

A Loss and a Gain

By Suzy Hopkins

One of my favorite things about my California condo was the three clear skylights. Two, hundreds-of-years-old White Oak trees hung over my 1,000 square foot home. They were magnificent. Since I never had to rake piles of leaves I loved them. Through all the seasons I enjoyed seeing them in the skylights.

One summer day I was horrified to notice that the leaves on one of the trees had suddenly turned brown. Then, over a period of a few days, this tree shed tons of acorns hammering down on my skylights like machine-gun fire. I called the management company who sent out an arborist. Extremely bad news. That beautiful living thing had succumbed to a disease. He checked out the other massive oak and determined it was hollow inside and had to be felled as well. In one awful week my two magnificent friends were cut down. Before they were dragged away I felt like they were cadavers as they lay in my yard.

The silver lining was now, through the skylights, I saw the clouds zooming by on a windy day, heard the rain pounding on the glass, looked at the full moon on a winter's night and enjoyed the warmth of the sun while sitting on my couch on a cold clear day. The sky had become my new friend.