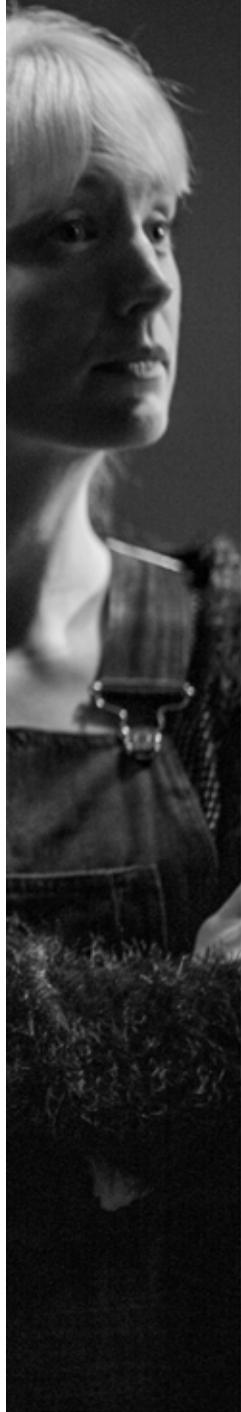


Open to new ideas

# RE



A Norton Rose Fulbright magazine

RE:

issue 15

RE:

WORK

LOST IN A GOOD BOOK

A SEA FULL OF STARS

THE PHOTO ESSAY: IN REHEARSAL

LIFE

# RICHARD CALNAN ON JURISPRUDENCE

One of the advantages of the common law tradition is that it enables judges to develop the law. In a parliamentary democracy, that power needs to be exercised with caution, but the best judges can help to mould the law and at the same time to clarify and simplify it. In the twentieth century, Lord Denning led the field. His nineteenth century equivalent was Sir George Jessel.

Jessel was the first senior Jewish judge in England. He became Master of the Rolls in 1873, a position which he held until his death in 1883. He was also, for a time, a member of the House of Commons and the Solicitor General in Gladstone's first ministry. But it is as Master of the Rolls that he will always be remembered—sitting both as a first instance judge and as a member of the Court of Appeal. He sat as a judge at a time when the quality of the judiciary has never been stronger. But it is Jessel who is best remembered. Why?

In *Bleak House*, Dickens had portrayed the law's delay in *Jarndyce v Jarndyce*. One of Jessel's great strengths was that he got on with the job. It is said that as a first instance judge he never reserved judgment, and that in the Court of Appeal he only did so twice—in both cases in deference to his colleagues on the bench. As soon as the argument had been completed, Jessel would give his judgment. He did so with a brevity and clarity which few can achieve. And he was hardly ever reversed on appeal. He was able to do this because of the strength of his personality. A judicial colleague once asked him whether he had actually said: "I may be wrong, but I am never uncertain." To which he replied: "That is partly true. I said that I was never uncertain."

The difficulty with case law is that it is an aggregation of single instances. But a good lawyer has an instinct for the right answer to a problem, and the ability to cut through the complexity of the case law in order to rationalise and simplify the law. Jessel's approach can be seen from his decision in *Re Hallett's Estate* in 1880. Henry Hallett was a solicitor. He held some Russian bonds owned by Mrs Cotterill. Without her authority, he sold the bonds and received the proceeds of sale into his bank account. The question for the court was whether Mrs Cotterill was entitled to the proceeds of the bonds in the bank account.

Paradoxically, it was the fact that Mrs Cotterill owned the bonds that caused the problem. If

Mr Hallett had owned the bonds and held them on trust for Mrs Cotterill, she would have been entitled to the proceeds as the beneficiary of the trust. But Mr Hallett had no interest in the bonds.

He simply held them for

Mrs Cotterill. There was no trust and therefore no basis for giving Mrs Cotterill a beneficial interest in the proceeds.

Jessel was having no truck with that. Could it make a difference that Mr Hallett was not a trustee? "I say on principle it is impossible to imagine that there can be any difference." Mrs Cotterill had owned the bonds. Mr Hallett had wrongfully sold them. Mrs Cotterill was therefore entitled to a beneficial interest in their proceeds. A rule which has applied ever since.

Next time: Law reform

---

RC is a partner with Norton Rose Fulbright in the UK, Visiting Professor at UCL and an author with Oxford University Press. He writes on jurisprudence from an English law perspective.

**People change  
their minds.**

# The historian

David Francis

POETS, ESSAYISTS AND NOVELISTS

This is the dedication inscribed on a PEN International memorial which I came across last year in a grove of trees beside Lake Burley Griffin in Canberra. I write fiction. I also co-chair the US west coast branch of PEN America, the largest of over a hundred PEN centers worldwide. So this chance encounter had real resonance for me.

PEN exists to give writers a voice, to provide for intellectual exchange and to promote freedom of expression for all writers—regardless of nationality or race or religion or the political system under which they live. The acronym originally stood for ‘poets, essayists, and novelists’ but now includes playwrights and editors among that number.

PEN was founded in London a few years after the devastation of the First World War; its first president was John Galsworthy, the Nobel Prize-winning author of *The Forsythe Saga*. The writer of *The War of the Worlds*, H.G. Wells—who later campaigned against the burning of books by the Nazis—was one of PEN’s early members. He was in good company: other members in the 1920s included Joseph Conrad, Elizabeth Craig and George Bernard Shaw.

By the late 1930s, PEN was active in protesting against negative treatment of writers and appealing on their behalf. One notable case was that of Hungarian-born Arthur Koestler, who was working in Spain as a foreign correspondent in 1937 and was imprisoned and sentenced to death by Franco’s nationalist forces. Koestler was freed after PEN vigorously campaigned for his release. He went on to write *Darkness at Noon*.

In 1967, under the presidency of American playwright Arthur Miller, PEN appealed to Nigeria on behalf of Wole Soyinka, a playwright marked for immediate execution by the country’s head of state, General Gowon. After a letter from PEN was conveyed by a businessman, Gowon asked if Miller was the

same man who had married Marilyn Monroe. When assured that he was, Gowon summarily released his prisoner. In 1986, Soyinka was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

In 1989, when Salman Rushdie, winner of the Booker Prize, published *The Satanic Verses*, he was forced into hiding when a fatwa was proclaimed, calling for his death. PEN played an instrumental role in the global campaign that called for the withdrawal of the fatwa. Rushdie later became President of PEN America and—in the aftermath of September 11—co-founded PEN World Voices, an international literary festival with a human rights focus held each year in New York. Its

aim is to ‘broaden channels of dialogue between the United States and the world’.

The right to speak, write, read and publish freely lies at the heart of global culture. In recent years, PEN has been a leading voice in the call

for accountability in the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi inside the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul; and worked hard to secure the freedom of Reuters journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo in Myanmar—sentenced to seven years behind bars and recently released after more than five hundred days behind bars.

Thousands of writers all over the world belong to PEN. Among its programs, PEN bestows literary awards; fosters emerging writers isolated from the literary establishment; undertakes prison writing programs; and sponsors translations of works written in obscure or neglected languages. In 2019 Manila will host the PEN International Congress; I have been offered the position of American writer-delegate there. PEN’s historic, vital mission goes on.

‘The spirit dies in all of us who keep silent in the face of tyranny.’

---

DF works in the Los Angeles office. His novel *Agapanthus Tango* was published in the U.S. as *The Great Inland Sea*. He was born in Australia.

# RE: Writing Prize

## The winners

1st prize  
**Barbara Blake**  
London

2nd prize  
**Sophie O'Mahony**  
Alumni

3rd prize  
**Chantal Lacombe**  
Montréal



Looking out not in  
**Beautifully written**  
Open to new ideas

The *RE*: Writing Prize invited writers in Norton Rose Fulbright to submit work of between 300 and 3000 words.

Barbara Blake's poems impressed the judges by their skill, depth and control; two of her poems are published in this issue of *RE*:. Sophie O'Mahony (one of our alumni) wrote a creative, witty and acutely observed short story. Chantal Lacombe submitted a beautifully understated, simple and subtle story in French.

Thank you to everyone who took part, including writers from Sydney, Vancouver, Cape Town, San Antonio and Houston. And thank you to our judges, Alexandra Howe and John Böhm with Mathieu Dahan (reader in French).

# Contributors



**Josh Agrons**  
Books for children



**Richard Calnan**  
On jurisprudence



**Georgina Hey**  
Books for children



**Laura Louw**  
Books for children



**Benedetta Orsini**  
Playlist



**Dianne Somma**  
Back streets



**Aditya Badami**  
The moving image



**Philip Charlton**  
Why?



**Alexandra Howe**  
Stringers  
Bookshelf



**Ivan Maslarov**  
The Factory  
Playlist



**Uyen Poh**  
The kitchen table



**Andrea Spellerberg**  
Books for children



**Paul Baram**  
The guide



**Allison Chong**  
Books for children



**Gillian Jaravaza**  
Zimbabwe



**Dylan McKimmie**  
Books for children



**Yvonne Puig**  
The guide



**Russ Trice**  
The sporting life



**Josh Bernstein**  
The guide



**Keya Dasgupta**  
Books for children



**John Kim**  
Books for children



**Lily McMyn**  
Books for children



**Andrew Robinson**  
Zimbabwe



**Tom Valentine**  
Stringers



**Barbara Blake**  
The poet



**Ramya Djealatchoumy**  
The kitchen table



**Katie Knight**  
Books for children



**Sabine Meinert**  
The sporting life



**Rachel Rosenfeld**  
Why?



**Laurie Weiss**  
Why?



**Patrick Bracher**  
Obiter dictum



**David Francis**  
The historian



**Jenny Leslie**  
Books for children



**Gamu Murerwa**  
Zimbabwe



**Debbie Sanderson**  
Back streets



**Anna Wilkinson**  
The guide



**Lisa Cabel**  
Books for children



**Steve Gamble**  
Zimbabwe



**Richard Lewis**  
The sporting life



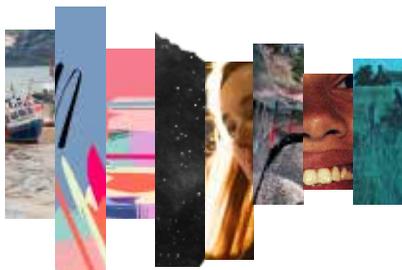
**Natalia Mushinska**  
Stringers



**Fleur Shaw-Jones**  
Books for children

**Ingeborg Alexander,  
Aneesa Bodiati,  
Jenny Gray, Maxim  
Hayes, Mordecai  
Mahlangu**

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Coda  
Songs of joy and  
sorrow

Cover: the Factory,  
by Ivan Maslarov

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

RE: is a window onto a fascinating world. Good, challenging, wondrous, and not so great. Our world. It makes me very proud to be part of Norton Rose Fulbright.

**Richard Fogl, Sydney**

I just wanted to say that *Re* is of a consistently high standard. Really engrossing articles and photos; the anonymous and Way of Life articles in issue 14 were very poignant. My wife really enjoys it too.

**Chris McLeod, Perth**

*Way of Life; Coercion, issue 14.*

People genuinely enjoy getting a copy of *RE*. As soon as it appears on our screens in our public areas, people are looking for a copy. I was particularly interested in the article on coercive control. It gave an insight into what goes on behind closed doors. I'm sure it happens more often than we think.

**Stefanie George, Sydney**

*Coercion, issue 14.*

I'm an NR alumni (left/escaped ten years ago). I was moved by the *Coercion* article in the latest magazine and wish to circulate it among my colleagues. There's about 100 of us globally, and it's obviously such an important message.

**Benji Field, alumni (London)**

I enjoyed reading Alexandra Howe's No Standing Still piece, especially the last paragraph. I recently had an amazing first trip to London and returned feeling the same way about New Yorkers and older buildings. In London I was in awe at the many 'flatiron-style' buildings that wrapped around street corners, a stark contrast from the high-rises here along 6th Ave. The entire *RE* magazine is beautifully done.

**Zoe Nagasing, New York**

*Stringers, issue 14.*

I recently acquired my advanced PADI (diving certification); this included a module on photography and fish identification. So when I opened up *RE*: and saw the article by the underwater photographer Stéphane Braun, I found it absolutely fascinating. There is such skill involved in taking such fantastic shots. It has brought back fond memories of my time with the turtles on

the Gili Islands, Indonesia and on Belize's barrier reef. And I now have some great, new diving spots for the bucket list. Thank you, most of all, for reiterating the message about keeping our oceans clean. I hope that we can go on to enjoy these creatures and the wonders of this underworld for many more years to come.

**Tarryn Lazarus, London**

*In the eye of a fish, issue 14.*

The photo essay on dogs in the latest edition of *RE*: is excellent! Woof—made my afternoon!

**Alice Vuong, Sydney**

*He loved laughing, and I loved barking, issue 14.*

A new joiner has asked me about the meaning of the title 'RE:'. Does it have a special meaning or is it simply the re: we use in emails? I'm curious to find out. ☺

**Charis Wong, Singapore**

*We chose the name RE: when we created the magazine in 2011 chiefly because it is a small word that encompasses a great deal. The magazine is a celebration of our diversity. It is about this; and this; and this; about this matter and that matter and all conceivable matters. RE is a Latin term; for a law firm, that is a nod to our past and an indication of our love of learning. Magazine titles often disappear behind the way you think about the magazine itself. We didn't want a name that seemed to be trying too hard. The only trouble with RE is that it can be hard to pronounce. It comes with a punctuation mark: the colon. RE:. That suggests that there is more to come, more possibilities ahead. Ed.*

Most of the writers, photographers and artists featured in *RE*: are Norton Rose Fulbright people. To talk about becoming a contributor or to pass through ideas or comments, please contact the Editor.

*RE*: is published twice a year. It is the recipient of industry awards for its design and creativity. It remains steadfastly open to new ideas and new points of view.

[nortonrosefulbright.com/about-us/re/](http://nortonrosefulbright.com/about-us/re/)

**Contact the Editor**

[nicola.liu@nortonrosefulbright.com](mailto:nicola.liu@nortonrosefulbright.com)

## OBITER DICTUM

Latin, deconstructed

By Patrick Bracher, Johannesburg

---

quantum meruit

**As much as is deserved.** Used to reduce a contract price to what is reasonable for the job done.

---

quicquid plantatur solo, solo cedit

**Whatever is attached to the soil belongs to the soil.** A building on land cannot be separately owned.

---

quid faciat leges, ubi sola pecunia regnat

**What will laws do, where only money rules?** A cry for the Bribery Act.

---

quid pro quo

**Something for something.** The basis of every contract.

---

qui prior est tempore potior est jure

**Earlier in time is stronger in law.** An earlier right beats a competing interest.

---

quis custodiet ipsos custodes

**Who guards the guardians?** (The Roman poet Juvenal.) The rationale behind the choice of eunuchs to guard women in ancient times.

---

qui tacet consentit

**Silence gives assent.** In constitutional democracies the right to silence is usually protected.

---

quod erat demonstrandum

**QED:** what was to be demonstrated (has been proved). Usually employed for self-congratulation.

---

quod vide

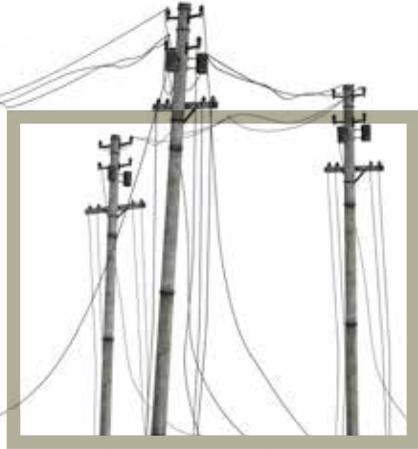
**q.v. or, which see.** A way of cross-referencing in a text.

