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The Sunrise reporters interviewed a number of EPI students and found out lots of interesting things about them and their countries. You'll find their reports in the “People & Places” column in this section.

Stories & Poems ...................... 11
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.

Personal Messages
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.
Editor’s Note

It’s been great celebrating the end of the millennium and EPI’s 20th birthday with so many nice people from all around the world. May this interesting issue of Sunrise help make our special time together even more memorable. Thanks to all who contributed!

Dick Holmes

Sunrise Staff

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Around the World at EPI

Ivette Villarreal Venezuela
Margarita Pacheco Mexico
Catalina Concha Colombia
Jung Yun Park Korea
Pedro Vega, from Venezuela, recommends that we check out the most important island in his country, Margarita. Tourists from all over the world like to visit this small island where it’s summer all the time and there are so many things to do and places to go. Margarita has wonderful beaches with very clear water, a variety of shops, and very interesting historic places to visit, such as old castles in the mountains. If you go to South America, Pedro says, don’t miss Margarita Island in Venezuela.

Myeong Ho Kim, from Korea, says that when he was in the army the United Nations sponsored a show for the soldiers and many famous actors and singers came to perform. That day was very special for him because he had the opportunity to meet a person whom he admired: Brook Shields. The moment that he saw her, he just kept looking at her. She came down from the stage to greet the crowd, and he gave her a big hug and a kiss that he will never forget.

Roxana Rumanescu, from Sweden, says that one of the interesting places in her country is Kurin, a small city located in the coldest, northernmost part of Sweden. For more than three weeks in the wintertime there, it’s dark twenty-four hours a day, while in the summertime there’s sunlight twenty-four hours a day. In the middle of the summer, a special event held in Kurin attracts a lot of tourists. Since Kurin is so remote, people usually travel to this event by train, making an exciting adventure of the trip.
Margarita Pacheco, from Mexico, received an award last May from the president of Mexico for being the best middle school teacher in her state. She said it was a wonderful experience for her. She was invited to go to Mexico City to receive a medal, a diploma, and a check. “All the efforts you make to be a good teacher,” Margarita says, “will always be rewarded.”

Cassiano Falangola, from Brazil, says that his favorite place in his home country is the beach because it makes him feel free. He likes to stay in the water all day long. He’s proud of the beautiful beaches in his country. The water is very clean, and many water sports, such as windsurfing, may be practiced there.

Galo Chacon, from Ecuador, says that the most interesting place in his country is Quito, the capital. It’s a beautiful old colonial city surrounded by mountains. In the middle of the city is a large main square, a very interesting place to visit. Other attractions in Quito are a place called Half of the World and Guagua Pichincha, a volcano that has recently erupted.

To Won-Giu and Mai,

What’s up, guys? This is me, Van. I just want to let you guys know that I am very pleased to be your friend. I feel very comfortable spending my leisure time with you. By the way, thank you for your food. It was delicious. I want to eat it one more time. Could you please make it for me? I hope that you guys will have a good time in the U.S. and that you’ll study hard.

One of your friends,
Van Tran

Dear Dick Norwood,

Thank you for your kindness. I’m so happy I’m living with you. I think my English has improved a lot because of you. I’ll never forget your efforts to help me speak English better. That has helped me a lot. Using English is very important for people who want to speak English well. I’m going to try to use English always. Thank you for everything.

Hwa-Soo Son
People & Places . . .

Masashi Shinjo, from Japan, says that raw fish and sushi are special foods in Japan. Japan is surrounded by ocean, so fish has long been a main dish for the Japanese. They like to cook and eat fish in various ways, but they especially enjoy raw fish, a popular dish eaten anytime. They eat raw fish with a taste-enhancing sauce made of soy sauce and wasabi. Sushi is eaten on special days like holidays, celebration occasions, and the day after payday. Made of rice, vinegar, sugar, and fish, sushi not only tastes good, Masashi says, but also has a pleasing appearance.

Yesim Erdogan, from Turkey, says that in the last week of March the Turkish people celebrate spring with Hidirellez, or Nevruz. At this time, people make simple drawings expressing their wishes, put them outside the window, and wait to see if they will be blown away. If the wind takes their drawings away, their wishes will be granted. It is also customary to walk barefoot on the fresh grass during Hidirellez. At night, people make small fires and jump on them.

Pei-Yu Lai, from Taiwan, says that one night six years ago when she was sleeping a weird feeling came over her. She immediately opened her eyes and saw a man sitting beside her, wearing something that looked like prison clothes. She was so scared that she couldn’t move. She couldn’t even scream. All she could do was to close her eyes, hoping that she was just having a bad dream. Since that night, she has occasionally experienced the same weird feeling in her sleep, but she has kept her eyes closed, afraid that she might see that strange guy again.

CS60LH (left to right) — front: Bonhong, Daniel, Cassiano, Young-Hoon, Hwa-Soo back: Fernando, Hossam, Margaret, Abdulaziz, Leonardo

To Hyun-Sook,

First of all, I was very glad to meet you, and thanks for your help and your kindness. I can’t believe that you have been my friend for only three months because I feel that you are an old friend. I want to continue our friendship. If you ever need help, I will be there.

Yong-Min
Shih-Pei Wang, from Taiwan, says that the Taiwanese believe that ghosts have a world of their own, with their own society, government, friends, and family, just as the living have. Once a year, though, ghosts can return to the world of the living. On July 1st, a Buddhist monk opens the door to our world, and all ghosts, good or evil, are invited to travel around among us for one month. Families, stores, and companies in Taiwan prepare abundant foods and drinks for them, hoping they can help us make money or bring us good luck. July, or “ghost month” as it is called, is considered a dangerous month to move, buy a house or car, travel, or get married because people may get injured by evil ghosts at this time.

Bernard Rohner, from Switzerland, says that his favorite place in Switzerland is the national park in the Southwest. There you can go hiking among amazingly beautiful scenery. Wintertime is a good time to go skiing there, but October is the best time to visit because there aren’t so many people in the park then. After a cold day of hiking or skiing, you can warm up with Fondu, a Swiss sauce made of melted cheese and white wine, into which pieces of bread are dipped.

Ajlan Al-Mansouri, from the UAE, says that a traditional winter sport in his country is hunting with a falcon.

Dong Woo Kim, from Korea, says that one important holiday in his country is Chue-Suk. For four days during the fourth week of September, Koreans celebrate, giving thanks for everything they have and asking their ancestors to protect them. If their grandparents are dead, they display their pictures at this time. A traditional ceremony is held at home in commemoration of their ancestors, and a lot of special foods are prepared. Wearing traditional Korean clothes called Han-bok, they bow to each other. They have a good time throughout this holiday, enjoying the company of their close relatives. Koreans are usually very busy, but at this time of the year they take a break to share a special time with their family.
People & Places...

Johanna Dingalt, from Gabon, describes *Feuille de Manioc* as a typical dish in Gabon. Leaves are cut from a special tree, washed, and then ground (along with onion and garlic, optionally) into a pulp in a mortar. Then the pulp is cooked in a pot over a low fire, and salt and little pieces of dried fish or shrimp are added. The dish is served with banana or with white or red rice.

Yousef Al-Amoudi, from Saudi Arabia, says that the sunny climate of his country is nice for playing a lot of soccer.

Noora Sultan, from Oman, says that there are lots of fun things to do in her country. You can go to the malls, the commercial center, the gorgeous beaches, or the huge rocky mountains. Nature in Oman is full of wonderful views.

Kuo-Yuan Sung, from Taiwan, describes the people of his small island country as very hardworking. People often work from Monday through Saturday every week. They come to work at 8 a.m. and work until 5 p.m. at least. Sometimes, they forget about time and work very late. If they aren’t finished with their work at quitting time, they stay in the office as late as midnight. The people of Taipei, the capital, are especially busy. He thinks that the Taiwanese have a good standard of living because they enjoy working.

Leonardo Magnoni, from Argentina, says that of the many things he likes about his country, the way the people are is perhaps what he likes most. The character of the Argentine people is very complex and difficult to define, but two of their special characteristics are simplicity and frankness. Another defining trait is their relaxed sense of time: Argentines don’t worry about wasting time talking with someone or simply daydreaming.

Samir Joachim, from Benin, says that a lot of mysterious things happen in his country. Village people believe in magical power. To reach their dreams, to get something they want, or to put a curse on someone, they often ask a sorcerer to conjure a spell. Sometimes it works, Samir says, and sometimes it doesn’t.

To all the Arab boys and girls, Marhaba!

Hey, GUB GUB! The time I spent with all of you has been amazing. I really appreciate your friendship, love, and happiness. You made South Carolina, Columbia, and EPI my second home. Hamad, Abdulla, Saad, and especially you, Rashid, thank you from the bottom of my heart. Najla, Heba and Noora, you are great. You are nice people. Please never forget me. I’ll never forget these moments (your culture, values, and behavior). “Dream with angels and a better tomorrow.” See you in heaven. Ahibkum Kikum.

