

IMAGES AND REFLECTIONS ON STUDY ABROAD

# Passage

2005-2006

SALIZADA  
STODARO



**Passage**

**2005-06**

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One of my favorite analogies, a remnant of a prior international experience, explains the change in paradigms that can occur during a study abroad experience. Early in life, everyone receives a pair of glasses. The color and tinting of these spectacles is determined by the country and culture. This is why, as tourists, we still see the world differently than the locals. Sure, we see the great cathedrals, or the lively mix of color in botanical gardens, but the tinting on our glasses might render us blind to the special pastries at the local bakery, or the traditional birthday celebration seen only in homes. To the local people, these sights are obvious, because their glasses are of a different color.

Through homestays, attendance at local schools, and experiencing the daily routine of a different culture, we might acquire a pair of glasses in the local color. This changes our perception, but we are not locals...we are wearing two different colored lenses and, as neither a tourist nor a local, we are in our own, unique, in-between world. But over time, we may be fortunate enough to remove our "American glasses" and see our surroundings in the local color.

We students at Kalamazoo are fortunate to be granted this gift of sight. As you will see through the contributions to this year's Passage, it can be a powerful and enlightening experience.

Clara Lampi, Editor-in-Chief



Ted Hufstader, Quito, Ecuador  
Fishermen returning with the morning catch in Puerto Lopez, Manabí, Ecuador

## Los Mangos

Mary-Katherine Thompson, Oaxaca, Mexico

1.

I always assumed that I had just one mother, that I had been birthed from a single womb. You had three children pass through your body. And I made sure you understood none of them were me. We were separate. I did not want you to forget that. There was no reason for us to become one. Your motherly notions weighed heavy in your eyes. Every move of your hand suggested protection and love. And I hated you for it. Sometimes I could feel you looking at me, knowing me, just because you came from flesh and had given life to new flesh. I hated thinking you might want to make me your little *hija*.

2.

I barely knew you. You mothered a world that smelled unfamiliar, tasted foreign, and felt ridged against my skin. I wanted my mama, not you and your mothering. I slid around your house with the words *mi mamá y yo* on the tip of my tongue. You weren't ever going to be her. So stop trying. I had the attitude of a *gringa* and it leaked all over the floor, leaving traces from my bedroom to the phone and back to my bedroom. You just silently mopped up my polite insolence. And I felt you absorbing me, like a sponge.

3.

We fumbled through our conversations. For weeks I only asked you if I could borrow your *teléfono* to call my mama. Each time you told me, *Sí, Katy, Sí. Sí.* And after, you followed up by asking if the *comida* was too spicy. Your food often burned my tongue and throat. But I wasn't going to tell you that. It would only lead to more conversation. And who could stand more feigned conversations? Not talking was worth burning the hell out of my throat.

4.

One day, I came home from *escuela* and it had been a bad day. My salsa teacher had come on to me again. You thought he was *un machista* and so did I. I wanted you to commiserate with me, if only from a distance.

5.  
But it had been a bad day for you too. Your mother died that day.

6.  
Another family came and picked me up after school. They fed me and made conversation with me. They praised me for speaking Spanish so well and asked me what I liked about Oaxaca. I told them about the time you and I had gone to the market and bought mangos. You showed me how to find the softest and ripest ones. You taught me how to know that the pit would cling to the meaty flesh. You made me feel what it is like to be inside the mango. I felt myself clinging to the idea of life inside of life. And it made me miss you.