This is issue 15 of *RE:*, a magazine for everyone in Norton Rose Fulbright around the world and for our friends, among them our clients and alumni. Shortly before going to press, I spent three days on the tenth floor of a major hospital, covering for a friend whose 94-year-old mother had been brought in with pneumonia. Afterwards, back at my desk and unbelievably weary, I listened to a Maze track listed on the Coda called 'Joy and Pain' and it nearly finished me off, it captured my mood so well. Shauna Clark in Houston had sent it in, so I contacted her to thank her. I am relating this incident because I want to direct you to the smaller moments in the magazine as well as the colourful pages of children's books and the dramatic light and shade of theatre rehearsals that fill this issue. We also have the food of south India, the life of Psyche Tai and a glimpse of Zimbabwe. Our Stringers include the Canadian Tom Valentine in Mozambique and the final 'letter from America' by Alexandra Howe, who has just said goodbye to New York. Alexandra is the arts editor of *RE:*, so I invited her to choose twelve books and put them on the Bookshelf for us to marvel at. Small pleasures.

The next issue will appear at the end of 2019. See you then.

**The Editor**





# Stringers

Reports filed by correspondents across the world

## WHO CARES?

Natalia Mushinska | Russia

I am Russian, and I have noticed one thing while watching how people follow rules. In a situation where one person prioritises ‘voice of reason’ over prescribed rules, others would prefer to be obedient. No matter how absurd those prescribed rules in a particular situation are, some would prefer to follow them and some not. I am not talking about cultures based on strict orthodoxies, only about the modern secular world, the one I observe.

One incident which illustrates my point happened during a trip I made to America to visit my cousin, a recent emigré from Russia. My nephew was a couple of months old at the time, and we were having a picnic in a rural area by a local river. Each time the baby’s wipes needed to be changed, my sister had to go a long way to a toilet. The toilet, I have to note, was rather dirty, because it was that kind of a beach place. I was a little surprised and asked why not change the wipes right here by the water on linen bedding, in more pleasant surroundings and cleaner sanitary conditions. She answered: this is prohibited. I was inclined not to obey that ruling. But I heard that there was a fine to pay and no way to avoid it if you are caught. So I became obedient.

Another incident took place in Switzerland, in a ski resort. We had occupied a table for six in the open-sky area of a mountain restaurant, the type with self-service and a casual

atmosphere, where people are in their ski outfits. Three of us were having snacks and drinks and waiting for the others. When a Swiss member of our company arrived, he said that he would not join us because he had brought something to eat from home and, he insisted, he should eat at a special place rather than with us.

No doubt there are situations where rules could be ignored. But what if the mere concept of strict adherence to the rules, regardless of situation, makes life more comfortable and secure? Look at how people of different nationalities prefer to form a queue. Who are the most messy and chaotic? I think maybe the Chinese and the Russians.

There is a trait in the Russian character which we call the ‘who cares?’ attitude. We Russians know its origin. This is the seventy-year-long legacy of State property, when no one took care of the crops on the collective farm and you could bribe your way out of trouble with the traffic police. This trait is still deeply rooted inside us, even nowadays, in the changed era of private property. The ‘who-cares?’ attitude gives us a pleasant feeling of freedom. Ordinary Russians feel free when it comes to the small things of everyday life. But are they free when it comes to decisions which influence people’s lives or the life of the whole country?

---

NM is RE:’s Moscow correspondent.

## TOMORROW, AND TOMORROW

Alexandra Howe | United States

September 15, 2008: Lehman Brothers files for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. It is the largest filing in U.S. history, listing debts of over US\$600 billion, and sparks panic in the global financial markets. Thousands of jobs are lost. Dazed employees are photographed leaving the bank’s offices carrying their belongings in cardboard boxes.

September 11, 1844: 23-year-old Hayum Lehmann, wearing his best shoes, arrives in America from Germany. He swiftly anglicizes his name to Henry Lehman. Two younger brothers follow, Mendel (Emanuel) in 1847 and Mayer in 1850. In Alabama, they work together in Henry’s store, selling suits and fabrics, accepting raw cotton from customers as payment. They later establish a cotton brokering company, which they call Lehman Brothers.

To trace the story of these brothers and their descendants is to trace the history of Western capitalism over two centuries. It is also a dazzling manifestation of the American Dream. The business they built and nurtured was remarkable, ambitious, resilient. It survived the American Civil War and the Great Depression. It moved to New York and branched out into coffee, sugar and oil trading, became a bank and invested in retail, railways, aviation and cinema. When King Kong scaled the Empire State Building in 1933, it was with Lehman Brothers’ backing. Management of the company was handed down from Lehman

father to Lehman son, until Emanuel's grandson, Robert 'Bobbie' Lehman died in 1969, leaving a void. Control passed from the family into the hands of the company's trading division. And the rest, as they say, is history.

Understandably, the monumental disaster of the bank's collapse has overshadowed, perhaps even tainted, in modern minds all that came before. This imbalance is interestingly probed in a play, *The Lehman Trilogy*, which transferred to New York from London in March; it's a drama by an Italian playwright, mostly about the Lehman family but also about the bank, because, really, the family was the bank. The dreadful denouement, when it comes, takes up only a small part of the action.

The New York audience loved it, and I think that was partly because it offered a tonic to the American vision of itself. The polarisation of contemporary American politics has become conventional wisdom, and any kind of schism is destabilising for national self-fashioning. I think there is a kind of agonising among New Yorkers—maybe among other Americans, too—about what it means just now to be American. I think a similar crisis of identity is being played out in my native Britain. Escape into drama and the past is a welcome relief.

---

AH is RE's arts editor, based in New York.

## NIGHT STROLL IN MAPUTO

Tom Valentine | Canada

I nearly lost my balance as the train lurched ahead. It served me right, climbing the fence and jumping onboard this railway car. I had thought it was an old abandoned train car and I wanted to take a picture as the African sun started to set. It was not abandoned—it was one of the railway's passenger cars and this was how people traveled.

I jumped out of the car as it picked up speed, did my best James Bond roll, and stood up, dusting myself off. I wandered back along the tracks toward Maputo's train station. Built by the Portuguese more than a century ago, the paint was peeling and some windows were broken but the building is beautiful and is loved.

As I walked back to my hotel through the marketplace outside the station, I was struck by the contrast between the evening activities in the streets of Mozambique and my walk along the marina in Dubai the night before.

Last night, I walked past yachts bobbing in the harbour; rarely operated, often simply a display of wealth. Here in Maputo, the streets were dirty with trash scattered about and street vendors calling out as they sold tee shirts, cheap plastic goods, and roasted peanuts. The contrast was stark and unsettling.

Mozambique is war-torn. Its infrastructure is failing. And tens of millions of dollars of foreign aid have somehow vanished. But, tomorrow is starting to look more promising. The world's largest gas discoveries of the last five years have been found off the shores of east Africa. Each time I travel into the country now, I spy the usual luggage tags on the suitcases accompanying my fellow travellers in the airport lounge: many of the major players are now spending time in Mozambique as they try to line up the hundreds of moving parts that a successful project requires.

I crossed the street, followed the sound of singing and came upon a wedding serenade. There were smiles, there was laughter, much like any wedding anywhere. Everyone seemed to be looking forward to what tomorrow would bring.

---

TV is a partner in Calgary.

# child's foundation

**we make families not orphans**



In Uganda, more than 50,000 children are growing up in orphanages. Nearly all have family. Orphanages make orphans out of children. Every day, families in crisis or poverty are forced to give up their children in the hope of a better life. Children lose their childhoods and their life chances. Decades of research prove what we know in our hearts: a family is the best place for a child to grow up. Child's i Foundation supports families to keep their children; and helps reunite children in orphanages with their own families where possible, and find loving, Ugandan adoptive or foster families where the child's own family cannot be found or is unsafe.

**Thank you to Norton  
Rose Fulbright for helping  
us to make sure that  
every child grows up in  
a safe and loving home,  
and not an orphanage.**

You have supported our work in Uganda in more ways than we ever expected. Over the past 3 years, you have welcomed us into your office and given us a home for our weekly team meetings, providing us with significant cost savings on our overheads. Your generosity helps us to support hundreds of vulnerable families.

## **YOU HELPED US TO HELP ABIGAIL AND HER CHILDREN**

Abigail is the mother of triplets—Leo, Lucas and Luke—and when they were born she had neither the means nor the confidence to take care of them. She was unemployed. She had no-one to help her. Her babies were at risk of being placed in an orphanage. "That was my nightmare", says Abigail. We supported Abigail with her medical bills and we gave her the skills and the confidence to take care of her three beautiful boys. Our social workers also helped her to start a small business to provide for her children. This support has given Abigail the confidence to keep her family together.

**[www.childsifoundation.org](http://www.childsifoundation.org)**

To know more, please contact Paula Alionyte  
[paula@childsifoundation.org](mailto:paula@childsifoundation.org)

A woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a dark blue top with a white dotted pattern, sits on a bed with three young children. The children are wearing white and red t-shirts. One child in the foreground is looking to the right with their hand near their mouth. Another child is behind them, and a third is partially visible on the left. The room has a grey wall with a small orange-framed mirror. In the background, several yellow jerrycans are stacked on a shelf. The image is framed by a decorative border of colorful triangles and circles at the top and bottom.

**“I am so happy.  
My children  
are my pride  
and joy.”**

RE: Work

# Wide angle

BY THE CELTIC SEA IN ST IVES, CORNWALL, BY IVAN MASLAROV





**BOOKS**  
**NEVER**  
**BOOKS**  
**WITHOUT**  
**BOOKS**  
**ONE**

# BOOKS FOR CHILDREN FROM 6 MONTHS TO 12 YEARS OLD

Once you start, it's hard to stop. I still have collections of nursery rhymes and folk tales and poems for children on my shelves from years ago. All I have space to mention here is a bear of very little brain, Winnie-the-Pooh; and the poet Michael Rosen; and the illustrator Alan Marks. Oh yes, and Rosie & Jim. And the writer Shirley Hughes. And the Ahlbergs. *The Borrowers*. *Thomas the Tank Engine*. Professor Astro Cat. Yuri Norstein's *Hedgehog in the Fog*. *The Iron Man*. And for the grown-ups, Lucy Mangan's memoir, *Bookworm*. **The Editor**

## ALMOST EVERYBODY FARTS

by *Marty Kelley (writer/illustrator)*  
(Sterling Children's Books, 2017)

The title of this book says it all. This is one that should be reserved for the silly times, which for Maeve is always! The book was actually a gift from her little friend who picked it because 'Maeve is always up for a good, loud laugh!' The illustrations are very good—adding to the general silliness.

**Lisa Cabel, Toronto**  
(selected by 6-year-old Maeve)

## BUBBLEGUM DELICIOUS

by *Dennis Lee (poet) and  
David McPhail (illustrator)*  
(Key Porter Books, 2000)

Dennis Lee is a Canadian poet best known for his children's classic, *Alligator Pie*. This particular collection of poems takes you on a whimsical reading journey and has some great illustrations. There are poems for the silly at heart ('Goober and Guck') and for the romantics ('If Lonesome Was a Pot of Gold'). Lee's rhythmic style makes this collection fun for both the reader and those being read to. My son has enjoyed these poems since the age of two and will, I'm sure, come back to it in the years to come!

**Keya Dasgupta, Toronto**  
(5-year-old son)

## ANNE OF GREEN GABLES

by *L. M. Montgomery*  
(L.C. Page & Co., 1908; V&A Collector's edn, Puffin Classics, 2017)

A well-written, evocative story of a young girl who has a rough start as an orphan but whose spirit, wit and high intelligence sees her win the hearts of her reluctant adoptive parents and the society around her. Written in 1908 by Lucy Maud Montgomery and set on Prince Edward Island in Canada.

**Allison Chong, Melbourne**  
(eighteen nieces and nephews)

## BUSY, BUSY WORLD

by *Richard Scarry (writer/illustrator)*  
(Golden Books, 1965; 50th anniversary edn, Random House, 2015)

A classic from my childhood. Richard Scarry takes you around the world in a series of short, silly stories. Thirty-three countries and thirty-three characters. I still have my original copy!

**Fleur Shaw-Jones, Melbourne**  
(7-year-old son, Christian)

## DIE HÄSCHENSCHULE

by *Albert Sixtus*

(*writer*) and *Fritz Koch-Gotha* (*illustrator*)  
(Alfred Hahn, 1924; Esslinger Verlag, 2009)

A 95-year-old classic. (The English translation might not be that old.) In English, *A Day at Bunny School*.

**Andrea Spellerberg, Munich**

## CAR-JACKED

by *Ali Sparkes*  
(OUP Oxford, 2015)

The truly gripping, exciting story of a twelve-year-old boy who makes an unlikely friend when they should be enemies!

**Dawn Hayes, London**  
(selected and reviewed by 11-year-old son, Maxim)

## DIE WIMMELBÜCHER

by *Ali Mitgutsch*  
(*illustrator/writer*)  
(series, Ravensburger  
Buchverlag, 1968—)

Best picture books ever. No text, just huge pictures, with endless details to discover (also for the grown-ups): pictures of daily life in the 1960s and '70s, in town, in the countryside, in the mountains and at the sea. Look for the skiing scenes and the kissing boys in the 1960s chairlift. The series started with *Rundherum in meiner Stadt*. A joy to explore.

**Andrea Spellerberg, Munich**

## DOG MAN

by *Dav Pilkey* (*writer/illustrator*)  
(series, Scholastic, 2016—)

Dav Pilkey (the creator of Captain Underpants) is still writing this series of tales about a half man/half dog police officer and his misadventures with an Evil Cat. The stories are written and illustrated in comic book style ('graphic novel' in today's speak) so the content is easily digestible for kids who are learning to read and reluctant to try on their own. They encouraged my son Liam to start reading; and the humour kept him interested. Liam wishes to point out that the characters include a strict Police Chief, an actor, a news lady (reporter) and the not-so-strict security guard easily and absurdly foiled by a kitten.

**Lisa Cabel, Toronto**  
(selected by 8-year-old Liam)

## GO, DOG, GO!

by *P.D. Eastman* (*writer/illustrator*)  
(Random House, 1961—)

This book is full of dogs. Big dogs, little dogs, red dogs, green dogs, blue dogs and yellow dogs, dogs going fast, dogs going slow, dogs in cars, dogs going up, dogs going down, dogs sleeping and dogs playing, but best of all a dog PARTY! It is a fun book for babies and young readers alike. I remember this book from my own childhood and have read it to all of my own kids who have each loved the dog fun, culminating in a slight puppy obsession for everyone!

**Georgina Hey, Sydney**

## HARRY POTTER

by *J.K. Rowling*  
(series, Bloomsbury, 1997—)

Each and every night, when it came time for the bedtime story, I was obliged by my firstborn to read her the full adventures of Harry Potter. His life in Hogwarts, his struggle to defeat He Who Must Not Be Named—I read my daughter all 1,084,170 words *out loud*, over the course of what felt like centuries. Why should I be the only parent to know such suffering?

Seven masterly books: nuanced, layered storytelling. Highly recommended.

**John Kim, Vancouver/Singapore**  
(two children, 8 and 12)

### **HAVE SPACESUIT—WILL TRAVEL**

*by Robert Heinlein*

(Scribner's, 1958, 1st edn; Del Rey, 1981; New English Library, 1987)

In this late 1950s piece by a noted science fiction writer (and engineer), the young male hero acquires an old space suit, repairs it, and becomes caught up in an extraterrestrial adventure. The novel deals with plenty of science fiction images, but also takes on some pretty interesting ideas—evolution of species, judgment of others and genocide (indirectly), and ends with the hero returning to Earth with valuable mathematical insights to benefit humanity. The hero heads off to college to be an engineer at Massachusetts Institute of Technology aka MIT. This is an easy read by a talented writer. Recommended for anyone who is nine years old.

