The Courage to Write
By Lucia Chikowero

It takes courage to write when you have never written before.
It takes courage to write when you have always thought you do not have anything to say.
It takes courage to write.

Venturing into those uncharted waters within you takes courage.
Drawing every ounce of strength within and without to overcome fear of rejection takes courage.
It takes courage to write.

Putting together word after word to mean something so dear to you takes courage.
Writing and expressing yourself so the next person can understand you takes courage.
It takes courage to write.

Writing again when you have been told that you suck at it takes courage.
Dusting yourself off and picking up that mighty pen and paper takes courage.
It takes courage to write.

Writing again when you have been knocked out flat by naysayers on countless occasions takes courage.
Writing again when you have been told you do not make any sense takes courage.
It takes courage to write.

Lucia Chikowero comes from Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe. Her native language is Shona. She came to the United States in 2007 and is currently a student in the class of 2014 Odyssey Project, now in its 11th year at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. For information on the project, go to www.odyssey.wisc.edu. Click on “In the media,” then “TV/Video,” and finally “Forward Motion film on Odyssey- Big Ten Network” for a 23-minute documentary on the program.

For a look at another wonderful Odyssey, don’t miss Meandering with Madonna on the next page.
MEANDERING WITH MADONNA
MADONNA DRIES CHRISTENSEN

Building strong minds

In a Washington Post article about readiness tests for Kindergartners, Valerie Strauss wrote, “Research shows that children learn best when they have hands-on learning experiences... invent their own problems to explore and solve, and share their own solutions.”

For some 25 years an international program called The Odyssey of the Mind has trained students between Kindergarten and college to solve problems both large and small. Participants work as a team of about seven students of the same age group. At meetings throughout the course, they receive problems, technical and artistic, from actually building something to interpreting a literary classic.

The resolutions might require extended time or a quick result. Both the skill to develop long-term solutions and the ability to think on your feet when a problem needs immediate action are important.

Here’s an example of a problem from OOTM’s website: Seeing is Believing (Grades 1-5): Teams are to create and present an original performance about a community that feels threatened by something in a location it has never visited. The community townspeople will use a creative method to select one or more Travelers to visit and explore the location. While at the location, a Traveler will use a means of communication to send a message home to convince the community that there is nothing to fear. The performance will also include a narrator, two rhymes about the travels, and a moving set piece.

Conventional resolutions are okay, but OOTM encourages imaginative ideas. Free expression, without criticism, is a guiding factor that leads even shy children into the thick of things.

That’s the goal. My 11-year-old granddaughter told me there are bossy kids who try to run the team. And when she missed a meeting, no one brought her up to date next time, so she didn’t know what was happening.

Perhaps the adult guides should pay closer attention. This sounds like it could become a lesson on how to deal with members who try to control the activity. That will happen in adult life, too, and children must learn to handle it.

At the end of the course, teams may elect to enter a competition, with district winners moving on toward a World Competition. Teams get a spontaneous problem, which they must work out and then demonstrate their solution through a skit or drama, with each person playing a role or roles.

Another division of OOTM is Odyssey Angels, in which members use their problem-solving skills for public service with a community project. The program began with Middle School students at Burton School District in California who wanted to help friends and classmates overcome physical disabilities. The team, along with its coach, built a mechanical arm so a student could write without pain. And for a classmate who wanted to be in marching band but was quadriplegic, the team equipped his wheelchair with a device that allowed him to play cymbals with a finger tap.

There’s a fee to participate in OOTM, but teams that need aid can apply for a scholarship. My guess is there are grandparents or doting aunts and uncles looking for a unique idea for a birthday or other occasions. Or you might sponsor a team from your local Boys and Girls Club or Scout troop. What better gift than one that strengthens a child’s mind, builds confidence and creativity, teaches team work, and is fun as well?

At my age, I’m still working to strengthen my mind. From writing this article, I finally learned to spell “odyssey” without consulting a dictionary. Take me to a spelling bee.

[To learn more than just how to spell odyssey, go to http://www.odysseyofthemind.com]
Words of Wisdom from Phyllis Diller

Thanks to Norma Sundberg

Whatever you may look like, marry a man your own age. As your beauty fades, so will his eyesight.

Housework can't kill you, but why take a chance?

Cleaning your house while your kids are still growing up is like shoveling the walk before it stops snowing.

Women don't play football because 11 of them would never wear the same outfit in public.

Best way to get rid of kitchen odors: Eat out.

A bachelor is a guy who never made the same mistake once.

I want my children to have all the things I couldn't afford. Then I want to move in with them.

Most children threaten to run away from home. This is the only thing that keeps some parents going.

Any time three New Yorkers get into a cab without an argument, a bank has just been robbed.

We spend the first 12 months of our children's lives teaching them to walk and talk and the next 12 years telling them to sit down and shut up.

What I don't like about office Christmas parties is looking for a job the next day.

The only time I ever enjoyed ironing was the day I put gin in the steam iron.

My photographs don't do me justice - they look like me.

Tranquilizers work only if you follow the advice on the bottle - keep away from children.

I asked the waiter, 'Is this milk fresh?' He said, 'Lady, three hours ago it was grass.'

The reason the golf pro tells you to keep your head down is so you can't see him laughing.

