

UNMASKED:
Reflections in the Mind's Mirror

by Frank J. Kelly

Tatsu sat quietly on a large, flat stone outside the Master's Gate, as was the custom. There was no need to ring the large brass gong hanging from a polished wooden frame. That would be impertinence. Matsukaze need not be told so boldly of the boy's presence. He would sense it and acknowledge Tatsu, or not, in his own time. Tatsu closed his eyes and breathed evenly. Any sign of impatience would surely result in an extended wait or, worse, no audience at all.

Tatsu had arrived just before dawn, which was the most respectful thing to do ... and also guaranteed he would not find the stone already occupied. Had it been, he would have to choose between combat and failure ... neither of which appealed on this particular day.

The day passed without incident until, just as he could see dusk climbing over the distant mountain in her pink and purple robes, the heavy gate opened without a sound. This was his signal. Fighting the urge to leap up and bound through the entryway, Tatsu, composed himself. He rose slowly, straightened his tunic, and entered the courtyard.

The old man's hair was as white as his robes. He sat like an ancient monk beside a small fountain in the middle of the courtyard. The low table before him held a small pot and two shallow cups – nothing more. He did not call to Tatsu, nor did he invite him to sit. The boy bowed once and seated himself before the old man.

"So you are to attend your first Festival of Masks and you come to seek my counsel." It was not a question.

"Yes, Master, that is why I am here."

The Festival of Masks was an important occasion for anyone. One's first Festival had the most potential ... and also the highest risk. Some overreached and paid a heavy price. Some lacked authenticity and paid an even dearer one. The Festival involved wearing a mask for an entire day while sharing in the festivities and participating in certain rituals. For some, it was little more than a day of merriment. For others, it could be a life changing experience. The masks were invested with power that was not apparent on the surface. Participants chose them from a wall in the Great Hall, where they hung year round. Some believed that it was the masks that chose who was to wear them.

"It is true," said the old man, reading the young boy's mind. "The masks do have power. Whenever we hide our true faces from others it changes who we are. Normally, it takes a long time for such changes to be absorbed. But these masks – and the rituals for which they are used – are different. The changes may be good or bad, temporary or permanent."

Tatsu listened intently. He thought rather than said his next question.

“Profound experiences have consequences,” came the unbidden reply.

“There are only two reasons to climb a mountain. One is to then brag about your mastery ... to others or yourself. The other is to risk falling in order to catch a closer glimpse of the stars ... or an eagle in flight, and to tell no one. You choose to wear one of these masks for much the same reasons.”

“But, how can I know which mask to choose and whether I am choosing it for the right reason?” wondered Tatsu – this time aloud.

Matsukaze stroked his thin white beard.

“That is a very good question and a good place to begin. But Mistress Moon will soon be here and we should honor her.” As he said this, Matsukaze leaned forward and poured two cups of tea. Not offering the boy either, he resumed his erect posture.

For a long moment, the boy sat motionless, unsure what to do. Should he wait for the Master to bid him drink ... or to choose a vessel for him? For the first time, Tatsu noticed the two cups were not identical. They were of different size, shape, color and decoration. The one closest to him was smaller, green and decorated with slender pines. The one closer to Matsukaze was slightly bigger. The surface was blue and the bowl was encircled with a small winged dragon.

He was drawn to the second cup. But it was larger ... and closer to the Master. What would Matsukaze think if he chose that one? He looked up, hoping to see some sign in the old man’s face. The face that greeted him was kindly and reflective but gave no clues. He would have to act soon. It would be ill mannered to allow the tea to cool. Tatsu closed his eyes. The Masters words floated in the air. What was the answer? Then he felt a breeze against his cheek, carrying the faint scent of pine from the tall trees just outside the courtyard wall.

Tatsu’s eyes opened and a smile passed over his lips. He leaned forward and picked up both cups, setting down the green one in front of Matsukaze and placing the blue cup in front of himself. Then he resumed his erect posture and took a deep breath.

