Collage

Volume 3 | Number 1 Article 1

2007

Collage Vol. III

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Recommended Citation

O'Keefe, Charles; Christian, Alyssa; Hupertz, Alex; Camel, Sydney; Cummings, Liz; LaCount, Stephanie; MacAllister, Maddy; Carpenter, Whitney; Ramahi, Sadika; Butcher, Meleni; Cunningham, Jenny; Hamilton, Patrick; Niro, Christina; Ayala-Martínez, Mónica; Camealy, Jeff; Faur, Christian; Gerken, Danielle; Herrick, Ryan; Jacoby, Sarah; Kopko, Catherine; Kuhlman, Greta; Orlowski, Sadie; Sellers, Emily; von Gersdorff, Katharina; Webster, Ben; Ali, Amy; Lewandowski, Nick; Peters, Rebecca; Jones, Ashley; Sadat-Ketabchi, Sophie; Trumbull, Jessica; Davidson, Rebecca; Hardy, Ali; Hofert, Meghan; Lynch, Mariel; Panyushkin, Alexey; Lee, Cherie; Keiser, Rebecca; Baker, LaForce; French, Kristin; Hopfinger, Leslie; Bathiany, Bert; Embry, Katie; Unvala, Xerxes F.; Akradi, Rochelle; Courtney, Leigh; Grundahl, Sarah; Grotheer, Rachel; Brown, Amy; and Dobos, Gwenn (2007) "Collage Vol. III," *Collage*: Vol. 3 : No. 1 , Article 1.
Available at: https://digitalcommons.denison.edu/collage/vol3/iss1/1

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Collage
A Magazine for
Language & the Arts

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Collage is an interdisciplinary magazine designed to explore the poetry of language and the visual arts. Submissions may include original poetry, short prose, and bilingual translations. All submissions must be accompanied by an English summary or translation and include the name of both contributor and translator. Images may be in black and white or color and must be submitted digitally. In the online version of the publication, we can also insert links for audio and video pieces.

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Acknowledgements

Our gratitude is extended to two professional artists who have contributed to this issue. Christian Faur has graciously allowed us to reproduce one of his early paintings, Die Stunden (The Hours), whose background features excerpts of a poem by Hofmannsthal, two stanzas of which composed a group translation project for students in Gabrielle Dillmann's Introduction to German Literature. Rebecca Peters, whose work has been exhibited in both the United States and China, has shared three collages, Hindsight, Eager Tree and Kiss the Moon, which project a world of gentle nostalgia, while touching on the eternal themes of time, beauty and love. Additional thanks are due to Charles O'Keefe for the powerful and delicate photographs that grace the pages of this edition.

Collage would also like to acknowledge special projects that illustrate the encounter of words and images such as the Arabic calligraphy created by Sadika Ramahi and her students and the poesía concreta, or picture poems, designed by students in Margarita Jácome's Introduction to Hispanic Literature. Other collaborative projects include original poems by students of my French Lyric Poetry inspired by the cosmic landscapes of Surrealist painter, Yves Tanguy, two poems written by students in my First Year Seminar and translated into French by students from my Advanced Grammar and Readings, and five poems by emerging voices from Gabrielle Dillmann's second semester German.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to all the students and colleagues who have contributed their time and ideas to the completion of this issue. I extend my special thanks to Christina Niro, student editor and photographer, to Cheryl Johnson for her care and patience in the technological preparation of the manuscript, and to the Patty Foresman Fund and the Office of the Provost, whose generous financial support has made this issue possible.

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No. 3-Spring 2007

Editorial

by Judy Cochran

This third issue of *Collage* appears in the aftermath of the violent shootings at Virginia Tech, and during the continuation of the war in Iraq, events which serve to heighten our awareness of the fine line between death and life. This is the overarching theme we explore here in text and image in the hope of capturing a glimmer of the light that is born of darkness and chaos.

Artists perceive beauty where it may otherwise go unnoticed. In the words of Emily Dickinson, the poet "Distills amazing sense / From Ordinary Meanings."[1] This, I believe, is the gift, and the offering, of those whose perception and understanding come not only from the mind, but from the heart. Language as an art, whether textual or pictorial, is an expression of the opening of the heart in compassion. Its essential purpose is the communication of an experience that raises our level of consciousness, enlarging and enlightening us and our world.

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[1] *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, "This was a Poet" (446), edited by R.W. Franklin. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998.

This issue of *Collage* features a wide range of experiences from the contemplation of the Koran or of our cosmic identity to life in a Peruvian orphanage or an island off the coast of Africa, from the loneliness of a woman abandoned by love to the comfort found in a cup of coffee. Interwoven with thoughts of Euler or of the mistakes we've made, we find images of sovereign mountains or a single drop of dew on a blade of grass. These texts and images combine to pose the question of the transitory nature of existence, summarized perhaps most aptly in the cobweb's brief geometry.

Photo by Charles O'Keefe

Photo by Charles O'Keefe

True Beauty

Small, oval eyes,
undeniably twinkling,
below brows full but distinct;
the look of childhood
vows to remain,
in the distant pupils
glazed with nostalgia.

Naturally glowing flushed cheeks;
rounded forehead;
proportioned ears, nose, mouth and chin:
the ears and their earrings,
the mouth and its whitened teeth,
the chin and its small dimple.

Beneath the neck
collarbones float
between womanly shoulders;
the rest—not so exciting,
but for the tiny waist
and toned legs.

I pause,
as if posing for a magazine;
my features are unique,
are they not?
But then the doubt creeps in,
and I yearn to know:
am I truly beautiful?

La vraie beauté

Mes yeux, petites amandes,
scintillent indéniablement,
sous les sourcils épais mais distincts;
le visage de l'enfance
jure de rester,
dans les prunelles distantes
voilées de nostalgie.

Les joues roses, le teint éclatant;
le front arrondi;
les oreilles, le nez, la bouche,
bien faits:
les boucles d'oreilles, les dents
blanchies, au menton une petite fossette.

Mon œil descend jusqu’aux clavicules
proéminentes flottant
entre les épaules de femme;
quant au reste—rien d’extraordinaire
à part la taille fine
et les jambes sculptées.

Je marque une pause,
tel un mannequin;
mes traits sont uniques,
n'est-ce pas?
Puis le doute se glisse en moi,
et je désire savoir:
suis-je une vraie beauté?

Written and translated by Alyssa Christian

Photo by Charles O'Keefe

Shape Me

Shape me
as darkness surrounds
light fades
death beckons

shape me
as birds sing
grass grows green
sapphire waters consume

shape me
while some weep
and some pray
and some whisper

shape me
to love a world
of dreams
and truths

shape me
to see
what I have created
and what has created me.

Alex Hupertz

Façonne-moi

Façonne-moi
alors que la nuit descend
que la lumière s'éteint
que la mort attire

façonne-moi
alors que les oiseaux chantent
que l'herbe verdit
que l'eau-saphir engloutit

façonne-moi
alors que certains pleurent
que certains prient
et que d'autres murmurent

façonne-moi
afin d'aimer un monde
de rêves
et de vérités

façonne-moi
afin de voir
ce que j'ai créé
et ce par quoi j'ai été créée.

Translated by Sydney Camel, Liz Cummings, Stephanie LaCount, Maddy MacAllister & Whitney Carpenter

Islamic Calligraphy

Because the Islamic faith prohibits the pictorial representation of the created world, calligraphy has long been an important art form among those who adhere to Islam. Islamic calligraphy then employs the Arabic script, which is comprised of twenty-eight letters, as well as a number of diacritical marks. This art form was originally conceived to preserve the Qur'an, the Muslim Holy book.

