



A Journal of Places:  
Hudson Valley,  
Southern Indiana,  
State of Nayarit on  
the Pacific Coast of  
Mexico

Brenda Coultas

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Aug 4-5, 2015 HUDSON VALLEY

A day of abandonment. I abandon the page, I abandon the summer, the sun, the hammock: regrets as plentiful as grains of rice spill on the countertop.

Reading Unica Zurn and thinking of her Rooms of Illnesses, her architecture. Wondering if I have the courage to feel the edges of my practice.

Yesterday, ate like a mad woman. Buttery grilled cheese. Potato with sour cream, burger, two beers. Mad cow eating... Long fast then devouring fat and sugar. My fear of having everything and nothing to say. At mid-life, age 56, never to live in the abode above, my glance is at earth level on the earth plain.

Unveiling of a SojournerTruth marker on route 9 yesterday. A historian said this is the path, tavern site, and this is the house of refuge.

Dusk. After a swim. Microwaved mud in a bowl from the Dead Sea.

The path was square and mom's clothes made an island in the middle. What would you name that island anchored in the brown carpet? The mainland consisted of more clothes, papers (many never sorted just stuffed into a bag after clearing the kitchen table), office equipment and a TV with VHS slot. Still the outside door was blocked. The door is 80 to 100 years old, with a glass window and a bell that one turned and it made a satisfying brrriiiiing. Manual trill. Not the short self-satisfied quip of a car lock.

A fantasy of building a cabin just for the pleasure of opening the doors I love. All with original glass (almost wavy) Grandmother's face emerging out of the dark to open the door. She unlocks it, laughs, and I come in to spend the night.

It was not a dream, there were old doors leaning on the trees. I opened a thick one, like the door to a hacienda. Rough, tall and majestic.

Wormholes. Two days after clearing my father's room, of a twin metal bed, another sibling began filling it with magazines and books (not literature which never expires) but career and software manuals from the last century.

The hoard is anger submerged. An octopus fills its lair with bits of curiosities making a cabinet in the sea. It must be loaded with plastic water bottles and six pack rings, and maybe Happy Meal toys: french fries with legs, palm sized bat-mobiles. Does the octopus think, I'm saving that for a rainy day?

Human stash of malted milk balls in a milk carton. Cleared a path to the dryer and found a leak.

Bed surrounded with coffee cups. Empty plates, even though my sister rarely eats. She takes the plate you made her and retreats as swiftly as the carved bird inside a German cuckoo clock. She returns to the cuckoo's cloistered room, narrow and of plastic or wood: her exits determined by a chain and spindle cast as pine cones.

Underground chambers

As loquacious as headstones

Crayfish-built rooms in the mud

Correction tape stored in its original plastic bed

Will the bells ring or coins drop into the dirt?

Hadn't thought of my brain as a bell

Ringin' it does

Heralding one in and out of the doors

I wear a bell as a warning and place a key inside that could unlock a Book of Hours, and my name could mean black soil or someone who breaks young horses.

I blew up the high school every night in my dreams, but I never called in a bomb threat. Someone did and more than once. We filed out as far out as the baseball fields. The phone booth: all glass and steel and the light inside the booth has a bluish cast, and the hoaxer speaks through a cloth over the mouthpiece and hangs up after delivering the warning

of a bomb inside, perhaps a locker or closet, maybe on the 2nd floor girls or boys restrooms.

The hoaxer is hero of the day. He or she or they has seized the hammer and broken the safety glass, and gotten away. Orderly chaos. Everyone baffled at the liberation from drowsy routine.

Aug 6, 2015

Of gold found in a farmers field. Of what animals hoard. How we are protected by our collections. Prisoner of our fears, distraction between birth and death. How to fill the time. Why are we here if not to collect, to be makers.

For flying Confederate flags in a Union state  
For packing heat inside a white suburban strip mall wonderland  
For the fulfillment of bronze belt buckles and fast food dreams of management positions  
For cutting grass, for emptying out a truck of carnival games, and lying them on mattress and box springs  
For getting a thumping from police

Aug 3, 2015

Gun centerpiece at the wedding reception made it easier to have missed.

They gave his name to the pair of witless Jehovah witnesses knocking in daylight. If only inhabitants of model homes were wearing psychic deflectors instead of blueberry skins over the teeth.

Leave him in jail, so "to get it over with" his grandma feels bad for the other inmates because he's so nervous.

