

Goodbye 5 Newton Street
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It was ten and a half years ago when I first walked through your front door. I will never forget the day—December 18, and Boston was experiencing the worst winter they had had in five years. Snow was piled high around you—your porch barely passable—and it was so cold. I left sunny Phoenix, Arizona, in the morning and entered Boston after sundown. From sun and palm trees to snow in a few brief hours.

My oldest daughter who had moved to Boston a couple of months before, came running out your door, capturing me with one of her famous hugs. She hugs like she means it, like she'll never, ever let you go, and it is bliss.

And then I walked through the white-painted door and into your long hallway.

You and me? We were an arranged marriage of sorts. You had good bones, and I had a good family, and we grew to love each other.

We met each other, shy at first, neither of us were sure of the other. After all, we found each other on Craigslist, and all I knew was that you claimed to be “sunny and bright.” I was moving from Phoenix, Arizona to a bitterly cold Northeast winter. You had no idea how much I needed sunny and bright. That first night, I think you sized me up and decided that I would do. Admittedly, it took me a while longer.

I traded in a large, open floor plan, designer paint, and a sparkling blue pool for a city condo with noisy upstairs neighbors. Our oversized Arizona furniture, including couches to sink into, large decorative cast iron wall pieces, and alabaster vases cramped your style. Our massive candlesticks, which fit so well in rooms with cathedral ceilings had to find another home. I fought with you for more space, cursing your small corners, but you didn't budge.

But we began to live together and slowly, like an arranged marriage, I began to love you.

I began to love your location, so close to everything! With you, I could walk everywhere! Grocery store, pharmacy, subway – even the beautiful Charles River with its banks that changed with the seasons. I painted your walls and hung pictures that made you shine. I

draped white lights on your porch, a bright beacon in the sometimes-dark nights of life. I plumped pillows on couches and put furniture in your rooms.

And we began to live, really live within your walls. You began to know our family, and your halls and walls heard our laughter and held our tears. Thanksgivings, Christmases, and Easter celebrations brought people from all over the world into your safety and joy. We played games and discussed politics; dyed Easter eggs and carved pumpkins; brought Christmas trees from the Boston Tree Company, and lit candles amidst holiday sparkle. You gave space for graduation celebrations and expanded as our family grew.

It wasn't all sparkle. You heard sadness and witnessed anger; sometimes our tears were more than we could bear, and you held us in safety when we couldn't let the wider world know what was going on. Even so, you and we held on.

And now, we are taking you—our home—and turning you back into a house. If I wasn't so busy and if I didn't know that this next step is a good and important one, it would break me.

You, with your old wood floors and your non-updated bathrooms, hold the magic of Home. And you are being stripped of that magic by me—your nomadic love.

I'm so sorry. You've been so good to us. You have loved us well through over ten years of life. You have been a place of safety, joy, and laughter.

Your walls will hold our family stories forever and, like a dear and loyal friend, keep them safe.

Your windows bear the marks of our noses, pressed against them looking out onto the world.

Your hallway and stairwell will echo our footsteps, like ghosts coming back for one last look.

And your porch? Your porch will carry the magic of late summer night laughter and conversation, the sounds of the city a musical background.

You have loved us well dear house. You have loved us well.

And now, I say goodbye. May the joy and grace that has held us be passed on to those coming through your doors.

Goodbye 5 Newton. I will always love you.