

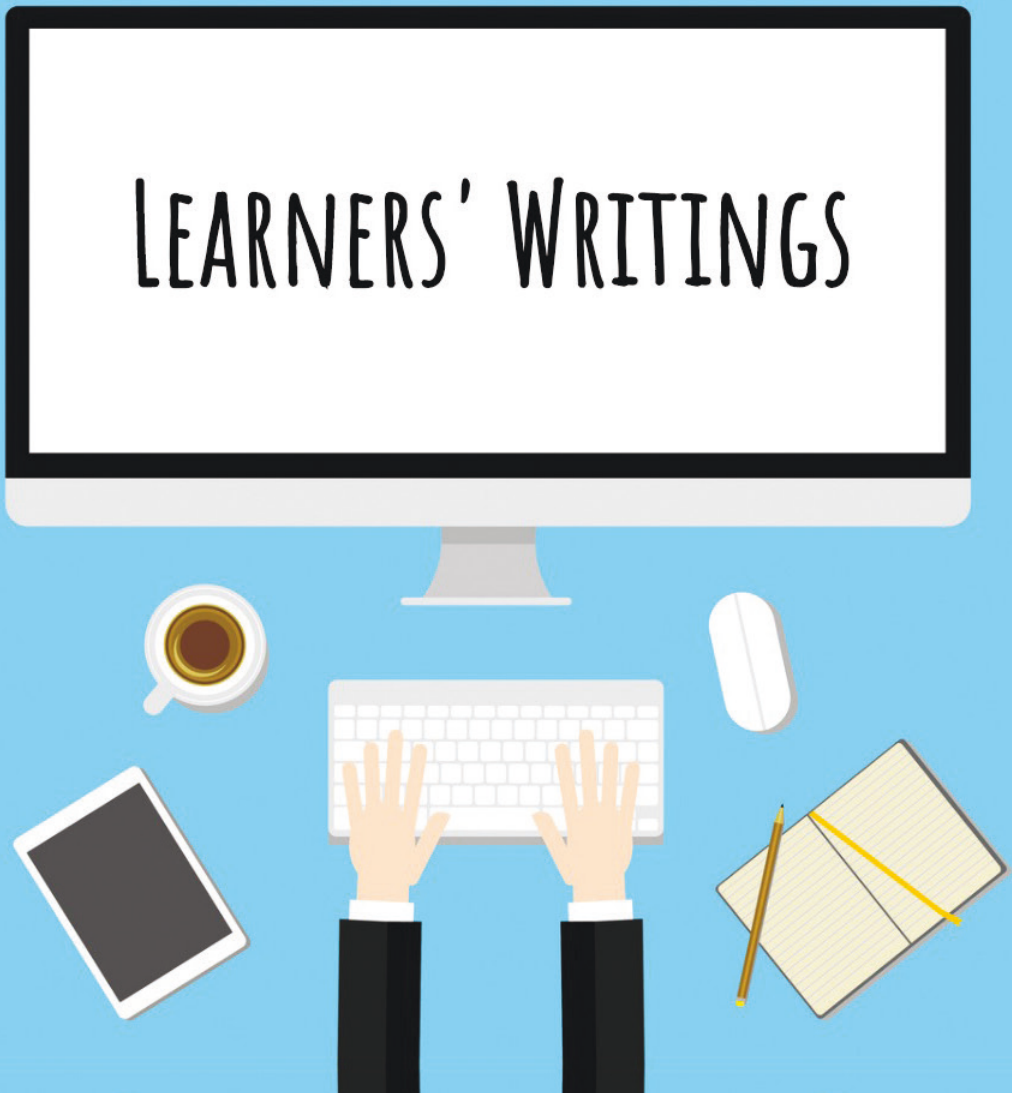
IN
OUR
OWN
WORDS

A
Book of
Learner
Writings
volume XVII

READ SANTA CLARA

Adult & Family Literacy Program
Santa Clara City Library

LEARNERS' WRITINGS



Coming to America

E. Brasil

Four years ago, my family and I moved to the United States from the Azores (Portugal). Because I was born here, we had the opportunity to give our children dual citizenship. But little did we know how difficult life was to be in our new country. I cried more in the first few months after arriving in America than I had in my entire life in Portugal. Starting our new life in America meant a new language, set of rules, and culture—all without the support of family and friends that we had left in the Azores. Thankfully, we knew of a Portuguese family living here who, to a great extent, replaced the support we had left in Portugal. They helped us survive in our new country.

Things are getting better; we are all adjusting to the American lifestyle. My husband and I can see that exposure to the American experience has made our children better prepared for the future.

My History

Maria Calderon



When I came from Mexico City to the United States in 1999, I was the mother of three children, aged ten, nine, and three. I came for more opportunities for my children.

My plan was to study English (I didn't know any English yet!), but I didn't have time since I was taking care of my children and working.

