English

Ok Ran Ahn
English flies into the sky
and keeps right on going to all the other continents
English a deep ocean
of unknown words

Hussain Ani Al-Balushi
English landing in an unknown land
wanting to share his culture
English deciding not
to be quiet there

Tariq Al-Dawaighri
English developing inside my head
like a child gets her language
English pushing me up the hill

Hiroshi Awata
English lived in the hearts
of many countries
English a teacher
who makes me love to learn more about it

Ludovic Capo-Chichi
English turning me into a clown
in spite of my effort

Irene Carrasquero
English used since ancient times
like a sarcastic poem

Ozer Cinar
English learned in high school
not useful for talking

Andrés Fernández
English my selfish cat
I feed every day

Andres Fernández
English taking my heart away
and keeping me busy all the time

Gabriel Fernández
English tongue-tied
when it's time to talk

Gaby Haenisch
English perfunctory
when it's time to kiss

English concealed in old dictionaries

English words staying alone in my mind
without a phrase

English hiding out to protect its identity
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One of the great things about studying in an international English program is the opportunity it presents to get to know people from all over the world. Here you can get the inside story on several countries and their customs.

Stories & Poems . . . 29

What would life be without the inspiration that stories and poems provide? This section features the creative talents of some fine storytellers and poets here at EPI.

Special Features

- Got a problem? Maybe you’ll find the answer, or at least a good laugh in the Dear Pat letters at the end of each section. Whose problems are they, and who’s Pat? You’ll have to ask the Grammar/Writing 60a class.

- You may have a secret admirer and not even know it. In the personal messages throughout the magazine, here’s your chance to find out.

- Who is Sonya the cat? Well, the real Sonya is a dear friend of EPI teacher Barbara Kubodera, who came up with the challenging final sentence to be used in this edition’s Sonya the Cat story contest. See pages 45 and 46 for how the two winning writers managed to end their very different stories with exactly the same sentence.
# Sunrise Staff

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<td>Pedro Andrés Rojas, María Alejandra Quintero, Nobuhito Uda</td>
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Art & Entertainment

John Snopek               USA
Ferda Soyer               Turkey
Sung Heang Lee            Korea
Hiroshi Awata             Japan
Oscar Mondragón           Mexico
Ilana Nahm                Brazil
Irene Carrasquero         Venezuela
Pedro Andrés Rojas        Venezuela
Omar Al-Mutawaa           Kuwait
The time has come! All too long have we students of English suffered the indignity of being subjected to the cruel and unusual punishment of being forced to learn this irrational language! Too often have we groaned under the tyranny of the third person singular. How long are we to suffer in silence? I, for one, say, “Enough is enough!”

EFL (pronounced “ef-el”) students of the world, unite! Down with the tyrant. To the third person singular we say, “Off with your head!” To you irregular verbs, we say, “Be regular, or die!” To the multitudes of countables and uncountables, with your treacherous and useless differences in meaning, we say, “Settle your differences among yourselves, or we will settle them for you, and it will be a terrible sight to see.” To you word-order peculiarities, we say, “Put aside your pride of place, accept the democratic new world order! History is on our side, and we will bury you.” And finally, you capricious auxiliaries. To you we say, “We repeal your mandate. No longer shall you wiggle in and out of sentences for no apparent reason other than to annoy and frustrate us. Find your place and stick to it, or we will banish you forever!”

EFL students, remember. There are hordes of us. We are the future! We have already begun to remake the language. It can use all the improvement it can get. It may resist in the beginning, but in the end, we shall overcome it . . . mark my words!

Sirens

Ferda Soyer
Turkey

The main characters in this film, Sirens, are Stella and Tony, a married couple that have come to Australia from England. The story takes place in a small village in rural Australia. They are staying at the home of an artist and his family. Their host is a painter, whose wife is a model. He also has three other models and two little daughters. They live in a big house whose walls are covered with a lot of pictures of nude women.

Tony is a thin priest with brown hair and brown eyes. Stella is a thin, conservative woman with short brown hair and big brown eyes. Her white skin looks lifeless. The models are beautiful women with excellent bodies, long hair, and golden bronzed skin.

Tony feels that the paintings are blasphemous. Every night, during long dinners, the characters discuss art. Tony tries to convince the artist to change his style of painting, to quit painting pictures of naked women. And then Stella, one night, has a sexual relationship with the male model.

By the end of the film, Tony and Stella have changed a lot; they are much freer about expressing their physicality and feelings for one another. They return to England without changing the artist’s views.

Nudity is used very successfully in this movie. It represents collapsed taboos. In many other movies nudity is used in a disrespectful way. It cheapens women and the human body, but this movie celebrates beauty, not pornography. For these reasons Sirens made a positive impression on me. Love is always a subject matter for movies but in Sirens it isn’t presented in a stale, traditional way. I like Sirens and I would recommend it to everyone.
Van Gogh and His Tragic Love

I'm not an artist, but I have a love of art. For this reason, I've read many books written by art critics about the lives of artists. When I was a university student, I read a book about Vincent van Gogh's life. This was a fortunate and rare opportunity that made me concentrate my attention on Vincent van Gogh's life and his painting.

After reading the book, I respected him with all my heart and grew to love his pictures, especially two versions of "Sunflowers" and six versions of "Self-Portrait." Analyzing his "Sunflowers" and "Self-Portrait," I was able to understand why he daubed paint so thickly onto his canvas. I could read his passion and purity in his primary colors. In his "Sunflowers," the flowers will not keep silent. They seem to be struggling with something. They're dancing with someone. They seem to be fanatical about something. His "Self-Portrait" shows him as very thin and sad-faced. All the versions show his wrinkles, skinny looks, and tattered clothes. The most remarkable feature in the self-portraits is his eyes, which are so deep, dark, and burning. "Why does he look so sad?" I wondered. Why was he so poor? And what made him paint? Finally, what was he trying to say through his paintings?

Vincent van Gogh was born in Holland in 1853. His father was a pastor of a small church, and his younger brother, Teo van Gogh, was a trader of art objects. His family was very poor, so his parents opposed van Gogh's decision to become an artist. But only his brother Teo supported him. Van Gogh painted a lot of works, but he sold only one. Therefore, he was cold and hungry almost all the time. His paintings were his only companions. He felt alienated and depressed most of his life.

Yet he never stopped painting. Instead, he was absorbed in his life of painting with passionate love. He was filled with love not only for his pictures but also for the people around him. Still, his works are filled with a pain that, as his voice, says, "I love this world so much that I love even poverty, sorrow, shame, and all that is tragic in life."

I'll never forget my emotions when I concentrated my mind on his life and pictures. I could understand his work, which wants to give meaning to people's pain all over the world. Because of the intended expressions in his paintings, I'll look up to him forever.

Jorge: You were a good friend and roommate during the Spring quarter. I hope you can find a good opportunity in Florida. Good luck!

Gabriel

Heidy Valbuena & María Márquez:
Never say never again...
Their best friend.

Latin American Students and Omar:
We had a wonderful time this term. I hope to have so much again fun next term.

María Márquez
Fantasia:
A Journey to Self-Realization
Hiroshi Awata
Japan

Last month I saw a very interesting musical play, Fantasia. This word mixes the words fantastic and Asia. Fantasia was produced and directed by Dick Lee, a director from Singapore, and he starred in it also, playing a mental patient who has a dual personality.

One of this patient’s personalities is that of an Asian man and the other is that of a Westernized man. To find which personality is really his and who he is he sets out on a journey through Asia. As he experiences a variety of traditional dances and songs in each of the countries on his journey, he discovers gradually that he is an Asian and that he has to behave as one.

In this review Lee compares his life to the journey of a patient in search of healing. Singapore is one of the most modern and Westernized countries in Asia. He grows up in this country speaking English in the same way Western people do. He had thought there weren’t any differences between him and them, but in the course of his journey, he realizes that he isn’t a Westerner but an Asian. And now he has found his true identity.

When I finished watching this show, I really sympathized with Lee’s ideas. I had grown up in my country, Japan, being exposed to Western culture, American movies and American food. I had yearned to eat hamburgers and drink Coca Cola like characters in American movies. I had made light of Asian culture, including my country’s. But now I really think Asia is fantastic and exciting, with a rich historical and cultural heritage. I want to discover how to live within this heritage.

To the teachers who taught me and Doctor Alexandra:
I’ll move to Michigan and this is the last quarter for me at EPI. I’d like to thank each teacher that taught me and I’d like to thank Doctor Alexandra for what she did for me in the Fall quarter.

Ahmad Al-Mutairi

Cecil:
I want you to know that I love Ken Follet, Feliks, David, Lydia, Tom, Faber, Walden, Bloggs, Charlotte... and even Pritchard. I really love your classes!

Irene

Dick:
I didn’t know I liked to read and write until you taught me how to do it. You really developed my subtle writer I had inside. Thank you.

Gabriel

Pedro Andrés Rojas:
"I don’t know about you, but I can’t stop thinking of..."
Luis Miguel’s personal translator
The Dog and the Two Tortas: A Mexican Moral Tale

Oscar Mondragón
Mexico

It was a sunny, really wonderful day in a little town in Mexico. A healthy and enthusiastic dog was walking down the road when it came upon an old man who called to it, “Come! Come here, pretty dog.” The dog went up to the old man and how great was its surprise when this man gave it a really big, wonderful and incredible torta, full of exquisite beans, ham and cheese. Definitely, this was its best day and it thought, “It’s just incredible, unbelievable!”

The dog was so happy and kept on in the same direction. It had to cross a bridge, but first, on this particular day, it decided to go down to the lake for a drink of water. Suddenly, it saw another dog that had a torta that was as big and delicious-looking as its own. Immediately the dog thought, “If I scare it, I will have two tortas.” So the dog began to growl, but as much as it growled, so did the other dog. Then, having opened its mouth to bark at the other dog to scare it, it realized that the torta had fallen into the lake and that the other dog had been only its own reflection.

*Moral: Never let avarice blind you. Be prudent and just.*

---

The Age of Innocence

Ilana Nahm
Brazil

The film The Age of Innocence tells the story of a married man that falls in love with his wife’s cousin, who is separated from her husband, a very uncommon situation at this time. The married man and his wife’s cousin know they love each other, but they try very hard to control their feelings because they also know that there would be a scandal if they revealed them. Finally, the wife’s cousin decides to run away from her feelings and moves to another country to live again with her ex-husband. The married man remains married, but he does not love his wife, who knows about her husband and her cousin but prefers to “close her eyes” to the fact. To her, it is more important to maintain her marriage.

