While I spent half of every weekday in the kitchen preparing supper for the group, I found time in the mornings and on weekends not only for my writing project but also to explore the island and learn new skills such as driving a tractor (even backing it up onto the wharf with the trailer attached) and operating a lawn mower. I also helped Ryan and Sheela band and weigh with the Savannah Sparrow nestlings and participated in the end-of-season sweep of the Shire with Claudia, Elizabeth, and Claire for new Storm-Petrel burrows. Some of my favorite Kent Island mornings were spent on the South Hill with Kasey spotting sea birds in the tidal wake. I often gathered wildflowers in the North and South fields to make bouquets for the dining table, the lab, and even the outhouses. My writing changed substantially from what I originally proposed because my expectations for what daily life on the island would be like did not match what I found when I arrived. In addition to translating about a dozen poems thematically related to my project from Spanish to English, I wrote thirty-four original poems inspired by my Kent Island experience and a short fictional piece based on my time in the kitchen. Several of my poems were written in connection with specific images from Monica’s photography work and will be included in her magazine. I had a great time cooking every day, often starting bread in the mornings and enjoying entire afternoons working, chatting, and listening to music with a new sous chef every day. I feel extremely fortunate to have had a brand-new kitchen to work in. The six-burner gas stove and enormous oven were amazing to work with, and the cabinets were well-stocked with everything from incredibly well-seasoned cast-iron skillets to shiny, brand new turning spatulas and even a hand mixer and a food processor. We could get most any ingredient we wanted from the Grand Manan Save Easy, even fresh ginger and coconut milk for my favorite Jamaican dishes. While some days I felt frustrated with my project or overwhelmed in the kitchen, things always worked themselves out and I learned more this summer than I have in any other of my life and had some unforgettable experiences as well.

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