

Issue 5.

THE CULTURE ISSUE.

December 1st.

2013.

The Paperbook Collective.



*it is not only addiction
but it is of only addiction
the one of which
I am most fond*

a *jayde ashe*
publication

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Welcome.

Welcome, everyone, to the final issue of The Paperbook Collective for 2013!

What a year it has been.

I want to begin with a huge shout out to every single person who has submitted work to The Paperbook Collective over the past few months. Without you, there would be no magazine.

To every single person who has read, downloaded, shared or promoted The Paperbook Collective in any way, you guys rock. Without you, there would be no magazine.

To every single person who has purchased a copy of The Paperbook Collective Zine, a million thanks. Without you, there would be no magazine.

The collaborative effort and involvement of everyone over the lifespan of The Paperbook Collective thus far has blown me away. I think this has demonstrated the power of creativity to connect people from every culture across the globe. It is truly awe inspiring.

So have a wonderful festive season, everyone. Enjoy the final issue for 2013, The Culture Issue.

See you all in 2014.



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Confronting Culture.

Leonard Durso.

I walk down narrow streets
passing strangers who resemble people
of my youth
the faces so familiar
it is as if my uncles/aunts are here
huddled in conversation
politics and sports
though the talk here is of football
not the Brooklyn Dodgers
our hearts broken with each loss
our hearts buoyant with each win
and those damned Republicans
on the loose again
here the talk is of a loss of freedom
the high rate of taxes
what to eat for dinner
and time to drink one's coffee in peace
the shrugs of shoulders
the helpless hand gestures
I know this world
so far from my own
and yet is my own
it is like looking
in a mirror
I have not felt so Italian
until I walked these streets
of Naples
my name not so musical
until I heard it here
I have not felt so at home
until I closed my eyes
and took in the scent from restaurants
in the air
of these streets
here



An open letter from a resident of the North Pole.

Aspiring Scribbler.

To whom it may concern,

We recently got the Internet connected at the workshop, and for a laugh, I thought I'd Google myself and my workplace. I couldn't help but notice that there seem to be a few misconceptions floating around about how things are run up here. Santa's Workshop is a business, just like any other.

For a start, let's forget those stripy, fur-trimmed outfits you see us elves wearing in all the movies and TV shows. Those are so last century. These days we're all bound by strict OHS guidelines. That fur trim and all those bells were deemed a safety hazard because of the likelihood of their getting caught in the machinery. Not to mention the number of broken toes suffered when tools or toys were dropped on those soft, pointy shoes. Now, we're all required to wear company issued overalls and heavy duty work boots.

Well...I say we all... There's not quite as many of us here as there used to be. The packaging division is doing alright, of course, but production is suffering. There was a time when most of us were carpenters and seamstresses, but people aren't asking Santa for handmade toys as much anymore. We asked for permission to retrain in electronics, but all those gadgets are protected by patents and we can't risk copying them. I'm told we get a pretty good deal when we order in bulk from the manufacturers though, and few of the elves were routed into the mail room to help manage the extra incoming deliveries.

Speaking of deliveries...We all know how it works. We elves work a fairly cushy 9 to 5 job, but it's Santa and the reindeer who suffer through that one grueling 24 hour shift each year. Nobody's grudging them the extra glory they get. They earned it. But here's an idea, how about this year you wrap up a spare cookie or two addressed to the elves? Is that too much to ask?

Sincerely,

Alvar Silverman. (Elf)

Alvar Silverman. (Elf)



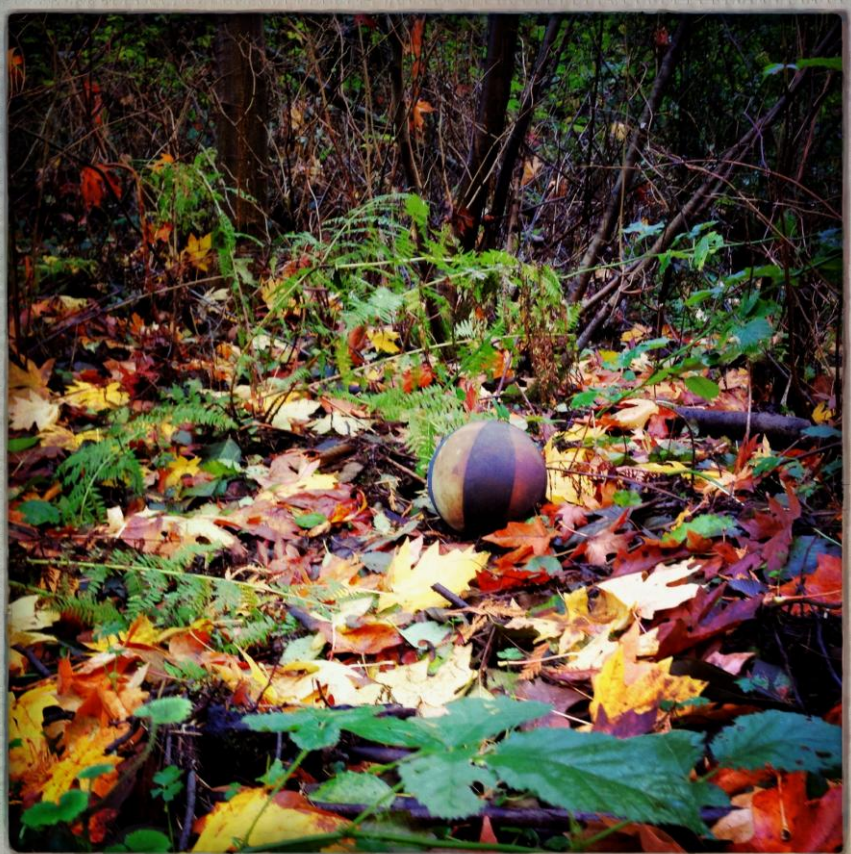
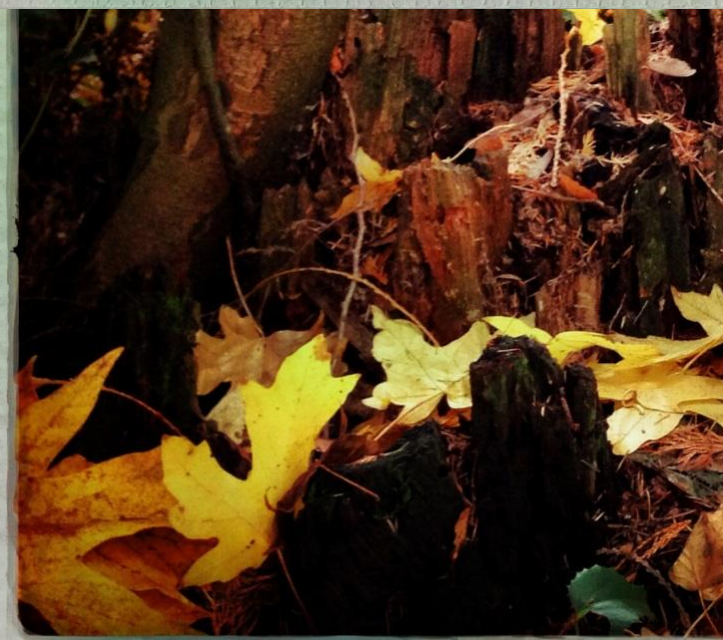


Autumn

in

Seattle

Lisa Kennedy



Anatomy of an Artists Desk.

Tempest

I hit the switch on my lamp with the flexible neck, sending the light washing over my own dark little corner of the world. A hard cover A4 sketchpad lies open, a single pen isolated and resting upon its surface amidst the half-finished lines.

A precarious cluster of ink dropper bottles to the right crowds the top of an untouched drawing pad, tempting disaster with every wayward pen stroke and outstretched arm. Behind them, their older, inferior cousins of since forgotten colours nestle around the base of the lamp, their position in the spotlight imploring me to reach out and know them again. To the left, the orderly cases of vibrant watercolour pencils fight for position and prominence against their darker brothers, the tinted graphite pencils, subdued and brooding until the water can bring them to life. When the drawing starts, it's as if a battle has begun, the outnumbered graphite's infiltrating and invading the vibrant ones larger cases, jostling for balance and occasionally tumbling to the dark oblivion of the carpet below.

Each outpouring of creativity is a declaration of war, a constant struggle for space, interspersed by brief moments of ceasefire, a coffee break, a cigarette, "pretty sure it's past midnight now."

The funky CD holder housing some personal favourites sits beyond reach, blockaded by an army of stacked paint tins, Banksia wood carvings, books, and the obligatory bottles of hard liquor, standing like headstones in an ever shifting graveyard, ruins swallowed by the jungle.

Dozens of pens litter the landscape, every pen known to man. Gifts, thefts and impulsive purchases, cheap company giveaways, sleek and pricy professionals, gold and blue, leaky red ones.

I have but two hands, well one really, and many of these will sit waiting until their ink dries forever, passed over time and time again, or falling victim to one of the inevitable purges that must take place from time to time.

A hundred genres of music fly from the speakers to the right, bass lines rumbling across the room, voices soaring above the chaos. The machine gun fire of unrelenting drums and endless oceans of haunting guitar melodies, contrast and opposite with each song, the lonely piano and croon of Julie London, the deepest growls of Scandinavian death metal.

Frames by the dozen and temporarily discarded works in progress line the left side wall, sharing space with crates of visual diaries and portfolios, the future and past constantly united.

Candles, always gazed upon but never lit, and empty glass bottles, long drained of drink, stand like eternal monoliths, towering over the rampant sprawl of dreams and the tools used to create them.

Looming above it all is the pin up board, the wall of inspiration, its cork surface a frenzied multitude of perfect moments compressed and immortalised in the background. Old sketches on file paper and post its, tiny squares of briefs forays into colour. Festival tickets, concept drawings, memorable photographs, love letters written in Japanese. This place has seen celebration and frustration, numerous and frequent temper tantrums and moments of sweet serenity. From this maelstrom my art is born, each line and mistake, every glorious moment of triumph, a personal release and an exploration of the self. I couldn't imagine a life without it.

Of words...

