
THE REVIEW

The Lifelong Learning Institute
NATIONAL LOUIS UNIVERSITY

Volume 13 - December 2020

TO LLI MEMBERS:

The final lines of my letter to you in last year's edition of *The Review* read as follows:

"This year, with the publication of the 2019 edition, I plan to retire from my position as Managing Editor. I know my successor will obtain great satisfaction in working with the bright and amazingly talented LLI members."

Within two days after our party for *The Review*, two LLI members approached me to help with the publication. Wade Bartlett and Lynn Steinberg became Copy Editors who reviewed the Prose and Poetry entries as they arrived. I stayed on to mentor and to process the document. Without *The Review* 2020 Editorial Board, and without each of you who submitted your works and made donations, there would be no *Review*.

Since the offices of LLI were closed early this year because of the Covid-19 pandemic, all classes were held remotely. In spite of this, there was an outpouring of creative submissions in sufficient amounts to produce this year's *Review*.

The process of honoring the best entries of Prose, Poetry and Art/Photography has been changed. *The Review's* juries voted on the winners in each respective group instead of using outside judges. The winners' comments on their work follow:

NANCY ANDERSON, ON HER PROSE ENTRY: A FISHY TALE.

"I always felt sorry for the poor lobsters lying, claws bound, bottom of the tank in restaurants and groceries. How about a story where a woman frees them where she shops? Could be funny; we all need a good laugh these days! Throw in a bit of magic realism and kids like my grandchildren. I had fun writing it."

SUSAN CHERTKOW, ON HER POETRY ENTRY: WAITING FOR MY GARDENIAS TO BLOOM.

"The inspiration for my poem came from the following:

One stubborn gardenia bud
A wistful mood
Lingering memories
Unfulfilled dreams
Flowery seduction
The desire to express inexpressible beauty."

ROSLYN GLATTMAN-HIRSCH, ON HER REVIEW COVER ARTWORK/PHOTO: VIEW OF THE PACIFIC

"This view of the Pacific was taken at low tide just below a pier in La Jolla, California, near Scripps University. The gentle waves, the beautiful blue water and sky, and the soft breezes are why Vasco Núñez de Balboa named this the *Pacific* (Peaceful) *Ocean*."

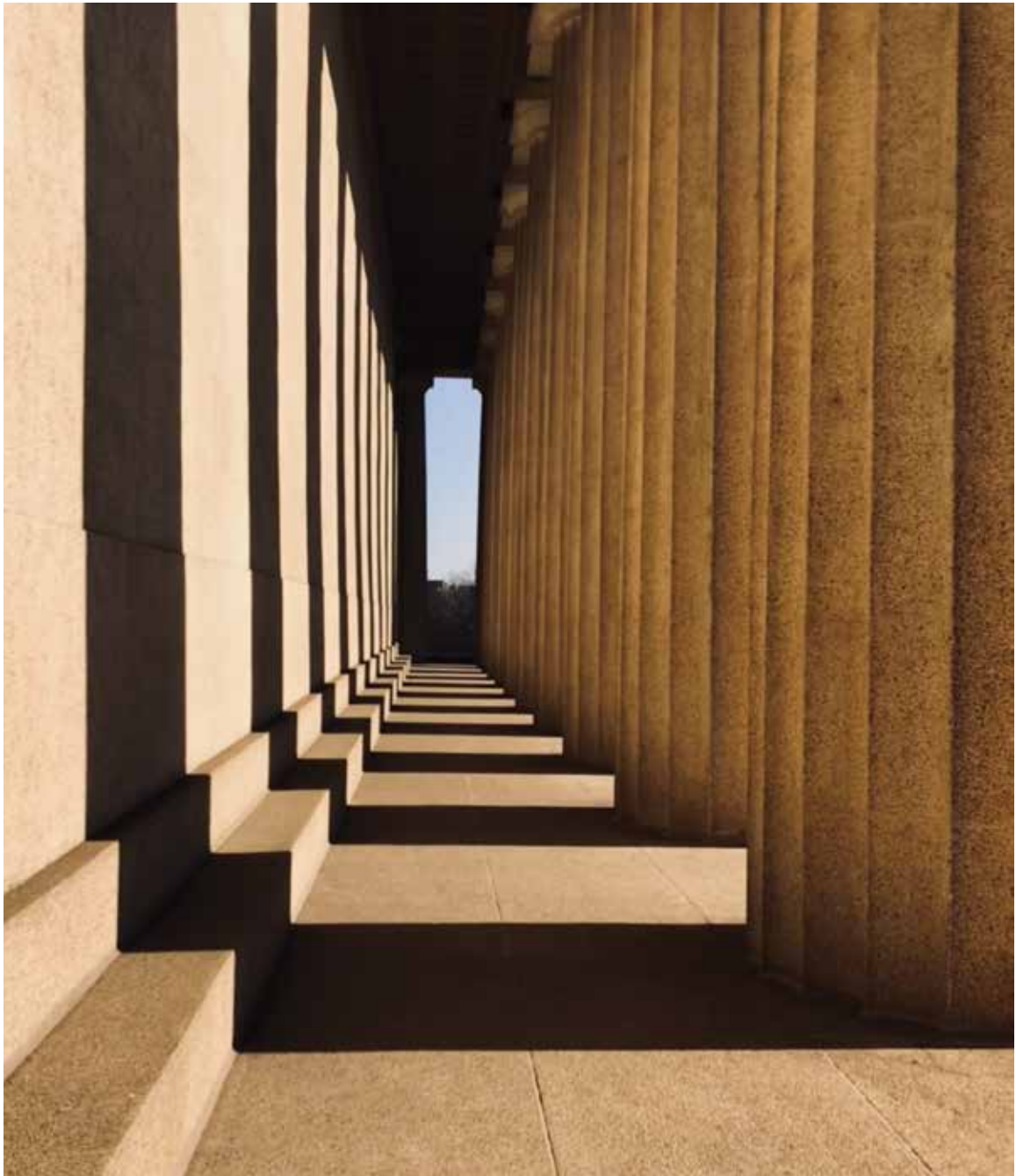
I wish you all good health and happy times.

Respectfully,



Ivan Berk
Managing Editor

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The Parthenon photograph by Roslyn Glattman-Hirsch

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A FISHY TALE

by Nancy Anderson

Family always meant to look away when walking by the live lobster tank in Jewel grocery. She had to pass by the lobsters to get to the meat section, and sometimes she forgot to look away in time. Then she'd see them, their pincers bound, their beady little eyes, some just lying miserably on the bottom of the tank, while others would be desperately moving their long antennae, at nothing. The tank was so crowded she wondered if they could filter enough oxygen.

Today was a holiday from teaching her science class at the local high school. She was absent-mindedly wondering if her husband Joe could get away early from his job as professor at Southeastern Community College. So she was not vigilant, and she forgot to look away. Five lobsters looked back at her. She was sure they were saying, "Help!" This time she felt more than the usual sorrow for them. This time something in Emily snapped. Overwhelmed by a soaring devious idea, she looked around. No other shoppers anywhere near and no grocery workers behind the tank and fish counter.

Pretending to be pre-occupied with something behind her, turning her head, she summoned all the strength in her five foot two inch body and rammed her shopping cart forward into the tank! The huge

crash sent glass and water rushing towards her, propelling five lobsters to her feet.

Shaking and quivering, she grabbed them by their tails and managed to push three of them into one of her shopping bags, two into the other. She grappled them into her cart; the overhead PA system began blaring for "team members" to come to the fish counter. She walked as fast as she could without attracting attention, towards the exit doors of the store.

"Help!" cried the lobsters.

"Shush! Shush!" she warned them. "I am helping!" No one paid her any attention—just one of many middle-aged female shoppers. The "team members" were too busy trying to find the escaped lobsters and mopping up all the water. Many customers were pushing their baskets toward the fish counter to see what all the commotion was about.

Emily grasped the two moving grocery bags and, slinging her purse over an arm, escaped from the store, hurried to her car, and hefted the two bags onto the back seat.

She pulled into her driveway at 4:00 p.m., grabbed the squirming bags from her back seat, and because Joe's car was in the garage, found the kitchen door unlocked. Her tall lanky husband was pouring himself a cold beer. "Hi Joe, my, you're home early," she gulped. "How nice."

"Hi dear, I got home early from my faculty meeting, and...what in the name of..." he muttered, eyeing the writhing grocery bags she'd placed on the counter.

“Now Joe, I can explain,” she began, “Please stay calm, enjoy your beer, whatever.”

“Explain? Explain what? What **is** that?”

“It’s just that I had to help them. They were so very miserable.”

“Uh, *who* was miserable?”

“These guys. Look at them!” and she pulled open a bag, motioning him over to look.

He did. “Yoweee! What in the world...”

“We have to help them, Joe!”

“But...but...” Unable to form words, Joe was babbling.

“I rescued them from Jewel. No one saw me run out the door with them, or rather some people saw me, but they didn’t know I had them instead of groceries in my bags.”

“But Emily,” Joe was beginning to get his wits back, “you didn’t PAY for them! You stole them!”

“Oh? All right. That can be remedied. I will pay for them. But for now, we have to keep all five of them alive until we return them to the sea!”

“The sea!? Emily, we live in Iowa! There’s not a ‘sea’ available for thousands of miles!” He collapsed onto a kitchen chair, his kind brown eyes unfocused and his long arm and hand clasped to his forehead. “Emily, you’ve got to take them back!”

Emily pulled out another chair and sank into it.

“Okay, okay, let’s think. One step at a time. How do we keep them alive until we figure out how to get them to the sea and salt water?”

“You’re not going to take them back.”

“No, Joe, we just need to keep them alive. We’ll find a way.”

“Okay.” Joe knew arguing with Emily was useless.

“Why don’t you Google how to save lobsters until they’re in salt water? There must be a way,” he said wearily.

The rustling sounds were becoming quieter, and she worried about this. She Googled the question. “It says keep them covered with a damp cloth if out of salt water. Their gills must be kept moist to extract oxygen from the air.”

“Sure, okay. But where do we put them while this gill wetting is going on? Oh Lord...”

“How ’bout one of those large boxes in the basement? We can close the top and poke holes in the side for air to get in.” She ran down the stairs, got a big box, and placed it next to the lobsters.

“All right. Have you thought about what we tell the kids when they get home?”

Emily drew her dark eyebrows together and thought. “Let’s tell them the truth—including the part about paying the store,” she added piously.

Just then the door opened and Lily and Ethan burst in, ready to fling their backpacks into their rooms.

“What’s that?” cried Lily.

“The bags are moving!” shouted Ethan, his eyes wide and staring,

“Your mother can explain,” sighed Joe.

And so Emily told them the whole story, including

all the problems involved. "Cool!" they both said. Joe smiled weakly.

Ethan, age ten, was busy on his iPad. "They need salt water," he told them. "And did you know there are several kinds of lobsters? Which kind did you steal, Mom?"

Joe stood up. "She did not steal these lobsters. We are going to pay for them."

"Cool!" the kids said again. "Let's see them!" said Ethan.

Emily walked to the bags; the rest of them followed. She carefully opened one a little. There three of them were, one lying on top of the two, with their beady little eyes and rubber banded claws. They were green and brown, looking to be about a pound and a half each, and maybe a foot long. "Oh! They'll turn red when cooked," said Ethan. Everyone stared at him.

"Not going to do that," said Emily, in her firm teacher voice.

Lily asked, in her pragmatic way, "What now, then?"

"It says we need to cover them with damp rags so their gills can take in oxygen," said Ethan. Emily didn't tell him she'd already looked this up. "Lily and I can do that," Ethan added.

So Ethan and Lily put the lobsters in the box, wet some old rags and covered them. Then they left to do homework. The lobsters appeared now to be sleeping. Joe looked at Emily.

"So, I expect you'll come up with a plan for this?" he said. Emily nodded her head. Joe took this as a chance to escape the problem by going out to fix

something in the garage. Emily was left alone with the lobsters.

"You know we need salt water, preferably ocean water."

Emily jumped, her heart thumping wildly. She wondered if she was losing her mind.

"I said we need salt water, Emily, like Ethan said!" This time she couldn't deny it. One of the lobsters had crawled up onto the back of another, his head barely above the box top. He looked at her. "Emily, we need salt water! Lots of it!" he repeated. He flailed his thin antennae about.

"Oh my God, I've lost it," she moaned.

"No, you haven't, Emily. And I can tell you what to do next."

Emily shook her head, took a deep breath. But when she looked, the lobster was still there, looking at her. "What?" she finally managed.

"Find us a nice big salt water tank. About 20 gallons."

"20 gallons! Where in the world am I going to find that? Oh my God, I'm talking to a lobster."

"Try an aquarium. I'm tired now. I have to rest." He crawled back over the other lobster to rest on the bottom of the box.

Emily grabbed her purse and car keys. As she was getting into her car, Joe called from the garage, "Where are you going?"

"To get a tank."

"To get what?"

“A tank,” and she backed out, screeched to a halt, then sped forward towards the nearest aquarium she remembered seeing, J.T. Aquarium.

“A tank. Sure. Why not? Lobster pets.” Joe had learned long ago not to try too hard to understand all of Emily’s actions. He returned to the predictability of his garage project.

Mr. Troutsky had owned and worked at the aquarium for 25 years. He prided himself on his knowledge and ingenuity when working with customers. He was bent over, finishing the job of cleaning a tank and returning the popular clownfish to their home. No one called them by their scientific name, Amphiprioninae, which he liked to share with his customers. He’d just popped a fish food pellet into his mouth when he heard someone enter the store. He gave his right gill a scratch, and stood up, pushing his glasses up onto his nose.

“Hello. I wonder if you could help me?” Emily began.

“Yes, what can I do for you?” He hoped she might be looking for a clownfish, since he’d stocked so many due to customers’ preferences.

