

Windows are curious things, are they not? I love a good window, the view it offers, the light it lets in, but oh how I don't enjoy cleaning them. Yet, if left smudged and dirty it's difficult to behold the beauty that lays upon the other side.

I have lived in many houses in my lifetime, and as I've reflected on the topic of windows I confess that what I remember most about each home is a view from a window. Is it not strange that these are what I remember most from a home? Perhaps, but I suppose I have spent countless hours staring out of them.

I can still remember the first house had a beautiful bay window which had a seat under it. I remember the seat most often covered with potted plants, including the sour orange tree. I can't tell you what it's proper name was, but I can still see it in it's pot with the little window in the base that told you if it had enough water, or if it was time to add more.

The mini tree seemed magical to me as it grew, at best, cherry sized oranges that, on occasion, my siblings and I were allowed to pick and eat. I think we adored the process of picking them more than anything, because as I recall those oranges were quite sour.

The thing about that window is, I couldn't tell you exactly what the view outside was like. I know that my grandmother's house was across the street. I could tell you that it looked out upon a front porch, green I do believe, and that at the right time of day all the parents ran outside and changed the cars from one side of the street to the other, but what I remember most about that window, was the orange tree that grew in it.

I was a little older when we moved to the next house, and the window I remember there was a bowed window from our kitchen. While I can still close my eyes and instantly see that kitchen table and chair set, the window is a little harder to conjure in my mind. Yet, it's there and if I push the other thoughts to the side I can see the backyard, the swingset at the back of the property. The very one I swung so high on that the metal frame nearly flipped. I can see the small brown playhouse that we spent hours playing "house" in. And the pool that we likely spent just as many hours cooling off in during the summer months.

I would be remiss if I didn't confess that I also remember looking out that window one day

and seeing the neighbour upon her roof, a large beach towel in hand. At the time she seemed a little strange, moving this way and that before laying down. As an adult I'm pretty sure she was doing yoga, but why upon her roof is still quite beyond my grasp.

The next house I remember more, and I could tell you the view from many of the windows, but I shall pick just one because it holds the funniest little memory attached to it. We spent many hours in our basement, which was set up like a large living area and was also the place we did most of our school work. It had an entrance and exit to the outside world, a kitchen area, bedrooms, and more, including a long row of windows across one wall.

Now in fairness, the windows themselves were not special. They looked out upon the path that people might walk if they came up to the side door. If it was snowy out you'd likely only see snow unless someone went out and cleared it away, grass in the spring and summer, and likely mud {although I do not remember this} in the spring. Yet, what I remember most upon looking out that window was the silly little ducks who use to waddle right up to the window and tap sharply with their bills before the quacking began. This little charade was such an interruption to the daily rhythm and flow that we were sent outside to lead them back to the creek, but the only way to accomplish the task was to get some corn and lure them. Oh yes, those little ducks learned to come and beg for their food, and what laughter it caused amongst the chaos.

In the final house of my childhood we had many windows, but there are only two I looked out of often. One being the front picture window which, when the fence row across the street isn't overgrown gave view of a lush green unkempt pasture and a rolling hill of a mountain behind it. But the window I stared out most often looked out over an apple tree. There is just something breathtaking about fruit blossoms on a tree! One day you see a barren tree, the next small buds, and shortly after it looks as though the tree is covered in snow! And the scent, I quite love the scent of apple blossoms, maybe because I quite loved the view from that window that I spent many hours staring out and dreaming up stories and adventures!

My next home was shared with my husband and it sat upon a little hill overlooking other homes in the slight valley below us. Those homes were often changing owners and at times blocked from view by the beautiful trees that lined our driveway and an adjoining property. I

confess I spent more time looking out the window at the back of the home that overlooked a cow pasture.

Like clockwork every single morning one of the cows would jump up off all four of her feet and moo and bellow and carry on. We were never really sure if she was agitated at being released from the barn, or excited about the prospect. We did, however, find her antics semi-amusing from our view at the kitchen table.

I have lived in many more homes with many other views from my windows. Some with trees and some with water. I had a kitchen window that looked out over a Japanese Maple, a small raised garden that was fully fenced in to keep the roos out. Another window that looked out over the yard where my, then, young children jumped on a trampoline. Imagine my shock one day when I found that they'd invited their 75 year old grandmother to join them and she agreed!

One house had a window that captivated my attention as I stared out at the ocean for hours on end. Sailboats coming and going, cargo ships.. An occasional seal. Sea birds and sea storms, and always knowing just the right moment to run down and scavenge on the beach to throw the dislodged star fish, the shark eggs, and ray eggs back in the water.

Then the home that offered fairly little to look upon when I glanced out the window. I kept one curtain closed nearly all the time so the door peoples wouldn't think I was home. The window I peered out most was the peep hole. An odd window, for sure. Yet the windows at the back of my home offered a glorious view of the yard and the rolling green beyond it where, no joke, several dozen wild rabbits roamed until they were culled. They would sneak up to our fences and sniff around as the neighbours tame rabbit would wander into our yard at times. The two would sit with nothing more than a fence between them, each thwacking their large back legs on the ground.

Another home, another view. So many views from so many windows. My favourite being that where I gaze out the window into a small front yard on a section of a small city block and imagine that I live back in the country. The many trees along the fence line give me that ability until the next bus rolls by or the neighbours begin their daily work on cars.

Soon there will be another house and another window, it's something I've given much thought to. What will my view be? Which window will I like the most? Will it be a sky view or a ground view? What will I see outside that window? What wildlife will frequent my new yard? For now, I shall simply imagine what wonders and beauty it will behold!

Author's Note:



Today's story was inspired by a writing prompt I received called: Windows. It's a very open ended writing prompt, isn't it? My first thought was "Windows to the Soul" but that seemed a little too deep for the deadline I was working with, and then I started to consider all the windows in all the homes we've ever lived in... or, at least the windows I most remembered.

Even now as I type this little note, I find that as I pause to find the right word my eyes drift immediately to the window. It's not the prettiest window in our home, but rather one of the lesser windows I wrote about. Still, I pause to glance out it in hopes of seeing something that will capture my imagination and carry me away.

I am slightly distracted by a bush out there, we didn't plant it, in fact there was a time I thought it was dead. But today it's alive and well and offers a little privacy between my window and a neighbour's. Somedays there's an array of finches out there carrying on, or a starling warning others to stay away. Once, a baby possum was out there. Often the neighbour's dogs are there.

What's outside your windows?

The Reluctant Author:

