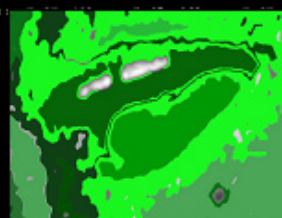
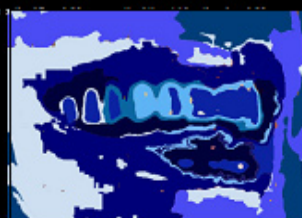
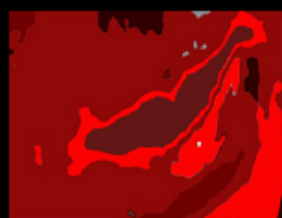


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CHORD

Multi-America Magazine

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Mouths on the Front Cover
(right to left)

César E. Chávez (1923~1993): An American. A labor activist, and a founder and leader of the National Farm Workers Association (later became the United Farm Workers). He led many strikes to protest for higher wages and better conditions for farm workers. Under the United Farm Workers, Chávez united Mexican and Filipino workers, and encouraged them to be committed to nonviolence.

Rosa Parks (1913~2005): An American. She refused to give up her seat to a white man in a bus in 1955, which led to her arrest and trial, and eventually a 381-day Montgomery bus boycott, and the Supreme Court's ruling in November 1956 that segregation on transportation is unconstitutional. Parks also served as secretary of the NAACP and later Adviser to the NAACP Youth Council.

Yuji Ichioka (1936~2002): An American. He coined the term "Asian American" to help unify different Asian ethnic groups. He is a pioneer of Asian American Studies and a key founder of Asian American Studies Center at UCLA where he served as a professor approximately from 1969 with the first Asian American Studies class up until his death in 2002.

Magazine Statement #1:

ESL: Englishes as a Shared Language

“Chord” here means a combination of three or more tones sounded at the same instance making one harmonious sound. In Chord Magazine, therefore, we aim to present as many voices as possible, which, we believe, produce one America chord that sounds harmoniously. And, we also believe that including various voices from people of various backgrounds regardless of the quality of each voice will ultimately enable us to produce a higher quality of America chord.

We’ve been concerned that especially in writing field, Americans are not provided an equal space to publish their voices as well as an equal treatment toward their use of their own Englishes. For instance, writings by ESL students are often regarded “not good enough” because their Englishes present “grammatical errors” with which some people think a writer loses her/his authority over her/his work. In fact, with corrections on their Englishes, many ESL students who like writing are discouraged to write in their own ways and feel as if their writings would never be as good as standard English users.

We rather think that those “errors” will strengthen her/his writing, for it insists who she/he is and speaks up her/his own voice. Our shared language should be “American” English, which of course includes any kinds of English that are used by “Americans”. Our English should reflect the diversity of United States. Although including various Englishes may make our communications difficult, we’d better be proud of the difficulty, for it proves our efforts of including and understanding different, yet equal “Americans”.

Thus, Chord Magazine is here to provide a space for us to publish our voices while also to show an equal value of various Englishes and encourage us to produce our own voices in our own tones.

02/20/2006

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Yasuhito Yamamoto

Short Story

I wrote this piece in accordance to Jamaica Kincaid's short story, "Girl".

I Want to Go Home

Zohal Atif

Don't pick shiny things from the streets it might be a bomb; don't go playing in the fields, Russians have covered it with mines; when you hear a high pitch sound stay away from the windows it might be a rocket; don't go outside the rebels will kidnap you; put on all the warm clothes you are going away; *where are we going?* Don't ask your country is at war, you should know that; don't take anything no matter how dear it is; your friend's home is bombed; just go don't look back; you are in Pakistan now; this is how to cover your head when praying; this is how to cover yourself completely when outside or people will harass you; get in your home, girls in here don't play outside; this is how to wear Pakistani clothing so you won't be mocked at; stop talking in your language only speak in Urdu*; never go to Pakistani police for help they will put you in jail till you pay them; *I want to go home*; don't say that, you are an Afghan refugee, you should know that; five days from today you are going to U.S; you are not allowed to take anything with you no matter how dear it is; you are in America speak in English; don't cover yourself completely or people will mock you; think before you speak; people are watching you; *I want to go home*; don't say that, you are an Afghan refugee in U.S; you can't go home till you become a U.S citizen, you should have known by now.

* The national language of Pakistan

This creative piece is a response to Jamaica Kincaid's short story, "Girl".

Path

Joseph Park

Hold your cards with both hands; leave them on the table and look only when you must; do not laugh; do not smile; you know what they say about keeping your poker face; wear sunglasses if you want; but keep in mind that they make you look silly; you do not have to conceal your eyes; they might actually help you; trick other players' minds with your eyes; keep your mouth shut; because your mouth is your worst enemy; open them only to raise; when you do, speak in low tone and speak quickly, so that they do not know that your voice is shaking; try to look into other players' eyes; then try to look through their eyes; beyond those eyes, try to look into their minds; don't forget; they might be trying to trick you with their eyes; think logically; think quickly; do not think logically; do not think quickly; follow your instinct when the feeling is strong; you will know when to think logically and when not to; if you are stuck, talk to your stomach; it will tell you what to do; you do not have to win every pot; whoever has the most at the end is the winner; do not fret or give up until your very last chip is gone; do not lose hope even if you have one chip left; you never know what can happen; even if you lose everything, do not laugh, smile, or cry; do not forget your poker face; never come to me after losing everything; I cannot help you; never blame me for losing everything; I did not force you; do not worry; it will be fun; enjoy the thrill and love your choices; don't forget; you are already in hell the moment you touch those cards.

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This creative piece is a response to Jamaica Kincaid's short story, "Girl".

A Hard Worker

Linda Chu

This is the way you greet a customer; this is the way you smile at a customer you like; this is the way you smile at a customer you don't know; this is the way you smile at a customer you hate. No matter how you feel about them, you smile. *What if I can't smile because I am having a bad day?* You don't have to be happy, but you ought to make them feel happy. *What if I can't.* This is the way you answer the phone, "Bamboo House Chinese Restaurant how may I help you?"

4 This is the way you take a delivery order; this is the way you take a takeout order; this is the way you answer a customer's questions; this is the way you deal with an angry customer. *What if I can't answer their questions or what if I can't deal with them?* This is the way you order food in the kitchen, this is the way you talk to the chefs, watch your mouth and your attitude, it's already hot enough in the kitchen, you do not want to get them pissed off at you and make the kitchen even hotter. *What if they are pissed off for no reason?* This is the way you set up a table, napkins on top of the left side of the placemats, silverware on top of the right corner of the placemat. *What if I place them in the wrong order?* This is the way you deliver the food to the table; this is the way you clean up the table, be careful not to break any dishes. A clumsy person like you seven dollars and twenty-five cents an hour is probably not enough to repay the dishes that you are going to break. This is the way you... *What if I ...* Linda Chu! Listen up carefully and stop asking what if. I can still fire you even you are my niece you know?

America's Favorite Cookie

Roxana Cheng

At 5:30am Jacinta opened her eyes and looked at the sky. The moon was in the same place as it was when she woke up yesterday and the day before; she then knew that it was time for school. She got up, grabbed a plastic bag containing a notebook, a pencil and her lunch box and quietly walked towards the door. Jacinta started her day and long journey to school while memorizing the conjugation of the verbs she had learned the day before.