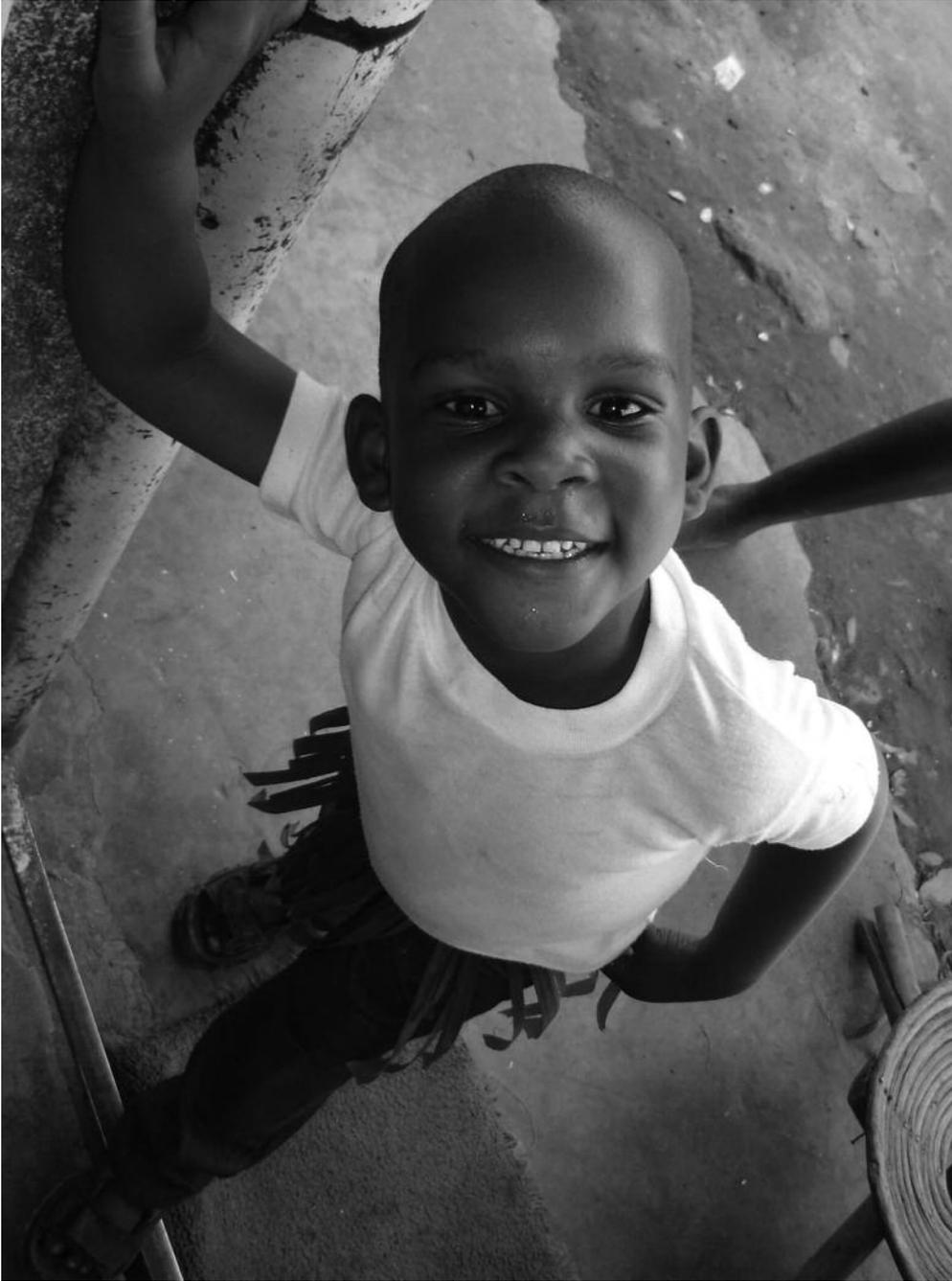
7.  
The day I came back home, I hugged you. And it was a selfish hug. I wanted to feel you need me. I pressed up against you so powerfully that the barriers of our skin fell away.

8.  
The next day I ate the ripe mango you put on my breakfast plate. I watched you cry over the sink. What could I say to you? I didn't know what to say in English and I certainly didn't know what to say in *español*. So I told you the only thing I felt. I miss my mama too.

9.  
Our tears pooled up on the empty breakfast plate with my mango seeds. I watched you tuck those seeds in a little pot on your kitchen windowsill.

