

DISCOVERING OUR WORLD THROUGH STORIES



DISCOVERIES

The 2022 Collection of Stories
Written by BoulderReads Learners

BOULDER

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BOULDERREADS

is the community learning program of the Boulder Public Library.

OUR SERVICES INCLUDE

- One-on-one adult literacy tutoring
- Reading Buddies for children
- English conversation groups
- High school completion

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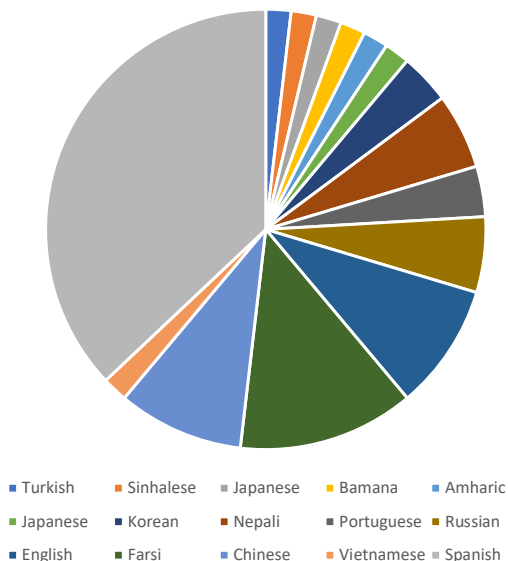
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INTRODUCTION

I'm pleased to offer up the 2022 issue of Discoveries, a magazine written by the adult learners of BoulderReads. I am often in the position of explaining BoulderReads to those unfamiliar with it. I can point to so many accomplishments, I can describe the tutoring model, I can provide demographics of the adults and families we serve – or I can hand over the Discoveries magazine. It provides a remarkable window into the great impact of tutoring, English practice, and connection. Because BoulderReads relies on community members to serve the community, it creates relationships that cut across economic, cultural, linguistic and social barriers. BoulderReads focuses on learner-identified goals. While these might be broadly identified as improving communication or increasing education, the specific impacts of progress manifest very concretely: a driver's license that means independence, the ability to converse with a child's teacher, a job with benefits, or a small business that employs other community members are just a few examples. We are so grateful to this year's writers for sharing their words with us.

It is my sincere belief that the future is bright for all of us here at BoulderReads, because our learners, our facilitators, and our tutors make it so. We are thrilled to be bringing back the much-loved Reading Buddies program, in which University of Colorado undergraduates are matched with children K-3rd for a semester. We've broadened our services to include a high school equivalency class in Spanish. We continue to provide the opportunity for a high school diploma through the Career Online High School. Ten sessions of Conversations in English meet per week, and we look forward to bringing back the opportunity for these groups to meet in person. With the help of the Maria Rogers Oral History Program at the Carnegie Library for Local History, we've started an archive of interviews with BoulderReads learners and tutors.

We Are BoulderReads



I must also shine a light on all of those who create the space that allows BoulderReads to thrive and grow. Without our incredibly dedicated and wonderful volunteer tutors and facilitators, we simply would not exist. Thank you to the staff of the Boulder Public Library for all that you do, in ways both large and small.

Thanks also to Adriana Paola Palacios Luna for her inspired teaching in the Spanish high school equivalency class. We appreciate Coal Creek Adult Education for its provision of high school equivalency testing in Spanish, and the Adult Learning Source for partnering to provide GED classes. Finally, we thank the Boulder Library Foundation for its faithful support of Reading Buddies and the Career Online High School. As one of our learners put it, "BoulderReads is a great opportunity to discover a new world...Thank you!"

Karen Bowen
BoulderReads Program Coordinator



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EXPLORING LITERACY THROUGH POETRY BY ADRIANA PAOLA PALACIOS LUNA

Teresa Mason, Tutor

In this space for collective learning and writing, we would like to share a little bit about our encounters with the beauty of poetry and its relevance to literacy. Poetry has been our main path for strengthening our communication skills in the use of the English language. To share our experience, we have defined four reflections to share our teaching and learning process. We have used an interview-style of writing to share our thoughts and begin a conversation within the BoulderReads community.

Why did you join this program?

TM: I simply followed my curiosity. I saw BoulderReads mentioned in a library email newsletter and reached out to Karen to learn more. I had just moved to Boulder and was looking for ways to be involved in the library community. I wasn't sure that I'd be a good fit but after talking with Karen and meeting Adriana, I had a feeling that I could be part of something larger. I'm so glad that I reached out. I've found literacy tutoring to be a way to connect, not only with words and language but with my inspiring learner and the BoulderReads community!

APPL: Between the need and the hunger for poetry, I am interested in writing properly in English. Of course, I'm also interested in talking, listening, singing, etc. However, I love poetry and literature, I am a poet and storyteller in my mother tongue, Spanish, and I am interested in being able to share my poetry and oral tradition in English. This was the main reason that led me to connect with BoulderReads. I have been paired with a tutor who works on literature, so it was the perfect match! BoulderReads cares about connecting you with tutors who have characteristics that can be aligned with your learning goals.

Why do you think poetry helps literacy learning?

TM: Poetry helps us understand the world. It helps us process big feelings and to pay attention to the little details of moments. I think that when you practice understanding poetry in English, you not only begin to grasp the language but the sentiments behind the language. There are things that we all, as humanity, feel and experience that only poetry can really grasp. Especially during challenging sociopolitical times, poetry unites us.

APPL: The reading and writing of poetry seem like a mere solitary act. However, there are many ways in which reading and writing are definitely collective practices. Book clubs, collective writing sessions, and storytelling are just a few examples of this.

