Extra Innings

A resolute issue

The newsletter of omniscient etymologists everywhere

Number 83 Madison, WI January-February, 2017

SUZANNE BEECHER'S DEAR READER

Self-improvement: not just for New Year's Day

I'm a work in progress, constantly trying to make myself a better person. So when am I going to get it right? Probably never.

I like to think I have made improvements in my personality and tweaked my day-to-day thinking, so it's more positive than negative. And I've experienced a run of days, weeks, sometimes even a few months when I'm feeling, 'Yes, I've finally got it together.'

But then I wake up the next morning and everything seems to be jumbled and unclear again. Things about myself, that made me feel good the day before, suddenly they've turned on me. I see these traits through new eyes, and I realize I'm facing some of the same set of personality flaws I set out to correct a long time ago.

The picture I paint in my mind is one of a losing battle, but then I acknowledge that's not reality either. The truth is, at least for me, I'll always be a work in progress. So I've decided to stop looking at starting over again as a failure, but instead be thankful I have the opportunity to begin again, any time, any morning I choose.

Thanks for reading with me. It's so good to read with friends.

Suzanne Beecher
Suzanne@DearReader.com
blog: http://dearreader.typepad.com/

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KATHIE GIORGIO

Recapturing the joy of writing

Coach's note: The following is an excerpt from an email Kathie wrote to me shortly after she was my guest on The Writers and Their Words Radio Program.

Just listened to the interview - well, Michael and I did, together, him on his computer in Waukesha, and me here in La Crosse. What a good job! What a natural interview! And it was FUN! …

Yes, I'm partly restless because of being out of my environment, out of my schedule, but I've also gotten pretty used to doing that. I've had to toughen up a lot and come out of my protective shell in order to travel and promote.

I think it has to do more with the writing of this particular book… [w]hich puts me in the line of fire for rejection again, of course. Those who know [me] are saying, "Oh, come on, you know you'll sell, you're too good not to," but I've been in this business long enough to know that you can't count on anything. I'm currently the lead story in *Prairie Schooner, Fiction International,* and *Chariton Review*, but by the time I get this book done and I'm marketing, will that matter?

I am trying very hard with this book to get back to the joy of writing, the writing without thinking about selling because selling comes later. I'm not thinking about audience, I'm not thinking about numbers, I'm just thinking of the words and playing with words and letting them play with me.

We're required to be such salespeople now in the publishing industry that there are times, like now, that I have to remember who I am organically. I can't tell you the number of students who come to me asking me to teach them how to do a platform - before they've written the book. And they look at me like I'm an alien when I say they have to be a writer first.

I am a writer first. And I have to take that back.

Though that little question is right there, behind my right ear. Will it sell? Will anyone want it?

Your question about when did I know I was good - man, that hit me right between the eyes. You never do. Well, you do, but then you don't, and then you do again. Unfortunately, in our line of business, "goodness" is measured by what others think of you. Which is hard.

So. Way more than I intended to write. But I had such fun doing the interview. And your introduction of me just made my heart swell.

Thank you, Marshall. Please stay out of ERs.

Kathie

Novelist, short story writer, poet, and essayist ***Kathie Giorgio*** *writes literary fiction, and her poetry, short stories, and creative nonfiction have appeared in over 100 literary magazines and anthologies.*

Her first novel, The Home for Wayward Clocks, *published by the Main Street Rag Publishing Company, debuted in 2011 to critical acclaim and an enthusiastic readership. She followed that with a sequel,* Learning To Tell (A Life) Time i*n 2013. In between those novels she published a short story collection,* Enlarged Hearts, *in 2012. Her fourth book*, Rise From The River, *was published by Main Street Rag last year.*

In 2016 she published Oddities & Endings: The Collected Stories of Kathie Giorgio *and her first poetry chapbook*, True Light Falls in Many Forms.

She is also the founder, director, and lead teacher of the AllWriters' Workplace & Workshop.

In her writing and her teaching, she exhibits her mastery of craft, her creativity and ingenuity, and her heart and humanity.

She's my Brownie, my Dryad, my Sprite and Woodland Pixie. OliviaGrace is my "Will O'Wisp" that dances across the lakes at night. The light she gives off looks like a flickering candle and she is beautiful enchanting but unable to be caught and kept in the gilded prison of the world's opinions or expectations...

My girl is Free and I will work until I no longer am able to do so to ensure that she remains untethered and light and full of merry music...for to possess her is to kill her and what a shame that would be.

Brown girl, brown girl, tell me what do you see?
Brown girl, brown girl, when you are looking at me?
Brown girl, brown girl, tell me your dreams.
Sunstreaks and starbursts, and maybe moonbeams?
Brown girl, brown girl what secrets are you keeping? Your eyes move and dance even while your sleeping.
I promise to hold you close and protect you well; never leaving my post unguarded.
Brown girl, brown girl, when you wake at morrow's dawn,
I'll be right here to watch you stretch and yawn, and soon so eager to jump up and out of my arms,
Brown girl, brown girl, to run and hop and twirl and jump and skip
As you greet the destiny for which you were born.
Brown girl, brown girl...
I Am The Mother

RubyTruthSeeker❁©
Ego Sum Fabulam Narrantem...
(I am the Story Teller...)

Extra Innings

"Ars gratia pecuniae"

Number 83 January-February, 2017

OUR ALL-STAR LINE-UP
Suzanne Beecher, Kathy Giorgio, Lisa Partee, Sandy Rafter, Madonna Dries Christensen, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., Ron Hevey, Jacob McLaughlin, Ed Pahnke, Dick Mallard, Jan Kent, and Esther M. Leiper-Estabrooks

AND INTRODUCING…
Chaney Lyons

WITH SPECIAL GUEST STARS FROM THE ODYSSEY PROJECT:
Kevin Mullen, Felicia Thomas, Carissa Love, Alyanna Cooper, Marisol Gonzalez, Johnnie Walton

AD VERSE EFFECTS BY
Craig W. Steele, Sandy Rafter, Tom Crawford, Gary Busha, Marshall J. Cook, Bonny Conway, Jan Bosman, John Manesis, Esther M. Leiper-Estabrooks, and Norma J. Sundberg

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Internet Gleaner
Pedro Hiort-Lorenzen

Web Weaver
Kerrie Jean-Louis Osborne

Mr. Cook's Stunt Double
Yakima Canutt

DIRECTOR OF CREATIVE IDEATION
S. Dardanelles

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
Madonna Dries Christenson

COACH-IN-CHIEF:
Marshall J. Cook

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Extra Innings is a proud promoter of
Write by the Lake, The Writers Institute, Weekend with your Novel, the Odyssey Project, and The Little Free Library
Back issues available at:
www.continuingstudies.wisc.edu/writing/extra-innings

60'6" FROM HOME WITH MARSHALL J. COOK

How are we to live in this _____ world?

How are we to live in this post-truth world?

One night recently Jean Feraca, who teaches poetry and philosophy in the Odyssey Project (odyssey.wisc.edu), left that question hanging, unanswered, during a discussion of Plato's *Apologia*, which chronicles the trial of Socrates that resulted in his state-sanctioned execution by hemlock.

She had heard on NPR that "post-truth" is the *Oxford Dictionary* Word of the Year. It means that we are no longer interested in the truth or facts, choosing to make our decisions based primarily on emotion and opinion instead. Not an easy thing to hear for a philosopher poet who believes that the unexamined life is not worth living.

How about you? Are you worried about the future of your country? The world? You may have another, possibly more accurate word for the age we live in. I'm curious to know what that word might be.

