

## SUPRIYA MATREJA

**“If we had no winters, the spring would not be so pleasant, if we did not sometimes taste adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome.”**

My experience has been full of highpoints, low points, pleasant surprises and not so pleasant surprises, some disappointments and some positive encounters.

Two years when I was sitting with my friends a friend of mine came running to me and asked –‘Is it true that you are going to America, so soon you will be Americanized, asking for diet coke in place of water and gulping down a whole hamburger at once.’ I laughed and confessed-‘Yes it’s true I am going.’ Never a day apart from my family but I was more excited than nervous.

I thought I knew everything about USA just by watching Hollywood movies, listening to backstreet boys and boy zone, and knowing the names of couple of basketball players. I worked from the American dream on the day when I landed in Detroit in January. I never knew that Michigan is so notorious for the bad weather and unending winters. When I saw snow everywhere and no life for many days all my expectations vaporizes into air. I had an impression that everywhere its New York and Las Vegas, full of lights, people and life. Instead I observed very ordinary people with t-shirts and jeans.

During my 1<sup>st</sup> winter, the figures in Fahrenheit seen on Lansing State Journal (LSJ) seemed so unreal to me, and I was so obsessed for conversions from Fahrenheit to Celsius and then understood the results. Never been below 20°C, it was like a nightmare.

While the winters were in full swing it’s so depressing and frustrating and it’s almost impossible to think that this misery will ever end. I seem that the nature is bowing its

head and praying continuously to God to be modest and generous. The bald trees, so raw and helpless attached to the trunk, as if they are begging to restore their beauty and give them their life back. In the months to come the prayer are unanswered, the nature is all covered with snow as if they are given a white blanket to cover-up.

Dusty, busy, loud, exhilarating is the view of the roads in my county. Loud honking of the horns, continuous astonished you as how eight cars can fit in two lane road. Heavy traffic of cars motors and bikes approaching you and not paying any attention to the pedestrians on the road.

Now I've acquired little muddled American accent, a big wardrobe full of winter jackets, snow boots. I am now quite used to the traffic on the right side, preference to the pedestrians rule, coin laundry, unending aisles in Meijer and Wal-Mart and of course route 20 CATA.

I never thought that being from different country would become my 1st identity. O Lord I was so surprised by the diversity on the day of orientation; infact I learned the world geography here. Foe few days in school I use to walk all alone, take my lunch alone because I had no one to talk to. During my lunch the only thing I could concentrate was my sandwich, which use to stare at me sympathetically. I hated it. Few days went by like that; eventually I shaped my identity, tried to find jobs on campus and luckily got my 1<sup>st</sup> job at Office for International Students and Scholars (OISS) and that made me feel so much better. I loved what I did, my workplace was a hub of diversity and I started feeling better day by day. I ended up finding an entirely new aspect of myself.

## **IN TERMS OF LANGUAGE**

Growing up in a multilingual country like India means surrounded by people talking various languages and dialects. In my country the national languages is Hindi, and at my home mom and dad use our cultural language, brother married a girl from different culture, my education has been in English, wow I think I did my homework and prepared myself well to face the diversification. But still I am under training for the American accent, can't imagine of Indianized American accent, broken English-different tics and bits to describe and see the beautiful world.

No matter how long I have been in Lansing the weather is something that will always astonishing, insane and breathtaking. The very pleasant one is fall colors. The greens turning into flaming red than sunny yellow than cute maroon than multicolored and finally gone, feeling the chilly winds on your face, seeing the swiping of the leaves by winds on the roads. Truly said—

“There is a pleasure in the pathless woods, there is rapture on the lonely shore, and there is society, where none intrudes. By the deep sea, and music in its roars; I love not man the less, but nature more.” **George Gordon**

## **EMBARASSING MOMENTS**

“Experience is the name we give to our mistakes.”

I can never forget the second day in US when I ordered a bagel. I ordered at the counter for a bagel...I was thrown up with the alley of questions...

Which bagel? Plain/onion /multigrain /sesame seeds.  
With cream cheese or butter?

Strawberry cream cheese or plain cream cheese.

Toasted or untoasted?

For here or to go?

Cash/credit

WOW

I was clueless what to say, felt so embarrassed finally replied could you please cancel my order and give me a regular coffee. I ended up only with a small coffee. I never knew that you get so many choices for a simple loaf of bread.

### **DIFFICULT MOMENTS**

**Every path has its puddle.**

There are times when I feel lonely; I seem am the most confused creature on the earth. It mostly happened when in the initial days I was unable to explain myself to other; I tried my best to express my feeling and thoughts but could not. I didn't know that knowing English is not only weapon to survive here. At times some incidences happens which make me realize the distance from my family and old friends. Even if I think of going home, it is going to take good 48 hours to reach. But than I console myself that life is never same always, I can't be a delicate darling, staying home being pampered all the time. **'Gardens are not made by sitting in the shade.'**

Finally I can say, coming to USA has been special to me, I sculpted my identity and I am satisfied with my decision, which I took two years back. If I had not come here my life would have been so much different. I would not have discovered my real self and hidden abilities to survive in a new environment and this vast diversification. Now, I am some scale higher in maturity than before. I can conclude whatever happens, happens for the best.

Essay competition

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