**Josh Agrons, Houston**

### **I WANT MY HAT BACK**

*by Jon Klassen (illustrator/writer)*

(Walker Books, 2012; board book edn 2018)

This was a firm favourite during the pre-school and 'learning to read' years. Simple repetition for the kids, quirky but cool illustrations, and a dark twist at the end—what's not to like?

**Katie Knight, London**

(7-year-old daughter, Eva; and 6-year-old son, William)

### **KIDNAPPED**

*by Robert Louis Stevenson*

(*Young Folks* magazine, 1886; var. publishers incl. Vintage, 2012; Usborne, 2016)

This historical novel captures the feel, if not the precise chronological events, of Jacobite political conflicts and controversies in mid-eighteenth century Scotland. It tells the story of David Balfour, a young man denied his inheritance by a scheming uncle, who is kidnapped to be sold into slavery, escapes, and by his adventures comes into his fortune. Along the way, Balfour must learn among other things the meaning of justice, and that good friends may none the less have profoundly differing views of politics and religion. This is a great tale for children of ten and up to read by themselves; or catch them younger and read it to them.

**Josh Agrons, Houston**

### **HOLES**

*by Louis Sachar*

(Bloomsbury, 2000)

The story of a boy who unfortunately has to endure an old family curse that gets him into unbearable pain and trouble.

**Dawn Hayes, London**

(selected and reviewed by 11-year-old son, Maxim)

### **KITCHEN DISCO**

*by Clare Foges (writer) and Al Murphy (illustrator)*  
(Faber & Faber, 2015)

Comedy illustrations and words that get the resident grown-up rapping against your will—the problem with this one is that nobody is up for bedtime by the end of it!

**Katie Knight, London**

(7-year-old daughter, Eva; and 6-year-old son, William)

### **LITTLE BLUE TRUCK**

*by Alice Schertle (writer) and Jill McElmurry (illustrator)*  
(series, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2008—)

This is a great book for younger children. It tells the story—in rhyme—of a large 'bully' dump truck who gets stuck in the mud. The little blue truck, who is a kind little truck, goes to help the big dump truck, but he too gets stuck! When his friends (from horse to toad) come to rescue him, the dump truck learns a valuable lesson about being kind to others, no matter how busy and important you may be.

**Lisa Cabel, Toronto**

(selected by 6-year-old Maeve)

### **PERCY JACKSON & THE OLYMPIANS**

*by Rick Riordan*  
(series, Disney Hyperion, 2005—)

Full immersion in the vast and complex world of Greek mythology. My son James is an avid reader and loved all five books in the series. There's a lot of text to read here—ideal for kids with a vivid imagination and a strong vocabulary. Percy Jackson is the demigod son of a mortal (Sally Jackson) and the Greek god Poseidon. My son James says that the writing is 'very funny' and the stories are 'cool' because they change up Greek mythology in a way that is fun. As James tells it, 'the real stories are not funny, so this is a better way for kids to learn!'

**Lisa Cabel, Toronto**

(selected by 9-year-old James)

### **PIPPY LONGSTOCKING**

*by Astrid Lindgren*  
(Rabén & Sjögren, illustrations by Ingrid vng Nyman, 1945; OUP gift edn, illustrations by Lauren Child, 2010)

All the Pippi and Lotta stories by the Swedish writer Astrid Lindgren are beautifully written and funny.

**Andrea Spellerberg, Munich**

### **SCARLETT AND THE SCRATCHY MOON**

*by Chris McKimmie (writer/illustrator)*  
(Allen & Unwin, 2013)

The 'one and only' Chris McKimmie: is in fact my fabulous dad. This is the story of a young child (my second daughter), the loss of two

much loved family dogs (my own) and the comfort that is offered by her favourite toys (which she still sleeps with every night). The theme of loss and renewal is universal, and particularly striking when viewed through the eyes of a young child.

**Dylan McKimmie, Perth**

### **SNUGGLEPOT AND CUDDLEPIE**

*By May Gibbs (writer/illustrator)*  
(Angus & Robertson, 1918—; HarperCollins  
(Australia) deluxe edn, 1990)

Snugglepot and Cuddlepie, little gumnut brothers, go in search of a human and meet new bush friends along the way. As a child living in rural Australia, I believed the bush was alive with these characters!

**Jenny Leslie, London**  
(three nieces, 2 and 5 [twins])

### **THE GRUFFALO**

*by Julia Donaldson*  
(*writer*) and *Axel Scheffler (illustrator)*  
(Macmillan, 1999–)

I probably know *The Gruffalo* off by heart. It was the first book I read to my daughter in my quest to get her to sleep better—and then read to her every night before bed for six months. It's fun, simple to read and not too long, with lovely illustrations. Before she could understand the story properly, my daughter simply enjoyed the rhythm and rhyme of it, plus Mummy doing daft voices.

**Laura Louw, London**  
(two children, 9 months and 2 years)

### **THE BAD GUYS**

*by Aaron Blabey (writer/illustrator)*  
(series, Scholastic Australia, 2015—)

Meet Mr Wolf. Mr Shark. Mr Snake. Mr Piranha—a tough gang of scary-looking animals trying to change their bad reputations. They'll do anything to be heroes. I cannot wait for episode nine. (And they're making a movie!)

**Fleur Shaw-Jones, Melbourne**  
(7-year-old son, Christian)

### **THE LITTLE PRINCE**

*by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry*  
(*writer/illustrator*)  
(translation from French by  
Katherine Woods)  
Reynal & Hitchcock, 1943; Gallimard,  
1945; Egmont incl. Heritage edn, 2013)

*Le Petit Prince*. Another classic.

**Andrea Spellerberg, Munich**

### **THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER**

*by Mark Twain*  
(James R. Osgood, 1881/1882; Simon & Schuster, 2006)

This charming nineteenth-century writing also carries some meaningful messages. A prince and a pauper switch places in society. Mark Twain takes a hard look at social inequality, and helps the reader to see that judging someone by how they look is profoundly misguided. Though written for children, with some wonderful illustrations, the book takes on some provocative topics.

**Josh Agrons, Houston**

### **THE SCHOOL FOR GOOD AND EVIL**

by *Soman Chainani*

(series, HarperCollins, 2013–)

*Alice in Wonderland* meets *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*. *Sleeping Beauty* meets *The Walking Dead*. *The Princess Diaries* meets *Game of Thrones*. What's not to like? Only those with a macabre sense of humour and an appreciation for inspired lunacy need apply for this ride.

**John Kim, Vancouver/Singapore**

(two children, 8 and 12)

### **THE SHAPE-SHIFTER: STIRRING THE STORM**

by *Ali Sparkes*

(series, Oxford University Press/OUP, 2016–)

A story packed full of excitement, drama and crime. There is only one person who can stop the evil head-teacher from committing his worst crime yet! Warning: this book is the fifth in the series of six books.

**Dawn Hayes, London**

(selected and reviewed by  
11-year-old son, Maxim)

### **THE TIGER WHO CAME TO TEA**

by *Judith Kerr (writer/illustrator)*

(HarperCollins, 1968–)

A favourite of mine as a child, I rediscovered this recently. Even though it seems a bit old-fashioned (who has 'a boy from the grocer' come round anymore?), my daughter loves the idea of a tiger coming by to eat all the buns and drink all the water straight out of the tap!

☹️ I was sad to hear of Judith Kerr's death this year. She has left us a lasting legacy.

**Laura Louw, London**

(two children, 9 months and 2 years)

### **TOOT, TOOT, BOOM! LISTEN TO THE BAND**

*Surya Sajnani (writer/illustrator)*

(Wee Gallery, 2017; QED Publishing 2017)

A press-and-listen board book: what's not to like?! Simple illustrations, minimal words and great sounds combine to create this cornucopia of fun for toddlers. The result? My two-year-old niece, Maddie, is 'in a band with Daddy!' 'Off' switch included—the book, not Maddie.

**Jenny Leslie, London**

(three nieces, 2 and 5 [twins])

### **WAR HORSE**

*by Michael Morpurgo*

(Kaye & Ward, 1982, 1st edn; commemorative edn, Egmont, 2014)

I read this to my son, then aged ten. It's about a horse in the First World War; but it's actually about the greatest of friendships, the depths of loss, and the curative power of kindness. I sobbed my way through the final chapters. My son was oblivious to the sadness (a relief, really) but thoroughly enjoyed the story.

**Lily McMyn, Singapore**

(three children, 8, 11 and 12)

### **WHEN MARNIE WAS THERE**

*by Joan G. Robinson*

(Collins, 1967, 1st edn; HarperCollins, 2014)

Anna, orphaned and lonely, is sent to live with an elderly couple in Norfolk, on the east coast of England. Her days are carefree, but friendless—until she meets Marnie. But who is Marnie? A thoroughly charming read, oozing magic and mystery.

Now also a Studio Ghibli film (with the story transposed to Hokkaido) directed by Hiromasa Yonebayashi, whose previous work includes *The Secret World of Arrietty*—but that's another story.

Read the book before you watch the film. Let the story on the pages work its way into the child's imagination.

**Jenny Leslie, London**

(three nieces, 2 and 5 [twins])

# zimbabwe

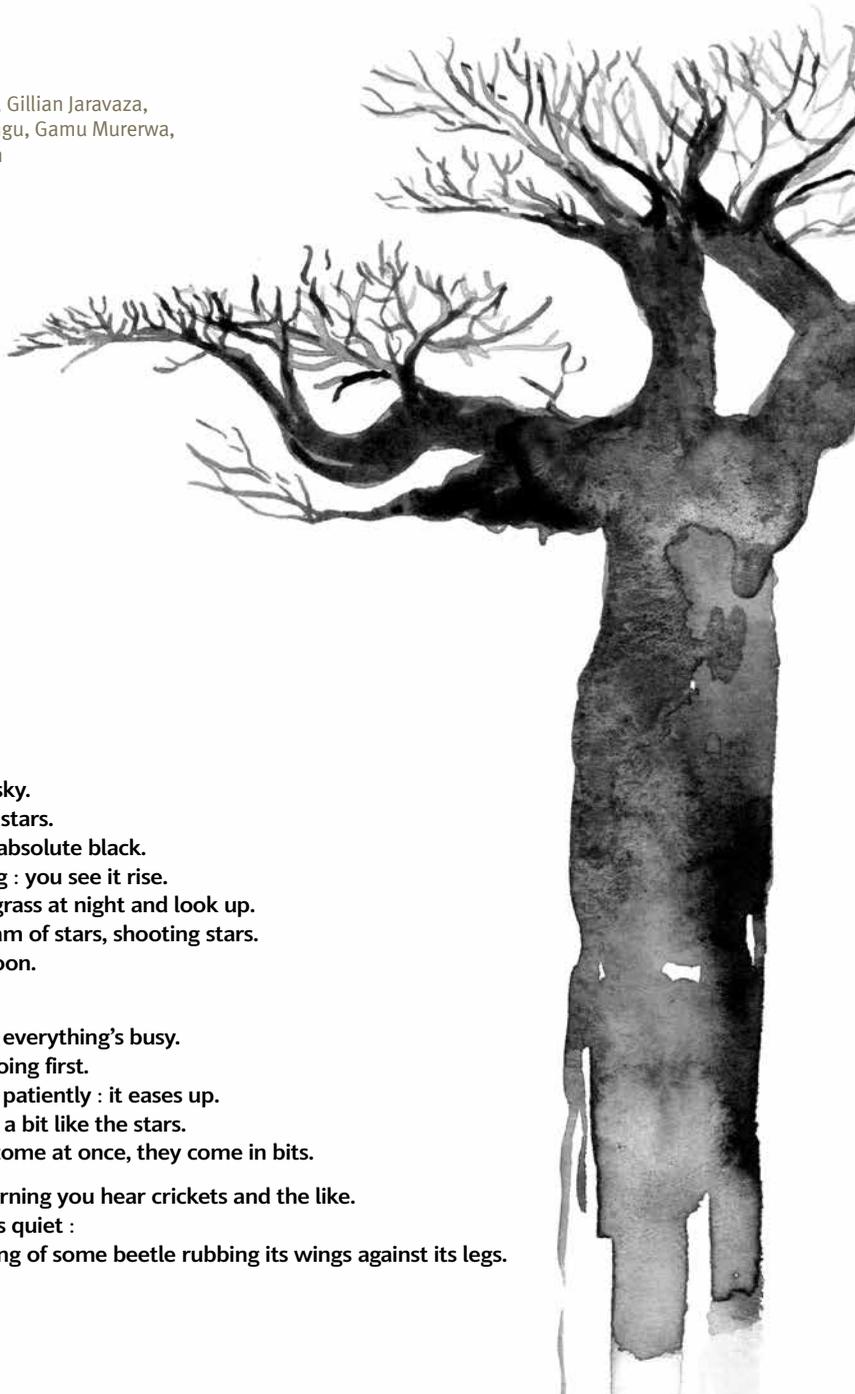
A portrait in words

By Steve Gamble, Gillian Jaravaza,  
Mordecai Mahlangu, Gamu Murerwa,  
Andrew Robinson

The stars. The sky.  
It's a sea full of stars.  
You get to see absolute black.  
The moon is big : you see it rise.  
You lie on the grass at night and look up.  
It's a thick stream of stars, shooting stars.  
A big bright moon.

Sunrise is busy, everything's busy.  
The birds get going first.  
The sun comes patiently : it eases up.  
Birds come out a bit like the stars.  
They don't all come at once, they come in bits.

In the early morning you hear crickets and the like.  
Then mostly it's quiet :  
Just the little zing of some beetle rubbing its wings against its legs.





Have you ever seen a jacaranda tree?  
When the petals fall, it's like a row of velvet down the street.  
In the valleys you get fever trees :  
Dark yellow trunks, bright greens almost lime-y green leaves.  
They offset each other beautifully in the sun.

Today, we don't have any cloud cover.  
None at all.  
We won't until late October.  
The skies are bright blue.  
You'll not see a clearer sky anywhere in the world at moments like this.  
It's one of the wonderful things about having no industry.  
It's all just bright blue.

Baobabs are upturned trees  
They are the funniest trees in the world  
And one of the oldest trees in the world  
  
They absorb the light, they almost glow  
  
Everywhere, baobabs are dying, of old age  
They happened all at the same time  
They seem to all be going at the same time

Just before the rains come, people burn their grass.  
At night you'll see fires on the roadside.  
  
You can smell the rains coming.  
The raindrops are massive and when they hit the ground  
They smell wonderful.

The sound, in the bush—when there's a storm—  
Goes around and around and around. It cannons about.  
You see the rain coming and the thick slanted  
Shaft. Cumulonimbus. Streams created out of nothing.

You see birds on the water  
Dead still  
They're looking for movement :  
Cranes, and the herons, and the storks  
  
You can walk past and not know the little blue crane is there  
Standing absolutely still

You get elephant crossing from Zambia into Zimbabwe  
With their trunks sticking up  
They walk on the bottom of the river and stick their trunks up

Everything's larger than life

You get rocks balancing on each other  
Massive boulders, thousands of years old  
They change, cast thick shadows, take on the hue of the sun

Big, blue-necked lizards come running

If you wash in the river, you wash where the water flows quickly.  
You always have someone on hippo control and croc control.

We were going to the watering hole to look at hippo.  
Along the way, we sat down, under a bush  
Just sitting, getting some liquids into our bodies.  
That was when the first of about a thousand buffalo came down.  
We sat under this bush for a good hour as these buffalo  
Eased past, moving towards the watering hole.

We were sitting round the campfire and next thing an impala  
Came rushing through, jumped over our fire.  
We sat there looking, what was that...

Then along came these wild dog, jumped over our fire.

