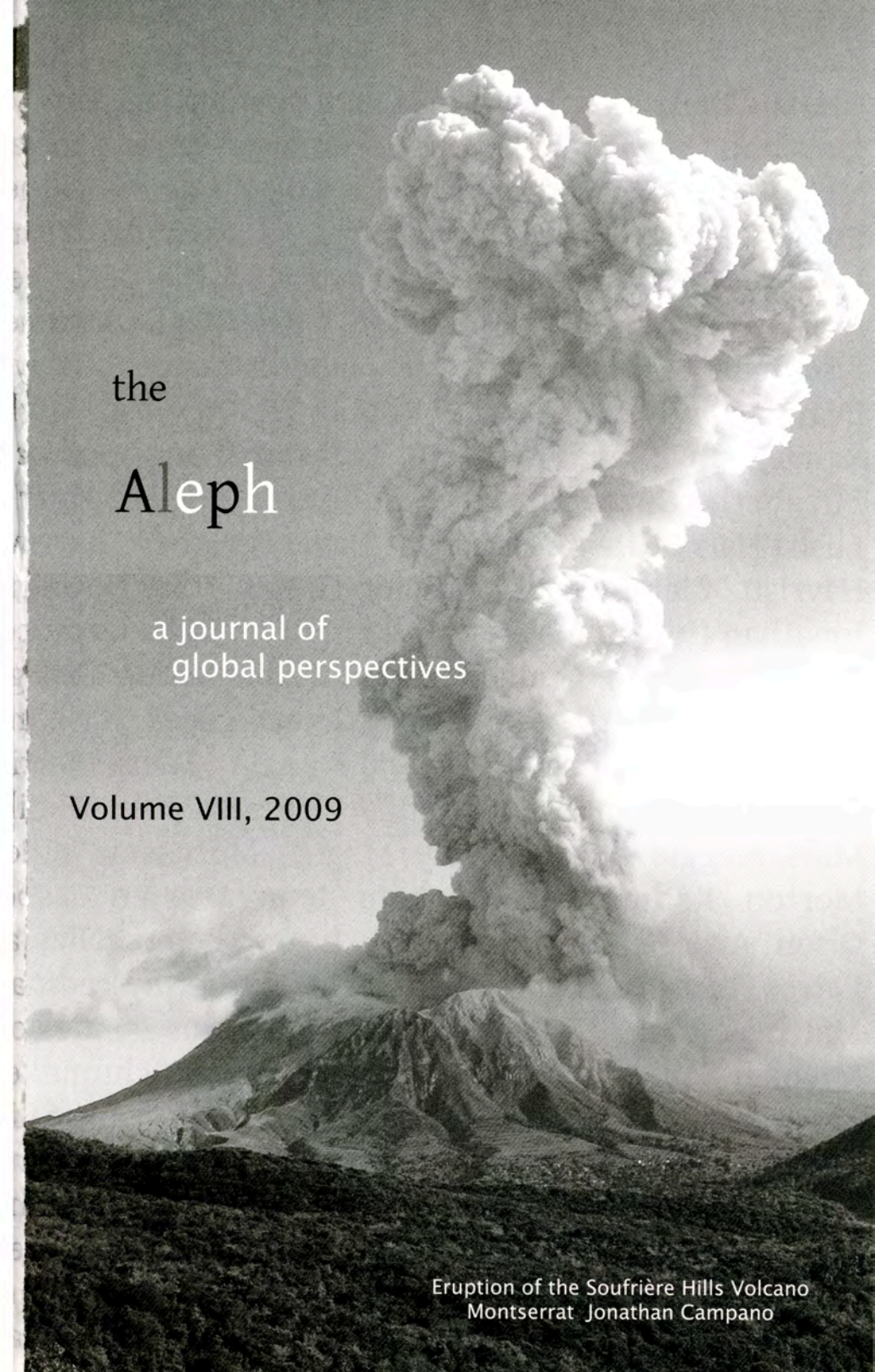
# the Aleph

8

a journal of global perspectives



# the Aleph

a journal of
global perspectives

Volume VIII, 2009

Eruption of the Soufrière Hills Volcano
Montserrat Jonathan Campano

Roger Arnold Alysa Austin Innis Baah Cristina Bair
Zachary Barash Ian Barton Mary Kate Bates Matt
Beenan Daisy Bird John Boyle Ben Bristow Jared Byrn
Jonathan Campano Jessica Cardinale Marie Catilla
Mary Cinadr Charlie Clarke Peter Todd Coggins Rach
Cohen Kirsten Cooper Whitney Cox Nicholas Crea
Lyndsay De Matteo Josh DeBartolo Katie DeKrake
Kayleigh DeLap Molly DiStefano Collin Doyle Micha
Eisenman Christie Eldredge Jane Erickson Kaitly
Evans Molly Fitzgerald Robbie Flick Sarah Foy
Rahde Franke Jena Frisbie Julia Gibson Diana Goodma
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# Letter from the Editors

## Editors' Note

*This journal takes its name from the 1945 short story "The Aleph" by the Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges. In the story, the author finds "a small iridescent sphere" in which, "without admixture or confusion, all the places of the world, seen from every angle, coexist." Borges' story resonates with the experiences of students who have crossed cultural borders. The Aleph: a journal of global perspectives provides space for students to explore the ways in which their encounter with other cultures may have changed them. For the reader, the journal serves as a window into the lives of students as they navigate cultures and identities. Contributor and reader alike are are challenged to comprehend "all the places of the world, seen from every angle."*

*With this issue, we decided to try something that Borges, who studied philology, would have appreciated. We have introduced a third narrative to accompany the images and texts, one made up of definitions of words that are particularly meaningful to students studying abroad. The definitions were drawn from contemporary open source dictionaries as well as reference works in the public domain. We sought to create definitions that were playful, unexpected, or revealing, in the hope that, like study abroad, the encounter might shift the reader's point of view. The first essay in The Aleph, by Lauren Samuelson, introduces the definitions thread.*

*For this year's edition of The Aleph, we contacted alumni who have built upon their study abroad experiences with continued international engagement. We asked these individuals to write about their lives abroad, and how their engagement illuminates the ethos of global citizenship, a growing sense of awareness of the interconnectivity of life on earth. Their contributions are placed within The Aleph's traditional structure where they fit best, and they are identified as 'Alumni Voices'.*

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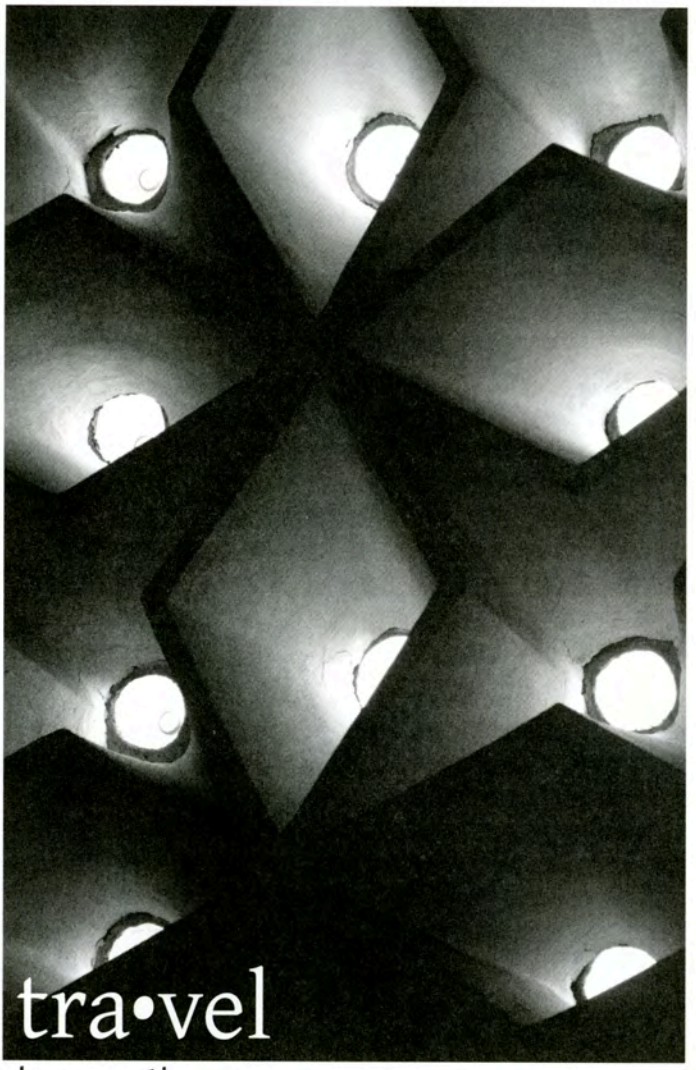


# tra•vel

|tra-vəl| v.

## move through space; make a journey, usually of some length

[fr. *travail*; Middle English *travailen*; toil, labor; via Old French from medieval Latin *trepalium* 'instrument of torture,' from Latin *tres* 'three' + *palus* 'stake']

*Travail. To work. To toil. To search. To grow.* When we travel, we search. We search ourselves. We search for ourselves. When we travel we search for a connection with a place. We use place as a way to gather ourselves—our thoughts, our passions, our identity. We store our memories in a space. We remember ourselves and connect with others in the context of a specific space. We begin the work, the toil, of traveling from the place, the space, where our story lives—our home.

Humans track their identity across space. We use space to define our present and to understand our collective and personal histories. Space is the entry to the *"everywhen"*. We understand a space, a location, as existing not only in the present. A space can connect us with our history. A space is a bridge. To experience a place is to find a piece of oneself and to find connections with other human beings. When we travel we seek new spaces. We seek a more complete understanding not only of ourselves, but of our individual relationship to the *"everywhen"*—our place within both time and space.

We are all programmed to understand place in particular ways. The scientist sees the beauty of a well-ordered world. She sees the beauty of nature and understands herself in relation to that beauty. For the man of God, space is always powerful. He understands that life is put some *place* and that life arises from some *place.* Space for the religious person is a way to experience and know God.

Children understand space and travel in profoundly different ways than adults. Unlike adults, children have not yet been socialized into a particular understanding of space. The child chasing pigeons in the square cannot yet fathom how the space in which he is playing will affect his identity or connect him to other human beings. As he runs and plays with wild abandon, the child simply enjoys *being*. While the child does not understand space in the same ways as adults, it does not mean that his connection with space is any less true. The look of sheer joy and contentment is perhaps the truest expression of connectedness within space and time.

I watched children traveling with their families on the bus. While the parents appeared harried and frantic, their children carried none of that burden. They traveled without expecta-

tion and without agenda. Riding the bus one day a little girl climbed into the seat next to me. Her backpack was almost as big as she was. She looked up at me with the clearest blue eyes I have ever seen and smiled knowingly. As she began to babble in Dutch and point out the window, I *knew* precisely what she was saying. I *felt* precisely what she felt. Both of us, in our traveling, our toiling, our search, found in each other something that we could understand. Both of us found in our shared experience an entry to the *"everywhen"*. Our travel and our place brought us together in a powerful way. Whether we identified it as such or understood it at all, we were connected. That to me is what traveling means: to identify across space and time and to find common identity with others.

The Australian Aborigines believe that in order to understand themselves, they must seek connections with their ancestor spirits. In order to connect with these spirits, they travel to specific places within their topography. They understand themselves, their ancestors, and their religion through spaces – specific spaces are keys to understanding place and identity. Bruce Chatwin, the famous travel author, wrote of the Australian Aborigines, "by spending his whole life walking and singing his ancestor's songline, a man eventually becomes the track, the ancestor, and the song." As we travel and learn to understand spaces and our relationship to them, we become connected to journey itself. We transcend to the *"everywhen"*— we have a deeper understanding of both time and place allowing us to connect with others more fully. As we rode on the bus that day, with no way of knowing where the other was going, the little girl and I knew exactly how it was that we were going to get there.

–Lauren Samuelson

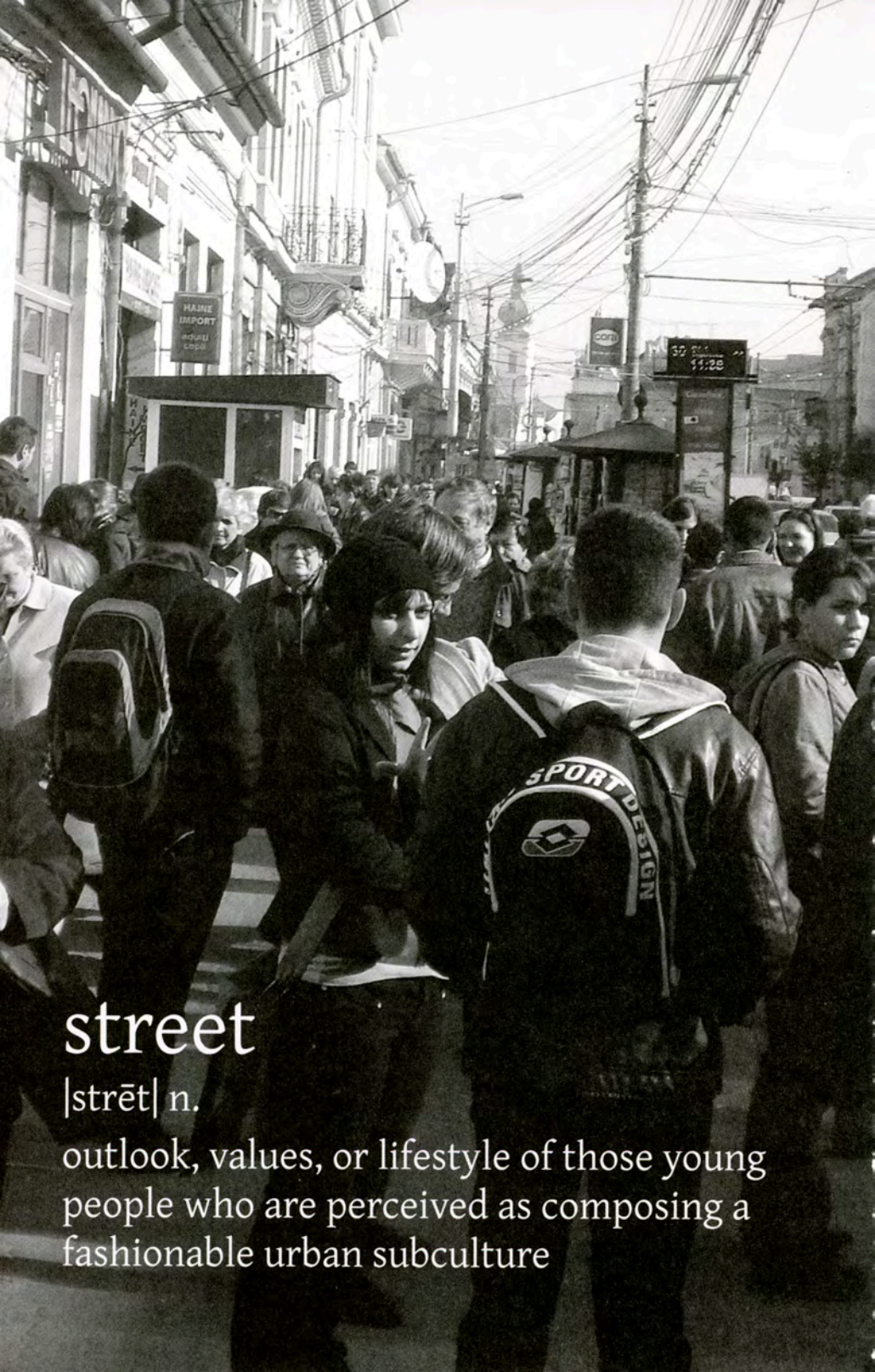
Early Morning Dog Walk on Mikkelborg Beach in Kokkedal, Denmark Charlotte Styer

# def•i•ni•tion

|ˌdefəˈni sh ən| n.

1. description of a thing by its properties

2. an explanation of the meaning of a word or term as it is used, or the meaning which the speaker intends to impose upon it




# street

|strēt| n.

outlook, values, or lifestyle of those young people who are perceived as composing a fashionable urban subculture

# Verse and Vision I

## Rubberneckers

Scenic View, Mexicali Mexico

We all
pile out, careful
to put a safe distance
between us and the canyon
mouth. My

stomach still clenched
tight from switchback
turns. Everybody's
snapping pictures
of the beast's belly,
big hunk of twisted

scrap metal wrapped
around a boulder.
Screwing up our eyes,

zooming in on our
high-powered, state-
of-the-art, expensive,
one-of-a-kind, meant
for National Geographic
style photography
lenses,

Itching to see body
parts splayed out
in the red rock
Mexican dust, still
shaking from that

Waiting for the Bus in Cluj-Napoca, Romania Jena Frisbie

high-speed, take

no prisoners,
better off dead
than alive, then-nobody-
can-talk car chase. Game
over, just nerves now,
synapse spasms,
science stuff, like
goose wings quivering

all the while with
its head looking
back at them
across the barn yard
on a chopping
block.

Brick of cocaine
still locked up
in the trunk. Good thing
he swallowed that
key.

We keep clicking
away, maybe hoping
to see a ghost rise
out of the wrecked
ground, soaked
with the blood
of Indians
even before these
poor fools, trying
like us
to send something home
to mom.

–Erin Schumaker

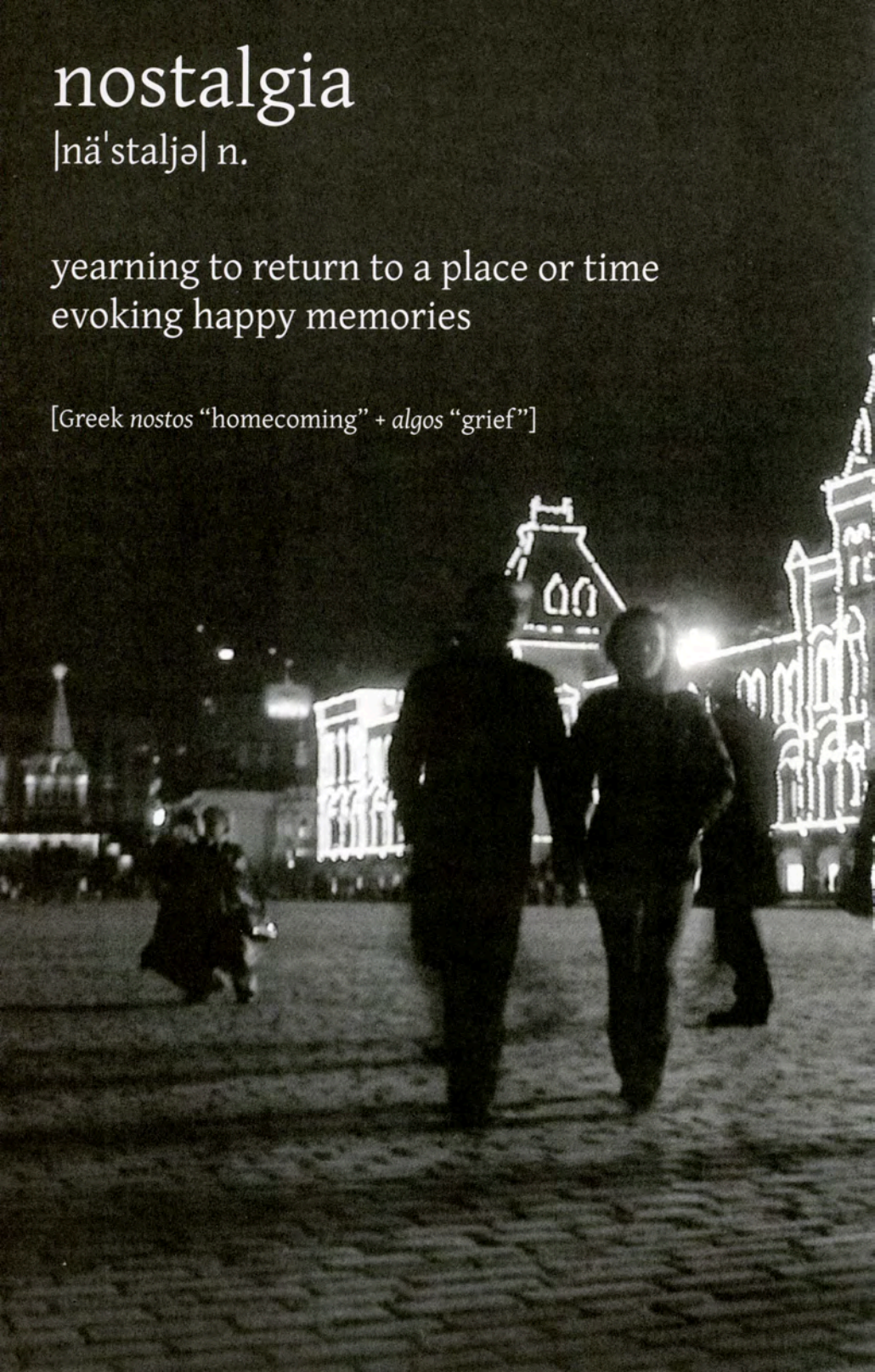
Wooden Calendar Workshop in Botiza, Romania Jena Frisbie
Local Artist Spreading the Message of Peace in Rennes, France Matthew Rohrs

# nostalgia

|nä'staljə| n.

yearning to return to a place or time
evoking happy memories

[Greek *nostos* "homecoming" + *algos* "grief"]



Red Square at Night in Moscow, Russia Elizabeth Guzzetti

# Moments I

## Service Handbook

Here is how to push away the precious tangibles of home, friends, love, familiarity, and comfort for vague repetitively drilled ideas like 'perspective' and 'horizon':

Here is how to wrap your shaking arms around the trembling body of your loved one and whisper uncertain words of what you hope is perceived as optimism before you pass through airport security:

Here is how you explain that helping people you don't know and quite frankly aren't sure will even appreciate your help is more important than spending time with those you love:

Here is precisely how long you hold moist eye contact:

Here is how you step in front of a classroom full of street children sitting in desks and eyeing you suspiciously and chattering to each other about you in their impenetrable native tongue, and convince them you have something important to impart:

Here is how you realize that most NGOs and their putatively selfless leaders have motives that are far less altruistic than they might want you to believe:

Here is how you handle realizing your NGO might be one of them:

Here is how to keep your head low during a shit storm:

Here is how to rip your hair out in frustration at the ego-driven, single-minded narcissistic omnipresent attitude that gorges on the resources and passion of your students, displayed by the very individuals who purport to be said students' champions.

