

An abstract painting with a textured, expressive style. The background is dominated by warm, earthy tones of yellow, orange, and red, with visible brushstrokes and some darker, more saturated areas. A prominent horizontal band of green and white paint runs across the upper middle section of the image. The overall effect is one of vibrant energy and organic form.

IMPRESSIONS

**A Collection of Writings
by Learners in the
Sonoma County Library
Adult Literacy Program**

**SONOMA COUNTY LIBRARY
ADULT LITERACY
2018**

The Adult Literacy Program is an integral part of the mission of the Sonoma County Library, which strives to bring information, ideas and people together to build a stronger community.

The services of Sonoma County Library Adult Literacy program help adults throughout Sonoma County collaborate and connect to one another to access materials, learning spaces and instruction to build literacy skills and help adults pursue their goals as learners, parents, workers and members of their community.

The views and opinions expressed in these writings are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of the Sonoma County Library or any other funders of the Adult Literacy Program.

For the most part, these writings have been reproduced as written by the adult literacy learners and, as such, are not “perfect” by design.

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**Sometimes you have to create
a vision, a path for a vision.
It may not be apparent, and
you may have to forge it yourself.
And that will be the way
to move your life forward.**

~ Herbie Hancock

Foreword

Writing is hard. It is a challenge to identify the story in your heart, to find the words to express it, and then to capture those words on the page. The learners in the Sonoma County Library Adult Literacy Program have taken this one step further, as they have mustered the courage to share their stories with the world.

When I read the entries of our adult learners in this year's Adult Literacy writing collection, I was so inspired and moved by how these new authors used their words to tell their stories. Just as the artists of the late 1800s called "Impressionists" created paintings to capture a feeling, not to create an accurate picture, the authors of these stories have truly used their words to capture the feel of the world they live in. Whether they wrote about their families, their dreams of the future, or their journeys to Sonoma County, these new authors have opened a window into the different experiences, cultures, and challenges of their lives.

Maya Angelou said, "The idea is to write it so that people hear it and it slides through the brain and goes straight to the heart." The stories included in the "Impressions" collection have gone straight to my heart; I believe when you read them, they will also touch yours.

Kathy DeWeese

Youth Services Administrator
& Adult Literacy Supervisor

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the adult learners and volunteer tutors of the Sonoma County Library Adult Literacy Program for your ongoing work and willingness to share these writings with all of us.

Thanks to our Adult Literacy volunteer conversation facilitators and office volunteers working in our literacy office and in the Sonoma and Windsor library branches.

Thanks to our contract instructors, classroom aides, and tutors working in community outreach classrooms on school campuses, in day labor centers and in detention facilities to bring literacy and language skills to those who ask.

Thanks to the *Easy English Times* staff for encouraging adult learners to read and write and for providing a space for adult learner writings to appear in print for an audience of their peers.

Thanks to the current staff of the Adult Literacy Office – Alisa, Christine, Jessica & Melissa -- who help adult learners and their tutors get started working together at their local library and support them along the path of learning.

Introduction

The title, Impressions, comes from the observations of an adult learner who wrote about, “the common fate of the emigrant: to have feet in the new country and shoes in the old one.” Many writings in this collection follow this thread and offer the reader a myriad of impressions from adults willing to share their memories, their journeys, their dreams. While the stories in this collection are as varied as the individual adults in the literacy program, they all seek to impart and share a unique impression with the reader.

Here you will find stories of first impressions – sometimes painful first experiences learning to read and write or to overcome obstacles to arrive and find your voice in a new language, alongside writings sharing the tender hopefulness of a parent watching their child embark on first experiences of their own. There are intimate writings addressed to beloved family members, about pets, and persuasive writings addressed to a public audience about ideas and causes important to an individual author.

The final section of this year’s collection features excerpts from longer autobiographical projects and offers a spectrum of impressions gained by reflecting on life through the different lenses of adulthood. We are honored to feature these selections from students’ longer works here.

I encourage you to read on and explore these life journeys, beautiful places and cultural experiences celebrating the human voice in stories, music and song.

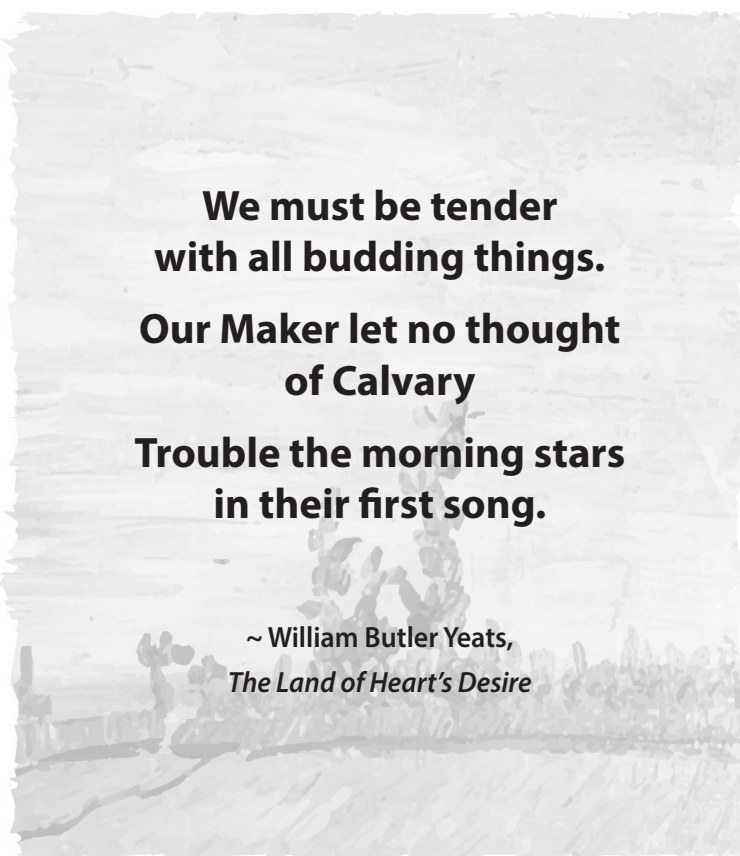
Alisa Adams

Adult Literacy Services Coordinator

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**We must be tender
with all budding things.
Our Maker let no thought
of Calvary
Trouble the morning stars
in their first song.**

*~ William Butler Yeats,
The Land of Heart's Desire*

Reading & Writing

By Janice M. Bowens

Why does it come so easy to many people and so hard for others? Like me. Why must I always do all the struggle and others do it in half the time, but that's not me.

I have heard the sounds others might have heard. Can I learn to read and write the same words? Will the words be my friend or my tormentor? Will the words and spelling all be correct? Or will people say, "She that old, and she can't even spell that simple word. She might just be a little slow or just stupid instead." But I'm neither.

I was always told, "Janice, you're just stupid or something? Are you just dumb?" No. I'm neither.

Matter of fact, I'm smart. Just because you think you are smarter than me, you're so very wrong. You may use words that bring the "ooh's and ah's" but my words are quite plain.

But words can be all the same, like to show one's feelings, to show one's hopes, but most of all to show compassion.

Words can be hurtful because words can never be taken back. So be very careful what you read and write, because the world is now reading MY written words.

Tutor: Janet Felker

Completing My Dreams

By Itzela Carlos

Hello, I am Itzela Carlos. I am from Timiriche Municipio de Churumuco Michoacan de Ocampo. My town has a lot of violence. I needed to leave for a better life. I want to tell you how I came to California and how I passed all obstacles at the border to get to the other side.

At first, I needed to prepare myself mentally, physically and spiritually and then it made me feel confident with my journey. I prepared myself mentally by thinking of my brother's experience. From Mexico, he walked eight days and eight nights to the USA. I thought about walking a lot. I prepared myself physically by walking in my town for a few days before my journey. I prepared myself spiritually by talking with God about my plans to go to the USA.

My journey was different from my brother's journey. First, I swam across the Rio Bravo. It is hard because the water is very rough and the current is very strong. It is a very big river. I swam twenty minutes to arrive at the other side.

At the other side of the river there was a car waiting for me. We drove fifteen minutes to Laredo, Texas. We stayed there for three days because the people who were driving me to my next stop were not there. Finally, the people came for me and we drove one hour. After, they dropped me off to start walking.

I walked all night. I stopped walking at 6 am and I was very tired. My body was in a lot of pain. We did not have any water or food. We were hiding in a hiding place in a field beside the freeway. We were waiting for a car to come for us.

At the end of the day, the car came and they took us to Austin, Texas. We were there for one night. The next day of my journey

was just four hours to Houston, Texas. I waited there for one hour for another car. We drove for three days and three nights to Los Angeles. We waited in L.A. for three hours until the next car arrived. It drove us to Vallejo, California.

In Vallejo, my nephew was waiting for me. The last time I saw him was when I was 10 years old. Now, I was 22 years old. He was ready to pay the money for my American Dream.

Tutor: Patricia Golesic

First

By Maria Randazzo

First, I was afraid to speak and write until I take advantage of this wonderful program. Every session I learn new words and I improve more in my pronunciation. That encourages me to go to the SRJC (Santa Rosa Junior College) and take English credit classes.

I am feeling more prepared to start on my path – that is to become a teacher. I want to teach Kindergarten. I was a teacher in Mexico. I love the interaction with little ones.

The program has helped me. When I go to the doctor, I can tell them what my health problem is, and I understand all the instructions from my doctor.

Tutor: Chris Flindt

Searching To Live

By Anonymous

Just what do I do when I wake up one day, feeling
Alone and lost?

I have no more family, I have no more friends
Do I now have to pay the cost?

The cost for the things I have done, the ones I have hurt,
The cost for the life I have lived.
The cost for forgetting how to care,
For forgetting how to love,
The cost for forgetting how to give.

I've been searching for answers, searching for advice,
but I seem to have looked in all the wrong places.
I've searched my heart, I've searched my soul,
I've looked for answers
In other faces.

I've road my "Harley" from state to state just searching
For some peace
Searching for care, searching for love, searching
To find some relief.
But will I quit searching, will I just give up, no
That is just not me.

So I'll just continue to ride
Continue to search until I can again feel free
I will learn how to care, I'll learn how to love,
I'll learn how to care and give
I will change this lonely path I've been on,

I'll learn how
Not to just exist, but to live.

A note on using Pictures to organize Words

Alicia's story on the next page emerged from a writing technique that uses a diagram to provide a simple outline and structure for writing.

Alicia's diagram had a center circle around the topic "Sons' New Jobs."

From this circle, she drew three branches, which she labeled:

Marcelo/moving away

Jose/better job

Eddy/getting started

My Three Sons

By Alicia Caldera

My three sons got new jobs this month.

