

# THE MIRROR

THE HOME EDITION

ISSUE 26 - Fall/Winter 24-25



HERITAGE

by FERNANDA LOPEZ

---

# A WORD FROM THE EDITORS

---

JANUARY 2025

THE MIRROR

---

## WHAT DOES HOME MEAN TO YOU?

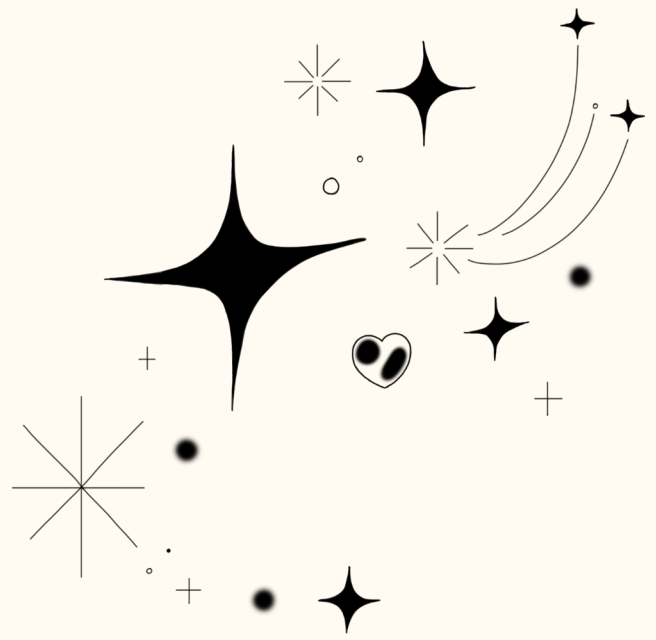
As Troubies, St. Francis is our home away from home. Trying to reconcile our first home with this second one, however, can be complicated. Many of our friends live an hour in the opposite direction, we face a long commute to school and back, or our home self and school self are different. Sophia, myself and the senior class are now struggling with the fact that we'll be leaving behind St. Francis and our family homes as we prepare to leave for college. In this issue of The Mirror, we ask you as Troubies: What does home mean to you? How are you different when you're at home, and when you're not? Through poetry, art,



and every type of creative expression found in this issue, we hope you emerge with a more profound understanding of how your community approaches their own homes and what these backgrounds bring to our lives with one another.

Best,  
Stella Davenport and  
Sophia Hendrix  
Editors-in-Chief

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



- 04**    **A GIRL CALLS OUT TO GOD ONCE MORE**  
*by Kyrielle de Dios*
- 06**    **A GOAT DREAMS OF HOME**  
*by Ela Lopcu*
- 07**    **NATURE IS HOME**  
*by Seyvene Kahwaji*
- 08**    **BY THE BAY & FISHERMAN'S LIFE**  
*by Dottie Kropp*
- 09**    **HOME INTERIORS**  
*by Claire Strange*
- 10**    **TRANSITION**  
*by Olivia Wedding*
- 11**    **PORTFOLIO**  
*by Stephanie Seri*
- 12**    **THE BEAUTIFUL LIE**  
*by Kavya Benush*
- 13**    **HERE, ONCE STOOD A BRIDGE**  
*by Hanna Wysoczynska*
- 14**    **HOME IS WITH THE INTERCHANGEABLE PEOPLE I CAN'T REMEMBER THE FACES OF**  
*by Anonymous*
- 15**    **THE POLISH IMMIGRANT'S FLAG**  
*by Hanna Wysoczynska*
- 16**    **YEARNING**  
*By Rouelle Pereira*
- 17**    **MILK CHOCOLATE-DIPPED, LACE RIBBON-TIED**  
*By Angelyn Gonzales*
- 18**    **THE ECHOES OF HOME**  
*By Hannah Chitea*
- 19**    **APARTMENT**  
*By Alexandria Reznikoff*
- 20**    **SNOW ANGELS**  
*by Stella Davenport*
- 21**    **THERE IS NO PLACE LIKE AKRON**  
*By Caitlyn Richwine*

