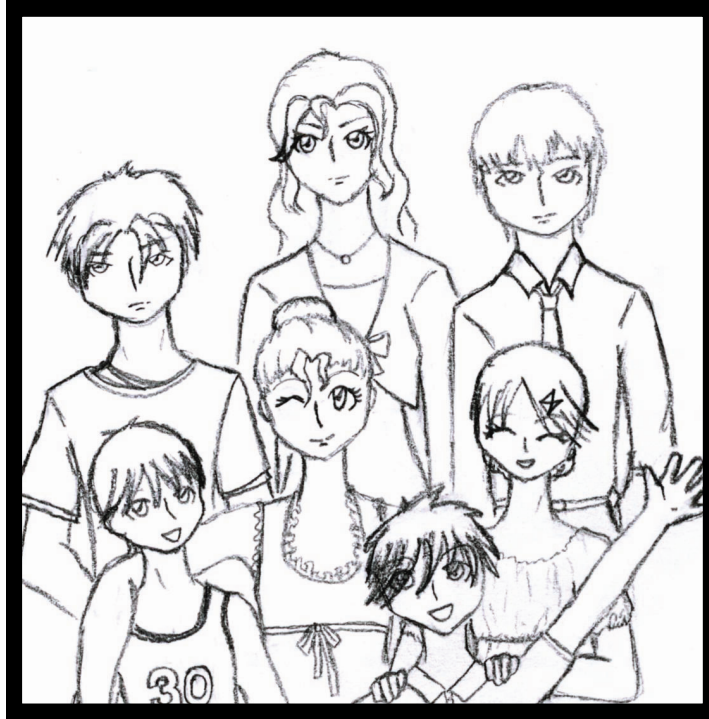


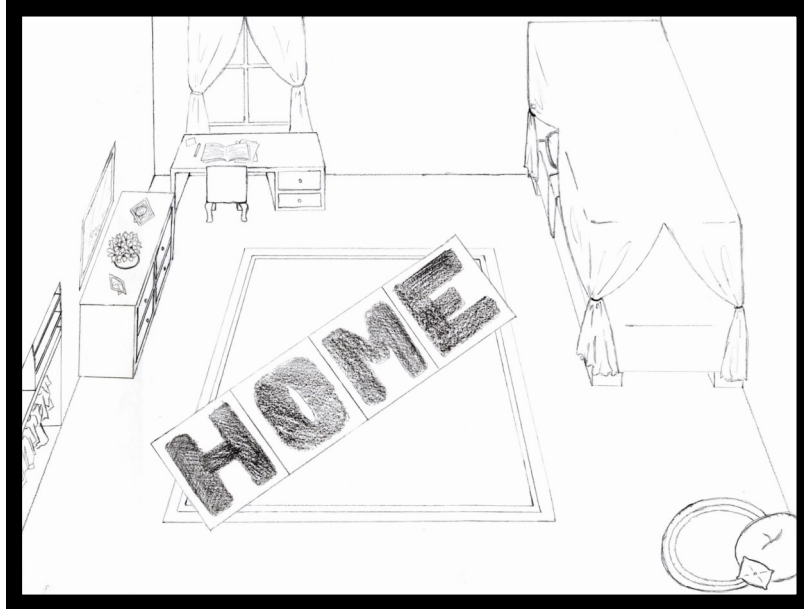
By Shania Jackson and Alyssa Rosch
Illustrations by Shania Jackson and Kim Trippi

My name is Hermani, and I am thirteen years old. I have a big family. I have four brothers, one sister, and a mother. We are all different. We each have different ideas of what home is. Home can be a place or a feeling. Some people say that food, smells, music, clothing, or many other things can remind them of home.

For me, home is where you can be yourself. Everyone wants to have a home. Everyone has a different home.



My bedroom is my home.



My room is a place where I can be myself, no matter what. I can do all kinds of silly, crazy things, and it doesn't matter. When I am in my room, I like to dance and sing, even though I can't really sing well.

But I feel comfortable and safe, so I sing anyway. I also like to put on my mom's make-up, shoes, and clothing. But most of all, I like to write poems about how I feel.

Here is my poem:

**Palms sweaty, heart racing,
Walking home at night alone is scary,
But my home is not my home.
My home is not my mom,
My sister, or my younger brothers.
My home is my room.
My sanctuary,
My refuge,
My retreat.
It is where I sing and dance,
And I can be completely myself.
My room is where I feel most safe.
Tomorrow may be uncertain,
But no matter what happens,
I always have my room,
To return home to.**

