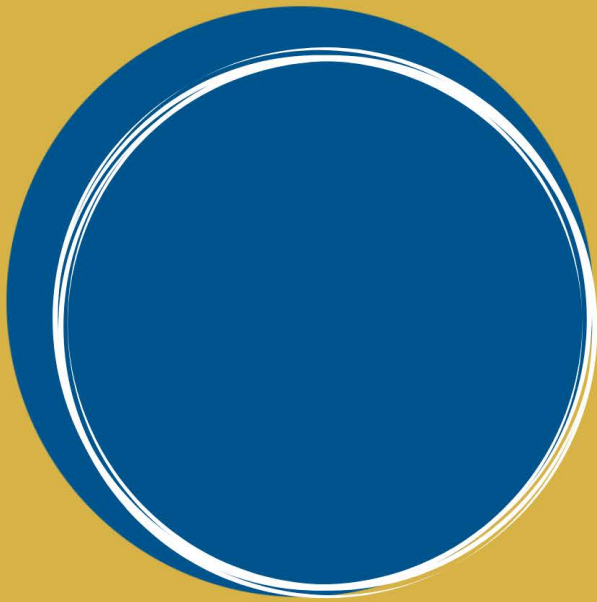


# Colors of a Childhood: How to Paint a House

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## *Colors of A Childhood:* How to Paint a House

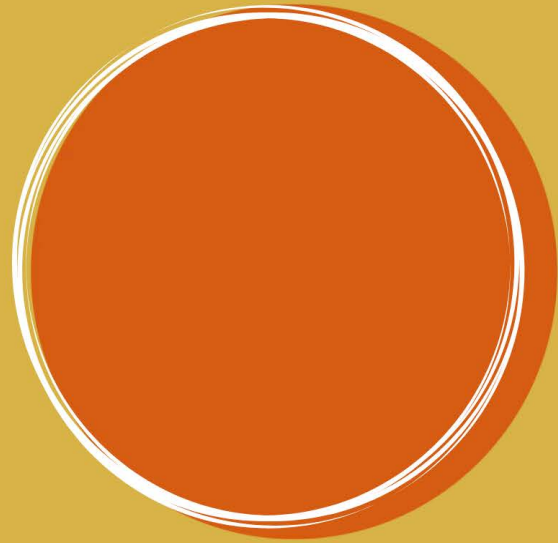


### *Blueberry*

The color adorns the outside of the house, a homage to the blueberry bushes your mom grew in the side yard. You and your sister painted rocks with the acrylic stuff from Michael's which identified the different varieties. By the time the plants really began producing berries squirrels would steal them, and nets would soon be put up to guard the fruit. Even with all the effort gone into caring for the plants, they always were small and bitter, at least compared to those Driscoll blueberries from the Price Chopper down the hill.

