



***The Loyalhanna Review***  
2016





Welcome, Spring! © by Gerrie Grandpre



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**Ligonier Valley Writers presents  
the 2016 edition of its literary magazine,  
*The Loyalhanna Review.***

# From the Editor

In 2016 we mark Ligonier Valley Writers' thirtieth year. It is also the twenty-fifth year of publication for *The Loyalhanna Review*. Both of these anniversaries represent major accomplishments for an all-volunteer organization not affiliated with a university.

This year featured a successful student poetry contest, which garnered over 500 entries. Winners in grades 4-12 read their winning poems aloud and received their cash awards and booklets of winning poems during our program at Barnes & Noble, attended by over sixty people. Our popular Halloween-themed flash fiction contest brought both local and out-of-state entries. Winners entertained a Craftique Collections audience with their scary or humorous takes on the subject of "It." We congratulate and support several of our individual members who achieved publication and displayed their talents and accomplishments with readings and receptions at local libraries.

In these thirty years, the publishing industry has undergone a metamorphosis, but in spite of dwindling numbers and finances, we continue to help authors learn and adapt while providing opportunities to entertain and enrich the cultural life of the community. Our St. Michael's of the Valley workshop featured Jim and Rachael Busch teaching ways to foster creativity. At our Fort Ligonier workshop, presenters Marge Burke, Mary Ann Mogus, Jim Busch, and Louise Tilzey-Bates taught attendees tips for writing, the how-tos and caveats of self-publishing, and effective use of social media for promoting their own work. One thing that has not changed is the opportunity for good food, fun, and camaraderie at the annual picnic and our holiday party.

For LVW to remain viable, we need increased membership and active support from people who value what we do. We invite the community to enjoy our fundraiser book of short stories, *Phantom Detectives on Vacation*. Please also consider helping Ligonier Valley Writers on the Community Foundation of Westmoreland County's 2016 Day of Giving on September 21.

*Ruth McDonald, Editor*

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## Special Thanks to LVW Contributors and Friends

Editorial Staff of *The Loyalhanna Review*, especially Judith Gallagher

- Tom Beck
- Marge Burke
- Jim and Glenda Busch
- Rachael Busch
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- Keith Neill
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Community Foundation of Westmoreland County

Craftique Collections

Mary Manges at Fort Ligonier

Greensburg Writers' Group

St. Michael's of the Valley Church

Smail Auto Group

Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art

Louise Tilzey-Bates of Westmoreland Heritage

Westmoreland Museum of American Art



# Four Little Words

© by Nancy A. Clark

Summertime, and the livin'... was sometimes overwhelming for our family of six back in the mid-'50s. A breather was in order.

"Wanna go for berries?" Dad asked.

Those four little words made my heart sing. At just the mention of berries, I was into blue jeans and a long-sleeved shirt faster than you can say blueberry buckle with vanilla ice cream.

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## *The local berry patch— and a tight family budget— whispered our names.*

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The invitation was issued on early July mornings when bituminous coal mines in our corner of the country shut down for retooling. We called this two-week period "miners' vacation." While others sought New Jersey's beaches or Niagara's falls, the local berry patch—and a tight family budget—whispered our names.

Our mom, who appreciated kitchen breaks and was ever mindful of nutritional reinforcement for every occasion, raided the pantry for picnic fare. She loaded Ritz crackers, apples, a bag of cheese puffs, a box of Cracker Jacks, and a gallon jug of green "bug juice" into one side of a two-compartment orange crate. Dad filled the other half with an OD-green woolen military blanket, bug repellent, a roll of bathroom tissue, and a collection of pint-size cottage cheese containers. The crate fit like a glove in the trunk of Dad's '49 Chevy, between a squatty three-legged stool and a large galvanized water bucket into which we'd empty our smaller containers.

Seven miles of country roads and five full stanzas of "She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain" later, we drove through what Mom called the Cathedral of Tall Hemlocks. The shady sanctuary was alive with sparrows and chickadees chirping their alleluias to the new day. We liked to think their song welcomed our presence rather than opposing our intrusion.

At the end of the leafy hemlock canopy, Dad parked on a prominence where the vista included the neighboring county. Hungry hawks glided lazily in a bright, cloudless sky, and sun-kissed dew still glistened in rainbow hues on spiderwebs spun in the tall grasses. All this magnificent beauty, but I only had eyes for the wild blueberry bushes that poked the steep hillsides where coal strippers had once plied their trade.

This was hallowed ground, and being in that

place was a spiritual experience for me.

The blueberry bushes indigenous to southwestern Pennsylvania grew in clumps low to the ground. Dad carried his squatty stool from bush to bush, sitting on it to "milk" the branches. My own heart belonged to the humble huckleberry, a poor relative of today's cultivated blueberry. I've had a gastric love affair with the succulent dark-blue huckleberry ever since my memory meter started ticking.

Back in those dark ages, we knew nothing about antioxidants or other health benefits of the berries blue, but we liked that they floated in our cereal bowls and dyed our tongues purple. Harvesting water buckets full of them ensured enough pies, cobblers, muffins, and jams to satisfy our sweet tooth, and that was incentive enough to keep us picking.

My siblings and I were unaware of it at the time, but we learned a few things during those berry-pickin' "vacations." Our folks urged us to tune in to those elements of Mother Nature's symphony we ignored in our own backyard: the calliope of rustling leaves, the hymns of birds, the bass notes of bumblebees. We marveled at the antics of furry critters darting from under-bush to under-bush and shared the shock and awe of finding snake skins and bear-paw prints, although we never once saw any of those critters with skin on.

We were challenged to work without complaint—at least for the first ten minutes—as well as to value our own company.

We learned *truth* ("Hold on to your container or you'll lose your berries") and *consequences* ("Now pick 'em up").

We practiced *self-discipline* ("Fill a cup before you eat a handful") and *competition* ("Who picks the most gets the Cracker Jack prize"). Berry picking is not a team sport.

In the hills where defiant berry bushes outsmarted primitive reclamation efforts intended to hide the scars of surface mining, we tolerated some of life's inevitable irritations: flies, mosquitoes, sunburn ... and siblings.

Fast forward six decades: Like a kid marking off the days until Christmas, I count down calendar days to when the humble huckleberry is at its peak ... to July's early mornings when Hubby snuggles up behind me and whispers into my ear those four little words that still make my heart sing. "Wanna go for berries?" ♦

Nancy Clark and her husband, Tom, are enjoying retirement in Export, PA. Although Nancy dreams of those berry-pickin' times in the hills of her youth, she is totally satisfied these days to pick those succulent "blues" at the fruit market.





**Doe and Her Fawn Share a Meal**  
© by Carolyn Holland

**Carolyn Holland**, a photojournalist in her seventh life, evolved to being a writographer in her eighth life. Her historical novel-under-construction, *She Saw Her Promised Land*, is struggling to emerge. She maintains an online magazine and facilitates the Foothills Writers in Latrobe.

## A Necessary Meddling

© by Tikvah Feinstein

Yes, it is she—back  
the robin perched on a wire  
near the window  
regarding me eye to eye.

She, who last spring nested in the bush out front,  
protected, yet wary. So close I could almost hear  
blue speckled eggs cracking  
feathers growing.

One evening, a squawking—one of the young,  
hanging upside down, pushed—  
A foot stuck fast had become a part of the nest that refused it, yet  
refused to set it free; fleshy wings flapping,  
head thrashing, beak gaping, hung.  
She overhead circling wildly, her mate, screaming;  
I, human observer, am attacked.

No right to see this.  
Mortality. Moving closer,  
separating pine branches, gloved hands break  
the connection, lift the bird, replace it in the nest.  
Only to be pushed out by the others again, twice.  
While she squawks and swoops a warning,  
not to interfere again. I don't.

Fed under the bush, it flies in time.

So, what is she saying to me now, eyeball to eyeball?  
That she has forgiven me ... can do just fine without me.  
I am saying to her:

This year, don't make the nest so tight.

**Tikvah Feinstein's** poetry is published in *Phenomenal Literature*, *VerbalArt*, *Boston Poetry Review*, *Leaves of Ink*, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, and others. Author of two books, she also edited *Taproot Literary Review* for 25 editions.



# Forbes Field of Dreams

© by Joe Potts

As a kid in the 1950s, I was blessed by fate and family to grow up in Pittsburgh. Although we children of the early Baby Boom spent our share of time ducking under desks to protect us from nuclear attack, we lived a magical childhood in times that are gone forever. Who could be bothered worrying about the bomb or sirens when the siren call of the crack of a baseball bat came over the radio? These sirens, however, did not lure us to our doom, but rather to the wonderful structure known as the ballpark.

When I was eight, my dad took me to Forbes Field for a Pirate game. Forbes Field sat in the middle of Oakland, near the Cathedral of Learning. We took the streetcar, which to me was almost as good as a Kennywood ride. Who didn't love riding the streetcar? The dreamlike, rhythmic *clickety-clack* of the trolley on the track was mesmerizing. As the car gently swayed back and forth, it put me under its spell. It was a magic carpet ride to a place where boys' dreams came true.

