

University of Southern Maine
Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
2022

reflections

reflections

Field of Clouds

Photo by
Gail Worster

*"My favorite field is
always attracting
the best cloud
formations."*

ART and *Literature*

Welcome to *Reflections*

Once again we have endeavored to put together the finest collection of OLLI members' artistic and literary works. Many thanks and kudos to all the contributors whose efforts made this issue possible. As is always the case, we receive many submissions but must make the difficult decisions about how much we can fit within the budgeted space. All works are chosen by a committee using a uniform standard and adhering to a strictly "blind" selection, i.e., with no knowledge of authorship for any of the pieces. We sincerely hope that the representative works featured in this year's issue will delight and inform you, and perhaps even encourage you to submit some of your own creative efforts.

We are so pleased to offer this beautifully rendered magazine for your enjoyment. Additionally, as in the past two years, this current issue can be viewed in its entirety online. It is a great way to view the journal and can be downloaded as a pdf and shared with anyone anywhere (if they have an internet connection). Simply go to this site and look for a link. <https://usm.maine.edu/olli/>

Of course, none of this would be possible without the dedication and hard work of our selections and production crews, and of our very wonderful designer, all of whom contributed their special talents. We'd also like to thank our OLLI administrators for their continued support and promotion of this valued tradition of artistic expression. And finally, thank you, dear OLLI member, for your support and appreciation of our entire program.

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**Eleven
Eleven**

Photo by
Ted Anderson

*“Mud season
barn boots, in
the downstairs
bath of our
beloved 1918
Harrison house.”*

An Elementary Education

Toby Hollander

My educational journey began at Boulevard Elementary School in Denver, Colorado, in 1951. My elementary school teachers were instrumental in scaffolding a resilience I would require throughout my life and providing stability as I adjusted to my first of seven years in foster care. My first-grade teacher, memorably named Vinabel Fromhart, reported that “Toby has many interesting things to tell us. But we need to be quiet at times—Toby just can’t understand this.” My mother dutifully responded that I had promised to work at being quiet. Nonetheless, I continued to have many interesting things to tell anyone who would listen.

At Boulevard we had “duck and cover” drills to prepare for the possible event of a nuclear attack during the Cold War. I crawled under my little wooden desk and closed my eyes tight. My mother reported to Grandmother Edythe that it was...

All part of the chaos we live in; like just before school was out, the education of the children in how to survive an atom bomb.... All that accomplished—for Toby anyway—was nightmares and a sense of horrible insecurity with death lurking explosively in every corner.

When I entered foster care in Santa Fe in November 1953, I was enrolled in the third grade at Wood-Gormley Elementary School, a one-story, pueblo-style public school. The two-story brick edifice across the street was Harrington Junior High, where I was destined to spend seventh through ninth grades. At the far side of our playground was a small, wood-framed candy shack, where I spent my meager allowance and “grade money.” I received a dime for an A, a nickel for a B, and a penny for a C. My favorite treats were bubble gum, with baseball cards, and Wrigley’s chewing gum (Spearmint, Doublemint, Juicy Fruit); jawbreakers, Fireballs, and Red Hots; Mary Janes and penny packets of Kool-Aid powder that turned my tongue grape purple, orange orange, or cherry red. Earning a B in arithmetic or geography could keep me in candy for a whole week.

The radio played constantly in that little store. It was there I first heard “Blue Suede Shoes.” I had no idea what blue suede shoes were—or engineer boots—but I sure liked Elvis “Go Cat Go” Presley.

Even before I arrived in Santa Fe, my academic Achilles heel was handwriting—I never got above a C—and a glance at my handwritten letters to my mother reveals that even a C was an act of charity. My penmanship never did improve.

In third grade I was introduced, unwittingly, to the First Amendment. One December day after the ritual recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, our teacher announced that we were going to learn which church each of us attended—she canvassed us one by one to reveal our church affiliation to our classmates. As my turn approached the exercise was well underway:

“First Baptist.”
“Cathedral.”

“St. Francis.”

“Methodist.”

“Cathedral.”

“First Presbyterian.”

“Cathedral.”

The teacher’s gaze settled on me. “Toby?”

Innocently, I piped up, “I don’t go to any church.”

“Oh!” she gasped. All the air was sucked out of the suddenly silent room.

After a pause, she asked the kid behind me, “Well, Ramon, what about you?” I felt the horrified stares of the whole third grade and resolved: “I gotta get me a church.” I had no notion whatsoever that, technically, I was Jewish and didn’t need a church. I had never been to a synagogue either.

The way I figured it, wherever my counselor, Starky, went was good enough for me. When I got back at the ranch that afternoon, I cornered him and questioned him closely about what church he went to and whether I could go too. I became an overnight Presbyterian, pastored by the Reverend Robert Boshen, a large bald man in a flowing ebony robe, arms folded across his chest, with a serious frown at one moment and leaning back and belly-laughing at the next.

My Sunday school teacher was Mrs. Ruth Jobin, a properly dressed lady with red hair, a white blouse buttoned all the way to the lace collar circling her neck, and a tweed skirt. Every Sunday morning, she sat ramrod-straight in her folding chair, knees squeezed tightly together beneath her Bible, giving us the Gospel Truth.

In fourth grade at Wood-Gormley, I suddenly became aware I was learning new stuff (long division and geography). Taught by the animated Emma Briscoe, I was awarded a certificate for “Meritorious Conduct and Neither an Absence Nor Tardy for the Nine Months of the School Term of 1954 to 1955.” I still have the small red leather binder containing the certificate bearing her signature. She was my version of “Miss Othmar,” the teacher so adored by Linus from Peanuts.

My fifth-grade teacher was Elizabeth Souders, a middle-aged woman who carried her generous frame comfortably. She took note of my chronically chapped and bleeding hands from outdoor play and chores caring for the horses in the dry New Mexico winter and sometimes called me in from the playground before school began. She took my hands in her own and tenderly rubbed a generous dollop of lotion into my hands and fingers from a bottle of Jergens on her desk. Chagrined at first, I came to love the ritual. Her thoughtfulness to offer that kindness before the other children filed in at the bell, sparing me embarrassment, is why I remember her sixty-five years later. That and her beautiful, human hands. She made me feel that I mattered. To her, I wasn’t just a “state kid.”

It wasn’t until sixth grade that I had a male teacher, Mr. Foltz. By the end of the year, he had me ready to go to Harrington across the street. In the sixth-grade class picture, my shoulders were confidently square, and my chin was up. I was ready to move up to junior high. A damned C in penmanship kept me from the Honor Roll.

Burnt on My Soul

Barbara Hesselman Kautz

I am twelve and a night owl.
I hear a faint snore coming from my sister Laura, but I am not sleepy.
My Dad is at work.
I hear the murmur of voices below and know my mother is watching TV.
I creep downstairs.
“Go back to bed Barbara. This is not something you should watch.”
She sees my face and, knowing I am endlessly curious, invites me to join her.
On the screen are piles of dead bodies.
“What is it?” I ask.
“A concentration camp called Auschwitz.”
The scene is terrible, but I cannot look away.
The image is burned onto my soul.

I am fifteen, standing in the basement of our old farmhouse.
There is a coal cellar. Inside its thick walls it is so dark I fear going inside.
Now I am scared for another reason.
On the news Khrushchev and Kennedy are playing a game of chicken.
“Can we turn the coal cellar into a bomb shelter?” I ask my dad.
“If they drop bombs on Pittsburgh, you don’t want to survive.” My dad’s harsh words are burnt onto my soul.

I am twenty-two, a nurse in Vietnam. I care for the sickest of the sick. Boys younger than I, comatose from shrapnel piercing their skulls. I am straddling the body of a soldier, trying to find a femoral artery so I can draw blood to measure its oxygen content. He doesn’t respond. He will probably die. The memory is burnt onto my soul.

Now I am seventy-five. A news junkie. I flip from channel to channel. The pictures are all the same. Of burning buildings, of terrified people, searching for safety. Of brave people standing up to a bully, their country being destroyed. One more reminder of war burning onto my soul.

