

Fred

Fred walked the Earth. Sometimes he drove if he had to, sometimes took a ferry—he walked whenever he could: observing, learning, wandering. There was much to see, much to know, much to understand. Fred knew it was good for his soul. Talking with people, watching animals, living in each environment. Walking the Earth was good.

Fred's relatives were concerned. He left home at eighteen, phoned and texted regularly but never returned. He had no job, no income, was apparently dependent on strangers. They hoped he would find a home, start a family, begin a career. Wandering was not a career. His mother worried the most.

Fred did not worry. He enjoyed life, receiving food and comfort from strangers, seeing something new every day. He learned more, he understood more. He admitted he was uncertain what he *did* understand, but that only encouraged him to wander more. Wander in the cities, the forests, the beaches, the deserts.

Frequently he saw people rushing and did understand why. He saw people cry, struggle, in pain. He was a watcher and felt guilt when he moved on—did he have a choice? If he stayed, he would never be free.

But it gnawed at him, not helping. People had helped him, now he walked away. So eventually, in a pleasant valley where people needed help during a drought, Fred finally stopped wandering and helped.

At first, he hated his feet growing roots deep into the soil. But he could repair water pipes he was brought and the town council met around him every week. They advertised for him and soon another wanderer arrived, fell in love with him and grew beside him and they raised a family.

Their children left home at eighteen, to wander.