Thank you all for coming. Don't worry, I'll be quick, and then there's more food than any of us can reasonably eat.

I turned fifty this week, and I've been trying to figure out what you're supposed to say at your own party. I don't think you're supposed to give a speech at all. But this is my house and I'm making the rules tonight.

Here's the only piece of my life I want to tell you about.

In my early thirties, I spent three solid years planning a move to Seattle. I had folders. I had a job lined up twice. I talked about it so much that some of you in this room probably assumed I'd gone.

I never went.

And the year I finally stopped planning it was the year I met half the people standing in my kitchen right now. It was the year I signed a lease on the studio, which turned into the pottery, which turned into most of my Saturdays for fifteen years. It was the year my life stopped being a draft.

I'm not saying don't make plans. I'm saying I spent three years looking at a door, and the whole time the room I was standing in was the good one.

So at fifty, I'm not going to stand here and tell you about goals.

I want to thank people instead.

Beth, you have flown in from Denver for every single one of my birthdays since 2009. Every one. You have never mentioned it once, and I have counted every time.

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To the four of you I've known since high school, thank you for still finding this funny after thirty five years.

To everyone from work, twelve years is a long time to sit near the same people, and I genuinely like all of you, which statistically should not be possible.

I've got a house with too many mugs I made myself, a hiking group that tolerates my pace, and a kitchen that is full right now.

That's the whole ambition for the next fifty. Keep this room. Keep these people.

Would you all raise a glass with me, and then eat something, because I made too much.

To all of you. Thank you for being here.

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