

First published on <https://medium.com/@barefootatthekitchentable/dorset-21st-july-1969-a2a9920e0516> on 31st August 2019

Dorset 21st July 1969

There had been a huge row when he had bought the colour TV. Once the shouting had died down we girls were quite proud to be the first in the street with something this up-to-date. We told our friends it was because we came from London.

Now this permanent feature of our family life sat in the corner of the L-shaped lounge, its colours competing with the tomato orange wall. The longer wall was magnolia and just let the bold red bleed on to its insipid cream or would reflect the dancing colours of the babbling box.

The morning started with my sister kicking the underside of my top bunk and telling me that she would beat me there. I swung down and pushed past her. We had spent the previous day fervently drawing, colouring, sticking and arguing over who was the best. Together we tumbled from our bedroom and rushed to be the first to place our handmade birthday cards on the dining table next to Dad as he ate his cereal. He gave a sad smile with milk hovering in the left corner of his mouth. He placed both cards upright in front of him. He told us they were beautiful. He said he was proud to have two such talented daughters. He then turned back to his cereal and hurriedly scraped the bottom of the bowl.

Mum sat, legs curled beneath her on the couch in front of that large colour TV fixed on the reruns of “*one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind*” and letting the coloured wall cast an iridescent orange glow over her white quilted dressing gown. She instead of tell us get dressed or have some breakfast she called us to join her for what she called “this historic moment.”.

We watched for a while as a grey man in a strange space suit bounced around on a grey pock-marked land and placed an American flag into that soil.

Dad came and kissed us both on the top of our heads and said how someone had to go to work. The cards still stood where we had placed them on the table. We turned and knelt on the couch and watched Dad walk across the lawn then take a giant leap across the flower bed. We waved as Dad drove off.