



Reflections

2021

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Candles for the New World

Even before the 1840s, as pioneers began settling the Oregon Territory, there were stories of a Spanish shipwreck on the rugged coast. The stories may have originated in 1813 with the fur traders at Fort Astoria. At that time blocks of beeswax could still be dug up on the Nehalem Spit near Neahkahnie Mountain and brought to the fort to barter. The practical traders made the beeswax into candles. The natives had no memory of this shipwreck to add.

As the State of Oregon was settled the buried treasure stories at Neahkahnie Mountain became more elaborate. Adventurers chased local fantasies of buried Spanish gold. It was always Spanish gold not ordinary things. These stories weren't true, of course, but, generations later, archaeology and Spanish archival data have discovered an entirely different story.

As the Spanish brought Europeans to build their Empire in the New World they also brought their culture with them. This required household goods and foods unavailable in Mexico. When these things were cheaper to buy from Asia than Europe the Spanish shipped them from their Philippines assembly port in Manilla in sailing ships we know as galleons.

In sailing west across the sea the galleons inaccurately sailed where the winds took them. They made landfall somewhere along the coast of North America then tacked south to the port of Acapulco. The Spanish galleon in our story, the Santo Christo de Burgos, was one of these. The Spanish Archives say she left in late summer of 1693 for a routine voyage, but she never arrived. Along with a supercargo of Spanish officials, priests, and diplomats and their families, she had a cargo of teak lumber, beeswax, and fine Chinese porcelain dishes. Beeswax seems to be an odd cargo now but, with no domestic bees in Mexico, there was no wax for candles in the New World churches. The Philippines had both bees and beeswax.

Foul winds and bad weather carried the Santo Christo de Burgos far north into the Pacific Northwest. They lost their way because overcast skies prevented them from making accurate navigational sightings. The galleon was thrown onto Oregon's Nehalem Spit during a storm. The passengers and crew were thousands of miles from help. Those who survived the wreck waded ashore and met the fierce Tillamook Indians, generations before European contact. The Tillamook would have treated the survivors as unwelcome intruders and

enslaved those they didn't kill at once. Maybe this is the origin of local natives with blue eyes.

Scientists believe the 1693 shipwreck survived until huge tsunami waves from the December 1700 Earthquake broke it up and scattered the pieces along the shore. Shards of Chinese porcelain are found at the mouth of the Nehalem River where they were washed in by the tsunami. Pieces of teak also have been found. One doubts the natives could use the beeswax and left it the wreck. We know some of this tragedy but we will never know all of it. We definitely know the beeswax never reached its destination to be made into candles.

Written By: Carl Petterson
Rose Villa Senior Living

Reflections on Water

My love affair with water began in the bathtub
Where I spoke to myself earnestly and sang girlish tunes
That bounced pleasingly off the porcelain tiles.
I learned its properties, its weight and volume
With a plastic cup held upside down
Finally releasing a giant bubble leaping to the surface.

Swimming pools allowed complete submersion:
Diving, swimming, kicking, bubbling, and
Curiously staring at the other bodies underwater—
Legs, swimsuits, bellies, and waving hair.
I wanted to stay, fingers wrinkled and lips blue.
Leaving always came too soon.

Frightening dark Southern lakes invited me to
walk bravely into whatever they contained:
Could there be snakes?
I swam in the top few feet
Where the sun shone through yellow-green.
Finally I dove to the slimy bottom
Shivering at my courage in the darkness.

The ocean tossed me, flipped me
And carried me on its frothy waves
Filling eyes and nose with salt.
I loved its thrilling power,
But then from the safety of my towel, I watched the
Hypnotic crests of the waves as they
thundered on the sand.

Years later, I have grown timid with my old lover.
I wet my feet on the ocean's edge,
I swim in a small, shallow swimming pool,
And grateful for relief, I soak my aches in a hot tub.
Cinematic scenes of drowning in deep, blue-green water
Draw me in with an artificial terror.

Out my window lies a river flowing North
Where others sail, fish, kayak, and canoe.
Each morning I greet the water as I drink my coffee
Admiring its ripples and splashes of color
As eagles and osprey search for breakfast.
Sunsets make magic sparkles on its surface
Until night fills its quiet deepness.

Written By: Patsy Steimer
Willamette View, Inc.

A Black Dog in Norman Rockwell's America

I was coming home from my paper route and a black dog followed me home. Dad said I could keep him and the dog agreed to stay. That dog was street smart and could spot the dog catcher three blocks away. And if he didn't want to be caught, there was no catching him. He must have liked our house because he decided to hang around and joined up with my routines.

He went along on my morning walk to school and shared that brief interlude before my incarceration in the class room. He ran from yard to yard circling around with his nose to the ground. I thought he was a historian of sorts who could see the day just like me, but could also smell out the drama of the night before. He knew who had passed by – cats, dogs and possums — and who had had a fracas, and who had stopped to leave his mark like Genghis Kahn or Napoleon.

When we passed old Mrs. Moody's house she'd bust out on the porch and yell at him for crossing her yard. But he did not share her passion for private property. If she got too agitated and waved her arms, he'd stop and leave a token of his opinion of property rights in the middle of her front yard. I was always a little behind his running ways and never did own up to Mrs. Moody that the dog was a guest at our house.

She must have known though because everywhere I went the dog tagged along, like when I walked to the library or to Grandfather's real estate office. And when I went for a haircut at Mr. High's barbershop down by Schwartz's Market, he was at my heel. High's shop was a converted front porch walled in with windows. He lived in the house in back.

Two big barber chairs stood in the center of the room, but there was only one barber. Small chairs backed up against the walls and the windows for waiting customers. When I stepped into the shop, the dog lay down on the stoop to wait for me.

"That your dog, Chuck?" Mr. High asked as I climbed up into the chair and he draped the big barber cloth around me. Since Dad's name was Charley, he called us all Chuck – Dad, and me and my brothers Chuck, and Jim and Don — we were all Chuck to Mr. High.

"Yeh," I said, "He's the smartest dog that ever was..."

Mr. High was one of a kind. He was bald and fat and had warts and squinted and smelled of whiskey. His belly pressed up against the arm of the chair, and

seemed to squeeze talk out of him like he was some kind of accordion. The talk alone was worth the price of a haircut.

“What does he know that’s so damn smart?” Mr. High asked.

“He can track ring-necked pheasants,” I said, “and bobwhite too.”

Our neighbor, the one that sold me the muskrat traps, old man Hedrick, was sitting in one of the wooden chairs by the windows. He was next up for a haircut. His house was only a few blocks over from our house, and I used to go by and look at his big Walker hounds chained up to dog houses.

“Yes, Chuck,” Mr. High said to me, after he pumped up the chair a time or two, “Bird hunting is a proper sport for a gentleman like yourself. Some folks, you know, run raggedy old hounds at night after possum. But real gentleman, they hunt them little bobwhites in the daytime.”

“You agitating old reprobate,” Hedrick said. “Any dog can follow the stink of a bird, but it takes a real nose to pick up on a raccoon and not get thrown off onto a possum or a deer. My dogs are worth more than your whole shop. You’ve never heard sweeter music than those hounds singing out when they are on a scent.”

Sam Johnson was waiting there too and he joined in with Hedrick.

“I’ve got three beagles,” he said, “and any hound is a far better than those jug headed Irish Setters that McIntyre has. McIntyre takes them idiot red dogs clear down to Carolina to go bird hunting. He likes to think he’s southern gentry or something, and not just a small town car dealer.”

“Yeh,” Mr. High said, “but this boy doesn’t have one of those crazy red dogs, he’s got a smart black dog – the kind they use for seeing eye dogs. This boy’s got himself a Labrador Retriever.”

“Bull shit,” Hedrick said, “that little black thing out there on the step, isn’t a Lab.”

Mr. Hedrick didn’t hurt my feelings any since I didn’t know what a Lab was.

Mr. High put down his comb and shears and walked over and rooted through a pile of *Playboy* magazines and came up with a copy of *Field and Stream*. He brought the magazine back and handed it to me. Right on the cover was a picture of this leaping black dog flushing out a pheasant.

“Now, there’s what you got Chuck,” he said, “and don’t you let none of those ‘West, by God, Virginia’ hound folk tell you any different.”

Hedrick raised up a little in his chair. “Just cut hair barber,” he said, “we’ve had enough of your bull for one day. I can get a better haircut up on Fifth street, and I would do it too, if the son of a bitch wasn’t a Republican.”

I knew that shop on 5th Street because I'd been there a time or two with Grandfather. The clientele there was more proper and the conversation almost hushed and delicate. There might be a preacher waiting, or a school teacher or a mother with some kid getting his first haircut. The place was a hundred times cleaner than Skinner's with no mat of hair stacked up against the base of the barber chair. Even the magazines were different: *National Geographic* or *Life*, and not *Field and Stream* and *Playboy*.

But I was more comfortable at Mr. High’s shop. A haircut there not only got the job done, but allowed for education and entertainment at the same time. When he finished my haircut Mr. High asked me as he did since I was in the first grade “Are you going to have a shave today?”

“Nah, I’ll skip it.” I said, as he pulled off the cloth and shook hair into a big matted pile around the chrome base of the chair. Hedrick got up and stepped over to the chair. I paid my 50 cents and said thank you, and pushed open the door.

The dog jumped up and wagged his tail. He was all black and had a nice square build to him even though he was just a little on the small side. But he did look exactly like the picture in the magazine. That was a really good haircut: I went inside with a mongrel dog, and came out with a Labrador Retriever.

