

Georgie

This is Georgie. He was a present straight out of our car trunk, presented to an overjoyed, bouncing three-year-old version of myself. From then on, I took him everywhere I went – and I mean everywhere. There are videos of me dancing with him at my aunt’s house in the Negev, back when he was as tall as I was and served as an excellent partner (though I must say I was leading). Georgie accompanied me up and down the worn steps of the Coliseum, tracing out the paths of countless ancient Romans with his paw as I dragged him behind me. He even got in a stockade with me at a haunted house in London, smiling as cheerily as ever. I wasn’t smiling though, I was close to tears, and seeing him in the stockade made me much more scared than being in it myself.

As I grew older Georgie became a little more sedentary – my life became increasingly regimented and routine, and there was less and less room for him to follow me in my well-worn path between school, swim practice, and homework. But he was always there, sitting on my bed at night, sometimes my snuggle buddy, sometimes squished under a pillow for days. Until I packed my bags for Harvard. As I crammed my suitcases in the car and we all piled in, Georgie stayed on my bed, I can only imagine gazing off at us with a big, sad smile.

But about halfway through freshman year I questioned this decision – after all, Georgie was my adventure buddy, and this was the biggest adventure of my life. I realized that going places and seeing things was in his blood (or stuffing or whatever). That’s why I loved him more than all the other tons of stuffed animals cushioning my childhood room. When I returned sophomore year, Georgie safely emerged from my backpack, squished but smiling as broadly as ever, and took a permanent seat on my bed.

Obviously, Georgie doesn’t do much these days. He doesn’t attend class or follow me to lab, he didn’t get strapped to my backpack on any FOP trips. I’m sure my teammates are appreciative he doesn’t hop in the boat with me every day at practice, either. He doesn’t really even travel anymore, and stayed at home when I worked in Jerusalem this past summer. But I’m still very comforted by his presence. I was staring at Georgie the other day, for no reason at all, when I asked myself why he mattered so much to me. I cherish him over photographs or home videos, enjoy remembering stories more while giving him a hug. And as I thought about it, I realized that tucking Georgie in the crook of my arm did more than remind me of a time when I toted him around just like that for weeks on end. He was there – actually there – and while everything else about that time has changed – the buildings, the smells, the politics, even my parents and myself – he has stayed exactly the same.

I’m in my last semester here at Harvard, and am feeling the pressure of rapid change set in once again. Next year will be a new place to live, a new group of people to meet, a new schedule to conform to, another layer of responsibilities to absorb. Now, more than ever, Georgie is an emissary from a time that seems very far away, both temporally and emotionally. He’s a total anachronism, the best friend of a little girl from the past who hadn’t a care in the

world. But the neat thing is, he belongs in this time, too. He's a link that connects me to a wide-eyed curly-haired three year old in our Virginia driveway, a homesick eight year old in a hotel in Venice, a nervous eighteen year old arriving in Cambridge, a twenty year old returning from a conference in Chicago. Through him I can literally touch all those iterations of myself. In doing so I can feel what has changed about me, but even more importantly, I can feel what has stayed the same. And that awareness, of who I've always been in spite of the changes, of why Georgie and I will always share an inside joke, makes me feel a little more...like me.