Aug 7, 2015

Blogger, critic of Isis hacked to death in Bangladesh.

Aug 12, 2015.

For solace I spend my days cutting out rooms in the grass. In Queen Anne's Lace, maybe in Hemlock, I make a home. I walk from room to room, and when I run out of space I make another one, with gasoline and a machine, or say the old way with a scythe. A wild turkey with her nine chicks likes it tall and seedy. She crosses over from the master suite into the wild: the construction site of future rooms.

Mashed potatoes scooped out like a ball of ice cream. Counting dollars folded in half and wrapped with rubber bands. About five stacks in a plastic bag. He speaks softly to a twenty for over a minute. I write as carefully as he ate, counting words instead of currency, counting books as wealth as testimony. I write slowly as if each word is etched into stone. (Velselka diner, NYC.)

An IBM Selectric with its alchemical ball of letters that I cast into an ocean of 1980s newsprint. About wardrobes for composing, I prefer vintage writing rags, even though I look like a corpse awakened by a bell, who claws herself out of the grave. An underground chamber as loquacious as a headstone.

Aug 19, 2015 MEXICO

I shop at a strange market, and soak leafy plants in the sea. Brown pelicans plop into the water, and they are "carved with a jackknife" as Stephen Crane wrote in *The Open Boat*. Crabs cling to the rock face. Waves wash in.

Just a sea outside the window. Clouds over the mountains. Pink sun rising. And sometimes the rain makes a hard blue line out in the distance. The blue softens and hardens out a ways.

August 20, 2015

Salt & pepper, tequila & weed, beer & wine, milk & coffee, salsa & tortillas, candles & lighter, fruit wash & almond milk, avocados & eggs, razor & toothpaste, groceries in paradise

Note from beach. Mewling birds who are not quite black, brown breasted, this agitated flock swarms and swarms again. One bird couple inspects the sand as if they were looking for the ruins of their lost home.

Fresh tortillas kept warm in a cooler. Tender and steaming. Tuna, the catch of yesterday but still fresh enough. Grouchy European sells t-shirts emblazed with "Live the Life You Love."

August 23, 2015

Rain and thunder last night. How many names are there for these Jurassic Park (the thunder is enormous and wild) claps of car alarm inducing apocalypse?

Last night's dinner at a no name jungle cafe: Only 17 servings a night of homemade pasta. Laid out on cutting boards. Served water in a glass with irregular waves. Clear without the blue band at the mouth. Like drinking from a fruit jar. The water glistening and glorious in the heat. No fans. Outside at a wooden table. The chairs, wood frames straight-backed with plastic woven seats. Like sitting on duct tape and my bare legs are a bit uncomfortable so I shift throughout. Soccer game next door.

Hippie vans. Occupied and abandoned on the same street. California license plates.

Fishing. Fishing is a constant. Everyone fishes without a rod, with a line and hook, cast from a hand. Groups of men wade out to chest high



and cast out nets. Families gather snails and mussels from the rocks and wade in the low gentle water.

Hérons. Two species? A small white herons rest in the treetops in front of my balcony. Another taller heron, could be same species, mateless. Long stick legs and yellow feet. Co-existing with the brown pelicans who are more grey than brown, more driftwood than earth. Counted 40 or so this morning.

Buzzards ride the sky during the storm, they plummet and then fly up. Not sure if this is a joy ride or technique for surviving high winds.

Dreamed I took some eggs covered in a blanket to a party and they hatched during the party. Cute hungry chicks. I frantically search for a basket and food. Crumbing cake into their mouths, fearing for the future that I had made. Recognized the root of this dream: at the market I bought six eggs and they packed them in a baggie, instead of a carton. By the time I got home, I had forgotten about the loose eggs and dropped the bag into the counter and broke three. I bought eggs again the next day, stayed mindful of this delicate package, and made it home with all six intact inside a pink thin baggie.

She says the pharmacy “sells generics of generics.” The doctor owns the pharmacy and he keeps regular hours, no charge to see him. The washed instruments lie in a heap on the sink’s upper ledge.

Smithsonian writers coming this week for “culture of the River Nayarit” feature. The morning sun fails to shine through the haze.

Expect to look feel and like a peanut by the end of August: salted and roasted in my skin.

