

Thesis Excerpt 2

I grew up in Marin county in Northern California. The landscape is harsh, live oaks clutching at otherwise bald hills, the sky abruptly dropping down to meet the land. Living close to the country has given me many opportunities to further understand myself as a human and how I relate to the earth. This past summer I spent Labor Day at a beach in Inverness. The small beach overlooks Tomales Bay, flanked on all sides by cliffs and forest. Various types of rays swim in the shallow water. It feels strange there. Inverness is one of the few towns in the area that sits on the Pacific Plate. The San Andreas fault runs beneath Tomales Bay, separating the Pacific Plate from the rest of America on the Continental Plate. On one side of the bay, the hills are stark and bare; on the other, they are lush and green. I was on the lush, green side. As I sat there on the beach, running the alien sand through my fingers, gazing back at America, I saw the beauty of the land enhanced by the threat of the fault not twenty feet from my toes. It is hard to say why some experiences are more impactful than others. Perhaps it was the fear I felt as a child during the 1989 earthquake and coming face to face with the impetus of this memory. Whatever moved me, I was aware of the moment's transitoriness, and I felt the fast repetitiveness of human activity next to the slow yet similarly cyclical movements of the earth.