

1Hotels_brand exploration

You awaken slowly because nothing in particular has stirred you. Was it the mockingbird in the poplar outside your window? Or the brilliant finger of sunshine grazing your bare shoulder? You smile because you are safe and warm and solitary (although the familiar sounds of loved ones lap at the edge of your consciousness) and you snuggle down into the cool, wholesome clean of your lavender-scented sheets. You rummage about in your mind for the quote left on your pillow last night—“*I had a dream which was not all a dream*”—from Byron you think, and you ponder its meaning, lightly, your eye drifting to the window where the slatted wood blind reveals stripes of a tapestry in brilliant greens.

You are wickedly free, away from it all, high up in your perch with everything you need to feel completely secure, sound and sated. It recalls your childhood refuge, the rickety platform tucked way up in the live oak on the hill in your backyard. This place was your domain—off limits to duty, responsibility and schedules. The KEEP OUT sign scrawled on a brown paper grocery bag in your favorite crayon (burnt umber) and tacked onto the trunk of the tree just below the spot where the rope swing hung down. The secret password (beetlejuice) and the house drink (Welch’s). There in the corner is your stash of rare comics, your harmonica, your favorite peanuts salted in the shell, your collection of animal bones. But what lives on most vividly, the thing that slid under your youthful skin and has never surrendered its sweet spot, is that sense of being at the very top, where your soul came most alive.

You are older now. The next generation is nipping at your heels, but you are not so much changed as advanced. Your desires and longings are not so very different but the scale has grown. And so you swing your legs over the side of the bed, your toes gripping the mossy carpet, and take a broad sip of the sweet spring water in the carafe on the table. You bite into a pear so ripe the juice trickles down your fingers. You don’t read the paper because there is a stack of books by your favorite writers, you don’t turn on the television

because somehow the only version of the Goldberg Variations you really love (Glenn Gould, 1981) is playing, you don't open the blinds at the window because at the flick of a switch they open for you. There is everything you need to survive—light, air, water—and more: that ineffable something that fascinates, compels and consumes you. It's the best of everything as you define it, presented without undue fanfare, distinguished by a refinement as essential to you now as it was unknown to you then. It's your new treehouse, and it's waiting for you.