Here is how you realize that the NGO sector is not the paradisical world of unified objective, humble cooperation, and fierce resolve you had imagined:

Château de Chillon in Montreux, Switzerland  Keegan Prue
Bicycling in the Aran Islands, Ireland  Lisa Vallee

Here is how to persevere and refuse to demarcate lines and focus on your children who are what it is all about underneath the complicated hierarchies and official titles and corrupted salaries:

Here is how to grip the bony shoulders of a close friend and look deep into his dulled eyes hours before he is expelled back into the squalid poverty he grew up and will now die in:

Here is how to love your students like your own children:

Here is how to let them go:

Here is how to sit at your desk paralyzed from the all-too-familiar fear of poverty's relentless, awful undertow dragging your students back under into a world of desperation, the paralysis bringing just that fear closer to realization as your students wave confused hands before your glazed eyes as the plastic hands of the classroom's clock tick off the first minutes of English class:

Here is how to overcome:

Here is how to walk to avoid stepping on needles while walking through a mountain of rubbish while visiting the former homes of your students:

Here is how to control your tears:

Here is exactly how hard to hug the skeletal frame of a developmentally-challenged student whose mother faced starvation while he was in the womb and who apparently stopped growing at age 8.

Here is how to handle the violent hallucinations that come with the extreme fever and dehydration wrought by severe dysentery:

Here is how to get struck down by illness and hospitalized for a week while realizing your body is just a puny vessel that is made to shit and piss and vomit and will one day wither away and die like the rest of them and how there's nothing you can do about it:

Here is how to realize you are just a speck of dirt inside a giant's eye:

Here is what depression feels like while absorbed with that implacable whirlwind of human suffering that ravages your host country, twisting and raging, knocking daily on your students' lives, threatening to suck them back into the depths

of dangerous poverty, their precious, fragile hopes and dreams that have been so carefully nurtured by You and Co. between its canines, now snapping them with one fatal snap, leaving them to die only after being tortured by desperation and starvation and commodification of their bodies and the ravages of disease:

> Here is how to wake up every morning and help others anyway:
>
> Here is how to never lose hope:
>
> –Robbie Flick

# Moments II

## Kawaue Sho

Yesterday was my last day at Kawaue elementary school. To say it was an amazing day is an understatement.

When I arrived everyone knew it was my last day. I'd say about half of the students and most of the teachers were asking me when I was leaving and why I was leaving. These questions are difficult enough to answer, and when you have to do it in another language and to six- and seven-year-olds, it is quite another thing altogether.

When I got there they told me they were having a goodbye party for me. All the students and all the teachers met in the library, and from there it was possibly the best 30 minutes of my life, and for sure the most bittersweet. After the greeting, the leader from the sixth grade class gave me an envelope filled with letters from all of the students. Then all of the students and teachers sang their school song for me. Next was my speech. I did my best to describe a quite indescribable feeling in a foreign language. Toward the end I diverted from what I had written and said what was on my mind, that Kawaue was like my Japanese family. In the end I was choked up over the last thank you and could barely get it out.

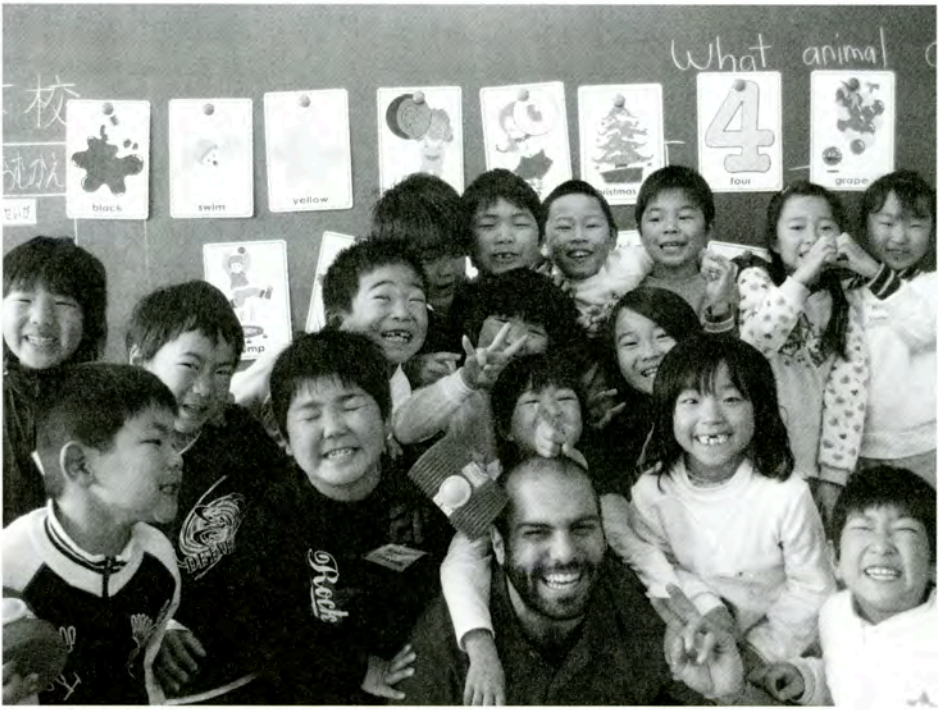
The hardest part for me was when the principal gave a speech about me. He used my progress in Japanese as an example to get the students to give a good effort with English in the future so that they could possibly come to my house at some point. He then turned to me and asked, "can they go to your house Nick sensei?" and with tears in my eyes I choked out an "of course," as he finished up his speech.

Really the epitome of why I fell in love with Kawaue so much was the human tunnel they made for me. Every pair I came to closed their arms around me and gave me a hug, saying thank you or goodbye. I couldn't believe just how warm

these peoples' hearts were. Also, I didn't think one school could have such a profound effect on me. I knew from the start that I would fall in love with the students, but never in my wildest dreams did I think I would become such a part of the community that the school would hold an assembly (granted it is a school of only 53 students) in honor of my last day.

I love Kawaue elementary school, and I hope I get a chance to come back and see some of the younger students before they all graduate. I think that if I follow my heart, I will find myself back in this place that has meant so much to me.

–Nicholas Cream




My Last Day at Kawaue Elementary School, Japan Nicholas Cream

# bor•der

|ˈbôrdər| n.

1. to be contiguous to; to touch, or be touched; to be near the limits or boundary;
2. to confine within bounds; to limit

Spring Blizzard, Mongolia  Julia Gibson

# Moments III

## Moses

Mosesi was in high spirits the morning of my final departure from the Naivalurua family. Every week I'd pack up and grab a bite of breakfast before catching the taxi into central Suva for our two-or-three day excursion around Viti Levu. By the eleventh week of my stay, Mosesi (or Mo or Moses) was used to seeing me get ready and leave, but also to return in just a few short days. My usual duffle bag and backpack that day was replaced by a seventy-plus pound mammoth suitcase that rested on the rusted metal chair, one of the uncomfortable ones that was padded only by hard brown floral-patterned cushions. This day was obviously different.

By the time I had woken up that morning the *kava* was already flowing. While there was a farewell party two nights prior, my family insisted on a proper sendoff with the traditional drink of Fiji. Even after tasting *grog* week after week in long nights sitting around the plastic basin of muddy-looking water, I had still not acquired a taste. I'm still not really sure if Fijians ever really enjoyed the taste of their "favorite" drink. An effort was always made, by me and them both, to not make a sour face, whether it entailed dodging your face from the crowd or quickly grabbing the nearest piece of candy to rid the bitter taste. Moses' mom, my host-cousin Christine, had been telling him for days about how this time I was "really going," but he did not get it. Even as we sat around the *kava* bowl that morning, Moses seemed oblivious. It was not at all uncommon for *kava* drinking to spill over from late nights into early mornings, but this was clearly not the case. The family gathered and the first bowl was filled in front of the bouncy three-year-old.

Moses was far more preoccupied by the basket of tiny kittens out on the porch, the same ones that had been born under the kitchen sink just a few weeks before. Never had I

imagined kittens causing such major conflict in a home, with family members divided over whether to let them be under the sink or to throw them outside. Moses, dragging the pink basket to the front door, plucked one of the helpless creatures. As he held it by the ears we all yelled "*kua*" (don't!), yet it was of little use. The kitten wrangled free of his grasp, but Moses quickly snatched up another from the bundle – this time latching on to it by its short tail. Our laughter erupted from an honest sense of horror and amusement.

I learned more of the Fijian language by interacting with Moses than with anyone else, as he spoke barely any English. Early on in my field notes I even began comprehending the mysteries behind Fijian humor because of Moses. From my notes:

> *Speaking to them reminded me also just how the whole family constantly makes fun of Christine's son Moses by calling him "bacigesa" because of his rotten teeth. Even Christine constantly joins in by calling him the name. Moses will usually yell back at them playfully. Laughing ensues in particular after they tell him "Smile Moses!" I thought it was surprising, as his bad teeth obviously are a sign of poor dental hygiene, yet Christine simply told me that when his new teeth grow in they will be white.*

Another day I witnessed first-hand mystical beliefs unlike anything I had ever experienced before.

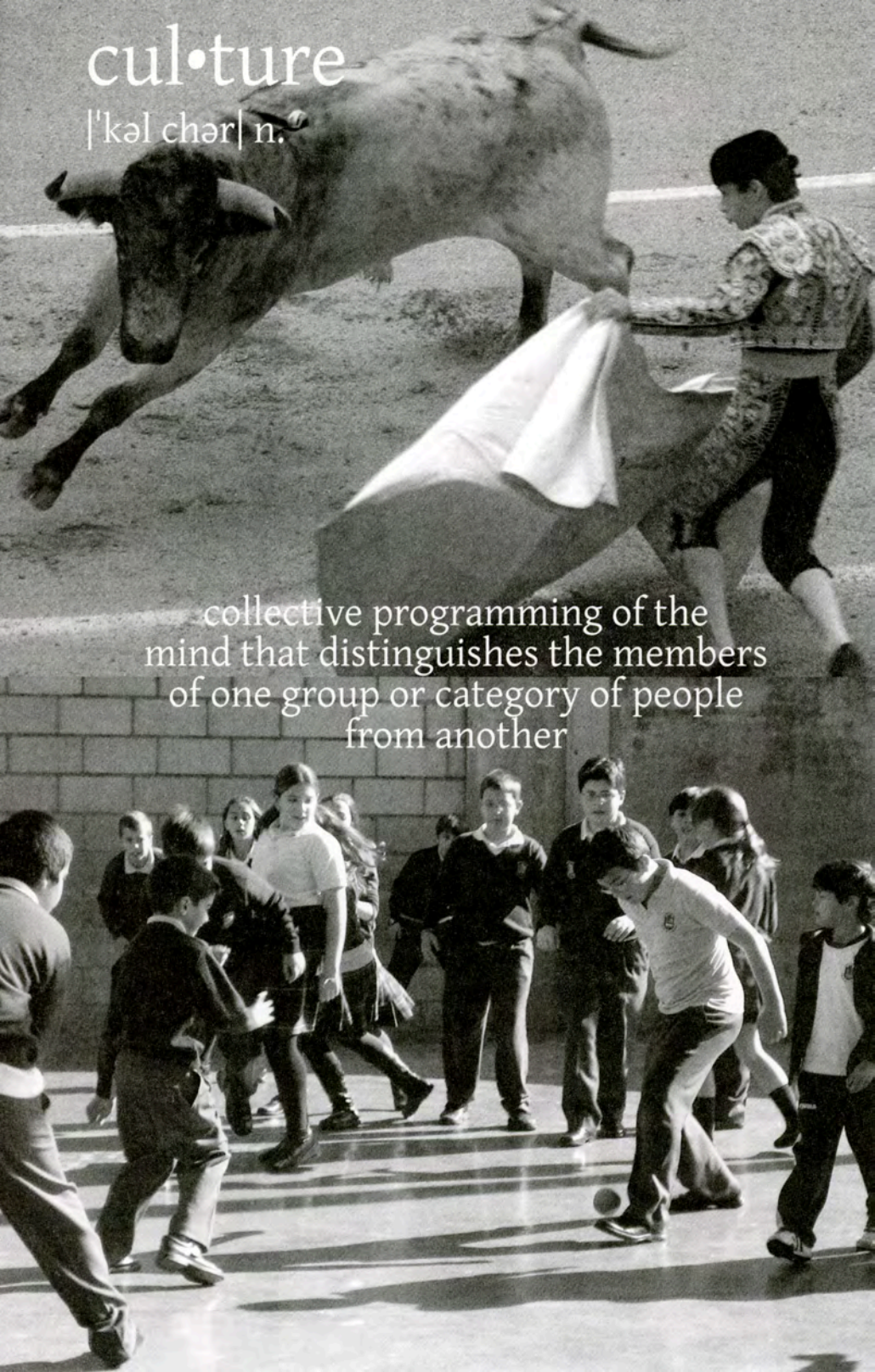
> *Christina was preparing lunch while Moses ran around the kitchen. Nervously watching Moses instead of the deep fryer, oil splattered onto Christine's arm, burning her. After letting out a loud yelp, she sat down and took Moses by the hand. She then made him touch where she was burnt. She explained to me that she has "blood" from Bega Island, where they fire walk and have the ability to heal burns. Moses had the blood within him too as her son, so she touched him to help it cure. She then told me a story of an Indian couple in the hospital for bad burns that were touched by one of her relatives. When they thanked him, he responded "if only my mother was here to help you!"*

I learned how a three-year-old could become a teacher and a friend.

Yet, as I look back, the experiences of living in Fiji could not easily be relayed in these weekly field notes. I tried to remain as scientific and detached as possible in my writing, but my memories hold the sentimental realities of my time abroad.

I made my way up the rocky staircase for the very last time. Moses, as usual, ran up the stairs behind me to say goodbye. A taxi was not sitting at the top of the hill as he expected. A small bus was there instead with a few other students already loaded. As I began saying goodbye to my family members I saw the uneasiness in Moses' eyes; at that point he realized I was leaving. When it was his turn in the line I waved and told him "bye-bye!" "*moce*!" He refused to look at me, instead burying himself in his mom's chest. I boarded the bus and looked out the window to see Moses weeping so hard that snot bubbles burst from his nose. The girls on my bus, overwhelmed by the sight, began to cry as the bus rolled off for the next home.

–Brian Rosenblatt


cul•ture
|ˈkəl chər| n.
collective programming of the
mind that distinguishes the members
of one group or category of people
from another


Bullfight in Madrid, Spain Nicolas Petros
Les Vernets Ice Arena, Switzerland Katie DeKraker
The Call for Prayer, Istanbul, Turkey Ariel Palter
Recess Soccer in Sevilla, Spain Cristina Liquori

# Moments IV

## Bumps Along the Way

25 kilometers, or 15 miles, is how long our hike was. My friend Sarah and I only assumed we were going to see a castle. When we arrived at the meeting spot at the train station, we were informed that we would have to also go on a four-hour hike. There were about four people from Union and 80 other international students from Scotland, France and Kansas. The trip occurred early in our stay in Prague, so many of the faces were unfamiliar.

The castle was an hour away in the city of Svaty Jan. The city was very small and consisted of several tourist shops and hot dog vendors. After wandering around the town for a half hour, we walked up to the castle. Ironically, there were too many people visiting the castle so we spent a grand total of ten minutes actually inside. Then the torturous hike began.

To make the trip even better, it had rained the day before so the ground was muddy and slippery. The hills were steep and peppered with large rocks. Although I had many embarrassing falls along the way, I would not trade this day for anything. The architecture of the castle is a distant blur in comparison to the memories made. I became closer with my friends from home and started new relationships with people from all over the world. We learned that, in Czech tradition, locks in high places symbolize everlasting love.

We thought our hike was over. Then our leader informed us that another twenty minutes would take us to the very top of the mountain. This part was optional. After debating for several minutes, Sarah and I decided to suck it up and proceed up the hill.

After a long twenty minutes of cursing and short breaks, we finally made it to the most beautiful view. We anxiously waited for the train to go back to Prague. The train car pulled up, just one train car for 80 people. Little did I know that the rocks and falls on the hike were vivid foreshadows of the many bumps along the way in my term abroad, like losing tickets, missing trains, getting lost in foreign cities and other misfortunes. These also I would never trade in for a smooth ride.

–Lindsey Walaski

Hiking in the Romanian Countryside Marie Catillaz

Stradbroke Island Reflections, Australia  Christie Eldredge
Island Shelter in Scotland  Jonathan Wilson

# Moments V

## Reflections from the Happiest Country in the World

You may have heard those reports on *20/20* or *60 Minutes* that the tiny country of Denmark, with only 5.5 million people, scored the highest marks in the world on an extensive happiness survey. As a student currently nearing the end of a semester in Copenhagen, I can say I believe it.

"Just enjoy life." That was what I was told at the end of a pleasant, casual conversation I had with a Dane the other day. Sounds simple enough, but as we all know, it's easy to get all caught up in our day-to-day hectic schedules and ambitions and forget those simple words. Even though I have only been in this small country for a little over four months, my experiences have opened my eyes wider than I ever imagined. Maybe it's the fact that almost every business and shop here closes before 5:00 pm so people can go home and eat a home-cooked meal together as family...every day. Or the fact that people actually take the extra few minutes a day to bike to work or school to stay healthy and cut down on pollution. Or that people actually wait for "the little green man" who flashes to say you can cross the street and cars really will stop for you in a crosswalk. Maybe it's the simple pleasure of a warm, delicious pastry as an escape from a cold, windy day. Or perhaps it's the contentment in witnessing a good *hyggelige* (roughly: coziness) moment and finally starting to grasp the meaning of that word.

Recently, I attended a confirmation ceremony for a relative of my host family, an event that I learned in Denmark is not trivial by any means. The day began around 7:00 am when we awoke, dressed in our nicest clothes, and drove out to the church where the service was going to be conducted. The entire family of the boy who was being confirmed—from

immediate siblings and parents, to aunts, uncles, grandparents and even great-grandparents—were present to celebrate the achievement. The day officially marked the child's movement into adulthood, as defined by the church. Following the service and many photos and hugs, the entire group departed for a restaurant where we were met by even more family and friends to continue the celebration. Everyone sat around a long table to partake in a multi-course meal. There were speeches, stories, singing, tears, laughter and many toasts of *skål*.

And the party didn't end when lunch was over; the family continued to talk and enjoy each other's company until well past sundown. There didn't need to be elaborate activities planned to keep people's attention and prevent boredom. All that was needed was a good place to sit and relish in the pleasure of good conversation. People weren't worried about rushing off to accomplish other things on a long "To Do" list for the day and it is doubtful that the Danes would ever use an expression like "I just need to make an appearance" when referring to a social gathering. This dynamic I witnessed didn't just stop with the confirmation celebration. It was the same at birthday parties for my host sister and cousin and a gathering to celebrate the completion of a project at my host father's workplace. There was a general appreciation for time spent socializing with family and friends and recognizing the accomplishment of another.

I am grateful for the short time I have spent in Denmark and I have developed a profound respect for its culture. These moments I have described only begin to scratch the surface in describing my overall experience. I only hope I can internalize a fraction of what I learned, returning home with a new vigor to really embrace the joy that life has to offer, as I have seen the Danes do.

–Christina Kinnevey

Český Krumlov Castle, Czech Republic  John Boyle
Fishing Boats in Galway, Ireland  Ursula Williams

# Moments VI

## Same Same

"I hate shopping. I know exactly what I need, so why can't they have it?"

"Try eBay," he suggested. "They have everything."

"Macy's is supposed to have everything," I complained, touching each of the folded sweaters as we walked by. I had recruited my best friend from high school to go coat shopping with me. I wasn't seeing anything I wanted, and I longed for a cheap tailor and a market full of fabrics.

"So what are you doing in Knoxville anyways?", he asked me. "Amassing a fortune in babysitting money? Where are you going next?" He stopped to look at a pair of khaki pants.

"I don't know." It had been about three months, but I still felt like I had just gotten back to the country.

"So not back to Vietnam?"

"Nah. I'm kind of thinking Indonesia for my next abroad stint anyway. Or maybe I'll stay here a while. It doesn't really matter. It's the same thing everywhere, right? Good days, bad days, going to the gym, riding the bus, cooking spaghetti... *Same same but different*." I had adopted the saying from cheap tourist t-shirts sold in Saigon.

"I can't tell if you're being deep or just disturbingly disengaged." He was teasing me.

"It's not deep. It's that feel-goody stuff first-graders sing about. People are people. We all do pretty much the same shit for pretty much the same reasons. Kumbaya. The minutiae are the only real differences: the language on TV, the weather, the kind of fruit in the grocery store—there's only so much you can get out of that."

He shook his head. "I don't believe that you didn't get anything out of living in Vietnam for a year."

I didn't want to believe it, either. What could be more depressing than the idea that an entire year of your life—granted a fun, vibrant and engaging year—was wasted? But I tried to think of something, something garnered from the 365 days of practicing a tonal language, bargaining over the price of mangoes and dodging motorbikes that would last me the rest of my life. I needed some Aesopian moral to round off that experience and give it a nice, shiny purpose.

I shrugged. "I don't know. I'm back to exactly where I started from, so it's like 'what was the point of that?'"

"You got a tan," he joked. "But in all honesty, I don't get what you expected. Did you really think you'd go to another country, discover the meaning of life and come back a new person?"

"That's what happens on TV," I replied sardonically. "So it must be true."

Carrying Bamboo in Mai Chau Village, Vietnam Julia Vu

"Whatever. It doesn't work that way, though. You say you didn't get anything out of living abroad, but here you are talking about how you ride the bus and make spaghetti here, there, everywhere..."

"In a house or with a mouse," I interrupted.

He ignored me. "It's something. A lot of people are freaked out by the stuff you call 'minutiae', but you talk about...I don't know...about eating snake like it's fried chicken. So maybe you didn't get some grand sweeping meaning from the whole thing, but your little experiences snowballed into something that affected you. I can tell you've changed anyway."

"Oh, well if you can tell then it must be true."

"Shut up."

We walked towards the shoes, where I was drawn to a large, red 'SALE' sign. I suddenly became conscious of *Tiny Dancer* playing softly on the store's speakers.

"In Saigon, I won a key chain for rocking this song at karaoke."

"You're a terrible singer," he said. This could not be construed as cruel, as it was a very accurate assessment.

"You don't need talent to be good at karaoke," I explained. There was a trick to karaoke singing. "You just need to put a lot of feeling into it." This is what I learned in Vietnam.

-Whitney Cox

Galway Bay from Salt Hill, Ireland Megan Sesil

# Moments VII

## Visiting Phin Village

Upon seeing a bus of tourists roll into their village, dozens of women and children of the Red Dao minority group flock to the bus, waving home-made bags or hats, intent on making a sale.

"Maybe you buy something from me," is a common request as we are escorted around Ta Phin, a small village on the outskirts of Sapa.