Amreen B. Shaikh

*For words was my friend
holding the lifeless breath of sorrow
etched within the crevices of my life.*

*And it chirped a cupid song
when butterflies played upon my belly
and life was red paper roses.*

*It was beside me like a shadow
to cast a rainbow of hope
above the silent tears of a broken heart.*

*It stroked a hue of love
over the untitled memories
to soothe my loneliness.*

*And words became my existence
when I saw them inscribed
on every wall of my heart
forming the only archive of my life.*

A Pilgrim's Journey to Chimayo, Princess del Oso.

Sometimes it is only after we leave our homes that we begin to appreciate the traditions and rituals that make up our lives. I grew up in New Mexico, a state rich with Native American, Hispanic, and Anglo culture. While some of the many traditions of the area have always been with me, it was only after I had moved to the Pacific Northwest that I became curious about the Good Friday pilgrimage to the humble little church in Chimayo. I had always believed it was an act of devotion only meant for those of the Catholic faith. But after my father passed away, I saw it as an opportunity to honor him, even though I was not a person of faith. I thought my family might find me foolish for wanting to perform the pilgrimage on Good Friday in 2007, but when I told my sister, not only was she completely supportive, she asked if she could accompany me. Those hours walking were the closest we have ever shared. I cherish them always. And when we descended into Chimayo, with all the other pilgrims, I felt very inspired and humbled. Then, when we entered the church and the sanctuary, I was completely moved to tears. The simple beauty of this little Spanish Colonial church renders all the other



grand edifices superfluous. It is a remarkable place to experience, especially when one understands a little of its history.

Nestled in the Santa Cruz River Valley of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in northern New Mexico is the small community of Chimayo. Chimayo, New Mexico gets its name from the Tewa peoples who called the area “Tsi-Mayoh”, after one of four sacred hills surrounding the valley. After the Spanish conquest of the area by Juan de Oñate in 1598, the Pueblo Revolt in 1680, and the re-conquest in 1695 by Don Diego de Vargas, nineteen families settled in the area that became known as El Potrero de Chimayo.

Legend has it that in 1810, Don Bernardo Abeyta, one of the founding family members

and member of the Hermandad de Nuestro Padre Jesus el Nazareno (Penitentes), was performing penances in

the countryside when he saw a light coming from the hills near the Santa Cruz river. When he got to the site he discovered the light was issuing forth from the ground. He dug out the sandy dirt with his bare hands and discovered a crucifix. This crucifix came to be called *Nuestro Señor de Esquipulas*. A priest in the nearby village of Santa Cruz de Cañada, Fr. Sebastian Alvarez, was summoned to the site. The priest, followed by parishioners, carried the crucifix back to Santa Cruz and placed it in the church. The following morning, the crucifix was gone. It was located at the site where it was originally discovered. Two more attempts were made to house the crucifix at Santa Cruz, but just like the first time, the crucifix disappeared only to be found again at its original site. The community accepted that *Nuestro Señor de Esquipulas* wanted to stay in El Potrero de Chimayo; therefore a small shrine was built to house the sacred relic. At that time, reports of miraculous healings began, and were attributed to the crucifix and to the earth in which it was found.

There is another version of the legend. In the archives at the Diocese in Durango, Mexico, documents state that a priest from Esquipulas, Guatemala, was one of the first settlers in the Chimayo area. He carried with him a very distinct crucifix and preached to the native peoples. He was killed and the other settlers buried him and the crucifix in El Potrero. A flood in 1810 uncovered both the body and the crucifix. This is where the name of the crucifix came from. It seems certain in either form of the legend, Don Bernardo Abeyta was familiar with the devotion to the Esquipulas crucifix.

In 1813, Don Bernardo Abeyta petitioned Fr. Sebastian Alvarez to contact the Holy See in Durango, Mexico, to build a chapel in El Potrero. The settlers of El Potrero wished to honor *Nuestro Señor de Esquipulas* and to celebrate Mass. Permission was granted and in 1816, El Santuario de Chimayo was completed.

After the end of World War II, the veterans of the Bataan Death March began making a pilgrimage to Chimayo in thanksgiving for having survived. Since then, El Santuario de Chimayo has been the destination of thousands of pilgrims annually, especially during Holy Week and Good Friday. The church has even been given the name of The Lourdes of the Americas.

The Prayer Room, off from the sanctuary, is filled with photographs and discarded medical devices of those who have said to have been healed by the sacred earth of the area. In an even smaller room is “El Pocito”, the little well, where pilgrims can dig out a little of the sacred dirt.

While it might take an act of faith to accept the legends as to the beginnings of El Santuario, one afternoon spent in quiet reflection in this beautiful valley can re-center one to the natural magic that is surely felt in this ethereal landscape. I am very thankful that I had the opportunity to connect with the traditions of my home.

Whisky Dreams. Lavanya.

#1

Cawing thirsty crows,
and calculated passion.
Vendetta en fin.

#2

In ignorant bliss
ink and paint or blood and gore.
A vesper bell rings.

#3

Grandiose schemes.
Love's but an apparition
sweet delirium.

Papillon by Henri Charriere.

Book review by Tempest.

In a world where we dream of escape, from the daily commute to work, from consumerism, politics, bills to pay, and all the other trappings of modern existence, I can think of no better way to do it than by diving into an open book. And what better book than one that is literally talking escape, as in, knock the guard over the head and vault the wall escape. One part “Robinson Crusoe”, one part “The Count of Monte Cristo”, with a liberal splash of poetic license and some masterful storytelling, and you have *Papillon*. Critics have denounced the book, claiming it is a work of fiction masquerading as a definitive auto-biography, and after reading this novel (many times) I’m inclined to think they are correct. More importantly though, I couldn’t care less.

“The convicts called that prison the man-eater. I hoped I’d be able to prove the nickname false.”

The story follows Henri, a member of the Parisian underworld who was wrongfully convicted of manslaughter and subsequently sentenced to life imprisonment in French Guinea during the 1930’s. Despite proclaiming his innocence, Henri soon finds himself buried by the French prison system, with nothing but his ingenuity, street smart attitude and endearing personality to help him. That and an exceedingly rich compatriot and several thousand francs ingeniously smuggled in with them. Known throughout the underworld as *Papillon*, the French name for the large butterfly tattooed on his chest, Henri is driven by the all-consuming urge to escape and exact vengeance upon those who condemned him. Upon their arrival in South America, a series of inspired adventures and escape attempts follow, all written in a free flowing and frenetic style.

“It was a storm all right, my first storm, with all the terrific splendour of nature unrestrained. Thunder, lightning, rain, waves, the howling of the wind over and all around us”

Portrayed as a highly regarded and influential figure within the criminal fraternity, his expressions of innocence seem somewhat rehearsed at times, but underneath it all, his struggle represents an ideal higher than himself. There is a sense of surreal behind the hidden nuances of prison life, narrated with a seemingly endless capacity for even the tiniest details. Between every blast of action, from running through a South American jungle chewing on coca leaves to avoiding murder within the confines of a darkened prison, the characters joke with each other, brewing coffee, smoking and sharing stories. Filled with dark humour and uplifting meetings with people they encounter from all walks of life, no one is safe from the irresistible charm of *Papillon* and his incredibly calm yet driven mind. Committed to survival and the search for freedom, not even those who would be his captors can quench his spirit.

“I discovered a world, a people, and a civilisation that were entirely unknown to me”

Throughout the book, across the myriad cultures and backgrounds of the prisoners and the local peoples, the humanity present in everyone is what makes the book so memorable. An act of betrayal from one who is trusted implicitly, a gesture of friendship from another who has nothing else to give, corrupt guards, strangely benevolent governors and kindness from complete strangers. Language barriers are broken down, replaced by universal symbols of communication, a wave of a hand, a shared cigarette, the cold eyes of veiled intent and a freely given smile. Even so, there is much dialogue, and the pace at times resembles a freight train out of control, caught up in the rush of pages, interspersed with brief moments of lucidity and reflection.

“And slowly, very slowly, we went down into the camp, side by side and still holding hands, followed by the two stretcher bearers carrying our dying friend.”

Above all, the book imparts an incredibly optimistic view of mankind, delving into the hidden reaches of a barbaric and soulless institution, and bringing out from the darkness a hope and light. One of my all-time favourites, (so much so the book is literally falling apart) in my mind it is a shining example of who we are, the macabre and the beautiful side by side, the definition of right and wrong sometimes a mere word when compared to the light of a person’s soul. After a particularly rough day, I’ll pass my eyes over the bookcase and spot the stark black title of *Papillon*, and more often than not, leave with it shortly afterwards, to dive into another world again. Literary escape in every sense of the word.

Beautiful Loundja and how she married the Prince:

AN ALGERIAN STORY TOLD BY GRANDMOTHERS FOR GENERATIONS.

AIRLIA GRAY.

Once upon a time there was a prince. He went one day to water his horse by the well. The horse drank and played with the water, tossing it around and wetting an old woman. The old woman was very angry and shouted at the prince "Do you think you are Loundja the daughter of ghouls?" before hurrying away. The prince became very curious at the words and kept thinking of this strange girl named Loundja. What was she like? A daughter of a beast? Was she pretty or ugly? He finally decided to come back and find the old woman and ask her about it. He had a problem though: a man should not ask of strange young women. He had to devise a plan to force the woman to tell him. The prince faked sickness and said he wanted no healer but the old woman he had met at the well. At his request, the woman was found and brought to him. Seeing how weak he looked she asked him what he wished for and he asked her to make him some soup. The two of them were left alone. The old woman began to make the soup while the Prince watched. He waited until she was engrossed in her work and then threw something into the pot.

"Look! What is that in the soup?" he cried. The woman saw something floating in the soup so she reached into the pot to take it out. The prince seized the opportunity and held her hand in place close to the hot soup.

"Now, my dear woman, tell me about this Loundja." The old woman struggled but could not break free, so she began to tell him the secret of the girl, daughter to the family of ghouls who feasted on humans.

"Loundja is the most beautiful woman that ever was; she has white skin that glows like the moon, and long black hair that comes to her feet. She lives with her mother and father, two horrible beasts that live in the forest feeding on humans." Hearing of the girl's beauty, the prince decided he wanted her for a wife. He packed his things and set on the trip to the forest where the ghouls lived.