We got off the streetcar at Bouquet Street, one block from the home of the Pirates. As we walked down Bouquet toward the ballpark entrance, thousands of fans milled around, but my eyes were only for Forbes Field. She was a magnificent lady, all steel and concrete, with terra-cotta arches running like a necklace along the first-level facade.

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*Thousands of fans milled around, but my eyes were only for Forbes Field.*

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In those days, the Pirates were perennial losers, and Forbes Field was more of a draw than they were. They had begun to assemble the nucleus of a championship team—Clemente, Groat, Mazerowski, Virdon, Law—but success was still a couple of years away. It was my first visit to “The House of Thrills,” as Bob Prince, the Voice of the Pirates, the Gunner, called it. As we walked through the turnstile, I could already smell the peanuts and hot dogs. And I swear I could detect, hidden among the food smells, the distinctive aroma that comes only from leather baseball gloves. Surely this was a small corner of eight-year-old heaven.

My dad led me past various field entrances until he found the section that was printed on our tickets. We walked through a long, dark, narrow passageway, and then suddenly the field burst into

view, all Technicolor green grass and brown mound and white bases and chalk lines. And real men were on the field. Real ballplayers in real uniforms. It was a kaleidoscope of mystic sights that bring delight. Seeing the revered ivy-covered walls in the outfield, the “457 ft” on the wall in deep left-center field, the huge Longines clock above the scoreboard, was a thrill for an impressionable Pittsburgh boy.

We settled into our seats along the third base line, not far above the Pirates' dugout. Fortunately, we were not behind one of the steel beams that supported the upper deck. To the left, beyond the scoreboard, against the bright blue sky and cottony clouds, the top of the Carnegie Museum building was visible, complete with the light-up globe on top. Some of the Pirates were on the field warming up—Maz, Dick Stuart, Elroy Face. An impossibly muscular guy, his already-short sleeves rolled up, was flexing by swinging three bats at once. It was none other than the mighty Ted Kluzewski, who, like the Mighty Casey, was sometimes better at whiffing the air out of the infield than the ball out of the park. But if he got ahold of it, you could kiss it goodbye.

The opponents that day were the St. Louis Cardinals, led by Donora native and future Hall of Famer Stan “The Man” Musial. Musial was already a legend, and one of the all-time best hitters in baseball. My baseball knowledge was limited at the time, however, and rather parochial at that. Pirate Dale Long had set a record in 1956 by hitting home runs in eight consecutive games. My uncle had bought me a T-shirt with Long's picture and the caption “Dale Long—Eight Games, Eight Home Runs.” I had worn it incessantly since then, but, in all honesty, I probably could name only a few Pirate players, and very few non-Pirates. During pregame warm-ups, one of the Cardinals (the enemy—you could tell because their uniforms were a dingy gray) emerged from the dugout to a vigorous round of applause from the Pittsburgh crowd.

“There he is,” Dad said. Even at my clueless age, I sensed the reverence in his voice. “Stan the Man.”

I looked at my father. He was obviously expecting an awed response. I gave him the only reply I could. The reply that revealed innocence and drizzled weed killer on the bond that sports can bring to father-son relationships. “Who's Stan the Man?” I said.

My dad's face visibly deflated. “Who's Stan Musial?” he said in a hushed voice, as if he couldn't believe it. But it was true—I had blasphemed. He was obviously thinking, *How can my own flesh and blood*



*not know Stan Musial?* Who knew being a father would bring such darkness and tribulation?

To his credit, my dad managed to compose himself, and explain the facts of Stan the Man to me. I suspect that, in my father's mind, this day was more significant than the day I was baptized.

As batting practice ended, a small tractor came out onto the field. It stopped near the batting cage, and the driver got off and hooked a line to the cage. The tractor then towed the batting cage to deepest left-center field, near the flagpole and the 457 ft. sign. And there it remained during the game, in play, for those sluggers who could hit a ball that far. I have told this to some younger people, born after Forbes Field was torn down, and they didn't believe me. "No way," they say. "They wouldn't leave a batting cage in the outfield during a game!" And they look at me like I'm the old fool they fear they'll become.

"Yes, way," I say. And I'll continue to preach that, long after I'm one of the angels in the outfield, even if I have to do it by séance.

The game got underway, and the Pirates quickly fell behind. First 2-0, then 3-1, then 4-1. By the sixth inning, the Cards had built up a big lead, and I had built up a big thirst. Rooting for your team in the sun and fresh air really works up a thirst, it turns out. Innings passed, and vendor after vendor had gone by, promising sweet relief, but Dad had not flagged down any of them. Surely he would do so soon. Surely we weren't going to die here, in the middle of Forbes Field, in front of thousands. Surely this wasn't my punishment for not knowing Stan Musial.

Or was it? Maybe my sin was unpardonable. After all, what do American males take more seriously than their sports? But I was a young innocent. Surely ignorance of the law carried some weight. Surely even ignorance of Stan the Man was forgivable. Didn't Jesus' sacrifice absolve this transgression? Perhaps not—after all, there was no baseball back then. In fact, as far as I knew, there weren't any sports in Biblical times. *Good grief, how did people pass the time? No wonder they were so bad. No wonder that fire and frogs and brimstone were always raining down on them. What the heck is brimstone, anyway?* I didn't know, but I was betting it would be falling from the sky before the eighth inning.

Fortunately, I had no talent as a prophet, as not long after these morbid thoughts had seized my brain, another Coke vendor wandered by. Surely this man

was to be my salvation. Surely he was sent to deliver modern manna to the forsaken. My dad turned to me and spoke the sacred words: "Would you like a Coke?"

Salvation! I couldn't contain my excitement. Leaping out of my seat, I shrieked, "YEEEESSSSS!"

My dad gave me an odd, bemused look. "Well, gee, you could have said something. Why didn't you ask me before?"

I looked at him for a few seconds. Then I shrugged. "I didn't know I was allowed." He gave me another odd look and bought me a Coke.

In the bottom of the ninth, the Bucs were behind, 6-2. They got a couple of men on base and had a nice rally going. My eight-year-old heart was thumping. They were going to do it! When Maz singled to load the bases, Danny Murtaugh brought in Big Klu to pinch hit. I wondered if he would take all three bats to the plate. But no, he took just one; I guess that's all he needed to hit it over the wall.

*Whoosh!* Strike one. What a swing, though. The power of three dynamos in that swing. Big Klu stepped into the batter's box again.

*Whoosh!* Strike two. But you could tell the pitcher was intimidated. What a swing! Big Klu once more stepped into the box, whirled his bat, and stared down the pitcher.

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*I suspect that, in my father's mind, this day was more significant than the day I was baptized.*

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*Whoosh!* Strike three.

And that quickly, the game was over.

It was my turn to be crestfallen. My dad and I shuffled up the aisle, back through the tunnel, through the gate, and out onto Bouquet Street. Finally, my dad spoke. "Did you have a good time?"

"Sure. It was fine."

On the way home, the *clickety-clack* of the trolley track sounded lonely and plaintive. I stared out the window at the buildings we passed, but I saw only Cardinals crossing the plate. How can a boy see his dreams coming true, only to have them dashed 6-2 by





the St. Louis Cardinals? How can the home team lose on a boy's first visit to Forbes Field?

Over the next few years, Forbes Field proved to be more hospitable to a boy's sensibilities. My dad forgave my transgression, and I witnessed any number of victories by the Pirates at Forbes Field. Drinking sweet Cokes in the sunshine, eating hot dogs

with yellow mustard, cheering at a Dick Stuart home run—all the stuff of a little boy's dream. That boy still lives somewhere in a deep recess of my mind. And Forbes Field lives there as well. And there it remains, always and evermore, exactly as it was back then—the magnificent lady, the House of Thrills. ♦

**Joe Potts** is a semiretired engineer who has had articles published in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* *Pittsburgh Tribune Review*, and the *Laurel Mountain Post*. His humor blog is at [www.joepottszone.com](http://www.joepottszone.com). He lives in Harrison City, PA, with his wife.

## Grounding

© by *Laura Lovic-Lindsay*

Daughter of a Den Mother, I'm taken to trail behind brothers and boys. They make me watch the stab of worms to hooks. These they offer to soggy dark gods. They wipe blood and worm on their shorts. The worms don't hear, "Sorry," but I say it. We're up early

enough for dew and just enough fog that I sneak away to walk the woods-trail. Caterpillar grass strokes my legs and I want to scratch but I have to get into trees before Mummy sees me, drags me back to boys. Evergreens are best for hiding, branched low and thick. In

deep now, I fill one pocket in pinecones, one in acorns. These I drop to mark my way when I Hansel-and-Gretel my way off-path to find the animals that talk. Crickets call and I follow. The path is steep but I'm racing velvet chipmunks and now I'm atop a small cliff, that fast.

Below I see boys dangling feet in water, splashing. Adults at the back, arm-folds or smoking. Sun-flash, Mummy spreads foil over fire. Behind me, flower fields. Flickery blues that crave petal-picking. Candy-scented sweet peas to come home. I string them in the knots of my hair, listening

to the songs of bees. I find them near an apple tree, tasting the fallen. I steal in, grab. They ignore me. There is plenty. I eat as many as I can, toss them my cores and study ant paths. Black ants don't bite, so I let some crawl up to lick the juice that sticks in stripes on my arms, then

brush them back to ground. This wind, green and rich. This sun sugars my skin. So soft, these grasses ... My name. I hear my name. I hate my name. She is angry. She is worried. She is angry. I am grabbed by my arm before I can rise. "I have been calling you! Everyone is looking for you!"