The film can make us think about a lot of points. We can ask ourselves about the social values of this age, about freedom and about people’s conflicts. And it is also very interesting to compare the past society to today’s on these points.

The characters are guided by the social values of the time. The most important thing for them is to be in agreement with the conventions of the age, even though this will damage their happiness. In the past sometimes people didn’t agree with the conventions, but they were worried about appearances. We can see this with the wife, that although she knows that her husband is in love with her cousin, she
... The Age of Innocence

presents to pretend that she doesn't know it, showing that
marriage, even one without
sincerity, was considered
more important at that time
than it is today. We can see it
also with the cousin, who tries
to live as a separated woman,
but who suffers a lot of
discrimination because of this.
We can see how difficult it
was for a separated woman to
live during "the age of inno-
cence." Society didn't accept
such a woman. The cousin is
forced to go back to her
husband because that was the
model at the time, and the
married man can't fight for
his happiness revealing his
love for his wife's cousin
because that would be too
liberal in this conservative
age.

The film can also make us
think about freedom. We can
conclude that the characters
don't have enough freedom to
do what they want. Although
they are free people, they are
also tied up in social conven-
tions. But what is freedom?
Today, people seem to be freer
to fight for their happiness, but
does that make things easier?
People can try to make a good
marriage as many times as
they want to. People can also
be single and society accepts it
without problems. But someti-
times it seems that people
don't know what to do with all
this freedom. Of course it's
much fairer to give people
chances to look for their way,
but that doesn't mean that
things have become easier.

Maybe today, people are
more liberal, but they also
have more conflicts than in the
age depicted in the film because
they are encouraged to think
and to question social values.
It's obvious, too, that the nature
of people's conflicts has also
changed. In the film the charac-
ters are worried about ques-
tions different from those we
are now faced with. Today,
people are talking a lot about
homosexuality, abortion and so
on.

The film might also make us
think about what will happen
in the future. We can see that
the characters' conflicts in the
film are not problems anymore.
Today, we have a liberal society
compared to that of the past,
but will today's questions
become conservative questions
for the next generations? How
far can society go with new
questions and conflicts? Those
are also questions that the film
makes us think about.

Like Water for Chocolate:
Once Isn't Enough

Irene Carrasquero
Venezuela

To see Like Water for Choco-
lace once isn't enough to catch
all the details it offers us. This
Mexican film, based on the
book with the same name
written by Laura Esquivel,
offers so many good things to
see. All these things try to
come into our mind at
the same time, but our
mind isn't able
to receive so
many things
at once
enjoying them
as they deserve.

The story, the
details, the charac-
ters—especially the charac-
ters—deserve to be seen one
by one.

Raised among onions,
tomatoes, potatoes and
condiments, Tita, the
main character in this
film, spends her life
under the oppression of
her mother, who obligates

Pedro Andrés Rojas:
"Have you ever thought about all that I had to do to get here and
meet you? I even had to take a quarter in EPI... Isn't it
enough?"

The Most Faithful of All Your Fans (and Your Favorite)

Ted:
"Do you know that I
miss you?"

Man Ni Chin
...Like Water for Chocolate:  
Once Isn't Enough  

her to obey a tradition that destroys her life: As the youngest daughter, she can't get married, because she has to take care of her mother until she dies. Consequently, Rosaura, Tita's oldest sister, marries Pedro, the young man with whom Tita is in love, and who has proposed to Tita but marries Rosaura as the only way to be near Tita.

But the film would be only one film more, like many others, if it didn't have such intricate details that won't let you think of anything but the story. The smallest detail has an important reason to be there. Tita is an amazing cook and each dish she prepares has unexpected effects on each character. This gives the film a kind of naive tone that makes it funny despite the tragic story of Tita's life.

The characters are completely alive. Each one has a well-defined personality. You have the opportunity to know them one by one during the film. Tita, Pedro, Elena, Rosaura, Gertrudis, Nacha, Chencha, the doctor... You can almost guess what they're thinking. Each one of them has her or his own life, her or his own problems, her or his own love story. All of them have their role in the story and give their contribution to building it from the beginning to the end.

To see "Like Water for Chocolate" once isn't enough either to catch it completely or to enjoy it as much as it deserves. To see it twice is enough to catch it. Would three times be enough to enjoy it? ☺

---

The Party Observer:  
A Slice of Weekend Life at EPI  

Hello, friends, it's me, the party observer! Today's report is about Jorge Lander party's, which was in Cliff Apartments, room 212, on April 22nd.

The hosts of this occasion were Jorge Lander, who provided all the beer and snacks, and our well-known friend Juan Antonio Somoza (Juanchi), who took care of the music.

People started to arrive at the party around 9:00 p.m., and by 11:00 p.m. almost fifty people had crowded into the apartment. People from various cultures were there, drinking and dancing non-stop until around 3:00 a.m., when two officers of the law came to the apartment and said,

"Hey, guys, please the music is too loud." Jorge talked to the police and, with his inimitable suave manner and considerable skill in the use of English, managed to smooth things over, and the party continued.

Around 5:00 in the morning people were still drinking, dancing and talking.

It was an unforgettable party. Everyone is still talking about it today, especially because a rumor floating around about an alleged videotape supposedly recorded around 4:00 a.m. has some of the partiers a little concerned, but don't worry, friends, so far no such video has turned up.

---

Omar Al-Mutawaa  
Kuwait

Pedro Andrés Rojas  
Venezuela  

Heidi, Juanchi and Yong.
Me again, my EPI friends, the party observer with another report on the awesome ability of EPI students to get down and party after a hard week of trying to crack the hard nut that, as we all know, English is. The night after Jorge’s infamous party, another great party was held by a group of EPI students on April 23rd at Omar Al-Mutawaa’s house located in the Five Points area. The party was organized by Omar and his Venezuelan friends Pedro José Rojas and Manuel Díaz. It proved to be a great success, as the fact that those present were still talking about it weeks later testifies. A few special factors contributed to the success of this party.

In the first place, the guests represented a variety of countries, giving the party a very international flavor. Everyone was happy to take advantage of this unique opportunity to interact with each other and learn about different cultures.

Second, there was an ample supply of beverages, which helped keep the guests merry and encouraged them to stay longer. The hosts conscientiously tended to the guests’ comfort and made sure that everyone was taken care of.

Finally, the selection of music played at the party was carefully selected to suit the preferences of the guests. A lot of Spanish, Arabic and popular old American songs were played. People were constantly dancing. Many got the chance to learn new dances from different cultures. This party was another unforgettable experience that left good memories in the hearts of those who attended. So, Mr. Omar Al-Mutawaa, congratulations on a very good party, and please, let’s do it again!

Dick Holmes, Cecil Melo, Jennifer Gardner, Mark Porter, Mark Stiteler, Alice Goodwin and Lauren Johnson:
Thank you for your good classes. You are excellent teachers.

And Julia Ferrillo:
Thank you for your precious help.
Ha huy Tuan

GWULa:
It’s been a real pleasure teaching you this term, and I’ll miss you when you leave! Please keep in touch with me!
Barbara

My Dear Sunrise Staff:
Thanks for all your great efforts in creating this Sunrise classic! It’s been a lot of fun, good hard work, and an education.
Dick

Ximena, Angelica and Oswaldo:
Good luck next quarter! It is good to have people like you for sharing part of your life.
Gabriel
Dear Pat,
I met a handsome guy from Turkey and I feel we’re falling in love. The problem is that I’m in Level 20 and he’s in Level 10, so our English is not good. He speaks Turkish and I speak French. Do you have any idea about how we can at least talk with each other?

In Love But Without Words

Dear In Love,
You don’t have a problem at all! In fact, you’re very lucky to have fallen in love with someone you can’t talk with. Words can be very dangerous when you’re in love. My advice to you is to speak only in French to him and insist that he speak only in Turkish to you. This way, you’ll stay in love with the sound of each other’s voice and never have to face communication problems. You’ll be the perfect couple!

Pat

Dear Pat,
I have a very unusual problem. Maybe you’ve heard about me. I’m the tallest human being in the world, and also the oldest. The problem is that I’ve never stopped growing. I’m 186 years old, 16 meters tall, and still growing. You know, it’s pretty uncomfortable “up here.” It’s beginning to hurt my neck when I bend down to listen to people. What can I do to stop growing?

Mr. Tree

Dear Mr. Tree,
You shouldn’t be afraid of that. It’s a wonderful thing. If you keep growing, you’ll be able to go to the moon by just stepping over. And you’ll be able to see the galaxy! The universe!

Pat

Dear Pat,
I have a big problem. My T-shirt has a small hole at the level of my chest. It’s small, but everybody looks suspiciously at my hole and I feel conspicuous. I don’t know what kinds of things people think about me. I like my T-shirt very much and I don’t want to throw it away, but this hole is driving me crazy. What can I do?

Mr. Hole

Dear Mr. Hole,
My advice is to make more holes in your T-shirt so nobody will look suspiciously at just one hole. You’ll be the center of attention. Wonderful, huh?
If you have success, please let me know because I’ll do the same thing, OK?

Pat

Dear Pat,
I like sleeping and waking up very late. Unfortunately, I have to wake up at 7:30 a.m. to go to school. Why don’t schools begin later, after 10:00 o’clock or so?

Sleepy Girl

Dear Sleepy Girl,
Here’s an easy solution to your problem: Just go to another country where time is three hours later.

Pat
Around the World

Oscar Valencia  El Salvador
Irene Carrasquero  Venezuela
Ilana Nahm  Brazil
Elzbieta Malinowski  Costa Rica
Andrés C. Fernández  Colombia
Tommaso De Luca  Italy
Kannika (Yong) Lilavivat  Thailand
Kyung-hoon Kim  Korea
Turkan Ozaydın  Turkey
Leda Escalante  Costa Rica
Remembering My Home

Oscar Valencia
El Salvador

It was an unexpected meeting. After all, I couldn't believe that here before me was another Salvadorian, here in Columbia. His name was Salvador, but he said to me, “You can call me Chamba” (a common nickname in my country). Our meeting was in the Thomas Cooper Library. Chamba had brought along a photo album and showed it to me.

For me, the album was a real treasure. In this “magic book,” Chamba kept many photos of his family, but suddenly the photos, like a flashback, brought back to my mind the war in my country...

“This is my town,” Chamba said, and the view of his town was terrible: All the houses had been destroyed by heavy bombardments.

“Here I am in another one,” he said. Incredible! Hundreds of people were crossing the Lempa river; they were escaping from a war zone.

In the album, Chamba also kept photos of many orphans, living in poor places and clothed in rags, showing dirty faces and sadness in their eyes. In addition, the album had photos of bloody soldiers and bloody guerrillas... both groups Salvadorean. Photos with destroyed schools, photos with ambulances and wounded people.

