

Checking in on the school year, origami for everyone, a rainbow, and the pillow everyone needs (7 Quick Takes)

~1~

Six weeks or so into the school year I'm feeling a little out of my depth.

It's lucky that I don't have to understand sixth grade math to be able to help someone prepare for a test, because I have no idea what half the math vocabulary words mean. I don't even remember having math vocabulary words growing up, but that doesn't mean we didn't have them.

Meanwhile, I decided it was time to check in with our fourth grader's teachers to clarify expectations—for me and for our son. They showed me test scores and talked with me about him. I left feeling so proud of him and sure he's in the right place.

There is nothing like the feeling that your child is in the right school. And I cried a little as I left. I'm just so proud of him and relieved that he is making progress.

~2~



My fourth grader was so excited to hear that our conference at school would be early in the morning before the school day started. He decided he would make paper origami ninja stars for his classmates. The night before the conference, he took stacks of post-it notes and folded and folded and folded them.

When I went to bed, he was lying in his bed, still folding. I figured he would fall

asleep, and eventually he did.

The next morning, he sprang out of bed, ready to go. The stars were all folded and ready to go.

“Wow,” I said. “I can’t believe you finished. What time did you fall asleep?”

“I think it was 3:00,” he said.

Yikes. I don’t think it could have been because he was full of energy, bouncing around the house, counting the minutes until we could go. But he was definitely up later than I was.

~3~

We are looking for stools for our breakfast bar, so we went shopping at a store in Frederick, Md., that one of John’s sisters recommended. It’s called At Home, and they did have lots of stools. Somehow we still couldn’t find quite what we were looking for.



I think maybe it’s time for me to acknowledge that I think I’m not at all particular, but I am, in fact, incredibly picky. Or maybe I just enjoy the hunt. So, we didn’t buy a single stool.

But I had to pause by the Christmas displays because they had these “Better not pout” pillows. Doesn’t everyone need a “Better not pout” pillow? I regret not buying them for me and everyone I know.

~4~



One afternoon, we were driving home when it started raining.

Just as we were approaching our neighborhood, the sun came out.

“We should look for a rainbow,” our 9-year-old said. It made me smile because I have said that many times, but now he is looking for them himself.

Almost a moment later, he spotted one, right over our neighborhood.

There are few things as magical as a rainbow—even when you can’t find a pot of gold at the end.

~7~

I’m part of a diversity reading group at work this month, and I simply cannot keep up with the reading.

This week when it was time for our meeting, I was in the middle of an urgent project and realized I would be late. But I decided to go—even though I was late and behind in the book we are reading, *The Pearl that Broke Its Shell*.

My colleague who is leading our group had arranged for us to Skype with Nadia Hashimi, the author. We had such a delightful conversation. I asked her about her writing process, how the story changes as she writes, and how she selects the titles.

Afterward, I felt so grateful that I had gone even though I didn’t feel ready and knew I would be late. It was a good reminder to myself that sometimes even when you are unprepared, you can be present—and that is enough.

Read more quick takes at Kelly’s blog, This Ain’t the Lyceum, and have a wonderful weekend!