HOME SWEET MARFA  Writer Rachel Monroe '06 found a real home in this quirky little Texas town. 26
HER LITTLE SLICE OF HEAVEN  Fed up with city life, Jazmin Lopez '09 found peace and meaning on her 4.3 acres. 38
THE BEST A PLACELESS PERSON CAN DO  A search for understanding led Sean McCoy '16 to a cattle ranch in Arizona. 44
THE WILDS OF L.A.  Environmental Analysis Professor Char Miller examines the wild side of L.A. sprawl. 64
In recent years, Pomona has increased its focus on recruiting students from rural communities who, in the past, might never have had a chance to hear about the College. Here are four students who hail from rural and small-town America—and what they would like to tell you about the places they come from.

Sebastian Kahale Naehu-Ramos ’21
Kaunakakai, Moloka’i, Hawaii

“I WAS BORN on another Hawaiian island, Maui, but my stepfather is from Moloka’i, so I moved there when I was 7, and that’s been home ever since. It’s a very close knit community. You grow up knowing almost everyone. Everyone knows you; they know your parents; so everything you do is a reflection on your family. The economy is not so great. A lot of people actually sustain themselves through gathering what’s available. We have fish. We also have axis deer, though they’re not indigenous. I do some deer hunting with my dad. This photo is of one of my favorite places. It’s a fresh water spring what we call a pūn wai that my dad and his best friend restored as a nursery for baby fish. It’s about 800 years old. Coming from that setting to a place like Pomona was pretty intimidating at first. I was less politically aware than most people here, so coming here was pretty eye opening. I tell people I feel like I grew up on a rock. I’ve gotten used to California’s faster pace, but I really miss my family and Hawaiian food and being close to the ocean all the time.”

PHOTO BY CHANTELLE ALVISO ROBERSON
Katy Swiere ’21
Orangefield, Texas

“MY COMMUNITY IS PRETTY SMALL. We have a gas station, a fire station now that’s new, a school and a small grocery store. The lumber industry built my town, but today the main industry is the petrochemical plants along the coast of Southeast Texas and Southwest Louisiana. Most families have at least one member who works there. They call it the cancer belt because there are higher rates of cancer in the area. When I left my hometown, I was kind of like, ‘I’m never coming back here.’ You know, a very typical, small town person who wants to get out to the big city. But then Hurricane Harvey affected my hometown in the first few weeks after I got here, and that was kind of like a slap in the face. My first thought was that my community really needed me right now, but the last thing they heard me say was, ‘I’m never coming back.’ That really made me think. And then, especially, going back home over break and seeing the destruction, but also seeing the recovery and the ways that my community was coming together and helping each other—that was just a really awesome experience. Maybe that’s not unique, but it’s very special. And I think that’s part of the strong communities these small places have. It’s just that everyone feels so connected, and even if you don’t know each other, there is this connection that you share.”
"IT’S KIND OF WEIRD, because there’s a whole bunch of small Alaskan villages in the area, but they lump them together into cities. I live in a log cabin in the middle of the woods, roughly 10 miles outside of town, but I’m considered to live in Soldotna. A lot of the people there don’t want government or neighbors or anyone interfering with their lives, so I guess it’s not very communal. I don’t want to speak for all Alaskans, but people in my town really pride themselves on being independent—being able to hunt and fish and provide for themselves. I really didn’t do any of that—if I had, maybe I’d subscribe more to the Alaskan mentality. But I do feel like I don’t rely on things as much as maybe some other people who weren’t forced to live in that kind of environment. Along with a few Alaskan natives, my sister and I were among the only people of color in my school, so it’s been a big contrast coming here to Pomona. But my experience is so different from that of most other people of color here that at first it was kind of uncomfortable. I’m still not a very social person, so I don’t really participate in a lot of things, but I’ve become more acclimated. When I go back home, I enjoy seeing my family and knowing who everyone is when I go to the grocery store, but I don’t think I would want to go back there permanently."
"COZAD IS A TOWN of 4,000 people, give or take a few. The last census was around 2010, and I’m sure we’ve lost folks since then. I was born and raised there. Both of my parents were born and raised there, and their parents came there from other places in Nebraska. It’s a pretty stereotypical small, rural town in the Midwest. The nearest Walmart is in the next town over, so you have to drive like 15 minutes on the interstate to get there. The nearest mall’s even farther than that—an hour away. But it’s a place worth visiting. I ask my friends all the time—sometimes jokingly, sometimes seriously—if they ever want to come visit me in Nebraska, and usually the answer’s no. But it’s a place where people who don’t know you make you feel welcome. If you’ve never been to rural, small-town America, it’s an experience you need to have at least once in your life. I personally prefer small-town living to living here next to L.A., and I often think about going back after getting my law degree. The pace is slower. When you think of California, you think of it being laid back. You think of surfer dudes—or at least I do—and beaches and just a cool, chill pace. But the real slow pace is in rural America, where people aren’t in a hurry to get from place to place. They’re enjoying the day; they’re enjoying talking with people they run into on the street, or when they come into their businesses. They’re catching up. That’s probably one of my favorite parts about small-town living."

Alyson Smock ’20
Cozad, Nebraska
My favorite anecdote about growing up in the rural South is a childhood memory of sitting with my aunt and uncle at their red Fomica kitchen table, which was strategically posi-
tioned in front of a double window looking out on the dirt road in front of their house. Each time a car or—more likely—a pickup would go by, leaving its plume of dust hanging in the air, both of them would stop whatever they were doing and crane their necks. Then one of them would offer an offhand comment like: “Looks like Ed and Georgia finally traded in that old Ford of theirs. It’s about time.” Or: “There’s that Johnson fellow who’s jogging the Trenton place. Wonder if he’s any kin to Dave Johnson.”

Inevitably, there would follow a speculative conversation about their neighbors’ personal and business affairs, about which they always seemed remarkably well informed. “I heard his mom still in the hospital?” “I think they let her go home yesterday.” “Maybe we should trade in that old Ford of theirs. It’s about time.” Or: “There’s that Johnson fellow who’s finally moved into that new place on the edge of town.” And so on.

For the most part, it was casual and benevolent. Though their nearest neighbors—my parents—lived half a mile away, beyond a screen of forest, they seemed to have a strong sense of belonging to a real community where people knew each other well and looked out for one another. Sometimes, though, a darker note would creep in. “There’s that Wheeler boy again. What’s he up to, do you reckon?” Then the conversation would turn to past misdeeds and present mistrust, accompanied by a disparaging shake of the head.

And on those rare occasions when they didn’t recog-
nize the vehicles or driver at all, they would take special note. “Who in the world is that?” “Never saw him be-
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Eclipse Memories

Thanks to Chuck and Lew Phelps (both ’65) for the interesting article about the Pomona eclipse event in Wyoming in August. The opportunity to share the experience with Pomona friends and family was stunning, and the article captured the depth of the adventure. It’s amazing that they had the foresight to plan two years in advance and to reserve one of the premier spots in the U.S. to view the spectacle. The twins worked tirelessly on every aspect of our time together, including housing, meals, a lecture series and guided stargazing, and they created a deeply memorable experience for everyone on the mountain.

Wishing to honor the Phelps, attendees from the Class of ’65, as well as the Classes of ’64 and ’66, created a Pomona fund to celebrate our time together. At the final group lunch, we announced the Phelps Twins Eclipse Fund to support Pomona summer internships in science. The response was heartwarming: 86 donations came from Pomona alumni and friends who attended the event and from some who did not but wanted to support the fund. The final figure was $52,242. The fund will support more than 10 summer internships for students in future years.

With appreciation to Chuck and Lew for making it happen.

—Ann Dorele Thompson ’85, P’92
—Calia Williams Baron ’65
—Virginia Corlate Pallad’65, P’93
—Jan Williams Hazlett ’65
—Peter Briggs ’64, P’93

Excelling Wisely

When I received the Fall 2017 edition of PCM, I was intrigued by the front cover’s puzzle shapes, where work and life fit together. As a creative writing and reading intervention teacher at STEM Prep High School in Nashville, TN, I wrestle with this question of how to fit life and work together without work consuming both pieces. I was absolutely delighted, upon opening to the article “Excelling Wisely,” to read these lines by the president of Pomona College: “We need to tell ourselves and each other that we can achieve and excel without taking every drop of energy from our reserves. That we all need to take some time to laugh.” And later President Starr adds, “Creativity requires freedom, space, and room to grow. And achievement isn’t the only thing that adds meaning to our lives.”

This article hit home for me as I was struggling with just one more bout of sickness after a challenging semester. My message needs to be heard in every corner of our world. Yes, achievement is important. But the quality of our lives as we accomplish our goals is also important. In my work environment at STEM Prep Academy, I am surrounded by motivated, hardworking, yet caring leaders who themselves are asking these questions. Students today are extremely stressed. Many of our students face particular language challenges, which further contributes to stress. How can we help to close the achievement gap and yet not become consumed by it?

STEM Prep High is intentionally trying to create a balance this year by adding once-a-month Friday afternoon clubs. These clubs enable students to explore interests and to spend more relaxed time in a group of their choosing. I lead a sewing and knitting club, which has attracted a very "chill" group of students. I provide knitting needles, crochet hooks, yarn and other items, as assisting students explore these crafts. Other clubs include: flag football, hiking, a Socrates club, games and yoga.

STEM Prep High has also created balance this year by offering elective classes such as Visual Arts and Imaginative Writing. My Imaginative Writing classroom is intentionally filled with creativity and fun, including a bookshelf full of children’s stories, teen books and adult novels. A stuffed Cat in the Hat and a Cheerful Cat lounge on top of the bookshelves. Plants adorn the top of the filing cabinet near the window, creating a homey, relaxed atmosphere. During the month of November my students and I participated in NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month). This provided students with an opportunity to creatively express their own life stories or stories that they had made up. And what about teachers? How can we create a tremendously bors on work and life? Certainly, our work is important, but what we do for our lives. I continue to wrestle with this question. One “solution” that my husband created was buying season tickets to the Nashville Predators games. This allows my husband and me to enjoy downtown Nashville and to spend time together. We also enjoy motorcycle trips on my husband’s Harley.

