

ROCKY MOUNTAIN REFLECTIONS

SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES



VOLUME 1, FALL 2010

Letter from the Editors

This issue of *Rocky Mountain Reflections* marks two important milestones for Colorado Mountain College's arts and literary journal. First, in addition to regular submissions, our special Shifting Perspectives section presents the six winning entries from the Common Reader Photography and Creative Writing Contest. The Contest was the culminating event of this year's Common Reader Program centered on Kevin Michael Connolly's memoir *Double Take*. Contest guidelines required contributors to reflect on the theme of 'shifting perspectives,' an idea that reverberates through Connolly's book, his art show Rolling Exhibition, and his live appearances. Inspired by Connolly and his work, over fifty photographers and writers submitted poems, images, essays, and short stories.

The winning entries display diverse and dazzling interpretations of 'shifting perspectives.' Visual artists regard their subjects from new points of view, and writers capture moments in time when consciousness itself seeks fresh understanding. These works invite viewers and readers into spaces of self-reflection and renewed awareness.

Entries to the contest were so robust that we are printing twelve contributions in addition to the six winning entries. We are delighted to record in this issue a measure of the success and excitement of the Common Reader Program, in which students participate in a series of intellectual, cultural, and personal learning activities along with the CMC's staff, faculty, and community friends from all of our sites. We thank Brad Bankhead, Vice President of Student Affairs, for his unwavering support of the Common Reader Program and this journal.

The second cause for celebration is that, with this issue, the editorial committee now has representation from every campus in the CMC system. These individuals also served as the panel of judges for the contest.

Please enjoy the fruit of Fall Semester 2010 that is offered in these pages. We invite all of our readers to submit their creative work; we accept submissions year-round. *Rocky Mountain Reflections* is published twice a year, at the end of spring and fall semesters.

Sincerely,

Joyce Mosher

Cover Art

Shifting Perspectives Contest Second Place Winner

"Don't Ask, Don't Tell" by Nick Glimenakis

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Shifting Perspectives

Photography + Creative Writing Contest

Winners

First Place: Photography
/ Rachael Miller /
Seeking Something



Second Place: Photography

/ Nick Glimenakis /

Don't Ask, Don't Tell



Third Place: Photography

/ Julie Albrecht /

Entranced



First Place: Creative Writing

/ Tinker Elizabeth Duclou /

To See a World in a Water Drop

Like neoprene otters, a pod of triathletes slips off the pier. Somehow, as I plunk into the Hudson River, my end of the bungee cord disconnects. Why now? Other wet-suited bodies and red swim caps bob around me, oblivious to my frantic fumbling. Their attention centers on grabbing the rope that prevents us from being whisked downstream before the start gun. Thankfully, Nancy doesn't notice me either. Working as quickly as I can, my fingers going numb in the chilly water, I create a new loop, knot it and clip it securely around my waist. I say nothing to Nancy about the minor fiasco, letting her focus on her race, and the swim set to begin in 14 seconds- 13-12-11...

Nancy, blind since birth, races triathlons. The six-foot bungee cord encircling each of our waists tethers us together as we swim. Typically we glide along in near silence, save the surges of the water, the soft rush of breath inhalations, and bubbles of exhalations. The taciturn bungee cord and its tension, or lack thereof, tells all that is needed about our spacing, pacing, and location.

Compared to swimming, the second leg of the triathlon (cycling) proves very verbose. From the first second we touch the tandem bike, we talk. We talk to make sure the wheels are positioned properly; we dialogue as we get up on our seats and carefully execute our choreographed start. We cheer as we successfully get rolling and gain momentum. And that's just the beginning of the bike-talk. As we ride, I attempt to articulate all relevant elements of the world for Nancy to "see." This information is sprinkled with other chatter, but first and foremost come terrain details.

"There's a bit of gravel on the road... A left turn is approaching... Slight downslope... We'll be going through some sand... Crack in the sidewalk... Nearing a pedestrian on the right... Manhole cover."

When biking on curvy trails or bumpy roads, the aforementioned type of information spews forth in a rapid-fire soliloquy.

The third discipline, running, requires copious communication too, but during our training jaunts the terrain approaches and passes at a less dizzying pace. Here we share our thoughts, impressions and reflections of the day as the miles pass. In addition to verbal cues, we maintain proximity via a purple nylon cord coiled loosely

around Nancy's right wrist and my left.

"The songbirds are happy," Nancy notices.

I watch them twirl between the buds on the branches, and describe their antics as they alight into the cloudless sky.

"The sun feels great," Nancy says. "Is the river running high today?"

"It is. The boulder out in the middle is nearly submerged and some kayakers are playing on the wave."

We listen to the rushing rapids and the sound of our footfalls.

After a time we talk again, now about the book Nancy is currently reading—*Great Expectations*.

Blindness never stopped Nancy from doing anything she set her mind and intention to do: she climbed trees, mastered guitar, and excelled in school—not the blind school, but in the public high school she opted to attend. She went on to live in Germany as an exchange student, compete for the U.S. in Cross Country Skiing in the 1998 Winter Paralympics, ride a bicycle across North America, and raft the Grand Canyon. Between and beyond all of these events Nancy has gotten out of bed every day of her life and walked out into a world she cannot see.

On runs, when we encounter high curbs, railroad tracks and sidewalk construction, we slow down and Nancy clasps my wrist as we synchronize steps. She is masterful at maneuvering around obstacles.

"Right turn," I guide.

"Those lilacs are terrific," Nancy says, inhaling deeply as we round the corner.

I giggle, "There's a man in the park with three puppies, they've completely entangled his legs in leashes."

She laughs and we talk about various critters, including her trusty guide dog, who remains at home, pouting, while we run.

"Ok, we'll be making another right turn and there's a big hill coming up," I say, "We should be able to do it in about four minutes."

We quiet, and focus on our breathing, pushing ourselves to the top of the hill, where we hope the lactic acid will cease its surge of liquid fire through our quadriceps. At the summit we each acknowledge the roses and lilies beginning to bloom.

Usually, but not always, communication goes without glitches. One day, as we run, a woman ahead of us stands alongside the path, limbering her calf muscles.

