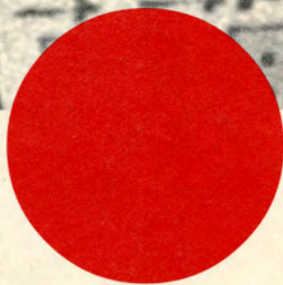




the



Aleph

3

a journal of global perspectives





Young Peruvian Girl Nick Sadoski

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Volume III, 2004



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Letter from the Editors

In constructing *The Aleph*, the most exciting part of the process is when all of the submissions are laid out on a table and we begin to identify thematic connections between the pieces. Borges would appreciate this process, as it is motivated by a drive similar to that of his eponymous character in the short story “The Aleph”, who searches for the mystical key to understanding the relation between all things. (The fictional Borges discovered his Aleph in a basement on *Avenida Juan de Garay* in the *Constitución* district of Buenos Aires. The background image on the cover is a historical map of this district.)

One of the threads that emerged from the chaos on the table was a series of essays concerned with identity. This is fitting because international education often challenges our identities, forcing us to see ourselves as distinct from our cultural contexts. These essays appear in the section *Crossings*. We also began to pair images that resonate with each other, either in harmony or dissonance, which are spread around this issue. This edition of *The Aleph* also features a selection of humorous and fictional pieces, although we have referred to the latter as *(Non)fictions* because it was clear to us that, while the situations might be imagined, the themes and observations are obviously and richly drawn from personal cross-cultural experiences.

Finally, we conclude with a powerful pair of photos: a chic housing development built next to a *favela* (shantytown) in São Paulo, Brazil, and the Great Wall of China. These images struck us as illustrative of the types of barriers, some more obvious than others, that exist between people. Our students, as evidenced by their work, have actively engaged in a dialogue across a multitude of barriers – cultural, linguistic, political, racial, and socioeconomic – and it is our hope that they have gained a new awareness not only of what divides people but also of what might serve to bring them together.

Moments I

Running in Place

It is early morning in Carroroe. My friends are still asleep under warm comforters, while soft rumblings in the kitchen sound of the Irish fry. I fumble in the dark for my sneakers, shorts and well-worn t-shirt. Creaking down the stairs, I slip out the front door and into the brisk wind coming off the bay. The smell of peat in the air is musty and warm. Swinging my sleepy arms to get my circulation moving, I walk down the gravel driveway to the road. Deciding to head towards town, I turn right. The only sound is my feet tapping on the dewy pavement. The road is worn around the edges, but sturdy with age and trimmed with loose stone. A shaggy brown dog comes around the side of a tawny colored cement house. His aging features suggest that he is too tired to bark. But he knows that I am not intruding here, merely exploring. My mind wanders to home for a minute, as I wonder if my dad got up early this morning to run....

“You look like a runner,” people tell me. “Tall and long-legged.” But I do not run out of loyalty to my physical composition. I am not the muscle-wrapped woman in the Nike commercial. I do not careen through the countryside for miles on end while my shiny and toned leg muscles merely graze the open fields. I do not bound over streams or hurdle fences. Gritty rock music does not accompany this peak physical exertion, nor do logos pop out of the surrounding scenery. Marion Jones has a contract. I run for mental profit. There is something about moving my legs that airs out my brain, like rolling the window

down in a sun-warmed car. Maybe it is the increase of blood flow? Or that I have some time to myself? Either way, a psychiatrist's plush, velvety chaise lounge will never be my refuge. The reassurance of my road-worn running sneakers will do just fine....

I round the bend and see a small lake ahead. As I get closer, I stop for a minute near an old boat launch. From here, I can see the green, yet golden Twelve Bens stretching into the clouds, cradling the outskirts of this little, waking town. The lake, trimmed with the occasional bobbing wooden boat, reflects this postcard-perfect scene, a scene that is mine, if only just for this morning. I turn and look down the road toward the church, pub and grocery store at the intersection in town. A quick glance over my shoulder and I jog on....

In preparation for Ireland, friends, professors, and travel guides told me what I could expect; how this place would be arranged, what I would see and how I might fit in. And I could go and search for these expectations of Ireland, but in reality I just need to go for a run. It is a chance for me to explore and expose myself to this new place. I know now what the white-washed stone cottage looks like at 3:00pm every day, that Rainbow, the farm dog with different colored eyes, will always chase me on the stone wall until he tires. All of these places and moments mix together and the patchy, yet sturdy roads seemingly welcome me as much as I do them. Maybe when I get back home I will think about jogging in Ireland. And while I am here, I will think about my routes at home. But it will always be the comfortable road and me, no matter where I am.

—Lauren Shallish



Ireland Road Kerry Sullivan

Moments II

Anoo, nande ikimasu ka?
(How will I get there?)

Americans hold many misconceptions about Japan. As such, I could gently admonish the propagated stereotypes and myths—Japan as a faceless society, its youth chained to stressful examinations, men married to their jobs and women married to the home—all of which completely obscure the rich, creative society that is Japan. And yet Japan does allow for many occasions of comedy for the naïve, uninitiated foreigner trying to survive.

I awake to bright sunshine filtering through the curtains beside my bed. Stretching and allowing myself to sink into the mattress, I grin. I could not have wished for a lovelier homestay: my own spacious room, windows opening up onto rice paddies and the neighborhood below, children laughing in the streets and my own bed, so soft. My reverie is interrupted by Tamiko-san, my host mother, calling from the kitchen downstairs, “*Sutefuanii!*” (to give you some general idea as to just how ‘Stephanie’ sounds in Japanese).

I leap out of bed and grab my towel and shampoo. The night before (my first day in her home), Tamiko-san had briefed me in her rapid Japanese and broken English that we would be going to meet the rest of the family at her grandson’s Sports Festival, a day of competitions and performances put on by the elementary school. I could only imagine how nervous she must have been, trying to speak English and hoping that I understood. My own Japanese still quite minimal, I had nodded and smiled and attempted to make conversation about the meal and about what was expected of me.

Dousing myself under the showerhead, and then dashing up to change, I emerge several minutes later greeting Tamiko-san in the kitchen. "*Itadakimasu!*" and the two of us sit down to miso soup, fried egg and salad. One thing had been troubling me since I learned we would be going to the school...how am I going to get there? I am feeling very nervous, fumbling with my Japanese and my head still foggy from the early rising. Tamiko-san buzzes around the house like a bee, with me at her heels trying to help and catch what she's telling me. Finally, my arms full of clothes and lunchboxes, I ask her, "*Anoo, nande ikimasu ka?*" (How will I get there?)

She leads me over to the screen and I behold the oldest, most rickety-looking bike I had ever seen. This apparently was the neighborhood bike, and for today I was kindly given permission to borrow it.

Since arriving in Japan several weeks ago, bicycles had been a common sight—everyone seems to ride one, whether commuting to work or school or going to the supermarket. And the Japanese ride with inhuman skill. Dodging in and out of heavy traffic, maneuvering tight corners and crowds of people, I had already begun to enjoy this lifestyle, and it was much easier than waiting for the bus. However, today would be a little different. Tamiko-san disappears to change, putting on a lovely skirt and hat, and applying make-up. Then, the two of us, weighed down with bags, slip on our shoes and head outside.

Tamiko-san does not own a car. Rather, as many older Japanese do, she rides a motorbike. Despite her small frame, she confidently and somewhat gracefully (more so than I could have done) maneuvers the bike out of the tight space and through the tiny gate. Having just met her, and unsure what is expected of me, I stand by awkwardly as she loads the bags onto the bike, puts on her helmet, and starts the engine. Glancing at Tamiko-san and looking at "my" bicycle, I almost laugh; here is this tiny woman before me, dressed to attend a formal dinner, mounting this motorbike as if it were the most natural thing in the world, revving the engine and looking back at me expectantly. I hop on my bicycle and shake my head in helpless resignation, prepared to follow.

And we are off. I think I am going to die. Never in my life had I felt this insecure. My brakes did not quite work, and as we ride through the town, Tamiko-san is speeding ahead around corners and up hills. I keep to the sidewalk believing I will survive this ordeal and soon be enjoying lunch. However, once we make it out onto the highway, riding past the open fields, with traffic speeding by, my bravery wanes slightly and it takes all of my will to not laugh hysterically. I distract myself with the surroundings slowly materializing before me. I am on the open road, the wind in my hair, bicycling beside breathtaking scenery and having a near-death experience. Taking my eyes from the tiny figure ahead of me on a motorbike, I behold the wilderness. Japan is a beautiful country. Even out here, amidst fields of swaying green grass and rice, mountains in the distance, there is a quiet spirituality about the landscape. An awesome majesty, with the expanse of skies overhead feeling so close.

Twenty minutes later, I slide off my bike bedraggled, windblown, and sweaty, my hands shaking slightly as I lock the bike beside Tamiko-san's. Giving her a quick hug, and gathering the bundles, we hobble together, Tamiko-san with her arthritis and me with my wobbly knees, towards the field behind the school. There I am greeted warmly and enthusiastically by the rest of the family. Smiling, feeling quite safe and contented, I know from this moment on that my stay with Tamiko-san will be special.

—Stephanie Merritt





*Tamiko-San (top left), Sutefuanii (left),
the Sports Festival (above)*
Stephanie Merritt

Moments III

A One-Act (Comedy)

Anyone who has been on a term abroad will tell you it's not the big cultural differences that you notice, it's the mundane, small ones that you would only notice when you have to live there. For example, it might seem small and trivial, but while I was spending a term in England I found myself often pulling a door I was supposed to push. Why? Because there are handles on both sides of the free-swinging doors. Normally, most of the doors in the US have a handle on only the "pull" side, and a metal plate on the "push" side. So when I see a handle I instinctively try to pull the door open.

But this sort of thing only led to mild embarrassment in the worst-case scenario. I had the pleasure, or perhaps the displeasure, of venturing into a far more dangerous term abroad experience.

The dilemma presented itself after I worked out at the local gym—although to me, local seems incorrect since it was such a long walk to get there. Since I had to go through the heart of downtown York to get back and forth, I thought it might be easier if I travelled in my nice clothes, changed into work-out clothes, exercised, took a shower in the gym, changed back into nice clothes, and continued about my day.

Normally, in the US, when one takes a shower, one has to get naked. You can imagine my confusion when I saw several males in the locker room showering with their bathing suits on. I thought "Surely the British can't have more issues with the naked body than Americans." I mean, it's just not practical, given the

obvious reason that one doesn't get very clean when one showers with a bathing suit on. One also has to deal with a wet bathing suit, and the fact that you get naked twice anyway; once when getting into the bathing suit and again when one changes back into his clothing. As for me, I did even not think to bring a bathing suit with me abroad, since I would be spending the fall in England, a country known for its inclement weather.

So this was my major dilemma. This wasn't something I could just ask the manager: "Yeah, Sir, I wanted to know about your policy about getting naked?" And I couldn't just jump in the shower naked with a bunch of bathing suit-clad British men. I mean, how embarrassing! This was definitely not a door pulling issue. I don't think I could shake off the weird looks with "Sorry, I'm an American."

So, I set out on a quest, a quest to find a naked man, for the first and, I sincerely hope, last time. Now this was no easy adventure; I couldn't just stand in the locker room staring at the showers just waiting for a naked man to show up. I had to be clever, subtle, and invisible. I had to act as if I had reason to be there, and reason to pass by the showers.