You know you're old if they have discontinued your blood type.
FOR THE LOVE OF WORDS
ESTHER M. LEIPER–ESTABROOKS

Leprechaun capers

When my family visited Strathaven, Scotland, where ancestor Thomas Leiper lived till he came, pre-Revolution, to America, the local phonebook listed Leipers still. Noting how close Ireland is to Scotland, I assume raiders mixed and mingled with the locals, so likely I have a drop or two of Irish. Anyway, I love leprechauns who mend shoes, hunt rainbow-gold, or even scale those brilliant arches to glimpse Heaven. This verse is from the Internet, though I smoothed the rhythm:

Leprechaun, leprechaun, fly over the sea
To fetch back bright Irish shamrocks for me.
Do not bring nettles or thistles for joke
But fine green shamrocks for Irish folk,
Thus you and I shall wear them, I pray,
With winning smiles on St. Patrick’s Day.

I wrote this:

HOW A LEPRECHAUN EARNS BANNOCKS
Oh, Lep’s a proud cobbler to fairy gentry;
If you tap at his door, yet do so gently--
Although quite likely he won’t be there
Since he often works sitting in open air
Where he whistles while stitching every day
‘Cause the Fair Folk wear shoe-heels away;
Yes, dance soles thin with never a care
As their clever cobbler proves well aware.
He’ll cut fine leather then wield his awl;
All shoon* fixed when the Fair Folk call!

* “shoon” = shoes

LEPRECHAUN, by Nora Chesson, graced The English Illustrated Mag, in 1903.

Have you seen the leprechaun at darkning of the moon?
Have you seen the leprechaun a-clouting fairy shoon?
Beneath the sacred thorn tree he sits and labors long,
And not a bird in Ireland can better him in song.
His eyes are changeful-colored as an opal-stone;
His mouth is sly and wistful with a wisdom all his own,
His ears can hear the grass grow a hundred miles away;
He’s younger than tomorrow and more old than yesterday.
If you can catch the leprechaun and keep him in your hold
He’ll show you where he’s buried a crock of fairy gold,
But you must never lose your grasp whatever wile he tries
Though you see your cabin flaming before your very eyes!
Should you let him escape you, some wisdom you have won
By holding wisdom in your hand beneath the moon or sun,
Though only for a moment and suddenly withdrawn.
Oh, have you ever met him, the red-capped leprechaun?

This I wrote for our children, Hannah and Tom—and now for the grandkids.

LEPRE-CON CAPERS
I tell of two twin leprechauns who loved bright gold so much
They lived to brag of coinage although they kept tight clutch.
Yes, hid their wealth deep in a cave while always was their boast
That of all the neighbors round-about they garnered the most:
The pair knew whims of rainbows nor respected others’ pot.
They called themselves ambitious but the better word is _sneak_: When dark clouds funneled gold down, the pair set off to seek, For no one else dared to follow amidst wild thunder—burst So pub neighbors griped loudly as they satisfied their thirst! “We’d like to trust those brothers but we find it rather odd: They’re rich, yet oh so stingy; thus can they sit right with God?” Then a wrinkled fellow piped up whose name was Honest John: “You’re foolish, the whole lot of you, those boys are leper-cons! Here you sit and sip green beer; stewed green with envy too; --All in a tither and tizzy, not knowing what to do!— You grump and gripe suspecting how _they_ fare forth to pluck Coins from _your_ hard-garnered hoard, but naught to do with luck! “No, don’t go pell-mell seeking just to catch them in the act; In time God will chide them for the thieves they are, in fact! Let them head their cocky way while thinking us outsmarted. Yes, it’s true: Fools and their cash have ways of being parted.” So it happened not long after as the cons grabbed cram-full pots Lightning knocked top hats askew so they saw stars and dots! Their neat goatees were frazzled; supple boots blew off their feet Till they fled hopping hot-foot, sore from head to toe, plus beat! Thus these two learned the hard way, so on hearing thunder- mutter, Ever afterward they cowered, plus spoke with a stutter-stutter! “We’re sorry being gr-greedy, and will never gr-rab again.” Or so this pair, at last, confessed; yes, repentant little men. The experience knocked sense in, plus _some_ generosity, For seated at the Dancing Elf each vies, “This round’s on _me_!” So they squabble with each other to claim who spends the most And vow to pay back what they took; at least that seems their boast. ---If they are sorry leprechauns pledged never more to steal Who live by selling cabbages; still; _they drive a canny deal!_

**Leprechaun Humor:**
Can you borrow money from a leprechaun? ---No, he’s always a little short. What is small, green, and travels 300 miles an hour? ---A leprechaun in a blender. How can you spot a frog leprechaun? ---He has a croak of gold.

**Esther’s News:**
The just-published horror anthology _CELLAR DOOR_, from James Ward Kirk Publishing, featured Esther’s tale “Behind the Cellar Door,” and the also new-released antho, _CANOPIC JARS_, from Great Old Ones Publishing, awarded Esther the opening slot for “Death in a High Place,” a monolog featuring the ghostly thoughts of a sacrificed girl whose corpse was found atop of an Andean volcano.
Three days below zero.
I have put seed into the bird feeder
and am sitting hunched near the window
trying to see beyond the frost and
wondering about the dog I heard bark
outside in the cold; animal tracks
crisscross the blowing snow.
I am feeling sad and alone.
I remember when my brother
came into my room and told me
the cat was dead
because my father
didn't see it by the car tire
and backed over it.
How could he do that?
I cried but didn't believe him,
nor my mother's pleading words
for me to understand,
and I raged at my father
even though I knew they lied.

