

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 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.

VOICES AND VISIONS

OLLIAT UCONN
2016
ANNUAL REVIEW

The UCONN OLLI Annual Review

Volume 6

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Editorial Committee

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Bob Grady

Brian Denyer

Cindy Eastman

Harriet Fotter

Charles Lasky

Evelyn Marshak

Peter Mulholland

Mary Fitzpatrick Peitler

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Cover photograph by Allen Smuckler



SUNNY BUT WINDY

Abby Ripley

TIME

A Villanelle

Time, it floats with the clouds and rolls with the tide,
It eyes the worm and flies with the stars' vast flight;
As ageless in the wind, my soul would gladly abide.

Time paces the waves in their currents and pride;
It seasons the earth with a touch that man will fight;
It floats with the clouds and rolls with the tide,

Slowing the stream, then urging the river's stride
To tumble to the sea with a flood of might;
As ageless as the wind, my soul would gladly abide.

It wakes the godly sun for its daily ride,
Then pulls down its hues at call of night;
Time floats with the clouds and rolls with the tide.

Tickled by whims of weather, time just sighed
At winter's shroud and summer's striking light;
As ageless as the wind, my soul would gladly abide.

Time laughs with each birth as if taking a bride;
It stares with each death at the body's last blight;
Time floats with the clouds and rolls with the tide,
And ageless in the wind, my soul will gladly abide.

Brian Denyer

FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome to this sixth anniversary edition of *Voices and Visions*, the annual literary and arts review of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at UCONN. We strive to print at least one piece from each submitter and applaud all those who have had the courage to submit their work, the openness to accept constructive criticism and revise if necessary, and the generosity to share it with you and the rest of the world through this publication. Some contributors are “veterans” who have submitted to past editions while others appear here for the first time.

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 collective goals of OLLI—education for the pure joy of learning, encouraging creative expression and engaging with the larger world.

We wish to express our appreciation to UCONN and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute for recognizing the enormous creative potential that resides within each individual and for providing the opportunity for members to express that creativity through the OLLI program and this publication.

The Editorial Committee

**In Memory of
Brian Lindsay Denyer
Writer, artist, colleague, friend.
July 28, 1947—July 25, 2016**

FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

The University of Connecticut's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute has much to be proud of over its nearly ten-year history. From humble beginnings, the Osher Institute has sprouted into a vibrant and expansive learning community which celebrates generativity, volunteerism, and creative expression. Its thriving membership of seasoned learners serves as a brilliant illustration of human potential at every stage of life. The creativity and generosity of its members have transformed OLLI at UConn into one of the major cornerstones of UConn's Waterbury campus, and of the Greater Waterbury community as a whole.

Let this Annual Edition of *Voices and Visions* serve as a harmonious reflection of the values which make OLLI at UConn so great. I commend and thank the founders and current members of the OLLI Review Editorial Committee for their generous volunteer efforts which make the Annual Review possible. I also invite the contributors of this document to celebrate their work, and thank them for sharing their creative expressions with the OLLI community!

May readers find joy and encouragement in the creativity of some of OLLI's most brilliant members, and consider how this work contributes to their own journey of lifelong learning!

Jonathan R. Draper
Interim Director, OLLI at UConn

FROM THE OLLI at UCONN PRESIDENT

As we age, we must learn to adapt to some inevitable realities of life. In time, we will not hear as clearly, run as fast, or see as far. Fortunately, however, creativity knows no age limits. In fact, as the pages of this volume will testify, it may well be enhanced by the *passage* of time. For readers, savor the beauty and wisdom contained herein. For contributors, on behalf of the Leadership Council and all of the OLLI members, our heartfelt congratulations and thanks for sharing your enormous talents with us.

Chuck Miceli
President, OLLI at UConn

LOVE AND WAR

Nuptials to Napalm, the journey's begun.
College weds combat,
Naivety gone flat,
The news filming combat,
V.C. On the run.
Holes in the rotors and holes in the heart,
Love letters breathing
With fears of bereaving
Yet dreams of conceiving
When war ends, and life starts.

Judy Cousens



AMERICAN CEMETERY-FRANCE 2015

Bob Grady

OMAHA BEACH, OCTOBER 11, 2015

It was hard to visualize
on that peaceful sunny day,
standing on that beach, with the English guide, Julian,
describing the chaos, confusion and pure terror facing those
youths emerging from the landing craft
on June 6, 1944.
As we stood on those hard sands, Julian's words,
describing the cliffs with that massive firepower raining down,
and how much open beach they had to cross,
must have been horrendous to those young boys becoming
men—or not.
Imagining the confusion among the machine gun bullets
and mortar explosions and cannon fire,
the dead and wounded, and the loss of leadership,
was beyond belief.

Julian's descriptions brought it all to life.

The American Cemetery overlooks that beach
some seventy-one years later.
Nine thousand of those boys and men
remain there under lines of crosses
stretching to the cliffs lining the coast.
They finally made it off the chaotic sands
and rest now in hallowed ground.
We feel sadness and gratitude
as we gaze out over the white crosses
symbolizing the ultimate sacrifice given that day
by the youth of the Greatest Generation.

However, as we contemplate that picture,
we have to think, regarding this present world,
of Pete Seeger's protest song that ends:

“When *will* we ever learn?”

Bob Grady

2016 CONTRIBUTORS

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Anna Ascione	Marie Kenney
Mary A. Baker	Lynn Karr-Hasler
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Jackie Gugliotti	Allen Smuckler
Bob Grady	Louise Varanelli
Sharon Hebb	Sharona Welton
Debra Hinck	Nancy Whitney
Ann C. Hodges	Jeffrey Wilson



CHARLIE THE CAT

Peggy O'Brien

Heels, Pumps, Stilettoes or Wedge,
all those choices can send us over the edge!

A King's ransom we gladly pay, is it really worth it? Who can
say?!

Structurally impossible and inflicting such pain, Ouch! Will
our poor tootsies ever be the same?!

What price discomfort are we willing to endure, it's sheer
insanity and madness, that's for sure!

So I state once again hoping all will come to know,

"SHOES . . . "Are You a Woman's Friend or Foe?!"



Roseanne Elliott

POETRY MAN

"SHOES . . . Are You a Woman's Friend or Foe?!"

What is this fascination that we have with shoes and high heels,
that brings so much fun and joy, yet such pain we can feel?!

Who would have thought such a treat could bring so much
pleasure; A wonderful, whimsical design, a female's great
treasure.

Outlandish styles designed to inspire,
can those stiletto heels really get much higher?!

Styles absurd by nature lend a dramatic flare,
would you really wear such a creation in public, do you dare?!

While one may view a design with glee and delight, others view
them as objects of sheer horror and fright!

If you could peek inside a designer's dream, does it seem that he's
really gone to the extreme?

Designs that are truly quite unique, have a flare for carrying such
mystique.

Shoes in our youth that were all the rage, may not fare us well as
we age!

So many styles, which one to choose, best hurry to that shoe sale
before you lose!

Boots, Sandals, Sneakers and Flats,
so many colors, oooh . . . don't forget black!

Bowman's Corner had never seen his like. Dressed in black jeans, black boots, black leather jacket, black leather gloves, carrying a black leather valise and sporting a neatly-trimmed, salt-and-pepper Van Dyke on his impassive face, Poetry Man marched through the village several times a day. He was never seen talking to another villager. He simply strode like a gunslinger, an implacable hepcat Gary Cooper, through their midst.

"What does he want from us?" the villagers asked. "It's not right to walk around like this not talking to anyone else."

Poetry Man did not appear to have a job. On most days, and sometimes into the early evening, Poetry Man held down a study desk at the Benedict B. Bowman Memorial Library. On the desktop beside the valise, stuffed with crisp white sheets of paper, rested an old-fashioned fountain pen and inkwell. When he wasn't staring into space, he busied himself filling pieces of paper with sudden spurts of verse.

Other library patrons could see the verses taking shape from afar. Pretending not to be curious about what he was doing, they gave his jottings furtive glances. They saw his stanzas were perfectly sculpted, like his Van Dyke, choo-choo trains of thought: ABBA. ABBA. CDDC, CDDC, EFFE, etc.

After he had been seen so engaged for a few weeks, people began gathering at the library window to watch him with the same rapt wonderment with which they once watched the village blacksmiths shoe horses, bakers make pies, apothecaries make pain-killing potions and cows have sex. Poetry Man was so wrapped up in the shape of words on his paper that he did not notice the voyeurs. Caressing the words on the paper with his eyes, he could have been an architect reacting to an aesthetically pleasing blueprint or artist admiring a sketch.

"He writes words for no reason but to pleasure himself," Jack Hoffman whispered, simultaneously awestruck and terrified.

"Yet he does not share words with fellow humans," Stan Jensen responded.

"What kind of a person would be so selfish?" someone else intoned.

"It just ain't human," said Hoffman.

It was true. Poetry Man was an island unto himself, an oblivious verse machine. His mental landscape was a vast open steppe, a trackless savannah, a moonscape containing only his boot prints and miles of unpeopled, unblemished space.

Unable to stand his inscrutable presence in their midst, the villagers came alive with gossip.

“I sneaked a peek at what he was writing,” Hoffman said. “It had some sexy stuff in there, something about death and some French words.”

Jensen said, “I’ll bet he’s a murderer who strangles victims with those black leather gloves. That’s why he’s writing about death, to cover his tracks, the dirty bastid.”

“Have you seen the way he walks in those tight pants?” Bob Horsly asked. “Kind of delicate-like, if you catch my drift.”

“What kind of man writes poetry?” Hoffman concluded.

Cars now swerved at the sight of Poetry Man on his perambulations through Bowman’s Corner. The police began cruising slowly behind him at a distance. He was an itch the village couldn’t scratch. He loomed so large in the collective consciousness that his name need not be mentioned. Just a slouching gesture and squiggle of hand, suggesting writing on air, and a knowing nod was enough.

“What does he want from us?” they repeated. “It’s not right to walk around like this not talking to anyone.” Hoffman and Jensen decided that, if the village constables would do nothing to stop Poetry Man, they’d take matters into their own hands.

One afternoon, the pair strode into the library. Pretending to peruse encyclopedias, they studied their prey with morose nods and disgusted pursing of lips, as if their mission was one of those thankless but necessary jobs like unclogging a sump pump.

When Poetry Man stood to take a ruminative stroll around the room, the pair moved toward his desk, scanning the half-finished verse. Hoffman saw “voluptuous” and nearly fainted with outrage. That’s a sexy word, he decided, and this is a public institution used by children. Some child could walk by here and see that sexy word and have sexy thoughts.



DUOMO AND GIOTTO'S TOWER AT NIGHT

J. R. Lewis

SKELETON

Skinny tho' I be
Know that I am free
Edging slowly to the door
Leaving not a print on knob or floor
Every bone is here to view
Tinkling haunted sounds toward you
On this Halloween
Night of scare and scream

Maryellen Joncyk

GENESIS

I remember
April in Salem-
New England winter, reluctant still
To loosen its grip, stayed with us
That weekend.
Winds whipped the witch town
Sending icy blasts through the fishing fleet
And tossing sea-foam toward
Quaint cottages and mansions mighty which
Ringed the rocky shore-impervious, it seemed, to the
Raw New England spring.
Dormant-yet ready to burst forth
Like the new buds to come-
Was the feeling between two who,
Reaching tenderly toward each other,
Despite the raw, wet, windy, world outside,
Made something warm and sweet and special
Happen on a rainy April weekend
In Salem.

Bob Grady

When Poetry Man returned, the pair stood like sentries in waiting.

Hoffman said, “What have you to say for yourself, Mr. Voluptuous?”

Poetry Man made no response. He did not even look at Hoffman. He hadn’t noticed Jensen at all. While he was distracted by the looming presence of Hoffman, Jensen snuck around behind him and got down on all fours.

“We have a nice town here in Bowman’s Corner,” Hoffman said. “We don’t need your type ruining it.”

Poetry Man said nothing. Angered more by his passivity than his poetry, Hoffman shoved the wordsmith, and he tumbled over Jensen and sprawled onto the soiled carpeting. Jensen got to his feet and dusted himself off, paying heed to those points on his body that came in contact with Poetry Man. Other than an “oof” of exhaled air when his body hit the floor, Poetry Man said nothing. He remained on the ground while Hoffman and Jensen waiting for something, anything.

“There’s more where that come from,” said Hoffman, and the pair left the room.

Poetry Man got slowly to his feet, straightened his papers and began writing. Later, as he strode back to his apartment, one could detect a slight limp in his otherwise steady gait.

Alan Boisvort



PORTLAND HEAD LIGHT Sharon Hebb

VISITOR

What are you doing here?
I have no need of you—never have.
The summer sun reflected in the lake
means more to me than you.

You've been here before—
sidling through an unguarded door
with entreating pleas
and promises as false as winter light.

