

# Homecoming

by Lorenzo Sewanan

EXT. UNIVERSITY PHILOSOPHY QUADRANGLE — EARLY  
AFTERNOON, THURSDAY

The sun shines brightly. Many students lounge on the grass in their brightly colored t-shirts and shorts; Pion Harrari sits a little hill to the right of the flat quad; the windmills of the labyrinthine engineering building lies behind him; the splendid white English building to his left and the lavish gothic Philosophy building to the right compete to dominate the view; in the distance, a little lake demarcates the north edge of the quad. Pion talks on his shiny silver cell phone to his sister, Brigita, as he looks across the quad. The digits on his cell phone screen display 0034-931-5432 in large bright green font. A large cloud shaped like an elephant passes overhead.

BRIGITA (Off Screen)

(upbeat)

That's ok broth.

I'm getting better every day!

You'll be here for the next one right?

I'm already decided I'm going to dance the Saura song.

PION

(evasively)

Probably going to be over there.

When's that even going to be?

BRIGITA

No idea.

In a couple of months?

Before next year for sure.

You're coming home though, right?

PION

Of course.

I'm coming home soon.

Anyway, give me dad.

BRIGITA

Ok. Love you Pi. Miss you.

PION

Love you too.

A few seconds pass, the white elephant drifts far out of sight. The sun shines brighter now.

INT. PION'S HOME — LATE AFTERNOON, THURSDAY

The room is dimly lit. Dark red curtain shut out the reddish twilight sunlight from two open windows. The curtains wave back and forth in the slight breeze. The room smells of worn wood and old books. A glass of water and a pill bottle sits on the coffee table. Pion's father wears khaki shorts and a plain red shirt. An open yellow book lies on the coffee table. Pion's father sits on a blue couch and talks to Pion on his cordless black phone. On his hand, Pion's father wears two rings: a white-gold patterned ring on his left ring finger and a large gold black-jeweled ring on his right middle finger.

FATHER

Not really. The weather is horrible.

I'm getting old now.

Son, so you ready for your graduation?

PION (Off Screen)

Yeah. Next week.

I got all the stuff I need: cap, gown, and suit.

It's going to be awesome.

FATHER

I'm really sorry I can't be there.  
Your mother would have loved to see this.

PION

(somewhat quiet)  
I know Pa. I know.

FATHER

I'm glad that you could do this.  
You can graduate and come back here finally. This country could  
use you, boy. You're going to do great things, son.

PION

Pa, I've been thinking.  
I don't think I'm ready to come back...yet.

FATHER

What do you mean?

PION

I want to stay here for a bit more.  
I can probably get a job or something;

FATHER

I thought you wanted to come home?  
You always been talking about how you wanted to make an impact  
when you came back, about how you wanted to change things.  
What happened?

PION

I just don't think I'm ready yet, Pa.  
There's nothing for me at home, except you guys.

FATHER

You feel that way now.

But, I don't think you're ready to not come home, yet.

PION

I just don't want to come home yet.

FATHER

(resolutely)

Son, I love you, and I want you back home.

Just remember who we are, who you are.

PION

(quietly)

I love you, Dad.

Bye.

The call disconnects. Pion's father sits back in his chair and starts to cough violently. He reaches for the glass of water and the pill bottle. He drinks an orange pill and stares at the enlarged pictures on the wall. One shows Pion as a little boy, his father, Brigita as a bay girl, and his mother sitting in front of a river. Another picture shows Pion, a young man, in his high school graduation attire, smiling with the enthusiasm of someone ready to take on the world. Yet another picture shows Pion standing tall, a sophomore in college. He stands in front of gothic pillars of the Philosophy building, a windmill and lake visible in the distance behind him. Pion's father looks at the picture and holds his graying hair with his right hand.

INT. UNIVERSITY MUSIC COSERVATORY — LATER FRIDAY  
NIGHT

The Music Conservatory blinds with its bright lamps and white walls. Light reflects off a beautiful black piano, with Telemachus engraved in gold on its hood. The piano curves like a frozen wave. Pion sits at this piano. He looks at sheet music and turns the pages. He puts the sheet down, face down, and begins his sonata. The eighty-eight keys of the piano sing Chopin's 19th Nocturne in E-Minor. Pion's long fingers fly from black to white, white to black, without missing even a measure. The nocturne starts soft. Stormy notes reverberate within the piano room, sad and slow. The sonata starts to climax. Sounds like thunder emerge from the piano. Pion shuts his eyes as he moves his fingers back and forth across the teeth of the instrument. The sonata nears its end. Just then, Telemachus refuses to produce sound. The center C key breaks. An ugly sound breaks the beauty of the sonata. Pion stops playing. He gets up and walks away. His teary eyes glimmer in the light.

INT. UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTIAL RESIDENCE — FRIDAY  
NIGHT

Seventeen students sit around a round table, bearing the coat of arms of the university. They wear illuminated expressions. They, the most brilliant scholars of the university, have their last dinner together, in the presidential residence. They all wear suits of different colors and styles, for girls and boys. But, they all have on their right chest, a pin, a pin ever more visible because the candle light glimmers on its silver, raindrop form. Pion Harrari sits among them. He speaks only to one person, the girl on his right. Jen has a beautiful smile and green eyes; they focus on him.

JEN

I mean, what are you doing after all of that.

PION

Thinking of staying here.  
But, I might have to go back home.

JEN  
Why?