Matsukaze bent and took the cup in front of him, rose and drank from it without a word. Tatsu did the same with his.

Then the old man spoke.

“You instinctively offered me the cup that reflects my true Nature ... and chose the one that suits yours. At first, you hesitated, but then you looked into your Mind’s mirror and saw Truth reflected there. Do the same at the Great Hall tomorrow. Let the Mask choose you. Then look through the eyes of that Mask and remember what you see ... as though it were a night sky – seen from a mountaintop – reflecting ten thousand stars. If you are changed, it will be for the better.”

The old man’s words were like a breeze blowing through an open window, parting curtains.

Her Other Face

By

Helen Leet

With her two children at camp, and her husband, Ted, on a fishing trip, Sherry was enjoying her short vacation in Ocean City, Maryland. As she arrived at the Assateague National Seashore Park, her heart sped up. She was so excited! She parked near the North Beach, jumped out of the van, and grabbed her small cooler and backpack. She picked up her Nikon D500. "Today we are going to get some shots of that mom and new foal," she promised her camera. Two days ago the mother horse and her foal were seen on the North Beach. Sherry planned to take as long as necessary to locate the pair and take precious pictures.

As she trekked to the beach, she noticed a woman waving furiously at her. Sherry did not recognize the woman. No one else was nearby. A small girl around 5 or 6 was with the woman. The child ran ahead of her mother directly toward Sherry. Sherry nearly fell over as the little girl slammed into her, hugging her legs tightly. She had no idea who these people were. "Well, hello there!" she said, trying to keep her balance and protect her camera.

The young woman stood next to her, dropped her bags, reached out and gave Sherry a huge hug. "Annie! You can't imagine how wonderful it is to see you! Just look at Ella! She is now the picture of health! She is truly a cancer survivor! We have you to thank for it! Without your loving care, day in and day out, your encouraging words to keep us going, we just would not have survived that ordeal! Our life is almost what you would call normal now!"

Ella was tugging on Sherry's arm. "Annie! We saw the baby horse and its momma! They are down by the beach! Do you want to see them? Come quick before they leave! You can get some great pictures!" She started to pull Sherry toward the beach. Sherry didn't hesitate.

"I would love to get some pictures of them, Ella! That is the main reason I came here today. Lead the way!" Ella giggled and started running toward the beach. Sherry eagerly followed her.

As they hurried to the beach, Ella's mom said, "I am back to work now, too. Ken and I are planning to have another baby, now that Ella is doing okay."

Sherry looked at the eager face of the young woman. "That is wonderful news! I am so happy for you!" and she sincerely meant that. Ella jerked her arm. Sherry turned and looked where Ella was pointing. About three hundred feet ahead, near the surf, was the sorrel colored mare and her young foal. Sherry caught her breath. They were so beautiful! She positioned her Nikon to get the perfect shot. She smiled widely as she took a series of pictures, moving about to get different angles.

She turned to face Ella's mom. The woman's expression had changed. "Oh my! You aren't Annie, are you?"

Sherry shook her head, "No . . . but I sort of wish I was! She sounds like she is a wonderful person."

"My name is Connie Burke. Annie Currie was our nurse when Ella had her cancer. Annie followed her through the illness, and a bone marrow transplant. She is the most wonderful human being! Always upbeat. You look exactly like her! She is thirty-five years old. We wrote letters back and forth for a year or so, then I did not hear from her. She had moved to work at the John Hopkin's Children's Center in Baltimore. I was so excited when I saw you! You must think I am a crazy person."

"Think nothing of it! I'm honored. I always wanted to be a nurse, but I ended up being a chemistry professor. Funny how things turn out sometimes. I am so glad Ella survived. She is a beautiful little girl, and she has led me to the prize I wanted to discover today." Sherry motioned toward the horse and foal. "I am ecstatic to find them so quickly. I thought I would be searching all day long for them. You two have brought me good luck! Can we spend time together on the beach? I plan to spend the day."

