

The old man leaned on his gnarled cane as he gazed at the others milling around him and at the gates looming ahead. A worn, patched backpack weighed him down and contributed to his stooped, hunched posture. He prepared himself for a long wait, but was not daunted because a long life had taught him to be patient and stoic.

He grew up on a dairy farm in rural Pennsylvania and left at age 17, before graduating high school, knowing that he needed to see the world. Of course, he had intended to settle down when this travel lust was satisfied, but that time never came. He remained a wanderer his entire life, traveling from Mexico, to Bhutan, to Italy, and countless rural villages and vibrant cities, never spending more than a few months in one place. Odd jobs allowed him to live modestly with no extra money to spare. But the thrill of exploring unknown places, of meeting exotic new people, made any inconvenience worthwhile.

When he became too old to live in this carefree way, he returned to familiar places where he was welcome to stay with old friends. He never had his own family or a place to call home, but he died a happy man, reveling in memories of climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, exploring a bustling market in Calcutta, and sipping espresso at a café in Florence.