Alyssa Rhoades, Nairobi, Kenya

Kwame. Luo host brother from the Siaya District of northwestern Kenya



Background Photo by Alyssa Rhoades

Alyssa Rhoades, Nairobi, Kenya  
Hand-woven baskets from the Masai Market in Nairobi





Erica Bloom, Chiang Mai, Thailand  
Girl with baby, Lisu village

Background Photo by Morgan Hague

## Returning to my Senses

Hilary Lake, Chiang Mai, Thailand

I come from velvet cushion violets tickling my toddling cheeks  
and hugging hedge-way strolls lined with bobbing foxgloves.

I come from the mouthwatering smell of crêpes as my toes rustle  
flannel sheets and too-hot-to-touch teapots nestled in woolen cozies.

I come from meals accompanied by the buzz, flash news update,  
historic gatherings around warm hearthside laughter.

I come from brassy inspiration blasting open my eyes on Saturday  
morning and blustery hilltops over fuzzy green patchwork farms.

This is what I've come from and found I am made of,  
creating the world of my senses. How far from these moments am I,

where floating lotuses replace violets, stinging chili paste is lifted to nose  
with the morning fog, sticky rice adds to the weight of heat-laden lethargia?

Living here, sensing this Thailand,  
I work to find comfort in each repeated stimulus.

But if I stop,  
If I remember,

I long for the ease of falling asleep to faint crickets,  
knowing I don't have to dream up the love from warm arms

welcoming me back to familiarity. Yet I know these same arms  
that held me year to year still hold me through black and white words

to my senses, reminding me of what and who  
I come from.

## The Daily Commute

Clara Lampi, Quito, Ecuador

The trip to and from the university involves two buses. We can flag down the first one a few blocks from our house. If we are lucky, it will stop; otherwise, it just slows down and we scramble on board. Some days, the bus is full and just passes us by, so we walk for 20 minutes to the transit center.

There, we change from the red *Ecovía* (city bus) to a green inter-pueblo bus and ride to Cumbayá. Over the course of a half hour, we drop about 1000 feet in altitude. The ride costs 36 cents. In Cumbayá, we cross six lanes of traffic to reach the school. Our motto, as Ted reminds me, is "*corre o muere*" (meaning "run or die"), inspired by an Ecuadorian saying shared with us by our Spanish teacher. This translates to "there are two types of pedestrians: the fast ones and the dead ones." So far we've managed to be fast.

I'm not so good at catching other buses. One night, I got pretty confused downtown as I was leaving the shopping center after dark. I waited for about 45 minutes at what I thought was the bus stop, then decided to take a different bus home. After walking a few blocks and not recognizing a single street name, I realized that I was lost in the middle of downtown Quito, frightened and frustrated. I resigned myself to taking a taxi. When we pulled into the cul-de-sac and I saw the CENTI sign in front of my house, I felt a wave of relief.

Laura Lonneman, Quito, Ecuador  
Waiting for the bus in Canoa



Rob Morrison, Erlangen, Germany  
"K" students from the Erlangen program studying a map



Background Photo by Rob Morrison

## Germany as Example

Rob Morrison, Erlangen, Germany

Germans seem to understand the idea of sustainability much better than their U.S. counterparts. One example is the very extensive recycling program in Erlangen. Every few blocks, there are public recycling bins: three for glass, one for metal, and one for old clothing and shoe items. Most houses and dorms have at least one container labeled *Bio-Tonne* for biodegradable waste, which goes to a city-wide composting program. There are also recycling containers for paper, cardboard, and plastic. Municipal and university buildings have bins for used ink-cartridges. Stores rarely give out bags unless explicitly asked; every supermarket where I've shopped has customers buy their own bags if they want them. In the university dorms, the lights are turned off as the default position: you flip the switch to turn on the lights, they stay on for a given duration, and then turn back off.

I won't soon forget the wonderful mass transit system in Europe, either. In Germany, one can get around most towns with the local bus system, and also on foot; many stores and residential neighborhoods are close to one another. In the bigger cities, there are not only buses, but subways and streetcars. On a larger scale, an impressive train system connects almost all major towns, cities, and European countries.

