

Relearn The Notion Of 'Home' & Redeem It From The Wasteland Of Your Youth

By Shannon Crossman

What Happens When Lost Is Home Because Home Is Lost?

My family was nuclear. Explosive. Home mutated, the first and longest lasting casualty of our domestic catastrophes.

First home lost to a folded business and a divorce. Small tribe that added up to four now equaled three. One removed and far away. Second home lost to exile. Every known thing obliterated in the mushroom cloud of maternal rage as I was cast out of the garden of my mother's family for eternity. Third home and I was on trial again. Awaited judgment in a shared cell at a friend's house. This time the judge and jury were paternal. Weighing my worth against a spouse who demanded, "Her or me."

In the post-apocalyptic world of my youth, home became a fractured thing. Fragile. Uncertain. Wistful. Imaginary. Unfamiliar. Radioactive. Something to aspire to. Something to shun. Desired yet impossible to hold onto. Growing up I learned that home was a place I arrived at, a place I entered, a place that could be stolen from me.

What happens when lost is home because home is lost?

I can tell you. You come up wild. Un-rooted. Straggle from place to place. Leaving before abandonment strikes again. Surrounding yourself with thickets of bramble. Sharp edges to keep out intruders. All the while longing for someone to brave the slivers and save you, if only from yourself.

Home was fallout from which there was no shelter. I learned to

fear it. Resist home at all costs. Run from place to place. Give back home after home after home like they were unwanted fish dangling at the end of a hook. Not because I did not want home. No, I burned for home. But letting home take root was dangerous business. Improbable business. The most unlikely thing that could ever happen to me.

So, I fought the notion of home until I learned how to renew and redeem it from the wasteland of my youth.

Now, I cannot find the way home because home is no longer 'out there'. That is the upside of all the tragedy. All the loss. All the wild wandering. Home is tucked tight into a small pocket of my heart. There is no finding of it. Except perhaps in turning inward. In seeking out the vast landscape of my interior so that I can slip into my own understanding of self and place once more.

In this way of living, lost is a concept. A thing my mind whispers of discreetly. Rising unbidden in the fog of misunderstanding. Lost is only a forgetting. Temporary displacement of the facts of a self or the shifting sands of the ego. Lost is what comes when I freeze up, go icicle or stalactite... when I neglect my own fluidity.

Home is water. Moving. River like. I cannot step into the same home twice. No matter how I try. No matter that my mind screams for permanence. The truth is, permanence is a myth. A legend concocted to hang onto safety, security, a false sense of peace. I am none of these things. I am a river. Mighty and wild. Carving my way across the continent. Flowing towards the sea. Waiting to join, at last, the ocean of my belonging.

When I remember I am a river...

When I remember home is inconstant...

When I remember the feeling of freedom in this...

I *am* the continent of my own belonging.

When I forget, I am fractured. A spindly version of myself. All knobs and knees and spikes and spires. I am disjointed, at best. Lacking a core, at worst. I revert to the habits of my youth like a prodigal daughter. The impulse to run lays heavy hot hands on my forehead driving me to abandon everything, especially myself.

I sometimes wonder if humankind left behind a profound inner knowing when we decided to tack our bodies to the ground. To wall and roof and floor ourselves in. To attach our sense of identity to geography. To a specific latitude and longitude. As if we were fixed in the sky, the way we mistakenly see stars.

Yet, we are more like stars than we know. Those heavenly bodies do not stay in place. They move. By the time we see them, they are dead.

Have exploded into the last thing they will be before they disappear forever. What if we lived like that? Knew that our fluidity, our movement, our ability to pick ourselves up and live on *is* The Way. Knew also that in the moment we become fixed, we have died. Come into our final resting place. Evolved into the last thing we will ever be.

This makes me happy to remember I am a river. Mighty and free. Cutting my way across the terrain of All That Is. Becoming all that I am along the way. Even in the running. Even in the resting. This is my peace. There is no finding. No losing. At last, I shed the fallout of my atomic past. There is only the moment and the being and the living into the thing before my eyes.

I embrace a concept of home that is adaptable, flexible, fluid. Resides beneath the epidermis. Below the bones and blood. Un-contained by walls or a roof or familial affiliation. Throw myself whole-heartedly after home that speaks the tongue of nomads and wild things. Returns me to

myself over and over again because it is irrevocably mine.

Realize I cannot be lost when home is a living, breathing force that fills the skin in which I reside.

For more self-study, [The Urban Howl](#) recommends [The Universe Has Your Back: Transform Fear to Faith](#)  .

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