Jacinta's mother makes little boats made from dried seaweed as souvenirs and sells them to tourists all over the world. Her dad is a farmer that seeds potatoes. They eat potatoes everyday, people say it fills you up very quickly and it also gives a lot of energy. The family owns several sheep, which is mainly from where their living comes from. Jacinta is the oldest child in a family with 5 children. Jacinta's parents are still young that is why they only have 5 now. Auntie Manuela has 12 children and she is only 40.

School starts at 8am now that is summer which allows Jacinta to have 30 more minutes of sleep. Jacinta has already walked half way to school; she has one more hour of walk and the sky is getting brighter and brighter. She arrives to school just on time to start class. The teacher looks at her and says: Jacinta why aren't you wearing shoes? Because my mom gave my shoes to my little sister who has to take the sheep to the mountains while I am in school, she answered. Then the teacher walked towards a closet in which she opened a box with charity clothing that came from another country. After digging into the box for some time she finally found a pair of Nike sneakers and gave them to Jacinta. But Jacinta rejected them. You prefer to walk barefoot? The teacher asked. Jacinta replied: I can't wear those shoes, only tourists wear those kinds of shoes. I am not like them. They are big, white and have yellow hair. The teacher had no other option but to put the sneakers back and told Jacinta that he will take her home in his bicycle after class.

During lunch Jacinta desperately reached out for her lunch box, she did not eat anything ever since she woke up this morning. She sat on the floor forming a circle with 4 other classmates. They all had the same; one baked potato. They all looked so happy and it felt like it was the yummiest meal ever. They spent no time to finish it all and go play a little bit of

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soccer before class starts again.

After school, the teacher took Jacinta home as promised.

Jacinta dropped her plastic bag on the table and run to the lakeshore where her mom and other people were selling souvenirs to a group of tourists that have just landed to the island. This was the first time Jacinta paid close attention to what they were saying. The way they talked was very strange for her but for some reason she could still understand what they were saying. When a lady approached to her and asked how much was the little ship she was holding in her hand, Jacinta was paralyzed by the great smell that lady had. It was a smell that she couldn't even describe, but it was definitely something she had never smelled before.

The lady asked for the second time and Jacinta replied: 1 dollar. The lady looked at her little face with frostbites on the cheeks and gave her 5 dollars and told her to keep the change. Jacinta was stunned since she had never held that much money in her hands before. Before leaving the island the lady came to Jacinta again, but this time to give her something. She gave her a package of Oreo cookies. Jacinta had never seen such a cute small package of cookies before, the ones that she eats are plain cookies that come in big bags and have no filling. Holding the package of cookies Jacinta watched the ship leave the island.

Jacinta run to her mother and gave her the money. Where are these tourists from? Jacinta asked. They are "gringos" her mom said. Is Gringo a country? Jacinta asked again. No, that is how American people are called. They are from America. Do they eat the same food we eat? No, the mom answered. They eat some kind of food that makes them grow that big and look good. We don't have that kind of food here that is why we are small and dark.

Jacinta walked back home holding the present that nice smelling lady had given her. Jacinta was very happy. When she got home she hid the cookies in her plastic bag. Then she started to do her home work. She had to make sentences with the new verbs that the teacher had taught them today. It took her no time to write all those sentences since she had encountered a very exciting experience selling ships in the afternoon, so her mind was full of imagination and the smell of that lady's perfume.

Later that night when everybody was already asleep Jacinta took out the package of cookies and went outside. She sat on the ground and looked at the stars. She remembered what her mom said about the food that "gringos" eat, and then she felt she was the

luckiest person in the world because she had the food that gringos eat in her hands. She loved the way how that generous lady smelled; she wanted to smell like that too. For her, that package of Oreo cookies was like the magic food that could make her smell as good as that lady. She then decided to eat one of the six cookies in the package. That was the best thing she had ever tried in her life. Jacinta never knew something as yummy as this existed in the world. It was so good that she couldn't help eating the second cookie. She felt like she was in paradise. How can those gringos not look and smell good if they eat this everyday? She asked herself. Without noticing, she had finished the whole package. Jacinta then smelled at herself, she did not smell like that lady at all. However, Jacinta still kept her hopes very high. She thought that maybe she needed to eat more of those cookies in order to smell like the tourist. After that day, Jacinta went to the lakeshore after class everyday to wait for more gringo tourists to come and hopefully give her the cookies that can make her dream come true.

This creative piece is a response to a short story, "Seventeen Syllables" by Hisaye Yamamoto

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Mrs. Hayano's Perspective

Jennifer Sabia-Lopez

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Mrs. Hayano shuffled around her kitchen looking for better serving cups for her guests. Soon the Hayashi's would be here and she didn't want to spend any extra effort moving about once her guests arrived. The simple task of opening and closing cabinets was painfully embarrassing to Mrs. Hayano whose body trembled and shook with such force that she often dropped whatever she might be carrying. It seemed best to prepare what she could ahead of time and save herself the embarrassment of a nasty mess while entertaining guests. Her four girls were accustomed to helping when necessary.

"Natsu, set out these cups for me. The Hayashi's will be here soon. Start the water for the tea, also. Haru, put that coat away!" She squeaked with all the force her weak lungs would afford her.

Haru, one of the Hayano's four daughters, had purchased a new coat on sale and could not seem to stop touching it or bragging to her sisters about her spectacular find. Admittedly, it was quite nice, but the talk and nonsense over an article of clothing was ridiculous. Actually, she wouldn't have minded being able to wear it herself. In fact, fifteen years ago she would have looked stunning in it, but she would look like a fool in it now. What she had once possessed in beauty had been destroyed with her first pregnancy. The doctors could still not say exactly what was the cause of her illness but her pregnancy had left her drained and shaking uncontrollably. She was told that a second pregnancy would be dangerous, but Mr. Hayano would hear none of it. Even in her weakened state, he was relentless about siring a boy. Four daughters later, he could look at her with nothing short of contempt. She was a failure and an embarrassment to him.

Mrs. Hayano glanced over at her husband. He had been revising some *haiku* for several evenings after work and was looking rather anxious for the Hayashis to arrive. She caught him glancing at the door several times and then looking at his time piece. It seems Mrs. Hayashi had written several *haikus* for the magazine *Mainichi* over the last few months and was successful enough to have almost all of them published. Mr. Hayano was impressed and wished to share with Mrs. Hayashi what he hoped to have published himself.

Mrs. Hayano wasn't sure how to feel about this. It wasn't the fact that he was writing the *haiku*, it was that he did not once ask to share what he had written with her.

Mrs. Hayashi heard steps on the porch and stumbled forward to open the front door. Rosie, the Hayashi's daughter, was immediately accosted by Haru who had her coat in her hands ready to start showing off again. She smiled a broken smile as the girls rushed off to a bedroom, giggling and twirling while taking turns in Haru's coat.

Before Mrs. Hayano could even welcome her guests, Mr. Hayano looked at Mrs. Hayashi and gestured for her to move to the small table in the kitchen. Without a glance in their direction, Mrs. Hayano watched as they sat and started excitedly discussing Mr. Hayano's poem. Mrs. Hayashi was more alive than she had ever seen her. She pointed and gave her input with self confidence and Mrs. Hayano couldn't help notice how young and vibrant she seemed. She looked pretty and happy. Mr. Hayano looked handsome and, most of all, content. He had not looked or acted in such a fashion with her in years, far before she had their first child.

