



JUNE # 1—Boat Trip to Bowen Island

Visuals: photos of Bowen Island shoreline, trails, lake, and swimming beach and Ryan's young relatives relaxing on deck

Another wonderful day on the ocean and a rewarding hike. Part of Mary's extended family cruised to Bowen Island, about two hours from where the boat is docked in downtown Vancouver. The event was to celebrate the birthday of the boat owner Ryan, who operates tours with the boat. The family refers to this as a "party boat," as there is room for up to 40 people. There were about 30 of us on this outing.

Some of the nametags of Ryan's extended family took me a few minutes to figure out: "Nancy, Ryan's second wife," "Tracey, Ryan's stepdaughter," "Jim, Ryan's son-in-law," "Bruce, Ryan's second wife's husband." Mary says individuals marry into the family but never leave it. How civilized that the relationships continue despite divorce having been part of the shared experience.

Before leaving the dock, Ryan introduced an elderly couple giving some background about them. Then I heard, "And today we have a very special international visitor on board." Coming to my side, he said, "Her name is Erika, and she is from Japan." Everyone clapped. I was very moved that he would acknowledge me because up to then I was feeling invisible, like maybe I shouldn't even be there.

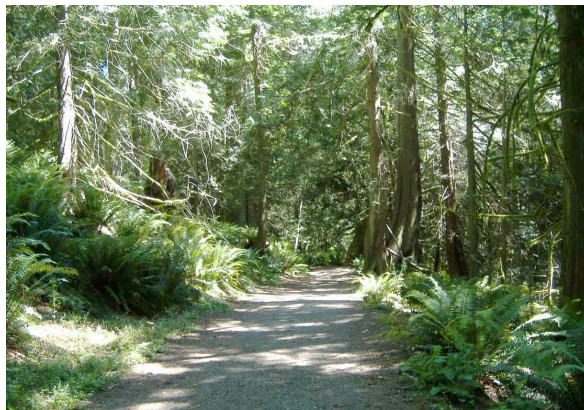
As we left False Creek, the morning was overcast, even threatening rain. But Mary said it is common for June weather to look unsettled in the morning and turn into a beautiful afternoon and evening. And this is exactly what happened. Sunshine increased as we passed under the bridges and out to English Bay, went round Stanley Park, and crossed the harbour to reach the North Shore (yes, I can name these now!). By the

time were crossing the strip of water to reach Bowen Island, the sun was fully out. Ryan is definitely an expert at handling his huge boat, as he parked it, in one motion, at a previously arranged spot on the dock in Snug Harbour. Wish I could do that with a small car even!

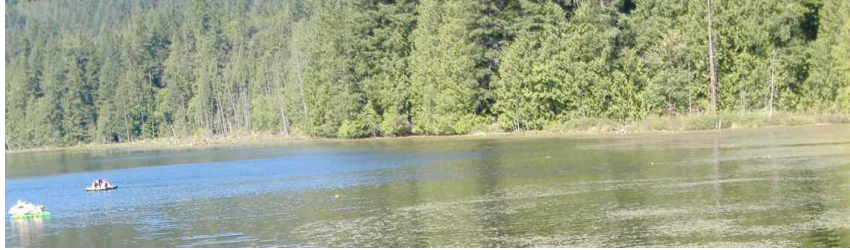
Before we got off the boat, Ryan told us to be back for barbecued salmon at 5:00 pm. The island is about ten kilometres long. After checking our watches, Mary and I walked up the wharfs and stopped at one called the Pier where we bought a delicious ice cream cone. Mary decided she would like to show me Killarney Lake and the closest swimming beach, so several others from the family decided to come with us.



We hiked up the main road (quite a hill!) away from the dock and turned right walking past the Archives and Museum building that had an old tractor out front. Mary said it reminded her of something her brother would love. We walked along a gravel road and then turned left to enter a path through a quiet forest. I admit I was feeling like Sandy was somehow with me. I wish we could visit such a beautiful place together.



We walked quite a way before we reached the lake, Killarney Lake. Within a few minutes, our straggling troop took over two picnic tables and ate our lunch close to where some children were swimming.



A couple of the children in our group said they wanted to swim too, but in the ocean, so we headed back on the trail to reach the beach that is closest to Snug Harbour.

Their suggestion seemed a bit adventurous so early in the season, but walking through a meadow put us in sunlight again and made us aware of how warm it had become.



At the end of the trail, we walked through an area of houses and arrived at the swimming beach called Deep Bay. It reminds me a lot of Deep Cove, Mary's family community. The kids swam and ran in and out of the water.



When everyone returned to the boat, we were treated to a delicious barbecue salmon dinner complete with many different kinds of salad and a fresh fruit that included local berries.

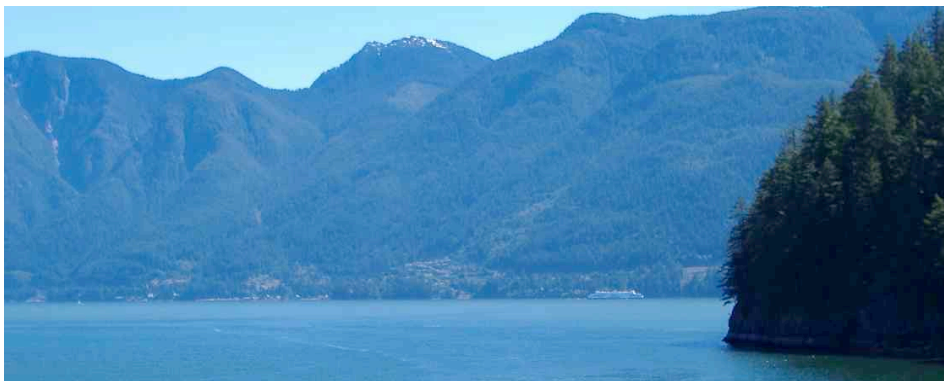
After eating, most of the group just sat and talked in the sunshine outside on the decks.



When I went inside the saloon to get some water, I saw Ryan's stepdaughter dancing around her baby. The child was lying on a blanket on the carpeted floor transfixed in watching her mother move to the music. The others came inside briefly too to sing happy birthday to Ryan, watch him blow out his candles, and enjoy the delicious cake made with hazel nuts, real butter, and whipping cream.

When we finally pushed off to head back to Vancouver, all were content to just watch the wonderful scenery go by. A couple of people encouraged Patrick, Ryan's stepson (who had his guitar with him) to sing. Apparently he writes his own lyrics and music. He is tall and blond and about two years older than Sandy. We talked briefly, but I didn't feel motivated to extend our conversation.

I realized that I was comparing him with Sandy and was thinking of Yoko's advice that Sandy can't be the only interesting guy in Vancouver. But again I was reminded of my immediate, initial attraction to Sandy that I have never felt for anyone else. Yes, I was missing Sandy.



We crossed the channel surrounded on all sides by rocky shoreline, often covered in evergreens to the waterline. On the West Vancouver waterfront there are impressive and unique

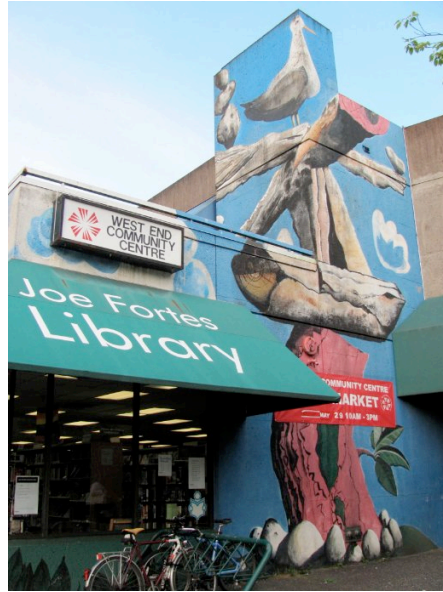
houses, some seeming to hang onto cliffs as if gravity doesn't exist—architectural challenges!

Then we were within sight of the Lion's Gate Bridge and headed toward English Bay again.

Some distance from English Bay Beach, Ryan pulled up alongside a huge freighter so that some of us could touch the rough metal side of the ship. I was a little nervous about this as Ryan's boat suddenly seemed so small. Looking up at the freighter from the water level, I realized it was several stories high and about a block long. In seeing such freighters from the shore, I haven't realized they are so massive. Our group yelled up and waved to a couple of the crewmembers high above us who were leaning over the railing, smoking, and relaxing in the early evening sun.