Connie smiled. "I would love that . . ."

"Oh! Sherry, my name is Sherry Carter. " She grabbed Connie's outstretched hand. "Glad to meet you, Connie. Let's have some fun with these horses and Ella." The three had a most enjoyable day at the beach, sharing lunches, flying kites, building sand castles, and Sherry took pictures of everything. They exchanged information and planned to become friends on Facebook.

When Sherry was back in her room, relaxing on her balcony, listening to the surf, her curiosity got the best of her. How hard would it be to locate someone with today's technology? She grabbed her laptop and began a search for Annie Currie.

There was the Annie Currie who was murdered in 1982. An Annie Currie was a lost mother in Vancouver, British Columbia. There was Annie Currie the human relations counselor, the accountant, an education consultant, and even an hotelier. Sherry then entered "Annie Currie, registered nurse, at the Philadelphia Cancer Treatment Center, " where Ella was treated. Sherry startled. An obituary with the picture of a woman who looked identical to her appeared on the screen. Her eyes quickly skimmed the obit. Annie had been born on the exact same day as Sherry at the same hospital. Annie died a year ago from a car accident in Baltimore.

Sherry felt shell shocked. Her mother had told her that she had been a twin, and that the other baby was undeveloped and did not survive. Sherry wept. She knew instinctively that she would have loved Annie as much as Connie and Ella did. She wished she could have known her other face.

The Girl with the Pretty Face

By
Helen Leet

Carrie held Timmy's hand tightly, despite his squirming. "You may as well just cooperate. I am not letting go of you in this bus station. I could literally lose you forever, and I love you too much to let that happen!"

Timmy looked up at her defiantly. "No more buses! I hate riding on buses all the time! Why can't we just go back home?" His look of genuine distress made Carrie turn away from him. She closed her eyes briefly to erase his distressed look from her memory. She only had \$64.00 left. Just enough money for the last bus ride to get to her sister's apartment in Hoboken, New Jersey. There was no extra money for a snack. They had traveled by bus from Kentucky.

She half dragged Timmy to the ticket window to purchase their tickets. She had received a letter from her sister Maggie last week. Maggie told her to come to Hoboken and they would figure out her next step. After she purchased the tickets, she grabbed a magazine someone had thrown out, and sat down to look at it with Timmy. It was a fashion magazine, filled with women with beautiful, made-up faces, and brightly colored lipsticks and eye shadows. Timmy was mesmerized. He studied the faces intently.

"Mommy, what do these ladies do? Where do they live? I have never seen any ladies like this. "

"They are models, Timmy. They are paid to look pretty and to model make-up, clothes, perfume, and things like that. Most of them live in New York City or Los Angeles, or other large cities. They get paid a lot of money. "

A shocked expression appeared on Timmy's face. Then he smiled. "You must be kidding, Mommy. Who would pay someone to wear make-up and clothes like these? Those high heels are too high. How could anyone work with shoes like that? Her skirt is too tight. I don't think she could even sit down without it ripping apart. " The loudspeaker announced that the bus for Hoboken was loading.

"Come on, we have to take one more ride before we get to see Maggie. You can bring that book with you, if you want to. " Timmy held the magazine tightly to his chest as he climbed the stairs into the bus.

He sat quietly by his mother, studying the women in his magazine while people continued to board the bus. Just as the bus driver was about to close the bus door, they heard a woman yelling, "Wait! Please wait! I have to get on this bus!" The bus driver looked down, and a warm smile appeared on his face.

"Well, hurry up, Molly! I haven't seen you in weeks! Where have you been?"

Timmy watched as a stunningly beautiful redhead climbed onto the bus. Her hair was swept up stylishly and secured with a jeweled hair clip. She had bright red lipstick, bluish green eye shadow, very long lashes and 5 inch heels. Her skirt was very tight and very short. She had on a low-cut mint colored blouse that revealed most of her upper breasts. Timmy stared with his mouth hanging open.

