

# mutterhood

*a community of thought one idea at a time*



**HOME**

winter 2019



## welcome home

Think for a minute about the last walk you took.

Did you hear your neighbors talking through an open window, or a dog barking off in the distance? Maybe you looked up to see a family eating dinner or someone watching TV. It's a little thrilling to be a sidewalk voyeur, imagining another home so very different — or not — from your own.

As we considered home for the theme of this issue, we knew the idea involved much more than what some refer to as a woman's place.

The stories we present here — of a woman living in an historic home, an artist working in miniature, women who invented some of our modern conveniences, and memories of places that used to be familiar — illustrate how women's creativity often originates in our desire, or even need, to control our environment.

In fact, home as a creative idea is often the springboard for contributions to our communities, be they creative, social, professional — even personal.

That quiet neighborhood walk tempts us to imagine a world outside of our own four walls. We hope the stories in this issue do the same for you, finding the creative spaces and places where you feel most at home.

*ellen & cathi*

*"Believe me, all of you, the best way to help the places we live in is to be glad we live there."*

**Edith Wharton**

*Summer*



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## mutterhood

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# (re)making History

## the curator

**L**aura Luce kneels on the dark, polished oak floor of a hallway in her 1927 David Adler home in Lake Forest, Illinois. Running her hand along the smooth wood floor, she points to a spot where the color changes ever so slightly and launches into a discussion about patina.

“A patina is something that’s really hard to come by, and when it’s gone, it’s gone,” Laura says. She explains that the subtle change in color is from an old carpet runner that she and her husband pulled up when they bought the house in 2014.

She indicates a faint outline showing where the runner used to be, which is really only visible now that the sun has brightened the floor. The wood is beautiful, even more so because you know it’s always been there.

“We kept the patina because it’s part of the house,” Laura says, standing up. “We would never change it.”

It’s early in a visit to this beautiful home, but already it’s clear that Laura and her family don’t consider the house theirs as much as they think of it as theirs for a time. They’ve happily adopted the role of caretakers whose job it is to honor and preserve the home’s original beauty and design.

“All we wanted was to be stewards of this house,” Laura says, looking out to the sunken back yard, the outline of which is still visible even though the arbor vitae and hedges are covered with snow.

“We’ve definitely adapted our lifestyle to this house rather than adapting the house to ours. We consider it a privilege to live here.”

*The living room of the Clow house, designed by architect William Adler, features a 25-foot cove ceiling.*







*Details from a corner of the living room show the silver leafing of the doors, dating back to the 1930s. The photograph by Tina Barney is a favorite of the owner, who collects and displays contemporary photography throughout the home.*

Lake Forest, Illinois, sits some 30 miles north of Chicago along the shores of Lake Michigan. Founded in 1857, Lake Forest attracted some of Chicago's wealthiest families, who commissioned renowned architects to build one grand summer estate after another. The result is a mix of architectural styles that ranks Lake Forest among the nation's most historically significant towns.

It's not just age that makes these homes notable. The National Register of Historic Places includes three Lake Forest estates and two historic districts comprised of hundreds of 50-year-old-plus properties, more than 60 of which are considered architecturally or historically significant. Laura's house is in one of these two districts.

Laura was raised in Lake Forest, and it's this history that drew her back to her hometown after years spent living on the East Coast.

"We joke that my husband came here kicking and screaming, but now the only way we'll go back is kicking and screaming," she says.

Owning this particular house is one reason why.

The house is one that Laura had her eye on for some time. Her father, an admirer of David Adler, introduced her to the architect's work, and her mother was active with the Lake Forest Historical Society. She conducted the town's first oral history project, interviewing owners of Lake Forest's historic homes.



*A shot of pink lends personality to the library, modernizing the look of the original floors, moldings and windows. Note the cove ceiling, a David Adler feature that's repeated throughout the home.*



Laura attended college in Boston, met her husband in business school, and lived in New York for a few years before moving back to Lake Forest for good with her husband, daughter and son in 1996. The family chose a mid-century modern house after trying to buy another David Adler house in Lake Forest, living there for 18 years. During that time, Laura had been showing this particular Clow house to her husband, and when it finally came on the market in 2014, they decided to buy it.

What drew them to the house?

“A David Adler is unique,” Laura says.

Adler worked from the late 1910s to the early 1940s, securing commissions from some of America’s most prominent families (27 in the Chicago area alone). Known for a strong sense of proportion and symmetry in design, Adler combined classical elements from a variety of architectural styles to create homes and estates that fused old world aristocratic traditions with elegant architectural details.

The William E. Clow house is an excellent example.

Driving up to the house, the first thing you notice is a balustrade enclosing the front of the home (what Adler called the Elephant Cage, which he based on a design by Austrian architect Josef Hoffman). After wiping your shoes on one of two matching original boot scrapers placed symmetrically on the front step, you enter through the front door into a square foyer with deep green lacquer walls. The original



*Amber glass, a unique detail of the original windows in the Clow house, lends a subtle filter to the light that streams into the home.*



*Just off the entry foyer the gentlemen’s and ladies’ dressing rooms gave guests a place to leave their coats and freshen up before ascending the staircase to the main floor. Both are still used today.*

marble floor features an inlaid compass rose, one of Adler’s signature design motifs.

On the right, two doors open to men’s and women’s dressing rooms, where during the house’s heyday guests would leave their coats and freshen up before ascending the grand staircase to the left of the foyer. Another set of doors on the opposite side opens to another room (her son’s). The butler’s room is in the basement, with other rooms that were used by visitors’ chauffeurs.

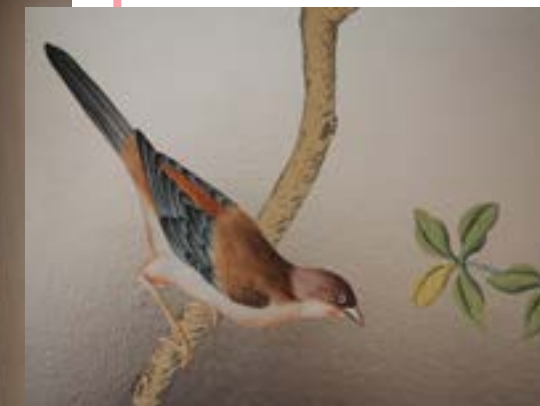
Hints of the grandness of the house are everywhere, but with Laura’s touch they blend seamlessly into the family’s living space.

Upstairs on the main floor, a hallway fronts the living room, which is framed beautifully by arches.