“Hey!” I said, “You are a good reporter!”... But he didn’t answer me.

He was not there... he was gone, and I couldn't look for him because, at that moment, I woke up.

I was in the library, a red book with the title El Salvador in front of me. Probably I’d been sleeping because of my fatigue but, anyway, I’d seen the faces of my people again and their suffering.

The “album” even showed me many things that I had never seen (I could see, for example, that the capital of my country hadn't suffered from the war as much as the rural areas had), and it reminded me that Salvadorean must work to keep the peace that El Salvador has right now.

Many world organizations such as the United Nations say that El Salvador is a great example of how to achieve peace. After almost twelve years of war I saw old enemies giving their hands to each other and working together in recent years. It is marvelous! And, when I go back to my country, I will try to work for peace, also.

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Manuel Díaz Poo

Osovaldo:
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Your Secret Lover

Pedro Andrés Rojas:
ALAKOM SALAM. Keep in touch. You never know what could happen in the future.
‘Amiguita’
What a Mistake!
Irene Carrasquero
Venezuela

"Where are you from?" the man asked her.

He was young. He looked like a good person. He probably just wanted to talk in order to make the time pass quickly. Even though she didn't want to talk, she didn't have anything better to do, except to read her book, but she had finished it. So, she decided to answer.

"From Greece," she answered without any more explanation.

"And what are you planning to do in Venezuela," he asked, curious.

"I'm not going to Venezuela. I'm going to Greece," she explained.

"Greece?" he asked, a little confused. "I didn't know this flight would stop in Greece before going to Venezuela!" he added laughing.

"Venezuela. What is he talking about? Is he laughing at me?" She couldn't stand the man staring and laughing at her.

"What are you laughing at?" she asked roughly. "Is somebody joking here?"

The man stopped laughing immediately and said softly, "Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't want to upset you," and, trying to contain a laugh, added, "but I thought you were kidding."

"Kidding? What is he talking about?"

"Why should I be kidding?" she asked seriously.

"Because you shouldn't be on a flight to Venezuela if you want to go to Greece. Venezuela is a little far from Greece, isn't it?" he asked sarcastically.

"What?" was the only word she could say.

Two hours and forty-five minutes later they were landing at Maiquetía Airport in Venezuela. And there she was.

She couldn't believe that she had taken the wrong flight. She thought nobody could make such a stupid and unbelievable mistake.

Venezuela... It was one of the most unknown countries for Juliet. She was Greek and she had just finished a master's degree in biochemistry at the University of South Carolina in Columbia.

She was supposed to be in Greece. But, instead, she was there in Venezuela waiting for the baggage.

Almost crying, she asked the young man, still by her side, "Where is Venezuela?"

"Venezuela," he corrected.

"In the north of South America. And my name is Carlos. I'll help you. Don't worry, this is a nice place... By the way, I don't know your name."

"A nice place? In South America?" She couldn't believe that.

"Juliet," she said. And added, "Do you have cars and buildings in Venezuela?"

"Yes," he answered. "And telephones and electric energy and shopping centers, believe it or not," he added smiling.

She smiled too. He saw that her smile was beautiful.

They picked up their baggage and gave it to a man dressed in blue.

"Taxi, sir?" asked the man.

"No, we have to look for some information first. Follow me," said Carlos.

They went to a window and Carlos talked to a woman in a strange language for a few minutes. He looked a little worried.

"What's wrong?" Juliet asked.

"There's no flight to Greece until next Thursday," Carlos said. "I'm sorry."

"Thursday? Today is Monday!" Juliet exclaimed.

"It isn't so bad. I'm sure you'll like this country, and you'll like my family too," Carlos said.

"His family? What is he planning to do with me?" But other thoughts made Juliet hesitant to complain. She didn't know the language. She didn't even know what lan-
A thin little woman appeared and looked at her in a friendly way after kissing Carlos on his cheek. Carlos said something to her in this strange language. The woman smiled at Juliet, took her hand and brought her to a room with a big bed. She was Carlos' mother.

Sitting on her bed, she wondered if she could talk to her mother. Carlos came into the room and as though he had been reading her thoughts asked her, “I guess you want to talk to your family, don't you?”

The three days in Venezuela didn’t turn out to be only three days, after all. It was to be three days, then five, then one week, then two... Three months later Juliet was still in Venezuela. Finally, she had learned how to pronounce this strange name: “Venezuela.”

She also learned how to take the subway and how to dance “salsa.” She learned to love the traffic and the people in a hurry every day. She learned to understand how to be “punctual” in Venezuela. She learned how the people work in this country and how they do their best for it. She learned Venezuela has engineers who build wonderful buildings, doctors who save lives, journalists who do their best to tell the truth, lawyers who fight for justice, teachers who educate Venezuelan children, and economists who try to put the economic situation into good shape. She learned Venezuela is more than corruption. She also got to know Angel Falls, Los Andes, La Gran Sabana, Amazonas, Morrocoy, Margarita. She learned to love these places.

She enjoyed learning all these things about this unknown country that wouldn’t be unknown anymore. Now it would be part of her life.

In Maiquetía again, she remembered that day, three months before, when she’d dis-
covered that she wasn’t afraid. Now, she wasn’t afraid either, but she was sad. Carlos was there, helping her as he always had.

"What a mistake!" Carlos said, breaking the silence. "Venezuela instead of Greece."

They both smiled. Juliet hugged Carlos and kissed him on his cheek.

"Gracias," she said. And she went. She wasn’t the kind of person who likes to say "good bye."

During the flight to Greece she realized how her life had changed. Now she knew she could go wherever she wanted. She wouldn’t feel fear anymore. Carlos had taught her not to be afraid. "Why be afraid?" Carlos used to say. "Good people are wherever you go."

And now she knew Carlos was right. It wasn’t strange. He was always right.

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Various stereotypes about Brazil have become famous around the world. Some of them accurately describe the way of life in Brasil while others are not exactly true. Let’s examine some of the most popular stereotypes.

In general, people say that Brazilians are very warm and friendly. That’s true, but there are some advantages and disadvantages about this characteristic. For foreigners it’s very good because they are well received by the people, and they can even become friends with Brazilians. It’s also good for Brazilians encountering a new social environment (at a party, for example, where most of the people are unfamiliar) and for those who live in the country, because everyone there is very friendly. But there are some disadvantages to all this friendly conduct. Sometimes it seems like you have a lot of friends, but when you really need them you see that this is not exactly true. Everyone seems to be your best friend, but it’s not deep, it’s only superficial.

Brazilians are also known for being lazy. As in other countries, though, in Brasil there are all kinds of people, some who work really hard, and some who don’t like to work at all, depending on the person. It is true that in the cities near the beach people are more informal and students prefer to study at night so that they can go to the beach during the day. Because of these appearances, foreigners might assume that Brazilians in general are lazy.

Another stereotype about Brazilians is that they always have a “special” way to solve problems, called “The Brazilian way.” That’s really the truth. Brazilian rules are not so rigid, and people think they can always do what they want because they won’t get into trouble doing it. There are some advantages and disadvantages to this conduct. For every rule there is an exception, and Brazilians consider these exceptions. Sometimes this can lead to fairness beyond that in other countries where laws and rules cannot be questioned. People are rational and not machines, so they must be open to thinking

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Colleague:
For my colleague old Pedro. I hope you have a nice time in South Africa. Be careful with lions.

Carolina

New students:
Enjoy the hottest season!

The Weather

CS20:
I enjoyed being your teacher. You’re all so much fun to talk to. I know you love to talk, so remember to talk during your oral interview.

Your teacher, Bronia
About Brazil

about rules and questioning whether they are really necessary. On the other hand, Brazilians just ignore some rules and this creates a big disorder. For example, Brazilians generally don't respect traffic rules, so the traffic is really crazy, and the rate of accidents is high. We Brazilians and people all over the world need to learn when we can question a rule, and when we have to respect it. It's important to understand that we live in society and have to respect each other's space, so if we all just do what we want, the meaning of living in society will be lost.

Like other countries, Brazil has a very particular way of life, with good and bad aspects. The most important thing to keep in mind is that we can't just generalize Brazilian characteristics and apply them to every Brazilian. Everyone has individuality, and before being Brazilians, everyone is a person with his/her personal way of life. The problem with national stereotypes is that we form impressions about people that we don't know based only on the countries that they come from. This impression can be wrong, and we have to give everyone a chance to show her/his unique personality before concluding anything about this person.

March 30th, the day EPI classes started, my communication class teacher handed out a syllabus and explained the activities that we would be doing during the quarter. One of these activities was to prepare speeches about something interesting in our countries and to present them in primary schools.

In the beginning, I didn't like this activity since I didn't have anything from my country and it would be very difficult to find something interesting here for ten-year-old children.

Finally I decided to talk about Easter in Poland, because we paint eggs there and crush them as a special kind of play and I could buy and prepare eggs here for the children. I thought if the children had a chance to play as a part of my presentation, they wouldn't feel bored.

After practicing our ten-minute speeches in communication class and getting some correction, we went to a primary school. On the way to the school we talked to our communication teacher and we were very nervous because our English was not always easy to understand and we didn't know how the children would accept our speeches. We were going to be presenting our speeches twice because there were forty children and they were in different classrooms.

It was a very enjoyable time making our presentations. The children paid attention, maybe because of our different pronunciation or maybe because we were from different countries and they hadn't had so many opportunities to know people from Oman, Korea, Japan, Russia, Poland, etc.

When my speech about Easter in Poland was over and the children were painting their eggs, I asked them if they had some questions. I prepared my mind to answer questions about Easter and I was surprised when the first question was: "Do you rent movies in

Surprising Questions

Elzbieta Malinowski
Costa Rica

Juanchi, too, was asked some surprising questions.
... Surprising Questions

Poland?" Then came other questions about our lifestyle. "Do you go to grocery stores to buy food?" "Why do you study English?" "What does the government do if somebody kills another person?"

At first, I couldn't understand why nobody asked about my topic but instead about just anything they wanted to know. However, eventually I felt very good because, in this way, I got to know American children and I liked their direct questions. They were very friendly and open and by the end many of them had painted eggs with special greetings to me and gave them to me as a gift.

After all, I enjoyed this activity because it was different and new to me.

Ranch Work in Colombia

Andrés C. Fernández
Colombia

In Colombia there are various kinds of farms depending on the region. One of those is the plains ranch. The plains are characterized by their dry land in summer and floods in winter, and there are no mountains around. There are distinctive species of fauna and flora, and sometimes it is easy to find wildcats and bears. The ranches generally average 1000 acres each, and are dedicated almost entirely to the raising of cattle.

