

University of Southern Maine
Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
2023

reflections



Sunset in Fort Sumter Park Photo by Tim Baehr *"I loved seeing people enjoying the sunset."*

ART and *Literature*

Welcome to *Reflections*

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 allocated 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 few years, this current issue can be viewed in a PDF format. It is a great way to view the journal on a digital device and can be shared with anyone anywhere. To receive a PDF version, simply ask for one by emailing the OLLI office at olliatusm@maine.edu. Once you have the file, you can make it accessible to anyone in the world via an attachment.

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 the OLLI administration for their continued support 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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Sunday, Woodville

Larry Dyhrberg

The green tractor
Rounds the field,
Its clockwise path
Chronicling the seasons' revolution
To this warm June day.
Spinning tines
Mound mown grass
To be baled
Into bound, dry loaves
To feed cattle
On their unknowing path.
Against the summer sky
Redwing blackbirds flit
Above the lifeless hay,
Searching to find,
To understand,
The disappearance
Of their hard-won nests.



snow drops

Irv Williams

in dunblane there were sixteen and one
sandy hook twenty and six
in texas nineteen and two
points of light extinguished
in a few terrifying minutes



pupils, students, children, nieces, nephews, runners, huggers, gap-toothed singers
teachers, mothers, sisters, aunties, lovers, smoothers of windblown hair and patchers of skinned knees
in march the snow drops bloom in scotland
in december deer graze on patches of green under the snow in newtown
in may the bluebells are blooming in texas
tonight there are sixty-four fireflies hovering in my backyard softly blinking off and on
i'm here they say in one instant
i'm gone they say in the next

MY UNFORGETTABLE FIRST EXPERIENCE AT A DINER

Bill Gousse

“We’ll stop along the way for dinner,” Mom said as we tossed our luggage into the trunk of Dad’s new company car, a 1957 Ford Fairlane 500.

The trip involved two-lane roads creeping through small Vermont towns, weaving beside riverbanks, climbing over sloping mountains, and rolling past huge farms. There was not an inch of highway along the 150-mile trek.

“Okay. Springfield [Vermont] is about an hour and a half away. That’ll be perfect timing,” said Dad. He hoped that, with hearty food in our bellies and the late hour, Greg and I would fall asleep for the rest of the four-hour trip.

When we reached Springfield, I was starving. I hoped that there would be no waiting for a table. Visions of a hamburger and chocolate frappe ran through my mind. Maybe a hot dog and a Coke. How about a full meal of meatloaf and mashed potatoes with gravy and string beans! My mind was running rampant with expectations of fine dining.

“There’s a diner and, look, lots of trailer trucks around,” Mom announced with glee.

Dad pulled into a parallel, angled parking spot on River Street. We hopped out of the car and raced toward the most silvery, shiny, neon-lit structure that I had ever seen—The Springfield Royal Diner—a glittery oasis amid the brick downtown. There was nothing like it in Greenfield [Massachusetts] or anywhere else I’d ever been to or lived.

We stepped inside and were led immediately to a booth by the bob-haired, smiling, perky hostess. Greg and I commandeered the window seats. Above us was a sconce mounted on the mahogany wall between the windows. Its linen white shade cast a warm glow. With too much to read on the large multi-folded, plastic-covered menus, I made my choice based on the pictures cast throughout the pages.

After ordering the cheeseburger platter with french fries, coleslaw, a chocolate frappe, I turned my attention to our table jukebox. The Platters, Brenda Lee, Bill Haley and the Comets—there must have been a hundred songs, I thought, as I flipped from page to page using the metal tabs over the glass face. Push buttons of letters and numbers sat in rows at the bottom of the device, and I quickly made the connection with the combination next to the song title.

“Hey Mom. Can I have a dime to play a song?”

“Here you go. Just make sure it’s a quiet tune. ‘Magic Moments’ by Perry Como would be nice. Please, no ‘Hound Dog’ by Elvis!”

Meals came and I dove into my juicy cheeseburger and crispy french fries. I began to take in the ambiance. Stainless steel-lined walls abstractly reflecting the waitresses scurrying by; glass-covered pedestals of pies and cakes standing at intervals along the pearly white Formica counter; the milk machine with its huge levers lifted to fill

large hard plastic red tumblers; an open window to the kitchen where the cooks with paper hats hurried to and fro, placing composed plates, ding a bell and shouting a waitress’s name; the sounds of silverware striking china, stacking glasses, people murmuring, jukeboxes playing, whirring blenders, red vinyl-covered stools squeaking, all made for interesting, yet comforting, sights and sounds.

That was until I noticed an unshaven, tattered-dressed man sitting with a similarly-clothed boy about my age at the counter. Their work boots were covered in mud. Each had a soup bowl haircut, featuring longer locks down to just above the ears, then a very closely snipped, almost shaven, line below the ears: obviously a homemade haircut. Their clothes were heavily soiled from their day’s work. Both sets of hands were darkened from toil and exposure. Beaten hats with shredded visors removed, I noticed the man’s crow’s-feet-concerned smile and the boy’s wonderment.

Plates were placed in front of them, one empty, the other with a western omelet sandwich cut diagonally in half. There was no Coke or coffee, just water to sip between bites. Each discreetly took his share and ate in silence so as to not invite attention their way. It struck me that this one sandwich was all the man could afford, and he was sharing it with his son. They might have had a hard day on the farm or in the garage, and this was their reward. An evening meal out, happy and barely able to do so.

With all of the contrasting cheerful hustle and bustle around me, this sight was sobering. At ten years old, I wondered for the first time if I saw what being poor looked like. I wanted to offer the rest of my dinner to them, but I knew I couldn’t. Terrible thoughts grew in my head of what life must have been like for them. I was upset. Half of the dinner in front of me, that I looked so forward to, lay unfinished, my appetite gone.

“Billy, is something wrong? Aren’t you going to finish?” Mom asked. “Eat a few more bites and you can have dessert.”

Mom and Dad finished their mugs of coffee, empty dessert dishes in front of Greg and them. The man and boy had already quietly left, leaving coins and a few wrinkled bills on the counter with the tab. Slowly, I walked to the car. Back on the main road we drove, leaving the stainless steel and neon lights behind. As the miles melted by, I just stared out the window not seeing anything but the contrasting images left behind.



Parenttheses

Mary Tracy

I like the invitation of parentheses,
the way they enclose a digression,

soften an admission, cushion a fall from grace,
curve arms around the shoulders of slight misfits,

procrastinators, dodgers, fibbers, wallflowers,
throat clearers, hemmers and hawers.

Like small ribs, they hold the lungs of an idea
straining to jump onto a red boxcar

coupled to the rumbling train of words,
a small notion relieved to be hoisted aboard,

a freeloader, more or less, on the rattling journey
of (un)certainly chugging across the page.



Church and *Theater*

Lynn Bailets

Tall spire and stained glass.

Modesty magnificent.

Originally a church,

now a theater.

Both require participants

to imagine,

go beyond everyday reality,

take leaps of faith.

Different and the Same.

The Owl and the Red Squirrel

Gail Worster

Late one night, standing in the mouth of the garage
I stare into the stillness of the dark woods.

There it is again, the deep husky voice of the Barred Owl
So close, so clear, reverberating through the silence.

Baying at the darkness, like a wolf howling at the moon
A warning to some, a love song to others.

Early morning, I wake to a noisy scamper on the roof
As black sky dissolves to charcoal.

That feisty red squirrel, a master at defying gravity
Its tiny nails clicking sharply along the shingles.

Exploring the odd-shaped tree we call a house
Always in search of a better place to spend the winter.

Suddenly, a heavy thud on the roof
Followed by a startled piercing shriek
A brief scuffle
A final squeak-like whimper. And silence.

I did not see this, but I did bear witness.
No villain was the owl. No victim was the squirrel.

Just the forward movement of life in the woods.

Finished

Tana Leonhart

The painting stretches across the canvas. A delicate sky transitions from autumn storm to hope of clearing. Faint pink lightens the clouds over the ocean, and there is a hint of blue.

The keeper's house catches the stormy light. Paint peeling, aged from countless storms, the house stands its ground in the wind. Beyond is the tower of the lighthouse. Decades old, a treasured guide for ships at sea. From a distance, its iron railings are a lacy adornment.

No trees in sight. Just dry grass and goldenrod bending in the wind.

Bleak? Solitary? Strong. Resolute.

My brush rests on the palette. Is the painting finished? Perhaps the windows should be darker. The house is empty, after all. The keeper, Captain Elliot, has long since gone. I imagine his years of dedicated service. His children and grandchildren played on the once-mowed field, ran to the edge of the sea, climbed the spiral steps of the lighthouse tower. I hope they have saved those memories and carry them now, wherever they may be.

I eye the foreground. Should it be more defined? Should the viewer see each stalk, each clump of autumn-colored grass? Perhaps there is a sense of dry, crispness; of verdant days gone by.

And the siding...does it show the weathering of all those years? How did it look that first year built? Gleaming white, certainly. Such a statement there on the rise above the sea. It must have been a beacon even without the tower light.

I'm drawn to the trim along the roofline. Time has softened it to a mere suggestion of its gingerbread origin. But, still, it gives the house a certain elegance. (Thank you to the architect for considering it essential.) Should I touch it with white or darken its shadow to make it stand out? Or is the suggestion enough?