Cata (the bedu)
Dear Hui-Chen,
Thank you for your smile every day. I'm really happy to have a great
time with you. I have been able to do
anything for you, but I've learned a
lot of things from you. Thank you so
much. You'll go back to your country
in the near future, but I promise I'll
remember you forever. I was (really)*
glad to meet you!!! Keep smiling!!!

*=:)
From your Christmas tree

Dear Miss Yellow,
I've seen you for six months.
Especially since October, I've taught
you English. Even though you feel
your English has advanced just a
little, I believe your sloppiness has
greatly improved. After returning to
your country, please keep using
English. Please try to speak English.
If you can't find any English speakers
there, just call me!
Your private teacher,
Ice Cream

To Chao-Chang Lee,
You are a good friend who has
taught me a lot about English.
Thanks. You always invite me to
your apartment and cook some
Taiwanese food. I am happy to have
such a kind friend. I'll never forget
you, Chang.
Kuo-Yuan

Dear Barbara,
Thank you for your attention,
understanding, and competence in all
that you do at EPI. In addition to
your intelligence, you are a friendly
and wonderful woman. It is totally a
pleasure for me to say, "I am
Barbara's student." When you want
to visit Brazil, don't forget to call me.
I will teach you and your husband the
Samba.
Gabriela Gallucci Tolo

Hi to everybody,
Einstein went to a party, where
he was approached by a beautiful
woman who suggested they get
together and make a baby.
"The baby will be just as
beautiful as I am and just as smart as
you are," she said. "Now wouldn't
that be wonderful?"
"But what a catastrophe it would
be if the reverse were true for the
baby," Professor Einstein replied.
Mariana Toma

To the attractive one,
Tell me it is real. I realize that
it's not your responsibility. I miss
you and I am proud of you. I really
hope you'll come back. I'll be very
glad when I see you before my eyes.
Wounded soldier

Dear Jin-Sup,
How are you, Jin-Sup? Thank
you. You are kind to me. I hope you
will be happy.
Jeng-Hoon

My dear GW classmates,
I have enjoyed my GW class
because I have a good teacher and we
have studied a lot together. Even if I
never see you all again, I will never
forget you. If I have a chance, I want
to visit every one of your homes.
Thank you, Karen, Galo, Pedro,
Hytham, Arcan, Won-Young, Yuan
and Jeng-Hoon.
Yong-Min

Dear Nina,
How are you, Nina? Whenever I
think of you, I'm very happy because
you are very kind to me. I know you
are going to get married after this
term. I hope you have a wonderful
marriage.
Yours sincerely,
Won-Young Kim
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Lee wanted to visit the road in his memory again. It had once been surrounded by golden rice fields, though now in their place were just ugly cement buildings standing there like huge, stiff monsters, especially in the dark.

It was exactly five p.m. Lee was clad in deep blue from head to toe. People say that blue symbolizes melancholy, but nobody seeing Lee at that moment would have thought he was blue in that sense. His eyes were bright; his face revealed the expression of youth. He looked so vigorous.

Lee whistled as he rode his sparkling new bicycle from his home on Sunset Street. Light yellow paint softened the materials of the house. Everyone thought that it looked delicate and warm. Though earthquakes and floods had carved marks on its body, they hadn’t lessened its beauty at all.

While riding down the road in his memory, his train of thought flew to the past. About ten years before, he had been just a naughty child who loved nature very much. Every day after class, he would come here eagerly. No amount of homework, abominable weather, or parents’ exhortations could prevent him from coming; he was determined to hold this charming place in his arms once again.

As the burning sunshine became tender, earthworms in the fields along the road, especially after a heavy rain had left a seven-colored rainbow in the sky.

He often stayed here until the sun withdrew and the king of darkness threatened to swallow him up. Then he would count the twinkling, smiling stars while reluctantly walking home, thanking his science teacher for helping him identify the South Star, the Big Dipper, and other bright celestial bodies. It made his walk home delightful.

Now, as he stood in this landscape full of his childhood memories, the glorious vision it had once been was obstructed by these hideous, rigid buildings. Yet the memories would never disappear from his heart.

A sudden coolness pulled Lee back to the present. The wind was blowing harder, and night almost covered the land. Realizing that his family was by now waiting for him to come home to dinner, Lee tightened his coat and took one last deep, steady look at his childhood paradise. Then he turned around firmly and left. Gradually, his shadow became an indistinct speck, and finally it disappeared in the dim light of night.

---

Dear Jung,

I appreciate you so much. You have helped me a lot ever since we met. Do you remember? When I first met you, I couldn’t say anything. But you kindly and patiently taught me English. Even though sometimes I couldn’t respond, you kept trying to talk with me. When I felt bad, you encouraged me and made me happy. I always enjoy talking with you, and I am happy to be your friend. I hope we continue to have a good relationship.

Your friend
Kabah, a famous music group in Mexico, is named after some colossal Mayan ruins located on the peninsula of Yucatán, where I live. A fresh, spontaneous message is sent through Kabah’s music to everyone in Latin America. This group has had a great impact on my life, influencing even my major at the university, communication science.

Kabah formed six years ago, practicing their music in the garage at one of their houses. The group consists of six musicians from twenty to twenty-five years of age: Sergio, Federica, Maria Jose, Daniela, Andre, and Rene. They are a group that is driven by something far more than fame. They are a vibrant complex of feelings, a family, a magical union, a dream come true, six souls joined together. Their wonderful vitality on stage is transmitted directly to the audience, who feel and vibrate along with them.

The group has produced three CDs so far, each of which transmits positive messages to today’s youth. Their warm pop ballad songs speak of love, fantasy, illusion, and dreams for a better world. The group is convinced that music is a universal language through which everyone can communicate their feelings and ideas without the barriers of nationality, race, and religion. Consequently, they decided to name their most recent CD Esperanto, after the universal language. For the booklet accompanying this CD, they took on a new, more avant-garde look.

I’ve been very lucky to meet the members of Kabah several times when they’ve come to Merida, my home city, for concerts. I’ve talked with them, taken photos with them, and gotten their autographs. I’ve been in love with this group ever since their very beginning. They’re so nice and friendly, even now that they’re famous. My devotion to them and their music has led to many of my most precious memories, such as waiting in line for long hours to get into their concerts, or getting up at four o’clock in the morning to go to the hotel or the airport so that I could have a chance to talk with them or just get a friendly smile from them and their thanks for my being such a loyal fan.

My whole experience of Kabah is something so wonderful and unforgettable.

To everybody in EPI,
I really appreciate you for helping me improve my English skills. I have been here two terms. At first, I was so shy that I couldn’t speak with people from other countries. Now I have changed a little, even though I still have some problems communicating. Everyone in EPI makes me more energetic and excited. After finishing this term, I’ll go back to my country and miss everybody I have met here. I’ll have good memories of America, except for American food, which I consider terrible! Thank you once more. I want to see you in the future. Please don’t forget that I will always remember you.

Mr. G
Two huge snow-covered volcanoes, Popocatepetl and Iztacciuatl, delineate the landscape near Mexico City. Popocatepetl, or Popo, looks like an enormous ice cream cone. Nearby, stretching out much lower and longer, Iztacciuatl resembles the shape of a sleeping goddess covered with blue velvet under the sun.

The story goes that thousands of years ago Iztacciuatl was the most beautiful Aztec princess in a town of warriors. She fell in love with the most valiant, handsome captain, whose name was Popocatepetl. Her father told him that in order to marry her he had to bring him the head of the enemy. If he succeeded, he would be awarded, upon his return, a victory celebration honoring him and a wedding ceremony uniting him with his beloved Iztacciuatl.

Thus, with great hope in his heart, Popo went to war and led his warriors to an outstanding victory. When he triumphantly arrived in town with the head of the enemy, he found the victory celebration ready for him, but not the wedding ceremony. His bride lay dead on a mourning bed under the sky, waiting for the kiss of her beloved Popo, who had never kissed her in life.

Overcome with sorrow, Popo said nothing. He only broke a pair of arrows over his knees. Life was his, truly his, because he had vanquished the enemy. He had attained victory, wealth, and power. Yet now he could not have his love.

Popo had twenty thousand slaves build a great tomb under the sun. There he laid the corpse of his bride, and there, facing the sky, she has remained ever since, like a goddess sleeping in her bridal gown.

He also had his slaves build another, much higher tomb for himself. When the tomb was finished, he lit a torch and climbed to the top to light up the sarcophagus of his pain. Like an apocalyptic vision, he stands there watching over his beautiful dead goddess' body forever and ever. Even today, thousands of years later, the smoke from his torch still wanders from the volcano.

Century after century, many romantic, beautiful poems have been inspired by this story, and I am pleased to tell it to people from all over the world.

---

Dear Koji,

I am very happy to know you. I have a great time with you. Thank you for giving me good memories. I will never forget studying in the library, watching the baseball game, and going to Disney World in Orlando. I will take these memories back to my country with me. I will remember you forever. Don’t forget the advice I always give you. Speak Japanese alone, and pay attention when you do anything. Enjoy American life. I want you to be happy every day.

Your medicine,
French Fries

---

Dear Bernie,

Thank you for sharing all your experience and knowledge. I will never forget the many good memories of you. I will always keep in mind your wonderful advice, and your experience in teaching will help me back in my country.

