

Harmony

和



SNOW

SNOW

Slippery, blinding
Shoveling for hours
Hazardous, cold
Causing accidents
Makes you want to stay inside

SNOW

Pretty, glistening
Children play and make snowmen
Snowflakes sparkling
A carpet of pure white
Frozen wonderland outdoors

~Sheila A. Hightower

A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

I'm from Eritrea. Some Eritrean customs are different from the ones in America.

Once when I was ten years old, my parents had to travel to the village for a whole week because of an emergency. While they were away, all of our neighbors took care of my brothers, sisters, and me. Helping each other in this way is not unusual, because in Eritrea we believe that it takes a whole village to raise children.

Five years ago, I bought my first house in the United States. I have neighbors on both sides of me, but none of them talk to me, other than smiling and saying hello. I don't think that there is the same kind of community life here that there is in Eritrea.

Life is very easy in the United States. Kids have more things than they need. Kids here don't respect their parents. I think that as soon as they become teenagers in the United States, children are allowed to do whatever they would like.

Life is very hard in Eritrea. Many kids suffer there. Children are respectful to their parents. When they become teenagers, they have a lot of responsibility taking care of their younger brothers and sisters.

In an Eritrean household, for example, the father is the provider for the other members of the family. If he becomes sick or hurt, one of the older children has to assume his role in the family. If necessary, this child must take time off of school so he can earn money. Since Eritrean women are not allowed to work outside the home, one of the children has to make this sacrifice. The community is

always there to help too. The family always knows that it is not alone in a crisis.

I have met some Americans who feel the same sense of community that I grew up with in Eritrea. For example, I used to work at Value City, and one of my coworkers became just like a member of my family.

I hope change is coming; I hope more people here will learn to help each other. I hope that we will all learn the lesson that human beings are more important than material things.

~Fereweini Gebrehiwet

WHEN WILL THIS CEASE?

In a life of violence and uncertainty,
I'm uncertain of my life this time around.
When I sleep, I dream of being wide-awake.
When I'm wide-awake is the only time I sleep.
Recuperating from countless loveless and new surroundings
Often it seems I'm reunited with a love of the past.
When I close my eyes for a break in time,
Nothing has changed.
But upon optical clarity
It is irrefutable that everything is different.
I mutiny my own mind over and over
To free me from this horrid curse,
I beg and plead
But it shows no emotion or mercy.
When will this cease?
Can anybody tell me when the storm will blow over?
And for once allow me
To reconstruct the pieces of my soul and life
So I can finally live in peace.
That's all I want.
Peace
...Peace

~Bradley C. Bechtel

WHERE I'M FROM

I am a Black African Queen,
From the heat of my mother's body, born into the heat from
the old potbelly stove
In my grandmother's house.

I'm from a beautiful black family, the most loving and the
most hurt family.
From a family that has a body of lies and a bed of tears
A family that has no color,
With a grandmother from the Ukraine and a grandfather
from America.
Always together, even when there's hard times—we stick
together like glue.

I am from a family where all we know is loving and caring,
hugs and kisses,
Enjoying every day life brings.
From Grandma and Grandpa to my mom and dad,
And now I have my own generation, from me to my daughter
to hers.

I'm from the root of the Rose that grows up through
concrete,
From the despair, grief and pain of gun violence that claims
my family and friends.
From the cactus that has thorns that will hurt you whenever
you touch them
And having big responsibility at such a young age.
Couldn't no one else but my mother keep me going,
A single mother with thirteen children to raise
The Daisy who had a daughter, and she is me.

I'm from Columbus, where we folks eat a lot of ribs and
greens,

From Cleveland, the lakes and inner city.
I am from nothing more than what you call a duplex, but to
me it's a half of a double.
From Heaven and Ivory soap, 50 cent and zebra cakes.

I am from the sweet smelling grass when it rains in the
morning.
From soil, sunflower, laughter, respect and loyalty
From the apple that doesn't fall far from the tree
And the streets that will hurt you if you let them.

