



Voices & Visions

***The UCONN OLLI
Annual Review***

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Volume 3

September 2013

The 2012-2013 OLLI Review Editorial Committee

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With special thanks to UCONN, Brian Chapman, Director of OLLI, Rita Quinn, Assistant Director of OLLI, Richard Fogg, President of OLLI, and the OLLI Leadership Council for their support, guidance and encouragement.



UCONN
WATERBURY

Cover painting excerpt *Dandelions* by Bridget Grady
Back cover painting excerpt *Sea and Clouds* by Jean Hosier

From the Editors

OLLI programs across the country annually publish journals of their student work. We are proud yet humbled that our OLLI Review is a continuing part of the OLLI family of annual publications. We would be remiss if we didn't acknowledge that this Review has its seeds in the many classrooms filled with enthusiastic learners and committed presenters. It is the “*voices*” of persons in those classes and the “*visions*” of what is seen through the artistic eye of students, that gives rise to the content of this publication.

This annual review provides OLLI students a place to share their passions, stories, creativity, artistic talents and discoveries. As a place where our *voices* and *visions* are highlighted and shared, this publication demonstrates the aim of OLLI—learning for the joy of learning, encouraging creative expression, and keeping in touch with a larger world.

The Editorial Committee is continually at work. As one academic season closes, another begins with the anticipation of new creations by OLLI students and the request for submissions repeats itself. The response to our call for submissions for the Fall 2012—Spring 2013 season was heartening! The willingness of OLLI members to share their passions inspires and motivates us to commit ourselves to this third annual OLLI Review. In compiling this publication, we continue to build and expand upon the foundation presented by our first annual publication in 2011. We also draw from our own backgrounds as presenters, teachers, writers, and students. We review with admiration the prose, poetry, artwork and photographs that were submitted.

It has been a wonderful undertaking to shape this third volume of ***Voices and Visions***, the UCONN OLLI Annual Review 2013. We thank every contributor, and hope you will enjoy reading this edition and that it will inspire and delight you.

The Editorial Committee
September 2013

From the Director

Dear OLLI Members and Readers,
Congratulations to all the contributors and editors of the exemplary third published edition of *Voices and Visions*. Joseph Campbell is quoted as saying, “The job of an educator is to teach students to see the vitality in themselves.” The works in this publication demonstrate the vitality, depth, and creativity of the members of OLLI at UConn. I am enormously pleased to see the diversity and volume of submissions that have been sent in 2013. You are all to be congratulated many times over! Many OLLI Presenters are to be commended for encouraging, coaching, and inspiring the works featured within these pages. Equally as impressive is the dedication and endless number of hours put forth by the editors of this publication. I attended one of the numerous meetings that this group of individuals dedicated to editing and to say I was humbled is an understatement. This fine group of individuals cultivate, receive, sort, assemble, read, review, edit, digitize, and format all submissions. Through dozens of meetings over of many months the final result is simply a work of art. Finally, I express deep gratitude to all the individual donors to the OLLI Sustainability Fund, whose generosity supports this publication. As I have said many times, the best ideas come from members—this publication is 100% member-inspired and member-driven!

Brian G. Chapman, Ed.D.

Director of Outreach at UConn Waterbury and
Director of The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Connecticut

From the President

We give our thanks and congratulations to the contributors and editors of this publication for again giving our membership the inspiration of OLLI creativity. *Voices and Visions* is a vital part of OLLI at UConn, and for those who enjoy its pages, a lasting, portable treasure.

The arts are alive at OLLI, and *Voices and Visions* is a testament to their vitality and to the variety to be found in the hearts, minds, and experiences of the OLLI membership..

Richard K. Fogg

President of OLLI/Waterbury

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Voices

The Writing Lady

(On the night of December 19, 2011, two thieves stole an iconic bronze statue of a seated lady writing on a granite pedestal from the historic Riverside Cemetery in Waterbury. They sold it for scrap. Its pieces have been recovered.)

I was icon, Sybil, prophetess
sequestered here
one hundred years
at
Riverside,
my back against the world
facing
the blank granite tablet,
pen in hand.

Seated sideways,
face turned toward destiny,
I wrote the words,
“Yet shall he live....”
The thought trails off—
incomplete, suggestive.

I was like the romantic
Lady of Shalott:
they saw my back;
they viewed my words
but could not see my face.

Now my severed head,
broken limbs,
shattered breast
sit in a box
in a shed.

Kidnapped,
mutilated,
left for scrap,

they found my fragments
and placed them in a cardboard coffin.

No longer
seated on my pedestal,
the caretakers can
turn my head
to gaze upon my face
and wonder
at the serenity
of those blank eyes
and silent lips.

Philip Benevento

My Personal Provence

I lie awake in the early morning hours.
My room is in a 16th century hotel.
The twelve foot ceilings caress hand hewn wooden beams.
Wooden shutters with iron latches are now ajar,
Letting a gentle breeze bathe my body,
While I'm serenaded by myriads of songbirds.

I am in Provence whose essence was immortalized
By Cezanne, Picasso, Chagall and many Impressionists.
The light, the color propagate a sensuality
That expands time and experience.
Gifted artists captured this sensuality.
I can only memorialize my personal experience.

Cobblestones, narrow winding streets
Lead to relics of antiquity.
Abandoned theaters, coliseums and forts
Once securing gladiators and knights in armor
Now seek a present day role.

During the day people sit in open air cafes
Taking time to converse with each other
About the issues of the day,
While consuming fresh produce
Gifts of the fertile countryside.

In the early morning light
I refuse to close my eyes.
I absorb the scene of the open portal.
Poplars embrace wisteria vines which cover the breakfast garden and
Emit a sweet scent to compliment the chorus of the birds' morning call.

During such moments sensual experiences
Converge to effect a heightened awareness.
My hyperawakefullness is not insomnia
But an explosive sensitivity producing a euphoria
A media for creativity and extreme pleasure.

Ira Mickenberg

Soup Kitchen

They stood outside
Smoking, talking, hanging out.
Disheveled, forlorn, isolated
Men and women whose stomachs ached.
Tipsy heads from low blood sugar
Or high blood levels of what shouldn't be.
These are the homeless, the hungry.
Societies cast off, no security
No jobs, no homes, no **self esteem**.

They wait patiently for 11:00AM
When they receive a home cooked meal.
Food grown and prepared by others
Seniors, college students, all volunteers
Caring and working for others.
Peeling, scrapping, cutting vegetables.
Boiling, baking seasoned treats.
Washing pots, trays and knives.
Drying utensils and promptly reusing them.
Paid with an infusion of **self esteem**.

A volunteer carries out
A plastic bag of debris.
He is intercepted by one of the downtrodden
Who takes the bag and tosses it.
It follows a long arc
Despite its heavy weight
And finds its mark
Directly into the dumpster.
The hungry man receives a heartfelt "thank you",
Feeding his **self esteem**.
A hunger of the highest priority
Before his stomach is satiated
With the one decent meal for the week.

Ira Mickenberg

light

it wasn't rain alone
or darkness
at the end
of day

or the smell of sadness
in the air
that brought
back the thought
of you.

something else—something
sudden and indisputable
breaking
through time's protective
barrier

some ineffable something
brought you back
shining
a light
on
all
of those buried
hurts.

Philip Benevento

Miss Shea

Classic '50s pose—
crimson jacket, matching skirt
white blouse
a string of pearls.

She weaves magic—
not just Keats or Chaucer
but that awful
Walter Scott—
making
Rebecca and Rowena come alive.

There is
insistence
in her measured, cultured voice
that this stuff
has something to say—
that flesh and blood
exist upon a printed page.

She makes us see
that we can see.

Philip Benevento

Off We Go These Feet and I...

We walk, we run, we skip, we jump, we kick a stone.
These are great things I have these feet.

Cross country we go, we hike, we explore, we get dusty and wet,
we've been hot, we've been cold, and we've blistered and ached,
these feet and I....

To school, to church, to camp, to work.
We have walked into baptism and we walk together a faith journey,
We've gone through surgery and survived, now blessings bestow
these feet and I....

We've walked through Jello, yes we have, we've played and escaped.
Onto a plane, a train, a ship, and a car,
to new ventures they carry this excited and anxious body, up hills
and down rivers of foreign lands,
these feet and I....

They've done an Irish Jig, tapped to a German folk song,
swayed to an Italian lyric.
They've felt the cold ground of Russia and crossed a bridge from
Buda to Pest
these feet and I....

Now ready we are these feet and I, for this winter we go to the cold
of Europe.
Christmas Markets that await in Frankfurt, Bratislava and Prague.
They will lead us to ride on the Ferris Wheel in Vienna.
Then to return to the terra firma we love....home is best
for these feet and I.

Betty Salerno

These Hands.....

These hands have held a child, a newborn, a toddler, a teen, and an adult.

They have knitted, sewn, painted, baked, built furniture, tickled, fed.
They have touched and they have shared, they've been gentle and been firm.

They have ached, tingled, blistered and bled.

These hands have felt the spirit move and they have felt pain.
They've held with joy a new born and they've held with sadness
a dying loved one and felt the gentle rub of a thumb that says
“ I know you are here”.....

These hands have taught a child to hold a crayon, a spoon, a book, an ice cream cone,

a screwdriver, to throw a ball, and yes, to hold another.

They have burped a tiny back, wiped a tear, braided hair, tied a bow,
spit on a tissue, and with scowled resistance quickly cleaned, the dirty face of her child.

These hands have taught, they've encouraged,
they've consoled.

They have prayed and clapped in joy and love.

They've touched a forehead to feel for a fever.

They have smoothed the veil for a bride.

These hands have held a young girls hand-
her arm, trampled by a horse, the girl lies in fear,
panic sets in, afraid....

these hands reassure, gently holding on to a grip so strong.

Tears, sobs, then a quiet peace, it's over the bandage is changed.

Deep are the brown eyes that now seem warm.

As the last tear falls and a small smile appears,
no words are spoken.....these hands are now squeezed to say 'thank you'.

These h have accomplished much, but mostly they have touched in life
and let go in death.

They have been young and are now old.

These are my hands, they show my heart and they tell my life.

Betty Salerno

A Day in Our Lives

She stood there
Taking it all in
Blown glass
Diligently shaped
Infused with color,
Mesmerized.

She walked around
Checking the reds
Then the whites
Olive ciabatta bread
Cheeses unknown
One of each was chosen.

Again on the road
Peeking through tall trees
Finding cottages by the water
Summer residences for city people
Wishing one was hers.

Back at the old inn
Sitting in the reading room
They poured the chianti
Sliced the ciabatta
Then the cheese
Toasting life as it is.

Marie T. Maag

Whether the world needs more novelists is a matter of opinion.

Richard Marks in *Thinks...*
by David Lodge

what? another novel?
how many stories can i read?
how many bookshelves
do i need?

the trees used to create books
is way too much. soon i will be singing,
"where have all the forests gone!"

now, like most people, i like to read
a good story. one that entertains me.
one i can pick up and put down
as time provides.

but, time is not on my side.
i must work, care for my everyday responsibilities,
and, of course, get a fair amount of sleep.

so, writers, do your best.
create stories that grab me
at the onset. Then, time is given.
And, we'll keep our trees.