The first two days at the gym were unsuccessful. I either found the showers completely empty, or small children dressed in bathing suits going into the shower before they jumped into the pool. But on the third day I found him. I will admit that this naked man *was* holding a bathing suit in his hand, but he was, nonetheless, naked.

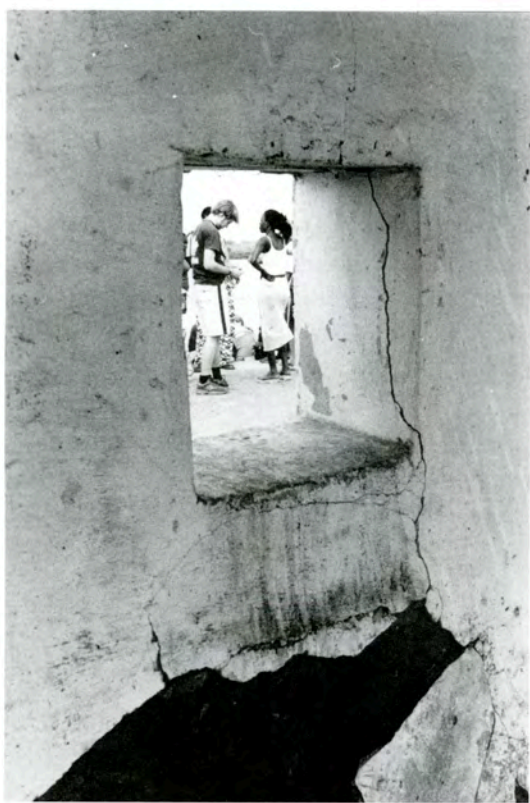
So, all you guys who are thinking of taking a shower in England, rest assured you can do it naked. Thanks to me. I searched for a naked man, so you don't have to.

—Sean Luttman

Verse and Vision I

I saw a girl.
I liked her.
She was black.
I am white.
That's new to me.
Not new to her.
I love life.
It changes me.
I love change.
It helps me.
I saw a girl.
I liked her.
She was black.
I am white.

—Michael Wentz



Through A Window, Senegal
Helmi Hunin

Word and Image

Rome's Jewish Quarter

Ever since Emperor Constantine's public acceptance of Christianity, Rome has been the focal point of the Catholic religion. However, there is an older religion that inhabits the streets of the ancient city. Despite sporadic hostilities and discrimination, there has been a Jewish population residing within the Roman walls for over 2000 years.

During my semester abroad in Rome I explored both the present and past Jewish population in Rome. As in all cultures, the only way to learn about contemporary life is to understand its history. Rome was the perfect environment to explore the combination of new and old: "Smart" cars speed



around ruins that have stood for millennia and people wander narrow medieval streets talking on their cell phones.

A lot has changed for the Jewish population over the two millennia that they have lived in Rome. In 70 A.D. Emperor Titus sacked Jerusalem and had an arch constructed to memo-



rialize the conquest. Reliefs decorate the inside walls of the Arch of Titus, depicting Roman soldiers carrying off the spoils. Jews were forbidden to walk through the arch, one of the first discriminatory regulations in Rome.

I was not sure how Jews were treated in contemporary Rome. I wondered how their past affected their relationships with the larger Catholic community. To find out about the Jewish community's place in Roman society today I traveled to what was once called the Jewish Ghetto. Like virtually every other part of Rome, it consists of ancient ruins surrounded by contemporary buildings. In the old neighborhood's center are the remains

of the church of Saint Angelo. It was at this church, built on a *Pescheria*, or fish market, where Jews attended Catholic mass after being forcefully converted during the second century.

There is a huge metal menorah next to *Tempio Maggiore*, (Great Synagogue), the main synagogue in Rome. When I think of synagogues I imagine the architecture of the suburban temples built in the 1960s and 1970s across America. What really surprised me were the



carabinieri with semi-automatic weapons standing at the front gate. I learned from a woman who lived in the Ghetto that a group of *carabinieri* is always stationed at the synagogue to protect the worshippers. Even though the Jewish Ghetto is now as diverse as any other part of Rome, the presence of the synagogue makes it a target.

Over the centuries, the fortune of the Jews of Rome has varied between acceptance and understanding to outright hatred and persecution. But while the creation of the Jewish Ghetto was originally motivated by suspicion, it is now a place where both Jews and Gentiles work, live, eat, and worship, mostly in peace.

—Becky Flammino



Ruins of Saint Angelo, Rome
Becky Flammino

Verse and Vision II

Mood Blue

The satin bower bird of Australia
collects bits of blue,
lining his bower with pen caps,
milk bottle tops,
the occasional forget-me-not.

The hows and whys
of this phenomenon are enough
to puzzle many an ornithologist.
But somehow I find myself
doing the same.

I see a pastel blue van, rusted, door-less,
sitting in a field of black and white cows
and I pluck it up and place it in the bower
of my memory.

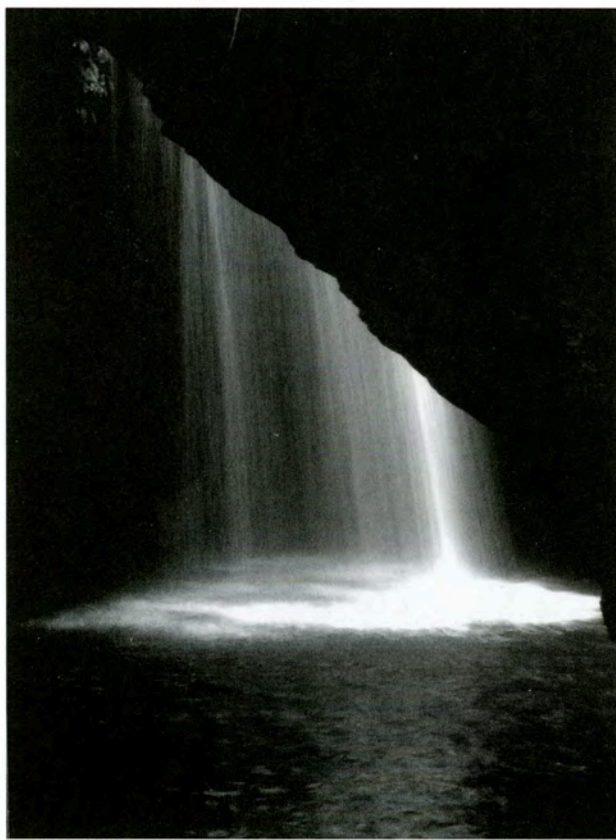
Already there is the tiny fish on the reef,
glowing so blue that 'blue'
comes to mind before 'fish'.

And the blue eyes of the gold-panner
and the cords of blue veins
in forearms that have been swirling water and rocks
for ten years in search of flakes of gold.

Today I add one more:
The horizontal parallel pale blue lines
on the pages of my notebook,
quiet guidance behind the scrawl.

When I see you next I'll show you:
Take this pen cap, have an ocean.
Look into my blue eyes,
see what I've collected.

—Nina Moats



*Natural Spotlight: Hidden Natural Bridge in
Mullumbah, Australia*
Lindsay Brown

Center and Periphery

Rome's Stones

*Quante volte, del tempo
che rimembre, legge,
moneta, officio e
costume hai tu mutato, e
rinnovate membre!*

*E se ben ti ricordi e vedi
lume, vedrai te
sommigliante a quella
inferma che non puo
trovar posa in su le
piume, ma con dar volta
suo dolore scherma.*

How many times within
your memory have you
changed, laws, coinage,
offices, and customs,
and renewed your members!

And if you well bethink you,
and see clear, you will see
yourself as the sick woman,
who cannot find repose
upon the down, but with
her tossing seeks
to ease her pain.

Canto VI
Dante's *Purgatorio*



Speaking of his homeland in the middle of his novel, Dante likens Italy to an invalid who tosses and turns on her bed, never escaping pain and restlessness. By studying Roman history, and focusing my independent research on the building materials of Rome, I recognized that Dante's 14th century vision of Italy still resonates 700 years later.

For three and a half months, I looked at the stones of Rome, the building blocks used to construct the eternal city. Metamorphosized limestone, marble, is the most significant building material in the city, and the most exalted stone in Rome. Countless varieties of white and colored marble have seen the rise and fall of the western world's most powerful empire. Today, conservation of the monuments of this empire and the relics of the following epochs is of growing concern.

In the last 30 years, record high levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide and related air pollution problems have gained global attention. Post-industrial Rome's destructive atmosphere is evidenced by the thick smog and blackened buildings. Every exterior piece of marble is stained. By studying how and where Rome's marble has been used and reused, and by looking at how modern society simultaneously threatens and tries to protect these works, a sense of the restless city emerged.

1. Mountains of Marble

It was the summer of 2003, and after my semester abroad in Rome I travelled in search of Carrara, the most famous type of marble, in the Apuan Alps, 350 km north of Rome, nestled along the coast. Formed by geologic processes millions of years before the rise of man, the white metamorphic rock is reminiscent of snow in the high country of coastal Italy. But in May, when I climbed these hills, the snow had melted and the magnificent Carrara marble was in plain view.

Marble has been continually mined from these mountains for over two millennia. In the 2nd century BC, Julius Caesar promoted exploitation of the marble quarries by financing large-scale operations to extract marble, and shipped it through the towns

of Carrara and Luni. Carrara marble gained a unique reputation because of its white color with veins of white and dark grey, and its tendency to contain relatively few impurities.

Carrara was used almost exclusively in the fora of four great emperors, the continuity made possible by the exclusive personal control of marble enjoyed by the emperors for five centuries.



II. Marble = Power

The sublime beauty of the mountains is captured in the metropolis' many monuments. The Pantheon is one of the most well-known structures in the world, and its floor provides a stunning example of how Roman emperors used marble to represent power. At the time of the Pantheon's construction, around 120 AD, Rome controlled lands surrounding the Mediterranean, and therefore the empire had virtually endless resources. Marble slabs from every corner of the empire, carried on the backs of slaves, were joined in the Pantheon's pavement, including stone from what is now Tunisia, Egypt, Turkey, Greece, and, of course, Italy. This variety of marble types demonstrated to the Roman citizenry the vastness and power of their empire.



III. Divine Stone

Along with power, marble also represented divinity. Quite literally, hundreds of statues depicting pagan gods, and later versions from Christian theology, were all made of marble.



Naturally, Romans carved their gods out of the most pure marble available, Carrara. In an effort to align himself with the gods, the Emperor Vespasian (famous for commissioning the construction of the Colosseum) had his marble temple constructed in the Roman Forum right next to the Temple of Saturn. Statues of the emperor were placed beside statues of the pagan gods that the citizenry worshiped.

In fact, most temples in the Imperial fora were almost entirely made of this marble. Centuries later, Michelangelo would travel to Carrara to hand pick slabs of marble for his sculptures, including his masterpiece, the *Pieta*, which is now housed at the center of the Roman Catholic world, St. Peter's Basilica.

IV. Meaning in Marble

I was drawn to the marble, and the particular structures formed from this material, because of what they represent. Their significance transcends several disciplines. As Norman Herz wrote in *Geologic Sources of Building Stone*, “The ancient Greeks [and Romans] sought to preserve and transmit to later generations what they deemed most significant in their culture—not their mean day-to-day existence but their philosophy, religion, and form of government; and this could best be done through marble monuments”. Their permanence, in the face of over 2000 years of natural weathering and human demolition, attests to their importance.