\*

On the way home, we stop at the abandoned cemetery so Vernon can tip standing stones and find snakes. I'm not allowed out, so I kick the backseat, pick at the vinyl and try to remember what the dragonflies were saying when she grounded me to her world with that name.

(See Laura's bio on p. 8.)

## In My Shoes

© by *Candace Kubinec*

Go ahead, walk  
a mile in my shoes.  
Try the sneakers  
(you might have to run)  
or the zebra-striped flats.  
Stay away from the new  
canvas ones—they pinch.  
If you choose the garden  
boots, wear socks to  
avoid nasty blisters.  
Penny loafers will transport  
you back in time—if  
you wear them too long.  
Flip-flops are always fun;  
I recommend the aqua pair.  
Go ahead, take a walk  
in my shoes, 'cause I'll  
be dancing barefoot.



(See Candace's bio on p. 8.)



## What Is There about a Box?

© by Patricia Orendorff Smith

What is there about a box  
That steals the child away  
Absorbs him in childish play  
Hours upon end  
Away from the coveted contents within  
Six sides of corrugated cardboard  
A house  
A fort  
A car  
A bus  
A train  
A truck  
A spaceship  
Imagination unleashed  
Set loose

## When We Were Children

© by Patricia Orendorff Smith

Life was cookies and cream  
when we were children  
We splashed in the rain  
Caught raindrops on our tongues  
Patted mud pies  
Swung on swings  
Trapped lightning in a jar  
Camped out in teepees  
Played cowboys and Indians  
Dressed up in fancy clothes and heels  
Painted our faces and nails  
Summertime lasted forever  
We held our pinkies high sipping our tea  
We danced while the stars shined and  
the sliver moon slid across the sky  
Time didn't exist  
When we were children.

**Patricia Orendorff Smith** has published over two hundred pieces of poetry, articles, essays, and other prose in twenty-seven publications, including three books, newspapers, and magazines, both national and local. She is currently working on *Mama's Mountain*, a book about her family.

## Tracks and Trails

© by Laura Lovic-Lindsay

I balance-beamed the tracks, tucks and leaps,  
a cartwheel. The only danger was to my ankles,  
those long-abandoned tracks rusted over, moving  
toward archaeology. My brothers announced their  
targets, pelted the strips to trigger their hidden song,  
that ethereal waver of stone-on-steel only children  
ever hear, music that never had a tune. We plucked  
coal and pig iron, Easter eggs secreted among the  
shoring stones, spikes. The planks of wood were  
auburn until the weather and chemistry drip-dyed  
them. I picked strawflowers that pressed up among  
them, marveled over what spices had been dropped  
here like a flower girl's wedding petals. So many  
thousands of groaning cars skated along these blades,  
cut these trails, so long ago and they shone.

**Laura Lovic-Lindsay** lives and writes in a quiet old  
farmhouse in western Pennsylvania, along a foggy river.

## Hope 'n' 'At

© by Candace Kubinec

We sat along the *crick* waiting  
The sky was unusually blue  
the blue of joy  
We packed our lunch  
*chipped ham sammiches*  
and planned to stay all day  
if necessary  
It was the day the *iggle* hatchlings  
were due to fledge  
After years of pollution from  
*still* mills and factories the air  
and rivers around Pittsburgh  
were fresh and clean  
and the *iggles* were nesting again  
The first bird took flight and  
as we looked over the hill  
toward *dahntahn*  
we were filled with hope 'n' 'at

**Candace Kubinec** lives in Greensburg, Pennsylvania.  
Her poems and short stories have appeared in *The  
Loyalhanna Review*, Highland Park Poetry Muses'  
Gallery, *Kind over Matter*, and the 2015 JOMP *Poet's  
Guide to Peace*. She was the April finalist in the  
Highland Park 2015 Poetry That Moves competition.



# A Toolbox Full of Memories

© by Jim Busch

Long before anyone ever heard of a man cave, I had my workshop. When I tell my wife, “I’m going to the shed to putter around,” she thinks I go there to be alone. She doesn’t understand that I’m never alone when I am standing at my workbench. My shop is where I go to reconnect with the men who made me who I am.

I come from a long line of self-reliant handymen who made their living with their hands. They were proud of their skills and their know-how. My mother’s father bragged that he could “grow anything but younger, make anything but enough money, and fix anything but a broken heart.”

As a boy, I was impressed with the skills that my grandfathers, my uncles, my dad, and their friends possessed. They built their own homes, repaired their own cars, and fixed anything else that needed fixing.

Their opinion of one another was not based on income or social status but on what a man could do. They were more impressed by my dad’s best friend’s ’37 Dodge pickup than by someone driving a new Cadillac.

“Any damn fool can buy a new car, but you really have to know your stuff to keep an old-timer like that running like a top!”

I dreamed of growing up to be one of them. One of my favorite birthday presents of all time was my Handy Andy tool set. These were real tools sized to fit a kid’s hands. I dreamed of all the things that I would make and do with the contents of my tiny toolbox. My lifelong love affair with tools of all kinds began with that precious gift.

I had hoped to inherit my relatives’ mechanical and construction skills, but sadly this was not to be. Though I enjoy working with my hands, a sales career proved to be a much more effective way to provide for my family.

Gradually, the men I grew up admiring passed from the scene. I may not have inherited their skills, but my appreciation of their abilities did not go unnoticed. They passed their tools down to me, the little kid who always seemed to be around. Those tools are now among my most treasured possessions. I use them almost daily, and with them I can easily build a bridge to my long-departed loved ones.

On the edge of my workbench sits a small bench anvil that my Grandpap Ed made from a short piece of discarded mine rail. Ed lived with us and I was his unofficial helper. Born outside of McKeesport in 1882, he grew up in the epicenter of the industrial revolution, but Grandpap had a strong counter-revolutionary bent. When they were young men his brother got him a job in the mill, but he lasted only two days.

By birth and by choice he was a farmer. In the

1920s he started the greenhouse business that he ran until his death. Grandpap paid me to take my Radio Flyer to the local Sparkle Supermarket to collect wooden orange crates. He would knock them apart and use the wood to make flats for the plants he sold.

My job was to use the small anvil and his hammer to straighten out and recycle the nails he pulled from the crates. When springtime rolled around, I helped Grandpap fill and plant the flats we had built. Our simple boxes made from discarded wood gave me a sense of how it feels to make something from nothing.

Whenever I use his homemade anvil, it reminds me of how good it felt to help him, of his smile when he inspected my handiwork. Most of all, it reminds me of how much I loved him.

Unlike Grandpap Ed, my mother’s father fully embraced the machine age. Grandpap Campbell had been a millwright in his early twenties. In our blue-collar steel town, millwrights were held in great esteem. They were the men who kept the wheels of industry turning. Chosen for their mechanical and problem-solving abilities, millwrights were responsible for setting up and repairing the massive machinery used to pour and shape steel.

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*He bragged that he could  
“grow anything but  
younger, make anything  
but enough money, and  
fix anything  
but a broken heart.”*

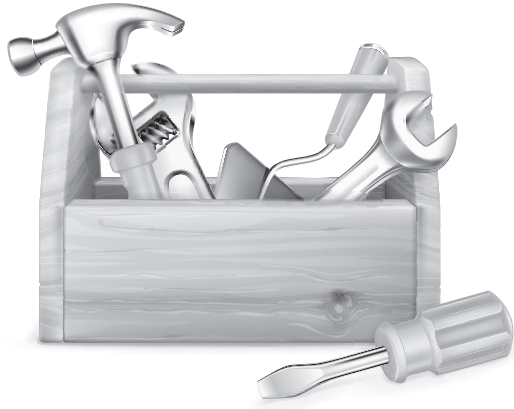
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Usually it took years to accumulate the skill and experience to become a millwright, so Grandpap’s position was a testament to his exceptional skills.

He loved the mill and he loved his job, but an industrial accident brought his world crashing down. His hand was trapped in the gears of a rolling mill, crushing three fingers of his left hand.

He was going into shock when a close friend cut his fingers off and rushed him to the hospital. Grandpap survived but lost his job; the mill didn’t want a man with a crippled hand.

His hand may have been crushed, but Grandpap’s spirit never wavered. He managed to secure a job as the building supervisor of a local school. His new job paid only a fraction of what he had been making. It required him to get out of bed at all hours to stoke



the building's coal-fired boilers and to clean up after hundreds of children and teachers.

Grandpap took great pride in keeping "his" building in top condition. In a career lasting more than forty years, he saved the school district countless dollars with his mechanical ability. Other schools in the district called in plumbers, electricians, and boilermen, but Grandpap was able to handle all those tasks himself. He built furniture, cabinets, and whatever else the school needed.

The fact that he was missing two fingers and half of another never slowed down Grandpap Campbell. He added a second floor and two sunporches to the cottage he shared with my grandmother.

