Journal of the American Academy of Psychotherapists

VOICES

VOL 55
NO 3
2019
WINTER

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF PSYCHOTHERAPY

The Geometry of Place

the Tangled Roots of Home

Founded in 1964 by John Warkentin, PhD, MD and Thomas Leland, MD

Voices: *Journal of the American Academy of Psychotherapists*

VOICES: THE ART AND SCIENCE OF PSYCHOTHERAPY (ISSN 0042-8272) is published by the American Academy of Psychotherapists, 230 Washington Ave Ext , Suite 101 / Albany, NY 12203.

Subscription prices for one year (three issues): $65 for individuals PDF only; $85 for individuals PDF & print copy; $249 for institutions. Orders by mail payable by check: 230 Washington Ave Ext, Suite 101 / Albany, NY 12203. Orders by MasterCard or Visa: call (518) 240-1178 or fax (518) 463-8656. Payments must be made in U.S. dollars through a U.S. bank made payable to *AAP Voices.* Some back volumes may be available from the *Voices* Business Office.

Change of Address: Please inform publisher as soon as a change to your email address is made. Send change of email address to aap@caphill.com.▼

Journal of The American Academy of Psychotherapists

VOICES

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF PSYCHOTHERAPY

We all carry (nostalgia) for a lost home. *That lost home is ourselves.* How do we ever make it back there? Paradoxically, we can only make it back home to ourselves by going forward into the unknown, scary possibilities of a risky, more fully lived journey.... Our histories embody a paradox that humming beneath all of our lives is a strange rhythm of *exile* and *homecoming*.

—James Hollis, *What Matters Most*

Journal of the American Academy of Psychotherapists

VOICES

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF PSYCHOTHERAPY

The Geometry of Place, the Tangled Roots of Home Winter 2019: Volume 55, Number 3

Cover:
Gone. Digital Photo, 2018
David Pellegrini

Published three times per year.
Cover Design: Mary de Wit
Design and Production by
Mary de Wit | in2Wit®, llc
AAP Web Site:
www.aapweb.com

David Pellegrini

David Pellegrini, PhD, is a former tenured associate professor of psychology at Catholic University, where his research focused on psychological risk and resilience over the lifespan. He is currently in private practice in Washington, DC, specializing in individual and group psychotherapy. He also consults to CEOs and family business owners. In addition, he is an accomplished oil painter and fine art photographer. Recently he has returned to his original creative passion, writing poetry.
dspellegrini@gmail.com

Editorial

Nostos

Home is the place from which I have come and to which I return. Home is where I always am. All circumstances call me to new steps in the dance. All sickness points me there. All sickness is home sickness. All healing is homecoming. Sharing moves me homeward.

—Dianne M. Connelly
All Sickness is Home Sickness

A common feature in ancient Greek literature is the theme of *nostos*, in which a hero engages in an epic journey—typically by sea—in a valiant effort to return home. The literary epitome of *nostos* is of course Odysseus, the mythical Greek king of Ithaca whose treacherous journey following the Trojan War is recounted by Homer in *The Odyssey*. Odysseus is a bit of a paradox, the wandering adventurer who perpetually longs to return home. In his alienation abroad, he suffers from what we might call *nostalgia*, a word whose derivation can be found in the Greek word *nostos*. Again, a paradox: Nostalgia is typically a melancholic longing for ephemera that never truly existed in the first place, at least as our memory informs us.

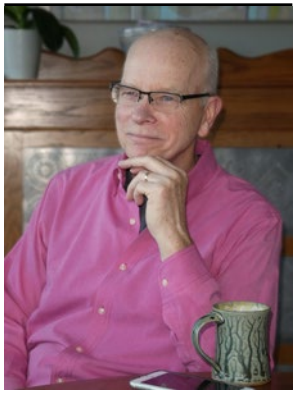
As for all of us, returning home for Odysseus is about far more than just a literal return to place. His homecoming is also significantly about the reclaiming or reintegration of his personal identity—getting to the center of what he is most deeply and authentically about—and reconciling relationships. Along the way, Odysseus operates as a shapeshifter, adopting a range of identities in order to adjust to different "homes" or landing places abroad. His sense of dislocation persists even upon arriving home, as he continues to inhabit multiple disguises. Odysseus'

final homecoming is achieved gradually, as he drops his disguises one by one and is recognized by those who know him for who he truly is. And yet, at the center of his true self, Odysseus is perhaps still unsettled. Is he warrior or peacemaker, a wanderer at temporary rest or at last a homebody?

So we must ask—is our homecoming ever complete, do we ever fully arrive? Like Odysseus, we may never fully reconcile our natural ambivalence about being known versus remaining—at least in part—unknown. We may never fully integrate the parts of ourselves that we acquire and express in our wanderings near or far from home. Perhaps, on leaving the nest the first time, we are forevermore relegated to some continuing sense of dislocation and alienation from a home that never is again as it once was. We are forever changed—and changing. Finding ourselves and finding home, then, become equivalences that remain perpetually in dynamic flux.

> I will stay with it and endure through suffering hardship, and once the heaving sea has shaken my raft to pieces, then I will swim.
>
> —Odysseus, *The Odyssey,* V, I. 363

Tom Burns



Tom Burns, PhD, is in private practice and resides in Northeast Tennessee. He's a long-time AAP member, has collaborated on *Voices* and a variety of workshops, and currently is co-chair of programs for the 2020 Institute & Conference in Memphis. He treasures friends, family, and particularly, granddaughters. His other preoccupations are poetry, current events, underperforming sports teams, and the whereabouts of his wallet.
burnsvoices@gmail.com

Entangled

privilege is an aggressive form of amnesia...
I know a fine shoe when I see one
—Elisa Gonzalez, *Failed Essay on Privilege*

Disentangling from home, leaving the familiar landscape, is arduous work. The articles contained in this volume are testaments to that and each remembrance of an author's origins an essential element in any antidote to privilege. The remembering is what might allow us to see others as not unlike ourselves, that they, in some fashion, are not so foreign.

One side of my ambivalence. To this day when I mingle with the proletariat, say at Kmart, trying hard not to identify with it, I see my reflection—working class Detroit revealed in the clothing worn and the products on the shelves, even the way people hold their bodies —and I struggle with the urge to flee. To take my discounted mouthwash and run. Not proud of that, but there it is. As lawyer Clarence Darrow, a champion of labor, said, "I am a friend of the working man, and I would rather be his friend, than be one."

Another side. One morning in 1981 I found myself standing on a Capitol Hill subway platform having a full-fledged panic attack as I commuted to graduate school. I couldn't figure out what to do, which way to point my feet and walk. The geometry of the experience, the lines, planes, and angles associated with showing up for a class on child psychopathology where I was to do a presentation, seemed insoluble. I freaked out. An *imposter syndrome extraordinaire* enveloped me. Anticipating my classmates as audience—some from elite schools, some who owned horses, held season tickets, or whose parents

were comfortably Washingtonian, I felt unequal to the task of claiming my intelligence and competence, even though I was fully prepared for the presentation. So I cut class.

Later that day I met with the professor[1] and, providing only a partial reveal, I described having had a panic attack that morning. Deftly, but with care, he asked why I thought it happened at this time. He created space for me to speak to what I was shouldering—like being the first in my family to complete college or having awareness of sacrifices made by my siblings and their possible resentment. I didn't articulate all that, but what I did know about and could share, he took in with compassion and no apparent judgment. We agreed that in the next class I'd complete the presentation. The fever of the amnesiac moment on the subway platform had broken. What I carried from the past was made present, and I felt freer to move around.

Denouement. In collaborating with my guest co-editor (and the regular editor) on this issue, there's been a parallel process: daring to stand before my fellow graduate students decades ago and claiming print space here, both to remember who I am, and to allow even that I appreciate a fine shoe.

Geography is fate.

—Ralph Ellison

1 The professor was David Pellegrini, PhD.

Carla Bauer

The Shadow of Home

Carla R. Bauer, lcsw, is in private practice in Atlanta, Georgia. A second career therapist, she brings over 25 years of corporate experience, as well as an earlier journey in theological studies, to her understanding of people and their struggles. Psychoanalytically trained, she seeks to blend psychodynamic and attachment orientations with a contemporary relational presence. When she can't be on the beach, the colors of the beach are on her! As editor of *Voices*, she offers her voice to AAP.
crbauer01@bellsouth.net

Our theme, *The Geometry of Place, The Tangled Roots of Home,* explores how the physical, emotional, and psychological dimensions of place and home inform who we (and our clients) are, whether we identify with or rebel against our homes of origin, whether we stay home or travel far and wide in search of it.

When our guest editors proposed this theme, it resonated on many levels. The power of place immediately evoked that deep feeling of being home that hits me as I drive across the Atchafalaya Basin, gazing at the swamped cypress trees, entering a region that on some cellular level remains home though I haven't lived there for over 40 years. Even arriving at night, in the dark, seeing nothing but knowing what's out there, I feel it: home. But it is a complicated identification with the tangled roots of a place I could not remain, a place both home and not home, and the ever-present search for a new home upon leaving it.

When I was 6, my family moved a half-mile down the road—and a world away—when my parents restored an antebellum plantation house on the outskirts of our small bayou town in South Louisiana. I would have grown up in a fishbowl wherever we lived, born into a prominent political family in a very small town—big fish, teeny tiny pond. But people looking into this house saw mostly what they projected. To me, it was just home and from my young perspective little different from anyone else's—the antiques and chandeliers just furniture and lights, the rooms and grounds just bigger. What did I know or care of the value of such things? Or of status derived from them? But to others, those differences mattered and were the basis for myriad projections about how we lived and how I saw myself and others. Few of those fit, but they shaped my life nonetheless, the big house on the outskirts of town rooting a lifetime of being set apart, feeling "othered." It was assumed that I thought myself somehow above others, when all I ever wanted was to belong.

I left that home for college and kept right on going, ever searching for a home that

fit me, not just someone's projection of me. My family left the house during my college years, and eventually the town, freeing me (at least externally) from this gilded cage and its labels. No one in my family lives remotely like that today, least of all me. (And really I'm not sure we lived much differently from others then—just in a bigger box, with more room to be alone.) I'm more than 40 years gone from that house now, but I carry its legacy still. And home remains elusive, though I have lived in the same city for all of my adult life, much of it in the same apartment.

Attachment to place runs deep nevertheless and recycles in its essence even when far from that first home: My strongest feeling of being "home" today similarly occurs as I approach the beach, especially through the marsh with its familiar tug. You can take the girl off the bayou, but you can't take the bayou out of the girl.

This issue of *Voices* was envisioned and brought together by guest co-editors David Pellegrini and Tom Burns. In the pieces that follow, authors offer their stories of journeying from and back to home and the tangled ways they carry homes of origin along the way. David Pellegrini starts us off with his story of growing up in the intersection of Old Country and New World. Samir Patel and Anni Tuikka share their emigration stories of leaving native countries for new homes in the United States. Jonathan Farber, David Donlon, and Delia Kostner illustrate attachment to place as refuge, as the natural world weaves through their experiences of home. Penelope Norton explores home attachment in describing the loss (and recreation) of her home to a devastating fire. Lee Blackwell and Kathryn Van der Heiden write of migrant experiences of home, one across the United States, the other the world. Justin Hecht brings a humorous touch with his proposed DSM entry for Geographical Displacement Disorder—humorous but poignant, the grass being always greener.

Debbara Dingman and Bruce Ellman describe journeys from homes of origin at different ends of the socio-economic spectrum, exploring what they took with and what they left behind. Grover Criswell's commentary on Ellman's piece recognizes that similarities in internal experience can exist at both ends of that spectrum. Lyn Sommer writes of the legacy of trauma in the home, the ways in which home cannot be fully left behind. Bob and Steven Rosenblatt explore how intergenerational Holocaust trauma impacted two brothers in different yet similar ways. Kitty La Perriere also recounts the legacy of the Holocaust on her sense of home and identity, with excerpts from her recently published memoir, *Mirrored Reflections,* and Don Murphy further tempts us to a reading of the book with his enthusiastic review. Cathy Roberts' review of *Deep Roots: How Slavery Still Shapes Southern Politics* illustrates the tangled roots of place and history impacting the current political landscape. New poems from Linda Tillman and Tom Burns round out our theme, and original photographs from David Pellegrini, Lee Blackwell, and Penelope Norton further illustrate it. And as a special treat, we have an evocative photo essay from photographer Patricia Howard exploring one family's intergenerational experience of home in a single small town.

I thank our guest editors for their vision and efforts and our authors (and those whose submissions were not published, as tough choices had to be made from the abundance that this theme generated) for sharing their voices with us. If you read something in this issue that resonates, let the author know; keep voices connecting. ▼

David Pellegrini

David Pellegrini, PhD, is a former tenured associate professor of psychology at Catholic University, where his research focused on psychological risk and resilience over the lifespan. He is currently in private practice in Washington, DC, specializing in individual and group psychotherapy. He also consults to CEOs and family business owners. In addition, he is an accomplished oil painter and fine art photographer. Recently he has returned to his original creative passion, writing poetry.
dspellegrini@gmail.com

Home and Away

First divesting ourselves of worldly goods, as St. Francis teaches, in order that our souls not be distracted by gain and loss…we had then to discuss whither or where we might travel, with the second question being should we have purpose…it was by this word we were consecrated pilgrims rather than wanderers…

—Louise Gluck, *Parable*

I

Dago. WOP. Greenhorn. I heard all these slurs [1] and then some, growing up in the Mayfair section of northeastern Philadelphia.

Northeast Philly was more commonly known as "The Great Northeast," by which folks meant "White Philly," meaning Irish and German Philly, not Black Philly, Italian Philly, or Pole-town (aka Fish Town). Mayfair itself was an expansive tract of modest row houses. Each block of row houses was conjoined to a parallel row of identical houses via a shared lower alleyway. Each double block was a mini-neighborhood with its own friendship circles

1 These derogatory terms were once commonplace in the 20th century but are fortunately not widely used or recognized today. "Dago"—originally Diego—was a term originally coined by the British Navy in the 18th and 19th century to denigrate Spanish sailors. It later came to be employed to refer to anyone of Euro-Latin descent. "WOP" stood for "without papers" for immigration purposes. "Greenhorn" made reference to the "greenness" of newly arrived and as yet unassimilated immigrants. "Guinea" was most likely to arouse the ire of an immigrant Italian. It was a reference to the Guinea Coast of Africa and implied that Italians were not actually White. Of all of these, only WOP (a non-racial term) and Dago would ever be used in a light-hearted way by Italians to refer to each other.

and gatherings, most of which unfolded in the alleyway below the kitchen windows that faced down on the action for all to see—gossiping busybodies, watchful mothers, hidden peepers, and who knows who or what else were behind curtained windows. We speculated.

Those hurtful words—I heard them from boys and girls on my block. From kids whom I considered friends and kids I longed to be my friends. From threatening teenagers, defending their rule of a neighboring city block. From kids whom I disrupted from their summertime game of stoopball by merely biking by, no purpose in mind other than killing time before dinner.

Stoopball was one of many urban variants on baseball in a baseball-crazy town. It was a low-tech and simple game. The only equipment was a cheap, white rubber pimple ball, preferably one still filled with enough air to bounce. Other than that, you just needed to find a patch of curbside with a minimum of parked cars blocking the makeshift diamond. The final ingredient—neighbors willing to put up with the repetitive thump of a rubber ball ricocheting off of their concrete steps and the occasional errant pitch that crashed against their front screen door.

The narrow street served as a crimped and makeshift outfield. Occasional passing cars were for dodging or were relegated to collateral damage if their windshields or side doors inadvertently intercepted the ball in flight. Startled and angry drivers just added to the hilarity and the sport.

"Hey, interference! Do-over! That little Dago almost ran me over with his bike!"

I even heard Spic once, from an obviously confused kid who was misled by my dark summer tan. He should have said Dago. That would have covered his uncertainty.

I don't know whether my older brother heard such taunts or if he was as wounded by them if he did. Frankly, I never asked him, not wanting to reveal sensitivity. I sought his intervention only one decisive time—after a particularly merciless harassing of my 12-year-old self by 18-year-old Sean Kelly that reduced me to tears.

My football-playing 17-year-old brother was his most pumped-up self at the time and honor-bound to revenge his little brother—which he did by chasing Kelly down to his locked basement door, with me at his heels, cheering him on, along with whatever boys hanging around were thrilled by the action or spoiling to see a block bully get his comeuppance.

To Kelly's shock and dismay, my brother threw a punch at him right through a pane of basement door glass. Much blood ensued, and my brother's reputation as an avenging agent of justice was cemented. My peer status edged up a notch. Kelly never bothered me again, but the occasional epithet from other quarters continued largely unabated, though perhaps with less ferocity from those who knew the local legend of my fearless (or crazy) older brother.

II

One day my father asked me how things were going in the neighborhood. Looking back, I can only think that my brother gave him a heads-up. I kept pretty mum and mumbled some vaguely worded question about why there weren't any other Italians in Mayfair, by which I meant my one square block. Not one. Actually, to be precise, there was one other Italian kid my age on the block. Tony Crispo came round nearly every

day, calling out my name under my bedroom window, entreating me to come out to play. Unfortunately, Tony had a special knack for making himself the target of particularly stinging verbal abuse from other kids in the neighborhood. Fearful of drawing fire through association, I tended to limit my playtime with Tony and shamefully undervalued his friendship.

And there was *one* Jewish kid to befriend—Albie Frankel—who also happened to be an albino, which doubly set him apart. As with Tony, our friendship existed in relative isolation. Like me, he had a separate and co-existing world he lived in, far from Mayfair, which I glimpsed only once as the sole outsider invited to his Bar Mitzvah—the only one I attended in my youth.

While Tony and Albie pursued me for friendship, I concentrated my efforts on fitting in with the Irish posse of my dreams—Jackie Gravlin, Jackie McDevitt, Johnny Devlin. I kept my romantic sights on the Irish lasses, beginning with the tall, thin, older, and out-of-reach Mary McDevitt. Mary was a complicated case, as she was also my occasional baby-sitter. This romantic trend continued through high school, college, and beyond, with a procession that included Bridget O'Shea, Mary Farrell, Catie Hawkins, Katie O'Brien—until I finally landed a Scotch-Irish gal for my wife.

"You know," my father said, "your name means *pilgrim*. That means your forefathers came over on the Mayflower, which gave Mayfair its name. Remind those kids of that the next time they give you a hard time." Even at 12 I recognized that this was a dubious claim, since all four of my grandparents came to America straight from Italy. But maybe there were others before them...and who was I, devoid of Italian language skills, to question my father's translation of Pellegrini. It gave me some small comfort, but I kept my powder dry on that one.

Many years later, in college, I found myself hanging out on a leafy campus hillside with the most diverse group of friends I could have ever imagined—though still only one other Italian. This one was the real deal, though, straight from Rome. The subject turned to the origins of our names. "Pellegrini means pilgrim," I offered for the first time, with some confidence.

My Roman friend started laughing with the gusto I associate with a Sunday gathering of my own relatives. "What are you laughing at?" I asked. "Well," he said, "that's one way to translate it. When I finished high school, I took a year off to see what I wanted to do next. Mostly what I wanted to do was hang around the Coliseum with my buddies, ride motor scooters, pick up tourist girls, smoke cigarettes, that kind of thing. The young crowd shared the turf with the old guys—pensioners—who mocked us and taunted us in between their games of checkers and chess. 'Hey, *pellegrini*, when are you gonna settle down and get a job, you bums!' Pilgrim, sure, but also aimless wanderer, drifter..."

My father—nothing if not a man of purpose and determination—was far from amused by such dismissiveness of our family's journey when I shared this encounter. He stuck by pilgrim with the certitude of a man who was prepared to prove himself to anyone foolish enough to underestimate him.

III

Between 1900 and 1910, nearly two million immigrants came to America as part of the "Great Italian Migration," in search of jobs and a better life. The lion's share repre-

sented an exodus of unskilled workers and farmers from the poorer, lower half of Italy, unlike the skilled laborers and craftsmen from the north who crossed over in the prior century.

My father's parents came one by one from the province of Foggia, on the Adriatic. First came my grandfather, Vincenzo, who established a beachhead alongside other southern Italians in South Philadelphia. After securing employment as an apprentice hat maker, he got word that the family was sending him a bride, Madalena, whom they had selected for him. He met her boat on the designated date and, from there, they headed to church to get married. Seven children followed, with my father Alfred being the youngest.

My mother's parents came from Santa Stefano, in Calabria—the poorest region of Italy at the time. The Calabrese were notable for sticking together and resisting intrusion from outsiders. My maternal grandfather, Ralph Domanico, worked as a foreman at a lampblack factory for several years before sending for my maternal grandmother, Giulia. She made the trans-Atlantic crossing with three children in tow. Four more children followed, with my mother, Adeline (Lee), the youngest. My maternal grandparents established roots in the Tacony neighborhood, along with the majority of their regional countrymen who came to make a new life in Philadelphia.

Their house on Edmund Street had a large plot of farmable land across the street. My grandfather died during the great flu pandemic of 1918, although my grandmother held steadfast to the belief that he was poisoned for his union organizing and socialist party activities. My mother's just-older brother was also claimed during the same flu season.

A few years later, my grandmother married a distant cousin, in part for the financial help he provided. Vincenzo, whose nickname was Skippy, was well known for playing an accordion, especially upon having a few drinks. Together they farmed the land across the street for many years. They raised figs, peaches, eggplants, tomatoes, and other produce that made for a bountiful supper table. Unfortunately, Skippy died when I was an infant.

IV

Growing up, my life felt segmented—both temporally and geographically—like the caterpillars we'd search for on the azalea bushes in front of our houses, when fireflies weren't in season, to fill up our glass insect jars with the nail-hole metal tops. School owned me Monday to Friday. Saturday was the only day I had claim to as my own—assuming that I could efficiently dispatch my chores and the odd neighborhood lawn to mow or sidewalk to shovel for pocket money. And then there was summer, a bonanza of "me" time, at least until I came of age where getting a real, wage-earning job was an imperative for character-building and saving for college. But summer, winter, spring, or fall, Sundays belonged to extended family and to the old neighborhoods, rather than Mayfair.

Every Sunday after church we made the pilgrimage "home" to one of my grandparents' houses. Most aunts, uncles, and cousins convened in time for Sunday dinner. As the youngest child of two youngest children, I was surrounded by older cousins on both sides. I worshiped them and followed them around, happy to play the mascot or the fool when I wasn't being hugged, squeezed, read to, sat on, or otherwise passed around.

Sunday dinner with paternal grandparents in South Philly

My paternal grandparents' home was my favorite, in part because family attendance was the most robust. That little brownstone on Moore Street, and its surrounding streets, also had so much to explore. My grandparents spoke no English, but no English was required for an Italian to make and keep a life in South Philly.

The heart of my grandparents' house was of course the kitchen—the largest room by far. The most interesting room for me, however, was the central chamber of the house—a windowless sitting room that held the Victrola radio and record player, as well as my grandfather's small mahogany desk.

That desk, which sits today in my living room, mesmerized me when I was young. On the bottom were frosted glass doors, behind which were shelves stuffed with books and papers. On top was a drop-down desk shelf. The shelf opened with a little key to reveal tiny hide-away drawers and nooks and crannies stuffed with scratched out notes and letters from Italy that I tried fruitlessly to translate or decipher. My investigations were curtailed whenever my grandfather and uncles gathered to listen to opera, talk, and

argue while smoking their Sunday cigars.

Unlike life in Mayfair, Sundays in South Philly or Tacony afforded the opportunity to drop the mask, to let down the façade of assimilated life. I could be myself then. We all could—homemade pasta draped over every chair to dry, everyone talking at once, loud voices, sometimes angry voices followed by louder laughter, a mélange of English and Italian.

For reasons I could not understand at the time, my efforts to speak Italian were discouraged in no uncertain terms, from a very early age. In a fractured version of our family's odyssey, my grandfather's stern words were translated for me: "I didn't bring you all the way over here to speak Italian. Speak English. Fit in. Make it." My father attempted to console me. "Our Italian wouldn't serve you much anyway. We speak peasant dialect. They'd hardly understand *me* in Rome. In Florence, they'd treat me like a foreigner if I opened my mouth."

V

For the most part, back in Mayfair, no one—including my childhood friends—saw my indoor Italian life. To the best of my recollection, no friend ever met (or even knew of) my mother's mother, who lived with us from my infancy, after her husband died. She passed away in her sleep when I was in first grade. Like my paternal grandparents, she spoke almost no English, though she enjoyed watching television with me every weekday afternoon. Her favorite was the *Arthur Godfrey Variety Show*, for which she would prepare cherry Jell-O or chocolate pudding from scratch for us to enjoy, sitting wordlessly, side by side, for an hour.

Nor did anyone ever see the cooking rituals that dominated our household life on a regular basis. While Jackie Gravlin's family grilled burgers in the alley, my mother and I rolled mounds of meatballs at the kitchen table for braising on the stovetop. While they plopped packaged hotdogs into boiling water, we stuffed and pan-fried Italian sausage. There was little use for ketchup in our house—our pots were simmering homemade tomato gravy. Pasta was our staple, not potatoes. Plump eggplants were thinly sliced and fried to painstakingly assemble eggplant parmesan for our special meals. No overcooked pot roast for us.

Looking back, it was as if under the skin of our assimilating, Americanized, Mayfair life, our bones and marrow were stubbornly unassimilated, still and perhaps forever old country. That seemed especially true of my mother. When our indoor life spilled outdoors, I felt shamefully exposed, like my skin had turned translucent or peeled away to reveal what was our true greenhorn nature.

There were two recurring examples. Not long after moving "out" to Mayfair from the Italian neighborhoods of my parents' past, my mother had my father drill a hole in the concrete pad that was our share of the common alleyway. Into the hole went my mother's expandable clothes hanging pole. My mother did not believe in drying clothes in the spanking new Maytag drier in the basement. Fresh air alone restored our clothes and bed sheets to her standard of care. Thank goodness she believed in machine-washing, unlike my grandmother. Unfortunately, my mother's persistent bursitis made hanging the heavy, wet clothes a challenge. That's where I came in—or out, to be more precise—for any passersby to see and chuckle or puzzle over.

In Mayfair, the author leaning against his mother's clothes pole, with two members of his Irish posse

Nor did my mother believe in supermarkets, apparently, at least not until she surrendered to their efficiencies later in life. Instead, she was a devotee of the market and shopkeepers "up the Avenue." Since my mother never learned to drive—despite my entreaties and attempts to teach her when I came of age—I was enlisted to drag her collapsible metal shopping cart on two wheels whenever possible. A Phillies hat pulled down over my eyes at least kept me from seeing anyone who saw me as we drudged the mile or two up and back and from store to store. This vendor had the best eggs, that fish monger was the only place to get fresh flounder for Friday night dinner, oranges from that guy, eggplants and string beans from someone else. An extra few blocks was not too much to add on for fresh Roma tomatoes grown in some Paisan's hobby farm plot and fresh homemade pasta from one little old lady or another.

VI

As childhood gave way to adolescence and adolescence unfolded into young adulthood, I drifted a long way from South Philly and Tacony, perhaps further in psychological miles than my grandparents had travelled from Italy. Family gatherings diminished or were attended only by those whose identities had remained most closely tied with the old neighborhoods. My ambitions took me distances from home. Many of my relatives took note of the trajectory that was carrying me away from home, with a complex mixture of "good for you" and "who do you think *you* are—too good for us now with all your schooling?" I gradually became aware that our family's—and my own—striving to get ahead, to achieve, to "make it" had its own cost in family cohesion and my sense of belonging.

None were more direct and pointed about the cost of striving than my mother's eldest sister, Mary, who was a second mother to me. When I announced that I was off to college, she asked, "Where?" When I said Boston, she replied, "I don't understand. You're so smart. You couldn't get into *any* school in Philadelphia so you wouldn't have to leave home? I thought Temple University took *anyone*."

Four years later I announced that I was going to graduate school in Minnesota. Mary was incredulous. "Minnesota?! That's even further from home than Boston. All that schooling, and you're going in the opposite direction! You're getting stupider!" Six years later, after my mother passed away, I mentioned as casually as I could that I was moving to London for a post-doc. She responded only with stone silence.

VII

I've often wondered, over the years, what I gained and what I lost in my journey from home. I know I reaped many advantages from learning to assimilate, to fit in reasonably well like a native where I don't fundamentally belong. But more recently I have been troubled by the question of what it has cost me to *want* to—what it has cost me in terms of my own individuation, in finding and expressing my own true nature.

I no longer live in Philadelphia. I have no relatives in the city where I live now. More sadly, I have many fewer relatives left in Philadelphia. Those that do live there are dispersed rather than concentrated by neighborhood. Every few years I make a pilgrimage back to the old neighborhoods. First, Mayfair, which is still lily White from what I can tell, with tiny front lawns and well-maintained, compact houses. The hole for the laundry pole has long been patched over. I checked once.

Then, South Philly. The Italian market on 9th Street is still a market, but it's not Italian anymore. Spruced up houses intermingle with abandoned ones—boarded up, condemned, or falling down. The neighborhood is, at last, diverse—black, Hispanic, Vietnamese. The Italians, however, are scattered to the winds. The same goes for Tacony.

So where *was* home, the real home of my childhood? Where did I *feel* most at home? The complicated truth is neither and both.

While my Italian "suit" was more familiar and relaxed, it wasn't a perfect fit for me. South Philly and Tacony—warm, loving, and vibrant—each had a large piece of my heart. It was easy to stay enveloped in the traditions and culture that felt familiar deep down to my bones. At the same time, my parents' ambitions for me, and those I had for

The author (with beard) on his visit to his maternal grandmother's ancestral home, with his Great Uncle Antonio (2nd from left, back row) and Great Aunt Antoinette (2nd from left, front row), and Ottavio, his first cousin once removed (with author's hand on his shoulder)

myself, required that I leave, or be cast out, from the very beginning. Our move uptown to Mayfair made my ultimate uprooting far more bearable.

Mayfair was home enough for 17 years, despite being a round peg, square hole situation for Italians such as us. It was like a transitional object—a launching pad where I learned many field skills, a base of operations that was easy to leave in the end, without ever longing to look back.

The thread running through it—through me—was Italy of course, the old country, the heritage that helped to define my passions, my style, my value system no matter where I make home. I had been to Italy once or twice during college and graduate school—the "greatest hits" Italy—to the Roman coliseum to see where my old friend hung out with his fellow "pellegrinis," to Florence and Tuscany. But over the ensuing years I became more and more drawn to the idea of finding relatives. My father provided me with an address in the rural village his parents had left behind, along with some relatives to try to track down. He, himself, had visited some 20 years earlier, returning with some smuggled soil to make his father cry, but had had no contact since.

I flew from London, where I was living at the time, to Rome, where I took a train across the lower belt of Italy to the port city of Foggia. From there I took a bus about 50 miles northwest to the little rural village of Biccari, address in hand. To my surprise and delight, my knock was answered by my maternal grandmother's youngest brother, who still lived in the two-room house with his elderly wife and their eighth son, Ottavio. As a young child, I had heard of my grandmother's sorrow at leaving her much younger

brother behind—the only brother who refused to make the crossing.

The surprise of my arrival—and my identity—created a village uproar and a procession through the main street of the village, with the 5'2" Ottavio wrapping his arms around the shoulders of my 6'2" frame as we marched and waved to villagers and the few elderly who claimed memories of my grandmother.

That night, my great uncle and aunt insisted that I sleep in their bedroom because, as he explained, "This is the bed that your grandmother was conceived in." There was no saying no, despite my guilt at displacing the two of them. When I opened my door shortly after dawn the next morning, I found my elderly relatives curled up asleep on a blanket tossed on the concrete floor.

After painstaking attempts to communicate family news, a villager who was fluent in English showed up to translate. She explained the day's schedule to me, a round of celebratory meals at the homes of various villagers and dubiously distant relatives. Since no one was willing to offer anything as simple as breakfast or lunch, the culinary tour consisted of four "suppers," each a spread of food akin to what Sundays in South Philly tended to be. The capstone would be a trek up to the local lake for a sunset picnic with cake and grappa.

