

THE OTHER SIDE

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Photograph by Jan Phillips

REPORT TO READERS

Beginning with our next issue, we will revert to our original bimonthly publication schedule.

There will be no change in the amount of time remaining on your subscription. And, in fact, each issue will be slightly larger than at present. But you'll receive fewer issues per year.

The change in frequency will reduce some of our postage and printing costs.

Anyone who finds the change unsatisfactory may request a full refund for any issues remaining on their subscription.

—The Staff

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Soir, Maintenant publishes monthly, with analysis of the Haitian situation taking priority over news. Of its circulation of two thousand—paid for by exiled Haitian advertisers and donors—five hundred copies go back to Haiti. In place of Clitandre, the magazine swims precariously in Haiti's political bloodstream.

Maintenant keeps him going—also his painting, his writing, his wife, his kids, and his hopes of one day returning to a new Haiti. The void that Haiti created, Haiti fills.

When he went back for a visit in 1986, he saw a new Haiti trying to break through the shell of the old. "The people were in the streets to protest against the Macoute. It was very exciting."

In a television interview at the airport when he arrived, Clitandre wept. A joyous prodigal son whose time had not yet come. The old Haiti would still manage to save itself by shedding new blood.

—Robert Hirschfield

Bombs Bursting in Air

The Fourth of July, 1988. This year, this most American of holidays is especially perplexing. At least for me. Probably for any parents raising children for peace.

My husband and I watch the fireworks with our children—six, three, and one year old. The one-year-old exclaims at the sights and noises then, half-way through, falls asleep. The three-year-old, who has been edgy and apprehensive all day long at the occasional explosions, now watches with morbid delight, hands firmly over her ears, in the safety of Daddy's arms.

But our six-year-old, who has been boasting all day that *she* is not afraid of firecrackers, insists on returning to the car, watching from within closed windows. She tells me that she can hardly talk because of the interrupting blasts. Her voice is indeed choked with fear.

I wonder why our oldest is the most fearful, and then the word *gunpowder* flashes through my mind. Of course. She is the only one who consciously connects these bright flowers with guns. She has been asking how the firecrackers work, and we have been discussing guns, fireworks, and the flammable powder that causes the bang.

I consider whether to tell her that we celebrate the birthday of the United States with these displays in memory of the guns and cannons used over two

hundred years ago to fight another country, England, which wanted to keep us as part of itself. We cheer now for pretend bombs—in memory of real ones long ago. No, I decide, that would be too hard for her to understand. She is strongly pacifist—guns, soldiers, and wars are all anathema to her, tied up with why Jesus was put on the cross. We'll get into the violence behind the Fourth of July some other day or year.

But the brilliant explosions climaxing the yellow streak send a chill into my heart as well. Each one is a missile screaming through the sky and striking an airplane with two hundred and ninety people on it. I feel nauseated this Fourth of July, thinking only: sixty-six children. A flight of nine minutes. Five minutes of "repeated warnings." A police officer would not be excused for killing two hundred and ninety people after only five minutes of attempted communication. But a general of twenty-two years is allowed to, even expected to do this.

With difficulty we have concealed this news from the six-year-old. I watch the "bombs bursting in air" and consider whether to say: "Roz, you are right to be afraid. These firecrackers are like the real bombs that our country makes. And yesterday the soldiers of our country—the kind we call sailors because they ride in a ship—these soldiers shot a bomb at an airplane full of people. It exploded just like those up there and killed everyone on the airplane. There were sixty-six children on the airplane, and mothers and fathers, too."

But I don't say this. Neither of us could handle the questions it would raise, beginning with, "Why didn't they solve it with words?" (Household Rule #1).

I decide to let the parades, barbecues, and fire-

works proceed in their traditional glory for a while longer. I'll talk to her about the rest of this some other day or year.

—Anne Eggebroten

You Did Not Choose Me

For many years, the South Carolina State Hospital was surrounded by a great wall, clearly marking the boundary between those within—namely, the mentally disabled—and so-called normal people without. The wall was a monument to the dark whispers and stigma which followed anyone who lived inside. The wall was a convenient way to keep an embarrassment isolated, out of sight and mind.

As the facility's image evolved from prison for the dangerous to hospital for the ill, the walls came down. Bricks from the wall were salvaged to help construct a chapel. The symbols of shame yielded to what was appropriately named the Chapel of Hope.

But old stereotypes die slowly, and on that hot, muggy Sunday, so typical of Columbia in the summer, I was more anxious than hopeful. My attitudes, I fear, were more congruent with the spirit of the walls than of the chapel.



PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT A. WALSH