Islamic calligraphy has since evolved into eighteen different forms of writing. The most common styles are Kufic, Naskh, Riq'a, Thuluth, Persian, Taliq, and Nastaliq. Kufic is very angular, and is composed of squares and horizontal strokes. Naskh consists of rounded letters and thin lines. Riq'a and Naskh make up most of all printed material in Arabic.

Thuluth was introduced in the 13th century. The name indicates that 1/3 of the letter slides downward below the line, thus displaying ample curves. Persian, Taliq, and Nastaliq styles are characterized by strong cursive with exaggerated long horizontal strokes.

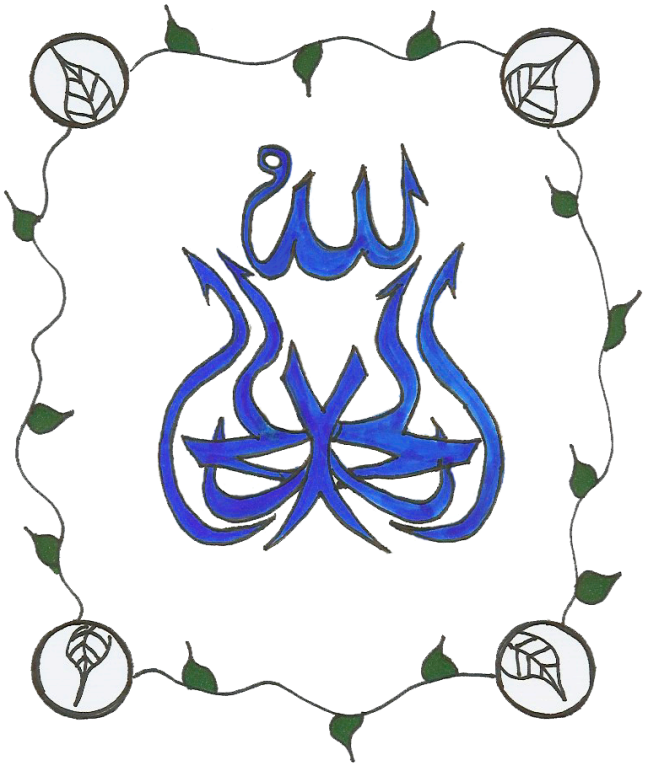
The style of Diwani was developed in the 16th century by Housam Roumi and reached its peak under the reign of Suleyman 1st (the Magnificent). This form of script writing was used for both decorative and communicative purposes.

Calligraphy, along with the art of mosaic, is still used to decorate mosques, shrines, courtyards and houses. The first were the Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. The Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa Mosque were constructed between 687 and 691 CE by the 9th Umayyad caliph.

The most commonly reproduced phrases are "Bismi Allah al-Rahman al-Raheem," "al-hamdu lillah," Muhammad Rsul Allah," "La ilaaha illa Allah." Their respective meanings are: "In the name of God, the most merciful most gracious," "all praise be to the God," "Mohammad is the Prophet of God" and "there is no God but He."

Each calligrapher developed his own style. By interweaving written words these artists were able to produce anthropomorphic figures such as praying figures. Other shapes include elephants, ships, mosques and geometric patterns.

Sadika Ramahi



Praise Be To God

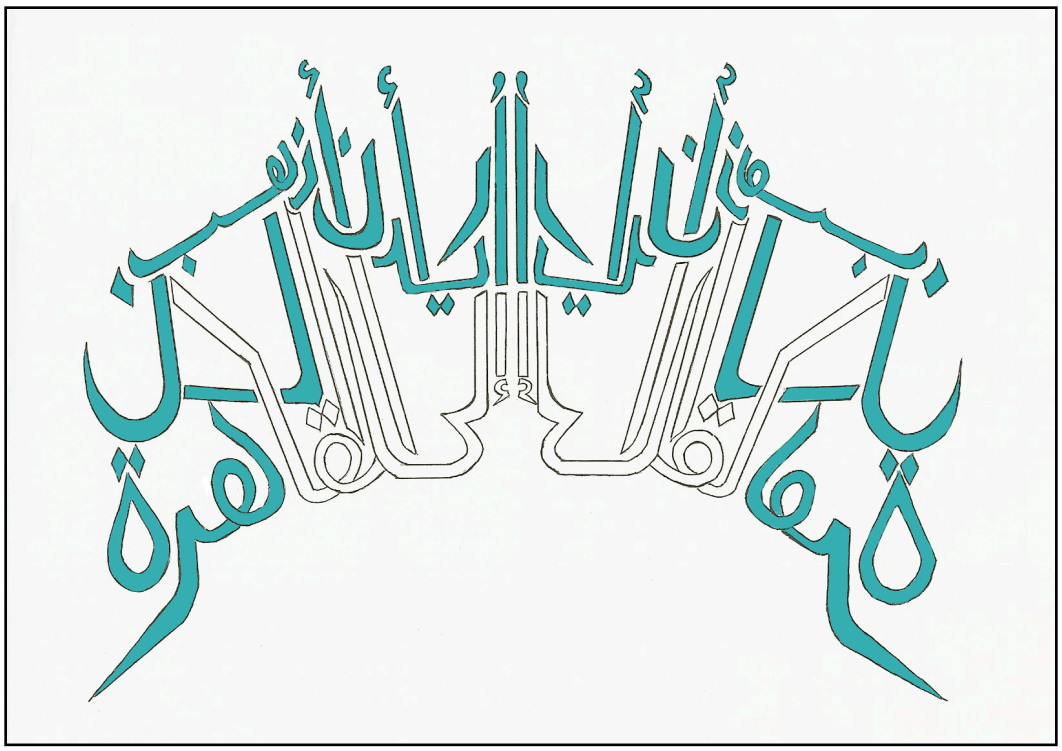
by Meleni Butcher

A Greeting: "Consider Us Your Family & This Your Home."

by Sadika Ramahi

Seek Knowledge

by Jenny Cunningham



I Want to Go to Cairo

by Patrick Hamilton

Balance

by Sadika Ramahi

Photo by Christina Niro

Sans titre

La neige couvre le monde sinistre des hommes
Nous sommes allongés—nus, mortels, exposés au ciel noir
paralysés—à côté d'un chemin jamais suivi
rêve à ne jamais réaliser

Des pousses vertes au souffle coupé, expirent dans l'obscurité
Le sang rouge gèle dans nos veines et bleuit—
Nous percevons à l'horizon une échappée dorée, mais notre regard lumineux
cède enfin à la blancheur

Et alors nous revenons à la réalité, au morne paysage
et cette froidure humide de neige et de glace
nous pénètre jusque aux os.

. . .

Untitled

Snow covers the dark world of man
We lie naked, mortal, exposed to the black sky
We lie paralyzed, next to a path never followed,
a dream never realized

Shoots of green gasp for breath, smothered by the darkness
We feel our red blood turn blue with cold
We see an escape, golden, on the horizon, energy fading from our eyes
They too will succumb to the whiteness

And then we open our eyes to reality, the same bleak scene
and feel the dampness of snow and ice
seep into our bones.

Written and translated by Christina Niro

Photo by Charles O'Keefe

De Amor e de Morte

Mónica Ayala-Martínez

Meu corpo foi achado num canto do parque. Era um corpo morto mas era também uma pergunta aberta. Nehuma sinal, nada inusitado num corpo sem vida senão pela sua presença num canto do parque. “Que lugar absurdo para morir,” dizía o policial. Senso comun demais faz a gente idiota, pensaba eu quando o ouvia. Eu via meu corpo lá, feita um barulinho de carne e de osos gelados e rígidos por todo o frio que se sente quando a morte chegar. Os policiáis preocupados por determinar a hora e as circumstancias, mas eu lá, morta; não falecida nem difunta, só morta, tuda, completamente vaciada de palavras, de ações. Eles e a manía de exatitude e de saber quando, como, enquanto uma habitou sempre o destempo, numa especie de retardo perpétuo, cheia de olvidos, de memórias imprecisas, juxtapostas ou completamente apagadas, ou habitando num presente sempre em perigo de render-se ante as arremetidas da imaginação e da fantasía.

