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likeness

m a g a z i n e

we have our differences

Low Entropy is headquartered in Kwikwetlem First Nation Territory of the Coast Salish people, and in the shared territory of the sə́lilwətaʔt təməxʷ, xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Stz'uminus, Qayqayt and S'ólh Téméxw nations.

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Foreword

The distance between us is indefinite, but we wouldn’t have it any other way: we love connecting—particularly when there is a connection—yet we need ourselves to be ourselves, lest we forget ourselves.

We have boundaries. We draw borders. Sometimes, we build barriers. Whether at the touch of the lips or an arm’s length, we calibrate our relative distinctions by managing distance, pulling the same few levers to filter out another messy selection of readings, to make sense of the din of information in the world even as it seeps in through every pore.

I don’t know you, do I? I just know we’re not the same.

But I offer you this. We put this together: skyscrapers and squirrels, paisley and ponchos, humility, dreams, moonlight, love. For you, so that it might somehow traverse the void. We know it will transform into something we can’t even see by the time it arrives, obscured by that vacuum of solipsistic ether, but we hold our hats, fingers curled in nervous anticipation of what you might think.

You like, yes?

I hope so. We are different, but I always knew we’d get along.

Simon Cheung

Editor, Low Entropy

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“my purchases have created fantastic memories for the months following their acquisition”



Photo by Clem Onojeghuo

UNDERWEAR SOUVENIRS

Jayne Seagrave

I write from Colonia del Sacramento, Uruguay, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, at the ferry terminal, killing time at a local market complex before my 5:00 p.m. ferry back to Buenos Aires. I am in a very pleasant cafe, with fresh pastries temptingly displayed in a glass case, and wine, beer and liqueurs on offer, neatly dispatched by well dressed, attentive, young waitresses moving between the tables as unobtrusive western music plays in the background. Someone has taken time with the attention to detail to ensure this environment is welcoming.

I chose to be seated where I can see eight of the small kiosk gift stalls, all offering an eclectic range of Uruguayan crafted merchandise, including carved wooden bowls; chimes and earrings; gemstone jewelry; brightly coloured, knitted ponchos and scarves; wine and liqueurs; pottery; stained glass bowls and coasters; and jams and preserves. There are many vendors I cannot see. Periodically, large tour buses arrive and disgorge tourists who wander through the contemporary retail space. The singular occupants of the kiosks put away their portable telephones (what did they do before owning these devices?) and smile encouragingly at the latest arrivals, who generally have little or no interest in the goods on display, here only to use the washrooms. The visitors

slowly walk by, avoiding eye contact. In the last hour I have seen one vendor sell one pair of earrings. Am I here on a “bad day,” or is this normal?

This Uruguayan craft market adjacent to the ferry terminal has much in common with other such markets across the globe, with the only exception being that the wine, pottery and earrings are produced in Uruguay, not Canada or Portugal or Vietnam, or some other destination. It is not dissimilar to the one at Tsawwassen, British Columbia that I have visited on numerous occasions but is not as busy.

I do question how these artisans make a living. Is it a hobby, where the vendors have proper, salary-producing jobs to pay the bills in another life? Do they have more success at other locations or with an online presence? Or is it just a poorly paying,

uneconomical yet enjoyable pastime they are committed to?

Each year I am surprised at the number of craft markets that spring up, especially prior to the Christmas holidays. I question whether we do not have enough “craft stuff.” Recently there has been a growth in recycling old clothes. Is there not an opportunity to recycle logo-carrying fridge magnets, woven brace-

JAYNE
SEA-
GRAVE

Jayne Seagrave is a BC bestselling author. The ninth edition of her book *Camping British Columbia, the Rockies and the Yukon* was published by Heritage House in April 2023. Over 60,000 of her camping books have been sold. She also writes fiction, non-fiction and freelance articles, and occasionally teaches writing and publishing courses.

lets, ceramic jam pots, mobiles and wooden spoons, advertising a city visited,
but now all but forgotten?

