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## A (Hotel) Room of My Own

Annmarie Kelly

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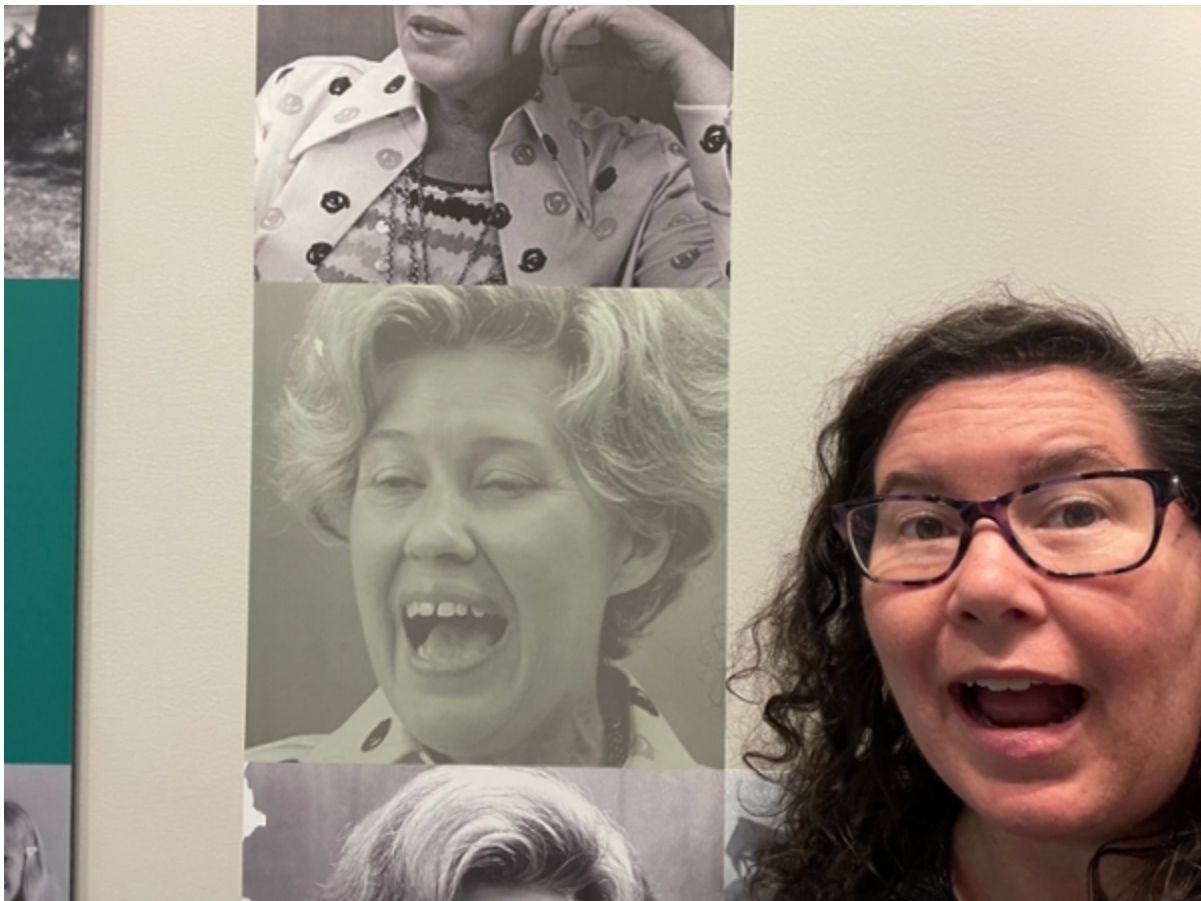
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# A (Hotel) Room of My Own

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Wednesday May 1, 2024

By Annmarie Kelly

I recently spent two weeks living and writing in the Dayton Marriott, a prize supported by humorist, Anna Lefler, and named in honor of my first newspaper crush, Erma Bombeck.

As a mother of three, I'm constantly playing catch-up. Today, I stretched two pieces of lunch meat into four sandwiches. Last week, my son wore his sister's dress shoes to his 5<sup>th</sup> grade orchestra concert. Yesterday, we ate Fruit Loops for dinner. Most days are an exercise in thrift and survival.

And so I was beside myself thinking about all that time. Alone! In a hotel! In a boyfriend-snuggly bathrobe embroidered with my name. As you can imagine, it was positively luxurious.

First off, no one needed anything from me. No one barfed or sneezed on me. No one tugged my sleeve the moment I sat down. I slept when I wanted. I barely recognized myself without bags beneath my eyes.

I also ate when I was hungry and wrote whenever I wished. It turns out, when left to my own devices, without children to feed, I subsist almost entirely on popcorn and Wheat Thins. There was a restaurant downstairs, but I kept forgetting to eat. It was too delicious to tumble into my stories.

I wrote so much that my butt hurt. I changed locations frequently to allow my back and shoulders to become equally sore. I wrote in the laundry room, the library, the courtyard, on a treadmill, on an ironing board, and in the jacuzzi.

I left Dayton, Ohio, with the draft of a new novel on my laptop and the belief of this community in my heart. I'm not foolish enough to think my story is all that unique. Every woman I met at the Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop knocked my socks off. They'd endured hardships and setbacks. They were wildly talented and oh so wise.

And so am I. It's easy to forget. I lose myself sometimes. In my kids. My partner. Caring for my mom. Everyone's needs are so great. But I'm allowed to need things, too. Like Wheat Thins, and time to write, and a fuzzy bathrobe, and strangers who become friends united by words.

Thank you to this community. I'm gonna make you — and me — proud.

— Annmarie Kelly

Annmarie Kelly is the author of *Here Be Dragons: A Parent's Guide*, a memoir about the wonderful misery of raising children with someone you love. She is also the host of *Wild Precious Life*, a literary podcast about making the most of the time we have. Annmarie teaches at Ashland University, and her essays have appeared on NPR's *All Things Considered*, in *Today Parenting*, *The Black Fork Review*, *The Gordon Square Review*, *Anodyne*, *Huffington Post* and the *New York Observer*. In her non-writing moments, Annmarie loves kickboxing, karaoke, hound dogs, ping-pong, books that make her laugh, movies that make her cry and salads other people make her eat. She lives in Cleveland, Ohio, where she is currently querying a novel about all the truth in the lies we tell.