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On the cover: "The World's Largest..." by Gina Cesario, 9" x 12" monoprint, digital print, tracing paper, cotton thread, and feather. Originally commissioned as part of Jeremy Frey's chapbook-length poem, "Big Bang."

p. 5 "River," felt artwork by Petra Kuppers
p. 6 "Salinum River," photograph by Kreg Abshire
p. 9-11 "View from the Typewriter, 1984," photograph by William F. Van Wert
p. 12 "Joy," photograph by Daniel Van Wart
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p. 26 Traditional Japanese flute notation, used with permission from Music Cultures of the World website; http://munk2011-04.fhsu.edu/
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The University of Arizona
Harbison Building, Box 2
Tucson, AZ 85721
Tel. 520.621.1952, Fax 520.621.2899
here@email.arizona.edu
http://www.arizona.edu/youhere/

Editors
John Batridge
Shaoshana Meyden

Editorial Staff
Ashley Dole, Emily Sellinger, Kimi Eisele, Jennifer Shepherd, Zara Smith, Erika Wise

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Editors’ Note

Last year, we entertained the notion of “displacement” as a theme for Volume 8 and, at the time, it seemed especially appropriate. The world had witnessed the mass displacements of people following the Indian Ocean tsunami, after devastating earthquakes, and in the United States following hurricane Katrina. Ongoing conflicts continued to force large scale migrations and, along the U.S. border, hundreds of migrants were dying each year in the American deserts. We expected a lot of people to have displacement on their minds.

But as we sifted through the hundreds of submissions we received, we began to see other possibilities. Among the selections we liked most, a more complex and subtle theme emerged. While many of the pieces we chose do suggest displacement, they even more strongly evoke how our sense of place grows from and through personal relationships and evolving identities. On one hand, we experience places as somehow separate from ourselves—uniquely arranged spaces that we enter, where we exist, and from which we depart. But people (including ourselves) also comprise part of these arrangements in space. Our relationships to places are deeply connected to, if not mediated through, our relationships with people. Our selections for this issue reflect this complex recursive connection between identity, place, and personal relationships.

In Kreg Abshire’s “The Fall Line,” we find feelings of family entwined with a familiar place but also powerful symbols of movement and displacement: the river, and a child’s impatient roaming. The Van Werts’ poems give us detailed understandings of place that only make sense through the lens of the father-son relationship, and yet themes of migration, loss, and death remind us of the transience in our world. Karen Paiva’s displacement from Florida to Pennsylvania to care for her dying mother led her to embrace and embed herself in a new location. In her paintings, people and the landscape seem inseparable. Mark Hummel, offering us part of his “Water Cycle” series, binds place to people as surely as Michael Ratcliffe does in his poem, “Jessup,” though the two pieces are, in many ways, aesthetic opposites. In “The Rift,” the line between person and place often blur, with delightful or tragic consequences.

A few of the pieces here dwell more on the displacement end of the axis than others, and these include Eggert-Crowe's “Santa Cruz River, Dry After a Storm,” Komives’ “Lethbridge Bridge,” and Goodland’s “Place Time.” Brian Mark interview with the Beehive Collective reminds us about people, places, and identities that are often left out of public political discourse. But what all these works share, as we noted above, is a deep appreciation for the idea that place and people are inseparable.

As we move through space, our own movements and existence help constitute place in all the forms it can take. For one, it might be how water in a riverbed becomes a lover to be seduced. For another, it might be how the sound of a young girl’s flute echoes the meandering terraces of a deep canyon. For you, the reader, in this issue of you are here, it will be all these things and more. We hope you enjoy this edition as much as we have.

John Baldrige
Shoshana Mayden
Tucson, AZ
108° F

Santa Cruz River, Dry After a Storm
Lauren Eggert-Crowe

Here, water makes no promises.
The current races through the dry creekbed,
a lover leaving gnarled branches uprooted and gasping
from the shock of so much rushing. Gone
after the clouds bruised with rain. This morning
the concrete winked puddles.
Creeks stretched for sun-blanched shoals.
Here is the evidence.
Water, though, has other places to go, does not hold.

But you know the story,
the addiction to eternity.
We seduce water to be kept. We make it call us home, settle down into pools, knit wide scarves
of grass. When its eyes go circular, like it is dreaming
of Mexico, we beg for days. We need
the way it fills us. In a century, we will dry up
and disappear. The end
of the story? Everyone collapses
from the exhaustion of making their beloved stay.

Artwork by Petra Kupper, “River” felt panel (80 cm x 50 cm), part of Felt Stories, an installation at Ararat Museum of Art and History, Masterton. New Zealand, 2005.
The Fall Line

Kreg Abshire

It is early August, the last of summer in the South, where we send our children back to school far too early, weeks before Labor Day. If I ask my son what we should do with the fleeting time available to us before we resume our schoolwork, he always returns to water.

I'd like to think that my son is a transcendent knower in the line of Thoreau or Whitman. They, too, knew of longing for water, the power it has over us. Thoreau found his muse on the banks of Walden Pond, and Whitman celebrated water as our origin, our gently rocking cradle. Anthony is far too practical for Romanticism, however. Like many eight-year-old boys, he tends toward nonfiction, stating a preference for facts, for reality. He knows, for example, that the human body is 65 percent water and that we can survive for only three days without water in a temperate climate. The South in early August, however, is not a temperate clime. And I find myself impatient with mere knowledge of water, the facts of water. Like the student in Whitman's "Learn'd Astronomer," who after "becoming tired and sick" of the astronomer's lecture, wandered off alone, "and from time to time, / [I]look'd up in perfect silence at the stars," I pine for direct experience of the thing itself.

II

Columbia, South Carolina, sits at the point where the Saluda and Broad Rivers come together to form the Congaree River. Like many cities a few hours inland from the Atlantic, Columbia sits on a fall line. Here the land starts its slow, gradual rise from the coastal plain to the Appalachian Mountains. Early settlers forced their way up the Congaree only to find rocks, shallows, and rapids. In the face of these obstacles, they stopped and decided that they had found a great place to build a city, just as other Westerners did at similar points along many other Eastern rivers. Thus, for a time, a line running roughly north and south from Columbia to other cities similarly located below rapids or waterfalls defined the frontier. To the east of this line were flat water and civilization; to the west were rapids and wilderness. The line itself was where water fell between the two.

Falling water, however, was no match for canals, dams, or steam. Settlers pushed the frontier further west, and Columbia lost its short-lived place at the edge of things. Yet to be so far from the margin is to be nowhere. We write our stories at the limits, at the lines between here and there, between reason and passion, between wilderness and civilization. Without the line, how would we recognize change? How would we name it?

Protected by a gentle bluff, Columbia's downtown is just east of the confluence of the three rivers. Gervais Street runs in front of the capital, through the trendy Vista district, down the bluff, and across the Congaree. Beneath the Gervais Street Bridge, the Congaree rushes in a subtle show of gravitational force: under its influence water accelerates, forming swift currents, tiny whirlpools spinning out into shallow eddies, and small white-crested wakes opening below each of the boulders scattered down the river. For a pedestrian pausing on the sidewalk above, the river's surface illustrates the structure of chaos, each spiral, line, and dimple resulting from a discernible combination of force and resistance, of falling water and rocks.

III

To put ourselves on the Saluda River, we follow the signs from 126 to Columbia's Riverbanks Zoo. The stream of children and chaperones subsides as we move out past the last SUV and minivan to the end of the parking lot. Two trails present themselves. One takes us south to a worn patch of shady, damp dirt along a stretch of smooth, calm river. Any one of the picnic tables hidden in the shadows makes for an excellent vantage point from which to watch the water slide by. The other takes us through a meadow of knee-high grass cut to make way for a series of high-tension-wire towers.