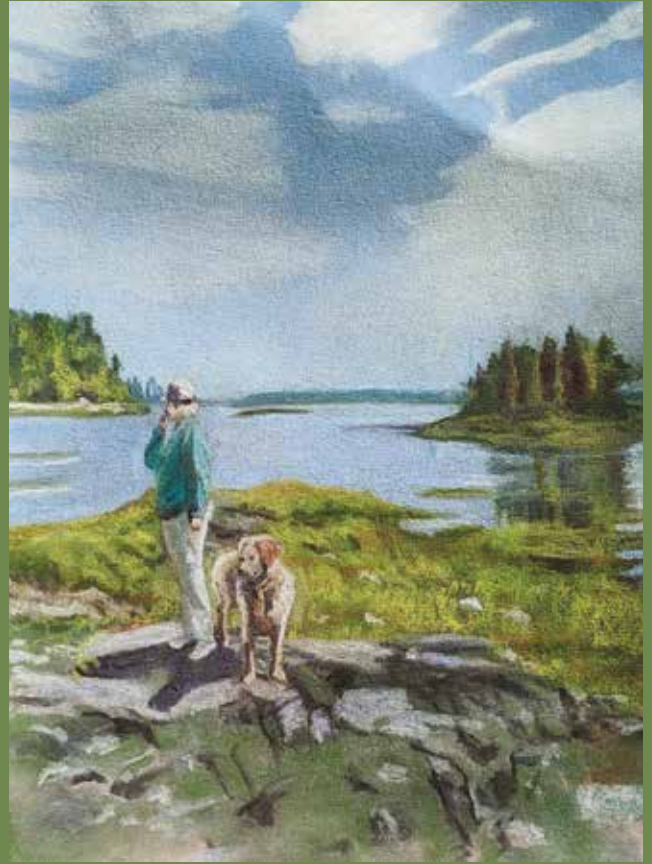




Wonderlust

Acrylic by Gail Worster

"Let's face it, flowers are just plain joyful."



A View Down the Machias River

PanPastel by Mary Barrett

"I have been painting, primarily in pastels, since retiring."



Spring at Wolfe's Neck, Freeport

Watercolor by Kathleen Howard Sutherland

"Inspired by water scenes of all kinds! This scene was painted on an early spring plein air day in 2021."



Catch of the Day

Photo by
Gail Gingrich

"While watching this juvenile double-crested cormorant perfect his fishing skills, I challenged myself to capture his catch!"



Dawn Fog Downriver

Photo by Richard Welsh

"Dawn and fog paint the sky with muted colors, a breeze crosses the water, and the water answers them all."

A Very Good Skiff

Richard Welsh

Macmahan had built a skiff for neighbors the previous year, and now it was my turn. I'd saved up enough for the materials and labor; a friend on the lookout had found me a barely used 9.8-horse Mercury outboard. I was nearly seventeen, and Horace Macmahan, a retired boatbuilder, was slowly approaching eighty. No matter; his gnarled hands still worked like Vice-Grips.

Like half the families with any Midcoast history, his had reportedly been cheated out of their land. MacMahan Island, its 250 acres now locked up by a summer community, lay two and a half miles away across the broad lower Sheepscot, or nearly 40 by car to a private ferry landing on Georgetown. Mac and his wife lived on Hodgdon's now, in a trim house on the Sheepscot's Back River branch. But where he really lived was in his shack off to the side, with its oil-drum stove, weathered spruce limbs railing a rickety ramp down to the float, and brown wainscoting of tobacco juice that always missed a nonexistent spittoon. The back swung open for small craft access at high tide.

You could find the strangest assortment of people in that shack, drawn by Horace's welcoming personality, respect for his skill, and curiosity about the other guests. It was just a good place to be. One regular was his neighbor, old Fritz Peontack, shoe toes cut off to comfort his diabetic feet, full of determined advice on any subject, and wary of phantom "commonists." Ronny Colby showed up occasionally with his high-speed runabout (a sort of maritime muscle car), whom we adjudged one of those "Barter's Island Boys" best avoided. Ron was peaceful, though (not counting the outboard's roar when departing), other than when goaded by a disturbingly provocative young cousin under my occasional care—"Where's the lippy little bastard?"

There were the two boys I hung out with, Massachusetts kids, who showed Horace how he could make a few bucks harvesting periwinkles (ubiquitous coastal snail species, if you don't know) for the Boston Italian market, and provided him with gunnysacks and a local wholesaler. And me, a marine biologist wannabe, whose ambitions for the skiff featured the hauling of my 24-inch iron and mesh dredge to bring up deep-water specimens.

Horace was short, wiry, a bit stooped, arthritis-slow of pace; green work trousers, flannel shirt. Under a faded old army-style service cap were pale eyes in a weathered face and a quick smile, "By gorry!" his standard exclamation. World War II found him employed at the Navy Yards in New York; now he supplemented the family's small income with a few crab pots (satisfying the need to be on the water, while remaining practical); with the new foray into "winkling" for those intertidal escargots; and occasional boat jobs like mine.

Its design was simple and elegant, stronger and more seaworthy than the usual clammers' and wormers' skiffs, and bigger at 13 feet. All done with hand tools, from memory. We went together to the old Pierce & Hartung, where he carefully selected the lumber so nary a knot nor hint of warpage could

be seen. Three woods lent their particular virtues to the project: two-inch thick oak for the transom, to withstand the outboard's kick; long, tough, spruce for the sides; and pine for the floorboards. Like other local skiffs, the side was two boards, but with a difference: they were not simply butted together flush, but were edged with a 45-degree bevel, so they could be slightly lapped, the upper overhanging the lower. This made for a solid nail-angle to tie them together, with a join far less accessible to spray and other leakage. And the bow was gracefully raised, deflecting more spray and handling larger swells than the common skiffs.

The astonishing part was how he hand-cut that bevel with a drawknife. This old-fashioned tool consisted of a blade held horizontally by a handle on each end, pulled towards the user to cut shingles or other thin pieces of soft wood. Horace used his to slice the bevel, from one end of the three-quarter-inch spruce board to the other 16 feet later, in a clean, unerring line. Sharp blade, keen eye, steady hand, and startling strength in that old body.

The two completed sides were nailed at one end to adjacent sides of a two-by-two post to start forming the bow, making a temporary right-angled triangle. The stern ends were then pulled together with a rope double-looped through a block and tackle. The powerfully springy spruce held in place, the oak transom was then nailed into their ends, and the tackle released. This technique ensured that the side planking curved naturally and handsomely, equalizing the stresses throughout.

We nailed on the floorboards ourselves, to Horace's repeated mantra—"every nail's as good as an anchor!"—leaving a tiny gap between them to allow for swelling without buckling once waterborne, and then carefully wedged in the caulking. Beyond the basic design, there was customization for my particular needs: rear seat mounted forward from the transom to open up space for managing the dredge, center seat removable to provide still more work space. When done, you couldn't find a skiff of that quality for the price, if at all, at the \$78 he charged, plus about the same for lumber.

We—the skiff and I—eventually added 23 new mollusk species to my collection and one brachiopod, lonely survivor of that once-teeming group of ancient invertebrates. The 12-fathom hole inside Oven's Mouth proved especially fruitful for its abundant *Colus pygmaeus*; off Spectacle Island was a dense sand dollar colony; bivalves *Pandora gouldiana* and *Yoldia sapotilla* came up from Townsend Gut and Dogfish Head. But don't get me started, I'll rattle on for an hour—did that for some campers once, who needed a bedtime story. And I might build a model of her someday. That will mean a lot more than any diminutive clipper ship or *USS Constitution*. Those you can find anywhere, but not a Macmahan skiff. Or Macmahan.



How to Find the Sacred

Dave Stankowicz

Space is the place.
—Sun Ra

Enter into
this thing,
this place,
this gesture.

Words get in the way.

Mute the mind
with a silent explosion
of all-encompassing wholeness.

Shhhhh.

In the dark, on the edge of the ocean,
sense rather than see situations
of flux and uncertainty;
caress the illumination.

Neither look for
nor attempt to make anything happen.
You cannot manufacture serendipity.
Merely be open to its happening.

Liberate yourself wholly
from the amplification
of this modern world.
Defend against ugly cacophony,
ennui, and stagnation by
putting your faith in the belief that
things are not what they seem.

In a state beyond texture and temperature,
drop all expectations given by others.

We carry our home with us
wherever we go,
so no need to hurry.

Go in peace and grace—
unfold all eight right prescriptions
and let them be your map.

Wholly presence,
obscured by the aura of noise
that has become our gross survival.

Survival is not enough.

Prepare yourself wholly,
with patience and presence,
quietly aware that everything
you need to know is at hand.

Lie down in crabgrass and daffodils.
Sing the body electric.
Allow time and tide to pass
without comment,
while wholly waiting out the turmoil.

Catch your breath and wholly embrace
the entirety of now,
finding compensation
for what you have lost.

Wholly allow the world to be itself—
winning the moment,
in the boundless sky
of patience.

Wholly waiting.

Be vigilant of temptations
whispering sweet nothings
in your ear;
this seductive noise of promise
for something better,
which you will discover
isn't.

Know your heartbreak,
with confidence that it will pass
like a flash of lightning,
illuminating the immeasurable midnight sky.

Know the depths of uncertainty;
cancel your junk time subscription;
decommission your pinwheel of anticipation;
wholly distance yourself from the
antics of your mind.

The sacred is a reset
towards boundless mystery;
Be with that which is—
Wholly,
Wholly,
Wholly.

free

David Agan

The porch is icy. Mom tells me to slide down our three stone steps on my butt so I won't slip and fall. It rained yesterday and froze overnight. I'm off to school. It's almost Easter. Little Mark is standing behind Mom in the doorway. She's holding the baby. "I'll see you at lunchtime," she says. I don't need to be reminded.

