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Home is Where the Heart is

by Gill Kane

“There’s no place like home,” they say. “Home is where the heart is,” they say. But if your heart, like your love, is splintered and scattered across continents, how do you find that perfect spot, the place unlike anywhere else.

We’ve had many homes my heart and I. Take my childhood home. Now that was a home. A home of roaring fires and roast dinners. Christmas trees and long summer evenings. Family parties, friends and laughter. A safe place to incubate and grow. But when I grew I put aside childish things and without a backward glance my heart and I set off to find our own place in the world.

Then there were the less than salubrious years. Damp student flats and grubby rentals. But you know we didn’t really care. I was much too busy living and my heart was definitely engaged in other activities. Who wanted to go home?

But then we happened upon ‘THE Home’. A home of children and cats and dogs. Budgies, hamsters, stick insects and tadpoles. Shiny wooden floors and oriental rugs and a 25 foot stained glass window dominating the stairwell. This was a home of balconies, hidden doors and nooks and crannies. An Enid Blyton home. So perfect that one Scottish summer evening, still light at 11pm, I looked out the window and thought that life could never be better than this moment and I wished that the world would stop right now.

But it didn’t, the world carried on, swept us up and deposited us 500 miles away in a London town house. Four flights of narrow stairs led to my daughter’s attic bedroom where, at night, looking out at the twinkling lights and roof tops of London the child in me fully expected Tinkerbell to alight and lure us away to a world of lost boys. A magical house, but alas my heart never rested easy there.

And in the background there was always the Spanish home. A white world of glass and marble bleached by the baking Andalusian sun. A place of respite and escape. A pause in a busy world. Oh how we grieved, my heart and I, when we closed that particular door behind us.

And finally I found my current home, my last home, clinging to the coast, looking out over the sea to France and the world. My windows a wall of changing colours. A kaleidoscope of blues and greys, pinks, oranges and purples. A wonderful world of light and space. Who could wish for more? And yet, and yet... there is a slight tugging of the heart, a stirring, a yearning. I'm seeing a cottage with roses and a small white dog. Maybe we haven't finished yet, my heart and I, haven't found our place but if we do I'll let you know. Might even invite you round.