

“Why, you will go home and then you will find that home is not home anymore. Then you will really be in trouble. As long as you stay here, you can always think: One day I will go home.” He played with my thumb and grinned. “N’est-ce pas?”

“Beautiful logic,” I said. “You mean I have a home to go to as long as I don’t go there?”

He laughed. “Well, isn’t it true? You don’t have a home until you leave it and then, when you have left it, you never can go back.” James Baldwin, *Giovanni’s Room*

Location Dialectics (or, being two places at once)

I have been trying to describe the experience I have each time I pull out of my driveway or board a plane. Physically, my body can only be in one place but mentally I’m usually somewhere else. But where am I actually?

Are we really only in the place where we are standing? Where we are living?

In law there is a term for this : “domicile.” One’s domicile is where they reside with permanent intent. Legally speaking, a person can only have one domicile- usually expressed in language as a street address, city, state and zip code.

However some of us exist in more than one place at one time, which is why I associate location with dialectical thinking. Where we are, may also be where we are not. It’s not so simple to explain with language, yet all of the writers and artists in this issue have been able to articulate some version of this.

The path between two places, two homes, has always looked the same to me. When I travel between one home and the other, it takes most of a day.

The flight: between three and four hours taking off from LAX over California, Arizona, Colorado, Nebraska, South Dakota, and finally landing at MSP Airport, where the timezone is two hours ahead. The drive: I sit in the passenger seat while my father takes us north of Minneapolis about two hours, almost entirely on I-35 to a small town not too far off the coast of Lake Superior. The soundtrack: some combination of Fleetwood Mac, Traveling Wilburys, and sports talk radio. We always drive in at night.

The reverse is true for the trip back to Los Angeles. Except there is a heaviness added, a complicated emotion I struggle to explain.

Opt West was created to explore this feeling. I ask each reader to consider the place you find yourself, whether that may be physically or otherwise. May you find a way to capture it, as the writers and artists have done within these pages, making existence a bit more tangible, somehow.