Written By: Bob Watt
Rose Villa Senior Living

A Friend

A friend knows all about you
But likes you just the same
Not just because you're popular
Or have a famous name.

It really makes no difference
Where your ancestors are from.
A friend couldn't care less if you
Are intelligent or dumb.

A friend is someone with whom
Secrets you can share.
She will lend you something
When she has none to spare.

She tells you her troubles
And you can sympathize
Because she listens to your problems
With teardrops in her eyes.

If you are fortunate to have
A trusting loving friend
Always treasure your friendship
So it will never end.

Written By: Ann Ingermanson
The Village Retirement Center

A Gift of a Bottle of Wine

It was nineteen sixty-eight and our fourth anniversary,
For which the traditional gift is fruit or flowers!
So my wife gave me a bottle of Bordeaux called Chateau Batailley,
And I grilled a steak, and with the wine, the night was ours!

My previous encounter with wine
Had not been nearly so sublime!
And while we knew little of wine,
This bottle tasted divine,
In fact the bottle was amazing!
It was a '61 Bordeaux, a bottle well worth praising!
So we endeavored to learn
To distinguish Merlot from Sauternes!

We sampled the wine from many a vine.
At first our tasting was kind of willys-nilly!
We tried appellations from many nations,
Mainly France, but from Germany, Spain, and Chile!

That year we lived in Texas and one morning at breakfast
We decided to drive to Hanover, New Hampshire
And attend a meeting to present research I'd been completing
It was my first, and I hoped to set the world on fire!

The meeting was The International Congress on Photobiology
Held in the summer, this time at Dartmouth College.
It brought together researchers, who without apology,
Presented their contributions to human knowledge.

I had no time to have slides made of my lab achievements
So on our way there we saw my parents in Cleveland
Where I photographed ten figures that I drew,
And made them into slides in my Dad's darkroom

So there I was, a lowly postdoc, working with a well-known professor
Prepared to present my work to a fairly august audience
Hoping my contribution would be greater not lesser
Nervous that my findings constituted good science

My talk was the last in the last afternoon of the meeting
A typical slot for a postdoc talk, but among those seated
To listen to me was the famous Raymond Latarjet,
Well known for his studies on virus growth with gamma rays!
Now Latarjet as it happened and by circumstance
Was the leader of a laboratory in Paris, France!

And was a well-known researcher from academia -
The first to develop an immune therapy for leukemia!

So I gave my talk on DNA repair,
Scared as a mouse in a mountain lion's lair!
And not long after at the banquet party,
Where three quick scotches got me feeling hearty,

It wasn't too long before Latarjet arrived:
"I'm Raymond Latarjet," he said. And I replied,
"I know very well who you are," having much imbibed.
"That was a very fine talk you gave!" he then advised!

I thanked him profusely; he'd been very kind!
But I've got to admit that in the back of my mind,
I was thinking of the future, of wine and of France!
And being a little high, I took a big chance!

So as our discussion went on I put forth this query:
"Do you think I could work in your laboratory?"
"I think you could if you win yourself a fellowship award!
But I'll talk with your adviser to be sure we're in accord!"

So I petitioned Damon Runyon; my application did succeed!
And Latarjet and my adviser to my going to France agreed!
And so we lived and I worked in France from 69 to 71
Thanks to a gift of a bottle of wine, a new life had just begun!

'Ten years before, two soccer mates and I had downed
Too much chianti - I had a headache profound!
And I had sworn off wine for the rest of my life!
But that was way before I met my future wife.

Written By: Rufus Day
Holladay Park Plaza

A Path

I took a path down my childhood
Of memories gone by
I dreamed a dream of yesterday
Of memories gone by
The path is long
My steps are slow
I pause to look at the sea below
How wild we are
When youth is full
We romp as wild bulls and stampede
When cares of days
Are not in sight
We go our ways
With each delight

Written By: Shirley Hicken
Adams House

A Veteran's Prayer

May 11, 2018

Dear Lord, I've served my country
My love. For her is. Strong
I've stood. Behind. old. Glory
When others thought. Her wrong
I've. Joined in. Celebration
A raised a toast to cheer
I've pledged my all allegiance
And sang her anthem dear
I've wept for fallen brothers
Who proudly fought, then died
The freedom they defended
I cherish so deep inside
I'm proud I'm American
For her strength, and peace I pray
There. Is no greater country
God bless. The USA
Still a veteran of America

Written By: Steven E. Pierce
The Village Retirement Center

A Winter Tale

The young woman sitting across from her mother asked, “Ma, what is the most dangerous thing you have ever done?” In the dining room I learned to eavesdrop but failed to catch the answer. So, I pondered in my own life, many dangerous situations that might qualify as “the most.”

Fifty years ago, it was not as easy to go around Mount Hood to cross-country ski as it is today. There was a road that crossed the White River – with a roaring river in the shadow on the downhill side and a turnoff to a Boy Scout camp parking area on the sunny uphill side, close to White River Glacier. I decided to take my southern-born new daughter-in-law Gail cross country skiing in this area.

I knew she was a strong, healthy person, but not yet used to skiing, so this seemed like a gentle introduction to a wonderful winter sport. We packed a little lunch and our skis; even thought of sunscreen. Not a long drive from the city but further and further into the wilderness.

Arriving at the empty parking lot, we had a snack, a sip of water then strapped on our skis in the snow at the edge of the lot and away we went... uphill. Easy going, gradual incline with just enough snow.

The snow began to get a little deeper, the path a little steeper but, oh, the glorious sunshine. We began to go higher and higher with the terrain a little icier, but it was wonderful! Now, I realized we were nearing the top of White River Glacier with jagged sharp patches and small crevasses. Then bigger and bigger crevasses until we were at the top! No discernible path down. My companion happily followed wherever I went; fortunately, not understanding what danger I had led us into.

It took a long time for me to get us safely back to the parking lot, take off our skis and finish our lunch. All the while Gail was merrily following my lead, never nervous until I told her to look back at where we had come down. She said, “Oh, I knew you knew what you were doing.”

Written By: Mary Bothwell
Willamette View, Inc.

Abalones

We were scrambling amongst the rocks where the sea waves were coming in, splashy and cold. Our bare feet slipped on seaweed, our rolled-up trousers getting wet.

Stuck tightly to some of the rocks, just where the wavelets came in, were abalones. We wanted to take some home to our kitchens to cook, abalones were pricey items in some restaurants, but we had never come close to eating one, they were supposed to be a delicacy.

“There’s one”, Carol yelled, we scrambled over to look at our prey, nudged it with our toes. It just lay there, no movement. “Take my knife” called Scotty, reaching it over. Carol stuck the knife under the abalone, it didn’t even react.

Abalones are sea animals that cling to rocks that lie along some ocean shores. They are made of one big muscle that suction itself tightly to its rock. A shell covers them that can be as big as 6 to 7 inches across, the inside of the shell looks like mother-of-pearl, quite lovely to see. But getting one of these creatures off its rock, and out of its shell, takes a lot of determination and strength, and a good tool to pry it off. Well, we were determined!

There were five of us, we were high school friends of 15 and 16 years of age and our muscles were not as developed as these abalones were. We had some kitchen knives but no crowbars, or pick axes. Two more abalones were discovered and we set to work on these, as our feet grew cold and our backs tired, and the sun was slowly finishing its journey across the sea to the west, we struggled.

Finally, we pried three abalones loose, not very big ones. We were triumphant! We gathered up our knives and trowels in a pail, rolled down our pants, and climbed up to the road to the car.

“ Who wants an abalone?” Carol, Scotty and my sister and I took one home to deal with. Anne, who had mostly sat on a near-by rock, declined. And so we drove home.

We knew these wrestlers of the sea, our sad opponents, had to be somehow cut out of their shells, and then pounded with a hammer or the like to soften them up. We hammered mightily onto the poor thing, lying helplessly on our bread board. It was night by the time we were able to put the frying pan on the stove, melt some butter, and cook our abalone. We dusted it with flour, lay it in the pan, lit a match for the gas flame and let it cook.

“When will it be done?” I queried Peggy, my sister.

“When it gets tender”, Peg said, poking doubtfully at it. “Not yet”.

So we waited nervously until the edges of the abalone were turning brown.

“It must be done by now”, Peg whispered, and we lifted it onto a plate, then cut it in pieces, sawing away until we could pick one onto a fork.

Then we chewed, and chewed, and chewed.

“I’m not sure it’s done”, I said, “it’s so tough!”

Peg looked at me and sighed. “It doesn’t even taste good”. And she spit out a well-masticated morsel.

We looked at each other and then started laughing, as we threw it all into the garbage.

“Oh well,” I said, “we can at least say we have eaten abalone.”

Written By: Evelyn Cole
Rose Villa Senior Living

About This Plague

Human beings are always hoping
To find some treasure for our hearts and minds.
And naturally we gather, we always have.
Always looking to be with: someone we love,
Someone we know or someone we've just found.

Because sometimes when we've gathered,
Breathing together, conspiring,
We collect from one another something,
Something that just goes right into our heart, or mind or life.
When we can't gather easily, we stop feeling – being – human.

A year or so ago the virus left its forest Pangolin home
And discovered some of us.
Each of us has cells –
Well deep within us where the virus can duplify.
And we just love to get together and conspire.