"I had a modeling gig in New York and also here in Baltimore. I'm heading home to Hoboken for some much-needed R and R. Thanks for waiting for me, Charlie!" She gave the bus driver a quick kiss on the cheek. His face reddened, and Timmy laughed out loud.

Molly turned, looked directly at him, and smiled. She took the seat across the aisle from Timmy, maintaining eye contact as she did so. "Well, hello there little man. You certainly are a handsome chap. What's your name?"

Timmy was speechless for a minute. "Timmy, where are your manners? The lady asked you your name." His mom said.

"My name is Timmy. I'm six years old. How old are you?"

"My name is Molly, and I am 22 years old. I live in Hoboken. Do you live there?"

Timmy was still awe struck. He could not believe that this beautiful woman was talking to him. His mother gave him a nudge. "No, I am from Kentucky. We are going to visit my Aunt Maggie. She lives in Hoboken, but she surely does not have a face as pretty as yours! I have never seen anyone as beautiful as you . . . except in this magazine." Timmy shows her the magazine.

"I don't believe it, Timmy! I am in this issue! Check out page 26."

Timmy quickly turns the pages in the magazine, and stops at page 26. There is a beautiful woman with her red hair floating all about her head, and she is wearing a silky looking, long white gown with bright red high heeled shoes. Her lips are very red, and she looks as if she wants to kiss whoever is looking at her face. Timmy studies the photo intently, then looks at Molly. "It is you!" he exclaims.

"Told you so!" She looks over to Carrie. "I have some cheddar chips. Can I share them with you and Timmy?"

"That is very generous of you. Thank you." Molly has several small packets of chips in her large carry-on bag, and gives each of them a bag, along with a bottle of Pepsi to share.

"After a week of modeling and eating practically nothing, I love to splurge on chips and soda." She smiles and winks at Timmy.

Timmy and Molly continue to chat during the long bus ride to Hoboken. Carrie leans back in the seat, wondering if she will be able to find work in Hoboken. She feels frightened and excited at the same time. She faces the challenge of creating a new life for herself and her son. She notices her reflection in the darkened window. For the first time in a long time, she sees a hopeful face.

Face to Face

by Katrina K. Martin

Men gather in the humid night, weapons ready. A wind spirit moans softly. Clouds cover the gentle moon. This night is dark. Dark also are the skies. All stars have fled.

One man steps haltingly forward in the center of the ceremonial clearing, arms raised in supplication. His left leg is twisted, bent at an odd angle. The skin on his sunken chest is lacerated with ribbons of old scar tissue. When young, he fought an epic battle with a jaguar and won...at great cost. About his neck a single tooth from the mighty cat gives testimony to his valor. Now he is imbued with JAGUAR POWER.

The aged shaman gathers that power like a cape about himself and begins to chant: "Mother Earth, Father Sky, this man humbles himself before you. Brother Jaguar look upon this man with favor who asks for help in the coming hunt." The supplication continues: "God of Starlight, God of Moon Glow, guide the footsteps of your children." The waiting hunters now join in the refrain. A horn rattle punctuates their words. "God of Starlight, God of Moon Glow, guide the footsteps of your children."

The heavy jungle air vibrates. Soon the whole clearing seems to shimmer despite the lack of light. A drink from the Ayahuasca Vine has been carefully prepared. Its' power enables the shaman to see where game lies even in the dark. The elder drinks. The hunters continue to chant.

At the shaman's sudden call for silence, a hush falls over the clearing. He speaks of his vision. Not far off, an animal drinks at the river's edge. That tapir is willing to give its' life so the village may eat.