Those first three children are grown up now. They are well-educated and married, living in Manteca and Lathrop with my four grandchildren. We visit on holidays, birthdays, and at other times.

Five years ago, we had another baby, Isaiah. He is in kindergarten now. He likes to play video games. He likes stories, movies, or anything about dinosaurs and superheroes. We have an aquarium with Nemo, Dory, Marlin, a snail, Peach the starfish, and other characters from the movie. Isaiah likes to watch them and feed them.

Now I have more time, so I can learn more English and improve my reading and writing in the Read Santa Clara program. It will be nice to be able to read to Isaiah and help him with his homework. I want to improve my work skills, too. I could learn more about cooking and maybe be a chef! Or I could do childcare, rather than clean offices. Unfortunately, it is probably too late to become a medical assistant.

I was one of thirteen children—in the middle. One of my sisters came to the U.S. before me, but the others are still in Mexico. I got to visit them all one time, twelve years ago. I talk to my mother on the telephone every day. She is a very good mother. Isaiah has only seen her on FaceTime.

My Experience in School

Juan Carlos Contreras Flores

I came to San Jose in 2009. I started to work in a salon, but my English was not good. I started to go to school, but there were a lot of students. Nobody paid attention. Everybody was talking.

I came to the library in 2017. My English has improved because it is quiet, and I have one-on-one classes through Read Santa Clara. I have started to achieve my goals. Thank you, Read Santa Clara.



My Proudest Moment

Nancy Huang

I did a lot of things after I came to the U.S. There were more moments when I felt proud of myself than I could have imagined: making a living and supporting my own education, becoming an American citizen, getting a GED, earning an AA degree in administrative office technology, and working in an office. But above all, my proudest moment was when I graduated from



Purdue University in Indiana with a master's degree in industrial technology. Particularly, that was achieved when I was in my fifties, and it was over my bachelor's degree from China. With my master's degree I was able to teach adult school courses on computer applications such as MS Word, basic accounting software, and eBay (when it first started).

How did I reach that goal? Being ambitious is the most important factor. It took great effort, a couple of years, and three tries to pass the

GED at the Reading Academy while I worked as a caregiver for the elderly. I learned a lot from the ladies and their families, including how to live in this country and conversational English. When I chatted with the families, I would record the conversations to listen to in detail. After receiving my AA degree, I worked as a secretary for Hybrids, an electronic repair store next to Purdue University. To pursue my master's degree, I took classes during the day and worked as a custodian at the university at night.

With the knowledge I've gained, I'm devoted to doing something good for society. Following my son's job to California, I moved to the Bay Area. I promote bilingual education and Chinese medicine. I am proud of myself as a lifelong learner.



Spring Training

Saman Lahidji



In March 2018, my family and I went to visit my aunt and uncle at their house in Gilbert, Arizona. They have a large house with a pool and a game room. It was a long day, and I was tired. After dinner, I went upstairs to bed.

Friday morning, I woke up early at seven o'clock and went for a walk in the neighborhood because it gets very hot later in the day. After my walk I had breakfast, showered, and brushed my teeth.

The family went to a spring training game between the Giants and Angels at Scottsdale Stadium. At the game I met two girls—one was a Giants fan and the other was a Dodgers fan. The Giants fan had an extra ticket and invited her friend to the game; otherwise

she would not have gone. Surprisingly, it rained really hard starting in the seventh inning. Everyone who stayed went under the stadium roof for shelter. We decided to leave when it began to rain. Later we checked the score on our phone. The Giants won.



During our visit, my sister had a birthday. My Uncle Gene and I went to the Giants Dugout Store in Scottsdale to get my sister a Giants spring training T-shirt for her birthday. She liked it a lot. I also purchased a T-shirt for myself.

I spent time playing golf with my uncles and cousin, going sightseeing, and playing games at a facility called Main Event. I enjoyed going to spring training to watch the Giants and visiting my aunt and uncle while the weather was warm. I hope we go again this year.

Home

Camille Li

Several times I left my home to study and work, but this time I left my home to go home. I followed my husband with my child to his hometown two years ago. I never thought of emigration in the past. I enjoyed my life in my hometown; I had a comfortable life and a stable job. My sister and I lived in the same city, and my mother often visited me.

When I met my husband, I knew we could not live apart, and one of us had to move. Based on a more open education system and a more suburban environment, we decided to relocate to the United States. This was a big challenge for me, as it meant that I had to give up my work, my family and friends; everything I was familiar with. I was very scared of becoming an immigrant in another country and losing my confidence. Because of the love from God and in our marriage, I spent a year organizing and transporting possessions to the United States. I could not have done it without my husband's companionship and support.

In order to settle in the United States, we had to deal with many administrative and legal procedures. Several times I almost lost patience and told my husband, "I want to go home." Maybe I forgot that my home is here now. After obtaining my driver's license, attending a language school, meeting new friends, and connecting with my in-laws, I feel that the city where I live now is home to me.

