

## Seven Vignettes About Rural New England

By **Rachel Marcy** on January 12, 2015 in **PERSONAL STORIES**

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*Rachel Marcy's previous work for The Toast can be found [here](#).*

My mom and I were in our front yard when the Environmental Police pulled over their pick-up truck. The officer in the passenger seat leaned out the window.

“Do you have a bear in your house?” he asked.

They'd received a 911 call about a bear in the caller's home, but the line went dead before they got a location.

I have no idea how this story ends.

\*

We were afraid we would lose power in an ice storm, so we filled the bathtub with snow, in order to have water to flush the toilet. We never lost power, and the snow never melted.

\*

Life in our house was a constant battle against rodents, and one that we thoroughly lost. We had a colony of flying squirrels living in our attic. Occasionally one would emerge into the open, wide-eyed and baffled, but mostly we just heard them scurrying through the walls. Sometimes two squirrels would run from opposite ends of the wall and meet in the middle, squealing and scuffling. They also left evidence of their presence in the form of seed stashes in tissue boxes and coat hoods.

They weren't our only rodents. Once we came home to find English muffins strewn around the house and a red squirrel chattering on top of the kitchen radio. Mice got into our silverware drawer so frequently we gave up on using the drawer altogether. We set up mousetraps and named the drawer the Grim Crawl of Death, after a cave in Wyoming that we read about in *National Geographic*.

I once opened the bottom drawer of my desk to find a family of mice had taken up residence. The mother mouse had chewed up my papers to make a nest for her several babies. After a brief internal debate, I decided to close the drawer and let them be. When I peeked again a few days later, the mother mouse decided her nest was too dangerous. She picked a baby up by the scruff of its neck and ran down the hall, presumably to make a new nest in someone's sock drawer. She returned for each of the babies, which was quite an impressive performance, because there were a lot of them and they were about two-thirds her own body size. She then came back to investigate the nest a final time, which my brother said is probably proof that mice can't count.

\*

A bear walked through our backyard and took our laundry off the line, leaving teethmarks in my mom's skirt. She ironed them out.

\*

The introduction of cell phones was presaged by towers pretending to be trees. We first noticed one in a nearby larger town.

"I'm not sure how I haven't noticed that before," my dad said. "Given that it's 200 feet tall and flashes."

When I got my driver's license, my parents thought I should have a cell phone for emergencies. This was next to useless, because reception was very sparse. Anywhere with service also had people. If I got into trouble in an isolated area, I was on my own, phone or no.

As a result, I barely used my phone. My mom suggested I use more of my minutes, because it seemed like a waste.

"Sure," I said. "I guess I could drive twenty minutes to sit in the Post Office parking lot. And call someone."

\*

Our neighbor down the road had a birdfeeder on a pole with a metal plate to deter squirrels. An adolescent bear sat on the plate, stuffing its face with birdseed. Our neighbor sprayed the bear with the hose, but the bear munched on, unperturbed. I suppose it left when it was good and done.

\*

We never really talked to our neighbors down the road, who were an elderly couple. From what I understand, my parents made an attempt when we first moved in, with limited success. That was the summer I turned six. When I was 18, we experienced a rainstorm that flooded a nearby field. This was the geography of the neighborhood: a cluster of three houses around a bend in the road. A field across from our house, which featured our half-hearted attempts at gardening and a 19th century one-room schoolhouse that had been relocated from somewhere else. A steep drop into a minor river, then the flooded field. I went to the bridge over the river to investigate the flooding, which was significant.

Our neighbor from down the road was there, standing on the opposite side of the bridge from an impressively large dead beaver. He turned to me with a surprised expression and said something about the flooding. "Yes," I agreed. This was shocking; I had assumed we would separately observe the flooding in stoic silence. We lived down the road from each other for over a decade and this was the only time we spoke. It was bizarre to think about, but he'd seen me grow up. From a distance, down the road.