“The first thing I notice when I see an Adler is the coved ceiling,” Laura says, looking up toward the 25 foot ceiling. The living room features two sets of doors at either end, both silver-leafed, Luce believes, in the 1930s. Two floor-to-ceiling mirrors face each other, hinting at the influence of Frances Adler Elkins, a renowned interior designer and David Adler’s sister, who worked with Adler on several of his commissions.







*Detail from the handpainted design by de Gournay.*

The formal dining room is adjacent to the living room. As part of her research into the home, Laura collects vintage books and magazines with articles and pictures of this house, and other Adler projects. From these articles, Laura knows that the walls of the original dining room were covered in custom straw marquetry (a technique that mimics wood veneer by using straw) by Adolphe Chanaux, an early 20th century French decorator. But when Laura bought the house, she was disappointed to find those same walls painted plain white.

Now, the room is a show-stopper.

“We wanted the dining room to be the belle of the ball, so we decided to sheath the walls in Badminton from de Gournay, the handpainted chinoiserie motif on silver background,” Laura says. Now the shimmering walls blend perfectly with the oak floors and original marble baseboards. It’s a nod to the room’s original Art Deco elements that Luce discovered in the vintage magazines.

Laura has yet to confirm a story she’s heard that the Duke of Windsor and Wallis Simpson danced in the living room.

“I suppose it’s possible, what with its ballroom scale,” she says. “The house was certainly built for entertaining.”



*Walls sheathed in silver handpainted chinoiserie make the dining room shimmer in a nod to the room’s original Art Deco design, as seen in this image from an article on the Clow house in a vintage design magazine.*



Laura and her husband are only the fourth family to own this particular Adler house. The original owners, Mr. and Mrs. William E. Clow (and their household staff of five) lived there until 1949, when Mrs. Leola Stanton Armour bought it following her divorce from Lester Armour (of the Chicago meatpacking dynasty). She died in 1980, and two years later the house was purchased by a retired couple who in a 2003 *Chicago Tribune* article said that the first time they saw the house, “it was like falling in love. Nobody had ever done anything bad to it, and I wanted to preserve as much as I could,” the owner said.

In fact, the family left many of the original furnishings in the home for Laura’s family when they moved in.

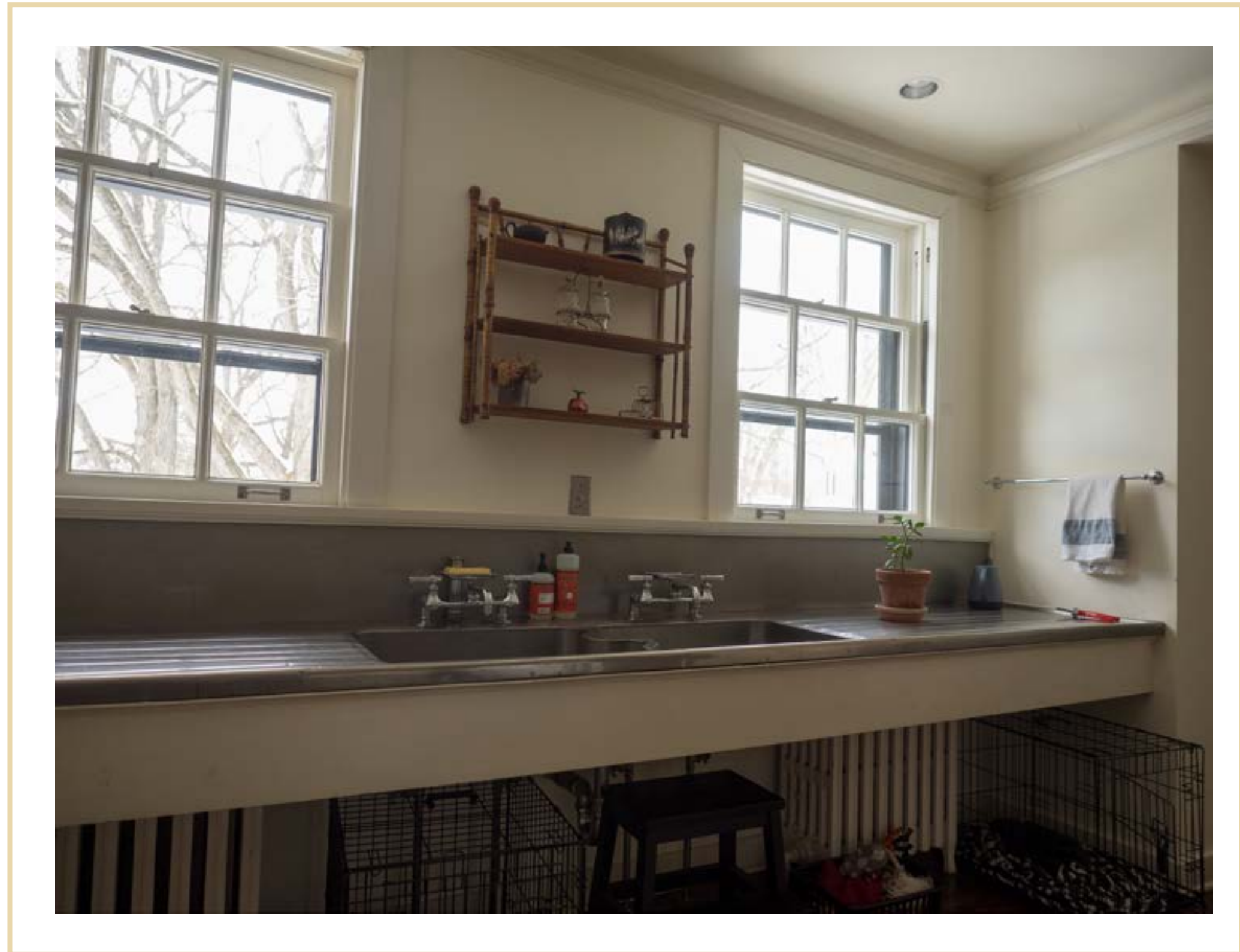
“They knew we got it,” she says.

Laura has taken great care to keep things simple, preferring to let the original house speak for itself. For example, rather than tear down walls between smaller rooms once designated for maids to create larger living areas, Laura instead repurposed them as they are for family use. In the library, Laura’s modern updates include overstuffed furniture upholstered in hot-pink velvet and original photography she collects from auction and from friends. She is a photographer herself.

Laura even kept the more ornate but perhaps less practical design elements, such as the travertine marble that covers one entire bathroom – floors, bathtub, vanity, even the walls themselves.

“It’s all original,” Laura says. “Even the sink.”

The house boasts two kitchens: the main kitchen, which retains the original sink and drain board made from Tennessee Pink marble, and a larger one, formerly the butler’s pantry kitchen and dining room, which features the original cabinetry, wooden countertops and a 136-inch German Silver Sink. The original pencil sharpener is still screwed into the wall.



