



Caballero del Mar, by Rafel Zamarripa

Wanderlust

by Darlene Carucci

Lately I've been thinking about how "a rolling stone gathers no moss"...and feeling kind of mossy.

I think somewhere in my bloodline there must simmer a trickle of tinker. The only thing I wanted for my 16th birthday was matching luggage for destinations yet unknown. I enlisted and served in the United States Air Force right out of high school, volunteering exclusively overseas.

I was the kid who wanted to go to camp all summer and the Mom who decided on Labor Day weekend that since our cape house wasn't rented, perhaps we should just skip traffic, stay, and go to school here on Cape Cod.

Well, life has a way of redirecting daydreamers. Reality, stirred in with a husband, bills and a few kids, has a way of halting spontaneity. Though I squeezed in a few little escapades, I "scheduled" future adventures on a "when the kids are in college" time-line.

Life surprised me with the inheritance of a third baby while the older two were preteens. Here I am a mother for 23 years, and still with a ten-year-old at home. But I've finally built my dream home on the ocean and feel slightly settled.

Sometimes during the most inopportune moments, the clearest opportunities and possibilities can arise.



Triton and Nereida, by Carlos Esprino

Living in my last-minute mindset, I booked and executed a five-day vacation to Puerto Vallarta. I chose this from all of the incredible “seat-of-your-pants” travel sites that I hastily trolled because of the... well... price, and... the sun, beach and tequila qualities, along with my incessant urge to practice kindergarten Spanish.

Puerto Vallarta, like a lover from a mysterious place, exceeded my expectations.

Hot, beautiful, diverse, cosmopolitan, artistic, quaint and grounded. Where old and new harmoniously and joyously entwine within the threads of a serape and the fiber optics of an Internet cafe.

A place that spurred my growing restlessness, my urge to once again be that rolling stone of my youth.

For years I've dreamed of immersing myself within a culture where I could experience the history of an ancient civilization blended with modern progression.

A place where I could practice a language I adored, and feel safe, captivated and motivated. This seemed like the place to make the fantasy into reality.



Our Lady of Guadalupe, one of Puerto Vallarta's best known landmarks

Wandering cobblestone streets, camera in hand, I located the Mexican neighborhood where I could fulfill my growing fantasy.

I returned from this vacation jaunt with renewed vigor and my thoughts racing – how could I make my pipe dream

happen? With two dogs and an elementary-age child at home and two children in college, there were challenges to overcome. A stalled economy dampened my perspective as well.

Time to start scheming.

The first obstacle to hurdle would be how to finance this escapade. Living on the Cape, a desirable place to vacation, I thought maybe a solution would not be so hard.

Within a week of my return home, I met with brokers, photographed my home, and listed my house for rent.

Now it was time to start throwing this thought out to the family and see how they might react. My husband supported it. My daughter thought it was great. She would come visit.

My youngest, who will of course come with me, is on board and excited about our adventure together.

My son reacted with abandonment. "Wow, Mom, you really don't want me to come home this summer, do you?"

Well, come to think of it, no.

After living on the Cape more than a decade, my previous illusion of summer vacation has become a clearly focused sentence of slavery with its never-ending droves of company, lazy teenagers, bed stripping, cooking and cleaning.

The advantage of living on the beach, on the Cape, in the summer had become the disadvantage of living on the beach, on the Cape, in the summer.

The summer season ends with bewilderment – where did it go? A humid evaporation of waiting in supermarket lines, in traffic, at the recycling center, mixed with the surprise ambush of friends, family and business colleagues who are "coming to the Cape for the weekend, get the guestroom ready, let's cook lobster."

I hate lobster!

Don't get me wrong, I love a vacation just as much as anyone else. But while everyone else was on their vacations, I'd become a disgruntled innkeeper. No, I would not miss that.

Securing Mexican living arrangements is easy enough, between the Internet and an abundance of English-speaking realtors. The last hurdle is finding and securing a spot in a bi-lingual school for my little one. Who knew this would pose the most difficult obstacle?

Fast-forward four months.

The Cape house is rented out for the summer, securing the financing for the endeavor. Mexican neighborhood and new local broker (quickly becoming my first new friend in town) are chosen. Language study is in process.

After three very long months on the waiting list, my daughter was finally accepted to the elementary school at the end of May. A sprinkle of good fortune mixed with perseverance and synchronicity helped the process along.



Vallarta Mexican Dancers, by Jim Demetro

I am proud, amazed and anxious that I have made this happen. I've decided this is a good opportunity to teach my little one a philosophy of not "I can't because" but instead "I can - despite..."

~Saludos!





Darlene Carucci lives on the beach in Harwich Port... for the moment.