Um rolo, uma madeixa cheia de nodinhos que já não esperam mas desfiar-se. Un rolo de dôr e de morte num canto do parque, justo onde um dia ele dexou atiradas suas botas velhas, esbanjadas, porque já era justo e decente mudá-las, todos lhe tinham dito. Eu tinha escolhido uma botas novas para seus pés burdos e enormes, mas aptos para caricias ternas e doçes. Eu foi assim outras vezes, um rolo, um nó cego entrelaçado nas pernas, nos dedos, nos olhos dele. Tantas vezes assim, esperando me cheiar de cheiros, de mêl, de unturas, ou só deitada alí, como uma boneca quebrada, com este corpo flácido lá, no canto do parque.

E elles que não lo sabem, e só perguntam cómo, quando, e meu nome e a idade. E eu me repetindo: tanto lugar común faz a gente idiota, porque não sabem que a gente só morre de morte natural, sem causas e sem pretextos.

Eu acordei uma manhã e notei a ausência dele; sua não presença. Não estavam alí seus pés de monstro terno nem os vestígios das suas douçuras, nem seus olhos. Somente um forte cheiro a abandono, a fugida. Eu estive morta dede esse momento e me refugiei nesse canto do parque só para saber que sempre eu tinha estado assim; que nunca tinha estado cheia, que sempre me tinha vaciado; que a única certeza de seu amor, seus únicos vestígios, eram os nodinhos de solidão com os quáis tinha ligado meu corpo. Esse corpo que já não pode ser mais do que um rolo vazio num canto do parque. Morto de solidão. Morto de olvido.

This is the story of the loneliness of a woman abandoned by her lover.

Photo by Charles O'Keefe

外国人在中国

派在中国写的
by Jeff Camealy

我只是外国人在中国,
我学会怎么生活。
每天我**认识**了很多人,
他**们问**我同**样**的**问题**。
例如。。。
你会用筷子**吗**？
你是哪来的？
你有没有去桂林？

Despite all differences
and curiosities,
I've discovered something
that means more to me than these…

People are people, no matter where you are.
People are people, from here or there or far.

人都是人,
我才不管你是哪里人
人都是人。

Observations of a foreigner in China

Die Stunden (The Hours) by Christian Faur, 1994

Terzinen

Hugo von Hofmannsthal

I

On the nature of the transitory

I still feel her breath on my cheek:
How can it be that these last days are gone,
Gone forever and completely passed on?

How can one fully comprehend,
It is much too grim to lament:
Everything passes and slips away.

I am myself, restrained by nothing,
Having grown from a small child
Who, like a strange dog, is eerily silent.

I also existed a hundred years ago
And my ancestors, in shrouds,
Are part of me,
One with me like my own hair.

II

The hours, while we gaze upon the sea
As it turns light blue, and we contemplate death
So light and solemn yet without horror

Resembling little girls, with white faces,
With big eyes, and who are always cold,
This evening, silently looking on

Sensing the life now flowing quietly
From their drowsy limbs
Into tree and grass, with dull smiles
Like saints, sacrificing their blood.

Translated by Danielle Gerken, Ryan Herrick, Sarah Jacoby, Catherine Kopko, Greta Kuhlman, Sadie Orlowski, Emily Sellers, Katharina von Gersdorff, Ben Webster.

Photo by Christina Niro

White Fades Away

Blue and black engulf me
I am lost in their junction

Waves of movement taunt me
while I search for their truth

The devil—this darkness—pursues me
and I prepare to fight it off

Abandoned by my loved ones
who fade away in shadow

Then I am raised up to the sky
whose breath unfurls like a white flag.

. . .

Le blanc s'évanouit

Le bleu et le noir m'engloutissent
je me perds dans leur jonction

Brassée dans les vagues
je cherche leur vérité

Le diable—ce ténébreux—me poursuit
et je me prépare à le repousser

Ceux qui m'aiment
s'évanouissent dans l'ombre

Enfin je monte au ciel
dont le souffle déferlé tel un drapeau blanc.

Written and translated by Amy Ali

Photo by Charles O'Keefe

Bond Villain Monologue # 9

Take a look at your life.
Mistakes you've made and things you've done –
Like a television,
Friends re-runs from Hell.

Mistakes you've made and things you've done –
The ones you hide.
Friends re-runs from Hell
Flicker in the dark.

The ones you hide –
Memories you can't seem to shake
Flicker in the dark
Like hollow footsteps down a hall.

Memories you can't seem to shake
Always at your back
Like hollow footsteps down a hall –
Echoes trailing off.

Always at your back
Things you've done and mistakes you've made –
Echoes trailing off,
They soften then fade to black.

Nick Lewandowski

Bond-Bösewicht Monolog Nummer 9

Schau dir dein Leben an.
Fehler, die du gemacht hast
Wie im Fernsehen
Friends Wiederholungen aus der Hölle

Fehler, die du gemacht hast
Die du verstecken willst
Friends Wiederholungen aus der Hölle
Flackern im Dunkeln

Die du verstecken willst
Die du nicht vergessen kannst
Flackern im Dunkeln
Wie schattenhafte Gespenster

Immer nahe
Fehler, die du gemacht hast
Wie schattenhafte Gespenster
Die abgeschwächt übergehen ins Schwarz

Translated by Nick Lewandowski

Hindsight *by Rebecca Peters*

http://www.rebeccapeters.com/rebeccapeters.com/home.html

Photo by Ashley Jones

Les Rues de l'Ile de Gorée

Les rues de l'Ile de Gorée
me font souvenir d'un temps passé
Les puissants aimeront toujours le pouvoir :
Est-ce possible de jamais savoir
le prix des vies gaspillées?

Les rues de l'Ile de Gorée
me font souvenir d'un temps passé.
Ils sont encore là—garçons et filles—
afin de nous faire souvenir
de toutes ces vies précieuses gaspillées.

Les rues de l'Ile de Gorée
me font souvenir d'un temps passé.
Or, il existe hommes et femmes
courageux et braves :
dont les vies ne seront pas gaspillées.

. . .

The Streets of Gorée Island

The streets of Gorée Island
remind me of times gone-by
The powerful will always love power:
Why is it we never know
the price of wasted lives?

The streets of Gorée Island
remind me of times gone-by
Still here, the boys and the girls
so that we can never forget
all the precious wasted lives.

The streets of Gorée Island
remind me of times gone-by
Yet there remain men and women
courageous and brave
whose lives will not be wasted.

Written and translated by Ashley Jones

Where the Children Gather

Sophie Sadat-Ketabchi

Every morning at the same time, all of the unassuming, brown, dirty children gather at the large, wooden gate. A visitor pounds the large steel knocker. The enormous door is a portal, an opening to a secret palace filled with efficient little children, orphaned and trying their hardest to adore every day and prosper within the fresh community.

It was I one morning, months ago, who lifted that large steel knocker, letting its heaviness fall loudly against the corroding wood. One of the older boys, peering through an empty space between the planks wanted to know who I was. My face was unfamiliar to his bottomless brown eyes.

"¿Quien es, quien es?" echoed like a thousand tiny voices. My Spanish faltered, not because of a lack of understanding, but because my nerves were creating knots in my head, tangling my thoughts. My desire to enter and belong here drew me in closer, closer.