In less than a century, from some of these gatherings,
We have learned to help repair or forestall the harm the virus brings
And to pull down the “To Let” sign from our front windows.
But until the help arrives:
We wear masks, wash our hands, and stand apart.

The virus helps us see we are not Those People over
There or These People over here.
You and I, we are the one human species.
A virus will come one day, from which we can't escape. Until then:
Get together when we can.
Stay alone when we must.

Written By: Robert C.A. Moore
Willamette View, Inc.

Ancient Greece Warrior Dance

On a ship sailing the Mediterranean Sea, near Greece. The Captain picked up the speakerphone. "I'd better check with Greece's dock authority to make sure they've recognized my ship and our neutrality." He thought.

Joe, the first mate, banged open the door interrupting the Captain, "Sir, while we're docked in Greece, I'm going to take the three new sailors that we hired ashore so they can stretch their legs and see a little bit of this ancient land." "Sure, Joe, go ahead" was the response. So, Joe left yelling down the deck, "Come on you three new sailors, we are going ashore to see new life and what the Greek's are doing here in Europe."

The new sailors Alex, Dimitry and Fedor could hardly restrain themselves, "We are going to really meet Greeks!" Running behind Joe, they saw rows of tents and lots of people going from tent to tent. Joe led them down past shops and stores on the waterfront, suddenly they rounded a corner and came upon a tent-like building where people were gathered in small groups. Men and women were dressed in white, fancy ruffled clothes. The boys stopped, looked and asked one of the men, "Why are all of you wearing white dresses?"

"These are not white dresses," laughed the men. "This is an ancient warrior uniform for us Greek soldiers. Today, we only wear this for a wedding. But now that you have come here to talk to us, you have brought us good luck for the bride and the groom." "Come. Join our party, we will dance, eat and sing."

One of the Greek women joined the men, talking to them and repeatedly asking them to come to the wedding to bring them good luck. Alex, asked one of the men, "You will dance at the wedding?" He responded with, "Sure, we are ready to start the dance now, come and dance with us." At the same time he said this, a plaintive melody started to play somewhere in their surroundings. The Greek men and women swayed to the music which increased in volume and speed. The women moved to the side at the music's change. The men danced a few steps which looked familiar to the boys, except they were steps in a Greek battle march. They remembered when their grandfather had taught them some battle marches when they were young. "Come, come dance with us," one of the Greek men said.

A man on each side of Alex took hold of him by the arms and stepped to the music. Alex followed the steps and soon they were doing the simple ancient

war dance that would have prepared them for battle. Joe, the Captain's first mate who had accompanied the boys, could not believe his eyes because he, himself had never heard of ancient war dances. He dropped back to one corner of the tent where he stayed out of sight leaving the boys with the Greeks.

The music increased in speed and volume, the steps became faster and faster. The Greek men's, short, fluffy, delicate, white battle skirts swayed, and they swirled.

"We are battle dancing," Alex thought. One man did a few extra steps of their battle dance. "We Greek soldier's battle dance for strength, stamina and fitness, we have danced since ancient times," the man repeated. "We Greek's battle dance for many reasons and sometimes just to relive our ancestors ancient life."

They fluffed up their skirts, twirled and flashed the ruffles. "When we dance with this ancient army dress, the flare of our ruffle skirt distracts and confuses the attack of our enemy, so we have an advantage in war."

"Oh, is that why your many layered white skirts are a battle dress?" asked Fedor.

"Yes, in ancient times we wear this." He twirled, and Alex saw a strapped girdle around the soldier's waist under his skirt. Just at that time, the dancing men formed a line and started moving back and forth with the increased forceful beat of their music.

"I can't restrain myself," said Alex. "I started to step to the music like the men were doing."

They kept the beat slower so Alex could recognize the steps. Then suddenly the music gathered strength and sound. Faster and louder to what was now a marching battle beat. The men joined hands and used steps that he could follow for one part of the dance. Then several dancers broke into wild battle steps. They turned, twisted, thrust and leapt high in the air. The many layers of white battle skirts flashed and slashed to distract their opponent's attack. The music was now a full battle cry. The men dancing the fast dance whirled and suddenly, covering more ground, leaped gracefully over one of the tables. The fast dancer's strength carried them to more leaps. Slower dancers stepped quietly in the back ground, to keep pace with the warriors but could not do the complicated leaps.

Alex, thought to himself, “I can feel the strength of the warriors’ charge. I feel ready to fight and kill.”

At first Alex kept up with the slow practice dancers. Then, without warning he felt the fury of the warriors. He experienced the gut fury of their battle dance. And he joined in with the fast dancers. Jumping, thrusting, and crushing. He felt the urge to kill. The warriors stayed with him, to help him dance. When Alex had trouble jumping, two warriors grabbed each of his arms and lifted him up to clear the table.

Traditionally the music slowed, and the dance finished without warning. The men stopped and looked at each other, they were exhausted and out of breath.

“We are one,” thought Alex. No one spoke, the feeling was shared. Having seen this, they knew it was something they will never forget. This ancient Greek warrior dance.

Joe peeled himself off the far wall where he had retreated to and said to himself, “These boys are more competent than I thought.” The captain has got to hear about this.

Written By: Olga Keesling
Willamette View, Inc.

Candles and a Music Box

Santa Claus may have been mentioned in my home growing up, but I honestly can't remember. What was real were candles lit on the tree Christmas morning, ones held in tiny silver holders clipped to the tree limbs. And the music box that held the tree, balanced with cornucopia ornaments holding fruits, enough so that the tree would turn full circles and not fall over. This was quite the feat to get it just so. Dad was the official to oversee chosen fruits for the delicate maneuvering. And once, through many trial and errors, the tree would turn without stopping, we kids got to test the candles by lighting the ones on the bottom limbs.

When Christmas morning arrived it was magical. My brother and I sat on the top step excitedly waiting while Mom and Dad lit logs in the fireplace as well as all tiny candles on the tree. Then, the tinkling music box started playing "Oh Tananbaum" and we knew we could go downstairs to the living room where the tree, reflected in a bay window of three panes, lit the entire downstairs, or so it seemed.

Many memories of childhood elude me, but not Christmas morning. Sadly, I hold very few memories of baby Jesus. My family wasn't religious or a church going family, though in my adolescence an Episcopal church was built nearby which I soon joined as a teen member interested in the youth club and junior choir. My brother, staunch and stern, later became a lay reader which was perfect for him. He was already a bit pious which eventually made him a perfect candidate for Alcohol Anonymous and sponsor for so many suffering from alcoholism. Dad, however, wouldn't touch the Episcopal Church. "Nobody is going to see me genuflecting on the carpet! I'll go back to the Presbyterian Church", which, of course he and Mom did.

Today, probably close to 120 years since the music box was made in Germany, it now lives with my oldest daughter, her husband and two kids. It's slightly bent, broken and wobbly on its feet, but candles still get hung on the artificial tree which rests inside a cup designed to hold it. The last time I visited their home at Christmas the music box was able to play two of the four carols. I don't know whether it was the tree or the music box that felt a little bit like the tale of the Velveteen Rabbit, discarded and thrown out and no longer of use, but I sensed an end to an era, one where many of us grow away from held customs to make our own traditions. What never leaves, however, are memories. Like candles of hope, thankfully, we can light those anytime.

Written By: Lynn Thomas
Rose Villa Senior Living

Cheryl

She was quiet, eager to please, dependable and very earnest. She seemed vulnerable. She was a junior. Occasionally she would drop by my journalism classroom after school to talk. I learned her family was active in a fundamentalist church. She sang in the choir and sometimes was asked to sing a solo. That surprised me. I wouldn't have guessed she had enough confidence to sing alone but her eyes danced when she talked about singing.

She was the youngest of three daughters. She was not allowed to date during her teenage years because both her sisters had gotten pregnant while still in high school "and disgraced the family," her parents said. She appeared to accept this limitation on her freedom without question.

In the spring she applied to enroll in the newspaper staff her senior year. She was earning a B in Advanced Journalism, one of the requirements for applying. Although she wasn't one of the best writers, her work was good, she worked hard and met deadlines.

Fall came and she became a reporter on the newspaper staff I advised. She seemed a little intimidated by the experienced staff members at first but relaxed as the days went by. She worked well with her editor, got stories in on time and seemed proud of herself.

However, by mid October, something about her seemed to be changing. She was less outgoing. Finally I asked her if she was okay. She said she'd like to come by after school to talk. She had a problem she wanted to share with me.

As the last class ended, she returned to my room and hung around until the other students were gone. Then she pulled up a chair next to me and sat down. "I'm pregnant and my parents have thrown me out," she quietly said. "The baby is due in May." She explained that she had met Matt, a 21-year-old who lived with his parents on her street. He was a butcher for a local grocery store. Somehow they had managed to go to the Oregon State Fair together – or perhaps met there. I don't recall the details, but she said he was the father of her child. His parents had taken her in so she was now living with him and his family.

"I don't belong there," she said sadly. "I just don't feel right there and I know I have made an awful mistake. I don't belong anywhere now." She brushed away a tear that crept down her cheek. Sorrowfully she added, "I can't even sing in the choir any more." I tried to comfort her and expressed my concern.

We talked about the school district's alternative school for pregnant teens. Students there attended special classes, including a parenting course, and once their baby is born they bring their child to the school's nursery. For some of the students this is their second pregnancy, so various ages of infants and toddlers are in the nursery. Each teen is responsible for spending several hours each week in the nursery, supervised by a teacher who helps them care for the little ones. This school also coordinates the students' prenatal care. Cheryl knew she would need to spend her senior year at that school.