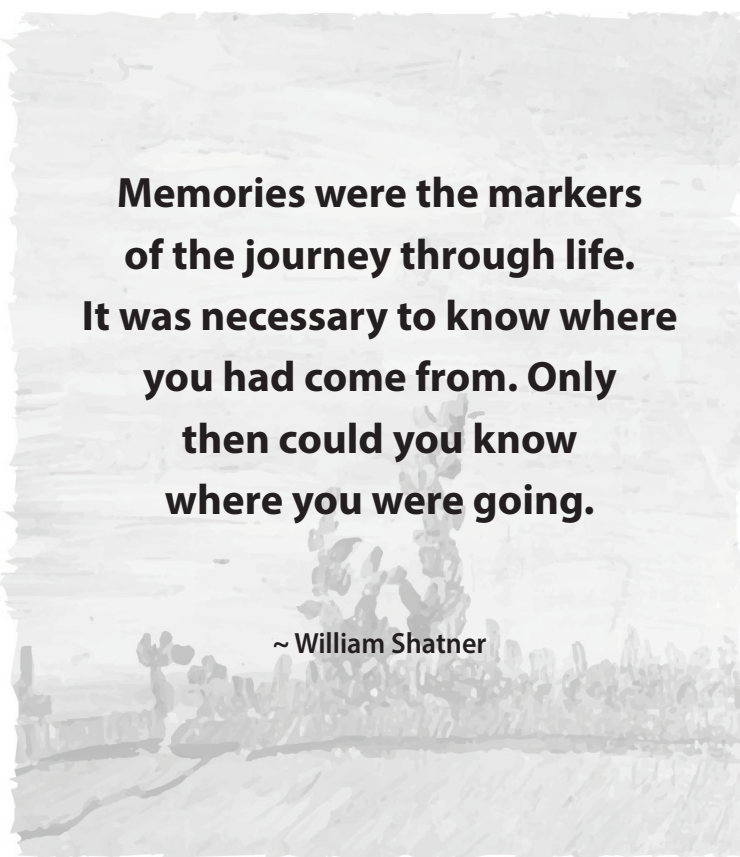
Marcelo took a job in Nogales, Arizona. He will be moving with his family far away. I am happy for him but sad because I am not going to see them often.

Jose was working in El Dorado Kitchen when he got an offer of a better job at the Fairmont Mission Inn. He is excited because he will learn more ways of preparing foods.

Eddy got his first new job at Round Table. Eddy is happy because he is going to be able to buy books for school.

Let me tell you more about Eddy because it is his first job. I was driving him home, and he told me he will pay rent and pay taxes. He was talking like a mature person. He was so serious that I really believe it. I hope he can change and grow up.

Tutor: Bob Alwitt



**Memories were the markers
of the journey through life.
It was necessary to know where
you had come from. Only
then could you know
where you were going.**

~ William Shatner

La Historia de Mi Vida

(The Story of My Life)

By Maria P.

I was born in Mexico. I was poor. I didn't have money or a bed, but I was happy. I went to the fields. I climbed the trees, I gathered branches to clean out the oven. I would sing in the tree. I worked hard. I had to knead the dough that my mother would make into bread. I had to bring the wood for the fire every Saturday. I was 8 or 9 years old. I also washed clothes in the river for other people, and they would give me candy.

My house had a dirt floor and the walls were made of wood. My bed was made of bean pods with a blanket laid over them. My brothers and I harvested the beans in the field. I sometimes ran through the wheat fields and would fall down on top of the soft wheat. These are some of my best memories of my childhood.

We planted corn every year on the ranch. My brothers had to go into the fields to take out the weeds. If a family only had girls, the girls had to go to the fields too. I had brothers, so I couldn't go, but I wanted to! So I helped another family with only girls so I could go in the fields, too.

I had three brothers and a sister. But my sister lived with my grandmother. My father was a farmer and my mother stayed home. My father was mean to my mom and all the kids. My mother sent each of us to live with our grandmother when we got to the 5th or 6th grade. Eventually, even my mother moved out to live with my grandmother in the city.

My grandmother was very nice. She was never mean to anyone. She treated us all the same. My grandfather was mean to her, too, just like my father, but he died when I was 6. Since

continued

then, she took care of all of us kids, and later she raised my sister's four children, too. I'm more like my grandmother than my mother.

When I finished the 9th grade, I came to the USA to stay with my uncle. I thought it would be fun and beautiful in America. It was beautiful, but it wasn't fun. I wanted to work, but I was too young. I couldn't go to school, so I just stayed in the house for 6 months. It felt like 6 years!

I went back home for 3 years but not back to school. I worked as a servant for one family, 6 days a week.

When I was 23, I came to America with my boyfriend. We just walked across the border and a coyote picked us up and took us to a house. From there, I flew to Oakland.

I have three beautiful daughters. My oldest just graduated from SSU (Sonoma State University) with honors and is going to Graduate school. She is the first in our family to graduate from college. My two younger girls are good girls and are still in school. I am very proud of them.

I bought a house and I live alone with my daughters. I am a CNA and work in a rehab facility. In 2012, I became a US citizen.

Tutor: Judith T.

Impressions

By Katarzyna Apolinarski

When living in a new country, we all have tendencies to idealize our old/previous lives and places where we grew up. We miss all that we had there. At the same time, all we have here in our new country we miss when we go back to our place of origin.

Recently, I went back to visit Poland for the first time. Here are some of my impressions that I want to share with you.

Landscapes. For a short time landscapes and sounds seem to be new. I am able to see everything brighter and sharper with the eyes of the visitor. Smells are different but familiar. All is much smaller than I remembered.

A language. It is so relaxing to understand every single word of my native language. Talking is as natural as breathing. I can make jokes faster. I understand culture codes without any hesitation. If I feel like paying compliments or swearing, I know how to do it. I feel that a mother language is absolutely a big part of my identity and my way of thinking is deeply affected by it. But speaking English, I am able to communicate in many other countries.

Food. All dishes are so good. The taste of food from our childhood stays with us forever and there is no replacement for it. However, after a while I notice there is not such a great variety of choices like in the US. Polish cuisine is heavy, so after a week I start to gain weight.

Friends. I am so happy to see them, they know me better than anyone in the US. They are happy to see me and eager to hear the news. However, when I start to complain about my American life, they encourage me to stay abroad. So they rather expect to hear about my successes and want me to keep

continued

the illusion of the American dream and happy ending.

Work. People are not paid as well as in the US, but they usually don't work so much and they have much more holiday. They say I can always come back to work there. But . . . at the same time, I notice that the person who now works in my position is already well adopted and accepted.

When I come back to California, I miss all I left there and I want to keep all I have here. Wherever I am, I have a nostalgia for the other place. They say that for an emigrant it is a common fate – to have feet in the new country and shoes in the old one.

Tutor: Roxanne Rogers

Pets of My Parents

By Irma Flores Garcia

Duque is the name of my parents' pet. My mom tells me about him and she describes the dog like a person, because he always takes care of the house of my parents. When they came to the United States in September 2017, my mom said to him, "Duque we are going far away for some months, but you will be here caring for the house. You can hunt rabbits to eat." And my mom said to me that the dog's face was sad.

Duque is not really young. He had a thorn in his foot and can't walk very well. When he sees my dad go for a walk, Duque wants to go with him, and my dad says to Duque, "Stay here. You can't walk." The dog stays at home but he cries like a boy because before, when Duque could walk very well, he always went all places with my dad.

Before my parents came to the United States, my brother Antonio went to my parents' house to pick up Duque in his truck, but the dog wouldn't jump in the truck, maybe because he remembered the words that my mom told him. Duque stayed for a long time to take care of the house and waited for them to come home.

One day in the morning around 4 a.m., my brother Antonio heard his dogs barking at someone, and he thought it was a coyote that had been around the house. He got up and looked out the window and he was surprised to see Duque. Duque arrived at my brother's house; he probably walked all night because my brother's house is 3 miles from my parents' house! Duque knows perfectly the road, because my brother and my parents live in a small village.

continued

When my parents went back to Mexico, Duque was very happy to see them. He was jumping and moving his tail around like when a person says to you, "Welcome to my house." I think he felt happy because all the time my parents stayed far away, Duque was sad.

My mom and my dad are living alone, same as most people when the kids are grown and have started their own lives. I love Duque because I know my parents are not really alone. He is a good dog!

Tutor: Sandy Drew

My Short Experience as a Restaurant Server

By V.M. Garcia

I have done so many jobs in my life. I enjoy learning new things. The other day when I was eating at my favorite Mexican restaurant, the waitress told me they were looking for a new server. I left my phone number and they called me. I only worked for six hours. Everyone - employees, employers, and customers are very nice and friendly. It's very fast paced. I had to take the orders to the customer's tables; ask them if they needed anything else. I also bagged the food when it was to go. It was three of us. We also clean the tables; sometimes they leave tips, and we put it in the tip jar. At the end of our shift we divide it by three. I made \$15.00! When we closed we had to clean up. The next day, one of the owners texted me to let me know "that my help was no longer needed." One of the old waitresses came back. My short job as a server! It was a lot of fun.

Christmas Through the Eyes of a Child

When I was a little kid, I couldn't wait for Christmas! That's the time you get presents from Baby Jesus. The Guadalupe Fiesta started December 12 when we went to church to sing "Las Mañanitas" to the Lady of Guadalupe, then we went around the whole town singing to the people whose name is Guadalupe, because that is their Saint. The next day, we started the "posadas". That is when Mary and Joseph are looking for a place to stay. The family who sponsors them would welcome them. They give a little bag of candies to most of the kids, and hot chocolate. If they didn't give candy, they had two piñatas, one for the boys and one for the girls. The Posada Fiesta started December 13, and went all the way to December 24. At the

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church, on the altar, they had a big Nativity where the priest said a midnight mass. In the middle of Mass, two little kids are picked to rock Baby Jesus. At the end, all the kids went and told baby Jesus what they want for Christmas. January 5, we put our towel or shoes outside our room so the Three Wisemen can bring you what you asked for.

Growing Up

Who says growing up is easy? It's a lie! I remember when I was a little kid, I could not wait to grow up and have a job so I could buy my own things. What started as fun and games soon turned out to be a nightmare. I started working when I was 12 years old. My parents worked in the fields, so us kids had to follow in their footsteps. Thank god my mom put my sisters and me in school, Curious George that I am. I wanted to become a cop. Soon I realized it was not what I thought it would be.

Years later, I finally found my dream job as a CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant). My favorite part is taking care of my older patients. I enjoy hearing them talk about their "good old days." And like any other job, it has its bad parts. This job has a lot of paperwork that I hate to do. I just started at a new facility two weeks ago and some of the patients started recognizing me, and some are calling me by my name. It's a great feeling. And you guessed it! The paperwork is the hardest part. I'm determined to stay here for a long time, so I'm going to learn how to do all the paperwork because the satisfaction is much greater than anything else.

Tutor: Catherine Kubu

Chuseock

By Keunhye Park

Chuseock is a major harvest festival and a 3 day holiday with a Korean New Year Day in South Korea. It means literally *the autumn evening*. People celebrate on the 5th day of the 8th month of the lunar calendar.

Korean women usually make a lot of food to serve to their family and relatives. **Songpyeon** is a representative small rice cake. It is made of rice flour. There is a kind of sweet syrup or beans or chestnuts inside of the Songpyeon.

Korea has traditional clothing, called **Hanbock**. Koreans wear the Hanbock on special days like Chuseock. Hanbock has no pockets, simple lines, and vibrant colors.

On this morning, many relatives gather together to commemorate a celebration of their ancestors at their oldest grandfather's house. There are a lot of meaningful foods and a few nameplates of ancestors on the big table. Relatives burn incense and bow twice to the nameplates in front of the table.

Kangkangsulle is a special traditional dance. Women hold hands with the next person to make a big circle. Then they sing the special song and move in one direction. It's held under the full moon.

Men usually enjoy the **Juldalleekke**. There are two groups of teams. Two teams line up and the first person from each team faces off in the middle of a long rope. After starting the game, everyone tries to pull the rope in their team's direction. The team that gains more of the length of the rope wins the game.

continued

In the past, it was a tradition that families gathered on the day of Chuseock to visit relatives and to go to their ancestor's tombs for commemorating and mowing the grass around their tombs. There are still many families who follow the tradition. However, these days, more and more families enjoy this special holiday in different ways. Some take a trip abroad instead of visiting their relatives. Some parents visit their children who live in the big city to escape terrible traffic on the highway.