The day is misty and wet as our student group sloshes our way along the muddy, unpaved roads of the village. Our sneakers instantly become caked in mud; the villagers wear high rubber boots or sandals. The Red Dao women make friendly conversation with us in English, which they have learned solely through tourist interaction.

It has become a routine for them: "What is your name? Where are you from? How old are you? How many people in your family?" Once their questions have been answered, it becomes, "I think you buy something from me, for my family."

The women are dressed in their traditional garb, often with their babies wrapped snugly to their backs. An adorable baby becomes a valuable asset when the time comes to sell merchandise. Those without babies carry large woven baskets on their backs, filled to the brim with crafts they hope will be appealing as gifts for friends and family on the other side of the world.

When walking through the village, we see a vast contrast in lifestyle from that of the bustling Hanoi or even Sapa. The roads are not paved, the houses are wooden with metal roofs and bare on the inside, with no beds but mats to sleep on. Nonetheless, the villagers are upbeat, energetic and talkative.

The pollution and noise of a city does not exist here in the mountains, even though one might spot an occasional satellite dish.

One of the only men we see in the village stands facing a tree, keenly watching the birds on its branches. He is armed with some sort of crossbow, and his gaze does not stray from the tree as our large group trudges by and notices his medieval weapon. With most men working the rice fields, it seems like a perfect time for him to find himself some dinner.

After an hour of snapping photos through the mist and mingling with the locals, we make our way back through town to the bus. That is where the rush starts.

It becomes nearly impossible to get back to the bus, as sometimes as many as five or six women of the Red Dao swarm each student, aggressively selling bracelets, hats, bags and colorful shirts.

Buying an item from one villager emboldens the others to make a sale. Again, a familiar sales pitch: " You buy something from her. You buy something from me, too!"

Some students handle the commotion well. They laugh and patiently bargain prices with the Red Dao women, or they give candy to the small children.

A few don't handle it so well and make a bee-line for the bus, only to be tracked down by dedicated villagers who continue to show off their merchandise from outside the bus.

When everyone has managed to make their way through the crowd and onto the bus, there is a collective sigh and a laugh. The Red Dao villagers cheerfully wave us off, happy with their morning sales. No time to rest and reflect, however, as we are off to another village.

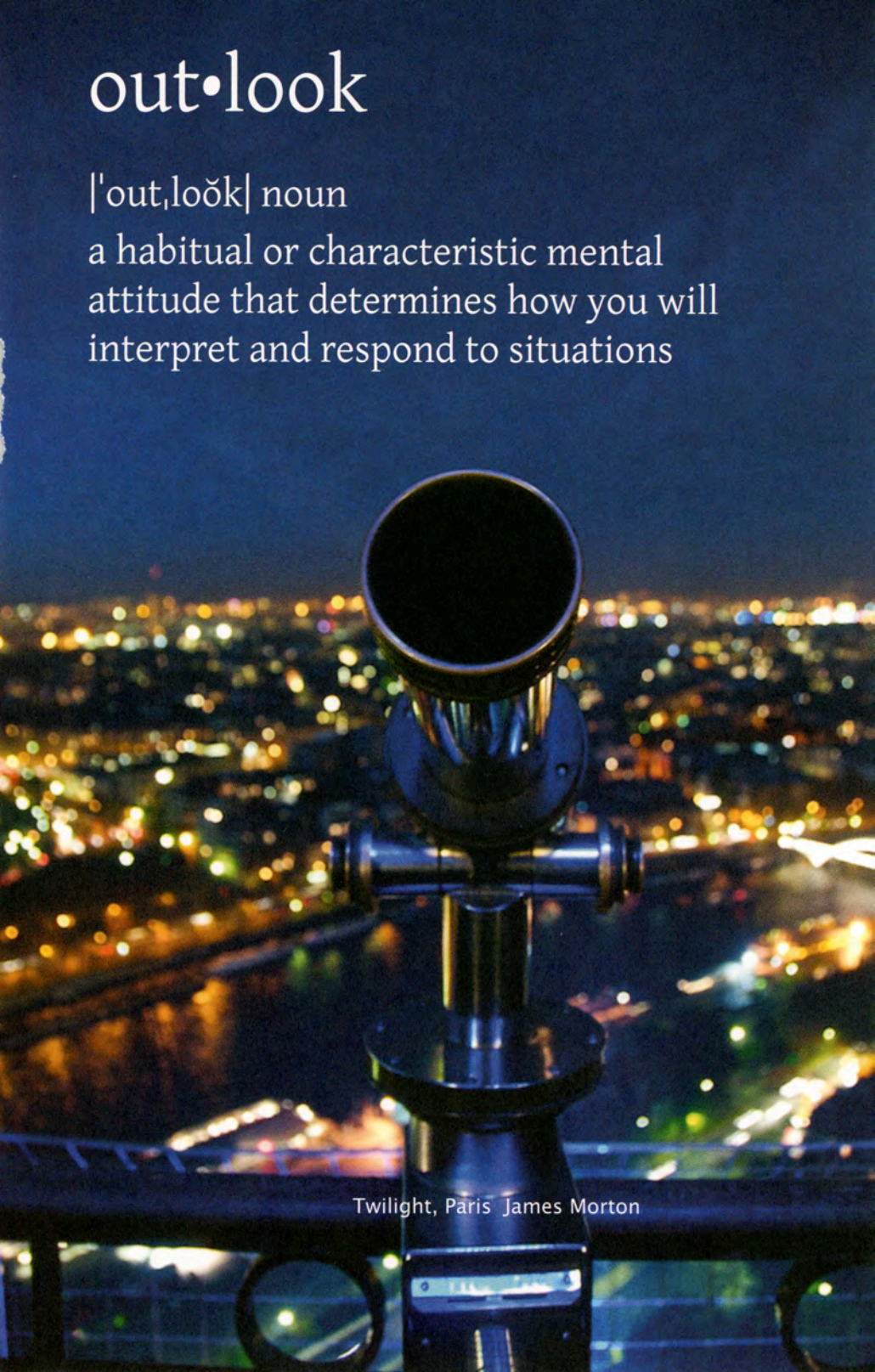
–Tom Pressman

Homeless Man Cooks Meal at the Night Market in Hanoi, Vietnam  Bryan Harris

# out•look

|ˈoutˌlo͝ok| noun

a habitual or characteristic mental attitude that determines how you will interpret and respond to situations



Twilight, Paris James Morton


I LOVE YOU ALL
MCI
SMILE
GRAZIE PER OGNI SPERANZA
Lauren
08
Free Palestine
ANYA
MATT
COLLETT
NZ
2008


Lenin Wall in Prague, Czech Republic Lindsey Walaski

Tasman Peninsula, Tasmania: Last Land Before Antarctica Katherine Newingham
Preparing Lunch Outside Hanoi, Vietnam Katherine Rodman

Prague from the Powder Tower, Czech Republic Drew McConnell

# Verse and Vision II

## What Senegal Gave Me

When events end they are immediately
flat and static as salt,
as near me as Africa
and absolutely as stark.
They become unattainable as photographs
and I am lucky if I can access them
as easily, and regardless, as the months pass
it is as if I drop them steadily,
one by one, into a hole weary
with dark or glittering
with fire.

But I digress.

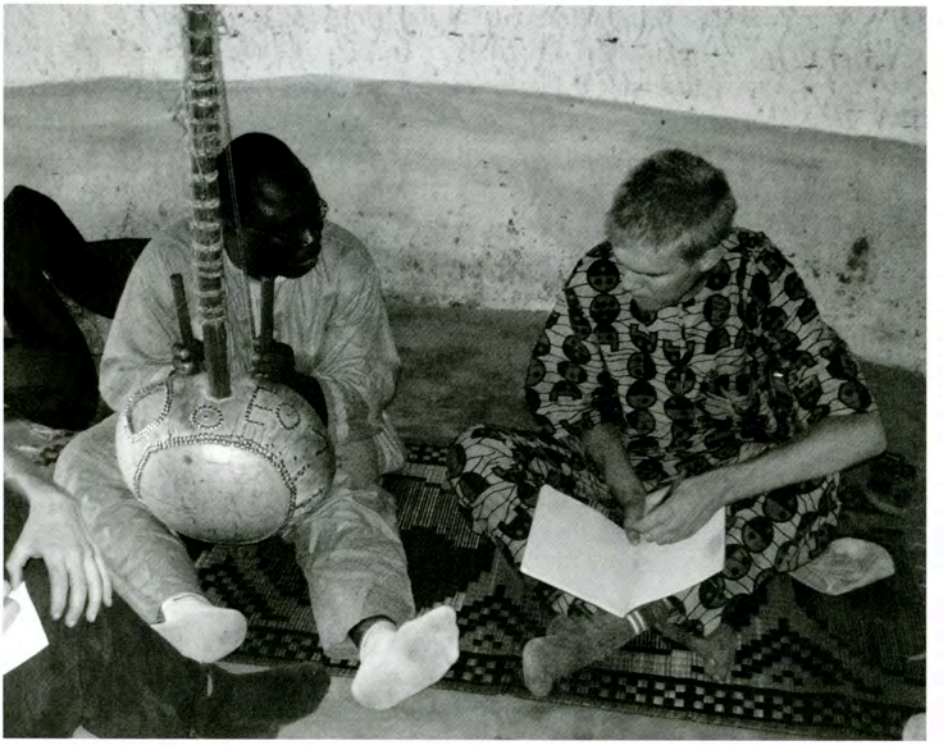
Summer had depressed and sunken in,
long tables hitched in the middle, spread with people
and conversation, little corners falling asleep:
it is difficult even now to lift it
to the page, as they are gone,
dried as the fruit in an abandoned Mexico,
an Eden without.

Watch me as I make it mean too much, these
thin waxpapers, logs of my past,
and like animated figures abandoned by
their magician they will debase and
crumble, heads gone into lakes full of lilies
where I will have lost
all my other beauties.

Lost and abandoned are such close
things, and I know this feeling well,
one of acknowledging parallels with I should
not, and watching them take their places
on a long crusted stage, brown as our American
mid-west
and covered in creaky wooden machines,
held up by their tall unstable legs.

–Roger Arnold

Lesson from the Kora Master, Senegal James Secor



# Lessons I

## Stepping in(to) Ireland

There is a quote that says "A girl can't listen to Irish music without knowing she's Irish and wanting to pound that truth into the floor with her feet." I started Irish step dancing when I was six and stopped when I was seventeen, and while I blame those years of Irish dance for my inability to dance normally to any other kind of music, my feet can't stay still when I hear a reel or a jig.

I decided to reconnect with Irish dance while on a term abroad in Galway, hopeful that I would get to know Irish students and interested in the differences and similarities I would find between Irish dance in America and in Ireland. I reserved some of my very limited suitcase space for the soft shoes and poodle socks that I dug out of the back of my closet at home and signed up for NUIG's Dance Society during orientation week.

After the first intermediate Irish step dance class, I was surprised at how much I remembered after nearly four years of not dancing and even more surprised at how many Americans were in the exact same position I was. Fourteen of the seventeen students were Americans on terms abroad in Galway, most with vaguely Irish names and dance histories very similar to my own. Some were lapsed dancers and some were still active competitors, but I don't think any of them expected to find so many Americans Irish dancing at NUIG. Irish step dancing had always been something that made each of us unique at our own schools and in our own social circles; many of us thought that in Galway, our Americanness would make us unique as Irish dancers.

I compared stories of Irish dancing in America with the other abroad students and with our Irish teachers and the few Irish students, who were shocked to hear about the money and time American dancers pour into *feisana* (competitions) and

performances. In the U.S., hair must be meticulously curled, socks must be uniform in height, and costumes are as much a part of the competition as the dances themselves. For the Dance Society recital, we were simply asked to wear a black skirt and top. While most Irish students understood the basics of Irish dance, those who actually chose to pursue it were few; salsa and hip-hop were far more popular. On the surface, American Irish dancing seemed about as Irish as Lucky Charms cereal.

On one of my last nights in Galway I went to Monroe's, a pub known for its traditional music sessions and on Tuesdays, for its Irish dance. Many cities that we traveled to in Ireland advertised Irish step dance shows, performances in the style of *Lord of the Dance* that were put on almost exclusively for tourists. Monroe's offered a simple *ceili* dance, whose participants were older folks who wore regular clothes instead of costumes—some didn't even wear dance shoes—and whose smiles weren't pasted on for the benefit of an audience, but came from the sheer joy of moving perfectly in time with the music. I knew smiles like that, and I even knew many of the steps performed at Monroe's that night. Despite the prevalence of American Irish dancers and the superficial differences between Irish dance in the U.S. and Irish dance in Ireland, the feelings and the movements were the same. As I enjoyed one of my last pints of Smithwicks, I still wanted to pound my Irishness into the floor with my feet—and I was proud that I knew how to.

–Bridget Jameson

Glacial Stream, South Island, New Zealand  Claire Hendry
Skautská Vyhlídka, Czech Republic  Collin Doyle

# Lessons II

## Memory Failure

I studied abroad in Queensland Australia, where I lived with a family of four in a small rural home in Fig Tree Pocket. To help finance my trip and traveling expenses, I applied for a SEAY grant. While in Australia, I hoped to attain a higher level of understanding of the population. It is a country unlike any other when it comes to diversity. An Australian is no longer just the descendent of a criminal sent to Australia in punishment. They are a people from all over the world who have found a home and a community in a country with a long history. They are also the aboriginal population, who have been forced to the sidelines of society and only recently have been gaining a voice and a role in the country.

I like to think of myself as a photographer, and as a result my project was to document the people of Australia in all the glory of their diversity. I wanted to photograph a range of people from the young to the old, the various ethnicities, the exchange students who are part of the everyday life of college campuses, and the mothers and fathers with children playing at the pool or riding the bus. However, I have found it very intimidating to approach strangers and request a photograph. So this was not only a project for grant money, but also an attempt to enhance my skills as a photographer and a chance to come out of my inhibited, shy shell and take the opportunity to talk to the people who are shaping the country I chose to visit—the people who make Australia what it is.

Queen Street was one of the most active places I visited in the city of Brisbane. It was a shopping area where cars are prohibited so that pedestrians have the rule of the street. As a result, this is where I started by setting up a "studio," which was really just a few pieces of yellow poster board taped to

a wall, on a corner of this street. I brought along a buddy for moral support in my attempt to be extroverted and stationed myself at this wall with a sign advertising, "Candy for a photograph," yet no one stopped. I decided that I would need to approach my subjects and found that those easiest to seduce into getting their photo taken were those loitering or waiting for someone else to arrive. After the first "yes" I gained confidence, walking up to people I would normally avoid, characters that are not part of the mainstream: the gothic, or people that others shun like the poverty-stricken. I also found that the young are easier targets, as they get more excited by candy than do the businessmen on the way to get a coffee at one of the very few Starbucks.

I tried to make as many attempts at portraiture as I could and I was finally feeling more comfortable. I traveled up to Darwin for a four-day weekend. Darwin lies in the northernmost corner of the continent, and it's part of a territory, not one of Australia's five states. It is vastly different from the city of Brisbane and from Queensland in general. It is devastatingly poor and there is a much larger population of aboriginal people. As cliché as it is to say that you will never understand poverty until you see it, I have to say that it is undeniably true. I have never seen anything like it. I took advantage of this difference because I could now see more of the Australian people. I could now show the gradation of economic standing.

While I was in Darwin, I stationed myself at a bus stop where I could easily introduce myself and my project to those waiting for the buses. I got to meet many very interesting people with stories to tell and faces that expressed their histories. Burt agreed to let me photograph him, but unlike everyone else he did not plaster on a forced smile. Hazel and Frank Henschke were an elderly couple sitting hand in hand on the bench. They talked to me about their home in Adelaide, encouraging me to visit if I had time. But the most memorable of all these people was the aboriginal family whom I initially approached with hesitance. The mother was sitting on the pavement cross-legged holding her youngest in one arm and the wrist of another child with the other hand. She had four young children all jostling around the sidewalk and although

Portrait from Darwin, Australia Rose Parker

she was reluctant to let me photograph her, she agreed. Each child vied for my attention, pushing another out of the view of my camera. I scrambled to capture it all, at the same time asking the kids their names. My favorite by far was the oldest who couldn't have been more than ten. He told me he was the man of the family and provided me with all of the attitude that the role entails. I later saw him again at a craft fair performing on the didgerido, an amazing instrument that I tried and failed to master. I also photographed his two smallest siblings, who are seen in the preceding photograph. The girl did not understand the camera and so her brother took it upon himself to bring her to life in my photos. Once I had finished, he clambered over to me and demanded to see his picture. I separated myself from the family with waves and calls of goodbye, wishing that I had a way to send those kids their photographs.

By the time I left Australia on December 3rd, after four months of Aussi life, I had accumulated a portfolio full of faces that spoke to me of the memories I had and the wonderful people who welcomed me into their lives and allowed me the privilege to take their pictures. However, I made a mortal mistake. Three days after I had arrived home my computer decided it no longer had the will to live. I took it to four computer technicians, including one of the companies which acts as the data recovery center for forensics labs. If anyone could save my photo library it would have been them, but after two months of probing and requesting new parts, my hard drive was deemed unfixable. They told me it had internal damage and that nothing could be recovered. They tried to assuage my grief by telling me that there were rumors of government agencies that had a technology which could save my files, however this technology has yet to be released.

This was no comfort to me; I was completely devastated. All of my memories of the places I went and saw were gone. I lost my portraits to a few scratches on electron-coated metal. On my return to campus I learned that a friend, while taking some of my pictures for herself, had also taken one of my portraits and as a result it is the one image I cling to. Please, to all those planning a trip, or building a digital portfolio, or simply taking pictures to form memories, learn from me: back up your work.

–Rose Parker


Bern Train Station, Switzerland, 2:00 A.M. Michael Sauter
*Took took* (motorbike taxi) in a back alley of Udon Thani, Thailand Dale Watkins

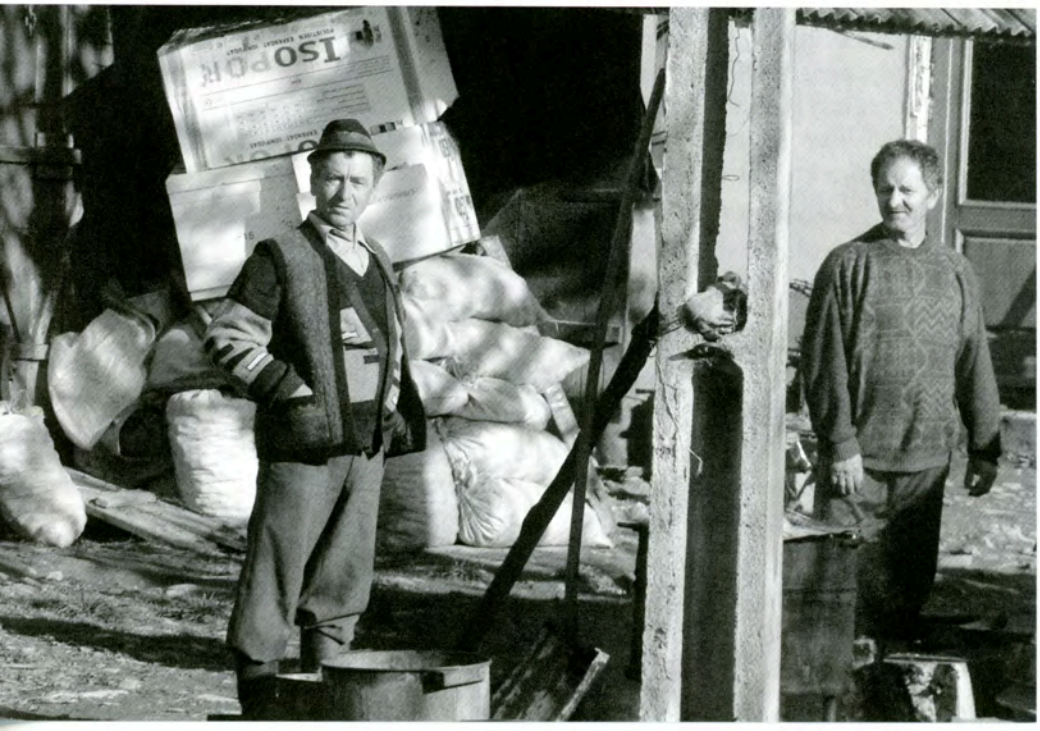
# Verse and Vision III

## All Eyes On Me

All eyes on me when I walk in the streets
All eyes on me when I ran in my cleats
All eyes on me when I sing in the hall
All eyes on me when I shop in the mall
I'm beginning to feel as if I am a clown
For all eyes look at me in this China town
All eyes on me when I talk in the class
All eyes on me when I'm having a blast
All eyes on me when I'm boarding a train
All eyes on me when I'm having a drink
Their eyes look at me with shock, surprise, not despise
But at this point I want to be a spy...invisible in their eyes
All eyes on me when I swim in the pool
All eyes on me just isn't cool
All eyes on me makes me feel like a fool
They read me, analyze me, as if they studied me in school
All I want to know is, Why are your eyes on me?
Steering, glaring, preparing to read my actions
Is it because I'm short & black? Or is it because of my walk and swag?
Is it because I hail from the West? Or is it because I look different from the rest
Is it because my hair curls with naps? Or is it because I wear clothes from Gap?
Oh why keep asking... just give me the answers.
Somehow I don't blame you for what your eyes may do
For not long ago I was simply just like you
I looked, stared, then questioned in my head
But it wasn't long before I figured that what my eyes couldn't do was ask questions just like I'm asking you.

–Innis Baah

Children in Citadel in Hue, Vietnam  Molly Fitzgerald
Something Worth Staring At, Maramures, Romania  Ariel Palter



# Crossings I

## Finding Home

There I stood at the crossroads of dust and dustier. I stared at the sign once more: Garage. This is where we were to find a car to take us into town, where we could find a bus to take us back to Saint-Louis. I stood helplessly next to my Mauritanian companion Beccro, giving him desperate looks when to my right, up at the crossroads, was a stampede of cows coming to graze. By now, the idea of a stampede ending this nightmare of a journey seemed strangely appealing. I looked up at the sky for answers but the sun was only a reminder of my current state of frustration as it blistered my face like a cast iron grill. I went and sat under the only tree nearby, but the shade did little to calm my anger.

I had been living in Senegal for a few months when a friend invited me to his home in Mauritania. The trip to his home had proven to be much like the previous week—full of culture clash and confusion. I had made my best efforts to integrate, but being twenty years old with no marriage prospects, I remained a puzzlement. Yesterday he had pulled me aside to explain that his mother was sick and that he had to return with her to Senegal for treatment. Our plans to travel on to Mali were put on hold.

