

WE RENT IN: SAN FRANCISCO



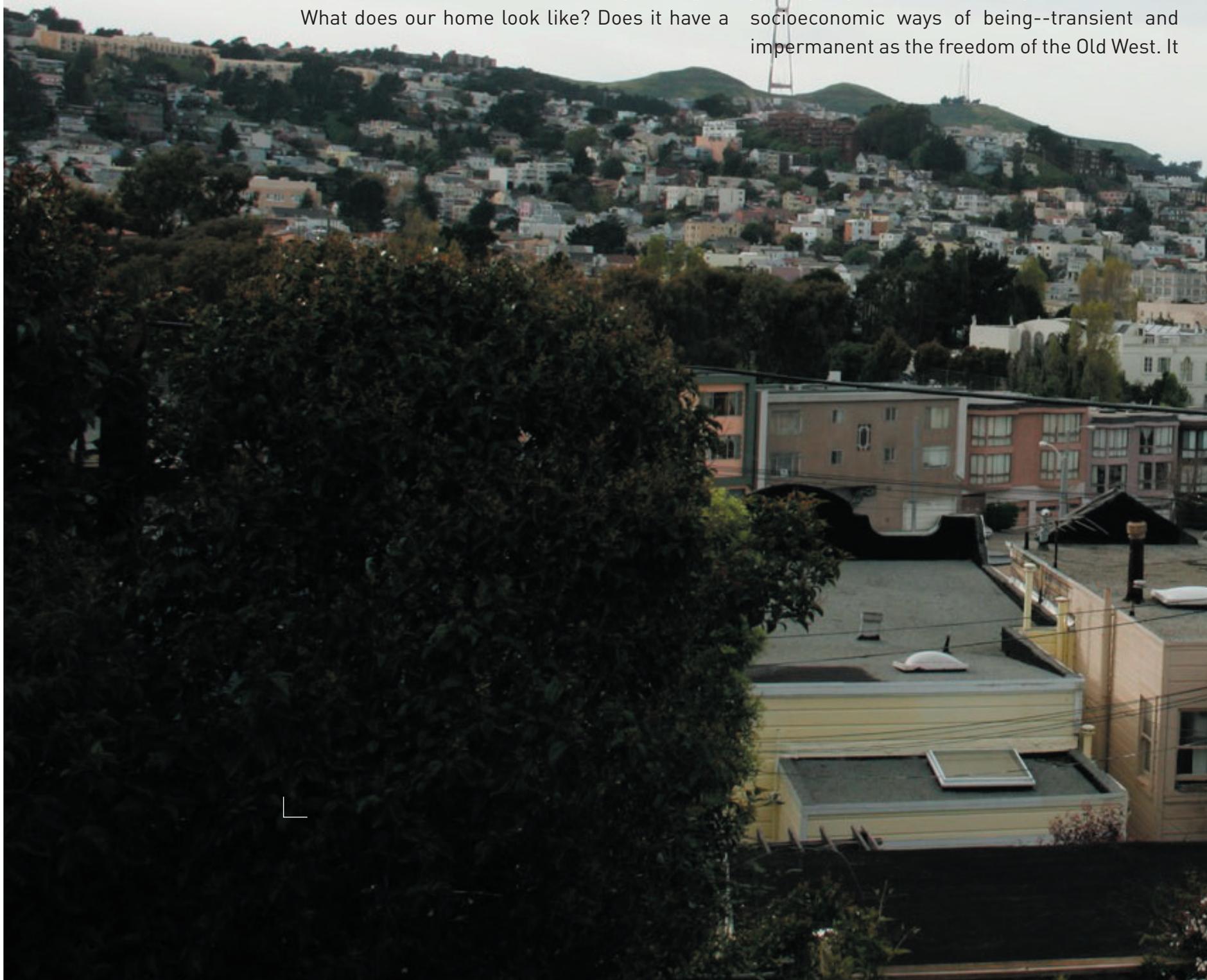
American Dreamers

A gracious Victorian looking out on Twin Peaks, or an airy loft apartment poking out of the skyline of downtown San Francisco: These are icons in the American imagination. In our American dream, we dream in hardwood floors and organic gardens instead of picket fences, and we land the job and settle down. In this dream, we own our home.

But when we rent, the landscape changes. What does our home look like? Does it have a

spot in the carpet marking the party where you woke up on the lawn surrounded by pink plastic flamingoes? Or was it the apartment you rented that summer you went to grad school in the Bay Area, where your niche in the Universe was *feng shui* appointed with plants?

Home is where the renter's heart is. In San Francisco, one's home follows a journey-- personal, artistic, professional and socioeconomic ways of being--transient and impermanent as the freedom of the Old West. It



is a reality, too, as many no longer wish or can afford to own in the Wal-Mart Age. The Jewel of the West is always tied for the Number 1 most-expensive place to live in America, and owning can be one big pain in one's karma. Rents in the Bay Area peaked in 2000 and fell for the next four years along with the dot-com boom and bust, stabilizing, and even rising slightly, in 2005, to an average rent for a one-bedroom apartment of \$1,652 per month.

So why buy a house? Compare renting to sweating mortgage payments and taxes and whether you will get promoted to vice

president next year so you can keep your house and make your investment pay off for the children you don't have time to parent because you're too busy, when you can live simply and simply rent? The renter's San Francisco is a New Century Bohemia, peopled with fellow sojourners—where your neighbors are a California migrant, a transplanted misfit, a perpetually dissatisfied Don Quixote—all whose homes are a lifetime of rented rooms.

Nay-sayers whine that San Francisco is an “over-priced urban theme park” or “an adult Disneyland.” If San Francisco is a theme park, it's not sponsored by Disney, Inc. It's a



ALL YOU NEED TO LIVE IN SAN FRANCISCO MONTH'S RENT AND ACCESS TO A COMPUTER



3D cartoon with the volume turned up loud. Who needs cable? Sure, you dance to local bands at summer street fairs with ethnic/gay/arts themes, lubed up with tanning oil, choking down crab, chugging beer out of plastic tumblers, and take MUNI home, your arms sticking to your drinking buddies' naked chests at 3 a.m. Sure, there's a cover charge to a good time in San Francisco. It's about fifty dollars.