Loundja lived in the house of her parents like any young obedient girl; she cooked and cleaned and never left the house without her mother's permission. Every night her parents came home after feeding, and her mother would set to putting Henna on all the pots of the house so they will sleep in peace and make no noise as they slept. The prince arrived at the ghouls home and knocked on the door. Loundja answered and was surprised to see the human man.

"Who are you human, what are you doing here?"

"I am the prince of the neighbouring tribe, have heard of your beauty and came to see you" he said.

"Have you gone mad? Don't you know this is the house of monsters? If you stay you shall become my parent's meal of the day." Just then she heard the sound of her parents approaching and shivered. "Hurry, come, if they see you it would be your death". Loundja took the prince to back yard and helped him down the empty well with his horse and dog, and covered the opening with the large plate who was her friend.

"Listen plate, when mother asks you to put Henna on you, please do not obey." The ghouls and his wife came in and smelled a new human scent in their home.

"Loundja my daughter" said the ghouls, "We smell a human, where is he?"

"A human, here, father?" said the girl, "What idiot comes to the house of men eaters?" Knowing her for her honesty, the tired beasts left it alone and went to put Henna on the pots who all came running to their master's call. All except the large plate over the well. The ghouls' wife was very tired and forgot to start with her favourite copper pot. The copper pot became angry at her and refused to obey the call.

"Mother?" said Loundja as her parents were getting ready to sleep, "How do I know if you are too deeply asleep?"

"When our eyes are wide open and unmoving, dear" answered her mother yawning.

Loundja waited until the beasts eyes were wide open and unmoving then went to get the prince out the well. "Now go home and never come back" she said. the prince took her hand.

"No, I want you to come with me and become my wife". Loundja thought of his offer for a moment then agreed, life would be better away from monsters that ate human flesh. As they were leaving the house on the prince's horse, the copper pot noticed them and went on ringing and chanting "Loundja is running with the prince" repeatedly until his mistress woke. Loundja knew her mother would soon be on their tail so she made seven marks on the ground and asked them to delay her.

"When mother calls for me, answer in my stead one by one".

The prince and his bride came to the raging river and Loundja called for it “Oh great river, bringer of all fortune, please calm down” and the river, pleased at the flattery, did letting them cross over easily. The ghou’s wife finally made it to the river and found her daughter already on the other side with the human prince and the river was high and fast.

“Oh daughter, how did you cross over this angry water stream?” she asked

“I said: Oh angry river, bringer of all destruction, calm down” answered Loundja. The She-ghoul repeated the words and river grew higher, angry at the insult.

“Oh Loundja, you disobedient daughter, I wish you all the bad luck in the world!”

Loundja cried at her mother’s words. “Have I not been a good daughter mother? Will you not wish me good luck?” the mother was saddened by Loundja’s tears and nodded.

“Go, Dear Loundja, I wish you all the good in the world. Remember, if you come to two birds fighting, do not try to break them apart.”

Loundja was pleased at the she-ghoul’s words and promised to keep the advice.

They did not travel long when they came to two large birds fighting one another. The prince descended his horse and ran to break them apart. Loundja warned, “Don’t! Remember mother’s advice!” The prince did not stop.

“Your mother is only a ghoul, what does she know of fighting birds?”

He jumped at one of the birds and carried him far from his mate. The bird seized the prince under his wing and flew away. The prince spoke to the bird apologetically, “I know I have wronged by getting between you and your friend. I know you have every right to take me but please let me say some goodbye to the girl before we part.” The bird floated closer to Loundja allowing the prince his farewell.

“Listen Loundja, you must head towards my home and wait for me there. But first, you must kill my dog and wear her skin. And when you get to the tribe’s camp, live with the dogs, otherwise my cousin will see you and do you harm or take you for himself.” Loundja nodded eyes filled with tears. She rode to the prince’s home, and then did as he had ordered. Each night she ate the leftovers of food thrown to her by her masters and slept in the stables with the animals. Just before dawn each day the bird came and sat on the roof of the stables and asked,

“Dear Loundja, what you eat?” and Loundja would respond,

“The leftovers of my master’s food.”

“Dear Loundja, where do you sleep?”

“In the stables with the animals.” Upon hearing this, the prince grew very angry. This continued each night until a servant heard the strange conversation between the dog and a bird, and notified the prince’s parents. The tribe’s leader and his wife sat under the roof and heard the entire conversation then went and consulted a wise man who told them to treat the dog well. So they took Loundja and fed her well and let her sleep in the prince’s tent. That night, the bird came again and the prince sang,

“Dear Loundja, what do you eat and where do you sleep?”

“A feast I eat and in the prince’s bed I sleep”. The prince went very happy at the news and sang nice words about his parents. They recognised him with the bird. Again, the prince’s family went and consulted the wise man as how to release their son from the bird. The wise man advised them to put plenty of food on the roof and wait until the bird has started eating then hit it on the wings, and so they did. The prince fell from under the bird’s wing small and weak and now his family was worried as to how they will see him back to health. The prince told them he wanted his dog for a wife. At first they objected, but eventually gave up and held a great wedding for the two. Loundja and the prince came to their bedroom and the prince took the dog’s skin off his wife’s body. A serving girl was spying, curious about the strange couple. She saw that from under the dog’s skin appeared a beautiful woman, with skin glowing like the moon and hair falling like the silky night all the way to the floor.

The serving girl went and told of what she saw to her friend who served the prince’s cousin. The cousin was passing by and heard everything, so he decided to do like his cousin had done and asked to be married to his dog. The poor thing was a very hungry and mistreated animal, and attacked him at first sight, killing him off.

Loundja and the prince lived a long live together and had many sons and daughters.

The End.

Cultural Differences.

John W. Howell.

The young man knocks on the massive door. Too late, he sees the bell which given the size of the house would be a better choice. He is now in a quandary. If he rings the bell and the knock was heard, it will appear to everyone inside he is way too anxious. If he does not ring the bell he will have to trust his knock registered. Either way he needs to wait a few minutes to see if anyone heard him. If not he can ring the bell.

The reason for all this trepidation over something simple as knocking on the door is this is the first time he will be meeting Angie's parents. He has put this moment off for as long as he could, but today is the moment of truth. He got tired of explaining he wasn't ready every time she asked. It's not as if he has a problem with commitment to Angie, but rather an aversion to being in the presence of high classed and cultured people. He has been this way his whole life and he can't explain why these kinds of folks make him so nervous.

He remembers back working at the country club. He never had a problem cleaning golf shoes or running to get a drink. He could "yes sir and no sir." with the best of 'em. It was when some big shot would ask, "Say boy, what are you going to be doing with your life?" he would start to sweat. He always felt as if he was being evaluated and the judgments weren't going in his favor.

"May I help you?" A brusque looking older gentleman in what could only be termed "butler's clothes," is standing looking at him.

He had not heard the door open and was deep in thought on the country club. He couldn't help but stammer. "Uh. . . I am here to see Angie."

"Please come this way," the butler says. He leads Thomas into a small room off a very expansive hallway. "I will inform Miss Angie you have arrived."

Arrived? Good, he thinks. At least someone is expecting him. One thing he noticed early on was how rich people give you the opinion your presence is a bit of surprise. It always mystified him this surprise is registered even when he was responding to a request to pick up the car for service or to run some errands. He guessed it just was a piece of the culture of the wealthy. The cultural norm boils down to the rule of never letting anyone doing work know how much the person is needed.

"Thomas you made it."

"Yes Angie I made it. Here these are for you."

"Oh I love Iris and these are just gorgeous. I'll need to get a vase. Come with me."

Thomas follows Angie down the long hall and after passing a number of huge rooms they enter the kitchen through a large doorway with two swinging doors. Thomas sees a number of people moving around the expansive space. They are all dressed as if they are restaurant chefs and are busy making what he supposes is dinner.

"You sit here Thomas. I will get a vase out of the pantry."

Angie disappears around the corner of the kitchen and returns with a slender crystal vase which looks to be perfect for the Iris. She unwraps the flowers and begins arranging them.

"Don't forget the little packet of preserver," Thomas says.

"Oh yes. Very important," Angie says.

"Where did you learn to arrange flowers?"

"I don't know how. I just put them in the vase and hope for the best. All set. Let's take these to the dining room."

Thomas again follows Angie back down the hall to the dining room. They enter and Thomas is taken back by the long table which is set for his estimate of twenty people.

“My goodness it looks as if you are expecting a big number for dinner.”

“Oh no. We usually have more, but I told mom to keep it intimate since I know you get a little squeamish with big groups.”

“It’s not quite squeamish it’s more a rash around people with a lot of money.”

“*People with a lot of money.* You are so funny.”

“I have been this way my whole life.”

“Well if you and I hang out together, you’ll just have to get used to it. Okay look at the flowers on the sideboard here. Aren’t they beautiful?”

“Yes they look quite nice next to those big bouquets of fresh summer flowers. I might even say they look quaint.”

“Oh stop. They are lovely and represent something special to me. Are you ready to go on the patio and face the rents?”

“I guess I can’t put it off any longer. Yeah let’s go.”

Angie leads Thomas through a maze of halls and rooms and they enter a beautiful patio and pool area. There are a number of people all actively talking on their special interests. Angie takes his hand and leads him to the handsome couple standing near the pool.

“Mom and daddy I want you to meet Thomas Berkowitz, Thomas this is my mom and dad.”

“Very pleased to meet you Thomas,” says Angie’s mother. She extends her hand and Thomas shakes it carefully.

“Yes it is time we get to meet the boy who seems to take up so much of Angie’s time. Put ‘er there,” says Angie’s dad. Thomas takes his hand and provides the proper resistance to a very firm grip by the father. He immediately likes both the father and mother since they seem genuine in their welcome.

“What are you drinking?”

“Same as you sir.”

“Hey Angie I like this one. Harold, bring another couple of Martinis over. Hope you care for gin Thomas.”

“Love it sir.”

“You can call me Frank.”

“Yes Frank I love gin.”

“Good. While the drinks are being made let me introduce you to some of our friends.”

“I would enjoy meeting them si— er Frank.”

“Excuse me all.” Frank raises his voice above the chatter and for good measure clinks his glass with his heavy university class ring. “I want to introduce you to a special guest and friend of Angie’s. This is Thomas Berkowitz and I know you have all read his story in the papers and magazines. Tonight though we just want him to feel comfortable so when you get a moment I’m sure he would welcome a handshake. Thank you all.”

