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Winter Path 2014

Stone Path Review

AN ARTISTIC JOURNAL OF PATHS THROUGH IMAGES AND WORDS



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Stone Path Review

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On the cover

Kristy Johnson "Sundogs"

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Another Fifth Season

by Roger Desy

— four seasons are as it were a way of life —
barring

inevitable failure and loss — a kind of given
particular

to a paradigm of latitude — the accidental
stability balanced on the evolving stasis of an
inherent chaos

— familiar — temperate anticipation — habits of
truth

like the experience of experience taken for
granted — the fetal innocence and fatal
cherishing

— fields one can seed and grow a resurrection on

— what if — however — seasons are more — or
less

— either part of that single chance that invites
trespass on whatever intimacy a sensitivity can
grasp

— or a fifth perhaps — that pits acuity of its
survival against all fanaticisms of self-adoration

on the serenity of selflessness on drifting fields

Roger Desy has taught literature and creative writing
and later edited technical manuals. His poems are in a
few journals, including Blue Unicorn, Cider Press Review,
Kenyon Review, and Mid-American Review.



Definitions

by Roger Desy

— reality is what it is — or reality is what we make of it

— or reality is what we make it of ourselves —

or reality self-defines out in the fields of selflessness all by itself and on its own and has nothing whatever to do

with desperation seducing self-deceit — incredible faith

forcing fanatic intensity on other than what truth it is

— and what it is is what occurs in the background behind

the scenes as well under the nose of those who take its scent

and take it in in its own terms — letting it waft letting it be

— tracing it back — division back to unity in the womb

— to the original withdrawal — exhaustion — the relief — thrusts — the foreplay groping with hands and tongue

fondling manipulation of desire compelling pheromone

to flitting ecstasy — to the quickening inevitable at last

lying in wait lining the walls in innocence of its oblivion



Game

by Mike Finley

Some say the world
will end in stone,
others paper,
some say blade

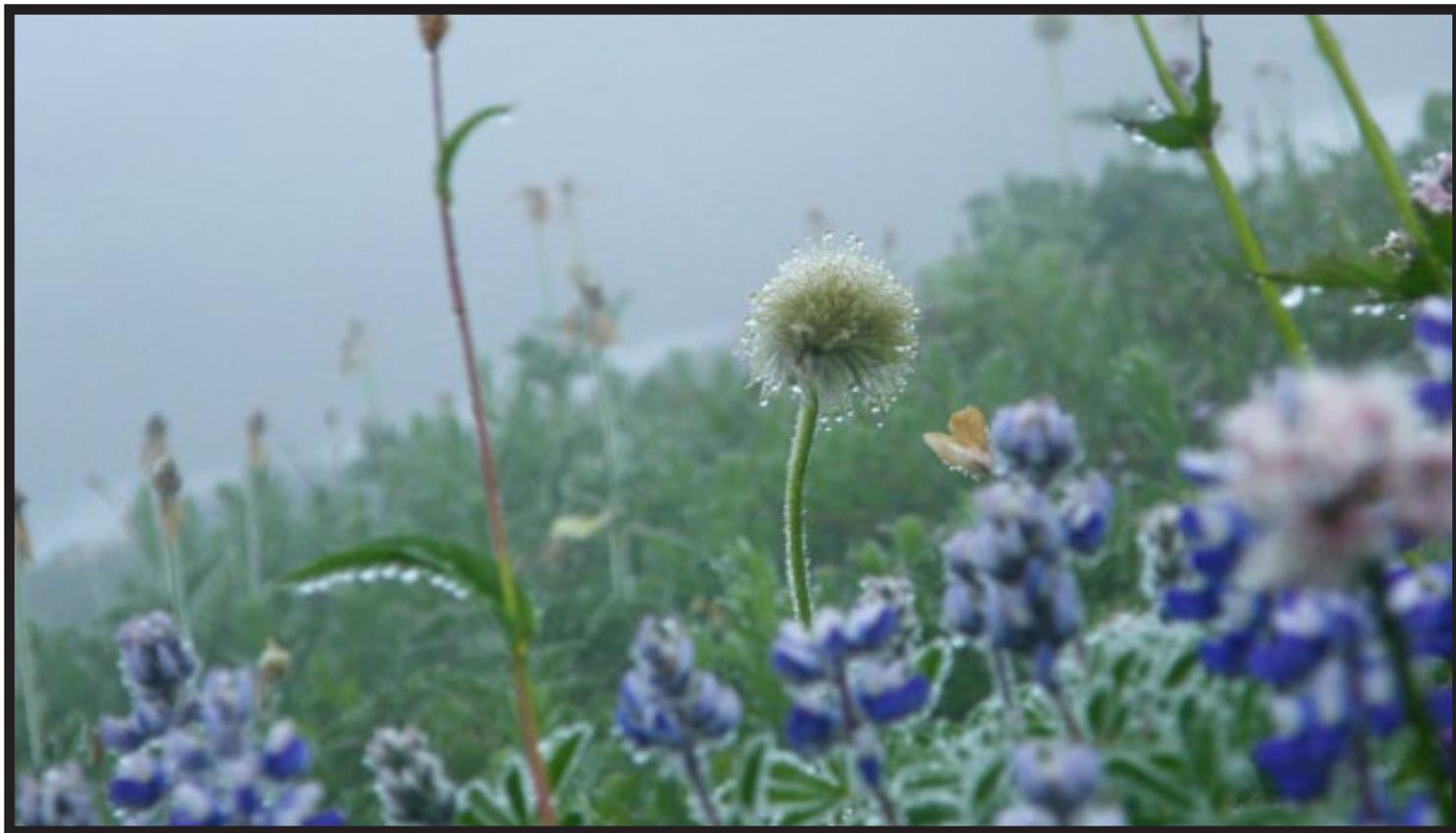
Fear is the cement block
that smashes every laugh

Laughter is the scissors
that makes chaos bearable

But paper is love
which can smother every fear

Rock, scissors, paper --
fear, laughter, love

Mike Finley is a Pushcart winner, and author of over 200 books of various kinds, and 100 provocative videos. Today he writes web copy for law firms for a living. Mike was awarded the 2010 KPV Kerouac Award, a lifetime achievement honor. In his spare time Mike edits LIEF Magazine.