How many small metal animals created from recycled beer cans does a society need? How many pieces of jewelry can a woman wear? How many of these items purchased as gifts by the well-meaning tourist for those left behind are appreciated by the recipient? This should be a research project. Data is needed.

A few years ago I went to France with only hand luggage. I always travel lightly, as it is convenient and means I cannot buy an excessive amount that I will regret acquiring at a later date. While in France I bought underwear. It was needed—I did not want to wash—it was a typically French purchase (are not the French supposed to have the sexiest styles and therefore very chic “sous-vetements”?) and these small items took up no space in my suitcase, thereby fulfilling all requirements for holiday memorabilia.

Now for my confession. Where other travellers purchase fridge magnets, snow globes or tea spoons, I buy underwear from the country I travel to, as a souvenir. In the last few years I have purchased underwear from France, the UK (the Marks and Spencer’s English department store is world-renowned

for having the best underwear), Taiwan, Fiji, Vietnam and Uruguay. My tradition has introduced me to a whole new aspect of foreign travel, as sometimes just searching for a shop in a strange town that sells the style of knickers I want or determining the correct bra size is an enlightening, educational, often time-consuming experience. And you get to meet some great locals who are not used to The Tourist seeking out these goods, and who are consequently enthusiastic to offer all the assistance needed.

Upon returning home, my purchases have created fantastic memories for the months following their acquisition. Each morning, I need to decide what underwear I want to wear that day. Will it be from France or Portugal or Las Vegas? And in making the selection, I am happily reminded of

where and when

the item was acquired.

Maybe there could be a demand for a craft market store selling locally produced bras and panties, as like fridge magnets and bottle openers, they are easily transportable, useful and generate memories of that special time and place.

SUE
TURI

I am an artist, illustrator, and writer living outside of Montreal with a passion for storytelling in all its forms. I left my homeland of South Africa 40 years ago to find better pastures, only to discover that pastures are cultivated from within.

Blood and Water.

Sue Turi

When on the day after a storm
we heard a ship had hit the rocks and broken her back,
and we skipped school to rush to the edge of a cliff
to watch her great bow-held only by a thread to a stern-
heave and sway in the surf until it
splintered into matchsticks then drifted, drifted
along the coastline;

when in those moments we waited in silence for
the sun to sink, sink, like a ripe peach into a sequined sea
while the bottom of our ice cream cones fell out;

when the first year I was born, you were forbidden to touch, touch me
unfurling pink and precious from Easter yellow
for fear you’d break me;
and the time you chased me around the kitchen in anger,
then sunk your nails deep into my wrists until they bled, bled;
then I chased you and caught your finger in a door, turning the nail blue
and it fell off;

when on those days we washed laundry in the bathtub with our hands and feet, and I had to hold the
heavy laundry basket while you got to hang the laundry
with perfect, perfect pegs;
(and wasn’t it you who got to wash the dishes in Sunlight with sparkly suds
while I had to dry them and put them away in dark cupboards?)

And that time you say I stole your favorite doll and chopped her hair with the kitchen scissors;
(but then it was always you, you who wore the new sweaters and me, your hand me downs.)

When over the years we had made friends and lost them like ships after a storm
and “family” meant a rare newsy letter or postcard with fancy stamps received from overseas by airmail
and never anything more than that;

where in this moment, I bequeath this poem of twenty-nine lines to you and me—

I continue to ask how blood is thicker than water.

Vignettes

Anna Mallikarjunan

Extracts from an unpublished novella in which I explore whether a unifying, primordial love and intelligence can weaken the compelling force of differences. The story revolves around the intersecting lives of three young people.

I

In the early hours of a morning, Maya began her walk to fetch water from the river. It was still dark, but life in the houses of her village was already stirring. She heard the gentle clatter in kitchens, the low hum of voices and strains of music from old-fashioned radios. The sounds of life grew distant, however, when she reached the solitude of the riverbank. As she sat down to fill her earthen pot, only the touch of the cool water was to be her guide. A twinkle in the water then caught her eye—it was the first light of day. And gradually, a bright ball of orange emerged from the mountains beyond. Darkness raised its hood as the sun rose, and she was suddenly aware of the mighty mountains, the rich foliage of trees and the flowing waters of the river, all at once. Dawn had turned swiftly into morning. She filled her earthen pot and made her way back home, squinting in the brilliance of the summer morning.