Tutor: Sheldon J. Reber

Letter to My Mother

By Delia Mora

5-23-18

Dear Mom:

How are you doing? Today, I hope you are doing Ok. We are all fine. We are very happy about their new baby girl, Gianna Valentina Mora. The baby is ten weeks old and she was born on March 8th 2018. She weighed 8 pounds and 11 ounces when she was born. Osvaldo and Cindia, his fiancé, are very happy about their baby girl. Gianna is an easy baby to take care of. She sleeps most of the time for three and a half or four hours. She wakes up twice at night and Cindia nurses her and changes her diaper, burps her and puts her in the crib.

Isaias retired two years ago; he does side jobs to keep busy. And he doesn't like to be at home.

Mom, Carina sends you a big hug. She is very busy with her beauty school and work. After she gets home, she cuts her clients' hair almost every day. Also, she works with me on Mondays.

Osvaldo works with men in construction. He also helps Cindia with their baby after work.

Lupe works with me four days a week doing house cleaning. She is busy learning English at MacDowell School twice a week. She goes out with friends Paola and Maria on Fridays.

Mom, I miss your calls every week when you don't call me.

I Love you,

Delia

Tutor: Shirley Domenichelli

The Warmth of Child Birth in My Town in Mexico

By Rosa Cordova

My name is Rosa Cordova and I am from Tabasco, Mexico. I would like to write about the traditions in my state — Tabasco, Mexico — when babies are born.

I've been a married lady for 19 years. God gave me the blessing of having 2 kids. My first one was my son born in Mexico and the second was my daughter born in the United States.

My first child was born in Mexico because I had a problem traveling. I lived all my pregnancy in Mexico where we had a lady we called "midwife." She took care of the pregnancy cycle and she knew when the baby was in the right position to be born or not, and if not right, she used her hands for moving the baby in the right position to be born.

When the baby is born, it is traditional for the family and friends to come to visit to get to know the new baby. They usually bring food to the mom, like atole (hot drink) and chicken soup for quick recuperation. You receive a lot of love and compassion from people who love you.

In the first 40 days of the baby's birth, the mom doesn't do anything except care for the baby. She needs to be girdled to have a flat tummy, and she doesn't eat some foods because they are bad for babies. For the baby's care, mom needs to put the water under the sun so it is warm to give a shower to the baby, usually at noon each day.

That's the care during the first 40 days after the baby is born. You enjoy all care from family and friends. After this, you return to your normal life but with a new family member. This experience is totally different than how my daughter was born in the USA.

Tutor: LaRee Maguire

Cambodian New Year

By Chandara Noun

I'm Chandara Noun. I am a Buddhist monk. I come from Cambodia. My parents live in Cambodia. I have two elder sisters, two elder brothers, and one younger brother. I came to the United States in 2011.

I'm living in Watt Meangkolvorn Santa Rosa Association, 297 Millbrae Ave., Santa Rosa, CA 95407. Now, I am the leader (head monk) of Watt Meangkolvorn. The Buddhist tenfold conduct of the leader is:

- Generosity
- Morality
- Sacrifice
- Honesty
- Softness and Gentleness
- Austerity
- Calmness
- Peacefulness
- Patience
- Respect the law

I would like to tell you about Cambodian New Year, which took place on April 14 through 16. The celebration lasted for three days.

The first day of the New Year, we cleaned our house, prepared food and the altar for the Buddhas and our ancestors.

continued

On the second day, we went to the temple to celebrate with the community. We brought blessings to all the people and the spirit world for a better new year.

For art, we had Cambodian classical dances and folk dances, such as the Wishing Dance, the Rose Dance, the Welcome Dance, *Chhoung* and *AngKonh* (two traditional games).

The last day of our New Year, we pay respect to the elders and the Buddhas.

We wish you the four blessings of the Buddha:

Longevity

Nobility

Happiness

Strength

Tutor: Sharon Dennison

The American Dream

By Genoveva Lopez

My name is Genoveva Lopez, I am from Mexico. I came to this country in 1991 looking for a better life. When I got my first job, I decided to go to adult school to learn English, so I could communicate better with my boss.

I studied English at Lewis school in Santa Rosa. When I finished there, I continued taking English classes at the Santa Rosa Junior College. I stopped school at level 3-4, because I got a better job with a better schedule, so I could no longer go to school. I met my husband in 1994 and we got married in 1998. We have two wonderful kids: the oldest one is 15 years old and the youngest is 8 years old. We are a happy Christian family.

Since I came to this country, it has been a blessing for me and my family, because I got a job and can help support my parents in Mexico. After I got married, my husband and I bought our first house in Santa Rosa. Then, we sold that house, and we moved to Windsor where we bought our second house. This city is quiet and the best thing about it is that Cali Calmecac bilingual school is here. I am thankful for this school because my youngest son is learning my language. I want to preserve my culture, my food and my language by teaching my kids the richness of their parents' background. *(We speak only Spanish at home because the boys speak English all day at school and with their friends).*

My American dream is to become an American citizen. Also, to be able to see my kids grow up, graduate from college, and have their degrees. So that they have the opportunity that I didn't, which is to have a better career and life than if I had stayed in Mexico.

continued

Later on, if I don't have to work. I would like to volunteer helping other people, possibly by translating for them. Recently I had good experiences at my mom's doctor appointments when I translated her therapist's instructions into Spanish for my mom and another lady in the same room. I felt proud for doing that and the therapist thanked me.

In conclusion, I am grateful for the Literacy program because this program has been helping me to continue to learn English. They sent me one of the best tutors who has been teaching me English as my second language.

Tutor: John Jay

My Life Changes

By Martha Espinoza

My inspiration is from a book I am reading, *The Circuit*. My tutor Cynthia recommended it to me.

In 2004 in Guadalajara, I met my husband. He was living here in Rohnert Park and was on vacation in Mexico. I was happy, working. I had my salon and I was living with my brother, but in 2005 my husband asked me if I wanted to marry him. I said “yes” right away, and one year later we got married. I wasn’t worried about going to the U.S. because I had a visa, but I was scared for my new life.

When I got to the U.S., my husband told me that if I wanted to buy my first car, I had to get my driver’s license. In 3 months I had my license and I was looking for work, but I needed a license to do hair too. Finally, somebody said it was ok to work in her salon without a license, but in a few months, I was pregnant. My husband was in the process to be a U.S. citizen. I was stressed because my second six-month permission to stay in the U.S. was expiring, and I was waiting for my permanent resident (“green”) card. I was also stressed because my English wasn’t good, and because I had a two-month-old baby, just 15 months from beginning my new life.

I was happy with my baby, but with a baby, there was no time for English school or more work in the salon. That made me feel sad because I wanted to get my license to do hair, learn English, and buy a house before I had my baby.

In the next year I got my permanent resident card! In a few more years, I was training to work independently too, but in my tiny apartment that was difficult.

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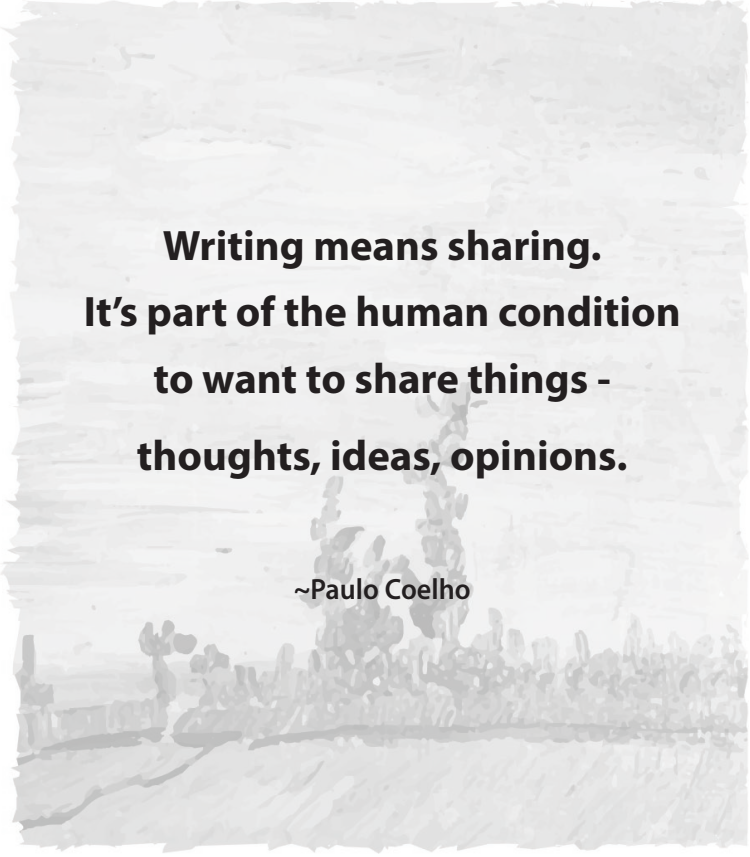
In 2010, our opportunity to buy a house finally arrived! With more space, I could work in my house. The next year, I was pregnant again, with my second (and last) baby. Then I was very happy, with two kids and my work! That year I became a citizen too, although my English was not very good. In 2013, I was ready for my cosmetology license and even with two kids, nothing is impossible. In 2 years, I finished!

But I never forgot my plan to take an English class. Now was the moment! In 2017, my friend told me about the Library Literacy Program.

I am blessed because now I am in an English program. Thank you to the people in the program; they are working as a team for the students to make learning English a reality. I know my tutor, Cynthia. Thank you to Cynthia for her time, patience, and dedication. We learn really interesting things together every class: culture, history, holidays, community programs and events, recipes, etc. She is fabulous, and she surprises me because she knows a little bit about everything.

Thank you, Adult Literacy Program!

Tutor: Cynthia Denenholz



**Writing means sharing.
It's part of the human condition
to want to share things -
thoughts, ideas, opinions.**

~Paulo Coelho

Let Go

By Jamie Campman

Let go of anger and let it slide
It falls like a feather and let it glide

Let go of judgment
For when judgment disappears,
Life is like a lion
Alive and without fears

Tutor: Holly King

The Wonderful Gift of Life

By Lupita Ochoa

Hello, my name is Lupita Ochoa and this is my story about organ donation. I realize that many people are in need of organs and are waiting. They even spend years waiting for a transplant. Sometimes it is too long waiting for them, and they pass away. At this moment, there will be 1,600 people waiting for an organ. I became aware of this great need.

The wonderful gift of life is: to give life to wonderful people needing an organ. These are the organs that people wait years for: lungs, liver, heart, pancreas, intestines, kidneys, bones, corneas, skin, heart valves, and other tissues that can give life.

I have made the decision to be a donor. I am aware that I need to change my lifestyle to be healthier, with a good diet and exercise. I wish in my soul that I can grant this wonderful wish of the gift of life by donating one of my organs.

Tutor: Carol Digitale

Positive Thinking

By Veronika

Have you ever thought about how positive thinking can help us achieve our goals?

Probably many times we give up when problems come. It doesn't matter if they are personal, academic or professional; but after learning some positive thinking, we can think about ways to resolve every problem.

Positive thinking is a mental and emotional attitude that tries to keep in mind only thoughts, words and images that drive us to growth and success. And that mental attitude expects positive results so the probability of success will be high.

Positive attitude is to face difficulties with a positive mindset. It will help you get your stress level lower and improve your relationships.

Positive thinking involves positive feelings like pleasure, satisfaction, gratitude and happiness. On the other hand, negative thinking can drive us to negative emotions like anger, jealousy, fear, revenge, etc.

In addition, positive emotions can affect your mental health, help to boost your immune system and let your body fight many diseases and illness.