We headed back into False Creek where we started from and where Ryan moors the boat. We passed under three bridges. Mary noted that Ryan managed to dock the boat exactly as his sound system started playing a homecoming song.





JUNE # 2—Beginning the Drawing Course

Visuals: Photographs of architecture in West End

Se-Eun and I decided to take a drawing course at the West End Community Centre. I am just doing this as I am missing drawing, since I did so much of it last year. Se-Eun is taking this as a commitment to doing set design whether or not this is something she can do with her former boyfriend. Perhaps Barry encouraged her to sign up as a way to work out her anger and heartbreak over her split up and turn it into something positive.

Speaking English on the telephone has always been one of my biggest challenges since this relies totally on the spoken word without any visual clues. So as a challenge I registered for the course by telephone, and I am quite proud of myself for managing that. Mary, who was cooking dinner, said she would listen to the phone call in case I needed any help—but I didn't.

"I did it all by myself!" I shouted happily after hanging up.

"Of course you did. And perfectly, too," Mary commented.

The course will take place four Wednesday nights in a row. The first session was tonight. The pamphlet said bring photographs of the subjects that we are planning to draw. I have decided to do mainly old buildings in the West End, structures that I have been routinely photographing since I arrived.

Our teacher, Linda, is totally encouraging. She has recommended that we do local subjects that we can return to

and look at even if we are primarily working from photographs in class. It took me a while to get started and then I did one image quickly, but I can see how out of practice I am.



I confess I thought that in taking this art course with Se-Eun she might tell me something about what is going on between her and Barry. But in the class tonight we were very focused on our projects and at the end of the class we went for a snack with a Canadian classmate, Barbara, at a cafe on Denman Street.

Talking to Barbara about our experience of being in Vancouver meant that Se-Eun and I didn't discuss details of our own lives. Se-Eun and Barry now seem to be avoiding revealing their increasing closeness.





JUNE # 3—Group Visits Apartment before Dinner

Visuals: Exterior and interior of restaurant

Before setting off for supper tonight, our group gathered at my place. On first thought, I had feared the renewed approach of Noboru but then realized I have not had all that much personal contact with him recently. He has been spending more time with Juliana. She seems to be his confidant although I don't think there is any romantic interest between them.

When we entered the apartment building, I asked everyone to be quiet as we trooped through the main hallway. Noboru and Juliana, Song and Daniel, Fernando and Bae, were silent, but not Nicole. She wanted to know which apartment the band practices in. I tried to hush her, but her response was, "There are other cute guys in the band, aren't there, Erika? Not just your man." I was devastated in thinking how I'd feel if Sandy or Larry heard such words.

"So which apartment is it, Erika? Which one is it?"

To quiet her I pointed to Larry and Leah's door as we turned to go up the stairs. For all my wishing that the band would return soon, at that moment I desperately hoped that they were not back yet. Luckily we got up the stairs without seeing anyone on the main floor.

On Mary's floor, however, there were a couple of moms, sitting with their kids in the hallway. Nicole took notice of Tyler, the not quite one-year-old from across the hall. She also encouraged the four-year-old boy as he demonstrated his hockey shot with a balloon and admired the little girl in her princess dress.

As it is fairly warm out now, Mary's door and those of her neighbours are open onto the main hallway so the air can circulate—a homey touch as if extended family is just in the next room across the hall.

In coming into the suite, Juliana said, "I love these older buildings with the high ceilings and hardwood floors. And these dark mahogany doors are just like mine at home in São Paulo."

After basic introductions, Juliana asked Mary, "May I have a look around?"

"Certainly, although there isn't all that much to see."

While Mary put away vegetables, the rest of us sat down at the dining table to wait for Sumi. The sun was streaming through the dining room window into the kitchen. Mary suggested that I make some tea.



Where to eat? We couldn't decide, as there are so many good restaurants in the West End. As Mary headed for her computer, she handed us a menu for a neighbourhood Singaporean restaurant. After some discussion, we decided to go there.

In a few minutes, Sumi arrived with a couple of designer shopping bags.

"Is that all you bought?" we teased.

I've set aside some black pants that I hope to pick up tomorrow.

"Black? More black!" we all exclaimed.

"No one will notice new black pants because they will look like all your other black ones."

Sumi is such a sophisticated dresser. She always looks good in her tasteful, tailored outfits. But even with the warmer weather, she is sticking with black. Juliana told us how when she arrived at the beginning of March, it was about 10 degrees outside.

"Even though it was sunny, I was very cold," she said. "It had been 35-degrees in São Paulo when I left."

Against her homestay mother's advice, Juliana stocked up on winter clothes—a parka, hat, gloves, and boots. She laughed admitting that since then she has bought a lot of summer clothes because it is now hotter than she expected.

Without a pause, she added, "My husband recently phoned and asked about all the clothes on our charge card, and I had to explain the major shift in Vancouver weather and how hot it has suddenly become."

Nobody reacted to this comment. I realized being married doesn't have to be a secret any longer. Previously I had wondered if Noboru knew.

Sumi asked Mary's opinion about the price of the black pants at \$550.00. I think Mary was somewhat dumbfounded at the thought of paying that much for pants. But Sumi reassured her that the price included alterations. Mary smiled, not convinced that this made all that much difference.

Seeing Mary's attitude, Sumi said that she would phone her mom to get her opinion too. With calling card in hand, she took the phone just inside the living room door while the rest of us sat at the table drinking our tea.

Baby Tyler crawled through the main door and into the kitchen. Song went over to him and knelt down on her hands and knees to be nose-to-nose with him and said, "Boo!"

I am amazed that, even in the presence of Daniel, Song can be so innocent and childlike.

"So do you want to come and visit us or are you just looking for Nicole?" Song asked Tyler. "And is your mother coming over too?"

"Hi, Tyler!" Mary exclaimed returning to the kitchen.

Song continued, "So where is your mother, Tyler?"

From the door Marcie answered, "Not far behind. May I come in Mary?"

"Of course"

Meanwhile Song, still on her knees, was prepared to entertain Tyler. "Do you want to meet all my friends?"

He seemed to approve. Song clapped her hands and laughed innocently as she does so often.

"Yes? Well, then, we'll have to fix your shoe first. We don't want that falling off, do we?"

Marcie and Mary watched this exchange not wanting to intrude on this intimacy between Tyler and Song. Then Song picked Tyler up and brought him to the table.

"So these are my friends," she said as she began introducing each of us to him. "You know Erika, and this is Noboru, Daniel, Fernando and...." Fernando stood up as Tyler leaned toward him with his arms reaching outward. He took Tyler and sat down with him.

Fernando continued the introductions with Tyler sitting contentedly on his knee within view of Marcie. I was amazed that a guy could have such a way with babies. Nicole came back into the room and sat next to Fernando and also helped entertain Tyler by making silly noises for him.

As soon as Marcie took Tyler home, Mary mentioned having a problem with her computer and went back into the living room to try to resolve it. Noboru quietly followed Mary to the computer where she was staring at the screen. He pulled up a chair and sat beside her. We were not aware of most of their conversation, but Noboru apparently did something to solve the immediate problem and offered to help fix her computer more fully another time.

Knowing that I have an awkward relationship with Noboru, Mary apparently didn't know whether to accept his offer or not. He was suggesting he'd come and help her again before going to a movie with the group on Tuesday.

Hearing some of this discussion, I went into the living room and was able to say, "Noboru is always helping me with my computer problems in the lab at school. He can work magic. He is a computer programmer in Japan."

Intuitively Mary got my message that it was all right to invite Noboru for supper on Tuesday in exchange for such help. I knew how important that could be to her.

Sumi got off the phone. Apparently her mother had approved the price of the pants saying they would cost a lot more in Japan.

As a somewhat boisterous group, we marched up the hill to the restaurant. In seating ourselves I noticed that again Noboru took a seat next to Juliana. Interesting.

As we waited for the server to take our order, I still couldn't help noticing the togetherness of Daniel and Song, despite still appearing an unlikely couple. Song has a youthful, casual appearance. At home in Switzerland, Daniel lives in a suit, tie, and vest. Here, he has finally begun to look more relaxed [Song's good influence?]. She teases Daniel about owning Birkenstocks but not being willing to wear them in public. Apparently he thinks that would be like wearing pyjamas in the street. Daniel and Song's mismatched appearance seems not to matter to them. They look into each other's eyes when they talk and their hands touch a lot.