The Bookstore

Marie T. Maag

Millions of creative minds
Stand side by side
Snapped to upright position
While pokey perusers
Leaf themselves
Through millions of ideas

Nancy Grady

I don't want to end up simply having visited this world.

Mary Oliver, from *When Death Comes*

When death comes
I shall be on my
way to that place no one
Knows for sure.

I don't want to feel
Anything was lost to
Me in the wasted
Moments. And, there
Were many.

It's only when we
See the presumed end
Of the road that we
Try to hurry, to cram
Past opportunities
Into an hour, a day, a week.

Looking ahead to this
end, knowing there are
Many ideas I need
To pursue, I breathe
Deeply, I plan.

Marie T. Maag



The Light Turns Red

Sixty-something,
with hair more gray than brown,
she sits in traffic
and stares ahead.
She's running errands and running late
and knows that stoplights have no power over time.

Then
a glimpse of yellow
a glance to right –

On a school bus
sits the brown-haired girl
gazing out a window.
She's holding dreams and holding tight
and believes that dreams come true with time.

And for a moment
their eyes meet
in greeting
and in memory.

Who is she – was she – will she be?

The light turns green.

Catherine Capuano

Emergence

In the small spaces between love and reality
the high peaked questions of immortality
Sing the psychic sunspots in my mind's eye,
and the question becomes:
If I am not what I once was
who have I become,
And which direction is tomorrow?

II

The house is empty-
a shadow of its former self;
And the shell of memories it still holds
is not as distinct as it once was.
I've discovered that the lines that define me
aren't as distinct either.
My invisible ink has disappeared
With the faint outlines of the real me
Emerging at last.

III

It's the echo of laughter that I remember
like ghosts that fade in and out
Like scenes from a movie or chapter in a book –
But wait - those are real;
They captured my heart in lives
that soared like eagles above the rest.
I hear them and smile for the sound they make
bumping against my heart and whispering tomorrow.
Do they know that I believe them
when they dreamtalk?

Susan Dantino

Fractal

I am waiting to be discovered
in the canyons of deep recognition
illuminating my necessity to be.

I am a self-reference -
developing my own infinite diversity
sitting on my back porch.

I am a surprise -
the only route to discovery
that vibrates with new learning.

I am a part of the dance
the universe compels me to move in,
so that I might know that

one

perfect

moment

when I am Discovered.

Susan Dantino

Called to the Headmaster's Office

*Just look at him.
Eyes like his father,
Smile like his mother,
Slightly overweight teenage body,
Slightly arrogant teenage gaze,
He sits comfortably
In the straight-backed chair.*

*All eyes are on him.
He admits what is known
But can't be proved.
He has smoked pot.
He has used LSD.*

*There will be no penalty
Today.*

Harriet Fotter

The Phoenix

11 a.m. The hour of counseling concludes.
Questions asked and answered.
Memory mined for reasons for the unreasonable.
How did this happen?
When did the ruin of a marriage begin?

The risk of visiting the past is losing the future.
And yet today a vision comes, a whisper of possibility.

They leave the office together.
He, focusing on each step, finding the keys, opening the car door.
She, imagining a new morning and suddenly filled with power,
Becomes too large to share the car.

Harriet Fotter

My Father's Shoes

How small they were:
Only size 10.
My father was a small man.
A fact that often surprised me.

When he died,
I picked from the boxes of discarded clothes,
Some sweaters, a jacket or two,
And his winter boots.
I gave the sweaters and boots to my friend.

For years, memories of my father returned
In winter with the cold winds
As my friend would blow into the office
Wearing a warm sweater and my father's boots.
I liked seeing the boots, serving another.
A reminder, like a photograph,
Or the old t-shirt that I wear to bed.

Today the email came, winters after:
"Dear Harriet,
I got some new winter shoes the other day.
I'd worn down your Dad's shoes so badly
They really weren't practical anymore.
It was an honor to walk in his shoes all these years...
I'll miss them.
Shalom, Jim."

Harriet Fotter

Drifting

I have a friend
who drinks dry white wine
and listens to mellow jazz
who smiles away the sudden aloneness
that parting brings
when there's no more time to spare

I am grateful that you took the time
To find my meaning in your eyes
In my words that spoke your name

You amplify the rhythm of the sea
Impatient for the beginning to start again
Your mind distant and uncertain
A thousand miles away

I have a friend
who touches me warm
and calls me *cher* now and then
who laughs away those melancholy blues
that parting brings
when love runs out of time to spare

Mary Ellen Joncyk

with respect to e. e. cummings

anyone lived in a pretty how town
dying the day he was born
everyone up saw anyone down
and noone had time to mourn

through life he died and death he lived
and grew none every day
sun's rays through rain clouds sieved
kept anyone's life at bay

someone loved anyone yet
more than everyone could
somehow someone could not forget
that anytime anyone would

so someone married anyone
and anyone's any day life
became a something to someone
became a he and a wife

time came, time went,
sometimes, time stood still
on borrowed time was time lent
on wasted time to kill

someone loved anyone yet
anything comes not from nothing
so everything anyone tried to forget
from nothingness turned into something

so anyone died in a pretty how town
leaving the day that he came
and someone cried anyone down
and noone was ever the same

chuck miceli

**A Brief History
Of Early 21st Century
American Politics**

Foreign fiascos,
Domestic doldrums,
Political posturing,
Solution pollution.

Chuck Miceli



Never were

In a world where flowers
never were
bees and butterflies
never were
just for those who claimed they
never were
only for flowers' beauty and bliss that
never were
for a world where flowers
never were.

Charles M. Corden

The Wintery Woods

Driving through the wintery woods
One sunny but frigid afternoon
I begin to ponder my damaged goods
Before they get too serious . . . too soon.
Then observing, the skeletal trunks race by
Silhouetted against the snowy surface
Reaching for the icy blue sky,
Giving me solace.
My soul clears.

Charles M. Corden

ME

When I was born, I was given a name and a nickname and titles, and after that, titles and titles and titles, etc., etc.

I was the first child, a daughter to Edward and Edna, the first grandchild to Isaac and Sophia, then the older sister to Andrew. Then a kindergartener, a first grader, a student, a friend, a cousin, a high schooler, a college student, a girl friend, a fiancée, a married woman, a mother and a mother-in-law and grandmother and, in between, a bookkeeper, a volunteer, an organization officer, a member of lots of organizations, volunteer again, gardener, knitter, needle pointer, and on and on and on.

Today I am a widow, a senior citizen, and all this time, I wanted only one thing.

To be ME.

Allyne "Pij" Kadish

The Final Battle

In a far off land,
Where darkness engulfed a firebase ---
Abandoned by brass
Resting comfortably behind the lines --
Draftees hugged the mud and grass
Afraid and waiting
For death's final embrace.
They looked at one another
And began to snake toward
A protective hillside outcropping:
Each new warrior showing his fear
Of a sudden

Searing
Slashing shot in the ass
The darkness and the silence ---
Interrupted sporadically
By gunfire from the hunted and hunter
And cries in the jungle night ---
Encircled and confused the Americans
While protecting the enemy
As they approached their prey.

The radio man desperately
Attempted to establish contact
With someone
...Anyone.

No radio contact was received.
A grenade burst a few yards away
Shattering the silence and
Hurling body parts in the air.
The platoon leader responded
By discharging his machine gun
And exhausting his ammo.
Two minutes later, a shell struck the firebase
Killing three men
And destroying the remaining ammo.

The surviving members of the platoon,
 Isolated and adrift,
 Waited for the final battle.
Dark figures silently emerged from the reeds
And rushed the hill for the final fight that ended
In a face-to-face,
 Hand-to-hand confrontation
Sending the throwaway men of the lost platoon
 To their deaths ...
To be remembered only by their names
Chiseled on stones
 In a far off land.

Charles M. Corden

Choices

January moonlight casts snake-like shadows
Over the brightened snow,
Creating a black and white world-
Beautiful, colorless and cold.

How different is October,
With its warm winds,
Its red and gold and orange leaves
Boasting of the harvest!

So it is with life.
Do we live it like October
Or will January's
Ice suffice?

Bob Grady

Blue Moon*

Roaring down the runway at Johnnycake,
The little Cherokee lifted off into the crystal sky.
Fairweather clouds to the west
And high cirrus above
Blocked out the sun fleetingly.
Shadows on the ground
Carved out the hills and valleys.
As the plane rose higher,
The autumn colors shone brilliantly
In the late afternoon sun.
The perspective from the sky
Sharpened the trees outlining the ridges.
The horizon stretched at least fifty miles.
Flying toward the west,
I watched the sun sink behind the distant hills
Among a myriad of oranges and reds.
Turning south, on my left,
Rising over the eastern hills,
Ballooned a magnificent full moon,
The second this October month.
I thought:
Where else can you see such sights
Except from the cockpit of a plane?

It really was
Once in a blue moon.

Bob Grady

**two full moons in one calendar month*

October 2011

October's half over.
The colors haven't arrived, yet.
Orange pumpkins grimace for Halloween,
Except for those rotting in the fields.
The usual red maples are muted.
Dull greens and grays predominate,
The golds seem tarnished.

Crops came up sparse.
Too much rain, they say.

Perhaps.

Maybe this fall's like
The world.
People hurting,
Rainy days and confusion
Darkening the mood,
Making winter's approach
Foreboding.

Halloween

There's time yet,
Hopefully,
For the colors
To brighten the world,
A bit.

The pumpkin was
So delightfully lumpy --
A country bumpkin
Waiting to be adopted!

Bob Grady

Its grotesque shape
Was the reason for most refusals.
I took it home
Precisely because
It possessed some truth
I simply had to make my own.

Nancy Grady

Nonet 1

We all want to know that we matter, (9)
that our time here served some purpose. (8)
Life brings so many questions (7)
as we search for meaning. (6)
The roads are many. (5)
Which one to take (4)
is often (3)
a coin (2)
toss. (1)

The Choice

Containment
Behind these
Prison walls
Where no
Sun shines
Falling
Into the
Darkness
To look into
Your soul
You have
A choice
To break out
And find
Your own
Happiness.

Marjorie Fitzgerald

Denise Whelan



Nonet 2

Ah – wasn't it only yesterday (9)
That we nervously said, "I do"? (8)
You never looked prettier, (7)
I, never happier. (6)
How quickly time flew. (5)
How can it be? (4)
Seventy (3)
Today. (2)
Ahh... (1)

Denise Whelan

Quinzaines (7-5-3)

Time, like a secret lover
Stealing the moments
Soon—over

Worried about everything
Enjoying nothing
Depression

Envy led her to vengeance
Who was she hurting
No one saw

There'll be a wedding today
She's still my baby
Look at her

Evidence tells the story
The mind wonders why
Someone would

Fairy tales are just that
Live in the real world
Eyes wide shut

Forgetfulness more often
A short jaunt downstairs
Total blank

Denise Whelan

Shards, a Godlike Creation

Air, Earth, Water, Fire.
Earth and water, clay to mold and form.
Air and fire, to mold and temper.
The Potter is akin to God.