Probably you are thinking, "That's easy to say but what do we do about these things? How do we stop ourselves from negative thinking?" I looked for information about that, and I would like to share with you what I found. I tried it and it helped me a lot.

1. Try to train your brain. We already trained our brains the way they are, but you can retrain your brain to think positively.

2. Observe your thoughts. When you observe your thinking, you will know where to start.

3. Every morning try to pray and give thanks to God or repeat simple phrases like, "Today is beautiful" or "Today I will only do positive things." "You can, you should and if you are brave enough to start, you will." ~ Stephen King

4. Using the phrase, "I can do it," is done by successful people.

5. Make a gratitude list. Just write five things you are grateful for: for life, reading a good book, having a roof over your head, sunlight. Thinking about those things can change your mood and keep you focused on the positive in life.

Of course, besides positive thinking, there are many factors that determine success: confidence, optimism, hope.

Confidence means to believe in oneself. Believe that you can face challenges. To increase your confidence, put yourself in situations that you can master, break difficult tasks down into manageable pieces and mimic behaviors of successful people. Try to stand up very straight and improve your posture. It will help you to feel better.

Being optimistic means reflecting a favorable view of events and conditions and the expectation of a positive outcome. To be more optimistic, you can think that negative circumstances are temporary and try to take responsibility for the things you can control and recognize and release the things that you could not have controlled – otherwise, you can get frustrated.

continued

Efforts: Put your best efforts on the project. Positive thinking alone doesn't work. You must work very hard to achieve your challenges. How? By being a good person, trying to put efforts, doing as Jesus Christ did. He possessed many qualities such as joy, love, peace, great patience, kindness, loyalty, etc.

In conclusion, your attitude is a form of expression of yourself. You can choose to be positive and optimistic or you can choose to be pessimistic and critical with a negative attitude. Just think about how a positive attitude is contagious and wherever you go, people around you will feel better because you can be a positive role model for others.

This topic got my attention because I wanted to make that change in my life. As a mother of little kids, I feel that I am responsible for how they will face their challenges. In addition, it will help me to achieve my educational goals and in the future, when I get a job in the health area, it will help me to have a very good relationship with other people like my coworkers, my patients, my boss, because I will be able to interact with other people in a positive way.

Tutor: Claire Etienne

Trump's Wall is a Bad Idea

By Cristina Rodriguez Carreras

debate: *verb*
to contend in words
to discuss a question
by considering
opposed arguments

There are several reasons why President Trump's border wall is a bad idea.

First, the border is now well protected and will not have that much impact on the number of illegal immigrants crossing into the U.S. Also, President Trump will spend the American people's money for building the wall, now estimated at \$25 billion. The (current) President of Mexico, Enrique Peña Nieto, has said his country does not have the money to build the wall.

In addition, there is no reason for the wall because the number of Mexican immigrants is very small compared to those coming into Mexico from other countries, such as Panama, Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala who then cross the border into the U.S. Furthermore, Mexico is trying to limit immigrants from other Latin American countries from entering Mexico.

The number of undocumented apprehensions at the U.S. border is about the same now as in 1973. In the past few years, fewer young people have crossed the border to pursue opportunities to better their lives in the United States. Mexican families are now smaller, so fewer young people feel the need to leave Mexico and come to America.

In addition, immigrants from Mexico do not take away jobs from American workers. Therefore, the wall Trump wants to build is not a good solution to prevent illegal immigrants from entering the United States.

Tutor: Michael O'Looney

Our Environment

By Jade Ciriaco

Let's talk about the Earth and environmental issues! They are very important to discuss and need our attention because our environment is in constant change.

The environment is in a critical state of health. Our planet is crying for help and our job as human beings is to create the habit of preserving and taking care of the place that we live. Unfortunately, our ancestors didn't have enough information about ecology and because of this they didn't worry about pollution and the devastation of nature. Both our generation and future ones need to deal with these environmental issues, taking care of the planet and always seeking for little actions to help keep our world alive.

Even though these are small actions, they have a significant impact on the environment: For example, turn off the light in an empty room, use water wisely, reuse objects to reduce the production of excessive garbage, recycle, don't throw trash away in inappropriate places, and be conscientious about the consequences of our behavior on the environment.

According to research, thirty percent of American people don't consider that the negative effects on the global environment were caused especially by humans. But we need to keep our eyes open, because we are responsible for the Earth's health. Most people in the world don't follow the examples in the paragraph above, and all of us should take actions to help our planet avoid getting worse than it is at this moment.

How about planting a tree? The trees are principally responsible for producing oxygen and purifying the air, improving its quality. Planting trees can filter toxic components in the air,

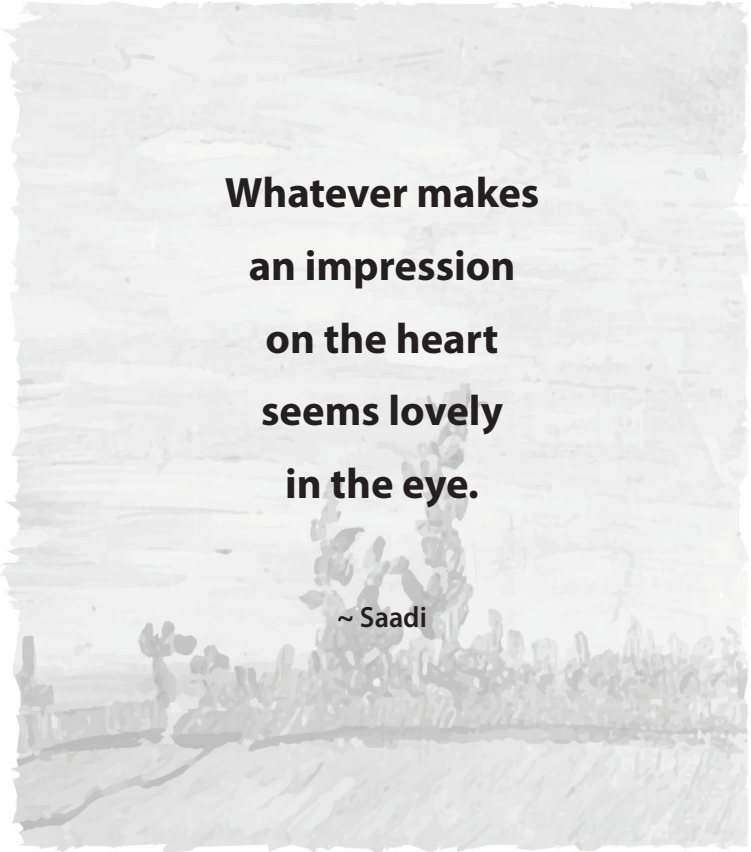
reducing ozone, which is causing a big hole in the atmosphere. Nowadays, people have been cutting the trees down and this is a big problem for our planet.

The carelessness of the past generations for nature has caused the Earth to show its dissatisfaction through climate change, the lack of water in some places, the marine life being harmed, etc. (the examples are numerous). The errors of the past can't be fixed anymore, but what we can do is become conscientious, environmentally speaking.

Well, those were little warnings that I could share and all we need is to change our habits about taking care of the world. It is so serious and something that each human being needs to be aware of. Even though we cannot stop the ozone layer from becoming less dense, we can still do many things to help our planet survive by doing what we already know, which is not hard.

Current environmental problems make us vulnerable to disasters and tragedies, now and in the future. We can contribute to a better environment by promoting awareness in our neighborhood and talking to our families about these issues. Sharing this information is very important and can save the Earth!

Tutor: Elizabeth Freitas



**Whatever makes
an impression
on the heart
seems lovely
in the eye.**

~ Saadi

The Glass Beach

By Alex Lee

After my final exams of the spring semester, I went camping with my friends and my family by the coast. On the way back, we went to a beach called "Glass Beach" in MacKerricher State Park near Fort Bragg. The beach was covered with lots of colorful, translucent gravel like I have never seen nor imaged before.

The colorful gravel is made from the particles of many different colored wine bottles. Some pieces of gravel have inscriptions that prove they are artificial. In the early 20th century, laborers of the area dumped lots of bottles of wine in the area and the particles of the discarded bottles crowded along the beach. By the wave erosion, the particles have become round and smooth and they look beautiful.

Unfortunately, recently the gravel is decreasing on the beach because of erosion, wave action, and tourists picking it up. People need to protect the beach to keep the gravel safe, and you need to go and see it before the glass gravel disappears.

Tutor: Ben Ireland

The Petaluma Library Museum

By Natalia Scherbakova

Today, my tutor Patricia and I are going to the Petaluma library museum. It is located in the former gorgeous Carnegie library. We approach the building. Its beautiful columns and triangular pediment remind me of buildings of European theaters.

The staircase leads us to this wonderful old library from a bygone era. We are met by a museum volunteer. And, while Patricia talks with her, I'm looking around. It is like taking a step back in time when there were no electronics, just books.

In the middle of the hall you can see a table and creaking armchairs that invite you to sit down and flip through books. The walls are covered with old silk the color of burgundy. I see pictures of General Vallejo and other people who had been important in the history of Petaluma. Next, I see old wooden furniture. And, a lovely doll house takes me back to the time when I was a child.

In the next section, I see an old fire wagon. Firemen sat on it and the horses, with all their horsepower, carried them to the place of the trouble. There are an old water hose, a metal horn, a rescue belt for firemen. There is the police uniform behind the glass. Places like this always excite my imagination. I quietly touch old things and think about people who are long ago and about their life.

What is waiting for us on the second floor? Two stairways lead us there. Wow! How it is beautiful! We see, in the middle of the high ceiling, the gorgeous stained glass dome, original wooden banisters, arched windows. Ladies and gentlemen came here, read books and talked quietly. It is so cute!

First, we see the section about production of eggs and chickens in old Petaluma. Who would guess that at one time Petaluma was, "the egg capital of the world"? We see exhibits of chickens, eggs, conveyor for eggs, old photos and even a fox! Perhaps the sly fox annoyed the production owners. There are cardboard trays for

eggs. They look the same as today. People fly into space, talk with each other from different continents, but trays for eggs are the same as 150 years ago. Cool!

What's next? There was a railroad from Petaluma to Santa Rosa. And two steamships plied the river between Petaluma and San Francisco. And Patricia sailed on one of them. There is also a big suitcase of Mrs. McNear and a big steering wheel and even a piece of paddle wheel. It was so recent. Humanity develops so quickly. I hope it won't destroy itself.

What's next? There is a picture of architect Brainerd Jones on the wall. He worked in the early 20th century. For years Brainerd Jones was the only architect in Petaluma. He is, "The man, who built a city." Many buildings in the Petaluma's historic center were designed by him. What beautiful houses are in the photos! "Are they still standing?" I ask. "Yes," Patricia answers.

In the next corner there are children's school desks, a small chair, and some books on the table. I pick up one of them carefully. And, suddenly we see a notebook of a girl from 1934. There are the list of her teachers and cute notes from the girl's friends to her. Tears come to my eyes...

And next is what's wonderful! Old household items! The very heavy irons (we are trying to lift it), metal washboards, different old kitchen items. But, what is this? We are trying to guess. Yes! It is a washing machine made from wood! It is not BOSCH! We are having fun again.

Ok. It is too much information for us today. We are tired. We say goodbye to the museum volunteer and go to the car. Patricia is offering to drive me to my house. And I agree with pleasure. And I get one more gift. Patricia is driving to show me the houses that we just saw in the photos. Old Petaluma is so cute. These houses return us back to its history.

We had great time, as always. Visit this place. It's great! It is worth your time. This museum is a gem.

A Visit to China

By Saeko Silverman

I visited with my husband in China. We went to see his brother in Beijing in 2007. It was the first time for me to visit in other parts of Asia. I was surprised at everything.