That night I told my husband about Cheryl. We agreed that she needed to live somewhere else. I explained to him about the alternative school. Because our son was in graduate school in Colorado and our daughter was attending the University of Oregon, we had two unoccupied bedrooms. "I'd be willing to offer to have her stay with us," I told him.

"That sounds like a good option for her," he agreed. "Why don't you talk with her about that possibility tomorrow?"

That weekend Cheryl moved in with us. By then she had already registered for the alternative school. Its bus would pick her up each morning and return her after school. Having her there was actually pleasant. She seemed to relax and concentrate on her studies. My husband was often gone for several days at a time with his work. It was nice to have her company.

She spent almost seven months with us. I told her she was welcome to give others our phone number so she could keep up with friends. This was the 80s, long before cell phones. However, I never saw her receive a call – not from her family, her friends or Matt.

We talked about what she would do when the baby came. She was definite. She intended to keep it, even though she knew a baby deserved to have two parents. They would make it together somehow, she said.

Then one Saturday in late April our doorbell rang. I opened the door to a woman I did not recognize. "I'm Cheryl's mother," she said quickly. "I've come to take her home. Her baby is due in just two weeks."

Cheryl heard the conversation and came to the door. She quickly packed her things and away they went. We heard nothing more from her or her family until three weeks later when she showed up after school with her child.

"I want you to see my baby," she said. "I've named her Melody." A sweet little baby was wrapped in a pink plaid receiving blanket, sound asleep. "I'll graduate with my class here next week," she said. I told her how pleased I was that she would be able to do that.

"What do you plan to do after graduation?" I asked.

“I’m moving to California to live with my middle sister. Both sisters live there now and both are married. They want me to come. I’ll find a job and Melody and I will make a new life for us there.” She seemed stronger, more sure of herself.

I was glad she had a plan, but I knew that she had lots of difficulties ahead. I wished her well. Sadly, I never heard from her again.

Written By: Carla Harris
Willamette View, Inc.

Hello, Julia

Joy and contentment were notes
I heard in your parents' voices
when they chorused over cable
to let me hear of your birth.

Now, you are the warm silence
there, on the other end
of this umbilical cord, stretched
to connect us on two continents.

The "little squeaking noise"
that has amused your father
is hushed in soft breathing,
and I cannot detect your sound.

You are only two days old!
I am not at all anxious
for your first utterance!
I'll listen for you in my thoughts.

In three months, I'll fly to hold you,
to catch every coo and cry,
to be mush in your tiny hands.
Before then, do call me again.

Written By: Shirley Hilts
Mennonite Village

Hotel Lobby, Chicago

I used to be you
With your high heels
Clicking on the marble lobby floor
Rushing to that important meeting
Not wanting to be late
But now taking my time
I notice things
Like the shortest route to the front door
And you look surprised
When you see that I am there before you

Written By: Carol Flanagan
Holladay Park Plaza

Jacarandas

Myra woke one morning at the end of May to sunshine pouring in around her bedroom curtains. She sensed the rainy season was finished at last as she threw open her windows to dazzling skies of cloudless cerulean blue. It felt marvelous to breathe. The jacaranda trees would be putting out the first of their astonishing purple blooms, she knew.

Breakfast and ablutions done, Myra dressed in a suit of jacaranda blue over a cream silk blouse. She chose some faux amethyst beads and earrings and fixed a bright enamel monarch butterfly pin on the lapel of her jacket. Her shoes were sensible, black, "old lady" shoes, but there was no help for that, she thought, and felt good about her turn-out anyway.

She made her way to the front desk of the Golden Days Retirement Village to meet her driver, who took her downtown for a doctor's appointment. Doctor Brinks had told her last month that the double vision she'd been experiencing was a small but inoperable glioma. Not to worry for a while, he'd said... "We can slow it down so that you have at least another good year or so before things begin to get ugly".

Myra had no doctor appointment today, however. As soon as the driver pulled away, she caught a bus out front of the medical center. Half an hour later, she transferred to the excursion bus that would take her to her destination in another hour and a half.

The bus made only a few stops, so Myra settled back into her window seat. She thought again of the jacarandas, so vivid in her mind. When she was young and working in L. A., she'd loved to take a bag lunch to work and sit on a park bench beneath those glorious trees to eat it every day during their season. Some fusspots complained about the mess once the blooms began to drop in earnest, but she spent her lunch breaks in wonder until the very last flower fell.

One day, a man she didn't know but recognized from the office asked if he could join her on her bench. They had brought the same kind of sandwich, a conversation ice-breaker, then found they had a lot to talk about. His name was Burke: a solid, manly name, she thought, to go with his good looks. He began to join her every day for lunch, and, when the flowers finished, they went out together. Engagement and a long, happy, if childless, marriage

followed, until five years ago when Burke had quietly dropped dead from a heart attack at church one Sunday. She hadn't even known that he was dead until the congregation rose to sing.

Such were Myra's reveries until the bus pulled up at the historic lodge halfway up Mt. Hood. Large patches of snow lay about, but the sun was still fierce in a clear sky. Myra got out and treated herself to the pricey but delicious buffet in the dining room. After lunch, she spent an hour or so with a glass of wine in front of the roaring fire in the lobby's great stone fireplace before heading out for a walk.

Myra angled up the mountain more or less in a westerly direction as the late afternoon wore on. She paused frequently to admire the long views over the Cascades and the Willamette Valley. The air was so clear! Such a mercy there was no wind.

Towards sunset, Myra settled herself on a comfortable rock in a cozy stone niche. She shivered in the gathering cold, and her teeth chattered from time to time as she watched the sun sink into a golden glow. The stars came out: first Venus, then the brighter stars, and finally those smaller and uncountable stars one never sees in the city anymore--the Pleiades, the Milky Way--the whole, gorgeous panoply of night hidden by the blue illusion of the day. She picked out the few constellations that she knew. Far- away jets and satellites and shooting stars sailed by from time to time. The stars turned in their stately wheel. The shivering stopped. Myra felt a kind of warmth envelop her instead, and a drowsy contentment. She seemed to smell the subtle, honeyed scent of jacarandas.

Written By: Patrick Mizelle
Rose Villa Senior Living

Just A Candle Small

*Let your light so shine among men, that they may see your good works,
and glorify your Father which is in Heaven. Mathew 5:16*

Shirley Rempel

♩ 96
legato

A can-dle glows and sheds its
light to brighten up the dark - est nights. Just a can-dle
small to light the way and the night will turn to day. Oh
let My life like the can - - dle be, a

17

light for all to see. and turn dark - ness in - to light. That flame so

22

small, not much at all, but the flame that glows with a light so

28

bright can take the dark - ness from the night. Through out the

32

night, the dark - est night, that flame so small, not much at all to light the

36

way, yet it ___ burns so bright in ___ the dark-est night, to show the way for some-one to-

36

3

41

day. — Oh let my flame burn bright to be the light that is

41

45

need ed to show the love of God to some one to day. That flame so

45

51

small not much at all, It can burn so bright in the dark - est

51

57

night to show those a - round the love of God. My

62

flame so small, not much at all. *rit.* May my can - dle glow with a

69

light so bright to show to you the love, of God. God. *a tempo*

75

Margaret

Who had the style, or the will to pursue it?
Who would have calla lilies at her wedding?
It was such a beautiful thing.
Where did she get this?
There were nice things at home where she lived.
Like her crystal and linen brought from abroad.
But this little ol' farm girl, who deep in her heart
Wanted a city girl to be.

She knew how to clean, and cleaning she did
For women of wealth, with houses so large.
She learned about magazines and things such as that,
About impractical shoes,
And lizard bags,
And travel, and permanents,
And places to shop, how to dress little girls,
But boys is what she got.

California was more in her mind,
Things that are there are more dignified,
With sisters nearby,
She'd serve them tea, with cakes on nice plates,
And silver to make it so pretty.
But home sick she was, for the place of birth,
With her family in tow she returned.
Not to farm. To edge of the city.

Written By: Evy Nickel
Dallas Retirement Village

Meandering

I make lists as I wake:

write a sympathy note,

work on genealogy.

Not long ago, I completed what I started.

Thoughts were focused, energy sufficient,
the paths to goals straight as arrows.

When interruptions stretched the lines,
the shape of the lines snapped back.

Now goals, though clear, are easily lost,
written down quickly so I won't forget.

Pursuing them is like
meandering down a winding river,
flowing with S curves,
drifting into tributaries,
or dropping anchor unexpectedly
for picnics on shore.

Written By: Karla Klinger
Holladay Park Plaza

Metamorphosis

Death adorns life,
No moments repeat;
Every door is an exit,
Every step is complete.
Death allows birth
From the shattering of molds,
Old ideas being replaced
While fresh vision unfolds.

As midwife to change,
Death heralds what lives,
Reinventing what was,
Hope roused for what is.
To confront human wrongs,
Life's deserts and pain,
Hope leans on demise
Through Time's earthly reign.

Though endings can threaten,
Cause clinging and fright,
Love is not absent
When hidden from sight.
Darkness was never
Meant to stay,
Just new doors and caring
Every day.

Written By: Sandra Felkenes
Willamette View, Inc.

Molly

Sleek, black Labrador pup, galloping through the shallow water, splashing and raising hell, leaping and grinning at the sky.

Molly, you made my heart young.