The cat had disappeared.
She was a stray I fed
and laid on my bedroom chair
on a pillow, and she became mine.
I talked to her during long evenings
and read to her from my books.
My mother would pass my door
with a frown and mutter words
of worry about fleas and dirt,
and I didn't even know then
we could have taken her to a doctor
if she were sick at all.
I wanted to give her my love.
I knew as sure as I felt
the empty space surrounding me
that my father had driven away with her
and pushed her out of the car.
Long years ago: I try to remember
her color, and I can't, but this night,
I still feel tears thinking about her alone,
eto.

Sandy Rafter
The Battle of the Sexes: Part 2,109
thanks to Sandy Mickelson

A wife asks her husband, "Could you please go shopping for me and buy one carton of milk, and if they have avocados, get six.

A short time later the husband comes back with six cartons of milk. The wife asks him, "Why did you buy six cartons of milk?"
He replies, "They had avocados."

If you're a woman, you're going back to read that again. Men will think it made perfect sense the first time.

WIFE: "There’s trouble with the car. It has water in the carburetor."
HUSBAND: "Water in the carburetor? That's ridiculous."
WIFE: "I tell you the car has water in the carburetor."
HUSBAND: "You don't even know what a carburetor is. I'll check it out. Where's the car?"
WIFE: "In the lake."

THIS IS A FRIGHTENING STATISTIC, PROBABLY ONE OF THE MOST WORRISOME IN RECENT YEARS.
25% of the men in this country are on medication for mental illness. That means 75% are running around untreated.

Husband and wife had a tiff. Wife called up her mom and said, "He fought with me again, and I’m coming to live with you."
Mom said, "No darling, he must pay for his mistake. I’m coming to live with you.

From Genesis:
"And God promised men that good and obedient wives would be found in all corners of the earth." Then He made the earth round...and He laughed and laughed and laughed!
When I check the weather map, Madison’s below zero new norm jumps out. Yikes, Madison is as cold as when I was a kid.

Below zero has its special memories, sensations beyond the sting of frozen cheeks. In still air on those bright blue sky mornings with temperatures 10 degrees below zero, give or take, your nose recalibrated to deal with the situation. It took a minute. And when you got around to taking a breath, your taste buds triggered up a notch and your sense of smell heightened.

Once we got to school on those subzero mornings, after trudging through as many snow piles as possible, white stuff packed down into our boots, we kids needed extra time to transition from frozen to wet to steam. After we tromped into the school building, hung up crusted layers and stored sloppy boots, our freshly scrubbed foreheads were shiny with perspiration before the brainwork began. We gave off whiffs of Ovaltine and oatmeal until lunch.

What lingered, though, in my years of parochial school, in my nearness to fresh nuns, the cleanest humans we would encounter all day, was that all nuns used the same brand of soap. It seemed the standard issue only nuns used could have been throughout the diocese or, who knows, nationwide, a unique soap that mirrored their lifelong commitment. You took away more from the nuns than that soap scent; you took away seriousness. One trace of that brand today, whatever it was, and I’d be back in grade school.

When we took class trips to the Wisconsin State Capitol, our noses noticed immediately that we were in an important place – the building gave off an aura. Other places did not smell that way. Might have been because the Capitol was built from dozens of different materials, a worldwide assortment of forty-three marbles and granites to be exact. Not only was the stone impressively cut, scraped, fitted and arrayed, the confluence was designed to capture senses for the ages whether politicians were present or not.

Trains that ran though Madison during my earliest childhood belched plumes – winter’s were best – that rumbled from engine stacks along with the odor of burning coal. Trains were the largest machines we experienced in Middle America before we went out to the airport to watch planes that grew bigger each year.

Old trains were picturesque and welcoming with their friendly growl. We rued the day train companies changed over to diesel, the streamlined engines replacing the chug, chug, chug with a high whine. Trains burning oil-based products started to smell like trucks and tractors. They had become industrial.

Some of our grandpas and grandmas lived on the farm, and there was nothing like the bouquet of a farm barn on a cold winter’s day. Not everyone enjoyed the experience; it was an acquired smell.

Come Spring and Summer, smells weren’t as much fun. Madison heated up all too soon, accompanied by green stuff in the lakes, at most a few blocks from where you were in town, again a scent you had to get used to. We were forced to have our fill of the lake early in summer before beaches closed in August.

Other not-so-welcome odors are gone. Downwind from the meat packing plant – no longer a problem. And cigarette smokers at Supper Clubs? How did we ever enjoy meals surrounded by smoke rings?

Any ride down East Washington was accompanied by the waft of Red Dot potato chips fresh from the oven at the plant next to the avenue, with its huge red dot and clown on top. More than once we drove that way on purpose, just for the smell.

Along with Red Dot potato chips, my favorite was the sweet and sour and greasy smells that grabbed your senses when you arrived at the carnival: caramels, cotton candy and condiments along with grilled burgers, brats, dogs and beer. Nothing like it.