Finally, I scrape the palette clean and wash the brushes. I will miss my time with the keeper's house. It has been my companion for many months.

I study the painting one more time. Is it really finished?

Perhaps just a little more blue in the sky...



The Keeper's House Oil painting by Tana Leonhart



Day Is Done—The Watchers Photo by Ann Landsberg

“The vastness of the sky and the smallness of the watchers struck me as an interesting contrast.”



Sunset, Camp Ellis Photo by Sharon Roberts

“I love photographing sunsets. The display that nature puts on every evening is awesome. Shooting upriver from the Camp Ellis pier.”

While We Stayed Inside

Stephen Dorneman

While we stayed inside, winter begat spring, spring begat summer, summer begat fall, and fall begat winter again. And again the spring.

Dirty piles of snow-salt-sand waxed and waned, waned and waned, until finally they vanished. Seagulls returned in force, complaining about missing tourists. Snowdrops turned to crocuses that grew into daffodils and tulips and beeches and maple trees. Woodchuck ticks awoke and found themselves hungry.

A fawn tried new hooves on the jumbled brick

sidewalks, while its mother cropped at fresh clover spilling out from untended gardens.

Eddies in the river ran clear, iridescent petroleum swirls that once ruled now but minor decorations on the blue-green expanse.

When will it all end, we cried to each other across wires of light lashed to the earth's face. When will it all end, the earth cried back; but quieter now than before.

And still, we stayed inside.



Grayscale Sky Photo by Eric A. Edmonds

ways

Dave Agan

Right arms extended, thumbs erect, facing traffic, the two of us are looking for a ride this Fourth of July weekend. Standing here beside the road, the Alabama Capitol dome on the near horizon, we're hitching to New Orleans.

The stares coming from behind open car windows remind me how much we stand out, two guys trying to travel without a car. I'm a nondescript White twenty-year-old. Todd's my age, six foot six with curly strawberry blonde hair and a loose gait. He's noticed wherever he goes.

This summer, a bunch of us from New England colleges are helping teach Negro high school students from three rural Alabama counties. We're working side by side with students at the Negro college in Talladega in Upward Bound, an academic program for poor kids, part of the "War on Poverty."

Last night, Butch, a Talladega College student, drove us to his mom's home in Montgomery. Butch's mom is a cafeteria worker at the Capitol. She told us the Governor had given her a \$5 tip last week. She fed us well. In the morning after breakfast, Butch drove us out to the State Highway.

Waiting for a ride, Todd and I talk about our students, teaching, and the segregation we're seeing in Talladega even though laws have changed. Why is there still racial discrimination? It is 1967, after all.

"Do you think we should stop in at the State House and tell the Governor we heard him speak at our college?" I ask. We each force a chuckle.

I recall a night two months before. Governor George Wallace had come to our campus in New Hampshire to test the waters almost a year before the presidential primary. Images emerge and blend: Burly, scowling men, busting out of their dark suits, surrounding the Governor; the little man's strange accent, hint of a smirk, greasy front wave in his hair, harsh rhetoric; Afro-American Society students and White allies shouting him down, walking out and then back in; the Alabama contingent's hasty retreat; the mass of students surrounding, yelling at, and banging on their big, black sedans; state police finally clearing the way as the campaigners peel out and race down the road. I know Todd's remembering all this, too.

Looking off in the direction of the big dome, Todd answers, "Yeah, maybe he'd show us around and buy us a Coke." Forced chuckles again.

I start remembering the voter registration volunteers executed and buried in the dam in Mississippi three years ago, the buses burned in Anniston and baseball bat beatings of Freedom Riders, all the lynchings, state cops on horses riding down and bashing marchers at the Selma bridge. They killed Medgar Evers and shot James Meredith in Mississippi. A few of the targets were White, mostly Yankees. There's a knot in my gut as I think about the way some locals might look at our work in Talladega. I'm too young to die.

An older sedan slows and pulls over onto the dirt shoulder

up ahead of us. We hustle toward it and climb into the back seat, Todd behind the driver, me on the passenger side. Up front are two White guys a few years older than us. I'm sweating and it's not just because of the heat. The front seat passenger turns down the radio. The guys in front glance at each other. Todd answers their questions as we roll down the highway.

"Where you boys headed?" the driver asks.

"New Orleans. We're going to meet friends there for the Fourth." This is true. He doesn't say they are our fellow young teachers, a dozen young men and women, Negro and White.

"We're only going a little ways, near Georgiana."

"That's okay. It's closer than we are now." True, too.

After a moment, the guy in the passenger seat asks, "Where y'all from?"

Todd answers, "Connecticut." That's where he's from.

"Cold up there."

"Yeah, in the winter."

Another pause. I sweat a little more.

"What are you boys doing down here?"

That was the question we had anticipated as we stood by the roadside. Todd was prepared.

"Visiting my aunt in Montgomery," he lies.

It seems like a long, long moment. "How you like it down here?"

I pipe in. "Kinda warm."

Light laughter all around. Mine is one of relief.

The guy riding shotgun turns up the radio volume. Tammy Wynette is singing "Your Good Girl's Gonna Go Bad."

Near Georgiana, we get another ride and pass through the outer neighborhoods of Mobile. I know this is Hank Aaron's home town. I see homes as simple and small as I can imagine. This ride takes us on to the Gulf Coast and we're let off in Biloxi.

Two hours later we're still standing here hot and thirsty as hell. Gotta be high nineties, barely a breeze. We're watching the trees' shadows migrate from this sidewalk to the other side of the fence at Beauvoir, Jefferson Davis' retirement plantation. Both of us English majors, we note the irony (or is it poetry?) of these two Yankees baking in the sun outside this Confederate historical site. Whichever it is, something feels ominous.

Someone stops and carries us along the coast and over the Mississippi all the way to the outskirts of New Orleans. We walk toward a more built-up neighborhood, soon stepping into Dave's Café. It's dark inside. After a vaporous beer apiece, Todd asks for directions to a bus stop.

I look at a newspaper on the corner of the bar. The front page features a big photo of a smashed-up car, windshield and roof torn off. "Jayne Mansfield Killed in Car Crash" is the headline. Why is this such big news in a local paper? The article reveals that the glamorous actress's car on its way to New Orleans rear-ended a tractor-trailer and jammed under it on the Gulf Coast Highway overnight.

We were riding along there this afternoon and hadn't noticed a thing. What a way to go.

STUMPS

Carl Little

Going to get the mail, I point out a stump
to young James and henceforth he notices them,
so many along our road,

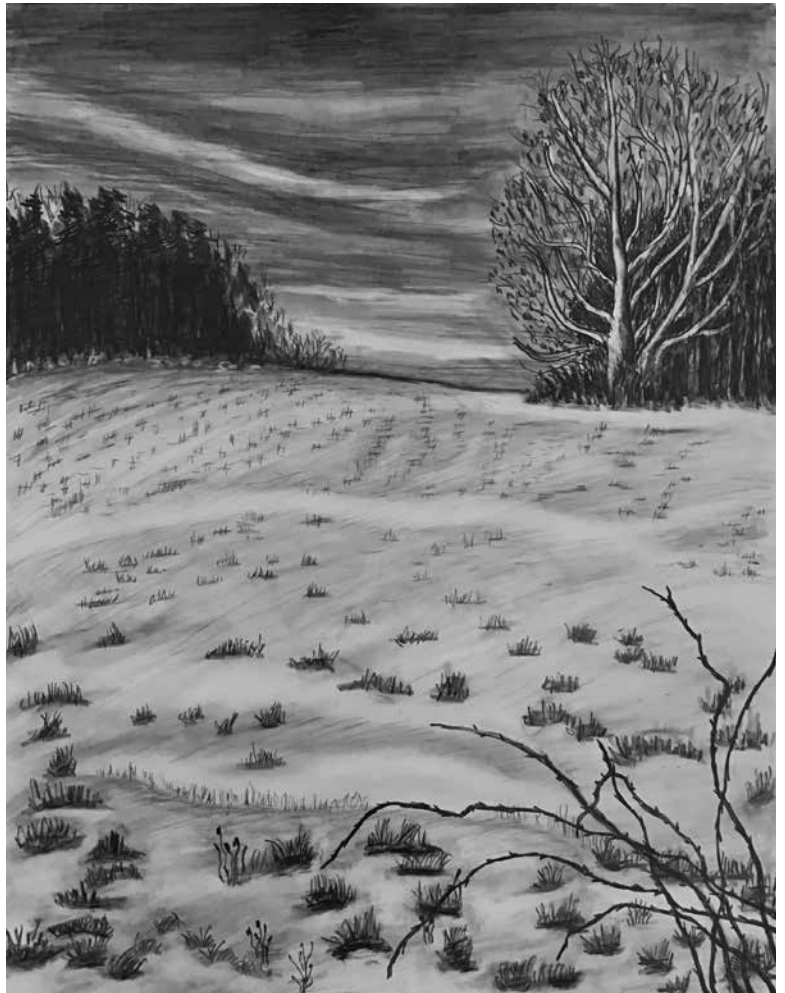
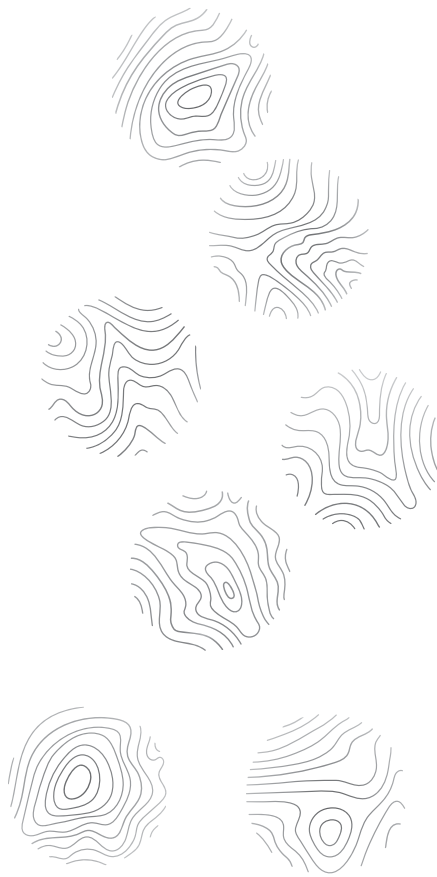
tom-tom to bass drum size, some
large and flat enough to serve
lemonade on, others a leg's/arm's width,