The end of the meadow trail, the trail we intend to take, is hidden behind a short rise. We can already hear a dull roar, however. Pausing to investigate every rustle and to admire the butterflies we flush out of hiding, we move along at an eight-year-old's pace, an excellent pace for taking in a place that is modest about its beauty. Shortly after we start down the bluff toward the river, we trade the straight-line trail for a jumble of gray boulders and sand. From this point, we can see water falling. An expansive series of steps moves down from the right to the left, broad planes of water shifting from green to white as they spill over or push through rock ledges. Off to our right, the water starts its fall from a level roughly equal to my height; it proceeds over several steps until it seems to be at the level of the ground I'm standing on. Continuing its fall, the river disappears around a bend.
8

Karen Paiva

One of my longest "rush hours" began in fall 1998, when I decided to move from Miami, Florida to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. It ended in January 2000. Parental caretaking and hospice care are roads of love and honor filled with stress. During the last year of my mother's life, a back-to-basics period for me, I eased my struggle from grief and helplessness by taking refuge in art. As Mom rested or as others came to visit, I painted and reflected on the joys of simple living. With no real formal art training, I began my therapy of spirit and, eventually, auditioned my first painting during this period, A Lancaster Rush Hour, for Mom, who absolutely loved it. From her living/dying room couch—now bed—she smiled and urged me on. So in a humble, holy setting began my hospice series. I appreciated more the power of place soon after I buried my mother. Lancaster County, its geography and its people, was a natural balm that eased and enriched my spirit. What began as a healing place became my laid-back, creative setting to celebrate my passions.

Yesterday Located in the Here and Now
Karen Paiva

A Lancaster Rush Hour
11" x 14", acrylic, canvas board

Rush hour is an oxymoron, no matter where you live: rural, suburb, or city. As someone who has traveled quite a bit and who has lived in South Florida, I am smitten by our "rush hours" here in the village of Intercourse. A Lancaster Rush Hour, my signature piece, finds humor and pleasure in knowing that by car or carriage going three miles an hour is a "rush" of a different kind. The series mirrors my delight in the relative nature of rushing.

A Lancas ter Rush Hour

Yesterday Located in the Here and Now
Karen Paiva

We've stopped. Anthony is studying an odd rock. I am simply stopped. There's something unsettling about looking eye-level at a mesa of water. It's like watching a tiger at the zoo from the safe side of the barrier. Something keeps it from eating me, just as something keeps the river from changing its direction. I know that water flows downhill and that much of me is below much of the river. All the certainty of knowledge and all the similes of experience seem muddled and insufficient. I pause, expecting the river to rush round my knees. Answering a breathless prayer, the river stays put. I wonder: is that what brings me here, the need to offer this prayer?

My son insists that we "got" Children are helpful that way. Anthony's quick capacity for wonder is immediate, a clear and direct response to what is there before him. It is neither meditative nor learned. It has nothing to do with an understanding of Thoreau, of Whitman, of English classes, of books, of words. It is, instead, a form of perfect silence. And facts, which he has in abundance, cannot obscure it. That's what I am thinking in the moment between his exclamation and his decision to start down without me.

So we go, Anthony leading the way, plotting our course over and around the boulders, moving down to the edge of and then out into the river. We identify a rock suitable for lounging and connect the rock-dots that take us out to it. We pass a comfortable hour eating peanut-butter sandwiches, exploring the neighboring rocks, and staring at the river until rapids slow and blur and freeze, taking on the appearance of an over-exposed photograph.

Something, perhaps a train passing on the rusting trestle above the river or the sounds of afternoon traffic picking up on 126, jars everything back into focus. Looking over towards the train and highway bridges, I notice a sign that advises me about the potential for and dangers of fast-rising water. The South Carolina Electric and Gas Company placed it there on a telephone pole in the middle of the river. SCE&G runs the hydroelectric power plant at Lake Murray and, consequently, determines the level and rate of flow on the Saluda River here a few miles below the Saluda Dam. When the dam gates open, the sign informs me, horns will sound, water will rise quickly, and I should retreat back to the safety of the parking lot's higher ground.

Today, though, there are no horns. Even so, perfect silence is fleeting at best. It seems that we are always remaking nature in our own image, bending it to meet our needs. We dam it, admire it, mine it, drive hours to find it behind the boundaries that we have established to contain it. And even in reverence, we set it apart from us, drawing yet another line to feed our desire for escape, for transcendence. There is, I suppose, potential here for despair. I do not, after all, want to find only a mirror behind the curtain. Ahead, Anthony calls. I can only imagine what he's thinking. So we go. ■
Whooshing You Were Here
16" x 20", acrylic, canvas board

Whooooosh! A rasping noise outside my kitchen window interrupted my dinner preparations. More inquisitive than startled, another loud whoosh whistling overhead pulled me outside my home. Hovering above a neighboring Amish farm was a colorful hot air balloon. Young Amish teenagers were running to the border of the green tobacco fields. I believe hot air balloons floating through the air currents have a magic about them, and they seem more enchanting as they drift over the quilted farmlands. Smiling, I returned to making dinner while also making mental notes for this painting.

Requiem for Rachel
9" x 12", acrylic, canvas board

I had not seen as large an Old Order Amish funeral for a child as the one in 2003. The “carriage-cade” appeared to stretch for miles down route 772-East and Belmont Road. The child, a young female toddler, had run in front of a car. Children are automatically angels (white doves) in most people’s book, so the knowledge that an angel had been re-released tempered the sadness. As an English outsider, I cannot explain why this particular child’s funeral touched me more deeply than others. Her name was not Rachel. Had I any talent as a composer I would have written a requiem; instead, I painted.
The Living Room
Daniel Van Wert

This selection and its companion, "Michigan," came to us from a son and the father he lost in 2003.

Reminisce under dim light in the half-empty living room after my father's death in preparation to move out of my home, his home of nearly thirty years. This is where he did his best thinking, his type-writing after we went to sleep.

He held class meetings here with his favorite students over an orange Oriental rug with burgundy wine and cheese, and interruptive children wielding crushes for attractive, encouraging female students.

This room, where my brothers and I invented games: "Log," in which we jumped over rolling human obstacles; "76ers," where we chased one another around in a circle, singing the name of the game with no point or goal in sight; we took on our dad in 3-on-1 hopeless brawls.

This room, where David and I gobbled chocolate bars, stolen from our dad's secret stashes, and slurped the red stripes off candy canes during Christmas Eve rendezvous.

We sat up late nights leading up to the Holidays in front of a north star flashing in a circular pattern, and bubble lights, our father's favorite.

Listening to Christmas carols on the stereo while our father worried about all of the presents he had yet to half-wrap, leaving ends exposed.

On Christmas mornings, Camille came down from her apartment upstairs with twenty-five dollar checks for all of us. David hoarded his presents for later, amidst intense scolding from Ian and our dad, trying to persuade him to open them on the spot. Our father hid Camille's cancer from us, so as not to spoil Christmas, took us to midnight mass as if nothing were awry.

We were not perceptive to her gifts, more plentiful than usual, including a bell and an intercom with which to call if she needed us.

Our dad made love in this room, wrote novels and poetry over unsweetened instant iced tea and cigarettes. He hid his treasures here, displayed film posters, cottage photographs and literary accomplishments. And through difficulty in leaving this room, without our dad, it no longer feels like home.
Michigan
William F. Van Wert

1
I think of it now
as the lake in late afternoon,
a blister of breeze through poplars and birches
that cluster and rustle
like old spotted dogs.

My father naps in the black felt recliner
and never looks at the lake.

I mark time to the lake.
I mark time by these trips to the lake.
My memories, the ritual husks of my memories,
are now our memories.

My sons catch fish, play ball, act cocky.
They fight off supper with swimming and laughter.
They fight off bedtime: bonfires in the
barbecue pit, lightning bugs smeared on jeans,
knee-deep in darkness, a clay glaze
over vision. Everyone lies.
Tall tales away from the city.
My father naps in the black felt recliner
and never looks at them.

Saginaw, Chippewa, Tittabawassee.
Nasal names and no Indians.
The dirt farms spread like an oil spill
with silo or a satellite dish;
the farmers absent from their fields:
fields of corn, summer tomatoes,
John Deere tractors, Burma Shave signs.

Michigan used to be the Midwest.
Now it's the North, far north and forgotten,
as though it had moved.