“Very nice Frank. Thank you.”

“Thomas it is not every day we have the richest man in the world in our house. Although it is crass to say it, you cannot ignore the fact your net worth is a big elephant in the room. I think just getting it out front is the best way.”

“I agree Frank. A toast to your family and Angie.”

“I’ll drink to the same and to you Thomas.”

The Sedoka.

Georgia Koch.

The *sedoka* is an obscure form of Japanese poetry which appeared for the first time in the *Mano'yoshu* — literally "Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves", the oldest collection of ancient poetry compiled around 759 during the Nara Period (710-794). The country was basically agricultural, whilst the ruling aristocratic class modelled themselves after the Chinese, including the adoption of Buddhism, kanji (writing) and fashion.

The *sedoka* more or less disappeared after that period, occasionally being found in place of the more common *tanka*, when the *tanka* (5-7-5-7-7 syllable poem) proved to be too small for what the poet wanted to relate, but didn't feel that a longer poem (*choka*) would be appropriate.

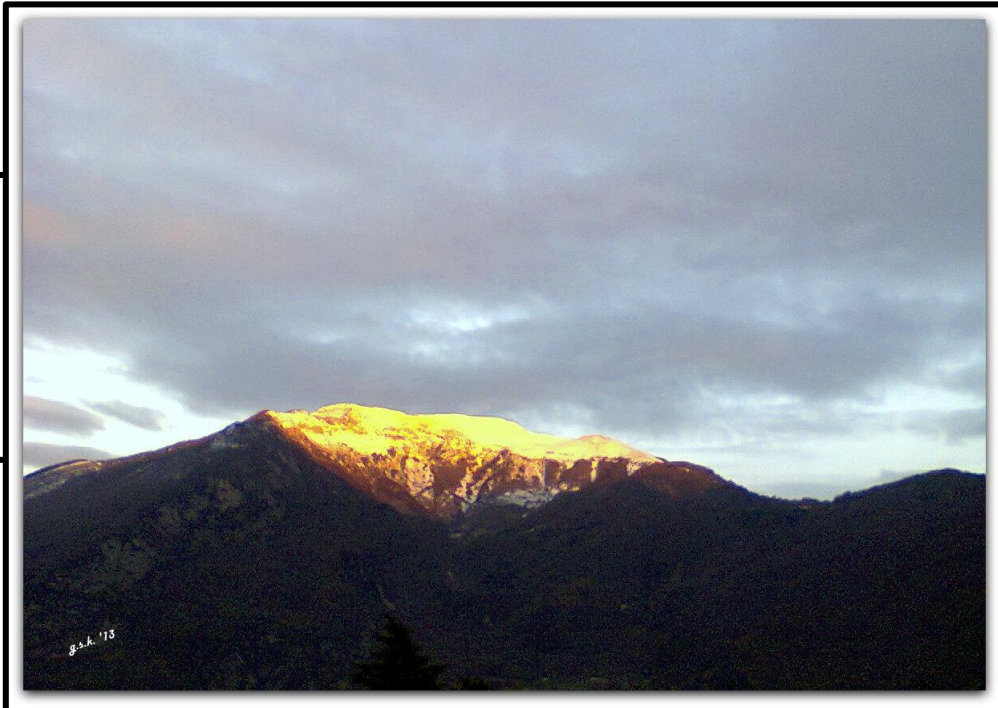
The *sedoka* is made up of two complete *katauta* (5-7-5-syllables) or half poems that when placed together form a single poem: the *sedoka*. Remember from my last article that they are not actually *haiku* as we know them, but for simplification I will call the two fragments *haiku* in future.

The magic words here are complete poems or *haiku*; both parts of a *sedoka* should be able to stand by itself but is enhanced by placing the two together. Otherwise, we've got a short *choka*, another form of Japanese poetry we may look into in the future. Just one more bit of information, if the poem has been written by two poets it is not a *sedoka* but a *mondo*, though the *haiku* may be complete thoughts.

On the Internet you can find some very fine articles which speak of the *sedoka*; conversely it is used more in the English speaking world rather than in Japan and since it is less used it's less subject to the rigid rules that characterise Japanese poetry.

So here is an example of what is *not* a sedoka:

Mary's little lamb
may be white as snow and yet
said unwelcomed lamb
would not be admitted
to the court of Winter's Queen
nor to school classrooms!



Here's my Sedoka:

Winter
Long sad winter day
frost growing on the windows
we walk in the snow
as cold night falls
wind kami howls with delight
blowing out candles

In Truth.

Steve Hunter.

Fragments of truth dribbled out onto my shoes
From the kneeling worshippers where Jesus was born
And at the wall Israel's government so kindly built-
Pieces of truth fell over me as snow at Everest
And at a multi-colored lake in the barons of north India.

There was truth in the hands of the poorest families of Myanmar
Where they gave us their hearts for nothing in return;
There was truth at the bottom of a mine site,
Where Burmese workers dug for gold
And dump trucks were shipped back to China.

There was truth in the desert,
When I was lost and risked it all for a lone voyage;
It was but for two Bedouins,
Their tea and their goat's milk;
For their hearts and their bread.

Truth came into light with the landmarks of Egypt,
Crumbling, holding on for dear life;
Surrounded by litter and sucked dry of their history
Where the Nile felucca floats
Awaiting tourists no longer there.

In Sinai territory between enemies,
Where the Bedouins care not but for their own good-
In the Moroccan North where Moors are forgotten;
Pick pockets and shysters have replaced them
And the desert has become dull.

In an opium blaze; in a trail of ketamine
In a milk shake substitute, or
In a bottle of coconut wine-
In a canoe with Ciaran on an empty beach
In a little inlet of our own space for one brief moment.

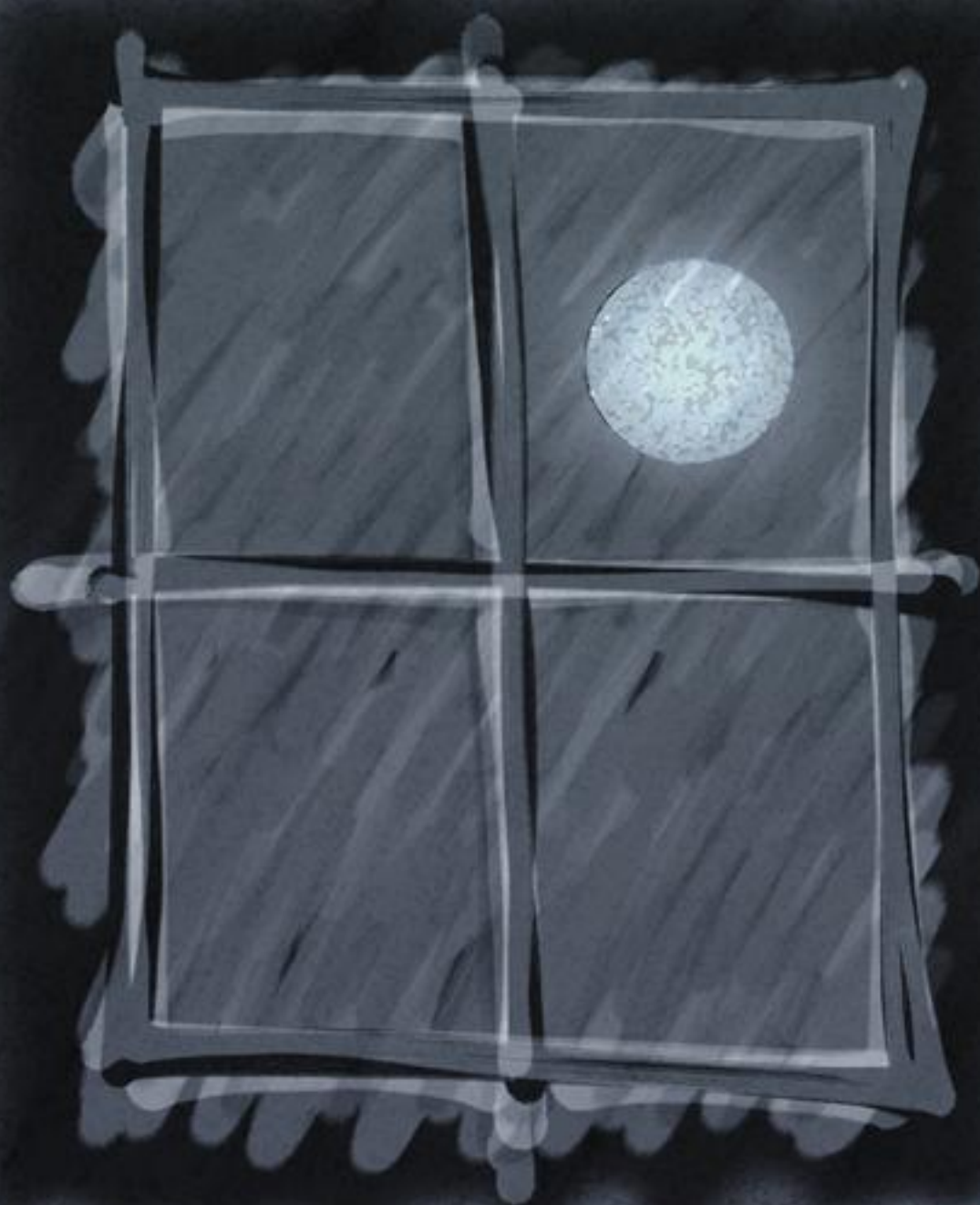
On the longest whitest beaches where whales jumped together,
And in the deepest canyons of Australia
Where the rock sparkles like a diamond;
Truth comes quick lost on a mountain top
Or on a moped with no brakes and only our flip flops to stop us.

In a field full of fresh grass and elephants
Mingling together away from a poacher's rifle-
In the oldest of Asian monuments,
From the first settlers in Sri Lanka and Cambodia
To Matale hospital and the killing fields.

In the architecture of Gaudi,
The little Parisian streets and lovely fresh baguettes,
At Oktoberfest surrounded by dancing Germans;
In the Austrians Alps at 2700 meters
With an endless sea of mountains.