First of all in working the cattle, it is necessary to gather them about five times a year or more to count the births and deaths since the last census, maintaining control of entries and exits to prevent cattle theft. The plainsmen go out around 6:00 a.m. to gather the cattle. At this early hour, it is easiest to get all the cattle together with only a few misses since the cattle sleep together at night to conserve the young bulls' warmth. All the plainsmen ride horses and enclose the cattle whistling and yelling as they guide them toward the corral.

Once in the corral, the cattle are moved one by one into the branding funnel, which consists of a tunnel made of wood big enough for only one cow at a time. When the cow is inside, wood sticks are put in back and in front of the cow, restricting its movements. In this way it is easier to brand it and inject the vaccine against aftosa fever into its neck, avoiding vaccine loss.

Finally, the plainsmen gather the young bulls into a small corral, even though it is very difficult to accomplish this task because their mothers are very jealous and defend them against anybody. Ranchers are able to recognize the young bulls by the brand put on the ear at birth according to their mother's brand. The brand may be a cut in the ear tip (bocado), or a hole in the center of the ear, etc. When the plainsmen recognize the brand, they force the young
bull to lie down and hold it firmly while the new brand is put on each side of its back legs.

Generally when the cattle count is finished, the ranch owner permits the killing of a cow the next day as a reward for the work done. The steer is selected from the corral and is tied with ropes to a tree all night long to keep it still, because it is bad for the meat if it is disturbed. At 4:00 a.m. the next day, the steer is sacrificed with a stab into its head. Then, the blood is gathered in a dish to be given to the dogs. The meat is cut into pieces and the leather is used afterwards to make ropes. Almost every part of the steer is used, and the cook knows how to cook even the intestines and the testicles to make a delicious typical dish called creadillas.

Recently, the first “free” political election in South Africa was held. It was “free” because, for the first time, over thirty million black citizens were allowed to vote.

This event, even without considering the results, represents a great success and symbolizes apartheid’s end, due to the long struggle of Nelson Mandela and his African National Congress party. At the end of the vote counting, the ANC leader, after twenty years of political imprisonment, became South Africa’s new President. His administration, as he has promised, will be based on the collaboration of all South Africa’s political parties, including also the party of the former president.

Considering the long background of apartheid and the election’s potential for violent conflict, the election and the vote counting proceeded smoothly. U.S. President Clinton announced reinforcement of economic assistance to South Africa to help carry forward the democratic process.

With this election, millions of South African people, after three centuries of colonial domination and two generations of apartheid, have obtained civil rights, the well-deserved fruits of their struggle and the struggle of their ancestors who died in the hope of one day making South Africa a free and civil country.

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Famous Thai Festivals

Kannika (Yong) Lilavivat

Thailand

In Thailand there are many unique traditions, such as our costume, food, language, script, and celebration of a lot of Thai Festivals. Our most famous festivals are Song-Kran Day and Loi-Kra-Thong Day.

Since ancient times, Song-Kran Day has been celebrated as the Thai New Year’s Day. Song-Kran Day falls around April 13th every year. On this day parents bring their children to visit their grandparents. The children pour water into their grandparents’ hands and the adults grant them a wish. Water-pouring, in general, is a traditional custom on Song-Kran Day. Nowadays the way of celebrating Song-Kran is changing. Teenagers and kids stand along the road and splash water onto the passing cars and pedestrians. On this day you will get soaked if you are not careful. Many car accidents occur everywhere, especially on the highway to rural provinces. Too much fun, too much pain. Many people don’t think about unpredictable phenomena on Song-Kran Day, and a lot of people get hurt. Some lose time at work because of getting soaked or
Famous Thai Festivals

injured. Others even get killed in car or motorcycle accidents. Nowadays the government warns people not to pour water on drivers, especially motorcycle drivers.

Another Thai Festival is Loi-Kra-Thong Day, held on full moon day in November every year. We believe that this day we must make apologies and give thanks to the Kong-Kar river, which gives us water to use and drink. We consume some water and then drain some into the river. Loi-Kra-Thong reminds us about the usefulness of water. The festival begins at night. A lot of people make their own Kra-Thong boats or buy them at the river or canal. Some people make wishes as they send off their boats. In the Kra-Thong we put candles, flowers and coins. The children always jump into the water and swim after the coins. Ten years ago all Kra-Thong were made from foam or plastic. They filled the river with a lot of garbage. Instead of representing an apology to the river, this practice was just making more pollution. Now the government and other agencies urge our people to make Kra-Thong from natural items such as banana stems rather than from foam. This will reduce the waste.

It can be seen from the customs followed during these two festivals that the relationship between Thai people and water is very important. I think the source of these festivals may be the hot weather in Thailand.

The Most Difficult Aspects of American Culture for Me to Understand

Kyung-hoon Kim
Korea

This is my first time in America, and everything seems difficult, even looking at people. When I meet someone, it is a confusing matter to determine which part of the other’s face I should look at. When I was in Korea I was taught that to look straight into another’s eyes, especially into the eyes of someone older than I, was impolite. This means that lots of Koreans do not like eye contact except with those whom they have a very close relationship with.

Koreans’ lack of eye contact originated in Confucianist culture. Confucianism lay emphasis on politeness. Most people living in regions influenced by Confucianist culture have been taught that looking straight into others’ eyes is beyond the limit of politeness, even while they are talking. Koreans have been emphatically taught to observe the proprieties since ancient times. Even though we are
The Most Difficult Aspects of American Culture for Me to Understand

living in the 20th century, it is still considered unacceptable to make eye contact.

Foreigners, especially those who live on the American continent, might think it is a sign of ignorance or racism that Koreans do not make eye contact. During the LA Riot in 1992, a lot of Korean stores were totally destroyed. There were some cultural reasons behind this destruction. Koreans and most other Asians hardly smile and do not make eye contact with others. Because of the difference between Koreans' typical facial expression and that of Americans, almost 90% of those attacking their Korean neighbors at that time considered them racist. That was a tragedy.

Misunderstanding brings hostility. Now newspapers and TV are beginning to inform people about the differences between Koreans and other countries' people. We keep learning about differences among various cultures. Someday, we Koreans will easily make eye contact with other people because the world is getting closer and closer every day. Culture shock will not be a serious problem for us in the future.

The Dedekorkut Story

Turkan Ozaydin

Turkey

The ancestors of the Turkish people lived in a valley in Anatolia surrounded by many very large mountains. These people had a great deal of influence on the neighboring peoples. They were hunters but they were also farmers. Their population increased day by day, and finally they didn’t have enough space for everyone; they had to spread beyond the valley.

The only way they could get out of the valley was to make a tunnel through the mountains, so they tried to dig their way through. They didn’t succeed, but in their digging, they discovered iron deposits and decided to continue tunneling by setting fire to the iron and melting it. They tried burning their way through the mountains over and over again until finally they succeeded. The Anatolians were very happy, for they had finally escaped the confines of their valley.

One group of these people became the Turks, another the Uzbeks, another the Kazaks, another the Hungarians, and the other the Azaries. In this manner, the Anatolian people spread throughout the region.

Everybody: By the time you read this, maybe I won’t be here anymore. But it doesn’t matter! I just want you to know that I enjoyed being in Columbia in the spring term and meeting all of you. Unfortunately, I’m not as lucky as some of you and I have to go back. Good luck to all of you. Maybe someday we can meet somewhere in the world.

Roberto
One Sunday at Easter time
I woke up and I could not find
my husband. I decided to look
around and finally I saw him
praying outside the house
waiting for the sunrise to give
thanks to the Lord for the
resurrection of Christ. That
day I realized that my husband
and I have different ways of
celebrating holidays. I was
beginning to learn how many
differences we have as a cross-
cultural couple. My husband is
from North America and I am
from Costa Rica; as a result we
are constantly living and
working with two cultures.

My husband’s North
American family and my
Costa Rican family are
different, but I have
learned to enjoy both.
My family is very
close. Every Sunday
afternoon we meet to-
gether to drink coffee with
bread and talk around the
table the whole afternoon and
part of the evening. Everybody
is usually talking at the same
time, but we all understand
what is happening; we do not
need much to eat, just time to
talk to each other. If the televi-
sion is turned on, we do not
pay attention to it. My
husband’s family meet only
when they have a specific
reason. There are always many
tings to eat, which I enjoy,
but they do not spend much
time sitting around the table
talking; they stand up and
play a game or watch tele-
sion, concentrating on the
program. Unlike my Costa
Rican family, they are always
in a rush to leave because it is
late and the next day they have
to work.

In America family activi-
ties or dinner with friends has
a definite time to start and a
certain time to finish. How-
ever, in my country, they may
start at an approximately
definite time but they do not
have a certain time to end.
Time is important in North
America, but in Costa Rica,
time does not mean as much.
In Costa Rica, I can be late to
church or to class or to a
meeting and it is not impor-
tant, but in North America you
have to be on time in order to
be polite or responsible. This
is a cultural aspect that my
husband and I are working on.

He is trying to accept that
people will be late to
meetings in my
country and I try to
be

sorrow, excitement, and
frustration through close
physical contact.

I have a special North
American father and mother-in-
law. When I met them, I
thought they were going to be
cold and quiet and that they
would not have time to really
get to know me, but I was
wrong. They taught me that it
is unwise to make quick
judgments about culture or
people. They are lovely and
expressive, and they have
taken time to get to know me
and talk to me even though
their lives are busy. They are
very observant. I do not need
to tell them that I need some-
thing when they have already
met the need.

I have seen this
same great quality
in some North
American friends
and groups who
have visited Costa
Rica. They give of
their time to help
others and fill the needs
that they see. In this way
North Americans give their
lives to others, not necessar-
ily with words or by spending
a lot of time but with actions.
This is something very special
North Americans do.

My husband and I are
learning day by day how to be
open in our cross-cultural
marriage. Since I have moved
to the United States, I have
begun to understand the
differences between our two
cultures. There are differences
in how we relate to one an-
other and how we show our
feelings. Sometimes this causes
confusion and misunderstanding,
and this is what makes
cross-cultural relationships
difficult. However, one thing I
have already learned is that
neither culture is better or
worse, just different.
DEAR PAT

Dear Pat,

Last night, a girl made a phone call to my room. When I picked up the receiver, she didn’t let me say anything. She was crying and saying a lot of things that I couldn’t understand. At last, I understood something like, “I love you, John, I love you!” I tried to explain to her that I wasn’t John, but she persisted. She said she was going to come to my room and then hung up the phone. What am I going to do if she comes here?