Margarita Pacheco
Death, My Friend

Givemore Mutubuki
Zimbabwe

It has been like this for some time. Life is now one long highway in the Nevada desert, nothing but loneliness and winds of despair to accompany me on my journey. A journey whose destination I have failed to comprehend. Unbearable cruelty seems to be its only meaning. The physical pain that now rakes my body from sitting on this cold, hard floor is nothing compared to the excruciating emotional pain I have tried to endure. Hard as it may be to believe, the ache in my soul has killed me a thousand times. Now I am ready for the final death, a kick in the teeth of this treacherous life.

I know that you are thinking, "What could make a man hate life so much?" Well, my friend, I will tell you what brings me to this moment in time, what makes me refer to you, Death, as my friend.

Tension was building up in the streets of my town, but that was usual around election time. My learned professor called it political immaturity, but the rest of us viewed it more as the spirit of things. Election day was just two days away, and campaigns were taking on a more brutal approach. The candidates were sling mud, and their supporters were having their minor scuffles as usual. All this in contrast to the fine weather that now prevailed—blue skies, soft breezes, mild temperatures, and, oh yes, love! For oblivious to the political frenzy and everyone around us, my wife and our three-year-old son simply felt love in the air, and I thought life couldn’t be better.

... Forgive me, my friend, but it is hard for me to tell you the story without sobbing. The grief still choking me, and the wound is too fresh to poke without the body shuddering in pain. I know men don’t cry, but I can, for I have lost that which makes me a man.

Well, as I had become accustomed to doing, I put my angel, my life, to sleep with a bedtime story. First, he offered to pray, and the prayer was the most beautiful I had ever heard. Though short, it was eloquent, pleading yet resolved in its demand that the family be together forever. With the brightest eyes, he looked at me and smiled. He wrapped his gentle little arms around me and squeezed me in the most affectionate, tender, loving hug. Mesmerized by the feelings that swept within me, all I could do was look into his eyes and return his gesture of love.

Letting go of him, I thought I saw a tear in the corner of his eye, but attributing it to love I did not ask him about it. As I read the story to him, his eyes gently closed, and try as he might, he could not keep them open. Noticing that I no longer had an audience, I quietly rose from the bed and stroked his cheek with the back of my hand. He responded with a gentle smile that lingered a moment on his calm face before he slipped back into his slumber. With that, I gave thanks to the Lord for this precious gift and proceeded to join my wife in our bedroom.

Oh, my friend, if I had known then what I know now, I would never have left him! I wish I had given him the biggest hug a father could give a son. Now my hopes of teaching him life’s lessons are lost, and dreams of going to his first graduation will always be just that, dreams. I am sorry—I abandon the story to burden you with dreams that are never to be.

Upon entering our bedroom, I found my wife seated at her dressing table brushing her hair. How lovely she looked, I thought. Her head was tilted to one side, eyes closed, and she was humming the most beautiful tune. It was the same song that I had played for her on our first date. I hate to admit it, but that was the only romantic escapade of the occasion. Catching my image in the mirror, she blushed, my stomach rumbled, and we both smiled, acknowledging how such moments still made us feel as though we had just met. Then she stood up from her table, revealing the most splendid figure on Earth. Following her lead, I collapsed on
Death, My Friend...

the bed with her in my arms, and together we lay listening to the night’s silence. With her safe in my arms and her sweet scent in the air, we soon peacefully fell asleep.

The tranquility with which we had fallen asleep was suddenly shattered by a burst of intruders into our house. Instinctively, my first reaction was to protect my family, but I found myself thrown to the floor, and boots and clubs began raining on me like a torrential storm.

Hearing my wife’s screams gave me a surge of energy, and I managed to strike back against the assailant nearest me. But no sooner had I shoved him away than I looked up to see my wife being assaulted in the most inhuman, devilish manner possible. One of the assailants cocked his leg and kicked her hard in the stomach. She let out a cry of pain, and I felt her agony. I can still hear that cry up to today. It was the last sound I heard her make before something struck me on the head and the world to me became a dark void.

Nothing in the world would have prepared me for the shock that awaited me when I regained consciousness. The house was full of people whose faces I had never seen before, some wearing white clothes and others black, all carrying themselves with authority. A beautiful young lady crouched next to me. Noticing my return to life, she quickly offered me something to drink, and at the same time someone raised my head to allow me to swallow. It must have been the lady’s smile, for as if hit by a bolt of lightening I called out my wife’s name. Instinctively, I got up to search for her whom I considered my life. There on the bed she lay, the most gorgeous creation on Earth turned into a disfigured object. Her face was swollen, her once fair complexion now black and blue. Blood covered her precious body. Unable to bear the sight of her like that—it simply tore me apart—I covered my face and sobbed into my hands. And then in looking for reasons to explain what had happened that night, my mind came to rest on my other precious one. I rushed out of the room and headed for my son’s bedroom.

The sight that greeted me there was unbearable. My angel, my life, was no more. Like his mother, he was battered and torn beyond recognition. I fell down onto my knees and took him into my arms to give him one last hug. My tears dripped down onto his red face and ran down his tender cheek. Clasping him to my chest, I wept so much I could feel what was left of my strength desert me. The police and medics there tried to take him from me, but I could not let go. As his father, I had to hold him, love him, bring him back to life. But I fell desperately short, for all I kept holding was a dead son. After a while, I passed out from my grief, and when I woke up in the hospital, my son was gone.

So, my friend, now you know why I am sitting here, a gun in hand, ready to die. There is no possible justice that can ever bring back what I have lost. Death, I now call you my friend, for only you can take me away from this world, one that gave me joy only to replace it with grief beyond description. Only in death can I find peace. ☯

Hello, Everybody,

I’m glad to write this message to all my friends and to all the people in EPI. I want to share these words with everybody who knows me. For me, this term has been one of the best experiences of my life. In addition to learning English and improving my English skills, I’ve met a lot of people from various countries around the world and learned so many things about a lot of different cultures and beliefs.

Also, I’ve made close friendships with my teachers. You have always been willing to help me and share your knowledge with me and all the other students.

Next term, many of us will no longer be here, but new people will come and we will again make a big family called EPI.

Juan Enrique Gil, from Ecuador

To all the EPI teachers,

First, I want to say to you, “Thank you very much.” Your work requires being patient and highly qualified, and you’re doing a great job. I’ll never forget you. I bow respectfully before you.

Yesim Erdogan, from Turkey
My Lucky Solid Blue T-Shirt  
Shih-Pei Wang  
Taiwan

It began with a solid blue T-shirt.  
A few days ago as I was  
walking along Sumter street after  
my Reading/Vocabulary class,  
something suddenly grabbed my  
eyes. What a cool T-shirt! Instead  
of going to Burger King for lunch  
that day, I walked up the stairs  
to the second-hand shop displaying  
the shirt.

Staring at “my” T-shirt, I  
asked the kindly,  
old, white-haired manager  
of the shop, “How much?”

“Six dollars.”  
After negotiating  
the price with him for  
several minutes, I got a 20%  
discount! Now this cool used sky-blue T-shirt with its rectangular  
orange “SUPREME” in the center  
belonged to me. Little did I know,  
as I cheerfully walked out of the  
small, smelly store, how much  
luck that shirt would bring me.

...Three days later...

It was a muggy, lazy Friday  
afternoon in Columbia. Nobody  
wanted to stay outside under the  
blazing sun except a few crazed  
football players. After long hours  
of being engrossed in books, I  
would rather sleep the day away  
than do anything physical.

Unfortunately, though, to main-  
tain the perfect contours of my  
body, I have to exercise when I  
have time. Even though I knew  
exercise was going to feel grueling  
that day, I set out for the P.E.  
Center. At  
dumb bells.

Suddenly, a girl walked in.  
“What a cool color!” she said with  
a friendly smile. “Where did you  
get that T-shirt?”

OH! HA! HA! HA!  
We chatted for a long, leisurely hour. I learned that my  
new friend is from New Mexico  
and that she works here part-time. She has short brown  
hair, is 5’9” tall, and  
always has a sweet smile on her face.

Would she like to learn  
how to speak Chinese and  
cook Chinese? I wondered  
breathlessly. Finally, I got my  
courage up and  
asked her.

“Sure!” she  
answered  
excitingly. And then she  
gave me her telephone number  
and e-mail address.

What a wonderful, fantastic,  
amazing day it was! I had found  
a conversation partner—a girl,  
no less—and this because of that  
T-shirt...

Dear RV30,  
I have really enjoyed teaching  
you! I will miss you!! If you miss me,  
come by my office and I will give you  
more homework!! (Do you remember  
my special presents/gifts?) Seriously,  
I have really enjoyed you and I hope  
to see you all again.  
Your old teacher who sometimes  
needs oil in order to get up in the  
early morning.

Mr. Rice

Dear Bronia,  
It's been a delight for me to teach  
you and to have such a  
terrific experience with you and the  
students. I feel I've made a friend in  
you, and wherever I am I will think  
about you. The entire EPI staff has  
really made me feel a part of the  
family.