Grey Goes With Everything

by Christina Kapp

In the droll turmoil
of sleep,
holes appear in the matte mist
of morning,
opening sockets and soap,

tearing the Siamese twins-
mind and body-

from their wallpaper
dreams, where they
attempt to slip down
ropes of nocturnal flowers

and duck under doorways,
escaping the vacuous
suck and snap

of consciousness blooming
in the yellow kitchen,
where mother has disappeared,
leaving two blank
slices of bread

in her wake, the door left
open to the grey
fog of morning.

Christina Kapp has published her short fiction, poetry, and essays in numerous publications including Barn Owl Review, Gargoyle, DOGZPLOT, and Forge.



Discarded

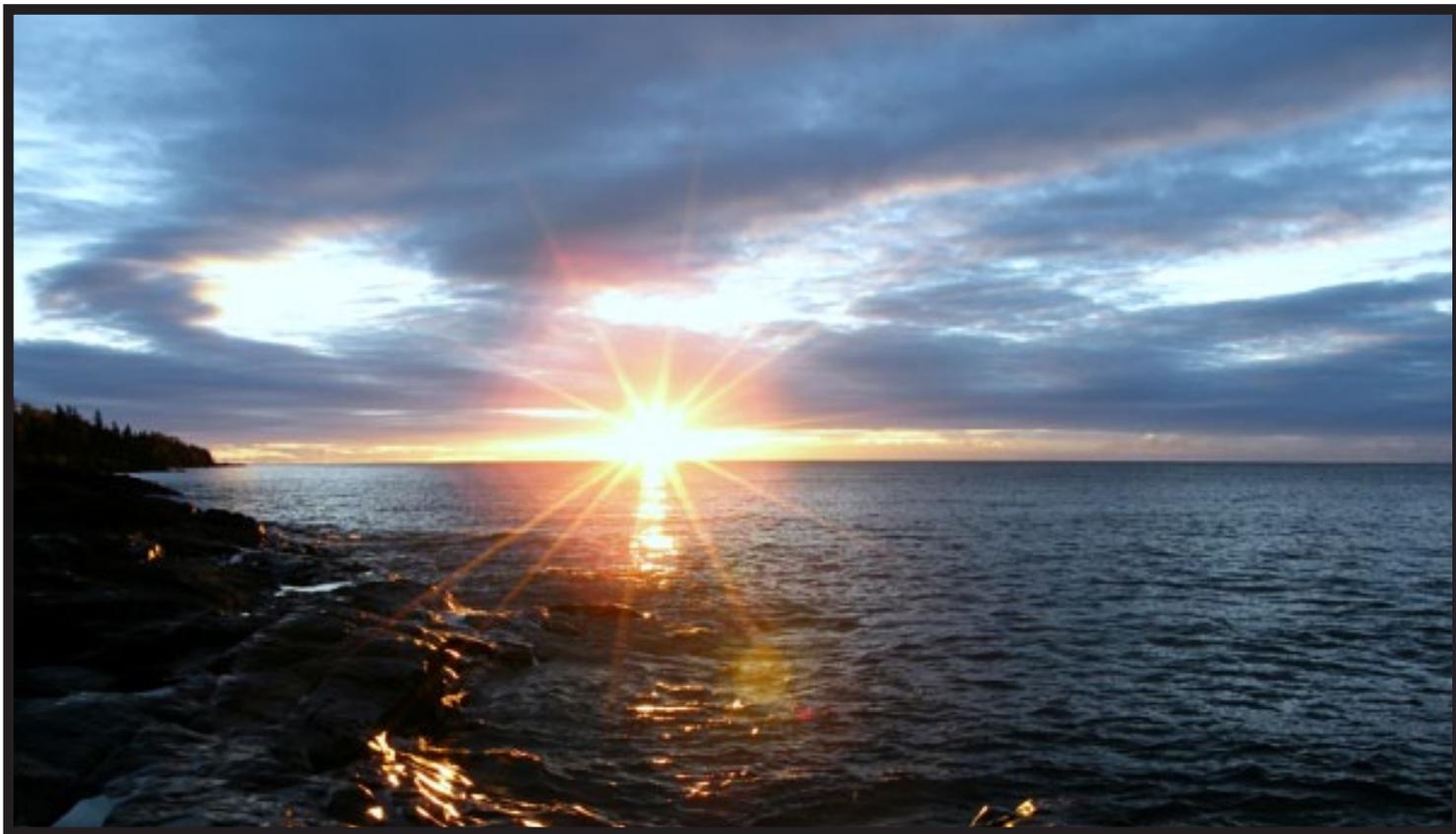
by Melda Koparan

In order to progress; you must regress
 You must let go. In order to let go
 You must travel to the past
 Collect the trinkets that line the
 Rotting and termite infested floors;
 Flashing images, fiery feelings, and
 Clingy memories
 That strive to suck your soul, and
 Bleed you from your bones;
 Place them in your loot
 Carry them to the ocean
 Discard each bitter piece
 Let them fall into the water
 Watch them drown,
 Swept away by fleeting waves;
 Death strikes quickly
 Rage, regret and remorse
 Stay with you infinitely

Unwanted guests at your dining table, in your
 bedroom, and
 Forever at the windows of your mind and soul
 The clarion of all that was sounds shrill, and
 The battle within you ensues and continues
 At the moment progress triumphs, however,
 What came before can never be forgotten

Melda Koparan is twenty-two years old and resides in New South Wales, Australia.

She is a secondary school English and History teacher. Melda's work has been recently published, or is forthcoming in The Tenement Block Review, Stepping Stones Magazine, Eunoia Review, and 94 Creations Literary Journal. Melda enjoys exploring the possibilities offered by creativity, the imagination, and human experiences, and emotions.



Pieces of Sky

by Dan Lewis

Pieces of sky

have fallen
to earth. Shards everywhere.
Spilled from the slit
in god's eye. This is the path
of time — along sharp edges
of light. You must
make your way with great
care. The sun
has been beating down
on this courtyard
for centuries. There is
no other place
to begin.

