

# WANDER

BRANDS ABROAD



Issue VII



*Wander: Brandeis Abroad*



*“The only true voyage of discovery, the only fountain of Eternal Youth, would be not to visit strange lands but to possess other eyes, to behold the universe through the eyes of another, of a hundred others, to behold the hundred universes that each of them beholds, that each of them is.”*

– Marcel Proust



# Letter From The Editor



Fellow Voyager,

Spinning through the globe, you'll find yourself dizzy with a blur of insights. Globetrotting can consist of metallic hulls and aerodynamics, wheels and jetlag. These pages will take you far, without the fatigue. Skid over New Zealand's cloudy mountains and flowing lava (pg. 31). Snack on sweet plantain while strolling the streets of Ghana (pg. 27). Finally, live by your words lost in translation in a Czech hospital (pg. 17).

Travel transpires us from one place to another. Compassion occurs when two distances of humanity resonate with one another. It transcends the act of being another and witnessing things differently through your own eyes. Through travel and understanding, we can bridge voids of mentality and being to empathize with the other. Our universal needs and desires are not so different. It is the cultural and environmental backdrop that makes our expressions unique.

*Wander*, for me, has been a path of self-discovery in relation to others. The subjective 'self' and the objective 'reality' break down when you try to find their meeting point. Travel and its implications elucidate the truth that lies between us. I hope this issue encourages you in your explorations to recognize the unknown and to see yourself reflected.

Wander well,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Isaac'.

Isaac Steinberg '15

## GEODESIC

The font, created for *Wander: Brandeis Abroad*, was inspired by travel itself. The letters start as a sphere, like the globe. The curved lines that form the letters reflect the shortest distance it takes to traverse from one point on a sphere to another, as this route is not straight in 3D space. Similarly, it can be imagined as watching a transcontinental airplane flight from a satellite.

Created by Isaac Steinberg, *Editor-in-Chief*

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Vinh Nguyen Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), Vietnam



... & Co.

BLUE  
EXCHANGE

SALE

NƯỚC MIA  
CẦN THƠ  
3000  
5000

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668.39

# Wails in Wales

By Savannah Bishop

*Class of 2017  
Cardiff, Wales*

Wind murmuring maliciously  
With sea salt like snow  
Silence sets in viciously  
With waves to and fro

The crags full of violence  
Foretold by gusts only  
The peril hidden; silence  
The *Phooka* a pony

Trees trilling intrepid  
Their spirits taunted  
Laughter echoes threaded  
The shadows haunted

The woods full of ghosts  
Invisible past the dawn  
History primordial; boasts  
The faun thought a fawn



Alexander Brenner Leiden, Netherlands

# Traveling Is Letting Go

By Rachel Hirschhaut

*Class of 2015  
London, England*

**T**raveling is relinquishing control.

It's the act of giving up your familiar community and your comfort zone for the moment.

It's letting go of any preconceived notions you may have had about a place, because even a centuries-old city is constantly growing and reinventing itself.

It's letting go of your expectations, knowing that anything that goes not according to plan is all part of the journey.

It's letting go of the initial fear that you may never know how to make your way in a new city, celebrating the moment when you finally know enough to give other people directions, and laughing at it all.

It's going off the map and discovering the special places that turn a city into a home; it's the visions that immediately come to mind when you miss that city.

It's letting go of inhibitions, and pushing yourself higher and further.

As a tour guide said on one of my weekend trips, it's "going up and getting lost." Exploring every hill, every lookout point, every inch of a new city, and all of the charming little side streets where you walk and imagine how everything must have looked hundreds of years ago.

It's starting a new life in a new country, doing what you never thought possible, and letting it change you.

Six weeks into my semester in London, I stepped into a kayak off the coast of Wales, with only a paddle to steer myself against the high winds and a kayaking instructor with a Welsh accent so thick I could barely understand it. This was my program's outdoor adventure weekend, a break from bustling city life.

It was scary. And it was exhilarating, the feeling of relying only on my own strength to keep pushing through the water. Knowing that if I stopped to think about fear, if I quit moving forward, I would never reach where I needed to be.

This is the image that defines my semester abroad, living in London and traveling through Europe. Letting go of inhibitions, of fear, of the solid ground beneath my feet, all for the sake of adventure. This is what it means to be alive.