"Me llamo Sofia y estoy aquí como un voluntario." All of the little voices giggled with excitement. I glanced around, continuing to filter my surroundings through a cultural sift as I had done on the forty-minute journey over. "*Casa Hogar*," read a large, hand painted sign. The primary colors were chipping, leaving almost nothing, and the sign showed years and years of attempted livelihood. It took some time for the wooden door to fold open, but when it did, it opened very slowly. There stood what seemed like a thousand children. The number probably came closer to two hundred. Four hundred pairs of eyes fixed on me. Their skin, the color of softened leather, or wrinkled bark, the color of Quechua descent, filled the space. Their fingers, dirty from breakfast and from the rubble that lay scattered around the bare courtyard, lifted all at once with miniature attempts at welcoming hand waves.

- - -

The orphanage was one of only two in the Peruvian land that had managed to acquire some sort of government funding. The children living in the many bare and square bedrooms were called orphans, but were more often products of poverty, abuse or overly large Peruvian

families. The majority had family, and plenty of it. Whether the family would ever want them back or be able to support the children was the real issue.

The large building consisted of three stories. The first story was home to two large cafeterias with splintered wooden benches, bare kitchenware and half as many scratched metal utensils as there were children. There was a bakery with which I would become intimately acquainted. The bakery had one large island table, very high windows, a mixing machine twice my size and three large brick burning ovens. The other rooms on the first floor belonged to the administration. At the center of the building was a corridor covered in native murals. Walking through the corridor felt like walking into a historical convent with dark, damp insides and walls that bounced what you said right back at you. The bright colors tried so hard to make everything better. The colors seemed to release stifled screams for better food, better education and more love for the children. The offices of the administration were bare. There were desks, of course, and elementary finger paintings on the wall, but things seemed scarce, third-world.

The administrators themselves (there were three) were like stoic mothers who led monotonous lives. I could tell there had once been fire, deep love and caring for these children, the years had hardened them. One administrator came maybe once a week and the children celebrated like Christmas each and every time. He was always smiling, with a hopeful air and usually brought treats. He was a healthy man with clean, dark skin, but his life, like the other administrators,' was free from the orphanage. Of all of us, he had the most hope.

There were many rooms and residences on the other two floors. The boys' quarter was on the right side of the building, the part that curved into an L shape, and the girls' quarter was in the main run of the building, the part that faced the empty playground and the ugly, half rotten rows of plantain and banana trees. Each room held ten to twenty bunk beds. Each bunk bed was covered with burned and tattered sheets; half had extra blankets and half of those had pillows, but not pillow cases. The bed spreads were pathetic, but the little children adored their beds. Lucky children received donated sheets from the volunteers depicting American Disney princesses dressed in pink, which by this time were ultra faded.

Attached to each living space was a bathing area. The bathing areas were reminiscent of cow troughs, filthy and communal. There were no showers, just plastic buckets and sponges, the

sort that we would use to wash our cars. These were for the children. On the third floor, there were two sewing rooms each with four sewing machines. The sewing rooms were right in the middle of the girls' sleeping rooms, and access to them was very easy.

None of the rooms were well lit and they barely any had windows. They looked like outfitted caves. A balcony, in similar fashion to the balconies at cheap motels, ran along the backside of the top two floors. The view from the balcony could have been beautiful if the dust and fog, constantly suspended in the heat, were not in the way.

As far as I could measure, the orphanage had a substantial amount of surrounding property. Within the bare, cement courtyard was a pseudo-soccer field. The field, however, was not a field, but rather a short, hard driveway with etched lines to determine where the children could stand and where they could make goals. Grass grew where it wanted to in the courtyard, but it appeared weakly and sporadically. This main area lay just inside the large, wooden gate and right in front of the two cafeterias, the bakery and the girl's sleeping rooms.

Around the other side, where the boys lived, the grass was thicker, not bright or happy or green by any means, just plentiful. There were rusty cages for a few animals, like one large, brown boar and many skinny cows and goats. I assumed there would be chickens as well, but I never saw any. The children didn't understand what I meant when I flapped my arms and elbows hopelessly about my body, having forgotten the Spanish word for chicken. There was also a balding peacock.

Beyond the caged animals and the bare courtyard, were the lines and lines of plantain and banana trees that could be seen from the top balcony. On days when I needed to grab a free moment from the screaming, smiling, dirty children, I would sneak out of the cafeteria, walk briskly across the courtyard, and push myself into the canopy of trees. These days were the hardest, the days on which I felt the guiltiest. I could escape, and, eventually, I would be able to leave. The tree trunks were skinny, the leaves frail, dry and contorted. My walk wasn't at all alluring, just as none of the Pica Piedra town was, but the vitality of the trees and their sense of being needed, really being needed, was so exotic and clever to me.

- - -

The bell rang for desayuno and all of the little bodies scuttled into the dining rooms, sitting their miniature bottoms on the decaying wooden benches. I wanted to improve my Spanish, so selfishly, I wandered over to the table of pre-teen boys. I figured they'd chat with me and force me to pull the vocabulary out of its hiding place in my memory.

"¿Quien eres? ¿De donde vienes? ¿Y porque? ¿Y cuantos años tienen? ¿Qué vas a hacer? ¿Dónde vives?" they asked, the questions coming like rapid fire.

The questions were like rockets. My language was awfully simple and American and all at once, the table of boys dropped their bread loaves, snapped back their heads, and laughed like pompous little business men.

"No te preocupas, señorita" said a shy, presentable one. He had stopped his laughter upon seeing the look of uncultured horror that had filled the freckles in my face. "Ellos necesitan un poquita de risa de vez en cuando. Este lugar es tan oscuro."

The boy looked to be about fourteen, probably one of the oldest of the group. His jeans were washed in the fashion of the early 90's, speckled white. They looked cheap. The neck around his t-shirt was so stretched that it looked as if someone had dragged him by that ribbing. He wore a baseball hat that was a funny color purple and his hair, damp or greasy (I wasn't sure), stuck out from underneath like hay from a scarecrow. His skin was smooth, but scarred, like the texture of crushed velvet when you run your fingers the wrong way over it. At fourteen, he was handsome, and his jaw line marked the potential to be very, very attractive.

"¿Puedes ayudarnos en la panadería? Necesitamos hornear todo el pan para mañana." "You have to do what," I replied, flustered by my how hard it was to remember Spanish. He looked confused. I tried in Spanish, "Necesitas hacer que?"

Salvador explained to me how he and two of the other boys at the breakfast table were responsible for baking the entire day's bread supply. They would bake all morning so that the orphanage could eat the following day. I thought, "Salvador was smart." He knew I wanted to improve my Spanish; he wanted extra help in the bakery so he would have more time to kick the soccer ball around on the crumbling tarmac. The other two boys were called Henry and Carlos. Carlos was older than Salvador, but his skin was much lighter, his face rounder and gentler, and

he never asserted himself in the same manner as Salvador. Henry was just a little child and followed the other two.

We baked two sorts of bread every morning; one kind of dough was traditional and the other one was infused with plantains from the outside rows. Henry was a diligent worker. He showed me all of the different ways to roll dough. We made buns, croissant-like pastries, and braided loaves; it was quite sophisticated. Salvador spent most of the mornings showing off, but all three of the boys managed to find time to tease me and every one of my pathetically twisted bread pieces. When the first batch came out of the oven, little Salvador coveted a few for me. He said "Estos son para ahora, y los otros para mas tarde cuando te sales," like a grown father or brother worrying that I wouldn't have anything to eat later that evening. The bread, simple but delicious, would become my morning staple. I never greedily took any for myself though; I always waited for Salvador's approval. The bread loaves were something he was proud of; he felt accomplished in giving them to me, and delighted proudly in my enjoyment.

I spent almost three weeks doing exactly what I had done that first day: knocking on the large gate, waiting for entrance and acceptance, surveying the land; lastly, helping to feed an entire orphanage, while guiltily enjoying little tastes of something so mundane yet so indicative of misfortune.