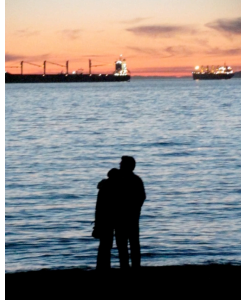
In this regard Bae, who is always pleasantly but unselfconsciously dressed, and sophisticated Sumi look more like a couple. Yet Sumi still makes it clear to poor infatuated Bae that she does not love him other than as a friend. In the restaurant, apparently to confirm this, Sumi spent more time talking with Fernando and Nicole than to Bae.

I was surprised when Fernando revealed that he is going into medicine and will specialize in pediatrics. Oh, that makes sense, I thought, after seeing him with baby Tyler. Apparently Fernando's father is a pediatrician.

Did Nicole's interest in Fernando increase throughout the evening with knowledge of his future plans? Or did it date back

to Juliana's birthday party when Nicole was trying to help Fernando get over missing Sabine by dancing together?

After finishing dinner all of us decided to walk down to the beach, as it was such a beautiful evening. We wanted to be out in the air. We seemed more subdued than usual. When I saw, against the sunset, a couple hugging at the water's edge, I wished that could be Sandy and me.





JUNE # 4—Noboru at the Apartment before the Movie

Visuals: photos of Granville Street movie district, architectural details of surrounding buildings

After class Noboru and I walked from school so he could fix Mary's computer before having dinner with the two of us. I regretted not asking at least one other classmate to keep me from feeling paired off with Noboru. But the others had made their own plans for supper before the movie.

Mary had some meat simmering in sauce on the stove ("beef stroganoff" said the recipe taped to the cupboard door). Rice, a large salad, and a bowl of fresh strawberries were on the counter, and the table was mostly set.

Noboru went straight to work on the computer with Mary sitting at his side. I started getting other items out of the fridge. Butter. Dressing. Juice. Milk. Whipped cream.

"Erika, there's a postcard there for you," Mary called from the living room.

I looked at the sideboard. My heart leapt as I saw a beach scene with the word Penticton on it. Definitely from Sandy! Unnoticed by Mary and Noboru, I picked up the card and walked into my room so I could savour it.

Erika,

Thinking of you. Gigs are going well despite too much time between them. Have managed to get out in the sun a bit. Turquoise lakes and dry hills remind me of how much I loved this area as a kid camping here with my parents. Expect to be back late Friday (the 24th). Any chance of seeing you on the Saturday?

Sandy

Any chance! As in will I totally arrange my life to ensure I am available the minute Sandy steps out of the van? Or at least first thing Saturday morning if they arrive after I'm in bed Friday night (will I be checking out the window most of the evening?).

"Thinking of you." Is he really willing to admit this despite his reaction to me in leaving the seawall? And yet these words are only a faint reflection of my near preoccupation with him. Such simple words. How can they make me this happy?

But just a minute! Saturday the 25th.... Mary has invited me to go to her niece's wedding service and to see some wedding-related activity. What bad timing! I have been looking forward to seeing a North American wedding. But I'm not invited to the reception, so I should be ready to leave Deep Cove by 6:30 pm. Could Sandy meet me there? Nothing less would cause me to delaying seeing him.

I tried to calm down. Returning to the kitchen I asked, "Noboru and Mary, should I put dinner out for you yet?"

"No, but you go ahead and start eating," Mary said.

"We may not get finished in time for me to go to the movie, so you should plan to go alone, Erika."

"No, you mustn't miss the movie," Mary tried to convince Noboru, but I heard him quietly say, "I don't intend to abandon you with a computer that doesn't work."

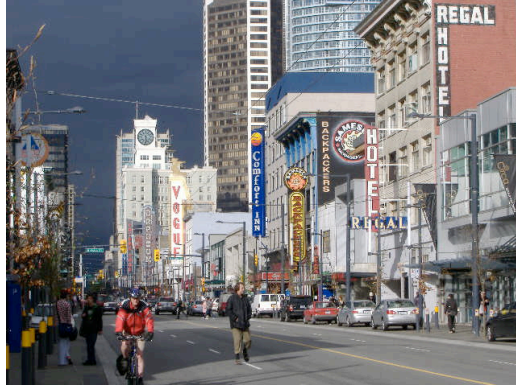
I recognized this as a very kind gesture. Mary depends upon her computer and can't cope with the slightest problem.

Just as I was finishing my stroganoff, I heard Mary and Noboru let out an involuntary, "Ah hah!"

A minute later they joined me at the dining room table. Always a fast eater, Noboru started his strawberries just as I was finishing mine. Then Noboru and I were on our way.

We walked to the movie theatre on Granville. At Burrard Street I stopped at the yellow light, but Noboru decided to cross anyway. He grabbed my hand and led me to the other side. He did this in a totally non-affectionate way, dropping my hand as soon as we got through the intersection. But the imprint of his palm seemed to stay on mine.

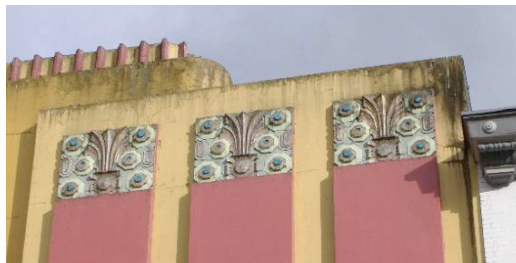




We met our group standing outside the movie theatre. Juliana drew Noboru and I into the lineup with her. I mentioned how much Mary appreciated the work Noboru had done on her computer. He graciously made light of this saying he enjoyed getting back in touch with computer troubleshooting, as he has had so little to do with computers in Vancouver.

I would have left it at that, but Juliana (certainly more computer literate than I am), asked several questions about what had been involved in fixing the computer.

This gave Noboru a chance to reveal some of his knowledge of computer technology. I confess I hadn't thought to ask for such details. He and Juliana continued to talk about computer related things that I have no interest in. This gave me a chance to look at architectural details of the surrounding buildings.



Nevertheless, once inside, the three of us sat together, as it was too crowded for all eight of us to sit in one row. But my interaction with Noboru was comfortably detached. Perhaps he has forgotten that he was ever trying to relate to me personally. I can't imagine all of a sudden not caring about Sandy, but I am glad Noboru seems to have lost interest in me.

The movie, all action and crime, did not appeal to me, so I was able to think a lot about Sandy and his postcard—and enjoy the feelings of hope that they stir in me.



JUNE # 5—Expedition to Crescent Beach and White Rock

Visuals: photographs of Crescent Beach, White Rock train station, beach with pier, and Japanese businessmen climbing the white rock

With map in hand and bus information that Mary provided, seven of us set off on a grand adventure to Crescent Beach and White Rock on a morning of perfect weather.

Our group included Claudia, Noboru, Nicole, Marina, Daniel, Song, and me. We met at the school. Most of us arrived early except for Nicole—she was her usual bit late.

We all walked to where the Crescent Beach bus starts. Mary advised me to visit Crescent Beach before going to White Rock. So we didn't get off until the end of the line in Crescent.

It is a small community that feels like a summer resort with its relaxed atmosphere. We walked up a path over a slight rise and there, in front of us, was a totally breathtaking stretch of sandy beach that is miles long. This is the longest stretch of beach that I have ever seen! The glistening water and the cool air seemed so clean and serene.

There is a promenade along the shore in front of a row of beautiful houses—some are old, established summer “cottages” and others are unique and new. All have an unobstructed view of the water. Not that many people were around. What a wonderful place to go and mediate if you wanted some time alone in a place where there is a sense of space open to the sky. Here, one can actually get away from Vancouver's always-present mountains.

We walked a little and then found a bench and a log. We sat down and ate our lunch there even though it was still early. We could see, some distance away, children playing in the water between the sand bars. Several dogs ran freely with the kids. Beyond them were a few sailboats and sailboards.

After we finished eating, we were so content in the warming air touched by the ocean breeze that we didn't want to move. But Nicole nudged Noboru onto his feet saying she wanted to play Frisbee. Marina went with them a little way down the sand so as not to hit us with badly placed shots. In

running, lunging, and jumping as they threw and caught the Frisbee, Noboru, Nicole, and Marina moved progressively further down the beach toward the waterline.



Song and Daniel, despite his wearing his usual business shoes, headed off alone toward the south end of the beach but still within sight.