For me, poetry and literature are spaces for creativity, history, expressions of diverse identities, and even social commitment to justice. When we connect through poetry and stories in literature, we can take infinite journeys, we can express ourselves and recognize ourselves in the stories we read or write. We can use language as a contraption, not only as a communication tool but as a creation of beauty and multiple emotions and ideas that we can share.

This act of the aesthetic use of the words allows us to strengthen previous knowledge, but integrate new experiences, that of the authors we read and that give us many clues and possibilities in the use of language. That's why poetry is a great resource for literacy.

Exploring Mary Oliver and Reinventing Ourselves

TM: I think there's a misconception that poetry is difficult to understand. Some poems are purposefully abstract, yes, and poems do frequently play with grammar and push the limits of the "rules," but there are many accessible and fun poems to incorporate into sessions for any level reader. We focused on Mary Oliver. She was a nature-focused writer who created beautiful poems in simple words and showed the universal experience of awe. By reading her book of essays, *Upstream*, we had lots of conversations about vocabulary, understanding poetic language, and what we enjoy in nature.

APPL: I got to know Mary Oliver thanks to Teresa; we did work together with some of her poetic essays in *Upstream*.

EXPLORING LITERACY THROUGH POETRY CONT. BY ADRIANA PAOLA PALACIOS LUNA

Her language was intriguing. She brought so much wisdom from her own experience as a writer and made us connect with her words and many other writers' words and worlds. I am thankful for listening to her voice through time and space. Reading her, having conversations based on her writings, and being inspired by her for some of our writing prompts.

Mary Oliver unfolds many meaningful conversations that fuse the natural world and the inspirations from Mother Earth, and the multiple metamorphoses of humanity. We learn about dissolving traditional interpretations of reality and daily life. She teaches us this in the same way that poetry blurs the borders of language and thinking. We got to know her and got to know each other and reinvented ourselves in the process.

How Do You Use Poetry in Literacy Learning?

TM: Teaching and reading poetry is more accessible than ever. I have heard that poetry can be intimidating, people think they won't be able to understand it, but there are poems for every level reader. Think bigger than the classic poets — Instagram poets and YouTube readings provide relevant poetry that's easy to engage with. Living poets talk about modern struggles and emotions in familiar and even casual ways.

With a little digging, you can usually find well-known poems in multiple formats. I like to use this to explore how speaking and reading poetry differ. After a few readings, the meaning can become clearer and you can get a good conversation going. There are also so many great translations to work with side by side. Adriana and I did this with Borges' poems and I was fascinated by her take on the translation. The lessons go both ways!

Here's a great exercise: a short-length tapestry poem¹. Each participant writes a few lines on an agreed-upon subject and then, together, you create a new poem by mixing and matching the lines of the poem. Below is a tapestry poem Adriana and I made on the subject of poetry. The purple lines are Adriana's and the green lines are mine.

APPL: The use of poetry explores our intellect, but also our emotions and sensations. It is an ethos, and it is the creative space of communication through written/spoken language.

In poetry are the voices that interconnect and that allow us to rethink the learning process, meaning, and use of words. It is the abstract and the concrete combined together. It is the possibility of recognizing the malleability of languages, a creatively expressed philosophy.

With poetry, we can know worlds and ways of life. Therefore, it is an excellent literacy tool.

BoulderReads Tapestry Poem

We approach the magic of words in poetry

The verbs, commas, and structure of verse

Exploring the creation of the poets from whom we stole inspiration

They invite us to question the standards of beauty

Inspires and inquires our natural world

We sit and study and discuss until we burst

With curiosity and endless fascination

Playing with the language for a mystical communication

READING BY AMANDA BAMMANN

Jackie Seltzer, Tutor

Reading is a beautiful way to understand hearing and deaf people. Also, reading is a good way to help people in different ways in our community. Sign language helps me read, the pictures help me and understand and learn what I am reading. I am not afraid now of reading out loud to others. Phonics and understanding the syllables of words, helps me read more accurately and it's more enjoyable. I am learning a lot about reading and language. I am glad I asked for help and grateful to BoulderReads.



BLANCA'S SUBMISSION BY BLANCA UREÑA

Chelsey Eichler, Tutor

I feel very fortunate to belong to this BoulderReads program and will share with all of you a true story from one of the books that I have read during my time here.

It is a very moving story of a family that immigrated from Mexico to the state of California. This story began in the 80s in the state of Guerrero, in a small town called Iguala. I cried when I read everything this family of three children, two girls, and a boy, had to go through because the children had to suffer the abandonment of their parents when they immigrated to the US so they could have a better life. The children stayed with their paternal grandmother, where even with her, they suffered from being marginalized by their own family. Their parents' dream was to work in the US to save money and be able to build a house in the town of Iguala. Unfortunately, history took a very different course.

After more than two years, the children's father decided to return to Iguala and take the children to the state of California, in the US. They crossed the border with a coyote and were discovered twice before being returned to Mexico. The children's father decided to risk crossing the border a third time and finally succeeded. When they returned to the US they were reunited with their mother. Their father's alcoholism caused their separation and then their mother decided to go live in another place and left the children with their father. Their father gets together with another woman and their mother gets together with another man.

When the children started elementary school they were discriminated against because they didn't speak English, but by the time they graduated from high school, they had received their legal papers and green cards. This is just one of thousands of stories of families that immigrate to the US in search of the American dream. I am sure that many of those families see themselves reflected in this story and I think that despite everything this family had to go through, the children had a happy ending! Especially the younger girl who wrote the book and also graduated from college.