Humble truths subtle in a bush
To sleep the night away in Barcelona,
Beside a river bed or on a beach, or
Under a castle bridge in Nantes-

With the thumb out 7000 kilometers and all the kindest of people who came.



iPad moon



with a finger flick

my window

full of blue firelight

Cuban coffee and miami.

alicia sandino.

MIAMI IS MY HOME.

IT'S WHERE I WAS BORN, RAISED AND SOCIALISED.

IT IS A WORLD OF ITS OWN, THIS CITY I KNOW.

WE GREET FRIENDS, FAMILY AND ACQUAINTANCES WITH A KISS ON THE CHEEK, AND BEING BILINGUAL IS A NECESSARY ADVANTAGE.

MIAMI IS A MELTING POT OF DIFFERENT CULTURES AND BACKGROUNDS, MAKING IT A DIVERSE TROPICAL PARADISE.

BUT WE CAN ALL AGREE ON THE ONE THING THAT REPRESENTS MIAMI'S CULTURE UNIVERSALLY - CUBAN COFFEE.

HOW IS IT THAT THIS SUGARY DRINK CAN BE CONSIDERED PART OF A CULTURE?

NOT EVERYONE ENJOYS OUR BEACHES, NOT EVERYONE CAN LISTEN TO SALSA MUSIC...

BUT I CAN CONFIDENTLY SAY THAT EVERYONE IN MIAMI LIKES CUBAN COFFEE. ANYWHERE YOU GO IN THIS CITY YOU CAN FIND VENTANITAS, OCCUPIED BY FRIENDLY OLD LADIES SERVING THESE DELECTABLE STAPLES.

THIS INTEGRAL MORNING BEVERAGE FUELS THE BUSTLING CITY; MANY CAN'T START THEIR DAY WITHOUT A SHOT OF IT!

SO WHEN I THINK OF MIAMI CULTURE, I THINK THERE IS NOTHING MORE INFLUENTIAL AND SPECIFIC THAN CUBAN COFFEE.

Portrait of a Christian as a Young Man. Sex, Drinks and Getting It Wrong.

Adrienne Morris.

“God, I’m one hell of a mess, but there’s something . . . I’m no artist . . .” The drawing comforted Buck. He didn’t know why. The disfigurement was there, but so was something else. Something new or maybe just discovered. “William, you see it don’t you? No one else has.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” William replied.

“You see what God’s done for me.” Buck smiled at William. William had to drink not to let his heart go out to him.

“Thanks, Willy.”

“It’s nothing,” William mumbled, but felt sorry at how things had turned out between them. If only Buck hadn’t been such a sneaky bastard.

Then Fred burst in, fastening his suspenders. He pushed his hair back with a refreshed laugh—until he noticed William. “What the hell?” he stared at him, turning to Buck. “I thought you said William had gone away? You look like shit, old friend. Hear you like the drinking.” Fred laughed. “Well, that’s plain enough. Oh, I’m done in there—are you next in line?”

Buck glared at Fred. “Fred, the girl, she’s—William’s wife, it seems. We shouldn’t have come here.”

“What? That whore? Stop fooling with me, Buck.”

Ginny pulled back the quilt and blew out the candle, closed for the night. Buck saw her swollen, bloody nose.

“Did he hurt you, miss?” Buck asked.

Ginny brushed past him with what was left of Fred’s bottle of whiskey and put it down beside William. “Billy, you all right?” she asked kissing his forehead, but he shrugged her off.

Fred laughed. “Willy, you’ve done well for yourself!”

“Shut up, Fred,” Buck said.

“I’m sure your parents would have loved to come see you. Oh, you should have had a double wedding with my sister and Fahy! I thought she always had a foolish crush on you. Thank God she put that out of her head.”

“At least I’m not a thief and liar!” William replied.

“Who’s the thief?”

“William, be quiet for Thankful,” Buck pleaded.

“No. She thinks Fahy’s noble. What a laugh! He fucked at least one girl I know while engaged to your sister and if it wasn’t for Buck he’d have been dishonorably discharged for robbing the Indians.”

“Did you know all of this?” Fred asked Buck.

“Yes, some, but why pile on the agony?”

“I thought you were so Christian! And now you’re involved in cover-ups for a crook and fornicator? You’ve got some very mixed up notions. Why should Thankful be stuck with a crippled, dishonorable soldier?” Fred asked.

“She loves him . . . and there’s the baby.”

“Buck, you’re a moron!” Fred shouted. “I’ve never met someone so incapable of sorting out a situation as you! Stay out of the way, read your Bible, pray or whatever, but with that face and that mind, you’re better off in hiding.”

“I thought if I took the blame and bribed the men to stay quiet about Fahy’s stealing—it might be better for them.”

“What does the Bible say about bribery, Buck? I knew you were a fake! And what’s that in your hand?” He pulled the drawing from Buck. “Vanity! While I’m fucking William’s wife, you’re here having drawings done of yourself?!”

“For Thankful.”

“What would Thankful want with this crap? Can’t you see how Willy made you a monster? He’s having a joke on you.”

“No, I wanted William to see I appreciate his talent. I wanted to have a record of my scars.”

“You want to see yourself?” Fred took Buck by the collar and dragged him to a slightly chipped looking glass. “Look! Every bit of putrid skin is due to your own weak, little heart. Your wounds are self-inflicted. You hang about with drunks, throwing away education, distinction and even your appearance, for what?”

Buck said nothing.

“And have you any real friends, any accomplishments to show for your weird behavior? No. You have nothing.”

“I-I have God. . .”

“You’re pathetic! You have to turn to some fictional, invisible friend for comfort. Ugh. I think you’ve truly gone off.”

“Fred, leave him alone,” William said.

“And who are you to speak to me, you drunken gimp—go back to your bottle and wife,” Fred replied.

“Get out of my house,” William said.

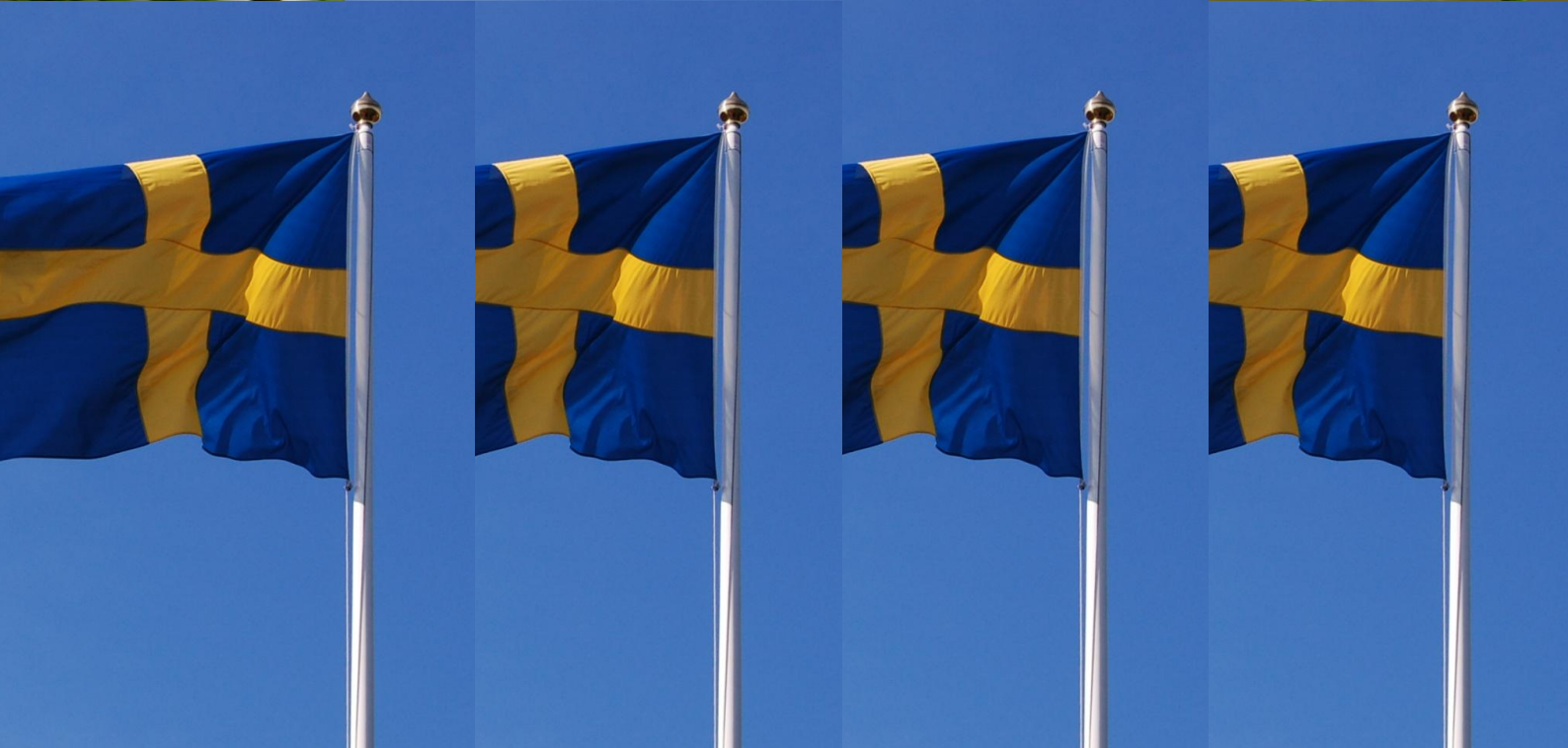
“Come on, Buck.” Fred crumpled the portrait and threw it at William.

Buck retrieved the drawing at William’s feet, “William, I’m sorry about all of this.”

William took a drink from Fred’s whiskey, making like he didn’t care what Buck said, but as Buck turned to leave William gripped his arm. “Buck, you’re damned ugly now . . . but . . . well, I think those marks give you something like, well, like character.”

“Character?” Buck thought. “Thanks.”

The most famous and highly anticipated cultural tradition in Sweden is Midsummer!





Essential to the celebrations are the Swedish flag, the maypole and the strawberry cake.

Leya.



Christmas Down Under. Aspiring Scribbler.

