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(From Motherwell's [Facebook page](#))

### The Room

Virginia Woolf wrote that a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction. But I wonder where she stood on doors.

I have a room of my own, but the door barely closes because it's been slammed so many times, and there's a door-knob-shaped hole in the drywall behind it. This was a teenager's room, and it has the battle scars to prove it. But before that it was my room, an in-home office I happily occupied for more than a decade.

The last time I wrote in here I was a full-time freelancer with three young children and the sunken eyes of the chronically sleep-deprived. My desk was a hollow door laid across two filing cabinets, and there was a tatty old navy-blue couch along one wall. The couch was made of foam rubber and flipped out into a thin bed. No adult could comfortably sit or lie on the thing, but the girls loved it and made a little fort in it by folding it up over itself. They bounced on it, crawled in it, and basically destroyed it. And because it kept them occupied, I let them do it.

The couch has been gone for years, but it's part of the history of this room, which I commandeered as an office when we moved here with a

six-month-old baby and held onto even after a second and third daughter came along.

When the oldest became a teenager, I moved out so each girl could have her own room. For a while I wrote articles from a desk in the dining room, then gave up the home office entirely when I took an editorial job and worked downtown.

The dream was always to return, though, to come back to the room and the ghosts that inhabit it, knowing that in them is the inspiration I need to move on to the next phase of life.

So here I sit inside these four peach-colored walls, the garish yellow trim replaced by a glossy white inexpertly applied by people who should have been wearing reading glasses when they did it. I peck away on an aging laptop that sits atop a battered lime green desk. Behind me, a bifold closet door barely holds back the deluge of papers, clothes and shoes — so many shoes! — that I've yet to sort through. In other words, it's my room again...but barely.

“Sort through” are the operative words here. Parenthood leaves us with much to process, and I can think of no better place to do it than in this room, where so much of it happened.

It's quiet in here, so quiet that I'm aware of the blood pulsing in my ears. Sometimes, if I listen closely, I can almost hear those long-ago

conversations I'd like to forget: talks about schoolwork and boys and curfews and the breaking thereof. There were times when it seemed that all the pep-talks I could muster would not be enough to counter the world's pitfalls and temptations.

But the girls grew up, flourished, found good work and true love. They are fine young women now with families of their own. And I am back in this room with my books and plants and a view of the yard where they swung and zip-wired and chased each other in the autumn leaves.

What will I do with this room, now that I have it? Ah, that is the question. And I'm answering it with each new essay and blog post I write. I'm slowly reclaiming the self that inhabited this office so long ago.

Meanwhile, the room that was once a sanctuary has become one again. But I'm not alone in it. Every time I look outside and glimpse the covered garden bench, I think for a moment that it's the playhouse we had when the girls were young. It has the same outline, the same lightness against the dark green hollies that border the fence. But the playhouse was torn down years ago, and I am here with my dreams and my memories. I am here in this room, which is finally, unbelievably, mine again.

— By Anne Cassidy