I grew up on a farm in the Low Veld  
There was a big river a kilometre away  
And a big mountain two kilometres away  
During the rainy season everything was green

It's hot in the Low Veld  
We spent a lot of time in the river, cooling down  
Our parents didn't know :  
They'd never have allowed us near water

My mother and my father have passed on  
I own the farm now  
It passed to me because I am the eldest boy  
That's the tradition

My dad died when I was ten  
She started farming full time then  
She farms tobacco and winter wheat  
She farms barley  
She farms maize  
She keeps a few cows  
She'll sell a cow to the butcher if she needs to

Cash flow can be difficult for a farmer :  
Your money only comes at the end of the season  
Anything can happen during that time

She looks like me—but stronger  
She looks like she can take a lot more than I can  
It's as if she doesn't have time to be gloomy



She has things to be doing  
She's thinking things through  
It's almost as if she's not there.

People are looking out for each other  
That's part of Zimbabwean culture  
It's Ubuntu

It's a peaceful country  
A deeply religious country  
Very God-fearing

We choose to be here

Family and friends : everyone's close  
People don't go around saying, 'I'm Shona, you're Ndebele'  
They say : we are Zimbabweans

Time will change, as it does everything  
'Ah, but', people say : 'it never changes'  
You hear that a lot

I was a small child many years ago :

We walked to school along the footpath.  
It was quite a challenge because we were very small.  
We walked up to five kilometres to get to school.  
It took almost a full hour, unless you ran.  
It was a tiring walk, sometimes cold in the morning  
But very hot in the afternoon.

We didn't have any shoes then.  
We just walked barefoot all that distance out in the bush.  
Not easy. But everybody did that.  
It didn't feel that you were alone in that.

Nobody kept time.  
You just looked at the sun.

Girls dropped out of school early.  
Some got pregnant. Some got married.  
In the end it was mostly boys going to school.  
It's changed now :

Everything changes, including that.

A woman will have a family.  
A man will need to take care of his family.  
If the money for the school is tight  
The family will continue to send the boy.

It's all right in the suburbs but the city centre :  
It's a whole different territory

On this one occasion she wore shorts



To go into the city centre  
She came back in tears :  
They pulled me out of the minibus  
They said they weren't going to take me  
They called me names'  
She was ten, eleven—just a baby

I call it an African mentality  
Of what a woman should be like, very African

One son is settled in the UK, one is in Australia.  
There is a girl : she is in South Africa.  
The two youngest boys are still in Zimbabwe.

I started as a Rhodesian and became a Zimbabwean  
I am of the Ndebele tribe  
This country is the only home I know.

I grew up in Harare : my mother is still there.  
My siblings are in Canada.  
We are part of a diaspora.

The young bright guys go off to university outside Zim.  
Seeing them again : well, that's a different thing.  
It's rare to see people coming back to Zim.

Zimbabwe is becoming a poor place  
It's actually quite disheartening  
Some effort has been made

But it's slow : it's going to take forever

I've had no water for fifteen years  
The roads are full of potholes  
There's no fuel in the cities

We're not in the place where we should be

We have no clean water coming out of the pipes.  
'You can't blame the government for a drought', people say.  
No. We can't.

We can blame the government for not being prepared.  
They know we have a drought every ten years. That kind of thing  
Breaks our hearts.

My childhood home was on a hill.  
We didn't get any water : it didn't go up the hill.  
We opened the tap and it spat out a little bit of dirty water.

Then it shut down.  
We tried to dig a borehole : but we were up a hill.  
We couldn't reach the water table.

We took buckets and we drove to my uncle.  
He had a borehole.  
We drove home and we stored the water in 200-litre drums.

My mum was hooking power to our new house.  
At that time we had daily load shedding.  
She was going to hook it from the power line closest to us.  
The people at the power company said :  
'We recommend you spend a little more.  
We recommend you hook it to a line a little further away.  
This is a line that feeds to the President's house.'

From that time if the power ever went  
It was for fifteen minutes and that was probably a mistake.

In the village, my grandparents, they had no electricity at first  
They had solar panels : enough for a radio, a bit of light  
At night, they had a paraffin lamp

You would buy your groceries in town to take to your family  
They'd hang the meat over the fire to smoke it  
They'd cook on the open fire in the kitchen  
You'd smell of firewood when you came back

The men have their communal bowl of food

The women have their bowl  
The men sit along the sides  
The women sit on the floor  
The men congregated together  
The women congregated together

People were hopeful that Mugabe would wake up one day  
Have a brilliant idea, turn things around.  
Mugabe was a ninety-year-old man.  
You can't blame Mugabe for everything  
Even though it would be nice.

It was the people he surrounded himself with.  
Those people, they're still there.  
It's the same bus, different driver.  
People were hopeful when we got rid of Mugabe.  
When we had our coup that wasn't a coup.

I can't see that a lot has changed.  
We're waiting to see these changes.

The people in power once made sacrifices for Zimbabwe.  
It's as though we owe them for the sacrifices they made.  
My father made sacrifices. He was a political refugee, an exile.  
He's got four sisters : he missed every one of their weddings.  
They had to bury my mum's brother without her being there.



There was hope.  
There is still that hope.

At that time  
There was nothing on the shelves, nothing in the stores.  
We'd go down to South Africa to buy bread.  
You could pay South Africans : put your order in.  
Within five days it would be delivered to your family.

Now, you can't walk on the pavements freely  
For fear of stepping on somebody's produce.  
People selling tomatoes, onions, *mazhanje*  
Selling eggs from their car boot  
People doing shoe repairs, selling shoes, selling watches  
Anything you can buy, somebody's selling it.

A graduate with a first-class mathematics degree has to apply  
To be a driver. To be a gardener.  
They are standing on street corners, selling airtime, laughing.

# zimbabwe

Give it time. That's what people say. Give it time.





# THE FACTORY

IVAN MASLAROV

A photo essay  
[thefactorytheatre.co.uk](http://thefactorytheatre.co.uk)







Theatre is a collaborative practice and the Factory one of many innovative theatre groups around the world. They use no costumes, no stage sets, and mostly no stage. Casting is gender blind, and the actors learn several parts and discover more or less on the night which role they will play. At the first rehearsal I observed, in a hired rehearsal space above a pub, Macbeth was played by a pregnant woman; at a later production, she, now heavily pregnant, played Macduff; she is now at home, with her newborn, learning the part of Cleopatra. The Factory performs Shakespeare—each line of verse the measure of a breath—and all the actors honour the text. Theatre is a live, collaborative practice across playwright, director, actors, and audiences; and the Factory likes to engage with its audience, which is why it holds ‘open door’ rehearsals of the kind you see here.











# Life

jump out of aeroplane Martin Scott, London. complete my first marathon in under four hours, preferably alive! Tom Owens, Austin. add rock garden to backyard Andrew Lim, Calgary. join hiking club Jeanine Goodall, Cape Town. take cruise to Western Caribbean Soraja Davis, Dallas. take 1 minute 52 seconds off my half-marathon time Clinton Slogrove, Dubai. learn to be a clown and read Stephen King Timothy Lam, Hong Kong. obtain my motorcycle licence Peal Mathonsi, Jo'burg. go swimming with two-year-old daughter on Saturday mornings Torsten Sauer, Luxembourg. give more respect to others Rickey Sykes, Los Angeles. vacate to London after daughter graduates from middle school Andre Hanson, Minneapolis. run 5km within 20 minutes Reno Lessard, Québec. learn traditional hula dance and teach it to my niece Ileana Navarro, San Antonio. buy a house in the neighborhood of my dreams Maxwell Karasek, St. Louis. draw landscape painting Penny Zhu, Singapore. install curtains in new apartment one year after moving in Alexander Mathes, Munich. get better at salsa! Khalid el Moussaoui, Amsterdam. learn song on guitar Danielle Chiang, Toronto. read non-English-language book Ervin Tan, Singapore. treat my dog after visit to vet Svetlana Valivots, Moscow. run 5km in under 29 mins. Chanunchida Tharnthorncharoen, Bangkok. finish the Andrew Roberts book on Churchill that I started six months ago Glen Barrentine, New York. get married! walk down aisle, don't trip Ellen Vincent, Brisbane. qualify as snooker referee Gurjot Kaur, Newcastle. ride Master Blaster at Schlitterbahn Water Park, New Braunfels, Texas Barbara Cooper, Houston.

To  
do

# The sporting life

“I WANT TO DO SOME SKY RUNNING”

## Ultra non plus

### THE RUNNER

Russ Trice, Los Angeles

Journey running, that's my thing: a kind of 'travelling with a purpose'. I went across Ireland from the Beara peninsula to Dublin the year that Brexit was announced and the Euro Cup was on. I ran fifty or sixty km a day, stopping to talk to farmers and just chat. I love that about journey running. You see the landscape from ground level, meet the people, stay above an inn.

I was a runner in high school and started to do longer distances during the recession. In the last ten years it's been more ultra-running. Only a small group of people do it, so you know one another and it connects you. Sometimes my eldest daughter joins my training, going up and down the local mountains. She's old enough now to learn how to handle an ice axe and move carefully.

I carry everything I need: an emergency bivvy sac, food, a little first-aid, a hat, and a GPS Spot tracker, so if I get in a bad way—or I'm going too slow—I can signal my crew or my family.

In ultra-running, things that people often think are weird are normal. It's normal to run, be sick, eat and go again. It's normal to barely be able to walk, but still run. The older you get, the more you learn. I know how to take

care of my feet; I know how to fuel myself correctly; I've run in heat close to 54°C; I've run in cold temperatures above the Arctic Circle; I'm okay at altitude. And if you do suffer, you've put yourself there, right?

There's always something tougher. I've run the Marathon des Sables and that is one of the toughest events in the world. I think that's why they have the high finish rate. People prepare properly. It takes a good few years just to get in the race.

There's a saying, “90 per cent of ultra-running is mental – the other ten percent is all in your head”. That mental aspect is extremely important. You can't train to run two hundred miles. It has to come from your head.

I always have projects and wishes going. Then, depending on what life brings, I make one happen and I'll wait for the other. I want to go to the King's Trail, the Kungsleden, in Sweden, with my sister; it involves a lot of water crossings, which we'll do by pack raft. I want to fly to Cape Town with some crew, cross over to Namibia and then run through the Fish River Canyon and up and over to the Skeleton Coast. At some point I want to do some sky running.

### THE CYCLIST

Richard Lewis, Sydney

I have just spent forty hours on my bike, cycling 1,000 kilometres from Melbourne to Sydney and climbing 14,000 vertical metres through Australian ski-fields. I had a nasty accident last year (I was hit from behind by a car) and I have joints which have already endured more than forty years of exercise. But, you know, the great beauty of cycling is that, provided you stay upright, it is relatively kind on the body.

Cycling is addictive. It's tremendously sociable (there's a huge post-ride coffee culture), fantastic aerobic exercise and a great way to see the scenery. It gives me a chance to get out in the fresh air, push myself to my limits, compete and release plenty of endorphins.

Advances in technology have led to electronic gearing, disc brakes and bikes that weigh less than seven kilograms. Bikes are now highly tuned machines. Strava has also taken competition to new levels: it records a rider's time for each segment of a ride, so I can find out where I rank on any particular climb—which feeds my competitive streak perfectly.

I have cycled many well-known rides in Australia, climbed the Stelvio in Italy, taken part in the BP MS150 in

Texas and raced in the World Cycling Championships in Perth. The toughest climb I have done—so far—is the Mortirolo in the Italian Alps: over eleven kilometres at an average eleven per cent gradient. That one was mentally challenging.

My wife tells me that cycling has become an obsession with me—and that, after twenty-five years of marriage to a total sport fanatic, she is not in the least surprised.

In my youth I was a competitive tennis player. Even my choice of university was sport-driven—I decided on Sheffield so that I could continue to train with the Yorkshire tennis squad.

At twenty-seven, I had the chance of a two-year secondment to Sydney; I have lived in Sydney now more than thirty years—that's how good Australia's outdoor lifestyle is. I also played squash competitively, until I realised it was a young man's game in the heat. Then I took up triathlon, but my swimming was way off the pace of the locals, so I turned to middle-distance running before, at forty-five, taking up sprinting. A series of calf muscle tears brought that to a premature end, and that's when my obsession turned to cycling.

## THE SWIMMER

Sabine Meinert, Munich

I started running; then I started swimming on the side and cycling on the side and some triathlons, and so it went. You build up the stamina: then you can transfer it. I also dive. I do yoga. When I was young I did gymnastics. I wouldn't exclude any sport. Apart from motor racing. And mountain climbing; I go mountain walking, never climbing.

Last year, I had a go at the German Classic: it is a marathon run, a long-distance swim (4 kilometres), cross-country skiing (150 kilometres), and a bike ride (300 kilometres). You have to do it all within twelve months.

When you are working really long hours you have no time for the gym or team sports. That's why I started running; and then swimming. At first, I was swimming just 1500 metres. After I decided to try the triathlons, I spent time with a trainer to get my freestyle technique up to speed. So I was in the pool two or three times a week.

Then I went to the lakes to try openwater swimming. That is scary. You don't see anything. You don't see the hand in front of your face. But from week to week it got better. I usually go to the mountains on holiday and now I always pack my wetsuit.

The mountain lakes are cold and I'm freezing; that's why the wetsuit. I don't wear it for my training swims. But in most long-distance swimming races you have to wear a wetsuit. In some events the wetsuit is forbidden, and I like that; it helps me improve my rating.

My longest time in the water was a 4.2-kilometre swim. That took me eighty minutes, and I was one of the slower swimmers. The fastest were getting out of the water after fifty minutes. The Olympic swimmers are really fast; they have perfect technique. I see them at the start and I see them at the finish; in between, I don't see them: when I am in the water they are already gone.

I love two lakes: Fuschl See, near Salzburg, where I did my first openwater swim; and Thumsee, a tiny mountain lake at Bad Reichenhall in Bavaria—the water there is so clear you can drink it, and the swimming is wonderful.

When you're swimming you only hear your own breathing, you don't hear anything else. I like this. It relaxes my mind.



El Chepe in Barranca del Cobre

# The guide TAKE THE TRAIN

## CHIHUAHUA—LOS MOCHIS

My father never forgot a *National Geographic* story that he read in 1968, when we were kids. That's why, years later, our family boarded the Chihuahua al Pacifico in Mexico and set out on a journey of more than four hundred miles to the Copper Canyon: the Barrancas del Cobre.

The railroad (now called El Chepe) advertised 'world-class accommodations'. The reality was something quite different—and made the trip so much more memorable. Instead of a dining car, there was a car with seats removed and a hotplate, where a short-order cook warmed *tortas* with cheese. The 'air conditioning' meant open windows looking out on spectacular vistas. And the scenic car? A huge, cracked sun-roof.

We crossed huge cliffs and breathtaking mountains, disappeared into eighty-nine tunnels and passed by magnificent waterfalls. We stopped in villages with

sweeping views of jagged, rough terrain. We saw the cliff dwellings where the Tarahumaras (the people who 'live to run') have survived for centuries. We glimpsed an older way of life.

The Copper Canyon is four times the scale of the Grand Canyon. As our train crawled along to arrive at the rim of the Canyon, with its four-hundred-foot drops, we heard the wheels squealing on the tracks down through all the open cars.

I long to return, but I think it is best I remember that priceless trip just the way it was, back then.

