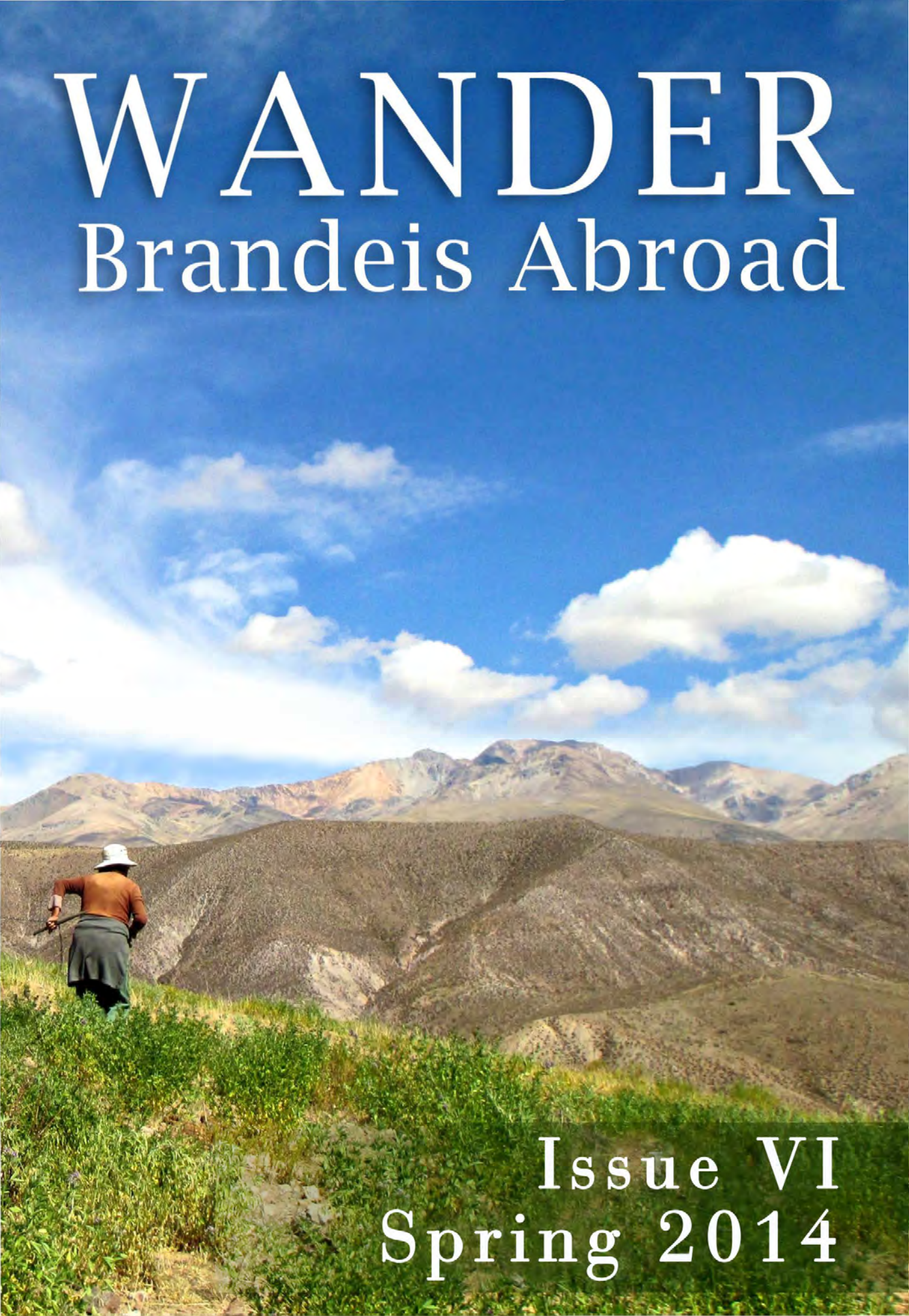
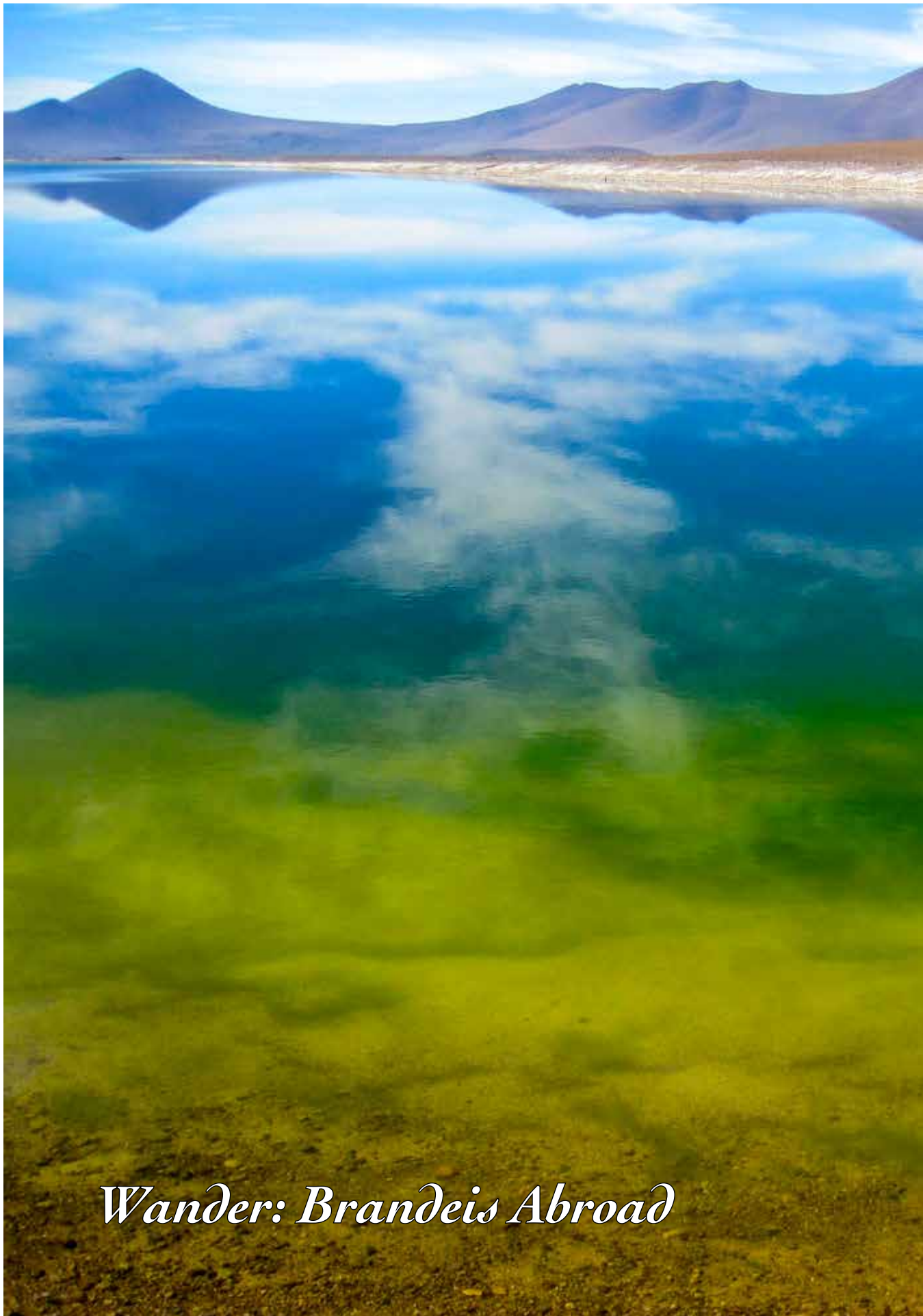


