



UP
front

Two weeks ago, my older daughter moved from Washington (D.C.) to New York City, to an apartment two blocks from the one in which she lived until she moved here when she was 6. Life's circles have a way of closing themselves.

We converged upon her to "help," but she didn't need it. She – and a pair of movers willing to tackle a sixth-floor walk-up – had the heavy lifting handled, literally, before we arrived. I hung a picture and a mirror to make myself feel useful, and we bought a few small things. And we ate... quite well, as one does in New York.

On the second night, we went to a neighborhood restaurant from our regular late-1990s rotation. Same owner, same staff. "The last time I saw you, you were this big," the woman said, reaching her hand down towards the floor, "and you were bundled in your cute little coats."

The girls' outerwear is more sophisticated, less "cute" now, and the woman would need to stand on her toes and reach above her head to indicate their current heights. Things are both undeniably different and conspicuously the same as they once were. The smiles the girls shared with the woman were as wide and innocent as their toddler selves. Their little-girl dimples had suddenly, as if by magic, reappeared. Our updated family: More excited about our prospects than melancholy from the passage of time.

"I love my place," Sofia said. "It's big for New York." Her enthusiasm mirrors mine when I was her age. An age when the "good" is front-and-center, and the rest gently fades into portrait mode.

She has a roommate after living solo, the same one as freshman year at college 10 years ago. The granddaughter of my daughter's late-maternal grandmother's San Diego friend. Sounds confusing when you read it, I know. What it really says is: It's a small world and life's circles have a way of closing themselves and smoothing the abrasions that once seemed unlikely to heal.

"If not now, probably never," she said of the move. I think Mom would be happy and proud.

She would. She is.

"It's not forever," she added. Sofia loves Savannah. It's her home, and she pictures a day when it will be, for good. As do I, but I know that time is not now, and that's as it should and must be, and it's fine.

"Are you alright?" Jenna asked as I stared out the car

window, my old neighborhood fading to a blur.

"I am," I said, simply. And, indeed, I was. Not perfect, but okay.

I can imagine a time when Sofia's children, and Gabby's, don't feel compelled to move away from here to find their way back. I long for it. That day is more conceivable than it was when I arrived.

Someday, we will be Grandpa and Grandma, and take care of the kids' kids better than I did my own, just as my parents did with mine. We'll do it right here, in my beloved city, when the girls return to stay. After Sofia makes it in New York, as Gabby is in New Orleans. When everything New will be old again, and vice versa, because life's circles have a way of closing themselves.

Scott A. Lauritti



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