

the
Atlas

*The Study Abroad
Magazine of
Kalamazoo College*

*1996
Volume 6*

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Study Abroad at Kalamazoo College is a process of conquering many lions. Students conquer fears, doubts, misconceptions, and languages as they explore new lands. The fountains of Peterhof, modeled after Versailles, symbolize Russia's desire in the eighteenth century to fit into the European world. Study Abroad students also attempt to fit into ways of life different from their own. Along the way, they each reflect on their experiences and lives. The College's extensive Study Abroad program has equipped more than 85 percent of its graduates in the past 30 years to conquer the lions within themselves.

The *Atlas* is a Kalamazoo College publication containing works 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 original prose and poetry, photography, and drawings for consideration.

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Conquering Lions

by Stacy Neterer

The central fountain of the Peterhof Palace is located just outside St. Petersburg, Russia.

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The Sands of Time

January 1996. This afternoon Petra, Marian, and I took a break from our exam cramming by walking down to and along Balgownie Beach near Aberdeen. The winter grayness was less gray today, replaced by a hazy sunshine that made us squint when the clouds moved apart. The wind off the North Sea was as strong as ever and Petra kept clutching her hat to her head. The whitecaps rolled in on steel gray waves, but their rumbling crashes did not disturb the seals we saw. Dune grass matted itself flatter to avoid the blowing sand, and the old cement war bunkers crumbled a bit more.

This countryside is full of monuments to the World Wars, but these bunkers are some of the unintended ones. I hadn't realized how many Scottish lives were lost in the "Great Wars" before I came here . . .

Fifty years ago, the bunkers held Allied soldiers defending this vulnerable shoreline from German invasions. Today, beer bottles and trash inhabit what's left of their walls. Sand has been piling up, swallowing and burying

them for decades. It occurred to me as we walked how amazing it was that the three of us were there together: a German, a Scot, and an American. Two Allies and an Axis, sharing a friendship that felt much older than only four months, strolling where our grandparents had tried to kill each other. Perhaps Mother Nature was helping the process of "burying the hatchet," or the bunker.

But how can things change so quickly and yet remain unchanged? Castles have been standing here for centuries, cathedrals are timeless, and the national hatred for all things English hasn't died out yet. Still, those bunkers, symbols of this century's mistakes, are disappearing already. I wonder how things will have changed at home, how my friends will have changed, by the time I return. I feel like a different person with a different life here. Is it a common Study Abroad sentiment? Will the "sands of time" bury my old relationships or will they endure like Crathes Castle, withstanding the elements? I guess I'll find out soon enough.

Susan Johnson

Geography

This earth, with many faces, is one globe.
But I, with all my parts, am I one man?
My soul has sides too numerous to probe.

Great peaks and valleys make up nature's robe;
What's seen in Scotland isn't in Iran.
This earth, with many faces, is one globe.

We all must suffer clearances like Job
And feel the sorrows which we never plan—
Our souls have sides too numerous to probe.

What is a human being? What kind of ode
Describes the shift of land inside us? Can
This earth, with many faces, be one globe?

Can I be just one man, the one who strode
With phony masks to hide my sinking land?
No! Souls have sides too numerous to probe.

Be schizophrenic then. Flash like a strobe
And twirl, like earth round sun, for rather than
This earth, with all its faces on one globe,
Your soul needs sides too numerous to probe.

Tom Bourguignon



Directions

by Rachel Bemis

Hikers arrive at Castle Moil, on the Isle of Skye, Scotland, after a walk along the beach at low tide.

Observer

Have you ever heard
the wind brush through a waterside willow
with a divine whisper?

Or have you ever seen
a stretch of orange street light
ripple over black abyssal waters?

Have you ever smelled
the air change,
telling that winter's near?

Or have you ever touched
the stone-cold battered wood
of a parkside bench?

Have you ever tasted
a wind-chilled tear
so quietly gone in the moment you forget it was there?

Or have you ever
had your senses flooded
—and yet felt a lingering emptiness

Christina Wootton



The Church Keeps Watch

by Henry Langreder

From the bell tower of the Piazza del Duomo, all of Florence extends below the church in its Renaissance glory.

Where Is it Written That My Heart Cannot Belong to a Place I Have Never Seen Before?

A silver blue stream peaked with white, meandering like a child
through fields green and linear, escorted by trees slim at the base,
upper reaches exploding in spreading leaves.

The North Sea brilliant in the cloud-filtered sun glittering like craggy crystal beyond the cliffs,
sheer like broken European chocolate bars.

Mountains, great rounded weathered heathered mounds rising up
out of the ancient farms and stands of pine and crumbling stone barns,
built from rocks that once overturned the plow and covered the green green fields
delineated now by hand-piled walls of that same stone.

Alison Crane

"Blooming Gloriously"

The Nature of This Flower Is to Bloom

Rebellious. Living.
Against the Elemental Crush.
A Song of Color
Blooming
For Deserving Eyes.
Blooming Gloriously
For its Self.

Revolutionary Petunia.

from *Revolutionary Petunias and other Poems* by
Alice Walker

Another two months in Kenya, East Africa, and still no conclusions, no solutions of any kind. I just continue to build, tacking on make-shift layers of new dimension to old theories and once-shocking images. I wrote my first essay in a series of passionate flashes and moments that demanded my interest. I believe I'll do the same in this one, allowing the fragments to speak for themselves.

October 17. Matrona took me to a funeral today. A huge force hit me as I sat on a grassy slope with sixty to seventy women wrapped in *kangas* and scarves of every geometric design and color. The land here is so very mystic—dense waves of fog roll over mountain terraces of green coffee, vegetables, and fruit. Banana trees rise up to greet the still, gray sky. The sound of men and women wailing freely and singing both traditional and Christian songs with such intensity and harmony, such rhythm and motion . . . took my soul into a thousand directions. I spotted Stacy across the crowd. The only *wazungus* present,

we were greeted with stares and good-natured jeers in a language spoken all too rapidly for our virgin *Kitaita* ears.

The power of sisterhood flooded over me as I felt the warmth from the sea of brightly colored African women seated around me. I thought of all the strong women of the world, in nooks I have yet to explore and may never see . . . all pushing and pulling and raising their chins in defiance of Life's dealings. The man in the wooden coffin before us died of AIDS, leaving his middle-aged wife alone with three babes to raise. Matrona told me that the women here had come more in support of the living than out of respect to the dead. Holding hands to face the Darkness alone, together. The nails were pounded in, more wailing and moaning, then the men lined up, passed the coffin through the crowd, and lowered it with ropes into the hole in the ground. Another death, another end. But, tomorrow, the fog would lift and the woman would gather her babes and continue the fight. Somehow, above, in the stone-washed gray sky, I could see a ring of women, women of the ages who had buried their loved ones in the wheat fields of Nebraska, in the terraces of the Philippines, on the battlefields of Bosnia . . . they, too, were here to carry this woman. They understand all of the cruel ends and beautiful beginnings and all that lies in between. I buried a past Dawn with that man and embraced the New as well. We are one.

Beginnings and ends. A circle of life. Lands are plowed, seeds are planted. Some places have healthier soil, some have more adequate sunlight, some more frequent rains. . . . Some of the seeds rise up, others die. But, we keep trying. That's all. And, we learn. We learn. And, we struggle to defy the "elemental crush," to "bloom gloriously" in spite of everything.

Dawn Crist



Lunch Break

by Stacy Frattinger

A homestay family in Takaungu, Kenya, eats the daily communal-style meal.

Sounion

Beneath pillars of stone
Wind whips through my
Soul and I feel
Alive.

Leap down to me among the
Waves, he says, and
You will have
Eternal life.

But today I have
Life to last me.

Ryan McQuade



Temple of Poseidon at Sounion

by Ryan McQuade

The sun sets at the Temple of Poseidon at Sounion, the southernmost tip of the Attic peninsula.

The Sleepers

honeydrip sunlight on old stones,
crumbled like cheeses,
gray and lichened, braced
and leaning like tired strangers
grown friends with shared time.
they confide their secrets
in the wind—conveyed
like the blown petals of the roses,
soft and creased with damp—
myriad—hued, fading, yet still
with a decayed trace of sweetness and potency—
like this, the stones whisper their pasts:
'Here lies Angus McDowell'
'Departed this life'
'In hopes of resurrection'

'In loving memory this stone erected by'
'Fisherman' 'Joiner' 'Alderman'
'Loving spouse' 'Devoted parent'
and so on . . .
passing the dates between them
like wine-tasters:
Vintage: '1788' '1647' '1906'
and so on . . .
the grass, close-cropped, neat-edged
wraps them protectively—
the sleepers lie beneath their
blankets of turf
the whispering stones
and the whimsy-driven
leached petals of roses.

Nichole Miller

Table of Contents: Excerpts from *Sullen Reproach*

Last fall, as part of a GLCA program, I went to various cities in Poland, Germany, and England to study, among other things, the political, economic, and social ramifications of the collapse of communism on these three nations. For my independent project, I wrote a long, semi-fictional account of the experience, told from the point of view of a character who, instead of attending class each day and being reasonably well-behaved, decided to finish his journey by himself. These excerpts are taken from a draft of that project. The narrator, Spencer, is describing his travails to an eager listener . . .

"And the real issue here isn't even the men themselves. It's the fact that Walsea had the church behind him, and Kwasniewski had the media. And who won? Fifteen years ago, when John Paul II returned to Poland as Pope, that's when the people knew they could organize themselves and form the Solidarity movement. Now the lines are redrawn in their old formations. All power is transitory. And time is speeding up."

"A friend back home who went to Germany a couple years ago told me a story. He was studying in Bonn and met an older woman through his research. She was maybe seventy. And Dave's a real curious guy, always asking questions. He was studying to be a doctor for awhile, but he never made it past the iron bed. Anyway, he asked her if she'd ever known anyone in the Hitler Youth when she was small. She laughed gently and told him that she was in the Hitler Youth. She was a shy little girl, with few friends, and her job was to take attendance at the meetings. If there were children who weren't coming to the meetings, she'd put on her little uniform and go to their houses. She'd talk to their parents about how their children were being naughty. She said once she was chased off a doorstep with a broom and told not to come back. In retrospect, she said now she would have done the same thing had it been her house. I'm sure there are a million stories like that, you know? And so few of them have anything to do with murdering six million innocent people. If my dreams were bad, I can't even imagine hers."

"I waited inside the Hauptbahnhof station for Carola, almost frightened of what lay outside. She stepped off the train, and I spotted her immediately, a golden face in the pale mass. She took my hand as we stepped outside into a slight drizzle that arose without warning. There it was, just to our left. Kenny Scharf's design was an immediate landmark for me, since my brother had always been inter-

ested in his work, and then it all started to hit me at once. We were walking hand in hand along the Berlin Wall, on the East side, experiencing it from the insular little bubble of young lovers. I was surprised there weren't more people around looking at this. We were the only ones. The rain, coupled with our isolation, made it feel like the end of the world. One section simply read 'No More Walls, No More Wars.' It sent chills throughout my body and put tears in my eyes. I just stood there in front of it for awhile, unable to think of a damn thing worth saying. She was staring off in the distance at the bridge. Several minutes passed before she said: 'I remember when the world ended here. I lived in Dresden before it fell, and we watched on the television that night, all the people celebra . . . celebrating. But it was several weeks before my father felt it was safe to come here, that this was lasting. When we did, I came over this bridge. I was sitting in the back, looking out the window at everything and crying. There are not words in any language to describe it. I' She looked in my eyes and I took her in my arms gently. We held each other for what seemed like ages, crying like children. So much of wisdom is so simple, you know? And miracles happen to all of us everyday."

Spencer stopped for a moment and lit a cigarette. He sat silent, watching it burn all Halloween orange and chimney red. Finally, he said, "Well, that did happen, but I remember saying something as she finished her story that makes me cringe to think about. I said, 'That's so sweet' before I hugged her. And she said, gently, 'It's not sweet.' I suppose I meant sweet as in amazing, astounding, awesome, but the literal meaning just sounds patronizing and unsympathetic. I should have known better."