WANDER

Brandeis Abroad



Issue VI
Spring 2014



Wander: Brandeis Abroad



“A good traveler has no fixed plans, and is not intent on arriving.”

– Lao Tzu



Letter From The Editor



Welcome Wanderer,

Take a second to breathe the breeze – that gust has winded through many places to reach you. It's swept through the crisp green hills of Ireland (pg. 11). Blown through the luxury stores and beggars' fingers of Milan (pg. 23). Flown through the aroma of fresh groceries and frigidity of Wumart refrigerators (pg. 33).

I am studying abroad at the University of Sydney for the semester. While upside down to Brandeisi-ans, it feels far from foreign. My time here has been spectacular; I've met people and made friends from all corners and countries. Attended lectures in gothic buildings, hiked through eucalyptus scented mountains, enjoyed wine on grassy Law school lawns, and listened to midnight jazz at underground hangouts.

Traveling away from home is as much a mental trip as it is physical. Travelers reap the benefit of continuous learning, where wisdom and the unknown are abound, waiting for you to step into them. You discover landscapes and experience cultures. But just as the environment morphs its landscape, the land can change its ecosystem. A tourist breaks the bounds of voyeur when they immerse themselves and localize.

It is in this cultural pool that an individual must dive. Engage in the setting. Learn the language of the country, the tea clerk, the businesswoman, and the student and speak it when you can. Preoccupation with the consequent will always undermine the journey. It is in this moment of presence where we find ourselves and learn of others. Let your time abroad flow and find the current where you want to go.

Kia pai te haere*,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Isaac', with a stylized, cursive script.

Isaac Steinberg '15

* Best wishes for a happy trip - Māori

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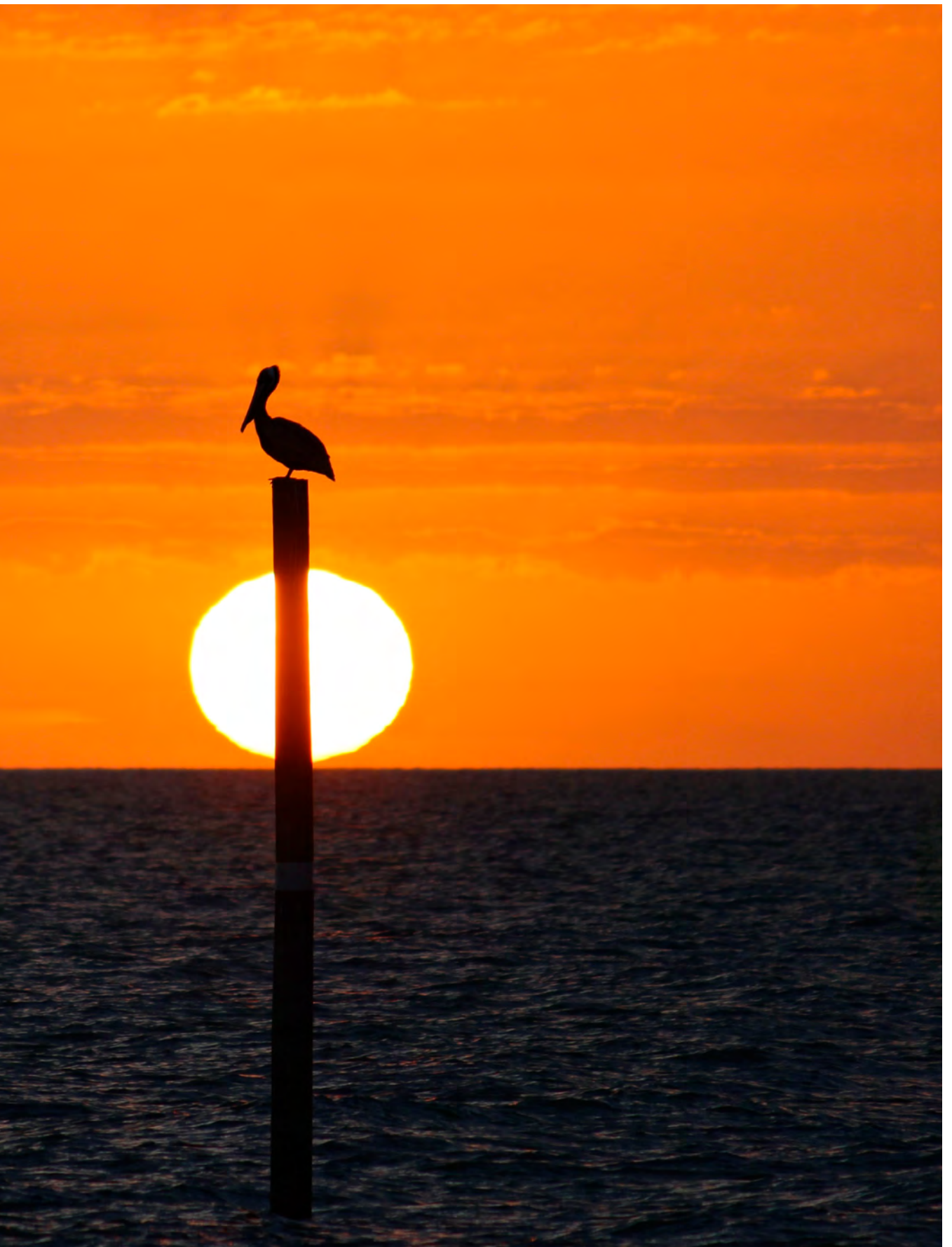
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Opposite Letter From The Editor: *Isaac Steinberg: Cradle Mountain, Tasmania, Australia*
Opposite Table Of Contents: *Alexandra Hall Neuchatel, Switzerland*



Samuel Ronkin *Saint Martin*



Traveling the Teddy Bear

By Barbara Rugg

*Class of 2015
Dublin, Ireland*

Dear Dublin's not much of a looker
She's got endless pubs and some snooker
But you bet she's got charm
Celtic Tigers don't harm
Recession, just for a bit, shook her.

