

A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

Travel suspends emotion as we find ourselves caught in the space between the left-behind and rapidly changing perceptions. Memories are etched in vivid color by alien sights, sounds, smells and textures until we remember the places we have seen as deeply personal parts of ourselves.

After studying abroad with the University of Washington, as well as traveling independently, we found ourselves inspired by the power of the journey. Travel is a merciless muse, ripping to shreds our webs of understanding until we see everything with new eyes. We see the horrific and the inspiring, the extreme pathos and the indefinable beauty of the world when we travel. And when we return home, everything is redefined.

The Anthology Project was founded as a forum for processing these new ways of seeing — as a place for University of Washington students, faculty and alumni to share their stories about the experience of travel. We hope this first compilation will inspire others to travel abroad — to find independence, introspection and identity in their own voyages.

This collection is a rich reflection of laughter, pain, fear and love. Its works span the world, connecting unlikely places across preconceptions. From the rainforest to the classic cities, from the townships to the temples, the places described in these pages prove the willingness of the contributors to risk everything of themselves in search of understanding. It is these experiences that have become increasingly necessary to understand our globalizing world.

Without efforts to understand the experience of “the other,” we condemn ourselves to conflict and pain. And with tightening borders and rising tensions worldwide, travel can release us from world views. It is our hope that The Anthology Project will begin to bridge cultural misunderstandings, one page at a time, by recording reflections of abroad.

Letters Home: Stories of Travel, Return and the Changing Space Between presents the stories and photos that illustrate what it means to live in our rapidly changing world — lessons of what it means to be human.

— The editors