To the Students:

The Kapiolani Community College Diamond Journal Club would like to thank all those students who submitted papers. Writers whose works were not selected for publication should not feel discouraged. There simply was not enough space available to print all of the superb entries. The staff would like everyone to continue writing and to continue taking the opportunity, when presented, to submit works for publication. Writing is a good way to communicate personal feelings, thoughts, and ideas. It reminds us of who we are. All too often we get lost in the hectic pace of the world. Writing provides the chance to step back, look at where we are and where we have been, and to express our experiences and ideas creatively. For those who did not submit any papers, the Diamond Journal Club hopes that in the future you will submit your writing for review. Each person has within him or her unique ideas and the ability to be creative. Take the writing opportunity when presented. There is nothing to lose and much to gain.

The Diamond Journal Staff
The opinions expressed in the contents of the essays are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the University of Hawaii or the Diamond Journal. Furthermore, the Diamond Journal Club would like everyone to know that this magazine does in no way officially represent the writing subdepartment here at KCC. This magazine is simply a collection of works done by students attending KCC. Some of the divisions are related to courses offered at KCC, but they are simply a convenient way to separate the entries into different skill levels. This semester, the Diamond Journal staff called for entries that were specifically narrative. This, we felt, was in keeping with judging criteria used in the past. Narratives, we feel, provide the most interesting reading to the general student body at KCC.
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ENGLISH 10V
Special Person

Koman S. Diabate

1st Place, English 10V
Instructor: Sandra Kelley-Daniel

I would like to talk about a very special person to me. This is my mother, Batta Soumarro. She is 53 years old and has five children: four sons and one daughter. I have a very good relationship with her and she has always been at my side to help me. My mother is a very peaceful lady and of course I can't forget that she is a good cook (because cooking for more than 20 people, my family size, is not easy).

Currently, she is living with the rest of my family in Bamako, the capital of Mali. Mali is located in West Africa and is surrounded by seven other countries in the Sahel which is the region halfway between the Sahara desert and the nearby savannas.

When I left my country to come to the United States, she helped me a lot. She helped me to get my visa for entry into the USA. She also prayed a lot for me and is still praying. She encouraged me to come here even when I was very hesitant. Although she has no formal education, she realizes the true value of a higher education. It was because of this that she did not want me to pass up such a good opportunity.

My mother is a housewife who didn't go to school enough to work in an office or any other setting. When my father married her, she purchased a book and started to learn how to read and speak basic French, with the support of my father. This is a very important language in my country and is the only one written. Thus in schools and in offices all the documents are in French. So for my first three years in school she was able to help me with my homework. This also helped me to establish good study habits, something that is not very popular with young Malian students.

I am very close to my mother. If I have a problem, no matter how serious it is, she is the only person I have to talk to. I remember in my first trimester in middle school, I failed my class because I was not studying very well. I used to skip classes to go with my friends. When I received my grades, I was supposed to show them to my father and I knew he was going to be very upset. So I talked to my mother and promised her that on my next examination I was going to receive at least the average of the rest of the class. Then together we went to show the grade report to my father. My mom explained to him what happened and he just told me that it's very important to do good in school because it pays.

Our relationship is so good that a lot of people are jealous of us. My father has two wives and 15 children. Thus often times there is a lot of competition and rivalry between the children and also between the mothers. But my mother is very peaceful and she doesn't like to argue a lot. She always has taught me to be what I am and to never be jealous of my brothers. My mother always gave me good advice and encouraged me to do everything correctly. She always told me that she didn't have a chance to go to school. Because there weren't a lot of schools at that time, education was only for a very small portion of the population. She says that now we have plenty of schools and that I'd be a fool to miss this opportunity.

Since I was young, she has shown me that to be somebody you have to go to school. I remember sometimes it was hard for my father to pay the school expenses of 15 children, so in cases like that she always found the money to pay for me.

My mother has had to overcome many difficulties in her life. She always wanted to go to school and she never had the chance because her family was not rich enough to afford the school. Also, at that time people thought that school was only for the male sex because in the future, they were the ones to work and take care of the family financially. Her family didn't have many material goods. They lived in a small mud house and she had to work, washing the dishes and clothes of other people to get some money. This all has made her a very strong person. Because of the encouragement and support my mother has shown me my whole life, I was able to break away from the hardships of life in Africa and to try to seek all my potential. It is for all these reasons that my mother is so special to me. I know it was difficult for her to encourage me to go so far from home. However, she could see the possibilities far more than I could.

It is still sometimes difficult for me to adjust to life here in the U.S. However, it is with all the lessons that my mother has taught me that I am able to overcome these challenges, not just of life in the U.S., but everywhere. I am definitely a better person thanks to the help of my mom.
The Day I Will Never Forget

Hai-Lam That Ton

2nd Place, English 10V
Instructor: Sandra Kelley-Daniel

I was in shock after hearing the news that one of my best friends was shot to death. The robber shot him after he refused to leave his car. The next day, I went to his home to give my sympathy. I entered his house and stood in front of his body covered with white cloth. As I looked at him, the memory of the night after my sister's death came back to me.

I won't forget August 18, 1977. That night, I went home late from my friend's house. As I opened the door, I saw my brother sitting on the chair near the table. His eyes looked at the floor. He didn't even look up when he heard me open the door. I went to the kitchen. My mom usually was there; she liked to bake cakes for my family after dinner every night, but that night she wasn't. I went to her room, and I heard her crying in her room. When I silently opened the door, I wondered whether or not she was crying because I came home late and if that had made her anxious. I, a six-year-old boy, was still too young to think of another reason why she was crying.

When she saw me, she told me to come near her and she put her arm around my shoulder. She told me something, but I couldn't hear because she spoke while crying.

I tried to listen to her and only heard, "Lam, your sister... no longer..."

I asked her, "Mom, when will my sister come back from the hospital to play with me?"

At that time, my sister was 10 years old. She was an active girl. She always set up interesting games that attracted not only my brother and me but also the children in our neighborhood. In these games, in order to satisfy me, she always chose me as the hero.

I loved my sister very much, not only because she always pleased me but also because she was my protector. I still remember one time I stole money from my father to buy toys. After my father discovered it, he punished me by whipping me and then telling me to kneel down. It was my sister who entreated him to forgive me. My father loved my sister very much, so after receiving her entreaty, he forgave me and warned me not to do it again or I would receive heavier punishment.

My sister loved to go to school very much. When she was sick with a fever, my father took her to a hospital. The doctors in the hospital checked her and found nothing wrong. They thought she had a light fever. So they gave her some medicine, and let her go home. A few days after that she felt better and asked my parents for permission to go back to school. First, my parents didn't want her to go back to school because she still was sick, but she entreated and told my parents she would be free from fever a few days later. Finally, my parents agreed.

One week after going back to school, while she was in physics class, she fell down on the ground and was unconscious. Her teacher took her to the hospital. At that time, the doctors began to suspect something was wrong with her, so they took her to the X-ray room. Several days later, they found out that she had a heavy case of encephalitis, but it was too late.

After hearing my question, my mother cried louder. I was so afraid. I sensed something wrong and I asked her again, "Mom, what happened to her?"

She was silent for a while, tried to calm herself, and then said, "Your sister has just died. Tonight before you go to sleep, remember to pray for her."

I couldn't hear anymore. Everything seemed to collapse before me. I didn't want to cry, but there was something choking in my throat and my tears came out. This was the first time in my life I experienced such a big shock. I didn't know how long I stood there motionless, but the sudden sound of someone opening the door awakened me. I turned back and saw my father entering.

He came to my mother, sat close to her, and then said, "You shouldn't be so sad. If God wanted to see her, we had no choice but to obey him."

Although he comforted my mother, looking at his face, I could feel how much sorrow he felt when he lost his beloved daughter.

With my father's help, my mother went downstairs step-by-step, and I followed my parents. In the living room, I saw many people who came to my house to give their sympathy. Among them was my sister's teacher. She came to my house and talked to my father. She told him how much she loved my sister...
because my sister was a good and active student in her class.

At night before going to bed, I went to my mother and asked her what my sister would do in heaven. She took a long time to think about it and then said, "Your sister will be a small angel in heaven and she will pray and watch over you." That night I couldn't sleep. I looked up into the sky and tried to find heaven and my sister. I looked up for a long time and finally I saw her. She came down from heaven, sat next to me, and talked with me in my dream that night.

By bringing back this experience, I understand a little better the meaning of death. It is becoming clear to me that we are born to serve a purpose. After our purpose is fulfilled, we die. But just because a person dies doesn't mean that he is forgotten.
What I Missed in the Summer

Rika Murata

3rd Place, English 10V
Instructor: Sandra Kelley-Daniel

As usual, it was a beautiful summer, and my closest friend Junko and I were looking forward to summer vacation. While the sun glared down on us, we walked among many noisy, chirping cicadas. We were planning to walk along the beach in the sea breeze and camp out in the woods. If we hadn’t had a fight and if I had said that I was sorry for what I had said to her, we could have had a nice time. I have not seen her since the summer we fought and she left town. I have learned that her friendship was precious to me.

At the time we fought, we were fifth-grade students, and we had gone to school together everyday since first grade. We lived in a part of Tokyo which had a lot of green trees, and they dazzled under the midsummer sun. I worried about nothing and everything seemed good. I knew little of the world yet.

"Let’s have some fun in the garden!" Junko said.
"OK," I immediately replied. We enjoyed playing badminton and usually scored almost the same number of points.

"Wow! The shuttlecock is flying over," she said.
I said, "All right, I’ll get it." When I found it in the garden, I saw a broken-down clock and I couldn’t believe it. I had given her the clock as a present on her 12th birthday. At first I felt very sad and upset. I asked, "Who broke this clock?"
She apologized and said that her younger sister had broken the clock. "I’m sorry, forgive me, Rika," she said, crying.
"You are a liar! Didn’t you say that you would treasure this clock forever?" I was thinking about the clock, not her. I had bought the clock by saving my monthly pocket money for three months. Although she was really sorry for what she had done, I didn’t forgive her. I spoke cruel words to her, including, "I hate you." After saying that, I left the garden without waiting for an answer. I soon regretted this, and I felt sorry that I had put it so strongly. All through the summer, I was concerned about her; however I didn't have the courage to say "I am sorry" to her. I thought that we would soon be good friends again when the fall semester began. Unfortunately this was not to be. In September, I heard that she had suddenly transferred to a school in Osaka because her father was transferred by his company.

Because Junko and I had not become reconciled yet, I didn’t want to believe what I’d heard. I felt that I should say “I’m sorry” to her. I thought that she was disappointed in me, so she went away without saying good-bye.
I asked myself again and again, "Was I a narrow-minded girl?"
"Yes."
"What was the cause of the fight?"
"It was about a trifle."
We could easily find a new clock instead of that one, but it was difficult to fix our friendship. I learned that I must apologize sooner, if I realize that I have done wrong. Since then, I have never spoken cruel words to people such as my friends, parents or sisters. Since that summer, I have learned the words which I shouldn’t say. To me, everything has changed.

•
I can still remember the day my dog came to my house. I was seven years old. I wanted a dog and asked my parents for a dog for a long time. The day before my dog came, I was very excited and couldn't wait until the next day came. So I made a house for him, wrote his name on the house, and drew some pictures. I named him "Kolo." When Kolo joined our family, he was only one to two months old. He was tiny and looked weak. I can remember that his tiny white body shook when I held him in my arms. I was filled with precious feeling for him, and joy.

Since that day, I rushed home after finishing school and took him for a walk or played with him. He loved to go for a walk like all other dogs. Sometimes I had to take him for a walk three times a day. Because I was an only child and both my parents worked, I had to play by myself sometimes. But since Kolo came, I was not lonely anymore. I felt like I had a little brother.

It was a day in fall, about six months after he came. As usual, I came home from school and I called his name at the front door. Whenever I called his name, he ran to see me. But that time, he didn't come. I called his name several times. Then I realized that something had happened to him. I searched for him all over my house. But I couldn't find him. I was just in a panic and didn't know what I should do. I even checked in the bathroom and under the beds. He had disappeared! I checked every room again and again and finally found that a garage door was open. He had run away. I told my parents, but they couldn't help me because they both worked. So I had to search for him by myself.