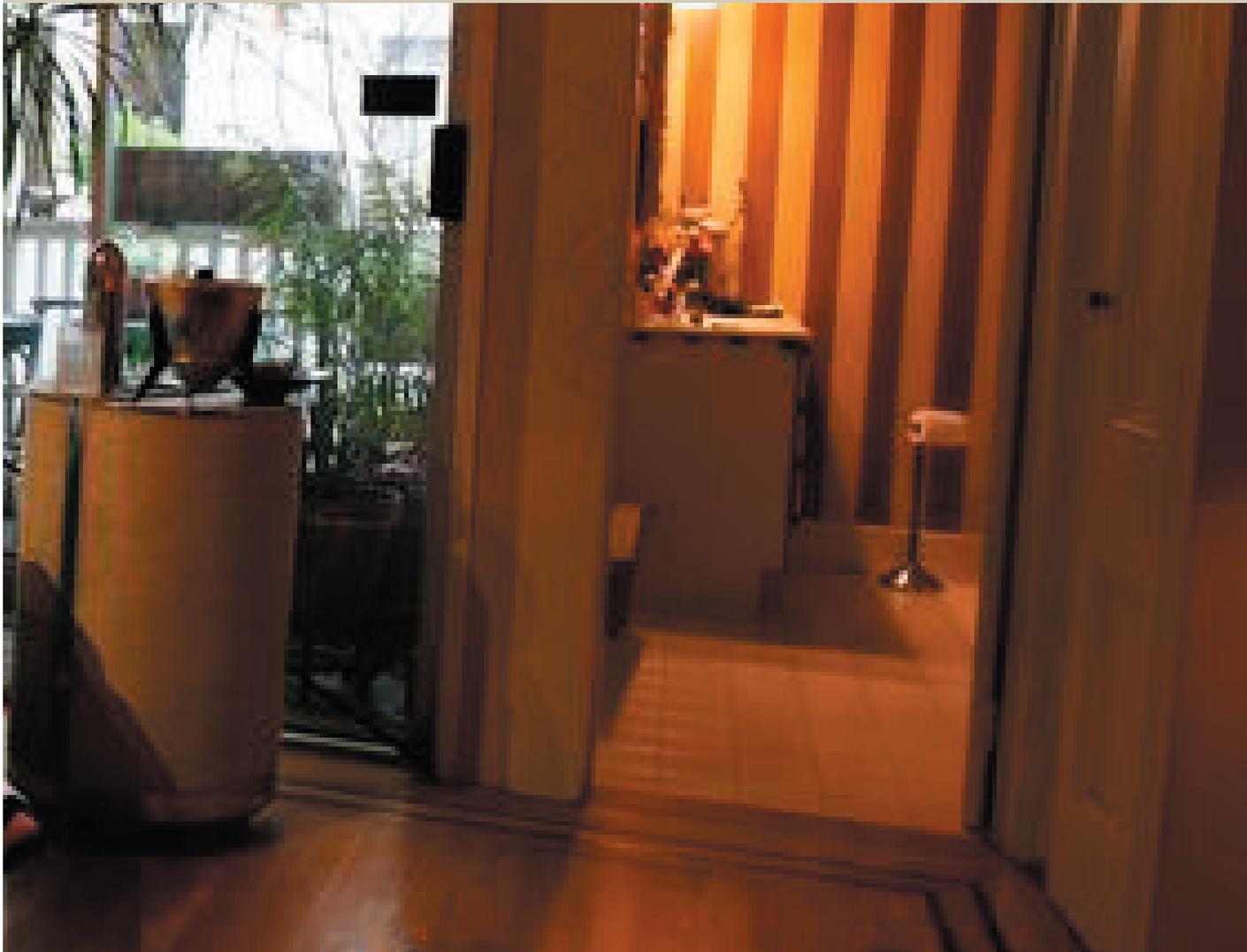
Let them say what

they wish. In San Francisco, dreamers beget the dream. You observe a Chinese lantern swaying in the breeze in an alley next to a strip club off Columbus Avenue. You skim WE RENT IN SAN FRANCISCO at a North Beach bookstore in the naked noon, pick up a copy of Capote's *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, asking yourself, in yet another American daydream, just where is my home? And why did that coffee table book ask so many questions?

Keep asking questions, and you'll find it, your dream. Just make the rent. Come home from work every day, and pretty soon, with computer access, you will be going to events, hanging out, getting invited to parties where you don't know anyone. At the parties, until you get to know people, you can sit on the couch and pick up cool coffee table books like this one and read. See, the renter's life is not bad for a reality.

All you need to live in

SAN FRANCISCO IS THIS MONTH'S RENT, YOUR LAST MONTH'S RENT, YOUR LAST MONTH'S RENT.



San Francisco is this month's rent, your last month's rent and access to a computer. Then wait. It will all begin to happen. Keep renting. Renting is a whole lot more fun. Renting can be a whole lot more chill. Read about these twenty-five renters in San Francisco who make out rent checks, month by month. See why they don't take the leap into home ownership. You'll be amazed at the diverse lifestyles in this city, but you'll quickly see the

ironies apparent in the renter's journey. Find out how to work/live and join the Creative Class. Learn the art of living while you grow professionally. Get tips on screening a landlord. No matter what, stay in this city. You don't even need health insurance; there are acupuncturists and herbalists all over the city to help you. Just rent your adventure, and it will come to you, your dream.

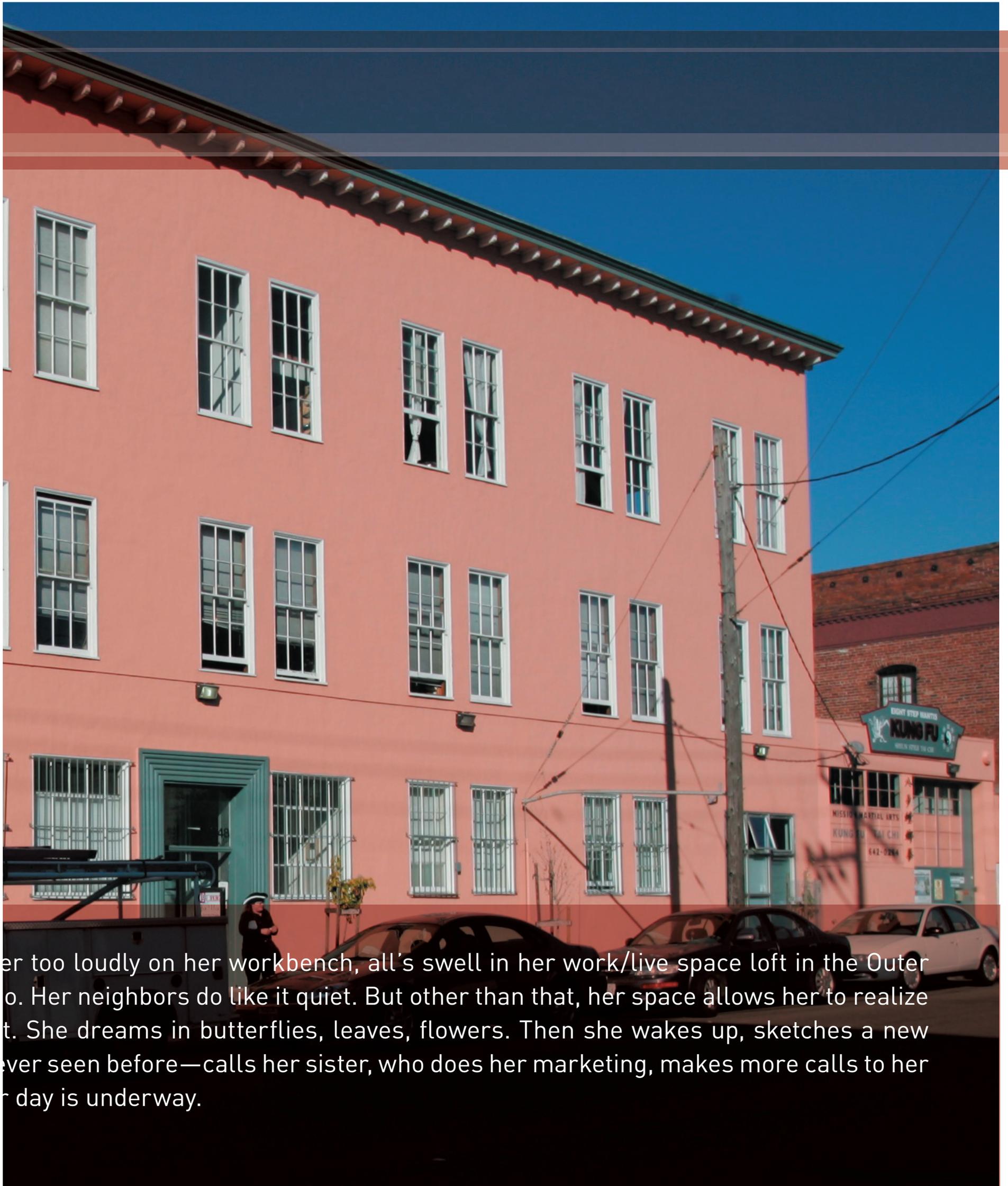
And if you like WE RENT, RENTERS: San Francisco

Opens Her Doors, this is just the first book in a series of teneight expressing urban culture through space. Enjoy each; enjoy all, and enjoy the journey.

The Rise Of The Creative Class



If Kris Nations doesn't tap her hammer in the Mission neighborhood of San Francisco, she has at night the dreams of nature she has at night—a necklace and ring—jewelry designs need three employees, and her twelve-hour



er too loudly on her workbench, all's swell in her work/live space loft in the Outer
o. Her neighbors do like it quiet. But other than that, her space allows her to realize
t. She dreams in butterflies, leaves, flowers. Then she wakes up, sketches a new
ever seen before—calls her sister, who does her marketing, makes more calls to her
r day is underway.



KRIS NATIONS JEWELS HAS GROWN UP IN A ONE-BEDROOM LOFT.



Jacob Bragham, her partner in life and work, thinks outside the box of the twenty-first century urban zone, too. Kris and Jacob dream of the Main Street of the future, where they will work downstairs in their storefront and live upstairs, surrounded by their children. They share separate dreams as artisans—Jacob is a cabinetmaker, draftsman and interior designer—but they share the same dream of where and how they want to live and work.

And it could happen. In a city like San Francisco, in neighborhoods like the Outer Mission which are being revitalized with mixed-use buildings, in buildings mixing commercial spaces with live/work or just live, their dream is tangible. San Francisco is one of a few cities which encourage artists through such unique opportunities. Work/live is an old idea, but twentieth-century urban zoning has discouraged mixed use. In 2004, the *San*

Francisco Chronicle reported, “Nationwide 10 percent of all families own or manage their own business...one-third of small family businesses operate from home. In San Francisco, where there’s a preponderance of knowledge workers employed as contractors, freelancers and creative entrepreneurs...as well as immigrant families who have a mom-and-pop-and-kids business, the number of home-based workers may be much higher.”