“Well, ah, I’m Emily Brown,” she said.

“Jerome Troutsky, at your service,” he answered proudly.

“Well, Mr. Troutsky, I have five lobsters that need a tank.”

“Ah, you can keep them alive for a few days without need of a tank. They will be fine when you cook them,” he offered.

“No, that’s not what I plan. I want to keep them safe

and alive. We’re too far from any salt water, or I’d return them there.”

“Oh, I see.” Mr. Troutsky considered Emily. She had all the trappings of a normal middle-class woman. She was well dressed and spoke appropriately, and she had obviously driven herself here. He’d worked with a variety of requests; for example, the last one, a man with a pet alligator who needed food for it. Now here was a woman wishing to save five sea creatures. He smiled.

“You’ll need at least a 20 gallon tank, with salt water, a recirculating system, cold temperature of 40-45° F, pumps, a filtration system. You’re going to need to feed them and then remove their feces from the bottom...” He waited to see if she was really up to all this.

“Fine! I’ll do it. What’ll it cost me?” Emily asked. Mr. Troutsky listed the needed purchases and handed her a bill.

Emily paid for the tank and delivery, and left. Mr. Troutsky popped another fish pellet. In light of the day’s transaction, he felt he deserved it. As usual, he looked forward to his evening swim.

The next day the tank was delivered, and with the aide of long suffering Joe, the tank with lobsters, bands off their claws, now sat at one end of the living room, taking up all the wall space. “Cool!” said the two kids.

After a while, the family tired of watching the happy lobsters soaking up oxygen and enjoying the food pellets dropped in to them and everyone went to bed.

But after everyone was asleep, Emily crept into the living room to see how the lobsters were doing. One of them (the same one?) crawled to the glass wall and said, “Emily. We thank you. However, we forgot to tell you a few things before he took those awful bands off our claws. We tend to fight over space, and can't really help it. We love to fight! If you want to keep us all alive, you might put some mesh walls between us. And, soon, very soon, you're going to need a bigger tank for us, because, of course we'll grow bigger. In the wild, we can live to be 100 years

old! We could grow to four feet long! We'll need a much bigger tank, maybe twice our total weight. We can grow to 40 pounds. That would mean a 400 gallon tank.”

Emily gasped, and grabbed the back of a chair.

Seeing this, the lobster continued, “But cheer up, Emily! You don't have to walk us, and we won't ever pee on your floor!”

Unknown to Emily and the lobsters, the kids were watching from the hallway. “Cool!” they said.



Morning Rocks photograph by David Herd

WAITING FOR MY GARDENIAS TO BLOOM

by *Susan Chertkow*

There's one gardenia bud on the whole bush.
Two weeks now—
one bud on the whole bush.
I've waited for the bud to unwrap, to bloom,
but no change—
It's still firmly sealed.

For my first formal dance, my date brought me
a gardenia corsage.
The fragrance was so pungent, I took it off
my wrist and pinned it to my clutch purse.
Then I left the purse in a safe, remote location
until it was time to go home.

When I was with my husband and kids
at Disney's Epcot in Florida, I saw a small
field that had been planted with gardenias.
I bent down to the ground and inhaled
the scent, took in the creamy white petals
nestled in dark, glossy leaves.
The flower had finally seduced me.

Now, I tend to my own gardenia bush
in its cobalt blue planter, and I wait—
but not patiently.

I make plans.
When I have blooms, I will float
one in a glass bowl.
I will wear one in my hair or
I'll give myself a corsage and pin it on my chest.

I am waiting for my gardenias to bloom.

THE KID NEXT DOOR

by Donald Draganski

Bobby yawned. It was a quiet afternoon. No, not just quiet, but empty, a void, a vacuum. Bobby's parents were busy at their grown-up activities, while all of Bobby's friends were away on vacation. Time hung heavily as he stared out the window into the empty street below.

A moving van pulled up to the apartment house next door as Bobby watched the movers carrying furnishings and cartons into the first floor flat. Pretty soon he spotted a kid his age spring out of a car, into the building, then out again onto the sidewalk. After debating with himself for few moments, he decided to go down and make friends with the new kid. Bobby approached him, and after a few preliminary remarks ("Hi," "Hi") the new kid suddenly grabbed the totally unexpected Bobby around the waist and wrestled him to the ground. Before long the two were embroiled in a totally unanticipated scuffle. Bobby must have got his face knocked about, for his nose soon began to bleed freely. This was a clear sign that the entertainment had entered into a new and more dangerous phase, so they parted while Bobby went in to get his nose mended.

After awhile Bobby went back outside and there stood the new kid, this time beaming and smiling beatifically. He took Bobby's hand, showed him some sort of secret mumbo-jumbo handshake,

introduced himself as Jim Johnson, and declared that they were now till-death-do-us-part pals. Evidently Jim was a firm believer in testing loyalty by fire. Two people simply couldn't consider themselves friends until they had engaged in battle, and if one of the parties drew blood, so much the better. Jim felt it was best to get the preliminaries out of the way right at the outset.

Bobby's mother never approved of "that Johnson boy," and Bobby never asked why, although there had been rumors about some dark episode in Jim's fatherless family. In any case, Jim's mother was away at work during the day, leaving her son pretty much free to roam about at will. Even before his household goods were unpacked, Jim was already sniffing and mapping the neighborhood boundaries, clearly defining the borders between "us" and "them."

Bobby, the quiet introvert, quickly latched on to Jim as he reveled in his new friend's outspoken and bold forays. Jim taught Bobby mumbledy-peg and any number of other games played in the hard-packed sooty soil of Chicago's parkways. Bobby's mother entertained some misgivings over her son's playing with knives, but his father was secretly delighted to see his bookish son involved in a bit of rough-and-tumble play. The two boys would roam throughout the neighborhood, and even beyond as they occasionally trespassed onto alien turf, with the inevitable hasty retreat as they encountered a threatening gang.

Jim also drew upon a rich fantasy world of his own, entertaining Bobby with wild and exciting stories about his life, often set in Alaska and other far-flung places. Bobby suspected that most of these stories

were products of Jim's imagination, but he was held rapt by the exuberance of their delivery. Jim was at heart a lonely kid, and his ease in making friends and organizing cabals among the neighborhood gamins was probably his way of creating a family to replace the one he lacked.

That summer, filled with its discoveries, its explorations, its unanticipated adventures, soon came to an end and Bobby wondered if he and Jim would be attending the same school. One morning he went next door to ask Jim what his plans were for the fall. Bobby knocked. There was no response. The door was ajar as he pushed it open and peered into an empty apartment. It took a few moments for Bobby to realize that Jim and his mother had

evidently moved away quickly and quietly the previous evening. There had been no goodbyes. Bobby loitered in confusion for a while in the hope that there might be a message or even a brief return, but he soon realized that Jim was gone for good. There would be no more secret handshakes, no more stories, no more explorations.

Like a brief summer shower that refreshes the ground and is quickly gone, like a meteor that darts across the night sky for a few dazzling moments, Jim had arrived that magical summer, cast his spell, and then disappeared.

Bobby headed back to his apartment and sat by the window. He yawned. It was a quiet afternoon, empty and void—without Jim.

THE LILAC TREE

by Anne Wold

Sometimes she blooms
In full color.
And sometimes not.
I need her beauty.

Her buds appear
Signaling that soon
She will arrive.
I wait patiently.

I am not disappointed.
Her buds flower
Into a majestic violet
Overwhelming me.

Her perfumed flowers
Surround my senses
Reminding me of my mother
And her love.

I am calmed.
Her presence reassures me
That her beauty will overpower
My feeling of despair.

THE MASK OF THE CORONAVIRUS

by Nancy Anderson

They came by private transportation. Some in their Learjets, some driving their Mercedes, Jaguar or Tesla. All healthy and wealthy. No need to pack anything but essential medicines, favorite jewelry and resort clothing. Everything else would be provided.

James Hefner, an attorney, with his wife and two children, drove in their BMWx6M, a more conservative choice. “How long till we’re there, Dad?” Mikey, age eight, was asking for the third time.

James answered automatically, “About twenty minutes.” Then, “Getting tired of your iPad games?” He keeps bothering me with his iPad problems,” Jimmy, age 11, complained.

“Why don’t you boys look out the window at the pretty scenery?” suggested Beth, the mom. Silence. They were back on their iPads.

The closer they got to Paradise Now, the more James felt his panic sliding away. Sure, he was sad to leave Loralie, his very secret indulgence. He would miss their Tuesday and Friday afternoon liaisons. She was paid well, but, ah, the sex was magnificent! Realizing he’d been daydreaming again, while following the usual road to his grandfather’s home, he saw he’d driven over the long causeway to the island. Up ahead was a gated entry. An armed guard

approached the car. James rolled down the window, “I.D. please,” said the very serious guard. He wore gloves and a mask. James showed his I.D. The guard raised his eyebrows. “Sorry, Mr. Hefner. We need for everyone to stay in the car while taking the test.” Then, each family member was given the Covid 19 test. Finally, the family was pronounced free of the virus and allowed to drive through the entry and down a winding road.

Up ahead loomed an enormous Gothic Revival mansion, circa 1927. It overlooked the Pacific Ocean. James knew that it had 90 rooms, 66,000 square feet, offering every amenity imaginable. All the windows were high off the ground, and all were barred. Their host, they knew, was already there. James and family were arriving by special invitation from his grandfather, H.H. Here they would be safe from the virus.

They drove to the main entrance, a massive steel door. Following the cars in front of them, they eventually pulled to a stop near the main door. The minute they stopped, the kids scrambled from the car.

“Everyone wait here,” said James. He strode toward the door. Two bellmen sprang forward.

“Can we help you?”

“Yes, all the luggage in the trunk, inside.” He marched his family inside to the front desk.

“Certainly!” called one of the bellmen, and he produced a rolling cart, emptied the car of its luggage, and rolled it up to where the family stood. He was a handsome man, tall, with dark hair, a deep tan, and clear blue eyes.

“Name’s Robert. Good to meet you!” and he held out his hand to shake.

James gave him a cool smile and a nod of the head. He found him to be flippant, unlike any bellmen he was used to. He had no intention of shaking anyone’s hand, and certainly not a servant’s! This viral pandemic made touching taboo. “Well, there you go then. Have a great stay!” Robert offered.

“There’s a special dinner tonight in the main dining room. H.H. will be there to welcome everyone,” said the clerk at the desk. *So here he is—H.H. in his Paradise. I’m just lucky he’s my grandfather. And all my legal services to him, my spins on the law for him, sure helped. And now, why should I grieve for the rest of the world—let the rest of the world take care of itself!*

TWO WEEKS EARLIER

Walking from the fridge to the kitchen counter, Rosa lost her balance when her right slipper flopped sideways and, grabbing the counter, she dropped the half-gallon of milk. It broke open and flooded the floor. She burst into tears, sobbing loudly. Roberto ran in from the living room. “What happened?”

“I dropped the milk,” she sobbed. “I’m sorry,”

“It’s OK, no problem! Here, I’ll mop it up.”

“But that’s all the milk we had. We won’t have it for the girls’ cereal, our coffee, or anything else. It’ll be weeks before we dare go get food again,” she sobbed.

“Rosa, we’ll manage. It’s OK.”

This stay-at-home directive from the government was unnerving to both of them. Shortages at grocery stores because people had been hoarding. Fears

of contracting the virus during their short frantic visits to the grocery and pharmacy, because there was no one left doing deliveries. Roberto finished mopping up and consoled Rosa as best he could. His usual tall erect posture was slumped and dispirited, and his usually clear blue eyes were full of worry. His black beard and hair were disheveled and long. His business was failing—two women’s clothing boutiques, both closed due to lack of customers. Women weren’t interested in new clothes, since they seldom left the house. Rosa had been furloughed from her computer company. Roberto and Rosa’s once-substantial savings were gone, their investments disappearing in the stock market dive, and they were worried about how to pay mortgage, bills, everything.

“I had an email today from Alicia. She said she and Martin are living in Paradise Now! They’re working for H.H. She’s cooking and he’s a bellman. She wants to know how we are, if we’re healthy and how our clothing business is doing.”

“Did you tell her the truth?” asked Roberto. Rosa nodded grimly.

“That’s OK. No use hiding the truth about the business. The fact that we’re here illegally—that’s the truth we never share! Certainly not in an email.”

“Of course, Roberto. Of course not.”

Later that evening, Rosa said, “Guess what? I got another email from Alicia. She and Martin want to know if you’d like to apply to be a bellman at Paradise Now. And maybe I could find work there, too. They’ll put in a good word for us. It’s a huge place—over 300 people. They need lots of staff.”

“A bellhop? Caramba, Rosa! How would we live

on such a small salary? And do I really look like a bellhop?” he laughed.

“Well, with your good looks, and pleasant manner, yes, I bet you’d pass. And there are servants’ wings in the building, and I’m sure room and board is paid for. Plus, we’d be safe from the virus!”

“But we hate H.H.! The people who are his pets, his toadies, are obnoxious, selfish millionaires who don’t care for anyone but themselves!”

Rosa let a moment pass. “The hospitals are triaging dying patients. The number of deaths rises daily. We must protect our girls. Mi querido, do we really have a choice?”

* * * *

Life in Paradise Now was good for James and his family. Their rooms were beautifully decorated and furnished. Dining in the gold and crystal main dining room was a gastronomical treat. “Let’s stop by the bar for a drink before dinner,” Beth suggested. “The nanny can bring the children to the dining room later.”

“Sure.” James had noticed Beth was drinking even more since they had moved here. By eight each night she was pretty much out of it. It hadn’t bothered James when she had done this before they moved. After all, if he’d found Beth too drunk to be interested in sex, there was always Loralie. Ah, Loralie, her musical name...but now, many weeks with no Loralie...he’d begun to miss her more and more. He’d begun to daydream of her, of them...