Contemporary Romans can't escape reminders of their history. They rebuild and recycle their ancient world. Every stone is remolded or reused; they don't start from scratch. Debate continues to rage among conservationists about how and what to preserve of their city.

Like Dante's old lady, the city is restless. The marble's journey serves as a reminder of the struggles that Rome has faced, and the unfinished, constantly reinvented project that is Rome.

-Philip Dixon





Ancient Incan Ritual Site of Moras-Moray, Peru
Lindsay Bellinger



Monemvasia, Greece
Beth Lee-Herbert



From My Journal

From Terrified to Frenchified

Saturday, January 11th

Today is my first day in Avignon. Traveling here was one of the worst trips of my life. It makes me think this experience will be well worth it. I'm sitting now in what will be my bedroom for the next five months. Crazy. I can't really grasp it right now and when I try to I feel sick. So, I am approaching this as a day-by-day experience. Adventure, even. I was extremely nervous at dinner, but I kept pushing myself to speak. I figure if I can keep this up for the next few weeks, I might even get good. My host mom took me for a walk around the city and showed me my school. Avignon is beautiful and what I saw of it, I loved. I can't wait until my nerves settle enough to enjoy it more.

Monday, January 13th

Today was the first day of school. It felt somewhat nice to be with other Americans, and I began to feel less isolated and alone. During orientation, we were told about culture shock, which, although I had known about it already, was helpful to hear again. While many students around me seemed to have adjusted effortlessly, I was still going through culture shock in every meaning of the phrase—and probably will be for a while. But I felt much better after orientation and returned to my host family with confidence.

Tuesday, January 28th

I had quite a lovely day. I spent the morning at *Les Halles* (the market) and strolling in the streets, where I ran into a friend. We shopped and then had lunch outside. I went to class, did some more shopping and went to the local gym for aerobics class. Then I had a great dinner with my host family, where I think I've spoken the most comfortably since I got here. I think I'm growing fond of them. Also, I wrote a pretty decent paper for film class. All in all it was a very good day in France!

Saturday, February 1st

Today marks the 3-week anniversary of my arrival in France and I'm loving the French life. After work/school or on the weekends, people just walk around the streets and hang out in cafés. Recently, we've been sitting around in cafés on Saturdays and Sundays with some people from school and some French people we've met. We converse in a half French-half English language (because they like to practice their English). I love it. It's very French. No one cares how long you stay at the café and they don't ever kick you out. And even though it's freezing out, there are musicians on the street all the time, playing instruments. As you walk by the little boutiques, the music fills the streets that are lit by hanging lights strung across the buildings. I feel like I'm walking through a movie. It's really fantastic.

Monday, March 23rd

We just returned from Montpellier—it was an awesome city. As we got off the train, a man heard us and kept saying, "George W. Bush," and "Americans." We pretended to ignore him and talked in French. I was terrified by the look on his face and I walked away scared and fuming with anger. How could people be so ignorant? I talked to my mom on the phone and she told me about the news in the US and death counts from

the war in Iraq, plus the gruesome details from the TV, and how more and more anti-American feeling is surfacing...I'm starting to fear for my family at home, and for myself. I spent a good hour talking to my host mom about the war and the press, which helped a lot. It reminded me that whether American or French, no one really likes war.

Wednesday, March 26th

I am realizing how soon this is all going to be over and I feel like I need to make sure I take in everything. Let's see...my host sister Perrine and I have a Tuesday night tradition of watching movies and eating candy and other treats. Every night when dinner is ready, Perrine comes in and says, "*on mange!*" ("we're eating!"), sometimes while holding up a knife and fork. And she likes to get me little presents like French candy or special kinds of soda. At dinner, my host mom like to sing a little song that goes, "*C'est bon pour la sante!*" ("It's good for your health!") as she serves vegetables. I find it rather amusing. Everyone at school goes to a *Shoppi*—a little grocery store—for lunch where we get fresh baguettes, cheese and fruit. I now know most of the members and workers at the gym, so it usually ends up being more of a socializing event than a workout. And my favorite part is usually walking home down the streets when people are out playing music. This is all going by too fast.

Sunday, May 18th

Here I am. On the train to Paris. I just left Avignon for what might be many years. I can't believe it. What happened to the semester? I spent the last half-hour sobbing like an idiot! Last night was sad, but it hadn't sunk in at that point that I was leaving. Today, seeing my empty room and being on the train all alone—it sunk in really fast. I can't believe how I quickly met so many amazing people and now we are all going our separate ways. Luckily, I am traveling for a few weeks, because I'm not ready to say good-bye to Europe just yet.

Friday, June 13th

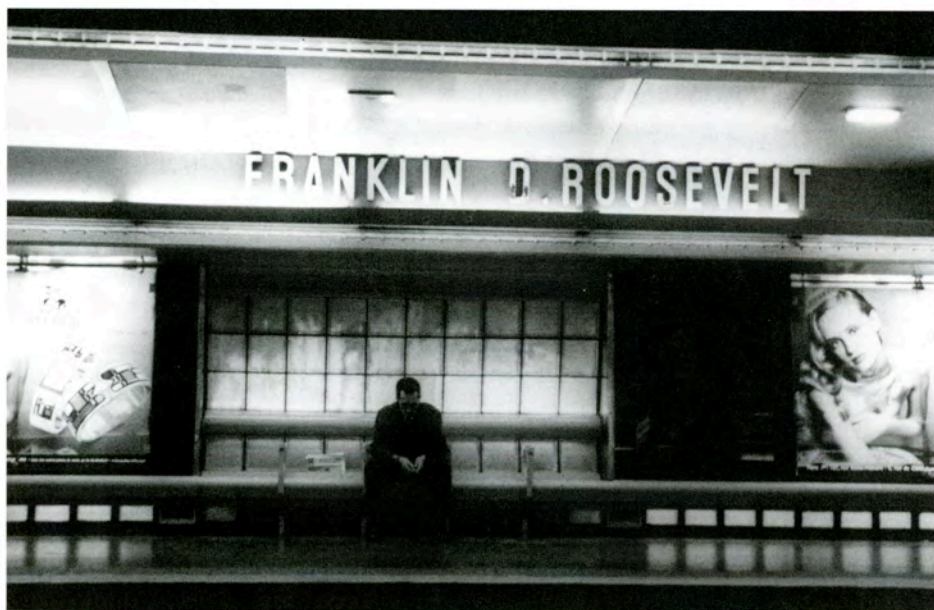
So, right now I'm sitting on an Air France flight heading for JFK Airport. That means it's over—6 months, done and gone. Probably the craziest, most fun, most interesting, most self-changing, most everything 6 months of my life. It was amazing and as quickly as I was thrown into it, I'm being tossed back out. I can't really imagine what it's going to be like, if everyone at home will be the same, if I am the same, if relationships will ever be the same. I have a feeling they won't be. I picture everything as I left it, but of course I can't expect that. I have realized that we don't have forever here and just as fast as these past 6 months flew by, so too will the next 6 months. And as I'm writing this, I'm listening to my new favorite French band, *"Je veux vivre chaque seconde, comme si demain etait la fin du monde, etre libre pour le bon..."* I want to live each second as if tomorrow was the end of the world, to be free for good... You've taught me a lot, France.

—Katie McGuire



*View of the Palais des Papes from my host
family's apartment, Avignon, France*
Jolene Beck

Verse and Vision III



Franklin D. Roosevelt Metro Station, Paris, France
Cole Judge

What is this (II)

Yes he was,

he was my first:

the first dance that required no rhythm because there was Gipsy Kings,
the first trip that traveled me all around the world,
through forests and over seas,
in boats, gondolas, or just our feet over dried leaves,
with words, whispers, breaths and silence
with eyes, lips, looks and smiles
with hands who hold, feel, care, caress, protect, kiss, love and laugh
through streets, old and new,
underwater, blue and green—and red and pink and purple,
over palaces, churches, street vendors, smoky coffee shops,
in and out of celebrations, traditions, feasts, births, deaths and weddings,
newly baked breads, simmering teas,
peeled/unpeeled mandarin oranges
after a breakfast of olives, tomatoes, and feta cheese
sunrise, sunset, dusk and dawn, and twilight,
from America, to Europe, to Asia, to Africa, far far East, South America;
to highs and drunks, sobers and sleepies,

all four seasons in the smell of one rose petal,
all colors in the taste of one kiss,
all feelings in the shape of one cocoa-butter scent
He was my first, how could I resent?

—Aysegül Duru



Reflections I

The Power of the Process

How does one sum up 100 days in France? How can one put words to an experience so profound and growth inducing? All I can say is that the time I spent living, eating, and speaking with a French family was the greatest accomplishment, hardest task, and most wonderful time of my life. I would like to share a few of my most memorable moments....

There was a moment, a little more than halfway through my stay, when the language barrier just fell. Indeed, I was not, nor am I, the most graceful, eloquent, or refined of speakers. In fact, oftentimes I cringe at the sound of my voice butchering the beauty and flow of the French language. Despite this impediment, I reached a point where the words came to my tongue when I needed them, when my eyes did not strain perusing a French magazine, and when my dreams told stories in both French and English.


My eyes were blessed with many stunning sights: the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre and its many masterpieces, the famous Pont-Neuf bridge, and the Tuilleries Gardens. However, nothing touched me more than the Normandy invasion beaches. Much of France's beauty was destroyed during World War II, and yet now we have a modern France, all because of hundreds of thousands of brave young men. I cannot describe the power of Normandy. It is something that must be seen and reflected on personally.

The most important part of the experience for me was the power of the process. I have never felt more humbled, emotional, American, or free ever before in my life. I never thought I would miss France, but that was my biggest mistake. The meals, the romance, the cool approach to time and schedules, the wine, my little world of university and reflection...I keep it in a part of my heart reserved just for me; I long for it all.

—Laura Butterfield



The Hotel de France, Avignon, France
Cole Judge



Reflections II

Making An Album

On a casual Saturday afternoon in Galway, I stopped on my way back from Shop Street to buy a photo album with the intention of organizing all the photographs I have taken of my last three months in Ireland.

Back at my little apartment I sat on my bed amongst the scattered snapshots, surrounded by the strewn moments, the fragments of places and times that I had experienced in Ireland. Random and disjointed on their own, my instinct is to put them in some sort of order. I sorted through the piles of photos, casting aside any that are unflattering or superfluous, tucking the chosen ones carefully into the plastic sleeves. An hour later I finished, and closed the cover of the new volume.

Running my hand over the smooth finish, pleased with the weight of it in my hand and excited with the prospect of what would fill the remaining blank pages, I anticipated my return home to the States.

How I would gather friends and family around the couch and relive the events in the photos with them, how awed and proud they would be of me when they saw what I had experienced. Sitting back, I perused the volume, studied it, as if it were a story about someone else's life. I saw the first weekend in Galway, people smiling and clutching celebratory pints; I saw sweeping landscapes sectioned by stone walls, and a sunset over a coral beach. There were the obligatory group shots: a cluster of students posed in front of Kylemore Abby, my group on rickety bicycles teetering around the bend on Inis Mor. There was a red thatched-roof cottage, and finally, a rainbow arching elegantly

over a green pasture dotted with wooly sheep. I closed the cover and sat back feeling strangely dissatisfied.

With a sense of sadness, I realized that by making this album I had already begun to put closure on my trip. But there was more. I felt an absence of myself, of my true experiences in the pictures. They were lovely and captured some of the beauty of Ireland. But if someone were to happen upon this album, this montage of moments and events in my life over the last three months, what they would see would merely convey the Ireland that they expected to see, the moments that *any* traveler would capture. I searched the pages wondering how, in my painstaking effort to capture Ireland and my time here, I had managed to leave out the realities of daily life.