Youthful clay, supple and plastic,
Responds to touch, push and pull.
The parent potter's hands, gentle, yet strong
Form the living vessel.

The onset: an intense relation between clay and hands,
The clay nothing, the hands all
Upon the spinning wheel, centering
Amorphous mud.

The clay responds and moves to the potter's will.
Growing, opening, revealing its soul,
Defining the space, within and without,
A niche in life's gallery to fill.

Spiraling upward, taking its shape from the potter's mind,
The clay becomes harder to form.
Water, a blessing at first, is now the enemy,
Softening, weakening, collapsing the mass.

Warm air plays upon the pot's skin;
Stiffening, strengthening, hardening.
The potter's hands make certain subtle changes
While the gross form remains the same.

Exposed to the air of the world outside,
The clay dries to its most fragile state.
Waiting to be tested and tempered by the fire of life,
One errant touch might destroy love's work.

Some pots, never tested, sit drab and grey
Upon some out-of-the-way shelf,
Waiting to return to that inevitable dust
From which they came.

Some survive the fire
Only to be cracked and warped because of it,
While others live on in beauty and usefulness,
Paying homage to their creator.

These will leave their marks upon the world,
As the potter stamps or signs his own work,
So, too, will the shattered shards of these vessels
Inform future generations of the way they were.

Richard Kupstis

The Cape Calls

It's the tug of the tide and the sound of the sea;
It's the wash of the wave, that still beckons to me.
For the smell of fresh fish and the salt in the air
Is the call of the Cape that keeps calling me there.

To the cranberry bogs, the grey gulls and soft sand,
To a place where an artist might make a last stand,
Just to sit at the shore painting rock, surf and foam,
With its greens and deep blues, Ah! Now that could be home.

Yet her winters are cruel and her wind how it blows
From the North or the East bringing terrible snows
And the storms eat away at her land, cliff and dune
Just thank God, winter's terror, is ended by June.

For the summer's the time when the Cape is in bloom,
Both with flowers and people all reaching for room.
For a place in the sun, one to grow, one to tan,
Let's save one place for blossoms, another for man.

So remember, O man, what you sow you will reap,
Do not roil or despoil, for this land will not keep.
She's a child of the sea, quite a delicate thing,
And with your interference, her death knell might ring.

So she calls with her beauty and lures with her scent,
And you hear and you heed and if such is your bent,
You will come to her shores, there to run and to play;
Treat her well with respect, or she'll soon die away.

Richard Kupstis

Tides

Hunched in concentration
he crouches and watches,
feet planted ready
as the water glides in,
sliding on its belly
caressing as it goes
moving ever closer
to his outstretched toes.

Out goes his hand
palm facing forward,
"Stop right now!",
a soldierly command,
useless as he knows
there is no one to hear,
find a bit of courage
replace a wave of fear.

Advancing, receding,
slowly gaining ground,
forward, retreat,
a muted battle cry.
Must be a giant
somewhere out there,
tipping the world
toward his curled up toes.

Wide-eyed he watches
this moving water world.
Where does it come from,
what makes it free
to come and go just as it pleases,
racing up the beach now
making little puddles
where the sand lies low.

Now he runs with it
backing up quickly as a wave curls
in.
Plays by the rules and playing the
brave boy,
he finds delight in his new found
game,
lets this lesson linger,
finds what he can trust in,
plays the game smartly
and keeps his toes in.

Betsy Nickerson

Slippers

Find us, find us,
here we are, down here,
tight angled to your night-sleep,
ready at attention as rays of dawn
slide across the floor.

As you rest above us unaware,
caught immobile in the web
of night/day dreaming,
we, and the world, await the rising.
Swing those tootsies over the edge
toward distant lands and into life.
You who dream-stagger
your way into morning,
stand firmly and slip, slip your way
into our caved wooly toes.

Now slowly, snuggled together, we shuffle
forth toward the chamber door.
In comfort and support we cheer
your greeting of a new day.

Your ablutions accomplished, our duty done,
we are released once again to lie
floor-bound 'til the last rays signal
your return and we are once again needed.

Betsy Nickerson

What I See...

What I see is that reach-
 that bumbling part of me that extends beyond my brain;
Imagination bent to the ground,
 but lovely in its grasp of beauty.
I plunge into the air sideways at impossible speeds;
 soaring, skimming, scraping, but never touching the ground;
I'm as green as new spring
 but as old as the dozens of rings that circle my body;
I've entered the dance – sleek and graceful-
 and what I see
Is that reach.

Susan Dantino



The Lily Pad

There is a place...on this blue sphere,
unknown to man but most admired by God
...a spot unsurpassed of beauty known,
a display of glory, oh untouched!

In the depths of the jungle of unspoiled Brazil,
a pond so pure, so clear,
wet and alive...
a "Lily Blooms" on its soft pad,
the beauty oh, so magnificent!

The colors perfectly reflected by mirrored water...
the golden yellow, the pureness white, the green of life...
no eye has seen and unaware...
but there for ONE to know,
TO GLORIFY THE CREATOR SOLE!

Salvatore J. Martone

Letter to Michelangelo

I'm writing to tell you the Sistine Chapel was so crowded
I could barely see your ceiling except for an abundance
of naked cherubs floating on cotton candy clouds.

I did see the centerfold where God breathed life into Adam
through his pointing finger. The scene reminded me
of when my father caught me lighting matches
in the basement as he wagged his large finger at me.

How could you stand it all those years lying on your back
on a hardwood scaffold while oil paint and turpentine
dripped in your hair, on your face, probably in your eyes.

What dedication!

You had a flair for carving gorgeous young athletes
from travertine marble. With their rippling pecs
and generous genitals it's clear you felt a deep physical
connection to their sensual torsos. For example,
the nine-foot tall Florentine David who preens as though
in a photo shoot as he rests before the main event with Goliath.
Looking at the tender Pieta in St. Peter's reduced me to tears.
You certainly pulled out all the stops--Mother Mary cradling
her dead son, Jesus, in her lap, their pain both raw and exquisite.
You demonstrate how sadness and beauty can co-exist through
posture and gesture (and a sharp chisel).

Did I tell you you're my hero, Michelangelo?

Where I come from there aren't many heroes. I wish I could
pull aside the curtain and borrow you for my son's sixth
birthday party. You could show him how to draw faces
and fill out those funny sticks for arms and legs.

Sue Plein

Time Zones

My daughter called last night
from Tokyo.
Ah, March 11th
Tsunami anniversary.
"That was yesterday"
came her words
from a space
thirteen hours ahead
her day just beginning.

This morning the phone rang,
mountain time two hours behind,
my son sitting in traffic
on his way to work
in a snow storm.

Lunchtime call from
Amsterdam son,
six hours ahead he was
watching the sun
set behind gabled buildings.

Four zones of separation
where imagination
leaps distance,
where time is an illusion
of our minds to create
an ordered existence.

The past is memory,
our present is now,
the future not yet.
In the moment we are speaking
present to each other
in the beauty of here,
now is the only moment
that exists.

Betsy Nickerson

Life and Transfiguration

After many changes and transformations,
A new road to a far horizon.
With affection for art and a heavy heart,
I struggle to create, to feel,
To be true and real,
While reconciled to what I must abide.

Gifts From the Sea

Gifts from the sea, pearl of the orient.
Capricious Aquarian, water borne.
My partner in life. Her memory survives.
Persistent, present, and proud.

Quiet beauty flowing from liquid spirit.
Fiercely loving and loyal.
Enduring much pain, yet afraid of the rain.
Bravely embracing her life and its end.

Playing the piano, preparing her lumpia,
Laughing through tears over silly minutia,
Enjoying her lobsters, clams, and calamari,
Watching the sunset, facing the sea,
And smiling at me.

Flowers, Gems, and Memories

A quiet riot of floral color.
Petals open, closed, bulbous.
Deep purples underlying
Red, orange, pink and white.
Flamboyant, vibrant, bright.

The purples shine like faceted amethysts,
Evoking a heart's joyful longing.
A February birthstone, Aquarian laughter.
Gems and flowers fuse their essence,
Conjuring sweet smells and gleaming memories.

Henry Friedman

Turquoise

The Turks are the true eagles
turning slowly but
steadily catching fish.

I am so glad
gladder than I know
or knew before my journey.

I am surprised as at Ephesus
when Mary spoke with serenity
“Here I was.
Here I truly am”

and at Gallipoli where soldiers spoke,
“Here we are, here now,
the sons of the Turks
Our names shall live forevermore”

as the past shouted
Troglodytes, Eremites
Rome, Greece, Mongolia
Hittite, Galatian, Lydian

and resounded
in a vendor on a bridge
with a bucket of small green plums
another, with a gift of blue-eyed amulets

in workshops for pottery and onyx
in leather styled far beyond fine
in intricately woven carpets
that Marco Polo himself endorsed

in a bazaar of 2000 shops
an underground warren
lit by lamps encrusted
with jewels and black metal

selling saffron, silk, tea
purses, shirts, blouses
in Turkish cotton
with Turkish embroidery

in the women as they passed
covered in black or
capped with lavender, turquoise, or
scarlet scarves trimmed with lace

or bare headed in modern garb
directed by men to this stall or that
passing from this path and that
captivated in a way no mall can match

in this country rolling in small quilts of crops
over hilltops of olive, fig, apricot, and pine nut trees
where valleys and cities kiss
and Mongols and Romans meet

where honor is the man in the street
and the woman,
despite her flowing robes
or is it because of them?

Did the others know
they were on a pilgrimage?
The Australians knew
Gallipoli was their Gettysburg

and they cried at the graves
and tributes from the Turks themselves
their boys buried by the Bosphorus
having kept till death

the high point of the latest battle
for Constantine's control.
The Turks won that one
for all of us

these controllers of the seas
where boats and barges stream
beside the white ferries carrying buses
past the mosques and the first basilicas
Of Christian faith.
O yesterday, how beautiful you are

**Dorothy Camarra
(Dorothy Sterpka)**

Out of Order

Spring...To fiddleheads, Frenchman fancy turns

Incredible edible curly green ferns
Look like the head of a fiddle, mais oui
Voila....Validated identity
Scarce, short season, infrequent in store
Seek, ye shall find. Ma knew who, where, why for

French connection.... Sent straight to the source
Beau Bob brought me to Bristol, of course
Greeted by a T-shirt and jeans clad lad
Barefoot, unshaven, good looking. 'Not bad
Mrs. Cormier here? She'll be home in a while
Do come in, the stranger said with a smile

Our handsome host promptly put us at ease
With a welcome gesture...Have a seat, please
With the woman's arrival a'pending
Small talk transpired, a faux pas sending
Do you go to school?, the young man asked me
I'm a high school senior. 'And you wanna' be?

Thought of joining the convent, confessed
Strict-ly speaking, kicked the habit, not professed
Out of order.... My own, I may start
We "C.N.D.s" would sure' stand apart
Short for Congregation of Nutty Dames
My title, Mother Superior. My name?