Dan Lewis lives in Worcester, MA. He is the author of *This Garden* and two chapbooks: *Tickets for the Broken Year* and *Iconospheres*. Winner of the 2012 Frank O'Hara Prize, he has been published by *The Cortland Review*, *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Bombay Gin*, *Diner*, and others.



Apostle Bay

by Julie Maclean

Standing in a cathedral
of palms
clouds form an anchor
then the face of Jesus

At moments like these
I could almost believe

Originally from Bristol, UK, Julie is now based in Victoria, Australia. Shortlisted for the Crashaw Prize (Salt, UK) in 2012 and winner of the Geoff Stevens Poetry Prize (UK), her debut collection of poetry, *When I saw Jimi*, was published by Indigo Dreams Publishing, UK in June 2013.

Website: www.juliemacleanwriter.com

Always in Season

by David Oestreich

Fresh snow
dusts the path

winding from back stoop
to woodpile;

on it have fallen
feathers

like dead leaves
and a few

bright berries of blood.



David Oestreich lives in Northwest Ohio with his wife and three children. His work has appeared in online and print journals, including Tar River Poetry, Chagrin River Review, Ruminant, and Melancholy Hyperbole.



Driftwood

by Sergio Ortiz

so much
of how life feels
lies in
the safety of a breeze
the loyalty of a thought

the answered questions
and questions set aside
the company we keep

the poems
we were too old to write
too factual
to be of any interest

so much
of how life feels
lies in
the solitary
breakfast

Sergio Ortiz is a retired educator. Flutter Press released his debut chapbook, *At the Tail End of Dusk* (2009), and his second chapbook, *Bedbugs in My Mattress* (2010). He is a 2010 Pushcart nominee. His poems appear in, *Shot Glass*, *Notes from the Gean*, *Atlas Poetica*, and *Kernels*.



The End of Summer

by Sean Prentiss

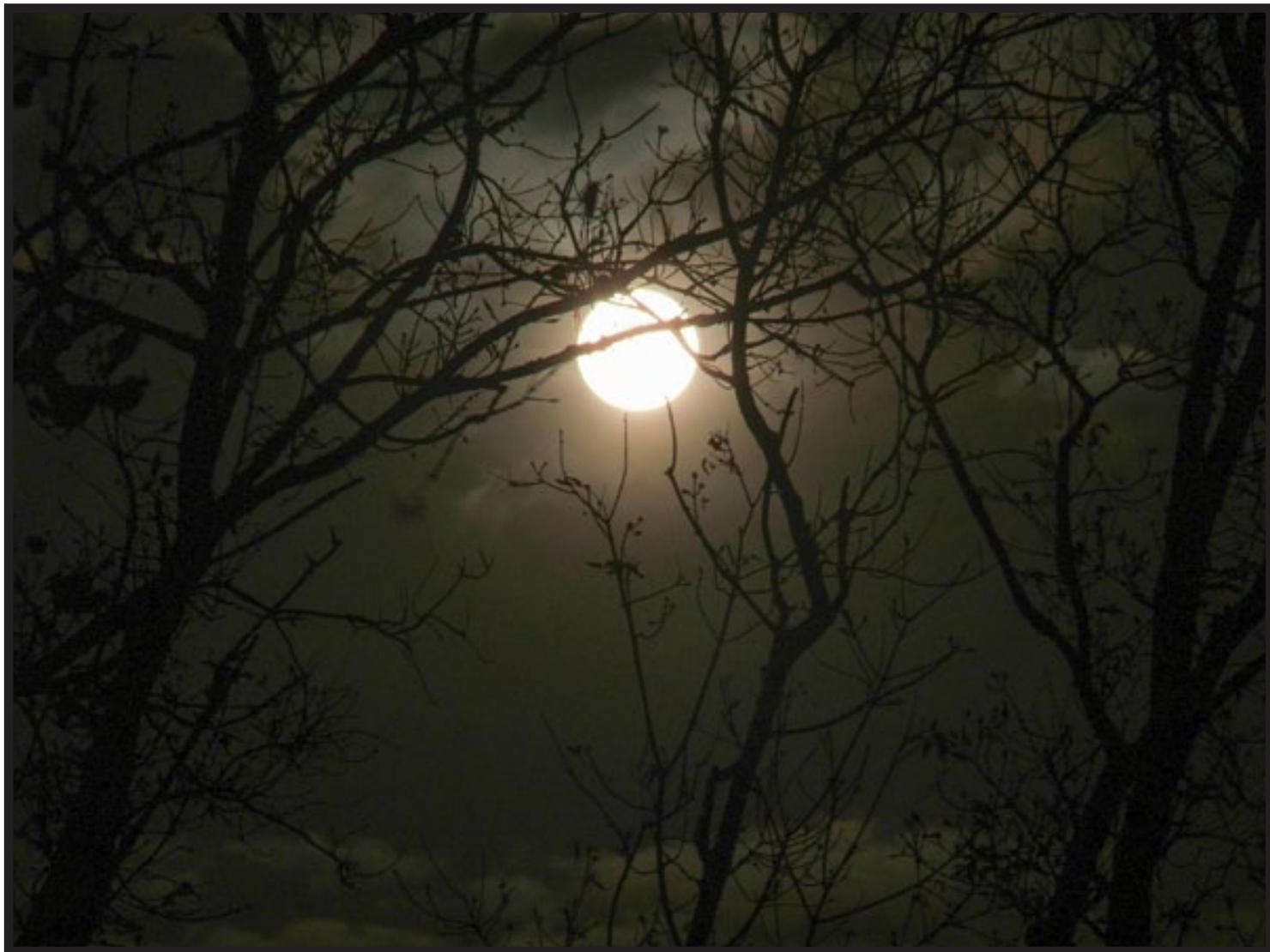
Larches become autumn brittle,
Fade green toward gold. Fall.

We're larch needles now. Soon
Dispersed by September wind.

Image courtesy of www.XMWallpapers.com

Sean Prentiss is the editor of an anthology on the craft of creative nonfiction: *The Far Edges of the Fourth Genre*, published by Michigan State University Press. His essays, poems, and stories have appeared in *Brevity*, *Sycamore Review*, *Passages North*, *ISLE*, and others.