Where were the reeling bus rides to weekend trips, the goofy and impromptu moments with my friends? Where was my favorite pub? Didn't I have any pictures of my NUI Galway professors? Where were all the people I've met during my time here? The photos began to annoy me; I stared back at the glossy landscapes and portraits, fixed with a sense of finality between the plastic sleeves. The last three months had meant so much more than this! If I couldn't sum up my experiences in words, the pictures I took were equally ineloquent.

My desire to capture moments on film had less to do with my own experience, my connection with that moment or place, and more to do with the fear that I might *somehow* forget it. But this logic is further flawed when I end up taking pictures that might distort my memory of what I actually felt or saw at the time I was taking them. I wondered why my instinct is to take photographs that would impress someone else, pictures of what the guidebooks tell me is significant, rather than the fundamental aspects of my life in Galway, and of traveling in general. I wonder, if in the months and years after this experience, when I pull this photo album off the shelf and dust it off, will these pictures strike a chord with what I remember about my semester abroad?

In order to truly capture the nature of my experience here, I need the reality of life, whether or not it is aesthetically pleasing. I need a picture of me and my classmates sprinting frantically

across a four-lane highway on the way to the Galway University campus in the morning. I need to see, again, Galway: Shop Street at night with the crowds of boisterous young kids and brightly-lit pub fronts; and the morning after, as vendors sweep various debris off their sidewalks.

I'll want to remember the farmer's market on Saturday morning and my favorite booth, where the chubby gentleman in the white apron made legendary Nutella crepes. I must capture our bus driver Ken Hartman and his lurching white bus, the sleepy and often grim countenances as my group headed to weekend trips, over the breathtaking and winding landscape of the countryside. I'll want to remember the place I lived, apartment eight Gort na Coiribe, with all its pre-furnished orange glory.

I'll also want to relive those nights at the infamous pub "Hole in the Wall," packed shoulder to shoulder with a hundred other college kids, singing rugby songs at the top of my lungs. And, more recently, a picture of myself, huddled over a laptop surrounded by books, typing one of my nine final essays. Because these aspects are essentially what has become familiar to me, in a place that was once completely foreign. Perhaps it will be these moments, that had become more or less routine, that I will want to remember, that I will miss the most.

—Caitlin Inglehart




A Polish Doorway
Kara Scalzo



*Two Strangers Strike Up A
Conversation, Madrid, Spain*
Kendra Zysk



A Gargoyle's Glimpse of Paris, France
Meghan Sorenson



Reflections III

Parisian Memoir

I am now sitting in a train riding alongside the Hudson River, and the lights of the western shore are glimmering with points of white that sometimes show a rare flicker, which works to impress upon me an apparent lack of lights all around.

I had recently arrived from France, and airy memories of experiences from that beyond now manifest wakes, running silently in reiteration of the inner space of my mind, as though traversing a gulf, threading the elements of that which is past to the surface, where precisely pitched, a waking shift is set.

And now there are few lights, and a feeling of tangible distance in moving compliments the plane stretched outside. The river is long, without the respite of an interruption; length collects into an aggregate of melancholy.

Length invokes history and passage. And for a language so different from my native English (and from my native Russian), so removed and unfathomable, there is an appeal that taps to the very length of place names the nostalgia of today and the potential for melancholy....

The center of my little Parisian quarter was Place Maubert. And amidst the relics of the architect Haussmann stood the Cluny Museum—irretrievable beyond hope, a memory and a want. Modern in employment, shamelessly exposing its medieval foundation, and in the foreground of that composition, jutting incomprehensible edges of what was, in the middle of Paris, the ruin of a Roman bath. It was laid well to superintend over the rebirth of the city.

But from where, in the heart of historical Paris, did the energy for this youth come? The heart of Paris is self-determined and defined, as though itself a pole—uncentered, ever deeper with forward steps, with the investigative gaze of our eyes. And with the considering survey of a pause, perhaps a half-about face, and a good look-round, the glance refracts outward, toward the fringes of the city. Under those clouds were various “suburbs,” describable as much by the connotation of the term as by its more amorphous substance. To the south and west were Issy and Ivry, which a foreigner must cross to get his health documents, and to which he chances over following the call of a sullen help-wanted lead. The architecture of the suburbs seemed the modern I-Beam equivalent of the Gothic transepted church; inverted, its glory was not focused on one internal place, but dispersed and scattered, tending to the open space of the outside, beyond the walls. In Issy or Ivry the owner of my second hostel, outside that line that marks the Parisian heart, kept his “thugs.” They settled his matters effectively. One needed one’s own thugs.

And rooted stiff over the descending *rue des Bernardins* is that church whose bells intone that historic map that eventually arises to the mind in pulses to awaken the landscape of the world in that little corner of Paris. “Gloria Deum Pax Terrae.” The calm and easy breath of dawn. And in another cozy corner of the mind, as if in response to the tune of these ungraspable bells—comes the image of dogs barking, roosters calling—light rising on the fresh earth not yet acquainted with all the stuff of daily life that would frame the bark and call and limit it.

“Buy this card, so that you could send it to me when I am away.” I acquiesced. Even in the gift shop, there is room to receive mockery. That which haunted me would please someone else. Pretty... but cursed: unicorns on an unassuming card. The paths of one’s mind are traceable only by oneself. And from a slight pull of the muscles in the stomach, a new, curious gait will strike out the dissipating steps, leaving Cluny behind.

There was a gnawing feeling in the stomach, as if a reaction to the intonation of the streets. On this Lutetian Capitaline Hill stands the Pantheon. And there, rounding the subtle, unusually emotive and retrospective descent from the *rue de l'Estrapade* across the square are modest seats, some shadowy terraces and shade.

Behind the shadows, suddenly—voices, drink, laughter, inevitable soccer commentators, all dissynchronous with that which was about. The World Cup was over, the force that stilled the whole world to one moment had passed, and everything again was before me, and I had opaque eyes. The café “Bombardier” was peopled, but there was no admittance. In the Pantheon still hung Foucault’s Pendulum, a reminder itself—was it?—of the single beat that moves the gods. Even the Gallic ones. “Universal Nature/Mov’d by Universal Mind” Tennyson called it once.

And down ancient streets the square approaches a most medieval of horizons—one of inevitability clearly written in the sky, in the prospect of vast clouds. Imagine a postcard of Paris, the skyline emphasized by a disturbing spire. The buildings of Haussmann stately, forgetting, and reflecting the memory of self-imposition, all around. To the present harmony there was no harmonious beginning. The pressure of time is felt on those streets. It was a great anxiety to live in Paris. And *rue de la Montagne St. Geneviève* echoes the footsteps of its quick descent. Below, in quiet streets from before Haussman, by the river, stood in a small wood, the oldest Church in Paris, St. Julien le Pauvre.

It was perhaps there, no—perhaps it was *rue St. Jacques*—from where it is difficult not to glance at the sky and wonder whether it is the same sky that looked down bright over the medieval world and the seemingly-eternal path to Santiago de Compostela. And there came a great melancholy, a great feeling of the passage of time, of the smallness of “men’s” deeds, of the impermanence of all in that great structure, of the great press of time and the passing, intoned in the beating out of

many deeds and great words. The deep heaviness of the forgetfulness of the world.

And it was perhaps on the dusty (somewhat) descent of *rue de la Montagne St. Geneviève*, that on a rhythm-beaten step, I looked, as if by chance, at a sign that stood, and suddenly, as if by—providence—swung round and read. There was the spot, perhaps the house, where long ago François Villon had lived and passed some wind-swept days. And there was written in steady type a section from his “Epitaphe”:

*Frères humains qui après nous vivez,
N'ayez les coeurs contre nous endurcis.*

(Fellow men who after us should live, Have not your
hearts against us hardened...)

Did he look back into time—his past—and wonder at his history, and look into the future and wonder where he will remain after his death?

I walked downcast and shocked down *rue de la Montagne St. Geneviève*. There, in an alcove, was a little Russian bookstore with publications on Orthodoxy and old names and times—a little quaint sigh, as it were. Russian outside Russia only.

I was lost and rounded Cluny again with a step intoning the necessity of the hour. In Tennyson's words “The sad, mechanic exercise, / Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.” But if there was elegy in my thought it was, if not exclusively for me, then also for the collective world. And I was alone.

On *rue Mouffetard*, I remembered, there were bars, restaurants, voices of tourists, a fountain, and that disturbing and inviting descent that characterized many streets. And this—across the square of the Pantheon—the Pantheon!—a hard crossing. For everyone. “I am Bob,” an American or a Brit (or Australian)—a typical patron—would say, conscious of a feeling that this statement, this manifesto would be somehow out

of place, and indicative of a strange disturbance. "I am John." But the introductions did not end, nor the names. The practice ought to be perpetuated... till I know that Bob's father is divorced from his mother, that he has once been in Florida. Indeed, just between me and him (or him and me), he has Breton blood as well - something, it would seem, not looked upon kindly by the French, with all their "Le's." It is as though all attempted to spin out lines, to connect to other items on that landscape, all spinning around, circuitously, in avoidance of that nameless bulge in the middle that was a foreigner's Paris. A very particular thing. The moods were not high.

I did indeed once walk into a bar on *rue Mouffetard*, on the other coast, again, across the *place de Pantheon*. I saw some people there that I recognized. I searched for their names to greet them inanely, but found that I did not know them. We had never been formally introduced. I approached, and felt somehow uncomfortable. That place was too crowded, too small for one's name to be heard in such a way that its bearer remains comfortable.

At the top of Sebastopol, a line of ladies in full livery, wearing about their bodies the collective insignia of their métier. From the Grand Opéra, the first building of the nominated purpose in the city, and the building that, marking the focal and original point of the Haussmanian reconstitution, first elevated the trade, to the Rex—the first motion picture theatre in the city, and by day, stately as a theatre still—were but several links of the continuing boulevard. Though contemporary, this was still a place where the deep notes of a cloister would resonate. There were still people in Paris for whom there could exist something on Earth which would be of value correspondent to the value that were *The Lady and the Unicorn* tapestries to those that "hung" them. *A mon seul desir*, and I was hungry.

I was hungry, and that felt good, for walking in the darkening sky back home in melancholy along an empty Paris somehow felt good, but not entirely satisfying, as though my thirst was yet unquenchable. I did not know what I was looking for.

Eyes drooped, I remembered the expatriate's walk; long taps of feet at sunset directed by a pervading note, and through it a steady, higher voice evoking the turns and curbs, buildings and blocks, and steady days of St. Petersburg. But I was not an expatriate, nor, perhaps, was she. Another Day, the template: two foreigners in Paris, in the Great Library, *La Bibliothèque St. Geneviève*, before the desk.

"Ah, you speak good French. Where are you from?" A sense was present of books in their collective energy stacked behind the stone walls.

"From the United States," I said.

"From Russia," said the other, both of us in French.

"Ah, and you are here for a long time, or...to stay?"

"Oh...yes, I am doing research here in music...graduate study," a quick response. I was silent, of course.

"In Paris?"

"Yes... in different cities of Europe."

"Really?"

"Yes."

"It is a big project," I contributed.

"And you got papers?" he inquired.

"Yes, it's a... how to say it... a grant. I have all the papers I need." She moves her eyes in closing arguments.