"I mean, that's what makes London so hard to nail down, you know? Most people won't talk to you at all. And the ones that do are using an unwritten rulebook I've never seen. Even the city itself, there's no way of knowing what hides behind the superficial, and it's probably something completely unexpected. It's all Tardis and pay-toilets. And that frustrates the hell out of me. Even Berlin never felt that way, to that extent. I mean, sure, the West has become very financially prosperous, but there's not much mystery behind that. The horrors of the past are laid bare and exposed in detail for all, especially the Germans, to see. So, for a couple of days I decided to translate every sentence I heard a British person speak to mean the exact opposite. And it worked more often than I would have thought."

Jon Mastantuono

A Cultural Difference in an Unexpected Place

I heard that there would be occasions when I would be confused by cultural differences, but I never suspected that I would be the most confounded in the bathroom. Aside from the sit-and-spray “showers” in bathtubs with no curtains and only intermittent hot water, the toilets often required several contemplative and embarrassing minutes in order to figure out their flushing mechanisms. Apparently, a toilet seat with a simple and obvious lever on the side is neither chic nor challenging enough for the ever-inventive Europeans. In order to help future American travelers avoid confusion, I will describe the five different toilet types most frequently encountered.

When I first arrived at the apartment of my host family in France, I was confused with the pull-plunger toilet. For a few desperate minutes I searched in vain for a lever. Finally, I noticed a knob at the top of the water tank which looked to have more than a decorative purpose. I twisted and pushed the knob to no avail. But when I *pulled* the knob, I was awarded with a whoosh of success. Mastering the pull-plunger toilet gave me the skills to operate most toilets in Western Europe.

Less intimidating is the pull-chain toilet, which is found throughout Eastern Europe and older hotels and hostels in Western Europe. These are basically the same as the nineteenth century type once used in the United States: the toilet is flushed by pulling a chain which is attached to the water tank. The water tank is normally separated from the bowl and hangs on the wall above it. These toilets, while low-tech, are obviously comfortable to use.

I only encountered the rare push-spring toilet in Greece. This toilet won the prize for being the most confusing and taking the most time to figure out. The flushing mechanism was a small spring located on the bottom of the water tank (which was suspended on the wall above the toilet). Since I was standing in a puddle of water (this will be explained later) I had a fear that I would be electro-

cuted by pushing the metallic-exposed-wire-looking spring. Besides the intimidating toilets, some Greek bathrooms also have another charming feature: a shower head protrudes from the bathroom ceiling so that the entire bathroom becomes a shower stall. This accounts for the puddles of water next to the toilet.

I will now move on to the terrifying Turkish toilet. Despite its name, I encountered this toilet more often in France than anywhere else, especially in bars and clubs. Flushing the Turkish toilet is no mystery because it uses the pull-chain mechanism. However, the Turkish toilet has no bowl. It consists of two raised foot platforms above the floor with a hole in the middle. For men, the Turkish toilet usually does not present a big problem. For women, however, well . . . let’s just say it’s an asset to have strong thigh muscles and a good sense of balance.

The last type of toilet I experienced was indeed found in Turkey. I guess this could be described as a “modified” pull-chain toilet. This toilet was similar to the pull-chain toilet in every way except that the pipes were too narrow to accept toilet paper. Instead of flushing it, the used toilet paper had to be deposited in a trash can next to the toilet or even on the floor, if the can was full or non-existent. I don’t think I need to describe the hygienic or aesthetic implications of this. As a possible solution, many locations decline to offer toilet paper.

Some potential American travelers may be intimidated to read about the vagaries of European toilets, but never fear! American cultural imperialism comes to the rescue. Many American franchises found throughout Europe, such as McDonalds and Burger King, offer clean, easily-managed sit-down toilets with flushable toilet paper. However, if you can’t locate one of these havens when the need arises, just imagine that you are embarking on another exciting cultural adventure.

Tim Smith



Mussenden Temple

by Susan Johnson

The building, once a library, is located near Castlerock, Northern Ireland.

My Ode to Haggis

"Hey, Rachel! How 'bout a game of Scrabble?" Uh-oh, it was Matty and Gene working the front desk.

"Uh, I'm actually on my way out right now, but how about later tonight, when I get back?" And please, please don't ask me where I'm going. I don't want to have to explain this.

"Where are you headed? Someplace special? Big night on the town? Meeting someone?" They kept guessing. Ah, they'll never guess.

"Nope, just . . . exploring."

"Well, don't forget—Scrabble! And tonight we'll beat you!"

I laughed. "Not a chance!" And with that I was out the door and headed for High Street. I was on a mission. It had taken me four months just to get to this point, and still I had my doubts. But I was determined to go through with it. Ah, the Royal Mile. It was quite a place, what with Edinburgh Castle at the top and all the touristy kiltmakers' shops down below. Surely I'd find it here. I walked and walked. I ended up outside a dark pub. It looked like a nice enough place, but then again, Claire had warned against trying it in a pub, no matter how tempted I might be. The thought of anything about this being even remotely "tempting" got me chuckling. I passed a few pubs and finally ended up outside a relatively nice-looking restaurant. I glanced at the menu posted outside the door. Yup, there it was, and there I was. And all I had to do was open the door, enter, locate a table, sit myself down, wait for the waiter and . . .

"I'd like an order of haggis, please," I lied. I hoped I didn't sound too American. I didn't want her to laugh. She didn't, but she did smile.

"Neeps and tatties with that?"

I thought fast. Neeps. Those were turnips, right? And tatties were just potatoes. Sure, why not? "That would be great."

After she left I pulled out my journal, but I couldn't write. I was too busy worrying. Oatmeal. It was basically just oatmeal, right? Oatmeal cooked in a stomach instead of in a pan. And a little bit of lard and, um, sheep parts for flavoring. There were spices in there too, someone had told me. That was good; I like spices. But basically just plain old comfortable, homey oatmeal. I tried to think about winter mornings back in South Haven, at the table with the family, and Dad serving up heaping woodenspoonfuls of hot oatmeal, saturated with butter and brown sugar and juicy raisins, into the brown earthenware bowls. But the prevailing image was rather that of Elaine, on Burns' Day, reciting that poem, "Ode to Haggis," or whatever it was called, with her knife poised in the air. When she finished the last line, she stabbed it, and the haggis spurted, or spouted, or exploded. It scared her; she jumped, and

watched in disbelief as it took on a life of its own! Oh, why on earth did she have to tell me that story? Must have made quite an impression on her; I know it did on me.

Why *was* I doing this? Just so I could say I had? I'd managed to avoid the guided monster walks around Loch Ness and the ghost talk in Edinburgh. After all that time at the university and especially after these weeks making my own way through the country, I felt at home in Scotland. I certainly didn't feel like a (gasp, choke) *tourist!* So what was I doing here, trying out the haggis? I felt rather silly, like a kid who spends days staring at her classmate's hair and wondering if those big fat ringlets will bounce back like a spring if you pull them or if they could be pulled as straight as your own, and then one day you can't stand it any longer and you purposely stand right behind her in the lunchroom line just so you can yank one while she's busy telling the lady she wants extra gravy on her mashed potatoes . . .

Mashed potatoes. There they were, next to a beigeish-brown blob with dark specks in it. I imagined the specks were raisins. I poked the blob and jumped out of the way, but it didn't even spurt. It just kind of sat there. The diced things on the other side of the plate, I guessed, must be the neeps. Turnips, right? I was pretty sure that's what Claire had said. I took a quick glance around, just to make sure no one was watching, and quickly sniffed them. Yup, these were turnips, all right.

I took a quick bite of turnip. It tasted like mud. I decided to wash it down with a big forkful of tatties. They, amazingly, were worse. I inspected them carefully. They certainly behaved like mashed potatoes, but there was something horribly wrong with them. I looked at the haggis, almost expecting it to look back at me and make a face, but it didn't. I was almost sorry I'd ever ordered it. I thought about pleasant things (like Hobnobs and chocolate digestives) and took a quick, small bite. Not bad, I thought. My next bite was bigger. Kind of greasy, but palatable. Maybe even kind of nice. Before I knew it, all that remained on the plate were the neeps and tatties. I left them with the tip, paid, and walked back to the hostel. I felt awfully smug. I'd conquered the formidable haggis.

When I got back, I headed straight for the kitchen and cooked up a huge bowl of oatmeal. I sat down at the table and marveled at the many positive attributes of oats. Pretty soon, Gene and Matty found me and started to set up the Scrabble board. "Hey, what're you eating?" Gene asked me.

"Oatmeal," I answered, "with butter, brown sugar, and sultanas."

He winced. "Ugh, that's disgusting. How can you ruin your porridge with that stuff?"

Rachel Bemis

The Chicken Story

As a student in Quito on my Study Abroad experience, I was required to take a bus to and from the university each day. Each South American bus trip is an adventure unto itself. The decrepit engine wheezes and coughs as it struggles to climb the side of a mountain, and the other passengers lurch into you with every turn, or are pressed so tightly against you that you feel you should say something sweet to them at the end of the ride. One day, however, my daily excursion on the bus took a fatal turn.

I was running late, and darkness, which comes quickly on the equator, was falling rapidly. Frantic to be home in time for dinner, I sprinted to the bus stop and waved down a *Transporte Popular*, which is the most, er, economical of the bus lines. Now, being six-foot six-inches tall, or two meters, I have a hard time on the buses. I nearly need to bend in half to make it to a usually non-existent seat, and when I do find one, the three inches of leg room necessitate that I jam myself quite forcefully into the seat. Usually I check to make sure the seat is clear, but having been harried I simply did not check before I slammed myself onto the seat. This was to be the deadly mistake.

As I shoved my rather large *gringo* self into the seat, I felt a weird lump, not such an uncommon thing on an Ecuadorian bus, but I also heard a wet snap. Looking at the window seat, I saw a very angry looking old farmer holding two chickens in his lap. The looks on the faces of those chickens will always haunt me. Those beaks accused me, I tell you!

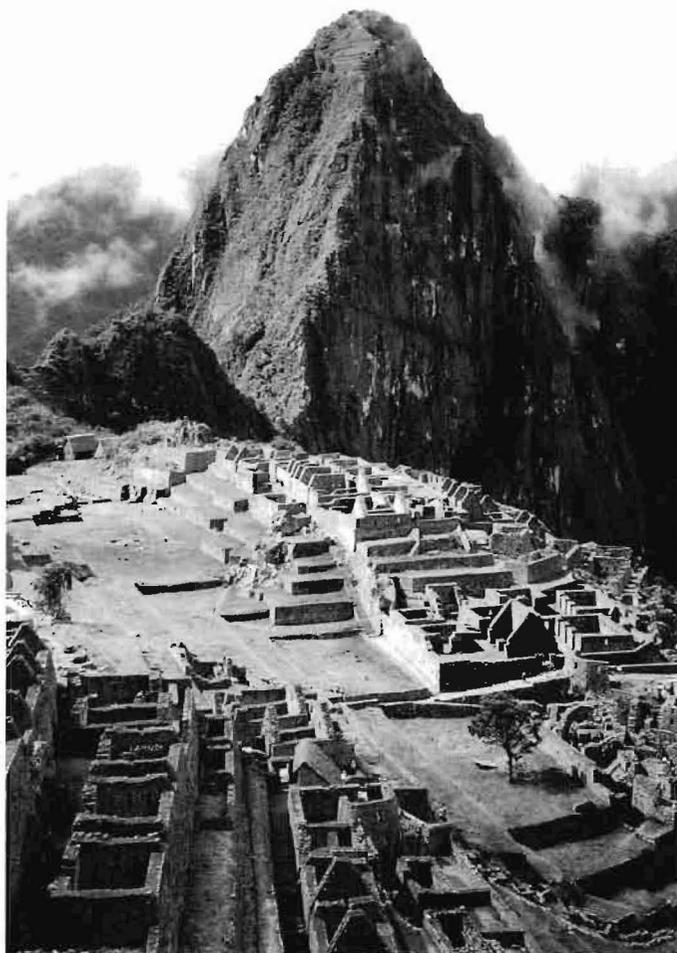
Launching myself from the seat, I whirled to find I had sat on a chicken, breaking its neck and ending its existence. The face of the chicken was almost peaceful in death. The old farmer immediately leapt to his feet, yelling at me, calling me "Stupid *gringo*!" and "Clumsy fat one!" much to the amusement of the other passengers on the bus. Apologetic, I tried to summon enough Spanish ability to tell him it was a mistake, that the death of his beloved chicken was one more senseless tragedy in a cruel world. The anger did not fade, though. Maybe the three bucks I forked over for the dead chicken would hasten his recovery from grief. I told him, "I do not need a dead chicken!" but he burst into tears and the fight ran out of me. I still maintain that the chicken had not paid for that seat and must have known the risks.