After many more adventures, the semester came to a close, and I came home with a desire to see and do and experience even more. Travel is a magical thing.

When you leave a place, you let go of a lot: The life you constructed there, The freedom to wander down any street and stumble upon something of historic significance, And most of all, a piece of yourself.

"You will never be completely at home again, because part of your heart will always be elsewhere. That is the price you pay for the richness of loving and knowing people in more than one place." 





Theo Goetemann Marcahuasi, Peru

# White Daughters in the Motherland

By Malika Imhotep

*Class of 2015  
London, England*

## Part I: Dietary Restrictions

### *Teacher Says:*

The stranger has eyes  
wide shut-  
Like mouth at the foreign table  
Turns like stomach at the sight  
Of words tongue can't move  
Around easily.

### *Maame ka:*

"Who sent you here to swallow  
My culture?  
How much did they charge you  
To consume us?  
Have I sold away my consent?  
I stare plainly because you don't belong here  
Because of what your skin has done to mine.  
Because of what I do to my skin to mimic yours.  
Your eyes are blank like the fields  
After the dutch left.  
I laugh in my language because  
You look like a joke. The punchline is how I  
break myself  
small for you  
to handle with fork  
never fingers.

But you say you still can't eat the food  
And I am still supposed to trust you."

## Part II: Dance Class

Fingers spray out from the wrist like discarded  
saliva  
Landing playfully on the sharp  
corner of hips  
Hinged to joints that move stacatto. You can't  
feel the rhythm without hands  
Tied to spirit.  
Can't shake what your mama's  
daddy tried to steal from this land.  
Can't cut the black from this movement if you  
want it  
to take you anywhere.

*\*Maame ka- mother says*



Tzvi Miller  
Galway, Ireland

# Bubbles kill

By Ilana-Mahmea Siegel

*Class of 2016  
Prague, Czech Republic*

I'd been told at some point that doctors hold their needles upright, tap them, and squirt a little of the liquid out before injecting a patient to make sure that no air gets into the system, because unwanted bubbles can be deadly. Recalling this, I watched in horror as a would-be assassin made their way smoothly along the IV toward my wrist. I panicked a bit, staring at my impending doom, and spinning around on my bed, looked for an escape: the call button? The bubble was seconds away--the responding nurse would find only a corpse. Pull the IV out? Too drastic and too messy. And then I spotted it: the little orange wheel on the IV tube. With only seconds to spare, I caught the plastic piece and spun it backwards. The bubble zoomed away, but my blood rushed out through the tube as well.

Finally managing to stop the flow in either direction, I reached back and pressed the call button, never taking my eyes from the suspect air. The

nurse came in and I pointed to the bubble, but she simply smiled and nodded, and made to start the IV again.

"No!" I yelled, shocked she was being so blasé about it. Struggling for a way to communicate, I grabbed my phone and typed into a translate app: BUBBLES KILL. The nurse slid on her glasses squinted at the little iPhone screen. Her blue eyes crinkled and she shook her head, laughing, trying to reassure me. I shook my head frantically and jabbed at the bubble again. She nodded and laughed more saying, "*bubliny, bubliny,*" and eventually I laughed with her: I'm being silly, I thought, she's a medical professional and I'm not. But even so, I tracked the bubble as it slid through the looped IV and into my wrist, fully expecting a sharp pain and then death at any moment.

I really was not prepared for the Czech hospital experience. For one thing, all I packed to wear was jeans; many pairs of jeans. We're not al-

*Rachel Hirschhaut Rome, Italy*





### Ildiko Kemp *Kamakura, Japan*

lowed to wear jeans here. Oops. The other patients came prepared with fluffy slippers and colorful pajamas, but I didn't get the memo. Striped knee high socks and flip flops under a stiff white gown wasn't exactly the fashion statement I was hoping to make in Europe, but I rocked it until my roommate showed up with my one pair of leggings a day later.