Most of us will continue to face this challenge of how to “excellently” throughout our lives. I was most grateful for this issue of PCM and the opportunity to reflect on ways in which I am trying to make this happen and ways in which I can continue to create a healthy balance between work and life.

—Wilma (Fisher) Lefler ’90

Wow! Wow! The recent issue of PCM is superb. Each story is meaty and unique and engaging. I’m one who usually reads on issue from cover to cover, and this one left me wanting to start at the beginning again with the suspicion that I’d surely missed important details along the way. Thank you for the imagination, creativity and careful editing that you give in helping us feel connected and proud.

PS: I’m one of the trio who were the first exchange students from Szwarcchmore in spring 1962 at the invitation of Pomona. It pleases me that both colleges are currently led by African American women.

—Betsy Croth ’63
Southampton, PA

Citrus Roots

IN 1888, THE SAME YEAR that upstart college moved in, the town of Claremont planted its first citrus tree. At the time, groves and sheds dominated the unincorporated town in a region once inhabited by Native Americans of the Serrano tribe. Twelve years later, Claremont’s 250 residents belonged to one of two camps—the College or the citrus cult.

Early 20th century Claremont was a citrus boom town, a hothoused summer resort and packing house. Until the mid 1930s, according to historian Richard Barker, citrus was one of California’s largest industries, second only to oil. Particularly in Claremont, “the economy was driven by citrus.” Ones, Queen Victoria ordered a shipment of Claremont oranges for her birthday.

Once boilermakers for the College Heights Oranges & Lemons Association, small citrus growers produced a number of citrus—lemon, lime, and orange. A 1910 comic laid claim for the College brand, pictured above, featuring a vintage image of Pomona Mission Hall, along with a large purple apple—Harwood Hall for Botany, which once occupied the center of the Stanley A. McCloy Archives. Most growers in the region were members of the California Fruit Growers Exchange, founded in Claremont in 1893 under a different name. Membership soon exploded, and in 1952, the group formally adopted the name from their longtime advertising campaign—Sure. Michael Wilson 20

CITRUS ROOTS

POMONIANA

CLAREMON'T'S CITRUS ROOTS, BUG HUNTERS, YELLOW BIKES AND MORE...
In its first year, Pomona’s Humanities Studio will take as its inaugural theme a line from Samuel Beckett’s “Finnegan’s Wake” that says, “it’s totally ingrained in my brain.”

Dettmar said the theme honors the late Arden Laudermilk and Philip A. Munz, a professor of English, who spoke on the topic development workshops and other community events. Programming will also include visiting speakers, professional development workshops and other community events.

The theme, Dettmar said, “is about the notion of failure and the importance of mistake and the notion of error in the ecosystem of scholarly discovery. Together with the studio director, faculty and postdoctoral fellows, and a group of visiting speakers, writers and thinkers, Humanities Studio undergraduate fellows will take a deep dive into failure, to bring back the treasures only it has to offer.”

Last October, biology major Hannah Osland ’20 biked to the Pomona College Farm with a single mission. She would wait by the compost bins, clutching a glass jar filled with ethyl acetate gasoline—her “kill jar”—until she captured a yellow butterfly she had seen earlier. In total, she spent an hour looking. “I was so frustrated that this little tiny butterfly was beating me,” she says. “It’s amazing how insects will evade me.”

Osland needed to catch and identify the butterfly, known as a small cabbage white, for his junior Ecology and Behavior class with Professor Frances Hanks. For their project, Osland and nine other students captured 40 unique insect specimens from at least 11 different insect orders. Twenty had to be identified down to the scientific family they belong to—a difficult task given that, as Osland tells it, “so many beetles look alike.”

For Osland and other students, the project became a constant source of fascination among friends, many of whom tried to help nab new insect orders now,” she says. “It’s totally ingrained in my brain.”

Four score years ago, the sciences were alive and well at Pomona, as evidenced by these brief stories from the mid-1930s.

In February, Pomona College and the dockless bike-sharing company ofo rolled out the firm’s first college pilot program in California. Founded in 2014, ofo is the world’s first and largest station-free bicycle sharing platform. To date, the firm has connected over 200 million global users with more than 10 million bikes in 20 countries.

What makes this bike-sharing program unique is that ofo’s services to our resources are available to our students, faculty and staff. The program has been a hit, with 200 bikes being used every day.

In August 1936, a Riverside woman named Ruth Muir was found brutally murdered in the San Diego woods, and the case ignited a media frenzy. A suspect claiming he “knew plenty” about Muir’s murder was found with 20 hairs that appeared to belong to a woman. In their rush to test whether the hairs were Muir’s, police turned to an unlikely source to conduct the analysis—Pomona College.

Though the hairs do not seem to have matched Muir’s in the end, at least we can say: For a brief moment, Pomona operated a crime lab.

12 13
For Barnett, there is no barrier between his work and the rest of his life. Those "alive" ideas can come from anywhere. "I write about the things I care about. Everything I see, every bad book I see, every good book I see, everything I care about that elicits a strong emotion. It's just experiencing the world and paying attention to the world. That's the work. That's the thing that makes your brain a receptive place to an idea."

Barnett first started crafting children's stories when he was in college during his summers. He worked at a summer camp, telling original stories to the camp kids. He'd make up stories about his life: adventure stories, espionage stories and more. In the telling is where he found his dream. Barnett spends a lot of time on the road, visiting elementary schools and reading out loud to children. They are who he keeps in mind when he's building an imaginary world; he pictures himself standing in front of a big group of kids and holding their attention with a book. Barnett is keenly aware of the audience he's working for. People of different kinds of stories. "Kids' literary tastes are as widely varied as adults' literary tastes. You're just trying to tell something true that's stylistically important for that truth. That's what good art is for adults, too. It's just a kid's experience of the world is different from an adult's experience of the world. Kids love all kinds of different things. Literature for all kids should be as diverse as kids are."

Translated into more than 30 languages and racked up awards like the E.B. White Read-Aloud Award and the Caldecott Medal for the cake for every child's book two Caldecott Honors. Barnett is quick to say that it's actually the illustrator who gets the Caldecott award, not the author. "They don't even give me a certificate," he says, with a laugh. Still, even though it's not technically his, seeing that Caldecott sticker on his books is very satisfying. Barnett hears from college kids who grew up reading a series. He writes called "Brixton Brothers." Barnett tells him kids love horses, kids love robots—but he thinks it's important for children to be exposed to all kinds of different kinds of stories. Barnett says he takes all of the criticism seriously. Barnett says he doesn't care about the book, they're not fawning over the author, he says. But because they care about the book, they keep it real. Really real. "They will just tell you anything they don't like about the book."

Barnett's three favorite books of his own are a motley collection themselves: Guess Again (2009); Leo, A Ghost Story (2015); and his most recent, The Wolf, the Duck, and the Mouse (2017). He loves Guess Again because it is the lightest in tone, full of jokes, and yet his most philosophical work. His affection for Leo is due to Chris Robinson's illustrations and the subject matter, which is a paean to friendship. The Wolf, the Duck, and the Mouse is special to Barnett because it poses big questions about life, death, and why bad things happen—questions he wrestles with and that children pose all the time. It's a tough audience, Barnett says. The good part: his crowd isn't fawning over him the way grown-ups can do to their favorites. The kids are there because they care about the book; they're not fawning over the author, he says. But because they care about the book, they keep it real. Really real. "I have a really big Adam's apple, which I didn't know until I strolled by in the mirror for the rest of my life. That's all right though—they weren't wrong. They weren't wrong."
For Professor of Geology Eric Grosfils, the scorching planet Venus is a "volcanologist’s playground," where interpreting well-preserved geological records could help lead to better understanding of volcanoes here on Earth.

Now, a $425,000 NASA research grant will allow Grosfils—the Minnie B. Cairns Memorial Professor of Geology at Pomona—and his research colleague, Pat McGovern from the Lunar and Planetary Institute, to push forward with their efforts to better understand the evolution of stresses within and beneath a volcano as it grows.

The grant proposal, “Breaking the barriers: Time-dependent, stress-controlled growth of large volcanoes on Venus and implications for the mechanics of magma reservoirs—bodies of potentially eruptible molten rock within the subsurface—and what causes them to destabilize,” is a continua-
tion of ongoing research started in 2006 by McGovern and Grosfils.

Their latest grant, awarded by NASA’s Solar System Workings division, provides funding for three years of research and will include students who are just starting their geology education to help per-
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no water, no liquid—so when something happens at the surface on Earth, the record is much more likely to be preserved for the long haul.

The scientists will use observations derived from radar data and topography of Venus to construct numerical models they will use to examine the evolution of stresses within the crust and uppermost mantle as a volcano is growing. Their research will add to our knowledge about the formation and evolution of the Venusian surface, which in turn helps scientists apply those findings to better understand the long-term evolution of volcanoes on Earth and the hazards they present to surrounding populations.

—Carlos Guevara ‘06

**The Pearl Harbor Diaries**

The attack on Pearl Harbor is familiar history to most Americans, but Pomona College Professor of History Samuel Yamashita has spent years researching little-known aspects of that fateful day. Poring over prefectural and municipal records and personal diaries, Yamashita has written extensively about early modern and modern Japanese intellectual and cultural history, focusing most recently on Japan during World War II and Japanese and fusion cuisine. He is the author of *The Pearl Harbor Diaries*, a book that chronicles how ordinary Japanese people responded to news of the attack, not only through mass, orchestrated gatherings but also in individual reflections. While “nearly everyone reacted emotionally,” with young men the most enthusiastic, Yamashita documents how ordinary Japanese people responded to news of war.