*The sink in the original butler’s pantry spans more than 11 feet. Original to the home, the German Silver Sink features its original hardware.*






*Adler's sense of scale and proportion is on display in this light-filled bedroom.*

Still, things happen — and that's where Laura's affection for her house shows. When she needed pulls for a newer island in the main kitchen, Laura searched the internet and found ones that Adler designed himself from a source in Los Angeles. She spends hours researching who the best artisans are for repairs — the person she uses for marble restoration in her home also restored the travertine floors in Chicago's Conrad Hilton hotel — and she scours auctions, ebay and other online resources for historical information and restoration details. One of her current projects is replacing an original, square-shaped glass towel bar that broke when one of the bathrooms was wallpapered.

"I'm still hunting for that one," she says.

Still, the effort is worth it.

"It's such a joy to be a steward of a place like this," Laura says. "I'm just fascinated by it. It's my pride and joy." 



*Symmetry in design is a key characteristic of architect David Adler's work, seen here in the background as Laura Luce exits the living room.*



# Visiting

ellen fowler hummel

I wake up and the room is pitch black. I turn my head toward the lace-curtained window, where the barn light next door casts a soft white shadow across the bed. I know that I won't go back to sleep. It was the same last night; it's the same every night when we visit my grandmother's house. I lay on my back, sweating in the summer air, my 11-year-old legs stretched out straight on top of the sheet.

Nana snores gently next to me. She and I share the bed in the back bedroom; my younger brother gets the pullout sofa in the front room to himself. If our grandfather was alive the arrangement would be different, but it's been this way as long as I can remember. It's just the way it is.

Outside, I hear the sound of trucks speeding down the highway not 20 feet outside my grandmother's front door. All night long, the rumble of 18-wheelers and the more gentle whoosh of cars generates a kind of white noise that lulls most of us to sleep. Except me.

I lay still, trying not to move. At some point I hear a high-pitched buzz in my ear and

recognize it as a mosquito circling for a bite. I grab the sheet covering us and pull it up over my head. The buzz stops. Nana breathes softly, and I continue to sweat. Slowly, I ease the sheet off my face, desperate for cooler air. Hearing nothing, I fling the sheet off my chest, letting the air settle around me, listening for the mosquito. It comes back and I pull the sheet up fast again.

This will continue for the rest of the night, like it does every summer night at Nana's. The sound of traffic, the light from the barn, hot summer air, soft snoring, a mosquito buzzing. This night, the next night and the one after that, all the same until we go back home.

The nights are so long.

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The next morning, the temperature's already hit 80 degrees. It's hot in the small house with no air conditioning, but Nana still bakes biscuits and fries eggs for breakfast, and rolls the shades up to let in the morning sun.

I'm already bored, so I walk out the kitchen door and head across the grass to the shed behind the house. It's a small wood building, barely 15 feet square, painted white to match the house. Inside it's filled with all kinds of junk discarded over the years. I like to go in there and hunt through my grandparents' things. So far I've found old comic books; pictures my dad drew when he was little, during World War II, of Japanese planes; so many boxes of seashells; piles of old fabric.

I step up on the concrete block and open the door. Hot, musty air washes over me as my eyes adjust to the pitch-black inside that's absorbed by the tar paper walls. There's no light because there isn't electricity out here. The door is on a spring, and I remember to prop it open with the brick so it doesn't slam shut and lock me inside, like it did when I was younger and I got a spanking, even though it was an accident.

I hear a loud buzz and look up at the ceiling, and there's the hornet's nest where it always is, stuck to a beam high up in the corner. A couple of wasps circle lazily. In front of me is a bench, springs poking through stained upholstery. Along the sides of the shed,

canning jars and kerosene lamps share space on wooden shelves above a wheelbarrow and the rifle my dad and grandfather used to hunt squirrels.

I sit down on the edge of a rocking chair, its caned seat long gone, and pick through a box of books. I pull out an old one with a teal cover that I've never seen before, an unabridged edition of *Gone With the Wind*. I flip the pages, turned orange with age, brittle to the touch, the type set in two columns like an old newspaper. Sweat runs down my back as I start to read. Scarlet is driving the wagon with Melanie and the baby back to Tara, and Rhett has stopped them on the bridge to warn of Yankee troops.

I have no idea how long I read, until a loud buzz next to my right ear makes me jump and duck my head, swatting the air with my right hand. The wasp flies away but the spell is broken. I put the book back in the box and pick my way across the floor. I kick the brick out of the way and the door springs shut. Back outside, the hot white sunlight makes me yawn.

I head back toward the house, hoping it's time for lunch.

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We pile into the car late one morning to go visiting, which involves dropping in for a few minutes on old relatives whose names we don't remember and friends of Nana's from church. Ushered into dimly lit living rooms with wall-to-wall carpet, my brother and I sit quietly while the old women talk about people we don't know and the high price of milk. Trying not to fidget, we fight to stay awake in the hot, overstuffed houses that always smell like medicine.

Sometimes we're offered 7-Up, and usually someone passes around a small crystal candy dish filled with pastel pink, yellow and green butter mints. We take one, say thank you, and set the dish back down on the coffee table, or the console TV.

Back home, Nana takes a nap and we pass the time sneaking M&Ms from the amber candy dish in the dining room, just a few so it doesn't look like we took any at all. We snoop through the cabinets in the bathroom, picking up tubes of ointment and bottles of pills that don't match what our parents have in their medicine cabinet at home.

It's too hot to go outside so we lay on our backs on the carpet in the living room and stare at the water stains in the ceiling. We try to find different names for the shapes that we know as well as our own faces, but then we give up and just lay there, quiet.

Other than the occasional truck going by, the only afternoon sound is the ticking of the sunburst clock on the wall by the front door. Tick, tock.

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By late afternoon we make our way out back to climb the apple tree and wander along the railroad tracks behind the house. It's cooler now, the sun lower in the sky, and shade begins to creep along the edges of the carport, the grape arbor, the pine trees that mark the property line to the north. We chase each other around the shed, then poke through bushes looking for the stray cat.

The back door slams and Nana comes out, a bowl filled with apples in one hand and a smaller yellow one in the other. She sits under

a tree, in an aluminum lawn chair with green plaid webbing that squawks when she moves. Holding an apple in her left hand — a perfect fit inside her arthritic fingers — she presses a paring knife against the fruit with her right, and starting at the stem, peels the red skin off in one continuous spiral. The tendril falls into the yellow bowl on the ground; she picks up another apple and peels it the same way, until all the fruit is naked. She slices each apple into eight perfect sections that fall machine-like into the bowl, ready to be made into pie.

