

Home is Where the Heart was...

Brandon Frazier

Who would have known that something I cherished could go away so fast? I don't even remember giving my final goodbyes before leaving. That *ole* house had so many memories; now that I'm not there anymore it feels like nothing really existed. From the long days of yard work and house chores to the cool nights of outdoor barbeques and poolside parties, that *ole* house was the place to be. I used to love the view I had back then. I had the best room of that house, a top floor room with a roof-like ceiling and a crawl space to get underneath the roof of the house. A lot of issues were in that *ole* house but I wouldn't have traded any of it for the world. Most people say "change is for the best" or "the past is the past for a reason, so leave it as it is." Then again, who's to say that "most people" are always right?

I can still remember the summers when it would get so hot that it was a struggle to walk around the house without air conditioning. No one would even dare to go outside except for me. Not to say I liked the hot weather, but I had chores and back then those would come first. No matter the temperature or degree of weather, as long as it was possible, I would still be out there, picking the roots of weeds or cutting long strands of grass. Days like these were some of the worst days but they had to mean something because I never forgot about them. After about three hours of walking with the odor of granules and tough turf, I would come in and take one of the best showers I had ever experienced.

Not all through the summer was I chained to house chores and yard work, so in my free time I would go out on the block and play basketball. One of my closest friends, LeDale, had his own basketball rim, and around that time, it felt like we were just one step closer to the league. We had so many dreams of making it to the league just to get a taste of the things that don't mean much now. I would go out at one o'clock in the afternoon and not get back to that *ole* house until almost nine that night. I can remember the first time I missed curfew and I looked up at our front window as if it was my escape path. I knew I had the worst coming for me as soon as I stepped foot in that *ole* house. It was something about that one window that rested so tall on that *ole* house. I mean everyone in the house loved the upstairs because it would never get too hot or too cold and it had the best view from the front and the rear of the house. It was the only window that was visible from the street and it sat near our brushes and green-like dirt pile dad considered as a garden. My childhood wasn't picture perfect, but that *ole* house had something about it that would always cheer me up in the worst times, especially when the temperature would drop and the trees were just branches with leaves under them.

I can still remember the ticking sounds coming from the "fiery hot furnace" that I once believed was a lethal weapon toward my childhood dreams. It would get as low as three degrees outside and that *ole* house sat up on a hill. UGH! I hated shoveling that mess. One winter it got so bad that we expected over six inches of snow. Skit! Skit! Skit! Piles and piles of salt would almost stand as tall as a dwarf back then. About five years ago, which seems like yesterday, was one of the worst winters we had ever experienced in that *ole* house. It was up to seven inches of snow, the temperature dropped to fifteen degrees, and it really didn't help when my little brother thought it was a good idea to make snowmen while I shoveled. Besides the long days and nights of shoveling the winter was peaceful. Times like these were the only times where the entire

family got to be in that *ole* house. Dad lived the fast life so he didn't always stick around, but the winters in Chicago would slow any man down. When he didn't have too many cups of whisky, we could come together without aggression, and if we were lucky, we acted as a family like the Cosbys. And looking back, I can laugh it off now because that *ole* house brings back some great memories of my life.

I can still remember the thoughts I had of leaving that *ole* house. I guess mom got tired of Dad's bull and figured if we left and he stayed he could learn his from his flaws. In result, Dad lost that *ole* house to bad funds management and insufficient behavior. When you separate a family from its stable, you may find life isn't easy. That *ole* house will never be forgotten but it will never be the same either. Maybe change is for best after all; everything doesn't last forever, right? Either way that *ole* house was like blood is to a heart for me. Unfortunately, I don't have that *ole* house anymore.