

## *The Other*

I worked for a piano and organ dealer in Mesa, Arizona, giving at-home music lessons to anyone who bought an instrument. This gave me the blessing of personal friendships with people of all races, colors and creeds. Tammy Tom was a young teenager, and a pretty fair piano student. She was like her Dad – friendly, and direct. Once I mentioned that her home always smelled like perfume. She said that was because Americans think Chinese people smell like fish, since fish is a major part of their diet. Always the curious one, I replied, “what do I smell like?” She blushed, then, “well... uhhm... kind of like old... meat, like hamburger.” I laughed, thanked her for her honesty, and somehow got the lesson going again.

I consider that to be one of the most helpful conversations I have ever had. As Bobbie Burns wrote, “...to see ourselves as others see us.”