Philip Benevento



ONE AND ONLY!!

Mary Baker



BARN IN WINTER Bonnie Celello

MIDNIGHT HOPPING

Sun smooths, rounds the rims
Sculpts the rabbit trace, leaving
Shadows cupped in snow.

Harriet Fotter

SEASONS

Sitting on my deck, listening to the chimes emit their pleasant sound in harmonious melody, I never tire from enjoying and photographing the reflections of the seasons in my back yard. In the spring, when the last of the snow melts, I check for the first sign of daffodils and tulip plants. Later, from my kitchen window, I like to look at the profusion of pink and red blooms on the rhododendron and azalea bushes.

Summer is the season when my husband plants tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers and assorted herbs. We wait impatiently for them to ripen so that we can enjoy the sweetness and juiciness of fresh picked fruits of his labor. The flowers, annuals and perennials, add so much to the landscaping around the house.

Autumn is my favorite season. That is when I pick up my camera and photograph the most. It starts gradually—the vegetable plants wilt, the flowers lose their brightness, but like changing the props between acts at the theater, the look of the backyard changes dramatically. Leaves on our lush trees gradually become gold, brown, orange and dull green. On sunny days light seems brighter and richer. Eventually, when the leaves fall, they form colorful carpets on the ground, rustling under foot. Of course, picking up the leaves is no picnic.

Winter—I have a love-hate relation with winter. I don't like to drive in snow and ice and the cold gets to me, but watching the white snowflakes fall lightly on the ground, creating stillness, I feel calm and serene. When the snow storm passes, I like to walk on it, the only noise the crunching under my feet. When the sun shines and the snow on the bare branches starts to melt, sparkling diamonds change the yard into an enchanting forest.

The hope of spring when flowers and trees bud and days become longer, is always there.

Lidia Bram



FRIENDS **Charles Lasky**

FRIEND

You lift me up when I'm down
Leaving little cause for me to frown
No other love shared
Has left me so unprepared

For recycling of inner peace
Only your patience can release

Maryellen Joncyk



BLARNEY CASTLE CORK, IRELAND Peggy O'Brien



P27 EAST FALMOUTH, CAPE COD Jack Costello

DOUBLE TALK

I must go to Cape Cod today
It's where I'm free to think and play
There's no one there to interfere
With what I want to say or hear

I think today's conversation
Will score a new revelation
About how a wayfaring sea
Transforms the better part of me

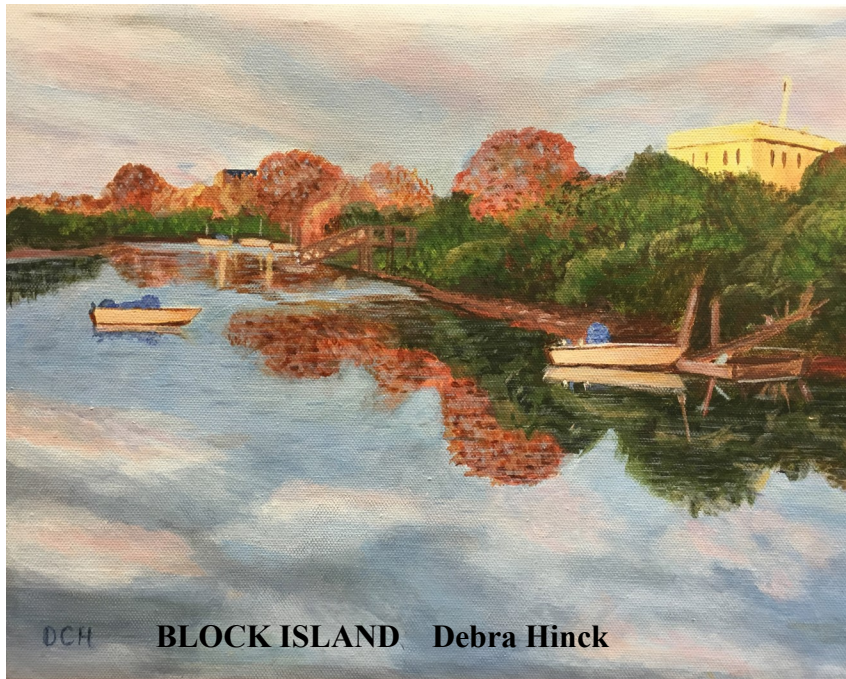
Like an inscrutable preacher
It defies the better teacher
To infuse my soul one more time
With the best of thoughts that rhyme

Maryellen Joncyk

Supportive of the idea, I suggested we coordinate our attire for a more professional appearance. All approved of my proposal ... wear black pants, white shirts, and matching, tailor-made vests. Easier said than done. How, when, or where do we begin? Being theme oriented, I recommended material with a musical motif, unanimously approved. The fabric hunt was on. Bob spotted one with many, multi-colored musical instruments. That went fast compared to the much more challenging complementary components.

What a chore determining our individual sizes, choosing patterns, linings, buttons, snaps. To tie or knot in back? Know a good seamstress? Decisions, decisions! Once the vests were works in progress, we faced our "identity crisis." Who are we? What's the name of our group? Personally, "Late Bloomers" came to mind. However, Hank prevailed with a title reflecting our "band"ing together, combined contributions, and duplicate dress code . . . "*Vested Interest!*"

Anita Siarkowski



BLOCK ISLAND Debra Hinck

MINER'S LAMENT

Pink: the color of sky,
blossom,
organ.

Pink, the day education ended
and heaven faded to black
in a cage dropping six hundred feet.

Pink, invisible in the darkness
save the lamps lighting the way
of blind mules, fat rats and sacrificial birds.

Dark pink after a year,
waiting in the blackness for each mule,
opening, closing, salvaging precious air.

Light grey after three years,
straddling chutes in the breaker's deafening roar,
sifting stones in the black clouds.

Grey after seven years,
racing alongside two-tons of runaway coal car
with only sprags to stop them.

Dark gray after twenty years,
surviving black damp, white damp,
falling bells and singing timbers.

Black after thirty years,
wheezing up blood

and never smoked a damn day in my life.

Chuck Miceli

PENANCE

Writing, seems sacramental, no not communion, not yet; perhaps later. Pencil on paper, assigning words to emotions and events, all the while searching the self, the writer within. Opening channels and allowing innervations their day; whether it be dazzling/sunny; drear/rainy; smotheringly snowy; or impenetrably fogged in.

Bit by sound byte, the pencil makes its way across the pages, at times flowing with past and present, graphite speaking the story living in my mind and in my life. Other moments, as this vaporous morning in April testifies, I struggle with buried treasure or trash.

The sacrament is Penance, and me, I am a fervent penitent. Someone spoke of hair shirts in early monastery days. Appropriate, since flagellation of the self is what this writer does, and, I daresay what we all do given the circumstance.

For what perceived sins you may ask and for which my reply is simple “I don’t know . . . yet.”

Writing, mostly journaling, has been cathartic and restorative; discreet between me and the covers of the chronicle of the moment. Over the past few years changes have shifted from a plan to write of my grandparents, of necessity on hold.

The truth, as I live it, and have lived it, has pushed itself ahead, and apparently brooks no nonsense.

In the writers’ workshop each week we sit and attend to each other’s musings. Fantastical worlds, richly woven childhood sagas and dramas, coming of age, historical fiction and plays on the drawing board serve up a bounty of mind and soul works as we participate.

For me, I am grateful to be a part of this illustrious community. Further amazed that I have the wherewithal to write, and then the moxie to read it aloud in this elite intergenerational company.

Of course, truth being the operative word, I usually feel underdone upon leaving the gathering, but further determined to measure up.

Sipping DARK MAGIC in this moment in my authoring space, scanning the tea cup bird feeder Patrick brought me on Saturday, I move into the day to be lived . . . to experience . . . and to write with veracity.

Sharona Welton

was mainly meant for Tony, the first to arrive, and the last to leave. Lillian, Tony’s wife, would point to her watch, concurrently giving him “the look,” hinting (to no avail) that it was time to go. Those were the days (and nights). Over a quarter of a century later, the camaraderie continues until today . . . “and the beat goes on.” Looking back, I never imagined being “instrumental” in generating a jam that would spread far and wide, satisfying a variety of tastes via various venue . . . a tried and true tradition bringing so much joy to so many people for so long, ongoing! It’s beginning “relative,” all because “*Mama’s Got A Squeeze Box.*”

II. VICTORIA’S SECRET

Hank hadn’t touched a drum since high school marching band. Newly retired, in his early 60s, he started line dancing at St. Mary’s Russian Orthodox Church on Friday nights. Later, inspired by the live accordion music in the back room, Hank was overheard saying, “*Someday, I’m gonna get myself a drum!*” His wife, Victoria—a.k.a. Vicky—picked up on his passion, sharing Hank’s hankering with their daughter and son-in-law. Donna and Joe didn’t miss a beat, soon surprising Dad with a drum and a throne of his very own. “Fit for a king,” King Henry.

Hank’s hidden talent was unbeknownst to the bunch. No one, except Vicky, knew what was lurking behind the scenes the following Friday night. The back room beckoned to us after line dancing as usual. But there was something unusual there this time. We walked right into a “set up” . . . a snare drum and a stool. We all wondered to whom they belonged. Aha . . . the person of interest was Hank, a drummer from the past. From that point on, we marched to the beat of a different drummer. Before long, Hank treated himself to a 5-piece drum set. Then we got even more bang for our buck, countless re-percussions. He also serenaded us in song. Prior to Hank’s singing and drum debut, his musical skills were kept a surprise from all of us. That was “*Victoria’s Secret.*”

III. VESTED INTEREST

As time went on, more musicians joined the jammers . . . my husband Bob on accordion, Nancy on fiddle, Paul on banjo, Al and Helen on vocals. Hank and Tony, already on board, aware that Bob and I performed professionally as an accordion duo, inquired about accompanying us.

A SONG AND DANCE TRILOGY

I. MAMA'S GOT A SQUEEZE BOX

It all began in 1988 at St. Mary's Russian Orthodox Church in Waterbury, Connecticut. Friday nights were fun for one and all in the church hall. We'd line dance, mingle, meet old friends, make new ones . . . Marge and Jim, Charlotte and Alan, Nancy and Jim, Hank and Vicky, Vera and Al, Louise and Jim. We were a vintage lot, more mature than most wines, aged an average of 60 years. In the mellowing phase, still in my 40s, I blended right in with the batch. Hank called me "the kid."

During dance sessions, our instructors, Mary, Boris, and Janet kept us "in line." Afterward, we'd retreat to the back room and engage in another "orthodox" form of exercise, elbow-bending. Steve would set the standards by raising the bar, Vera served savory snacks. Janet would whet her appetite, wet her whistle, then pass out (song sheets that is) and "preach to the choir."

Someone squealed that I played the accordion, prompting Steve's appeal . . . "Bring your accordion next time!" For a few weeks, Steve's plea fell on deaf ears. However, he persisted, knowing "*Mama's Got a Squeezebox*." It was time for me to face the music, so I figured I'd get Steve off my (accordion) case, once and for all. One week I came, 'cordine in tow, and plunked out a few tunes. My ploy didn't work, so I played every Friday.

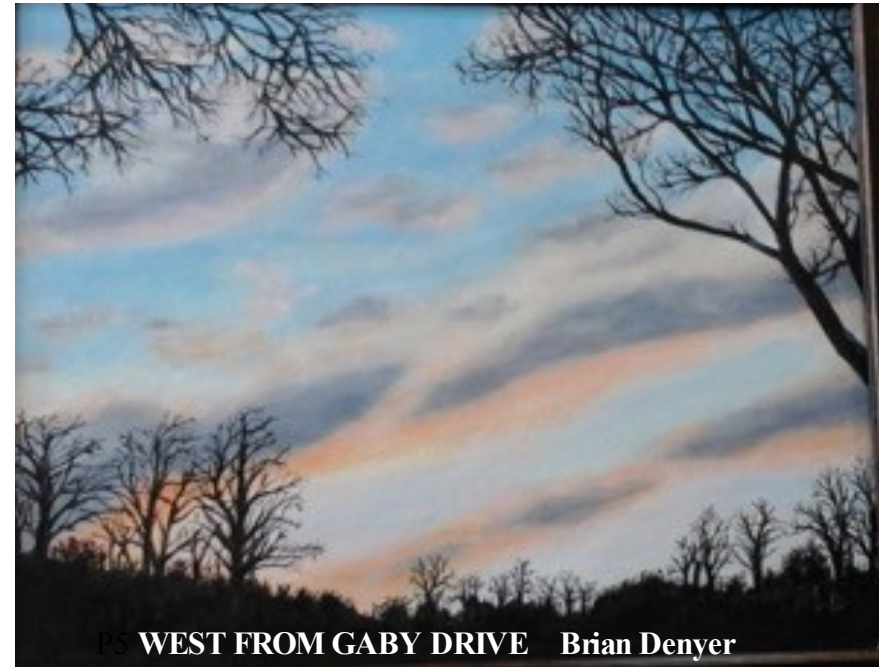
I winged it, flying solo for a while, when Tony, two decades my senior, approached me . . . "*Do you mind if I join you?*" Spontaneously I said, "*Sure Tony. What do you do?*" "*I play the guitar,*" he informed me. There were strings attached . . . not only to Tony's guitar, but his banjo, his "banjitar" (banjo/guitar combo). And "by chants," I learned he could croon too, in two languages, English and Italian.

