

## A Change of Homes

by Marilyn Moffatt

I stood up carefully, but as I reached for my walker it moved, I lost my balance and fell. I was soon in an ambulance, heading for hospital.

Surprisingly, they found that I had fractured both my femurs and needed surgery. Recovery involved four months in hospital and painful physiotherapy. During rehabilitation I still felt optimistic about returning home.

I had lived in the same house for sixty-five years, and although I know my daughters thought it was nothing special, it suited me well and I was pleased with how I had managed alone since Roy died. I even had some modifications done as I grew older.

Imagine my distress when the doctor informed me that I would never walk again, and would have to enter aged care. My comfortable home would have to be sold to finance my entry. I wouldn't even have a chance to return for a visit.

It wasn't just leaving the house itself that upset me. It was leaving the neighbourhood. I had wonderful neighbours. One day when I arrived home from church, Dan, from across the street, was on my roof, cleaning out the guttering. His wife and two young daughters were frequent visitors. Reg from next door had been taking out my bin for many years.

So many fond memories! I brought three babies home to that house. Both my daughters left from there to get married, looking beautiful in their white frocks. We had family get-togethers. Lara loves to tell of a barbeque when Roy went around asking everyone, notebook in hand, how many sausages they planned to eat. He placed that exact number on the grill, no back up sausages required, he declared. I know Paul ate five when he'd said he wanted four, and what a fuss that caused. Juno, Kate's cat, entrusted with us while she holidayed, and disappearing for five days, was another memorable event.

I enjoy remembering the sad moments too. The day Gary was diagnosed with meningitis. The weeks before Roy died. Home became his solace. He loved to sit out on the patio and let the sunshine bathe his face.

Not only my home, but most of its contents had to be sold. My dinner set, my mother's crystal, Roy's desk that was a twenty-first birthday present. Most of my clothes. My new home is just one room, with just enough space to display a few photos and the quilt Jenny made.

I know my daughters are surprised that I don't seem very upset about losing my home, but my lovely neighbours and two other good friends visit me every week, and my children phone more often than they used to, even my sons. I don't have any housework to do. How good is that!

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