

Janis La Couvée

Marie wears tiny thongs and lacy push-up bras she orders online from France, displays them daintily on her clothesline Wednesday mornings.

Tracy is a chatterbox, a source of gossip and opinion hard to argue with.

Rick likes to pound back beers on the beach Friday nights, a moment of respite after a week of gruelling physical work.

Jim is the cantankerous oldtimer, devising traps for new-comers, “in my day” and “remember when?” his constant mantras.

Jennifer keeps her secrets close, reveals them to trusted confidantes.

JoAnne gets things done, in an orderly no-nonsense fashion. Queen of the fundraiser and community event.

BirdDog came for a visit, fell in love with surfing and a wilder life, stayed to marry and raise a family.

Norma is a creative genius, her works of art in beads, pottery, and paint gracing homes from the coast to Europe.

Bob knows the natural world, tracks whale movements in local waters, consults with universities and think tanks, mourns the loss of what was in the face of climate change.

Susan is constantly plotting ways to attract investment—money for a new seniors’ home, improvements to the rec centre, a trail system.

Gary can be depended upon to answer the phone at 3:30 in the morning when your car hits a deer on a dark and twisty road, or your boat needs a spare part only found in the big city.

Sam remembers a time before a road, when challenges had to be dealt with in the community, and people pulled together to build infrastructure.

Clara is a good-time girl, the life of the party, has a phenomenal memory for names and is guaranteed to bring a smile to the face of every customer at the grocery store.

Mike and Paul trade stories over coffee, talk about a life before tourism and crowds, proud of their place in the town’s history.

Naturalizing

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Roberta Spivek

You only have to get six questions right. I’d studied a hundred. The immigration man had been gentle. What’s a constitution? Who’s the country’s father? I’d studied so hard I had nightmares. If you ace six out of ten you will pass but if you don’t you are done, unless you have the money and grit to start over.

And what about those questions that weren’t even on the test? Like, why have the crows come, now? And, should I crush the wild turkey’s eggs, or let them hatch? But what if they hatch and encroach on the landscape? And what about that coyote Marilyn saw running up the cul-de-sac behind the pool when she was out walking her dog, a chihuahua? Can’t I let the cat out anymore? Even if he beseeches? But what if he slips out anyway because one time the kids next door left some salmon skin on their patio table? Will the coyote go home? Do they have seasons? What can you study to prepare for that? Wouldn’t you have nightmares?

Home As Sanctuary

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Diana Raab

Home is where our heart is, is what my mother often told me. She said the house we live in is just a shell, and that we are all visitors here.

The older I get, the more I am able to see the truth in her words. In 2018, I was a survivor of the Thomas Fire and debris flow disasters in Southern California, two events that forever changed our community.

Beginning in December 2017, the massive Thomas Fire ripped through Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties in Southern California, ninety miles north of Los Angeles, where I’d been living for the previous twelve years. During the course of one month, we had to evacuate six

