



As a child, I never thought a day would come that I would say goodbye to the town who built me into who I am today. While I spent 12 years begging to leave, I never realized how much I valued your charm and loving community.

I will never be able to say enough, but here's to you, my hometown.

To the brick roads paved with the travels I've taken with friend's downtown, I love your charm. You are seriously *way* too bumpy and I do blame you for my tires always needing alignment but I'll miss your potholes and bumpy paths while I head up the rush hour plagued interstate to my new home. You created the charming atmosphere that made this hometown such a cozy place to be.

Oh my, the local stores full of unique treasures were my absolute favorite. I will miss your t-shirts, handmade jewelry, furniture and even your squeaky floors that are oddly comforting. I know each one, as I shopped for years for gifts and other items. Your staff has always been the sweetest and I will miss each of you. I love the finds that can only be found in my hometown. I will never find stores quite as good as yours. You had the best.

For the red lights that took too long to change, thank you for giving me the silent moments of reflecting on my day and watching me cry after a long day. You've seen it all, and I know you'll keep my secrets. I don't think anyone has seen the smiles, laughs, and tears like you have. You kept me late most of the time, but these moments were vital to my sanity and for that, I thank you. Also, **don't** tell anyone about the day I ran you.

To the late night trains that keep me awake, I used to hate you, but I find comfort in your loud cries in the still of the night. These times let me know that one thing in my life was still constant.

You may have stopped me in the middle of my morning commute to school, but I was always happy over it when I was in my Morning Prayer or worship. You're the best.

To the Friday night Football games that was full of endless laughter, smiles and cheers, as well as sadness and defeat. You taught me that we all have good and bad seasons. Most importantly, you taught me that *our losses do not define us*. We are defined by how we act, and respond. I hope to always remember your cold bleachers under the Friday night lights spent with our whole town cheering on our team. You will forever be remembered, cherished, and missed.

For the small restaurants that filled my life with treats, there will never be another like you. While the meals we shared were great, I will never have enough of the sweet memories I've made with the staff, my friends, and family inside those walls. These local restaurants run by your sweet people will always have a special place in my heart.

To the Grand Theatre, I will always remember the stage that taught me so much. You taught me the meaning of community and why we should work harder to keep the arts in our town. From performing with the show choir, to your summer arts camps, that were always a highlight of my summer, without your grand stage, our little hometown wouldn't be the same.

To my hometown, while most would like to say that they won't miss you, I will say that you are going to be missed. From every aspect and blemish that some may find, you will always be the town that taught me to shop local, smile at everyone I meet, and work with a smile for my community.

Thank you for all you've done. You will truly be missed.