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**Well-Versed Research**

What makes a poem appealing? People prefer poetry that paints a vivid picture, according to a new study from a trio of researchers, including Pomona College Professor of History Samuel Yamashita. They have written extensively about early modern and modern Japanese intellectual and cultural history, focusing most recently on Japan during World War II and Japanese and fusion cuisine. He is the author of *The Pearl Harbor Diaries*, a book that chronicles how ordinary Japanese people responded to news of the attack, not only through mass, orchestrated gatherings but also in individual reflections. While “nearly everyone reacted emotionally,” with young men the most enthusiastic, Yamashita documents how ordinary Japanese people responded to news of war.

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**New Critical Inquiry Courses**

Call it Sagehen submersion. Twice a week, first-year students participate in one of 30 Critical Inquiry (DI) sections—intensive classes that introduce new students to both the joy and the rigor of academic life at Pomona. Last fall, there were 30 sections, including 10 brand-new courses. Here are a few with intriguing titles:

**The First Crusade: Monks of War**

Professor of History and Classics Kenneth West’s class was inspired by the involvement of monks with warfare and “holy violence” between the years 1096 and 1105.

**Into Desert Oneness**

One person’s wasteland may be another person’s wonderland, says A Confucian specialist with mastery of both classical Chinese and classical Japanese, Professor of History Samuel Yamashita. He has written extensively about early modern and modern Japanese intellectual and cultural history, focusing most recently on Japan during World War II and Japanese and fusion cuisine. He is the author of *The Pearl Harbor Diaries*, a book that chronicles how ordinary Japanese people responded to news of the attack, not only through mass, orchestrated gatherings but also in individual reflections. While “nearly everyone reacted emotionally,” with young men the most enthusiastic, Yamashita documents how ordinary Japanese people responded to news of war.

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The scientists will use observations derived from radar data and topography of Venus to construct numerical models they will use to examine the evolution of stresses within the crust and uppermost mantle as a volcano is growing. Their research will add to our knowledge about the formation and evolution of the Venusian surface, which in turn helps scientists apply those findings to better understand the long-term evolution of volcanoes on Earth and the hazards they present to surrounding populations.

**New Critical Inquiry Courses**

Call it Sagehen submersion. Twice a week, first-year students participate in one of 30 Critical Inquiry (DI) sections—intensive classes that introduce new students to both the joy and the rigor of academic life at Pomona. Last fall, there were 30 sections, including 10 brand-new courses. Here are a few with intriguing titles:

**The First Crusade: Monks of War**

Professor of History and Classics Kenneth West’s class was inspired by the involvement of monks with warfare and “holy violence” between the years 1096 and 1105.

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One person’s wasteland may be another person’s wonderland, says A Confucian specialist with mastery of both classical Chinese and classical Japanese, Professor of History Samuel Yamashita. He has written extensively about early modern and modern Japanese intellectual and cultural history, focusing most recently on Japan during World War II and Japanese and fusion cuisine. He is the author of *The Pearl Harbor Diaries*, a book that chronicles how ordinary Japanese people responded to news of the attack, not only through mass, orchestrated gatherings but also in individual reflections. While “nearly everyone reacted emotionally,” with young men the most enthusiastic, Yamashita documents how ordinary Japanese people responded to news of war.

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HOW TO ADVANCE MATHEMATICS BY ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

One day last year, in Professor Stephan Garcia’s Number Theory and Cryptography class, the lesson took a surprising turn. To make a point about the use of seemingly random patterns in cryptography, Garcia had just flashed onto the screen a chart of the first 100 prime numbers and all of their primitive roots. “It would take too long to explain what primitive roots are, so suffice to say that they’re important in modern cybersecurity applications,” he explained. Looking at the chart, Elvis Kahoro ’20 noticed something interesting about the chart of the first 1,000 prime numbers and all of their primitive roots. “It seems to be too interesting to just take off without some explanation,” Kahoro thought. “I just asked what I thought was a random question,” Kahoro recalls. It was the kind of curious question he was known for asking all through his school years, sometimes with unfruitful results. “Some teachers would get mad at me for asking so many questions that led us off the topic,” he remembers. But Garcia took the first-year student’s question seriously. And the next day, the professor called Kahoro to his office, where he’d been doing some number crunching on his computer. “It turns out that Elvis’s conjecture is false, but it is an astoundingly interesting way,” Garcia explains. “There are only two counterexamples below 10,000. And the bigger number crunching indicated that his conjecture seemed to be correct 99 percent of the time.”

Garcia and a frequent collaborator, Florian Luca, then founded a theoretical explaination for the phenomenon, resulting in a paper titled “Primitive root bias for twin primes,” to be published in the journal Experimental Mathematics, with Kahoro listed as a co-author.

“When you think about this, Kahoro says, “it never be afraid to ask questions in class, because you never know where they’ll lead.”

Elvis Kahoro ’20 with Professor Stephen Garcia

Come to the United States from Kenya at the age of 3 and grow up in Kennesaw, Georgia, about 30 miles north of Atlanta. Go to public schools and discover that (a) you love math and (b) you love finding patterns.

In seventh grade, play a video game based on the Japanese anime Naruto. Discover the source code for the game online and find yourself fascinated by the logic of its code. Decide you want to make computers your life’s work.

Choose to attend the STEM magnet program at Kennesaw Mountain High School because it offers lots of AP classes, including one in your #1 interest: computer science. Join lots of organizations, and do about a thousand hours of community service.

Learn about the QuestBridge program from another student, apply, and get accepted. At a QuestBridge conference, learn about Pomona College from your group leader, recent Pomona alumna Ashley Land ’16, who urges you to apply.

Visit Pomona on Fly in Weekend, meet a number of faculty who make you feel at home and discover that Pomona’s support for DACA students like you is the best in the country. Apply for early admission and get accepted.

During your first semester at Pomona, take a Linear Algebra course with Professor Stephan Garcia, whose problem-solving approach to teaching impresses you so much that you can’t wait to take another course with him second semester.

In Number Theory and Cryptography class during your second semester, look at a chart of prime numbers and notice something intriguing. Ask a question, and learn how just asking the right question can open unexplored frontiers of new knowledge.
A VOICE FOR CHANGE

Alaina Woo ’17 stepped to the free-throw line hundreds of times during her basketball career with Pomona-Pitzer. But she had never stepped onto an athletic stage quite like the one at the NCAA Convention in January when she stood in front of nearly 3,000 of the movers and shakers of college sports for a one-on-one talk with the NCAA President Mark Emmert.

“It was a completely new experience for me,” says Woo, who appeared in her role as chair of the first NCAA Board of Governors’ Student-Athlete Engagement Committee, tasked with considering some of the crucial issues facing college sports—including the hot-button topic of how the NCAA addresses sexual violence.

“I felt prepared in the sense that I obviously was very familiar with the committee’s work and I had worked on the Commission to Combat Sexual Violence, which is why I was named chair,” Woo says.

“But it’s completely different when you arrive in Indianapolis and see the giant place you’re going to be speaking. The NCAA helped me out by making it be more of a conversation with President Emmert, rather than me giving this giant speech looking out to a crowd.”

Among the points Woo made onstage: “I think it’s a rare opportunity for student-athletes to speak directly to NCAA Governors. And like I said, I was a public policy major, and I’m surprised by how often people craft policies or make changes without engaging the people that they’re making the policies for.”

Woo’s role is seeking change within the NCAA.

“There is so much more to be done,” she says. Citing recent news stories of mishandled cases of sexual violence in athletics and at NCAA institutions, Woo feels that athletics and higher education are a step behind. “Issues of sexual violence have plagued college campuses and athletics—both youth and collegiate—for years. It is imper-ative that the NCAA and other sport governing bodies continue to work on efforts to prevent sexual violence, support survivors and hold their memberships accountable.”

Basketball and Advocacy

Now in her first season as an assistant basketball coach at Tufts University while simultaneously working as a research assistant at the Harvard Kennedy School, Woo was deeply active in NCAA issues while at Pomona, where she is the Sagehens’ career leader in three-pointers. She also is ninth on Pomona-Pitzer’s career scoring list and was the team’s leading scorer as a senior.

Woo was still a first-year student when a teammate took her to a meeting of Pomona-Pitzer’s NCAA Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. That friend and Lisa Beckert, a professor of physical education and associate athletic director, encouraged Woo to get involved.

“They said, ‘If you’re interested in making athletics something where you can make a difference off the court, interested in community service, interested in leadership, you should definitely check this out.’”

By Woo’s sophomore year, Beckert—a “wonderful mentor,” Woo says—suggested applying for the NCAA Division III National Stu-
dent-Athlete Advisory Committee. Woo was selected and repre-sented Pomona-Pitzer’s Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference and the Northwest Conference for a three-year term that ended in January. Among other roles, she also served on the NCAA Committee on Women’s Athletics for Divisions I, II and III.

“My interests really lie in women’s athletics and Title IX, ad- vocacy for victims of sexual violence and underrepresented student ath-letes, so that was why I was chosen for those committees rather than a championship committee or some-thing like that,” Woo says. “My in-terests were definitely inspired by being at Pomona, a liberal arts cam-

In the event that she wins the 60th edition of the “Bat- tle of Sixth Street” against the ClaremontMudd-Scripps (CMS) Stags, 29–28. The game ended with an overtime, fourth-down, HailMary pass from quarterback Karter Oldmann ‘20 that bounced off the helmet of a Stags defender before falling into the waiting arms of Kevin Masini ‘18, followed by an equally heart-stopping two-point conversion reception by Daniel Berkinsky ‘19 to seal the victory. (In the photo above, Sagenen fans lift Berkinsky onto their shoulders.)

The football season was also marked by a series of team records. Azeal Britt ‘18 set both the all-time rushing record (2,859 yards) and the single-game rushing record (275 yards). And Evan-Lloyd ‘18 set an all-time record for career tackles with 275.

BASKETBALL

The men’s basketball team won 13 of their last 16 games to ad- vance to the finals of the Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SCIAC) tournament before losing to CMS. For the woman’s team, Emma Godfrey ‘21 was named SCIAC Newcomer of the Year after totaling at least 30 points in six games.

SWIMMING & DIVING

Both the men’s and the women’s teams won SCIAC championships, the second in a row for the women and the first in program history for the men. Madison Kuball (PI’19) won SCIAC Female Athlete of the Year, Mark Hallman ’18 was Male Athlete of the Year, and Lukas Markhoff ’21 was Newcomer of the Year.

