

2020

— HAPPY NEW YEAR —

# The Mirror of the World



### *Acknowledgements*

The *Mirror of the World* is a student/tutor project of the English as a Second Language (ESL) Department at the Community College of Denver, Center for Math, English, and the First-Year Experience. All of the contents are written by current or former ESL students in various classes. Submissions are selected by the editorial team of tutors in the ESL Tutoring Center. Thank you to Linda Nechrony and Ryan Sethre for their countless hours spent editing, formatting, and designing the submissions entered into this year's edition!

Many thanks also go out to Peter Lindstrom, Dean of the Center for Math, English, and the First-Year Experience, for his support of this valuable project, and to Roberta Ware, ESL Department Chair, for her encouragement, advice, and direction. We would like to also offer a special "thank you" to the ESL faculty who encouraged their students to submit their work to the *Mirror of the World*. Special thanks go out to the EXCEL! Zone with Ann McCalley and Sofia Hernandez offering support of the project and all the EXCEL! Zone tutors who provide guidance for students throughout their course work at CCD. Finally—and most importantly—we thank all of the students who took part in this project. As a tutoring staff, we always enjoy seeing the hard work our students do and want to continue to encourage them to submit their amazing writing to the *Mirror of the World*! We hope you enjoy the 2019-20 edition of the *Mirror of the World*!



**The 2019-20 issue of the *Mirror of the World* is dedicated to Roberta Ware, who is stepping down at the end of this school year in her role as Chair for the English as a Second Language department. Her many years of leading the CCD ESL program have strengthened it and in that time she has seen many success stories played out by our amazing students who come to us from around the globe! She will remain at CCD as an instructor, but is now turning over the program leadership responsibilities to Jerry Kottom moving forward. Thank you, Bobbie, and we wish you all the best!**





## *A New Life*

by Nikki Ngo



**A college is a place that can provide a solid knowledge, and job opportunities for a person's future, and that is the reason I choose to go to college. At the same time, I will learn the knowledge to grow as a student and person who has the ability to give back to community and society. College also leads me to a better opportunity to have a good job with a steady income to support my family. It's also a great experience to get to know students from different backgrounds and to build my level of confidence for the future. In my family, I'm the first generation in college, and I'm proud of it. Especially, I know the difficulty when you don't have an education and career to make a living. I witnessed how my parents worked in hardship to support my brothers, sister, and me. I selected Community College of Denver in particular because it's a diverse college that has students from a variety of backgrounds, and I don't feel isolated. I started taking classes at CCD in 2015 because it has the Dental Hygiene program that I wanted to apply for. After several semesters at CCD, I feel that instructors, faculty, and staff are dedicated to the students, and help them when they need it. Therefore, I feel very familiar, and comfortable with the learning environment, and it gives me the confidence to do better.**

### Have overcome hardships

**As I stated above, Dental Hygiene was the major that I wanted to apply to, however, I didn't get accepted into the program because of the competitive program; there are certain requirements maybe I didn't qualify for. I feel sad that I'm not competing enough to get accepted into the program, but I'm not giving up. After gathering up my thoughts, I made up**

my mind to change my major to Accounting. I want to devote what I have learned in school to bring the community, and society, a high quality of services that I will manage.

## ACCOUNTING

The road to the future has not been easy since I entered college after graduating from high school. The biggest challenge of my life is my husband, and in education it is the language barrier. I was born in Vietnam and came to the US when I was 13 years old. At the time, everything was disoriented, and I was like a kid who learned how to walk and speak. As time passed by, I have conquered myself, adapted to the culture and tradition of American life, and set a goal for my future. During my junior year of high school, I got a part-time job at a dental office and trained to be a dental assistant. With all the experience that I learned, I decided to go for Dental Assisting program, and in 2005 got my AS degree in California to be licensed as a Registered Dental Assistant. I knew that my English wasn't completely fluent, and it may be an obstacle to my success; however, I continued to learn, so I could overcome the challenge. In addition, my personal life wasn't sailing as smoothly as I wanted. My parents passed away early. Sometimes, I feel helpless and unsupported mentally; that is why I have become resilient and independent both physically and mentally. My primary income is my husband's, but his life is unstable, and he has gotten incarcerated from time to time. I must support my kids and am going to school to obtain a career to advance our lives. The biggest motivation for me to stand strong to overcome difficulty is my daughters, and that is why I want to be successful in my career. I will be able to create more opportunity for my daughters and give them the support they need in a world full of competition and challenge.

