

# Changing spaces

We're in the process of deciding where we want to live for the next four years. We'll stay in the same city, of course, but there are a couple of options regarding the exact location we want to inhabit. We'll be making a decision very soon one way or another.

For the past year or so, I have been resisting settling in. We haven't unpacked our books; they're in the garage. We still have partially unpacked boxes of various things that are in the living area because we needed something from the box but the rest of it wasn't that important. We haven't gotten any furniture in the past year that we didn't need, though we've thought about a few things. We've been kind of on hold in terms of making the space ours because we knew we wanted something different.

Now that we're looking at a place to spend at least the next four years, I'm changing how I am looking at the space. I want the place we live to be our home, not just a house (or an apartment, as the case may be). I want people to feel welcomed when they come in. I want to be surrounded by things that I like and to have enough space that we don't feel hemmed in. We don't need a lot of stuff, but I'd like the things we have to be pieces that I actively want to live with rather than pieces that we've kind of ended up with. For the current place and the last place, I was unwilling to settle in too far because I knew we'd be moving. This place, though, we'll be settling down in. By the time we leave, Katja will be in elementary school. That means it's time for me to accept that we're staying and make the new place, wherever it is, someplace that we like coming home to every night. It's time to create home.

We know we will have a nice kitchen; we won't move to a place where the kitchen is less nice than our current one. That part's easy. We've already found bookcases we like, so we can

start buying them as we have money. We'll have outdoor space of some sort so we can grow things. Someday I'd love to get a nice rolltop desk. It will mostly be Xander's, but I love the way they look and having one would make me happier than having some other piece of more modern furniture as a desk. There will also be more organizational things such as a bigger wine rack (we don't drink that often, but it would be nice to have more options in the house), a couple of bookcases for Katja, since the current approach includes books falling off on a regular basis, and possibly something other than bookcases for the pantry items. I'd also like a bigger jewelry box at some point. I don't have much, but it's all kind of crammed into a small jewelry box right now.

I want to be able to find everything and not have pockets of clutter. I've lived with pockets of clutter most of my life, since that seems to be my default, but I don't like them. I am calmer, happier, and I work more effectively when everything is organized and sorted. I haven't set up the framework for that, though, so I fall into old habits and end up with, for instance, a pile of papers next to my bed that really ought to be filed soon. I think I'll get to it before we move. I hope so, anyway.

We won't get everything right away, of course. We will buy things in bits and pieces as we have the money. I think, by the time we are ready to move again, that we will be able to be happy with everything we're moving rather than feeling put-upon that we have to move that irritating piece of furniture yet again.

My sense of place has never been particularly strong, but we'll be here for a while and I would like to love where I am rather than simply existing in the space.