and a few sporting shelves of fungi
or dark spots where water begins
to infiltrate. James counts them

as he rides along on balance bike
happy to make their acquaintance,
another part of the world to know

as we make our way past
the camp road cut-off and culvert
to the mailbox and home again,

home again, boom, boom, boom.



First Snow Pencil

drawing by Gail Worster

*"I just loved the way the snow
covered this field without
obscuring everything."*

TIME FOR REST

Ariela Zucker

I stand by my parents' graves, as I do every year around the week of Hanukkah. It is a cool winter day; the skies are gray except for a pink cloud hanging on the horizon beyond the two cedar trees that were planted next to the graves twenty years ago. The trees are slightly crooked and lean toward each other as if for comfort. Their intertwining branches form a gap through which I can see new houses climbing like goats on the steep mountains that surround Jerusalem, my former home city. I cannot see the highway meandering below, but I can hear the buzz of the traffic rising in the clear air.

As I do every year on my visit, I deliver a short update. I tell my parents that I finally retired, and that everyone tells me, "Now you can rest, you deserve it."

It's time to rest, I think, first quietly inside my head and then loudly in front of the graves. Rest from what? Rest for what? And what made me deserving of this rest?

Do I expect an answer from a mountain covered with resting people? I stand there in the quiet for a few minutes, roll the words around in my head, and wait—will the answer come?

It's time to rest.

Or maybe now is the time to let go of everything that has been holding me back for the past years. The

hesitations, the pondering, the "what-ifs," the concerns regarding "What will others say?"

Perhaps now is the time to look for and discover hidden talents and hobbies that have been neglected over the years.

A time to grant myself permission to express my opinions freely and without reservations.

Be an eccentric old woman,

Feed street cats,

Collect secondhand relics in Goodwill stores
for display,

Be forgetful and careless; make mistakes and
own them like well-fitting dresses.

Family and friends might nod their heads in bewilderment.

"Such an organized person, so calculated, so logical, what has happened?"

And I will smile inwardly—perhaps it was not time for rest just yet.

I pick two small round stones and place one on each grave. I give the view one last look. Maybe I got my answer, or it is still forming and taking shape. It will be a year before I stand here again, talking to my parents. In the meantime, they will continue to rest, and I will continue to search for answers.



Letter to a WWII Soldier on the Front

Lynn Lynch

May 5, 1944

Dear Jack,

I read daily about the advancement of our troops in Europe and the Pacific, but I am always left wondering how much more there is to each story than what we read. I am always on the lookout for news of the 5th Armored Division. I pray for your safety and well-being, recognizing the sacrifices being made here at home are small compared to what you and all those in service make every day.

I have just started preparing this year's Victory Garden. I will be expanding it, as last year's canned goods barely lasted the winter. There are many, especially the elders, who struggle to grow their own food, but they come to help when they are up to it. I have just turned the soil and have planted the early spring vegetables. I've taken the neighbor's kids out to collect fiddleheads and dandelion greens, and I am looking forward to the first berries of the season (at least another month) followed by the jams to be put up later.

As the food rationing becomes more restrictive, we find ourselves exchanging recipes or swapping ingredients with neighbors and friends. The Coupon Cookery cookbooks are helpful for adapting. I had a nice rabbit stew cooking last week when Auntie stopped by. It was nice to have enough to share. It is wonderful to have friends with small farms who are raising chickens and pigs. Occasionally we benefit. The butcher accepts any bacon fat or meat drippings we can spare. We exchange it for extra food coupons. I do miss my sweet coffee. It has taken quite some time to learn to drink it black. Here I am complaining, and I don't even know if you have time for a cup (or if it is even available). I hope you have this simple pleasure as part of each day.

The number of Blue Star Flags in the windows throughout Auburn is growing daily. Some flags have up to three stars on them. Fortunately, none have been changed to gold. I don't know how we have been spared. We celebrate the arrival of every letter or note from the front. We cherish them and read them repeatedly.

Next week the city is sponsoring a metal and rubber collection event. I've been scouring the house for items to contribute. Auburn is competing with Lewiston and Bangor to see who can raise the most poundage. The last drive just after you left had everything from toothpaste tubes to kids' toys. Paper is ALWAYS being collected at the dump.

Jeanie and I treated ourselves a few weeks ago by going to the movies. We saw Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo with Spencer Tracy. The movie was exciting, the action seemed very realistic, often frightening, as those pilots maneuvered their planes like racecars. I wonder what kind of crazy things you do with your tank.

I promise to write again next week, but I want to go join some of the other women in town to wrap bandages for Red Cross and tear or repair worn clothing.

Please take care of yourself and your fellow soldiers. I continue to pray for your safety and an end to this war.

Your loving sister, Betty

NEON

Tim Baehr

Holy crap, I thought. I've gotta have one of those.

I had been running some errands for Harry—the cook on the breakfast shift, and also my boss and the owner of the diner where I worked. As I was walking from the last errand to his car, a display window made me stop like someone dumped lead in my sneakers. Neon signs. All sizes. Some blinking, some steady. One was a big pair of eyes, one of the eyes flashing so it looked like it was winking.

But I was dazzled enough by the smaller, simpler stuff. I could imagine *Harry's Diner* spelled out in red tubing, hung in one of the windows facing the road.

I went in. A buzzer went off in back. A man sauntered out from behind a half-wall, rubbing his eyes. He seemed annoyed, as if I'd interrupted a nap.

He had on socks but no shoes. His rumpled plaid shirt and tan pants shared real estate with a huge gut. His only hair was a mustache that looked like he'd drawn it on with a felt-tip pen. Talk radio muttered from out back.

He looked me over. Ratty jeans, T-shirt with permanent food stains, sneakers that may once have been white. Or not. Not exactly a hot prospect.

Yeah, we can sell you a sign.

He sighed and pulled out a catalog of generic pre-mades. About a hundred dollars each, he said. I stopped him. The designs might as well have said *Hey Look, We Were Too Cheap to Buy a Real Sign*.

I asked Mr. Neon about a custom job, with *Harry's Diner* on it. He named a price. I said I couldn't afford that. He said, well how about just *Harry's* for two hundred. I said that'll work.

He looked me over again and asked for the two

hundred in advance. I said okay. His eyebrows went up a bit, and a notch higher when I pulled out a credit card.

Six years, cooking lunch and dinner six days a week. Living cheap, eating at the diner. The Visa folks thought I was okay, and they couldn't see, and wouldn't care, how I dressed.

Mr. Neon wrote down the order and padded back to his radio. The buzzer announced my exit.

Harry and I don't usually see much of each other. Doesn't say much. Doesn't need to. Just as he's finishing up his breakfast shift, I come in to set up the kitchen for lunch. He always leaves the kitchen and the public area spotless. One time I left a dirty rag on the food prep table, and the next day I found the rag—even dirtier—in my apron pocket. He didn't need to chew me out.

Mr. Neon called a couple weeks later. I made up

some excuse to borrow Harry's car and went to pick it up. I sneaked it into the diner and hid it while he was busy with

HARRY'S

breakfast cleanup.

After dinner I put up two hooks over the window by the door, hung up the red *Harry's*, and plugged it in. The window reflected a backwards *Harry's*, bathing my face in red. Perfect. I left it on and walked home.

The next day Harry waddled outside as I arrived for my lunch shift. He pointed a sausage-link finger at the sign and squinted at me in the late morning sun.

He started sputtering. What the fuck is this?

I tried to sound casual. Happy birthday, Harry.

The sputtering stopped. He turned and stomped to his car, arm stretched out in back of him with a wave that said *Crazy Kid, What'll He Do Next*.