The next chap to chime in was Steve. He could carry a tune, carried a harmonica, and was quite the comic. We never knew what would come out of his mouth . . . a song, a joke, or a tune on his harmonica. A great bartender, he drove us to drink, called the shots, setting limits. At twelve midnight, he would signal curfew by repeatedly flicking the light switch on and off stating, "*You can stay all night, but you can't stay here!*" This mandate

GRANDFATHER

Grandfather, a man I
Remember
As a loving, gentle man with a
Need to know, to learn, to question.
Dedicated to education, he was
Fascinated by listening, learning, and teaching.
A cigarette dangled from his lips
Then he would blow smoke rings that
Hung in the air. My fingers chased them.
Ever curious, he read to me
Revealing unknown worlds to my captive mind.

Nancy Whitney



PS WEST FROM GABY DRIVE Brian Denyer



VASE WITH FLOWERS Jacqueline Gugliotti

PEONIES

A Triolet

A crescendo of peonies
 Rose royally for listening clouds
 Singing with all of nature's ease
 A crescendo of peonies
 Floral flames with a subtle frieze
 Each sacrificial cup feels proud
 A crescendo of peonies
 Rose royally for listening clouds

Brian Denyer

QUESTION

The silence reverberated, pulsated, overwhelmed
 Demanding loudly in its persistent vacuum.

Vowels, consonants, forming inchoate chaos,
 a valiant attempt to move toward order,
 to make something out of nothing.

In what we know,
 is there a difference between what is black and what is blank?

Irene Murray



SALAD BOWL

Charles Lasky

SURROGATE SHADOW

A sterile alphabet lies before me.
Sullen, empty, incomplete.
Had I not pursued the phantom
Had I not a capture made

Word-made thoughts
The writer's quarry
Now escape from composition
Structure shattered in the void.

Had I not designed the pattern
Not anticipated form and structure.
Molded fact with innuendo
Given rise to supposition

What, the use of rhyme or meter
What the use of iambic beat
What bones support the lifeless body?
What writer's blood inflates the veins?

Should I not cease the fruitless voyage?
Retreat in shadows of the mind
Or raise my hands in supplication
Permit fatigue to win again

Perhaps another's womb is vacant
Waiting patiently for the moment
Who would claim to be the parent
Adopt my seed perform delivery.

L. Jack Singer

I AM AN ACCORDION

Once the center of entertainment, enjoyment and recognition as well as the heart and soul of a society that longed for beauty and merriment, people came from far and wide to see and hear me. It was 1950 and I was the answer to the new ideas of this great country.

Having no means of walking, I was strapped over the shoulders of people who loved me, who breathed life into me. They pushed and pulled my lungs to make the most magical sounds that became music to their ears. On my right side, flying fingers ran up and down my white tentacles and short black stubs. On my left side with a diamond in the center, rows and rows of black buttons resembled a river of rocks in a bed of white water expecting to be fondled.

Children would run their little fingers up and down all over me. I loved the sensation and expelled sounds only a satisfied lover would hear.

On my TV show, I glowed in my celebrity responding with sounds higher than a human could comprehend and enjoyed the acclimations given to me. From the concert halls to the family festivities, I was treated with elegance and care in a style suited for a king. It is now 1960. With the passing of time, my place of importance has faded. A younger and more compact lover has replaced me. To my audience I became cumbersome, and awkward.

My lungs were decomposing and developing holes. The pushing and pulling of air out of me I could no longer control. The white of my tentacles had turned yellow, the short black stubs had become brittle to navigate, and the river of black marbles had become impossible to fondle. Once magical sounds from my being became sounds of an old person's garble. I began to feel like the ugly duckling. It was time for me to retire.

My old heart could not bear it any longer. Children of today will not be aware that I once provided enjoyment and pleasure for those who wanted to hold and caress me. I rest now in this silk-lined coffin with a beautiful covering over my belly of bellows and black buttons. On the floor of this closed jail under a pile of junk, I wait not to be exposed, not to be fondled, not to be caressed and loved, but to be sold. At a tag sale! For a song no doubt!

Barbara Genovese

I NEVER LAUGHED IN SPRING

Nature's not funny. I never laughed in spring.
It was mostly work. It **meant** work
In snow but sometimes rain.
Robins pulled at worms in thawing pliant soil.
Tree buds burst; sunny jonquils bloomed
Amid the hyacinths.
Spring made me happy, excited to be alive.
It brought chinook winds that melted ice
On river bottoms, hill divides.
Gray muslin clouds swept swiftly overhead.
Whitened sheets dried, snapped in the wind
On frayed, old cotton lines.
Black calves nursed; lambs were bottle-fed.
Barns and barnyards shoveled
Or gardens sowed instead.
I never laughed in spring. Never played either.
Days became long when school let out
And frogs began to call.

Abby Ripley



HORSE SENSE

Nancy Schuler

DUET

Warm bath water,
Johnson shampoo and
Ivory soap.
Towel folded next to the small tub.
Not the first baby
I slip into water,
supporting neck and head,
anticipating.
His eyes widen, small "o" of mouth,
a gasp as the water slides around,
tickling
soothing
lapping his newborn skin,
the organ most attuned to this world.
Warm wrap of towel and singing after-bath songs:
Mommy nonsense.
Grand finale: the rubbing of lotion on back and tummy,
muscles expanding, contracting in response to touch.
His arms shoot out as I massage lotion onto his
chubby legs.
I laugh, he looks,
totally immersed
in the singing of his skin and
his own reflection in my face.

Harriet Fotter

MY LITTLE BROWN BOOK I

In the far corner
a shadow

From it soft tones
are heard

Words barely audible:
my little brown book
my little brown book

Out of the shadow
a girl of twelve appears
holding something
close to her breast

From where I sit
it is blurred
like the words heard:
my little brown book
my little brown book

Slowly she drifts
back into the shadow
leaving the mystery
contained within

**(written after
listening to Duke
Ellington/John
Coltrane version)**

MY LITTLE BROWN BOOK II

Du . . . da du . . . da
Hmmm . . .

Gentle steps

vibrant notes
repeated
softly

echoing

calling out
rising up
climbing
seeing the world

Experience
let it happen

save it
in a little brown book

Marie T. Maag

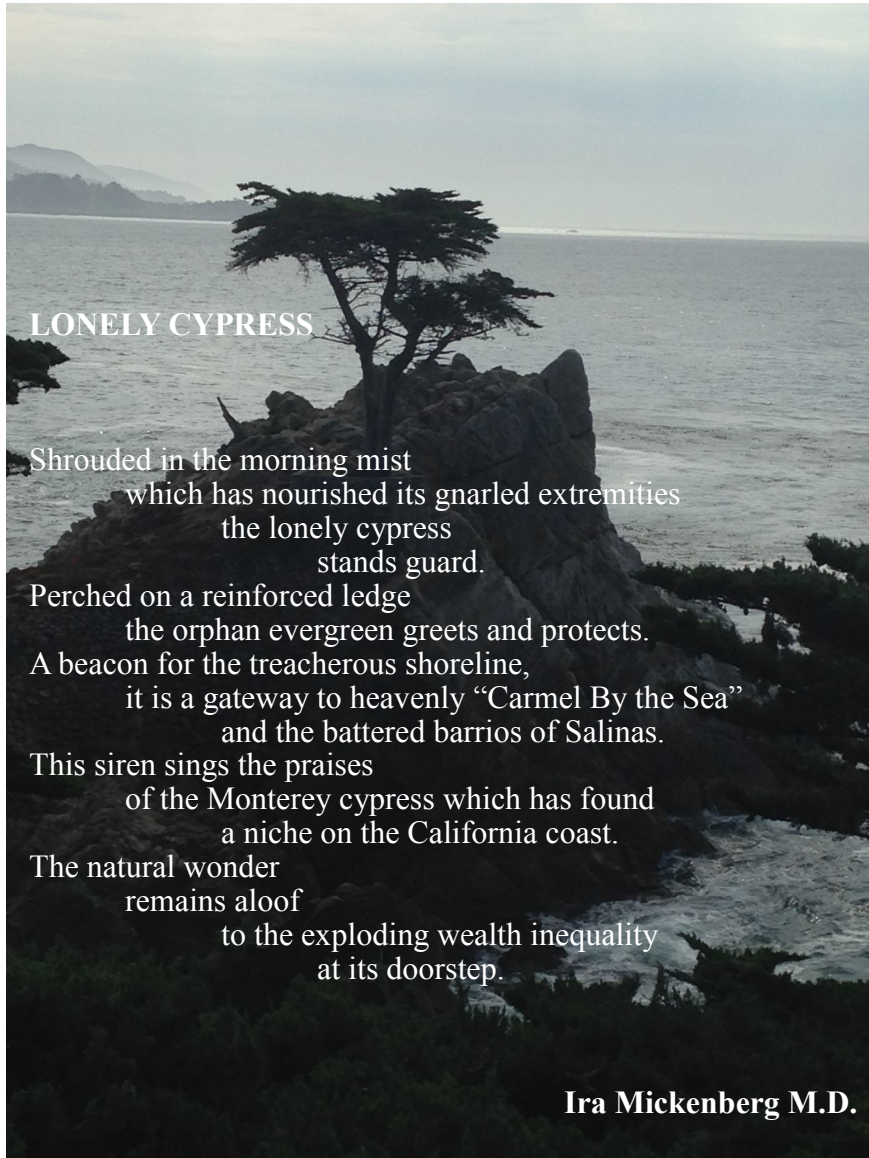


LILACS **Nancy Rakuba**

HAIKU

Leaf mold, earth's dander
nature's moist incubator.
Shoots emerge, crocus!

Irene Murray



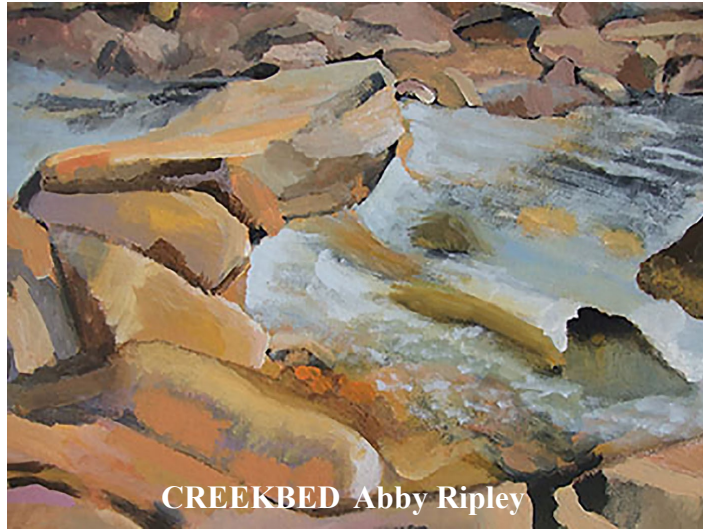
AUTUMN LOVE

Late afternoon, the shadows creep in
 The clock you so lovingly restored
 Looked so beautiful this morning
 But seems ominous to me now
 These hours seem to take on wings
 Like our remaining days and years

I will not cry, but take my leave
 I will think about the morning with you
 About your face, your lips, your smile
 And wait until the next time
 For the precious gift of you and
 The deep gold tapestry of our autumn love

Mary Fitzpatrick Peitler





CREEKBED Abby Ripley

SHUSH-UP

Don't bathe my ears with
The tears of your consternation
Don't clutch my hands and hold
Them to your heaving breast

For have we not lived in the
Silence of complacency
And enjoyed the deafness
Of denial

Were we not blind to the
Structures that surrounded us
Or the aroma of a
Society gone rancid

Would you still expect
The system to protect us
When its very fabric
Has been built upon deceit

And do we not replace our leaders
With chameleon-like duplicates
Steeped in the rhetoric of
Campaign hyperbole

And do not think that I stand alone
Enjoying the innocence of solitude
For I too bear the guilt
Of not having made a contribution