Germans have also discovered how to better blend nature into everyday city surroundings. In parks all over the city, people run, play, and enjoy tree shade. Nature isn't just banished to parks; trees line streets and small spots of green grass brighten shopping districts, helping prevent a concrete jungle. This blend returns some sanity to a place where nature is often "out there" rather than where people actually live, where the rule of the natural world seems distant at best. It fosters the sense that we, as humans, can live without nature, forgetting that we were born by it and ever depending on Earth in everything that we do. German structuring of cities has partly helped to overcome this.

## Barrio de San Antonio

Regan Blinder, Cáceres, Spain

Sometimes the spiraling streets  
of the old city grab me.  
They push me  
through a tan tunnel—  
tall with mismatched stones  
and dim passageways—  
then drop me  
in the *Barrio de San Antonio*,  
more a corner than a neighborhood,  
small Star of David  
etched next to its name.  
Its white walls hold onto daylight  
long after evening  
has sunk into the cracks  
of the brown stones a block away—  
a Hanukkah miracle,  
unnoticed by those who live here  
by choice now, their church  
converted from the synagogue  
that was built by those  
grabbed and thrust and spit  
into this part of town years before.  
I would have been one of those  
roped and shoved and dumped  
into this place years before,  
blinded instead of lightened  
by the whitewashed walls,  
taunted instead of comforted  
by the miracle of light.  
The only residents I ever see  
are the potted plants,  
crowded like an audience

to my thoughts as I stroll among them,  
terracotta burning  
in the sun, weeping leaves  
green with life  
although it never rains.

Liz Okey, Cáceres, Spain  
Graffiti in Madrid



Tiffany Tononi, Chiang Mai, Thailand  
Skeleton of a longtail boat sits on Lipe Island off the southern coast of Thailand



Background Photo by Tiffany Tononi

### **Meal at Libong Island**

Erin Agee, Chiang Mai, Thailand

I hold a squid eye. I roll its black center  
in my fingers, peer into the oil paint resiliency  
of the turquoise blue and white iris.  
Except I do not think they call  
a squid iris an iris.

The giant squid can have eyes up to ten  
inches in diameter, but the one  
I hold is marble size. I look casually  
at something that no longer looks back.  
I place the eye ball in a tin with all  
the other squid eyes.

They are no use for our cooking.  
They cannot see that we are about  
to drop them into the intertidal zone,  
where all the other things go that we  
have no use for, that must, and will,  
be swept out to sea,  
and gone by morning.

## Learning From a Thai Girl

Erica Bloom, Chiang Mai, Thailand

I.

A year ago, I stayed in a room that belonged to a girl who played badminton in her yard. She had slick-as-a-slide black hair that soared down the curve of her back and shone blue in the night. She would wind up her small arm, toss the birdie into the dust sky and watch it float down where her netted racket had whacked it strong across the yard. I waited for the birdie to soar my way in a slow-motioned swoop over the cut grass and trimmed garden. I returned the birdie smack into the net.

II.

Sometimes if I was lucky, she let me follow her black hair down the street to the fish store that glowed neon orange in the dark. We pressed our lips to the tanks and made fishfaces at the glittering rainbowed circles. We stayed until it was feeding time, and I watched her drop food into the waiting fish mouths that sucked up the tiny pebbles from her fingers. We walked home in silence, blues and purples still swimming in our heads.

III.

Outside the kitchen, we washed our clothes. In blue drum buckets we sudded the water and dunked our dirt stained uniforms into the soapy mess. My hands becoming tangled as I tried to scrub like the gracefulness of her fingers. Her hands knew the motions and rhythms that came with the practice of washing out grass stains year after year. She looked over at my bucket, a wild giggle followed by a sigh. She showed me the way to rub two pantlegs together like she did, simple as that.

IV.

Most days after school, she sprawled the length of the carpet and watched TV. Thai gameshows buzzed through the house, muting my own stumbling tongue that tripped over sounds like *bplaa* and *jaan*. I would nudge her small shoulder and point to a letter, how do you say this? With one eye still on the gameshow, she took my hand and traced the rolling letters with my black pen, *nwa*, she said, and turned back to the show. I told her *kaup kun ka*, thank you in Thai.



