

One Room

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Here's how to fit 60 years of life into one room. Have a kid at 17, then have another at 19. Throw in a third at 21. Three kids, one bunk bed, two bedrooms, three holes punched into two walls, one marriage over. Two grandparents raising three grandkids. Take a job, quit that job, take another, no, another. Keep looking, dreams are out there. It's been a few years, new guy, don't get married, have another kid. One woman, two men, four kids. Four is good, even numbers work. Kids are hard. One aunt one uncle raising one fourth child. Get a new guy, take a new job. Quit that guy, keep the job. Not that job. Hit the road but come back, climb down from that 18-wheeler to tell your kids you're married again, that's two, two husbands, one wife. One driver, one passenger, one mom M.I.A., 18 wheels take you far, far away. Write your kids, don't forget to write the kids, greetings from five states away, three postcards, four letters, three kids, no, four. Take that punch, that's one to the head, one to the stomach. That's two hands that grab, two hands that slap, two hands that shake, one mouth that screams, one foot that kicks. Kick number two husband out. That's it, you're done, no more husbands, zero. Remember your kids, they're out there. Four kids, three to talk to, three to see. One holds out, the second one, she remembers. One joint, one pill. No, one thousand joints, one hundred pills. No job, none. No parents, gone. No second child, who's still remembering, done. One mattress, no frame, one closet half full, four boxes hold dozens of pictures. One letter, one laminated memory of the second child who won't see you, won't speak to you. One purse, three pill bottles, 12 dollars. One patch. One arm with one fentanyl patch. One room holds all the mementos of one life's mistakes. One patch for one overdose, it only takes one. One room, one life. No, just one room.