I am proud of myself because I chose to be brave; I left home and came to a new world in my middle age, and now I am writing down my story in a second language.

Skateboard God

Bryan Marquez

When I got my first skateboard, I was eleven. I got it from my uncle. At first, I was scared and I was on my knees. Then I started cruising outside.

I learned by watching skateboarders on YouTube. I wanted to get better, so I bought a book and went to the skate park in Santa Clara and built my own ramp at home.

When you are a real skater, you need special shoes. The special shoes you need are Nikes. A lot of skaters buy Vans. I got both of them so that I could do tricks.

When I was fifteen, my friend Roger gave me some wheels and bearings for my board that my uncle gave me. Roger also gave me a board.

After school, we went to Roger's house to pick up his skateboard and then went to the skate park or cruised. We also went to a 7-Eleven to buy a drink. Roger had a BMX bike and carried his skateboard in his backpack.

I upgraded my board myself with the parts Roger gave me. The bearings on a skateboard only last three to six months and cost from thirty to fifty dollars. I bought them at Zumiez at the Great Mall. When I was a senior, I built my own skateboard from parts I bought at Zumiez.

Today I only skate to go to 7-Eleven or to the gas station to buy something for my mom.

About Japan

O. Masuda

Japan is located on the western edge of the Pacific Ocean and is to the east of China. It has four main islands: Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu. It also has more than 7,000 small islands. Tokyo is the capital and the largest city in Japan. I lived in the city next to Osaka, which is the second largest city.

Japan has a large population for its size. With approximately 130 million people, Japan has about half of the population of the U.S. However, the Japanese birthrate has been going down recently, so we are facing an aging problem.

I think Japanese is one of the most complicated languages for foreigners. There are three types of written characters: kanji, hiragana, and katakana. Kanji was adopted from China. The others were developed in Japan. We Japanese use a combination of the three scripts properly, but it makes it hard to understand for foreigners.

Regarding politics, Japan is a constitutional democracy. The current prime minister is Mr. Shinzo Abe. He has been supported quite a long time as a prime minister. Also, we have the Emperor. He performs various ceremonies as a symbol of our country, but his political power is very limited by the law.

Sumo wrestling is the national sport of Japan. We can watch battles on TV between very large wrestlers who weigh more than 330 pounds. In addition, we also have professional leagues for baseball and soccer, and both of them are popular.

My Proudest Moment

Karen O'Reilly

I moved from Europe to the U.S. It's been a new experience for me and a new chapter of my life. I've been really excited about it, but there was something that concerned me. Freedom to me means never having to worry about being deported or my immigration status. I can come and go as I please. I can go to Canada without a visa. I have the right to stay in the U.S. legally and can have a reunion with my family. I can stay at jobs or change jobs as I wish.

For me being a U.S. citizen means I can feel equal with everyone else. As a woman I like to be treated equal, so being a U.S. citizen is a step closer to being respected. I can be treated fairly when it comes to salary.



To become an American citizen, I needed to pass the test. My teacher and I worked very hard together. I did a lot of homework on my own. I listened to the CD in my car day and night when I drove and gave the answer after every question. I think I had a mini heart attack. I couldn't sleep the night before my interview and test. I went to the interview three hours early and studied in my car. I passed the test! That was the proudest moment of my life.

Blindness

Norma Martinez Q.

As human beings, the five senses are very important in our lives. If someone is born without one of the senses, or if a child begins to lose one of them, it is likely that the person might be able to develop the other senses more and adapt to the world with some help. But what would happen if we lost one of our five senses suddenly and without explanation? Which of them would we be willing to lose? José Saramago wrote a novel called *Blindness*—in Spanish, *Ensayo Sobre la Ceguera*—about the sudden and contagious loss of vision.

The novel describes a kind of “white blindness.” This illness becomes a public health problem around the world. But there was a woman who was not affected by the white blindness. She could see the chaos in the society: the starvation everywhere; the lack of clean drinking water; the garbage and corpses on the streets; people doing their necessities and having sex on the streets; dogs eating corpses; many houses and buildings vandalized; no electricity; and no kind of communication. This chaos makes her reflect whether it was better to be blind like the others or not.

Although she had friends whom she had to help, she felt alone. She needed eye contact with someone. One day, in the middle of the chaos, a little doggy came close and looked into her eyes. After that, she did not feel alone.

Despite the problems the woman had to face, the novel shows us that everyone can survive among the chaos. Also, it shows us to be more aware of the importance of every part of our bodies, and that friendship is good to overcome the difficulties in our lives.



I love to read books, especially ones that make me reflect on things.