"You need to show me something to get a card," he continues, waiting.

"I don't have anything with me..." A sole ID, of dubious worthiness.

"Ah well, I believe you." 'Believe you' *anyway*, it would seem. He looked at her again. "Yes, it's ok, I believe you. You know, we in France, we are very tolerant of foreigners. In some places... people are not so tolerant. But we are."

"Really?" said she, revealing an expression beyond any unstudied evaluation, nor, perhaps, easily to be convinced. I

smiled, we got the library card, and the pace started again, and down the hill. For a while I had been awoken, in a reality in which I was dynamic, smiling interrogatively: "Was there anything for which I ought to be 'tolerated?'"

There was quiet on the approach and Paris was more open in the darkening air. One was in his place, and the aging suburbs of Ivry and Issy were only in memory. And entering my hostel meant—listening, still, if not speaking. I was not dulled by aught, and resonant. The concierge would speak. "Men and women can't talk with words," he said. He was joking, insofar as articulation for him was somehow pivoted on a mechanism of humor. It was not an answer, but a response. "*Lepsi nez dratem do voka*" said Radek Novak, a Czech philosopher, to me. "It's better than a wire into the eye."

"That's why in France we have the feminine case, and the masculine case. Feminine for women, masculine for men. They don't intersect." This was a familiar hymn. The concierge did not speak often in words with women, and presumably, he meant, that one should speak in deeds. And indeed, words, too echoic on streets near Maubert, could not suffice for survival.

Indeed, the French never did invent their language for the understanding—but rather for the reciprocal stimulation of the brain—the national search for harmonies. My languages had neither. But now a new tone sounded, and a vague, if possibly deceptive, hope.

—Peter Gorvitz



Mountain Climbers, New Zealand
Erin Kane



Sounion, Temple of Posiedon, Greece
Adrienne Dodge



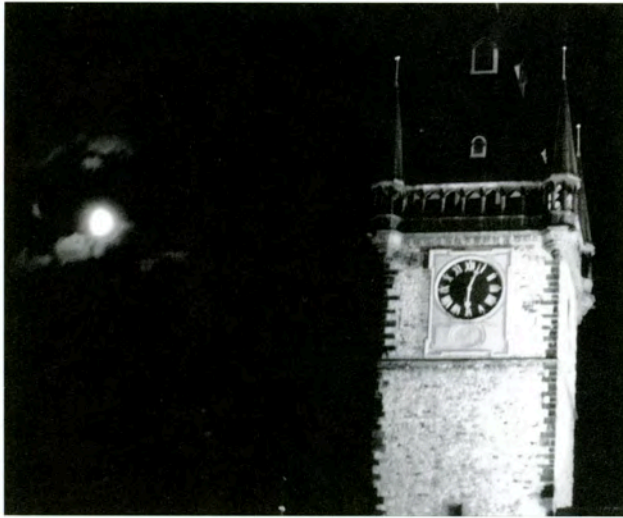
Snapshot

Seville, Spain

Looking at the people in this picture, you might just see some smiling faces—people that just stopped to pose and say “cheese” for a second or two to remember the moment. But, if you have ever experienced something as significant as going abroad you will know that it is more than that. In a movie I heard once that “we all travel thousands of miles just to check into some place with all the comforts of home.” You’ve got to ask yourself: what’s the point of that? When I see the way we were at the moment this picture was taken, I know that Spain was more than just another culture, another way of life. Every person in this picture went to Spain with an open mind, knowing that it would be different and nothing like the comfort of home. I can see how the relaxed way of life of Spain has affected our postures and faces. We were all happy. We understood that in those new (and possibly uncomfortable) experiences we got to meet the most unique people and see things we had never known existed. I’ve never felt more fortunate than to have been a part of those four months. And I’m so thankful that we all took a moment to pose so that we can always look back and smile.

—Rachel Henderson





*The Moon and the
Tower in Prague's
Old Town Square,
Czech Republic
Nathan Stodola*

*Sunrise Over Temple
IV, Tikal, Guatemala:
"The Guatemalan
jungle is a place where
light and shadow cre-
ate masterpieces. A ray
of light breaks through,
the yellow melts into
green, revealing a ta-
rantula hidden be-
tween the stones. The
monkey's scream sets to
music the tragic love
story of temples and
trees which will ulti-
mately cause the death
of the temples."
Thibault de Trogoff*



(Non)fiction I

Declarations

Day in and day out, it was the same old story for Miss Tracy. She left home every Sunday evening at 4:45 to catch the 5:00 train to Manhattan. On the train, she met with her usual group of governesses and babysitters. Each swerve of the train signaled the beginning of one woman's story. Leona says, "I don't understand why they cannot take their dirty laundry and put it in the hamper. The woman takes off her dirty panties and leaves them right on the floor for me to pick up." *149th and Grandconcourse, transfer available to the 2 and 5 trains, the next stop will be 138th. Stand clear of the closing doors please...* The train door closes with a ding and Sonya begins her story. "I tell you, last week Friday my daughter had her first play and I promised to be there. I told my boss but she still didn't show up until 6pm when she knew that I had to leave at four to get to the Bronx on time. I couldn't leave because I would get in trouble for leaving her children by themselves and I needed to collect my paycheck from her. Tell me if that's life." *42nd Street Grand Central, transfer available to the 4, 5 and the shuttle to Times Square...*

The women exit the train and say their goodbyes. Alone on the path train to New Jersey, Miss Tracy travels back in time to days spent in the Caribbean. She realized that she hadn't shared anything when the women on the train began to share their stories. Was her pain so unbearable that she was unable to put it into words? Somehow she found comfort in memories of her life in the Caribbean although the situation was not much better than life in America.

"No woman no cry, No woman no cry..." One more day in the struggle in this jungle called the world. Miss Tracy was born and raised in the Caribbean, but she always dreamt of life overseas. She heard from her neighbor Miss Lou, who had relatives in the States, that the streets were spotless and that you'd get in trouble for just spitting on the sidewalk. She heard that everything was dirt cheap and that ten dollars could feed you and your family for months on end. That's why everyone who went to America went looking like a stick and came back looking like a plump chicken being fed chicken feed round the clock. Don't ask for the price of clothes. Everyone walked around as if it was one big fashion show because clothes too were so cheap. She wouldn't have to worry about buying uniforms and plain black shoes for her little ones because they could wear regular clothes to school. As for money, she was told that in America she would never be broke. There was no such thing as poverty and there would be no more days in struggle...in the struggle that many like her were born into and had no means of escaping.

She never completed high school. At sixteen, after becoming pregnant with her first child, Miss Tracy had to go and find work. After all, baby formula didn't grow on trees. Working in the "free zone" she could barely afford a pound of rice and some chicken to feed her four children. If they got three square meals a day, it was a great day. Most days were not that great. Most days all they would have for breakfast was some tea made from young leaves picked from the orange tree and some dry crix crackers. When she had it, she would give them each twenty-five cents to buy a bake and some skim milk for lunch. Here she was sewing Hanes underwear all day without a lunch break, without bathroom breaks, with a white man over her shoulder telling her to speed it up and still her children could not have three decent meals a day.

It's called the "free zone" but other local people were not allowed beyond the boundary unless they worked there. Also, all the workers had to be searched before they entered and after they left the factory. The heat brought about by the Carib-

bean sun hitting the galvanized roof was unbearable. Not even an air conditioner helped the situation. Did God say that? For Miss Tracy and the other workers at the factory it was worse than a prison because even in prison you are allowed to go outside, to use the bathroom and you are given adequate food to eat. Miss Tracy got down on her knees every day and prayed that God would have mercy on her and her four little ones. "Lawd, you know my situation, if you can't put a hand, put a foot," she would say. Well, one day Miss Tracy finally got the courage to go to the US Embassy and God couldn't put a hand but he did put a foot. Miss Tracy got a visa for herself and all four of her children. She made the sign of the cross with her big toe.

A month later, after she had saved up enough money and borrowed enough money from relatives, Miss Tracy packed all her and her children's things, locked her house and gave her sister the keys. With her four children following closely behind her like chicks following a hen, she boarded a minibus and headed to the airport. All together, they had ten pieces of luggage. She was carrying some sugar cane for Ma John's niece, some rum cake for Miss Lou's uncle, some mangoes for Miss Felicia's daughter and some coconut water, breadfruit and yams for her sister at whose house she would be staying once she got to America. "Aye, Miss Tracy, you doh intend on coming back" said the porter. "It look like yuh takin' your whole house wit you on board de plane. Just remember to bring me a little sweetie whenever you come back from foreign. I hear sweetie real cheap over dere." "I won't forget, I won't forget at all," said Miss Tracy. "And take are of yuhself, you hear." She then walked to the ticket counter and handed in five tickets. "Your plane will be leaving from gate number five," said the attendant. "Thank you, sir" she said and proceeded to find the gate, with her four children following closely behind. One was dressed in blue jeans, a white Mickey Mouse t-shirt, and white tennis shoes. The two younger ones were wearing blue and red Ninja Turtles t-shirts with blue jeans and white tennis shoes. Her older son was wearing a yellow NIKE t-shirt with blue jeans and black tennis shoes.

Miss Tracy herself was dressed to kill. She was wearing a pink mini skirt with a pink polka dot top and pink high heel shoes. Her hair was pulled up in a high pony tail and her nails were painted to match her outfit. Miss Tracy and her children had already begun to live what she believed to be the “American Dream.”

They thought that the plane would never land but after six hours in the air, the flight attendant made an announcement. “Welcome to John F. Kennedy International Airport. We hope you enjoy your stay here. The time is now 8:00pm and it is currently thirty degrees outside.” The rest of the announcement was nothing but *shwi shwi shwi* to Miss Tracy. The minute she heard thirty degrees all these crazy thoughts popped up in her head. What if her children caught pneumonia from the cold? Did her sister remember to bring them jackets? She had heard about the snow and how beautiful it is but wasn't it ice? How did anyone walk in ice and not get frozen stiff like meat does in the refrigerator? This was the beginning of many questions Miss Tracy had to answer for herself and her four children.

There were two lines at immigration. One was for visitors only and the other was for anyone carrying a blue US passport. Miss Tracy didn't know this so she went in the line that was for US citizens because it was the quickest line. “You're in the wrong line!” said the attendant after she had finally gotten to the counter. “This line is for American citizens only.” She then had to get back in line. Then began the countless questions and for a moment, Miss Tracy felt as if she was in court. How long are you staying? Are you on holidays? Are these your children? Who will you be staying with? Do you have anything to declare? What's in all these bags? Are you carrying any fruits? With that they proceeded to dig in her bags and believe it or not, they took all the mangoes, yams, breadfruits and sugar cane. “You mean after all that trouble to carry this somebody else goin' to enjoy it? Not over my dead body,” said Miss Tracy. “If de people I bring it for cyah enjoy it, nobody else will.” Miss Tracy took the mangoes from the bin where the attendant had placed them and started biting

into them. She took a pen and poked holes in the breadfruit and yams. The attendants thought she was crazy but they were too amused by the whole situation to call security.

After hours of interrogation by immigration, Miss Tracy and her children were finally able to walk out to meet her sister. This was a sister whom she hadn't seen in over ten years. Her sister had gone to America but was not able to visit her relatives back home because she had overstayed on her visa. Furthermore, she had applied for a green card but hadn't gotten it yet. "Oh Lawd, Marcia," "Lawd Tracy, it's been so long." The two embraced each other with tears streaming down their eyes. Tears of joy mixed with tears of sadness mixed with tears of hope.

