

The **ESL** Writers' Review

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Her Mother's Life Story

*Susana Ruiz Castillo
ESL 100 Spring 2007
Ferguson*

Her full name is Felicity Gonzalez-Franco de la Riviera. She is half-Mexican-Indian and half Spanish. She was born in Tepatitlan, Jalisco Mexico, in the southwest by the Cortez Sea on November 6, 1923. She is a lady of eighty-three years, light brown skin, with brown eyes and a profound and expressive glance. Her temper was strong and solid, but at the same time noble. She was not only a strong willed woman; she was also a caring mother of nine.

I remember those days with her in the kitchen, cooking, singing a tango song ("Goodbye Children") and making breakfast for everyone. She would always bring us lunch to school, too. I remember how delicious the burritos were and how sweet the fresh squeezed lemonade was. When we came back home and opened the door we instantly smelled food. She never liked it when we went to play before we finished our homework and chores. She was always protecting us, but at the same time she gave us a chance. If we ever made mistakes she would explain to us what was right and what was wrong. She always had her eye on us and observed everything we did.

As the years passed by everyone grew up and we all went different directions to study. This little old lady soon stayed home alone until my older brothers and sisters finished their education. After coming back home, they soon married and left once more. When my younger brothers and I were ready to go to college, this beautiful lady was once more alone because she didn't have anybody at home. She enjoyed this period of her life, and as the years passed she was alone in her home. She never wanted to live with anyone and always said we were welcome to visit her in her home.

When we were celebrating her 70th birthday we realized how much she had changed, her attitude, the way she spoke. She just wasn't the same, but we thought it was old age and this was normal. As time went by, we continued to see many things different and

she always talked about when she was younger or the years she was married. One day we took her to see a doctor where he examined her. His test results were terrible news for us. We never thought she would have this sickness "Alzheimer's" Now she lives in her own world and we live around this world to take care of her. I love and miss my caring mother.

We are five brothers, five sisters-in-law, four sisters, and four brothers-in-law, eleven grandsons, ten granddaughters, two great grandsons, and one great granddaughter. We are her family, and most of the time she doesn't remember our names. Please, if you have somebody with this sickness or another similar to it in your family, remember to take care of them and give them a lot of love, compassion and companionship.

From the Editor

Welcome to the ESL Writers' Review Storyteller's edition! In this issue, you will read several wonderful stories about people's lives. Susanna Ruiz Castillo, from Mexico, tells the story of her mother's life and Mardalena Kusuma, from Indonesia, tells the story of her grandmother's life. Sebastian Turczyniak tells the life story of Pope John Paul II and his influence on people throughout the world. Also look for stories about moving to the U.S. from Somalia and Sudan, a story about life in the army in Korea, and a story about (almost!) getting a speeding ticket in Colorado. I hope you enjoy reading all of these wonderful narratives!

The Life of Pope John Paul II

Sebastian Turczyniak

Bobbie Felix

ESL 103 Fall 2007

The most admired person for me is John Paul II, Karol Woltyla. He was a very famous pope in the world. He was born in Wadowice in Poland, close to Cracow. His father had been an officer and office worker, but his mother died when he was 9 years old, and when his old brother was 12 years old. When he was studying in elementary school he was distinguished. Because Karol was a very good student he started to study in University Jagiellonia, the famous and old University in Europe, 1272, in Cracow. When World War II began, he couldn't continue studying, it was German law. Therefore, he continued to study in an underground organization which helped Jewish people. At this time, the Germans' occupation was terrible. Karol saw a lot of sadism, violence, and death. People were dead everywhere: in the ghetto, in German Concentration Camp, and on the street because they couldn't get food, because they were Polish or Jewish, and because of no reason. It had to influence him in the future. One day when he come back home, he found his father dead. He lost everything which he loved.

In 1942 he decided to be a priest, so he went in underground seminary. After the war he could continue to study in Roma, in Papa's University. He was a very good student, priest and friend. He spent a lot of time studying theology and languages. He liked to meet with young people. When he came back Poland, the Cardinal saw him how he was studying and how he had good contact with people. This time his life changed forever. The Cardinal told him about his personal potential, his roles in Poland and also on the future. In 1978 he came to the Vatican. About 5 pm the Cardinals chose as Pope Karola Wojtyla from Poland. Everyone was really surprised! After 455 years he was first pope not from Italy.