Claudia and I stayed where we were. In her soft, wide-brimmed hat and full, dusky rose skirt, I thought she looked the picture of a French, late 19th century women of leisure sitting on a beach (at least how Impressionists have depicted this). It amazes me that she always manages to have on a flattering, suitable hat that stays on her head. But unconscious of herself, she was looking toward Daniel and Song.

"You could be like that you know," she said.

I didn't understand what she was getting at.

"With Noboru," she commented.

Daniel and Song did look cute holding hands as they walked southward on the beach.

"Oh. But you're supposing Noboru is still interested in me, which I don't think is the case."

"Oh, he is."

"You think so?"

"Definitely. Although he's trying his hardest not to show it."

"Well, I am sorry if he is, because as you know I am not interested in him."

"Do you think you might be if you hadn't met Sandy?"

"I can't tell that. I just know that, by comparison, I am not attracted to Noboru."

"Have you thought about what it's going to be like having to say goodbye to Sandy if you really do strike up any kind of a relationship?"

"I... Do you know, he did send me a postcard this week."

"Well, that's something. What did he say?"

"He admitted that he's thinking of me and asked if we could get together next Saturday."

"So he's finally coming back then?"

"Apparently."

"Good. But you haven't answered my question about how you'll feel when you have to go home if you and Sandy do get something going."

"I try not to think about that. It's hard enough now not being able to see much of him and having no rational basis for hoping that he could ever like me in a romantic way."

"Could you be assuming that you could become a couple and not have to give him up?"

"I know that is not feasible, but look at you. You have a boyfriend who is from a different continent."

"But I wouldn't choose an out-of-county boyfriend if I could avoid it. I suppose I am trying to give you some advice before it is too late, Erika."

"Well, perhaps it is already too late. I would like to experience what this attraction is about. You can understand that."

"Attraction. Yes, of course, I understand that, but it isn't everything in a relationship."

"Well, why does it happen? What is the purpose of attraction if it doesn't lead somewhere? It's not as if I have been attracted to all kinds of guys."

"Sometimes it can be very short-lived...."

"But you're still attracted to your boyfriend and you must have known that there would be difficulties. How long have you known each other?"

"We lived together for five years. He was CEO of a large Taiwanese company. We didn't assume he would ever have to leave that position or leave Taipei. His family has been trying to get him to move back to Italy ever since the business amalgamated with another firm. At 42 he is still manipulated by them!"

"He is 42?"

"Yes, 11 years older than me and he can't have children. So even though we have loved each other for so long and want to get married, his Italian parents see me as some young thing just going after his money."

"So he's rich?"

"He has always had a very senior position for his age. And his family has money. That's what they are concerned about."

"So they are trying to keep the two of you apart?"

"Yes. Definitely. Trying very hard to end our relationship. They are demanding his return. They come up with one supposed family emergency after another, but the emergencies turn out to be nothing. He gets back to Italy and they just go at him again, trying to convince him to stay there for good and to drop me."

"And this is even when you are with him?"

"Yes, even when I am there they try to brainwash him into viewing me as evil, as someone who has nothing better to do than to pursue their son for his money."

"Don't they recognize that you have enough money of your own without marrying him?"

"No, they refuse to believe this. Even though my elderly parents are no longer alive, well, they provided for me. I have my father's factory to look after. His farm. His house. But my boyfriend's parents think I have everything to gain by marrying their son. They don't see that my being with him is actually a sacrifice. To give up my country, my remaining family, my friends, my language, my job, any potential children."

"Sounds like you do have far more to lose than to gain by wanting to spend your life with him."

"Certainly his family's assumptions and lack of trust are insulting."

"How terrible. Can you ever hope to change their attitudes?"

"Erika, I am not meaning to complain here. I am just trying to warn you about what you might have to face if you continue to want Sandy in your life. I guess I am suggesting that you think a little more about what you are doing."

"I know, but thinking isn't everything."

"So you feel you already love Sandy that much?"

"I've never been so preoccupied. I want to be with Sandy. To me, yes, this is love."

"I guess I am also asking you to be gentle with Noboru."

"Noboru!"

"I see that you have the capacity to hurt him."

"Is that what you see?"

"Yes, I see him trying not to be infatuated with you."

"Really? Perhaps that may have been true, but I don't see that now."

"That's because you don't want to see it."

"Besides, I wouldn't want to lead him on, acting as if I am interested in him."

"No, I am not asking you to do that. Just be considerate of his feelings. I think he's feeling for you what you feel for Sandy."

"He couldn't!"

"He could."

"I find that hard to believe...."

"I don't see why."

"I have been rather mean to him. Well, not intentionally mean, but brutally honest."

"In what way?"

"I've criticized him for how he spends money without thinking about where it is coming from. And for consuming so much junk food, with no regard for the environment or his health. And for being selfish, putting his interests over that of the group."

"How has he taken that?"

"Well, he has clammed up on me."

"I'm not surprised."

"But maybe it's had a positive effect on him. I haven't noticed anything quite so obvious about his consumption habits since then."

"I imagine he'll do anything to get your approval."

"I can't believe you are saying this, Claudia," I said. But then it struck me how this might be true.

"You know... he came to the apartment this week to help Mary fix some computer problem. Tuesday night before we went to the movie."

"So you see...."

"You think he did that for me?"

"Probably."

There was a pause in the conversation as if Claudia was giving me a chance to reflect on this.

After a few minutes of sitting in silence, Claudia asked, "And what's happening with Se-Eun and Barry? I'm not in Se-Eun's confidence now. You have that drawing class with her. Have you heard anything about them?"

"At both classes there have been reasons for her to leave without talking personally with me."

"I just wonder if her closing me out means that she is depressed about breaking up with her boyfriend or that she doesn't want to talk about how she is relating to Barry. If she's depressed, I want to be there for her. If she feels she needs privacy, well, I respect that."

"When she and Barry were friends before her breakup, they didn't try to hide their friendship. At least they didn't seem to mind that I'd seen them together at that restaurant on Mother's Day."

"From what we saw at the Kits Beach picnic, I assume he has been supportive of her while she's getting over her boyfriend. Perhaps it's nothing more," Claudia commented.

"But they looked so together the night of Juliana's party."

"That's true. But we mustn't jump...."

I moved abruptly as the Frisbee came careening off course and just about landed in my lap.

Noboru laughed and said, “Hey, the Frisbee is saying you should come and play. You both look far too serious.”

So Claudia and I joined them. Claudia’s skirt was blowing in the breeze but her hat magically stayed on her head. We were throwing, running, and catching the Frisbee while trying to avoid splashing in the water between the sand bars.

After a few minutes we felt we had had enough fresh air and exercise. We realized it was almost time for a bus to leave and we should probably get it. We headed along the short main street where fish and chips and ice cream seem to be the main attractions of the pleasant, cottage-style shops fronting the street.

We asked the bus driver to let us off just before we turned at Oxford Street (another of Mary’s instructions). I asked him how long it would take to walk to down to Marine Drive from there. He said a few minutes but that it would be faster if we just rolled down! We just laughed when he said this, but once we saw the huge hill we realized it would be true—if anyone had the nerve to try rolling! However, as we wanted to stay on our feet, it took us a little longer.

Part way down the slope we saw two cement seats that some residents had built into their rockery amongst their flowers. The seats have lettering in the cement that reads, “Rest awhile and enjoy the view.” And what a view! That long curve of sandy beach with the sand bars seeming to go out for miles before meeting solid, blue ocean. We took some pictures.

We walked along the boardwalk parallel to the beach, railway tracks, and little shops on the other side of the road. As none of us was interested in shopping (Sumi wasn’t with us!), we walked toward the pier in the direction of the large white rock further along the beach. We stopped and went into the museum (it’s free). It used to be the old White Rock railway station. Mary had told me that her uncle used to work in the office that is at the front of the museum looking out at the ocean.



Then we strolled on the pier. Beyond the white rock, after which White Rock is named, we could see another stretch of beach where the sky was full of kites. Apparently there was a

competition going on. At the end of the pier we leaned on the railing.

Even though this was a long way out from the shore, on one side we could see down into shallow, clear water showing the sandy bottom below. On the other side the water was deep enough for a dragon boat to be docked. It had a dragonhead at the front and a streamlined tail at the back. It also had a drum in the boat for someone to beat out timing once the boat was underway. After we watched a while, we realized the boat was taking on volunteer rowers and teaching them simple paddling. The boat, with several paddlers, did a timed race around three buoys marking a short course with the three sharp turns and not much straight paddling in between.