Now Wicklow is lovely and quite fair
You're privileged if you can go there
With such gorgeous wild land
And Glendalough's tower-stand
The city won't be hard to foreswear.

Next town is called two names opposing
With "Derry" or "London-" exposing
Just which side you support
And with whom you consort
The Troubles are still quite imposing.

The one way to talk about Belfast
Is with sorrow for all that has passed.
It is felt in the air
And indeed everywhere
The deep scars from the fighting still last.

Killarney has nature abounding
I'm sure it's quite nice and astounding
But as happens quite oft
Swiftly came rain aloft
Floods prevent me from now expounding.

Most beautiful in the world: Dingle.
It does embody every single
Ideal set out for
Ireland. That and much more.
Beauty and dreams there intermingle.

Cork is truly a city of craic.
I hope maybe someday I'll go back
It's a chic little town
As the river runs down
Munster's heart of which one should keep track.

Well Limerick, ah limerick, inspired me
To poetize thus as required me
But that is about all
All Eire knows its downfall
Yes it's boring as boring can be.

Leinster, Munster, Connaught and Ulster
Make up the beauty and the luster
Of the country I love
More than all else above
No matter the rain or the bluster.





Tanvi Bahuguna *St. Andrews, Scotland, U.K.*

A Green Light in Copenhagen: My Introduction to Danish Obstetrics

By Damiana Andonova

*Class of 2015
Copenhagen, Denmark*

I arrived in Copenhagen sleep-deprived, stressed, and hungry for food and adventure. Walking through the streets of Copenhagen for the first time, I felt like the odd one out. It was as if in a sea of Danes, I was looking overhead, and I could single myself out. The Danish were different—in their regal gait, their foreign tongue, and their Scandinavian demure, edgy fashion.

As a frugal student traveler, I connected with some relatives to host me in their studio loft on Oster Sogade right by the artificial lake across from Rigshospitalet, the hospital I'd eventually visit to study how national health policy affects obstetrics healthcare delivery. As I hauled my luggage to the right address, I saw swans in the artificial lakes. And I could even see the swans and the hospital from my bedroom window, too.

My host took me to a Turkish buffet that evening. The morning after, I was instructed on how to make coffee on their fancy coffee machine, and was introduced to smorrebrod, a Danish rye bread. I learned to take it with strawberry and champagne preserves with some butter, by candlelight of course, because at approximately 6:30 am, the Danish sky was pitch black, and I cared to not use the lights in the loft apartment so as not to wake my kind hosts.

The walk to the hospital was a brief one. The hospital lobby with its modern lights and furniture was a welcome change from the yellow wooden furniture and rather repetitive décor of hospitals I'd toured in Boston and Chicago.

I still can't believe how my mentor, someone so busy, so integral to the daily function of the OB/GYN department, took me on an hour-long tour giving me a glimpse of the history of the obstetrics in Copenhagen using architectural models displayed throughout the hospital. I had never been treated like that by anyone before,

and his gesture I honestly hope I remember for the rest of my academic career.

On the first day, an extraordinary C-section stands out. There was a clear difference in the way things were done in the States. For one, the father was a support "object" that the mother leaned on while she was being prepared for an epidural, and there was a midwife and some neonatal staff prepping the beds for the newborns, of which there would be two. The surgery went smoothly and as the babies were born, they were handed to the midwife, the nearby anesthesiologist, and pediatrician, who asked me if I wanted to help stimulate the baby—to rub it with a clean cloth, as the nurses cleaned it and prepared it. I shook my head. He smiled. But only minutes later, the parents asked me to hold their son while they held their daughter. I moved around the green veil, and congratulated the parents. A resident came by and said, "You could come with me," but the anesthesiologist told her he already dealt me a task. I was going to carry the boy as they transported the parents and his sister upstairs to their room. The naturally lit room we entered was quiet and serene. There, I stayed with the anesthesiologist and saw the boy's sister being breastfed for the first time. I learned the baby's name and I discovered he had an older brother. The parents thanked me in English before I could manage a "tak," right before I left. It was something like a fairy tale and my description does not do it justice.

There were days when the clock's hands flew at a wild pace. Even in emergency situations, when we'd find that a normal delivery became abnormal, I observed a sense of urgency without panic, and a sense of determined action without the complication of flustered thoughts.

I met a resident whose name rhymed



Damiana Andonova *Copenhagen, Denmark*

with the Bulgarian word for ladybug. Following her, I learned how to analyze fetal monitors, observed two fetal scalp pH tests she performed, and saw many deliveries—each a unique experience in its own right. Once, she asked me to help her suction during one C-section. Another time, I stood at the patient’s right near the conclusion of her surgery. We talked to a lot of moms together, checked on their sutures, talked to them about their birth experiences. She encouraged my questions, explained how the medical school system worked.

There were times we’d both steal a few seconds of our day just to run and get a cup of coffee from the “køkken” [kitchen] before a C-section. Once in a while, we’d take a day-old sandwich, left unclaimed in the fridge, to nibble on while filling out patient charts. It was exhilarating. I remember parents thanking us for “our” efforts. And I remember how bashful I was at ac-

cepting such comments.

On lazy days, we talked about medical culture. She was shocked at my description of the pre-medical education in United States, asking “but how could one be motivated to do well?!” I smiled. If only Americans posed this question with an interrobang, too.

During lunch breaks, an “overlaege” [attending] taught me statistics on a napkin. We spoke of how misclassification could lead to “tweaked data” on clinical tradition and preference. I read two books on fetal ultrasounds while waiting to see a patient and munched on smorrebrod. Sometimes, I just ate lunch.