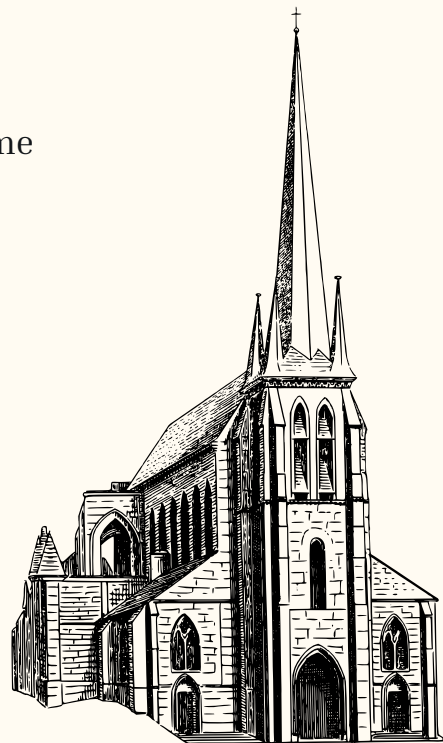
# A GIRL CALLS OUT TO GOD ONCE MORE

*by Kyrielle de Dios*

There's something about the dying flowers in the chapel  
They sit in pots at the base of the altar  
Faded yellow, orange, and purple  
Dying at the precipice of eternal life  
The holy tabernacle cannot resurrect  
The gaze of the crucifix cannot sacrifice  
The flowers sit there, petals crumpling  
Their soft edges, turning brown  
Below the benevolent gaze of Mother Mary  
Candles snuffed out  
What is a refuge if it is deserted?  
The font, empty of holy water  
Dust on my wanting fingertips  
How does one make themselves clean upon arrival?  
I cannot  
So I sit, dirty,  
In the second row - out of shame  
Crumpling like the flowers  
Asking any holy figure in this sacred space to be my savior  
Gazing up at octagonal glass  
Not the cloudy skies of my childhood  
But still beckoning  
There is a soothing woosh to the sound of the chapel  
It distorts the noise of humanity outside  
The noise of expectations and unanswered question  
And in this way a refuge, yes  
But what is a refuge without a struggle to escape from?  
I've been trying to escape my whole life  
From what - I still don't know  
But I see the stations of Christ along the walls  
and know my suffering should be small in comparison  
Yet still insurmountable  
And I remember kneeling on unpolished stone  
Digging into my knobby nine-year-old knees  
Repeating, repeating -  
"Hail Mary full of grace the Lord is with thee"



Oh, how I wanted her to save me  
I believed in her, a mother,  
I'd never known a man to do it  
"Station IX - Jesus Falls for the Third Time"  
Perhaps this is my last, perhaps I cannot get back up again  
I sit here, dirty, relegated to the second row  
In my filth, unholy, to be so close to all that is sanctuary, sanctimony  
The tabernacle directly facing me  
I've always wanted to pry the small door open  
As if Christ Himself would emerge from within and reveal to me all I've never known  
As when I was small I thought by some miracle, no longer holy host of edible paper  
But soft flesh and pearly bone  
"Eat of it for this is my body and blood of the new and eternal covenant which I have  
poured out for you and for many"  
So what is love then, if not letting another consume you whole?  
What then, is love without sacrifice?  
The tabernacle offers me no answers  
Its golden gate remains closed  
So then, what is a refuge if it is deserted?  
- but what I make of it?  
I kneel, my knees now covered in cloth, on polished smooth, and shiny stone  
Before the altar  
Still not on the step, still sacred  
I kneel, still dirty  
And examine what they said God has put before me  
Where is my answer?  
The candles, unlit  
The font, of dust  
The cloth, still green, soon to be the wrong color  
The flowers, so close to life, yet dying  
The tabernacle, lacking sacrifice  
Lacking love  
This chapel, lacking use  
What then is it, still a refuge?  
The woosh does not form words  
A crumpled petal falls -  
To the sacred step, I still dared not cross  
There is my answer.