Not having paid the price
Of at least giving
A damn

L. Jack Singer

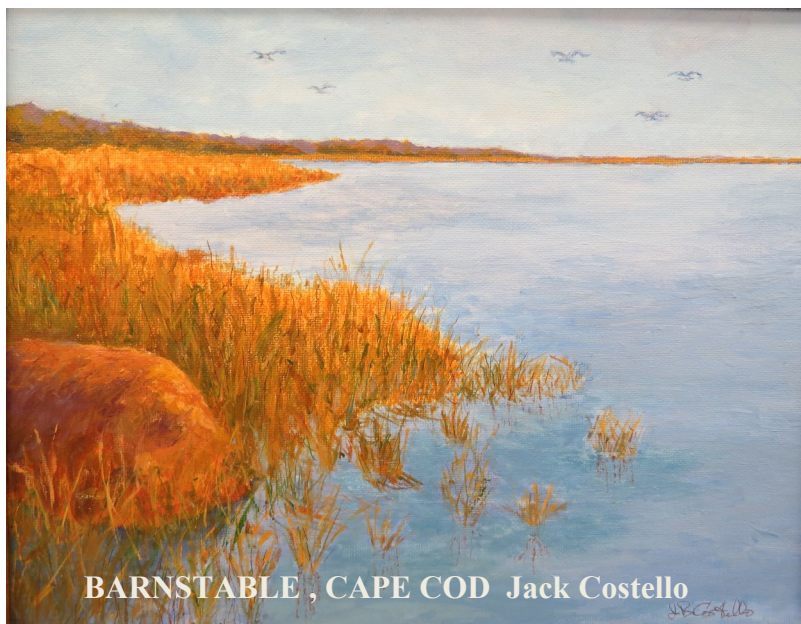
YES OR NO

Does it matter that we ran out of detergent this morning?
Does it matter if the furnace doesn't kick in immediately?
Does it matter if a father in Pakistan maims his daughter
because she didn't marry the man he chose for her?
Does it matter if there are ants in our plants in the bay
window?
Does it matter if there's dust on the bookcase shelves?
Does it matter that ageless works of art are destroyed by
religious fanatics?
Does it matter that a young man gets fifteen years of hard
labor for a prank in a foreign country?
Does it matter that women are condemned because they have
been raped by someone in their own family?
Does it matter that young men with smiles on their faces
detonate the bombs on their waists and blow up an airport?

What does matter?

Everything—some things—or nothing?

Betsy Antonucci



BARNSTABLE, CAPE COD Jack Costello

NOW

I walked the beach today
nothing else to do
I thought about things
as if in a rear view mirror
instead of seeing
the road ahead.

I strolled along the shore
by my melancholy self,
let the ripples cross my feet
alone (adrift) in thought
of what might have been
I missed another day.

There's nothing in the past
I can do a thing about
and living in the future
makes little sense at all
right now is all that matters
so I'll live life while it happens . . .

and never question why.

Allen Smuckler

As the water approaches,
tips fracture randomly into pure
strings along the ridge, rolls of rhythmic-
Waves joining together from
different directions to
into foam and sand.

swell's
white
chaos

morph

Eyes closed, the crashing sound as in a
percussion symphony,
random from left, right and center-
drown the clutter in my mind,

stereo.
non-vital

I walk in the white rolls and foam;
no longer
My daughter dives in, swims into
the blue water. She rolls over,

run
floats

Had we been younger, we would
splash into rocky pools
left by the outbound tide,
barnacles glued the rocks. Follow
small trails in the sand
to discover what made them:

observing
periwinkles

At night we watch as the Earth's shadow
slowly chews up the full moon
turning it into a bloody ball, The
normal reflection on the water
The shadow passes slowly; the moon
again reflects sunlight in the water:
a sparkling swath of

vanishes.
beauty

Time travels faster than waves and tides.
In a blink approaches my final
May the end be at the beginning -
near the beautiful turmoil-

phase
ocean

Lisa Quint



SPARKLE BEACH

Mary Baker

ECLIPSE OF TIME

Return to the beach of our childhood,
daughter and I together,
Wells Beach, Maine, end of summer,

Reclining on the sand under cerulean,
Gazing at the horizon above
phthalo blue,
looking for an island, ship's sail,
motor boat wake, lighthouse,

Me: age 75
Her: age 45
escape

sky
ocean
visible

LAST WORDS

So live that when at last you die
And from this mortal coil you flee,
Your last words are 'What's next?' not 'Why?'

And when you heave your farewell sigh
And you would seek that blessed lea,
So live that when at last you die

The angels cradle you on high
And God is there to hear and see
Your last words are 'What's next?' not 'Why?'

To those left here to mourn and cry
You leave behind the heartfelt plea:
So live that when at last you die

You place a rainbow in the sky,
And those you love may solaced be
Your last words are 'What's next?' not 'Why?'

But if I am the first to fly
And you must say farewell to me
So live that when at last you die
Your last words are 'What's next?' not 'Why?'

J. R. Lewis

We are God's song,
written before the earth was,
the symphony of creation stirs within us,
around us,
as we mingle with eternity.

J. R. Lewis

GOIN' TO DIXIE

"It's a direct flight," they tell me.
"He's a senior; this is the last time.
You HAVE to come."

Of course I agree.

Flying used to be an adventure but is less fun now
I've grown old. Wheelchairs are involved and I must
endure solicitous strangers who call me Honey.
It's a long time since I've been sweet.

On southern ground, life picks up speed.
The wheelchair and I are snuggled into blankets and
pushed past the bleachers to the edge of the field.
For a dollar, loudspeaker announcements are made:
"Billy Bob, Aunt Sue is praying you'll have fun today."
A pretty girl flounces a long route around
the field, her eyes scanning the crowd
for masculine approval. Everyone
in town is here. Proud parents
wear matching team shirts.

The music begins and HERE HE COMES.
Resplendent in a white uniform and tall feathered
hat, he leads a huge band onto the field.
I swell with unearned pride.

"There are rules," I am told.
"Watch how they move their feet.
It's not about the overall show."
Rules be damned.
I fix my eyes on the almost-grown leader.

Music is repeatedly interrupted
by football and the cheering crowd.
Suddenly, he's marching the band off the field.
Can it be over so soon? But wait—

He blows a whistle, raises his staff.
The band halts and marks time while
he runs toward me.

A hug, quick kiss, "Love ya, Gramma."
He returns to duty, blows a whistle, leads
the band and Phillip Sousa back home.

My heart sings.

Audrey Eckert

Yes, I do read about the stock market. It is great place to
use my math skills which took a sometime to develop. Think
percentage and fractions which are common in the stock
reports.

Of course I think the grocery ads are vital reading material
in my house. Sometimes they are eye-opening. One grocery
chain is offering five bottle of cola for \$5 or about one and half
cents an ounce and another wants you to spend \$.10+ per ounce
for an eight ounce bottle of the same drink. If I hadn't noticed
both offers while checking the grocery ads, I could have been
fooled into buying the more expensive Coke. If you live in a
town with one grocery store, reading the grocery ads is not that
important. However if you live in a city with several different
grocery store chains, reading the grocery ads has saved me
some serious money.

Yes, I still am reading the sports pages but tend to
concentrate less on the Yankees and more on UCONN sports;
especially the women's basketball team. I love reading Kyle
Brennan's sports stories since I had him as a student in school
and Chris Massa's fantastic photos. His father was a teacher
colleague.

I am normally skeptical about the weather forecasts printed
in the paper but I look at them every day.

My favorite section of the paper features the political
cartoons. I find the political cartoonists truly amazing because
they can say so much about the current scene with so few
words.

I love the advice columns for several reasons including my
sense of smugness because I don't have most of the problems
for which advice is being sought.

The front page of the local section fascinates me. It is an
amazing feeling to see what story gets the most coverage and
how big a picture of an accused bank robber gets. Or how often
say two convicted murderers are again appealing their
convictions. I'm disgusted by the stories on the front page and
how much is publicity for a movie star or a recording celebrity.
To me, these articles are not news. Nor do I like the repeated
photos of the bad guys to continually remind us of them not
their victims.

Still when the weather is cold and snow is rapidly coming
down, I do get out of my warm bed to fetch the newspapers and
see if UCONN won. Or if Snoopy is flying his Sopwith Camel
airplane which is really his doghouse.

Evelyn Marshak

MY LOVE AFFAIR WITH READING

My love affair with newspapers has lasted more than 60 years. Perhaps I should explain how this affair began.

I was about 10 when my hunger for news about my favorite baseball team drew me to the sports pages of the New York Daily News. My dad, made my life easier because he brought it home every day. Plus the Waterbury American was delivered daily as well. Its coverage was more favorable to the Boston Red Sox but it had news about the Yankees including Yogi Berra, Joe DiMaggio and Vic Raschi.

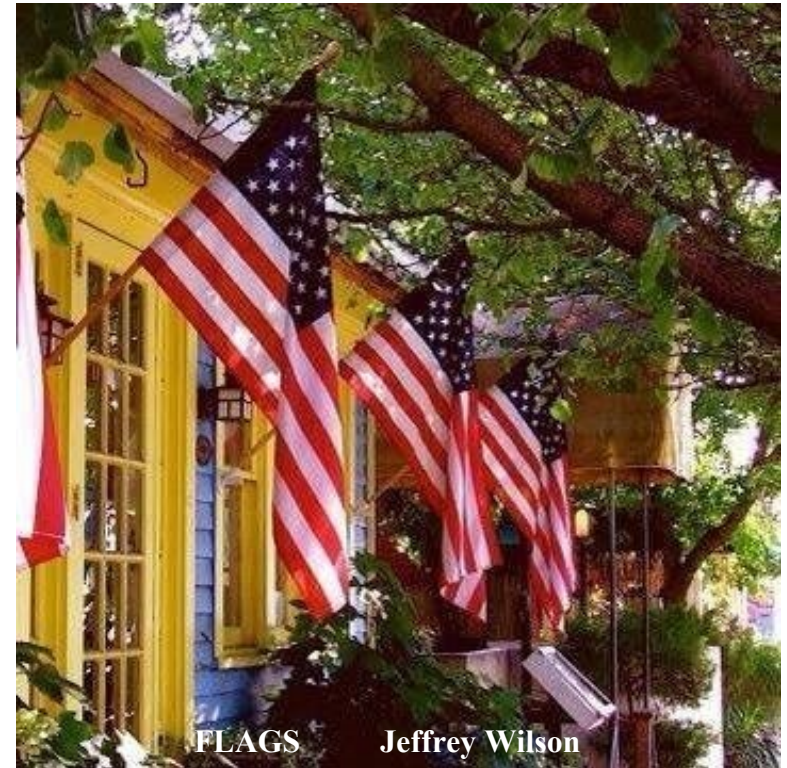
Thanks to my teachers at Waterbury's Anderson School and my newly acquired eye glasses, I was making great progress in the Fun with Dick and Jane reading series. At age 10, I was working my way through the series proud to be in the level 5 book, Days and Deeds.

I passed the East End branch of the Silas Bronson Library four times a day. Yes, we walked to school and home for lunch in those days and each trip took me past the library. Normally I'd stop for books on my second walk home, or after the afternoon session ended.

My love affair with newspapers has two different aspects-reading the newspapers and writing for newspapers.

Reading newspapers came first but by time I was a junior at Crosby High, I was writing for the school paper, the Argus, and on Fridays I'd see my byline in the American's school page section. At UCONN, I did interviews, wrote headlines and did layout and was eventually named managing editor.

One daily newspaper magnet for me is the comics. Charles Schultz refused to let someone continue creating "Peanuts" after his death. While there are no longer new episodes, reading the paper lets me enjoy Schultz's incredible view of life and Charlie Brown, Lucy, Linus, Schroeder, and Snoopy every day. The comic strip, "ZITS", reminds me that parents are forever amazed and also disgusted by their teenagers. In the comic strip, "Hi and Lois" the parents, in a strip with the same name, are forced to deal with four children and trying to stay somewhat sane. Most days the strip is downright amusing. I am amazed how "Hagar the Horrible" another comic strip character, who lives in feudal times, often encounters 21st century problems. When the stock market drops and the forecast is for strong winds and bone-chilling cold, reading the comics in the morning helps me take on the day.



FLAGS

Jeffrey Wilson



FLOWERS

Marie Kenney

OLD WIVES' TALES

My mother saw a ghost once. I know this is true because she told me it happened. It wasn't just any apparition but that of a neighborhood child who was hit on the head with a large block of ice when she was picking up slivers of it from under a delivery truck. It was 1933 and that's the kind of thing the kids did to quench their thirst on hot August days.

The girl died and was laid out in a white, satin-lined coffin, wearing her white communion dress. A bouquet of white daisies were placed in her hand and her pink rosary beads were laced through her tiny, rigid fingers. Her dark, black curly hair, coifed to perfection, was in braids, with white bows tied at either end.

The bump on her head, from where the 50 pounds of ice landed, was still visible to mourners. It was over her left temple, the size of a lemon, all black and blue.