After a long evening of wining and dining, James and Beth staggered back to their rooms. James was feeling romantic—well, horny. “No, dear, not

tonight. I’m too tired and my head hurts,” said Beth, as she collapsed onto their bed. *That does it. I need Loralie! I’ll find a way,* James thought.

* * * *

Roberto and Rosa had a very nice apartment; each girl had her own bedroom. The kitchen was modern and well equipped, and Roberto, the chef in the family, enjoyed cooking in it. Rosa helped the girls with their on-line school assignments. They shared grounds with others who worked as staff or servants. Everything was going well, despite their dislike for H.H. and his wealthy guests, a feeling they tried to bury. Roberto was trying to get into his role as bellman and he was concerned about an incident two days before.

Relaxing between duties, Roberto had been talking to Martin, his friend and fellow bellman. “Our lives have improved since moving here,” he said. “We were always living in fear of the virus.” Robert was honest with Martin because he trusted him. Martin, also from Mexico, was a legal immigrant. “I wish, like you, I’d gotten my green card. Never was able to find the time to go through the steps to become legal. Work, raising two girls, took all my time.” He sighed.

Suddenly, Martin bolted upright, rolling his eyes to the right. James had just come around the corner, and was standing, looking at Roberto. It was clear that he’d overheard the conversation. “I need you to drive me to the golf course, Roberto. I have a ten o’clock tee time, and it’s quarter of ten.”

“Certainly, Mr. Hefner. Right away!” Roberto walked quickly to the golf equipment building, grabbed James’ preferred bag of clubs and balls, and drove

back to where James stood, tapping his foot. He drove James to the golf course on the mainland in silence, but this wasn't unusual. "Have a good game, James! Oh, I mean Sir!" he called out, leaving James at the course and driving back to the main building. Now he couldn't stop worrying. *Did he hear me?*

Well, well, isn't that interesting. James had thought. *What would H.H., whose playmates hate illegal immigrants, do with that information? H.H. doesn't care, but he wants to keep them pleased with him.* He thought some more, came up with a plan, and smiled.

* * * *

One day, H.H., tall and still slender, but age revealing with his darkly dyed hair and cosmetically enhanced face, now mask-like, walked through the lobby with his playmates. The manager on duty called out, "All Rise." Everyone, including James, immediately rose from his or her seat and stood until they left the lobby. James saw Roberto go to get H.H.'s golf cart. Then, as soon as H.H. drove off, he walked up to Roberto.

"I understand you're here illegally," he whispered, wasting no words. "It's a good thing H.H. doesn't know," he sneered. "His playmates hate aliens and H.H. is frantic to please them." Roberto went white and wide-eyed. He was speechless. "And no one will tell him, no one who's your friend," continued James.

"Are you threatening me?" Roberto gasped.

"Oh no, because we're friends. And as a friend, I need you to do me a favor."

"Yes, sir, what favor?"

"I need you to secretly get me through the gate and outside tomorrow evening."

Roberto's pulse raced, his hands clenched. "I can't do that! It's the worst offense. I'll lose my job, and... and, it's dangerous!"

"OK, I'll just have a little talk with H.H. today..." and James began to walk away.

"Wait!" Thoughts of Rosa and the girls sent back into the world of the virus raced through his head. "How far are you going? And will you be wearing gloves and a mask at all times?" he asked desperately.

"Of course. Not far. Someone will be waiting for me. Back by the next day at noon."

Robert did the only thing he could do.

* * * *

The next evening at ten p.m. Roberto drove James, lying hidden on the back floor of the car, to the gate. He knew the guard on duty usually fell asleep soon after sundown. The guard was asleep! Quietly reaching behind the guard, Roberto hit the button that electronically opened the gate. James jumped out, and hurried to the red Corvette and the dark woman waiting for him.

At noon the next day, Loralie dropped James off around the corner from the gate. A passionate kiss, and a sprint through the gate to the car while Roberto distracted the inept guard. Roberto drove James back to Paradise Now and a ruffled but smiling James said, "That worked out fine, my friend. Perhaps we'll do it again!" He jumped out before a nervous Roberto could answer.

Back in their rooms, Beth was trying to wake up after an evening of heavy drinking. "Did you go for a morning run or something?" she mumbled over her coffee.

“Morning, dear. Yes. Now for a shower.” And he was gone before she came out of her fog.

Four days later, when James was planning on asking Roberto for a repeat of their very successful escapade, he awoke feeling hot and achy. He was surprised to find he had a fever of 102 degrees.

Must have caught a cold or even the flu, not wearing a sweater in the air-conditioned rooms here, he thought. He took an aspirin and had a cold beer. By late afternoon he started coughing. He took some ibuprofen for his painful throat and went to bed early. By morning he was coughing deeply and constantly, and he began to find himself gasping for breath. Beth telephoned the house doctor. He arrived, surprised to find someone with anything more serious than a sprained ankle. As James coughed at him, he backed up, yelling, “Cover your mouth! Use any material and wrap it around your mouth and nose! Make a mask!” Beth grabbed a dishtowel, put it over James’ mouth, then wrapped it around his head like a mask and tied it.

“I need to take your temperature,” the doctor said, placing his hand on James’ forehead. “You’re burning up!” he exclaimed.

“And it’s hard to breathe,” gasped James.

The doctor then did a strange thing. He backed out of the room, into the hallway, and out the front door, calling out, “Do NOT leave your rooms. Take two Tylenol and lie down. I will call you.” And he was gone.

Two days later, Beth had the same symptoms. Three days later, the doctor. Four days later, the doctor’s wife. Five days later, the friends they ate supper with, and their waiters... until it reached everyone in *Paradise Lost*, including H.H. And it was lethal. And there was no cure.

“And Darkness and Decay and the masque of the (*Coronavirus*) held illimitable dominion over all.”
Edgar Allen Poe | “*Masque of the Red Death*”



Woman I Knew painting by Ellie Routtenberg

THE DESERT CACTUS

(cereus epiphyllum oxypetalum)

by Pat Somers

The desert cactus is dry and prickly. It grows tall and upright reaching into the sun-filled sky; it has never known plentiful water, but saves when it can in its leaves and stems and heart. It blooms one exquisite flower, rarely and only at night and is finished by noon the next day.

I loved a man like that desert cactus. He grew tall and straight and could be dry and prickly; but when he made love he would be warm from the day's sun and moist from the brief rain. When he closed his eyes and was in his own night, he bloomed gloriously for that short while...I miss him so.



On the Zambesi River photograph by Sunny Gold



Cactus Flowers photograph by Ivan Berk

LADY GODIVA CHOCOLATES

(In the Time of the Coronavirus Pandemic)

by Susan Chertkow

First Mistake

In January, when I went to stay with
my friend in Florida,
I FORGOT to pack my gift to her
of Lady Godiva Chocolates.

Second Mistake

I TOLD my friend that I forgot to give her
the box of Lady Godiva Chocolates.
Then I promised to give it to her when
she returned to Chicago.

Third Mistake

When she returned to Chicago,
I FORGOT to give her the box of Lady Godiva
Chocolates due to the turmoil over the virus.

Outcome

I ATE the entire contents of the box
of Lady Godiva Chocolates—
all eight of them.
I consumed one chocolate a day for four days, and
on the fifth day, devoured the rest of them.
They were delicious, especially the one
with the liquid caramel interior.



Light Forest painting by Judy Holstein



Art Nouveau photograph by Fred Seff

WAITING

by Ellie Routtenberg

I am sitting on the floor outside my mother's door. The maid has asked me to move over, so that she can open the door and go in and give my mother her breakfast. I snatch a peek into my mother's room and see a lady sprawled out on her side, eyes closed, the length of the bed. Is she dead or alive? She does not move, even though the maid quietly enters. The maid gently places a glass of orange juice on my mother's night table. She opens the blinds. My mother stirs, lifts her head, and says, "*Quelle heure est il?*" (What time is it?) The maid says, "*Huit heures, Madame. C'est l'heure de vous reve. C'est un bel jour aujourd'hui, madam, il faut que vous vous reveille.*" (It is eight o'clock, madame. Time to get up. It's a beautiful day, today, madame.) "*Pas encore,*" (Not yet.) my mother says.

Same routine every day. My mother hates to get up. She needs to have her glass of orange juice before she lifts her head from the pillow. It is her low blood sugar, she says. She is weak and dizzy in the morning, much too weak to say hello to her 5-year old daughter. That time is for when she has gained more strength.

My mother looks like a princess, is treated like a combination of a princess and an invalid and a monster. I gaze at her through the half open door. She is not supposed to be seen in this unkempt state. I am a nuisance, a fly that keeps buzzing and buzzing around her ears.

I stay crouched on the floor, uncomfortable, waiting for an instant to sneak another glance.

Five minutes later, the maid enters again, this time with a silver platter, a breakfast tray. I have glanced at it before, many times, I have been in the kitchen while the maid was laying it out: English bone china cup with delicate flowers for the coffee, a tiny budlike vase for the 2% milk, a Danish Copenhagen china dish filled with three tablespoons of the best canned salmon a touch of mayonnaise on the side, a blob of cottage cheese on another small plate, a carafe of coffee (it must be steaming hot or it gets sent back).

The door opens again and the maid helps my mother sit up and arranges her lacy pillows behind her back for support. She helps my mother move back against the pillows and then gently puts the tray on my mother's lap. All this I see through the crack in the door. I dare not say "Hello Mommy". She will be angry at the maid for letting the door be open a crack. Finally, the maid (from whom I have learned French) plops the morning paper, the *Gazette*, on the side of the tray. The maid asks, "*Est-ce que je peut vous donner quelque chose d'autre, madame?*" (Can I get you something else, madame?) "*Non, merci,*" (No, thanks.) my mother squeaks in her raspy voice. She then glances towards the door, sees me sitting on the floor, and angrily says, "Ellie, I told you I don't want to see you until I am finished with my breakfast. Please go away and I will ring you with my bell when I am done and you can come in."

I slither away empty in hand and in spirit, with a pit in the bottom of my stomach. That pit has waxed and waned over the years, but never goes away.

CONCERT COURTESY

by Donald Draganski

The oracular silence
Sets the oncoming stage
As the orchestra conductor
Turns the first page.

A momentary pause
Before the first sound
Gives way to feelings
So deep and so profound.

The listeners, rapt
Are brought to a place
Of beauty and peace
Without time or space.

The music dies down,
The last sound soon dies
And fades like the breath
Of a lost lover's sighs,

When at that last ineffable moment
 some goddam idiot
 who wants to be the first to clap

Breaks the angelic spell.
I hope he burns in Hell!

TOO LATE

by Michael Ellman

My books

Where photographs

Speak

An enormity

And

Stories

Enchant

Like Niagara's

Waterfalls

I recline and

Let the evening

Medications settle

In

Until

Marvel and joy

And regret

Consume me



Winter Twilight serigraph by Lynn Staudacher



Ribbons at Sea fabric-quilt by Linda Spring

REFLECTIONS 2020

by Michael Ellman

From emptiness to an
Expanding World
There's just
Too many galaxies
And Stars, and Planets,
And People

God loves us
But She's tired
Creating the Universe
Is exhausting

There's no other
Explanation
For the Pandemics
Mass killings
Guns
And bombs



Internal Dialog drawing by Lynn Staudacher



Mickey Mao photograph by David Herd

by Susan Chertkow

He was so natural, down to earth. Yes, Vince was quiet, and rarely initiated a conversation, but I thought he was someone blessed with a wonderful disposition and a profound interest in people.

Thinking back, I should have guessed something was amiss. He accompanied me to the dining room, but he never joined me to dine. He said he preferred to visit with the other staff. Most of the time, we enjoyed quiet evenings in the living room. He liked to play vintage video games like Minecraft and Manic Digger. I left him alone to enjoy them. I preferred other diversions.

I could ask him anything. What a listener! He'd turn his head, smile, repeat a couple of my words, and then say something like, "You sound frustrated," or "You seem confused." He knew how to put my mind at ease. I was always relaxed around him.

When I was getting up in years, around 120 to 130, he became my caregiver/companion. He met all my needs effortlessly, and what a singing voice he had! Irish ballads, Frank Sinatra's standards, Gregorian

chants—you name it, he could sing it. And light opera, too, the most wonderful arias. With his dark, swarthy looks and that tenor voice, I told him he was one of the great Italian Tenors. He just smiled. "Don't be so modest," I remarked.

