

# Mom's House

By: Ed Lowe



She died in October. At the end of March, I decided I had to do something about the house. After all, she was the one who lived in it, and she wasn't going to be doing that any more - the last three months had really convinced me, I suppose. She left pretty much everything, except the dress she was wearing.

Of course, I could keep it - the house - sit on it for a spell, procrastinate, as I was pretty much doing. But all kinds of people would consider this wasteful, profligate and zany. Amityville is a small town. Also, they would be right.

They would go out of their way to convince my children to influence me to either live in the house or sell it. My children would feel pressured, for really no particular reason, to have to think about something they needn't. They would eventually feel they had to confront me about it, maybe debate it, maybe

even argue about it, as if it were their concern.

I have long thought about it, though, only when I was tired and didn't have my guard up. One time I imagined living in it, too, rather than face the unspeakable, inevitable moment of separation from it. I didn't, of course. Well, maybe not, "of course." I didn't, is all. I just procrastinated for all of this winter, adding the cost of six months of deciding this or that, before still eventually doing nothing. I do that well.

Sixty-one-Summers ago.

It was 1949. I was pushing three and a half years with my new partners, Dolores and Eddie Lowe, originally from Brooklyn. "The North Side." Green Point, Williamsburg.

Legend has it, I talked them into Amityville. I don't recall. I couldn't imagine life without it or them, though, so maybe it's true.

One day I do remember: I

was perched atop my father's shoulders, looking north, my mother at my left - at me and my Dad's left - holding my father's left hand, as it came around the back of her shoulder and rested there.

Our car was in the driveway. (Black - my father used to quote Henry Ford, something about cars of every color, as long as it was black. I laughed, hoping he wouldn't know that I didn't know what he was talking about: "...any color, as long as it was black." What could that mean?)

We had been living for a little more than three years in a studio apartment over my cousin's three-car garage, which was fine with me - I mean, swimming across the canal, chasing ducks, fishing for snappers, catching crabs - although, a room for me, alone, was tempting.

I imagine they couldn't believe it; a house with a bedroom and a living room, and a separate bedroom for

me, and a separate room for the car. (A separate room for the car! We must have won the Irish sweepstakes.)

I'll admit, I got caught up, too, in the awe and wonder of our owning our own house. (I pretty much presumed equal partnership.) I even forgot for a moment that I was leaving Great South Bay.

The bay was merely out of instantaneous view, I concluded, really only a couple of blocks South. There was a canal behind some of houses near "our" house. That would do fine. I could throw rocks into the canal.

Mister Lurie (or, maybe, DeLurie) was there, coming out of the house, telling my father when he could count on moving in. Probably, July.

He was a boatbuilder. This was his first house. The land had been supplied by Jack Folks, and the bank took the land as a down payment. Then, Jake Bendersky, a lawyer, did the

closing for free, as a gift for the new cop, Eddie Lowe. I didn't know what a closing was, and I wasn't invited. I did not know Jack Folks, yet, either. I let my father handle all those financial details. My father didn't have much money, but he had good friends.

There was something like 205 feet from the front of property to the back. I forgot that almost immediately. The back yards all blended together.

From the street, there were thick woods to the left of the house, and tall grass and woods to the right, opposite the garage. Another year, Mister Lurie, or DeLurie, would build the identical house there, to the right, next door, mirror-image, so that the garages would face each other.

I would play in the dirt mounds all that summer.

I lived there 21 years, although, not much of the

last four. My father lived there from the age of 33 until he died, at 69, or 36 years, which is a lifetime, unless you dared compare it to my mother's tenure, which included my father's 36 years plus 25 more.

She ended it precisely the way she wanted to end it, surrounded by mostly female relatives of my daughters' generation (there being none left of her own). She reminisced. Talking, telling stories. She talked up to and including a moment where, for only 20 minutes or so, only Colleen was there, holding her hand. Colleen was softly singing, "Show me the way to go home. I'm tired and I want to go to bed / I had a little drink about an hour ago / and it went right to my head..."

And she died.

She picked a perfect moment, and died.

I'll have to do something about the house.

SEND COMMENTS TO: EDWARD.LOWE1@MARIST.EDU



Ed . howe

Fax 843 - 2953

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howe phone 843-2322