II

Mia heard the rustle of autumn leaves on the ground below. A squirrel looked up at her, then scurried away with an acorn between his teeth. He dug into the ground past the leaves and buried the acorn. He then quickly covered the hole by replacing the leaves and looked up at her again, this time with a smug, satisfied air of a job well done. From the garden seat where she sat, she smiled admiration at him. Perhaps

encouraged by her approval,

he scampered about the bed of leaves and started to dig once more. She wondered if he was looking for the acorn, but if he was, he seemed to be looking in all the wrong places, growing increasingly agitated at not finding it. She wished she could intervene and help the

little creature. Just then, her attention was drawn away by a sharp change in the evening light. The setting sun had created an explosion of colour everywhere, and her surroundings were drowned in the hues of dusk. And as the autumnal colours dissolved into the approaching darkness, first the distant hills, then the trees nearby seemed to vanish from her view. As if shaken out of a dream, she suddenly remembered the squirrel and looked down for him. He was gone, and

all that was left was an undisturbed, dark bed of leaves.

III

Norbu picked up his robe and walked quietly through a plantation of coffee bushes and trees with climbing pepper vines. An enchanting smell of spices filled the air. He emerged from the grounds onto a narrow road, the other side of which marked the beginning of a forest. He ambled through the forest, touching and feeling the ruggedness of tree barks and the fragility of their leaves. A grass snake slithered across his path. He saw it disappear beneath some fallen leaves and into the distance. As he went on, he felt a drop of water on his cheek—the forest air had suddenly turned moist. He wiped his face with his palms and continued walking into the dampness, listening eagerly to the approaching babble of a stream. He stopped just as his feet touched the edge of a rock, with the branches of a tree draped over it. Pushing aside the leaves, he looked down. From the towering height of the forest floor, a narrow stream of water rushed down, creating a white, foamy, thundering waterfall.

IV

Maya and her friend laughed gleefully as the deer gobbled up the pieces of cucumber from their palms. The two, exhausted after all the walking, found a rock to sit on and rested their feet in the cool waters of a stream. On another rock nearby, a young boy sat by himself. Dressed in red robes, his head completely shaven, he was the most unusual boy Maya had ever seen. Nisargadhama was the furthest Maya had ever been from her home in Karangi. In her village, she was familiar with the darker-skinned Kannadigas and the lighter-skinned Coorgis, like herself. But she had

never seen someone like this before.

He had long, narrow eyes and a gentle, calm demeanour. Then she noticed others like him. They were all boys of the same age, and they all wore long red robes that exposed their arms and feet.

V

Norbu was blissfully unaware of the tension and unhappiness many Tibetans felt about the state of exile from their land. It was incomprehensible to him why anyone could be unhappy in such a beautiful place with kind, contented people. On his walks alone, he befriended many Indians, who were both intrigued and charmed by this little Tibetan boy wandering the lands. Many shared their food with him, which explained why he could be away from the temple for several hours on end. He had been accompanying his father, who worked at the temple, since the age of five, and now, five years later, the temple and monastery had become his second home. He regularly joined the young-

er monks in turning prayer wheels. He would run playfully along the columns, delighting in the rattling sound the wheels made as they spun round and round.

VI

The group from the Academy boarded the fast train to Mysore. As the train sped through villages and towns, they looked out at the lush green countryside and large rock formations common to this region. Mia noticed the contrast of the landscape to what she had seen over the last few days in the busy streets of Bangalore. The train was a non-stop service, but it slowed once in response to a signal. The tracks there ran next to a lake that was bordered sparsely by bushes and trees. In the middle of the lake, on a rock jutting out from the water, a dark cormorant stood still. He appeared noble in his solitude, but soon she noticed he was not alone. At one far end of the lake, she noticed a man and a buffalo. The man, standing knee-deep in the water, scooped up and splashed water on the buffalo with his palms. She stared, astonished, at the large, formidable creature standing compliantly as its keeper bathed him. A few moments later, the train gained momentum, and the countryside passed her by rapidly once more.

