

This I Believe

Stephanie - Katy, Texas

I believe in magic rooftops.

Magic rooftops are well camouflaged. They don't have unicorns frolicking out their chimneys. Instead, they look like any other roof, yet what sets them apart is their secret ability to heal, awaken, and unwrap secrets. I first discovered the wonder of these shingle-paved landscapes in the winter of 2005.

Another weekend sleepover was coming to a close. Katherine and I have always had the hearts of children—daring, imaginative, innocent— even at the oh-so-“mature” age of fourteen. As midnight crept closer, our young, caffeinated minds grew more anxious. The quiet bedroom and strict parental rules were a weight on our new teenage desire for freedom, and we were determined to escape.

For the third time in my life, we both stepped out of my second story window, venturing into the forbidden darkness outside. My bare feet skipped over the garage roof, pretending I wasn't scared of slipping onto the concrete far below. Eventually my fear faded, and all that was left was happiness. Together, Katherine and I danced and sang out of tune as the night stripped away our insecurities. I felt as if I had no boundaries and no limits, as if every ounce of worry had drained away and left me spiritually complete and unstoppable.

I was the first to give into exhaustion. I collapsed onto the roof and Shelby sat next to me, still recovering from an unexplainable fit of laughter. After many moments, our playfulness finally faded, and we evolved to a state of musing silence. Together we stared at the star-speckled sky, until I noticed the soft glisten of tears welling up in Kat's eyes.

I asked her what was wrong, and she struggled to tell me. I pulled her close, wrapping her in a hand-sewn blanket. Through her sobs she told me something no fourteen-year-old should ever have to utter.

Perhaps she never would have told me her secret if we hadn't ventured onto the roof that night. Without the comfort and stability of that magical place, I may never have been able to help her heal. After she told me her secret, we spent several hours of every sleepover laying on the shingles. Slowly, we began to bandage her innocence and I felt myself growing in the process. I learned how to become a caretaker, but eventually the situation became too dire for me to handle alone. I convinced her to call the police, and after that day I never saw her step-father again.

We continued to sneak onto the roof for months afterward. Each time we sang, danced, cried, and healed. We woke up each morning a little more alive, a little more free. With the help of the roof and each other, depression drained away.

I believe that healing places can be found anywhere, even in the most mundane setting. All it takes is two open hearts.. and sometimes a little help from a magic rooftop.