Neither of us mentioned the beaver; I suppose it was too obvious to talk about. It was gone a couple days later, probably thanks to the Environmental Police.

\*

Photo credit: Nathan Marcy

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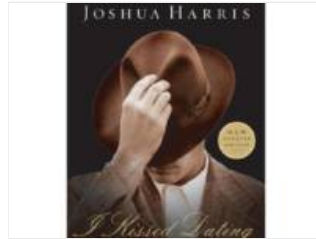
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Rachel Marcy likes history, sleuthing, ballet, fencing, and guinea pigs.



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**Owl Queen** · 158 weeks ago

+19

I guess I just have rules about living in a place where bears in my house is a genuine concern.

I mean, the worst we get here are foxes and badgers - british badgers, not honey badgers - and the thought of one being in my house by surprise makes me anxious.



**houblonchouffe** · 158 weeks ago

+44

As a fellow graduate of Rural Northern Life, I applaud this series of vignettes and can identify greatly with them.

[1 reply](#) · active 158 weeks ago



**Es\_Petal** · 158 weeks ago

+12

I would love to live somewhere where there are bears. New Forest ponies in the front garden are as exciting as it gets round here.

[8 replies](#) · active 157 weeks ago



**aravisthequeen** · 158 weeks ago

+26

A Story About Bears: When I was in grad school the Chinese place I was partial to got in trouble with the food safety people, because a friend of the owners had shot a bear and dressed it out and was keeping it in the restaurant's indus-

trial refrigerator rather than at home, and that was a safety hazard as the meat was not regulated. On an unrelated note, I had gotten an exciting bout of food poisoning from that restaurant the very week beforehand. I don't know if the two things are connected.

[1 reply](#) · active 158 weeks ago



**katekari** · 158 weeks ago

+75

"We were afraid we would lose power in an ice storm, so we filled the bathtub with snow, in order to have water to flush the toilet. We never lost power, and the snow never melted."

This is like a Zen koan, and I love it.



**Girl Named Jack** · 158 weeks ago

+45

My unconcerned bear story is very similar, only it was suet, not birdseed, and my dad threw firecrackers to scare the bear off, instead of using the hose. Unconcerned bear remained unconcerned, and we decided maybe it was a good afternoon to stay inside.

There was also a tame doe named Blossom that would appear on our back deck, looking for food. She liked us because we would brush her coat and put natural insect repellent on her head, to keep the deer flies off. Pretty sure she would've wandered into the house if we hadn't kept the screen doors shut.

I miss the north country.

[2 replies](#) · active 158 weeks ago



**JGlo** · 158 weeks ago

+25

These stories are so beautifully grim, like the weather in Buffalo right now, and my heart.



**sausagedog** · 158 weeks ago

+27

Of the beavers I've seen, the dead ones have been bigger than the live ones. Am I only seeing baby live beavers? Are beavers very efficient at post-mortem bloating? "Impressively large" is correct.

[4 replies](#) · active 158 weeks ago



**achemicaldefect** · 158 weeks ago

+31

These are both foreign and familiar to me-familiar in tone, foreign in specifics.

Vignette from rural Florida:

When my dad was seven, his dad came stomping into the kitchen one day saying what was recounted to me as 'Somebody better go shoot that -bleep bleep bleep gator in the south pasture before it -bleep kills one of the cows. [Dad's name], go shoot that gator!' So he dutifully got the .22 and shot the gator, five times in the head because their skulls are apparently about as thick as concrete.

[3 replies](#) · active 158 weeks ago



**GreenGrasses** · 158 weeks ago

+36

This seems to be the place for bear stories! There was one in the woods behind my house when I was younger, and the animal control people came and tranquilized it. I was standing outside with my dad watching this happen, and when the bear had passed out, the officer let me apply vaseline to its eyes so they wouldn't dry out while the bear was being moved. It was definitely a strange experience, but the animal control officer seemed to think he was giving me a huge treat?