More importantly, I seek your answer to the question. Just how *are* we to live in this *insert your word here* world? Let's share solutions. I'll share my answer next issue, and I'd really like to share yours, too.

Whether you were with Hillary or stumped for Trump, how do you plan to weather the political, environmental, and social storms that seem poised to engulf us?

Send me your answer (just a sentence or two) by January 31st. If it's okay with you, I'll share it in the March-April edition of *Extra Innings* along with my own attempt.

You can choose one of the words from the following menu or make up your own word:

corrupt
racist
misogynist
abusive
self-absorbed
materialistic
godless
fallen
damned…

Hope to hear from you soon.

Coach

marshall.cook@wisc.edu

Six Miles Above Earth with Sandy Rafter

How about a new computer for the new year?

I bought a new tablet computer. It is thinner and lighter with 7.9 retina display, A8 chip, 64 bit desktop-like architecture, two cameras with slo-mo video and burst modes.

I had to have it. I needed it. I couldn't survive without it. In hindsight, I think I saw too many commercials. It's difficult for me to understand what I've bought into.

I'm a little dense about the architecture of the tablet since I've always related that word to buildings. Will the columns I write for *Extra Innings* be Doric, Ionic, Ironic, or Corinthian?

My parents were fair but strict because they wanted me to be a good girl and a good citizen. I was never to swipe anything, no matter how much I hungered for that Hershey's chocolate bar at the Woolworth's Five and Dime.

Now I may swipe indiscriminately. On the screen is a site I do not wish to see. I swipe to rid myself of it. Up-swipe, nothing changes. Down-swipe, still nothing. Back to up-swipe, this time with four fingers. Nothing. Three fingers? Corner to corner swipe? Nothing. I close the cover to get rid of the site. I open the cover. Still there. Am I being punished because I did swipe one Hershey Kiss when I was eight?

I find my keyboard accidentally by tapping willy-nilly across the screen. Size small. I resign myself to the fact that I will forever be typing on a key not much bigger than an ant's behind.

With all the tapping and swiping, the screen is a mosaic of smudges and prints. My grandmother was wary about my fingerprints on her always freshly polished furniture. She was most happy when I visited her in the winter and wore mittens. "Might as well keep those on, Sandra. It's a little cold in here."

No wonder I am incessantly cleaning the tablet screen with a cloth. I know as long as I have it, I'll never take up criminal activities when I can be so easily traced and identified.

If I were a child, I'd say someone lives inside my tablet and only awakens when I lift the cover. I say a name and someone answers, wanting to know what I wish to know.

The problem is I never ask the questions to which she has the answers.

I find problems, too, with features I don't fathom yet. I know I can delete any app, but I have to get them all shaking before an X will make them disappear. So far, shaking the tablet, tapping, and shaking myself have not succeeded.

I've also gotten into a bad habit. I hold the tablet against my body as I peer at it. I got to a Bob Dylan site and pressed to hear him sing, but he sounded so far away. I discovered he sounds much better when I don't have the bottom of the tablet where the stereo speakers are located pressed into my body. I don't think he'd like that either, being a moral man.

Wi-fi hot spots have been a big disappointment. I was envisioning using my tablet at "Alyce's Adult Entertainment Palace" to discover what that is all about. So far, I've located a McDonald's.

I have been good at keeping my tablet charged. I fear an explosion with highly amplified distortion and a heavy metal death if I let the percentage go below a certain number.

If only I'd been so diligent in my life when counting calories so as to not gain weight, or filling my gas tank so I didn't run out, or counting my money so I didn't bounce any checks. I would have been a more perfect person.

Even a simple maneuver like plugging the computer in to recharge sometimes throws me. Last week I placed my tablet on the counter and ended up charging my toaster for an hour. Two white cords.

I view my tablet the same way I do my car. I tell my Honda what a good car it is. I've been this way since my first car, when I knew nothing at all about cars and thought my Plymouth might break down if I didn't baby and talk to it.

I am not disheartened. I feel I am making progress with my tablet. Buying it must count for something. Still, I cannot help but wish, when I'm baffled by defining features like the A8 chip, that opening the box would reveal eight chocolate chip cookies, too. I need them. I eat when I'm frustrated.

Report from the Odyssey Project

Students find the courage to write about the most difficult times in their lives

Coach's note: I have the joy of participating in the Odyssey Project, now in its 14th year. Each year I republish some of the students' work as it originally appeared in the class newsletter, The Odyssey Oracle. *The following essays on courage appeared in the November 16 issue of the* Oracle. *I reprint them with the students' kind permission.*

For more information on the Odyssey Project, please see **www.odyssey.wisc.edu.**

"I learned that courage was not the absence of fear but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid but he who conquers that fear."

Nelson Mandela

On March 7, 2016 my son's father and I had to make the toughest decision that a parent could ever face. I had to decide to take my Zaire off life support and donate his organs. In that moment my heart stopped, knowing that his heart would not beat in his body but in the shell of someone else's five-month old child in Ohio. All my mind could think was, "Zaire, wake up in these last minutes. Do not leave us to make this troubling decision. Do not leave me with the decision of letting you go. How do you expect me to move on?" I had a choice, a decision, and a right to decide my son's fate. I didn't know if he was hurting or suffering, something I never wanted him to do. I was told my boy had no brain activity, yet his heart was still beating in his body.

My mind told my soul that he still had a chance. The doctors said no chance.

On March 8, 2016 at 4:49 p.m. and five seconds, Zaire's heart no longer beat in his body.

Felicia Thomas

I can think of a time in my life when I was a young girl. It was hard to accept the fact that I had a learning disability and was going to special tutoring and having a special education class. I had to be brave enough to stand tall and accept the facts. That means knowing that it's OK to be different. God didn't make us all the same. I had to have the courage and strength to know that this is OK. It's what makes me be me. I was starting to lose hope and faith. Also, being around people who had the same issues as me and finding my place where I fit in was like segregation, being separated from my classmates.

I used to attend Masonic Learning Center for help with reading and writing. It really helped me along the way through struggle and hard times.

Carissa Love

I had a huge decision to make at such a young age. I was lost in how to make the right choice, with only being 16. How was I going to make the right one? I was pregnant and scared of the unknown. The stereotypes people made of it were as if my life was over, although I was never one to give up.

I took some time and backed away from everyone's thoughts, only so I could have my own. That's when it came to me. I'd keep my baby and fight for our future. I can do this; I can become more that a stereotype.

My son is now 14 years old, and we beat the odds together. We learn and grow every day as one. Because I made the decision to keep him, we both are who we are.

Alyanna Cooper

More Profiles in Courage

I remember I was a single mother. My family was in the USA, and I was alone in Mexico. The father of my son offered to get back together. Sometimes I thought that it was my only choice, but I got up the courage and made a promise to myself and to my son that I would make a good decision for both of us. Then I took my son to work and asked my aunt for help because I didn't want my son to suffer with an alcoholic father.

When my family offered to help me move to the USA, I was very sad to leave the country, and I knew I would need lots of courage to cross the border with my little son. After spending one week apart from my son and being deported, I got the courage to try again because my family and son were already in the USA.

I didn't have an option. I had to cross the border, to keep trying until I got together with my son and family again.

Marisol Gonzalez

A time when I felt courageous was when I went to the Illinois Department of Corrections at the age of 14. The year was 1998, and I was sent to one of the worst juvenile corrections centers in Illinois. I had to fight a lot. Everyone was older than I was, so winning the fight made me feel like a natural born warrior. Besides fighting, I had to pay very close attention to those around me. I had to be emotionally intelligent and empathetic. I had to survive, so I did.