Everything's for sale now:
houses, cars, pontoons in the yard.

I have these two memories: one,
as a boy, helping my father
install a third kitchen for Henry Ford,
and watching the workers lay in the lawn,
swatch by swatch, brought in from Japan;
the other, this summer, a sign
outside a cemetery: PLEASE, NO RV's.

We travel, Mackinaw Island:
the bittersweet smells of horseslilt and fudge.
The ferry boat from Ludington
to Oshkosh, Wisconsin, home of bib jeans.
Traverse City on the bay, where migrant workers
from Mexico still pick bing cherries
into July: Houghton Lake, Higgins Lake,
Everywhere we look a lake.

You always get the news of home
away from home. Highway construction
in Philadelphia has caused an exodus of rats.
Thirty-five thousand in Center City.
They laugh on the local news at the lake.
The Modern Pied Piper, they say.
A Detroit firm, Termapest,
has been hired to put an end to the plague.
My father, the snow bird.
September first to May fifteenth,
he lives in a trailer in Florida.
He drives his "boat," shops at Winn Dixie.
He clutches his coupons with Dutch farmer's hands
that shudder and lock with Parkinson's.
Bologna and beer, his widower's lunch.
By noon he goes barefoot. He kicks back
and sleeps in a black felt recliner
and never goes to the beach.

He used to play golf.
They say that golf is a middle-age sport
for men who've stopped working,
but I can't tell. The women outnumber the men by three to one,
the gap still growing. Even so,
they're still called the "gals."
The gals tee up at ten o'clock
and go home at six; lost balls,
laughter, a good old time.
They play through the sullen men.

In China, a nation of crackejack dancers,
students revolt. They laugh at the lake
on the local news. They say that Mao
could shake a stick, fox trot for hours.
Even as China retreats from the West,
there's still Chubby Checker and Deng Xiao Ping doing the twist.

We dance this dance, two men
without women. I rub his feet
till he sleeps and he lets me.
This touching, this candor,
sticks in my throat.
We used to talk, his days on the farm,
his years in big business,
my mother's death. But now
it's all silence, the history of movies
rolled in reverse. I never think
thumbs, the pus and the swelling,
the shape of unshaping,
how feet fit in hands,
but only how long.

My father turns off the national news
for reruns of M.A.S.H. and Jeopardy.
I teach him how to cook for himself,
but he never remembers. Pesto,
baked salmon, paprika chicken.
Ten minute meals. He acts attentive,
but he never remembers. And still
we play this charade to the end,
like a baseball game that's already lost,
but must go nine innings. He always asks
about the time: not broiled or baked,
cayenne or paprika, covered uncovered,
but always how long.

It's now all winter in Michigan
when I'm not there. Four months
at a time, the freeze like a flu,
whole towns boarded up. The crawl
of traffic, barren birches, brittle cold.
My sons never ask for the cottage in winter.
My father won't call from Florida.
We hibernate, our bodies on hold,
till birds and baseball come back together.
Shock of spring colors, smell of fast flowers,
the asthma of bees, and mornings
in May with rain at a slant.

It's like an infection.
My sons stop sleeping through the night.
They eat at odd hours, throw quick fits
of rage, righteous impatience
for school to end. They wait.
They straddle time like a horse,
flank full of spurs. Michigan,
like a carnival ride, waits up there.
Water Cycle: Retreat
Mark Hummel

High up on the Overland Fork, above Mills Park on the old highway that used to service the mining camps and that now offers a backdoor route to the ski towns, there is an A-frame house built at the edge of a pretty pond formed by diverting a small side-stream off the river. The house seems to divide the nearly perfect oval pond into symmetrical halves. Tall pines bookend the house with near symmetry as well. The diversion channel that steals from and then returns water to the river must run deep, for the pond surface is so placid there appears no current and all day the clouds reflect back upon themselves. The mirrored images of pine trees and house and reeds at the shore make it seem an artist’s conjuring. The only movement most days comes from the skimming jaunts of water striders or the blossoming circles formed by feeding trout. It is the sort of house that makes you want to take pictures, the kind of setting where you imagine yourself taking naps in the tall grass, sleeping with the dull rhythm of dragonfly wings at the pond edge or where you would want to teach your grandchildren to fish.

My own grandfather spent most of four decades calling it “his place.” Now it never was, never would be “his place,” for he was a mechanic making mechanic’s wages down in Arapaho Springs where the Overland Fork changes its pace and spills out into the plains, but it was the kind of place he spent a lifetime dreaming about owning. Never once did we pass the little house and pond without him saying, “That’s my place.” It remains “Grandpa’s place” in my mind, and I can imagine him teaching me to fish there with an ease that does not accompany the reality of him patiently untangling my line at a hundred different man-made lakes and old gravel pits set into the hot summer plains. I can conjure the smell of Grandma baking there, too, just as I can imagine the exact floor plan of the little kitchen, see its color scheme, its wallpaper, the knick-knacks of its windowsill though I’ve never once been closer than the opposite shore.

I still pass the place once or twice every summer, once in a great while in winter, too. Not much ever seems to change there. The place seems magical in that way, like a postcard set down opposite the river, never changing, always perfect in its simplicity and quiet. I suppose if you chronicled the place closely enough, the way my grandfather surely must have done, you could mark the changes in the growth of trees or in a subtlety of change in the paint color or some other incremental alteration.

Mostly the place is an ideal, a dream. My grandfather always said, “That’s my place” with a chuckle in his voice, but I know there was a seriousness to his desire as well. For that sort of longing isn’t really about a house or a place at all but about the imaginative ability to see oneself there, to believe the self could be different, live a different lifestyle and in so imagining the self different, a larger piece of the world would change too. I’ll bet he’d see himself taking his coffee out onto the wooden deck that extends nearly to the shore, imagine himself getting a line into the water before breakfast and while doing so come to believe that he could have a life with more money and less heartache, one where his wife wouldn’t have been so sickly, where he’d kept all his children closer.

I wonder how often he closed his eyes at night picturing that little place, the flatness of the water, the glow of the house lamps at night swaying gently on the pond’s surface. I wonder what regrets he held in his old age, what wisdoms he’d lost or forgotten. When I pass the place these days and there’s someone new in the car with me, I turn to them and say, “See that pretty little house there? That was my grandfather’s place.” And if they remark on its prettiness or ask a question, I’m ready with a thousand different stories of the lives we led there—stories, not falsehoods, tales of the best and most touching moments of our actual lives moved to this shared setting of a little house caught inside time.
The Rift
Evan Morgan Williams

My name is Charlotte. I am fourteen-years-old. I live in the Rift. My hobbies are collecting rocks and gems, playing with my dog, and writing letters. I would like penpals of my own age, please.

My name is Clayton. I was fourteen, and I lived in the Rift, too. I was sitting at the kitchen table, eating a snack before starting my chores, when I found this item on the kids’ page of a farm magazine, wedged between an article on irrigation pumps and recipes for leek soup and apple pie. I already had a dozen penpals, but I was pleased to make room for one more. Not because I dreamed of life beyond the Rift. No, a good letter contained a life within its margins. I liked to drag my finger along the tightly cobbled words and feel a voice come to life at the top of the sheet, blacken the sheet with hopes and longings, and end itself at the bottom. Maybe the girl, Charlotte, felt the same.

Across a gulch from my family’s orchard lived Tomoko. She was also fourteen. I lived in a house too delicate for this country—paper walls, cedar roof, slender beams jutting over a cliff. The house clung to the rock like a bird’s nest. That afternoon, as I worked the terraced slopes of our orchard, refitting stones that had loosened and slipped, Tomoko dragged her music stand to her deck and practiced her flute. I stopped to listen. The melody seemed to wander, untethered to a home note, like a leaf on a swirl of wind, unsure where to set itself down. I stole a long look at Tomoko—white sweater, plaid skirt, straight black ponytail. We could have chatted across the gulpy in normal voices, but when she glanced up from her music stand, I looked down at the rock in my hands. It had squirmed loose from the terrace. I would have to jam it back. At this moment, a pear fell from a branch, rolled in a circle, and stayed on its ledge. I thought about the penpal, Charlotte, and I decided to write her.