As the sun began to fade, much debate ensued about whose car or truck would transport me to the lake. Ending the debate, Ottavio asserted primacy, and we piled into the cab of his beat-up truck, along with my great uncle and great aunt. We drove the dusty, dirt farm road a few miles to a hilltop and spread out our picnic under the shade of a large oak tree. Nearby were rows of delicate olive trees, reflecting the yellow rays of the setting sun. The heat of the 90-degree day began to drain from the air, and it was almost cool under the old oak. As I sat on my blanket, the excited chatter washed over me, though I understood not a word, only the mood. Looking down on the water—a pond more than a lake—I was overwhelmed with a sense of déjà vu that brought me to tears. I had found my roots. I belonged here, I felt safe. I had never felt so enveloped, never felt such communal warmth and comfort. I dreaded going back to the chill and remoteness of London life.

Months later, when my time abroad was up, I visited my father and tried to convey this powerful feeling of déjà vu and my fantasies about a reverse exodus back to rural, southern Italy. My father began a small chuckle that rolled into a full-bellied fit of laughter. "Don't you remember all those Sundays we spent at Grandpop's house? From when you were 6 years old, every Sunday, soon after we arrived, he'd make you sit down on his lap in the front parlor of Moore Street. You would rub his scratchy beard stubble, and he'd talk to you in Italian." I vaguely remembered that. "Do you remember how you would complain to me, 'Why does Grandpop talk to me in Italian? Why won't he talk to me in English? Doesn't he know I don't understand Italian?'" I clearly remembered that.

"What the heck do you think he was talking to you about? Every Sunday, the same damn thing. He must have described that lake, those olive groves, that oak tree, and the cool of the shade in summer, maybe 100 times. He never stopped mourning the loss of that land. He always said it was the most beautiful spot on earth. Philadelphia had nothing to compare to it."

I guess I understood more than my 6-year-old self knew. And I guess my grandfather was right. ▼

Samir Patel

Samir Patel, MD, MPH, a psychiatrist with specialized training in geriatric psychiatry, has a private practice in Providence, Rhode Island, where he sees individuals and couples. He is a member of the American Academy of Psychotherapists. Besides his clinical work, he enjoys supervising and teaching residents at Brown University's psychiatry residency program.
spatel@samirpatelmd.com

Home Is Where You Are Seen

My right hand gently massages my left hand as I sit, legs crossed, in my armchair across from Amaan[1], who sits somewhere between upright and slouched on the couch. He frequently turns to the ficus in front of the window, behind him to the left, as he describes his feelings about going home for the summer. Now scrutinizing the same plant more carefully, he tells me that he has started to appreciate the splendor that summer has bestowed upon the city of Providence. He then looks at me briefly with a muted smile before turning his gaze to the window behind the ficus, as if admiring the radiance of the summer morning: "This town has so many beautiful spaces for all of its residents to enjoy…free of cost…See…in India you don't realize what such places can do for you…for the public good, right?"

This is our last session before he goes to Mumbai, the city where he grew up. He will be away for 3 months. With his eyes now scanning the pictures on my office walls, he tells me that he has been taking a lot of pictures—of trees, particularly the flowering dogwoods; of a statue of *Our Lady of Fatima,* which sits atop a balustrade of a second floor window of a stone building near his rental apartment and to which he has bowed every day on his way to yoga, making the sign of the cross, because it resembles the statue of *Mother Mary* at his middle school in Mumbai; of the yoga studio, where he found refuge in the aftermath of being publicly attacked and humiliated by one of his university professors, whose uninvited sexu-

1 Name and other personal details have been modified to protect the privacy of my patient.

al innuendos during the first few months of graduate school he had chosen to confront rather than ignore; of India Point, where Narragansett Bay receives Blackstone River, from a spot where he sat on many an evening feeling wounded and lonely; and of the old Victorian houses that lined the intervening streets between his apartment and my office.

"At first I hated living in Providence, but now I have grown to like it a lot. My first year was so traumatic that, I think…it affected everything." Wistfully, he adds, "But, now it's different. I like it, and I will miss it. What's it like for you?" A polyvalent "it." *What's it like to live in Providence as opposed to a larger city such as New York City or Mumbai? Or, what is it like living in the United States? Or, what is it like for me that he is leaving?* Since we won't be seeing each other for an entire summer, I am not sure how to respond. But, Amaan is very maternal, and perhaps he sees the subtle signs of discomfort on my face and does not pause long. He adds, "Although…I could never live in a small city. I'd literally die. But I am sad that I will be leaving this place in a few days."

But as he expresses his feelings about leaving Providence, my mind buzzes with bits of his history that have spoken about his longing to be home. For example, I remember the session several weeks prior to this one, when Amaan walked in with an uncanny feeling of terror. It was a particularly sunny day in early spring, when a sudden realization that he was *living in the United States* had struck him, as if waking him up from a nightmare. He was gripped by terror at "discovering that I am living here." With a mix of rage and bewilderment, in escalating crescendo he exclaimed, "What the fuck am I doing here?…I know how I got here, what I do here…you know…but you know, *seriously, yaar, what I am doing here!* I need to be home, I need to be in India." We wrestled with those feelings. I invited him to slow the process, and he followed suit. He spoke about what he felt and where in his body he felt it. He recognized he was feeling deprived. He was missing the sounds, smells, heat, clamour, energy, and crowdedness of the streets of Mumbai. That sounded familiar to me. I shared how sometimes I have found myself uncannily drawn to New York City, particularly on days when I felt really homesick. The sounds, the clamour, the energy and crowdedness of the city felt particularly soothing on those days. He smiled and said, "You too, huh?" His emotional upheaval began to settle. He paused and then went on, "I am sure you have done this…or your mom did this…In order to sprout moong, you soak them overnight, and then the next day you drain the water and wrap the soaked beans in a *mulmul ka kapda* (muslin cloth) for 24 hours. You get the sprouts. But, if you notice…although they have sprouted, the seeds have not taken root in the cloth that holds them. I feel like those sprouts on *mulmul*. I don't have any roots." With that, he sat in a comfortable silence for some time. He then said that his boyfriend of a few years, a young tenure-track professor at a university in a different state, with whom he has felt quite at home in the United States, had been visiting him for the past several days and had returned to his work the previous day. No longer appearing scared or bewildered, he again sat for several moments in silence, before continuing, "This land and its stories don't speak to me…I have not written anything extra-curricular for the past 2 years. But when I was in India, I used to constantly write about its people."

His boyfriend's departure the day prior to that session had tapped into a deeper pain stemming from the loss of rootedness in the social, cultural, and environmental contexts of his developmental years. The sudden eruption of this pain had been terrify-

ing. Salman Akhtar (2011, 2018), a noted Indian American psychoanalyst, has used the German term, *Seelenschmerz*, to describe this chronic pain. Freud had used this term to describe the pain a child feels when separated from the mother, from whom it is not fully differentiated (Akhtar, 2016). Akhtar equates the chronic mental pain of immigration to that of a child separated from its mother. Following that session, Amaan came in delighted to report that he had finished two articles that he had been sitting on for more than 18 months.

Therefore, on this day of our last session before summer, in response to his expressed sadness about leaving Providence, I wonder aloud if he is not also excited about leaving. He exclaims, "Oh yes! I am." Then softly, "I feel exhausted. Sam*ee*r. For once, I want to not be living with a constant awareness of my position in geography. I want to *just* live. Period. That's it. Just *be living*." He rapidly scrutinizes the simultaneously quizzical and all-knowing expression on my face, and with a sigh adds, "You do understand what it's like to live here." *As opposed to his partner, who was born and raised in the United States?* I silently wonder. "I want to go home and rest, you know. I no longer want to be in a monolingual world, I want to speak in Marathi and Hindi and English, sometimes all at once!" With those words, he begins peeling off another layer of experience of alienation—of exhaustion from constantly monitoring himself. As I listen to him, I am thinking of my own journey of acculturation, which I have described in another essay (Patel, 2018) published in *Voices*. His increasing trust in and comfort with dependence on me, and the proximity of his travel back to India, allow him to admit within his awareness the exhaustion that comes from expenditure of psychic energy that results from living in someplace other than home, about which Salman Akhtar (2011) in his thesis on acculturation has written as follows:

> The experience of 'living (at home)' implies a seamless fusion with one's inanimate surround as well as a painless demarcation from it. The experience of 'living in someplace' belies a rough-edged union and narcissistically taxing demarcation from the environment... Constantly speaking in a new language, operating unfamiliar household machines, and participating in a new social custom increases self-awareness to a level that causes a disjunction between action and its contexts. (p. 9-10)

Amaan is talking about *resting* and the various ways he will rest when he is in India. Among these is his fantasy that he will feel rested when doing field work for his thesis, which involves living among impoverished weavers in a small village in India, in 110+ degree weather. As if reading my internal musings on Akhtar's writing in this moment, he says, "My soul will stop hurting...I will feel happy when I am back with the weavers... See my friends in Bombay don't get it...they say *'arre yaar, tujhe wahan gaon mein kya mazaa aata hai?'* (oh man, what kind of pleasure do you find in living in that village?) ... but you know what I am talking about. That land speaks to me, the people speak to me, their problems speak to me. Finally, I will just be living." Once again, he knows that I do know something of this feeling up close.

Silence ensues. The room now feels brighter. We feel connected. The session is nearing its end, and a certain playfulness emerges within him and between us. He acknowledges the safety of the space that we have shared for the last several months, following which he tells me of an incident from a time when he was an undergraduate student in India. He had to apply for a medical leave of absence after missing school because of a severe depressive episode. A university clerk, to whom he was to submit the papers to

retroactively authorize his leave, noticed that there was a huge crowd of students with all kinds of forms and applications in their hands. Therefore, as a means of managing the crowd, he loudly declared, "All those who are mental, please form a line to the left, and the rest please move to the right." We both laughed until we had tears in our eyes. Still laughing, he adds, "If I told this story to anyone at my university here, they'd have a seizure!" Then, a bit somberly, "But you understand that it was no big deal because what I was really worried about then was if the leave would be approved...in fact the clerk saw my sad face and started consoling me, *'Rona mat beta,* dental *ho ya* mental, *sab* approve ho *jaata hai.'* (Don't start crying, my son, whether it is dental or mental, all will get approved.)" After a pause, he looks at the clock and prepares to collect his cell phone and bag. As he is about to get up to leave, he expresses appreciation for the privacy he has felt with me. He contrasts it with the relative absence of such a practice within the Indian context, as he reveals another incident when a therapist acquaintance of his in India had let him in on the closeted bisexuality of a Bollywood celebrity at a casual social gathering. He tells me he will contact me from India when he is about to return and says goodbye. I wish him the best as he closes the door behind him.

After he walks out, I wonder about my right hand massaging my left hand. I immediately recall watching a YouTube video of a former FBI expert on body language (WIRED, 2019). The agent's suggestion that one hand squeezing the other indicates an attempt to self-soothe makes sense. I am feeling envious that Amaan is getting a chance to go home, to go to India. But, I choose to go elsewhere—should I have sat with his feelings (and mine) about him leaving Providence (and about leaving me)? Was I too eager for him to tell me how excited he was about going home? With this, I also become aware of a sense of relief that I will not be seeing him for a few months. Many sessions ago, Amaan had remarked that seeing me for therapy was very helpful and painful at the same time. Is treating him simultaneously rewarding and painful for me as well because our shared Indianness brings to the fore a desire to "no longer be in a monolingual world"?

Throughout our work, his nostalgia-filled longings for India have intermittently emerged between us. They have gently poked and prodded me, inviting me to join him. My ability to follow his lead possibly has reassured him that I can be with him in reality and in dream, here and there, rooted and uprooted. As he psychically journeys back and forth along the bridge of acculturation between home and here, I hope he can find me with him. When reassured that I was with him, I have seen him flourish even when feeling overwhelmed by rage, betrayal, and grief in response to past traumas and losses. During many a session, I have found myself in the back seat, admiring him for his openness, courage, clarity, and ability to love. And then, as if unsure of his own abilities to lead himself in the sessions anymore, or perhaps to make sure I am with him, he looks at me. Like the sprout on a muslin cloth, he searches for his ground, and we find ourselves talking about the vicissitudes of his experiences as an immigrant. Once grounded, he marches on.

In writing about my clinical encounter with Amaan, I am aware of how proud I feel about our work. I am grateful for the theoretical clarity that the act of writing brings to it and the many questions it raises. The essay also betrays the specialness that I feel with Amaan, who came to see me at a time when I had not been to India in several years. Reflecting back, I also remember how strangely comforting it felt to hear my name

pronounced with the elongated e and a rolled r. During one of our early sessions, I was overwhelmed with an urge to use a Hindi word to heighten the feeling with which he was wrestling. I imagined Salman Akhtar (2006, 2011) would approve of such an intervention since he has shared some very poignant anecdotes from his own work about using Urdu or Hindi words to access hitherto unformulated affects. With Akhtar's imagined blessing, I sought Amaan's permission to share the word. Hearing it precipitated a feeling in him that was until then unformulated, and he wept. It had the effect I was hoping for, and boy, did I enjoy the impact! There were several such moments when Hindi entered the room. I wonder about the specialness. Amaan and I had come together as patient and therapist, respectively, the latter with an explicit intention of creating a therapeutic space for witnessing and holding the psychological vicissitudes within the former. In that respect we are no different from any other therapist-patient dyad. However, we are also two multilingual immigrants with the same country of origin, working in English, which is a third language for both of us, in a place that looks, sounds, smells, tastes, and feels very different from our first homes. Judit Szekacs-Weisz (2004), a Hungarian-British psychoanalyst practicing in London, in her encounter with a Hungarian-speaking patient, has written about the experience,

> What I was not prepared for was the wave of joy that swept through the consulting room during the first session in Hungarian…I tasted words and phrases like long forgotten delicacies, enjoyed the poetics, syntax, the plasticity and creative potential of Hungarian grammar; in one word, I was really in my element! (p. 26)

Although she and her patient were working in Hungarian, her description matched my sense of delight at working with someone with whom I had once shared a similar background of sounds, language, and culture.

Home, in the context of psychotherapeutic work, especially around immigration and acculturation, can have complex connotations. But to me, what stands out is that to be seen is to be home. To be loved is to be home. The more one is discovered by the other, the more one is at home. During the course of writing this essay, I had an intimate experience of being discovered in my own alienation. During a powerful process group composed of primarily non-immigrant American-born individuals, the group leader, a middle-aged white-skinned man with a towering personality, remarked on his puzzlement at certain of my nonverbal responses to the group members who were being very loving towards me. I felt ashamed that somehow I was being disrespectful of the group when that was not my intention. At this point, a fellow immigrant in the group remarked that my nonverbal responses reminded her of a culturally ingrained act of being deferential and humbling oneself in response to love and respect from others. This resonated with my experience. I remembered how, growing up, I was told to touch my elders' feet as a sign of my respect and love for them. I was enacting a version of the same in the group that I had come to immensely respect and love. Being seen in my difference shifted something fundamentally in my experience of being there—of being here, of being *home*. I could then appreciate how my nonverbal deference appeared weird in the sociocultural and ecological context of the group. Once understood, the group revelled in my difference. The group not only witnessed my longing to experience India's landscapes, cloudless blue skies, crowds, sounds, festivals, social contracts and their densities, customs, and so on but also welcomed my longing, my alienation. I could then truly appreciate the joy of being in the group and being in the United States. I felt witnessed

in my alienation and belonging. In my being there and here. In being uprooted and rerooted. In doing so, the group, which represented my new home, brought me home.

This brings me back to Amaan. In his penultimate session, he had wistfully described his longing to be recognized by his American partner as someone who misses India: "I am here and I miss being in India. Just that. Nothing more. I wish he would see that, but he just gets so upset when I bring it up. He says, 'If you want to go back to India, then we are done.' But, I think I just want him to see that I miss it…Because, otherwise I feel that when he embraces me, Sameer, a very big part of me is left out of his embrace." ▼

References

Akhtar, S. (2006). Technical challenges faced by the immigrant psychoanalyst. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 75*, 21-43.

Akhtar, S. (2011). *Immigration and acculturation: Mourning, adaptation, and the next generation.* Lanham, MD: Jason Aronson.

Akhtar, S. (2016, October 20). 2016 Conference Opening Plenary Address: Salman Akhtar. American Group Psychotherapy Association. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ElbCVQSwvRk

Akhtar, A. (2018). Mental pain of minorities. In *Mind, culture, and global unrest.* Retrieved from https://books.google.com/

Patel, S. (2018). The journey of an immigrant psychiatrist into his 30s. *Voices: The Art and Science of Psychotherapy, 54*(1), 5-28.

Szekacs-Weisz, J. (2004), How to be a bi-lingual psychoanalyst. In J. Szekacs-Weisz & I. Ward (Eds.), *Lost childhood & the language of exile* (pp. 21-29). London, UK: Imago East West, The Freud Museum.

WIRED (2019, May 21). *Former FBI agent explains how to read body language | Tradecraft | WIRED.* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4jwUXV4QaTw

---

> Home is everywhere and nowhere.... When I was growing up in my home in Korea, I never thought about it twice.... After I left... home started to exist as an issue... started to occupy me.
>
> —Do Ho Suh

The Elusive Sense of Home

Anni Tuikka

Anni Tuikka, LPC, is a psychotherapist and an AASECT-certified sex therapist and supervisor of sex therapists. She is in private practice in Atlanta, Georgia, and works with individuals and couples who primarily seek to enhance or explore their relationships or sexual fulfillment. She holds master's degrees in psychology from Georgia School of Professional Psychology and in education from the University of Tampere, Finland. She presents on sexuality topics at AAP and elsewhere.
atuikka@sent.com

If I had never moved away from my birthplace, I suspect I wouldn't have come to appreciate the deepest sense of *home*. I would have simply lived it. But it's probably a minority of people in modern times who never leave their birthplace. I've moved away from home many times—once far away. I'm multiply richer for the reshaping experience of moving and eventually taking root in a new culture. Starting anew has challenged assumptions about home that I absorbed growing up. At the same time, my heart is unquiet from flitting between cultures, picking and choosing.

The Black Cat!

February is a beautiful month. In addition to being born in February, I've experienced many important life-changes around that time of year. In 1987, I became more aware of February, its beauty, pain, and excitement, than in any other year in my life—all during a 6-hour drive.

It was nippy outside, as it often is in February in that part of the world. The worn leather mittens I was wearing became suddenly more dear and comforting than ever before. The sun was out in all its dazzling glory after a tiringly long absence. As if celebrating the return of light, nature was dressed in bridal white, sparkling with diamonds and lace. That February sight is now etched in my heart. I had seen it countless times over the then 33 years of my life, barely noticing it. Now I was acutely aware that I might lose it. Little did I realize that I would not see this kind of February again in my second 33 years.

I was weeping quietly in the depth of my soul while my husband drove us from my birth town to the capital city. After one more week, I would not be at home for who-could-say-how-long. How would that state of limbo feel?

As we passed the edge of the town, a black cat crossed the pristine-white road in front of the truck. We both burst out laughing, possibly a bit nervously. But I did not spit over my shoulder. I chose to go with the British interpretation of a black cat crossing one's path as being a *good* omen.

I was moving. Since high school, I had moved several times, but this was no ordinary move for me. I was moving to another country, another continent, another cul-

ture, another world. I'd been determined since elementary school to live outside my birth culture. I didn't know where or why; I was a child.

This move felt like standing on the highest diving board for the first time, preparing myself for whatever might come, closing my eyes, and jumping into the cold water below. The brief in-between moment after I was no longer touching the board and before I was in the water was the gut-gripping *where am I?* state. The anticipation of my new adventure was almost unbearably exciting. But there was also the sadness of finding myself between what might be the last goodbye to the old and the as-yet unexperienced hello to the new. Fear of the unknown echoed in every heartbeat.

Whenever I had previously moved within my old culture or to a neighboring one, from one town or city to another, the adjustment and new home-making were uncomplicated and fun. I'd only needed to adjust to a few new surface structures like a new school, a new job, a new town, new friends, a new boyfriend... And during several summer jobs, to a familiar non-native language. On a deeper level, I could function the same as I had before. It didn't even occur to me then that many of the fundamental beliefs and values, such as the high level of equality and fairness that I had grown up with, would ever come into question. No matter where I had moved before, I was easily understood without explanation. I didn't know that my very sense of self might need to shift; I had quickly felt that I belonged. This time I was stepping into the strange, confusing realm of an immigrant, a foreigner, an alien. Indeed, I had been preparing to receive resident alien status (the "green card," currently officially known as the Permanent Resident Card) at arrival. To my ears, that sounded like I would be arriving from outer space. My first impressions also felt like that.

First Look

When I moved to the United States, to the Illinois prairie, it was not exactly like moving next door. Suddenly everything familiar was obsolete. Few things made sense. I soon realized how incredibly lucky I was that my native-born American (albeit also cross-cultural) husband was by my side to speed up the process of cultural adaptation. A handful of my forefathers had figured it out without such help. The fact that there were some descendants of my ancestors on the continent was an odd comfort to me, sort of a blessing of my choice. They anchored me to my home, to the only existence I knew.

I had visited the United States before the move but only the east coast. After a stop with my future brother-in-law in New York, we neared Champaign, IL, as the sun was heading to bed in the cornfields. On our descent to CMI Willard airport, I surveyed my new surroundings with keen curiosity. My internal alarm was going off. There was nothing there! I mean there were fields, and a house every ten miles or so, but that was it. No trees? How was that even possible? I had not in my wildest imagination considered treelessness an option. And it appeared that my husband had "forgotten" to mention that detail. I could imagine that when he described *flat*, the description might have included *no trees.* But how was I supposed to make that connection? I was used to flat with trees! Coming from a culture where a person was never far from nature, where nature meant an abundance of trees and lakes, and taking care of forests (although we don't actually rake them!) was in the national economic interest, I didn't know how I could breathe without trees around me. But because I was jet-lagged and worn out, I decided

to take it all in, see how the town felt, and defer my first opinion until I was fresher after sleep. I wanted to feel the town's welcome, anything pretty and cozy that would mitigate my growing unease… We passed several huge American flags, the largest flags of any nation I had ever seen. It all looked very patriotic. Was it a national holiday? Some sort of festival perhaps? The courthouse area or something? No, we were passing a swath of car dealerships and uninviting-looking commercial buildings. My stomach sank with disappointment. This felt the opposite of patriotic to me; it felt like the flag was denigrated by the way it was used. Where was I?! Right before too dark, I saw some residential areas that I decided looked calming enough; the elm-lined streets were reassuring for now.

My crash course in American politics, putting up scaffolding on this soil for further learning, came from the Iran-Contra hearings that were on television at the time I immigrated. It sure didn't feel like my "Kansas"! How would I ever come to understand the messy, messy system of powers and their history enough to eventually call it home and function as a citizen here? I had no idea. I had yet to learn that people with accents and green cards didn't have the same right to express opinions freely without getting a polite smile (in the kindest situation) and an overt or covert look or comment to go back where we came from. So many times I felt quietly hurt and diminished—and infuriated. I can easily understand why some people resort to public unrest.

The sacrifice I have learned grudgingly to accept is that when one emigrates, one will never again have the kind of unquestionable sense of home that one had before emigrating. It doesn't mean that one can't adapt. It doesn't mean one can't feel at home in certain ways. But there's always that in-between dance going on, the dance of not fully belonging. While it has been a sacrifice well worth making for me, it has also meant that there remains a certain cultural restlessness and a sense of rootlessness. I suppose that's one definition of a foreigner.

Because moving into a different culture is so complex, why do it voluntarily? Why torture myself by leaving the home I know with all my being? For me, opportunity, curiosity, and the quest for adventure were a siren call stronger than my need for the safety of the familiar. I wanted to learn about my husband's world *in vivo*. Moving as an adult is different from the experience *third culture kids* (Bushong, 2013; Polluck, 2017) and adults have; they've spent a significant amount of time in their developing years in a culture that is different from their passport culture, thus never learning the depth of just one home.

We didn't decide to move away forever. I remember saying out loud to my family that if it became unbearable in the United States, we could always come back. I wonder if they believed me. I knew I was trying to soothe my own fear of the unknown by saying to others that I believed that home is wherever the heart is. The tricky thing here is the heart, because it remembers, it yearns, and it needs more than what surface surroundings can offer.

So how does one gather the ingredients to weave the tapestry of a new home?

Connection to the Old Country

Because we only know what has gone before us and not what will come after, it's easy to see that in this era of new technology, the internet and social media have made a huge difference in the psychology of human migration. It's so much easier to stay in contact

with my family and friends anywhere in the world than it was before the internet. I immigrated shortly before the internet, during the fax era. That I could send faxes felt like a relief from the fear of losing touch. I felt fortunate compared to immigrants who came decades and centuries before me and had to write letters on paper and wait for weeks or months to hear back from family in the old country. Today faxes, too, are part of a bygone era.

I remember squelching my fear of losing contact with my family. I tried to convince myself that of course I'd keep in touch. But in my gut I feared that if I stayed away for a long period of time, the connection would not remain as strong and present as it was in the beginning. The prospect of not having people from my own culture to remind me who I was in my own context would have meant I wasn't myself anymore, that something of my core would have been lost. Or changed. My new people, my new community, didn't and couldn't know or understand the myriad threads that had influenced every aspect of my internal and external activities for decades. At least not without a lot of curiosity on their part and time spent with me. I was an adult, fully grown and developed. It's different for young children, who don't yet have the reservoir of cultural meanings engraved in their souls. To soothe my concern, I told myself that it was okay for old relationships to change as long as they didn't disappear completely. At the same time, I dreaded that no one but my husband would come to understand my deepest core out of its context. I would be something different in the new context, and that is the only me that exists in *this* context. Would it feel like living without a limb I'm used to?

Especially in my first years as an immigrant, I was surprised to feel and speak more patriotically for and about my old country than I ever had when I lived there. I've heard this from many immigrants. Any old-country religious and cultural traditions become something to clutch at in order not to lose oneself in the ocean of the new mainstream culture. When I listen to Finlandia today, over 30 years after emigrating, I choke up with tears. I could say that happens because it's so unbearably beautiful. And it would be perfectly true. But it also evokes something culturally deeper in me. It evokes *home*. Or when I place a loaf of bread on a cutting board or in a basket, I cannot place it round side down. Having it right side up means to me that I'm showing gratitude and appreciation for the Earth, the grower, and for the piece of bread being sustenance for my body. Many would read God into that. I find it a bit hypocritical of myself that while I never baked bread in my old country (my mother regularly did that when I was a child), in my first 5-or-so years in this country, I baked sourdough rye and other breads as if I had always done so! I needed to take care of my cultural loneliness, my sense of otherness. That wasn't a social kind of thing that anybody else could help me with. It's a pity to know that the feeling of nostalgia changes memories, as does any remembrance. In other words, I know now that the old country in my heart is not the same place where I go to visit my family and friends. Their country has changed, while the one in my heart has not.

Life Goes On

Before obtaining U.S. citizenship, being an immigrant was an obscure status with few rights—and today it's even more so. Even with legal status, I didn't want to make waves; I stayed quiet, under the radar. Not being a citizen and thus not being able to vote

meant to me that my opinion didn't matter. I could hardly stand it! The first time I was able to vote in my new home country, I felt like I was 18 years old again.

Foreigners are frequently asked from where they come. That question has never bothered me; I take it as curiosity and welcome it. I've become pretty good at assessing how much the person asking really wants to know. In my first year here, with an accent stronger than it is now, I answered that question at a gym in Illinois. After I gave my answer, the woman continued with what sounded like a statement rather than a question: "Isn't it better here?" It had not occurred to me to think of countries as better and worse. By what standard? Why was I hurt by the question? Reminding myself that the question might have been prompted by her lack of cultural understanding or her fear of difference, I said, "No, it isn't. But I do like some things better here and some things better in my native country." It didn't appear to have been the right answer.

I had quickly learned to dislike the ugly, unkempt face of America. I didn't know what to think of the violence, hate crimes, oppression, discrimination, and taboos that surrounded me. I didn't have the necessary foundation and cultural experience to understand it. I still struggle with making that part of America my home.

Is There Going Back?

I visit my family every few years. Earlier in my years of acculturation, I visited them annually, in part to spend time with my last living, elderly, and later-ill parent and in part to try to make sense of my own internal status. It was important to me to know the latest happenings in my family, the new movies and TV-series, the current political affairs. I was trying to continue belonging there. Over time my visits decreased, and my efforts to keep culturally abreast there diminished. My cultural knowledge here improves continually, but I've never reached the level of total comfort.

I've come to realize there is no such thing as one permanent, unquestionable state of home for me. I'm in constant flux. I had expected I would come to feel fully at home in a second country; instead, I became half-at-home in both.

To preserve some of my original sense of home while adapting and assimilating to my current majority culture is about treating the journey as the destination. I'm learning and absorbing memes from and about this culture every day, giving in, accepting, staying open, feeling it. That helps me to belong more. At times it's tiring. At the same time, I'm now more unabashedly aware of my own roots and the complexity of how they have grown over my lifetime. I'm now a tree with one tap root that goes deep and many far-reaching surface roots that keep me up straight and balanced.

References

Bushong, L. J. (2013). *Belonging everywhere and nowhere: Insights into counseling the globally mobile.* Indianapolis, IN: Mango Tree Intercultural Services.

Pollock, D. C., Van Reken, R. E., & Pollock, M. V. (2017). *Third culture kids: Growing up among worlds* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA, USA and London, UK: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

Abandoned Farmhouse (Pungo, Virginia). Oil on canvas, 2012. David Pellegrini

Jonathan Farber

Jonathan Farber, PhD, practices clinical psychology in Washington, DC, and Chapel Hill, North Carolina. He works with adults, children, and groups, provides clinical supervision, and leads workshops at AAP conferences and salons. He's a past editor of *Voices*, which is still his favorite journal, but as a former professor, bicycle shop owner, and national triathlon champion, he believes therapists can learn more by living than by reading. So close your laptop and get out there.
jonathan.farber@gmail.com

Making for Home

for Joanna Frederick, who asked exactly the right question

We built an off-the-grid cabin on a lake in the remote Canadian woods, and eventually it felt like home. How did that happen? I have many vivid fragments from 50 years there but few coherent narratives, so the story feels like the natural evolution of landscape, or of the human genome: no master plan, no god or villain at work... things simply happened, one accident after another.

My father was a classics professor who pursued the darkest secrets of the human heart in the poetry and theater of extinct civilizations. He had an enthusiastic and playful side that I didn't see much after about the age of 7, a judgmental and perfectionist side I saw too often after that, and privately, I believe, he experienced his life in terms of sweeping dramatic and romantic narratives rarely glimpsed by anyone except my mother. He was comfortable not conforming, and in an era of gas-guzzling behemoths, he drove a tiny French car he'd bought in Europe, proposed a fraternity ban 30 years ahead of its time, and furnished our drab suburban duplex with unique walnut tables and shelves he built himself. Instead of fairy tales, he read me Greek myths—eventually the entire *Odyssey*, three times, different translations—both of us captivated by the wily captain's determined progress homeward to his son, his father, and his wife.

Unfailingly polite and well-spoken in public, Dad's rare outbursts got our attention at home. Before TV remotes, he glued a small stick to the volume knob and kept a 4-foot wooden rod beside the couch so he could turn the volume up or down by flicking the stick with the rod.

He would mute the commercials to penetrate the dishonesty of mainstream culture. During one for Charmin toilet paper, he announced, "What they're really saying is 'wipe your ass with this.'" During the Miss America pageant, hosted by the archetypally wholesome June Lockhart (Timmy's Mom, from *Lassie*), he said "This is really a competition to be the woman you most want to go to bed with."

My mother, also an academic, was ramping her career back up by the time I was 12, when her father died. From a family of Holocaust victims and refugees, apparently adapted to the United States on the outside, my mother seemed haunted by the violence of the transition, and her moods shaped my world. She wove maternal magic and rituals in the midst of ordinary life, like picnics on the green carpet in the basement or soothing me with wistful songs from her childhood. She showed me how to grow flowers, talk to our dogs, and be kind to bullied classmates. She could also flash with fury or sink into despair over things I struggled to understand. We comforted each other.

My brother was 2 years younger than me, which wasn't enough. With friends, sports, academics—even board games—I was always pushing myself, trying to outrun the humiliation I would feel if my little brother bested me at anything. At home, he was usually the grouch or the clown of the family. He didn't share our love of books or of nature, and he avoided grandparents or anything else Jewish whenever he could. His real family seemed to be his friends in the neighborhood. When the family paired up, I had my mother, who could be sweet, depending on her mood, but we never had light fun, like my brother and father had: My mother never did "light" back before our family discovered psychotherapy.