When the boat we had been watching returned and the paddlers disembarked with excited conversation, the organizer on the wharf yelled up at us. "Do any of you want to try? There's no charge."

We looked at each other and our impulse was to say no even though it looked like fun.

The organizer said, "Come on, try it!"

Daniel and Noboru looked at each other. "Why not? Let's go."

They looked at the rest of us. "Come on!"

Marina said, "Okay."

And Nicole, said, "Sure."

Daniel tried to get Song to agree, but she said, "We'll cheer you on."

Claudia and I decided to be enthusiastic spectators too.

Those who were willing to try paddling climbed down the steeply inclined ramp to the dock. They were handed life jackets and got in the boat where they received instructions on what to do when given certain commands. "Hold, rest, right side paddle, left side..." Then we heard the assistant with the stopwatch on the dock say, "Four minutes and two seconds is the record. Try to beat that. Ready?"

"Ready."

"On your mark, get set, GO!"

They were off heading for the first marker. Then... right side holding while the others paddled to make the turn. Then the short, straight stretch. Then the left side holding while the right side made the turn. Another short, straight stretch. Another turn and the man on the dock called out three minutes and 48 seconds. We started to shout, "Come on you can beat the record. Go, go!"

Noboru, Marina, and Daniel put everything into paddling as forcefully as they could. Even Nicole tried her best.

They passed the finish line.

"Four minutes and eleven seconds," the assistant shouted.

We all cheered some more.

“Very good for novices,” he commented as our group got out of the boat. Noboru, Daniel, Nicole, and Marina happily joined us back up on the pier chatting excitedly. Song hugged Daniel.



We sauntered back to the beach end of the pier again and went over to the while rock. Of course this near victory in the dragon boat race made Noboru and Daniel even more eager to prove their athletic abilities by climbing the rock. There were a couple of short logs leaning against one side of the rock. Three Japanese businessmen in suits couldn't resist the challenge. They tried to climb up the logs. One got part way up, enough to sit on the side of the rock. But then they all slid back down and walked away, unsuccessful.



Daniel and Noboru tried mastering the white rock with the same result. But they decided they would not be defeated. They climbed up a slight embankment a little way off and then ran full speed back toward the rock. Gaining momentum, as they hit its surface, arms and legs flying, they scrambled up the rock's face (think of Daniel in business shoes still!), just before losing their momentum as they reached the top.

"We made it. Made it!" They shouted waving their arms. More clapping and cheering for our two champions.



After Noboru and Daniel slid from the rock and calmed down a little, we all walked up to the main street to an ice cream shop. We took over one end of the deck by putting two tables together and gathering several chairs. There we sat and each ate an ice cream cone. I had hazelnut; the others had black cherry, pistachio, double chocolate, licorice, or peppermint.... (I memorized these from the blackboard listing the flavours!)

"Yummy," I said involuntarily as my tongue savoured the sensation.

Noboru asked for a taste of mine. If it hadn't been for Claudia's previous counsel, I would probably have laughed and said, "No way!" But as it was, I let him have a lick.

He responded with a smile at me, "M'mme delicious."



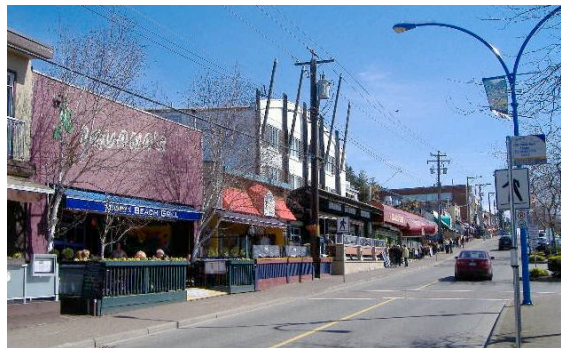
It was so relaxing to just sit there in the sunshine and watch the people casually strolling by. As we stood up to leave the deck, we noticed the tide coming in quickly now. The water had travelled such a long way up the beach in a short time.

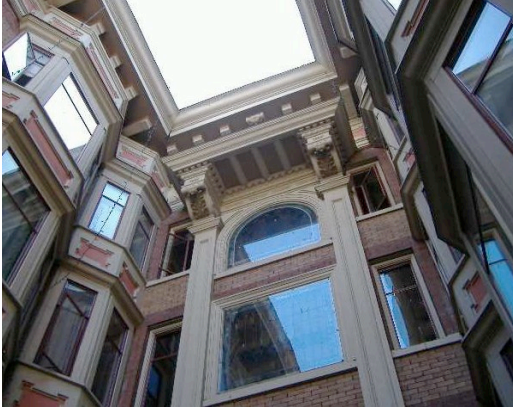
Behind the railroad museum, we waited a few minutes to catch the shuttle bus. The bus took us to the bus loop at the top of the hill where we had been earlier in the day. Thank goodness we didn't have to walk up the Oxford Street hill.



Soon we boarded another comfortable suburban bus with high seats. As we filed into the bus, Claudia took a seat by herself rather than sitting next to Noboru. That meant Noboru was alone, so I sat with him rather than obviously shunning him. I recognized Claudia's deviousness in subtly forcing me to do this.

Travelling in the morning we had all been interested in seeing everything (horses especially). But all our exercise and the ocean air and sunshine through the day had made us sleepy. Daniel had his arm around Song's shoulder as she snuggled into his side. Some of the others slept most of the way back to the city. But not Noboru. At one point when I was drowsy but only pretending to be asleep, I noticed the tender way he put my sweater over my shoulder in the cool air of the overly air-conditioned bus. I was moved but felt almost sorry for him in realizing that he might still care for me in a way that I can't reciprocate.





JUNE # 6—Sandy Views My Drawings

Visuals: Photo sources for sketches and one drawing of West End heritage buildings

Strangely, Se-Eun wasn't in sketching class, yet today at school she hadn't said anything about not coming. I certainly hope she is okay. When I finally considered phoning her, it was too late. Why was it too late? Well, in coming back from the community centre, I met Sandy outside the apartment. What a wonderful surprise! He admitted they got back a little earlier than they had expected, as their final gig had been cancelled. He didn't seem too disappointed about that.

"Thank you for the postcard."

"Oh.... Yeah?"

Did he seem self-conscious about this? If so, why? Sandy looks so good with a bit of tan. And his hair is blonder and noticeably longer.

"So you did get some sun," I commented.

"Yes, there was more time than we wanted between performances, and I stayed with a family friend who lives on a lake and has a ski boat. So we enjoyed some waterskiing, something I haven't done much of for a couple of years."

We talked more about the tour and I asked, "So are you finally home for good?"

I expected a simple laugh and "yes" as a reply. But can you believe it? He said they have yet to tour Vancouver Island! I had to suppress my supreme disappointment at this. But at least they are home for 10 days before they head off again.

I mentioned the drawing course. Sandy said he would like to see some of my drawings. I asked if he would like to come up after he finished helping Larry and Leah get the equipment inside. Perhaps this is not what he had in mind (they had driven directly from Vernon—apparently seven or eight hours way), but he said yes.

As he came to the door, Mary was pouring some tea so we joined her. She too asked about the tour. We also talked a little about Crescent Beach and White Rock.

Mary said, "I used to spend a lot of time there when I was young because several relatives used to live in the area."

I explained, "Crescent Beach was so relaxing with hardly any one within sight while White Rock felt like some kind of festival was going on.

Sandy asked, "Was it difficult to get around there by bus?"

I smiled at Mary and said, "No, it was very easy thanks to Mary's valuable advice."

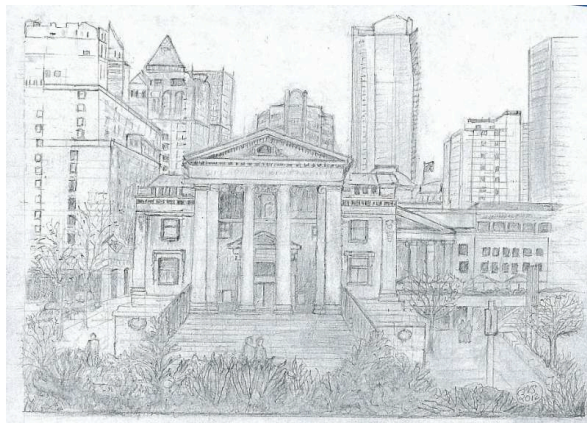
After a few minutes, Mary left the table to have a bath. Did she do that purposely to leave Sandy and me alone? It's true I wouldn't feel comfortable taking Sandy into my bedroom and maybe Mary would otherwise have been at her computer in the living room, which is within sight and hearing of the dining room table.