Enjoy the scents of winter while they last. Spring and summer are on the way.
Lapses In Our Synapses
Norma J. Sundberg

My brain resembles Swiss cheese, he claims.
Such holes, no doubt, drain words from our brains.
During introductions, try recalling a name.
Memory eludes us and we stammer with shame.
Strange how recollections from long ago time
Of rhymes, quips, and quotes come to surface just fine.
Yet, call up a new fact as smart as we can;
It refuses to rise up; we're dumbed once again.
Conclusion I've made is my Swiss cheese brain
Has developed black holes that snatch and retain.
Words, phrases, thoughts that come through
Are stuffed into dense matter, it's true.
Exercise your gray matter, the experts all say.
Songs, word games and puzzles keep dementia at bay.
Yet how to retrieve and retain a stray thought?
Put it to paper, as quick as we ought?
Place pencil and paper close by the bed,
To write it down quickly before it has fled.
Except when it comes in form of a dream,
Words tend to slip away into the stream
Of consciousness, once reaching black holes, it's gone.
Fashion a line on the page and push on___________
When you are rested, long away from the din,
Words may come suddenly, Just fill them in__________
Paul Joiley, who finished ninth on “American Idol” last season for warbling *Eleanor Rigby*, has a page in Wikipedia, the Peoples’ Encyclopedia—hailed by some as a truly democratic and freely accessible source of information while condemned by others as the triumph of chaos over order, the overthrow of reason.

George de Mestral has his own page, too, but that’s only right. He invented Velcro, after all.

But shouldn’t Charles Elmer Doolin-- inventor not just of Fritos but Cheetos, too!-- also merit a page? (In fairness, if you Google “Who invented Cheetos?” his name pops right up, and you’re directed to the “Frito-Lay” page in Wiki.)

**For that matter, don’t you deserve one?**

You can’t submit one on your own behalf. Aye, there’s the rub. Somebody has to do it for you. And then anybody can edit it. Now, then, are you still sure you really want a page?

Writer Judith Newman does. When she checked last December, she found 4,399,610 articles on Wiki. (And that’s only in English. Wiki also comes in many other languages, including Farsi, which has over 100,000 pages.)

Newman was determined to make it 4,399,611 in English by creating a page for herself. She recruited an office-mate, Lewis, to write and submit the page for her. She’s a widely-published writer and has even won the coveted Fifi, awarded by the Fragrance Foundation for 1993’s best article on perfume.

She wrote about her attempt at Wiki-immortality in the January 9, 2014 *New York Times*; that alone makes her worthy of inclusion on Wiki as far as this former freelancer (who has never published in the *NYT*) is concerned.

Co-founder Jimmy Wales introduced Wiki in 2001, hoping to create a living, breathing storehouse of all knowledge, accessible by all and to which anyone with passion and time could contribute corrections.

There are, of course, guidelines. You may include “no original research” in your article. (You have to have a source for everything you write.) You’re to maintain a “neutral point of view.” And your words must have “verifiability.” Once posted, your page may be edited by pretty much anybody, which of course can result in real intellectual carnage. To see what kind of devastation can result, you can click on “View History” for any page to see all the changes that have been made and on “Talk” to access a discussion of those changes. Those exchanges can get acrimonious.

**Try former President George W. Bush’s page; according to a recent Oxford University study, his is the most controversial page in the English language Wiki.** “Global warming” is on that list, too, as are Mohammed, Jesus, and Christianity. Circumcision, “race and intelligence,” and-- this may surprise-- a roster of pro wrestlers for the World Wrestling Association are also on the list.

For still more of the most-controversial articles, you can check “Wikipedia: List of controversial issues” on, where else, Wikipedia.

Wiki’s gatekeepers (90% of whom are male) try to prevent such violations as “sock-puppeting, the creating of online identities for the purposes of deception.”

Newman’s attempt to gain Wiki immortality was thwarted by one of those Wiki guardians, who goes by the user name StarryGrandma. Newman admitted to some bitterness over the rebuff, especially when she discovered that even Edward the Blue Engine has his own page.

Who or what is Edward the Blue Engine?

You can look him up on Wikipedia, of course.
Poems Need Their Feel

An egg outside its shell,
an apple skinned of peel,
a fish without its fins
all lack artistic feel,
like poems written awkward-phrased
that shred imagination,
or shed accessibility
while shearing all sensation.

Rejection Collection

I collect rejection slips
in finely-crafted snares,
using poems as the bait
to lure them from their lairs.

JAN KENT IS
THE WORD WHISPERER

A while back, there was a book review in the
*Chicago Tribune* of a biography of the city's well-
known mayor. Speaking of Rahm Emanuel's
growing up with his two brothers, the article said,
“The Emanuel brotherhood formed early.”

Wow –“ early” – all by itself. For years now, I'd
thought “early” had been removed from the
American lexicon and replaced by “early on.” But
there it was – flying solo.

*Coach's note: That's a good sign. Perhaps we can
hope for “history” without “past” in front of it,
“gift” without “free,” “windshield” without
‘front’? Call me a dreamer.*
KEEPING UP WITH TECHNOLOGY

Number please...

By Sharon Young

Our landline phone has been silenced, marking the end of an era. Canceling our landline was both a money-saving decision and a decision to stop telemarketing, political polls, and research study calls, which always seemed to come at dinner time. A bright red, push button landline phone sits silently on my desk, a reminder of life before the cell phone.

My memories go back to the mid 1940's, when I was old enough to use the phone. Our heavy black telephone sat atop an upright piano in our living room. It was the only phone in our home, minus a rotary dial or push buttons. When I lifted the receiver, a female voice greeted me on the other end with "Number Please." Our family number was 6039, a number etched in my memory forever.

I remember conversations with long-time friend, Karen, calling her on their party line. We often heard a click as Mrs. Zook, the other party on that line, picked up the phone, eavesdropping on our conversations. Now those black phones are collector's items, nothing but a memory, as cell phones are everywhere.

