

The Pond

The wind whistled gentle melodies in my ear as I gazed at the soft ripples in the water. The air is warm but not sticky. The cicadas produced a dull roar while humming their tunes, breaking the silence. Each footstep produced a small *squish*, a consequence of the summer rain plaguing my hometown.

I sat on the rickety wooden porch swing facing the water and transported back to the summer of 2013. The zipline was still intact on my left, the deck was loaded with floaties, the canoe was heating up while sitting in the sand, and my brothers were splashing around, making lukewarm waves. I dove in, unafraid of the fish or the blanket of dark green 6ft underneath me.

I picked myself up, determined to finish my walk around the pond's perimeter. I passed the stones marking Sadie's grave. My grandparents didn't tell my brothers and I about the burial.

The stretch of trees appeared impenetrable, but they weren't always so. 8-year-old Me clutched my grandpa as he sped over the leaf and branch-covered ground on his four-wheeler. My grin never faltered.

I passed the hill buried by overgrown grass and weeds and flowers. I saw a younger Me sledding onto the frozen pond in the middle of a snowstorm, not a care in the world. My brothers were throwing snowballs at me as I sprinted on the ice, unafraid of any potential dangers. I miss the joy of winters here.

I paused by my grandma's greenhouse. It's small yet mighty, still filled with thriving green plants. I wish I had her green thumb.

I wandered over to the old firepit, plopping myself into one of the chairs. It had a faint stench of smoke, but I don't know when it was last used. My brothers and I begged them to start a fire so we could make s'mores, but he told us they were out of firewood. Determined, we set out on a hunt for good wood concealed deep within the trees. We walked on the fallen logs, hopped from stump to stump, shoved the occasional worm in each other's faces, pointed out every bunny escaping our loud shouts, and lost track of time in the most magical universes we dreamt of.

I think this may be my favorite place in the whole world.