—Lervan Johnny



Still Life With Fresh Fruit, Marica, Brazil
Benjamin Howe

Verse and Vision IV

Lattice and Loloma

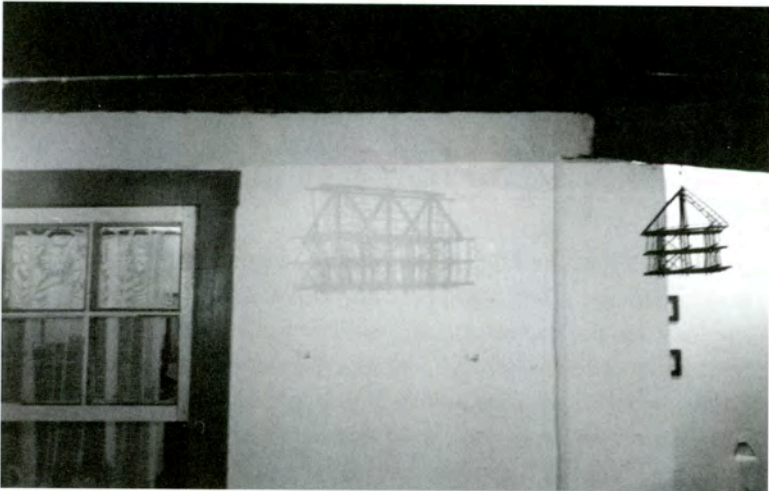
As I fixate on this window pane
life is stencilled on the ground.
Hands pressed deep in pockets
to keep the winter out.
I saved all receipts and stamps,
remember you were here.
Postcards, pictures, effigies
to adorn the restless stare.

As the fronds cause scattered lattices
ants form networks on the ground.
Hands pressed deep in tide-washed sand
to have ephemeral identity.
I kept personality,
remember you were weak.
Sunburn, words misspoken,
a spectre from the being.


Nighttime lines used on daytime girls.
Eyes move towards the ground.
Hands pressed deep in pockets
to keep the echoes out.
I found mobility
in learning how to speak.
Greetings, invites, conversation,
afloat in the Pacific.

As the dusk sends ominous shade
I will run back to the town.
Hands pressed tight in fists
to keep lethargy out.
I see days' events,
and will my friends to speak.
But without warm pockets
winter causes words to break.

—Amanda Haag



*Uma Sombra da Gaiola/A Shadow From a
Birdcage, Ibla Bela, Brazil*
Benjamin Howe



(Non)fiction II

Jen Blue Gloves & a Heartbeat

The London Underground system blends a strange assortment of characters. After living in the city for a few months, I find that I am usually equipped with a book or my journal or, if the mood strikes, I can be found wasting batteries on the pain-in-the-ass that is my Discman. Once a week or so I'll even take out the occasional roll of film that I picked up a few minutes earlier. I will have already looked at the pictures once or twice, but now on the tube I take my time. I try to go back to each situation, each person, each expression, while I still have the power to associate the memories with feelings.

Sometimes, though, I can't focus on anything other than those around me. I find myself making up stories about them...I have all the time in the world to develop the lives of a few Vernons and a couple of Oolas. Today, though, I have some-one new.

I watch as the High Barnet train saunters into Euston Station. There are a few seats, here and there, and I pat myself on the back for the proper decision to wait for this train instead of taking the packed Finchley Central a minute earlier. I notice the guitar before I notice its owner. Big, black, leather case. Airport tag. It must be important if he travels with it. He must be a musician. I think I'll call him James. He could be a James.

He wears gloves that are a bit brighter than navy blue and a bit more tasteful than royal blue. They are the kind without entire fingers, just like Madonna used to wear. There are four holes on the top of the right hand. When he gets nervous or

impatient he rubs the skin that breathes through each of these holes. His hair is light brown and long; down past his ears, parted erratically throughout the center. Although they frantically search the car, his eyes are a peaceful crystalline shade of green.

He knows I am hooked. He looks up and catches me looking, but then again, I look up and find the same. I know he is watching as I flip through the pictures, holding on to some a little longer than others. I know he notices when my expression shifts, when a happy smile becomes a nostalgic one. I know because I feel it. He begins tapping his fingers on his guitar case. He is obviously waiting for something. Or someone.

I sit back and remember the day; I took my time today. I descended the stairs without the sense of urgency that seems to plague each of my movements. I didn't run between the Victoria Line and the Northern Line. Seven flights of stairs instead of the elevator in the academic building I affectionately refer to as "Regent." I looked up at the lights outlining Oxford Street; I tried on a new pair of jeans at Top Shop. I sat down with ease and looked around at each person beside me. I watched the man in front of me with his eyes closed and his mind on his music. I watched the man with the shaggy red beard read his newspaper and I noticed that his sneakers were remarkably clean. The woman to my left read Dostoevsky, concentrating intensely on every word with her forehead creased with what I can only think of as perplexity.

But I simply cannot shake James. I keep having this instinct to look over and whenever I do, I see the flick of green as he turns away. The more it happens, the slower the turn. There is suddenly no real rush, we know the other is there. I am not beautiful. He is not in awe of me. He is just curious. I am not mesmerized by his strong jaw or his light eyes. I just want to know where the holes in his gloves came from. What his favorite song to play on the guitar is. Whether his mother or father gave him those eyes. What he's doing in my life at 7:23 pm on a beautiful Tuesday.

I sink back into myself. Maybe he can't stop looking be-

cause he can see the scar on my neck; a constant reminder of past pain and the bizarre familiarity of hospital lights. Maybe he'll go home and write a song about this strange girl who caught his attention for a little while on the underground one evening. Maybe he'll forget about me the minute we hit Archway. Maybe, in ten years, I'll wake up next to him, roll over, stare into the light green eyes that I have memorized and say, "Whatever happened to those blue gloves?"

—Jennifer Mitchell



Bridge on My Way Home
Aix-en-Provence, France
Kate Evanciew

Conveyances

Students often relate stories to us of the memorable encounters they have with unique and disparate modes of transportation as they travel around the world. These encounters are frequently depicted in the photographs and written pieces that they submit to The Aleph. How people get themselves and their possessions from place to place is a fascinating topic in and of itself; equally fascinating, from our perspective, are the experiences students have as they come into contact with different people in the process of going from point A to point B. Our objective in presenting these images is to provide the reader insight into the diversity of human transportation as well as the opportunities for cross-cultural exploration available to our students.



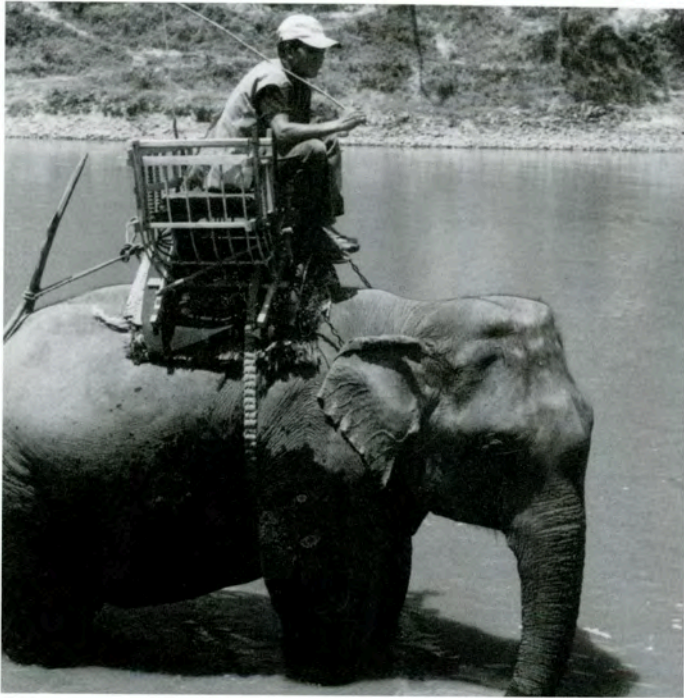
India Street Scene
Sarah Quintal



Favela Bug, São Paulo, Brazil
Christina DeLeon



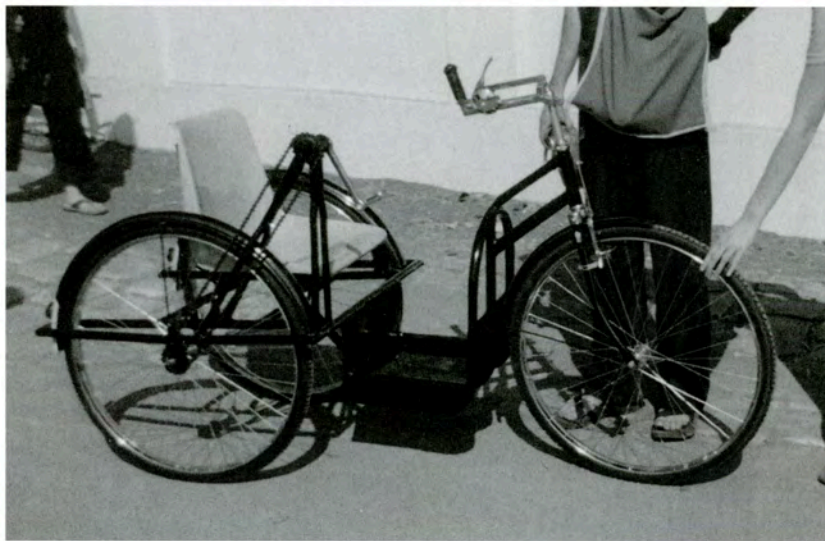
Trapped on an Off-duty Train, Budapest, Hungary
Leya Tesmenitsky



Elephant, Northern Thailand
Shannon Mason



Boat and House, Jamaica
Chelsey Kantor



Leper's Bicycle, India
Nancy Ta



Ferry Loading in Senegal
Helmi Hunin



Commuters in the Madrid Metro, Spain
Kendra Zysk



Horse and Truck in the Australian Bush
Annmarie Mica



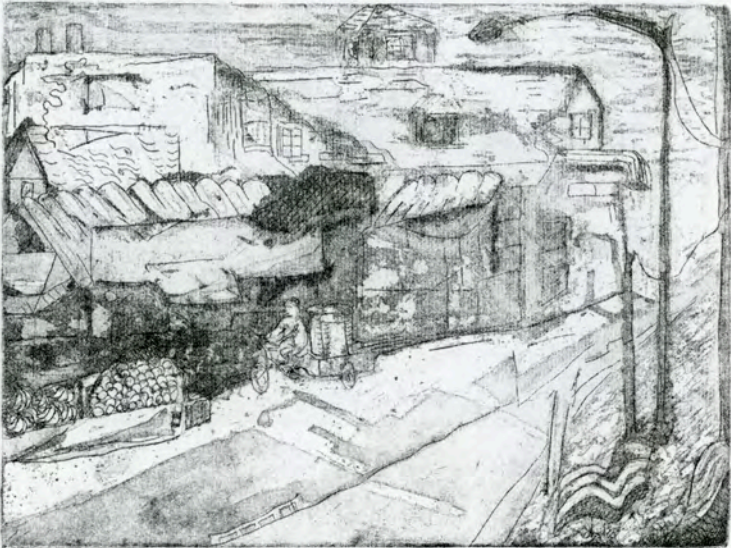
Horseman and Telephone Line, China
Suan Tan



Gondolas at Rest, Venice, Italy
Melissa Passarelli



Coal Cart, Beijing, China
Michael Losure



Take Home
Street Scene, Shanghai, China
Tyler Spence



Pedestrian Traffic, Germany
Leya Tesmenitsky



Pedestrian Traffic, Fiji
Amanda Haag

Verse and Vision V

Will It Ever Be?