Our first cell phone, purchased in the 1990's was a "bag phone." My husband now sports a Motorola Android smart phone, and I have a small flip top older cell phone. Visiting our family in Beaverton, Oregon, Christmas 2012, my cell was on the kitchen counter. My son-in-law, Russell, said "Granny, they don't even make that phone anymore." I should have sweetly suggested that he buy me the latest model for Christmas.

Cellular phones have become a 21st century phenomena, a modern day obsession. As Kyle Munson said in Life So Far: Bonding over Beer and Business Cards in the June 6, 2003, issue of The Des Moines Register, "Yeah, the ritual business-card swap seems an old-fashioned tactic for a crowd where e-mail is a life line and a cell phone hanging from the hip is as much a fixture as a six-gun in the Old West."

My cell phone provides a sense of security, and it’s a comfort knowing it’s close at hand. BUT it is not glued to my ear, and I respect others when using my phone. I've often snickered or scoffed at cell users of all ages but must admit I'm caught up in the cell phone frenzy.

Only about 10.5% of the population over 65 is wireless only, but I foresee that percentage going up in the future. 2013 data from Pew Research shows that 97% of adults have a cell phone. The cell phone is the most quickly adopted technology in history, and 29% of users say they can’t live without their phone.

My cell would have been handy back in the 1960's. I had just parked my car in a parking garage and was on my way to the street, when I discovered a car on fire. I found a pay phone near the parking garage and called the fire department.

Pay phones still exist, and people still use them when cell batteries die or prepaid credit cards run out, but they’re an endangered species. Even the classic red phone booths in England are fighting a losing battle with cell phones, and many will be removed because of losing revenue.

The 21st century introduced broadband wireless access and smart phones. Now cell phone users have a mini-computer at their fingertips. We can e-mail, access the Internet, text message, surf the World Wide Web, and use a GPS system for directions, all on our cell phones.

My cell phone may not be hanging from my hip, but it is close at hand, something I can't live without. I don't miss the old black telephone and the operator asking "number please," or Mrs. Zook listening in on our conversations, as nostalgic as it may be. The demise of the landline is inevitable, but probably far off in the future. The world is changing every second, and I'm peddling as fast as I can, trying to keep up with the rapid pace of technological innovations in the 21st century.
Sports quotes for the ages

*thanks to Mary Tracy*

"Last year we couldn't win at home and we were losing on the road. My failure as a coach was that I couldn't think of anyplace else to play."
- Harry Neale, professional hockey coach

"**Blind people come to the ballpark just to listen to him pitch.**"
- Reggie Jackson commenting on Tom Seaver

"All the fat guys watch me and say to their wives, 'See, there's a fat guy doing okay. Bring me another beer.'"
- Mickey Lolich, Detroit Tigers Pitcher

"**When it's third and ten, you can have the milk drinkers; I'll take the whiskey drinkers every time.**"
- Max McGee, Green Bay Packers receiver

"My knees look like they lost a knife fight with a midget."
- E.J. Holub, Kansas City Chiefs linebacker, regarding his 12 knee operations

"*If you buy an ice-cream cone and make it hit your mouth, you can learn to play tennis. If you stick it on your forehead, your chances aren't as good.*"
- Vic Braden, tennis instructor

"We were tipping off our plays. Whenever we broke from the huddle, three backs were laughing and one was pale as a ghost."
- John Breen, Houston Oilers

"**When I'm on the road, my greatest ambition is to get a standing boo.**"
- Al Hrabosky, major league relief pitcher

"I have a lifetime contract. That means I can't be fired during the third quarter if we're ahead and moving the ball."
- Lou Holtz, Arkansas football coach

"**I tell him 'Attaway to hit, George.'**"
- Jim Frey, K.C. Royals manager when asked what advice he gives George Brett.

"*[M]inor surgery' is when they do the operation on someone else, not you."
- Bill Walton, Portland Trail Blazers
After having a rough time with Fidel Castro at the Lincoln Memorial, you guys climbed all over a second Lincoln reference, the picture of Ford's Theater that appeared last month.

“That’s the old Ford’s Theater right about the time when I was born,” Leighton Mark emailed about an hour after the issue was delivered. “This random thought just popped into my head by itself, that that’s where Lincoln got shot,” he said. “Weird.”

Minutes later, Bill Scanlon also nailed it.

“The building shown in the quiz seems to have Civil-War-era architecture, be in an urban setting of that era, and be a place, like a church, arena, or theater, where large numbers of people would have gathered,” Bill explained. “Thinking of such buildings in which important events in U.S. history occurred, Ford's Theater, where Lincoln was assassinated in April, 1965, was the first to come to mind. An internet search for a photograph of Ford's Theater in the 1860's confirmed that the building shown in the quiz is indeed the theater.

“At first I was going to say it's Fidel Castro visiting Miss Kitty's Long Branch Saloon on the set of Gunsmoke during his tour of the U.S.,” Bill Hickey quipped (I assume), “but--and I kid you not--unprompted and unexplained, Ford's Theatre burst into my brain from out of the blue. I checked it out on Google Images and saw the very photograph that's in Extra Innings.”

Others to make the correct ID included Madonna Dries Christensen (who also got it at first glance and then Googled for confirmation), Anne Lee Landen (“appropriate for February and Abe Lincoln’s birthday!”), Peggy Elliott, Willis Brown, and Janet Taliaferro.