[1 reply](#) · active 158 weeks ago



**achemicaldefect** · 158 weeks ago

+16

Bear story: Mr. Floridagal's family's church in Tacoma, WA backs up to a baseball field which backs up to a creek. One Sunday morning after church was over, everyone went out to the parking lot and found that there was a bear up a tree. They called animal control, who brought along the fire department. The bear was tranqed and dropped onto a trampoline and relocated to the nearby Olympics.

[3 replies](#) · active 158 weeks ago



Natalie · 158 weeks ago

+13

I went to college right on Lake Superior. One day a young bull moose sauntered through the middle of campus. It caused quite a commotion, since moose aren't really seen in Wisconsin - Minnesota, sure, but not so much Wisconsin. He seemed unconcerned about the growing knot of students and professors who followed with their cameras from a safe distance. Eventually he clambered down into a wooded ravine and continued on his trek. His photo graced the front page of the town newspaper the next day.

[1 reply](#) · active 158 weeks ago



latenac · 158 weeks ago

+13

Did you live in Vermont as I'm pretty sure I've lived every one of these scenarios since moving here. We had bears our first spring in the house and that's how we found out you only have your bird feeders up Nov - March or you'll get bears. I will admit the mother bear and her three cubs galloping through our yard were awfully cute from inside the house.

Mice are just a part of life for us and I've learned to keep a bucket half filled with water on the deck for the half alive ones the cats bring us. I used to be more kindhearted but then found out mice will come back unless you tote them far away from where you found them. I'd much prefer our barred owl take care of them.

I read about people who no longer have a land line and I wonder what they do during power outages since our cell phones will probably never work at the house.

And during our most recent 5 day power outage we brought in snow for flushing toilets after running out of water from the bucket we had filled before the power outage. It too never melted. Also not a good source for boiling water for tea, it takes a lot of snow.

[2 replies](#) · active 158 weeks ago



**Nimona** · 158 weeks ago

+37

The New York version of the first vignette: two policemen rang my buzzer to ask if I was being illegally evicted from apartment 9N. I told them I was not and pointed out that my building only has three stories, so they went on their way. I also have no idea how this story ends but it probably wouldn't be interesting even if I did.

**rouxfully** · 158 weeks ago**+40**

I have no bear stories, just a particularly embarrassing mouse one. Right out of college, I lived in a moderately crappy ground-floor studio apartment in a 150-year-old house. Because midwest, a large mouse population had taken up residence in the basement, and because crappy, there was a conveniently placed pipe with a gaping hole around it at the back of my pantry that basically acted as a mouse interstate highway. I discovered this on an aggressively shitty late-fall evening wherein we were in the process of receiving 1/2" of freezing rain. I had no mousetraps, no anything, and certainly wasn't going to leave the house to get some, since it was a skating rink outside. I cleaned out some of the most decimated items, took a shower and then, while sitting in the kitchen with my hair in a towel, heard a series of persistent scratches -- not just a mouse, but a mouse trapped in something. Opened up the pantry and concluded that an undisturbed-looking box of instant oatmeal actually contained one (1) live mouse. Well I didn't want to, like, kill it with my bare hands, but I also didn't want to leave it in my apartment in any capacity, so I decided to take it outside and dump it in the yard of the vacant house next door.

I lived on a major road (4 lanes one-way) so bad weather and all, I am sure at least a dozen people were treated to the sight of a girl in a giant hair-towel, snow boots, and a winter coat over a bathrobe teetering gingerly along her ice-covered front sidewalk clutching a box at arms length, opening the box, shrieking as a mouse leapt DIRECTLY AT HER FACE, and falling into a soggy icy dirty old snow bank. Dignity!

[4 replies](#) · active 158 weeks ago**Yarnybarny** · 158 weeks ago**+4**

Lovely! More please. Maybe also from other areas.

**MilesOfMountain** · 158 weeks ago**+36**

As someone living in rural Canada, it's amazing how familiar these stories seem. Especially the cell phone one, as anyone living here can rhyme off every patch of cell service for at least an hour in each direction and there's a big sign at one of the spots where your phone will first pick up a signal after nothing for the previous hour that says "Put Down Your Cellphone And Pay Attention To The Road".

