

Where is home?

By [Laura Kelly Fanucci](#)

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Right now I am home. Sitting in the house that we own. Where we are raising our children. Where mail arrives daily bearing my name. Where we welcome family and entertain friends. Where I pull weeds and paint walls. Where my car pulls into the driveway and my shoes slip off in the doorway.

And I am writing about going home. Which is not here.

The gate agent accepts my folded slip of paper and scans it with a beep.

“Heading home?” she asks, smiling down at the baby in my arms and the two boys running ahead down the jetway. I look at her and wonder how to answer.

What makes a home? The people in it? The relationships they share? The permanency of an address? The bigger sense of time and place wrapped around four walls and a roof?

Home is here and home is there.

Right now I am home. Where the school bus picked me up every morning by the tall elm tree out front. Where we dragged sleds through the backyard to the sledding hill. Where I curled up on the sunlit carpet to pour through books. Where we sang grace for dinner. Where my brother died and every childhood dream I had was born.

Where I am writing about going home. Which is not here.

For the longest time I had my parents’ number listed as *home* in my cell phone. The first number I’d memorized, the digits dialed by grade school friends and high school boyfriends, the number I called from college and abroad, the 10-digit combo where I always knew I would find a voice happy to hear mine, even if just a familiar answering machine.

After I was married, I punched in our newlywed number as *Our House*. Another house was still *Home*. Whenever I noticed and thought of changing the obvious, I

changed my mind. Did I fear I would lose home forever if I claimed another?

One afternoon I made the switch. Idling in some parking lot, killing time, playing on my phone. That oldest familiar number became *Mom and Dad*. Ours became *Home*.

After all, if I wanted to list every place that felt like mine, the list would be blessedly long: Michigan houses and Indiana dorm rooms and French apartment buildings and Minnesota backyards.

I began to see how home was a more expansive concept—more accepting and embracing and growing and shifting.

Maybe this was the moment I understood home theologically. Maybe, as with Sabbath, we are made for home.

“Is this home?”

Thomas’ dark brown eyes blink up at me through the dusky light settling in the bedroom, the last slants of summer sunset stretching through the shutters.

“This is Gramma and Papa’s home,” I tell him. “It used to be my home, too. This is where I was little.”

“I’m little,” he declares firmly, soft jaw jutting out his resolve. “So this is my home, too.”

“But our home is in Minnesota,” I remind him. “We go home on the plane tomorrow.”

“No,” he insists with a shake of his head. “We stay home here. And then we go home, too.”

Somewhere I read that every great story is about leaving home or trying to come home. Scripture is full of this. Eden exiles and Exodus wanderings and exhortations to shake the dust from your sandals if the place does not welcome your message.

We are always coming and going. Departures and arrivals. Trying to find where we belong. There is something ultimate in this longing, I know: “Our hearts are restless till they rest in thee.” But maybe what Augustine missed was that it’s not only our hearts that are restless. It’s our legs and our feet and our ears and our arms. Our whole self.

Toes that tire of workday heels and ache to slide into slippers at the end of the night. Ears that once buzzed with children's babble and now hope to hear grandkids' feet clamoring up the front steps. Arms that wrap 'round the beloved waist and itch to slip into bed together again.

Longing for home is a whole-body restlessness. Yearning to settle in where we are known and loved.

What Christ meant when he dreamed up rooms in my father's house and what Eliot knew when [he wrote](#) "to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time."

What we all know in our bones. From home and to home.

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