- - -

It was the Thursday of that third week when I started to realize what *Casa Hogar* was all about. The boys and I were on our third round of dough when the kitchen door fumbled open. The door was heavy, like steel, but a totally different weight compared to the main door of the orphanage. There in the doorway stood two of the ever-absent administrators. I jumped a little on my feet, attempting to imbue my task with intention. My Spanish faltered as it had the first day I had arrived at the orphanage.

"Hola, Señoritas. ¿Como estas? Los chicos y yo estuvieron casi listos para traer el pan a la cafetería," I claimed. In a heavily weighted accent, one of the two women responded.

"No te preocupas – Don't worry, we are not here to check on "el pan." We're sure you're doing just a fine job – our chicos are so dedicated and good about this." My body swayed a little from front to back, just within the boundaries of trepidation.

"We're here for Salvador. Well, his family is here for him. Salvador, go upstairs and collect your things. Su tía le espera a la puerta." Nervously, I glanced at Salvador. I would have swiftly focused elsewhere or continued with the kitchen work, but his brown eyes had become so bottomless, begging for me to fill them. We locked thoughts for an instant; his expression was like a heavy door knocker rapping on my vulnerability, wanting the gate to open. Salvador glanced around momentarily, and making a basket out of his oversized, over worn, dirty shirt, filled it with bread buns and knots. He lifted the funny color purple hat from his head and patted it down on Henry's. Carlos bid some sort of colloquial Peruvian goodbye and Salvador pushed harshly past the administrators and beyond the steel door.

"Gracias, hasta luego," said the two women to me or to the other boys, and they trailed after Salvador. I fixed on the door, watching their shadows diminish against the hallway wall as they walked further away. When I turned back to the boys, they were back at work. Carlos was knotting plantain dough into beautiful little buns and Henry was using all of his little body effort to lift the trays from the highest rack in the oven. Neither one of them flinched, so I returned to work. We worked at least fifteen minutes in lifeless silence before Henry spoke.

"Ud. sabe, Sofia – su familia quizás quiera que usted regresa en cualquier tiempo. It's not important what you want. It only matters what is better for the rest of the world. ¿Ud. entiende? Do you understand?"

Photo by Charles O'Keefe

Speechless

the nursing home smells like babies;
the scent of diapers hangs in the air.
as i walk past the old, withered ladies, i wonder if
they are jealous of my strong legs and my painless joints,
of my long brown hair and my bright eyes,
of my ability to walk on my own and to dress myself. i wonder
if they hate me.

i bend over my grandfather and press my lips to his tasteless cheek.
"i'll be back soon," i say, gently, into his ear,
and when i pull away to look at him, he is crying.
tears brim over his eyelids and cascade, one by one,
down his wrinkled face.
i squeeze his hand tightly; i tell him i love him.
there is no right thing to say.

Jessica Trumbull

. . .

Aucun mot à dire

la maison de repos sent le bébé
une odeur de lange flotte tout autour
côtoyant les petites vieilles flétries, je me demande si
elles envient mes jambes solides, mes genoux sans douleur,
mes longs cheveux bruns et mes yeux brillants,
ma capacité de marcher, de m'habiller toute seule. Je me demande
si elles me haïssent.

me penchant sur mon grand-père, j'effleure des lèvres sa joue sans goût.
« je reviendrai tantôt » lui dis-je, doucement, à l'oreille,
et quand je me relève, je le vois qui pleure,
des larmes débordent de ses paupières et coulent, une par une,
le long de son visage ridé.
je lui serre la main fortement; je lui dis que je l'aime.
il n'y a aucun mot à dire.

Translated by Rebecca Davidson, Ali Hardy,
Meghan Hofert, Mariel Lynch & Alexey Panyushkin

Photo by Charles O'Keefe

Cheveux en hiver

Le parfum des cheveux en hiver
senteur bleue de roses pressées
seuls témoins des arbres sans visages
        qui fondent en larmes

des aubépines dansent
sur le plafond glacé
pendant que le ciel gris chante, souffle
        et mange de la nougatine aux arachides

pendant que le petit chien sans tête
s'en va au cirque.

Hair in Winter

The scent of hair in winter—
blue of crushed roses
lone witnesses of faceless trees
        that melt into tears

hawthorn blooms dance
on a ceiling of ice
while the gray wind blows and sings
        eating peanut nougatine

while the little dog with no head
takes off for the circus.

Written and translated by Cherie Lee

Photo by Charles O'Keefe

Más que bien

Rebecca Keiser

En mis primeros días en México yo estaba tratando de hacer amigos. Estaba nerviosa porque no entendía la jerga ni la mayoría de las conversaciones entre mis amigos, pero me esforzaba mucho en hacer una vida social. No quería que los demás me consideraran una estadounidense sangrona. Entonces hablaba con todos mis compañeros de la escuela, iba a todos los recesos para platicar y participar en los juegos.

Un día que estaba en receso y mis amigos me presentaba a otros estudiantes que no había conocido, todos me preguntaban: "¿Cómo estás?" Y yo respondía: "Muy bien, ¿y tú?"

Pero un chavo, cuando le había dicho que estaba muy bien, me dijo, "No, no, no, cuando quieres decir que estás muy muy bien, dices 'soy bien buena'. Esto significa que estás MUY bien".

"Ahhhh, gracias", le dije con una sonrisa, "he aprendido una frase nueva".

"Sip. Y ahora puedes usar esta frase entre tus amigos. Es más informal".

Pasé todo el día diciendo "soy bien buena" cuando alguien me saludaba. A veces las personas se sonrían o soltaban una risita ahogada a mi repuesta. Pensaba que ellos se estaban riendo por mi acento americano y eso no me molestaba. Estaba contenta porque había aprendido otra frase y mis compañeros se divertían platicando conmigo.

En el último receso del día, el chavo que me había enseñado mi frase nueva, me llamó desde el jardín, "Oye, quiero presentarte a mis amigos, ven", y me indicó que lo siguiera con su mano.

Fui con él a la isla, un lugar rodeado por asfalto en el interior de mi escuela. Cuando nos acercamos a sus amigos él les gritó, “Oigan, quiero presentarles a Becca de los Estados Unidos. Pregúntenle cómo está”.

Y ellos me preguntaron. Y yo les dije que estaba bien buena. Todos estallaron en carcajadas. Y en ese momento me di cuenta que él me había mentido sobre el significado de ‘soy bien buena”. En lugar de parecer una americana sangrona, ahora parecía vanidosa también. Descubrí que estaba diciendo “I’m extremely hot, ¿y tú?”

“Más que bien” is the story of one of the many experiences I had dealing with learning a new language during my year in Mexico. When I arrived in Mexico I quickly realized that conversations weren’t built upon the textbook vocabulary that I had learned in the United States. Therefore I was constantly being taught new phrases, words and slang. In this story a boy in my school convinced me that “soy bien buena” meant the same as “estoy muy bien” or “I’m doing very well.” I therefore proceeded for an entire day to answer my peers’ questions of “how are you” with “soy bien buena”. Not until I was getting ready to leave school that day did a friend overhear me answering, “soy bien buena” and inform me that I was actually telling everyone that I was extremely good-looking. Needless to say I was mortified!