Mrs. Hayano slowly made her way toward the rocking chair in the living room and painfully lowered herself into the seat. She felt Mr. Hayashi follow, hesitantly, while glancing at his wife in the kitchen. Mrs. Hayano noticed that he grabbed a copy of *Life* from a near by table and started flipping absently through its pages of photos as he sat. He pretended he found something interesting because he leaned over to Mrs. Hayano and showed her an image and asked her slowly and loudly what she thought. Mrs. Hayano struggled to put down her cup and place it on a table next to her. She was always hurt and a little angered when her friends and family spoke to her in this loud and deliberate tone. She knew she trembled and moved slowly, but her mind and ears were fully functional. It hurt her that she was perceived as a mental invalid as well as a physical one. She slowly rocked in her chair not looking at Mr. Hayashi and yelled to her daughters, "Haru, Natsu, Aki, Fuyu, our guests must be hungry. Please, bring out some rice cakes and peaches. Bring the tea."

Mrs. Hayano watched as her daughters giggled and joked while setting up the refreshments for the Hayashi's. They were all graceful and so pretty to look at. Mrs. Hayano noticed that Mr. Hayano and Mrs. Hayashi barely noticed their presence. They continued their animated chatter about the *haiku* without sharing the writings with the rest of the group. Mrs. Hayano picked up her cup

again and almost dropped it when Mr. Hayashi announced rather abruptly, "Come on, Rosie, we're going home now."

"Already?" asked Rosie.

"Work tomorrow," he said.

Mrs. Hayano saw that Rosie and Mrs. Hayashi looked rather startled. She looked the other way and concentrated on the tea in her hand while her daughters asked Mrs. Hayashi if Rosie could stay. To be honest, she really didn't want Rosie to stay tonight. Mrs. Hayano didn't want to see Mr. or Mrs. Hayashi tomorrow when they would come to retrieve her. It would be a reminder of her exclusion from her husband's hobby. Besides, Mrs. Hayano wondered, when did Mrs. Hayashi have the time to write *haiku*? It seemed that all she did in her household was work.

Mrs. Hayano read Mrs. Hayashi's poems, they were good. But she remained a bit disturbed by how she signed the poems. She changed her name in the magazine to Ume Hanazono, blossoming garden. Mrs. Hayano wondered what this was supposed to mean. What was wrong with the name given to her? She was putting on airs and she didn't like it. Here she was with a hard working decent husband wasting time writing words on paper. Mrs. Hayano felt the fake name Ume Hanazono was dishonorable to her husband and family. She continued to pretend she didn't notice Mrs. Hayashi monopolizing her husband without any respect for her own husband's feelings. Mrs. Hayano felt the evening should have been shared between all present and was not at all happy about the pair conversing privately in the corner. She was happy Mr. Hayashi wanted to leave.

Mrs. Hayano watched Mr. Hayashi from the corner of her eye as he stalked out, followed by his wife and daughter. She was relieved. However, her husband was having a hard time concealing his anger at the hasty departure of his now good friend, Ume Hanazono, the writer. She pretended not to notice his narrow and straight figure watching as the door hit the door frame. He turned abruptly, without a word to his daughters or Mrs. Hayano, and left the room. She heard the bedroom door shut and the little chair in their room scrape the floor as he sat at his desk to revise some additional poems. Mrs. Hayano knew he would be expecting her to clean up and ready the girls for bed.

Mrs. Hayano pushed herself up from the chair and slowly walked to the door. Her hand, as usual, shook as she turned the lock. Before she turned out the light, she could see Mrs. Hayashi trying to

talk to her husband as he looked straight into the windshield of their car. Mrs. Hayano turned out the light as Mr. Hayashi drove away saying nothing.

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This creative work is a response to a novel, My Year of Meats by Ruth L. Ozeki.

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“John Wayno’s” Last Ride

Benjamin McNary

“Goddamn.”

12 The word echoed in his head, for about the hundredth time that night. Joichi “John” Ueno was sitting, slumped against the far wall of his apartment, eyes cast to the floor, with a half empty bottle of Kirin lager in his hand. Several more lay in a pile near him, an obvious indicator of the events of the previous day. He hadn’t bothered to turn any lights on, and the only light was the odd streetlamp or headlight shining through the balcony door.

“Goddamn.”

He polished off the beer with a single swig, and ran his hands over his face. His skin felt clammy, his hair greasy. He looked at his watch; it read 3:07. He pushed himself up the wall, and trudged into the bathroom. He pissed, leaning himself against the wall with his free hand. He looked at himself in the mirror. His eyes hung deep, puffy bags, and his skin looked loose and dull. He combed his hair just enough so as not to look too slovenly, and walked out of the bathroom.

As he made his way to the train station, he went over the events of the past few days in his head. *My American Wife!* had bombed. The DES scandal was all over the U.S. and Japan. Akiko had disappeared, but he knew well enough where she went. He had been demoted, and was due to leave for Fukui prefecture in a week to start on a commercial for the *Luxuriant Pearl* hot springs resort. When this all happened at once, he was beset with mixed emotions, to say the least. At first, he blamed Takagi, that rule-breaking troublemaker for letting out the whole story on DES. Then he blamed Akiko, for leaving him, and for not being there when he needed her. Then, he blamed BEEF-EX for coming up with the idea for *My American Wife!*, and for knowingly promoting such a dangerous product. Then he blamed the crowded masses, for their crazed hunger for over-the-top news and wild-eyed sensationalism. Finally, however, he came to a realization that, at any point previously in his life, would’ve been dismissed without thought. It was his fault. *He* had caused Akiko to leave. *He* had blindly served BEEF-EX, and upheld their ideals while knowing nothing of them. *He* had let

himself believe there was some noble cultural ideal he was duty-bound as a Japanese to live up to. So, he had been sitting, slumped in his living room, for 10 hours, drinking beer after beer and watching his life slip through his fingers. He still wondered how the hell he'd gotten to this point.

"John Wayne" he said to himself. That name was once his pride and joy. It was his connection to the Great American Ideal. Now it tasted of puke, and just the mere thought of it made him feel sick.

"Joichi Ueno" he then said. It felt awkward. This was his name, rightly, and his heritage, but now it was something he was detached from. He sounded it out phonetically.

"JOH-EE-CHEE OO-EH-NO."

Before *My American Wife!* he had tried to fit into what he thought a Japanese man should be. Then, he tried to fit himself into what he thought an American man should be. All the while, however, he was denying himself, and blindly hurting all the people around him.

By now he was in line at the station.

"Destination?" the ticket vendor asked.

"What?"

"Your destination, sir?" he repeated.

He hadn't really thought about it, nor was he even sure why he had gone to the train station.

"Uh, Shinjuku, please." He paid, and got on.

He'd never really been in Shinjuku all that much, and since he didn't know where he was going or why, he figured it was as good a place as any. He stared out the window, and thought some more. He really was an asshole to Akiko. He knew she'd married him, but he wondered whether she even really loved him, or whether it was just the duty society expected her to uphold. If she did love him, he thought, maybe she wouldn't have left. His mind reeled in confusion. Something in his head said he was still right in his attitude, and his treatment of his wife, but he knew this wasn't so. The rape proved that. He rubbed his eyes, and checked his watch again; 4:32.