Margarita Pacheco
It was eleven p.m. We were going to a party in the outskirts of the city. It was a very dark night; there wasn’t a single star in the sky, only a gigantic, opaque moon. The road looked like a tunnel, and the car’s headlights cast a light no brighter than that of two candles. We were the only souls on the road. Nobody else. Everything seemed dead. We couldn’t see anything around us. Mr. DeLancey was getting a little tense because he couldn’t find the house. We kept looking, but it wasn’t to be found, it seemed. Everything was dark and desolate.

Mr. DeLancey decided to park on the side of the road and look at the map. “We are very near,” he said, but at that moment the car engine stopped, and it wouldn’t start again. We decided to walk the rest of the way, through the woods.

Everything was black. Amidst the scary silence, we heard some desperate cries, sinister laughter, weird voices, murmurs, and moans coming from far away. “It’s just people celebrating Halloween,” Mr. DeLancey tried to reassure me, but I was already regretting having accepted the invitation to the party. If something horrible happened to us, nobody would know anything about us.

Filled with panic, I began to recall some legends and horror stories I had heard in Venezuela—“The Whistling Man,” “The Sayona,” and “The Hanged Man”—about souls who live in the darkness, in penitence, condemned forever to their own hell, mean spirits that suddenly attack people on deserted roads. My heart beat faster and faster, and the rest of my body began to freeze. I called out to Mr. DeLancey, but he didn’t answer. The night had swallowed him up. Now I was all alone in the darkness!

I heard noises that sounded like people fighting. I heard evil footsteps, as if someone was following me, creeping slowly across the grass. Fear! Was I going to become a victim that scary night?! I kept on walking like a blind person without knowing where to go, expecting the worst.

Eventually, I saw some shadows ahead and heard some children laughing, but everything was still dark. As I walked toward the welcome sound of children, my foot hit something, like a low wall of some kind. I touched it and realized that it was a tombstone. And then I found another and another . . . I was in a cemetery! I was so afraid that I couldn’t breathe.

Suddenly, I saw some very strange-looking creatures with bloodied, disfigured faces coming toward me! I couldn’t stand it anymore! And then a hand came up out of the earth and grabbed my leg! Oh, my God, no, no, nooooo! It was all over for me now!

As it turned out, though, it was just my friend Robert and his family, playing a Halloween trick on me. “Happy Halloween!” they cried out to me. They had created this cemetery to celebrate Halloween.
Hello
Eduardo Garcia
Mexico

Hello!
I am one of your dreams.

I started out from nature,
but I’ve been waiting.
I’ve been waiting for a long time.

I entered your mind,
perhaps as a bright light
in your sleep one night,
or else I got into your heart
as part of your life’s desire.

Now what I’d like to know is this:
At what point,
as I came into your thoughts,
or was willed by you,
was I part of your soul?

And at what exact moment
(later on) do I become
part of your self-fulfilling love?

Let me know what you think.

Yours,

Hello
Givemore Mutubuki
Zimbabwe

Hello!
I am one of your conscience keepers.

I started out from your parents’ teachings,
but I grew into your morals.
I’ve guided you for over half your life.

I entered your life,
perhaps as an aspect of a society’s culture,
or else I crept into your heart as part of
life’s hard experiences.

Now what hurts me is this question:
At what point, as you went wrong,
or were overtaken by greed,
was I part of what you lost as you got older?

And at what exact moment
(later on) do I return
to once again be part of your bright light,
i.e., your humanity?

Let me know what you think.

Yours,
Hello
Ahmed Al-Raaisi
Oman

Hello!
I am one of the many electrons.

I started out from a nuclear reactor,
but I move around.
I've been used for military needs,
among other things.

I entered a computer,
perhaps as a piece of information
on the Internet,
or else I got into it
as part of its power.

Now what concerns me is this:
At what point, as I was ignored,
or was intentionally exploited by
the military industry,
was I part of the war?

And at what exact moment
(later on) do I become
part of a peace plan,
i.e., real communication?

Let me know what you think.

Yours,

---

Hello
Mee Hyun Bahng
Korea

Hello!
I am part of your life!

I started out from the sunrise,
but I never set.
I've opened the window for you.

I entered your room, perhaps as a space
in my dream,
or else I got into your heart
as your true love.

Now what I'm anxious to know is this:
At what point, as I was
loved or taken care of by
you, was I part of your life?

And at what exact moment
(later on) do I belong
completely to you,
i.e., your mind?

Let me know what you think.

Yours,
I work along the border line between Tijuana in Mexico and San Isidro in the U.S. My job is to prevent Mexicans from crossing the line illegally. It’s a very hard job, especially for someone like me.

Until 1848, this land that I patrol was part of Mexico, and thousands of Mexicans lived here. Even today, many of the streets, counties, cities, lakes, beaches, and mountains in the area have Spanish names—Los Angeles, for example. Then in 1848, the U.S. government once again widened its territory and the northern part of Mexico became part of the U.S. My Mexican ancestors were among the Mexicans living here at the time, so eventually they became U.S. citizens, though of course they still loved their home country, Mexico.

So, that’s the background I come from.

Every morning at 5:30 a.m., I begin my duties: driving a Cherokee jeep around trying to find Mexicans hiding among the rocks and bushes as they attempt to cross the line and head north. Normally, I catch ten to twelve illegals per day. Some of them are persistent, and eventually I don’t see them anymore because they finally succeed in getting across.

I know one Mexican who’s tried to cross the line eighteen times. I’ve caught him in seven of those attempts. As a result of this hide-and-seek game we’ve been playing, we’ve gotten to know each other. His name is José Esperanza. Because of my Hispanic background, I know esperanza means “hope” in English. José is always hoping to see his family in Los Angeles—his two daughters and his wife. Maybe he can’t afford to make the trip legally, so he chooses the cheapest and most dangerous way to get to his family.

One day, just as I set out to make my rounds, still pretty far north of the border, I saw somebody hiding behind some bushes. I could tell even from a distance that he knew I’d spotted him. He had such a crushed look, having almost succeeded in making it across. As I got closer, walking up to him with my gun in hand, I saw the fear and disappointment in his face. I recognized him immediately. It was José Esperanza. He closed his eyes, lowered his face, and just kept calm and motionless as I approached.

A few feet away from him, I stopped and just stood there, thinking about what I had to do. My voice and legs froze. What was happening to me? Finally, I realized what my heart wanted to express. “Hey, Jose, you’d better go home,” I said, pointing to the north.

He got up quickly, his still scared face changing to a happy but shy expression. “Gracias, Patrón,” he said.

He walked away fast, his back to me but his happy face still looking thankfully at me.

I turned around and left the scene, driving my jeep to the south.

-To Abdulla Al-Dosari, the sweetest guy that I’ve ever known!
-Thank you for giving me and your other reading classmates delicious candy and chocolates. Thank you for your spontaneous and loving attention.
-Tovette Villarreal
So Many Tears

Ahmed Al-Radais
Oman

It was a cold day. A young lady standing on a street corner of a destroyed neighborhood was waiting for something. Even though it was winter, she didn’t care. She’d been waiting for a long time, but nothing had come. “I feel so weird,” Michelle said to herself.

A few minutes later, a little girl showed up.

“Wait!” the little girl said. “Wait! For how long?”

Michelle was getting more and more worried.

“I really don’t know,” the little girl said and then ran away.

Apparently, Michelle was waiting for something that was very hard to get. Now it was raining and she was getting wet.

“That girl has forgotten about me,” she said to herself. “I’d better go back home... Home! Oh, I wish I had one!” She started crying. She’d lost her home during the bombing.

“Ah, here she is again!”

The little girl had reappeared.

She had a letter for Michelle, and she handed it to her. Then she walked away without saying a word. Michelle didn’t even realize when the little girl left.

Happiness lit up Michelle’s face. “It’s a letter from my love, my heart, my soul!” She was so happy that she felt like flying. She hadn’t heard from her love in such a long time—since he’d gone away to fight the enemy.

Suddenly, though, her face dropped. “There’s something wrong. This letter has no address.

How come?” She opened the envelope and pulled out the letter. Shockingly, it was just a blank sheet of paper with nothing written on it. She started crying again. “But why?! Why have they done this to me? Is he dead? No, no, he’s not. I can’t believe that. He’s alive. I can feel his breathing,” she lied to herself.

“The war will end soon,” she continued talking to herself, “especially now that Italy has dropped out.”

She sat down on the sidewalk, and things began to look strange: the street, the destroyed buildings, everything. “But what if he doesn’t ever come back? I’d rather die than live without him. It wouldn’t be worth it to live. I’m living in a world where almost nothing is going right. A place where smiles are for rent. I hope that he understands the sweetness he’s brought into my life and can keep giving me a reason to live.

“Anyway, so many tears won’t bring him back. I’ll just have to pray to God all day and all night to let me hear a single sentence from my love. Only one sentence assuring me that he’s alright.”

Sejin Im,

I have made a lot of friends this term at EPI, but you are each totally different and special to me. I am very happy to know you, and I will not forget you and our secret. I wish you success in whatever you want to do, and I wait for your visit to BRAZIL...