BLANCA'S SUBMISSION CONT. BY BLANCA UREÑA

Chelsey Eichler, Tutor

My family and I have our own story that is very different but maybe harder! When I immigrated to the US I did not have the fortune to leave my 8-year-old twin daughters with my family so they stayed at the house of a “friend” while I was here trying to find a better life for them. I cannot write my complete story in detail because it is very long and painful, but I can say that my friend’s parents were in charge of turning my “American Dream” into my worst nightmare. After many years of receiving therapy, my daughters have overcome the trauma and I have learned to forgive. True forgiveness comes when you remember what happened without feeling pain. Life is responsible for returning to each individual the good or evil that we have done in life. And as the saying goes: “What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.”

I still haven’t managed to get the “American Dream.” One of my daughters, who was the most affected by what happened, achieved “The American Dream,” is successful at her job, and owns two houses. My other daughter has achieved many things in her professional career and I know that she will also achieve her dream very soon. I feel very very proud of my daughters!

THE AMERICAN DREAM BY CARMEN BIRMINGHAM

Lynn Weatherwax, Tutor

“A public law known as the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (INA) collected many existing provisions and reorganized the structure of immigration law. Since then, Congress has amended the INA many times based on new public laws” (uscis.gov).

So many immigrants fight for their lives to cross the border. They seek better lives than the ones they left behind. Some pay fees to coyotes (agents that know the areas and points where the borders are weak). Some are refugees from war zones, or trying to flee dictatorial regimes (asylum), and unfortunately some do not make it through the rough terrain. Immigration is a hot topic in this country. Politicians have opposite approaches to immigration. The Democrats support an open borders policy. On the other hand, the Republicans are for closing the borders (building walls).

In my opinion, I like the Canadian immigration system where visas are awarded based on merit and points. This is the best approach to bring immigrants with the highest IQs and emotional intelligence into the work force to be part of society. Do not get me wrong. The USA has an immigration system that works.

During Obama’s first presidency I was working at Caracas airport and we saw a record number of deportees from USA flights every day. Years later Obama’s administration signed my naturalization papers. I know the system works, and might also have room to keep improving.

Here is what I think USA core values are. They can be found in the Constitution and in the Declaration of Independence.

- 1. Liberty:** speech, press and religious freedom.
- 2. Pursuit of Happiness:** individual ways to achieve one’s goal, and personal and material success and wealth.
- 3. Equality:** equal rights for men and women, and equal rights for those of different ethnicities, religious beliefs and social backgrounds.
- 4. Life:** secure life protected by law, government and military.

THE AMERICAN DREAM CONT.

BY CARMEN BIRMINGHAM

Lynn Weatherwax, Tutor

The term “American dream” was coined in a best-selling book in 1931 titled “Epic of America.”

James T Adams described it as “that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement.”

So much has changed since 1931. Is the “American Dream” still possible? Educated men get good paying jobs. Since WW II, both parents go to work, get health care, good educations, material things and extra money to spend on better things. However the middle class, which fuels the economy, is disappearing, and the gap between rich and poor is tremendously influential in achieving the “American Dream”.

I talked to some immigrants, that came here and asked them what they think about the “American Dream.” I can conclude that they think they are in a hamster wheel, working long hours. Some have two jobs (full time + part time) just to barely meet their needs. What I realized is that the main key to help you achieve the “American Dream” is education or a set of highly paying skills, to help you ensure such a dream.

A final quote from comedian George Carlin. “It’s called the American Dream, because you have to be asleep to believe it.” No matter the gap between rich and poor, racism, poverty, discrimination, violence, corruption, a harmful environment, unfair treatment, limited access for some minorities, materialism, wasteful consumers. You are responsible for the pursuit of your own happiness and achieving your dreams. It’s up to you to sit in the front seat and idle there or press the pedal and move forward with your plan to take action and achieve it.



MOHAMMAD, NASER, KERAMUDIN, VAHID, AND THE OTHERS BY GENEVIÈVE BATTAREL

CIE Participant



They come from different countries and have to learn French. They are asylum seekers. We call them the migrants. They left their country for political, economic or social reasons.

9 a.m, Friday. I arrive in the room where the French course takes place. Mohammad and Naser are always early. The classroom is ready, they prepared it: on the whiteboard, the date of the day is written, four tables are gathered for the students. On a chair is a cushion: they have also prepared my place. They are very helpful.

The others arrive in turn. The bus was a little late, the class can start.

MOHAMMAD, NASER, KERAMUDIN, VAHID, AND THE OTHERS CONT. BY GENEVIÈVE BATTAREL

The other times, each student introduces himself, but today I suggest that each one introduces his neighbor. They know each other well because they have been attending these beginners' classes since October.

The first question is, "What did you do yesterday?" I know that many of them go to Paris on Thursdays. "I went to the Eiffel Tower and then walked along the Seine." Another wanted to buy a summer shirt but it was too expensive. Another stayed in his room and cooked for dinner because he invited friends from his country. They try to express themselves to improve their French language.

Now it's my turn to read a dialogue. The text is about a man, Ali, who is at the doctor's who asks him what he is suffering from. Ali explains that he has a headache every night. The doctor asks him several questions.

I read a second time. They listen very carefully.

Who understood? It is their turn to tell the dialogue with their own words: who wants to be Ali, who wants to be the doctor. They stand up and speak.

It's difficult, we laugh a lot!

Now they have the text and they read it out loud in pairs. Are there any words they don't know? Yes, the words "carte vitale" (social security card). I try to explain it to them in French and if it is too difficult, I translate it into English. But many of them only know the language of their country.

Keramudin, an Afghan, speaks German but not English. When he left his country, he was welcomed in Germany for 5 years. But now he is not welcome anymore, he arrived illegally in France and has to start all over again. Sometimes it is necessary to explain in another language because they live in France and they need to understand clearly how the health system works, for example. Keramudin, who understood thanks to German, explains it to Naser in Pashtun language and Naser explains it in Hindi language to Vahid, who comes from Iran.