The other patients also came prepared speaking Czech. I supposed I should speak more Czech than I do, considering that I've had Czech class for two months, but it seems I left everything I knew back at the apartment. Not that it would have come in that handy anyway; what kind of messed up teacher tells their students how to say, "can you stick the IV there instead?" No, I know how to compare beers and wines, and can say "director," "actor," and "film" ("*režisér*," "*herec*," and "*film*," for anyone interested in learning Czech), but communicating with the many nurses, none of whom speak English, is a bit beyond my Czech skills and requires a delicate combination of exaggerated facial expressions, wild head shaking and enthusiastic gesticulation.

For the most part it works, but how do you mime that the reason you don't want the IV in the crook of your right arm is not that you're scared of

needles, but that you need that arm to be bendable because you're right-handed? It's a challenge befitting a Brandeis student, certainly one enrolled in an acting class.

The doctors and nurses all take the time to work with me though, and are all very sweet about it. It seems I'm known throughout the hospital as the American, and people stop what they're doing to smile or walk me somewhere so I don't get lost. My roommates, too, try to learn English and teach me Czech. If any generalizations can be made about people in Prague, it's that they're nice.

I should be writing about the hikes in the Czech countryside, the festivals, and the adventures with friends. People want to hear of the castle in Český Krumlov, the bone church in Kutná Hora, and the incredible weekend in Berlin. Certainly there is much, much more to my abroad experience than a stay in a hospital, and many other stories to tell. But this, too, is a story and an opportunity to learn, and although it is only a little part of my study abroad experience, as I lay here with my room's pink walls and brown trim reminding me strongly of Pocky Sticks, and watch the bubbles swirl down the tube and into my arm, it's an experience I'm glad I have. 



WANDER  
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Emily Greenwald Namib-Naukluft Desert, Namibia



# Death, David, and the Duomo

By Alexandra Schuman

*Class of 2015  
Montpellier, France*

We were checking into our hostel in Florence when I got the news. After drifting across a European sea of disconnectivity, we had reached a source of Wi-Fi where I could finally check my messages. There were two from my dad. One telling me he thought I should know that my cat Smokey was sick, and another a few hours later, telling me that he had passed away. I let out a gasp, causing my friend to ask worriedly what was wrong. In a matter of seconds I was crumpled on the kitchen floor sobbing. I could hear a frantic clacking of high heels as Nadia, the owner of the hostel, hurried over, and I struggled to pull myself together.

“I’m sorry, it’s just. My cat died. I-I’ve had him since I was five. He’s been there throughout everything in my life. He just...he means so much to me.”

“Oh!” she exclaimed, hovering over me with a sympathetic and helpless look. “It’s hard.

Pets, they are like family,” she said in her thick Italian accent, and began wiping the table vigorously, despite the fact that it was already perfectly clean.

I allowed myself about twenty minutes of crying before I forced myself under control. We were in Florence, the birthplace of the Renaissance and a bastion of art. Later I would let myself cry, but we didn’t have much time in this city, and it wouldn’t be fair to my friend if I spent the time wallowing in my hostel bed. If I were going to be away from home right now, it would be for a good reason.

Later on, we made our way to the *Galleria dell’Accademia*, home to Michelangelo’s David. The line curled down multiple blocks and we trooped resignedly to the end, wondering if we would even be able to get in before closing. But our *Deus Ex Machina* came in the form of a tour guide calling for participants on his English speaking tour. For an extra fee, we skipped the line and fol-

*Aliya Bean Culloden, Scotland*





*Licheng Shen Canterbury, England*

*Adam Stern Copenhagen, Denmark (Top Prize)*



lowed the man inside.

Our guide wound us by Stradivari violins and past the wrought, twisting sculpture of the Rape of the Sabines. Finally, we went through the Hall of the Prisoners. Michelangelo's unfinished collection of sculptures gave the chilling appearance of men half-concealed and writhing, eternally struggling to break free of their marble blocks.

At the end of the Hall was David, at last, enormous and standing on a pedestal while people milled around him, craning their necks upward. Michelangelo was commissioned to create a sculpture to put on the top of the Duomo, the famous basilica in the middle of the city. But upon seeing the finished sculpture, our guide told us, David was deemed too magnificent to be placed somewhere where people would never be able to appreciate his beauty up close.

