

# The Farm



By Katherine Sasek

**W**hen I was five years old my parents separated, and with my mother we moved from Port Credit to Meadowvale, Mississauga. My father, shortly after, built a house on a 50-acre parcel of farmland he had purchased several years before. The land was located on the 4th line in Milton, between the 5th and 10th Sideroad. There were working farms all around the property and the land gently rolled with wooded areas lining large crop fields. Along the north edge of the property there were the remains of a long-forgotten driveway ending at a small wooden bridge that crossed a meandering creek flowing from a pond. Above the pond, on a small knoll, was likely where that old original farmhouse sat. A boarded-up well was the only remnant of that long-ago property.

That old driveway was to be my path to many adventures when I visited every other weekend. My father had given me a minibike from a mechanic friend of the family – a peppy little Yamaha 60. With that bike I used to imagine I was riding off into the great unknown down that overgrown laneway.

But my favourite pastime was packing a lunch and heading off into the woods to explore the back ‘50’. Left on my own all day long in the summer while my father and stepmother worked in the city, I would dream up wild fantasies

that I was dropped off in a remote wood and had to fight off bears and wolves to find my way back to safety. I knew every inch of that farm and fell in love with the trees and remoteness of the land. 50 acres to a 10-year-old might as well be a thousand miles from civilization.

My dad used to have fun with my wild imagination. The property was indeed remote in the ‘70s. Compared to the modern conveniences a half hour drive away in the suburbs of Mississauga, we only had three television channels that, weather dependent, were able to tune with the old Sputnik-like antenna on the roof. Everywhere was long distance. We even shared a phone line – a party line, with neighbouring farmers. Winters were long and snowy, the wind howled around the empty fields unobstructed, and nights were inky black with millions of shining stars. Sitting around the fireplace at night, my dad would quietly disappear, then suddenly all the power would go out. Alarmed, I would call out to my dad in the complete darkness, then slowly a ‘woooing’ sound could be heard and a ghostly face lit from below by a flashlight would seem to float up the stairs. I would scream and beg for the lights to be turned back on.

Another time, capitalizing on my fear of the bathroom on the first floor, my father waited patiently for me to use the bathroom one evening. The bathroom was a long rectangular room with a window at

the end. It was at the side of the house away from the main living room. To me it felt like a thousand miles from the rest of the house and I used to delay nature’s call for as long as possible. Hurriedly this one evening I made my way there and seated myself, firmly hoping to get out of there as soon as possible, when suddenly a loud banging on the window knocked me right off my perch and on to the floor. Howling in fear I ran like heck out of the bathroom running straight into my dad coming in the front door doubled over with laughter. I gave him my most indignant 10-year-old frown and stormed off.

Another time I was so angry with my older brother that I took his cherished Led Zeppelin record and buried it along the treeline at the edge of a field. I figured if he found out I had taken it and was angry at me I could dig it up, clean it up and return it. I feel a little bad about that now. Given that it is vinyl, it is likely still buried there. Polluting pristine land is something I am strongly against.

I often drive by that farm. Little has changed. The little cedar trees I remember planting with my dad all along the long driveway have grown mature and stately. But the land all around remains the same, rolling farmland with woods and creeks and plenty of adventure for the new youngsters who live there now.

*Katherine Sasek dedicates this to her dad Arnold, with thanks for the wonderful memories.*





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