*Yvonne Puig, Austin*

## CHICAGO—SEATTLE

The Empire Builder runs daily between Chicago and the Pacific Northwest. Despite covering 2,200 miles in two days, it has plenty of fresh air and stretch stops. Leaving in the afternoon, it passes through the shadowy dusk of the forest and lake country of Minnesota, where cottagers wave from twinkling porches. You awake to a shocking contrast: the bright austere plains of North Dakota. Take in the view. Take it in again. By mid-afternoon, the landscape transforms, entering the Montana wilderness, home to the charming flag-stop Essex station

(pop.~50). In season, a Trails & Rails National Park ranger boards to guide you through the rest of the journey, starting with an evening introduction to glaciology in the Glacier National Park Rockies. The train splits at night and, heading to Seattle, the final morning is spent hugging the shoreline of Puget Sound, scanning for whales and identifying peaks of the snow-capped Cascades. From the mayhem of Chicago's Union Station to the elegance of Seattle's King Street Station, from plains to mountains, lakes to sea: this is a journey of contrasts.

*Anna Wilkinson, Toronto*

## ST PETERSBURG—MOSCOW

The Grand Express is reputed to be the most luxurious Russian train operating on the St Petersburg to Moscow railway. When we booked our seven-hour journey, we had the choice of four types of VIP cabin: Premium, Grand, Imperial and Grand Deluxe! I was in Russia with my daughter on a heritage tour. My grandparents left Russia by train over one hundred years ago in a time of turmoil in the Russian Empire.

Embarking at Moskovsky Station, and with train staff standing to attention at each door of the train, we had a taste of the luxury to come. My meagre Russian language skills got a real workout as the cabin crew explained the breakfast menu and the do's and don'ts of the bathroom and the fold-out beds.

We were gently rocked to sleep and awoke to a vista of forests, lakes and villages. Breakfast (eggs Benedict, yoghurt and fruit) was delicious. The countryside gave way to the Moscow suburbs of apartment buildings and we arrived refreshed at Leningradsky Station. My grandparents never knew such luxury in Russia.

*Paul Baram, Sydney*

## BANGKOK—THE ISLANDS

Jude and I always catch the sleeper trains from Bangkok down to the Thai islands. If you have the luxury of time, I'd recommend this an alternative to flying.

Our first time was in bunks with the masses but recently we've upgraded ourselves to a private cabin! Whatever the travel conditions, we always buy a bottle of Thai whisky, sit on our bed/bunk with the window open and watch the nightlife of the towns and countryside roll by while playing cards. The shops and bars that line the tracks in the various stops are so close that you can simply lean out from your cabin window and replenish your ice and mixer stocks. Not so lucky if you come to a halt opposite a dried fish stall.

At four in the morning they start to bring round a breakfast of omelettes and coffee. We get off the train an hour later and take a mototaxi to the nearest port, where we jump on a fishing boat or a ferry for the last six hours of the journey.

*Robbie Pattemore, London*

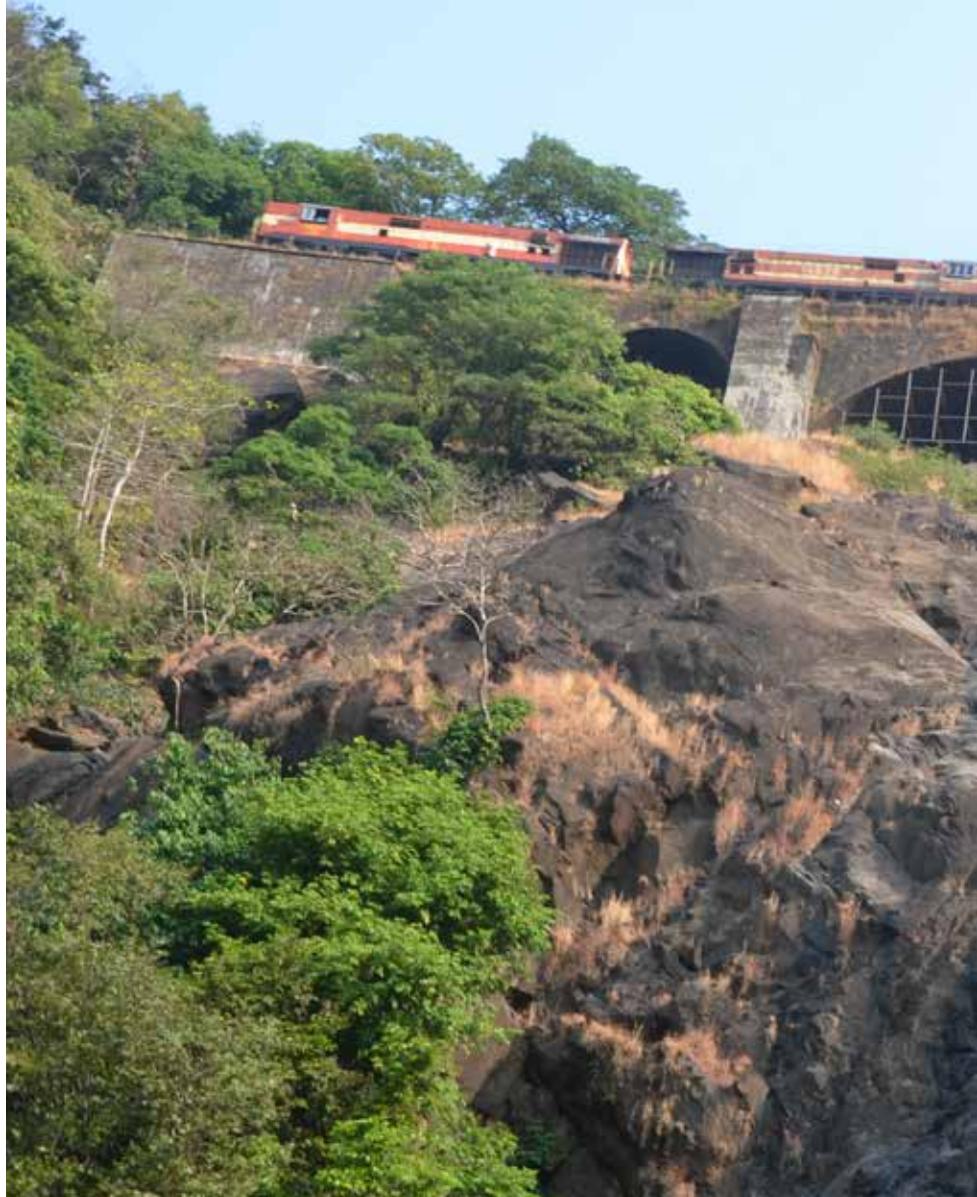


Maeklong Railway Market

## BEIJING—URUMQI

In the 1980s, when I lived in China, I went everywhere by train. The first time I went to Xinjiang it was because Urumqi was the end of the line, and I wanted to see what was there. I had no money, so I booked a hard seat for the four-day journey from Shanghai, knowing I would arrive in the cold winter of northern China. Someone lent me a Chinese peasant's overcoat and I bought some dogskin knee pads in Shandong. I sat next to a woman whose only book was a small Chinese dictionary and whose only food was a sack of puffed rice; the train guard brought round a kettle of hot water, which my neighbour used to fill her enamel mug to soak the rice. I could have walked through to the dining car, past the hard berth and soft berth compartments, to eat my fill of steamed rice and a hot dish, but at some point the will to exert myself fell away, and I was too embarrassed to do more than watch the others squeezed in around me. At night, in the rain, I saw a fragment of the Great Wall outlined against the black sky and hills. Xinjiang is a place outside the reach of the Great Wall. The next day the train went through the Gobi desert for ever, it seemed. I hadn't realised it was a desert of stone. In the distance, coming closer, I saw the Tianshan mountains. I could barely walk when I left the train and barely bring myself to leave my fellow travellers, I felt such kinship with them. Later, after I had started to work in Xinjiang, the Urumqi—Beijing line became familiar to me; three days, a hard berth, a good book, a long, long journey that took me across northern China again and again, until I owned that journey. You can get the measure of a place if you go by train.

*Nicola Liu, London*



## TOLEDO—CHICAGO

You'd be surprised at how pleasant a place the Toledo, Ohio Amtrak station was in 1997. Even at 2am, in the dead of winter, when it was mostly empty.

I had just driven a hundred and fifty treacherous miles, after working a shift waiting tables at a fondue place in Columbus. And I had another five hours to go by train to Chicago, where I would see a girlfriend I did not love.

In the anteroom, a grainy VHS copy of *Arthur* was playing on a burned-out tube

TV. When the credits rolled, and up came its familiar theme song, I was almost in tears. *Gezellig*, the Germans would call it. *Hygge* to the Danes. We'd say 'cozy'. But it was more than that. There's a clarity and purpose to setting out on a journey. And the irregular hour, room, and movie all seemed to be telling me something.

Settling in, the train felt oddly antiseptic. I rested my head against the cold steel rail beside me and tried to sleep, tracking the rhythmic movement of the train.

*Josh Bernstein, Austin*



Goa, India

### VLADIVOSTOCK—MOSCOW

My fellow passengers on the Trans-Siberian Express included families going on holiday to Lake Baikal, Russian conscripts returning home, the unwell seeking medical treatment in Moscow, and a number of overweight women heading for a health spa on the shores of the Caspian Sea. At Ulan Ude, where the train picks up passengers from Beijing, we were joined by a British couple drowning their sorrows with Russian vodka after booking a non-existent Chinese package tour. Confinement to the limited space of

the railway carriage for extended periods meant that station halts came to assume great importance, and the day's activities were largely built around them. With only one train a day in each direction, shortages in the buffet car were put down to the local housewives who used the train as a travelling shop. Each time the departure whistle blew, twenty or thirty Russian women, dressed in thick winter coats and colourful headscarves, would alight from the train with whole salamis, jars of caviar and bottles of apple juice tucked under their arms.

*Jenny Gray, London*

### GUJARAT—JAIPUR

I have gone by train from Cochin to Goa, thirteen long hours of cramped, cold discomfort. I have rushed from Mumbai to Surat on the 'superfast'. I have luxuriated in the overnight sleeper from Gujarat to Jaipur, in a top bunk that wobbled. And, ever since *The Darjeeling Limited*, it has been a dream of mine to travel by train in the north of India. A few pointers: the air conditioning could be harsh; the tea will be milky; you would do well to have a Gujarati speaker. The views—could be grimy, could be amazing. Do you want some memories? Then try it.

*Aneesa Bodiya, Johannesburg alumni*

# The kitchen table

## THE FOOD OF SOUTH INDIA

Ramya Djealatchoumy, Paris

Foodies who take pleasure in spices, rice, curry leaves, masalas, coconuts and sea foods which exude mouth-watering flavours and scents will love the cuisine of south India.

Each region in south India has its own variations and culinary creations, and rice is the centrepiece of every meal served. In Puducherry (where I was born and brought up) and in Tamil Nadu, almost all the food preparations include rice, whether in the form of straightforward steamed rice or something a little more complicated. We also prepare *idli*, a Tamil term for steamed sponge-like cakes made out of a rice-and-lentil batter; and *dosa*, fried pancakes made from the same rice-and-lentil batter; and *pongol*, which is a rice dish with the consistency of porridge. We also serve *vada*, a side dish based on a mix of deep-fried lentils and spices; and *sambar*, our beloved south Indian stew, described in loving detail below.

Also on the table is coconut chutney—which tastes divine on everything apart from rice!

We always cook a dish of *sambar* when we prepare a banana leaf meal: this latter is a south Indian speciality and a longstanding tradition in this part of the world. All the dishes bar one are served on a banana leaf; this is your plate. The meal consists of steamed rice served with *poriyal* (all known varieties of steamed or stir-fried vegetables with the addition of onions and coconut powder) and *kootu* (a lentil dish made with coconut paste and coconut milk giving it the consistency of porridge). In addition, there is *rasam*, a ‘pepper soup’ that aids digestion and is so good for you that I am including it in my recipes here. On the side are the crisp lentil bakes—*appalam*—that my son likes to call ‘Indian chips’; and pickles; and buttermilk; and—the only dish not served on the banana leaf—*payasam*, a sweet pudding made of vermicelli, sugar, cashew nuts and coconut milk.

For the non-vegetarians, we add fish dishes and lamb or chicken biryani, with hard-boiled eggs.

Cooking is my great passion and kitchen time is my favourite time. I love to try new recipes and to experiment and I encourage you to do the same! You might like to start with *sambar* or *rasam* or, if you want to keep things very simple, an omelette. But first, source your ingredients (and invest in a good chopping knife—if in doubt, chop).

### SOUTH INDIAN RESTAURANTS

To inspire you to rush back to your kitchens!

#### Puducherry, India

**The Indian coffee house** | The oldest restaurant in Puducherry, this place is not at all expensive. They are famous for their heavenly coffee and *bonda sambar*. If you visit Puducherry, don’t leave without visiting this place. No website, but don’t let that put you off.

**Hotel Surguru** | A vegetarian restaurant and our all-time favourite. I love their *dosas*, Poori masalas and the chilie parathas.

**Dindigul thalappakatti** | Famous for its biryanis. They have branches all over the world.

#### Paris, France

**Saravana Bhavan** | A vegetarian restaurant famous for its *sambar*. Their mini *idli* with *sambar* and *thali* are our ever favorites. They have branches all over the world.

**Namaste** | A veg & non-veg restaurant. They serve tasty biryanis and tikka masalas.

### SAMBAR

High in fibre and good for the heart, this classic south Indian dish controls cholesterol and helps to prevent colon cancer. You can get hold of *sambar* powder in any Indian store; however, homemade is always better than shop-bought.

#### Sambar powder

##### Ingredients

100g dried chillies  
100g coriander seeds  
20g rice  
20g toor dal  
20g channa dal  
20g urad dal  
10g fenugreek seeds  
10g cumin seeds  
4g hing/asafoetida  
4g turmeric powder

##### Method

1. Put the hing and turmeric powder to one side.
2. Dry roast all the other ingredients (a few minutes), keeping the heat very low to prevent burning.
3. Cool the ingredients.
4. Half grind them in a blender or pestle and mortar.
5. Add the hing and turmeric powder to the mix and finish grinding into a very fine sambar powder.
6. Store the sambar powder in an airtight container. It will keep for six months (or longer if refrigerated).

#### Tamarind juice

##### Method

1. Soak a tamarind (the size of a lemon) in lukewarm water for 10 to 15 minutes.
2. Extract the juice.

### Sambar main dish

#### Ingredients

130g / 1 cup toor dal  
1 tsp chilli powder  
2 tbsp sambar powder  
500g fruit/vegetables brinjal [aubergine], carrots, murungakkai drumsticks, mangoes, or just potatoes)  
2 tomatoes  
1 or 2 green chillies  
½ tsp turmeric powder  
¼ tsp hing/asafotida  
Tamarind juice  
Salt to taste  
Water as required  
Chopped coriander leaves (for the garnish)

#### Ingredients for tempering

2 tbsp oil  
¼ tsp mustard seeds  
¼ tsp fenugreek seeds  
3 to 4 strings curry leaves  
¼ tsp hing/asafoetida  
8 to 10 shallots or onions  
2 dried red chillies

#### Method

1. Use a pressure cooker or rice cooker to cook the toor dal with the green chillies, fenugreek seeds and turmeric (optional) for 4-5 whistles or until fully cooked and mushy. If you use a pan (not a cooker), boil some water first and allow 30 to 40 minutes cooking time.
2. In a big pan, heat the oil.
3. Add the mustard seeds, fenugreek seeds, dry chillies, curry leaves and a little hing. Mix well.
4. Add the shallots (these add taste but you can replace with onions).
5. To complete the tempering, add the chopped vegetables and tomatoes to this and mix well.
6. Add the cooked toor dal along with chilli and sambar power and some water.
7. Cover and cook until the vegetables are about 70 per cent cooked.
8. Add the tamarind extract and as much salt as you need.
9. Cook for 10 minutes on a medium heat.
10. Add the fresh chopped coriander leaves and mix in before turning the heat off.

#### Tips

Add a pinch of salt to the onions to make them caramelize faster.