Takagi was his turning point. She had instigated the DES investigation, and the subsequent canceling of *My American Wife!* She did what she did not because she was bound to any duty, or any culture, but because it was right. Even if it got him fired, he knew that the truth was more valuable than blind faith. That was what he wanted to do; to be. He didn't want to be a clone drone, doing

everything asked of him without question, and undistinguishable from the herd. He had started out hating his new assignment, but now he felt differently. True, he still didn't want to be doing commercials for resorts, hotels, and golf courses for the rest of his life, but he knew that if he could hoist himself up, and do his work the way he wanted to do it, his life would come back into focus, and he could find himself.

Sure, he tried to ignore the DES stories, but it was all over the news, and he couldn't ignore it forever. What he had read and seen shocked him, and he'd wondered whether his insistence that Akiko eat meat did more harm than good. He looked around the train. In the far corner of the car, there was a woman, somewhere in her late twenties, with an infant. He felt regret at the fact that his show might have induced this young mother to eat beef, and that it may have had an effect on her baby. He never would've felt this kind of compassion before; he never had. Something about this whole collection of mixed-up circumstances changed him. He was no longer John Wayno, everyday man; he was Joichi Ueno.

"Joichi"

He liked it now.

The train pulled into Shinjuku station, and he stepped out. People hustled about on the streets, some winding down their night, some just starting their day. The sun, though not yet risen, peeked a faint glow over the horizon. He watched the signs, felt the noises, tasted the smells. He was hungry. He scanned over the sea of neon for some little place to eat. A place off to his left called *The Happy Buddha* blinked its characters at him. On the other side of the street, a stooped old man swept the steps of a little noodle shop called *The Silver Thread*. There were probably a hundred *Happy Buddha*'s in Tokyo alone, he thought, and probably popular. He waited for the light, and crossed the street toward *The Silver Thread*.

Photography

New Orleans, Gulf Coast Experience
(Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina on Vietnamese Community)
Judy Mai

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A fishing boat waved up on a shore.



People gather at a church.

唐人街 2003 (*Chinatown 2003*)

Victoria Yue



必珠街小販



在必珠街的越南檔



夏星匠街的角位



Works from Kazu Osugi

Kazu Osugi

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April 18, 2005- Copley Square, Boston, MA: South African wheelchair athlete Ernst Van Dyk breaks the tape after his fifth straight win with a record time of 1:24:11 during the Boston Marathon.



September 24, 2005- Ellipse, Washington D.C: Antiwar activist Cindy Sheehan (right) gets a kiss of support from an unidentified supporter when Cindy arrives at the rally.



March 19, 2005- Harlem, New York City, NY: New York City Council Member Charles Barron leads the march from Harlem to Central Park during an anti-war protest. According to police estimates, more than 15,000 people marched to join thousands already gathered in Central.

Poetry

Death on Air

Roxana Cheng

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22
So close to heaven, so far from earth
So close to God, so far from hell
Ups and downs, downs and ups
Free fall is the last thing needed now
I want to scream, scream, and scream
Let God know, I don't want to go now,
I haven't prayed enough yet
Please give me the chance to pray for my life
The Stewardess gives signs of hope, not from God
Deep breathes, buckled up
The only way to save my life,
I can't scream, so I write
I write you this letter, to make it clear
I wanted to pray
I just didn't have the chance
Sitting on this cushion,
The air is slimmer and slimmer
Wearing an oxygen mask,
I wait to see God.

War

Ching-In Chen

I cannot write to you of the wars that live within

Instead, I focus on war
beyond my fingertips
intangible and ridiculous
what we don't envision in sunlight
that filters into my skin at night

we wake in morning to loss and absence
how many souls on the other side are whispers we only visit in
dream

on the street, words hurled heavy with struggle
freedom justice bodies
laid in formation
how we cradle each other
crouched in the curve of each other's heartbeats
arms linked
and awaiting brutality
on each side of our oceans

I cry at night
back to wall
waiting for sleep to rescue me
the world is in pain and I am hiding
we are in pain and we hide from each other, curse each other, and
love each
 other
we are in pain but we love
we love in small bites, secret tastes, unseen struggles
waters that flow seasick from the shores of our hearts
searching for paths like Braille in the darkness
our love is a pearled song that lies within belly
my voice silver tears I grow inside body
we poets who can no longer write
we sing liberation songs for people we may never know who may be
dead
 tomorrow

I cry on public transit where nobody knows me
I know nobody can feel the sorrow beneath my skin
cannot pinpoint its exact location or destination
we walk with brown ghosts in these strange streets
rise with each other
until we raise our own dead
to tell us our own sweet stories
that have been left behind

(War)

24

we must remember to sustain us
past these broken bodies
beyond lies that break our hardened fragile hearts

and we have already seen this before

my people we have already seen this

but still my beautiful hard and fragile people
remember
resistance is beautiful and necessary
resistance is love

my heart is a transit station
of reaching and retreat
of subtraction and addition

my heart is a temporary holding cell for my battle-weary comrades
who fall from my arms when the fight is too hard
because I do not want to lose you again

my people with black hair sorrow-melted skin liquid eyes
my fiery vulnerable people
I am calling you

my people

I am asking you with my broken heart and my strong song
to rise up

rise up my people rise up
you are powerful
we are powerful
and my heart expands despite it all
my heart expands into faith
that because of you,
love is still enough to change the world.

P
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To Vincent

(for the YouthWrites crew)

C
H
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D

1.
the summer
we befriended Vincent Chin
aware of our own mortality
we – 15, 16, 17 years old –
reclaiming
Boston streets together
in memory of struckdown Asian men
unfortunate and lonely enough
to fall

26

between us
Vincent
brought
in the map of carved body
broken hands
and body parts
Cambodian man
head smashed by bottle
in his own backyard
one hour south

we read of dotbusters
burning dots into otherbrown skin
a few hours away
testaments to rocks
hurled
signs of unwelcome
in our own neighborhood
innercity or suburb

we sometimes wonder at our own shadows
and who will save us

2.
Ravi
rides the T in the opposite direction
taking me home to safety

in his neighborhood
a violent overthrow of capital has begun
two brown men in struggle
with one snatch of CD player

Lei
cut wiremesh this boundary that holds your heart
(To Vincent)

unsettle this immigrantchild burnt
my wish for you
to relocate your comfort within your skin

Saba
who will liberate herself
to a bought-and-paid-for condo in the suburbs
allowances she never had
from the working class Pakistani immigrant family
she was confined to regrets
and her own battles to fight

Duong
speaks Vietnamese only
teaches me to dance in summergrass

XYZ
who cries because
the boys and girls
throw paper
scraps
and names at her

Raphael
quiet Korean twin
talks about bloodlines
before we knew the value
of loving your own self

Jean Lisa Amy and me
lonely Asian sisterchilds of suburb

and now home
I marvel

We have held our memory tight

iii.

Vincent Chin still breathes in the air
a ghost
who returns
when another bloodstain
rockthrownbottleswingincrossburnin
motheryoungworkerfather

is slain

(To Vincent)

we
scattered on the backs of the continent

iv.

the buildings in Chinatown are taller
but people are still dying

and when you ask me why I have come back
where who knew our numbers made up more than half the sky

I say

to reclaim the streets in our name

A Secret

Chu Ly

There is nothing beyond that horizon
but water and wind pushing me away.
I threw a secret in the ocean a year ago.
It came back.

It came back.

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The Bitter House

Jacquelyn Benson

C
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D

Some houses are bad from the start.