We watch, transfixed by the tendrils, lulled by the precision. We sink into the hum of the highway traffic, the buzz of cicadas, the sound of a train whistle far away in the distance. The cat comes over and paws at the peels on the ground. His tail curls in a slow, lazy arc.

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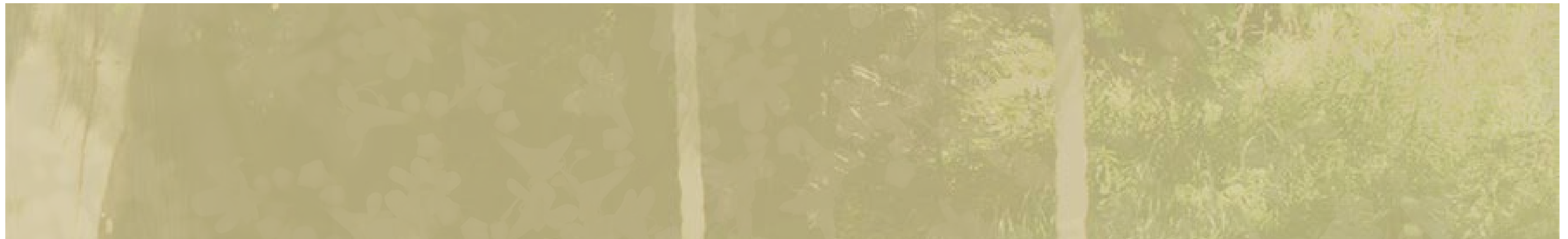
After the dinner dishes are done, we spend the evening in front of the TV, volume turned up so Nana can hear. We watch "Wheel of

Fortune," some crime show or another, and the local news to hear the weather report. Tomorrow will be sunny and hot.

Nana sits in her chair, piecing blocks for a quilt. After awhile she puts down her sewing and picks up a book of word search puzzles, squinting to see the letters. My brother and I watch TV because there literally is nothing else to do, and at the end of this long day we bicker and fight and poke each other when Nana isn't looking. Finally we go to bed, wiped out by boredom.

And with that, the day is done. Tomorrow will come and with it more of the same, the rhythm of our visit dictated by the pace of Nana's life. It's nothing more than that, there's nothing else to do.

We will get older but time in this house stands still. 🍏







## SMALL WONDERS

**W**hat's the fascination with tiny houses? For many, the art of miniatures is a window into history, a way to capture a time and place in precise and accurate detail. For others, it's a creative outlet, crafting rooms and details that create an illusion of being in a certain place and time. Still others see miniatures as educational, an opportunity to study history, recreate a scene, or explore their craft.

JoEllen Kerwin, profiled here, is a skilled miniaturist whose work serves both artistic and historical purposes. Each of her structures creates a sense of place for those who visit her tiny worlds.



## the artist



It's a beautiful day for a tiny home tour, and JoEllen Kerwin, an artist and miniaturist, has things ready to go.

Light fills the living room where she's set up three of her "builds," as her son Brian calls the scenes in miniature that JoEllen creates, a new medium for this former painter. Each display is set up with enough space to walk around it, offering a 360-degree view inside. In the adjacent sun room, two more miniatures sit on shelves, inviting visitors to peer at the carefully crafted details inside.

"What I like most about working with miniatures is that you're creating an illusion," JoEllen says, walking over to the largest display, a multi-room build that, unlike the other pieces, opens at the top. The room, a Japanese atelier, was purchased as a kit and finished about a year ago. It was her first multi-room project and involved hours of historical research, which JoEllen truly enjoys.

"The more realistic in scale you can get, and the more realistic the details are, the better it's going to be," she says. "People want to feel like it's real, and that illusion is what miniaturists bring."

Looking closely at her work, the illusion seems more than real.



*For a tudor home, JoEllen used golf weights to mimic the look of a leaded glass window. Tiny handmade carrots and loaves of bread fill a basket outside the working front door.*



"She's a kimono designer and this is her work and living space, where she meets with her customers," JoEllen says, peering inside the Japanese atelier. "I did lots of research on Japan and Japanese structures, and I discovered that in Japan they use these traditional design elements even now, so



*A colorful kimono on a miniature dress form decorates a corner of a Japanese studio.*

this space would be appropriate today and historically."

"I don't normally design to tell a story, but I do like to get a sense of who would be living in the space, is it true to the time and the design, is what I'm making a good space."

The atelier features a shrine, tea room and garden house (complete with a koi pond and surrounded by irises, which JoEllen learned to craft in a miniatures class). Inside, elements include a tiny kimono on a mini dress form, a sewing machine with spools of thread, and furniture including a dresser with drawers that open.

To save on costs (each room within the building shell also comes as a kit) JoEllen researched other materials she could use to duplicate the actual kit supplies.

Take the tatami mats, for example. Rather than use authentic tatami, JoEllen visited a local Vogue Fabrics store and found material that's almost an exact match in texture and color. The overhead light in the main room is actually made from a ping pong ball that JoEllen covered with thread. And she hand-painted the floor, wall and garden surfaces to create a warm room filled with fascinating detail.

She applies the same research and art skills to all of her projects. For the French House, she used polymer clay to form carrots and bread that filled a basket. She made the cobblestones from wall paste and window frames from a golf weight that she cut to fit. Deciding that she wanted to add lights, JoEllen built a lean-to to hold the light battery, then added texture and color to age the shingles and stone.

"That's where my art background helps," she says.

Each of her projects showcases a particular skill she learned from a class, or a new solution she brainstormed to get the effect she's looking for.

For the Tudor Facade, she studied Tudor homes in her neighborhood when she walked her dog, Lexi. She then researched Tudor windows to get an idea of what was required, and cut roof tiles from paper that she water-colored. A tree on the outside is actually a rosemary twig and egg cartons added texture to clay she used for the walkway.

All of these elements add to the effect, JoEllen says.

"The rooms represent a piece of the world," she says. "You see the whole thing in snippets, a view of the front, of the back and then you can see the whole house, the complete view."

JoEllen holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in art history from Northwestern University and a master's in art education from the University of Wisconsin. She's worked as a painter, recycled materials manager for the Chicago Children's Museum, and recently retired as an art teacher.

Her miniatures obsession began 10 years ago when she first attended the Chicago International Miniature Show, the largest gathering of dealers, artists and miniaturist fans in the world. This first visit was prompted by a flood in her mother's basement, and the Barbie collection that her mother gave her when she cleaned it up.

"I went through a period when I relived the whole doll thing," JoEllen says. "I never wanted a dollhouse, or a huge display of



*Everyday items find new life as miniatures, like this ping pong ball turned overhead light.*

holiday houses and scenes, but I became interested in Re-Ment, which are Barbie-sized toys and accessories. They were so much fun to open, especially the kitchens. They're the best."

