

My Suburbia

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My Suburbia

by

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I live in a town called Old Bridge, in Central New Jersey. I have lived in this town called Old Bridge for as far as my memories go back, back to when my father was alive and I was four years old and we lived on Pine Tree Road where Hurricane Gloria ripped my climbing tree out of the backyard on a swirling Sunday afternoon. And no matter how many times we moved, no matter how many times I packed my Barbies in taped up, cardboard boxes and watched muscled, sweaty uncles place those boxes on top of each other in dented, rented U-Haul trucks, we stayed in that town called Old Bridge, stayed in the same Old Bridge school system, kept the same Old Bridge friends. I always got to stay and live in the town that housed my father until he drank himself to death at the age of twenty-seven. We just didn't stay in the same house. And we didn't plant down roots until Jupiter Court, when my mother and her new husband finally got a mortgage and bought a little red and white house in the neighborhood that gave my friends and I someplace to be throughout my adolescence.

It is said that George Washington named the town Old Bridge during the Revolutionary War. The actual "old bridge" crossed the South River into East Brunswick, connected the town to the other towns fighting for the cause of independence, and brought people together who might not have known one another if that bridge had not existed, or if George Washington had not gone over it one day, his ideals following him into the town that has connected me to people I will never forget. But these days, I see the old bridge as a road named Cottrell, which connects one side of Old Bridge to the other, Route 34 to Route 516, Cheesequake to the Old Bridge that existed when it was called Madison Township for awhile before I was born. This road, spotted with houses, an old church that a girl named Lark lived in when I was in high school with her black lipstick and her bright silver piercings, and little rounds of woods sticking into the backyards of those who choose to live on the connecting road. At the one end, near my side of town, a big farm stretches for the first half of the road. During the fall, children go pumpkin picking and a big hayride brings them all over the fields, high school kids jumping out of patches wearing witch costumes to scare them into the trick-or-treating mood.&nbs

A description of a town that we all know. A town in New Jersey where the middle class grew up and experienced the middle class life. A blue collar town with woods and places for us to hide. This is the memoir of a girl who grew up in Suburbia, only to move back years later when she had been trained to write about it, and the story of the people and places that made it home.

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