Johnnie Walton

These students and their 25 classmates are earning six units of humanities credit from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in a rigorous program including literature, American history, philosophy, art history, and vocabulary development. They are all living at or below the poverty line, and many are single parents with several part time jobs. They demonstrate their courage, intelligence, and heart every day.

Coach

See also Kevin Mullen's Odyssey Address, page 17 this issue.

JAN KENT *IS*
THE WORD WHISPERER

Misplaced modifier department

From a well-known, often published author, in a new historical novel, comes this: "At the age of three, my father was off to war, and I was back in Paris . . ." Wow.

"I express myself with my friends and my family. Novels are not about expressing yourself, they're about something beautiful, funny, clever and organic. Self-expression? Go and ring a bell in the yard if you want to express yourself."

Zadie Smith

In Memory

Leonard Cohen

singer/songwriter, poet, novelist, Buddhist monk
Sept 21, 1934 - Nov 10, 2016

From "Suzanne" and "Bird" to "Hallelujah" he was "the master of erotic despair."

Now you can say that I've grown bitter, but of this you may be sure
The rich have got their channels in the bedrooms of the poor
And there's a mighty judgment coming, but I may be wrong
You see, you hear these funny voices in the tower of song.

Leon Russell

(Claude Russell Bridges)
singer/songwriter, musician
April 2, 1942 - Nov 13, 2016

He walked a Tight Rope, giving us A Song for You and so many others, we'll never be able to count them all.

The wisdom of first graders

when asked to complete a common aphorism

Thanks to Pedro Hiort-Lorenzen

1) Don’t change horses until they stop running.
2) Strike while the bug is close.
3) Don’t bite the hand that looks dirty.
4) A miss is as good as a mr.
5) You can’t teach an old dog new math.
6) The pen is mightier than the pigs.
7) Where’s there’s smoke there’s pollution.
8) Happy the bride who gets all the presents.
9) A penny saved is not much.
10) Don’t put off until tomorrow what you put on to go to bed.
11) Laugh and the whole world laughs with you; cry and you have to blow your nose.
12) Children should be seen and not spanked or grounded.
13) You only get out of something what you see in the picture in the box.
14) A bird in the hand will poop on you.

Madonna Dries Christensen's
Meandering with Madonna

What's in a name?

It's difficult to measure the importance of a fictional character's name. Would the opening line of *Moby Dick* be as enticing if it were "Call me Walter?"

Imagine *Gone With The Wind* featuring Agnes O'Hara and Ronald Butler. Frankly, my dear . . . . they don't grab my attention.

Would the lawyer in *To Kill A Mockingbird* be as memorable if he were, say, Albert Wren? Maybe—that character was well-defined beyond his name. Still, the distinctive name Atticus Finch dwells in literary history, with a monument to this fictional man at the old courthouse in Monroeville, Alabama. The plaque honors him as the model for nondiscriminatory justice. Recently, that integrity has come under fire, but that's another story.

Anne Tyler's extensive cast of characters could probably have any name. It's their performance we remember. I've read all of Tyler's novels, and I'm hard-pressed to come up with one name from any given book.

James Lee Burke's long-time fans speak of his main protagonist, Dave Robicheaux, as if they personally know him. He's simply Dave (or Streak), and his daunting side-kick is Clete (Purcel). These characters come alive on the page and would do so regardless of their names.

Meanwhile, Lolita is a perfectly provocative name for Nabokov's teenaged object of Humbert Humbert's lust.

I asked a few fiction writers how they choose names. Ned Burke replied, "I picture the character in my mind. Jerry Killian fits a teenaged boy and Amos Grant fits a strong male lead. If I switch those names, they don't fit the character."

Ruth Coe Chambers keeps a list of interesting names. Margo Lemieux has used the names of childhood friends, children, and cats.

Kristin Wolden Nitz chooses popular baby names for whatever year her character was born.

She added, "In my first novel, *Defending Irene*, I made the mistake of using an Italian friend's name as a placeholder. When I tried to come up with something different after I finished the draft, my character put his foot down. When I needed the name of an Italian dog in *Saving Griffin,* I used the name of a dog that had made a difference in my son's life."

Suzanne Morrone said, "My recent character's name came in a dream. In fact, three of the five appeared as if waiting to hear from me. Three others came without a thought; a gift." However, an agent suggested name changes, citing too many names ending in similar letters (i or y).

Gail Gauthier responded, "If I want a particular ethnicity, I choose a first letter and then look online for Hispanic, Polish, French, etc. I'm also interested in what the name means, even if it never comes out in the text. It helps me in thinking about the character."

Brook Gideon, too, looks at the name's meaning, as well as ethnicity, region, and religion.

Novelists Harlan Coben and John Lescroart have a deal going with readers. Contribute to a charity of your choice and they will give one of their characters your name.

Lescroart has a continuing character named Dismas Hardy. Dismas is a lawyer, and the name is that of one of the thieves crucified with Jesus. Some might think the author is making a subliminal connection. I'll not speak to that.

With my name, I suspect I'd be type-cast—perhaps as a nun or a Good Samaritan. Nothing wrong with that, but imagine the adventure I might vicariously have if Coben created a villain named Madonna Joy (yes, that's my middle name).

Do art!

In 2006, a teacher at Xavier High School in New York tasked her students with writing a letter to a favorite author inviting him/her to come speak to the class. Only one author even responded to the letter. He had to turn down the invitation, but his letter still serves as inspiration to us all. Here's the letter from novelist **Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.**

November 5, 2006

Dear Xavier High School, and Ms. Lockwood, and Messrs Perin, McFeely, Batten, Maurer and Congiusta:

I thank you for your friendly letters. You sure know how to cheer up a really old geezer (84) in his sunset years. I don't make public appearances any more because I now resemble nothing so much as an iguana.

What I had to say to you, moreover, would not take long, to wit: Practice any art, music, singing, dancing, acting, drawing, painting, sculpting, poetry, fiction, essays, reportage, no matter how well or badly, not to get money and fame, but to experience becoming, to find out what's inside you, to make your soul grow.

Seriously! I mean starting right now, do art and do it for the rest of your lives. Draw a funny or nice picture of Ms. Lockwood, and give it to her. Dance home after school, and sing in the shower and on and on. Make a face in your mashed potatoes. Pretend you're Count Dracula.

Here's an assignment for tonight, and I hope Ms. Lockwood will flunk you if you don't do it: Write a six line poem, about anything, but rhymed. No fair tennis without a net. Make it as good as you possibly can. But don't tell anybody what you're doing. Don't show it or recite it to anybody, not even your girlfriend or parents or whatever, or Ms. Lockwood. OK?

Tear it up into teeny-weeny pieces, and discard them into widely separated trash recepticals. You will find that you have already been gloriously rewarded for your poem. You have experienced becoming, learned a lot more about what's inside you, and you have made your soul grow.

God bless you all!
Kurt Vonnegut

Extra Innings

Ad Verse Effects

The Writers' Poet
Craig W. Steele

No Poem Until Its Time

I've heard before, according to lore,
no poem can ever be birthed
until its time to be unearthed;
I hope my gems of polished verse
are mined before I'm in my hearse.

But just in case, be sure to place
blank paper, pen and pencil set
(and I implore you, don't forget!)
into my plush-lined casket,
although I hesitate to ask it.

Then, if a stanza bonanza
should worm into my consciousness,
I will be blessed with blissfulness
that I may scribble in repose,
avoiding dreams of hellish prose.

Time to Fade

And after I've become a shade,
I hope my work will prove to be
most like the marigold. You see,
their blooms require some time to
fade.