I am from faith, love and hope,
From being hurt to finding the Lord.
I am from "I'm going to make it" and "Never give up"
From "Always hold your head up" and "Follow your dreams."
From dreamers who believe in trying to make a difference.

I am an open spirit, full of hope
I'm from a world that I'd like to call love.

~Godman Guild Group Project by

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MIND TRICKS

Your thoughts can make you crazy! A depressing thought is a type of illness. I had an experience that convinced me.

I still remember the day when my uncle passed away in my arms, in a hospital in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. It was the worst day of my life! A doctor at the hospital told me that my uncle had died because of liver cancer. I asked myself, "Why did my uncle have to leave me?" He was only 32 years old! My uncle was like my oldest brother. We were raised together.

The day after he died, my family and I decided to arrange for his funeral. Two weeks later, my husband and I drove home. I started to feel lonely even though I had my own family to take care of me. I didn't talk or listen to anybody.

One month later, I was very sick and my stomach hurt a lot. I went to see a Vietnamese doctor, but he could find nothing wrong with me. I was sure I had stomach cancer. I wanted to have an appointment with the doctor every day, but he wouldn't allow me. I was upset and hated it when the doctor told me that there was nothing wrong with my stomach. He told me that I had a mental problem.

Two weeks later, I went to an endoscopy center to meet a specialist who examined my stomach, but he couldn't find anything wrong either. Instead, the doctor advised me to eliminate my depression by learning to relax. So, each night before going to bed, I began to sit quietly with my legs crossed. I felt better with my eyes closed. My mind became clear when I focused on one thing and practiced slowly breathing in and out. One month later, as I continued learning more about how to relax, I began to feel better and my stomach pains disappeared.

It is true; the more you worry, the more upset you will become! I realize now that even if you are going through a lot, you have to learn to relax your mind. It's always a good habit to clear your mind and not let things get to you and make you crazy.

~Xeng Veopraseuth

SIMILAR YET DIVERSE

Interesting Diverse
Learning Communicating Eating
Unique Creative Similar United
Inspiring Progressing Socializing
Friendly Imaginative
World Citizens

*~Live Oaks Group Project by
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THE POWER OF THANK YOU

How do you feel when someone shows you appreciation? Even if it is a simple phrase like “Thank you” or “Thanks a lot,” it makes you feel better. Suppose you have just gotten back from a very exhausting and upsetting business trip. You might feel better and get over your fatigue when you hear that your boss or colleague tells you “Thank you, welcome back.” Only one phrase may help you feel relaxed and comfortable yourself. Just hearing someone say “Thanks” to others may give you a warm feeling when you are disappointed. I think it is amazing that such a short phrase could change our feelings.

I read a Japanese article that reported that “Thank-you greetings” recently have become less used among young people in Japan. Since I have said “Thank you” many times a day and told my daughter not to forget to say that, I don’t understand the reason. Whenever I feel as if I left something behind and feel sorry about it, I forget to say “Thank you.”

“Thank you” makes people happy. When I do something for others, they usually say “Thank you.” I do not expect any appreciation from them, though. If you say “Thanks” on the surface, nothing will change. If it comes from the bottom of your heart, it surely will give a happy feeling not only to others but also to you.

When I was a child, my parents always told me that we should be thankful for many things; for God, being alive, being healthy, the fact that I could go to school, my teacher, and even little things in our daily life. We cannot live without a lot of invisible help. We should not take anything for granted. Being grateful makes us realize how happy we are. Feeling how happy we are makes our lives much better. We never forget to express our happy and grateful feelings, which

have the magical power to warm our hearts and our relationships with people in the world.

I believe that the more expressions of “Thank you” there are in our world, the happier we will be. Could you imagine that this easy, simple, and familiar message brings us great happiness? Why don’t you try to use this magic when you see someone who doesn’t seem happy?

In the end, I would like to deeply express my appreciation to my ESOL instructor Susan Renner, her aide Julie Frye, the many generous volunteers who have been instructing me, the kind classmates at Live Oaks, and to my dear family who has been supporting me.

