

I wouldn't have worn skinny jeans on the bike ride if I had known how long it was going to be. And, now, I had to pee.

We were riding along tree-lined streets in what looked to me like multi-million dollar neighborhoods close to my brother's work, the private country club on Fishers Island in New York. I was told I couldn't enter the clubhouse because of my clothes.

I yelled to my brother in tow, "Have you ever wondered why jeans aren't allowed? What kind of elitist bull shit is this?"

He didn't answer. Fair enough considering my normalcy of idealistic virtue signaling.

"There's a bathroom at the driving range you can use," he said later.

I replied with a pathetic moan. I didn't know how far the driving range was, but I knew I was starting to chafe.

We rode for 10 miles, a bit longer than the length of the 1-mile wide island in the Long Island Sound. It's a miracle I didn't bleed from skin rubbing on denim or get a bladder infection from violently holding in urine, but I made sure to get retribution through petty sibling bickering.

It was 2015, and I was visiting my younger brother, Andrew, while on a trip to the East Coast. He was a golf professional on Fishers, part of a world that I could not visit that day because of my pants, and part of a world I may not have historically been able to become a member of because of what's in my pants.

Not that I could join as a member at any time. We weren't born into a private-country-club-type lifestyle. Money wasn't even enough to join a club such as Fishers Island. Like other private clubs, sponsorships from other members are needed, along with sometimes-five-to-six figure initiation fees and annual dues of 1,000s of dollars. Like our juxtaposition to the wealthy members, which summed to around 500 at the time, the island was home to an estimated 200 year-round occupants versus the 2,500 to 3,000 visitors and staff in the summer.

It was September and astonishingly beautiful. Chafing or not, as a native of the Southwest, the novel scenery easily seduced me. I had taken Metro North into New London, and bought a ticket for the 45-minute ferry ride, which felt like an adventure in itself. It was a gentle sway of a boat ride, an unexpected courtship that I had little control over participating in, and I was quickly in love.

A member couple, I assume, offered me some of their chilled wine on the ferry. The wife sat next to me and chatted her way into a permanent seat in my memory. She seemed like a character from a TV show, a person living a life so far removed from mine I could comfortably question her existence.

Even though I brought my one pair of khaki pants to golf in, I knew, wholeheartedly, I may not feel like I belong in a place like Fishers. It was, notoriously, unavailable to most humans after all. So, even though I made fun of its socially-constructed allure, I felt special to have been invited.

My wardrobe continued to cause issues during our round of golf, this time my Vibram shoes—the ones that look like gloves for feet. My brother was embarrassed to introduce me to some people he knew on the course, so we evaded them, lest they be appalled. I loved that I didn't fit in, and I loved the long-sleeved golf shirt I bought on a discount in the pro shop. (The logo on the shirt was an outline of the island, only purchasable and recognizable by 'those in the know.')

At sunset the day after the bike ride my brother and I finished our round of golf. The luxuriously designed golf course was strategically placed among pieces of strewn land in the water, so unique and breathtaking I thought it deserved its own geographical designation.

The day before, I wasn't allowed to pee in the clubhouse. And, that day, I felt lucky to just be in its presence, a presence that most people could unfairly not experience, acceptable wardrobe or not.