Kris and Jacob began working in togetherness five years ago, when they met outside a club and recognized in each other’s eyes a common dream. Call it love at first sight. Call it destiny. When you fall in love, all your saved-up wishes start pouring out.

They dated for three years, moved from roommate situations and in together, and were married two years ago. They found their loft through a friend who lives down the hall, and over coffee one day, they met the owner. They were interviewed, their portfolios reviewed, and they received over a third of their rent discounted in exchange for future trade on Kris’s business, Kris Nations’ Jewels, and Jacob’s talent for rehabbing kitchens. Their landlord quickly became their patron.

Kris moved from a 9-5 job in Web design to launching her own jewelry business in only one year. Her sister Kim is her business partner but also makes the stained glass that Jacob uses in his cabinets. She and Kim grew up going to art shows with their mother, who is an oil painter. From their parents they learned the business of selling at art shows, and their family enterprise is no subject of sitcom dysfunction. “I trust Kim on so many levels. We can make decisions so quickly,” she says. Mom will move to San Francisco from their

hometown of El Paso, Texas, in a few years, and so, as Kim says, “Yeah, San Francisco is home.”

Kris Nations Jewels has been featured on Oprah and The View, so she doesn’t worry about imitators. “A lot of scouts look for emerging designers and knock them off. Someone stole one of my rings at a wholesale show, but no one does what I do, and I can’t get crazy about it. That is what fashion is about. Just try to be original.” Kris and Jacob are completely self-taught—she creates her pieces out of precious metals and semi-precious stones like apple coral at a workbench that was a wedding present and a drill press her father gave her. They love coffee table books, too, and not just because of the *Seinfeld* episode where Kramer takes his onto *Regis and Kathie Lee*. Kris keeps her own books and runs around to boutiques in the city during the day. She works until it’s time for sleep, and for another dream to replenish her imagination. But when tomorrow begins for Kris and for Jacob, the dreams they share never sleeps.



KRIS NATIONS FEELS AT HOME WITH SEMI-PRECIOUS STONES.



WORK/LIVE IS AN OLD IDEA, BUT TWENTIETH-CENTURY URBAN ZONING DISCOURAGED MIXED USE.





OPEN SPACES WORK FOR KRIS AND JACOB: FOR PARTIES, TWO BUSINESSES, OR A QUICK SNACK.

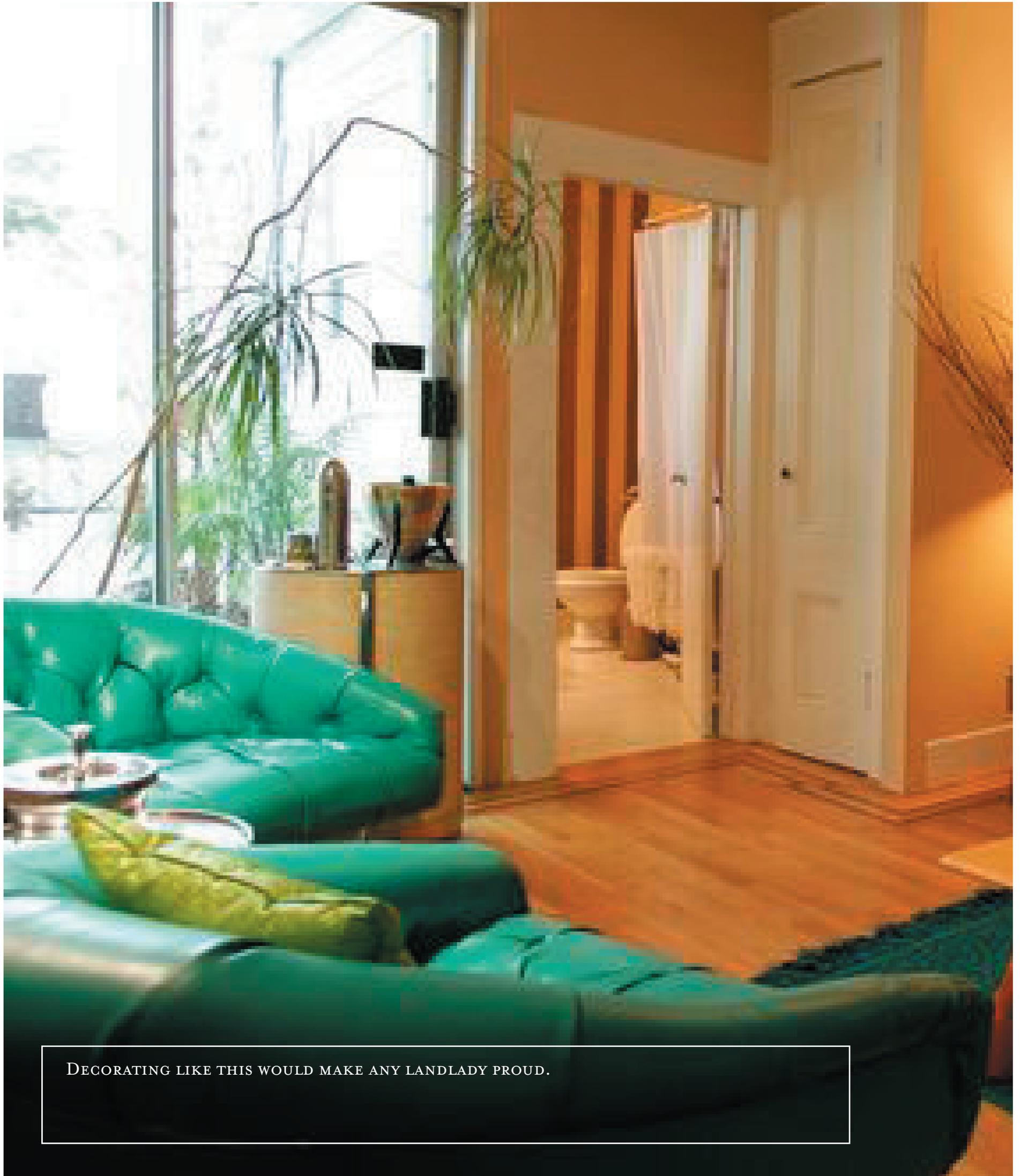
Daritha, My Landlady and Me



WE RENT brings you an up-close-and-personal view of the *Vanity Fair*, here is how a member of the WE RENT community made the journey for WE RENT.

