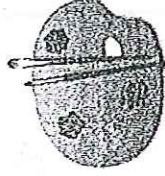


### My Artistic Adventure

When I was a child in Ireland, I went to bed late, and I could not sleep past six. One morning, I found a Spanish television show with a French man who was painting a beautiful countryside with oil paints.



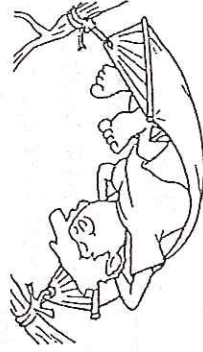
Right then, I began watching this show. With his quiet voice he explained his natural way of painting, and he quickly made trees and rivers, simply by moving his hand across the paper. He made it look simple and easy, so I thought I could do it by myself.

Every Sunday morning, I would try to paint what he was painting on the screen, but I needed oil paints to make my paintings as beautiful as his. I could not buy oil paints; I was only seven, and my parents would not buy them for me. Then I decided to use my mother's cosmetics and paper for my painting. I was ready to paint my first picture.

After my mum saw what I did with her things, I was told I could not paint again. This put an end to my idea of using food the next time to make a picture. After a while, I stopped watching the French painter. It was difficult for me to simply watch him when I was unable to paint my own pictures.

### Jonathan's Trip to Colombia

I went to Colombia last summer. My journey began on the Caribbean coast and ended on the border with Ecuador. Colombia is a splendid country, extremely diverse and full of wonderful people. I will tell you why.



In South Colombia there is a city called Pereira; just outside you can find a track where you will see the farm Villa Maria - a hidden paradise that takes a long time to get to. It is a working coffee farm located in the middle of a valley. Coffee and plantain grow as far as the eye can see. The farm is made up of the house and the processing plant. The family business has guests at the house for just \$45,000 a night. This includes 3 home cooked meals a day, a swimming pool, and as much coffee as you can drink. The scene is quite unbelievable. Bamboo chairs rest on the corners of the Villa, mangos hang from the trees, parrots and birds fly wild.

A wonderful man named Hector who runs the farm is happy to show guests around the coffee processing plant. By day, the only sounds are of the horses coming down the valley side carrying food. By night, the wildlife comes alive, and depending on the time of the year - thunderstorms offer a spectacular light show. For those who wish to escape, Villa Maria is the answer.

This is just one attraction of many in Colombia. I could write pages on the country and not get bored. I graduate next year and I can't wait to return to this beautiful country. Some of those reading may be stimulated to do the same.