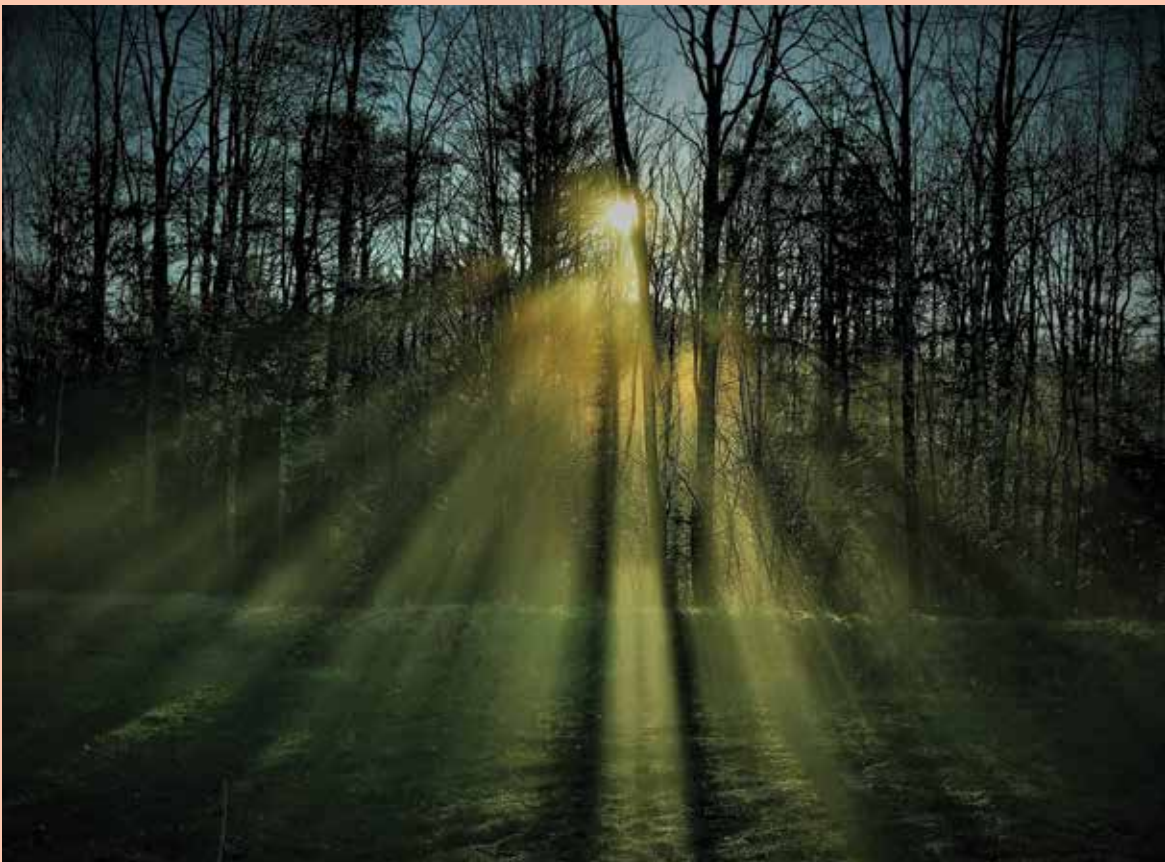
The following day I found a Hallmark thank-note in my apron. With flowers and birds on it.



Bathed in Pink

Photo by
Gail Worster

"A perfect morning overlooking Mt. Katahdin from Daicey Pond."



Hidden Horizons

Photo by
Joel Kallich

"I am currently trying to capture the edge of our visual and mental perceptions, i.e., horizons."



Down the Road

Pastel by
Chris Essler

*"Inspired by an
early summer walk
down my road in
Waldoboro"*



Crow

Painting by
Marsha Campbell

"I love crows."



Up

Photo by
Robert L.
Petrillo

*"A pretty
typical street
view in Zurich.
This photo
is from my
iPhone 13. It's
all I had."*



Enchanted Forest

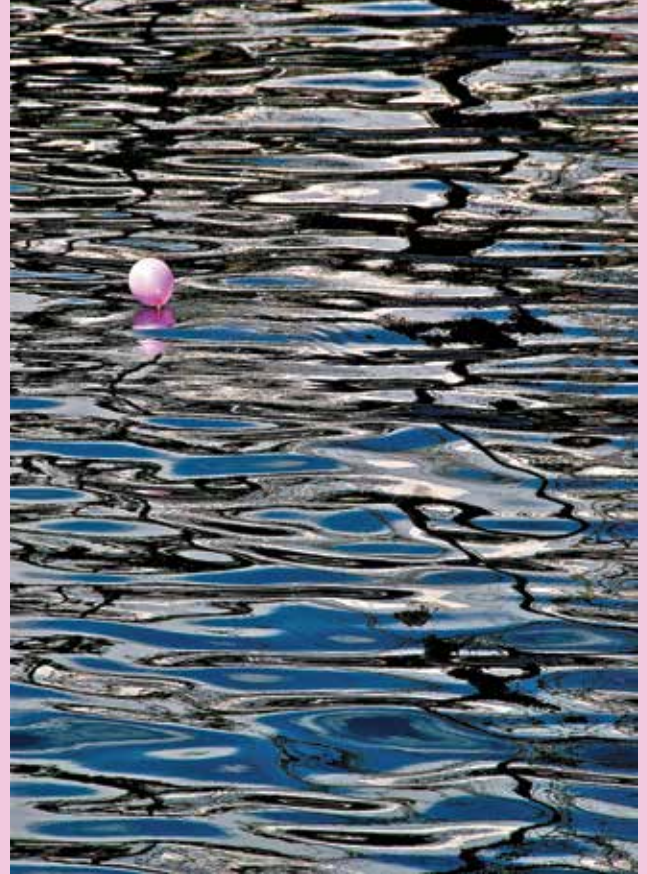
Photo by
Brigitte
Bartolucci

*"Majestic
trees seem
to arise from
the rocks in
fireworks of
gold and light
at St Joseph
College."*



Heron Launch Photo by Richard Welsh

"Thick fog and dim light, but the heron said go for it—call it Impressionist, and hurry up already!"



The Balloon Photo by Steven H. Horowitz

"Watching mast reflections shimmer in the wake of a slow moving boat is endlessly fascinating. Suddenly, in Barcelona, a balloon floats by."



Just a Dusting

Photo by Michael Colton

"A digital photo of one of my favorite places."

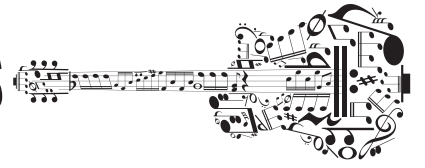
ORDINARY THINGS

James Crary

He will leave soon.
The aspects of the old barn
have settled into him,
the way long-married couples
adopt each other's likenesses.
His bones have the creak of worn board
and his mind an attic
for the ageless iron implements
That furrowed and harrowed the fields,
harvesting sweet silage for winter.
And last he sees in the sweat-eaten sheen
Of the barn door's brass pull,
A jagged crystalline mosaic
of intricate and mysterious design;
And wonders how the ordinary
had become so beautiful
And in this final touching, holy.