Across the crunchy lawn and our narrow road, through the line of firs, over the field onto Ocean View Road, down the big hill and two turns to the bottom of a little hill. Here's the swamp. When it's dry, it's easy. With snow it's a little harder. When it's full of water, it's a long walk around, five turns onto Cottage Farms Road and up the hill from there.

In the swamp today, there's ice in pools between the fallen trees and higher spots. It's a little slippery, but there are plenty of branches and bushes to hang on to. I make it across pretty easy and start up the banking to the road. I see the big bright line of windows of the four classrooms facing the street, first the two upstairs ones and then, as I climb, windows in the two rooms downstairs.

The school day goes as usual. We practice writing numbers and letters. Teacher reads us a story. We all have a little bottle of milk. We sit down against the wall in the hall, bend and cover our heads like we're told. This is a new one. Some other stuff. We sing. Then we get dressed to go home in boots, coats, hats, and mittens.

And I'm out the door on the boys' side. The stairs and walk are damp. The road is almost dry. My pants get wet in back as I slide down the banking into the swamp. I start across where the ice is still hard enough to hold me. There's the same thin white ice on the surface as there was before school. Below that is a layer of air and then some of the solid old dark winter ice underneath. I hold on to some branches and keep going.

In the open where there's no shade, I step on the white ice as I lean forward to pull myself over a big log. My right foot breaks through and down onto the solid ice. I slide my foot forward and it catches under the fallen tree trunk. I pull my foot backwards and it won't go. My heel's stuck against a branch that's frozen in the winter ice. I try to lift and pull my foot back at the same time.

Uh-oh. My foot pulls out of the boot without my sock.

Okay, if I stand on one leg and bend down, I'll pull my boot out. My bare foot sticks up into the air. I try and try pulling with my hands again and again. It's so solid in there, I'll never get it out. I choke down a sob. I finally stop trying. I reach into the boot and pull my sock out. I put it on and as I make my way out of the swamp, my sock gets soaked and my foot's icy cold. But I couldn't get my boot out and I had to get out of there.

I make it to the short road that rises a little before the corner. As I walk, my right foot sets itself down onto gravel and pebbles and I wince in pain, not to mention my foot's cold almost to numbness in the wet sock.

I turn the corner. I'm going so slow and limping bad. But I gotta do it, get home and get warm. Before the next corner, I hear a door open and a loud lady's voice say, "Little boy, come in here and warm your foot up." Who is that? "Come in here now." This is very different. "I'm going to give you some soup and we'll warm up your foot." I don't want to go in there, but my foot hurts so much I have to.

I turn and shuffle across her lawn, up a step and into the hallway.

She takes off my sock, sits me by the radiator. "What's your name?"

"David," I say.

"No, what's your last name?" I tell her. She looks in the phone book and calls Mom.

She gives me a bowl of tomato soup that I hold on my lap and start eating. I picture Mom coming here across the lawn and our narrow road, through the line of firs, across the field onto Ocean View Road, down the hill to this house at the corner. She does, carrying the baby. The lady invites her in, but she says, "I can't come in, my younger boy is home napping. I have to get back."

The lady hands my mom the wet sock that she had wrung out and gives me a dry one and a right boot that's too big. "Return it when you can." I use it to walk home, holding my Mom's hand. She's pulling me faster and faster because she left Mark alone and the baby's crying.

I won't go back into that swamp again. Well yeah, I will when all the ice melts and it dries out enough.



Workhorse

Don Bouwens

My challenge was to use a workhorse to skid logs from the woodlot. Unlike bulldozers or skidders, horses need just a narrow path, soon leaving no trace. But I had never used, let alone owned, a horse of any kind.

Local friend Keith suggested I find Royce, who cut pulp on his woodlot using a horse like I planned to do. I introduced myself to Royce, asking if I could help him for a week, working for free, just to observe and learn. The way he worked with his horse Jess was a thing of beauty. Royce would cut a few fir trees, limb them, back Jess up, hook a chain around the butt ends, attach it to the grab hook on Jess's whiffletree, tell her to "walk ahead," and she would calmly walk down the path to the roadside "yard" and wait for Fred to come unhook the load and start her back for another trip. She would walk to the end of the path and wait for Royce to come and cut the next load.

If only I had Royce's experience and demeanor and had found a horse like Jess.

Keith's next referral was to someone who could help me find a horse to purchase. He sent me to Earl Worcester, a widower who lived nearby in the village. Now most Mainers spend a fair amount of time beating around the bush before getting to the point of an encounter...the weather, the crops, the Red Sox, etc. I found Earl behind his house in his vegetable garden with a hoe in his hand, sweating on a hot day in his "wifebeater" undershirt. When he saw me approach, his first words were "What the hell do you want?" And thus began one of my most treasured friendships Downeast.

Earl was a big man. Tall, bald, with a heavy body—not fat, just very stout. He had made his livelihood buying and selling livestock. I'm guessing that as a younger man he was as strong as some of the bulls he handled. When we first met, he was 78.

I told Earl I wanted to find a workhorse to buy and hoped he would help me. Before long, we were traveling hundreds of miles, stopping at places he thought might have a horse to sell.

I found it amazing riding around with Earl. About every half mile he seemed to have a personal anecdote to share, where something had occurred in his former travels: "I used to buy butter from a woman in that house until one day I found a big black hair in the butter...never stopped there again," or "That place used to be a pig farm, and I always went there for piglets," or "Up on the right always had horses...let's pull in there, just up that dirt ro-ud." "Road" in Washington County is pronounced *ro-ud*, don't you know. And Earl would sometimes

call me "dear," pronounced *dee-ah*. Some Downeast colloquialisms were entirely new to me, such as this one of older men calling young men "dear." Others new to me were "wicked" (extremely); "tunk" (tap), as in "just tunk it a little"; and "ugly" (irritable). Pulling away from one of our stops Earl asked me if I didn't agree that the woman was "some ugly."

Eventually we found what Earl thought was a horse that would suit me, a Belgian. Bob was a beautiful horse, but too spirited. I tried and tried to train him to just calmly "walk along" like Royce's mare, but Bob would either go full speed ahead or not at all. I tried to work it out of him by hitching him to a huge log to pull along a field road where he couldn't hurt me, but when he started, I couldn't slow him down, even sawing hard on the reins until he stopped dead in his tracks, stubbornly unwilling to move at all, despite my effort to keep him going and tire him out. After a breather, he would charge ahead once more.

I got plenty of advice from well-wishers: "He needs to know who's boss... hit him over the head with a two-by-four," or "He's too full of spirit from the oats you're feeding him...back off the grain and just let him eat hay." Nothing worked.

A city boy, I had never been to a county fair, where they have pulling contests for workhorses. Now that I've seen these events, and much too late for me and Bob, I know exactly what the problem was.

My horse must have been used at these contests where the animal is hitched to an enormous load and expected to haul it from one end of the arena to the other in the least amount of time. At a signal, the owner hollers or whips his horse to pull as far and fast as it can until it stops to catch its breath, then off again with all its might. Just like Bob. I suppose, had I known, I might have patiently taught Bob to just walk along by holding his bridle and walking calmly and quietly. But that wasn't in my playbook.

I tried using Bob in the woods once or twice. The last time, in the fall when the forest floor was covered with noisy leaves and brush, he nervously kicked back while I was behind hooking the load, coming within an inch of knocking my head off. I felt the wind of that huge steel-clad hoof. Had he connected, since no one knew my schedule or where I was working, my skeleton might still be in those woods.

Bob did, however, excel at one function that was truly delightful. He could trot along endlessly pulling a heavy rubber-tired farm cart. I can tell you that going down a shady country road on a warm fall day pulled by a trotting Belgian is "wicked nice."



Little Did He Know

Tim Baehr

Little did Adam know when he went out for cigarettes that he would never see home again, never see his wife, never see his kids, never see his dog, never see his co-workers, never see his parents or his brothers or his sisters or his aunts and uncles and cousins.

A coastal sleet storm had just started, along with a northeast gale that blew the icy mix horizontally. Leaning into this stinging curtain, Adam stumbled down the block, bound for the corner store to alleviate the itch and the pang of his addiction. He didn't mind that Mr. Godrej would scold him, in lilting tones, that tobacco was no good for him and would shorten his life.

He already felt his life shortening, not just with the passing years. Lately, everything seemed to be closing in on him. His wife had moved out. She had turned their grown kids against him, along with nearly all his other kin. He hated his job. He even hated his dog. It had been hers and was even more vicious than she had been.

Adam stood inside the door, panting and dripping. His parka and wool cap were frosted with sleet, which melted rapidly in the overheated store. Small rivulets flowed off his hat and down his face. Larger tributaries ran down his parka into the widening pond on the floor.