Dancing through the cover of autumn, nose to the ground snuffing and snorting the hot pheasant scent, tail a-blur behind you.

Molly, you made my heart thrill.

Returning to the duck blind after a long, difficult retrieve, head high and back to balance the welcome burden, legs prancing just a little bit.

Molly, you made my heart proud.

I will miss your warm presence and constant companionship, the re-assurance of your sleep-sounds in the dark stillness of night.

Molly, you made my heart content.

You fought the demon in your belly with never a whimper or groan, until your knowing, gentle eyes told me it was time to go.

Molly, you taught my heart dignity and courage.

Fly, fly on, big dog, we'll meet again where the breezes blow fresh and cool, the birds are many and the golden sun of October always shines.

Molly, you make my heart remember - forever.

Written By: Ron Sadler
Mennonite Village

Mom's Story

Drucilla Upper-Uppington reclines beside her pool. Her lefthand soaking in a bowl of Palmolive Dishwashing Liquid while the other is being skillfully manicured by Madge.

From the far patio door bustles maid Irda Lee. She heads unswervingly and at great speed toward Drucilla Upper-Uppington.

“My ear plugs Madge, my ear plugs! Thank you. That girl is so frightfully boring I don't know why I allow her to eat her lunch out here in the garden.”

Brown bag chitlins in her grasp, Irda Lee hovers over Drucilla Upper-Uppington and begins to chatter.

Drucilla Upper-Uppington nods and smiles. Irda Lee chatters on and on. Durcilla Upper-Uppington continues to nod and smile.

Irda Lee suddenly stops, shrugs, turns on her heel and leaves.

With a free hand Drucilla Upper-Uppington removes the ear plugs.

“Wasn't that the most odious prattle, Madge, you've ever heard?”

“Well ma'am it may be well for you to have heard it. Your Great Dane, Kubla Kahn is in a frenzy with a nonstop case of diarrhea in the Philippine Room on the sisal carpet!”

Written By: Jean Thorpe
Terwilliger Plaza

My New Life

June 11th 2020

I woke to my coughing, Chocking, coughing again. The thick fluid coming up to my throat. Then the suction tube going deep into my throat.

“There, that was a big one,” came a voice from someone I didn’t know. I opened my eyes to see a lady with a mask over her nose and mouth, holding the tube in front of my face. I looked around to see the dentist. There was no dentist. I stiffened from the pain in my back on the left side just behind my heart, it was getting worse and worse. I started to groan and whimpered, then tried to move away from the pain. Then blackness followed by a muddy funk all around.

Suddenly I woke again. The pain was less severe, but I saw the person holding the tube in my mouth, sucking up that awful thick fluid. I caught a glimpse of the tube as he pulled it slowly out of my mouth. It was blood, lots of it.

“You’re doing fine my man, just keep coughing. I thought we were going to have to drain for a while there.”

My thoughts were ‘They say sometimes the cure is worse than the sickness.’

“What happened, where am I?” I spit out during the calm moments. Then the coughing and the pain in my back and my throat. Then more chocking.

“Are the pains severe? What number would give them, between one and ten?”

“What comes after ten?” I reply, I can’t breathe very deeply.”

“That’s because some of your ribs are broken, the EMTs had to restart your heart.”

“Why?” I Whined.

“You weren’t breathing, your heart had stopped, you were essentially dead.”

“For how long,” I asked, trying to erase the whine from my voice.

“The EMTs say they arrived 12 minutes after the 911 call was received. “What do you remember?”

“I couldn’t speak for a few minutes, When I did there was a lady nurse, a different one holding the blood sucking tube, but Dang it, I was still the one coughing.”

“The other nurse was asking you if you remembered anything, can you tell us what happened just before lost conciseness.”

I couldn’t talk again for a few moments then quivered lightly and said “No, not a thing, I just woke up here.”

“Can you tell me your name?”

“Yes” I stammered and told her my full name.”

“Do you know where you are? She asked for the first time, but Hardly the last during my stay at that less than that lovely place.

“No,” I replied. again. I complained about the severe pain from the broken ribs and the blood that they caused, and I asked for the name of the guy who did this to me.

She told me the name of the hospital, in emergency, Heart section. I was shocked. “Why here, all of my doctors were at OHSU closer to my home also?

They were full and not accepting any new ER patience. She replied. I was not in any position to complain any further, nor was I in the frame of mind to understand anything except this constant pain.

Each time I choked up blood and tried to rid it from my throat I winced from the pain in my throat and my chest at the same time. I was relieved that the pain stopped when I started breathing again. I asked for the name of the s.o.b that jumped on my chest so hard that it broke three ribs.

Her answer was, “At least your alive now, isn’t that a good thing?”

I replied, after the next fit of pain, “Is it?”

She gave me a slight chuckle. Not knowing how serious I was. My mental state, as out of whack as it was, blinded my mind to any reality I had at the time. As the miserable hours went by I was taught to use the suction tube myself, not putting it so far down my throat, changing my gag reflex considerably. For three or four more days I could measure the amount of solid

and liquid I was expiating. I was surprised how that amount compared to the improvement of my general health. Soon I could eat solid food again.

The nurses keep poking and prodding in so many different places, and so many different people doing it that I began to question how qualified they were. I was becoming so paranoid that I was asking each person entering their credentials. There were phlebotomists, this assistant, that nurse a different nurse, Doctors and their assistants. I asked each one what they were doing to improve my health. They labeled me a pessimist (quietly), and put electronic restraints on the bed to keep from me getting out and hurt myself. I thought I was fairly strong and couldn't believe that I could fall. I wanted to get up to urinate, so a physical therapist let me roll my legs over the side of the bed and tried to stand. I fell right down to my knees. Then he said, "Stand up". I could not even make my legs straighten them or put any weight at all. I immediately apologized for my stubbornness and actually started to tear up. All of my seventy years of life I was proud of my strength and physical abilities, and was shocked that I had lost them. I was dead for twenty or more minutes and completely lost my bodily functions. My next query was I going to teach myself to walk and do the things that I did without even thinking about them. They all called muscle memory functions. You can't believe how easy they are to loose. They are also hard to get back. The P.T. assured me that I can teach my muscles to react the way they did before. I just need to be diligent. Fourteen days in bed can erase a lifetime of dependence on your body.

After fourteen days I was scheduled to have a defibrillator installed in my upper left chest. One year earlier I witnessed my wife going through the process of having one installed in her chest. It healed quickly so I wasn't too worried about the procedure too much. It consists of a small sterile machine about the size of a pack of cigarettes and wire it to different spots on your heart. When the rhythm of your heart skips a beat, a shock is activated to reset the rhythm to keep pumping blood. While it was explained to me they said 'mild shock' after the procedure E.M.T.'s have told me that some people have Squealed loudly, some do not, However you do feel it. I wonder how many folks would actually get one if they heard the latter before the surgery. That's why they call it a procedure instead of surgery.

The surgery was started after the anesthetic was administered, of course, I've always gone under at the least bit pain killer, so I was out already as we were going down the hallway to the O.R..

I remember waking up in a small room with a large clock on the wall. The time was 4:20, I knew it was p.m. because I was brought in there at noon. I felt that there was someone standing next to me. I looked to my left and saw my wife, who had passed away one month earlier. There was someone standing next to her. Neither of them had masks on. Her face was blurry, as was the face next to her. She smiled and took my hand it felt so warm, it was quite cold the last time I had held it. I tried to speak, they both held up their right hands. The other person had a very gentle voice. I couldn't tell the gender, but it was the sweetest I had ever heard almost as sweet as my darling of fifty years. I'm starting to quiver at the memory. It said, "Have strength, my son, I am with you, you will survive this". I drifted back into the comfort of sleep. I woke again feeling that time had passed. However looking at the clock I was shocked to see that the clock was still displaying 4:20. Not one second later.

The nurse came in at that moment I whispered, "Who was that person in here just a minute ago."

She answered quietly, "No one was in here, I've been watching you the whole time, your rhythm changed so slightly, so I came in to see how you were. Did you feel something"

Her voice was so sharp compared to the last voices I just heard, I answered as softly as I could," Yes, My wife was holding my hand, It felt so warm, I thought she was here."

"I'll go out and see if she wants to come in for a few minutes."

Before I could stop her she was rushing out the door. I guess she wanted to stop her before she got back to the waiting room. I fell asleep again to see her again, she wasn't there and the other person was gone also all that was there that fog from before, although the color had lightened a bit. She came back and asked me of the last time I saw her. I told her how I held her in my arms as she was passing away one month ago.

Written By: Richard Corbett
Dallas Retirement Village

Never Alone

I was walking along the sea shore and feeling the cool breeze upon my back. My shirt was blowing in the wind, my hair was in a mess. I could smell the salty sea and hear the roar of the ocean, as it came in and crashed upon the nearby rocks as it sent a spray high up in the air. Seagulls nearby screeching high in the air, diving into the blue ocean water for frenzied blue fish to get something to eat.

Then I heard something else, like foot prints behind me, faint but there. I was bare footed in the sand and behind me it sounded like something quiet but faint, so I kept walking. Then I stopped and turned around. My breath caught in my throat.

The man I saw was as white as snow, his hair white as wool, his eyes were as flame of fire. He had a two edged sword sticking out of his mouth and when he spoke it sounded like rolling thunder. His robe was as pure white with a gold sash around his waist, his sandals were as gold as a flame of fire. I fell on my knees then.

