

The space between here and home  
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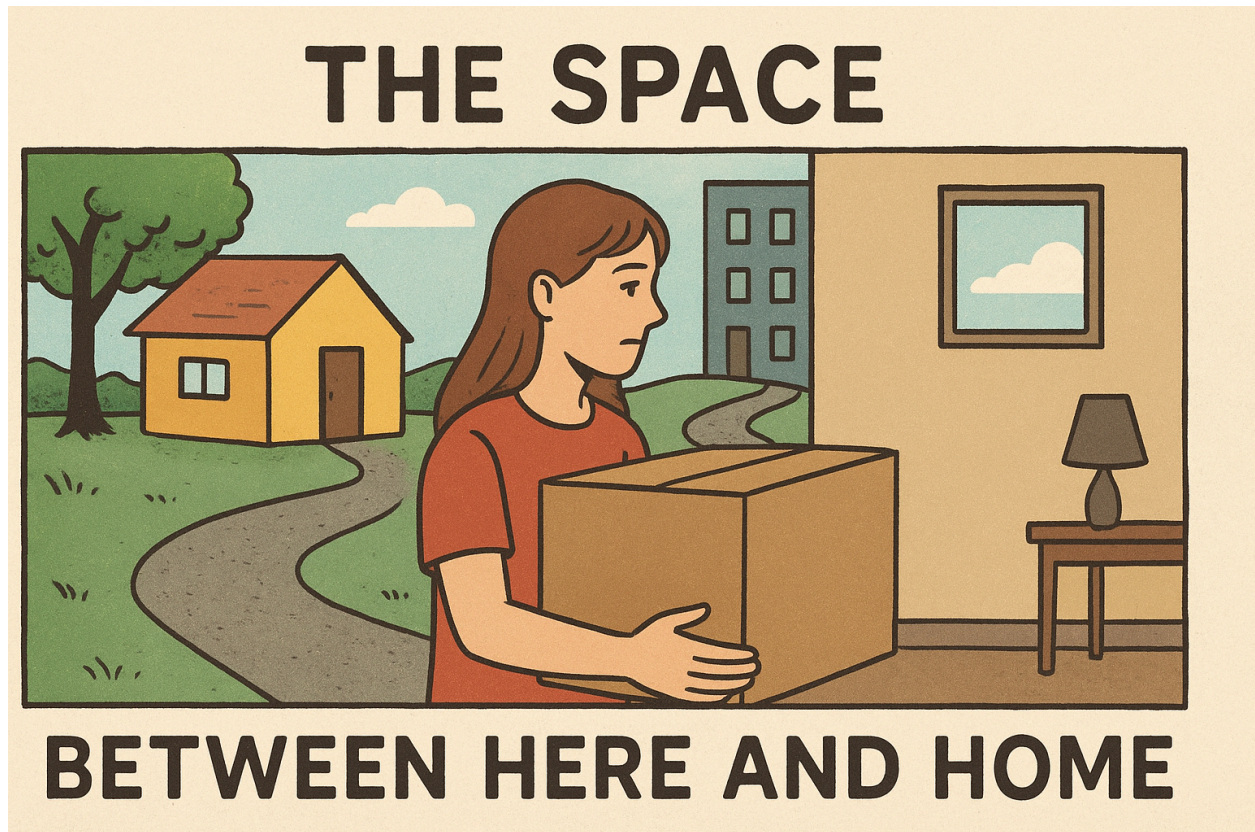


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Moving out smells like fresh cut grass, dew from a recent rain, the adhesive from packing tape and the odor of Sharpies on cardboard. Moving out feels like sticky sweat soaking into the back of my shirt, and a ball of emotion weighing in my stomach so heavily it feels like I have cinderblocks tied to my feet. Moving out sounds like heavy footsteps, sadness tinged goodbyes and furniture creaking that doesn't quite fit through the doorway.

When I moved out on my own I left a piece of myself in my hometown and carried the rest with me to my new beginning. Change doesn't always feel as good as it sounds and in that moment it felt like I was jumping into a pool and forgot how to swim.

People often say that turning 18 means becoming an adult, some may argue that it's really when you turn 21, but I think the first taste of being an adult is moving out and living on your own, especially when you are truly alone away from your family.

The beginning of this stage of life feels equally exciting as it feels exhausting. You will quickly find out how much truly goes into living on your own and how your stomach will ache for something that just feels familiar.

The first thing you will realize on your first night in an unfamiliar town, in an unfamiliar living space, is how unfamiliar quiet is. You do not realize how quiet the sound of nothing is until you are sleeping on a mattress on the floor of the first home you call your own until you reach into the darkness to turn on some background noise to go to sleep.

The second thing you will realize is that being alone does not feel as good as it sounded. The first few hours are nice, maybe even peaceful, but then you become aware of how truly alone you are. You will realize quickly that you need to figure out how to get WiFi in the first home you live in without your parents, then you will call your mom and ask her.

The third thing that will hit you like a truckload of bricks is how much stuff you need to fill your space. Once you fill the space, you are going to feel accomplished, then you will feel defeated because you forgot to buy coffee filters and a vegetable peeler.

The first few weeks feel like you are living in borrowed space, like someday the real occupants will come back and you will go back home to your parents. Soon, however, this space will become yours and you will feel like you accomplished something you didn't even know existed.

One day the WiFi will be set up and you'll fall asleep with a comforting TV show playing in the background that you've watched at least 100 times. You'll go into the kitchen drawer and there will be two vegetable peelers you overnighted from Amazon. But, you still won't have coffee filters because you forgot to buy them the last time you went to the grocery store.

The unfamiliar town will start to feel like your home, and the space that once felt empty and borrowed will become your own. When you think of the space between here and home you'll find yourself thinking of your new home, and not the one that shaped you.