A Child’s Utopia
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Lindsay Rybkoski wrote “A Child’s Utopia” for Dr. Mittner’s English 10001 class. The assignment was to describe a place that is memorable to her, and use all five senses to bring the location to life for the reader.

Can you recall how your stomach feels when you are at the crest of the highest roller coaster ready to go over the summit, or how about when you are driving fast in the country and effortlessly sweep over a dip in the road? I cannot recall how many times I lost my stomach that hot and humid day. Disregarding the beads of perspiration that came down my forehead from the hot sun, I saw everything while effortlessly swinging on the old blue and off-white paint-chipped swing set. In my bright yellow tank top and stone-washed pegged shorts, gracing the world with only seven years at the time, I pushed my dirt-covered feet together and out, together and in: I went higher and higher. I gazed to my right and peeked through the patio of my dull blue, two-story house. I looked in front of me and saw rows of flourishing forest-green pine trees separating our house from my neighbor’s off-white two-story home. To the left of me was the rest of my one acre of imagination. Three 20-foot evergreen trees made the shape of a diamond that was often times used for amateur father and daughter baseball games. In fact, at that moment my sister, who was nine at the time, was at bat with her white t-shirt and 80’s style teal exercise shorts. My dad, with his gray Colorado Rockies t-shirt and light jean shorts, held a white wiffle ball in his hand ready to pitch in a game that consisted of neither points nor penalties, just fun. Behind me was a weather-worn wooden fence. The fence separated nothing but my house and an overgrown field. This seemingly average day in the backyard was anything but a mediocre play-land for an inquisitive child. My wholesome day in the backyard was extremely memorable and essential to my life because of the familial, innocent and perfect significance that my backyard made me come to understand.

Careening down the roller coaster, people’s ears cannot help but tune into the sounds of screams. That day in my backyard, however, all my senses were alert. The constant buzzing of my neighbors Cub Cadet had me uneasy. I could, however, clearly hear the sound of my sister’s plastic baseball bat pounding hard onto the ground. No longer was the green-brown grass sticking straight up from the ground, it had succumbed to my sister’s assault with the bat. The popping sound emitted from the collision of the ball and bat frequently played in the back of my mind. The constant rush of cars whizzing down the street in front of my house was imposing. Clanging sounds made by pots and pans came from inside the house as my mother had begun to prepare supper. I was startled by the squawking of a bird that was nowhere to be seen from my view. My gaze fixed up when I realized a blue jay was perched on top of the swing set. My senses keyed in on the sweet corn that I was beginning to smell from the kitchen. Smothering the smell of the corn, however, was the aroma of freshly cut grass. My nose got too close to the rust-colored chains of my swing, and I could smell a pungent odor from them. The heavy breaths I took included the smell of summertime in the air. I could taste the grape popsicle that still lingered in my mouth. The grape was dull, but still fulfilling. What I saw, heard, smelled and tasted compared to none of what I felt that hot summer day though. I felt the pointy blades of grass between my toes as my feet touched the ground when I swung, the wind against my face and my bangs brushing against my temples. The chipped paint off the chains of my swing stuck to my hands. I felt the blood quickly rushing to my head as I turned upside down in my seat. I was young, cared for and had not a worry in the world. At that moment, a realization occurred to me that still lingers in my character. No matter how much trouble I was in or how helpless I was, I would always have my family there for me. That moment in the backyard was what I like to call my realization of “familial innocent perfection”.

The memories that I take from that day have structured the character of my life. School and friends are important, but my bond with my family has become stronger than either of those. Although I acknowledge that not all families fall under the mother, father and children stereotype, I do, however, feel that if one were to be placed in my situation that day regardless of family set up, they would have felt the same way I did. My family is who I have to thank for the person I have become. I took morals, beliefs and values from my family and incorporated them into who I am. I use the term innocence to interlink the relationship between my family and I when I was young. My
family had the steering wheel of my life and they drove me in the right direction. Looking back on when I was a child and na"eve, my innocence was dependent upon the teachings of my parents. I looked to my parent’s to guide me and not only tell me, but show me what was right and wrong. My parents not only took me down the right roads when my lack of knowledge did not allow me to make such choices, but they gave me the love I needed to be able to confidently voice the values that I was taught. Also, that day in my backyard signified perfection to me. I was not only fulfilled by the material necessities in my life, but the psychological needs in my life were also met. To this day, I have never found perfection quite like I had that hot, relaxing and carefree summer day. I had no worries and no problems. Nothing prevented me from enjoying that beautiful summer afternoon. In turn, however, I learned that the perfection I experienced in my backyard was a fleeting moment that I would try to re-experience in my later life. Perfection in my childhood, especially that day in the backyard, was a healthy perfection. Overworking, over-stressing, and taking on too many responsibilities trying to be the best is unhealthy perfection. Thankfully, I learned that lesson when I was young.

In the words of Deepak Chopra, Indian physician and author, "There is always one moment in childhood when the door opens and lets the future in" (Think Exist 1). That day in my backyard with the shining sun, green grass and a protective blanket better known as my family, was the day my door opened and let my future in; that day was a future full of hope, achievement, challenges and hardships. I was, however, ready to face the challenge, thanks to the realization of a strong stepping stone built by none other than my family. My innocence allowed me to see that when I needed them, my family would be right there for me. However, when my perfectionism would cloud my thoughts, they would be there to bring the sun. That day in the backyard was symbolic of my familial structure. The innocence tied in with family and the perfection that I learned, whether it be bad or good, provided me stability and frame of mind to have a successful life. However, the roller coaster ride of that day was never over; it was simply beginning. A seemingly average day in my childhood proved to be an awakening of a life that was only beginning. My backyard will always be a child’s utopia, only for me.

Works Cited