"Ok, there's a stretcher up on the left," I notify Nancy, easing gently right.

Nancy remains unusually quiet as we pass the woman who is now bending to touch her toes. Not until a few minutes, and a bit of dialogue later, do I realize that

Nancy had been envisioning and sending good thoughts to a broken victim being hauled up the path on a hospital "stretcher."

And so our swims and rides and runs come and go. Nancy is ever generous in her appreciation for my acting as her eyes on these adventures. I am at least, if not more, grateful.

Being Nancy's vision gives me new eyes. When running or swimming or biking alone, I perhaps plug into music or an audio book, or simply zone out. My mind wanders; I mentally rehash the day's events, irritations, aggravations, and other trifling minutia. I wonder about the tragedies and triumphs that tomorrow, or the next day, or the next week, month or years might bring. Miles may pass without me ever noticing my surroundings. Light moves through my eyes, hits my photoreceptors, zips through neurons to my visual cortex, and the information is organized and synthesized. By virtue of this process, on most days I don't collide with anything, but much of the information bouncing past my retinas never receives much conscious recognition or contemplation.

This flat and featureless world with its deafening background noise and cognitive and emotional static, this heedless, mindless mode-- is not an option when training or racing with Nancy.

If we are swimming in the pool I must gauge the distance of the approaching wall and communicate these coordinates. I notice the frayed blue and white ropes separating the lanes, and the floating silhouettes of other people. When in open water, I must maintain awareness of direction, distance, water conditions and any other entities, motorized or organic, sharing the ripples and currents with us. In addition to visual stimuli, I also feel the gentle but persistent aqueous resistance on my shoulders and feet. I taste and smell the water's chlorinity, salinity—and on the best days-- its clarity and lucency.

On the bicycle, the world whirls by swiftly, and I must note each bump, curve, knoll and passerby, and alert Nancy of each. The asphalt hums beneath the tires, my hands vibrate as we roll over lines in the concrete, the diesel truck barrels past, I taste the fumes and try not to gag. I both feel and hear the clicks of the chain moving from gear to gear. I shift, not only the bike, but also my mind.

When we run, I hold responsibility for warning Nancy of any hazard she might possibly encounter- mailbox, tree branch, poodle, scat from the poodle, compact car, precarious intersection, or any large or small sidewalk chasm. I am aware of the surface of the ground beneath my feet, and the changing sensations as we move from concrete, to asphalt, to dirt. I observe how my ankles, knees and hips take and transfer the

impact of each stride into motion, and how my legs, lungs and beating heart respond.

I move in a state of intense awareness as I note our surroundings and communicate the world to Nancy. I live only in the moment, for there is no other way. As with the best swimming water days, I find clarity and lucidity living in the moment-- in the lilacs and rose petals, waves and eddies, cracks and chasms, feathers and wings, and the thoughts and words of the person I am beside.

Strong women are commonplace at triathlons, but Nancy, while physically strong, also possesses world-class courage and fortitude. She cannot see the brackish waters of the Hudson, she will not see the streets and parkways spinning beneath the bicycle, she will not see the pavement of Central Park as we run, but here she is. 4-3-2-1- The start gun explodes and we duck beneath the rope and swim. About seven strokes later the bungee again comes unhooked-- clip malfunction. I tug Nancy's foot, we stop and tread water as I relate the situation and knot the bungee in a new way, sans clip. We begin again, but not very many strokes later the bungee disconnects for a third time. Why now?

None of these things ever happen during a training session. Our bungee lifeline stretches, but we know it always brings us back to where we need to be—but now the cord is essentially useless, and here we are, treading water in the middle of the Hudson River. Now, during a race... Of course...

When practicing in the pool we would sometimes swim alongside each other without a bungee; I would lightly tap Nancy with each stroke to provide direction and guidance. But that is practice in the pool, in a heated, highly controlled environment with exit ladders. This is a race--- this is in a river— this is real, and we are in the middle of it. Right now...

“Ok Nance, we'll do the tap,” I say.

She agrees without hesitation; I don't have long to linger and be astounded by her boundless dauntlessness and trust.

We move through the river; with each stroke I brush Nancy's hip so she is sure of my position. Periodically I grasp her hand and provide slight redirection if she veers off course. Soon we reach the ramp that leads from the river to the transition area. We pedal to the Bronx and back again, stride up 72nd Street to Central Park, and run around and through the park to yet another podium finish for Nancy.

I am ever awestruck by her courage, strength and tenacity; humbled by her trust in me; and amazed by all I see thanks to the extraordinary opportunity to glimpse the world through Nancy's eyes.

Second Place: Creative Writing

/ Kathryn Howlin /

Flashing Lights

Kevin Michael Connolly describes his voyage through life while missing two rather essential appendages, his legs. His autobiography titled *Double Take* enables readers to embark on a lifelong struggle of adaptation to conform to the oppressive societal norms, a journey to find inner confidence and normality. I feel that the intended emotions provoked when reading this book are not ones of sadness or pity, but of amazement and inspiration. *Double Take* allows you to identify with the various aspects of Kevin's life: personal, family, and societal. Disabilities, in his eyes, are not seen as prohibiting in life; however, with each obstacle of life comes difficulties. I believe that it is in one's times of greatest adversity that the true person is exposed, and it is how we cope that makes us great individuals. Kevin is a perfect model of this.

As early as chapter three, Kevin captured my compassion in a situation relatable to every child's life, but not nearly to the extent of his: the first pair of tennis shoes. This experience displays the pure joy and innocence of youth despite his impairment. He could hardly contain his excitement while shopping for these glorified sneakers, “Mom, check these out! Look at the red lights! My friend has these; when you step the heel goes *pieu pieu pieu*.”

The gun sounds in this quote are priceless! His zeal for these inanimate objects is as pure as it gets. The moments of bliss were soon followed by despair as Kevin had to give up his tennis shoes in order for the doctors to accurately fit the prosthetics. What feelings of utter disgust and sadness for the situation that filled his stomach, I can only imagine. Connolly reminisces, “I had just obtained my heart's desire, and now it was being taken away.” As he sat on the ride home absolutely infuriated with his parents, he describes envisioning burning a hole in the back of his parents' heads. I loved this story so much that I called my own Mother to see if I had any similar experiences growing up and was disappointed to hear that nothing came to mind.