My mom didn't see her at the funeral, but my Grandma Grace did. Two nights later, my mom did see the girl when she appeared in the doorway of the bedroom my mom shared with her sister, my Aunt Rose. Mom was ten, my aunt just six, and they were waiting for my mom's friend, Suzy, to come over for the night.

"I heard a sound like tiny footsteps and looked up and there she was," my mom would say as she told the ghost story yet another time. "She was all in white and I yelled out 'Suzy' and she vanished."

My grandmother came to the room and asked what was going on. "No," she said, "Suzy wasn't there." Who could that have been? Of course, being Italian and from the old country she was the family's purveyor of superstitions and the like. Grandma of course knew who it was.

It was the girl in the coffin. She must have lost her way back to her own house and ended up at ours instead. Grandma was the one to go to sort out such things. She loved to predict, entice and scare.

COME HOLD MY HAND

Let me show you love
See that tree
See that nest up there
Resting up so high
Silhouetted in the sky,
Come, Come nearer still,
Listen do you hear,
The sound of spring is here.
The rippling brook,
Rambling on at will.
Look a Robin sings,
On such wondrous things,
Come with me and see,
The Pussy willow's out,
Their fuzzy buds do sprout
Like caterpillars alight,
Come quick,
A chipmunk in the woods.
Oh, if you only could,
Come closer too,
And see the love,
That's there for you.
Hold on,
Can you feel it all,
The love that's here.
Such a sight to hold.
And wills to mold.
Come hold my hand.

Louise Varanelli



STAGE HARBOR LIGHT Bonnie Celello



MARSH VIEW CHATHAM Bonnie Celello

When I was expecting my second child, I slipped going upstairs one day and landed on my knee. When I told grandma she asked, “Which knee?” “The right,” I said. “You’re having a boy,” she replied. And I did.

She also believed in the evil eye, a curse which could be accurately predicted by pouring a little olive oil onto a plate of water. If the oil congealed in the center, you were certainly the target of some wrongful person.

Are you going to make a celebratory toast? Well, make sure it’s with wine and not water. Don’t take chances.

You bought new shoes. Don’t put them on the table. The same goes for putting your hat on the bed. That’s unlucky, too, and usually associated with death. Who wants that?

Ah, the Old Wives’ Tales. For a young girl, it was bad luck to leave the house with wet hair – you certainly would catch your death of cold. Or if someone brushed over a young lady’s feet with a broom, that almost certainly meant she would remain single for life.

If it was a woman’s “time of the month,” God forbid, don’t stir the spaghetti sauce, or gravy, as we called it. You could turn it sour.

But there were a few ways to bring good luck including eating lentils at midnight on New Year’s Eve. For women, wearing red undergarments would surely make her lucky in love. But that’s a given.

You listened, but not really believing most of the superstitious banter, even if it came in the form of a strange, foreign dialect.

It was hard to really believe about the apparition my mom said she saw, even though my aunt also swore it happened.

My son would always ask my mom to retell the story. He just loved it and no doubt was a believer.

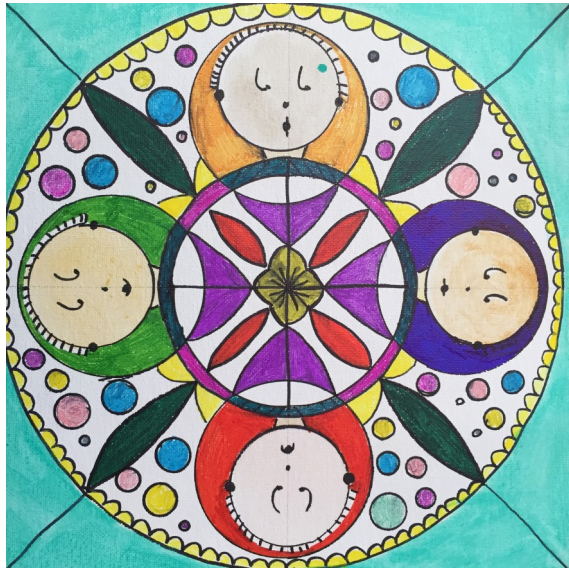
As for me, I try my best to avoid the evil eye and would never put my new pair of shoes on the table. And I always toast with a nice big glass of vino.

Why tempt fate?

Anne M. Amato



LADAKHI OLD COUPLE Abby Ripley



MANDALA FACES Mary Lee Carroll

Spring rain frolics through
caressing the land softly
Blue sky tomorrow

J. R. Lewis



BUTTERFLY Anna Ascione

DANDELION

Bits of green, but mostly brown,
A stirring in the warmth.
A little yellow spot, two blooms,
Resting close to earth.
Round and bright as sun in sky,
Omen of a change.
The beaming face removes all doubt—
Spring has taken root.

Nancy DiLorenzo

ROCK AND ROLL POET

(A Pantoum)

Chuck Berry wrote the poems of rock 'n' roll—
Poems that have come down through the years.
Chuck sang as if to save his soul,
With his rhyming ringing in my ears.

Poems that have come down through the years
As played by Wolfman Jack and Alan Freed,
With his rhyming ringing in my ears
And my emotions dazed as if from a need.

As played by Wolfman Jack and Alan Freed
His songs ruled the nation
And my emotions dazed as if from a need.
Religious folks threatened with hell and damnation.

His songs ruled the nation.
Chuck Berry sang to my teen-aged psyche:
Religious groups threatened with hell and damnation.
I had to get my hands on his songs, hoping they're free.

Chuck Berry sang to my teen-aged psyche
Poems like "School Days" and "Sweet Little Sixteen."
I had to get my hands on his songs, hoping they're free.
He sang of a "Brown-eyed Handsome Man" and
"Maybellene."

Poems like "School Days" and "Sweet Little Sixteen,"
Chuck sang as if to save his soul.
He sang of a "Brown-eyed Handsome Man" and
"Maybellene"—
Chuck Berry wrote the poems of rock 'n' roll.

charles corden

CHANGING HATS

I changed my hat the other day
became someone I never
thought I would . . . but I did
I metamorphosed
all because of that hat
it changed me forever
a change in life

I wear many hats you see
of father, husband,
brother and son
cousin, friend and
retiree
but I changed my hats today
to include
an exited lover
and I'll never
quite be the same

I lost a special hat today
which vanished in the mist
it sheltered me from
the storm of life
curled around the edges
it helped me navigate the seas
of discontent and
wonderment

I changed my hat for good I think
I couldn't toss it out
so I hung it with all the others,
glance at it most every day
and pine away the moments
all because of changing a hat
that meant so much to me.

Allen Smuckler

GENESIS 1:2015

And the Lord said,
Go forth and multiply
Feed the masses
Create, educate
Approbate, condensate
Communicate, concentrate
Captivate, celebrate
Innovate, irritate
Germinate, illustrate
Ideate, impregnate
Moderate, motivate
Perorate, penetrate
Postulate, predicate
Resonate, stipulate
Titillate, alliterate
Invigorate, fascinate
And when you do, I will be
Well served, and invite you
Into my Kingdom
And I will call you
POET

L. Jack Singer



RUSTY Betsy Nickerson

ALCES ALCES

In the east when the benevolent light
Lifts her burning head, forest eyes and ears
Pay homage to this early morning sight
And to the wakening animal cries.

Alces alces, the bull moose, pauses at the foot of the forested
hill,
Strong in his middle age; an image of youth.
Setting out on his climb to the crest.
He emits heavy, grunting sounds

From the summit of the highest hill,
Alces alces waits for calls from distant mounts.
He picks up the scent of long-absent cows,
Gives a snort and lets out loud plaintive grunts.

His cry is satisfied from a hill in the distance,
Wail-like sounds from waiting females
Float over the autumnal forest
Announcing to Alces alces their existence.

The bull hurtles through dense underbrush,
Crosses near freezing streams,
Scrambles up leaf-blanketed mounds
And arrives in a sheltered, grassy gorge.

In the distance, excited cows await.
But a rival bull, motionless—threatening—
Blocks the approach of Alces alces.
After a period of gauging their chances of success

The two bulls approach and face off head to head,
Then engage each other's antlers.
After a period of intense wrestling they separate
With the more mature Alces alces standing his ground

The younger bull retreats
Leaving the harem of cows to Alces alces
Who lets out a loud victorious bugle cry
That floats over the arboreal hills.

charles corden



WATERFALLS Allen Smuckler

IF

If telegraph is tap,
Printing is Charleston,
Typing is hip-hop,
Shorthand is tango,
Cursive is Viennese Waltz,
what dances will be lost in the keystrokes of evolution?

Irene Murray



TRAFFIC JAM

Charles Lasky

HOT WIRED

Digitally charged from morning till night
 Apps crowd the screen like missiles in flight
 Always on the ready
 Rightly placed and steady
 Fingers to move from site to site

When not harried by schedules to keep
 Or starting another app search sweep
 Fingers choose a game
 No matter what its name
 To reward my brain with a fun-filled treat

Maryellen Joncyk

THE BUILDER

This prison cell I built myself,
 I forged each bar and set it firm
 In deep resentment's strong foundation.
 I colored each one dark and grim.

Some bars were started by my family,
 Cousins, siblings, cruel kin
 Beat me down with criticism,
 Crushed out any light within.

The bars stand straight and overbearing –
 This one is Envy, that one Hate,
 Failure's over in the corner;
 It's Worthlessness that bars the gate.

I saw myself as they described me –
 Weak and stupid, ugly, wrong.
 I bought into their every put-down
 And built a jail both dark and strong.

This cell is now my hiding place;
 I made it out of all their lies.
 I made it well; I can't escape it,
 It's fear that keeps me locked inside.

And even if I could break through it,
 Where on earth am I to go?
 In a world of hope and freedom,
 There's no one there I really know.

J. R. Lewis



DAILY LIFE ALONG THE GANGES Pat Fahey



BELLA VENEZIA Lise D. Rinaldi

TREADING THE BOARDS

I saw you standing in the mist
under the flickering marquee lights.
“Show is —old out.
Fin— —formance t—ight.”

You stood erect—head up, shoulders back—
in a stance that gave me hope.
We funneled through the palace doors,
home once to vaudeville and silent films.

Posters hung between faded columns
featuring names of forgotten films and stars.

We took our tickets from a box;
then, took our seats.

You were some distance away,
among the first whose name was called
to cross the pit
and stand on stage.

I latched onto the tale you had to tell
and felt my own finality
when the curtain finally fell.

Philip Benevento

TALL SHIP

The night is clear. The stars are bright, playing a kind of "Peek-A-Boo" between the leaves rustling in the wind on the old oak tree. Farther away the sea is calm, foamy white waves are rolling gently toward the quiet, abandoned beach.

She has the window open, gauze curtains flying in the breeze that extinguished the flame of the candle. The complete darkness suits her. She loves to hear the wind and the far whispers of the waves kissing the shore.

She approaches the window. Her bare feet on the cold tiled floor, send a chill to her spine. Her white nightgown and dark long hair billowing in the breeze, give her the appearance of a ghost. Her green eyes are large, staring in front of her. Her red full lips are open, as if asking the darkness and loneliness: How much longer?

Leaning on the windowsill, she cradles her face in her hands, staring into the darkness, hoping to detect any flicker of light in the water.

She remembers a year past. They lived a quiet uneventful life, then, the Tall Ship docked in the port. Seeing the majestic ship, he had a wistful look on his face. No words were exchanged between them on the subject. She knew . . . he was yearning to sail far away and discover exciting worlds beyond the horizon.

The Tall Ship sailed away, becoming a dot far on the vast blue sea, on the day when he went to buy fish and never returned.

Lidia Bram



STILL LIFE WITH FRUIT

Jackie Gugliotti



Jazz Riff Number Seven for Aleta

Shari Sasso found the Tenor Saxophone while walking the railroad tracks that ran along the back of her home. Tommy Roman had tossed it from the *New York, New Haven and Hartford* on its way back from Torrington. Revolted with his playing after a gig in Great Barrington, Tommy, a talented musician, ran to the back of the train and, in a manic moment, tossed the instrument. Tommy was crazy.

Shari, a very mature fifteen, contacted Tommy, somewhat worldly at nineteen. She found Tommy's New Haven address on an ID Tag in the case. Through their connection, Tommy and Shari had a child, Michael. Their union lasted a very short time, not even through the pregnancy.