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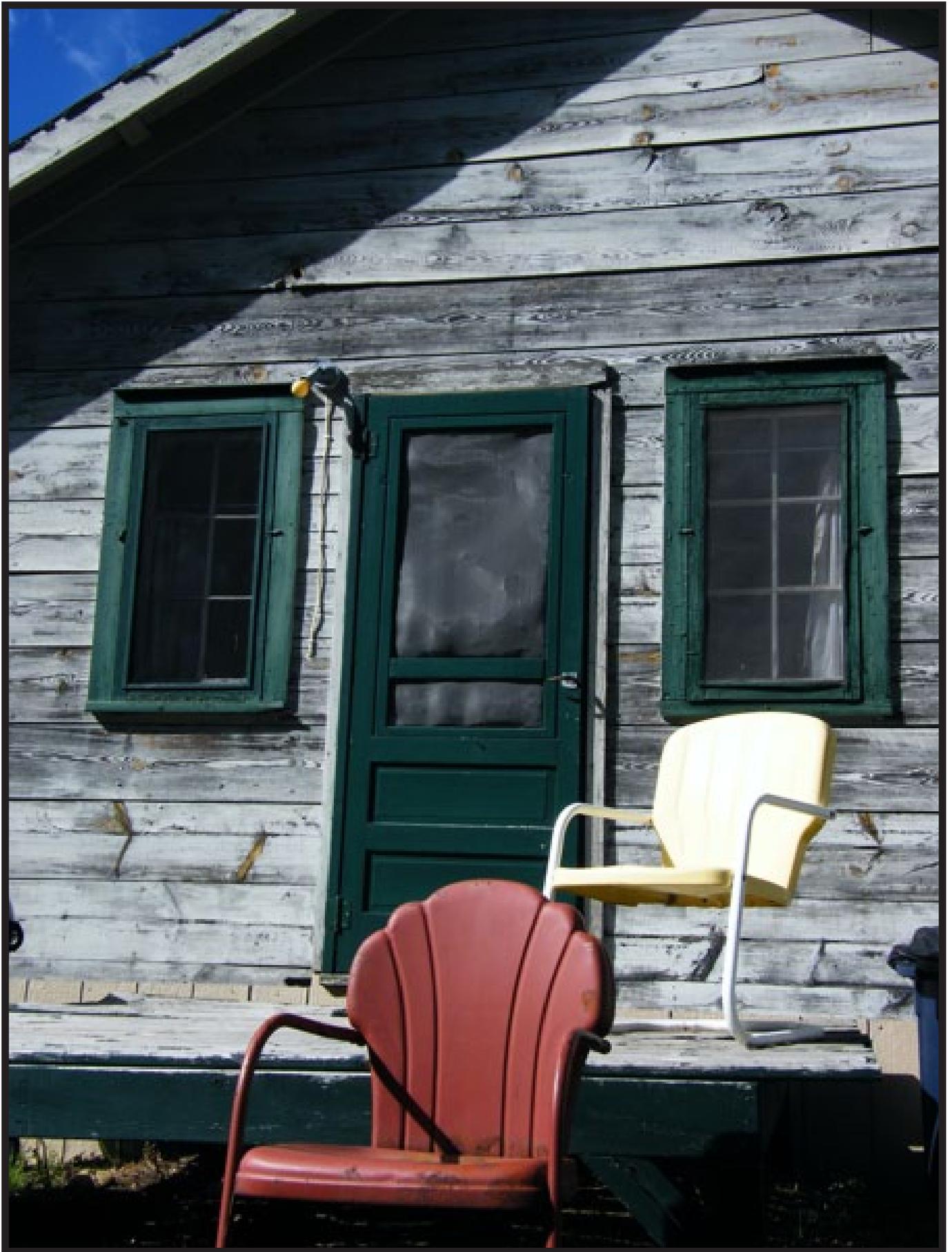


These Summer Moons

by Sean Prentiss

Asleep again on a bed of granite and wild
Grass, a full moon showers this cedar
Forest in the soft white rain of moonlight.

In the deep hours, I peer far from this tent,
Past the cedars, past Battle Axe Mountain,
All the way to May's milk moon.



Becoming Ted and Mabel

by Elizabeth Templeman

Ted lived in the basement of their house by the lake. It was dark, pleasantly cool and damp on a summer afternoon, and unkempt from the top step as far as the eye could see, which wasn't far. My memory is of him answering the door at the top of the stairs, squinting in the sunlight, bare-chested and clad in plaid boxers, trailing the sweet smell of cigar smoke.

Mabel lived upstairs, on the main floor. It was elegant and sunlit, stretching from the doorway through an open kitchen and into a vast living room lined with bookshelves. At the centre stood a grand piano of dark gleaming wood. Mabel appeared, in the midst of it all, more petite than she had once been.

Age was shrinking her body, and a fondness for dry sherry, clouding her once sharp mind. She would have intended to be first to the door, to avert the humiliation of Ted in his underwear. But, though she'd look lovely—in a silky shirtwaist dress, bedecked with jewellery and trimmed with lace—she'd forget the sound of the doorbell, or muddle what it signified.

Clear across town and a lifetime before their split-level cohabitation at that house above the lake, Ted and Mabel—Mr. and Mrs. Strong as we would have called them then—had been our nearest neighbours. They weren't the closest, a term reserved, in our childhood vernacular, to affection, rather than proximity. (The closest neighbours, for me anyway, would have been the Montgomery's, principally because of Marcia, my best friend.)

In the fifties, or in Maine, or maybe just in our neighbourhood (though I suspect not), closeness evoked a different quality than it tends to today. At that time, Ted and Mabel's home was the nearest, their yard beginning on the far side of our swing set. But there may as well have been a gulf between our home and theirs, rather than a slightly descending slope and span of grass.

Ted and Mabel inhabited a class apart from us, or the Montgomery's, or certainly from the neighbours further along South Main Street toward the bustle and grit of downtown. Ted was an engineer. Mabel taught piano. In her home on Main Street there were three pianos—a pair of baby grand's for her pupils and her own grand piano behind them—in a room curtained off from sun or distraction. The room smelled faintly of perfume and—odd, for a room full of pianos—inspired a hush, and the stab of awareness that I was too clumsy and artless to belong there.