MEN’S WATER POLO

For the second straight season, the men’s water polo team claimed the SCIAC title both in the regular season and in the conference tournament. Daniel Dietmer (PI’18) was SCIAC Player of the Year.

MEN’S CROSSCOUNTRY

The men’s cross country team won its first SCIAC title since 2005 and finished sixth at the NCAA Championships.

FOOTBALL: A HailMary Memory

For most Pomona-Pitzer fans, the crowning achievement of the year in sports happened at the very end of the football season, in early No-

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This dramatic image of the Stanley Academic Quadrangle in winter is a view you don’t see very often—unless, that is, you’re a drone.

Photo by Jeff Hing
WHEN FREELANCE WRITER RACHEL MONROE ’06 WENT SEARCHING FOR A PLACE TO CALL HOME, SHE SETTLED UPON A REMOTE LITTLE TOWN IN THE HIGH DESERT OF WEST TEXAS. HERE’ S WHY.

HOME SWEET MARFA

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MARK WOOD
So she began to write essays, and something clicked. Essay writing immediately struck her as a more appropriate form for exploring the ideas that excited her, and after years of rejected short stories, as an essayist she found quick success.

Her first published essay, which appeared on a website called The Awl, was about a group of girls with online crushes on the Columbine killers. “I sort of related to these girls in the ferocity of their crushes,” she recalls. “Female rage is something that’s not really permitted, and so instead of being like, ‘Oh my god, I’mBulletin, I’m miserable, I’m so unhapp’y, instead of owning that feeling, which is not socially permissible, then you idolize this boy who acted out.”

Being published was good. Caring about what she wrote was great. Doing research was fun. And she no longer felt like she was faking it. Suddenly, she was off and running on a new, entirely unexpected career in nonfiction.

After completing her MBA, she stayed on in Baltimore for a couple of years, writing for a website run by fellow Sagehen Susan Dunn, ’84, called Baltimore Fishbowl. And then, she simply knew it was time to move on.

“I’ve made most of my decisions in life kind of intuitively,” she explains, “so they’re hard to explain after the fact. But I had a ink of that, OK, I’ve plateaued here. I’ve reached some sort of limit. Time to go.”

So she packed up her car and drove west.

According to the Texas State Historical Association, the town of Marfa was founded in 1883 as a water stop and freight depot for the Great Western and Harling Rail Road. The railroad tracks slice through the heart of town, and a couple of times a day, seemingly endless freight trains come barreling through. The landscape here is flat and barren, covered with sparse grasses and low vegetation like creosote and yuccas, so you can literally see the train coming for miles. But the trains don’t stop here anymore, and their only apparent contribution to the local economy is a negative one—the cost of earplugs provided to guests in a nearby hotel.

Back in the 1940s, the town’s population topped out at about 5,000, bolstered by a prisoner-of-war camp and a military base. When those vanished after war’s end, Marfa seemed destined to slowly fade away, like so much of small-town America. But in recent years, the town’s population has stabilized at around 2,000, thanks to the two rather discordant pillars of its modern economy—arts tourism and the Border Patrol.

Monroe doesn’t remember much about her first impression of Marfa, but she remembers the high desert landscape surrounding it. Somewhere around the town of Alpine, the scene began to shift: “All of a sudden, it just looked kind of rugged and open and empty,” she says, “and I got really excited about the way it looked. I was like, ‘Oh, I’m in the West.’”

In Marfa, exiled from her eight-hour drive from Austin, she crashed at El Cosmico, a quirky hotel-slash-campground where visitors sleep in trailers, teepees and tents. The next day she took a tour with the Chinati Foundation, one of two nonprofits—the other being the Jud Foundation—that promote the arts in and around Marfa.

Then she drove on. But she couldn’t quite leave Marfa behind. “When I got to L.A., I was like, ‘You know, if I moved here, I would have to get a job because it’s just expensive. And I don’t want a real job.’ So I had this plan to drive back through Montana and Wyoming, but for some reason I kept thinking, ‘That Marfa place was real interesting.’

Since she hadn’t been able to write much on the road (“It’s hard when you’re sleeping on friends’ couches”), she decided to return to Marfa and find a place to settle in for a week or so and write.

What drew her back to Marfa? It’s another of those intuitive decisions that she has trouble explaining. “I’m not sure I could have said at the time. I can make something up now, but I was just like, ‘Oh, that’s a cool place. It’s really pretty. It seems easy to find your way.’”

That week stretched into six. “And at the end of that, I was like, ‘I think I’m just going to move here.’"
to the sector’s website, it now employs about 700 agents and 50
support staff. Among them, Monroe says, are quite a few young
men and women who grew up right here in town.

The other pillar of Marfa’s economy doesn’t jump out at you until you
walk up Highland Street toward the big pink palace that houses the
Presidio County Courthouse. Glance inside the aging storefronts,
and you’ll find, instead, art gallery after art gallery

The story of Marfa as a destination for art lovers begins in the early
1970s with the arrival of minimalist artist Donald Judd. Drawn to
Marfa by its arid landscapes, he soon began buying up land, first
the 60,000-acre Jett National Wildlife Refuge, then an abandoned
military base. In what must have seemed a grandly quixotic gesture
at the time, he opened Marfa’s first art gallery.

Some of those stories, which increasingly have appeared in promi-
nent national venues like The New Yorker, New York Magazine, Marie,
The New Republic, and The Guardian, have grown directly out of her
engagement in the Marfa community. In fact, the article that really put
her on the map for national editors happened, in part, be-
cause of her decision to join the local fire department.

“I just loved that book, and then I was like, ‘Oh wait, I’m moving to
a place where they have wildfires.’ Fighting fires, she thought,
would be a good way to connect with the land, and as a writer, she
was drawn by the sheer drama of firefighting. “And then, you learn
so much about the town,” she adds. “You know—not just the tourist
surface, but the rural realities of living in a place.”

A year later, when a fertilizer plant exploded in West, Texas
(“That’s West—comma—Texas, which is actually hours east of
here”), Monroe found that her status as a first responder was her
“in” for an important story. In the course of the investigation, a fire-
fighter named Bryce Reed had gone from local hero to jailed suspect.

Recentl, she put her freelance career on hold in order to finish a
book, the subject of which harkens back to her very first published
essay—women and crime. “It centers on the stories of four different
women, each on opposite sides of a crime,” she says. “And each of those four women
imagined herself in the role of the victim, one is the
lawyer, and one is the killer.”

She already has a publisher, along with a deadline of September
to finish the draft. What comes after that, she doesn’t even want
to think about. “For now, I’m just working on this book,” she says,
“and the book feels like a wall I can’t see over.”

That description—a wall I can’t see over—also applies to how she
feels about Marfa. The resulting article, which she considers her first real work of in-
vention in every sense of the word, than when I was living in Baltimore.”

As I walk, I see things that seem to feed that theory—like two men
walking into the post office, one dressed all in black, with a shaved
head and a small earring, the other in a cowboy hat and black
jeans, with a big bushy mustache and a pistol on his hip.

But at the same time, I’m struck by the sense that there are two
Marfas here, one layered imperfectly over the top of the other, like
that old sky-blue Ford F250 pickup I see parked in the shade of a
live oak, with a surreal, airbrushed depiction of giant bees stuck in
pink globs of bubblegum flowing down its side.

Monroe quickly pulls me back to earth—where the real Marfa
resides.

“This is not a typical small town,” she says. “There’s not a too
much. There are jobs. It’s easy to romanticize this place, but it’s an
economy that is running on art money and Border Patrol money, and I
don’t know if that’s a sustainable model. You can’t scale that model.”

Monroe is quick to point out that the advantages conferred by
Marfa’s unique niche in the art world are part of what makes the little
town so livable. That’s why she’s able to shop at a gourmet
grocery store, attend a film festival and listen to a cool public radio station.

Anyway, she says, residents are far more likely to be vociferous
about local decisions than national ones—for example, a move to put
in parking meters on Marfa’s streets. “People can get way more fired
up about that than about stuff that feels somewhat removed from here.”

All in all, Marfa just feels like home in a way Monroe has never ex-
perienced before. “It’s a quiet, beautiful life, but not too quiet. I
think about to walk it in the dairy man street. We’re all

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ask whether she’s here to stay, however, and her reaction is an
involuntary shudder. “Who are—you—my daddy?” she laughs. “I don’t
know. I can’t—no comment. I really have no idea.”

After all, a person who follows her intuition has to keep her
options open.

Leaving Marfa. I stop for a few moments to take in one of its most
iconic images—a famous art installation known as Prada Marfa. If
you search for Marfa on Google, it’s the first image that comes up.
And a strange scene it is—what appears to be a tiny boutique, with
plate-glass windows opening onto a showroom of expensive and
stylish shoes and purses, surrounded by nothing but miles and miles
of empty scrub desert. Looking at it before I made the trip, I thought
it was a wonderfully eccentric encapsulation of what Marfa seemed to
stand for.

Here’s the irony—it’s not really located in Marfa at all. It’s about
40 miles away, outside a little town called Valentine. But I suppose
“Prada Valentine” just wouldn’t have the same ring to it.
The crisp winter air buzzes with activity one morning in early January: from construction at the historic Seay house to a pom-pom-making session at a nearby Victorian farmhouse to jokes and laughter in the converted kitchen of an old hotel downtown.

If you’re looking for a kudzu-wrapped cliché about well-meaning do-gooders who rescue a fading town and its impoverished citizens—well, this isn’t that.

“People have told the same old story over and over about Greensboro,” Dr. John Dorsey ’95 says. “This is a new story of potential and hope and movement forward.”