“Find out who you are, how did you come to live, longing for truth, goodness and beauty in a world full of evil.”

— Nisargadatta Maharaj

ANNA
MAL-
LIKARJU-
NAN

Anna writes from her love for the natural world, lessons from her journey through illness and trauma, and gratitude for the wisdom of the ancients. Her essays have appeared in literary magazines and eco-conscious journals. Originally from South India, she presently lives in Montreal (Tiohtià:ke), on the unceded lands of the Kanien'kehá:ka.

AMY
TOBIN

Wanderer. I'm an Australian from Wurundjeri country, currently travelling solo, walking on unceded lands of the First Nations people, in Turtle Island, Canada with a background in communications, writing and marketing for nonprofits, including animal welfare, conservation, Indigenous brands and environmental management. I share my travels as I aim to walk lightly, reduce my carbon footprint and connect to sacred land. I'm passionate about mindfulness, vegetarianism, Land Back, social justice, volunteering, conservation and giving back to communities and the land on my travels.

two cities,
one girl

Amy Tobin

The beauty of both,
The sounds on the streets of people's voices
Is louder than the birds chirping in the trees,
of my childhood home.
We have our differences
Tkaronto and Narmm.

The snow flurries fall
and the sun rises above the city skyline.
The eucalypt and the pine.
The bitter with the sweet.
Take it or leave it,
But it feels like all mine.

Oh, how underrated it is,
These brick buildings and skyscrapers,
But how do you know what's inside?
Maybe an artist, a doctor, an activist,
Tastes from all over the world,
The potential
For anything to happen,
The potential,
To be so expansive.

My footsteps walking in different boots,
The same soul,
with the same smile,
And the same roots.

Just another city,
Two worlds apart,
But joined by the heart.



We have Our Differences

Shayan Afkari

We have our differences, and within them lies the essence of our existence. No two minds perceive the world the same way, no two hearts beat to the same rhythm. We are shaped by the roads we've walked, the wounds we've carried, and the dreams we silently nurture. Sometimes, these differences clash, pushing us apart like tectonic plates, shaking the foundations of our understanding. But if we listen—truly listen—we find that, beneath the noise of disagreement, there is a deeper truth: our differences are not barriers, but bridges. They force us to expand, to step beyond ourselves, to see that the world is not black or white, but an infinite spectrum of experience. And in this vast complexity, in the tension between contrast and connection, we find what it means to truly be human.



Together and Apart: *Isolation & Making Assumptions*

(Olga And The Lime Green Puffer)

Sue Turi

Fluorescent lighting makes my eyes swell up.

But here I am again, perusing the aisles in the coat section of Winners on a winter day. The familiar smells of packaging, cardboard boxes and someone's passing perfume has settled in my nose.

Metal hangers scrape along racks while a cell phone conversation nearby discusses a family member excluded from Christmas dinner. A store associate sporting a short black apron interrupts the conversation with an "excuse me" to hang clothes from the changerooms.

Working my way around to the liquidation aisle is when I notice "Olga," mid-twenties, accompanied by a male companion.

I choose to call her Olga as it's a Slavic name, and I like Slavic names. But, to elaborate, it's because I heard them speaking a foreign language and I assumed it was Slavic.

Olga is enamoured by a lime green puffer jacket that has caught her eye. Her companion is looking like the habitual shadow shopper—bored,

tagging along more out of duty than interest.



Her friend/husband/father has a weathered look to him—disheveled hair and a salt-and-pepper beard. He wears a lived-in black sports jacket with a bold white stripe across the lapels over worn jeans. He looks like he would rather be having a drink in a bar somewhere and shooting pool.