In the basement, he built a workshop for himself. His hand tools were neatly arranged in cabinets along the walls, and rows of baby-food jars held an assortment of nuts, bolts, nails, and screws. His power equipment included an ancient drill press he had carefully restored, a homemade bench grinder, and an electric jigsaw built from an old Singer sewing machine.

Grandpap's shop produced much-appreciated gifts for every member of my family. The green wooden wheelbarrow I received for my sixth birthday was so well built that it survived not only me but rough usage by my two children and my grandson.

I was always welcome in Grandpap's shop, and he took great pleasure in teaching me how to use tools. He helped me make a small wooden planter in the shape of a dachshund dog for my grandmother. He was helping me make a plant stand as a Mother's Day present when he fell ill. He passed away suddenly after a brief illness. Though I was only ten, my grandmother told me that Grandpap wanted to me to have his tools.

I still have them today. I like to think he would enjoy knowing that his tools are still being used to help the family. Recently I was using his block plane to smooth a pine board. I remembered how he carried it in the pocket of his shop apron and how

the paper-thin shavings curled up from its blade, creating a fresh sap smell, as Grandpap performed the same operation I was doing. I did not see a cold piece of steel in my hands shaping a board; I saw my grandfather's hands showing his love to his family.

When I was a boy, I looked forward to the annual Westinghouse family day the way most kids look forward to Christmas. I think my dad enjoyed it as much as I did. He wanted us to see where he worked and how he made his living.

Had he been born into a different time, I think my dad would have been an engineer. He had an affinity for math that I could never understand. In high school, I would "just happen" to leave my algebra book open on the kitchen table, along with a yellow tablet and a few pencils. I knew my dad couldn't resist doing my homework for fun.

Dad dropped out of high school during the Depression to join the Civilian Conservation Corps. It was his only way to help his widowed mother and little sister; the CCC would send \$27 of his \$30 pay home every month.

After several years in the CCC and a few more bumming around the country working odd jobs, Dad landed an apprenticeship at Westinghouse. He worked as a laborer by day and attended classes in the plant at night. Out of his small salary he was expected to buy the tools he would need as a machinist. He could order what he needed from the company and pay for them through payroll deductions.

He started by buying a Kennedy machinist chest, a large toolbox with a number of small felt-lined drawers designed to protect the delicate measuring tools needed for precision work. He filled it with the tools of his new trade: dividers, calipers, squares, and micrometers. Eventually he became a master machinist, and he stayed at Westinghouse until he retired forty years later.

I'm sure that given the choice, my dad would have chosen another path in life, yet he took great pride in his work. Just as he'd sacrificed to help his mother, my dad went to work every day for his family. He was not a man who expressed his love easily, but he spent half of his life soaked in cutting oil and with chip burns on both arms.

Though I seldom do precision work, my dad's battered Kennedy box has pride of place in my shop to remind me what he did for me and why.

Craftsmen become one with their tools. A hammer or chisel becomes an extension of their hands and of their spirit. This may sound crazy, but I believe that when a man uses a tool for years, a part of him remains when he lays it aside forever.

My toolboxes hold more than steel and polished wood. They hold the memories and the spirit of the men who made me the man I am today. ♦

**Jim Busch** is recently retired from the newspaper industry. He writes several monthly columns and has published a number of freelance articles. Jim lives in White Oak with his wife (and proofreader) Glenda.



# Fi Broke My Algia

© by Tamara DiBartola

Fi ... broke ... my ... algia  
mechanical breakdown  
generator of misfiring pain  
Demolishing me  
Benching me  
Barring me from full life participation

Conditioning  
a fighter  
a survivor  
Training me  
to adapt and overcome  
pain, loss, shame, and judgment

Major oppositions in life  
reveal your core makeup  
propelling you to overcome them  
I say in absolute certainty  
What cannot destroy you ... makes you durable  
What cannot restrain you ... lifts you higher

I have a new way of life  
as an adaptor, overcomer and survivor  
clawing and dragging myself  
to each day's finish line  
crossing it,  
to rally back for another

By the grace of God  
you too will overcome whatever  
strives to break you;  
do not accept a ride  
to break down,  
find your inner mechanic.

**Tamara DiBartola**  
believes words can  
provide comfort. She  
appreciates heartfelt  
words that inspire and  
uplift the spirit. She  
hopes her words can  
positively touch another  
someday.

# Bus Stop

© by Sally Witt

*Dedicated to every bus driver who ever  
stopped for me between stops.*

From my working window  
I saw the bus pull over  
by our house  
even though the stop is down the street.

What brings this, I wondered.  
And there was a woman who walks past our house  
each day  
around this time.  
She would have reached  
the corner late,  
and the next bus was an hour away.

This kindly notice of another's need  
could not begin to heal the planet's wounds ...

But check again because,  
in truth, somewhere, it did.

**Sally Witt, CSJ**, is a Sister of St. Joseph of Baden, PA.  
She does research and writing on the history of religious  
women.



**Chapel in the Woods** © by Gerrie Grandpre (See Gerrie's bio on p. 25.)

# Special Spots

© by Patricia Orendorff Smith

We all have special spots in our life. When I was a child, I found my special place tucked inside a sprawling Japonica bush. After whacking away briar branches, I concocted rooms into my special playhouse. I ducked down and shimmied through the maze I had created. I held special tea parties in the living room. A make-believe kitchen served well as a place to make my pretend tea. A cardboard box flattened and spread out along the dirt floor provided makeshift beds. Hours passed. Crickets chirped. I was unaware of time until I heard Mom calling me to a late dinner.

I remember my sister Judy asking Mom for a special spot, a place to store her precious things away from grabby fingers. Eleven siblings posed a problem. Mom's solution was to push an old upright piano askance just enough for Judy to enter and stash her stuff like a squirrel hoarding nuts for the winter. I think she even made a tiny bed for rest.

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## *Eleven siblings posed a problem.*

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My oldest sister, JoAnne, found storage space in the stairwell under our staircase. Too bad she didn't have a door. While she was at school, the younger children delighted in investigating and rearranging her precious possessions. We rummaged through her treasures, new Elvis records, marbles, movie star scrapbooks, and more.

While she studied in school, Mom snatched and stitched some of her older clothes into smaller versions for the younger set. Miniature dresses fit Lori, Bobbi, and Debby. Some patches ended up in Mom's crazy quilts to JoAnne's dismay. Worst of all was when our investigative, curious cat found her spot. It took years to remove the smell.

My friend Linda and I found a special spot under her front porch. We set up an old rickety table with toadstool-like seating. Linda pretended to make tea with her new Christmas collection: a miniature teapot, saucers, and cups. Imaginary play lasted for hours until JoAnne interrupted our parties. Two children could play, never three; too much jealousy.

Another favorite spot was my neighbor's apple tree. For hours I could sit on a branch while plucking off shiny green globes to devour. Of course, I had pilfered Mom's salt shaker. I must say, I could share that spot with my sister JoAnne without incident.

In one home we found a cubbyhole tucked into a wall over our staircase. We children crouched low to enter through the tiny doors. I think we packed at least six kids into that small space. We spread out Monopoly, Lincoln Logs, and trains. We played for

hours sprawled on our tummies, much like miners in a coal mine. We were tiny tykes, so we fit snugly. A lightbulb suspended from a wire provided our only light.

But the best space in our home was Dad's workshop tucked into the far side of the basement. We marveled at his saw, sander, lathe, plane, and chiseling equipment.

*Zing*, his saw would sing. Curls flew off wood pieces as he chiseled. We pretended they were hair curls. One by one Dad crafted blocks of unusual shapes and sizes. Our imaginations were in full gear while we built castles, homes, and forts; I can still remember that woodsy smell.

Another special spot was our kitchen, just a makeshift porcelain sink, a refrigerator, a 1950s stove, a pull-out-of-the-wall ironing board, a built-in china cupboard, and a broom closet with our chores listed. I don't remember much counter space, just the covered ironing board used to prepare meals. Our stove had a griddle in the center. My friend enjoyed buttered cinnamon toast cooked on our griddle.

In that kitchen, Dad siphoned cream off five-gallon milk cans. Mom mixed powdered milk into the cow's milk to stretch the precious liquid among us twelve. Christmas was special; desserts were served with a dollop of whipped cream.

In that kitchen, Mom had a large pot going on the stove at all times—soups, stews, and spaghetti. The saucy aromas permeated our home.

Best of all was Mom and Dad's bedroom. Dad took the smallest room in the house and converted it into a bedroom, office, and study space, with their double bed tucked under two windows. He placed a TV on a built-in bookcase. He wedged a tiny desk and swivel chair into the leftover space. On that desk sat an Underwood typewriter, one with black keys. Many evenings I heard the *click-clack* of keys as he typed his doctoral dissertation. At the far end of the desk, Dad concocted a bookcase made of cement blocks and crude boards. Along the wall he continued his creation. Everything was within his reach. He could type his dissertation, discipline a child, and change the TV channel with a long pole device he had created, his first TV remote.

When we moved to Indiana, Pennsylvania, we found an old springhouse in the yard. Hours of fun and inventive play kept us busy. My sisters Bobbi, Lori, and Debby spent hours re-enacting *Lost in Space* and *Star Trek* using knobs on an old radio for a control panel.

I treasure the memories of all our special spots. ♦

(See Patricia's bio on p. 8.)