The character in this story that I best relate to is Buck, his first ski instructor. Being a volunteer for Challenge Aspen year-round, I have encountered similar situations on the mountain. Buck's opening statement, “I don't really know what you can't do, so I guess we might as well try everything” (51), embodies the attitude I try

to relay to each of my students. Kevin's first monumental wipe-out was classic; every adaptive skier has experienced this on some level. That state of aftershock and bewilderment comes across even the best of skiers upon completing a fall. My fondest memory of a student is his expression after his fall. Bobby had suffered a traumatic brain injury (TBI) while skiing as a teenager. TBI patients have a loss of memory of anything before the accident, and Bobby was one of them. However, his love for skiing like a bruiser through fresh powder somehow prevailed. On one of my first lessons with him, I described how it might be difficult relearning everything mainly because half of his body was not functional, but that we would do our best.

This inspirational pep-talk was soon followed by one of the most atrocious falls I have ever witnessed. Bobby caught an edge of his ski and was somehow projected a good ten feet in the air, tumbling for forty feet. As I waited in dreadful anticipation for him to come to a halt, I remember the feelings of regret and concern that filled my core. Those thirty seconds seemed to last hours. Skiing as fast as I could, I came up next to him, relieved to see his eyes open and bizarrely smiling through the snow that covered his face. He surveyed the situation, realizing that everything not stuck on his body flew off and was scattered across the slope. His response, "GARAGE SALE!" shocked me and it took me a moment to understand what that meant and once I did, I fell over laughing. We laughed together for the entire duration of me picking up the "garage sale" items. A memory such as this will live forever.

While reading Kevin's first fall experience, I could not help but to reminisce. The most important observation to take from this is his perseverance and diligence to get up and try again. Many of my students become scared and want to give up, but not Kevin. He spent the entire rest of his day skiing and learning as if nothing had happened. Exuberance like this is hard to come by and should be admired. Kevin's depiction of his flashing light-up sneakers to his first fall on skis evokes a need to find courage within each reader of *Double Take*. His journey has only just begun and what a wonderful mission it is. We are all confronted with challenges in life, some more severe than others, but to make amends by creating a new self is remarkable. I can only hope to have such a persevering and brave outlook as I go on my personal journey.

Carpe Diem

Third Place: Creative Writing

/ Liv Johnson /

Damned for Life

I worked on 108 feet of pure hell when I was twenty one. Sitting across the river from my mother's house, the Golden Fleece was being converted from a crab boat into a trawler processor. My father had fished on that the boat when I was little in the Bering Sea, and it was preparing to head back north to Alaska. I took it as a sign, and I jumped on it, more or less.

Before the boat left the docks of Washington, we had our big safety meeting where we watched a video of a boat that sank in under a minute and drowned the fishermen who didn't get away from it fast enough, then we practiced putting on our life suits. I tried the ones everyone else used, because my Captain wanted to make a point to me. I am a tiny person, especially compared to those guys, and if I were to jump in the freezing water in a regular sized suit, I would fall to the bottom, and it would fill with water, drowning me. "Damned if you do, damned if you don't," the Captain leered. Luckily, they had bought a suit my size. "You better hope you get that suit," he laughed. I wasn't worried; I was the only one who could fit in it. We headed up there, across the Gulf of Alaska, around Kodiak Island, and out to Dutch Harbor.

I did not take to the job immediately or ever; the eternal horror of slimy massacre assaulted every one of my senses, but I loved being way out on the ocean, days from shore. No sign of life out there, except a bird or two that fly out to sea, and porpoises, which sometimes play off the wake of the bow. Out there, the water rolls thickly and looks like ink, peaking, yet never cresting, sometimes playfully and sometimes with indifferent rage. I was constantly awed by the giant skies and vast horizons, many times with puffing volcanoes riddling the horizon. No matter how big those waves get, they never really break like they do on shore... unless, of course, your boat makes it break.

We had picked up a Philipino boy off the docks, and the Captain and First-Mate poked me, "Better get to that suit first if we go down!" Of course, to be fair, and to keep things lively, they explained things to the boy.

We had a seventy-seven year old engineer, “Chief,” thanks to the owner’s affinity for saving money. Chief couldn’t wind his watch! He refused to wear headphones in the engine room and after seventy-seven years, he couldn’t hear a fog horn. The day our boat went down, I had seen him at breakfast. “Good morning, Chief!” I yelled, “How you doin’ today?”

“Great!” He smiled, “I figured out how to do my job AND sleep as much as possible!” he announced, and I laughed inside.

I was on shift when we started going down, and I was the first up to the wheel house deck. My heart was in my stomach and adrenaline shook my hands as I headed directly for the hatches to the chest of life suits. Unscrewing each hatch seemed to take an eternity and then there was that Philipino boy. We both unscrewed the hatches, as fast as we could, attempting a modicum of nonchalance, but we both knew why we were there. We got the lid off together and we both dove into the rolled up suits and pulled the suit out, each of us holding an end and pulling. I could feel the First Mate watching us, slyly witnessing a blatant game of natural evolution. I paused for a minute, determinedly looked the Philipino straight into his eyes, and wrenched that suit out of his hands. It seemed to come away freely, and I gave it no more thought as I mindfully moved quickly and calmly into it.

That damned boat never went down all the way, though I prayed to the gods that it would. Everyone was on deck, the sun had set, and lights from three other fishing boats circled ours, dancing off the black, roiling ink. I felt that there would be no casualties, but I KNEW that once we got back to the docks, there would be hell to pay. Chief had left a running water pipe open and then fallen asleep. The first-mate turned it off and the sumps eventually pumped most of the water back over board. The other boats went back to fishing, and we headed into port with a freezer hold full of spoiled fish. We chipped frozen fish blocks out of that hold for days with crowbars.

There were only twelve of us that manned the Golden Fleece and even though we’d be on the ocean for months at a time, I could never look that Philipino boy in the eyes again. Awash in my survival instinct, I’ll never know exactly how my standoff with that boy truly went down, but in the end, I feel that he absolutely won in the game of life – I think he let me have that suit.

