



Homebody

By Rhonda Fox-Waltz

I am a homebody. My life is housed in all the places I've inhabited since my earliest memory.

Childhood recalls Saturday mornings alone as I listened to records, sang along, and danced to my self-made music. One fateful Thanksgiving, home from college, my Dad and my boyfriend Kevin talked in the basement. Afterwards, Kevin fell to one knee to ask for my hand as he held out the ring he'd paid for by selling his motorcycle.

We started our married home life in a series of rental apartments, remembered mostly for shag carpets, cinder-block walls, minor floods, and pesky pests. The first place we owned was a mobile home we bought in Memphis, Tennessee, and then moved to Goodlettsville as Kevin began medical school. With the addition of two cats, I began the lessons in care-giving and care-taking that frame my life to this day.

Kevin's professional journey led us to Gainesville, FL where we rented a house and I learned about Florida rooms, ceiling fans, wood floors, and the cost of filling a home first with necessities, then with craft show art, and finally, our Gator babies, Zach and Zoë.

With our children came a change in priorities and our home now needed a safe neighborhood, playmates, nearby parks. Our home space soon filled with toys, laundry, boo-boos and books, the sounds of animated movies, the colors of Sesame Street, and the familiar swing set in a backyard with a fence.

Our next place in Springfield, Illinois, was on the lake. I rented a piano and played music for the first time since high school. It was a balm, as was our yard. One of the house's previous owners had been a gardener and throughout our year there we were blessed with unexpected flowers at every season, and our lives bloomed.

In Indianapolis we carved pumpkins, built snowmen, survived illness and 'nose-and-toes' discipline, and travelled while grandparents watched our children. The household grew this time with original art, furniture, and travel souvenirs. Birthday parties, wedding and baby showers, neighborhood parades and Christmas-time punctuated daily life and prompted a momentous decision to build our own house.

It is from this house that I reflect on all the places, experiences, and memories that were built in to making it a welcoming place for myself and all I love. I think of my original home, the one that's come with me to all the places in which I've dwelt—my own body—and I am grateful. I am grateful that my home is here in a city that embraces its spirit and place and that honors it each year with different themes that reflect the times in which we live, the experiences we share, the values we strive to live by, and explores divergent, vibrant affirmations that we are, as one body, at home here.