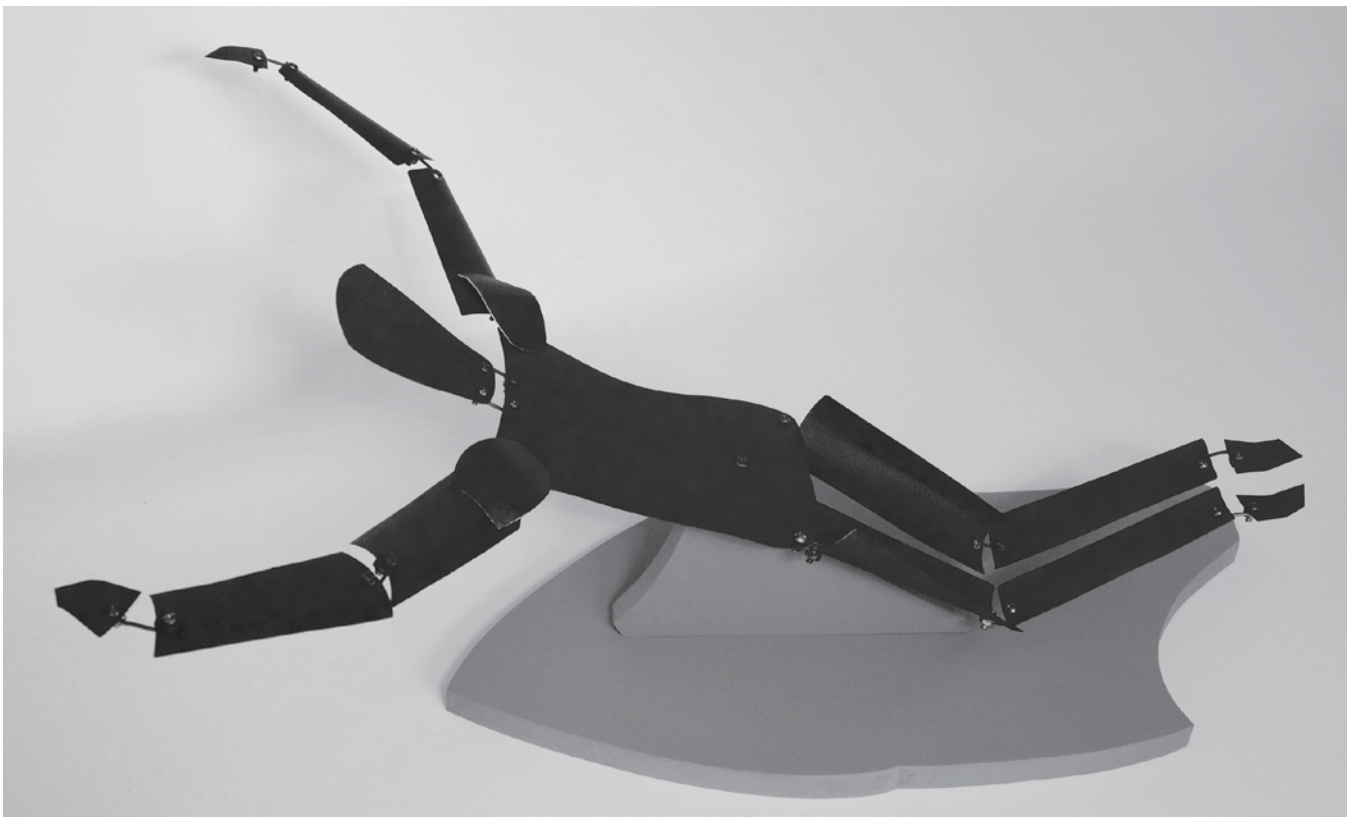


Memphis



Robert L. Petrillo

Beale Street on biker night—it's hog farm heaven
Me and my Baby in the city of blues
We're walkin in Memphis at half past eleven
Out on the sidewalk in my beat-up suede shoes
James Govan's music rocks Rum Boogie Café
Guitars signed by icons from the rafters are hung
I'm floatin up with them on the notes those cats play
While my Sweetie's swayin in the beads that are flung
Next day as is custom the Peabody ducks
Descend from the rooftop to swim in the fountain
Grand Entrance is made amidst clicks and clucks
A fine Southern sight, of this there's no doubtin
Sun Records and Graceland and the wide Mississippi
On the banks of Mud Island, and my Honey here with me



Swimming the Butterfly Sculpture by Eric A. Edmonds

Love in the Flint Hills of Kansas

Mary Tracy

Formed by layers of limestone and shale, the Flint Hills glitter in October—maroon, black, tawny, flat prairie tops sloping into gullies filled with rounded treetops. I turn south from the Konza Prairie outlook, where these broad rumples of eastern Kansas stretch all the way to the Osage Hills of Oklahoma. The wind swims over one of the last regions of tall grass.

In my childhood days north of these hills, I fell in love with small city life, traveled close to the ground, smelled peonies in my grandmother's yard, dangled my feet from her porch swing, dodged acorns on warm sidewalks where tiny worms dropped from oaks, walked in flip-flops to the city pool for lessons in the hot sun, dove and turned somersaults underwater.

Older now, I return, in love still, and with a sense of prospect, the fascination of holding both the long view and close-up, the way fossils reveal eon and element, telling us the Flint Hills were once a shallow sea, that flint slowed the erosion of limestone and shale, made a home for tall-grass prairie where roots grow ten feet deep like long tangled hair, where wind and shale relegate the few trees to creek bottoms, where buffalo with thick coats withstood blizzards.

Where the Konza, the Wind People, thrived. My ancestors came later—sod-busting, church-going farmers, pioneers with a capital P, who loved and schooled their children to be their version of decent. No long view then of people forced to relinquish all and vanish. No close-ups then of conquered families in love with their own children splashing in the creek, in love with the creek itself, with cottonwood shade and tall grass, in love with the very air moving over the grass, and flinty hills where roots sink deep.



In the Midst

(For the Ukrainians)

Lynn Bailets

In the midst of a bombed-out city
an old woman feeds pigeons.
In the midst of a small town
a small boy picks wildflowers,
offers them to his mother.
In the midst of air raids and mortar barrages,
a wounded civilian struggles
to bury his neighbor,
his lifelong friend.
In the midst of it all,
resilience, tenacity, hope.

pressure

Dave Agan

Bam

I wake instantly, jam the steering wheel left, and swerve sharply back onto the highway. In the mirror, I see a cloud of dust kicked up as I forced my tires back off the gravel shoulder.

What did I hit? Looking in the overhead mirror, I see no body in the road or beside it. I see a car rolling down the highway behind me and passing. The driver must have seen what happened but doesn't stop or blow the horn. I'm okay, I think.

Eyes wide open and alert, I drive on for a half-mile, signal and turn into the big lot at the town garage. I stop and think. I am three miles from home after an hour's drive from a visit with my mom at her assisted living home. I was sleepy this late afternoon and had turned the radio news up louder before I dozed.

I'm lucky to be whole and not rolled over in a ditch. I feel grateful.

What was it? It had a loud, resonant sound like something hard banging on hollow metal. I look for dents on the front my car. It's an old Ford sedan we bought from Mom when the State of Maine told her she couldn't keep her license due to memory loss.

The only blemish I notice on its silver body is the old bruise on the right fender where, as I would tell people, "Some idiot backed into it." Then I would smile and say, "and I really regretted it as soon as I did it."

So now, I drive back to the scene of my loud awakening. I stop where I see the dual tracks, shallow where I floated right, then deeper ones at a sharp angle where I skidded back to asphalt.

Not too far below the shoulder is a good-sized lawn I might have crossed safely until I hit a tree or the home or woke up. There's no debris here, but a few feet back, near where the tire marks begin, is a mailbox. It rests intact on a real sturdy post. Folks around here secure their boxes well against town snowplow assaults.

Okay, but what about the car? I look again and then start as I finally notice the right rear-view mirror is missing. I walk along the shoulder looking for it and eventually give up. No cars on my side of the road, so I drive slowly glancing over the shoulder occasionally. There it is, black and bulky in the ditch about thirty yards from the "bam."

On Monday, I take the mirror to the shop down the road, and one of the guys fits it and glues it to the Ford, no charge. I call Dr. Bill and he wants to see me. At my appointment, I tell what happened on the highway and

confess to years of waking up tired and falling asleep in waiting rooms and during telephone conversations. Right away he concludes, "Sounds like you need a sleep test."

It's only a week later. Since I had told the sleep center I had fallen asleep at the wheel, they moved me to the top of the list. It's dark and quiet here at the back door of the office complex in a wooded corner of the city. I ring the door buzzer. Am I apprehensive? Yeah, I am. I always crave a full night's sleep and I know this is not likely to be one.

A guy named Chris leads me through the hallways, shows me the bathroom, and then "my" room. He asks me a bunch of questions, has me fill out a survey, and tells me to get ready for bed. It's summer. I put on T-shirt and shorts and turn the Red Sox game on TV. Chris returns and begins attaching sticky leads to me everywhere, I mean everywhere from scalp on down and all around. At least one wire runs from every lead and I feel like I'm caught in a net.

After Chris and I talk about ourselves a little and about the ball game, he says, "It's almost ten, time to sleep." So, I do. Not as poorly as I had feared, but I notice the leads and wires as I gather and move them in order to roll over and later to roll back. I'm being filmed and audio-recorded, too. What was that Jim Carrey movie? Oh yeah, *The Truman Show*.

Chris helps me get ready to walk to the bathroom, wires still glued on me but unplugged from the other end and gathered on a rolling pole. I'm grateful I haven't been hospitalized since my appendectomy in 1966 because since then, I've seen all kinds of people, johnnies flapping in the back, rolling their IV lines and saline bags all over. It's not a self-image I wish to develop.

And this will be over soon, in the morning.

Back in the car in the parking lot around 6:30 on this cool morning, I cover myself with my sweatshirt, recline the seatback, and snore for an hour, knowing this will make me a safer driver on my way home.

Not too long after the test, I learn that I'm diagnosed with acute obstructive sleep apnea with snoring or something like that. Dr. Z, my sleep doctor, prescribes a continuous positive airway pressure machine to be hooked up to me via a nose mask every night, all night. It'll blow plain air into me. It'll keep me breathing and my heart beating all night long.

Is this going to work? My friend Steve had smiled and told me it was like "night and day" for him. I decide to make the most of it. Within a week, I see what Steve was talking about. Everything's so much better now, my sleep, mood, attentiveness.

I'm grateful for the air pressure machine I hook up to every night, and for that mailbox.

ALOHA!

Tom Deignan

It was our last night on Oahu. We had rented a large house on the North Shore. There were eleven of us. My wife Pat had hit the Lottery for a handsome sum and was treating the family to a week in beautiful Hawaii. We had done it all. Swimming, surfing, hiking, shark cages, helicopter tours, visiting the state park at Waimea, and soaring 3,000 feet above the mountains in a sailplane, which, of course, had no engine. The safety brochure for the sailplane said, "...the advantage of not having an engine was that it eliminated the risk of fire..." Comforting.

So, this was it, the last of many wonderful suppers together. It was a beautiful, moonlit evening, and the warm gentle ocean breeze blew the palm fronds back and forth in a slow and steady rhythm. We stood outside Uncle Bob's steak house with a bunch of other tourists, remembering and talking about the day's adventures. Several conversations were going on at one time, and I had difficulty following all of them. Everyone was happy and excited.

