

# Moving back, and then forward again

The front set of my living room drapes fell during the night last week. I awoke to a pile of sheer beige cloth, brown beads and white curtain rods on the floor. The window they used to cover now looks bare and sad, even with the coordinating sash still hanging between the two decorative curtain holders above the window.

But I haven't put the curtains back up. There's no point. I figure the window is preparing me for when the entire apartment will return to its original empty and more rose state. This will happen at the end of the month.

I'm moving, and I'm dreading it. As one of my grandmothers observed when she visited me early in my lease, I have "so much stuff to be just

one person," and I can't take most of it with me.

I'm headed back to my mother's house for a while, a short-term move that I believe will enable me to save a little money now as I prepare to make a bigger move later. I couldn't take the contents of her household to my apartment, except for three chairs that were, in fact, mine, so I bought new furniture and dishes. And random signs from hotels that were closing.



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And other decorations. And towels, and bedding, and curtains and so much stuff.

And though I tried to be meticulously organized in the first space in which I purposely lived alone from the beginning of the lease until the end, I didn't always put everything in its place and I never quite found a place for everything.

But I found a place for me. I came to feel like this was my neighborhood. I know its traffic patterns, its normal noise levels. My routine never got so predictable that cashiers at the grocery store asked me where I had been if I didn't enter the store for a week, but their faces became familiar to me, no matter what shift they worked.

I saw businesses close and a few open or move. Change is easy to notice when you walk, and in all but the most severe and extreme weather conditions, I've walked my neighborhood. I've received friendly remind-

ers from my car manufacturer that it's time for an oil change, only to look at my odometer and see a difference of a thousand miles between their estimate of where it should be and its actual reading, due to the fact that the car's driver is an avid walker. I've come to believe that any destination within about a 2½-mile radius is a reasonable distance for walking, provided the pathway there is friendly to pedestrians and generally safe.

I live in the most walkable neighborhood I could ever ask for. I have countless restaurants, five grocers, four TARC bus lines, three nail salons, two ice cream parlors, one bakery and one dry cleaner at my feet. If a developer wanted to build an anti-obesity city, my neighborhood would be the prototype.

Where I'm going, not so much. My mom lives within reasonable walking distance of a grocery store, but the route there is filled with speeding

motorists decidedly hostile to pedestrians and to the deer that always seem to infiltrate her neighborhood at dawn and at dusk. So that saving money thing may not work if I blow my extra cash on gasoline and oil changes as I put my car back to work.

But I have accepted the need to move, and I hope that returning to a place where all I need are the clothes on my back will help me to feel lighter. Over the past three years, I have often wished I could share the household chores with someone. Soon I will.

Until then, I'll enjoy my last few walks around my neighborhood on breaks from packing some stuff and selling the rest. If you need anything, I'm accepting cash. ♣

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