



Lullabies and Mold

At night I would try to fall asleep while listening to the rhythmic sound of my sister breathing in the bed next to me.

For as long as I can remember, I've felt so much shame for who I was and where I came from. When I was a kid, I just wanted us to be like the other families in the neighborhood with their clean houses, two cars parked in the driveway, and loving parents that showed affection not just anger. A house that my grandparents would actually visit.

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I wanted to live in a house with no fighting. A house with strong family traditions.

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I longed to be a happy kid...
from a happy family...
happy like everyone else...

The painful reality is, we were not like everyone else. Our house had clothes strewn everywhere, garbage piled high on any flat surface you could find, no routines for homework and bedrooms that were assigned to us but completely interchangeable.

My most vivid memory from childhood is when we had a flood in our house that soaked the scattered mounds of laundry that polluted our entire basement floor, some of which were waist high. Instead of working together as a family to quickly clean up the mess, we collectively made the decision to simply close the door and ignore it.

At night I would try to fall asleep while listening to the rhythmic sound of my sister breathing in the bed next to me as I completed my familiar bedtime ritual of lighting a vanilla protection candle to cover the overpowering smell of mold that seeped out of the vent next to my bed and overpowered my young senses.