

**"Where are you from?"** echoes through every vertebra inside me. By the age of 14, I had already moved across 11 states and attended 13 different schools. Growing up, I was immersed in various cultures and stories from all over the world, from the chaos of a circus to the mechanics of a used car dealership. I was surrounded by stories bleeding to be told, voices bleeding to be heard, yet I didn't know what I was bleeding for.

### **Move IX: The serene town of Bedford, New Hampshire.**

My father gave me my first camera as a going-away gift, I had to convince my mother to keep it. It was visibly used, with a crack through the center of the lens cap. I was shocked the camera even turned on. It was his old camera, his old perspective of the world; my dad once too dreamt of being a storyteller. My mom sent my dad the used film I took in the mail for him to develop over the nine months I lived in New Hampshire. During that year, I had limited contact with him, except for the simple exchange of a roll of film—a series of memories exchanged through a chemical exposure. I often wonder if the roll of film was his way of being present in my life, his way of reliving the memories I never had the chance to make with him. I began to use filmmaking as my voice, one that was constantly evolving, one that never had a true home.

### **Move X: South Florida surrounded by fifty-five pluses and college parties.**

This was the third time coming back. South Florida has always been the closest physical place I define as home, the one place I ultimately always come back to, whether it be the ocean or my grandparents' fifty-five-plus community; it has always held a special connection, a place I always return back to. To me, connection has always felt like a hidden puddle of gratitude, one you truly have to step into to appreciate. After moving from place to place I began to lose count of the places

I've been. I instead recollected each destination through a simple thread of photographs and short excerpts, one that began to tell a story, my story.

### **Move XI: Interlochen Arts Academy.**

Move eleven was the first move I ultimately made myself. The first move that fell into my hands. I watched "The Florida Project" for the first time in Sophomore year with my best friend Jasmine. She was raised on a farm in the middle of Montana her whole life. She came back to the same house her father built by hand, the same land, the same mattress her body imprinted into every day. She didn't have a TV until she was fourteen, some would say she was cut off from the world, but I realized that she was raised to experience it. We cried over a universal language, a universal understanding of storytelling, neither of us could truly describe but only embrace. It was simply a feeling of connection, a testament to the power storytelling holds. I held an immediate response to the vulnerability my body embraced, something I never truly felt, nor could describe. I quickly fell in love with Sean Baker and his rawness embodied through his stories. I fell in love with symmetry, how Wes Anderson can evoke feelings of the unknown through imagery, making our heads turn twice, yet making us not want to look away.

### **Move XII: Undetermined.**

I am officially 18 years old. When asked "Where are you from?" I now confidently answer, **I reside within my stories.** I have defined home as a feeling illuminated across a screen. Home is held within the worn leather camera bag my dad gave me at twelve. Every conversation, whether shared on-screen or off, contributes to my ongoing definition of home—a concept that is as fluid and evolving as the stories I choose to tell—home is a concept that lives and breathes between the frames of every film roll I exchange, every voice that lingers through a screen.