There were moments brought upon by the use of Danish, when I’d stop listening to the medical phraseology, and instead focus in as an alien observer. I took time to observe body language, count the minutes he would take to explain rhesus and platelet iso-immunization to

parents, and just really focus in on how care was delivered.

And what I saw was brilliantly clarifying. Teamwork, coordination, and an unspoken rule of “you’re not better than me and I am not better than you” culminated in a serene environment where women’s screams and moans were as important as the wellbeing of the baby. It was like an exemplar of how midwives and OBs work together. Talented midwives quietly monitored the baby and attended to the whims of the parents-to-be—more juice, a pillow or two, the management of pain—a water birth, epidural, or a gas mask, perhaps. Only in emergency situations was the quietness interrupted by the introductions of persons with titles.

In this strange way, language was the tool that gave me insider privilege and outsider status.

Between my waking in the morning in pitch darkness and leaving the hospital by nightfall, I rarely got to see the elusive Danish sun, which only peered through the periwinkle-grey sky briefly for sunrise and sunset. But those moments were magical, as rainbows chased the sun and bikers raced before it.

On one adventure, I scavenger-hunted for depictions of babies in village life paintings at the Thorvaldsen Museum minutes before closing time. On another adventure, I had dinner by myself. I went on a boat tour and met a Finn with whom I went sight-seeing one evening.

And between the days at the hospital and late evenings in the city, I had this strange idea that the elusive green light at the end of the dock I was chasing was lurking somewhere nearby. I was strangely satisfied. I told my roommates, “This is exactly what I wanted to be doing at this time of my life.”

And one fine evening, a few days before I headed back to the East Coast, I headed to Nyhavn to see the home of the famed folklorist. Attractions closed, and the air windy, I walked toward the end of the dock holding a to-go box of Pad Thai, hoping to catch a glimpse of the Royal Danish Playhouse. Flustered by hair flowing onto my face, I barely noticed reaching the end of the dock. And what it was that struck me right

in front of my path was a buoy with a glimmering emerald light that flashed through the misty, cold January wind. This was where I’d see the green light at the end of the dock?! The sight was triple interrobang worthy—it was just too right. Was this the quintessential Danish “hyggeligt” [no English translation] feeling?

On my last day at the hospital, I saw this old medical tool—a Pinard horn, and was excited to use it on a funny patient whose smile I was sure her son would inherit. I heard nothing, but definitely felt something. I jumped a bit at the surprise of a gentle thump—the baby’s heart beat. The day was almost over, and after saying my goodbye to everyone, I left with an excitement for what lay ahead. I enjoyed being in Copenhagen, but I found I hated traveling. After all, wandering around until I found the green light at the end of the dock was much more enjoyable than the long, hot, stressful journey it took to get there. **W**

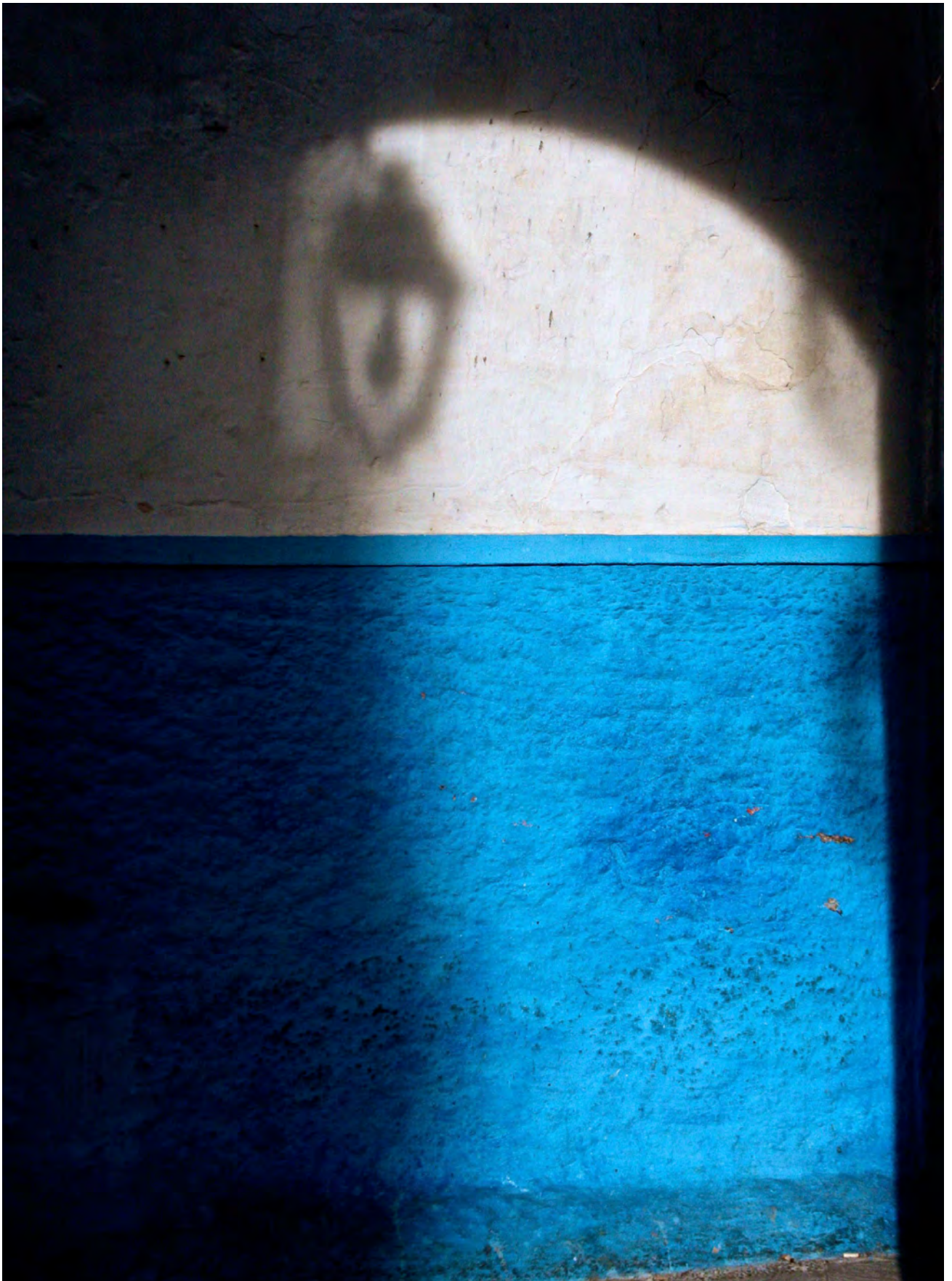




Alyson Eller *Paris, France*



Top: Julian Seltzer *Copenhagen, Denmark*
Bottom: Julian Seltzer *Hamburg, Germany*
Right: Eli Philip *Rabat, Morocco*





