

Home Sweet Home

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There's no place like home, it is often said. Yet I have no place that I would consider home. I have lived in this space for nearly twenty (20) years, but it is not home, nor is any place I have ever lived.

What is Home? Where is Home? If I must answer those questions, home is a place where I would feel safe, loved and accepted. I have never felt as if I had a home, merely a space that I occupied.

I visualize a place where mud cakes are made and decorated with the berries and flowers from a bush that sits next to the road. A swing set in the back yard with rusted chains and sideways sliding board. There's a swimming pool that's filled with more leaves than water next to the trampoline that has caused many broken bones. Anger and resentment reside within the walls of the white house with black shutters and trimming. Laughter seldom heard, tears common place. Emotions buried deep like the roots of the old pine tree that towers over a yard that is more Georgia clay than grass. There's not much of me left because with every move a piece of me was left behind.

In New York my comfort and safety were destroyed. In Alabama my innocence was taken. In Texas my self-esteem was shattered. In Colorado my perception of the world was distorted. So here, in Georgia, I am nothing, just a body of mass occupying a space.

The constant hum of a plastic fan does nothing to eliminate the chatter from the hall. At night a heavy snore keeps me awake, the click of the door as the officer gathers P.I. disturb my slumber. The droll of a buffer at 5 am does not permit a moment of solace. There's no real rest in this space.

A plank that is deemed a bed is supposed to be an instrument of rest, sleep, yet the blanket stained with mustard, coffee and God knows what those reddish brown stains are, does nothing to fend off the cold sterile air that flows out of the vent directing over it. The sheets are so thin you can see the pattern of the stiff plastic mattress, making it as unyielding as a coffin.

What scenery there is of the sky and trees is distorted by the gray bar that runs vertically down the narrow window. There can never be a perception of freedom with the razor wire fence and passing perimeter car.

The stark white paint used to cover scuff marks, chipped spots and rust stains on the block walls merely make the room cold and void of any hominess. These walls are meant to create a sense of privacy, yet they do anything but. They symbolize the many things I did to cover the pain, rejection, anger and sadness that I felt.

The pink tiled tub room is devoid of heat, no window to crack to let in a breeze with the smell of burning wood, or to release the steam that will fog up the mirror. There's always an urge to rush because someone else wants this "LUXURY" of a bubble bath.

Dingy blue carpet stained with coffee, Kool-Aid and soup is an attempt to make this place comfortable, however nothing will compare to the thick beige carpet with the small iron burn mark in the corner on my grandmother's living room floor, or the dark gleaming hardwood floors in my dad's foyer.

My living space now is not much different from all the others spaces I have occupied. I have learned to adapt to the spaces. I don't conform, just adjust to make things fit for me. I have to ask myself "Will I ever know what and where Home is?"