Erica Bloom, Chiang Mai, Thailand  
Hand of Buddha, Sukhothai



Gregory LaVoy, Rome, Italy  
At the gate of a reclusive Umbrian villa: *Paradise Found* in Assisi

Marc Kelley, Quito, Ecuador  
Final day of protests against President Lucio Gutiérrez before he fled to Brazil



## Journey

Regan Blinder, Cáceres, Spain

I passed a hunter on my way to Auschwitz.  
He was dwarfed by leafless bone-thin trees,  
their knotted branches frozen as I drove past,  
their rigid shapes stretching between towns.  
He was the only thing moving, the only living  
creature I could see in those woods. He stalked hidden prey, tense.

He paid no attention to me while I slumped tensely  
in my seat as I approached Auschwitz.  
Smoke curling from chimneys and other signs of life  
disrupted the blur of the mourning trees,  
and strangers standing at bus stops in nameless towns  
huddled as they waited for time to pass.

When the road narrowed I stopped to let other cars pass,  
the air sinking around me. I tensed  
my nostrils against the stench that choked the town:  
rot still swelling and drifting from the Auschwitz  
crematorium, brick chimney sturdy and squat behind sickly trees.  
The chemical tinged air, still alive

with memories of trapped and butchered lives  
writhing under the glare of soldiers strolling past,  
taunted when leaves reappeared on the trees  
each spring, leaves green and bright against the tense  
dull brick and wood plank barracks in Auschwitz  
that still stand, in strict rows, like the blocks of a town.

Did the people stare, frantic, trying to memorize their towns,  
the bookstores and bars and lamppost-lined streets on which they lived,  
as they were being heaved into boxcars headed for Auschwitz?  
Could they still remember—as they were being purged of their pasts,

counted and corralled, left waiting, tense—  
the view through their kitchen windows of the trees

rooted in their yards? Could they still recall the flat treeless  
stretches of land they converted into soccer fields on the edges of town?  
The edges here are marked with fences and barbed wire strung tensely  
around guard towers where perched soldiers once reigned over the lives  
of those people whose pasts  
were buried under mud and bones in Auschwitz.

Naked and stiff, the trees were lifeless,  
the headstones of towns emptied and passed  
unseen by prisoners, tense in windowless crates, on the way to Auschwitz.



Liz Okey, Cáceres, Spain  
Auschwitz concentration camp



JM

Jon Marshall, Bonn, Germany  
A view of the Chain Bridge and Palace from across the Blue Danube in Budapest, Hungary

Katia Jorgensen, Clermont-Ferrand, France  
Crêperie 1513, named after the year the building was constructed



Tieneke VanLonkhuyzen, Dakar, Sénégal  
Griot drummers in Toubab Diallaw



Background Photo by  
Tieneke VanLonkhuyzen

## One Way of Knowing Here

Kris Wawer, Dakar, Sénégal

At first, my toes sloped around  
the lumbering rocks  
on the beach of Mermoz;  
my hips tottered,  
sea-saws balancing water and sand.  
Today drums of young Baay Fall<sup>1</sup> call *siggil xool*<sup>2</sup>  
while they beat winding waves  
through disappearing footprints  
leading off the shoreline  
down the *Rue de Ouakam*  
to the house on "First,"  
furious with dressmaking,  
framed by small strips of leftover silks,  
smelling of stewed rice and fish,  
sticky cigarettes and sheep;  
we share nicknames like spoons and bread,  
stories, lotion, languages,  
handshakes, dinner *ba suur*<sup>3</sup>;  
At night we dance to Ndongo Lo or Fatou Laobe,  
loud feet and wide-mouthed laughing,  
hips singing to familiar rhythms  
until we take in strong sugared tea,  
I wrap fabric around my rice-filled *jaay fondé*<sup>4</sup>  
and steadily simmer off to sleep.