Eli Philip *Rabat, Morocco*



Molly Lortie *Pharping, Nepal*

My Passion for Spanish Culture

By Clayre Benzadon (2nd Prize)

*Class of 2017
Madrid, Spain*



My crimson-stained eyes adjust
to the wine-tinted light coming from outside.
I drowsily glance at myself in the mirror,
feeling too tired to move a muscle.
The chestnut scented fall air got the best of me,
however, and I ran outside, feeling as weightless
as the flag waving right above my head-
Stripes of ruby and yellow,
which continue to remind me of
my roots, my childhood,
the Spanish traditions and foods,
of fresh ripe cherry tomatoes,
of Gazpacho
And as I wait for the copper-rusted metro,
I start to realize that being exhausted
is not something to be worried about
in the hustle and bustle of
the Madrid city life.



Return: My First Visit to a Concentration Camp

By Brandon Gale

*Class of 2015
Dachau, Germany
Brandeis in The Hague*

I hadn't even remembered that Dachau was in Munich. My dad mentioned it to me when I told him I was visiting Germany for the first time that weekend. My family hadn't been in Dachau, but I am related to two survivors of Auschwitz. I was raised Jewish, so I'd learned about the camps for many years. I resolved to go.

Sunday started with a tour of the city with Mike, another person on my program who had made the journey. We decided to do that before seeing the camp. When the tour ended, we raced to the small town just outside the city, almost missing our train. At the moment it felt like the universe didn't want us to get there. There was something poetic about riding a train to the little town.

We arrived at Dachau station, laughing about the McDonalds in the station and making globalization jokes about it. We found our bus and rode it through the town, we were the only occupants besides a group of Italians. I kept seeing young people going about their business in the town, wondering to myself how anyone could have grown up in this quaint little village with a dark history.

We got off at the camp bus stop and walked down a gravel road. We had no map of the area, and were running out of time before the gates closed. We finally found it. A little two story gatehouse with white stucco walls. In the center was an iron gate, a small door in the center with the eerie words "Arbeit Macht Frei". Work Makes You Free.

We walked into the camp area and marveled at the size. It was shockingly open. Only two barracks remained, the rest removed except their foundations. The barbed wire fences were still there, and in the wide open space they still made me feel claustrophobic. A large camp headquarters stood at the front. The wood on the roof

still had the faded areas where "There is one path to freedom". Its milestones are: 'Obedience, honesty, cleanliness, sobriety, diligence, orderliness, sacrifice, truthfulness, love of the fatherland'" and had been written in white paint on the shingles. I picked up two stones when I entered: one for the tens of thousands who had died there, and another for my friend's great grandmother because she couldn't be there herself. We went to see the crematorium first, since it closed 15 minutes before everything else.

Mike and I exchanged few words. Most of the time walking I listened to the gravel beneath my feet, picturing the many disheveled Jews in striped clothing walking the same place. We passed many people while we walked, but no one said a word. I saw a girl wearing a sweatshirt from Santa Monica College, a school not 20 minutes from where I grew up. Anywhere else in Europe I would have run up to her and struck up a conversation. But not here. In this place you let people be to mourn.

We found the crematorium. It was so small that I couldn't believe its purpose. It had been built to convert the work camp into a death camp. A small square chimney jutted out of the roof. Mike took pictures while we walked. We looked at an informational board next to the entrance. It had a picture of a large pile of twisted bodies next to the crematorium. For the first time in my life I looked at the picture of dead holocaust victims' faces, then turned to my right and saw the exact spot where they had laid.

We entered the building, walking through the waiting room where the inmates were told they would be showered and the disrobing room where they left their clothes. Then I saw the large iron door. I knew it was the gas chamber from the first moment. I turned my head away, unable to look at it. I worked up my composure, and slowly walked in.

The room was dark, save for the light



Nelly Schläfer *Joal Fadlouth, Senegal*

through the doors and through the vents on the sides, which would be opened after 20-30 minutes to let the Zyklon-B gas filter out. There were fake shower heads in the ceiling, put there to convince the inmates until the final moments that they were taking a shower. There weren't any markings on the walls, but I could picture the naked men, women, and children scratching at them until their fingers bled and grasping at their throats as they suffocated to death. Every step I took required all my strength, from the moment I entered the chamber until I stepped out. The air outside felt somehow cleaner.

We walked from the room where they piled the bodies into the incineration room. It was the biggest room, with only four ovens, each capable of fitting four emaciated bodies. The rafters had been used to hang prisoners sometimes; there were nails jutting out at various angles from where the ropes had hung. I told Mike that I needed a minute, and went to sit outside on a bench, staring at the building. I felt several tears crawl down my face, but I didn't weep. I was too shocked for that. A stone table sat next to the crematorium. I held the stones close to my mouth and whispered the Mourner's Kaddish before placing them on the table.

Mike and I walked through the woods

next to the crematorium. There were concrete walls that had been used by firing squads. There were faint holes in the walls from the bullets. Various spots were marked by plaques, tributes to the unknown dead. Strangers sat in the woods writing in journals or reading books. The woods were beautiful, albeit scarred.

We walked through the rest of the camp in our limited time. We stopped by the Jewish memorial, a large stone cylinder with a hole in the top reminiscent of a chimney. We walked between where the barracks formerly stood, trees lining the path. At the end, right in front of the headquarters, stood a large metal statue. It was a section of the barbed wire fence, with bodies twisted in. The faces were in horror.

We left half an hour after the camp had officially closed. They weren't going to kick us out; you don't do that in this place. Mike and I rode the bus back to the train station in almost silence, and stopped at the McDonalds for burgers. When I asked him how he felt about coming to the camp, he said he thought there was something beautiful in our people coming here forcibly, and us returning voluntarily. Then we made more jokes about globalization, and I laughed again. **W**

Milan: The City of Opulence and Poverty

By Victoria Aronson (3rd Prize)

*Class of 2015
Milan, Italy*

“Bella, un euro, per favore. Ho bambini, bella....” The voice echoes in my ear, I can feel his focused gaze boring into my soul, sensing my hesitation and guilt. My fingertips slip around the cool, circular euro stowed safely in my pocket, toying with the cold metal and concealing it from sight. I keep my eyes averted, staring pointedly at the perilous black subway track only a few feet ahead of me until I hear the footsteps shuffling slowly pass?, eyes surely locking on to the next bystander.