Mother Saint Nicotine of the Holy Smoke

Fired up, on target, ricocheted, my joke
We'd marry priests, have little altar boys
Choir girls too...blessed bundles of joy
Like paschal candles, we'd waver half lit
Make tap water holy (Boil the hell out of it)

The lady came home, the next thing I knew
Bonjour Madame, comment allez vous?
I'm Mrs. LeBlanc's daughter, so nice to meet you
Her reply, I see you met my son, Father...Who?
A priest, oh no. I had no idea, no clue
Father forgive them, they know not what they do

Anita LeBlanc Siarkowski



A Turn for the Nurse

*We're hiring R.N.s, the ad read
Med' surg' experience a must, it said
Work where you want, when you want, too
Sounded way too good to be true
I applied and interviewed, was on a mission
With a temp' outfit, got a position*

*I knew not what lay ahead
Diverse endeavors, so widespread
Worked three shifts in hospitals, ten in all
Plus thirty-five shops. I was on call
The Motor Vehicle Department too
Utility, insurance companies. 'Whew*

*Agencies love to tell you where to go
And just how to get there...To, not fro
Directions straight from point 'A' to point 'B'
Lost in a fog? Ohhhh' say can you see?
Had you go through stop signs and red lights
Book you 'round the clock, both day and night*

*Schedules went through the change every week
Such variety is not for the meek
Assignments varied in time and place
Where will I go? What will I face?
Choice of shift, advantage I reckon
But who's on first? 'Third? What's on second?*

*Where do I park? Snowed? Get the drift
Depends what facility, what shift
Sure, all elevators have ups and downs
Do I want Lobby, Basement, Main or Ground?
At one facility, mark my word...
On the level...6th floor becomes 3rd*

*The nursing office, so benign
Midst doors and hallways void of signs
Nurse's dress code....We wore white, were proud
Went incognito when not allowed
Report.... taped ahead, accepted as read
Or delivered direct', by mouth instead*

*Beds have their place....Left, right or one through four
A, B, C, D. At times....window, door
Linen....Out of the closet? Can't assume
Could be 'a la cart' or go to your room
Thermometers... 'lectronic or not
Regardless, when you're hot, you're hot*

*Medication cards were by room numbers set
Or could be accordin 'to alphabet
Administration time, when do I pour
9-1-5, 10-2-6 or 8-12-4
Some meds generic, others by brand name
A taste of their own medicine, just the same*

*Unit dose system, conventional way
May not be allowed to do drugs no way
IVs, catheters involve "I and O"
Intake, Output 'for good measure', so
Twenty-four hour totals to tally
At midnight or 7am, rally*

*Narrative nurses' notes, oh no
Get with the times. Go with the flow
According to shift, color coded, on track
Go green, see red, or stay in the black
Current medical records on top, the style
Or get to the bottom of things to file*

*Act professional, keep your poise
Bells, beeps, buzzers....What's that noise
Paging Doctor Firestone, Doctor Red
Doctor Quick or Code 99 instead
Telephone system...Dial direct
Or call the Operator to connect
Worked 11 to 7 one night, you see
Mid-day, the telephone rang. It was for me
Agency calling..... We want to see you
Half asleep, I asked, "Why? What did I do?"
Don't worry; don't rush, when you get a chance
Why wait? Face the music, the song and the dance
To the office, I absconded anxiously
Upon arrival, "Congratulations!" Huh? Why me?
You've been selected "Superstar of the Year"*

'85.... *Highlighted my nursing career*
I was three years deep in the 'pool' by that time
Took the plunge, dove right in, and wrote this rhyme
Reflections of a 'pool' nurse staying afloat
In unchartered waters. Don't rock the boat
A challenge, to say the least, 'all said and done
Strange encounters, adjustment reaction
Pool nursing, not for everyone, 'can be a curse
If worse comes to worst, take a turn for the nurse

Anita Siarkowski

Our Main Squeeze

The 'key' to our intro'? 'Instrumental!
The 'tie' that binds, music. 'Sentimental
From solo to ensemble, the senior band
Accordion school's where we took a 'stand'

Tuned in to each other, both in our prime
Accompanied one other! 'Made time
When we were wed, met 'fore the preacher
Reception music.....Bob's band, the feature

Anita's Mom sent for her 'cordine! 'Cute!
'Figured Bob could borrow his substitute's
Per request for our guests..."Pretty please"
An accordion duet, our main squeeze

To the delight of everyone in the room
A medley of tunes by the bride and groom
Anita, Bob, their boys – have taught 'n played
Bob's Music Center, .still strong 'til today

Accordin' to my notes, the score, 'tis true
It's been fifty years since we said, "I do!"
A two part harmony arrangement
Ad-libbing the rest is our intent

Anita Siarkowski

The Empress Theodora

More than a princess;
Much more than a queen.
An exceptional woman,
Never in between.

Born in Syria-
Constantinople became her home.
With her father she joined the circus;
They played the Hippodrome.

She spent an adolescence
Dancing in disguise.
Soon she learned to captivate the world
With the beauty in her eyes.

Her lowly class was a subject
That many would deride.
Some accused her of being an actress
Who did favors on the side.

A journey took her to Egypt;
A rich man's paramour.
A woman of great substance,
She needed so much more.

Alone in Alexandria
She reached an epiphany.
She became a devout convert
To a Christian heresy.

Then by the strangest set of circumstances
She became the Empress of Byzantium and Rome.
The great Justinian took her as his mistress,
Then elevated her to his throne.

Her radical beliefs were a contradiction
To the emperor's orthodox life.
But she co-ruled an empire beside him-
A most adoring wife.

It was Justinian who resurrected an empire
While Theodora took care of matters at home.
Together they were the greatest co-rulers
The world has ever known.

They built roads, hospitals and churches
For the great benefit of man.
They tamed the aristocracy
And brought Roman law to all the land.

Theodora enacted new laws
That were unheard of in her time.
She made the abuse of prostitutes
A serious civil crime.

Many from the poorest classes
Would the Empress save.
Passing anti-rape laws
Protecting lower-class women and slaves.

In matters of divorce and property,
She improved women's lives.
She changed child custody laws
And prohibited the murder of adulterous wives.

She also built convents
Where homeless women could live.
She was the greatest aid to womankind
That God could ever give.

And when Justinian fell sick with the plague
In the empire's darkest hour,
She took control of the capital
Exercising supreme power.

Theodora possessed the strength
Of even the strongest men.
Her fortitude and character
Would always win out in the end.

She attempted to shape society
In the most humane ways.
While defending those she loved
Till her dying days.

And when she left this earth
She left a better world behind.
She lifted the hearts of men
And the spirits of womankind.

From the most unlikely beginning
She rose to eternal fame.
In Greek, 'God's gift'
Was the literal meaning of her name.

(Theodora, 'God's gift' 500-548 CE, Empress of Byzantium 527-548 CE)

Vincent Casanova

Chicken Soup

Why do the people who make chicken soup
using such foul fowl
that
it remains between my teeth
for hours
pressuring me
to floss?

Nancy Whitney

A Phantom of Delight

I do not wish to go gently into the night.
I shall be as a shooting star in the Milky Way.
I shall laugh, dance, then kiss the world good night.

Who is to say my end is dark as night?
A Wise Woman knows the end is light like day.
I will tiptoe in and turn up the light.

I shall not cry, this is the end of sight.
Picture me dancing, the light upon the quay.
I shall laugh, dance, then kiss the world good night.

Recall my deeds and how they brought me such delight.
I sang and wrote and waltzed my heart away.
I shall be a bright wanderer in the galaxy of night.

Upon my earthly bed, my eyes will be filled with light,
Say a prayer, and bring me a sweet bouquet.
I shall laugh, dance, then kiss the world good night.

.
Painted nails, wing-tipped shoes, a phantom of delight!
Open the gates and I'll dance through the doorway.
I shall be a bright wanderer in the galaxy of night.
I shall laugh, dance, then kiss the world..."*Good night.*"

Nancy Whitney

Going Against The Grain

Going against the grain
The nail bends
The saw binds
Brush strokes show.

Hannibal crossed the Alps on elephants
Orville and Wilbur built a flying machine.
Semelweis washed his hands
Louis believed in germs.

Abraham wore stovepipe hats
Became President
Freed the slaves
Was assassinated.

Alexander taught the deaf to speak
Invented a phonograph
Asked Watson to "Come here!"
Invented a telephone.

They marched in Selma.
Sat-in at lunch counters
Sang "We Shall Overcome"
Led candlelight marches.

Benjamin flew a kite.
Going against the grain
Creates a path
Where before there was none.

Nancy Whitney

Reliance

The Elberta Peach Tree grew tall and sturdy
but the blossoms and fruit were of scant acclaim
while in the same yard not far from Elberta
the Reliance Peach lived up to her name.

In springtime, Reliance was covered in blossoms
like swirls of pink frosting against the blue sky
that turned into golden sweet-tasting peaches
dependably ready by the end of July.

To Elberta was given time and attention,
the needed amount of nurture and care.
While Reliance in summer produced a great harvest
Elberta's gnarled peaches came late in the year.

With Elberta now grown to full width and full height
her branches were blocking the rays of the sun
from reaching the plants growing behind her
seeking the sunlight - tall and spindly each one.

Both trees self-fruitful, independent on their own
not needing each other to cross pollinate,
and Elberta's poor harvest as she blocked the sunlight
all helped me decide what would be her fate.

Early one morning I went out with my saw.
with a few back and forths she was gone,
falling quickly to the side with hardly a sound,
then taken away in the light of the dawn.

Behind where she'd stood the bright rays of the sun
now bathed the flowers and bushes and plants
all thriving together as never before
not stretching, nor straining, their beauty enhanced.

I thought of the action regarding Elberta;
as a practical matter, I knew it was right.
And it seemed to have no effect on Reliance
though the hue of her leaves did not seem as bright.

I became more concerned in early July
though her health had not been in doubt,
for she started dropping much of her fruit
without storms, or high winds, or drought.

During the month she got steadily worse -
that's when I suspected a blight.
Her leaves dried up and fell to the ground.
By week's end she had died, without much of a fight.

I will never know what actually happened.
I believe she stayed true to the name that she bore.
Her reliance was not just in the fruit on her branches,
but in her friendship with Elberta it seems even more.

Tom Melesky

My Mom

Mothers are so stupid.
We secretly mock them.
Old fashioned,
stupid hair styles
and their clothes are not cool.
Ridiculous Eisenhower era notions
Nixon's the one and flag decals
embarrass us in public.
Now as I see my mother fading,
her mind ripe for secret mocking,
I have, in turn become a stupid mother
embarrass my own children
my own mind soon ripe for secret mocking;
perhaps it already is.
And as my mother's mind ripens,
public embarrassment, old fashioned ideas,
Depression and WWII can-do,
her straight spine, cocoa and days at the sea
sway and dance as sweet dreams,
slipping through my sleeping fingers
as waking in the morning
dreams flee.