## Says the Man

© by Michael Weidman

Through the darkness reaches an arm  
Slender and soft.  
Its hand brushes against my skin  
Before fading into black.  
There was no face, no legs, no body,  
No soul,  
But such are only burdens.

Take only what you crave,  
She'd say,  
And it was all she gave.  
"A touch was all I wished.  
To believe, if only  
For one moment I was rich,"  
Says the man, from the abyss.

**Michael Weidman** is a writer, poet, and songwriter living in Pittsburgh. He has had poems and photos published in *Eye Contact*. He is currently attending Seton Hill University.

## Untitled

© by Sara Lee Anderson

I'm slowly collapsing  
In on myself  
I should be gone soon

God I hope it hurts  
I deserve this  
Maybe I'll become a black hole

I can't wait to be so luminous

**Sara Lee Anderson** has been writing short stories and poetry since the age of nine. Aside from the written word, she's passionate about running, hiking, astronomy, palmistry, and gardening. She's currently working on her first full-length novel.



**Stars on Water** © by Gerrie Grandpre (See Gerrie's bio on p. 25.)





**Heron Rookery** © by Gerrie Grandpre (See Gerrie's bio on p. 25.)





**Christmas Dreams** © by Susan Potts

Susan Potts is a semiretired secretary who is enjoying spending time with her husband, Joe, and her three beautiful grandchildren. Her hobbies include genealogy, photography, and collecting vintage bridal photographs.

**Cardinal in Snow** © by Jan McLaughlin  
(See Jan's bio on p. 22.)



**Three Sisters Cactus Blossoms** © by Marjorie DeAngelis (See Marjorie's bio on p. 22.)





**Primrose Stars** © by *Alicia Stankay*  
(See Alicia's bio on p. 25.)

**Alberta** © by *Sandra Oliver*  
(See Sandra's bio on p. 25.)



**Flowers on Purple** © by *Michael Weidman* (See Michael's bio on p. 13.)



# Survivors

© by Candace Kubinec

It was my fourth visit to the Memorial in as many weeks. In March I had allowed myself to be convinced to quit my job, pack up everything I owned, and follow William to Oklahoma City. By April he'd taken off for California in the middle of the night, leaving me with no job, no friends, and rent to pay. I'd had enough. My life was in shambles.

I started visiting the Memorial when a neighbor recommended it as one of the must-see places in Oklahoma City. The first time I walked around the site, it helped me put the chaotic pieces of my life into perspective.

My route through the Memorial never varied. I'd slowly walk down the steps at the 9:01 Gate, the formal entrance to the outdoor memorial that denotes the second before the car bomb exploded, forever scarring our innocence. Touching the names on the Survivor Wall as I passed became ritual before I continued slowly along the granite walkway.

At the Field of Empty Chairs, I always paused and bowed my head. My eyes were drawn to the small chairs in the field, and silent tears rolled down my cheeks when I thought about the nineteen children who died that April morning so long ago. Emotions coursed through my body as I walked—anger, sadness, and horror.

The solitary man wearing jeans and a blue Oklahoma Thunder T-shirt was there again. I'd seen him on my other visits, always alone, always sitting in the same spot on the low stone wall, staring across the reflecting pool at the rows of empty chairs. Today I noticed he was holding a pink cell phone, not the color I would have expected him to own.

I usually move on through the Rescuers Orchard, then up the hill to the Survivor Tree. Under the branches of that old American elm I find the peace and hope that draw me back to this place.

But today a tug deep inside pulled me to the wall where the solitary man sat. I stopped a few feet away from him and sat down. He was still clutching the pink phone, not talking or texting, just staring across the reflecting pool—the smooth, shallow surface that had once been Fifth Street.

Many years ago my mother taught me not to talk to strangers. In the world we know today it is still good advice, but I threw caution to the wind and spoke softly. "I've seen you here before."

Sad eyes looked back at me and he shifted on the hard stone wall. I thought for sure he would get up and walk away. Instead his face brightened and a whisper of a smile touched his lips.

"I come to remember," he said.

"Did you lose someone in the bombing?" I asked.

"No. You might say I found myself here."

I must have looked confused. He smiled a little

wider. Crinkles appeared at the corners of his eyes and a tiny dimple exposed itself on his right cheek.

"Would you like to hear my tale of despair and deliverance?"

I nodded and slid closer to him.

"On that day in April 1995 I was across town, in the hospital emergency room. My wife, our three-year-old daughter, and I were in a car accident that morning. A young man fell asleep behind the wheel of his pickup truck, careened off a light pole, and smashed into our small car. I was the only survivor. We had been taking our daughter to her favorite restaurant for a special birthday breakfast. I'd just lost the only people who lit up my life, and I didn't think I could go on alone.

"Sitting in the ER waiting for hospital personnel to do what hospital personnel do, I noticed an increase in activity, a new urgency, almost panic. I glanced up at the TV screen and saw the devastation caused by unleashed hatred.

"Months later, as the city began to recover I found that I was healing too, until the calendar page turned to April and the cruel grip of hopelessness encircled me again. The first year I found some comfort in buying a birthday gift for my absent child. Each year I would shop for the perfect gift for a girl the age she should have been.

"This year she would have been twenty-three, so I picked out this pink cell phone. Pink was her favorite color. Once this memorial was completed, I stopped going to the cemetery. Now I come here and sit across from the field of empty chairs, thinking about the many lives that changed that day."

He closed his eyes and I wiped mine.

"But how has this helped you find yourself?"

"Well." He reached into his pocket. "I found this quote by William Blake." He handed me a creased piece of paper, worn smooth from many years of folding and unfolding.

I opened it and read: "*You never know what is enough until you know what is more than enough.*" I looked up and saw calmness in his face.

"When I think back to that morning and feel like I've had enough, I remember the devastation that was more than enough," he said. "I find strength to keep moving forward. Coming here is a balm to my soul."

By now tears were flowing freely from my eyes. He reached into his other pocket and pulled out a tissue. "I'm never without them." He stood up and looked down at me. "Thanks for listening to my story. It feels good to release it now and then."

He walked away. I sat on the wall, still alone but with a spark of hope ignited within my heart. I pulled out my phone and dialed my mother's number. ♦

(See Candace's bio on p. 8.)

## Jotting

© by Carolyn Cecil

Notes from the sermon  
“Love Is No Luxury.”

“How to improve your marriage,  
cultivate a pleasant voice.”

How to make ourselves lovable,  
a strategy of harmony.”

From your hospital bed  
you jotted what the doctors said,

the phone calls you got,  
the flowers and how I asked

what stage the cancer was  
and how you did not know the answer.

Notes on your collection of *Godey*  
and *Peterson* magazines,

page numbers, descriptions,  
hundreds of fashion plates.

How much, where you bought them,  
as though if you didn't take note

it did not count or you might  
forget you dined at the

Clarkson House on your anniversary  
and had the steak sandwich.

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## Still Walking

© by Carolyn Cecil

Still walking ten blocks to nursery school,  
pushing your stroller through Stoneleigh past  
Uncle Wiggly's Ice Cream. To the carpool of  
moms on Yarmouth. Ten blocks of sidewalks,  
some craggy, painted green. Your laugh so deep  
for a slight little girl, a rhyme or jingle to me.  
Ten blocks remind me of that motherly time. I  
walk you to school in my mind.

**Carolyn Cecil** lives in Baltimore but travels the Pennsylvania Turnpike often in pursuit of the natural places that call her.

## Quite Nearly Peace

© by Bridget Malley

[a little castle on a hill in Greensburg, PA]

Don't have any cosmos in my soul, never been  
to space. All I got's wet leaves, holding my breath  
under the bridge every time a train passes,  
ice that tingles in my fingertips  
when I walk inside. Gray skies  
the color of silverware. No,  
this is not sadness. This is  
a Pennsylvania comfort, all damp toes and  
ten below, rock salt covering sidewalks.  
The cold reminds me I'm alive  
whether or not I'd like to be.

Here we are, then: the damp, still day,  
the rows of sycamores where crows lie in wait,  
rain followed by fog chased by cars  
walking on stilts of light all over the pavement,  
little moon-like streetlights hanging  
at regular intervals all down this shining road.  
It's as close to home as lonesome gets.

Come on, you holy cosmos. Fill my sky with iron ore  
and a certain celestial coldness. I'm alive,  
for the time being. Where else could I be?

---

## Aperture

© by Bridget Malley

Telephone wires make a net. Electric  
dream-catcher, smiles reflected in  
black rubber. Wires strung from pole to pole,  
not meaning to but pleased to be a frame  
for this picture—no one else here but  
the ones in it to witness  
the camera flicker. One Polaroid.  
Hidden in the wires. Candlelight  
flickering forever after, the night captured  
while dawn turns in its sleep,  
rolling over under the city  
and tugging telephone wires  
back under its chin.

**Bridget Malley** is a poet and writer living in the Pittsburgh area. She has been published in *RUNE*, *Eye Contact*, and the *Setonian*.



Using the page number 164 and map coordinates R6 from the index of an old *National Geographic* atlas, I found the location of Draney, a small town near Paris and the setting of several chilling scenes near the end of André Schwarz-Bart's 1959 novel *The Last of the Just*. Draney and its place in twentieth-century French history recently became even more securely fixed in my consciousness while I read a translation of *Suspended Sentences*, a novella written by Patrick Modiano, the 2014 Nobel Laureate in Literature.