Latin Lover

Dear Latin Lover,

She won’t come to your room. Don’t flatter yourself! It was just the wrong number, not the wrong person.

Pat

Dear Pat,

I wore a Beavis and Butt-Head T-shirt today, and everybody stares at me saying, “Hu, hu, hu, hu.” Do I look stupid or crazy? Do they like me or just my T-shirt?

The King

Dear King,

Don’t worry about it. I think they’re jealous. It probably doesn’t look like a stupid or crazy T-shirt, but maybe it looks a little bit childish. If you don’t want people staring at you, you should give it to someone younger than you, for example to me.

Pat

Dear Pat,

I have a big problem. I’m always falling in and out of love. I’m sitting in a restaurant with my new girlfriend when along comes another beauty and I get up immediately, without even telling my date where I’m going, to pursue my new “dream girl.” What can I do to solve this problem?

Latin Lover (Again)

Dear Latin Lover,

Go ahead, don’t hesitate to follow your instinct, but don’t forget to give a last kiss to your first date and pay for her meal. You have to be a gentleman after all.

Pat

Dear Pat,

Everybody wants to help me get a new job. I would like to change my job because I’m bored with it, but unlike the situation for human beings, my job is unchangeable and my work is indispensable. What’s your advice? Could you help me, please?

God

Dear God,

Find your Goddess. She can help you. Or, you could try killing yourself to confirm whether you’re really God or not.

Pat
Stories & Poems

Masako Yamamoto
Kannika (Yong) Lilavivat
Dick Holmes
Hiroshi Awata
Valery Ganiev
Eugene Rakotonirina
Gabriel Fernández
Ok Ran Ahn
Carolina Liendo
Ludovic Capo-Chichi
Durmus Ozdemir
Oscar Mondragón
María A. Larrañaaga
Turkan Ozaydin
Osvaldo Driollet
Mutlu Ulutagay
Turker Teker
Roberto Matsuda
Patricia Coello
Ilana Nahm

Japan
Thailand
USA
Japan
Bashkortostan
Madagascar
Venezuela
Korea
Venezuela
Benin
Turkey
Mexico
Colombia
Turkey
Argentina
Turkey
Turkey
Brazil
Ecuador
Brazil
Body Language
Masako Yamamoto
Japan

Jack had just finished his day's work, which was to kill another important figure. Jack was working as an assassin. Now he was back in his house cutting a lemon because he wanted to drink some vodka with lemon. In the process, he cut his thumb, which bled for a while. After the bleeding stopped, he looked at the open wound on his thumb. "Wow!" he thought. "It looks like a mouth." And the shape of the wound did look like lips. But he didn't think much about it and went to bed.

The next morning, he was awakened by the pain in his thumb. He looked at it and screamed because the wound, which still looked like a mouth, was moving and making some kind of noise. Then the mouth on the thumb began to talk to him. "Jack... Jack... I'm thirsty..." said the slight voice. Jack thought that he was dreaming. But the mouth said again, "Give me some water..."

Soon his thumb began to talk every day. "Jack, how's your job?" "Jack, how did you get so rich?" At first he tried to ignore it but after two weeks, he wasn't able to stand it anymore. He decided that he would chop off the thumb. "I don't need a thumb with an evil mouth," he thought, and chopped it off. Then he lived again as usual, but after three months the mouth appeared on his knee and began to talk again. "Jack... I have a sore throat... Help me..."

Jack thought that he was insane. But definitely the mouth on the knee was talking. When he tried to cover it with dressing, it was very painful.

"Jack... You killed me... You killed me..." said the mouth.

Every day, the mouth kept talking, and Jack went crazier and crazier. "Please stop talking!" he screamed every day, every day.

But the mouth didn't stop. "Jack... You killed me..."

"Stop it! Who are you?..." he demanded.

"I'm Freddy..."

When he heard this, his face paled. "Freddy... the man that I killed... three months ago."

Finally Jack was sitting in a wheelchair and screaming. He'd completely lost his mind.

"Shut up!" he screamed. "Jack... Why did you kill me?" The mouth was appearing on his throat now.

"Jack..." the mouth said.

"Shut up!" he screamed.

"Jack..."

"Shut up! I'm going to make you shut up!" he screamed and grabbed a gun. He pointed it at his throat and pulled the trigger... &

Giovanna:
It was a pleasure to know you this quarter. I wish you good luck in your future plans.

Gabriel

Roberto "my platonic love"
I have missed you a lot since you left our class, but seeing you around has given peace to my spirit and has helped me to keep going. I will miss you even more when you go. What am I going to do without you?

A Broken Heart
Kiss

Kanika (Yong) Lilavivat
Thailand

A little boy named Amos lives with his parents in a big city. His parents are nouveau rich and give him everything he wants. He has a big room in which he is surrounded by toys such as a big teddy bear, a car that can run like a real one, etc. Although he has a lot of things he wants, he is always very quiet. Sometimes he stays in his room all day. His parents cannot understand why he looks so sad all the time.

One night Amos goes to the playing room with his teddy bear. While he is playing, a beam of light comes shining toward him. He is shocked and frightened. Suddenly there is a beautiful fairy with a wand in her hand standing before him.

"Amos, little boy, why do you look so sad?" the fairy asks.

Amos gazes at her and says nothing.

"Don't be scared. I won't hurt you. I want to help you."

"I don't need help," Amos replies. "I have a lot of toys and everything I want." Amos replies.

"I know you need something besides these toys."

"I don't know." Amos answers.

She asks Amos again and again what he needs. Finally Amos asks for a flower. She is amazed.

"I will give this flower to my dad and mom," he says. "I love dad. I love my mom, too."

Suddenly he wakes up because his mom and dad are calling him to go to bed. He wakes up with the flower in his little hand.

He goes to his parents, gives them the flower, and kisses them. Amos doesn't say anything. His mom and dad are surprised and kiss him, too.

And that was all he needed, a kiss. Having gotten it, he becomes cheerful and stays that way.

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Two Haiku

Dick Holmes
USA

one lifetime
has led to this
ripe watermelon

twilight in the woods
with each step
unseen wingbeats
Nightmare
Hiroshi Awata
Japan

One morning, the sound of strange voices wakes me up. I can’t understand at all who would be speaking such a strange language or what language is being spoken. Wondering what’s going on, I get up out of my bed earlier than usual and go in the direction of the voice. In the kitchen I find that it is my mother and elder sister, making breakfast, who are speaking this strange language I haven’t ever heard before.

“Good Morning!” I say as usual and they look up slowly. I’m startled at the sight. They have three eyes and only three fingers. “What’s the matter with your faces?” I shout. But they seem not to be able to understand what I said. They look at each other and my mother says something to me with a look of wonder on her face but I can’t understand her. I run to the bathroom and look in the mirror. I have just two eyes and five fingers as usual. I can’t understand what is happening.

I run out of my house to find out what is happening. Praying that my friends haven’t changed, I go to school. When I reach my class many three-eyed, three-fingered students are chatting loudly in a very strange language. No sooner has

laughing at me. “Oh, my God!” I lament.

I start off on a run to the hospital. I decide to be operated on. After a few hours, the doctor cuts off my first and third fingers and drills a hole into my forehead to put another eye in. When the surgery is finished I have three eyes and become a normal three-fingered person.

I go back to my class and spend several hours with my friends. After several hours, I’m able to understand their language almost exactly and to listen and speak fluently. I think I will be able to live in this strange world. I feel relieved. Before I know it I fall into a deep sleep. I don’t know how much time has passed. Suddenly, I feel somebody shaking me out of my sleep. I wake up and I’m astonished at the sight: My two-eyed mother is shaking me with a five-fingered hand.

Everyone:

Should the USA send troops to Bosnia? This is an important question. In my opinion, there are good reasons to send troops to Bosnia. First, if the USA sends troops there, it will keep the world safer from problems which may happen in the future in places such as Albania. Second, it will prevent the war from spreading in Europe. If war spreads in Europe, the world will be destroyed. World war will start. Finally, if the USA sends troops to Bosnia, it will help the people of that country, including the small children, old people, and also women there.

But why doesn’t the USA send troops to Bosnia? I think because the American government thinks that there are no benefits for them in becoming involved in Bosnia and also because the American people don’t want to lose their sons and daughters in this war. If the USA wants to be the only power in the world, though, I think it had better send troops to Bosnia.

Said Al-Shahri
How Crazy Words Can Rescue Us

Valery Ganiev
Bashkortostan

Every exciting adventure remains in our memory because of the unusual situation it represents. It could be some terrible conditions, like stormy weather, wonderful achievements, or even crazy words. Our words and our emotions... What power words have over our feelings, even those that may not contain important meanings! I will never forget what a dramatic influence just a few seemingly insignificant words had on a group of people I was with when we were once in a very difficult situation.

Our adventure happened as we were doing a research project after our second year of studies at Moscow University. Our group, consisting of eight people, were studying geological formations of the Kruym peninsula. We had to climb the Chatury-Dag mountain, find some rocks, and collect them. Nobody expected that it would be difficult, so we didn't take any special equipment for climbing. When we got to the top of the mountain, we found what we were looking for. So far, we hadn't had any problems.

The troubles began when our group started to go down. First, we got lost and had no idea where we were going. Some people in the group were getting very tired. Then, halfway down we came to a big obstacle, a dangerous precipice. Descending this precipice, two girls almost fell and had to be rescued. After this incident we sat down a while. We were almost at the bottom of the precipice, and each of us was thinking about what had just happened. Nobody could speak or do anything. My hands were shaking. Nobody wanted even to think about how we could continue to go down. Suddenly, a girl in the group said, "Oh, my God! My pencil is broken!"

What a change these few words brought about! All of us started to roar with laughter, and we continued to laugh for five minutes. By the time we stopped laughing, we had almost forgotten our predicament and gotten some fresh, powerful energy from somewhere. It was wonderful! Only a few words, and believe me, our world was changed! After that, our group was able to clear any hurdle, and in spite of everything we managed to make it back down the mountain.

When we came to our camp, we were so tired that it was impossible to do anything. But we found energy enough to express our gratitude to this girl for her crazy words, which had rescued us. I will never forget her words: "Oh, my God! My pencil is broken!"

Like a Blossom

Masako Yamamoto
Japan

I have to be born and live in your wind
And grow like a blossom with someone like you.
Each tree stands alone at the edge of night
And I see your face sparkle under a half moon.

I see you after a week of rain.
Among the stars in my head, your face shines.
Darkness glides by and disappears.
And I am not alone in the pines.
Dissatisfaction

Eugene Rakotonirina

Madagascar

On a nice summer day, I'm walking through the mountains and fields, on my way to visit my parents, who live in a rural village about 50 kilometers from the capital. I enjoy going to our village during this season because the scenery is beautiful and all of nature is being resuscitated to a new life.