Behind the counter Mr. Godrej handed change to a woman holding a small white plastic bag printed in red with "Thank You" in outlined letters. Mr. Godrej

looked up and nodded to Adam. The woman turned toward the door.

Melting sleet had darkened the collar and shoulders of her overcoat. Her head, unprotected, was matted with black and silver strands of damp hair.

She stopped. She stared. He stared back.

It was Noelle.

Noelle from Ohio. Noelle from high school. Noelle from thirty years ago. Noelle from under the bleachers at the football game. Noelle, whose father had discovered them, naked and frolicking, in her bedroom. Noelle, whose family moved the following week and whom he hadn't seen again.

Noelle.

What would she be thinking? Remembering?

She walked toward him, slowly. "Slower, slower!" he wanted to scream, so he could take in the savory, unlikely, impossible moment.

She was a foot from him, nine inches, five inches, three. She pinched the top of his dripping cap, pulled to the side, and let it drop to the floor. She touched his hair. She touched his cheek. Then his lips. She smiled. She reached down and took one of his gloved hands.

And pulled him toward the door.

Other than pauses for gas, snacks, and restrooms, they didn't stop until the Arizona sun had turned the atmosphere into an alfresco sauna. They had exchanged perhaps a dozen sentences.

She drove down a ramp from the highway, turned up a side road, and stopped at a motel. They checked in and tumbled into bed.

Their clothes stank. Their bodies stank. They didn't care.



Nirvana

Anne Cyr

The deer got in, finagled the fence—
we were blissfully floating in the boundless Pacific,
rainbow-colored fish mere inches below.

The deer nibbled as high as they could reach, boosted by layers of icy snow—
we snorkeled with twirling manta rays,
squealing through our masks as they brushed by.

The deer punctured the gardens with their hooves—
we drove and then climbed above the clouds at sunset,
willing the stars to come out.

The deer especially relished the new peach tree, a harsh pruning—
we gazed over a vast caldera,
watching lava glow scarlet as it seethed.

The deer demolished the roses, undeterred by thorns—
we were astonished by banana blossoms
and hibiscus of every hue.

The deer had a feast while we gloried in the tropics—
separated by uncountable miles,
each in our own Nirvana.



nap time

Irving Williams

i've been falling in love with you for almost a year now
sometimes it feels like an incoming tide as the nooks and crannies of the shoreline fill up
rocks and seaweed disappearing under slowly rising water
it is like my heart has been submerged and taken over by you

the power of your small hands as they fold in sleep
the sound of your quiet breathing
the slow smile as you awake and see that i am still by your side
curled up next to you reading or just daydreaming

sixty-five years lie between us
how many years that are in front of you that i will share is still a great unknown
my head says fewer than my heart wants

but for now just a few hours shared while you nap
is as good as an eternity for me

Last Gasp

Photo by
Patricia Garrett

"A 'Wilted Tulips' series reached the final frame. The 'Last Gasp' composition—an antique bowl, afternoon light, curves and colors create a dignified finale."



Sunset, Boyden Lake, Maine

Photo by
Robert Petrillo

"Just another sunset, not unlike so many others, but I just happened to be there in those moments."





Mama Eider and Babies

Photo by
Gail Gingrich

"The absolute wonder of this mama eider resting in the sun with her chicks and then taking them for swimming lessons!"



Tap Dancing Goose

Photo by Brigitte Bartolucci

"Irresistible dancing carefully observed by two white female geese while arousing zero interest from the mallard ducks!"

Atlantic Full Moon— January 2022

Photo by
Dave Stankowicz

*“Full moon over the Atlantic
Ocean in New Smyrna Beach,
Florida, in January 2022”*



Romance on the Ice

Photo by Stephen Fielding

*“Other animals are not as different as we
often think. We’re all highly dependent on
our respective environments.”*





Iced Leaf Photo by Stephen Fielding

"I saw a lovely contrast on an abstract background. Ice is disappearing so I photograph lots of it."



Motion Gouache by Gail Worster

"What can I say: horses are a walking, breathing sculpture!"

COIN OF THE REALM

Susan Bassler Pickford

I can still feel the pleasure of having a quarter in my hand. It was real. It had weight. Add a nickel or a dime, and it made a jingle-jangle noise in my pocket. It was all mine. Twenty-five cents was my weekly allowance for putting away the dishes and carrying the empty trash cans back to the garage, and it belonged to me. I could spend it if I wanted to, or I could save it in my drawer. And after awhile, I could pile all the quarters on my bed, and count them over and over again, just like in *Silas Marner*.

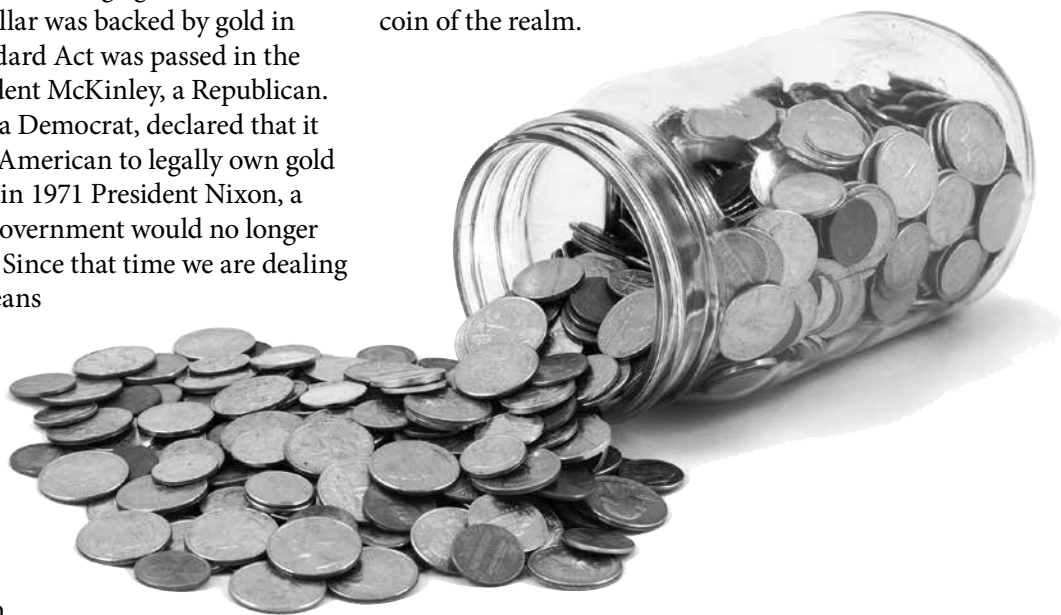
Eventually I got a better job and actually earned my own money by babysitting. It was even more wonderful to straighten out the wrinkled dollar and place it carefully on top of the others, and neatly stack the quarter on top of the other three quarters. But I didn't just hoard my money. One day I went to the store, and with no permission, I bought a scarf. With pride I showed my grandmother my latest purchase. She asked: "Will your mother approve?" I didn't know, but wasn't that exactly the point? I had made a decision and spent MY money. I had taken it out of my pocket and laid it on the counter. The saleswoman picked it up and counted it and put it in a tube that magically swooshed up overhead to somewhere I couldn't see. She smiled when she handed me my purchase, wrapped in tissue, and placed it in a Troutman's bag.

Those days occurred in another world. My understanding of our monetary system is rudimentary at best. I remember from school something about William Jennings Bryan, a Democrat, and the effort to substitute silver for gold. There was a time long ago and far, far away when every single dollar was backed by gold in Fort Knox! The Gold Standard Act was passed in the 1900s and signed by President McKinley, a Republican. Later President Roosevelt, a Democrat, declared that it was against the law for an American to legally own gold (other than jewelry). Then in 1971 President Nixon, a Republican, declared the government would no longer exchange gold for a dollar. Since that time we are dealing with "fiat money." That means that dollar bills and coins are basically useless except as an exchange for goods. My older brother and I didn't know diddly about "fiat money," and we had no gold or silver to speak of (although

he did have four or five jelly jars under his bureau with varying amounts of change in each one). So our sibling transactions were more along the lines of bartering. I'll do the dishes this week, I'd say, if you walk the dog for a month. I'll take out the garbage for a year if you'll help me write a history paper. Sometimes my brother drew up a contract, and I signed it. You will not be surprised that he became a lawyer.

Many years have passed, and it's time to forget about the gold standard or bartering. Dollar bills and coins are almost an anachronism. Why are they still making them? Pension checks are automatically sent to checking accounts. Electric and cable bills are automatically deducted from said accounts. All this week, because I forgot my new bank PIN, I've had nothing but six cents in my pocketbook. I went to McDonald's, Walmart, the supermarket, and even the Post Office without ever touching a dime. I just swiped a piece of plastic and presto, I'm good to go. Electronic money—all bytes in more ways than one. It comes and goes in some gigantic electronic Fort Knox cloud database that I cannot see.