Others go that way in time
after years of small betrayals.

The bitter house was warm once, I think,
open-doored and full of dinner-smells
and soft sheets.

Now it is a place only children will go into
when they play the games of fear
that precede sex.

30

I remember a night I spent inside of it, on a dare,
lying on the unswept floor,
imaging ghosts fluttering the cobwebs,
marking time with a flashlight and a pocket-watch,
wondering what had made those scratch-marks
on the table legs,
if they were some secret language of the dead,
recipes for the devouring of small girls.

In my turn, I have been devoured.

Not once, but many times over
by a succession of wolves.

I have met so many wolves I start to wonder
who is hunting whom, and I would trace it all back
to that night in the bitter house –
to a smell of neglect that has never quite left me,
to an unwelcome wisdom like a lingering cough.
That place is a teacher
like the world after God left it,
like the corpse we all have to look forward to
and even though you have never been there
I know you have learned its lesson
as clear and as painfully as I.

The Envy of Janus

Maggie Beetz

The ubiquitous whisper of autumn sounds
held back in dehydration but the apathetic
Janus doesn't need to turn his head.

He can be brutal or pleasant with reversibly linear
intellect just short of the prophetic Prometheus.
Prejudiced geographically, but consistent in delivery.

He can look at prior seasons from the
imperative position of his designated month
without the slightest strain of neck or sight.

He can find himself comfortably cushioned
in snow holding the eternal first place in line
and the prize for the most dismissible resolutions.

The orange autumn air exhaled holey, broken leaves
falling from green to brown to dust to mocking
the firm and platformed Janus dwelling in tenacity.

He can accept his limitation but never not look back
and discern that his position is uncomfortably
in common with the iron-chained Prometheus.

He can stare in each direction in unblinking thought
and see clearly through the panes of glassy frost
that gloss his eyes, envying his unabashed temerity.

He can relate to indecision and understand regret
but with god-like inability and feet glued to the floor
the dead leaves of autumn are better than none at all.

Strippers

Yasuhito Yamamoto

C I'll take off whatever I wear. This Black jacket, Red sweater
H Yellow pants, and White lingerie. I will take off
O my traditional clothes too. First this golden *obi*,
R then cherry-blossomed *kimono*. If you ask
D me so, I would even untie my silky hair.

So, why don't you, blondy, take off
your striped shirt and blue
jeans? Then, you will be
32 you as honestly as
I am me,
and we
will
be

equal

human beings.

酔う (YO-u): *Drunk*

Know no,
so go, you.
Hollow follow
sorrow
overflow.

P
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Know no,
o
so go, 酔う .
Hollow follow
oo
sorrow
overflow.

33

Know no,
走 go, 友.
崩ollow 否ollow
o
sorrow
overflow.

o

我嘔,
蒼 g , 憂.
崩露 否ll押
想露
嘔verfl嘔.

o

STRINGS



An Asian American Magazine

*(khor, khor) - A combination of three or more tones sounded simultaneously;
an emotional feeling or response.*



Submission Watch

Currently Accepting:

- Articles
- Narratives (fiction and non-fiction)
- Poetry
- Prose
- Visual Art
- other forms of expression

Submissions can be dropped off at the
Asian American Studies office [W.G. 097]
or emailed to Chord.Magazine@gmail.com

Interested in joining our team?

Weekly meetings: Wednesdays @4pm [W.G. 097]
[For disability accommodation please contact: 617.367.5011]

DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 11TH, 2005

Chord Magazine Flyer for Fall 2005
by Soramy Le

Painting

[Untitled]
Uyen Ly

C
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D

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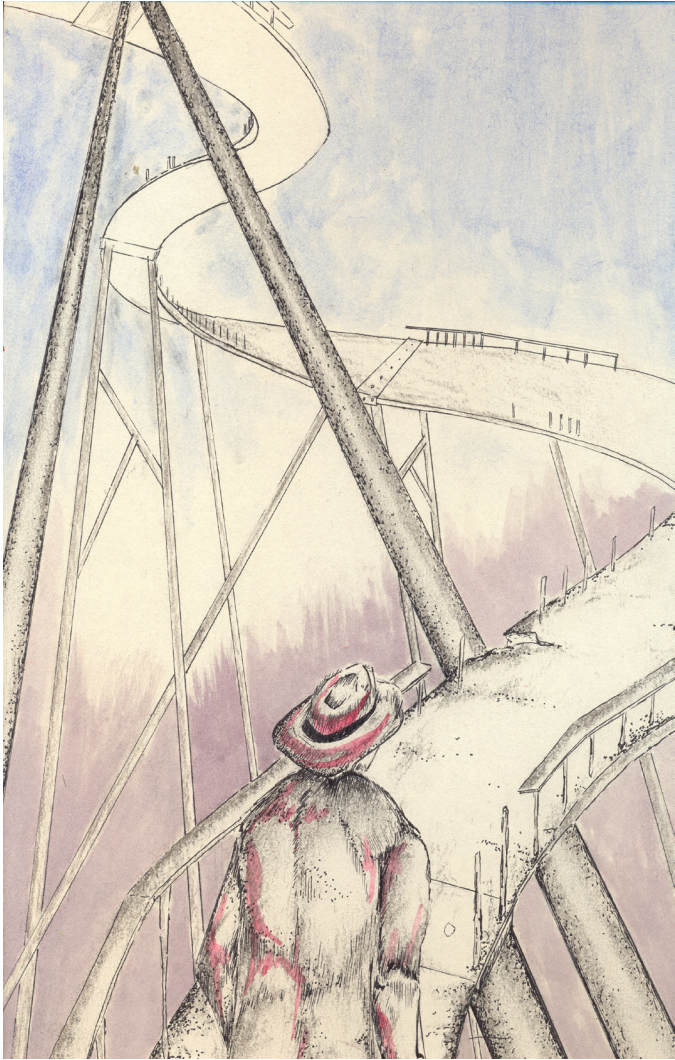




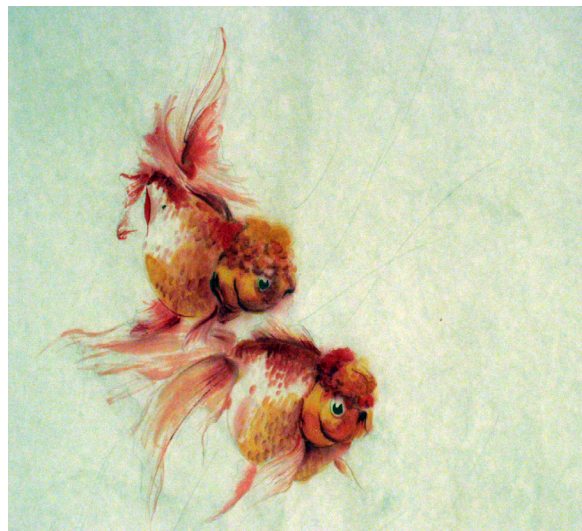
His Solitary Odyssey
Jason Chou

C
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D

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[Untitled]
Heidi Lo









[kôrd, kôrd] - A combination of three or more tones sounded simultaneously as one harmony

Multi-America Magazine

www.asamst.umb.edu/chord

Essay

I and my Asian American Studies 423 class with Prof. Peter Kiang made a field trip during Fall 2005 semester. This is a reflection of the field trip.

