

The House & The Hill

The ground under my jean-clad bottom is cold and hard.
Fallen leaves crunch and grind beneath me as I shift.
The autumn's wind is a gentle kiss, with just a little nip.
The air carries the scent of the pines and dried up leaves.
My hands, bare and dry, dig into the dirt and twigs.
The clouds are full and grey, hanging low, threatening rain.
The distant hills, gold and red against the darkened sky.
The holler coils and winds, gouging through the valley,
While the Cardinals chirp and flit along the pointed boughs.
A feeling of home and connection, peaceful though bold.
Bound by blood and stubborn pride, at home atop the hillside.
Carved by Papaw's weathered hands, the homestead's spirit rests.
Quiet and proper, yet so full of pride, this scrap of land provides.
At my back, the hilltop flattens, corralled by a barbed wire fence.
Where long ago, a meadow grew, wild, lush and green,
Now plowed each year, turned for corn, squash, and beans.
I sit atop the hill between the scraggly pines and Elders.
As one with my surroundings, calm, silent, and alone.
Without thought, without knowing, storing memories in my mind.
Below, the old white house sleeps solemnly by the hill.
Hewn by Papaw's hands, its foundation aged and blistered,
Yet its bones are strong and proud, the stories it could tell.
With clapboard siding and dark green shingles, the vaulted roof does rise.
Burning coal sends blackened smoke spiraling from the chimney.
I could sit here all day, alone atop my hill, happy for the peaceful quiet,
While gazing over the home and land that raised me.
The wind picks up, and as I lift my face into the breeze, I feel a drop of rain.

The clacking of the screen door bangs, echoing through the holler.
“It’s time to come in,” my mother yells with a shrill country twang.
Indignantly, I sigh, sad to leave my special place, my perch atop the hill.
The trees begin to sway, and the clouds begin to pour.
“Tammy Annette!” my mother calls out once more.
Spurred by the pelting rain, my peaceful bliss disturbed,
I jump and run through burrs and mud, fleeing down the hill,
Across the yard and up the porch, passed the clanking door,
Safe from the rain and the cold, the old white house, I’m thankful for.

THE OLD WHITE HOUSE

Old house.

White and weathered.

Screen door clacks against the frame.

Built by the hill, in the holler,

My home.

HOMESICK

Homesick.

Dark and Lonely.

To Miss, To Dream, Too Long

To see again, my childhood home,

I stray.