I searched around my house first. I asked all my neighbors about him. Some people were worried about him and some people didn't take it seriously. They didn't know how much I was worried about him. I was upset with them and also with myself because I could not do anything for Kolo.

Because Kolo was still little and didn't know about the outside world very much, I began to wonder if he might be hit by a car or if someone might have taken him to his or her house. I searched in parks that we always went to. But he was not there either. I asked many strangers around the park. It was very embarrassing for me because I was not an active child. I had never spoken to strangers. But that effort was not rewarded. The more time passed, the more I thought about Kolo's death and felt sorry for him. Pedaling a bicycle, I couldn't stop crying. I pedaled the bicycle stronger to ease my anger and fretting. But it didn't work.

I searched for him for about four hours. It was getting dark and cold. I wanted to keep searching for Kolo. But I thought my parents would worry about me as I had worried about Kolo. So I decided to go back home and ask my parents to help me. On the way home, I was filled with disappointment and anger at no one but myself. In front of a supermarket near my house, a woman with a small white dog caught my eye. That dog looked very much like Kolo. I walked up to her and recognized the dog. It was him, Kolo! My tension went away at once. I couldn't think about anything; but I just felt relieved. She had found him at the entrance of the supermarket and almost took him to a police station. I thanked her and went home with my dog. I cried again from relief.

It was my first time to feel responsibility so strongly. Nobody helped me. But I knew that I was the only one who could have helped Kolo. I will never forget the unbearable feeling that I felt while I was searching for him.

Now Kolo is in Japan with my parents. Although he is 12 years old, he still runs away sometimes. He loves running away and is well-known as a running away expert among our neighbors. He drives us crazy!
I was 12 years old when my father died. I woke up one morning about 5:00, and I heard my mom crying. I walked into her room and that was when my mom told me my dad had died. That was when I knew I had lost someone I loved, my father.

My father was born and raised in a small city in the north of Thailand. He was very tall, light skinned and had very big sad eyes. He came from a family of four and he was the oldest. He graduated from the University in Thailand in 1950 at the age of 28. He married my mother the year after he graduated and they had four children. I am the only girl and the oldest one. He became a professor in a private school and taught Music and English.

It was January 1962 when my father died. He had a heart attack. I remember that day. We kept his body in the house for about three days because this is a Thai custom. Family and friends came over to give their sympathy; everyone was crying. My aunts and uncles brought food for everyone.

As for me, I cried for three entire days because my dad and I were very close and I was his favorite girl. We used to do many things together. He took me to the beach, to the movies, helped me with my homework and read me bedtime stories.

After three days, they moved my dad's body to the Pitsanulok Temple. The night before my dad's body was cremated, I cried the whole night. Everyone was ready for the funeral except for me. I didn't want to go because I knew that would be the last time I would see him, but finally I went to the funeral. My mother and I said a prayer together and afterwards the monk and the people prayed. Before they cremated my father, I put a flower into his coffin and I told him I loved him and was going to miss him. Then I said good-bye.

Life without my father was difficult. I was lonely and frightened. For two years after he died I missed him so much. Every time I saw my friends' dads who came to visit them at school, I always cried, and I wished my dad was still alive. Now that I am older, I have accepted his death and got on with my life.
Paradox Personified

Rose O. Sadie

Honorable Mention, English 10V
Instructor: Steve Singer

My best friend Ted is the model of inconsistency. To begin with, he's an intelligent person but gives the impression of being brainless. For example, Ted is a 3.0-plus student in college with a large vocabulary, yet it is not unusual to find him sitting on the bus staring at something unseen by anyone else about six inches in front of his face, with a long silver ribbon of drool connecting his lap to his chin.

Secondly, upon hearing that Ted earned two varsity letters (baseball and basketball) in high school, you might expect him to be coordinated, in shape, and at least of average height. His five-foot-two-inch, one-hundred-sixty-five-pound frame bouncing off of walls, tripping over his feet, or trying to dance and looking like he has to go to the bathroom would surprise you.

Lastly, someone who gets grades as good as Ted does, and who won spelling bees and speech debates throughout high school and his first year of college (as Ted did) should have a good memory. Again Ted defies logic. He once searched for his backpack for a half hour while it was on his back. To top that, a friend of his who lives in the Netherlands received a letter from Ted. Three days later a letter that was almost a duplicate of the first one arrived. Ted had forgotten that he had written the first letter.

In all, Ted would most likely give Mr. Spock a major Excedrin headache.
A Childhood Experience
Joel Versola
Honorable Mention, English 10V
Instructor: Sandra Kelley-Daniel

The thought of being burnt to a crisp is a frightening feeling. I lay hopelessly in bed thinking what happened, what went wrong. I felt so much pain my whole body was shaking. I didn’t know what to do. I was lying in bed like I was crippled. I couldn’t do anything but lie on my back. Everything happened so fast, I thought I was going to die. I could not even walk. The doctor said I had to stay off my feet for a month. I’m grateful that only my feet and not my whole body was burned.

It was July of 1982, and I was 12 years old. It was a beautiful day for a barbecue. I called my cousins Alan and Burt to come over to my house for a barbecue. When they arrived, Alan and I got the kiawe wood ready and we started to light the fire. I took newspapers and anything I could find to start it. We had a difficult time starting the fire; it took us a while and I was becoming angry. Alan suggested we should use some kerosene, but I told him to keep using newspapers. But he insisted on using kerosene and went to get some in the storage room anyway.

Alan brought the kerosene, and I kneeled down next to the barbecue. Alan stood next to me with his brother Burt and my two brothers Jesse and Jonathan. I lit the match and threw it into the kiawe wood. Then, Alan poured the kerosene. The next thing I knew—BOOM!

I saw a huge fire right in front of my face. The fire climbed up to Alan’s hand while he was pouring the kerosene, and he threw the kerosene down. It landed on my feet and, thank God, not on my body. My reaction was too slow. Everything happened too fast. Since I was wearing slippers, my feet caught fire immediately; then the flames went on to the bottom of my jeans. I thought, Oh my God, my feet are on fire. I ran so fast, looking for a water faucet to put out the fire on my feet. As I ran, I was screaming my head off. I was crying so much I could not even see. I thought that was it for me.

I remember a friend of mine telling me he was a couple blocks away from my house and heard someone screaming. He thought someone’s mother was hitting her kid with a bat, but he found out it was me screaming. Finally I found a faucet and stood there, holding the hose while the water extinguished the fire on my feet. I was terrified and in pain. I was also pouring tears. My Aunt Tessie did not know what to do, and even she was crying. Somera, a visitor from the Philippines, carried me to the car and my Aunt Tessie rushed me to Kaiser Permanente Hospital. When I got there, they rushed me to an emergency room. I was still in pain. When I took a glance at my feet, it was the most terrifying thing I had ever looked at. My feet were filled with huge blisters. They were puffy and the biggest blisters I had ever seen. My entire feet were covered with huge blisters on both sides, and it was gross.

When the doctor and nurses came into the room, they first asked me what had happened, and I said that my feet had caught fire and that I was in pain. The nurse went to get me Tylenol to take some of the pain away while the doctor got his things ready. As soon as I took the Tylenol and they got their equipment ready, they started to cut the dead skin off my feet. The liquid gushed out of the blisters that were on my feet. As soon as they took off all the dead skin, I could only see meat, and it was awful. They started to scrub my feet and began cleaning it with peroxide, and I screamed like crazy. My Aunt Tessie, Somera, and all the nurses held me down on the table. It was worse than pain. It felt even worse than when my feet were on fire. Even if I touched my foot slightly, it felt like someone was sticking a needle through my foot. I looked down at my foot, and all I saw was blood. After the scrubbing was over, I was relieved. The worst was over. All the doctor had to do was to rub cream and wrap bandages around my feet. The doctor told me not to walk on my feet for at least a month and to come in daily to change the bandages.

I knew I was going to be crippled for a while because the doctor said I could not walk for a month. I thought to myself, Even if my feet healed up I would not be able to walk because the muscles in my legs would be too soft and weak for me to stand up. This happens when you stay off your feet for a long period of time and you don’t exercise your legs.
As the days passed, I could see my feet slowly healing. I could see new skin forming at the tips of my toes and the backs of my heels. I remember the second day I went in for a bandage change, the doctor told me that I would have scars on my feet that would gradually go away. Till this day I still have scars on both of my feet. I think the scars won't go away and they will remain there forever. I always thought the doctor lied or told me that just to make me feel better.

Though my feet were improving, I still could not walk. Every time I had to use the bathroom or go to bed at night, I had to be transported in a wheelchair. It was really hard to get around in the house, and at times, I would get frustrated. Everywhere I went I would have to be carried by my dad or be transported in a wheelchair.

As soon as a month had passed, I knew I would have to start walking. Every day I would try to stand; just pushing myself up was really hard. I still could not stand because the muscles in my legs were too weak for me to stand. Finally a month and a week had passed, and it was time to take off the bandages completely. I was thrilled. My parents took me to Kaiser. As soon as I got there, I went in and waited. The doctor came in and told me that I must be thrilled to take off the bandages, and I told him that I was. But the doctor told me that I would still have a hard time walking because the muscles in my legs were still soft. So they gave me crutches to help me start walking better.

As soon as they took off the bandages I could see new skin all over my feet. It looked like they had given me a pair of new feet. I was really happy. All I was worried about was walking. They made me walk that day with crutches. I sure had a hard time walking. I felt like I had to learn how to walk again. My legs were really shaking. But every day I used those crutches to walk, I felt better and better until I didn't need the crutches and I could walk on my own two feet.

When I think back on the painful incident, I realize I've learned and experienced a lot. I can explain what pain is all about and even beyond pain.

I've learned that fire is not a thing to play with, and that fire can kill. I am thankful to be alive and not dead. I would never in my whole life use kerosene to start a barbecue and never play with fire. I'm just happy to be here today and to share my experience with everyone.
Experience at Ted’s Drive-In

Charissa K. Chock

1st Place, English 22
Instructor: Janice Cook

I’ll never forget the experience I had when I was working at Ted’s Drive-In, the fast-food place where they served American and Korean food. The place was located in Varsity Square near University Avenue. It was a popular place for college students to hang out to eat and to make friends. It was a fun place to work because I met many different people. However, working at Ted’s without any experience and with little English skills gave me the most embarrassing experience of my life.

I remember it clearly. I started working at Ted’s about a year after I came to Hawaii. The owner, Mr. Sung, was a Korean who knew my mother, and he asked my mother if I could work at his place. He needed a counter girl right away because his waitress, June, was retiring in a week. I was hired to work at Ted’s even though I didn’t know how to speak English well enough. Mr. Sung was a hard worker and an understanding person who was willing to help young students to better themselves.

He told me, “Don’t worry, Charissa, you will be able to handle the work. The first step is important; after that everything will get easier.” I had no idea what to expect from work because it was the first time ever that I had worked. I was expected to absorb everything and to learn fast within a week.

During the first week, I helped June at the front counter making french fries, filling the drinks, packaging the take-out orders and mopping the floor. I had to know things such as where the supplies were located, and I learned to work fast. The main thing that I had to learn was to recognize and memorize the menu and the prices. I had no problem recognizing the Korean dishes, but with American dishes, I had a difficult time pronouncing unfamiliar names. Another thing that I had to learn was to be able to take the orders and give fast, satisfying service to every customer. When a customer ordered, my job as a counter girl was to repeat the main dish items like plate lunches, hamburgers, and sandwiches in a clear loud voice so the cook could prepare them. To raise my voice, almost shouting, at anybody was a very difficult task for me because I wasn’t accustomed to it. Instead of calling out the orders from the front, I would run back each time and hand the written orders to the cook. As a result, it made the servicing very slow and customers had to wait longer.

Mr. Sung told me, “Charissa, don’t be shy, now. Try to use your voice to order, and at the same time you can prepare the drinks. All right?” I shyly nodded my head. However, gradually I learned to use my voice. My voice was so soft that Mr. Chong, the cook, made me repeat myself about five times until I said the words louder.