I was often frustrated with all that I couldn't do. I felt the classic pressure of children of the Holocaust: to achieve, experience, love, and give enough to make up for all the silenced, vanished family. My usual escape was into science fiction and adventure books, but when the tensions grew too great, I headed outdoors, alone. My favorite place I called "the swamp," a little brook and surrounding wetlands, tucked between a farm and my elementary school. I walked and walked until I felt calmer, almost hypnotized, I realize now, by the flow of the stream and the patterns of wind on the waving marsh grasses. My conscious objective was usually to locate the mallard nests. I felt terribly protective of them and kept my distance. I didn't want to frighten the parents, but also I couldn't risk that anyone observing me might discover them: Humans I mistrusted.

My father's colleague, Bob Russell, the Oxford-educated English chairman, was blind—and fearless. He'd bought a defunct summer camp on one of the Thousand Islands in the St. Lawrence, and they invited us up. Bob, a former wrestler who'd once wrestled and bested one of his students on a dare, was restoring his ornate camp buildings to their former glory. Their oldest boy met us at the public dock with one of their boats and taxied us through dozens of islands that looked like ships to me, bristling with pine tree masts above rock cliff hulls. Bob greeted us, waist deep in the shadowy depths of the cliffside boathouse assembling planks and stones, that ever-present wry smile on his face. Bob's wife, with her shrill British voice, summoned us to lunch in the camp dining hall where Ahab the parrot presided from his antique brass perch by giving his precise performance of a toilet flushing, from the first clink of the handle to the very last hiss.

In a few days, the Russell kids had taken me canoeing, water skiing, fishing, swimming, and scrambling along shoreline trails and cliffs. I envied James and Miranda how

at home they seemed there, sure-footed on paths or hopping from one boat to another, walking through wilderness the way I walked the halls at school. They knew the trees, the fish, the birds, and the best places to watch the stars. But though we fumbled, they never abandoned us. James would patiently repeat his explanations and instructions. Miranda, long-legged and radiant with early adolescence, would give a little sigh of contained impatience, smile mischievously, and invite me to another part of the island with an old camp building or a great diving cliff. Even as my parents shopped for land nearby, I am embarrassed to admit that I was already grieving that it could never be a place I spent my childhood, because being already 12, I could never feel as at home in the north country as our hosts.

Our land came in multiple parcels, a mile of waterfront in all, in the meandering Rideau Lakes, mostly impossible to develop (and dirt cheap) because it was inaccessible by land, and it was glorious. The summer sky above the lake appeared endless, with parallel rows of identical puffy clouds in a stately procession to the horizon. The ledges and clifftops were covered with stunted pines and the twisted and hungry roots reaching far across the rock in search of soil. From the canoe, we saw ancient, grey cliffs crumbling in slow motion into moss-covered cubes surrounded by ferns. In the oak and basswood forests further inland, we occasionally came across ancient hemlock groves, hushed with thick needle beds underfoot where multiple generations lean towards each other over shallow black pools of water. Where the lakeshore was low and swampy, the paper birches seemed luminous in the evening light when the bullfrogs began to croak and the lightning bugs danced in the thickening shadows of undergrowth. Impenetrable forests of reeds obscured the shore in some places. Elsewhere the water was so thick with lily pads that the dog once tried to walk across them, which made us laugh so hard we nearly capsized.

The land my parents found was on the Frontenac Axis, a narrow strip of some of the oldest rock on the planet, connecting the Adirondacks in New York to the vast Precambrian Shield that nearly surrounds Hudson Bay in the far north. In the past 2 billion years, this land has seen mountains higher than the Himalayas and volcanoes that brought rare minerals to the surface. It's been compressed, scraped, and gouged by mile-thick glaciation and riven by wind and rain. The entire Axis is now an international bio-reserve, for the rare diversity of plants and animals that range north and south through it. My parents, who had each spent their teens canoeing in the Adirondacks, felt at home and fell hopelessly in love with this new place, and a few thousand dollars from my grandfather put it within reach.

The cabin on the land was only 12 feet square. Once we owned it, my parents slept inside, my brother and I, and the friends who came with us, slept in large tents, on steel bunks from the Russells' camp. My father immediately began improvements, such as installing a sink, with running water from a hose attached to the bottom of a plastic garbage can lashed to the base of a tree uphill from the cabin. I filled the tank daily, hauling buckets up from the lake, mostly so my mother could wash dishes. I was happy to take the workout rather than let him install a noisy, polluting, gasoline water pump, but I confess I harassed my mother when I thought she used too much water. Additions like the water system were clever, but my father had much bigger plans.

Next was a floating dock, with blocks of styrofoam and massive fir boards. We assiduously followed instructions from the Sears pamphlet. First we assembled small sections

on land. Then we put them together in the water, so the dock was upside down. Then we read: "Flip the dock over." Think about it. We howled, got creative, and grunted with effort, trying to flip an 800-pound slab that kept floating away from us. "Just flip it over" became family shorthand for a Herculean task, casually assigned.

Finally, on a high overlook, where the grass grew in tufts between the rocks, Dad declared he would build a house, placed so that a pair of twin oaks stood at each of the front corners. He read about construction. He and my mother built a cardboard model, and one entire winter, instead of a jigsaw puzzle on the table in front of the TV, there was the house model, and we played around with different furniture arrangements inside. There was a fireplace, a bench swing, dining table, propane refrigerator, everything.

Summer finally returned, and we were all pressed into service at various stages of construction. Dad's praise was rare but heartfelt and worth working for. His criticism was often sarcastic and belittling, or worse, full of despair and self-disparagement: "It's my fault you messed it up; I just was too caught up with the windows on the south wall to notice how badly you were doing. It's all my fault." I was responsible for one wall, and I still look at it with pride when I walk in the door. But to watch my father build was to watch him slowly and painfully win his war against his own perfectionism. He enthused over his favorite tool, "Big Blue" his huge nail puller, because it allowed him to undo mistakes. His biggest discovery, as the house went up, was that flaws at each level could be corrected at the next level. If one course of cinderblock in a pier leaned a little to the left, you could use thicker layers of mortar to level up the left side on the next course. If one pier was a little higher than another, you could shim the lower piers to level them out before you lay the beams across them. If one wall stud is spaced too far, the next one could be spaced a little closer to that one. I've often used this as a metaphor for child development: There are many points along the way to an adult personality where skews from earlier stages are counterbalanced and corrected.

For myself, I didn't want to build structures as much as tinker with the landscape. In a long-abandoned pea field near Scout Point, two pioneer species were at war for the sunlight: white pines and paper birches, both in the 8- to 12-foot range. I was enchanted with the vision of a purely pine forest, with no undergrowth and no low branches, where you could walk easily. I helped the pines along, putting in many hours cutting down all the birches and pruning off the lower branches of the pines, visualizing myself many years in the future, walking through my pine forest. I also dug steps into the steep hillside near the cabin, embedding short logs to retain the dirt.

Interspersed among all the family times, there were always times alone. Some of my happiest memories were reading on my back, concealed by foliage on the nearly horizontal trunk of an ancient cedar that leaned way out from the shore, while the water lapped rhythmically below me. But often in the solitary times I was engaged in battles with my fears. On the way to the outhouse in the dark, the mosquitoes could attack in legions, until I realized this was really a mental battle, against panic. On the path down to where we went swimming, when everyone else had run carelessly ahead, I was cautiously picking my way barefoot, studying the sharp rocks, roots, and millipedes for anything dangerous or disgusting I might step on. Diving below the water, when the voices of the family instantly went silent, I was alone in the eerie light, my skin brushing the forest of long water plants reaching towards me, trying to entrap me, and realizing I could drown a few yards from them all or be dragged away by a huge snake. When I finally thought

about what the frightful plants actually felt like against my skin, and realized it was a pleasant sensation, I lost my fear.

Fear of snakes lasted longest: the slithering movement, the lack of limbs, the fixed gaze. There were many encounters with little ribbon snakes, black and slender, with yellow stripes running lengthwise. I'd generally suppressed and concealed my panic when the leaves rustled and a snake darted across my path, but one day I'd had enough. I shouted as loud as I could, some kind of war whoop, and kept shouting as I chased the snake, uphill, across the hill, back down the hill, to the other side of a thicket. I was fighting down terror. Each time I lost sight of him I wanted to call it a win, but I made myself stomp around in the leaves until he bolted again. The first time he paused within reach, I surprised us both by picking him up. He twisted and writhed, but I clenched my teeth and held him with both hands until I dropped him in a bucket back at the cabin where I kept him for a few hours, making myself handle him until it was no longer frightening, until I could tell him jokes and hear myself laugh. After holding him close to my face and looking him in the eyes one last time, I let him go. Snakes haven't frightened me since, not even in my dreams.

Often I went exploring, tying the canoe to a strange shore, trying to travel by compass in a straight line across a peninsula, say, until I was forced to detour by a looming rock outcrop, like an impossibly huge beached whale, an unscalable leviathan, that forced a detour. Then there would be a deep ravine that forced a detour from the detour. Eventually I would find my way back, and though I wouldn't have admitted it, I was intensely relieved to be back home, with the adventure behind me.

Once, I was heading home in the canoe when the sky went nearly dark, the winds whipped up the waves, and raging thunder grew closer and louder. The wind was stronger than I was and kept twisting the bow away from shore, and I panicked. But panic accomplished nothing, and eventually I found my own rage, went down on one knee and dug ever deeper with the paddle, whipping it forward furiously between strokes before the wind could rob me of my few inches of progress. I made land just as buckets of rain began to fill the canoe.

As we settled into the area, we became familiar with countless animals. We never saw more than one heron at a time, so even after 50 years, it is simply "the heron," usually standing deathly still in shallow water, hunting. Wolves and loons were the natives of the land that meant the most to me. In our first years, we sometimes heard wolves howling at night across the lake, and I sometimes camped there hoping to see them. I read everything written about wolves and felt an overpowering love and kinship with them, intensified by their near extinction. Inexcusably, the province still had a bounty on wolves. They were hunted in winter by people I met but to whom I couldn't bring myself to speak.

A loon is a large, black-and-white water bird, and its haunting wail, especially after dark, is the signature sound of the north lake country. Every spring my parents waited anxiously for the loons, then waited anxiously to see the hatchlings, and then watched anxiously every day to make sure the little ones hadn't been eaten by a snapping turtle or vanished for some other reason. One year my father made them a raft for a nesting site according to a wildlife agency's instructions and nestled it in the reeds; we were all beside ourselves when they used it. The last critical issue of the season is whether the young will be ready to fly in time for the migration south. One year a friend who stayed

on the lake into the fall told us of a young loon who didn't leave with the others. The lake began to freeze, and his ever-shrinking patch of open water had become too small for a take-off. Each day an eagle swooped in closer before the young loon went underwater for cover, and eventually the eagle caught him and ate him. Ultimately, nature is pitiless. Today, the wolves are long gone, but there is still a nesting pair of loons on our lake every summer. And sometimes I read about wolves moving back into areas where they'd been exterminated, and I wonder.

I brought my friends up to the lake. Scot, who asked my mother how many hot dogs he could have and having never before been told as many as you want, ate 13. We were in awe. Jon, the son of a Mennonite chaplain, and I sometimes went crashing through the brush as fast as we could wearing only our shoes. "The Adam Routine" we called it. The therapist-in-me says we were trying to get comfortable with our changing bodies, and Jon was trying to find a way to make his father's Christianity his own. The client-in-me rolls his eyes and tells the therapist-in-me: "You're too old to understand," and I think he's talking about the exultation of abandoning civilization, of having nothing between you and nature, of becoming one with the forest. But I can't be sure.

Once Jon and I spent a week cutting logs and bolting them together cleverly into our raft: *Beelzebub's Bomb.* When we finally launched it, with much ceremony, we found we could paddle forward through the water, tracking a reliable line and floating securely at a dead level, but the *Bomb* stubbornly remained about 8 inches below the water surface. We actually did manage one journey on it, laboriously paddling around the river bend and back, mystifying observers from shore to whom we appeared to be paddling an invisible craft. We were young and moved on without much regret, as the *Bomb* disintegrated slowly, over years, just where we had tethered it, half out of the water, until nothing remained but a few feet of logs and the massive rusting carriage bolts.

One recurring family tension was my self-appointed role as defender of the wilderness. This put me passionately at odds with things like extending the narrow bulldozed drive closer to the house, or cutting down one of the trees we had built the deck around, even after it died. Another recurring tension resulted from what I saw as my mother's pointless need to suburbanize the wilderness. She wanted proper meals eaten with proper utensils and a kitchen cleaned to a sparkle. For dessert, my mother preferred to cook, while we of course preferred store-bought cookies out of a bag. But she made good-faith efforts to compromise. One night after dinner, she brought up a nicely browned peach cobbler, but reassured us: "Now this is only dessert Number One." "Looks more like Number Two to me!" quipped my brother, and we all watched the shock and pain on her face. She was out the door and up the hill before my father set off in pursuit.

I began college young, and once I left home, Canada was where I spent the most time with my parents. My brother stopped coming and never returned, and we still live very differently, but he lives near me, and we support each other in our divergent paths. Our biggest commonality is our childhood, which still gives us much to discuss.

My father's journey included a stint flying aerobatics. Once I saw him glowing right after doing loop-the-loops and barrel rolls and asked him how he could enjoy something so dangerous. "When you're my age, you'll understand; there just isn't that much more to look forward to." Now I'm past his age, and I still don't understand, but as he finally became more comfortable with himself, he became so unconditionally accepting and supportive of me that I began turning to him when life grew difficult, and I still do. Co-

incidence or not, the summer I left home was when the dam on Dad's academic productivity finally broke. First, the number one classics journal in the world accepted a chapter from his dissertation, written 20 years previously. He went on to do new research in the Middle East that excited him, and he allowed himself the performative indulgence of wildly popular large courses, like his "Cannibalism and Incest in Greek Myth."

My mother and I eventually found common interests in theories about society and psychology. We discussed Weber's ideas about charismatic leaders and bureaucracies; Durkheim's finding that suicide rates go up when more people are displaced by modernization; Mannheim's idea that idealistic activists are sustained by living most of their lives, in their imaginations, in the utopia they are trying to establish. Most of all, we discussed Freud, whose Vienna home was a few blocks from my mother's, and his idea that people's lives are shaped by scarcely-conscious desires and fantasies. Eventually, my mother left academics to help manage and counsel at a shelter for domestic violence victims, which she found much more fulfilling ("I use everything I ever learned, from school and from life."), years before I likewise exited the university, to practice fulltime.

In the years since, sometimes the inner video recorder was on, though at less frequent and inexplicable intervals, and I have detailed but sporadic memories. All four of my children have come to the cabin nearly every year of their lives. Actually, they were all potty trained there: It's so much easier to understand what's happening when you go naked. Mostly I trusted that their relationship with the land would happen spontaneously, but sometimes I waxed instructive. There was the time I led them noiselessly to Scout Point over land, telling them that if we were quiet and patient enough we could spot the beavers who'd built the sprawling lodge there. No beavers appeared, but then we heard a tiny scratching at our feet: a pygmy shrew, the size of a penny, straining and fumbling to drag a small seed towards its hole nearby. The lesson? There are miracles to be found in stillness, though not necessarily where you are looking.

Did my children grow up feeling at home and at ease in nature? Not entirely. One of them still battles a fear of spiders. One won't swim where there is seaweed. One doesn't like to go out in the dark alone, even with a flashlight. But they all love coming and travel great distances to return each summer, and they enrich the place. One brings his dog and his hammock and sleeps outside. One brings a girlfriend who loves to cook. One cheerfully exhausts himself clearing brush all day. And one brings a spouse and our grandchildren, renewing the cycle for at least one more round. Does the heron see my grandson on the dock and think: There's that same human, after all these years?

This summer, instead of driving, I flew to Canada for the first time in many years. I could see just enough of the old tiny airport in the bones of the new one to bring back memories of other journeys there, and the tears began. (It just wasn't under my control; I might as well have been at a wedding.) My grandmother, my parents in their prime, my children as young children— all vanished. Time slipped by, and my world slipped away. Even though I can understand and maneuver better in this world today, do more people more good, accomplish more, faster, with less stress, even though my head burgeons with enough cultural trivia to complete the *Sunday Times* crossword—this just feels less like my world, the world I bonded with so intensely when I was young, and I feel increasingly lost. But it's the same lake. The cabin has aged as I have. There's a low corner where a pier has settled more deeply into the earth, moss on the roof shingles, and a dresser in the corner so regularly occupied by mouse nests that I gave up on it. But it's

still the same *place*. It's home because home is where family relationships happen, and when the river of time seems to wash away everything, a location in space is an anchor. For me, home is neither a place I remain, like my brother in our hometown, nor a place I yearn for in perpetual exile, like my grandparents' Vienna. It's a place I feel compelled to leave, and then compelled to return. Leave and return, leave and return. I may go days or even months so engaged with my life and my clients' lives that I won't give it a thought, but one place is with me wherever I am, and like a boy with a compass—I always know which way is north. ▼

> My wound is geography. It is also my anchorage, my port of call.
>
> —Pat Conroy, *The Prince of Tides*

David Donlon

David Donlon, LCSW, has been a psychotherapist in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, for the last 38 years and lives in the nearby woods with his wife, Julia. In 2006, David's path took a turn. Generally content, he was imagining a long, smooth glide toward retirement when he impulsively registered for an American Academy of Psychotherapists conference. This opened an unexpected network of wondrous interior and interpersonal journeys. He is currently serving as president of the Academy.
david@daviddonlon.com

Missing Acres

This is a fork in the road story.

My relationship with people and my relationship with place have taken very different routes. For decades, the former was my tumultuous, often painful, focus. Place was always the steady source of comfort, albeit in the background. But in taking for granted that comfort, and as I approach old age, the theme of place and home struck an unexpected nerve for me. I'm realizing that my relationship with place could use some work.

I take solace in the constancy of the natural world around me, the most constant being the couple of acres of woods in which my wife and I have lived for the last 25 years. Loss and change occur in these woods, of course: a ravine slowly deepens over the years, or an old dogwood gives up and dies. By and large, though, everything is where it was yesterday.

Yet I have long sensed an unquiet attachment to place. Recalling places from my past often leaves me melancholy. Previous homes, of course, evoke this, but I carry a similar wistfulness for places visited once and never again—a favorite campsite at Cobscook Bay or a front patio at a hotel on Grassy Key. No matter where I am—even when enveloped in beauty—I find myself missing all the places I am not. I am now more or less at ease in the human world, much more restless and unsettled about place. What is to account for this fork—my developmental path in the human world straying so far from my developmental path in the physical world?

Background

A few years after World War II, my father and his new father-in-law bought 60 acres of Connecticut woods in Hattertown, centered, appropriately enough, around an abandoned 18th century hat factory. Soon after they completed some major remodeling, I was born, and this was my home. (Lest I present an unbalanced self-portrait, we also had an apartment overlooking a traffic circle in the Bronx.)

By the time of my first memories, they had cleared about a dozen fields, all outlined with the original impressive stone walls. They had a few cattle (my grandfather's family were dairy farmers), and my father had started a tree nursery. Dad had a WWII surplus jeep, and all the different fields were connected by well-worn jeep trails. Behind the house the land sloped steeply down to a brook, then up the other bank and well back up to Eden Hill Road. Across the street from the house the land sloped up a hill, then flattened out and ran all the way to Aunt Park Lane, the next road back. The trail up this hill forked at the top—a hard left across the ridge or straight back into the woods and fields beyond. As a little kid, it seemed an endless expanse.

Our household was an odd constellation for my first 7 years, consisting of my older-than-average parents, three grandparents, and me (ages 51, 37, 73, 71, 67, and 0, respectively, to start with). Two years later all but two of us were gone. My father's mother died. Then my own mother died. My mother's parents moved away, likely not wanting to share a house with my father's mistress whom he married almost immediately after their daughter's death. My father—happy and in love—technically was still there, but he immediately took a sharp turn toward his new wife's tastes and values and away from those that had been our family's. Solid colors were replaced with pastel designs, ketchup with French wine sauces, and jewelry began to appear.

But the land remained.

Somewhere in these years Dad sold off 5 acres along Aunt Park Lane, the far part of the property across the road, and apparently stopped clearing the jeep trails back to the adjacent woods and fields—those beyond the fork. I remember asking him a couple of times about us going back there again. He always dismissed the idea.

The Dream

I had one recurring dream throughout the rest of my childhood. In these dreams, sometimes with a friend, sometimes alone, I would set out walking on the jeep trail across the road, up the hill. At the fork I would never take the road to the wonderful views from the ridge. I would continue on, straight ahead, trying to find traces of the old trail. Quickly, the realistic version of the dream was replaced with more imaginative obstacles than merely small trees. Frequently the trail would lead through an abandoned building with many levels that might or might not connect, with blocked doors and dead ends. I rarely emerged from the buildings before awakening, and even when I managed to find my way out the other side, I remained lost. Often the woods just became denser and more impenetrable. I never again, in dream or in real life, found the missing acres.

As I was headed to college Dad decided to sell the farm, leaving me completely unrooted from my childhood.

It seems obvious to me now that what I was trying to get back to in those dreams was more than just a wooded area that I knew from my earliest years. At night I did not dream of my mother or my grandparents, but of a bit of land that I knew (hoped?) still existed. In recent years, without the aid of photos, I can barely recall any of those lost faces, my mother's included, but I could draw a reasonably accurate map of the farm—complete with all the jeep trails, the biggest maples, oaks, and spruce and all the fruit and berries, the largest rock outcroppings, the exact course of the brook and where to ford it, and where the frogs were likely to be. My sense of belonging and security abruptly shifted from family to land in those early years, the missing acres later holding the deeper family losses. As a result, my melancholy for the irretrievable also shifted as time went by, firmly attaching itself to beauty (and loss) in the physical world.

On Closure

Perhaps my somewhat unmoored past is connected to an immediate affinity for Gestalt theory at the beginning of my career. The Gestalt contact cycle has of course infiltrated common discourse in many ways with terms like "unfinished business" and "closure." I knew intuitively the high cost of not achieving closure. Some portion of the freedom to move through life is sacrificed, hung up, so to speak, on the unfinished Gestalt. Some aspect of inner peace is unattainable.

It would be 15 years into my career before my personal psychotherapy and a couple of mystical experiences allowed me relative peace about my mother's death. I think I now have a fairly healthy ability to grieve the loss of relationship. This is handy for relational therapists when you consider the number of people we have cared deeply about who finish up, move away, quit, or die, often without much notice. I think this reflects the pattern of flow in the human world. We have individual interactions with others in a disjointed rotation with some resolution of each before moving on. After decades of working on it, I believe I move much more freely as I meet and part, enjoying without clinging.

In contrast though, and getting back to the theme, letting go of places remains a struggle for me. It seems I long to return to every vaguely pleasant place from my past. Nowhere, though, do I long for as deeply as for those missing acres that I dreamt of but never returned to after my family died and the trail was allowed to revert to dense woods.

Perhaps knowing no one who could verify that there once was such a trail has magnified this longing. Then, as I contemplated this writing exercise, it occurred to me to try to find the missing acres in satellite photos. And there they were—still undeveloped, with no roads or trails apparent— 41°20′45″N, 73°18′42″W. My lost spot of Mother Earth. I had no idea how important it was just to know it does exist—in the physical world and not just in my memories or imagination. I have now seen evidence of the missing acres, here in this century! I've spent a good amount of time with those photos over the last few weeks. It feels good to do so.

Will this visual reunion provide the necessary closure? Will this free up my psyche from its overattachment to place? Will I feel as fluid to move through the physical world as I do the world of human relations? That's the exciting possibility. ▼

Red Earth Drive-By

Tom Burns

Passing a giant dollop of a structure
rose-colored, proud as a Hopper painting
my tears well up
stirred by luster in November's finale
fall's parting ordnance

The house lords over the countryside
ordering that dusk be pressed
against its still, sea-green sill
stretching shadows long as finned cars
emptying the porch of forms that sat and waved

Later a woodland creature will ease into a tangle of leaves
distract a passerby
the house will be shrouded too
a victim of its own vanity

Delia Kostner

Delia Kostner, PhD, is a psychologist and psychoanalyst in private practice in Amherst, New Hampshire. She is on the faculty of the Boston Psychoanalytic Society and Institute and recently completed a 3 year writing program, New Directions: Writing with a Psychoanalytic Edge. She has taught and lectured widely on the confluence of psychoanalysis and Buddhism and has contributed chapters to two recent edited volumes on this topic. *deliakostner@gmail.com*

Land of My Heart

Wilderness is an anecdote to the war within ourselves.
—Terry Tempest Williams

It was one of those deceptively bright warm afternoons in late March. I had just left the house I hoped to soon own and, having completed the home inspection, was moving closer to the unsettling notion of settling down. I had moved to New Hampshire for my pre-doctoral fellowship. I remained for a relationship that refused to take. Uncertain and indecisive, I indulged my wanderlust on weekends and took time for extended forays into the wild, while inhabiting a series of increasingly unsatisfactory rentals, cottages, and worn-out apartments before succumbing to the task of house hunting. My psychotherapy practice *had* taken hold, as I quickly became known as someone willing to work with the most recalcitrant and traumatized children. An accidental expert, I decided it would be wise to stay put for a time.

But mostly I stayed for the woods and mountains. This was my chosen landscape, the place of my heart.

After the inspection I called my beleaguered real estate agent to inform her that, yes, this one would do—and then chased the winter back up north. To celebrate my hard-won decision to stay in place, at least for the time being, I spent the next 2 days walking the Carter-Moriah Range in the White Mountains.

* * *

How do I understand my relationship to earth and sky, landscape composed of gravel and granite and densely

packed pines? These wild places, ragged granite mountaintops and deep green forests, were not my birthright. Nor was I born into a family of outdoorsmen and women, naturalists, campers, or explorers who instructed me in the ways of the natural world. I had to learn the names of the trees and plants on my own, which is to say imperfectly and incompletely.

My family was as urban as they came. Aggressively so. My childhood landscape was composed of brick, glass, and steel, the natural world bordered and contained in tiny patches of grass and hedge, concrete planters, and small container gardens adorned with common annuals whose names I did not know. As a city child my earliest playgrounds were a city beach and a tiny pocket park on Chicago's Near North Side. The dusty acrid scent of asphalt, the faint smell of garbage, and rotting alewives from Lake Michigan a block away were what greeted me as I learned to ride my bike in front of our apartment building the summer I turned 6.

It was into this thoroughly urban landscape that I was born and came of age. This was the mid-1960s and the country had not yet wended its way out of the post-war obsession with cleanliness and convenience. Mostly this meant maintaining a sanitary distance from the earth from which all our sustenance came, from which we arose, and to which we all eventually return. A denial of death in the aftermath of unspeakable destruction created a preoccupation with modernity and sterility, of homes kept and presided over by impeccably groomed women who, plucked from their work in factories and hospitals and placed decorously back into kitchens and nurseries, would, it was hoped, gradually obliterate the aftermath of the destruction witnessed by millions of soldiers returning home. For us, my two sisters and me, the war seemed so far in the past that it was years before I finally gleaned its impact on our lives beyond the much touted but vaguely described fact that my father was a war hero.

My father's war trauma was neither acknowledged nor discussed. It was certainly never labeled or treated. When he cried out at night, waking the household with his restless wanderings, his sleepless mutterings, when my mother retreated to sleep in the guest room, when we sisters snuck into each other's bedrooms for comfort, pretending nothing was really wrong, no one explained what was happening. Our mother, overwhelmed with the unexpected demands of child rearing and of being married to a man grown distant, angry, and progressively more consumed with his own unexplored terror, would simply explain, "nightmares," before turning her back, as if she too could not approach and address the reality of his suffering and how it tore at the fabric of the elegant life she hoped would be hers.

It was a good home to wander off from.

* * *

I parked at the trailhead with just enough daylight left to hike to the Carter Notch Hut for the night. Almost 8 miles and 2,000 feet in elevation later, the snow softened and deepened. I could almost discern the shape of the lake hidden beneath the still thick cottony white cloud of snow as I approached the hut. The light from the main building spilled onto the path pocked with footprints and drew me toward its promise of warmth. This was where the winter caretaker lived, the only building in the small compound heated for a few hours at night with an ancient workhorse of a wood stove.

Before entering I turned and paused, staring out at the mountains in shadow, and felt myself dissolve into the frigid blue-white glow of the newly rising moon on snow.

What is it to inhabit a space not of one's ancestry? I wondered that night in the unheated, primitive hut, curled in my down sleeping bag, knees to chest, trying to stay warm. No childhood friends or relatives? To start afresh in a place of one's own choosing? My roots here were shallow. I felt intermittently giddy and lonely as I lapsed into a restless dreamless sleep.

I began my ascent at dawn. The snow still clung to the highest peaks of the Presidential Range to the west, although it had mostly blown off the peak of Carter Dome, and its neighbor Mt. Hight, a steep mile-long climb just above the hut. What was left had settled like a gossamer shawl on its rounded shoulders. Large patches of unstable ice shrouded the summit of Hight, and I picked my way carefully across on crampons, the metal spikes scraping shrilly against the granite, the ice not deep enough for safe purchase. The wind whipping off Mt. Washington plunged the temperature into the single digits, and I donned every piece of clothing I carried. It was up there that my heart was free to roam. The double helix of mountains and home, this is what I sought. And perhaps for the first time since childhood I allowed myself to be swaddled and held by the promise of stability.

* * *

As an adult I had spent considerable time honing my backcountry skills, hiking and backpacking, digging progressively deeper into wild territory. Solitary sojourns into the mountains increased in tandem with my training as a psychologist and then later as a psychoanalyst. And yet little time was spent in my own analysis examining how my passion for wilderness and mountains evolved. Until recently a displaced and strangely disembodied practice dedicated to understanding the isolated mind, psychoanalysis has had little use for the ways in which landscape carves and forms the psyche. And yet, the private unremarkable experience of traveling on foot alone in the mountains gave me ownership of my life as no other therapy could. I achieved not simply an understanding of myself, but a deep abiding awareness beyond words, a primordial connectedness to earth and breath that has sustained and held me.

* * *

Even as a small child I sought out the edges, the places in between, the spots where the concrete ended and soil and trees could be found. I was captivated by tree roots capable of upending the square slabs of a concrete sidewalk, the greenery that forced itself out of the cracks, and the moss that formed along the brick and stone foundations of buildings in our neighborhood, transgressive and beautiful. I was an early wanderer, difficult to contain, perpetually sneaking down the back stairwell and out into the alley to explore the empty lots and backyards that abutted our building, until someone happened to notice my absence and dispatched a sister or housekeeper to collect me back to our third floor apartment.

But mostly, I wandered to my grandmother's house a mere block from our own. And she in turn would pack my sisters and me into her old white Buick for the interminable

2-hour journey to her farm in Pulaski County Indiana where we spent many of our summers. It was there, on that scrubby flat land in a town that topped out at 250 individuals, that I was first introduced to the natural generosity of plants and animals. It consisted of almost 300 acres of river bottomland planted with soybeans, feed corn, and winter wheat. We collectively referred to it as "the country," and it offered respite unavailable elsewhere.

"Johnny Weissmuller taught me to swim," my grandmother reminisced, her hand beneath my soft belly as she glided me like a small vessel through the tea-stained water of the Tippecanoe River.

"Who?"

"Tarzan. The actor who played him. He used to teach swimming at the Y where I learned to swim."

"Oh."

She had many stories like this. She knew Sophie Tucker, had met a crown prince at a cocktail party, and was the widow of a politician. She auditioned for the Zigfield Follies and reportedly knew Al Capone and said he gave our father his first bicycle.

It was there on the farm that she came to life for me, and I suspect it was where she was most alive to herself. In this tiny rural farming community, unrestricted and unobserved, the slightly subversive solitude allowed us each to stretch and shrug off the confusing demands of our city family and come into our own. Lulled by the soft rhythmic lament of the mourning doves and the lazy buzz of the late summer cicadas, I found the peace I didn't know I craved.

The landscape encouraged a long view. Made up of flat geometric, grid-like patches of field separated by strips of brambles and brush, Scotch pines, oak trees, and blackberry bushes, it seemed like the very edge of the wild to me.

I wrapped my arms and legs around my grandmother and buried my 6-year-old face in her neck as she waded me back toward the muddy shore, swim lesson over. I relished the physical contact. I did not know my mother's body like this, strong and soft and protective.

Summer nights we would leave the tiny four-room farmhouse and drive through corridors of corn along stick-straight roads framed by perfectly placed electric poles, past the red brick elementary school, the bank and doctor's office, and on into the town for dinner. There we would choose one of the two watering holes frequented by neighborhood farmers. My grandmother would order the one drink she allowed herself each evening and trade local gossip with the sunburned men, some with partially missing digits and scars that showed beneath rolled up sleeves, men who wore their caps inside, while my sisters and I ate fried chicken from bright orange plastic baskets lined with wax paper.

