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## simply stated blogger contest

A *Real Simple* reader joins Simply Stated for the month of October to share her stories of friendship.

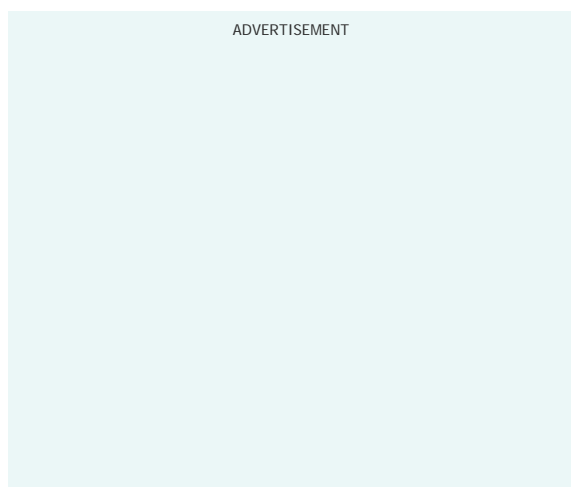
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**Finalist: Shelly Miller**  
August 31, 2011 at 10:07AM  
by [Simply Stated Blogger Contest](#)

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### A Dusty Road to Friendship

Squeezed together on the bench seat of an old van, Speciose and I couldn't help knocking into each other as we bounced over potholes, swerved around pedestrians crowding the red clay roads of Kigali, Rwanda. She speaks Kinyarwanda to someone on her cell phone, clothed in vibrant African dress, hair braided like a piece of art.

I only know one language and this woman, living in a third world country, can speak four. I am one of several visiting Americans shifting through her world, fascinated by her skill in translation and bartering.

We eat lunch at separate tables on a crowded terrace overlooking the metal roof skyline of the city. I notice a faraway look; she picks at her food quietly. It leaves me curious.

On my last day in Rwanda, during a final embrace she reveals what haunts her. "The children are starving and we have no way to feed them. Do you think you can help," she asks hesitantly.

I accept the challenge and together, over five years, we manage to help sustain eighty children – orphaned in the genocide and living in a village of child-headed households. Her courageous question is the seed for our blooming friendship.

Years later, on her first visit to America she sleeps in my guest room, soaks in a bubble bath for the first time. We share concerns for our children, laugh about picking up after our husbands, shop at Target. Surprised by what we share in common despite our individual circumstances.

Last fall, I find myself seated across from Speciose sharing a meal at her own dining room table, surrounded by her three children. I am thankful for that courageous question those years ago.

*Shelly Miller is a freelance writer in Pawleys Island, South Carolina where she lives with her husband,*

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daughter, and son. You can read more of Shelly's writing at [Redemption's Beauty](#).

Read more entries and vote for your favorite in our [Simply Stated Blogger Contest](#).

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## comments

17 comments

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**Angela Stanley** · Teaching Leader at Shepherd's Heart Prison Ministry

Shelly...I'm crying as I read this...thanking the Lord for being such an awesome Networker, putting the two of you together, joining your hearts in order for you to come together to feed His Beloveds in Rwanda!

Reply · 3 · Like · September 6 at 8:29am

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