The week had gone by fast, and within that week I tried to learn everything, which wasn’t easy. I made some silly mistakes like repeating the order two times, thinking that Mr. Chong didn’t hear me. As a result, he repeated the orders unnecessarily.

At other times, during the busy hour, I would call out the orders without thinking and I’d say, “One mixed plate and two cokes.”

Mr. Chong laughed from behind the kitchen and yelled back, “Two what?”

Then I realized and responded with a smile and said, “Oops! No! No! Cancel.”

I blushed with embarrassment, but June told me, “Charissa, I do that all the time. You are beginning to sound like a regular counter girl. Hang in there and you will do fine.”

During the second week, June left. I was to handle the counter all by myself. I hadn’t memorized all of the American menu, but I was ready for the day. One large woman came and ordered the mahimahi dish with an extra macaroni salad. At that moment, I couldn’t understand the word mahimahi. It was the first time I had heard the word and I couldn’t pronounce it.

However, I tried my best to say the word in a loud voice, “One ma-e ma-e an-da ex-so to-ra ma-ca-no-ny.”

After hearing the funny accent, everyone burst out laughing. The customer looked at me with her big smiling eyes and said, “No! No! Girl! That’s not what I ordered.”

Mr. Chong pushed his head out through the hole and asked, “What was that?” Also, Mr. Sung came out from his office laughing.

At that moment, I felt so embarrassed that I ran back into the kitchen and hid myself. I felt flushed from
the top of my head to my toes.

Mr. Sung came and gave me a pat on my shoulder and told me, “Charissa, it's all right. We laughed because your accent sounded so cute. Besides, I was surprised because of your voice. That's what I want to hear, a loud voice coming out from your mouth.”

Mr. Sung made me feel better, but I still felt awkward.

There were people from school who knew about the incident. They teased me whenever they saw me at school. It was a very embarrassing moment that I can never forget. I promised myself, from that day, to study hard and to learn to speak English as fast as possible.
The Medium
Lisa Villarimo
2nd Place, English 22
Instructor: Meena Sachdeva

On the evening shift the patient, an elderly Japanese man, had had a heart attack, and though heroic measures were taken, he could not be saved. A phone call came from the night nursing supervisor requesting me to help prepare the body for family viewing. Eager to please, I immediately responded. That night the unit had been notably busy, leaving me to do my job alone. My duties involved bathing the patient, then cleaning the surrounding area.

As I bathed and dressed the patient in a clean gown, my back faced the glass picture window, with the bed in front of me. Suddenly I felt a strong desire to look over my shoulder. I felt a desperate need to see what was behind me. I had been in these semiprivate rooms too often and I knew they had no open windows, no balconies; and I was two stories up, where no one could possibly be behind me. I knew very well what the area looked like. Beyond the picture window, there was greenery with a dimly lit building in the distance.

Alone and not wanting to believe what I felt, I continued to finish my work. I felt a cold eerie feeling. No matter where I moved throughout the room, the feeling stayed. Fear began to set in. What was I dealing with? Would leaving the room accomplish anything? Questions raced through my mind, yet I needed to make a decision soon. I debated whether to stay and comfort the soul I had not known, or leave out of my own sense of fear. I finally asked myself, “How do I deal with my own personal fears?” The solution then became clear. I knew I must face up to my fears and overcome this unusual feeling.

I began speaking aloud. I recited how I cleansed the body and the nice job I’d done. I then felt a sense of peace and comfort. The eerie feeling seemed to dissipate, replaced by warmth, love, yet insecurity. I fumbled around, still gathering the waste.

Despite the little knowledge I had of death, I tried to guide the spirit in the direction he needed to go. Still speaking aloud, I confirmed to this patient that he was truly dead, for his physical body was lifeless. I insisted that his purpose here had ended, and it was time to withdraw. I questioned him about a very bright light at the end of a tunnel, and the warm, loving, pulling effect. I especially concentrated on the immensely bright light.

I explained that I never experienced anything beyond Earth’s dimensions, but I knew there was a guided path to follow. I told him relatives or close friends were awaiting his arrival and would help him there, where I could not. Most of all, I told him that God was there and not to fear what was ahead. I could not help him anymore because he was on a different plane than I. I tried to reassure him, to wish him a safe journey to God’s house, yet I felt he did not want me to leave. I could not comfort him anymore. Again I was firm and said out loud, “It’s time to move on. Go to the light. You’ll find your way. Go to the light!”

Though I was near the end of my task, I found menial chores to do because the feeling of need still existed. I apologized for shortening my stay and said, “I am busy. I must leave. Please go on your way.” I knew nothing else could possibly be done to comfort him, yet I still had doubts. Could I have guided him in a better manner?

My final answer then and now has always been the same: I did my best at the time in dealing with an unknown existence. That night I learned that communication involves not only the five senses but also one’s intuitive powers as well. I realized that an afterlife does exist beyond our reality. I learned not to fear the spirit or the soul, even when contact is initiated. I will never know whether my patient reached his destination or not, but maybe one day I will be faced with that same uncertainty and will need a guide to show me the way. Death does not always mean the end; possibly it is a new beginning.
The Event Which I Don’t Want to Remember

Mari Sakamoto

3rd Place, English 22
Instructor: Janice Cook

Performing in front of people can mean much excitement and satisfaction for some people, but not for me. Unlike others, I don’t like getting people’s attention. I can’t even have my own wedding because everybody looks at the bride. So, imagine how I felt when I had to perform in front of many people. Every time I remember that incident, my face turns red, and my stomach becomes tense and uneasy.

It was a beautiful Sunday afternoon in Australia. The air was nice and crispy with strong sunshine and cool winds. My friend Masa and I were walking down the mall in Manly, a small suburb in Sydney. The mall was covered all over with red bricks, linking two beaches, starting from one beach and finishing at the other beach. I could see many people who looked relaxed and happy, hanging around on a typical Sunday afternoon. Soon, we noticed a big crowd over in the middle of the mall. A large group of people was facing the center and laughing so much. I put my head between people’s bodies to find out what was going on. There was an open space with several steps surrounding a low stage in the center of the crowd. People were sitting on those steps and watching somebody who was doing something. We decided it was worth watching for a while, so we elbowed people and settled into a little space at the third step near the bottom.

The person who was making people laugh was a barker, a street performer. He was dancing with a woman as if they were in a ballroom. I suppose she was chosen from the spectators. Yet whenever the performer said something, everybody burst into laughter. I couldn’t even understand what he was saying—my English was pretty bad at that time. I could tell that he was a very proficient performer because he could get the attention of so many people and keep them laughing.

After the woman was released, he looked around while making jokes. Then, believe it or not, he came towards me.

“What’s your name?” he said.

I suddenly became confused and panicked. I whispered my name somehow.

“Where do you come from?” he asked me again.

“Japan,” I said.

He smiled and said, “Could you help me?”

I wanted to say no, but he was already pulling my hands, and Masa was pushing me and saying, “Go! Go!” I went to the middle of the space with the performer. Everybody was looking at me. That made me want to run away. The performer should have known that I’d never acted or performed!

He quickly said, “I’m Bob. Don’t worry, you just follow me.”

“I can’t,” I said with my worried face.

“That’s nothing difficult. Stay here.” Bob gave me a smile and left me in the middle of the space, and walked to the end. He started a pantomime by himself, riding a big motorbike and kicking the ignition. While he was having trouble starting his motorbike, I was just standing alone in the middle, feeling helpless. I looked around at the people’s happy faces. I realized it was too late to run away. I had to do it with Bob, regardless of whether I liked it or not. “OK. I’ll do it. I’ll try my best,” I said to myself.

Bob was making engine sounds just like a big running motorbike. He braked in front of me after circling the space once. He passed me a helmet. Of course, there was no helmet; he just pantomimed. So I pretended to put on a helmet and fastened its strap. He gestured as if to say come and sit behind me. I stepped over his motorbike and sat down. He made me hold his body and we started. Since I was on his rear seat, it was necessary to run with him. But it must have looked awkward, two people stuck together and running. Of course, between our legs there had to be a big motorbike, so I had to keep my legs apart while I was running with him. It must have looked super stupid. I can’t remember if people were laughing or not during our performance. I was too embarrassed to notice anything. Bob and I went through many curves and hills. All of a sudden, he fell down with a loud braking sound, so I did the same.

“You dead,” he whispered to me.

“I dead?” I thought, and decided to lie on the ground like a dead person.

Bob was injured but could stand up, and he found me dead. To my surprise, he suddenly screamed in sorrow. He sat down beside me and cried, holding my
hand. His way of crying was so exaggerated and funny. I wanted to laugh, but I was too embarrassed to do so. Bob was joking and took me in his arms as he stood up.

"Give a big hand to this young lady!" he said. Now I could hear people clapping their hands. It was finished. He said to me, "Thank you," and let me go back to my place.

Masa was laughing and said, "You did a good job."

All of Bob's performances were finished. There was Bob's hat upside down on the ground. People were putting in coins on their way out.

This event happened three years ago. Although I remember that afternoon clearly, I try not to think about it. I performed in front of many Australians. Oh, my goodness, I still feel like digging a hole and hiding myself forever. I don't know why I'm so scared of people's attention, but it is a part of me, and it can't be helped.
My teacher, Mr. Scarlett, is a perfect description of what happens with old age. He has those big bags under his eyes that make him look like he just got into a fight, giving him two black eyes. Then his hair grows in the middle front section of his head, with hair still growing around his head. If you have a great imagination, you'll see that his head really looks like a small secluded island in the middle of the ocean, because that small portion of hair looks like a palm tree swaying back and forth. Occasionally he would decide to grow a beard. This gave him that look of someone who had been in prison for some time and had just broken out of jail. The next thing that really stood out was his belly. It was one of those bellies people get from drinking a lot of beer over a period of time. I guess you could say he looked pregnant 365 days a year. My teacher also had these short and stubby legs which brought him closer to the ground. I guess that's what happens when gravity has an effect for so many years. Although he looked funny, as a teacher Mr. Scarlett had an important effect on me.

Mr. Scarlett helped me grow up physically and mentally by teaching me how to be ready for whatever the future had planned for me. For example, he told me how to form a positive attitude toward whatever I did. When I tried my best, I wouldn't be disappointed in the outcome. Next he would make me take responsibility by making me manage my money on trips the class took to Maui. I guess that was his way of helping me grow up in the right direction.

My teacher made learning challenging and an experience to remember. In class he picked labs that he thought would be most interesting to the students, especially anything that pertained to chemicals. Because we had no idea about a certain chemical, we became very curious. Then he let us experiment with the solution itself. Also he had these experiments that were puzzling to the mind. For example, we learned about the different densities of liquids by separating them with a razor blade. I guess that's what science is all about, finding things out on our own. Lab reports were the most challenging. Because they were hard to do, perfect lab papers were Xeroxed for all the students, and all would know who wrote the perfect paper and what a perfect paper looked like. Mr. Scarlett's goal was to try to make class fun and interesting. That's the only way to keep a student alive nowadays. Most importantly, as a rifle team coach, Mr. Scarlett helped us work together as a team. He made us know how important we were as individuals, and made members of the team help each other out by telling each other how they can improve their positions. This way we were closer as a family. All of us put in a lot of time and effort in our practices. All that time and effort paid off because we were ILH champs all those three years when I was there because of the constant coaching he gave to the whole team. He had faith in us and helped us improve our talents by encouraging us to do our best and to never give up. Mr. Scarlett did the coaching, and the rest was all up to us. We got taught how to motivate ourselves to do better the next time. Most of all he taught us how to be individuals who helped the team, not only themselves. Mr. Scarlett wanted us to be consistent every time; therefore, we were champs all the time.

Mr. Scarlett helped me grow up in the right direction by teaching me how to figure out what's important in life. Also, he made me know how to take responsibility for all my actions. This is why he's a perfect example of a perfect teacher.
My Never Never Land

Mayumi Ishimaru

Honorable Mention, English 22
Instructor: Jill Makagon

Peter Pan lives in Never Never Land where children have unlimited freedom and adventures. It is an ideal children's kingdom, without adults. Nobody scolds children, or tells them what to do. The children can spend time however they want to. I saw a movie called *Hook* which is about Peter Pan. The movie made me remember my mother's home-village and made me recall wonderful and unforgettable memories. That village was my Never Never Land.