HAPPENING IN GREENSBORO
It’s the collision of past and present and future, all having a meet-
ning in the middle of Main Street. In historic buildings downtown,
brick residences serving as temporary office space and housing and a
restored Victorian several miles away, Dorsey is leading a charge to
provide a range of services through a series of community-based pro-
grams he founded under the name of Project Horseshoe Farm. These
include adult and youth programs addressing mental and physical
health, housing and after-school care, plus gap-year fellowships and
internships for top recent college graduates from around the country.
His methods are creating a new model for the way mental health
care and community health are addressed in communities while si-
multaneously helping reshape a thriving downtown and preparing the
next generation of social entrepreneurs to create their own paths.

Alabama by Accident
Dorsey, a licensed psychiatrist, initially thought he’d live closer to his
family in California.
However, part of him was pulling him to a more personal way of
living and practicing medicine. A tip from a colleague at a medical
conference led him to an interview at Bryce Hospital in Tuscaloosa,
Alabama. While driving cross-country to begin working, however, he
learned Bryce no longer needed his services. Unsure of what he
would find in Alabama, he drove on to Tuscaloosa and took cover in
the wake of Hurricane Katrina in a motel room.
His savings dwindling, he had to come up with a plan—and a
place to live—fast.
“I stumbled upon a mobile home sales office in Moundville and
asked them to rent me a mobile home. They sent me down to
Greensboro and connected me with a local pastor and nonprofit di-
rector,” Dorsey remembers.
“It was a quintessential small town with interesting energy, and
they didn’t have a psychiatrist,” he says. “That’s how I ended up here
12 years ago. There was no plan that I was going to Greensboro.”
And yet, this little town of 2,365 residents would turn out to be
exactly the kind of community where Dorsey could carry out his
grassroots vision of integrated, community-based health care—a
vision that he developed in medical school while studying what he
terms a “frustrating” disconnect between doctors and patients.
“Focusing my residency on community psychiatry and people on
the margins really crystallized the mismatch. You have to understand
the person’s housing, transportation, finances and relationships,”
Dorsey says. “There’s a spectrum, and when you have someone who
is homeless, in chaotic relationships or who abuses drugs or alcohol, a
test in an ER or primary care setting won’t solve their issues. I
wanted to set up systems to address the needs of the patients, particu-
larly in underserved communities.”
Since then, Project Horseshoe Farm has grown through a series of
small steps, beginning with an after-school program for kids that met
a community need. Then, in 2009, Dorsey began building a housing
program for women with mental illness. He also selected his first
group of three student fellows to spend a year partnering with the
community and learning to take care of patients in a holistic way. He
describes his success at attracting them to a brand new nonprofit with
no reputation in little Greensboro, Alabama, as “a miracle. We had
great fellows right from the start and have grown ever since.”
As the project celebrated its 10th anniversary last year, it had ex-
panded to encompass a range of other services as well, including the
Adult Day program, a kind of community center where people come
together for companionship and mutual support, and the Health
Partners program, pairing individual fellows with vulnerable adults to
help them navigate the complexities of health care and social services.

“Welcome to the Hotel!”
Seeing is believing, so Dorsey offers a tour of downtown and Project
Horseshoe Farm, starting at the old Greensboro Hotel property, do-
nated to Project Horseshoe Farm in 2014 for use as a community cen-
ter and project headquarters. Located right on Main Street, the old
hotel was once listed as a historic building in peril, but now it’s being
lovingly restored. One can see glimpses of its former grandeur in the
embossed ceilings, pale mint walls and gleaming wood floors.

Dorsey conducts a meeting with the Project Horseshoe Farm fellows in a room that is undergoin
gen renovation by students of the Auburn University Rural Studio architecture program.
“There is such a rich, complex history here,” Dorsey says. His tone is reverent. In addition to being a hotel, the building also once housed a dress shop, a café and a sewing plant that employed some who now come through its doors as patients.

This morning, the place is bustling with students preparing a meal and guests in conversation. Kevin Wang, a first-year fellow from Northwestern University and future medical student interested in health care delivery systems, steps away from lunch preparations to describe his own experience here. “I was surprised at how willing people were to work with us, especially having no personal ties to Alabama. It’s a testament to the organization,” he says. “People know we’re here for them and understand we’re here to learn from them, and they’re willing to share. That’s really cool.”

Toward the rear of the building, retired nurse Jane Prewitt, known as “Nurse Jane,” organizes patient prescription trays with the assistance of Berkeley graduate Michelle McKinlay. “Until you truly get down here and walk with the people, you have no idea,” McKinlay says. “Walking through health care barriers with them and really getting to know people has changed me and helped me understand the issues better.”

Prewitt invites patients and visitors to sit in one of the outsized white Adirondack-style chairs that dominate the space, a striking change from the usual exam chairs or tables one might see in a doctor’s office. Her husband made them. Prewitt had brought one in to use and it was a hit with patients who found the chairs comfortable and easy to get in and out of. Another plus—staff found the light, he says, walking to a window to point out the corner of the room where sunlight streams in.

Administrative space is planned for the area next to his, and the closed-off third floor may one day serve as housing for students in the health professions. “Having a community center in the heart of Main Street where people are welcome and supported is a wonderful testament to Greensboro. It’s one of Greensboro’s strengths,” Dorsey says. “In most communities, Main Street renovation is about stores and restaurants. But Greensboro has embraced having people who are usually on the margins come right downtown. It’s not just about commerce. It’s about the soul of the community.”

“Build Around What is Beautiful”

Being situated on Main Street also allows the students to get a sense of how the community’s pieces fit together. A few doors down, a new sandwich shop and gym have opened. Across the street is the old opera house reimagined as event rental space, plus a specialty pie shop. The Hale County library and mayor’s office are within walking distance, and a technology center offers residents Internet access.

“There’s an interesting momentum on Main Street,” Dorsey says. “Each thing creates more movement.”

Construction equipment and stacked wood slats, piles of pale sawdust and brand new brackets of Ultra Spec 500 paint sit amid aged flooring and exposed beams. But one can see the dream taking shape throughout.

In another room upstairs, 10 church pews line one wall and win-
dows look down over the grounds where a courtyard is being planned with the help of the Auburn University Rural Studio architecture program. “We imagine having community performances there,” Dorsey says, pointing.

Downstairs, he foresees a space where patients can gather while waiting to be seen. And he’d like to turn the grand old ballroom at the rear of the building into a fitness center for program participants. Its filigreed mantels, honeycomb-patterned floors and ornate ceiling hint at the elegant atmosphere guests once enjoyed. In many ways, that legacy of graceful hospitality and comfort is being continued.

Dorsey is quick to acknowledge that his efforts are part of a network of engaged leaders working together. He also considers the relationships he made at Pomona College instrumental. “Professor Richard Lewis worked with a group of us to start a neuroscience major and created a wonderful community. I wouldn’t have gotten into medical school without that support.”

His continued Pomona connections have also been important, Dorsey says. Tom Dwyer ’95, a founding and current Horseshoe Farm board member, was Dorsey’s first-year roommate in Harwood. “We’ve had several past Horseshoe Farm fellows who were also neuroscience majors at Pomona and who had some of the same classes and professors I had.”

For the future, he anticipates exploring opportunities to replicate Project Horseshoe Farm’s successes in other small towns, but he urges humility for anyone looking to improve a community. “The idea alone is not enough. The missing piece is understanding who people are and what they want and developing trust in order for it to work. So often people look at the deficits. But you can’t build around deficits. You build around what is beautiful and strong.”
Tucked away in a corner of Greenfield, California, a rural town located in the heart of the Salinas Valley, Rancho Colibri sits on a narrow sliver of land bordering a large vineyard with dormant vines.

Standing at the center of the property, wearing scuffed leather boots and Levi’s jeans—the unofficial uniform of most residents in the area—is Jazmin Lopez ’09, who loves to welcome visitors to her “little slice of heaven.”

At 4.2 acres, Rancho Colibri consists of a renovated mid-century house, a large barn where two owls make residence, a mobile chicken coop with squawking residents, sprawling protea plants, a variety of citrus trees that include the unique Yuzu lemon and Australian finger lime, garden beds made of repurposed materials and a variety of succulents, bare-root and native California plants—and of course, the unwelcome gophers that Jazmin is constantly battling.

Although she and her husband, Chris Lopez CMC ’08, took the name for their farm from the Spanish word for hummingbird colibri, Jazmin shares that her father nicknamed her property La Culebra (The Snake) because of its curving, narrow shape. Either way, it’s home sweet home.

Here, with views of the valley floor and the Santa Lucia Mountains, Jazmin is at peace—but don’t let that fool you. She is full of bursting energy, ideas and dreams for her farm. The goal: to one day have a working farm, grow the food she wants and make a living off the earth.

A NAPA CHILDHOOD

Having grown up in 1990s Napa—a smaller, calmer place than it is today—Jazmin got a taste for the outdoors at an early age. Her parents come from a rural town called Calvillo, located in the state of Aguascalientes in Mexico, and settled in Napa, where they raised four daughters: Jazmin; her twin, Liz; and two older sisters.

“When they moved to Napa, they brought a little bit of their rancho to Napa.”

JAZMIN LOPEZ ’09 WELCOMES YOU TO RANCHO COLIBRI, THE PLACE SHE CALLS...
The Lopez children grew up on a street that dead-ended at a creek. Childhood in Napa “had a rural feel to it because some of the sidewalks were missing. There were lots of walnut trees we’d go pick nuts from, and we had a surplus of wild blackberries at the nearby creek.”

They also grew up with a rural awareness of the realities of where food comes from that most urban Americans lack. “We had a lot of rabbits growing up. I thought they were my pets. But I soon realized why she never worked at the Pomona College Organic Farm or visited the nearby Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Gardens.

“It’s almost like I put it on hold,” she says adding that academics at Pomona was really rabbit. “That’s why, she says, when their neighbor at a young age that the chicken we were eating at our family barbeque during trips—practical skills she’s honed as an adult at Rancho Colibri.

“I’ve always been really passionate about gardening.” With a deft pressure to follow a certain kind of career path. There’s no regret in that self-reflection. After all, “I get along with my co-workers,” she says. “I’ve had some of their kids come shadow me for a day. We bump into each other at the supermarket. We go to their family parties when they invite us. It brings a lot more meaning to my work, and it makes me feel like I’m part of something bigger.”