Eager Tree *by Rebecca Peters*

http://www.rebeccapeters.com/rebeccapeters.com/home.html

Ich habe Heimweh

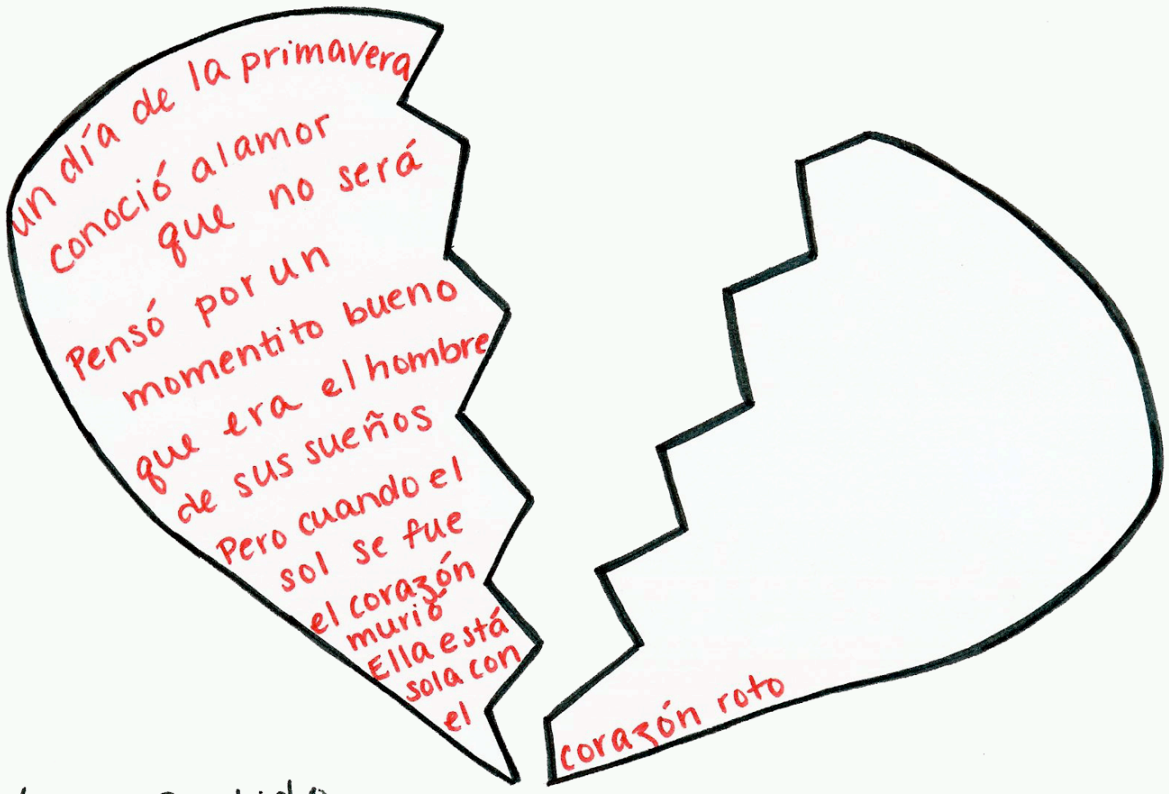
Was will ich am Wochenende tun?
Ich komme aus Chicago
Chicago ist schön
Ich kann mein Auto in Chicago fahren
Chicago ist groβ
Granville ist klein
Ich will nach Chicago fahren
Ich liebe Chicago im Sommer, weil ich zum Strand gehe und Vollleyball spiele mit
Freunden und wir können schwimmen gehen.
Ich kann zu Giodanos gehen und tiefe Tellerpizza essen.
Meine Freunde sind in Chicago
Meine Mutter lebt in Chicago
Ich will nach Chicago fahren
Heute, will ich nach Chicago fahren!

. . .

Homesickness

What will I do this weekend?
I am from Chicago
Chicago is beautiful
I can drive my car in Chicago
Chicago is big
Granville is small
I want to go to Chicago
I love Chicago in summer when I can go to the beach
with my friends to play volleyball and go swimming
I can go to Giordano's and eat deep dish pizza
My friends are in Chicago
My mother lives in Chicago
I want to go to Chicago
Today, I want to go to Chicago!

Written and translated by LaForce Baker



Amor Perdido

Kristin French y Leslie Hopfinger

Football

Football
schwierig, schmerzhaft
anstoßen, laufen, stoßen

Football
aufregend, mitreißend
fangen, blockieren, werfen

Das Spiel ist das erstaunlichste auf der Welt

. . .

Football

Football
tough, painful
hit, run, tackle

Football
exciting, emotional
catch, block, throw

The most amazing game in the world

Written and translated by Bert Bathiany

Ich habe alles!

Ich habe gute Ohren,
Ich will mit ihnen Musik hören.

Ich habe gute Augen,
Ich will mit ihnen fernsehen.

Ich habe einen guten Mund,
Ich will mit ihm essen.

Ich habe eine gute Nase,
Ich will mit ihr Düfte riechen.

Ich habe gute Hände,
Ich will mit ihnen schreiben.

Ich habe gute Beine,
Ich will mit ihnen tanzen.

Ich will alles!

. . .

I Have It All!

I have good ears,
I want to hear music.

I have good eyes,
I want to watch TV.

I have a good mouth,
I want to eat good things.

I have a good nose,
I want to smell perfume.

I have good hands,
I want to write.

I have good legs,
I want to dance.

I want it all!

Written and translated by Katie Embry

To Kiss the Moon by Rebecca Peters

http://www.rebeccapeters.com/rebeccapeters.com/home.html

Der Soldat

Da war ein Soldat von Aachen,
Der wollte die ganze Welt seh'n.
Er war ein Held.
Aber er hatte kein Geld.
Dieser arme Soldat von Aachen.

. . .

The Soldier

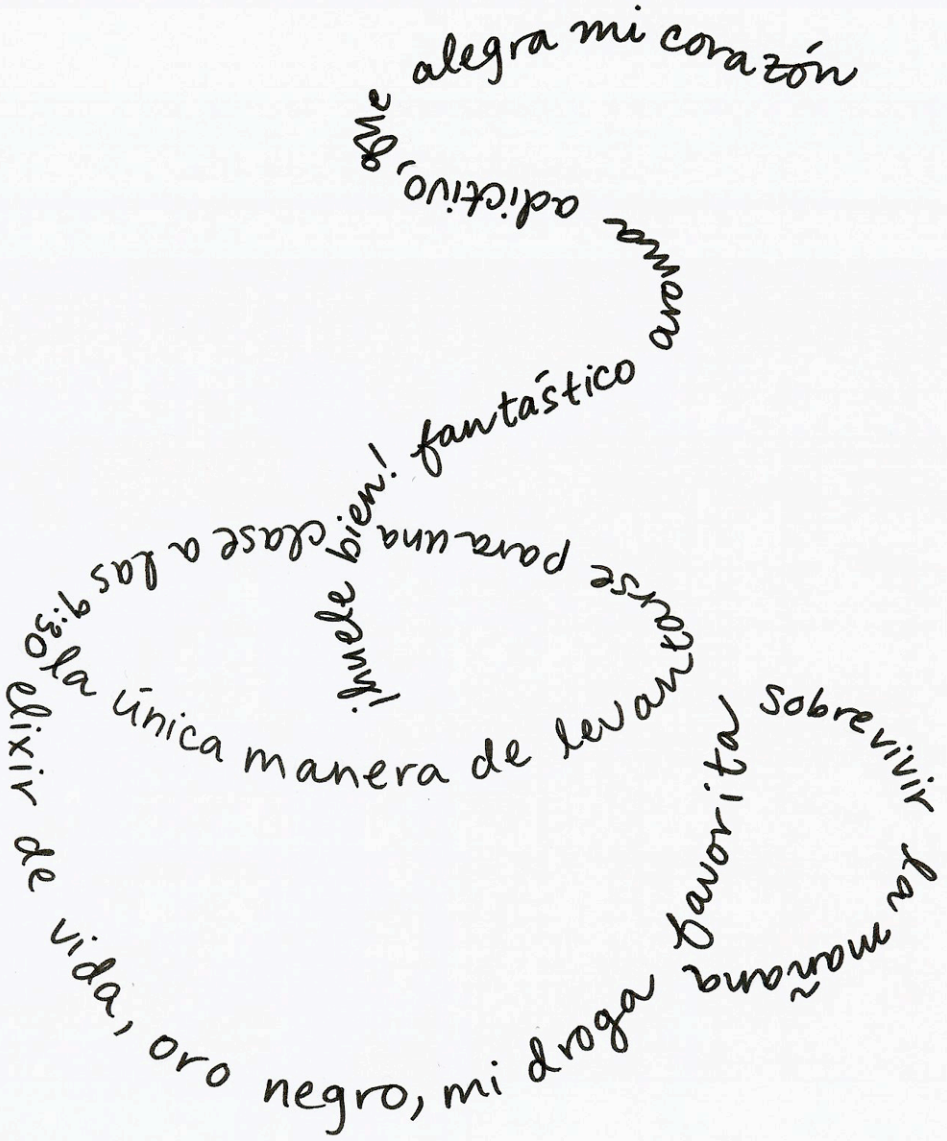
There was a soldier from Aachen,
Who wanted to see the world,
He was a hero,
But he had no money,
This poor soldier from Aachen.