My mother's home-village, Minamigata Village, Tome County, Miyagi Prefecture, is located in the northeastern part of Japan. It is about 240 miles away from the capital of Japan, Tokyo. The village was extremely rural. There were rice fields that stretched as far as my eyes could see. The fields looked as if they were a large beautiful green carpet. I can also remember a brook among the fields, a small grove, a small, dowdy grocery store, and only about 20 traditional Japanese houses. The scenery still comes back into my memory vividly. The village was very serene, especially at night. The only noise I heard was when the cows mooed, the pigs grunted, and the roosters crowed. The air was clean and smelled good, but the wind sometimes carried an odor of rural perfume (a smell of pigs).

My brother, one year older than I, and I visited our grandmother's house every summer from the time I was six years old until I was 13. My parents were so busy with their sushi restaurant that they could not take care of us during the summer time. They sent us to my grandmother's house, so we did not have to be alone. We spent the whole summer vacation, 40 days, at my mother's home-village and had a wonderful time every year.

The trip to my grandmother's home was one of my most exciting adventures. My mother would take the train with my brother and me until I was nine years old, but after that we traveled by ourselves. The train left Tokyo at midnight and arrived at the station close to my grandmother's house at 7:00 a.m. Although my mother helped us get on the right train when we rode the train alone, I was afraid that we would not wake up and would miss the station. However, I usually woke up with the sunlight and was excited to see the sun rising over the horizon, making the rice fields shine beautifully with an orange color. All of a sudden, I knew that I was back in my Never Never Land.

I had 10 cousins living in the village and three of them were about my age. My brother and I played with them every day from early morning to late afternoon. We did many things that we could not have experienced at home in our city. We went fishing at the brook, explored the grove, and played around with the baby pigs with our cousins. My favorite game was pretending the grove was a haunted forest and playing tricks on several neighborhood children by scaring them at night. The grove was gloomy and seemed scary even during the daytime, so we hardly ever went into it. However, it was a perfect place to play the game. Each of the children had to walk through the grove alone. My brother, my cousins, and I strung up figures of ghosts in branches of trees. When the children passed by they unknowingly tripped on the strings, and the figures and the branches rushed down on them. We also hid behind the trees, and when they passed we jumped out at them. I was very happy to see their faces filled with fear and to hear their screaming. It was fun to play that game.

We did a little mischief too. We sneaked into somebody's fields and stole some fresh ripe tomatoes several times. One day when we were plucking tomatoes in one of the fields, the angry landowner came, startled us, and shouted, "Hey! What are you kids doing?" We ran away holding the tomatoes. I was scared, but he was too old to catch us. My heart pounded with excitement and fear.

One thing that was different from Peter Pan's Never Never Land was that there were adults in mine—my grandmother, uncle, aunt, and three cousins. Although they treated my brother and me like their own children, they were not as strict as our parents. They let us do most of the things that we wanted to and they never scolded us. We were spoiled by them.

Those relatives were like my second parents. I was very happy to be in their home, especially at dinner time. As I ate dinner, I always had the big family (10 members) in the house with whom I could share what I had done during the day. Since my parents worked at
their restaurant until about midnight every day, my brother and I hardly ever had a chance to eat dinner with them. In Minamigata Village, I ate more than I did at home because the house was always filled with the cheerful voices of my second family which made the food more delicious. I learned what a typical family was like and I was envious of my cousins who were about my age.

The last time I visited the village was about six years ago, when I was 20 years old, to attend my grandmother's funeral. Now I do not feel like going there. One reason is because my grandmother is not there anymore. However, the biggest reason is because I am an adult. I would not enjoy being there as an adult because as I grew up, I lost my childhood feelings.

I feel lucky that I had my own Never Never Land when I was little. I understand that those valuable experiences were the best times of my life. I learned about important things that school did not teach me, such as the importance of nature and the lives of rural people. If I had not had my own Never Never Land, I would have grown up to be just a boring city person. I really appreciate the experiences and will never forget the wonderful memories.
The Charming Artist

Yuki Mitsuyasu

Honorable Mention, English 22
Instructor: Louise Pagotto

If you see him for the first time, you might not think he is Japanese. His features are exotic and his complexion is dark. His black hair is extremely short on the sides and very short on top. His eyes are big and have long lashes. He has a big and high nose with a mustache underneath. His words are very soft and he never talks rough. His hands are small for an average man, so naturally his feet are also small. His name is Muneyoshi Tsuchiya. He is a flower artist and he loves flowers more than anything in the world. He designs and arranges flowers for commercials, advertisements, shows, and special events. And he also teaches his flower arrangement techniques in between. Mr. Tsuchiya does not follow the ordinary steps of teaching. He always has plenty of flowers to choose from, and gives us lots of freedom to express our ideas. However, besides his exceptional talent he has a wonderful character. Now he is my most favorite teacher.

Mr. Tsuchiya’s flower arrangements are so beautiful. He uses many kinds of flowers and is very conscious of their colors. Each arrangement has a totally different expression. During the time he was in Bali to arrange flowers for an advertisement using still photography, he wanted to use different bright colors to give a tropical image to his flower arrangements. He walked for miles in the country to find the flowers and the colors that he wanted to use. Even though he found the right flowers in someone’s yard, he negotiated directly with the local people. Furthermore, most of his arrangements that are used in commercials and shows are large. They may be three to five times as large as Mr. Tsuchiya himself. When he once did a commercial for Fujitsu, he had all the traffic blocked off on one of the streets in downtown Chicago for half a day. His arrangement was simple, using only White Collar Lilies and Casablancas, but big. Since it was about three stories high, he had a special ladder made just for this arrangement. Because of his skills and techniques, he can finish his work amazingly fast. Presently in Japan, he does most of the flower arrangements in commercials and ads. That alone explains how much people like his work.

Mr. Tsuchiya likes to share his interests with other people. Besides flowers, he has a great passion for food. He occasionally has parties in his studio. Once he had a curry party and invited his students, staff, and friends. We formed groups and cooked separately. We had five different kinds of curries and they all tasted different. Mr. Tsuchiya also likes to try out new restaurants. He knows lots of great places that other people may not know. He often took us to some of them after class. He looks forward to his trips to foreign countries, and to explore foods of other cultures.

Best of all, Mr. Tsuchiya has a charming personality. He is very caring and remembers special occasions. One day when I was visiting his flower shop with my friends, who were also his students, they mentioned briefly about my birthday coming soon. Without any word, he started picking out flowers. He made a beautiful bouquet in front of us, then he gave it to me as a birthday gift. One time while we were finishing up our arrangements for Mr. Tsuchiya to see, he had a strong urge to fly a kite on the roof of his studio. He left and came back, and we were all wondering where he had been. But in spite of our worries, he entered the studio with his kite in his hand and a smile of satisfaction. He is full of curiosity, and he is very open-minded to anything. Perhaps that is why his heart stays young at all times. Because he is like a child sometimes, he makes us relax. Since he is down-to-earth and warm-hearted, I always forget that he is a celebrity. I think his personality makes Mr. Tsuchiya very special. His warm personality attracts people; therefore, he constantly has people around him.

I spend a lot of time at Mr. Tsuchiya’s studio learning his arrangements. I always am filled with pleasure. He demonstrates his art, shows us examples of the work he has done, and shares his ideas with us. But best of all he makes us feel relaxed and comfortable. He is not only a good teacher, he is one of my favorite people.
The Long Road

Duane Ikeda

Honorable Mention, English 22
Instructor: Judith Kirkpatrick

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At the top of Kaimuki, curving up to the old World War II bunkers, there is a place called Crater Road, where many children lived. For many years children played on this long-dead end road; this is where I spent the best years of my life. I was only a three-and-a-half-foot tall, four-year-old seeing the new world when I started playing with the kids on the road. Back then, there were about 30 of us, but a few years later, there were only 10 of us left. We played cops 'n' robbers, hung out in the tree house, caught lizards, and other fun activities that many children would do. One unforgettable pastime on Crater Road was playing sports like football and baseball. We enjoyed our childhood to the fullest, forming friendships which would last for many years.

We played football and baseball during their respective seasons. The long dead-end road provided us a safe place to play. There were not many cars passing by, so we didn't have to worry about getting run over. Crater Road was a close neighborhood where everyone knew each other. Every summer our gang played baseball. All of our sports equipment was free. We stole the extra slippers from our porches to make the bases. A white rock found on the side of the road was used to mark a batter's box and a base line. We played with tennis balls, so we wouldn't break any windows. Our bats ranged from a typical homemade wooden bat to the sleek metal Easton bat. All of us played like men; no one wore a baseball mitt. We stole the extra slippers from our porches to make the bases. A white rock found on the side of the road was used to mark a batter's box and a base line. We played with tennis balls, so we wouldn't break any windows. Our bats ranged from a typical homemade wooden bat to the sleek metal Easton bat. All of us played like men; no one wore a baseball mitt. We played baseball near the end of the street where a 20-foot wall stood; we wanted the thrill of hitting a homerun over the wall, just like the major league baseball players. Out of 10 of us, only two could hit it over that monster. We would split the gang up into two teams of five. The scores would be somewhat insane, averaging about 30 runs per game. The game would last for many hours and far more than nine innings of play. We used to bean the person with the ball when he wasn't on base, instead of tagging him. We were a mean little bunch.

When the summer rolled over and school started, the only time the gang could hang out together was after school and on the weekends. That's when baseball season ended, and we started to play two-hand-touch Hawaiian-style football on the road. Playing football on Crater Road was a tradition among us, for all of the children who came before us played Hawaiian-style football, too. Unlike American-style football where you had rules to follow, Hawaiian-style had no rules at all. We could throw the ball as many times as we liked during play, and there were no penalties for being off sides. The game could last for many hours because there was no time limit to follow. We used either an old waterlogged Nerf football or a cheap Forty-niners football. They were smaller than the real thing and were easy to throw. With those balls, we could throw the long bomb. Like baseball, we set up the playing field by using a white rock to mark the road; we would mark the end-zone and every 10 yards of field. The logo in the middle of our playing field read "C.R.F.L.", which stands for the Crater Road Football League. We'd split the gang up into teams and start to play. We played the game from telephone pole to telephone pole. The telephone poles were the end-zones. We gave it all we had during these games, pretending that we were the Joe Montanas and the Barry Sanders of football. We would have plays like the long bomb for a touchdown, and would dance in celebration in the end-zone when we scored a touchdown.

On a hot New Year's afternoon in 1985, while families in the neighborhood were celebrating the New Year with parties and watching the college football bowl games, the Crater Road kids had a bowl game of their own to play. A family on the street had a large get-together, with many children. They saw us playing football and asked if they could challenge us. It was a dream come true, a 10-on-10 matchup of Hawaiian-style football. I had to pinch myself to believe it! It was the toughest game we ever played. The road looked like a war-zone out there. When the smoke cleared only one team was left standing; we lost the game by one measly touchdown, a devastating blow to all of us, and what a way to start a new year.

Playing football on Crater Road created some of the funniest times of my life. There was this big set of croton bushes on the side of the road where we played, and every time someone ran or caught the football in that area, some strange force would make him trip and...
fall into the bushes. During a month's time the big set of bushes was reduced to little shrubs because there were five big holes left by us. One time an old grouchy lady told us she was going to call the police on us because we were making too much noise and were playing too close to her car. She took out a notepad and wrote down all our descriptions of what we were wearing. Then we all dashed home to change our clothes, and came outside to play again. We waited to see if the police would come, but to our disappointment no one came at all.

When we got older, the Crater Road gang saw less of each other. They were the best set of friends I ever could have. Playing on Crater Road is what kept us friends for so long. Sure we had fights with each other, but the next day we would make up. We rode bikes, blew up mailboxes on New Year's Eve; experimented with smoking cigarettes, gambling outside in the yard, and growing up. A part of me died when those fun days were over. My childhood came and went like the blink of an eye. If I had just one wish in the world, just one wish, I wouldn't wish for a million dollars, not even a billion dollars. I would wish that I could go back and do it all over again. I miss those childhood days. Friendships like the ones I had are priceless.