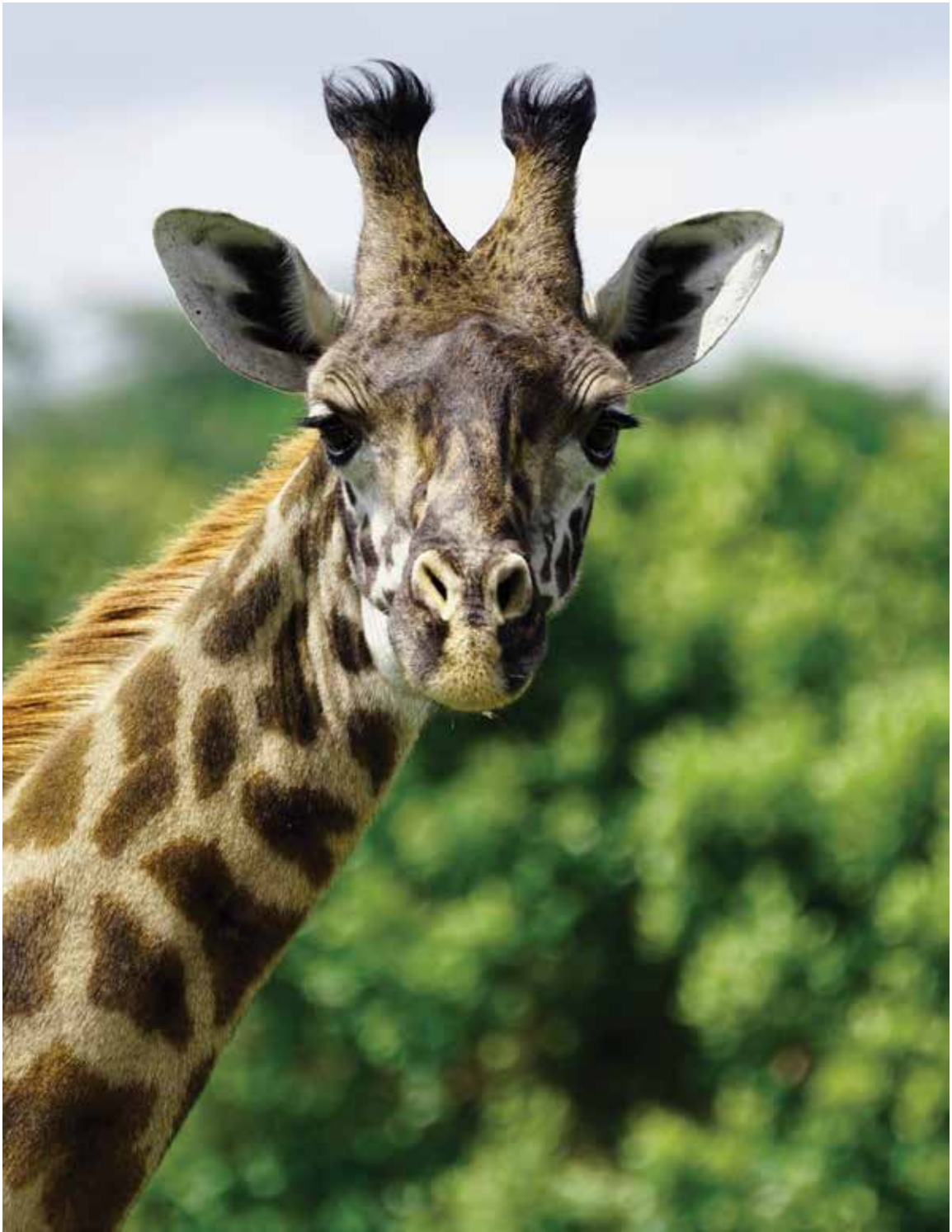
I tried to get him to talk about his family and friends. He disclosed that he was an only child who grew up in Silicon Valley. Then he would shift the subject back to me.

When did I figure it all out?

One evening, Vince was sitting in his armchair playing his video game. A soft ding went off. Then he slumped, his face froze, and his limbs went rigid. Immediately, a maintenance crew arrived. They paid no heed to me; I had activated a snoring mode to elude them.

Next an unforgettable scene transpired: they took off the top of Vince's head and poked around with tiny tools. Then they put the top of his head back on. I heard one of them say, "These early models need a lot of maintenance; it's a good thing we still have their parts."

And to this day, I can't get over how remarkably lifelike he was. Matter of fact, *still* is.



Giraffe Greeting photograph by Rhonda Milkowski

HOW TO PISS OFF AN ELEPHANT

by William Blustein

I realized too late that what I had done was neither smart nor safe, but we survived anyway. However it did precipitate some harsh words and nasty looks from my traveling companions.

I was on safari in Kenya. It was magnificent. But it was nothing like a trip to the zoo. Lions are related to, but not at all like pussy cats, and jackals are related to, but not at all like cocker spaniels. Elephants have funny looking noses with which they can swat you like a Sammy Sosa home run. That's why the safari guide tells you on day one to listen to every instruction they give you so that all can have a safe trip. I sure showed them!

On the day it happened we were on one of our twice daily game runs driving along a road in Kenya. We stopped to watch a herd of elephants cross the road in front of us. The mommas were protecting the calves and the bull elephant stood outside the herd to do his job as protector. When he saw our van, he stood in the road ahead watching us like a castle sentry. We remained at a respectful distance from him. Then for some reason, the herd changed their crossing angle so that their line moved closer to our van. The bull therefore walked closer to us. The driver immediately and sharply said to the four of us in the van, "Don't move or talk!" So I naturally stood up so I could take a picture. Two things then happened very quickly—the bull walked up to our van and put his forehead on the front bumper and

I felt the driver's hand squeezing my leg like he was squeezing juice from an orange. He repeated, "Don't move!" with a tone that could not be ignored.

As I stood there looking into the elephant's eyes, which were about six feet in front of me, he seemed completely in charge, the way a tank driver might be if an enemy soldier was throwing rocks at his tank. I don't know what the elephant saw in my eyes, but I doubt that he was worried about what a little creature like me could do to him.

We remained in that position for several minutes that felt like hours until the herd had finally crossed the road. The bull, finally sensing that the road was no longer vibrating from the footsteps of his herd, stood up and slowly backed away. I sat down to find myself not being congratulated for how cool and brave I had been, but being threatened by all that if I ever did anything that stupid again I'd have to walk back to camp. I did not argue their point.

When we arrived back at camp, we received news from the passengers of a van that had been behind ours. They were able to see that when the bull elephant bent down and put his forehead on our front bumper, he had also wrapped his trunk around our right front wheel. I suspect that he could have thrown our van like Tom Brady throwing a pass had he been provoked further.

The lessons learned—we were visitors in the animals' home. It was not a zoo. Elephants and the other animals we saw deserved our respect because in the large scheme of things, they can beat the hell out of us.

REFLECTIONS ON A NEWS ITEM

by Eve Perkal

The news that the composer and conductor Sir Edward Downes and his wife Joan committed suicide in Switzerland last Friday came from the BBC. It stated that the 85-year-old musician, almost totally blind and deaf, had become dependent on his wife. She had just recently been diagnosed with liver and pancreatic cancer and had very little time left. The report stated that theirs had been a 54-year harmonious union.

No bloody end with gunshots, no crashed car, no dangling corpses from the cellar ceiling, no illegal poison to end it all at home. Instead, a very quiet, private flight to Switzerland, where, with the drink provided by the organization—and in the presence of their two children, they drank their draft, held hands and were free. People have a choice, and they were wise.

The Germans have two words for suicide. One is Selbstmord, a harsh word meaning murder of the self. The other word is Freitod, free death, and that is what the couple chose. They were free to choose the end on their terms, togetherness in death, free from pain forevermore. May they forever be united in the Great Beyond. Salutations!

REVERIE

by Irene Elkin

They say I slept
When I know I've not
They say I snored
When my breath I caught

I tell them it's a state
Called reverie
For that they tease me
Mercilessly

I think about my funeral
And what they'll say about me
Grandma's not really dead
She's in reverie

THE LIONESS

by Pat Somers

My sisters and I have been following this herd for many days.
They are grazing in the long yellow savannah grass.
It is the hot, dry season and food is scarce for all of us.

They are easy to see in their black and white coats. None have the same pattern of stripes. We have chosen one that is slower than the others and lags a little further behind each day.

We crouch and wait...finally the moment comes...I signal the others and we charge in. The kill is quick...They hear the kill...They smell us. The herd runs off...We are ravenous. We settle down to eat.

Our lion lies on a hill above his pride. He comes down and roars at me to move...I turn to him, snarl and bare bloody fangs...I need this meat. I am bearing his offspring. He roars at me again...but moves off.

I turn back to the kill and feed with my sisters.



Friends photograph by Joni Friedman

AN EARLY SNAPSHOT

by Sybil Virshbo

We lived in a house divided. In my corner were my mother, my sister, and I, and in the other corner was my father, the only man in a house with three women. My father loved us dearly, but was aware our interests differed widely. He thought our interests didn't hold a candle to his own, which were motors and machines, cars and trucks, and the monthly issue of "Popular Mechanics."

"What do you need all those rags for," he'd ask, when we told him we were going clothes shopping. Of course, this comment wasn't surprising from a man with one get up, and that was a pair of greasy overalls and a greasy cap to go with it. And "What's with the telephone?" he wanted to know. Right. What was the value of talking nonsense to girlfriends, about boyfriends, when you could be admiring the new green Hudson sedan sitting out in front of the house?

I do know one thing for sure. That so-called new green Hudson with the fancy faux wood panel was not new. My father didn't like brand new cars because they didn't require improvements. Just think. You could save money on a used car and enjoy fixing things yourself if anything went wrong, which they often did.

Dad told me once that when he was no older than six or seven, out in Ohio where he was raised, a bunch of his father's friends stood around a Model T Ford that they couldn't start up. Needless to say, my father, at his ripe young age, got it going. I can only imagine the adoration that must have been heaped on him. There isn't a doubt in my mind that his lifelong passion for wheels came about as a result of this unconditional love-in.

Not to minimize my father's influence, many a joyous Sunday afternoon was spent in that green Hudson, driving to such wonderful destinations as Jaenicke's in Kankakee for A&W root beer or, my favorite, the man made waterfall at Olson Rug Company. Where else can you see ducks floating in a pond but on Pulaski Road, in Chicago?

My mother was bored by automobiles, and never once took a driving lesson. She didn't have to because my father drove her wherever she had to go. That is whenever he could tear himself away from his daytime work, which consisted of trucks because he was in the trucking business. So off my chauffeured mother went, grocery shopping after dark, and scolding the butcher over the telephone the next day for delivering meat with too much fat or too little, orders she couldn't supervise in person. You can imagine how eager my father was for his oldest daughter to turn 16.

But as it turns out, Dad didn't wait. At fifteen and a half, he settled me into his by then second hand Dodge, replete with stick shift and proceeded to teach me how to drive. This experience showed me

a whole new side of my father. He had never before displayed a temper. Needless to say things didn't go well and he set me up with a driving instructor. After a while, I was ready.

But was I? I failed the driving test for not coming to a complete stop at the end of an alley. The second time my father was ready. Before I even entered the test car, a \$5.00 bill exchanged hands. I passed with flying colors this time. It was later that same day, Dad handed me the keys to a somewhat battered second hand Chevy he had gotten just for me. He said, "Take your mother anywhere she wants to go."

I was thrilled. I never experienced a sense of freedom like I did when I learned to drive. I still remember driving off with no one in the car but me, and laughing gleefully, nonstop. My mother's shopping trips were now done during the day, and she got to be on better terms with the butcher. All the stores were blissfully at our disposal. My father didn't even have to drive her to the movies (unless it featured a Model T or something newer) because I was happy to do so.

An added perk to all of this was that I could now drive to school. One day, driving down one of the side streets near the school, I spotted something unusual. At first, the scene ahead of me didn't quite register. My mind was undoubtedly filled with thoughts of guys with cool cars, and what to have for lunch. But there, near the curb, was a woman sitting still at the wheel with a white face and with

two red blotches on her cheeks. Why had she gone white? I then noticed cars sitting in front of her and in back of her. And I noticed the police cars and flashing lights. After a while I was told to move on, and the traffic started to proceed. As I did so, I heard someone standing on the sidewalk say a young woman had been run over.

After I drove off, it occurred to me that the pale woman, sitting frozen in the front seat, was the unfortunate woman driving the car that caused the accident. I was chilled by the fact that the accident had probably occurred just minutes before I arrived on the scene. It could have been me driving the car that caused the accident. And, what about that woman? How was she going to live with something like this for the rest of her life?

Later that evening I told my father and mother about the accident. They were shocked, but I felt as though, unlike them, I had lived it. And indeed, the image of that woman sitting stock-still in the car is one that has never left me. I made a decision that night. I decided to take the bus to school. And dad was soon back to taking my mother on her nightly rounds of the stores..

It was quite a while before I felt that unbridled freedom that driving had originally offered me. But when I did start driving again, I obeyed the laws.

THE WRITER'S BLESSING

by Lyle Cohen

May your pencils always be sharp
May your ink flow freely.
May you start with a blank page,
But finish with one filled with words.

May your creativity soar,
And the pleasure from it even higher
Until it washes away your sorrow
And fills you with joy.

May your work be published
On paper and in the cloud
So when your body goes the way of all flesh
Your words live on forever.

May they be read in classroom and library
May they receive the praise they deserve
And be appreciated during those quiet moments
When they count the most.

May your words be like old friends
That always give freely
Never asking for anything in return,
But the pleasure of your company.

May your circle of friends love and support you
May they encourage you to understand and to feel
That the way to write is without fear or stress,
But with the confidence that God Will Bless.

May you find the peace of mind and spirit
To sit still and write,
Working through childhood traumas
That prevent you from finding your purpose.

To rise to your occasion
To achieve your definition of happiness
To becalm your soul, saved from insanity
Be self-confident and free of doubt.



Spring Adorns Baha'i Temple photograph by Nancy Bellew

JEW S AND MOVIES

by Barry Lippa

When we were young our world was very small. Many of us were born before television and grew up when television was in its infancy. Much of our knowledge about the world came from the radio, newspapers and movies. Of those three media, the movies probably provided us with most of our information about the outside world. From the movies we learned eternal truths: that the only good Indian was a dead Indian, that good guys wore white, that African-Americans were either superstitious clowns or were put on earth to serve us and that most women were either “fallen” or sweet virgins. And what did we learn about Jews? Very little, if anything. The reason for all of this misinformation was because Hollywood was controlled by a handful of conservative Jewish moguls who felt uneasy about their Jewish identity and wanted to foist their view of the world on us.

Of the seven major studios during the Golden Age of movies, six were run by Jews. Only Darryl Zanuck of 20th Century Fox was not Jewish. They were either born abroad or had parents who were immigrants. The reason that so many Jews went into the movie business is that many other avenues of commerce were closed to poor uneducated Jews. To get in on the ground floor of the early movie business was easy, cheap and open to all. Even when they became rich and powerful, they felt like

outsiders and tried to compensate by being “more American” than Americans. Some of them still spoke incorrect English. Samuel Goldwyn, born Shmuel Gelbfisz, was “famous” for malapropisms, such as “include me out” and “his word isn’t worth the paper it’s written on.”