The sounds in the canyon flowed around me: water gurgled in the earth, stones clattered down the slopes, and arpeggios from Tomoko’s flute floated across the gulch. I had given up locating any restful place in her song, and I let her music, like a ribbony flock of bats, stream into the graying sky.

The sun dropped behind the black cliffs, and the long twilight began. My chores were over, and I walked down the terraces toward home. It was hard to see the way, but I counted my steps and turns from memory. I thought about the penpal, Charlotte, and I did not care whether she was pretty or plain. I wondered about her voice, the sound of her words on paper. Aware of a silence welling around me, I looked across the gulpy to where Tomoko had stood on a deck. She had gone inside. Her silhouette slid along the paperly wall of a lighted room. Skirt, sweater, ponytail. She was putting her flute in its case. The light went out.

The Rift was a hundred miles long and a mile deep, a great crack in the plateau. Many of the families in the canyon were Japanese; the Rift had swallowed the hopes of prospectors and ranchers and immigrant grandparents tried this place, they found the conditions perfect for growing a delectable variety of pear. There was a trickle of water, a skin of fertile soil, and a breeze that felt like breath.

My family’s orchard was a thousand terraces, cobbled from a million grinding stones. The terraces held back soil, water, pear trees, and an urge to settle, slouch, and fail. It was care never-ending. Canyon walls did shift, and you listened for the terraces to react. In the middle of the orchard, our house leaned on wooden posts that twisted and strained under their load. We ate supper in silence. A dribble of pebbles we knew to ignore, likewise the gasps and hisses of sand, but a loud pop was an alarm, and we would flee the house and get to work. Bulging stones, we hammered back. Broken stones, we pivoted loose and gave to the drop, the shattering clack, the silence. As a child, I never played marbles. My sky was a strip of blue, a slit of Milky Way stars.

I spoke few words, good words with long gaps between them. Words were hard to fit together; brittle stones gave me less trouble. Like any child who grew up in the Rift, I kept a roster of penpals, and I wrote in a slim vocabulary that was colors and sounds and textures and smells. No word for joy. I kept my letters in a cedar box, the habit of one born on steep slopes in windy canyons, who needed the things he loved to play in place. Growing up among rocks that acted and popped and cried to wrestle free and fall, I believed that the box where I stored my letters was the one solid thing in my life and I believed that by writing this girl from the Rift, I would be sounding the walls of my world, not for a way out but for an echo.

That night, I sat at the kitchen table and wrote to Charlotte. I filled the sheet edge to edge with words. Thrashing water, caught in a slough, dragged to a terrace, led to a tree: did she know those sounds? Lichen, yellow flowers, morning sky, evening sky: did those colors seep into her thoughts? My word for hard was rock, and soft was skin. What were hers? Did she sleep snug between grumbling canyon walls, or did she sleep afraid? Was she bothered by the stray odors of pinyon and sage that spilled from the plateau into the canyon and muddled the air like radio static?

Charlotte, you may want penpals from Florida and California, but same as you live in the Rift. I know the sound of a stone flung against the opposite wall, ricocheted, rattling to the bottom. When the stone hits the dry creekbed it is a rain of shards.

A winter passed. I did not hear from Charlotte. I forgot about her. One Saturday, late in spring. Tomoko and I climbed to the bottom of the canyon. It was a safe time to go: rocks that had sprung loose during the freeze had already done their tumble and shatter. At the bottom, we found a swirl of stale air we had been inhaling...
and exhaling all our lives. We set up a picnic blanket among the remains of rocks, some that I recognized from the orchard, some dashed to smithereens. Lichens and pale flowers perched where the sun could reach them, but except for a sliver of direct sun at midday, we sat in the shade of canyon walls. Tomoko spent the afternoon gathering a fist of green pebbles, which she trickled into a pile, scooped up, and trickled into a pile again. The pebbles piled together with a bell-like sound. I saw no purpose to it.

"Let's go home, Tomoko."

Earth twisted into night before we were halfway home. In the darkness, our feet slipped on shreds as noisy and brittle as glass.

"I want to tell you something," she said. "At night, I can't sleep. I can't think."

"What is there to think about? Just listen."

"I think about running away. My sister ran away. When I get older, I am going to find her."

Most of this story I already knew, but not all of it. Tomoko described her sister's fearlessness, how she used to hide in her blankets in the morning, then trudge into their orchard weeping and covering her ears to block out the canyon noise. She would test every foothold to make sure it was safe. At night, she read slim volumes of light sleep. After a bit of sleep, and when she began listening to her dreams, that was the end: one morning she was gone. A gate was found open at the top of the road. I did not understand, but I believed Tomoko did not either. In the silences given to us to hear the clatter of stones, there was no suggestion that we listen to anything else.

"I am going to find her."

"You don't know where to look."

"Not down here."

As we neared the top of the canyon, we did not speak. The wind was its own talk: fruity scent of Tomoko's shampoo, earthy scent of lichen, odor of iron water that seeped from cracks in the cliffs, wispy perfume from yellow flowers that threaded the cracks to get the water. During a gust of wind that spoke of a rockfall spilling in a faraway canyon, I heard a nearer sound. Sniffing, Tomoko was crying. Wisps of her hair clung to the wet tracks on her face. I took her hand.

"This is hard for me." She pulled her hand back.

"Don't say anything. Just listen."

"That is the hard part."

As Tomoko spoke, I clung to the silences between words that, to me, felt empty as sky. In the canyons, I knew to listen well—to dodge rockfalls, to fix a broken terrace—but also to hear hollow home notes in a breeze thatthreaded the canyons and left them ringing. Apparently, Tomoko did not feel this way, and when I took her hand again, she gripped back, smiled at me, then walked down the homeward path, mushy gravel underfoot, her voice humming her restless song.

"Tomo?"

"What?"

"Count your steps. You'll get lost. You'll fall."

"Silly boy."

As I lay in bed, I considered: she had gripped my hand, but she had also pulled her hand away. I thought of her warm skin, her long hair, and her breasts outlined beneath her sweater. Then I thought about her music; the green pebbles she had stacked purposelessly, the silence she had been so startled too, but I didn't know how. Sleep clouded my thinking, but I knew, as I lay within the murmuring walls of my bedroom, that as Tomoko and I grew closer, I was becoming more alone.

A rumpled letter in the mailbox.

I read the letter. It was a walking switchbacks home. It came with a photo of a Japanese girl and her dog. The text was dense, the margins narrow. The handwriting was pressed into the page so deeply I could have read it blind.

Thank you for writing to me, Clayton. My name is Charlotte. If you live in the Rift, I am nothing new to you, a voice you already hear. Like you, I know the difference between copper and iron on my tongue. In the flesh of a pear I can taste how far into the strata the rocks have dug for water. I can split open a gourd as cleanly as a coconut and chip out the sparkling flesh inside. Clapping my hands, I can mimic the sound a rock makes, pinched tone during a freeze and tumbling from the notch where it will never fit again.

There was only so much to say about the narrow sky, the echoing rockfall, and the strata whose sequence in the rock was solid and unchanging; by the time I reached home, Charlotte's words had begun to repeat themselves. But that did not matter. I knew those words. Absorbed in the letter, I walked past my house and had to scramble back.

I should not confess this. I chip at the terraced walls of our orchard. I pick at them with a nail, and I polish the promising stones that I find. My liquidy machine grinds through the night, and by morning the rocks that had seemed muted glint and glimmer brightly. There is a liquid texture to a finished stone. It glitters like water, and when I set it on my palm and roll it around I imagine it swirling away. I can mail you some rocks that I polished. Maybe you already have them. Maybe you know their era and formation, but maybe reciting these facts calms you. If not, toss them over the edge. The point is that I'm reaching to you.

A wind throbbed down the Rift. From the thousand terraces, the twisting canyons, the crush of detail I itemized in my sleep (because tomorrow it would shift and urge itself at me again), I wondered how to sift her voice, a gem from a fist of gravel. The edges of the Rift were fruited with brittle clefts, and the clefts glowed with kerosene lamps—farmers working late, shoring burst terraces. Charlotte was fifty miles away. I could not see that far, but gripping her letter, I did not have to.

