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A WEBSITE SERVING AS AN ARCHIVE OF MY  
DIFFERENT ADVENTURES ON PLANET EARTH...



BY BETTY H

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## Homecoming

I arrive back in Ohio on a bleak, chilly February afternoon. My brother greets me with a hug and a joint, and we chat about my flight and gossip during the 45 minute ride to my parent's house. My anxiety rises.

"He's not as bad as he sounds on the phone?" I ask.

"He gets confused, mom says it's just swelling from the craniotomy. But he's still his old self," he replies.

"When I called yesterday, he told me there was an army hiding outside, trying to kill him – waiting in the hedges," I say, but my brother just shrugs and tries to smile.

We pull in the driveway. Unlike previous homecomings, no one is waiting for me. My dad is sitting on the sofa, a giant smile on his face, and my mom leaps up and greets me, her mouth a wide smile, her eyes tired and unsure.

"Dad thought the coffee table was the toilet," my other brother says, with an exhausted-looking face. "I'm going out for a smoke."

I snuggle up to my dad. He is much thinner than the last I saw him on our trip to Scotland the previous October. The ample belly I used to rest my head on is gone.

"How was the boat?" he asked.

I laugh. "Dad, I flew back from London."

"Yeah, we always joke about you coming back from London on the boat and you're always," he raises his voice in a teasing way, "does anyone want tea!" He smiles cheerfully and pulls me closer, gives me a kiss on the head.

We sit like this for what feels like hours – he's happy and holding me as I sit, crushed under the weight of his new reality.

**In Ohio**

## **The Blonde One**

I once lived with a very competitive flatmate in Chicago, in a predominantly Mexican neighbourhood. She competed with me on everything – to the extreme. She started mildly by turning her hair orange in an ill-fated attempt to match my blond hair the week after I moved in. She then took the doors off of our bedrooms to compete on how much sex we were having, and I always presumed, how loud and boisterous we each were. She even quit her job so she could join me on my job hunt, and prove that she could get a job quicker than me. One autumn, early evening, after sitting in a coffee shop for the better part of the day staring at want ads and both trying to get a date with the guy behind the counter – we gave up and walked home.

On the way, a car full of teenage boys cruising the neighbourhood slowed as they passed, dimmed their headlights and yelled out, 'Hey, why don't you come home with me, I'll treat you like my queen!' My brunette flatmate acted all exasperated, as if this happened to her all the time. But a few seconds later, someone from the car yelled 'The blonde one!'

I also got a fantastic job offer the next week.

**In Chicago, IL**

## About Author

### Betty H

At her most convivial discoursing in a pub, a pint of ale and a large gin on the table before her

#### Why is the website called [bytestories.com](http://bytestories.com)?

This is a place for "byte-sized" stories and there is a 1500 character (about 250 words) limit for two main reasons. Firstly, we want you to know that "War and Peace" isn't required to leave your mark. Secondly, it takes about 2 minutes to read each story meaning you can head here whenever you want a quick (and entertaining) read.

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