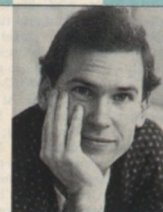


by John Sedgwick

# porch



John Sedgwick is SELF's national correspondent. His most recent book is *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Year in the Life of America's Oldest Zoo*.

“A covered entrance to a building...large enough to serve as an outdoor seating space.”

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All houses need back porches, just as all lives do. That's my porch above. It's slender, as porches go, with just enough room for four rocking chairs that line up facing out, as if the porch were a theater balcony to take in the scene of our small backyard. I often sneak out on sunny afternoons for a quiet sit on the one padded rocker. My feet up on the porch railing, I gently teeter back and forth, gazing dreamily at the maples and chestnut trees that stand like sentries at the edge of the lawn, the tangle of herbs and daylilies in our crowded rock gar-

den, the bright blue sky. But it's not the view, or even the warm air, that draws me. It's the freedom. A back porch is one of the few places in life that entails no obligation—beyond giving the dog a scratch when he comes by. Neither indoors nor out, a porch has no phone to answer, no grass to mow. Away from the street, it is quiet, private, nearly secret. Itself a kind of nowhere, it looks out on virtually everywhere, beyond our yard to the neighbors' lots all around. Still, when I am on my porch, I am in the world only as much as I want to be. And that spells bliss to me.