Decorations and giftware start appearing on the shelves at the end of September, but it is not until mid-November that the lights really start going on. That's about the time that Santa's helpers make their grand entrance into shopping centres up and down the country – they'd probably melt in those heavy red jackets if it wasn't for the industrial air-conditioning!

Tempers fray in the car-park as thousands of shoppers look for an opening. It should be fun, choosing gifts for loved ones, but the closer to December 25th it gets, the more people start wishing they'd started their shopping in October. The heat doesn't help either. Blinded by the glare coming off of hundreds of car windscreens, you step out of those automated doors and wonder if you've walked into an oven. You regret choosing to risk buying chocolate as gifts. Did you forget it might melt before you get it home?

Every second song you hear at this time of the year is about snow, but the closest thing you'll see is the canned stuff sprayed on decorated windows. And forget about roaring fires. They are absolutely not welcome, indoors or out. The grass is tinder dry already, and sadly we've all learned the hard way that a single spark can lead to wide-spread devastation.

Speaking of songs...of course there'll be carols by candle-light (as long as there's not a Total Fire Ban) but don't expect them to start until 8:00 or 9:00 pm. Before then it's still daylight. Santa's arrival is not the big finale here, but almost the first order of business. Otherwise the tots will all be fast asleep before he appears.

At last the big day arrives. Santa's left his pile of goodies under the tree, but as soon as they're opened it's time to start making lunch. The turkey roasted for hours...yesterday. Today it's going to be served cold with salads and jellied cranberry sauce. There'll be a mountain of prawns (we don't call them shrimp) and how about an ice-cream plum pudding for dessert? All of it eaten out in the fresh air of course.

Not everyone spends the afternoon at the beach, but those that do will find them packed. Just remember – don't go in the water until you've digested that huge lunch...and watch out for the sun...you don't want to get burned.

Later it's home again to more cold turkey for dinner...and probably lunch for the next few days. Then, finally, a chance to play with all those new toys before bed. Let's face it, you didn't sleep that much last night, did you?



Kep: Out of Zeit

Jaydeashe

I felt blind. Peering into the inky blackness only intensified the feeling; nothing but the occasional brief flash of a distant fire interrupted the complete dark. The moped screamed a tortured howl beneath us, rattling and hammering its threats to fall apart. I sensed rather than saw the countryside flashing past; it felt like an eternity since we had left the last dimly lit streets of Kep. I could barely make out the man whose body sat firmly between my legs, but I could smell his musty scent of sweat mingled with dust, and the strong Cambodian cigarette he was smoking. My own cigarette was clasped firmly between my shaking fingers, its tiny pinprick of light a small familiar comfort. I brought it to my lips and drew deeply, my other hand clenched white knuckled around the side bar of the shuddering bike. Looking over the man's shoulder, I could dimly make out the dirt track lit by the sickly yellow glow of the flickering headlight. Potholes and deep dry rivulets etched into the track's dusty surface, remnants of a wet-season long gone. I threw my head back and took in the dizzying sight of a night sky lit by millions of shimmering stars, dancing centre stage out here away from the intrusions of artificial light. I was in Cambodia, deep in the southern countryside, hurtling towards the unknown on the back of a clapped out motorbike.

I had arrived in Kep a few days earlier, setting up camp in a worn out yet hospitable backpacker's accommodation. My travels had begun to catch up with me, a month and a half traipsing determinedly around Thailand and Cambodia was taking its toll. Backpacking through South East Asia can be exhausting; you spend uncomfortable hours on questionable transport before spending uncomfortable hours on questionable beds. I was looking forward to a few days of utter relaxation, planning to shamelessly ignore the wonders that this small town had to offer in favour of the hammock outside my room, my worn paperback, and the 500ml bottle of gin I had with me. I wanted a few activity-free days to rest and rejuvenate, and recharge my tired soul. And no doubt, this is exactly what would have happened, had I not met The Man.

He caught me when I had dropped my guard. A month of being continually pestered and followed, every time I stepped out of my room, had made me slightly neurotic. Everywhere I turned there seemed to be endlessly smiling Thai and Cambodian locals with one goal in mind, to separate me from my rapidly dwindling pile of money. I had become embarrassingly abrupt and brisk to a point of rudeness; shaking my head, putting up a hand and repeating NO! at the top of my lungs whenever a potential salesman or woman approached. But here I was, lazily swinging in a hammock, two gins down, my book slowly dripping from my fingers to the floor as I gazed at the most marvellous sunset. I was in another world when I heard a gentle voice at my elbow,

'Hello miss, how are you?'

Blearily I attempted to get into an upright position, not an easy thing to do when you are tipsy in a hammock. I stared bemusedly at the man who had pulled me from my reverie, taking in his worn out, busted tee shirt, his shabby stained pants and his gigantic, friendly smile. I relaxed. He had nothing with him, so he had nothing to sell. We ended up sitting there for about an hour, chatting about my trip, the Cambodian countryside and his hometown of Kep, before he made his proposition.

'You like come visit my family?'

Kep is a town that wears its scars on its sleeve. Founded in 1908 under French Colonial rule, Kep enjoyed a long period as a wealthy and fashionable seaside resort town. It was a playground for the elite and patronised by the rich, of both French and Cambodian descent. Expensive and extravagant stone villas were built along the ocean foreshore, and King Sihanouk himself ordered a palatial mansion to be built in Kep, overlooking the Gulf of Thailand. Sihanouk planned to turn this beautiful little seaside town into the next 'French Riviera' of South East Asia, yet he never even got the chance to move into his seaside home. Today, these extravagant villas stand as hollow shells, peering out over an ocean they cannot see. They have been stripped bare and are overgrown with weeds, home to native wildlife and a resting spot for the cattle that roam freely around them. They are a monument to the destruction ravaged upon this country during Pol Pot's regime, a chilling

reminder of what Cambodia and its people could have achieved had it not been devastated by genocide. During the Khmer Rouge occupation of Cambodia, Kep was all but abandoned, its lavish villas torn apart not only by the retreating Vietnamese but also by those Cambodians left behind. It is off the beaten track for most Western travellers, a fact that is reflected in the limited English spoken by the locals. Essentially, it was the very epitome of the dangers I had been counselled against: isolated, unfamiliar, unstable.

Yet here I was, belting through this Cambodian countryside, holding both moped and cigarette with equal anxiety. I was on my way to visit The Man's family. Events had spiralled out of control with the rapidity that is typical of adventures while travelling: one minute you are enjoying a gin soaked sunset, the next you are venturing into Marlow's *Heart of Darkness*. I tried to subdue the thoughts that ran screaming through my head. Not one single person alive knew where I was; my mobile phone had long since lost its last flicker of reception; I was completely and utterly disoriented, and given the lack of light, would have no chance whatsoever of finding my way back to town unaided. Most importantly, my brain screamed at me, I had willingly put myself into this situation. Before leaving for my solo trip through Asia, I was lectured, advised and outright warned by every well-intentioned friend who believed themselves to be seasoned travellers. I was told of pickpockets and thieves, rapists and kidnappers, all apparently waiting anxiously for me to arrive so they could begin their work. My blonde hair and my white skin would be their red flag; they would see me coming a kilometre away and rub their hands together in glee. I was warned to never put my bag down, never listen to a local, and always seek out other tourists to protect my frail and incompetent self. I was lectured to always say I was travelling with others, never admit I was alone. My going away party was a whirlwind of terrifying booze-soaked advice; by the end of it I felt as though I was saying my goodbye's forever.

Eventually, the moped slowed. Shadows loomed out of the darkness as the headlight flickered, lighting up a surprised looking rooster. I swung my leg over the seat and onto solid ground, the quivering in my knees a combination of trepidation and the long bumpy ride. The Man turned and smiled excitedly at me, redundantly stating 'We here!' He led me along a narrow dirt path. I heard a gentle natter of voices, punctuated by the occasional high-pitched squeal of a child. Beyond this, there was nothing but the calming murmurs of life in the country, insects chirping, cows lowing and what I later identified as the whisper of wind through the rice fields. This was it, *the lurking depth...the hidden evil...the profound darkness*. I nervously rounded the corner of a small wooden house on stilts, to be confronted by a large family sitting eating dinner. It was an alfresco affair; the food heaped in the centre of a low wooden platform upon which two cherubic children sat. Adults sat on beat up plastic chairs or low wooden crates, one young man reclined on a low hanging tree branch conveniently located nearby. The Man beckoned enthusiastically, drawing me closer to the makeshift table. A quick blast in Khmer had the nearest person offering me their chair as an elderly woman began heaping food onto my plate. They ignored my embarrassed protests; I quickly realised that it would be more polite to take part than say no. Not one single person except my host spoke a word of English; we got by on garbled translations, nods, and smiles. The food was simple yet delicious: rice, cucumber, scrambled eggs, greens and a spicy stew. At one point, the grandmother hobbled into the house, returning to me with a glass of water. One of the ubiquitous rules of travelling through Asia is to avoid tap water at all costs. I drank the whole glass.

As I awoke the next morning, the events of the night before tumbled back into my head like shaken dice. I had no photograph, no memento, nothing to show for the monumental risk I had taken. I went headlong against every piece of advice I had ever been given, every belief I held true. I experienced the single greatest, most generous encounter that would occur on my trip — perhaps even in my entire life. And the unspeakable horrors that everyone had sworn would fall upon my head did not fall. *The heavens do not fall for such a trifle*. I was not even ill from the water. I rejected completely the ingrained fear and loathing that has been bred into me by our Zeitgeist of caution, and I came out the other side a better person. My out-of-Zeit experience opened my mind completely, and I have to strain against our Zeitgeist every day to keep it from closing again.

*Correspondence on Culture:
There is Such Beauty in Doing Your Own Thing.
Alicia Austen.*

Dear Jayde-Ashe,

[November]

As I sit down to write this, inky blue-black clouds are scuttling across the horizon like a convoy of fat, hairy spiders. A night sky in the middle of the afternoon has to portend something beyond the changing of weather patterns: death or regret or a coming cleansing of souls must be imminent. What a backdrop of darkness this provides for the simple act of writing a letter! It is easy to be poetic about storms, isn't it? The best ones provide fodder for all of the senses, and the fear and anticipation felt in the face of Mother Nature is primal, universal. If we were to be dropped back in time, at any point in human history, I'd think that even the fiercest thunderstorm would be a comfort. A bit of home, really.