Crater Road today is different; children no longer play on this long road where many generations of kids once played. We were the end of a tradition. Memorable moments just don't come from watching T.V. and "veging out" at home doing nothing. Children today are missing out on an experience of a lifetime.
My Friend, a Memorable Teacher

Mary Chi Ching Wong

English 22
Instructor: Louise Pagotto

On September 3, 1979, I attended the first school day in Level 12. The whole class was waiting in excitement and curiosity when a tall, athletic figure came into the classroom. This was the first time I met my class teacher—Miss Ng Yuk Chi. Miss Ng was in her early-thirties but she looked like mid-twenties. She was about five-feet-seven-inches tall with a muscular build. Her hair was short and black, so short that we could see her ears. I remember thinking, How can a female have such a short haircut? If she was not in her dress, I could have mistaken her for a man. Her eyes were the darkest brown I had ever seen, and they sparkled and glistened as she laughed. She had a small, cherry-red mouth, and I thought that she must have a very soft voice, but I was wrong. Her voice was so loud and clear that no one could have missed a single word.

Her smiling face made her an approachable person and I remember her words, “A smiling face can establish a new friendship. It is good for you all to have a smiling face.” Miss Ng, who taught me Chinese Language and Chinese History, was a memorable teacher.

I had never met a teacher who was so forgiving before. In my class, three naughty students played a trick on Miss Ng by putting some glue on her chair. As a result, her dress was torn when she stood up. Everybody in the class burst into laughter. Although she was embarrassed, she did not get angry. Miss Ng knew who did it, but she did not point them out. She tried to make them understand that it was wrong and hoped that they would not do it again.

She said, “You can make all kinds of mistakes in your life; however, once you know it is a mistake, try not to do it again. Nobody can tolerate someone who always makes the same mistakes over and over again especially in society.” I am sure the three of them would have been punished with another teacher.

Apart from her forgiving character, Miss Ng’s teaching methods made Chinese history interesting. In the past, learning Chinese history was boring for me because I had to memorize the emperors’ charts and their contributions for each dynasty. In Miss Ng’s lessons, everything changed. The class was divided into two groups. In each lesson, we were given a discussion topic; for example, one topic that I remember was “Emperor X is now facing tax problems. What types of new systems do you think he should introduce in order to solve the problems?” We had to put ourselves into that situation. The group which had the best solution got bonus credit. She analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of our solutions and then explained to us the emperor’s real decisions. Besides group discussions, we had drama too. I could not forget the excitement when I was chosen to act as an emperor in the Ching dynasty. Even now whenever I recall my memories, I laugh to myself and say, “I used to be an emperor before!” Miss Ng not only aroused my interest in studying Chinese history but also taught me some study skills. I learned I could not absorb anything by just reading without thinking.

Furthermore, I was always impressed with her love for her students. I cannot forget one of her students, Kammy, who had blood cancer and required blood transfusions. Once Miss Ng knew that she had the same blood type as Kammy, she did not hesitate to donate her blood. She went to the hospital every day after school. Miss Ng told us not to cry in front of Kammy because this would make her feel bad. What she needed was hope and encouragement.

I still remember what she said: “Kammy, with confidence and perseverance, nothing is impossible. You will get well soon.” We all hoped so; however, Kammy passed away two months later. Miss Ng also helped to prepare Kammy’s funeral. I was touched by her thoughtfulness towards others.

After graduating from secondary school, I still kept in contact with Miss Ng and we became good friends. The last time I saw her was two years ago. She was still teaching in St. Mary’s Canossian College. As a friend and a teacher, Miss Ng is a lady with forgiveness, interest, and love. What a memorable teacher!
Rain or shine, the assiduous little widow wearing a faded blue shift pushes a bulk cart full of newspapers, empty bottles, steel and iron. I won't be ashamed to call her Grandma, for in fact, I am proud of her. She is the best woman I have ever known. I was a year old when my Grandma took care of me. As I grew up I discerned her humility, conservativeness, diligence, and simplicity. Grandma was only 39 years old when Grandpa passed away. He left seven children who were young and needed much attention. Grandma aspired to give her seven children a good education. It may have sounded impossible but Grandma knew she could do it. Her acre of sugarcane helped her to start. Also, her industriousness and courage assisted her to succeed. In time, her recycling business grew abundantly and her acre of sugarcane multiplied, leading her to build a poultry and a piggery business. She also started a printing business. This was done with the cooperation of her motivated children. She once said, “Working together and working hard are life’s riches.” Grandma’s outstanding qualities are keys to her success.

First, simplicity makes her beautiful. Grandma dresses simply, in her casual duster. When she and I go to church, she wears a loose blouse with stiff square sleeves which stretch up to her shoulders. She tucks it into her long wide skirt which is wrapped around her waist. She has natural beauty and does not need makeup. She has thick eyebrows which do not need to be lined to make them dark. Her eyes are spaced as with most people from Asia. She has a pointed nose and full lips that are just right for her angelic face.

Second, I admire her humility and calmness. I will not forget when I was 12 years old, Grandma and I went to the one popular jewelry store to buy presents for my mom’s birthday. As usual, she wore her favorite duster that matched her wooden shoes that made noise every time she walked.

When we entered the jewelry store, we heard a grouchy voice, “Unless you are looking for fancy jewelry you are in the wrong place.” My grandma just smiled and calmly asked the salesclerk if she could show her the pair of ruby earrings. The salesclerk refused and said, “Lady, these are expensive earrings that you cannot afford.” Soon the manager came and recognized Grandma.

With her pleasant voice she asked my grandma, “What can I do for you, Mrs. Mandani?” In short, we got mom’s present.

The salesclerk did not look at us, but Grandma approached her and said in her mellow voice, “Honey, don’t judge a book by its cover.”

Third, Grandma is economical and conservative. She will not procrastinate. She plans her time by writing notes before she goes to sleep. Also, she saves anything she thinks can be used in the future. For example, when we are walking on the street and she spots rusty nails or screws on the ground, she will pick them up. Moreover, when it rains, she will save the water from the rain to use for watering the plants and to use for washing cars. Furthermore, she prefers to cook outside the house and uses wood to make fire rather than using her electric stove.

Finally, her diligence influenced her children and helped them to succeed. Grandma does not get tired. In the morning, she gets up at 4:00 a.m. and gathered vegetables in her backyard to sell in the market. Before she left, she woke me and my uncles up to do our assigned duties. By the time she came back from the market, everybody had done all his or her assigned tasks. Then she rushed to prepare lunch to sell to the factory workers. She had a lunch wagon that looked like a cart and needed a cow to make it run. After she sold all the food, Grandma and Uncle Rusty, who was attending school at night, helped her to recycle. After dinner we had to clean up everything while Grandma counted money. All her children are degree holders. My Uncle Pepe is a graduate in business, Uncle Cris is a lawyer, Uncle Rusty is a teacher, Uncle Horacio is a CPA, and Uncle Bert and Uncle Max are both electrical engineers.

To summarize, Grandma is happy with her accomplishments. She is now 82 years old, still strong and healthy. She lives with my Uncle Pepe who manages her business. Grandma will always be my inspiration. I may be disobedient and disappointed at her times; however, it is not too late to emphasize to my three children her simple phrase, “Working together and working hard are life’s riches.”
"Hey! Come on, Celine! See, there will be an expedition training program next month. Let’s join it together," Christine shouted at me as I finished my education class and walked down the stairs. Crowds of students were squeezing in front of the notice board, looking at the poster. This program was held once a year for all students who wanted physical fitness training. Those who performed well would be chosen as leaders for other curricular activities.

“How can I carry 40 pounds of baggage in my backpack and walk for 36 miles in three days? No way!” I screamed to Christine. “I am not as strong as you, but——” Deep down in my heart, I really wanted to challenge myself with this expedition though it sounded hard and appalled me.

I was 18 years old and studying in the College of Education at that time. I spent almost two days debating whether I should join the expedition. Finally, I made up my mind to try with all my heart. Therefore, I formed a group with three other girls, Lisa, Peggy, and the leader, Christine. We were not only classmates but also close friends.

To prepare for the journey, we had to plan our schedule to complete the designated route in the shortest time. With our limited orientation, this task was even harder than the subject matter.

The trek began on a Saturday morning. All participants were gathered in a playground, waiting for the instructors to check if everything was all right. Here came the instructor, lifting our backpacks one by one. “Have all of you got 40 pounds?” the instructor asked with a smile. “Make sure you distribute the stuff evenly!” Then we started to walk.

Every instructor was responsible for two groups but his role was to supervise and offer help in case of emergency. The instructors were not to give us any advice during the journey. After walking for a few hours, we were still on the hillside. The path was uneven with stones and mud. Black clouds were moving quickly in the sky, and I was worrying about the change of the weather.

Just in front of us was a junction. “We must go that way to the east, there will be something wrong if we try the other ways,” Lisa shouted without hesitation.

I immediately interrupted her, “You’re wrong! Look at our map, this is not the way to the east.” I took out my compass in a second to check the direction, trying to prove that I was right. This kind of discordance always happened in a group activity but we had to compromise with the last decision made by the leader.

Raindrops started to pour down on my face. While we were going higher up the mountain, it was so foggy that the mist and rain mixed to block our view. Was it fun? My answer was no when I felt I looked like a wet little chick with my feathers soaked. I was having difficulty moving my legs because of my tiredness, and it didn’t help that my stomach was hammering as well. However, we had to move on because our group was behind schedule.

Then, the top of the mountain called The Snake’s Head appeared. To me, it was so steep and scary that I wondered if I could climb over it. Struggling with the idea, the thought, Stop here and withdraw, flashed in my mind. The weight on my back became heavier and heavier as the phobia struck me hard. “You can only move forward without any choices, your action will influence the others in the group,” I told myself seriously. Sobbing secretly, I lifted my legs up carefully to climb up little by little. Everyone heard my deep breath while they were moving in the back.

Suddenly, a shrill sound echoing in the air relieved my pressure, and it raised the group’s spirit. “Don’t give up, we have almost succeeded. Try hard, everybody!” Christine cried loudly. Four of us passed over the top safely. Looking down the mountain, the things were so small as if I had transformed into a giant in front of them. Excited and exhausted, we sat down on the rock, wiping the sweat of fear on our foreheads. Laughter and tears mixed in the air and I’ll never forget that scene.

We continued the trip for the next two days which seemed to be the happiest days in my life. It challenged me physically, mentally and emotionally to handle the difficulties and to complete the journey on time. It was such a good feeling to look back at the mountain I had climbed. I believe I had gained more power and confidence after that.

Perseverance and group cooperation are the
essential elements required for joining this training program. This purpose was served in the way that the friendship among our members became closer. Now, "No way!" would no longer be my first response if I have a problem to tackle. Instead, I would be more confident to face it though success is not guaranteed.
A Taste of Life
Tami Lynn Penney
1st Place, English 100
Instructor: James Shimabukuro

There is no greater love than the unconditional love provided by a family; hence, it is unconditional. It is easy for people to take this love for granted, especially when their lives are going smoothly. Sometimes it’s not until a tragedy strikes a family and the members gather to support each other that people begin to appreciate the preciousness of their family’s love.

I was born in Sonoma, California, the product of a broken home. By the age of 14, I was found to be incorrigible by the family court judge, and I was sentenced to a youth correctional center until the age of 18. I am not sure how my mother did it, but within a 24-hour period, she had convinced the judge to place me in a foster home on the island of Molokai. Going to Molokai was the best thing that ever happened to me at that stage of my life.

Besides myself, there were three other foster youths in the family, and we were all about the same age. James was 16 years old and from Cotati, California, which was very close to where I was born. He had been sent to Molokai for about the same reasons I had. Harold was 15 and from the island of Kauai. His parents had divorced and neither was capable of taking care of him. Thus, the courts had arranged for him to be sent to Molokai. Ming was 14 and came from San Francisco, California. She had been raised by her father and was starting to give up. Thus, the courts had arranged for her to be sent to Molokai with the hope that she might begin to appreciate the preciousness of their family’s love.