Words were hard for me, but blank paper was worse, and in the questions that I forced into ink and sent to Charlotte, I came close to spelling out a longing. Had we met? Did we share a common friend?

She said no.

On your orchard, water weeps from the vails. A single flower, lodged in a crack, is enough to pry a rock from the cliff and send it hurtling down. You find, tracing the rock with your fingers, veins of gold, stick and thin and sharp as wire...

I replied.

Your house is cobbled from porphyry; you sleep cocooned in purple stone, and you breathe air old and familiar and lustig of juniper...

You live deep in the canyon, where days are short, and you burn coal in smudge pots to thump the trees. The smoke hovers, too heavy to float away...

Your canyon is a maze. You lose yourself there, for hours exploring the terraces; by nightfall the darkness is inky in your hands but you are still going, until the terrace thins to a ledge over sleep nothing. No matter. Knowing where the world ends, you don't have to stay awake at night forever...

You hear the loud ache of the canyon walls. It is your world closing in on itself, a surrender, a yearning of rock for the bottom.

Charlotte, our letters echo each other. I forget who sounded the first note.

I read the letters in bed at night, again and again, and after I had memorized every note, I folded the letters and stored them safely in the soundless cedar box.

I was sixteen. My dad was paying me to move water among the terraces, flooding the highest levels first, spilling water to the next, the smooth blanket of murmuring water slithering down until, at the deepest levels of our orchard, only a dribble survived to wet the soil.
Some afternoons, while your neighbor's flute song recalling like smoke, you follow a meandering path among the terraces and seek stones tired of their role. They do not gain back, and you let them go. The stones and soil spill to the next terrace down, and you try to stop the creeping damage there. If you succeed, what flows to the bottom of the canyon is a trickle of pebbles in a dry riverbed.

After my work, I would visit Tomoko in the orchard, but as I listened to her stories, my head was turned away.

"She was a disgrace to my mom and dad. They burned her dresses, but some of her things they left before me. A flute. A calligraphy set. A telescope for stars. Have you ever seen what lies in the night sky, Clayton?"

Her voice was a whisper. I was listening for something else. A rockfall. A gust of wind.

Her father goes away on trips, and he brings home thundereggs and amethysts, little crystal palaces which she puts on a narrow cedar shelf against a milky paper screen.

Tomoko gathered another pile of pebbles, and as she spread them in her palm, she spoke of stars hidden behind canyon walls. She gave them names in Japanese—the few she knew. She promised millions more. "Late at night they twist into view. We can see them, Clayton. We can take your dad's truck, bring the telescope, climb out of the Rift, and see..."

"Your friend wants you to leave the Rift. She says, "Why is this so bad? To see the sea of stars, and in the morning feel the sunlight on the plateau?" Of course, you and I know what will be lost: the good home in the earth, the layers of warm rock that shelter us, Clayton, as you gaze at stars, notice the blank spaces you lack words for, the stars too numerous to name."

"You have your driver's license, yes?"

I am sad for her. The path of your friend's words and the path of a rock are the same. She will never leave the Rift. As a rock tumbling down, her moment of awareness will not be a sweet sound but a hard fall.

"My parents want me to stay. I am the only daughter they have left..." Tomoko began to cry. Between tears, she listed her obligations.

Study hard. Honor her mother and father. Marry a good boy. One by one she threw her pebbles over the edge.

She doesn't know herself. Her words for colors are the names of rocks. Her hands, like ours, reach for walls to hold. Canyon smells are locked in her nose. She talks too much, too long, yet the soft plunk of a pear, dropped from a tree, still makes her flinch. I believe her longings are all wrong; a flute can play a wrong note.

"I play the flute because I am sad."

Your friend needs to accept the words the wind supplies in her ear. She needs to taste canyons in her mouth after she drinks. She needs to sample the echo of her voice and be content with the softness she gives to her. The details that burden her to distraction are the very things that make her alive.

"You're not listening to me!"

Nobody in the Rift feels joy.

"Clayton!"

It is time for us to meet.

Tomoko pulled her hands away. I told Tomoko that I wanted to be alone.

"No one wants to be alone," she said and crunched down her gravel path. Before she disappeared I heard not her song, but sobs, and between them, numbers. She was counting her steps.

Charlotte, my dad is loaning me the truck. Do your parents need me to do some work for them?

My mother packed coppery rocks and foil-wrapped pears as gifts, and I left early in the morning. Charlotte's orchard was fifty miles as the crow flies, but the road through the Rift was all twisting canyons, knife ridges, and switchbacks. Day fell into shadowless twilight before I reached the end: a house of jumbled purple stone, dingy to a slope more crumblily than ours. I shook hands with Charlotte's parents. They were older than I expected. Her mother spoke only Japanese. Her father walked with a cane. Brown spots on their hands.

"Charlotte doesn't talk much, but you're all she talks about when she does. She's down in the orchard. This way."

We counted our steps, up and down terraces that slumped with the weight of wetery soil and trees that sagged with unpicked fruit.

Charlotte's dog was rolling back and forth, yelping and whining. A mallet lay on the ground, and beside the mallet, a stone that had slipped from the wall. On top of the stone, a half-eaten pear was turning brown.

Peering over the slender lodge, I could just pick out, tumbled deep into the canyon, a small broken body, arms stretched, its fall arrested by a slough that carried water to an orchard far away.

I had borrowed the truck to stay one night, but I stayed for seven days. Long enough to help Charlotte's father build a cedar box, dangle it from a rope into the canyon, load her curly body inside, and drag the box—barged and scratched and splintered—a hundred terraces to their home. Charlotte. At night, as I lay on her bed that smelled like lavender, I gripped the little box where she had kept my letters, and I remembered lifting her body, curled in a ball, as though she were sleeping, Eyes closed, lips just touching. Lulled to sleep. What had she seen and heard and tasted in her final moments, and had those things comforted her? I wanted those things to comfort me.

My last letter to Charlotte: When I imagine your voice I hear murmuring water, gusting wind, and exclamations of shimmering stone...
There came a weekend when Tomoko's parents went on a trip to town. Tomoko and I lay on their bed, listened to the squeaky paper house around us, and studied each other's eyes across the distance.

"That day when you were fixing terraces, that day when I went out on the deck and played the distance.

"I only did it to watch you. I got dressed up. I wanted you to notice me. I was sad when you looked away."

"I noticed you."

"I thought you didn't like me."

"I kissed her."

"Clayton, I want to show you something."

Tomoko led me to an opaque paper panel and slid it open to reveal an atrium bedded with green rocks as smooth and rounded as eggs. From this bed grew a vine maple that meandered towards a split of blue sky. The rocks were from a river-bed, and they lay in a jumble as though spilled and tumbling by the current.

"The rocks," I said, "There is no order to them."

"That's not true. I carefully placed them."

"It doesn't look like it."

"Well, I placed them to look that way. Now you are the one who needs to listen."

One evening, I worked later than I had meant to. I found myself in an unfamiliar canyon, its contours rumbled with odd terraces, some wide enough to support a grove of pear trees, a level space in my thinking, others no wider than a few cabbages would need, a footprint on the way somewhere else. All my life, I had learned to get around by memorizing my path, the order of steps and turns, winding among pear trees, up and down terraces, words and numbers mumbled under my breath. On this day, the sequence frayed in my thoughts. The lay of the terraces seemed to shift. I hurried on. The wind was strange to me, and the sage and pollen that spilled into the Rift displaced the mix of smells I was used to. I tried to put the static out of my mind and focus on the lay of the terraces, on finding my way home at the end of the day.

I was startled by a falcon tearing through the sky after a flock of rock doves. Flapping, snapping wings. A dozen echoes. I lost count of my steps and tried to turn back, but the terraces had become a maze. I grew dizzy and sat on the wet soil far from the edge, gripped a fruit tree, and felt the canyon sway.

