

A little bit of an old home

I went on a trip this week and my change of planes was in San Francisco. I was on relatively small planes (still commercial, but one held maybe 30 people) so I walked the tarmac to get into the terminal and then again to get out to the next plane instead of going straight from the plane into an enclosed tunnel.

When I got off the plane and took a deep breath, I smiled. Completely unselfconsciously, I lifted my face to the wind and breathed in the air with an edge of brine to it.

I grew up by the bay and I also spent a few weeks every summer near the beach in Southern California. I love the smell of the ocean. Spending those few minutes breathing the air I grew up with, tasting the salt and enjoying the wind, was surprisingly relaxing. Lately, relaxation has been something I have had to focus on. That travel day, between getting to breathe such familiar air and spending almost five hours straight reading a book, relaxed me more than I had any reason to expect.

Travel is not generally relaxing. There are timetables, pressure changes, people who wear too much perfume, and the general feeling of being overwhelmed by too many people. This time, though, was different. The planes were on time. I didn't have any schedules I had to meet on the other end, just a night in a hotel room before an interview. My hip didn't object to the pressure changes. No one wore too much perfume. Someone made the mistake of eating sauerkraut on the second flight, which almost caused several people to be sick, but that dissipated fairly quickly. I like sauerkraut, but that smell in a small, enclosed space with that many people was a seriously bad idea. I got off the plane in San Francisco, checked the boards for where the next flight would be, turned around, and walked back to the gate I had just left. I can't remember ever having that happen before. All of the pieces

just seemed to fall into place for once and it was a pleasant several hour long stretch of reading a good book and actually being able to relax.

I won't be stopping in San Francisco on the way back, unfortunately, but I will be able to curl up with a good book and not worry about anything for a while. No lists, no stress, no packing or scheduling or making sure everything is done. All I need to do is get on a couple of planes on time. I can do that. In a week we'll be packing the trucks and Xander and Katja will be moving, but for a day I will not be thinking about that. I'll just be curled up either on an airplane or on a seat in an airport losing myself in the enjoyment of an interesting book. It will be easier because I got to breathe San Francisco air, however briefly; I spent a lot of my childhood curled up with books, too, and I was quite good at letting go of everything else while I was reading. I'm going to enjoy practicing that skill on the way home.