

Thoughts of Places

I WANT TO BE LIKE THE OCEAN

I want to be like the ocean,
I would like to have its energy
Its strength...
The ocean is life.
It has wisdom and history.
The ocean is wonderful, powerful
Respected and admired.

It is a home, a shelter, and a refuge
For the nature inside.
In its depth, prevails peace.
Its surface is an armor that protects the soul.
I want to be like the ocean,
I would like to have my heart serene
And feel my being, alive.

Marcela Szipina

SANTA'S HIDE-A-WAY HOLLOW

I met Bill Dieterle at Opportunity Resource Center last year when we chose Santa's Hide-a-Way Hollow as a charity we would like to help. We decided to raise money for the charity.

We all liked Bill when we met him. He seemed to really be Santa, although he was not dressed like him. But as he talked to us, he told us how he was before he changed. He was a boss at a big company in charge of many people. If one of his employees had asked for time off because their child was sick, he would tell them they were fired and now they'd have plenty of time. Then Bill's life changed when he met a little boy who was dying and who only wanted Santa to make his mother smile again.

Bill is now Santa to lots of ill children. He is building a new "North Pole" for them to visit him. But, sometimes he has to go to them.

He was Santa for one little girl who was very terribly ill. She was in a hospital, and time was running out for her. The doctors at the hospital told Bill that the only thing she wanted for Christmas was a Barbie Corvette, but the doctors knew she would not live until Christmas.

Bill hunted all over for this toy with no luck. Everywhere he went, he was told, "No Barbie Corvettes!" So, he called Mattel and told them the story. Mattel told him they would have it there by the time he was ready to leave for the hospital.

As he was putting on his boots the morning he was to visit this girl, the doorbell rang and there was a deliveryman with a package, which he handed to Santa.

Bill asked, "What do I owe you?"

The deliveryman replied, "Nothing. Mattel took care of it all," and left.

Santa went to the hospital and gave the little girl the wrapped package that contained the Barbie Corvette. The little girl smiled at Santa and hugged the toy and went to sleep. The next morning, the hospital called and told Santa that the little girl had died that night with the toy in her arms.

I have been to Santa's Hide-A-Way Hollow. (It is still under construction.) He has cabins and a small lake full of fish where the ill children can go and have fun. There are also trails through the woods where they can ride in a buggy or a sleigh, if there is snow. He is going to build a North Pole Village starting this summer with all sorts of wonderful things for the sick children.

I saw the "Kosar Kabin," donated by Bernie Kosar who played for the Cleveland Browns. The money we raised by selling ornaments and cookies provided a bed for that cabin.

If I had a very ill child, I would want Santa to visit him. He makes those children happy when they and their families are very sad. Sometimes, after the child has died, the parents come back to "The North Pole" and plant a pine tree for them. There is a plaque on each tree, and they can visit any time they want to.

Carrol Starcher

THE NECESSARY HOUSE

Many terms were used to identify the “Necessary House”. The Early American colonists referred to it as a privy. The English called it an outhouse. The more aristocratic people called it the House of Office. One of the oldest references, commonly used by the western world, was Jakes. If you were from Canada, you may have called it the Back 40, Auntie of the House of Parliament. Some other names used when seeking an outdoor toilet: One Holer or One Seater, Two Holer or Two Seater, Back House, Depository, Willie, Convenience, Closet, Throne, Post Office, Federal Building, White House, Roadside Rest and Oklahoma Potty.

Since the invention of the indoor Thunderbox in the 1730s, this ancient structure has vastly disappeared from the American home’s landscape. However, many remaining outhouses can be found on the premises of homes in rural communities. Some privies could even be found in parks.

I guess it would safe to say that my involvement with outhouses started in my childhood with my late Grandma Jessie Carter, with whom I had a special grandmother-grandson relationship. She introduced me to one of the standard outdoor comfort stations of South County Park in Pennsylvania. South Park is approximately 25 miles south of Downtown Pittsburgh. It was after the destruction of this series of park privies 20 years ago that I became quite fascinated with the Necessity.

Over the course of time my interest in the Johnnies has grown. I’ve researched as much information as possible via the internet and various outhouse publications. I’ve included the subject in some of my artwork. My in-depth studies of the construction and other architectural elements

of these structures have inspired me to draw detailed building plans for future projects I plan to do.

