# A College Town

*by* Susan Davis

@font-face { font-family: "Cambria"; }p.MsoNormal, li.MsoNormal, div.MsoNormal { margin: 0in 0in 0.0001pt; font-size: 12pt; font-family: "Times New Roman"; }div.Section1 { page: Section1; }

We pulled into a college town on a cloudy, cold Sunday afternoon. My oldest child, by my side, was here to visit the college. I felt gloomy like the sky overhead. How is it that my baby could leave for college soon?

I dropped her on campus and then I was alone, ready to have my own private adventure. Little did I know that adventure would be hard to come by in this depressing, college town. The cloud-covered sky seemed a perfect backdrop. Does the sun ever shine here? Do dreams ever come true here? It didn't seem so to me.

My adventure started with a drive through town. Each street seemed to take me further from my destination, whatever that was. A wrong turn here, a one way street there. I drove on and on and waited to see some sign of light, of brightness, of success. There was little to be found. I finally made it to my hotel and there the wait began. My room wasn't ready so I sat at the bar and drank wine. Something I do well. I spoke to pleasant people, but never felt at ease. I don't know why, so unlike me.

I was actually relieved when my daughter called to say I had forgotten to give her money. It's always the mother's fault. Of course I had to fix it. That's what moms do. I walked back to campus, to get a feel for what her walks will be like if she goes to this school and to help pass the time. Me, a 47-year-old woman on that very day, walking, mixing with college kids. It made me sad, a faint yearning for years past, when I was that college kid.

Available online at *«http://fictionaut.com/stories/susan-davis/a-college-town»*
Copyright © 2011 Susan Davis. All rights reserved.

The next morning I woke, determined to find some life in this college town. I walked the streets and noticed the people around me. Flannel, work clothes, cigarettes, tired, old. That's about all I saw. The occasional man in a suit or well dressed woman were a shock to see in comparison. And me in my well chosen clothes, my too blond hair. I felt as though I didn't belong. I felt strangely out of place.

I waited for my daughter, anxious to leave. She called my name from above, I turned to look, and there she was. Her smile beamed. This smile came from a child who hides her feelings so well. I read on her face all she felt inside. She felt she belonged here. She was filled with thoughts of the opportunities, the possibilities. This is where she wanted to be. We packed up her things and drove out of town. I, the mother, so contented to leave. She, the daughter, carried thoughts of when she will return.

They say we learn something new everyday. Perhaps I need to learn from her. I need to see this college town with fresh eyes, with eyes that don't judge. I need to see it for what it will mean to her. We'll come back in the spring, we agreed. Maybe this college town will look better in the spring. Better when it's bright and green. Everything looks better in spring.