But as much as they tried to fit in, it seems that they could not completely distance themselves from their Jewish origins. Dorothy Parker, who worked for a while in Hollywood commented, “Once I was coming down a street in Beverly Hills and I saw a Cadillac about a block long and out of the side window was a wonderfully slinky mink, and an arm, and at the end of the arm a white suede glove wrinkled around the wrist, and in the hand was a bagel with a bite taken out of it.”

An example of trying to deny Jewish origins was Harry Cohen who ran Columbia pictures. From 1929 until 1946. Cohen made it perfectly clear he did not want to deal with Jews or Jewishness in his films. Once, when a director wanted to cast a Jewish actor in a major role, Cohen rejected the idea because he felt the actor looked too Jewish and said, “Around this studio the only Jews we put into pictures play Indians.” David Selznick also tried to deny his Jewish identity, and once said, “I’m American, not a Jew.”

In the early days of movies there were many pictures that had Jewish themes and characters. Most of the early films dealt with Jews as stereotypes, comic characters, cunning merchants or victims. Later films dealt with problems of immigrants- assimilation, conflicts between traditional parents and modern children, intermarriage, relations with other immigrant groups, especially the Irish, or life in the American ghetto.

There were also Jewish actors in early films. The first cowboy hero, “Bronco Billy,” was played by the actor Gilbert Anderson, whose real name was Max Aronson. One of the greatest stars of the early movies was Theda Bara, born Theodosia Goodman, an overnight sensation in 1915 whose famous line “Kiss me, my fool” became a popular phrase.

In the 1930’s, and especially after 1933, Jewish characters and themes virtually disappeared from the movies. There were several reasons for this. One was that Jews were now beginning to assimilate and move out of the ghetto and the problems of immigrants were no longer of interest. Another reason was the rise of Fascism and the Nazis. A large percentage of foreign profits came from Germany and other European countries and the bottom line for the movies was always money. Even when a film was made where Jewish identity was central to the story, the studios downplayed this identification. Much of the 1937 film, “The Life of Emile Zola,” centers around the Dreyfus case. Only once in the film, when we see the word “Jew” next to his name in a list, was Dreyfus identified as Jewish. Except for this, there was no indication that the affair had anything to do with his being Jewish, which was one of the main reasons for his victimization. Dreyfus is simply presented as an innocent victim, a wronged man.

A notable exception was a film made in 1933 called “Counsellor-at-Law. This movie was one of the few films to touch on the subject of anti-Semitism. But instead of having a Jewish actor playing the lead, it had John Barrymore. It seems that the producer, Sam Goldwyn felt that “You can’t have a Jew playing a Jew; it won’t work on the screen.”

There were many Jewish actors, but their screen names would not identify them as Jews. Emmanuel Goldenberg (Edward G. Robinson) and Julius Garfinkle (John Garfield) played tough guys. Laszlo Lowenstein (Peter Lorre) played creepy characters, Betty Joan Persky (Lauren Bacall) played elegant ladies and Muni Weisenfreund (Paul Muni) played everyone else.

The lack of Jewish characterization in films continued into the 1940’s. When Jews did appear, they usually were part of a mixed ethnic battle unit in war films. A Jew, along with a guy from New York, an Italian, an Irishman or another ethnic group, live and fight together and learn that “we are all basically the same—good Americans.”

But even during the war, Hollywood could not bring itself to stress the identity of Jews. Many of the anti-Nazi pictures of the time identified the victims as “non-Aryans” or had them speak with accents. When I was in elementary school, I remember my class marching down to the auditorium to see a film about brotherhood starring Frank Sinatra. In this film a boy is about to be beaten up by a group of other boys because “he has a different religion.” Sinatra then tells a war story where the heroes have different religions, one of them being Jewish. Confronting anti-Semitism directly was not done.

After the war, when the horrors of the Holocaust were revealed, Hollywood became a little bolder. In 1947 two films came out, “Crossfire” from RKO and “Gentleman’s Agreement” from 20th Century Fox, that dealt directly with anti-Semitism. While the RKO production chief, Dore Schary, was Jewish, the impetus for making “Crossfire” came from the producer and director of the film, who were not Jewish. “Gentleman’s Agreement” also was initiated,

produced and directed by non-Jews. “Gentleman’s Agreement” dealt with a non-Jewish reporter who passes as a Jew to examine prejudice. After the film was made, one Hollywood wit said, “the moral of the film is ‘be nice to Jews,’ because they may really be gentiles.”

Post-war Jewish actors still had to give up their Jewish names if they were going to make it in Hollywood. Jews were still Indians; Ira Gossel (Jeff Chandler) played the Indian chief Cochise three times. Issur Danielovitch Demsky (Kirk Douglas) was a big star and in one film was crucified by the Romans (not the first Jewish boy to be nailed to a cross), and Daniel Kaminski (Danny Kaye) changed his hair color along with his name.



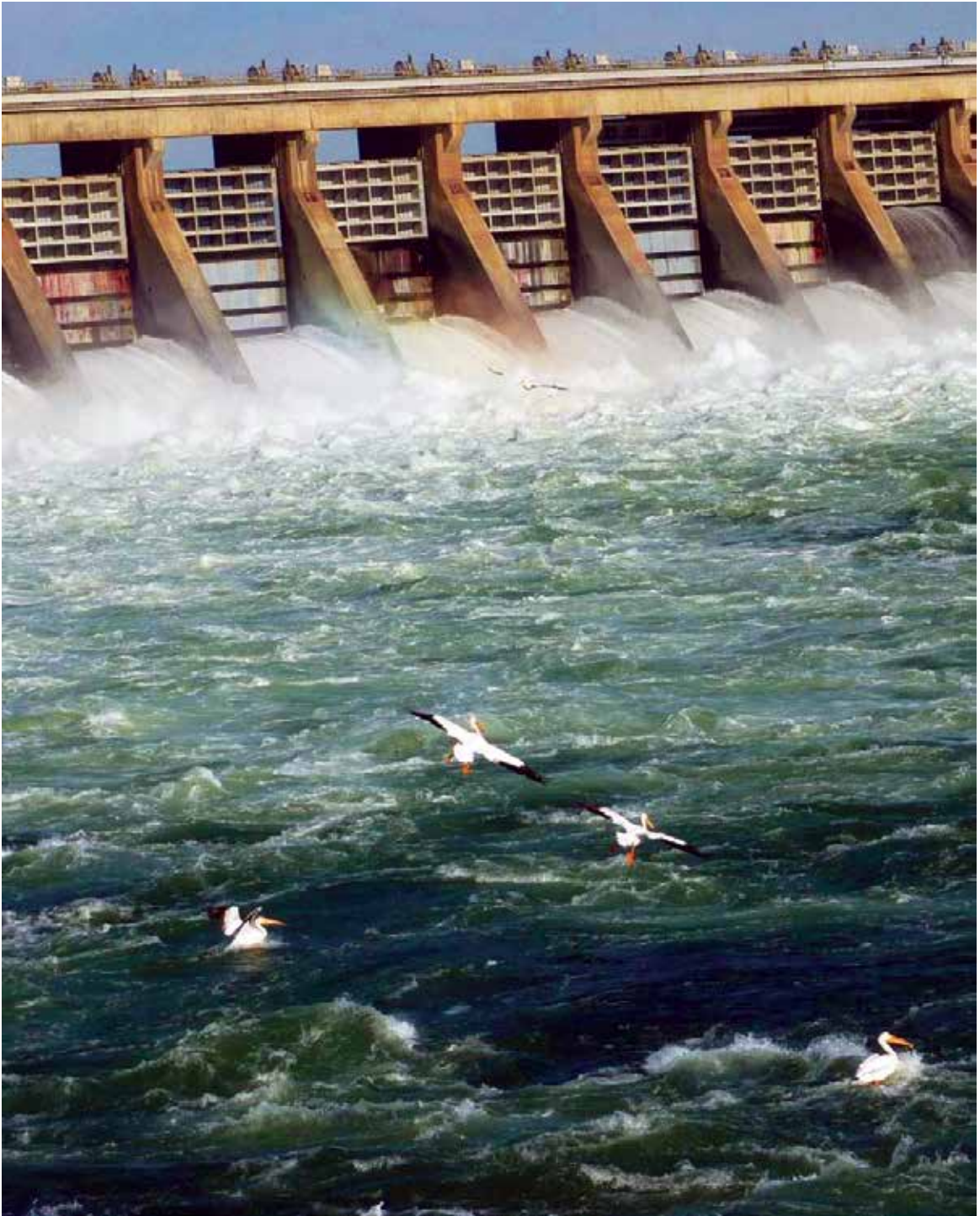
With the HUAC hearings in Hollywood and the rise of McCarthy witch hunts of the 50’s the small door that was opened to Jewish and social issues (“message pictures”) was slammed shut.

One studio boss was quoted as saying, “If you want to send a message, go to Western Union.”

A liaison between Jewish agencies and the studios in 1951 wrote, “Studios this year will resist ‘problem’ pictures dealing with racial or religious relations, though they will be receptive to ‘human touches’ and suggestions, without naming them. By this I mean a sequence in which a Negro or Jew will be included in a group that is hired for some job—if the story warrants it.” Even in biographical films about Jews (“Houdini”, “The Benny Goodman Story”) the Jewish elements were downplayed or eliminated. Where dramas, plays or novels with Jewish themes were adapted for the screen, Jewish characters were “de-Semitized.”

In the 1960’s, with the demise of the studio system, the representation of the Jew on the American screen burst into full bloom. But by that time we were grown up and no longer depended on the movies to tell us about the world. Despite my access to other sources and greater sophistication about the world, part of me still thinks that “good guys wear white.” That’s because “I learned it at the movies.”

Palace of Music photograph by Fred Seff



Let's Go Fishing photograph by Barbara Levin

HAIKUS TO YOU

by Ivan Berk

1.
I'm a hummingbird
With long bill to sip nectar
Stand still, flit away

2.
Honey bee brown, gold
Zip and buzz from blue to red
They like sweet, you too

3.
As you come closer
Your lips blossom like a rose
I want to kiss them



Evening Sky in the Midwest photograph by Rochelle Singer

THE LIGHT THAT BREAKS THE DARKNESS

by Anne Wold

Dark and silent
Is the night before the dawn.
I stand gazing out my kitchen window
Because I cannot sleep.

The pain in my heart awakens me.
It is 4:15 in the morning
And everyone else is asleep.
I patiently wait for the dawn.

I need and want its light,
Its light is what I so badly need.
Fond memories of better times
Wash over and comfort me.

I think of my husband and my children
And how I will miss them.
I see the sky awakening and signaling
The beginning of a new day.

It is the light that breaks the darkness
And gives me hope.
And promises me
That I can rejoice in its arrival.

The light lifts my spirits
And assures me that I will be all right.
For it is this light
That breaks my darkness.



Flower Moon Gracing Tucson Sky photograph by Nancy Bellew

NOT ALONE

by Irene Elkin

“Stay at home—don’t go out
There’s a pandemic out there.”
Phone calls and emails help
But no Shabbat dinner with my family?
That makes me feel alone.

And then the text:
“Look outside your door.”
I look—there’s a shopping bag
And, inside—two small challahs
No ordinary bakery challahs these,
But my daughter’s concoctions
Braided perfectly, enlivened by herbs
Makes me feel connected.

And then the call:
“Do you want to light candles with us?”
How can we do that from afar?
Oh, FaceTime, that great invention
Helps us to see each other
As we light, and sing the blessing,
My monotone blending with their
melody.

And then they form a circle,
I join it with my phone
For our communal hug.
And now—I do not feel alone.



Morning Ritual photograph by Joni Friedman

by Donald Draganski

Before going any further, I must confess that when it comes to botany, I am a hopeless ignoramus. I wouldn't know a pansy from a petunia, and the whole taxonomy of the plant world is a mystery to me. Oh, I enjoy the beauty and wonder of the plant kingdom, but I stand in mute amazement of those savants who can identify various plants, describe their characteristics, and even reel off their Latin names. (I am referring to my dear wife, Antje, who fills that role to perfection.)

As a city born and bred kid, I certainly didn't encounter much in the way of the bucolic life during my growing-up years, and the only contact I had with the world of plants was confined to the usual array of mother-in-law tongues, African violets and other houseplants that graced the window sills in our apartment.

My first real encounter with the world of nature in the raw occurred when I was between the ages of six and eight as I spent several weeks during those summers on my great-grandparents' fruit farm in Michigan. This was a new world, full of fresh discoveries for a kid who knew only the streets and alleys of a big city. I learned by direct observation that farming was a hard and grueling business, and I made up my mind, even at that early age, that being a farmer was not high on my list of career paths that I intended to pursue.

During the '40s my father, like so many other Americans, planted a victory garden; it was located in the corner of the back yard of the apartment house where we lived. I distinctly remember Dad's regretful expression the day we moved away in the summer of 1945, as we left the victory garden vegetables behind for others to harvest, Dad, ever the stoic, didn't complain, but the expression on his face spoke volumes.

I should emphasize that gardening, along with music, was my father's two main sources of solace and escape. I have no idea how successful he might have been as a farmer, but I know that, on the small scale of a garden, he was able to achieve that harmony with nature that the poet Virgil speaks of.

During my growing-up years, I was expected to hoe and weed the various gardens my parents had planted, but, like most kids, I viewed these activities as nothing more than the usual onerous tasks that had to be borne stoically.

With marriage came the first awakening of interest in bucolic matters. We spent the first eight years of our marriage as apartment dwellers; then, in 1971 we became house owners in Evanston. One of our new domicile's major attractions was a commodious back yard, and thanks to Antje, we were soon involved in creating a pastoral setting, albeit on a small suburban scale. In short order Antje set aside a portion of the back yard for a kitchen garden, and she began to create flowerbeds along the borders of our property. It has since become quite the showpiece of the neighborhood. My own modest area of responsibility happens to be the lawn that I mow regularly and try to keep dandelion-free.