Two by Sandy Rafter

At Her Grave

I crawled into my mother's lap at bedtime
and she kissed me on the lips
until I thought I was too old.
I was five.
I wiggled free, no more baby stuff.
My boyfriend at school was Butchie, Jr.
I hit him on the head
and he shoved me back.
I saved him penny candy
but he had to hold my hand
for his reward.
Since then, I've been tongued
and smooched on ears and throat and
breast.
Perhaps, I should not float these words
of passion in this place,
but she saw only my haughty side
when embraces filled the air
at wakes and weddings and holidays
and I chose to stay apart.
She died unaware of the graces and
kindness,
generosities, I learned from her
in holding someone dear enough
to say goodbye. I freed my own daughter,
too.
I don't forget the way her eyes
would drop from mine
when I adventured toward shame.
But, she still reached arms
for a kiss hello and goodnight
when we watched the cow
and the moon and fiddled
our dreams away dancing;
she, the full dish
and I, the dipping spoon.

So Tired

I have no cheer.
I'm on no team.
A woman incomplete
with half a hope.
No pom-pon in my hand,
no sis-boom-bah.
I won't attend the walk.
I own no pink
nor ribbon I can wear.
I barely thrive,
cannot arise.
I sink into my bed.
I do not care
who is aware
I am spare company.

CANTO 39
Tom Crawford

Dear reader, pay attention. Entering
the next life you'll face a large door, cracked open
just enough to let in a brilliant glow of light,
blinding light, really, that'll makes you feel,
well, hopeful. That's the idea especially now that you know,
having died, you're not dead. Then a voice-over,
not harsh, almost feminine, will say, "All you need
to do now to enter here is name
the six essential auxiliary verbs." God bless
Miss Johnson and bone-head English
at Bakersfield Junior College in 1962. My hands
were sweating then too. I wasn't trying
to get into heaven, just pass her test.
All these years later I still run through them
when I go to bed, now I lay me down to sleep:
have, had, has is, are, was, were.

The Providence of Milkweed Pods
Gary Busha

near the fenceposts
a patch of milkweed pods
catch the first snow

a pale sun
the gray november
rolls downward from the north

the milkweed pods snap off
and leave their twisted stubble–
the fenceposts mark the spot.

THREE FROM MARSHALL J. COOK

Inquiry

Perhaps it is God and God alone
who gives us strength and courage
in times of sickness and grief.
How else could we hope to grasp
the peace that passes all understanding
rather than sinking into despair?

I believe, and therefore I see.

But then would it have to be God and God alone
who gives us weakness and cowardice
in times of great temptation
to spare us from sin?

Perhaps all good gifts are borne to our souls
by the same angels who sang to those souls
as they bore them to our mothers' wombs—
each soul different, each soul loved,
each soul necessary to complete the Soul.

May we never mistake cowardice for virtue
and may we thank God for both.

Three things I believe about God

1) There is a God.
2) I'm not God..
3) Neither are you.

Holiday stress survival kit

If it moves and it shouldn't: Duct Tape
If it doesn't move and it should: WD-40
If it aches, burns, oozes or itches: Vaseline

more poems on pages 26, 27

The Odyssey Address

Kevin G. Mullen

Coach's note: When the Odyssey Project took up Lincoln's Gettysburg Address in the American History segment, Kevin sat down and penned an address of his own. He did not write it on the back of an envelope, but then, neither did Lincoln. (Another myth busted.)

Almost one score ago (actually, a half score and four years ago), Emily Auerbach and Jean Ferraca brought forth, at the University of Wisconsin, a new course, conceived in the Humanities, and dedicated to the proposition that all people are created equal (and should have equal access to education.)

Now, in 2016, our nation is engaged in what almost seems sometimes like a civil war, testing whether or not a country this big and unruly can long endure. We see that battlefield on tv and in the news every day. But on Wednesday nights, from September to May, a classroom on South Park Street is dedicated to removing the lines that separate us and exploring the ideas that bind us together. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this classroom. The brave women and men who struggled there, with Plato and Frederick Douglass, Emily Dickinson and Maya Angelou, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what I say here, but it can never forget, and will always be impacted in a myriad of ways, by what they do there, in that classroom. It is for us, the Odyssey students and staff, to be dedicated to the unfinished work, and homework, in a way that befits the effort of those students who have gone before us. It is in this dedication, this full measure of devotion, (and also many of your donations), where we resolve that these students have not studied in vain, that we can insure that this classroom of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from this earth.

Kevin Mullen *is the Associate Director of the Odyssey Project and heads the writing and tutoring aspects of the program. He is a world traveler and true citizen of the world who once worked in a spring factory in the mountains of Japan — among many other adventures. He is a devoted (and very happy) lifelong Chicago Cubs fan.*

www.odyssey.wisc.edu.

ESTHER M. LEIPER-ESTABROOKS' FOR THE LOVE OF WORDS

"Valentine" almost rhymes with "rhyme"

Before sleep, waiting in traffic, or in idle moments, I practice rhymes like at, cat, bat, fat, hat… Dialect would include What's "dat?" or the Bible's "begat." Today we'd say "fathered" – which rhymes with bothered—or "sired" to match with fired, mired, hired, tired, and more. Yet I encounter many off pairs whose poets think close is good enough. "Dog" and "clog" provide an example: The "og" the pair end with form a sight rhyme, but each vowel is pronounced differently.

Most children's verse is amusing. If you end a line with 'absurd,' rhymes include bird, burred, blurred, curd, stirred, slurred, and word.

Rhyming dictionaries range from basic to complex. My computer lists 30, including one especially for country and western songwriters.

Of my four, one is woefully inadequate, while the *OXFORD RHYMING DICTIONARY,* at 659 pages, is truly daunting. Words ending in "ish" take a full page and are *not* listed alphabetically. Under 36.2.6, I find Jewish, trueish, shrewish, newish, bluish, and Melhuish in that order. Spellcheck doesn't recognize several of these.

My remaining two list everyday language.

If rhymes can be over-simple, they can also be strange and esoteric—as if some poets *want* readers to feel stupid.

I collect poetry- all kinds. Some kid-books employ free verse but most choose rhyme and meter. Robert Kraus wrote *WHOSE MOUSE ARE YOU?* Here is the opening, with cat and trap being a near but not exact rhyme. There ***is*** a happy ending.

Whose mouse are you? / Nobody's mouse.
Where is your mother?/ Inside the cat.
Where's your father?/ Caught in a trap.

Ogden Nash rhymed "anonymous" with "Geronimous" and "pattern" with "Manhattan"; surely inexact, goofy rhyme pairs. But Ogden Nash is Ogden Nash, and the sillier he gets, the better his verse. Can you recall the Miles Kimball sales catalog, for which he penned perky couplets?

From him I learned to savor odd rhymes, like linking bowwows with powwows or party with Astarte, Semitic goddess of fertility. Is this an exact rhyme? Yes, according to my dictionary.

However, many supposed rhymes are inept. Consider this verse from *A DOGGIE'S TALE***,** told by a French poodle named Miss Fifi Duverall. (The human author is E.V. Starett.) Pooch-friends run off on a foolish adventure, but rhyme and rhythm falter: An example--

The woods and fields are very close,
Right at the edge of town;
Where flowers, trees, and animals,
And wildlife abound.

Town and abound are similar but not exact rhymes, while to say animals *and* wildlife is redundant.

Instead of counting sheep at night, list rhymes in your head. Pick a word: Let's say *absurd**:*** Mentally go down the alphabet. Doing so, I find burred, blurred, curd, deferred, deterred, furred, gird, heard, herd, interred, nerd, sherd, stirred, slurred, purred, plus bellbird and cowherd.

