

Olivia Soto
Leshler Middle School
6th grade
Mr. Swann

2021 Fort Collins Reads

Colorful Colorado

Imagine you are in your car, on a long, straight Wyoming road, making your way to Colorado, a mysterious place. You're looking around at the new scenery, one you've seen only when you visit your Aunt and Uncle for a week in the summer. Now that it's spring, the whole place looks different. You see a beautiful sunset, resting for the night on the horizon, and tumbleweed, rolling and rolling around, doing somersault after somersault. The grass is blooming, big and bright and green, looking like children, swaying their skinny arms back and forth with the wind. You stare back into your car, seeing your mother and sister talking, and your brother peacefully sleeping in the bouncing, rumbling vehicle.

That was me, back in May 2017. I was 7 years old and my family and I were on our way to Colorful Colorado. My mom's cousins live there in a bright yellow house, easy to spot, if looking for it or not. Of course, this was just supposed to be a summer vacation for a week or two, but nothing is ever *just* something. My mother always loved the mountains, but she fell in love with them more than ever right then and there. After staying with my

mom's cousins for two months, day after day baking things, watching cartoons, sleeping in a bunk bed with no ladder, and playing with a fat deaf dog, we moved on to a condo.

It was quite small but big enough for us four to fit. I shared a massive room upstairs with my older brother. We both had twin beds, and the wall behind us was painted with cartoon-like snow-capped mountains. My mom's room was next to mine. She had a massive bed. My sister's room was in the basement, her bed feeling like thousands of fluffy clouds. The condo was small but doable. My dad is a travel nurse, so he comes and goes often, and my mom is a real estate agent. They fought a lot, usually about little things, but one time they had a super big fight and my dad left and fled to the cold outdoors. My mom and dad's relationship has never been rock solid. One day when he was coming to visit, our parents gathered us together in the living room for a family meeting. They both looked sad and solemn as they told us they were getting a divorce. My mom was crying, and I thought about how weird it is when two people can love each other and then suddenly have an internal grudge for one another.

After a year and a half of living in the condo, it went up for sale so we had to move out. We moved into this house that was a good size, coffee-colored with green gutters. The living room was much bigger than the old one. I had my own room, right across from my sisters. She got the

master bedroom with its own marble bathroom and a humongous walk-in closet. My brother's room was the smallest, but it fit his needs. His closet was the same as mine, small with a sliding door. My mom's room was in the basement with her king bed and a whole room dedicated to her enormous amount of clothes. One day in early March we gathered around for a family meeting. My mom announced horrific news. She explained that we did not have enough money to keep up the rent for this house, so we had to move in with her boyfriend, Ryan, and his two kids. Since 7 people in one small house were already crowded, my mother explained sadly that we would have to give our fluffy Yorkie poodle to our grandma in Wisconsin. After all of it, me and my siblings held our clueless dog and wept.

Moving into Ryan's house was a struggle. Ryan moved out of the master bedroom so my sister and I could move in, and my brother took the office across the hall. A twin bed and a desk was all that could fit. My mom slept downstairs with Ryan in her king bed, in the basement living room, so there was no door. Ryans kids had the two twin rooms in the basement. Time flew by, and It soon became the day before spring break, when the pandemic struck. When we were informed we got two weeks off for spring break instead of one, everyone cheered. Little did they know that the two weeks turned into an astounding two years. Online school was not fun, I can tell you that, but it sure was something. My school was not used to the whole online thing so they were quite clueless about what to do. Eventually

(and thankfully), school ended, with the summer left unexplored. My mom was pretty strict about Covid-19 at first, but then she eased up when things got better, but then covid spiked. During the eventful summer my mother had found her dream house, the house she knew was the one. Soon enough, a thin packet of paper was the wall separating us from our dream house. Moving out of Ryan's house was so chaotic! The moving guys arrived, and we needed everyone to help transfer all the boxes into the Uhaul. We even needed to use the back of Ryan's pick up to help load things. It took a few days for everything to ease into its assigned spot, and even more time for all the big furniture like the beds and couches to get here. Sadly, summer came to an end. School started again, still online. It was the same boring routine; wake up two minutes before your meeting, and pay only enough attention to answer simple questions. Once more, school ended. Summer felt like it ended in a flash. Around mid July, the Delta Variant, a Covid-19 virus strand, started to escalate, just as my mother was getting less strict about Covid-19. To make matters worse, I contracted Covid around the end of August and missed the first week of sixth grade (Do not recommend). So much has happened in each and everyone of my houses, but I know that our dream house is not just a house, it's a home.