Our garden has undergone any number of metamorphoses over the years. When spring arrives, we don't move sofas and chairs, we dig up bushes and transplant them, we re-arrange flower beds, we prune trees—in a word, our garden is in a constant state of flux. And we are a team: Antje constitutes the brains of the operation, and I follow orders. We particularly treasure a Japanese Katsura tree that we planted to celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary. Now, after seventeen years, it towers in front of our back south window, creating a handsome privacy screen.

Winter is devoted to careful planning for the next season. That involves searching in catalogs, selecting the seeds and cuttings, and ordering them as soon as the weather breaks. There are notebooks to consult and new methods to try. Observing Antje at work planning the upcoming season is like watching a general planning a major campaign, as I, the ignoramus, watch in silent wonder.

Our flower garden has a somewhat improvised appearance, since we avoid planning along severe Euclidian shapes. This is very much in line with one's particular notion of beauty. Back in the 17th and 18th century, cultured Europeans, particularly Frenchmen, insisted on symmetry and regularity as touchstones of beauty. When Voltaire visited Switzerland, he was appalled by what he perceived as the ugliness of the Alps; he considered them chaotic, disorderly and wild. And yet, just a century later, with the rise of the Romantic movement in the 19th century, nature in the raw was admired indeed, panegyricized—as the epitome of beauty. The Alps hadn't changed in the interim; rather

human perceptions were altered by cultured norms. All this is a roundabout way of saying that we like our garden to have a touch of wildness in it.

When a guest admires our garden and poses a question, I am honest enough to confess my ignorance as I refer the inquirer to the Better Half. I take pride in our garden, but it is a reflected glory.

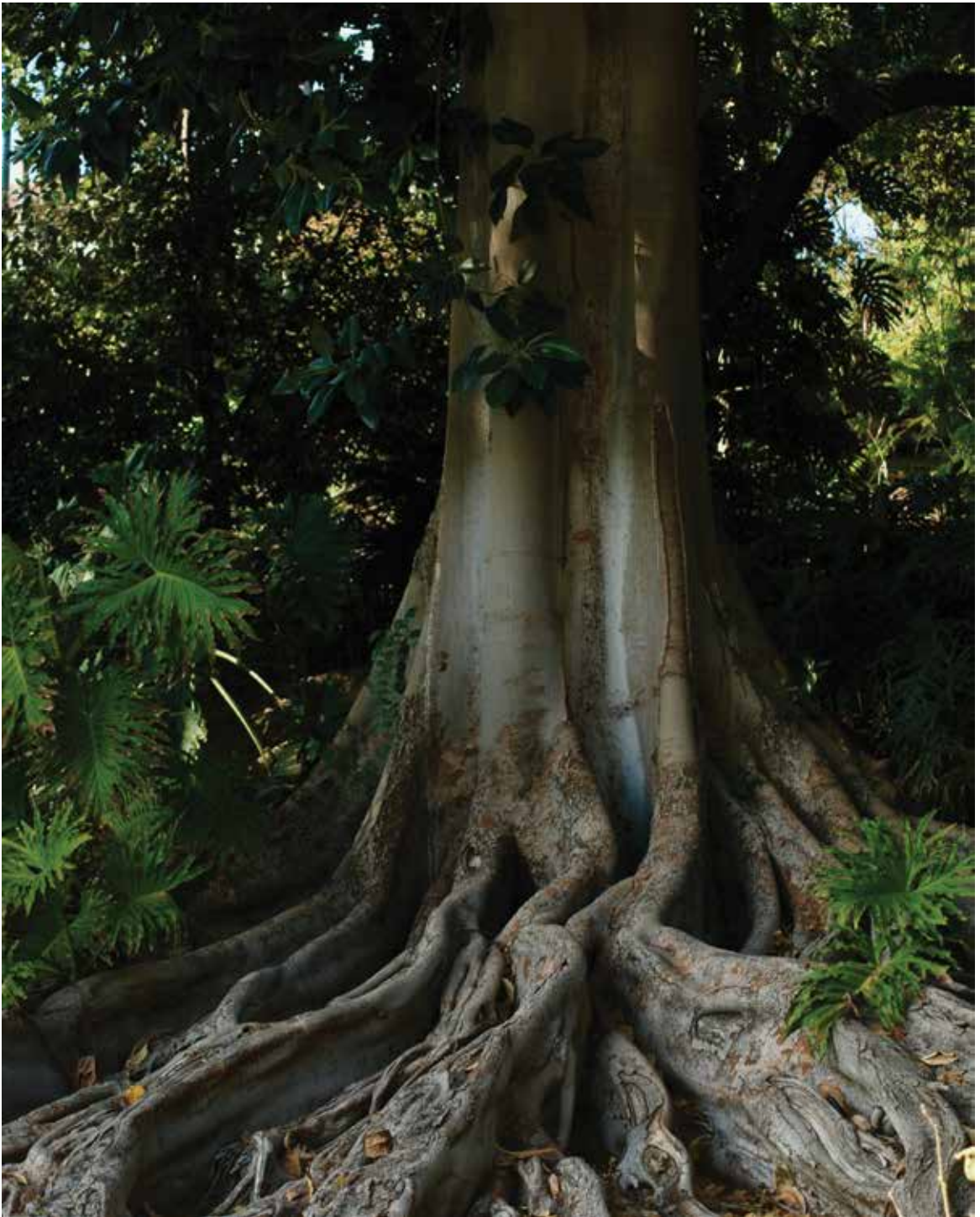
So here it is, an account of gardens and the place they have held at various times in my life. I cannot say that I've played any significant role in all of these georgic adventures, for I have been for the most part a mere bystander, but every performance needs an audience, and I am an eager and hungry member.



Curvaceous photograph by Barbara Levin



Two of a Kind photograph by Lynn Steinberg



Deep Roots photograph by Lynn Steinberg

ON THE TRAIL

by Elaine Glickman

As we drove west on I-80 in western Nebraska, one of the boys noticed that each town now posted a sign, informing travelers of its elevation: North Platt 2,800 ft., Ogallala 3,223 ft., Fort Morgan 4,033 ft. At Greeley (4,664 ft.) my husband drove off the expressway to fill up. After using the restrooms, the children took the dog to relieve herself in the designated area behind the station. My husband was examining the map posted in the station. So it was that I stood alone beside the car, looking west at the horizon. My first reaction to the grayish haze was anxiety; we were driving into a storm. No, on second look, those dark formations were the front range of the Rocky Mountains. I felt something akin to awe.

Our destination was the YMCA camp near Estes Park, Colorado, located only a few miles from an entrance to the Rocky Mountain National Park. The peaks of the mountains rose to over 14,000 ft.; our cabin sat at 8,000 ft. We had been cautioned to wait several days to allow our bodies to acclimate before attempting a mountain hike. So it was on the morning of our third day in camp that we donned our backpacks and drove to a place near a trailhead, parking the car in a small gravel lot near the road.

The children surged ahead up a bank where they waited for their plodding parents at the trailhead. Ann, our sunny dark-haired daughter, our eldest, brought up the rear. Mark, our youngest, moved at a pace utterly unlike hers. He ran with abandon, as if

the joy of movement was intoxicating. Paul, our fair-haired son, ran between them. Somehow he seemed more focused on this high, alpine place that was utterly new to him.

Unexpectedly, I was overwhelmed with dizziness. I sat on a boulder with my head between my legs. I blacked out for a time. My family and the few hikers who passed must have looked at me with curiosity, but I was unavailable for explanation. I was frightened. It took me a while to realize that I was suffering from oxygen deprivation, “the bends.” At last my head cleared, and I raised it. Another interval passed before I was ready to stand. The children were not used to seeing their mother in physical distress. When I assured them that I was ready to resume hiking, I saw relief replace concern on their faces.

For me the high country of the Rockies is like no other. The fragrance is different: wild sage mixed with pine needles. Away from the evergreens the air carries so little humidity that it is crisp. The rays of the sun are so intense that it seemed as if we were closer to the sun (which, of course, we were). In the exertion of hiking, a jacket was tied around the waist, but in the shade it was protection against the chill.

The trails were marked, but the Rangers were not profligate with their signs. Where trails crossed, there were signs designating the direction of each trail. At ambiguous sites, say when a trail crossed a stream on steppingstones, a reassuring sign pointed the way. But sometimes a long stretch without a sign caused these hikers nagging uncertainty.

Although adequately marked, the trail was never easy. The direction was relentlessly up. Sometimes the children had to wait while their parents sat to regain their normal breathing. Huge boulders littered the trail. Often the only recourse was to find toeholds

and clamber over them. Even in late July, little rivers of melting snow often crossed the trail; our shoes were wet. However, my concern was where to put my feet, not the state of my shoes.

As we climbed, the evergreens grew shorter; many were bent away from the direction of the prevailing wind. We had reached timberline. Beyond this point even hardy shrubs were few and far between. Above us the exposed trail wound between piles of rocks. It was here that we decided to eat the lunches we carried in our backpacks, our backs resting against warm boulders. We relaxed and noted that the sun had reached its zenith. We decided to start down.

Now a new set of muscles was employed, and our pace picked up. My husband and I relaxed and discussed plans for the next day. Later when we were about half an hour from the trailhead, the children, as usual, were ahead of us. I don't remember which of us noted that Paul was not with the others. At this point all of us started shouting Paul's name. But after what seemed like a lot of shouting, we still had no answer to our calls. I could see that Ann was distressed. So was I. The sun was halfway in its descent, and we were already wearing our jackets. We knew that it would only get colder and eventually get dark. I think both of the children may have been alarmed when they realized that their parents had no idea what to do. Eventually we decided to continue down and seek the help of a Park official.

The remainder of the descent was tense. I remember a group of hikers who were descending more rapidly than we. As they made their way around us, I asked if they had seen an eight-year-old blond boy hiking by himself. No one had seen him, and we walked a little faster. At the parking lot it was decided that I would take the car and go to the Ranger Station while the rest of the family waited at the trailhead in case Paul showed up.

"Does anyone know where the Ranger Station is located?" I asked of the few people in the parking lot. One man seemed to remember that it was up the road and to the left. I thanked him and hurriedly made my way to the car. I unlocked the car, jumped in, and slammed the door so quickly that I did not have time to withdraw my ankle. The pain was intense and blood flowed. At another time I would have located the car's first aid kit and applied a pressure bandage. But now I backed out and preceded according to the directions I had been given. I no longer thought about my ankle.

Fortunately, my guide was correct. Within a mile I spotted the Ranger Station, parked, and entered the building. I found a cheerful but authoritative Ranger sitting in a sunny room surrounded by walls of maps. I told him my tale of woe, expecting him to move quickly, following my car in whatever vehicle Rangers drove. Instead, he looked at his wristwatch and told me to come back in half an hour if the boy had not returned. As my adrenalin drained away, I experienced a sudden loss of energy and bowed to his command.

Now pain emanated from my ankle, and I looked down to see that my shoe and sock were full of blood. As I drove away, I muttered numbly something about mountain lions and bears. When the road straightened out, I could see my family waving to me. There was Paul! A wave of love and relief swept over me, banishing thoughts of mountain lions and bears. I parked and everyone talked at once, explaining to me that Paul had gone ahead and joined another family, but ended up at a different trailhead. He had run to our trailhead, expecting to find his family waiting for him.

I thought to myself, apparently it had not occurred to Paul that his family would be worried about him, and that one of them would sustain a self-inflicted wound.

CONNECTIONS

by Barry Lipka

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY:

PRISON GUARD Middle-aged, Wears a uniform of a brown shirt and pants

MAKMOOD MASURI A Muslim Arab, Age—in his late 20's/early 30's, Thin with short hair.

SHULAMIT AARONI An Israeli Jew, Age—Middle to late 60's, Wears a simple dress.

SETTING

The visiting room of a maximum security prison somewhere in Israel. The room is bare except for a table with a board in the center, about 7 in. high. There is a chair on each side of the table. Shulamit is quietly sitting on one chair.

VOICE-Offstage: *Makmood Masuri.*
You have a visitor.

A prison guard enters the room with Makmood. Makmood sits in the other chair across from Shulamit. The guard leaves.

MAKMOOD: Who are you?

SHULAMIT: My name is Shulamit Aaroni. Even though we do not know each other, I need to talk to you.

MAKMOOD: Shulamit Aaroni, that's a Jewish name. Why would a Jew want to talk to me? I hate

Jews. Just the thought of touching a Jew sickens me!

SHULAMIT: We need to talk because there is a connection between us and I need your help.

MAKMOOD: I'm stuck in this hell hole for the next 15 years and you think that I can help you?

SHULAMIT: Yes; There is something that I need to know. I have a question that only you can answer and that may help me with my feelings.

MAKMOOD: OK, I'll listen, but keep it short; I don't like talking to Jews... You said that we have a connection—what is it?

SHULAMIT: That connection is the reason that I am here. Why did you do it? Why did you try to kill my brother?

MAKMOOD: Your brother?...Oh, I see. He was the one in the car.

SHULAMIT: Yes, he was the driver of the car that you threw the rock at, causing the accident that almost killed him. What did my brother ever do to you?

MAKMOOD: He stole my land and life!

SHULAMIT: That's not true. My brother is a good man who never harmed anyone in his life.

MAKMOOD: He is an Israeli Jew. Isn't that enough reason?

SHULAMIT: No, it is not. I agree that we two peoples, Jews and Arabs, have problems, but that does not justify what you did. It is wrong to kill innocent people.

MAKMOOD: You say that it is wrong to kill

innocent people. If you people are killed, you complain, but when you kill, you change your tune.