Judy Burnham first guessed Mayberry, USA (again I’m assuming a certain puckishness here), but after “thinking a spell,” she, too, came up with the correct answer.

Two folks thought it might be the Texas Book Depository/Dealey Plaza (where JFK was assassinated), and one ventured “Las Vegas strip during a power outage just before the signing of Declaration of Independence (What Happens Here Stays here).”

Abe Lincoln is not involved in this month’s poser

Can you identify the gentleman on the left in this month’s mystery photo poser?

Answers due to the Coach by March 21st. mcoook@dcswisc.edu

HAHNKE PAHNKE
ED PAHNKE

Al knowing

Manny Moondane longed for a better life. He worked hard and watched what he ate, but he was falling further and further behind: debts piled up and weight bulged his mid-section.

Frustrated, he realized that he needed advice, so he consulted Al Chemy, the local shaman.

After hearing Manny’s tale of woe, Al got his scrawny little body up from his chair and padded around the room. “I have the solution for you,” he announced, handing Manny a phial. “Rub this miraculous mineral oil all over your body when you awaken in the morning and just before you go to bed each night. It will work wonders.”

Reluctant at first, Manny thought what the heck, paid Al his fee, and left.

Al’s oil changed Manny’s life. He applied the oil every morning and evening. Debts vanished, and his bank account grew by leaps and bounds. He lost weight and added muscle almost over night.

Just proves the truth of the old adage, Oily to bed and oily to rise makes Manny healthy, wealthy, and wise.
Whether we independently published authors admit it or not, there is a tremendous amount of ego involved in the process. Isn’t it reasonable that after the blood, sweat and tears to write and publish a novel, we want to be noticed in the world – meaning that we want readers?

In an effort to market my debut historical novel, I’m learning that there are a lot of potential resources, and they are not FREE. In fact, I’m beginning to feel like a mark. I must share my experience with one Madison independent bookstore. I will strive to share the experience without judgment, although it’s difficult. I would rather each of you form your own conclusion.

I e-mailed the event director of this Madison independent bookstore three times, asking what the process was to schedule a local author book reading/signing event. In the third e-mail I allowed my frustration to show and specifically asked for the courtesy of a response and documented my two previous e-mails.

I received an apologetic response that didn’t address how to schedule an author event but did make an offer to take three books on consignment. A form was attached for me to complete and bring in when I delivered the books.

I was disappointed that they only wanted three books, but it was a start. I printed the form and learned there was a $15 fee for selling my books, plus the bookstore would take 40% of the sale price. I admit, I was angry about the request for a fee.

To calm myself I completed a financial analysis. When I included my cost for each book and shipping, the price of the book, and the $15 fee, it would actually COST me about $6 to have the bookstore sell three of my books. The bookstore would make the $15 fee plus 40% of the sale price, about $33 for selling them.

I e-mailed the bookstore event director and shared my financial analysis and asked if their practice of charging an author $15 to sell books was fair. I told them I simply couldn’t afford to sell my books unless they relinquished the $15 fee. They too had completed a financial analysis and claimed it cost them $15 to sell my books. That argument seemed fallacious to me because I’m sure they don’t charge traditional publishers to sell their books – no publisher would pay a fee. In addition, the bookstore has to buy the book from a traditional publisher. In the consignment sale the bookstore doesn’t purchase the book.

The director of events claimed that most independent authors covered their fee by raising the price of their books. My book has the price, with a barcode, on the back cover. I can’t and wouldn’t whimsically change the price of my book.

I didn’t respond to their final e-mail. There’s no point.

For the record, the bookstore is A Room of One’s Own.

Next month I’ll share my experience with another independent bookstore in Madison. This experience has taught me that just because a bookstore is independent does not ensure that they support independent authors. This bookstore is out to make a buck even if it means gouging independent authors. I wonder if the bookstore charges the consignment fee to better known independent authors I really don’t want to know the answer to that.

What do you think of a bookstore charging an independent author/publisher to sell books? Send in your comment to E.I. or e-mail me at rexowens00@gmail.com.
The Ghost on Johnson Street
Janet Taliaferro

The neighborhood, sometimes tatty
occasionally post modern
mostly gabled Victorian houses
with porches smiling in the sun
was perfect for student renters.

My father abandoned the South
in 1907 to spend his freshman year here
before the harsh winter chased him home.

“Did he walk this street every day to class?”
A fleeting thought until I stood
before the yellow brick building,
Romanesque arches with two story columns
and a bulbous window.

The green awning read
Pinkus McBrides’ Market & Deli.
The date—1893—brick worked
above it.

“Is this the place
he got the idea for the book store
and chili parlor across the street
from what became his own alma mater?”

Other than a nickname
he carried for life, is this where the idea
for success began?

Memory invaded and I stood on another sidewalk
in another city outside old Presbyterian Hospital
smoking a cigarette and waiting for results of the spinal tap.
I knew he was dying.

Today he would be one hundred and fourteen years old.
No. Today, not was, but is.

Janet wrote this poem for UW’s Write by the Lake class in Creative Non-Fiction. She later turned the essay into a poem, published in EchoLocations [Poets Map Madison, Cowfeather Press, Middleton, WI (www.cowfeatherspress.org/echolocations.html)] this fall. Sarah Bussey and Wendy Vardaman created EchoLocations.
Gold brought the rushes to Kalgoorlie/Boulder back in 1893 and led to the opening of the Golden Mile. Early Kalgoorlie and Boulder boasted a population of about 30,000. Now, a century later, Kalgoorlie/Boulder is one of Australia’s most thriving and bustling inland cities.

