

Memories of Yonkers on Hudson  
Ruth Balton

After my husband and I separated, I moved from Kings Park, Long Island, to Yonkers, literally a stone's throw from the Hastings-on-Hudson border. My new home offered spectacular views of the Hudson River and the Palisades, whose cliffs rim the western side of the Hudson River.

As devastated as I was, I forged on with my life at work and far more slowly with my personal life. I first rented a one-bedroom apartment, which afforded no views of the Hudson. I yearned for rooms with a view, which I knew would inspire me and where I would find respite from my melancholy. Less than eighteen months after the separation, I purchased a two-bedroom co-op on the eighth floor that was the top floor of a mid-sized apartment building.

In addition to the stunning vistas, what attracted me was the sea-foam colored carpeting and walls inside the apartment. Upon entry, those colors never failed to soothe me. I was inevitably drawn to the balcony that beckoned from the living room. Opening the sliding glass door and stepping out onto the balcony, I could see south, all the way to the majestic George Washington Bridge as well the New York City skyline. Across the river on the distant shore rose the Palisades, a ridge of pale chartreuse in spring, verdant greens in summer and a blending of gold, russet, and burnt orange during autumn's peak foliage. And in the warmer months, directly below my balcony, I observed all the swimmers and sunbathers on the deck as well as the children with adults who were cavorting in the pool.

The crowning glory was the view of the Hudson, and the boat traffic that sailed north and south on the river. In summer, sailboats and speedboats went by my balcony. And during the cooler months, oil tankers came up and down the river.

The Hudson River with its ever-changing vicissitudes provided me with my greatest comfort. No matter how horrendous the commute, which was over 500 miles in dreadful traffic each week, no matter how stressful and exhausting my Citibank position was, no matter how lonely and desolate I sometimes felt, the river and its moods restored me and sustained me through all seasons.

In warmer months, upon reaching home after a twelve-hour day, I would pour a glass of wine and escape to the balcony to watch the sun descend in golden hues over the Palisades. Reclining on the chaise, my tension would ebb as the sun set.

In winter, the afternoon sunlight would form ribbons of fuchsia, mauve, and purple, which appeared to stream south, towards New York Harbor. In frigid weather, enormous ice floes would form, and then ultimately crack as the temperatures climbed. The ice chunks appeared as crystals as the winter sun began to set. My favorite time on winter Sunday afternoons was examining the

crystalline shapes while sipping homemade beef barley soup, accompanied by a decent pinot noir.

Gradually, over a period of several years, I regained my equanimity and began my search for my life's next chapter. Despite the fact that I had approached forty and was single with no prospects of a husband, the dream of having my own child became my life's objective. The fulfillment of that quest spanned two years; all the while I continued to receive emotional sustenance from my sanctuary on the Hudson.

Miraculously my dream was fulfilled and I gave birth to a beautiful redheaded son. As soon as I brought him home, I had an epiphany. I knew instantly I could not raise him in my heaven and my haven, as it wouldn't be safe for him. Balconies ten stories high are hardly ideal for toddlers. Before my son reached six months, we left the Hudson, left New York and moved to Philadelphia, to an apartment without a balcony and to a new life, one that I built with my newborn.

While I will never move back, I always reflect on my life in Yonkers on Hudson with enormous fondness and gratitude. There is much truth to having a room with a view.

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