

Leaving home

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It was early and everyone was still asleep, as Shuck descended the stairs quietly, into the kitchen. He lay down his things, put on some water on the stove for tea, and sat down in his father's big wooden chair at the table. It was the only one with armrests on it, and Shuck made use of them and savored the feeling. How nice it must feel to sit in your own chair in your own house year after year. The seat was positioned in a way that enabled his father to look out the front window at the road and driveway, out the back window towards the fields, and at the same time, faced the kitchen door by which everyone came and went. Shuck wondered if he had planned it that way when he built this house.

As if for the first time, Shuck noticed the intricate designs on the hand crafted cupboards, and thought of the work that his father must have put into them. His eyes scanned the room noticing all the little objects and trinkets that had found a home on top of the refrigerator. The clay ashtrays his sister had made in art class, the hand prints in plaster, spray-painted gold, numerous fish hooks, nails, and other gear emptied out of a carpenter's pockets.

Shuck put his elbows on the table, fingers intertwined and each thumb took a turn at digging into his palm, while he continued his surveying, now glancing out the front window. He saw his pickup in the drive, the one he'd always driven since high school, a blue Ford, the rear end slanting downwards from the weight it held. Almost immediately his eyes flicked over to where his keys hung from a hook on the wall, right where they always were.

The water hissed and spat on the stove, so he got up to prepare his tea, skimming his fingers on the countertop while walking over. He got down his big mug with the 'I love New York' logo on it, stained on the inside from his daily ritual. Looking towards his things near the door, he contemplated a minute, then shook his head, pouring in the hot water on top of the tea bag. Shuck walked out the kitchen door, stood in the driveway and smelled the fresh morning air, listening to the swallows, bantering noisily. The sun was just below the tree tops making them look skeletal, like bony fingers. He sipped from his steaming cup watching little brown rabbits dart across the lawn from bush to bush. Shuck reveled in this feeling, virtually glued to the spot, trying to take everything in at once, this place that he loved so. Then, annoyed by the indecision he was feeling, he took a deep breath, smiled sadly to himself and walked back inside.

Looking at the clock, he emptied his cup in the sink, of a sudden feeling the need to hurry.

Shuck scribbled a short note on a pad, ripped it off, stuck it to a magnet on the fridge, and grabbed his keys off the hook. The little brown bunnies scattered into the field when they heard his truck backing out of the drive.