In general, skip fancy words. Show-offs can turn off readers. For example, *THE OXFORD DICTIONARY* includes comprehensivization, molossus, endothelial, frangibility, monochromater, saurischian, staurolite, tapotement, vibracula, zugswang, and zwitterion,

'Frangibility' was the only one of those I'd ever heard of! Yes, frangibility rhymes with tangibility, vibracula (I suppose) pairs with Dracula, and Molussus, perhaps, with colossus, but how can you use what you don't understand? (And no; I don't think Molussus is molasses spelled wrong!)

Rhyming is a skill where simplicity beats complexity, if the latter makes readers feel ignorant. Bad rhyme is a crime--which almost rhymes with Valentine. On that special day, may you receive sweet verses, and if word-pairs are flawed, stay mum. Rhyme skill requires practice. Try listing word-choices on scrap paper before starting a poem, and play to your strengths. My weakness is math, which beyond counting syllables, doesn't involve verse. The following limerick makes a point-- but no decimal point!

Once a young lady named Cath
Could not wise up to New Math.
Algebra pooped her;
Formulas duped her:
Verse-writing proved her best path.

AN *E.I.* SPECIAL FEATURE
DICK MALLARD

My name is Carl Farnsworth

In the mid-1970s, the oil embargo raged and worldwide demand for petrochemical plants went beyond the atmosphere. Fluor Engineers & Constructors sat on $5 billion worth of backlogged projects.

Its headquarters in Irvine was a glass fortress overlooking the Orange County, California freeway with what appeared to be gun towers on each corner of each building pod.

Before personal computers, engineering drawings were produced by hand on drafting tables. Each floor of each pod was open space organized and reorganized according to whatever project or project phase existed. At the time, Fluor exemplified the dynamic top of the *Fortune 500*.

MD&T, as my department was known, did all the non-technical training. If a manager or supervisor had a personnel problem, we became advisors—more like priestly counselors.

One day, we got a call from the Computer Department Manager. He had an employee problem.

He wanted to know if we could teach any of our courses to an employee who was deaf. It was an enlightened call, more than a decade before the Americans with Disabilities Act required action.

Traveling the underground rat maze of the Fluor Complex, where MD&T and the other support departments lived, I found the computer department. There, with a background of whirring IBM mainframes, spinning data disks, and deafening air conditioners, I met the grandson of Philo Farnsworth, the inventor of television.

Before Carl Farnsworth, I had never met, knew, understood, or had any dealings with a deaf person. We saw groups of them at Disneyland or the L.A. Zoo, but they stayed with their own, rapidly moving fingers in a language as foreign to me as Swahili. We felt sorry for them.

Uncaringly ignorant of the hearing impaired world, I sat down with a smiling, energetic young man about my age. Our first encounter transpired over his ability to read lips, my ability to write notes, and his infectious enthusiasm as a human being. Carl was a likable guy.

Leaving the meeting with Carl and his supervisor, my mind raced over the situational landscape. Our training courses didn't accommodate someone who was hearing impaired. We did not have interpreters. In the project-based engineering world, when a job was completed, you were laid off or reassigned to another project. Labor moved among companies like Fluor, Parsons, and Bechtel depending on which company had contracts. Fluor breathed in and exhaled people without remorse. Raising overhead costs to help one guy in the computer department was likely to get him fired.

So what to do? The more I thought about Carl's situation the fewer options presented themselves. It was a lay-awake-at-night situation until I realized the problem wasn't the problem. 'Handicapped' as an adjective, now politically incorrect, describes someone with a disability. My point of view from the beginning was Carl was handicapped. He certainly had a disadvantage with his inability to hear in an compassionless business, but was that the problem?

After a good night's sleep, I realized Carl's handicap wasn't the problem; my handicap was.

I met and talked with Carl several times over the next few weeks. I'm vague about how the idea came to life. It was either a mid-night wake up scream from my unconscious, creative self, or maybe the suggestion came from a casual remark from my wife, or maybe Carl sparked the idea himself. Anyway, one morning I excitedly traveled the rat maze corridors of Fluor's underground from MD&T to the Computer Department to float an exciting idea to Carl.

"Carl, would you be interested in teaching sign language?"

He acceded with his usual enthusiasm.

I went back to my boss and pitched the idea. He was NOT as enthused as Carl. I pressed. "Well, what if we did a pilot, at lunch time, on a volunteer basis? I could put up some bulletin board fliers, and we can see if there is any interest."

— Carl Farnsworth, teacher, next page

And so several weeks later, sign language class began as a Friday brown-bag group. Our instructor, Carl Farnsworth, who was deaf since birth, who could hardly talk understandably, and who had no training as a teacher or experience as a public speaker, faced a group of strangers munching lunch. It had the makings of a real disaster.

The group comprised a few of my colleagues from MD&T, still sore from the arm twisting, my wife, who worked in Fluor's legal department, Carl's supervisor, and a mix of computer staff that could break away for an hour from the digital cacophony. All of us committed to an hour lunch, once a week, in the MD&T conference room, around a large table and white board. None of us were prepared for what we were about to experience.

On the first day, Carl stood confidently at the head of the table, whiteboard marker in hand. In front of Carl was a stack of amber books. Each was an inch thick (nearly 400 pages), paperbound, with the title: *Signing Exact English*. Next to the books was a folder containing Carl's lesson plan and notes. Carl was nervously confident as he began.

"My name is Carl Farnsworth."

Over the next year, Carl treated us to one of the most interesting learning experiences of my life. We became as proficient communicators as any novice in the first year of a foreign language class. Each Friday was a mixture of learning about the deaf world, learning one of many sign languages (yes, there are more than one), learning how to form letters, then words, then constructing sentences, and finally expressing ideas and telling stories and jokes. We played games of Carl signing and us interpreting. Despite our having homework and very sore hands, Carl made it interactive and fun.

We learned the sign for boy was moving your hand to your forehead as if to grab the bill of a baseball cap. For girl, it was drawing your thumb from in front of your ear down to the underside of your chin, as if tracing the strap of a bonnet. Each word had a form and movement that made sense once you knew its etymology.

He taught us mostly in *Signing Exact English*, but also some in ASL, or American Sign Language. We learned about different regional dialects. British Sign Language is unlike AS, which is based on French Sign Language.

We learned about deaf education and the "oral tradition," which at schools like "Gallaudet," was forbidden and "lip reading only" taught.

Time flew by in Carl's class. In the end, we all went out to dinner with Carl and his hearing wife, Jeanette, and then to their home where we learned how they have to change their environment to live in a soundless world. They were also preparing for a new family.

For those of us who lasted the whole year-- as with anything hard we had our dropouts-- Carl transformed us.

At dinner that night, we became that group at Disneyland, or the L.A. Zoo, or an Orange County Mexican Restaurant, viewed condescendingly by the hearing world around us. In a way, we felt sad for those outsiders. They just did not know the riches we had learned from Carl that year.

Soon after, I left Fluor and traveled in the adult teaching world for 35 years as an instructor, college administrator, dean, and executive director of a non-profit industrial training center. Carl Farnsworth, deaf grandson of the inventor of television, was the most naturally talented and gifted teacher I have ever known.

Carl never attended an MD&T class as a student. We didn't accomplish that goal. We accomplished much more. As for Carl--any worthy educator will tell you, a good teacher learns more from the students than they do from him or her. My heart tells me that was doubly true for Carl.