If your sambar (or any sauce) is too salty, don't panic, just add chopped potatoes and stir in. After 15 minutes remove the potatoes (they will have absorbed the excess salt).

Serve our super delicious, healthy south Indian sambar with rice or dosa or idlies or pongal or vada.



## RASAM

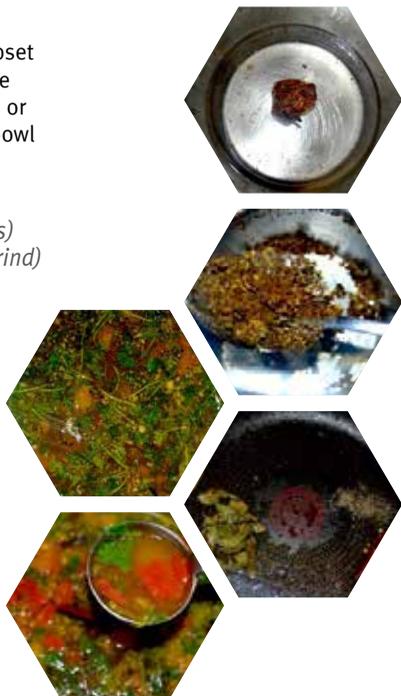
Rasam is a perfect remedy for flu or an upset stomach and tastes especially good in the winter or on a rainy day if you have a cold or a sore throat. The spices and herbs in a bowl of rasam aid digestion.

### Ingredients

1 tamarind (the size of a lemon) (seedless)  
½ cup lukewarm water (to soak the tamarind)  
1 tomato (chopped)  
2 tsp black pepper  
1 tsp cumin seeds  
4 or 5 garlic cloves  
½ tsp turmeric powder  
2 cups water  
Chopped coriander leaves  
A few curry leaves  
Mustard seeds  
1 dry red chilli  
2 pinches hing/ asafoetida  
Oil  
Salt

### Method

1. Soak the tamarind in lukewarm water for 10 to 15 minutes and extract juice.
2. Grind the cumin, pepper and garlic cloves until semi-ground.
3. Add the semi-ground mix and the water to the tamarind juice.
4. Add the tomato, turmeric powder and coriander leaves. Season with salt.
5. Set it to boil until frothy, then prepare to temper.
6. Heat the oil; add the mustard seeds; then the red chilly, curry leaves and hing; cook over a low flame for a few seconds.
7. Add the temper to the rasam.
8. Serve with steamed rice or on its own (to come first in the meal).



## SPICY INDIAN EGG OMELETTE

A quick, easy, healthy meal.

### Ingredients

3 eggs  
1 finely chopped onion  
1 finely chopped tomato  
1 or 2 finely chopped green chillies  
1 or 2 tbsp chopped coriander  
½ tsp turmeric powder  
Pepper or chilli powder as desired (optional)  
Capsicum (optional)  
Salt as required  
1½ tbsp oil

### Method

1. Finely chop the onions, tomatoes, chillies, capsicum (optional) and the coriander leaves and mix them with salt and turmeric.
2. Add the eggs and beat until frothy.
3. Add oil to a pan and heat on a medium flame.
4. Pour in the egg mixture; when the base firms, flip it and cook. Do not let the pan turn very hot; it will brown the omelette without cooking.
5. Sprinkle the crushed pepper or chilli powder if you like more heat in your omelette.
6. Serve stuffed in chapati (Indian bread) or any bread along with chilli sauce (or tomato ketchup).



## EATING OUT IN BROOKLYN

### Morning

#### Brunch @ House of Small Wonder

Walk through unassuming wood-paneled doors to a petite retreat built around the trunk of two large trees. This cute little gem serves an eclectic menu for breakfast and lunch. Try a traditional Japanese breakfast such as grilled salmon with miso soup, Okinawan taco rice, or opt for a *croque madame*. Feel like something sweet? Try the croissant or French toast. Drinks are just as interesting, with a lavender latte or iced matcha milk. Be prepared for long wait times on weekends. Bring cash—or use the ATM on site—as no credit cards are accepted.

77 North 6th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11249  
houseofsmallwonder.com

### Noon

#### Smorgasburg @ East River State Park on the Williamsburg waterfront

This is one for Saturdays (11:00–6:00) between April and October. Enjoy a non-traditional lunch outdoors along the Williamsburg waterfront. Go from stall to stall and sample foods from all over the world at this seasonal outdoor food market. Try the fried anchovies at Bon Chovie, Sichuan rice noodles at Ya Ya Noodz's, or frozen desserts at Kochin. Sit at the picnic tables or bring a picnic blanket and sit on the grass in the park. Afterwards, go for a walk along to where there is a small beach and take a photo with the East River and Empire State Building in the background. The best way to get there is to take a scenic ferry ride to the North Williamsburg stop, then walk a block north. If Saturdays don't work for you, try the Sunday location at Breeze Hill in Prospect Park. The website has other locations. Note: the vendors only accept cash.

90 Kent Avenue (North 7th Street), Brooklyn, NY 11211  
smorgasburg.com

### Night

#### Dinner @ Oxomoco

Williamsburg's neighbor, Greenpoint, is a neighborhood with new and interesting restaurants. These include Di An Di (Vietnamese), Chez Ma Tante (upgraded simple foods), and Oxomoco—one of the few Michelin-starred Mexican restaurants in NYC. Start off with the charred carrot *tamal* or spring-pea *tlayuda* (a personal favorite). For the main course try some tacos with complex and tasty flavors. Try the pork cheek *carnitas* with *chicharron* (who doesn't like fried pork rinds?), lamb *barbacoa* with squash blossoms, and chicken *al pastor* with grilled pineapples. You will be stuffed silly after all that but leave room for the Oaxacan chocolate cake. Ambiance is great here and reservations are necessary. If you can't get one, see if they can seat you at the chef's counter in the back, where you can watch the food being prepared.

128 Greenpoint Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11222  
oxomocnyc.com

#### Drinks @ the Brooklyn Barge

Still not ready to leave Brooklyn? Head over to the Brooklyn Barge for a nightcap with a view of the Manhattan skyline. The barge is docked near the Greenpoint ferry stop and is located between two warehouses.

Intersection of West Street/Milton Street, Greenpoint, Brooklyn  
thebrooklynbarge.com

Restaurant critic: Uyen Poh, New York

# Why?

Why did I think it would be a good idea to wear that?

## LAURIE WEISS SAN ANTONIO

Some years ago, to be quite frank with you, my wardrobe was a sad affair. Everywhere, there were workmanlike tones of grey, relieved by touches of black and the elegant counterpoint of navy. And that's how it was.

I couldn't see that until we went to Costa Rica. The night before we left, I was throwing things into the suitcase, trying to get ready in time. Work was busy; I hadn't had time to think it through. That's how come I ended up on the beach in Costa Rica in long black pants in full sight of husband and bemused old friends—and, it seemed, everyone else in the world who had strolled down to the beach that day in their sundress, soaking up the heat, or in their shorts, striding along in the sun.

It's all different now. If I were to open up my closet to you today, you would see that it is full of color, full of play, full of everything that is not black and not navy and not grey.

I am rarely accused of being fashionable. There was, however, once a leather bomber jacket that I coveted more than anything. It went 'missing' one night on a rugby tour of Scotland. The lads in Wick relieved me, painfully, of my jacket and my vanity.

Mark Davis, Toronto

As a child, I dreamed of wearing a black dress—not Coco Chanel, not a little black dress, no, more of a *robe* than a dress, a magic *robe* which enables the wearer to vanish. I still remember the first time I wore my *robe* at the *prestation de serment*—the day I took the oath.

Janice Feigher, Paris

## PHILIP CHARLTON SYDNEY

The gold-embossed invitation glittered on our doorstep. A request for the pleasure of our company at the Sydney Opera House for our first Sikh wedding. Now, my wife said, you'll need to add some Indian fashion to your wardrobe! I have to say I was thinking more 'smart lounge suit', but hey ho.

A week later and, the proud owner of a gold brocaded jacket with a pair of wonderfully comfortable matching bluish-gold pantaloons (you get the picture), I was all set for a truly wonderful Indian celebration. I strode in, ready to compare my finery with others on display. At first, I thought I had the wrong venue. But, no—

Wear a wool blazer and a narrow strip of cloth tied around my neck on a beautiful day? #NoThanks. One benefit of being a woman in law! I LOVE the opportunity to express my culture and style through my wardrobe.

Sumantha Rani Sedor, New York

## RACHEL ROSENFELD WASHINGTON DC

against the backdrop of the sparkling blue sea was another sea, of formal, grey suits. Only the groom's father was as well dressed as I was.

So, I did ask myself the 'Why did I think...' question—but there's little that a glass of Bollinger won't fix. Guests approached me with a smile, saying, 'Well done, not worn that in ages', and I actually think that they were quite pleased that someone had at least made the attempt. People tend to like the inglorious trier who might not get it quite right, but gave it a go.

I'm no Bridget Jones and I've not been to a vicars' party, but I do know that when you get to a certain age the horror at wearing the wrong kit tends to fade.

Once upon a time, a group of friends who were young and excited to be in São Paulo—far from home—purchased tickets to a football match. Not just any football match. This was Corinthians lined up against São Paulo. A game such as this between the city's two rival soccer teams was a significant event and was heralded with great anticipation and celebration. As a sign of this, the friends were kindly given the gift of team t-shirts.

In all the hubbub, no one in the city thought to warn the young and foolish Americans that outside the stadium the São Paulo fans would stay to one side and the Corinthians to the other. Inside the stadium, the same demarcation was plain to see.

Fate played its dreadful hand. This small, innocent band of students decided to loop around the stadium to glimpse

the festivities before the game got under way. Foolish, yes. But they meant no harm. I know this because I was there. I was among them as they ran from the São Paulo fans, from the man who broke his beer bottle and advanced upon them, shaking the jagged shards in their direction. I was the one who lay on the ground, hands over my head, aware of only the harsh sound of police sirens and shouts and the sensation of footprints trampling over me.

Why did I think it would be a good idea to wear a Corinthians t-shirt and then walk into the heart of the São Paulo side? Why would any soccer fan wear a rival team's jersey? Either the fan is looking for a fight or the fan has never been to a game in Philadelphia. There can be no other answer. But I am from Philly. I should have known better.

It was a hot day and I didn't think the sun was that strong.

Jude Songhurst, London

University Freshers' Week, 2014. I was invited to a last-minute 'fancy-dress' party and, with only an hour to spare, I conjured up a stunning outfit that resembled Gene Simmons from Kiss. Complete with face paint, white platform boots and black cape, I arrived to discover no one else had bothered.

Georgia Platt, Newcastle

It was the nineties. What can I say?  
I was full of teenage angst.

Alexander Fane, Vancouver

# Playlist

## **BENEDETTA ORSINI** **MILAN**

Jazz and the blues form the backdrop to Benedetta Orsini's life in Milan. She grew up listening to Ella Fitzgerald and Billie Holiday and graduated to jazz rock, picking out blues lines on a bass guitar with friends and singing in a jazz group. At nineteen, she enrolled at the 200-year-old Conservatorio di Milano, where she studied vocal jazz for several years before deciding to concentrate her energies on her career in law. She still finds time to go to gigs at the Blue Note jazz club, mixes it up with musicians and singers and rescues broken saxophones from garbage dumps. What a wonderful world.

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### **DESERT SONG**

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Stanley Clarke

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*School Days, 1976*

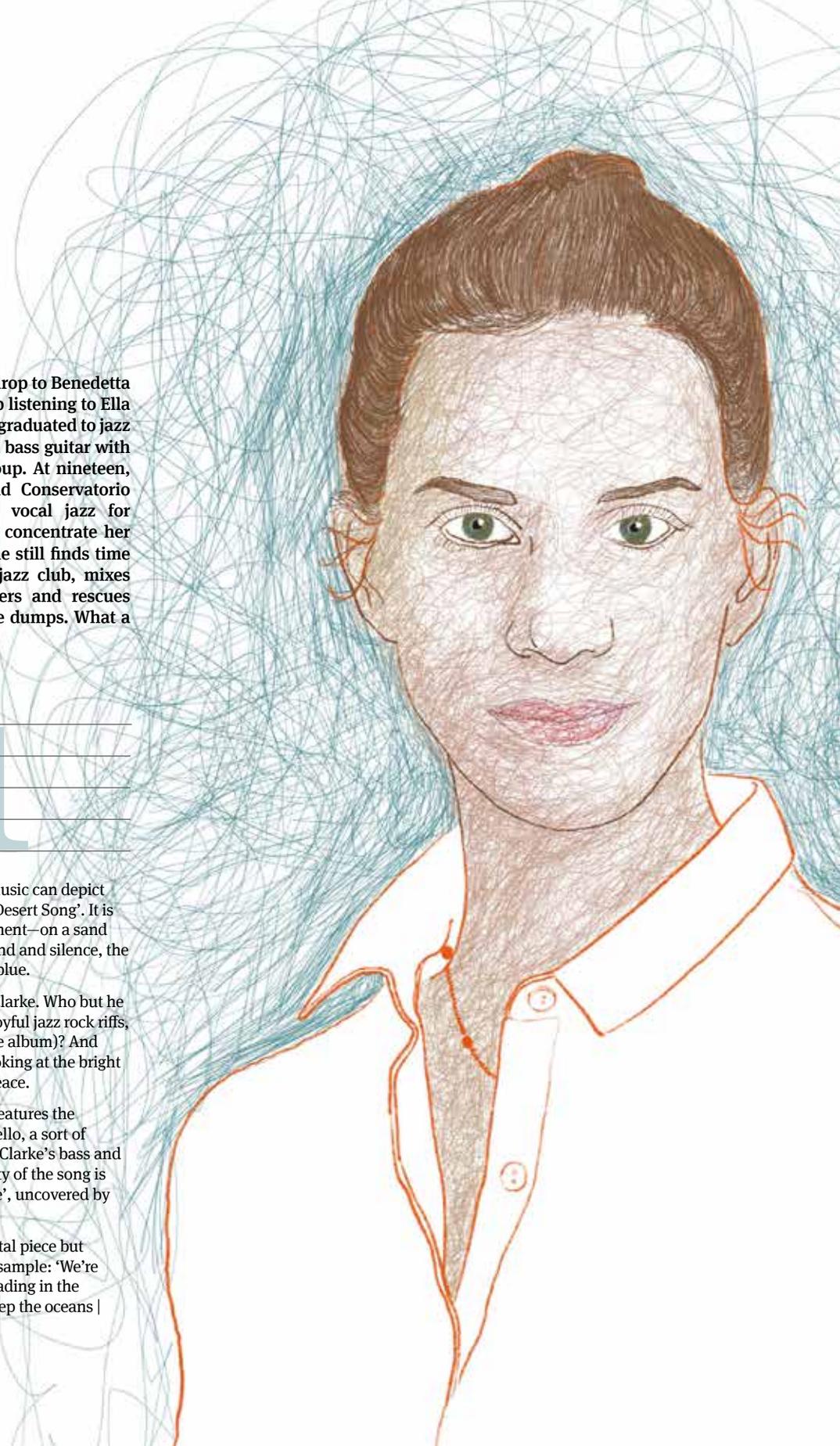
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If you have ever wondered whether music can depict an image, then you have to listen to 'Desert Song'. It is as though you are there— in that moment—on a sand dune, the wind shaping the line of sand and silence, the sky low and perfectly, astonishingly, blue.

I have to admit: I really love Stanley Clarke. Who but he can make you bump and jump with joyful jazz rock riffs, as in 'Life is Just a Game' (on the same album)? And then, in the next moment, you are looking at the bright moon on a winter night, filled with peace.

'Desert Song' dates back to 1976; it features the melancholy, acoustic presence of a cello, a sort of bitter-sweet lament, dialoguing with Clarke's bass and John MacLaughlin's guitar. The beauty of the song is in its simplicity: music appears 'nude', uncovered by effects or frills.