Jean McGavin

Visions



Anna Ascione



Hank

Harriet Fotter

Prince Island View

Bonnie Stephens





Flowers

Betsy Antonucci

Nefertiti





For Rent

Gen Delkescamp



Peony

Bridget Grady





Gourds

Bridget Grady



Cardinal

Mary Ann Regan

Goldfish

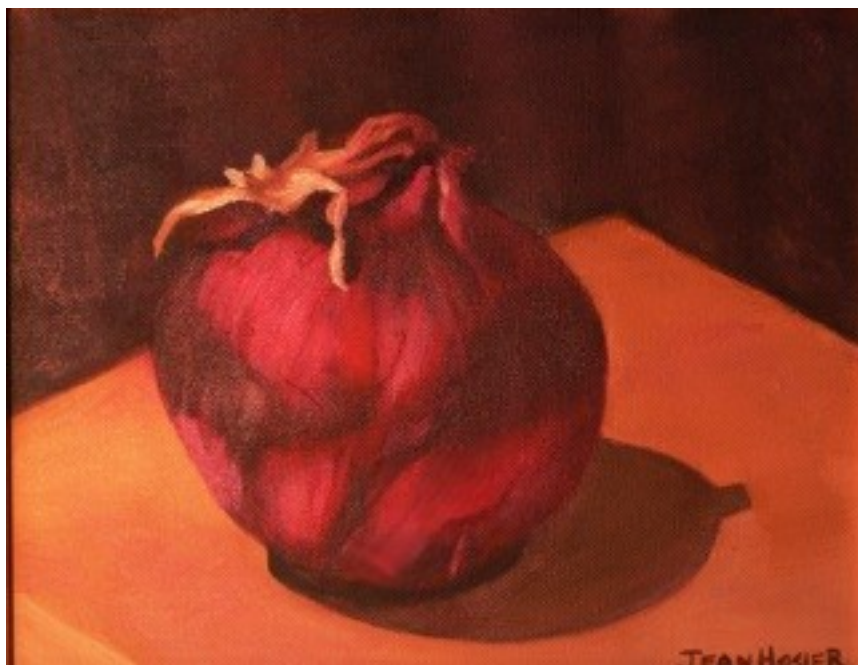


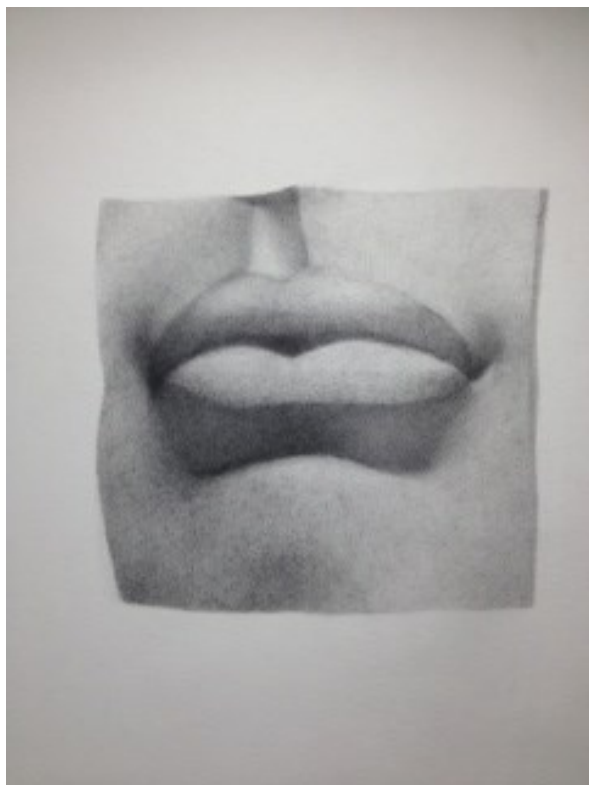


Red Barn

Jean Hosier

Onion





David's Lips

Jean Hosier



Breakfast

Harriet Fotter

Heaven's Work

It was my first day in heaven and I hoped that it would not be my last. Upon arrival, I had been assigned to the snow division of the weather department. Entering the work area, I expected to find clouds, wind, and cold water. Instead, I found a paper shredder. It turns out that snow actually begins as shredded paper tossed gently from above.

In the middle of the workroom sat two stacks of neatly piled paper marked for shredding. There were the performance appraisals of guardian angels now retired and the *to-do* lists of souls who simply could not leave their plans behind. Such a meager supply of paper would not account for the deep and peaceful snow I remembered from my time on earth.

As I pondered this apparent shortfall, in came a parade of boxes, each filled to the brim with paper. The parade was endless, and it was headed in my direction. With a mixture of curiosity and anxiety, I turned to the supervising snow angel and asked, "What's in those boxes?" "Those, dear soul, are the records of sins long since forgiven," she replied.

Thus began my new life as an angel of compassion and mercy.

Catherine Capuano

Once upon a time there lived . . .

But there is no time.

It's left to you

To tell the tale

Unfinished until now.

Assemble all your stories and I will be

Revealed – complete and whole and memory-shaped by each and all of

You.

Catherine Capuano

Moonstruck

For too many days now
I have not uncapped my pen,
picked up my knitting needles,
or tied on my tap shoes.

For too many nights now
I have not even wondered
if the stars are out
or if the moon is full.

I have not given myself
space to explore
beyond an orbit
of calendars, and schedules, and lists.

I have not felt
the magic of making
or the surprise
of becoming.

I have not heard
the world's story
as only the man in the moon
can tell it.

But now I sit,
out of orbit,
with pen in hand,
writing down his story and mine.

Catherine Capuano

Mixed Emotions

Flying overseas always produces mixed emotions in me. Some of the fear revolves around my passport. I check again if I have it. I do. If it were back home in Connecticut, it was too late to return home and retrieve it.

Do I have the drops for my dry eyes? Yes. I only packed three bottles to make sure I'd have enough even though I know it will be available in Jerusalem.

Then there is the nail biting routine. Will my luggage be overweight? It wasn't. Will I get the requested aisle seat? I did. Will the Israeli inspectors really take my bottle of water from me? They threatened but didn't.

There was a little break in the tension when I passed the TSA man carrying my sister's passport. The TSA man said we looked very much alike. My seven-year-old grandson asked how that could be since I had gray hair and my sister had dark hair.

Should we have flown El Al because the Israeli airline uses soldiers as stewards and hasn't had a skyjacking incident in all the years the airline has been flying? But then we saved a few hundred dollars by flying Delta.

The flight seems to be taking forever. While the reality is the flight will arrive at Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv a little ahead of schedule, it seems like we have been in the air for more than 10 hours.

We land. We schlep our suitcases for thousands of meters and we finally clear passport control and walk toward the exit. Will my nephew and niece come to drive us to Jerusalem? Will they find us in the crowd? He was 12 when we saw him last?

I cannot remember if we saw them first or they saw us first, but once we meet, much of the tension melts away. My niece, Chava, , and I have never met, yet we talk easily and seem to have known each other for years. My nephew takes control of my suitcase and suddenly we are home.

Yes, home in Israel. I cannot recite the long history of when the Romans drove the Jews out of their homeland. Eventually my ancestors landed in the Minsk area of Russia. Years later, my grandparents migrated to the United States, the goldene medina, or the promised land. Settling in Israel was not an option for them but now two of their granddaughters had returned, although just for a visit.

Evelyn Marshak

Train to Jerusalem

It is a rainy, blustery day in March when I take the train from Tel-Aviv. Cascades of fat drops roll down the car window, blurring the view. Not a very bright start to a four day visit to Jerusalem.

Half an hour into the trip the sky clears. The sun shines brightly as we ascend through the craggy hills of Judea. Parallel to the train tracks, in a narrow wadi, clear rain water is rushing down. Anemones, cyclamen, and other wild flowers adorn the hills, many blossoming in the crevices of large boulders.

Spring in Israel is short and intense characterized by a profusion of blooming wild flowers and other vegetation. By May, most of the green hills and valleys, from the Golan Heights in the north, to the Negev in the south, become arid. Rain will not fall until November, when nature will again endow the land with her bountiful gifts.

Four days are for me a magical time in Jerusalem. Modern boulevards lead to the walled city, where cavernous, narrow, cobbled streets teem with people of all nationalities. One forgets the strife and religious divisions. There is so much history and tradition ingrained in the ancient, worn by time stones. The City stands alone as a special world, where some homes date to the time of the Crusades and archaeological findings point to glory and terrible destruction through history.

Descending back to Tel Aviv, I decide to take the bus. The weather is much improved and the green hills are dotted with pristine little villages and herds of grazing sheep.

Yet another enriching visit for me to the Golden City on The Hill.

Lidia Bram



A Perfect Beginning

I was a teenager and our family had already made its summer migration from Medford, Mass. to our seaside cottage on Cape Cod. I woke just as the sun began spreading its light on the world. I was wide-awake anticipating what I was about to do so I quietly slipped out of bed and got dressed, being careful not to wake the rest of the family. After a quick breakfast, I went outside to greet the new day.

There was no breeze and I felt the sun's warmth on my face - a perfect morning to do what I loved most. The deep blue sky and glassy sea beckoned me to my small boat moored in the bay. I checked the fuel, placed the seat cushions, and safely stored the life jackets. Then I started the motor, slipped off the mooring cable, and headed out to the wide-open bay. Once clear of the other boats in the basin, the boat and I swiftly glided across the surface of the ocean. The warmth of the sun, the wind blowing in my hair, and the quiet hum of the outboard motor combined to say, "Welcome back."

My first stop was the marina, where the staff provided information about significant changes in the channel and surrounding area. Then I had the bay to myself, to do what I wanted to do and go where I felt like going. I immersed myself in the peacefulness of my surroundings. The basin was mine for the taking and I explored every nook and cranny that looked inviting. Even though I had often made this trip before, there was always something new to see.

No matter how comfortable I felt, I continuously checked my surroundings. Experience is a great teacher and I learned early on to pay attention. Mother Nature is also an excellent instructor. The color of the water indicates depth and bottom conditions. Surface ripples show tidal flow and the location of underwater obstructions. When the wind picks up and causes whitecaps on the waves, Mother Nature says it's time to head home, and you never disobey.

Through the years, many people have asked, "What is it that draws you to the ocean?" For me, it is not a concrete thing. It's like trying to explain an emotion. It is an inner feeling of comfort, being at peace with your environment, living in a familiar place and experiencing contentment. It is being, "at one with the sea."

Francis Escott

A Good Day

I watched old black-and-white family movies. My older siblings looked so young. Phil looked particularly fit and trim. All of them, along with mom and dad and long-gone aunts and uncles were so vibrant, so alive. I marveled at how similar they looked: the genes run strong in our family. It was a good day to watch home movies.

My brother-in-law Eddie called. He asked how I was doing and I said I was ok. With so many brothers and sisters, we were never alone. We were always part of something bigger than ourselves, even after mom and dad had gone. But Phil was the first sibling to go and not nearly the oldest. It felt as if a part of me was missing. Eddie listened attentively, only adding, "I just wanted to say I was sorry to hear about Phil and to make sure you were all right." It was a good day to get a call from Eddie.