Pedro's Patchwork

Carol Scheufele

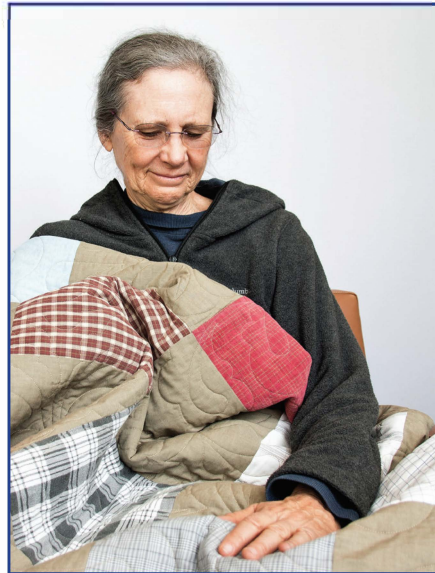
January 6th brought an annual celebration of the Three Wise Men to Pedro Moctezuma's childhood town of Caguas, Puerto Rico. Pedro would receive new clothes, although he was surprised with roller skates one year.

Pedro celebrated Christmas after moving to the mainland and starting his family. Later, I liked to follow the tradition of his childhood and gave him clothes. Pedro would place his older clothes in a donation bag for veterans. When illness spoiled our fun, I treasured his last bag that he no longer had the strength to lift.

I found just the right quilt pattern in a craft design book at the library's Friends Bookstore. My tutor Linh helped me determine whether we had enough clothes to proceed. When I struggled to cut the clothes that Pedro had graced, Terri, my older brother's wife, generously offered to make my quilt.

Pedro's quilt displays the fabric of our lives together.

It is a fitting tribute as he worked delivering bolts of cloth to the seamstresses' work areas in New York City's garment district as a young man. I received this quilt on January 6th, the day of the Three Wise Men, Epiphany.



My Life in Sudan

Wein



My name is Wein. I was born in Ethiopia. When I was two years old, my family moved to Khartoum, Sudan. Sudan is mostly Islamic, and it is a very hot country. The people who live there mainly speak the Arabic language. I lived in northern Sudan for most of my life. The people in Sudan are very kind and respectful. The only thing that I did not like about the culture was Sharia law. There's no freedom at all. They like to control people. People can't wear what they want. They can't have a boyfriend in public. They can't drink or sell alcohol. Some people still break Sharia law, which is not good for them because if the police catch them, they will be put in jail.

One day I was walking to school early in the morning when the police stopped me for wearing a tight-fitting top. They took me to jail, and I spent the night there without my family knowing I was there. At that time, my mother was already in the United States. The next day, the judge ordered a woman to hit me forty times. I remember I cried so hard.

Six months after that happened, my mother finished our emigration papers in order for us to move to the United States. My sisters and I were so happy that we were going to the United States to live a free life and to see our mom! We hadn't seen her for five years. Our trip to the U.S. was on September 9, 2006. I remember that day very well.

My Mother

Dongyi Ye

My mother is the best mother, in my eyes. She is smart, hard-working and she loves me.

My mother is very bright. She was the best student in her class and was the first in her village to graduate from middle school. She liked to study and was good at mathematics. My mother never used a calculator when she sold vegetables in the market. She could do math in her mind faster than if I used a calculator. She has a good memory for numbers. She can remember a phone number that she has called only once. My sister is a statistician now. I think she inherited my mother's intelligence.

My mother is a hard worker. She took care of our whole family, not only doing all the housework but also the field work. She woke up at four o'clock and worked in the field for more than twenty years until I graduated from nursing school. When my family was very poor, my mother grew vegetables and sold them in the supermarket to support our family.

My mother loves me. I was very weak when I was born. When I was sick, my mother took me to the hospital by bicycle. She put a lot of clothes on the seat to protect my bottom because I was very thin as a child. My mother would take care of me overnight and would bring me medicine any time I needed it. When she heard that I got a cold at school, she took the bus for three hours to go to school to take care of me.

My mother is excellent. She is the best mother in the world. I know that there are some women smarter than my mother, but no one is like my mother. She is special to me.



My Favorite Path of Traveling

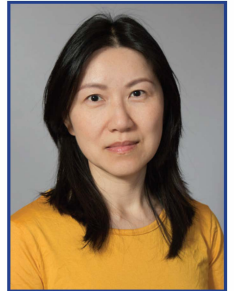
Carol Yuan

Indeed, I love traveling. Since my first overseas trip thirty years ago, I have been to four continents and thirty-four countries.

I can still remember how the U.S. seemed so big compared with my home country, Taiwan. Then I felt the great cultural atmosphere in Europe. In fact, I really love Turkey. I bought a CD, which I heard on the street, even though I did not realize what it was. The sound attracted me like a bee smells a flower. I think it might be a panpipe after I listened to it years later. The exotic music can take me back to Istanbul immediately. I also remember how deep the Moskovsky Metropolitan Subway is in Russia. The elevator took more than three minutes to carry me down. Do not forget India! I had a heat stroke when it was 113 degrees there. I also visited Mahatma Gandhi Park and followed Gandhi's steps as I imagined his thoughts of sadness and fear. Thailand, a very friendly country I do highly recommend, is inexpensive but still fun.