I looked around at the other people. All different ages. Husbands and wives, little children, teenagers, boyfriends and girlfriends, boyfriends and boyfriends, girlfriends and girlfriends, singles: the whole perfect representation of relationships. Smiles, light chatter, laughter, teasing, and camaraderie set the tone for the evening. Life was good.

Then I saw him. He stood on the fringe of the crowd looking in. He was young, maybe twenty-five, maybe a little younger. He had fairly long and curly jet-black hair, dark black eyes, a round face, deeply tanned skin, a muscular build, and he was very, very dirty. He had a grocery wagon, which we often see in our cities, loaded with recyclable bottles and cans, an economic metric for the homeless. His clothes were, for the most part, tattered and torn, and also very, very dirty.

He stayed on the fringe, not attempting to bring his wagon through the crowd that was blocking his path. The happy, light, and celebratory chatter continued without stop, and the crowd never noticed the young man, or if they did, they quickly turned their gaze in another direction. I was fixated, not able to take my eyes off him. The chatter around me became a muddle of different voices and eventually a cacophony of meaningless sounds. No one was there, except me and the young man.

A million thoughts raced through my head. Who was he? Where was he born? What was he like as a baby?

What were his parents like? Did he do well in school? What were his dreams, his goals? What did he want to be? What did he want to do with his life? How did he come to this moment? How is it that we were here in Hawaii, celebrating my wife's good fortune, and this young man may never realize his? How is it that we are about to sit down to dinner and drinks, some of us still full from the lunch we had earlier, and this young man doesn't know where his next meal is coming from? How is it that we will leave dinner, full from yet more food and drink, and go to a house with seven bedrooms, four baths, and two refrigerators full of food, and this young man will camp out under a tarp, if he is lucky, with his fellow homeless brothers and sisters, to share whatever food or drink they have been able to scrounge up that day?

I am incredibly uncomfortable to confess an aversion to the homeless. The dirt. The smell. The unsavory appearance. I am petrified of the possibility of contracting lice, scabies, TB, or God knows what else from contact with them. I am not proud of these feelings. Our eyes meet. I have no idea why he locked in on my eyes, rather than someone else's. Perhaps it is because I am the only one looking at him. I take a ten-dollar bill from my pocket and fold it in half. I move forward, ever so slowly and carefully so as not to make physical contact. He sees that I have a bill in my hand, and he reaches out. I let him take it from me. He smiles and says, "Hey man, I really appreciate this." Then he says, "Hey, let me shake your hand."

Oh my God. What do I do? All the years and fears of this moment well up inside of me. It is as though he and I are the only ones on the sidewalk. I can't hear or see anyone else. He offers his dirty hand to me and I take it. Then, he pulls me to him, shoulder to shoulder, like the athletes do. He wraps his other arm around my shoulders and pats me on the back and gives me a hug. "This really means a lot to me," he says again, and I knew he wasn't talking about the money. He was talking about the human contact, the brief relationship that we had, and then he is gone. I followed my family into Uncle Bob's, since our table was now ready. The bill for the eleven of us came to \$540.00. I had given him a ten-dollar bill.

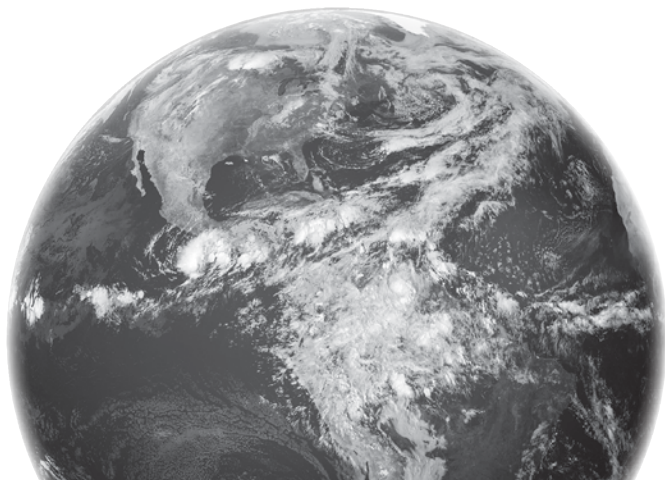
It occurred to me later on, as I thought of the encounter, that I had not invited him to join us for a meal and some human companionship. I had not asked his name. Damn! Why didn't I? Not there yet. I wonder where he is today.



Rock of Ages

David von Seggern

Your journey began in time before time,
The primordial flash of creation,
Unbound trajectory into the empty,
Morphing the essence of matter,
Light years in a formless making,
Accreting to fellow travelers,
Finding a locus in a spiraling galaxy
Of particles of similar fate,
Grabbing the gravity of a nearby sun
And settling into a smaller orbit,
Joining with other particles to form a
Glowing gas, winding down now in energy,
You consolidated into a molten brew of
Elements and simple molecules, hot and
Panting with the gaseous breath of a
Newborn planet. The mantle stiffened
and then broke under relentless pressures,
Pathways to the surface and a final exit
from a fiery volcanic orifice on the skin.
Then through the poisonous vapor to land on a
Plain of baked stones where, buried by the
Burning lava, you were encased in the dark
Crust of the planet. Wind, water, and eons of
Wear dislodged you and left you on this
Hillside where my booted foot crushed you
Into the soil of a million prior martyr stones.
It's nearly the last now, as you lie broken,
Bent, and exhausted from a journey of
Imponderable time. I, in my journey of
Infinitesimal time, ambled down that hillside,
Unaware of your pain and your endurance,
Merrily and obviously a short-term actor
on the earthly stage here in the cosmos.



News

Susan Bassler Pickford

People have always wanted to know
And people have always wanted to tell
So gossip worked very well—
In olden times
Balladeers roamed from town to town
Strumming and singing
About love and murder
The pubs were hubs of news—
In time, more people could read
Scandal sheets printed entertaining juicy bits
Once a day—sometimes twice—
New radio technology
Boasted Walter Winchell
Louella Parsons and Hedda Hopper
All heavyweights in print and on air
In time
A TV box with talking heads presented the news
Local and world happenings
Politics and celebrity
Love and murder
And anchors selected the juicy bits
Breaking news always hot never cold
Might be hours or seconds old
Modern technology
Internet and phones with lightning technology
Give us
Instantaneous digital wearisome pulses of
Unfiltered
Undelayed
Unending
News
...anyone for a ballad?

Alive

William Doughty

Alive to join in battle and fight for causes dear
Alive to kayak paddle, to feel the wild waves rear
To see the eagle flying, to see the otter dive
The yellow warbler singing: Alive, alive, alive.

Alive to raise a family in good days and in ill
To care for home and neighbor; to walk the far green hill
Sometimes to work in sweaty heat or feel the freeze at night
To know the taste of sour defeat; at 3 a.m., the fright.

And yet to carry on again though sheltering at home
The courageous will go out again and they are not alone.
For we are born with endless hope and minds to find the way
When this wave of fear has passed we'll live another day.

Creatures of the great sunlight, we seek, we hope, we strive
Dawn comes after worried night: Alive, alive, alive.

