My second summer on Kent Island proved just as adventurous and enriching as the first. I was cooking once again, but my mornings were spent not writing poetry but rather working on a blog. The blog, Island Kitchen, focuses mainly on my activities in the kitchen but also features writing about and photos of island life as a whole and even includes guest posts from the island’s other residents. I wrote posts every weekday and one for each weekend, and often included recipes for dishes that I, with the help of many talented sous chefs, prepared over the course of the summer.

For the beginning of the season, I had the great privilege of living in Fog Heaven. Waking up with the light of the sunrise and the sound of the gulls every morning was wonderful, and for the latter portion of the summer I stayed in the Hodgson House, which is equally quaint and cozy and features the sounds of petrels calling through the trees and purring in their burrows in the late evenings. Some of the highlights of my time here were our group excursions, especially the trip to Machias-Seal Island and the whale watch. At Machias-Seal, I was delighted by the charismatic puffins and razorbills that nest among the rocks and by the experience of meeting and chatting with the researchers who nest in the buildings.

The whale watch was even more exciting than it was last year, in large part because this year’s experience involved a close and prolonged encounter with an actual whale. Everyday life on the island was exciting in its own ways as well, with swimming in the basin, long walks to the far ends of the island, and games such as tank (a comical Kent Island tradition involving blindfolds) and ultimate Frisbee keeping our evenings lighthearted and fun.

My favorite side project of the summer was the construction of an authentic earth oven. After reading a book on the subject, I and many of the other islanders gathered rocks, sand, and mud and set about building a place to bake wood-fired bread for future Kent Islanders to enjoy. The process went beautifully, and when we were ready to dig out the sand form that had been supporting the dome we were thrilled by the anticipation. The oven promptly fell in on itself. At first I wanted to give up on the project, but my co-builders convinced me to persevere and we picked up the pieces (literally) and started again, rebuilding the entire oven in a single evening session. The lesson in perseverance was so valuable and the loss of time so negligible I can honestly say I’m glad our first oven collapsed.