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Mount Hope Cemetery, Chinatown and Fields Corner Reflection

Judy Mai

44

The class field trip to Mount Hope Cemetery, Chinatown and Fields Corner with the class I can say that I found connections with the sites we visited. For Mount Hope Cemetery I can not seriously think of any possible connections with it. Maybe besides the fact I used to reside in Mattapan when I was much younger when I was still in kindergarten with my family. Also when my youngest sister past away my parents made the decision to make her resting place back in their native country of Vietnam instead of over here in the States, she was buried among Asians too just like the first Asian pioneers but by choice. As for Chinatown my connection with it I have been going to it since toddler. I can recall going there with my entire family and relatives on the weekends to eat dim sum in the morning and going to Thai Binh Super Market afterwards since back then there wasn't a large number of markets in Dorchester that carry a decent amount of Vietnamese products so my parents had drive to Chinatown each time they needed something. The connection I have with Fields Corner is that I was brought up here and still lived near this area.

Attending this field trip I have seen connections with the overall experience of it with my own experiences such of the fact that there are communities for Boston's Asian Americans. When I used to think about Boston Asian American communities only Chinatown would come up to mind but after this trip there more that that like Fields Corner. This trip has definitely given me ideas for my photo essay but I still find this assignment to be difficult, it seem I still don't know exactly what to photo that will represent Boston's Asian American communities in a meaningful and good way and for the research project I still have an interest in the temples or crime/violence among youths.

I have several new questions about Boston's Asian American communities after going on this class field trip such as the following: Is there a Boston's/Dorchester Vietnamese Historic Center? Is there anything being done to stop the building for new luxury hotels and condos within Chinatown? Do you think Chinatown will still be a residential place for Chinese within the next few years/decades? With

the Boston Developed Authority intending to revitalize Dorchester's Fields Corner and Streets like Dorchester Avenue like it has in other Boston communities like Roxbury Grove hill it has had a positive outcome. Do you think it will be the same for Dorchester? Will impact the Vietnamese business and if so how so?

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I have learned more about myself from this experience. That I am not as involved with my community as I should be to keep it in existed for the future generation. I live with Dorchester and because of this trip it was my first time actually stepping foot in the only Vietnamese American Community Center in the nation and Dorchester only Buddhist temple. I have also learned that some of my classmates know a lot about Chinatown past like Mary and Victoria they were very informative about our last stop site in Chinatown they know a lot about the Chinatown community.

45

My reflections about doing this kind of community-based learning in a course like this it's an eye opening experience. Actually visiting these sites first hand and documenting it enable I and my classmates to have a better appreciation that Boston has communities for Asian Americans to belong to, for us especially myself to understand more about my community of Dorchester's Fields. Like the narrow alley Soramy took us through it was kind of creepy but cool it was a first for me. Also I have been to Chinatown a zillion times but I never notice the little signs you pointed out Peter telling the public about the significant for the place. By the way a connection I realize about Fields Corners and one of our class discussions is that Dorchester Vietnamese community is flourishing by gradually slow it steadily plus the pictures I seen of Chinatown past like its building and street signs it was intriguing I enjoying viewing it.

Struggling for Work

Why is it that at the age of 16 you're legal to work but nowhere will hire?

Tara Jackson

According to the U.S. Department of Labor in the state of Massachusetts sixteen is the legal age to work. You can start applying for jobs and they accept you if you meet their requirements. But do they really accept you?

Sixteen year olds are finding it hard to find work in the Bay State. Even though businesses and companies are hiring they're mostly accepting teens 18 and over.

Sixteen year old, Ashlei Berry applied for around five or six jobs and didn't receive a single call back. "They don't be looking at the applications," she said.

Another sixteen year old interviewed about the situation was Cherelle Spencer, who would like to see better chances for sixteen year olds obtaining a job. She said, "We should be able to get the same opportunities as 18 year olds."

Speaking of eighteen year olds, is it really easier for them to get a job, as sixteen years think it is? Dana Jackson said it wasn't hard for him to find work at sixteen. "It was easy because I know a lot of people that work a lot of different jobs," he said. Some consider Jackson lucky, Berry thinks it's the reason sixteen year olds have trouble finding work is because of the late hours. "Most of us would have had a job then, and their only taking eighteen and over so they can work overnight," she said.

Placing Dana in the driver's seat, he said he would hire a sixteen year old if he ran his own business. "Everybody deserves a chance," he said.

One high position employer, Karen Young from Youth on Board, said she didn't have a problem getting a job at sixteen. "Where I come from it was easy. I had three jobs in high school." When asking Young if she'd hire a sixteen year old she responded "Absolutely. I do it all the time at Youth on Board. We have sixteen year old trainers."

However Young doesn't currently have any sixteen year olds working at the moment. "There aren't any right now, but we're looking for some," she said.

So, are companies really hiring sixteen years olds or are the teens on a wild goose chase? For those companies that are, they

should try harder to get these teens attentions. For those that aren't, as Berry said, "They should at least give us a try."

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The Language of War

Fawzi Nicolas

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War is this monster that blood can't quench. I knew it since I was a kid. I saw the tears in mothers eyes. I heard the cries of children. I saw fathers killed trying to save their families. I touched fear in the heart of lost youths. War has one language: it is slaughter and destruction.

48

I learned the language of war when I was young man. War was my first school; I shall never forget it. In the war I lost relatives and friends, who now live in my mind. Memories that are always touching my heart and my soul. I graduated from the school of war by accepting others, by knowing that respect is the language of freedom. Respecting every one's religion and heritage is the backbone human right, and the language of peace is the language of God. My story happened over twenty five years ago, during the civil war between the Christian and Muslim parties in Lebanon.

We lost power that night at my grandparent's shack. The lantern's light was so weak, but enough for me to see the ray of fear in the eyes of my mother and my father. My grandparents were holding my sisters who were crying and screaming. My brother and I covered our faces under the sheet each time war bombs fell close to our house.

My grandfather's house is an old building. It was built by an old solid stones. My father decided to stay that night in his parent's house, because that old house would protect us from the bombs that were falling.

Two men knocked on the old door in the middle of the night. My father went to open it and my mother followed him. In a few minutes I saw that my mother had covered her face in her hands and started to cry. Then the men left. In an hour my mother wrapped up three bags, changed our clothes, and said to us, "Say goodbye to Gido and Sito (my Lebanese grandparents). We are leaving soon; we are going to visit Aunt Mary," who lived about an hour away. A few hours later, around five in the morning a taxi carried all of us to Aunt Mary's house.

On the road my mother didn't stop crying. I heard her say something to my father. I tried to understand what was going on but I couldn't. She said something in Arabic. At least the sound was Arabic, but I didn't get it. That is my parents way; they like to use this mystery language if they want to hide something from us.

They whispered, as if they were talking about some aliens or strange people sentences without verbs or adjectives. I asked, "Mama, why are you crying?" My father said, "She has a headache." I knew that day something bad happened, but my parents didn't want us to know.

Aunt Mary was a nice lady. I always liked to visit her. Her house were surrounded by orange, apple and peach trees. That day she welcomed us with open arms. That day my father said to us, "If the kids you play with ask what is your last name, don't give it." "Why papa?" we said. He said again, "If you love Mama don't give it." Is there any kid in the world who doesn't love his mother? "We promise you Papa," we said.