# A GOAT DREAMS OF HOME

*by Ela Lopcu*

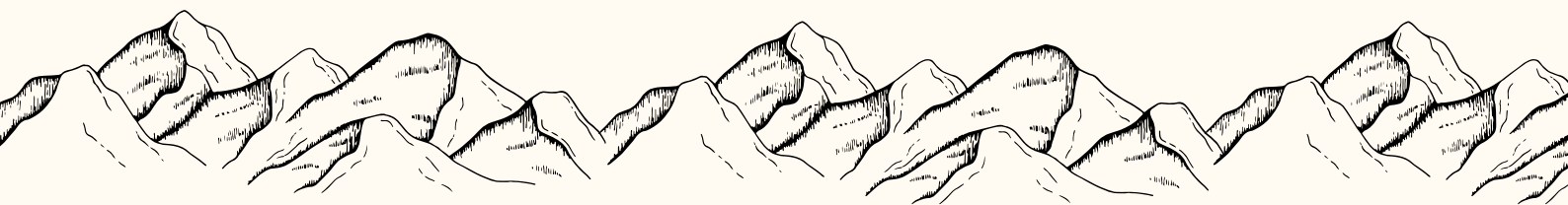
# NATURE IS HOME

*by Seyvene Kahwaji*

The rustling trees and whispering winds.  
Chirping birds singing melodies.  
It repeats the same hymn.  
Mother Nature brings peace.

The sound of ocean waves.  
The sound of sweet songs.  
The sounds of crickets chirping.  
The sound of wind.  
The sound of peace.

Nature is home.  
From the biggest elephant.  
To the tiniest ant.  
The peaceful sound of a babbling brook.  
Nature is our home.



# BY THE BAY

*by Dottie Kropp*

By the shine of white scales  
Yonder are the stars  
That you draw in  
Hook line and sinker  
Each slimy light dims  
But behind the brown cobweb  
A mindless fool  
Your light is trapped too