Phil's cancer started in his lungs and spread to his lymph nodes and brain. After months of treatments, nothing else could be done. It was only a matter of time. Five of us converged on his house in Long Island. We sent Rosemarie off for a much-needed break while we drew Phil into a daylong session of poker playing. We snacked incessantly, ordered out for pizza, ribbed each other mercilessly, and laughed all day long. It was a good day to visit.

The doctors prepared Rosemarie for the worst. As the cancer attacked different portions of his brain, Phil could lose control of his face muscles. His tongue might droop out from his mouth. He would probably drool uncontrollably. His legs and arms might falter and eventually, he could become incontinent. Phil decided to organize his garage and Rosemarie found him lying in the driveway. Death came quickly while he was at home and on his feet. It was a good day to die.

My son Mike called. He and his wife had a business meeting in Manhattan and they wanted to know where and when the wake would be. They planned to attend before heading back home again. It's always good to have children, but it was an especially good day to be a father.

I looked through the closet for an outfit to wear. The shirt was missing a button. Replacing that button would allow the shirt to continue to serve out its purpose. It was a good day to sew on a button.

It was time to leave and it was still raining and gray outside. It was a good day to say goodbye.

Chuck Miceli

It Takes a Team

The nautical magazine's article described chartering an entire fleet of wooden 12-meter yachts for a weekend of sailboat racing in Newport R. I. The yacht owners were looking for crews! Being a sailor at heart, I sent in my application and was elated when I received my selection notice.

Friday evening was a get-together with finger food and drinks for all participants and their spouses. I was both excited and nervous. Table placards identified our assigned yachts. This was the first time crewmembers met each other and we were surprised to find out how widely diversified we were. There were twelve crewmembers, eleven men and a woman. There were two Argentineans, one Australian, one Dutchman, one from Sweden, and the remaining seven from various states in the USA. This was a challenge. Half the participants had limited English-speaking capability, yet we needed to become a competent crew by Saturday noon.

Saturday and Sunday were reserved for practice and racing. We started with a continental breakfast Saturday morning, then off to sailing practice. After finding our way to the yacht we were given time to thoroughly inspect her (Since most of us had never been on a 12-meter racing yacht before). The captain called a team meeting to explain the conduct of the races, after which we drew our yacht positions from a hat. He stated that all of us knew how to sail as individuals but now we needed to work as a responsive, coordinated and efficient team. It would take some time but when it happened, it would happen suddenly and we would get a feeling of self-assurance and confidence. Before we knew it, it was time to head out to open water. Instruction and practice started as soon as we left the dock. The sky was clear, the sun was out, and most important – the wind was up. Once we cleared the harbor and were free of the other boats, the command came loud and clear, "Set the main and jib." To a sailor, all boats have a distinct personality and our boat definitely did. With the wind at our backs and the main and jib tight, you could feel that this thoroughbred was ready to race.

We practiced all morning. We ran with the wind, made hundreds of turns, learned how to simultaneously set the spinnaker and lower the jib and most important, did all these maneuvers

without falling overboard. Time passed quickly. Then word came from the committee boat that the first race was in 30 minutes. We cleared and put the deck in order and were off to the starting line.

Before the race began, all nine yachts jockeyed for a favorable starting position. Surprisingly, we were not nervous, but you could feel the adrenalin starting to build. At the one minute signal, all the yachts were in position (favorable or not). Thirty seconds to go, all was quiet. You could feel your heart beat, waiting for the captain's command to go. When it came, everyone reacted instantaneously. We tightened the mainsail and jib and the yacht surged ahead. As the yacht heeled over, water raced along the leeward deck. We made a clean start and we were off.

Nine yachts were racing down the course at top speed with just a few feet separating the hulls. After several minutes we all took a deep breath, looked around and saw where the other yachts were. That first look was both magnificent and startling – my god we were close!

The first race was good, we did everything right, made no major mistakes, but did not win. During the first leg of the second race, we broke free of the rest of the fleet. At the approach of the first mark (turn), our yacht was ahead, but another competitor was closing fast. The Captain said, "When we get there first, we're going around and we'll squeeze her out." We rounded the first mark perfectly, cleared the buoy, set the spinnaker, let out the main, lowered and stored the jib successfully and forced the other yacht to veer away. That's when the feeling hit all of us simultaneously. We did it! Everything was right and completely in sync. We had become a team.

The remaining races went off without a hitch. There were a few close calls, but each time the other yachts veered off and gave ground. At the conclusion of all the races, we came in third and missed second by a very slim margin. Somehow, it really did not matter. We had performed as a team and had the time of our lives. We went home with a weekend of unforgettable memories and quite a few black and blue marks.

Fran Escott

Oda a la clase de español

Ode to the Spanish Class

¿Quiénes somos nosotros? Somos la clase de español.

Who are we? We are the Spanish class.

Es viernes a las diez de la mañana y nos encontramos en la clase de español.

It is Friday at ten o'clock in the morning and we meet in the Spanish class.

Somos Patricia Doherty, Erma Florida, Michael Galleano, Patricia Halloran, Judy Lee, James Matthews, Eleanor Regan, Judy Regan, Peter Smith, Pat Syvertsen, y Darrell Williams.

We are Patricia Doherty, Erma Florida, Michael Galleon, Patricia Halloran, Judy Lee, James Matthews, Eleanor Regan, Judy Regan, Peter Smith Pat Syvertsen and Darrell Williams.

Ponemos nuestra imaginación en España.

We place our imagination in Spain,

Aunque seamos de Morris, New Fairfield, New Haven, Newton, Southington, Waterbury, y Woodbury.

even though we are from Morris, New Fairfield, New Haven, Newton, Southington, Waterbury and Woodbury.

Nadie comprende cuánta inspiración y cuanta diversion nos compartimos.

No one understands how much inspiration and how much fun we share.

Otros comentarios de la clase son:

Other comments from the class are:

Mi trabajo antes de jubilarme fue con niños con necesidades especiales en el sistema escolar público.

My work before retiring was with special needs children in the public school system

Yo trabajé de enfermera por cincuenta años.

I worked as a nurse for fifty years.

Recientemente me jubilé. Rehusó atrofiarme ni físicamente ni intelectualmente.

Recently I retired. I refuse to atrophy either physically or intellectually .

Me gusta cultivar mi jardín de verduras.

I like to work in my vegetable garden.

Este verano voy a Pamplano por la corrida de toros "a la" Ernesto Hemingway. Olé, Olé, Olé-I Viva España!

This summer, I am going to Pamplona for the running of the bulls à la'Ernest Hemingway. Ole, Ole Ole - Viva Espana!

Bob, Susan y yo vamos a España para recorrer el Camino de Santiago de Compostela.

Bob, Susan and I are going to Spain to walk the Camino de Santiago Compostela.

Amo España, su idioma, su música, a mi familia, a mi perro Lizzie, los dulces y el chocolate.

I love Spain, its language, its music, my family, my dog, Lizzie, candy and chocolate.

Soy enfermera. Estoy jubilada y yo lo amo.

I am a nurse.. I am retired and I love it.

Me encanta viajar espero ir a España algún día.

I love to travel and hope to go to Spain someday.

Mi esposa y yo celebramos nuestro aniversario de boda, número 48 y mi cumpleaños 73 andando el Camino de Santiago de Compostela. Eso es lo que hizo el viaje tan especial.

My wife and I celebrated our 48th wedding anniversary and my 73rd birthday by walking the Camino de Santiago de Compostela. That is what made the trip so special

Me gusta caminar en la primavera.

I like to walk in the spring.

La oda está terminada pero el deseo de aprender el idioma español continua.

The ode is finished, but the desire to learn the Spanish language continues.

Members of Judy Kollias' Beginning Spanish class



“Ser? O no Ser?”

To Be? Or Not To Be?

Hamlet: Buenos días, Señor. ¿Cómo se llama?

Good morning, Sir. What is your name?

Jean-Paul: Me llamo Jean-Paul Sartre. ¿Y Ud. ?

My name is Jean-Paul Sartre. And you?

Hamlet: Me llamo Hamlet.

My name is Hamlet.

Jean-Paul: Extraño. Hamlet con una “H”?

Bizarre.. Hamlet, with an “H”?

Hamlet: Sí.

Yes.

Jean-Paul: No se pronuncia la “H” en español; es la regla.

You don't pronounce the “H” in Spanish; it's the rule.

Hamlet: No soy español.

I'm not Spanish.

Jean-Paul: ¿De dónde es?

Where are you from?

Hamlet: Soy de Dinamarca.

I'm from Denmark.

Jean-Paul: No me gusta Dinamarca.

I don't like Denmark.

Hamlet: ¿Por qué?

Why?

Jean-Paul: Porque hace frío en Dinamarca. Hace mal tiempo. Está menos de cero grados centígrados. Necesita mucha ropa: guantes, botas, pantalones, una bufanda, un abrigo, un sombrero. “Hamlet” es su nombre o su apellido?

Because its freezing in Denmark. The weather is terrible. It's less than zero degrees Centigrade. You have to wear a lot of clothes: gloves, boots, pants, a scarf, an overcoat, a hat.

Is “Hamlet” your last name or your first name?

Hamlet: Es mi nombre.

It's my first name.

Jean-Paul: ¿Cuál es su apellido?

What's your last name?

Hamlet: No importa. ¿De dónde es Ud.?

It doesn't matter. Where are you from?

Jean-Paul: Soy de Francia.

I'm from France.

Hamlet: No me gustan los franceses.

I don't like the French.

Jean-Paul: ¿Por qué?

Why?

Hamlet: Porque beben mucho vino, y fuman mucho, y piensan que su idioma es el mejor del mundo. ¿Cuál es su profesión?

Because they drink a lot of wine, they smoke a lot, and they think their language is the best one in the world. What is your profession?

Jean-Paul: Soy existencialista.

I'm an existentialist.

Hamlet: ¿Qué????

What????

Jean-Paul: Soy existencialista. Soy filósofo. Pienso en los problemas más grandes de la existencia.

I'm an existentialist. I'm a philosopher, I think about the big problems of our existence.

Hamlet: Tengo muchos problemas. Tengo dolor de cabeza.

I have a lot of problems. I have a headache.

Jean-Paul: Lo siento mucho. ¿Cuál es su profesión?

I'm sorry. What is your profession ?

Hamlet: Soy príncipe.

I'm a prince.

Jean-Paul: Un príncipe no tiene problemas. Es rico. Es famoso. Tiene sirvientes porque no necesita barrer el suelo ni lavar la ropa. Come bien. No trabaja mucho. Tiene muchas novias...

A prince doesn't have problems. He is rich. He is famous. He has servants so he doesn't have to mop the floor or wash the clothes. He eats well. He doesn't work much. He has a lot of girlfriends...

Hamlet: Pero el esposo de mi madre es el hermano de mi padre.

But my mother's husband is my father's brother.

Jean-Paul: Ah, tiene una familia unida!

Oh, you have a close family!

Hamlet: ¡Pero mi tío asesino a mi padre!

But my uncle assassinated my father!