However, I've lived long enough to see the birth of Bitcoin. In 2008, a digital currency was created. It is controlled by users, not banks. So I guess it's still "fiat money." I don't understand it. I think it is black magic. Let's hope it's not all vaporized by earth-bent meteors or comets. Fiat money? Bitcoin? I think I'll keep some dollar bills and quarters in a jar under my bureau—just in case. There is still some visceral pleasure in feeling "real" money, and it jingle-jangles when I shake the jar. I find comfort in that. Besides, it's still the coin of the realm.



Fighting Alzheimer's

Brigitte Bartolucci

"I am a single mother of three. My oldest is seven. Being a full-time employee, I share the children's care with two other moms so we can all go to work. Last month my seven-year-old broke his leg, and I was able to get a payment plan for the medical bills, but it will make us short \$150 a month for the next quarter."

These words make us fly back in time, and we know where we are going to land....

It is a nice lounge, simply but tastefully furnished, with a very homey feeling.

We are there, the three of us, painting. Mom has always loved painting. She loves creating any kind of beauty, from visual art to countless invisible acts of kindness.

Mom is painting and blissfully focused on her canvas. Such a small space of time but infinitely precious. Mom is happy painting. Colors and forms emerge under her brush, and she is happy.

There is no paint on the table, just a pot of water. But there is a brush, a canvas, and a desire to create. Images appear when brushing water on the specially treated canvas....

Mom's painting lost all forms and colors overnight.... The canvas went blank, just like her memories. She did not recall painting, so she did not feel bad. Her feeling bad is not from missing something specific anymore, but from a growing emptiness, a growing distance from this world.

Do our tears reveal the complex tapestry of our lives? Is it all destined to dilute in the infinite and leave a blank canvas?

Mom's celebration of life ceremony was beautiful, special music, touching eulogies, lots of tears, gorgeous floral arrangements....

Filled with flowers, our car looked like a floating garden on four wheels as we were cruising on the highway towards the Sanctuary at the Oaks, such an appropriate name for the place where Mom spent the two last years in Memory Care. All was quiet at this late hour.... Time seemed frozen while we were making bouquets for each table, each empty corner, like a delicate legacy, a bundle of fragrant smiles from Mom to her friends.

A broken voice suddenly emerged from the deep silence. "I really wanted to come to the ceremony; I love your mom so much! But I cannot trust my car on the highway, it's so old, I cannot trust it, and if it breaks, I would not be able to go to work."

We knew this woman well; she was one of several providing tender care here

at the Sanctuary at the Oaks. More angels than employees, they literally create a safety net around all the residents. They instill a very needed feeling of family to replace the relatives and friends often long disappeared because they cannot face the effects of dementia on their loved ones.

This woman is one of the courageous and altruistic army of people who made a sacred mission to help their fellow humans, whatever their conditions, whatever the task, with an immense patience and respect for each and all.

Very subtle but very real ties are weaved between the residents. Strong, but, oh, so vulnerable, the equilibrium is immediately compromised by a new arrival or when one leaves. Eventually, like some relentless tide, disruption and routine keep alternating and create a strange harmony.

We are stunned. This woman was not able to come because her very tight budget could not handle any emergency. We never heard any complaints during our two years there, nothing, and we are now in front of a tragic reality suddenly revealed through her tears.

The seeds were sown and three months later the "Phyllis Employee Emergency Assistance Fund" blossomed with the blessings of the Sanctuary administration. They had been wanting to help the employees but operated on a budget too modest to allow better salaries.

We plunged into three months of extensive research.... We had no legal experience, and quite complex were the waters we navigated to achieve the goal that a nice woman with an old car had unknowingly revealed to us.

And so, we created a very complete Charter including detailed descriptions of Funding, Eligibility, Review Board, Application Process, etc. All the elements for a successful project had been carefully studied and assembled.

As noted in our Mission Statement, this Fund was created in honor of our mom to reflect the love that all residents and employees share.

"I am a single mother of three. My oldest is seven...."

We look at each other with a soft smile and foggy eyes: this courageous employee will be granted the help she badly needs to pay her son's medical bills. Now it's Mom's turn to take care of her.

Mom's brain might have been devastated by the terrible plaques that cause Alzheimer's, but her heart was and will always be intact.

The canvas is colorful, and rich, and alive!



Pappa's Woodshed

Mary Snell

Angled off the side of the garage,
Pappa's woodshed intrigued me, but
I rarely went past the front sill,

preferring to stand with my back in the sun
and peer ahead into its jumbled gloom.
There were no lights in this pre-war shed,

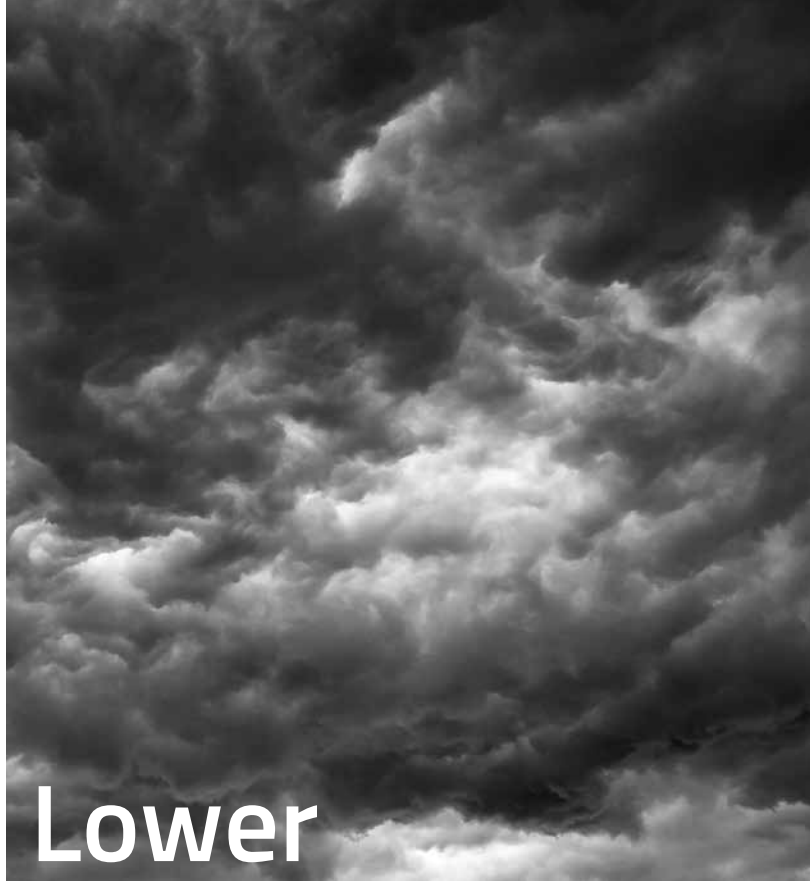
built to shelter his 1940 green Chevrolet
and stacks of logs needed to get through
the next New Hampshire winter.

As a kid, I loved the dusky odor,
the feel underfoot of aging wood chips.
I inhaled that heady cloud of moulder,

from oak and beech, maple and ash
blended with sharp pine and hemlock.
But the joy was always cut short

when I spied the three axe-crazed log stumps,
his chopping blocks of differing heights.
Which one did he use, that resolute Finn,

when, pestered with a corn,
he removed his black-laced leather boot
and chopped off his own small toe?

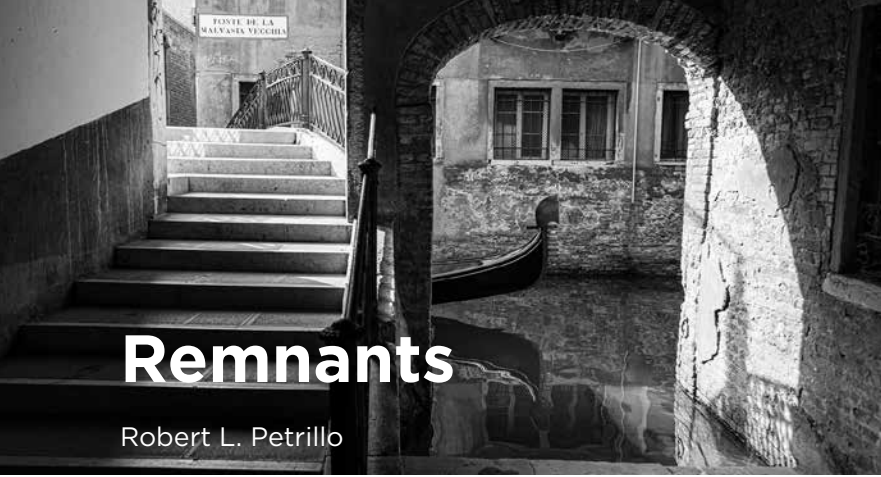


Lower

Susan Bassler Pickford

*"lour" English, Germanic & Scandinavian origins
rhymes with "flower"—1300s*

Both our skies and our faces
Can Lower
Haze passes o'er the sky
Obscuring what we see
Dark clouds pass o'er our heads
So others see not our thoughts
Lower is an old word
Rarely used
Its meanings and pronunciations have mixed
Like oil and water
Over time
We all have probably said, "Lower the blinds"
"Lower the curtains"
We lower them to obscure what's inside from outside eyes
From judgment
Black thoughts and dark intentions
Make a face lower
While the rest of us cower
Under fear
Yet
Hope
Scolds the dark clouds
So the haze will lift
So the lowering we feel will pass
So lightness will rise and flower
At last



Remnants

Robert L. Petrillo

Footprints from another century sleep like ghosts on the cobblestones of narrow streets no wider than an alleyway that here in Venice are festooned

with elaborate doors bearing long-polished heavy iron pulls and hand-sized rings adorning wide panels of antique wood.

