Every guest is a gift from God

Contributed by Aaron Richner
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Hospitality in an inhospitable world.

One of the most remarkable things about large swaths of the non-western world from my distinctly western is the importance of hospitality, of honoring one's guests and treating strangers as friends. I remember taking tea with countless Moroccans whom I know were unimpressed with me, but felt obligated by their culture to extend a simple kindness to a weary traveler. I remember a shoemaker in Nepal who offered advice and guidance to a wandering hiker who had lost his way. I remember a desk worker at a hostel in India who provided an exhausted man roaming the streets at 5 in the morning a bed to sleep in at no charge.

In this month's issue of InTheFray, we feature three poems from Priscilla Campbell titled Shed for you. We hear about diversity and campus advocacy from LuzJennifer Martinez in her piece My L.I.F.E. story. Amy O'Laughlin also reviews The Tenth Parallel in Parallel lives.

It is my goal to learn something from these small acts of generosity shared with me by strangers, people who are much closer to the line between eating and not eating than I am and was. people who were surely aware of this and who helped anyway. It seems to me that at its essence, kindness, generosity, and hospitality are not virtues that are shared with others and thereby diminish ourselves, but rather acts that strengthen both the receiver and the giver. I try to remember this as I move through my days, helped along by the kindness of strangers.