She had purchased the farm in the late 1930s, after the death of her mother. She had lost her father while still a teenager. Already a widow, this was where she intermittently resided when my father attended Culver Military Academy nearby. And it was where she stayed and found solace when he, against her will, enlisted the winter of his freshman year in college and was promptly shipped to Europe.

* * *

While working on my dissertation I took a job as an interviewer for a study of adult male development. I found that I was quite good at it, listening for hours to men whose stories were shaped and formed by the Viet Nam era of political and social upheaval. I was especially adept at interviewing the vets, those men who had seen combat. "Interview" didn't quite capture what I did, however. Once we got through the preliminary review of childhood and adolescence, I would simply ask the men to describe their war experience. The release valve would pivot, and the stories of combat pour forth. I would simply listen, prodding infrequently for detail.

My interview subject that day was a man in his 40s who resided in a small Midwestern city. The interview was in its 4th hour. This was not unusual. The winter sun was just beginning to set, sending long shadows across the room, obscuring his face in silhouette. He described witnessing a buddy being killed in battle, a story he had shared with only a few people. This too was not unusual. The assurance of anonymity, my youth, and the fact that I was female and therefore not competition, contributed to the success of these marathon sessions. As I leaned over to flip the tape in the cassette recorder, I glanced up just as sun hit his water glass at an angle, momentarily creating a small rainbow on the far wall. A memory stirred and emerged.

I am sitting somewhat like this with my father in the den of our apartment. I am 14, maybe 15 years old. The fading light from the large window behind him refracts through the crystal tumbler in his hand. I hear the ice ringing against the glass as he takes a sip.

"After Belgium, they moved us into Germany," he speaks quietly, in a monotone, sharing an urgent secret.

"Then they sent us into the camp, to see if there were any survivors. We had been warned, but nothing could prepare anyone for what we saw."

Every cell in my body recoils as I resist the urge to stand up and walk out the door. But I rarely had my father's attention like this. And so I remain as he describes the skeletal survivors, the decomposing bodies, the evidence of brutality and nightmarish horror that far exceeded the carnage endured in Belgium, where, as the only qualified man left standing, my father had been promoted in a field commission. He was 22 years old and in charge of over a thousand men. And then he recounts how liberators turned annihilators when he and his men unwittingly fed the prisoners their own rations, unaware that the starving had lost the ability to digest food and thus died from their assistance.

Numb and detached, he finishes his tale and without another word leaves the house, as usual, for a walk.

This memory has no before or after; it was suspended in time, not forgotten really, but lacking necessary context. Even at the time, I wondered what provoked his confession.

* * *

"Are you all right? I've been talking way too long, I know." His query and furrowed brow shook me from my reverie.

"I'm fine," smiling. "I just drifted a little." I gathered myself and tried to refocus. Incredible as it seemed, I had been only vaguely aware of the link between my father's experience and my own interest in trauma. I felt numb and light-headed.

I took a deep breath and resumed the interview.

"Tell me more about what happened after you returned to the States. You said you

retreated to the cabin your family owned?" I truly wanted to know how he had survived and flourished, while my father had not.

He laughed, "I became a little feral, you know, out there in the backcountry on my own. But it was my time there that kind of healed me: the solitude, the sound of the loons at dusk, the hard work of restoring the cabin. My parents thought I was nuts. And perhaps I was a little."

"What happened? What pulled you away from there?"

"A woman," he smiled. "She said she would have me, but not the drink, and a cabin on 100 acres of backwater was not her idea of the best place to raise kids."

He stared into his water glass. "It's a lethal combination, war and alcohol. So I stopped. I left and enrolled in grad school, got the idea for this business. Started a little therapy. Life sputtered and started up again. I guess that's the way it is. The warrior returns and somehow finds a way to shoehorn his way back into civilized life."

We were silent, both lost in our own thoughts.

"But you know, sometimes I still miss my time at that cabin, in those woods. It gave me something, you know, something not available anywhere else, or since."

I did indeed know.

My own father came home from the war, but he did not survive it. Soldiers were not rewarded for revealing their pain. Psychic damage was not to be exposed or explored and so was inadvertently passed along.

* * *

When I returned from my trip to the Carter-Moriah Range, I called my parents to tell them about the house I was purchasing. Ours was a strained and distant relationship. My trips back to Chicago were infrequent and fraught. I had been their difficult child, contentious and argumentative, the bringer of unwelcome observations, refusing to quietly and decorously bear in silence the cloud of turmoil that enshrouded our household. My father had all but ceased talking to anyone by this point, forever disappearing into a bottle and a book. My mother and I cautiously circled each other seeking terra firma in the only two safe topics of conversations we could find: books and decorating.

"What does it look like?" She asked.

"It's a post-and-beam Cape. Very simple, but beautiful. It sits on 5 acres. Oh, and it has a small pond, but I'm afraid it will take some work to open it up, to clear the brush around it. I have a guy coming next week to look at it. He said I could keep the cost down if I helped with the labor and burned the brush myself." My mother loved a bargain. I knew this would please her, although she eyed self-sufficiency with suspicion.

"So you've gone back to your roots."

Confused, "My roots?"

"Yes."

"I thought my roots were in Chicago?"

"I'm referring to your grandparents. Your grandmother's farm was her favorite place, God only knows why, and there's my father's family property in Tennessee. You were never there, but it's apparently in your blood."

Oh.

"Your sisters were born stepping off a city bus, but you were always just as comfort-

able having tea at the Ritz as covered in sweat on top of a mountain," she added absently.

So, she had been paying some attention. My life in the wild, camping and hiking, had never been acknowledged by her. Not once. It was too different from her life—an affront, I felt, to her gentility.

"But I do hope you make a point of getting down to the city every now and then. You don't want to become too provincial you know," she added as we hung up.

* * *

The undigested, unspoken trauma of one generation is always bestowed upon the next, an accidental legacy. We are porous, we humans, not bounded, demarcated, or as separate as we might wish ourselves. We take in and absorb whatever surrounds us, whether emotions or landscape, and this in turn shapes us. Loewald (1960) speaks of the ghosts in the unconscious, the legacies of unresolved traumas passed along from one generation to the next. And what cannot be spoken of persists most, but it does so in a vague and indistinct manner. My father's war experience, unspoken and unexplored, speciously called "battle fatigue" in his day, flooded our household and was ill-understood by any of us. He coped by retreating into a bottle. I coped by taking flight, and fortunately there was a grandmother, and a farm, at the end of that road. I was thus caught and held and imprinted with the mark of rural life and a love of the wild. I had unconsciously played upon the pastoral trope of country life, wilderness, and adventure as the pathway to interiority, as the passage to peace. And to some degree this worked. Since childhood it has been in wilderness that I find solace and insight.

There is the landscape of our birth, which indelibly imprints, and then for the fortunate, there is the landscape of choice, which can assist in the healing of old wounds. It is not the geography that cures, of course. It is the internal shift brought about when encountering new landscapes that loosens conflicts calcified by time and inattention. But just as trauma is passed along, so too are pleasure and passion inherited. My grandmother's farm and the respite I found in her and in the forms, shapes, and sensations of the natural world provided the foundation for healing and influenced my later love of wild mountainous territory. It also landed me where I have lived for almost 30 years.

And this much I do know: I belong where I have landed as much as if I had been born here.

References

Loewald, H. (1960). On the therapeutic action of psycho-analysis. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 41*, 16–33.

Penelope Norton

Hiraeth

Penelope Norton, PhD, practices psychology in Ormond Beach, Florida. She provides psychotherapy to children, teens, adults, couples, families, and seniors. She and her husband have three adult children. She offers readers the following wisdom: In case of fire, save the relationships!
psynorton@aol.com

Hiraeth: A home sickness for a home to which you cannot return.

—"Hiraeth," 2014, Collinsdictionary.com

I began building nests at a young age. Between two tall pines given my parents by my great grandmother, I smoothed down the tall grasses and quietly hid—to think, to pretend, to read, to tune in. It was a space that belonged to me. In her book, *House as a Mirror of Self,* author Claire Cooper Marcus (1995) writes of such childhood spaces: "Whether these places were called forts, dens, houses, hideaways or clubhouses, whether they were in the home or were found, modified or constructed,... [t]his is the beginning of the act of dwelling, or claiming one's place in the world" (p. 25).

The construction of human dwellings evolved from the construction of nests of primitive species and birds; it is deeply embedded in our mammalian psyche. Comparative psychologists and ethologists have posited that nest building and burrowing are sensitive tools in assessing animal well-being (Jirkof et al., 2013). Nest construction is associated with neuronal reward circuits involving motivation and reward, singing, copulation, affiliation, pair bonding, and incubation (Hall, Meddle, & Healy, 2015). Birds abandon threatened nests (Audubon bird rule #28), and often the eggs or young within. Although swans mate for life, following nest disruption they separate (Syroechkovsky, Litvin, & Gurtovaya, 2002). When box turtles are removed from their homes, "they will wander aimlessly, hopelessly trying to find their old home until they die" (boxturtles.com).

In an earlier paper (Norton, 2019), I wrote of attachment to place, i.e., the locale or environment in which one lives. Attachment to house or dwelling is another aspect of attachment to place. Attachments to home and to the environment encompassing home are parallel to human attachment (Scannell, 2013). Both develop through multi-sensory experiences and connections, and both evoke mourning when lost.

According to Scannell and Gifford (2017), houses provide physical and psychological comfort and a sense of security, supporting the view that, for some, home is a haven. Individuals who have been absent from their homes for an extended period of time express a great desire to return or visit, even at much effort or cost (Reimer, 2000). Attachment to homes provides belonging, memory support, and psychological security (Scannell, Cox, Fletcher, & Hykoop, 2016), with women reporting more benefits of attachment to their homes than do men (Scannell & Gifford, 2017). Stretched place bonds are associated with physical health problems, sadness, longing, and disorientation (Scannell et al., 2016).

Experientially, attachment to houses is sometimes bold and sometimes subtle. I was not particularly aware of my attachment to my grandmother's house until, in my 40s, I wanted to trade houses with a girlfriend. This fantasy transaction made no sense until I realized that her house was the exact mid-'60s floor plan of my paternal grandmother's house. When giving away his possessions near the end of his life, my father gave me a photograph, which he kept in his underwear drawer (a kind of intimacy), of *his* grandmother's farmhouse, which he had visited often during his childhood.

I have had 18 homes in my life. I left many of them by choice in order to move forward in my life. I left a few due to circumstances such as the job changes of my father or my husband. But the two homes lost to disasters were much more wrenching. When I was 3, our house was hit by a tornado and was uninhabitable for nearly a year. And when I was 61, my house, in which I had lived for over 30 years, was consumed by fire.

Since 2008, 26.4 million people were displaced from their homes by natural disasters (Hill, 2015). There is a home fire in the United States every 8 seconds, impacting 149,873 homes (National Fire Prevention Association). In 2013, 220,000 people lost their homes due to extreme storms and tornadoes, and 100,000 people lost their homes from floods in Colorado (Phillips, 2014). I was not alone in my losses, though it often felt that way.

Clare Cooper Marcus (1995) establishes that home loss, whether through divorce, death, urban renewal, or natural disaster, incurs feelings of shock, numbness, anger, sadness, and mourning. In studies of forced urban relocation, Fried (1963) found a constellation of psychological impacts titled "affliction," which included feelings of painful loss, homesickness, and tendency to idealize the former home. Loss of one's house has a disproportionally negative impact on women, because women report being more attached to their homes than men (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001).

Traumatic housing loss triggers relational costs as well. Following Hurricane Hugo, the statewide divorce rates increased, with the greatest increases occurring within the declared disaster areas (Cohan & Cole, 2002). In the short aftermath of disaster, there is a higher frequency of discordant family functioning (McDermott & Cobhan, 2012).

My memories of the tornado that ransacked our home when I was 3 are sketchy. I remember the tangled mess of my swing set. I remember the distress of my neighbor Eddie, who lost not only his house but also his dog in the storm. Mostly, I remember

my mother's distress, her grief at the ruination of her space and its particulars: curtains, carpets, pictures, and other carefully selected aspects of her nest. She was not herself. When fire ripped through my house over 50 years later, I became a member of that same group, to which I did not want to belong.

On a hot Saturday night in May, my husband and I, our 18-year-old daughter, and our two cats went to bed as usual, in the house in which we had lived for 30 years. At 3:00 a.m. the fire alarm began beeping, and my husband and I nudged each other to see who would get up to turn it off, assuming the batteries had run out. Awake, we went downstairs to see about it. My husband opened the basement door and hollered, "Call 911!" My daughter, a week short of high school graduation, came downstairs yelling as only a teen would, "Will you guys turn that thing off!" By then, the first floor was filled with smoke, and we had to walk out the front door in the clothes we were wearing.

Sofia Naz (2018), who lost her home in a California wildfire, writes, "The Native Americans consider fire to be a kind of sacred purification that reveals the true essence of a situation." The three of us, and one cat, survived. We would discover that in addition to our bricks and mortar house, we had built a house of connection. Our connections would be part of everything that followed.

First, we were loved. My close friend Sara housed us for the night of the fire and for a week thereafter. Our church arranged for us to live in a condo owned by another member of the parish until we could work through details with our insurance company and arrange for housing. We sat in the front yard of our burned home for nearly a week, inventorying salvageable goods, enumerating and discarding that which was unsalvageable. Friends came by bringing food, clothing, and support. My close friend Linda took over my daughter's graduation party, moving it to her house and gathering a crew to put it together. Amanda's boyfriend, Pat, and his mother took in our surviving cat. Our clergy friends Lex and Luisa helped us bury our cat that died. Our two sons came home and helped. Our eldest, then a graduate student, and my sister, a designer and realtor, stayed for 3 weeks to help. Friends housed them as well. The Academy of Psychotherapists (AAP) blessed me by taking up a collection on our behalf, responding to a vital need. Friends gave us furniture. When our church showered us with household goods from ironing boards to kitchenware, my response was, "Surely there are more needy people in the community." I could just barely receive the love offered us: It was wonderful; it was too much. My lifelong aversion to my own neediness and vulnerability was blown wide open. Even so, at one point I had an emergency room visit with chest pains; my heart *was* broken, just not in the medical sense.

During the month living in the condo, we replaced computers and phones, clothing, and toiletries, then found more permanent rental housing and moved in. I will never forget my friend's affirmation of me, when after a few weeks, she walked in, looked around, and said, "You've made a home." It was not home; yet, I (we) made it our home just in time for our last child, our daughter, to leave for college. I was driven to nest, instinctually, even under very trying conditions.

In the next phases of our loss, we were accompanied—walked with. The support was not quite as visible, but equally vital, because the next 2 years were a process of taking two steps forward and two steps back. We had to find permanent housing, decide whether or not to build, and face the administrative tasks required by insurance. These tasks comprised the work of a full-time job, although we both already had those. I spoke

with a woman who had lost her home in a fire; she gave me a roadmap. When she told me that recovery would take 5 years, my response alternated between disbelief, anger, and fear.

More than these raw emotions, I now think of this 1st year as a period of numbness, although I was not aware of the numbness at the time. My husband and I spent as much weekend time as we could spare walking in local natural settings. The cadence and quiet of our walks soothed us. I walked with my girlfriends, who listened to my distress. We had many consultants among our friends and acquaintances who stepped forward with their expertise and advice. We went for a vacation with our middle son and his wife. Our eldest helped us with the complex financial messes we had. Our daughter prepared the itemized lists of the thousands of household items required for insurance reimbursement. My book club gave me a Christmas shower, providing decorations and ornaments to soothe the ache of a holiday without our home and without the sentimental ornaments and decorations collected over the years of our marriage. The 1st year ended with half of our rental garage full of fire salvage and the remains of our house being razed.

Also in that 1st year, 6 months after the fire, we lost both of our mothers, ages 87 and 92, after final illnesses and hospitalizations. These losses added still more family complexity and emotional distress, more time off work, and more responsibilities. Although these losses were expected, they added to the burdens of grief, disorientation, and administrative work.

Indeed, the first 2 years were filled with the strong sense of disorientation, in which unpredictably, grief would break through. Chronically, there were questions of missing items—searching for that tool, utensil, or clothing accessory that no longer existed. It felt like aimless wandering. Grief for experiences in our former home, even more than things, sought and found me. I missed the apricity felt through the French doors of our living room. I missed the feeling of the wooden floors of the kitchen on my bare feet. I missed arriving *home* after work. I missed cooking in my own kitchen. We were immersed in loss.

At the end of the 2nd year after the fire, we entered yet another phase of our recovery...angry and agitated. Every time my husband approached construction of a new house with the phrase, "Just like our old house...," I was annoyed. In order to recoup insurance monies from our largest financial investment, we had to rebuild a house of similar size on our original lot. It took several months of conflict for my husband to persuade me to understand this, while we looked at optional homes for sale that neither of us wanted. Developmentally, we were becoming empty nesters and could have lived in a much smaller home. Making peace with this decision, we chose a builder who, it emerged, was dishonest, and we lost 8 or 9 months on that experience, having to start over. The insurance company quit paying for our housing, saying that the average family rebuilt within 2 years, leaving us to pay rent as well as mortgage payments. Our landlord's daughter decided to move back from up north and wanted to live in the home we were renting, causing us to have to find another house to rent and to move once again. We alternated between numbing symptoms, watching endless reruns of *Law and Order,* and rage and frustration. Although some of our friends offered solid support, others began asking, "What's taking you so long? Do you have a house yet?" evoking more frustration and anger, and an increasing sense of shame that we were not moving along faster. The poet Mary Oliver lost a home. She wrote: "...don't tell us / how to behave in

anger, in longing, in loss, in home- / sickness, don't tell us, / dear friends" (Oliver, 2001).

So, we moved again. This rental house was built in the '60s and had regular plumbing problems; if one took a shower in the master bath, the toilet backed up. Combating roaches, endemic to Florida "the insect state," required our constant vigilance. Shortly after we moved, Hurricane Matthew hit our coast. As our rental was on the coastal barrier island, we had to evacuate. After boarding up the rental house, we left for a week. We returned to debris 10 feet high on either side of the access road to the house; we had no power, the entire contents of our refrigerator had to be emptied, and we had some water intrusion in carpets and in the garage. We each lost 2 and a half weeks of work. We felt farther behind than ever and so very unsettled.

And then there were my clients. Practice in a smallish community is so different than in urban communities. My clients knew about the house fire. They could not resist asking me about it. They could easily drive past my gutted house and witness the post-fire drama of emptying the house onto the lawn, sorting our things there. I had had, by then, several clients who had lost homes in fires or hurricanes. One, whose home had just been repaired after the three hurricanes of 2004, did not want to "work with a therapist who lost her home." Another literally fell into my office bawling about "what happened to you." One client's story created strange and uncomfortable validation for my distress. She had been clean and sober, a healthy weight, and happily married until she and her husband renovated their kitchen; during the year of renovations she relapsed, gained weight, and fought endlessly with her husband. After Hurricane Matthew, I had numerous clients whose homes or businesses were uninhabitable for months or years. I deeply knew their stories; I didn't want to know their stories. Their pain was validating; their pain added to my distress. It was a transference and counter-transference quagmire through which I sought consultation and soldiered on.

Returning to routine after Hurricane Matthew, I finally found a model home I liked that met the insurance company specifications determined by the parameters of our previous home. We leapt on the new model, which our salesperson said could be built in a year, gathered retirement and estate monies to speed the process (since the insurance reimbursements were long from settled), and signed a contract. We waited for their appointments to select details of the house to be built. We spent the next couple of months cleaning out the contents of my mother-in-law's home, some 2 hours away, adding her salvage to the fire salvage already stored in our garage. Three months after we signed the contract, our salesperson disappeared, the contract was lost, and with many apologies from the sales manager of the company, we started over on the house contract. We felt hopeful about the house we were to have.

Construction did not begin on our replacement house until the beginning of the third summer after the fire. Excessive rain, as well as permitting and engineering issues, had delayed construction. This was a new part-time job: Building a house requires hundreds of decisions, big and small, some of which required us to agree as a couple, some of which required us to negotiate with the builder, and all of which involved money, which continued to be something of a shot in the dark because we did not know how much insurance monies we would actually receive. We were pummeled with another hurricane—Irma. Rinse and repeat….put up the shutters, evacuate, lose work, lose power, lose food, clean up debris and water damage, delay construction, and see more clients whose houses have been damaged or destroyed. And yet, ironically, I felt less alone in my own

loss, albeit more worried about the costs of climate change as I witnessed the volume of people losing their homes.

Throughout the previous 3 years, we were replacing household necessities and furnishings. Initially there was a longing to replace the things we had had. We found our old bedroom set and our dining room chairs on eBay. As I had learned from hypnosis training, engaging the brain on search mode was relaxing. Combing thrift shops, antique stores, and estate sales was pleasant. I was able to replace the antique desk my grandparents had given me. Although the desk was no longer the one that they had actually given, the mostly matching "stand-in" desk reminds me of their gift. I was able to replace pieces of our wedding china that were lost or broken. But, in many cases, first I had to grieve a loss, letting it go, and only then was there space to decide on something new. It continued to be terribly unnerving (and still is) to believe that I had a common household object, and to look for it, only to realize that it had been lost in the fire and had not been replaced. Sometimes, in this process, it feels as though the fire is gaslighting me, making me feel crazy in my certainty that a tool or piece of clothing or an accessory is in my possession.

Although we believed we would be in our new home after 6 to 8 months of construction, we did not actually move (for the fourth time) until just past the fourth anniversary of the fire. Three months before we moved, my husband ended negotiations with the insurance company and came to a settlement. Six months after we moved, we received our final check. By most measures, we were "made whole" (in insurance speak) with regard to the cost to rebuild our house and the first 2 years of rental payments. We do have a few photographs of our former home, which my husband wants to display in our foyer. We were able to reframe and restore two large pieces of stained glass that hung in the entry of our original home; they hang in the entry of our new home. By rebuilding on the site of our former home, we have been able to reclaim our place in this particular landscape.

We were lucky that we survived, thanks to the fire alarm. We were lucky that we had a good insurance policy. We were blessed by many friends and loved ones who stepped up for us. But the costs of the fire were immeasurable. The fire had taken an emotional toll. My weight had ballooned. My husband had postponed needed hip surgery that seemed impossible in the face of the paperwork he had in addition to his job. At one point, one of our children, in a moment of frustration, said, "Every single person in this family needs to be in therapy." And, in fact, all but one of us did go to therapy in the first 2 years after the fire. For me, couples therapy helped aright the marital ship; it did not move our relationship forward, but I believe it kept us from sinking.

Six months after our move into the replacement house, I felt awash in sadness. Safely nested again, there was space to feel more of the sadness that surrounded all the events of the past 4 and a half years: the loss of my mother and mother-in-law, the empty nest created by our daughter's departure, the loss of so many sentimental objects in our home. There had been still more losses. We had had to drop out of many sustaining activities due to the avalanche of work: time in the natural world after the 1st year, participation in the choir in which we had sung for many years, editing for Voices, recreation. It felt sad to have lost so much of my time in "all things fire," especially precious in my late middle age. I find myself asking, once again, "Who am I now?"

I continue, now 5 years after the fire, to work on finishing details of our new home. But, I have lost weight; my husband has a new hip; we are walking outdoors again. Like a nesting bird, I am much more grounded and content. I am happily cooking and entertaining from my new kitchen, appreciating that joy all the more for the years of its absence, of cooking in small, dark kitchens that were alien to my needs. Unlike mated swans that have lost their nest, we did not separate. We did not wander aimlessly forever like box turtles removed from their nests, although we did wander aimlessly many times in 5 years. My nest and my female mammalian need to nest have been restored.

I carry the home to which I brought my babies and spent so many years of my life in my heart. I have a much deeper understanding of the impact of home disruption and home loss among the many clients I see. I am even more passionate as an environmentalist, knowing first-hand the impact of home loss and displacement on the fabric of family life, multiplied many times over when a whole community loses their homes. I can speak with conviction about prevention of fire losses: Do you have good, working home fire alarms? Have you a video or photographic record of all your belongings? Have you built a good marriage, a strong family, and deep community ties to sustain you in case of such a loss?

Recently our eldest son and his wife came for their first visit to our new house. The morning they left, standing in the driveway with their suitcases, he said to me, "It was good to be home." Although he had visited Florida, and the houses in which we lived, he hadn't been "home" in 5 years. Neither had we. But, I am home again. We are home again. ▼

References

Audubon (rule #28). National Audubon Society. http://www.audubon.org/news/birdist-rule-28-know-when-birds-think-youre-too-close-to-their-nests

Boxturtles.com. Behavior in the wild. http://www.boxturtles.com/

Cohan, C., & Cole, S. (2002). Life course transitions and natural disaster: Marriage, birth and divorce following Hurricane Hugo. *Journal of Family Psychology, 16,* 14-25. doi: 10.1037/0893-3200.16.1.14

Fried, M. (1963). Grieving for a lost home. In L. Duhl (Ed.) *The urban condition* (pp. 151-171). New York and London: Basic Books.

Hall, Z.J., Meddle, S.L., & Healy, S.D. (2015). From neurons to nests: Nest building as a model in behavioural and comparative neuroscience. *Journal of Ornithology, 156(Suppl 1),* 133-143. doi: 10.1007/s10336-015-1214-5

Hidalgo, M., & Hernández, B. (2001). Place attachment: Conceptual and empirical questions. *Journal of Environmental Psychology. 21,* 273-281. doi: 10.1006/jevp.2001.0221

Hiraeth. (2014, October 03). In *Collins dictionary.* [Word lover's blog.] Retrieved from https://www.collinsdictionary.com/word-lovers-blog/new/14-untranslatable-emotions-that-english-cant-convey,155,HCB.html

Jirkof, P., Fleischmann, T., Cesarovic, N., Rettich, A., Vogel, J., & Arras, M. (2013). Assessment of post-surgical distress and pain in laboratory mice by nest complexity scoring. *Lab Anim.* 2013; Jul *47*(3), 153-61. 5.

Marcus, C. C. (1995). *House as a mirror of self: Exploring the deeper meaning of home.* Newburyport, MA: Conari Press.

McDermott, B., & Cobham, V. (2012). Family functioning in the aftermath of natural disaster. *BMC-Psychiatry, 12*, 55. Retrieved from http:/ www.biomedcentral.com/1471-244x/12/55

Naz, S. (2018, February 13). How losing my home in a wildfire taught me to value what we have inherited and protect it for future generations. *Dawn.* February 13, 2018. Retrieved from https://www.

dawn.com/news/1389181

National Fire Protection Association (nfpa). Retrieved from https://www.nfpa.org/News-and-Research/Data-research-and-tools/US-Fire-Problem

Norton, P. (2019). Mourning and the landscape. *Voices: The Art and Science of Psychotherapy, 55*(2), 83-92.

Oliver, M. (2001). "On losing a house." *Michigan Quarterly Review. Reimagining Place.* Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.act2080.0040.115

Phillips, A. (2014, September 17). Natural disasters displaced 22 million people last year, 3 times more than war. *ThinkProgress*. Retrieved from https://thinkprogress.org/natural-disasters-displaced-22-million-people-last-year-3-times-more-than-war-fdda85982e22/

Reimer, J. (2000). Job relocation: Sources of stress and sense of home. *Community, Work & Family, 3*(2), 295-217.

Scannell, L. (2013). *The bases of bonding: The psychological functions of place attachment in comparison to interpersonal attachment.* (Doctoral Dissertation) University of Victoria, British Columbia.

Scannell, L., Cox, R., Fletcher, S., & Heykoop, C. (2016). "That was the last time I saw my house": The importance of place attachment among children and youth in disaster contexts. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 58*(1-2), 158-173.

Scannell, L., & Gifford, R. (2017). Place attachment enhances psychological need satisfaction. *Environment and Behavior, 49*(4), 359-389.

Syroechkovsky, E., Litvin, K., & Gurtovaya, E. (2002). Nesting ecology of Bewick's swans on Vaygach Island, Russia. *Waterbirds: The International Journal of Waterbird Biology, 25*, 221-226. Retrieved from http:/www.jstor.org/stable/1522356

The ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned.

—Maya Angelou

Lee Blackwell

Lee Blackwell, PhD, is in private practice in Newport Beach and Huntington Beach, California, specializing in couples therapy and sexual issues. After receiving his PhD from Florida State University, he received training in sex therapy in the Human Sexuality Program at UCLA, staying on as a supervisor and then as Co-Director from 1983 to 1993. He has presented nationally and internationally on sexuality, psychotherapy, and neuroscience. Lee is a past president and Fellow of the American Academy of Psychotherapists.
lee@drblackwell.net

Home: Is Place Destiny?

In some ways, I have never felt at home, and in other ways, I have felt at home everywhere I've been. I was born in my grandparents' home in Piedmont, Missouri, population 1,977. World War II had just ended and my parents had returned home to Piedmont from Northern California, where they spent the war years working as civilians for the Navy. My father bought a Kaiser-Frazer automobile dealership and was ready to settle in for the long haul. However, the manufacturer could not produce enough cars, and eventually my father's business failed and the nest egg was gone.

Knowing that California was the land of opportunity, my father drove to Southern California in search of work. Several months later, my mother, my brother, and I, now age 4, boarded a train and joined him in a tiny trailer in a suburb of Los Angeles. My parents were pursuing the postwar dream of home ownership and upward mobility. We moved four times in 6 years, to better and better rental homes, until my parents finally bought a house in a new suburban development in a former orange grove. This was my home from age 10 until I left to go to UCLA.

Being alone was normal to me. My parents both worked my entire childhood, so my brother, who was 4 and a half years older, and I were true latch-key kids. We were told not to leave the house while our parents were at work, though each of us made small forays when we could. My mother was available by phone, but she discouraged us from calling unless it was very urgent. The anger that my brother and I felt towards our parents for being left was taken out on each other, and I was always at a disadvantage. I was too young to fit into my brother's

social life, and I had to fend for myself. I spent a lot of time on the weekends doing chores, especially pulling weeds. In high school, my attachment to the house showed in building a small fish pond in the side yard, which was hidden from view of any potential guests. Our anger was also expressed when I assisted my brother in cutting a hole in the bottom of his closet and digging a trench to a side opening so he could come and go without our parents knowing. This was the house that I came back to for holidays and vacations until my parents moved to their last house, in Orange County, California. While we did convene at these two houses, neither of them had the feel of home for me.

My sense of home was shaped by my family's annual trek back to Missouri and the reunions that brought together virtually every relative we had. My birth home was always an important stop, and we would often visit the farms that my parents grew up on. I was particularly fond of my father's log home, which was built with hand labor and basic tools in 1850. The house and chimney are still standing, though the roof has collapsed. There was a second story where the children slept and got into mischief. There was a well where water was hand pumped for daily use. I was fascinated by how the squared logs were notched on each end and then locked together to form walls, just as my toy log cabin did. The outhouse, now gone, was the only toilet. It was gross to me, but I wanted

to know about how it worked and why it was placed where it was. It had to be close enough to the house to be convenient, but far enough away and downwind to reduce the chances of the smell reaching the house. I laughed at the stories of treks to the outhouse in snow and ice. Peeking in the windows of the house, I imagined what it like was like in "the old days." I pictured my family crossing the continent riding a wagon pulled by two horses, not knowing for sure what they would find. This gave me a feeling of being part of something larger and braver than me alone. I've returned to the log house every time I have gone back to Missouri. Oddly, I find myself wanting to save it and rebuild it, even though it is in the middle of nowhere and I would never want to live there. Having lost my birth home to a park because of repeated flooding, the log house is the last physical connection to my father's ancestors.

After graduating from UCLA, it appeared that I would be drafted and sent to Vietnam so I decided to join the Air Force. Even though I requested other assignments, the Air Force, in their wisdom, made me a munitions officer. I moved from San Antonio to Denver and then to Germany, where I had a traveling job locking and unlocking nuclear weapons. I was literally on the road every 2 to 3 weeks. I easily made friends, even in Germany, where I deepened my ability to speak the language. I returned home to graduate school at Florida State University and then lived in Ohio, North Carolina, moved back to Ohio, and finally moved back to California, where I have remained for the last four decades.

