Paulo Reyes

Memoir

The patches of snow outside were thin, and the air was mild. The calm environment made our situation inside the house a chaos. Doing some last minute preparations, we rush around the house looking for everything we might need. Most of our luggage was locked and ready to go. Most of what we were getting was simple stuff: toothbrushes, magazines, drinks, money. When all was settled we’d check for our identifications, including our passports. The sun was barely out when we started loading our luggage to the back of the truck. We had a fair bit. They were not light either.

By the time we were ready to leave, I remembered I wanted a certain magazine, so we drove first to the drugstore, which sold the magazine in town. I bought a magazine about science stuff, mostly trivia. The topic in this one was De’Javu, thinking of something you’re seeing right now as something you’ve seen in the past. It would be a pretty interesting read. After buying the magazine, we stopped by the school for some assignments we might miss while we’re away. We would be away for a month, after all.

It was a three-hour drive from our town to Winnipeg. It was a long drive but I knew I wouldn’t be able to sleep. We were supposed to make some stops on the way. Our first stop was a Tim Horton’s in another town, just a bit bigger than our own. Coffee and breakfast for the long drive; I think that’s a good plan. Not that we needed the coffee to stay awake, but nothing completes a long drive more than food in the car. It was the first time I’ve had any restaurant or fast-food breakfast special. I got myself a breakfast wrap. It was magnificent. I never knew I was yet to taste something so good.

Our next stop was in Brandon. It was around 12 by the time we got there, perfect time to have lunch. We decided to go to an Asian buffet restaurant. This was a weird choice, I thought. After today, we’d be filling ourselves full with Asian cuisine, so there might’ve been a better choice. Still, the taste of sushi is still exquisite. I could never pass up on it. I still enjoyed myself eating my share of the sushi, burning my nostrils with the taste of the wasabi.

When we finished lunch, we headed straight for Winnipeg again, with our next planned stop at a gas station just outside of Portage La Prairie. We had about a 30-minute break there, giving ourselves a bathroom break for another hour and a half of driving. We also bought ourselves gum and gas for the rest of the way. This was our last stop before Winnipeg, where we’re supposed to meet with our cousins. We have to stay at their house for some hours since it would be 12hours before our flight by the time we reach Winnipeg.

It was a long drive, but I was ecstatic by the time we reached our cousin’s house. It was almost a year since we last saw each other. They were still at school when we got there. I went with their father to pick them up. Sure enough they were slightly surprised I was there. Watching them, I could see how they’ve made Canada their home so quickly. They were both with friends when they were picked up. It was different for me. I didn’t feel like I belonged. My friends have tried to hang out with me, but I always make it harder for them.

We stayed the night at their place that night. They had a few other family around, and they’d drop by every once in a while. It was also one of my cousin’s birthday that day. It was a perfect coincidence, a perfect time to visit. We had a small feast that night, chatting away about our plans once we get off the plane. We also took the chance to play together, just like before. It felt like home to us. I couldn’t imagine how much better it would be once we get back to our real home.

We left for the airport around 3 a.m. that morning. We had to be there 3 hours before the flight for check in. It was a peaceful morning, not as busy as I would have imagined. We were done checking within an hour, unlike the first time we had to fly to Canada, where we came 4 hours early and didn’t even wait an hour for our flight to leave. We were going back to where that was.

Our flight had 2 stops, one at Vancouver and another at Seoul, South Korea. It was a fascinating experience as always. 24 hours of air time isn’t much if you visit 2 other places, and enjoy it in your own way. From South Korea, it would just be another 4 hour flight before getting to our destination. The moment I realized that, I was too pumped to even sleep in the plane during the flight. They gave us papers to fill in the plane before we land. It was starting to feel a lot like we’re about there. Once we started descending, I was more pumped than I’ve ever been in my life. The lights in the city welcoming us, the familiar sea in sight, the people and cars that looked like ants, all still there, since the time we left. It was De’Javu. I rolled my magazine from Canada then, and thought to myself: “Nope, not De’Javu. I’m really back, this is where my life that paused when I left starts again. I’m really back in time.”