<sup>1</sup>Baay Fall            young men of a certain religious brotherhood

<sup>2</sup>*siggil xool*            lift up your head and look

<sup>3</sup>*ba suur*                until full

<sup>4</sup>*jaay fondé*            slang for large rear end

Tieneke VanLonkhuyzen, Dakar, Sénégal  
Traditional West African dance in Toubab Diallaw

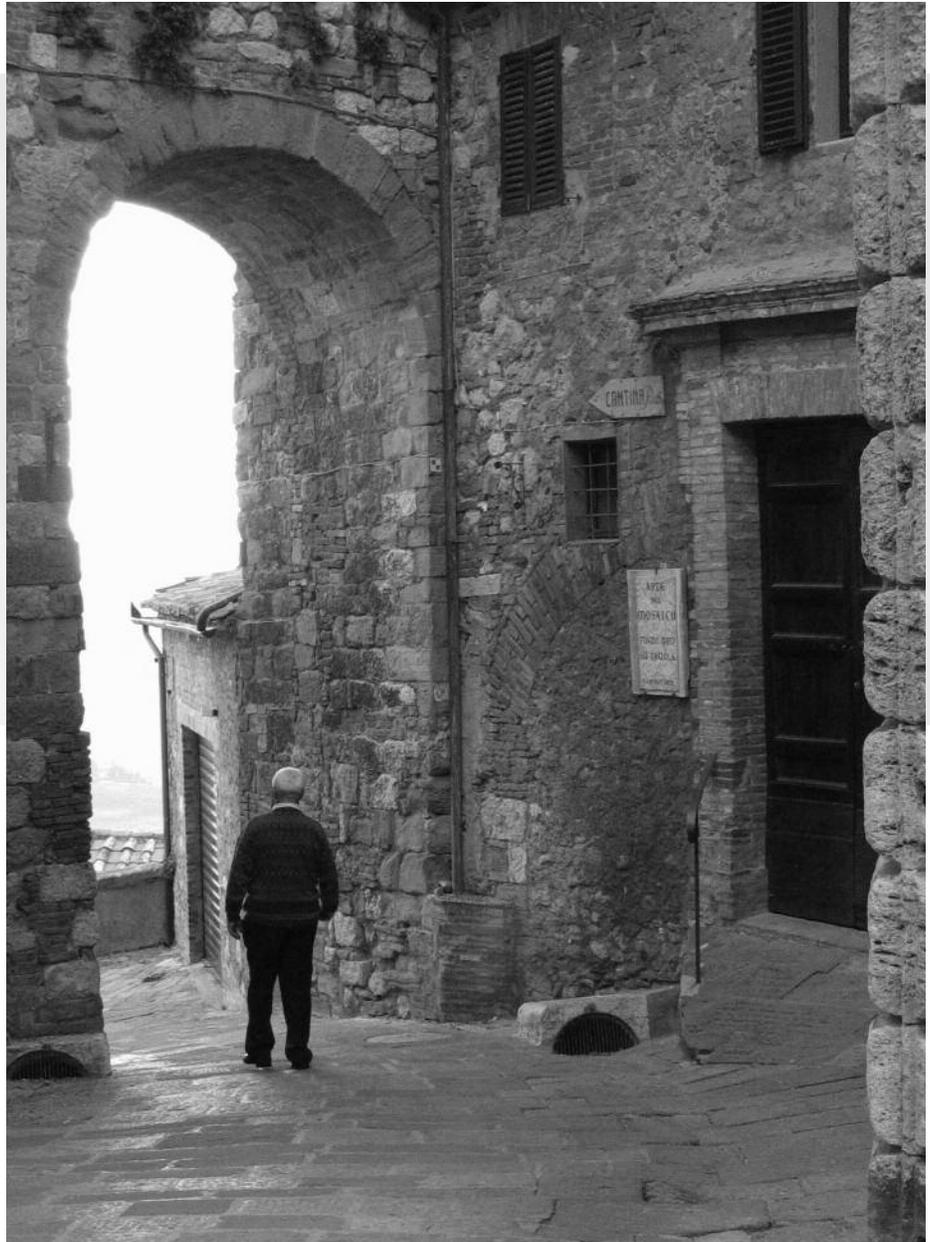


Tess Killpack, Santiago, Chile  
The San Pedro de Atacama desert, Northern Chile



Background Photo by Gregory LaVoy

Gregory LaVoy, Rome, Italy  
The vintage Italian man in Montepulciano



## Saying Goodbye

Fiorella Pimentel, Clermont-Ferrand, France

"It's like it never happened," I whispered to myself, shuddering. I'm a time traveler. The plane took me much further than just across the Atlantic Ocean—it took me back nine months, and France was all make-believe. Nothing here has changed. As I pulled up to it two nights ago my eyes searched for any signs of time passing, any alterations, but I found only a few pots on the balcony that I did not recognize. I had forgotten which apartment number to buzz. I had even forgotten how to get home from the airport.

Days before my departure I felt in two places at once. I was leaving slowly, pulling out like a wave. Breathing deeply all the time, my heart was heavy. Wide eyes, mind spinning with countless mini movies, each set to the same sad melody.

Saying goodbye. How I will never forget my last moments, *comme nos premiers instants au sourire*. My host mom, choking back tears, sobs, kissing my face, asking if I had been happy. My host dad having to yank her away. I was her daughter. Though she never let herself get too close, the goodbye revealed it.

How to make the most of a few hours. How could I be content with just a few hours? I didn't want to leave him, and still don't. Too soon it was 5 am. Too soon it was time for what I had been dreading and cursing. The train was trying to rip me away from my world.

*"Je veux pas te laisser"*

*"Tu me laisses pas"*

*"Je veux pas te quitter !"*

*"Comme je veux aller avec toi. Je te jure. Comme je veux y aller avec toi..."*

The clock at the station read 5:55, 5:56, 5:57....

I stepped on the train and our last kiss connected two bodies, his in Clermont and mine in limbo.

*"Bon voyage bébé. Bon retour bébé. Ne m'oublies pas. Don't forget me."*

I watched him walk away through the train windows, smiling, showing me his signature peace sign. He stood there, minute after minute. The train was behind schedule, but with unwanted certainty, it pushed forward. As I passed I searched with a million eyes, but he was gone. I wonder to this day why he hadn't kept waiting.