## My Daughters



Coming back to school has been challenging for me because I still must work to pay for all the expenses. Being awarded this scholarship will help me pay for out-of-pocket expenses while I am in school. I have proven to be a dedicated student who consistently spends the time needed to learn and complete all assignments. I have also shared my knowledge and understanding with other fellow classmates in the lab. I am considered a peer mentor and students seek me out for help. This shows that I will also be an asset to my community because of my compassion towards people.

*Challenged*

*Resilient*

**Adaptive**

**DEDICATED**

Compassionate

**Successful**



## *The Bad Experience in My Life*

By: MERYEM OUAZIZ

ESL 052



In life we go through good times and bad times that help us to move forward. For me the bad times are better because they *develop our strength*. That's why I'm going to talk about the bad times.

The bad time I lived in my life was when I came to America to join my husband. I remember the date was April 5, 2018 when I left Airport Mohamed 5 in Morocco. When I **said goodbye** to my family, I saw the *sadness* in their features, and the tears in their eyes, I hugged them hoping to visit them as soon as possible.

This period in the U.S. was very hard because my husband worked all day outside, and I used to stay by myself at home. At this time, I understood what loneliness meant with no friends,

and no family. It was so quiet, and I couldn't find someone to talk to me. There was not T.V. in my language, and I did not have the ability to speak **English**. It was very difficult for me to integrate



into American society because in Morocco we have other customs and traditions. It was a **difficult stage** in my life.

After I lived one month in the USA, I got pregnant. It was good news for me, but unfortunately, my health condition was not good. I couldn't walk or go out, and that forced



me to be in bed. In my eighth month of pregnancy, the doctor told me to go to the hospital for delivery because the **baby was in danger**. It was very scary, but after the delivery, when I saw my son in good health, I forgot everything. At first look, I saw a little angel with black hair, brown eyes, and white skin. I felt **happiness** because my son was fine. That

helped me to improve my psychological, and moral condition. In addition, I enrolled at CCD to study English. In fact, that helped me to form **new relationships**.

I love the bad stages that I went through when I came to America because they made me depend on myself, and I developed a strong personality. Also, that **encouraged me** to study English and to be happy with my husband and my son.

I KNOW THE JOY OF FAMILY

LEARNING & FRIENDSHIP!





## ***Dragon Boat Festival***

**By Qingxuan Fei  
ESL 052**



The Dragon Boat Festival is a Chinese traditional festival on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month. It's the day that is in memory of the patriotic poet Qu Yuan. During the Warring States period, when other states occupied the state of Chu, Qu Yuan preferred to die rather than surrender. He jumped into the Miluo River to commit suicide. Later, people set up the Dragon Boat Festival to commemorate Qu Yuan's loyalty and courage. In addition, people also row dragon boats to celebrate the festival in ancient times when they looked for the body of Qu Yuan.



People always eat a food called "Zongzi" during this festival. Because people thought the fish or other animals in the river would eat Qu Yuan's body they threw the Zongzi into the river to protect his body, so the fish would eat the food instead. After that, Zongzi became something to eat in this

festival. Zongzi is made of glutinous rice wrapped in reed leaves. There are different versions in the north and south of China. In northern China, they love sweets, so people put some fruit in the Zongzi; however, in the south people love salty foods, so they put meat in it.

Every year there are wonderful dragon boat races, and boats from all over the country come to participate. This is one of the traditional festivals in my country, with delicious food and interesting sports.