Our travels began early in the morning. I was under the impression it was a simple car ride across the border, but I soon learned that this would not be the case. After hours of stumbling around in the market wasting time, I was quickly herded onto the back of a truck filled with bags of grain and water. Beccro was sitting across from me but had disappeared once again, this time into the market to find his mother. So there I sat, alone on the back of a stranger's truck, all the while horrified it would pull away with only me on the back...and it almost did. Luckily mother was found and we continued on our way.

After the deliveries were made, we were left at the side

of a river. I was not told where we were, only to get into the pirogue to cross the river. We arrived at a village, where the cattle easily outnumbered the people, and were told our best prospect was a bus that passed by the edge of town. There I sat, confused, scared and angry. Beccro and his mother discussed plans in their native Pulaar while I sat reminiscing about my own home, in my own language.

I ached to be home, to be in Saint-Louis, wandering through the back alley markets looking for vegetables to make dinner, or perhaps a few yards of fabric, all the while the festive Toubab resonating in my ears. I thought about the girls I taught who giggled at the way I spoke, the street marriage proposals, Wolof class, bottled water showers, all those mundane activities that had stolen into my life. Saint-Louis was the place I had taken to calling home. Everything that had initially irritated me had become the pieces that defined a typical day. Through my sweat, sunburn and sheer exhaustion, I smiled and told myself if I had made it this far, I could make it home.

A Drive Among Baobab Trees, Senegal  Molly DiStefano

The sun had started to set when the bus came by taking us to the next town. Here we took a horse cart to a bus going in my direction. I happily boarded and took a seat. As the bus pulled away, I realized Beccro had stayed behind to help his mother. This little tidbit had gotten lost in our broken communication. I was alone for the last leg of the journey.

Just before midnight I arrived in a town, but it was not Saint-Louis. As I was getting off the bus I felt a rip in the side of my dress. My zipper had broken. A man helped me find another bus going toward Saint-Louis, and, after informing him I was married, he left me to fend for myself.

Alone.

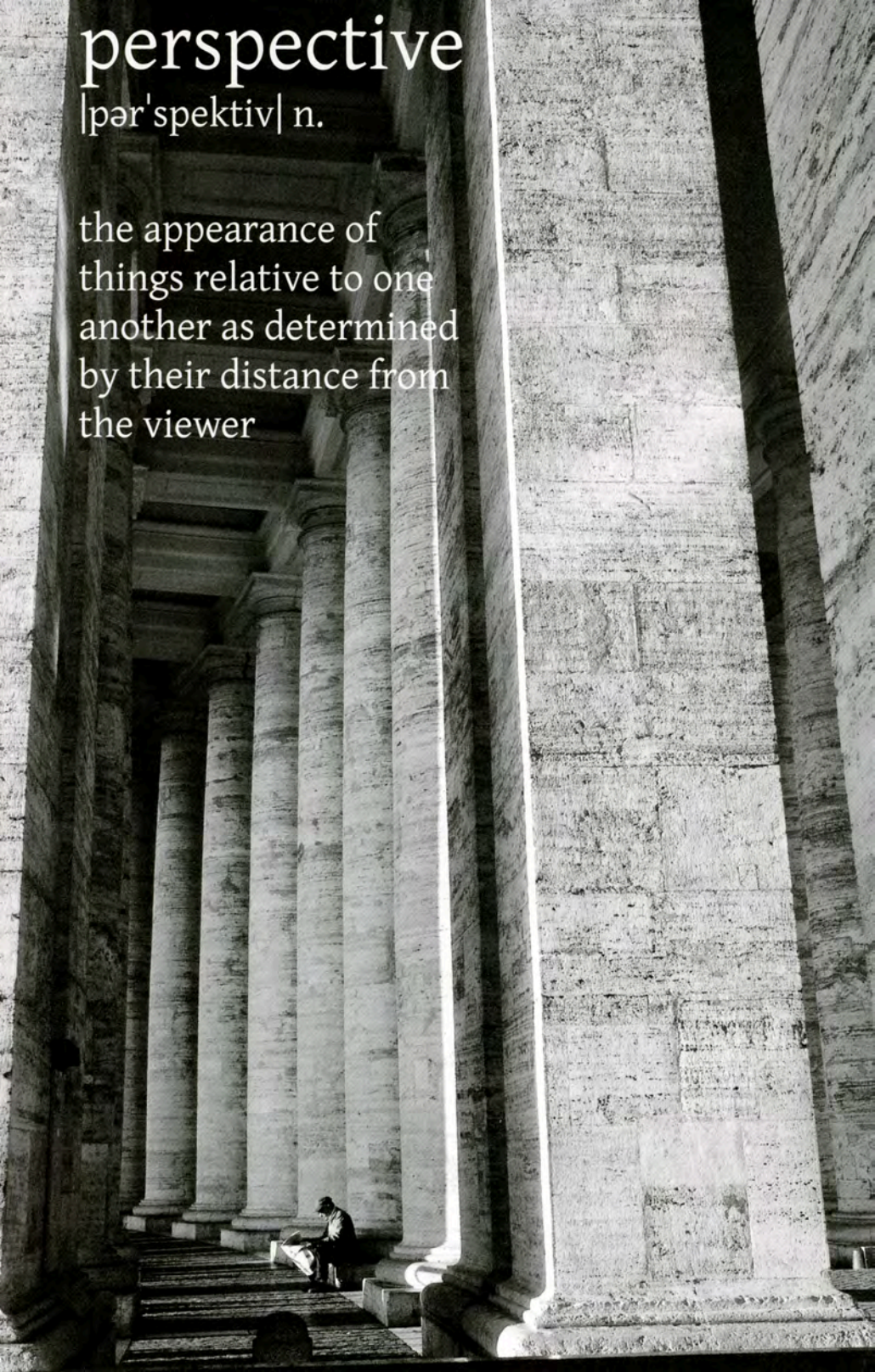
I sat and waited as I choked back tears of helplessness. I saw a girl sitting across from me and I asked, in the best French I could muster, where we were and where the bus was going. I explained I was alone. She looked me straight in the eye and said, "In Senegal, no one is alone." She gave me a safety pin for my dress. My dignity restored, she took my hand and guided me to a different bus. This simple act of kindness touched my heart. This girl restored my faith; she is my symbol of goodness. Her kindness is unmatched by anything I have ever experienced.

Finally, around 2:30 in the morning, I arrived back at the university.

There I stood, at the door of happiness, at my home—home in Saint-Louis, Senegal.

-Laura Martin

Piazza San Pietro, Rome Sunkyung Shin


perspective
|pər'spektiv| n.
the appearance of things relative to one another as determined by their distance from the viewer

# Crossings II

## "It's Just This Thing the Seasons Do"

One of the best ways to learn about a country's civilization and culture is to immerse oneself in such culture, surrounding oneself with the people and places that make a country what it is. While in our Civilization and Culture class in Romania, we took class walks and heard stories from our professor about the sights on our way. One day on such a walk we sat down in the Museum Square of Cluj-Napoca to share some coffee and discuss the surrounding area at a little café called Euphoria. I was able to take a photograph that really got me thinking about my experience studying in Romania. It has changed the lens through which I see the places I have traveled to and will travel to.

Autumn is a very special time for me back in America. It is filled with soccer, watching American football, apple cider, pumpkins, spending time with family and friends, and enjoying the weather before the season changes to winter. Some of my fondest memories of autumn from my youth involve spending time raking the leaves with my brother and sister and playing in them with our dogs. After being asked to rake the leaves we would bundle up and end up having a great day together. It never would cross our minds that we were doing a chore. Autumn is a bustling season, and as a part of my culture I get the most out of it as I can.

As time passed in my stay in Romania, I noticed the leaves changing color, the air becoming brisker and the sun becoming weaker. The sun set even earlier. From the first day we had arrived in Cluj, to our first weekend trip to Transylvania, to our latest weekend trip to Maramures County, autumn had taken a tighter grasp on the area, and winter seemed to be slowly coming closer. The mountains and hills in the distance

Fall in the Museum Square of Cluj, Romania Kayleigh DeLap

took on a light shade of brown, yellow and orange, the grass and pavements slowly being carpeted with leaves and the noise of the rustling and crumpling of leaves filled my ears. Thinking back to my autumns in America, these sights and sounds are not such a new thing to me.

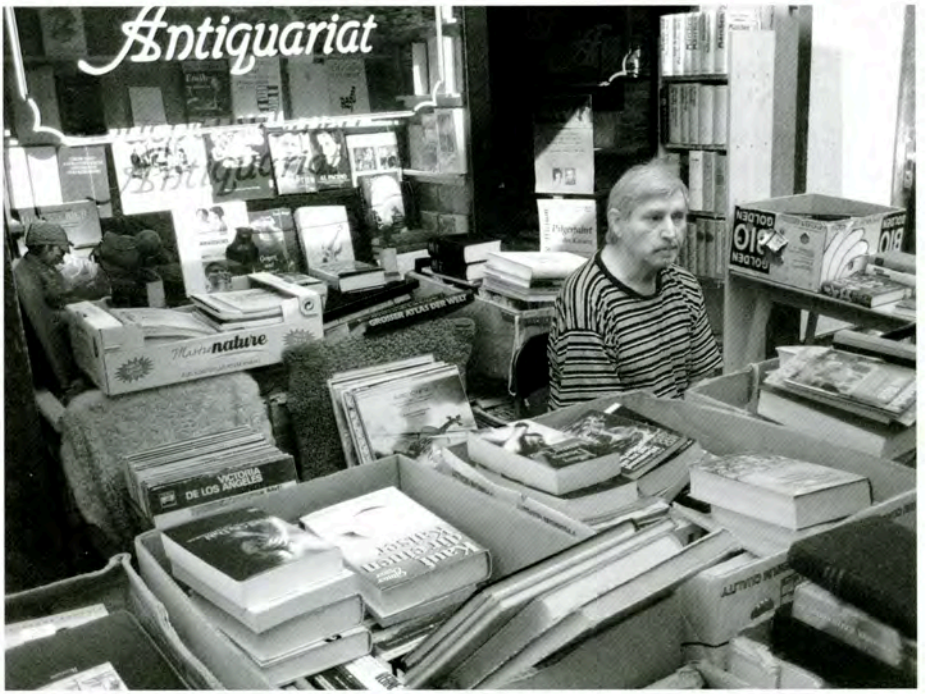
A photograph that I had taken of people sitting on a bench really struck a chord in me. The buildings in the background are definitely not what one would see in America; they are in need of some repairs and have a distinctive European architectural style to them. Bricks are exposed, the plaster gets dirtier as it gets closer to the ground and the buildings just held the look that they have been forgotten. However, the two people sitting on the park bench, under the tree that is losing its leaves, could be found in any city. The leaves have changed to a light brown and have fallen to the area below their former hanging place. Remove the foreground and place it in any number of other countries around the world. It would not be an uncommon sight to see two friends conversing on a park bench under a tree in autumn, enjoying each other and the last taste of mild weather.

The changing seasons are not specific to any one culture. "It's just a season thing, it's just this thing that seasons do." Seasons create nostalgia, but the magic of nostalgia often bridges across gaps in distance and culture. Romania, the United States, Germany, Hungary, Canada and many other countries around the world experience similar weather patterns and the changing of the seasons. We studied the culture of Romania, walking around the city discussing the architecture and history behind the city of Cluj-Napoca. Under all the differences in culture there is a common thread that unites all the people of the world: we are all of the same human species living on the same planet. It is now becoming apparent that above all, what is important is that humans may be able to mold themselves into different cultures, but we are a part of the same planet.

I am used to the weather and changing seasons—it is instead the surroundings and the people that are different here in Central Europe. When I first landed in Europe in September, I had thought everything was going to be extremely different

than what I had been used to. Now I am able to recognize that it is just those things made by people that are different for me. The Romanian language is a barrier; the old architecture and Communist-era buildings are something I am not accustomed to. Perhaps that is the mystic element to traveling around the world, realizing that people can be so different, yet in the end we are united. Traveling allows one to see and experience how human beings have evolved and adapted in different ways to the same common elements of the Earth. Look beyond the streets, look beyond the buildings and notice the similarities of our world. There are only four seasons but there may be a thousand diverse ways to experience them all in relation to culture. After all, "it's just this thing that seasons do."

–Kayleigh DeLap




Second-hand Bookseller in Tübingen, Germany John Howland

# Crossings III

## Muddy Boots

"You know what would clear that skin right up?" Still recovering from the act of heaving her large, soft body into the van, the old woman pauses for breath. "Calendula." She smoothes out the shawl across her broad shoulders, her cheeks becoming less flushed by the second. "Calendula. Right down at any pharmacy. Good for the complexion." Coughing slightly from the closeness of the air permeated by the scents of twelve other bodies, she nods to the passenger across from her. The young woman beside me, for whom this sage advice is intended, clutches her purse tighter, but flashes a slight smile that passes for polite acknowledgement. It is rare to hear a stranger's mundane ramblings in this country. I feel an anxious anticipation for the next inappropriate words that might spill forth from her mouth.

Now fully recovered from her prior exertion, the grandmother turns her attention to the glum driver as he speeds breakneck through an intersection. Several weeks ago, this would have frightened me. This morning, I calmly plan out what I will say to the medics as they pull my body out of the wreck.

It's important to have thought of such details beforehand when operating in a language that is not your mother tongue. Grandmother makes a clucking noise in the back of her throat. Her chin wobbles as she extols the orderly streets of this city during her youth. Angling her neck back she explains to the driver a better route he might take in the future. "Just as fast," more clucking, "Yes, but safer." The van driver grunts and exhales more smoke into the fetid air. Clearly suffering from craning her head at such an awkward angle for so long, she settles back comfortably into her seat like a smug mother cat.

A laugh catches in my throat. I force it to emerge as a quiet cough. Immediately, Grandmother's sharp gaze snaps towards

me, lingering on my filthy boots. A look of composed displeasure molds her features, but softens as her eyes roll upwards to my face. Foreigner. I sense her recognition and fiddle with my fraying mitten to avoid meeting her stare. Surely my stop must be coming up? I scratch at the iced window. A small foggy hole reluctantly forms. Increasingly uncomfortable that she has called my poor bluff, I doggedly watch for the familiar line of buildings to emerge out of the snow. Eventually, their silhouette appears through the grey. Aware that her eyes are still upon me, I call out for the driver to stop. The routine words feel strangely clumsy under her gaze. After making my way through packed-in bodies and bags, I leap for the grimy curb. Turning to pay, Grandmother's watery eyes find mine. "A young lady," she says in a firm, quiet voice, "should always have clean boots." With surprising strength, she slides the door shut and the van speeds away. Faintly puzzled by the unlikely kindness of her remark, I remain teetering on the curb before turning towards the path. Trudging away through the slush, I take care to avoid the especially muddy stretches.

–Julia Gibson

Into the Light, India Josh DeBartolo

# Crossings IV

## The New Routine

I always have a routine. This time last year I was a second semester senior, winding down my time at Hobart & William Smith. I woke up most days with a progressively louder alarm buzzer going off, checked my email, got ready, and checked my email again. I then headed to the Café for tea and began a day full of classes, work, and club meetings that lasted until around 10:00 pm which was followed by a few hours at the library and a few more in my room studying. On the less productive nights, it was late night TV with my housemates.

One year later, I'm in Hanoi, Vietnam. My day begins around 8:00 am with a trip to the neighborhood market. I weave my way between the ladies gutting fish and de-feathering chickens and the street vendors serving a variety of breakfast foods. I sit on a red plastic stool six inches off the ground and eat *banh cuon*, delicious rice pancakes filled with chopped mushrooms and spices (hold the pork for me). After breakfast it's to the woman selling tofu chunks plucked out of a giant plastic bucket of water, next to the vegetable lady for tomatoes and a variety of greens and then lastly to the fruit lady where I convince her and the bread vendor in the next stall down that two mangoes is enough and that no, in fact, I do not need ten. I work for most of the morning, and then again after lunch, either at home on my laptop, in the archives of the library on the other side of town, or 'in the field' with my translator. My days often include meeting friends for meals or coffee, errands, and an almost-daily walk in the park followed by a coconut with the top chopped off, allowing you to drink the delicious liquid inside with a straw.

A year ago I lived with friends I had known for all four years of college in Geneva, NY. Now I live in a four-story, one-room wide house in an alley off a random street in Hanoi, Vietnam with two French researchers named Clement and Lea and an Irish English teacher named Dave. A year ago I'd trek across the street to the basement of Hirshon to do my laundry; now

I hang it out to dry on my rooftop balcony, Vietnamese-style, so that the breeze full of construction dust can, in an hour, dry it completely, as well as turn it the same shade of brown/gray that it was before I washed it. A year ago I walked across our residential campus to my classes in Stern or Demarest. Now I drive my Honda Wave motorbike through crazy Vietnamese traffic, weaving smoothly around bicycles, women with shoulder-baskets full of bananas, as well as the occasional motorbike encumbered by a few pigs strapped to the back. A year ago I lived somewhere where everyone I interacted with spoke English; now most of my day is conducted in Vietnamese. Somehow, this all feels normal.

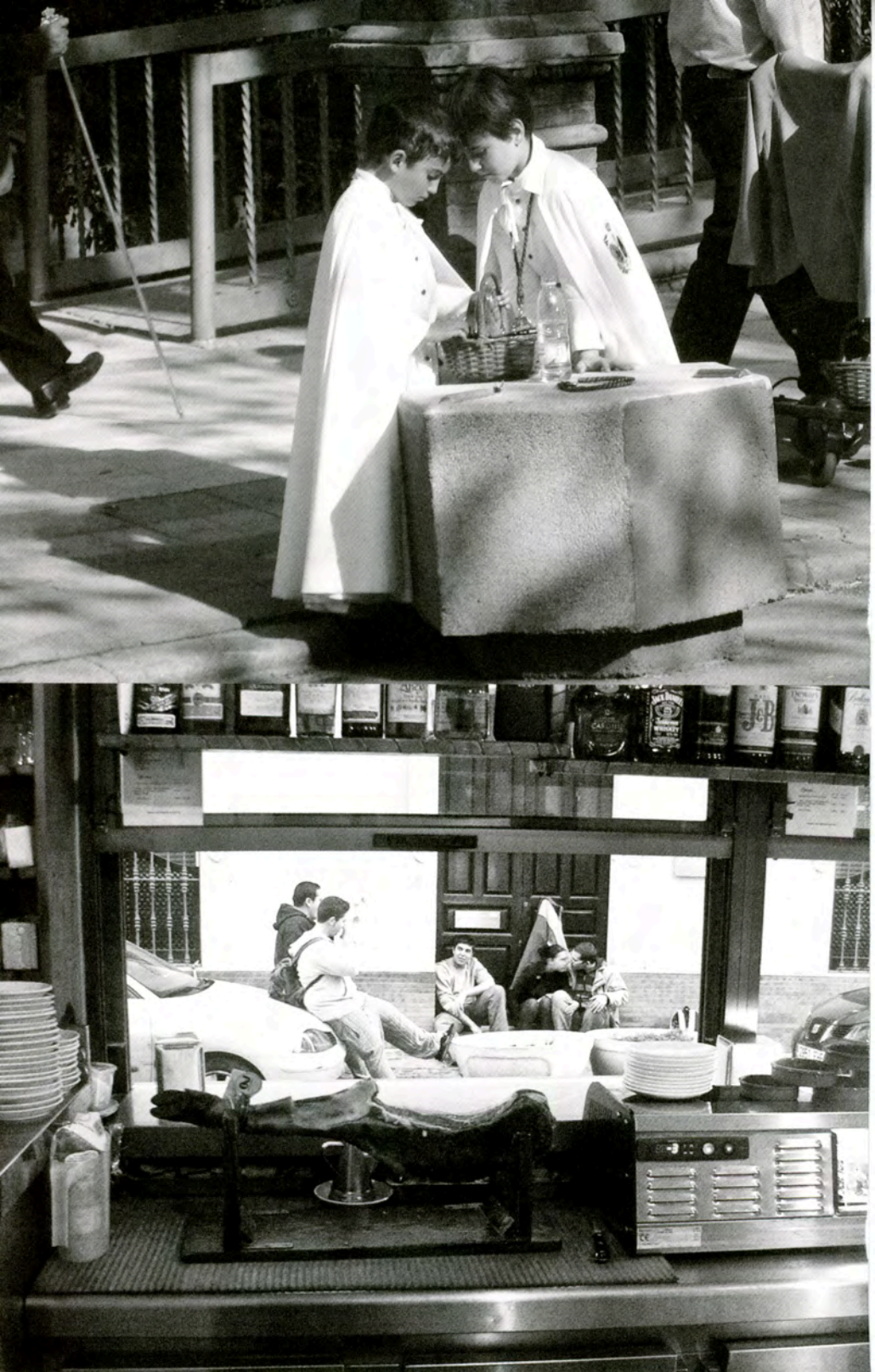
A Fulbright research fellowship has me living here in Hanoi, Vietnam, researching substantive (read: social, economic, and political) gender equality. The intent of these grants is to foster intercultural communication, something that aligns quite nicely with the concept of global citizenship. Living in another corner of the world allows you to examine your life, knowledge, and place in the world in a way impossible otherwise; thus, my semester abroad here in 2006 was the beginning of that awakening. Hanoi became my home in the same way that Geneva did after the fall of my first year.

