Like all stories, they have a beginning, middle, and end. But this story is just a little different. Imagine a tree and looking at the tree you wonder how this tree became so big and spread out. Well it’s pretty obvious that the tree came from the roots of the tree. The roots of my family or “my tree” are my parents. My parents endured many hardships coming to this country; through sleepless nights, long separations, and much more, they eventually came here in America. Through my parents’ experiences coming here to America, summarizes our family’s life story.

My parents were both born in Romania in 1966; my dad from Arad, Romania and my mom from Timisoara, Romania. They both went to the same church and were part of the same friend group, so it was pretty obvious how they met. They wanted to get married but at the same time they knew they wanted to have their futures in America. They heard that America was the dream and that everyone there were blessed beyond measure. They both had their own ways into getting to America, but their plans couldn’t include both of them, together, making it. So my parents said that they were gonna go their separate ways into America and if it’s God’s will for them to get married, they will meet again in America. My mom left first and as the months went by, my dad took off as well.

Now the real story is the journey of how they got there. My mom is a 5’2, small, petite, little woman and the stories she tells me of her journey to America blows my mind of how she made it. My mom knew she had someone to fall on in America because her sister, Mariana, went there two years before and had already established herself. So my mom, and a few of her siblings, some relatives, and her parents set their course to Oregon, where Mariana lived. My mom and her family tried to cross the border legally, but they didn’t let them pass so the next option was to go illegally. Unfortunately, that didn’t work as well, so they were sent to jail. Yes, my mom went to jail. My mom and her other sister, Magdalen, spent 26 days in the women’s jail and my mom’s two brothers spent a month and a half in the guy’s jail, where they were beaten. Her parents were sent home as well as the relatives due to their old age. Once they all got out, the family tried again, but this time less people. Long story short, they passed the border, got their papers ready and before they knew it, they were in the Oregon airport, where Mariana had been waiting for them. Mariana got all of them settled on their feet and their lives in America officially started.

My dad had it a little easier than my mom. At age 18 in Romania, all the guys were sent to the army for 9 months. When my dad got out he had all his papers necessary to leave the country. So he packed his bags, said his goodbyes, and left to the border. The difference between my parents was my mom left with her family; my dad left his family. After much contention and resistance at the border, they finally let my dad pass through. So my dad left with his bags and
a little bit of shame for leaving his parents and his brother back home. My dad obviously set his course to Oregon, where my mom and her family was. A couple months later in June, 1990, my parents were married and within a year; my dad making $6.50 an hour, bought his first house. A couple months after that, my oldest sister was born and the rest is history.

My parents had separate journeys, but they both ended it together. It was the beginning of their journey’s end. So you ask how does this connect to your family? My parents journeys made up our family's story. Our family tree’s roots comes from Romania and our tree has expanded in so many ways. My parents had eleven kids, most of which are moved out. Three of them are married and my parents are now even grandparents. Our parents taught us the Romanian customs and the idea of what a true Christian is. My parents, the roots of our tree, made our family into a great big living tree. We had our ups and downs, but our family wouldn’t be the same without the amazing journeys my parents went through, coming to America. This is it; my family’s life story.