

I chose Messy Roots.

Warm-up: What was your favorite part (or parts) of the text? What about those parts moved you?
The idea of wishing to "never have to explain myself" (page 12)

"Baba... I'm quitting." (page 141)

"It hit me then. College was my elixir of immortality. I could finally fly somewhere far, far away."
(page 157)

"Your hair is very thick. It means the roots are strong." (page 223)

"My story was still being written, and I was going to do it at my own pace." (page 249)

"American? No, all of our dreams." (page 257)

"I'll grow my home from the ground up... using the roots I've nurtured... With the people I love."
(page 269)

Loved loved loved these quotes- really resonated with me- especially the one about college- I'd forgotten how stressful it was to get to swat and now two years later I'm desperately scheming my grand exit, taking every opportunity I can to disassociate from the institution... this idea of growing your own home is so beautifully articulated by Laura; rather than home being just a place it's something you find within yourself- an ecosystem within you that works to nourish and ground you. We all have this powerful ability to grasp onto our roots, to really feel the ways in which our roots have gotten tangled → enmeshed? Right where they need to be.

Vibes: List at least three emotions you experienced in response to the text:

Soft- not to point of crying but I felt weird

redolent/ vibing? - this idea that regardless of where you journey from, you can always LEARN, those moments you've wanted to de-code, figure out why they drain your soul or tingle every molecule of your essence- those things that drive you away from yourself- not that you necessarily have to go to college to figure that out (working on that right now), but you'll know you're doing something right as those feelings intensify and you're left with nothing else but to reach out, ask questions, challenge those around you, perhaps feel lonelier than you've ever felt before... and then creating spaces to nourish your soul, spaces to help you better see yourself.

I hadn't read that many graphic novels since I was a pre-teen so simply having the chance to re-visit that part of myself was so refreshing. Especially since approaching books often makes me nervous (will I ever finish? Will I understand? How does this matter and apply to the real life? I don't know if I'd use this in a K-12 classroom just because the experiences Laura shares go beyond that part of her life- but maybe that's exactly what young people need!

Was this a joy-ride or work? Lines blurred. I appreciate this class for challenging me to read a bunch of graphic novels as I scoured through a variety to find something appropriate to share with the class and also elisa, serena, and others who shared their genius with us.

Mirrors: Which identities (race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, religion, age, etc) did you see represented in the text? Which are your own? How did it feel? Who do you believe is the audience? Wuhanese American, AsAm, immigrant-working class family, queer femme, people in college ? It was pretty accessible to general audience I think.

I want to point out the church part and when Laura realized that it was probably better that she couldn't understand most of what the pastor was saying- if this was my story, this part would have been greatly expanded since my KoreanAm identity is almost synonymous with church (at least in the way in which I experience it). Church is the place where I met almost all of my KoreanAm friends, elders, links to land where I was born- my blood family are also all church-goers, with a significant number of them pastors or clergy members.

I no longer go to church nor do I identify with an institutionalized faith but this was more challenging than just dropping a faith; it felt like I was dropping a community of people who I grew up with, understood my culture... never really had to explain that side of myself.

I still appreciate all the people who've taken care of me and my family, but sometimes the conversations just get too suffocating to the point where my existence just has no place in those words and it's necessary to disappear...

Key Concepts: What concepts/ideas from our conversations and readings (especially from this week) appear in the text?

The idea of going from no one (foreign) to someone (household name) is really interesting. Would this book have had as great an impact if Wuhan was not associated so heavily as it is with COVID-19's origination? Do we need a crisis to be seen as humans? A lot of infatuation and interest for these kinds of stories is an aftermath of great devastation and violence.

Are there any media forms where the main character is queer, AsAm immigrant, dis/abled and a teacher? As an aspiring educator myself, I'm constantly seeking out resources that speak to this experience in particular- where teaching becomes movement making and liberatory even within a K-12 oppressive school setting because that's a dream I have for myself.

In what ways can I continue to teach in ways that are nourishing and sustainable?

"So tell me, have you figured out what you are?"- white rabbit (page 210)