

Barefoot

by Holly Love King, Tennessee

It was the first family weekend at our new home in the country, and it was a jam-packed Saturday. Unpacking, HVAC inspection, septic-tank treatment, tree-stump service—all while my husband tried to install a fence for our dog. Late that afternoon, our neighbor drove over on his tractor. We all grinned ear-to-ear watching this tractor cowboy pull into our driveway. Quickly, I told the kids to come outside and meet him. Our dog, Pumpkin, even joined the greeting.

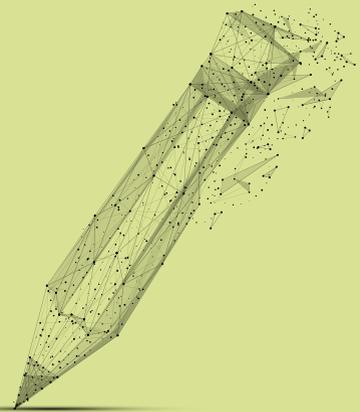
Up to this point, I had somehow been able to convince my 11-year-old “city girl” daughter that field mice would not be an issue, even though there was a 20-acre field behind us. Yet, within less than a minute in broad daylight, our precious, clean, dignified, indoor dog was hot on the trail of none other than our first country mouse! Screaming, jumping, and hollering in ways I’m sure our tractor-driving neighbor had never seen before, we could not hide our suburban selves. Finally, Pumpkin chased it under the car, and my stepson stooped down to declare, “Yep, Pumpkin ate the mouse.” We screamed some more, jumped up and down, and even cried a little. Total humiliation right in front of our new neighbor, and a ton of laughter. More important, though, a memory of home that we’ll never forget.

Home has a way of doing that to you ... bringing out your true self without you even being aware of it. It has a way of helping you let go, let loose, and just be who you really are, embarrassment and all. It’s not just a place to hang your hat. In reality, home is much more than we give it credit for—it’s holy ground. And maybe, like our ancestors, we should go barefoot as a reminder of its holiness.

It’s the sacred ground of child-rearing, the growing ground of marriage-making, the humble ground of learning to say you’re sorry, and even the stomping ground of running in full-on panic from a field mouse. If these floors and walls could talk, I think they would say, “We love you—all of your memories, all of the game nights filled with laughter and accused cheating, all of the burnt bread and screams from what the cat dragged in. We love all of it.”

Home is not about perfection. It’s about the safety of imperfection, giving us the time and space we need to learn how to be at home within ourselves. It’s more educational than college and more valuable than the stock market. I’ve learned and grown here more than anywhere else. I have even learned to be a little less fearful of mice. “Yes, this is the place where I have finally learned to love myself, and more often than not, go barefoot.”

Holly says, “I am a Nashville-native wife and mama. I own/operate my own house-cleaning business, Happy to Be Home, and freelance write. I love gardening and coffee.” To learn more or order her devotional journal, visit HollyLoveKing.com.



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