~Yuko Akiyama

THEORIES OF IMMIGRATION

A few months ago, my wife and I went to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles to take the written part of the driver's test. The test was computer-based. I was assigned a booth where I would take the test and my answers would be recorded by touching a monitor screen. I was surprised to hear from an official that there were versions in several different languages and that I could choose one of them, and not have to take the test in English. Unfortunately, there was no option to select Korean, which is my mother tongue, but I was intrigued by this concern to make the test more accessible for immigrants. Later in my ESL class at Case Western Reserve University, I learned that there are as many as 21 different languages provided for the written test in New York. We also learned that the United States has never declared English as its official language.

In the last century, the United States was known as the *melting pot* in the manner that it absorbed immigrants. The image was that of a large container that dissolves lots of metals into one piece of iron. Therefore, a melting pot philosophy meant that immigrants from different countries would become one unified people, who have the same identity. If this is the case, it is not a good idea to provide a variety of languages for something like a driver's test since this does not force immigrants to learn English. Without the language, immigrants can't integrate into mainstream America. Everyone speaking a different language can hardly unite into "one people." Such a system could lead to a separatist movement like the one in Quebec, Canada, where many people felt that they did not want to use English as the rest of Canadians do but instead insisted on using French. To establish the "melting pot" of one identity, one must start with the premise that all the citizens use the same language.

More recently, a different term has been used to describe the immigrant experience. The *salad bowl* theory of immigration means that people don't lose their own ethnic identities but instead are allowed to maintain their unique identities. The new image is that of a salad bowl in which all the vegetables are mixed together but still retain their unique features. When mixed together, each ingredient tastes different than when eaten on its own. I admit that this image does not convey the same cohesion as the piece of iron, but salads are inviting just because of the variety in the taste. A *salad bowl* approach to immigration respects the unique cultures of the individual immigrants while encouraging them to assimilate to American customs. This, in turn, strengthens America.

I think that each theory has its merits and its defects. Therefore, it is best to take the strong points from each one. Immigrants should be unified into America, but America should take advantage of the diversity of these newcomers for the betterment of the economic, political, and educational systems. In the ESL class, I learned that some states have passed bills declaring an "English only" policy which I do not support. I certainly see the dangers of too much language diversity as described in the Tower Of Babel story in the Bible, but I think it is better to support programs for learning English, like my ESL class than not to provide foreign language services. The United States has become strong because of its language diversity, not despite it.

~Seung-Ho Yang

ONE DREAM COMES TRUE

Slaves helped build the White House. The land that became Washington D.C. was acquired from the states of Virginia and Maryland. Both states practiced slavery.

Historic payroll reports document that many of the workers hired to build the White House were African Americans. Some were free, and some were owned as slaves. The African American workers worked along side white laborers. They cut sandstone, dug footers, built foundations, and fired bricks for the White House. After working all day, the slaves were put in underground cells while their owners enjoyed the comfort of local hotels in the area.

The architect for the White House, James Hoban, owned three slaves who worked on the project. The owners of the slaves received payment for their work.

Slavery was finally outlawed in 1865, but the inequality continued. Even after nearly 100 years after it was banned, Pennsylvania Avenue did little to advance justice for the African American race.

In 1964 President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act, outlawing discrimination of blacks in restaurants, department stores, and schools.

From 1964 to 2009, our country and the world saw great changes. As the 44th President Barack Obama took his oath of office January 20, 2009, we see our first black President of the United States.

President Obama spoke of himself as “a man whose father, less than 60 years ago, might not have been served at a local

restaurant, yet one who could take this country's most sacred oath."

As we look back over the history of the slaves in the United States of America, those who worked on the construction of the White House, cooks, housekeepers, fieldworkers, teachers, business owners, soldiers of war, we see that they are a big part of who we are today. They never could imagine in their wildest dreams that a man and woman of "color" would sit in the White House as the 44th President of the United States and the First Lady.

Yes, we can bring hope to all people of the world. We are not the red states or the blue states; we are the United States of America.

God bless America and God bless the world!!!

~JoAnn Franke