Adil and Sebastian are the only ones who only speak the language of their country: Sudan and El Salvador. Even if they are beginners, I have to explain them everything in French. Difficult, yes, but nothing is impossible!!!

It's time to say goodbye. They leave while talking together and I am happy to hear them because they have only one language in common: French.

I follow them with my eyes and I am very moved.

We don't know if they can stay in France. Statistically only 29% of them will obtain refugee status: France cannot welcome everyone. For those who will be able to stay their integration requires efforts and time. And we think that those who will be sent back to their country may have discovered with us a human face of France.



GOAT CURRY BY GYANENDRA POUDEL

Susan Litt and Toby Hankin, tutors

Goat curry is a popular and delicious dish made from goat meat. We can use all these ingredients for Lamb/Beef and Vegetable curry

PREP: 15 MINUTES

COOK: 1 HOUR

SERVINGS: 5 TO 6

INGREDIENTS

2 Pounds/Lb meat (goat, lamb, beef) cut into 1-inch cubes

¼ cup vegetable oil

1 tsp garlic paste

1 tsp ginger paste

1 medium onion chopped into small pieces

3 medium size tomatoes chopped into small pieces

½ tsp turmeric powder

½ tsp ground black pepper

1 tsp ground cumin

1 tsp ground coriander

1 tsp garam masala

3 bay leaves

½ tsp cayenne pepper

2 cinnamon sticks

5 pieces of cardamom

5 cloves

Salt to taste

¼ cup Fresh cilantro fine chopped

METHODS

Heat oil in a heavy pot over medium heat

Add cinnamon stick, cardamom, cloves, bay leaves for 30 seconds or until brown

Add onion, garlic, ginger stir for 5 minutes or until brown

Add tomatoes

Add rest of spices

Add meat. Stir for about 5 minutes

Add water to cover meat

Cover the pot

Cook for 1 hour or until the meat is tender

Stir frequently so the mixture doesn't stick to the pot

Garnish with chopped cilantro

Serve with rice

COVID-19'S ERA IS NOT OVER, STILL, IT CAN EASILY AFFECT PREDICTIONS BY HAMID SAMARI

Lloyd Botway, Tutor

Our story in the U.S. started when we found ourselves at Denver airport in February 2017. Our only American friend, Eric, was waiting for us at the airport to pick us up and bring us to his home in Boulder, in which his wife, Karen, was also waiting impatiently to meet this Iranian family, a couple and their son.

Frankly, we were welcomed by this family and were taught many new things during our two-week stay with them. My wife had applied for an artistic visa, and as accompanying persons, my son and I were in my wife's file.

After staying in the U.S. for two weeks we got our green cards, and at that time, the question "When we can become American citizens?" was printed in my mind.

Days passed, and we became more familiar with American Culture. In the second year of our stay in Boulder, we became busier. My son was involved with the school and his classmates, my wife with a few art projects, and I with a few national and international geologic projects at a company in Denver.

In fact, I forgot about our citizenship situation because I understood that we needed to live in the U.S. at least five years, and then we can apply for it. Yes, there were still many days left to submit our applications.

In the third year of our stay in Boulder, I remember the time when news came from the Far East about a mysterious virus, fatal and fast-spreading. People and governments in many countries did not think they would be engulfed by the disease so quickly. Nobody thought that crowded streets would become empty, restaurants and movies would be closed, education would become remote, and hospitals would be overwhelmed with desperately sick people. Yes, COVID-19 changed the face of the globe.

COVID-19'S ERA IS NOT OVER, STILL, IT CAN EASILY AFFECT PREDICTIONS

CONT. BY HAMID SAMARI

The shadow of fear and death spread out across the world. People had been asked to stay apart from each other. Although in the first months of the pandemic, most people did not take it seriously, after a few months, people became increasingly frightened when they got more information and news about COVID-19 and realized that this problem would not be solved immediately.

After a long time, the news of the discovery of the COVID vaccine threw the light of hope on the world. Registration for vaccination was started, and soon people were getting their first shot, second shot, first booster, etc. Finally, we found ourselves protected from COVID. Hooray, we got our booster! Eventually wearing a mask was not mandated. It seems everything is returning to its normal mode. Now schools are opened, universities are opened, and most employees are working in person, although I am still working from home.

I told my wife, “Oh my god, we have been here for about five years. Let’s apply for citizenship!” And we applied. Two months after applying, my wife got her appointment for a naturalization interview, and a week after, I got mine. They were three weeks apart. We started studying a 100-question for the naturalization interview and watching several mock interviews. I was 100% ready when I accompanied my wife to the USCIS office for her interview in April 2022. She passed her interview and became a U.S. citizen. I was waiting impatiently for May 5th, the date of my interview, but something weird happened. A few days before my interview, my wife attended an in-person meeting at the University of Colorado in Boulder. She started getting something like a mild cold with no severe symptoms. At first, she tested negative for COVID, and we thought there was no serious problem for her until she had a severe fever four nights before my interview. A day after that, three days before my interview, I felt sick, and I got a fever and a lot of pain in my bones. Finally, a day before my interview, I felt better, and I was ready for the interview. Before going to bed, I told myself it would be a good idea to test yourself with the COVID kit we had at home; maybe tomorrow, USCIS office security will ask you about



Lloyd Botway, Tutor

COVID, and you can answer with confidence that you are okay. I did it and was shocked because, in less than two minutes, the test showed a positive result. I yelled, and I told my wife I tested positive. She tested herself, and it was positive too. I was mad; how could I skip my interview, for which I had been counting the moments? I went to bed and could not sleep without having nightmares about my interview.

