
Traveling Light

Stories & Drawings
For a Quiet Mind



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The people in this book, if at one time real, are now entirely fictitious, having been subjected to a combination of a selective memory and a fertile imagination. Any resemblance to real people you might know, even if they are the author's relatives, is entirely coincidental, and is a reminder that you are imagining the incidents in this book as much as the author. (By the way, the "she" is not who you think it is, either. So, give it up...)

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*To my sons, for their love & curiosity &
outrageously comic view of the future we're all
making together & to Ellen, for the way she
holds love & home & a world that works for
everyone in a heart as strong & beautiful as
life itself*

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Traveling Light

Introduction

I like to travel. Or maybe that's not exactly right. Maybe it's more like this: as I go on, my idea of home is expanding & I can't wait to find out how big it will be. There's a side of home that means sitting on the kitchen counter, between the children & dishes & conversation & the smell of Earl Grey tea. There's another, completely different side that is all the places I've been. The places I've lived. The places I've visited. Even the places I've yet to find.

They're all home. I carry them with me everywhere I go & there's no telling when a memory of my boyhood in Chicago will cross paths with my adult life as I ferry one of the kids to some place or another. Or the smells of some new dish my younger son is throwing together on the stove suddenly reminding me of that lively Cuban restaurant Ellen & I found on a walk through Atlanta fifteen years ago.

I like to collect memories of people & things. For all my love of travel, I have no interest in collecting stuff from foreign lands. I'm not someone who brings back a container load of bright colored blankets, or realistic carvings of little Buddhas on pieces of driftwood, or even loaves of authentic sourdough bread. The most I usually bring back is chocolate & stories. I like to travel light.


It's enough for me to have memories of someone, or somewhere I love. The way sometimes when you catch it just right, our spice cabinet smells like my great-aunt's kitchen on a Sunday morning. The way my elder son puts his hands on his hips just like Ellen when he's surveying the scene right before he jumps in. The way you can just barely see where the boys wrote their names on the side of the big pine table. Memories make the world home.

The truth is, I like to be in the middle of my day & stop to remember the way the morning fog in Santa Barbara scatters suddenly, like a flock of startled birds & there is only you & the ocean, as blue as any ocean can be. At odd times, I think of the small Chinese woman on a side street in Hong Kong, taking down a freshly slaughtered goose with one hand & chattering into a cellphone held in the other. Now & then, I watch a hot wind curling dust into little funnels & I'm back in Mexico, on a steep cobblestone street that curves like a dry riverbed through a canyon of yellow houses. I notice the light glint on the river outside our house & in a moment, I'm there on a stone bridge in Paris, letting flower petals drop like wishes into the Seine.

It's no coincidence that this book is called 'Traveling Light'. Memories weigh nothing & yet, they feel like they're everything. They surround us & wash through us & tag along as we go through our lives. They're filled with laughter & exuberant gestures & at the same time, they are as quiet as the night wind. I've folded many of them neatly into stories here, so we can be ready at a moment's notice to travel when a new adventure calls.

Come & join me. Let's see what kind of home this wide world offers. It'll be great fun. I've already packed the book with most everything we'll need...

With love,



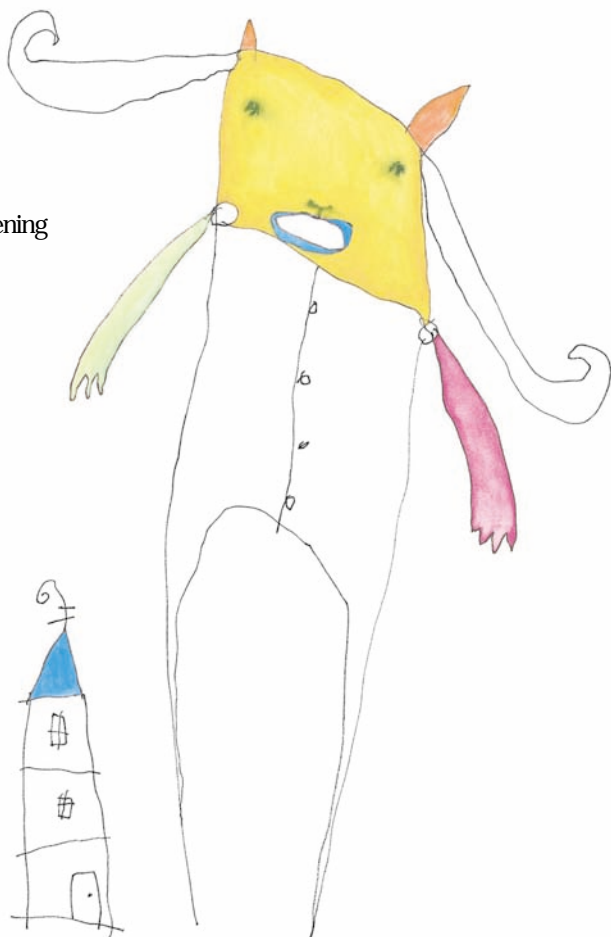
Brian Andreas
On David's birthday
28 March 2003

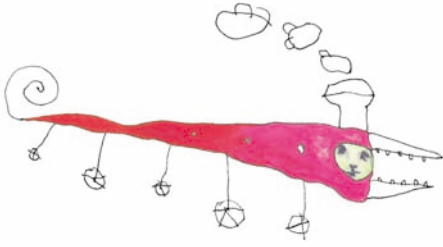
In those days,
we finally chose
to walk like giants
& hold the world
in arms grown strong
with love

& there may be
many things we forget
in the days to come,

but this
will not be
one of them.