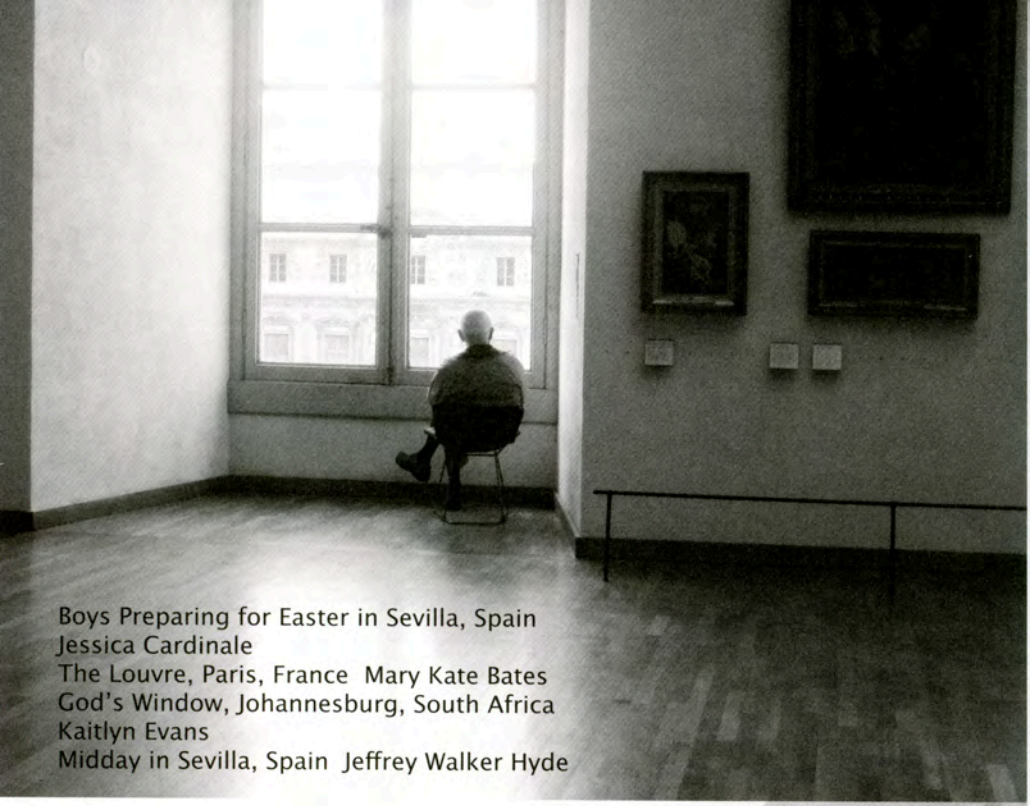
The only truly meaningful experiences are those that change you. Traveling as a tourist, observing the "weird" cultural practices, snapping some photographs and buying trinkets is voyeurism. True global citizenship is a state of being in which you are changed by your interaction with these other places, by relationships, dialogue, genuine interest, and all the self-reflection that these things should induce. You know you've achieved this goal when the place becomes a part of who you are on a permanent level.

My semester abroad brought me into contact with women from all facets of Vietnamese society: street vendors, students, CEOs, war veterans and government officials. Each person I talked to wanted to know my story, too, and so we shared. Every question I answered generated ten new questions, and so I continue. For me, a sociologist, a life of consequence is the result of striving to answer those questions...questions that have the potential to better the world...questions that arise every time I immerse myself a little deeper into my Hanoi life.

–Cristina Bain

Church Decorated for Feast of St. Mary in Puebla, Mexico  Emily Mills





Boys Preparing for Easter in Sevilla, Spain
Jessica Cardinale
The Louvre, Paris, France Mary Kate Bates
God's Window, Johannesburg, South Africa
Kaitlyn Evans
Midday in Sevilla, Spain Jeffrey Walker Hyde

# Crossings V

## An Atypical Experience

As an American college student studying abroad, I ran into a lot of people who had certain assumptions. Example:

"You're American! You must love country music!" (Actually, no.)

"You're American! Do you own a gun?" (No again, and some slightly disturbing implications there.)

This was just the tip of the iceberg. To a certain extent, I expected these sorts of generalizations, and so I was somewhat prepared for whatever baggage being American comes with. What I didn't expect was how much my time in Bath, England would teach me about my own stereotypes, and how they would change as a result of my experiences.

My time abroad can easily be defined by my work with the homeless community.

In Bath, I had two internships that were sort of connected: I worked at the Julian House homeless shelter, and for *The Big Issue Magazine*, a street aid publication. Before I left the States, my dad was concerned. He thought I'd end up in a dark tunnel somewhere, drinking liquor out of a brown paper bag. To be honest, I had no idea what to expect. I had a whole host of stereotypes about the homeless, and not many of them were positive.

On the first day of work I met John, who had been released from prison a week before. He told me that he preferred jail to being homeless because at least he was guaranteed a bed and three meals a day.

...Then I met Dave, who slept in a disabled toilet in London for six years and now that he had his own flat, couldn't sleep because he finds a bed so unfamiliar.

...There was Vicki, an alcoholic with flaming red hair and a purple jacket, who loved her dog like it was her own child but

had a violent temper that got her in trouble.

...I met Charlie from Scotland, who gave me a Cadbury egg and told me it was "a British tradition...in case I don't see you in time for Easter."

...I met Phil, who came to the shelter dressed in a suit and talked to me about his travels to the Mayan and Aztec ruins in Latin America.

...I met Andy, a *Big Issue* client. A former bar manager, chef, and drug trafficker with a twenty-year heroin addiction who one day joked, "If anyone comes in and says they've found the will to live, it's mine, because I've lost it."

...And I met Daz, who when I told him to have a good week said, "I'll try—hopefully I'll keep warm."

I was rarely comfortable at my internship, and I frequently grappled with a reality that so challenged my expectations. People like Daz helped me to do that. To think that Charlie, who couldn't even afford to buy his own food, would be so generous as to give me an Easter gift, or that Andy, in such hard circumstances, could stand to joke about finding the will to live. The sheer determination of these people, the fact that they could find humor in the most dire of situations, was simply incredible to me.

Of course, there were a few guys who tried to ask me out, and I did witness some arguments that escalated quickly and alarmingly, but virtually all of my experiences with the homeless were completely "normal." The guys would swear in front of me and then quickly apologize, or tease me about my love for a peanut butter and jelly sandwich (which the Brits view as gross.) I built relationships with these people, and although I certainly wasn't privy to every aspect of their lives, I felt connected to a subset of people who I wouldn't have had the courage to seek out under different circumstances.

As much as I was aware of the assumptions people had about me when I was in England, my work with the homeless community made me realize all of the stereotypes I carried and enabled me to reevaluate my views on the less fortunate.

I talk to people today and they have the same reactions towards the homeless that I originally had. But the fact is, some

of the hardest working people that I've ever met have been homeless. Some of the *Big Issue* clients sell magazines in the rain, the wind, the cold—and pedestrians treat them like dirt. It's hard to see, but makes me realize how much I've learned. Honestly, how many people would be willing to do that kind of work, here in Geneva?

For my dissertation, I talked about how my perceptions about so many things have changed. As a result, I have changed, in ways that I neither expected nor imagined. And although it might not be the most typical study abroad experience, it was the hardest, bravest, and best thing I've ever done.

When people ask about my time abroad, I tell them about my classes, how I attended plays put on by the Royal Shakespeare Company, lived in Oxford, and traveled to twelve countries. I'll tell them about how I would love to live in England someday. I rarely mention my internships. Why? I've learned that I can't really explain my experiences and the transformations that have taken place. It's something that only I know—and in that way, it's more meaningful. And although I will always remember my travels to life-changing places, I'll remember those people more.

–Annalise VanHouten

Norwich Cathedral, England Daisy Bird
Gannets at Otakamiro Point, New Zealand Isabel Olson

# Reflections of Resistance

## Riots in Athens

While I was studying abroad in Athens, Greece this past fall, a series of riots broke out. The riots were mostly held in the city center and were in response to the shooting and subsequent death of a fifteen-year-old boy, Alexandros Grigoropoulos. He was shot by a police officer in Exarchia—a central neighborhood of Athens. Though the riots began as a response to police brutality, they quickly evolved into something much more.

Greeks are not unfamiliar with protest and they have seen their fair share of rioting. For them, protest is a common way to demonstrate democratically and is seen as a legitimate way to have the people's voices heard. The older generation of Greeks

> The air in the town center was saturated with tear gas. Police were attempting to control the situation. By the end of the night, Athens looked like a war zone.

witnessed an Italian and German occupation, a military dictatorship, and many years of corruption within their government. They responded through protest. For this, many Greeks take pride in being such a difficult people to occupy.

So, the death of Alexandros Grigoropoulos appeared to many youths as their chance at expelling their oppressors. Thousands of teenagers and young adults used this opportunity to rebel—both peacefully and violently. The movement was hijacked, though. Every political group and ideological representative wanted to mobilize the angered youth. It seemed that within a couple of days, most people had forgotten about Alexandros Grigoropoulos.

The school where we were studying—I think in an effort to

appease our "sheltered, American parents"—issued text-message alerts to the student body. Such texts read, "Avoid Syntagma (the town center). It is "on fire" and "large riots scheduled for this evening. Please stay indoors." We even received ominous emails from the U.S. Embassy. With all of this excitement, how could we be expected to stay away? Donning hoodies and bandanas, we hit the streets. On the second night, the largest of the protests was scheduled by the Communist party. It was meant to be a peaceful march, but not surprisingly, others took advantage and turned it violent.

The air in the town center was saturated with tear gas. The streets were packed with people—riot police, demonstrators and observers. Police were attempting to control the situation; they let demonstrators march, but they tried to stop anyone who was looting or causing destruction. Riotous teenagers could be seen outside of the peaceful march, lighting fires and vandalizing state property, shops and cars. By the end of the night, the center of Athens looked like a war zone.

-Rahde Franke


en•coun•ter
|enˈkoun(t)ər| v.
to meet face to face (originally, with hostile intent; O. French *encountrer* "confront")
n. casual or unexpected convergence
299
POLICIA
POLICIA
POLICIA
POLICIA


Lima Police on Break, Peru Alysa Austin

# Verse and Vision IV

## Yassi Peeks Around the Corner

Yassi peeks around the corner
A child too sneaks a glance
Standing under reflected light
His head bobbles
Heavy shadows sleep in the corners
Breathing becomes hard—he leaves
Her colorful outfit going from room to room
Yassi slips by again
An infant awaits his first shave
Many will die, let him live
Many will crumble beneath poverty
Let him live
Many long to leave
Leave him to content
Flies swarm and he watches us wait

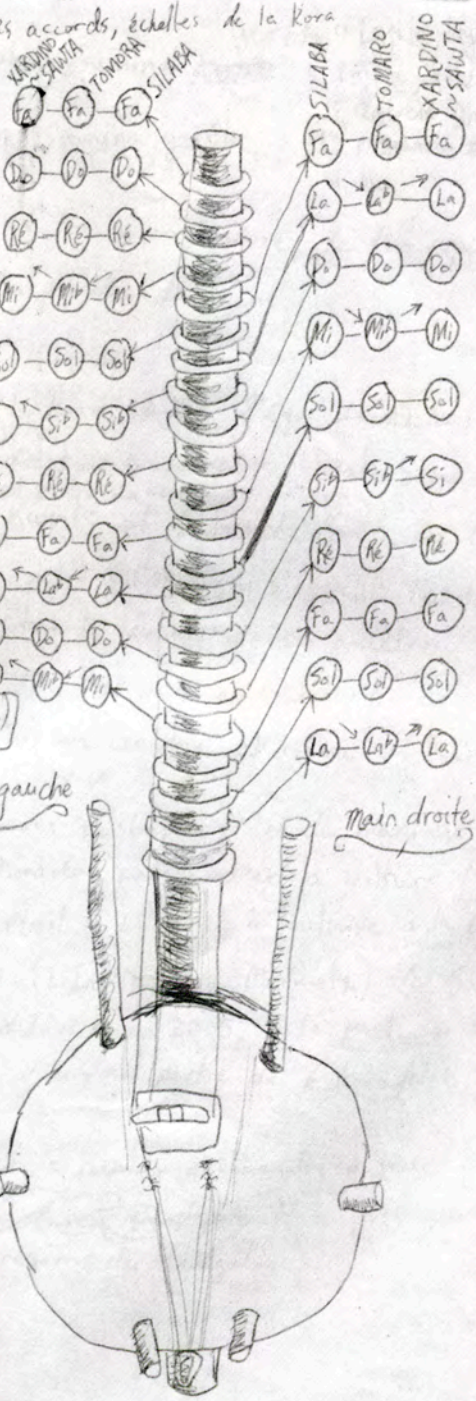
A song
A sleeping griot child
The calabasse hums and clucks
Her arms of sacred wood
Her long neck adorned with woven leather
Persistence is her song
Persistence of memory
Hours bring only the movement of shadows
Nothing draws my appetite like the clinking of spoons
*Kay lekk* I dream

–James Secor

Page from James Secor's Kora Notebook, Senegal

Sawta

Les accords, échelles de la kora




1ère à droite – 2ème gauche

8 à gauche – 2 à droite

1 à gauche – 2 "

3 " – 3 "

5 (do) – 3 (re)

6 (ti) – 4 (do)

7 (do) – 3 (sol)

5 (do) – 6 (do)

6 (ti) – 7 (do)

7 – 8

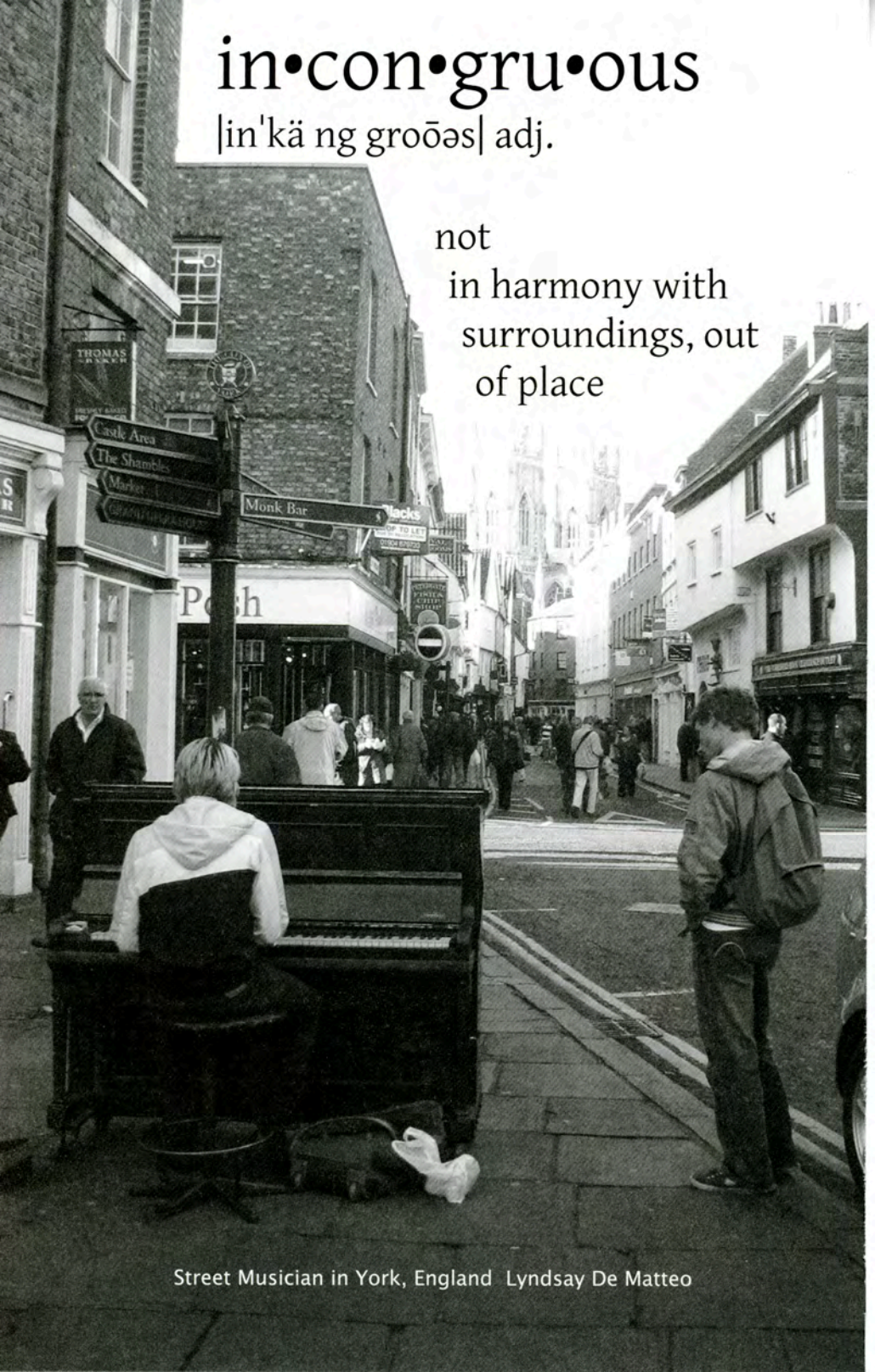
8 – 9

9 – 11

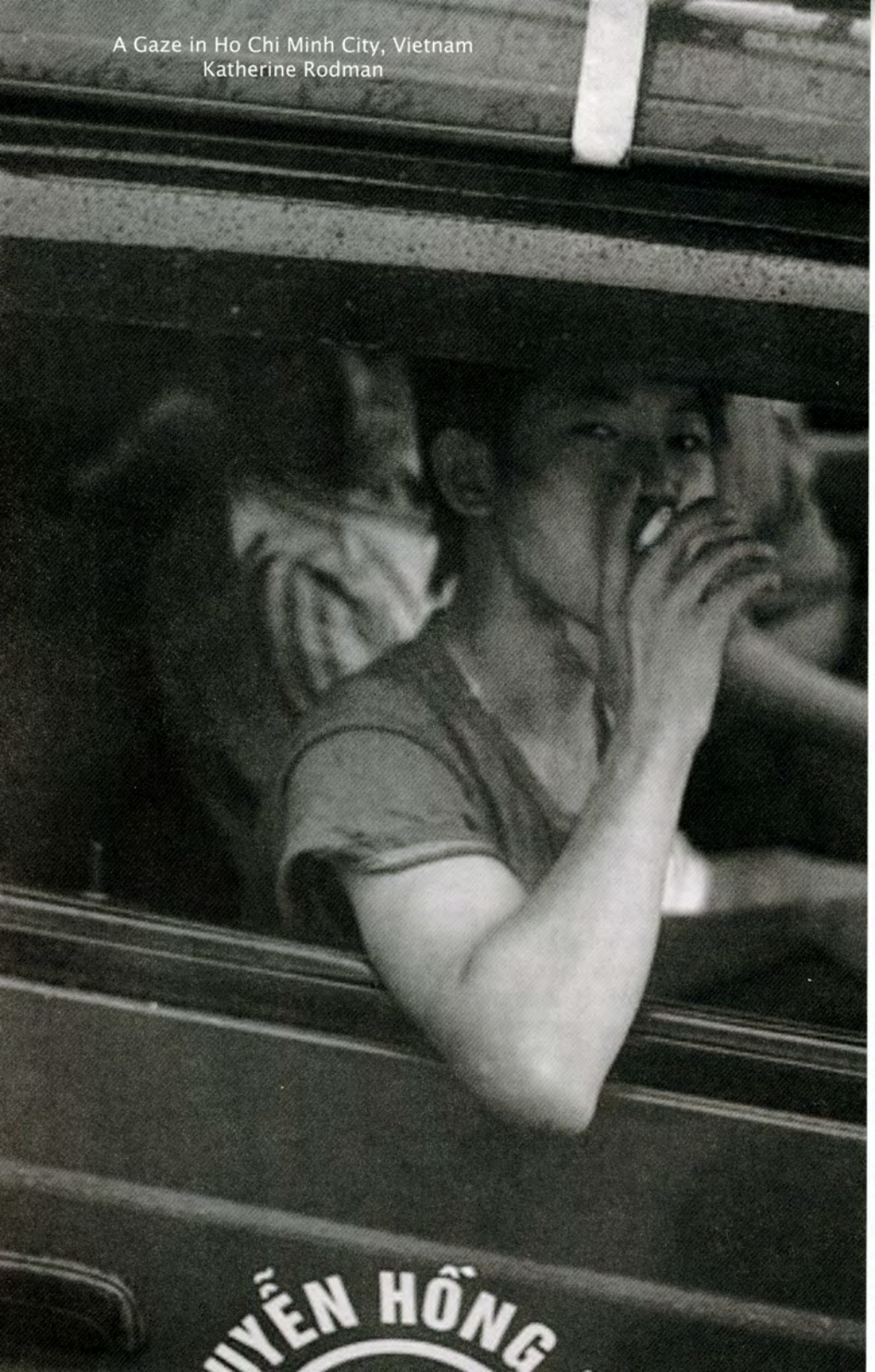
– 10 9 (re-do)

9 – 4

10 – 5


in•con•gru•ous
|in'kä ng groōəs| adj.
not
in harmony with
surroundings, out
of place
Castle Area
The Shambles
Monk Bar
THOMAS
Street Musician in York, England Lyndsay De Matteo

A Gaze in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
Katherine Rodman



# From My Journal I

## December 2, 2008
## Hanoi, Vietnam

This evening I went with Kate to her internship at a Zen meditation *sangha*. It was a perfect time to go, as it was a nice time to reflect on the experiences I've had here, reflect on my feelings about going home, and relieve myself of the stresses I've felt that come along with the end of academic terms. The place of meditation is very interesting as it used to be a hotel and it is set up in a very relaxed, serene way, with a Buddhist alter, candles, pillows and a "bell of mindfulness" that is chimed at certain times.

We did silent meditation, walking meditation, guided meditation, chanting (for which I was instructed to simply listen and enjoy), reading out of a Buddhist prayer book, and a Dharma discussion. I found it difficult to relax myself so much and to sit still for a long time but it is nice to try this once in a while and realize how we should try to take more time out of our lives to just sit and enjoy the moment.

I personally was most interested in the Dharma discussion because it was similar to a therapy session. In my group there were some English speakers and some Vietnamese speakers and everyone spoke in their native language. The Vietnamese spoke of their feelings, difficulties and emotions in Vietnamese and I could not understand everything they said but I still listened intently, as they did when the rest were speaking in English. The discussion and general feeling of the *sangha* creates a great sense of comfort and community. The *sangha* is not meant to be religiously affiliated but it is mostly based on Buddhist practices. The few hours I spent there helped me to connect the many thoughts and emotions I had collected over the course of the three months spent in Vietnam, as well as connect with a group of strangers on a spiritual level.



-Diana Goodman

Cao Dai Temple Service, Vietnam Jared Byrne
Fishing in the River, Perfume Pagoda, Vietnam Michael Eisenman

# From My Journal II

## "I know I am in Europe when my feet hurt."

The above is a quote of one of my host father's friends, Lars. So true. To begin a journey to the city, I leave my front door, glance at Henrik's bike, and decide that today, for one reason or another, is not a good day to bike to the train station. The reason du jour was that I couldn't find the key. This is perhaps the only legitimate reason there has ever been. My host mother told me she thought the bike was safer because in order to be attacked, a potential assailant would first have to push me off the bike. I laughed and told her that this would probably be an easier feat in my case than most others, but she knows, she's seen me wobble down the street.

Really, the distance from my house to the train station is only about a mile, so there's minimal motivation to actually consider anything more ambitious than walking. So, I walk down the street past the most adorable suburban houses, complete with apple trees, terra cotta roofs, and countless Danish flags in a wide array of shapes and try my very hardest not to look like a walking iPod commercial, but fortunately for me, life is not silhouetted.