Epilogue:

Carl W. Farnsworth passed away in Santa Ana, California on January 2, 2015. He was born July 28, 1941 in Maine, and moved to Lehi, Utah, then Las Vegas, Nevada. He attended Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, where he was known as Wendell, until 1959, when his family moved to Northern California. He attended the Fremont School for the Deaf. After graduation in 1961, he attended Gallaudet College for several years.

He worked for a petroleum company as a programmer until his illness. He then retired. He enjoyed woodcraft and loved to read. He taught ASL classes. Carl and his wife Jeanette traveled quite a bit.

He left wife Jeanette and two sons, Dean (Pennsylvania) and Mark (California) as well as two grandchildren.

FROM THE EDITOR'S HIGH, SHAKY STOOL*
MARSHALL J. COOK

Let us now praise our stuff

One of the hot self-help books this gift-giving, resolution-making season carries a rather cluttered title: *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing,* by Marie Kondo.

I don't know if anyone actually ives this book as a present. I sure hope not. Seems to me a wise policy never, ever to give someone a self-help book. ("Put on a few pounds, I see. Here's a diet book.") But the declutter book got lots of press, and lots of folks bought copies— even though there are heaps of other books on the same subject on the market, enough to overflow a good-sized landfill.

I look around my home office, and what do I see? My stuffed Dumbo, a gift from a friend. My Sandy Koufax signed baseball, another gift, most prized. A Goofy phone, even more prized, a gift from my son. (When the phone rings, Goofy, leaning against the stem that holds the receiver, suddenly awakens, eyes fluttering open, and exclaims, "Gosh. I must have fallen asleep!") My MC (Miles City, Montana) baseball cap, a swap with the coach of the amateur baseball team there. (There are lots of other baseball caps, too— *lots* of others.) Books, books, books everywhere— despite my having toted books and books and books out to the Little Free Library in the front yard, to St. Vinnie's, and to the local branch library for its book sales. I've had many of these books with me for decades.

There's also a large box full of free Christmas and greeting cards from various charities. Pictures of family and places of the heart. A mousepad cover that looks like a mouse. A little statue of a wolf. A miniature Mount Rushmore, made by a friend. Several Tasmanian Devils. Stacks of CDs. Boxes of recordings of old-time radio shows. A dog sleeping on the day bed. And the proverbial whole lot more.

In short, I wouldn't pass a fire marshal's inspection. Not even close.

I should just call 1-800-GOT-JUNK and let them have at it, right?

Actually, I did call them once, to come fetch a lot of stuff from the basement, which is like my office only colder and bigger. They did a great job! The basement's a mess again.

I do clean it and the office periodically, really I do. (Speaking of periodicals— there are tons of newspapers and magazines in here, too.) But some things— okay, many things— I've been unwilling to part with over the years.

I'm *still* not willing to part with them. And I've decided, perhaps in self-defense, that's not a bad thing.

Here comes the part where I justify the mess by quoting wise men and women on the correlation between clutter and a creative mind, right? Nope. Not going to bother (although I'm pretty sure it's true). Not going to tell you that "I know exactly where everything is," either. I'd be lying if I did. I spend a ridiculous amount of time looking for stuff (like the pen I just set down right here 10 minutes ago that has magically disappeared).

I won't justify the mess at all. I keep all this stuff because I like it. It comforts me. And thanks to my stuff, my office doesn't look like anybody else's office in the whole wide world.

Occasionally I reread a favorite book or look up a passage in one. I actually send freebie greeting cards. (I get that from my dad, who wrote me letters on stationery from the Shaw Hotel in San Francisco for years after he stayed there on a business trip. What I didn't get from Dad was how neat and organized he kept everything.) Sometimes I need Dumbo or Taz or Bugs or Daffy or a picture of Ellen, Jeremiah, and Buck the Wonder Dog that day we were at the lake or of my Grandfather Beymer, taken in his cluttered study. (Folks say I look a lot like him.)

So here it is, friends, my cluttered column about my clutter. If it gives even one of you comfort, perhaps momentary relief from a guilty conscience, my effort will not have been in vain.

** With thanks to my friend and mentor, Blake Kellogg.*

Jacob McLaughlin on Pop Culture

Jake harvests his top-10 from 2016 movie crop

While this year required a bit harder search for great films, I think this is a solid list of movies.

1) The Nice Guys-

Shane Black further proves that he can take two actors you wouldn't expect together and make them work comedic magic. Ryan Gosling is hysterical, and Russell Crowe is the best he's been in years. Easily the best comedy I've seen in quite some time.

2) Arrival-

Since 2009, the sci-fi genre has ventured into more intelligent territory. *Arrival* is one of the smartest movies to come out of the genre since *Snowpiercer*. Amy Adams gives a career best performance. You feel so attached to her character, and I was emotionally drained by the revelation in the film's final minutes. This is Denis Villeneuve's masterpiece.

3) Kubo and the Two Strings-

Not one other film this year had as much creativity, imagination, heart, and emotional depth as this movie. Laika continues to show that they are one of the best studios in this modern age of filmmaking. The animation is truly breathtaking, and the voice work is excellent.

4) Shin Godzilla-

The first Toho Godzilla film in twelve years; this is a semi-reboot of the series that still feels fresh. There are many scenes of people talking in boardrooms, but never does it feel boring. The film moves at a quick pace, and the new design of Godzilla is exciting and unique.

5) Captain America: Civil War-

Marvel released two of its best films this year. While this does have its fun moments, it also shows that they are capable of making a film in which serious issues work. The action is astonishing, the cast is spectacular, and it's emotionally rich.

6) Doctor Strange-

One of my favorite characters of all time finally got the big screen debut he deserved. Like *Guardians of the Galaxy* and *Ant-Man*, this movie wasn't afraid to get really weird, and it made for one of the best comic book films I've seen. Benedict Cumberbatch is well cast, and the visual effects are unlike anything I've ever seen— a huge feat these days.

7) Deadpool-

The best passion project of the year. The people behind this film represented the character perfectly, and this film stood out in the genre. Ryan Reynolds is pitch perfect, and the movie is an absolute blast. Definitely don't show it to your young children.

8) Hell Or High Water-

A fantastic modern Western. Chris Pine, Ben Foster, and Jeff Bridges are all excellently cast, Foster especially. The writing makes these characters feel like real people. It's one of the best crime films of this decade.

9) Star Trek Beyond-

The summer movies this year were mostly weak, but this one proved that this series still has a lot of life in it. Co-written by true fan Simon Pegg, this is the first film to truly feel like classic Trek since the original cast signed off with *The Undiscovered Country*. It's a great celebration of the series' 50 year legacy.

10) *Zootopia*-

Disney's best film in well over a decade. It teaches one of the best lessons of a modern animated film, one that really resonates. I think it's required viewing for any child. Its characters are memorable, the animation is gorgeous, and the voice work is solid.

Coach's note: You can read Jake's in-depth movie and concert reviews at his blog: www.seekerofschlock.blogspot.com.

Ron Hevey's Growing Up

Setting sail in the Mediterranean with the cruise people

My sweetie told me only two kinds take cruises: National Parks people and DisneyWorld people. Hardly cruise types but definitely National Parks people, we have planned our previous vacations in minute detail, We are do-it-yourself travelers. Planning to take our first cruise was new.

We added another twist when we bit on Viking's middle of winter Mediterranean cruise, one that promised fewer tourists and somewhat better weather than back home. Barcelona, Provence, and Italy beckoned.

In no time onboard the new Viking Star, we, the novices, were surrounded by cruise veterans, many on their fifth, sixth, or seventh. Discussions of intimate ships, everlasting food, and personal attention abounded, with plans for next cruises.