When he started, the world was threatened by nuclear destruction and divided into two political camps. In 1979 in Poland, a civil war almost started. The Soviet Army was ready to have armed intervention. There was a risk to kill a lot of people in my country. What did the Polish Pope do? He came to Poland. After mass he said these remembered words – "Don't be afraid, don't be afraid!" After that people in Poland understood they had a new leader, a person who was very careful about people. Now nobody could stop freedom in my country, in Europe. Also some communists understood how powerful the Pope was. This example helped me understand why "somebody" made an attempt to kill John Paul II in 1981.

I saw many times John Paul II when he visited another country. After that he changed people, politics and life. I have some favorite pictures with Papas' pilgrimage; one with "Child on Papas' hands" and another with mine workers in Latin America.

In conclusion, sometimes when I think about my life, about my present or my future I am afraid. But I remember "don't be afraid." For me it means keep going.

MY ARMY STORY

Mark Ju

ACE Grammar Class

Fall 2007

(editor: this essay has been edited for comprehension)

Three years ago, I entered the Army, because our country requires every healthy man must do two years. That is a duty of Korea citizens. So I did not have a choice.

On March 31st 2004, I stepped in the Army recruit training center in Nonsan. It was like hell. For example, there were not enough sanitary facilities, we didn't have enough supplies, and they taught very hard battle skills. They spoke critically of us for the first few weeks, but, after five weeks we became specialists.

After I finished the training center, they sent me to Chunchan. I thought this was a very cold place. My task was to protect the sky from enemy fighters or helicopters. I did not stay on base. Our platoon moved several places every eight weeks. I was a Private First Class, so I had to look after our platoon, that is sacrifice myself.

After one year, I was promoted Corporal. During my free time, I read a lot of books, and I practiced my personal training for battle skills. When I was Sergeant, I knew how to control my squad. My battalion commander recommended that I become an officer. I rejected that chance, and was discharged from the Army.

Sometimes I remember my Army life. If I had accepted that suggestion, my life would be easy. But I chose to study abroad in America. That was my challenge. But I mustn't forget our platoon fellowship, and the many skills I learned. That is good for my life.

Miyuki Mobley
October 2007, ESL 103 Felix

DRIVING A CAR IN THE U.S.

My native county, Japan, was the first place for me to drive a car and I drove for almost twenty years. Now I have been driving in the U.S. for two and a half years, but at the beginning, I was so nervous it felt as if it were the first time in my life for me to drive a car.

The biggest difference between driving a car in the U.S. and Japan is the side of the road we drive on. In the U.S., people drive on the right side of road and on the left side in Japan. Right after I got a driver's license here in the U.S., I used to think about which way I should drive my car, especially when I turned right and left at an intersection; I almost turned into the wrong lane if I did not stay focused on lanes. In addition, all equipment in the cars in the U.S. and in Japan is on opposite sides. This can be very confusing at first. For instance, when I tried turning to the right at a corner in the U.S., I accidentally turned on the windshield wiper. I do not know how many times that I did this when I turned at a corner

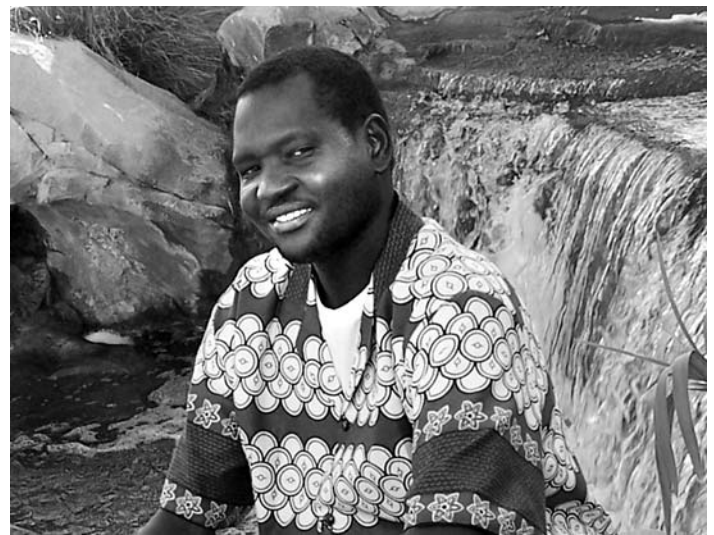
I never got a speeding ticket in Japan in my twenty years of driving. I had a chance to visit my husband's family in Colorado, and we drove the car, taking turns driving. I drove the car like always at 75 mph in Arizona even though the speed limit was 60 miles on the way to Colorado. While I was enjoying the view, I noticed a police car was chasing someone with its lights flashing. I thought the police were chasing someone else, so I just kept driving. After a while, for confirmation, I woke up my husband, who was taking a nap next to me and asked him, "Do you think the police are chasing me or not?" "Stop immediately!" he said. In fact, the police officers were chasing ME! Fortunately, the police officers did not give me a ticket, but warned me about speeding. There was a reason that I did not think the police officers were chasing me. In Japan, the police usually flash lights like in the U.S., but they also use the police car speaker and announce the license plate number, color of car, and type of car even for speeding. Therefore, it is easy to know which cars the police are trying to stop.