Written and translated by Xerxes F. Unvala

Schnee
Kalt, Flaumig
Schilaufen, Schlitten fahren, Rutschen
Eis auf meinen Augen
Winter

Snow
Cold, Feathery
Skiing, Sledding, Sliding
Ice of my eyes
Winter

Rochelle Akradi



"Café" - Leigh Courtney y Sarah Grundahl

Photo by Charles O'Keefe

Seuil

Abîme qui échappe à notre néant
Abîme qui joue comme table
Couleurs qui restent stables
Couleurs qui effacent nos rides

Ciel qui hante nos rêves
Ciel qui plane au-dessus de la Terre
Branche qui atteint nos cieux
Branche qui brise nos désirs
Couleur qui flotte dans l'air

Espace qui fait naître nos craintes
Espace qui détruit nos aisances
Triangle qui éclate nos appuis
Triangle qui poursuit la fin
Ciel qui existe
Couleur qui insiste

Livres qui se défont de nos idées
Livres qui embrassent nos pensées
Pierres qui limitent nos sentiments
Pierres qui délimitent nos continents
Triangle qui emprisonne l'espace
Branche qui transperce le ciel
Abîme qui échappe à notre néant.

Threshold

Abyss that escapes our emptiness
Abyss that acts as a table
Colors that remain stable
Colors that erase our wrinkles

Sky that haunts our dreams
Sky that drifts over the Earth
Branch that touches our heavens
Branch that shatters our desires
Color that floats through the air

Space that creates our fears
Space the destroys our comforts
Triangle that breaks our supports
Triangle that looks for the end
Sky that exists
Color that insists

Books that discard our ideas
Books that embrace our thoughts
Stones that limit our sentiments
Stones that define our continents
Triangle that imprisons space
Branch that pierces the sky
Abyss that escapes our emptiness

Written and translated by Rachel Grotheer

Photo by Christina Niro

La niña especial
Amy R. Brown

Había una vez, una niña muy linda que vivía en una casa con sus padres muy estrictos. Ella no podía hacer nada sin el consentimiento de sus padres. Los padres estaban preocupados porque ella era muy diferente a sus semejantes. Tenía una cualidad muy rara. Ella podía hablar con los animales. En este tiempo lo raro no era bueno y las personas diferentes eran consideradas brujas por la gente del pueblo. Ella quería jugar con sus amigas pero sus padres tenían miedo de que los vecinos y amigos descubrieran que ella tenía este talento.

Un día, los padres decidieron que ir al bosque. Dejaron a su hija con una criada durante el paseo. Ella estaba emocionada. Esta era su oportunidad para escapar y estar con personas reales. Ella se divirtió mucho con sus amigos animales aunque anhelaba la compañía de niñas y niños. Como la criada estaba cocinando la cena, ella salió por la ventana de su cuarto. Tan pronto como ella tocó la tierra con sus piernas, oyó gritos distantes. ¿Qué podía ser? Empezó a buscar la cosa responsable del ruido. Con cuidado, ella corrió por el bosque y más debajo de la calle, había un río pequeño donde un niño estaba llorando y gritando.

"Por favor, necesito ayuda", dijo el niño. Ella no sabía qué debía hacer. Lo miró como si se hubiera roto la pierna y no pudiera andar. Su corazón latió rápidamente pero sabía lo que tenía que hacer. Ella corrió al coral y encontró su caballo favorito. Trajo el caballo al niño y lo ayudó. Puso el niño sobre el caballo y dijo al caballo: "Toma este niño al pueblo y regresa pronto. Ten cuidado, mi amor." El caballo sabía exactamente lo que ella dijo y lentamente, empezó a andar al pueblo. El niño estaba medio desmayado pero le preguntó a ella, "¿Por que no te vi antes?" Ella respondió: "Porque mis padres son estrictos y no vale de pena. "Esto vale de pena…gracias por

todo". El niño desapareció en el crepúsculo y ella regresó rápidamente a su casa en el caso de que sus padres hubieran regresado.

Cuando ella regresó a su casa la criada era muy enojada. La criada la encerró a ella en su cuarto y esperó a sus padres. Después del regreso de sus padres, fueron al cuarto de su hija y gritaron mucho. Aunque parezca extraño, ella se sentía tranquila y después de toda la gritería, les dijo: "No me importa, padres. Ha encontrado mi amor. No vale la pena para ustedes y ahora me voy". Entonces, con la cara llena de golpes, ella se fue. Los padres no volvieron a ver a su hija nada más.

"The Special Girl" is a story about a girl who has the gift of talking to animals. Because of this gift, her parents believe that she should not speak with children or anyone who would see her as different. One day she escapes from her bedroom and goes off into the woods where she finds a boy who is injured. She helps him by getting one of her horses to carry him to a nearby village. When she returns home, her nursemaid locks her in her room for disobeying her parents' wishes. Instead of being upset, she is perfectly calm and ready to do what she has always wanted to do: leave to begin her own life.

Photo by Charles O'Keefe

Couleur de feu

Un chiffre à la fois parfait et imaginaire?
C'est impossible crient les voix
De nombreux mathématiciens
Peut-être s'élèvera la voix d'Euler
Douce, mais certaine parmi la foule
«C'est difficile mais rien n'est impossible
On peut trouver une réponse».

Les angles sans source
Rien n'est impossible pour l'imaginaire
Chiffre, livre rejeté
Les outils de l'esprit qui s'évade
Le bleu de l'hiver mêlé à
La mer et aux algues qui s'accrochent
A la vie.
Parfait—imaginaire.

Devant Euler, le chiffre repose
Bleu, solitaire
Sur le tableau blanc
Effacé comme le livre.

. . .

Color of Fire

A number that is both perfect and imaginary?
It's impossible cry the voices
Of multitudes of mathematicians
Perhaps Euler's voice would be heard
Quiet yet certain among the crowd
"It's difficult but nothing is impossible
We can find an answer."

Angles without a source
Nothing is impossible for the imaginary
Number, discarded book
The tools of the mind that wanders
blue of winter, mingled with
The sea and seaweed that clings
To life.
Perfect—imaginary.

In front of Euler, the number sits
Blue, solitary
On the white board
Erased like the book.