I have many bear stories! This fall I kept having to leave my lunch spots because of bears. At one point, I was eating lunch on a bench down the block from my work, which is next to the road. I saw a car full of young guys slow down then pull up in front of me and open the window. I was expecting some annoying catcalls or something when one leans out and very politely informs me that if I didn't know, there was a bear in the apple tree on the other side of the large bush I was sitting next to. I decided to pack up my lunch and head back and passed a guy walking the other way. I let him know that there was a bear just around the bend, he asked a clarification of which house exactly, then said "That's my granny's house!" and hurried down the path (I guess to let her know).

[1 reply](#) · active 158 weeks ago**damanoid** · 158 weeks ago**+22**

Squirrels in the walls. A squirrel once adopted my Grandfather's boots as the ideal site for a nut hoard. Grandpa was a stoic, antisocial man, but eventually acquired a strange affection for this intrusive rodent.

There is a farm behind the sign marking the junction of Bear Swamp Road and Bug Hill Road. Is it a family farm that pre-

dates the road names? Or have people intentionally chosen to live at the junction of Bear Swamp Road and Bug Hill Road? I am perversely envious of whoever gets their mail delivered at the address of One Bug Hill Road.

[1 reply](#) · active 158 weeks ago



**Sean\_Sullivan** · 158 weeks ago

+70

I was out running along a lonely forest road in the north of Wisconsin when I heard a sort of gruffing sound. Ten feet ahead of me, a little bear cub was tumbling and romping in the raspberry canes at the side of the road.

It was cute as the dickens, but I remembered pretty quickly that breaking the line of sight between a mother bear and her cub is a great way to collect stitches, so I backed up the road a piece, keeping my eyes determinedly on nothing in particular. There was no detour available; I would have to pass the cub to get the home. So I decided to flag down the next car and get a lift past the danger zone.

I thought I was in luck when a minivan appeared, heading in the right direction. It was already slowing before I began waving my arms. It slowed some more...slowed...and finally ground to a stop fifty feet before me. I jogged up to meet it. The driver stuck his head out the window.

"Thank god someone else is around!" he said. "The engine just died on me. Tell me, do you know anything about cars?"

Long story short: a bear ate us, and I am a ghost.



**houblonchouffe** · 158 weeks ago

+9

We have a constantly-evolving set of deer mice that live in the attic, and we refer to them as "The Upstairs Neighbors." Once it gets dark, I can often hear them skittering around above the ceiling, and it drives the cat absolutely nuts.

They have never been any sort of trouble and they don't seem to care we exist, so imagine MrChouffe's surprise when, this fall, we realized the reason our furnace wasn't working was because a mouse corpse had blocked a drain pipe. We didn't even know they could get into the ductwork from the attic, but apparently.

[1 reply](#) · active 158 weeks ago



**m98widow** · 158 weeks ago

+25

I was getting tomatoes out of my garden last summer when what appeared to be a direwolf strolled out of my neighbor's yard. It took me a moment to realize that it was one of the coyotes that lives in the woods, but I had not expected such a tall, broad-chested, shiny-coated, clearly well fed creature. I think of coyotes as mangy, skinny things, but this one is apparently living high on the hog and looked like it could probably be saddled and ridden by a smallish person.

Our neighborhood also boasts a roaming pack of turkeys. I defy anyone to look at these things and not immediately understand that evolution is real and that these things definitely used to be dinosaurs. They saunter around occasionally gobbling loudly at any humans they might see.

[1 reply](#) · active 158 weeks ago



**PonyAlong** · 158 weeks ago

+39

Bears!



One hot summer day, I was in the backyard when I heard my neighbour yelling "BEAR COMING UP THE ALLEY" but wasn't too concerned because (a) pretty sure it was a yearling and "awww" and (b) my German Shepherd "Ripley" was by my side and would drive off cute baby bear keeping everybody safe.