# FISHERMAN'S LIFE

*by Dottie Kropp*







# HOME INTERIORS

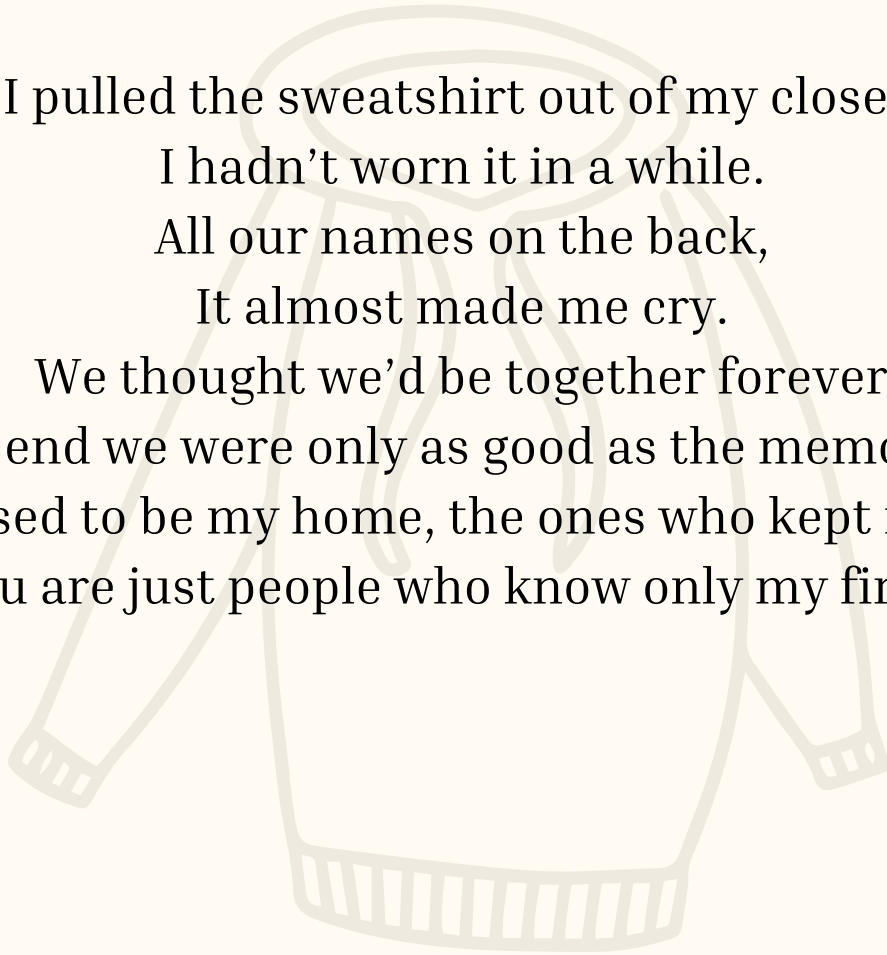
*by Claire Strange*

# TRANSITION

*by Olivia Wedding*

I pulled the sweatshirt out of my closet,  
I hadn't worn it in a while.  
All our names on the back,  
It almost made me cry.

We thought we'd be together forever,  
But in the end we were only as good as the memories we had  
You used to be my home, the ones who kept me safe.  
Now you are just people who know only my first name.



# PORTFOLIO

*by Stephanie Seri*



# THE BEAUTIFUL LIE

*by Kavya Benush*

My mother immigrated to America from Chennai, India in 1992. She was 17. She came to America with 100 dollars and a tennis racket. She believed firmly in the land of the free and the home of the brave. She, like many illusioned and exhilarated immigrants, believed. She traveled from her home and her family to the United States of America.

What a title America has garnered: The United States. Truthfully, we are united in name only.

In truth, America is all painted white. It is rolled in thick layers of unwashable white paint. White picket fences protected white children from the color of the outside world. White shutters closed swiftly and white teeth snared as discomfort crossed American streets, as my mother crossed American streets. Ignorance permeates flesh and coats the calcified, white backbone of these United States.

That is the truth of this country.

As American citizens, my family assumed we could, at the very least, call this country home; we believed we could belong.

We were wrong.

America has beaten the truth into me. I watched my rights be stripped from me. I watched my compatriots, my fellow Americans, curse at the color of my skin and pull at my thick black hair, caught like prey in the firing line of patriotic hatred.

Oh, the grievous sin, the outrageous misfortune it is to be born foreign, to be intruding in your own home.

I am the defective and watered down product of the American Dream. I am the amalgamation of the hopes and dreams this country chewed up and regurgitated.

This has never been home.

It is not my intention to appear ungrateful; I am indebted to this country; I am bound to it. At the very least, America is a domicile, a not so humble abode.

I intend to convey the deeply rooted fear and frustration within me; I am terrified. I was conditioned to be gravely afraid of myself. I was made to feel unsafe in my body.

I suppose, that is the foreign condition, the immigration tax, the price we pay to simply be.

Today, I urge you to ask an immigrant, of any generation, where home is. Let them tell you of their life-long struggle to identify home.

I still haven't figured it out. I wonder if my mother has, if my sister has. I wonder if my children will.

I wonder in vain.

Home, for the great many of us foreign children, for the alien masses, is a beautiful lie.

