



Home. Home is where the heart is, or so said Pliny the Elder. Home might make us think of four walls, the sounds of family, or a community group. Maya Angelou said the home is “the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned.” The word can simultaneously evoke memories of the past, thoughts of the present, and perhaps visions of the future. However, the sentiments expressed by American poet Muriel Rukeyser seem the most accurate to me: The journey is my home.

My journey began in Brockville, Ontario - population 20,000. I would consider Brockville as representative of small-town Canada, surrounded by even smaller-town Canada. It was home for the formative years of the journey that embraced kindergarten, elementary, and high school. Several friendships from that era remain with me 50+ years later. Yes, I’m talking to you, Richard, Ian, and Ed.

I spent my university years in Kingston, Ontario - population 60,000 at the time, though the greater “metropolitan” area is now listed as over 130,000. Kingston is a typical college town. However, any graduate of Queen’s University would not likely not consider their experiences at Queen’s “typical” for university (but I digress).

My most recent home has been Austin ... population 450,000 when I arrived, now pushing 1 million just 33 years later. Austin was a funky and otherworldly mix of musicians, slackers,

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legislators, and the University of Texas when I arrived. Live music was thriving, and Austin had more than its share of epic hole-in-the-wall venues (Liberty Lunch, how I miss thee). About a decade ago, it became cool to live here. Now, half of the state of California has moved here. How do I know, other than the license plates? If you call Mopac “the 1,” you’ve given yourself away, license plates or not.

I’ve had three places I have called home, each with a different vibe, people, and lifestyles. A trip home, any of them, in fact, always puts life into a new perspective. I now find myself attending to different details about each locale. It could be the food, the way the sun comes through the clouds, or the drive past a school or institution. There is a new-found sense of comfort, of enjoyment, and gratitude. I have come to cherish the memory of experiences I didn’t realize were so important. However, I now have the wisdom to assess them through a different life lens.

The journey itself is what gives us this life lens. The journey transcends all of them. I just manifested that journey in three rather unique locales, given whatever aspect of me was undergoing transformation at that time in the grand journey. While home serves as a reminder of what was, what is, and what can be, the journey - of self-discovery, growth, and transformation - is truly my home, our home.

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