What came sauntering past the driveway and pointed toward me was the biggest, shaggiest, heaviest black bear I had ever seen. Even the dog was like "wut" (dogs can't spell) and we both stood there in shocked silence as this thing glided silently past us, turning away with a cool, sideways glance at the Ripper without missing a beat, and into the bush cover that surrounded the house.

It took a second to realize that I had a death grip on Ripley's collar and that she was on her tippy-toes, hackles straight up and every muscle stiff and hard. We never once took our eyes off that bear, I'm sure of it.

This all happened without the three of us making a sound; it was the quietest and best/worst bear encounter I've ever had, and not sure if I'd welcome it again.

[2 replies](#) · active 158 weeks ago



**deleted5647547** · 158 weeks ago

+17

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NO TO BEARS. My policy on bears is A. you guys seem great! B. AVOID.

We didn't have bears, but we had other things. I moved to an area of rural NC my senior year of high school and the first night I went to "take out the trash (read: surreptitiously smoke a cigarette) I heard the most terrifying noises echoing from out in the woods. It sounded like women being murdered en masse! I ran inside to let everyone know about the PROBABLE MASS MURDER going on, and my stepdad was all "oh those are just the mountain lions. They scream like women during mating season." OH OK COOL.

I never saw one in person, because I'm not an idiot and I didn't venture that far out into the woods. I figured they wouldn't come that far in towards "civilization" (ie: the road to town) very often.

Later, one tore open our rabbit enclosure behind the house and ate all of our rabbits.

[2 replies](#) · active 158 weeks ago



**thestonefruit** · 158 weeks ago

+6

I lived in one of the oldest dorms in undergrad in the suburbs of Philadelphia, where there were rumored to be flying squirrels in the walls. Not just rumored, I learned, when I returned after winter break to nibbled-through Ramen noodle packs and chewed up flipflops. Also then I saw a wee flying squirrel face staring out of a hole in the closet wall, whereupon I shrieked loudly and hammered a large stick into the hole to keep them out.



**leslieellenjones** · 158 weeks ago

+33

My parents' house in Vermont has bats in the attic. My mother is pathologically afraid of bats. One year, they decided to have the attic weatherproofed, because in a 200-year-old farmhouse that isn't weatherproofed, you lose a lot of heat from the attic. They had everything done in the autumn and had a nice, cozy winter.

One fine spring evening they decided it was warm enough to open the front door and let the vernal breezes in. As dusk fell, and they sat in the living room reading, a bat suddenly flitted through the living room and out the door. My mother, naturally, screamed. Another bat. And then another.

Soon there was a steady stream of bats flying through the living, apparently emerging from the walls themselves, and making for open air, my mother was in hysterics, my father was doing his best to hustle the bats on their way as quickly as possible, and Sam the cat was doing his best to catch himself one of those fun flying mice--a nice challenge from the earth-bound kind, who were just too easy. After maybe half an hour, Bat Rush Hour appeared to be over, and my mother's heart rate returned to normal. But they couldn't figure out where the bats were coming from.

And the next night, it happened again.

Finally, they called in a bat whisperer from the Wildlife Authority. Turned out that the weather proofing--which had occurred after the bats went into winter hibernation--had sealed them in the attic, and when they woke up in the spring, they had started crawling down ancient, unused air ducts through the walls and made a break for freedom as soon as dusk fell. So now my mother makes sure to open a window in the attic every spring, so the bats can get out, because now my father is dead (and so is Sam, for that matter) and she would have to face them alone.

[1 reply](#) · active 158 weeks ago



**redheadedwolf** · 158 weeks ago

+1

I love these stories. Especially the first and the one about the bear taking down the laundry. Very well written.



