



Claire Holley ~ *Where I Lived*

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The events in our lives happen in a sequence in time, but in their significance to ourselves they find their own order ... it is the continuous thread of revelation. — Eudora Welty

Few artists today embody that thread quite like Claire Holley. Although she's made Los Angeles her home for two decades, her roots are firmly planted in the Mississippi soil of her Jackson birthplace.

Where I Lived, Holley's latest full-length album in a recording career spanning 30 years, is one of her most heartfelt, personal, and poignant albums since *Time in the Middle*. As on that album, and on *Every Hour*, she's teamed up with multi-instrumentalist/producer Dan Phelps on these nine quietly compelling songs that go straight to the heart, reflecting on home, family, friends, and memory. It's a common thread running throughout this album without a hint of sentimentality, but with deep sentiment and emotional weight.

Rather than nostalgia, Holley offers presence. These songs aren't about looking back with longing, but about honoring the connections that endure. She explores, sometimes playfully, the ways we carry our origins with us,

and how the places we lived become less about geography and more about the people and moments that define us.

On “4124,” she sings about returning to her childhood home, seeing aging parents and loved ones in the kitchen, watching baseball on TV, pondering the house’s future, and asking, “Are these my final days at 4124?” The song captures a sense of place, and not merely a house and its physical address, but where we live in our hearts and minds, the essence that sticks with us.

“Beauty School” was inspired by the story of Dolly Parton visiting her dying friend Tammy Wynette in the hospital, and doing Tammy’s hair and nails to soothe and relax her. Beyond just a touching story of two country music legends and a charming song, it speaks to the special bond of female friendships and being fully present for a loved one when they need it most, not with praise or gifts but through true tenderness and simple loving gestures.

On “Landline,” “Lingering,” and “Lightning in a Storm,” Holley explores what it means to feel unmoored and slowly find your way back to a place, to yourself, and to your art. “Go out on the land / breathe in the air / feel the dirt on my feet / thank God you welcomed me.” Sometimes, it’s the moments of chaos that illuminate who we really are.

The graceful closing track, “Bluebird,” a duet with Holley’s eldest son Jack, extends the album’s emotional thread to the next generation, a gentle reminder that love and memory don’t end, they evolve.

Where I Lived feels timeless, a collection of intimate portraits shaped by Holley’s warm vocals and sublime songcraft. Like the best of the region’s writers, she understands that a sense of place is really a sense of people. And in tracing her own history, she invites us to revisit ours.

--Jim Simpson *Americana Highways*