Shifting Perspectives

Photography + Creative Writing Contest

Entries

/ Tracy Gnojek /

A Heart of Ice, Melting



/ Nicholas Nolan /
Bryce Canyon



/ Julie Albrecht /
Last Chance



/ Julie Albrecht /

Winter Grazing Grounds



/ Mandy Rutt /

What is a Disability?

When someone uses the word “disabled,” what comes to mind? Maybe you think of someone in a wheelchair or maybe you think of someone with a mental disability. Yet, rarely, does one think about the things that a person with a disability can achieve. We live in a society that is quick to judge someone for what they do not have, and never take a second look at what they do have or what they can do. However, what if I was to define a disability as a personal limitation from achieving your dreams which you must overcome to meet your goals? Everyone has had to overcome a difficult issue in their life, and either they give up or they do their best to achieve their dream. A disability doesn’t mean you can’t achieve your dreams; it means that you just have to do it a little differently.

After I had read the book “Double Take” by Kevin Connolly, I started to think about what a disability was to me. Kevin was born without legs, yet that never stopped him from doing the things he loves like skiing. So is Kevin really disabled? Kevin states, “So yeah, I was born without legs, but that’s only one small aspect of my life.” What Kevin means by this is that there is more to him than just being a legless man. He has been a ski racer from an early age; furthermore, he competed in the X-games. He has achieved more athletically than I ever will with an average body. Kevin was always encouraged to do everything that normal children do like wrestling and going to school dances. Now that he is an adult he goes hiking, he has been to college, and has even traveled around the world. If you never met Kevin and were only told about the things that he has done, you would never think of him as being disabled.

Kevin may not have legs, but I do not believe him to be disabled. A disability is something that stands in your way of achieving your goals; a disability is not something that can stop you from living your life. If someone never learned to read that could be considered a disability, yet this doesn’t mean that you can never learn how to read or that you succeed in another area in life. Because you have an obstacle in your way, it doesn’t mean that you should just give up. Once you give up there is no way to reach your goals. We all have struggles in life, but how we fight them to reach our goals is what makes us who we are. The only real disability is not having

the will to fight for your dreams, and if you are not willing to fight for your dreams then you have let your disability become you.

After reading “Double Take” and writing this paper, I had to look at my own life. Kevin stated “Perhaps ‘Where the hell did you come from?’ is what we all should be asking.” What he means is that we should all be asking ourselves what is our disability. So, I did just that, and this is what I found. It wasn’t until I was 27 years old that I found out that I wanted to go to college for Anthropology. I realized that I still have no real idea how or where I am going to use that degree. Yet, I am going to put myself out there and try it. I was scared to death about going back to school, and the fear of not being able to succeed academically was terrifying. Yet, and more importantly, what I have learned is that it’s a lot of hard work; a lot of time not getting to do the things that I want, but it is so far one of the best growing experiences that I have had in my life so far.

By making a new definition of disabled we can change the way that society thinks about a disability. Maybe as a society we need to stop judging people by the disabilities that we think people will never overcome, and encourage them to overcome their disability and reach their goals. I think that Kevin is a good example of how a person can overcome their disabilities. Even though you have something difficult in your life that you must overcome to reach your dreams, it doesn’t mean that you will never achieve your dreams; instead, it just means that you will have to work a little harder to achieve them. Maybe everyone should be asking themselves “What is my disability?” If everyone in society were to ask themselves this question, then we would be able to see that we all have our own disabilities to overcome.

/ Aaron Knot /

What Happened to You?

Kevin Michael Connolly’s memoir titled Double Take puts me in the life of a boy who was born without legs. As debilitating as it may sound, Kevin has accomplished more feats than many young people at his age. At the age of twenty-four, he wrote his book reflecting on his arduous life from his day of birth to his present years. What hindered his self-esteem most were the “second looks” he would get while growing up. Even as a young twenty-year old, while traveling in school, he would be confronted by people’s stares and comments of concern. People stare at him in shame, worry, or wonder as they guess what might have happened to him. The stares from people eventually made him fire back by casting his own form of staring -- through a camera. The pictures he took on his journeys all had the same feel; all having the low angle close to the ground (rolling on his skateboard), and the universal look of wonder, or pity on people’s faces. He decided to travel the world a second time, on a school photography project, in search for the stares. These photos would eventually become his collection titled The Rolling Exhibition, which has been shown at museums and galleries all around the world. As I read Double Take, I could not help putting myself in his place since we are close to the same age and share several of the same interests. The fact that he was burdened in life by being born without legs gives him a whole different perspective on the world than most of us.

Like Kevin, I was born in a rural mountain town to a low-income family. My father is a carpenter, kind of like Kevin’s, and my mother being the sweet pushover, also similar to Kevin’s. I have two siblings whom I get along with as Kevin does as well. Kevin is only three years older than me, so the closeness in age really causes me to relate. I grew up like Kevin, with the same desire as all kids: to be cool. I even remember when the ‘light up’ shoes were popular and my aspiration to have them. Around that time is when girls suddenly weren’t so gross to me anymore, and I even liked one myself. I never got beat up like poor, 4th grade Kevin, but I did have some tussles and confrontations with other kids. I played a few school sports but didn’t care for practices and coaches after middle school, and eventually rode my skateboard and snowboard as much as I could.

Where I connected with Kevin most was his during his college days, which is where I am at right now in my life. During his college days was when Kevin was studying abroad in New Zealand and decided to travel and see other foreign places. He traveled with his skateboard to these places and took thousands of pictures of places and people. I can't even begin to describe my fervent desire to be able to do something like that; it would be 'a dream come true'. I've wanted to travel abroad to places like Spain, France, Germany, anywhere, ever since I was in high school, especially with a skateboard.

Kevin received second place in the 2006 Winter X-Games Mono-x, providing him a large cash prize. Instead of paying off student loans, he decided to spend the money on another trip around the world to take more photos of people for his project. I extremely admired the fact that he decided to take another trip, and pursue his photography project, even though he had debts to be paid. I hope I would do the same thing. I would much rather take that chance, go see the world, and have fun, than to pay off a debt that can wait.