I’m writing this from the bay of Bandaras; a baby pen for humpbacks in the winter. Not the largest bay and not the Sea of Cortez. That tectonic rift is further north. This is sixty miles of coastline, and the Pacific ocean is another blue horizon beyond this blue horizon.

Five hundred peso bill, worth a little less than forty US Dollars. Self portrait of Diego Rivera, in wire rimmed glasses, and his painting 'Nude with Calla Lilies', don't think its Frida but rather an earlier lover. The other side, Frida Kahlo's self portrait with her painting "The Love Embrace of the Universe, the Earth (Mexico), I, Diego and Mr. Xolotl" that features Diego, as a naked baby in her arms cradled by her enormous hands. Their family dog, Mr. Xolotl, named for the god who guards the underworld, lies on the arm of Cihuacoatl, the Aztec Earth Mother who is in turn embraced by the universal mother.

Isis blew up the ancient city of Palmyra.

The first full day of this year, I took a walk on the ruins of the Temple Mayor; inside the museum, a cut out of the temples inside of other temples:

Milagros pinned to a shrine  
Calcium grins grim  
Below the cobblestones  
Face to face with volcanic stone  
Temples built over temples  
Bed of the city lies on a lake  
Skulls with spinal cord tails: an offering.  
A shaman beat you lightly with branches  
It was a blessing, a welcome to this city

When the guard left the room, I leaned over the velvet rope to glimpse myself in that mirror but set off an alarm instead. Like the woman caught trying on Emily Dickinson's white dress, I mean I would have of tried it on too. Could I wear Emily's dress or lie in Frida's bed? Like typing in a poem that you love and hoping that poem's glory becomes yours. You're a thief, a tourist in local drag, but there could be a transfer of genius if you touch that cloth.

The grey pelicans. Mottled like driftwood. Seagulls with forked tails. Black under the wings. A white bodied one. With bits of red beak.

Beaks outsized, comical to the point of the grotesque. Like a bird, still wet, that flew out of a Bosch painting.

Youtube diary:

Dead Kids. 1984.

Mind Snatchers.1974.

August 29, 2015

Hermit crabs inhabiting shells smaller than a fingernail.

Dark lizard about a foot long, maybe a pound, hiding inside a tree trunk.

Heard of using fruit on a stick to lure down iguanas so you can gaze at their beauty.

Jorge, a marine biologist and fisherman, saw a Ridley turtle surface out in the open ocean. The turtle couldn't breathe because her neck was wrapped up in part of an anchor line. When Jorge cut her free, the turtle drank in a large breath and swam away.

Rumors that a Smithsonian writer covering the culture of the Nayarit was detained by a discovery of a mass grave of sacrifice victims under the Temple Major.

Our abode is all white like living inside an eggshell. White on white and like a broken yolk we muddle the colors.

Flowers and candles cover the grave like a blanket; her portrait makes the headboard. As he said, "She's beautiful" a candle burning inside a plastic cup caught afire. Handful of long stiff wires and rosaries knotted to a tree at the foot of the grave.

A graveyard is called a pantheon. Your grave is dug by your friends with shovels.

“We prefer Mexifiles. Not expats” says Joe, a retired pilot and Vietnam vet who lost his ass in Florida real estate.

Sept 1, 2015

These are the answered prayers of Guadalajara. The supplicants: a woman with dog gnawing on her leg, man crushed by a boulder, the sick in bed surrounded by family; Christo on the cross, appears hovering like a drone in the room.

The shell is a green stone and the legs are silver and extend across the tops of the other fingers, at first I thought he was wearing a bird’s head ring. A crowd gathers around him. Caged parakeets. The methodology: A parakeet picks out white paper fortunes from a stack. With a flourish, the shaman seals the fortunes in a blue envelope for the recipient to take home.

Squeegee man wiping down a motorcycle for three paper wrapped stacks of tortillas.

Mariachi festival: suits with bands of silver buttons, I have followed some mariachis down the cobblestones, leading wedding parties that include open pours of tequila and a donkey, maybe larger than life puppets of the bride and groom.

This is the language. Soft paper, moist. These sounds of water and fans hushing, coughs hushing us. In the quietude of the Market: alone with a cabinet of bleached ivory hoofs.

Sept 3, 2015

In the bay, a father and his son of about six, his father holds him so the boy skims the surface, horizontally like a turtle. They walk this way towards a small fishing boat of other fathers and young sons.

## **Acknowledgements.**

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