## How to Catch Fish

By: Rita Boiko

ESL 052

Going fishing sounds fun and not easy, but you should follow these steps to make it easier. The first step is to get a fishing license because you do not want to get a ticket for fishing. Second, you should find a good place for fishing. All sorts of different fish live in public lakes, rivers, and ponds, so you can always find something good to catch. Fishing is a good hobby, which not only brings you pleasure, but also gives you psychological and physical health.

Next, you will need to get a fishing pole and bait. You have to figure out what kind of fish you are planning to catch because the bait you use depends on that. Using live bait is a much better choice considering movement draws a fish's attention. For instance, if you plan to catch trout, you should use worms or even a piece of bread; for catfish and carp, you need worms and plastic fishing lures. If you do not want to buy live bait, you can dig for worms in your yard. Then, go to a sporting goods store and select things for fishing. There are different kinds of fishing rods, hooks, and fishing lines, as well as coolers or cages to store the fish you catch, so it all depends on what type of fish, their size and other factors. Without these things, your fishing will not be easy, but with them you will enjoy your fishing more.



When you are ready to go, you must be sure to check the weather because it can have a huge effect on what kind of fish will be out. At the lake, get your pole ready, and you should fasten a hook on your fishing line to put the bait on it. Throw the line into the water and be very patient. When you see a tug at your pole, you must start quickly reeling it in. The last step is to catch the fish in a net, take the hook out of the fish, and then put it in a cooler cage to store. After you have completed fishing, you can go home to cook the fish you caught and surprise your family and friends.





## *Memento Essay: The Book.*

*By: Eugenie Mukandayisenga*

*ESL 072*



My special book is a gift given by my valuable friend and a sister to me. She

helped me for many years, and taught me to forgive and forget, to appreciate, to help others, to show love and humanity, to cherish myself, to plan, and to achieve! She helped me into the journey of transformation, which made me positive.

It was one week before our departure; my daughters and I went to say goodbye to her family. We had a good time together. Before we left, she said, "What kind of gift can I give you, Eugenie?" In my heart, I could not imagine. What can it be? She went upstairs and came with a book in her hands; she approached me and touched me on my right shoulder. In her soft voice full of love and with a smile she said, "Eugenie, this book is a gift of appreciation and acknowledgement of how I am proud of you. You embraced the change, you helped others, your life is a book to read, you challenged me, and are my role model. I will miss you and I will share your testimony to my friends and those who aren't able to change. Go! Keep it up and become a blessing to many Americans." We hugged and cried. The book I received is spiritual material for a Christian's daily journey.

I could not discover the value of this book as part of my spiritual life until I started my ESL class at CCD. I remember my first days in class; our professor always reminded us to work on an essay about a special memento we have, and I felt frustrated and pain. I took longer to ask myself what kind of souvenir I had from my country and my own family. I had nothing to write on in my class essay. It was hard for me to explain to him, and I always feared to fail the class. From nowhere, I felt pain and started to cry in front of him. He was shocked! In my thoughts I knew that I had

healed, yet this book is the new step of *more* healing and the beginning of my freedom. The first time I met my friend she loved me unconditionally, and I shared with her my personal story. She treated me like her blood sister, which is the reason why this book describes my past, my present, and my future.

My last 14 years up to now, I didn't get a chance to be with my extended family or see how my mother's land looks. It was a part of my two lovely daughters and the memories of my past. This book represents only the combination of the nature of my country from my childhood, my painful story, my bleeding scars, my shedding tears, my body melting, my courage of surviving, my hope for today and tomorrow, and my testimony of life after troubles and failure. I came to the USA in October 2018, my 3<sup>rd</sup> country after 12 years in Uganda as a refugee. I was born in Rwanda, a country well-known in the world because of its unique history characterized by genocide, bloodshed, mass killing of innocent people from different categories and different tribes, persecution, and lack of freedom since 1990 up to now. Rwanda is among countries that have two popular tribes, "Hutu and Tutsi" also a minority one called "Batwa" and is known for the Tutsi genocide that happened in 1994. The catastrophe happened to both majority tribes. Because of the benefits of a special few and the dictatorship leaders up to now, there is a lack of genuine information and true testimonies from survivors on both sides. My CCD class's essay opened my heart to acknowledge who I am.