Before visiting I was a little nervous, afraid that the widespread conviction that the sculpture is one of the greatest masterpieces in the world would set the bar too high, and I would inevitably be disappointed. Yet upon seeing David, I, not an art aficionado by any means, found myself struck by the same awe I imagine millions before me have felt. I gazed in wonderment at the detail and grace, the life inherent in the curve of David's muscle, the raised lines of his veins, his knit brow, and the subtle curl of his hand. Most artists before Michelangelo depicted David in the midst of his fight with Goliath, or standing upon his head in victory afterward. Michelangelo chose to sculpt David in the moment right before his battle, standing *contrapposto*, rock sling loose in his hand, gazing upon his giant adversary. I had not known the context of the sculpture, and now I looked into his eyes and saw fear and resoluteness, the knowledge of the magnitude of what was in store for him, and his duty to follow through with his task anyway. My friend and I sat there on the bench for a while, staring at David captured in the moment as he eternally gathered his resolve, the possibility of his own death a specter in his eyes.

Later in the evening we headed back to our hostel, clutching gelato after enjoying a few glasses of wine at dinner. We passed through the Piazza del Duomo, and I stopped my friend as we stared up at the famed basilica.

"Honestly, I'd seen pictures before of the Duomo, in the skyline of Florence, but I never

thought it was that pretty," I confessed, partly to my friend and partly to the world at large. I had thought the rows of green rectangles were too geometric and exacting, when art was supposed to be impressionistic, non-linear, and full of feeling.

"But up close from the ground it's so different." The front facade of the Duomo rose above us, with vast circular windows and inset sculptures, colorful paintings of saints under the ornamented arches. Reddish-pink highlights streaked among the dominant green lines, which were the color of oxidized copper. The vast brick dome, much more intricately designed up close, was surrounded by smaller domes, adding dimensions to the marble building. Behind the Duomo, the twilight set a royal blue backdrop, but a halo of light seemed to glow from the outline of the basilica.

"I was going to see him in ten days," I said, clutching the spoon in my cup of gelato. "After five months of studying abroad, I was going to see him in ten days. I didn't get to say goodbye to him."

"I know," my friend murmured, while I stared resolutely at the Duomo. The masterpiece of Renaissance art was so vastly different from anything back in New England. The height overwhelmed me, and the intricate colorful designs were dizzying after a long few days indulging in Florentine art, delicious food, and wine. As I stared up at it, loss rushed back in, gaping deeply and unsteadily inside me. A huge part of what I had always known as *home* was gone, and I was left drifting in this foreign city on a foreign continent. But instead of feeling hopelessly alone, I acutely felt the crowds of people gathered around us in the well-lit and bustling plaza. We were all gathered here to see, in the flesh, one of the masterpieces of our collective canon. Despite the well of loss, I felt connected under the towering facade of the Duomo, united in a world of overwhelming beauty and life. 





Tzvi Miller Galway, Ireland (Top Prize)

# Musings in the British Museum

By Savannah Bishop

*Class of 2017  
London, England*

Human bodies, flesh pulled flush  
Pliant mortals, painted thrush  
Halls of treasures, behind glass  
Fake false lions, reigns that pass  
Blood stained windows, sunlight god  
See through staircase, legend trod  
Cut off columns, of above  
Golden scripture, Seraph Jove  
Memories to touch, and ink pen  
Cast iron archways, voices then  
Light steps echo, coffin lids  
Bereft fountains, entrance bids  
Boastful armor, not war worn  
Well cast iron, dark forlorn  
Beneath curtains, above view  
Is this artwork, over through  
Clockwork gearing, un-tolled bell  
Museum echoes, stories tell.



*Aliya Bean St. Andrews, Scotland*

# Ghanaian Peace and Kindness

By Rohan Narayanan (Top Prize)

*Class of 2015  
Accra, Ghana*

It must be fate to have found such a good mate, in awe as mates scream “Cra, ‘Cra”. Sitting in the tro-tro, feeling the flow go, wondering where time goes. My time here has quickly become timeless, known to have found Ghanaian peace and kindness, in such a manner that I must call it a truce, inspired by Meredith Duce to spruce up the confines of my mind with strange rhymes of strange lands. Planned and spanned across worlds that twirl with the sheen of discovery and exploration. No desperation, such constant perspiration in this red clay nation. I’m patient, slowly figuring out my bearing as our group grows caring, for one another, smothered by others. Markets where barking and balking and stalking are pedestrian, pestering, come on to a new space where it is all common place. In your face, the distinction is vast, and I’m saddened because I’m already thinking ahead, back to how six weeks didn’t last.

