

It's a warm fall morning, the sunburned leaves in the trees transform into many more shades than ever imagined. The faint scent of a distant bonfire mixes with that of winter. It's too nice to stay at home, you can't bear to think of what adventures you'd be giving up if you didn't have the guts to just get up and go. You grab a sweater, put on your sneakers and head towards Onondaga Lake. Just the drive out to the park is enjoyable, the traffic doesn't even get to you. You whistle along to your favorite CD, whether it be classic jazz or contemporary rock, somehow you notice something different. Maybe it's a hidden drum beat or another interpretation of the meaning of the song, whatever it is, it makes you smile and appreciate small things. You pull in, park, and get out.

You start the trail equipped with head phones and a bottle of water. You pass the new swimming area, and you notice the "no swimming" sign conveniently located next to the towering lifeguard stations along with the bright red buoys floating in the shimmering water. You pass the jungle gym and swings that are crawling with young children and mothers close by on park benches reading the new Steven King novel and chatting with friends. You glance back at the boat house, there's a crew team throwing their coach in the water, "They must have won," you think to yourself.

Every thought of bills, who needs to be picked up and when, and who has what practice and "how am I going to schedule my life around my husband and three kids?" escapes your mind. You are at ease; you can't think of a better place to be. You sit on the next bench you happen to see, and think about when you were a kid: your high school crew team would cringe at the thought of accidentally falling into the lake, knowing how toxic it was. An extreme amount of accomplishment flows throughout your body, knowing that your generation was able to make such a beautiful place safer for your children, and their children.

That is the morning I look forward to.