

Lyme disease is a tricky thing. Patients experience a wide range of symptoms, and it's an invisible illness; a person with Lyme Disease can look healthy as a horse. When I was 17 years old, my doctor didn't believe in the disease, so he threw some antibiotic prescriptions my way and that was that. I was alright for a few months, but then it came back stronger. Not many people understand how this disease works. Not many people understand how I work. This equation made for a very lonely couple of years.

I became so ill and so depressed that I could not - physically or emotionally - leave my bed. I made some art, took photos of myself. Every swollen joint, unexplained bruises, angry red stretch marks -- all the visible pain was documented.

After months of intensive therapy, I booked a ticket to move in with a good friend of mine in Bend, Oregon. I got to the airport early, at 6am. When I was little, I used to imagine all the people early in the airport, going to their big jobs, wearing suits and leather shoes and not sleeping with stuffed animals. Looking at the same CEO types cruising through the airport, I couldn't help grinning like the little kid I am.

Oh, to breathe and to walk and to smile again.

I walked down the aisle to my gate, and the white-walled corridor was stained with hues from the rising sun.

I can remember how beautiful that sunrise was.

Purple, and the most vibrant pink I have ever seen.

I stood in the terminal, glassy-eyed. After two years of darkness, I saw the world in color once again.

I was the last passenger to board.

Freedom is the wings of a west-bound plane taking off into a pink and purple sky.