He said “Don’t be afraid, for I am the Alpha Omega, The Beginning and the End. I am he who sits on throne and who judges all and He who Believes in the Son shall have Eternal Life. Come let us walk together.”

So I got up and we walked on the sandy sea shore for the longest time. He told me about Heaven, things to come and things that will come to pass. Then he said He must go and as softly as he came, He left and left a set of foot prints in the sand out to sea where the waves washed them away. To this day, I will never forget Jesus waking with me on that windy day.

Written By: Leona Thorson
Adams House

Offerings

In 1952, my family was posted to Japan for three years. We were assigned to live in a large home outside Tokyo with lovely tatami mats throughout and a tall stone-embedded concrete wall surrounding the house, approximately 5-6 feet tall. The only other homes in that area were of similar size and now inhabited by employees of other governments.

There were four children in my family and I was the oldest at nine. On the surface, all seemed well. We went to school at a nearby Army base, we had each other for playmates, and my parents made sure we learned local customs and how to express, in Japanese, our gratitude and respect for another culture.

Although Japanese adults and merchants in the neighborhood were kind to us, happily selling us kokeshi dolls, paper flowers and Japanese crackers and candy, the children were not. Not too long after we arrived, they began to throw stones at us if my siblings and I ventured alone beyond the walls of the house. As the oldest child, I would try to protect my younger sisters and get us back to the safety of our house where the children dared not pursue us; however, one day we were caught several streets from home. If we tried walking away, the children blocked us, throwing large stones that struck us with such force that they made red marks on our skin. Not until a Japanese woman walked by and angrily said something to the children did they stop, calling us names as they walked away. She stayed there until we were safely behind that tall concrete wall. We must have told our parents about these incidents.

One afternoon, we were playing on our swing set when we heard voices and looked up to see Japanese children sitting on top of the wall, the same ones who had tormented us in the past. When they started yelling at us, we fled to the house. The children were still perched on the wall when we saw our mother and father leave the house and walk towards them, large trays of American cookies in hand. As we huddled by the glass doors, we watched them lift these trays up to the children, smiling, and motioning them to take some. My father spoke some Japanese and he said something to them, pointing to the swing set in our back yard. To our horror, he seemed to be inviting them to play. For a few breathless moments, no-one took a cookie and then one of the younger children bit into one and smiled broadly. Slowly, others did the same. Some of the younger children began sliding off the wall and running to the slide, eventually followed by others.

My mother came inside to refill the cookie tray and indicated that we were to go outside, something we had no desire to do. We had been raised to do what was asked by an adult, however, and we hesitantly made our way outside. When my mother noticed a little boy sitting on a swing, not quite sure what he should do to make it move, my mother told me to gently push him. He was too little to be afraid of me, I think, and he was delighted to go up in the air and down. Almost as quickly as we had been enemies, we all became children together. Pretty soon, the cookies were gone and my father must have told them to take some cookies home because they all left at once, some holding a last handful of cookies in their hand. They waved to us as they went out the gate.

I didn't then (or now) speak Japanese so I do not know what was said in those moments. I do know that in the days following, a young boy came to see us with plastic bracelets he had made for us. I do know that we never saw children on the wall again and that we were never stoned again.

Today, I know how difficult it must have been to have been on the losing side in a war where so many lives were lost on both sides but I didn't know that then. I also understand now that children probably heard stories in their homes about Americans that caused them to respond in the way they had, but I also learned something else: Hatred does not resolve situations but kindness, understanding, and communication across cultural chasms can have miraculous results. These are the lessons my parents taught me without words and that I have carried with me the rest of my life.

Written By: Susan Shumway
Mennonite Village

Pablo

U.S. Highway 90 runs west out of Del Rio toward Van Horn, dashing briefly through Comstock before going on to cross the Pecos River canyon. At the west edge of town Big Brock's Bar offers cold beer and dominoes—the community's only nighttime diversion but one. A Domino game, specifically Forty-Two, commands its own table with a chair reserved for Brock.

A half-dozen or so regulars wander in from nearby ranches and highway crews, a couple of new fellows from an archeological survey in the Pecos canyon among them. Brock's welcome rings out hearty and sincere to all alike as they belly up and lay down cash for a cold one. Brock fishes each man's favorite from an icy bath in a box below the Formica counter without a glance into the rows of brown bottles: Lone Star, Pearl, Budweiser, Pabst, Falstaff.

That Brock finds your brand in the box without looking comes of necessity. He must cope with blindness, a military service casualty incurred during an ill-considered foray into a brothel in Juarez. He has learned to compensate and ekes out a living with his preferred drink and game.

A regular looks east out a window into the gathering twilight. "Ain't it time for Pablo?" he asks.

"Dependable as sunset," confirms Brock. "Should see him any minute."

Others turn chairs to look out in joint anticipation, intent on a small house up the highway on the opposite side. Two pickup trucks and a semi swoosh through their lines of sight.

A rectangle of light appears in the house-shaped silhouette as a door opens. A small, bent figure under a broad-brimmed hat steps from the porch onto the highway's gravel verge and moves straight toward the bar—diagonally and a football-field's length away across the busy road.

Big Brock's Bar holds its breath. The man's steady pace ticks seconds off the clock. He reaches the yellow lines at the road's center and, without a pause, continues ahead. The blacktop remains empty but for him. He reaches the northern verge and the bar breathes.

Pablo steps in, easing the screen door shut. He moves to the counter as Brock sends out his Spanish greeting, “Hola, compadre. ¿Cómo está?” The old man nods a silent reply and slaps two quarters onto the counter. “Perla,” he says. Brock already has the bottle halfway out of the box. He levers off the cap and slides it across.

Pablo lifts the bottle, drains it in two quaffs, nods a thank-you, turns, and walks out the door. The highway once again remains in suspended animation as he retraces his path to the house. A yellow rectangle appears and then disappears as twilight succumbs to darkness.

Brock’s Bar breathes again. The room murmurs as scraping chairs turn away from the windows.

“OK, boys,” Brock says. “Entertainment’s over. Mitch, set up the dominoes.”

Written By: Dave Wilson
Mennonite Village

Punxsutawney Phil

There were no jobs in the old factory towns when we came up. Our dads were all out of work. My own Pa, a civil engineer, got laid off years ago, permanently, so why should I hope to find a gig, punch a clock for a living wage? What was the point of trade schools and union dues for my generation? As a youngster, my dream job was tool and die—custom work on little pieces of the big machines that make even bigger stuff: cars, washing machines. Rockets. Back then I had no idea what an orthodontist *was*, although that might have been a perfect fit: There's a growing market for cosmetic dentistry these days, even in our small community.

I never met Bill Murray. He was here for almost a month in the eighties while they shot that movie that turned our home at Gobbler's Knob from a local historic attraction into a madhouse . . . in the same pint-sized venue. Since then, our family takes a suite at the Cobblestone Hotel, just south of town, from January 31 through February 4. The kids love the water amenities—pool and spa facilities (Danny learned to swim in the jacuzzi!)—and the grownups use the kitchen to prepare food we bring from home. We all jump on the beds. Before we leave we reserve the same rooms as a retreat from next year's media and tourist invasion.

In 2017, I tried the tanning bed in the Hotel's fitness center an hour before the car picked me up for the drive into town. Crazy thing to do: It zapped my eyeballs so badly that I had to make an educated guess about my shadow. Hesitated just long enough that the guys in top hats got anxious and wondered if I fudged the call. I'm still not sure! And I don't go anywhere near that fluorescent array of retinal madness. My coat is brown, what do I need with a tan? Gainful employment is at a premium in Punxsutawney, and I'm the only Better Business Bureau-listed prognosticator in the county.

Written By: Pam Glenn
Holladay Park Plaza

Riding in a Truck with Jack

We never did actually run out of gas, but it was a near thing a time or two. It all started almost immediately after I moved to Eugene. I saw a poster looking for volunteers to work at the city's native plant nursery, which grows plants for restoration projects around town. Among those volunteering was Jack, a tall, balding man with a beard, a ready smile and a wry sense of humor.

Early the next summer someone suggested a trip to Three-Fingered Jack, a jagged peak on the crest of the Cascades. One of the volunteers had just lost her dog, and wanted to take the ashes to a meadow they had often visited. Jack and I discovered that we both liked the out of doors, modest hikes, native plants, and back roads.

The next spring Jack asked me if I would like to go with him to Horse Rock Ridge, a natural site Jack was monitoring for the BLM. This was the first of several hikes to this gorgeous spot overlooking the Willamette Valley. On the way there Jack introduced me to the local history of the Mohawk Valley: an abandoned rail line, the site of a vanished logging town, the tiny cafe/gas station, the school where he tutored kids.

This soon became a pattern: one of us would suggest that it was time for another expedition, just the two of us, usually along with Jack's dog. We both enjoyed narrow, twisting, dusty backroads, and neither of our wives really appreciated their rustic charm, so they were happy to see us go. Over the next several years we went out every couple of months, exploring obscure corners of Lane, Douglas, Linn, Benton counties. Jack seemed to know every back road, every little crossroads hamlet, and the story behind them. On every trip Jack delighted in pointing out the wildflowers that we came across. He knew them all, both common and scientific names, and tried to teach them to me, with partial success.

We would meet early morning at some convenient spot, find the nearest greasy spoon for an unvarying breakfast of coffee, two eggs over easy, hash browns, bacon and a glass of orange juice. Over time we probably ate this same breakfast in more than twenty tiny roadside diners, always enjoying listening to the banter between the waitress and the regulars who were clearly there several mornings a week. Then off to hike to a waterfall, a fire lookout, a lake or an old mining camp, sometimes in my Prius, but most often in Jack's pickup.

