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Return in My Memories

Frank Zahn

In the quiet of evening, my memories often take me back to my hometown. As always, I head down Eighty-Second Street and pass over the streetcar tracks that run through my old neighborhood. Just past old man Kopp's garage where he lived and filled the air with the aroma of Prince Albert pipe tobacco, I see it.

It is the grey house with white trim that provided a safe place for me during my troubled youth. Mom's flower beds of zinnias, red and white roses, hollyhocks, and nasturtiums lend color to the mostly barren front yard. The elm trees along the driveway still shade the house from the summer's oppressive western sun.

Mom rushes out the front door to greet me, followed by my Dad, three brothers, and sister Sharon. Mom and Sharon give me big hugs. Dad says, "Welcome home, son." Then the three of them hurry inside to put a Sunday dinner on the table that Mom promises will be topped-off with my favorite, her homemade cherry pie.

I stay outside and talk with my brothers. We reminisce and josh each other. They update me on what they've been up to. Henry got his first job and bought a new BB gun. Ernie got a foxy new girlfriend. Not to be outdone, Jim bragged that he caught an eight-pound catfish on the Blue River with just a kernel of yellow corn.

Inside, I stuff myself with fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, peas, corn on the cob, coleslaw, Dad's homemade bread with butter and Mom's wild grape jelly, sweet tea, and cherry pie with home churned ice cream. It is those memories of Sunday dinner with my family in my safe place long ago that sustain me still.