So I left the bus to walk the rest of the way home. Swinging the chicken by its feet, I noticed several people on the sidewalk stopping to look at me. Puzzled, I looked myself over to make sure I hadn't spilled something on myself, but when my gaze hit the chicken I knew what it was. I am literally a giant in Ecuador. I stand a good foot above most people and am more bulky. The sight of such a huge *gringo* walking along while swinging a dead chicken was so esoteric, it deserved a second look. Self-conscious,

I checked right and left, then threw the chicken over a large fence into someone's yard.

After telling the details of my trauma when I arrived at home, my Ecuadorian family was hardly sympathetic. In fact, they were angry I had not brought the chicken home for dinner that night. Alas, I knew him well.

Cliff Lampe



Lost City of the Incas

by Heather Simpson

Macchu Picchu, Inca ruins outside of Cuzco, Peru was discovered by an archaeologist from the United States in 1911.

Pilgrimage to Bethlehem

Vamos.

I have left Spain, but it has not left me. Even now, back at home sitting on a couch in my carpeted room in midwestern America, I think about Spain, my other homeland—*mi patria*. I still believe in its holy dream. I think of Spain, its nightlife, its food, and my loving host family, full of off-color jokes that are hilarious in any language. But, more often than not, I think about *el Parque Belén*. This Park of Bethlehem was close to my house on the outskirts of a Madrid that never sleeps. The park wasn't a particularly pretty place, but I sometimes wonder if Jesus was born there. Like Bethlehem, the park was dirty and crowded, and there were no inns. But to me the park was at least as holy.

I went to *Parque Belén* often, sometimes with friends, but usually alone, when I could truly appreciate its magic. I would leave my *casa* at about 7 p.m., after afternoon classes and before dinner at 9. I would wave goodbye to my *madre* while pulling out a cigarette from the pack of Marlboro Reds I had bought outside the subway for 200 *pesetas*, always 200 *pesetas*. Everyone smokes in Europe, even professional athletes and coaches. I lit up my cigarette and began the ten minute walk down the sidewalk on *la calle Arturo Surio*, named after the famous writer. On the way to the park I looked up at the Spanish sky, always clear and blue and beautiful. I looked into the windows of the stores, *las tiendas*, and at the people I passed. But more often it was they who looked at me. With blond hair, blue eyes, and milky white skin, I was an obvious foreigner—most Spaniards thought I was German. So did many German tourists, until I answered their attempts at conversation with an uncomprehending stare. My physical appearance was also of interest to the Spanish. I was the frequent object of their fixated eyes, which I often felt on my face in subway cars. It bothered me until I learned to stare straight back into their glare, which embarrassed them terribly and made them stop.

Upon reaching *Parque Belén*, I passed through its iron gates and walked on the dirt path past the main fountain, vandalized and dirty, in the front of the park. The park wasn't pretty. So why was it always so full of people? The answer is simple: grass—the park contained the highest concentration of grass for miles around. All that usually grows in cities like Madrid are tall buildings, homes for banks or international corporations or apartments. When fall arrives, the buildings plant their seeds on the ground next to them. Come springtime, the construction crews appear and new buildings sprout up next to their parents. This is how cities grow quickly and take over the

places where grass should be. But Madrid didn't take the grass away from *Parque Belén*. For city people, parks like this one are their last desperate connection with Mother Earth. With their green grass and flowing fountains and innocent children, parks are a kind of Eden, or maybe a Bethlehem, stuck in the middle of modern-day chaos.

So the people flock to this paradise, this park. And they all bring their dogs, who are to thank for the health and thickness of the grass there. Almost everyone in Madrid has a dog, usually a very large dog not meant for a city where almost everyone lives in a cramped apartment. Once, sitting in the grass at *Parque Belén*, I thought I saw an underfed horse trot by. But it was only somebody's huge dog, set free in the park after spending all day in a small apartment. His gallop was one of happiness and relief. They need *Parque Belén* just as much as their owners do.

Since dogs leave their droppings around indiscriminately, I checked the ground I was about to sit on before settling on the grassy knoll overlooking the main path, the second fountain, and its adjacent pond. My usual seat lay next to the only marked grave in the park. But I had no problems sharing my thoughts with a dead Spaniard.

I always brought a book to read or homework to do when I went to the park, but never read or wrote for long. I was enthralled with watching the people (and the dogs)—they are what made *Parque Belén* so beautiful, so heavenly. I could see the Virgin Mary's face in each young woman that passed, pushing a carriage carrying an innocent, glowing child. Was it the baby Jesus? I loved watching them, watching all the people in the park. I looked at the businessmen jogging around the circular path, around and around, and wondered what they were talking about—was it business or *fútbol* or women? I smiled when I saw young lovers rolling around in the grass, openly displaying their affection. In Spain, public places are full of people kissing, fondling, groping—innocent and unashamed. For *los jóvenes*, the young people, there is no place else to do it; culture requires that everyone go out to meet instead of visiting each other at home. I also looked at the university students sitting cross-legged in a circle in the green grass, smoking hash and making jokes about the blond American they assumed couldn't understand a word they were saying. They were wrong, of course. I smiled at the young children playing *fútbol* with their fathers. Each *padre* had a gleam of hope in his eye, a dream that his son would someday become the next great Spanish soccer savior. I looked at the homeless man, bundled up in blankets, wrapped in

swaddling clothes, murmuring softly to himself on the bench in front of the clear pond. He, too, was beautiful.

One day I saw young newlyweds posing for wedding pictures with their extended families in front of the fountain overlooked by my seat, my grave. Their dogs were there, too, along with everyone else's dogs; none of them seemed interested in the proceedings. But I was. If this park indeed was Bethlehem and the holy place I felt it to be, was I mistaken when I saw the immaculate conception in the flash of the photographer's camera as the light

bounced off the face of the beautiful bride, Eve, in a flowing dress of virgin white? The whole family was all there to witness the event, and they said nothing of the miracle. Family means everything in Spain, which is why I eventually had to leave my looking-hill, my peephole to the holy, and light another cigarette for the walk home. I had to get back to my *madre*, who loved me as much as I loved her, and my *padre* and my two sisters, even my dog, Tor. It was almost nine-time to go home and contribute my share to the dinner and laughter and love.

Todd Thompson



Friday Noontime Prayers in Alexandria, Egypt

by Michael Mundahl

Walking through the streets of Alexandria, the main street turns toward the mosque. Most of the people were in the mosque for Friday noon prayer.

Offerings

"And the seasons, they go 'round and 'round
And the painted ponies go up and down.
We're captured on the carousel of time.
We can't return, we can only look
Behind from where we've been
And go 'round and 'round and 'round
In the circle game."

"The Circle Game" by Joni Mitchell

Colors, patterns, flashes of light. A month and some odd days in Kenya, East Africa, and my mind has long since given up on any form of linear processing. Thus, writing has become a dreaded chore. I sit, staring blankly at the yellow paper, attempting to fill its lines with brilliant sketches and definitions of my journey. Yet, the very words that once served as such a dependable form of expression now trip over one another, shy from order, and simply refuse to rise in my defense. Well-structured sentences and complete thoughts are of the past, the Old World. And, as I have let go of healthy food, personal space, frequent bathing, and fear of cockroaches, so too shall I let go of an ancient writing style, hoping that somehow the fragments and images will tell their own story.

September 17, 1995. Sunday morning. Church service—Protestant. We climbed and climbed, up and down the rolling earth in quest of a bit of inspiration, enlightenment, and escape from the monotony. Or, in my case, and perhaps a touch more honest, simply for a few more experiences and observations to note in my writings and journal. The cement dwelling that was to serve as our meeting place stood proudly atop one of many red hills overlooking the beautiful blue valley of Makueni. The band of teenage musicians played as Jee, Peter, and I (the only representatives of the *Wazungu* tribe to visit this neck of the woods for quite some time) took our seats on a roughly built wooden pew near Ngonzi's cousin. Questions of religion invaded me as I numbly searched through my pocket for a twenty shilling note, with the cue of his cousin's arm nudging mine, and preceded to give my offering.

Last night, while attempting to roll out *chapati* in the dark, smoky, animal-infested kitchen of Ngonzi's brother, Anna and Patricia confided that what gets them through the laundry, cleaning, and strenuous trips to the "river" (really a knee-high concrete structure filled with brown communal water and insects of every kind) . . . was their belief in God. They grilled me about my religious affiliation as we took turns singing hymns in English and *Kikamba*. The Christian influence is apparent everywhere here. All living spaces are lined with biblical messages or cheap paintings of Jesus Christ. So far, nearly everyone we've encountered has asked whether we have chosen the way of Catholicism or Protestantism, after proudly declaring their own choice of path. I sat on the hard pew, staring at the animated preacher trying to appease our virgin

Kikamba ears with a phrase or two in broken English, realizing that part of my discomfort stemmed from just that—the lack of difference with regard to churches in the U.S. The language spoken was different, a few of the instruments were unfamiliar, an auction to raise money by selling some greens was a new fundraising tactic, but other than that. . . the same. Offerings were taken once more, familiar hymns were belted out by old and young, the preacher held the pulpit as he rambled and moaned, the members fanned themselves to combat the heat and flies, Bibles were opened, heads were bowed, prayers were said, more offerings taken, hand-shaking at the end, a welcome of visitors. There is nothing like witnessing the results of the death of tradition and the embrace and grasp of Western influence unfurl before your very eyes on a spectacular Sunday morning. The ever-present feeling of uneasiness shook me once again. Yet more questions in need of answers.

September 19, 1995. Four hundred schoolchildren, all with shaven heads and tattered gold and royal blue uniforms engulfed Pete, Jee, and me today. A compound of bricks and red dirt greeted our shiny *wazungu* faces. We walked slowly toward the school, surrounded by the curious faces of babes afraid to touch us, giggling at glances their way. Once inside, marvelous moments unfurled. Pete began to chase the children, causing waves of laughter. Jee and I put our hands out and beckoned the bravest to touch, proving there was no need for fear. After one hand rested for a moment on my arm, two hundred others followed. Then, the hair. Stroking, pulling, tugging, shrieking with joy of the New. All of the sudden I found myself teaching them. "Give me five, up high, down low . . ." They loved it. Dawn the performer. We were taken to several classrooms of awe-stricken Kenyan students. Ancient wooden desks, faded blackboards tacked to cement walls, dim lighting. Questions about America flowed from toothless mouths, soft-spoken ones, mouths covered by hands: "What is the largest river?" to "How much money did it cost to come here?" Questions loaded with curiosity of a supposedly and perhaps comparably golden world. The burden of ambassadorship was heavy, but we tried. We tried to explain the good and the bad as well as the difficulty of generalizing about a country as large as the United States. We attempted *Kiswahili*, entertained, asked questions about Kenya, explained that our motives were to learn and compare cultures. Then, at the end, one of the most beautiful moments occurred. After Jee and I sang the Star Spangled Banner in response to a request for our "loyalty song," a class stood up in unison, smiled faintly, then began their own. My breathing stopped at the sight of sunny children with patched clothes, few learning tools, and bare feet, clapping, drumming, and wailing a song complete with parts and rounds. Time stood still as children from different worlds came together as one. The classroom inflated with the sound of harmony.

Dawn Crist

Reflections of a Past Intertwined with the Present

Although the days of the Third Reich have long since passed, its vivid memories appear to be at the forefront of the mind of German society. Perhaps I am conscious of this right now, late spring 1995, since this month commemorates the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. In Germany, the reminders of World War II seem to go beyond this anniversary—the incidents that occurred fifty years ago appear to still touch many aspects of a German's daily life.

Feelings seem to be mixed here. There appears to be a great deal of unspoken thoughts and feelings. I am not quite sure if the silence is out of sadness or fear of the implications of such discussion. What exactly are the implications of such dialogue? The stigma that much of the world may still associate with Nazi Germany seems to follow the new, reunified Germany, no matter how much time goes by. And so, the words continue to go unsaid.

