

Happiness

幸



PERU

My homeland

Divided into three regions

Coast, mountains, jungle

Coast produces best cotton and fine wines

Mountains in the middle and cold all the time

The jungle borders Colombia and is hot

My homeland is pretty. I like it a lot

Coast, mountains, jungle

Divided into three regions

My homeland

Peru

~Maria Egoavil

MY BELOVED SISTER, OLGA

When I was growing up, the person who helped shape my life is my beloved sister, Olga.

We were born in the small Russian city of Sochi. We had the pleasure of growing up along the seashore of the Black Sea. My family consisted of all females: my mother, grandmother, sister and my beloved terrier dog. Can you imagine what kind of commotion went on in that apartment?

Luckily for me, my sister was a bookworm. When I could barely understand human speech, I was by my sister's side listening to her read. She read books for grownups: romance, comedy, tragedy and even medical encyclopedias. Every place she went, she had a book to read in her bag. I have sweet memories of us lying on a beach on a hot summer day, under a striped beach umbrella listening to her calm voice reading Alexander Dumas' Quinn Margaret. My sister was always a very emotional and sensitive person. She read books with passion, sometimes using a gruff or high-pitched voice. We had very little TV, video games, or cinemas in our small Russian city in the mid '70's. My best entertainment was my sister reading.

Art was another passion my sister and I shared. At an early age, my grandmother was teaching us some drawing basics. Little by little my sister was involved in painting, sculpting, and drawing. Every day after school she dragged me to the library and then art school. My mother worked two jobs, trying to provide for her girls; therefore, my babysitter was my sister. I was introduced to the history of art, oil painting and water color techniques from the time I was seven years old. History books of ancient sculptures, Roman Empire, gold Incas, Mayan mystery, and Egyptian pharaohs' treasures filled our daily conversations. As a little shadow

behind my sister, I discovered many wonderful things in this world.

In just a few years she was taking first place in art contests and festivals. She attended Art College and then Art University in Krasnoy, Russia. Time went by so fast. Now, she is a famous artist in Russia. She has her own studio and art exhibitions. Art museums from all over the world buy her paintings.

Olga visits me sometimes in America. We keep in touch via phone or the Internet. I cannot imagine not being able to talk to her often. She gave me a love of both reading and drawing. Her desire to know more about the world, her curiosity about life, and her motivation to learn will always stay with me. After all, we are sisters. Just like years ago, she will say on the phone, "Are you ready to listen?"

~Anastasia Henize

MY LIFE IN MEXICO AND IN THE U.S.

My family and I moved from Mexico to the U.S. in 2000. We were not prepared for the differences between the two countries – things like weather, lifestyle, and working conditions.

Mexico has numerous social and economic problems that affect all people in Mexico. Despite these struggles, Mexico is a very nice place to live. It has wonderful weather, great fresh food, tourist attractions, beaches, and more. The problem is that the people can't earn a good salary. For example, in Mexico City the people commute 2 to 3 hours to work, work 10 or 12 hours and only receive fifty dollars a day. In contrast, people in the U.S. commute no more than an hour to work, work 8 or 9 hours and receive fifty dollars per hour. In my case, my husband has time to play with the kids and has more personal time to relax, read, or do other healthy activities.

Mexico City is also very stressful. All day there's heavy traffic, smog, and other pollutants that affect everyone's lives. However, life in the U.S. is more comfortable and more relaxed than in Mexico. You don't spend a lot of time driving to work and other places. Here you feel safe.

Even though many differences exist between the two countries, I've come to appreciate both places. I can never forget friends and family back in Mexico or our life then, yet I'm very glad that we can live in the U.S. now.

~*Maria S. Perez*

THE PLACE I CALL HOME

The place where I grew up was a quaint sleepy town named Mukah. It is located on the east coast of Malaysia. Mukah is a small fishing town that has a population of about one hundred thousand. This is a picturesque town nestled on the seacoast with refreshing ocean breezes.

People are warm and friendly in this village. Maybe because the weather is so beautiful, people feel the warmth and then share their inner peace with others. The population is about thirty percent Chinese; the other seventy percent is the native people of Mukah. Although their skin and language are different, the people get along well. Everyone is kind and compassionate.

In the morning when I would wake up, I could always hear people greeting each other outside. Neighbors would be riding bicycles to the market for locally grown foods. Local open air coffee shops were filled with people sipping coffee and enjoying the scenery. You could smell the aroma floating in the breeze. The calm sound of the ocean would whisper in the background. In the evening beautiful birds called swallows would cover the sky. This made the skies intriguing, and their singing resonated throughout the streets.

Coconut trees grew abundantly, and people could enjoy their sweet taste whenever they wished. The restaurants in Malaysia not only served their native foods but also served Chinese and Indian food. Food is very expensive but delicious. One of the most popular foods is Kam Pua. It is made from noodles. Fresh seafood is abundant and scrumptious.

Mukah is my favorite city and the best place I have ever lived. I love everything about it including the ocean, the food, the sounds, the scenery and most of all its inhabitants.

The environment is so relaxing and peaceful. It is the place that I will always call home.

~Joanne Carey

SMILES ARE

Smiles are

Happiness
Time spent with my friends and coworkers
Good memories
Children and spouses

Smiles are

Rainbows
Fall colors
Winter snow
Laughing babies

Smiles are

Beaches and ocean waters
Visits from loved ones
Wisdom from elderly relatives
Funny movies

Smiles are

Good grades
Children returning home for the holidays
Promotions at work
Newborn babies

Smiles are

Healing
Contagious
Healthy
Kind

Try to see the good in your life and SMILE!

Just smile!

*~Pierre Foods Group Project by
Karen Flick
Sheila Hightower
Catherine Phillips
Kim Wilson
Aji Wozufia*

THE ROSE

I sit alone and stare down
at the rose in my hand. I clench.
I picked it from the rosebush
that grows along our fence.

I sit and ask the flower
if he really feels the same.
I smell its soft, sweet petals
and play this silly game.

I pluck its petals, one by one
and watch them fall and rot
While I quietly recite
“He loves me, he loves me not.”

I don't know why I sit and ask
a single simple rose
But I ask it quite sincerely
as if it really knows.

I shouldn't let one rose
determine how he feels for me,
But whatever that last petal says
is how things have to be.

This is my democracy.
The system seems quite fair,
And I've become quite attached
to the rose at which I stare.

Its petals feel my kisses, and
its thorns have drawn my blood
And I'll sit and pluck each petal
till I reach its tender bud.

This rose is slowly dying,
and I fear it's almost time
to lay to rest my flowers
and to end this silly rhyme.

Just a few more petals,
and this rose is finally free.
So I pluck one more
And hold my breath...

Whew... He loves me!

~Darlene Underwood