I would love to travel more. Anywhere I have not explored would be very interesting to me. Why? Because I am curious and fond of learning new things in the world! In spite of people coming from different lands, cultures, and various language backgrounds, we are similar to each other. I believe humankind could have been the same in the beginning but changed day by day from living in different geographical environments.

Even though I keep so many sweet memories from each of my journeys and hope to travel more, I do miss home when I am away. No matter how far I go, East or West, home is the best!





Packing My Bag to Explore San Francisco

Wen Jean Lin

People go on a trip looking to free their mind. We all feel trapped by the daily matters of life, work, and family. So, an escape to somewhere is the best way of relaxing. Looking and eating let us temporarily forget how hard life is. Our curiosity will ease our mind: we need to recharge by traveling.

I've decided to explore San Francisco for the next year. I wasn't interested in going to the city last year. I felt danger, and it was unfamiliar. But I found a DK Eyewitness Travel Guide of San Francisco on my bookshelf recently. The history of San Francisco encourages me to explore.

I've already bought a set of extra lenses for my iPhone. I will pack my bag with a bottle of water, a hat, and a scarf. I will visit museums and enjoy the art. I will take pictures of the Golden Gate Bridge from different viewing spots. I will take the Muni streetcar to feel the energy of the city. I will photograph the flowers and historical buildings.



I will try cuisines from different countries. I will walk down the street and feel the breeze on my face. I want to explore the spirit of Chinese frontiersmen in Chinatown.

I don't need a passport to go far away. Beauty is just a corner away. San Francisco is like an indomitable and charming lady. She has been through the dream of the Gold Rush and the tragedies of great earthquakes. She has the most natural beauty of both geography and landscape. The multi-ethnic mix is revealed through the city's food, art, and people. I am sure this will be a little trip that makes me feel massive joy.



Writing in English was never on my to-do list. RSC gave me the chance and encouragement. Now, I really enjoy writing. Thank you.

Going to My Niece's Wedding

Loula Ali

I need to go back home to Ethiopia. Ethiopia is in East Africa. It takes twenty-four hours of flying to get there from California. I want to bring my daughter and my son to attend my niece's wedding. We have not been home in three years.

My niece is getting married in the town of Dire Dawa in May, and it will be sunny. There will be two hundred people there. I will see my uncle, my aunt, my sister, and my neighbors. My niece will be wearing a long, white dress. She will also have a shiny and colorful Ethiopian wedding dress. There will be a band to play all kinds of music. Kids will dance. Some adults will dance, too. It is important for my children to learn more about their culture. They will see the whole family in one place. Spending time with the family is very important. We will have a good time. The best trip in the world is with my family.

Packing My Bags for Portugal

Anonymous

If I were able to go to one place in the world, I would choose to travel to Portugal. I see all the Google images of Portugal, and it looks beautiful and utterly unforgettable. I especially like the photos of their beaches—the water is deep blue and crystal clear. Portugal is where my grandpa on my dad's side is from, and it would be an amazing experience to learn more about where my family came from. This might give me a better understanding of my immediate family and myself. It would be interesting to know how and why they left Portugal and immigrated to the



United States. Did they leave to chase the American dream or something else? Hopefully, I would meet some long-lost relatives as well as cousins my own age, to be able to trade stories of growing up in our different cultures. My fear of flying has deterred me from traveling, but I hope to overcome this fear and visit Portugal.

My Dream Vacation to the Canary Islands

Paul Barcelos

I want to go to the Canary Islands, a group of islands in the Atlantic Ocean that are a part of Spain. The Canary Islands are a short plane ride away from the Azores. The Azores are a group of islands also in the Atlantic Ocean that are a part of Portugal. I am from the Azores. I have been to all the islands of the Azores except one. My brother, Joseph, still lives there. He can go with me to the Canary Islands.

I looked up the history of the islands. People of North Africa settled there thousands of years ago before the Spanish explorers discovered the islands. The Latin name for the Canary Islands means "Island of the Dogs"; that's what they found on the islands.

I have three reasons why the Canary Islands are interesting to me. The first reason is that I want to see Mount Teide, the third tallest volcano in the world. It is on Tenerife, one of the Canary Islands. The second reason is to experience different cultures. I saw a group of Canary Islands dancers in the Azores two years ago. Some of their dances reminded me of Madeira Island's dances. Madeira Island is between the Azores and the Canary Islands. The third reason is I want to see their famous palm trees, dragon trees, and beautiful birds.

After I see the last island of the Azores, the Canary Islands could be the next trip I take.



Dream Trip to France

Van Bui

*I came from
Vietnam in 2006.
I have three girls.*

If I wanted to travel right now, I would take my family to France. We would like to see a new country, its people, and its culture.

