

Home Sweet Home

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Here I am, my last year of high school, sixteen years old, with the kind of hairdo we created in 1954 by winding our hair into pincurls each night and impaling our own heads with bobby pins (now there's an obsolete term).

I was thinking of myself at 16 this past weekend because as I flew into New York, the plane took an unusual approach to La Guardia, flying low over southern Manhattan, and I found myself looking down at the roof of the house I lived in as a teenager.

Because of my father's job at that time, I lived on the most incredible piece of real estate: Governor's Island, out there in the harbor not far from the Statue of Liberty. Each day I took a boat over to the Battery, and from there the subway to school in Brooklyn Heights.

New York has changed, in some ways, since then. I'm not certain that if I were the mother of a fifteen or sixteen year old now I would be thrilled with the thought of her roaming the city the way I did then. But oh, what a magical time that was for me. I thought myself very worldly and sophisticated. In truth, I was wide-eyed and ingenuous - and like a sponge. I absorbed everything - and have squeezed some of it back out, in a couple of books set in Manhattan (The One Hundredth Thing about Caroline; and Your Move, J.P.!).

My house is now derelict and abandoned as the city of NY decides what to do with that now-unpopulated island. But as my plane on Saturday circled slowly, getting in line to land, I looked down at my own past and remembered what it was like to be young, looking ahead to life, and thinking that all things were possible.

Now I am home again, back in Cambridge, where I live, catching up with laundry and mail and heading to Pittsburgh this Friday for the weekend. The Prime Stage Theater there will be doing a dramatic adaptation of "The Giver" and I'll get to be in the audience.

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