

Dream On

Gold. In 1607, the first English settlers would arrive in Jamestown, Virginia in search of this precious material. Unfortunately, these settlers would never actually acquire any of this promised gold.

Today, Americans continue to search for infinite amounts of wealth. While this may be attainable for a select few, most of us know that the likelihood of becoming a billionaire is infinitely slim. However, this does not stop us from chasing those outrageous dreams, as Gatsby taught Nick to “run faster, stretch out [his] arms farther...”(Fitzgerald 148).

I kept running. That is until my body told me to stop. After months of training for the 3rd of July 5K, I managed to get sick the day of the race. I was bummed that I would not get to even start my first 5K race, but there was little I could do to control the fact that I had gotten sick on race day.

By evening the day of the race, I was feeling better, but not in any condition to run 3.1 miles. At this point, I was more sick of being sick than I was actually sick. Going into the 8th grade that fall, I had decided that I was too old to go see the fireworks, despite the fact I still loved to watch them light up the sky.

Boom! A firework exploded off in the distance. I craned my neck, trying to catch a glimpse of the fireworks over the trees, without any luck. My mother, watching me scan the sky for the fireworks, decided to take action.

Barefooted, wearing pajamas, unkempt hair—I followed my mother up the street to the top of the hill. The fireworks were barely visible over the trees, and ended almost as quickly as they had arrived.

I was disappointed I had gotten to see so little of the show, but luckily the Walpole Fireworks show had not begun. Still in pajamas, I got in the car with my mother as we headed towards the center of town.

We came over a hill just as a firework erupted in the sky above us. My mother pulled the car over and we got out to watch the show.

Just then, the sky lit up with a giant smiley face firework. One I had never seen before that moment. Standing there shivering, barefoot, sick, while being bitten by mosquitoes, I smiled back, because even after I had failed to run and looked like crap, I was still able to see that firework.

In America, we may never finish the race, catch the green light, or find that pot of gold. However, America offers something else: hope that we will find something that will sustain us. The firework did that for me. Loving Daisy did that for Gatsby. And the settlers at Jamestown found wealth through tobacco. Being an American is simply having the ability to dream, and by doing so finding happiness, even if it lies in something unexpected.