On May fifth, although I did not feel so bad, I called USCIS and canceled my interview, for which I had been waiting for five years. I felt that I could not go and take the chance of infecting people with the virus, especially older people who are more at risk.

Yes, sometimes something blindsides you. Something attacks you when you least expect it. This is what happened to me.

However, although I lost my interview, I am satisfied because I did not cause anyone a personal health problem; I could not forgive myself if I did.

Please stay home if you test positive, even though you do not have any physical symptoms. Wear a mask if you think you might be transmitting the virus. We are responsible for each other and our community. Let's keep it safe.

By the way, I got an email from USCIS which mentioned that they are going to set a new appointment for me. That made me happy because I realized they took my situation into account and were willing to adjust the schedule appropriately.

Who knows, I might pass my interview while you read this article!



CHILA BY MARILU SILVA

Conversations in English Participant

Chila was like a second mother to my mom, and her home a shelter during difficult times. By the time I was 9, my mom, my siblings and I moved to our new house. There, we had no TV or other books to read, just textbooks, and dictionaries, so I complained every afternoon since boredom was killing me.

One day, my mother came home with a beautiful edition of Jonathan Livingston Seagull (Juan Salvador Gaviota in Spanish) and a stack of Reader's Digest. She told me that "La señora Chila" was lending them to me under the condition that I had to take care of the books and give them back once I finished.

That was the first loan of many during our friendship. I grew up and exchanged my own books with her, but not always successfully: once I lent her my latest discovery, but she returned it to the wrong person. She told me that she knew that a woman had lent her the book, but she got confused. Chila was 86 years old.

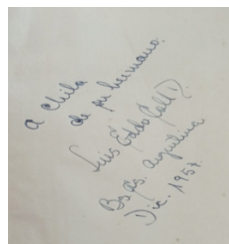
One afternoon, while I was visiting her, Chila gave me three old and weighty books. I took a quick look, but I couldn't recognize the writer. She told me that she was not able to read them anymore because they were too heavy and their letters very small. I just thanked her and stayed silent, feeling a lump in my throat. That time, my friend was giving her books to me.

Only after she passed away did I recognize the value of those three yellow-stained page books. I had left them at the bottom of my bookcase, near the forgotten ones. The day after Chila's funeral, I leafed through them again, and the inscription on the second book's first page made sense. Luis, her closest brother, had bought them for her in 1957 when he was studying medicine in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Chila raised her little siblings after their mother died, and Luis was the apple of her eyes. Suddenly, I grasped it; I could never get rid of them.

A few months after that, I read someone on Twitter recommending Joseph Fouché: Portrait of a Politician by Stefan Zweig, and then I recognized the author's name. Chila had given me three volumes with novels, essays, and biographies by one of the keenest minds and of one of the most talented writers of the twentieth century. I couldn't be more grateful.

In June 2020, I had to leave my house under adverse circumstances: My family and I were assaulted in our house and the lockdown restrictions were severe in Venezuela. Hence, I was allowed to travel only if I proved urgency, and consequently, I could only carry the most indispensable things: my son and two pieces of luggage. Also, in my backpack, I brought with me the second book, the one with the inscription. Marie Antoinette's psychological insight, drawn by Zweig, accompanied my passage.

P.S. I have not grouped the second book with the others yet. I simply promised myself that I would find a place where I could get rid of the feeling of half-packed luggage, and have a bookcase to store Chila's gift and the new ones. Meanwhile, this is still an unfinished story.



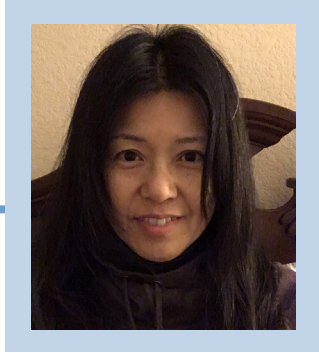
MY LITTLE RED WATCH BY MASAKO AIZAWA

Conversations in English Participant

My little red watch on the desk is precious to me
The day before I left it came with me
The color that I chose was from my sweet memories
Red was the color that my mother gave to me

My little red watch on the desk is true to me
The day before I left it came with me
The color that I chose was from my pure heart
Red was the color that my desire gave to me

My little red watch on the desk is kind to me
The day before I left it came with me
The color that I chose was from my olden days
Red was the color that my dream gave to me



Tick-tock, Tick-tock comes and goes
Tick-tock, Tick-tock learn and grow
Tick-tock, Tick-tock time will come

My little red watch on the desk said hello
I said sorry that I never said hello.
Since you came here what have you seen?
Now I think what of you what you'd say to me.

A THOUSAND WAYS TO GO

BY MAURO ZAVALA

Robyn Goby, Tutor

Life gives you a thousand ways to go but every single one has a different destination. Only you can decide which one you want to take. And even if you take the right road, you must leave something behind.

In 2014, I decided to take a long road, a hard one, and one I wasn't sure even had an end. The only thing I knew at that moment was that I had thousands of reasons to continue.

My name is Mauro Zavala, and I am from a little town in Mexico. Eight years ago, I decided to find a new life in the United States, far from everything — from my family, my friends and my culture. It has not been easy to leave everything I love, but I know I need to be strong and fight for what I want.

When I moved here, it was very difficult. I couldn't speak the language, I didn't feel comfortable because everything was so different and people were always looking at me and knew I was an immigrant. But I came to this country because I believed that there would be a safer place to raise a family and I've been able to find that. I met my wife, Raquel, five years ago in English class and now we have two kids who are growing up in America.

At the same time, though, I have a whole family in Mexico who I haven't been able to see in eight years and I'm not sure when I'll be able to see them again. I have always been the son who wants to see his parents happy, the brother who wants to see his siblings succeed and the father who wants to spend time with his children.