The average outhouse roof generally slants from front to back, while others have a roof that comes to a peak either in the front and back or on the sides of the building. While most outhouse doors are close to the center of the structure, other privy doors are off to the right or left side of the building. Other interesting attributes of the Necessity are the symbol on the front of the building. The symbol that's well known amongst outhouses is the crescent moon. A pair of identical outhouses that are only different by the design on the door can be individualized by the crescent moon signifying the ladies' accommodations. The star represents gentlemen. The last two symbols that come to mind are the diamond and the circle. The majority of the privy planks have circular shaped holes. 51% of the estimated 76 outhouses I've visited thus far have circular shaped holes in the planks.

Prior to the invention of toilet tissue, the Sears Roebuck catalog often served the purpose of toiletry items. When the Sears Roebuck was not available, leaves or newspaper could be a good alternative.

If it was not for my dear departed Grandmother, chances are I may have never discovered my hobby.

Jeffrey Carter

AN OHIO BOY SEES THE WORLD

Living in different parts of the country has been a learning experience for me. I think it was really neat to see how people live in other places, how they speak, their customs, and their values.

I was raised here in Ohio on a small farm outside of London, Ohio. I lived in the city of London also, so I got a taste of city life and country life.

In the country, we had a pump for drawing drinking water. There was also an outhouse! We had a big lot for a garden. We had a big coal-burning stove in the living room and a smaller one in the kitchen. They were hard times, but as I reflect, they were good times.

In the city, we had water inside the house; the bath and restroom were inside. This was a lot different than the country living! And we had neighbors that lived really close to our house.

Coming from this kind of background, I didn't know what to expect going to another part of the country, but I liked the thought of it.

I have a cousin who lives in Houston, Texas, and he had invited me to come down to visit him for a couple of weeks during the summer. This was in 1981. I had never been on an airplane before this time.

While I was down there, I decided to look around for work. I tell you, there was plenty of work, a lot more than there was in London, Ohio. I got a job at National Steel. I found out that a friend of mine from London was living there also, and he and I ended up renting a house together. It was

good at that time. It was like a boomtown there in Houston. This was a lot different than Ohio, which was depressed. There were so many people in Texas from Ohio, that we used to joke, "The last one out of Ohio, please turn out the lights!"

I met a girl from California who was just visiting a friend of hers there. We ended up getting a place of our own and got married two years later.

In 1983, Hurricane Alicia hit Galveston and Houston. Everything was a mess. Debris from trees was everywhere. We had three feet of branches in our front yard, plus a tree was on our front porch. We had no electricity for three weeks. We decided to move to California, closer to her parents. We packed up everything we owned and moved to San Jose. It was easy to get jobs. I got one in an auto body shop, and she in a law firm as a paralegal.

Living in California was a lot different than Texas. Not as hot, different type of people, not as prejudiced, more educated, no rednecks (Confederate flags), but it sure was expensive to live there.

Vacations to Mexico were easy to do. We went to Acapulco, Puerto Vallarta, Mazatlan, and Yalopa. You are treated very well as a tourist down there. The country is so poor; they need American tourist dollars. We saw women washing clothes down at the rivers there. No wonder the people want to come to the U.S. to better their lives, to work. The lucky ones do make it here!

After living in California 14 years, I moved back to Ohio. Wow, what a difference! Back to Mayberry! It was neat to see green fields of wheat, corn, beans, and farmland after living in the big city. It was nice to have a slower pace in life. You could tell that you were in the Bible Belt. This seemed

like a good place to raise children! Camping, swimming, chasing lightning bugs, snow skiing—it was good to be able to do these things. No lightning bugs in California!

Having actually lived in these different parts of the country has been an education I feel you can't get out of a book. Having been around such a diverse group of people, from all over the world, living in those coastal cities, Santa Cruz, Carmel, Monterey, Burlingame, Seaside, San Francisco, all these places with their cultures are something I believe everyone should experience and see at least once in life.

Teddy Thompson

PALM TREE LEAF

There was a house on the hill in a small town in South Korea. My grandma lived in that house. After my uncle went to the Vietnam War, I visited her very often. She would pray every night for his safe return. She would go into the mountain valley to get clean spring water. Then she would pour the water in a white bowl, set it on a rock, and pray and pray for her son's safe return home.