The song was issued as an instrumental piece but Clarke did write lyrics for it; here is a sample: 'We're sailing ships across the desert | And fading in the Arabian sun | Too hot the sand too deep the oceans | It's just surviving whatever the cost'.



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## BLUES FOR GASSMAN

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Piero Umiliani

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*I soliti ignoti*, 1958

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Piero Umiliani is a composer and conductor. He may not be as well known as other Italian composers—he is certainly not as familiar a name as Ennio Morricone—but his compositions provide the soundtrack for many wonderful movies, particularly in the 1960s and '70s.

Umiliani's most popular song—'Mah Nà Mah Nà'—was released in 1968. The song, with its simple, seemingly naïve sound, relates back to scat singing (random syllables repeated rhythmically, typically used by jazz singers as an instrument and to cover instrumental solos). One of his composition techniques was interpolation, where melodies are abruptly cut off and replaced with new ones.

The Italian film *I soliti ignoti* (*Big Deal on Madonna Street*) is one of the masterpieces of Italian cinema; and there in its 1958 soundtrack is Umiliani's 'Blues for Gassman', now an Italian jazz standard. Umiliani also composed the soundtrack for the sequel, featuring Chet Baker. And if you have seen *Ocean's Twelve*, you will already be familiar with the guitar rendition of 'Crepuscolo Sul Mare' ('Twilight on the Sea').

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## ON THE SUNNY SIDE OF THE STREET

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Roberta Gambarini

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*Easy to Love*, 2006

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Roberta Gambarini left Italy at twenty-six, when she won a scholarship to the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. Later, she moved to New York and met James Moody, who became her mentor, introducing her to the New York jazz scene, where she became a cult favorite. She is a great jazz interpreter. She is also terrific at scat singing. I love her stunning version of 'On the sunny side of the street', where she covers note by note the instrumental solos played by saxophonists Sonny Stitt and Sonny Rollins, as well as the well-known version released by Dizzy Gillespie.

I met Gambarini when she came to Italy on tour and was astonished by her.

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## BLACK

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Pearl Jam

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*Ten*, 1991

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When I was a teenager, in my room, struggling with the translation of a text by Senofonte (Xenophon, student of Socrates) or contemplating an ellipse equation, I always had Pearl Jam on the stereo. The warm, abrasive voice of Eddie Vedder spoke just to me from the speakers. I spent endless, entire afternoons in the company of Pearl Jam—the epitome of grunge.

I still recall the night I spent listening to Pearl Jam live on a radio gig. Everyone else at home in Milan was asleep. I, too, was supposed to be in bed, dreaming, but instead a buzzing pair of headphones kept magically repeating in my ears the sounds of my favourite group.

Adolescence is a time when you have more questions than answers and all your hopes collide with fears and doubts. Pearl Jam is one of the sweetest memories I keep of that time in my life. The emotional melody line that runs through 'Black' is carried to perfection by Eddie Vedder, who once said, "Fragile songs get crushed by the business. I don't want to be a part of it." He was my hero then, and now.

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## I'LL FLY FOR YOU

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Spandau ballet

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*Parade*, 1984

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Spandau Ballet are actually a legacy of my older brother. I used to go into his room and steal cassettes and, later, CDs. I was always quite afraid to be caught in that moment of crime. My brother was always yelling at me because he was the one who was buying the music that I was listening to and enjoying...

'I'll fly for you' is a classic from the New Wave sound of the eighties, when a smooth, optimistic and glam feel was accompanied by video clips. The video of this song is one of my favourite: it's an ironic love-crime story, a girl trapped who needs to be saved, the ending left to destiny. Another hero of mine, definitely.

# The moving image

ADITYA BADAMI IN CALGARY TALKS ABOUT MOVIES

I'm happy to go to the movies on my own, but typically I drag my spouse along and force her to watch weird movies where we are the only people in the theatre. I have friends who are into movies but not necessarily the type of obnoxious arthouse stuff that I like.

## AN ARTHOUSE MOVIE

When there's no resolution, when not everything is neatly tied up, it leaves the viewer with something to think about. I like that.

*Madeline's Madeline*  
dir. Josephine Decker [2018]

*Madeline's Madeline* is so unusual. It's very affecting. The structure is quite beautiful. It's about a teenage girl who has some kind of bipolar disorder and is also a talented actor, so her mother takes her to acting classes; the whole thing is shot from the daughter's perspective. It's a very strange movie; and I like weird stuff.

It's about the creation of art and of theatre; the music takes you through that and the cacophony of theatrical production. It's a great soundtrack.

The classic arthouse movie is Bergman's *The Seventh Seal*: it's visually stunning and emotionally overwhelming.

I've never got into Truffaut or the classic French arthouse cinema. I do, however, recommend *Holy Motors* by Leos Carax. And *The White Ribbon* by Michael Haneke. And then of course Kurosawa's work is beautiful, all of it.

You can go to arthouse and come out feeling desperately bleak; but I'm okay with that. There's something cathartic about watching something very, very sad.

## A MOVIE FOR ALL THE FAMILY

I love Miyazaki's movies.

*Princess Mononoke*  
dir. Hayao Miyazaki [1997]

Totally beautiful. Fantastic. His characters are all morally complex. The visual landscape and the weird creatures he creates are vivid and dreamlike; I love that slightly hallucinatory imagery.

Wes Anderson has made some good movies—*Moonrise Kingdom*, *The Darjeeling Limited*—and some good stop-motion animation. His most recent one, *Isle of Dogs*, is awesome.

But if you want a good Saturday afternoon movie, I'd go to Hitchcock. I have memories of watching *North by Northwest* with my family. Or the Coen brothers. I bonded with my dad when we watched *The Big Lebowski*.

## DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME ON THIS ONE

*Mother!*  
dir. Darren Aronofsky [2018]

I have a high threshold for pretentious, experimental movies but at a certain point they just become unpleasant to watch. This was basically unwatchable. And laughably ridiculous. I didn't even really know what Aronofsky's point was.

I saw it in the theatre, which made it worse because it's unbelievably loud and brutally violent. I watched it with my soon-to-be wife and another couple, and all of us hated it. And I was the one who had suggested going to see it.

## MY GUILTY PLEASURE

I like action movies.

*Heat*  
dir. Michael Mann [1995]

I watch *Heat* maybe once a year. It's a great heist action movie with Al Pacino, Val Kilmer, Robert de Niro. I have this movie in my collection. I have also seen that incredibly trashy Keanu Reeves series *John Wick*, where he's basically on a killing spree because someone killed his dog. It is stylised, unbelievable violence.

## A BLOCKBUSTER BUT WHY NOT?

*Black Panther*  
dir. Ryan Coogler [2018]

I'm not saying it works on every level but it's an enjoyable action movie.

## OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE BUT BRILLIANT

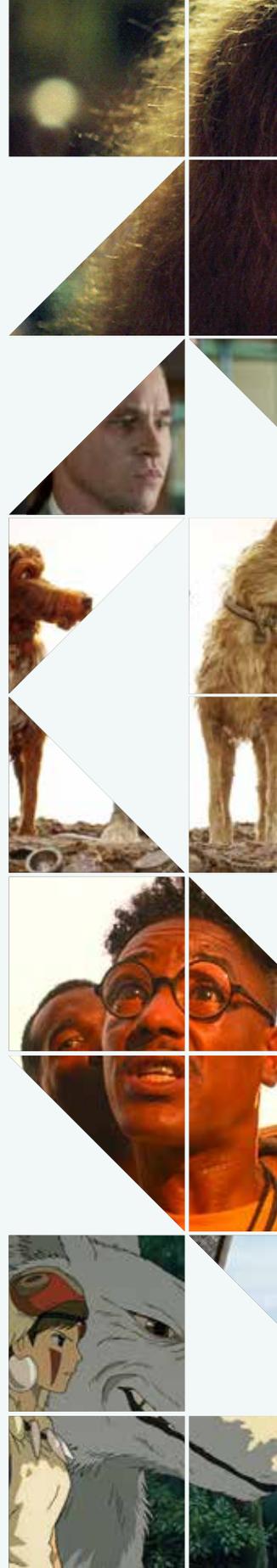
I enjoy reading the movie critics David Denby and Anthony Lane of the *New Yorker* and Peter Bradshaw of the *Guardian*. One of them wrote a great review of *Get Out*, so, even though I don't like horror movies, I went out and saw this one.

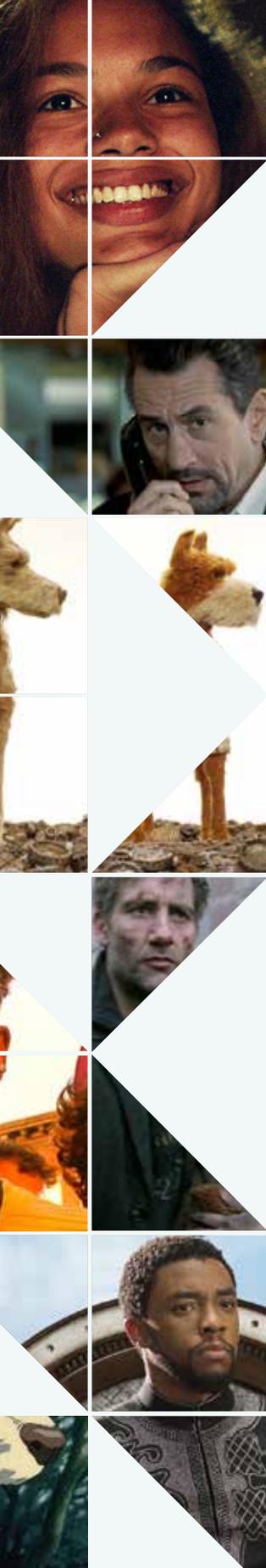
*Get Out*  
dir. Jordan Peele [2017]

It is totally fantastic.

## A ROMCOM

Really good comedies are few and far between. Richard Linklater's series, *Before Sunrise* (1995), *Before Sunset* (2004) and *Before Midnight* (2013) is beautiful. I like *Crazy, Stupid, Love* with Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone. And *La La Land*. But





is it a romcom? It doesn't have that much comedy in it. Neither do the Linklater films. Frankly, these are all just forgettable, enjoyable, feel-good movies.

#### A CLASSIC TO BUY AND KEEP AND WATCH ONCE A YEAR

**Do The Right Thing**  
dir. Spike Lee [1989]

It's set on the hottest day of a summer in late '80s Brooklyn, New York.

Spike Lee has a distinctive visual style and this movie exemplifies it. There's also a fantastic soundtrack with iconic hip hop music. Samuel L. Jackson is a radio host in the movie. There are some great, great performances. I just love it. It's very moving, it's heartbreaking, it's definitely a classic.

It's an exploration of racial and class tension and the kind of systemic issues that black America faces even today. Things go badly wrong but there is a sense of reconciliation. It exposes the fractures in society but also the ties that bind.

**The Thin Red Line**  
dir. Terrence Malick [1998]

I was going to suggest Terrence Malick's *The Tree of Life* but I prefer *The Thin Red Line*. There's something about Brad Pitt—and this is not his fault—when you see him on the screen all you see is Brad Pitt. You get lost in *The Thin Red Line* more easily. The movie is an exploration of war and the meaning of life.

#### A SIGN OF THE TIMES

There is a shift now towards more recognition for women. I'm ashamed to say I can think of only a few female directors, Kathryn Bigelow being one of them: she directed *The Hurt Locker*, an amazingly good war movie.

Even the female-driven movies I can think of tend to be directed by men. *The Favourite* is a case in point; the director is Yorgos Lanthimos. There are three women at the centre of this fantastic movie; the male characters are all preposterous and subservient. But it's still directed by a dude.

*Madeline's Madeline* is a phenomenal, utterly female, and female-directed movie.

*Roma* is a beautiful movie, flawed but beautiful. There is a romance at its core; it has arthouse tendencies; it is a movie about a woman. But it doesn't quite capture the female perspective: it seems to be all from Cuarón's perspective.

Cuarón also directed *Children of Men*, and this movie, which came out more than ten years ago, is the one I want to end on. It is also a sign of the times, but in a different way.

**Children of Men**  
dir. Alfonso Cuarón [2006]

The actors are Julianne Moore, Chiwetel Ejiofor and Clive Owen, and the film was Oscar-nominated.

I think about this movie often. It's a dystopia set in 2027, but its visual landscape, its depiction of England, and those shots of the cages of refugees all look real to me.

#### ADITYA'S LIST

Great directors

Pedro Almodóvar

Paul Thomas Anderson

Coen brothers

Jim Jarmusch

Steve McQueen

Quentin Tarantino

Great movies

*Sorry to Bother You* (2018)

*The Death of Stalin* (2017)

*Victoria* (2015)

*Ghost Dog* (1999)

*Hoop Dreams* (1994)

*Pulp Fiction* (1994)

*Blue Velvet* (1986)

# Bookshelf

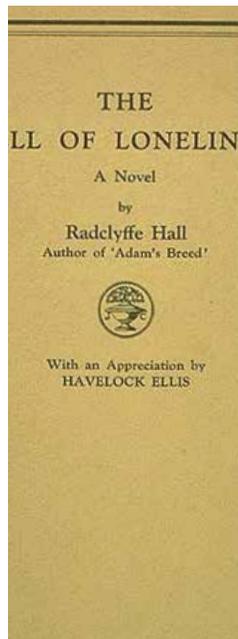
ALEXANDRA HOWE IN NEW YORK ON THE BOOKS THAT TRACK HER LIFE



## COLLECTED STORIES

JOHN CHEEVER

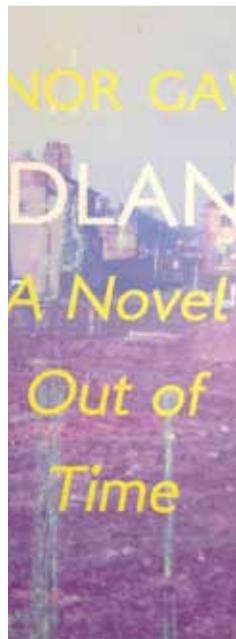
I discovered Cheever through the *New Yorker's* fiction podcast. I heard *The Swimmer* read aloud by the Irish novelist Anne Enright; something in her voice, slightly gravelly, slightly world-weary, complemented the story so beautifully. It's about a man who decides to swim home from a drinks party through the pools in his affluent neighbourhood in Westchester County. It's strikingly naturalistic and beautifully, poignantly metaphorical. It's difficult to think of anyone who handles the short story form better.



## THE WELL OF LONELINESS

RADCLYFFE HALL

A couple expect to have a son, and give their only child, a daughter, the name which they had already chosen for him. As she grows up, Stephen Gordon realises that she is attracted to women and prefers dressing in masculine clothes. In 1920s England, this was sufficient to provoke a vicious newspaper campaign against the book, culminating in an obscenity trial and the banning of its publication. It was considered that the novel was particularly harmful because it was so well written.



## MIDLAND

HONOR GAVIN

In my second year at Oxford, I lived with three friends in a flat above a Japanese restaurant. I suppose it was pretty squalid, but to us it was heaven. After we graduated, Honor became an academic, musician and writer. This is her first novel, and it is written partly from the perspective of Birmingham, the city itself. Honor is one of the cleverest people I know. This book reminds me of all the days we spent lying on our grotty sofas in that flat in Oxford, talking, with everything still before us.



## PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

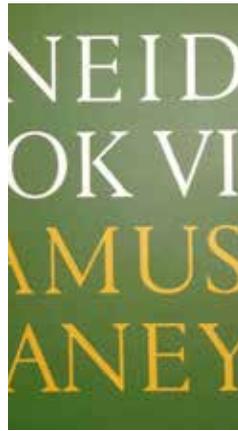
JANE AUSTEN

"It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife." This must be one of the most delicious opening sentences in all of English literature. *Pride and Prejudice* was the first Jane Austen I ever read. I love everything she wrote, but this is just a perfect novel and Austen is a master of the genre—a relatively new phenomenon at the time she was writing, in the early nineteenth century.

**PEARL**

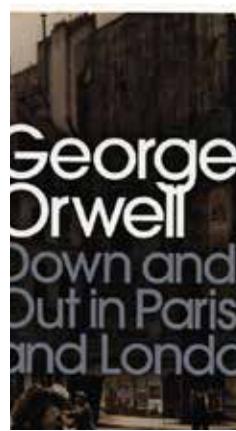
AUTHOR UNKNOWN

This beautiful fourteenth-century poem is about a grieving father whose young daughter, his 'perle', has died. The original is trickier to read than contemporary works by Chaucer, as it's written in a dialect less similar to modern English, but the poet Simon Armitage recently produced a sensitive translation.

**THE AENEID,  
BOOK VI**

VIRGIL

I studied this at school, and remember my Latin teacher, Miss Eltis, awarding extra marks for particularly 'felicitous translations'. Seamus Heaney's translation is as felicitous as they come. When the hero, Aeneas, tries in vain to embrace his father's ghost, I have tears in my eyes.

**DOWN AND OUT  
IN PARIS AND  
LONDON**

GEORGE ORWELL

Orwell wrote that good prose is 'like a window pane'. In his memoir and study of poverty in two European cities in the late 1920s, he practised what he preached. His ability to condense human experience and injustice into crystalline phrases is extraordinary.

**PLAINSONG**

KENT HARUF

I cannot think of another novel where the title suits the prose style so perfectly. The epigraph explains that "plain-song" is "unisonous vocal music used in the Christian church from the earliest times; any simple and unadorned melody or air." It's a hauntingly beautiful story about a community in rural Colorado.

**AnOther E. E.  
Cummings**

e e cummings

My father gave this collection to me when I was a child. I think if he had been a professional poet (instead of a civil servant), he might have written avant-garde poems like e e cummings. There is still time.

**ABIGAIL'S PARTY**

MIKE LEIGH

A suburban couple invite their neighbours over for drinks in this darkly comic play set in 'the London side of Essex'. Social pretensions gradually unravel as alcohol is consumed and the characters reveal themselves as equal parts monstrous and hilarious.

**HAMLET**

SHAKESPEARE

When I went to university to study English literature, I was frightened of writing about Shakespeare's plays, assuming that everything profound and novel that could be said must surely have already been said. *Hamlet* taught me that this will never be true.

**THE MILL ON THE  
FLOSS**

GEORGE ELIOT

This is a lovely, painful exposition of childhood joy and trauma; I defy anyone not to weep at the ending. I admire Eliot for her unconventional life in Victorian Britain; Maggie Tulliver is one of the most autobiographical of her heroines.

AH is RE's arts editor

# The poet

**BARBARA BLAKE**

The poet Barbara Blake is, as was Philip Larkin, a librarian. Winner of the RE: Writing Prize, Blake has worked in the library at Norton Rose Fulbright for thirteen years and has an MA in critical theory.

## HURRICANE

*Kevin* in '94,  
when he broke my heart  
and left the roof caved-in.

*Carol* the year before,  
the only person I've ever hit,  
outside of family,

and further back *Elaine*,  
the girl at school who smelt of wee.  
She left that school so damaged.

They retire the names of hurricanes  
that prove too costly,  
retire them from

the six lists of names  
that rotate  
throughout our lives.

Now I couldn't call a puppy *Kev*  
and watch him wash,  
or breed a rose

and name it *Carol*  
or have a daughter  
called *Elaine*.

Names marinade in their people  
absorbing juice  
until some taste funny.

People wipe their feet  
on their names  
until some no longer read Welcome.

And then there's *Jennifer*,  
always *Mum*,  
never *Jennifer*.

Did she retire herself  
when she had me,  
retire the whirlwind part?

Or would it be too small,  
too disrespectful,  
to ignore her title of office,

her robe of state with its simple trim –  
*Mum* – not ermine,  
but soft as fur?

Never *Jennifer*.  
I couldn't bear  
to level our home.

## SPIRIT

You don't expect to feel maternal  
towards NASA's Mars Mission rovers.  
I certainly wouldn't dare to name  
my children Curiosity, Opportunity, Spirit.

But the rovers have heads with camera eyes,  
on top of spindly masts rising up  
from beds of solar arrays stretched out  
like shoulders—a dinosaur's ancient frill  
and the landing deck of a Star Wars toy,  
plotted with squares, a schematic of the Studio Lot  
at MGM, factory of the stars.  
And they have six wheels for legs  
and robotic arms that reach out to test the surface!

And here's Opportunity trundling over the craters  
as indomitably as a toddler who points  
then runs towards a tree.  
And here's the pictures being beamed  
from Curiosity's Pancam  
of a planet more orange than red—  
cinnamon, caramel, gingerbread—  
pictures that show the rover's tracks  
like doodles in an exercise book  
or the petulant crop circles of a kid strung out  
on too much Sunny Delight.

And here's Spirit  
busily collecting samples on her own,  
as self-absorbed and self-contained  
as a child on a beach,  
making a society of a rock pool,  
telling Mr Starfish he must be home in time for tea.

So when I read Spirit had fallen silent  
at a site called Troy, where she'd got stuck  
wrongly angled before the Martian winter,  
without enough charge to see her through,  
and there'd been no sound, no peep since Sol 2210,  
I felt a tug, a pull, the light years loaded  
with new wonder and new fear,  
which is how I imagine a mother must feel.

Spirit—you robot! Machine! How did you flip  
a switch in me to make me want  
what I never did—to cradle  
your massive head, dig out your wheels  
and set you right again? It must be because  
you are so logical, and so far away.



# First person

Psyche Tai

Hong Kong

戴志珊

In Hong Kong, everyone has a Chinese name but most people also have a taken name, which we pick up when we go to school. My sister suggested my name, Psyche. It's from a Greek myth.

My grandparents were born in mainland China.

My grandma came from a wealthy family and she had a dad who was, I think, very open-minded. Her feet were unbound at the age of ten, because she was sent to school—this was very, very rare in those days, to go to school, and to take away the foot-binding.

The happy time didn't last long; because of the war they all had to quit their studies.

She lost her brothers and sisters. They actually lost the whole family.

I never met my grandpa. He served in the army and probably got lost or died in the war. At that time in China this was not something new.

My grandma, my dad and my auntie came from Guangzhou to Hong Kong. They all walked. For days and days and months. They went down to Hong Kong to escape from the war. My father was just three or four years old when they walked to Hong Kong.

They walked down from their homeland because the Japanese had invaded China. Hong Kong was actually the last place to be conquered by the Japanese. At that time Hong Kong was under the charge of Britain.

They lost everything. My grandma had to start from scratch in Hong Kong.

I find that people who have experienced war look at things with a different set of values. They tend to bear more hardship, they complain less, just accept whatever happened, take the tragedy and move forward. I think this is a very good set of values.

Trauma happens to everyone in the course of their life. If we are given a chance to choose, probably it's better to experience these bad days early. You become better at adapting, stronger, less vulnerable.

I think it's not a bad thing if in your younger days you come from nothing; you gain determination, a clear view of life and the value of things. You gain some inner qualities. Of course, you might miss out on happy moments, having fun, going out with friends; if you live in poverty or in an environment that doesn't allow you that luxury, then you won't have those happy memories from your younger days. It can make you more serious, in a way. You don't have those times of hanging around, doing nothing; you need to be focused, study, study, get high scores. At work, you need to be focused, to climb the ladder.

I don't have children. I would say that is—not a sadness, but a hole in your life; you cannot experience life from every aspect. I got divorced in my late thirties. I am single now. So I don't have kids. If I were born in another time, I would probably want to experience that other life where I am not a career woman. Don't misunderstand me, I love my job—but if I were given a second chance, then, yes, I would probably want to be a mum of two or three and learn more about myself through my kids.

My mum passed away at the time I got divorced.

My dad is still alive. He had a stroke, so he can't speak well. Actually, I am still looking after him; he lives with me.

I am very lucky because I have siblings and we are very close, so we share our feelings.

I think I have to take some part of the blame for the divorce. I was probably too focused on my career. But life is life. I probably could have done things a bit better but I am not too unhappy with what has happened: I meet a lot of people through my work; if I had been a housewife, or a mum, needing to take care of family, I would probably have been deprived of those opportunities.

I know I can stand on my own two feet: that is a very great sense of achievement.

I was married for seven years. We were college schoolmates and were boyfriend and girlfriend for years before we got married. When you're young, you're still finding your way; we probably did not know much about ourselves at that time. And my early career required me to work around the clock. That is not very good for a relationship.

Time goes past and  
I don't notice it,  
because I am enjoying  
myself working.



Everyone has their own story.

I have many friends who either got divorced or never fell into a relationship. I don't know whether it's good or bad, but people now, especially in the younger generation, don't want to get married too hastily.

My mum is very Chinese. When I was little she practised Buddhism; then when I was ten she got cancer and she converted to Christianity. That's when my whole family started going to church together. The Bible means a lot to me because I was brought up in that way. My religion has given me the will power and the faith to bear whatever situation I find myself in. I made a personal sign of faith at the age of sixteen and when I became an adult and was baptised again. All through my adolescence I was doing Bible study. Even now. It gives me the comfort, and the strength, to continue my life.

I'm still working really hard. Actually, I work everywhere. I sit in a shopping mall or in a garden on a conference call, for hours and hours. Yes, I have to say I work extremely hard. Time goes past and I don't notice it, because I am enjoying myself working. It happens often.

In the early days, there were people older than I or more senior or more knowledgeable who held views which differed from mine; I found it easier, then, to step back from the argument. I think now, at my age, I would have more guts when it comes to expressing myself.

As a woman, of course you have to be on your guard. I am actually quite lucky. I am a Chinese woman, doing Chinese business, including occasions where there is drinking while the

business is done, but I have not had many awkward encounters. Sometimes I wonder why that is. I think probably it's because I look really serious, I am a lawyer, people generally are a bit afraid of me, I don't know. I am always on guard, especially in how I talk, how I behave, I am always very much on guard as a professional.

With old friends you can be really open and say whatever you want. I enjoy that feeling. I have friends who are very like me, same high school, same university, also lawyers. And we have friends who are not so lucky; after high school, after university, they did not do as well in their careers, had to struggle a bit more in life; I think this is the time when they need people around them, friends. I think it's important they have someone to speak to, to relate all the misgivings of their life.

## As a woman, of course you have to be on your guard.

I was told that at my age hot yoga is too demanding. I like hatha yoga: it gets rid of work stresses and makes my body less tired. When you meditate, your brain stops. Sometimes I concentrate my focus by praying to my God.

I practise qigong. It's slow. You hold a posture, let the qi flow around the body. I sometimes let the qi lead me into different postures. I have been practising for years, every weekend. On holiday I practise every day, but if I'm working it's difficult to get the time.

I like running, slowly. I can't do it too fast, I 'slow run' and always outside, never on a treadmill. Being out in the sunshine and the green gives me energy.

I live in a high-rise apartment in Hong Kong, on the thirty-second floor. From my balcony I can see the water and Hong Kong Island. It makes me feel human and small. I get the feeling that I am small and my problems are also small.

At home I take a lot of pleasure in cooking. I don't think I am particularly good at it but it takes me away for a while. I play music while I cook. Some of it is Hong Kong pop music, sentimental, full of emotion. Sometimes Chinese folk music or Chinese opera.

When I observe others performing well, I ask myself why I cannot and that motivates me to work harder, so at least I am not worse than others. My siblings are not like that. I think they have a more relaxed life.

I won't describe myself as a perfectionist, but I am very demanding of myself; I always set myself high goals. I blame myself if I do not do well. At high school, if I didn't do well in an examination, I would blame myself for a week at least. And in the workplace, if I felt I did not do that well in a meeting, it would keep me up at night, because in my mind I would be thinking how silly I was, what sort of thing I need to do; so, I am quite critical of myself; that is not good, I would say, not a good thing. My sister tells me not to be so serious with myself; she says sometimes you need to forgive yourself.

I think my parents don't impose anything on me; everything is self-imposed! They suffered when they were younger and they had no chance of higher education, so seeing their kids go to university is already wonderful for them. They did not expect me to become a professional, to be very successful—not to say they don't like it, but they did not expect me to work so hard to gain that. For them, as long as you are happy, you are healthy, that's all right; so I have very loving parents.

I am starting to think about my future because I am not that young, I am forty-nine. I need to learn to let go more. That is quite hard for me, because I tried to grasp everything when I was young but now it's the other way round. I need to let the younger generation in.

I feel particularly comfortable at my age. Ten years ago or more, friends were getting married or having babies, but now people find themselves with more time. That's why friends at my age are getting closer and spending time together. I think this is a really good thing.

My dad lives with me in my home. I enjoy the time with him. He's in a wheelchair, but we are lucky because in Hong Kong we can have a domestic maid, so I have two taking care of my father. At the weekend I take him out, together with my sisters, for tea, or dinner. I really enjoy it, because he is now eighty-seven. I always try to take him to good restaurants; I tell my sisters that we don't know how many times we can do this for him, so let's be sure to give him some good food. Our family gatherings are always—just like all other families—all about eating, eating and eating. It's probably the happiest thing to do for a human being.

## We are all on this small island for the whole of our lives.

Hong Kong is just a small space, really small; people tend to be born here, educated here, work here. We are all on this small island for the whole of our lives. I'm one of them. In Hong Kong everyone is running, not walking. It's probably too small, too squeezed, but it is a lovely city.

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**Psyche Tai, Hong Kong**  
Head of Norton Rose Fulbright's Hong Kong office  
Corporate lawyer (capital markets, M&A, compliance and regulatory)  
Joined Norton Rose Fulbright in 2003; made partner in 2004  
Law Society of Hong Kong, Company Law Committee member  
Degrees from the University of Hong Kong; and Beijing University

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Interview by **Ingeborg Alexander**  
Photography by **Ivan Maslarov**

## RE A MAGAZINE OPEN TO NEW PERSPECTIVES

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PRIVATE VIEWINGS OF CITIES, AND STREETS, NEAR YOU

NEW YORK BY DIANNE SOMMA AND TORONTO BY DEBBIE SANDERSON





# Coda

SONGS  
of joy and sorrow

Joy and pain **Frankie Beverly and Maze** | Shauna Johnson Clark, Houston

Mother and child reunion **Paul Simon** | Lisa Cabel, Toronto

Happy **Pharrell Williams** | Valérie Spano, Frankfurt

Goodnight Saigon **Billy Joel** | Naomi Schuitema, Amsterdam

L-O-V-E **Nat King Cole** | Elena Slipchenko, Moscow

River flows in you **Yiruma** | Haydee Lopez, New York

C'est bon pour le moral **La Compagnie Créole** | Hélène Sabatier, Paris

Summer breeze **The Isley Brothers** | Alison Baxter, São Paulo

Only happy when it rains **Garbage** | Katrina Tognazzi, Dubai

Flight of the Valkyries **Wilhelm Richard Wagner** | Donna Bekendam, Perth

Mr. Blue Sky **Electric Light Orchestra** | Siobhan Kasper, London

A sky full of stars **Coldplay** | Niki Alexandrou, Athens

Vole **Céline Dion** | Nicky Davies, Singapore

All you need is love **The Beatles** | Chloë Merrington, Cape Town

Bridge over troubled water **Simon and Garfunkel** | Shelley Chapelski, Vancouver

RE:  
LOOKING OUT NOT IN