With affection, or com carinho,
Gabriela

To all the EPI teachers,

To those I know and those I don’t know, thank you for the hard work that you do for us, helping us learn English and showing us the customs and habits of the American people. I know that it’s not easy for you because we are from different countries and have difficulty with pronunciation. Our progress has been your goal, and your patience has been a great help to us.

Thank you very much,
Johanna Dingalt
The Nvet Oyeng and the Artist's Epic

Alfredo Ovono
Equatorial Guinea

The Nvet Oyeng is a musical instrument played by the Fang, an ethnic group who live in Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Cameroon, and Congo. In the past, this bowed string instrument was played in ceremonies and special rites giving last homage to an important person who had died. Nowadays, the Nvet Oyeng is still played in culture centers because it represents a very important part of Fang culture. Playing the Nvet Oyeng, an artist presents his epic, and the audience sometimes sing along with him.

The artist is a person chosen by the elders in town after they determine that he has sufficient courage for his work. Once they have selected an artist, they feed him a special dish made of rooster to help him commit his epic to memory since he does not write it down. Eventually, it does get written down but by local people who listen to the artist perform it in the culture center, not by the artist himself. One such epic is the story of the Engong and the Okuyn.

The Engong is a nation of people living in a city where everyone has a job and some responsibilities. According to the epic, the Engong are an immortal people, the first nation created by God.

The elders of the Engong, who like problems and adventures, are always seeking out trouble with the tribal leaders of the Okuyn people. One of the trouble-making elders is Acoma Mba, who simply does not like a calm life. He has access to God's office and uses it to gain advantage over the Okuyn.

The Engong have a big, important army. The soldiers sleep with their uniforms on, constantly awaiting orders from the government. All of these soldiers have been selected for their top-notch skills.

The Okuyn are actually many separate nations with a common name. They are only loosely organized because everyone assumes that they are very strong. Some of the important tribal leaders of the Okuyn are Mbenga Ndong of the Yebeluyn tribe, Cunguru Ndong of the Yebesy tribe, and Mbuam Ndong of the Misimis tribe. Every tribal leader has his own land that he commands.

The Engong and the Okuyn engage in several wars, which the Engong always win.

Every year an artist's epic is published by the local people. These books are very interesting because of the lovely culture they represent. They are sold in Spain as well as in Equatorial Guinea.

Dear Barbara,

First of all, I want to say thank you very much. I gained confidence in my English because you always paid attention to me whenever I spoke. Whenever I felt upset, you talked with me and suggested good ways to handle my problems. I'm very glad to have had the chance to be part of your class. Due to your teaching, I have improved my writing and grammar, even though they are not yet perfect. In addition, you made our class friendly by giving us the chance to talk with each other. I'll never forget you.

Sincerely yours,
Hye Won Lee

Hi to all my teachers in EPI,

I appreciate you very much and want to take this opportunity to say "thanks" to Barbara Kubodera, Russ Harless, Glen Rice and all the other people in EPI who supported and understood me from the beginning.

Mariana Toma
Rapture
Hwa-Soo Son, Korea
Richard Norwood, USA

The morning dew
Glistening
Like emeralds
In the grass
From the touch
Of the rising sun
Gradually disappeared
Before my eyes.

Happiness
Catalina Concha
Colombia

We convince ourselves that life will be better tomorrow,
after waking up.
But then we get frustrated from being unsatisfied
and we wait for dusk, for the moon.

We tell ourselves that life will be complete
when we have enough money, when things work better, when we have
the car, the house, the vacations . . .

The truth is that there's no better moment to be happy
than now.
If not now, when?

Your life will always be full of challenges.
It's better to admit it and to decide to be happy in all situations.

For a long time it seemed that my life was approaching the beginning (the true life),
but there was always an obstacle in the way; something to solve, to finish, to pay for;
time to pass . . .
and then life would begin. Then I realized that obstacles are my life.

So there's no way to happiness because happiness IS a way.
Value each moment, and especially appreciate it when you share it with someone.

Remember, time doesn't wait for anybody . . .
STOP waiting to finish your studies, to lose five pounds, to get married.
STOP waiting for Friday night, for Sunday morning, for spring or summer or winter . . .
or else you may keep waiting until you die
to decide that there's no better time to be happy than NOW.

Happiness is a way, not a destiny.
My dear Zenoans,

The major purpose of Zeno’s space exploration program is to find other species in this universe and achieve mutual understanding with them. If we’re successful in this mission, we might someday come to know the meaning of our existence.

We’d already known where Earth was and what kind of planet it was, although we hadn’t investigated it much before because Earthlings were just too primitive; they didn’t deserve contact with us. But recently the situation changed. One of our scanner teams noted that a human spacecraft had broken the light barrier. Human beings had finally discovered how to reach light speed, a universal standard in measuring technological development. A planetary conference was organized at once, and it was decided that we would initiate contact with Earth. My team was selected as the first group of ambassadors to be sent to the planet.

I still don’t know why my team was chosen. All I knew about Earth was that human beings were barbarian, unintelligent, and primitive. Anyway, we set out on our mission. According to our first contact procedural manual, we were to communicate first with the scientist who had invented the Earthlings’ light-speed spacecraft. We decided to land at the site where the rocket had been launched. There we learned that the scientist lived in a place called Montana, in the Northern Hemisphere.

Of course, we needed to be able to speak the language of this region of Earth, English, but it was very easy for us to learn. Our language is hundreds of times as complicated as theirs. We started talking with the humans in Montana as soon as we arrived. At first, they were stunned by us. Of course, we were the first aliens they had ever seen. But they gladly showed us the way to the scientist’s house.

This so-called “genius scientist” was an eccentric sort of guy. He was living alone in a suburb, and for some reason he hated to talk with anyone. The first thing he did, even before we could explain to him why we had come there, was to give us a cup of clear brown liquid called “whiskey.” He told us that this was the human way of greeting. Generally, we wouldn’t touch such a dirty-looking liquid, but we were a little nervous at the time. And my partner—this was his first official mission—was extremely curious about the substance. So, we decided to take the plunge and greet the scientist on his own, human terms.

Oh, my God!! What a good taste! We don’t have this sort of beverage on Zeno—one of various forms of “alcohol,” we now know. The more we drank, the better we felt. We couldn’t believe this magic water.

A few hours later, we completely lost consciousness because of this magic liquid. We don’t remember anything we talked about there. (Of course! Humans use a mind-altering beverage that erases memory of first contact!) When we woke up, we found ourselves on our spaceship surrounded by Zenoan security guards. It seemed that our government had decided not to form a relationship with Earthlings, after all.

Thus, our first contact with Earthlings was a failure. We hope not too much of a failure—we don’t want to lose our jobs!

Sincerely,
Bacito

To you!!!

In the morning when I see you, I cannot eat. In the afternoon when I see you, I cannot eat. In the evening when I see you, I cannot eat. And at night I cannot sleep because I’m hungry.

Johanna Dingall
Dear Zeno,

We landed our spaceship at about 10:00 a.m. Near the place we landed, a lot of people were coming out of various kinds of boxes with windows and doors. Most of them were middle-aged men carrying newspapers, and they were all heading toward the same place. We decided to follow them.

There was a gate at the entrance to the place. Before we left our planet, we had been told to hand the gatekeeper some pieces of paper called “money” whenever we passed through a gate, but at this particular gate, our money wasn’t taken.

Inside was a huge field with a small crowd gathered around it. Elbowing our way through the crowd, we finally got close enough to see some kind of ceremony taking place. Some people wearing special clothes—colorful caps, shirts, and pants and long boots—were leading around some larger, strange-looking brown creatures, pulling on strings wound around the creatures’ necks. It was the first time that we had seen creatures of this kind, though we had seen some similar-looking creatures called “dogs” in a book. But these creatures were much bigger than dogs, and they had long necks. The people attending this ceremony were staring both at the proceedings and at the newspapers they had brought there. We peeped at the pages they were studying and saw various diagrams printed on them.

Moving on through the crowd, we got even closer to the huge field, where there were lots of people seated around the field holding small pieces of paper in their hands. These little papers seemed to be very important, so we wanted to get some, too. After looking around awhile for the place to get them, we found it and got into one of the long lines of people waiting to get their papers.

At the front of the line, there was a small window in the wall, and a woman on the other side of the window told us to fill out a form. We did as we were told, and then in exchange for some of our money she gave us some of the papers that seemed so important to everyone.

With our precious papers in hand, we went back to the field and saw that the colorfully dressed people out on the field were now sitting on the backs of the large, long-necked creatures, one rider per creature. As the creatures and their riders formed a line, the spectators seated around the field suddenly got very excited. Then we heard a loud sound as though something had exploded, and the creatures started running! They were so fast! While they were running around the field, the people around us became more and more excited.

When the creatures reached a white line drawn across the ground, some people seemed sad, others glad. Why were they like that? We couldn’t understand at all.

Leaving the field to return to our spaceship, we remembered our special papers. We still hadn’t figured out their significance, so we just threw them onto the ground.

As we readied ourselves for take-off, we looked out the window of our spaceship and saw a man pick up the papers we had thrown away. He seemed so delighted and excited. Were they valuable? At this point, we didn’t really care. We were so exhausted from trying to figure out the strange customs of Earthlings that we just wanted to get back to our planet.