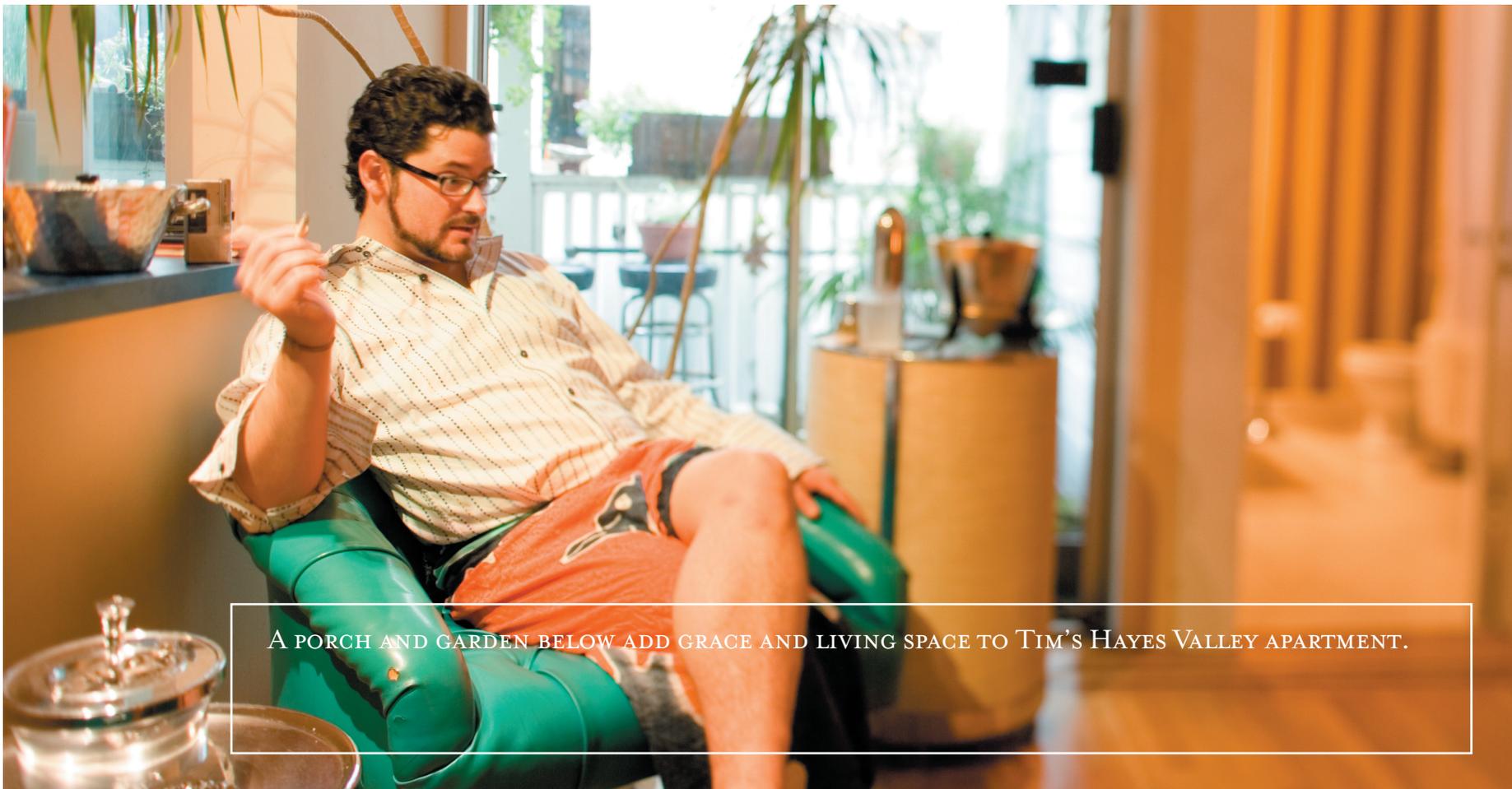


and-personal interview with a soon-or-ne'er-to-be-famous San Franciscan. Á la
of not the upper class but the ephemeral outer class of San Francisco parodies



DECORATING LIKE THIS WOULD MAKE ANY LANDLADY PROUD.





A PORCH AND GARDEN BELOW ADD GRACE AND LIVING SPACE TO TIM'S HAYES VALLEY APARTMENT.

TIM HEGEMAN: BIG-HEARTED BOY IN THE MEAN CITY

WE RENT: Tim, how did it all start?

TIM: It all started when I was a hopeless romantic working for Marvel Comics in New York City. I had to choose between Grace, my boss, who got hit upside the head at a Penguin game with a hockey puck, and the man I love. So I was earning slave wages—I'll put my jade necklace on later, my sarong now. My mother was a nutcase, I know, a gay man with a crazy mother, surprise, surprise, and it was the end of the boom, I had never been in California, and I was presenting to the head of ABC-TV and the producer of *Rain Man!* That's when I worked at FamilyRoom.com. Ugh. No doubt. Anyway,

the way I met my landlady, can you spell "dotcom?" You could not get an apartment in San Francisco for love or money five years ago. Then she moved to Marin, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and now she lives in Washington. She's more than my friend. She's my landlady. She wanted to watch my



gay porn, me and Andrew having sex. I said, no doubt. So I had to choose between love and dotcoms.

TIM ON HIS CRIB

WE RENT: Tim, why don't you tell us about your Hayes Valley apartment?

TIM: Built in 1904, this apartment survived two earthquakes. Then the first whites moved to Hayes Valley, Irish domestic servants who worked in Pacific Heights. They said, "I don't have servants, I have sons." So you know, then the artists came. Then the artists had lawyer girlfriends. Now it's \$6 milk and \$500 shoes on Hayes. And my rent is \$1600, in case you were going to ask.

Once upon a time, Tim used to date girls, too. Do I look gay enough yet?

TIM ON FENG SHUI

WE RENT: Tim, what is all the hullabaloo about *feng shui*?

TIM: Feng shui starts in the oven. Your hearth has to be clean all the time. Earth, wind, fire, water, and money, because on our transitory journey through life right now, we need money. Touch the penny in the frog's mouth, and money will rain down on you like shit.

That's where I had my hot tub till my boyfriend joined the gay rugby team. When he left, his lovely rugby friends came over and dug up the flowers from the garden in the wake of the divorce. These are the flowers I threw at him yesterday when he came over to return my top hat. It's all about keeping your life in balance and paying homage to the Universe.



Don't have anything under your bed, ever. That means you're doing business in your bedroom. This is a tablecloth. I usually hang my sarong up in here. How much would you give me for this dress from Guatemala?

TIM ON THE JOURNEY THAT IS SAN FRANCISCO

WE RENT: Where are you on your personal journey? Are you in transition?

TIM: Let's transition into the bedroom.

TIM ON BEING ALL THAT AND FROM THE MIDWEST

WE RENT: What is your full name?

TIM: John Timothy Xavier (I was a Catholic for a while, too) Hegeman

WE RENT: What celebrity from the Midwest have you played football with?

TIM: John Cougar Mellencamp

WE RENT: What turns you on the most?

TIM: Gingham.

WE RENT: What is your current career?

TIM: I don't have one.

WE RENT: What was your previous career?

TIM: I don't recall.

WE RENT: What is your next career?

TIM: Real estate mogul.

WE RENT: What is your philosophy of life?

TIM: The opposite of my philosophy of death.

WE RENT: What is your solution to people from Marin?

TIM: Make them wear glow-in-the-dark dog collars when they come to the city and charge

admission at the Golden Gate Bridge.

WE RENT: What do you eat for breakfast?

TIM: Sherry, coffee, make-up, and cigarettes.

WE RENT: What does your favorite T-shirt say?

TIM: It's a tie between the one that says: "We're all porn stars" and my undershirt that says, "I'm not an Intellectual" on the front, and "I'm a Genius" on the back.

TIM ON SAN FRANCISCO

WE RENT: What is your opinion of San Francisco culture?

TIM: At a party, people ask you to remove your shoes. They want you to shoot heroin between your toes, mind you, and take 15 Es, and what do they do when you light up a cigarette? People look at you like you're a fucking mass murderer!

TIM ON IOWA

WE RENT: Tell us about Midwestern culture.

TIM: Ames, Iowa, is fun as hell. Ames is wild. I spent a three-day weekend in Ames, Iowa, that changed my life forever. I say let the Amana Tribe make Amana Radaranges because it's a helluva lot better than gambling and hookers. But I'm not judging anyone.

TIM ON OH, WE WERE TALKING ABOUT TRANSITIONS

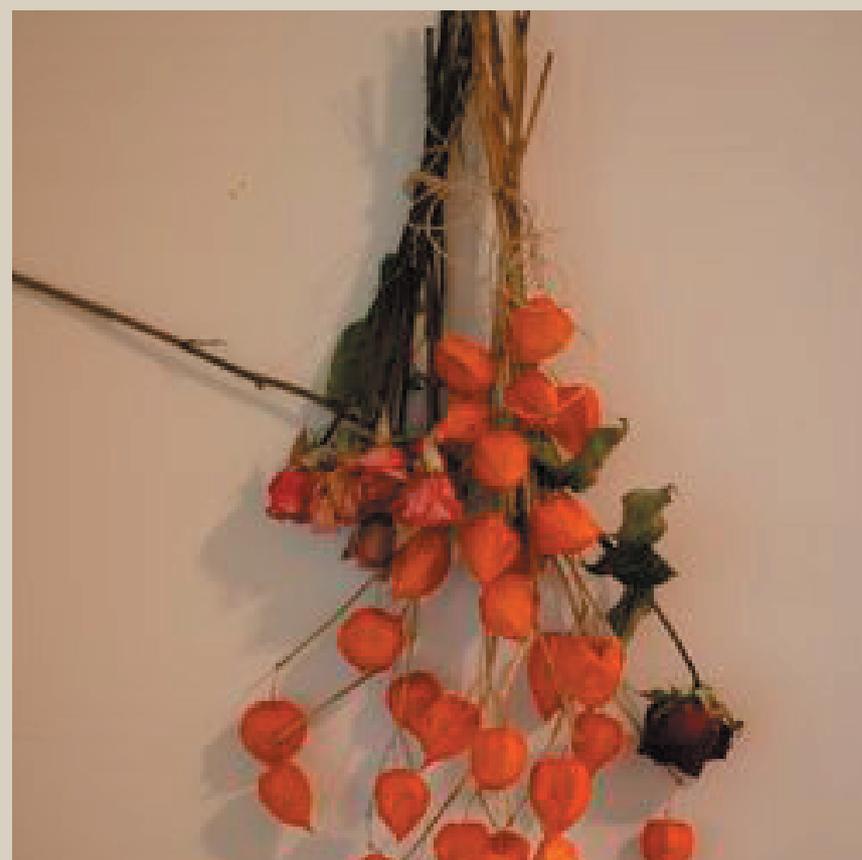
WE RENT: Could you finish explaining about your journey, and the Zen or Tao, if you will, of San Francisco?