So there have been amazing things that have happened on this journey as well as many difficult things. I know now that I could not have one without the other. When you are making a new life for yourself, you have to make sacrifices.

I appreciate that I have met some good people and that I can feel comfortable in a place I didn't even know about a few years ago. I have a tutor who doesn't have a lot of free time, but who is helping me at no cost to learn my second language, English.

Over these past eight years, I've learned that life is a great challenge but also a great journey. I've learned that being an immigrant does not make me a bad person. What would be bad is not taking advantage of the opportunities in front of me.

So I will take advantage of them for me and for my family. Life gave me a present. I ended up in this beautiful place with a beautiful family and I am very grateful. In the face of difficulty, there will be a thousand roads you can take. Whichever one you take, remember to recognize how lucky you are to be making a better life for yourself.

INTRODUCTION BY MIYEN WU

Conversations in English participant

My name is Miyen Wu. I come from Venezuela and I've been in Boulder for 7 years. Boulder Public Library has been important in English learning, and the acculturation process.



Although it has not been as simple as I imagined, when I got here, I'm moving forward, and every day I feel more confident. I'm very grateful for our life in this place. It's full of magic, friendly and beautiful people. Thank you Boulder, and the US for opening your doors, and your heart as well, to us.

Namaste.



VISIT TO OUR FAMILIES IN SRI LANKA BY NISA FERNANDO

Nancy Erickson, Tutor

My husband, our daughter and I, Nisa Fernando, visited our families in Sri Lanka after 4 and half years. We were planning to visit a few years ago, but we could not make our trip due to Covid19 virus situation.

My parents, brother and sister live in Anuradhapura in Sri Lanka. Both brother and sister are married and my brother has a daughter Yomuli.

First my husband, our daughter and I spent about a week with our family and then visited several of our relatives. After a few days from our arrival in Sri Lanka, the traditional Sinhalese and Hindu New Year, Vishu, took place on April 13th and 14th. We made traditional food and sweets for the New Year, some of which were milk rice, oil cake (Kaum), Kokis, cake etc. Our daughter especially enjoyed fireworks and games with neighboring kids.

My family could not visit several places because of the heavy rains and problems with gasoline shortage and power cuts several times a day. There were also riots and civil unrest and the curfew was in place for several days.

During this time, we were able to visit a few historic Buddhist temples in my hometown, including Sri Maha Bodhi tree and Ruwanweli stupa. We bought Lotus flowers, coconut oil for oil lamps, and incense sticks to offer to the Buddha.

After a couple of weeks, we visited the Hindu temple of “Lord Ganesh” in Trincomalee city. Next, we went to the beach for a boat ride and after that we went to the hot water springs. We stayed there one night, and then came back home.

VISIT TO OUR FAMILIES IN SRI LANKA CONT. BY NISA FERNANDO

After a few days we went to the elephant orphanage at Pinnawala. We watched baby elephants and mother elephants bathe in the river. After that we went to the temple of the tooth where the preserved tooth relic of Lord Buddha is displayed. This temple is called Daladamaligawa.

On May 15th arrived the Vesak festival in which we celebrate the Birth, Enlightenment and Passing away of Lord Buddha. We made Vesak lanterns and illuminated them that night. We went to a public park and watched a story from Lord Buddha's life that was displayed in the Vesak Pandal at night. Next week we made books and school supply donations for children in 3 different schools in the Anuradhapura area. We bought them school bags, shoes, books, water bottles, pens, pencils etc.

Then we visited my husband's family and we spent time with his sister's family and brother's family. That part of the country is very beautiful because there are lots of rice fields, tea and rubber plantations and other beautiful landscapes.

Also, we visited two beautiful and historic mountains where World's tallest walking Buddha statue is built. They are called Ranawana Viharaya, Nelligala Viharaya in Kandy. We were also able to visit the National Zoo in Dehiwala. Our trip lasted for a month and a half and the time passed very quickly. On May 19th we said goodbye to all of our families and returned to our home in the US.

Thank you.



PRACTICE ESSAY FOR HISET EXAM BY ORADAN BARLOW

Laura Roettiger, Tutor



In the two articles, “Dealing with Stress and Strong Emotions” and “Butterflies in Your Stomach? Worries Keeping You Awake?

Here’s how to deal,” they talk about stress and anxiety. They also talk about coping mechanisms and how to deal with stress.

In the article “Dealing with Stress and Strong Emotions” it talks a lot about the three different types of stress. They are: survival stress, environmental stress, and internal stress. Survival stress is when you are in fight or flight mode and your body is pumping with adrenaline. Environmental stress can be created by loud noises that startle, fireworks for example make it hard for veterans, animals, and others who are bothered by sudden noises. Lastly, the article talks about internal stress which is caused by something that happened in the past or something you’re worried will happen in the future. I can relate to this because when I messed up something at work and it cost a lot of money it was hard to let it go. Beating yourself up for something that happened in the past does not change what’s happening today.

In the article, “Butterflies in Your Stomach? Worries Keeping You Awake? Here’s how to deal,” it talks about examples and solutions to stress. A recent personal stress was when things were stolen from my car. I started shaking and felt panic wondering what was missing. I used some of the techniques suggested in the article. The techniques that work for me are deep breathing and walking.

In both articles, they talked about stressors and what triggers stress. They also gave strategies and techniques that help people like me deal with stress.