Our best to everyone on Zeno,
Hello, my dear friends!!!

How are you doing on our lovely planet?

Well, I want to report to you about my mission. I’ve been on this planet, Earth, for a long time, but time is not the same here as it is on Zeno. For terrestrials, time is composed of years, and there are twelve months in a year, around thirty days in a month, twenty-four hours in a day, sixty minutes in an hour, sixty seconds in a minute, countless fractions of a second in a second, and countless more fractions in a fraction of a second, and so on until time becomes imperceptible. It’s a really crazy system, and I haven’t understood it yet. I’ve asked lots of terrestrials about this weird concept of time, but nobody seems able to introduce me to a day or to a second. I haven’t seen any of these units of time, but I can see the panic that people feel about time. They’re always in a hurry, and they make weird faces when somebody talks to them about time.

Everybody wears a strange-looking thing around their wrist called a watch, which is supposed to measure time. It consists of a small, flat container with a top made of glass, and two small belts for tying the device around the wrist. Within the container, there are three sticks, one of them very long and thin and moving continuously, another one short and thick and moving once per minute, and the other one long and thick and moving only once per hour. I think the third one must be the boss because he doesn’t do much work. Another kind of watch is one that has the same sort of container and belts but that has numbers inside the container rather than sticks. Just as the sticks move on different schedules, the numbers in this kind of watch change at various speeds. I bought one of these number-type watches for myself. It’s really nice.

Terrestrials have another, bigger kind of watch that they set in their houses, cars, and offices. This device, called a clock, has the same function as the wristwatch but is always kept in the same place, except when it’s being cleaned. I’ve seen one clock that has a bird inside, and at the beginning of each hour the bird comes out and sings for a moment, and then goes right back into the box. Poor bird—it has to stay inside that box all its life; it isn’t allowed to leave. And the worst thing is that nobody feeds it! I don’t know what’s wrong with these terrestrials. They’re probably punishing the bird as some sort of revenge against time, but the problem that terrestrials have with time isn’t the poor bird’s fault; it only works for time. Time is the boss, and I don’t think he even pays the bird for that hard job it has.

People are always looking at their watch and saying that time is running and that they don’t have time, but time is right there on their wrist! I don’t understand why they say that. I think they believe that time is trying to catch them—you can see
Report to Zeno 5493...

people walking in a hurry on the streets and driving cars on the highways at high speed—but I've never seen time running in pursuit of them. If time really is running after them, he probably only wants to play with them, but they imagine he's going to hurt them.

Anyway, I think terrestrial have lived with time for so many years and become so time-dependent that if he ever left them they'd miss all the worries and problems that he causes them.

Well, those are my impressions of one aspect of planet Earth. I plan to stay here for a couple more “days,” and then I’ll return to my sweet planet Zeno.

Take care—
~!*&^+_<.

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CS10/20 (left to right) — front: Khalid, Mark, Juan, Won-Giu
back: Mai, Miyuki, Yousef, Johanna, Carlos

Dear Esteban,

I have enjoyed being your roommate this term. You know what? For me, life here has been difficult because it has been my first time to live away from my family, but you are a good partner and roommate. I hope you have a lot of luck in the future. Please don't forget your English (or your Spanish!) And remember: “Rules are rules.” Thanks!

Pedro

Dear Eliecer and Yharedia,

Thank you for helping me learn about this place, and for helping me with everything when I began in EPI. Now I feel better and I think my English is better each day. Also, I wish you happiness with your new son.

Yours sincerely,

Pedro Vega

Dear CS60 Encounter Americans students,

Some of you I taught the first half, and some of you I taught the second half. I was proud of all of you when you gave your speeches to the high school students!! That was not easy... but you did it!! I can speak Thai, but I never had to give a speech in Thai, so I am proud of you!! Have a very Merry Christmas!! I hope I will see you again!

Mr. Rice
My dear Bo_alabed,

Yesterday, I went to a place on Earth where women love to subject themselves to various forms of punishment. In fact, the more afflicted they get there, the more they pay!

The most interesting thing about the place was that by the time the women left they had become much more beautiful and younger-looking than they had been before they went through their torture treatments. The people in charge of inflicting pain on these women seemed to be professionals; they certainly knew how to get positive results from stinging them. For example, they stitched some long black fibers onto one woman’s eyes, and when the operation was finished and the poor brave woman opened her eyes again she looked so happy!

Another example: they tried to remove a woman’s skin by applying a jar full of a sticky yellow liquid like honey to her face and then quickly pulling it off. After this horrible process, her skin became really smooth and she—the victim—was delighted! There were many strange things happening in this crazy place full of crazy women.

One useful thing I observed there: the workers used some kind of a heat machine on one woman, apparently to kill lice in her hair. As a result of this procedure her hair was all puffed up. The workers smiled at her, and the victim, sincerely appreciative, said, “Wow!”

The weirdest thing I saw there was the way the workers removed part of a woman’s nails. They used an agonizing tool to cut her long nails and another instrument to rasp them. Then they painted her nails unusual colors. I wondered why they sharpen women’s nails. Maybe those sharp nails are used as weapons. What phenomenal weapons they must make!

When the workers were finished torturing these poor ladies, they dipped their faces into various colorful pigments—the color of blood, the sun, and so on—turning them into bozo clowns! Those poor women looked so funny! But after the pigments were removed, their faces looked radiantly young and beautiful.

To augment my data collection in this amazing place, I decided to undergo the same treatments myself. It was really interesting and painful at the same time, but anyway it was a day in my Zenoan life of space exploration.

Sincerely,
Om_alabed

G.L.,
You are the only one in my heart. = I love you =
Yours forever,
R.R.
Exploring Earth

Report to Zeno 1127

Mohammed Al-Kaabi

Dear Brook 100,

As you know, we have been on Earth for one month. Our assignment was to kidnap the king of the Earth to facilitate an invasion of the planet. First of all, of course, we had to find out who the king was.

We began our search in a busy street in a place called New York City. We didn’t expect to find the king quickly, but we came upon him almost immediately, sitting there along the street. Almost everybody who passed by him stopped a moment and gave him some money. He cursed at those who walked by without paying him. People were so scared of him they didn’t say anything to him even if he said something bad to them.

We heard several of the passersby refer to him among themselves as “homeless,” which on Earth apparently means “the big king.” So that people could easily recognize him, he wore a special kind of clothes.

We decided to change into human form and have a conversation with the king. Just before we were ready to approach him, a guy wearing the same kind of clothes the king wore walked up to him. He didn’t offer the king any money, and he talked to him in the same way the king talked to his subjects. Now we were confused. Which of these two was the real ruler of the Earth? But everything soon became clear; they started fighting, and the king won. Evidently, the other guy had been trying to wrest the power from the king.

But we still had one question: Why hadn’t the king’s guards protected him? Anyway, we were happy to see that the king’s guards were so lax; that was going to make our assignment much easier.

After the king had regained his composure, we went over to him and started trying to talk with him. He wanted us to pay him before we talked, though, and we promptly obeyed. He didn’t answer any of our questions seriously. He was obviously very smart. Finally, night came and he wanted to leave. We asked him where he was going.

“I’m going to go drink some beer,” he said. “Would you like to come along?”

Ah, this was our opportunity.

He bought a beer for himself, but he forgot to buy drinks for us despite his having invited us along. To stay on good terms with him, we bought our own beers and sat down to drink with him. After two of these foul-tasting drinks, we felt something strange going on in our bodies, and the king started cursing at us. At this point, we realized that he knew everything about us. We tried to get up and capture him, but we couldn’t. We couldn’t even move.

The next morning, we got up with a big headache. He had used his super power to stop us.

Now we understand why he doesn’t need any guards. And why he is the king of the Earth. In conclusion, we think that invading Earth is impossible. How could we fight against a king who fights so effectively without even using guns?

Yours sincerely,
Rshooooood and 3b0ooood

Mai, my roommate,
I still remember your kindness on my first day here. My life in Columbia has been convenient and enjoyable because of you. I think I’m very lucky to have met you and had you as my roommate. I’m not sure whether I’ll be staying here or going back to Korea after this term is finished, but you’ll always be in my memory. Thank you for everything. I hope that you’ll always be happy and that your dreams will come true.

Hye Won Lee

P.S. If you visit Korea without your boyfriend, don’t call me . . . :-)

To my classmates,
I’m grateful for your smiles. They have made me feel better when I miss my country and my family. My best wishes to you.

Ivette Villarreal
My dear Zenoans,

When I first caught sight of Earth, it looked like a small pearl suspended in space, but the closer I got to it the more I became aware of its hugeness—it is actually about twenty times bigger than Zeno. Thanks to Earth’s low gravity, it was going to be easy for me to walk around on the planet, and I was looking forward to getting to know some of its interesting places and groups of people. I wanted to understand Earthlings’ culture, behavior, and feelings.

The first place I went to explore was a wide open area crowded with happy people. My first impression of the lifestyle on Earth was favorable because in contrast to our life on Zeno, which as you know is very busy, life here was so carefree. But this area was also strange to me, and I felt confused.