Jean-Paul: ¡Ay, Caramba! ¿Y Ud. Es el hijo de la mujer que es la esposa de su cuñado de ella?

Oh, my God! And you are the son of the mother who is the spouse of her own brother-in-law?

Hamlet: Sí.

Yes.

Jean-Paul: ¡Dios mío! ¿Y Ud. Es el sobrino del hombre que asesinó a su padre?

Oh, my God! And you are the nephew of the man who assassinated your father and married your mother?

Hamlet: Sí.

Yes.

Jean-Paul: ¡Tiene muchos problemas! ¿Pero cuál es la solución?

You have a lot of problems! But what is the answer?

Hamlet: No sé. No sé. ¿Ser? o no ser? ¡Esa es la pregunta!

I don't know! I don't know! To be? or not to be? That is the question!

Jean-Paul : "¿Ser? o no ser? ¡Esa es la pregunta! " ¡Es verdad !

¡Podemos usar « tu » ahora ! ¡Hablas bien, « Hamlet con una H » !

¡Hablas como un filósofo ! ¡Hablas como Shakespeare ! ¡Hablas como un existencialista ! Te quiero, aunque tu lleves mucha ropa.

"To be? or not to be? That is the question!" It's true! Now we can call each other by our first names, Hamlet with an H".

You speak like a philosopher! You speak like Shakespeare! You speak like an existentialist! I love you, even if you wear a lot of clothes.

Hamlet : Te quiero, Jean-Paul, aunque tu fumes como un francés.

I love you, Jean-Paul, even though you smoke like a Frenchman.

Mary Conseur

Dwyer's Hill Interlude

I reached the half-way point in my journey and rested in the shade of the maple. Patches of blue sky dotted with silver-edged gray clouds checker-boarded the rock-enclosed, golden fields of Dwyer's Hill this May morning. Sun shadows turned the gold straw to tan as they raced across the meadow. Standing on the knoll where Dwyer's house once stood, I could see clearly in any direction. To the south and beyond what once must have been the lane to the house, was a field of tall straw grass waving softly in the breeze. That same breeze wafted the damp odor of earth-mold from the swamp to the west. Something

rustled in the leaves behind the rock wall there - a thrush looking for grubs, I hoped!

Along the south-west corner of the field I was facing ran another rock wall. (All of New England seems crisscrossed by rock walls. I often wondered if the chief crops of those first settlers weren't just rocks. No matter. Those rocks were useful to them. They used them to separate the cattle from the corn.) Small saplings had begun to take over the edges of the lane-maples and birches predominated. Three hundred yards down the field and right where the lane veered to the east was a gigantic white birch tree with thick branches (great for climbing) standing bright against the dark green of the woods behind.

In the middle of the field, looming black against the gold, rose an old gnarled oak whose branches twisted skyward while spreading their shade along the ground. My grandfather had told me that the farmer often left one tree in the field so that he might rest in the shade on sunny planting days. Could this be Dwyer's resting tree? Hidden in the top-most branches was that ever-present watch-bird, an iridescent black crow cawing its warning of the intruder.

Sitting on the hard rectangular stone that probably was once the threshold of the house, I took off my shoes and wiggled my toes in the cool green moss that felt like luxurious carpet. Behind me the spring bubbled up and little blue violets stood watching the water-bugs skim over the rock-lined pool.

This was the best time to come here, I thought. The mosquitos and gnats had not yet hatched. Tiny white May-flowers dotted the edges of the fields. The red buds had become little green leaves and the flowering honeysuckles showered the path with petals of their flowers. Traces of skunk cabbage and lilac filled my nostrils and the air tasted fresh and clean. Robins and blue jays, in harmony with the crow, provided background music. White and yellow butterflies flitted across the fields and the sun, even behind the clouds, felt warm and friendly.

Rested now, I began to think about the remainder of the walk to Hidden Pond and that big bass that I had seen so close to shore last week when I had no fishing gear. Putting on my shoes and rising, I picked up my pole and lifting my bait pail with my left hand, I hurried down the slope and climbed the wall to cross the field to the pond.

Bob Grady

Muddy Water

It is paved now, but when Harrison Lane was still a dirt road, I used to walk to and from school amid some of the greatest mud puddles in the entire town.

It was the combination of melting winter snow and April rains that filled in the dips and the ruts, and converted them into first rate mud puddles of all sizes and shapes almost as far as the eye could see.

With the weather getting warm and the birds singing, I thought, "What more could a kid ask for than to be living out in the country and walking to school on a dirt road stomping in as many mud puddles as he wants?" I felt bad for kids living in the city where the streets were paved; they probably didn't even know what a mud puddle was, I thought, much less what they were missing by never stomping in one.

I was happy just walking by myself, picking out the best puddles I could find. But, when someone else came along, it got even better. One of us would lay down a challenge for a duel. After being cooped up all day, afternoon was the perfect time. Working fast, you would pump your foot up and down, stomping and splashing to get as much mud and water as you could on the other kid 'til the puddle was empty. From a distance, it would look a lot like two country fiddlers at the annual firemen's clambake playing and keeping time to the music.

Besides being fun, stomping in mud puddles was good exercise. It would have made a good spring sport, I thought, right after basketball season ended and before baseball season got started. But, like many things that were fun, it seemed that, sooner or later, someone or something would come along and put an end to it. In this case, it was my mother.

After my first stomping duel of the season, it was as if she knew in advance when I was going to be in another one. She would be standing at the front door waiting for me. Gone was the smile she sent me off with in the morning, along with the cheerful wish that I would

have a good day. It was as if, in the afternoon, she was a changed person. In place of the smile was a frown and an angry greeting, "Look at you! Look at your clothes!" And then, "Don't think for one minute that you are coming into this house with those muddy feet!"

We would look down together at my feet. I knew she was right to be annoyed with me, but I was just having a little fun. "Aw, come on, Ma, they're not that bad," I would say, to which she would reply, "You are not going to track mud into this house again. Take those shoes off right now!"

But, fortunately, unlike this negative reaction by my mother, I had never been faced with a similar problem at school.

Then, one morning, right after our class had finished saying the Pledge of Allegiance, we took our seats. Miss Blake said she had an important announcement.

"Class, I would like your attention, please; all eyes up here." She paused until the room was quiet and everyone was paying attention.

Then, she went on, "Everyone knows our school janitor, Mr. Johnson. And you know that Mr. Johnson works very hard to keep our school clean. And he does an excellent job, doesn't he, boys and girls?"

"Yes, Miss Blake," the class responded together.

"Well, now he has to do extra work because of the mud that some children are tracking in from outdoors. It's not fair to him to have to do all that extra work, especially if we can help, is it, boys and girls?"

"No, Miss Blake."

"So our principal, Mr. Reuben, has asked all of the teachers to find out which children are tracking the most mud into their classrooms. Even though everybody was saying, "Yes, Miss Blake," and "No, Miss Blake," I wasn't paying close attention, concentrating instead

on finishing a picture I had started. I couldn't find my blue crayon for the sky, so I turned around to ask Harold Gerard if I could borrow his.

As Harold passed me the crayon, I heard only a part of what Miss Blake was saying when she added in a serious voice, "And the person who is tracking the most mud into our classroom is Tommy!"

I looked up when I heard my name called. I thought, "All right! I finally made student of the month!"

But instead of applause from my classmates, I heard giggling. I was just asking Harold if he knew why my name was called when who walked into our room but Mr. Johnson! Miss Blake talked to him for a minute. Then he looked down and caught sight of a trail of mud on the floor. He and Miss Blake started following it across the floor right toward my desk. I just stared at the floor and felt guilty. They both came over and stood looking down at me. As I continued staring at the floor, I peered under my desk and was surprised to find that there was a pile of dirt there which I had never noticed before. Then Miss Blake said, "Tommy, you know Mr. Johnson, don't you?"

"Yes," I said, looking up.

"Now, Tommy, I want you to promise me and Mr. Johnson that you will wipe off your feet before coming into school from now on. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Miss Blake."

"And you must promise to stay out of mud puddles."

I hesitated for a moment. It was quiet in the room. I thought about the seriousness of what she was asking. She wanted me to give up what, for me, was the best part of spring. She wanted me to stay out of mud puddles for the rest of the year!

But, looking up as they stood there, I knew I really had no choice. And I knew deep down that, like my mother, Miss Blake and Mr. Johnson were right. Slowly, and with difficulty, the words came out,

"Yes, Miss Blake....I promise."

There was more giggling, reminding me that, not only hadn't I made student of the month, but I would have to give up my favorite spring sport.

At home, my mother had made it clear that she wouldn't put up with my mud, and now in school, Miss Blake had made me promise that I would stay out of mud puddles altogether. As much as I loved playing and stomping in puddles, I knew that they were right. I knew I'd have to stop. I made up my mind that I wouldn't do it anymore. No more mud, no more dirt, no more tracking anything in. And I knew I would be successful.

That is, until last week when before supper, as I was sitting down at the table, my wife glanced at the floor. Seeing a trail of mud and grass clippings from when I mowed the lawn, a trail which led across the floor right to my chair, she said to my son, "Please get Daddy a broom so he can sweep up all the dirt he tracked in!"

It was then I realized that some lessons taught in childhood, no matter how valuable, just don't stay with you.

Tom Melesky

Grandma Mamie

When your grandparents die during your childhood, your memories of them are few, sparse. There are many fill-in-the blanks without answers. My main memory of Mamie is that I both loved and liked her a lot. Our relationship began as her life was winding down. My memories were made during her last nine years of life. She married her husband, Thomas Keating and together, they'd raised five children, three little boys and two little girls. My father, Francis, was their youngest.

Mamie (nee Ellen Fitzpatrick) and Thomas were of Irish descent. They were working class people who had moved to New Haven, CT from Jersey City, NJ when my dad was quite young. Somehow they were able to buy their own home on Brewster St. It

was a side street, residential and tree-lined, off a main thoroughfare.

We lived two blocks away from Mamie in a cold-water flat on Dorman St. My dad and I would frequently visit Mamie and Pop-Pop on weekends. We'd walk hand-in-hand past gas stations, the A+P, Visel's Drugstore and Kramer's Bakery. When we reached Bassett St., we'd wait to cross with the light, and Dad would let me press the round metal button that would eventually wake the red light from its nap. After crossing, we continued, slowly closing the gap between ourselves and Mamie's front door.

My impression of her house was brown: brown roof, brown shingles, brown door with a beveled glass window that was higher than my head. The house seemed small, sturdy and warm somehow. And then, there she would be, Mamie. She was always smiling, always had a big hug for me, her face flushed, rosy-cheeked. I also remember my grandfather, Thomas. But those memories are not as clear as those that I carry of Mamie.

She seemed very large to me. She was a little chubby, my Mamie; maybe not chubby, maybe just substantial. She had a cloud of white hair and always wore dresses that were either dark-colored or printed with tiny flowers, often covered with an apron. She didn't wear pearls, but favored pins and broaches.

Her house had steps in the front that led to a wrap-around porch. Then inside there were more stairs leading to a second floor. The dining room and kitchen were bright and cheery, but the living room, where my grandfather could usually be found, was dimly lit with heavy curtains. We called it the "front room".