My professor reminded all of us about the essay and helped me to feel free to share my testimony. This book represents my childhood. I am "Hybrid" born from a Hutu Father and a Tutsi Mother. In the period of 7 years from 1992-1999, I have real testimony that mass killing, and genocide happened. I can't count the number of people killed by the RPF with whom I am familiar; they were many different ages and genders. I lost extended family members on both my parents' sides.

In my childhood, I didn't know or remember hatred or persecution; I didn't know my tribe. It all started in 1992. When the RFP attacked. It was my first year in high school in the capital city that was among the top schools in the country, where I learnt

that I was mixed blood. My family has suffered from that very time to now. There are some typical scenarios which make me cry all the time; the unforgettable date was 2/08/1992. My village, located in the North, was among regions which suffered the mass killing of Hutu. On that unforgettable day, the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF-INKOTANTU) attacked different families - most which hosted migrants. They attacked my family, killed 8 migrants, and one neighbour; whose bodies are still buried in our land. After their burial, my mother, and the rest of my family became migrants too; we left our home because of fear. To some groups, it sounds crazy, false, and unbelievable, but this is totally true.

From that very day, my family were migrants until the death of Rwanda's President on April 6, 1994. The next day, the Tutsi genocide started. We became vulnerable of course, but no one in our house died except a part of our extended family on my mother's side. Only my family and very few other families who lived in the UN "Neutral Zone" had Tutsi blood. It was an area located between the two oppositions. No armies from the Ruling or Opposition parties could reach it except the UN army and International NGOs. It was an area where internal migrants went for their safety.

When the RPF took power, the worst suffering started, and they questioned us regarding, "Why did you not die like others in the genocide?" My family was under pressure to answer them. Our father tried to explain why to different levels of the Army, but he couldn't satisfy them. He bribed them with money, cows, sold part of his land and forest to make them happy, but nothing worked. He faced several tortures, persecutions, and severe illegal imprisonment. They asked him to make a false accusation to his Hutu brother, but he refused. On February 28, 1998, the RPF killed my father and my brother (who died one day before his graduation from high school), our kettle keeper, and the 11-year-old daughter of our cousin's brother who came for a visit. They died like dogs!

The RPF tried to force me to believe that they didn't kill my family by using humiliation and sexual abuse again and again. During that time, my young sister and I

faced multi-sexual harassments to redeem our father and brother's deaths, but nothing satisfied them. It was also the time they forced most youths to surrender and serve them by force. Most of those who denied them were killed. In the multiple sexual harassments, I got pregnant with my first daughter; she is 19 years old now. I tried to speak out by joining the opposition political party, but nothing worked. They kept monitoring me and used ways to silence my freedom of speech, forcing me to serve them using different people from my family, civilian leaders, and armies. I refused. My pain and scars kept growing until I faced seven days of illegal custody in June 2006 when I was pregnant with my second daughter - she is 13 1/2 years old now. The RPF falsely accused me, and I faced torture. When I started to bleed in custody, and was about to miscarry, they released me under a bad health condition with pregnancy of 6 months. Their agenda was to convince me to have a voluntary abortion since my father was Hutu in terms of blood covenant. They wanted me to work with them to make money; I agreed verbally to save my life, but NEVER worked with them. I later forgave them about my father's death, and all our family's past.

My life was in danger because I could not help myself. I visited The Human Rights Watch. After their full investigation, they told me that my life was in danger of death or life imprisonment because, at that time, I had changed my actions and refused to work with them and acknowledge their instructions and mistakes. I could not allow myself to make money and forget the heart of my humanity. It would not work for me because it was part of my life. The Human Rights Watch advised me to save my life. I left my country with empty hands, had a short stay in Kenya, then went to Uganda in September 2009 and became a legal refugee.