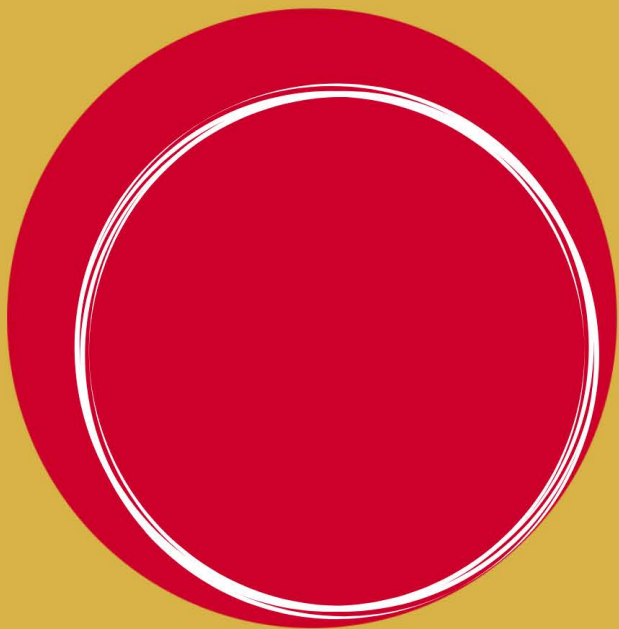
## *Jazz Age*

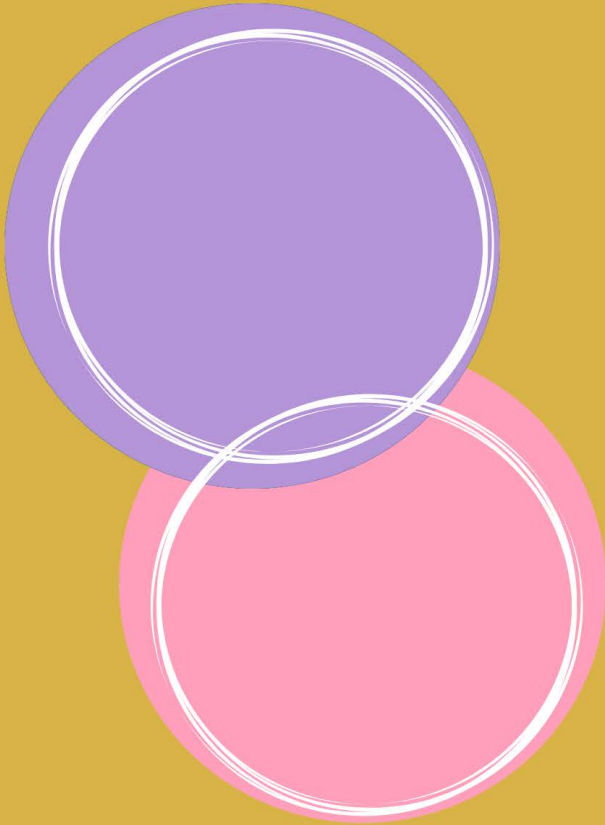
In your house, there are two living rooms, sort of. One with bookshelves and glass table and rough white furniture meant to make guests *ooh* at the pure interior design genius of your parents. The second living room, the better room, has the worn-in leather chair and couch, the big tv on the burnt orange wall, and twinkle lights strung above your dad's prized record player (the one he's going to give to you). Though he tried to teach your older sister, you are the one who knows how to use it, the one with 20 of your own records in their own section amongst his. Your music, Adele and Ella Fitzgerald, Taylor Swift and Chuck Berry and Sheryl Crow, play for your dad halfway across the country when you leave for college.



## *Wine and Dined*

You remember struggling to get the wine glasses out from the upside-down rack. One day you'll be much older and still no better, the rim of the glass always caught behind the metal bars. At night, the red of the dining room will become so dark you'll run through it to get to the stairs, worried that the same zombies from your parents' tv show will somehow get you. This berry flush of the dining room matches your mom's fleece zip up, which has absorbed your dog's fur, snow of each winter past and all of your salted tears every time life gets a little too hard.





### *Ice Age*

This is the last color you'll paint your room in your hometown before it is no longer *yours* and the painted rooms mentioned before are all white now. Gone are the pinks and purples of childhood, the blood red of the scary dining room, and the orange of your dad's soul. Goodbye to the blueberry house, to the height markers on the walls and smudge marks on the glass door from your dog staring out into the street. In your house, your memory has been painted over, and adorning the walls are cheery *Home is Where the Heart Is* signs but this is not a home anymore and any heart is underneath layers of *Bungalow Beige*.

### *Forever, Fairytale*

She never believed in Santa, the tooth fairy, or imaginary friends. But *you* did. So she made these things come true. She wrote you letters from your imaginary friends, storing them in the high place of the closet you couldn't reach, then taking them down and reading them to you. Your sister would put her money under your pillow the time you lost a tooth and your parents had forgotten to play the part. She wrote you grand stories of her imagination, she'd tell tales of witches and evil and the opposing good. When you got older, she'd be the first to scrutinize your behavior, to make sure you'd act right, and she'd be the first to come to your defense.