Kalgoorlie/Boulder is steeped in history. Some of the buildings are magnificent, and the people are friendly. It’s all that dust from the mining: bulldust. A monument honours Paddy Hannan, who discovered gold in Kalgoorlie.

We visited Kalgoorlie/Boulder to see our daughter Lucy and her fiancé. One evening, Michael, drove us down Hay Street to look at the ‘girls of the night.’ I was a bit disappointed as there were only two or three brothels. These famous brothels in Hay Street are not unlike small houses with verandahs at the front, so the girls can sit in and wait for customers. By day they are just ordinary plain buildings, in another busy street of Kalgoorlie. At night the environment changes.

We met Michael’s brother Thomas for a ‘working-man’s breakfast’ at the Exchange Hotel. It was a big breakfast: bacon and eggs, tomato, baked beans and spaghetti on toast.

Of course, the other reason for going in at the ungodly hour of 7:30 in the morning was to see the skimpy’s, young girls aged 18 upwards, employed as bar girls. They dress in bikinis to attract more customers. Some of the pubs in Kalgoorlie/Boulder have the skimpy’s working all the time, whereas other hotels only have them at certain times of the day or particular days of the week.

Once again, I was disappointed; the only skimpy we saw wore a bikini, and I thought, ‘Well, she is no different to the girls you see on the beach in the summer all the time’. She was not even attractive.

The mining industry had transferred from underground to open pit, mainly because in the late 70’s and 80’s Alan Bond invested his money in mining interests. The super-pit is roughly 2.5 kms by 5 kms and is a fantastic sight. The trucks that take out all the debris are huge. The workers work two 12-hour shifts.

Actually two men named Bayley and Ford found gold in Coolgardie, 30 kms away, before it was found in Kalgoorlie. But now Coolgardie is struggling to stay afloat, and most of the people who live there travel into Kalgoorlie for work. We looked over the museum at the Coolgardie Railway Station and took in the Government Stamp Press, where the Miners paid a fee to crush their gold.

We also visited the Boulder Town Hall, about 3.5 kms from the Kalgoorlie Town Hall. On a Wednesday afternoon they display a silk and satin curtain painted by Philip Goatcher, who will be the subject of a future letter.

According to Michael and Thomas, Kalgoorlie/Boulder is a very harsh environment to survive in. If you’re a single person, it can be very, very lonely with few people to talk to. Life is one round of work, work, work, hit the pubs, drink, drink, drink. And many of the girls are not interested in the men if they have not got the dollars. They can afford to be choosy.

Kalgoorlie/Boulder is a place of high energy, sumptuous places to eat, lovely memorabilia to take back to your hometown, and many places of interest.
Harbinger Bird
Tom Crawford

Dying’s as close as we get to flying
It’s a natural state. With age
we lose mass. With no muscles
there is nothing to keep us here.
Just climbing the stairs
is out of the question. The bones
head back to hollow. We grow lighter
so what we see in the mirror
is not so much a smile,
anymore, but the loss of certainty.
The albatross only needs a long run
to get air-born. All this evolution
for us and still no wings.
Our plane breaks up in the sky,
and we’re shaken out with our heavy luggage
like salt and pepper into the blue.
In the Navy, aboard ship,
I’d watch for hours, albatross
soar over the fan-tail.
What we plowed through,
they floated over.
We can’t seem to get over
our own weight, and with heaven
over our heads we still have
fewer options then the little sparrow
who appears way more contented.
The flying buttress after all,
was about propping up the too high
church walls that otherwise
couldn’t carry the load--
Our frailness, finally,
is just right,
all attachment, air-born,
the bird we were waiting for.
THE QUESTION OF THE MONTH

What literary characters did you identify with?

I didn't get much action on my question from last month, but thanks to Andrea and Sandy for passing these along.
I identified with both Jo from Little Women and Francie from A Tree Grows in Brooklyn, because they were girl writers and I was writing from the age of eight. I wrote plays like Jo did for my two sisters, the girl next door, and me to act out. We rehearsed with the idea of presenting it to an audience but never did. Too shy.

Andrea Lozinsky Schoenthal

Children's books: Poppy, a wee girl who fit into a tea cup and lived with a regular family Tom Swift. I was a tomboy and took my brother's books.
Tween years: Thor Heyerdahl in Kon-Tiki.

Sandy Rafter

I hope this month's poser prompts more response:

If you could meet any writer, living or dead, who would it be?
as always, tell Coach: mcook@dc.wisc.edu.

WINTER POEMS

Two by Marshall Cook

Winter 2014

Pieces of stars litter the earth, shattered on the brittle dawn. I hurl myself toward earth's embrace miss and fly toward slivers of stars streaming to earth broken on the dawning.

The dead of winter

frozen silent
Must keep my heart idling against despair.

End of an Icicle

Jan Bosman

The end begins so simply—a single drip, loosened, followed one by one. Drips fall off each tip while the whole hangs on, a slow start, then incessant dripping in sunlight a wearing away moment by moment, an inescapable end from a simple beginning no crashing, no burning, no violence, no trauma—just ever hurried dripping, dripping, dripping, a lessening, a giving away at the end.