I have a flashback to walking through slush and snow on my first day in Canada 20 years ago. I'm wearing sodden, European-bought leather boots, and I am on a quest to find the nearest shoe store to buy a pair of impermeable ones to replace them. I buy black rubber knee-high monsters with felt lining at Pitt Shoe Store, believing this is what you're "supposed" to wear in cold climates. If ancient Alpine icemen managed to make grass shoes both stylish and functional, then so could I.

I stand with fellow commuters on the Montreal Metro, feeling geared up appropriately, having grasped the concept of Arctic wear. But then I carefully observe the casual understatement of the footwear around me: Nikes, Oxford lace-ups, a pair of suede hiking boots—leaving me to feel

dorky and excluded from the local club.

Olga has something familiar about her that has nothing to do with being a foreigner, though I don't know what.

She asks her husband/father/friend what he thinks of the puffer jacket. Without waiting for an answer, she tries it on. I'm assuming she's asking him this as, even if I don't understand what they're saying, his abrupt replies need no translation. I've tried this same jacket on myself a couple of times over the last few months. Many people have since the sales started. I mean, it's lime green, for heaven's sake. It shouts *fresh and young* amongst the drab of black, gray and khaki. It makes a punchy statement. It glows in the dark. Everyone needs a pick-me-up at this time of year.

But for Olga's 5'11", heavysset frame, the jacket is a risky purchase. It ends at her hips and fits too snugly. If only she were to ask me instead of her male companion, I would tell her the truth about the puffer: that it's not warm; it's been tried on by roughly 50 people or more, and the zip is exhausted. I'd tell her lime green is a fad; she'll date herself with it and get tired of it. On top of it all, it's an XS and she'll restrict her circulation until her arms freeze to icicles.

Moving on to another aisle, I lose sight of Olga and her father/friend/husband only to find her, one hour later, alone at the cash desk in front of me with the puffer over her arm. She's discussing the item with the cashier.

For the first time, I observe the paisley motif on the back of a maroon coat she wears over black leggings, a coat that's going to be discarded soon for something flashier. The pompom on her cream hat matches the coat, which is pulled tight at the waist, adding bulk to her shape.

Olga turns around—a shy but contented smile lingers on her lips. She's finally made the purchase, converting an object of desire into a conquest.

I now recall who she reminds me of, someone dear to me who has refused to talk to me for the last six months. It's her build and long, pin-straight brown hair. Or is it her smile? My heart sinks thinking about a relationship that soured because of miscommunication at a time when people needed each other the most.

Back to Olga and "friend" (who has never reappeared).

I decide they must be new immigrants and wonder what language they speak. Russian, by the *shhh* sounds, although being partial to anything vaguely Slavic-sounding (blame it on the 1960s movie *Doctor Zhivago*), I'm an unreliable judge. They could be from Sao Paulo, for all I know. Down there, they also make *shhh* sounds.

It's intrusive and weird to just ask a stranger out of the blue where they're from, so I leave the store guessing and chide myself about my ridiculous assumptions that

Russians need advice on style and cold climate wear, more than someone like me, who grew up barefoot in Africa, wearing only shorts and t-shirts.

As I get in my car, my mind stubbornly persists. I want to know the story of Olga and her companion, not stories about material aspirations for their new adopted country, this found deal or that profitable scheme . . .

Rather, I want to know

what flowers grow wild in their homeland.

What winds blow incessantly. And is borscht really made from beets? Maybe I want to join her companion for a drink in a bar to exchange stories—stories my hungry soul can relate to, other than department store finds.

Photo by
the nix
company



ALEX
ANDY
PHUONG

Alex Andy Phuong earned his bachelor of arts in English from California State University, Los Angeles in 2015. Emma Stone inspired him to write passionately after he heard the song “Audition (The Fools Who Dream)” from *La La Land*.