Awakening

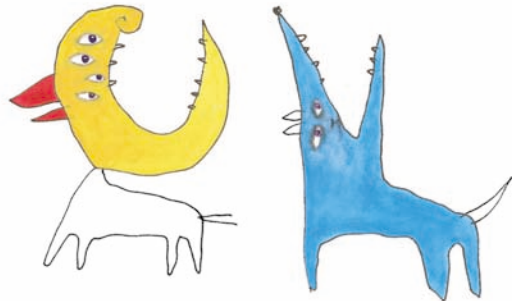
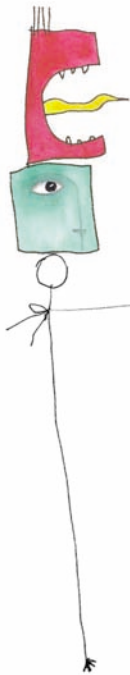




**carries a lot of suitcases
but all of them are empty
because she's expecting
to completely fill them
with life by the end of
this trip**

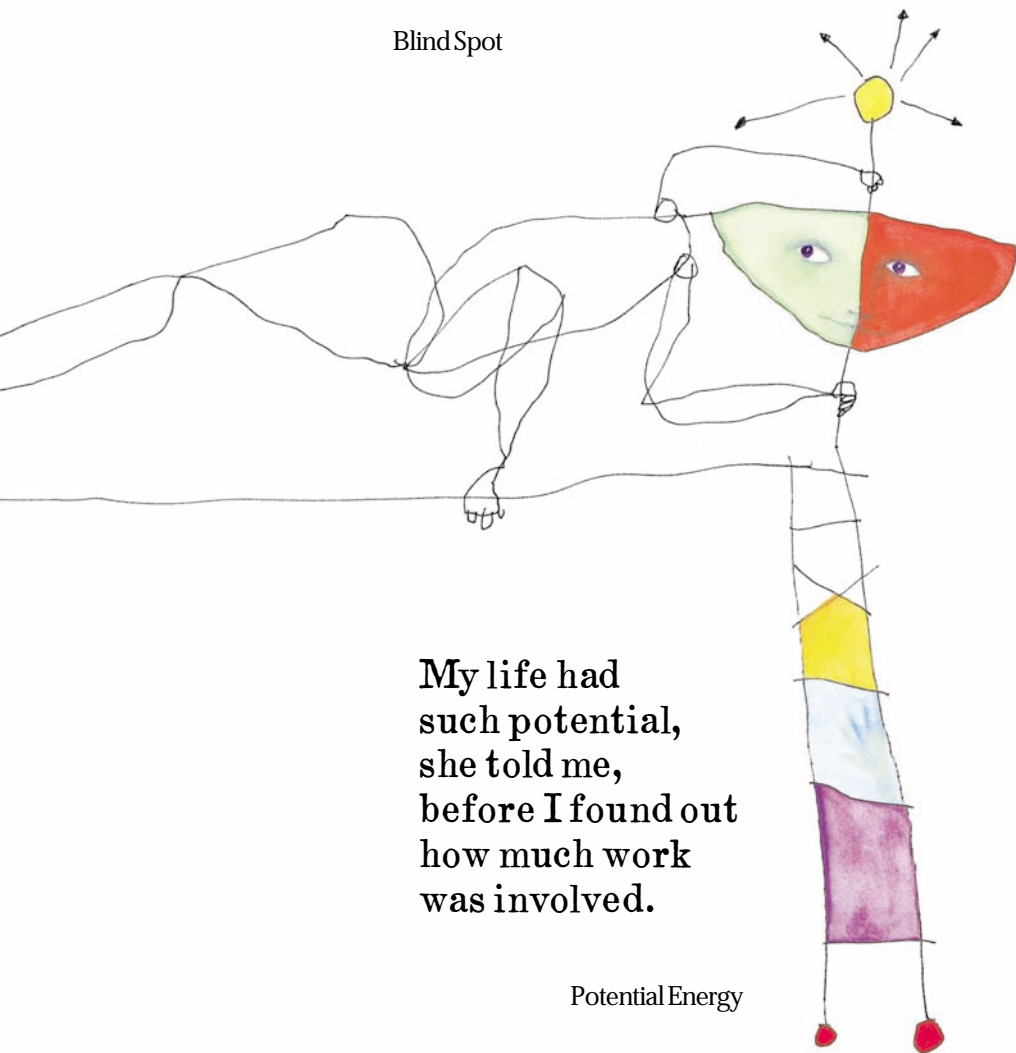
**& then she'll come home
& sort everything out
& do it all again**

Veteran Traveller



I'd like to think
that things are
getting better,
he said, but
my eyes are
getting worse,
so maybe I miss
a lot.

Blind Spot



My life had
such potential,
she told me,
before I found out
how much work
was involved.

Potential Energy

I can imagine it
working out
perfectly, I said.

I can't, she said

& I said no wonder
you're so stressed

Stress Management