While we never talked about it, Jack seemed to not pay too much attention to how full his gas tank was. On our first attempt to follow the Calapooya River to its headwaters Jack's map showed a forest service road that would take us up over the ridge to Blue River, with a gas station. However, well up the road we encountered thick snow still blocking the road and had to turn back. "Well," said Jack, "here's this other road that cuts over to the south and should take us to the MacKenzie River, if it isn't blocked off at the other end." The gas gauge was leaning on Empty when we reached the river, and the road was not blocked, and we breathed a sigh of relief. (Two later attempts to get to Blue River this way also failed, but gas was not an issue).

A later outing to the top of Marys Peak, west of Corvallis, also included a stop at Alsea Falls, where we noticed the gauge was approaching Empty. "Is there a gas station in Alsea?" I asked. "I think so" was the reply. As we rolled into town we spotted a solitary gas pump on the north side of the road, but no one in sight. The town might have been deserted. After a longish wait for someone to appear, Jack finally went into the tumbledown store across the street to inquire. He soon returned with the store's proprietor, who said she had been in the store room, and hadn't seen us drive in. Another close call. It was quite a ways into Philomath.

One day we decided to trace the upper reaches of the Willamette River, back to the source of the south fork at Lake Timpanango. It was a long, lonely road south from Mills Creek Reservoir. I think we met one Forest Service truck, and perhaps one other pickup. Finally, after coming within a couple of miles of our goal, Jack said "I don't think we have enough gas to get down there, and back." So we turned around and started back toward Oakridge. Neither of us said a word, but Jack put in a tape of Garrison Keillor stories to listen to, and turned off the truck to coast down every downhill stretch. Pulling in to the first gas station we came to in Oakridge, Jack filled the essentially empty tank.

In 2015 I moved to the Portland area, and consequently our outings became less frequent, but we still met up every few months to explore another side road somewhere between Eugene and Portland. Then Jack was diagnosed with the first stages of Alzheimer's. (The diagnosis was wrong, but that's another story). Our last trip together was in early 2017. We met at the Trappist Abbey near Carlton, north of McMinnville. Jack was late in arriving; he had (uncharacteristically) missed a turn in town. We explored the Abbey grounds, and walked through the woods behind the abbey. It had rained the day before, and the paths were muddy. It was a rather gloomy, overcast day, and I was

feeling rather depressed, much in tune with the weather. After a visit to the gift shop, and purchase of one of the monk's renowned fruitcakes, we left. Jack followed me as far as the junction with Highway 99W. I waved to him as he turned south along the highway, and I went north toward Portland.

Jack died a few months later of the brain tumor that had been initially missed.

Written By: Elliot McIntire
Rose Villa Senior Living

Rocking Chair Ride

Grandma Lois, 90 plus, phoned from rocking chair,
"Please come, I can't breathe."

I sat and reassured as
she swung back and forth.
No progress made; panic is always a dead end.
"Give your fears to God. Quit riding
piggyback on my faith," I scolded.

I wrote *Anxiety and Fear*
on a card, handing it to her.
"What will you do with these?
Fear and faith cannot coexist."

She gazed at me, then timidly
tore the card in two
and threw
the pieces in her garbage, saying,
praying,
"All right, Jesus, I give my fears to You
but...I just want to live a little longer."

"Why?" asked I.
"Heaven will be wonderful. All
you love are there.
What if Jesus wants you tonight?
Are you willing?"

Hesitation.
Then quietly,
"All right, Lord,
if you want me tonight,
I'm willing."

Instantly her countenance transformed.
Fear vanished.
In its place
peace filled her face.
First I'd seen in all the years I'd known
this mother-in-law.

Quiet now, listening,
back and forth she swayed
as we sang and praised and prayed.
Two hours gone.

Then as we watched,
Lois closed her eyes, took one last earthly breath
and sailed her rocking chair straight from Time into Eternity,
her lungs inspired celestial air,
and welcomed by the God she
dared to trust,
she ran into His arms.

Written By: Petey Prater
Dallas Retirement Village

Rodents as Pets

Ah, the joys of keeping rodents as a pets! You'd think the smell of mice indoors would be enough! Or the pleasure of each new litter? Or the chore of keeping their bedding fresh? Or the sound of a squeaky wheel turning all night?

But just one look at those shiny brown eyes and fur-swirled cowlicks told me this adorable guinea pig would be a lovable pet. A rodent, yes, but one capable of receiving and demonstrating affection more than those jittery mice, — these were my hopeful thoughts at the pet store.

Besides, *this* guinea pig would be given lots of attention and care by youngsters learning about kindness to animals and responsibility for pets. What better way to learn those lessons than with this gentle pet in my classroom. Also, as a new teacher, it would show my class how “with-it” I was. No other room in our school had a classroom pet!

During the initial weeks, Nani was a quiet addition to our classroom and the children enjoyed recesses playing with her. Some students never did get the hang of assigned chores, so feeding, watering, cleaning her cage regularly were up to me. Weekends were not a problem. Nani went home with any child who had their parent's permission. Over one weekend, a student and his father built a fairly large cage (a Scout project?) for Nani and delivered it to a corner of our classroom.

I'm not sure who first voiced the discovery that Nani was growing larger around the middle by the day. (An immaculate conception? No, more likely from the pet store.) From then on, not wanting to risk a birthing experience in the classroom, Nani went home to my small apartment and a very understanding roommate. Her first litter was four or five cavies, each one a different pattern of colors, — a potential Mendelian lesson.

Then Nani and her babies and their large cage came back into my classroom to be adored by the kids. Finding homes for Nani's first litter was not hard. But it was imperative after weeks went by and, by gosh, somehow Nani was looking big in the belly again. We never had a discussion about the birds and the bees, thankfully, but we all suspected that putting two guinea pigs together begins a multiplication problem! Needless to say, with each succeeding litter, any good will I had with parents, friends, and relatives was diminished.

Nani and her descendants went home to my apartment permanently one afternoon when

Beth's mother let me know that her daughter had a severe allergic reaction (hives) to guinea pigs. In hindsight, it hadn't been a good idea to have a

classroom pet without thinking through all the consequences for the students, their parents, my roommate, myself, — and the animals. But Life's lessons come from living it, wouldn't you know.

In retrospect, Nani the house pet was much more entertaining than the mice I had kept previously. In our small apartment her high-pitched whistle, whenever the refrigerator door was opened, told us *she* wanted a snack, too! That was many years ago; still, I enjoy a pet store and, if I'm lucky, just a quick peek at the rodents....

by Estelle Leong Bergstrom
Friendsview Retirement Community

Simple Path

It is simple
This path we can choose

All it requires is that we show up
And just Be

Be present
Be grateful
Be kind

Let go of control
Turn it over

To love
To Be love

That's it
It is a simple path

So challenging,
So difficult to remain faithful to,
So hard to execute

And yet tell me this

What could make for a more important path
A more important way to do life

Written By: Esther Elizabeth
Holladay Park Plaza

Sipping Scotch Broth

Just so you know, Campbell's Scotch Broth Soup always conjures up pleasant childhood memories. Pearled barley, beef and seasoned broth—what's not to love about the contents of my favorite red-and-white-labeled tin can?

Marketing innovations often launch adventures into the manageable unknown. Our Bob's Red Mill marketing agency tantalized and convinced me to compete in the World Porridge Championship held annually in Carrbridge, Scotland. Their pitch went like this—jump into the fray and compete with professional hotel chefs and others from around the world. Win or lose, the brand will benefit. Win the prestigious 'Golden Spurtle' trophy and, with proper messaging, sales of Steel Cut Oats (Pinhead Oats to the Scots) will see a major spike.

The first year I took a team and entered the competition, we won the coveted Golden Spurtle trophy for 'Best Traditional Porridge.' Our surprising win received screen time in Times Square New York and coverage in several national newspapers. With publicity and marketing we doubled world sales of our Steel Cut Oats. This was a resounding team success. We vowed to return and compete again.

Returning to Carrbridge for the third time in as many years for the contest was special for me. This was my year as chef/competitor. I was well practiced cooking and stirring oats with my spurtle and ready to again prove that the way we cook our Canadian-grown oats—cut by steel blades into small pieces—makes the world's best porridge. I would be attempting to capture the title for the second time in three years.

Thoroughly in love with Scotland after two prior visits, we had a plan. Arrive several days prior to competition and connect at the Glasgow airport with kilt-clad Rickey Henderson, owner of 'About Scotland' and be escorted in his seven-passenger Mercedes van. In simple instructions from the four of us before our visit we asked Rickey to “show us a new part of Scotland you love, with good food, historic sites, interesting accommodations, some surprises and a few distilleries for daughter Jules and son-in-law Rob. Then drop us at the Fairwinds B&B in Carrbridge in time for a final practice in their kitchen, the evening Ceilidh Dance at the community hall and competition the following day.”

Hearing that the area around Carrbridge—nestled on the Spey River in northern Scottish Highlands—was also appreciated by seasoned whisky lovers as 'Speyside', and home to over 20 Single Malt Scotch distilleries, was not

impressive to me. “So what, who cares? I’m not here for sippin’ dew, I’m here to compete, have fun and possibly regain the World Porridge Championship.”