Having moved so frequently, home is a not a single physical place for me. Home is more the people I identify with, which has always been a problem. My parents were solid Southern Baptists; I tried to be a sincere believer but finally had to reject religion forever at age 18. This and my interest in learning made me feel different from my more rural, religious, and conservative relatives. One of my cousins used to taunt me with the name, "Schoolboy." My decision to attend UCLA saved me from going to Baylor University, much to my parents' dismay. My father thought it was a mistake, but I feel like it saved my life. While I wanted to please my parents, the thought of spending 4 years immersed in religious dogma and parochial thought at Baylor terrified me. I would have to sacrifice myself and continue to live in the suffocating religiosity of my childhood. UCLA felt like a doorway into the larger world of science, philosophy, art, and literature. I felt, "These are my people." No longer needing to defend myself from religious absolutism was a huge relief. In some ways, my identification with UCLA gives me a feeling of home. I am a total fan! I feel tremendous gratitude to my parents for being able to support me in my choice.

In my travels I have tried to learn a few words of the local language, including Arabic for example, as a way to make the place feel more like my home. I would make the effort to pronounce words as a native would, although it was not always possible. Being able to communicate with local people felt more connecting and less like observing.

In my moves, I was looking for home in rural locales, but never quite felt settled. When I was in Ohio for the second time, I went into individual therapy with the late Howard Fink, PhD. After exploring for many weeks where I wanted to be, he said to me, "Every day that you don't do something to get to California is a wasted day." I was back in California 2 months later, and have never left.

In recent years I have come to appreciate lineage as a way of feeling a sense of belonging. It helps answer the questions of where did I come from and what has shaped me. I

am fascinated by the long genetic and epigenetic history that resulted in this one individual, me. I arrived at a particular point in time and place, with a lot of mixed baggage from long ago. I am descended from Robert Blackwell, who was born in England about 1620 and was probably a Royalist. As the Royalist's situation deteriorated, Robert chose to move to Virginia about 1645. My branch of the family moved to North Carolina, and my great-great-grandfather, who built the log house, moved from North Carolina to Missouri. Wondering and wandering seem to be in my blood.

While I never felt "at home" in Missouri, I find that I am attached to particular experiences and objects from my childhood. The stories I heard, and even the ones I didn't hear, and the way people actually interacted with me are all part of my attachment to place. The experiences of my forbears changed their DNA epigenetically, thus altering gene expression. These changes were passed to me through the generations. Trauma can have a dramatic effect on people who then go on to have children who will have reaction patterns as if they had gone through the trauma, whether or not it was discussed in vivid detail. Eight generations before me, an ancestor left England during their Civil War, and many of those who followed moved many hundreds of miles to establish new homes from Virginia to North Carolina, Missouri, and finally, California. My forbearers' traumatic experiences of pain, loss, and being uprooted live in me to this day, both consciously and unconsciously. For example, when I am with people, I am really present, but I am hesitant to contact them between meetings because of a fear of feeling rejected as intrusive or too needy. This is part of my legacy of uprootedness.

Knowing that everyone has a long history inside them makes it easier for me to not take their behavior as personally. I ask myself, "What fight are they fighting?" More importantly, I ask myself, "What fight am I fighting?" Knowing my history gives me a story about why I am reacting to things the way I am and some distance from which to reflect on my reactions and behavior to re-evaluate the current moment. I can see this in my desire to explore the world and to find a home in the American Academy of Psychotherapists (AAP) with "my people" scattered around the globe. I can also see it in my reaction to conflict, which I either avoid or go all in. Now, I realize that perhaps today's fight is a stand-in for a past conflict, and there is no need to fight or avoid today.

Home can be a secure base from which we venture with confidence, or it can be a place of insecurity, or even danger. My caretakers were anxious, pre-occupied, and non-self-reflective, which led me to dismiss my need for others or a home. Although my parents gave me many gifts, I wish they had been more present and self-reflective and had understood my mind. If so, they could have given me an internal "home" that provided more security when I was away from home. I have had to overcome my feeling of being alone and untethered. Psychotherapy, relationships, being a parent, and AAP have given me the fabled "earned secure attachment," at least most of the time. ▼

A Sestina[1]

The Memory Spider

By Linda Tillman

The creak of the long-unopened door stirs stories of home,
Pushing in, to corners and crevices, sticky with the webs of spiders,
And the girl, mixed in the strands, finds it hard to untangle.
Touching the sticky part of the web, she wishes she, in her own weaving,
Could smooth the tales that echo so that she could change history.
Wouldn't it be simpler if somewhere inside she found love?

The kitchen, musty, now useless, had been a place for love,
Dispensed with her mother's biscuits around the table at home,
With a stinging comment or look, sealing moments in history,
Leaving the girl unable to keep herself safe, as would the spider.
Once she asked for long hair, for braids and pony tails, weaving,
But her mother said, only if you braid it yourself, brush, and untangle.

Caught in the sticky strands, the girl struggles to untangle
And find her way back to what remnants there might be of love.
She searches every corner for a sign, but all she finds is the weaving
Of the sticky webs that cover every part of these rooms called home.
She imagines how it would be if she were the nimble-footed spider,
Able to stand on the web moorings and tip-toe her way through history.

1 *Sestina (def.): a poem with six stanzas of six lines and a final triplet, all stanzas having the same six words at the line-ends in six different sequences that follow a fixed pattern, and with all six words appearing in the closing three-line envoi, two per line.

She in elegant costume on the wall, she with her brothers, preserved history.
Was she a happy girl? Unknowing? Or young as she was, could she untangle?
Or maybe she distracted herself as the fly caught in the web of the spider
Must do, facing the inevitable. Then, a mother's buttered biscuit might feel like love.
She picks up a pink and gray silk scarf, her mother's, a flutter of home.
She sniffs the scarf, then shaken by her mother's smell, weeping, weaving.

Stumbling through room after room, she finds herself weaving,
Unable to walk parallel with the floorboards, trying places in each room's history.
Her old rag doll, head down in the corner of a closet, its overturned home,
Old books, old yarn, old sweaters, old scarves, a web to untangle.
She aches to embrace a thought, a memory, a feeling of love,
Grieving, and envious of the sure-footed ability of the spider.

She pictures the tiny, sensitive hairs on the feet of the spider,
The ones that allow her to create sticky webs and not get caught in her weaving.
If the girl had those hairs, she might brush across slight scraps of love
In the rooms, the objects, the smells, the hurts of history.
Her memories of harsh words, too tenacious and clinging to untangle,
She flings open the door of her mother's sticky entrapping home.

Outside, the dew-glittered web of the garden spider, spun for now history.
Her own insides weaving, she closes her eyes as the strands untangle
Thoughts of her grown-up loves, her children, her grandchildren, her home.

Kathryn P. Van der Heiden

Kathryn P. Van der Heiden, MS, MAT has lived in many countries and speaks six languages. This journey has caused her to be deeply interested in multilingual and multicultural issues as a therapist. She has been in private practice in Dayton, Ohio, for 35 years. She studied at the Jungian Institute in Zurich, the Cleveland Gestalt Institute, and the Institute for Integrative Psychotherapy. She sings for peace, diversity, and justice in the World House Choir.
kathvdh@gmail.com

The Littlest Drawer

Home is where the heart is.
—Pliny the Elder, Roman philosopher

Our hearts often yearn for home, whether it is a place, an idea, a memory, or a sense of self and belonging. Sometimes it is a physical place, such as the house of a beloved parent or grandparent, that graces our memories and holds a certain kind of comfort. The pull of home is about the conscious and unconscious connections that we make with place, experiences, and self-expression.

Carl Jung (Jung & Jaffe, 1963) talked about the symbolism of a house as the various parts of a person's psyche, with the kitchen symbolizing the center of the self. No matter where I have lived, how large or small my living space, it is the kitchen where people gather. The kitchen is usually redolent of food being cooked, where there is little need for pretense. We gravitate there to find nourishment. At its best it is a gathering place. If there is a table, it is where the family gathers to engage one another in conversation and to share food and community. The kitchen was where I could always find my mother at her happiest. She would often be humming tunes from her childhood, learned before the difficulties and personal tragedies of World War II (WWII) descended on her life.

From my earliest memory, there was a little drawer in the kitchen in every house or apartment in which we lived. In it were all the essentials that my mother needed for fixing the little things that go wrong in a house: scotch tape to wrap packages, a small box of bandaids, several screwdrivers, a pair of scissors, a measuring tape, a

ruler, a small box of nails and another box of thumb tacks, batteries, a small pad of paper with the numbers of repairmen, a small roll of ribbon, a utility knife, a putty knife, a small roll of twine, and matches. It was at once a trove of treasures and a space that eventually began to mean stability and comfort.

We started moving to different countries when I was 4 years old. My father worked for a tire company that needed someone to open a new plant in Casablanca. He was suited to this job because he spoke French, and no one else wanted to go to North Africa. That was in 1954, when the Moroccans were fighting to liberate their homeland from years of French occupation. It was a time when anyone who had a white complexion was suspect and considered to be French.

We were moving from a small town in the Midwest, which at that time was a community with little diversity. We lived in a tidy little starter house in a newly developed neighborhood where everything was peaceful. A grocery was within walking distance, I had friends in the neighborhood, and everything was clean and new.

Morocco was a very contrasting experience. The most obvious difference was that it was a country at war. It was a tumultuous time. As Caucasians, no matter what our nationality, we were considered to be the enemy. It was a place where confusion was the primary felt emotion in a foreign environment. French and various dialects of Arabic swirled around me. I could not understand what was being said. I did not know how to make sense of the rhythm, intonation, and meaning of the words. In addition, the smells of this new place were strong. Sweet and acrid spices intermingled with the odors of humanity. The saltiness of the ocean came on a breeze from less than a mile away. I remember gripping my mother's hand with all my strength when walking in the streets. The experience in its totality was bewildering.

Morocco, in those early days, was mostly a third world country. It was visually beautiful, with ochre ground and swaying green palm trees. It was also frightening. Going outside of the rock enclosure that surrounded our house was often an anxiety provoking experience. Besides the foreign sights, sounds, and smells, there were the deep, dark, and cautious eyes of the people themselves. There were children carrying other children on their backs begging in the streets. They were dirty and barefoot, and their loads looked heavy. Moroccans tend to walk up to you looking right into your eyes before looking away. I know that as a child I was already prone to staring with eyes wide open. I generally looked right back and often wished I had not done so, as the eyes I saw were rarely friendly in those days. A picture that I can easily conjure up is one in which I am holding on to my mother's skirt as she stops to buy something at the meat market. I am wide-eyed, with no smile on my face, trying to take in the world around me. If I could have crawled under my mother's skirt I am sure that I would have done so.

Over the years of living in Morocco my impression of the place began to change. The sounds and the smells became familiar. I learned French, and I loved going to the French school, in which I thrived. The French occupation of Morocco ended. There were magnificent festivals with galloping horses, ululating cries of celebration, and drumbeats that echo even now in my soul as I write. I can picture myself there. The smell of the salt air, the sound of galloping horses, the odor of the spicy chickpea soup that broke the fasting during Ramadan, and the cries to Allah of the Muezzin from the mosques that woke me up in the morning are palpable. I can still feel the scirocco winds that came down from the Sahara bringing unbearable heat and the sand that crept right under the

door jams, filling the corners of the house with fine sand dust and stinging bare legs. It was exotic with a strangeness that became familiar, and it became home. It was a place that still echoes in my psyche.

Moving and growing in a family of immigrant parents who spoke with foreign accents was the backbone of my life. They became naturalized citizens the year before I was born. We were all American. We were a unit of four that spoke interchangeably in more than one language. We had a history of depending on one another. We moved from Morocco back to America, then to Italy and then to Belgium. Many people over the years have remarked that I had a charmed childhood, using words like "that must have been wonderful and exciting." My sister and I really had no choice about where we lived, and had the usual childhood needs and desires. Our needs, desires, dreams, and friendships were often interrupted by the next move. The definition of home was our quartet. The houses changed. The landscape was remarkably different from one place to another. The expectation of teachers, culture, and peers was something to get used to. Home was the four of us. I do think that my sense of self at times felt as though it was in a tumbler. School in particular was a challenge. I did learn how to speak a multitude of languages and to be able to get by in most of them, but I cannot say that it did not affect my sense of belonging. The many changes were interesting and became the building blocks of my personal development. Each new location became home for a time.

I was born American, but little about who I was readily defined me as an American except for my passport. Over the years, I have thought of myself at times as a person without a home. At other times I have thought of myself as more European than American. My values were informed by those of my European parents and the countries in which we lived. I did not feel that I belonged to any one country. What I carried within me became more important than belongings that surrounded me.

It was in Morocco that I first realized that there was a small drawer in the kitchen. It turned out to be an important discovery. At times I am homesick for the country, the food, the people of every color of brown, the swaying of the palm trees, and the smell of the ocean. Tears of joy and sadness intermingle, and the warmth of the totality of my experience there reminds me that I first felt at home there.

In 1961, we moved back to Ohio. I protested loudly and refused to come out of my room when my parents announced that we were leaving. How could I leave a place that was home? I came to understand my mother's reasoning and the fatigue of this strange and difficult land to live in. In the 6 years that we lived there, my sister and I had most of the childhood diseases, with complications. My mother likely got tired of worrying about our health. She wanted to go back to a more homogenous life.

I experienced the move as tearing me away from everything I had come to know. I just did not want to go. I was filled with a flood of tears as I realized that I had no choice in the matter. We left early in June and travelled by ship to New York. We arrived at dawn in the New York Harbor to see the Statue of Liberty greeting us. It was a sight that left me breathless.

A few days later we were traveling again, and I was ostensibly going "home." I was going back to the place where I was born. As we travelled by train back to Ohio, there was plenty of time to stand by the large windows looking at what seemed like endless green fields. At one point I began humming, and a fellow passenger remarked to my mother that I seemed to be humming the music to "America the Beautiful" as the landscape of

farms and fields unfolded before me. My unconscious was remembering.

Living in Cuyahoga Falls was bland. Gone were the colors of North Africa, gone the smells redolent of spices and dirt, gone the ululating sounds of women in celebration. I no longer spoke English, though I could understand it. The little I spoke sounded odd to my ears. I was again a stranger in a strange land. I did not feel at home. Because I was American born everyone expected me to be American, act American, and know how to behave culturally. My school peers laughed when I spoke with an accent or spoke to my sister in French. I could not easily acclimate to what felt like a cardboard, unfamiliar, paper doll world. School stopped being interesting, and even the language that I had come to love and consider my own was taken away from me one step at a time. I felt bereft. My schoolmates seemed more interested in recess than in learning. My best friend was not there, and I missed her. My heart yearned to return to Morocco. I felt displaced, out of my own skin, and unable to connect. Clearly I was affected by the move and the cultural differences that I mostly could not understand and did not relate to. I was deeply sad. I seemed to have lost an engaged part of myself in this move.

Three years later, my father announced that we were moving to Italy. I was elated. The only person I would miss was my new best friend. I could not wait to leave a place where I never felt at home. We spent the next 3 weeks learning Italian every evening while eating dinner. Anticipating the rejection I felt in the United States when I arrived speaking French, I was determined to know how to speak some Italian as quickly as possible. It was an easier move.

Besides, I had learned that the little drawer followed us. In America, the kitchen was still the place where I spent time when not in school. Periodically I would be asked to get something, to help my mother, from the littlest drawer. I imagined every time that it still contained a small part of Morocco. I could close my eyes and imagine that I heard the waves crashing on the rocks and believe that I could return for a moment to Morocco. Perhaps the Moroccan leather change purse that had a place in that drawer helped me remember. There is nothing that smells quite like Moroccan leather.

I have had many clients over the years who fail to mention that they moved a lot in childhood. When we stumble on that fact, I am curious about how the moves affected them. They often want to shrug the question off and are surprised when my curiosity persists. Only a few of them crossed the ocean in their moves; nevertheless, each move affected them in some profound way. A door seemed to open up in their consciousness, and the stories emerged about feeling lost, alone, fearful, and out of place. I notice the changes in their voice, the change of tone in their skin, as the stories come spilling out. Each move taught them something about their ability to cope as well as ways in which they felt estranged. Every move changed their experience of the world. Even if they only moved to a different state within the United States, they discovered different customs, speech patterns, and attitudes. Some of those differences felt welcoming and mind expanding. Others felt stifling.

The multiple meanings of what home could be entered into those conversations. Each client carried within themselves a feeling of what home was and was not.

Even in the United States, the dialects of language change in an often nuanced but profound way. Our language carries our experience. Our language influences how we experience the world. In the practice of psychotherapy, I notice the subtleties in language use.

A woman who spoke fluent English came to deal with depression and anger. I noticed the hint of an accent in her perfect use of the English language. It was as if she was trying to hide something with her voice. That is not necessarily unusual as stress often changes the way we enunciate words. It turned out that she had been hiding her British accent for two decades. She came to the United States as a teen and found it difficult to fit in with her British accent. So she determined to change how she spoke. She deliberately altered who she was. In that process she lost some of her identity. She fit in better, but she never did feel entirely at home in America.

Somewhere in the historical context of being Americans, we are all immigrants. For some of us it is closer to the bone than others. The issues related to being displaced can be both national and international. The effect of those displacements can be both positive and negative. It all depends on the context. Inherent in the act of being displaced is knowing where home is. Feeling at home seems to relate to belonging and underlies difficulties with self-identity and understanding. Attachment is disrupted with every move and is only further complicated if the moves happen often. It becomes, sometimes, difficult to attach in relationships as a result. On the more positive side, moving can result in finding a new experience of self. The concept of what home is can become broadened and enriching. Each new move can help us develop a kaleidoscope of facets of our identity.

Another client moved from deep in the heart of America to the East coast and discovered himself newly able to share in intellectual interests. He has always had an interest in classical music that he can now share with others. His internal understanding of pleasure is invited to grow. He becomes enamored with opera, symphonic, and jazz performances, and his internal experience is expanded. He finds a new home.

There is the woman who attended a different school every 2 years because of her father's job. She walked into a new school by herself every time. No parent helped her with registration. In some schools, she doesn't remember registering. Her schoolmates became a blur of faces. Her experience of being at home was disrupted again and again. In adult life she often felt lost and alone with her peers.

Another woman survived WWII as a 3-year-old by hiding in the French countryside under a wagon and staying as still as she could. She had never spoken of that experience. It is only when invited to speak about it and to vocalize the experience from her 3-year-old self under that wagon that the tears come and a certain anguish leaves her. She describes the incident in French, her native language. She reconnects with a powerful part of her character. As a 3-year-old she survived by keeping absolutely quiet and still under that wagon. She muffled any sound she felt like making. In her adult life she was not encouraged to speak in French. She was encouraged to "just speak American" as many immigrants are. Her French accent never left her. She was ridiculed and stereotyped by people who only had misconceptions about what it meant to be French. They just wanted her to fit in. She kept that 3-year-old well hidden inside herself. In some ways she just never came out from beneath the wagon. She wondered if it was under the wagon that she learned to keep her mouth shut in difficult times. She recognizes that much about that early experience, doubled by the misconception of others about her French background, informed her ideas about life in America. In our work together she reclaimed her French identity and developed the courage to own her accent. She found comfort in knowing that a skill learned in order to physically survive was no longer needed to

live today. Now she can speak her mind, own her French identity, and refuse to be diminished by her accent. In accepting her disowned self hiding under the wagon she can more easily accept her adopted home. She can own her decision to live in America with French overtones.

Ideally an experience of being home can be different than feeling at home. Moving frequently meant that it was necessary to adapt to new surroundings, new schools, new communities, and new cultural norms. It has been difficult to think about moving again. The important descriptors of home ideally incorporate community and a sense of belonging. Belonging takes time and common references. Moving frequently also means multiple experiences of loss and sometimes a hope for a new or better life. For someone who embraces change, those frequent moves can be more easily navigated. It can also be confusing and stress provoking. Repeated moves require the ongoing experience of reinventing one's concept of what it means to be oneself, or to belong.

Moving frequently meant that I never had just one place to call home. At the same time, the experience of feeling at home was different in different places. Even now, when I am in a city where a multitude of languages are spoken I immediately feel more relaxed and at home. Being in an environment where expression is multicultural and language is diverse reminds me of family. I was not raised in a single place. The continuity of experience was our family experiences. We had our routines no matter where we lived, and they were comforting. Wherever we lived, we learned the language and lived in the local communities. I became deeply influenced by the values of those communities. My personal development grew out of diverse and international communities.

My practice of psychotherapy is deeply influenced by my upbringing. To learn different languages, I had to look for the words but also the non-verbals that accompanied them. I learned to lip read to see how the words were formed by the differences of mouth movements. Being in environments with diverse languages, races, and nationalities gave me a breadth of experience that grounds me in my life. I naturally found myself drawn to Gestalt and relational therapy training. I learned to pay attention to the way the body responds to change, trauma, and triggers when studying bioenergetics and other fields of bodywork.

I use those skills to inquire into the subtleties that I observe in voice, body movements, physical inhibitions, breathing changes, and facial impressions of my clients. I want to know what the formative experiences are and how they influence people. I look for slips of the tongue that indicate an accent or a variation in pronunciation. I do not take for granted that just because I am practicing in Dayton, Ohio, that the experiences of my clients are rooted in the culture of this area. I am fascinated by the ways in which attachment or detachment are intricately mixed with experience of place, language, and context.

I have been fortunate. The anxieties that came with moving did not involve being estranged from family. The difficulties were not the result of persecution, war, or fear of survival. When persons are displaced because of danger to their survival the meaning of home is likely secondary to the need to find a safe place to be. The memory of home is a place to return to in memory that can give solace to a displaced soul. It is not unlike the littlest drawer. Like a little drawer that holds what is needed to fix a home or wrap a package, our memories of home remind us of times when we might have been more secure. At the very least we might remember the tools we used that defined safe space

and community.

At its best, home becomes a collection of images and memories that we hold onto to remind us that we belong. I returned to Morocco in adulthood, 35 years after I left. We were beginning a 2-week trip of the country. I wanted to start with the place where I had lived for 6 years. I was not surprised that I could still find the street and direct the driver to the house. The house was gone, but the stone wall remained. Within the walls the property held not one house but three condominiums. The sound of the ocean could still be heard from the street. I felt a relaxation in my body. We drove to the school I had attended for 6 years. It was still there. In the courtyard children were playing, and I remembered a dream that had been a recurring one for many years. In the dream, I went into the courtyard of the school as an adult. The trees had been mostly cut down but the playground was still there. There were children of different colors of brown playing on the swings. They approached me as I walked up to them. I was looking at the place where the yellow-brick three-room schoolhouse had stood, but it was gone. The dream ended there. The experience of being back on that school ground with the children playing on the swings 35 years later gave me a shiver. They asked me what I was doing there, and I said that I had gone to school there. They were incredulous: "Non madame, c'est pas possible" (no mam, that cannot be possible). Then a workman approached me and asked the same question. He told me that I was lucky to have come that day because the next day the school building would be torn down.

I think that it was at that moment that I realized how much Morocco was my first real home. It was no wonder that I never felt totally at home in an environment with only Caucasian people. It was no wonder that I had a hard time relating to my peers who had never been outside of the United States. It is no wonder that I still carry a longing for the sounds, the smells, and the unusual beauty of that place.

I have had many places that I called home, in many countries. I can find my way back to every street and location in every country in which I lived. Everyplace I have called home holds a piece of my consciousness and my soul.

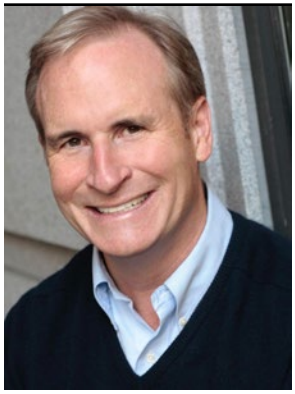
The littlest drawer became the symbol for continuity. It was a simple drawer that held the basic things we all need day to day. It is a reminder that no matter where I am, home at its best is a place inside of me. When I open the little drawer in my own house, I imagine that I can hear my mother singing. I am home. ▼

References

Jung, C., & Jaffe, A. (1963). *Memories, dreams, reflections.* (R. & C. Winston, Trans.) New York: Pantheon Books.

Flights. 2019. Mary de Wit

Justin Hecht



Justin Hecht is a Jungian analyst and group therapist in private practice in San Francisco. He is on the clinical faculty at University of California, San Francisco, and also leads training groups for therapists in Houston and Washington, DC. Primary areas of interest are fostering individuation and integrating Jungian theories with group practice. He is a fellow of the American Group Psychotherapy Association.
A graduate of Harvard, Justin studied business at the Wharton School and did his clinical psychology training at Columbia and Boston Universities.
Personal interests include aviation, history, music, and travel. He is an instrument-rated private pilot. Justin lives in San Francisco with Erik Hjorth-Reider, his husband of 26 years.
justinhecht@gmail.com

Geographic Displacement Disorder (GDD)

As a psychologist, I'm always interested in the latest diagnostic nomenclature. Many critics of the Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM) suggest that it pathologizes ordinary human unhappiness, but in my experience, it doesn't go far enough. For instance, I have regularly been afflicted with distressing feelings of longing to live in a city that I don't currently inhabit, a frequent desire to see unknown corners of the world, and a chronic sense of disappointment about my current geographical circumstances.

Therefore, in the interest of advancing nosological science, and in describing one of my own most treasured neuroses, I propose the following addition to the DSM:

Geographic Displacement Disorder (GDD)—(see also "the Great Geographic Cure")

A syndrome of a chronic subjective experience of spatial and geographical displacement characterized by at least three of the following eight characteristics, and causing clinically significant subjective distress and/or marked difficulties in social and occupational functioning as reported by the patient and/or by significant others in the person's environment:

1. Idealization of the physical, climatic, political, and social characteristics of distant countries or cities,
2. Devaluation of the physical, climatic, political, and social characteristics of one's current country and city,
3. Expenditure of considerable financial, temporal, and emotional resources planning, taking, and recovering from trips, voyages, vacations, and business trips,
4. The selection of and maintenance of a lifestyle requiring constant travel and resulting in substantial

inability to invest deeply in one's city of current residence, as well as the rapidly shifting idealization of distant, and forever unattainable, locations,
5. The feeling of rootlessness and not belonging anywhere, alternating with expansive feelings of belonging everywhere,
6. Preoccupation with the minutiae of airline frequent-flyer programs, schedules, seating charts, et cetera,
7. Extreme susceptibility to travel-related advertising, writing, or photography,
8. Blaming or disparaging the city of current residence for not providing the imagined benefits of a distant non-current-resident city.

There, I've just completed it, my first entry into the DSM. Like a lepidopterist who eagerly scours the Amazon jungle for an elusive butterfly, hoping to have it named after himself, I've just run down an insufficiently described mental disorder. Like that butterfly-chaser, I dream of fame and immortality, my name forever attached to the intellectual history of psychology. Who knows what might follow? Appearances on *Oprah*, consulting gigs, a book, lasting fame and glory?

Alas, I'm not like the lepidopterist. After chasing and finding his butterfly, he can add his name (with a Latin suffix) to the species, have photographs and other evidence of the butterfly registered in the Smithsonian, and be done with it. Me, I've got two problems. The first is professional. Having named the disorder, I now have to figure out some way to at least treat it, maybe even cure it. That could take years of careful work, evaluating different treatment regimens, recruiting subjects for clinical trials, working with psychiatrist colleagues and pharmaceutical companies to develop a medication trial. Like I said, it could take years. And, I've got a plane to catch!

That brings me to my second problem, which is personal. You see, for years I've suffered from GDD. It started when I was a boy. Actually, it started even before that. My parents met on an airliner. My father was a pilot for Pan American. My mother was a stewardess. It was one of her first flights, from Berlin to Paris. She made an announcement on the PA system, in a thick German accent "Ladies und Chentelmen, pleass *distinguish* your zigarettes." The passengers burst into laughter; Mom burst into tears. Dad came back to the galley to find a lovely chagrinned 21-year-old; they fell in love. Three years later, I came onto the scene.

Was it something of my origins in an airborne romance that made it impossible for me to feel ever at home on terra firma? Perhaps. All I know is that for as long as I can remember, I have dreamed of being elsewhere.

In grade school and junior high, I worked two paper routes to save enough money to go visit my grandmother who lived on the Rhine River, across from an honest-to-god medieval fortress. I grew up 20 minutes from Disneyland, but even at age 10 or 11 the ersatz Matterhorn and Sleeping Beauty's castle seemed impossibly tacky to me. I wanted to see the real thing!

In high school, I began to learn that people all over the world dreamed of the Southern California beach culture that I found so appalling. What, I wondered, was the appeal of 330 days of sunshine each year, mandatory beach-volleyball classes, a culture that insisted on golden brown tans and blonde hair, even for a red-haired freckle-faced kid like me? I found surfing not just boring, but childish. I longed for the formality and tradition of New England: crisp fall days, huge libraries with bigger stacks of books, intellectual conversations in book-lined studies, and exciting, urban environments, where people actually wore real clothes.

At 17, I got my wish, traveling as far away from Southern California as it's possible to

get in the United States. Ending up in Boston, I promptly became…desperately homesick. It started with the weather. Never had I known the stultifying humidity and unrelieved heat of the East Coast summer. The almost green air before a thunderstorm. The sensation of never actually being dry and nearly constant athlete's foot. The oppressive heat of summer eventually gave way to that crisp autumn I'd longed for. Freshman year, we went to the nearby apple orchard of a new friend named Betsy. Tramping through piles of fallen maple and chestnut leaves, we picked glowing red apples for about 20 minutes, before I realized that the temperature had plummeted. Returning to her house to warm up, the others made fun of me; I was actually shivering. The Yankees were amused at the freezing provincial.

The brief, glorious, golden days of fall quickly gave way to a winter that nothing and no one could have prepared me for. I awoke every morning at 3:00 a.m., freezing in my bed. Putting on more clothes, I'd finally get to sleep an hour or two later, only to be awakened by the radiator clanking to life, with the din of a Dickensian boiler factory. That radiator was determined, though, and within 30 minutes I was covered in sweat. I began longing for those boring stoner surfers. What was I thinking to have left sunny southern California for this stuffy, uptight, cold, damp, and dark city?

I wish I could tell you that I saw my situation with an ironic distance, but that's not the case. As the years wore on, I lived in five large U.S. cities, most of them more or less happily. But I always wanted to be somewhere else. I always imagined that other places would have just the right combination of weather, natural beauty, climate, and architecture to make me happy. And I travelled constantly, far and wide. My more adventurous travels in the third world lost their appeal following amoebic dysentery in Sulawesi, prickly heat in Phuket, contaminated ceviche in Guatemala, and a still-unnamed super-virus in Madagascar. Throughout those years, I hoped always to find something better and different in other parts of the world.

When I moved from Boston to San Francisco in 1996, I thought that I would finally settle here and feel at ease. I invested myself in professional and personal communities. I gave up my travel-intensive consulting job and started my own psychotherapy practice. The two hardest things about it were shutting up and listening and… staying put. Not travelling. I tried, really I tried, to travel less. But I missed the East Coast, and there were always professional conferences and continuing education opportunities that were located a long way away. I could feel the GDD becoming more active, and I began considering moving back to Boston or trying a whole new, different city.

By now I have enough perspective on myself to be amused. I watch my GDD whispering that I'll be happy if I move back to Boston, spend the summer in Provincetown, or move to Paris. Then I remind myself that no matter where I've been, I've longed to be somewhere else. My long-suffering partner, Erik, points out with amused forbearance my tendency to plan the next vacation while we're still trying to enjoy the one we're currently on. Sometimes even before.

I've also noticed that quite a lot of people everywhere long for a life somewhere else. Studying a foreign language provides a wonderful window into the culture of another country. It also, almost inevitably, connects you with another person suffering from GDD. It never takes long for an immigrant language teacher to tell you what was wrong with the (invariably miserable) place they left.

European tourists flood San Francisco year-round and praise its natural beauty, climate,

diversity, and openness. They express surprise that anyone would want to visit, let alone live in, tidy little Holland, boring, regimented Germany, or decadent France or Italy. But this idealization of the other place continues to exert a powerful hold on many of us.

One thing that's helped me keep my GDD in check is discovering how many of my clients come to me for a psychologist's perspective on their own GDD. Many had naive assumptions about San Francisco. Free spirits move here hoping to find an echo of the idealistic '60s and are shocked by the materialism and competition for everything, as intense as anywhere except perhaps Manhattan. Gay and lesbian people find not a caring utopia of like-minded people, fleeing oppression and creating a supportive milieu, but instead the same social stresses and strivings they hoped they left behind. On the same day, I've heard opposite complaints about the city, both from New Yorkers. One complained that "no one is friendly here in San Francisco," citing a dispiriting series of social rejections. The other complained that "everyone here wants to get too much into your business," stating that he missed the appropriate distance and reserve practiced in Manhattan.