Traveling around Germany has helped create a sort of picture book of images in my mind's eye. Stark landmarks ironically break through the silence while quietly representing physical reminders of World War II. A cathedral in Berlin stands amidst normal city bustle. Looking up to the top of the church, however, one's eyes cannot help but behold the sight of a damaged steeple. The damage appears untouched and unrepaired. By reading a tour book, I learn that this very church survived numerous bombs and blasts in the Second World War. It is moving to look at it again with this new knowledge that the cathedral appears not to stand tired and defeated by its wound. Instead, it stands with a rather meek, positive energy. I can hardly find the words to express the feelings I have when looking at this sight!

Illuminated billboards stand in the dark of nighttime, in the middle of the Nuremberg marketplace. The enlarged black and white photographs portray this very place 50 years ago before its destruction and afterward, flattened to the ground with only rubble remaining. I am standing here in bewilderment as my eyes jump back and forth from the past to the present. What an ironic image! One can observe the billboards and then look beyond them to see a marketplace that has been rebuilt almost identical to its original state. But the feelings intertwined within the newly layered bricks radiate with an almost frightening intensity. It is still different.

The "East Side Gallery" in Berlin consists of a plethora of artwork on a fragment of the Berlin Wall. This remainder of *die Mauer* is now a one-and-a-half kilometer long reminder that lines a busy stream of passing compact cars. The numerous murals jump and shout, trying to attract people passing by. The paint on the wall consists primarily of themes of freedom, democracy, unity, and peace.



Brandenburger Tor

by Susan Johnson

The gate between East and West Berlin was opened December 22, 1989, a month after the wall came down.

On the sidewalk next to the concrete wall, I stop and gaze in amazement at a painting that portrays a sea of faces flooding from one side of a broken wall to the other. Walking further, my eyes behold a dove of peace flying in a free blue sky, carrying a rose in its mouth. Within the fascination of the swirling colors, an onlooker might nearly forget that the canvas for this political artwork was once the divider between a people in two separate nations. Stepping back, however, the complete image of wall and art creates a powerful, unforgettable notion in the mind.

Recalling all these scenes together has given me a bit more insight into the uneasiness many here have about World War II. Germany has picked up the shattered fragments of a time where power, control, strife, downfall, and defeat were wrapped up into one. From the fragments, Germans have created a new way of life—a unified, democratic country. She must constantly watch herself because the world's eyes are closely watching her every move. There is a certain uneasiness about having pride in this new, rebuilt nation. As my German friend said to me in one of our many discussions, "There is no such thing as a proud German anymore." Despite the new nation Germany is today, a proud German is still confronted with the stereotype of a Nazi. After our discussion, I found myself wondering if Germany will ever be freed of this stigma. It seems that many Germans continue to wonder the same thing themselves.

Katharine Gormley

Any More Seng?

"Ahh, hello! Hello! How are you? Fine?" He smiles at us as if he knows some deep, dark secret. "Tea? *Tahina salat?*"

"*Aiwa,*" we reply as we all nod our heads in blank agreement.

He moves the ashtray to the exact center of the table, the rose slides to the empty place setting, my knife and fork return to their original position after I have just moved them to the edges of my place setting.

Ted lights his cigarette, Mel gets herself comfy, and we begin to recount the day's events as if sharing the plot of one of our favorite novels.

Moments later, Amir appears and asks if we want the tea when he brings the *tahina*. We tell him, "Yes," just as we have for the past month and a half.

The music, oddly enough, is different almost every time we make this 1 a.m. sojourn—slowly becoming tradition or habit (whichever expresses the most emotional dependency on our part).

The *tahina* arrives, decorated with various little slivers of strangely unidentifiable vegetables which garnish the sides of the bowl, two halves of olives floating in the center, and assorted colored spices sprinkled randomly over the surface.

The tea, always "Lipton Yellow Label Tea—Quality No. 1" arrives, and he ceremoniously flips over our cups, for he gets noticeably upset if we turn them up for ourselves.

With the tea comes a small pitcher of highly steamed milk, which we never use, but he never fails to bring it out for us.

Finally, out comes a basket of rolls, or various forms of bread. A small plate containing exactly four individually wrapped "Royal Pack Fresh Butter" packets, which happen to be frozen solid, accompanies the bread.

The bread, depending on our luck and on the whim of the baking staff, could be used as building material just as equally as it could be for human consumption.

If it is a special night and Amir is in an even better mood than normal, he will come out with a small plate of the driest cookies in Egypt and say, "Cookies? Special—just for you."

Several additional pots full of hot water, each with one additional tea bag added per refill, about six baskets of bread, and at least three hours later (if not more) he asks, "Any more *seng?*"

We reply, "No," to which he nods and then disappears for an unfathomable amount of time.

When he does eventually return, we ask for the "*Hisab, min fadlak?*" He brings out the bill in a small folding brown leather case which is never brought to any of his other customers.

After leaving a tip which sometimes equals the total amount of the bill, we get up to leave, and he always appears around the corner to say, "Sank you! I will see you tomorrow, yes?"

"*Bukra, In sha'allah,*" we reply, smiling as we again make the 4 a.m. silent journey home to the dormitory from our late night hideaway in the Café Flamenco of the Flamenco Hotel.

Michael Mundahl

¿Qué soy yo si no hablo?

Tranquila con la luna.
Silencio
mejor que una lengua incompleta.
Silencio
pesa más que oro, vale más que mi alma.
Silencio
de paz o de miedo, un silencio completo.

Lola Baumann

Grocery Shopping, Russian Style

Going to Russia on Study Abroad meant many new experiences for me. After riding buses I learned what the phrase "packed in like sardines" really means. I found out that checking for mail could be the highlight of my day. Most of all, I discovered that something as simple as shopping for food could be a learning and humbling experience.

The very first item of food I ever bought in Russia was a loaf of bread. I went to a little bread stand not far from my school. A small line of people stood waiting for bread, so I went to the end of it. I pulled out all of my money, then leaned to the side to see the price. A little note in the stand's window announced the price as 2,100 rubles. I looked down at the money in my hand. I held three notes of 1,000 rubles each. While waiting in line I must have checked the price and my money a dozen different times and rehearsed in my head what I would say. I wanted this buy to be perfect. Finally I arrived at the front of the line. I held my money out and correctly asked in Russian for a loaf of white bread. I was so proud of myself for all of two seconds, until the baker woman started to smile. A small elderly woman behind me said, "Too much, too much." I looked a little more closely at the money in my hand. I had somehow missed one tiny, insignificant detail on each of the notes: one small zero. I was trying to pay 30,000 rubles for a small loaf of bread.

This was not the last time I made this type of mistake. With the exchange rate being about 4,500 rubles to the dollar, prices were very high. My measly addition skills could not hold up, and I found myself trying to over-pay numerous times. Fortunately, the sales people never ripped me off. They just took the money they needed and handed the rest back to me. I will admit, however, that they usually had a funny look on their face. I was probably giving a bad name to Americans everywhere. If you are ever in Russia and you come across a salesperson who automatically assumes Americans can't do math, it is most likely because at one time I tried to buy something from them.

The marketplace near my metro stop was where I did the majority of my food shopping. Large rows of open stands held all sorts of vegetables and fruits. If I needed something that was not sold there, I could go to a twenty-four-hour store nearby that had a small selection of products. It kind of resembled a 7-11 store, so that's what my friends and I nicknamed it. Of course, it did lack a Slushy machine. Grocery stores did exist, but I tended to shy away from them. Two different types of stores existed, Western-style supermarkets and the traditional Russian grocery

store. The Western markets were extremely overpriced. A box of Kellogg's Corn Flakes cost \$7. Who would pay that unearthly sum for a box of corn flakes? Okay, I'll admit it. I did, after being in Russia for about three months. What can I say? I was weak and desperate for a taste of America. Of course, a lack of decent milk meant I either ate the cereal dry or put it in Coke. It doesn't really taste all that great, but the flakes do fizz when the Coke hits them. There's something to be said for the entertainment value.

The Russian grocery stores were much more interesting. The store near my apartment building was partitioned off into counters and all the food was tucked away from prying hands behind these counters. A few cashier machines stood in the far corner of the store. Buying something was quite a process. The first step was to add up the prices of everything you wanted. As I'm sure you can guess, that did not enamor me to this style of grocery shopping. It was very important to keep prices from different counters separate. When paying you had to tell the cashier the counter where the products you wanted were located and the total price of the products. She would give you a receipt that you would then hand to the other woman working behind the counter. The pitfalls of such a system to non-fluent Russian speakers should be painfully obvious. Not being able to actually pick up and look at products means you might buy one thing when trying to buy another. For instance, you could buy stewed tomatoes when desiring tomato paste. Then you may stand in the middle of the store wondering what to do next. You could have an apartment full of people waiting for you to return so spaghetti can be made for the dinner party that is starting in twenty minutes. Then, after deciding that your Russian is not strong enough to explain that it was all a mistake and you want your money back, you might end up walking twenty minutes to a small store that sells little jars of Uncle Ben's spaghetti sauce for inordinate amounts of money. Not that this actually happened to anyone I know . . .

One thing that grocery shopping in Russia did for me was make me very appreciative of the stores we have here in America. The first time I walked into a large chain supermarket after returning from Russia I wanted to weep with pleasure. I could touch stuff before I bought it! I didn't have to add up the prices by myself! I bought an armful of junk food and decided this was the best homecoming I could have possibly wanted.

Cathia Bailey

Finding Comfort in the Crazy

September 15, 1995. There is no place I can go to get away from "here." There is no place that is good to go to in order to avoid life outside myself. No safe haven where silence rules and there are no honking cars or talking people or strange music or construction or the buzzing of a megalopolis. I can't imagine living here for a long period of time.

It is, however, amazing. Standing at the bus stop in the middle of Tahrir Square is one of the most thrilling experiences I've ever had in my life. The flow of the cars, the people just barely avoiding getting hit, the bus not stopping for its passengers to get on and off, the signs, the exhaust, the noise, the smell, the buildings, the museum, the university, the *mugama*, the mosque, the spaghetti streets, the street vendors, the beggars, the businessmen, the common men, the veiled women, the children, the old men, the taxis, the heat. No picture can say what I want to say to capture the feeling.

October 7, 1995. There is some comfort to the crazy bustle of the entire place. People in excess to the point of overflow now only make me slightly tense—they no longer worry me. The taxi brushing by my body has become a

sign of the comforting norm, not a frightening curiosity. The *awlad al-balad* (son of the country) always trying to charge me five to ten times more for the little items he is selling simply because my skin is lighter than his has now become the person who looks shocked when I bargain him down to the normal price. Strange passersby *still* "Welcome [me] in Egypt" in my second month of legal residency. The horse and camel jockeys are constantly getting within my personal space and accosting my cabs in order to get me to ride on their abused and mistreated animals when they stroll around the Giza Pyramids. The carpet, perfume, papyrus, pottery, and other small trinket stores all are claiming to be selling the "real thing" while their cousins and nephews are unpackaging the plastic wrapped shipments from the factories in the back rooms. These are all part of the experience of Cairo. I do not ask why any longer—I simply accept these things with a passing smile of indifference and strange irony while saying my "la's" and "shokran's" (no's and thank you's).

I'm afraid I will miss the noise. the bustle. the smells. the foods. the people. the sights. the traffic. the lights. the living. I will miss the noise. the noise.

Michael Mundahl

Train de Praha a Frankfurt via Nürnberg (written on a tissue)

Listening to the hum
Feeling the sway and shake
Of the train—
Destinations
To, From, and Returning.

Thinking, reflecting, savoring
A lost relationship 3,000 miles away
Unable to forget and go on.
Loneliness.
Chances taken and not taken.
Regret.

An empty pocket.
Home.

Why?

Friends of time and circumstance
Made and lost in seconds
Never to be seen or heard from again.
Trying to discover ancient cities
Full of history, heritage, hallways
Unable to look beyond the English speaking tourists,
Exchange offices and crowded roads.
Claustrophobia.

What have I gained?
An enhanced sense of independence,
A developing sense of sight, hearing, smelling,
touching, and tasting.

What can I take back with me?
A story to carry home to you.