Did Emily Bronte compose poems in her head as hail the size of chestnuts bruised her beloved moors? I often ask myself these and other answerless questions, as trifling as they probably seem to some. This brings me 'round to the question *you* asked a few weeks ago. The one about culture, and what it means to me. First, a caveat.

My culture is not contained in a single city or country. It does not revolve around the tenets of a particular religion or involve a shared economical background. Although it runs deeper in me than all of those things-to a sort of pulsing, hot core that is my truest nature, without which I could not fully exist-it is both simple yet difficult to explain. I will do my best.

Living creatively is not about taking the easy way out. It requires a certain toughness to repeatedly hurl ideas and thoughts and visions into the dull void of an often obtuse world, and afterwards walk into the kitchen and do the dishes. How easy it would be to give in to the demands of daily life, and let our creative selves shrink until nothing, nothing is left! How tempting, how divinely tempting! Fortunately, when it comes down to it we have no choice but to continue making things. So we go on.

I've no idea where others find their strength, but mine comes from the past. From history's underappreciated creative warriors: dead women writers and artists. Is that morbid enough to make you laugh? I hope not, because I see it as a natural extension of being a feminist woman writing in the twenty-first century. I owe the relative ease of my ability to sit here banging away at a keyboard to them. They did the hard work, greased society's wheels, suffered for their art in ways that I cannot even fathom. Yet, they persevered!

Their words are their own, and not mine. Although their circumstances cannot be replicated, only respected, our paths are not so different. I live amidst the luxury of technological household conveniences, but regularly fall short of my basic domestic goals. Heaven help me if I had children instead of pets! This battle is a constant one. Should I do laundry or write just one more paragraph? What if the neighbors peek between the curtains and see me, a disheveled be-robed mess at two in the afternoon, furiously scribbling away in a battered notebook instead of shoveling mounds of yellow dog hair from the floor where they have collected like drifts of wiry snow?

This is the cultural continuity that brings out my passion: women fighting for their right to personal or intellectual expression, generation after generation, usually in obscurity, and at great expense. Many found a measure of fame or notoriety whilst still above ground, but at what cost? Censure, poverty, imprisonment, a bad reputation when a reputation was the only thing of moral value that a woman could possess. I'd like to think that what they lost in repute, they gained back in fighting to be true to themselves. *The horror of dying unfulfilled is enough to haunt even the hardiest of souls.*

It is impossible for me to pick up a book by a dead woman writer without considering what she went through in composing it, and seeing it through to print. What obstacles did she face? Did she have that greatest boon—familial support? Did she write in secret, rushing to give life to the worlds she created in her head whilst she should have been embroidering or scrubbing dirty floors instead? How easy it is to forget that every word written by women has been a giant *fuck you* to the status quo, every canvas we create a subversive act!

Even today, how many of us are eager to announce our creativity, full-blooded and unapologetically, to the wider world? Too often we earn our artistic livings by stealth, as if creativity were an adjunct to our real lives and responsibilities. Something to be enjoyed on the side, like fantasy football leagues or nights out with friends. If it is difficult for us, think about what it was like for our foremothers!

All of these ladies-known and unknown, relatable or not—deserve our respect, and a hearty thanks. I would write a letter to each one if I could. I know that I would be limited to those who left some kind of a record, but wouldn't that be something?

Dear Djuna,

*Thank you for being so troublesome, so fearless. I love your contradictions. Your irascibility is a solace, and a beacon. Who wants to be a paragon all of the time? There is such beauty in doing your own thing, and not giving a shit. **The Book of Repulsive Women** was ahead of its time, as were you.*

Well, you get the idea. And *this idea* is what culture means to me: understanding how lucky I am to be able to do what I love every day, knowing who led the way, and appreciating them for all of their sacrifices. Virginia Woolf wrote, *"For most of history, Anonymous was a woman."* Isn't it up to us — modern creative women — to ungag *Anonymous* and allow her voice to be heard? *All* of her voices, past, present, and future.

I will go to my grave with words as my winding sheet, in the company of these rebellious women. Until then — and beyond — may the beauty, pain, and relentless potential of their lives—our lives—ring into the night, ceaselessly churning.

The storm eased off a few minutes ago, dying like a firecracker mid-bang. How fortuitous! I've written what I set out to write, with whatever powers of clarity I possess.

Cordially Yours,

Alicia Austen

P.S. - *"The very condition of Woman is so subject to Hazard, so complex, and so grievous, that to place her at one moment is but to displace her at the next."*

-Djuna Barnes.



The Lighthouse.
Bunbury,
Western Australia.
Jaydeashe.



Wyalup - Rocky Point.

Bunbury,

Western Australia.

Jaydeashe.

Once Upon A Time Today in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Rachmi Febrianty.

Once upon a time there were two kingdoms in Java, *Pengging* and *Boko*. *Pengging* was a prosperous and rich kingdom ruled by a wise king, Prabu Damar Moyo. He had a son, Bandung Bondowoso. The kingdom of *Boko* was lead by a giant king who liked to eat humans, Prabu Boko. He ruled his kingdom with Patih Gupolo as his Steward. Although Prabu Boko came from the giant race, he had a beautiful daughter named Roro Jonggrang.

To extend his kingdom and conquer *Pengging*, Prabu Boko and Patih Gupolo trained an army and raised taxes. Then, he launched a surprise attack on *Pengging* which caused great damage; many died or were injured, and there was famine on both sides. In order to defeat Prabu Boko, Prabu Damar Moyo sent his son to defend *Boko*'s kingdom. Because of his supernatural power, he killed Prabu Boko. It caused *Boko*'s loss and Patih Gupolo led his army away in defeat.

In *Boko* Palace, Patih Gupolo told Roro Jonggrang about her father's death. While she was still grieving, the *Pengging* army lead by Bandung Bondowoso attacked *Boko*. Upon their first encounter he was amazed by the beauty of Roro Jonggrang. He fell in love and proposed marriage, but she didn't want to marry with her father's murderer. Yet she didn't know how to refuse him either. Since Bandung Bondowoso insisted on the marriage, Roro Jonggrang finally agreed with two conditions; Bandung Bondowoso had to build a well named *Jalatunda* and build a thousand temples in one night. With his superpower ability he believed he could effortlessly complete the tasks. He easily built the well. She then told him to enter the well and when he did it Patih Gupolo closed it and buried him alive. But he managed to escape, and it only made his love for her stronger.

Now it was time for him to build the temples. With his supernatural power he asked demon spirits to help him. Together they quickly built 999 temples. While he worked on the final one, Roro Jonggrang asked her maids to begin pounding rice, an activity which would indicate it was already dawn. They kept pounding rice, and started a fire in the east. The demon spirits believed that morning was coming and the sun would soon rise. Afraid of the morning, they ran away, leaving the last temple unfinished behind them. Bandung Bondowoso discovered Roro Jonggrang's trick and was furious. He cursed her into a stone, and made her become the last temple to complete his promise.

Today, the temples are the largest Hindu temples sites in Indonesia and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Aside for Hindu rituals and ceremonies, such as *Galungan* and *Nyepi*, there is also *Ramayana* ballet indoor stage performance on the west side of the temple. It performed in a full moon night. It is one of the famous tourist attractions in Indonesia.

My last visited to *Prambanan* was five years ago, during December 2008. At the time, there were temples I couldn't see because they were under construction following the earthquake of 2006. Though a couple weeks after the earthquake the site re-opened for visitors. The reconstruction of the temples already finished now, but still there are the interior of temples that remains off-limits for safety reasons.



Photography of India by Lavanya.

An Australian History.

jaydeashe.

(All characters and events that appear in this story are fictitious. Any resemblance to any real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.)

Crying. The incessant noise of children crying. Confusion. Chaos. And a wailing, a keening that rose and fell in an endless wave, a sound that made your skin crawl. Her mother. It was her mother's voice. She recognised it despite having never heard it raised to such piercing decibels. The slam of a car door. Darkness.

Sally awoke with a start. Her frail hands gripped the bed sheet which had twisted and trapped her legs during the night. She breathed deeply, a ragged gasping in the quiet blackness that surrounded her. She forced herself to focus on the ticking of her bedside alarm clock, the steady sound calming her racing heart. She slowly sat up in bed, blinking as her eyes adjusted to the dim light. Inch by inch she pulled the blanket off her legs, before swinging them around to rest on the ground beside her. She shuffled her feet on the cold bedroom floor, her toes finding her slippers and burying themselves in the familiar warmth. She stood, her back creaking in protest as she straightened and stretched. She hobbled towards the bedroom door which was lit by the yellow glow of the hallway lamp beyond. A cup of tea. A nice, warm cup of tea and maybe a little late night television. Perhaps that would banish the memories that continued to haunt her sleep, long after she had banished them from her waking thoughts.

The sun had begun its slow ascent into the morning sky when Sally awoke again. Cursing quietly to herself, she attempted to wipe the cold tea from where it had spilled down her front. The television blasted cheerily in front of her; the inane chatter of talk show hosts on *The Morning Show*. She watched blearily as she held her damp night-dress away from her body. From the corner of her eye she saw the cup and saucer laying broken on the floor, the last of the tea having soaked into the carpet. *You're getting old, woman*, Sally muttered, smiling wryly to herself. Her head shot up as the next news article came on, a close up of Kevin Rudd as he prepared to address the first sitting of the newly elected Federal Government.

'To the Stolen Generations, I say the following...'

Angrily, Sally reached for the remote and plunged the television into darkness. She eased herself forward on the couch, rocking back and forth as she prepared to stand. At that moment the letter box in her front door opened and a bundle of letters squeezed their way through. All thoughts of the new Prime Minister gone, Sally stood quickly, ignoring the angry protests of her ancient back. A new purpose to her day, she shuffled slowly along the hall toward the door, excited to see who could possibly have written to her.