"Oh, Erika, if Daphne arrives before I am out of the tub, could you buzz her in? She doesn't have a key with her."

"Oh, sure."

I had momentarily forgotten that Mary's daughter was coming home tonight. She will be here for ten days to attend a conference and the wedding of her cousin.

Sandy and I went into the living room and I spread my drawing class work on the coffee table. Well, Yoko (are you keeping up with all this?), despite being self-conscious of my drawings looking so stiff in not being up to what I could do last year when I was drawing every day, it was wonderful sitting there next to Sandy looking at them.



He was so encouraging as he looked at each one of them. The only thing he commented on without praise was my lettering identifying each building.

He said, "While your lettering is neat and very clear..."

He paused.

“Just say it.”

“Well, for architectural presentations, it is useful to be able to print in a distinctive way.”

“Okay...”

“Perhaps that is something I can help you with. To discover your own unique, individual style.”

“I’d like that. Do you have any time...?”

I admit I wasn’t thinking of that for Saturday, but Sandy suggested then, so I didn’t want to turn him down. I explained about my going to a wedding in the afternoon, so we agreed that he would pick me up in Deep Cove at 6:30 pm so we can go back to his house. As we were finalizing this, Daphne buzzed.

Sandy said, “I should be on my way,” and he came to the door with me as I responded to the intercom. Thinking it was Mary answering, Daphne asked, “Can you come down and help me with my luggage?”

Sandy said to me, “I’ll go down.”

In a couple of minutes he and Daphne were at the door hauling the luggage inside with Daphne laughing and saying hi to me and trying to explain that she usually travels light but....

Mary, emerging from the steamy bathroom in her dressing gown, also came to the door greeting Daphne with a hug. With this much confusion in the hallway, Sandy excused himself, saying goodnight and confirming he’d meet me at the sculpture fountain next to the Deep Cove Cultural Centre on Saturday.

As Daphne dragged her luggage into Mary’s room, Mary started making some popcorn which the three of us then shared sitting at the dining room table. Sipping cocoa, Daphne talked, and talked very fast. In fact I am not sure I have ever heard any one talk that fast. I certainly couldn’t follow everything she was saying, but I enjoyed seeing her mannerisms, enthusiasm, and the expressions on her face.

She is quite striking looking. Mary, in describing her previously, had said she has a “great frame to hang a suit on,” meaning she is fairly thin. That gives the impression of her being tall although she is probably only a few centimeters taller than me. She has so much energy, it kind of takes over the room, even though she confessed to being tired.

“I thought I’d never get away from work today. There were so many pending emergencies. And I’m afraid I had very little sleep last night what with packing and all.”

“Oh, Daphne. Everything always at the last minute.”

“But I had to come up with suitable clothes to wear to the wedding.”

In hearing this Mary responded, “Some people plan for weeks what they are going to wear to a wedding.”

“Oh, actually, I do have a dress. I think you’ll like it. It’s just the rest I was having problems with. Like what to wear over

it if it rains or is cold. And what shoes? And digging up some nylons, which I haven't worn for ages."

I went into the living room to remove my drawing materials. Daphne apologized for not being more sociable saying it was almost three a.m. Toronto time and she was going to have to get up early in the morning. She said she just wanted to set up her bed in the living room and get to sleep.

After Daphne closed the doors to the living room and I was helping Mary wash the snack dishes, I commented about how rapidly Daphne speaks.

"Can you understand everything she says?"

Mary laughed and said many others have asked that too.

Photograph of the building and drawing of the Vancouver Art Gallery by the author



JUNE # 7—Family Wedding and Lettering at Sandy’s House

Visuals: photographs of wedding parade on the main street of Deep Cove, view from the Yacht Club, two heads fountain outside Deep Cove Cultural Centre

Wow, last night I visited Sandy’s house and met his parents and, well, wonderful, but some awkwardness.

Yesterday morning, for the wedding of Mary’s niece, I got dressed in a summer dress with matching jacket belonging to Daphne that she had left at Mary’s place a previous time she had been in Vancouver. Luckily they fit me well. In fact Daphne commented that the outfit was more flattering on me than on her. Mary said that, on arriving at Deep Cove, she would put up my hair and twist in some baby pink rosebuds from her mom’s garden. This she did. Quite feminine looking!

Mary had agreed to drive Daphne, her parents, and me to the church as well as deliver some of the flowers there. At their family house, Mary’s brother Howard, who is the bride’s father, was putting some final touches on a rowboat. He explained that the bride and groom would row around in it for photos at the reception that was being held at the yacht club on the waterfront.

At the entrance of the church there were potted plants and flowers; some were also at the altar, and small bouquets were attached to all the ends of the pews along the aisle. A lively choir, as well as a small band made up of friends of the groom, made the wedding service much more joyous than the solemn, serious weddings I have been to in Japan. The guests stood up and sat down several times in the process of singing

and clapping to the music. The bride and her attendants, in deep red, were beautiful, as was the tiny little flower girl.

After the ceremony, people gathered outside the church in the warm afternoon to chat and take photographs. Then people began to disperse on the understanding that all would reassemble at the top of the main street in Deep Cove, outside its apparently famous bike shop. When all were accounted for there, the Scottish pipers began to play their bagpipes leading the wedding party down the main street of the village to the water front.



I walked as far as the doorway of the yacht club where the reception was being held and then, on Mary and Daphne's urging, I peeked inside to see the elaborate decorations. Beautiful! Then I said goodbye to them and I walked part way back up the main street.

I was intending to wait for Sandy at the sculpture heads fountain outside the cultural centre. But Sandy was already there! I guess I was so engrossed in the wedding parade that I had not seen him as we all walked past. It seemed extraordinary that Sandy was able to arrive at Deep Cove and be standing there, waiting for me at the sculpture, just as we had agreed.



I guess this seemed remarkable because, except for the gig, I have never met Sandy anywhere other than at the apartment.

"Hey, you look beautiful," he commented, reminding me that I was more dressed up than usual, complete with makeup and the rose buds in my hair.

"Thank you."

I was hoping he wasn't thinking that by contrast I usually look sloppy in my more casual clothes with minimal make up.

"Looks like that is a fun wedding."

"Yes. So you saw us...."

"Uh huh. Taking over the entire main street," he laughed. "Not every wedding gets to do that."

"Certainly I've never known one do that in Japan."

"I'm not surprised. Oh, the car is over here," he said, indicating the parking lot beyond the grass of the park.

Once inside the car, Sandy said, "So, shall we get something to eat on the way to West Van?"

"Good idea."

"What are you recommending?" he asked.

"Me?" I laughed.

"Yes, you've been going to more restaurants since you've been here than I have in a while."

"Well, what about the Thai restaurant near Lonsdale Quay. Mary's family likes that one. Do we drive past there?"

"We certainly can, and that sounds like a good choice."

Sandy knew which restaurant I meant so we headed for North Vancouver and arrived at there in a few minutes. There was only a short wait as a server prepared a table for us. I liked the respectful way that Sandy talked with the restaurant staff.

With his hand at my elbow, Sandy guided me to our table as we followed the host to where we were to sit. The whole atmosphere there seemed more exotic in being with Sandy than it had when I was there with Mary's family.

After laughing about not wanting to have anything marked with too many chili peppers, we ordered and then enjoyed a fairly relaxed meal. It seemed as if time were standing still. Oh, that it could! In my mind I labelled this as our first date—something that made being together feel particularly intimate. I looked at Sandy's beautiful hands and again wished I could touch them.

As the food and service had been good and the environment pleasant, I felt pleased that I had been able to suggest this restaurant.

I let Sandy pay for both of us. Was that the right thing to do? I didn't know. He did this with ease, without question.

I was surprised to find it was getting overcast as we came out of the restaurant. As we ate, the sun had been bright on the

water down the hill beyond Lonsdale Quay. I love Vancouver's long evenings. The longest day of the year was this week.

We drove up a mountain to an expensive-looking area. I wasn't expecting Sandy to live in such a prestigious location. The house itself is a well-preserved example of the West Coast modern style that I've seen in books on Canadian architecture. There is, however, a very steep driveway from the road down to the carport, one that I would find nerve-wracking to have to drive, but Sandy seemed to take it for granted.