A little way from me, two children are on their way to school. The boy is about 8 years old, and the girl, probably his sister, about 6 years old. It is very pleasant to see them jumping, singing, shouting, dancing, and running along the road. Sometimes, they run through a field rushing after a cricket. Having succeeded in catching the poor insect, the little boy shows his great delight by rolling himself in the grass like an acrobat. The little girl, afraid of their arriving late at school, tells her brother to hurry up. Running and jogging, they keep on laughing and shouting. Sometimes, they throw stones or plout oxen and sheep grazing in the fields.

Suddenly, the little boy stops jogging, touches his trouser pockets, puts his satchel down, and begins to check all his clothes. Seeing him very nervous, his sister comes back to him and asks him what is wrong. Confused and slightly worried, I see him answering his sister in a crying voice. For a few moments, the little girl pores over her brother's face, very perplexed, too. And then, they begin to check the soil and grasses around them and retrace their way looking for something along the road.

I wonder to myself what problem they have to be worried like this. They are so busy that they don't see me approaching them. Quietly, I ask them what they are looking for. The little girl, crying, answers that they have lost their money their parents gave them to buy something to eat for lunch; and the boy adds that their parents will scold them if they find out. I take the two children by their hands and reassure them that nothing bad will happen to them. I give them some coins and tell them to go to school. They are very pleased and thank me for my help. And I leave them sitting in the grass counting the coins in their hands and smiling to each other.

Walking ahead, I turn my head back around and take one last look at them. How surprised I am when I see that they've gone back to their search for their lost money. I can't say anything, but in my mind, I try to imagine what the two children are thinking now: "If we find the coins we've lost, we can save the money and buy something else!"

And on my way, I'm whistling a popular song: "It is difficult to find satisfaction..." ə

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My Dear GW60a, RV50, and Toefl Workshop students:
It's been a pleasure working with you and getting to know you. Best wishes to each of you!

Dick

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My Danish girl:
I will really miss you when you leave. I had a wonderful quarter in EPI with you. Please do not forget me in Denmark. Send me a small postcard at least.

Camel

---

Ri³¹

All:
Forbearance is the key to success.

Mutlu

Beaves:
Shut up, Beaves!

Budhead
Magic Valley

Gabriel Fernández
Venezuela

It was a cloudy day, like every day since Evil Think stole happiness from the valley. The weather was cold and the wind was blowing. Blossoming Word was playing in the garden with his dog Runner when he heard a sweet sound drifting through the sky. "Blossom, Blossom!" Somebody was calling him using his short name, what his friends were used to calling him.

He moved his head side to side to find where the voice was coming from and heard someone yelling, "Blossom, come here! Come look at this!" At the right side of the garden he was able to distinguish his friend Happy Feeling inside a group of trees. Blossom knew that something unusual was happening, so he called Runner and both ran quickly toward the trees to dissolve all the questions his mind had formed about this mysterious event.

When Blossom arrived at the source of all the shouting, Happy was very excited and Blossom couldn’t understand what Happy was trying to explain to him. Blossom saw a group of people gathered in a circle around something brilliant and warm and walked over to them. All the people were completely in ecstasy carefully examining a beautiful but rare artifact. Runner stayed near Happy but kept looking up at its owner. Blossom nudged through the circle to get a better look at what was emanating this strange light and he was paralyzed by what he saw. "What is this . . .?" were the only words Blossom could say.

"Ten seconds, two hours? How long have I been looking at this?"

Blossom thought when he recovered his normality. Then he took the artifact in his hands and felt a great peace in all his body and mind. He examined the thing closely and said, "It’s a magic flute! What is it doing here?" At that time all the people began to talk and move impatiently around the place and Runner was running through the legs of the people. It was the first time in hundreds of years that someone had found a magic flute.

Happy walked near Blossom and said, "So, Blossom. What are we going to do now?" Everybody stopped and waited for Blossom’s answer.

"Well, this is the thing we’ve been waiting for," Blossom said.

"Yes, yes!" the people screamed in a general euphoria.

In the mind of everybody appeared only one name: Evil Think.

Evil Think had been one of Magic Valley’s magicians. Everybody believed in him and never did anything to warrant his evil magic, but one day he cast a spell and stole happiness from the valley. He thought he was the most important person in the valley and he was the only one who deserved happiness.

Nobody was able either to change his mind or to recover the people’s happiness. Everybody left Evil Think alone and ironically he died sadly and without friends around him.

Hundreds of years passed and many generations lived without knowing what happiness meant. But hope is the last thing that a person can lose, so all the families taught their children about what had happened and chose the Word family to teach its children
...Magic Valley

surreptitiously how to play the magic flute that would break the spell.

The last magic flute had been used a long time ago to expel a big storm from the valley and it was destroyed in the fight. New magic flutes could only be produced when the planets were rightly aligned in space, the weather was cold, the clouds were close in the sky and a gnome tossed a gold coin to the ground. The magic flute would be created from the gold coin.

Blossoming Word had the magic flute in his hands and was shivering with fear. All the people around Blossom were looking at him and waiting impatiently. “All I learned from my father could mean the return of happiness to the valley,” Blossom thought. Then, he took the flute firmly in his hands, moved it to his mouth, took a deep breath and started to play it. A magic melody flowed out of the flute and began to fly through the sky. The landscape was shot with lightning bolts. A great feeling broke out inside the people all over the valley. The weather changed from cold to warm and the clouds dispersed, giving way to a clear, blue sky with a radiant sun. Blossom played the magic flute for hours, breaking the evil spell and filling the valley with the happiness the people had not been able to feel in hundreds of years.

Blossom felt blissful to help his friends recover something lost a long time before and everybody was proud of him. From then on, Blossom played the flute often to give happiness to the valley’s inhabitants, and the Word family continued to be in charge of teaching its children the secret of how to play the magic flute to expel the sadness of Magic Valley.

Sometimes, when I feel sad I remember Blossoming Word playing the magic flute and I feel that beautiful music changing my feelings, filling my mind, flowing through my arteries, and I think of all the people of Magic Valley feeling the same way. Then I feel better. What happiness to remember Blossom playing his magic flute giving happiness to everybody!

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Turn gracefully your face and Someone, shining by moonlight among the stars, dreams inside your heart.

Come to Him like a bird ascending into the mysteries inside your head.

Stand alone for a minute, listening to the gentle whisper, and disappear.

You realize the mystery of your real story and now you have His voice touching your whole soul.

You can see Him after a week of rain, dancing in the whole landscape as flowers bloom.

One by one the true sparkles, and you know where it comes from, just as the branches of the tree shake when the wind blows.

The voice rolling in the way, the truth and the life is real food and real drink, and peacefully everything turns into stillness.

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The Voice

Ok Ran Ahn
Korea

Gabriel Fernández
Venezuela

37
The Storm You Brew In Me

Gabriel Fernández
Venezuela

The whole landscape is not a dream
as real as the mystery of being born and living.
The stars are shining and neither I nor you
realize that a breeze is writing a song in the pines.
The possibility we have among your fingerprints
stands alone inside my head.
Darkness becomes the real food of moonlight
and your face appears in bits and pieces.
Slowly my blossoming heart
does not know where it comes from.
Letters, birds, beggars, books appear in my mind,
reminding me of the real story of my life.
Each tree dances in the garden
in a free form that becomes my hallucination.
The wind is blowing and crying in the wilderness
and everything turns into its new weight.
At the edge of the night
your voice disappears dissolving my dreams.
Where are the big wonders created by you going?
I feel like a peaceful bird in the middle of the storm.

Sometimes my dreams are like growing trees
as the seasons come and go and make them change.
My dreams are like the trees that dance with the wind
as my thoughts dance in my mind alone sometimes.
How strange it is sometimes to feel free as the wind
and even stranger than the change of weather.
I dream in you wondering, feeling, creating
and I know I can also wonder, feel and create ideas.
Sometimes I don’t know if I’m right or wrong or both
but I try and try once again.
The dreams come in bits and pieces
that sometimes I can fix and make only one.
Sometimes it’s so easy to create ideas,
and sometimes it’s so hard to build only one.
The time comes and goes and ends
and sometimes so peacefully that you don’t notice it.
Among the stars I dream in poetry
and as the sun shines I also try and try.
As real as ideas the feelings appear
as real as my dreams coming true... sometimes.
The Unexpected Hunting

Ludovic Capo-Chichi
Benin

Two friends from the same school left their homes in the morning around eight a.m. They told their parents that they were going to school.

The father of one of the boys was a famous hunter in a village called Goun-Goun. His son Boko knew a lot of things about hunting because he often accompanied his father when he went hunting. His friend Koffi, though, didn’t know anything about it. On the way to school, Boko suddenly decided to go hunting. His friend, Koffi, after thinking about it, decided to go with him. So, instead of going to school the two of them went hunting.

After ten miles of walking in the forest, they got lost. They didn’t know what to do. Koffi began to be afraid. They had neither food nor drink along with them. Boko, however, wasn’t worried about the situation.

A few hours later, Koffi was complaining seriously and began to cry. His morale had sunk as low as it could go. He was filled with terrible regret.

Suddenly, as they were looking for something to drink, a big bull appeared. Koffi stared at the bull as though he were seeing his own death. Boko, using his hunting experience, began to pronounce some incantatory rites. The bull immediately became weak. Taking advantage of the weakness of the bull, the two friends ran to find something to kill it. Fortunately they found an old machete lying on the ground and were able to kill the bull.

Meanwhile, it was around seven p.m., and their parents were worrying about them. While the boys were cutting up the meat of the bull, a farmer came walking by and asked them what they were doing there. The two friends replied, “We got lost.” Seeing their prey on the ground near them, the farmer said, “Okay! I can help you find the right way back but you have to think about me when you’ve finished cutting up the meat.”

When they were finished, the farmer helped them find their way back home. On the way home Koffi scoffed, “Eh, guy, you wouldn’t have helped us without getting some of our meat!” The farmer replied, “Well, it’s difficult to find the right way.”

When they arrived in the village, the farmer claimed his part of the meat. The parents of the two friends had been ready to beat them, but when they and the other villagers saw the prey Boko and Koffi had brought back from the hunting, everybody was happy.

RV40a:
Thanks for not being absent.
Did you do your homework?
Guess who?

María:
Take it or leave it. Those are the only choices we have. Let’s forget the words “I would never…”
Have a good time on the way back home.
Top Secret

Mrs. Gardner:
You are the best teacher! I’ll never forget you.
Your pupil, E.C.V.