# HERE, ONCE STOOD A BRIDGE

*by Hanna Wysoczynska*

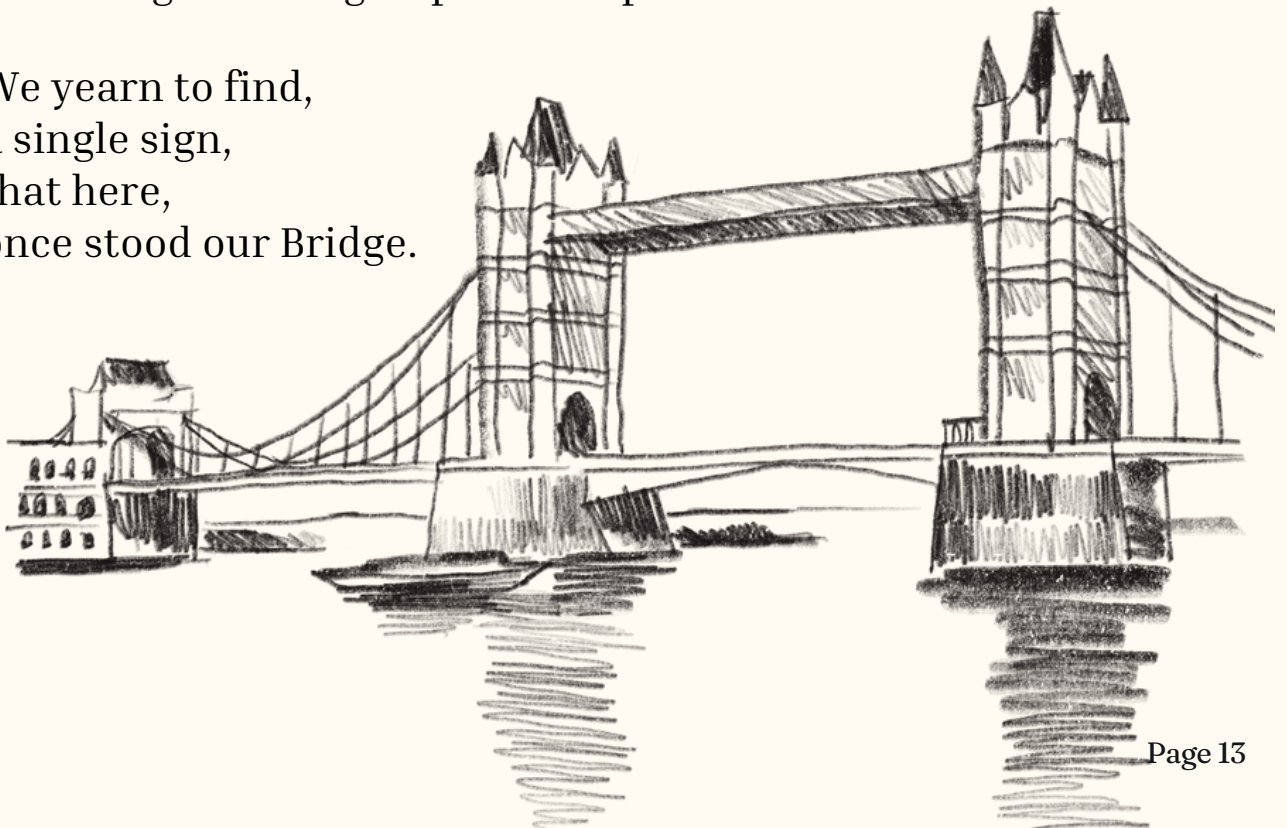
My feet take me to a place where there once stood a Bridge.  
I can still smell the smoke, and the air, dry from the fire.  
The longer I linger, the harder it becomes to breathe.  
My lungs shrivel as I long to leave.

I remember the day we saw Him burn:  
He cried out in agony, He screamed out His lungs.  
We, the two spectators, didn't try to save Him.  
We didn't ever whisper a word.

I see you now on the other side, a shadowed face behind fog.  
A long lost laugh lingers on my tongue.  
Holding our breaths, we stare across the ravine,  
looking at the lives we built without each other.

We will stand, and suffocate, but we'll never cry out.  
We may stare, we may want, but we will never cross.  
We continue to gaze into the blank space between us,  
searching for a single splintered piece of burnt wood.