During the German occupation of France in World War II, Draney became a transit depot holding French Jews destined for transport to German concentration camps.

Schwarz-Bart pictures, with vivid bluntness, life at the prison with frequent incidents of brutality reflecting the callous attitude of both French and German officials, who customarily referred to the detainees as "creatures." Modiano, writing later than Schwarz-Bart from a different perspective, reflects on the bleak, sleazy underside of life in Paris during the occupation. He tells of a small-time Jewish mobster being questioned prior to transfer to Draney; he is suddenly released upon the intervention of an influential Nazi collaborator, a prosperous French black-market operator.

In another book, Modiano meditates and speculates on the circumstances that led a young French schoolgirl and her immigrant parents to Draney and ultimately Auschwitz. Through these works, readers begin to understand the grim significance of Draney to the Jewish population during their uncertain, fear-filled daily existence under the Occupation.

Schwarz-Bart and Modiano have joined Vonnegut, Solzhenitsyn, and other writers of fiction to leave indelible accounts of the bigotry, hatred, greed, and cruelty responsible for death camps, firebombings, gulags, and similar barbarities. These accounts measured the depths to which human behavior descended in the middle years of the twentieth century. Even as memories of Draney have dimmed over time, the need has only grown for it to remain a symbolic reminder of those dark days and a warning to guard against their return.

Draney also illustrates the valuable role fiction writers play in giving us a more complete view of history by adding a human dimension. Such writing eschews abstract labels like "The Holocaust." Instead, it presents the story of a fifteen-year-old girl (very nearly my own age at the time) being herded aboard a train bound for the bewildering terrors of Auschwitz and her death. History describing the price paid by people with the names of Ernie and Dora in shattered

and shortened lives brings us up short to acknowledge the need to move forward from Draney with greater effort and renewed resolve.

Over time, many of the most reliable and accurate accounts of our progress and the need to do more may continue to be found within the pages of Modiano and fiction writers like him. From all corners of the world, they are working to bring us thoughtfully considered, sensitive portrayals of the hopes and struggles of those with whom we share this time and this planet. We are fortunate that such guides can help each of us on our difficult journey from Draney.

How far from Draney have the world and I really traveled?

Despite many hopeful signs, the answer when heard in the neighborhoods of Ferguson, the airport of Brussels, the streets of Paris, or the beaches of Greece reveals that progress has been slow and the benefits unevenly experienced. After seventy years, each of us is called to do more. ♦

**Lou Steiner** is retired from business but continues to write brief essays, which he hopes offer a few sensible thoughts about books, music, and art.

## Oceans of Jasper

© by Tom Beck

Waves in an ocean of jasper  
 Draw me back in time  
 A time when you were living  
 Late night, late mourning  
 Sun appears each day  
 As a bright bronze coin.  
 Alone I sat  
 In the parking lot.  
 "Ovarian cancer,"  
 They said solemnly.  
 The silent killer,  
 A death sentence.  
 Those words consumed me.  
 You vowed to fight  
 You vowed to win  
 But its roots were too deep within.  
 Forever you remain  
 Forty-nine years of age  
 I must go on each day  
 Aging

**Tom Beck** is a recently retired registered nurse trying to write full time. He has written poems, novels, and a play and now hopes to have the courage and perseverance to have some of his writing published.

# Heights and Depths

© by Rose A. Domenick

The things I've done that I still find amazing all these years later involve many heights and depths, both literally and intellectually, whether flying with the Army's Golden Knights parachute team or going deep into a coal mine to see how a long-wall machine worked.

So what that for days I dug black coal dust out of my nose and ears? I never dreamed that I would get to experience what my Grampap did for a living. So what that the fellow who took me down into that pitch-black darkness loaded so many tools on my belt that my hips had bruises for a week afterward?

And, oh, how I wanted to Velcro myself around that buff Golden Knights paratrooper next to me when he jumped out of the cargo plane at the Latrobe Air Show. It was exciting enough to be strapped in a five-point harness next to the open doorway, watching everyone take their leap. Even though it was summer, I sure did need the scarf, warm coat, and gloves they told me to bring. The high-altitude pen they gave me when mine stopped was a treasured tool for years.

These were some of my freelance writer experiences for a daily newspaper three decades ago. I have favored the physical depths of our planet far more than the heights. I learned how to scuba dive around the same time I flew with the Golden Knights and eventually received my advanced certification for search and rescue (not that I've ever used that skill).

The highlights of diving were freshwater quarries until I lived on a sailboat in the Bahamas for a week, going on at least three dives a day in beautiful seas.

Then there was the three-hour dive in the waters off Maui where I squeezed the ink out of a baby octopus. It was probably illegal in some way. If there were an underwater SPCA, I might have been handcuffed. How strong those tentacles were when they wrapped around my forearm. I didn't think they would ever come off!

Many visions swim in my mind's eye now of sea turtles, stingrays, sand sharks, and eels. The scariest was the sunlight glinting off the jagged teeth of a quick-moving barracuda. Underwater, I always felt just like Mrs. Limpet! Being back on land felt wonderful after a dive; I appreciated life, the colors were more vivid, and the air was so fresh and easy to breathe.

Life sure was exciting when I said yes to the full-time reporter job for another daily newspaper. I preferred the intellectual highs that came with the opportunities to meet and interview local and world dignitaries, from former Allegheny County Coroner Cyril Wecht and Allegheny County DA

Stephen Zappala to Army General Stormin' Norman Schwarzkopf and Rosa Parks. Parks had been a hero of mine since childhood. She was frail by the time I met her, and most of my questions were answered by her handler.

One memorable day I was assigned death watch when then President Bill Clinton was in Pittsburgh for a speaking engagement at a downtown hotel. Death watch means that a reporter is there just in case something unspeakable happens. Well, that man's charisma was palpable from a block away. It's no wonder Monica Lewinsky was smitten.

Being a reporter had moments of extreme excitement but also of extreme angst. The emotional depths were difficult to deal with when I had to push victims for information or delve into gruesome details of awful crimes to write for a daily deadline.

I found it hard when I had to locate the nearest relatives of children who perished in a house fire, knock on the door that same day, and ask for photos of the poor kids. The smell at fire scenes would always take me back instantly to 1974, to the moment my home burned to the ground when I was three months pregnant and living in Fort Pierce, Florida.

At active fire or crime scenes, standing around for hours, waiting for information from the officer in charge, was a physical low. I was amazed at the energy it takes to stand in all types of weather at these scenes, waiting for *any* official information for the story. While grateful for the experiences, I am still relieved, almost a decade later, not to have adrenaline squirting when the scanner beckons.

Other intellectual lows that stayed with me for days were when I had to sit from me to you away from rapists, child molesters, and murderers, then write about details of their crimes from being present at their hearings and inquests.

One day when I responded to the scanner, the crime tape was taken down a bit too soon. It happened to be the day I wore the brand-new banana pumps I'd finally found to match a pastel tulip-patterned skirt and yellow linen jacket.

It was a throat-slashing homicide along the train tracks in Duquesne. The fire trucks had hosed down the site, but they had missed a few areas—as I found out the hard way. As I was walking back to my car after trying to find the CSX employee who'd called in the body, there were long blood clots spattered on one heel and across the toe of the other. Into the garbage those shoes went.

Whether highs or lows, so far my life has certainly not been boring. ♦

**Rose A. Domenick** is a freelance writer, Reiki practitioner, folk artist, and former newspaper reporter. Her vast variety of job experiences ranges from poodle groomer to steelworker.



# Meadow

© by Sara Lee Anderson

Soft and light are  
hand and wrist  
and pulsing veins  
when fingers write  
out words  
against cold winter skin,  
and sharp intakes of  
breath make way for  
lips on lips and  
shoulders say  
*come close,  
please stay.*

It's late,  
but still there's  
time for this  
and heavy hands  
on warming skin  
not sun-kissed  
yet.

Such foolish lines  
I used to see  
the smallest light  
in tired eyes,  
now part your teeth  
and sigh,  
and speak the  
words you mutter soft  
like poetry,  
more foolish lines used  
just for me.

And sounds outside  
resound  
and break your train  
of thought,  
but I'm still here.

Please stay, there's so  
much evening left.  
I'll use my hands and guide  
you there,  
across my neck.

Now skin meets skin  
like galaxies;  
colliding stars and  
planets seem  
less distant here.

Come close,  
the blinds are drawn  
and sky is woven black.  
We'll play pretend;  
the room is Hell  
and tangled sheets will  
pull us back.

Now sing to me, and play  
my ribs with fingertips,  
but quietly.  
You'll soften hearts, enchant  
the empty night. I'll be  
Eurydice.  
We'll make it out  
this time,  
you'll see.

It's easy now,  
I feel your heat right  
next to me  
in sheets and skin  
made clean by words  
spat out with ease.

But now it's late,  
you're weak,  
I didn't think you'd  
mind but I'm  
a thief, and in this  
room is one more  
piece I need.

## The Swampy Bog Blues

© by Janice McLaughlin

Went walkin' with my honey, after midnight in the fog,  
Made a wrong turn somewhere, got stranded in a bog.