Lyrical Splendor

Alex Andy Phuong

Marvel at the wonder
Of natural splendor
Within a world
Unlike any other,
And live today
In such a way
That expresses gratitude
Through a hopeful attitude,
And understand how living
Comes from the acceptance of now
Since the present moment
Can demonstrate how
Continuing a story
With a sense of humility
Offers authenticity
Without the need for glory,
And becoming free at last
Can let the past stay in the past

I Love You

Alfie Lawson

In the chaos of day-to-day life, we sometimes take each other for granted. Not in a cynical or deliberate sense, more just in a “there’s so much going on and I have my own stuff to worry about” sort of way. Sure, we could say those three words—I love you—more often. But right now, I’m busy. And besides, the people I’m close to already know how I feel, right?

Whatever your current routine is, we tend to shy away from certain people at certain times, and our emotional language also changes. When I was a kid, and therefore most dependent on my parents for support and guidance, I would rarely tell them I loved them. In a way, it felt odd. They obviously loved me, for which I am very grateful, but it somehow seemed cheesy to say it back to them.

Fast forward to adulthood and, whilst I do now say “I love you” to mum and dad, it loses its meaning somewhat. It normally feels tacked on at the end of a phone call to give a standard goodbye more gravitas. Additionally, once you’re grown up, there are other people that you’re more likely to say it to. Whether it’s friends or lovers, I see those people face-to-face more than my family. And maybe those



relationships appear more fleeting, so the idea of love is more central.

I’m not sure that’s right either. Whilst many friendships genuinely merit an “I love you,” it can often be deployed at the end of a boozy night out or in a slightly jokey sense. Meanwhile, I personally find myself dancing around the L word when it comes to relationships. Saying it is a bit like spotting an iceberg in the distance—will the ship be able to clear it? Or is it time to head for a lifeboat?

This is perhaps truer for the male experience, or indeed my specific male experience. I’m naturally in-

Photo by
Alexander
Andre

troverted, and opening up and being emotionally vulnerable is something I still work on. This is especially true for relationships where, to be honest,

I've only said L-O-V-E maybe once or twice.

Meanwhile, male friendships often have the air of two or more people who are still rediscovering repressed emotions, or unlearning traits of toxic masculinity. We're not supposed to be lovey-dovey, or else everyone may see us as (the most dreaded thing of all) weak.

All of this, however, is exactly why I need to say "I love you." There's a sweet spot where those three words carry so much more than the sum of their parts. They don't just show affection, they also show vulnerability. The phrase has a meaning that runs deeper than simply being another way to say "I think you're alright" or "Goodbye, but I would like to see you again."

I recently read a poem called "Taking the Night Train" by John James Piatt, of which the ending stood out to me:

I seem to see each street a mystery growing,
In mist of dreamland—vague, forgotten air:
Does no sweet soul, awakened, feel me going?
Loves no dear heart, in dreams, to keep me there?

To me, this serves as a poignant reminder of why we need love and support. It's important whenever we leave the family home, spend time away from our partners or close friends, or feel isolated in the world around us. Those words: I love you, they act as our North Star, a compass that guides us away from loneliness and instead towards comfort, compassion and hope.

Whilst it's beyond cliché to use poetry to discuss love, that passage taps into the very basic human emotion to feel wanted. It's something we all carry to one extent or another.

So, personally, I want to say "I love you" more often. Not because it will always have this huge weight every time it's said, but because it acknowledges something far greater.

No matter where we are in the world, we have a duty to each other to be more emotionally honest. We should offer that support so we don't feel like we're alone in a confusing and complicated world. The people in my life give me purpose, and I would like them to know that.

Friendly Winter

Balreet Sidhu

Come winter come snow
Let the orange in the fireplaces glow

Snowman snowman taller you grow
Adults with children; snowballs they throw

Many a gingerbread house, snowflakes, snow angels till Easter is all I know!
Moonlight 'n' winter wonderland memories as rare as a winter rainbow

BAL-
REET
SIDHU

I am an avid lover of living, nature and adventure. This is writing to appreciate winter for the joys it brings, just as in a spring bird a full heart sings.

“no one knows of its existence, and therefore it survives as an unspoiled destination for the impassioned voyager.”