We met Sandy's parents who were preparing to go out. Sandy's mom (Robyn) is very attractive and friendly. She seems about five years younger than his dad. His dad (Darren—Would I ever be able to call him that!) is a little more settled looking, even though he was wearing a casual black turtleneck. He calls Sandy "Sandford," which to me suggests a much more conservative person. Perhaps that is the person that he hopes Sandy will become.

It was easy to admire the house with its expanse of glass extending along the entire front of the structure letting in lots of light and revealing an incredible view of the city.

Seeing my interest in the house, Sandy's mom commented, "Darren designed the house just as he was graduating from architecture at UBC in the mid-1960s. It was his first house plan to get constructed."

"Incredible to have such a project actually built," I commented.

"Yes, I was fortunate that my father had the money to be able do that," Sandy's dad admitted.

"This gave Darren early proof of his design ability that launched his career," Sandy's mom added. "In fact, he won an award for it."

"I am not surprised."

These detailed comments made me think that Sandy's parents appreciate the fact that I am going to be studying architecture. Perhaps they think I will be a good influence in getting Sandy back to architecture school. I'm not sure this is Sandy's intention at the moment.

"We have only lived in the house slightly more than ten years," Sandy said.

Sandy's dad said, "The problem is that there is some commitment to just maintaining the house rather than doing any renovations beyond installing a new roof, repairing the chimney...."

"Yes, the kitchen is the only room that we have significantly changed. It's okay to have a look if you like," Sandy's mom said, moving toward the kitchen door.

I accompanied her into the kitchen without expecting Sandy's dad to follow us.

"Oh, very nice. So you really did update it...."

"Yes, we pushed out the far wall and added the nook with the cathedral windows and of course the new cupboards, countertops, and appliances," Sandy's dad said.

"This is lovely with so much light."

"Yes, we needed to maximize the light since it is on the north side," Sandy's mom said.

"Very effective."

"Unfortunately we had to give up some garden to enlarge the room, but we simply had to transform the bleak, awkward space that it was," Sandy's mom added.

"Even I didn't want to cook in the old kitchen!" Sandy laughed.

"It's wonderful now," I said.

We went back into the living room with its built-in teak shelving and smooth-stone fireplace. I noticed on the mantle a framed picture of a pre-teen Sandy at the piano. I asked about this.

His father said, "Yes, Sandford was trained as a classical pianist and had a lot of potential."

Sandy seemed a bit awkward—styles of music a point of disagreement with his dad? His mother, however, seems accepting of Sandy's current activities and interests. Sandy didn't comment but drifted to the dining table and looked at some papers that apparently were architectural sketches.

When I admired some flowering houseplants flourishing beside the glass door to the deck, Sandy's mom admitted that most in-door flowering plants grow well for her "because of the airiness of the room." But in touching stark blades of some orchid plants, she laughed saying, "Except for orchids, which I love but have never been able to keep in bloom beyond a few weeks."

Seeing Robyn and I examining the plants, Sandy's dad joined Sandy in looking at the drawings on the table and asked him something. My attention was caught by the image of Sandy and his dad huddled over architectural floor plans taking turns with a pencil, marking the drawings as they talked.

Sandy's mom asked whether Sandy and I were planning to go in the hot tub. Sandy turned his attention away from his dad and said, "I didn't suggest that Erika bring a bathing suit because she has just come directly from a wedding this afternoon."

"Oh, that is why you are so dressed up," his mother commented to me. "You look lovely."

When she said this I became self-conscious, as I had forgotten that I still had flowers in my hair. I didn't explain that the dress and jacket belong to Daphne and that I otherwise didn't have anything with me that was suitable to wear to a wedding.

"Well, in case you decide you'd like to try the hot tub, I'll leave you a bathing suit," Sandy's mother said as she disappeared for a moment. She came back with a swimsuit, looking about my size, along with a towel, that she left on a chair in the living room. I was touched by her level of trust.

"Thanks for thinking of this," I said, more grateful than this sounded.

Sandy's mom suggested Sandy show me some of his architectural drawings.

"Oh, I'd love to see some," I said.

Sandy took me into his bedroom. There I experienced a different kind of self-consciousness with the intimacy of standing close to Sandy. I might even have felt guilty about being in there with him if it had not been his mom's idea. While he was showing me some of his drawings and sketchbooks and framed architectural photos on the walls (of old European buildings?), I was again aware of his sensitive-looking hands. One of the sketchbooks contained images of mostly famous buildings done with energetic pen strokes.

When I picked up one unassuming drawing of an apartment building that was on a separate sheet of paper, Sandy said, "You can have it, if you like."

He has so many sketches it seemed nothing to him to give one away lightly. He definitely has own self-assured style. I can see why his parents want Sandy to use his drawing ability.



"Oh, here. This is where we used to live," he said taking from a shelf a small, framed photograph of a modest house. Sandy was standing in front of it. He was probably about age eight, very blond and with a tanned face, squinting pleasantly in the summer sunlight. I enjoyed this glimpse of what Sandy had been: an appealing little kid. In showing this photograph to me, Sandy explained that he doesn't take their current house for granted.

"We swapped houses with my grandparents when they could no longer drive and needed to downsize. Later my dad and my uncle, who lives in Toronto, together inherited this house from my grandparents so Dad and my uncle own it together."

Looking at another framed photograph on the wall, I asked, "And what about this one?"

"Oh, that's a photograph of my fraternity brothers."

"A club you were in at university?"

"Yes, a group that made up my best friends at that time, some of whom I still have contact with."

"Which one is you?"

"Ah, yes, nice."

"And this is Larry."

"So that's how you met him?"

"No, he was the one who convinced me to join that particular fraternity. By then he and I had already been performing as a band for about a year."

Sandy's mom called, so we rejoined her and his dad in the kitchen.

"We should be on our way," his mom said, but then opened the refrigerator door and suggested some things that we might like to eat. I couldn't imagine being hungry any time soon but, on her suggestion, Sandy put on a tray some cheese, vegetable pieces, dip, and some fruit juices while his dad stood patiently waiting.

Sandy's parents did not seem the least concerned about leaving Sandy and me alone in the house, although I felt somewhat awkward. The house seemed so quiet.

We went directly onto the deck making a couple of trips with snack tray and the paper, pencils, and pens that we needed to do architectural lettering. We sat side by side at the table so Sandy could see how I was doing. In giving me directions, he touched my hand apparently without awareness, whereas my skin became alert.

He talked about recognizing the distinctive character of each letter and having to decide which version of a letter I liked best. I needed to make this choice, he explained, so there could be consistency within my alphabet. We did some practice sheets. On the first one I copied the various options. On the second page, I practised the versions I like the most.

I was trying my best to concentrate, but I was feeling so attracted to Sandy. The 180-degree view of the city could have been a distraction too but it had been clouding over since we arrived. I did manage to determine my favorite form of each letter and wrote out one page of the entire alphabet according to my chosen versions. The time went by very quickly. The sun had already set when some raindrops splashed our papers. We quickly gathered up our materials. By the time we got everything inside and closed the deck door, it was raining quite hard.

While we put our materials on the dining room table, Sandy asked, "Can we call it quits on the lettering tonight if I promise you a lesson on writing text blocks next time?"

"Certainly."

"We can do something related instead," he commented with some enthusiasm. I wondered what that might be.

"But first let me light a fire."

This surprised me given that this is late June and it had been a warm day. I mentioned this.

Sandy said, "My dad is such a fan of the fireplace that I've grown accustomed to using it almost all year round, especially when it rains."

I sat down on the sofa across from the fireplace. Sandy crouched on the slate hearth to arrange the kindling and other wood. I was noticing how his back narrows to the waist.

After the flame caught and the kindling crackled, Sandy headed for his room. He came back with a book and a magazine on architecture. He sat down beside me and we started to go through the book, turning pages and both commenting on what we saw. I was glad that I had taken a six-month course on Western architectural history as part of my fine art program. This meant that a lot of what Sandy was showing me was familiar.

I was able to tell him the basic differences between Greek and Roman architecture, the characteristics of Romanesque churches, and I was able to correctly name the periods of the main buildings that we looked at. I think Sandy was impressed.

I commented that I would be willing to teach him something about Japanese architectural history, but unfortunately Sandy didn't respond to this as, that exact moment, the telephone rang and he went into the kitchen to answer it. Apparently the call was just someone trying to reach his dad.