(For those unfamiliar, Re-Ment is a Japanese toy manufacturer that specializes in miniature food, furniture and toys, among other collectibles. Most of their products are aimed at the adult collectible market.)

The Chicago International Miniature Show also showcases modern computer technology that has jump-started work in miniatures. Workshops on using laser cutters, 3D printing and LED lighting attract as many artisans as the more traditional skills of mold-making, crafting flowers and animals, designing stained glass, and fine needlepoint and embroidery.





*JoEllen's dog Lexi makes her debut in miniature in a cozy kitchen scene.*

After five years of “just going,” to the show, JoEllen figured out where her interests lie.

“In the beginning I worked with different elements to get an idea of what I liked,” JoEllen says. “So much of what they have on display and for sale, I just thought ‘oh, that’s too sweet’. But the artisans who made the tile and the furniture, and painted the surfaces? That’s what I was really interested in. It turns out I like the challenge of structures.”

She began to buy room kits as a way to test the waters, and she joined a local miniatures club. She participated in some of the projects, but soon realized that what she enjoyed most was the people.

“Miniaturists are very sharing, very willing to help you with ideas and solutions, and when you have people to share the work with, it strengthens what you do,” Jo Ellen says. “I love the creative challenge, and I like talking to people about it. I’ve done that all my life.”

Working with miniatures also offered JoEllen a welcome creative challenge from painting.

“After filling two houses with paintings, I was ready for something new. I sometimes found painting to be isolating, but this community is so big and so giving, it’s a nice change of pace.”

JoEllen’s latest project explores the Art Nouveau movement in a room that she’s building from scratch.



*Details from landscaping that JoEllen placed outside a house; treats that look almost good enough to eat.*



“The idea came from a class on art nouveau furniture I took with a fascinating artist from Amsterdam,” she says. “I picked the class because I love that period, and I started to learn more about it. Then I bought a piece of wallpaper and thought, what will I make from this? I decided to make a room box, and here we are.”

Her workshop in an upstairs bedroom is filled with computer printouts, stencils and tackle boxes filled with buttons, earrings, beads and other knick knacks that somehow she finds uses for. She’s designed and made tiny breads, flowers and even crown molding from her mother’s costume jewelry and her grandmother’s buttons. She even uses a pasta maker to mix and form the polymer clay she uses, which she then bakes in a toaster oven.

“You get very inspired with these things,” JoEllen says. “Miniaturists are definitely hoarders. It’s a nice challenge to me to figure this out.”

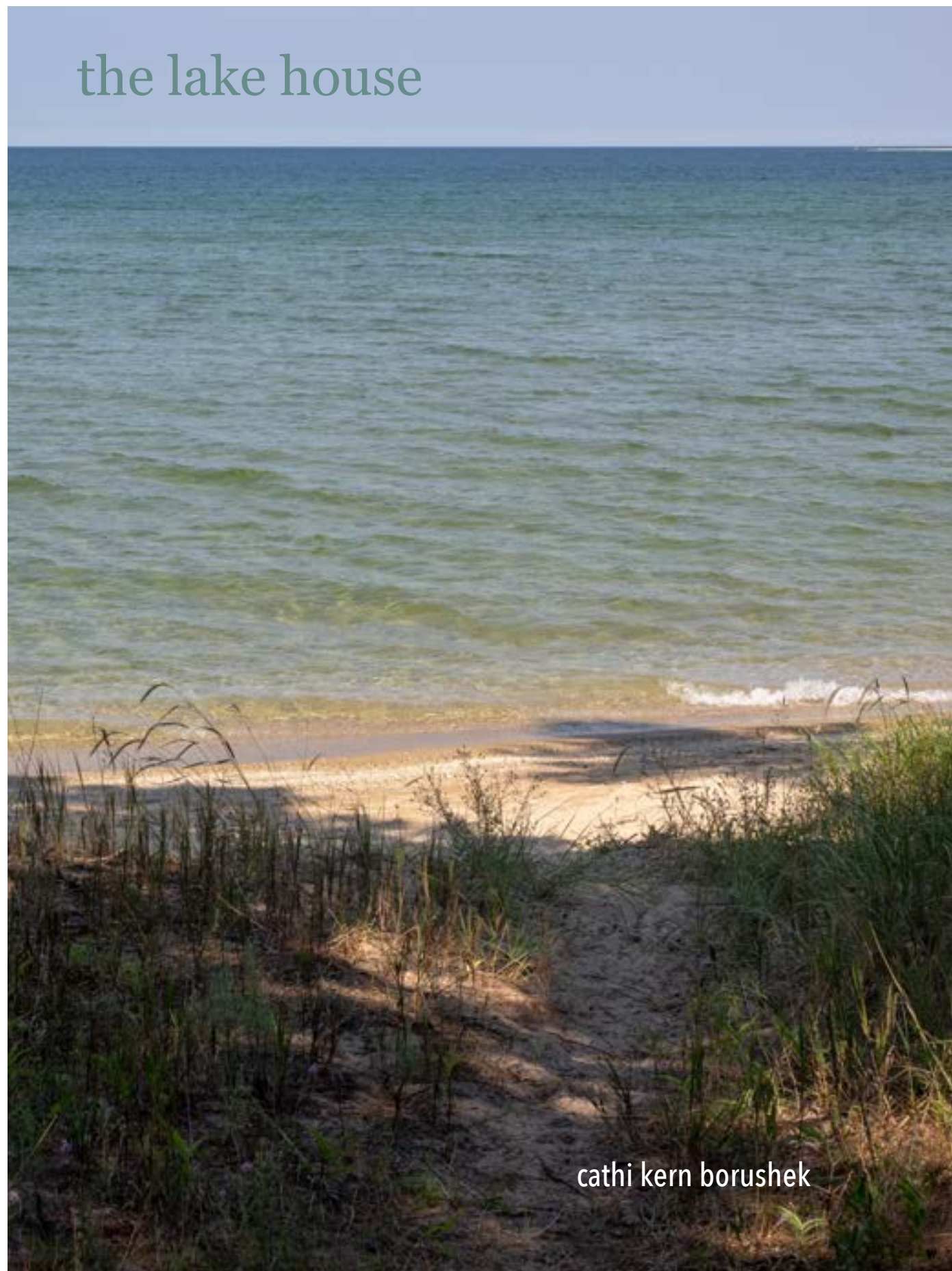
The combination of historical research and creativity clearly inspires her work.

“I fantasize about living in the Swiss mountains and doing this all the time,” JoEllen says, holding up the art nouveau molding she created that’s drying on the table.