Fast, that’s life here, but my mind is clear, as are my pores as they pour sweat, I bet that my mosquito net is the unsung hero of how malaria incidence is still at zero. I’m in fear though, that comes with being a stranger, constant worries of danger in my chest even though America also carries great stress. It’s like I’m begging please every time there’s a break between the breeze and I feel the thick air in my hair, on my face, and on my body. Obvi I’m sorry that I didn’t bring more bug spray or candy and I’m remiss that I missed the mist and I clench my fist when the ants crawl on my pants and dance like I gave them a chance when in reality the causality is that they make me annoyed so I make them a casualty.

Sand everywhere, that’s a beach. Every mosquito carries malaria, that’s a reach. Bargaining down from obruni price, that’s hard to teach. Pouring rain, changing lanes, dodging

traffic, never static, moving, dancing, playing, prancing, buying, spending, never-ending. But I’m pretending if I think I’ll never leave, I imagine I’ll have to wipe tears away with a sleeve when I depart. Every journey that has a start has an end, left only in memories and pictures we send. I leave a part of my heart in Ghana, a slice, that with it pays a high price, so nice to travel but with it comes baggage and the passage of time and the aging of spirits. Dearest Gold Coast boasts of the most wonderful people, I raise a toast. So humble, I mumble, my stomach rumbles so I eat so much I stumble. I’ll miss eating plantains and jollof, I think this summer I’ll melt like Olaf, and be so soft when it comes to next summer. I already know it won’t be as great an adventure and that’s quite a bummer.

Buying water bottles by the truckload, unload as mountains of satchets, and play. Frisbee while locals look at us like we’re *crazy*, and play. Football with the kids at Hope on Monday, and play. Get lost in Legon and Accra because we’re away and no one can understand what we say. Pause. And play because our time here is short so we resort to spending a standard day like it’s the last of the earth and discover our worth in the mirth we share. Care, laughing at all of my jokes, a cheeriness invoked as we soak our heads in bucket showers, hours of losing power, towers of dirty clothes impose and the moment my eyes close, I’m disposed. Back to wandering and sauntering, pondering, this new universe inspires me to write and rehearse a new verse on the daily, mainly because the time here I have is mine, left to explore in body and mind. 





*Erica Granor Nzinga, South Africa*

# From Elephants to Elevation

By Sophie Brickman

*Class of 2016  
Gaborone, Botswana*

In Hebrew, the word *olam* (world), is a derivative from world *neelam* (hidden). My time abroad began in Botswana and ended in Israel, and through my journey I discovered more hidden lessons, secrets and wonders than I ever imagined.

*Dumela* is the most common greeting in Setswana, the language spoken in Gaborone, Botswana's capital city. It means hello, how are you, etc., but it also means believe. In so many ways, I was enchanted by the beliefs of the Tswana people. As a clumsy foreigner immediately accepted into a local family, a young minority trying to navigate local transportation and cultural norms, I learned not only to believe in myself, but to also believe in the selflessness and generosity of others. Life became simpler in Botswana: clean water became scarce, power outages were frequent and simple appliances turned into luxuries. Family, respect and human connection were most valued. My host mother, Mmati, shared a Tswana proverb that stuck with me:

*There once was a very rich man who asked his new son-in-law to build him a house. "I'll give you as much money as you need. Spend it all! This house should be built with the best materials of the richest quality." 'My father-in-law will never know,' thought the young man, as he built the house with the cheapest materials, disguising them as the best, asking for more and more money. When the house was finished, the young man's father-in-law came to inspect it. "It's beautiful", exclaimed the father-in-law. "I love my daughter so much. I know that she is modest, so I gave you everything you could possibly need to build the best house for the two of you to grow old in."*

This is what Botswana taught me: to unplug and connect with those around me, to embrace rather than fear cultural differences, and most importantly, to genuinely treat others to the best of my ability simply because we are all human beings.