Although it’s not totally unusual to see women in the California’s agriculture industry, her boss Mark Pisoni, the owner of Pisoni Farms, says it’s still not a very common sight. “Pomona should be very proud of her. Her diverse skill set is huge—for us, it’s amazing. We’re all called to do what’s required to be done, and she just jumps in.”

**F I V E - U P P E R • S A L I N A S E D I T I O N**

Back at Rancho Colibri, the cold Salinas winds are picking up, but the hens and rooster remain unbothered as they cluck and crow in their chicken coop. The coop was designed by Chris (hand-drawn on a napkin) and built by Jazmin in her basement, where the shelves are stocked with tools and supplies that would give any hardware store a run for its money.

The coop she says proudly, is portable. It can be picked up and carried to a fresh spot of grass. With a grin, Chris says Jazmin wishes she could do it all—build the coop and lug it herself—but Jazmin grudgingly cedes that job to her stronger husband. She, however, remains the builder in the marriage. Chris, who recently launched his campaign to succeed his mentor as Monterey County supervisor, came home one day needing to build a podium for a rally he was holding the following day. With
a gentle scoff at her husband’s building skills, she came to his rescue. With scrap wood found around their farm, she designed and built their house in the area. As the housing crunch in the Bay Area and the East Bay pushes people out, it’s created a trickle-down effect that has increased property prices in small towns like theirs. In addition, local policies are in place to preserve farmland, explains Chris. There’s a big push not to subdivide under 40 acres.

Almost by chance, Chris found their farm for sale, but the house was in bad shape, unlivable really, and in dire need of some tender love and care. Jazmin—who admits to being a fan of HGTV’s Fixer Upper, a home remodeling show—was not only unanted; she was inspired. After fresh coats of paint, new floors and windows, new toilets and the coming together of family and friends, Rancho Colibri was born.

Upstairs, the living room’s glass doors open to a deck that overlooks the valley floor and beautiful Santa Lucia Highlands where Pisoni Farm’s vineyards are located. Jazmin, a newly minted beekeeper and a master gardener, has introduced beehives, an insectary and a new orchard of her own design to Pisoni’s vineyard.

Jazmin still has a lot of projects around the farm, but the place already has the indelible stamp of the Lopezes. A small hallway table with an odd assortment of jars is both a décor element and station for her kombucha tea fermentation. Midcentury modern furniture, bought used and restored by Chris, dots the four-bedroom home.

A FUTURE SOWED

With her roots firmly planted in the soil, Jazmin is happy. In early fall, she started a prestigious program she’s had her eye on since the first year she started working in agriculture as a grower education program assistant for the California Strawberry Commission. It’s part of the new cohort for the California Agricultural Leadership Program, a 17-month intensive program to develop a variety of agricultural leadership skills.

“I tend to be on the shy side, and when I attend meetings that are ag-related, I’m in a room full of older white men, and I lose my voice. I don’t feel comfortable speaking up. And even though I know I’m a different perspective as a Latina in agriculture, there’s still that fear that I haven’t been in this that long, that I’m not an expert in this. The program is challenging her not just to find her voice but to own it. “I hate public speaking—I can do it, but I avoid it when possible. That’s one thing this program is pushing me to do—to be comfortable with being uncomfortable. It’s a really big deal for me because I haven’t been in this that long, that I’m not an expert in this.”

This coming year alone, they plan to install an irrigation system around the farm so they can plant more things further away from the house and expand their garden, to which they want to add hardscaping. They’ll also continue the offensive against invasive weeds and the plants grew on the property. Since then she has learned to distinguish the invasive weeds like shortpod mustard from the native plants and is on the offensive to get rid of the invaders.

“Jazmin is a superwoman.”

“Jazmin’s drive doesn’t stop there, however. On top of her full-time job at Pisoni, supporting her husband’s campaign for county supervisor, the emerging leaders transform their lives and empowers them to become accountable, competent, productive and responsible citizens. Lastly, Jazmin is a Master Gardener volunteer through her local UC Master Gardener Program. Through this program she provides public gardening education and outreach through various community workshops, activities and on the web.”

For a normal person, this might seem daunting, but as Chris says, “Jazmin is a superwoman.”

For Jazmin, making the time for what she loves to do is no chore at all, and Rancho Colibri is the battery pack that keeps her going.

DOING IT RIGHT

The first two years of living on their farm was a lot of “trial and error” for Jazmin who would walk around the farm to discover what plants grew on the property. Since then she has learned to distinguish the invasive weeds like shortpod mustard from the native plants and is on the offensive to get rid of the invaders.

“She used to have this little hand pump and walk around the farm, so I got this big pump that hooks up to the battery of this Kawasaki Mule,” says Chris, who explains he drives the small vehicle with Jazmin hunched next to him spraying the weeds. “The neighbors think we’re crazy because I’ll be driving as slow as possible and she’ll be hitting these little things at the base. The neighbors ask why we don’t just boom spray and kill it all and then bring back only what we want, but Jazmin is very passionate about the local flora and fauna.”

Looking at her farm, Jazmin adds, “I’ve never owned this much land before, you know! It’s exciting, and I want to take care of it the right way.”

“This coming year alone, they plan to install an irrigation system around the farm so they can plant more things further away from the house and expand their garden, to which they want to add hardscaping. They’ll also continue the offensive against invasive weeds and the plants grew on the property. Since then she has learned to distinguish the invasive weeds like shortpod mustard from the native plants and is on the offensive to get rid of the invaders.”

“The garden around the house—I have it all designed by my head,” Jazmin says. “I know exactly how I want it to look and the purpose I want it to serve. On the weekends, I take either Saturday or Sunday, or both, to just work on it and make progress.”

They also plan on building a gunny unit for Jazmin’s parents when they retire. “I really think they would enjoy living here in their retirement,” she says. “They could have some chickens and make some mole. That’s another project to figure out this year.”

The more Jazmin learns about her farm, the more she wants to do it all. “I want to have a small fruit tree orchard; we want to have a small vineyard to make sparkling wine with our friends; we want to have a cornfield. We want it all.”

“We’ve put a lot of our time and heart and soul into it, and it’s just the beginning. We have so many dreams for our little ranchito, our Rancho Colibrí, and I can’t wait to see what we end up doing with it. I can guarantee you that in five years, it’s going to look completely different.”
FROM THE SOUTHERN ARIZONA RANCH WHERE HE WORKS AS A COWBOY, SEAN McCoy '16 OFFERS A MEDITATION ON THE MEANING OF 'HOME.'

THE BEST A PLACELESS PERSON CAN DO

ESSAY AND PHOTOS BY SEAN McCoy '16
Ray flicked his razor and bent over the lifeless heifer and cut a long backwards L across her torso. He sank his fingers into the seam and peeled away the hide, scoring and pulling until we could see the white outlines of rib. He stood and scanned the arroyo: tumbleweed, pigweed, bare earth, the remains of a nearby bone pile. He chose a weathered femur and brought it down on her ribs, hard, four times, stopping when we heard a crack. I shoved my boot behind her shoulder and pushed it forward to give him room to work. He severed the connecting ligaments, slipped and released a spew of guts, readjusted, yanked free the rib. I watched him place it carefully beside the femur, both bones propped perpendicular against the animal’s jaw. More cuts, more blood, and a large slab of lung appeared in his hands, dark and splotched, scattered with pustules, smelling of rotten hamburger. He squeezed it gently. Hear the crinkle? It’s not supposed to sound like that.

The heifer had been alive that morning. She lay with her head in the grass as we approached, forelegs splayed out, choking on the cool air. We returned 30 minutes later with syringes of Banamine, Baytril and penicillin but never got the chance to use them. At the end of the day, after doctoring 50 more calves, snotty and hacking from the recent cold snap, we took the four-wheeler down to the ranch graveyard to perform an autopsy. I rode home with her left lung in a plastic grocery bag.

A year ago, I never expected to be herding cattle in the deserts of the Southwest. I believed, as I had told Josie, walking the streets of Silver Lake one evening before I left, that movement was a strange way to understand settlement; that running off to work on a ranch would yield more of the road than the hearth; that running off to work on a ranch would yield more of the road than the hearth; that departure was the wrong way to escape departure, but that it might also be the only way, or at least, the way for me.

We walked another circle around her block. Josie knew I had bounced around growing up. She knew what it was like because she had been through it too. I admitted apathy for the cycles of goodbye and hello, the expanding and fraying of social circles, the learning and forgetting of street names. She shared my feelings, but she didn’t believe movement had rendered us homeless. She told me she felt at home wherever, whenever she was with her family, and that location was merely a means to that end.

Home requires time, I argued. It often has more to do with one’s place in the past than one’s place in the present. I don’t have enough history to be at home here, I told her. I also tried to tell her that she wasn’t at home either, as if we were having an empirical disagreement about the location of the restaurant we just came from, and as if that dispute could be resolved by retracing our steps: a left turn, down the hill, over the bridge, another left turn. She pressed me on the unavoidable connections that even a short stay in a new place can generate; how people, impressions, experiences pull us into unfamiliar orbits that soon become our own. She said I hadn’t considered the depth of history within families. Those relationships exert more gravity than longitude and latitude.

We said goodbye and I drove away, wending between the glass and concrete hoodoos of downtown, the slush of automobiles, billboards of movies, of movie stars. I wondered if it would be easier to navigate Los Angeles through a screen, and if people who have never lived here might, in some crucial way, know the city better than I do. I passed another billboard. We Buy Ugly Houses. At least they have seen what produced this place, what this place produced.

So I departed, traveling east, or West, into something I believed was my past. I stopped in Long Beach, where I was born, to say goodbye to my grandparents. I zipped through Phoenix, where I was raised, without veering from the interstate. I called my parents in New Jersey and explained that cell service would be spotty, and that they’d hear from me, sometimes. I drove until I arrived in the mountains of the Mescalero Apache reservation, surrounded by pinyon and juniper, branding irons and barbed wire, the thrill of a blank beginning.