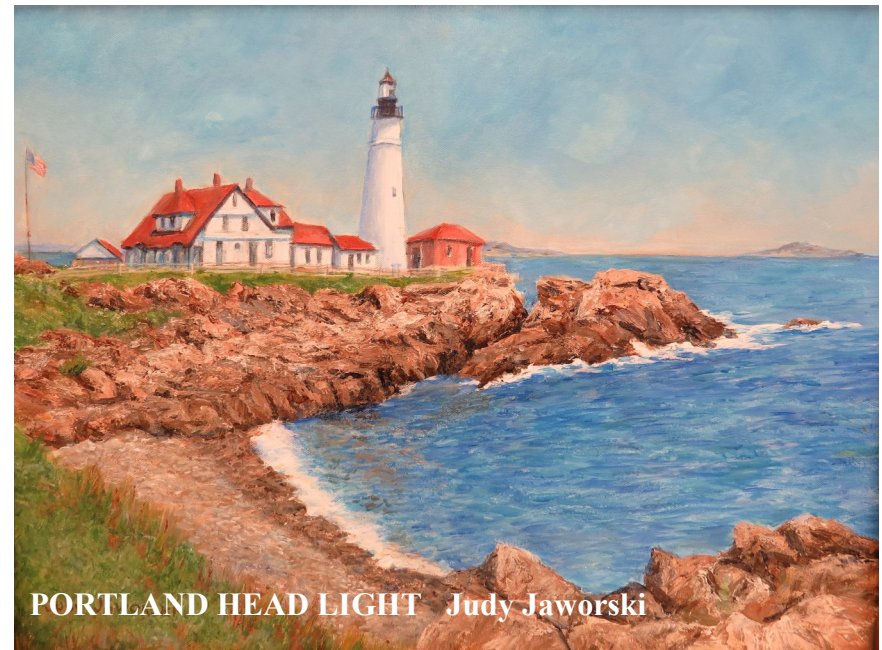
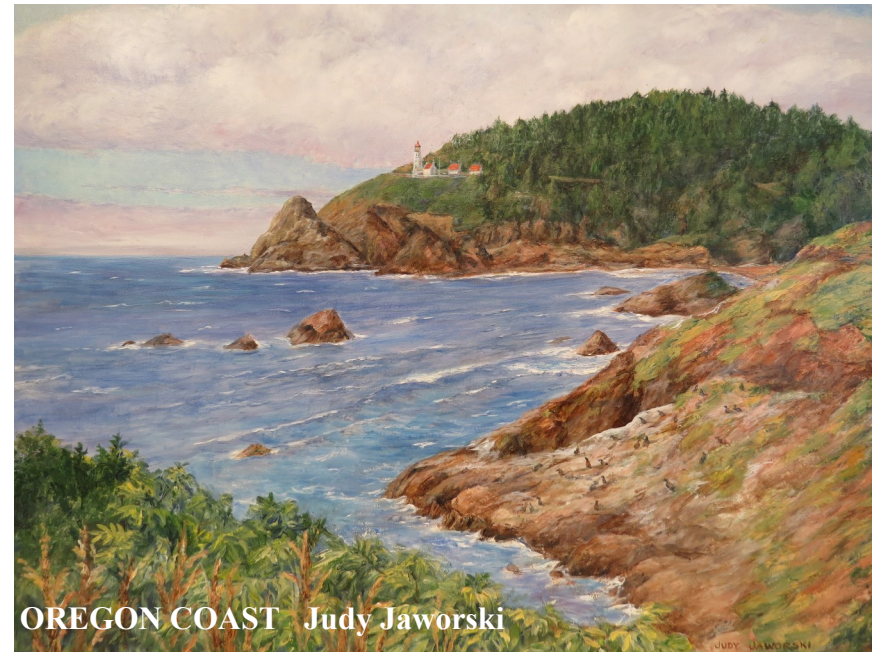
Shari led a troubled, hard-scrabble life. Her family abandoned her, for the most part because of her pregnancy, and she ended up in the street. Tommy chased Coltrane, Eric Dolphy and New York City jazz and led a struggling, penniless jazz musician's existence.

Coming from such dysfunction, Michael struggled, but somehow managed to become a lawyer. He never knew his father and dealt with a mentally challenged mother who would never take his help. Still, he made a life.

He would often find himself walking long-abandoned railroad tracks, playing the harmonica. Self taught; he played the "blues", long-horn sounding, lost-train sounds.

He never knew why he was drawn to the tracks.

Jeffrey Wilson



RED GERANIUMS

She stands in front of the mirror, shocked by the wrinkled face of the woman staring back at her. Touching the corners of her eyes, moving her fingers over her dry lips, trying to straighten her unruly hair, she is reminded this morning, again, that her inner feelings about herself, are not compatible with the physical reality.

Sunlight is streaming through the window, reflecting the magnificent colors of autumn. She opens the window, breathing in the fresh cold air. She thinks of the coming howling winds and snow drifts of winter, but also marvels at the beauty of the moment.

She opens the door. The house is quiet. The aroma of fresh brewed coffee engulfs her. Now, she remembers, it is time to bring in the red geraniums.

Lidia Bram



LIFE IS A STORY

Some of my early and best memories are of sitting around a warm, flaming, yellow bonfire listening to stories told by my parents. Stories of galloping with a stampeded herd of bison over the face of the mountain with the frightening possibility of my mother's horse stepping in a prairie dog hole and falling, throwing her to an instant death. No matter how many times she told the story my heart raced alongside those thundering, grunting behemoths, and I feared for her. Of the stories my father told of hunting elk without a license in the Big Horn Mountains, and the shenanigans he and my uncles played to outwit John Ashenbach, the resolute game warden whose sole purpose, as my father told it, was to catch them red-handed, literally with the animal's blood on their hands.

From these fantastic yarns of braggadocio and consummate skill, I learned that I never had to be cornered. There would always be a way out even if it seemed an impossibility or involved risk. Nothing could defeat an imagination of necessity, and later in life, I, indeed, saved my own "bacon" by such creative thinking.

My three sisters and I would sit on logs enraptured by their sorties into a wild and woolly past. The potatoes baked in the coals; our faces turned a deep rose from the scorching fire; our eyes watered when smoke drifted into them, and although we all knew that smoke followed beauty, I never seemed to be favored by the smoke oracle and took its random selection personally: Was I really the ugly one?

My parents were prolific storytellers, but when it seemed likely they had run out of stories, I asked probing questions: Were you scared; what was the color or name of the horse you rode that day; if Ashenbach had pulled his gun to arrest you, what would you have done? And when I ran out of questions to extend the stories, I told them to make them up. Those stories were never as good or exciting as the true ones.

I'm reminded that any narration of our lives is a story. Who's to say it is not? In recounting our quotidian lives, we can never tell it straight. With each narration we enhance it. We add curly cues and shading, and our listeners smile broadly and their eyes gleam with satisfaction. And so, if our lives are worth telling about, they are worth writing about, and that's what I do.

Abby Ripley



AFTER G. COURBET, PLAGE A TROUVILLE Brian Denyer

MARINA

“A silence in our hearts . . . and a cloud upon the soul.”

Your name evokes an ocean’s inner power,
Your smile once thawed many a frosty face,
Your caring heart was born of stars’ own shower,
Alive your eyes as blessed by nature’s grace.

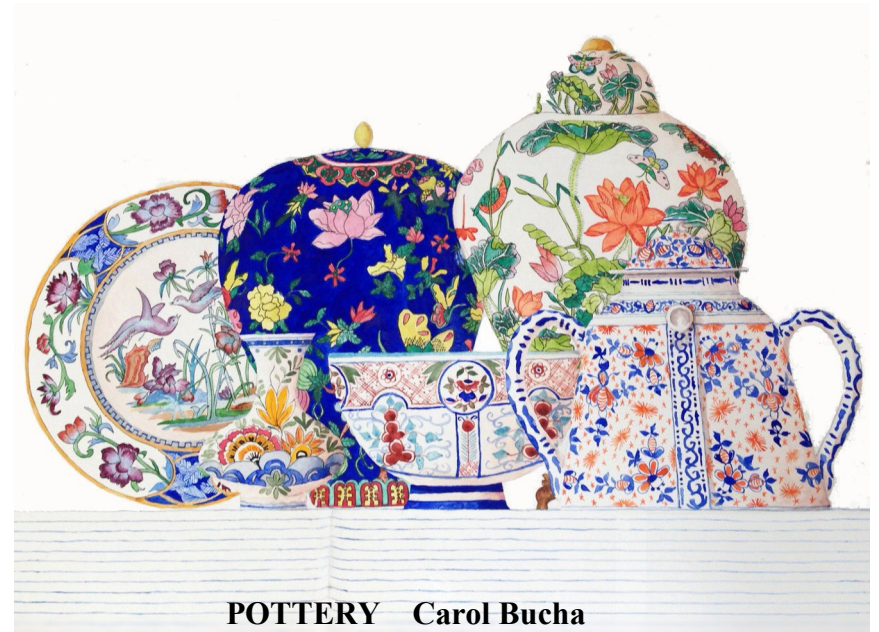
Your family feels you still despite a stricken mind:
The touch of your voice upon a mother’s ear,
The dance of your step for a father’s arm to steer,
A brother’s bond to guide your gifts so dear.

Your laugh would sweep through us like truth in the wind.
At school you learned to climb a challenge steep,
In college days you gave such times of joy to keep,
In caring, living well you showed us how to reap.

Marina, smile on us from up above,
For all we feel for you is naught but love.

*At age 21, Marina Peterson was killed in an automobile
accident in June 2009*

Brian Denyer



POTTERY Carol Bucha

Evening sky, so pale
yet streaked with red and orange
My soul gasps in awe

J. R. Lewis

OUT NUMBERED

Stars and nebula scattered
like so many grains of salt
on a bed of purple velvet.
Only God keeps an accounting.

A diamond. A carat stone.
Three billion years old.
Unbroken. A time-traveled egg.
Created by earth, wind and fire.

How many legs does a millipede have?
Birds are reported to have two feet.
Humans the same: two.
Animals - four feet to walk upon the earth.

Dinosaur bones. Millions of years old.
How do you measure years
in a puff of smoke?
We can't count the years.

A tree has rings inside its trunk.
Count the rings. Tell its age.
I don't think a tree really cares.
A tree wants to grow.

Do you think a tree counts leaves
when they sprout? or fall to the ground?
Does a dandelion count as it blooms
and its seeds blow away on the wind?

How many notes in a Beethoven symphony?
Someone must have counted.
He wrote without counting. He composed with passion
not counting notes.

A baby finds her toes.
She does not count them.
She stuffs them in her mouth
and enjoys them.

IN- LAWS

Her silent anxiety
screams at the kids
in the back
seat. They dare not ask:
Are we there yet?

Front door greetings,
"How the children have grown!
Come sit by the
fire." Her square thoughts
squeeze into the family circle.

Grandma and the Aunts
work in the kitchen.
"Rest yourself," they tell
her. Evicted, she doesn't know
they don't really mean it.

In the smoke-filled living room
loud football and politics are
washed down with cold beer.

She slips outdoors to
watch lonely November clouds
threaten
Rain.

Audrey Eckert



BUTTERFLY Anna Ascione

SUMMER RAIN

Icky, sticky, drippy popsicle air—
A wet sheet hanging in the stillness;
No sway of blade or stem;
No leaf or bird or bee aflutter—
A breath exhausts.

Suddenly—a flash, a clap—
Thick dark sponges squeezed;
Moisture drops like rubber balls,
Relief forming instant puddles.

Young children, suited to swim,
Moments ago inert,
Emerge and dance in joy.

Nancy DiLorenzo

How many daubs of color did Seurat paint
on his giant canvas? How many tubes of paint
did Van Gogh use
in a lifetime of creativity?

How many ‘whys?’ in a lifetime?
Do they every really get an answer?

Nancy Whitney



COLLAGE OF MANDALAS

Created by **Rose-Ann Chrzanowski's** Mandala Class

Collage assembled by **Charles Lasky**

REMEMBERING ONE CHRISTMAS

I remember one Christmas when I was 12. We were living in an old Victorian house on the east side of Bridgeport. It had three bedrooms and a secret walk-in closet off of my grandfather's room where all the gifts were hidden. We celebrated Russian Orthodox Christmas on January 7, 1953. I desperately wished for ice skates.

My parents both worked and did not get home until 5 p.m. After school my sisters and I were "latch key" kids. Under my blouse I wore a key chain. Lots of kids were home alone after school during the late 40s and 50s. I unlocked the door; we changed our clothes and had a snack. I, being the oldest, was supposed to peel potatoes, set the table and start supper.

But I wasn't called Mischievous Marjie for nothing. I suggested to my sisters, Betty, nine, and Marilyn, six, to snoop in the secret closet to see what we could find.

It was my grandpa's room. We called him "Deedo" in Rusyn. He came to live with us from Olyphant, Pennsylvania. That was after "Baba," my grandmother, died. That same year, my Aunt Madeline, eighteen, died of diphtheria and my Uncle John, 14, died of strep throat. The room was vacant of Deedo's personal items; I could smell his pipe tobacco. It permeated the room.

We opened the closet, it was dark and scary until I pulled the chain light and there in the corner was Deedo's old trunk. When he was 18, he left his village in the Carpathian Mountains to come to America. He brought all his possessions in that trunk. He spoke little English but knew three languages. His native language was Rusyn, but he was forced to learn Hungarian and Russian when those countries took over. We were afraid of him because he was stern and we did not understand him. Deedo was very tall, thin, wore spectacles and walked with a cane. He always seemed angry and most of the day tended to drink an amber-colored fluid from a small glass. My mother said he was in a lot of pain and depressed about losing his wife and children.

