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Period 7

Traditions

I'm running down the beach, cool sand sticking to the soles of my feet. I can feel the breeze dance along my bare skin, lifting my damp hair from my neck, its shadow chases after me. I take a deep breath. The humid air enters my lungs tasting like salt and nature. I can hear the ocean alongside me inhale and exhale with each wave, matching the tempo of my pounding feet.

For as long as I remember I have loved the ocean. I can not be positive where this feeling first originated, but if I were to guess, I would say the summers I spent in Jamaica with my family. As a child, I would go on annual trips with my father's side of the family to Jamaica. My grandparents are quite wealthy, and to spend more time with their children, every summer they rented a mansion-like house for three weeks and hired cooks and maids. To me, having a house opening up onto the beach surrounded by a tropical environment was the definition of paradise. I think my family decided to make this a tradition because there was nothing else connecting us. We were never really religious and lived too far apart to see each other for the holidays. My more immediate family also doesn't celebrate any holiday or made-up event. Since these trips were the only time I got to see my whole family, It made them memorable.

As soon as I got off the plane from Colorado, I felt like I was entering a separate reality, this island was like a bubble of earth and water disconnected from the rest of the world. I could see the vivid green leaves of the palm trees littering the blue sky with dots of color, seeming to illuminate the sunlight trickling through the car window as we drove away. We arrived at the beautiful house engulfed in the surrounding wilderness. The big window in the center of the house identifies a passage leading to the pale sand of the beach and the expanding ocean behind. The air feels fresh and heavy as if infused with the energy and life of its surroundings. As I enter the house I am greeted by the smiling faces of my grandparents. Their faces refresh in my mind as I glimpse them for the first time that year. Then my cousins, aunts, and uncles dispersed throughout the property or exploring the beach.

I remember sitting together at a table eating dinner, the rich textures and flavors adsorbed by my taste buds. The fresh fruit is sweet and tangy; as I take a bite, juice trails down my face. After dinner, we play board games and watch movies with the family, laughing and joking in a carefree environment. In the afternoon, my brother and I play games with our cousins, taking cover behind trees as we're pelted with water balloons. We swim in the ocean, and I practice diving beneath the waves im

agining I'm a dolphin or mermaid by kicking in a synchronized manner, mimicking a tail.

Our family continued this tradition for four years, starting when I was seven until I was eleven. Though I have lost many memories to time, I can recall how every summer, I was excited to spend time at a beautiful resort and also see my extended family. As I look back at the time I spent I can see it was a vacation I took for granted. I was able to relax and forget about anything but the moment. Even now when I think about it, I feel a sort of calmness and tranquility. I miss being able to see all of my family together. I still visit my family every year but rarely see everyone at the same time.