In their home next to ours on South Main Street, Ted and Mabel lived together, or certainly gave the impression that they shared the house in the usual way of married couples. Ted was the friendlier one. From heavy framed photographs leaning on the pianos and hanging on their walls, I could see—even as a kid—that he had always been lean and handsome. Mabel was pretty in a delicate way, and elegant no doubt from birth. She was classically trained, but I don't know where or how. It never would have occurred to us to ask, or to her to elaborate.

Outside, around their house, Ted grew mint along the shrubbery, and roses, and a few rows of vegetables. Sometimes he'd

bring my mother a bag brimming with Swiss chard—never much appreciated by us kids—which she'd steam and serve with potatoes. They had one son, Ted Junior, whom I only remember as grown up and living away. He'd visit every summer with his own single son, Ted III. Ted the Third was younger than me by a couple years. I remember him appearing one summer sporting a plastic beanie with a propeller on top. Why I remember that I'll never understand, but somehow I think that I covet it still.

In the house next door, we were the big noisy family whose father was away more than not, and who managed to appear well fed, decently dressed, and tolerably mannered. My brother and older two sisters took piano lessons from Mabel. They claim to have hated piano, but when we're together now, they share jokes about piano practice still, in a way that makes me envy all it might have been for them.

Though a piano still stood in our living room, piano lessons were out of the question for my younger sister and me. I think that my mother was exhausted by trying to hold up to whatever high standards she perceived to be expected of mothers of piano students.

Mabel had a sister who lived alone a block further up the street. None of us can remember her name, nor quite why we would sometimes visit her. But my clear and sole memory of a doorway opening from the side of the house suggests it was to await treats on Halloween night. Probably She was older, and widowed, I think. There was talk of another sister who had died in childbirth. Forty years later, in the unimaginably remote future, Mabel will sometimes call my mother by the

names of her sisters, both, by then, long gone.

In the fall of 1979, I had returned to Maine to get married. Monty and I had fallen in love in university, and sustained a long-distance relationship after he graduated and went back to Canada to work. Marriage was our first solid step into a shared adulthood, having no set plans about where to live or what to do for a living. We were aware of, and yet not particularly burdened by, the various and sometimes contradictory dreams and expectations of our families: those of my mother, the more typical immigrant family drive for a life of wealth and importance; and those of my husband's family, which seemed to centre on working hard and having pride in that work. As for us, we were deeply in love and shared only vague dreams of home, land, and children; dreams largely unexplored and most certainly not yet articulated.

After our wedding, we would be separated again for the winter while I completed a teaching practicum, and Mont went back to work, to save for our vaguely imagined future. In the short time between wedding and yet another separation, my mother propelled us into taking on a job. I never knew whether she was motivated by a sense of obligation (hers), or opportunity (ours). Whatever the reasons, we were to pack up Ted and Mabel's possessions for their last move.

In the years I had been away growing up—making my way through university and a range of jobs, seeking adventure and knowledge and love—Mabel and Ted been

growing old in their retirement home. They had become, by now, too frail to live alone in that house on the lake. Their son would be moving them out to Milwaukee, to live in a suite in his family home.

My mother, somewhere along her own trajectory—between leaving our childhood home and neighbourhood, her kids growing up and, one by one, moving away—had unaccountably drifted into looking after Ted and Mabel. By now her apartment was in the middle of town, and theirs, over the lake along its more gentrified edges. Despite the distances, she would call them every morning, pick up their groceries and Mabel's weekly bottle of sherry, take them for doctor appointments.

So perhaps it's not so surprising that, as those years of care and whatever closeness they had forged came to a close, she had offered us up to do their packing. Such are peculiar loops and dips that propel us; and the circumstances that pry the lid off one's life, opening us up to intimacy where we'd least expect to find it.

I vaguely remember meeting with Ted Junior, himself the most jarring reminder of his father's long-ago charm and rugged good looks, as he provided us with some general direction of what to box up and label for the movers, and what to discard. I believe we were paid, and also encouraged to sell what we could and keep whatever we liked of the things not moved. The instructions—ambiguous in a way that flattered me then—presumed the capacity to interpret the accumulation of a lifetime, and conferred

upon us powers of discernment that today strikes me as astonishing, and dismaying.

I don't remember any cogent conversation with Mabel or Ted, only awkward good byes. While they had become, in the years since I'd left home, enmeshed in my mother's life, I had, after all, hardly seen them in the years between twelve and twenty-five. Had they had a share in the decision to move to the mid-west? Would they even have agreed between themselves? No one seems to remember these things. What my mother—herself ninety two, older than Mabel was then—remembers with certainty, is that a couple short months after that move to a home not their own, far from Maine, they would die: first Ted, and weeks later, Mabel.

What had once been elegance had given way to eccentricity. For us, newly wed, secure in youth and love and possibility, Ted and Mabel's split-level co-existence seemed amusing. But even then, we had the good sense to recognize the poignancy of their being moved from Maine, with what was, in all probability, at best only a dazed acquiescence.

As dissimilar as they always were, they would have been in love once. I had seen the wedding picture, mounted on one wall of that piano room back on South Main Street—in love, despite and because of their differences. I envision Ted as a romantic and Mabel as the exotic, charming one—always a Prima Dona. Somehow, by the time they reached their eighties, those differences had

become irreconcilable—or at least too great to commingle, comfortably, in a single space. Somewhere along the way the differences lost allure. Somehow, what had once drawn two individuals into a union produced, instead, a chasm—albeit one navigated, as needed, by a stairway.

Maybe I shouldn't have been so astonished to have Ted and Mabel show up the day I sat down to write quite a different essay than this. But it has surprised me to recognize, in the months during, which thoughts and memories of them have roamed my mind, the extent to which their lives touched mine, and then to note how the stuff of their lives has entered our lives.

Today, my husband and I live in a home we built. Enough years have past to see it evolve from fragrant with newly sawn pine, to noisy with kids bounding up and down stairs, to run down and then repaired, bit by bit. The kids are now adults, even the youngest away at university.