The rule, if you were lost, was to climb down. The land would simply to broken rock and stunted trees. You would be calmed by the warmth of the earth around you. Hungry for this comfort, I let go of the fruit tree, shuffled to the edge, and began the long descent into the heart of the Rift.

The sky drained of light, the earth around me. The crisp echoes of my footsteps assured me that I was nearing the bottom. I was ready to slow the evening's pace in a place where it would not bother me again, when I rolled my foot on a fallen pear and slipped from a slender edge.

My body smacked the next terrace with a mushy thud. Wet gravel stuck to my face. I tasted blood.

You taste the canyon in your mouth.

I thought of Charlotte falling, leaving the warmth of stone, falling for so long that the rain lashed the earth. Her body had been curled into sleep, but she will not awaken, and the question of whether she had been comforted in those last moments did not matter anymore. The Rift, which had seemed so warm and safe and sheltering against the empty sky, was just a press of smothering detail: fluttering birds, clattering rock, drip of water, rare wind, grit in my mouth. I added my voice to the noise. "I want out."

Surrounded by the groans of walls ready to burst, I climbed. I closed my eyes, listened only to my breath, smelled only my sweat, touched rocks only to spring to the next. By early morning, the walls in the upper canyon abandoned me, and I stood on the plateau. The sky widened to stars I had not cataloged before. The wind across the plateau was a blanket of odor thickly woven, and I could not separate the strands. It was new information, undifferentiated background noise. It did not have to fit, and I saw for the first time that neither did I.

I lay beneath the roof of sky—stars! I let spin namelessly. I wanted to hear Tomoko's flute song that never settled and long to float away. I imagined that I could see, far below me, her paper house flicker and glow. Her silky silhouette against a paper wall. And though I knew that Tomoko's heart held a deep and hollow sadness, I imagined this space could equally fill with joy.

I stumbled home by late morning and slept through the day. I dreamed that bits of canyon crumbled and left gaps of widening blue.

Tomoko and I live on an older street in town, among narrow brick buildings, beneath crags of sky slashed with trolley lines and fire escapes. Each morning, we lie in bed and soak up the sun on our faces, sweat and oil gleaming on our skin. I turn to the wall and see the world that will tower around us for the day.

The air outside is a swirl of cigarette smoke and leaves and bits of trash. Odors that, as children, we had ignored as background noise surround us now, and out of habit we list them on our fingers with the same attention we used to note the smells in the canyon, but instead of twisted juniper and slippery rock it is steam from the puddled pavement, odors of greasy cooking.

We are still careful where we set things. When Tomoko lays her flute on the music stand, her hand hovers until she's sure the flute won't roll away. Hands skimming brick, windows, mirrors, our bodies, the thick air.

At night, the rumble of trucks, the roar of planes, and the wail of sirens leave us embracing. We could go back to the Rift whenever we want to, but we stay in each other's arms because we choose to, and that is the point.

My parents write and tell me the Rift is closing up. The rocks that tumble down are boulder sized. I imagine Tomoko and me walking the side of a cliff once jagged, now rounded and softened. I listen for echoes long, only a silence that I equate with Charlotte's voice, and I understand that all those years of rumble and clatter and hiss just masked that silence. I will never go back.

We will find Tomoko's sister one day. She must live in the heart of town, where air stagnates in canyon-like alleys. She sits on her fire escape and chats in Japanese with neighbors across the alley. Tomoko and I live in the same neighborhood. You can only uncover yourself so far. Sometimes I read Charlotte's letters. They are brittle and brown, and they flake and tear when I unfold them. First, I carefully pile the items that slide out on their own: swatches of fabric, dried lavender, poems, photos, drawings of her little dog. A lock of shiny black hair. Then I breathe the scent of paper and trace the tilt of her letters and the smudges of her fingerprints. I follow her description of a canyon wren, whose fluttery cascades of song come close to confirming a kind of joy but also restless sorrow. Then I fold the letters up. I will never throw them away. They belong in their stack, in order, in their little cedar box, with me. I slip them under the bed. Although Charlotte gave herself to the Rift, I am exactly where I belong.
The air a mix of diesel and spices at the concrete and asphalt corners of Routes 1 and 175. Commodities flow in and out of the road-bound harbor, from container ships in Baltimore, unloaded in hours by man and crane (a job that once took days and hundreds), to trucks laden with seafood and produce for the restaurants of Washington and Baltimore.

This is the harbor in suburbia, truck stops and warehouses, wholesalers and cheap motels, and the shipping channel moves down the interstate.

Here is where the spices are packed that once were packed in Baltimore when its harbor filled with ships from Asia and the Caribbean; Central American banana boats; buy boats filled with oysters and crabs and produce from the Eastern Shore.

Here is where the sons and grandsons of longshoremen who worked the boats spend their days in warehouses driving forklifts in and out of trailers for barely a living wage, or spend their days behind iron bars and the razor wire fences of the penitentiary (another extension of Baltimore).

Here is where the prostitutes work the lot from truck to truck, where drivers find a home-cooked meal and a quick fuck.

Here is where the suburban slums—trailer parks and cheap motels where families crowd a single room rented by the week; and next door lovers try on the half-day rate; children play amid the diesel fumes, suburban dreams a world away.

This is Jessup, where we find the city's rhythms in modern form; the flow of goods in and out, the city's dirt, sights, and smells, banished from the old harbor now washed clean and sanitized, a playground for suburbanites who cannot stand the thought of Jessup.
Place Time
Giles Goodland

This place is but a forsaking and not a river that passeth by this place is very still water
I see it plain. Here in this place is write: Homo fugit!
from Bloud and Plots this place is free, And calm as Diversion; and this place is called Amusement
where he remains. And this place is that which we call the high
way of riding most used in this place is on ass-back
the more remarkable as this place is so much to the South
in dry seasons, and at this place is 200 yards wide
this place is consecrate; to Death and Life
this place is a residue of a wreck of nature
the temperature of this place is not fitting to your fine
but the chief trade of this place is slaving
him!' exclaimed Ellen. 'But this place is lonely
the atmosphere of this place is saturated with the odour of
dead trees in Sandy Bay; this place is now so utterly desert
desert of the night when this place is clear and shut, we read
divination; and this place is accursed. The landlord
learning of its inmates. This place is not named, but may
tarry not here, but fly! This place is under his curse
you're made off! To stay in this place is beyond me
being so far out back this place is a little world in itself
this place is full of plebeians And woodlice
whose hatred for this place is second only to his
old shoes as this place is very muddy and manure
you know what this place is, don't you, sir
this place is Pickup City tonight!
gently mildewing in this place is the lively response
lost in your memories. This place is lethal on weekends
you know, boss — this place is a friggin' menagerie
all that matters about this place is what we've just done
in fields. And, you know; this place is on a ley line. Maybe
a bit of sleaze, but this place is cheap skate sleaze
after me. If they don't this place is gonna turn into a total
hip, young museum, this place is perfect for a rainy day
Niles: (to Frasier) This place is going to hell
arms raised in good-bye. This place is called a salt scald
mato, this place is crawling with summer muck
and this place is on a topo map, so it can be

How a certain clyson of this place was hastily preuent of dethe
when faire Pastorelli into this place was brought and kept
small loose we suspeyned in this place was multiplied upon
them. In the midst of this place was a stone, not unlike a Tomb
called Hell. Formerly this place was appointed a prison for the
by what I perceive, this place was built by the Lord of the
water seen trickling down. This place was so fit
to stir? I feel this place was made for her
near this place was cut a vista through the
interpreter. This place was supplied by one of the
procured. The yawl at this place was anchored some way
when I sent for him to lay this place waste for me; having read
I then asked if this place was the one I had heard of.
at the yard gate (for this place was like a well-doing farm)
brought a good price; but this place was utterly stagnant and so
near the town of Louth. This place was afterwards
the philosophy act, but this place was successfully claimed
call to London? If this place was on a manual exchange
the racket in this place was just what she remembered
a dream kitchen. If this place was smartened up a bit
it seemed to Thomas that this place was a sort of paradise
the last time I looked this place was a pisshole, not fit
food, but it was plain that this place was not really up
for counterculture types, this place was an opportunity to not grow
in the meantime, this place was an accident waiting
the meantime, this place was an accident waiting
tables. Frogy was right, this place was bush country
ten years ago, this place was clean, yeah? There was

The LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace
as possible, as my stay in this place will not exceed a few days
greatly endure it to me but this place will always have one claim
here in this place will I set down how that
Texas in my talk; Oh, this place will be my ruin. Ki-yi-yip-pi
and it is a safe bet "this place will really be cranking"
way, someday this place will be everywhere.
The Bees
Brian Marks interviews the Beehive Design Collective

In the last issue of you are here, we introduced you to the work of the Beehive Design Collective, a group which uses complex pen-and-ink art to educate people about globalization issues in North and South America. In this issue, Brian Marks takes us inside the hive to discuss the Bees' ideas about everything from cartography and Coca-Cola to mythology and mainstream education. You can learn more at www.beehivecollective.org.