The first unusual thing I saw there was a small ship attached to a mechanical arm that went round and round, continually digging at the air. Although this ship looked dangerous, many people were waiting for their turn to go for a ride in it. They seemed to enjoy daring adventures. At first, I hesitated to try it, but as my teacher had advised me that I had to behave like aliens if I wanted to understand them I finally decided to get in line and go for a ride in the ship myself.

So, I bought a ticket with a piece of paper called “money.” I became aware of how easy and comfortable money made life on Earth. With this little sheet, people could do anything they wanted. This explained why they looked as if they were entranced with joy. On our planet, the idea of enjoying something without working for it is an illusion; but this seemingly unrealizable dream has come true on this planet. I was very glad to meet such people but was envious of them at the same time.

When it was my turn, I handed over my ticket and boarded the ship. I noticed that everyone wanted a seat in one of its two extremities. By the time I entered the ship, there was no place left there, so I took a seat in the middle. I became more and more excited about what was going to happen. Finally, the ship started to move—slowly at first and then faster and faster. I began to feel something peculiar happening in my stomach. The faster the ship moved, the worse my stomach felt. And I wasn’t the only one who was feeling sick.

Everyone on the ship was crying. Despite the unpleasant
feeling in my stomach, their
grimaces made me laugh.

Suddenly, I felt some liquid
being spilt on my head. I turned
around and saw a girl sitting
behind me profusely spewing out
some kind of slimy secretion from
her mouth. I couldn’t guess what
it was, but it smelled delicious.
She seemed to be doing this just
for fun. So I started spitting on
people, too, like the girl. But then
something unexpected happened.
A man sitting in front of me
looked back at me with infuriated
eyes and punched me in the face.
Why was he angry?

I still haven’t found the
answer to this question, but I did
discover something very interest-
ing about Earthlings: they are
highly aware of their mortality.
They know they can die at any
time from an unforeseen accident,
so to become accustomed to death
and able to encounter it without
fear or pain they intentionally put
their life in danger.

After I got off that ship, I tried
another of the Earthlings’ interest-
ing forms of transportation: a
train running and looping rapidly
through the air. It looked unsafe
but thrilling, too. I noticed that
the more I rode such frightening
machines the less I was afraid of
them. Finally, I was able to
endure the pain they inflicted
and even to enjoy myself. I
concluded that in the transporta-
tion field we could learn some-
thing from Earthlings.

Now on my way back home,
I suppose I wouldn’t panic if my
spaceship broke down because
I’m prepared for anything
dangerous, thanks to my never-
to-be-forgotten experience on
Earth.

See you soon,
ωνπωφή
Hello, beloved Zeno!

I started my mission at 198473 Zenoan time. During my flight, I speculated about what I might find on that blue-green ball called Earth, though I didn’t really know what to expect. I had seen computer simulations of “human” beings there—they have a little ball on the top and four worm-shaped limbs—so I wasn’t surprised about their looks when I saw them in person for the first time.

But first back to my landing. I landed on a kind of rock with a red cross and red lights on its top. I couldn’t believe that they had known my arrival time and had prepared the runway for me. But apparently they had, and I was very glad about that because I had nearly gotten lost getting there.

After I had shrunk my spaceship so that I could carry it, I looked for a way to get down from the rock. I soon found a hole called a “doorway” and went down some stairs inside the rock, which brought me to a big room inhabited by many strange-looking people. They had all painted their bodies a white or brown color. I couldn’t understand why they had done that. I am proud of my light green skin.

Anyway, that was only the beginning. As I walked around observing them, suddenly a person in a white smock came up to me and cried, “Oh, my God, this man needs urgent medical help—he’s nearly green!”

At once, three of them grabbed me and laid me down on a moveable bed of some sort. I tried to escape, but I had no chance. They held me down fast, and a woman pushed something over my face that pressed a lot of air into my nose. My only thought was, “Everything is over. They are going to do experiments on me and kill me.”

But then I had a fantastic idea: I remembered that on Earth everybody has a heart and that its beating is a sign that one is alive. So, I decided to turn off my electronic heart for the next three hours to make everyone believe I was dead. When I began to carry out this plan, all the workers around me started behaving very hectically. But of course they didn’t succeed in reviving me.

Eventually, they gave up and took me to a room where a lot of other people were lying on narrow beds like mine. Almost all of these people had a strange blue-green color. Poor people—they could not escape.

After I was left alone among these motionless humans, I turned my heart back on, got up, and resumed my tour of the inner rooms of this strange rock I had landed on. I found some white smocks like those the workers were wearing and put one on so that nobody would recognize me as I continued my observation.

After a while, I heard some terrible screams coming out of a nearby room. It was a woman’s voice, and she was crying out as if she was about to be killed. I decided to risk a quick look into the room to see what was going on. I opened the door a slit and peeked inside. I could not believe what I was seeing. Her belly was one big ball! She looked awful, and I felt pity for her. The pain this woman was suffering was unbelievable. She must have had a very serious disease, and perhaps she was dying.

Suddenly, I saw something coming out from between her legs. At first, it was only a little ball, but then it became bigger and bigger. She cried and pressed hard to push the ball out of her body. Finally, out came a little BABY!!! I could not believe it. Were humans really so old-fashioned that they did not yet make babies via computer as we do on Zeno?! Didn’t people want to create their own dream baby—male or female, strong, intelligent, tall, or perhaps thick—whatever they wanted? I could not understand how a woman could suffer all
Exploring Earth

Report to Zeno 6213 . . .

this pain and in the end still be happy and laughing. And ONLY because of a baby. And not even knowing what kind of baby she was getting. Isn’t that stupid?! In my opinion, the Earth is not a planet worth further exploration at the present time. The people are crazy and not at all progressive. Maybe we could return for another look in 10,000 years or so (&@%*$^$ in Zenoan time).

Yours,
@#$%^&

To my dearest friend Catalina,

How are you? I hope everything is fine. I’ve really enjoyed being your friend, and it’s my pleasure to have a friend like you. I promise you that we will be good friends forever.

C ya soon,
Noora Sultan

To you,

Separating is hard to avoid, and sometimes it makes people sad. May your life’s journey be great.
Your friend

To Pei-Yu,

I’ve really enjoyed getting along with you. I’m going back to Taiwan after this term, and I’ll miss the pleasant time we’ve had together here, my dear friend!

Your friend forever,
Shou-Yu

To all of my teachers,

Thank you for your help. I’m so glad you are my teachers, and I’m never going to forget you.

Roxana R.

Dear Marit,

It has been very meaningful for me to study English with you and our classmates. Because you’re always giving us an opportunity to enjoy learning English, I feel that I have improved my English. I would like to express my most heartfelt thanks.

Sincerely yours,
Sun

CS60TE (left to right) — front: Yesim, Noora, Mariana back: Gorka, Armando, David, Nicola, Samir

To all the Arabs,

Marhaba . . . Thanks for being good friends. I wish you a happy life full of success. Just remember, life is a desert, and friendship is a cool glass of water. Do everything with love, and love will touch everything you do . . .

Noora Sultan (Oman)
(redN)

Dear GWBW classmates,

Thanks. We have studied hard this term. I have many feelings in my heart. When I was a new student, I didn’t know what I should do. You have always looked after me carefully, so I have had a good time at EPI.

Kuo-Yuan

Yuko,

How are you doing, Yuko? I heard that after this term you are going to visit Seoul, so I am very happy. People in my country are very kind. You are like a Korean. I hope you have a wonderful visit.

Won-Young Kim

To a friend,

I have been calling your name, I’ve been seeing your name. I am waiting for you. See you next year.
Wounded soldier

Dear Hwa-Soo,

How are you, Hwa-Soo? I have enjoyed meeting you and I hope you will be happy.

Jeng-Hoon
Greetings, dear Zenoans!

Traveling around the galaxy, my partner and I received a message from our leader. He wanted us to explore Earth, the third planet from the sun, because this planet has similar conditions to our planet and we could live there in the future.

As we approached Earth, we saw a very open place where we could land our ship. From a distance this place looked like some sort of wrecker’s yard, but as we got closer we could see that the old ships there were still moving. Humans inside the vehicles were parking them beside each other, steering them over the surface with a set of wheels beneath them. Although these ships apparently could no longer fly, they were still being used. “Amazing!” I thought.

When people had parked their ships, they got out and walked toward a gigantic structure nearby. We parked our ship and followed the crowd. On the way to the structure, we encountered a lot of people trying to sell us all kinds of uniform-type clothes with a message written on them. Most of the people entering the structure were wearing the same kind of uniform or at least one article of clothing having the same message. Besides the clothes, there were a lot of other products with the same message for sale, and for some reason people looked happy whenever they saw that somebody else had the same message as they did. On the other hand, if somebody was wearing or carrying something with a different message, people would look at him or her as if he or she was strange. To look as inconspicuous as possible, we bought some clothes bearing the most popular message and put them on before we walked into the structure.