**alicia** · 158 weeks ago

+21

Notes from rural California:

1. If the phone line goes dead in clear weather, it's probably because there were too many crows on the lines which couldn't handle their weight. The solution for this is to get in touch with Rocko, the PGE guy. If he doesn't answer his cell he's probably at his second job bronco busting at the ranch next door, in which case you should hop on the Gator and drive over to get him.
2. If suddenly one morning the crops look like they've been badly rototilled in one particular spot, it's probably because wild boar thought they looked tasty. The solution for this is to call the Sheriff's dept, where the deputies have a sideline in boar hunting. Top tip: If you give them a case of beer they might also invite you to the pig roast.

[1 reply](#) · active 158 weeks ago



**ru\_ri** · 158 weeks ago

+11

I live in rural Northern Michigan, in a barn down the hill from my parents' house. My mom has a coop with chickens, and I have a shed attached to the barn with my own chickens. I usually get the chickens that are rejected from her flock, or who are terrible bullies and have to be removed from her flock.

In the winter of 2012 my mom had six hens and a rooster named Sam, and I had four hens. Sam used to crow in the middle of the night, and also took to attacking my mom when she fed them, so we finally decided we had to do away with him. Two nights after Sam became Rooster Soup, a weasel came into my mom's henhouse and killed all the hens stone dead. And the next night, I was awakened at 2 a.m. by the sound of my hens screaming in terror and ran to the shed to find one hen dead and the others shrieking madly. One, the golden wyandotte, ran out flapping into the snow, and I ran after her. When I picked her up, the weasel (ok, it was an ermine i guess) dropped from her neck, landed on the snow, and hissed at me, like, "Bitch, that's my lunch!" I brought the wyandotte into the barn and went out to see if anyone else had survived. I'd lost one but the other three were OK, and they lived with me in the barn for the rest of the winter. I cleaned up a lot of chicken poop that winter! I tried really hard to kill that fucking weasel but I didn't have a gun and weasels are very fast.

Sadly, a fox got two of my remaining hens the following Mother's Day, but the one survivor is still going strong (so far).

Now we have a new flock. We keep baby monitor in my mom's henhouse and I have a Winchester .22 in case of further predations. Country livin'!



jaclyn · 158 weeks ago

+10

my dad bought a "have a heart" brand humane trap for our wall squirrels. he told me when he caught them he would drive out into the woods a few miles and let them go. i believed this well into adulthood until recently my sister commented "you know he just shot them in the cage and threw them in the creek, right?"



cofax · 158 weeks ago

+6

My brother & his family moved from DC to Boulder a few years ago, bringing with them a very large and intelligent mixed-breed dog named Carynne, who had accompanied her mistress on hundreds of miles of runs through Rock Creek Park, but who was unfamiliar with the Rockies.

Shortly after they moved in, my brother lets the dog out into the front yard to do her business before going to bed. Carynne races out into the dark yard, my brother hears a distinct "thump", a yelp, and then Carynne raced right back to him-- and peed on his feet.

Turns out the bears were at the garbage, and poor Carynne ran right into them.

After that, my brother built a shed for the garbage, and Carynne was a lot more careful about bears in the yard.



coryyc · 158 weeks ago

+9

We have two single male bears here in our county....in an exurb of Cleveland!!! Also bald eagles. I trained my dog to chase geese out of my yard. When my son went to the school bus that on his first day of school, there were 12 ducks following him. I had a cup of coffee, looked out the window, and there were only 11. Across the field (about 400 ft away) on the pasture fence was a large bird, and I tried to get my dog to run after it assuming it was a hawk that had decided the ducks were breakfast. I had to run alongside her, she was curiously reluctant--which is very unlike a wolfhound. About halfway across the field she turned tail and ran back home. That's when I saw that the bird was nearly as tall as the fencepost. I left the eagle alone!



funkmistress · 158 weeks ago

+4

This makes me miss my rural upbringing, and also Mallory's Chris Kimball posts.



kouredios · 158 weeks ago

+2

As soon as I saw that corresponding picture, I recognized it as part of my commute from Adams to Amherst--the backroadiest backroads in Western Massachusetts. I've never seen a bear on my commute, though. It's usually just flocks of turkeys hanging out in the middle of rte 116.



kayloulee · 158 weeks ago

+20

At my parents' place in rural far northern New South Wales, they regularly have koalas fucking in the trees outside the house. Fun facts about koalas: The male koalas make HRUG HRUG HRUGH noises, which translates to "HEY LADIES I'M UP FOR SOME HOT KOALA LOVIN'"; then some time later, if they are successful, you get the lady koalas making screaming noises, which is the sound of koala sex. Also, the vast majority of koalas have chlamydia.