SHULAMIT: We only kill in self-defense. We have a right to protect ourselves.

MAKMOOD: Self-defense! Since when is slaughtering unarmed men, women and children self-defense?

SHULAMIT: Not true. We have never killed without good reason.

MAKMOOD: Oh! Did you ever hear of Deir Yasin? Of course you don't want to remember that. Let me refresh your memory. On April 9th 1948 you Jews killed over 200 unarmed Arabs, including women and children in the village of Deir Yasin, just outside of Jerusalem. Those who survived were loaded into trucks and paraded in Jerusalem like animals. And all this was done after the village had declared its neutrality!

SHULAMIT: Yes, I have read about that. But, it was not the regular army that did that. That was done by renegade terrorists, and this act was immediately condemned by the official Jewish army and the acting Jewish government.

MAKMOOD: It makes no difference what was said afterwards. The killers were never punished and continued to kill.

SHULAMIT: Look who is talking! Do you know how many Israelis have been killed over the years by terrorist acts like yours, and are still being killed?

MAKMOOD: You call us terrorists! You, who have stolen our land and forced us to live like dogs in filthy refugee camps. We are not terrorists...we are

freedom fighters, fighting for our right to the land that which was stolen from us.

SHULAMIT: You are forgetting that all of this killing could have been avoided if only the Arabs would have accepted the 1947 U.N. resolution to divide Palestine into two countries, one Arab and one Jewish. The Jews accepted the U. N. resolution; the Arabs did not. And as soon as the Jews declared their state, they were invaded from all sides by six Arab armies, from Egypt, Syria, Transjordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

MAKMOOD: Of course the Arabs didn't accept it. How would you feel if you were told to carve up your land and give part of it to people who had no right to it?

SHULAMIT: OK, all that is in the past. But we live now. We have families and lives to live. You caused great suffering to my family. Would you want your family to suffer as mine did?

MAKMOOD: My family...you dare mention my family! Because of your people, my family has gone through unbelievable suffering for many years. You don't know what real suffering is.

SHULAMIT: We caused your family to suffer? What do you mean?

MAKMOOD: Until your people came we lived a good life in Palestine for a long time. My grandfather told me the story of how you Jews destroyed our lives. My grandparents lived in Lod. They had a home and a little garden with a tree that he loved to sit under. Then, on July 12th, 1948 everything changed. He told me how he remembered the Jewish soldiers came to

Lod, yelling through bullhorns, “Yallah Abdullah. Go to King Abdullah. Go to Ramallah.” The soldiers went from house to house, sometimes pounding on the doors with the butts of their guns, yelling at the people to leave. In the 100 degree heat my grandfather and his family, along with thousands of others, including old men and women, pregnant women and children had to walk three days until they got to the safety of Ramallah. They had no food or water except what they could carry with them. All of my family were forced out-grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. My grandmother, who was pregnant with my father, almost died on the way.

Slowly, over the years my family managed to rebuild their life. Then two years ago, during the last war, an Israeli bomb fell on my grandfather’s house, killing him, my grandmother and two cousins. I was the oldest of the grandchildren and felt especially close to my grandfather. When I was little he would take me for walks, telling me wonderful stories. When they died, I felt a part of me also died.

SHULAMIT: Oh my God...I did not know of your sorrow. But now I see that we have another connection...the hate and pain we hold in our hearts. I hated you for what you did. All I can do is to tell you is that I understand your pain.

MAKMOOD: Understand! Unless you have gone through what we have, you cannot understand. I don’t need your sympathy. It will not make up for our loss or bring my family back.

SHULAMIT: Of course it won’t. There is nothing that can be done to undo the past. But how would trying to kill my brother change anything?

MAKMOOD: It would give you people a taste of your own medicine. We are not animals to be slaughtered at will. It will show you that we are humans who have feelings, and that if you harm us, you will suffer as we do.

SHULAMIT: You talk about what your family went through and what was stolen. At least your family had a place to live, clothes to wear and food to eat after they left Lod.

MAKMOOD: Don’t talk to me about family. I will never again be able to hear my grandfather’s stories or play with my cousins. When you leave here you can return to your family. When I leave I will return to the sorrow of a family once again torn apart by Jews.

SHULAMIT: You talk about listening to your grandfather’s stories and playing with your cousins. I never had a grandfather or grandmother to tell me stories, or cousins to play with. My mother’s and father’s families both came from Poland. During the war the Germans came to their villages, and like your family they had to leave their homes. But, they did not have to walk...they rode...in cattle cars that were so packed with people that they did not have room to sit down. When they got to their destination, it wasn’t a place of safety; it was a concentration camp. All of my family, grandparents, aunts, uncle, cousins, were either gassed or starved to death. My father managed to escape, and hid for three years in an attic until the war was over. My mother was hidden in a convent. After the war they had no home. They could not return to Poland because their homes were destroyed and no country would take them in. For a while they

lived in a refugee camp in Europe, where they met and married. They felt that the only place for them was Palestine, the historical homeland of the Jews. They took a boat to Palestine, but the British, who controlled Palestine would not let them land. They were caught by the British and sent to a camp in Cyprus, behind barbed wire. I was born in that camp. Only in 1948, when the State of Israel was established, did they finally find a home. But in 1948 there was not enough housing. We lived in tent for three years, during which time my brother was born. I remember there was food rationing. While we did not starve, but ate the same food every day. Years later we were given a house...a house that had been abandoned by Arabs. It was in Lod...and also had a little tree in the back...my father, until the day he died, took care of it.

At first, like you, I wanted revenge...I wanted to kill anyone who was connected with those who

murdered my family. But over the years I began to see that hate only harmed me. In order to live, not just exist, I had to let go of my hate and thoughts of revenge. To kill others would not undo the past or bring my family back.

Makmood does not say anything.

SHULAMIT: I know what you are going through. I forgive you for what you did, and hope that in your heart you will find the strength also to forgive.

The guard enters.

GUARD: Time is up Masuri. You have to return to your cell.

Shulamit puts her hand on the board that divides them. Makmood hesitates for a second, looks into her eyes, then takes his hand, gently puts it on hers, and silently leaves the room.

CORONAVIRUS REACTIONS

by Wade Bartlett

Coronavirus—First Reaction

Forced are we into separation
Putting up with much frustration
Experiencing torrents of trepidation
Stuck in a virus sick nation.

Coronavirus—Plea

We met and found our hearts' desire
Then social distancing caused isolation
When will this separation expire?
Denied contact breeds alienation
Our mutual affection may lose its fire.



Victorian and Albert Waterfront photograph by Sunny Gold

THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN HAND

by Ivan Berk

Some 15 miles west of Los Angeles, California, is the East Fork of the San Gabriel River where gold seekers began their search in the 1850s. I was there in 1927 when gold was still being panned by needy, curious and adventurous people like me. One summer day, I hitched a ride on a farmer's truck heading towards the East Fork, which flows through a deep canyon, with emerald green trees carpeting the canyon sides. There were campers everywhere, including families with young kids all searching for gold.

I approached one family and asked, "Hi there. Is there someplace where I can set up my gear and begin panning for gold?" I'd been dragging a tent, some food, a pick and a pan from the dirt road where the farmer left me off some two miles back.

"Humph! You must be one of those desperate ones from L.A., judgin' by the holes in your pants. You really must be down an' out comin' out here."

"Well yes, I've my troubles. By the way, how have you been doing? Find any gold yet?"

"Yep. Not much. Just enough to feed mah family. When we hit it big, we're outa here."

"So, where can I go?"

"Well, just about anywhere far from us. Don't get too close to other miners who've already set up their stake."

"If I find anything, where can I sell it and how much can I get?"

"There's a town near here, Glendora, down the mountain some 18 miles south of here.

But if you need daily suppliers of food, there's a small store walking distance from here at the Eldoradoville Campgrounds. As for pricing your gold, it's best to go to Glendora."

"And, the price?"

"Well, the last time I brought my findings in, I got \$18.50 an ounce, discounted by 10 percent off the real market price. The best place to go is to Hy's Gold Appraisal and Jewelry Shop. It's been there since the 1850s. Ask for Sy, the current owner. He's honest. Good luck."

"See ya. And, thanks." I waved and then walked upstream to find a spot.

Over the next two weeks, in not too hot weather surrounded by the cool forest, I panned a bunch of gold sand and gravel, and one big nugget. In some places, I had to stand knee deep in the cold water with my pan scraping the bottom until yellow appeared amidst the dark debris in the stream. With my find it was time to see Sy. I bundled up my stuff and sold much of it to the camp store for five bucks. I think in the process of panning I must of lost some 20 pounds. The family that I first talked to was still there. The man, I think his name was John, or whatever, said:

"Hi there, again. Looks like you're more rundown than when you first came here. Findin' gold ain't easy is it?"

"Nope. I've had enough of this. Got to go back to L.A. and find a real steady job."

“Well maybe your luck will be better there. So long.”

I hitched a ride on a supply truck which went south to Glendale down a winding mountain road. I was off to see my maker—of riches, I hope.

There it was, a graying, wood-plank, one story building—the house of Hy. I entered through a shaking, squeaking door.

A small man standing behind a counter said, “Hi there stranger. Can I help you?”

He must be Sy. Looked to be about 30 years old, balding, wire glasses framing dark sunken eyes, pink cheeks and a square dimpled chin. As he came forward to greet me, I could see that he was stooped shouldered under his white shirt and red suspenders that held up his black wool pants.

I queried, “Are you Sy?”

“Sure am. What can I do for you? And, who might you be?”

“Well, the name is Isaac Solomon. I just came down from the East Fork with my gold find.”

“Hmm. Let me see it. Empty your bundle of gold on to this pan so I can spread it out and look at it.”

I opened my burlap cloth pouch and poured the contents on to the metal pan on the counter. The rattling of the gold pebbles and the big nugget sounded like music to my ears—big bucks, I hope.

Sy peered at the contents through an eye-piece attached to a band around his head. He looked and stirred and then lifted the large nugget from the gravely bed. “This is pretty big. About the size of the fore-knuckle on a man’s thumb. Must weigh a couple ounces. Let me weigh it and the rest on my scale in the back room. You can come with me.”

He smiled. I smiled. I followed.

In the dimly lit back room there were scales, like that of the Lady of Justice. On a back table, a large gray box with red flames peered out from its lone window. Various tools were spread across the counter next to it. Sy’s cyclopean eye focused on my nugget in the pan. “Looks really good. Most of the gold from up there in Eldoradoville is pretty pure. The bits of sand and gravel need to be washed and cleaned. If you can stay here for a few minutes, let me clean this batch and then weigh it to give you a fair price. Pour yourself a cup of coffee from over there on the stove.”

The coffee was boiling hot and strong. I sipped it carefully from the metal cup that was available. While I waited, I asked him about himself and how he got here.

Sy said, “My grandfather Hy, or Hyman Gold, came here from Chicago in the 1850s to stake his livelihood on the California gold rush. Back there he was a jeweler and learned how to smelt raw gold here. He was a scrupulous man. He knew that if he cheated the unsophisticated miners coming through town, the word would get out and he would lose business. The store that you are now in was built then and looks the same-sort of sentimental.”

“That’s interesting. I came here from Chicago in 1921 after my newlywed wife died in an auto accident. Something kind of hard to over-come. Jobs in L.A. are difficult to find even though I went to engineering school for three years. Maybe my luck will change with my gold find.”

“I’m sorry about your wife. Being both from Chicago, we must be *lantsmen* (countrymen) of a sort. Now that the gold is cleaned, let me weigh it and tell you what it’s worth. And, oh by the way, there was a blue stone among your find. I’ll check that out too.”

Sy put all of the gold in a large circular pan hanging from one arm of a Lady. On the other hanging pan he started to add metal cylindrical weights, taken out of a wood box, until the scale balanced. “The total weight is 64.5 ounces, worth, to you, about \$1,200 at \$18.60 per ounce.”

“Not bad for two weeks of back-breaking work.”

I note with satisfaction thinking that this will cover about one year’s expenses back in L.A. in the dilapidated rooming house I’m living in.

“And the blue stone, it’s Lapis Lazuli and worth about \$25. What do you want to do with all of this?”

“Lapis Lazuli? What’s that?”

“It’s a gem stone that many ancient cultures used, like the Pharaohs of Egypt. Some people believe the stone has healing properties. If you look very carefully, you will see tiny specs of gold on the stone’s surface. Looks like stars at night.”

“Thanks for the explanation. Could you make a set of rings for me, just for the fingers on my left hand?”

With an incredulous smile, Sy questioned, “Are you sure? A ring on each finger?”

“Yes. And, could you make one of the rings large enough to hold the blue stone? Say for my left ring finger?”

“Yes, and narrow bands for the others?”

“O.K. And how much will all that cost me?”

“Hmm. I can give you an estimate and a final cost when the job is done. If I use five ounces of gold, say valued at \$90, plus my labor and setting the blue stone—that should come to about \$200.” His calm voice assured me that he was being fair.

“Sounds O.K. to me. That will leave me with \$1,000, just enough money for about eight months of living.”

“Isaac, come back tomorrow afternoon to pick up your rings. In the meantime here’s \$300 for you, which he pulled out of a large vault in the back of the room. I’ll have the rest of the money for you tomorrow after I go to the Wells Fargo Bank. Don’t worry if the work costs more. For old-time Chicago’s sake it won’t change.

We shook hands on the deal. My calloused one lightly gripped his smooth one.

“Oh, by the way Sy, where can I stay overnight?” I seem to be asking a lot of questions.

“That’s easy. Go down the street to your left to Sarah’s Palace; she has a rooming house there. It’ll cost you \$3.50 for the night, to include dinner and breakfast. She’s my cousin and will take great care of you. Just tell her Sy sent you.” His face spread into a wide smile of assurance.