As the shaman continues speaking, a tropical moon emerges from behind cloud cover. Stars too reappear. The cough of a jaguar is heard nearby. Now the path to the waiting tapir is easily discernable. After the kill, the hunters honor the spirit of the Tapir. On the way back to the village a victory chant echoes through the surrounding vegetation: "God of Starlight, God of Moon Glow, your children thank you. Jaguar Spirit, thank you. Tapir Spirit, thank you. For success in this night's hunt we humbly thank you."

The jubilant hunters disappear down the trail to the village, their song growing fainter and fainter. The shaman follows some distance behind. His limp is more pronounced now. He is tired from the weight of many years and this night's exertions. He knows his time has come. Ancestors call out to him. At the bend in the trail up ahead, Jaguar waits.

The Face Painter by Lynn Olcott

The day smells of fried dough and caramel corn. Mary Smith, yes that's her real name, her real name for today anyway, dips a small, quick brush into the tiny capsule of pink paint in her hand and twirls. She looks intently at the face of the child sitting before her.

Carefully she paints the outline of a ballerina on the girl's cheek. The girl wiggles and giggles at the tickle of the brush and Mary Smith smiles. She asks the girl about her ballet lessons, about her pets and about the weather in this little town. She tells the child she is beautiful, which is true. She imagines this child dancing through the life that opens before her, arms graceful, legs strong. The child smiles at her reflection in the mirror Mary holds.

Her next customer is a boy with a shock of dark hair and restless eyes. Mary Smith waits in stillness while the boy decides what he wants. He chooses a dragon...a dragon *with fire*. Mary Smith assures the boy that a dragon is her favorite thing to paint. After several strokes of the slim brush, the dragon rears, mighty and beautiful, across side of the boy's face. An arc of fiery breath flares under the boy's eye. In her heart, Mary Smith wishes the boy courage and wisdom for all his days.

They come, a procession of children and a few grandmothers seeking to have their dreams and images take shape in Mary Smith's bright paints. She brushes happiness and strength and joy into each colorful image. Her fingers grow tired. She wants to stand and stretch and perhaps dance. She's been told these are merely stray sensations from her life before, the body saying goodbye. She has been told to expect this at first.

She's happy. Every image is a joyful task. Every small painting is a gift. She keeps painting as shadows deepen and flood across the afternoon. Mary Smith wishes her last customer a life of love and ribbons in her hair as she paints rainbows on the little girl's cheeks. The child dashes away, smiling.

Mary Smith slowly slides her paints and pictures, her camping stools and tiny table into her canvas bag. She lifts the bag to her shoulder and walks slowly out of town. She has not yet received her assignment for tomorrow. But it will come. She doesn't really understand how it all works yet, but somehow she arrives at each new place perfectly disguised and with her paints refreshed. It's amazing the diverse assignments there are for apprentices. She feels this is the perfect assignment for her.

Tomorrow she might be painting faces in a busy urban park or at a county fair or on a sunny, sandy beach. A beach would be nice, where people relax and toddlers play in the sand. She does hope tomorrow's assignment is near water. She'd like to see the surface of the water speaking riddles to the sky, with her new awareness, her new way of looking at things.

But for now it just feels good to walk freely and enjoy the humming, vital, precious life all around her, the trees and weeds and bugs and birds at the edge of this small, rural town. It feels good to be dead, freely and finally dead, with so much to look forward to. No one notices her, an ordinary woman walking down an ordinary road. No one notices Mary Smith completely disappear.

A Reflection: I Know Your Face

What a gift to be able to remember the name of a person we encounter after a long time. The face is familiar. No problem with the recognition this person is someone I socialized with some time in the past. However, I have never mastered the ability to remember the name associated with the face. My mental database has the name stored, but access is inhibited. So I continue to admire the people who seem to have a knack for associating a face with a name. Is there a cure for my problem? How common is this problem in society? Is it age-related? Do we lose cognition as we age?