YAH: What are your central goals in doing this work?

Bees: Basically, our goal is to be as useful as possible with these materials. The topics we've made graphics for are because there are movements acting on them. We make these graphics as a sort of 'solidary tool,' a bridge between those movements. For example, for the upcoming food system poster (a depiction of the North American food system based on several agricultural commodities), people at the ends of the system like producers and consumers might be able to see from each others' perspectives.

YAH: Do you see your work as a kind of mapping, and how does it differ from other kinds of cartography?

Bees: The graphics are a tool. They navigate people through really complex issues. So in that way it has the same components as mapmaking. For cartography as a tool of imperialism, there are clear things like the Northern Hemisphere being on top of world maps. America is named 'America' after Amerigo Vespucci, an Italian. If we're counter to that, it means we're mapping the undercurrents, all that's been drowned out in 500 years.

The really important part for us is the fact that there are tons of public visual representations of our culture devised in the advertising think tanks that are now serving as the dominant visual teachers of our time. As a result, this overriding consumer culture is very intimately known and the effects of that culture and alternatives to it don't make it onto the popular radar. In the past, those who had the most power were able to censor and decide what would be visually represented on maps.

There was a kind of mythos of old maps, they used to say 'here be dragons' because they couldn't know what was beyond a certain point. Myths are a way to control people and make connections. So for example a corporation could link joy with a soda in an ad or confidence with a hairdryer. We're telling a new mythos, especially in the trilogy on Latin America. It's highlighting things that aren't shown. Not having maps of important things, that makes people afraid. Having maps of that 'other' makes them less fearful. In terms of fearing the unknown, especially United Statean people think about what's to our south, they think of beaches and women or drug wars and violent insurgencies, they have no idea of the truth about Latin America. That dual mythology is exploited; a dominant consciousness of people in the United States is to think of Latin America as a place to use rather than know.

YAH: How do you represent in your graphics the perspectives of the people you collect stories from and those of the many audiences you are trying to communicate with, considering how different and diverse they may be?

Bees: We are really careful with the imagery we select to incorporate into our graphics. We use symbols that are recognizable and meaningful to all. The images we use get put through a process in our group to make sure they're respectful to all concerned, that we're not perpetuating stereotypes. When we go somewhere, like to Central America, we ask the contributors of stories how they want to be depicted in illustrations. We are also careful to use native plants and animals from the bioregions we're depicting. We try to make sure symbols we use are cross-cultural. We imagine how a symbol could be useful to high schoolers in United States or Latin America, or farmers here and there.

We think that our role in making graphics is that we're translators. We use pictorial language so that the message is universal. The objective is to unify resistances—to reach many audiences. We think that pictures are better at bringing people together than using words. Our target for the Western Hemisphere trilogy is to use the graphics as tools of popular education, particularly in the United States, where people aren't directly related to what's happening in Latin America. They're not directly experiencing and aware of the situation, so it's difficult for them to relate.

We are always channeling information. Facilitating people's stories across differences is an intensive process, it's exhausting but it's important and worth it. It's a really organic process, how it's produced and then used. Everyone has a piece to share, our role as facilitators is to convey and tend to that process so people can have their say, be welcomed to tell and use the story for their own purposes. It's important and really hard to make each stage collaborative—there's so much intricacy in the graphics. It's not a unidirectional process, it's so many directions all at once. It's really consuming, but it's amazing for what it produces.

The people gathering stories to make the graphics are being educated while they do it. The people educating with the graphics are doing research when they present it. Only 15-20 percent of the Plua Colobia banner's information was intentionally there from the initial drawing, the rest was brought in through the educational process. For example, when we put the 'Coca-Cola mosquito in that poster to represent water extraction, we didn't know how did Coca-Cola was to coca production historically.

We have different goals in choosing what information to use. We take a lot of time balancing representations of 'the big picture' with...
Using visual work as a medium in itself gives the message that there are other ways to digest the stuff that is often only thrown around in a lecture setting or as written work. This message addresses mainstream educational attitudes and approaches. It looks at how people learn as opposed to what specifically they are learning. It can cross a lot of borders, cultural and geographical. As a result, people might say that they could do a graphic, too, because they can see that it's possible.

The bee hive graphics are like elaborate notes, they are notes that have been gone over carefully before studying for an exam, they are notes that have followed each thread of story to its root and placed it accordingly. In our case, they are the notes of a group of people digesting stories from many groups of people. The responsibility for the information in the graphics is exponential, so many people inform the graphic, the metaphors are like the dolls that each have another inside, just a little smaller. People document their experiences differently, they attribute more weight to different factors of a topic, so different pieces inside the graphics stand out for them. So their note taking, their collection of a particular story, whatever they are trying to understand in more depth, is a sort of map that they construct out of the graphics parts. It is a type of organization that makes sense for them and for the information they are working with. Anyone can tell their story. Anyone can take notes.

YAH: How do you intend the posters to be used? How does the design of them reflect this?

**Bee**: We use very different modes of working than some forms of art or education. It's important to break things down into digestible pieces, using visual material in ways you can break down and work with. You can see the interconnectedness of things as opposed to them as isolated. One of the main reasons we use symbols of everyday life, form, nature, and corporate logos in our graphics is people look for what they identify with. People love to feel that affirmative cultural blanket sometimes, they like to know that they are part of something and sometimes their minds are only open to looking at things they identify as well-recognized symbols.

There's this concept of world mono-myths—in each culture there's these stories, such as a fire story. They may have different cultural meanings but the symbols are universal. The new version of that, such as Coca-Cola, everyone knows what it is. You can talk about it because the corporate logo reaches across cultures. Because Coke is an understood symbol it's easier to explain concepts like resource extraction with it. If you approach communication and explanation as image instead of words, you unite people instead of dividing them and take people off their guard where they'd be defensive.

YAH: Describe how people use your graphics.

**Bee**: It's democratic. It doesn't take a lot of training to use them for educational purposes, it's a more equal process than the typical educational process in high schools or college.

Comparing the bee hive to other political art with one really quick message, it's a strong contrast. We're about a longer process of looking between the big and little picture. It's about creating such a complex form of the graphic, not just a simple one. The gap between how we approach this and how others do is very apparent and frustrating in the United States/Canada. It's different in Latin America, where there's a popular education tradition. We hit a brick wall at first with art groups in the United States. The genre of stuff we do, we don't get support as art because we're too political, and we don't get support as politics because we're too artsy.

There are different perceptions of our work, how people use the graphics. Some people look at them as backdrops. To not take two seconds to look at them, or put them up in a bedroom, it's not public art. Doing presentations with people, especially small groups, is better. We're trying to figure out a popular education model that works with what we do—what are the most effective ways to analyze and make use of the graphics. As there's no real tradition of popular education in the United States, people buy posters as wall decorations, as commodities not popular education tools. It's hard to not see them as pretty things to hang up in a commoditized culture.