“I love the creative challenge. It’s not a job at all, it’s almost a need. I feel so much better when I work on this. I just feel calmer, and happier.” 🌱



## the lake house



cathi kern borushek

Until the last of the family elders died - our grandparents and our great aunts and uncles - my brothers and sister and I spent summers on a small lake in Michigan. The official name of the place, The Playground - est. 1938, was permanently etched on the concrete front stoop by someone's shaky ancestral hand. While it may have had an actual name, everyone simply called it The Lake.

Family lore has it that my great-grandmother demanded a lake house to protect her grandson - my father, the family namesake and crown prince - from the polio epidemic. It was bought new, but by the time we came along decades later the house hadn't seen many changes. The main upgrade was an in-house bathroom, replacing the outhouse attached to the garage that was still wallpapered with pages from 1940s glamor magazines.

Situated on a bluff, a Fitbit-worthy 100 stairs stretched down towards the water and the wooden pier. Inside, the two-story living room with the requisite knotty pine walls and huge stone fireplace topped with an actual moose head, was used mostly on rainy days to watch the black-and-white TV. Next to the TV a stuffed pheasant, bagged by my grandfather on a long ago hunting trip, perched on a side table watching us through glassy eyes. In the kitchen was a

long pine table covered with slick oilcloth that stuck to your arms on hot summer nights. It's where we honed Vegas-worthy skills playing Michigan Rummy for pennies. Afterwards, the boys were sent to the downstairs bunk room, next-door to the grown-ups for better monitoring. We girls went upstairs to the dormer room, with its white chenille bedspreads and a dressing table skirted with fancy fabric. It was like sleeping in a Doris Day movie.

There were actually two houses on The Playground property. The main house was a charming white clapboard house with flowered window boxes and a long screened-in sleeping porch. Next door was its creepier cousin, The Annex, a boxy, dark and slightly rundown rectangular structure we were told not to explore. When it wasn't occupied by second-tier family and friends, The Annex became an after-hours club for my parents' generation. Raucous weekend parties started when the kids were sent to bed. The sounds of loud music, laughter and clinking bottles drifted up through our windows in the main house.

There were two types of trips to The Lake: those with our mother and those with the older generation. On journeys with the elders we were loaded into an enormous Buick, the four of us rammed free-range style in the back, pre-seatbelt days. After distributing books, car games and a severe behavior-consequence lecture, our mom would joyfully slam the car door, wave goodbye, and we were off.



Barely 30 minutes later the fighting began. Eventually, the weakest (here's looking at you, baby brother) would be dragged into the front seat, leaving the three remaining contestants more room to battle it out. Just over the Michigan border the unlucky driver, exasperated with our tomfoolery, would screech into the nearest rest stop. Among dust clouds and cigarette smoke we were given foil-wrapped sandwiches and a behavior-consequence refresher. On luckier days, we stopped for gas at a past-its-prime Stuckey's where we pestered the adults for candy or a tooth-chipping "world-famous" pecan log. When we finally reached the house, dragged in our stuff, claimed our beds and clamored to go swimming, the adults would need a 21-and-over beverage before the summer could officially begin.

These older-generation trips were fraught with rules. No swimming until 30 minutes after meals. No walking on the pier without life preservers. No touching the water without an adult. No leaving the yard without an adult. No drinking more than one glass of pop. No wet towels on the floor. No leaving beds unmade. No snacking. No having fun before doing chores. No, you can't buy that at the grocery store. No. The Depression-era minders were often just depressing.

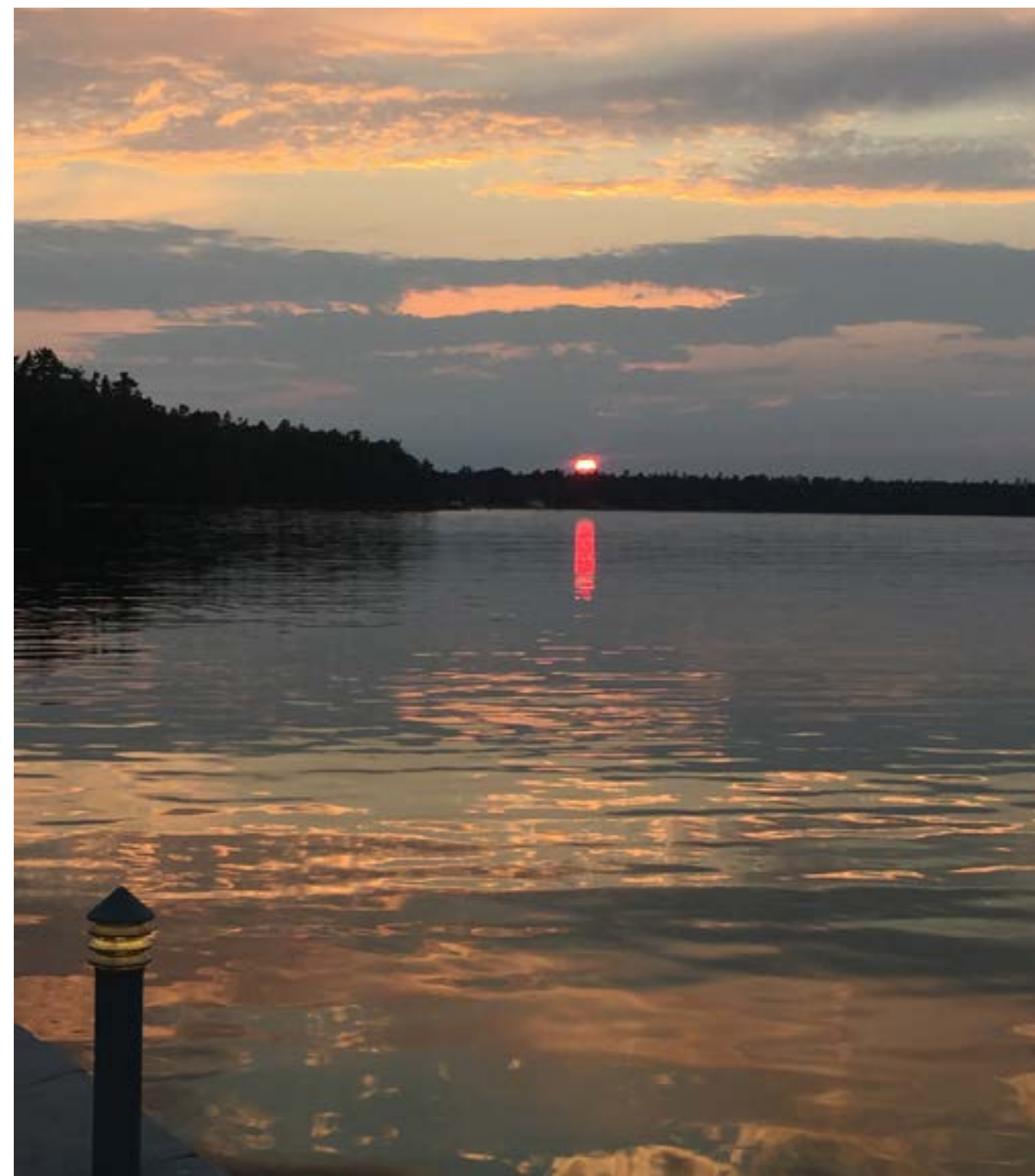
The mom-journeys were packed with adventure. Stops were more of the "pick flowers along the highway" or "talk cops out of speeding tickets" variety. Once at The Lake, the rules were looser and the fun was edged slightly with danger. "I haven't