Many years ago I tried self-help tape instruction on tips for remembering names. There are a number of techniques. For example, one can associate the person with a common object. Or one can hang an absurd picture on the face of the person when you meet them. This is supposed to create a unique connection of name, face and trigger to remember the name in the future. I tried to perfect this technique, but never mastered it. I have an anecdotal memory of a Cornell University meet and greet event several years ago in the company of Cornell President Frank H. T. Rhodes. At a break in the session we were enjoying a private moment over coffee. I said to President Rhodes, "I admire your incredible ability to remember people and names. I want you to know that I have been training with self-help tapes to be able to remember people." He replied, "And how is it going?" To his delight and groan I said, "Not so well because I forgot where I put the tapes". Perhaps I was not disciplined enough to spend the necessary time to master the recognition and remembering techniques.

In my early years of teaching, I often lectured to classes of 100 or more students. I always felt it was important to connect with the students by recognizing them as individuals. The best results I had was photographing each student and then spending time reviewing the photographic record with the name displayed. My batting average was about 70%. Even though I wasn't perfect, students appreciated the effort.

I am convinced that people are gifted with varying types of intelligence. When I acknowledge my shortcoming in remembering names to friends and associates, many also say they have the same problem. Conversation then drifts to laments about how embarrassing this can be. We also consider little gimmicks that save us from offending people. However, there is no cover for not being able to call the person by name. Alas, the face is familiar but for me time erases the memory of the name. I must have frequent reinforcement from periodic encounters. However, the good news is that if one has had a significant encounter in the past, it will stick with you.

We all know aging of the brain or disease may reduce our ability to remember names and even faces. How tragic it is that Alzheimer's disease, dementia and other cognitive disorders can rob us of the social connections of our past life. How sweet it is if we can bring to mind the faces of loved ones departed. We should delight in our senior citizens who age gracefully with full cognition.

Maybe there is a technical solution to our failure to identify people. Facial recognition technology by computer analysis is now quite refined. Just as we have hearing aids to enhance our hearing ability perhaps we can develop a miniature camera and computer device that will fit our glasses and will whisper the name into our earpiece. Perhaps not so far-fetched since Google already has Pixel Ear Buds that will translate languages in real time. Meanwhile, I will simply admit, "your face is familiar, but sadly your name is buried deep in my brain and will not come forth."

Gerald E. Rehkugler

Portraits of Power

Since the age of eight, I have been interested in faces -- faces painted in oil on canvas. My mother's face upon an old coat-lining convinced my father to let me have lessons in portraiture in Syracuse. When I returned to Homer in 1845, Paris Barber set me up in a studio over the Sherman Exchange, and I painted portraits of villagers. I painted the Barber Family and the eleven trustees of the Academy. In 1851 I departed with my bride for New York City, set up shop in Brooklyn, and began to paint the faces of the movers and shakers of 19th century America. Jenny Lind, the "Swedish Nightingale," sat for me, as did the famous showman P. T. Barnum. Five U. S. Presidents sat for their portraits: John Tyler, Franklin Pierce, Millard Fillmore, Abraham Lincoln, and James A. Garfield.

Of all the faces I have painted, those of Lincoln and his Cabinet have brought me the greatest fame. When I heard that President Lincoln had signed the Emancipation Proclamation on New Year's Day, 1863, I was determined to capture on canvas the moment in 1862 when the "Great Emancipator" had first read his historic decree to his seven Cabinet members. During six months in the White House in 1864, I labored. Working under the chandelier of the state dining-room, I labored to get the eight countenances correct of the men of political power I placed along a table of counsel. They were seated according to their views on the abolition of slavery, with liberals to the left of Lincoln and conservatives to the right. It was my desire that the painting should become the standard authority for the portrait of each and especially of Mr. Lincoln.

When I had reasonably completed the 8 foot by 15 foot painting, I showed it to the men depicted. I was eager for their reactions.

Secretary of War Stanton, depicted with his eye-glasses and two-tone beard, made a favorable comment: "The work is in every respect, that I am capable of judging, entirely satisfactory and worthy of national admiration -- as a fitting commemoration of Mr. Lincoln's great deed."

