

it in without JUDGING so much?!" I was continually, and apparently annoyingly, expressing my opinion, "I like this, I dislike that," when she wanted to just experience. As a counselor, I have learned to enter and experience the world of the people I work with and, ironically perhaps, in my role as a college counselor, to interpret and explain the unique and strange world of U.S. colleges and universities and the convoluted process of admission into them.

As I sit here, the sun has now set over Caracas and the spectacular sunset has spread out across the mountain and the city. Every evening is different, with a range of colors from deep orange, like tonight, to light pink. Sometimes the colors tinge the entire sky, and sometimes, like tonight, the color concentrates in one corner of the horizon. And each day, the mountain awakes with a different face. Sometimes, when wild storms convulse the city, it disappears behind the clouds and wisps of the fog slide in through our windows. Whatever is the mood of the mountain, I feel privileged to be here and to witness its beauty. It is part of me, as is being an American, and being a Baha'i, and being a member of the human race, in all its beauty and its tragedy.

ALEXANDRINA SERGIO

CAN YOU TAKE THE COUNTRY OUT OF THE GIRL?

Me: OK now, tell me this: Do you get teary-eyed when you're watching the Olympics and they play "The Star Spangled Banner"? Does your heart go pitter-patter?

She: Well, I get choked up over "O Canada" when the Canadians win, even if they have competed with the U.S.

Me: I didn't ask about context. This is a gut check. When you hear "The Star Spangled Banner" at the Olympics, do you get an involuntary emotional surge?

She: Yeah. I do.

Me? I'm Sandy, The Mother.

She? She's Lauren, The Daughter.

She was raised in a Connecticut suburb, born into a politically involved family that planted campaign signs on the lawn at election time, wrote many letters to the editor and spoke at town meetings and legislative hearings. Tall flagpole in the front yard. She had a high-school boyfriend. She scarfed down roast beef and ham with the best of them. Storybook American childhood.

Today she is a city-dwelling vegetarian married Canadian lesbian.(!)

As I rejoiced in the child she was, I revel in the adult she has become. Her evolution has been marked by the blessed awakening to her sexual orientation and the happiness of her legal-from-the-start marriage to her beloved Meg. I easily grasp how she has become an avowed city person, her basic metro-life training having taken place in Montreal and Toronto. I understand how she became a vegetarian: hard not to be when Meg had espoused the practice long before they met. The being Canadian thing, though, has prompted questions. She holds dual citizenship—feels privileged to be able to be Canadian without renouncing the place of her birth; but if she were forced