Cruising is about people and places, but first, and this may be a guy-thing, I must wax about the boat. Stunning in design, this new ocean-going vessel felt like a luxury hotel featuring ease of movement to theme restaurants and motif lounges, with waiters ever at our fingertips filling wine glasses.

Details sparkled: standing on curved satin-glass staircases we marveled at how, with forged clips holding them, they seemed airborne. We imagined old-school craftsmen at work. Doors wowed us. Every door on ship fit so well it would make Andersen jealous. Reminded me how doors never quite fit in our house the way they ought. More like a Swiss watch than structure, open spaces were filled with powder-coated ironwork screens and sculptures. Enamel-coated exteriors had nary a rusty bruise. Amsterdam's shipbuilders had brought excellence to this ship.

Mixing with interesting people does compensate for not traveling on your own. One Hawaiian couple talked up their recent cruise and their upcoming cruise; that makes three in less than a year. Did we have anything in common with these folks who travel all year - they looked so young? Aha, they had passed the "doing" stage and were working on "being."

A couple in their 80s, both Navy retirees, were chipper. He for 30 years flew and led aircraft carrier commands; she moved personnel around the world. Here were two people with eight children, 17 grandchildren, and five great grandchildren enjoying a well-deserved retirement.

One couple from Alberta had founded a global fashion company. He, an Indian refugee from Africa living in the far north, had prevailed in business. He planned public service to pay back their good fortune.

Sailing into ports on foggy morns, we saw cities peeking through mist to greet us. We were off to hill-top cities, many dating from 500 BC. Women guides, serious, working mothers all, knew their turf. The sites and the guides had one thing in common: both had descended 100 or so generations. Guides told similar stories about their civilizations going back to Iron Age regimes, typically lasting 300 to 500 years until recycled, reconfigured, and taken over.

Their civilizations were amalgams of indigenous, Greeks, Jews, Romans, Arabs, Africans, Goths, and Normans. Each civilization reached a point of disarray and a new civilization took over. One guide used the term "power shuffling." I felt I could see in their faces some of the many races who had invaded.

Dates and civilizations could be confusing, but the pattern was undeniable. One tour guide summed up with, "Some things never change." Did the gods send shiploads on cruises to learn lessons from history?

Back home Viking put us on top of their email list. Venice? Paris? Saint Petersburg? I got nervous when sweetie went quiet for long sessions on Viking's site, a place filled with temptation. How could we resist? Good trips sell out. Why not?

This time we'll make a few changes, fine tune our side trips, take Rick Steve's advice to customize, cut down the crowd gathering, long bus rides, and multiple potty stops. It wouldn't hurt to sign up once more.

MEET OUR NEW COLUMNIST

CHANEY LYONS PRESENTS LYONS' TALES

Two short profiles for you; now we want to read yours

Prologue

The *Lyons' Tale* is a class within this newsletter. Well, not a class exactly, a seminar–possibly a webinar–an online sharing of information, experiments, creativity about writing. An exchange, let's call it.

A conversation, I hope.

Here is how it works: I'll write a personal essay, a memory piece, biography, or journal recording about what interests me–an incident, idea or person I want to remember or believe others will. I'll share it with you. Then you write one. Send it to us if you'd like, and we'll print some of them (with your permission).

I'll share writing ideas and techniques for you to try out. We can learn together. Make your writings short–a nugget, a meaty paragraph of 100 words– or a biographical essay up to 2,000 words. At the end of our class you'll have a series of written pieces to assemble into a book. We'll do that, too. The book will become part of your history, your legacy.

I like to tell personal stories, narrative non-fiction about creative women, places, and art histories. Two artists star in the short biographical narratives that follow

Tara paints what she sees, feels

(Born 1947, Myanmar)

Tarra, a 42-year-old, 8'2" Asian elephant, is a painter- an abstract expressionist. Elephants paint what they see, what they hear. Tarra paints on a large, off-white artist's pad.

I watched as she wrapped her trunk around a large brush, contemplating colors. With bold strokes she spread a Cerulean blue on one side of the paper. Next, a pale teal she intentionally splattered across the rest of the paper—Pollock style. I wondered what she was observing.

Watching Tarra, listening to her, riding on her back were extraordinary. Today her painting hangs on my office wall.

(99 words)

Coach's note: Tarra now lives at The Elephant Sanctuary in Hohenwald Tennessee. www.elephants.com.

Julia communicated with her haunting paintings

(Born 1896, Delavan, Illinois; Died 1973, Chicago, Illinois)

A shy young farm girl with a knack for art-making, Julia Thecla became one of Chicago's best-known fantasy painters from the 1930s through the 1950s. She lived alone for the most part, distancing herself as a means of self-protection. A chicken (which she dyed pink) and a rabbit were her studio companions. She painted small, intimate, jewel-like, haunting images of girls and young women, ghostly figures and animals, and mysterious landscapes that evoked childlike wonder.

Julia was about five feet tall and wore her carrot-red hair in long curls. Her clothes had a turn-of-the-century look. Her friend David Porter said, "She appeared like the little girl she thought she was. She wore tiny vests, quilted skirts with tight waistbands and flaring hems, and high-button shoes."*

—Profile continues, next page

In her continuous search for herself, she appears frequently in her own paintings. She painted a striking self-portrait in a magical realism style in 1936. She places herself close to us, consuming most of the painting surface, which gives the painting a sense of intimacy that is immediately dispelled by her transfixed gaze.

Her works are personal visions applied to canvas and paper with technical skill and a colorist's sentiment, unaffected by changing styles or public opinion. She showed her paintings in Art Institute of Chicago exhibits, the Chicago Women's Art Salon, and Peggy Guggenheim's legendary exhibition of surrealists in New York City. During the Depression, she worked for the Federal Art Project. She painted into her seventies, until she began losing her eyesight. She died in a Chicago charity home in 1973.

* David Porter, *A Valentine for Julia* (Springfield: Illinois State Museum, 1984), catalog for the exhibition "Julia Thecla 1896–1973," Maureen A. McKenna, shown at the Illinois State Museum, Springfield, 1984.

* You can see Thecla's paintings at: https://www.google.com/search?q=julia+thecla&sa=N&biw=958&bih=540&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&ved=0ahUKEwj9iPGj1t7QAhXGz1QKHSK8C2k4ChDsCQgp Her Self Portrait (which is in the collection of the Illinois State Museum) is the last picture in the 3rd row. (*334 words*)

Epilogue

Your turn. Write about something that interests you— an event, a relative, a memorable holiday gift…Keep it short. As non-fiction master William Zinsser, advises, "Think small. Decide what corner of your subject you're going to bite off, and be content to cover it well and stop."*

Appeal to the senses. Be conversational. Use vivid imagery. Add sketches or pictures if you like. Read authors whose rhythms feel comfortable to you.

Write about something that interests you— an event, perhaps. Use story-telling techniques.

To share your work with us, send it to me at channy@mtco.com.

* Zinger, William, On Writing Well: an informal guide to writing non-fiction, Harper Perennial, 1990, p 63.

Ed Pahnke's Just for the Pun of It

Cheesy Danish

Walking into the Sublime Restaurant arm in arm with Annie, a new girl friend, Fritz Fabricus smiled, then pointed to a booth. The burley Dane was well known to several of the people seated in the dining room. A few of the women had dated the self-styled "Great Dane."

Though Fritz had been in the States less than a year from his native Denmark, he prided himself on being thoroughly Americanized as to history and terms past and present, knowledge that stood him as a useful asset.

Almost as soon as he arrived, he had landed an office job. He had superior electronic skills and a knack for seeing ways to cut costs.