FRIED FISH BY SWATANTRA NEUPANE POUDEL

Susan Litt, Tutor

PREP: 10 MINUTES

COOK: 10 MINUTES

SERVINGS: 5

INGREDIENTS

2 lb trout fish or other white fish

½ cup water

½ cup gram (lentil) flour

½ tsp red chili powder

½ tsp turmeric powder

1 tsp garlic paste

1 tsp ginger paste

1 tsp salt

2 tsp fish masala or garam masala

2 tsp ground yellow mustard

juice of 2 fresh lemon or ¼ cup
lemon juice

METHODS

Mix all ingredients except for fish

Marinate fish in the big bowl for 1 hour

Heat frying pan

Add the vegetable oil

Add fish

Cook 5 minutes then turn over

When it is brown or 145 on thermometer it is done

Lynn Weatherwax, Tutor

MY FATHER BY TAYEBEH FIRUZKUHI

My father was a short man with normal weight. He was a white man but his face looked weather-beaten, because of going to our village and being in the sun especially in summer for harvesting his agricultural produce. I didn't remember his hair was dark or brown it was just white. He was a real Mussulman. According to religious customs, he worshiped every day and night. After the day time worship he went to our garden and pruned fruit trees. At noon he went to mosque to pray behind a prayer leader that he accepted as a theological official.

He always wore white clothes. He said, "The white clothes are from heaven and black clothes are from hell."

He was very calm and satisfied about everything he had or

didn't have. He believed, "To live for today, don't worry about tomorrow. When tomorrow comes then you go through it." It was just opposite to my mother's beliefs.

My father's name was Gholamhussein that means Hussein's servant. He really believed in Imam Hussein, the third Imam from twelve Imams that Shiite (a branch of Islam) people know as the leaders after Mohammad. Every year on the first ten days of the month of Muharram (one of the months of Arabic calendars), he went to village and made a spectacular performance about the story of the war that happened between Imam Hussein and his following as the real Mussulmen group and a group of Mussulmen that opposed them as an enemy (it happened in Karbela-Iraq,

MY FATHER CONT.

BY TAYEBEH FIRUZKUHI

Lynn Weatherwax, Tutor

about one thousand four hundred years ago) and how they had been killed by their enemies. He wrote some sad verses about them and sang it very emotionally. One time he had been to Karbela, because of that people called him Karbelae. Also he engaged a spiritual to come to our home every Monday to talk and sing about the tragic stories of those leaders, like the priests that talk on Sundays in church. On the other hand he wanted to help them because most spiritual men couldn't afford to provide for their families in this job. Also he had some theological friends. They used to be supported by him. For example he provided their required wheat breads for a year from his wheat plantation.

He had three sons and one daughter from his first wife and one son and seven daughters from my mother who was his second wife. He wished one of his sons to be a theologian. He told my brother, "If you go to Najaf (a holy city in Iraq) and study religious science, I will give you all of my properties."

In spite of his religious prejudice, he had a very good relationship with other people who had different religions. For example according to Shiite principles, disciples of Mussulmen don't have to accept that Bahia's religion is right, and can't be in touch with them. They think Bahia people apostatized their religion because of splitting from Shiite unlawfully. We had a few neighbors who were Bahia and one of them was my mother's seamstress, also my oldest sister went to learn how to sew from another one of them. When they came to our home for our New Year or to do something for my mother, he entertained them respectfully.

He didn't force us to follow religious rules. He confided our training to my mother completely. He was much older than my mother, but he didn't oppose my mother's decisions about our training, studying, or our marriage.

He was prim and precise to music and hijab, but not too much. Sometimes when he was reading

his holy book in the guest room, we listened to a traditional Iranian song. He called out, "Turn it off." Then we told him, "it is a religious song Baba." Then he said, "Ok." But we cheated him. It was only a bit like a religious song.

We called him Baba (in Farsi it means father). He loved us. I remember when my last sister was born; he came to my mother's room and asked, "Is it she or he?" My mother answered him with annoyance, "Same as others." He told her, "It is a blessing from God, giving us another girl. I should pray to God for the abundance." It was surprising because most men preferred to have sons in those days. When he bought a new property, he registered it to every one of us. He didn't differentiate between boys and girls.

We had more than thirty date trees in our yard. I had chosen one of them and told my siblings, "It's mine." It had large yellow dates. Every morning in summer when Baba was at home, I

climbed up the tree and picked some dates for him. He liked to eat them with breakfast. When he was very satisfied about me he called me happily, "my Malak" (it means my Queen).

When he went to our village, he sent several bundles of melon, watermelon and some kind of vegetables or fruits by one of the field-hands who worked in his plantation, with two or three camels or donkeys. That day was a happy day for me, because I loved to drive the donkey around our yard. Also I loved to sit next to that field-hand man and listen to his tales, especially when he was sitting around a big pot full of the turnips on the fireplace in our outdoor kitchen. It was my best hobby at that time.

Baba was the oldest man in my family so, in important ceremony, like New Year, all men in my family came to say "Happy Nowruz" to him first. Also when they had some difficulties with each others, they came to meet him and receive his arbitration.

MY FATHER CONT.

BY TAYEBEH FIRUZKUHI

Lynn Weatherwax, Tutor

Sometimes our home was full of people for a whole day because of these issues. He and my mother managed them calmly.

At the end of September 1972, I went to university in northwest Iran, far away from my hometown. Baba had told my mother, “Isn’t it better she get married instead of going far away?” My mother persuaded him that continuing to study would be better for me.

In that time one of my uncles (my mother’s brother) had an argument with a man who occupied part of his property in the village.