My wandering continued from Botswana to Zimbabwe to Zambia to Namibia to Turkey to Israel. The most common greeting in Israel, at

**Sophie Brickman Gaborone, Botswana**





**Sophie Brickman** *Jerusalem, Israel*

least in Hebrew, is *Shalom*. It means both hello and goodbye, but it also means peace. *Shalom*, we said, on the streets of Jerusalem, as we steadied our voices to mask the sounds of rioting a few blocks away. *Shalom*, on the shores of Ashdod, moments after running for shelter as sirens warned of incoming rockets. Transitioning from the slow culture of Southern Africa to a war zone, where tension, emotion and violence were strong but spirit and bravery were equally strong, continued to open my eyes to worlds I had never experienced. In the midst of the conflict, I felt a sense of elevation in my experiences—each physical experience seemed to gain more meaning and purpose.

Popular misconceptions about the countries I traveled to were on my mind throughout my journey. I want to share that yes, Africa is a developing continent, but each individual country within the continent is unique culturally, geographically, politically and structurally. We did have less access to clean water, electricity

and modern appliances in Gaborone, but we also lived in houses, rode public transportation, and went to malls and supermarkets and restaurants in a city that didn't just have single story buildings. Yes, in Israel we heard sirens, watched rockets being intercepted above via Iron Dome, and heard flares and riots in and around our neighborhoods. But, we felt welcomed and safe, and within reason, daily life went on as normal. While flights into the country were banned from multiple departure points and varying stories about current events were broadcasted on the news, the Israel I knew and the Israel the rest of the world knew seemed completely different. It still amazes me that throughout both Southern Africa and Israel, I found such clarity amongst the chaos.

Regardless of where your wandering takes you, to lose and gain pieces of yourself in the people you meet and places you go is the greatest gift, giving truth to the idea that not all who wander are lost. 

# The Maori people call her Aotearoa

By Jessica Hood (Top Prize)

*Class of 2015  
Auckland, New Zealand*

Aotearoa's hips are round and her thighs rub together like mine do.

She swallows me whole.  
Appetizer still awaiting a main course.  
I sink into her carriage  
swimming in her words:

"They lied  
when they told you you couldn't fit  
down the rabbit hole,

That plus size would be nightmare  
as you scale travel catalogues,

That your dress size would ruin an adventure."

They forgot Aotearoa birthed mountains large  
enough to scribble tales of warriors in the clouds.  
That she had stretch marks that could trace her  
ancestry back to its inception.

Her children were built for war.

Stone carvings guarding the entrance to her  
kingdom.

Aotearoa and I melted into each other  
Forms liquefied into lava  
We coexisted.  
Flew into Auckland  
landed in a pool of thick legs, swollen hips, and  
skin golden baked.

She rebirthed me.  
Welcomed me into her womb  
She transformed me.  
Left no room for depression  
She uplifted me.  
Floating, laid back, extended,  
Watching clouds drift  
in plus size formations.

The only highlight, the only response:

Aotearoa's hips are round and her thighs rub together like mine do.





Isaac Steinberg *Blue Mountains, Australia*

# The People You Meet

By Madeline List (Top Prize)

*Class of 2015  
Around the World*

I don't casually use the word 'dreams.' I used to think it was a word that should be reserved strictly for Disney songs and inspirational posters. But in the summer of 2014, I'm traveling alone on the brink of a new chapter in my life. As I move from Brazil to Argentina to Australia, and further west through Asia and Africa and Europe, I find myself dusting off that old cliché and thinking about what will become of my dreams. Part of me is convinced I have nothing to worry about. I'm living out a whirlwind of a story. After a semester of dealing with a crippling hit of rapidly declining vision and a back injury, I applied for and received a study grant to visit eight different countries and research organizations that help people with disabilities.

I've always wanted to travel, and the opportunity to live out this high school daydream is more than I could have ever expected. But in less than a year I'll be graduating, and part of me is scared that I won't be able to continue the adventurous life that I want. Part of me is afraid that I'll become just another post-grad stuck in a big city waiting to have a resume noticed and struggling to make ends meet. I can't think of a way to settle these anxieties so I carry them with me instead. Before I know it, those lingering fears over my personal goals are following my trail across every line of longitude.

