

Ellie Bilodeau

Creature of Habit

For my entire life I have lived in the same small town, south of Boston. My friends, who have remained the same since elementary school, all live within a short walk from my home. The mechanic who works downtown knows who I am when I come in to get my oil changed, and asks how my mother is doing. The woman at my favorite coffee shop notices when I dye my hair, and prepares my drink before I even order. Many of my aunts, uncles and cousins live just one town over. One time, a substitute teacher told me he was friends with my grandfather, and drew me my family tree while I took a quiz. A town where no fast food restaurants are allowed, which preserves the quaint, small town feel, that characterised my childhood and allows the small businesses like I mentioned above, to flourish. My roots here are deep, and I am a self characterised “creature of habit”, who finds happiness and security in her routines, and feels connected to the people of her small town. I have never moved, and my friends have never moved, for eighteen years. In the fall of 2018 though, that all changed.

College. When the last graduation cap hit the floor, reality set in. I would be saying goodbye to the town I had loved, and found comfort in for the past eighteen years of my life. In abstract, college was exciting. New opportunities, places, friends, experiences dangled in front of my nose. Tour guides on college tours told students college would be the best time of their life. When it finally came time for me to pack my bags however, my stomach churned. Although the school I chose, Syracuse University, was just a five hour drive away, I felt like my world was shifting. Change was the natural next step after high school, but I had never faced change like this before. I felt unprepared. All this is not to say I did not love my university, or revel in the opportunity to have the stereotypical college experience of classes, and dorms and dining halls. I simply had never moved, and was anxious about all that came with it.

I am now a junior at Syracuse University. I still feel sad when I drive my car past the town line, but now I also feel excited because I know all that I have to look forward to. At Syracuse I have found new friends, and embarked in classes to prepare myself for a career I am passionate about, all while maintaining my relationship with my friends and family while I am not home. Moving to a big school has taught me about myself, and encouraged me to push myself in ways I may not have if I never left home. I have learned there are benefits to a small town, and a big school, Most of all I however have learned that while it is ok to love the comfort of where you are at, never let that stop you from moving forward.