seen your brothers all day, know where they are?" kind of fun. "Run up those stairs and grab a coffee can full of kerosene so I can start a bonfire." "I wonder how we're going to get your father to tow this speed boat that I just ran aground on a sandbar. Behind a rowboat. With a broken hand." "We should break into that abandoned farmhouse and see if there's any good junk in there." Looking back, that older generation may have been on to something with all their rules.

We were in our early 20s when the last of the elders died and the house, left to my father and his cousins, was sold. We were offered the chance to buy it ourselves but we were all too new to jobs and finances and life to afford it. So, we said goodbye to the place by using our meager funds to buy keepsakes from the estate sale. I have no idea who snagged the stuffed pheasant, but the bed and dresser from the dormer room sits in our basement among the cobwebs. Still, there are plenty of mementos scattered around my house, their importance known only to me and my siblings. Memories we share.

Occasionally, my husband will ask if he can toss a relic he thinks has outlived its usefulness. The look of horror on my face signals that wouldn't be wise.

"Must be from the lake" he mutters, carefully putting it back where it now belongs. 🐟





*the writers*

# Lost & Found

The things we cast aside speak as much to who we are as the things we keep close. Here, we pair photographs of found objects with the words of women writers and thinkers about finding a place in the world.

**“A house that does not have one warm, comfy chair in it is soulless.”**

**May Sarton**

*The Journals of May Sarton Volume One:  
Journal of a Solitude*







"There must be quite a few things a hot bath won't cure, but I don't know many of them. Whenever I'm sad I'm going to die, or so nervous I can't sleep, or in love with somebody I won't be seeing for a week, I slump down just so far and then I say: 'I'll go take a hot bath.'"

**Sylvia Plath**

*The Bell Jar*



"Lock up your libraries if you like; but there is no gate, no lock, no bolt that you can set upon the freedom of my mind."

**Virginia Woolf**

*A Room of One's Own*





"America is known as a country that welcomes people to its shores. All kinds of people. The image of the Statue of Liberty with Emma Lazarus' famous poem. She lifts her lamp and welcomes people to the golden shore, where they will not experience prejudice because of the color of their skin, the religious faith that they follow."

**Ruth Bader Ginsburg**

*Supreme Court Justice*



"Home wasn't a set house, or a single town on a map. It was wherever the people who loved you were, whenever you were together. Not a place, but a moment, and then another, building on each other like bricks to create a solid shelter that you take with you for your entire life, wherever you may go."

**Sarah Dessen**

*What Happened to Goodbye*





Hostess Twinkie molds

“The house sheltered us, we spoke, we loved within those walls. That was yesterday. Today we pass on, we see it no more, and we are different, changed in some infinitesimal way. We can never be quite the same again.”

**Daphne du Maurier**

*Rebecca*



Detail from vintage stove

“I suppose I could have stayed home and baked cookies and had teas, but what I decided to do was to fulfill my profession, which I entered before my husband was in public life”

**Hillary Rodham Clinton**

*Former US Secretary of State*

*Former US Senator*

*Former First Lady*

“All I was doing was trying to get home from work.”

**Rosa Parks**

*Activist*





"Nowadays she and I speak of the house where we grew up as home, we forget for long hours the places we live now, which have cupboards with our spices and canned peas, dressers with our clothes. When an aunt or our brother relieves us at the hospital we drive over there for some empty time, some quiet, and sit in her kitchen table with the carvings of childhood forks in its surface, stand drinking coffee right on the worn spot where she stood to stuff chickens, weave the crusts on pies. Home, we say to each other, drawing those dented walls around us like a wool blanket, two little girls in matching nightgowns, pinching and elbowing, acting hateful, getting yelled at. She was browsing, trying to find something to bury her in."

**Jo Ann Beard**

*"Waiting" from Boys of My Youth*



*the visionaries***Mothers of Invention**

Sisters keep doing it for themselves, as these pioneering women prove when necessity became the mother of invention.



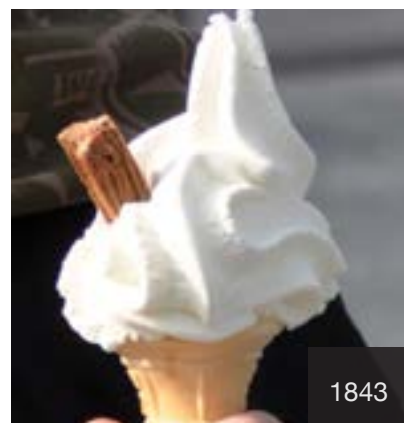
1809

**Hats***Mary Dixon Kies*

Her machine to weave straw and silk into hats created an economic boom in New England during the Napoleonic wars when hats from Europe were embargoed.

Kies was the first woman awarded a US patent, even though most women couldn't legally own property at the time.

However, fashion is a fickle mistress (think parachute pants), and when straw hats fell out of style her profits fell too. She died penniless in 1837.



1843

**Ice Cream***Nancy Johnson*

Of course it was a woman who received the first US patent for ice cream.

Johnson's hand-cranked machine blended salt and cream in a pewter chamber producing this delicious treat in a variety of frozen flavors.

She has our eternal gratitude.



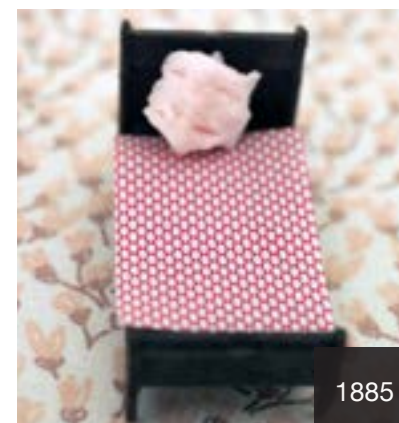
1871

**Paper Bags***Margaret E. Knight*

A safety device that swept the cotton mill industry was her first invention. She was 12.