The work refreshed me and exhausted me, provided a welcome change from sedentary life as an editor in Los Angeles. I was outside and using my body, joined by a team of dogs and horses, caring for cattle, mending fence, keeping up with the waters. I lived in a small trailer an hour from town by dirt roads; the distance grounded me, seemed to override the experience of sleeping each night in a bed anchored by wheels.

I befriended an elderly Apache man—Bloody, he insisted I call him—who approached me near the entrance to a tipi at the Fourth of July feast. I soon learned that he, in his youth, had trained horses.
and herded cattle in the pastures I'd come from that morning. We stood and ate from paper plates, watching the descendants of Geronimo stomp to the same drumbeats that ushered their ancestor to war more than a century ago.

Bodily’s nose was crooked, his teeth both there and not, his left eye missing a fleck of pupil. He lost the teeth because he started dip- ping at 27, he explained, but he was as better health than a lot of his friends, they had drunk too much trough water. He winked and told me to stay away from that stuff. Just stick to bourbon and Coke. I laughed. I said I just came from the rodeo, did you see it too? Ah, no, he had to miss it. He had been taking his daughter to the dentist, but how was it? Did any of the bull riders last eight seconds? Yes, there were a few, I said.

We continued to watch the ceremony. A new song began in honor of a member of the tribe—healer, father, friend—who had recently passed away. Bloody turned to me and put his hand on my shoulder. You’re part of this now, he said. Being here, this is for you too. These dances, these songs, they are for everybody, all the Earth.

The next day, on a different ranch west of Tucson, New Mexico, I loaded the four-wheeler with buckets of toxic pellets and drove out to kill junipers. Juniper, mainy, as well as mesquite. Our dog Sophie joined me, riding shotgun to the top of the mesa, where we parked our sup- plies and set to work. I pulled on gloves and grabbed the first bucket. I walked to the far corner of the pasture and dropped five pellets at the base of the nearest tree. I walked three more feet to another tree and did the same. My gloved turned white.

Tree by tree, pellet by pellet, beginning to perspire beneath an early August sun, I paced an imaginary grid. Certain trees I left alone, the largest ones, to provide shade for cattle on days like today: Sophie trotted and wagged alongside me. I was pleased too. Pleased to walk where I hadn’t walked before, to be outdow on a clear day with a sky that stretched from the Mesa Risa to the Canarian Escarpment, and pleased to be greeting every single tree.

I had never walked like that. I had walked between trees, through trees, among trees, but never at trees. I began to know them person- ally—their bark, branches, shape of overhang. I knew their knots and facial features, the emotion in each contortion. And with this knowl- edge, I bowed to them, depositing pellets at their feet. I remained es- tranged from those whose lives I spared. But my trees would not die as I left. She said memory seems to survive through people and stories as much as place. If home requires time, as I had argued earlier, and if memory is how we preserve time, then the best we can do is gather and speak.

Fog had thickened over the ocean. We balled our wrappers to- gether to thwart the pull of wind. Don’t you think, she asked, that this is your home, here with family? I said I had forgotten about the bag and the coins until just now, returning to the beach. Movement reshuffles memory, divisus us from place and history.

Then it follows, she said, that the best thing a placeless person can do is stay put.

You might be right, I said, but for many of us it could be too late, or too inconvenient. I described the autopsy on the calf on the ranch I now worked in southern Arizona. I recounted my morning killing trees—grass, soil, Spaniards, petroglyphs, tombs, rock-house ruins. I said I wondered what Bloody had thought, chatting with me, a foreigner, while commemorating his deceased kin, engulfed by the song and dance of his ancestors, feet planted on tribal earth.

Let me ask you something, she said. What killed the heifer? Pneu- monia, I said. And those trees—did you get the rain you needed? I monia, I said. And those trees—did you get the rain you needed? I
Ray and I loaded our horses and traipsed to the old family homestead at the base of the mountains. Established by Ray’s great-grandfather, the building served as ranch headquarters at its founding in 1899. Today we live in the flats below, but the homestead, amelting, but infested adobe, endures as the best work base during the winter, when our herd grazes the slopes and canyons of the mountain range. Ray and I planned to ride in search of newborn calves. It was our job when our herd grazes the slopes and canyons of the mountain range.

We were easing along the washboard road, through muted groves of palo verde and mesquite, when we noticed a fresh set of tracks. Large, heavy, probably a rogue bull. We continued another half mile, then stopped at the camp of a hunter. Have you seen any cattle around here? Ray asked. No, the hunter said, I had good luck hare. Always seem to find those white-tail two-thirds up the mountains.

Ray and I drove on to the homestead. We parked beside the old adobe corraled by munching cattle, and emerged in the wash at the canyon’s entrance. A few cows, but no calves.

I crossed the ridge and dropped into the far canyon. I threaded between cholla and ocotillo, the stomped pads of prickly pear disordered cell phones, promptness for all meetings and meals, walking and immediate environment.

When we reached GDA’s dormitory, a pleasant young woman named Kim led me into a large entry hall dominated by a very long, paneled. I raised my binoculars and surveyed the distant flats: tanned water in the original pila, which was now pumped by an array of solar panels. I raised my binoculars and surveyed the distant flats:

When I became legally blind several years ago, I first asked the Braille Institute for a white cane. Although the institute gave me excellent mobility training, it only taught me the obstacles when you encounter them. As my vision worsened (now 20/350), I felt the need to avoid obstacles, and that’s the job of a guide dog.

Applying to guide dog school reminds me of applying to Pomona many years ago—neither is for the casually interested and all requirements must be met. Once you’ve decided which school to attend (there are three in California, all funded through charitable donations), you’ll need to line up references, including your ophthalmologist (are you healthy enough to complete the strenuous training?), your optometrist (how bad is your vision loss?) and your mobility instructor (can you travel independently using a cane?)

I could make out the white cross in the family cemetery below, and see the reflection of a red cross in the original pila, which was now pumped by an array of solar panels. I raised my binoculars and surveyed the distant flats: tanned hide of earth, taut and dry, home for someone, or home enough.

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Ray met up with me deeper in the mountains, just beyond the site of a white cross in the family cemetery below, and see the reflection of a red cross in the original pila, which was now pumped by an array of solar panels. I raised my binoculars and surveyed the distant flats: tanned hide of earth, taut and dry, home for someone, or home enough.

I crossed the ridge and dropped into the far canyon. I threaded between cholla and ocotillo, the stomped pads of prickly pear disordered cell phones, promptness for all meetings and meals, walking and immediate environment.

When I became legally blind several years ago, I first asked the Braille Institute for a white cane. Although the institute gave me excellent mobility training, it only taught me the obstacles when you encounter them. As my vision worsened (now 20/350), I felt the need to avoid obstacles, and that’s the job of a guide dog.

Applying to guide dog school reminds me of applying to Pomona many years ago—neither is for the casually interested and all requirements must be met. Once you’ve decided which school to attend (there are three in California, all funded through charitable donations), you’ll need to line up references, including your ophthalmologist (are you healthy enough to complete the strenuous training?), your optometrist (how bad is your vision loss?) and your mobility instructor (can you travel independently using a cane?)

Last, you may be asked either to schedule a home visit or to submit a video of your walking and immediate environment.

When the first school to which I applied sent a trainer to interview me, but after a walk, he announced that the school would be unable to match me with a dog because I walked “too slowly.” I was stunned, then disappointed, then angry, as he reasoned smelted of blatant age discrimination.

After submitting another lengthy application to a different school, however, I was thrilled to receive a phone call from Guide Dogs of America (GDA) in Sylmar, accepting me for its November-December 2017 class.

We learned the rules: no in-room visiting, no alcohol on site, silenced cell phones, promptness for all meetings and meals, walking on the right side of hallways and respect for the rights of others. We would meet at 8 each morning and train until nearly lunchtime. After lunch, we would train again until 4. Only after fetching, training and relieving our dogs would we have dinner, and after dinner we would often meet again.
show me that he could sit on his haunches and calm disposition. Valkor then wanted to days. Fires had broken out in multiple locations, including Sylmar. strenuous training and would certainly profit from having Valkor as GDA practices it." Then I broke down in tears: At 81 I had survived fires to our rooms to relieve our dogs and wait for an announcement. Guide Dogs of America, with Jones as its first graduate.

of their rooms and nearly collided. Collisions, in one form or another, were a constant concern for the entire three weeks. I slept very little that night. After breakfast the next morning, we gathered on the sofas for a lecture, then set off for a "Juno" walk, with the instructors playing the part of guide dogs. We were, it seemed, being evaluated for walking pace.

Excitement grew on Wednesday—the day we would be given our dogs. The instructors enjoyed our excitement, offering to give the first dog to the student who guessed her dog’s name. No one managed—certainly not Sue. (Who could have imagined “Valkor”?)

Wednesday came, and after lunch we were instructed to return to our rooms and be ready to meet our dogs. There was a knock at the door, and Kim and Valkor appeared with his trainer. Valkor, named by his puppy raisers for a character in a children’s cartoon, is an 85-pound black Labrador retriever cross and quite handsome. He immediately headed for a toy I had brought with me. I felt somewhat intimidated by his size—it would take me some time to appreciate better his intelligence and calm disposition. Valkor then wanted to show me that he could sit on his haunches and hold up his front paws.

Exactly how we were matched with our dogs remains a mystery, but it seemed to be primarily a matter of walking pace and energy level. Valkor was described as “a high-energy dog, and Valkor was described as “a gentle giant.” In any case, the matching seemed to work. We gathered for dinner with nine tails under the table. Everyone seemed very happy.

When packing for my three weeks at GDA I had thrown in a lightweight rain jacket, but instead of rain, that first weekend brought severe dry winds, the dreaded Santa Anas. Monday brought an acrid smoke from a fire in the area. Fortunately, they would remain distant. We were all exhausted from the stress and began to drowse before crossing a street, we did not approach a crossing if the situation is unsafe. Valkor, who looks both ways for traffic, seemed to understand he was a guest. We were getting to know each other and quickly became fast friends.