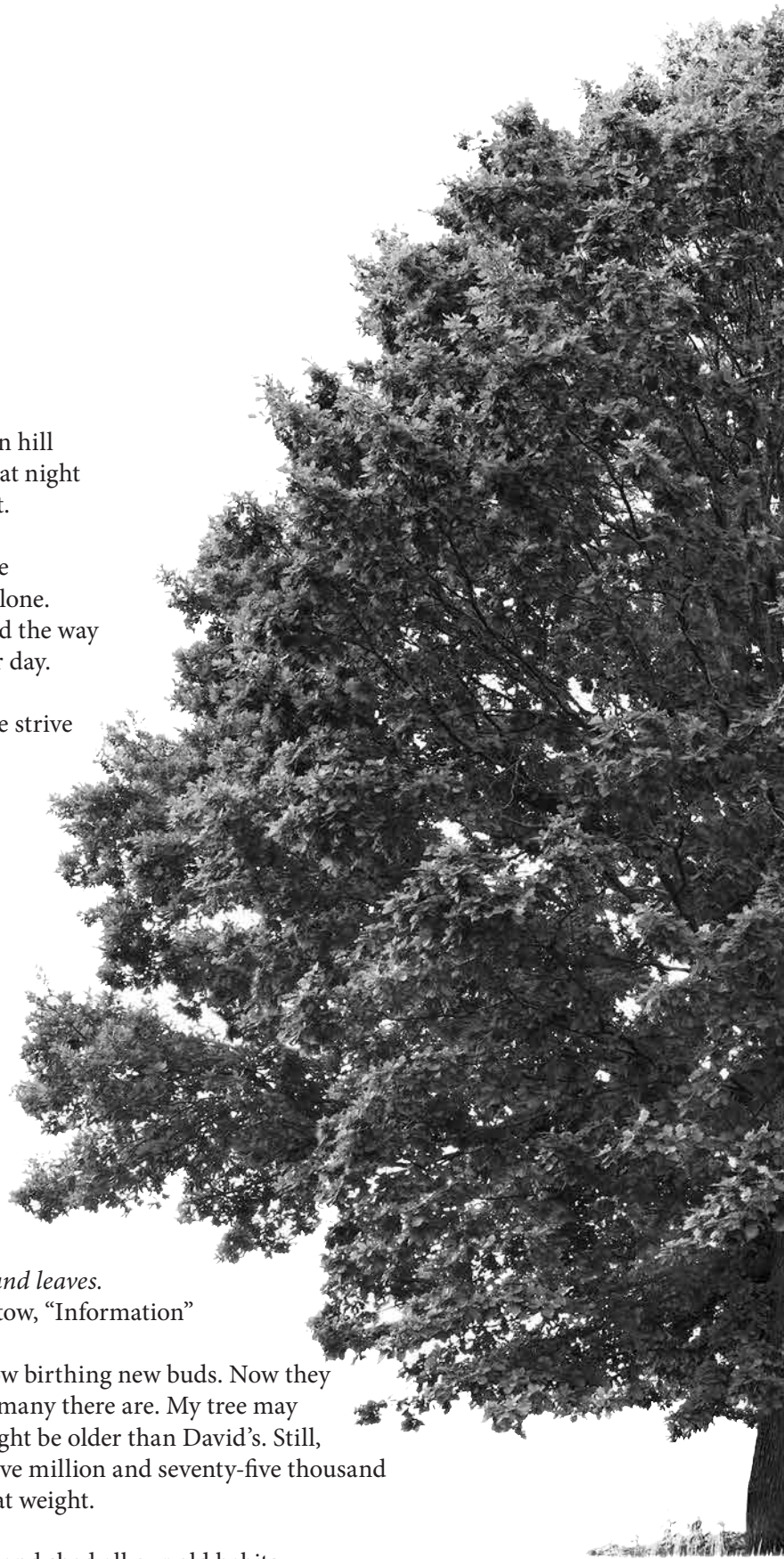
Deciduous

Eileen Griffin

*This tree has two million and seventy-thousand leaves.
Perhaps I missed a leaf or two.—David Ignatow, "Information"*

This spring I watched the old oak outside my window birthing new buds. Now they are all grown up—fully lobed leaves. I wonder how many there are. My tree may have perhaps three million being as, I think, she might be older than David's. Still, David's tree and mine, come autumn, will cast off five million and seventy-five thousand leaves (more or less), standing bare, free from all that weight.

Perhaps each autumn we should become deciduous and shed all our old habits, old words, and anything that weighs heavy on us, like the time my mom visited me in the Adirondacks and we sat on the forest-green couch in the room with the fireplace and all those books and I chatted and chatted away with her as the day faded and the softening summer light settled on her hands and I didn't ask her how she was doing.





Priscilla on Diamond

Photo by
Ted
Anderson

"A black volcanic sand beach next to Jökulsárlón Glacier Lagoon on the South Coast of Iceland."



The Guide's Husky

Photo by
Ted
Anderson

"From a guide boat on the Jökulsárlón Glacier Lagoon, on the South Coast of Iceland."



Somewhere in Maine

Acrylic on watercolor paper by Nancy Dorrans

"In a long visit to family in Tennessee during the pandemic, I started painting postcard-size pictures, inspired by photos of my favorite places in Maine."



Father Cardinal and Son

Photo by Gail Gingrich

"I was enchanted to see this cardinal's fatherly demeanor, sternly but indulgently responding to his little one's demand for MORE FOOD!"



Sunset at Acadia National Park

Pastel by Kathleen Sutherland

"I am a devotee of color and sunsets in Maine and elsewhere, as conveyed in pastels."

Hard Rock CASINO *on Christmas*



Leah Chyten

The day before Christmas and I'm celebrating my mother's ninetieth birthday party at the Hard Rock Casino in Tampa, Florida. Raised in the chaos, the sense of something destructive and hidden lurking in our home, the slow, painful awareness of my mother's addictions, I was hardly elated by my son's suggestion that we celebrate her birthday here, but at ninety I suppose she is entitled to doing what gives her pleasure. My son hands her a big wad of hundreds and off she goes, clutching her pocketbook and her cane, and more alive than I've seen her for a while. Sitting mesmerized in front of the slot machines, she is young again. I stay long enough to feel my revulsion for all the thinly disguised hypnotic inducements: the pulsation of the music, the perfectly timed flashing of neon, the overstimulation, the sleepwalking vendors handing out liquor and cigarettes. Not one window, not one exit sign, open twenty-four hours every day of the week. Next morning my mother wakes early and returns to the floor. I look for an exit, somewhere to peek out at real sunshine, but the place is a maze, the exits intentionally hard to locate.

Not the way I envisioned spending Christmas, a sweet and holy day, a day of peace and hope, a day I recall from a folk song speaking of the momentary and spontaneous truce between Germans and Allies who simultaneously began to sing "Silent Night" in their respective languages. Peace: a deep yearning of the soul to experience the exquisite stillness of the night sky, or at least of what we perceive of the night sky. In actuality, physicists tell us that there is much happening in that vast empty space that we ordinarily cannot perceive. And yet there is also, paradoxically, infinite space. No matter how much is happening, no matter how many stars are birthing, dying, colliding, no matter how many black holes are luring matter beyond the event horizon, space is not affected.

Big mind, according to Buddhism, is empty and spacious. Spacious mind is always here no matter how cluttered our small minds become with fears, cravings, judgments, and sorrows. It asks nothing of us, not even to drop our reactivity, positions, and closets filled with stale facts and data about reality. It does not ask us to drop our self-delusions, identities, and endless projections through which we perceive the world. It

does not ask to be recognized. But it offers the hope of peace.

It is now Christmas, and the family is toasting my mother and offering her our gratitude. Every person at the table owed their existence to her. Suddenly my resentment is gone. Had her demons, and the traumas of her childhood, profoundly impacted me? Of course, but she had also changed a thousand diapers and fed me ten thousand meals. She did indeed offer me life.

After dinner, they all return to the macabre world of slots and flashing neon and a consciousness that felt dense and sluggish. I retreat to my room. In the elevator, a middle-aged woman with a rotund belly and sweet smile strikes up a conversation. She asks me if I've been lucky. I offer a neutral nod and politely ask her the same. I'm lucky to be alive, she tells me. I should have been down under, but My Lord keeps offering me His hand. She then offers me a voucher for a free alcoholic beverage, a Christmas present. I don't drink, but I accept it in gratitude for her generosity.

Suddenly, surprisingly, the casino ceases to be the threat conjured up by childhood memories, or the mastermind game designed by a cabal of powerful and evil forces taking advantage of the empty hole at the core of all human beings. Who am I to judge? Who am I to put myself apart from or beyond it all?

My consciousness becomes slippery, like Teflon, a river of time where events are carried out to the vast ocean. The river flows through me, and I feel the spaciousness of Big Mind. It is now a silent night, a holy night. I have found the exit, or the exit has found me. It did not come by my escaping, but by opening and accepting life on its own terms. I cease resisting, judging, and resenting. Life in this moment is not showing up the way I want it, but rather, the way it is. Holiness comes through accepting it all, and through the unexpected kindness of a woman grateful to be alive, who gifts me a voucher and a smile.



Maine—The Way Life Should Be

Anne F. Cline

I officially became a resident of the State of Maine in 2013. My husband, Dick, and I made the decision to enjoy our later years in the Pine Tree State. We had enjoyed vacationing along the spectacular, rocky coastline. We considered Portland to be the perfect small city. Our daughter had recently been transferred to a new position in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. She relocated there with our two granddaughters. This provided even more incentive for us to settle in Maine to experience “the way life should be.” We bought a house. Our cars bore Vacationland license plates, and we were eager to become Mainers. Very soon we learned this was an unattainable goal. Neither of us had been born in Maine. We did not have a single relative in the past hundred years that might champion our cause. We were classified as “from away.” Since we had moved from San Diego, California, we were hopelessly and truly “from away.” In this northeast corner, we now lived closer to Greenland than the state we had left behind. Thinking I might up my status, I bragged that I was born and bred in Massachusetts. I was a true New Englander at heart. No positive results there, only creation of a new designation as a Masshole.

Our new home sat on an acre of land in a small development near Portland’s Back Bay. It was ideal, especially since we had arrived from the massive housing tracts in Southern California. The solid built house, and the gardens and the neighbors were everything we had hoped to find in this move. Everyone was polite and friendly. But we soon discovered it was not the “come over for a quick barbecue” friendly. More like the “good fences make good neighbors” variety.

Soon I began searching for ways to become more involved in our new community and make new friendships. Some people suggested church groups, quilting circles, historical societies or volunteer activities. A few made reference to something called “OLLI.” The only “Ollie” I could connect with was a children’s show popular in the old days of black-and-white TV called *Kukla, Fran and Ollie*. One day at Trader Joe’s, I overheard a woman raving about OLLI. She answered my inquiry by explaining it was an acronym for “Osher Lifelong Learning Institute” at the nearby University of Southern Maine. That information gained in a grocery line changed our lives. I explored the campus. I was impressed with the OLLI classroom building, and I began drooling over the list of classes offered. I was more than excited to share this news with Dick. He was a bit reluctant to sign up for classes. He was new in retirement land and liked having no

commitments all day, every day. He suggested we find one class to take together as a couple.