Hope C. Nguyen

Homeless in October

Enveloped inadequately
in a shabby gray sweatsuit

Anne sleeps
on a bench

hour-after-hour-day-after-day

She walk-wanders
around the same great flower-wreathed fountain

She whisper-whimpers
to a stuffed monkey who sometimes answers

She loves the (city-planted) flowers, a spot of color in her muted gray world.

Autumn comes and with it men in (city-issued) coveralls.

uprooted scarlet blooms lie in expiring heaps
winter-hearty greens fill gashes in the petal-bleeding earth

Anne shakes her disordered-white-haired head.
"They took away the pretty flowers," she cries (accuses?)

Sad (look carefully: *hurt*)
eyes close.

Perhaps she dreams
curled on her bench

of crimson flowers—the memory must last through winter.

Joy Campbell



The Face of Homelessness
by Joy Campbell
"Anne," a homeless woman in Aix-en-Provence, can frequently be found on a bench in town.

Reflections on my Odessey in the Valley of Etna

You can never outrun the music. It follows you everywhere. *Los Caminos de la Vida* (The Paths of Life) was my favorite song while I lived in Oaxaca. And during the whole experience I struggled with trying to find my path in life. That's what Oaxaca will do to you. It is a special place, nestled away in another world, hidden in a tiny corner of the human spirit we find so hard to grasp here in America. And the music drives you: it brings life to the mild mountain air and smiles to the faces of the children. It provides the security you desire because you know you are so far from home. There is nothing as powerful as the feeling of being so far away from home. But the music soothes you, leading you into the new culture you never knew, the culture that is much larger than the uniquely distinctive customs and traditions of Mexico. It is a totally different culture of the human spirit. It is a whole different life.

Walking along the narrow streets, I saw so much of what Mexico really is. I saw the homeless children, hungry and dirty, with the culture alive and burning in their big, brown eyes. I saw the elderly women selling their goods, gossiping about the day, with the wrinkles of a hard, proud life in their faces. And I saw the men unload crates of goods from the back of the trucks, working quickly in the scorching heat of midday. The sweat of pain and perseverance glistened on their skin. I will never forget my first days walking on the dusty concrete. Over my stay, those walks provided me with time for deep reflection and acute observations of life in Oaxaca. They also provided me with time to reflect on myself, my future, who I am, and where I'm going. What is my purpose in life? The mountains were off in the distance, and I used to think my future wound its way up those magnificent peaks. Near the end of my stay, I climbed a dormant volcano, all alone, and standing on a peak at 7,000 feet I overlooked the entire Valley of Etna. The city of Oaxaca was a tiny patchwork quilt. I came to realize that my experience in Oaxaca was not only profound, it was overwhelming. That is how life is sometimes. You walk the streets of life hoping to make it out into the mountains of your future someday.

Buses are everywhere, and the exhaust fumes suffocate you. Their rumbling engines fill the air with strength and determination. Riding the bus to school everyday was an adventure in itself. A young boy hangs out the door and screams the destination, slapping the side of the bus once to stop, twice to take off again. The driver sits on his throne of a chair, whipping his head from mirror to mirror as he weaves in and out of traffic, stopping and accelerating, stopping and accelerating. All the while, *ranchero* music rings from the boom box ducttaped to the dash. The music is the driver's soul: it makes the long day of

driving pass as he dreams about the next *fiesta* in the upcoming weekend. Above the makeshift music box is Jesus Christ on the cross. Next to it may be the Virgin Mary or *Soledad*. Perhaps streams of red, green, and white ribbons line the front dash, and sometimes you can find freshly picked flowers scattered within. The *autobus* is art; the art is Mexico. The passengers are the artists: children, elderly women with their baskets, teenagers in courtship, businessmen, and secretaries. Racing from stop to stop, the people come and go, on and off the bus. After you get off, the bus rumbles away, leaving you in a cloud of toxic fumes. It's hard for a foreigner to get used to that. The Mexican people never notice. After three months, I didn't notice either.

The smell of excrement is so intense in areas that you feel like your lungs will burn inside-out. The open sewers emit the decay of life in Oaxaca. Like the sadness of desperation, frustration, anxiety, and pure struggle, the rotten smells float through the air selecting their targets. It takes a newcomer quite awhile to get used to this phenomenon. You wonder if disease is alive in the air. You wonder if the earth is not deteriorating from the torture. You wonder if the Mexican people are decaying from the life of poverty. In some areas whole families will huddle on the sidewalk with only a blanket and rags for clothes. Their faces are coarse and rough, ground by the dirt of neglect and loneliness. They are truly the forgotten ones, left to starve in the sun's heat during the day and to freeze under the cruel, cold mountain air of the night. They can smell the sewers. They smell that life everyday. Others never notice.

When I walked home from school, I would see an elderly woman selling a strange, green water. Every afternoon for three months I saw her there, fanning herself with a beautiful wooden fan her granddaughter had made for her. She sat in the shade, in her corner of this side alley. Everyday I would talk to her, and everyday she would offer me her green water. She would tell me that it could take away the heat and purify my skin. Everyday I refused, not knowing what could possibly be living in her peculiar, green water. But still, she continued to offer me a glass. It was as if she were trying to convert me. She told me that Jesus would love me forever. Everyday I refused. She still tried.

It was in the street of a tiny *pueblo* outside of Oaxaca that I danced with a live turkey flapping over my head. I swayed back and forth as the live *ranchero* band controlled my pulse. I gripped the turkey's claws firmly in my hands, and we bobbed softly up and down, back and forth. It was a *boda tradicional*, a traditional wedding out in the countryside, and this was a customary part of the reception.

We all drank Mezcal, tequila, and beer into the early morning hours. In Mexico, there is a time to work and a time to play. The line is not blurred as it is here in America. There are no feelings of guilt when people want to stop working. The people not only know how to relax and enjoy themselves, but they also truly understand what the concept means. They understand that to enjoy life is to utilize all that you possibly own. They are the most efficient people I have ever met, and at the same time they are some of the poorest. They suck everything they can out of life: its joys, triumphs, sadness, and defeats. They live life as humans, not as consumerized robots. Cellular phones, pagers, luxury cars, and fancy Western clothes are not necessary. Mexican people seem larger than life sometimes; their faith in life transcends humanity.

And the music still plays. It is impossible to avoid it. Learning Spanish immersed in another culture was a liberating experience. It has left me a new and enlightened person, as both a personal triumph and an adventure of a

lifetime. I never had to work so hard to have that much fun. But it was worth it. I lived on the inside of Oaxaca. I got within the cracks and crevices of the culture, I immersed myself in a different life and found myself cut off from the world I know here in America. I was truly lost in Mexico. I didn't travel much, but I didn't need to; I didn't want to. Oaxaca was an odyssey in itself. The friendships, the relationships, and my experiences with these people showed me another side of humanity. These people only want to enjoy life, to get the most out of it as they possibly can. The culture is a celebration of life. It seemed like there were holidays every other day. There were parades in the streets, *fiestas* around moonlit bonfires, and dancing everywhere. The culture captured me. I know, because for the first time in my life I stood before myself, a unique individual with all my strengths and weaknesses, purely human, searching, learning, growing. The music was always with me.

Jeff Hotchkiss



The Grand Canal

by Tara Darcy

Fog descends on one of the many canals in Venice, Italy.

A Day in Kraków

Everyone has a place they've always wanted to go, whether it be Disney World or the zoo. For me, it has always been Poland. It has always fascinated me hearing stories about any state under Soviet influence. To get a chance to visit it would be almost too much for me. Is it really as different as everybody says? When my friends and I were deciding where we wanted to travel while we were on Study Abroad, Poland got my vote.

Kraków was the perfect place for us to go. It was close enough to take a day trip to Auschwitz as well as having its own charm and its own attractions. This, along with my general curiosity about the present economic conditions of the country, drew Jen, Elizabeth, and myself to Poland's intellectual center.

Arriving at Auschwitz/Birkenau gave me one of the eeriest feelings of my life. I knew that something awful happened there fifty years ago. After walking through the gates, I didn't know how anyone could deny that the Holocaust ever happened.

We saw many of the blocks where the Jews were quartered; the blocks were filled with suitcases, shoes, and clothing. These were the only remains of the more than 1.5 million Jews that had been killed there.

The thing that hit me the most was that the original signs still posted were all in German. Not only did the Germans strip the Jews of their clothing, but they took away one of their most important possessions, their cultural identity. It made me sad. After studying abroad in France, I knew what it was like to go somewhere and leave who you are behind. For me, it was my choice. For them, it wasn't.

The basement of one of the buildings was still intact. It was the basement where the Nazis tortured people who were not doing their work fast enough. Another striking image was that of the crematorium. Even though the Soviet troops destroyed the crematorium in 1945 when they liberated the camp, the Polish government soon rebuilt the crematorium afterwards to remind everyone of the ways millions of Jews lost their lives.

Afterwards, we made our way to the bus stop. We waited and waited outside in the below-freezing weather. This gave me a chance to reflect upon what I had seen that day. It made me feel better knowing that the Holocaust ended in 1945, and it was not still happening today.

Denna Evoe



The Cours Mirabeau

by Tara Darcy

The café side of the cours Mirabeau is the place to be seen in Aix-en-Provence.

Train Station Hero

Piercing eyes
knee-socks tight and high
braided fingers
Kool-Aid swollen tongue
(grape I think)
dishwater hair
and dirty flapping Band-Aids.

She spits her Gypsy juice
on the gentleman's shoes
(the Christian
with the ticket stub)
watching it trickle down
moistening his cracked leather boots.

Dry hating eyes
olive skinned palms
tighten around his ragged tweed cap
hissing obscenities
through his brown rotting mouth.

Behind the turnstiles
cigarette vendors
strain their necks
scrawny and straight
lips tight.

She laughs
at her joke
boarding the train
framed by the window
in the fine red dust.

Christa S. Clapp



The Mask of Dali

by Catherine Goodman

This is the beggar woman who followed me around the village for three days. She allowed me to take a picture of her on the day my friends and I were leaving the town. She smiled so I would not forget her.

The Dream of "Amerik"

I step into the *Télécentre* at my neighborhood in Ouagou Niayes II, a *quartier populaire* of Dakar. After the usual string of greetings in Wolof, I enter the booth and make my phone call to arrange a time for *attaya* with my friends at the university. As I hand the attendant his coin and turn to leave he ventures—"xanaa . . . **Yow, ameriken nga?**" *Are you American?* "**Waawaaw,**" I affirm.

There is a pause. Then comes the first of two inevitably predictable questions. "**Am nga jekker?**" *Do you have a husband?* I debated which of my routine answers to give him. The simple "yes?" The "yes, I already have more than I know what to do with?" Or the "no, and I don't want one?" I decided on the simple "yes," knowing what would follow was a string of questions . . . *Where is he? Is he Senegalese? Is he White? . . .* My feeble response was of course irrelevant as he went on to try and convince me that I needed yet another husband who could please me more than my present husband.

As he realized that I was quickly losing interest he blurted out the second of the two inevitable questions. "**Doo me yoobu Amerik?**" *Why don't you take me to America with you?* I responded with my usual "**Lutax?**" *Why?* as I knew what he would answer. *The economic crisis here is hopeless. The country has no future. There are no jobs, no opportunities.* And the media does nothing to dissuade the masses of young people with eyes fixed on the U.S. and their heads spinning with images of 90210, Dallas, and Baywatch. In much of the world the U.S. is losing its appeal due to a growing reputation of violence and discrimination. But to the Africans it is still the land of opportunity where they could someday succeed like Michael Jordon, Bill Cosby, or even the young favorites, Kris Kross. They all speak of "Amerik" with dollar signs flashing in their eyes.

The expected answer came. "**Fii amul dara. Amul xalis. Foofu amna xalis.**" *Here there is nothing. There is no money. There, there is money.* Money, I wince, the simple bartering symbol that now rules the world and controls our lives. I want to plead with him, I want to make him understand that money does not blow on the wind in my country, he must be willing to work very hard for it and endure trials he cannot even begin to imagine. I want to level with him: "Are you ready to give up your traditions, your *attaya*, your *cebb u genn*, your *sabbats*, your family, your roots, the very identities that you hold dear—and adapt to a fast-paced culture of consumption, independence, discrimination, and rampant individuality? Do you realize how vastly different our cultures, our values, and our perceptions of the world truly are???"

