

Taking a Step Back

I am a college student. A college student who spends time in the registrar's office, petitioning for course overload slips to be approved – even in the summer. A college student who works every weekend and some weekdays to pay her way through tuition and books, while still managing to complete homework. A college student who spends time with laptop in lap, scanning every possible avenue to seek new scholarships, grants, and other opportunities to be applied toward tuition; only one more semester to go, but the burden of maintaining this goal has not gotten easier. A college student that further attempts to incorporate other valuable choices into her life – i.e. healthy eating habits, sleep, exercise, family-time, and boyfriend-time.

To combat this chaos, which is accompanied by debilitating pulsations below the right eyebrow, insomnia, and appetite-reducing nausea, I found a way to levitate in the lotus position, aligning the seven, polychromatic centers of the body. My solace is “taking a step back.” This concept takes the form of lodging out-of-town or down the street; recently, the selected paradisaical hiatus – taken for a few days to leave life, i.e. laptop, homework, cell phone, family, friends, school, and work, behind – was Nashville Tennessee.

I ride shotgun in my boyfriend's car, enjoying the easy-going pace, but internally, I feel like I am on the part of a rollercoaster when it hits the stopping point, jerking every passenger forward before releasing them back, allowing them to revel in being alive. The dark anxieties around me melt through the seat, into the ground, being left behind within the Earth. In their place, like a child eager to play upon entering a playground, my yellowish-white aura brightens. This first day, the incessant chain of “what I have to do” thoughts are replaced by a silent buzzing, only the present moment – filled with cuddles and anime – registers in my baffled, “ready to go” brain. The next day, I find myself among my strongest revitalizers, nature and animals. When I take my first step into the Nashville zoo, I feel like a video game character, with my health-bar replenishing, fully green. I am practically skipping toward each new animal, and when the kangaroos, out in an open exhibit, want belly-rubs, their soothing fur and resounding purity remind me that money, exams, projects, grades, and electronic devices should not hold the key to my sanity.

I bask in the thought of needing to push myself through one final semester so many of those stressors will become old and shed from my body, as if my skin will slough and waft to the ground, revealing a new coating underneath. Although the new external covering will eventually be burdened by new afflictions, these reminders are what “taking a step back” is about, a secret weapon to combat the inevitable flareup of tribulation. I am a college student that found a way to persevere through it all.