I watched my Clermont dissipate under blue skies and surprising sunshine. It would be a beautiful day in Auvergne.

Fiorella Pimentel, Clermont-Ferrand, France  
The Park Montjuzet



# Contributors

**Erin Agee** is an English major who studied abroad in Thailand for nine months. Studying in Thailand helped her articulate many things about the ways we relate with our natural world that she had previously been unable to express.

**Regan Blinder** is an English and Spanish double major who studied abroad in Cáceres, Spain. She wrote her Senior Individualized Project, a collection of poems, based on her experiences living in Spain and traveling throughout Europe.

**Erica Bloom** is an English major with an environmental studies concentration. While on study abroad in Thailand, she developed a love for spicy food and now orders HOT whenever she goes to a Thai restaurant.

**Morgan Hague** is a chemistry major who studied abroad in Chiang Mai, Thailand. While there she developed a love for public transportation, particularly of the back of a pick-up truck variety. She also brought home prized scars which will remind her of backpacking through the mountains of Mae Hong Song and sleeping on the beaches of Ko Lipe for many wonderful years to come.

**Ted Hufstader** is an anthropology and sociology major with a concentration in public policy and urban affairs. He studied abroad on an extended-term program in Quito, Ecuador, and while in South America, had the opportunity to travel extensively in Brazil and Colombia.

**Katia Jorgensen**, a psychology major, enjoyed studying abroad in Clermont-Ferrand, France.

**Marc Kelley** is a philosophy major and political science minor who studied abroad in Ecuador for nine months. While there, he developed an interest in Latin American politics which led to his Senior Individualized Project on women's citizenship in Brazil.

**Tess Killpack** is a biology and Spanish major who studied abroad in Valparaíso Chile, and enjoyed going to the beach every day, speaking sloppy Chilean Spanish, and watching *telenovelas* with her host family.

**Hilary Lake** is a religion major and philosophy minor who studied sustainable development in Thailand and then researched the Thai Buddhist experience. She hopes to use all of this inspiration towards her interest in the Unitarian Universalist ministry.