TIM: My favorite drink is vodka and soda water with a splash of cranberry juice for your liver. Cranberry is also for scurvy.

BUILT IN 1904, THIS APARTMENT SURVIVED TWO EARTHQUAKES. THEN THE FIRST WHITES MOVED TO HAYES VALLEY, IRISH DOMESTIC SERVANTS WHO WORKED IN PACIFIC HEIGHTS. THEY SAID, I DON'T HAVE SERVANTS, I HAVE SONS. SO YOU KNOW, THEN THE ARTISTS CAME. THEN THE ARTISTS HAD LAWYER GIRLFRIENDS. NOW IT'S \$6 MILK AND \$500 SHOES ON HAYES. AND MY RENT IS \$1600, IN CASE YOU WERE GOING TO ASK.

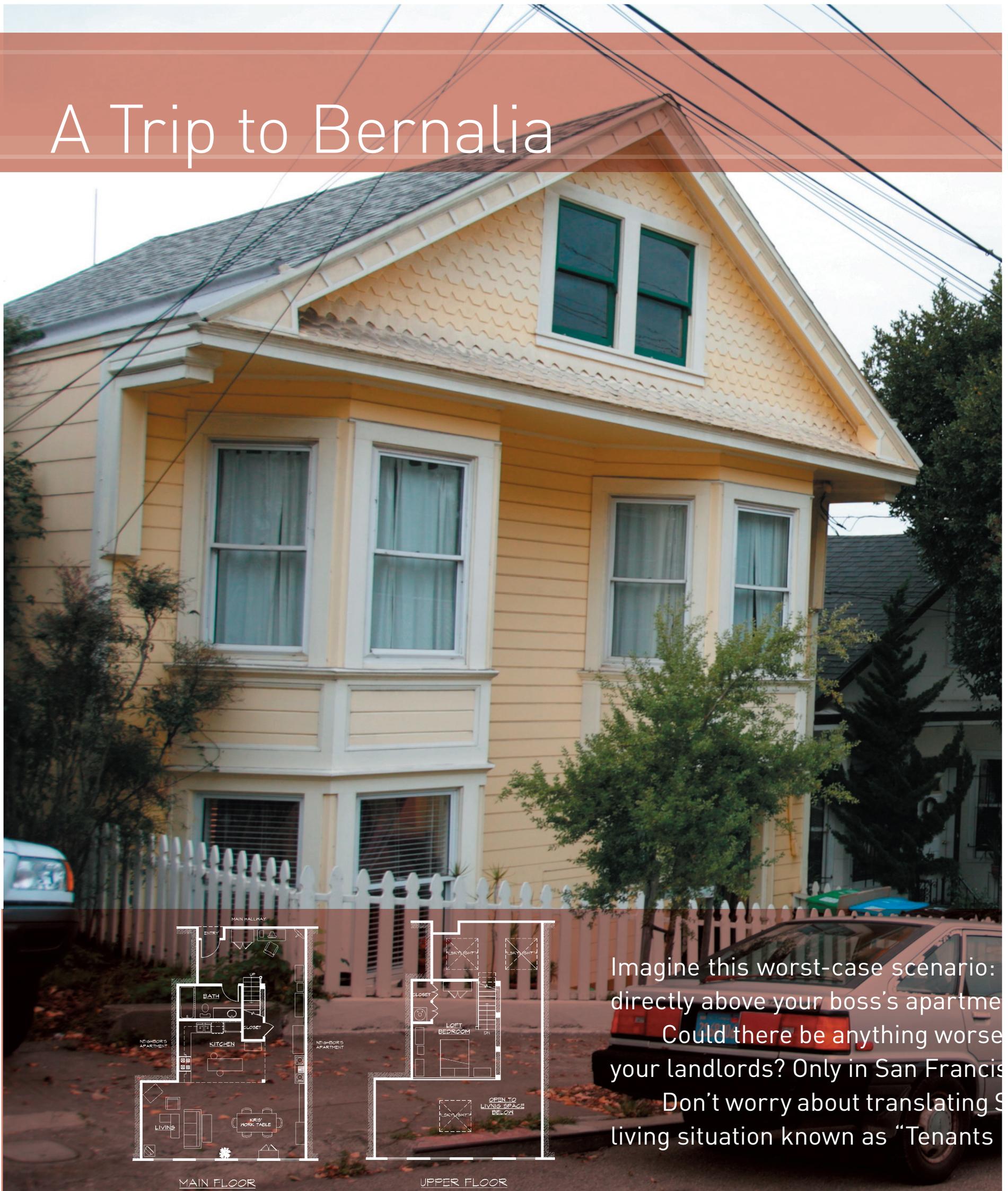


TIM HEGEMAN ADORNS THE MORNING ON IVY STREET WITH FRENCH TULIPS AND *CAFÉ AU LAIT*.

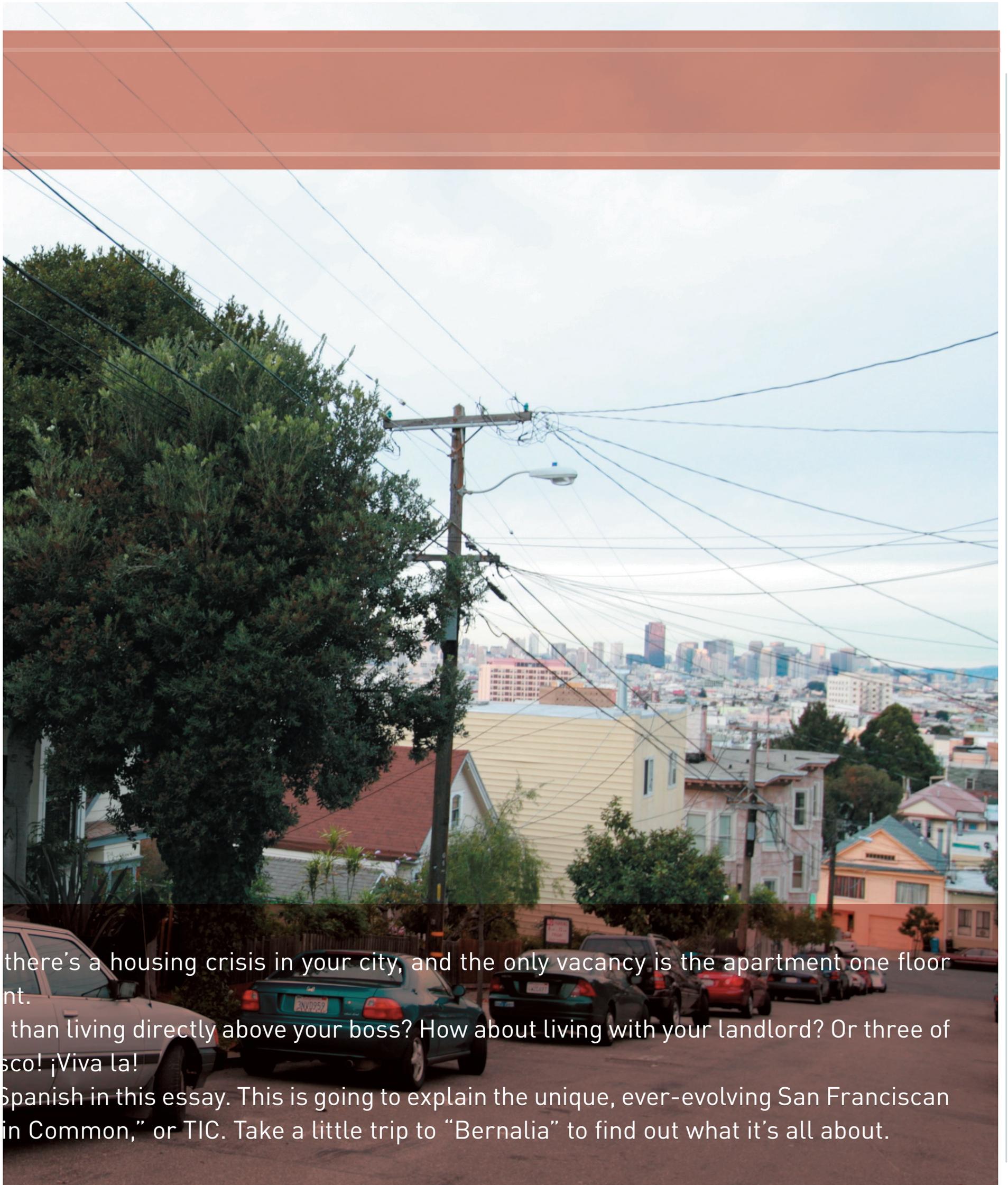




A Trip to Bernalia



Imagine this worst-case scenario:
directly above your boss's apartment.
Could there be anything worse
your landlords? Only in San Francisco.
Don't worry about translating S
living situation known as "Tenants



there's a housing crisis in your city, and the only vacancy is the apartment one floor

than living directly above your boss? How about living with your landlord? Or three of

sco! ¡Viva la! Spanish in this essay. This is going to explain the unique, ever-evolving San Franciscan

in Common," or TIC. Take a little trip to "Bernalia" to find out what it's all about.