So I suffer with my GDD, but it's kept in check by the perspective of knowing how many others suffer it. I've lived long enough to know that no place is perfect, and also to question the thoughts, assumptions, and conditions that give rise to my GDD. I've noticed, for instance, that I'm almost always on vacation when I begin to idealize another place. Freed from daily responsibilities, pampered in hotels and restaurants, my only obligation to myself and my partner, is it any wonder that the sky looks bluer in Prague or Vienna, the cultural life more vibrant, the inhabitants somehow *more* than where I'm living? It took me the longest time to realize that when I'm relaxed and far away, I give myself mental freedom to imagine a different kind of life, try on a new identity, and let my imagination wander freely about the experience of living in Rio de Janeiro, Nice, or Tokyo. I've also learned about *the novelty effect* that makes us notice and appreciate what's new and different. The first time you experience something lovely and dramatic, like crossing the Golden Gate Bridge, it feels wonderful, miraculous, and deeply impressive. After you've driven across it several times weekly for 17 years, it takes a conscious effort to appreciate and be grateful for its beauty.

There's also an irony of GDD. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. If you complain about the place you live, others who are content where they are will be repelled by you and will reject you. I've learned the hard way to keep my mouth shut when I feel critical of my hometown. It gets me the opposite of what I want. Another irony is that in my attempt to gratify my GDD by traveling to the place where I imagine I'll be happier, I become less invested in the community where I live, which perpetuates the very feeling of alienation that I was traveling to try to avoid.

Through my own painful experience, then, I've come to a few tentative conclusions about attenuating GDD. First, to alleviate the vacation effect, take a vacation in your hometown, or at least allow yourself to explore its relaxed charms with an open mind and an unpacked schedule. Next, to avoid the novelty effect, try to see your hometown with new eyes. Break out of routines, try a new restaurant, go to a new neighborhood, and let yourself see what tourists see in your city. If you're feeling disappointed with a lack of community, try taking one less vacation and volunteering for something locally. GDD is a serious disorder and a real problem, but it can be addressed.

So in conclusion... damn, I've got to shut my computer down, because we're about to land... ▼

Excerpts from *House to House*:
Transitory Tales of One Family in Spencer, Indiana

House to House is a collection of photographs and stories about my mother, her family, and the eight houses they moved into and out of—all within the small town of Spencer, Indiana. None of the moves represented an improvement. These events took place over two decades beginning in 1925 and ending in the late 1940s.

I have always wondered about the driving force behind the moves that my grandparents, Flossie and Ray Proctor, made. Was it economic? Was it restlessness? Was it a longing for an improvement in life? My own parents chose the opposite track—they built a house in 1954, and my father still lives in that same house today.

My life has also been marked by many geographic moves, which have created uprooting and unsettling experiences for me. Thinking about my own relocation experiences led me to explore those of my grandparents in Indiana.

For this project, I returned to the town of Spencer and located the houses and apartments that my family lived in. They range from a farmhouse, now abandoned and built by my grandfather, to an empty apartment over a pool hall on the town square. I photographed each house and various objects that belonged to my family during that time period—a doll, a wool coat, a dress. I arranged them within the environments of the houses, like characters in a story.

Each photograph carries a text that evokes personal legends and memories about living in that house, ranging from the food that my grandmother cooked and the relatives that came and went, to white spiders and the effects of mental illness. As a child, I often heard stories of my mother's family moving from house to house and asked myself why they chose such an unsettled life. Even after my investigation, I have not found one clear answer as to why my family continually chose to move from house to house.

Every family has its own histories, mythologies, and realities. *House to House* is the story of my family's restless efforts to create a home.

Patricia Howard

Patricia Howard is a photographer and educator whose work focuses on conceptual and documentary approaches, incorporating a strong element of storytelling. Patricia has held teaching positions at Penn State University and Juniata College. She has been awarded fellowships and attended residencies in France, Ireland, and at the Vermont Studio Center. She is a graduate of the University of Delaware, with an MFA from Penn State, and currently teaches with the Smithsonian Associates in Washington, DC.

patriciahoward154@gmail.com
www.howardpatricia.com

River Road

Elizabeth Josephine (Betty Jo) Proctor was born in 1925 in this house; her father Ray Proctor built it.It had 18 acres with it and was on the White River outside of Spencer, Indiana. She had 13 cats because people kept dumping them on the road. The cats were like brothers and sisters to her as she was an only child.

East Market Street

Betty Jo's grandparents had both passed away, and the Proctor family moved into their house in town. Betty Jo took two cats to the house on E. Market Street; they were named Toots and Goldie. Goldie kept running away, back to the house in the country on River Road.

To start with, Betty Jo had the nicest bedroom in the house. It had a bay window. Flossie's brother Ray died, and then his widow Pearl moved in with them, taking over the bedroom with a bay window. Pearl had dreams of being a writer and Betty Jo typed her stories. None of the stories were ever published.

After Pearl moved on, Flossie's older sister Bess moved into Betty Jo's old room. Bess had just gotten out of a sanitarium in Indianapolis where she had had electric shock treatments. They had also removed her teeth because that was thought to improve kidney disease from which she suffered. Bess liked to make rag rugs and had a daughter named Vendetta.Betty Jo liked this house, especially her bedroom and the porch. She played dolls with the girl next door who was named Ruth.After a few years, Ray sold the house and the family moved to an apartment.

Hubbards' House, W. Hillside Avenue

Betty Jo developed allergies in this house. Her parents took her to a doctor in Indianapolis who put her under a black umbrella for evaluation. The doctor told her never go into a swimming pool when you have allergies because there is too much bacteria.

The family decided to move back to East Market Street.

Corner East Market & East Streets

The family rented part of a house on the corner of East Market and East Streets from the Kaye family.Buddy Kaye was a little older than Betty Jo and was a kind of local celebrity. He had a double windpipe so that he was able to whistle and eat crackers at the same time. Buddy went on to performing and was the opening act for Smiley Burnett when he appeared in the area.

Betty Jo disliked this house; it was dark and rundown and full of white spiders. Next the Proctors moved to West Hillside Avenue.

Ray and Flossie bought two lots and moved for the last time, to a house they built on West Hillside Avenue.

Flossie sewed dresses and quilts for her grandchildren in this house. Elizabeth brought her family to visit almost every summer. This was the last house and home of Ray and Flossie Proctor.

Debbara Dingman

Debbara Dingman, PhD, is a psychologist at Pine River Psychotherapy Associates in Atlanta, Georgia, working with individuals, couples, and groups. She is an adjunct assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the Emory School of Medicine. In that capacity, she provides supervision and training to psychiatry residents, clinical psychology doctoral students, and post-doctoral psychologists. She has been proud to serve the Academy as the co-chair of a summer workshop committee, member and chair of the training committee, and currently on the ethics committee.
drdingman@pineriverpsychotherapy.com

Brick by Brick: Foundation and Finishes

Each decade the narrative of our life changes. With age, our perspective shifts. With therapy, we hope our awareness, insight, and wisdom affect the story. This is the story of my journey from the home where I was born to the home and office I occupy today.

I was born in the South Bronx. We lived in a fifth-floor walk-up tenement, where Irish, Italian, and Jewish working-class families shared close spaces. Apartment doors were usually left open and rarely locked. This meant that I could often eat with other families: spaghetti, cabbage, latkes. On other occasions, I could be witness to or participant in domestic discord or violence. It was a big warren of humanity, with overwhelming sights, sounds, and smells.

I was born into poverty and pathology. Thanatos had a hold on the community, but especially on my family. My father was 51 years old when he died, as was my brother. My mother died at 62.

When I was 6 years old, my father got a milk delivery route, which along with my mother's work cleaning houses, elevated us to the lower-middle working class. Our family (I have three brothers) and my Irish grandparents moved to a house on Long Island. It is hard to imagine now, but eight of us shared one bathroom.

The demographics of the new neighborhood were the same as the Bronx, but with German immigrants in the mix. It was the 1960s and parental sex, drugs, rock and roll, and political discord got added to the domestic soup. Still, doors remained unlocked, and kids roamed in and out of the neighborhood houses.

Theft was common. Meat, appliances, televisions,

children's bicycles, all arrived on the street in random intervals, having "fallen off a truck." Boys who engaged in mischief, or worse, were escorted home to their fathers by the police or the priest, who often stayed for a drink. After a wink-wink between the authorities and the father, the son would be informed of his punishment, usually minor, and essentially told not to get caught next time. It was confusing to me. There was right and there was wrong, and then there were the wrongs that were permissible for boys and sanctioned by the authority figures. And the rules were *very* different for girls.

My father drove a milk route in Queens, and my mother cleaned houses in the wealthier suburbs. My feminism got early roots, since we were required to go to work with our parents on Saturdays. I preferred the boys' job, delivering milk, to the girls' job, cleaning bathrooms. I fought for the right, and won, getting up at 2:00 a.m. to ride with Dad to the Bronx to get the truck full of milk bottles covered in ice. The milk truck seat stowed away, so the truck was mostly driven with my father standing. With no seats for passengers, I held on tight for the ride to Queens. The deliveries were to high-rise apartment buildings and public housing units. My father would put me in the elevator with all the dairy products for the customers in the building. Starting on the top floor, I rushed down hallways to collect empty bottles and deliver to the insulated metal milk boxes outside the apartment doors. When finished, we took the truck back to the Bronx, and I was allowed to order anything I wanted at the local deli. We were back home by 10:30 a.m.

During the school week, a Dominican nun would control the behavior of forty students in her classroom with the cracks of a ruler and regular reminders of how lucky we were and how grateful we should be.

When I was 16, we moved to Florida. I did not want to leave New York and begged to stay to finish high school. Could I please live with relatives, neighbors, friends? I became a sullen and angry teenager, hating Florida and the parents who brought me there. I was especially angry in the summer, when the heat became unbearable and anyone who could afford to left South Florida. I was a member of the over-heated under-class. And mad!

The public high school curriculum junior year was identical to the one I had studied the previous year at Sacred Heart Academy for girls in New York. They either did not believe me or did not care, and no accommodation was made. Thus, after homeroom, it was easy for me to be truant and still make straight As. I fell in with a mixed-race study group led by James, the smartest, tallest, most-respected Black student in the school. He determined our course of study: the writings of Carlos Castaneda. A student from each of our classes, at James's request, alerted us to test days, and we would show up and ace the exams. This odd mix of truancy and academic achievement led my guidance counselor to allow me dual enrollment at the local community college for my senior year.

My father now drove a dump truck, my mother clerked at the drug store, I worked at a donut shop, and my brother worked at the corner gas station. One late afternoon, my brother was robbed at gunpoint at the gas station. He ran home and reported that the robbers had driven into a street with no outlet. He and my father grabbed rifles off the wall and were waiting when the get-away car emerged. When the police arrived, everyone on the scene was disarmed and handcuffed until it could be sorted out: All armed, who were the bad guys? The next day, a photograph of my father and brother appeared on the front page of the local newspaper, and they were hailed as citizen-heroes. The

opinion section of the paper included my surname for almost two weeks. I remember mostly feeling embarrassed by my family and their oddly achieved notoriety.

Back at the donut shop, I suspected the owner was shorting us when he distributed tips from the locked box where we deposited them. I organized the workers to keep track of the money we earned, and my suspicion proved correct. The boss said the difference was to cover the free donuts and coffee for the on-duty police who stopped in and "kept us safe." I was fired.

I was also fired from my next position, leading weekend retreats for teens for the Catholic Church. All went well until someone informed the bishop of my addition to the segment on marriage: a film about birth control.

My early experiences with poverty, chaos, and porous boundaries led me to make certain promises to myself. I was determined to get an education and a profession, and to be independent and self-supporting. I worked my way through school on scholarships, loans, and waitress jobs, moving to Atlanta and obtaining my master's and finally my doctorate.

Serving an internship at a Veterans Affairs facility outside of Newark, I worked in Jersey City—not the gentrified town of today but the dangerous slum of the 1980s—where one of the first Vet Centers opened to treat men with what came to be recognized as PTSD. Most had served in the 1960s and had suffered from deep-seated trauma for years. These were men who were drafted or whose only way out of poverty was to join the military. My background was very helpful: I could relate to these guys, and they to me. They loaned me maps of Viet Nam, and served as sentries on the street to assure my safety between the Vet Center and the parking lot.

When I returned to Atlanta and a clinical staff position in the department where I had earned my degree, I learned about hierarchies and boundaries that I had never before encountered. At a university, a staff member inhabits an interstitial position between the faculty and the students and is peer with neither group. My parents had befriended people to whom they reported and those below them at work. Mom helped the delivery people at the drug store, and Dad shoveled dirt with the men filling his truck. All of these people were welcomed into our home. I learned that in the more educated classes, these boundaries were not so permeable.

As I built my private practice, I consulted at the local public psychiatric facility—spending my mornings with the poorest people and my afternoons with the most affluent and privileged. It was clear that zip code and opportunity were major variables that defined the distance between the two groups. Inside, however, the pain was the same; most people do not get out of childhood unscathed.

I grew up in a very rich melting-pot and, as a result, understand the advantages of cross-cultural, and mixed social class exposure. My dissertation is entitled: "The Imposter Phenomenon and Social Mobility: You Can't Go Home Again" (Dingman, 1987). But home goes with us, always.

My early development and roots show in my work as a therapist. I have come to value boundaries, striving to create a clean, orderly, considerate relational space in my home and in my office. Sessions start and end on time. The therapy takes place in the office, face-to-face, as scheduled. The door is locked from the inside. I speak the truth as best I can, and there is no fudging of right and wrong in the way I do business. I appreciate, and try to offer, a safe and valuing therapeutic environment.

When I lead groups and workshops, our therapeutic agreement is made explicit. All are encouraged to speak and be heard, and I encourage, as well, the role of the deviant leader who challenges the group norms, with the hope that each member will have an opportunity to experience that position at some point. Each group member is asked to take responsibility for themselves and for the group.

As a child, I learned a certain vigilance and I bring that same attention and focus to the consultation room. When I was supervised by Jim Bugental, he suggested that I put my feet up or doodle during sessions to reduce the intensity of my focus. I cannot do that with integrity.

I remain a strong feminist, stand up for what I believe, and confront social injustice in the office. I advocate for my patients and work with them to become advocates for themselves. Together we look for opportunities for them to find their own power and to challenge the patriarchy and other oppressive forces.

Given the experiences of my youth, it may not be surprising that I place a high premium on stability, reliability, and predictability. I have practiced in the same office for 32 years. One of my process-oriented therapy groups has continued for over two decades—we have birthed and launched children in that group. My peer group within the American Academy of Psychotherapists has been a source of challenge and support for 20 years. My husband and I have been together for 41 years and in the same house long enough to pay off the mortgage. We did not have children, for many reasons, but I am certain that I was too frightened by the prospect of economic dependence or the risk to my practice that maternity leave would entail. We do, however, have close, long-term relationships with the children of our most intimate friends.

My roots gave me a strong work ethic and groomed me well for my career as a therapist. I am dedicated to my craft and have pursued my own therapy and extensive experiential training to continue to improve and develop.

In the Bronx and on Long Island, I was privy to the intimate dynamics of the families around me. Enduring forced intimacy with a large group of diverse people, I learned about how people adapt to survive and developed a deep respect for the myriad strategies they use to stay intact.

In my professional life, I invite people to share the intimate details of their lives. The boundaries of these engagements are clearly established. I thrive in this arrangement. I am privileged to know and care for the many patients that have come to my office. My work gives my life structure, form, and most importantly, meaning. I am proud of where I came from and where I got myself to today. ▼

References

Dingman, D. (1987). *The imposter phenomenon and social mobility: You can't go home again*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Georgia State University, Atlanta.

Bruce Ellman

Dr. Bruce Ellman is a clinical psychologist, organizational consultant, and former Wall Street executive. Father of three, Bruce is a graduate of Brown University and holds advanced degrees from Yale (MBA) and Pepperdine Universities (PsyD). In addition to providing psychotherapy to individuals, couples, and groups, Bruce also advises family businesses hindered by complicated family dynamics and offers couples counseling to business partners. His favorite tee-shirt reads "Real Men Marry Rabbis." *drbruceellman@gmail.com*

Escape from the Big House

To live is to suffer, to survive is to find some meaning in the suffering.

—Friedrich Nietzsche

Thirty-five thousand is a really large number. Thirty-five thousand is about the perimeter, in feet, of Central Park and the number of Starbucks locations globally. According to my father, it's also the square footage of my childhood home.

As a kid, I was surrounded by a particular kind of beauty, one that was virtually impossible to ignore: enormous Persian rugs, glistening crystal chandeliers, detailed decorative wood-paneled walls with intricate plaster molding. My statuesque mother gazed out from the confines of a life-size oil painting, proudly presiding over antiques, multi-generational photographs, and travel mementos that warmed a cavernous living room. To balance this formal-occasion-only gathering space, the "Great Hall" offered a more casual sitting area that welcomed visitors with an arched stone fireplace large enough to embrace a small country.

My father's library was much more intimate. Books jammed every available inch of wall space, cocooning my brilliant and driven father. For hours, often late at night, he would disappear into this sacred place to read, work, and study Jewish texts or perhaps to quell small but unrelenting noises from the past that mahogany, marble, or masonry could not quiet. He was an unwitting child of matricide, his mother having died but a few days after an unusually complicated delivery, her first and last. But such matters were rarely discussed.

The dining room could seat 16 without much fuss. We

ate there on Friday nights and special occasions. Another life-like oil painting stared down at us while we sipped matzo ball soup and devoured hallah and roasted chicken. This one featured the six kids, with stiffly choreographed arms and stilted smiles, arranged neatly in two rows sitting and standing. Fresh-cut flowers from the garden adorned the long dining room table; each chair seat was enhanced by an intricate needlepoint cover, hand-stitched carefully and lovingly by my mother. The splendor and affectionate tumult of these meals were punctuated by heated but often meaningless debates, usually orchestrated by my father "to build character."

But the kitchen was the heart and epicenter of our home and family. With eight mouths to feed daily, it was a room in constant motion with refrigerators, freezers, and cabinets chock-full of staples and favorites like Pop Tarts, Captain Crunch, Campbell Soups, and Del Monte Fruit Cocktail in Heavy Syrup. Sarah Lee was our second mother. And yet, I was, and still am, always hungry.

Dinner, whether in the dining room or more often at the kitchen table, was never a quiet affair. The eight of us vied for attention amidst chatter, laughter, and squabbles. Pontificating was more common than listening, persuasion more valued than discovering. There was little room for feelings in the clamor for attention. Complicated emotions were like difficult relatives—tolerated at a distance but never really welcomed. Being loud, funny, or provocative was the surest way to get seen.

I was none of those things. Rather, as the fifth child, I was sweet, accommodating, bright, extremely likable, and not particularly proficient at getting noticed. In fact, I was the one kid who got left in the mayhem of transporting eight people in two cars to and from various places (minivans were not yet on the scene). Mid-way home from a night out, my parents pulled up side by side at a stop light to do a quick inventory only to realize that neither of them had me in their car. I was left stranded on several occasions at a restaurant or gas station, each parent under the erroneous impression that I was with the other.

Not surprisingly, I was great at hide-and-seek. It was possible to get lost in my house, and my friends sometimes did, with great delight. We spent hours with my younger sister playing this game of seeking and concealing, and I cleverly burrowed myself into small crevices of dark, mysterious, and rarely used rooms in the attic. I hid well and was difficult to find.

Another fun activity was riding in the dumbwaiter, a small freight lift intended for hauling firewood from the basement to the Great Hall. We found a much more amusing use for this convenience. A couple of us would cram into the small elevator while the others pulled on the thick rope that wrapped around a pulley. It was thrilling to ride between floors—until we got stuck, trapped in a small, wooden box. We were hidden from sight; only our muffled squeals for help leaked through the walls.

The adults had their fun with friends, too. My parents felt a strong commitment to give back to the community with their time, energy, ingenuity, financial resources, and their home. The house was lit up on many evenings to promote social, political, religious, and artistic causes. Like the oil-paintings, we and the house looked perfect.

Even our vacations were perfect. My family did not like to venture far from the manicured resorts of the Caribbean. Nearby city streets teeming with people, markets, and daily rituals fascinated me, but I was discouraged from venturing into these gritty, imperfect worlds.

It was a house and a life of abundance—a bounty of size, people, food, noise, activity, access, and privilege. But with all that square footage, there was not much room for messiness, ugliness, or especially vulnerability. That which was not beautiful was minimized or dismissed. Beneath the elegance and loving chaos was an unspoken world of painful relationships, confusing sexual awakenings, terribly hurt feelings, and little emotional contact. There was a particular, narrow vision of how one should be. A child who veered from that standard did not fare well. Those who marched to the beat of their own drum were asked to put down their instrument and upon occasion to leave the band altogether. And in this caring, beautiful, and often joyous habitat, I learned that I could be lonely even when surrounded by a family that loved me dearly.

I took refuge in my spacious, light-filled bedroom, with its own bath. I loved the small oil lamps carved into the mantle that danced across the top of the fireplace. Mature trees with full branches and verdant foliage graced my windows and the street below. Here I weathered a loneliness that I did not fully recognize or understand. In the quiet of my room a whirlwind of intensity simmered, one that I could not or would not reveal, even to myself.

There was the lingering impact from being left unattended as an 18-month-old and knocking over a scalding iron onto my bare hand. A decade of skin graft surgeries followed to replace burnt, dead skin. Patches of replacement skin were taken from other parts of my body to cover the original burn. Each graft maintained some essence of its home base, creating a derma-quilt of shapes, colors, and textures. The slice taken from my upper thigh still proudly sprouts hair in its new location on my left palm. Multiple surgeries and regenerative skin have fortunately repaired most of the damage, and I now have full use of my hand. The emotional residue—being cautious and protective, particularly in my most intimate relationships—is more difficult to transcend.

As the poet David Whyte (2016) says, "One of the vulnerabilities of being visible is that when you're visible, you can be seen; and when you can be seen, you can be touched; and when you can be touched, you can be hurt." I was deeply loved as a child but rarely touched. To safeguard my bandaged hand, everyone around me was careful. Roughhousing, typical for young boys, was off-limits. And I was careful, too. Careful not to get hurt, careful not to let anyone sense my rage or see other intensities that did not match the decor of the house.

Decades have passed since I've lived in the Big House though I still visit. I tried, unsuccessfully, to leave many times. Unpredictable educational paths, extensive professional and personal travel, careers spanning Wall Street to Hollywood, and explorations of various lifestyles all added spice to the stew of my life. But it wasn't until I returned home, to an experience of my youth, that I could truly leave. Then, I was able to build a new home for myself and return to the Big House on my own terms.

My high school required graduating seniors to spend their final academic month shadowing someone in the work force to get a preview of adult life. I chose to track a psychologist, a family friend, working in an in-patient psychiatric treatment center. Shortly after visiting this psychiatric wonderland, I left for college and adventures across continents and professions. It would be more than two decades before I began training to become a psychologist. Soon after, this family friend introduced me to the American Academy of Psychotherapists (AAP), where I continue to learn about myself and my relationship with The Big House.

After a lot of wandering, I've dedicated myself to using the loneliness and pain of my childhood rather than working so hard to avoid it. I'm aware that my suffering is substantially different from so much tragic heartbreak and devastating violence around me. Yet certain pain touches me in a very young and tender place. That's the pain I feel most deeply and respond to most compassionately, creatively, and meaningfully. That is why I am drawn to the work I do.

With trial and error, I carry *home* into my office. In the opening weeks of my private practice, I proudly offered a large bowl of crisp apples to every person that entered. I soon learned there were better ways to feed them, to nourish their injured neshamot (Hebrew for "souls").

I search for the hidden and the beautiful as I have come to believe that beauty lurks in the cervices of most human experiences. I have found beauty in my clients' pain, beauty in their tears, beauty in their suffering and even in their rage, sometimes at me. But unlike the Big House, that which is not beautiful is welcomed too. By paying close attention, welcoming vulnerability, interrupting deeply ingrained, automated emotional habits, and speaking that which cannot be said, I strive to help free people from the prisons of their childhoods, even those with gold-leaf bars. For many, liberation centers around being seen. And in this process, I rediscover over and over again my own humanity.

Along with my AAP companions, I have come to realize that my greatest asset as a therapist is my person. In using my unique person courageously and vulnerably in service of my clients, I have found the most powerful agent for characterlogical change: first exposing myself for therapeutic purposes by transforming my own in-the-moment feelings into a therapeutic intervention that provokes some emotional response, and then being open, curious, and encouraging of their reactions to me. To be free enough to use myself in this way, I have to forsake the delusional belief of the Big House that hiding behind being smart or even professional will protect me and help others. Rather, I aim to create a very different environment, one where I am genuinely interested in my clients' reality and not distracted by dazzling, seductive presentations. I'm careful to resist the impulse to be right and, perhaps most challenging, to get them to like me.

I recently had a difficult but very moving conversation with my mother, who still lives alone in that big house, 10 years after my father's death. Our family, like most, continues to deal with painful changes as aging children and grandchildren stumble through life. We launched into a tense disagreement about navigating a recent disruption in the family and how my way of managing it upset some family members.

Many decades of therapy have freed me from being obedient to others' expectations, another development that has caused my family some unease. For years, I have been pressing my mother to process our relationship (and her discomfort with me) in a way that is meaningful, deep, and satisfying. Quite consistently, she has protested. This time was no different. Except that after nearly an hour of jagged back and forth, it dawned on me: She's never engaged with anyone in this way. When I acknowledged the unfairness of my emotional demands, she softened and revealed more about her parents, whose limited skills with feelings left her unprepared for this kind of intimacy. No one ever taught or modeled for her this way of relating. To coerce her into my particular, unconventional mode of making contact was no different than her insisting I comply with how she wanted me to be. At that moment, I had more compassion for her than ever

before and new concerns about myself.

When I expressed my appreciation for our exchange, she was confused. "But we didn't change each other's mind," she said referring to the most recent family development. "How could this be productive?" It was then I knew her even better.

The apples are long gone. But each week, I place around my office and waiting room small arrangements of lovely flowers, usually picked from my garden. Leaving home gave me the freedom to breathe its beauty into the unique rhythms and aesthetics of my professional landscape. Liberating myself from the Big House in my most intimate relationships outside of the office remains elusive. This is where the elegance and anguish of home is never too far away.

References

Whyte, D. (Speaker). (2016, April 7). The conversational nature of reality [Audio podcast]. In Tippett, K. (Producer). *On Being.* Minneapolis: Public Radio Exchange. Retrieved from https://onbeing.org/programs/david-whyte-the-conversational-nature-of-reality-dec2018/

Commentary

When first you begin reading this article, you might think that you have stumbled onto the set of *Downton Abbey,* the television series about an aristocratic family that live in a gigantic mansion in England. The elegance of the author's childhood home was dazzling. As we are taken through the corridors being shown the details and extent of the opulence, we might assume here would be the setting for a privileged and perfect childhood. We learn later that all that glitters is not emotionally gold.

In sharp contrast, during my childhood we saw this kind of wealth only in the movies or as the setting in books. It seemed a distant world I would experience firsthand only later in my life. This is not to say that the setting for my childhood drama was compressed, even though we lived in a tiny house of 1,200 square feet until my father and grandfather built on an additional bedroom for my sister. When I was in the middle of that period of my life, I never felt deprived. My bicycle, crystal set, and books were my constant companions along with my many friends. I was active in DeMolay, Boy Scouts, and my church. My parents sent me to camp several times every summer, and I knew they cared about me. When I thought of home, it was often experienced as a neighborhood more than an address. Only in college, as I got to know those from different backgrounds, did I become aware of what I had missed and recognize my family as probably lower middle class.

While the author grew up on a mountain of wealth and I was negotiating my initial years down in the valley, some of our internal experiences were similar. We both had a curiosity about what lay outside our tribal boundaries even when that interest was discouraged. I think in my case it was more disguised in a cloud of religiosity and partly racial in nature, while "others" for the author seemed more expansive. I didn't have the pressures for perfectionism, but there were definitely rules that hemmed in choices and regulated proper behavior. Vulnerability was, however, more tolerated in my home, and messiness was a given. The author painfully describes the narrow expectations for what he should be and the loneliness that came as a result. He captures the essence of the trauma in this sentence: "Beneath the elegance and loving chaos was an unspoken world

of painful relationships, confused sexual awakenings, terribly hurt feelings, and little emotional contact." Even though the setting was vastly different, those hidden feelings of childhood, and finding words to speak them only later, are quite familiar. It might have been interesting to know more about what the author did for two decades before deciding to train to be a psychologist and what finally lead to that decision, not to mention how that was received by the family, but that could have turned the article into a book. What is clear was that a significant path out of the big house was psychotherapy.

What seems true is that there were certainly advantages to growing up in the big house, assets I am assuming the author would want to hang onto and not pitch as he ventured out the door. He describes clearly some of the negatives he experienced in that household, but he does not affirm as much the positives. Many of the positive assumptions about life and impacts on our character development are more elusive, but these are often crucial elements of our personal infrastructure. The author several times mentions that it was a "loving" environment, but the preponderance of evidence supplied doesn't seem very loving. Some of this may be that the focus in psychology is often on experiences that are debilitating and painful, not on what affirms and sustains us in our upbringing.

Growing up in the big house, it would be difficult, even with all of the hard things that happened, not to recognize the vast amount of privilege granted by being part of that family. When I was finally being exposed to those who had grown up or were living in wealth, I went through a period of idealizing that lifestyle. Their lives were not only heaped with possessions, but they enjoyed an array of rich experiences. They were the people of privilege, and I lived somewhere outside that circle. I have since learned that being a white male growing up in the neighborhood I did and enjoying the life with which I am now blessed, I am clearly also privileged. The author and I lived at different ends of the same street, but we were both on the privileged side. What has become evident to me is that the understandings we describe with the words of psychology often need a cultural reference point. The address where someone grew up or currently lives will give a unique flavor to their emotional experiences and the language they use to express it. Whether out of a big house or a little one, we need to keep remembering that all assumptions are suspect.

—Grover E. Criswell, MDiv

Lyn Sommer

Being at Home

Lyn Sommer, PhD, ABPP, CGP, lives in Southport, Connecticut. She has enjoyed three decades practicing psychotherapy, specializing with couples, groups, and supervising therapists. AAP has been her compelling professional home throughout her career. This bio is written while the author is stretching herself on a weeklong yoga/writing retreat, the irony of which will not escape the reader.
drlynsommer@gmail.com

Home is where one starts from.

—T.S. Eliot

For some of us whose childhoods produced complex developmental trauma, our internal home is irreparably damaged. One of our greatest challenges is to accept the fact that chronic painful treatment from a parent has created permanent damage in us that will forever require our attention and care. When old trauma is triggered, we get overwhelmed by a lonely cacophony of self-recrimination. John Bradshaw (1988), in *Healing the Shame That Binds You,* tells us that ongoing childhood trauma in relation to a parent tears at our basic esteem and instills an enduring sense that we are contemptable.

With treatment, we are trying to create a good-enough internal home, one in which traumatic states subside, even though they resurge on occasion. We strive to develop nourishing resources to help us live a meaningful life and integrate the pain we will always know. Trauma therapy is about creating more peace and safety in our lives and relationships, without being too restricted. We aim to repair our self-esteem and develop a sense of ourselves as loveable, loving, and deserving of a better life.

As therapists, we are fortunate that the universe provides us with opportunities to see and treat versions of our afflicted selves: Such was the case when I entered private practice in Washington, DC, and met with a 20-year-old Georgetown University freshman who told me that she came from upstate New York, one town away from where I grew up. As I listened to her describe her homesickness, I immediately conjured up the flat miles

of farmland leading to chilly gray Lake Ontario. While I often had to work hard to put together a picture of the place that a patient came from, in this case I had a clear window to her origins.

But that was only the beginning. This very attractive and likeable freshman had come to therapy tormented by panic and homesickness. Convinced that she would fail in the School of Foreign Service, she relayed a long list of anxieties, beginning with her fear of taking tests; she had missed her SATs twice. Low and behold, a decade earlier, I had managed to forget my SATs on three separate Saturdays! Furthermore, my patient was petrified of benign college experiences such as dorm meetings, basketball games, and mixers. She had decided that a few of her classmates hated her. She walked around campus cringing at her recent interactions and interpreting the looks on some faces as disapproving. I knew her pain.