**Clara Lampi** is a biology major and Spanish minor, and feels blessed to have lived in Quito, Ecuador for six months. While there, she frequently found herself wearing rubber boots as she hiked through the muddy but beautiful country.

**Gregory LaVoy**, a political science major with a sociology minor and a classical studies concentration, studied abroad in Rome, Italy. He credits studying and living with a wonderful group of people in the eternal city as the pinnacle experience of his education at "K" College.

**Laura Lonneman** spent nine months in Ecuador traveling, taking classes, and learning how to be a teacher at *Jesus el Buen Pastor* for her Integrative Cultural Research Project. She is a political science major and art minor who hopes to return to Latin America.

**Dan MacDougall**, a chemistry major, spent six months studying and traveling in Ecuador.

**Bethany Marsh** is an international and area studies and Japanese major who studied abroad at Doshisha University in Kyoto, Japan, for nine months.

**Jon Marshall** is a chemistry major and German minor, and spent seven months studying in Bonn, Germany and traveling throughout Europe.

**Rob Morrison** is a biology major and German minor. He still has difficulties expressing the impact that study abroad has had on him, though it was tremendous and far-reaching. He is very involved in EnvOrg, the Sustainable Living-Learning House, and chapel activities.

**Liz Okey** is a human development and social relations major, a political science minor and a women's studies concentrator. She is captain of the women's volleyball team. The short-term Bonn program allowed her to participate in four years of a collegiate sport and still go on study abroad.

**Fiorella Pimentel** is a biology major who studied abroad in Clermont-Ferrand, France, for nine months. The experience gave her insight into her life and identity. Fio's memory of study abroad motivates her to continue exploring different cultures. She plans to teach English in France or Japan next year.

**Alyssa Rhoades**, a studio art major, identifies studying abroad in Kenya as one of the greatest adventures of her life. She hopes to someday make a permanent home there. Alyssa's words to the wise: spend your life learning about others and you may find yourself along the way.

**Mary-Katherine Thompson** is an English major with an emphasis in creative writing and a political science minor earning her teaching certification. While studying abroad in Oaxaca, Mexico, Mary-Katherine created an irreplaceable relationship with her host mother, Silvia, and an incredible respect for the hospitality and love that can emerge in unexpected places.

**Tiffany Tononi** frolicked around the mountains of Mae Hong Song, observed bird sanctuary "fruit parties," and was enchanted by the majestic nature of the cuttlefish during her six months in Thailand. A political science major, religion minor, and women's studies concentrator, Tononi sums up her experience in Thailand as "same, same but different."

**Tieneke VanLonkhuyzen** has a political science major, French minor, and a women's studies concentration. She studied abroad in Dakar, Sénégal for six months and found her time doing her Integrative Cultural Research Project studying traditional West African dance at Toubab Diallo to be part of her most memorable time spent abroad.

**Kris Wawer** is an English/creative writing major with a concentration in women's studies. She spent nine months in Sénégal taking various classes, and attributes her ability to speak Wolof (which she uses so often in the US!) to all the days spent sitting on the front stoop with her neighbors.

**Caleb J.C. York** is a chemistry major and music minor who studied abroad in Strasbourg, France.

# Passage Editorial Board

**Clara Lampi**, editor-in-chief  
**Keegan O'Connor**, layout editor  
**Morgan Hague**, photo editor  
**Anne Holmes** and **Bridget Scallen**, copy editors

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Front cover photo by Jon Marshall: Venice, The City of Canals, Bonn, Germany  
Title page photo by Bethany Marsh: Torî at Fushimi Inari, on the mountainside overlooking Kyoto, Kyoto, Japan  
Back cover photo by Fiorella Pimentel: Country house in Auvergne, Clermont-Ferrand, France

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Passage is a Kalamazoo College publication containing writing and photography by students who have participated in the study abroad experience. The magazine circulates to students and their parents, alumni, friends of the College, prospective students, and members of the Kalamazoo College community. Students are invited to submit prose, poetry, photography, and artwork for consideration.



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