



**NOAA Teacher at Sea  
Christopher Harvey  
Onboard NOAA Ship OSCAR ELTON SETTE  
June 5 – July 4, 2006**

**Date:** July 2, 2006

**Time:** 6:00 PM Hawaii

**Location:** Almost back to Honolulu!

**Entry**

“The older I get, the less I know what I want to do.”

-Huntley Brownell

Over the last two days I have been thinking about how to adequately end this journey in words. And I know that despite how eloquent I try to make it seem, words fall short in comparison to the experience that has become a part of me. And again I fall back on the idea of perspective, and the value it has come to hold in my life. The older I get, the more I realize how big this world is. And though I've made a point to explore one small piece of it at a time, I realize in moments of earnestness- ever so infrequent, and always at a time when I am unable to capture the essence of this great mixture of thought and feeling- that I will never know it all. The more I think about this world, and the six plus billion people who now occupy its lands, the more I feel backed into a corner. And yet, I am unafraid of being so small. For in being so small, there is Being. And with Being, a lifetime ahead of me.

I have quoted a man that will perhaps never be quoted in anything more than this, my final entry from sea. But I have found that my discussions with Huntley on the ship have broadened my perspective and given more meaning for my own life. It is ironic that Huntley turned twenty six just days ago, adding another year onto his age and perhaps taking a little more direction from his life's compass. But there is a second half to this quote: “The more you travel, the more open doors you see. And you know that you can walk through any of them.”

I walked through a door that led me into the classroom at the age of twenty-three, and in a year and a half since walking through that door, have found so many other doors open before me. For instance, here I am typing on the computer and staring out the window at yet another setting sun. And in walking through this door, I have learned so much about Life and Love and Everything Else that I almost cannot take it all.

Where have these people come from, that I have shared such close quarters with over the last twenty-eight days? Where will they go? In a matter of weeks we were all brought here together, and in a matter of hours we will all be free to spread ourselves out again. Carole, my friend from France, will return to her last year of graduate school at the College of Charleston. Amee is headed to a small island north of Vancouver to study whale migrations for several months, then on to Boston to do acoustic work with a

research vessel there, and then quite possibly off to Antarctica. Logan will battle his way through the end of his undergraduate degree, working towards something he has longed to finish well. Eric and Aris will finish their undergrad degrees shortly hereafter and be scattered into the world. Justin is also nearing the end of his degree and is debating whether he wants to go directly back to school, or to work for a couple years and narrow down his options for postgraduate study. I will return home to prepare for another challenging year at school.

Some of the crew have been with this ship for years, and will be here many more years into the future. Others have just arrived, and still others will be leaving shortly hereafter. Time has brought all of us close together, and Time will take us apart. Most of us will never see each other again. And while it seems rather sad to speak this way, it is something that I have been reminded of on this cruise. Someone left these words upon my heart, however unintentional, and I must accept them with the part of me that loves this life of leaving: "Being a nomad carries along the awful truth that most meetings come to an end."

I have enjoyed my time out here for all of the reasons you have read about over the last few weeks. I have met my share of struggles- physically, mentally, and spiritually- and have come through them one way or another. Am I a better or worse man for their outcomes? I am not the judge of that. All I can say is that I am changed, and I will leave it at that.

I have seen things that have angered me to the point I had to walk away and be by myself for a time, and have also seen things that have made me wish I had another set of eyes with which to share the view. I have worked my way through routine, day after day. And have cherished the little idiosyncrasies that have come up at random intervals along the way. I have been a scientist, student, teacher, and friend. And have been both great and terrible at each at times.

In all, this has been a wonderful experience. And though this is just another cruise for some, it is another life experience for me. As Jack Kerouac would attest, any chance to gain life experience and adventure is another chance to make a story. This story may have seemed ordinary to some, but it is another chapter in the Story of My Life. The longer I live, the grander this story becomes. The longer I live, the more I see that my life is just a knot into which relationships are tied (yet another Antoine de Saint-Exupery quote). Have you enjoyed this bond with me? Has it in some way enriched your life?

I have two weeks on the Hawaiian Islands before I return home to a family I have grown to miss, a puppy and kitty I perpetually miss, friends whose summer stories I will have to catch up on, and kids who will be walking into my classroom unaware of all the changes their teacher has undergone this summer. In that time I am sure I will look back on all of this and consider myself fortunate to be one of the few to have such an experience. But I will also take the time to enjoy the simple things in life: a walk along a sandy beach, a nap under the shade of a palm, and an ice-cold beer. Life is meant to be serious when we

are serious, and relaxed when we are. May you find yours as such--a little of One and a bit of The Other, but never too much of either.