Within a few sessions she would offer historic details that would provide me with my first trauma therapy: She told me about her rigid and angry father who was (like mine) a Holocaust survivor. He had not allowed her to hug him and was ever blameful: "Don't be fresh! Don't be lazy! Don't be mean!" She had come to understand that she was a bad kid. It was obvious that her father, 1,000 miles away, was still having a ravaging effect upon my patient's college life. Feeling warmly toward this girl, I found myself asking: *How are you supposed to relax and be yourself and connect, when you are unacceptable?*

As a neophyte therapist, I was learning to navigate the path of rough shape-shifting transferences. While this patient was generally receptive to my caring, in the course of recounting her most difficult days she would occasionally misread a sober look on my face as impatient weariness and disdain. I learned to hold on during those moments when she felt stricken without rushing in to reassure her of my true intentions, which did not work. Instead, I slowed down the action so that we could both inspect the switch that got flipped in her: I needed to help her know the triggers that evoked her rejecting father and the strickened feelings that then invaded her. We had many difficult passages in which we had to sort out what was happening in her head, within me, and between us. As she risked clarifying her feelings, we learned that she needed more words from me, more connecting, less neutrality.

Home is where the heart is. —Pliny the Elder

As a child, I believed that my father was born an adult, since he couldn't recount one story about his childhood and certainly had not one whiff of carefreeness about him. When I was 12, my mother gave me *The Diary of Ann Frank;* it was in preparation to telling me that my German Jewish father had escaped the Holocaust when he was 9 years old. I was shocked to learn that my father witnessed his only brother (whom I had never even known existed) drown in a Brooklyn harbor months after they immigrated. I sadly and correctly assumed that my father would continue to "forget" the horror of his childhood.

My father's pain showed up most vividly in his bouts of paralyzing depression. During the stretches that he would stay home from work, I would see him lying in bed with big headphones on, reading about people and places he would never know first-hand. He rebuffed my attempts to be with him, with punishing rebukes: "Stop being a pest!" By my elementary years, I was living into my imputed badness; I was a precocious

delinquent, often picking on my younger brothers, shoplifting, and lying about things major and minor.

As a young therapist, with a few years of my own treatment under my belt before seeing that Georgetown patient, I would have said that being the beneficiary of my mother's delight and abiding love more than made up for my father's blighted view of me. I would have reported that as a teen, I learned to avoid my father and his judgments of me altogether, speaking to him only when necessary and escaping into the world of high school. I also would have expressed gratitude that once I went away to college my father seemed noticeably relieved that I was gone and launched, softening into his rationality and ending the reactivity he showed during my first 18 years. I held on to the idea that my father was a model for how one conquers a terrifying loss-filled childhood to build a life.

Hearing my patient's story challenged that perspective and helped me to see how profoundly my adult life had been impeded by the weight of my father's early disapproval. I became aware of the perpetual warring inside me between my mother's cherishing and my father's rebuke. This was a decade before EMDR trauma therapy, yet I had found a safe treatment space, paradoxically, my own office with my mini-me patient, to process the intransigent difficulties of my childhood and how much I was secretly holding myself in contempt.

Wherever you go there you are. —Confucius

At age 14, I became a meditation failure. This happened when my mother enrolled both of us in a transcendental meditation class. While I was able to experience Zen-like reverie in the training group, once on my own, at home, my meditation practice swung me into what I would later learn to identify as panic attacks. In the quiet, I was overtaken with embarrassing images of things I had done wrong, mistakes I had made, and self-admonishments. When I reported my heart-thumping reactions in class, the teacher nodded his head reassuringly and told me to practice more; it would get better. But it actually got worse, as I grew more apprehensive of becoming overwhelmed with panic. I envied the respite that others reported finding in meditation.

This pattern would later repeat itself as I learned yoga, guided imagery, and mindfulness. I could not stand to be with myself for more than a few minutes without aborting. My internal space was anything but restful!

Each time I was challenged to be on my own—at college, graduate school, and internship—my distress and self-contempt would rise. Again, teachers and peers alike would reassure me that my intense misery would ease; however, the art of self-soothing was beyond my reach. I would hobble through the "best years of my life" using eating disorders and escape behaviors to manage my dis-ease.

One of the safe spaces I discovered during those turbulent years was therapy. There, I felt I was with a supportive other who liked me. A big part of my first decades of therapy involved learning about how to care for myself more kindly. It impressed me to watch my therapist feed her plants and make cups of tea before our sessions. I also joined a peer group, which quickly became a healing family in which I grew to feel safer and stronger. Over the years, both my therapists and groupmates were perplexed by how tortured and anxious I was when on my own, and how punishing I felt after the smallest missteps.

With the next 20 years came private practice, marriage, motherhood, and a few relocations. I came to expect that moves and relationship breaks would create weeks, if not months, of lost time. In these charged periods, I was living in an internal world filled with debilitating angst and self-recriminations, though functioning at a remarkably high level.

Homeland is something one becomes aware of through its loss. —Gunter Grass

After September 11, 2001, treating patients who had been in and around New York, I received my next course of trauma therapy from my patients. This was another period in which I was utterly under siege emotionally, and it was during the post 9/11 year that I finally connected the dots about the generational origins of my anxieties.

I noticed that in comparison with my rattled Connecticut and New York patients, I was a basket case. I couldn't think straight about how to be in relationship with my husband; I was deeply preoccupied and found it hard to be present with my children. A petrified feeling invaded me. I dared not share it with friends, since I was not a victim and was tasked with being a mother, wife, and therapist. "I am having the wrong feelings!" I told my own therapist at the time. And we would have a laugh, because we knew feelings weren't wrong—except for mine, of course.

As a therapist, I saw only a few patients who came in to talk about direct losses they suffered in 9/11. I would see others who at some point backed into a discussion of their experience in the context of discussing unmanageable life stresses. One day a patient mentioned his irritation over nightly fights with his wife about what time he would train home after work for family dinner. He reported that his wife was still nervous about his arrival time, after his being trapped in the city overnight on 9/11. So, was he downtown on September 11th? At this point, he stoically recounted being at Morgan Stanley (in Tower One), making his way down crowded stairwells, sprinting through debris once he got to the street, and walking more than a hundred blocks, trying unsuccessfully to get out of the city. He seemed to be a reluctant and terse narrator. When I asked about his feelings, he said that he was angry at how many of his colleagues and friends were affected. He returned to his resentment that his wife would make more demands at this time. It was as clear as day: This man's (and my father's) angry look was a tag of terror.

I understood this from the inside out—because I was living that same overwhelmedness with my own children! I was barking at them, "Quiet down! Stop fighting! Stop asking for things!" Instead of being the caring, comforting mother I saw others being in my consultation room, I was exploding with anxiety about what had happened and what I feared could happen again and again. For the first time in my life, I felt close to my father, and I started several conversations with him about the fact that I now had a window into what he must have felt throughout his life after the Holocaust.

Although I did not confide this part to my father, I understood from therapy that I was suffering as well from the prolonged exposure to a parent who could not cope with, much less enjoy, having children—not to mention three children in 4 years. I realized that the look I had taken as "I hate you!" could be more aptly described as, "I don't want to deal with you, because I can't deal!"

For love is home to all of us. —Wald Wassermann

At this juncture, I more lovingly accept that sometimes, less often than before but more often than I would like, I still feel unraveled. I understand that no matter how triggered and traumatized I am, I need to move against the raw suffering, toward comfort, in order to not inflict it on those I love, including my children. There is a difference between grief and suffering, and I am learning to honor the losses in my early life, while resisting the continued suffering.

Of course, realizing that I carry a transgenerational and developmental trauma has not meant that I no longer lose valuable time to the distress that resides in me. However, I have learned to track myself better— after a bad relationship rupture or loss of a loved one, or most recently after the election of November 2016— and to recognize when I am falling into a crevasse.

I have had to face the truth of it—that being left alone with my self-contempt can sometimes feel like being trapped in a torture chamber. I will probably never be healed by solo vacations, spas, or yoga practices on a beach. To harness my own recovery resources, I have to own what truly puts me in my flow. Practicing as a therapist has gifted me alternative opportunities to hone being present, in the moment, resonating with others' life forces and attuning to my own experience. I have also worked diligently to create more shared space with my husband, my children, and in my closest friendships. I have made time for communing with my people. Most of my healing resources are relational and intimate routine practices: making eggs for breakfast every day for me and my family, sitting on the couch or porch with my husband, spending an hour on the phone with my long-distance friend, having lunch and a walk with my best friends and colleagues.

Gradually, I have more fully claimed my complex trauma diagnosis, and I wear it with some respect. It has become clear that, for me, in times of trouble solitude is fraught, although I am now able to treat myself with more care and sympathy during upsetting periods. I remain vulnerable to feelings of badness when I think someone is disappointed in me, and I marvel at how easy it is for someone/something to sink my ship. And even that understanding helps me build a more loving internal home, a little less entangled with my childhood roots of home. ▼

References

Bradshaw, J. (1988). *Healing the shame that binds you.* Deerfield Beach, Fla: Health Communications.

Bob Rosenblatt

Bob Rosenblatt, phd: "I have been sitting in my chair delivering individual, couples and group psychotherapy since 1974. Every day is a new adventure. I never know what I am going to learn, teach or feel in any given session. This is what keeps me coming back hour after hour—day after day. Supervision and practice consultation for other mental health practitioners in Washington, DC, and Atlanta, Georgia, make up another part of my professional life. When I am not in my office, I relish time with my family, especially my grandchildren; I enjoy traveling with my wife, golfing with friends and, now, writing about lessons learned over the years in practice."
doctor13bob@gmail.com

The Geometry of Home:
Two Brothers' Perspectives

Bob's Story

My Austrian father, born in1914, grew up during the era in which personal communication was via letters. Consequently, he penned numerous letters to me while I attended college in New York City and graduate school in Los Angeles. Without fail, he would sign off each letter with the following expression, "Your motherland is where you make your living." I resented this expression and expended a great deal of energy to ensure that this was not my mantra. I wanted to build my life wherever it felt right. I was also sure that the almighty dollar was not going to be the central theme structuring my existence.

Having fled Nazi Germany in 1939, my father settled and lived the majority of his life in Washington, DC. I've often wondered how his flight (and my mother's) shaped my brother and me, the respective geometries of "home" we've drawn, and the differing courses our lives have taken. Did we interpret and implement our father's adage in the same way?

To contribute depth and understanding to this puzzle, I asked my brother to author the backstory of our parents' flight and escape from Nazi Germany. I also asked him to offer his reflections on his purview of home. I wondered whether he had made his decisions based on the same factors that were part of my calculus.

Our family's migration was accompanied with great loss and suffering. All parents pass on legacies to their children, filled with both curses and blessings. My parents' legacies have had substantial influence on both of our lives. I speculated that the intertwining of these two narratives had the potential to be healing for our relation-

Steven Rosenblatt

Steven Rosenblatt, MD, FACP, FASN, is a board-certified nephrologist practicing in San Antonio, Texas. He earned degrees from Vanderbilt University and Cornell Medical College and did his graduate training at UCLA and the University of Tennessee Health Science Center, San Antonio. He is married and has three children, four grandchildren, and three grandpets.
stevegr13@gmail.com

ship and beneficial to our readers in understanding their own search for home. How do two siblings grow up with the same parents and end up with different perspectives about home? "Home is where the heart is [and where one can feel safe and secure]" (elaborating on Pliny the Elder classic proverb) might just be my version of the story.

Even as a young boy, I desired an antidote to growing up in a family of the World War II diaspora. Although it was outside of my awareness, I was determined to forge a guide to my existence out of the essential forces of family, home, community, and rootedness. With these tenets steering my personal choices, I shaped my life around the notion that *my* motherland is the refuge in which I feel safe and secure. These quintessential feelings were at the core of my professional aspirations and, more importantly, directed my decisions of where and how to live my personal life.

Let me share a little personal history. I met and fell in love at a very early age with Wendy, whom I immediately knew I wanted to be the mother of my children. Being a first-generation American citizen of Holocaust survivors, it was an added bonus to be with someone whose large, 4th generation Washington, DC, family was deeply enmeshed in the local community.

I chose to attend college in New York City to be in closer proximity to my brother who was already living there and attending medical school. After college, when Wendy and I married, I chose to move the two of us 3,000 miles from our childhood home to attend the University of Southern California (USC), in large part because my brother was already in his medical residency at UCLA. Both educational choices were driven by my desire to form a stronger bond with the key member of

my enduring family system.

I had other reasons to seek a California adventure, of course. USC had the kind of humanistic psychology graduate program I desired—an antidote to the behavioral orientation of Washington, DC, graduate programs. Being young and newly married, I also reasoned that it would be better for our growth as a couple to be outside the reach of all our parents. However, I always knew that DC was going to be the eventual home of my family.

Much to my surprise and dismay, my brother left California soon after my acceptance to USC. He took his family to San Antonio, TX, to finish his residency, start his practice, and make his home. He still lives there today.

Nevertheless, upon arriving in LA, my wife and I immediately worked to establish a solid community of friends. It was vital to create a sense of family that we could embrace with some degree of intimacy. We wanted and needed to feel that quality of home in our new location. We were young and strangers in a strange land. Developing that refuge filled with friends and colleagues was our backstop.

During our 5+ years in Southern California, Wendy and I had a beautiful son and daughter in short order. We quickly realized, however, that LA was not the right place to raise our family. I wanted to move my family home and endow our children with what I never had—grandparents and extended family.

Now, I might say that readers are not going to believe the next turn in my story, but I suspect that you already recognize where I am headed with this narrative. I moved my family home to Washington, DC, on a Friday in June 1980. My parents retired, sold my childhood home, and moved to Florida on the following Monday. This twist of fate (or destiny) represents what my family is all about. It also reflects the impact of the Holocaust upon my parents. Yes—I brought home my family filled with a daughter-in-law and two beautiful grandchildren, and my parents moved away. The curse of the Diaspora arises again!

Quickly, my family was spread all over the country, and there I was in DC nestled in the bosom of my *wife's* family, not my family of origin. And I was deeply thankful for that. As a new son-in-law, my mother-in-law had been quite angry with me for taking her daughter to California. Upon our return to DC with her daughter and two grandchildren in tow, our relationship began to thaw. My father-in-law and I developed a solid father-son connection, invaluable because my father had moved away and then passed away about 18 months after relocating to Florida. I was only 31 and still needed some fathering to get this thing called life together. My mother-in-law and I became best friends and had a deeply loving relationship that grew to become filled with mutual admiration and great respect. My wife's two brothers became my brothers and I was part of an encircled family. I liked this situation tremendously.

Having established the foundation of a new family life back home in DC, I began to concentrate on developing a sense of home in my professional practice. USC's graduate program indoctrinated me with the tenets of humanistic-existential (HE) psychotherapy. Simply translated, it is concentrated on the relationship of the psychotherapist and client within an existential philosophical foundation. In HE, the interpersonal relationship is the epicenter of the healing paradigm. This mode spoke to me and presented me with a way to be in both the consultation room and in the world. It created for me the capacity to feel relaxed, confident, and safe in my own skin. I still knew that I had

much to learn about myself and the human condition, but I had found a living space that was centered and balanced. I had found an internal home that allowed me to be in relation with others in an authentic and potentially healing way.

As Sting (1983) sings, every move I make, every step I take, is centered on the notion of creating significance in my interpersonal relationships. This has been my "home" for many years. I firmly believe that this central theme has been what has made my life rich and meaningful inside and outside of my consultation room.

My concept of home was further expanded and refined involuntarily 5 years ago when I was diagnosed with multiple myeloma. The best place in the world to get treatment for my disease was at The University of Arkansas Medical Center in Little Rock. I closed my practice for much of 2015, and my wife and I moved to Little Rock. First things first, we located a condominium and, prior to treatment, worked jointly and quickly to create another home. For the double stem cell transplant I was about to endure, creating a safe sanctuary was fundamental to my (our) mental outlook. We filled this refuge with our personal belongings as well as objects from family and friends to create a safe and secure place to hold us. Every day, as we returned from the hospital, there was always that sigh of relief as we entered our temporary home. Wendy and I felt comfortable, easy, and relaxed in that apartment. This home helped to bolster my attitude and enabled me to tolerate the treatment and recover.

Let's turn now to my brother's telling of our family's migration story.

The Rosenblatt Story

This story of the Rosenblatt family migration begins in 1914, when our father was born into the Austro-Hungarian Empire in a small village called Trybuchowce. This city is now a part of Ukraine. His father was an elder of the Jewish community and manager of a farm. During World War I, our grandfather was a decorated Calvary officer in the Polish army. After the war, he moved his family to Vienna, Austria. Why? I believe the opportunity to provide for his family and the growing strains of anti-Semitism underpinned his departure. With the rise of the fascist Nazi regime in the late 1930s, the family initiated its migration to America.

Uncle Richard, a Viennese physician, moved to America and had to redo his medical internship to become licensed in Washington, DC. Uncle Richard and his wife (our father's sister) lived on little for over a year. He was making every effort to support his wife and young daughter. He even had to reimburse the hospital for costs associated with having his whites washed. His wife, our father's sister Lena, was a student of Maria Montessori in Vienna. She was part of the coffee house intellectual movement in Vienna in the 1920-30s. Lena brought much of Montessori's educational precepts to early education in the United States. These two members of our family contributed to their new country and home by providing medical care in a lower income neighborhood of Washington, DC, and getting involved in the early education movement of the '50s and '60s. They were thus able to establish their path to survival and a secure life.

Our father's other sister, Bertha, alongside her husband and young child, left Vienna after the Anschluss. They kept moving through Western Europe until they arrived in Portugal, where they waited for over a year until they were able to obtain the visa that granted them permission to enter the United States in June 1941. They became corner

grocers in Washington, DC, thus establishing their own path to survival and a secure life.

Our father, Samuel, the youngest of four children, was still living in Vienna as the Third Reich was growing in menacing strength and ambition. One day in 1938, he learned that the SS was looking for Sam Rosenblatt, who was widely known because of his Motocross racing throughout Europe. When the SS was unable to find our father, they decided to arrest his brother, Adolph.

The SS transported Adolph to the labor camp known as Dachau. He was quickly reassigned and shipped off to Buchenwald. Our grandfather was able to bribe an SS officer who secured Adolph's release from the camp. Additionally, Grandfather was able to facilitate Adolph's migration to Great Britain, where he enlisted in the British army. In doing so, he changed his name from Adolph Rosenblatt to Ardie Rutherford. He knew that if he were captured with his birth name he would be killed immediately. He was sent to the front lines because of his knowledge of the German language and his desire to fight the Germans. The Third Reich quickly overran Western Europe and pushed the English troops all the way back to Dunkirk. My uncle was rescued in the famous retreat from these shores of France.

Adolph had a small child, Henri, who was still in Vienna with his wife. Henri was placed on a Kindertransport, a train filled with children of varying ages whose parents sent them away in order to escape the final solution of the Nazis. The children were given to unknown families and moved to unknown places in England. Ten thousand children were saved this way. Our father saved Henri. He met him in Brussels and placed him with a family. Henri lived out the war in hiding like Anne Frank in the back room of a Christian laundress who raised him as her own child. He hardly went outside for 3 years. Henri became an honored documentary filmmaker in Belgium and still lives in Brussels today.

Immediately following Adolph's arrest, our grandfather gave his youngest child, our father Samuel, 1,000 Shillings and told him to depart from Austria immediately. Grandfather was unable to direct him as to where to go, only to leave at once. Our father ended up in Brussels living hand to mouth for a little more than a year. He was concocting any and every effort to find a new home, desperately seeking asylum from the encroaching Third Reich. He wrote to Australia seeking admission. He wrote to every Rosenblatt in the New York City phonebook asking them to sponsor his immigration to America.

Finally, an unknown Rosenblatt responded to Dad's plea and after some reluctance agreed to sponsor him. He arrived in America in November 1939. Upon his arrival, he quickly moved to Washington, DC, and moved in with his sister. In short order, he was able to become a union electrical apprentice and find gainful employment. After Pearl Harbor, our father drove cross-country to Long Beach, California, where he worked with the Navy to help rebuild the Pacific Fleet. This period of service accelerated his path to citizenship. Dad was proud to help with the war effort because he wanted to be involved in the victory over the fascism that controlled Europe.

Our grandfather, Wolf, also chose to leave his home in Vienna. He was the last member of his family to depart and took a different route to the United States. He took a train through Russia and made it to the Eastern coastal town of Vladivostok. From there he boarded a boat bound for Shanghai, where he lived for a short period of time

in the Jewish ghetto and worked in a teahouse, until he was able to find passage on the last Japanese passenger ship to cross the Pacific and land in San Francisco prior to Pearl Harbor. He arrived in America with his second wife. His journey was still not over. His son Sam bought him passage on a train headed to New York by selling his car to raise the fare. Grandfather wanted to settle in a predominantly Jewish neighborhood in New York City. There, he would feel safe surrounded by his people. Our father supported him in his new home where he lived comfortably until his passing in 1964.

It must be an extraordinary statistic that every member of our grandfather's nuclear family made it out of Austria and arrived in America. They surely beat the odds! Each and every one took a different path, but they all survived the Holocaust.

Our mother's story is quite different. Her family also lived in Vienna (our parents met in New York at a Jewish singles dance at the Roosevelt Hotel). Mother and her parents left Vienna and went to Poland in an effort to escape the Nazis. Eventually, they found themselves under Nazi rule again after the invasion of Poland in September 1939. They were then moved into the Warsaw ghetto. The American Consulate sent word to our mom's parents in Warsaw that they had a visa for her to immigrate to America. Her parents made the impossible decision to say goodbye to their daughter and send her back to Vienna on her own to acquire her visa. Our mother's older sister had departed for the United States in 1938, before the German invasion of Austria, and was able to sponsor her immigration. Mom travelled across German-occupied Europe to Rotterdam via German troop trains. It was in Rotterdam that she had passage on an ocean liner to New York. As for her parents, they were transported from Warsaw to either Treblinka or Majdanek death camps (we are not sure) where they were exterminated. Our mother's Holocaust trauma was an ever-present part of her life, but her story has never been fully revealed to us.

Steven's Story

Why did I write this part of our history? These stories were a significant part of my early life. They are the stories of family who gave up everything for survival. "Home" as a place one put down roots had become meaningless. Home became wherever you were safe and had enough to eat, where you could make a living and provide for your family. Home was outside of fascism and authoritarianism.

So how does this relate to me? It seemed critical and deeply ingrained in me to pursue my best opportunities in education and settle where the circumstances dictated my greatest possibilities of achieving success as a physician. I ended my medical training as a nephrologist in San Antonio, TX. I saw the possibilities to be successful in that community. I could make a living and provide for my family in the practice opportunities that existed there. My attachment to home was wherever I was—wherever I could provide for my new family.

Years later, when I took a trip with my family, my brother's family, his in-laws, and our mother, it occurred to me that I had been missing something. I realized abruptly that there was something that I did not even know I was missing. The wholeness of family came suddenly into view. I realized that I had made some choices that were probably mistaken, that my view of family was too insular. The extended family created a wholeness I did not even understand. I cried deeply upon this awareness.

My choices were driven by opportunity. To follow the pattern of the family told above, it was the opportunity for safety underpinned by financial security.

I believe that what saved our family was the ability of each to independently seek safety with a confidence that each would get to safety. Families that clung too closely together died in the gas chambers. Now, I have learned that families have to ultimately reconnect and reunify.

Now Back to Bob…

What I have come to understand about my father's letter-ending statement was exactly the same as what I have strived to locate and establish in my life. I believe now that my father was advising me to find the spot in which I would feel safe, secure, and comfortable. It needed to be a spot where I could breathe without feeling scared and paranoid. My father's mantra was less about money than I had originally believed, and more about securing self-determination to construct your life as you choose with all the necessary freedoms. This is what my dad accomplished in America, his new home. Coming to this understanding with the insight and help of a good friend and colleague was immeasurably helpful. It provided me another moment to feel deeply connected to my father more than 30 years after his passing. He was, after all, giving me solid fatherly advice. And it was better advice then I heard then, from my oppositional nature.

My father and mother were always looking over their shoulders to find a place to feel safe and call home. Sadly, I am not sure that either of them got to feel that comfort. However, they displayed to my brother and me what they came to understand as the key ingredients of home as well as their lifelong strivings for this motherland. It is true that my brother and I ended up traversing different paths and living in different locations, but now our relationship is more closely connected than ever. We both now understand that the geometry of a safe and secure home is comprised of family and friends, and the deep connections they construct. ▼

References

Sting. (1983). Every breath you take [Recorded by The Police]. On *Synchronicity*. United Kingdom.

Kitty La Perriere

Excerpts from *Mirrored Reflections: A Memoir*

Kitty La Perriere, PhD, was born into a tri-cultural context in Czechoslovakia, spent WWII in Switzerland, and the rest of her life essentially in the United States. Educated in Europe, at Connecticut College, Yale and Washington Universities, her professional life encompasses research, teaching, and therapy with people from infancy to old age, with individuals, groups, and family systems, using a rainbow of theoretical orientations. Her life has been enriched by three marriages, one daughter, several stepchildren, and numerous friends, most of them gone. Her *Mirrored Reflections: A Memoir* (2019) is newly published by International Psychoanalytic Books.
Kittylap@mac.com

Author's Note

Looking back over such a long life opens a terrain defined by the length of this perspective. As if to prepare me for the time when diminished vision will be joined by error-pocked hearing, scenes of great detail rush in and lead me to a reliance on my inner world, in order to maintain connection to ongoing life. Clearly remembered cameo scenarios alternate with stretches of total blankness, as if I had moved out of myself and lived those years as someone else. Notwithstanding the unreliability of specific details, broader themes stand out. Given my profession as a psychologist and psychotherapist, there is an almost irresistible tendency to discern connections between past and present, sometimes venturing to posit cause and effect. How do I keep from making conclusions postulated by this or that developmental theory and stay, so to speak, with my raw data?

We pay lip service to the universally accepted trope that early experiences matter. In their unfolding, they shape the substrata of everything life superimposes on us. The persistence of this fundamental truth minimizes, or even wipes out, our optimistic insistence that we can reinvent ourselves multiple times, all within the course of a lifetime.

There are two basic emotional lodes in my life. I am fundamentally optimistic about people's potential, about possible solutions to seemingly intractable problems, about people's kindness and flexibility (despite the horrific historic times I have lived through and live in again), and, in my innermost self, I find the quality of basic human evil to be alien. Yet what I encounter inside myself,

overlaid upon what I think of as my basic temperament, is a murky layer of unease, alienation, a sense that I belong nowhere, forever seeking my community and never finding one, of depression and isolation.

At no time am I unaware of having lost my home, as well as a large part of my family, to the Holocaust. I am not, precisely speaking, a Holocaust survivor. I spent those perilous years in safe Switzerland. Only my father's incarceration in French concentration camps labels me as a child of Holocaust survivors, a label that is only partially descriptive. I personally was shaped by the catastrophe that befell my world during much of my childhood and adolescence. I only learned over many years the details of how and where members of my family and friends were murdered. None of those horrible experiences did I suffer firsthand.

In my family, these events were hardly mentioned. If so, the facts were given out as information, almost in passing. There were comments made about the postcards that arrived from Buchenwald with diminishing numbers of signatures. This, of course, was interpreted as an indication of who was still alive and who had died since the last card was sent. Later, there were the entries in the books kept in the camps that gave dates of death and listed fictitious causes, such as pneumonia. At another time, survivors told me the story of my cousin Annemarie. Wearing her prettiest sweater, she arrived on a truck in Terezin, but wasn't allowed to disembark before the truck departed. Instead, the Wehrmacht deposited her in a brothel, where it was reported she lasted less than 3 months.

As I learned these details, they seamlessly found their place within the murk of my pain. When other people speak of childhood, their grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, my own first thoughts are of the horrible deaths my family members experienced. In unearthing long-ago memories, I found myself rushing eagerly to my pre-catastrophic world, before it was annihilated by the events unleashed by Hitler, and to the world of ambiguity I inhabited in my next decade, which was spent in a place of privilege and safety compared to almost all other Jews in Europe at that time. Simultaneously, I lived as an unwelcome and marginalized refugee, akin to an undocumented alien with an aggressive and clamping-down immigration agency in action.

The *paradise* that was my Moravian childhood became that only in retrospect. At the time, there were sufficient family and political problems that created their own shaping influences, a preparation for feeling marginal, outside the mainstream of community, and solitary as I searched for my path. I fell into exceptionalism, rather than group identity. Often I took pride in these feelings. I managed to find a way forward toward success. But frequently any temporary allegiances and loyalties that were formed would later turn into sources of betrayal, when it became obvious I really did not belong to the groups and people with whom I had formed alliances.

The path I followed was more typically male than female. Work, not marriage, was at its center. Although I had more in common with men than with women, it did not accord me any reliable membership or status inside the male world. My interest patterns alienated me from women for many years. This remained so until the larger world of women caught up with me. The time finally came when finding a husband, having babies, and trading recipes were no longer a woman's defining preoccupations.

At the end of my first decade of life, my existence underwent a dramatic shift. My first years were lived within my family, in my home country where I belonged and felt

appreciated and loved. My young self had incorporated aspects of Czech, German, and Jewish identities, sometimes all vying for attention, but which, during that period, were not at war with each other. Until that point, I would likely have proceeded to become a patriotic Czech woman. When I was 10, that entire world disappeared, like Atlantis sinking into the sea. I had left on vacation, never to return. The abrupt disappearance of friends, family, and language went hand in hand with a slow disappearance of culture, meanings, and sense of self. I was no longer that cute little girl to whom people were drawn.

I forgot what I had lost and constructed a new self, one that was bereft but inwardly rebellious, with the self-esteem-protecting behavior of an outsider. I feared and hated Switzerland. Yet I loved it too. I complained about the fit of my shoes rather than being grateful to have shoes at all. I became an adolescent in Switzerland and was fortunate to attend good schools. I loved life in the way an unfolding life demands to be loved. Fear lurked around the edges; I could be expelled for any minor infraction. Switzerland was surrounded by Germany, and Germany meant my death. This dread usually stayed in the background but would start to lift as reports of the beginnings of Germany's defeat came in daily from the war's fronts.

Around the time the battle of Stalingrad turned in favor of the Allied forces, I began to remember a bit of Czech, and soon thereafter memories of Miroslav reappeared. I recalled primarily childish ideas of sexual mysteries mixed in with more reasonable sexual information: basic things such as where children came from and how animals and people had sex. I had forgotten all of that, along with my Czech language and the details of my former life. It is only in retrospect, and from the distance of age, that my life in Miroslav has acquired such Edenic tones. A most profound experience happened during a reunion for my then-partner, Al, which brought together his extended family and friends in an effort to heal his metastatic lung cancer. While he was bathed in the love and care that came toward him from everyone present, I suddenly had a vivid image of the Miroslav garden and all the people who had made up my world. I was overcome with the enormity of the losses that I had suffered and broke into sobs. Joan Speck, one of the therapists in attendance, comforted me, saying, "Now is not the time." I quickly withdrew into myself, reinforcing the barriers between my inner reality and the world in which I lived.

During the course of writing this memoir, my love flowed to the people of Miroslav who did not survive the Holocaust. I wanted to set down a portrait of the little town as it was before disaster struck and wiped it out: a small word monument to its people as I remembered them, the Jews who perished in the camps, the Czechs who starved during the war, and even the Germans who were killed in the war and those expelled afterward. The whole memoir drew me into its flow more by the people and places I remember and love than by a desire to build a monument to myself for my professional successes.

At various times in my life, the early wounds of dislocation were at different removes from my daily self. While I was a student and trying to make a life, they were acknowledged in a matter-of-fact manner, as a given, and not dwelled upon. When I lived in St. Louis and was married to Art, they receded into the background. I was trying to reconcile Art's working-class lifestyle with my own professional status.

As I became older and the immersion into a New York Jewish environment called forth more of my core identity, the early injuries loomed larger. This coincided with the

time when, quite naturally, one begins to look back. People celebrate grandchildren, seek out their high school friends on the web, and generally return to thoughts of their origins. The burden of my loss increases when such a return reveals only past desolation. In the writing and revisiting of my life at this late stage, I hope to heal lingering grief and affirm my belief that humanity may indeed have a future.