On each leg of the trip, I encounter people who unknowingly rehash this idea of dreaming. In a suburb of Rio de Janeiro I meet Gabriel\*, who learned English as a boy when he spent time in a US hospital during a fight with polio. Gabriel has been in a wheelchair ever since, but he has founded and led one of the most impressive foundations for people with disabilities that I have seen in any of my travels. We sit in the main office of the foundation's sprawling campus, drinking sweet black coffee from thin paper

cups and working to understand each other's English. He mentions that he had polio only a year before the vaccine was introduced. I express my condolences over the tragic timing. He tells me "that's life," that bad things happen that you can't control. Then he tells me about the new purpose his life has taken on, the wonderful goals he has adopted, and of the thousands of lives he's changed with an organization he co-founded in his living room.

Then there's Maria, a Brazilian English teacher who I meet in the airport in Santiago on the long journey to Sydney. She tells me she has a friend in the US who used to live in Virginia with a husband and children, but was plagued by remorse of choosing to stay with her family instead of leaving to pursue grander aspirations. When the friend confided in Maria, Maria responded, "Sometimes, we need to give up on our dreams when it's for the people we love." Now that she bears the privilege of hindsight, Maria confesses to me that she doesn't know what possessed her to tell that to a friend. "I don't even believe it," she tells me, "it was just one of those things that you say in the moment." A few weeks later, the friend asked her husband for a divorce and left the family to move into a desert mansion with a wealthy new boyfriend in Arizona. For me, there's an unexpectedly sobering moment in the airport hall when I don't know what I fear the most: becoming the friend who hurts her loved ones after decades of regret, or becoming Maria, burdened by that accidental slip of the tongue with which she told her friend that some dreams must be laid to rest.

The flight to Australia is delayed and I pass the time with Bren, a computer programmer from Auckland with a ginger beard and a tired smile. He programmed a successful app and his company just went on the New Zealand Stock



*Donna Vatnick Arica, Chile*

Exchange. We sit down for freshly squeezed airport fruit juice and chat about business ideas, Maori culture, and space movies. Bren's company is in New Zealand but his girlfriend lives in London, and I start to see the pride, excitement, exhaustion, and sacrifice that accompany success. I wonder if I'll be in his shoes in the next few years, fresh off an adventure but far from the ones I love, bonding with a stranger on the long road home.

In Australia, I meet two members of "Every Australian Counts," a low-budget campaign that managed to convince the Australian government to invest billions of dollars to reform the disability welfare system. In a coffee shop that's a short walk from the Sydney Opera House, they tell me about the day they realized they were going to get their legislation passed and how they had to pull over to the side of the road to type up press releases on the victory. My mug clinks as I return it to the saucer and hastily scribble the story into my notebook. It's been many months since they lived out that day, but they tell the story with such excitement and zeal that I have a clear understanding of the adrenaline rush that came with the great news of reaching their goals.

By late June I'm in Indonesia, spending the morning wading through ice blue waters and exploring little islands and sandbars. I stop

in my hotel room to check news and social media and find the story of Isiah Austin. He was the basketball player expected to be called in the NBA draft, only to find that he had Marfan Syndrome, a disease which is accompanied by a life threatening heart condition that forced him to resign from the sport. I think of the long nights during my back injury that I spent staring at the ceiling and wondering if I could ever finish junior year, much less travel the world. I feel a tinge of guilt that I've spent the morning walking in the Pacific with the sand between my toes, victorious over my ills, while another health condition has brought Isiah's dreams to a screeching halt. I know I'm lucky. I know I've dodged a bullet.

Now I sit on my futon in Massachusetts drinking coffee out of a chipped mug and holding a new title, *circumnavigator*. No longer do those lines about holding fast to dreams go in one ear and out the other. The people I encountered gave color to my clichéd struggle. They humanized it, and showed me what I truly need to consider as I work towards my own aspirations. They taught me one of the things that make travel beautiful: the way it can revive an exhausted part of your life and wrap it in a brand new light. Wherever these people are now, they should know that I am indebted to them. 🍷

\*Name changed for research confidentiality purposes

Vinh Nguyen My Tho, Vietnam





Daniel Cline *Copán Ruinas, Honduras*



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