We yearn to find,  
a single sign,  
that here,  
once stood our Bridge.



# HOME IS WITH THE INTER- CHANGEABLE PEOPLE I CAN'T REMEMBER THE FACES OF

*by Anonymous*



# THE POLISH IMMIGRANT'S FLAG

*by Hanna Wysoczynska*



While exploring the question: “what makes me the person that I am?” I came across the idea for this artwork. A huge part of who I am is this rich mixture between my home life and culture and the one I experience at school. I moved to the U.S. when I was only four years old, but I only speak Polish at home and celebrate Polish holidays and culture. However, my whole life I have been surrounded by American language and culture from school and obviously from living in America. I visit Poland a lot over the summer and sometimes even for Christmas, but despite spending most of my vacations there, people always comment on how I am not (in a sense) fully Polish because I do not live there and have been “polluted” by American ideas and culture. On the other hand, in America, I have always experienced this disconnect and lack of understanding between the American household versus the European house that I grew up in; the small differences in the food and sweets that I eat, how I spend my weekends, traditions and holidays celebrated, or even in the way that I say/mispronounce certain words make me feel not “American enough”.

The irony in all of this is that I do not look like the traditional “immigrant” and it is even weird for me to call myself that, even though by definition, I am. This name for myself has been something that I have struggled with, especially because society and media has always posed this image of “American immigrants” as people of darker complexions, refugees, or people with heavy accents, none of which I am.

# YEARNING

*By Rouelle Pereira*





# MILK CHOCOLATE-DIPPED, LACE RIBBON-TIED

*By Angelyn Gonzales*

I washed it off from my hands  
A simple task, a disquiet moment.  
It once cried for attention—the fairest in the land  
And with each drop, a bit of happiness was sent.

The drums begin their motions  
Rolled with melodies of laughter.  
BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!  
What once was bitter is now sweet,  
What once was loud is now a gentle hum,  
In harmony, my heart sings along.

My skin flushed with warmth,  
not from a shameful stare.  
The glisten of realization,  
that I am alive, vibrant, and free.

The bright red,  
No longer a memoire of discontent,  
but of passion.

My mouth falls open—  
Each word I speak,  
Is lace ribbon-tied.  
Each action I make,  
Is milk chocolate-dipped.

Now, they tug my muscles,  
Not to surrender, but to embrace.  
To dance to the Earth's rhythm,  
Displaying a smile on my face.

For this today, tomorrow, and tomorrows,  
I choose to adorn with ribbons,  
I choose to swirl with chocolate,  
I choose to embrace sweet red.



# The Echoes of Home

*By Hannah Chittea*

I used to think home was my best friend  
The girl who stood by me through thick and thin,  
The one I'd given an arm and a leg for  
To everyone, we seemed unbreakable, and we were

We were home

But a wooden house built in a burning field  
Can only ever turn to ashes,  
No matter how strong it stands against the wind and waves  
And I learned,

As I watched the wood turn to ashes and drift away in the wind with the fire,

That home is never infinite

It is always coming and going,

A promise, a deceit, and more than we can ever expect

Home is a powerful word

It is the strongest fortress,

The one that will never leave and will always be there when we fall

I used to believe this, but now I know

That my home is still out of reach

At best, I have a weak apartment,

But what I also have is an open field full of new beginnings and a vision of the  
future

A future full of shooting stars and a glowing moon  
So I will walk through this field, alone but unafraid,

Ready to leave behind what I have lost

And ready to find what home truly is

And when I find it, I may not recognize it,

But home, no matter how elusive,

Never loses its possibility

Because we all have a future

Even if we don't see it,

That promise is always there

And the echoes of home never quiet down.

# APARTMENT

*By Alexandria Reznikoff*





# SNOW ANGELS



*by Stella Davenport*

In the winter of '02, an eight-month old and a toddler, freshly two, died of frostbite in the Tabot Orphanage. The children living there didn't get a lot of attention before that, and wouldn't after the incident until the orphanage's closure, but two dead kids sure did, with pallid expressions fit for TV.