Miroslav

As my mother told the story: It was the 22nd of November 1927, and after she and my father finished eating their supper, she cajoled him into taking a stroll in the garden of the maternity clinic where she was awaiting her time. I was born at half past midnight. This made me a Scorpio in Brno, Czechoslovakia, the place of my birth, and a Sagittarius in the New World, where I have lived most of my life. Gently touching her arm, the smiling doctor reassured my mother, "You have a beautiful, chubby baby girl!" And she did feel relieved.

My brother, her first child, was born 9 years earlier after a punishing labor, the umbilical cord wrapped around his neck. He emerged long and scrawny, and became a poor eater and a dreamy, difficult child and remained so well into his teens. Thus, he captured Mother's worry, attention, and care, and, finally, secured her special love. Nevertheless, she had been eager to have more children.

Many years later, when my brother or I presented problems, my father would tease, "And she always wanted a dozen!" Ultimately, our family consisted of only my brother and me. My arrival was preceded by at least two miscarriages. In contrast to the previous pregnancies, which had been difficult, the one preparing me for the world had been easy, ending in an uneventful, speedy delivery with a labor of only 2 hours. The happy normality of my arrival pleased him. I suspect he fell in love with me then and there.

By contrast, my mother's feelings ran differently. She looked at me, heaved a sigh of relief, and said in some inchoate fashion, "She'll be all right. She won't need me all that much." Within the first months, and then during my childhood, her initial and unformed notion solidified. Many years later she told me, "I was not so preoccupied with you. I knew that you would have to live with *them*, and I should not interfere too much."

The *them* my mother had relinquished me to were not only my father's extended family, in whose midst we were living, but also our small town of Miroslav, where we returned after the two weeks' postpartum hospital stay. *Them* also encompassed all of Czechoslovakia, where my (Swiss) mother had moved following her marriage.

* * *

Miroslav's modest population of only about 5,000 people did not prevent its inhabitants from enjoying a proud and affectionate allegiance to its long history. Many years later in my life, I found among my parents' belongings a booklet printed in 1912 celebrating the 1,000th anniversary of Miroslav's founding. Whether it actually documented historical facts or a rather grandiose myth born out of civic pride, the booklet traced the historic roots of the little town far back to the beginnings of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Leafing through its pages, what impressed me most was a list of the prominent citizens of 1912. This list included the names of German, Czech, and Jewish families

intermixed alphabetically. It was a stunning reminder of a time when the community peacefully embraced its diverse cultural groups. As part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, it had survived the many waves of Europe's fortunes and had maintained its presence in southern Moravia as a small marketplace and agricultural center. Miroslav's glory declined under the Communist government when it was, as I discovered, left off the road grid and omitted from the map.

My father brought his wife and 2-week-old daughter to a house situated at the lower end of the village center: a broad cobbled square at the upper end of which stood the City Hall. Around us were a variety of small shops that facilitated daily life: a greengrocer, a baker, a dairy, a candy shop, a café. Closer to our end was the butcher, the volunteer fire department, and a photo shop. The square thinned into a street that wended its way up a small hill, past the German grade school and, set back a bit, the German high school. The tower of the Catholic Church could be seen from a distance, surrounded by the village. The street was called Church Street. Our house was number 4.

It was a two-story house with a pleasing façade, French windows, and a decorative railing along the roofline. A small bridge in the front crossed a hollow that ran along the square and could well have been the remnant of an open sewer, but only overflow rainwater ever dampened it in my childhood. The path that crossed the bridge led to a large gate and passageway that divided the lower story of the house into halves: the left side held two or three administrative offices, and the right side contained several labs, where my father's older brother, Kurt, plied his trade as a nutritional chemist. Aromas of flowers and fruit often permeated the air, welcoming you into the mood of the season.

In spring and summer, horse-drawn wagons would cross the bridge and pass into the inner courtyard. The wagons were laden with mountains of fruit, mostly strawberries and sour cherries, which were deposited on long wooden tables that had been set up in preparation. Benches accommodated seasonal workers who washed and stemmed and pitted the fruit for processing. There might have been as many as 60 workers or more, all women. I loved to find a place on a bench and work along with them. I felt proud of my labors and accomplishments. I can still picture the wooden sieves with net inserts we used to rinse the strawberries three to four times in running water.

In high season, the courtyard became part of the manufacturing plant, surrounded by the ancillary buildings required in the manufacturing process. The factory converted the fruit into etheric oils and esters, components for the food and perfume industry. There was a large boiler housed in its own barn, also a carpenter's shop and a barrel maker's shop....

At the back of the yard stood another gate that opened into a deep cellar, where the products were kept cool before shipment. During the German occupation of World War II, the cellar was taken over by the Gestapo and used as a prison. A set of steps led upward toward a terraced garden; on the other end stood Kurt's house. Our own apartment, and that of my father's parents, occupied the second floor of the main house.

I felt intensely at home among the buildings and with the workers of our small factory. I often watched them at work, and made friends with some of their children, although I had no intention of entering the family business later on in my life. Perhaps there was a tacit assumption that it would become my brother's legacy. I was quite certain from childhood that I would grow up to become the minister of public health for Czechoslovakia. Nevertheless, my father was very pleased with my interest in his work.

It cemented our good and warm relationship. I think he rather enjoyed my being a tomboy. From his rare business trips, he always brought back practical, easy-to-wear, easy-to-wash dresses. These contrasted dramatically with the highly constructed dresses my mother had made for me. Those dresses required great care in how they were worn, as well as careful attention to how I moved while wearing them.

My father often took me when he visited the farmers whose fields yielded the strawberries we processed. Early on, we made these trips by horse and carriage. I had a wonderful sense of surveying the countryside and the growing rows of strawberries and enjoyed talking with the farmers who spoke to my father. Occasionally in the evening, my father and I would go for a short walk along a stream bordered by willow trees, which led to a forest where it was often possible to hear nightingales singing. These are some of the images that come to mind when I think of the deep happiness and contentment I experienced in this paradise of childhood.

* * *

My father had decided it best if they returned to his family home. My parents, with my then 3-year-old brother, moved back to Miroslav, which was now in the newly constructed state of Czechoslovakia. Father joined the family business run by his father and his older brother. My mother was by then weary of the 6-hour commute to the Saurer offices. She agreed to follow her husband into the gentle and gracious countryside of southern Moravia, living in the same house as his parents. She held romantic notions about her future. She was very much in love and also hoped to develop a full intellectual and active working life in her new home.

Putting these plans into action proved impossible. In preparation for living in the newly founded republic, my mother studied Czech, while my father's family, with its cultural roots in Vienna, spoke German. The arrival of a foreign bride caused quite a stir in Miroslav.... Village life, while genteel and warm to insiders, was petty, gossipy, and unwelcoming to a newcomer. Over the 16 years my mother lived in Miroslav, she was never fully accepted. She found no entry to working with my father in the family business, and certainly no occasion or opportunity to look for intellectual or creative activities elsewhere. The women in the family, as well as those in the community, retained a suspicion of her....

We occupied a somewhat elevated position in the social hierarchy of Miroslav; the other kids were probably pleased to have something on me. My father was a ranking member of village society, having lived there his entire life. My mother would always remain the aloof foreigner. In retrospect, I realize that my brother joined Mother in the position of *outsider*. This was reflected in his difficulty of learning to speak Czech well. On the other hand, I was a village kid, and Czech was my first language....

* * *

I started school early, at the age of 5 and a half...in September 1933. It was an ominous year in the history of us all.... At school I learned to love our new republic, a state whose relatively recent birth still seemed to be in everyone's constant awareness. Its newly minted existence represented the fulfillment of a longing for autonomy and freedom

for a people that had been ruled by the Austro-Hungarian Empire for centuries, and whose history contained a number of popular uprisings or peasant rebellions against an essentially feudal yoke.

Czechoslovakia was created as part of the Treaty of Versailles in 1918. The Austro-Hungarian Empire was dismantled and carved into a series of nation states, most of them representing multiethnic compromises that carried the seeds for later troubles from their very inception. I was a fervent patriot. When we learned the song directed at TG Masaryk, the Republic's first president, I sang the words passionately: *"Taticku stary nas at se nam zachovas dokud ty jsi mezi name dotoud bude dobre s name taticku stary nas."* ("Our dear old father, be preserved for us. As long as you are among us, we will be safe.") Indeed, after Masaryk's death in 1934, political clouds darkened, and foreboding signs of peril appeared.

In school I was encouraged to join the Sokol (later known for its Fascist leanings), a youth athletic organization, and was proud to march on national holidays wearing its beige uniform banded in red. My tangible love of Czechoslovakia was shared by its Jewish community; as I discovered as an adult, that love grew out of an explicit, active awareness that the state Masaryk helped birth was one of the first to give full rights of citizenship and full protection of the law to its Jewish population. As the joke went: Who is a Czechoslovak? Only a Jew. The others are either Czechs or Slovaks. Perhaps it was this history that allowed the Jews of Miroslav to continue the peaceful coexistence that had prevailed under the Austro-Hungarian Empire and to live in confidence and on friendly terms with both German and Czech neighbors.

A regional exhibit of agricultural products was a big event in 1935, in which Czechs, Germans, and Jews participated. In retrospect, it expressed the tensions that would mar the peaceful picture and signal the beginning of the end. The German population had begun to strut around in ethnic German clothing, men in boots and brown shirts, women in dirndl dresses and white knee socks knitted in a braided pattern....

* * *

By 1937, when I was 10 years old, the threat of war hung heavy above our lives.... While we children prepared for what we saw as our soon-to-arrive hour of glory and heroism, the adults in the community began to admit that the political situation was close to catastrophic.... The world climate was ominous, but no awareness of the dangers hinted at the magnitude of what would come....

My attachment to my Czech identity went deep.... Whenever a question arose about possible emigration, the whole family closed ranks solidly against the idea. My grandfather spoke of our duty to Czechoslovakia. He ordered our foreign bank deposits back home to be put at the disposal of the state. Ultimately, only my mother maintained a wider view. At the critical moment, she prevailed and got her immediate family, her husband and two children, into greater safety.

As for me, I had no thoughts of leaving. I was firmly grounded in my village, and in my school, from the very first day I entered....

Don Murphy, PhD

Atlanta, Georgia
doncm38@gmail.com

Book Review

Mirrored Reflections: A Memoir
by Kitty La Perriere, International Psychoanalytic Books, 2019, 322 pages

Another Place and Time:
A Review of Kitty La Perriere's Memoir, *Mirrored Reflections: A Memoir*

At the outset I must say that *Mirrored Reflections* is a compelling and candidly written evocation of a life of complexity, of strength of character, and of overcoming daunting odds. Moreover, it also reads like a tantalizing mystery, notwithstanding that it is true. All of this expressed in the nuanced writing of a woman who knows and loves words and who understands how to capture a thought, an experience, a scene as though the reader, too, was there. What more can one ask of a memoir?

I first became aware of Kitty La Perriere in the 1970s, when I was beginning my career as a marriage and family therapist. I was in the cohort that organized the Georgia state affiliate of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. We grew quickly and began having an annual meeting to which we invited presenters of significance in our field. I had known of Kitty through national meetings and, being intrigued by her, suggested we invite her to come to Georgia. She did, and I was smitten. She was elegant, had a way of speaking as though talking solely to you, and encompassed the impressive ability to integrate well and then to beautifully articulate complex clinical issues. And I was totally taken by her beautiful Middle European accent.

I could not have foreseen that this lovely woman would eventually become a trusted and beloved friend, when years later we found ourselves in the same American Academy of Psychotherapists peer group. Sometimes the person on the dais does not translate well into the person sharing coffee with you. Not so with Kitty; what I saw all those years ago has remained true and deepened over the years. It is no wonder, therefore, that I read this memoir with excitement and anticipation.

Describing deep-seated feelings about place, one of the poignant themes elucidated here is the search for rootedness. Kitty tragically lost her innocent childhood to the Holocaust. At age 10 she was taken from Miraslov, her beloved Czech village, to live more safely with grandparents in Switzerland. The horrors of Nazism, however,

took not only her home but also many beloved family members. It is not surprising that much of her subsequent life involved the search for a sense of belonging. At the same time, Kitty did not see herself as a survivor, an example of the strong character she embodied in spite of numerous, and sometimes terrifying, obstacles to the contrary. The term "survivor" was abhorrent to her; it eroded her pride at being able to act creatively. Even so, she writes at one point: "I felt very much on my own, unguided and unprotected. Free to find my own way, to stumble, to pick myself up or not" (p. 93). And over and over she did pick herself up. She picked herself up to come to this country as a 22-year-old, miraculously found herself in college and then in graduate school, and over time rose steadily into national and international prominence in a male-dominated profession.

Prior to coming to America, even though she was safer in Switzerland than in her homeland, Kitty lived under the constant threat that she could be a German target. While there, her safety-seeking unconscious had her lose her ability with the Czech language, a phenomenon which mysteriously corrected itself following the war. It was also after the war that she made a longed-for visit to Miraslov and reconnected with the sense that there, as nowhere else, she belonged. Life, however, had other plans for her.

Among those other plans were Kitty's relationships with men on three continents over time. These were complex matters not easily managed. She often found herself making relationship choices that left her feeling bereft of her own sense of self. Even so, she was quite open and available in these couplings, being willing to be totally committed. Kitty writes of this part of her life candidly and vulnerably, describing her adolescent sexual discoveries, her later sexual involvement with various men, and her conflicted sense of her attractiveness. Her beautiful mother had made it clear to Kitty that she was not beautiful. That mother would have been surprised, however, at the men who begged to differ, being quite drawn to her keen intellect, her life force, her loveliness, and her openness. She had three marriages, having her daughter Melanie with her second husband, Art. Following Art's death, Kitty eventually decided single life without a man was quite satisfying. She had found substantial cure for her sense of uprootedness after having purchased and begun living in her New York City brownstone. So it was quite a surprise when Larry appeared late in her life to join his soul with hers in a rich and satisfying third marriage, sadly cut too short by his untimely death.

Kitty ends this stirring autobiography with some beautifully articulated and wise words about the journey of growing old. Despite compromised vision and lessened energy, she describes feeling quite fortunate in her 91st year. And then these sentences conclude the memoir:

> I do wonder if there will be a period when the true horrors of old age will befall me, the ones we think about in the small hours of the night. Will these descend on me suddenly, in full force, and extract their toll before I am ready? That short piece of the untraveled road defies closure or predictability. I will have to make do with the review of my life up until this point, and leave unspoken what may yet happen. (p. 322)

And what a life review it is! ▼

Cathy Roberts, LCPC

Rockville, Maryland
cathy@cathyroberts.net

Book Review

Deep Roots: How Slavery Still Shapes Southern Politics
by Avidit Acharya, Matthew Blackwell, and Maya Sen,
Princeton University Press,
Princeton, NJ
2018, 280 pages

Book Review of *Deep Roots: How Slavery Still Shapes Southern Politics*

Just get over it. That happened in the past. Let's focus on the future. The media regularly report a politician or pundit telling Black people to get over the historical harms of slavery. Maybe you've said it yourself. Is it possible to get over slavery when we have not dealt with it? Is slavery really in the past? History clings to us in ways that we cannot simply shake off. We are at a crossroads in national history where we might own and metabolize our history or disown it and attempt to forge a future without making a serious effort to digest the past.

In *Deep Roots: How Slavery Still Shapes Southern Politics* political scientists Avidit Acharya, Matthew Blackwell, and Maya Sen (2018) explore the ongoing effects of slavery on the political landscape of the south and by extension the rest of the nation. Their thesis is that the history of slavery continues to influence the values, beliefs, opinions, and attitudes of those living in southern states. They further posit, and this is where we learn that history is not over and done with, that counties which had higher proportions of enslaved people in the 1860 census are currently more conservative on civil rights issues and less warm feeling towards African Americans than are counties with historically less economic dependence on slavery.

The researchers start with data from 1860, the last census prior to Emancipation. Using that census to determine percentages of enslaved people in counties across the south, they gather extensive data from Reconstruction (1863-1877) to the present. In one study they examine three factors: partisanship, opposition to affirmative action for racial minorities, and high scores on racial resentment questions. Looking at contemporary data in two neighboring counties in Alabama, Barbour County which was 52% enslaved in 1860 and Clay County, 24% enslaved, the researchers find statistically significant higher levels of partisanship, more opposition to affirmative action, and higher racial resentment scores in Barbour than in Clay. The study also found statistical dif-

ferences in non-race-related issues such as gay marriage and abortion rights. This book contains multiple examples of current racial attitudes correlating to the percentage of Black people enslaved in 1860.

The researchers determine that Reconstruction was a critical juncture in U.S. history. With enslaved people freed and the government exerting control over southern states to enforce the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, southern states were at a critical juncture: Accept the equality of emancipated enslaved people, integrate them into society, and create economic opportunities for all or perpetuate the status quo by finding ways to continue to use Black people to supply free and cheap labor. Once the government withdrew oversight in 1877, many areas of the south chose the latter path participating in convict leasing and tenant farming, both of which impacted Black people more than Whites and continued the free and cheap labor practices of the 17th and 18th centuries.

How do the post-Reconstruction practices that continued well into the 20th century continue to impact political, social, and economic systems today? The researchers introduce the term *behavioral path dependence* to identify the method by which historical patterns are transmitted from one generation to the next. When a critical juncture such as Reconstruction occurs, the nation chooses a path that cuts off some options and opens up others. Attitudes and beliefs that might have occurred on Path A differ from those on Path B. Just as a high school senior choosing university A over B sets in motion a set of growth outcomes for herself and potential future offspring, so choosing to resist Reconstruction Era efforts to forge equality between Black and White people led to a set of outcomes for communities and society. Once the path is chosen, the behavior is reinforced and passed down through the generations by family socialization as well as institutional socialization. This is the basic idea of *behavioral path dependence.*

Implicit in intergenerational family socialization and institutional socialization is the sense of belonging that we all so desperately need. As the authors point out, Southern social norms required submissive behavior by Black people and agreement among White people to enforce the norms in order to maintain White dominance. Parents, relatives, schools, and clubs form the systems through which cross-reinforcement occurs. One can imagine the cost in family and social capital to those who did not go along with the Jim Crow social order. Being White was to belong. Being White cemented one's place of power and prestige in the hierarchy. Maintaining Whiteness and the mechanisms that retain White power remain powerful forces in the south and the nation. Behavioral path dependence offers one explanation for local differences in coolness towards African Americans. It also can explain how and why conservative political perspectives endure more in some areas of the country than in others as the multi-variable research data repeatedly confirm that local differences can be predicted based on percentages of Blacks enslaved in 1860.

The authors' thesis is clearly stated and definitions of unfamiliar terms like *institutional path dependence, behavioral path dependence, intergenerational family socialization, and institutional socialization* are thoroughly explained. I found my background in human development and psychology allowed me to bridge disciplines and understand the relevance of the researchers' point of view with relative ease. The political science concepts and terms italicized above parallel concepts in human development which facilitated my understanding of the core ideas.

The data driven volume is comprehensive enough to be overwhelming for readers

without a strong background in statistics. One outstanding strength of the research is that the authors anticipate critical arguments that might refute their findings and thus delve more deeply into additional research that further supports their argument. This multi-faceted approach to validating their findings strengthens their conclusions: Some counties in the south are more resistant to racial and social change than other counties. Those differences correlate with the percentage of population enslaved in 1860, indicating that the history of slavery impacts current beliefs, opinions, attitudes, and behaviors. This information alone might raise our hackles when we hear people say that slavery is in the past and we should just get over it.

Maps, charts, and graphs are sprinkled throughout the book adding visual detail and context to the findings and further illuminating the supporting data. The researchers believe one finding to be particularly troubling: "The past clearly matters to today's politics. It's not simply that more conservative people live in these areas—these are more conservative areas *because* of their past" (p. 75). This conclusion is useful for all of us in our work with people who grew up in and live in areas that were heavily dependent on slavery. To have greater awareness and empathy of how the racial past of our nation lives on in our patients, friends, and family is of benefit to all of us.

There are no easy answers to dismantling the impact of slavery on the south or the rest of the nation, and this task is outside the scope of research in this volume. Behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes are resistant to change, particularly when those tasked with change perceive they will lose something as a result. This is where we are. *Deep Roots* tells us how we got here and offers a plausible explanation, behavioral path dependence, for why there is so much resistance to moving forward. ▼

Becoming—and Being—a Therapist
Voices, Spring 2020

Call for Papers

Deadline for submission: January 15, 2020
Direct questions and submissions to the editor, Carla Bauer, LCSW
crbauer01@bellsouth.net

See Submission Guidelines on the AAP website:
www.aapweb.com
or in any issue of *Voices*

How did you become a psychotherapist? Or more to the point, Why?

How many times have you been asked some version of "How can you sit all day, listening to other people's woes? Don't you get bored?" What is practicing therapy about for you that these skeptical inquirers don't grasp? What has held you in your chair, through the changing tides of psychotherapy, year after year, client after client?

For this issue of *Voices*, consider: What led you down this path? What drew you in? Perhaps it was some relationship or hurt you were trying to (or couldn't) mend—yours or someone else's. How did your early life experience prime you for this role? Or, what puzzle were you trying to solve, what mystery explain, that pulled you to study the workings of the brain or psyche?

What did psychotherapy look like when you were trained? What did it mean, then, to become a therapist? What does it mean now? What changes have you seen in the world of psychotherapy? What has been gained or lost? How have you changed as a therapist over time?

What unexpected curves did your journey take? What have been the highs and lows, the gifts and hurdles? What has rejuvenated you along the way? What keeps you in your chair? Or lures you from it?

The Academy is dedicated to the growth and development of the person of the therapist. How has being a therapist impacted you, the person? How have you grown through this work? How is being a therapist inseparable from who you are in life? How is it different? Do your clients see the real you or a persona? Do family and friends see the therapist you?

How has being a psychotherapist changed your life? Would you do it again?

Share your journey.

Voices welcomes submissions in the form of personal essay, research- and case-based inquiry, poetry, art, cartoons and photography.

Call for Papers

Borders and Walls: Facing the Other
Voices, Summer 2020

Deadline for submission: April 15, 2020
Direct questions and submissions to the editor, Carla Bauer, LCSW
crbauer01@bellsouth.net

See Submission Guidelines on the AAP website:
www.aapweb.com
or in any issue of *Voices*

"The great challenge of this century . . . is that of understanding the other."
– Charles Taylor: Dilemmas and Connections

"Nothing that is human ... can do without the idea of the alien, to protect itself."
– Adam Phillips: Terrors and Experts

IN THIS ISSUE OF *VOICES*, WE EXPLORE THE BORDERS AND WALLS WE ERECT IN OUR MINDS AND WITH EACH OTHER—barriers we use to turn ourselves into strangers. Inner and interpersonal forms of estrangement are unavoidably linked. Those we alienate may be our friends, enemies, family, professional colleagues, larger community, people diverse from us in any number of ways, or strangers that represent disowned parts of ourselves.

From micro level to macro, facing what feels alien can stir up diverse feelings, including fear of loss of identity, power, or pride; helplessness, ignorance, or vulnerability; feelings of superiority or guilt, of failure, shame, or self-loathing. Facing the other can be met with varying forms of resistance: scapegoating, aggression, othering, projecting, sub-grouping, etc.

Consider your own experience and that of your clients: What are our borders and walls for, what are they meant to protect us from, what and who are they designed to exclude? How do we use them to prevent us from understanding the other? How do our inner and interpersonal barriers mirror actual borders and walls between neighborhoods, cities, states, and countries? What are we afraid of in the other? What are we disowning in ourselves when we reject the other?

We are hard-wired to seek connection, and through connection, communion. Yet we repeatedly default to behaviors that distance us from the other. As we examine our cherished borders and walls, our profound attachment to our distortions, and we begin to imagine what it's like being someone else, we are changed. Estrangement, when challenged, may be replaced by feelings of kinship or fellowship we have tried to disown.

For this issue, consider how these dynamics show up in your life and practice. Consider, too, how large and small group process can facilitate facing the other and breaking down walls.

Voices welcomes submissions in the form of personal essay, research- and case-based inquiry, poetry, art, cartoons and photography. ▼

Impasse, Intrigue, & Inspiration: Effecting Change through Psychotherapy
Voices, Winter 2020

Call for Papers

Deadline for submission: August 15, 2020
Direct questions and submissions to the editor, Carla Bauer, LCSW
crbauer01@bellsouth.net

See Submission Guidelines on the AAP website:
www.aapweb.com
or in any issue of *Voices*

People come to therapy to change—or do they?—yet clients often resist that very change.

Ever feel stuck when working with a client? The therapy seems stalled, at an impasse—now what? Perhaps your steady client has hit a plateau and can't seem to move forward. What about that ambivalent one who never quite seems fully invested, or the frustrated client with one foot out the door? How do you motivate that resistant patient who just won't do anything different to change what isn't working in her life? How do you break the impasse and motivate change?

Are you intrigued about the topics your clients talk about—and don't talk about!—wondering why they're paying to talk about *that*? Are you left wondering just what keeps them coming? What about those surprises when your patient buries the lead or drops a major revelation while walking out the door?

For this issue of *Voices*, consider: What have been some of your most challenging moments in psychotherapy? When have you felt stymied, not sure what to do next? When have you been caught off guard by something your client said—whether a door knob moment or an unexpected revelation in session that changed your formulation of the case? What about those moments when you hear, too late, how your words landed on your client's ears with a heavy thud, threatening a conflictual impasse? What inspired breakthrough in such scenarios? What have been your successes and struggles in motivating change? What would you do differently, given a do-over?

Consider: how do such moments of impasse impact your sense of self as therapist, your confidence in your abilities or impact? Consider, too, when you have felt stuck in your own life. How have you broken your own impasses and ambivalence for the change you sought, heeded (or not) your own therapeutic advice, to unstick your own life? How has your own experience informed your work with clients?

Winter brings a natural reflective lens to the Impasse-to-Inspiration cycle as we move through holiday blues and winter doldrums, the season of hope, and the fresh start of a new year.

Voices welcomes submissions in the form of personal essay, research- and case-based inquiry, poetry, art, cartoons and photography. ▼

The American Academy of Psychotherapists invites you to be a part of an enlightening journey into...

VOICES

Voices is a uniquely rewarding publication providing a meeting ground with other experienced psychotherapists. A theme-oriented journal, *Voices* presents personal and experiential essays by therapists from a wide range of orientations. Each issue takes you on an intimate journey through the reflections of therapists as they share their day-to-day experiences in the process of therapy. *Voices'* contributors reveal insights inherent in our lives, our culture and our society.

As a subscriber, you'll have the opportunity to experience contributions from noted luminaries in psychotherapy. Using various styles from articles to poems, *Voices* is interdisciplinary in its focus, reflecting the aims and mission of its publisher, the American Academy of Psychotherapists.

VOICES SUBSCRIPTION

Please start my one-year subscription to AAP's journal *Voices* at $65 for individuals PDF only; $85 for individuals PDF & print copy. Institutional subscriptions may be reserved directly through the AAP office or through the traditional subscription agencies at $249 per year. *Voices* is published electronically three times per year and is delivered to your email address as an ePublication.

Name .....
Address .....
City State ZIP .....
Telephone Fax .....
Email .....

❑ My check made payable to AAP *Voices* is enclosed.
❑ Please charge to my credit card, using the information I have supplied below:
Form of payment: ❑ Master Card ❑ Visa .....
Account # Expiration: .....
Signature .....

Address all orders by mail to:
Voices
230 Washington Ave Ext, Suite 101
Albany, NY 12203
You may also fax your order to (518) 240-1178.
For further information, please call (518) 694-5360

Guidelines for Contributors

Voices: The Art and Science of Psychotherapy, is the journal of the American Academy of Psychotherapists. Written by and for psychotherapists and healing professionals, it focuses on therapists' personal struggles and growth and on the promotion of excellence in the practice of psychotherapy. The articles are written in a personalized voice rather than an academic tone, and they are of an experiential and theoretical nature that reflects on the human condition.

Each issue has a central theme as described in the call for papers. Manuscripts that fit this theme are given priority. Final decision about acceptance must wait until all articles for a particular issue have been reviewed. Articles that do not fit into any particular theme are reviewed and held for inclusion in future issues on a space available basis.

Articles. See a recent issue of *Voices* for general style. Manuscripts should be double-spaced in 12 point type and no longer than 4,000 words (about 16 to 18 pages). Do not include the author's name in the manuscript, as all submissions receive masked review by two or more members of the Editorial Review Board. Keep references to a minimum and follow the style of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th ed.*

Submit via email, attaching the manuscript as a Word document file. Send it to Carla Bauer *(crbauer01@bellsouth.net).* Put "Voices" in the email's subject line, and in the message include the author's name, title and degree, postal address, daytime phone number, manuscript title, and word count. Please indicate for which issue of *Voices* the manuscript is intended.

If a manuscript is accepted, the author will be asked to provide a short autobiographical sketch (75 words or less) and a photograph that complies with technical quality standards outlined in a PDF which will be sent to you.

Neither the editorial staff nor the American Academy of Psychotherapists accepts responsibility for statements made in its publication by contributors. We expect authors to make certain there is no breach of confidentiality in their submissions. Authors are responsible for checking the accuracy of their quotes, citations, and references.

Poetry. We welcome poetry of high quality relevant to the theme of a particular issue or the general field of psychotherapy. Short poems are published most often.

Book and Film Reviews. Reviews should be about 500 to 750 words, twice that if you wish to expand the material into a mini-article.

Visual Arts. We welcome submissions of photographs or art related to the central theme for consideration. Electronic submissions in JPEG or TIFF format are required. If you would like to submit images, please request the PDF of quality standards from Mary de Wit at *md@in2wit.com* or find it on *www.aapweb.com.* Images are non-returnable and the copyright MUST belong to the submitting artist.

Copyright. By submitting materials to *Voices* (articles, poems, photos or artwork), the author transfers and consents that copyright for that article will be owned by the American Academy of Psychotherapists, Inc. ▼

Vision Statement

Our vision is to be the premier professional organization where therapeutic excellence and the use of self in psychotherapy flourish.

Mission Statement

The mission of the American Academy of Psychotherapists is to invigorate the psychotherapist's quest for growth and excellence through authentic interpersonal engagement.

Core Values

- Courage to risk and willingness to change
- Balancing confrontation and compassion
- Commitment to authenticity with responsibility
- Honoring the individual and the community

Full Membership

Full Membership in the Academy requires a doctoral or professional degree in one of the following mental health fields: psychiatry, clinical or counseling psychology, social work, pastoral counseling, marriage and family therapy, counseling, or nursing, and licensure which allows for the independent practice of psychotherapy.

- Specific training in psychotherapy with a minimum of 100 hours of supervision.
- At least one year of full-time post graduate clinical experience (or the equivalent in part-time experience) for doctoral level applicants, at least two years for others.
- A minimum of 100 hours of personal psychotherapy.

A person who does not fulfill the above requirements but who is able to document a reasonable claim for eligibility, such as a distinguished contributor to the field of psychotherapy, may also be considered for full membership.

Other Categories of Membership

In the interest of promoting the development of experienced psychotherapists, one category of associate membership is offered for those with the intent of becoming full members. These members will be working with a mentor as they progress to Full Membership.

Associate Membership

- has completed a relevant professional degree
- is currently practicing psychotherapy under supervision appropriate to the licensure
- has recommendations from at least three faculty, supervisors, and/or Academy members
- has completed or is actively engaged in obtaining 100 hours of personal psychotherapy
- agrees to work with an Academy member mentor
- may be an associate for no more than five years

Student Affiliate

For students currently enrolled in a graduate degree program. Application includes acceptable recommendations from two faculty, supervisors or Academy members.

For information regarding membership requirements or to request an application, contact the Central Office. Membership information and a printable application form are also available on the Academy's Web site, www.aapweb.com.

Executive Offices

aap@caphill.com
230 Washington Ave Ext, Suite 101
Albany, NY 12203
Phone (518) 240-1178
Fax (518) 463-8656

2019 Officers

David Donlon, LCSW
President

Doug Cohen, PhD
Immediate Past President

Kristin Staroba, MSW
President-Elect

Steven Ingram, D Min
Secretary

Philip Spiro, MD
Treasurer

Executive Council

2017 – 2019
Neil Makstein, PhD
Stephanie Spalding, LCSW
Linda Tillman, PhD

2018 – 2020
Tandy Levine, LCSW
Lori Oshrain, PhD
David Pellegrini, PhD

2019 – 2021
Meredith Albert, LCSW
Jonas Horwitz, PhD
Carrie Phillips, MSW, LISW

Journal of the American Academy of Psychotherapists

VOICES

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF PSYCHOTHERAPY