My three aunties, two uncles, and my grandfather live in Paris. I have eight cousins. I want to visit my relatives because for about twelve years I haven't seen them. I want my family to know about my grandfather and uncles and aunties. They are so sweet. I want to talk with my auntie and make spring rolls for my family to try. I remember she makes really good spring rolls.

I have a friend who lives in Paris. We grew up together in Vietnam. I want to visit her and introduce my family to her, and we can hang out together. My friend has invited us to come to her new Vietnamese restaurant to try the food and drink. But first I want to try the pate and the beef stew and drink red wine at a French restaurant.



Since it would be our first time, we would need to visit the Eiffel Tower and go to the beach. I want to see the Louvre and the Orsay Museum.

I hear from my friends that they have a lot of beautiful art and many kinds of sculptures. I am thinking we need to take the kids to see the zoo and look at the animals. We will buy the tickets to go on the tram and ride around the

zoo and have a lot of fun. The kids would be excited by that. I will go shopping to look for a special present from France.

I think this would be a very special trip. We have a plan to go to France and take a dream trip!

A Trip for Promoting Chinese Medicine

Nancy Huang

I am going to pack my bags for a medical trip to China. As a devotee of lifelong learning, in addition to continuing to learn English, I would like to do something good for our society in my senior years by promoting Chinese medicine. The most popular medical treatment is pain-release acupuncture, so my friends and I created a non-profit organization called the American Promotion Society for Chinese Medicine. On the trip, I will visit some prestigious Chinese medicine institutes and doctors and set up some technical trade relations with Chinese doctors in the U.S. Particularly, I will visit the geriatric section of a Chinese medicine hospital and may get some treatment for my memory loss while I'm there.



I am a lifelong second language learner.

My passions are bilingual education and Chinese medicine.



I would like to visit my only family member in China, my brother who is more than eighty years old and not in good shape physically. It might be my last chance to see him in our lifetime. I also have some girl's middle school classmates who still keep in contact on WeChat. If I go back to Wuhan to have a reunion with them, we will have a very good time!

I went back to visit China two years ago, but I didn't have the chance to experience the new train system. From my hometown of Wuhan to Beijing, we spent more than twenty-four hours on the train and got swollen legs from sitting for so long. Now it only takes six hours by high-speed train.

Since I am working for the non-profit, I have made a friend who is a Chinese medicine doctor and owns a clinic in Lake Havasu, Arizona. She has some business trips to China in the future. I think it would be nice to take a trip with her.

Visiting Mexico

Saman Lahidji



For the past ten years I have enjoyed being in Read Santa Clara.

My great-grandfather was from Mexico, near Cholula. I want to visit to learn more about my family history. I also want to see the Great Pyramid of Cholula and the Church of Our Lady of Remedies.

I would take my mom, sister, dad, and grandmother. My grandmother speaks Spanish; she can translate for the family. It would be nice to see if any of my family still lives near there. To find out, I would visit the library, look in the local phone book, and use the Internet. If we found my relatives, I would like them to come with us and show us around.

The Pyramid at Cholula was built over a 1,200-year timeframe. The structure was made out of adobe (mud and straw). Different levels were built in different years. The pyramid grew bigger and bigger to reach a height of 217 feet, a width of 1,480 feet, and a length of 1,480 feet. Murals were painted on the inside of the pyramid. There were thirteen



murals, but only eight are still there. The most famous is the mural of the Drinkers.

The pyramid is the main tourist attraction in Cholula, receiving almost 500,000 visitors in 2017. The pyramid is a lot different today than when it was built. Over the centuries, grass and dirt covered

the pyramid so that it looked like a hill when the Spaniards arrived. The Spanish built a church on top of the pyramid called Church of Our Lady of Remedies in 1594. The site is still used as a Catholic church and by native people for an annual ritual.

Knowing where I come from would help me learn who I am and why I have this personality.

Prettyboyfredo

Bryan Marquez

I want to go to New York to meet Prettyboyfredo. He is a famous YouTuber with five million subscribers. He is in his twenties and married with a one-year-old daughter. His wife's name is Jasmine.

He plays basketball with kids. His favorite basketball team is the Cavaliers.

He does giveaways on Instagram where he gives away prizes if you answer the questions right. He asks questions about himself, school, and sports. One of the questions he asked was what was his favorite color. It's red. The person who answered that won a 25 PSN. I watched two days ago when he asked a math question on his giveaway.



He likes to do video pranks. One of his favorite pranks was when Jasmine disconnected his PS4 and threw it into the pool. Another prank was when Jasmine deleted his Mike Currier players on the 2K game.