David had known the younger child, Jane, since she was born. She was the child of one of the older kids there, who would turn eighteen in three months and be kicked out onto the doorstep. He held the girl when she was first born the previous spring, on the last snow of the season.

Even the nuns who ran the orphanage, accustomed and numb to this suffering, were blinded by the attention. Two years prior, a four-year-old in the orphanage died of malnutrition. The sisters administered the situation with prayer, and then silence. But a Hail Mary wasn't enough for the press, and the sisters had no idea how to respond to the stories that were crafted atop the tragedy: of their involvement, of their fault.

Young David couldn't eat while the cameras were on him; not that he ate much at all.

The peak of the media frenzy lasted a week. Despite the prying eyes of the cameras, no one noticed the boy with the growling stomach and bulging eyes that winter. Years later, he'd rewind the news footage again and again, catching glimpses of himself just out of frame. Though he remembered less and less of his years at the orphanage as he grew older, he put pieces of himself together from this footage.

His body was thin and tarnished. Scars, scrapes, and bruises took quickly to his skin and overstayed their welcome. He was still chubby in his cheeks and stomach. He wore big, wire-rimmed glasses that made his eyes come to life, the most emotive and expressive part of himself, which he hated. Muddy green, like his envy, which was rabid and unrelenting.

# THERE IS NO PLACE LIKE AKRON

*By Caitlyn Richwine*

Akron was nothing like home—but in his arms, it may as well have been.

It was the off-season, which—on paper—was supposed to be LeBron’s time to chill, catch up on his Netflix queue, and let his muscles maybe have a moment to breathe. But, of course, it wasn’t that simple. Rest? No, no. LeBron James doesn’t know the meaning of rest. His “off-season” was a personalized program of sustained excellence, probably with a side of basketball drills you wouldn’t even think to try unless you had his wingspan and 40-inch vertical. While the rest of the league was chilling, LeBron was somewhere adding 10 pounds of muscle, working on his jumper, or getting that perfect spin move in 20 different ways. You know, cardio in the off-season like it was the Finals—because, of course, that’s how it goes when you’ve averaged 27 points, 7 rebounds, and 7 assists for 20 seasons. Seriously, that’s a career statline that could be put on a pedestal in Ohio. But LeBron didn’t care. He was already in full “beast mode” 365 days a year, because nothing about this man’s game was ever going to stop. The rest of the NBA could take vacations, but not LeBron.

Savannah didn’t mind it—she never did, because when you’re married to someone whose high school stats are still the stuff of legend (a 21.0 PPG average in his senior year at St. Vincent-St. Mary, anyone?), you accept that sometimes the off-season isn’t a real thing. Sure, she went to bed early, probably because she knew that—like clockwork—LeBron’s “off-time” was just an illusion.

But this wasn’t just about basketball stats. No, this was about presence. When LeBron was in Ohio, the very air seemed to swell with his energy. It was like Akron couldn’t help but adjust to his gravitational pull. This was where it all began. The same Akron that saw him grow from a teenager with impossible potential—someone who could average 25 points per game in his rookie season with the Cleveland Cavaliers—to the man who would eventually lead his teams to four NBA championships, proving that his high school numbers weren’t a fluke but a precursor to the world-changing beast he’d become.

But here, in this humble home, he was less myth and more... overwhelming fact. He stood there like man—but I could see the truth. I mean, we’re talking about the guy who, as a rookie, came into the NBA and immediately put up 20.9 PPG, 5.5 APG, and 5.5 RPG. Like, he was literally averaging a near triple-double as a teenager. As if the league was just a warmup for the real thing.

I walked into the kitchen that night, and of course, there he was. LeBron James, the human highlight reel. The man who had been MVP four times, who had dominated all of high school basketball and then made the NBA his personal highlight reel for years. He was casually drinking water from a jug like it was no big deal.

