

Thanksgiving evening

I'm sitting in a quiet apartment. Everyone else is asleep and the cat is purring, curled up next to my hip. It's a rare moment of peace in our busy little household and I am enjoying it.

Thanksgiving for us usually involves inviting anyone who doesn't have anywhere else to be. This year, we didn't feel like we could do that. We just moved here recently and we don't know very many people yet. We also don't have the house completely set up, which makes it more difficult. We decided to keep it small, just the three of us and my mom. She's vegan, so we adapted most of it to fit her. The turkey, cornbread, and pumpkin pie were not vegan, but the green beans, squash, stuffing that wasn't inside the bird, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, and little wheat loaves were. We also had both vegan and non-vegan gravy. It was all excellent. We also have a ridiculous amount of food left over, but that's what Thanksgiving is for, right? We do have plans for all of it.

I thought settling into a new place would be harder, somehow. Reno was a difficult place for me to live in many ways. I felt like it didn't fit me. We have a lot of very dear friends we made while we lived there, but I always felt out of place, somehow, and I had begun to think that perhaps that was simply part of being an adult. I've been here for a couple of months now and, even though I still periodically get lost driving around, I feel more at home here than I think I ever did in Reno. I don't have close friends here, which is sometimes very hard, but the general feeling fits me better, I guess. We live in a very multicultural place. When we go for walks, we end up talking to people about random interesting things. When I go running, I almost always get a comment or two of support from unexpected people. The CSA is year round and the person who works at the stand at the farmer's market is always very nice

and chatty. We talk to the guy who sells eggs and Katja always gets an extra piece of apple or orange from one of the fruit stands. We go climbing twice a week and everyone has been very welcoming and supportive of a three-year-old going up walls. I love my job and I like the people there. I have a gym four minutes away, so if I get there early or I'm feeling like swimming, I have somewhere to go.

I know in some ways it isn't perfect, but I decided when we started talking about moving that, no matter where we ended up, I would work on seeing the best things first. I didn't like Reno very much by the end of the time we lived there. I was allergic to everything, I didn't like how dry it was, and I didn't feel like I had a place there, like I really fit. I decided to change how I saw the world because being miserable was not improving anything. So, yes, sometimes traffic is nasty. Sometimes the fact that our apartment sucks at airflow unless we turn on the air conditioner can be frustrating. There are little things that I see on a daily basis and I acknowledge them. I am not being a Pollyanna. I have just decided that, since we'll be here at least five years and possibly many more and I want to be happy, I will accept that some small things will be a pain but I will focus on the positive aspects.

This weekend we're going to go visit an animal shelter to see if we can volunteer. We found a little local bookstore that we love. We have plants growing on our deck. We eat at the table on the deck quite regularly and it's very nice to chat with people as they go by below us. We have fresh, good food every week and easy access to a grocery store for anything else we need. Our kitchen is much better than the last one. Everyone seems to be doing well at school and work. We found a local children's theater that looks interesting. There's a lot of live music of a wide variety of styles that shows up within half an hour or so of where we live. We have family here, a little distant but not too far, and it's very nice to see them

regularly. I'm also going to check out a running group soon, since I've never really run with anyone before.

I'm glad we're here. I miss people we've known for years and I really hope we can keep in touch; I'm working on it. I haven't made new friends yet, but I remind myself that it took a while to make friends in Reno, too. I have a few acquaintances who may become friends at some point, so there's hope there. Overall, I think this is a good move for all of us.

I'm feeling very thankful today. Not to a god or higher power, but to our friends and family who have been part of our lives for years. Xander and I have been together for ten years and married for eight, and in that time we have been lucky enough to get to know some truly amazing people. We're in a new place now and I'm happy to be here. I feel like I fit a little better into the culture here, though I may be imagining it. It feels more open, more comfortable. Perhaps it's simply that I don't feel like I'm fighting my way through every day. I like going to work; I like coming home. I think that may be pretty close to my definition of perfection.

I hope anyone reading this has spent the day with people you love and good food.