Next, Salmon P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury, was depicted with arms folded, standing behind a seated Lincoln. This was an appropriate stance, considering Chase's tendency to self-aggrandizing machinations behind Lincoln's back. Chase was critical of the place of prominence I had given to Secretary of State Seward in the painting.

As for Seward, he said, "I think all the likenesses in your elaborate picture are admirable, except one, concerning which I am incompetent to discern." Seward expressed consternation not about his Romanesque profile but about his *pants*. He objected to being painted wearing wide, light-colored trousers with his black coat. I explained that the color composition required a splash of light in the foreground, but he was not placated by "artistic necessity." He didn't propose to go down to posterity looking like "an effeminate dandy."

Painted immediately to the right of Lincoln was Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles, with his full white beard and wig that caused the newspapers to appropriately refer to him as “Father Neptune.” Welles registered no objection to his portrait.

Standing to the right was Caleb B. Smith, Secretary of the Interior. One of Lincoln’s personal secretaries sarcastically commented that I had “murdered” Smith in the painting. Now, I admit that his portrait is the weakest, but I had little to work from. Smith died in January of 1864, before I had come to Washington to do the painting.

The last figure standing to the right was that of Postmaster-General Montgomery Blair. He offered no comment.

Finally, on the far right, seated at the opposite end of the table from Lincoln, I depicted the Attorney-General, Edward Bates. Bates believed that freed blacks should be deported to Africa and frequently clashed with Lincoln about slavery. So it came as no surprise that Bates commented favorably of the portraiture but not of the event depicted: “The execution seems to me excellent – far better than the theme, the historic incident.” He complained that those assembled had no opportunity for “deliberation upon the principles involved in the Freedom Proclamation” crafted by Lincoln.

The First Lady approved of what she saw. Mary Lincoln knew all too well how contentious and competitive the members of her husband’s Cabinet could be – a team of rivals. So, with tongue-in-cheek and to Lincoln’s delight, she nicknamed the painting “The Happy Family.”

Of course, I was most interested in Mr. Lincoln’s critique. After studying the painting he concluded, “There is little to find fault with. The portraiture is the main thing, and that seems to me absolutely perfect.” Later, it pleased me mightily when Lincoln told a friend, “I feel that there is more of me in this portrait than in any representation which has been made.”

A portrait painter tries to capture the essence of his subject. I desperately wanted to paint a face that I found to characteristically convey patience, kindness, and a wisp of humor, but over six months I found Mr. Lincoln to be a man weighed down by a nation tearing itself apart by bloody civil strife. He once said, “If there is a worse place than hell, I am in it.” It has been the business of my life to study the human face and I say now as I have said repeatedly to my friends, Mr. Lincoln had the saddest face I ever painted. I believe my portrait of Lincoln gave the man the heroic stature he did not get to enjoy during his presidency.

On February 9, 1864, I escorted President Lincoln to Mathew Brady’s Photographic Parlor. There I posed the President for photographs by Anthony Berger. The profile photo taken of the President would be used later in 1909 on the Lincoln penny, and the other portrait graces the five-dollar bill -- portraits of power that have inspired others.

Francis Bicknell Carpenter
Martin A. Sweeney

Faces and Crayons

By Jackie Yaman

The car radio announcer told her it was 7:20. Would she be late for work again? Got to calm down. Look at the scenery. Purple asters, yellow golden rod, red sumac. They all told her the weather was changing. Rosa smiled and thought about how she'd enjoy washing her Ford Granada a couple of more times before the real cold came. She loved waxing the fenders so they gleamed on sunny days. And she loved that old boat of a car. It made her feel safe and she knew her daughter in the back seat was safe too.