She would get a letter from my uncle once in awhile, but not often. One day she got a special letter; it had a palm tree leaf inside. The leaf was brown and partly dry, but still somewhat soft. The letter said, "Mom, I kissed and touched this leaf with my hands. Whenever you miss me, just touch the leaf and think of it as touching my hands." After that day, I saw my grandma touching the leaf all the time. She would touch the leaf very gently as though it were my uncle's hands. She would put it on her face gently as though it were my uncle's hands touching her face.

It went on for days, months, and years. Then one day I saw him. I saw my uncle coming up the hill. Oh! My hero! As he got closer, I could see his shiny black boots and olive green uniform; he looked so handsome in that uniform. When he got right in front of me, he said, "Hi!" with a big smile, putting his hand on my shoulder. I wanted to say something, but nothing came out of my mouth. There was something inside of me that wanted to put my arms around his neck and cry aloud until my lungs burst, but nothing came. I couldn't move; I was frozen, standing there motionless. He asked, "Where's Grandma? Is she in the house?" Then I saw him running into the house calling, "Mom, Mom, I'm home!"

Jin Hui Dulle

MY FAVORITE PLACE

My favorite place is out in the woods
To hear the birds sing
The wind blowing in the trees
The trees standing tall with leaves so green
Fresh air to breathe
To see chipmunks running around on the ground
To hear my children laughing
I can find a spot to seat myself
Clear my thoughts of the day
To focus on the sounds I hear in the woods
To say, "Hi Jesus, it's me in my favorite place"
To ask to be refreshed
To be filled and to give my worries away
To be on a hill so high
To look on miles and miles of trees
The wind blowing on my face is my favorite place

Jami Stover

MY HOME

My home sits way back off the road. I like it like that. We have ten acres with a 1500-foot driveway. It has beautiful woods on three sides. At night, you can listen to the screech owls and the frogs. My personal favorite is our lake in the front yard, which we put in ourselves.

We have four bedrooms and three baths. We have an open family room with a fireplace. There's a kitchen with a breakfast nook and a formal dining room. We have a formal living room for special occasions. It also has a laundry room.

Sometimes it smells like different scented candles. Sometimes it smells like garlic if my wife is cooking pasta. You can taste it in the air. My home always feels like a warm, loving place to me. I love to just walk around in the yard.

Dale Hudec

FROM SUDAN, AFRICA TO CLEVELAND, OHIO
IN 20 YEARS

My name is Isaac Dhal. I am a hard-working student and janitor. I am 25 years old.

I came to the U.S.A. in 2001. Prior to my arrival, I was embroiled in an African civil war between Christians and Muslims. More than two million people were killed.

I was in a bad situation for more than two decades. I wandered the country with other young boys. Many of my friends died from hunger, dehydration, and animal attacks.

There were thousands of us. Over half of my Sudanese brothers drowned or were eaten by crocodiles when we tried to cross the river. It was a miserable life.

We were so happy when Americans came to our rescue. We were shocked at first because there were so many things we had never seen or done.

I enjoy my GED studies. I have already passed many parts of the exam. I will be going to the community college next year. As a full-time janitor, I can pay my own way and even send money back home to my family. American money goes a long way in Sudan.

My friends and I were very excited when we heard a peace deal was made in Nairobi and Kenya.

Thank you to all Americans for allowing me to come to the U.S.A.. I now have a life worth living. I promise to make the most of it.

Isaac Dahl

HOW CAN OUR MARRIAGE CUSTOM WORK?

Marriage is important to our culture. We are Hindu. A Hindu marriage is a life-long commitment of one wife and one husband. It is the strongest social bond that takes place between a man and a woman.

Our wedding ceremony is colorful and unique. My parents corresponded with my friends about marriage for me. Eventually my husband's family heard about it. My husband was already related to me. He was my second cousin. An astrologer who declared us to be highly compatible duly compared our horoscopes, which had been prepared and are based on the precious moment of birth. So, my husband and I were brought together. We knew a little about each other as we had had a few telephone conversations. We wrote some letters. In these we shared our feelings.

Our wedding was arranged. Both our parents arranged our wedding. We didn't sleep the day before the wedding. Instead our relatives and friends talked, laughed, worked, and did lots of other fun things. Early in the morning of the wedding we each took a shower and didn't eat anything. I got dressed in a beautiful red colored sari all covered with gold embroidery. I wore lots of jewelry and I put lots of flowers in my hair. My husband wore a suit called "vestdi." It is made of silk. After he was dressed my brother went to my husband's house and brought him to the wedding hall. When my husband entered the hall, my brother washed my husband's feet. Then my husband gave him a gold ring. After that our Hindu priest did some religious pooja.