Kevin's book has opened my eyes tremendously. His hard work and the accomplishments that followed are inspiring. As an active person, I can't fathom the hardship and torment of being legless, let alone the sorrow of not being able to enjoy simple pleasures on your feet like running around, playing sports, or dancing. Kevin's book allows me to get into the mind and life of someone "born without them." It gives 'able-bodied' people a chance to get an idea of what it might be like to be 'disabled'. Kevin hardly seems disabled. His book shows me that; although we may appear different, we are all the same being that shares the same emotions as anyone. And no one wants to be stared at.

/ Debra Crawford /

The Frog and Toad

Feb. 1990, the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong

Within days of our arrival, my husband Russ and I are invited on our first weekend expatriate outing. Chris, an Australian lawyer we'd met in previous travels, is living here now, and he's asked us to join him and some friends. We'll be going by boat to the Frog and Toad, he explains over the phone, an isolated beach pub on Lantau, the largest of Hong Kong's multitudinous outlying islands.

We meet him Saturday morning at a ferry pier in Central, the main business district, where we're introduced to about ten young lawyers, financial analysts, and travelers. It's soon clear the route to the pub is more convoluted than a Shakespearean comedy. We start by filing onto a large commercial ferry for the windy, thirty-minute ride to Cheung Chau Island. Cheung Chau is shaped like a barbell, and the ferry drops us at a crowded village at the island's narrowest point. The sun-drenched ferry pier is jammed with local islanders and daytrippers from other parts of Hong Kong, bundled in windbreakers and sweatshirts against a brisk winter breeze. Loud Cantonese fills my ears, but I hear snippets of happy chatter in English, too. Beyond the pier I glimpse narrow streets into which the people spill. One shop looks like it's selling household items; red and blue plastic buckets hang overhead, above the open storefront. The smells of inviting foods—salty, sweet, pungent—entwine in the air. But we don't leave the pier to venture into the village. Instead, we hire a couple of sampans, small wooden boats, to carry us over to Lantau.

After motoring noisily around the densely vegetated east side of that island, plastic sheeting ineffectively shielding us from the wind and ocean spray, we enter a quiet cove. Our sampans come putt-putting up to a rickety wooden jetty. The jetty stretches over a narrow pebble beach; murky seawater laps darkly at its edge. Beyond the beach a sandy path leads us up through chest-high grass and brush to a solitary small building—a blocky, low village house nestled in the scrub.

Passing a few diners on the ground floor we climb stairs up onto the flat roof, where rows of tables have been set in anticipation of our arrival. There we drink beer; we dine on steamed fish and pineapple fried rice and roast chicken and stir-fried *choi sam* and broccoli with garlic. We drink some more. The wind eases; soft afternoon

sun warms our backs. A few hours later we are all good friends, and it doesn't matter whether we come from Dublin or Delhi or Adelaide.

"Did I tell you I was back in Tokyo recently?" says Chris, pouring more Carlsberg from a large bottle into Russ's glass.

"No," I say, recalling how we had met. "You didn't get back to the inn where we stayed, did you?"

"Funny you should ask," he says, leaning over his forearm resting on the table. "I did. And I found out what kind of hotel it really is."

I wait for the punch line.

"It's a love hotel!" Chris guffaws, pushing away from the table and throwing back his head in laughter. The people on either side who'd heard him join in the joke.

"You know, rent a room for an hour or so, go back to work with a smile on your face," says a young man whose name I've forgotten already.

"Wink wink, nudge nudge," says another.

With his chopsticks Russ pops a morsel of food into my wide-open mouth. So that's why I kept hearing voices through the walls but never saw anyone. And that's why we paid cash, in advance, each day. And why the proprietress looked angry when she saw me standing in Chris's doorway one afternoon, while we waited for Russ to join us. I see in my mind's eye the respectable-looking, motherly woman. Even in a love hotel, there are certain rules of decency. She thought I was . . .

Russ joins the laughter as my face flushes. I can't help but add my voice to the chorus—though I wonder if I would have stayed there if I'd known. Yes, I think so. Of course I would have. It was a great place, love hotel or not.

I'm glad for the distraction when a new couple enters the gathering, hikers who have come over from the other side of Lantau. They hold a newspaper triumphantly aloft. The headline proclaims: "Freedom for Nelson Mandela." In this idyllic place, our polyglot of partiers roars in approval and toasts Mandela's release from twenty-seven years in a South African prison. And at least for that one moment, the world is right and good.

Blissful and relaxed, not wanting the day to end, Russ and I elect to join the half-dozen or so walking back across the island to Silvermine Bay, Lantau's main village. There we'll catch a ferry directly back to Hong Kong's downtown Central district. As we walk I draw the sweet, damp air deep into my lungs, pushing out the pollution and stress of the city. Shrubs and undergrowth line the concrete path, fortified by a forest of bamboo and banyans, and flame trees farther out. Now and then the weeds lean into the path, and we have to hack our way through with our

hands. Among the group is a good-natured young British couple, Steve and Sally. He's a lawyer, and although Sally's also trained in the law, she's working here in publishing.

"Steve, are you a barrister yet?" someone asks as we walk along.

"No, I'm still just a solicitor," answers Steve. "Before long I hope to become a barrister." He gives an aside to Russ and me. "In the States you'd just call us all lawyers. In the U.K., the difference is that barristers can practice in the higher courts, but solicitors can't."

"No, the real difference is that a barrister gets to wear that silly white wig in court," says Sally. As they laugh in what appears to be a regular episode of teasing, I try to visualize Steve in a cascade of curls. With his short-cropped hair, wide brown eyes and quick smile, he's one of those people you can easily imagine as a child. I see him hopping on a bike, skipping stones across a pond; never in a somber white wig.

"So you've not been here a week yet, have you?" Sally asks as we walk side-by-side.

"Only for a few days," I reply.

"It can be hard to adjust to living here," she says. "Some days are fine. Some days the littlest things irritate you. And some days you're so bloody frustrated, you want to pack it in and go home. But you'll suss it out. It'll all make sense."