Photo by Julentto Photography

A PLACE THE TOURIST FORGOT

Jayne Seagrave

It had not been planned. It was not on my “to do” list. In fact, if you had asked me a month ago where it was, the name of its capital city and what its most memorable event was, I would not have been able to tell you. But recently that all changed . . . I went to Montevideo, the capital city of Uruguay, and now feel compelled to tell anyone who will listen just how wonderful this city is. In the space of only four days, Montevideo has reached the heights of being one of my favourite cities in the world. Why? Because I feel, like me before my trip, no one knows of its existence, and therefore it survives as an unspoiled destination for the impassioned voyager.

I adore travelling and yet get increasingly annoyed that everyone else shares my passion, so when I discover a capital city devoid of tourists, where only the native language is spoken, a city that functions without tour buses, tourists obediently following guides on crowded streets and kiosks to change currency, I am stunned. Wasn’t this how

Paris or London or New York were in the 1950s?

How can a capital city of a country of almost 3 million remain in the 21st century under the tourist’s radar? Why haven’t its clean, safe streets and awesome architecture been explored by that growing population of travellers always looking for safe, reasonably priced, new and exotic experiences? South

America’s smallest country has been overlooked . . . should I stop writing now to keep it this way?

I started to pen these words from the panoramic viewpoint on the top of city hall in downtown Montevideo, 22 floors up. There is no charge for ascending to this height to experience the 360-degree vista of the city. During this visit there were 30 other people, all locals I believe. **I was the only non-Spanish-speaking visitor.**

The staff in the shop and coffee bar spoke no English. I had to circle the ground floor of the building twice before finding the entrance. No signage pointed my way. The Lonely Planet guide did not list it as a tourist destination, but then again, Lonely Planet only describes Uruguay in a brief chapter at the end of their book on Argentina, almost as an afterthought.

One attraction Lonely Planet does list (and for which there is an \$8.00 entrance fee), is the Andes Museum 1972, dedicated to providing a history of the horrendous plane crash in which many were killed, but 15 survived over 70 days high in the snow-clad mountains, after the rescue mission had been called off. This is often the only event that most outside of Uruguay associate with the country.

I visited Uruguay in July, the winter season in South America, and experienced clear blue sunshine with cool temperatures. In these days of global warming,

I do not mind wearing gloves and sunglasses at the same time. Cities are best explored in winter months.

I arrived in Montevideo from Buenos Aires by taking a 90-minute ferry ride and then a two-hour bus ride (C\$200.00 return). I was the

only foreigner on the ferry, and the only international passport holder

clearing customs. My four-star hotel in central Montevideo with heated indoor pool was C\$100.00 per night, including full buffet breakfast.

Although some of the buildings in Montevideo are run-down, having not benefited from UNESCO funding as is the case in many other cities, there are many displaying neoclassical or art deco architecture rivaling that found in Rome or Berlin. Often these are adjacent to 1950s apartment and office buildings, coexisting in a haphazard way. The museums and galleries, like the city hall viewpoint, are mostly free to enter, frequently housed in buildings dating from the 19th century. There are a number of squares and parks, pedestrian-only streets, bars, and restaurants. The roads are safe and disciplined with street cleaners everywhere. No one jaywalks and despite my blond hair and blue eyes, easily identifying me as foreign, no one approached me for money or wanted to engage me in facile conversation. As a single

woman I felt totally safe. The shop assistants spoke no English, and I paid for everything by Visa, though I did not use any small stores.

Arriving at the Montevideo bus station, I searched for the tourist office. I found it, with keys in its glass door, and entered to find no one was present. For over five minutes I rifled through leaflets and brochures, trying to find something in English and a map of Montevideo. Eventually the custodian returned to offer assistance, half-eaten sandwich in hand. Like everyone else, he spoke no English, but after placing his sandwich on the desk, found the map I sought and, with a wide grin, showed me the location of my hotel.

The four days I spent in Montevideo made me hungry for more South America, and suggested to me that travelling out of season should not be considered an issue, but actually a real advantage. Prices are reduced, there are fewer people, and as long as the rain or snow holds off, and the shoes are comfortable, **a perfect time awaits.**