After four days at my aunt's house, my brother and my two older sisters and I went to play with my Aunt's kids at their friend's house. A woman at that house asked my brother, "What is your name?" My brother froze. My sisters and I started staring at him. My brother's name is Nicolas and our last name is Nicolas, too. If he would give his name to the woman he would break his promise to our father, but Nicolas didn't answer her; he ran out of the house and we followed him. I remember that we didn't go back to that house ever again. It wasn't a sin or crime for my brother if he said his name to that lady. He didn't know why my father insist that we not give our name to anyone who might ask, but for the love of my mother he didn't answer.

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For weeks, my mother didn't stop crying. Every night, every morning, the whole day I used to see tears in my mother's eyes. In the morning and before we went to sleep, she used to hold everyone of us very tightly to her chest and she cried. My brothers and I knew there were something wrong but we didn't know what it was about.

My welcoming Aunt Mary started to change after a while. She started to give us orders and make some rules. We couldn't play in a particular one room, we were not allowed to touch trees outside of her garden, if we weren't with her. We had to eat anything she cooked. There were a time for eating, time to play, time for showers, and time to sleep. Sometimes we heard her yelling for no reason. My father and mother were so quiet and very silent; they never said anything to her.

"I miss our house," said my sister to my mother. My mother held her and said to her, "Soon we will go home." But we didn't go home soon. One morning we kissed Aunt Mary a big goodbye kiss. She cried. We took another taxi. My mother said, "We are going to visit my cousins in Tripoli and we're going to stay for a few nights."

Tripoli is a big city in northern Lebanon not far from my village. I used to like to go shopping with my parents in that city, “the city of toys.” In that city, too, we discovered the secret that my parents held in their mysterious language: the reason why we were fleeing from one place to another, from one house to another. One day we overheard my mother talking to her cousin and we found out that my mother’s brother, Uncle Hanna was involved in the conflict between the Christian and the Muslim parties. He was considered a dangerous man, and the Muslim party that controlled our area wanted to kill him. Since my mother lived in the same area, they wanted to capture her as a hostage. We had to leave my aunt Mary’s house, because the Muslim party found out we were hiding in her house, and they were on their way. That morning all six of us woke up, some holding my mother’s arms, some sleeping on her lap, and some holding her neck. We didn’t leave her wherever she went. We never let go of her dress.

After two weeks at that house, my mother said, “We are going back home”. Like Christmas night, we were very excited. The Christian party was controlling our area again, and we were safe to go home. But later we knew the price of our safety was high for my mother’s family. My uncle was captured and they killed him. Later they tied his body to the back of their car and dragged it around the city. No one knows where they buried his body.

We went back happy to be home. But nothing was as it used to be. My mother always dressed in black clothes, as if she broke the daylight in her black dress. Always tears were in her eyes. I never felt safe again in our home; fear was my shadow. Every night I dreamed that some bad people were coming to take my mother away. Many times my mother would wake me up in the middle of the night because I was screaming and crying. “I am here Habibi my love. I am here.” I didn’t go out to play with my friends like before. My eyes were always on our door, on my mother.

After a long time the Syrian army came to Lebanon. They came under a false banner to protect the Lebanese people and to stop the civil war. For years the Syrian army occupied Lebanon; thirty long years to be exact. They destroyed every dream inside every one of the Lebanese people, especially the Christian Lebanese who never felt safe under the Syrian army occupation.

My mother decided to visit her mourning mother. She drove my father was sitting next to her, and the six of us were sitting in the back seats. For the Christians, the cross hanging by the rearview

mirror was meant to protect the people in the car. But one day, before we got to the Syrian checkpoint, my mother took out the cross that she had hung and put it in the dashboard. She said to us, “My dears hid your crosses under your shirts.”

We did what she asked, but after we left the checkpoint I said to her, “Mom why do we have to hide our crosses?” She said, “Honey, some people are bad; they don’t know what Jesus means to us.” I said, “In the Bible Jesus said, who is ashamed of me among the people. I am ashamed of him in front of my Father who is in the sky.” Then she said “I am not ashamed, honey, I am just scared, worried about you, but I promise you I will never move the cross again.” and she opened the dashboard and returned the cross to the same place. That time I promised myself that I would never hide my cross ever again.

That day my mourning grandmother welcomed us as always with her open arms. She held every one of us very close to her chest and kissed us a hundred kisses. My grandmother is a pretty blond woman who always likes to smile. That day she covered her hair with a very dark black scarf and her black dress covered all her tiny body. Behind her smile she was hiding her tears under her red eyes.

Later I asked her “Why are your eyes red, Sito? Are you crying ?” Her blue eyes turned red again and she had trace of a smile, but she couldn’t say anything. Then, I continued, “Sito is that true? They killed Uncle Hanna, and Uncle Khalil’s two sons, Tony and Hamid, and Uncle Fouad’s wife and Gido, too; is that true Sito?” She said with her hurt voice, “ But I still have you, and I have Jesus who never left me.” I continued, “Do you hate those bad people? I hate them, too. ” She held me in her arms as she always did, and she took a deep breath and said, “ Jesus told me to forgive, and not to hate anyone “Habibi.” Gido, Uncle Hanna and Tony, Hamid, and Uncle’s Fouad’s wife are safe now; no one can hurt them any more. I talk to Jesus every night; he told me they are safe now, Habibi. Just pray to them, like me.”

I couldn’t ask her more that day, because she hugged me and she started crying. Her tears wet my shirt. That day I felt safe as before I felt always safe when I was around her, but that day I felt that Jesus was my new home. It is where I am always safe and happy.

The language of war was the only language the Lebanese used to speak with each other, during that period. Over three hundred thousand people died and over one million had to leave Lebanon and run from death. Generation after generation born with no hope, no

security, born with the burden of injustice and fear. And the question was, is it worth it? Who won? No one did. Lebanon was the big loser. I keep wondering: Why do Islamic people think that, if we are Arab, we have to be Islamic and under their ideology? And why do Christians think Lebanon belongs to them, and only them?

Islam is a peaceful religion. "Al salaam, alaykum" means "peace be with you." Christianity is a forgiving religion: "love your enemy." For that Jesus died. If we believe, why we are killing each other in the name of God?

52 The war changed me to a worried man, as the worry feed from the beat of my heart. Always I worry about my country, my family, the people I love. I learned to look to every person without considering to his heritage, his religion, or his desire. I deal with him as a human being who has his own principles and ideas which I have to respect.

It took the Lebanese people over thirty years to understand each other's language. Innocent people, innocent blood and infinite young dreams broke under the language of guns. Beautiful buildings, and historic bridges were destroyed. It took over thirty years for the Lebanese people to realize that the language of peace is the language of God.

Enjoyable Food for Everyone

Interview with Makoto Hamada from Takemura Restaurant

Shun Hasegawa

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A pair of Italians entered Tatsukichi, an award-winning Japanese restaurant at the Financial District of Boston. Having seats at the counter, they asked Makoto Hamada to cook as he would like since they didn't have enough knowledge of Japanese cuisine to decide which dishes to order.

Hamada didn't simply make sushi since raw fish was foreign, if not frightening, to them. He didn't imitate Patate Pasticciate alla Piemontese that many North End ristoranti could easily offer, either. He presented the two remote food cultures in one dish. Fresh mozzarella cheese rolled with raw tuna, wasabi and basil, coated with dips of soy sauce.

53

The two customers praised taste of the "fusion" Hamada created, and they left delightedly.