In our remaining time, we focused on essentials and tried to ignore the unhealthy air quality and ashes covering the ground. Happily our lessons seemed to work. We practiced walking pace and energy level. Our youngest student received a high-energy dog, and Valkor was described as “a gentle giant.” In any case, the matching seemed to work. We gathered for dinner with nine tails under the table. Everyone seemed very happy.

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2018 Family Weekend

More than 750 Pomona parents and family members flocked to campus in February for the College’s annual Family Weekend celebration. Guests spent four sunshine-filled days attending classes, seminars, labs, open houses and art exhibitions; hearing from faculty, staff and graduate students during info sessions and the inaugural Ideas@Pomona: Family Edition speaker series; enjoying food trucks and a craft beer tasting on the Quad, and sipping Coop shakes with their students.

Alumni Board & Student Leadership Get Creative About Collaboration

Student-alumni collaboration was the focus of the Alumni Association Board’s creative energy as they hosted the First Alumni Board Breakfast. In a session hosted at the Rick and Susan Tashjian Center for Collaborative Creativity (“The Hive”) and facilitated by Andrew Achboung ’77, the Board spent an afternoon with students from Pomona’s Peer Mentor Groups and the Associated Students of Pomona College (ASPC), brainstorming ideas to develop and strengthen career networking, community service, and learning collaborations. Learn more about The Hive, a SC center dedicated to exploration, collaboration and creativity at creativity.claremont.edu. To learn more about the Alumni Board, visit pomona.edu/alumni/alumni-association-board.

Alumni Travel/Study:

Galápagos Aboard National Geographic Islander

June 15 – 24, 2019

Join W.M. Keck Professor of Environmental Analysis, Char Miller PZ ’75, PO ’03 for a journey to the Galápagos Islands. The 24-day trip is designed for all Galápagos enthusiasts and includes a trip aboard National Geographic’sDiesentra, a 150-passenger vessel equipped to give you the most engaging experience possible. Contact the Alumni and Parent Engagement Office at 909-621-8110 or alumni@pomona.edu for more information.

Mark Your Calendar:

Spring Event Highlights

Alumni Weekend 2018

Thursday, April 26 – Sunday, April 29

It’s reunion time for classes ending in 75, 85, 95 – and, oh, always, alumni from all classes are welcome back to campus to enjoy the Sagehen party of the year! Don’t miss out on new programs and favorite traditions like the Parade of Classes, a Taste of Pomona craft beer and alumni-vintner wine tasting, the All-Class Dinner under the stars on Marion Quad with President Starr, and Ideas@Pomona: a series of TED-style talks from Pomona-affiliated scholars and luminaries. Visit pomona.edu/alumniweekend for event and registration details.

Pomona in the City: Seattle

Saturday, June 2 / Fourth Seasons Hotel Seattle

Join fellow Sagehens in the beautiful Pacific Northwest for the spring edition of this signature event designed for lifelong learners. Seattle sessions include a welcome and College update from President Starr, keynote lecture and breakfast sessions from Pomona faculty, and a networking reception for Seattle area students, alumni, parents and friends. Watch for registration and event details at pomona.edu/pomonainthecity.

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Arden Reed, noted scholar, lecturer and Arthur M. Doyle and Fanny M. Doyle Professor of English at Pomona College, passed away on Dec. 21, 2017, at the age of 70 from an aggressive form of cancer.

Born in 1947 in Denver, Colo., Reed was a boundary-crossing scholar—an expert on 19th-century English and French literature and visual art, including contemporary visual culture. His research covered the spectrum of English Romantic literature; 19th-century French painting and literature; modernism across the arts, relationships between painting and literature, image and text; contemporary art; and tableaux vivants. His most recent and seminal work, Slow Art: The Experience of Looking, Sacred Images to James Turrell, was published this past summer by the University of California Press.

Covering works from the Middle Ages to the present, Slow Art calls on everyday museum visitors to contemplate artwork and trust that their novice observations are just as meaningful as those of art experts. In its review, The Wall Street Journal called Reed “an enormously erudite writer,” and his book, “a lovely rumble through high and low culture.”

Kurt Andersen, novelist and host of NPR’s Studio 360, reflected that “Arden Reed refused to stay in his lane: as a scholar and a human being, his extreme, gleeful curiosity about all kinds of ideas and art and people, and the connections among them, was positively infectious, and an inspiration to one.”


In 2006, Reed received a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, which he used to pursue research that helped ease the deep questions that would animate Slow Art.

In addition to the Guggenheim Fellowship, Reed’s distinguished awards and honors include a Bellagio Study Center Residency in 2007 by the Rockefeller Foundation; a fellowship at the American Academy in Rome (2007); a Bogliasco Foundation Fellowship at the Centre Studi Liguriere per le Arti et le Lettore in 2007; and a fellowship at the Clark Art Institute in 2008.

Under the auspices of The Albert & Elaine Borchard Foundation, he was a scholar in residence at Château de la Bretoche in Masillac, France, from 1990 to 1991, and under the aegis of The Camargo Foundation, he served as a research fellow in Cassis, France, from 1994 to 1995. Through an award from the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, he was a fellow at the University of Edinburg, among other honors.

Reed came to Pomona as an assistant professor in 1979 and was named the Arthur M. Doyle and Fanny M. Doyle Professor of English in 2004. Before Pomona, he was an assistant professor at Wayne State University and a lecturer at The Johns Hopkins University.

Reed earned his bachelor of arts from Wesleyan University, and his master’s and doctoral degrees in comparative literature from The Johns Hopkins University.

He is survived by his partner of 35 years, Deury Sherrod of Pasadena and Santa Fe, his beloved son, Jonathan Reed and husband, Jeffrey Dodd, of New York, his former wife, Anita Comtoss of New York, as well as a brother, Edward Reed of Denver; a sister, Susan Reed of Sedona, an uncle, Stanley Ely of New York; and cousins Elissa Ely of Boston and Marcia Ely of New York.

Reed’s family has requested that those who wish to honor his memory do so through the Arden Reed Summer Undergraduate Endowed Research Fund at Pomona, which will support the student research he found so essential to a liberal arts education.
THE WILDS OF L.A.

ESSAY BY CHAR MILLER

Wild Los Angeles? That seems a contradiction in terms, for surely it is nearly impossible to locate nature inside the nation’s second-largest, and second-most-dense city. This metropolitan region, which gave birth to the concept of smog and sprawl—the two being parts of a whole—is now so thickly settled that it is almost fully built out and paved over. In the City of Angels, where even the spongy prairie looks like an inverted freeway, there is no rural.

Yet as concretized and controlled as Los Angeles appears, it does not stand apart from nature—any more than do small towns tucked away in remote locales. Consider the natural systems that over the millennia have given shape to this region. They are still at work.

The most obvious of these is manifest perhaps the most dramatic signal of just how close Angelinos are to nature, and how compressed is the distance between where we reside and that space we imagine as “rural.” Flares up every time a wind-driven wildfire sweeps down canyon or horseshoe ridge. We have endured too many of these fires over the past decade (unlike Northern California, which has a deficit of fire, SoCal has experienced a surplus).

Some of these conflagrations have been massive, like the Station Fire (2009; 160,000 acres) and the Thomas (2017; 282,000 acres); others have been much smaller, such as the Skirball (2017; 422 acres). Notwithstanding their differences in size, these contemporary conflagrations follow a historic pattern: Wherever people have gone, fire has followed.

Beginning in the late 19th century, tens of thousands of residents and tourists hopped the Los Angeles & Pasadena Rail- way’s parlor cars that took them straight to the Altadena station, nestled in the San Gabriel foothills. There, by foot, bicycle or the Mt. Lowe Incline, they headed uphill to the high ground above the San Fernando and San Gabriel valleys, and, later still, cradled through upland acreage overlooking the San and Santa Clarita valleys. Like the August 2016 Blue Cut Fire that torched portions of the rugged Cajon Pass, shut down Interstate 15, and forced upwards of 80,000 people to flee for their lives, the Thomas Fire disrupted freeway traffic in its furious run from Santa Paula to Ventura to Montecito and drove 100,000 from their tree-shaded homes.

Fires also erupted as housing developments, following rail and road, pressed out toward an expanding periphery. For those with the requisite means, the lure of a quiet suburban arcadia segregated from the disquieting urban hustle, yet situated close enough to commute between family and work, was a powerful magnet. Even as this white flight re-arranged the city’s spatial dimensions, class interactions and racial dynamics, it proved invidious in another sense.

In the immediate aftermath of World War II, Army surplus bulldozers leveled large lots for grand homes in the Hollywood hills and Beverly Hills, and famous firestorms erupted. For all its damage, then, the Bel Air Fire of 1961, which consumed more than 16,000 acres and uninfamed 484 homes, was not unique. In subsequent years, blazes popped up in and around new subdivisions cut into the high ground above the San Fernando and San Gabriel valleys, and, later still, cracked through upland acreage overlooking the San and Santa Clarita valleys. Like the August 2016 Blue Cut Fire that torched portions of the rugged Cajon Pass, shut down Interstate 15, and forced upwards of 80,000 people to flee for their lives, the Thomas Fire disrupted freeway traffic in its furious run from Santa Paula to Ventura to Montecito and drove 100,000 from their tree-shaded homes.

With fires come floods. Punishing winter storms, like those that pounded Montecito less than a month after the Thomas Fire sputtered out, can unleash a scorching surge of boulder, gravel, and mud that destroys all within its path. The resulting death and destruction—horrifying, terrifying—is also, alas, predictable. Since the late 1880s, some Angelinos have had foreknowledge about the dire conse-quences of developing high ground, of turning the inaccessible, accessible. We have ignored those warnings at our peril—peril that climate change is accelerating as it intensifies the oscillation between drought and deluge, fire and flood.

Further evidence that this most urbanized place is, and will remain, inseparably integrated with wild nature.

Char Miller is the W.M. Keck Professor of Environmental Analysis at Pomona. His recent books include Not So Golden State: Sustainabil-ity vs. the California Dream and Where There’s Smoke: The Environmental Science, Public Policy, and Politics of Marijuana.
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