

Home

By [David Lewicki](#)

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Home is a recurring fascination of mine.

I've lived in six different states and nine different houses or apartments (not including the itinerant college years).

For me, home is a mixture of three things: 1) people, 2) land and 3) history.

People are the folks who live with and/or immediately around you. Do you feel safe with them? Do they nourish you? Do you willingly serve them and take care of them?

Land is the connection you have to the geography of that place. In New Hampshire, it's the hills. In New York, it's the concrete canyons and underground tunnels. It's the features of the terrain that shape your movement and your vistas, the things that are older than you and will still be there when you're dead.

History is the whole sum of experiences of people in that place. How did people live there before you? What migrations and patterns moved whole populations? What did they call sacred? What events are knots on the cord of collective memory? The removal of native tribes. Civil War battles. Industrial development. White flight. Civil rights.

I visited an old home this weekend, when I returned to [Upper Arlington](#), an inner ring suburb of Columbus, Ohio. Verdant, genteel, peaceful, restrictive covenants on the homes kept it white, little commerce within the city limits kept the working class out, an early suburb, leafy. Tennis, golf, lawns. Isolated. Conservative. Amiable.

I didn't want to stay there to live. But I took it with me. That home is still part of me. You can't really ever shake the dust of home off your feet. It's under your nails. It's in your mouth.

[Here's a poem](#) that came to mind after my visit, which meanders through various definitions of home, and finally focuses on the role of "people"--and their absence--in

making and un-making a home.

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