This story speaks for what Hamada, 50, learned during his 23-year residence in Boston, cooking for customers of diverse cultural backgrounds.

"I want to cook food enjoyable for everyone. There are people who like spicy food and who don't, or those who like Japanese food and who don't," says Hamada, native of Kurobe, Japan. "There could be something everybody took a pinch and liked it. It's difficult. But I think it's possible,"

Born in a small fishing village, Hamada graduated from high school and began to work for a restaurant. In 1980, he came to Boston (first trip abroad) as an opening staff member of a new branch of the restaurant. Instead of an "American Dream" or the economic necessity, the then-25-year-old single male was motivated by pure "curiosity and an adventurous spirit" to start a new life in a foreign country, having only two stamps on his passport, "Deported (from Japan)" and "Admitted (the U.S.)."

His first adventure, however, didn't last long.

Hamada was overwhelmed by the multicultural setting in the U.S. where making friends from other countries or even to correctly tell whether he wanted "coffee" or "coke" were challenging. According to the Japan's Statistics Bureau, only 0.5 percent of the 117 million populations in 1980 were foreigners. He suffered from heavy homesick and went back to Japan only a year later.

After two years at home, Hamada was sent to Boston by the

restaurant in 1983. Determined not to repeat the bitter experience, he zealously practiced English communication, talking with the American coworkers and customers with a Japanese-English dictionary at hand. As the dictionary became less important, making foreign friends was no more big issue, and Boston became a comfortable place to live in. More than a couple of decades later, he still resides in Greater Boston where he lives with an American wife with whom he has a 12-year-old daughter.

He also likes Boston's heavy snowfalls and cold temperature in winter and its adjacency to the ocean all of which remind him of his hometown of Kurobe.

54 Hamada was hesitant at first to compromise his pride as an "authentic" Japanese cook to make American-invented dishes, such as California and Philadelphia rolls. But he encountered many customers in Boston who ward off many Japanese-born menus, especially ones including raw fish.

"It was before Japanese food became popular," says Hamada. "I soon learned you can't be successful here doing the same way [as in Japan]. You have to meet different needs."

Now, Hamada is an itamae (cook skilled in Japanese cuisine) of Takemura at Harvard Square for which he has been working for two years. The majority of the menu consists of Japanese authentic dishes in addition to several Korean ones. "The Americans have become such experienced critics of Japanese food that I can't cut corners any more like 20 years ago," Hamada says laughing. To satisfy their palate remains to be his big fan as a lifetime cook. But he also wants more "beginners" to have pleasant meals through his culture-crossing dishes, as he once did to the Italian couple. You can try some of his original ideas at Takemura, such as Caterpillar Maki (roll), Cape Cod Maki, Green Monster Maki and \$8.75 New England Maki (lobster meat, cucumber and yuzu tobiko with mayo).

Responsibility for maintaining a family as a father as well as the staggering Japanese economy and the country's unfavorable hiring practice to the mid-aged make Hamada's comeback to Japan less likely. He hasn't been to his home country for the last six years. And he hasn't seen his family and relatives, though his father suffers cerebral infarction recently. Hamada said he would maintain his Japanese citizenship as far as his parents are alive.

Since Hamada works five days weekly till 11 p.m. (10 p.m. on Sundays), his daughter, Manami, spends more time with her mother speaking English than communicating with her father in

English. There has been no sign that she is interested in learning Japanese culture in which her father was raised. She even doesn't like Japanese food.

It doesn't concerned Hamada very much.

"It is fine now. Once getting older, [my daughter] might be interested in Japan. And once she wants to learn the culture, I am willing to help," he says.

Hamada appreciated that the Korean owner of Takemura supports him by purchasing food of the high quality. But there also are limitations at the restaurant full of student customers where keeping prices reasonable often has priority over offering elaborate crafts of food, many of them costly.

Asked about the possibility opening his own restaurant, Hamada at first laughed saying he has already spent too much money to do so.

Whether it is a joke or not, Hamada said that he hopes to run a small restaurant in Boston. He listed examples of dishes to experiment. Among them were: olive-oiled tomato salad with sliced and broiled beef with sprinkles of powdered cheese, and baked fish mixed with Italian salad.

Though his blueprint contains many uncertainties, there is one concrete thing in his possible new restaurant; that is, to entertain the people of cultural diversity. The United States is certainly one of the countries to provide him with such an intriguing stage.

Takemura is located in the basement at 18 Eliot Street in Cambridge. It opens seven days a week, from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for lunch and from 5 to 11 (10 on Sundays) for dinner.

Bring the Taste of Community

Interview with Nguyet Nguyen from BaLe Restaurant

Yasuhito Yamamoto

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Once when my friend came to Boston from Japan, he told me that he wanted to eat in a cafeteria of UMass Boston. “Why, I want to see what kinds of food are there,” said he. “It’s like a food court where you got lunch yesterday,” I told him.

It’s really sad that almost every university has the same lineups in its cafeteria like the ones in a food court: burgers from a big chain restaurant, wraps, pizzas, a salad bar, American sushi and so on. I don’t say they are bad. But, can we not have more different kinds of food in our cafeteria?

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Plus, isn’t UMass always proud of its diversity? We see a commercial of UMass and a poster of it in a train. There, we see people of various ethnicities getting together and represented equally. In fact, UMass Boston has a large number of students with Vietnamese background and a large number of students with Chinese background as well.

In addition, UMass Boston locates right next to Dorchester, where one of the biggest Vietnamese communities in the US exists. Then, “Why don’t we have any shop that reflects the community in cafeteria?” asks Dzung Nguyen, a graduate student in UMass Boston with Vietnamese background.

“If I can, I like to have a place in [UMass] cafeteria to sell Vietnamese sandwiches,” says Nguyet Nguyen, an owner and a cook at Ba Le Restaurant in Dorchester. She has been supporting hungry stomachs of local people for about six years, and many students of UMass Boston are also her regular customers.

A Vietnamese sandwich is about the same size of Subway Sandwich and uses French bread; so, you’ll enjoy having a crunchy bite outside. Inside a sandwich varies, and Ba Le Restaurant offers about ten different kinds of Vietnamese sandwich including veggies. One of Nguyet Nguyen’s recommendations is named Ba Le Subs, which combines different kinds of meats and vegetables between the French bread. You have a choice of making it spicy or not.

Nguyen sets the price friendly as well. Whether it’s Ba Le Subs, BBQ sandwich, Meatball sandwich, or whatever you order, one sandwich costs only \$2.25. So, if you get full with a half size of Subway Sandwich, now you can have it with about \$1 when you share another half with your friend.

“I want to bring the taste of Vietnamese community into UMass cafeteria. I hear there are so many Vietnamese students in UMass. To sell a sandwich there is not only to provide their home food to those students, but it’s also to introduce our own culture to students of different culture backgrounds,” says Nguyen. Ba Le Restaurant also sells a number of various dishes including Spring Rolls, steamed buns, and lychee drinks. The restaurant is located on 1052 Dorchester Ave.

Making our cafeteria reflect UMass Boston’s diversities will be beneficial for many of us. Students from the community can have their home food at school. Students not from the community can try a taste of another culture more easily. And the community will gain an opportunity to introduce their food, one of identities they can keep in this society. Then, UMass could be more proud of its diversity of students, for the school will be more rooted in the community they stand, and students too will be more rooted in school as the result.

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