It's a quiet home now, finer than I'd ever have imagined as a child, yet filled with family clutter, and reminders of other pasts, and older influences. On a shelf in our newly renovated kitchen rest three nesting bowls of Oxford stoneware from Mabel's kitchen. They're heavy and beautiful—cornflower blue, with ivory lids. The biggest lid is missing, and the smallest is chipped. But they've been well used and have outlasted most of our dishes.

In the living room, the top shelf is filled mostly with books that had been Ted and Mabel's. There's a cloth-bound set of stories

by Kipling, and volumes of American poetry. Sitting on a ledge in the den is a small stainless steel thermal cup—ingeniously insulated by an inner cup, which seals with a double lid—which I can't find it in myself to discard. This was Ted's, and I like the thought of him drinking tea wherever he worked, taking a break from whatever he did there, perhaps turning that tea-warmed thermal cup in his hands as he leaned over a blueprint.

On a shelf above the kitchen sink sits a china tea caddy that holds my sleep-time tea. Slightly chipped, it's painted with flowers and leaves, and edged in gold. In the drawer of cooking utensils is a carving fork with an amber resin handle, which we use to test baked potatoes. To me it's pretty and useful, with a delicacy not usual in newer ones. None of these were gifts, given to us by them; none are of particular value. I think of them as remnants of two lives; the miscellany we have been privileged (or burdened, as it may seem to my husband) to carry forward.

What's become clear to me is that my own quirkiness that results in impulses to keep a random thermal cup through all of our own moves, becoming even more firmly attached to it as the years unfolded, is exactly the kind of trait that once must have appealed to my husband. Now, it only irritates him, chafing against his own evolving sense of what is right and good about a home. Not, clearly, shelves of oddball, mismatched curiosities.

Once, we'd have been shocked to realize that, like Ted and Mabel, we would

advance in our out-of-sync crabbiness, our idiosyncrasies that once enchanted and now annoy.

Sometimes, in the early morning hours, when I find myself alert—worries and wild ideas are coursing through my brain. When my husband's restlessness signals that my being wide-awake is a problem, I will quietly gather up pillows, reading glasses, book, sweats, and move out to the couch. I'm always tempted to creep upstairs or downstairs to one of the kid's old rooms, where I can read, stretch, and just toss and turn freely—venting whatever stresses are percolating. But there's this nagging reluctance to become comfortable in a different bedroom, on a different floor. Instead, I make a nest of blankets and pillows and curl up to read until dawn lulls me to sleep, there on the couch, where my husband will know to look for me in the morning.

Elizabeth Templeman lives at Heffley Lake, in British Columbia, with her husband, and a houseful of stuff their grown-up kids have left behind. She teaches at Thompson Rivers University. Previous publications include *Notes from the Interior*, a collection of creative nonfiction published by Oolichan Books (2003). Essays and book reviews have appeared in various journals including *Room Magazine* and *Southern Humanities Review*.



Deep End
photography
by Nancy Canyon



Whistle Reflection

photography
by Nancy Canyon



Sundogs

photography

by Kristy Johnson

Growing up and attending University in Bemidji, Minnesota, Kristy Johnson has developed a love of the outdoors. Kristy enjoys hiking, biking, paddling, skiing, snowshoeing, rock climbing, camping, taking pictures, and gardening.

Ben Gorelick

as interviewed
by William Ricci

Introduction

For the Winter 2014 issue, the first of our third year, we have taken a different direction and reached out to other disciplines to talk about the paths through life.

Instead of a visual or written artist, we interviewed one of the founders and directors of a mountain guide training school with locations in Spain, Alaska, and Patagonia – Ben Gorelick.

I first met Ben in 2007 when I visited Alaska for the first time. I signed up for seven-days of kayaking, backpacking, and glacier climbing. Ben was the lead guide and provided direction, guidance, training where needed, a kick in the pants when required, but humor, and friendship.

This interview was conducted through email in December 2013. Editing of the responses was kept to a minimum to ensure that's Ben's voice, humor, and passion came through as much in print as in person.

SPR: How did you end up in Patagonia?

BG: In 2005, about three-days after Jaya and I got married, a friend of mine from Ireland sent me a congratulatory email. He also casually mentioned that he saw an ad in his local climbing magazine looking for qualified mountain guides to set up and run an educational mountaineering program in Argentine Patagonia. The job was supposed to begin about a week after we received the ad, so we were sure that the job would already be taken. We called anyway.

About five-minutes later, I received a call back from the director of the program, saying that they didn't have any guides yet and asking when could we come.

We paused to discuss program goals (they wanted a four-week program to either climb Aconcagua or cross the Patagonian Ice Cap), the level of experience that the students would have (they were experienced with trekking and backpacking in the UK, but didn't have extensive mountaineering experience), and what the organization had in place to get the program going (no equipment, no money, and no idea how to make this happen).

We agreed to join them.

The next day, we were at REI with four shopping carts full of mountaineering gear, enough to get a group of twelve into the field. We jumped on a plane to Argentina, took a bus to Bariloche, and arrived at the field camp.

We had about three-weeks before the first group

was set to arrive, so we immediately set about program and curriculum development. The company didn't have the budget to climb Aconcagua, so we decided to bring the group to Coyhaique, Chile (where we work now), which was the closest access point to the Patagonian Ice Cap from Bariloche.

We spent about two-weeks scouting entrance and exit locations for the ice cap, working to obtain maps, temporary permits to operate in Chile, transportation, and food. Then we had to go back and spend the last five-days prepping.

When the first group stepped off the bus, we knew we had aimed too high. Many of the volunteers had never pitched a tent before, and none had a backpack larger than fifty liters (which is about half as big as is necessary for a long, remote expedition). But they were also very keen and excited.

The first few expeditions we ran were some of my favorites. We were opening up totally new routes, in areas that had never been explored before. The maps of the area were terrible; there were whole sections of the map that were blank. However, after six-months, the organization we were working for decided that operations in Argentina and Chile were too expensive and they pulled out.

At that stage, Jaya and I had already obtained permits, learned the area, and had a stack of equipment.

More importantly, we had had the experience of working with a group of highly motivated students, and we had the experience, for the second time in our lives, of developing a training program from scratch.