Current favourite koala story: my mum was woken very early one morning in November 2014 by very loud male koala noises, so she went outside to have a look. There was a very large male koala attempting to creep onto a very spindly branch of one of the eucalypts, at the end of which was a much smaller lady koala. As soon as Male Koala got close enough, Lady Koala swiped him very hard in the head with her claws - koala claws are not to be fucked with - and he immediately reared back, swung under the branch, and scrambled back the way he came, hanging upside down. Lady koala continued with her breakfast, evidently feeling righteous. Mum got it on video but I'm not going to try to embed video, that way madness lies.

[1 reply](#) · active 158 weeks ago



RRR · 158 weeks ago

+1

I love these! This is my neighbor [http://www.berkshireeagle.com/News/ci\\_27284239/To...](http://www.berkshireeagle.com/News/ci_27284239/To...)



wondering · 158 weeks ago

+2

I could write these, only the title would change to vignettes of rural northern Canada. Except in addition to the bears, it would feature more moose.

"My sister was housesitting for a friend. A large prepared-to-rut bull moose decided that the front yard was a perfect place to hang out, which endangered the dogs and my sister. She fired a warning shot to scare it off - which ricocheted off the ground and killed the moose. Neighbours helped her disappear the carcass so that there would be no inappropriate questions from conservation officers regarding hunting seasons and licenses..."



Sarah · 158 weeks ago

+1

I can relate to these on a deep level. I also had a colony of flying squirrels in my attic, and didn't really realize how common a Thing it could be.



nonasuch · 158 weeks ago

+1

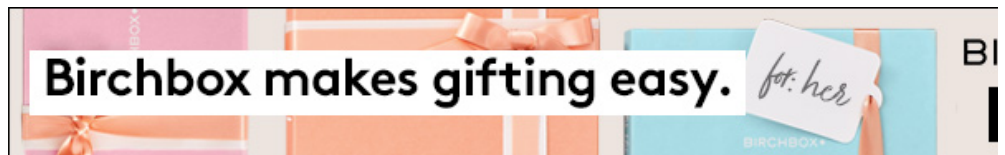
Holy hell, you guys, I have never felt more suburban in my life. The most alarming wildlife encounter I have ever had was the time a flock of turkeys chased my mom and sister down the street at Colonial Williamsburg.



organic gardener · 154 weeks ago

0

I live in rural New Hampshire. When we decided to name our place (got tired of it being called "the old Chapin place) we argued a bit about the name, but finally called it Mosquito Heaven Farm. My (city dwelling) family couldn't understand why we gave it such a "negative" name. There were two answers: my spouse is a pessimist, and this is just the pessimist's version of Frog Hollow; and (the real reason) if we called it Black Fly Purgatory, no one would EVER visit.



Hey Ladies: We Wrote a Book!



Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market," As I Understand It



Lord Byron's "Fare Thee Well," or "I Just Think It's Funny How"



Questions I Have Asked During The Only Episode Of *Doctor Who* I Have Ever Seen Until My Friend Said "Okay, Mallory, Why Don't You Write Your Questions Down And Ask Them All After We're Done Watching?"



Joan Didion and Anna Wintour: Best Friends Forever



Movie Yelling With Nicole and Mallory: *The Hunt for Red October*



*Harvard* Magazine Personal Advertisements' Many Synonyms For "Rich" or "Thin"



Go On, Get Out Of Here



A note on The Toast

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