In the middle of fall Baba went to control his cultivation in the village. He met that man and talked to him about solving that problem peacefully. The man told my father, “I agree with you. I will pick you up tomorrow with my van and go to visit your brother-in-law in town.” Next day he drove with my father to our town, but on the way he changed

his direction to Afghanistan (my hometown is located near the border of Iran and Afghanistan.) He kidnapped Baba as a hostage. Then he sent a message to my uncle that, “If you want to see him again you have to give me money.” I forgot how much it was exactly, but in that time it was a lot. In that time all of my family were mobilized to help and solve this problem to save my father. They worried about his health because Baba was old and that man couldn’t afford to feed him well enough. Every time Baba wrote a letter home he explained, “I am safe and healthy. He and his wife take care of me very well. Don’t worry about me.”

In that period of time the government didn’t come through to help with this kind of issue. My family had a long negotiation with that man’s messenger. Also to get the money he wanted wasn’t possible for us. So some member of my family who could afford it put some money on the table. After four months when

he got the money, he released Baba. When Baba went back home he didn't complain about his kidnapper. He said, "They were very poor, but they were very kind to me. They didn't have enough food, but they tried to feed me with every thing they had. I mostly ate yogurt and goat milk ,the only thing they had. I gave them most of the food you sent to me."

Baba told us, "I didn't think he was the kind of man who would kidnap me." He talked about them very optimistically.

Baba had become very weak, so my brother took him to Mashhad. He kept him for one month. He did some medical tests on him, and his wife took good care of him. Some of my family members tried to make a disputation over the relationship between Baba and my mother's brothers about that problem, but Baba and especially my mother managed it as well as possible.



Those days I didn't have easy access to a telephone. I went to a phone station in the city I was in. Then I waited for about one hour for them to call me and say it was my turn. Then I went to a cubicle and talked to my brother in Mashhad or my mother for a few minutes. In the last two years when I went with my friends to a café in city to drink a Turkish coffee, the coffee-shop keeper allowed me to use their phone. Then I paid money to him for the time I phoned. We wrote letters to each other. I wasn't aware of everything that occurred. My mother had wanted nobody to tell me, because I was far away and I couldn't do anything. I found out when I went back home for our New Year. It was so shocking.

MY FATHER CONT.

BY TAYEBEH FIRUZKUHI

Lynn Weatherwax, Tutor

In that year my sister Fati (Fateme) who was older than me got married to her fiancé. They went to Tehran because her husband hadn't finished his education at the University of Tehran yet. All summer I stayed with my parents and two younger sisters at home. Then for the new school year I came back to my university.

Two years later Baba wanted to go to Mecca. He believed this trip is essential for every Muslim if they can afford it without debt. When he went with a caravan to Mecca it was fall and I wasn't there. I heard he was absolutely thrilled. It was his best hope.

In Mecca after doing some religious customs all the pilgrims went to the Arafat Desert and Mena Desert to do some of their lawful formalities. In that period of time more than a thousand tents were set up for pilgrims in those deserts. They stayed there for three days. Baba and the other members of the caravan did their lawful formalities completely.

On the last night when they were resting in their tents suddenly they heard somebody announced, "Fire, fire, climb the mountain!" They went out from their tents, and saw some of the tents burning. They climbed to the mountain near there. Baba stayed on the mountain without any food or required water for a few days. He came down with help from some younger men, at last.

When he came back from Mecca, he got really weak and infirm. He said he didn't eat enough food for more than twenty days. He couldn't walk and do his worship as well as he did before. He had become ill.

I had never seen or heard in my whole life that Baba got ill. He was an old man but he wasn't unhealthy in his life. One month later he passed away. I didn't know about his death until I went back home for our New Year and I was shocked again. My mother told me, "He died quite calmly.

He couldn't pray to God just the last morning before he passed away."



It was too much sadness when we gathered and my family came to our home for that New Year as every year to tell him Happy Nowruz first, but he wasn't there to welcome them.

He left many important things for us In addition to his properties. He taught us how to be generous and open-hearted, how to be satisfied with the favors and good opportunities that we have, how to do a righteous act. He showed us a positive and forgiveable view of life in this world.

WHAT BOULDERREADS MEANS TO ME IS...

In June, some of our BoulderReads and Conversations in English community gathered in person for the first time since March 2020. We spent time together at a city park and enjoyed ice cream and each other's company. During the ice cream social, learners filled out cards to answer the writing prompt, "What BoulderReads or Conversations in English means to me is..."

Here are some of their responses:

What BoulderReads or Conversations in English means to me is...

"Helpful, wonderful!!!"

– Yaemi from Japan

"Gaining lots of knowledge both in terms of English and American culture. On top of everything, BoulderReads means to me is friendship and company. I want to thank everyone in this program from the deep of my heart."

– Alime Eroglu from Turkey

"Helping to gain more vocabulary, I think that is also improving my writing, so I can get better job. So thank you for making it possible so we become independent."

– Carmen Julia Birmingham from Venezuela

"It means freedom to learn to read and be independence from my mom and Tony."

– Amanda Schultz from South Korea

"Acculturation, better communication, and friendship time! Thanks Boulder Public Library"

– Miyen Wu Rodriguez from Venezuela

“Getting a good job and not asking a lot to people for help all the time. And learning stuff I did not know in school.”

– David Allshouse from Boulder

“Conversations in English means to me is... the fun place. I usually stay at home all day. When I join the Conversations in English event I feel happy. And I learned a lot of English expressions. It was very helpful. I’ll join the event when I have free time again. Thank you”

– Miran Kim from South Korea

“The best thing in my life because working one to one I’m more focused on learning. I think that all the students are very lucky to have the program. I am very grateful to all people who made this program possible.”

– Blanca Ureña from Mexico

“A very important activity to help me with integrating into the new environment. Also it helped me with finding some new friends which solved being lonely. It also helped me with finding some feeling of going back home. Thank you all so much for your help!”

– Min Su from China

“It is a great opportunity to discover a new world... Thank you”

– Mauro Zavala from Mexico



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