So when the other organization decided to leave,

it was a no-brainer that we'd start a climbing school in Patagonia.

SPR: Are you doing now what you thought you would be doing ten-years ago?

BG: I'm not doing now what I thought I'd be doing yesterday. Seriously. I've given up on planning my life. My life is many things, but stick-to-a-plan-able isn't one of them.

SPR: If you were not training mountain guides and leading expeditions, what career would you be in?

BG: Can I say that I have no idea? Is that cheating? God, it seems like so long ago that I branched off on this path, that it's hard to say what if.

I graduated with Chemical Engineering and Environmental Science degree, but I never really thought I'd end up doing either of those things.

That's not to say that I was bad at either. I really like engineering for the problem-solving mindset it helped develop in me. I love the way engineering encourages creative thought and rewards tenacity. But I've never been cut out for life in a lab.

If guiding were made illegal tomorrow, I'd probably restore old cars. Or train dogs for agility contests. Or teach 3rd graders about dinosaurs. Or just waste my days annoying my wife. Most likely I'd just become a lawyer so that I could overturn the law that made guiding illegal.

I like having a strong connection with my work and my life, not a clear separation. It doesn't work for everyone, but I prefer it.

SPR: What motivates you professionally?

BG: Easy - sadism. I like making my students suffer.

Life is too easy these days. People rarely have the opportunity to truly challenge themselves on an emotional, mental, and physical level. And I think people are worse because of it. They don't know what they're capable of. They're scared of being uncomfortable or being in pain (again, I mean this mostly emotionally and mentally). They're scared to take risks.

I like helping my students to develop that side of them, but it takes a bit of suffering to bring it out. At the end of the day, I like being a small part of helping my students bloom and learning how strong they really are and that they can do anything. Very, very few people have the opportunity to work with others on such a meaningful level. I get to do it every day.

A lot of it is just being stubborn and not being satisfied with "good enough". I guess that I see a lot of gaping holes in things, and I like to work to plug them. I see that most people don't like their jobs. So I encourage them to quit. And I give them an alternative that doesn't suck as much.

I see guide companies that give poor or minimal training to their students. So I've worked to create a thorough (and therefore, long) training program that equips my students to be self-sufficient in the mountains.

I see people who develop superficial relationships with others. So I bring people into situations where the relationship must necessarily be deep and complicated and nuanced.

SPR: What motivates you personally?

BG: My dad. And differently, my mom. And differently again, my wife. And my stuffed bunny rabbit. And me.

My dad's a stubborn and forceful guy. When I graduated and told him that I was going to make guiding a career, he flipped his lid. Freaked out. Yelled, cursed, and screamed. "Where's your fucking ambition?!? How can you squander your fucking brains?!? What the fuck is wrong with you?!?" We went through a two-year patch where we didn't really talk.

So I had to succeed, just to spite him.

He's now our biggest fan. It's amazing what a decade will do. (I love you, pop!)

My mom has always understood me a bit more. Neither of my parents were outdoorsy folks, but my mom has always seemed to understand why I connected with the outdoors and she was more encouraging at a younger age. She's still invaluable, both for advice, support, and the little things (like gathering up gear and mailing boxes out to students who live abroad, cashing checks at the bank, flying up to Alaska for a month to help drive a van and cook when an employee got very sick and I couldn't find a replacement). You know, little things.

Jaya is pretty much my everything. She's clever, incredibly hard working, and the strongest person I know. She's not as outgoing as I am sometimes, so I think I unfairly get a lot of the credit for the school. She is at least as responsible for things as I am.

Like I said, my job tends to be the ideas guy. But she's the person who makes those dreams into a

reality. She holds me accountable.

And finally, my stuffed bunny rabbit, Bunny. I've had him since I was four. I'm very, very superstitious about him; he goes pretty much everywhere I go.

When I was on my first camping trip, Bunny and I discussed how much he hates camping, and how much he would rather be in a nice king size bed watching "The Price is Right".

He reminds me of what life could be like. So I make sure to do the opposite.

SPR: How would you define being successful in life or in a career?

BG: After a bit of reflection, I changed my answer here. At first, I said success is in the small things. Having time to enjoy walking the dogs with my wife, write a journal entry about a recent expedition, build a Lego airplane, work on my old car.

But I think it's different than that. Success is being able to have an idea, and having the time, energy, and resources to carry that idea to fruition. I think this is something that I take for granted because of the way my life is. I take random leaps in different directions all the time. Some work out, and some don't. But I have the freedom to try, and that's an amazing thing that I don't know if everyone has.

SPR: Now that years have passed and your company is successful, what do your parents think about the career you chose?

BG: Both my parents and Jaya's parent have been incredibly supportive of our business. There

is no way we would have made it this far without them.

As I mentioned above, my mom does a lot of work for us. She does our banking. She puts together all of our student's gear orders and mails them off. She has flown to Alaska twice in the last five years to help us out of a pickle (working as basecamp cook for a month and, well, pretty much doing everything to keep me going the other time). She also "gets it", and is very supportive in that way.

My dad was a bit different. He's always wanted me to really challenge myself, and I love and respect him for that. Easy was never good enough for him. At first, it wasn't smooth, but he's now incredibly supportive. At the same time, he's also a very good businessman himself, but comes from a very different perspective (he heads disaster recovery, business continuity, and risk management for a big bank). So we bounce ideas off of him all the time. He helps us re-write things when they need to have that "professional" polish. And he always challenges us to be better.

SPR: The tagline for your company is "Welcome to The Hardest Expeditions on Earth". What differentiates you from competitors?

BG: We are very focused on helping our students to become self-sufficient. We want to teach them enough so they don't really need us anymore. In light of that, they are expected to be responsible for all the many tasks that go into a successful expedition. We don't cook for them or carry their gear for them; later in the trip we don't plan their days for them. We teach them how to do all this for themselves and coach them along the way.

The places we go to in Patagonia and Alaska are

remote; we live in tents for most of the six-weeks of a course. Sometimes we weather big storms, sometimes big days of moving. It's mentally and physically demanding to be out in the backcountry for so long without many of the creature comforts we take for granted.

