

If you don't have a rural address, you don't get the daily chance to experience nature. Being surrounded by nature was what it was like at my grandparents' house in Rolla, Missouri. They had over a hundred acres, much of which they gave to a Bible camp, but when you were at their house, you could see nothing around but nature. While their house was fun to explore, the memory of the view is what still inspires me.

My grandparents had horses, and it was the only time I ever got to ride one. My grandpa would lift us gently onto Chestnut's back and lead us around in the yard. We got to give the horses saltlicks and feed them carrots. Chestnut was chestnut in color but had a white diamond on her forehead.

Their driveway was a quarter of a mile long. "We're going to walk a mile a day," my dad would announce, deciding for the family. We walked up and back the driveway morning and evening to make it a mile. We didn't mind. The driveway went through woods, and what kid doesn't love exploring in the woods?

We loved it except sometimes for the bugs. We would get chiggers on us that would have to be picked off one by one. Once I slipped my shoe only to find I had squished a grasshopper. I took to checking my shoes before I put them on after that. At night we'd lie awake because of the noise of those grasshoppers. The night noises were nothing like in suburbia.

"Come and look," my mom would call to my brother and I, and we'd crowd the picture window to see the sunset. We would look out and see nothing but grass, trees, and open sky. The house was on a hill, so it felt like we could see far in front of us. The sunsets were beautiful, and so is the memory of them.