PION  
Since I'm done, I might go home.  
Got nowhere to stay really.

JEN  
You can always stay with me.  
You know that.

PION  
I do?  
I'm just not sure yet.

Jen  
You think home's changed a lot though?

PION  
There'll always be the old house, next to the river.  
Fruit trees in the yard. Can't have changed too much.  
(Pauses)  
There's dad and sis, of course.

Pion looks at his reflection in a glass of water set in front of him.

JEN  
How come you never talk about your family?

INT. ABSALON CAS'RA DORM — LATE SATURDAY NIGHT

Pion opens his room door with a brass key. The hallways are empty. No sound remains to be heard tonight. He shivers in the chilly room, wearing only a Green Day t-shirt. His hair is long and some strands linger just above his eyes. He puts on a black hoodie over and sits on his bed in his large single. He looks around at his clean room, most things packed into boxes. He continues packing his earthly belongings into boxes. He rips off the posters covering his wall, posters of the great cities Rome, New York, San Francisco, London, and Beijing.

He gets up and goes to sit at his desk, next to a long mirror. On the corner of the mirror near his eye level while sitting are three pictures, one of his father and his sister two years ago in front of the river. There is an old Polaroid of his mother, a beautiful clear-skinned woman with dark brown eyes and brownish-red hair. The third picture is of him, his father, and his sister, dressed in fine clothes and sitting on the lawn between the river and the house; it was taken last year. He looks at them, smiles, and mutters something that sounds like "Home." He takes his phone out of his pocket and puts it on his desk.

INT. ABSALON CAS'RA — AN HOUR LATER, SATURDAY NIGHT

A loud ringing interrupts the middle of the night. Pion jumps awake, leaps across the room, and picks his phone up.

BRIGITA  
(Screams)  
Pion!

PION

Brigit? What's wrong?

BRIGITA

Dad is in the hospital!

PION

Wait, what! What happened?

BRIGITA

(Crying)

He started coughing and then coughed up blood.

We called the ambulance, and they rushed him to the emergency room.

PION

What! What's wrong with him?

BRIGITA

(Crying)

I don't know!

But, I'm scared!

PION

Where are you now?

BRIGITA

(Crying)

In the hospital.

I don't know what to do!

PION

It'll be ok, Brigit!

I'm going to come soon.



EXT. THE RIVERSIDE — TWO WEEKS LATER, MORNING

Pion sits next to the edge of the river in front of a white house. Green grass and fruit trees embellish the riverside. Pion wears a black long-sleeved shirt with blue jeans. His black hair denies the soft light a hold on its dispersive form. A rare moon is still seen in the sky with its soft radiant glow. Pion speaks on his cell phone Jen. He laughs at something she said.

PION

I know. I know.

I got the worst timing ever.

JEN (Off Screen)

Well, at least, you called.

So he's getting better?

Pion

Yeah. Shouldn't be long now.

I figure that a couple of weeks and he should be out.

JEN

Mr. Harrari,

You think you'll come back then?

PION

I think so. When I can.

I just need to make sure everything here is good.

JEN

You know I love you right?

PION

Yeah. And, you know how I feel too right?

JEN

(jokingly)

I thought you were never sure about anything, Pion.

PION

I do. I love you. Really.

I will come back. For you.

JEN

You better come back soon.

EXT. HOME — THREE WEEKS LATER, NIGHT

Stars shine in the dark, and there are three people sitting on the second floor balcony of a large house, overlooking a slowly flowing river. The house has white color with dark blue highlights at its edges. It is a house made sensibly, with wood and brick, with two floors, in a style reminiscent of the colonial ranches. The house seems to be in good shape and looks not much older than twenty years. There is a well-kept yard around it, with green grass and fruit trees of apples, pears, and lemons. Three people, Pion, his father, and Brigita Harrari, sit on the balcony and enjoy the cool breeze of the calm river. Brigita, wearing a floral nightgown gets up to leave. Pion Harrari wears a leather jacket, jeans, and a white t-shirt that says PDA. His father wears khaki shorts and an armless plain blue t-shirt. The father's hand has two rings: a white-gold patterned ring on his left ring finger, a large gold black-jeweled one on his right middle finger.

BRIGITA

Good night, Pi! Good night, Dad!

Brigita kisses her brother and father on the cheek and goes inside the house. Pion gets up to leave.

FATHER

Wait, son. Stay.

Pion sits back down and looks out into the river. The stars shine in the sky and in the water. The wafting silence permeates the air, punctuated by the orchestra of crickets chirping obeisance to the pureness of their habitation.

FATHER

I'm happy you came back.

We missed you.

PION

I came when I was needed.

And, I am here now.

I'm just happy that you're ok.

The father stands up, clears his throat.

FATHER

I hope you will come back one day.

Our world is beautiful.

Someday you will see that.

PION

I see it already.

The father moves as if to leave, turns back, looks at his son.

FATHER

I am happy you came home. And will be happy to take you to the airport tomorrow.

PION

Thanks, Dad.

FATHER

I just want you to know that you carry your home everywhere with you.

You carry us, and in us, we carry you.

PION

I don't know what you mean.

FATHER

Take this.

The father removes one of his rings, his large ring with the black jewels on it and gives it to his son.

PION

Why'd you give me this, Dad?

FATHER

My father gave it to me when I was ready to leave home.

The father walks away. The son is left sitting there under the stars. A misty rain rises from the surface of the river, and it wets the grass, silences the crickets, and distorts the image of the stars.