I couldn't help but think back to his 2003 debut against the Sacramento Kings, where he dropped 25 points, 6 rebounds, and 9 assists, setting the tone for a career of mind-boggling performances. The moment he hit 50 points against the Wizards in 2017—yeah, that game where he became the youngest player to reach 30,000 career points. Or the 2008 Olympic run, when he was a part of the “Redeem Team” and cemented himself as a force to be reckoned with on the world stage.

LeBron had already come back from “training,” his body still radiating that raw power that had become so iconic. When he moved through the house, every doorway seemed to bend, as though the walls knew they had to accommodate the presence of a man who, at the age of 38, was still dominating in a way that made 20-year-olds feel obsolete. The guy had been in the NBA for over two decades—he had more playoff points than Michael Jordan—but you could still see it in his movement, that elegance combined with raw power that defined his entire game. At 6'9", 250 pounds, he could sprint down the court faster than most guards, leap over the defense like it was the first quarter of a summer game, and break down anyone's defense with a jab step that's still not fair to this day.

But tonight, it wasn't about basketball. It was just about the two of us, and I was somehow stuck in this moment, trying to act like I wasn't in the presence of history.

In the kitchen, I tried to play it cool, but I swear, even the sound of LeBron drinking water sounded like an Olympic event. I leaned against the doorway, and just like every other time, it felt like the room itself recognized what was going on—like the refrigerator was now on notice, trying not to feel inferior next to the living legend standing across from me.

“You shouldn't sneak up on people,” LeBron said without even turning around. His voice was like a half-court buzzer-beater: calm, precise, and capable of delivering a knockout punch without breaking a sweat.

“I didn't sneak,” I said, leaning casually against the doorframe, trying to act like I wasn't in the presence of someone who had taken the term “clutch” and expanded its dictionary definition.

He didn't even glance at me, but I could feel his eyes analyzing me like I was a rookie on his team. The kind of look you get when LeBron's gearing up to dish out an assist—or maybe just stare you down because he already knew what you were going to do next.

“You should be sleeping,” he said, because, naturally, the man who's logged more than 50,000 career minutes in the regular season alone felt qualified to give out sleep advice like it was an off-the-court skill he'd mastered.

“So should you,” I shot back, because I guess I wasn't afraid of the guy who'd averaged 27 points and 7 assists per game in his 17th season.

And that was when it hit me: LeBron had played 17 seasons and was still putting up better numbers than most people in their prime. He wasn't just a player. He was a statistical anomaly. The guy averaged 10.4 assists per game in 2020 while also being a top scorer for the Lakers. How? By moving like a human cheat code. LeBron didn't just play the game; he broke it down, reassembled it, and made sure the box score looked like something you'd see only on a NBA 2K video game.

“Fair enough,” he said, his grin spreading like it had been programmed into his system.

I crossed the room, my footsteps softer than they should have been—because every step felt like it was in the presence of someone who'd been to the NBA Finals 10 times. Ten. Not five, not six—10. Every move I made felt like it could be dissected and analyzed like some NBA draft pick from 2003. But I wasn't about to let my own lack of vertical leap make me feel small.

When I got close enough, I could feel his heat—but unlike with Miami he did not leave it this time. The kind of raw intensity you feel when someone's made history just by existing. LeBron wasn't just present; he was actively rewriting the game. It was like standing next to someone who'd dunked on every single one of your heroes (btw: what happened with France which was definitely AI my king could never be made a fool). A man who once scored 29 points in 19 minutes during the 2004 McDonald's All-American Game. A living, breathing statistic who had been to 18 All-Star games and was still going, still crushing it.

But this moment? It wasn't about his records, his stats, his legacy. It was just two people standing there in the kitchen, feeling the weight of everything LeBron was, is, and ever will be. And even then, you couldn't help but wonder—could anything in this house ever feel normal again?