

Published September 6th, 2015

## Fractured peace

By Alexandra Reinecke



Alexandra Reinecke is from Westchester, New York. She currently resides in Lafayette, where she is junior at Campolindo High school. She writes every morning at 5 o'clock opposite a print of "View of the World from 9th Avenue" and consumes copious amounts of coffee. Her likes include maple-flavored anything and snow. Her favorite animal is a tiger.

were hitherto concealed to me. Maintaining the academic track record I have sustained through high school. Continuing to produce fiction and nonfiction, to lead publications and clubs. Studying for Calculus tests which seem no less real to me than did their mathematical predecessors, which struck fear like nothing else in me for three years' duration.

I do not take car trips to Muir Woods, as I once expected I would. I do not eat takeout Chinese food over Scrabble games with leisure time I can now afford. I make Quizlets for AP Comp Gov. I bite the inside of my mouth over Calculus. Rather than begin the caffeine cleanse I, last year, promised myself I'd start in the fractured peace of this year, I stockpile the pantry with chai latte mix and cases of Diet Coke.

This is not a fractured peace. This is not the tranquility following the run. I am the same person I was as a junior, and as a sophomore, and as a freshman. I escape none of the old responsibilities. I skirt none of the old expectations. I am in limbo. I am working to a standard of excellence by which I am not only merely tired, but routinely exhausted.

So, it is not getting crisp. So, my life is not starting over again with the looming change of season. And Fitzgerald also wrote something different about starting over. "It's never too late . . . to be whoever you want to be. . . . I hope you live a life you're proud of. If you find that you're not, I hope you have the strength to start all over again."

So, maybe fall isn't about becoming born again with the leaves. So, maybe autumn isn't, as I expected of the time between junior year and college decisions, a time which smells of cider and cedar. A time of fractured peace.

So, courage isn't sitting out from the end of a hard race, but seeing it through. Courage is having the capacity, however difficult, to be the person, in those three years, you so often were. Courage is having not the capacity to start all over again, but that to start from where you stand. To begin to continue.

F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote that life starts all over again when it gets crisp in the fall. While the season is fast approaching, however, it is neither crisp nor personally incarnating. It is warm and groggy. Suede moccasins sit like impatient Labradors in the back of my closet. A new, sleek down Patagonia puffer is mashed in my backpack, resentful of the hope I, by wearing it in whatever short, early chill the morning provides, momentarily gift it. I haven't enjoyed the cedar smell of new pencils. Target does not yet allot shelf space to Washington apple candles. Beside the pack of gum signifying my recent plane ride home, the honey color of new, school year Chapstick threatens to melt in its stick.

With school starting, it is effectively fall, but not fall. I, being a senior, am effectively finished with the college admission mania, and yet I am not. I spent my summer completing Hinduism research at Columbia. I also spent it writing supplements for the 16+ colleges to which I plan to apply. Now, back at school in this sweltering California heat, I am as in limbo as is the surrounding weather.

I spent three years of high school working toward admission to my first choice college. From the vantage of my freshman, sophomore, and junior years, senior year appeared to be the breathing time after a long distance track of hurdles. As a senior, I have, unfortunately, found this school year is not composed of exhaling, or of the post-competition stroll to the water fountain I always expecting.

As a senior, I find myself sprinting, considerably less enthusiastically, at a group of phantom hurdles that

Reach the reporter at: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA