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## Section Introduction: Routes/Roots

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# ROUTES ROOTS

Life has the power to take us on a journey. Some routes are planned strategically and others are not, leading us to places we never could have imagined. Sometimes, we are overjoyed—filled with gratitude in a given moment—and other times, we are in darkness, searching for light. But wherever we go, whichever route we take, it is our roots that ground us, reminding us where we began, allowing us to grow.

Each of the stories featured in this section highlight a journey of self discovery and a transition from one place to another. These authors demonstrate the routes we can take and the places they can lead us. But their stories also share their roots, which are the foundation of their work. Skyler Gausney-Jones begins the section with “Wanderlust,” a story of self-discovery and her redefinition of home through her travels abroad.

We then move to Anuradha Desai’s “Storytime at North Side,” which highlights the refugee community in our own backyard. Desai investigates immigrant and refugee equality through the lens of children’s literature. As a sanctuary city, Syracuse has given many refugees the opportunity to start a new life. At the North Side Learning Center, Desai works with refugee children and creates a book that aims to celebrate their lives and experiences.

The section finishes with Zach Barlow’s “Shattered,” a heart-wrenching piece of when life takes a wrong turn and is routed in darkness. It is then when we realize we must stop, reflect, and re-navigate.

Together, these pieces demonstrate the different paths we take in life and the way they influence us. We are constantly reflecting on where we were and envisioning where we are heading. Whether it is relocating to a new country, traveling the world, or taking a turn down the wrong path, at the end of the day, all of these routes—and the roots within us—write our story.

—Michaela Marano, Callie Chute, and Denise Romero

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