

 **010823 Weinerbrød (Danish (you know, the tasty breakfast treat) in Danish)**

Sit down before fact as a little child, be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, follow humbly wherever and to whatever abyss nature leads, or you shall learn nothing.
- Thomas Huxley

So, here I stand, feeling on the edge of the abyss. My bags are finally packed, the errands are finally completed and all that is left to do is to get onto that plane in a few hours and start my new life as a student in a new place.

I have chosen the quote by Huxley, not because I feel the height of the cliff that I am standing on. I know glaringly little about what I am getting myself into. I know how to be a student, but there all of the unknowns a of a new place, a new language and a new culture. Are my classes really four hours long? Are these people nuts? How will I fit in? Who is this Tove Brandt from whom I am renting a room? Why are pickled fish so popular?

But, for all of the unknowns that are only an ocean away, I find myself to be surprisingly calm as I make this leap. Yes, I am excited and nervous. But, I think that my experience of living and traveling in China has taught me to be a little less of a control freak and a little more willing to just accept the unknowns ahead of me. I am going to Copenhagen whether or not I know all of the answers to my questions. Being open to discovery is a lot easier than trying to fight and fear something over which I have no control.

Which returns me to the quote once more. As I embark on this adventure, I want it to be a learning experience in more than one way. I need to remind myself to be open to the new experiences ahead with the heart of a child - that sense of discovery where life is magical and new, puzzles become challenges and slowly the pieces of life's great art come together. The beginner has struggles and fears, but keeps on going. I've lived in a new place and a new culture before, but I am reminded of the need to keep myself entirely open to the experience as there is so much more to learn about the world, about people and about myself.

I have been asked by several people if I plan to send out weekly updates as I did while I was in China. I can not promise that the emails will be as diligent or as interesting as the ones from China were, but if you would like to be on the distribution list, please let me know. I also hope to keep up regular correspondences with you other than just the mass emails. You can always keep in touch with me via this email address, but remember that snail mail is better! My snail mail address is:

And, I want to make sure that you understand that you are invited to come visit me in Copenhagen. I have no idea of what mysteries my academic schedule holds for me as of yet. But, tell me when you are interested in coming and we can work out a great visit.

I ask that you please keep me in your prayers over the next few days for a safe flight, a speedy recovery from jet lag and for an open heart and mind as I learn to live in my new home.

Take care and see you soon!

Jeff

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