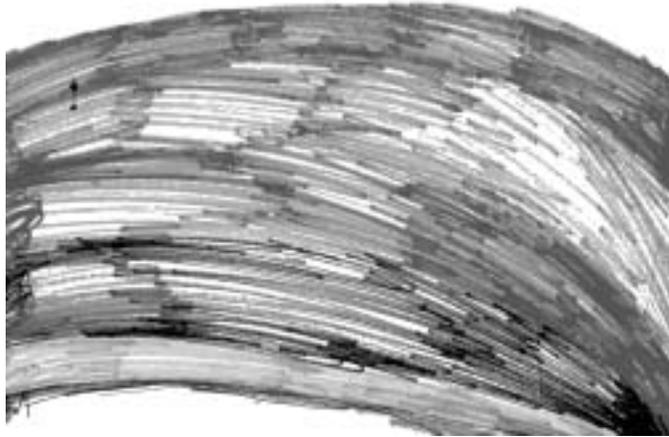


*Beautiful Ohio: Land
Where My Dreams
All Come True*



Artwork created by Gaye Weatherall



THE DAY I'LL NEVER FORGET

It was Monday morning in 1987. My mother took me to school. At around twelve noon, I saw black smoke and fire with a very loud sound that made everybody run out from school. I thought it was the end of the world. Both pupils and teachers ran.

I tried to run, but I felt like something was holding me to the ground. I tried as much as I could to get out, but I could not. I was lucky. A man coming from nowhere came and picked me up and ran with me. When we came out of the school compound, everybody was just running in different directions. The sound, smoke, and fire increased.

I saw a plane dropping some big drum-like things. When I asked the man, he told me, "Those are bombs, not drums." I asked him, "What are bombs?" He said, "These are what the army uses to fight." I did not know where my father and mother and my sisters were. We ran to the nearby town some miles away from my town. The men took great care of me. I cried day and night and asked where my father and mother were. Nobody could tell me.

I was taken to a nearby school. I spent four years in Ethiopia without my father and mother. When the war broke out in Ethiopia, I moved to Kenya, where I spent several years. In Kenya, I found out where my father and mother were. They tried looking for me all those years but could not find me. My mother came to me when she heard that I was in Kenya. She told me that people told them I was not alive. It is always good for children to grow up with their parents' love, and I missed it.

I will not forget the day my mother left me in school.

Laat Arier

SNOW

When everything is covered with white snow,
It looks like a beautiful photo.
I can smell neither grass nor soil.
I can see neither green nor brown.
I hear just a quiet sound.
I taste the moment.
It touches me mysteriously.
Snow refreshes and cleanses my tiring thoughts.

Mamie Ito

SEPTEMBER ELEVEN

It was Tuesday morning when I took off from Nairobi to Amsterdam. It was a long trip with much excitement. Everybody was happy to leave one hundred degree heat. Life had not been easy in our refugee camp in Kenya due to the many problems that were facing people in the camp. Some of these problems were lack of medication, food, shelter, and clothing, and killing at night by unknown people. Such a situation made many people think going to the USA would solve a lot of problems. We needed a country with peace and freedom.

At five o'clock, our plane landed in Amsterdam for a thirty-minute break. A staff member from IOM, which was making arrangements for our trip to New York, told us to be ready to move to the gate. On my way to the gate, I saw on the TV screen, "Breaking News." I stopped and kept looking. What I saw was a ball of smoke and people running. That image turned my mind toward what I saw in my home town (in southern Sudan.) I was shook and could not even say anything. The friend standing near me turned his eyes away and started talking to himself. He said, "God, what have we done? Everywhere we go the only thing we see are people dying and tears with sorrows. It means that no place is safe."

The tears started rolling down his face. I told him, "Evils are in every part of the world. People die for what they do not deserve. They do not know what they die for." It was the saddest moment in my life. It was too much like what I had been through. We were told about what had happened. We slept in the airport the first day. The next morning, we were taken to KLM accommodations, and we spent seven days there.

On the eighth day, we came back to the airport and we came to New York. The city was quiet. It was really a bad time. It seemed like the Arabs were following us wherever we went. The next morning we took off for Cleveland. My

journey started with happiness and ended with sorrows. I pray that no one should have a journey like the one I had.

The world should know that the war on terrorism is everybody's war. It does not belong to the United States or Britain. People should join hands against evil. People who died on September eleven are the heroes of the world, and the world will remember each and everyone.

Laat Arier

THE BIG JUMP

The experience to come to EEUU was a little scary for me at the beginning, because I did not know how to start my life. First I tried to get a job and I did. I'm a waiter in a Hispanic restaurant. That was my first goal. Now things are doing great, thank God.

I was born in Caracas, Venezuela in South America. This is a very small country in South America with a population of 24,000,000 people. It has a very nice warm weather all year. Our official language is Spanish. Venezuela is located close to Colombia, Brazil, Guyana and the Caribbean Sea. I came here because I wanted to improve my English and learn about North American culture. I would like to talk about my first experience when I came to Ohio five months ago.

My first visit to downtown that I think reflects Ohio's history was on July 4. I saw the place where you can see the La Nina, La Pinta and Santa Maria and the history about Christopher Columbus. I do not know the name of the place right now. At the same time I could see the big party or independence celebration. There were a lot of fireworks, food, drinks, and interesting events. I went to the theater to see a dance musical about Dracula; it was a great show, and I had the opportunity to go to the Ohio Expo Center to see the train show.