Natalie:
There is a good training called "How to deal with blankets. 1001 ways and specialized techniques." It is given at USC in "Laundry and Mattressy 101."
You have to pay only $5 for 36 hours.
Columbia Laundry Association

Giovanna, “a great gourmet:”
Thank you for the extra pounds.
Understanding Americans is not easy as you have seen. Anyway, do not forget that at home there is a lot of 'raw material.'
Confidential
The Mystery
Carolina Liendo
Venezuela

I know it's not a dream;
inside my head the ideas are growing,
One by one they just come into blossom,
like the possibility of each tree, peacefully blowing in the wind.
The mystery of writing touches my mind serenely,
as darkness turns gracefully by moonlight.
The time to be born and live
becomes created by love quietly, slowly.
It's like darkness gone in a minute,
when the moon glides out of the clouds.
Like each tree after a week of rain,
a rain that brings back its beautiful green color.

Your Eyes in My Heart
Gabriel Fernández
Venezuela

I used to smell flowers' fragrance
but now I am interested in smelling your particular perfume.
I used to watch the movement of leaves
but now I only want to see your body drawing curves in the air.
I used to write senseless things
but now I write poems because of you.
I used to wonder about life's meaning
but now I know you are my life's reason.
I used to feel like a small island in the ocean
but now I feel I'm important because you think of me.
I used to be a distracted person
but now I still am because of you.
I used to not care about what people say
but now I listen carefully to each thing you say to me.
I used to see opaque colors around me
but now I see them shining when you are near me.
I used to be anxious to have a little attention from somebody
but now I look at your eyes watching me and I feel totally patient.
I used to think that I wouldn't love again in my life
but now I have your eyes writing words of love in my heart.
Dear Friends from the Past, from You . . .

Durmus Ozdemir
Turkey

I learned that there are actually no human rights in the world, and that what rights there are are not freely given but are taken only by people who can take them.

I learned that it is very important to struggle to get your rights, first as an individual person and then as a people.

I learned that individual happiness is more important than social happiness, because if people are not happy as individuals, then they can’t be happy as a group, even though they might seem to be happy.

I learned that while life is fraternal, like a forest, it is also single and free, like a tree, as Nazim Hikmet, a Turkish poet, said in his poetry.

I learned that to love people is easier than to show it.

I learned that to give something to people is more important than to receive something from them.

I learned that life is full of lies and injustice and that, unfortunately, life is not like a fable. Who knows, maybe that’s why people tell their children a lot of fables.

I learned that even though there are a lot of cruel things in the world, the best medicine is to laugh at life.

I learned that there is no other world to live in and that there is no other life than the one we have.

So, why don’t we live it fraternally and laughingly?

Thank you, my mother and my father, for giving this life to me. I know that it is the worthiest thing for me today and tomorrow.

I will never forget you.

Oscar Mandragón
México

I learned that it doesn’t matter what you do, as long as you always do your best.

I learned that it’s better to be the last one among the best, than to be the first one among the last.

I learned that there is more time than life.

I learned that a real friend gives everything without any condition and without any desire or wish to be rewarded.

I learned the concept of the magic word: discipline.

I learned to give the right weight and value to everything. “Not everything that shines is gold.”

I learned that you will only know your real friends when you are sick in bed or in jail.

I learned that one should strive for a healthy mind in a healthy body.

I learned that you always have to respect the time of others.

I learned what it means to fall in love.

Thank you. I shall never forget you.
Maria A. Larrañaga
Colombia

I learned that your position is not important, and that you should always be honest.
I learned that if you want to be successful you should believe in what you do and do what you believe in.
I learned that you should not surrender to hopelessness in your worst moments, because you must always have faith and fight to go on.
I learned from you the value of truthfulness.
I learned that if you want to keep your relationship with other people forever, then the most important detail is to dialogue.
I learned that if I want to change my daily life I need to transform each goal into a step and each step into a goal.
I learned that the more you grow spiritually, the less you need materially. I learned from you the value of friendship.
I learned that it is important to be as I am and proud of myself without hurting others.
But best of all, I learned that wherever I am you will be in me because of the great love you gave me.
Thank you. I shall never forget you.

Turkan Ozaydin
Turkey

I learned that to love is to be loved. It is a first step toward personal independence.
I learned that money is not important for our life... also, that fighting is not necessary because there is peace if we want it.
I learned that I should be friendly, even when I’m treated unkindly by someone.
I learned that being polite is very important to have an influence on everybody.
I learned that, even if I’m very sad, I should laugh, because happily is the best way to live.
I learned that I have to make decisions and to be responsible for my own actions.
I learned that a strong personality is essential in human life, so I can stand on my own two feet wherever I go.
I learned that whether we have bad or good days, one’s love for others should always remain strong.
I learned that ten years ago there was a special person in this world who is gone now but who still lives in my heart and in my memories. Also, there is another special person who is alive but not near me now. Even though there are a lot of mountains and huge oceans between her and me, she is always in my heart and on my mind. I keep before me the image of what wonderful people they are.
Thank you, my father and my mother, for your love, for my life, and for everything you did for me. I love you and I always will. I shall never forget you.
Silence
Osvaldo Driollet
Argentina

Being Silent doesn’t mean being a witness to the absence of words.
Being Silent doesn’t mean closing our mouth and our senses to the exterior world.
Being Silent doesn’t mean being quiet or falling asleep.
Being Silent doesn’t mean having to freeze our emotions or forget our feelings.
It means letting our heart speak with our conscience. It means closing our eyes and
without making a noise entering inside ourselves and once there asking ourselves
about life. It is having the courage to face ourselves. It is looking ourselves in the eye,
hearing our own answers.

Just as the sky is above the earth the eloquence of our silence is above the eloquence
of words. Perhaps this explains how the silence of the womb is transformed into life
and why the silence of the Cross is the silence of God’s love, too.

Being Silent is to open the first door of the labyrinth of our soul. It is to look for our
internal peace. It is beginning to find out that peace doesn’t mean comfort and that living
is a deeper experience than existing.

Being Silent is the seed of true life, a chance to grow and germinate in the ground of our
soul. Being Silent is having the courage to live life without urgency but without pause,
trying to understand God’s language.

Being Silent means giving ourselves the freedom to grow and finding sense in our life,
too.

To find Silence is to find a treasure, because true Silence is the food for our soul.
Being Silent means these and a thousand other things that I don’t yet know as I
haven’t discovered the true value of Silence in my life.

The Young Turkish Couple
Mutlu Ulutagay
Turkey

The young Turkish couple Mutlu and Ozan could no longer ignore the strong
feelings they had for each other and they decided to tie the knot. Mutlu had always
been given the cold shoulder by Ozan’s mother and decided she might as well
give her a real reason for not liking her.

The last thing Mutlu saw as she left Ozan’s house with him was a white nightingale perched on
the window. Mutlu had been carrying a heavy burden lately. She was getting older and she
needed to marry before her 25th birthday.

Mutlu was very nervous as she got into the car, and she started to nibble her finger-
nails.

“Please,” Ozan said to her, “get a grip on yourself. You’re not the only girl marrying a
man whose parents didn’t approve of her.”

Ozan’s mother watched as his car began to fade into the distance. A small tear rolled
down her cheek. Not only had Ozan always been an obedient son before, but he was
also the only child of all her children to enrich her life by calling her every day
and granting her every wish.

In this case, though, even though Ozan’s mother had tried to keep her son from marrying
Mutlu, her efforts had been in vain.

"The Firm":
P.T., P.A., Manuel and Jorge, I’m about to commit a crime for the mere sake of having
any of you as my lawyers in a trial.
John Grisham’s Dark Side

Cecil:
Your reading class was so much fun and such an
education. I hope new students can have the
opportunity to be in your class.
Gabriel
I remember I visited your house of my dreams,
But I did not know what to do.
You kissed me when I was 20;
Never have I been so embarrassed in my life.

I remember you made me love you.
Sometimes you made me happy;
Sometimes you made me sad.
You knew you were first love for me.

I remember we left each other when you found a rich man.
You only said to me, "Good-bye." I said, "Good luck."
I had no money but you were first love for me.
I will never forget that day when we left each other.

I remember after leaving each other;
We met two years later.
You were alone and sad.
Although you did not say so, I knew you still loved me.

Even if you can make the moon fall,
You will never be able to close the precipice between you and me.
Although I still love you,
I can never forgive you.

What have I lived for? This is a good question!
Maybe I have lived to make my dreams come true.
Of course among my dreams I have achieved a lot already;
however, three of them are always in my mind: humanity, nature, and God.

What a complexity is this animal, self-called human! I have never met such a variety of animals from the same species: there are white ones, black ones and yellow ones. The hair may vary from blond to black, from straight to curly. What about the height, then? From short to tall. But the most complex part of a human is not the complexion; it is the mind. The human mind is always in a state of flux. You can never guess what will come next.
Certainly though, the human is not a perfect animal. If it were, it would not destroy its own home, the world of nature!

Ah! What a beautiful home is nature! Sometimes, I look at the sky, and there is the sun, and then the moon, and the stars. Sometimes, I can see just the clouds. Sometimes they are in a hurry, sometimes sleepy. When I try to consider our whole planet, the earth, I just cannot because it so very huge.
So, I just imagine... how many different trees and flowers, how many different beautiful animals, how many gorgeous landscapes there are!

However, it is a great pity that the animal called human is, bit by bit, destroying all these marvellous scenes, by cutting the trees, killing other animals, soiling its own environment. I hope I will not be here when the human finally succeeds in destroying every-thing. At this time, I hope to be there... talking to God personally!

I do not consider myself religious, but I always do try to talk to God, in my mind, in my heart. Sometimes He answers. Sometimes I cannot understand what He is saying. Maybe, it is above my comprehension.

However, someday, I will be able to talk to Him personally, and I will get His answers clearly. And at this time, I will know what to do to achieve these other dreams, how to understand the human, and how to save nature!
The Woman Who Was Sinking

Patricia Coello
Ecuador

To relax ourselves after a full week of studies at the university, we usually went to the seaside all weekend during the summer season. It was a wonderful summer day that my boyfriend, some other friends and I were spending at the beach. As usual, we were enjoying tanning ourselves, surfing, and playing volleyball. Then something unusual happened. I had never learned to surf because I thought it was too dangerous—until Brad, my boyfriend, appeared in my life. He was a very intelligent man who loved sports and surfing had long been his favorite sport. He taught me to surf and two months later I was surfing quite well; I wasn’t an expert but I was making a lot of progress and I enjoyed it. That day Brad and I were making plans for the future. The sun was bright, the sea was calm, and our friends were having fun. Eventually, the waves began to grow, and I asked Brad if he’d like to go surfing with me. He said no, but I still wanted to go, so I decided to surf alone.