When I lived in Okinawa, I saw a lot of tourists, including military personnel, who were caught by the police for speeding all the time. They know how to drive in the places they live, but not outside of their cities and countries. I felt the same when I almost got a speeding ticket in the U.S. When I got a driver's license in the U.S., I was scared of driving in the U.S. because it is totally different between the U.S. and Japan: the places of car equipment, the signs, the rules and the law. The four way stops are no problem for me any more, but even

now I often wait without thinking until the traffic light turns green when I turn to the right in the U.S. As above, I sometimes get confused when I drive, but at least, I feel myself more at ease as I drive a car in the U.S. than before. I think I am finally used to driving in the U.S., and I enjoy driving in the U.S. now. However, I have to drive a car as carefully as I can, and I try to obey the traffic rules no matter where I drive a car.

Leaving Sudan

Wilson Ladlo, Annette Aagard, ESL 110



I fled my homeland country (Sudan) in 2000. due to the civil war, and I came to the United States in October 2003. When the civil war erupted, I was so much overwhelmed with fear of uncertainty if I could survive at that time. However, my father who had been a top army officer put us in a vehicle and courageously smuggled us through Sudanese- Egyptian border, saving our life. However, he was murdered on his way back by the rebel militia. His death had a tremendous impact on us; He had been supportive, loving, and caring. He had fought and struggled to foster equality and justice. Even though he had left me physically, he will always live within me forever. Therefore, I would like to learn English, pursue the field of international security and conflict resolution, and become a United States ambassador in Africa to promote peace, democracy and justice.

Abdirizak Mohamed, Ferguson ESL 100

The Important Move that Changed My Life

I grew up in Somalia, a country that hasn't known what peace is for sixteen years. Civil War is destroying this country. In 1991, when the civil war started, I was six years old. I was in elementary school. When the civil war started I lost my school and so did everybody else. Everything was crazy. Crime and violence were everywhere and nobody was safe. My family moved from town to town, but nothing was getting better. Killing was the first language of the criminals in every Somalian town. We had such a rough time everywhere we moved. It was even hard to find something to eat or drink. People were dying from hunger. In the middle of 1993 the U.S. army came to Somalia to catch the criminals who were responsible for the civil war. The U.S. army didn't succeed in capturing the criminals, but they made the situation worse by making the criminals angrier. The situation was getting bad and worse. Civilians started fleeing out to neighboring countries, but my family stayed there. The U.S. army withdrew out of Somalia in the same year without making any difference. In 1997, everything was destroyed: no government, no system, no rules and laws. It was a mess, but the situation started getting better and some private schools were opened; I went to middle school and finished it in 2000. At that time my uncle was living in Egypt. He sent us a visa. We left Somalia and moved there in 2000 and for the first time we felt safe and could walk around without being frightened. It was really a big change for us.

The Life Journey of My Grandmother

Mardalena Kusuma, ESL 110

My grandmother was born in Indonesia in 1927; however, she never knew her birthday. When my grandfather passed away, she had five children and was still pregnant. She was very poor and never went to school. The only thing that she knew was making fish-crackers to support her family.

She woke up at three o'clock every day and started to make the crackers, so she could sell them to the market before six o'clock in the morning. From selling the crackers, she could send all of her children to school. Even, some of her children could go to other countries, such as China and Japan, for study; moreover, all of them became successful persons.

In 2000, she got very sick and was hospitalized. Because of her illness, she had to retire. She just enjoyed her life by watching her children have their own families and successful lives. Also, all of her grandchildren go to university, and some of them have opportunities to study abroad.

Last year, she passed away, and I just realized how wonderful her life was. She always taught us that as long as you try hard enough and be honest, nothing is impossible. Goodbye my beloved grandmother.

Editor's Corner

Sara Ferguson, Editor

If you would like to submit your writing to the newsletter, please contact Sara at

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and faculty of ESL the program
at Grossmont College.*

Our next issue will honor Women's History Month (March). Submit your essays, paragraphs and stories about famous and important women, the history of women in your culture, or the difference between women's roles in the U.S. and your country.

Deadline: March 15, 2008

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