Erstwhile scuffs of hob-nailed boot heels are routinely washed by rains, leached by fogs into the basin from which rises this improbable city.

Its thousands of *calles*, hundreds of canals, a labyrinthine puzzle to amaze and beguile, trod and paddled for fifteen hundred years,

each particle of dust, each droplet of moisture having disintegrated and dissolved and reformed while buildings and boats and spanning arches

have stood or flowed or stretched along the vapory trails that humans have made, plying trades and shuttling goods and hawking wares.

Meanwhile a million angles of sunlight splash upon polished domes and tarnished towers and everywhere tiles of earthen clay, rays glinting off spires, settling on *piazas*

whose sainted patrons and fervid followers once walked these narrow passageways to the bustling or tranquil squares that bear their names now—San Giovanni e Paolo,

San Marco, Santa María (so many). Like tin daguerreotypes, worn images of past splendor live in present-day clothing, sipping espressos on the corner, feeding pigeons near fountains,

children with hula hoops before the steps of grand cathedrals, Murano glassmakers swirling flames in their stalls, ceramic masques and leather boots blooming in shop windows.

At every turn in the winding pathways, around each blind corner, among the graffiti-scrawled walls in vivid hues and obtuse shapes, over each arching treadway spanning every narrow slinking lagoon

there abides in the shadows beneath the rising walls of colored window boxes and trellised balconies the faint musty breath of every soul who has ever passed this way before.

Just a Rainy Day

Ariela Zucker

Let me hold your hand,
intertwine my fingers into yours,
feel the beat of your heart,
streaming into mine.

Hand in hand we move as one,
matching our pathways, forming
a graceful dance, to a music
only we can hear.

Surging, then ebbing like the tides'
fluid dynamics, silky and smooth.
Subtle oscillations, the ups and downs
learned and practiced over a lifetime.

If I go forward, where will you go?
If I'll go to the right, will you follow me?
Who's leading and who's being led—
will you hold me when I will fall?

So, let's just hold hands,
your fingers touching mine.
Let the rhythm flow and connect
the intricate dynamics of our life.



Launch of Apollo 16

Jim Mason

16 April 1972

Clouds of steam, hundreds of feet high, billow on either side of the pad. Then the Saturn V starts to rise, silently, oh so slowly, on a lengthening column of flame so bright it hurts to look at it, even from four miles off. The assembled crowd goes “Ooooooh!”

And then the sound hits us.

Sixteen of us, fourteen aerospace engineering students and two professors, have traveled to the Cape for the launch. Driving in two-hour shifts, we made the trip from cold, rainy Iowa to hot, sunny Florida in 30 hours. We arrived day before yesterday, plenty early enough to find hookups for our two campers in an RV campground.

The trip had been in the works for months. We got VIP passes from Congressman Gross, which got us onto the Kennedy Space Center for the launch. They also got us a “VIP” tour of KSC and Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, in which the tour guides knew less about what we were looking at than I did.

We spent the rest of yesterday frolicking on the beach. It was wonderful—hot and sunny in mid-April!

In the evening, the profs took us to a seafood place—a big Morton building with a concrete floor and picnic tables, and then to a Little League baseball game, where we picked a side and blew off steam, cheering wildly. At the end of the night our department head, an old industry hand, drove us to a spot where we could look across the Banana River to the pad. There was the Saturn: beautiful, white, lit up bright as day.

We got up early this morning, and our two RVs are

second and third in the line at the gate. This turns out to be too much of a good thing, as we drive right past the gigantic Vehicle Assembly Building and continue on down the road. If we had been farther back in line, we would have been closer to the pad. Still, we are close enough.

The characteristic staccato roar of a supersonic free jet envelops us. Louder and more glorious than any heavy metal band, I can feel it beating my chest and shaking the camper on which I’m standing. As the rocket rises, I try following it with my 25x Bushnell bird-watching ’scope, but the camper is shaking too much. I follow it naked-eye as it tilts over the Atlantic until the exhaust is pointed directly toward us, and IT

GETS LOUDER!

Gradually the rocket shrinks and the sound dwindles to where I can use the ’scope. We are looking up from underneath it now. The rocket from this angle looks like a stubby pencil, small in my field of view, as I wait for staging. The flash of the separation charge, when it comes, momentarily fills the field of view. The exhaust from the ullage rockets that push the stack away from the spent first stage pulses quickly three times.

The second stage lights and appears as a tiny, bright white light disappearing into the distance, while the first stage falls away, a small cylinder silently venting white vapor.

We scramble off the roof and into the camper and race for the exit ahead of the crowd. Just as we get out of the gate and on to A1A, we hear that the spacecraft has been picked up by a tracking station in Africa. In the time it has taken us to get off Merritt Island, Apollo 16 has crossed the Atlantic.



connectivity

Susan Bassler Pickford

i lost connectivity
maybe i never had it
maybe the last time
was in utero

i cannot get on the internet
i lost connectivity
i cannot get “there” from “here”
because i don’t know where “there” is

i walked with my grandma
downtown Zelienople
to pay her telephone bill
i was five or six

and i was certain i was “here”
and i am certain i was “there” with her
the bill was paid
smiles all around

that was connectivity
i couldn’t spell the word
but
i experienced connectivity

i can now spell “connectivity”
but i no longer
experience it

what passes for connectivity
is electronic pulses through cords
not flesh and blood
not umbilical
only the mysterious
ethernet