It was so cozy sitting there beside Sandy with the book on our lap and the fire warming the front of our legs. Because I don't wear a skirt very often, I was aware of my kneecaps showing. Seeing them reminded me of an experience of having a first date at university with a guy who touched my thighs, a gesture unwanted and creepy. I wondered how I would feel if

Sandy did that. But our shoulders were the only point of contact as we sat there sharing the book.

We flipped pages ... early Christian and Byzantine periods, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque...I read the words struggling with the translations in my mind. From there we skipped to 20th century. Bauhaus, functionalism... We stopped and commented on buildings that struck us as somehow interesting. Then opening a magazine on Canadian architecture, Sandy showed me some West Coast modern houses that were from the same time period and area as Sandy's family home—West Vancouver.

"Wow, that one is so beautiful!"

"Yes, it's by one of Canada's best-known architects, Arthur Erickson, definitely an influence on my father's generation."

"Look at the slate flooring at the entrance and the teak, built-in book shelves..." I commented.

"Yeah and local stone fireplace...."

"So much like your place."

"That's right. Some of these are by my dad's teachers and their contemporaries."

"So many similarities...."

"Yes, the influences are obvious. You are welcome to borrow this magazine if you want."

"Thank you. I'd like to draw that house in order to see it more fully."

"So you do that too? Draw in order to see."

"Yes. Definitely that helps understand a building better."

Despite my interest in what we were looking at, I was suddenly aware of a slight ache in my scalp from the bobby pins having been in my hair all day. I took out one bobby pin and a small rose bud and laid the flower down on the page of the book. Was I... Was I hoping that Sandy might remove the rest of the flowers and bobby pins from my hair and let it down?

Instead Sandy set the book aside, stood up, and said that he should drive me home. This made me feel really embarrassed about my gesture. Was it that inappropriate? I picked up the magazine and gathered up my things to go.

Only as we reached the entrance, just inside the front door, did Sandy seem to consider something more. He paused while we were standing quite close. Maybe he was just checking for his keys. I admit that, despite our hasty preparation for departure, I did wonder if he might kiss me.

Unfortunately at that exact moment his parents drove down the driveway and pulled into the carport.

Sandy opened the door and greeted them. We stepped aside as they came in.

"We were just about to leave," Sandy said. "How was the symphony?"

"Uplifting as usual."

"And Simon and Sue?"

"They're good."

"Although they admitted they didn't enjoy their recent trip as much as the last one we took together," his dad answered, as he took off his jacket and put it in the closet while his mom set aside her purse and sweater.

Sandy explained to me that his parents and their best friends have season tickets to the symphony and often travel together.

"So you are on your way then?" his dad asked Sandy.

"Yes. I left a message for you on the fridge."

"About the time to meet Don tomorrow?"

"Yes."

Wanting some conversation with Sandy's parents before we left, I blurted, "Sandy is an excellent teacher."

His mom almost laughing responded, "Oh, is he?"

"Of lettering, Mom," Sandy apparently felt compelled to clarify.

"Oh," she said, pleased in a different way.

I added, "And of architectural history."

"Really?" his dad said approvingly but surprised.

I remembered my practice papers on the table and realized I had wanted to keep them. Did I subconsciously leave them in the hope that his parents would see them? Did I need to leave them as evidence of what we had been doing? Yet obviously Sandy's parents were not concerned about what we had been doing.

"Yes, Erika should be ready for your test pretty soon, Dad."

"Marvellous. Just give me the word and I'll dig up a recent copy."

Closing the closet door, his father added, "Do you want to trade keys? The engine is warm."

"Oh, sure. Thanks," Sandy said, as they exchanged car keys.

"Is it still raining?"

"No, that was only a brief cloud burst."

Seeing the bathing suit still on the chair, Sandy's mom asked, "You didn't get to use the hot tub?"

(I wish people wouldn't ask negative questions. I still struggle with knowing the right way to answer them.)

"No, we didn't have time for that tonight," Sandy said.

"Well, I hope you'll come again then," she commented smiling at me.

"Thank you. I'd like to."

In the carport we got into Sandy's parents' car. It had a roomier, more luxurious interior, but it made me feel further from Sandy. More distant.

Despite the wet blacktop surface from the brief rain shower, Sandy decisively backed the car up the steep driveway, something that would have completely unnerved me if I had needed to try it.

When we reached the main road, I asked, "What test?"

"Oh, I probably didn't tell you. Dad teaches architectural history at UBC one day a week."

"Really?"

"Yeah. Just to have contact with the students coming up through the system. And to keep him in touch with his roots, he says."

"So he taught you too?"

"Uh huh. When I was between ages 10 and 14, I went to Europe with Mom and Dad several times. By then my brothers, who are a fair bit older than me, were in university. So Mom and Dad dragged me around the Continent. I was exposed to a lot of architecture. I got to be able to identify buildings with their architectural periods the way other boys my age could identify the latest cars or new computer games."

"So you really had a head start in architecture."

"Yes, I suppose I did. Dad used to pre-test his exams on me to make sure they were appropriate for his first year students."

"And are you going to coach me till I am ready to take his exam?" I laughed semi-seriously.

"I'd love to," he responded, looking at me as if he could see me for the first time since we arrived at his house.

I wished I knew what was going on in his mind. Maybe he looked to better see the person he was promising this to. But after this he became quiet again.

Responding to the music on the car radio as we drove across Lions Gate Bridge, Sandy tapped on the steering wheel with his ring. I commented on this. He admitted he plays the drums.

"Or at least I used to, mostly as a teenager in the garage and in our high school band. As you've seen, we have an excellent drummer in our group, so I am not called on to fill that role. Anyway, I am rusty."

"Rusty?"

"Definitely out of practice."

We drove along the Stanley Park Causeway and I realized there are no turn-offs into the park heading in that direction. I wished we could stop somewhere. I was disappointed as we drove past Lost Lagoon realizing we would soon be back at the apartment.

We stopped in the parking strip behind the building. Sandy made no attempt to get closer to me, so I felt I had to do something.

Trying to sound light-hearted, I said, "So when can I have my next lesson?"

"I'm not sure yet," he admitted.

Did he notice I was disappointed when he said that?

He quickly added, "But I will be coming back to the apartment on Canada Day. Larry and Leah have invited me for the afternoon. Will you be there?"

"Mary has told me I am welcome."

"Well, I hope you will be there then."

"Just for the afternoon?"

"For us, yes. We have a sold-out Canada Day gig that evening."

Perhaps I sounded disappointed again because he commented, "You mentioned that you and your classmates are going to Victoria. When will that be?"

"In a couple of weeks. Why do you ask?"

"Well, the band will be playing in Victoria as part of our tour of Vancouver Island."

Before Sandy and I were able to compare dates or discuss any details about this, Mary and Daphne approached the side of the car on their way in from the wedding. They recognized us.

Sandy buzzed the window down. They seemed to be on a high from their day. Daphne was very talkative (or is Daphne always like this?). She and Mary described the reception in detail and some unusual things that happened, including the fact that the little boat that the bride's dad made had apparently been stolen from the wharf, moments after the bride and groom had been photographed in it.

"Oh, no. What a mean thief!" I said.

After a few minutes Sandy seemed to encourage me to go in with Mary and Daphne, which I thought was unnecessary.

Is Sandy trying to avoid physical contact with me? Am I deluding myself in thinking that he could ever be attracted to me? I am remembering Sabine's question in a recent e-mail when she asked, "Are you sure he is not gay?"

"Yes, I'm sure he's not gay!"

But why am I sure? Well, he did say he had a girlfriend until just after the band started touring.

"Anyway, I certainly feel attracted to him. I wouldn't feel that, would I, if he were gay?"

In Sabine's return e-mail, her succinct, discouraging response was, "Who knows?"



JUNE # 8—Final Art Class

Visuals: photographs of Barclay Manor, the Fish House in Stanley Park, and other West End buildings as sources for drawings

Sorry to see art class end. I have taken so many photos of interesting buildings in the West End (and I intend to take more), but I've had so little time to draw them properly (even with Sandy as motivation!). This is like playing the flute. You do get out of practice. How long before I regain last year's level in either of those?

I admit I have drawn the outline indicating the proportions for the Arthur Erickson house from the publication that Sandy lent me. To draw it now means it would have a very laboured look. Perhaps I will hold off a little in the hope that I improve with more practice doing the historic buildings that I have been doing for the class.

Se-Eun missed the class again tonight. I wonder what that signals—that she is not wanting to talk about Barry, or that the two of them are doing something together that is more interesting for Se-Eun than attending class?



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