It was not surprising that we were unable to agree on a class. He was a science-based rational thinker. He was comfortable with the lecture format. I, on the other hand, was a more liberal extrovert who was growing weary of our new twenty-four-seven togetherness. I sought a class where I could venture forth into uncharted waters on my own. No history, philosophy or religion classes for me, I had done that in college. No English or literature classes, as I had spent twenty years as a schoolteacher and librarian. I was not interested in acquiring any more textbooks. By process of elimination, I made my choice with “Beginners’ Improv” and no experience necessary.

On the first day of class, I entered a room with a stage and twenty chairs arranged in a half circle. I took the empty seat at the end of the row. I was a bit apprehensive seeing my fellow students as theater people. The instructor welcomed us with ease and humor. I began to feel more relaxed. He gave a brief outline of the course and what he hoped we would accomplish. He talked about stage presence, good listening skills, and an improv term, “Yes, and.” He asked us to introduce ourselves giving our reason for joining the class. Fortunately, he began at the other end of the horseshoe. Students eagerly listed their experience in theater at college and beyond. One engineer hoped this class would improve his social skills. Others desired to add to their current actor credits and résumés. I was becoming more intimidated as we moved along. What could I possibly offer with no acting experience in my background? Would I embarrass myself by mentioning my walk-on role in a high school play *Father of the Bride*? I knew I was completely over my head. At last, it was my turn. Without thinking, I blurted out the terrible truth.

“I signed up for Beginners’ Improv because it was the one class I knew my husband would never consider taking. Yes, and he is recently retired and driving me crazy.”

“Perfect! You are in the right place. You will do just fine,” the instructor nodded with a laugh.

And I did fine. I discovered a totally new side of myself. I loved “improv.”

To this day, even though I am now officially a Masshole, Zoom allows me to still be a part of OLLI and Maine—the way life should be.



The Balsams Hotel at Sunset

Mary Snell



Night pulls a quilt of clouds over the notch
and snow begins to fall as we nod in chairs
by the fire, books in our laps, toddies cooling

on an antique table. From this wing the hotel
dining room glows yellow with the promise
of tenderloins, poached salmon, rice piled

as high as an anthill. Down the long halls
I pass walls papered with roses, ivy, ships at sea.
I see Pappa's big hands smoothing the long

pasted lengths over patched and sized plaster,
hear the soft thud of his brush tamping the edges
against the wood trim, the brrr of the little roller.

Pappa and his son in their white caps and overalls,
scraping, stirring burnt umber into pails of white lead,
laughing high up on staging or leaning from ladders,

couldn't have imagined themselves, or me, here
as a guest, on those cool spring days they painted
and papered the quiet and empty rooms.

I WILL NEVER BE BACK

Ariela Zucker

Now I lay them on your graves,
pale limestones etched with gray veins.
Black shiny basalt stones, smooth to the touch,
eruptions of an ancient sea.
It's my way of saying, I am here, I was here,
I did not forget you. But I will never be back.

I come from afar, from deep within the years
to stand in front of your graves,
in cemeteries locked behind tall iron gates,
in countries that I do not care to remember,
and will not visit again.

I walk under trees, too green for comfort,
where wet grass drapes around my feet, and
the ground, so soft, lets the gravestones
sink back in. I lay them, unbreakable nuggets
full of sunshine, from a land of promise.

It's the best I can do, leave pieces of myself.
Be here when I am no longer present. For a brief moment
be one with the breeze moving inside the delicate twigs.
With the rain, dripping cold tears, on faces of stone.

And I will never be back.



contributors

Dave Agan lives and writes amid pines and oaks in beautiful inland York County. He loves being a grandpa, walking in the woods, and learning about himself by writing short memoir pieces.

Ted Anderson is a photographer and graphic designer based in Westbrook, Maine. The pared-down features in many of his images reflect an interest in natural history, and in the passage of time.

Tim Baehr is a writer, editor, teacher, and amateur photographer. His stories and essays have appeared in several print and on-line publications. OLLI courses and workshops have been vital sources of inspiration and encouragement.

Lynn Bailets is a writer and wood sculptor.

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.

Judy Calise, since retiring from elementary education, has had plenty of time to pursue new interests. Oil painting is one of these.

Marsha Campbell started painting after retiring and is still discovering who she is as an artist.

Leah Chyten is a psychologist, spiritual teacher, and author of three novels. She also teaches workshops on opening to the imagination. She lives in South Portland and draws her inspiration from the ocean.

Anne F. Cline enjoys the creative expression she discovers putting pen to paper. Now living in Plymouth, Massachusetts, she routinely attends OLLI classes “from away” through the magic of ZOOM.

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

James Crary is a retired hospice chaplain. He loves gardening, home repair, and poetry writing, to try to make sense of it all.

Susan Cunniff dedicates much of her time to creative expression, which she values in all its forms. In her works, she hopes to convey our emotional connection to people, animals, places, and cherished objects.

Tom Deignan is a retired Technology Manager and has been attending OLLI for many years. Tom is a New York transplant who came to Maine in 2001 shortly after 9/11.

Stephen Dorneman has been a member of OLLI since moving to Maine in 2018. His short fiction has appeared in a variety of literary publications including *Prime Number* and *Bartleby Snopes*.

Nancy Dorrans lives in Portland’s Arts District. She founded Adventure Marketplace (a travel company), and since 2014, has been helping travelers navigate authentic, nurturing, global, and local adventures.

William Doughty is a retired Maine educator who has written poems throughout life, seeking to understand the mysteries of nature, humans, and gratitude. He lives in Scarborough with his family, dogs, and kayaks.

Larry Dyhrberg taught history for 33 years at Westbrook High School. Currently he is working on a coming-of-age novella set in the early 1950s and an extended story of a Franco-American woman coming of age in mid-twentieth century.

Eric Edmunds is a longstanding member of OLLI and frequent contributor to *Reflections*. Eric has dabbled over the years with pencil drawing and metal sculpture, but most notably with photography. Fun things.

Chris Essler is a member of OLLI.

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.

Bill Gousse is a gardener, docent, and sports enthusiast. He also likes to believe that he’s a decent cook. When not at home in Yarmouth, you may find him at his family camp on Great Pond.

Eileen Griffin remembers and thanks her Aunt Catherine for creating a children’s library for her and her siblings, shelves and shelves of magical poetry and prose, which still inspire and delight her today.

Steven H. Horowitz, a retired academic neurologist, loved teaching, research, and, especially, caring for patients, but got relief by taking up photography. It worked! No burnout! He credits the photo-ops.

Joel Kallich has lived in South Dakota, Illinois, England, Iowa, Massachusetts, California, and Maine—and has an unrelenting curiosity to understand science, the world, and the people in it.

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

Carl Little is a poet and art writer recently retired from the Maine Community Foundation. He has co-authored four books with his brother, David Little, most recently *The Art of Penobscot Bay*. He lives in Somesville.

Tana Leonhart's journey included college, parenting, and a wonderful teaching career. Now, having traded the Colorado mountains for Maine's beautiful coast, she enjoys birding, painting, writing, and many great OLLI classes.

Lynn Lynch likes to go beyond the obvious, to see the everyday world from a slightly different perspective, and convert those visualizations into poems, short stories, and photographs.

Rob Petrillo is indebted to OLLI for preserving his sanity and for the intellectual challenges it's offered. He also enjoys the camaraderie of many wonderful folks whose company and friendship he's grown to relish over the years.

Susan Bassler Pickford has been a longtime member of OLLI, Senior Players, and a frequent contributor to *Reflections*. She self-published a memoir, *Removing the Habit of God: Sister Christine's Story* and poetry books, available on Amazon.com.

Sharon Roberts has been taking photographs since she was a child. After taking Tim Byrne's photography class at OLLI, she started the OLLI Photography Special Interest Group, which she still heads today.

Mary Snell is a writer, traveler, photographer, reader, wife, friend, sister, skier, swimmer, questioner, philhellene; and a lover of food, jokes, history, mystery, the theater, the jungle spa, Maine, Lesvos, and the good life.

Kathleen Sutherland has been painting for some 20 years and focused on the pastel medium. She has exhibited in several art shows in the Portland and Damariscotta area and has taught workshops at OLLI.

Mary Tracy writes at her kitchen table about ordinary life. Her work has appeared in *Balancing Act 2*, *Frost Meadow Review*, *Maine Sunday Telegram*, and *Reflections*.

David von Seggern is a retired earth scientist and recent transplant to Maine. David enjoys the outdoors here and works as a volunteer to hasten the transition to renewable energy sources.

Richard Welsh is most at home where worlds intersect. He invites others into this home in the OLLI courses he teaches (so far mainly where Shakespearean drama meets history), and with occasional photography.

Irv Williams was a starving poet who moved to the "old" Portland on Halloween, 1973. He's been busy photographing various dogs, children and landscapes ever since getting his first Minolta with 120 black and white film.

Gail Worster was an L.L.Bean video producer—now retired, she's been an OLLI member since 2018 and volunteers on OLLI's Teaching and Learning Committee.

Ariela Zucker was born in Jerusalem. She and her husband left Israel in September 2001, followed by three daughters. They decided to stay in Maine. Now retired after running a mom-and-pop motel for sixteen years, they reside in Auburn.

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 or call 207-780-4406.



a program of



Illumination Pastel by Susan E. Cunniff

*"The light behind the girl lighting up the book and reflecting back into her face.
Reference photo used with permission."*