

Driving Past Expensive Homes

I love getting nostalgic at home in the Fall. Summer's over, the island starts to breathe a bit again (I begin to start recognizing it a little more), and I can stretch out a little in the crevices that have been newly vacated, unbothered by eyes either fleeting or probing. Invasion's over, exodus begins. But for the past few years, more and more people are choosing to enact an indefinite vacation mode by remaining here all year long, moving here, and it's starting to come at the detriment of those for whom Nantucket is already their home.

I do this thing in the Summer where I drive around the same places every single day, not for lack of trying to do something else, and I work to tamp down my flagrant resentment at all these beautiful homes, try to stop thinking about the people that (only) live in them (for three months out of the year at best) and what their lives are like. I try really hard to not be covetous about it, because jealousy is necrotic to me, but I'm rotting, slowly, painfully, trying to stop imagining myself and those I love, living a kind of life like that instead. It implies safety, surety.

What does that mean? It's not that I don't want these people to have these nice homes (I mostly do, with a notable archetype of exception), or that I don't feel like they deserve them (honestly maybe I don't?), because how could I know or discern that, but I still feel it.

I think it has to do with this being my home, and the juxtaposition of it also being a well-known tourist trap/vacation destination. It's incessantly grating, and I feel like I can't be upset about it at the end of the day, objectively, because tourism is our biggest industry, and therefore keeping this place afloat.

A [recent article](#) from the Nantucket Current highlights that 26% of homeowners on the street I live on list their primary residence as *off-island*, and another 25% live at a *completely different address* on the island. People are buying homes in a neighborhood that was originally regarded as "working class," causing those prices to drive up, pushing out natives or year-rounders who are interested, and several of these homes are owned by real estate investors or LLCs who have converted or seek to convert the properties into short-term rentals.

It's just so insidious having to reckon with that aspect, of people coming here for short spates of time, uninhibited, relaxed, luxurious, privileged, disposably wealthy, just coming here to fuck off, do whatever, be whomever you are here away from your real life. I can't be anyone else here. It's too dampening. When you discover that they're moving here in droves, buying houses solely to convert them into vacation homes? When you can begin to feel the effects of tourism (especially when it's dripping with entitlement) seep into your daily life, even after they've supposedly gone? Feels like game over, but painstakingly slowly.

This [New York Post article](#) describes Nantucket as "Massachusetts' ritziest getaway," and aside from that causing me to legitimately vomit in my mouth a little, I recognize that it's the implications of that title that are causing me so much grief. They go on to detail several of the

rising issues that have directly impacted my life and my livelihood in my hometown: nearly out-of-control car traffic, the housing market in near shambles for natives and year-rounders, and the ever-swelling population turning this place into a distended clusterfuck. Water usage reports taken from last summer reflected a seasonal population increase of roughly 350-400% from the year-round population (According to figures from the Nantucket Data Platform, a public info org, in comparison with the numbers [reflected](#) by the [report](#)). As the New York Post mentions, this is not a sustainable situation.

I want to have a nice home like the ones I drive past and pretend I don't care about. It seems like it's all I care about. A place of my own, not dramatic, not vast, cavernous (at least not yet), but homey and roomy and quiet, close to the water (whichever kind) and maybe the woods (of any sort.) I want to have pets that get along with each other so I can leave them at home and won't have to worry about them. I want them to love each other and love me. I want to be able to let my dog walk around outside and not have to worry about anything else but what's in front of him.

I've lived my entire life so far in this place that I really can't stand. I'm cognizant of the effect that that can, and clearly does, have on me, and what that means about the things I aspire to achieve, the things I seek to possess, the places I want and do not want to live in. It colors my reality but I'm not sure exactly what that color is. I want this place to keep feeling like home, but as each season approaches, with it approaches hordes of people increasingly ravenous for an "island getaway." Maybe in the dead of winter when most businesses are shut down I can get some reprieve from the unrelenting noise.