

A Long Road to Tranquility

This is not where I was born. I moved here in 2006. This town is small, very wooded, and has some odd people. Nothing here is like where I came from. In fact--it's the opposite.

The skies here in Lebanon, Maine are filled with clouds, and it's hardly ever sunny out for an entire day. The wind is brisk, but still warm enough to go outside. On a winter day, the temperatures can drop to a frigid -10 degrees fahrenheit. During the summer, the air is filled with flies and wasps as temperatures rise to nearly 100 degrees. Storms can get very fierce, with winds bringing down trees and powerlines darkening the entire town.

Roads are very long, and seem endless at times. Ditches surround every road like a moat around a castle. Pine trees peer down from the skies like skyscrapers. Deers, foxes, squirrels, rabbits, and chipmunks go about their daily lives. Deep, fast moving rivers divide the town into sections. Creeks and streams crawl through almost every property. Leaves cover the ground, and bury native stone walls. Townhouses, barns, and fields with animals around every corner make the town feel old western. Bonfires late at night draw in the town's citizens while they roast marshmallows over the top.

Cracking open beer and moxie, drinking, laughing, and playing around is a typical day in Lebanon. Everyone is free to have fun and party, there are hardly any police nearby. Neighbors let teens ride four-wheelers and dirt bikes through their properties as if they have been friends forever. Tending to animals, hunting, and mudding is not uncommon, just like hearing the phrases "yea bub," or the occasional 'a' after each sentence. Every man loves to grow beards and get dirty while some girls get dirty and shoot guns. It's never too different here in Lebanon, Maine.

The road I live on, Chick Road defines Lebanon entirely. Right off of Little River Road lies a stop sign and a family from the Philippines. That family grows a garden every year, and has been fixing up their property for months. Cutting wood and digging up logs have been in their routine lately. Up the road a bit are some typical ranch style, or trailered houses. Most of which have gardens and lots of land behind them. Mid-street there are some more modern houses and a few hunting stands off into the woods, catching any wandering deer or moose that find their way in their crosshairs.

On top of a large hill is a farmhouse, with a few barns and two enormous fields where animals such as cows, ducks, and cats graze or wander. The cats are 'wild' and strictly outdoor cats. The cows get fed every morning and night, but every so often they find their ways out of the barbed wire fencing that holds them in. Then cows are walking up and down the street, going into peoples lawns and doing their own thing. Further up the road have a few homes with horses, but most are modern and not old like my neighbor's.

My neighbor Kathy has pigs, goats, and chickens in which she harvests food from all. Behind some electric fencing are two giant shire horses, Abby and Lucy. During the year they bring people on horse-drawn sleigh rides, move logs, and clear out light brush. All of the animals are in a big red barn with sliding doors and an upstairs holding 450 bales of hay. Kathy lives in an old ranch style house, remodeled, but the foundation was built in the 1800's. The house had run on a water well in its backyard, and also has a few apple trees that grow sour crab apples.

Far-far away from the place I was born and raised lies this old, unique town. Farmers driving big trucks roaring loud noises, up long hilly roads with beautiful farmhouses, filled with animals and the people that love to gather. Yeah, that's Lebanon, Maine.

Pizza Like no Other



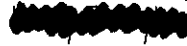
When someone brings up good ol' North Berwick, Maine, one might picture all the small business in this town. In North Berwick, off of Market Street, right before the train tracks is Town Pizza. People from surrounding towns might call it Townhouse, but to us locals it's Town Pizza. This wonderful pizzeria is owned and operated by North Berwick natives that live right up stairs. They offer delivery, but I highly recommend eating in.

As soon as the door into the pizzeria is opened customers are pleasantly greeted with a warm "How are you doing?" As many more friendly near by residents enter all you hear is: "It smells so good," or "I can't make up my mind, everything looks, and smells so good." Everyone that goes to Town Pizza has one thing in common; they aren't shy at all. Whether they know you or not they will always try to start a conversation with you. It's like walking into your grandparents house and asking your grandmother to cook a mouth-watering meal for you; she is always delighted to.

On a typical Friday night all the booths and tables are full with parents and children, some contentedly playing, just as if they were at home playing with their own toys. When it is time to order you walk up the counter. Sometimes there is a line of people ordering, but don't worry, there is always that one older man who is willing to tell you a story about the good ol' days. These stories are always so intriguing. Sometimes listening to them makes me feel like a child being read to by his parents. They're such enjoyable and peaceful stories. "I remember the days, back in the good old days when it was 25 cents a gallon for gas. We could practically drive cross country for 200 bucks. You know I did that once." These stories give you that insight on the town during the old days. Sometimes they are so descriptive you can feel as if you are participating in them. Before you know it is your turn to order.