I walked toward the car to pick up my surfboard. Meanwhile the sea turned rough and the waves were higher than normal. When I came back, Brad told me that it would be too risky for me to surf in these conditions. I disagreed, he insisted, we fought. Finally, Brad went to the car to pick up his surfboard, because he didn’t want to leave me alone in the sea.

Not waiting for him, I went ahead and began to surf under our friends’ vigilant eyes. I was enjoying it very much, but suddenly my surfboard crashed and broke against a rock, throwing me into the ocean. A piece of the broken board hit me in the head and knocked me out.

I remember thinking, just before losing consciousness, “Oh my God! What’s Brad going to tell me now?” And then I thought, “I don’t care! I’d rather sink than call Brad for help!”

Mixed Up

Ilana Nahm
Brazil

Kamaka (Yong) Lilavivat,
Thailand

Roberto Matsuda
Brazil

night is not day
there is mystery in the darkness
everything turns into a dream
how strange it is
the time glides by moonlight
neither I nor you are
here behind the mystery
I realize everything
at the edge of seasons
everything turns into green banks
white boats floating among the stars
slowly the heart turns gracefully
brings back wonders created by each tree
at the edge of my madness
a breeze runs like a ghost
pumpkins whirl out from seeds
to be born and live like orange suns
flowers blossom one by one
it brings back memories
inside my hallucinating head
white boats among the stars
the whole still peacefully here
Dear Pat,
My girlfriend Minnie doesn’t like cheese. Isn’t that incredible! I can’t believe it! She likes to eat beef stroganoff, barbecue chicken, and things like that. But not cheese! I like cheese very much. I can’t live without it. Can you help me solve my dilemma?

Mickey Mouse

Dear Mickey Mouse,
You have three options: Accept your girlfriend’s taste in food, change her taste, or change your girlfriend.

Pat

Dear Pat,
My little pet, a female elephant, has been dating a mouse for many years and now she’s pregnant. The problem is that I don’t know which kind of animal will be born. My house isn’t big enough to have more elephants, and my family and I are afraid of mice. What can I do?

Elephant Man

Dear Elephant Man,
First of all, you have to find this mouse and make him marry your little elephant. She shouldn’t have to bear all the responsibilities alone. Then, I recommend you wait until the baby mouse-elephant is born and see what the result is. If it’s too big, the best thing for you to do will be to buy a bigger house and give the happy couple and their baby the biggest room. You and your family can sleep in the kitchen.

Pat

Dear Pat,
I always feel hungry even though I eat a big breakfast. My stomach makes a lot of noise, especially during reading class. I feel embarrassed when my stomach makes that noise. It sounds like thunder in a storm! What should I do?

I’m Not Masako But My Face Looks Like Hers

Dear Masako Face,
Don’t worry about your sound. It’s a natural sound. Maybe you should get a weather forecast about your stomach every day. Probably the sound will disappear if you eat a radio. OK?

Pat

Dear Pat,
I swallowed a quarter, and I feel uncomfortable in my stomach. I went to the doctor and he offered to help me for a dollar, but after my accounting I realized that it wouldn’t be profitable for me. I’d be giving a dollar to the doctor only to get a quarter back. No way! I preferred to keep my dollar.

Mr. Accountant

Dear Accountant,
You’re right. You should keep your dollar and your quarter. Don’t worry about it. You can get used to living with a quarter in your stomach.

Pat
Sonya the Cat Story Contest

Two very different stories, two very different cats. . . . Congratulations to Carlos Fernández Baca and Oscar Valencia for their prize-winning stories!

The Dilemma and Sonya
Carlos Fernández Baca
Perú

Lucy was dubious about Dan’s marriage proposal. Sometimes she said, "I might as well be dead. He is only 19 years old! Although I like him, maybe he only wants to enrich himself with my money!" At other times she got a grip on herself and thought, "I'm 35 and I need to gather rosebuds while I may. I should think more about this."

She asked her friend, Jane, what she thought about the proposal, not knowing that Jane had an agreement with Dan to help get him married to Lucy as soon as possible. Jane told her that Dan was an excellent person and that age didn’t matter.

But last night when Lucy was playing with her cat Sonya, Sonya jumped out the window. Lucy became worried. After looking for Sonya for several minutes, she saw the cat at the top of a large tree near the street. She was very afraid and thought, "I must call the firemen but if they don’t come quickly, Sonya will jump and . . . I don’t want to think about it." So she climbed to the top of the tree. Sonya had a strange smile on her face. From this place it was easy to see the street, the scenery, and . . . into Jane’s room! . . . There was Dan kissing Jane.

Lucy got down and knocked at Jane’s door. Dan opened it and she inquired against him. When he tried to argue, she gave him the cold shoulder and left running.

This morning Dan gave Lucy a letter. She took the envelope, opened it and drew out a single sheet of paper. On it she read, "A nightingale is a heavy burden for a faded rose." She thought about that a few seconds, smiled and began to laugh.

And so, it was neither her boyfriend Dan nor her best friend Jane who helped her solve her dilemma; in the end, it was her cat Sonya who helped her find the solution. 

A Mighty Wonderful Cat
Oscar Valencia
El Salvador

Once upon a time, in the marvelous land of Azul, home of the white fairies and good genies, there was a pretty girl named Anahi, who lived with her mother in a poor house near the forest.

Such a forest was the home of scarlet birds, creatures capable of flying through time, and the hideaway of the dwarf moles, bad spirits with scorpion-shaped bodies and horns between their eyes and a voice that could kill any form of life.

One day Anahi heard the ring of the old bell of her home. When she opened the door, what she saw was incredible: Adi, queen of the white fairies, had brought home her little cat, Sonya, with a healthy and radiant aspect, and with eyes bigger and bluer than they had been before.

"Thank you very much, Adi! I thought I would never see my cat again," Anahi said. Adi smiled, but she didn’t answer. It wasn’t necessary: Anahi could "see" Adi’s heart appearing as a beautiful picture with suns and rainbows, birds and flowers.

"This is the fairies’ way to say thank you," Anahi thought. Adi nodded and her eyes lit up Anahi’s home.

That afternoon, while Anahi was watching how Sonya was playing with an old
... A Mighty Wonderful Cat

doll, she began to remember many things... First, how she had met Dan, a handsome boy who had rescued her from the claws of two scorpions, fighting against them with his sword after stuffing his ears with two pieces of cotton to avoid hearing their killer voices. He was seriously hurt but he managed to kill them when he cut their horns with a dagger.

After this experience Anahi and Dan began a lovely relationship, but they didn’t let their parents know about that.

Anahi was also remembering her experience with Jane, her best friend, a teenage girl who loved danger and adventures, a girl who preferred to explore the forest instead of going to school. One of their experiences together in the forest had almost ended with the death of Anahi’s mother, and the loss, forever of Adi...

It was a terrible night: lightening flashes and thunder among the darkness, storms and hurricanes in the whole land of Azul. Jane, Anahi and Dan were lost inside the forest. They were looking for Adi; they needed her help: Anahi’s mother had fallen down into a deep hole, near the land of scorpions. A scarlet bird went to Anahi’s home and told her about this. Dan and Jane joined her and began to look for Anahi’s mother.

When they found her, she had passed out, and she was lying over an old branch growing out of the side of the canyon. Because of the storm, they couldn’t help her and they began to look for Adi.

At the same time, riding on a “fire butterfly,” Adi was looking for the children. When she found them, she took them to the canyon...

Sonya the cat was sleeping on her bed. Suddenly she was hungry and, as usual, she went to Anahi’s room, but there was nobody there, so she went to the kitchen and then to the living room and then to the backyard, but nobody was home. She realized that Anahi and her mother could have gone to the city. However, when she went up to the roof to look down the road, in a terrible vision she saw Anahi’s face on a red cloud. Immediately, the cat went outside to look for her owners in the forest.

Adi and the children arrived at the canyon precisely when three scorpions were approaching Anahi’s mother. Adi left the children in a safe place and began the rescue... But suddenly something dreadful occurred: An enormous spiral-shaped time window appeared in front of Adi and she could not avoid entering it. And in spite of her fairy power, she could not liberate herself from its tremendous force of attraction.

Anahi and her friends were watching all these things. They were frightened! They knew the only way to save Adi: Someone had to take her place, but, as a result, this would probably be that person’s last time in Azul.

Anahi didn’t know what to do. If she took Adi’s place, she might not ever see her mother again. But on the other hand, Adi was her hope to save her mother.

Suddenly, as Anahi was hesitating, an explosion occurred: Sonya had jumped from some place into the time window! The explosion released Adi and killed the scorpions’ horns...

Anahi was happy to have Sonya home again. After all, the cat had helped her rescue her mother. Her cat took the place of Adi. And so, it was neither her boyfriend Dan nor her best friend Jane who helped her solve her dilemma; in the end, it was her cat Sonya who helped her find the solution.
Dear Pat,
I'd like to purchase an airbus but I don't have enough money. I'm a student and I have only a part-time job. My salary is $300 per month. Could you tell me how many months I would have to work to earn enough money for an airbus? If it's not possible for me to purchase an airbus on my salary, could you lend me some money to buy one?

Aspiring Airbus Pilot

Dear Aspiring,
You would have to work for 2,567,987 months in order to buy your airbus. I can lend you money if you really want to buy the airbus soon. You'll have to pay me only 120% annual interest. Do you want to do business with me?

Pat

Dear Pat,
Since coming to Columbia, I've made a terrible friend. He's strange and selfish and often changes his mind. His name is "The Weather."

Forecaster

Dear Forecaster,
This friend of yours is unpredictable, I know, but there's no excuse for predicting that the high temperature will be 40 F, when the day is so hot that you can cook eggs on the street. Try to be closer to reality, because I always wear a jacket on sunny days, and I don't want to look like a jerk again.

Pat

Dear Pat,
I like playing football. Yesterday, when I was playing, I broke my leg and my arm. Tomorrow I have a basketball game. Could you give me some advice about how I can play in this game?

Ozer Cinar

Dear Ozer Cinar (Difficult name, huh?),
From your letter, I see that you broke only one leg and one arm. That's great! You should be able to play in the basketball game because you still have your other leg and your other arm in good condition. Of course you'll get tired sooner, but you can compensate for that by playing just one half.

Pat

Dear Pat,
Venus drives me crazy. She believes she is the most beautiful goddess, and of course she's not. Someone should correct this situation. Pretty please with sugar on top, help me.

Aphrodite

Dear Aphrodite,
In a nutshell, be born again, my dear!

Pat