Widely known for her revolutionary paper bag machine at a time when they were still made by hand, Knight spent bags full of money (successfully) on a legal challenge brought by a man who argued that a woman could not have invented such a device.

Self-taught, this pioneer held 20 patents for a wide range of devices.



1885

**Beds***Sarah E. Goode*

Fifteen years before the Murphy Bed was invented and well before the blow-up bed was used for overflow guests, Goode invented a cabinet bed to sleep people low on space.

Her device was a desk during the day and a bed at night, demonstrating a woman's ability to multi-task.

She was the first African-American woman to hold a US patent.



1887

**Dishwashing***Josephine Cochrane*

Frustrated that handwashing her china caused it to chip, Cochrane worked with a mechanic to develop the first dishwasher.

The Palmer House Hotel in Chicago was her first customer, enabling her to build a successful business that is now part of Whirlpool, where she is considered one of the company's founders.

What she didn't invent, unfortunately, is a way to get teenagers to empty the dishwasher.



1905

**Games***Elizabeth Magie*

Do not pass Go! Monopoly, one of the most successful games of all time, started life as a way to preach the evils of capitalism.

Magie's Landlord's Game, patented in 1905, was rejected by Parker Brothers who then turned around and released Monopoly, purportedly "invented" by Charles Darrow.

Go Directly to Jail: Parker Brothers eventually paid Magie \$500 for the rights to her game. Capitalism indeed.





1905

## Hair

*C. J. Walker*

The daughter of former slaves and orphaned at seven, Walker created Madam Walker's Wonderful Hair Grower, a scalp conditioning and healing formula for Black women.

She spent nearly two years driving throughout the South selling door to door while offering women grooming and styling tips.

She grew the company into a direct mail powerhouse to become America's first self-made female millionaire.



1908

## Coffee

*Mellita Bentz*

Tired of cleaning up coffee grounds and messy linen filters, Bentz experimented with her son's school blotting paper and brewed up the modern coffee filter.

Granted a patent in her native Germany, her company thrived, pausing only during WWII when they were required to produce war-related goods.

Today, Mellita Coffee has subsidiaries worldwide. Her grandchildren remain part of the company's management.



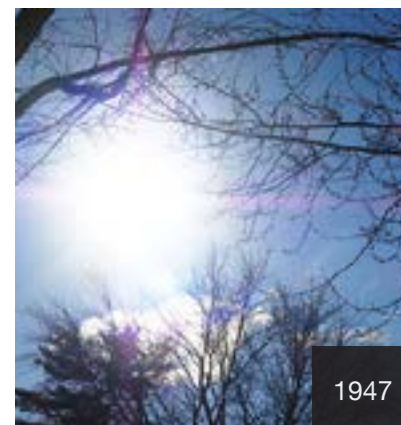
1938

## Cookies

*Ruth Wakefield*

Co-owner of the Toll House Inn (see where we're headed) legend has it Wakefield was trying a cookie-making shortcut by chopping a Nestle's bar into little pieces with an ice pick instead of melting it. She reasoned the chocolate would melt in the oven but instead the chocolate chip cookie was born.

Seizing on the opportunity, Nestle bought the recipe for \$1 and free chocolate for life. The company began selling chips with the recipe on the bag. Sweet!



1947

## Solar House

*Maria Telkes*

Let the sun shine in!

A biophysicist at MIT's Solar Project tasked with searching for alternative fuel sources, Telkes teamed up with architect Eleanor Raymond to build the Dover House, which relied on her invention of a heating system that took energy from the sun.

The house stood for two years before the project ended and Telkes went on to invent solar stoves, heaters and materials for the space program.



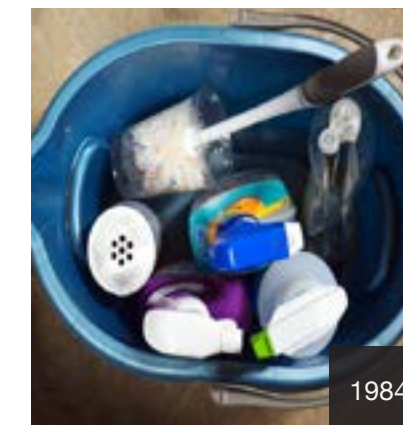
1956

## Office Products

*Bette Nesmith Graham*

Single mom (of a future Monkee) Graham worked her way up to executive secretary at a Texas bank, the highest position open to women in the industry at the time.

That wasn't the only mistake being made and her frustration with the difficulty of fixing typing errors led her to invent Mistake Out, a liquid that quickly painted over the problem. Eventually changing the name to Liquid Paper, she grew the company into an office product megastar before selling to the Gillette Company in 1979 for \$47.5 million.



1984

## Cleaning

*Frances Gabe*

A self-cleaning house was Gabe's solution to the mind-numbing chore of cleaning house.

Her Oregon house, built with her own hands and containing 68 separate patented inventions, worked like a giant car wash.

Installed sprinklers first sprayed sudsy water throughout the rooms, then a second spray rinsed them off. Water drained through the floor as jets of warm air blew the rooms dry. Furnishings were made of vinyl for easy cleanup.

Unfortunately she never cleaned up on her inventions. She died in 2016 at age 101.



## behind the scenes

My husband and I were on our way to dinner when I spotted something out of the corner of my eye. It took me a second to realize what it was before I yelled, "stop the car!"

Sitting off the side of the road, nestled among the forest preserve trees, was this dilapidated doll house calling my name. I grabbed a few iPhone shots and crossed my fingers the house would wait for me to give this odd little tableau its proper due. To my delight it was there the next day.

As I took the photos, careful not to disturb the house, I wondered how it got there. Rational thinking would mean someone had put it there, perhaps as their own photo project. I preferred to think it was more magical than that. Some long ago child, gifted with a brand new house, had spent hours inventing stories within those walls. As it was passed down to other generations, new memories were born before its disrepair left it abandoned and waiting for a different purpose: someone who could appreciate the beauty in the ruin.

Houses have lots of different stories to tell. I felt lucky to stumble across this one. The day after I took this photo the dollhouse was gone. ~ CKB



## CREDITS & RESOURCES

Images in the photo essay *Lost & Found* on pages 34-43 were taken at Evanston Rebuilding Center in Evanston, IL; Goodwill Industries in Evanston, IL; and Sasquatch Recycling Services in North Chicago, IL.

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Laura Luce

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"Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth, for the touch of a friendly hand and for a talk beside the fire: it is time for home."

Dame Edith Sitwell



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*a community of thought one idea at a time*



**Next:**

**BLOOM**

**Spring 2019**