I learned after the first week that I most certainly did NOT want to walk past the elementary school (which goes until the equivalent of sophomore year of high school) during recess and enjoy the company (fervent yelling) of the (real life mean) girls leaning coolly on the fence. Without possession of the language skills to serve up a biting comeback, I go around the back of the school which is the same distance and really much more scenic. I get to the main street in town and walk past the butcher and his freshly bloody meats, the ever-tempting bakery, and the kebab-ery that happily provides a girl in need with some falafel.

I cross the street full of cars barely bigger than me and the infinitely angry cyclists with their "ding of death" that you will inevitably be on the receiving end of should you cross the street....ever. In this country, you pretty much never have the coveted right-of-way. You see the green man that tells you to walk? The cars can still turn through you...and will. From here, I walk up the escalator to the platform, where if I'm lucky, I do not have to watch the last train pull away from the station, just out of reach. I finally climb aboard my train and into the "Stille Zone", where the select and silent gather. It is very seldom, however, that the car is so "stille"...always some loud foreigner who doesn't know the rules.

Scattered throughout my train trips are the same faces. Most notably: the man in green. He is always wearing the same Crayola marker-green track pants, embossed with what I can only assume is his company's logo. There is a matching ski jacket with reflective strips across the chest and black sleeves. He is always wearing generic looking, well-worn sneakers and fingerless gloves. Man in green most often boards the train with a can of beer, but this can sometimes be exchanged for a bottle of juice or soda. Never water. The man in green is in his late 50s or early 60s, although the wear and tear of life may have aged him more quickly than expected. This past week, I caught the 12:03 train on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, I sit in the second row of booths that faces forward, against the right-hand window. Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, the man in green boards the train exactly one stop after me, at 12:06, and sits in the second row of booths that faces forward, against the left-hand window for four stops. Friday, I miss the 12:03 and have to take the 12:13 instead. 12:16, there is the man in green, beer in hand, just opposite me.

Does he also take comfort in our routine? Or is he too consumed in his beverage and potentially stressful job (HVAC? Construction? Saving the World? Green Nylon Suit Tailor?)? A mystery to be resolved on another silent train ride...

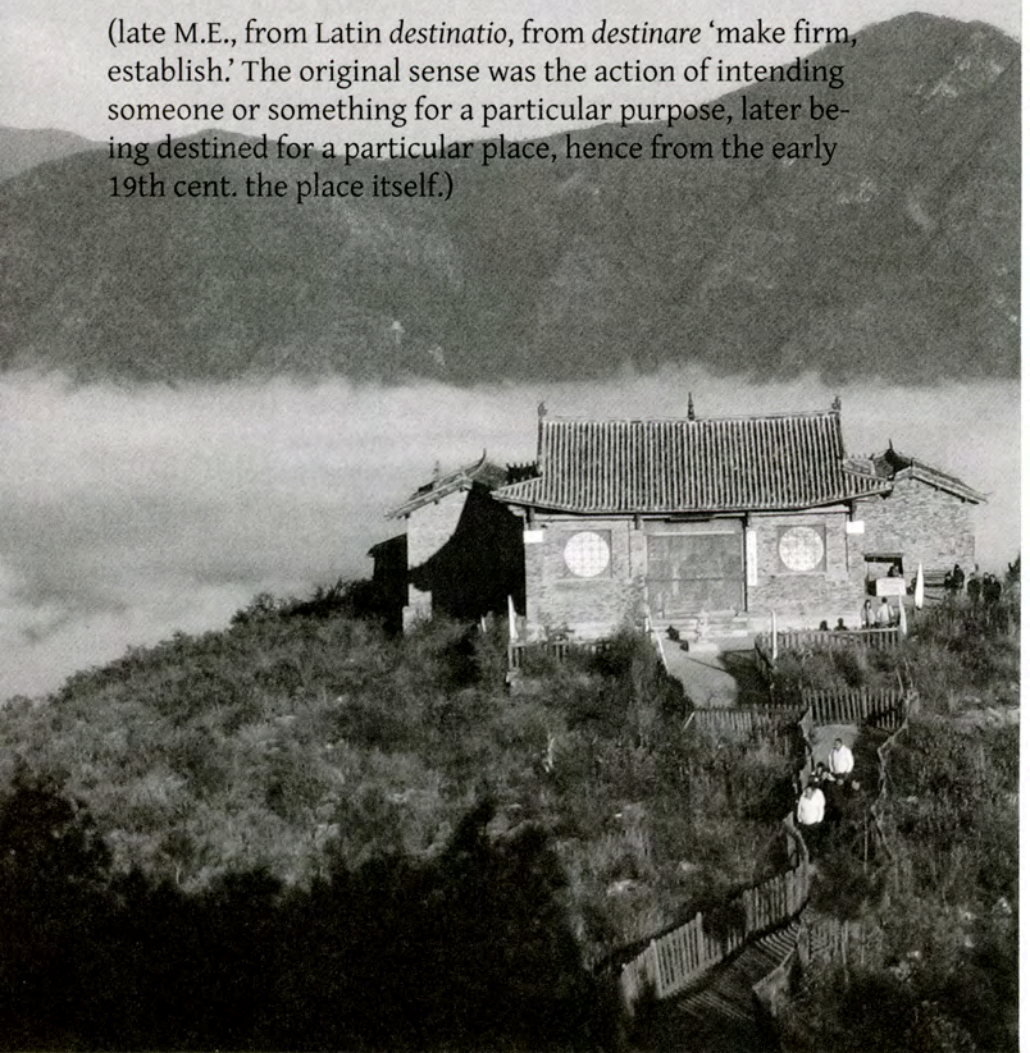
-Jenny O'Brien

# des•ti•na•tion

|ˌdestəˈnā sh ən| n.

purpose for which anything is destined; predetermined end, object, or use; ultimate design

(late M.E., from Latin *destinatio*, from *destinare* 'make firm, establish.' The original sense was the action of intending someone or something for a particular purpose, later being destined for a particular place, hence from the early 19th cent. the place itself.)



Buddhist Temple Overlooking the Yangtze River, China Ben Bristow

# Encounters I

## Robert and Me

The sense memories remain vivid. Heat of the day, sickly-sweet smell of mangoes at harvest, bright blues and greens of the tropical island, arm of an island friend so casually dropped over my shoulder, sound of roosters in the morning, Bob Marley and laughter wafting through my window from the bar below my host's home at night.

This was the summer before my freshman year at Hobart & William Smith and I wanted to get out of my hometown and have a more meaningful experience than mowing lawns and drinking beer. I had thought that I was going to go help those poor people on that island. I was wrong. They helped me see way beyond my horizons.

We had a simple project painting the shacks bright colors along the highway leading from the capital to their only resort. I remember Robert, the government's liaison, saying with a big smile, "We want the tourists to think; oh, look at those colorful native homes". It turned out to be perfect because we met many people, the poorest of the urban poor. They were so happy that we were there to paint their homes, even when they realized that we only had enough paint for the highway side. In fact, the whole island seemed happy. I would think, "They are poorer than the dirt on their floors but they seem so damn happy. Don't they get that?" No. The beauty and courage with which they led their daily lives was inspirational. But what stuck with me most was that, despite a totally different culture and generations of abject poverty, they were essentially the same as me. Same hopes, same fears, same dreams.

A bad thing happened about halfway through my time there. I received a small knife wound from a local punk who ran with a group of what the adults called "Raskals". He and a couple of his Raskals tried to take our group's food money from me on the way back from the market. I dropped the food and ran like hell. So did they. What followed was a lesson in

third world justice. The Raskals were rounded up, identified by me and then, to my horror, beaten right in front of me. I had to appear later as a witness in a court that could only be described as surreal. They were put in jail for a long time.

Our government liaison turned out to be the future Prime Minister's ne'er-do-well brother, an island version of Billy Carter. After that incident he started showing up at the house above the bar every few days to take me out on "walks". The walks always ended up at little roadhouses on dirt paths. We talked and talked with people in broken English and the local Patois. I heard a lot of stories of daily struggles. I finally asked him, "Why are you dragging me along?" Robert simply said, "You are rich and you will help one day." Robert came by late a few days later and we walked deep into the hills. More and more people joined us walking in the same direction as it became dark. We ended up on the edge of a natural amphitheater where hundreds of islanders had gathered. A light came on and under it was Robert's brother, the future Prime Minister. He railed against the British and the Yankees, while pointing at me! I was watching the birth of a democracy and a masterful politician who was positioning himself and his party for victory. I guess I was one of his props.

These experiences gestated within me for many years, through schooling, marriage, career and parenting. When the towers fell I anguished, watching the dancing in the streets overseas. What can we do? We must reach out. We must be citizens of every country because we are all of one. Same hopes, same fears, same dreams. My service experience flooded back. Twenty-four years later it became a frame of reference for the whole 9/11 experience. I have channeled this energy by becoming very involved in an organization by the name of United Planet that provides service travel and cultural education opportunities to anyone, anywhere. We serve communities in need in many locations around the world. I also heartily applaud the commitment to global citizenship at Hobart & William Smith.

Robert, I've not been back to St Lucia...yet, but I hope you would find me true to your vision.

-Charlie Clarke

# Encounters II

## Perfectly Perfect in Prague

*Vortex /vôrteks/ n. A situation or feeling that seems to swamp or engulf everything else.*

A vortex is exactly what my term abroad in Prague had proven to be. A vortex that sucked me in and spit me out a new person. A person willing to try anything, go anywhere, and, most importantly, talk to everyone. There is no denying that Prague is one of the most beautiful cities this world has to offer, adorned with stunning architecture and rich history ranging from the Prague Castle to the Charles Bridge. People also tend to rave about the nightlife, full of both delicious beer that you can buy by the half liter for a dollar, and clubs that stay packed until five in the morning. In the end, however, it was not the stunning views or the beer or the music that made my experience special. It was the people who explored the city with me, the stories exchanged between new friends, and the jokes we used to pass the time waiting for a tram at three in the morning that I will never forget.

So instead of giving a *Frommers* report including the best places to see and cheapest places to eat, I will share with you the true essence of my experience: the people I met. First and foremost there was Slava. Through example, Slava taught me how to not shy away from the awkwardness intrinsically wound in the meeting of people from other cultures, but to embrace this opportunity to learn from people. Slava asked more forward and provoking questions in a twenty-minute conversation than most people would be asked in a lifetime. For him there was no question too taboo or ordinary, and through his inquisitions he could learn more about a country and its culture in those twenty minutes of questioning than most could learn in months of travel.

Then there was Tina. Tina had been in Prague the spring before my term and was quick to show me around, taking me with her to Karlovy Lazne, the biggest club in central Europe, and an underground bar that would later become my favorite hangout. Tina showed me more than just Prague, she introduced me to Taiwan as well. Through sharing stories and delicious food I was able to learn about a part of the world I have yet to visit, and now thanks to Tina I am eager to venture there too.

And there is Louise. The friend from England who tags along to convince you that sometimes it is a good idea to go out six nights in a row. The friend you travel to Amsterdam with, only to find that the "hostel" you booked is actually a campsite. The friend who never turns down an invitation to have fun. She is that same friend who wakes up early with you to explore the city before the "tourists" show up, stays out late to catch the castle lit up, and laughs with you over meat and dumplings about the rich experiences you have shared. And the friend that invites you to go back and stay with her for your Spring Break in case you haven't gotten enough of the city yet. Which of course you don't turn down.

And this list could go on. There are the Scottish who remind you that you say tomato weird, and that whiskey is not meant to be mixed with coke. The guy from Lithuania from whom you attempt to learn Lithuanian, but complete your lesson after learning two words, *tobulai tobulas*, meaning perfectly perfect. Considering my experience in Prague I think these were probably the two best words I could have possibly learned. There are the Slovenians who remind you the meaning of the term gentle giant, and the guy from Honduras who invites you and your friends to your first Salsa club only to learn he lacks rhythm just like you.

That is the beauty of the vortex. You do not have to experience the whirlwind alone. Prague sucks you in, but luckily because of the people you share it with, when it spits you out, you can take more of it with you than you are forced to leave behind.

–Lisa McManus

Border Door Tijuana, Mexico Jared Iacolucci

# Verse & Vision V

## La hija de Tijuana

On the eve of her *quinceañera,*
the sun begins to fade, blinking its weary
cyclops eye down behind the waves.
I shield my eyes to see her, silhouetted
against the glare, box of cheap candy clenched
tightly to her chest.

*¿Quieres dulces?*
she asks. *Mañana es*
*mi cumpleaños de quince*
*y no tengo una vestida.*
*Por favor, Señora.*

She looks about fifteen. But soliciting money
like that on the day before. Surely
she would have already bought a dress. Unless
she's trying to raise money
for her family. Her children? She looks
young. Is she lying? Does it matter? Feeding
her drug addiction? Her mother's drug addition?
She doesn't look like a drug addict. She looks
young. I can't picture those skinny hips
filling out the Cinderella dresses
like the ones in the store-
front windows downtown. She isn't
fifteen. She's younger. Thirteen, or
fourteen.

A fat twenty weighs my pocket and I can't
shake the memory of her empty hand as we ride away
into the sunset.

–Erin Schumaker

# Antecedents I

## Trajectory

"What would you do that for?", my grandfather barked when I told him where I was going. "There's plenty to be seen in your own country."

I come from a place where people who speak Spanish are "Spanish." Where the American flag waves in small gardens, on truck windows, and on baseball caps. What we lacked in multi-cultural awareness we made up for with Boy Scout-esque skills and local knowledge. We had the second part down of "Think Globally, Act Locally", participating in sports teams, church, and local government. My grandparents worked the earth and knew it well. They lived with the seasons, and the joys and sacrifices that come with them. They fought in World Wars, gathered scrap metal for airplanes, ate watered-down ketchup and white bread sandwiches. There was no shortage of laughter. And many a stranger was said to feel welcome among us.

The globe lit up my family room growing up. I would heft it, fragile and warm in my hands, and send it gently spinning with eyes closed. Inspired by the Price is Right wheel, wherever my pointer finger landed when it stopped is where I would go, equipped with some scribbled country notes from my Encyclopedia Britannica set.

My daydream globe treks were colored by what I saw on television and in movies, the excitement of flying in a plane fed by the small bags of salty peanuts my Dad brought home from a rare business trip.

As a junior at Hobart and William Smith, I took my first plane ride... to Quito.

When I returned home clad in reed handbags, alpaca ponchos and bean necklaces, my brothers teased me. I tried to recreate and share the flavors of Ecuador in my family's upstate New York kitchen. My high school friends reluctantly

clunked their hips back and forth with me on "Salsa Night" at the local bar. I started a lot of conversations with "When I was in South America...". I practiced rolling my r's in my car on my way to work. I clung to the experience. I over-identified with it.

Eight years later, I am even prouder of my Aunt Linda putting on the VFW's monthly breakfast, of my father's oft-used baby blue "Clifton Park, New York Character Counts" t-shirt, of the way we mesh with our world, make it incrementally bigger. Global citizenship involves exploring the world outside of your little corner, and spreading kindness, volunteerism, and proud roots in your own little corner. In this sense, I feel less of a contrast now between me and my family, none of whom hold passports.

I relived my South America days while sweating it through Augusts as a cocktail waitress at the Saratoga Race Track. I'd get there early with coffee and sit in the horse owner boxes with the kitchen staff, chatting in rusty Spanish, asking them to tell me about their hometowns in Chile, Guatemala, Mexico, Honduras, and Peru. I substitute taught in Albany City Schools, forming a Spanish Language and Culture Club with the small group of Latin American students that attended. I welcomed strangers and forced myself to become one. I found diversity in my backyard.

Now, as a Peace Corps volunteer in Paraguay, I feel at home. The subtle notion I had of "me" and "them" has faded. I see the likeness of my small town back home and my small town here. I feel like a local, taking away more memories than souvenirs—more questions than answers. I harbor less frustration with the way things are, and have more energy to make them better. Perhaps global citizens are just everyday people opening their eyes a little wider.

I boarded a plane for the first time with HWS, but the seeds were planted long before that—by an upbringing that rewarded curiosity, taught me to care for others, laugh at myself, and keep asking questions. I look out at a world that awaits me, at strangers that welcome me, still feeling the warm weight of the globe in my hands.

-Mary Cinadr

# Antecedents II

## To My Dad

I had been to Europe three times before this last trip, but I had never visited the place that I had grown up hearing about. My great-grandfather was a gardener, my grandma was an accountant for the university in Latvia, and my grandfather was in the Latvian army. My grandparents escaped from Latvia during the war and lived in DP camps in Germany until they were sponsored to come to the U.S. My dad was born when they settled in Minneapolis and they died just before I was born.

This summer I was able to see the city and country I had heard about passed down from my grandparents to my dad and then on to me. I went expecting Eastern rubble, but I was greeted by restored towns of beauty and life. We went out at night in Riga, enjoyed the sights and sounds of the song festival, and walked the history of the streets during the day.

The highlight of my trip was Jurmala, a city that is surrounded by the Baltic Sea and only a bumpy twenty-minute train ride from Riga. It was off a gravel road and near the sea where I found the place where my dad's grandfather lived. A wire fence encompassed the house with an obvious "beware of dog" sign nailed to the side of the door. I was questioning my friend whether I should try to get the attention of the current residents. I knew I probably wouldn't be back to this place for a while and so I raised my voice and half-shouted "hello" a few times. An old woman with a snug apron opened the door, and with a rather nasty look, shouted something in Latvian, a language I never learned. "English??" I asked hopelessly. Her face then lit up and in a funny accent came "My son speaks perfect English."

She called for her son and a young, blond-haired teenage boy came out. I gave the boy a short biography of myself and

proceeded by asking him if he had known any of the history of the house. He turned to his mother and translated her reply. "The man that lived here was a gardener for the mansion down the road." That gardener was my great-grandfather. That response ended all the stories I had heard; I was starting new ones. This is for my dad who has not had the chance to go, but may he now go through my stories.

–Laura Valdmanis

Joking Before Prayer TIme, Istanbul, Turkey Alex Hallowell

# Antecedents III

## Learning A Song Line

Delmae Barton, a woman in her late sixties, stands before a class of thirty-two U.S. students, singing. She is welcoming us to her country, her land, her culture. She begins her dreamtime song with a low humming, hands folded on her stomach, eyes closed. As she finally begins to sing in her native tribal tongue, her body starts to sway, her arms move to the melody and her hands grasp at the air, as if they were actually able to feel the music for themselves. Her voice is piercing, with pitches both painfully high and gutturally low, as she wails her traditional song. It's beautiful, beautifully haunting. She sings of her connection to the land, of where her people came from and of who they are. She asks the land to welcome us, to protect us in our journeys and guide us wherever our paths may lead. She continues her ceremonial song for quite some time before she folds her hands again on her stomach, closes her eyes, and lets a humble smile cross her face. She nods her head in appreciation as we applaud her song and slowly returns to her chair as the smile finally flashes to her eyes. A chill crosses my spine, proof that we are truly welcome to this deeply spiritual, Australian land.

The months leading up to my departure from the United States were filled with obscure thoughts about a mysterious, seemingly mythical land called Australia. The fact that I was going to be studying abroad in Australia for three months was obvious, yet at the same time the idea seemed unreal and increasingly distant, despite the fact that my days in the United States were numbered. On the rare occasion that I took the time to actually embrace the thought of my travels, I grew intrigued by the prospect of diving into a new culture, especially an aboriginal one. A month before my official send off, I was assigned to read *My Place*, by Sally Morgan. This book chronicles the life of the author as well as her and her family's

struggles to live and adjust to a new Australian culture that hoped to erase all signs of the nation's indigenous roots. With this book, I began to think more seriously about my hopes of delving into the indigenous Australian culture. It was becoming increasingly apparent that this culture would be far more complex and oppressed than I had originally supposed.

Upon initially arriving in Brisbane, Australia, I was slightly disappointed with what I was faced with. The city seemed as though it was merely an exported version of the United States. McDonald's, Hungry Jacks (which is essentially the same as Burger King, except with a different name), United States politics all over the newspapers—things that I had hoped to leave behind for three months—were still slapping me in the face even halfway around the world. However, I was soon to become a victim of the common cliché, "Don't judge a book by its cover." I was able to learn that the commonalities I had originally observed between the United States and Australia were only superficial and that there was much more going on than I had originally understood.

As part of my program, I was fortunate enough to take an Australian culture class that introduced me to the foundations underlying the nation's aboriginal heritage. I was taught that the indigenous peoples believe that they belong to the land but that the land does not belong to them. It is the belief of these people that the land is their cultural identity, that the land is a story about the creation of their people that exists to be read and maintained through all generations. However, as white Australians began to dispossess these peoples of their culturally significant lands, they essentially destroyed vast portions of the native culture, some of which would never be recovered.

During the hundred years between 1869 and 1969, children of aboriginal descent were taken from their families and brought to settlements where they were raised by white Australians and discouraged from maintaining any connections with their native culture. These children are known as the Stolen Generation. Museums that I visited during my travels show pictures of these forlorn children and detail the consequences of this attempt to "breed out" the aboriginal race. Ultimately,

this attempt failed, but its repercussions were far-ranging and have had negative effects on aborigines, such as loss of land, loss of culture, depression and alcoholism. However, within the past few years, some progress has been made to restore lands to some aboriginal tribes and extend rights to some of the aboriginal population.

There are more than two hundred indigenous tribes that exist throughout the Australian continent, and each of these groups have their own culture and language. This has made it very difficult for aboriginal people to establish treaties with the Australian government. Before heading to Australia, I had imagined Australian history to be much more peaceful and integrated than American history. I blame this misconception on the fact that everything I had known about Australians came

> They carried with them pieces of souls, and as they traveled, they would cut off pieces of those souls and place them wherever they had been.

from watching *The Crocodile Hunter* on the Discovery channel. I know now that just because Steve Irwin was an easy-going and fun-loving man doesn't mean that all Australians throughout history have had those same qualities (mind you, most of the Australians I met while abroad were amazingly genuine, kind, good-natured people). In any case, in learning about the injustices that aboriginal people have faced from the time of the British claim in 1770 to today, I was able to then reflect upon the injustices that Native Americans experienced since colonization first began in the Americas. There are countless similarities between the way white Australians treated aboriginals and the way Americans treated the Native Americans. I came to the realization that injustices like these have been all too common during the course of world history and it's sad that unique and beautiful cultures, such as Australian aboriginal cultures, have been lost or damaged just because they are different.