But I tell him simply, "**Fii aduna dafa metti. Foofu di na metti itam.**" *Here life is difficult. There it will be diffi-*

cult as well. Life is entirely subjective. And happiness is all relative. Everyone has problems, and everyone's problems are of real importance, whether they be about hunger and basic survival or getting into graduate school. It seems that God, Allah, the Higher Powers or whatever name we choose to give IT, has given us each our own special challenges and chosen specific lessons for us to learn. All we can do is live as best we can and learn what it is we are meant to learn.

When I first arrived in Dakar I struggled and agonized over this issue. I would walk down the streets and two-foot high lepers would thrust out their stumpy hands for money; the deformed semblances of human bodies stricken by polio would pleadingly gaze up at me for help; and the three to four year-old *Taalibés*, exploited and suffering, begging barefoot in the streets in the name of Islam, would run through my head long after I was safely back in my family's house in Ouagou Niayes.

All I could ask was WHY? Why is it that I was born into a loving family in safe, smalltown, midwest America? Blessed with an American passport—my ticket to the world—I would never have to undergo the interrogations and searches that Africans must suffer at every step, every border, as they try to leave their country. I would never have to wait years for a visa to leave my home, forced to return to the embassy of my country of destination day after day after day as the diplomats gave me countless excuses for why I could not leave my own country, even on vacation. With my white skin I would never be subject to undue persecution, discrimination, or racism as I walked the streets of the so-called "developed" world, in the United States or in Europe. And at least I COULD walk, with my two able legs, two healthy arms, a loud voice that I could exercise at will, and all my "educated" senses about me. Why was I born so lucky while the leper was born to beg like a dog in the streets of this poor and dirty city?

Is the suffering in this world random and haphazard, or is every bit of it intentional? Is it true that we are never given more than we can bear?

I turn to my brother in this struggle and simply say "**Yallah baaxna. Beggoona nga judo fii ci Senegal. Beggoona nga fii nekk.**" *God is great. He wanted you to be born here in Senegal. He wanted you to be here.* A strange sad look came over his eyes and he repeated yes, "**Yallah Baaxna.**"

I smiled at him, said "**Mangi dem,**" *I am leaving,* and I turned to leave. Several paces out the door I heard him call after me in one last effort, "**Doo me yoobu Amerik?**"

La Canción de los Niños

Arriba las manitos,
Abajo los pies,
Cerramos las boquitas,
¡Uno, dos y tres!

Allow me to begin by saying this little recitation, intended to quiet a class of fifty-six kindergarteners, DOES NOT WORK. Believe me, I've tried. They will go right on sharing life stories, leaping off chairs with makeshift Superman capes tied around their necks, and fighting over who owns the blue Power Ranger with the missing leg.

It was completely by default that I ended up doing my cultural project in a school—after all, it wasn't like I wrote on my questionnaire form, "In order to effectively examine the Ecuadorian culture, I simply must be locked in a room with five dozen screaming little monsters." Needless to say, fate had something else in mind.

As it turned out, this is one experience that I would not have traded for the world. It was those very hellions I mentioned earlier who made it all worthwhile. When I remember that school, images come to life in my mind and I feel like I'm there again. Franklin sneaks up behind me and gives me a hug around the neck and a quick kiss before running off, giggling. Vanessa insists that I read her book, *La ratita presumida* (*The Presumptuous Little Rat*), for the fourth time, complete with the *miaos*, the *guau-guaus* and the *goiñg-goiñgs* of the animals. Jessica, a very quiet

girl, listens intently and takes in my every action with her deep, brown eyes. Patricio, the little clown with the red, jolly face and perpetual grin, leaps off the old tire on the playground and suddenly comes to the horrible realization that indeed he is *not* Superman. He lands right on top of Daisy, who immediately bursts into tears but soon calms down after a few hugs and my reassurance that she will survive. Ivan Cappa and Jorge Luis (I'm not sure to this day whether they were friends or rivals) start shouting and hitting one another, but then I take them aside and talk to them. They agree "that's not the way to treat a *compañero*" and they hug one another before going back to their table. And María José finally returns from her 30-minute trip to the bathroom.

This is how I choose to remember these children. This is how I will remember them tonight while María Belén sells roses outside the *Papillón* bar with her older sister. This is how I will remember them in six years when young Andrés has dropped out of school and is working full-time to help support his family. This is how I will remember them in twenty years, while Diana's husband beats her and her children, perpetuating the violence Diana is all too familiar with, even now.

It hurts too much to remember the sparkle of hope in their eyes while I contemplate their tragically predictable futures. For that reason, I will choose to remember them as jubilant, carefree children.

Tricia Smith



Los Niños

by Tricia Smith

These children were students from the kindergarten class where Tricia taught as part of her cultural project in Quito, Ecuador.

Silk

I spent my first few weeks of Study Abroad wondering what silk was. In the U.S., mind you, I never thought twice about the fabric, but seeing an English word spray-painted everywhere in Cáceres, Spain struck me as a bit strange. So I wondered.

With my mind in Spanglish gear, I reasoned: silk is *seda* in Spanish and if you put silk's "i" back in *seda* it forms *sida* , or AIDS in English, so of course the graffiti must be some social statement.

Whatever. It was still too strange. Strange like seeing red octagonal street signs say "stop" in a city where no one speaks English. *¿Dónde están las señales que dicen "pare?"* Strange like seeing someone flip a quarter on a TV commercial. *¿Dónde están las pesetas?* Strange like hearing "Stayin' Alive" on the radio. *¿Dónde están las canciones en español?*

There's definitely something wrong with this picture, I thought, realizing with a sudden pang that it was my native language. Toto, we're nowhere near Kansas anymore. *Estamos en España ahora.*

So my native language suddenly perplexed me and "stop" signs seemed random. Was a foreign land becoming my new home? Was I "adjusting to a new culture?" I decided not to click my heels three times.

Instead, I wanted to polish my Extremadura accent (by sticking my tongue between my teeth for the letters "c" and "z" and lisping out Cátheres and *platha*, for example), scoff at random English words and reject all things American. I wanted to pick up Spanish slang and use regional expressions.

Okay. So now, *porque no me suena inglés*, I could feel fully immersed in a foreign language, but this still didn't solve the graffiti issue. Silk remained at large.

Then I started thinking maybe silk wasn't even meant as an English word. Maybe it was some funky Spanish slang or colloquial expression, or not even *castellano* (Spanish) at all, but *catalán*, *gallego*, *valenciá*, or *éuscaro*, Spain's other official languages.

But then silk showed up again, this time on the bedroom wall mural of the Spanish woman my friend tutored. *¡Qué casualidad!* Time for the real scoop now.

It turns out Silk's name is really Enrique. He doesn't speak English, but he knows what silk is and thinks it sounds cool. Said with a Spanish accent, by the way, it does sound rather smooth and suave—"sealk"—like saying "sealed with a kiss" really fast. Because graffiti originated in New York, taking on an English name keeps the tradition alive.

Silk is an artist, but on the street his signature usually stands alone. It's unaccompanied by a mural because graffiti artists have to work fast to avoid getting caught. As a result, the most creative graphics cover hidden stairwells or secluded park walls. Some of the more elaborate ones are dedicated to his friend Inma with the bedroom

mural; her name is scrawled in the corner.

According to Inma, rappers from nearby Mérida are jealous of Silk's natural artistic talent (they can't believe he didn't even go to art school), and they come into Cáceres to deface his murals. That's why there's graffiti on the graffiti.

Finally, the mystery of Silk was solved. Yet it was more than a simple explanation of his name; a whole Spanish subculture seemed to be emerging. There are rival "gangs" of graffiti artists. Silk and Inma are a "couple" who avoid boyfriend and girlfriend labels. Silk goes by a code name. Inma shaved her head when she studied in London. Inma's friends get carded by the police when walking around Cáceres because they look different.

The emergence of a subculture seems to translate into a desire for self-expression. Graffiti artists slink around town with spray paint cans, their voices caught at their fingertips. Silk, who plays in a band, searches for an outlet in music as well as art. Inma, who speaks a little English (she translates invoices for the alternative music store in town), also tries to find her voice in Italian. And Inma's sister is pursuing an acting career in Madrid.

In turn, the need for expression emphasizes the generation gap. Symbolic of the older generation, my friend's host mom, Marisol, worries about how Spain has changed since the demise of Franco's regime—the corruption, the crime, the family structure. When Inma is late for tutoring sessions with my friend, Marisol snickers about Inma's family. She says Inma's dad is weak, her mom controls their family, and the kids do whatever they want. Inma flits around too much and needs to settle down, Marisol adds. (Ironically, Inma is a shortened version of the name Immaculate.)

Meanwhile, Silk and Inma look for new colors of spray paint, clean wall space, and a voice to bridge the generation gap.

Scrawled in English, the word "silk" stuck out to me as a tiny reminder of home, a token of my native tongue. "Silk" was familiar, but at the same time, "silk" was random and misplaced, awkward—it was stop signs, quarters, and "Stayin' Alive" in Spain.

When silk seemed bizarre to me, it meant I was adapting to Spain, feeling at ease in Cáceres. It prompted a desire for cultural immersion: English was out, Spanish was in. It broadened my horizons and transformed the language barrier.

When silk seems bizarre to Spaniards, boundaries are also being pushed outwards. A foreign language is being experimented with, a far cry from when Franco banned the speech of regional languages. The younger generation is working to expand societal horizons. They are drawing attention to difference, bringing issues to the forefront. Silk is everywhere, forcing people to look. The generation gap has no choice.

Umbrellas

scurry dark-legged,
pressed down by drops,
insect-like, shining
in artificial light, anonymous.

winter-borne flowers
dodge cunningly
across slickened pavements,
slant back quickly,
quickly return
to cover faces—
careful.

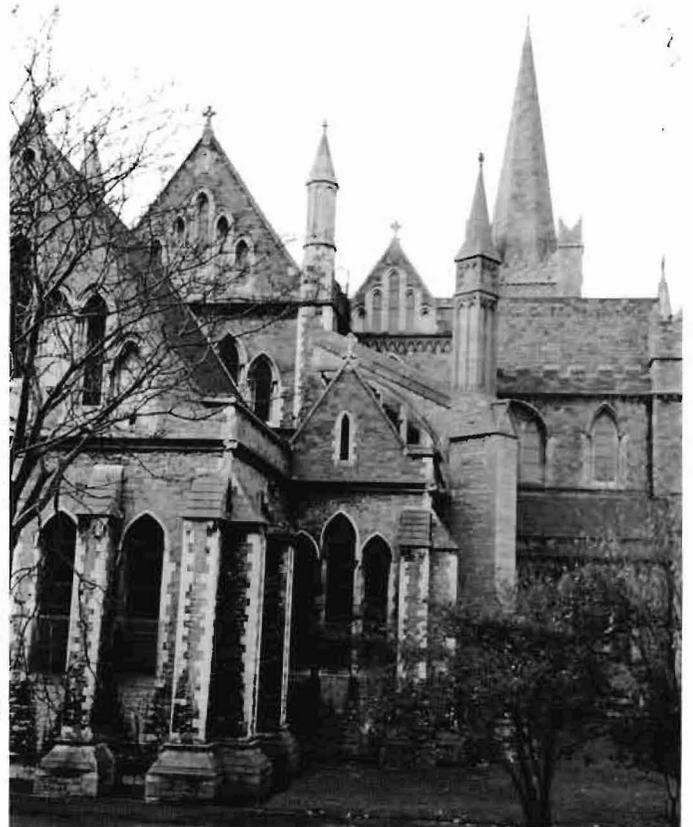
these are shields.
they keep off the rain
keep you dry, warm
safe, protected—
isolated
from the storm.

look at all the unfortunates
who lack one—
trying to dash between drops,
laughing or disgruntled,
red-faced and trailing-haired,
huddling through doors!

in the steamy warmth of the room
they fling off their soaked layers
with exultation,
shake out their hair.
one laughs and turns to me
with brilliant eyes, quickened cheeks:
'some weather, eh?'

I cannot meet the living eyes
with mine, which are
too dry—
'horrible,' I mumble,
in some sort of defeat,
shaking the drops off my umbrella.