Scenarios such as this have become a marker of my daily commute, a precarious moment that instills a sense of guilt and pity as my eyes meet those of the beggars that line the metro station. My mind cannot even fathom the sheer loneliness I imagine some of them must endure, grappling to survive on their own, relying on the station as a last ditch shelter to protect them from the constant rain that has been pouring from the skies of Milan for the last two months.

When thinking of Milan, images of suffering and poverty are not the primary associations that pervade the mind. Teeming with the allure of high fashion, the city offers an enticing glimpse into the world of luxury, the outlandish window displays of La Rinascente, Prada, and Armani beckoning to passerby and dripping with decadence. Yet, it only takes a few days to come to realize the economic disparity that is laced throughout the city.

Shop keepers at Prada will watch suspiciously as my friends and I stumble through, sheerly out of curiosity, staring wide eyed at walls of personalized handbags, designer perfumes, and endless arrays of shoes. I cannot restrain myself, I sneak a glance at the price tag of a plain, white cotton t-shirt for men, a replica of a Hanes garment displayed in prominent view. 80 euros.

My mind quickly calculates the conversion, approximately 120 American dollars. My breath inhales sharply, and my eyes turn to follow the precarious, slow stagger of a woman balancing in four inch cream heels, clutching a designer handbag in her freshly manicured hands.

I trip slightly over the worn, peeling sole of my leather boots before I exit the shop.

Just a brisk walk away, sits an old man, his tan skin wrinkled with age, perched on the curb of the street, with a cup placed by his feet and a few coins cast inside.

My mind does not know what to make of this stark contrast; beggars sleeping on thin blankets hidden inside the shelter of the metro station, a mere brisk walk away from the extreme opulence of luxury brands stores. Vendors line the streets, the majority of whom are immigrants in Italy, selling the same umbrellas and purses at every corner. Speaking in an accent I cannot trace, they tie brightly colored bracelets around the wrists of passerby. The blue, yellow, and orange strands of mine are fraying, but the memory remains clear. A vendor near the beautiful port of Genova had grabbed my wrist, insisting the bracelet was a gift when I told him I had no money. Tying the loose ends of the strings, he wished me life, love, and happiness, a wish from one traveler to another. W





Natacha Benabou *London, England, U.K.*



Ilana Weisz *Copenhagen, Denmark*

Breaking Up With Lonely Planet

By Mia Katan

*Class of 2015
Budapest, Hungary
Brandeis in The Hague*

My fingers traced streets with unintelligible Hungarian names in my worn copy of Lonely Planet. My personal travel bible ensured a weekend packed with the necessary checklist of sights, restaurants, and bars. I arrived at Carpe Noctem Vitae, a party hostel of the most nefarious kind, with promises of pub-crawls and hot spring raves. I was greeted by Cyclops, one of several hostel workers who intended to visit Budapest, and as if they drank ambrosia, never left. Tattoos, dreads, and a scar across his eyebrow suggested he could supply an adventure. With my days following the formulaic rhythm of an American tourist checking off sights and my nights staggering behind a hostel worker like a slightly drunk sheep each minute was packed with experiences. There was only one problem. I had come to experience Budapest. With every minute thoughtfully planned by the publishers of Lonely Planet and hostel workers this experience was entirely constructed. The city was an exhibit I experienced through the eyes of my guidebook and tour guides with the less attractive backstage neatly tucked away.

One night I escaped this carefully constructed world created to satisfy young backpackers looking for the perfect concoction of culture and entertainment. Leaving a floating bar on the Danube River I grabbed the last tram back to the comfort of my hostel. Accompanied by three Brazilians who spoke little English, we anticipated being dropped off at the hostel doorstep in a couple stops. However, this tram quite literally took an unexpected turn. As we found ourselves further and further away from the city center in the middle of the night I decided we should get off at the next stop. The last ones on the tram, we stepped into a dark, concrete, industrial area void of traffic or pedestrians. Gone were the brightly lit bars, two story H&Ms, and cafes. Having

left my Lonely Planet at home we turned to the phone booth several blocks away. As the only native English speaker I slipped an incomprehensible amount of Hungarian coins into the machine. The hostel had provided us with bracelets listing a taxi number and the hostel's address. As if a child separated from a parent I desperately dialed several times before getting through and stumbling to pronounce the intersection where we stood. A taxi came and returned us to our balanced bubble of adventure and safety. Tourism is a trade off of a packaged positive experience and limited awareness of local realities. Budapest taught me to give my Lonely Planet a glance then leave this safety net in my suitcase.

"I'm going to immerse myself in the local culture" is the anthem of study abroad students determined to live like locals and have an authentic experience. Study abroad programs sell these "genuine experiences" through language immersion and homestays. Can an outsider magically transform into a local within a semester? Can an observer transcend their personal background and become a participant? An Indian rickshaw driver successfully wooed my friends and I with the promise of, "a real Indian experience like you won't find in Lonely Planet." He knew how to speak the language of want-to-be adventurers seeking the exotic and craving uniqueness. We took him up on his offer. After a whirl of overpriced shops and museums it was clear he gained a commission from each purchase we made. The profits from our attempted escape from "normal tourism" went to our entrepreneurial rickshaw driver rather than Lonely Planet's publishers. In the end we had exchanged one constructed experience for another.

As my bus crossed into Scotland my cheap Dutch phone ceased to work. The plan to meet up with friends when I arrived became almost im-

possible. I arrived in Edinburgh and began walking without wifi, a travel companion, or plan. I strolled streets that appealed to me the most. I began walking uphill and discovered an incredible view of the city, mountains, and monuments highlighting by the setting sun. As it began to get dark, having not connected with friends, I walked into the nearest hostel. Asking for their cheapest bed I resigned to find my friends the next day. The next morning brought more miscommunication and aimless wandering. I stumbled upon Edinburgh Castle and only in a kilt exhibit over the sound of recorded bagpipes did my phone finally ring. The freedom of meandering without plans or purpose, without attempting to define or undefined myself as a tourist, impressed Edinburgh so clearly as a place, rather than an experience, in my mind. Within those 24 hours of spontaneity

Edinburgh was converted from a checklist into a city.