Our foster parents were very kind. They never told us that we had to do anything. Instead, they created an interest inside us. It was very satisfying to see and eat the fruits of our labor. The four of us kids used to talk about how lucky we were to have been brought together as a family. We felt safe and secure, and we could depend on each other.

About a year had passed when an older guy with a backpack showed up at the farm looking for work. He introduced himself as George and said he had just flown in from the East Coast. He told Jim that he was looking for a place where he could work for his stay, and that some people he had met in town recommended he try the farm. He said he didn’t know much about farming but would like to learn. Jim explained to him that we had just started clearing more land for planting and if he didn’t mind some hard work, he was welcome to stay.

George was a quiet guy who didn’t talk much but was always ready with a smile. He was also a very enthusiastic worker, and it seemed as though he could never get enough. He always wanted to know what needed to be done next. After a few months, he didn’t have to ask anymore. It was as though he had been born and raised on a farm. We all grew to really like George, and after a while, we began to think of him as family instead of a hired worker. He used to go hiking with us kids at least once a week, and he got us started in laying a net across the bay fronting the farm. He didn’t know how to swim, so the deal

The biggest house at the foot of the valley. The biggest house was used for cooking and family gatherings, and the other two houses were our bedrooms. The 11 acres ran up the middle and on both sides of the valley. Some of the land had been cleared and terraced for planting, and the water was piped in from the rain water located farther up the valley. Across the street from the entrance to the farm was the ocean. I quickly made friends with Harold, James, and Ming, and they began to teach me everything they had learned about farming. We were each assigned our own section in the garden and were responsible for weeding, watering, and cultivating our areas. There were also flocks of geese, ducks, turkeys, chickens, some pigs, and a cow that we were responsible for feeding each night.

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was if we would lay the net, he would do the cooking and cleaning. Time passed very quickly, and before we realized it, George had been with us almost two years.

One day Harold came back from town looking troubled. He called James, Ming, and me outside and told us that he had seen George's face on a wanted poster in the post office. According to the poster, George was a convicted murderer who had escaped from prison, and he was considered armed and dangerous. We were all in shock and didn't know what we should do. It never entered our minds that we should turn him in since he was part of our family. We knew that we had to tell Jim and George, but we couldn't decide who to tell first. We felt very angry at George because we felt as though we had been deceived and used, but James said that we should not judge George before hearing his side of the story. During the time George had been with us, we had never noticed any signs of violence. Therefore we agreed to wait until the next morning, when we called a family meeting to confront George.

The next morning we woke up to find seven marked and unmarked police cars pulling into our driveway. James immediately slipped out back to find George and warn him. The FBI told Jim that they had a search warrant for the premises, and they told him who they were looking for and why. Jim told them that, yes, George had stayed with us and worked on the farm, but he had just left a few days ago and we had no idea that he had been in trouble. After they searched the property without finding George, the investigators and police told Jim that they had reason to believe George was still around. They reminded Jim that it was a crime to harbor a known criminal. After the police left, we all went inside the house and confessed to Jim what we had learned the day before.

James came back to the house about four hours later by himself. He told Jim that he had taken George way inside the valley, but he needed to go back with some supplies. Jim was very upset. He told James to go get George and bring him to the house after dark. He said to tell George we deserved an explanation. When George arrived that night, everyone felt very sad. He apologized from the bottom of his heart for the trouble that he had caused us. He told us that he had been raised in an orphanage in California until he was 18, and when he left the orphanage, he had wandered around the States taking odd jobs. He ended up in Ohio, penniless, and decided to rob a liquor store for money. The cashier in the store pulled a gun from under the counter, so George shot him and ran. When George was caught, he was given the death penalty and waited on death row for 20 years.

George offered us no excuses for the crime he had committed, other than his own stupidity, and he blamed no one but himself. He knew how foolish it was to escape from prison, but after having been institutionalized for practically his whole life, he wanted to taste freedom at least once before he died. George said that we had given him something that he had never had in his whole life, and that was the love of a family.

George wanted to turn himself in immediately to avoid causing any more problems, but we all argued against it. Jim offered to get a fake I.D. and passport for George so he could depart from the country. Meanwhile, Jim offered George the necessary supplies in order to survive in the valley. George declined the offer because he felt we had already given him much love and support. He wanted to show his gratitude by surrendering himself to the officials.

Jim made arrangements with a friend, a fisherman, to sail George to the island of Kauai. On Kauai, when George arrived, he walked until he saw a police car passing by. He then flagged the car down and turned himself in. We knew that was his plan, but it did not lessen the pain and loss that we all felt when we read about it in the newspaper.

It was about four months before we finally received a letter from him. We exchanged letters frequently since then, and his letters were always bright and cheerful. In the last letter he wrote, we noticed that something was bothering him. It was kind of a good-bye letter in disguise. We sent him a
letter immediately to cheer him up, but instead of getting a letter from George, we received an impersonal letter from the prison officials informing us that he had been executed by the State of Ohio for his crime.

In the end, George taught all of us a valuable lesson about love for each other. Personally, I saw a bit of George in myself because we had both lacked the discipline that comes with a stable family life. Thus, George's tragedy and my experience on Molokai taught me the discipline I needed not only to make decisions, but also to take responsibility for my decisions and actions in life. My appreciation for my maternal mother and my foster parents is great. Through them, I finally realized how important it is to have the support and love of a family.
Uncle Silver
Anthony M. Defiesta

2nd Place, English 100
Instructor: Lisa Balzaretti

Uncle Silver and his wife arrived from the Philippines when I was 10 years old. He spoke very little English, and the English he used had a heavy accent. He lived in the studio behind my house. He seemed almost the same age as my father, but my father always addressed him as "Manong." He stood an inch or so taller than my father, and he had a dark complexion. He had straight raven-black hair which he parted on the right. In addition to his generosity and enthusiasm, he developed a father-son relationship with me that I still value.

Uncle Silver smoked cigarettes for a while—a habit he said he picked up during World War II. Unlike most other veterans, he seldom talked about the war. Uncle Silver once showed me a purple heart, which is an award given to any veteran injured during battle, and some other military memorabilia from the past. I wondered about the medal, and I asked him how he was injured. "I got shot ov'a' hea'," he said, pointing to a small scar behind his left leg. "Nagsakit ay unai," he whispered, "but tank God I still hea'. Da ting [the bullet] almost touch my bone." Although he was shot, he hardly showed any sign of his injury.

He always practiced playing musical instruments during his free time. He owned an electric guitar, a banjo, and an ukulele, but his favorite instrument was the violin. When he practiced, he hooked up the instrument to a loud amplifier, so the surrounding neighbors could hear and enjoy his music.

With his friend's help, Uncle Silver found a job as a musician in a ballroom band near the downtown area. He would work in the evenings and practice during the day. He would play for hours, song after song, and he would drink coffee and smoke during the breaks.

When I was in the ninth grade, I joined the high school band. I didn't exactly know how to play the clarinet and I was just learning how to read notes. After school, I would return home and follow the noise to the back of the house. I decided to join Uncle Silver and sat across from him. It was then that I noticed that he wasn't using any sheet music.

"Uncle, how cay you play with no notes in front of you?" I questioned.

"I neva' did use sheet music," he informed me. "I learned how to play by heart, since I was small."

He noticed that I had brought an instrument with me. "What kine of instrument you get inside dea'?" he asked curiously.

"I trying to learn how to play a clarinet, Uncle," I answered. I took a piece of sheet music out of the song book that I had received in class and asked him to play it.

"Tell me how da kine sound like, 'cause I can only read some notes," he confessed. "I go try copy how it sounds."

He wanted me to play the music. I told him that I didn't know how to play the instrument well enough.

Every day after school, Uncle Silver would practice his "toy," as he would call it, and would teach me several new Filipino folk songs whenever I joined him. As his left cheek would rest on the violin, he would play a calm, relaxing tune that was enjoyed by many.

One day after I returned home from school, I noticed that there was no noise coming from the back. I thought that he was taking his break. Several days after that, there was still no music being played. I became concerned because I knew that Uncle Silver rarely skipped a day of practice. Uncle Silver informed me that he had trouble breathing normally and felt too exhausted to practice. I advised him to seek medical attention, but he was hesitant.

Later, Mom informed me that she and Uncle Silver went to visit a specialist in a clinic. There they learned that Uncle Silver's pain was caused by terminal cancer in the lungs. That day I learned more information about Uncle Silver than I wanted to. I was so stunned by the news that I had to check for myself whether it was true. Uncle Silver was sitting by the table, sipping steaming coffee from his cup. He looked as placid as he usually did and he invited me in for cookies. I knew about his health but I didn't want to say anything about it. I only talked about school and how my classes were doing.
“Did you hear the news yet?” he whispered to me.

“No, Uncle, what news are you talking about?” I answered as though I knew nothing.

“The doctor said that I have only a few years to live,” he explained, “and I am going need chemotherapy and strong medication for the pain.”

I sat quietly next to him with glassy eyes for a few minutes.

“Wipe your tears. No cry for me. I am not dead yet,” he said, comforting me. He stood up, took the violin in his hand and began hooking it up to the amplifier. He played soothing music with his toy, helping to ease the moment.

Occasionally, I would come home to the music my uncle would play. I would sometimes check to see how his health was, and it seemed like his body was slowly deteriorating during the next few years. Uncle Silver stopped working for the band and stayed home with us.

Last year, when I returned home from my trip, I found out that Uncle Silver had been rushed to the hospital. I was very anxious to see him so my mother accompanied me to the hospital. As I walked into the hospital, the scent of disinfectant brushed up against my nose like the smell of the freshly mopped floor in a kitchen.

In a private room at the end of the hall, Uncle Silver appeared feeble and aged, lying on the bed with many hoses attached to his arm and his nostrils. He seemed like he was sleeping. Mother tapped him softly on his shoulder to check for a response. He moved his head slowly toward us. He seemed so far away from my early memories of him. His once full head of hair had thinned after so many chemotherapy treatments. His skin had turned pale because of the lack of sunshine, and he had lost a lot of weight because he said he couldn’t taste the food he ate. Since he was no longer capable of staying home by himself, he remained in the hospital.

For several months, I visited him in the hospital. We discussed many things that were happening in my life at home and at school. He often talked about things that he wished he could have done when he was younger, and he usually ended up with tears in his eyes.

Several days later, I got a phone call from my mother saying that Uncle Silver had passed away in his sleep peacefully and serenely, like a song in my heart. Every time I hear a violin being played in a band or in a symphony, thoughts of my uncle playing his toy come to mind, reminding me of the times I spent with him. He made me realize how precious and brief life really is.
Lost In Hokkaido

Georgette Magnuson

3rd Place, English100
Instructor: Kai Nelson

In 1987, I was lucky enough to spend two months in Hokkaido, the northernmost island of Japan. I lived in a rambling onsen hotel, a natural hot springs resort where people come to soak in the tingly mineral-rich waters, reputed to wash away not only aches and pains, but whatever ails you. Jozankei must be one of the most beautiful hot springs resorts in the world. Opulent hotels nestle among the mountain faces. A powerful river rushes turbulently between them. It is resplendent with tall trees turning red and yellow in autumnal tribute, majestic clouds almost close enough to touch, and the drama of the steam rising where the scalding hot mineral waters meet the frigid river with a hiss. It is also one of the most boring, there being nothing to do but take a bath in water that threatens to burn your rear-end off. Thus it had become my habit to hop the bus two or three times a week and take the hour ride down to Sapporo, where I would spend the day strolling the streets and browsing wistfully through expensive deparatos (department stores) hung with chandeliers. Having looked enough at things unaffordable, I'd drift over to Odori Park and enjoy a foil-wrapped baked potato or com-on-the-cob, and a blue soda in a clear bottle with a big marble in it that slid up and down with every drink. At around 5 o'clock in the evening, I would head over to the bus station and board the bus that would take me from Sapporo back up to Jozankei.