A tribute to a great actor, gone much too soon

The immensely talented Philip Seymour Hoffman is gone, and it sure is too soon. Hoffman was one of my favorite actors. Any movie of his always entertained me. You knew you were watching greatness without needing to be told. He would get lost in a role.

My favorites of his include Almost Famous, Boogie Nights, Before the Devil Knows You're Dead, The Big Lebowski, Mission Impossible 3, Capote, Doubt, The Master, Catching Fire and Pirate Radio. Almost Famous will always be my favorite rock and roll movie, and Hoffman's Lester Bangs says one of my favorite film quotes: "The only true currency in this bankrupt world is what we share with someone else when we're uncool."

Rest In Peace Philip Seymour Hoffman. You were one of the best.
Writers’ Institute celebrates 25 years

The 2014 edition of the Writers’ Institute is coming April 4-6 at the Concourse Hotel in Madison, WI, three full days of up-to-date information and trends in writing and publishing and a chance to network with fellow writers.

Michael Perry, Nathan Bransford, Dale Kushner, and Jane Friedman will offer keynote speeches, and an array of talented writers, teachers, agents, and editors will lead workshops and discussions.

Over the past 25 years, distinguished authors such as Elmore Leonard, George V. Higgins, Delle Chatman, Carol Higgins Clark, Lee Gutkind, Jerry Apps, Jacquelyn Mitchard, Donald Maass, Dara Marks, and John Vorhaus have shared their knowledge of writing with our writing community.

“I’m here to say that it is an honor to continue to carry the torch that Christine, Marshall, and Laurel started,” W.I. Director Laurie Scheer says. “This year’s conference continues to celebrate the energy that began in 1990,” Scheer promises. “Beginner or advanced, fiction or nonfiction, you’ll have three days to mingle with other writers, agents, editors, and publishers to talk about what matters—your writing and the writing life.”

You can contact Laurie at lscheer@des.wisc.edu and access the website at: http://continuingstudies.wisc.edu/conferences/writers-institute/index.html

Love and literature

“[L]iterature is love-- a way to connect with others not only across time and space but also in the here and now.”

Natasha Trethewey

“Literature (along with experience) has taught me that love means different things at different points in our lives, and that often as we get older we gravitate toward the quieter, kinder plotlines, and find them richer than we had originally found them to be.”

Ann Patchett

“Teaching us is one of literature’s afterthoughts: it is fiction’s bored sigh.”

Colm Toibin

 “[H]appy endings are all about where you stop the story.”

Helen Fielding

“Eventually, literature, an antidote to the pretty poison of pop-culture, came to my rescue.”

Scott Spencer

“Living in literature and love is the best there is. You’re always home.”

Eileen Myles

“Love never counts the cost.”

Jeanette Winterson
Essays from Images
Den Adler

Shadows on the backyard snow

A week ago, a friend told me I’m a romantic. Her clipped words assured me it wasn’t a compliment, but I decided I could take it as one. I did wonder, however, which of the many definitions of the word she meant. My dictionary includes: imaginative but impractical, unrealistic, given to thoughts or feelings of love or romance, and sentimental. Depending on the day and hour, all could apply to me.

On a night when I was thinking of reasons I hated to leave this house, I went to close the drapes shortly after midnight and encountered the view pictured above. I first noticed a full moon in a clear sky through the trees in the woods behind our house, and then I noticed their shadows on the fresh snow in our backyard.

It was one of many beautiful views we’ve had out this window during our 42 years in the center of Janesville, WI, and I knew it might be the last. We’d be moving in a few weeks, and I was keeping an inventory of things I would miss about this place. This was one, and I grabbed the camera and made this photograph.

As I looked out, I thought of our history in this backyard: the Whiffle-ball games with our son, Eric, where a ball hit over the lilac bushes was a home run; the friends or relatives visiting for our own Opening Day cookouts for a new spring season; the wildlife passing through—deer twice, a single one once and four another time; opossums; huge raccoons; and a woodchuck; plus thousands of birds (and lots of squirrels) eating at my wife Judy’s feeders—and times spent in wonder at our luck at finding this place half surrounded by woods in the center of a city. Of course there are regrets too: Our plans for a House Centennial Party in 2012 never took hold.

The house is well built and has been popular with its last three owners, who go back to World War II. The Buehls bought it in the late 1930s, the Callisons in 1954, and Judy and I in 1971. When the Callisons put it on the market for health reasons, the Buehls considered buying it back. We’re glad they didn’t. When the Callisons told me they had lived here for 17 years, I felt sorry for them because they loved this house.

We had moved every year for six years, and I figured we might stay about five years. I didn’t anticipate seeing the house’s 100th birthday.

One of our granddaughters, however, was not impressed by the house’s age. During a storm a couple of years ago, Vivi, 7, came downstairs from their bedroom and said she and Cici were “concerned” about the noises the storm was making on the house. Eric told her that it had stood up to storms for 100 years and would make it through this one. Vivi said, “It’s old. It’ll break easier.”

We won’t miss the 21 steps to the front door, or the narrow, “three-quarter-car” garage, or the upkeep, but our memories of our lives here and the beauty of this old house and the woods around it will make it sad to leave.

Over the years, I’ve made hundreds of photographs of this place, and I’ll relive our years here by looking through them. And sometimes I’ll be sad we had to leave. After all, I’m a romantic.

And now, at last...
Your monthly visit with Lily

Waiting for dinner with Dad at Pizzeria Uno’s

Dinner’s still not here!