When we leave to be elsewhere it is important to consider why. Do we leave to observe the other or to become a part of it? Is it better to submit the constructed experience of souvenirs and guided tours or fight to escape and risk ruining the illusion of a beautiful city? When I leave for Gulu, Uganda next semester Lonely Planet won't be there to help. There will be no guided tours, pub-crawls, or museums. There is also no opportunity to "blend in." I will never fool anyone into believing I am a local. I will have to find beauty and adventure without guidance while recognizing I'm an observer who will eventually take a flight home. **W**



Alexandra Patch *Hallstatt, Austria*



Eli Philip *Fes, Morocco* (1st Prize)





Eli Philip *Chefchaouen, Morocco*

Fashion Show

By Eli Philip

*Class of 2015
Rabat, Morocco*

There's a sense of fashion that permeates the cobbled alleys of Moroccan cities. Smart suits and comfortable fedoras, an easy gait, a knowing smile. Hints of Parisian boulevards and Zara advertisements fill the streets as they pass by subdued beggars sprawled underneath towering palm trees with hands outstretched in dulled hope.

A certain sense of fashion is cultivated on Moroccan streets. Tight-jeaned legs broadcast clandestine sexuality to addicts of coffee and

sugary tea lounging on the bare chairs dotting a café stoop. Men suspended in a timeless gaze. Eyes locked onto the trail of sweet perfume move of their own accord to a rushed moment of suggestive contact. Long fingers skillfully brush silky locks of dark hair, a turn of the head, a backwards glance.

Wispy beards thrust through earthy-colored hooded robes, thick black tights dispel the allure of would-be revealing jean shorts. There's fashion in Morocco. **W**



Ben Udo Boudha, Nepal

Finding Yourself

By Jake Cohen

*Class of 2015
Bangalore, India
Brandeis India Science Scholars Program*



When do you find yourself?

When reaching the oasis means an offering of your hair to a Yogi?

When finding a usable bathroom turns into a two hour long journey?

When accessing the internet means getting chased by dogs for 2 km?

When having to bike back through it again at 2 a.m.?

When your shower is a bucket?

When a “waterproof” thermometer explodes when water touches it?

When hand-washing your pants and shirt?

When envying a man sleeping on cardboard as you lie on dirt?

When a litter of puppies sleep by your restaurant table?

When you watch dancers bring to life a fable?

When falling asleep standing up on a crowded bus?

When a monkey is stealing your juice box?

When you wonder if you’ll come back alive from a bike ride to FedEx?

When everything you eat has enough spice to down a T-Rex?

When biking to class looks like National Geographic?

When you can pet a cow while waiting in traffic?

When beautiful flowers grow with burning trash?

When your mail gets eaten by rats?

When a child can make you look like a fool?

When a million people are chanting all around you?

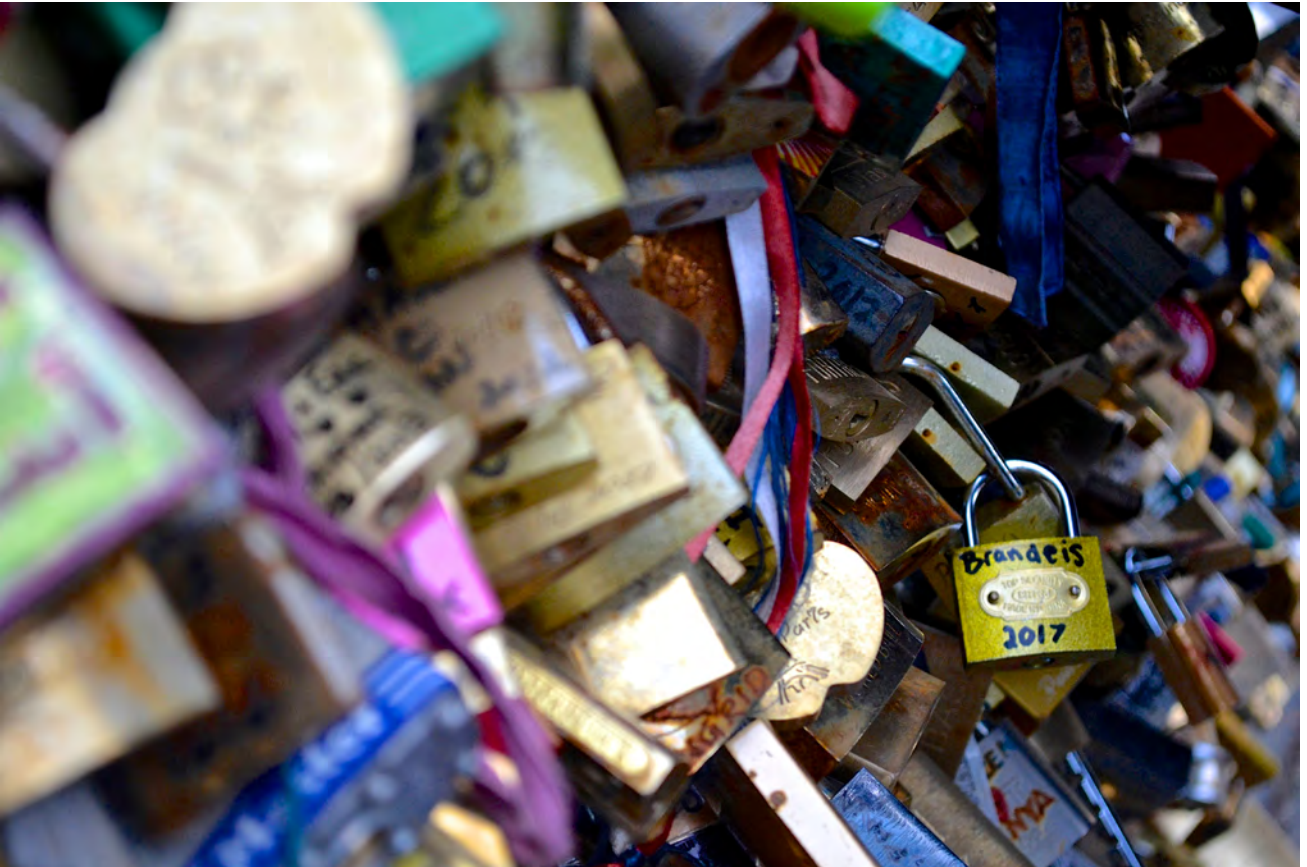
When do you find yourself?

