

I Live Here

Kate Stubbs

People

My friend sits on the counter and twirls the telephone cord. Her leg dangles over the edge and she swings her foot back and forth while she listens. Then she stops her foot and laughs, tilting her head back against the wall. Her toes wiggle as she talks into the receiver held between her shoulder and her chin. She uses one free hand to doodle on paper with a blue pen and she picks at her toenails with the other.

Now she's put the pen down and is sitting with both feet dangling. She's running her fingers through her hair and then twisting the ends around her index finger. "No kidding," she says and starts picking at the peeling formica on the phone counter. At the other end of the curly phone cord four yellow buttons on a cream-colored box blink on and off. Occasionally the box rings and my friend puts her finger in her ear "What's that? I can't hear you. The phone's ringing." She hops off the counter and starts swinging the phone cord like a jump rope. "Well, look, I really gotta go. I have a lot of studying to do."

A few minutes later, I walk by. She's pushing the grey buttons with numbers on them. Then she waits a minute and says, "Hi, what's up? Nothing much here," and hops on the counter again.

Weather

It's always wet here. Sometimes it snows; sometimes it rains, but most times the wet just hangs in the air. You can almost feel the drops of water clinging to your skin. The world seems surrounded by heavy water.

I don't mind it when it rains, though. Rain is beautiful. Everything turns deep green. The trees are green; the grass is green; the cracks in the sidewalk are green. I like to stand on our porch and look at all the green. It's not a dull, deep green, though. It's bright

manuscripts

and alive. It comes at you like a 3-D movie; it makes you tingle like the first cold spray of water from the shower in the morning-Ooooooh!

My Room

I'm sitting on the bed reading my Botany. Plants are very reliable. I like reading about them because they never do weird things, or even think about doing weird things. My blonde roommate walks in. She turns on her curling iron and dumps a bunch of clothes on the bed. My brunette roommate is typing. tap tap tappity tap tap DING! Nuts I lost my place.

My blonde roommate wants to know which outfit looks best. Is pink too light? Wide stripes make her look fat. She'll wear a mini skirt. No wait! Where is she going? She's not sure but it's some place sort of nice. My other brunette roommate comes in. Thud. She drops her book-bag. She hates Organic class and my blonde roommate looks cute in the sweater with wide stripes. tap tappity tappity DING! I think I've read the same sentence three times.

People

You find him either interesting or repulsive. For me, it depends on what day it is. He's tall. He always walks in to class late and no matter what the point, he argues the opposite of what everyone else says. Outside of that he's entirely debatable. He has long dishwater blonde hair or maybe he just never washes it. It always looks wet or greasy, but maybe that's just because it's thin. I don't think he eats much, because he's very skinny, but maybe that's just because he's tall. His holes are surrounded by a few pieces of jeans and his t-shirts are too small. Of course, he could be too big, but I don't think so.

At first, I thought I wanted to write a book about him and why he is the way he is, but then he started annoying me and I couldn't analyze him anymore. I think he doesn't like himself. He tries very hard to rebel so people will think he doesn't want to be liked, so it's O.K. if they don't.

Buildings

Buildings are like gum wrappers; they have no purpose if there is nothing inside them.

My Room

I'm sitting on the bed reading my Botany. My roommates are gone. The plants haven't done anything weird yet. Our window is open because the room is sweltering as usual. People are screaming in the street and I hear some cars. The phone is ringing outside the door; the room next to us is listening to the Top Gun soundtrack for the fourth time this evening and someone is laughing hysterically in the hallway. I think I've read the same sentence three times.

The Tree

There are always apples in our front yard. Except, in the Spring, of course, before they have been born. They fall off the tree onto the brown grass. Brown, because it can't grow with apples on top of it and a shady apple tree over it. The apples aren't sweet enough to eat anyway. They hang on the tree, get bugs, fall off smash and turn yellowish, brownish, blackish red. Then we have to pick them up. Since we live in a sorority house, everything always has to look nice, so every day, we pick up mushy, ugly, stinky apples. Even in the winter after we've picked up all the apples, there are more. -under the snow. They grow there I think. Then when the snow melts we pick them up again.

I'm walking home from class in April. I can see our red brick house with white clapboard on the porch and green shutters everywhere. There is a beautiful pink and white tree in our front yard. Actually, it's two trees grown together. Their blossoms are fluffy and cheery. They remind me of Easter dresses in pastel colors with big bows and lots of ruffles

manuscripts

trimmed in lace around full skirts and hats to match them that have flowers in the brim - kind of like these apple blossoms floating off this tree to the fresh green grass in our front yard.

Botany

In my Botany class we all sit on little stools in front of water faucets and gas valves and listen to the professor. There are lots of plants around the room. They sit there looking green and brown for four hours (that's how long our class usually lasts). The guys that sit on the far wall are always goofing off. They come in with their jeans and funky hats or shirts and act like they're paying attention. Then they pass notes and make funny figures with wood samples and notebook paper. Then they snicker for a second and look sober again. The two bleach blondes across from them laugh and blink their mascara a lot. At the next table they always tell goofy jokes and talk about "Hogan's Heroes." One girl is really fat and obnoxious. She talks loudly and interrupts people to get attention.

At the far end of my table, there are two guys who think they're cool. Sometimes they are. One is blonde and the other one is ugly and has dark brown hair. They just observe everything and doodle in their notebooks. Then there's a tomboy who has a mad crush on the blonde cool guy who ignores her. The other girl smokes a lot and likes to drink. She and the blonde cool guy get along well.

At my end of the table there's a 26 year old cello genius who doesn't understand Botany. Then there's a 25 year old who's dropped out of school twice. He understands most everything. The girl across from me is one of my good friends and she doesn't understand Botany either, but she's funny.

Mailbox

That's four times I've walked by a mailbox today and forgot to mail my letter. Why do people put mailboxes in such convenient places? I always walk right by them. If I had to go out of my way to mail a letter, I'd remember it.

Upstairs

The whole room is painted blue. The walls, the ceiling. Blue like the sky. I sleep on the top bunk and I can reach up and touch it. -the ceiling I mean. My bed is in the very center of the room so I can see all around me without moving very much. White designs are painted on the ceiling from outside lights that come through the blue striped curtains. It's quiet. But not entirely quiet. Every once in a while I hear the patter of bare feet or the squeaking of springs. Sometimes someone snores or talks in their sleep. Actually, if I really listen it's very noisy, but I usually don't really listen. It's peacefully dark too. The only light is from two green Exit signs and a bright safety light shining through the window.

People here are so nice. They don't argue, or have irritating habits, or stupid ideas. They don't interrupt my train of thought, or criticize me, or tell me things that aren't important. I'm a lot nicer too. I just lie here. I don't make a sound. I just think - and look at the blue walls and ceiling and curtains and lights and beds and people...