Written and translated by Rachel Grotheer

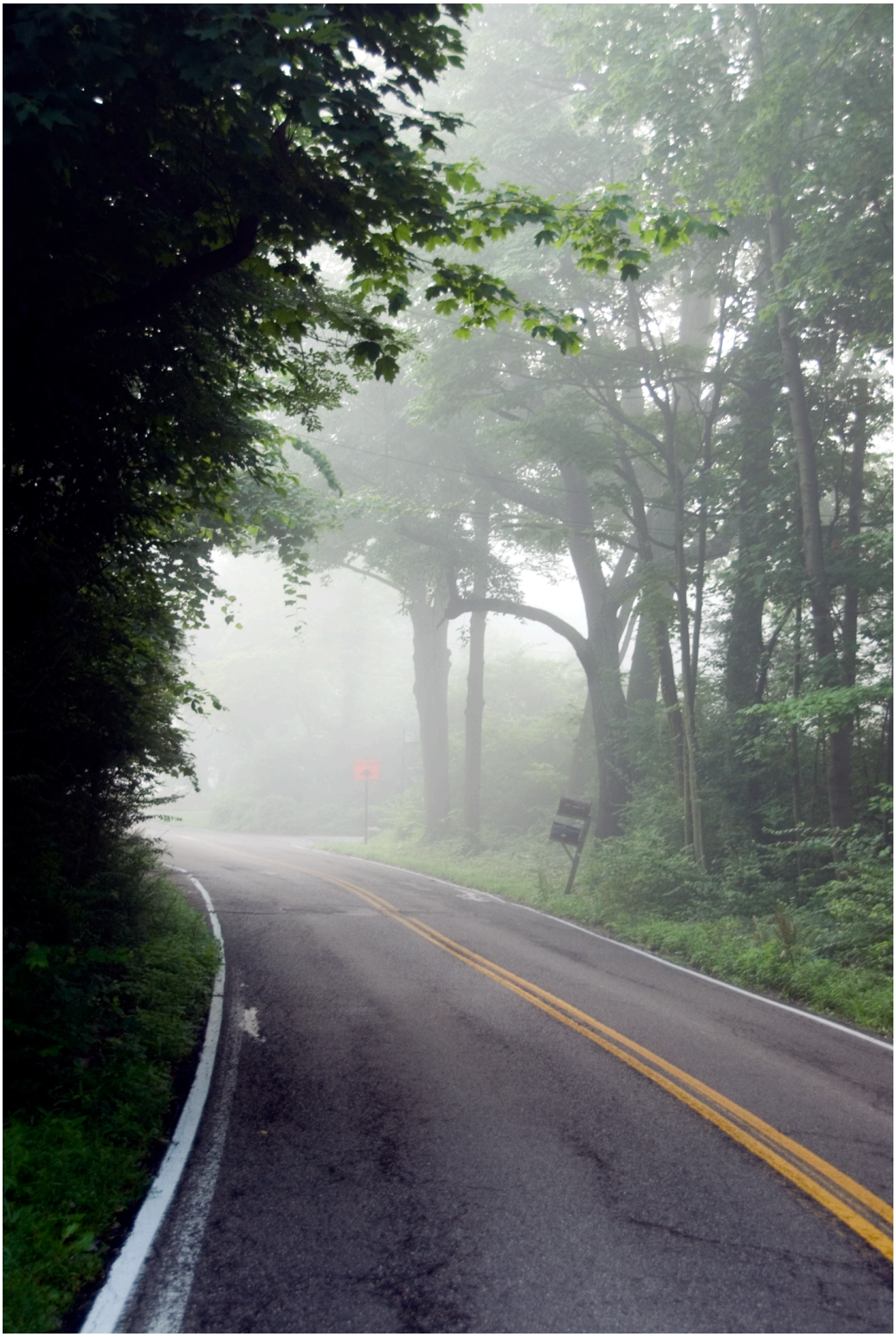


Photo by Charles O'Keefe

L'Infini

Pourrait-on se reposer sur la ligne de l'horizon ?
Si l'on savait la réponse
on saurait le secret du ciel et de la terre—
On y trouverait la paix.

Vivre dans les deux mondes
Déchiffrer la couleur de chacun
là dans le miroir
où l'infini déborde.

Est-ce un reflet de prisme dans nos yeux
ou plutôt nos yeux qui incitent la couleur ?
Comme il est vaste le champ de l'esprit—
le sens nous fuit!

. . .

The Infinite

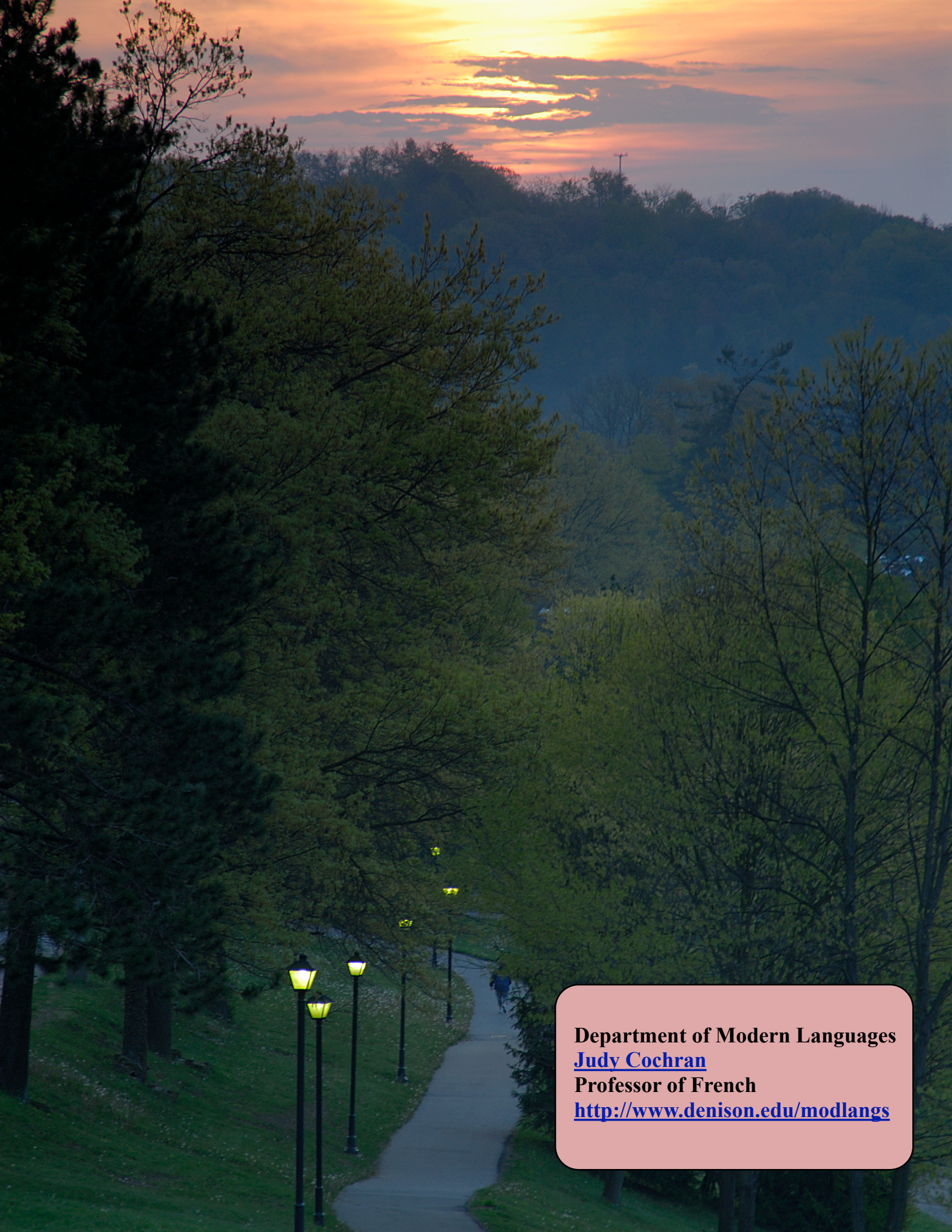
Is it possible to lie down on the horizon line?
If we found the answer
we would find the secret of earth and sky
and there know peace.

To exist in two worlds
To decipher the color of each
There in the mirror
where the infinite overflows.

Is color reflected in the eyes
or, do the eyes invent it?
How vast is the mind's eye
and yet the answer flees!

Written and translated by Gwenn Dobos

Photo by Charles O'Keefe



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