

Damien Riley's Blog

Blog of a freelance writer, online diarist, podcaster, & film critic in California

House on Kroeger Street

Everyone must have memories of the house they lived in as a child. From my earliest memories I was told about the “Kroeger Street” house. My parents reminded me of the big sycamore tree with a tire swing and our dog, Friday. I remember as an older child hearing it and barely remembering. Now I remember the street all too well from all the telling. I spent the first 4 years of my life there. In the pictures they showed me it had a white picket fence and a white wooden look to it. It must have been built before the days of “stucco” because it was all wood. It had a front porch and as I said a tire swing attached to a large sycamore tree visible from the street on the side. It was a place an open mind would come from.

They told me of another boy I used to play with next door. They told me of Mrs. Fitz. Apparently her last name was longer . . . Fitzpatrick or something, but so the kids could say it, they called her Mrs. “Fitz.” She was elderly and in a wheelchair but whenever we would go over and knock on her screen door she would say: “Well hello, here comes Damien!” and give us warm apple turnovers. We would sit and listen to her tell us stories. That part I remember vividly. My brother is 14 months younger than me so I doubt he remembers Kroeger street more than I do.

Nonetheless, we have 8 millimeter film footage of he and I in the grass with the cat and dog. My mom looks so young, it’s really amazing to see those pictures now. My dad always had a Freud-like beard. He was wild and wacky in those days (and you see it in the film). He’d throw me up in the air and put my face right in the camera lens. He was, and still is, so proud of his family and kids.

When I would close my eyes and envision Kroeger street I’d see gutter flowers, grass growing through sidewalk cracks, the house as they told it to me, and of course the

people they told me loved me while we lived there. One day at the age of 26, I decided to go back! I rode my bike past the house, since I was going to college close by working on my graduate degree in English. It was all boarded up and Mrs. Fitz's house had been razed. The fence sign around it read "Starbucks coming soon!" I suppose in a way that is all too fitting. I think they serve apple turnovers don't they? Even so, I doubt any barista would call to me from the screen door.

It's amazing how we as humans can attach so much meaning and soul to simple places. The soul is eternal, but places come and go. They are not static, yet they are inseparable. As I looked at the old Kroeger house I could see the tire swing was gone. The huge branches and leaves of the tree had been sawed off. It was just a trunk now with the cut areas spray painted over to prevent healing and regrowth. There were no animals, no children, no families of any kind. The street is a short street, and it appeared many houses were also boarded and up for sale. I wished I could walk in the front door to see if some memory would come back. A smell, and sight, a vibration of the wind through the house . . . something that might take me back to those wonder years I have seen and heard too much about.

The rose bushes in front of Kroeger street have long faded, I treasure their memory and that's why I'm writing them here now. Down the road, I'll be telling my kids how it was . . . on our mystical sequel to the long gone Kroeger Street.

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damien / November 13, 2017 / Blog / inspiration, prose, reposts

10 thoughts on "House on Kroeger Street"



Marcia

August 11, 2007 at 6:43 pm

Damien, I am so sorry your grandfather is dying. Have you been able to see him?

It was nice reading your trip down memory lane.

 **Damien Riley**

August 11, 2007 at 7:47 pm

Thanks for that Marcia. I have seen him may times yes. Death is part of life. It is so hard to let the ones we love go.

 **Norski**

August 11, 2007 at 11:29 pm

Thank you for sharing Kroeger Street.

And sympathies for your grandfather's condition.

 **Damien Riley**

August 12, 2007 at 4:25 pm

Thanks Norski! I appreciate your comments.

 **Jessica The Rock Chick**

August 12, 2007 at 5:24 pm

Damien, this a beautiful post! I am very nostalgic about houses and places we're we've celebrated big events, too. SO sorry to hear about your grandfather. I've been so fortunate to have my grandparents in my life as long as I have. They are both 95

now and neither of them has any interest in slowing down at all. They are both very young at heart, which I think is their secret 😊

Jessica



Damien Riley

August 12, 2007 at 6:21 pm

Thank you for the compliment! I hope to live to be 95! Mostly just to watch my kids go through all the stages of life!



Jodi

May 30, 2010 at 5:59 pm

Sometimes I feel like a traitor to my religion Damien because I attach so much meaning to earthly things, such as “home” and memories. The Bible states that we should always have one foot on Earth and the other in Heaven, but a lot of times I feel that both of mine are planted firmly here on Earth. The problem is I LOVE life, and I am definitely in no hurry to go. My Christian friends, on the other hand, are eager to leave this world behind and enter the kingdom of God. Sometimes I wonder (and worry) what this says about me, and my faith. Now that I think about it, I’ll probably write my own post about this issue sometime soon...maybe that will help me work it out in my head.

Thanks for such a beautiful, poignant post. =)



Damien S. Riley 🧑

May 30, 2010 at 6:11 pm

I think you are the best kind of Christian. Some are so heavenly-minded that they are no earthly good. I think if we embraced life more, the world might be less cynical

about our sub-culture. I have only gone public on my blog about my faith in the past few years online because many people hate the Christian sub-culture and rightly so. I am not really a fan of Christian subculture 100% but I'm a unique Christian, I'm Damien.



TheJackB

November 22, 2014 at 10:21 pm

I often want to visit old haunts to see if I hear the echoes of the past calling out at the present.



Damien Riley 👤

November 22, 2014 at 10:24 pm

When you do it, write about it! I'll be reading. You had a great post today BTW.