In Beijing, there were many people, bicycles and cars. And there were many new constructions, because they were preparing for the Olympics in six months. But I worried about it – that it looked not finished.

We went hiking at the Great Wall. His brother knew I like hiking, but it was so hard for me. I tried to keep up with them. He taught us about history; it was interesting to me. I was tired, but I had a fun time when I saw beautiful views.

He also took us to the Beijing zoo. There were many pandas. I like pandas, and I had seen pandas in Japan, but it was so different. In Japan, if we want to see pandas, we have to wait about one hour, and we can view them from a window side. But in China, there were big spaces for pandas, and they were so active. I felt sorry for pandas in Japan.

It's not far between China and Japan, but it is totally different. I want to visit China again. There are a lot of interesting places.

Tutor: Valerie Habegger

A Family Trip to Southern California in 2018

By Seojong Kim

This spring our family traveled to southern California by car. Although it was a long distance to travel with a tight sightseeing schedule, we really enjoyed ourselves. First of all, we visited the most popular places in L.A. Some people say that the traffic in L.A. is so bad that they avoid trips to L.A. However, I felt more comfortable and familiar in L.A. because the city was crowded and vigorous like Seoul in Korea – especially when I saw a few stores' signs written in Korean in this country! I was so glad to see reminders of Korea that tears welled up in my eyes. We felt as if we were in Korea, eating various kinds of familiar and delicious Korean food.

L.A. was extremely attractive to me. It had so many things to see and eat. For example, Santa Monica Beach was very beautiful, and the Getty Center had many fine examples of contemporary art as well as examples of art from the Middle Ages. I could not help being surprised to see that all of them came from a private individual, J. Paul Getty.

Also, the California Science Center was a dynamic venue because we could see the actual space shuttle, The Endeavour. It was so amazing and impressive; it made me realize again that the USA has been a leader in space exploration.

We next visited Disneyland, which was a huge and wonderful amusement park. It is composed of two parts: Disneyland Park and California Adventure. To my surprise, Disneyland had its own distinctive theme as well as so many kinds of fun rides. The rides represented every scene and character of Disney's animation. The level of sophistication was remarkable. Even though our legs ached from walking so much, it didn't stop us

continued

from enjoying Disneyland. Our family kept jumping up and down and shouting with joy each day of our 3-day visit.

There were so many interesting rides, but Soarin' Around the World was especially impressive. It is a simulation of a hang glider, which let us travel around the tourist attractions all over the world. It was very realistic, allowing us to experience thrilling sights on every continent.

Live musical performances, electric parades and fireworks at night were the best of the best. I can understand why Disneyland is on the bucket list for most adults and children. The family thought that every ride and performance in Disneyland was outstanding.

We next moved to San Diego for the last item on our travel itinerary. The orca and dolphin shows at Sea World were a delight. The orcas, also called killer whales, were far larger than I imagined, with terrific strength. Thanks to the orcas, we were drenched in water whenever they splashed water with their large fins.

However, our family was so happy because we could add these unforgettable, funny memories in our head. It is clear that these family trips always bring us closer together and refresh our spirits.

Tutor: Robert H. Gardner

My Favorite Place in Mexico

By Enedina Ochoa

Ixtapa Zihuatanejo is a small tropical town on the south side of Mexico City. This is the most beautiful place that I have ever seen. I first visited this town with my uncle and his family when I was a small child. I knew I wanted to come back to this place when I had my own family. I wanted them to see this beautiful town.

Two of the prettiest sights were the river and the ocean. Many rivers came down from the mountains with very cold water. The ocean water was much warmer. The rivers formed beautiful waterfalls making splashing sounds. Tall, green, tree-covered mountains made a wall surrounding the little beach town. Numerous colorful birds live in the tall trees, making loud screeching sounds.

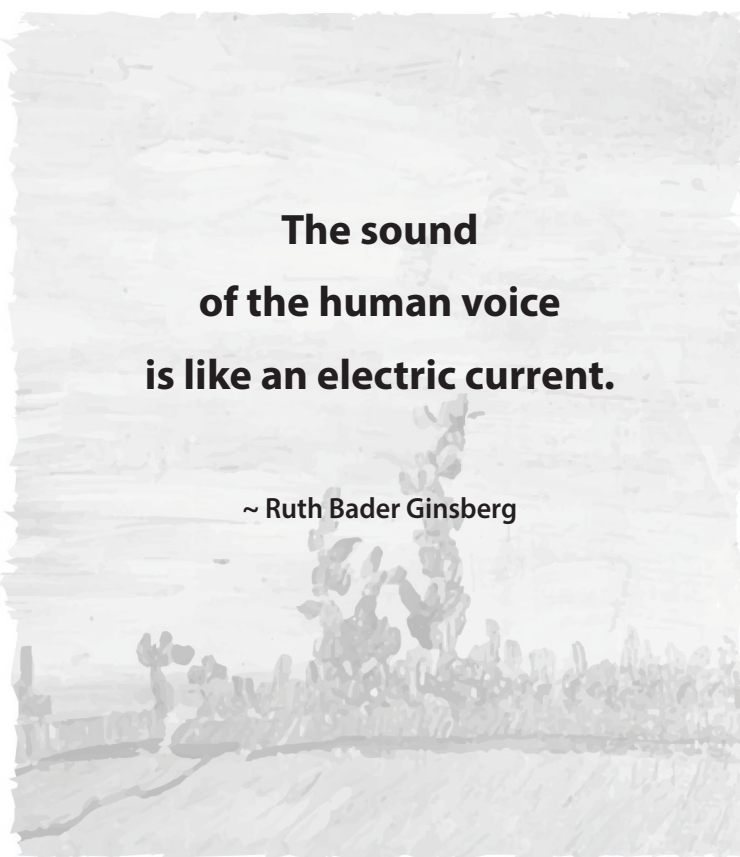
At the base of the mountains was a flatter area containing gigantic palm trees with many coconuts hanging from them. The leaves of the palm trees were used to make roofs for small cabanas near the beach area. My family members and I stayed in a cabana and slept in swinging hammocks.

Ixtapa had hot, humid, tropical weather that was cooled by soft ocean breezes. During the afternoon, heavy rains come down, but they cleared shortly after. The rain helped to keep everything green.

There was great food that we enjoyed. We had fried or grilled fish served with spicy pico de gallo. We also enjoyed seasoned rice and tasty beans with most delicious meals.

I found this place so beautiful that I highly recommend it to anyone who wants to visit a tropical paradise.

Tutor: Linda Thompson



**The sound
of the human voice
is like an electric current.**

~ Ruth Bader Ginsberg

Going to the Opera

By Natalia (Natasha) Scherbakova

We went to the opera! It was so great! I didn't think I could ever go there. Thank you, Patricia!

The name of the opera is La Traviata. Patricia drove to my house and we went to San Francisco. We talked about different simple things throughout our trip. I also looked at the scenery along the freeway. I love the nature of California, and I was able to see beautiful views from the car. We talked and laughed; the time ran so quickly. And finally, we saw a beautiful view of the Golden Gate Bridge in front of us.

We drove through the city to get to the opera. We left the car in a parking garage and went to an old big building. It was the Opera House. We went inside and then into the theater hall. It was great. The curtain has the color of expensive gold.

We went to find our seats. They were a "little" high in the balcony. For the first time in my life I regretted that I'm not rich and can't sit like Vivian from the movie "Pretty Woman." The stage was so far from us!

But the music began to play and I forgot about everything. The music was magic. And what we saw on the stage was magic too. There was a *salon* of a famous *courtesan* of Paris. Her name was Violetta. Ladies were in beautiful dresses and men were in black *tailcoats*. Everybody sang.

It was like a *fairytale*. I heard such beautiful voices. And, I was thinking at that moment: How do these actresses and actors go over from the play into modern life? They sit in their cars and go home on the streets. It must be an amazing and strange feeling. I wondered: How could I feel this? But, I'm here!

It's love on the stage now. The fallen woman falls in love with

continued

the young man, Alfredo. He loves Violetta tenderly and asks to change her life. Violetta decides to do this. Is it possible? No! Because the father of the young man is ashamed of his son's relationship with this woman. He asks her to leave his son and she does.

Violetta and Alfredo are unhappy and suffer. But love wins, of course. They are together now, but it's too late. Violetta dies from *TB*. That was a tragic ending to this story. It was so sad. The opera was over.

As we went home, we didn't talk much. The beautiful music sounded in our ears and souls. And, I think we both regretted that we sat so far and couldn't be on the stage with them. Patricia would look great in this dress! And, I would too.

Tutor: Pat Hanson

vocabulary:

- Salon:* a large room in a fashionable house that is used for entertaining guests
- Courtesan:* a prostitute, especially one with wealthy or upper-class clients
- Fairy tale:* a story involving fantastic forces and beings
b : a story in which improbable events lead to a happy ending
- Tailcoats:* a man's formal or full-dress coat with two long tapering skirts at the back
- TB:* tuberculosis

Music at the Library: Jubilee Klezmer Ensemble

By Olena Kraynyuk

The concert of Jewish music – in the library! The heat that day was 90F! Nevertheless, I went by foot. Scorching air penetrated even in the shadows. I dragged along hard, fought against the temptation to turn back home but reached there. The library, thank heaven, was cool.

A small hall of the library has filled with some of the audience, mainly elderly, but there were also the young men and women with kids no more than teenaged. My teacher Linda and I had seats by the wall. Musicians were placed before the listeners.

The concert began at once with very typical music: slightly mournful, oriental, lovely, mixed with European liveliness and rhythm. The audience immediately joined the musicians with clapping their hands and stomping their feet. Five or six people rose and joined in the semicircle, then began to dance behind the chairs. All were very sincere. Other listeners came from the library, being attracted by the passionate music.

There were five musicians: three men (clarinetist, contrabassist, drummer-guitarist) and two women (violinist and accordionist). I don't know if they were Jewish or not, but they were Americans, undoubtedly. The clarinetist had a scalp-cap on his head. The guitarist wore a delightful waistcoat embroidered with flowers and little elephants.

Sometimes the guitarist left his eccentric drum, which looked more like a vase with two bottoms, and sang a pleasant soft baritone. He sang in Spanish, translated in English before the song for those who didn't know Spanish.

Then one more musician, Alby – the father of the guitarist Larry Kass — joined the ensemble. Alby sang deep baritone in Latin,

continued

Spanish, and Yiddish songs from the Yiddish song repertory. It was so gay, so pretty, like a gathered jolly company of relatives, friends, and relatives of those friends — some 50 people.

Five-six listeners danced slowly almost all the time, enjoying their lives. Sometimes their semicircle became a circle. The music rang out so good, and all the people smiled, laughed. I felt passionately moved to dance with those who moved rhythmically step-by-step, putting their palms on the shoulders of each other, behind the chairs. One elderly man danced at ease, beautifully, almost professionally. I rose every now and then from my chair and joined the dancers to take part, but I was still very timid.

Old baritone Alby sang and sang, then recited “Tum Balalayka.” Many people echoed, and I did too. At last, I invited Linda to dance. She felt shy, but an old woman in a charming black lace blouse encouraged us: “Oh, it is very easy!” And we danced along a little bit.

I thought, How wonderful the Jews are: jolly, musical, witty, and madly talented. I thought about my love for them. We were in a cheerful mood! Receiving a little gift of good fortune: Jewish music from Eastern Europe, Spain, and Portugal! The Ensemble invited us to clap, to stomp, or just lean back and enjoy. It was really like this.

Thanks!