Talking and laughing, we trudge through the blessedly rural countryside, up and over hill after hill, finally descending into a wide valley. At the center of the dale below is a curious sight: row after metal-roofed row of Quonset huts, surrounded by pavement. As we draw closer, we see a perimeter of chain-link fence, topped by rolls of barbed wire. Within the enclosure is a cluster of dispirited children attempting to play some sort of game, and a handful of listless adults standing or milling about. Hold on, I read about this in the South China Morning Post: This is a detention center, one of several camps where the Hong Kong government houses thousands of Vietnamese boat people who've been picked up as they come ashore or flounder in the South China Sea. In recent years a virtual flood of these refugees has ventured onto the open seas to escape from grinding poverty or the retribution of the Communists. Most arrive with barely the skin on their backs, after riding makeshift watercraft through nightmarish storms, enduring near-starvation, only to wind up prisoners in internment camps, their future unknown.

I recall Vu, a former roommate of Russ's and son of a South Vietnamese officer loyal to the U.S. during the war. Vu said before he'd escaped Vietnam on a flimsy raft, he had fought starvation on the streets of Saigon. "Cat is bad to eat, but monkey

is the worst,” he’d said. “They look like little people.” I doubted I’d have the strength to survive under those conditions.

As we get closer to the camp, our presence sends a small ripple through the compound. More people come around from the other side of the nearest hut, to gaze upwards at the path where we walk. Through the fence a small boy waves up at us. We wave back, silently, and remain subdued until we reach Silvermine Bay.

We don’t talk about it but I suspect many of us are thinking the same thing. What is the difference between an expat and an intruder, an immigrant and a refugee? I can’t help but feel that there, but for the grace of God, a pocketful of dollars, and an American passport, go I.

/ Nicholas Andrew Robinson /

The Nurse

The nurse left work at five o’clock. Daggert of red/orange light shot into the opaque sky as the Sun’s rays splintered over the North Cascades. The morning was beautiful and swept the tired nurse into a childhood dream of growing up on the East Coast. Waking to cold winter mornings to see the Sun place its yellow light through the frost covered windows of his bedroom. Hearing the kitchen door open and close as his father went out to warm the family car before he drove off to work. Now, decades later, walking across a damp parking lot he could feel the cool, wet air against his skin: he could almost taste the rain that would soon be lightly covering the Earth. His keys were out three cars before his, or maybe he had been holding them since he left the hospital? His mind was elsewhere, unable to concentrate on simple tasks. There were others in the lot but he could not see or hear them as they shouted their farewells to one another. Two hours before he sat in a concrete stairwell, curled in a ball, rocking himself as three tears rolled down over the stubble of his cheeks and off his chin. Two hours earlier, hiding halfway between the 3rd and 4th floor of the E.R. Tower, he cried himself to sobriety. He came there often in the past weeks. Sometimes he would just sit, sometimes resting his head against the cool concrete walls, other times just standing in silence, as the tears he could not stop moved across his face.

The car was started and the hollow vibration of the engine shook his head as it rested on the steering wheel. Another shift would be filing into the poorly lit lot, doctors, nurses, patients; all starting their day as his came to a close. As his body shook with uncontrolled convulsions of confusion and anger, as his hands grasped the wheel and tried to rip it from the dash, as the waves of water poured from his eyes, he could almost feel the cancer eating away at his organs. Twelve hours a night he assured the dying that their death would be shunted with treatment, that the pain and fear would end, that there was hope. He... he was beyond treatment, he caught it too late and it spread too fast. He knew there was no hope, that in a few short weeks... even days he would collapse in mid step, fall to the ground and... and... that would be it. How does one tell their wife they only have a few days left? How would a seven-year-old girl or a four-year-old boy understand that their father needed to go away? He knew death, dealt with it every day. He was there when his father

was eaten alive by the same plague that had now infiltrated his body. He watched his mother wither in the months that followed, not being able to cope with losing the only reason she had for being alive, until she too filled the plot next to her only love.

As he moved from park to drive, as the black tires roll into the thin film of water that formed puddles in the aged pavement, he knew he will continue to let no one know. He will, as he always does, arrive home and kiss his sleeping children, gently sit on the edge of his bed and watch his Love sleep a few more seconds before he would need to wake her. It is not a perfect world, he knows this. This is his reality and he has come to terms with it. After his wife leaves for work, after his daughter is dropped off at school, after his son falls asleep on the couch, he will catch his breath and wait until he leaves for work at 5 o'clock.

/ Jemma Weideman /

Welcome to My World

Welcome to my World
When ever I get close to you
I just want to freeze all time
Take you beyond this universe
And show you the astronomy of mine

And before you say a word
Before you take that breath
Let me trace my hand on your inner soul
And show all what you have left

Study your eyes and the light beneath
I'll take you where you've not yet seen
We'll dance beyond the Milky Way
Observe reflections of Radiant Beings

Take my hand you won't regret it
into the world of the Great Divine
Look through my eyes to what lies below
My Energy and Yours will intertwine

Any loneliness that was felt
Any spaces that were bare
Will all be filled and healed for you
As I'm tending to your care

Take my hand and follow me
Let's see what we can do
We'll play along the brightest stars
And galaxies you never even knew

Everything else will seem to fit
 As though never lost at all
 Not a puzzle but a Masterpiece
 That was just ready to be solved

Come, look at you in this otherworld
 I want to see you in this light
 Your colors best seen here in this atmosphere
 They shine more beautiful and bright

Take my hand and follow me
 We'll converse amongst the gods
 They'll give their blessings in all we do
 All favor towards our odds.

/ Christian Yepello /

Rhapsode: An Elegy

Wood, metal, string and drum,
 you sang and played all—
 no work too hard, too complex—
 concerto, sonata, symphony.

Disease ate you.
 You never told.
 Did you know how pearl white crystals
 form upon vital organs?

Your fevered body in my arms
 humid as the air,
 your sweat, skin's tears,
 nearly blistering me.

I held you close
 wearing the scars,
 wishing they could help.

Hued roots entwined
 on your altar of linen and cotton,
 the wisest of the healers
 hangs his head, closes his eyes,

our last hope, gone.

Those healing fingers
 grip the roots, pull the lifeline.
 Your eyes grow brighter
 Gratitude?

You sing no more.