When you have let yourself be lost.





Alina Pokhrel *Bhopal, India* (2nd Prize)



Rebecca Korn *Paris, France*

The Essence of China Found in a Supermarket

By Alec Siegel

*Class of 2015
Beijing, China*

The inventory is stacked neatly in rows and columns, and is categorized just like any grocery or convenience store in the states. There's a produce section, an area for fresh meat and fish, aisles upon aisles of snacks and drinks. Wu Mart (Wu Mei in Chinese), however, is the furthest thing from familiar. Tucked away in a strip in the Haidian District of Beijing amongst the dry-cleaner, fruit stall, salon, phone store, and other smaller convenience shops, Wu Mart has acted as not only a place for me to pick up daily necessities, but also a way for me to peek through a microscope and view China through a unique lens.

In contrast to the bright LEDs and relaxed atmosphere of a Walgreens or a Whole Foods, Wu Mart, like the country it's situated in, is fast paced. It's loud, it's smelly (both good and not so good), it's vibrant, eye candy abounds, and it's

tightly packed. It's overwhelming at times and a rush at others. Although help traversing the foreign environment can be found where it's least expected. It's all of these attributes together that make Wu Mart a microcosm of China.

Mangosteens, a delicious Asian fruit with a deep purple exterior and an edible, milky white interior, passion fruit, apples, pears and plums await picking in an ice bin. Barrels of rice, selling for just cents, sit in the corner. The skinned, raw meat of creatures I never knew existed occupy the glass compartments in the back. Colors burst and pop at every turn. Chip bags and other snacks have either a cartoon or a Chinese celebrity endorsing the product on the front.

As is the case in the bustling streets outside, old and new coexist in Wu-Mart. The cashiers ring you up with what look to be the actual computers Bill Gates might have worked on dec-



Michael Secular *Beijing, China*



Maya Shemtov *Amsterdam, Netherlands*

ades ago. Two monks, both bald and with glasses, wearing nothing but gray robes, stood behind me in line the other day. Old school chivalry also exists; while I was checking out one day, I was having trouble communicating with the cashier. My mix of agitated English and butchered Chinese apparently didn't equal anything coherent. A middle aged Chinese man who I would never have guessed spoke a word of English came to my rescue and served as a liaison.

Packs of schoolgirls giggle, most with hairstyles I'm sure the older generation here scoff at, their way through the market. A small child was laughing and dancing as her mother waited in line at the cashier. A sort of escalator and airport walkway hybrid (a walkalator?) takes you to the bottom level. Young men with Nike Basketball shirts and crocs, and young women with Gucci bags and western style outfits navigate the maze of goods. Wumart is a place where the modern and the traditional collide. Wu Mart is a place where a trip for a snack can turn into something unexpected and magical. My daily

trips here have opened my eyes to the newness of not just this local market, but of my new residence as a whole. The only semblance of familiarity came in the small child's twirls and whoops, and the wide smile on her face. I guess being in a place with an endless stock of food is a universal joy. **W**



Maps

By Hannah King (1st Prize)

*Class of 2015
Luang Prabang, Laos*

An hour after daybreak, I'm curled beneath a shawl on a slow boat humming northeast along the Mekong River. It is January in Luang Prabang, Laos. Small islands abloom with cabbage and eggplant emerge from the glassy water like shoulder blades. The grey-headed lapwing cautiously navigates between the vines that graph the sandbanks on his delicate, spindly legs. A thousand Buddha figures at the mouth of the Ou River have already awakened and perhaps never slept. I think, *never forget, never forget*. Never forget the way in which, balanced upon a boulder along the shoreline, a young man pressed a stack of papers to his heart as you passed and gesticulated towards the horizon as if rehearsing for a part in a play; never forget that you'll never know what was written on those pages. Never

forget your otherness, your transience through this place not your own—the way in which the mist, resting along the paths of the sand gardens, unaffected, did not return your gaze.

But I have forgotten. Or at least, my memory has forgotten the urgency with which—at so many different times in so many different places—I had pleaded this promise. From amid another winter far from the Mekong, I can see now that I was feverishly collecting fragments with which to sew into myself a Lao dawn, from which an intact map defiant of space and time would materialize. I believed it possible—inevitable even—that a map whose coordinates were a shimmering river and a boat ride to a pair of caves was forming itself as I went along, melding my transience into transcendence, into some-



Ben Udo Nong Klew, Laos



Molly Lortie *Bhutan*

thing that I could run my fingers along like a equator.

But memory is un-routable, the distorted images nestled within it un-retrievable in any linear, longitudinal sense; as fine and wispy as mist, it spreads out infinitely to relocate itself further and further from its origin. The world spins on, its own route eroding any hope of reconstructing my own. I have no maps within me—only the numerous, shifting, floating fragments that I had once desired to make and keep whole. When I close my eyes they come to me, the Neverforgets. The boy monk who, after we'd meditated one evening, wished us good dreams that night, and the dream I had had—a memory without even a memory—of a school of fish desiccated on the street like silvery cobblestone, the sea hovering above Mount Phousi like a storm. The feel of the small Burmese girl's hand in mine as she walked me along the Ayeyarwady River, the way her mother had said to me, You're beautiful, you're white, and how unforgivably insurmountable centuries of trickery and cruelty felt with those words. The sluggish, swaying, heaving train ride to Mandalay during which I saw—amid

a landscape of mud and plastic—one of the most beautiful women I've seen, amber-glowing and gloved in a peacock-blue sari. *Never forget, never forget.* The look of the sun haloing the Annapurna range from the top of Poon Hill; the butteriest naan in all of Old Delhi; the relief and magic of standing upon an invisible sandbar in the middle of the Great Barrier Reef, as the whole of it slowly, irretrievably disintegrates into take-home-sized calcium carbonate souvenirs.

An hour after daybreak, and I'm curled beneath a coat in a car buzzing along the I-80 East. The fragmented memories of places not my own swim beneath my surface and clunk into each other; each time they come to bang against the backs of my eyelids they shed some piece of their origin. I have no maps within me. So I let the fragments come to rest in words on a page. Perhaps, perhaps, the young man balanced upon a boulder along the Mekong was doing the same, pressing the words of all he had ever seen to his heart, citing it to the river and the sky to let it linger on the breeze. **W**



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Dublin, Ireland

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