The first time that I came here to school, I made a U-turn; the police pulled me over and then gave me a ticket in the school parking lot. So I know the courthouse in downtown Columbus.

The most important thing that foreigners can notice in EEUU is how safe you feel in this country and how nice, warm, and respectful people are. The most difficult thing in EEUU is that wintertime is so cold outside but at the same time the city looks beautiful.

The most important thing that happened to me was that I met a great girl. She is from Ohio. She has been my support,

my friend, my English teacher—everything. Now she is my fiancé and in the future my wife.

Things are a little difficult when you do not know the language of the country you are living in, but if you try hard and be patient you can do whatever you want to improve your life in this beautiful country that gives you a lot of opportunities.

Douglas Velazco

OHIO: MY ADOPTED HOMETOWN

I was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, "the concrete jungle," as it's known to many. Sunshine is filtered by the tall buildings, and the smell of car emissions permeates the air. People are packed into trains and buses like sardines. Flowers can only be seen in window boxes and at the botanical gardens spread around the city.

I remember my parents telling me at 17 that we were moving to Ohio. I was devastated at the news. I did not want to leave my beloved city. I just knew I would miss the hustle and bustle of city life.

Most of the drive to Ohio was done in the evening. I can remember closing my eyes in a bustling city, replete with noise, action and lights and waking up to sunshine, in a scene reminiscent of a picture postcard.

Here was what I read about in my geography books! The sun shone down on me, warming my face. I could smell the earth. I could see the blue of the sky, unimpeded by buildings. It looked like it went on forever. The colors of the wild flowers along the side of the road were so vivid!

I can remember peering out the car window, driving along I-76 and seeing a cow for the first time, up close and personal! I was amazed! Up until that point in my life, I had only seen them depicted in cartoon commercials (Elsie the cow).

Walking down the street for the first time was an experience I will never forget. People actually looked you in the eyes, stopped, and said "hello." At first, I was too stunned to respond. No one in New York had made eye contact, let alone stopped to talk! It was amazing to me that strangers were so friendly!

Some of the other differences were the fact that people could actually leave the doors open at night, and some actually slept outside! Drive-in movies and drive-up windows were other things that were alien to me. There was no such

thing in the city. The absence of taxicabs and buses coming along every five minutes took my breath away. How did people get around? By God! Where were the people? There was no one walking along the sidewalks. Instead of the rumbling of trains and traffic, I was put to sleep by the sound of crickets gently chirping their lullabies.

New York may be the "city that never sleeps," but Ohio is, in my opinion, the "best place to raise a family."

Jean Piscitani

MY LIFE

This is a true story of my life as far back as I can remember. I still can remember some of my past life – even when I was as young as five. I was one of seven kids.

When I was five, we lived on a farm. We had some chickens and a dog on that farm. We also had two horses that were jumpers, a mare that was brown, and a baby colt that was white. We lost the farm and then lived in a trailer down on Lake Street. We moved from there to a little house on New Milford Road. We only lived there a short time, then moved to a newer house that was in back of where we had lived before. We had to make a road to the house that was up into a field. It was the first house on the road. Now there are more houses on the road than when I was younger.

When I was younger, in 1960, our house burned down. We then moved around for a few years. As I got older, we moved some more. I was getting tired of school, so I quit. I ran around with a few girls for a while, but then broke up with them. My family was still moving around. I moved to Florida with my mom and dad and brothers and sisters. When I got older, I went into the United States Army and was sent over to Viet Nam. I got out of the Army in 1969.

In 1969, I got married, but my wife left me. We had a little girl. I got a divorce, not knowing any better. After the divorce, I could not keep a job, so I went back into the Army and was sent to Korea. I wanted to make the Army my life, but couldn't because I became a drunk – drinking all the time. I was discharged from the Army a second time.

After being discharged from the Army, I moved back to Florida. I was in a serious accident; I got hit by a truck pulling a 30-foot load. I was messed up pretty good and don't remember too much of it all. I was in a coma for about a year and a half and in the hospital for a total of five years. But one thing I can say now from way down deep in me, God was with me to be able to tell all this. You see, the upper and

lower lobes of my brain were messed up really good from the accident. I had to learn how to talk, walk, and use my arms and legs all over again. My younger brother helped me to learn all these things again. I thought my family was "picking on me" and wasn't too helpful. But my brother and sisters kept on helping me. Finally, I realized that I had to learn all over again if I was ever going to have a good life.

I have traveled across the United States three different times in my lifetime, but when it came to settling down, I moved back to Ohio to the area where I was born and raised. I met a wonderful woman and we were married two years ago. My wife and I go fishing and camping a lot and even take our dog camping with us. After being out of school for 35 years, I am now attending GED classes in order to get my high school diploma. I am also learning how to use a computer so when my wife and I get our own computer, we will be able to play games, search the Internet, and send e-mail messages to our family and friends.

Ron Heckert

SNOW

Snow falling to the ground
It can be so beautiful as it falls
It begins to cover up everything it touches
Like a blanket
It falls and decorates your world.

Snow is meant to play in,
Go sledding in,
Skiing,
Build a snowman,
Or
Just lie down in it and make a snow angel!

Snow is fun
Until
It begins to melt away.
The snowman begins to melt; the snow angel begins to fade
And
The once beautifully decorated trees are no longer
decorated.

Snow only lasts for a season
And
Yes, it is beautiful when it first falls
So
Go enjoy the snow

Lisa Wright

COAT

Cold weather

Order a new one

All wool coat

Tight fit

Miroslava Deynega