i am now eighty years old
and when the great
disconnect happens
I’ll be ready

~~~~

what was my password again?



# Come Spring

Eileen Griffin

In the South spring  
comes early always  
smelling sweet like me  
at a perfume counter  
spraying magnolia grape  
hyacinth floating flower  
gardens into the air  
so easily spring comes.

In the North hand cold  
spring arrives sleepy  
bulbs bits of green push  
up hard earth opens  
cracks and rain and sun  
warm soil squiggles awake  
and all at once spring comes.

If there is joy to be had  
it will come spring early  
or late with sweet smelling  
mud up from the creek up  
through cracked concrete  
puddled rain parking lots  
for little ones to splash  
for there is joy to be had  
come spring.



## Marcus Antonius Felix, Procurator of Judaea, to His Prisoner Paul

Richard Welsh

You hotbrained fool, what demon seizes you,  
Who might with whispered counsel Caesar please?  
Or yet be crowned a prince of Pharisees  
If but deny that rebel, tree-nailed, Jew—  
What god of proud Jerusalem can shake  
Caesarea’s walls, of Roman stone bound fast?  
To Herod’s dogs your wet bones I might cast,  
Or with Chaldee spells your spirit break!  
Admit: the dead one never knew your name,  
And Prophets never his gave breath of old—  
Yet might you lie at ease with cups of gold,  
And drink your share to godlike Caesar’s fame!  
That tongue would not be stopped, nor spirit moved—  
Just babbled lunacy that he called—love.



**Kayaks  
for Rent:  
Russian  
River,  
California**

Photo by  
Tim Baehr

*"This jumble of  
color caught  
my eye when  
I was looking  
at something  
else."*



**Dusk  
Reflections**

Photo by  
Ann  
Landsberg

*"This pond's  
tranquility  
captured me."*







## Wintry Sunset, Lord's Point Cove

Tapestry of wool and acrylic yarns by Elsa van Bergen

*"The changing interaction of dark stratus and yellow sky and the intersection of dock pilings with horizontal coast led to this five-foot-wide tapestry."*



## First Frost

Photo by  
Michael Colton

*"First frost seems to be just a little later each year. November is a little much."*

# On Læsø

Barbara Hesselman Kautz

When I was seventeen, I spent a year in Denmark as an American Field Service exchange student, attending Virum Statsskole, a college prep high school in a northwestern suburb of Copenhagen. In the Danish gymnasium system, pupils choose to focus their studies on languages or sciences and then are assigned to a group of students who stay together for their three years in the gymnasium. Even if I would have a lot of catching up to do in every class but English, AFS recommended I stay with my host sister's second-year language-intensive class.

The headmaster knew I planned to study nursing in college, so, rather than follow the rules, he assigned me to biology, chemistry, and math in three different first-year classes. While every other class stayed together as a group, I moved back and forth between my homeroom English class, the three sciences, and music. I was the only student to change rooms, making me feel like Charlie on the MTA, forever moving from one place to another every school day.

School had been in session about a month when Mor, my "Danish mother," announced I would be spending the following week with my biology class on the Danish island Læsø, known for its unique plant life. I was more apprehensive than excited. Why hadn't my teacher told me about the trip himself? How was I going to cope when I was still learning *dansk*?

Denmark is a country of islands and the Jutland peninsula. Some of its smaller islands are far out to sea. Læsø, midway between Denmark and Sweden, in the North Sea Strait called the Kattegat, is one such island. To get there our class traveled all day by train to the Jutland town of Frederikshavn before boarding a ferry that took us to the island.

Our destination was a hostel that had the air of being owned by a maiden aunt who was tired of feeding hungry teenagers and had no desire to spiff up the place. Each sleeping room was crammed with six beds. The mattresses were old enough to inform a sleeper the bed had box springs, but not so bad Auntie had to spend money replacing them. At least every bed had a warm down comforter to crawl under.

My classmates made little effort to talk to me. Instead, they spent the evenings bent over various workbooks, completing homework assigned by their other science teachers.

I wrote letters home and studied my copy of *Death of a Salesman*, which we were reading in English class. It had been assigned reading in my American English class two years earlier. Now I studied Willy Lohman's sad life as if my own depended on it. My English teacher, Herr Rheumy-Eyes, a card-carrying Communist, disliked all Americans on principle. He spent every chance he got trying to convince our class that Willy's sad life was that of all Americans, while I did my best to counteract his opinion.

After breakfast on Wednesday, we packed reference

books, flasks of hot tea, and thick sandwiches wrapped in waxed paper into our backpacks and left the hostel in a steady rain. Our teacher led us about a kilometer away from the hostel, gathered us around him, and explained the assignment: *pick a piece of ground a meter or two away from any classmate. Using the material provided, stake out a 10 x 10 cm plot, then identify every different plant within the plot. Write down their names in Danish and Latin.* By mid-afternoon he expected us to have identified at least ten plants.

I sat down on a piece of ground that appeared to contain only a few different kinds of plants. I could not have picked a spot with more variety if I had purposely chosen to.

After an hour, during which I failed to identify a single plant, the biology teacher chastised me. "You haven't even started!"

"I have never seen any of these plants before."

"What?" Then, recognizing me, he asked, "Doesn't your host family have a lawn, a garden?"

"My host parents own a perennial nursery. Every spot of ground has raised beds and containers of small plants." I considered the wisdom of sticking out my tongue at him. I refrained.

He squinted through his rain-smearred glasses, then said, "Oh yes, you live with the Christensen girl. Well, do your best."

An hour later I still had not identified a single plant.

"Don't you do these kinds of things in your biology classes in the States?"

"We dissect fetal pigs."

"Oh," he muttered and walked away.

At noon we gathered in a circle to eat the sandwiches provided by the hostel. Thick slabs of Danish rye bread. I love it still. But it was topped with leverpostej. Leverpostej is normal, everyday non-gourmet liver pâté. It is to Danes what peanut butter is to Americans. The only way I could ever choke it down was to cover it with enough pickled beets I couldn't taste the liver. And I had no beets.

~ ~ ~

I wish I could write the teacher eventually helped me identify a handful of plants or suggested I take a walk and report back on what I had seen of the island's unique nature. But he didn't.

Things never got better. Learning science in a speaker's non-native language is extraordinarily difficult. Although I no longer remember how it came about, I eventually quit going to all three science classes entirely and spent my time in music classes instead. No one seemed to mind.

Yet I learned an important lesson that week, one that has withstood the test of time and helped me teach nursing to African-born students. Although they learned English as children, they did not know scientific terms. I'd like to think that of all their professors I understood their struggle with anatomy and physiology the most. And, that in understanding, I gave them grace.

# "We May Have Another One—Call Bubba and Gunner"

Bruce Sherwin

Tom was speeding along the highway early that morning in his new GMC Yukon, racing on his daily trip to the office. He was mentally going through the day's agenda—it included a new house showing, a sale closing on an office building, and a meeting with the town planner about a development he was proposing in a nearby growing town, which was on the verge of becoming a smallish city. "It's going to be a profitable day," Tom proudly congratulated himself, as he drove along. Suddenly his cell phone rang. He smiled, happy that he had already hooked up the Bluetooth in his new vehicle. "I can answer hands-free now... and be legal, for a change," he said to himself.

"Hello, Anne," Tom said, reading the phone's display as he picked up the call.

"Hi, Tom," Anne replied. "I've got good news and bad news for you this beautiful morning."

"What's the bad news?" Tom shot back.

Anne replied, with a laugh, "Your meeting with the town planner in Gotham today has been postponed a few days, until at least Wednesday of next week."

He said back, "That is bad news, we're getting close to approval on that project. What's the good news?" he asked.

Anne laughed again and said, "The good news is that you get the rest of the morning to goof off. Your showing and closing are not until 2:00 and 3:30 this afternoon. Don't get into any trouble out there now!"

"Okay—I'll see you in a while. I'll be along soon. And I better not find you goofing off." Tom laughed, said good-bye, and hung up.

As Tom considered his newly found free time, he spotted the dirt road entrance off the highway coming up ahead. He silently thought, "I've driven by this dirt road a thousand times and never explored it. Today looks like the day to take a little side trip into the woods." As he slowed and turned into the gravel entrance he pondered, "I've been wondering if there is any development potential here."

