



I Am Not Sure That I Exist, Actually

by MaryPat Campbell

I sleep in the same bed with the same man in a different house on a different street in the same borough of the same city. I do the same job with the same people but I am not sure that I exist, actually. The me that used to live in number 17 in one road now lives at number 15 in another.

I miss the winter trees black against the early morning or dusky sky visible from my old bedroom, and the patterns they made within the window frame. I miss the haunting sound of the owl that lived in those trees and sang his song outside my window regularly and one frosty night in particular just before we left. Who will I be without the owl and those particular trees? I am very much the same and also different.

New neighbours smile from across the street, a few come knocking at the door to introduce themselves and welcome us. Are they really friendly or just nosy? They talk of the people who lived here before us, as if they wish we were them and still here.

The light is different here, it can look almost tropical even when the clouds are full of rain as they are right now. A camellia bush grows just outside the kitchen window, and there is a regular park bench in the tiny garden facing the east when the sun shines. Big treasures for someone like her, or is it someone like me - who didn't have a garden since my childhood.

Freedom suddenly to change things. Like the old silver ice bucket that has hid in a cupboard gathering mildew for years, what to do with it? Today I put the big spoons and the fish slice and the egg whisk in it and now it looks like a shining treasure. Why has this never occurred to me before?

Old bits of rugs, clothes and soft furniture coming apart at the seams, reminding me of how I feel sometimes. endless wires to attach to god knows which electronic gadgets and machines. Why is there so much? Did my previous self need all these things, and do I need them now? Recycling is the buzz word these days and the centre is nearby, a short drive away.