

## Huacachina, Peru



### by Spencer James

Spencer James is a junior majoring in Biochemistry. He studied in Ioannina, Greece with CHID as a freshman and spent 10 months after his sophomore year travelling throughout South America, Europe, northern Africa, the Middle East, India and southeast Asia on the Bonderman Fellowship.

## A Rose's Finale

by Gillian Barth

Gillian Barth, a senior majoring in Comparative History of Ideas, studied in Prague and Paris in 2005. She has traveled extensively, always looking for a good story.

It was at least 10 o'clock on a warm spring night and the air was full of heat and noise. There was not an empty table along the whole block. Nicole and I sat at one, drinking in the scene and whatever else came along. We were roommates and friends, living in Prague for the quarter, but this weekend we were in Budapest, an eight-hour train ride from our dusty apartment and looming papers. We sat at a table on Lizst Ferenc Tér, a street lined with throbbing sidewalk bars and cafés. We chatted about our roommates and classes, and the conversation turned to the obnoxious bachelor party at the next table, where Englishmen dressed in green and rainbow-colored wigs and pink dresses downed rounds of vodka and Red Bull,

"They look ridiculous," said Nicole.

"I think that's what they are going for," I replied, wishing they would disappear.

Nicole noticed an old man selling drooping roses. He walked slowly and with great difficulty, tattered pants dragging at his heels. His too-large wrinkled grey suit draped his small frame, and I imagined him when his suit had fit, strutting robustly around Budapest. Now his shoulders sagged and his propped-up head and cataract-clouded eyes searched for anyone interested in a rose that was sure to be discarded by 2 a.m.

"He should be at home in bed," Nicole remarked.

It was late, too late for someone who looked like he could trip over a careless stiletto or bamboo chair-leg any minute. He passed table after table of faces carousing in Hungarian, English and German. My thoughts wandered away from Nicole to what could have brought this man to a loud square full of drunken twenty-somethings. He was out of place. I wondered if he had a bed somewhere and a wife waiting for him to return with a loaf of bread. He tottered out of our sight, and we picked up our conversation again.

Thirty minutes later, the skeleton came back around the block, this time carrying only three fading roses. The three buds held on to

what petals they had, telling of the fleeting evening, and the crowd talked on, oblivious to the man and his offering.

With a tired smile, he limped by our table a third time. Our gossip-filled chatter hung in the air and dissolved, and the pause grew heavy. He had one rose left.

“How much money do you have?” Nicole asked me. I did not have much in forints, but it was our last night in Budapest and we would catch a train back to Prague in the morning. I dug through my wallet, and between us we came up with 700 forints — about \$3.50. Nicole chased the man down. She came back, breathless, with the withered flower.

“How did it go?” I asked.

“Well, he didn’t speak English, so he just took the money. I think 700 forints was a lot because he looked surprised.”

I propped my elbow on the table and took the rose, twirling it between my thumb and forefinger. The petals were wrinkled with blackened edges and the leaves were filled with holes. The thorns on the stem had been clipped, and the stem was worn smooth from being handled. The flower stood against the café’s soft glow, casting a shadow against the glassy tabletop.

## Detroit, Michigan



by Weston P. Jandacka

UW undergrad Weston Jandacka took back highways all the way to Maine in the Summer of 2005, collecting photos and impressions that were later documented in oil painting. To see more of Weston’s art, go to [www.jandacka.com](http://www.jandacka.com)