Before you order, ask yourself, *Do I want to try something the locals enjoy munching on?* If you want to try something the natives indulge in, I suggest you try the Green Pepper and Hamburger pizza. The mouth watering taste of the fresh sliced green peppers and ground beef on the freshly made dough from that day has that classic flavor with a hint of something spectacular, followed up by the perfect amount of fresh cheese and sauce. If you go to other pizzerias you might dejectedly receive a pizza with some cheese by-product, either too much or too little sauce. I know it's really hard to mess up pizza, but somehow people manage. After enjoying that delightful, rich pizza it'll leave you wanting more. As you leave and give your tray back they always ask how it was. Customers receive a friendly "Have a nice day." With their low, affordable, consumer friendly prices you don't have to feel as if you were just robbed at gunpoint simply because you didn't want to cook that night. When you leave you feel as if you never left your home; you'll feel like you just had a great meal in your own kitchen

The Cemetery



There's something so haunting about the gray, boring dullness and nothingness of Berwick, Maine. From November to April, the weather consists of the same dark, gray sky, and most of the time is accompanied by a chilling wind, rain or snow. Nothing is exciting or thrilling about this town, and all it has to offer is the emptiness that it surrounds you with. Downtown Berwick surrounds the old, brick town hall building with some nice and crummy apartments, a Subway restaurant, A couple of little shops, a bank, and the fire station. The rest of Berwick consists of hundreds of housing developments. Overall, this town does not have much to offer.

Roughly about two minutes outside of downtown is where I live. I live on a road that is a U shape, so it has two entrances. My house is at the center of the U, but a little bit closer to the right side. On the U there is roughly 20 houses, all similar in color and shape. Perfect box houses all mostly a cream color, all pretty close together. As you walk down my driveway and meet up with the sidewalk, you'll be surrounded by homes with their families inside, hiding from the rain and dullness of the day. When you continue to walk down the hill I live on, take note of the beat up, cracked sidewalks, with plants obstructing them and pieces of the sidewalk crumbled around the edges. The road is slightly curvy and downhill, but you should be able to see where the end of the U is. This is Knox lane.

Once you reach the bottom of the hill and end of one side of the U, turn right onto Know lane, and walk past the very old, cement house that is built into a hill. It looks like a cement hut, like the foundation of a house was laid but no house was built, and a roof was put on it. As I walk, I see a frail looking middle aged man with a gnarly beard sitting with his dog outside this house. He smiles and waves at me, but doesn't speak a word. By the time you will be doing this, he will have passed away. As you continue to walk the trees that tower over you they will shade you from the dark gray sky, making the road appear darker than before. Shortly after you continue walking, on the left will be an old, long wooden shed lifted slightly on stilts. The windows are shattered, and it is filled with junk to which belongs to nobody, but somehow seems as though it just appeared there. The shed gives the appearance of an old, abandoned beat up boat house, which gives off a sketchy vibe as it lays on the water. However there is no water surrounding it.

The paleness of the sky will continue to embrace you, and you will reach the top of a slight hill which begins to flatten out. Cross to the left side of the road and weave around the tall, overseeing pinetrees. You will find that there is not many more trees, but infact a woodsey area where the floor is coated with orange pine needles, giving of a strange hue in comparison to the sky.

If you look to your right, you will find a metal bar fence surrounding a very old, small family cemetery. The fence is made up of rusty, metal bars that are all connected into stones. Go around the metal fence to the other side where you will find a small opening to the cemetery. You will see about ten graves. The gravestones are speckled with mold, and dirt, and have eroded over time. Because of this, some gravestones are unreadable, but others consist of brothers, mothers, babies, and legacies that have been planted much longer before your time. Overall the gravestones are so bland and boring, with nothing more than names of the people they are for. Your surroundings will match the overall feeling of the town, dead, haunting, and gray.

This graveyard is forgotten. The people in it are forgotten, along with their family. Hardly anyone knows it exists. Nobody takes care of it, and no one visits it. It's a lonely, dark place, just like most of the North is. I want be remembered, not forgotten. I can't wait to get out of this cold and dark place, and go somewhere worthwhile. Where my life can truly become something memorable.