He quickly noticed the bend up ahead in the road's path and wondered what he might find on the other side of the turn. He didn't have to wait long. As Tom slowly rounded the curve, he came upon a long straightaway, with a solitary figure on the far end of it, who was walking towards him. As they approached each other, he could see the man was dressed in old dirty and ragged clothing with a noticeably rumped, wide-brimmed straw hat that had seen better days. Alarmingly, the man was carrying what Tom thought to be a type of shotgun, held diagonally across his chest as he marched. Tom slowed even more and rolled his window down, preparing to speak to what appeared to be an old man.

"How you doin' today, sir?" Tom asked in a friendly voice as he came to a stop.

The grizzled reply came back, "Okay for an old-timer. A little tired from being out here on patrol since early, early this morning, though."

"What do you mean by being on patrol? And what's that

shotgun for? By the way, what's your name?" Tom asked, continuing his query.

The old man took his time thinking over his answers, rolling back on his heels, and, at the same time, rolling his eyes while pondering his reply. Then he almost whispered. "Well, you're the nosy type, aren't you, young fella." He went on, "Folks around here refer to me as 'Crazy Pete,' but you don't need to worry, I'm as sane as you can find in these parts."

Tom quickly thought to himself, "How sane can a guy holding a shotgun here be...and...who's also trying to convince me of his sanity?" Tom slowly put his hand on the gear shift knob, pulling it silently into reverse, while continuing to listen to Crazy Pete.

The old man rambled on with his reply to Tom's questioning: "This ain't no shotgun, this here is a tranquilizer gun, and these here are tranquilizer darts that go in it." Crazy Pete displayed the darts for Tom that were tucked into his belt by lifting his dirty, hole-filled flannel jacket. He added, "I've got several different sizes of them here, as you can see...for different size and weight targets." Crazy Pete went on, "I'm out here on patrol guarding against nuisance real estate developers. I shoot 'em with a tranquilizer, and then I get a couple of local boys, usually Bubba and Gunner, to help me load them into a pickup and then take the nuisance critter back into a city to release them—you know, where it belongs—back in its normal habitat, where that darn nuisance won't do us harm!"

Tom slowly began backing up the Yukon. As he started to move, he swore he heard the old timer ask, "Young fella, do you happen to know how many kilograms you weigh?"

"Time to go!" Tom said to himself as he looked over his right shoulder and down the dirt road behind him, towards the main road and safety. He hit the accelerator hard and sent up a cloud of dust in his frantic retreat. As he spun around at the end of the dirt road to re-enter the highway, he noticed the *TIME* magazine on the passenger side seat. He had picked it up with his mail the day before. It had been flipped open by the wind coming from his gaping open window to facing pages—one with an aerial photograph of a sprawling New York City and the other of the vast treetops of the Maine Woods. The contrasting pictures seemed to speak of a stark realism.

Tom sighed to himself as he sped down the highway, "Goodbye, Crazy Pete! You may have a point, old man! You just may have a point!"







## While Away

Photo by  
Ted Anderson

*"A week on the  
couch with the  
flu, and this was  
the primary  
view. Tybee  
Island, Georgia."*

# contributors

**David Agan** is a retiree and a grandpa who lives and writes amid pines and oaks in beautiful inland York County.

**Ted Anderson** lives in Westbrook, Maine. He's drawn to spaces—interior and exterior—with strong contrasts in light, exploring the space between loneliness and solitude, and imagining who has been there before, recently or in the distant past.

**Tim Baehr** has been editing and writing, professionally and otherwise, since 1968. He has been an amateur photographer for a bit longer. He has been a volunteer, and has enjoyed OLLI courses since 2008.

**Mary Barrett** has been painting, primarily in pastels, since retiring. She has been an OLLI Member since 2008.

**Brigitte Bartolucci**, originally from France, spent many years working in the corporate world in Chicago and is now happily living in the beautiful state of Maine, a lifetime dream finally come true.

**Don Bouwens** arrived Downeast in 1972 with no plan beyond working honestly with his hands. Seven years later he felt his brain and his back atrophying, and he moved to Portland and a belated career in sales.

**Michael Colton** is retired from a large engineering company and likes to unwind by taking photographs.

**Anne Cyr** has found joy in writing since retiring from teaching. She is passionate about gardening, spending time in or on the water, singing in a hospice choir, and traveling in the tropics.

**Eric Edmonds** has been doing amateur photography for several years as artistic expression. But he at least imagines dabbling in other art forms. Perhaps tin art?

**Stephen Fielding** is a retired medical sociologist now living in Maine. His primary subjects are nature and landscapes to raise awareness of the impact of climate change on our fragile environment.

**Patricia Garrett** is a serious photo enthusiast with eclectic interest. Her photo journey began years ago with a Brownie camera and gained momentum after retirement. She enjoys trying new techniques and discovering unique subject matter.

**Gail Gingrich** spent her career as a biochemist working for a large corporation in the Chicago area. She is now happily pursuing her second “career” in photography after retiring in beautiful Maine.

**Eileen Griffin** is so happy to call Maine home and to have the gift of time at her writing desk... a new adventure!

**Toby Hollander** is a retired lawyer, Vietnam Veteran, a burgeoning writer, and a repeat *Reflections* author. He is presently facilitating Ruth Story's Memoir Writing Class.

**Barbara Hesselman Kautz** has been a member of the OLLI Memoir writing group since 2010. In 2013 she published a memoir about her year as an Army nurse in 1970.

**Ann Landsberg** has been taking pictures since she was a little girl. She is still at it, only with more sophisticated equipment and technology. Remarkably, her phone is now her best camera.

**Jim Mason** retired in 2020 after a long career in the aerospace industry. He witnessed the launch of Apollo 16 when he was an aerospace engineering student at Iowa State University.

**Robert Petrillo** has been playing at poetry for a few years now; as long as it continues to be fun, he'll probably keep doing it. He plays at other stuff, too.

**Susan Bassler Pickford** is a longtime member of OLLI and Senior Players. Her memoir and poetry books are available on Amazon.com.

**Bruce Sherwin** stumbled onto OLLI in the fall of 2016, and has been attending classes nonstop since. He considers himself a lifelong learner who, hopefully, will live a long life!

**Mary Snell** of Gorham is a former journalist, media relations professional, and theater critic. She earned her MFA in poetry from the Stonecoast MFA program at USM.

**Dave Stankowicz** is a retired educator who hosts Palm Wine Radio on WMPG, and has taught film noir at OLLI.

**Kathleen Howard Sutherland** has been painting for twenty years, besides teaching on the Middle East at OLLI since 2005. Her artwork has appeared in *Reflections* and was juried into Pastel Society of Maine International Show 2019.

**Elsa van Bergen** has explored many weaving techniques while living in several countries but finds greatest satisfaction working on her upright Swedish tapestry loom, "painting with shuttle and bobbin."

**Richard Welsh** feels most at home where worlds intersect. He tries to capture them in history, drama, photography, and the OLLI courses he teaches and takes. A long time ago, he almost became a scientist.

**Irving Williams** was a starving poet who moved to Maine on Halloween night, 1973. The next week a snowstorm dumped an inch of snow inside his drafty apartment just up the street from The Brick Market.

**Gail Worster** was an L.L.Bean video producer, and is now retired—and an avid OLLI member since 2018. (Thank you, OLLI, for saving me from the pandemic!)

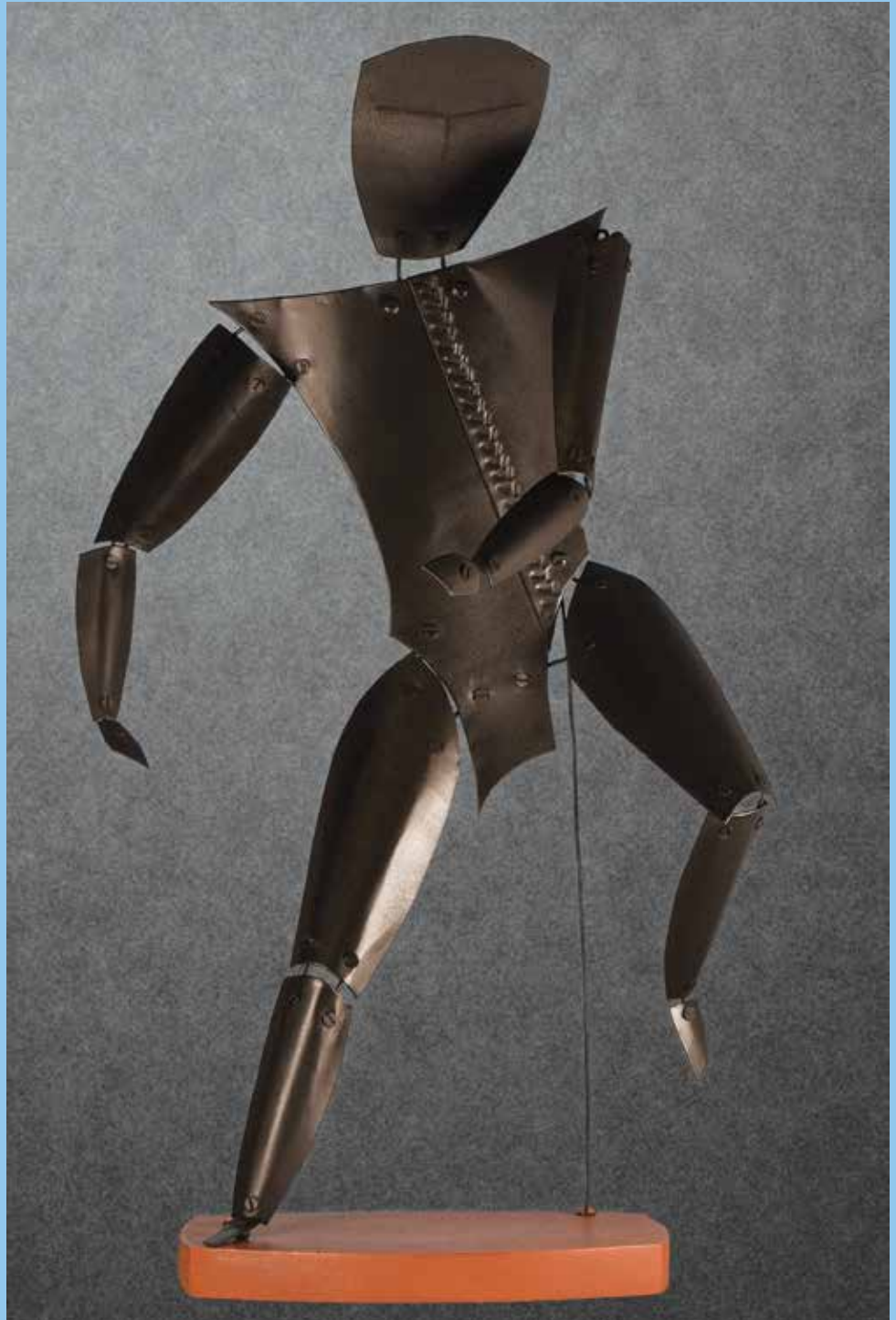
**Ariela Zucker** was born in Jerusalem. She left Israel with her husband in September 2001, followed by three daughters. They decided to stay in Maine and live in Ellsworth, in the motel they own and operate.

## about the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

*Reflections* is an annual publication of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Southern Maine. OLLI offers learners 50 and older a wide range of courses, workshops, events, trips, lectures, and special interest groups, all intended to capture the joy of learning and enhance creative pursuits. Sessions run throughout the year. To learn more about OLLI, to become a member, or to explore its courses and programs, please visit our website at [usm.maine.edu/olli](http://usm.maine.edu/olli) or call 207-780-4406.



a program of



## Combine

Tin can sculpture by  
Eric Edmonds

*"A doodle and  
time on my hands."*