Sally's hands shook as she fumbled with the buttons on the front of her dress. She deliberately trained her mind away from the bundle of letters, now sitting innocently on the kitchen table. Last button in place, she straightened and took in her reflection which mocked her from the closet mirror. She peered closer in an attempt to see the young girl she had been, cloaked in the disguise of this old woman. Her hair was still dark and curly, cut now into a respectable bob. The coffee coloured skin of her face was delicately lined, her nose covered in a smattering of freckles and sun spots. Her deep brown eyes which she had been so proud of as a girl were weary, dulled by a lifetime of hard work, bitterness and disappointment. Shaking her head, she turned from the mirror, moving slowly towards the bedroom door. She would treat herself to another cup of tea and a biscuit, she decided. After all, it wasn't every day that a letter from your sister arrived on your doorstep.

Seated at the kitchen table, waiting for the kettle to boil, Sally stared at the return address on the back of the envelope. She ran her fingers gently over her sisters' name. *Cassie*. It had given her a shock to see the address, a suburb not far from where Sally sat now. Last she had heard, Cassie was living near Geraldton, embracing her lost culture and catching up with the remnants of their scattered family. The bond between sisters had broken young and had never fully recovered. That terrible day they had lined up like frightened little scarecrows, divided up by a towering monster of a woman who with one word separated the sisters as though it was nothing. Sally to Catholics, Cassie to Methodists. And that was it.

She opened the envelope slowly, the memories she had fought so hard to restrain tumbling about unbound in her mind. Two letters fell out; the first a short note on thin unlined paper, the second a longer missive, folded tightly upon itself as though unwilling to give away its secrets. She picked up the short letter first, her heart clenching as she recognised her sisters handwriting. A car backfired on the street, her neighbor's dog began to bark, but all Sally could hear was Cassie's voice as they took her away.

Dear sis,

I hope this letter finds you well. I moved back to Perth a while ago, but I was scared to come find you. Imagine that — me, an old woman, scared of her last remaining sister. But you grew so hard, sis, I didn't know how to talk to you. Besides, you never seemed to want to talk about the old days. Talking about them gives me peace.

Anyway, I hope I made the right decision sending this letter to you. You might not want to read it, but I really think you should. Please read it, sis. I have had it for almost five years, I was never going to send it to you. But we're getting old, you and me, and I think it's about time we made peace with the world. I hope you think so too.

With all my love,

Cassie.

Her eyes clouded with tears, Sally held the letter to her lips for a moment. Then, taking a deep breath, she picked up the folded papers in front of her. Terrified yet curious, she gently unfolded them and began to read.

Dear Sally-Louise,

You may not remember me, but I remember you very well. It is with deep shame and regret that I write these lines to you. My name is Lisa Ellis, and I was the one who took you from your mother that day. I dream about that day all the time. It was awful. I felt so desperately sorry for you kids, but we were told we had a job to do. I'm not trying to make justifications for myself, what I did that day was wrong and I have lived with that my whole life. I have spent the past few years trying to make contact with the kids we took that day. I am trying to say sorry. I know that no words can make up for the loss you suffered because of that day. I know that 'sorry' probably means nothing right now. But I do want to say it anyway, and I can only hope that you know I am saying sorry from the bottom of my heart. I have prayed for you over the years, you and your sister. I have prayed that you managed to find joy and fulfillment throughout your life, despite the unimaginable hurdles we put in your way. I hope you found love, and had a family, and that family went some way towards replacing the one we so selfishly took from you. I am an old woman; I will not be here much longer. But it would give me great happiness to know not that you forgive me, but that you have found happiness in your precious life.

Sally didn't notice the time pass. She didn't hear the whistle of the kettle as it boiled over. A lifetime advanced and receded before her eyes as the tears finally began to fall.

Contributors.

Adrienne Morris - U.S.A.

'I live in the middle of nowhere (USA) writing novels, herding goats and keeping dogs off the table (sometimes). My first published novel is *The House On Tenafly Road* about a morphine-addicted Civil War veteran looking for redemption.

To check out more of Adrienne's writing, visit her blog - [Books at Middlemay Farm](#)

Airlia Gray - Algeria.

'I am an aspiring author who is passionate about books and learning. My hobbies include: reading, writing, graphic design and photography. I enjoy the view of a sky filled with stars and the light of a full moon. I am currently delusional about being able to write a bestseller.'

To check out more of Airlia's writing, visit her blog - [LOQUACITE](#)

Alicia Austen - U.S.A.

'I'm a freelance writer and editor based in the United States. I'm lucky enough to write about the things I love most: old books, dead writers, silent movies, creative women, and punk rock. In my free time I drink too much tea, bake, read, and listen to The Clash.'

You can see more of Alicia's writing on her blog - [A Small Press Life](#)

Alicia Sandino - U.S.A.

'Aloha! My name is Alicia Sandino. I am a Miami native, born and raised. I currently attend Florida International University as a senior, majoring in journalism with a concentration in sociology and anthropology. With positive vibes and enthusiasm, I intend to leave my mark in this beautiful and unpredictable world.'

Amreen B. Shaikh - India.

'I am a Web Designer by Profession and write poetry in leisure time. I've my poems published in few Anthologies in the UK and recently started to run a blog which showcases my poetry and I try to inspire others about it as well.'

You can check out more of Amreen's poetry on her blog - [Paint the Word with Words](#)

Aspiring Scribbler - Australia.

'I have always loved to create, and over the years have tried my hand at music, arts and crafts, and writing. I'd love to see my name on the front cover of a novel in a bookshop one day - I really hope they'll still exist by then!'

You can check out more of Aspiring Scribbler's work on her blog - [Musing's of an Aspiring Scribbler](#)

Bastet - Writing from Italy.

'I'm an expat American and I've travelled most of my life. I finally settled down, more or less, in Italy in the early 80s and in Trentino in 1994. I have three sons and four grandchildren. I began blogging in January 2013, without a very clear goal in mind. Since that first post, the blog has grown into an exposition of my poetry, short stories and photographs. I specialize in Japanese poetry and am working on the Haibun and Haiga art forms.'

You can see more of Bastet's poetry on her blog - [Bastet and Sekhmet's Library](#)

Lavanya - India.

'Who am I? / I'm me / all the time / Within reason, with a rhyme / And that's enough for me / this is what I wannabe. / With Love, / Me.'

You can read more of Lavanya's poetry on her blog - [lespoesietlespensees](#)
Or follow her on Twitter @EstrellaAcharya

Leonard Durso - Turkey.

'I'm a writer and an educator living in Istanbul. I currently have 5 books available through amazon.com as kindles and another mystery novel translated into Turkish available through a publisher in Turkey. And besides all that, I once managed a shoe store, a warehouse, owned a literary bookstore called Intellectuals & Liars in Santa Monica, CA, worked as a professional boy scout, wrote advertising copy for radio, did summer stock as an actor, clerked in a food co-op, was a busboy for a day at Ziggy's Kosher Restaurant, sold vacuum cleaners at Gimbels, was a green attendant at Cypress Hills Cemetery and so on. I get tired just thinking about it. Who says teaching is tough? Try leveling graves after a heavy rain. Or moving apples with spots. Now there's a challenge for you. And let's not forget how to Hoover.'

To check out more of Leonard's work visit his blog - [Leonard Durso](#)

Leya - Sweden.

'I am an amateur photographer who tries to capture some of the wonders in nature that make my soul soar and fly.'

You can see more of Leya's photography on her self-titled blog - [Leya](#)

Lisa Kennedy - U.S.A.

'My family and I make our home in a small town in the Northwest corner of Washington State and through my blog I share photos and stories of our adventures in this unique and beautiful part of the country.'

Check out more of Lisa's photography on her blog - [Northwest Frame of Mind](#)

John W. Howell - U.S.A.

'I write fictional short stories and novels as well as a twice weekly blog. I am currently under contract with Martin Sisters Publishing for my fiction thriller *My GRL* that is due to be released later this year.'

You can check out John's work on his blog - [Fiction Favourite's](#)
or reach him by email at - johnhowell.wave@gmail.com

Princess del Oso - U.S.A.

'I currently reside in the Cascadia mountain range in the Pacific Northwest United States. I live with a wonderful man whom I've been with for ten years. We live on his family's property. We have a sweet kitty by the name of Ginger. I am an English Lit Major, graduating from the University of New Mexico with a Bachelor's Degree. I started blogging as a way to improve my writing, to write/journal more, and to just see what the blogging world was all about.'

You can read more of Princess del Oso's work on her blog - [perceptive pot, clueless kettle](#)

Rachmi Febrianty - Indonesia.

'I love reading, any kind of genre but rarely read self-inspirational books. I don't think I'm eager to spend my money to read what people thought best for me. Some of my favourite authors are JRR Tolkien, Neil Gaiman, Agatha Christie, Paolo Coelho, Robert Harris, Khaled Hosseini, Suzanne Collins and Julie Kagawa.'

You can see more of Rachmi's work on her blog - [notalostwanderer](#)

Steve Hunter - Canada.

'I am a Canadian born nomadic wandering about the earth from continent to continent for most of my young life attempting to forge my life into a place of humbleness and warmth. I am quoting this wrong and have no idea who it was, but, 'Those who live inside spend their time looking out; and those who live outside spend their time looking in.' It has been a long development of writing with no real education to back me, but the books I read and the experiences which feed to my veins. Currently there is one novel that is in the editing process, 'I Would but I'm Broke' and two others in their infantile stages. Aside from that there are some travel writing projects I am building as fiction/travel guides for my favorite countries -for travel websites- and a book that is a collection of art work and poetry between me and some other artists I have met wandering the world. A collective a little like this one, which is partly the reason I was so happy to find this!'

Check out more of Steve's work on his blog - [The Eye Behind Acuity Around Our Golden Globe.](#)

Rick Daddario - U.S.A.

'As a visual artist I explore what catches my eye and attention—mystery, fascination, amazement—awe, ah and ah-ha. Through experience I develop a relationship with the world around and within me. Creating is a time related process that brings me into being. I enjoy this process of becoming.'

Check out more of Rick's work on his blog - [A 19 Planet Art Blog 2010/2013](#)

Tempest - Australia.

'I am one third of an art collective called Art Of Darkness. We are three artists from the Southwest of Western Australia. We first met over a decade ago as students, before eventually parting ways. Drawn back together by our love of art and a mutual admiration for each other's work, we joined forces to take our creativity to new heights. Although we cover different styles and mediums, there is an underlying connection that binds it all together. We are Art of Darkness.'

Check out Art of Darkness & Tempest's work on their Facebook page - [Art Of Darkness](#)

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