LANDLORDS AND TENANTS ENJOY BEING ROOMMATES IN THE GLADYS STREET COMMUNITY.



Bernal Heights looks like a hillbilly town of cottages scattered around Bernal Hill, which is a natural refuge for flora and fauna. A neighborhood that grew out of a 4,500-acre land grant from one of the original Spanish explorers, De Anza, in 1775, it was a squatter's paradise, then an outright ethnic enclave when it became part of the city in 1885, when Irish, Scottish, and Scandinavians didn't own travel agencies in the Outer Richmond district and owned dairy and cattle farms. Today, if you meander through Bernalia, you'll think that you're lost on Sesame Street: the residents are happy, friendly, proud, and decorative. In fact, the residents of an Edwardian two-flat on Gladys Street built in 1909, which retains all of its original moldings and gas light fixtures, interestingly watch their neighbors stage dramas using mannequins. You might think that you've left the planet when you arrive at this house, but what you discover here is truly one of the finest gifts—some say a holdover from the 1960s—that San Francisco has to offer, community living.

Jennifer Mayer, who works for the federal government, John Lewis, and Shirin Leclere found that their own kind of squatting on 2,400 square feet of property could be turned into their dream of ownership. The three former roommates converted their status as renters into status as landlords and now rent rooms to Ruby Pap, who pays Jennifer Mayer \$720 a month for her room and use of the shared kitchen,

and, in turn, helps Jennifer make her \$1800 monthly mortgage payment. John and Shirin, friends since college, own the upstairs flat and rent rooms to visiting tourists, also called "hoteling;" to a doctor from the South Bay, Y Pham, for ten days per month; and to Lawson Hancock. As a result of this arrangement, Ruby Pap was free to travel to Guatemala for an international live/study experience and return, to rent her room again. On the other hand, John went so far as to rent Shirin's room unbeknownst to her until she arrived home from a business trip. So now she shares her room with Y Pham, who sleeps on the couch when she's in town, one weekend every six weeks. "Sharing your bed" has taken on new meaning.

Are you imagining this "Trip to Bernalia" to be rather trippy? Three landlords and six renters under one roof? Do they use a calendar? Yes, John and Ruby do mark on a calendar when

they are "in" and "out." Do they have their own Web site? Yes, the house on Gladys Street does hang a map of the neighborhood with a tiny car magnet that designates where community cars have been parked so that they can be found or driven or moved to avoid tickets on street-cleaning days. The house on Gladys Street has used bed charts and bathroom rules: nothing may be placed on the counters, and no one stays in the bathroom for more than an hour.

Sound confusing? Perhaps, but sometimes out of chaos comes order. Sometimes diversity breeds unity. John and Shirin have always enjoyed having a lot of people around. When John lived in New York City, he lived in seventeen apartments, so he is used to change and transient roommates. What has arisen inside this TIC is a community. Once they realized they weren't spending much time with each other, they began having Sunday afternoon "Gladys Eats" and Saturday night outings together. The house on Gladys Street also sends out their own holiday card to friends and family. And they parent a community cat, Oscar. They even joke about a Generation Gap in their home: 24-year-old Ruby thought forty-something Shirin's vintage martini shaker was "so Brat Pack," not "so Rat Pack."

Do they all hold hands and whistle on their way to work in the morning? Building the house of Gladys Street hasn't been as easy as it looks. The work Jennifer, John, and Shirin have done on the house has been sizeable. They refinished the floors, and

John remodeled the kitchen and bathrooms. TIC may seem like the road not taken to home ownership. If you follow the three landlords down this road, they are taking the next step, thanks to a recent development in the city that allows TICs to be converted into condominiums. TIC is part of Mayor Gavin Newsom's dream to bring more affordable housing to San Francisco. Is it more of a struggle than saving to buy a single-family dwelling? Or less? For people used to renting and diverse roommates as those in the Gladys Street House are, it is a natural transition. John, Shirin, and Jennifer are three friends who want the best of renting and owning. While it fosters community, it also offers a young professional like Dr. Y Pham the cultural benefits of San Francisco on the weekends.

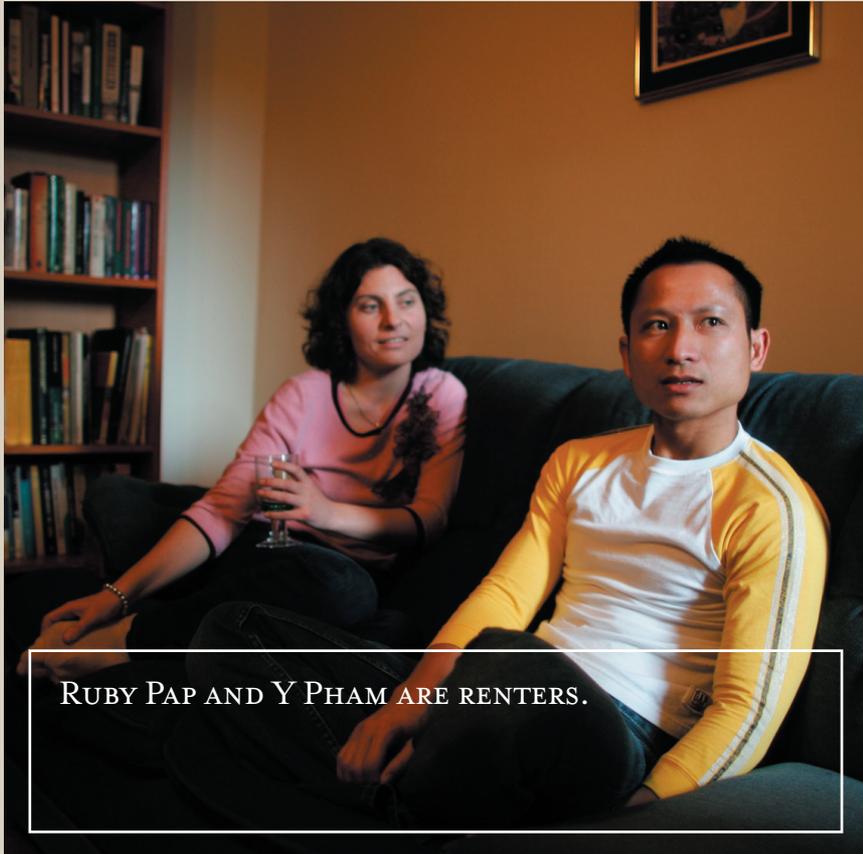
The TIC on Gladys Street is both an investment and a renter's option—if you don't mind a crowd. Privacy hasn't been a problem for the nine living on Gladys Street; each respects the other's need for silence. Solitude within a community: Is this the ideal that communes of the 1960s sought? Someone once said, "Friends are people you can be quiet with," and the silent poetry that this community has created is simply called friendship.