I'm honing our popular education strategy, but there's also this magic process with these graphics. There's a lot of political art that's about one person or thing, and that singular focus encapsulates the message around that point. The Free Trade Area of the Americas is not one thing; it's a whole process, as are Plan Colombia, biotechnology, etc. With the bee hive posters, the subject matter, how it's presented, the means of distribution through tabling at events and mobilizations, it's sinking in in ways we can't measure. It's a crazy magic trick that involves people looking at the graphics and picking out pieces here and there. We find people won't just throw away the posters, they're big or special to want to throw them away. So even if it's sinking in slowly, they're having an effect.
Letherhome Bridge
Bob Komives

Deborah went away today. We wished her well, as we did before, and the befores before that. Deborah laughed, said she will not be back. We try to believe her now, as we tried before, and had tried before that. Hernán Cortés tries to tell her to burn her bridges, burn them behind her, as he had burned his ships so he could not go back to Cuba or Spain until he conquered Mexico. But speaking as one of her bridges, or perhaps the hull of her ship, I have no desire to burn. Why should I suffer just so Deborah can conquer Mexico? In truth, she would rather conquer the Extremadura, back in Spain, a counter conquest of Cortés, an adventure that I support, as I supported her adventure before, and each adventure before that. How would my burning further her venture? Even if she conquers Extremadura, or Lisbon, or Brattleboro, she will want to come back to brag about it. She will need a bridge even for a short visit. So, I propose a compromise. Hernán, will you get out of her psyche if I let some weeds grow up, some bushes to hide me from a distance, some erosion to my approach? Let's agree that these are worth a try — alternatives to my burning. They will discourage her return until she is rich and famous or in desperate need of a warm bowl of soup. When the time comes, I can paint up and fix up, clear the landscape so she can see her way back. For my effort, I might earn a new plaque. Or, I might polish up the old one as I polished it before, having earned it before that. With luck, the old words will still read well: Here sank the ship that let me away. Here rose the bridge that let me back.

the following

PLACES appear in this issue of

you are here

Appalachian Mountains 36.00N 82.67W
Arapaho Springs* 39.28N 106.50W
Baltimore, MD 39.28N 76.60W
Brattleboro, VT 42.85N 72.55W
Broad River 32.02N 80.08W
California 37.00N 119.00W
Canada 60.00N 90.00W
Caribbean Sea 10.65N 60.00W
Center City, PA 39.93N 75.10W
Central America 10.00N 80.00W
China 35.00N 105.00E
Chippewa, MI 46.30N 84.48W
Colombia 34.00N 81.02W
Columbia, SC 34.00N 81.05W
Congaree River 34.00N 81.05W
Cuba 21.50N 80.00W
Detroit, MI 42.32N 83.03W
Extremadura, Spain 39.25N 06.25W
Florida 28.00N 82.00W
Hell 42.43N 83.98W
Higgins Lake, MI 44.47N 84.72W
Houghton Lake, MI 44.25N 84.00W
Interlouise, PA 40.03N 76.09W
Japan 36.00N 138.00E
Jessup, MD 39.13N 76.72W
Lake Murray, SC 34.07N 81.48W
Lancaster County, PA 40.25N 76.25W
Lisbon, Portugal 38.73N 09.13W
London, England 51.56N 00.00W
Louth, England 53.37N 00.02W
Ludington, MI 41.87N 87.82W
Machias, ME 44.70N 67.45W
Mackinaw Island, MI 45.85N 84.02W
Mexico 23.00N 102.00W
Miami, Fl 25.77N 80.18W
Mills Park* 40.00N 74.00W
New Jersey 40.00N 88.53W
Oshkosh, WI 44.02N 86.60W
Overland Fork* 39.95N 75.15W
Philadelphia, PA 44.04N 84.60W
Saginaw, MI 43.42N 83.95W
Saluda River 35.12N 82.63W
Sandy River, England 50.62N 3.41W
Santa Cruz River 31.48N 110.58W
Sault Ste. Marie, MI 46.48N 84.35W
Seattle, WA 47.60N 122.32W
Spain 40.00N 04.00W
Texas 20.00N 100.00W
The Ritt* 44.08N 84.30W
Tittabawassee, MI 39.88N 84.62W
Traverse City, MI 44.75N 85.62W

* denotes an imagined place

"Fence," Penelope Starr
Contributors

Kreg Ahbel’s work has appeared in Colly Quarterly, The Columbia Journal of American Studies, and Fact Magazine. A few years ago, he received a Ph.D. in American Literature from the University of South Carolina. After three years in New England, he is heading west to live in Denver, Colorado, and teach English at Kent Denver School.

Gina Cestaro received her BFA from Massachusetts College of Art in Boston (1998) and her MFA at the University of Arizona in sculpture (2006). Her mixed-media works have been shown nationally and internationally in Bulgaria, Australia, and New Zealand. She is a current and founding member of Plugged Video Collective based in Tucson, Arizona.

Lauren Eggert-Crowe is a second-year poetry student in the University of Arizona’s MFA program. She has been published in New Councils: Arts Review, The Twenty-Sixth, and Puerto Del Sol. She also writes a zine called Golata’s Pants, which was included in the San Jose Museum of Art’s “Art of Zines ’04” exhibit.

Giles Goodland is a writer and poet located in London. His poems often use large numbers of other texts as material. His last book was A Spy in the House of Yarn (Leviathan, UK, 2001) and his newest book, Capital, is due out from Salt Poetry in November 2006.

Mark Hummel’s fiction, poetry, and essays have appeared or are forthcoming in Fugue, The Bloomsbury Review, Telling River Review, Matter, and in the anthology These Stay on the Trail. A Collection of Colorado Fiction, among many other journals and reviews. “Water Cycle” is one of several vignettes that are featured between chapters of a new novel of the same title that focuses on the fictional Overland Fork river as its common setting.

Bob Koonives has worked as a land-use and environmental planner in Colorado, Central America, and other great landscapes. He spends much of his time these days writing poetry and drawing—often drawing upon his experience with diverse land and people.

Petra Kuppens is an associate professor of English, theatre and women’s studies at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She created the ‘Feel Stories’ installation during a residency at New Pacific Studio, New Zealand, in response to local stories gathered in a wildlife center. She uses fiber arts, storytelling and performance in her community arts practice.

Jennifer Leichter is a junior at Colorado College majoring in biological anthropology and with a minor in art studios. Her father, Mark Hummel, commissioned her to draw the imagined landscapes in his piece “Water Cycle: Retreat.”

Brian Marks is a geographer at the University of Arizona who studies the political ecology and economy of fisheries, particularly Louisiana shrimping. He interviewed some of the bees while they were on tour in the summer of 2005.

Karen Paiva, Ph.D., resides in Intercoast, Pennsylvania. She is both a scholar and an accomplished folk artist whose ongoing project is the study of myth and reality interactions. For the last seven years, her artistic style has been inspired by “magical realism,” through which she finds joy in contemplating the juxtaposition of place and space within the fuzzy boundary of Amish and “English” social frameworks.

Michael Ratcliffe lives in North Laurel, Maryland with his wife and three sons. When he is not writing poetry, he dabbles in census geographic concepts and criteria. Other interests include growing okra, canoeing, and teaching population geography.

Penelope Starr is a visual artist working in mixed media and photography who took a turn to the arena of performing arts a few years ago and founded Odyssey Storytelling (www.odysseystorytelling.com). Now she tells stories in addition to creating them on paper.

Daniel Van Wett graduated from Florida State University in 2002. He is an up-and-coming poet, screenwriter, and actor from Philadelphia.

William E. Van Wett was a professor of English and film at Temple University for thirty years until the time of his death in 2003. He is the author of several books: Memory Links, What’s It All About?, Proper Myth, The Invention of Ice Fishing, Steel Wires, The Anticipation of Ignorance, and Don Quixote. His writing can also be found in various literary journals and film reviews. He is dearly missed by his family, friends, colleagues and students.

Evan Mergan Williams has published more than twenty-five stories in literary magazines, including Mandala Quarterly Review, Northeast Review, and Blue Mesa Review. He has stories in the current issues of The Twelfth River, Papers, Strange Fruit, and Alliteration. He lives in Portland, Oregon. His website can be found at www.papersheded-blog.org.