There was a narrow dirt path beside the house which led to a small backyard. There was a small garden and a clothesline attached to a little porch near the back door. As a boy, my father had raised blue-ribboned chickens in that yard. I had been disappointed that they were no longer there. Today, I have a box filled with my dad's awards from his chicken-raising days.

Mamie was a wonderful cook and baker, and her house always smelled of fresh-baked biscuits and roasting beef. But what I loved best about Mamie was her laugh. It was infectious, boisterous, welcoming and ever-present. She had a wicked sense of humor.

One Christmas, my uncle-(Father Bob, the priest)- arrived at our home carrying a giant box of popcorn balls which were wrapped in red, yellow and green papers. Someone threw one at someone else. Mamie unsuccessfully admonished us to stop. Next thing you know, popcorn

balls were flying, a blizzard of colorful missiles in our small living room. I observed Mamie slyly reaching into the box. She lobbed one at my father, then yelled at all of us to stop the ongoing assault. Then she reloaded with ammunition held together by corn syrup. She shot them at her grandchildren, then at my mother and at my other grandmother. All the while, she was laughing, yelling and laughing some more at the fun of it.

There were other incidents that illustrate the type of person that I think she was. She could laugh at herself and she was a strong, kind and determined woman.

Once, at my uncle's home in Milford, CT, Mamie fell through her own lawn chair, one of those canvas jobs. Of course, Mamie was again yelling at people and laughing. The canvas gave way and her rear end was on the ground. She couldn't extricate herself because of her girth. She was laughing so hard that tears were running down her cheeks as her three sons worked to free her. I was maybe ten years old and recall that all of the relatives were laughing so hard that we were almost out of breath. Uncontrollable laughter, one of Mamie's gifts to all of us.

Mamie died when I was thirteen years old. It was a stroke that had rendered her unable to speak or walk for the last three years of her life. She actually lived those years at St. Mary's Hospital in Waterbury, CT. My uncle, "Father Bob," was the hospital's chaplain and had made the arrangement to honor Mamie's wishes. We saw her every Sunday and were amazed that not only did she understand everything that was said to her, but that she was still able to laugh at our antics and at her own predicament. That's how she was.

During her last Christmas season, she managed to buy presents in the hospital's gift shop for all nine of her grandchildren. I received my first watch, a Bulova, from Mamie. I treasured it until it no longer ran. When I learned of Mamie's death, my young heart broke. Then, it broke again when the Bulova stopped ticking.

I've been told over the years that I laugh a lot. My hope is that I can endear myself to my own children and to any grandchildren that I'm lucky enough to have. Just as Mamie did.

Ellen Keating Cleary

Prejudice?

What is prejudice? I believe the answer is even more complex than we may suppose.

In the early 1970s, my role as a Correctional Supervisor at the Cheshire Reformatory was managing a crew of inmates. Lured by the long-term benefits of public sector employment, I took a pay cut when I left the private sector and made up the difference by doing electrical jobs after hours. That's how I met Art. Typical of most penal institutions, the percentage of blacks in the population was over-represented. Coming from Jamaica, Art was lighter skinned than many. He was also not an inmate. He was a counselor.

Art had a large home in a nearby town and hired me to make some electrical updates. He was soft-spoken and likable and it didn't take long for us to become friends. My wife and I were delighted when he invited us to dinner. His wife was African-American and considerably darker skinned than him. My sons enjoyed the company of his two daughters. Both sets of children were similar in age.

Judy and I also invited Art's family to our home. Once again, we had a great time. Afterwards, one of my siblings cautioned me about the hazards of what I was doing. He ended with, "What if one of your kids got involved with one of his? How would you feel if one of your sons came home and told you he wanted to marry a black girl?"

I never recalled my father or mother saying anything negative about people of color and I theorized that the question might have come from our family's move from Pennsylvania to New York. In Pittston, race was not an issue because in the 1950s there were no blacks. In Brooklyn, the population was a melting pot of ethnicity and color. I was only six when we moved. For my older siblings however, it was probably as foreign to them as if they had moved to another country.

I also needed to learn the culture of our new environment and sometimes that learning came too late. As I sat with two friends on the front stoop of their home, the topic of race came up. I proudly said that I had never had any nigger friends before. For that, they beat me and left me out on the sidewalk. I never visited their home again. The incident left me more confused than angry. At the time, I could go to any candy store and buy small, dark, penny candies in

the shape of little children. The candy's name was Nigger Babies.

Looking back on the original conversation, I struggle more with my answer than the question. I insisted that I would not have a problem with either of my sons marrying a black girl. "If he told me he wanted to marry another man," I said, "that, I would have a problem with." When I made that statement, I meant it. Today, while the Supreme Court judges cases involving same-sex marriage, many gays and lesbians are my close friends. Most recently, I struggle emotionally and intellectually as my grandchild undergoes counseling and medical treatment to make the transition from granddaughter to grandson.

It seems to me that prejudice may be as much a matter of when as what.

Chuck Miceli

Dachau

It was spring, 1973. I was 19. My sister and I were visiting Munich. We wanted to take the day trip to Dachau and inquired at the Munich travel information office for travel instructions to the former camp. The man in the office responded with anger - prompted by shame or resentment - that all Americans want to visit Dachau and harangued us for quite some time about the voyeuristic indecency of our interest in Germany's horrific past. After suffering his rage, and acquiring the directions, we made our way to a lovely suburban village at the outskirts of which we found ourselves at the gate admonishing all who passed through that "Arbeit macht frei".

We are not Jewish and were we to have lived in Germany during the war, we would not likely have ever had cause to pass under this gate, but reading those words while passing under that gate in 1973, nearly 30 years after the war's end, I wanted to run away. The pain and death and terror and atrocity were sticky in the air. The bare feet of prisoners and jack-booted SS guards walked and crawled and were dragged and bled and became part of this ground. We visited the museum, with photos and film documenting the death, medical experiments, the teeth, the hair, the human skin lampshades, the uniforms of guard and guarded, the faces - so many

faces; innocent, stunned, numb faces of people who would soon be dead but deserved nothing less than to be home in their own warm beds.

We went out to the dirt yard. The barracks were gone. Outlines instead marked where they had stood. One reconstructed, sanitized barrack stood in place where the original lice, typhoid, cholera and unthinkable terror infested barrack had once stood as shelter from snow and as a zoo where Nazis caged their prisoners – Jews, Soviets, Gypsies, clergy and homosexuals. The German at the travel information office was right. No one should see this. There should never be a Dachau or Auschwitz or Buchenwald for anyone to see. Nineteen year old girls should never see this because these places should never have been even the thoughts in any man's head. But there were many men with heads capable of imagining death camps and exterminations of whole peoples, whole cultures and we need to see these places. I needed to see Dachau, to walk where the depraved and the innocent both defamed and ennobled the dirt they shared underfoot, and breathe the same air that sinner and saint inhaled and exhaled one lung to the next without affecting the quality of sinner or saint in the owner of each lung.

We walked past the barracks and arrived at the shower room. It is said that these showers were used for showers and not as gas chambers. Nonetheless, it is my recollection that they were equipped for that possibility of engineering mass death and it is not possible to walk through that shower without feeling death in the air. Next door is the crematorium. I recall a row of ovens - three or four, perhaps more, lined up in a brick wall. Big oven doors in a brick wall in a neat little building with big chimneys on top that spewed evil day and night. Tens of thousands of innocents were burned here. When American troops liberated the prisoners in Dachau in 1945, bodies were piled up in front of the crematorium which even burning 24 hours a day could not keep up with the executed, the dead and dying from exhaustion, disease and starvation.

At the back of the camp, behind the neat rows of barracks were chapels. I recall three– a Protestant, a Catholic and a Jewish chapel. In the Protestant chapel, a Lutheran Minister was receiving visitors. He stayed there to minister to anyone trying to make sense of the senseless and to offer God's grace, solace and peace in the face of the greatest evidence for the lack of existence of God. This

minister was about my father's age, probably mid-50's and he bore a tattooed number on his forearm. He had been a prisoner in Dachau and somehow had the fortitude to return to the camp to minister to the visitors. Perhaps he felt that in this way he could undo some of what the Nazis had done. Perhaps he felt that with his innocent breath he could continue to try to win the battle of good over evil – to breathe innocent breath into evil lungs, to unsticky the air of death and hatred and terror.

These memories have been in my mind for 40 years and I have never written about them. I tell my children to be careful what they see because it will be in their minds forever. Memories never leave us, they just get filed away in dark little cranial cubby holes. But it is Passover week. My children are half Jewish from their father and my son is talking about taking his Spring semester of his junior year of college in Tel Aviv. He wants to learn about his heritage. And this memory of visiting Dachau is squeezing out of a little cranial cavity and making its way to this page in honor of Passover and my children and my friends and strangers whose families lost so much to unchecked madness and cruelty.

Jean McGavin

Tombstones

Gray upright matchboxes
 Wince into the sun
 At a world that is no longer.

Written inscriptions
 Curve into slanted smiles
 On morose memorials.

People living
 In cold cement
 Laugh at potted flowers.

Nancy Grady

Visions and Voices Community

After years of focused learning and producing
No longer finding material wealth so seducing
We take a respite once we retire
And begin to look at those qualities we admire

.
OLLI is a community of people retired
Interested in learning and exploring
Mixing with youngsters yet to be hired
In classrooms of peers looking for moorings

.
A community of people whom we trust
Encourages creativity in areas explored
Using our mature brains collectively is a must
Rather than sitting at home and getting bored

A subcommittee did form of those who took part
In submitting original writings and works of art
People who published in "Voices and Visions"
Retirees who had responded to the mission

This community of participants can expand
Writers, poets and artists all amateur
Productive adults ever so grand
Can meet, create and, as a group, endure

Out of drawers and out of the subconscious
Will come products of our perceptions
By learned students following the path of Confucius
Received with varying degrees of reception

Retirees using attention, words and senses
May influence notions and hostility
Resulting in admiration and mending of fences
Toward the “non-productive” retired nobility

A community of the writer and the artist
Who finds this time of life in fashion
May inspire others to participate and to persist
To exchange lethargy for cultured passion

While part of a group, each of us is unique
We are exposing our psyches and taking a peek
Hoping to discover the creativity we seek.
There must be no sense of failure for even the meek

After speaking with editors and others who contribute
People who are creative are able to cope
With workshops and friendships, it is hard to refute
That the “Voices and Visions” community have plenty of
hope

Future works may be published or
Enjoyed simply for the process
Recognition and participation that we adore
Is all that we ask for and nothing less.

Ira Mickenberg

OLLI at UConn is a member-driven, community-responsive program offering non-credit learning experiences (courses, lectures, and special events) for older adults who want to engage socially and intellectually with their peers as teachers and learners. Situated on an intimate, state-of-the-art university campus with traditional-age students and research faculty, OLLI also provides fertile ground for an intergenerational interaction and exchange of ideas. The urban campus reaches out to a diverse region which provides opportunities for partnership with other cultural, educational, and arts organizations.