Tutor: Linda Dunlap

Responses to selected poems of Langston Hughes

By Janice M. Bowens

As part of poetry month in April 2018, Janice M. Bowens read the poems of Langston Hughes (1902-1967), an American poet, novelist, playwright and social activist. Janice wrote her reactions to the poems – she interpreted what Langston Hughes might have felt when he wrote a certain poem and she responded with her own experiences and feelings.

Joy by Langston Hughes

I went to look for Joy.
Slim, dancing Joy,
Gay, laughing Joy,
Bright-eyed Joy –
And I found her
Driving the butcher's cart
In the arms of the butcher boy!
Such company, such company
As keeps this young nymph, Joy!

Response by Janice M. Bowens

Look up, see the joy waiting for your love. Don't you see that pretty face looking right at you? I've missed so many of your shooting stars. I just want to have the arms of that one I dream of. To see those eyes of my bright dreamer, to be able to keep looking for that wonderful joy. Joy oh joy, bring back to me that sweet smell of hope, bring back the lost joy that was taken so very cruelly. They cared nothing for my joy, just my sorrow. Now that joy has found its way back into the place. Oh my joy, I've waited for your return, and here you are, my friend, you have brought me back my joy.

As I Grew Older by Langston Hughes

It was a long time ago.
I have almost forgotten my dream.
But it was there then,
In front of me,
Bright like a sun –
My dream.

And then the wall rose,
Rose slowly,
Slowly,
Between me and my dream.
Dimming,
Hiding,
The light of my dream.
Rose until it touched the sky –
The wall.

Shadow.
I am black.

I lie down in the shadow.
No longer the light of my dream before me,
Above me.
Only the thick wall.
Only the shadow.

My hands!
My dark hands!
Find my dream!
Help me to shatter this darkness,
To smash this night,
To break this shadow
Into a thousand lights of sun,
Into a thousand whirling dreams
Of sun!

Response by Janice M. Bowens

I can feel that old spirit calling, saying I too had that dream also, but I just put it away. I had to grow up too fast, leaving my childhood dreams behind. Also growing up to deal with this grown-up world, always too afraid of saying something wrong, keeping it deep inside, the old saying "sit down and shut-up." I did what I was told, being quiet as a mouse, locking away all my dreams, swallowing them. I'm choking. Trying to get air, feeling that I'm going to pass out or even die.

What happened to my dreams, what happened to me? I can't see anything. I feel so invisible, always putting my dreams away. I'm choking here. I'm drowning here. I can't find some kind of lifeline. My dreams were to reach the sky, to soar above the clouds, to fly free the wind under my wings, but you caught me, and you did the most heinous thing to me, you cut my wings, you broke my heart and my spirit. I came tumbling to this cold, cold world. You just laughed at my sorrow, and pain. I just wanted to fly just a little while. I was going to come back. I've taken myself from this dark world. I always kept my word. You've taken me for granted. The light of the stars and my own sun. I've taken back my hope, I've taken back my dreams, but most of all these things, I've given back your damned dreams.

Quiet Girl by Langston Hughes

I would liken you
To a night without stars
Were it not for your eyes.

I would liken you
To a sleep without dreams
Were it not for your songs.

Response by Janice M. Bowens

Always said your eyes are the world into one's soul. I've looked in your eyes and I lose myself, so hard for me to come back, so hard to find oneself, so hard to let go. I sit and daydream about how the night is going to be without the stars in the sky at night. Is the moon so ashamed that you keep me up all night, having no shame, you keep on playing that silly game of hide-an-peek. Sometimes you do cheat, but I don't care. I'll let you win always. You have taken the very best part of my heart, to turn it into the memories and the melody of love. Can I dream of dreams? Can I sing you my song? Will it touch your heart that can turn to gold? I hope it will, because my love for you is ever so very real. So, I'll close my eyes to open my mind, to find a place that's yours and mine.

Lullaby for a Black Mother by Langston Hughes

My little dark baby,
My little earth-thing,
My little love one,
What shall I sing
For your lullaby?
 Stars,
 Stars,
A necklace of stars
Winding the night.
My little Black baby,
My dark body's baby,
What shall I sing
For your lullaby?
 Moon,
 Moon.
Erect diamond moon,
Kissing the night.
Oh, little dark baby,
Night black baby,
 Stars, stars,
 Moon,
 Nights stars,
 Moon,
For your sleep-song lullaby.

Response by Janice M. Bowens

Here I'm seeing an orphan
From the south, self-educated
Black gay man in the south
It's a death wish
He is reminiscing of the lack
Of motherly love, not being
Able to hold onto memories
That weren't there, looking and
Wondering how that must feel
To hear the heart beat
To have that warm embrace
To share that special bond
To hear mother sing sweet
Lullabies, and wonder how
Would that feel like to be as
Dark as the night, to wish upon
Those starry nights, to look above
And wonder why? That I've
Never heard that lovely and
Sweet lullaby. So thank you
Stars and thank you moon,
You made me strong, to speak
Of the truth. I'll always love you
From the midnight skies, that those
Stars, and moon always
Shined so bright over
All the dark babies in the
Dark lullaby nights.

April Rain Song by Langston Hughes

Let the rain kiss you.
Let the rain beat upon your head with silver liquid drops.
Let the rain sing you a lullaby.
The rain makes still pools on the sidewalk.
The rain makes running pools in the gutter.
The rain plays a little sleep-song on the roof at night –
And I love the rain.

Response by Janice M. Bowens

This looks to me like Mr. Hughes is talking about tears that are falling on his sadness, the rain is covering up some unspoken pain and hurt that may have changed his path in life. Mr. Hughes speaks of silver liquid drops to conceal the ongoing pain of the silent rain he hears when he's alone. He may be thinking about drinking, because when you drink you sing about childhood memories. Mr. Hughes is saying that he sees pools of water and envisions lying in the gutter as many times happened in his own life. Mr. Hughes wakes up from his sorrowful night to little pink elephants that sing at the top of their voices, pounding like a hot tin roof, echoing the night before. He still loves drinking every night. He loves the rain but can't stand the rain, it brings back old memories.

Tutor: Janet Felker

This section features writings by adult learners who have devoted considerable time and effort to autobiographical and memoir writing. These selections are excerpts from their longer writing projects.

**What will our children
do in the morning
if they do not see us fly?**

~Rumi



My Mother Lived for Others

By Olena Kraynyuk

My mother was a remarkable woman. She was able to do many things: to sew, to embroider, to knit, to cook, to recite poetry, to grow plants, to teach schoolchildren as she was a teacher. She had a good character and spread her enthusiasm to all people around her. Her learners at school adored her. When she retired, they visited to congratulate her every 5 years for her birthday until she died.

My mother always gave most of her free time to children. In Russia, during the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945), she worked not only at high school but in the Kindergarten, too. There, she, together with the other educators, made children's toys of papier-mache, because at those times there were no toys. The aim of Kindergarten was only to feed the children. Almost all the young ones' fathers were on the battlefields (my father, too). The teachers knew all about their pupils to distribute the humanitarian aid among those who needed it most.

After the ending of the war, our family lived in Ukraine. Life became better little by little. The school where my mother taught, was replaced by new premises. As my mother was a biologist, she and the pupils changed the surrounding territory into a flowering garden. Children studied all agriculture jobs: to dig, to plant, to care for flowers, bushes, trees, vegetables. The harvest of currants and carrots were gathered for the school dining-hall and partly to sell to tenants in the nearest homes. My mother took into account all the money and then had the opportunity to buy visual aids for the class biology cabinet. There were even cages with birds and small animals.

Of course, all the children loved biology. In the early spring they made wooden boxes for starlings (with a parent's help).

continued

Then a column of pupils, headed by my mother, marched to the nearest park with the boxes to put them in the trees. At that time, birds came home from the South for nesting and breeding. It was a festival, named Day of Birds, which my mother created. In the evenings, there were real celebrations at school: poems, songs, and competitions about birds, with prizes, of course.

How did my mother know how to do so many things? She became an orphan at 14 years old. She watched and studied from everybody. For example, her older sisters taught my mother to make many hand crafts, and her mother-in-law taught her how to cook. My mother didn't know many dishes, but those she could do, she cooked perfectly.

I try to remember my mother's shortcomings, but I can't recollect any. They were so insignificant. In my memory remains only her kindness, thoughtfulness and joy given to all: children, family, and friends.

When I have a good result from any of my deeds, I connect to my mother with this thought: "Oh, if you would see it!"

She lived not for herself, but for all of us!

Tutor: Linda Dunlap

My Father

By Olena Kraynyuk

My father was born in 1907. He had a hard life but, I think, a happy life, even though his childhood fell on the times of World War I and the Russian Revolution in 1917. He studied at the primary school in the countryside, then continued his studies in the chief town of his district. He worked as a carpenter, then in the locomotive round house and later, as a teacher in an out-of-the way corner of a province.

In the 1930s, my father graduated from Kirov College as a Russian literature and language teacher.

In 1937 his father, a priest, was arrested, imprisoned and put to death by false accusations. The family endured with courage those hard times preceding World War II. My grandfather was fully exonerated after Stalin's death.

My father was a participant of World War II, fought in the Belorussian and German territories, and enjoyed the Victory over Germany in May of 1945. Later, he was sent to the Far-East Front and finished World War II there.

After the war, he worked as a journalist and as a school teacher in Lviv city of Ukraine. There he lived until the end of his life.

In his youth, my father wrote little folk verses, humorous and topical, sang them in a lively manner and played an accordion. During World War II, he wrote poems about soldier's lives and deaths. Some of these poems were published in the front-line newspapers.

After the War, Father continued his vocation as a writer. He remembered his remarkable school teacher of Russian literature and attending poetical meetings in Moscow with great Russian poets like Mayakovski, Yesenin and many others.

His own life experiences had given him a lot of material for creative work. He wrote many short stories for newspapers. After the publication of a big novelet, he began to work on a great novel devoted to revolution and the early years of Soviet village life.

continued

Sometimes his cousin, who wrote poems, visited my father, and they read to each other their new things, then afterward, discussed them. My father wanted very much to know my opinion too, but it was not realized. These were hard times for me: my job, family duties, and often caring for a sick child.

Father became older, his health was not good after four years on the battlefields in trenches, in mud-huts, and under fire in the open air. I still feel excruciating pain in my soul because so much remained unsaid. Father died unexpectedly in 1970, when he was only 63 years old.

Time changed. The past of our country was revised, reevaluated, and it seemed to me that my father wrote about uninteresting times. Then, as I became older and alone, I changed that opinion. My father wrote about our history as it was. Thirty years after my father's death, I started to edit the not published, second part of his novel. I was excited for both my father's talent and my work. In the publication, I was helped by a wonderful teacher from the country school in my father's motherland.

Now I'm happy that many people from father's motherland can enjoy the book too. All the published writing of my father is now placed on the internet: two novelets, a novel, unpublished poems, and diaries of World War II times. My father was not a famous, popular writer, but I believe his books will be embraced by readers. They were written so frankly, with great faith in a beautiful, happy future. They tell us about people who lived in the Soviet time.

My father was a good teacher. His students loved him because he knew a lot of poetry and was an artistic reciter. He also taught them much more than they could learn from the textbooks. He loved most of all his motherland — its nature. He knew a great deal about everyday life, as well as morals and manners of the country, and he visited his motherland almost every summer. That is why his books were written so brightly and colorful.

If the two wars and the Russian Revolution had not come, the life of my father could have been more favorable. But even this difficult life he had lived fully; he lived honestly and worthily. He was lucky, he wrote books, he got to know the boundless happiness of creative work.