(Inspired by a sunrise in New Zealand)

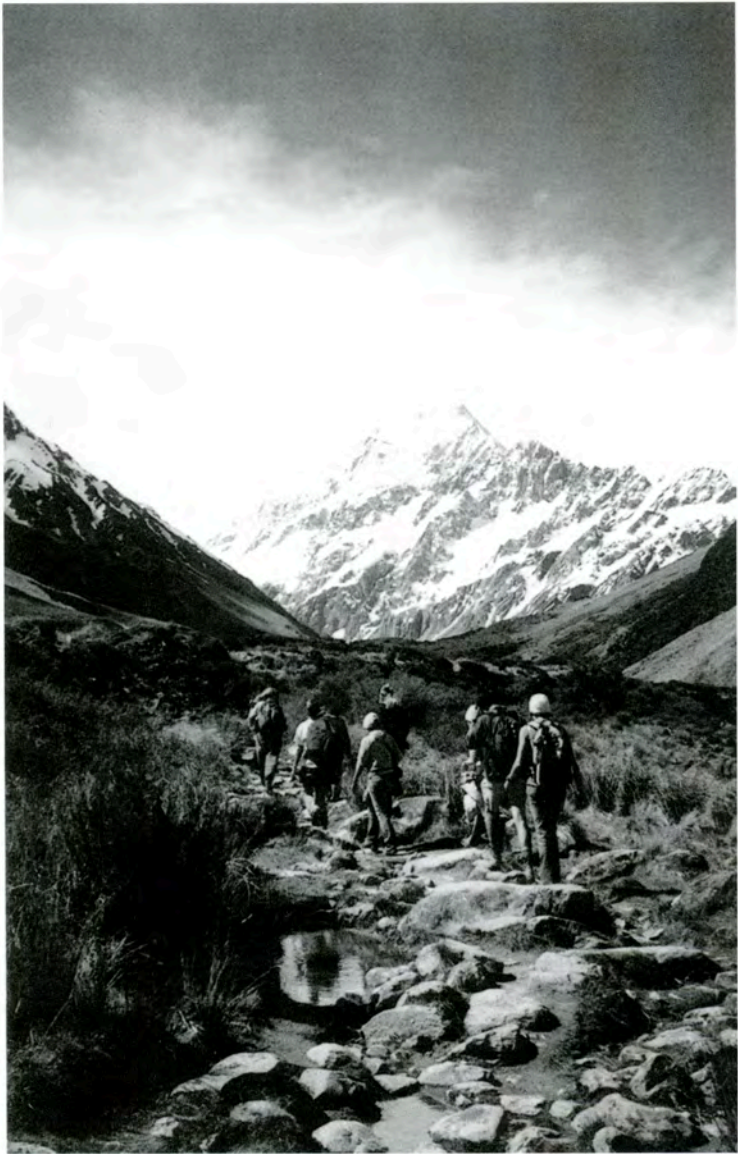
In a moment it is gone.
The thought that lingered
Now fades with a single breath.

Lost forever is the image
Of a face or was it a place.
So far gone it alludes.

Will they be recalled?
Can they be defined?
The sun gives way to new light.

Light of a new land,
One of new thoughts.
The memories of old fade
As new light engulfs my heart.

—Peter Devine



Hiking in New Zealand
Rebecca Traver

India Folio

Associations

bathing with buckets and cold water

Indian toilets – porcelain outlining a hole in the ground

brushing your teeth with bottled water

servants

people consistently interrupt each other in conversation

different head movements during conversation

men openly holding hands

men wearing jewelry – bracelets

whole families on a single motorcycle

“Indian time” = late to everything

Pepsi and Coca Cola billboards even in seemingly remote areas

taking shoes off at holy places or as a general sign of respect

heavy pollution

animals: mongoose, peacocks, camels, pine martins, elephants,
parrots, donkeys, cows, horses, water buffalo, monkeys, lizards,
stray dogs and cats

—Sarah Quintal



Self-Portrait, India
Nancy Ta

My Tiffin Box

I love it—the smooth, round, stainless steel container that I carry with me to school. Every morning I get this excited feeling of anticipation for the wonderful surprises which await me, inside. What could it be today: *chappatis...paneer*? The craft of my host mother's loving hands, with whom I've lived for only three weeks, but who already feels like to a mother to me, has created nothing short of a culinary masterpiece for my taste tendrils to succumb to: the spices made mild for my foreign stomach, but still rich with age and many secrets. Lunch rolls itself over on its lazy belly, so I rush over to my tiffin box that waits patiently on the chair. Everything inside looks just as it had four or five hours before. The only thing that tells of time having passed are the water droplets that cling to the lid of the container when I open it and then evaporate. The cows, bicycle-rickshaws, the auto-rickshaws, the bicyclists, the pedestrians, the gods and goddesses, the temples, the guest house in Mussorie, Mrs. Aurora's dog, the wee-hours of the morning doing ridiculous amounts of work for our group leader Ed, conversations on long train rides, enjoying a meal, every meal, with close friends and travel companions...why can't all of those memories be stored in my tiffin box? I tried to preserve it all, but I only came home with six stainless steel plates embedded with silver my host mother gave me before I left, so I would remember her forever. They are the best quality, but everything slides off of them. I don't know how to keep things on these new instruments. Everything on them remains unprotected, cools and ages. It's not just the plate I have problems with, but also the college cafe's woven plastic basket covered with black and white checkered paper which seems unfulfilled with itself, leaking through its own holes and through its own paper shield. How can I contain my life and my memories now that there is no longer a box? It's a struggle for preservation.

—Nancy Ta



*Doing Puja (devotions) at the Temple of Yamunotri, the
Source of the Sacred Yamuna River, India*
Elizabeth Lowery



Milling Grain, India
Elizabeth Lowery



Ghat on the Ganges, Varanasi, India
Nancy Ta

India Journal

9/5/03

I can't say that this experience, since our arrival in Delhi, hasn't been a little overwhelming for me. I've been sheltered my whole life in an extremely tiny town where I live on a hill with one neighbor a little way up the road—where I went to school with a mostly white population of mostly lower middle class and poor families—from which I went to a small, homogeneous, expensive liberal arts college. This was my second plane trip—my first alone or without family, my first time across an ocean—and is my first stay in a city. As soon as we arrived at the gate for the flight to India from Amsterdam we were the minorities—the soon-to-be foreigners. When we arrived in New Delhi I went to the bathroom. I started to go in the fourth stall which, when I opened the door, had the kind of toilet I take for granted. The bathroom attendant, however, stopped me before I fully entered and signaled for me to use the third stall. It was like a tipped-over urinal on the floor. It was really much like camping—no toilet paper, either. We enter Delhi—cars, bikes and trucks treating the road signs, lines, and lights as if they're

merely decorative – with cows obviously more at home in the middle of the street than I could ever feel even in a vehicle.

The next day, today, I feel totally alien, like a burlap bag in the midst of flowing silk patterns. It's a whole new world—the Third, I suppose—different skin color, different culture, different cultural cues, different smells, different climate, different currency, different technology, different clothing, different food, different attitudes. My person seems to be the only control—the only familiar thing I have right now and even that is in question. This is a struggle.

9/20/03

As we progress more and more in Hindi it's interesting to observe how language reflects and creates culture. I've continually heard Hindis refer to living somewhere or growing up somewhere as belonging to that area—to that land. In every part of their speech there is less focus on the person or the individual compared to English. For instance, in English we would say, "I was late" or "you were late", placing all responsibility on the person while in Hindi it would be more like, "lateness happened to me." (note: all Hindi references come from Professor Dinkarji as I'm not advanced enough to know them). Similarly in English we would say, "I have a problem" while in Hindi it would be "Problems have come upon me." The person is always less important and less focal in this structure and sentences are phrased more indirectly. It makes me wonder if the English language perpetuates the ego or facilitates the creation of a strong ego. Our very sentence structure seems to suggest the importance we place on the individual. It is less likely to hear someone in the US claiming to belong to the land that they live on. Rather, we in the US believe the land belongs to us. It's our property. I find the idea of belonging to the land much more preferable and I feel as though thinking in this way could create a sense of concern and responsibility for the environment—seeing it as essential to our own lives and therefore not less but equally deserving of attention. Perhaps I'm being idealistic...

9/22/03

A joke that author Nayatarah Sahgal told us: a young man comes upon an extremely old man, perhaps in his nineties, sitting outside of a house, enjoying the sun. Amazed, the young man asks, "Sir, to what do you attribute your incredible longevity?" The old man replies solemnly, "A drop of liquor never touched my lips." During the old man's reply there was a terrible racket inside the house with clanging dishes, moving furniture, and extensive yelling. The young man says apologetically, "I'm sorry, sir, but I can't hear you because of the noise." The old man says, "oh, that's just my dad, drunk as usual."

The joke seemed very Hindu to me because its moral is basically that different methods work for different people—just as in Hinduism different people choose their own gods to worship and to fit their own personal needs.

9/31/03

After hours of exhaust in our faces and more bathroom and tea stops than my dad would ever allow on a car trip, we finally made it to the Ganga Yamuna, the hotel we would stay at for the weekend. We unpacked quickly with two or three people for each small but comfortable room—some with western toilets and some with Indian-style toilets—ours, alas, was Indian-style with a broken flusher. Soon after our arrival we took a short hike across a bridge and up a small hill to Kharsalee, a small village with two temples and many gigantic water buffalo. The water buffalo are tremendously huge! I was shocked and delighted to see them.


There were two temples in the village, the oldest of which was dedicated to Saturn and Yama, the God of death. According to Dinkarji every Saturday night at six o'clock bowls full of oil are lit on fire. Everybody leaves the temple for the rest of the night and apparently in the morning the bowls have always been mysteriously emptied and turned upside down. Regardless of whether or not it's true I think it's wonderful that such stories are told and believed.

The most amazing part about the pilgrimage site of Yamunotri, a temple built in view of the glacier from which comes the holy Yamuna River, was the hot springs experience. As I've said in previous entries, with the exception of a few close relationships I generally find the women of India very intimidating and I don't generally know how to go about interacting with them. I had these thoughts in mind as I went into the women's changing room which made my experience there much more rewarding. I felt absolutely naked in the changing room in my bathing suit—a sharp contrast to the cloth dresses most of the other women were wearing to go in the water. As soon as I walked down into the enclosed dark area surrounding the women's bathing area all of my discomforts and fears vanished. Immediately upon arriving at the springs two naked women pulled me and the others into the water. We immediately created a huge circle in the pool of bobbing, singing, and clapping Indian and American women. It was incredible. They accepted us so openly into their religious pilgrimage experience. The women taught us a devotional song to Ram and Krishna and made us demonstrate our swimming abilities. There was constant laughter and joking—I had never before seen women so freely enjoying themselves. It made me wonder if perhaps this was, for many of them, their first experience being fully immersed in warm water. It's such a wonderful feeling that I've always taken for granted. When we left the springs all of the women were smiling—no longer intimidating—and wishing us well on our travels in India.