His knack for cutting costs and budgeting extended into his private affairs – affairs of the heart. Whenever he heard of a party, he did his best to wheedle an invitation for a free meal and possibly meeting congenial women looking for a date. After all he was a "Great Dane."

Seated across the table from Annie, Fritz was ready for a feast. He studied the menu while sipping wine. He preferred the Sublime for two reasons: the name and the low low meal prices. Tonight he figured Annie for a woman with a zest for loving, and he desired her. He picked out two items – one for each of them - on the menu.

At that moment, Annie plunked down her menu, a frown on her face, and said, "Fritz, please let's go elsewhere, I know you like this place, but I'm not happy with the food and wine here." She fluttered her eyelids. "How about the Regal? We can really have a feast there."

Fritz almost choked on his wine. "Well, that might be OK another time, but I'm a little low on funds." He paused before smiling. "Maybe if we split the check?"

"Why, Fritz, I thought you had a real zest for life. I'm grateful I found out how you treat your dates to a feast. *Clearly with you, feast is feast and zest is zest and never the Dane shall treat."*

Coach's (E)Mail Bag

Comments on our last episode

Congratulations to all the contributors to *Extra Innings* Number 82. From the lead story, **Carma Smidt's** salute to veterans, to the photo of Lily picking apples, it's a seasonal and holiday delight. I shouldn't single out anyone in particular, but **Sandy Rafter's** and Coach's poems impressed me, plus the homage to trees, and **Kathy Giorgio's** powerful piece, "Clocks in Prisons." This is a fine display of writers and their words.

Madonna Dries Christensen

Dear Coach, I've just started reading the 'book' [rather lengthy newsletter] and indeed you do have some very fine writing in there. **Carma Smidt** (what a remarkable woman!), **Madonna Dries Christensen** and **Kathie Giorgio** - I've only gotten that far but they are great. I was also impressed by all the noted authors who have passed on. You really did an amazing job with this newsletter/book!

I want to thank you again for including my story [A retelling of the nativity story].

I'm sorry you are battling some health issues. You are always in my prayers and will be now with special care. May all be well with you. Keep me posted.
With love,

Pernetta.[Deener]

P.S. A man who has been on the board of the Polish Museum of America read my book and through my son-in-law asked me to contact the museum. I spoke with two people there and then sent them copies of my book. I'm hoping they may wish to have it in their gift shop. I have a feeling this may be a slow process but may eventually work.

Coach's Bullpen Briefs

This just in at press time

Giorgio nominated for Pushcart Prize

Prairie Schooner has nominated author, poet, and teacher **Kathie Giorgio,** director of the All Writers' Workplace and Workshop, for inclusion in the *Pushcart Press* annual publication of the best of the small presses. Congratulations Kathie!

From our department of bloviated verbiage

My buddy **Pedro Hiort-Lorenzen** writes in to say "I called an old college friend and asked what was he doing. He replied that he is working on 'Aqua-thermal treatment of ceramics, aluminum, and steel under a constrained environment.'"

"I was impressed.....

"On further enquiring I learned that he was washing dishes with hot water .....Under his wife's supervision."

Pedro also wonders why men say that women should come with instructions. "What's the point of that?" he queries. "Have you ever seen a man actually read the instructions?

Esther's news

Esther M. Leiper-Estabrooks designed the front and back covers of NYC poet Barbara Hantman's ninth book, *BATSHEVAS WONDER WEAVE*. Esther also has a regular column on poetry in *WESTWARD QUARTERLY*, a Christian-based family magazine. Editor Shirley Anne Leonard likes "upbeat writers and poets," Esther notes.

THE BAY STATE ECHO published Esther's sonnet, "Rain is a summer bummer."

New blog alert

Regular *E.I.* contributor **Phyllis Babrove** writes to let us know that she just registered for a domain the other day and has started her blog. "Of course is's a work in progress (slow progress)," she notes, "but I'll get there."

You'll find her at mirikalblog.com

The Poets Have the Antepenultimate Words

The love knot lovers' caveat

Esther M. Leiper-Estabrooks

Pledged hearts and laughter, Valentines shun paltry prose
Yet time moves faster. That detail lovers' fears and woes.
--Love forever-- Far better hues of pink and red
Forgetting? NEVER! Good to warm the heart instead
Thus—for better or for worse--
It's nice to pen some fancy verse!

Tracks on Frigid Days

Jan Bosman

Hieroglyphics
beside the screened porch:
a mole, a mouse,
two Juncos?

Puppy paw prints:
Neighbors begin
again after
old Golden dies.

Squirrel furrows lead
to bird feeders,
back to dreys
in hollow trees.

Ugg boot treads
trail toward mailbox,
garage, front door,
back inside snug house.

In January, trackleft behind
quickly
on frigid days.

Arthur's hill

Bonny Conway

The cottage stood beside a shore
gulls pecked out glass winds took the door
abandoned place beach hideaway
where a lonely boy sneaked off to play

he believed a dune was Camelot
with him as king of battles fought
buffing his sword a silver sheen
he jousted with seaweed to save his queen

covered with armor flashing a shield
he hid the scars time never healed
on phantom steed he galloped to sea
aiming his spyglass where the man should be

the ships were in he stepped aside
on shoulders strong he longs to ride
the sailors passed but no one claims
one small child who believes in games

a king is brave a boy is not
without a father in Camelot

Their elders' echoes

John Manesis

"*Believe it or not, Chicago Cubs end*
the curse, win the 2016 World Series."
Jill Martin, CNN

In the decisive seventh game,
spurred on by several home runs,
stellar base running and clutch pitching,
the Chicago Cubs led until the eighth inning
when Chapman, their overused reliever
who had lost a yard off his fast ball,
allowed Cleveland to score three runs
and tie the game which stayed that way
until the end of regulation play.
Rain held up the contest 30 minutes
and when the game resumed,
the Cubs scored two runs in the tenth.
In the bottom of that frame,
after the Indians had scored once,
Kris Bryant fielded a two out grounder
and threw to first baseman Anthony Rizzo
to get the final out—Chicago 8, Cleveland 7.
The winners rushed to the infield
to revel in their hard earned victory,
the Cubs first World Series win
since their 1908 team of acclaim
which included the infield combo
of Tinker to Evers to Chance.
Live TV footage showed a festival
of Chicagoans in bars and streets,
roaring with delight, their voices amplified
by their elders echoes, present and past,
who hoped they'd live to see
the Cubs win it all.
Now that their team prevailed,
battling back from a 3 games to 1 deficit,
the time had come to celebrate.
One wonders if the rain delay
had helped to end a century of drought,
rewarding fans who had suffered
through many disappointments
but still came out to see their Cubs.

These valiant spirits

Norma J. Sundberg

for Jessie Caroline

A wisp of wind
Brushes past my chair
A child flits by racing down
The hallway behind me
I turn to find
No one there....

This Spirit Child
Soon to-be-born,
Is visiting, checking out
Her new home,
Then returning to the Father
For further instruction.

Lessons in this Spirit-world
More intense
Because learning on this
Worldly plane will be
More difficult than for those
Before.

Has Heavenly Father
Saved them for last,
These Valiant Spirits
Who must be able
To endure, in joy and sorrow,
To the end?

THIS WONDERFUL, WISE OLD DOG HAS THE PENULTIMATE WORD

It it wise to link patience with discretion.

BUT LILY *ALWAYS* HAS

THE LAST WORD

with Grandpa Coach. (She knows he isn't the real Santa because she's *seen* the *real* Santa!)
photo by Lily's mom