On one of those many outings I climbed onto the number eight, whose number was the only thing that indicated to me my destination, since every sign in the station is in kanji, which I can't read. Many things in Japan are very different, even opposite, from home, one of them being that you enter the bus from the back and never come into contact with the driver until you get off, at which time you pay according to the length of your ride.

Sitting in the back, staring at the twists and turns of the journey, I would watch as the scene changed from grey urban streets filled with shoppers to suburban apartment buildings stacked like cartons with laundry flapping gaily in the breeze. Then would come flat green pastures, orchards of special Japanese apples, and stretches of pine forest here and there.

Somewhere during this ride, darkness would encroach upon the view, like a movie ending. My consciousness would recede deep into the back of my head and I would become oblivious to my surroundings. Lost in sleepy daydreams, mesmerized by the gentle rocking of the bus and the steady hum of its motor, I would spend the rest of the ride like this until we neared my stop.

One afternoon, however, I was surprised by a voice, calling to me in Japanese. It was the driver.

"Young lady, please get off. This is the last stop." Bewildered, I looked around me. There was no one left on the bus but me and the driver, who was staring expectantly at me. We were stopped in the middle of nowhere, surrounded by pitch blackness.

"But... Aren't we going to Jozankei?" I stammered in Japanese.

"No. This is the last stop," he replied.

"But... I thought the number eight goes to Jozankei," I said stupidly, lost for words.

"Some of them do, but this one stops here," he answered.

He was a kindly man and looked amused as I asked how I would ever get back. Seeing how frightened and disoriented I was, he began to laugh jovially.

"Oh well. I'm going to Jozankei for dinner anyway, so I will drop you off," he offered generously.

He started up the bus and I sat up front chatting in broken Japanese with him all the rest of the way back to Jozankei. He was a friendly country man with a tanned face and a wide ready smile set against the almost military-looking white uniform. I guess he had a very generous nature because when we reached my stop, he accepted no payment for the ride. I jumped off the bus grateful for such a congenial ending to that little mishap. I thanked him profusely and waved goodbye, chuckling to myself as I walked to the hotel.

After that I was careful to check with one of the other passengers in line to make sure the bus would indeed end up at my destination. For several rides I had no trouble.

One day in November, though, I climbed onto the bus particularly tired and anxious to get back to my room and a hot meal. My feet were aching from all the
Christmas shopping I had done. I was weighted down with packages and famished, not having eaten since breakfast. After receiving confirmation from a fellow passenger, I settled into a seat, arranged my packages around me, and became lost in reverie.

You can imagine my shock when I was shaken from my dreams by the sound of the driver ordering me off the bus. A different man this time, he was shorter and lighter than the friendly driver I'd met before, and his temperament was quite different too. He was yelling at me!

"Get off!"

He was clearly annoyed. I must not have heard him the first few times.

"Get off!" he yelled again, more loudly.

I was dismayed. Once again the bus was empty except for me and this strident little dictator, and once again we were stopped in some dark void in God only knows where.

Once again I asked this driver the same question.

"Aren't we going to Jozankei?" But now I was buying time.

Looking out the bus window, I could see no buildings, stores, phone booths, or houses. Nothing in sight but blackness as far as my eyes could see! I was terrified! This man was obviously lacking in sympathy for my predicament, but still I wondered how I could convince him to take me to Jozankei. I turned to him in distress as he answered me roughly,

"No, you must get off! This is the last stop!"

I cried out, I checked with another passenger before we left and he said we would go to Jozankei! I don't know where we are! Will you take me to Jozankei?"

"No! I am finished working for the day! You must get off here!" he snarled.

"But . . . how will I get back?" I asked timorously.

"There'll be another bus along in a while," he said indifferently, waving his hand in dismissal, already turning away.

Feeling beaten and doubtful, I climbed off the bus, and he drove away, abandoning me to the darkness. It was so black out I felt like I was in outer space. My head was swimming from hunger and for a moment I feared I would faint. The back of my neck ached from carrying the packages all day and my fingers strained with the weight. I was consumed with anxiety. No one knows where I am. I don't even know where I am! I thought in horror. Visions of friends and family saying, "She just disappeared and we never heard from her again!" raced through my mind. Just then I felt the first wet drops fall upon my head. "Oh God. Now it's going to rain too." As the rain began to soak my hair and packages I felt more miserable than I had ever been in my entire life. Standing in the night, all alone, hungry and lost in a foreign country, I was completely helpless. I sent a silent prayer up to God, wherever He was.

Just then I heard the roar of a bus motor. I saw the warm inner lights as it pulled up right in front of me. I wonder how he had spied me there in that darkness. I breathed a huge sigh of relief as I climbed aboard. I rode safely back to my hotel. I felt very grateful.

The dichotomous nature of these two experiences makes this a fond memory for me. Had I experienced only one, it would have greatly influenced my view of Japan as a friendly or hostile place. But these two events give me a balanced perspective of human nature on a more global scale. Any of us can swing from kindness to rudeness at any time in a given day. I experienced many more contrasting experiences because I was a foreigner. I'm sure Japanese experience that here too. It was the kindness that got me through the loneliest times. They contributed to a sense that I am watched over and guided, wherever I am.
thought I was anxious about going to the concert, but I learned the true meaning of anxious that night in the ladies' room.

I fought the fervid crowd and made my way to the rest room. I groaned as I walked in and saw the line that had formed during the intermission. Shortly after I stepped into the line, a woman in her early twenties came bursting through the door. When she got in line behind me, she mumbled an unnecessary remark, then let out a heavy sigh. I turned around and glanced at her. She gave me a halfhearted smile. I smiled and leaned against the bathroom's cold tile wall, which was directly across from a huge mirror. I looked into the mirror and noticed how restless the young woman was.

The tall, slender woman twirled her curly, blonde hair around her finger and tapped her left foot simultaneously. She chewed her gum rather loudly and snapped it constantly. Her eyes wandered. She bit her bottom lip accidentally and swore as her eyes rolled to the ceiling. She made a suckling noise and shifted her weight from one leg to the other and continued to tap her foot.

Two people came out of their stalls and smiled as they passed us. The very anguished woman glared at them with squinted eyes. She turned her head away in disgust and grunted, "Just because you're relieved doesn't mean you have to smile at everyone still standing in line!"

Her immature gawk made me giggle. She stepped out to the side for a second to see how many people were up ahead, then stepped back in line, cursed, and made a wry face.

Beads of sweat formed on her forehead and trickled down her temples. She took a tissue out of her purse and wiped away the perspiration. Then she rolled the tissue into a ball between her palms as if it were clay. When she turned around to throw the ball of tissue into the trash bin behind her, I noticed the name "Misty" tattooed on her left shoulder blade.

How appropriate, I thought. Judging from this line, that's exactly what she's going to be.

She looked at her wristwatch repeatedly and cursed each time. Her knees were slightly bent, and her legs were crossed at the ankles and pressed firmly together. Then it happened. She started to bounce! I shuffled my feet forward a few steps when the line moved up. Misty, on the other hand, barely separated her legs and didn't move more than an inch. Her hands were in her pockets; but after a minute or so she took her right hand out and gnawed at her nails.

Her eyes twirched and her nostrils flared. She pouted and whined, and when I turned to look at her, I saw that tears had formed in her eyes.

Suddenly, a guitar wailed, and drums pounded; the band was back on stage. The roar of the crowd made my heart flutter. I didn't want to miss any of the excitement, so I took one last look at Misty and then headed out the door to join in on the fun.

We've all been in that predicament at least once and can sympathize with Misty. The crossing of our legs, the fidgeting and the anticipation are not uncommon. Sometimes in life we must face obstacles that put us through situations that are beyond our control, and we cannot hide our natural distress.
An NBA Three-Pointer

William Crockett

Honorable Mention, English 100
Instructor: Jill Makagon

An NBA three-pointer is no easy feat, even for NBA players. But, if you’re an average Joe, such as myself, an NBA three-pointer is a shot of chance more than of skill—resembling a roll of the dice more than power and grace. Nonetheless, every now and then comes a magical moment when your try breaks all odds, when God Himself seems to make it so, and you come through with an NBA three-pointer.

It must have been the ninth year of my uneventful youth when it happened. It was a warm summer day and a few of my friends, along with myself, were out taking turns with a brand-new Daisy BB gun in a neighbor’s backyard. The gun was passed around like a large joint, giving each participant a chance to savor the power the plastic rifle magically bestowed. Then, not wanting to be too selfish, the operator fired the gun into some unfortunate Pepsi can or, if he was too chicken to shoot, just reluctantly handed the gun over to the next boy in turn.

As the fourth rotation came up, I noticed a ricebird way off in the distance. Ricebirds are very small and jumpy, and compounded with immense distance, as was the case, are nearly impossible to hit. Divine intervention would be required for a BB to scathe the green plumage of this immortal foe.

In a few moments my turn came up. But instead of battered Pepsi cans, I turned my sights on the distant enemy, hoping to impress my peers with a near miss. It was a whim rather than malice—a test of skill rather than a hunter’s instinct for blood. Besides, the little green ricebird, like any Pepsi can, was not really my enemy. I’d never have dared take the shot if I thought I had a fragment of a chance to hit it.

The green bird looked even smaller in the fork of my sights. He was no longer a restless green bird cavorting on a grassy field, but rather, had become a dot on some distant horizon. My heart rate seemed to plummet in concentration, creating a feeling of mysterious calm. A long ringing silence preceded the pulling of the trigger.

An agonized chirp followed the crack of the shot. Then silence again. Horrible—dream-like silence. I had never consciously killed anything before—nor wanted to. How could I have hit him? The shot was beyond impossible.

One of my companions exclaimed, “Wow, you shoot birds like Magic shoots baskets!” Someone else said, “I’m telling my mom on you!” I was so sick I thought I might cry.

Now, there are certain dogmas about being a male—one of which is being macho. And to be macho is to never show weakness. Being nine and understanding the doctrines of machoness completely, I put on a facade of a ruthless hunter.

“You know me, Eagle Eye,” I said casually to the first comment. I just gave a cold stare to the owner of the mom threat.

My heart sank at the sight of the little green body, almost to the point of tears. The silent animal looked frozen in absolute calmness. The only sign of death was the closed eyes and ruffled feathers where my BB had either entered or exited. I picked the soft, light body up off the ground and tossed it back and forth in my palms, hoping somehow it would come back to life and fly away.

But, it did not. And by the end of the day there was a shallow grave with a little cross over it in the middle of that grassy field where it had died.

That day, one decade ago, could have been the worst day of my life. However, even though it was bad, or evil, I now look upon that day with a warm sensation in my heart. It was a day when a naive child took a chance at something he thought was impossible, and by God, skill, or plain luck, succeeded. Kind of like an NBA three-pointer.
Freedom in the U.S. As an Immigrant

Yuko Mataele

Honorable Mention, ESL100
Instructor: Janice Cook

I came to Hawaii on October 8, 1989, from Japan. I expected that I would be able to see a difference between Americans and Japanese from the point of view that Americans are Western and Japanese are Oriental. My view of the U.S. before I came is nothing in comparison with what I have seen after I moved here.

First, my English speaking ability turned out to be nothing. I started speaking English when I started working for a French company in Tokyo. Because my French supervisor spoke only English and French, we had to communicate in the world's most common language, English. I used English while I was working for this firm for four and half years and when I was dating the man who became my husband. Therefore, I thought I would not have a big problem in communicating in English. I realized that my accent was very different from the Americans'. I had a strong French and Japanese accent because I spoke English with French people. Besides, I lived with a Brazilian family who spoke both Portuguese and English for my last one-and-a-half years in Tokyo. Because I had never spoken to native Americans over there, I could not speak the way American people speak. For example, when I talk to my husband at home, my pronunciation of rice sounds like lice. He asked me, "Do Japanese eat lice?" When I say Thursday, people hear Saturday. My Thursday does not sound right because I cannot pronounce the ur sound very well. There is no r sound in the Japanese language. I come across the equivalent situation quite often. For the same reasons, I do not quite understand what people are talking about at work, at a restaurant and on the phone. I hated to pick up the phone because I was afraid that I might not be able to pronounce words correctly and cause a misunderstanding. Telephone calls sometimes give me a headache, even now.