On our wedding day the main part of the ceremony is called, "thali." The thali is made with gold and looks like a necklace. At a special time during the wedding ceremony my

husband put the thali on my neck. The day after the wedding was the first time that we were alone together. It was the first time that we could hold one another. I could feel his touch next to mine.

Meanwhile, a beautiful relationship started developing between us, a relationship of love and dependency and possession. I was married in France where I was living at that time. When my French friends listened to my story they gasped in amazement. How could two people, who had never even spoken face-to-face consent to getting married? "It's simple," I said. Love develops in its own sweet and natural way, and when the couple is married they solve their problems and differences in a compromising and understanding manner.

Generally, the beginning of marriage is a period of transition. It is a time when two people commit themselves and make promises to each other. I think only an honest, loving, understanding marriage could last forever. I wish everyone in the world could have a loving marriage. This is the way our Hindu marriage custom works.

Geetha Lingan

THE DAY I CAME TO UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

My family waits for me.

Today is May 21 of 2003. It's 4:00 o'clock a.m. Today is the day that I have been waiting so long for – time to join my family. I won't sleep tonight because I was working very late at my office, and after that, I went to my apartment to prepare my luggage (and now in this moment it's not ready). In one hour Francisco, my nephew, will arrive to transport me to the airport. I have to finish everything pending, quickly. The time for the departure of the airplane to Cincinnati (USA) is near. My heart is beating very fast; right now I'm thinking, "Lina, my daughter, is waiting for me!!!"

After that, we pick up my best friend, Jorge Hernan on the way to the airport. He is flying with me. I see the road; it's different, rare. These streets of my dear Bogotá City are colder than ever, maybe they know that I'm not going to be here for a long time. No one knows what's going to happen. Now I don't know why I feel so sad, but maybe I'll remember that all of my relatives and friends are staying here, all my life happened here, all of my memories were born and lived here, in this city in this country. There are more than fifty years of life, work, happiness, sadness, love for my family, love for my country and today I've got to go where my wife and my kids are. Away from their native country, only because a few delinquents want to destroy this beautiful country, my COLOMBIA. And now it is my turn to leave. I don't want to lose my life. That's why almost no one knows what's happening in this moment, that I'm going to abandon my country. What a melancholy, but my wife, Carlos Jr., Diego Alejandro, and Lina Paola, are waiting for me.

The journey is normal, for every person on the airplane, but today for me it is not the same. I'm sad for

everything that I've got to give up. But I'm happy. Today I will start a new life, in one country, where I know that I'll be able to be at peace with my family. My family won't have to wait for me anymore.

Finally, I'm here in The United States of America, at the International Airport of Cincinnati, walking very fast to where my family is waiting for my arrival. Now I can see them; there they are. Yes, this is my family. We have the best hug in my life. I'm between my wife and my kids. This is my new home sweet home.

**GOD BLESS AMERICA AND SAVE MY COUNTRY
FROM THE DARK.**

Carlos Lopez

PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY SCENIC DRIVE

Spring and summer are the most popular times of the year to drive on the Pacific Coast Highway, as Southern California locals do. This is one of the most scenic, breathtaking sights in the state. On one side you have mountains and canyons, and on the other side you view the Pacific Ocean. Take your time driving; the highway is narrow and winding. Remember to have a camera. There are several areas where it is easy to stop, walk out, and view the Pacific Ocean. Most of the time the shining sun gives you breathtaking sights of the ocean glistening, waves pounding into the rocky coves, mist of saltwater lightly spraying your skin. As you turn around you see mountains and canyons filled with wildflowers swaying in the breeze.

As you continue on you're now approaching one of the most popular beaches, Zuma Beach. This is one of the best beaches to park your vehicle, sit on the sand, take a walk along the beautiful shoreline, watch surfers, and perhaps see dolphins jumping in and out of the water. Some enjoy challenging the surfers. Being on this popular beach also gives a panoramic view of the California Pacific Coast Highway. It is a spectacular drive. The way to end such a beautiful drive is the California sunset – the sky and the blue Pacific Ocean change to a golden color.

If ever you're in the southern coast of California, this is the drive of a lifetime, a memory you will never forget.

Tonya Chadwick

