

Dec2

Pull

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I am pulled in two directions.

I've always been drawn to Beaver Island. It holds my family history, and it holds my heart. It feels like home to me. Whenever I've had to be away from this island, I've kept a poem by Langston Hughes close:

Wave of Sorrow

Do not drown me now.

I see the Island

Still ahead somehow.

I see the Island

And its sands are fair.

Wave of Sorrow

Take me there.

Still, as I get older...as issues of companionship, health and capability move more to the forefront...as loss of friends and family becomes a regular part of life...as children grow up and away with hardly a backward glance...I am drawn to my home town. Lapeer, Michigan is where I was raised, and where my remaining siblings still live. My daughters are close by, as are several of my grandchildren. Driving to see other friends is less of an issue when it doesn't begin with boarding dogs and getting on an airplane.

I join my sisters for an evening of wine, conversation and word games, and I realize how much I miss my family. I chat with my brother in the house that we grew up in...I talk face-to-face with my daughters...I have actual conversations with my grandchildren, and I feel drawn to that place.

Some things hold me on Beaver Island. My little house, in its current state of equity and unfinished disrepair, is probably unmarketable. Even if it were, the struggle to get – and then keep – this small piece of real estate makes it difficult to consider letting it go. My job here is secure, where jobs are hard to come by in other parts of the state. My aunt is in poor health and – though she gets assistance from others who love her, too – she depends on me for help and companionship. Just as I depend on her. My dogs are well suited to Beaver Island. The fields and trails and beaches welcome them. The sky full of stars holds me here...the canopy of trees...the water all around.

But still, I feel the pull.