This enormous structure was a kind of building with no rooms inside. Everybody took a seat
Exploring Earth

Report to Zeno 334 . . .

around a big yard, looking as though they were expecting something to happen there. For a long time, though, there was nothing to see. While people were waiting for that something to happen, they drank bubbly yellow or black liquids and ate some kind of soft, sponge-like food wrapped around a finger-like thing covered with thick liquids of various colors. The rows of people waiting to buy this kind of food were amazingly long. We couldn’t resist the temptation to try it—and, of course, one of the bubbly drinks. The food was delicious, something completely different from our food. And the bubbly yellow drink made me feel so relaxed that I immediately wanted another one.

I had my partner buy another drink for me while I continued to wait for the action to begin in the yard, an empty field with a large square marked out in white and punctuated with a small pillow at each corner. Finally, nine people in full uniform came running out of one of the two caves along the sides of the yard. After these people had all taken a special position in the yard, a woman stepped out among them and began to sing. When she finished singing, the crowd of people who were gathered around the yard started yelling and making a lot of noise as if they were crazy. Evidently, it was a war song that the woman had sung. Then all the spectators sat down and the battle began.

Now I could understand that the message worn by the minority of spectators was in support of the “visitors” in the other cave, who were apparently a representative squad of combatants from another part of the planet. One of the visitors stood up with a kind of stick and faced the nearest “home” combatant, who was getting ready to do something with a ball he was holding. The home squad consisted of the humans defending the yard and wearing the same message that the people outside the building had sold us.

The visitor with the stick was about five decoys away from the home combatant with the ball, who threw the ball to another home combatant crouched behind the visitor. The challenge consisted of the visitor trying to hit the ball with the stick. If he hit the ball, he needed to run to the pillow located to his right, called “first base.” If the ball hit the ground, he had to arrive at first base before the ball, which was thrown there by the home combatant who had caught it. If he arrived in time, he was considered victorious (“safe”), but if he arrived after the ball he was considered defeated (“out”). If one of the home combatants caught the ball in the air before it hit the ground, the visitor was declared out immediately. When three of the visitors had been declared out for one of these reasons or for some other, more complex reason, the first round of battle was finished. The visiting squad’s performance with the stick had been mixed. Though three of the visitors had been defeated, some of the other visitors had scored victories by hitting the ball in ways that advanced their squad mates already on a pillow to the next pillow.

After the third out, the visiting squad and the home squad exchanged roles and repeated the procedure, with the home squad now getting their chance to hit the ball with the stick. After nine of these exchanges—eighteen rounds ("innings") in all—the battle was over. The winner was the squad that had safely advanced more of their combatants around all the pillows of the square and back to the place where the ball was hit with the stick.

This kind of battle humans engage in is very strange, and if we need to fight on their terms to dominate them it’s going to be very difficult. They have a lot of rules, and they have four judges who determine the merit of each action in the contest.

To learn how we can fight humans, I think we need to observe in great detail all their forms of battle because we might be at a disadvantage.

Yours,

#@$^@() /

Dear Jin-Hoon,

You are very kind. I am so happy because you are my roommate. We have watched TV together every night. I think I want to see you in Korea next year.

Your friend,

Hytham


The Bomb

Nicola Baldauf, Germany; Satoko Handa, Japan; Rashid Al-Kubaisi, Qatar; Jung Yun Park, Korea; Sung Hyun Paik, Korea; Claudia Moscoso, Colombia; Ahmed Al-Raalsi, Oman; Dick Holmes, USA

It's the bomb

when the rising orange sun
illuminates a stretch of bluish-white fog

It's the bomb

when a yellow butterfly appears and disappears
among yellow leaves on the tree

It's the bomb

when you lie down on a big pile of yellow leaves

It's the bomb

when you remember that everything you've ever experienced
you've experienced within your mind

It's the bomb

when your face shines red from a fire in the fireplace

It's the bomb

when you have someone who can tearfully pray for you

It's the bomb

when you wake up one winter morning and everything is white
because it snowed the night before

It's the bomb

when you realize that though it didn't have to be this way
this is the way it is

It's the bomb

when you can feel the seed of hope sprouting in your heart

It's the bomb

when you see the stars dancing with the moon
The Bomb...

It's the bomb
when you breathe in the fragrance of pink flowers
drifting from a southern island

It's the bomb
when something you've decided on by yourself is going well

It's the bomb
when you find the fifth season in your own unique color

It's the bomb
when you can share with your family after not seeing them for a long time

It's the bomb
when you go to sleep and wake up again in your home country

Song of May
Barbara Kubodera
USA

Shade the light and still the shaking.
He who died was all too young.
Glint of fire and balance breaking
When he left his song unsung.

Let the words come gently pulsing.
Cloak the loss in silken lies.
Layer on layer the web is woven
Till the wound unspoken dies.
Sweetheart!!
Van Tran
Vietnam

If what I said made you laugh,
I will say it one more time.
If what I did made you smile,
I will do it all the time.
If what I sang made you happy,
I will sing it all my life.
When you look into my eyes,
You can tell how much I love you.
You are the one,
The one I really love.
You are the one,
The one I really care for.
When you told me
You really love me,
I lost myself in that happy time.
I didn’t know
Whether our love was true or not,
But I didn’t care
What was happening around me.
I just knew
Only you and I were in the world.
I am delighted to love you, sweetheart.

Even With . . .
Catalina Concha
Colombia

Even with roads that rise
the loneliness has taught me to learn.

Even with the wind always at my back
I have felt lost.

Even with the warm sunshine upon my face
I have been scared.

Even with the rainfall soft upon my skin
I have waited for understanding.

Even with flowers in bloom
I have missed my true self

Because even with everything
I haven’t found happiness without you.

Red
Dick Holmes
USA

Lit up like
stained glass
windows
in the sun
going down,
the red leaves
of the dogwood.

Blue
Dick Holmes
USA

Okay, so we
think we know
what makes the sky blue,
but do we see,
really see the blue,
and feel the sun, all the way,
al the way through?
We hope that when you return to your home country you will share this magazine with your friends. And if any of them express interest in studying at EPI please copy or cut out the application form on the next page and pass it along. Thank you!
CONFIDENTIAL FINANCIAL DECLARATION

US Immigration requires EPI to have a letter from a bank to prove that there is enough money to pay for tuition, fees, and living expenses for one (1) term. This amount of money must be at least $3800. You may not need to use all of this money, but you must prove that it is available. If your sponsor is a school, company, or other business, please attach a letter of support on official stationery.

Name of student

(family/last) / (given/first)

Name of person responsible for providing money for the student

(family/last) / (given/first)

Estimated costs for one term: $1725, tuition; $75, fees; $150, books; $850, housing; $1000, food and miscellaneous expenses.

Please read the following statement and sign below: "This is to confirm that I will financially support the student named above. I certify that I am aware of the costs of EPI and living in the United States, and I guarantee that the money shown in the bank statement will be available to this student during his/her studies in EPI."

Signature of person responsible for providing money for the student

[Signature]

Date

Name of bank

Address of bank

Official bank seal

ENGLISH PROGRAMS FOR INTERNATIONALS
University of South Carolina, Byrnes 207
Columbia, South Carolina 29208, USA
Telephone (803) 777-3867
Fax (803) 777-6839
epi-info@epi.sc.edu
http://www.epi.sc.edu

APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION

Please complete this application and return it with a $75 NON-REFUNDABLE application fee.

When would you like to start?

- Winter 2000 January 9 - March 10
- Spring 2000 March 19 - May 19
- Summer 2000 May 28 - July 28
- Fall I, 2000 August 6 - October 6
- Fall II, 2000 October 15 - December 15

(Orientation first Sunday only; Classes Monday through Friday.)

Program costs for each nine-week term:

\$1725 Tuition
\$ 75 University fees

The program costs include instruction, activities, academic counseling, computer laboratory/listening laboratory fees, health insurance, and services of the campus health center. The student will have to pay for housing, food, and textbooks. All fees are subject to change without notice.

***

How did you find out about EPI?

[Signature]
Housing Information

Average EPI apartments have one bedroom and one bathroom, providing space for two students. All bedrooms have two beds. All students share a bathroom with a roommate of the same gender. Kitchen, laundry, study, and reception areas are available for students from different countries to live together. However, we cannot guarantee that your roommate will not speak the same language as you.

There is a non-refundable $25 application fee due with the housing application. Once you have moved into the housing space, you must pay the housing fees for the entire term (apartment fee + maintenance fee). EPI housing fees per term are as follows:

- One Bedroom Apartment Fee: $25
- Two Bedroom Apartment Fee: $600
- Maintenance Fee (required): $25

If you are currently a student in the USA, please give the name and address of the school you are attending.

If you have any questions, please contact the University of South Carolina.

Date of birth (month/day/year)

Country of citizenship

Country

City

Street

Email

Phone number

Location

Postal code

Name

Sex

Family/Birth

Address

County/State

Yes

No

Are you a current student in the USA?

Yes

No

Are you currently employed outside the United States?

Yes

No

Have you finished high school (secondary school)?

Yes

No

Social Security Number

Home address

City

State

Postal code

Country

Country of birth

Date of birth

Yes

No

If yes, what is your visa status? Please circle one of the following:

[ ] 12

Other

Street

Family/Birth

Name

Sex

Male

Female

If yes, when is your visa expire?