As I started to open the chest, my sister Betty jumped and screamed and Marilyn ran out and slammed the door shut. "What's the matter?" I asked, shaking all over.

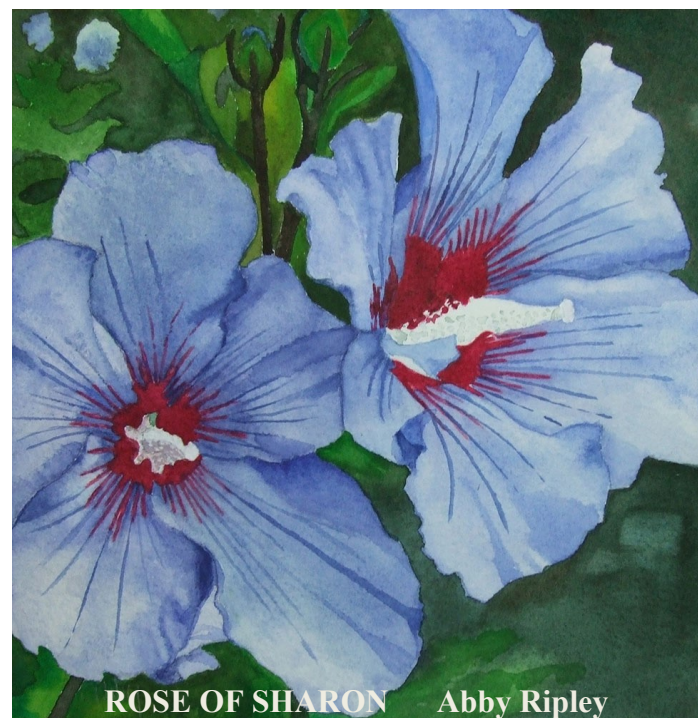
"Something ran over my foot!" said Betty.

The warm spring breeze seemed to tickle your window curtains making them dance and twirl on their toes as the curtain panels fanned you in the breeze, all the while as you drifted off to sleep reliving the day's wonderful playtime events in your mind, joyfully knowing that you would have a chance to repeat it all again tomorrow.

A good many years later, the same familiar scent of the warm, lovely spring air could instantly span multiple decades and easily bring you back to a peaceful, time of bliss in your life that was filled with such joy and happiness as you relived your youth.

The mind and senses tenderly hold each other as they dance in one accord across the memory's vast floor, one lovely step after another, reminiscing with great fondness of a simple and happy place in time long forgotten, except when the annual guest of spring appears again for her ever so short visit.

Roseanne Elliott



ROSE OF SHARON Abby Ripley

SPRING'S FRAGRANT SCENT

Ah . . . the smell of fresh spring air! How this familiar scent can evoke such wonderful memories of days gone by.

The pure air now stands proudly as a town crier heralding in a new chapter of life after a long, hard winter.

The birds quickly assemble in choral-like fashion on the telephone wires to serenade all those who would take but a moment to listen to their lovely overture.

The flowers and buds bursting forth on the trees sway in time to this avifauna choral delight.

It was a time of blissful childhood existence spent playing non-stop outside on warm Saturday afternoons until sheer exhaustion and the absence of daylight would put a halt to one's playtime.

Frolicking barefoot through warm blades of grass in wide open fields, and savoring the fragrant scent of tulips, daffodils, berries and spearmint, would have to defer to the following day, as nighttime ever so gently pulled its dark blue shade down upon nature's beauty prompting it to peacefully rest for yet another day.

A tranquil feeling would overtake you while lying in bed listening to the rhythmic sounds of the crickets singing their nighttime melody.

Slowly drawing in deep breaths of beautiful freshness from the warm night air, you would take in the luminous beauty of the full moon and twinkling stars, stopping for a moment to wish upon a star or two.

Before retiring for the night you would study the nooks and crannies of the bright, smiling, full moon hanging effortlessly in the dark blue sky.

"Oh!" I said. Just then the phone rang. I slammed the chest closed and we both ran down the hallway and down the stairs. We had a party line dial phone, three rings for our neighbors and four for us. Sometimes we would listen in on their conversations, for which we were severely reprimanded when caught. It was my mom; she was stopping at the store for milk and asked if everything was prepared for supper.

"Almost," I replied, and then gave orders to my sisters to hurry and set the table, while I peeled the potatoes. My mother had to take two buses to get home from Warner's, at the south end of Bridgeport, where she worked as a sewing machine operator. My dad walked home from Harding High School where he worked as a custodian. We had no car and had just recently gotten a TV.

By 5 p.m. we were all sitting around the kitchen table having delicious Lapatke soup. It was made with sour cream, water, yellow beans and potatoes. With a thick slice of black bread and butter, it filled our tummies. Deedo was in Philadelphia for the holidays with my Uncle Pete's family so we never did find the Christmas gifts that day.

What a surprise on Christmas morning when we opened our gifts. My sister Betty got the ice skates and I got books! There must have been some mistake, I thought. I was heartbroken and cried myself to sleep that night. My mother must have had a premonition of our future for my sister was stricken with Multiple Sclerosis at age 21 and never skated again.

I never lost my love for books and stories that led me to faraway places. After a divorce, I went to college while raising four children and decided to pursue Library Science. My oldest son graduated from high school the same time I graduated from college as did my daughter from 8th grade. What a celebration we had.

My real passion is genealogy and what was in my Deedo's trunk. The love of reading and research has led me to the National Archives in Washington D.C., New York State Archives and Connecticut State Archives. The next step will be to follow in my grandfather's footsteps back to the Carpathian Mountains.

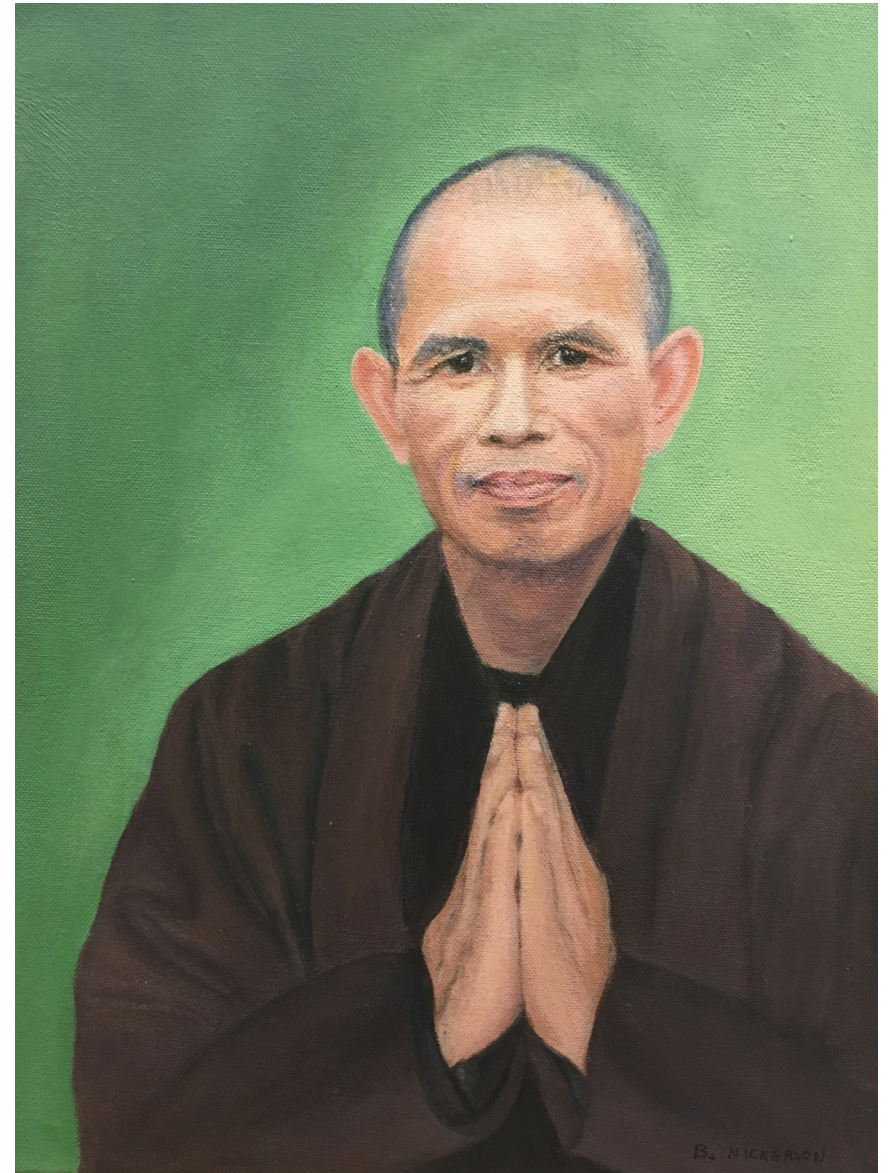
Christmases have come and gone but that Christmas determined my destiny.

Marjorie Matusko Fitzgerald

HEARTLESS CORE

THE MUSHROOM CLOUD
USURPS THE AIR
THAT HOVERS OVER
LIKE A VULTURE
EMITTING RAYS
INVISIBLE
SPRINKLING SOFTLY
LIKE A SPRING RAIN
PENETRATING CELLS
PARTICLES DIFFUSING
WHILE HUMANITY ASSIMILATES
WITH WIDE-EYED TERROR
MUTATED UNBORNS
CONTAMINATING TRUSTING SOULS
THE POLITICS OF BUSINESS GOES ON
AS THE CANCEROUS
CLOUD
CONSUMES

Marjorie Matusko Fitzgerald



THICH NHAT HANH Betsy Nickerson

FORBIDDEN LIGHT

Mom warned, they were not of the true faith.
I could be led astray.

Who knew what false doctrine or Satanic iniquity would tempt me.
To know camaraderie with the closest of kin discouraged,
watched as if in peril.

I peered at stars of light that appear in the night.
The rectangular shape in the neighborhood that I must not explore,
left with mystery of what illumination and warmth
may lie within.

Is there love within, caring, laughter, pleasure?
Does the lamp illuminate the printed page for some person
lost in the messages there, providing a bit more knowledge?
Is there music being shared by all,
cat or dog dreaming on the rug

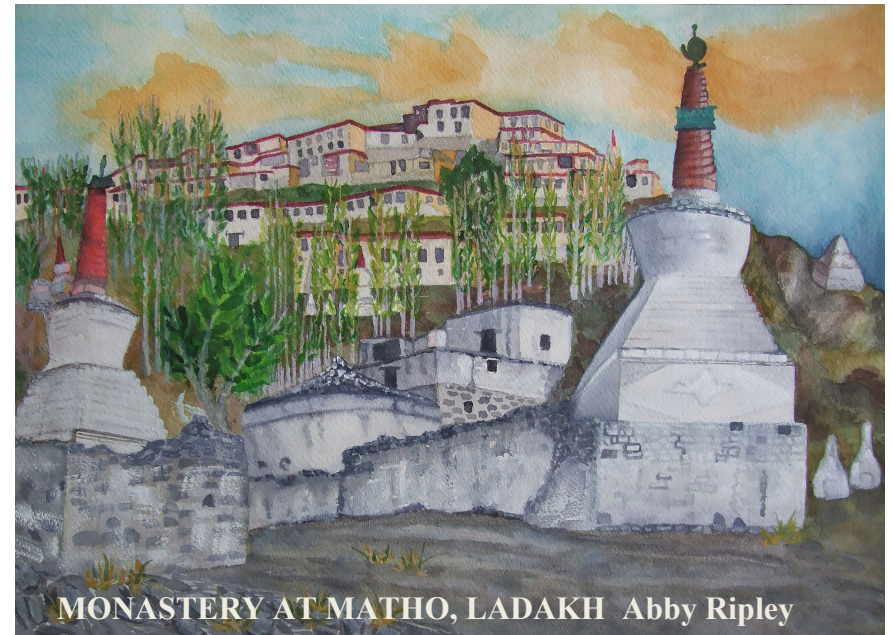
Is there discord, anger, silence meant to hurt,
Suppression . . . fear... Guilt . . . Judgment . . . condemnation?
Perhaps arguments that can't be known by us mortals,
Religious dogma that suppresses freedom of thought and exploration.

Oh, how I longed to know what I should not have known.
What are alternative explanations for the mysteries of our special life
as part of our universe?
What friendships and answers might I have experienced with cousins?

The thoughts of the supposed sins and improprieties that would be
shed by their light or lurked in the dimmer shadows,
made more delicious by the vivid imagination.
A wiser path . . . to be allowed to access all interpretation of reality.

Dogma be damned.

