

Since Mom Came

Nan Liu

BEFORE YOU READ:

1. What is a *passer-by*?
2. What is a *shelter*? How is it different from a home?
3. Read the headings. How do you predict Nan would finish this sentence: “Since Mom came”

Moving Away from Home

In 2017, I got a job in Beijing for one year. That was my first time being away from my parents. Since I was born, I had never left home to live by myself.

Feeling Like a Passer-by in a Strange City

I moved to a small apartment. It became my temporary home. I always worked very late. When I got home at night, I just went to bed and fell asleep. Did the apartment feel comfortable? Did it feel like home? I didn’t know. I didn’t have time to think about it. It was just a place for me to rest and arrange my luggage. Everything in this city felt strange to me. I told myself, “You are just a *passer-by*.”

Time went by fast. I spent the summer and fall in that small *shelter*. The first snowflakes were starting to fall. My birthday was coming soon. My mother came to celebrate my birthday. She planned to stay with me for several days. After my mom came, everything started to change.

Then Mom Came

One day, I came home from work, late as usual. When I opened the door, I smelled the sweet aroma of steamed red dates. The room was warm and enveloped in sweet steam. The kettle was gently bubbling. Clean clothes were neatly hung beside the window and gave off a light fragrance. “Oh, it’s home,” I said to myself, “warm, calm, and completely relaxed.”



After that, my little temporary residence became more like a real home. I started to leave work in time to have dinner with my mom. We spent time making my home nice and neat. Even the city changed. It no longer felt so strange to me. I grew fond of it. I decided to stay.

Then I met my husband. We lived in Beijing for almost 10 years. It is the second hometown of my life. You need family to make a place feel like home.

AFTER YOU READ:

1. What made Nan’s apartment in Beijing feel like home? Be specific and detailed.
2. Learn more about the word *since*. Try using it in various sentences.

Nan Liu is an ESOL student at the Borough of Manhattan Community College in New York City. She moved to New York in 2025 because of her husband’s work. Before she moved here, she was a bank officer in China. She is growing more and more fond of New York. The culture, the people, the events, even the sunset outside the window all deeply captivate her. Every day is a new day for her. She feels like her life is starting all over again.