The next day, Sy fitted the rings on each finger with the measurements he’d made before. The ring with the blue stone gleamed. “Say, Sy. I notice that there is a design on each side of the mounting for the stone. What is it?” I pointed to the minute etchings on each of the sides of the blue stone.

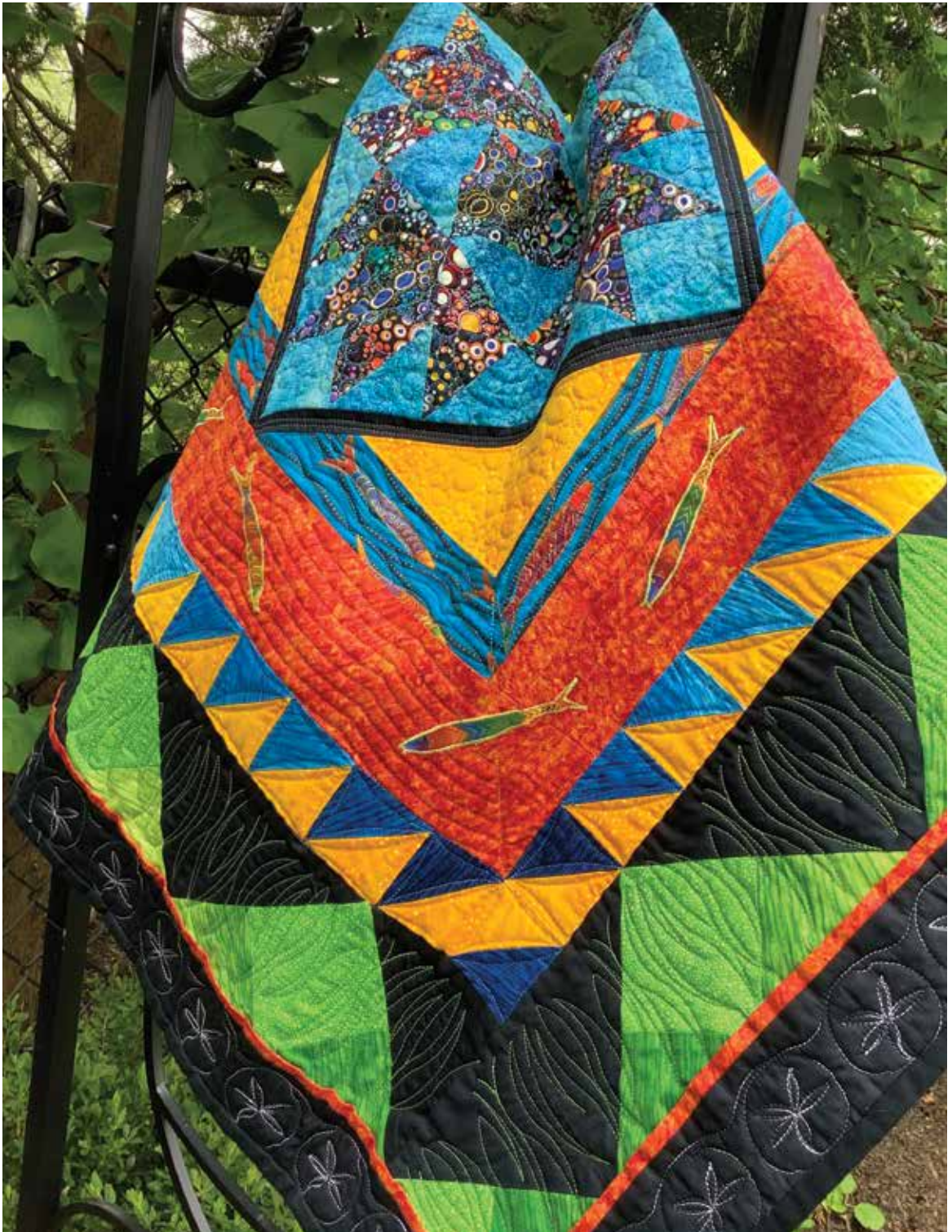
“The mounting is called a bezel. That’s an Indian symbol. Three horizontal lines on the top edge, with triangles below on each side and a cross or a man between them. There are also similar markings on each side of the bezel. That’s a design that is used around here.”

“The rings look great. One on each finger. Now I’m the man with the golden hand.”

Pride filled my chest and lit up my face as I waggled my hand in front of me: I left for L.A. with \$1,000 in my pocket and hope for an improved life.



Grey Crowned Crane Parade photograph by Rhonda Milkowski



Bubble Up fabric-quilt by Linda Spring

ZOOM BIRTHDAY PARTY

by Ellie Routtenberg

Zoom birthday party?
Why not?
No real people
No one to touch, to see, to hear
Our new reality
Is better than none
For now
It better be enough
It came to me in a dream
I can gather people from around the world
See them all at once
Introduce them to each other
Have a blast

With a click of the button
I can make it happen or not
I will make the decision to grab the world
Put all those pieces together
In one big picture
And try to enjoy!



Penguin Party painting by Judy Holstein

GIVING BACK

by Anne Wold

No one knows or understands the difficulty of having been socially and physically isolated more than my dear friend, Yali. Yali is a two time cancer survivor. She was diagnosed with leukemia at the age of four and then again at ten years of age. She reminisces. Looking from the perspective of having reached the age of thirty, she says, “Twenty years ago, on a spring day, a frightened little girl is told by her nurse practitioner that her cancer has reoccurred and that the prognosis is dismal without a bone marrow transplant.” She remembers her ten-year-old response to this devastating news as “It isn’t fair. When I grow up, I’ll have to fix this.” And her nurse practitioner said, “We will fix this.”

She was held in strict isolation. Her stem cell plant and infusion required a long isolation period. Yali compares her one hundred days of isolation to the amount of time all of us are expected to endure sheltering-in-place. As she put it, “There was a barrier between me and the world. I had to wear a mask whenever I went anywhere and people looked at me funny. Friends and family members could only wave to her through a glass door; no one was allowed in or out.” This was beyond anything that she had ever experienced. Her prolonged isolation was heart-wrenching for her! She was not able to form a connection with the outside world.

Yali stresses the point that people who are ill experience this physical and social isolation for an often undetermined amount of time; whereas, with sheltering-in-place, as we are presently doing, there is a time line, although it changes. For these others, this isolation is a very lonely experience and extremely difficult. Yali states that as the world is experiencing this social and physical isolation, perhaps there will be more compassion given to those who do not have a choice or the freedom to even be able to socialize. The importance of the power of connection between people is clearly seen through Yali’s own experience and now more than ever. It is hard to imagine having to endure this alone for weeks at a time for one hundred days, especially when you are only ten years old.

When she was just a teenager, Yali designed and created purses as an expression of her gratitude for her own recovery and hope for others to carry on. She designed her first purse with the late Kate Spade. I proudly attended the release party held at Saks Fifth Avenue in Highland Park, Illinois. Her doctor and her nurses who cared for her were in attendance as well as her family and friends. Poised and gracious, she explained her purpose behind the creation of the purses and thanked her health providers and her family for their care and their loving support. It was very moving and I wiped the tears from my eyes. She explained that one hundred percent of the profits from her purses would be donated to pediatric cancer. This was her way of giving back and highlighting support for pediatric cancer. She created and designed several other purses and patented her company, “Yali’s Carry On” She explained the symbolism of the name: “Cancer survivors should carry on with their lives.”

In actuality, this logo could easily be applied to all of us. The profits from every purse sold went towards the creation of a play space for young patients on the twelfth floor of Lurie Childrens Hospital. She personally signed each purse and included a note in each one explaining the meaning of the brightly colored paisley design on it. A peacock with its gaily colored paisley feathers donned each purse inside the lining or on the purse itself. “The peacock,” Yali explains, “is the symbol for renewal. Its tail represents each survivor’s unique story and the bond between the nurses, the survivors, family, and community triumphing over adversity.”

At present, Yali is a pediatric oncology nurse practitioner at Lurie Childrens Hospital in Chicago. Recently, she created a video on YouTube during this year’s Nurses Week in honor of all nurses. The purpose of this short video relates the “WHY” one becomes a nurse. She said, “I praise all nurses and join them all as my colleagues and friends.” An integral part of the video discloses her personal story and her support of pediatric cancer throughout her life. While watching her video, I recognized it as a tribute to nurses everywhere, but I felt it was also a well deserved tribute to herself. In the video, Yali recalled the day she found out that her cancer had returned. She said, “On that day nursing chose me.”

Now Yali relates that her role in helping her patients and their families navigate through and adjust to their “normalcy” is a huge part of her job. She is no stranger to having to change her life and embrace new situations with courage and strength. Enabling them to come to the realization that their lives now will be impacted in ways they never dreamed

possible and is the most heartbreaking part of her role. Yet she embraces it. She is their cheerleader, their mentor, and lends her shoulder to share their burden and help them to “carry on.” After all, who better than Yali herself knows the angst, the pain, and the anxiety they feel? She possesses the experience of having had to go through this herself. This is comforting to the families, for she represents the hope that they, too, will get through this and have a “normal” life.

Yali has found a meaningful way to give back to her community. She has become the shining light for those cancer patients she cares for and gives hope to them and other cancer survivors. With the support of a devoted family and health care professionals, she conquered her cancer. She focused on becoming a nurse, and today she works with many of the same doctors and nurses who took care of her! Her talents as a nurse, an artist, and an advocate for pediatric cancer, as well as her philanthropic handbag company, reflect who she is. She is an inspiration to me and to all who are fortunate to have her in their life. Yes, I said to myself, Yali did it! She turned what could have negatively impacted her into something more positive. Her selflessness and indefatigable spirit carries on and encourages everyone.

BIOGRAPHIES

NANCY ANDERSON has lived all over the world and has been a human relations consultant, teacher, and rehabilitation psychologist.

WADE BARTLETT spent his entire work life as a computer programmer, college professor, and computer consultant. He has been a long time participant in and coordinator at LLI.

NANCY BELLEW enjoys taking photos, especially on previous travels. With the Covid-19, she's been focusing on her winter home in Tucson, while still living in the northern suburbs.

IVAN BERK was an engineer and investor. He enjoys writing, photography, the arts, travel. He has volunteered at the Mitchell Museum and is an officer of the Illinois Disability Association.

WILLIAM BLUSTEIN retired after 40 years of private medical practice and two years of U.S. Army medicine. He loves music, pickleball, reading, his wife, and his five grandchildren.

SUSAN CHERTKOW is a native Chicagoan with a background in fine arts, writing, and education. One of her favorite diversions is playing in Scrabble tournaments.

LYLE COHEN worked in a family business primarily in domestic manufacturing. Now retired, he writes science fiction, fantasy, horror and, once in a while, a cathartic memoir.

DONALD DRAGANSKI is a published composer and was Music Librarian at Roosevelt University for 25 years.

IRENE ELKIN is a psychologist, primarily focused on psychotherapy research. Now she enjoys writing poems instead of research reports.

MICHAEL ELLMAN has been trying to write good fiction since he retired. Every once in a while, he succeeds.

JONI FRIEDMAN has a tax practice and loves LLI and the people who make it interesting. She takes yoga, walks her pups, gardens, golfs poorly, and takes pictures wherever she goes.

ROSLYN GLATTMAN-HIRSCH is a native Chicagoan who taught science for 34 years, including chemistry for 20 years in Waukegan. She became interested in art after retirement.

ELAINE GLICKMAN taught English and history in Chicago suburban schools and in schools near Boston. She later taught students with disabilities at Oakton Community College.

SUNNY GOLD was a full time mother before returning to school to become a computer programmer-analyst. She is now enjoying anything good that comes her way.

DAVID HERD is a retired environmental engineer who travels extensively and stays active with tennis, yoga, golf, and skiing.

JUDY HOLSTEIN began painting four years ago after she retired. She works in oil, pastel, water color, and acrylic.

BARBARA W. LEVIN is a native Chicagoan, an alumna of Northwestern, and re-educated as a computer-programmer. She has three children, five grand-kids, and loves photography.

BARRY LIPPA has a master's degree in Counseling Psychology. He lived in Israel for 22 years and worked there and in the U.S. in social services.

RHONDA MILKOWSKI is a former teacher who enjoys uniting with nature, photography, video editing, and glasswork. She volunteers with healing dogs in youth therapy and literacy programs.

EVE PERKAL had a thirty-year career in special education. She has been actively involved in the LLI program as well as pursuing other interests.

ELLIE ROUTTENBERG is a retired social worker, an aspiring bridge player, and a volunteer at The ARK. Ellie loves to write, paint, make films, and discover new restaurants.

FRED SEFF was a healthcare administrator and a pharmaceutical executive. He now volunteers at several nonprofits and is a representative on the LLI Advisory Council.

ROCHELLE SINGER taught in elementary schools and was a Professor of Education. As Director of the Elementary Education Program at Barat College, she prepared future teachers.

PAT SOMERS has a Liberal Arts background and especially enjoys book groups, writing, and meeting with friends. She also loves traveling and has been to five of the seven continents.

LINDA SPRING is a retired attorney and likes to hike, bike and swim. She became a quilter before retiring and has two children, four grandchildren, and is married to a retired biochemist.

LYNN STAUDACHER taught art in high school for 15 years and rediscovered her love of writing in 1990 with one of the first Artist's Way classes taught in Chicago. She is also a professional astrologer.

LYNN STEINBERG was a computer programmer for 42 years. She is currently exploring photography and painting, going to classes, and participating in her synagogue.

SYBIL VIRSHBO was a university English teacher. She enjoys the arts, with an emphasis on literature and film. She is presently a docent at the Illinois Holocaust Museum.

ANNE WOLD is a retired special ed teacher. She enjoys writing and intellectually stimulating endeavors. Anne is grateful for the opportunity to share her thoughts with the LLI community.