The ground began to quiver, to shiver and to shake.  
The quakin' quagmire pulled us down into the slimy lake.  
We both started sinkin', he began to moan,  
I didn't wanna hear it, I wanted to go home.

I got the swampy, swampy, swampy, swampy bog blu—ooz.  
Yes, I got the swampy, swampy, swampy bog blues.

I grabbed onto a tree branch and pulled myself free,  
My honey started wailin', "Ple-e-e-ase come back for me."  
Quickly my feet took me, I ran straight back home.  
All night in my nightmares I could hear his awful moan.  
I'm sorta kinda sorry; I left him in that muck.  
I woulda gone back for him, but he was such a schmuck.

I got the swampy, swampy, swampy, swampy bog blu—ooz.  
Yes, I got the swampy, swampy, swampy bog blues.

The next day I went back with a shovel and a rake.  
I couldn't find his body, but we had a lovely wake.  
Now when we go walkin', my new darlin' an' me,  
I try not to remember that ole painful memory.  
Don't go walkin' after midnight, in the rain or in the fog.  
Make sure we never get near that nasty ole bog.

I got the swampy, swampy, swampy, swampy bog blu—ooz.  
Yes, I got the swampy, swampy, swampy bog blu—ooz.

**Jan McLaughlin** has always loved poetry. In recent years she has compiled sixty different forms of poetry into two instructional books. She has also written a children's book with a companion coloring book, as well as editing a book written by her cat. Several of her photographs have been published and displayed at Latrobe Art Center and various shows.

(See Sara's bio on p. 13.)

# Of Crayfish and Men

© by Marjorie DeAngelis

Quick! Dash under that rock! See that little human up there with the two bright red-cups? (At least he didn't come with the *clear* ones we can't see—that's worse!) He's out to catch you and even take you home in the moving room they call a car, and you'll never see the creek or the park again.

Quick, hide under that big flat rock! And stir up the dirt a bit with your pincers or your tail so they can't see you! Oh, no! They're carefully lifting the rocks up, one by one. Drat!

A couple of things might work. If you think they may have seen you, dart to the right or to the left, but don't think you'll fool them by scooting backward, as we love to do. They're onto that! So remember: scurry to the right or left as fast your eight little legs will carry you! And just keep your shiny black eyes on them all the time.

See that lady up there with him? She's his great-aunt, sent down to the creek to keep him safe. Yes, that tall one standing in our quiet creek with her rubbery green shoes so she doesn't slip on our rocks or get her toes pinched by the likes of us. She may not be so steady on her feet anymore, but her memory's okay and she's told him how we move.

That's why they came here with two cups: one to catch us if we crawl forward and the other if by mistake we scoot backward. She's been coming here since she was a girl, just about his age. It's a game they like to play every year when the water is warm. They pass it on from one generation to the next, more's the pity.

Here's another idea: If by bad luck the little one steps near you with his bare feet, pinch one of his pink shriveled little toes, just enough to surprise him. He'll probably screech and splash away, muddying the water. If he does, thank your lucky minnows and rush as fast as you can as far away as you can! Get out of their sight, then keep on moving from rock to rock until nightfall.

And one last thing, son: If you get caught, all



**Open Wide** © by Michael Weidman  
(See Michael's bio on p. 13.)

may not be lost. Sometimes these human mothers are real softies and insist their kids throw us back in the creek before they leave the park for the day, so don't lose heart. It's just unlucky for us that they like us! They like looking at us!

They are definitely not interested in eating us, but if by bad luck they take you in the car, I'm sorry. Chances are you won't make it. They just don't know how to look after us.

Get this: there are no creeks at their homes! And they don't understand that it's rushing, living water we need! They think we can live in that still, boring water like those shiny weird fish they buy in stores.

*So do not get yourself caught!* Listen to what I'm telling you, son. Don't worry, they can't understand our language. And they have no idea how much we seniors know about survival after all these years of their dreaded "family reunions." ♦

**Marjorie DeAngelis** of Ambridge is active in Taproot Workshop. Her work appeared in "Open Heart, Helping Hands" and *Taproot Literary Journal*. She is assembling her dream book on her Kenyan experiences. Retired from ACTION-Housing in Pittsburgh, she works part-time and volunteers with seniors.

## Bigfoot Days

© by Ronald L. Murphy

The wonder of the Wild Man many of us know generically as Bigfoot was an undeniable part of my youth. To this day, the Big Hairy Guy personifies the wide-eyed wonder and Norman Rockwell incorruptibility of my childhood, that innocent aspect

of me that my formative years at Saints Simon and Jude Catholic School tried to domesticate.

This creature was more than a legend to me way back then; indeed, he was beyond real. He was the quarry of my imagination, hiding in the shadowy



wooded places just beyond my grasp.

But his prowess at hide-and-seek did not stop me and my friends from venturing into the woods on languid summer days or traipsing into the twilight forest after the inconvenience of school ended and we could wander unfettered. The Wild Man was my childhood obsession.

Of course, this relationship was not without tenuous trepidations as well. Bigfoot was also the bump in the night that caused me to scamper to my grandmother's bed and hide under the covers.

But it was oddly comforting to believe that something unknown still lurked in the woods that surrounded my house. Even then, the Wild Man was an ambiguous amalgam of cosmic wonder and spine-tingling dread. And I delighted in it!

I was a child of the 1970s, and it was a great time to be a kid. Not every second was taken up with Bigfoot, mind you. This was a time before technology, so kids still asked for baseball gloves and footballs for Christmas and birthdays. We rode bikes and got muddy. Our parents would shout our names at suppertime, and we knew to be in our yards when the streetlights came on.

Imagination was an integral part of everyday life. We were the characters we saw on TV or in the movies. In the summer of 1975, *Jaws* swam into our collective consciousness. And even though I had yet to see that turquoise expanse of the ocean, I imagined I was battling a Great White every time I dove into the chlorine green water of the Blairsville Public Pool. Before I knew it, 1977 came and I was in the backseat of my aunt Jane's station wagon, peering through the windshield, as I watched *Star Wars* for the first time at a drive-in theatre.

But after the eventful summer of '77 waned and winter returned, western Pennsylvania saw one of the worst winters on record. Schools were closed for two weeks. The mail wasn't even delivered, due to the dangerously frigid temperatures and relentless driving blizzards that glistened the world in a kaleidoscope of shimmering ice.

This suspended animation was nearly intolerable to an eight-year-old who had no cartoons to watch during the day. As it was far too cold to play outside, I would stare out the picture window in the living room, wondering what Bigfoot was doing in this frozen landscape. I waited for spring to melt the snow and breathe life once more into the dormant landscape. And spring came with unprecedented excitement.

The ferocity of that winter of '77 apparently stirred something out of its forest hiding place. A tall, hairy, bipedal creature was seen around my little town so often that it made front-page headlines in our local news paper. Our little village even made the evening news out of Pittsburgh. We hit the big time because Bigfoot was prowling about.

Now I knew my forays into the forest had not

been in vain! I felt validated. But now I wasn't alone in my quest to find the creature. Indeed, everyone was seeing it. A farmer even painted big footprints on the road where he'd seen the creature cross.

My mother took me and my brother out on our first Bigfoot expeditions in that spring of 1978. She would load us up in the big old Buick to follow the leads we read about in the newspaper or gathered from watching the news. She would drive us around the gravel-covered back roads in a car that had bald tires and no spare. But we felt no fear.

No, this was a scientific research mission like the ones I saw Marlon Perkins lead on *Wild Kingdom*. Danger was just part of the game. There was an elusive creature out there, and the Murphy family was determined to find it!

Of course we never did find Bigfoot, but that didn't stop me from searching. My best friend, Jimmy, came up from D.C. and stayed with his grandparents over summer breaks. He and my brother David and I continued to scour our neighborhood woods.

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## *We had friends and school and little else. And I had Bigfoot.*

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We would see deer occasionally, but we always found Bigfoot tracks. Well, at least they were tracks in our minds. So we would venture up into the woods following game trails, then quickly retreat, screaming, when we heard a twig snap, certain an eight-foot-tall hairy giant was barreling down on us.

We did this daily. We would look for evidence around the frog pond that skirted deep woods by the cemetery on the hill. We scoured the packed clay of the access road that led to the electric substation. We found clues in snapped twigs and piles of unidentified poo, but our actual quarry remained ever elusive.

This was my childhood. We had friends and school and little else. And I had Bigfoot.

Of course I wasn't always outside. I anxiously waited for the weekends, when I could watch Saturday morning cartoons on one of the five channels that our floor model black-and-white TV was able to pick up out of the air. This was before the advent of widespread cable, and satellites were a decade away.

But the viewing selection was just fine by me. After noon, the cartoons gave way to the horror matinees from a TV station broadcast out of Cleveland. A guy dressed in a Superman costume who went by the name of Super Host would emcee the Saturday monster movie double feature. It was on this show that I first watched the now classic *Legend of Boggy Creek*.

And I can't forget about *Bigfoot: Man or Beast*.