Nichole Miller



Christ's Cathedral in Dublin, Ireland

by Ryan Rummer

This is the cathedral the touring student looking for St. Patrick's Cathedral will always find first. A vast vaulted ceiling and radiant stained glass windows house the tomb of an ancient warrior called Strongbow. In the crypt downstairs rests the mummy of an unfortunate cat who was caught behind the organ while chasing a mouse.

Great Balls of Fuego

First she swept off a good-sized part of the dirt floor where she put a large woven mat of dried reeds. The chickens were moved out of the way, and the gerbils were put in the far corner of the room. Then she left the room and went outside to get more things. She came in and out like this a lot, sometimes to bring things in, sometimes for other purposes. On a 4 by 7 feet mat she put a smaller purple cloth which covered one corner of the mat. On this went a number of things: an old iron candelabra for three candles, lots of red and white carnations, a few bottles of various liquids, lots of polished black rocks, three unlit candles, a new unopened pack of cigarettes, an old bent cigarette, two eggs, and two bread rolls. She told me to come and sit down on the mat. She left and returned with a bunch of green plants that released a spicy basil-type smell when she cut them. She took off the tops of these plants and arranged them into four bunches, with string wrapped tightly around each one, discarding the bottom parts. Then, she brought in a plate with *carbones* (charcoals) on it and put a lit candle under it. After a few minutes the *carbones* were smoking and a little red in the center. While she was doing this I was to rub a candle over my body and "make it an extension of myself." After this, she took the candle, quickly said a bunch of prayers, lit the candle, and placed it in the center holder of the candelabra. This is how my visit to the Shaman began.

At this point she instructed me to take my clothes off down to my boxers. This was a bit surprising, but I acted as if everything were hunky-dory. Everyone in the group, and others too, were watching, and it was a little embarrassing for the main reason that my back and shoulders were peeling from the strong sunburn I had gotten the weekend before. There was a chilly breeze that came through one door (where she would go out to get things) and went out another. I was standing more than half naked while my friends had sweatshirts and sweaters on.

Next I was instructed to stand over the plate of coals with my bare feet on pieces of newspaper which she had placed on either side of the plate for me. As soon as I stood over the coals I could feel the warmth of the smoke rise up my legs. I felt the smoke hit my eyes and it stung. But I also wanted to see what the Shaman was doing, so I stood there with my eyes tearing and my eyelids quivering. It was hard, but I felt lucky to be part of this process, and it wasn't as unbearable as some might think. After about five minutes of this, she said some more chants and lit a cigarette from the lit candle that represented me. She puffed smoke at me in a very careful manner on my head, face, chest, arms, back, and legs. She picked up one of the bottles with liquid in it and held on to the neck of it while twirling it around, swishing the clear liquid (liquor, I thought), and chanting loud and fast, her voice undulating when she started a new turn of swishing the bottle. After this she took my candle and stood back from me about four feet.

She held in a big mouthful from the bottle and held the candle out in front of her and then spit the liquid at me, which became a big, purplish-red fireball that came right at me! Everyone cried "oooh" and some laughed in amazement. Again she took a swig and spit at me without the flame catalyzing a fireball. The liquid dripped down my body, over my knees and down to my toes. She asked which one I preferred and I said, after thinking for a second, "*con fuego, por favor*" (with fire, please). I thought the fire was a lot warmer, it didn't burn me, it was more spectacular for sure, and how many times does a *gringo* get healed by a Shaman? So, she commenced spitting fireballs at me up and down my body. I was to turn around halfway so she could do the same to my back and that's when I heard people change from "oooh"s to "ow"s. I felt a couple of the fireballs come really close to the skin on the backs of my legs, and I smelled burning leg hair—nothing serious though. It felt warm and wet, and the smoke in my eyes made everything kind of surreal. The alcohol that dripped off my body and the liquid spray that didn't make it all the way to me, fell on the coals underneath, which were quickly put out, and the smoke stopped. But I didn't really notice it because of the fireballs coming right at me.

Her attention changed from fireballs to her blowing cigarette smoke on me again. She was smoking the cigarettes really fast, and I was wondering how she could handle it so well. So I turned all around, and she covered me up and down with smoke while chanting and breathing heavily. The next things used were the bundles of plants. She held them up, chanted, and walked to the door where she spit alcohol on them. She came back and whacked my skin with them, starting always at my head, working her way down to my feet, then going back up under my arms, out to my hands and back down from my waist to my feet. For a second time, she spit more alcohol at them through the doorway, came back, chanted and did it over again several times. The next step was with the rolls of bread, which were partly offerings to the spirits who she had called to come help rid me of bad things. She rubbed my head with the rolls and covered my whole body in the same manner. She did the same with eggs, rubbing really hard, and I thought they were going to break on me. As she was rubbing them on the sides of my stomach, her body started convulsing a little, and she made noises like she was holding back vomit or something. She held my body with the eggs in her hands and shook me as if she were undergoing great internal pain. Diego, our anthropology professor, then told us that she had gotten most of the bad spirits out of me and that they were entering her at that point. I thought she was going to be sick all over me, but instead, she ran out of the room, and we heard her get sick outside somewhere. She came back in and told us, with Diego translating, that there was a man who had taken my footprint and was very envious of me and something I

have. She added that there had been many bad spirits inside of me which she had gotten rid of with the help of the spirit of the great mountain, represented by that bigger rock I mentioned earlier.

After all this she had me hold out my hands in front of me as she chewed up some carnation petals in her mouth, which she spit into my open, cupped hands. Over these she poured some red liquid and told me to rub it on my head and face, but to be sure to close my eyes first. She spit at my face and body this same red liquid that crept into the corners of my mouth. I could tell it was some sweet, home-made liquor. It did sting my eyes a little bit even though they were closed. More petals were placed in my hands with red stuff poured over them to rub all over my body a couple times. Next she brought in a really dinky chair and put it on the mat for me to sit on. I felt like Tom Hanks in the movie "Big" when he has just grown big and

tries to ride his little dirtbike. She took up the big rock and had me hold it on my head while she chanted and occasionally spit at me. Next she pressed the cold rock all over my body, chanting still, but in a more relaxed fashion now. I felt the healing coming to a close. She poured a little bit of liquid in a small, thimble-like, red plastic cup and added four carnation petals. I was to drink this down fast, petals and all, but I ended up chewing the petals because they were too big to swallow whole. At this point I felt wet, sticky, tired . . . but at the same time, invigorated, energetic, clear of headache, wide-eyed, happy, and relaxed.

I had been healed and that night I felt better than I had ever felt in Ecuador or anytime in the past few years. I really got into it. Maybe any religion is truth if you believe in it enough. So that's the story of when Knut went to Ecuador and got fireballs spit at him by a woman half his height.

Knut Hill



"La Maison des Esclaves" on Gorée Island, off the coast of Dakar, Sénégal, West Africa

by Liz Beachy

This is a scene of the remnants of the Atlantic Slave Trade. The door that can be seen under the stairs leading to the ocean was called the "Door of No Return." It was through this door that the Africans were forced to leave their homeland.

It was in places like this slave house on Gorée Island that thousands of people from different ethnic groups across Africa were stored in stone cave-like rooms with only a crack in the wall for light and fresh air. The people were separated into rooms designated for women, children, men, and a dungeon-like room with shackles for "insolent" men.

In contrast, up these stairs on the second floor, in luxurious surroundings and beautifully decorated rooms, lived the European slave traders.

An Unexpected Journey

Traveling in Europe has got to be one of the most interesting, exciting, and nerve-racking experiences of one's life. Things that may seem so simple can turn out to be more complicated than one could ever imagine . . .

Looking for a train that went from Venice to Budapest, we located the departure time for the overnight one, and were pleased with the scheduling. We had a whole day in Venice at Carnival! That being the third night not in a bed (having spent one night on a ferry and one on an overnight train), we walked into the train compartment thinking only of how great the long train ride would be for sleeping. Momentarily pondering which route we would take, we decided there was no way that the train would go through Slovenia; we would be stopping in Vienna. We waited wearily for an hour, riding with a group of military recruits until we got our own compartment and proceeded to vanish totally into the land of sleep.

The first interruption came around 2 a.m. when the passport official came to stamp our passports. Vaguely glancing at the stamp, I thought it didn't look Austrian, but I remembered I didn't know any small border towns and went back to sleep. A little while later, the ticket conductor woke us once again. "Sorry. Eurail is not valid in Slovenia." What?! "No, sir, we're in Austria. You're in the wrong train." (No I didn't say it, but I thought it.)

Well, \$17.50 each later we were happily sleeping again.

The next interruption came around 4:30 a.m., when the ticket conductor came around. "Sorry. Eurail not valid in Croatia." What?! No way. Not having read a newspaper in quite awhile and having no clue as to the political situation, this bit of information made us unsure of our personal safety. After trying, unsuccessfully, to come up with the \$20 per person he wanted—U.S. dollars, mind you—we started throwing in any currency we had. He

finally accepted the fact that we had no more money, scribbled some numbers on a piece of paper, pocketed the money, and went on his merry way. Whew! Edgy, but exhausted we sat in silence until the passport man came around. Checking our passports he said, "Get off the train," and took our passports down the corridor.

The next official came by, and, in response to my question as to why we had to get off the train, he responded, "Accept the reason. He's a policeman. Get your dress." Panicking about not having dresses in our backpacks, we looked at each other in confusion before we belatedly realized he meant "pack up your bags."

Stuffing things into our backpacks, we hopped off the train and followed someone to the police station, up two flights of stairs and to a bench to await the verdict. We had discovered we needed a transit visa. The problem was that the train conductor had all of our money, and we sincerely doubted they took VISA or traveler's checks. About that time, ten men came up the stairs behind a train official and began to hand over Italian *lira*. Yep, we were definitely going to spend a night in jail.

The door opened and the policeman came out, looked at our terrified, expectant faces, and said, "Go."

Okay, so then we were running, tickets in hand, to the train that was supposed to have left half an hour before. Amazingly it was still there, but three women were in our seats. After an interesting charades game, we got our seats, and sat in silence until we reached the border of Hungary. Finally. The adventure had ended.

My advice to others considering similar situations in life: while you may know where you are and where you want to go, check out the track in between because you just might get more than what you expected.

Kelly Riley



Itsukushima Shrine

by April Keaton

Erected during the Meiji Restoration, the shrine symbolizes beauty and majesty.

For Emily

As my thoughts wander, I think of you.
 About the times we have spent together and how long
 it has been.
 I thought about your birthday—the biggest one that I
 missed.
 One more New Year's Eve gone by, without the
 exchange of words friends like us share.
 With lots of time to think about life and friends and
 lifetime friends, I know that you will be a part of
 my life forever.

Carla Varner



Venezia

by Aaron Bommarito

A walk along one of the canals off the beaten path offers a
 glimpse of Venice, Italy.

Dachau

skeleton eyes peer
 from every stony foundation
 scream
 through every crack in the ground

the out-of-place sun
 the ovens, the chimneys,
 the gravel, the gray
 the more the more the more

the prisoners forced to feed the fires of the
 crematorium
 the ones who committed suicide

the ones who stole a blanket from their mothers
 the ones who could not live a free life even after
 liberation

the wind now licking my hair
 once lapped up ashes
 of small girls with dark hair
 bony men in striped uniforms

The guest book is filled with all who observe
 but there exists no record of lives lost
 my name is nothing
 I refuse to sign

Christa S. Clapp

Simply Belize

Life is "simple," but there is much to be said for Belizean "simplicity." A spontaneous, educational field trip with my fourth graders that would never have been possible without permission slips and bureaucracy in the States. Corn tortillas made from hand-ground corn and then cooked over an open hearth oven. A hike for lemon grass leaves to make tea for an after dinner drink. Colorful clothes woven with the intricacy of experienced hands and hours of labor in patterns passed down from generation to generation. Freshly squeezed juice with every meal.

A hand carved *sapito* from a cahoun nut and a mahogany plaque given to me by the principal of the school I taught at—very appropriate and meaningful treasures and gifts of time from the heart.

Respect and reverence for nature. The Mayans and Garifuna continue to practice with herbal medicines and to rely on the lush forests for help. Women use the clean river water and smooth rocks to wash their family's laundry while the children bathe and frolic in the water, cooling themselves. I have never seen such natural beauty.

