

## September Beginnings

September has evolved into a perfect month for beginnings. I began to view September this way as an antidote to the predictable sadness that would overtake me when August days grew noticeably shorter during my childhood summers spent in the Catskills. Nights would grow chilly, too, and my lightning bug buddies vanished as magically as they had appeared when summer sparkled endless as a starry sky. Not a simple goodbye. The creek behind the bungalows became so cold, I stopped wading in it; the tadpoles had disappeared anyway—without warning. Noisy rhythmic harmony of crickets, cicadas, and bullfrogs became softer making the pond behind my bungalow eerily lifeless. Sporadic leftover firecracker echoes from beyond the mountain were replaced by an odd vacuum of quiet. One day, the praying mantis that had attached itself to the fragrant butterfly bush simply abandoned its branch. The bird's nest in the rotten wood board above the screened in porch, stilled as birds left the cozy home they'd known all summer, added to lessons nature taught me about endings we cannot control.

The Big Dipper, my steadfast celestial summer beacon, would keep me company in my deepening loneliness as bees buzzed around the flower garden with less energy and I lost interest in daily weeding. Moths hovered around the porch light less frantically and monarchs grew scarce. How I dreaded the graceful fall of those first leaves from the mighty oak that had shaded me during those endless sweltering afternoons, filled with ice cream cones smothered with colorful sprinkles, wild blueberry stains on our clothes and teeth, and wide skies painted with circus animals lurking in the clouds.

Subdued and resigned, I would prepare for the inevitable return to school. I had to find a way to move past the grieving of packing up and letting go of a life and a home I loved. With time, I would grow to view September as a beginning of the wonderful season of autumn, a marriage of harvest and hope. Pale pastel flowers are overshadowed by the bold majesty of autumn mums. Sweet juicy peaches and plums are done. The crunchy firm feel of an apple picked yesterday in the palm of my hand today is a welcome change as I welcome my sweatshirt and socks those crisp early autumn morning visits to LBI.

September is a perfect moment for all of us to recommit to purpose and love as B9 School in the Barnegat, NJ area looks forward to enriching your child's growing mastery of learning English or Spanish—or yours—as I welcome every September rose ready to blossom, willing to learn alongside of a teacher who knows...the joys of autumn growth.

*"For all the sadness of closure, there is a new and joyful unfolding in the process of becoming."*—Mary Casey