Lisa Quint



MONASTERY AT MATHO, LADAKH Abby Ripley



OLLI TRIP TO NIAGARA FALLS Gen Delkescamp



THE RIPE TOMATO

I
 In springtime and summer the garden
 is a fashion show.
 In a single season the tomato plant grows
 beyond displaying its voluptuous product.
 It must be staked and watered
 weeded and fed.
 Nurture proffers seeded fruit.

The tomato's ripe ruby contours
 kiss the lips of the delighted diner.

II
 The exhausted plant is destined for the compost pile
 a plant cemetery,
 In two years this proud plant
 decomposes into rich soil which
 when mixed with manure
 forms a marriage of elements
 enabling next year's garden progeny to flourish.

Ira Mickenberg

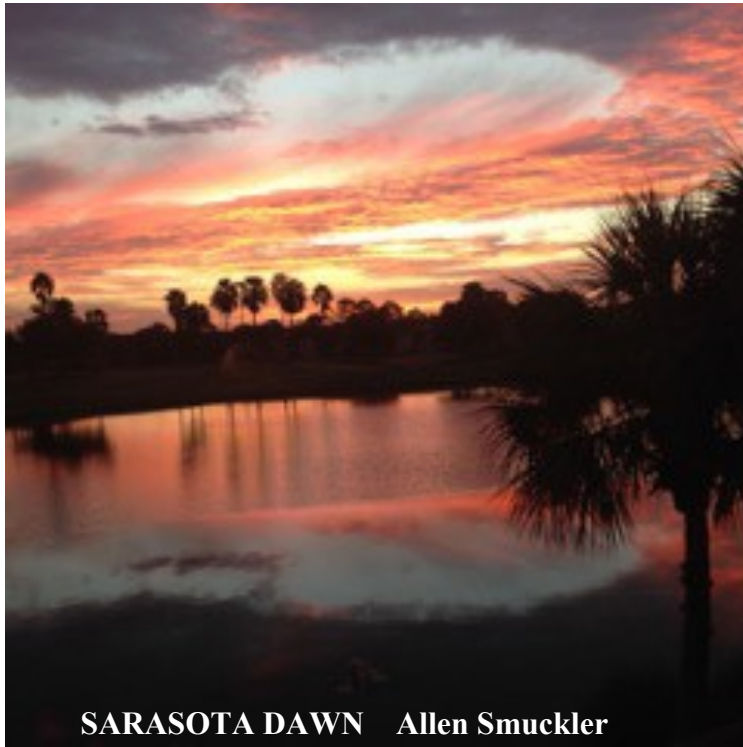
ONLY A WRITER

Only a writer ...
 knows the numbness of the blank page,
 forgetting the vision beyond the white;
 knows the rolling tide of the mind,
 ignorant of time spent on one sentence;
 knows the fragility of the next idea,
 unsure of its nascent strength;
 knows the lure of the lack of logic,
 daring to dive into a sea of pregnant words.

Only a writer ...
 thinks for a world
 that silences generous thought;
 works hearing a voice
 that is lost in space;
 smiles at one short phrase
 that has no link to the whole;
 dreams in flashes of images
 that haunt the day's mind.

Only a writer ...
 contemplates the hand
 that clicks a mouse,
 or holds a pen
 that still has miles to ink.

Brian Denyer



SARASOTA DAWN Allen Smuckler

MY ABC GARDEN POEM

A nemones blowing in the breeze
 Beautiful reds and oranges
 Carnations on their long stems
 Deftly wave as I walk by
 Even the dandelions greet me, in
 Forgiveness for their 'weedship'
 Gadiolas are still only buds
 High above the lowly periwinkles
 In my garden I can get lost
 Juniper berries, so blue and misty
 Keep the bushes from looking drab
 Lilies, long since gone to seed,
 Meander along the fence
 Nasturtiums in the vegetable garden
 Open their blooms to the sun
 Peonies, covered with ants,
 Quietly wait their turn to shine
 Roses in various hues
 Stately guard the garden gate
 Tulips have had their season
 Under the hedges they now wait for next spring
 Violets have taken over part of the lawn
 With new runners surely spreading outward
 X marks the spot for daisies
 Yearning to be picked and taken inside
 Zinnias will bloom next

Carol Ann Laferriere



SUNSET IN COSTA RICA Gen Delkescamp

ON A PHOTOGRAPH OF MY CHILDREN

A quiet shore in the rain—
Three youths and ancient boulders
Bathed by the ebb and flow of cold Atlantic waters.
Rocks, indifferent children of the earth,
Conceived as magma
Deep in the Earth's crust,
Cooling down for æons
Becoming coarse-textured stones
Streaked with mineral veins
Like genetic traits easily visible.

Carla, middle child, leader,
Scampered up the boulder
And with the intensity of her Incan ancestors
Defiantly faces the camera:
Hands on hips, legs spread apart,
Her straight black hair at rest.
If life challenges her,
She says, Welcome, friend!
Carla, in command of her world.

Sandra, first-born and quietest,
Stands to the side, leg ready
To resume climbing
And join Carla on the summit
Or remain in the middle, content.
Hair blowing in the wind
She looks to see if she should continue.
Always watchful, Sandra lives in tranquil solitude
Life is quiet, wise and good.

John, youngest, chooses not to climb.
A short compact body with dark, coiled hair,
He stands in the ocean—
Legs bathed by the cold Atlantic—
Exuding strength and agility.

His father, a strong, demanding presence, gave little support to Nathan or his siblings. His father never really spoke and when he did, it wasn't to say anything nice or pleasant. He was the kind of person who would stand by the door and bark orders when he left the house and, God help them if they didn't obey. Nathan was sure of that. It was perhaps the only certainty in his life.

Discipline was harsh. There was the time when Nathan, who was just 17, got caught drinking and his dad locked him in the basement for three days. He had begged for any other punishment, but that was that.

Nathan became one of those marginal people. You see them everywhere. They're functional and they hold down jobs. Some even marry. But there is always some longing, some desire, to feel they are loved, to feel wanted. But in many cases, like Nathan's, all they get is apathy.

So it was early on a rainy April morning when Nathan began his vigil. It began shortly after he heard the large thump. He went to see what happened and there he was, lying on the bedroom floor with a kind of silly grimace on his face. His eyes were halfway shut and there was just a hint of movement, but no sound.

Nathan stood and looked. He remembered two years ago, the first time this happened, when his dad's heart almost gave way and he fell to the floor and just laid there. But that time he was able to muster the word "help." This time, however, there was nothing.

Nathan didn't want it to happen again: The emergency call, the ambulance appearing, the apparatus to get his dad's heart beating again, that cold, hard heart. This time he knew better. He would wait. Wait until he was sure.

So this morning, when he awoke, Nathan answered his own question. "Has it been three days yet?" "Yes," He said to himself and smiled. It's been three days. Time to call for help. He was sure now. Sure as ever. His dad was dead.

Anne M. Amato



THE VIGIL

“Has it been three days yet?”

Nathan was always a little different. OK. Maybe not just a little different, but there were reasons, some that were more obvious than others.

His parents, of course, were a large part of the problem. Nathan was born during the 1960s and his parents were from the Hippie culture. No doubt his mom was using drugs when she was carrying him.

He was born very early on a sunny May day, just as the lilacs were starting to bloom. In a hurry back then, his mother was in the hospital's delivery room only 15 minutes when he was born. He was a good size: nearly nine pounds, with a chubby face and the darkest curly hair. Despite the joy he brought when he came into the world, Nathan never seemed content.

He cried and cried and cried for those first few years. It was almost like he was fighting against something—maybe even life itself. Not every child is happy all the time, but Nathan had few moments of joy or bliss.

A knight, shielding maidens.
Smiling, he regards the camera,
As if to say, let's have fun.
Adored by his sisters, John is happy.

*I am only a small child
Wandering upon vast shores of knowledge,
Wishing to find a rock
To be the strong foundation
For my future.*

charles corden





PENNSYLVANIA BROOK Sharon Hebb

DÉJÀ VU

Did the faun
in the alcove
above the brook
forget its magic
when the boy stumbled
to his death?

They placed his ashes
beneath the ground,
carved his name
upon a stone.
Icons everywhere,
and everyone alone.

Philip Benevento

ESCAPE

Tonight
Clouds blanket a moonless sky
Fog seeps along the ground
And the hills beckon
Tall, black and still

Unshackled, feet race for distance
Keeping pace with panting breath
And his heart's restless rhythm
Branches whip, thorns cut
But far behind, the stronghold fades

Forest consumes, conceals
A dim light ahead
Lantern of that phantom train
Waiting deep in the earth
And worth the risk

Freedom? No, not yet
One more meadow
Naked into open land
Out from the trees standing
Tall, black and still

Hounds growling
Howling his scent
Found too close, too soon
Trackers shout, bent on revenge
And the heralding light expires

Tonight
In groaning sounds, pierced skin
Blood soaked ground
His free-man hope dies, and he lies

Tall, black and still

Chuck Miceli



NIAGARA FALLS Lynn Karr-Hasler

RESURRECTION

What's beneath the barren earth?
 Quiet ground that's hard and cold.
 Yet Mother Nature's fertile spheres,
 Those bulbs will give their promised birth.
 Spring's the time for resurrection,
 Joyful jonquils blooming bright.

With subtle strength slim stems appear
 Green in hope of future glory,
 Pushing through the matted leaves,
 Herald that Spring is here.
 Now's the time of resurrection!
 Joyful jonquils blooming bright.

Ann C. Hodges



YOSEMITE Sharon Hebb



YOU CAN'T FOOL MOTHER NATURE Gen Delkescamp

IT WAS A WAR YEAR

It was a war year, 1944, so maybe this activity was not as bad as it could be if done today. Winter had come to Waterbury and for a twelve-year-old boy, whenever it snowed, that meant taking the old Flexible Flyer out and finding the highest hill to zoom down. Waterbury did not plow its streets down to the pavement in those days so that made for great sledding (unless some *meanie* threw his coal ashes on the street.) Our group decided to go over three blocks to Kelsey Street which boasted a long run down from the top with a little hump and then a long straight to the intersection with Baldwin Street, which was the main thoroughfare from downtown Waterbury to the south end.

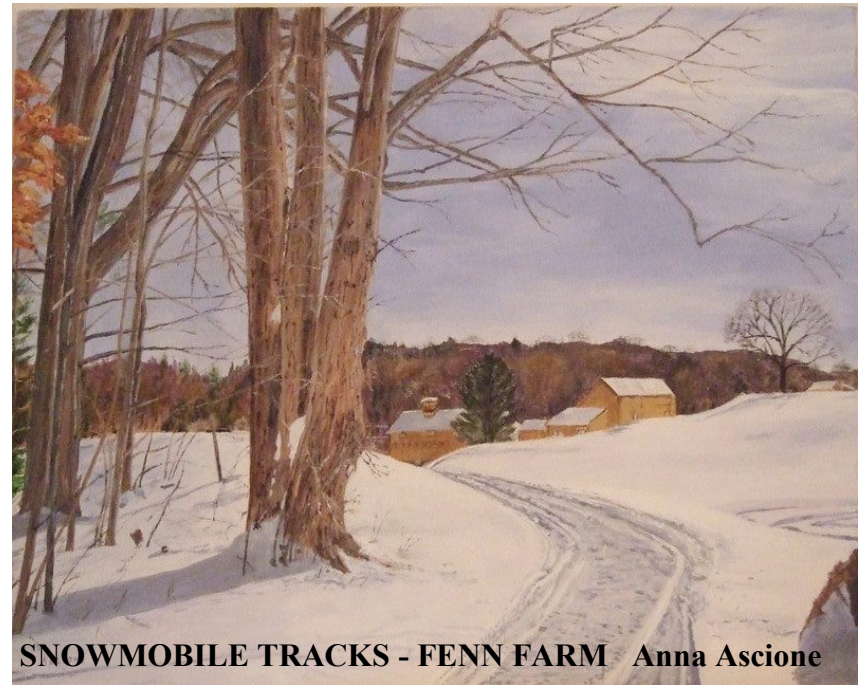
Most of the time we would manage to stop before the main road but sometimes the urge to keep going and turning down Baldwin Street was just too much. Luckily, as mentioned before, there was not much traffic because of the war, so we all made it. Sometimes we would station someone at the bottom of the hill to keep watch, but the thrill of bumping down that hill, steering that racing sled with your arms and your body, remains one of the exciting memories of my boyhood.

Of course, time causes us to forget that going down the hill for that thrilling ride meant also that the sled had to be carted back up the hill. But that did not matter then to a twelve-year-old who had only to live in the present. It was fun—and that was all that mattered.

Bob Grady

Slim wedge of pale blue
between dark mountains and clouds
Glimpse of a new world

J. R. Lewis



SNOWMOBILE TRACKS - FENN FARM Anna Ascione