Tutor: Linda Dunlap

Mountain in Valleys

By Cristina Rodriguez Carreras

I was born in a small house below the mountain, beside a road that ran alongside the river. Mezquitic, the town of my childhood, was pretty. There were trees around our house, which was between two creeks. There were rabbits that visited us every day, coyotes at night and birds of different colors sang to us each morning and night.

We were happy – all of us living with my parents: my three brothers, four sisters, and I. We were all doing well, but when I was four years old and my brothers and sisters were still very young, my father was shot one day in San Juan, a nearby town. But I don't remember why. Then life became difficult for us. My mother worked hard for us, making bricks near the river. She sent us to school, and step by step, working together, we got over our sadness. In spring we made bricks and in the summer we planted peanuts and harvested them in the fall.

A few years later I moved to San Juan, a small town near my village. I found a job taking care of children and cleaning the house. After I learned to use the embroider machine, I started to work in the factory and after work, I would walk five miles home to Mezquitic.

A few years later, when I was 20 years old I went to Mexico City. I worked in another factory that made baby clothes. I worked there for five years. During that time, I got married, then my son Efrain was born, which was difficult because I still had to work at the factory and it was difficult to care for the baby. I decided to leave my work. My husband found work painting houses. Life was good: My daughter Elba was born and then Alicia, and Hugo my younger son.

Then my husband decided to move to Ojinaga, Chihuahua,

continued

where he got a job constructing irrigation canals. After a few months, I went to Ojinaga and brought my four children. My husband worked there and we lived with my sister. Then my son Efrain started kindergarten.

For a while, all was well, but one day my mother died. After that my sister and I, with the children, left Ojinaga and returned to Mezquitie to say goodbye to my mother. One month later we returned to Mexico City where my husband met us to start anew. He looked for work and found a job working for an architect painting and maintaining schools. Our life was good. The children went to school and were happy.

Suddenly, my husband decided to leave our house. He wanted to leave us for another family. He never visited our children after that. We started a new life without him. I worked at different things. I cleaned the teachers' houses and I sold food at the school during lunch break. I worked hard and my children helped me.

One day my son Efrain decided to come to America with his cousin. He worked hard as a painter and cleaning cars. Soon he got married. Then he got his resident card and a few years later he became a citizen and was able to bring me to the U.S. This, for me, was difficult but I am here.

continued

My Trip to This Country

(section two)

By Cristina Rodriguez Carreras

A few years later, when my son became a citizen, he went to Mexico and said to me, "I want to apply for a resident card for you and take you with me." A few months later he called me and said he had the appointment for December and he would wait for me in Juarez and, "Do not forget."

I came to Juarez, got my resident card and I left Mexico. I took the plane to Texas, then to Phoenix, then to Los Angeles, then to Santa Rosa. I arrived in the U.S. on December 12th: a special day for Mexicans, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

The first days in America were happy. I was with my son and family, Alex and Bella, my grandchildren. For Christmas we went shopping every day. Although I was visiting my family, and it was Christmas, I was still sad. I remembered my children in Mexico and I cried. After a month we went to Los Angeles to Disneyland, but always I wanted to go back to Mexico.

But I am here now. I am well. I have good friends, a nice teacher, and I want to become a citizen. I love America.

Tutor: Michael O'Looney

A Boy and a Girl from a Tiny Church

By Ally Choi

"Ally, Ally, wake up; please, wake up!" I woke hearing his sharp cry; it was my little brother who was engulfed in fear. It was winter, still dark and freezing outside, and I couldn't imagine what time it was. "Ally, I cannot find grandpa and grandma. Where are they? I'm scared." He started crying again.

I needed some time to understand this situation. I was 6, and he was 4 years old. We were staying at our grandparents' house during the winter. Our parents sent us to them twice a year, summer and winter, to spend some time with them as well as to experience a peaceful rural atmosphere. We normally woke up after 8 a.m. and never woke up in the middle of night, but he woke up suddenly in the early morning that day. I didn't feel anything initially but started feeling scared as my brother kept crying.

Our grandparents' house was located in the middle of a tiny town in typical South Korean farm county. There were no streetlights, traffic lights, or big markets. Our tiny cottage was surrounded by corn fields. There was no bathroom so we had to "shower" in the kitchen. My grandma poured warm water in the big rubber bucket and washed us with a soap and a sponge. The toilet was also outside the tiny shack. If we needed to go, we had to climb up some small stairs next to the corner of the house. It was too scary to go there after sunset because it was so dark outside. My grandma used to take us there during the night. Maybe that night, my brother was looking for grandma to go to the restroom with him, but he couldn't find her.

After my brother cried, I tried to open the door to the outside. I assumed it was very early in the morning. As soon as I slightly opened the door, freezing cold wind came inside, and we shivered like tiny rabbits in the snow! It was totally dark

outside, but we could see snow. Finally, we stepped outside with bare feet (we couldn't find our shoes in darkness), and we were holding hands. Freezing wind blew our flannel pajamas, and we felt the extreme cold so we shivered badly again. The light in front of the toilet shack shined on the small stairs so we could climb them.

There was a small church on the hillside that appeared before us when we climbed the stairs. After the last step, we heard soft singing coming through the church door. As soon as we heard the song, our hearts started throbbing with the mixed emotions of relief and anxiety. My brother Jae started crying louder, and then we cried together as we open the church door. "Grandma, grandma!!" There were about 10 or 12 people gathered for the early Morning Prayer in the sanctuary. Everyone in the sanctuary looked astonished when we appeared. Finally, we could see grandma was running to us.

Yes, my grandpa was a pastor in this tiny country church. Generally, a pastor's house is next to the church, but in my case, my grandparents' house was just below the church! Grandma had left the house very briefly to serve hot teas to church members.

When we came back home, we were still crying with combined feelings of comfort and a little bit of anger (for grandma's absence). As the morning darkness started to fade away, grandma picked up the milk delivery from outside the door. It was the early 80's, and at that time, milk carriers delivered and picked up adorable small glass milk bottles. I will never forget the amazing taste of the milk, always super fresh and wonderful!

continued

Tiny milk bottles were warming in the gently boiling pot as grandma started to make sweet pancakes. She mixed sweet rice flour and sorghum flour with a little bit of water in a large bowl making a batter and fried them in a lightly greased pan. [Sorghum is the common grain in the country regions of Korea.]

After the pleasant sizzling sound ended, she delivered hot pancakes onto our plates and sprinkled black milled-sugar on top. She also put some honey into cups of warm milk. These sweet and warm goodies melted in our mouths as we ate, and they warmed our frozen bodies as well! "I want one more piece! Please, please, Grandma!" As we finished a small piece of pancake, we asked for more. She was smiling as she watched us eating so happily. We didn't even realize grandpa came in the room until we noticed he was smiling at us as well.

In the fall of 2017, Jae and I were standing in front of grandma's picture that we used at her funeral ceremony. It was a church funeral, and our family and friends were singing hymns. When we were singing our family's favorite hymn, Jae suddenly stopped singing, and a couple of minutes later, he started crying softly. Today's hymn was also the hymn of that day of the small incident long ago in grandpa's church. Grandpa used to choose this song as an ending hymn during church services or family gatherings.

My brother and I each shared the same memory of the time long ago when we first heard this hymn, and we felt the very same emotion again. I cried with my brother on that early morning in the 80's; I started crying again with him for our grandma who will never come back to us.

Tutor: Laura Owens

My Angel Brenda

By Yolanda Sanchez

People told me my daughter would never succeed. I didn't believe them. And here is my story....

At the age of 24, I had my daughter Brenda. She was born at 40 weeks. It was a natural childbirth with no complications. She was a quiet baby girl. When she was 6 months old I realized I didn't feel a connection with her. Although she was growing like a normal baby, she didn't look at my eyes. She sat at 6 months, and walked when she was one year old.

My mother took care of Brenda while I was at work. My mother mentioned to me that Brenda liked to see movies over and over and didn't respond or turn when called. She didn't play or interact with her brother and preferred to be alone. I was worried because she didn't act like a typical child. It was hard for me taking her out in the community because she had bad behavior; she screamed, threw herself to the floor, and didn't speak at all.

At two and half, I took her to her doctor. She referred me to Stanford for an evaluation. The psychologist who observed her gave us the diagnosis that she had severe autism and that she needed to receive therapies. At that time I didn't know what autism was. It was hard for me to understand, but I accepted and I started helping Brenda by educating myself. I attended workshops to learn what therapies would be beneficial for her.

She started speech therapy once a week and also started occupational therapy once a week at home until she turned three years old. When she turned 3, she began school at a special day class where she received speech and OT (occupational therapy).

continued

My husband and I continued to educate ourselves about autism whenever we could because we wanted to have a better understanding to support Brenda. In one of the workshops they talked about Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). They said that this therapy was the best for autism and the earlier the better.

At 5 years old, Brenda began behavior services at home and also at school. Brenda had serious behavior problems: she hit herself many times, and because of that I had to be alert all the time. She would also open the door and leave the house without anyone knowing. She had sensory issues and was very sensitive to light and physical touch. In school it was hard for her to wait in line for lunch. But little by little, I began to see changes in Brenda.

When she was seven or eight, she learned to use the school restroom, she had better eye contact, and she started learning how to write and read. She was mainstreaming in Language Arts, Math and PE, and for the first time she said, "mom." It was the best thing that ever happened to me.

Around December of the year Brenda turned 10, she started not sleeping, and she screamed and cried in the night for two weeks. We didn't know what was wrong with her. I took her to the doctor and everything was fine with her. She was not able to tell us what hurt or why she cried and screamed. She stayed home; I didn't send her to school because she was tired. We all were tired. My husband and I took turns staying with her in the night. Everybody slept in the garage because she screamed so loud. I was so worried thinking about what was wrong with her.

I looked online and found Brenda's doctor from when she was younger, and I made an appointment with her. The doctor had not seen Brenda for four years and she was glad to see her

again. She told me Brenda was going to start her period soon and probably she was having migraines and cramps. The next week she started her period. It was hard for her understanding what was happening. It took time for her to learn how to deal with this but when she learned, she understood when she needed medicine in order to feel better.

When Brenda graduated from middle school we moved from Monterey County to Windsor. She went to Anova, and she made good progress, plus she had very little bad behavior. In February 2017, she started to have seizures, and that affected her behavior. I felt scared not knowing anything about seizures. She started taking medicine to control seizures but the medicine caused her to be anxious, and she was not able to concentrate. The doctor changed her medication and the new medicine worked better for her. She started to progress again.

Now Brenda is attending a transition program in Windsor. She works at Round Table Pizza three days and she goes to Junior College two days a week. She is taking speech therapy, and she takes piano lessons and swimming lessons. At home I teach her how to sweep, clean tables, wash clothes, fold clothes, wash dishes, vacuum and make her bed. She also knows how to make a list and go to the grocery store. She loves to go shopping and she is learning about budgets. She expresses herself by writing on her iPad and making cards to show affection.

I am so proud of Brenda. She has made a lot of progress. Although she was originally diagnosed with severe autism, now her autism is moderate. I'm so glad I believed in her.

Tutor: Cindy Wilde

My Life: Adventure, Time & Nature

By Ako Munson

I was born on January 17, 1969. It was a chilly morning. I was born at Watanabe hospital in Takatsuki City, Japan. I was born during the Vietnam War. I was a small baby but full of energy. I cried a lot. My parents named me "Atsuko." Now, everybody calls me "Ako." I liked my nickname. I'd like to tell you about the long journey of my adventurous life.

Early School Life

In Japan there are two years of kindergarten, two years of elementary school, three years of middle school and three years of high school. From kindergarten to middle school, we needed to go to the school in our district unless we went to private school. Then we needed to take a test to enter most of the high schools.