America is one of the most advanced countries for women's rights, in other words, equal rights. I expected that women's and men's roles are no longer traditional and women enjoy freedom in deciding what type of professional career to choose. Furthermore, if they want to, they either can work or stay at home. However, women's and men's roles are still very traditional, and there is not so much job variety between women and men. Yet, the conditions here are by far better than in Japan. In Japan, men typically go to work and do not share any household chores, including raising children. Women take care of the house, cook, clean, wash clothes and raise the children. At our church, whenever we have a feast, women cook. Nobody questions. No men want to cook, or no women refuse to cook. It appears to be understood among them. The old conservative way of thinking still exists in this most advanced country.

A few months went by after I moved here. I started looking for a job here. When I looked at a newspaper, there was no separate division for women and men for jobs. It looked so good; it showed equal rights and equal opportunities although it may not be so perfect in reality. In Japan women and men have separate columns in the newspapers. In other words, some jobs require only men or only women. Even if you as a woman would like to become a manager of a restaurant, companies do not need a woman manager. In Japan, at work, women usually retire at a young age, around 25-30 years old. When they get married, companies ask them to retire. Women do not have the same chance as men to get promoted. People still consider serving tea a woman's given talent in Japan. I am now working for a local architecture firm as an administrative assistant. Administrative assistants are all women who sometimes appear to be mothering their supervisors. We have an architecture department and an interior department in our firm. Most interior designers are women and a few architects are women. Roles still fall into traditional stereotypes.

Furthermore, my view about Americans' religious beliefs was not quite correct. I found that I had not known anything but that Americans are Christians. As you may know, Japanese are Buddhists. They go to a shrine to pray on New Year's day and go to a temple for a funeral and a wedding ceremony. Japanese do not go to temples regularly, nor do they study a Buddhist Bible. To the contrary, Christian Americans do. The Buddhist Bible is not as popular in Japan as the Christian Bible here in the U.S. Actually, I did not know that Christians study the Bible regularly, in addition to going to a church every Sunday. I was quite astonished that
Christians study the Bible so diligently and apply its words to their everyday lives. Japanese are not religious; there is no religion in Japan. In other words, there are no spiritual strengths and spiritual beliefs among Japanese people. Americans are more religious. Japanese people sometimes think that Christians are so weak that they have to depend on Christianity. I was neither Christian nor Buddhist while I was in Japan, like most Japanese, although I had been interested in learning Christianity. Besides, my college adopted Protestant Christianity as its religion. After we moved here, we both were baptized at a church and we became Christians. I am still a baby Christian, but I am happy to have this opportunity to become a Christian. By learning Christianity, I can learn more about this country and be strong spiritually. I would never be able to do this if I were in Japan.

American people hug and kiss among friends, coworkers and between couples. Japanese people never do. In fact, when I went back to Japan this winter to spend time with my family, I had a chance to hug all my family. My parents were surprised although they accepted it. My sister explained to them that it is a common way to greet one another in the U.S. I was not sure if I should hug or not. I hesitated for a couple of minutes, but I did and I felt good about it. I love to hug whether I am happy or sad, thereby sharing my feelings with others. Also, I love to be hugged. I am happy to be in the U.S. where I can express my feelings more freely whenever I want. I believe that it is a good way to communicate, to express my feelings. Although more people shake hands in Japan nowadays, especially in business, hugging and kissing as a communicating tool are still not common. Japanese people are more reserved, or do not show their feelings. In expressing their own feelings, Japanese are introverted and Americans are extroverted. For instance, when sumo wrestler Konishiki wins against one of the strong sumo wrestlers, he expresses his joy and happiness freely. On the contrary, Japanese sumo wrestlers say, “This is not my power.” Although the Japanese sumo wrestler is so proud of himself, he does not admit publicly that he is so good. My husband thinks it is very Japanese that even when they are proud of themselves, they do not admit that they are good.

I was too optimistic about my ability to understand English. Therefore, I have to continue to make efforts to improve my English so that I can communicate better with people. Furthermore, I was disappointed to find that the U.S. remains very traditional regarding women’s and men’s roles in society and in the family. However, the U.S. is by far better than Japan. I will see if women’s and men’s roles change. Last, I am happy to become a Christian, to become strong spiritually. Moreover, I am so grateful to the U.S. that I can express my feelings more freely and behave freely. There is surely freedom in this country.
The Ice Knows

Stephan Robley

1st Place, Open
Instructor: Wini Au

He walked along the deserted road past long shadows which the midnight moon cast on the pavement. He closed the top button on his jacket to keep out some of the cold eastern wind that blew a chill right into his bones. Stopping, he stared up at the cold, dead satellite in the sky. The harsh wind welled tears up in his eyes, or were they his own? This was loneliness. He walked on.

Maybe he shouldn't have flown off the handle when she told him. She said it was a mistake and that she hadn't intended to lead him on, but it hurt just as much. He could feel a lump roll up in his throat and a shiver course through his veins as he remembered the times he had whispered, "I love you," in her ear. His soul cried inside and he walked.

A silver cloud blanketed the moon like a wraith, giving the filtered light an eldritch radiance. "What's wrong with me?" he asked himself. All his life he had waited for the one. He was constantly reexamining himself. All he had ever wanted was a someone who loved him and he thought he had found her. She was tall and pretty. Brown hair flowed down the back of her neck, stopping a few inches past the shoulder. She had a full body, but she wasn't drop-dead gorgeous. Her beauty came from a streamlined stature and presence that emanated from every inch of her. Huge brown eyes, like diamonds set in a Faberge egg, finished the picture, but her personality was the real jewel, an elegant and graceful countenance studded with kindness and humility. She was everything he dreamed of, and she was gone.

It was 30 minutes past the bewitching hour and it was starting to get really cold. He hadn't felt his hands in more than an hour and now dizziness was starting to wash over him. It was probably 10 degrees outside and he was only wearing a cotton jacket with no gloves. He had lived in the cold all his life and knew the signs of hypothermia, but he didn't particularly care. The pint of cognac he had drunk two hours ago was keeping him warm. He couldn't understand why something that seemed so perfect had gone wrong. It seemed they were made for each other. "Why? Why didn't it work?" he whispered to nobody. The road was empty and silent; the only sound was the trample of his feet as he walked alone.

The hills in the background looked like powdered doughnuts and the side of the street was covered in snow, giving off a fluorescent reflection of the moon that burned itself into the back of his eyes and remained there when he closed them. He was moving slower now, his head bowed down as he trudged along, his mind milling over a thousand different things that were said and done. He didn't understand any of it.

He came to the Old North Bridge abruptly and walked to the center. It was a sturdy wooden bridge over 200 years old. Years ago it had been a hangout for lovers. He used to know its origin and history but his mind wasn't working too well now. He had stopped feeling the cold as well as his body. His breaths were short and shallow. He looked at all the names and initials that were carved into the rails and supports. A few had been carved recently, most were old.

He followed an archaic handrail down to the frozen lake that the bridge covered. He was very tired. The banks of the lake were covered in a soft snowy cushion that looked very appealing to him. He sat down and stared at the bridge.

From this side he saw the old writing carved in the bridge. The letters were chiselled deep in the old chancellory style and he knew for sure they were over a hundred years old. He looked into the air and smiled. It felt like someone was watching him and he looked back at the letters. They said, "The ice knows," and for just a second he knew, also. Then he closed his eyes and fell asleep.
I was 16 at the time. Being 16 meant my pimples were clearing up, my voice wasn't cracking as much, and I didn't get an erection every five minutes. It was a time of growing up. The decisions I was making would affect the rest of my life. This is a story about one of those decisions.

The sun was setting. I was returning a second time to school. This time there would be no teachers nagging, no idle threats from jocks, no pressure from peers, no name-calling, no practical jokes, no gambling, and no extortion. All the chaos that reigned supreme in the school subsided. The school miraculously transformed itself into a place of solitude. This was my sanctuary from life's trials and tribulations. This was my church and skateboarding was my religion. The rhythmic flow of the wheels on the smooth concrete floor sent vibrations throughout my body, relaxing every muscle and sinew. The cool mountain air from the Ko'olau's wisped through my hair. I was in a world of my own, free from the pressures of life. Suddenly, like a rock through a window, my consciousness was shattered. I was jolted back to reality.

The all too familiar sounds of my peers broke the silence. As I approached their annoying laughter, I began to despise their presence. I wondered, What the hell are these idiots doing here so late? I rode past a most ominous sight, four juniors harassing two freshmen in one of the school's courtyards. Ride on, I told myself. It's none of your business. But it was my business. I knew them, all of them.

The juniors were a bunch of delinquents who were actually seniors but held back. These individuals harbored the idiotic mentality that if one of them should be held back a grade, then all of them should. Monkey see, monkey do; one for all, and all for one—that kind of bullshit. The leader of these imbeciles was Sam, a large, ugly moron, who looked like a gorilla with pimples. The freshmen, Jon and Reid, were friends of my younger brother. What am I going to do? I thought. What can I do?

I stopped and thought, I've got to think this thing through . . . I've got to do something . . . I've got to help them . . . Questions raced through my mind. How can I help them? It's me against four of them . . . I can't even fight . . . I sat on my skateboard and pulled my hair in frustration. I couldn't stop my legs from shaking. Oh, goddamn it. Why me? I thought. It was like my guts were turning inside out. I was torn in two. A part of me wanted to go home and part of me knew I couldn't. I stared at the cold grey pavement. I was all alone. The image of two helpless boys weighed heavy on my mind. Finally, in what felt like hours of agonizing over the same damn questions, I decided to do what's right. I decided to help Jon and Reid.

It wasn't like the movies. I didn't hear the Rocky theme music in the background or Obi Wan Kanobi telling me that the force was with me. I didn't feel courageous or heroic. All I could feel was fear, the fear of getting beat up by four guys. The reality of my situation made it harder as I slowly walked back to the courtyard. I was going to get my ass kicked. I felt a cold sweat on the back of my neck, my mouth became dry, and my breathing became shallow. I felt so tense. I gripped my skateboard in my hands. Pull yourself together, I pleaded. You can't let them know you're scared. I gritted my teeth and kept walking. When I got there, they all turned and looked, as if to see if I were a teacher or a janitor. There's no turning back now, I thought. It's too late, they see me.

I pointed toward Jon and Reid. "Hey guys, let's go home."

"You know these guys?" asked Sam, in disbelief.

"Yeah," I replied. "I live by them." I was lying. I didn't even know where they lived. It was the only thing I could think of at the time.

Sam's attention shifted to my skateboard. "That's a nice board. I like ride."

I thought, I'm not going to let him take my skateboard. If I let him ride, he'll ride all the way home. My heart was pounding like a racehorse. I was so afraid he was going to steal my skateboard.


Sam pushed me against the wall and punched me in the stomach. It happened so quickly, I couldn't
believe what was going on. Maybe it was because I was so tensed up or that so much adrenaline was being pumped through me or that I was in a state of shock because of the anxiety, but it didn't hurt. I couldn't feel a thing. Sam stared at me in amazement. He quickly changed the subject. “Nah, I was only joking,” he said. He then pointed at some cheerleaders walking home from practice. “Hey, Tina,” he called to one of them. She either could not hear him or was simply ignoring him. “I know them,” he stated.

“Good for you,” I sarcastically replied. “Come on, guys. Let’s go,” I said for the third and final time. This time we left.

Reid and Jon thanked me about a million times. I felt sick; not of their gratitude but I really felt like throwing up. When we got to the outskirts of the school, I told them to go home. I stayed behind and barfed. The sun had set. It was night now. I stared into the starry sky. I was alone again. If there’s a God, I wondered, he sure has a shitty sense of humor. I rode home, exhausted.

I look back now and it seems like a dream, like it was so long ago. I feel a sense of pride when I think about what happened. I can't say that this incident turned my life around in any earth-shaking way. It didn't make me want to devote my life to fighting injustice in this world. Helping Jon and Reid simply made me a better person: a person who believes in doing what’s right, a person who believes in laying it on the line.
Dedicated to the Students of KCC

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