Sometimes there is no respite and we are dealing with nature who doesn't give a damn if you haven't slept for twenty-four-hours or if your pack is stupid heavy or that your toes are cold.

SPR: Is there a common motivation for students to leave civilization behind for forty-two-days or two-years? What backgrounds do they typically come from?

BG: Our students are a mixed bunch, they come from all over the world, and their ages range from sixteen to early fifties. However they do all share many common traits: they have a big thirst for adventure; they understand that real life, with its complexity and stresses, eats away at your being; they are looking for something big and exciting to throw themselves at.

The students in our mountain guide training program so often have the same story that it's uncanny. They often feel like misfits in their own lives, and are looking for a way to live their lives better and to be involved with something that really gets their blood pumping. And I don't mean that just as an adrenaline thing, but something that engages them on all levels.

Jaya and I have the same story with our own variation, so we really understand where they are coming from. Many have done poorly in the traditional system of schooling where their talents are not valued. They are smart motivated people who find a real belonging at MTS with likeminded people who admire their natural talents.

SPR: How do you manage students who breakdown in the middle of a program, doubting they can keep going?

BG: Like most 'people problems' in life, they can be solved by talking to the students and helping them through it. The team is really important at a time like this to step in and help whoever is having a low time. We will reorganize gear distribution to take some of the load off people, change our travel plans; do what we can to help them through. Our priority is always the health and well-being of our students (and instructors). That will always get top billing, far more than bagging a summit or making the traverse.

We prime the students early on that they will have a time when they feel this way, when they feel like they can't go on and they just hate life, so at least they know it's coming. The intensity of mountaineering cuts both ways: it can be indescribably amazing and crushingly hard. That's the nature of it, and that's also the real attraction.

SPR: How important is risk assessment and management?

BG: We teach our trainee guides that risk management is about 80% of their job. It runs through everything we do. The important thing about risk management is that it's a multi-level process. It's easy to get focused on the most obvious features like using a rope to climb a steep slope. But before we even get to that point there is a ton of risk management that has already happened: how we select students for the trips; the gear that we use; the lessons we do before we climb; the skills we have drilled into the students; and the attitude towards risk that we have instilled in them.

SPR: During the long weeks and months in the field, does self-awareness play an important role?

BG: It sure does. On a six-week trip most of us will go through a range of emotions and states of being from euphoria to deep boredom and moments of sharp fear. Being aware of how you react to these extremes is critical to living well for extended periods in the backcountry. We encourage the students to come up with strategies to manage themselves through these extremes. We also work on being aware of each other and how we react differently. For example, some folks when they get scared get loud and obnoxious, some get cranky and some clam up completely. Knowing why someone is acting a certain way is an invaluable skill in the group.

SPR: How do you gauge a student's desire and what they think their abilities are, versus what you think they are?

BG: Being a guide means you have to be very observant and perceptive. From the moment we pick the students up we are watching them to see how they react and how they function. The preparation we do at Base camp before we leave on a trip is a time to gauge each student's willingness to work.

With technical skills the most important thing is to not make assumptions. We start from the beginning and put everyone through the same drills so we can assess their level of competence.

We have daily briefing and debriefing to keep in touch with the students so we can deal with any issues as they come up rather than allowing things to get out of hand.

SPR: Beyond technical skills, what life skills do your programs teach?

BG: In real life, it's not that often that people really get pushed, certainly not in the total mind and body experience that happens in the mountains. Our students learn a lot about themselves during an expedition. They learn they are far more capable than they think, that they can continue long after they think they want to give up. They learn how they react to fatigue and stress and intensity. We can take no credit for that really, that's all due to the mountains.

However, we do teach them a range of skills to help them better deal with the vagaries of mountain life. Early on we set goals and expectations for the expedition and we create ground rules for how we deal with each other, so we have a code of conduct while we are out there. We do classes on communication skills, conflict resolution, group dynamics and self-management.

The intensity of life on the expedition often gives rise to some strong interpersonal conflict, so the communication and conflict resolution skills are really important. More trips fall apart from lack of communication than from the group members not being able to climb hard enough.

SPR: When students successfully complete a program, where have they gone next?

BG: I'm happy to say that they go all over the place! We keep in touch with most of our previous students and they have gone on to do some very impressive things. Two students won a race to the North Pole, one is currently on an expedition to the South Pole with a war veterans group, and another is preparing to

be the first vegan to climb Everest. They have climbed 8000m peaks, first ascents in Kazakhstan, climbed things that I dream of doing.

More importantly, they have grown in unimaginable ways. I love seeing my students two- or three-years after a course. Even if they're not climbing anymore, they are all "climbers" in attitude, and that's reflected in who they are and what they're doing.

Professionally, our graduates are out working all over the world. In amazing places like Thailand, Vietnam, Iceland, Norway, New Zealand to name a few. A number of them now work for us in Patagonia, Alaska and Spain.

We are extremely proud of what our students do, their success in the whole reason that MTS exists.

SPR: Personally, what are your goals in the mountains or elsewhere?

BG: I'm not at all motivated to climb any 'famous peaks' and I don't really have a 'tick list' that I want to climb.

Two reasons: First, I hate traveling. I spend so much of my life in the mountains already, that my time home, spent hanging out with my wife, my dogs, or visiting my parents, is about as wild as I like. Second, I already live in two places with some of the best climbing in the world, Alaska and Patagonia. Why bother spending thousands of dollars to fly somewhere else, climb within a climbing culture that I don't believe in, and be away from the part of my life that I don't get much time with as it is?

That said, I do, absolutely, have some smaller goals. I've tried Marcus Baker in Alaska five times and San Valentin in Patagonia four times. I'll get one of the two this year.

When I go climbing on a personal trip, the mountains are about many things; a summit is only a fraction of that. I prefer to be somewhere remote where the chances of me seeing anyone are minimal.

For my next personal trip, Jaya and I are planning to do a north/south traverse of the southern Ice cap in the coming year. That's the only big goal I have for the near future.

Website:

<http://www.mountaineeringtrainingschool.com>

Stone Path Review

AN ARTISTIC JOURNAL OF PATHS THROUGH IMAGES AND WORDS

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