A sense of community. A death in Dangriga brings the entire town to the wake to share in the family's grievances while celebrating the deceased's accomplishments. Even those who did not know her come to mourn because she was a member of their community. Mount Carmel Primary School does not have classes this afternoon; instead the children and teachers gather at the volleyball courts for three hours in the scorching sun to cheer the eighth grade team to a victory. On Children's Day, all of Benque Viejo del Carmen parades through the town celebrating the rights of children.

A trip to Cahal Pech, Altun Ha, and Xunantunich reveals the naturally preserved history of the country. Thousands of years of a lost civilization before me. I climb the ruins and imagine another time and another lifestyle.

With only four highways, a great majority of the land remains untouched. Villages, not open to tourists or visitors, continue to thrive. Retired yellow school buses from the States play Latino tunes or Bob Marley as they cruise the highways. A mother and her four small children squeeze themselves into a seat.

A young Mayan boy in Maya Mopan cries at the sight of me, Jan, and two other American community health workers. The only time he sees a white person is when a British nurse comes to the village to give vaccinations. He fears the pain of another injection.

I was astounded by the generosity I encountered in each city I visited and in every home I lived. I was accepted into homes and graciously fed by families who did not have much for themselves. There was no compensa-

tion, nor were there any awards or rewards of commendable service given to them for housing, feeding, and sharing with me. They welcomed me and involved me because they wanted to teach me about themselves, their country, and their history.

Do not call Belize a "Third World Country" or the people simple. For while they live a different lifestyle which may seem harsh and lacking in material possessions and luxuries to us, they are far more knowledgeable in other areas. They are not poor or deprived—for many have found the meaning of family and enjoy the world they live in. I have left a calmness, serenity, and peace in Belize.

Amy Trenkle



Gardener

by Aaron Bommarito

A gardener in Urbino, Italy, tills the soil in preparation of this year's crop.

Le Soleil

–AFRICA!–

Naked I stand
beneath the blazing Sun

–AFRICA!–

The Griot screams
Oh “dark continent!”
Oh mystery!
I am here only.

The innocence that once cloaked me
you have devoured

My ideals you have tattered
until they blew away with the wind

My self, my zone of comfort,
you have stripped from me

And I stand
bare naked
beneath the Sun.

My tenderness has taken refuge

My weakness dare not
show her face

The sparkle in my eye has dulled
from standing too long in the Sun.

–AFRICA!–

He screams

My child inside wants to turn and hide
but there is no place to run.

I am here only
naked and still
under the blazing Sun.

Liz Beachy

About Our Contributors . . .

Cathia Bailey, K'97, is a History/International and Area Studies major who wants to make traveling around the world her professional career. Lacking money of her own to do so, she has determined to either rob a bank or marry someone extremely wealthy.

Lola Baumann, K'97, studied in Cáceres, Spain.

Liz Beachy, K'97, is an HDSR major and African Studies/Spanish minor who loves to travel and explore new cultures. She hopes to one day work with a branch of the United Nations.

Rachel Bemis, K'97, is a Music major/Psychology minor who studied in Aberdeen and spent her Christmas vacation soaking up all she could of Scotland. On the Haggis Backpackers' cheery yellow minibuses she spent hours on end singing Christmas carols and "Oh My Darlin' Clementine."

Biology major Aaron Bommarito, K'97, studied in Macerata, Italy. He says that to see and understand Italian life, you need to get away from the large cities.

Tom Bourguignon is studying English and Theatre. He is grateful he had a chance to live in Scotland and travel around Europe.

English major Mara Bragg, K'97, studied in Cáceres, Spain. She found Silk's graffiti intriguing, but no European graffiti compared to the powerful messages painted on the Berlin Wall's "East Side Gallery."

Joy Campbell, K'96, spent three months among the homeless of Aix-en-Provence doing research for her SIP. She still corresponds, through a shelter, with some of her friends, and hopes to see them when she returns to teach English in a French high school this fall.

Economics major Christa S. Clapp, K'97, studied in Madrid, Spain, for six months.

Alison Crane, K'97, is a Biology major planning to save the world from pathogens and autoimmune diseases. Until then, she'll settle for playing *real* football with the girls in Aberdeen and conquering the Lake District while covered in the ubiquitous mud.

Sociology/Anthropology major Dawn Crist, K'97, studied in Kenya, East Africa, for six months.

Tara Darcy, K'97, a Biology major and French minor, studied in Aix-en-Provence. She misses Aix a lot and is counting the days until she can go back.

Denna Evoe is an International and Area Studies major who is reminded of the time she spent in Europe every time she touches her side and feels the scar left there by an Amsterdam truck.

Stacy Frattinger, K'97, an HDSR major, spent six months in Kenya.

Catherine Goodman, K'97, lived and breathed the Chinese culture for six months on Study Abroad in Beijing, China. She is a Psychology/International and Area Studies double major, who wants to return to the country that taught her the importance of bicycles, tea, and friendship.

Katharine Gormly, K'97, completed her Study Abroad in Bonn, Germany in Spring 1995 and her Career Development in Winter 1996. She found the importance that the German culture places on its history fascinating.

Knut Hill, K'97, a Biology major with a concentration in Environmental Studies, has been in love with the Ecuador Study Abroad program since he first found out about it. He learned Spanish especially for that program and found Ecuador to be even more incredible than he could have hoped.

Jeff Hotchkiss, K'97, went to Oaxaca, Mexico, for three months last spring. A Political Science major, Jeff wants to return to Mexico after graduation to study revolution and learn more Spanish.

Susan Johnson, K'97, is an Anthropology major/Environmental Studies concentrator who fell in love with the Highlands during her six month term in Aberdeen, Scotland.

April Keaton, K'97, is an Economics/International and Area Studies major. She studied at Waseda University in Japan for the 1995-96 academic year.

Cliff Lampe, K'96, lived in Ecuador during fall and winter quarter 1995-96. Cliff has always been generous with his empathetic abilities, and his sensitivity to another culture is documented here with expansive humor.

Henry Langreder, K'97, is a Religion/History major. After finishing studies in Bonn, Germany he spent Lent traveling through Italy which included stays in Florence, Assisi, Rome and the Vatican, Naples, and Sicily.

Jon Mastanuono is a K '97 English and Economics double major who participated in the GLCA European Academic Term during the fall of 1995. He stopped writing when he lost his faith in words. He started again when it was too hot to sleep.

Ryan McQuade, K'97, a Biology major, spent an incredible semester in Greece learning and seeing things he had hardly imagined. He has learned much about ancient Hittite texts and has come to the conclusion that Homer's Trojan War never happened.

Nichole Miller, K'97, studies English and Classics and spent nine months of her junior year in Aberdeen, Scotland. "The Sleepers" was inspired by her first visit to the churchyard at St. Machar Cathedral in Old Aberdeen, and "Umbrellas" by the typical weather conditions of a north-eastern Scottish winter. Nichole plans to return to Scotland as soon as possible, perhaps for graduate study.

Michael Mundahl, K'97, a Religion and English double major, went to Cairo, Egypt, for six months. He found that friends were few and far between, living another religion was eye-opening, and that you can find yourself in the most unlikely places.

International and Area Studies major/Russian Studies minor, Stacy Neterer, K'97, remembers fondly her afternoons of wandering the streets of St. Petersburg, Russia, with her camera before the snow started falling . . . and never stopped.

English major Hope C. Nguyen, K'97, attended the Strasbourg, France, program. Hope plans to use her French and English skills to complete a photodocumentary/creative writing SIP in Vietnam.

Kelly Riley, K'97, is a Spanish major and English minor pursuing a teaching certificate in bilingual education, who just loves overnight jaunts into Croatia and panicking because she forgot to bring a dress.

Ryan Rummer, K'96, studied at Lancaster University in Great Britain. He regards the experience as the best thing that's ever happened to him; he returns to Lancaster in the fall where he will complete his master's degree.

Heather Simpson, K'97, studied in Quito, Ecuador. Heather also completed her Career Development in Quito at the World Bank and plans to return to Ecuador for her SIP.

Tim Smith, K'97, is an International and Area Studies major with a concentration in Western Europe. He thought about researching bidets in order to write a similar article, but never had the courage to use one except to wash his clothes!

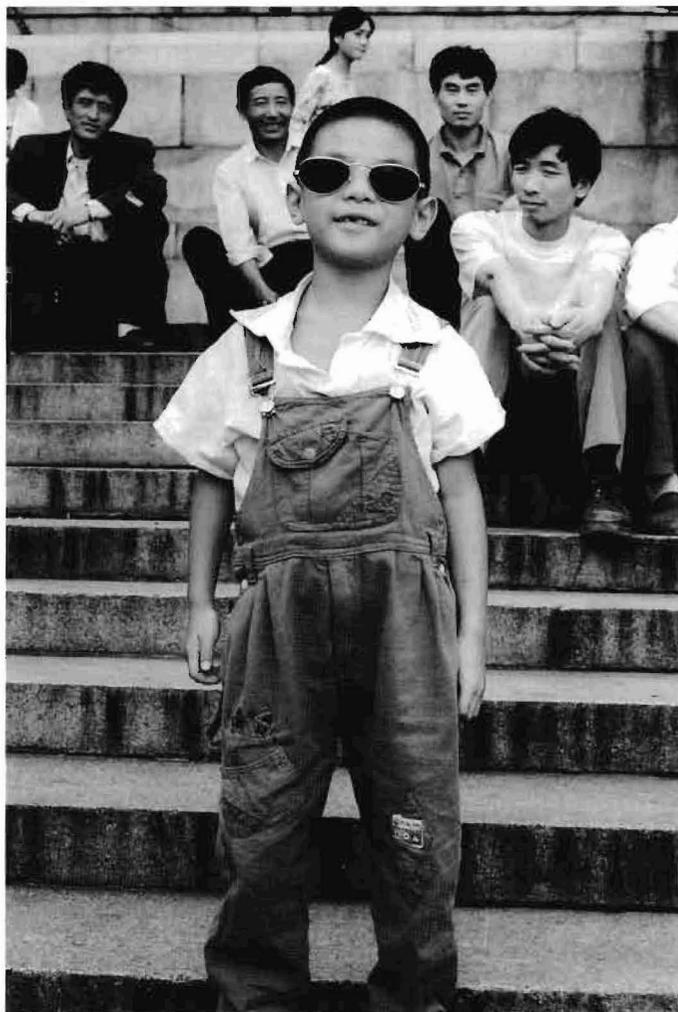
Tricia Smith, a K'97 Spanish/International and Area Studies major, loves magic, stomping through mud puddles, and looking for four-leaf clovers in her spare time. While on Study Abroad at the Universidad San Francisco de Quito, she had the wonderful opportunity teaching in a kindergarten class in Quito, Ecuador.

Todd Thompson, K'97, studied in Madrid, Spain, during the spring of 1995. He would like to return to Spain if he can.

Sociology major Amy Trenkle, K'97, spent the winter of 1996 teaching and traveling in Belize. She found the people, culture, and "simple" ways of life to be refreshing and inspiring.

Economics and German major Carla Varner, K'97, studied in Erlangen, Germany, for six months.

Cristina Wootton, K'97, from Grand Rapids, MI, studied in Lancaster, England, for six months. Christina has this to say about it: "Exploring myself, the good and bad, bouts of happiness and loneliness, all parts came together in Study Abroad for one of the greatest experiences of my life."



My Twin at Tiananmen Square

by Catherine Goodman

As I was sitting down to reload my camera and hiding from the Chinese who were pointing at the foreigner, I realized that the boy sitting across from me was wearing exactly the same outfit that I was.

Editors' Note . . .



Church of the Savior on the Blood

by Stacy Neterer

Alexander III ordered the Church of the Savior on the Blood in St. Petersburg, Russia to be built on the location where his father, Alexander II, was assassinated. It is often called the Church of Spilled Blood in remembrance of Alexander II's bloody death in 1881.

In St. Petersburg playing children, attentive grandmothers, and young lovers leave a nearby park through a decorated cast-iron gate and enter the grounds of the Church of the Savior on the Blood. Likewise, Study Abroad is a process of opening and closing many gates. We leave behind old familiar ways: native languages, customs, traditions, family, and friends. Soon, comfortable habits blend with insights into new peoples and cultures and we begin to look forward to the challenge of opening the next gate. We gain an appreciation for new lands and new faces which extends beyond the Study Abroad term. And we learn the world truly is our campus, and that there are many more gates to open.