Rosa looked in the rear-view mirror to see Carla strapped safely in the back seat. Carla was part of the reason Rosa was late some days. At four years old, Carla was active and curious, and she did not like to be rushed. Carla enjoyed going to her babysitter's home each day, but wanted to dress herself first – in four or five outfits before deciding on the day's ensemble.

From the back seat, "Mommy why do they call John black?" Carla had that crease in her forehead that told Rosa this was a question she needed help with and she would not let go of it.

"Well, honey, that's a good question. What color do you think he is?"

"Brown, Mommy. John is brown!" She was sure of that. "His face is brown. Is he black under his clothes?"

"I don't think so, honey, but let's talk more when I come back after work, okay?"

Carla didn't seem pleased with the answer because her forehead crease stayed put. Nevertheless, they had arrived at Lydia's house and there was no more time to talk about color. Lydia's husband, John, was African American. He was there in the mornings when Carla was dropped off as he started his work day later than Rosa.

Rosa unstrapped Carla, lifted her out of the car and walked her to the door where Lydia was waiting.

"Good morning, Lydia. Just want you to know Carla has been working on naming colors. She has lots of questions today."

"Well, hello there, CC. I might have some answers." Lydia called Carla CC. C for Carla and C for Caro, their last name. Now Rosa often called her CC too. She kissed Carla goodbye and left for work - an assembly job where she sat across from six coworkers. She could see some workers on another line across the room. Rosa looked at their faces and thought about what color she would call each one. To tell the truth, they had quite a variety of people at the Crescent. She had to smile at her thought, "God sure loves variety. I'll have to tell Carla that later."

Rosa picked up Carla around 5:30 and they went straight home. Once they were in their apartment, Rosa started pulling out food from the cupboard and refrigerator. Carla carried a bag of noodles to the counter, then a can of tuna fish. Carla liked to help and Rosa liked her

help. It was just the two of them now that Sam was gone. This was not a bad thing.

Once the casserole was in the oven, Rosa said, "CC go get your big box of crayons." Carla got her crayons while Rosa went to her room and brought back her laptop. Rosa put her laptop on the kitchen table and Googled: faces and ethnic. She pulled a chair next to her and motioned for Carla to sit there.

"We're going to look for the answer to your question from this morning, CC. Did you know some people call us white? CC get out your white crayon and put it next to your arm." Carla got out the white crayon and held it next to her arm.

"Mommy, I'm not white," she giggled.

Pointing to the lap top page of faces, Rosa said, "Okay, CC, which face looks the most like John?"

Carla pointed.

"Okay, now hold the black crayon next to that face."

Carla did. "Mommy, he is NOT black!"

"Uh, huh, CC. See how smart you are? We're not white and he's not black. Let's see what color people are. You get out the crayons that look like the faces you see here, okay?"

Carla searched her crayons and pulled out Sepia, Tan, Apricot, Peach, Mahogany, Brown, and Sienna. She held them next to the screen pictures one crayon at a time, then she set them on the table next to the black and white crayons.

"I like that faces come in all these colors," Carla said smiling.

"Yes, CC, God loves variety. Now, honey, which crayon looks the most like you?"

Carla grabbed all the crayons she'd set aside and ran to the bathroom with them. She held each one next to her face and chose the tan crayon. She ran back to the kitchen just as Rosa was taking the casserole out of the oven.

"Tan, Mommy, I'm tan!"

"Yes, I can see that. You are tan. Okay, CC, now which crayon did you pick for John?"

"I picked brown for the John face."

"We're almost done, CC. I can see you are getting hungry."

"No, Mommy, I want to know!"

"Okay, then please put the black and white crayons next to each other and the tan and brown crayons next to each other."

Carla moved the crayons as she'd been told.

"Notice how the black and white crayons look so different but the tan and brown crayons look closer in color. So, your face and John's are closer in color than black and white. I think that makes us more alike than we are different."

"I see that, Mommy, but I still don't know why they call John black."

"Well, CC, those people who say that have never looked at their crayons."