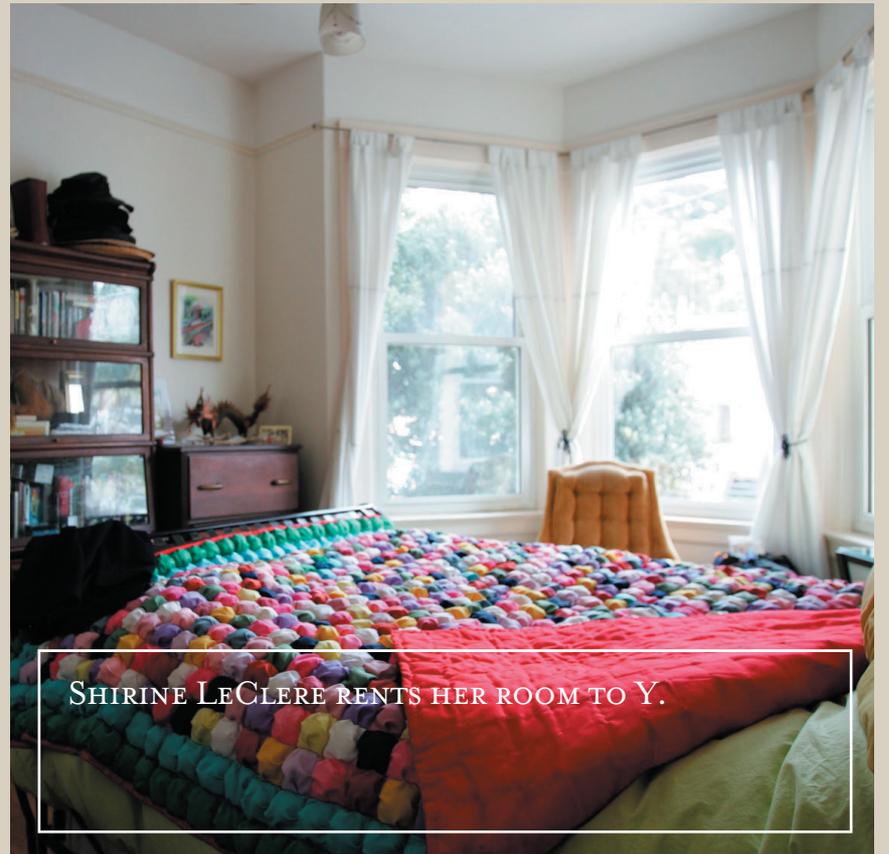


RUBY PAP IS AN ON-AGAIN, OFF-AGAIN RENTER IN THE GLADY STREET TIC.

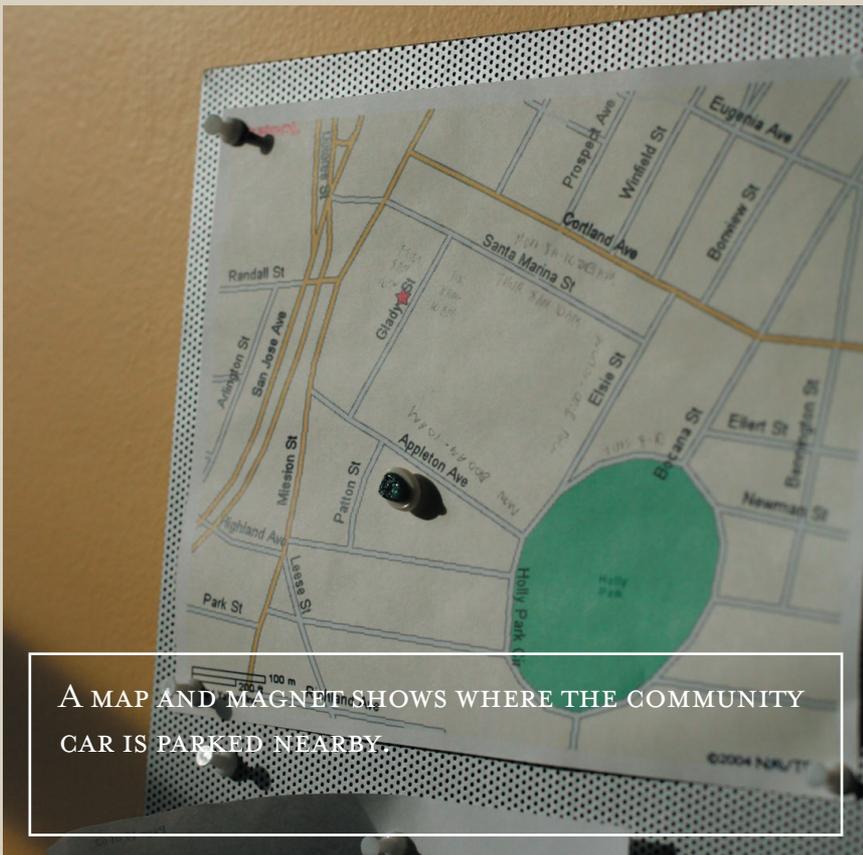
THE TIC ON GLADYS STREET IS BOTH AN INVESTMENT AND A RENTER'S OPTION—IF YOU DON'T MIND A CROWD. PRIVACY HASN'T BEEN A PROBLEM FOR THE NINE LIVING ON GLADYS STREET; EACH RESPECTS THE OTHER'S NEED FOR SILENCE.



RUBY PAP AND Y PHAM ARE RENTERS.



SHIRINE LECLERE RENTS HER ROOM TO Y.



A MAP AND MAGNET SHOWS WHERE THE COMMUNITY CAR IS PARKED NEARBY.

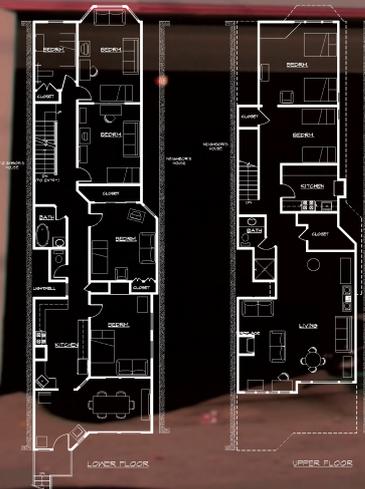


SHIRINE AND RUBY DON'T KNOW WHOSE TURN IT IS TO MOVE THE CAR.

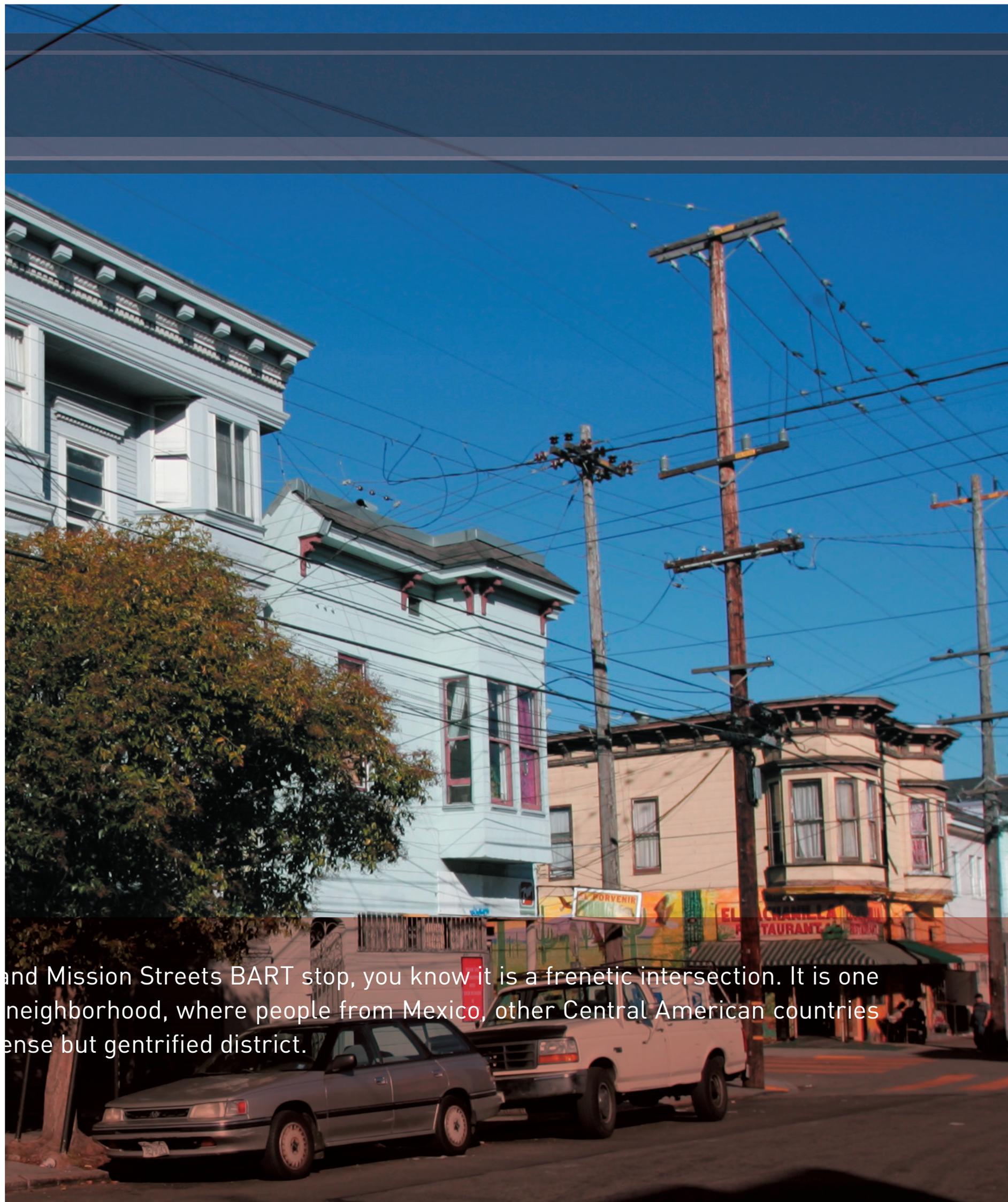


Y PHAM IS A PHYSICIAN WHO WORKS IN THE SOUTH BAY BY DAY AND ENJOYS THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA ON WEEKENDS.