One of the most fascinating aspects about aboriginal culture that I learned has to do with their perception of the land and

its connection to self-discovery. Aboriginal Australians believe that at the beginning of time the land was completely plain and homogeneous. At one time, their ancestors sprang up out of the ground and wherever they went, and in everything they did, they marked the ground with signs of their presence. They carried with them pieces of souls, and as they traveled, they would cut off pieces of those souls and place them wherever they had been. After the ancestors had gone back into the earth, their spirit children, present-day aboriginals, were born from the pieces of souls that had been left behind by the ancestors. It is then the life goal of every aboriginal person to track the markings left behind by their ancestors and to remember who they were and who they are. This is known as "learning one's song line." Places become memory, where stories are kept, and the spirit child is responsible for finding the meaning of his or her life in these spaces.

The reason I find this part of the aboriginal culture so interesting is because it is so unique from anything else I have learned before. With this belief system, aboriginals are responsible for not only learning their song line, but also for protecting and maintaining their ancestral lands, as well as passing their song lines on to future generations. In order to pass these stories along, aboriginal peoples use songs and storytelling. Oral traditions are very strong in this cultural system. This is why the impact of preventing children from speaking their native tongue has been so detrimental to many aboriginal cultures. But in the case of Delmae Barton, and other aboriginal artists and activists who have fought against their oppressors, these individuals have been crucial in striving to bring about respect and recognition for the aboriginal peoples of Australia. It is because of individuals like these that I was able to experience a new and intriguing culture. I am grateful now that I was able to take what I learned and return to the United States more mindful of my own culture and with an appreciation for a new one as well.

–Elisha Harris

# Verse and Vision VI

## On England

I see the city through
My window. The dismal
Grey is a lingering comfort;
Now something to be
Embraced. The little village
Continues on its day in
The firm English wind
In November.

The green grocer stocks
His vegetables.
The baker packs
The window with an assortment
Of vices for any sweet tooth.
The butcher cleans his
Best cuts for the day.
The jewelry maker fastens
Every lock and shines
Every metal to attract
Each eye that passes.
The student sheepishly makes
Her way to the dreaded bus stop.
While the housewife makes the
Beds and prepares for her
Visit to her favorite places
In town.

The crisp autumn breeze
Calls these city dwellers
From their toasty homes
To relish in the hustle

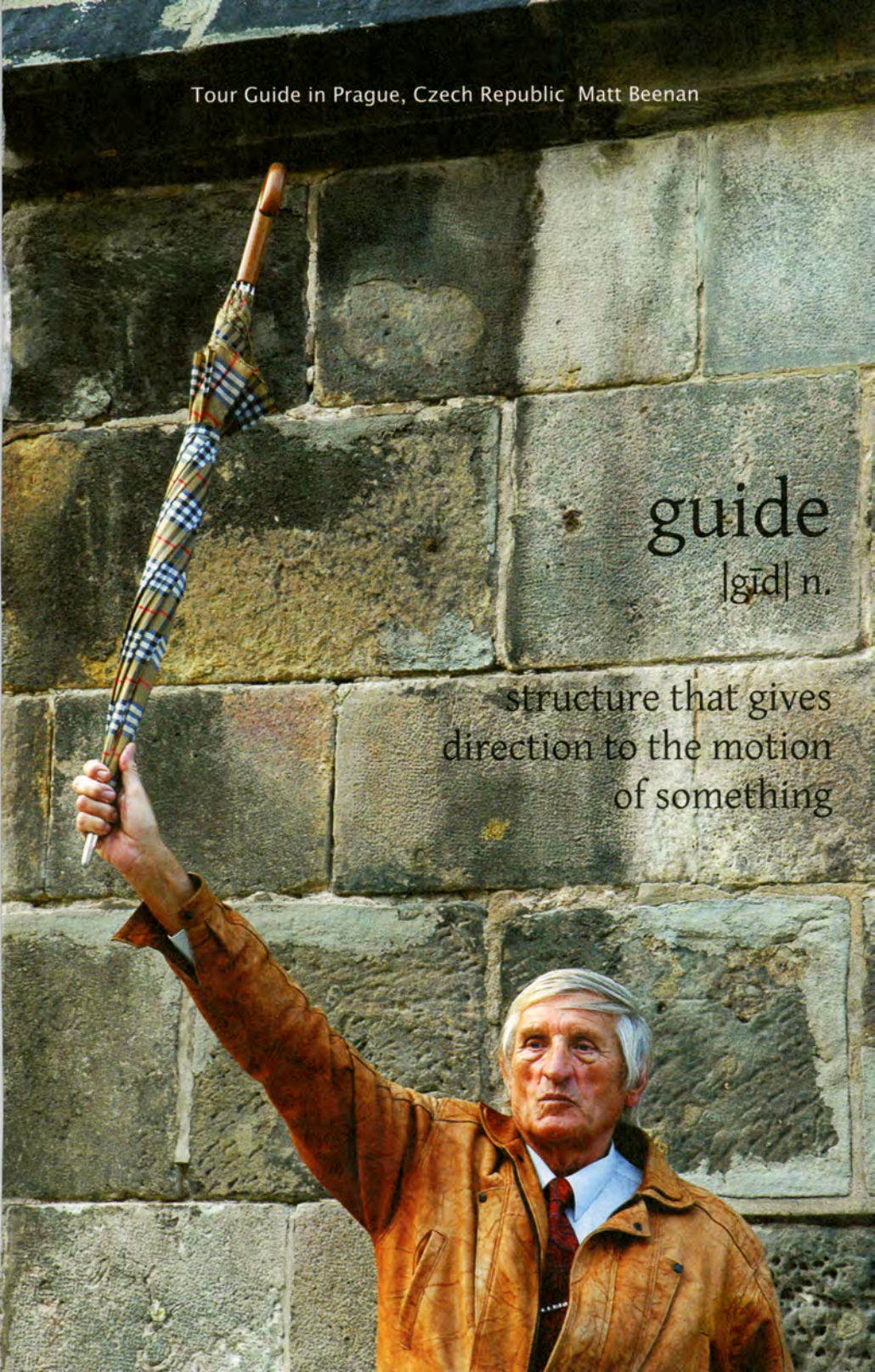
And bustle happening
On each small side street,
Within each small pub.

This world is a world away
Yet so close as to almost
Mirror my own.
The earth revolves, the wind blows
The little girl smiles and the boy
Runs.
No care is given to the affairs
Of another country.
Why should it?
This is their world, their own
Little part of the globe,
From which all others revolve.

–Shalon Hilton

University Building in Cambridge, England Sarah Foyle


Sheep at Croagh Patrick, Westport, Ireland David Haughey


Tour Guide in Prague, Czech Republic Matt Beenan
guide
|gīd| n.
structure that gives
direction to the motion
of something


"My Student", Steung Meanchey in Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Robbie Flick

Hmong women trek back to their village with HWS and Union students, outside of Sapa, Vietnam Molly Fitzgerald

Worshippers at the Cao Dai Temple, Vietnam William Wilkins

# di•rec•tion

|diˈrek shən| n.

the course along which something is moving or aimed to move


On Holiday in the Lake District, England James Morton

Franz Josef Glacier Floor, New Zealand
Neeraj Mangla

# Coordinates I

## Global Citizenship

The idea of global citizenship has never been more important than it is now. The sense and realization that we are dependent upon each other in this world has never been more necessary. Today's young minds must accept that having a well-rounded grasp on the world is vital to improve oneself and positively impact the world environment. Globalization means that we are all becoming increasingly interconnected. Thus, having a better understanding of the concept of global citizenship is of the utmost importance. I must say, however, that I do not believe that global citizenship can be obtained effortlessly, for it is an ideal that people must strive for throughout life–slowly learning and earning what it means to be globally educated and aware of the different views held by people throughout the world.

Since graduating from Hobart, I have been traveling and learning a great deal. Soon after graduation I traveled to Europe and the following September I came to the Dominican Republic to start my service as a Peace Corps volunteer. I spent my first months in training with the 52 other Americans in my entering "class". After training, each volunteer was assigned to their "site" or village. In my village, named *Los Mangos*, my job is to help my community construct a gravity-fed water aqueduct; essentially I am helping to pipe water to each of the 28 houses in my community. During my first few months in my site, I conducted studies to calculate and design the system. Next I formed my budget and solicited funds from various politicians, organizations and businesses. Currently my community and I are in the construction process. They are responsible for working one day a week and I am advising and supervising them through the construction of the entire system. I expect the project to last until June, since we have five kilometers of pipeline that must be placed one meter below

the ground. Once the construction is complete I will help train plumbers and health coordinators to aid in the sustainability of the aqueduct.

My work with the Peace Corps has surely expanded my understanding of global citizenship. In the time that I have spent in the Dominican Republic, I have learned an incredible amount about the lives of those who live in a developing country. I have come to understand why people outside the United States hold certain views about Americans and people of other nationalities. This experience has also completely changed many of the views and opinions I held during my studies as an undergraduate. The value of the knowledge I gained has not diminished; but my understanding and comprehension have been expanded. I am very pleased with the experience I have had with the Peace Corps, and I hope that Hobart and William Smith continues to encourage its students to further their global citizenship during and after their time in Geneva, New York.

–John Soden

San Miniato al Monte, Firenze, Italy  Devin Harrison
Food Exchange on the River, Mekong Delta, Vietnam  Graham Kaplan

Queen's Party Parade, Copenhagen, Denmark  Christina Kinnevey
Stonehenge from a Worm's Perspective, England  Rachel Cohen and Casey Snepar

# Coordinates II

## 25 Kilometers and the Lucky 10%

As a Peace Corps volunteer in Mozambique, it has been an interesting first year and at the beginning of my second, I'm excited to continue my work. Coincidentally, my Peace Corps roommate also happens to be an HWS alumni, Bryan Romas '06, who is in his first year of service. We live on a Catholic mission complete with a church, hospital, and a school. I teach human and plant biology to 8th and 9th graders, while Bryan teaches English to grades 10, 11, and 12.

The mission is located pretty much in the middle of nowhere. It's as though you clicked on any random location in the interior section of Mozambique using Google Earth and that's where you'd find our site, Mangunde. It's a 25-kilometer ride from the two-lane national paved highway to our community. But because of the condition of the road, it takes over an hour to travel it. During the rainy season, the road becomes nearly impassable because of mud, while the grass grows eight feet tall from the tropical downpours.

After the three months of the rainy season (December - February) the road slowly but surely starts turning into a dust bowl of powdered dirt as the dry season takes its grip. Traveling on the road during the high time of the dry season has been described by one PCV as being "worse than a South Dakota snowstorm." Over the period of a year, Mangunde's 25 kilometers seems to be as temperamental as a three-year-old. One minute things are fine until two feet of rain brings you three feet of mud—a testament to the unpredictable extremes of the African climate.

But, believe it or not, people live here and an awful lot of them live with HIV as subsistence farmers. The HIV/AIDS epidemic has left a lot of my students with only one remaining parent or, in some cases, even orphaned. Nationally, some 10% of those HIV-positive Mozambicans who need treatment are being treated with antiretrovirals (ARVs). That means that the

other 90% in need of ARV treatment are not receiving it. The PEPFAR emergency action money for the relief of AIDS is used to purchase nearly all ARV drugs for these lucky 10%.

PEPFAR also funds Peace Corps Mozambique projects such as the annual Local, Provincial, and National Science Fairs as well as male (JOMA) and female (REDES) after-school groups that implement gender topics with skill-based learning (such as theatre, art, photography, and journalism). It's our hope that a few of these students will use the information they have learned, use it to protect themselves, and maybe choose to become stakeholders in their futures and their communities.

–Jonathan Hureau

A Break from Class, Mekong Delta, Vietnam Meggie Anne Moriarty

Children at Play on the Beach of North Stradbroke Island, Australia Jordan Silletti

# Reflections I

## Learning to Call "Home"

What is "home"? To me, it's a place that I am familiar with, comfortable in and feel a deep connection to. Now, being halfway across the world from my home, an ocean away from my family, in a brand new culture, will I be able to make the U.S. my second home away from home?

### First encounter

My first encounter with American culture was the summer before I came, in 2008. A group of American college students came to Viet Nam for a summer course and I was among some Vietnamese students who took part in the class for a cultural exchange. These two months hanging out with American students was very eventful for me. In the middle of my old city, they showed me the first exciting feature of American college culture by bringing me to my first pub, keeping me out after 10:30 pm for the first time. For a girl who grew up in a traditional Asian family like me, this was quite a culture shock. However, I was more shocked by how the American students both work so hard in class and play hard in their spare time. Their friendliness and the enthusiasm gave me a very good first impression of America. I became more and more excited about my departure day.

### First steps on the land

And the day came. Exactly one year after the day I decided to come to the U.S., I took my first step on the land of the United States. America welcomed me with...reality. The Los Angeles Airport was complete chaos for a girl travelling alone for the first time. What I had heard about this clean country,

where my shoes would never get dirty, turned out to be not even half true. My exhaustion after a long flight across the ocean, the long transit wait and the thought of two more domestic flights ahead made this first hour in the U.S. horrible. The American friendliness which I adored became excessive-friendliness after a young American man startled me by stopping me and asking for my phone number. These experiences, which I have since found to be entirely normal in American culture, were very strange in my own Vietnamese culture.

However, this first bad experience soon faded away as I met more people. On the plane to school, I had some interesting conversations with some random Americans. One was a mother bringing her son to college for the first time and another was a veteran of the Viet Nam war. These conversations showed me another way to view the U.S. Half a world away from home, I started to feel that little something that reminded me of home. Was it the warmth of this mother's love that I felt listening to this woman talk about her son or was it the veteran's story of his life after the war in my country that made me feel this way? I suddenly realized this would be the land that I would be living in for the next four years of my life. In only the first few hours, the U.S. had struck me with so many new feelings. What would it be like after four years? "Make yourself at home!"—the mother and the veteran had said to me. Would I be able to call this place home?

## Learn things one by one

Each day of my life here is like a new page of a book: lots of things to see, to learn and to explore. In this small college town, which was described as "in the middle of nowhere", I have found myself in a cultural hub. I now have friends from all over the world: I hang out with the Indian girl who lives across the hall, I go shopping with a Japanese classmate, and I have lunch with a group of Chinese students. I have befriended many others, not only students but also faculty members from five different continents. Working in the Intercultural Affairs Office, I have had a chance to meet people from all walks of life. Being a foreigner, I have my eyes more open to

observe and learn about not only American culture but also those of other countries. Sharing my Asian dream of building a small family with my Indian friends, I learned how the role of women has changed in a rapidly developing country like India. Talking with a Japanese friend who has spent 8 years of her life in the U.S., I see how "westernized" she has become. I understand her confusion.

One of my favorite discoveries in this small town, with a total Vietnamese population of four (including me), is that there are many Americans who have special connections to my country, such as the mayor of the city who has been to Viet Nam twice; the two professors who brought their students to Viet Nam for study abroad semesters; or the two American seniors who talk to me in Vietnamese every time I meet them and have helped me to adapt to life here as two big brothers. Those people really bring the feeling of home to me.

Making friends in this place is also not as easy as I had thought. Due to the language barrier, I found my normally-talkative self extraordinarily quiet during most conversations. Not being able to fully express my ideas when talking has made it harder for me to get closer to people. Moreover, though having been introduced to the way U.S. students socialize at parties, I still feel out of place and uncomfortable socializing in those kind of settings. So I spend time with the other international students from Asia who have the same problem as me. In one of my classes, all the international students sit near each other and somehow form an "Asian corner". These days, as my English becomes better, I've been trying to get out of that corner. I can see the differences gradually in my relationships with the other native students. Interestingly, I find myself very comfortable when talking to people much older than me such as the lady in the dining hall, the cleaning lady on my floor and my professors—perhaps because they are older and they understand how lonely an international student might feel, so they give from their heart.

Another thing I have to get used to is the concept of personal space in America. The first day here, I was surprised to see people waiting in line back up to keep a certain space between them and the people around them. I found myself in

an interesting situation. Never in my life had I been craving a great big hug as I was during my first two months here. Back home, I hugged my Mom and my girlfriends whenever I was in need of one. But here, as people keep their distance from each other, it was hard for me. I used my first birthday in the U.S. as the excuse to get hugs from people and I felt so much better after that. However, all the people I hugged then were female. When an American guy friend hugged me for the first time, I couldn't help feeling a little weird. In my culture, hugging is considered to be a very intimate interaction between male and female. Even with my dad and my brother, I only hugged them occasionally. I came to understand that in the U.S., when friends become closer, hugging becomes more common, but it is still not really comfortable for me sometimes.

## Making myself at home

I am only three months into my life in the U.S. but the story of my life from here can go non-stop. What I have learned during the past three months are the most precious experiences I've had so far in my life. Have I been able to call this place home? Not yet. Not this soon. But the feeling is growing on me. I enjoy watering the plants and cleaning in the Intercultural Office because it reminds me of the housework I once did at home. I have begun changing the phrase "go back to my room" which I used to use before to, "go home". I still have a lot to learn and many more connections to make before I can actually call it my second home away from home. I'll try to keep my eyes and my mind wide open to perhaps one day make it my home.

–To Thu Tra


S S H
PLEASE RESPEC
sSHH!
NO SINGI
WAY HOM
WWW.


Famous Sign Outside The University of York St. John, York, England Meghan Morrissey

# Reflections II

## Measuring Prague

An engineer cannot possibly expect to live in a country where his first language is barely spoken, where every measurement about the world around him is based on a different number, where architectural feats and engineering marvels lay motionless everywhere around him, and not expect his life and personality to change. When I arrived in Prague and got started with school, I thought it was just going to be an easy term of little homework and lots of travel. I didn't expect to grow to see the world in a completely new way.

As I have come to see, the whole style of learning is different in the Czech Republic. In the States, we work incredibly hard for the term so that studying for the exam becomes just another homework assignment. In the Czech Republic the term is rather light, but the exam period is long and intense. A six-week exam period is five more weeks than anything I have ever seen! Lastly, I have not witnessed this yet, but I hear that people dress formally for exams. That is also unheard of in the States.

The first lecture of the Czech Culture course may have been the most interesting for me. It was a very basic lecture, explaining the main cultural differences between Czechs and Americans (and the rest of the world) that one could expect to witness in everyday life. It was full of interesting facts. For example, in the States when you go to a friend's house, taking off your shoes is polite, but not necessary. In the Czech Republic it is understood that you always take off your shoes. Also, I thought it was very strange to find that men always walk through doorways first here. Even the reasoning behind this, to make sure the next room is safe for the woman, was unheard of to me. A few times this term I have been walking with girls and I held the door for them, forgetting the custom, and they gave me odd looks. Clearly, it takes a lot to become

accustomed to another culture.

It was very helpful to learn about the different parts of the country and to learn what each part is known for. For instance, I got a kick out of hearing that Brno residents think that their city should be the capital of the country. Quite frankly, after seeing Brno myself I think that the capital is fine where it is. I think the residents of Prague agree with me on that. We also learned of Karlovy Vary over in the western corner of the country. I went on a trip there with some friends after hearing about it in class and we were not disappointed. The city was gorgeous and relaxing. It was good to go during the light season—no tourists.

We also learned about the Southeast portion of the Czech Republic: Moravia and wine country. When I heard about this unique and sacred region I knew I had to go see it first-hand. I have been to Moravia twice—once for wine, and once to visit Moravsky Krumlov. Both trips were worthwhile. The first one was an ISC sponsored trip, and we got to go to a great wine cellar and try fifteen types of wine. There was a very professionally dressed man showing off the wines, and he put on a real show by opening a bottle of champagne with nothing but a sword. Having already heard about the esteem Moravia has for wine, the experience was one to appreciate and certainly remember.

A lecture about democracy that I found enlightening included a few interesting points made by the professor and his PowerPoint. What surprised me was that the other international students seemed to be about as ignorant as the Americans regarding the world around us. When the professor asked questions about the European Union and various country-to-country relationships the room was silent. I found it funny how my friends and I found ourselves awkwardly waiting for some European student to speak up and answer a question, but to no avail. Nobody said a word for an hour and a half. The lecture was a little dry because of our inability to contribute to the discussion at all, but besides that the class was time well spent. The professor was clearly very knowledgeable, and was very passionate about his area of study.

After spending the past three months in heaven, I would expect myself to be apathetic about going back to Union College.

In reality, though, I have very strong feelings about returning home. I am mildly excited to get back to learning from the professors who I have gotten used to over the past two years, but I am ecstatic that I now get to attend my university with a solid group of friends behind me. My time here stuck me with four guys whom I have become very close to, and now I can already feel the difference in my expectations of Union College. I am very excited to go back.

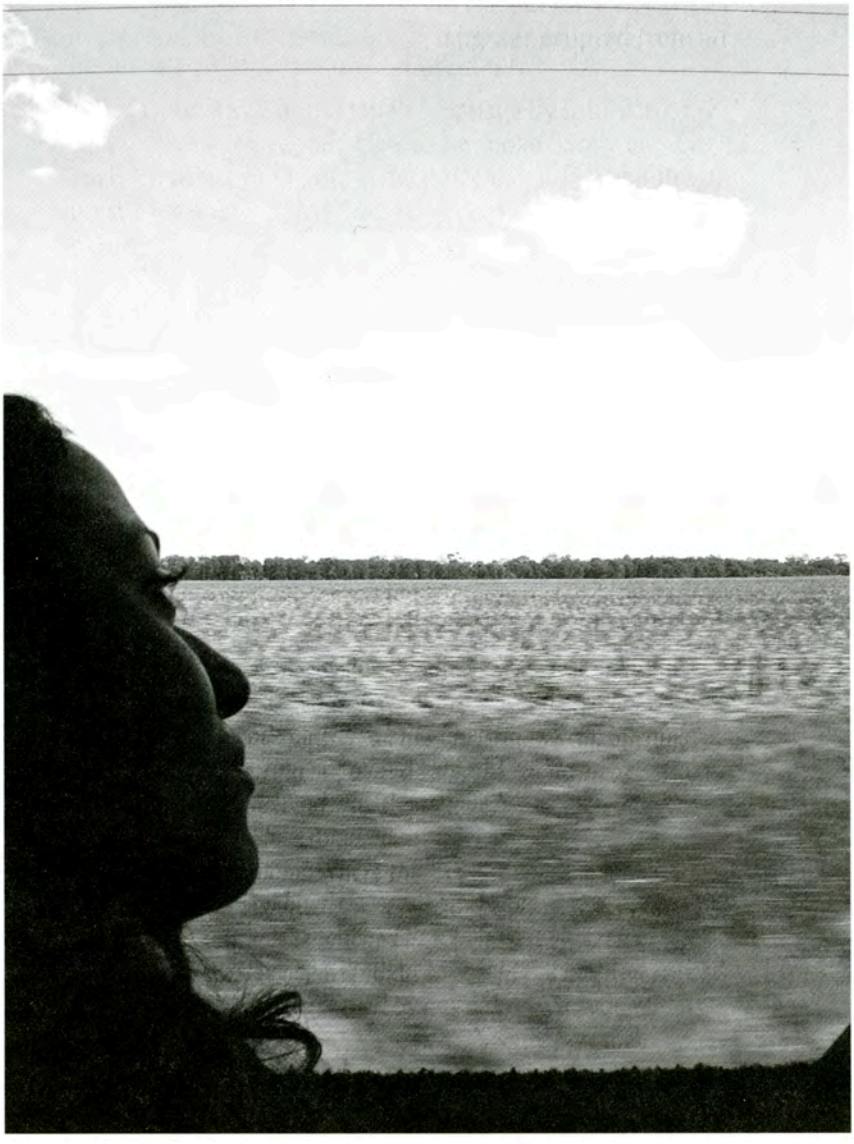
Being in Prague has offered me a world of experience. I have met countless people from Spain. I have met many French, Danish, and Costa Rican natives. I have also visited many countries, and I have observed how cultures and lifestyles vary. I have spoken with people from all over about numerous topics, had meals with them, met their families, and even lived with them for days at a time. I now know that there is so much more going on in the world than whatever is happening in America. My country is just the tip of the iceberg.