Not knowing it would send me on a second major life and learning adventure, I was stuck on the ho-hum side of interest when Rickey announced, “We’re in Duffton, do you want to visit Glenfiddich?” Jules and Rob were all in with a resounding “sure, let’s go.” My reply was “no thanks, I’d rather prowl the antique shop in search of treasure” and my wife Marie said, “I’m heading to the local coffee shop—everyone meet me there in two hours.”

Gathering in the coffee shop with Marie, we exchanged stories. I showed my new-to-me Scottish treasures, Marie unveiled her unusual hand-calligraphed portrait of Arthur Conan Doyle and Jules and Rob shared stories from their Glenfiddich tour. We enjoyed going separate ways and reliving our adventures.

As our trip progressed, I let it be known that I would like to join the distillery tour of Talisker on the Isle of Skye. After touring Talisker it was time to buy a cap and pin and have a free drink. Ooowee! Pretty stiff tasting stuff for a newbie like me. While there I began listening and learning from our seasoned tour guide. Alongside the shot of whisky, they served a small beaker of water known as ‘neat water back.’ Instructions were: “First ‘nose’ the whisky, then take a sip and roll it over your tongue while tasting. Now add a few drops of water to bring out the flavor. And never put Single Malt Scotch on ice.” So interesting. I was learning. With learning came confidence.

After touring six or eight additional Single Malt Scotch distilleries, learning the subtle differences each distiller imparts to their whisky when roasting the barley to their specs, being tutored by those who distill and tasting each, I was becoming transformed into a knowledgeable believer and occasional sipper.

Back in the van, Rickey continued presenting Scotland to us. During five-day tours with him over six years we visited massive standing stones that make Stonehenge look like a tourist trap, toured castles—some restored and many in ruins, observed working sheep dogs and visited many more distilleries. In the Highlands we toured the sacred ground of a Cloutie Well. We learned about climbing Munros—the 282 mountains over 3000’ high that many enjoy hiking and climbing. Sleeping in beautiful castles was an unexpected pleasure. Visiting Orkney—especially Skara Brae—opened me to history and antiquity I never imagined. And Scapa, where the Germans scuttled their fleet at the end of WWII was an eye opener still visited by scuba divers. Choosing a hand-knit sweater at the Wool Shed made by local knitters from naturally-dark-brown Ronaldsay sheep’s wool yarn—brown because of the sheep’s exclusive seaweed diet—gave me a story I’ll never forget.

And . . .

But back to whisky. Visiting three distilleries on the isle of Islay in the Hebrides—Ardbeg, Laphroaig and Lagavulin—I saw how each made their smokey peaty Scotch distinctive by allowing peat smoke to infuse the barley for three days so it would permeate each grain prior to distilling. Along the way I picked a smokey favorite—Ardbeg. Later at Glenmorangie I chose La Santa as my smooth, rich and spicy taste preference.

Am I really saying this?

Oban, Glenlivet and others are now checked off on my distillery passport. As a modest foodie touring Scotland, I've visited Walker Shortbread, found the world's best orange marmalade in Dundee and learned to avoid haggis. And there is no denying I love the Scottish people, their beautiful country and sipping what now replaces my childhood favorite--Single Malt Scotch Broth.

Written By: Dennis Gilliam
Willamette View, Inc.

The Hummingbird's Song

Quivering, mincing,
Throbbing ruby.
Darting, dashing,
Fickle nomad.

Staccato chirp to
Warn and flee.
Pieces of sound
Without melody.

Yet grandiose,
Elegant, wondrous
To see. Its life, its song
One reverie.

Written By: Peg Johnson
Holladay Park Plaza

The Sign on The Door

Seemingly ordinary events in one's life often carry the future in the messages they provide. Often the most mundane events carry an effect far from each intended message.

On Saturday afternoon in late spring 1986, my wife Lee and I visited a yarn shop in Portland. She, being a weaver, needed a supply of yarn not available in our small town of St. Helens, Oregon. We parked my van in front of a small yarn shop in North Portland. A sign on the front door read, "*Learn How to Make a Basket.*" My thought was, "*Wonder what that's about?*" Lee said, "*Why don't you ask?*" We went in. She soon was busy selecting yarn for her project, so I asked another person about sign on the door. "*What was it about?*" It was a beginning class on how to make a basket being held at the shop in the next weeks. I knew nothing about basket making, except that people carry stuff in them. So I enquired further about the class.

The class would be held the following Monday night and there were already 17 potential students signed up. I asked Lee about the idea and she said go ahead. It might be fun. So I signed up.

The following Monday, the class opened at the yarn shop. 18 students attended including me, the only male student. The instructor was an experienced, willing teacher and knew how to present project. Three hours later students ended up with a half-completed melon basket. Most of the students were eager for the next class on the following Monday. I went home still not sure about this craft called "basket-making".

On the next class meeting the instructor told us this would be her last session with us. Lots of disappointed students. I found another instructor at a basket shop in Portland and finished my project. I continued taking classes with

the shop owner. At home, I began making the melon basket to give to my family for Christmas.

Now, from wood making one basket pattern, I began to expand my range of basket in include other style and forms.

In Sept. of 1986 a new shopping mall was opening in Portland on the East side of town. The basket shop owner called me to see if Lee and I could help him at the opening, by demonstrating weaving using yarn with the loom, and reed for basket weaving, for 4 days. We said, “*Sure we can.*” It turned out to be quite successful and a good project for all of us.

In early September I received a note from the shop owner, asking me if knew other basket makers. My answer was “no”. The note was from the shop owner to his customers, inviting them to a meeting to see if other weavers would be interested in forming an organization of basket makers. A meeting was to be held in East Portland. Six or eight people were expected; 18 showed up! And that was the beginning of Columbia Basin Basket Guild in Portland. By year’s end there were 100 members from across Oregon, SW Washington and beyond.

In the meantime, I was extending my interest in the craft; working on the new basket forms and attending conferences about the craft in general. I was also deeply committed to the work of the Guild, and became the first President.

The organization of the Guild was a key factor in my professional development. Having been an educator, I was familiar with the Guild structure. It gave me a pattern for own development in leading the craft of basket making.

During the next several months it was important that I learn as much as possible, so I attended classes and other skill sets to increase my own

confidence in my new venture. Much of my winter time activities now were given to reading literature on the subject. In addition, I attended workshops to increase my skill and to conferences to widen my concept of how the craft of basketry expanded over the centuries. Lee and I, sharing the common during the next few months. We attended regional basketry conferences in such venues as Spokane, Washington; Greenbay, Wisconsin; Nashville, Tennessee. These visits to other parts of the country gave us a broader view of the range of the craft in Western America.

I was ready to use my skills as a teacher in my own community. As a student of the craft I understood how new students needed specific instruction as they learned.

I began teaching for Portland Community College and in my own community of St. Helens. Most of my basketry teaching was with young adults. Production of my own baskets, now led me to explore ways of marketing. I became involved in design, distribution and sales. There was a range of workshops, fairs, celebrations and conferences being all over the Pacific NW. Lee and I attended winery shows in Eastern Washington and also Spokane, Washington. The people who attended these shows were always eager to hear to about us and our basketry experiences. We attended craft shows at various events along the Oregon coast, including Yachats and Florence. These were always fun to attend as I demonstrated and sold my baskets.

Medical needs forced us to make the move from St. Helens where we had lived over 40 years to a retirement home in Portland, Oregon. We chose Terwilliger Plaza. I still maintained my membership in the Columbia Basin Basin Basketry Guild and kept up my production of baskets for sales. My time as a caregiver for Lee gave me less time to create baskets for sale. After reducing wood production of baskets, I realized that our travelling days were over. So I

planned to conduct basket classes at Terwilliger Plaza if the community was interested. And so for several years I held classes for adults here at the Plaza. Lee passed away in 2010. I was alone for the first time in our marriage. What to do? I was able to continue teaching until medical issues of my own prevented me from continuing active participation in basket making as a productive craft.

Looking back over 40 years of working a lifestyle that had been unknown to me in my early retirement years, I now understand what the sign on the door opened for me. That open door is now closing and I can look back on many years of being involved in a life full of activity and challenge. I was able now to explore my curiosity laid out for me that day when I met the sign on the door face to face. I can only hope that YOUR curiosity will be challenged. Go ahead and open the door. Your new adventure won't be the same as mine, but don't delay! Do it now, before the door closes, and the opportunity for an adventure is lost.

Written By: Bill Wilson
Terwilliger Plaza

The Sum of Us

How strange: the mystic circumstance
Of Creation? or some Law of Chance?
That molds the context of each life,
Its sorrows, hopes—its joys, its strife,
To form a unique entity,
A Being; an Identity!
Nature and nurture early build our base,
Which our later choices may alter--or erase,
But imprints from interactions with
The People that we meet
Are the threads that weave Our fabric,
And that make Us complete.
Others, for a time, may share our existence,
Or touch us but briefly, a passing instance,
But Every Connection adds to the sum
Of Us—and of Who we have become.
Through our twilight of loss for those we've held dear
Glow the comfort--and Joy--that for Us, they were here.

Written By: L. Joline Shroyer
Willamette View, Inc.

There is a Land

There is a land

where it rains all day;

the sun never shines

and the clouds are grey.

There is a land

that never sees the sun,

and that land's name

is Oregon!

Written By: June Forsyth Kenagy
Mennonite Village

“Life is like riding a bicycle
To keep your balance,
You must keep moving.”

Albert Einstein