He goes to the mall a lot and likes to buy shoes. He especially likes Jordans. He buys the latest Jordans once they come out. He once did a public prank where he proposed to Jasmine at the mall, and she turned him down. He wanted to do that prank to see how people would react. The crowd laughed, and only one person came to comfort him. The next day he encouraged his subscribers to help people when you see they are down.

Las Vegas Trip

O. Masuda

Long Drive

Las Vegas is about 540 miles from my house. I assumed we needed to drive for about eight hours one way. However, it took eleven hours to drive there because the road was congested, and we took a long break for lunch, etc. Both my wife and I were very tired from driving, but it was fun for us to share a lot of time with our family.

Sightseeing

We enjoyed seeing the main “Strip.” We were all—especially my kids—surprised by colorful neon signs, huge buildings, and lots of people. The large fountain in front of the Bellagio Hotel especially impressed us. My kids bought many souvenirs at the Coca-Cola Store and the M&M’s World chocolate store. We had an exciting evening.



Valley of Fire

We visited Valley of Fire State Park, which took an hour by car from Las Vegas. In the park are huge rocks which are all red like fire. I recognized that Las Vegas was artificially built in a desert area and surrounded by a lot of sand and huge rocks.

Thanksgiving Party

Seeing my wife’s father’s friend was one purpose of this trip. He invited us to a party at his home for the Thanksgiving holiday. We enjoyed traditional American food like roasted turkey and pumpkin pie for the first time. We spent a really nice evening with his family and friends.

Things Left to Do

I didn’t do two things on this trip. One is to see a show or musical. The other is playing at a casino. Both are popular in Vegas, but unfortunately, I didn’t have enough time to do them. I would like to experience a lot of different things in my life, so I’m going to try them next time.

I Packed My Mom in My Heart

Pedro Noyola

One day, my hiking friends Roman and Francisco asked if I would like to go to Hawaii. I told them, "Yes!"

I called my mom to tell her I would be taking a trip. She was so happy to know where I was going. She told me to send her pictures.

The first day was fun. We went to Pearl Harbor and saw some great history. Then we relaxed at the hotel. That night we walked around Oahu.

The next morning we hiked Diamond Head trail and got a great view of the city. After that, we did Koko Head. It was also exciting, but in a different way since it's along a railroad track that goes over a steep hill. We had to walk carefully to not fall through the gaps. It was worth it for the amazing ocean view. We took so many pictures! At night, Francisco surprised us with a reservation at an elegant restaurant with delicious food.

Over the next few days, we visited the Dole plantation and some beaches. We saw large turtles and went to the Polynesian Cultural Center. We snorkeled in clear blue water. The trip was awesome. I want to go back to this beautiful island.

As soon as I was back in California, I called my mom to tell her about my trip. She was so happy I had this experience. But then she told me, "I'm so mad at you!" "Why?" I asked. "Because you didn't take me with you!" she answered. "I promise I will take you with me next time," I said.

Unfortunately, two months later, my sister called to tell us our mom took her own trip. On my next trip, the first thing I will pack is her picture.



Hong Kong

Rafael

Hong Kong is the place I would like to go to. There are a lot of things to see there. I would like to listen to people make deals. I want to see and meet new people and see the stores with good prices. Hong Kong looks like a big city. There are a lot of buildings.



All Aboard on the Memory Line

Carol Scheufele

I'd pack my bag and head to the train station, retracing my grandparents' tracks. I still remember the three times they ventured West by train, crossing the United States to visit. I recall we'd walk to church services together, and Grandfather's joking to Grandmother that "someday there would be two nuts under the nut tree."



I too would take in the train route's varied scenery that had fascinated Grandfather—particularly from Los Angeles to the mountains—insights I gleaned from their letters my mother carefully saved. Undoubtedly this was because he was a Sooner's son raised in the Oklahoma Panhandle. He later had his

own homestead in Montana before taking up a teaching post at what is now Amherst College. Grandfather hadn't experienced this far west.

When I reached the end of the line in Massachusetts, I'd visit my mother's old Amherst and my father's old Wellesley stumping grounds. Finally, I'd pay my respects to "two nuts" lying under a heritage American Oak tree in Amherst.



Discovering Wildlife in Costa Rica

Maribel Walter

Costa Rica is in my dreams. I love wildlife, and I hear Costa Rica is a beautiful place to visit if you want to see wildlife. Because I live in the city, I just don't see animals other than pets. I can go to the zoo, but I see them in cages. I would love to see animals being themselves. Costa Rica is on my bucket list because it's a place where you can see animals from both the ocean and the land.



Costa Rica has beautiful national parks, like Parque Nacional Tortuguero where you can find nesting sea turtles and green turtles. It also shelters scary-looking caimans and spectacular waterfalls in the rainforests. There are a lot of parks where you can see wild monkeys running around, and you have to be careful not to bring food with you, or they will take your bags! In the forest, you can find many colorful parrots and hear their loud calls. I would like to sleep in a cabin at Coco Beach and fall asleep to the sound of waves. In the morning, I would wake up and ride horses in the water. In the afternoon, I can go snorkeling at Golfo de Papagayo. I can go to see the different species of fish, big whales, and clever dolphins. I would love to climb Mount Chirripó, the highest mountain in Costa Rica. After a long hike, there are natural hot springs at the bottom of the mountain where you can relax your body.