From that very day, my full book of tears shedding, and body melting started because of refugee life, pregnancy, my 6-year-old, a language barrier, homelessness, and so on! Being alive is very expensive, but I was determined to start the new journey instead of serving killers, being humiliated, and lacking freedom and justice for the rest of my life. I started at zero! It was a hard time. I always cried and grieved for many reasons. It was in this process that I met my valuable friend. She helped me to

overcome all excuses of vulnerability caused by my past. Some of her tools were counselling, prayers, time, material support including food, medical fees, and house rent, all while showing me love, hugs, laughter, listening, and simply giving me time. On top of that, she helped me to get training in crafts with her friend who had a jewellery shop.

My process of transformation took over 4 years. I also became courageous and determined to make jewellery and started to sell them door to door with small capital. It really worked for me! I became independent and started to train my fellow women refugees through their communities. At this time, I felt useful to train women to make bracelets, pairs of earrings, and necklaces, using beads and recycled papers. I learnt how to plan in the smallest way and saved a little for emergencies. In February 2011, I got a job in an International NGO to train refugees in craft making and learned to give them quality skills. I had success and worked for 8 years until the day I came to the USA. (*The picture with toddlers shows my first job here as a pre-school teacher from Feb 2019 to January 2020.*)

The book is the souvenir of my past, my healing process, my courage, my resilience, and myself today and tomorrow. It reminds me how I helped my family, and my refugee community in my former host country. It is my tool nowadays to overcome the limitations caused by the persistent vulnerability in my past and focus on the best of today and my future here in the USA.





**Our wishes for you, family & friends are:**

**Good Health, Curiosity & Learning, Laughter, Innovation, Kindness, Realized Dreams & Peace!**



आपके लिए हमारी इच्छाएं, परिवार और दोस्त हैं: अच्छा स्वास्थ्य, जिज्ञासा और सीखना, हंसी, नवाचार, दयालुता, एहसास सपने और शांति(Hindi)

Matakwa yetu kwa ajili yenu, familia na marafiki ni: afya nzuri, udadisi & maarifa, kicheko, uumbaji, ukarimu, kutambua ndoto & amani (Swahili)

여러분, 가족 및 친구에 대한 우리의 소원은 다음과 같습니다 : 좋은 건강, 호기심 및 학습, 웃음, 혁신, 친절, 실현 된 꿈과 평화. (Korean)

ความปรารถนาของเราสำหรับคุณครอบครัวและเพศคือ:สุขภาพที่ดีความอยากรู้และการเรียนรู้เสียงหัวเราะนวัตกรรมความเมตตาความฝันและความสงบสุข(Thai)

Наши пожелания для вас, семьи и друзей: Хорошее здоровье, любопытство и обучение, Смех, Инновации, Доброта, Реализованные мечты и мир. (Russian)

Nuestros deseos para usted, familia y amigos son: Buena salud, curiosidad y aprendizaje, risas, innovación, bondad, sueños realizados y paz. (Spanish)

Mong muốn của chúng tôi cho bạn, gia đình & bạn bè là: y tế, Tự hỏi & học tập, tiếng cười, đổi mới, hành động loạihành động loại, nhận ra & Hòa bình (Vietnamese)

Nos souhaits pour vous, votre famille et vos amis sont : La bonne santé, la curiosité et l'apprentissage, le rire, l'innovation, la gentillesse, les rêves réalisés et la paix. (French)

我們對您，家人和朋友的希望是：身體健康，好奇心與學習，笑聲，創新，善良，實現夢想與和平 (Chinese)

Życzymy tobie, rodzinie i przyjaciołom: dobrego zdrowia, ciekawości i nauki, śmiechu, innowacji, życzliwości, urzeczywistnionych marzeń i pokoju (Polish)

آرزوهای ما برای شما ، خانواده و دوستان عبارتند از :سلامتی ، کنجکاوی و یادگیری ، خنده ، نوآوری ، مهربانی ، رویاهای تحقق یافته و صلح (Persian)