/ Susie Leeson /

Shoes

I'm busy stomping through slush
 in my "cruel shoes" as Steve Martin might say.
 I've got my dogs Luna and Jazz on their leashes, only one gentle lead.
 I am my sturdy L.L. Bean clompers,
 Just like my old custom-made Limmer brothers' hiking boots
 Designed with drawings of my feet,
 by two German brothers who live in New Hampshire,
 for Slush and wet snow, fourteen inches they say today.
 I've dropped off the car at Bob's Conoco;
 it's left blinker was spastic and fast,
 the "Mechanic" light was lit up on the front panel and needs a reset.
 I'm marching. I'm marching. I'm marching home
 in the mush of the busy season of fall into winter.
 14 inches deep in slush,
 I see John Russell's telephoto lens is taking me and my dogs walking,
 in the new fallen snow.
 I'm featured on the on-line steamboat pilot.com front page.
 I am news-
 Worthy, just taking care of my business.
 I look beleaguered and sad to me,
 but in the caption, I claim to not be bothered by all the new snow.
 How nice to be caught in a good slog.

/ Suzanne Thompson /

Desire and No Exit

*For Blanche DuBois of Tennessee Williams'
 A Streetcar Named Desire
 and Estelle Rigault of Jean-Paul Sartre's
 Huis Clos (No Exit)*

The existentialist heroines Blanche and Estelle
 embraced mauvaise foi to survive in hell.
 With lipstick and attitude in the face of doom,
 they transformed themselves and their stifling rooms,
 struggling to carry on.
 So honestly deceiving, they were quite the rage,
 Believing themselves upon the stage!
 With all the hopefulness of youth,
 they created an illusion to hide the truth.
 A colorful paper lantern around a naked bulb.

Trapped by those who had a pen, and, having only a well,
 they had opened their souls.
 Their hells were written for them.

O Blanche and Estelle
 my precursors,
 desperate subscribers to the phallacy--
 Stand in the light.
 And with the ink that remains,
 color your lips in purest black
 and print your words across the page.

/ Suzanne Thompson /

Rune

Rune	L
old and	I
grey	A
sniffs the grass, turns, and lifts his	T
spraying the moonshine shack	
s p r a y i n g	W
spraying yesss i exist	A
pungent sweet urine stream	L
shiny warm it hits	L
the rusty old tin	.