Of all the cultures that I have dipped my feet into, the Czech culture has obviously had the biggest impact on me. I have been all around the city and I have been to numerous events and gatherings of Czech people. I have been in places hounded with tourists, scattered with adolescents, and dotted with senior citizens that are pleasantly (or not) minding their own business. My first thought is that my friend Katka was right about people in general: if they don't know you, they don't like you. I have gotten so many bad looks from people for doing things that wouldn't even merit a glance in the States. I think most of the differences are about personal ethics, and how people carry themselves. I understand why people treat strangers this way, but I don't think it's the most efficient way of going about your life. I think being outgoing and nice to people really makes a positive difference in the world. I have also noticed that this trait in Czechs is more evident among older people.

Even though there is still so much more to see and do, I feel like I took a chunk out of the world over the past three months. I have witnessed the gondoliers singing down the canals of Venice, tasted the wine in Moravia, seen an opera in Vienna, climbed to the highest point in Budapest, flown into space in

Amsterdam, relaxed in the spas of Karlovy Vary, tasted the pastries in Rome, and seen the ancient city of Pompeii. It really is too much to fathom, and there is still a whole world to see.

–George Kershaw



On Our Way to Saddler Springs, Australia Jenny Zhao


Asakusa Market, Tokyo, Japan  Zachary Barash

Prague, City of 100 Spires, Czech Republic Gareth Lewis

Crater Lake on White Island, New Zealand Elisha Harris

# Reflections III

## Sole Searching

While working in Indonesia as an English teacher I settled into something of a rut, no longer challenging myself and finding little tranquility in the chaotic port city of Makassar. In a quest to find peace and inspiration, I visited Masjid Raya, the city's oldest mosque. Prior to living in Indonesia I would never have imagined going to a mosque, especially on my own. I felt that as a white, non-Muslim woman who spoke two words of Arabic and a few more of Indonesian, I was either asking for trouble—or giving it to someone else.

But I had to go. In the frenzied sprawl that is Makassar, the aesthetic order and tranquility of Masjid Raya draws you in, out of both curiosity and reverence. On one of the busiest streets in the city, the mosque is an unexpected sight—a conglomeration of off-white circular pillars surrounding a massive domed oval structure. The mosque rises from the ground in a way that is, well, quite heavenly. Its large open-air archways welcome you on all sides, so the entire structure breathes. This ventilation system is obviously an equatorial practicality, but spiritually speaking, the idea that a place of worship has no physical doors is a refreshing alternative to the heavy, wooden cathedral entryways I am accustomed to.

Welcoming appearances aside, I was still hesitant to enter. After all, I am a guest in this country—is it discourteous to invite myself into its most holy sanctuary?

Reflecting on the reasons I decided to come to Indonesia, I remembered that fear is largely rooted in misunderstanding, and that the misunderstandings surrounding matters of faith are the most difficult to surmount. As an outsider, it's difficult to comprehend a religion organized by a different language, a non-Latin alphabet and a myriad of cultures, which some westerners judge as being synonymous with terror and hate.

Men in the Masjid Raya, Makassar, Indonesia Jane Erickson

I took a deep breath, draped the shawl I was carrying around my head, left my sandals at the base of a pillar and attempted to slip inside quietly. The warmth of the granite floor on my bare feet was soothing as I made my way up the dauntingly grandiose steps, but before I had made it halfway to the main entrance, two men rushed to my side. For a moment I didn't know if I'd be welcomed or turned away, but they kindly led me to the main area of prayer.

During my time in Indonesia I have visited many neighborhood mosques and places of worship, but none came close to Masjid Raya. As with all mosques, no decorative iconography adorned the temple walls—only scripture from the Koran engraved in flowing Arabic calligraphy. Rows and rows of reflective granite tiled the floor, which mirrored everything in sight as the light spilled in from the archways.

Ensconced in silence, I took a prayer rug and laid it behind the smattering of kneeling men. The only sounds I could hear

from inside the mosque were soft patterings of bare feet taking their places to pray, and I quickly drifted into the slow pulse of all that was around me. Minutes (or hours) later I was roused by the call to prayer, and quickly gathered myself to leave as the three o'clock devotions approached. But as I neared the place where I had left my sandals, I quickly saw they were no longer there. After discreetly circling the vicinity several times and eliciting questioning glances from the gathering crowd, I remained shoeless and grew increasingly apprehensive as the mosque began to fill—a friend had informed me that it was impolite to visit the mosque during prayers.

In my state of obvious panic, the same men who welcomed me approached and inquired as to why I was so flustered. I explained the situation and they began to help me look for my sandals. "It is imperative she finds her shoes! We must find her shoes," they exclaimed in Indonesian. As three o'clock grew nearer it became more apparent that it was time to pray. The men began picking up pairs of other women's shoes, trying to pawn them off on me. After what seemed like twenty minutes of politely declining to steal in a mosque, one of the Masjid Raya Imams—Islamic religious elders or teachers—walked by and asked what the big fuss was about. He had put my sandals under the box, right over there, to keep them safe. "Isn't that where you would have put them?", he asked.

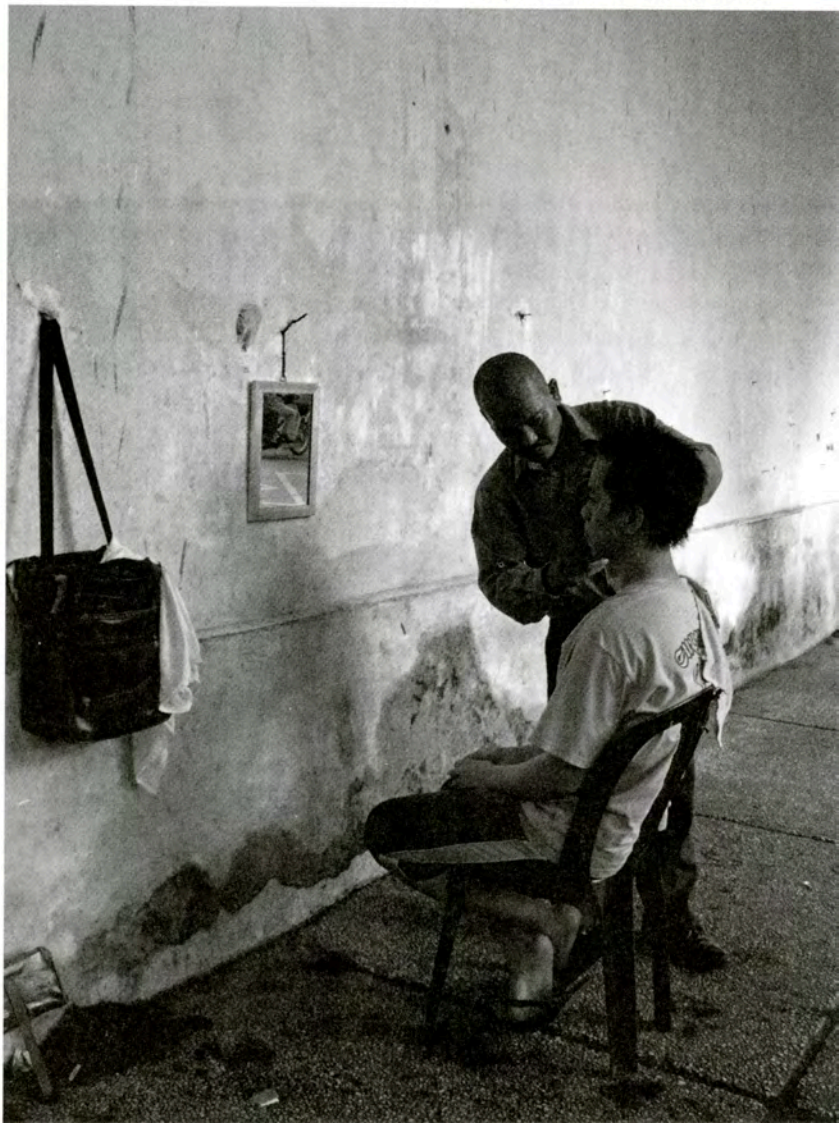
We all shared a laugh—mine a bit more tense than the rest. After many bows of thanks with my hands clasped in front of me, I turned to go. The Imam walked me to the street and bid me farewell with many good wishes and an invitation to return. So now when I visit the mosque I am known as *Ibu Sepatu*, or the "shoe lady." My circle of friends grows larger with each visit, but it always includes the men who helped me that first day. It is the most unlikely group of friends I have made while living here, but also the most rewarding. And while I suspect they secretly refer to me as "the crazy white lady who lost her shoes," I know the title is accompanied with a smile.

But an endearing nickname was not the only outcome of this uncomfortable experience; I also realized that differences and misunderstanding are not something to be feared. Misperception tricks us into thinking the surrounding world

is filled with locked doors. But by immersing ourselves in that so-called misperception, even if the moment holds entirely different meanings for each of us, we learn that life—much like the Masjid Raya—has no locked doors at all.

–Jane Erickson

Barbershop, Vietnam Sarah Scott



Monk at the Monastery of Arkadi, Crete, Greece  Amanda Slowik

# Verse and Vision VII

## What Once Was

The scene: the house was built in the 19th century and was in complete disrepair, probably about to be torn down. Right next to this house was a modern skyscraper, with yellow stucco, in the process of being built. This scene broke my heart because here is a beautiful little house that has so much history and yet people did not care to restore it. This reflects the state of Romania in the 21st century and how the country is rushing to become more modern, and in my mind, westernized. In the process they are leaving behind some of their most beautiful assets that connect them to their roots and reflect their past and how far they have come. While Romania might have experienced a difficult history, especially during the Communist era, I believe it is important to respect and remember the past, because if you don't, you are setting yourself up to repeat past events in the future.

Nearly two centuries ago
I came to be

My eyes were bright
My skin was clear
My body was full of life

People marveled at my beauty
I marveled back

My bones were strong
My purpose was true
My life had more meaning than I knew

Stretched out in the sun
I was the master of my land

Innocence
Love
Compassion
Honesty
Respect

These words were the definition of me

*What is Now*

Seven hundred and thirty summers, falls, winters, and

springs
Two world wars
Two revolutions
The fall of communism
The rise of democracy

These words are now the definition of me

My eyes have become dull
I am partially blind
My skin has wrinkled
My bones are exposed
I sulk, tucked away in the shadows of modernity

My insides have been ripped out
The life that once held so much meaning has gone
My purpose?
I couldn't tell you

*Abandonment*

I once stood, master of my land
People respected me, for I represented existence
And I gave them the means to live a comfortable life

Now, I am old
But I am wise

For I have seen nearly two centuries of history

My eyes have been witness to more rulers
More hate and love
More torture and forgiveness

But there is no room for history
Not now, not here
History is being demolished to make way for what is new

The meaningless
Old and forgotten

Slowly
I have watched all my neighbors disappear
Now, I sit alone in the shadow of the future

Chaos

My time is coming

–Ariel Palter

Berber Skeptic in the Atlas Mountains, Morocco Lauryn Peters

Notre Dame de la Garde, Marseilles, France  Caitlyn Schrader

# Remembrance

## Christophe

How can you fit an entire story into a paragraph? How can you possibly describe a year of your life in one sentence? How can you possibly sum up a person in one word? I stare at the blank page and find I have nothing to write. Where do I begin? When is it finished? What moral lessons have I learned or aspire to teach? But, perhaps the most daunting question of all is: Is it enough?

Christophe was family. That's the sentence I write over and over again. Christophe was family. Christophe was family. I write that sentence over and over again because it is the only bit of truth I can wrap my hands around.

Grief is a lonely emotion, and no one feels that more than I, right now. I wish I had someone to talk to, anyone to talk to, that knew Christophe, that spoke to Christophe, or at least had met Christophe. But I am not so fortunate. Out of all my family and friends, I am the only one that ever met him. So before I express my grief, I have to explain who Christophe was. And how can I do that? How can I reduce him to words, sentences and paragraphs? I type, and type, and type, and wonder: When will it be enough? When will I have written enough for my readers to truly understand Christophe?

I found out he died in Cambodia of a heart attack about two months ago, and it has affected me in so many ways. Most of the time, I just think the name "Christophe" without any association to a particular memory, and just feel sad that he's gone. I try to find meaning in his death, though I'm not sure why. As if his life and death should just be a plot point in the novel of my life. I reflect on Christophe's teachings, the one that comes most quickly to mind is his slogan: "As you get older, you have two choices: You can either be bitter, or be wise." I'm trying, Christophe. I really am trying. I'm trying to be wise, but too often I catch myself being bitter.

My main memory of Christophe was on Friday nights at the college we taught at in China. I would go over to his apartment and bring cheap beer. We would watch a movie on Christophe's DVD player and talk for hours. Usually we'd turn the DVD off because we realized we weren't paying attention.

I am very sad that I will never see Christophe again, or hear his voice, or receive one of his emails. Christophe was a good man and a great friend. He told me once that a really good friend is a friend you can call in the middle of the night and ask for money. I told him before we parted ways to call me if he ever needed money, no matter what time it was. I would give all the money I have just to get a phone call or email from Christophe.

Christophe was family.

Christophe was fascinated with language. He would tell me all the time "You can't really understand a culture of people, until you understand the language of that people." There is a Korean word *Han* that has no literal translation. Christophe really seemed to like that word. The best way he could describe its meaning was through the use of a photograph he had

taken. He said *Han* was "anger and sorrow, deeply welling, but long suppressed, about what might have been if an unavoidable fate had not intervened."

Christophe was unnaturally altruistic, going out of his way to help people. He also taught me about the good side of human nature, that even when someone does something mean, malicious, or manipulative, that person had good intentions or just didn't know better.

I brought too much luggage to China. I was always a heavy packer and I had two large suitcases that I had to lug around Asia. When Christophe was with me, he never hesitated to help me carry one of the large suitcases, even though he had suitcases of his own. He would say, "Sean, you and your luggage."

Christophe was family. I told him that even if he died without any children, that he had been like a father to me. I spent so much time with him, since neither of us had any other friends at the college, that I was afraid he might get sick of me. He never seemed to, and later admitted to me in a letter that he missed my company.

Without Christophe, I never would have been to South Korea. He had taught there before teaching in China, and invited me to join him. Christophe and I saw the Terracotta Army together. It is a humbling experience, walking among those hundreds of clay statues. We had plenty of time and we just walked silently together and took it all in. Took in all the details. I remember saying that the situation reminded me of a poem I had read (being the English major, I should have known it but I couldn't remember). It's this poem about a statue of a king and it's all busted up and broken. "Ah," Christophe said, "you mean 'Ozymandias,' by Shelley." And then he recited the poem word for word like he was reading it off a page.

> *I met a traveller from an antique land*
> *Who said: "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone*
> *Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,*
> *Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown*
> *And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command*
> *Tell that its sculptor well those passions read*
> *Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,*

*The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed.*
*And on the pedestal these words appear:*
*'My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings:*
*Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!'*
*Nothing beside remains. Round the decay*
*Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,*
*The lone and level sands stretch far away*

I traveled with him to the demilitarized zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea. Christophe had always wanted to see it, but even after spending years in South Korea, he didn't see it until we were there during the winter.

Christophe was family. He reminded me of a song lyric, "Don't feel guilty if you don't know what you want to do with your life. The most interesting people I know didn't know at 22 what they wanted to do with their lives. Some of the most interesting 40-year-olds I know still don't." I don't like summarizing people in one word, but if you held a gun to my head and demanded I describe Christophe in one word, the word would be "interesting."

He had such an incredible life story. He had traveled to so many different places and seen so many incredible things. His advice was priceless. I was constantly pumping him for more information and I took in every word. Every week I would learn something new and fascinating about Christophe that I hadn't known before. Traveling with him was traveling with a pro—he knew what to expect and he had learned from his own mistakes.

The only place we didn't visit (that we wanted to visit) was Tibet. We were planning on making a go for it before I left China to go back to America, but decided that we would be rushing the trip too much. Tibet was a place you needed to take your time to see. We made an agreement that someday we would get together and see Tibet. It seemed like a good way to make sure we saw each other again. As far as I know, Christophe never saw Tibet before he died.

I don't know what happens when you die, but I would like to believe that in some capacity, Christophe got to see Tibet. He got to see Tibet and is waiting comfortably for me to arrive, so we can see Tibet together.

The last time I saw Christophe he gave me a hug and handed me a piece of paper. On it was a quote from the Shakespeare play "Julius Caesar." Act V, scene 1, lines 123-134. I think that Christophe was unable to find the words himself to say goodbye to me. So he used Shakespeare to say goodbye. I will use Shakespeare to say goodbye, too.

BRUTUS
*And whether we shall meet again I know not.*
*Therefore our everlasting farewell take:*
*For ever, and for ever, farewell, Cassius!*
*If we do meet again, why, we shall smile;*
*If not, why then, this parting was well made.*

CASSIUS
*For ever, and for ever, farewell, Brutus!*
*If we do meet again, we'll smile indeed;*
*If not, 'tis true this parting was well made.*

BRUTUS
*Why, then, lead on. O, that a man might know*
*The end of this day's business ere it come!*
*But it sufficeth that the day will end,*
*And then the end is known. Come, ho! Away!*

For ever, and for ever, farewell, Christophe! If we do meet again, why, we shall smile. If not, why then, this parting was well made.

–Sean Luttman

Beijing's Qianlong Garden, China  Kirsten Cooper
Bubbles in Tübingen, Germany  Laura Valdmanis


The Queen's Church in Copenhagen, Denmark  Peter Todd Coggins (left)
View from St. Isaac's Cathedral in St. Petersburg, Russia  Katrina Havrish (above)

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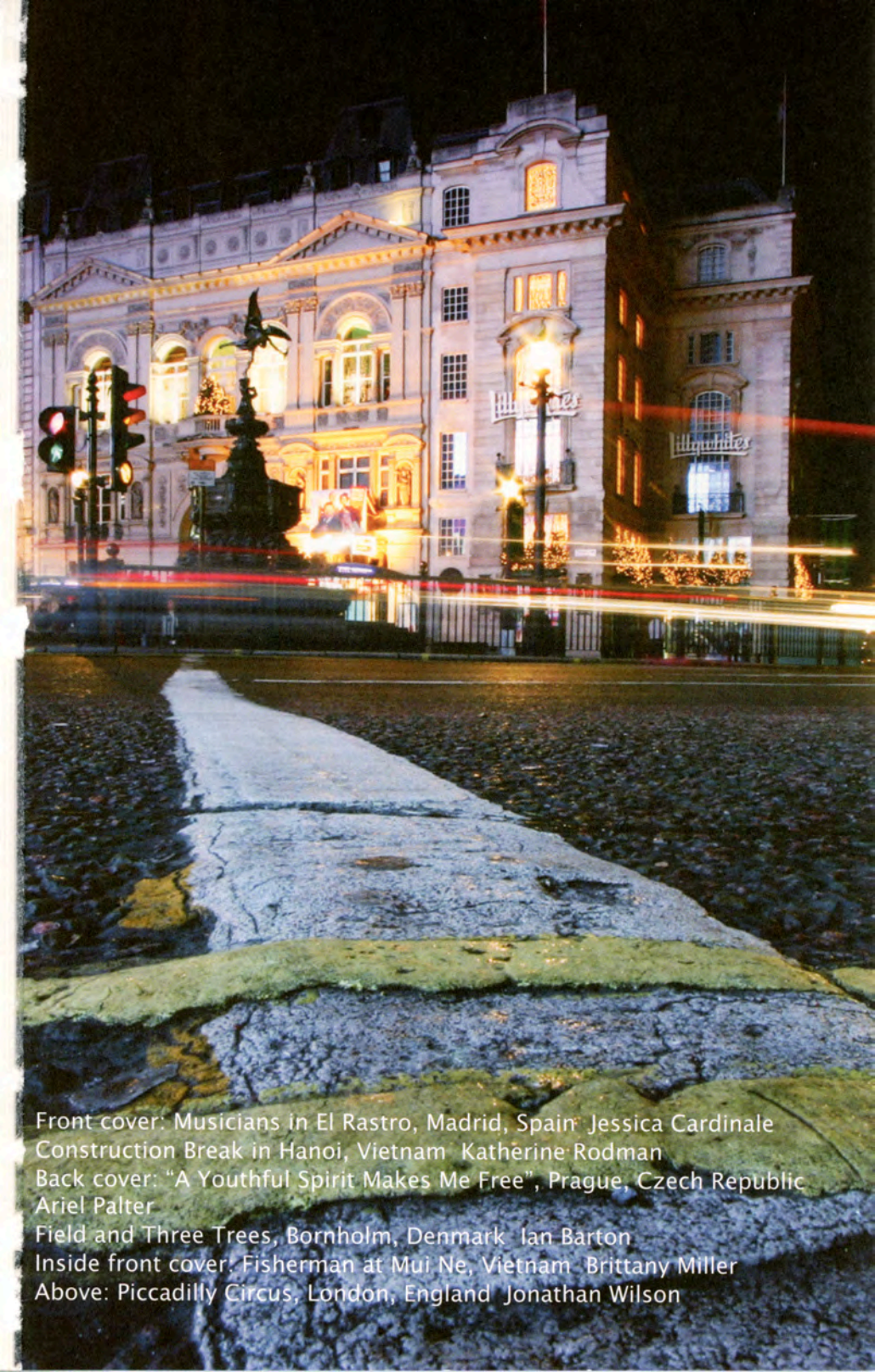

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Construction Break in Hanoi, Vietnam Katherine Rodman
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Field and Three Trees, Bornholm, Denmark Ian Barton
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Above: Piccadilly Circus, London, England Jonathan Wilson

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