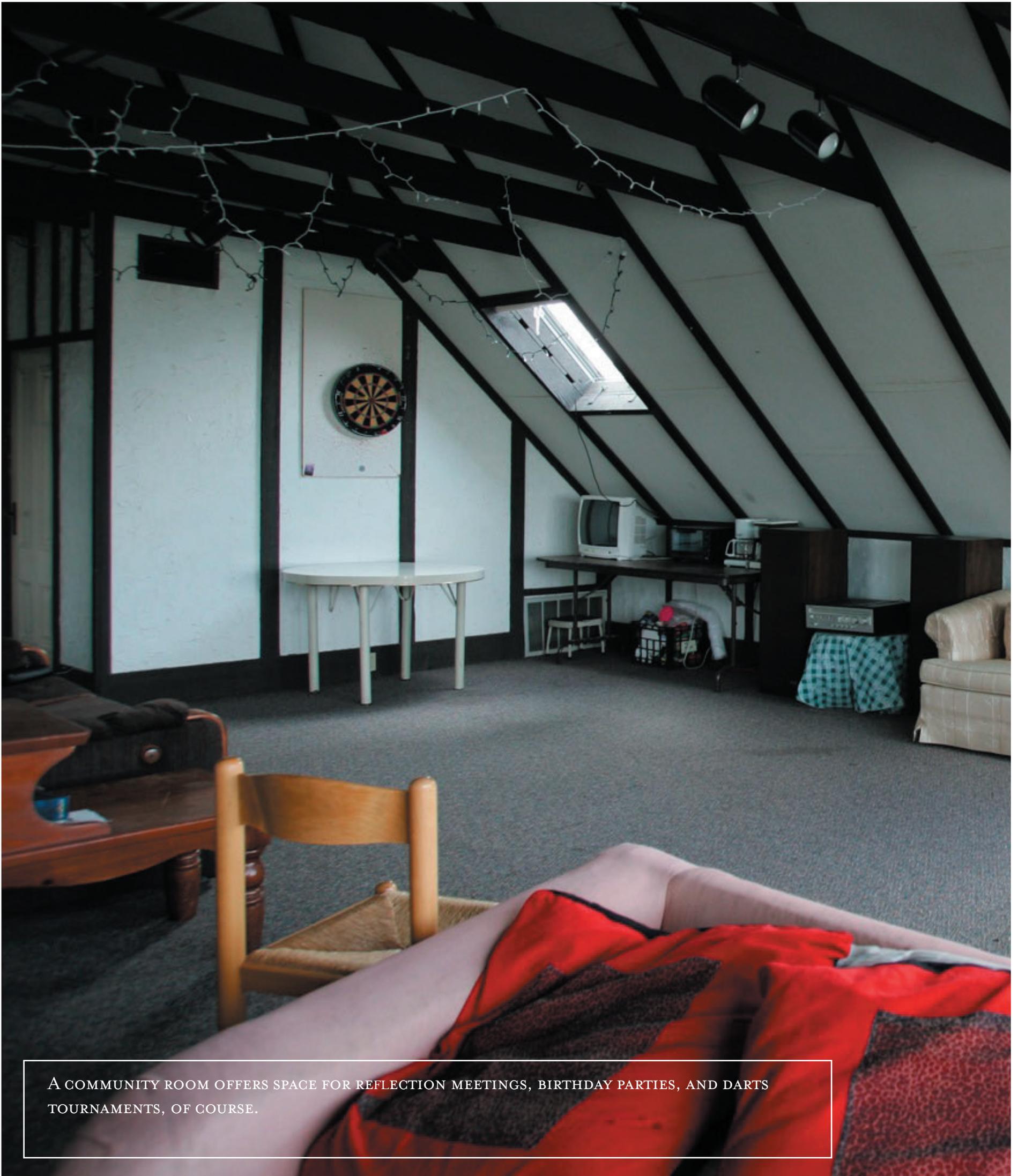
Inner Change



If you are familiar with the Sixteenth and Mission area, you know it's one of the hubs in San Francisco's Latino and South America converge in this de



and Mission Streets BART stop, you know it is a frenetic intersection. It is one neighborhood, where people from Mexico, other Central American countries sense but gentrified district.



A COMMUNITY ROOM OFFERS SPACE FOR REFLECTION MEETINGS, BIRTHDAY PARTIES, AND DARTS TOURNAMENTS, OF COURSE.



Sixteenth and Mission is where both Fernando Soto, 18, from Honduras, and Enrique Rosales, 19, from El Salvador, were arrested selling drugs after they lost their jobs in their native countries; there few opportunities exist in often unstable economies. Not far from Sixteenth and Mission is the city's Juvenile Detention Center, and Fernando spent six months there; Enrique, 40 days. There they met Jenny Bacon. Jenny and her husband Nate run the San Dimas Program, the local branch of the international Inner Change Program, which attempts to transform youth in detention across the world. Nate and Jenny not only have visited and coordinated Catholic Masses and activities within the youth detention system in San Francisco for 12 years, but they and their two children also live with the young men who have come in and out of their lives over the past decade. They even adopted one as a son, and he, now

working, is married with a wife and family of his own. The local justice system knows and respects the Bacons for their success and dedication, for they are working with the Latino population, having the highest incarceration rate in California. In Fernando, the couple saw a bright young man with an accounting degree; in Enrique, they saw gentleness. "We meet these boys in juvie, we talk and pray about what we are supposed to do," Jenny says. Then they decide whether or not to admit them into the halfway house on 21st Street. As a non-profit organization with a special rent agreement, Inner Change is able to rent rooms to the youth for \$200 a month.

When they found Rene Enriques, 19, however, they deliberated. His tag was "Little Shadow," and he had participated in 20 drive-bys by the time he was twelve.

"I used to be evil," he says.

"They give you your sentence by how many you bullets shot." So he was sentenced to five years in CYA in Los Angeles. His mother moved to San Francisco to transfer him into a new system, to eventually work for his release. Today, Rene encourages kids in his neighborhood to leave gang culture and discover their dreams. He desires to operate his own recording studio someday.

Fernando, a parking lot attendant at a neighborhood church on Sundays and a cashier during the week, studies English at City College on the Mission Campus. The jobs each of these young men have in the U.S. allow them to support their uneducated parents and brothers and sisters in Central America. Enrique, who works at In-N-Out Burger, hopes to work with airplanes someday. He sends part of his paycheck to El Salvador and "tries to walk the path of Jesus, humility. It is hard to give up pride," he

says. Through their community meetings and weekend trips, the boys learn to live together in a community, to share their struggles, to change through prayer and their relationships in their home and with Jesus Christ. It is difficult with crack and enemy gangs around the corner, but in San Dimas, they have been given a chance to truly live like brothers. With government cooperating in reducing its rent, Inner Change has taken root and bloomed in the Mission.





RENE ENRIQUES SAYS HE "USED TO BE EVIL," TODAY HE WORKS TO KEEP YOUTH OUT OF GANG CULTURE.

AS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION WITH A SPECIAL RENT AGREEMENT, INNER CHANGE IS ABLE TO RENT ROOMS TO THE YOUTH FOR \$200 A MONTH.



THE RESIDENTS PAINT AND RENOVATE THE HOUSE AS WELL AS SHARE ALL HOUSEWORK.



ENRIQUE, RENE, FERNANDO AND JENNY BACON MAKE INNER CHANGES EVERY DAY.



FERNANDO SOTO STUDIES ENGLISH AT CITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO AND WORKS DURING THE DAY, BUT HE LIKES HANGING OUT WITH "HIS BROTHERS" JUST AS MUCH.