Visual Arts + Creative Writing

General Entries

/ Caitlin Costa /

Stain Glass



/ Caitlin Costa /
Shelby



/ Jeanne Norman /
Lonely



/ Jeanne Norman /
Aspens in Glow



/ Ed Doogan /
After Monet



/ Kathleen Seeboth /

Walking in Sunshine



/ Julie Lyne /

Wild Grasses



/ Brooke Lee /
Sunflowers

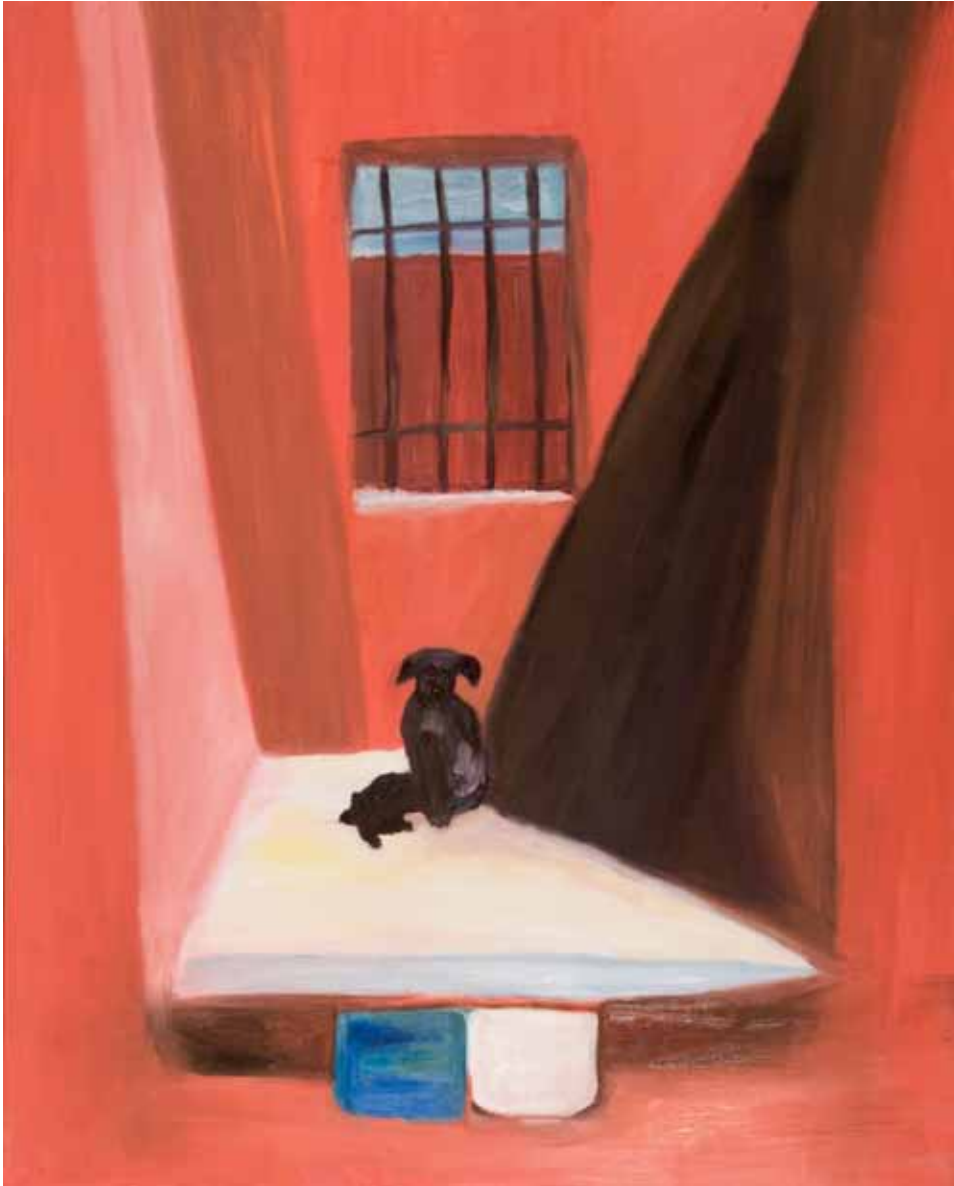


/ Jerre Smith /
Sunflower Profile



/ Shirley Raney /

Nikki Lopez in Santa Fe



/ Sharon Aguiar /

Casa Azul



/ Skip Lee /

Companions



/ Mary Lynne Lackner /

Never Lost ... Just Exploring



Materials: fossil, copper, brass, nickel silver, sterling silver, brass cable

/ Margaret Maxwell /

Easter

Imported, stained windows bathed
 The altar in color, the glass
 Cloak of St. Christopher
 Turned our faces blue.
 How to transport such fragile cargo? I thought
 Laying my crucifix
 Flat in my open palm.
 Did it come to us in pieces?
 I imagined it as if I were his
 Mover, handling the glass plates gingerly,
 Impressed by the largeness of his eye—canary yellow, of his sky-
 Blue robing.

“Protect us” the inscription read,
 The pendant buried in the crack
 Of my new front teeth.
 I had to swallow to tell my mother
 They hung only by threads—loose bone
 Cradled in the bed
 Of broken ice I held at my lips.
 My front teeth were dead, they told me,
 And this I understood, rising
 With some ten-year-old dignity, jiggling them
 And jiggling them again
 As that night I said my prayers, my tongue exploring
 The dark hollow between them.

As if in prayer, my grandmother repeats the story
 Of how she nearly lost both her children.
 I try to reconstruct
 The moment of impact, the shatter of glass,

My mother tossed from the backseat
 Of my grandma's sedan.
 Her teeth are porcelain now, rimmed
 By shiny, precious metal,
 This, she says, is her only scar.

We meet here too few times.
 And kneeling beside her this Easter morning
 I recall my first communion, my tongue outstretched, mouth opened wide,
 My celebration of the body
 Beneath a clear,
 Breakable dome of sky.

/ Jan Hadwen Hubbell /

We Come Together To Tell

The confluence it says is
 The place of this
 Coming together
 Of streams ---Could we
 All flow together like that?
 A river of humans—the way our blood
 All of it salt, pours out
 All of us the same—
 Plentiful cells, move gently
 Into estuaries—
 Wide mouths of water
 Subjected to tides
 Wide mouths
 Rising and telling
 With their words—
 Going out to sea
 In the begging of stories
 In the yearning,
 The going out and the coming in.
 Where steps are made in the river
 Where we are drops—
 Rushing in the place of this confluence
 Going off to forever merrily
 For all the no bodies are ONE in the
 River of the telling.

/ Jan Hadwen Hubbell /

The End, Eventually

Longing comes
 While we're twisted in the sheets.
 Safe from starting over.
 For in it, knowing
 The end lurks—
 Ready, even if you're not.
 Brace yourself with the headboard
 From the lure of more tumult
 And the steady flow outside of
 A broken weir where the
 Spring snow melt throws
 White water as far as your eye
 Can see. A long tide to go
 Yet the river bottom calls
 Each woman to roll over it
 Touch it gently, and move on.

/ Colin Carman /

Greetings

Cards for all occasions, for births and graduations,
 For wedding celebrations, for deaths and other setbacks

Secular cards for sending your money and love
 Religious ones saying "Heaven is reunion above"

February pinks, Easter greens, It's-a-boy! blues
 In columns neatly arranged by theme and hue

I once thought store-boughts lacked all imagination
 Sentiments purchased, stale articulations

For the mute at heart. But life brought complications
 What to say when the newborn becomes the patient?

When a loved one dies of self-imposed starvation?
 Tears too deep for blurbs and verbalization,

Where rhyme halts, where rhythm falters.
 So I go to this aisle of linoleum and artificial light

Carrying, in a gray plastic cart, one carton of creamer,
 Three candy bars, cigarettes, and Sambuca.

/ Sylvia Smith /

Minute Men from Moonbeams

They sat watching stars dance, wink, and twinkle. After noticing her friend noticing a shooting star, she said, "Go ahead, make a wish." So after closed and squinted eyes the friend asked, "What did you wish for?"

"To meet someone exotic from a far off land!" was her friend's reply. Just then they noticed that the star was headed straight for them. They ran and hid behind the baobab trees. Right after the meteor crashed they saw a strange little purple person with one eye and one ear.

Just then the friend turned and said, "Was this what you expected?"

/ Jimmy Westlake /

Hectostar

Algiedi, Dubhe, Dabih,
Deneb, and Betelgeuse;
Merak, Merope, Kochab,
And Miaplacidus.

Navi, Nunki, Mira,
And Pulcherrima, too.
Zubenelgenubi,
and little Eta Boo.

Rasalgethi, Rasalhague,
Nashira, Shaula, Caph;
Zubeneschamali
With Vega, Chort, and Saiph.

Saulocin and Rotanev
Bellatrix, Rigel, Choo;
Sheratan and Alpheratz,
And Cor Caroli, too.

Don't forget Antares,
Nor Sirius and Maaz,
Procyon, Albireo,
Alderamin and Kraz.

Fomalhaut and Sheliak
With Vindemiatrix;
Alshain, Altair, and Tarazed,
Alphard and Asmidiske.

Gemma, Gienah, Alnitak,
Mintaka, Alnilam,
Mimosa, Castor, Pollux,
Muscida, and Mirzam.

Capella, Algol, Rastaban,
Acubens, Propus, Keid,
Dschubba, Cursa, Achernar,
Kornepheros, and Beid.

Cujam, Zosma, Porrima,
With Rukbat, Naos, Ain;
Aldebaran and Algorab,
Matar and Muhlifain.

Markab, Scheat, and Algenib,
Polaris and Menkar;
Enif and Zavijava,
Arcturus and Mizar.

Arneb, Nihal, Canopus,
Alrescha, Sadalsuud,
Regulus, Denebola,
Gomeisa, and Furud.

Wezn, Phact, Alcyone,
Thuban, and there you are.
One hundred little diamonds
That make a hectostar.

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