—Sarah Quintal



Children, India
Sarah Quintal



Crossings I

Thoughts

Nostalgia. I long to be back. I realize it is where I belong. I am tired and the journey has been long. I feel like a shower will do wonders. It's the worst part of the entire trip to India. The journey is so incredibly long and the entire period all I can do is strum my fingers, tweak my hair, close my eyes and smell my country. It's what I have been doing for the past semester and I cannot wait to be there. It is the same story every time I go back home. Coming so far away from home, I have realized where I truly belong and whom I represent. It's ironic; it took me to come so far away to understand how much I appreciate where I come from.

India. Color. Smells. More color. Diversity. Languages. Food. Clothes, intricate and elaborate. People. The sights and smells overwhelm my senses as soon as I land and step out of the aircraft. It feels like I've entered an oven, the warm air embraces me, engulfs me so completely. I've imagined this heat in the stinging cold. Just like the cold cuts me into pieces, piercing right through me, the heat brings every part of me together, melts my being into one no longer depending on my heavy coat to keep me together. My blue coat is heavier, my friends say, than all of us together. I smile. I'm glad I don't need that anymore. I could just stand there in the middle of the runway and not move but I am pushed by a throng of people toward the terminal bus. I am reminded that Indians can get quite rowdy. My senses are being worked overtime, and combined with the jet lag, I am driven to a daze; robotically getting my baggage and finding my way out to meet my family. I've missed them.

I look up at the sky. It's polluted and I can't see as many stars as I see over Seneca Lake, but they're mine. I've thought of my Indian stars every time I looked at the sky in Geneva. I recognize them, I recognize me in them. It's going to rain soon and I wait in anticipation. I believe one has not seen rain until one has seen it in India. The rain just soaks the earth and the grass and cleans away all the dirt, a reprieve from the relentless summer. The earth rises and I can smell it. Exotic, I think. I rush out and see the grey sky pouring out all it has. I rush out, I need to be there with the trees and grass and flowers and the peacocks outside my house. Soaking in the rain, drenching wet. This is my moment; my memory when the moment has gone.

I don't complain about the heat now. It burns me but I always think of the piercing cold. I don't complain about the dirt and the poverty around me. It is part of what I know as my life and I cannot abandon it. Getting the opportunity to study in the US has played a major role in helping me understand my own culture and traditions, and all the festivity they have to offer. I have learned to live in the moment and save it for later when things aren't so great. My memories then are my rose-colored glasses. In my quest for being a compassionate and educated human being, I have learned about other cultures different from mine and understood the importance of global tolerance. It's a much wider perspective than I was previously familiar with, sometimes hard to comprehend because it embraces so many people, so many experiences. But I am learning, one step at a time. I have learned the importance of stepping outside familiar territory and expanding horizons, looking beyond the sky and stars that I knew. Of course I miss home, I always will. It's where I belong. But I have learned that my life doesn't necessarily have to be spent in doing things that I already know. I can experiment, take risks, make mistakes, learn along the way and become a globally conscious person.


—Suprita Kudesia



Sydney Harbor at Night, Australia
Brooke Denslow



Arapuni Power Station, New Zealand
Brian Rice



Crossings II

Borders

Crossing borders alone is both a formidable and a wonderful experience. You face many challenges which you cannot learn to overcome anywhere else. If you fail, you take pride in the satisfaction of at least trying. Traveling in order to learn opens our minds, and the shared global perspectives we bring back home undoubtedly strengthen the continuing learning process. I undertook my own voyage of discovery in September 2002, when I arrived in the US to begin college.

As an A-Level (high school) student in Karachi, Pakistan, I was interested in the issue of globalization as well as the structure of world politics. Yet the term “globalization” seemed vague. While classroom lectures offered theories, in essence it remained unexplained. I wanted to explore and experience the dynamism of the global system, and my curiosity for this understanding inspired me to seek an undergraduate education in a foreign country that not only values cultural diversity, but also gives everyone an equal opportunity to learn. The notion of freedom of thought and expression is valuable to me, and, honestly speaking, Pakistan is not a society that encourages such openness of mind. Thus, I began my search, and chose to study in the US.

I believe that a deeper understanding of cultural diversity and an expanded worldview are essential foundations to education. The world I saw in Pakistan was only green and white. There were so many other colors I had yet to see. I became all too aware of my own limitations, of how very big the world is, and how little I know about it. I wanted to interact with people from all over the world.

After September 11th, I feared my plans for studying abroad would be affected. During the first week of college, the responses from other students indicated that, a year down the road from the terrorist attacks, they were anxious to learn more from someone coming from a country bordering Afghanistan. But I also encountered misconceptions and fear, and I confess that these biased notions against a Muslim initially offended me.

Why did I then continue to stay here? I realized that instead of responding back with hate and anger, I can perhaps teach tolerance and change peoples' perceptions. I set out to list things I would like to learn and teach. I aspired to learn to connect, engage, self-discover, and assimilate. Through this process I also learned to respect and value my own culture, traditions, and individuality.

Now, two years later, I am continuing to construct myself and each day offers a new dimension of self-awareness. My college experience has been important to me personally because it has given me an opportunity to be independent and seek my future on my own. I always wanted to meet different kinds of people, and to live and breathe other cultures. Growing up, I was a shy, reserved girl who wished to step out of the shell and find some exposure. Going to college abroad has contributed immensely to my personality. I am no longer shy but confident, friendly, and ready to interact with everyone. Participating in organizations and being active on campus has helped me develop an extensive network of relationships.

I now understand myself as a student, a leader, and a teacher. I want to make a difference in the lives of others, especially the poor people in my country and other Third World nations. I have already begun this journey of social work; last summer I interned with a human rights committee in Karachi and gained much from this valuable experience. I still remember the beautiful smile of a very old woman I saw while working on a project. She toiled in very poor conditions as a laundry woman in a small village in the countryside, and yet her face was lit with this glowing smile. That stayed with me. Now I carry it and bring it to as many places as I can.

Living and studying in America has taught me things impossible to understand in a classroom. It has intensified my desire to work for the rights of others and has provided me with a strength and vision to assess things critically. Now, I try new things, create new ideas, and engage in new adventures. While I reflect over an appropriate way to end this essay amidst much noise in the cafeteria, I turn to see my surroundings. I am sitting with my three best friends Aysegül (from Turkey), Lauren (from Jamaica), and Ramah (from Ghana), international students like me. I smile. I have crossed borders and am on my way to crossing more.

—Tanya Khokar




On the Edge, New Zealand
Charles May



Hope Lights, Japan
David Baird-Miller



Peace Has No Color, Italy
Cole Judge



Crossings III

Jewish and Buddhist in Japan

For my 21st birthday, close family friends gave me the book The Life of Pi, by Yann Martel. Despite the whimsical cover of a boy adrift in a life raft, I expected a dissertation about number theory or a novel about a tormented mathematician like John Nash. Instead, the book follows a boy raised in India who embraces the Hindu, Moslem and Catholic faiths, much to the confused dismay of his parents. Much like Pi, I have been blessed with an enthusiasm towards two distinct yet surprisingly harmonious religious convictions: Judaism and Zen Buddhism.

Though I sometimes feel torn between the ritual devotion of God demanded by Judaism and the knee-jerk acceptance of a world void of stability preached in Zen, I believe that the two can peacefully coexist in my spiritual matrix without the “Zen duality alarm” sounding. For example, I believe that the ultimate truth gained in Zen enlightenment is the same objective reality in which God exists. Just as Jews believe God is the force which “binds heart to heart and mind to mind,” so I believe in the Buddhist notion that all things arise interdependently and that we all exist in relation to one another. Likewise, I often use a very important Jewish prayer as a mantra in meditation just as ancient Jewish Kabbalistic practitioners did centuries ago.

Thus, my main inspiration for studying Japanese was a distant dream to come to Japan and have the opportunity to experience Rinzai Zen in a monastery. Never did I imagine, however, that my most moving Jewish experience would be spending Yom Kippur in an Orthodox Shul in Kobe.

Though few of my Japanese friends had heard of Jewish communities in the Kansai region (or anywhere else in Japan,

for that matter), Jews are not foreign to this country. As early as the 16th century, Jewish travelers entered Japan along with Portuguese and Dutch merchants, though they didn't settle on the Japanese mainland until 1853. During the 1880s, many Jews settled around Nagasaki, fleeing the Russian pogroms. Despite Japan's alliance with Germany during World War II, Japan was also refuge for nearly 6000 Jews. The Japanese foreign minister, Matsuoka Yosuke, told a group of Jewish businessmen at the time: "I am the man responsible for the alliance with Hitler, but nowhere have I promised that we could carry out his anti-Semitic policies in Japan...I have no compunction about announcing it to the world." It has been suggested that the motivation behind such benevolence was the legacy of Jacob Schiff, a Jewish financier who raised funds for Japan during the Russo-Japanese War earlier in the century.

However, there are cases of open defiance to both German and Japanese authority during in the war years for the explicit purpose of saving targeted Jews. For example, Sugihara Sempo, the Japanese consul to Lithuania, despite constant Foreign Ministry cables ordering him to desist, issued transit visas to roughly 6000 Jewish refugees from Poland and Lithuania.

I had no knowledge of Japan's Jewish history until I stumbled upon a web page devoted to Jewish Sages a few days before Yom Kippur, the holiest of Jewish holidays. As I read through the page I saw that the author was not only Japanese, but also a professor at Kansai University. In a daze of serendipitous bliss, I wrote an email to the professor explaining how I had used an internet search engine to inquire about the spelling of a Jewish author and his site had appeared as the first listed. After a series of emails, he invited me to the Ohel Shelomoh synagogue in Kitano-cho, Kobe.

After battling through a series of train lines, I arrived in Kobe at the Sannomiya Station and was met by the professor. Though badly damaged by the earthquake in January, 1995, the Shul is a fully functional community center with a Kosher kitchen, meeting area and orthodox-style synagogue with a separate section for women. Throughout the service, I heard a mixture

of Japanese, Hebrew, English and another language that I could not easily differentiate. As the Rabbi and many members are from Syria and Iraq, it could have been an Arabic/Hebrew mix. Though I don't speak Hebrew, I could follow the service and the feeling of community I felt between Japanese, Israeli, American and Sephardic Jews touched me in a way no spiritual encounter had before. No matter how many people you might be meditating with, the feel of group prayer instills a sense of community and mutual trust that sitting *zazen*¹ cannot bring about.

Halfway through the morning services the next day, I took a short walk to get some fresh air and found myself doing a walking



meditation in a small Buddhist Temple. Though I couldn't hear myself laughing over my growling stomach (Jews fast on Yom Kippur) I was surely the only Jew who would leave mid-way through Orthodox services to meditate at a Buddhist Temple.

Because of my beliefs, I may never be considered a legitimate practitioner of either religion by the authorities, but I am not discouraged. I do not feel that I have to make a choice. Listen: this is the sound of one Jewish hand clapping in Japan.

—Aaron Edelstein

¹ To sit in *zazen* is the practice of sitting without purpose or thought, to exist completely in the present moment. Zen Buddhists try to extend the *zazen* mindset to every activity of their daily lives.



Wealth and Poverty Juxtaposed in São Paulo, Brazil
Christina DeLeon



Great Wall of China in Winter
Michael Losure

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To submit your work for the next issue of *The Aleph*, please contact the Editors at the address below.

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It is the place where,
without admixture or
confusion, all the places
of the world, seen from
every angle, coexist.

—Jorge Luis Borges

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