

It is Midnight

by Kurt Opprecht

It is midnight in Europe, and I am lying in the compartment of a train between Budapest and Prague. It's just a regular compartment, but no one else is here, so I've made it into a giant bed. At the border, the conductor rouses me for my passport. I didn't have a visa for Czechoslovakia, but that doesn't seem to matter.

It is midnight in India and the second largest spider I have ever seen in my life is in my room. Lucky for me, I don't know it yet. I'll find out soon enough. What is he thinking? Does he think there are bugs in here? Or is he just taking refuge?

It is midnight in Thailand and the pigs and the chickens are quiet beneath the house. My fellow trekkers are still stirring. Eric must have gone out to puke. I think the opium is wearing off. Maybe I'll be able to sleep soon.

It is midnight in Laos, and the men playing cards outside have gone away, but there is some kind of animal in my room. I shout at it and it scrambles out the window. Was it a monkey? This is why screens are important. I should always make sure my room has screens or windows that close.

It is midnight in China, and the managers are shouting at us. A girl is not allowed in the men's dormitory, whether she is a foreigner or not. Whether she is wearing a ski cap to cover her hair and make her kind of look like a boy or not. Perhaps we should stop pretending to be asleep.

It is midnight in Japan, and we are approaching Tokyo. We are hauling glass for a skyscraper downtown. I've been sleeping in the compartment behind the driver, but it's time to stir and get ready. He'll be dropping me off soon at Shinjuku station.

It is midnight in Nevada and the coyotes are yipping in the distance. It sounds to me that they are having fun. The moon is shining in my eyes. I scoot behind the shadow of the Joshua tree. It is standing guard for me.

It is midnight in Utah, but I can't tell. It always looks like midnight in a cave. I can't sleep. How can I sleep with the rest of the troop running around everywhere. To hell with my flashlight, I'll use a candle.

It is midnight in Indiana and I am in the "Holiday Out." It is stormy outside. That doesn't matter. Nothing matters. Aunt Mary is a terrible cook, but she is puffy and kind and her beds are cozy.

It is midnight in America. It is midnight in Asia. It is midnight right here. I am warm. I am dry. All is well.

