

# The Lives of Felix Gunderson

*by* Sugu Althomsons

The lights turn on, the audience cheers. He raises his guitar, steps up to the microphone and sings. The rock star. The audience bends to his will. When he sings mournful tunes, the crowd quiets, heads bowed in remembrance. When he plays fast tunes, the fans dance, jumping wildly to the rhythm. He is a god.

He is now somewhere in Asia. Even he doesn't know where he is this day. Was it Cambodia? Thailand? Japan? He sees a gazebo, completely blue, like the color of cornflower. In front are fire-engine red flowers, growing on a tree. It marks the perfect picture of his trip. The photographer. He raises his camera, frames the shot, makes adjustments on the device, compensating for ISO, adjusting the shutter speed for the daylight, the aperture for the depth. He can see the picture in his mind, before he depresses the shutter.

Now he is in Africa, working in a small community. He raises his hammer and strikes a nail into the board. He is building a house for the people. He hopes that it will go a long way, but it may very well be torn down. The humanitarian tourist. He does not know if he is helping, if he is needed, or if he is wasting his time, but he continues to hammer each nail, continues to raise walls, continues to smile. Someday, he will leave this place, but not now. Someday, these people may or may not forget him.

He is typing furiously on his typewriter, the rewarding clacking of the keys rapidly filling the room. The writer. He is working on his next novel. So focused is he that he doesn't notice the hours drift away. The pages stack up, the sun sets. He knows that this...is...it. This is the culmination of his writing. This book will no doubt outsell

not only his previous book, but every other book within the genre. But he doesn't stop to think about that--he is immersed in his character's lives.

He is standing in the front of the class, 40 students stare at him blankly. The teacher. He tries to communicate with the students, but they quickly lose interest in him and continue their own games to pass the time. He tries drawing pictures on the board, but to no avail. He doesn't know how much longer he can continue this career. The bell rings mercifully, and he leaves the classroom, shoulders slumped, to hide in the teacher's room.

He is sitting alone in his apartment, on a computer. The television is on, but he doesn't watch the program. The computer is connected to the internet, and he is barely aware of the articles he reads. The reality. He waits for the time to pass, for one day to bleed into the next. He waits for his reality to become something more, for a change in his life. He waits.