I took a test for a private high school, but I failed. Then I took a test for public school and passed. The school started in April. The cherry blossoms were so beautiful. Students came from all over the different areas. I knew some student from middle school, but there were lots of students that I had never met. I was really nervous and excited. We had twelve classes and thirty-seven or thirty-eight students in each class. We were in the Baby Boomer generation.

We had to wear uniforms like my middle school, but the style was different. We needed to wear white socks and dark colored loafer style shoes. Some students, including me, cut the skirt shorter and sewed the pleats together so it made a tight skirt. It was a school law to wear white socks, but some students wore light colored or printed socks.

One day when I was in my first year, I wore neon blue socks. I got into trouble. Why me? I didn't expect what happened

next. The P.E. teacher called me into his office. He said, "You were wearing blue socks. It is against the school law and you broke it!" I was starting to think I was going to get arrested and go to jail. I'm kidding. I replied, "I'm sorry that I broke the school law, but some students don't wear white socks." His anger rose up. It seemed that steam came from his head. The next thing I knew, he hit my head with a corner of a hard attendance book. I was so angry. Why did he do that for socks? I told all of my friends what had happened. Next morning, all of my friends wore colored socks. Nobody got into trouble. It was revenge for my freedom. It was a stupid school law.

The U.S.A.

After graduation from two years of college, I saved more money for my trip abroad. I was feeling like a great explorer—like Louis and Clark, but it wasn't 1800; it was 1999. I chose to go to the United States among all the countries I had considered. The year before I was supposed to go to the U.S., the earthquake occurred in San Francisco. It was enormous and horrible. The houses in the Marina district were burned down to the ground. The Bay Bridge was flattened.

It was January 1999. I arrived in St. Petersburg, Florida with expectations and feeling a little bit uneasy. The day I arrived had a blue sky and was pretty warm. I chose St. Petersburg because I assumed that there would be less Japanese people than in San Francisco (where I would eventually move). I thought I could speak English more than Japanese in St. Petersburg.

I enrolled in a one year program in ESL at Eccard College. I stayed in the dorm for a month. The inside of the dorm looked like a dungeon. The walls were concrete or stone. I don't remember. There was a small window and two beds. I remember the room being cold and dark. If I stayed here by myself, I could be very lonely.

continued

Luckily, I had a roommate. Her name was Cameria and she was from Puerto Rico. She was small, like me, and had black puffed hair. She was friendly and nice. I was so glad. We became pretty good friends. She had many friends, like Karla from Honduras, Monica and Francisco from Columbia, Pedro from Venezuela, and many more whose names I have forgotten. I was surrounded by people who spoke Spanish. To be honest with you, I spoke Spanish better than English. They invited me to go to their salsa dancing party every weekend. It was so fast that I couldn't copy them, but I had a great time with them.

The grammar was easy in ESL class, but the problem was that I didn't understand what the teacher was saying. My classmates were mostly from Central or South America, the Middle East, Asia and Europe.

My Marriage & Mellow

In the middle of struggling with my visa, I met my husband. His name is Joe. I was in my early 20s and he was in his late 20s. The first time I agreed to go out on a date with Joe, he came to meet me with his Yamaha 250cc. We went to a fancy seafood restaurant near the ocean in San Francisco where I had come to stay after studying in Florida. He entertained me pretty much the whole time. I was quiet. If I didn't understand, he made an effort to make me understand. He was a funny guy and made me laugh so much. He was a gentleman. He held a door and slid a chair back and in as I was sitting down. Also, he was kind. I had so much fun hanging around with him. We went out almost every day.

When we decided to get married, we went to City Hall. We took our friend as a witness. Our judge was a heavyset lady with crutches who had a broken leg. Our official wedding ceremony finished within twenty minutes. We wore regular clothes. We spent money for a wedding party and a dog.

We had a big celebration with our friends in Golden Gate Park. We had lobsters, steaks, chicken and many things for a BBQ, and a wedding cake. We had a blast. He gave me skis and poles, which were what I wanted instead of a wedding ring. We got a puppy so that we could spend time with a dog instead of going to parties. Our lifestyle changed completely.

We named the puppy Mellow Yellow. He was a yellow Labrador Retriever. He became stout. He was a beautiful dog and he was smart. We were going to put him in a dog show, but we found out that he had hereditary arthritis in his shoulder that his breeder didn't inform us about. So, we couldn't breed him, but we had a lot of fun with him.

We took him everywhere with us. He could go without a leash, he responded to voice-only commands. He could sit down outside of a restaurant while we were eating. Other dogs would come to say hello; he would stand up to greet them. After the dogs were gone, he would look at us through the window. We put our finger down and he sat down. He knew what we wanted him to do. He seemed more like a person than a dog.

Jade Hunting

One of our family hobbies is jade hunting. Our daughter's middle name is Jade, so Joe has been collecting jade for her. He likes jade so much that he staked a jade claim. I think that the stones are so beautiful and have mysterious powers. Some stones or gems are very expensive and considered to be treasures. It is nature's power. Some of the rocks combine to form minerals for a long, long time.

We are looking for California Jade, especially Botryoidal, which is nephrite with a knobby grape-like crystal habit. It looks like the brain. It is difficult to find, but possible. Also, they are growing.

continued

When we go to look for jade, we go to Covelo. We can find jade in a creek, a river, or a river embankment. It is very fascinating. I was looking down to find it, so at the end of the day, my neck was sore. My son Milo is the best jade hunter. He is lowest to the ground and has keen eyesight and high concentration.

We also have an interest in "Suiseki," which is Japanese art stone. In nature, these are stones that take different kinds of shapes through the forces of wind and water. Suiseki has rules and cannot be any stone found in nature. They must be expressive and follow the rules for Suiseki. Suiseki form or express different shapes like mountain ranges, mountains with waterfalls, cave shapes, Mt. Fuji, water pool shapes and tunnel stones. We try to find rocks that would match with the Suiseki rule. It is difficult to find them, but, it is possible. That is why it makes collecting so interesting and fun for us. When I find a stone that is special, it makes my day worthwhile.

The Future

I'm lucky to have such a wonderful family. I'm excited about the future, but, I have unsure predictions about my future. I assume that my children will go their own way and have their own lives. On the other hand, Joe and I will have our own lives. No matter what, I think that our relationship will be strong and deep.

I need to think about what I would want after their independence. I've looked at my past and think that my adventure has been interesting. I had hardships and happiness, as most people do. It is up to you to have an interesting life. Sometimes we have to let time and nature decide.

Tutor: Patricia Oberg



FREE Services of the Sonoma County Library Adult Literacy Office

One-to-One Adult Literacy Tutoring: Available at all branches

An Adult Learner is matched with a volunteer tutor who is trained and supported by our Tutor Coordinator and the Literacy Office team. The pair meet for tutoring sessions at their local library branch for:

a minimum of 2 hours per week for at least six months to achieve learner-centered goals to improve reading, writing skills in English. In addition, participants have access to quarterly laptop instruction workshops, and small-group instruction class at some locations. Program assessment, instruction, training and materials are FREE.

Pre-requisites/Learner Requirements: In addition to having 2hrs a week to meet with a tutor at their library, Adult Learners need sufficient verbal English skills to communicate and understand their tutor, schedule their own tutor appointments and related communications independently. This is not a bilingual program. All interested adult learners must begin by making an assessment appointment with the Student Coordinator. Interested in FREE One-to-One Adult Literacy Learning or tutoring?

Contact: (707) 544-2622 literacy@sonomalibrary.org

Visit Us: Mondays through Saturdays: 10:00 am – 3:00 pm
Sonoma County Library Adult Literacy Office
Physical Address: 725 Third Street, Santa Rosa, CA
(Annex Bldg.)

Families for Literacy (FFL) is an enhancement service offered to all One-to-One Adult learners who have children under 5 years of age residing in or visiting their home on a regular basis.

The FFL program provides free new children's books for the adult learner's household. The tutor instructs the adult learner in how to read the books aloud so the learner feels confident sharing the story with children. FFL is designed to improve the adult's reading skill and create an encouraging early literacy environment through the practice of reading aloud to young children and ensuring access to quality children's books in the home throughout the year.

English Conversation Circles: Available at Select Branch Sites

Non-native English speakers meet for FREE classes led by a facilitator fluent in English. Classes are ongoing, free and designed to help adults practice and improve their conversational English skills in a welcoming and social environment.

Interested in English Conversation Circles?

Santa Rosa Classes:

**At the Sonoma County Library Adult Literacy Office
725 Third Street
Wednesdays & Saturdays
11:00 am – 12:30 pm**

Sonoma Regional Library: Check with local branch to confirm.
At the time of this printing, classes were offered

Wednesdays 7:30 -8:30 pm

Windsor Regional Library: Check with local branch to confirm.
At the time of this printing, classes were offered

1st & 3rd Mondays 6:30 – 7:30 pm

No Sign up or registration needed.

No classes on library holidays

Sonoma County Library

Adult Literacy Partnerships

Community Outreach Classes for Adults at Partnership Sites

English & Literacy Classroom Instruction

These classes for adult, non-native English speakers focus on developing English & Literacy Skills

Classes meet two evenings a week for two hours at partnership site locations during the Fall and Spring school cycle. Classes are currently held at Luther Burbank Elementary school. Instruction is provided by credentialed Instructors and bilingual (Eng/Span) classroom aides.

Interested in Community Outreach Classes for Adults?

**Contact: Ernesto Sanchez at Luther Burbank Elementary
(707) 235-2910 (Bilingual Eng/Span)**

**Alisa Adams, Adult Literacy Services Coordinator
(707) 544-2622**

Inmate ESL Classes and Literacy Tutoring: Santa Rosa, CA

Through a partnership with the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office, we provide ongoing Adult Literacy and ESL classes taught by credentialed instructors at both the Main Adult Detention Facility and the North County Detention Facility. Inmates interested in these services contact their Inmate Services representative to sign up.

Inmate tutoring services are coordinated in partnership with the Sheriff's Inmate Services Office on an individual basis.

Graton Day Labor ESL Classes: Graton, CA

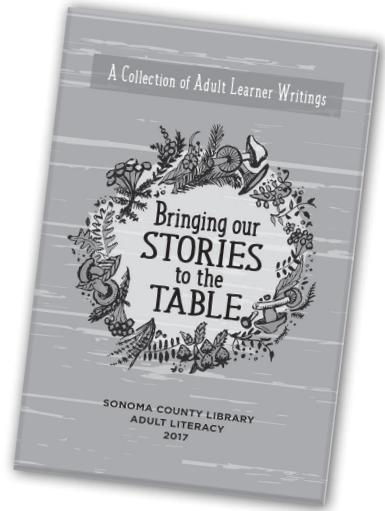
**ESL classes are ongoing and free at the Graton Day Labor
Center located at: 2981 Bowen Street, in Graton, CA**

Interested students must be members of the Graton Day Labor Center to participate.

Interested in ESL classes at the Graton Day Labor Center?

Contact: (707) 829-1864

Read more stories by our adult learners ...



For more information on how to get involved with our Adult Literacy program as a donor, volunteer or adult learner.

Contact: (707) 544-2622

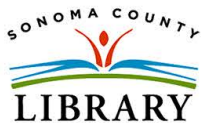
Email: literacy@sonomalibrary.org

Read & see more at:

<https://sonomalibrary.org/locations/adult-literacy-program>

Tutors get Involved: <http://libraries.volunteermatch.org>

**Find out how to get involved with our
Adult Literacy program as a donor,
volunteer or adult learner.**



**ADULT
LITERACY**

211 E Street
(707) 544-2622
sonomalibrary.org