My husband, my son, and my mom would be wonderful company because they enjoy nature, just like me. Now I have to convince them that Costa Rica is their dream, too.

Traveling to Ethiopia

Wein



Ethiopia is my former country. I was born there. Ethiopia is located in the Horn of Africa. It has a population of 102 million people and the capital is Addis Ababa, which means “new flower.” This year I am going to visit Ethiopia. There are so many places to see, like the Simien Mountains, Fasilides, and Bahir Dar.

I have heard that the Simien Mountains National Park is a beautiful place to visit and is located in Gonder in the Amhara region. I have seen a picture of the park. There are so many unusual types of wildlife like wolves, walia ibex, baboons, antelopes, and over one hundred types of birds. The walia ibex is only found in Ethiopia. It looks a little like a mountain goat.



Bahir Dar is a capital city of Amhara in northern Ethiopia. I have heard Lake Tana is a beautiful place to visit in this area. Lake Tana is the source of the Blue Nile and the largest lake in Ethiopia. I would like to sit by the river and smell the fresh air. The last place I would like to visit is the Fasilides Church, which was built by Emperor Haile Selassie.

It’s a famous place where people go to pray, and I would like to see this place.

The last thing I would like to do on my trip is to visit my aunty, who lives in Addis Ababa. We’re going to celebrate the Ethiopian New Year together. We’re going to wear traditional Ethiopian clothes called *habesha kemis* and make Ethiopian food and coffee. I am going to have a good time this year with my family.

Paris

Dongyi Ye

If I could go anywhere I wanted, I think the place would be Paris. Why Paris? Although I have never gone to Paris, I know that there are lots of wonderful museums, and Paris is one of the most romantic and modern cities in the world.



Paris has the most famous museums. You can see countless treasures of art in the Louvre instead of traveling all over the world. If you like art, especially oil paintings, you have to go to Paris. Paris is the capital of art. More than half of the famous painters have studied and lived in Paris. Paris has not only renowned art museums but also has wonderful history museums, science museums, and special

museums. Paris is a must-go place for museum lovers.

The romance of Paris is not only sex and love but also its lifestyle and landscape. In Paris, many people spend all day in coffee shops and enjoy a cup of fancy coffee. The Seine passes through the city. People like to walk on the street instead of taking the bus or subway because they don't want to miss the picturesque landscape of Paris. Women and men are a part of the scenery in Paris. The well-known luxury brands, such as Gucci, Hermès, Lancel, Burberry, and Lanvin are all available in Paris.

If you have the opportunity to visit the buildings in Paris, for example, Arc de Triomphe, Villa Savoye, or Pompidou, you would agree when I say Paris is a historical and a fashionable city.

Hemingway said, "If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you, for Paris is a moveable feast." You would know how fortunate you are when you travel to Paris.

The Dream in My Heart

Chienhui Yu

I hope one day I'll take my parents to travel all over the world.



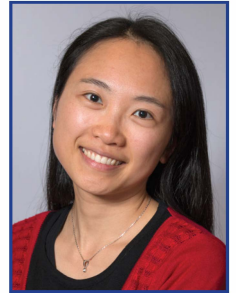
I was born in an ordinary family. When I was young, my parents were always working. My father delivered newspapers at dawn and drove a taxi all day long. He usually came home at midnight. My mother also went to work very early. Often, my brother and I heated our

dinner, did our homework, and took our baths before my mother came home. Although they were busy, we always felt their deep love and care for us. They saved money to provide us what we wanted. When I became a mother, I realized how much they sacrificed. I really appreciate their devotion from my heart. I'd like to express my gratitude by taking them to travel abroad.

My father is a big fan of golf, basketball, and baseball. He loves to watch sports channels. When I told him that I would like to take him to watch a live NBA or MLB game, he smiled and said, "That's great, but it costs money." Then I said, "How about golf?" His face lit up! He began to tell me that St. Andrews Golf Course in Scotland is the oldest and most iconic one in the world.

My mother always yearns for beautiful scenery. She learned about some "must-see in your lifetime" places on travel channels, such as the fantastic Aurora Borealis in Alaska, gorgeous Banff National Park, and spectacular Niagara Falls in Canada. But, Europe is her favorite: the magnificent Swiss Alps; the picturesque Netherlands; and of course, sweet Belgium, since she loves all kinds of dark chocolate.

For me, this dream is challenging, but I'll keep it in my mind and try to realize it little by little.



I really thank my parents for raising me and always encouraging me to learn more. I hope I can take them to enjoy the world one day.