Sometimes my mom would let me stay up and watch Chilly Billy Cardille at 11:30 on Saturday nights if he was showing a Bigfoot movie, but the flicks on Chiller Theatre were of the Squatchploitation genre, such as the forgettable *Curse of Bigfoot* and *Shriek of the Mutilated*. Apparently after a certain hour the viewing public preferred murderous, marauding monsters.

But I didn't have to stay up late to see Bigfoot; even Lee Majors battled the creature on *The Six Million Dollar Man*. It was such a let-down when Sasquatch was exposed as an alien robot. But it was still cool to have a prime-time Bigfoot sighting. And of course I got the action figure for Christmas.

---

*You long to escape  
in your youth,  
but as an adult  
you yearn to return.*

---

At school, I took every book out of the parochial library on the subject of Bigfoot. For a tiny library, it satiated my wanderlust for the Wildman. It had *Abominable Snowman: Legend Comes to Life* and *On the Track of Bigfoot*. Looking back, I'm convinced that one of the black-habit-wearing nuns who ran the library must have been a closet Bigfoot fan.

But then something strange happened. Life became more complicated. Girls became oddly appealing and my voice started to squeak.

My mother assured me it was puberty, but I had watched enough TV to know a transformation when I saw one. How else can you explain my body producing hair in very weird places?

But instead of a becoming a werewolf, I became a gangling young man with greasy hair and pimples. I left behind my small circle of friends from Catholic school and matriculated into the cavernous Blairsville Senior High School. I left my childhood behind, and with it, my old chum Bigfoot.

In high school, some people didn't even believe he existed! I know, I found this hard to believe as well, but I assure you it is true! He simply was not cool anymore. The 1980s was MTV and getting your left ear pierced. It was Duran Duran and *Miami Vice*. Bigfoot wasn't glam enough to keep up. Gradually, I outgrew him as a playmate.

After graduating from high school in 1987, I vowed to leave my little town behind and never look back. I was a terrible student, a borderline failure, but I was quite competent in English, so I was accepted into the University of Pittsburgh.

By the fall of 1988, I was living in the big city. No cornfields. No cows. Trees were replaced by skyscrapers, and I traded nights canopied by the

Milky Way for sputtering neon signs and rambling buses that belched noxious fumes into the thick air.

No more rustic diversions for me; this was where life would happen, not merely pass me by. I was alive with expectation. And soon enough, I forgot my childhood ways.

Until now. That's the thing about life: You long to escape in your youth, but as an adult you yearn to return. Driving through the neighborhood where I grew up was like visiting an old friend.

Those woods that I played in have long since yielded to chainsaws and construction trucks. The pond where my friends and I caught frogs is now an apartment complex, and the woods where my Bigfoot lurked are now a cable company field office, the trees replaced by huge white satellite dishes.

The places of my youth are gone. Only memories remain. I am sure Bigfoot has found a way to survive as well. A part of me hopes he is sitting somewhere reminiscing about the little boy and his friends who tried to track him down forty years ago. ♦

**Ronald L. Murphy, Jr.**, is a published writer of horror and paranormal and loves the opportunity to submit to *The Loyalhanna Review*. Actually, it is where he got his first poem published.

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## Shrine

© by Sara Lee Anderson

I can draw out Orion on your arm  
When you sleep  
Because you sleep so well,  
And your lip twitches sometimes  
In the low light of the room;  
On the couch;  
On the bed;  
And in the backseat where you just  
Can't keep your eyes open even though  
We drove through state lines  
An hour ago.

But you needed that photo for  
Your album.

I took it for you.  
And I took one of you and  
I took one looking back so  
You could see Aquarius  
And remember me one day,  
Because I'm forgettable, and  
That's okay.  
But God, you know I won't forget about you.

(See Sara's bio on p. 13.)



## Belong to Us

© by Michael Weidman

Leery, you are  
Come raid the light  
Come raid by and by  
To the deeper  
To the old  
To the loved.

Lurk with us  
No path back,  
To quit, to die, to underlie  
And slip as one to none.  
Bring me laughter  
Bring us solace  
Bring silence to death  
Earn us.

Dive with us  
Fall sure of home  
To hunger for hell  
Burn on waves sublime.  
Yield your will  
Will for us  
Will for me.

(See Michael's bio on p. 13.)

## Collecting Coal from Railroad Tracks

© by Laura Lovic-Lindsay

We drop them: fist-sized, black, matte—  
in paper bags, which soon grow weary  
of the task and begin to tear. The coal  
waits patiently for us, happy to be useful

again, not forgotten. The sun does what  
it can to make us go away. It wants these  
tracks for itself. It wants to bounce up  
and down metal straps today but our

shadows block it. We find dense metal  
spikes, long-rusted, loosened by a thousand  
angry trains pounding, rushing, ignoring.  
The smells of old oil, grease, tar are heated

and rise. They tang our noses and they call. Do  
you see how lovely we are? Do you wonder  
where we've been? We do wonder. We wonder  
very much. Telephone pole, telephone pole,

telephone pole, up and around the bend  
that hides the rest of the world. Cornflower  
chicory tags along beside the path, skips  
up ahead of us to see what's beyond...

(See Laura's bio on p. 8.)

## Art Credits

Front Cover:  
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(See Carolyn's bio on p. 4.)

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Back Cover:  
Sunset at Doverspike Lake  
© by **Janet R. Sady**

**Linda Ciletti** is an award-winning author of medieval, time travel, fantasy romance, and romantic adventure stories. Her published novels include *Draegon's Lair* (2008 Epic Award winner), *KnightStalker*, *Dream of the Archer*, and *Faerie Dust*. She is also a poet, photographer, and book-cover artist.

**Gerrie Grandpre** is a Sister of St. Joseph of Baden, PA. She is a long-time nurse, educator, and chaplain with interests in travel, nature photography, and gardening.

**Sandra Oliver** has belonged to several photography organizations over the years and has always had at least one dog and sometimes several in her life. Now retired, she still enjoys photography and does some writing as well.

**Janet R. Sady**, a storyteller, speaker, and certified UMC lay servant, is published in nine anthologies and has written nine books. Her latest publication, *Miracle on Green Mountain*, is available on Amazon.com. [janfran5033@twc.com](mailto:janfran5033@twc.com).

**Alicia Stankay** recently published her first book for young teens, *Cathi and Katrina: Adventure in Old Economy Village*, featuring the living history museum in her hometown of Ambridge. It's available on Amazon and Kindle, along with her three adult books.

# Green Tomato Chutney

© by Sarah Russell

Each fall (always by serendipity)  
I find green tomatoes at the farmer's market.  
I could order them, of course,  
from the Amish in the last stall on the left,  
but that would take away the magic.

Picked hastily before first frost,  
they nestle with the Brandywines and Early Boys  
and take me by surprise.  
I smile, my weekend planned, and buy six pounds.  
Come Saturday, I'll make chutney.

Then another sortie through the stalls.  
All the parts must be fresh picked—  
peppers, patent-leather red,  
rose-streaked Gala apples,  
chubby garlic bulbs,  
currants round as BBs,  
bunioned ginger toes  
and raisins, withered gold.

My basement yields an oddment of jars  
and the large blue pot that waits for this occasion.  
I whet my favorite knife,  
find cutting boards and colanders  
and blues on the radio.  
The tunes remind me of hard times, when canning  
meant peach jam for toast in winter,  
and women wore aprons.

I put mine on  
(a gift from my husband before he knew better),  
wash vegetables, and start to work.  
I pare and core and chop and mince  
humming with Muddy Waters, Bessie Smith,  
peeling the next apple, and the next.

The blue pot's almost full—  
a kaleidoscope of harvest.  
Next comes sugar, tawny with molasses,  
then spices—cumin, cinnamon, cayenne,  
sea salt, nutmeg, cloves—  
riches Marco Polo sought, now  
housed in tins at Kroger. I add malt vinegar  
and set the blue pot on the stove.

**Sarah Russell** lives in State College with a patient husband and a curly dog named Smudge. Her poetry has appeared in *Red River Review*, *Misfit Magazine*, *Shot Glass Journal*, and *Bijou Poetry Review*, among others. Follow her work at [SarahRussellPoetry.com](http://SarahRussellPoetry.com).

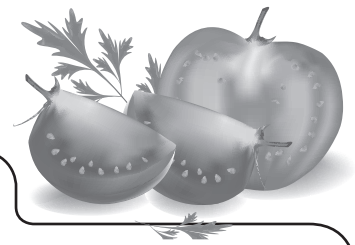
Chutney needs its own heat—  
too high will scorch a day's work;  
too low, and it will turn to mush.  
I set the flame just so and change the music—  
now conjuring a sultan's rapture  
with a favorite concubine who  
doesn't disappoint, for soon  
aromas like a dance of veils, exotic  
as Tangiers, fill the room and whisper  
secrets of the oda.

I fill the sink to wash the jars,  
dry them on white linen towels,  
put water in a roasting pan to boil,  
once more attend the chutney—  
handmaiden to my lady's whims—stirring,  
steeped in fragrance as the liquid turns to syrup,  
as raisins plump and currants soften.

Alchemy achieved, at last the chutney's ladled  
into jars and bathed—  
a purifying rite.

The blue pot's washed, its task complete.  
The jars come out with tongs  
to rest again on linen towels—  
three rows of five to give to friends  
and bring the Silk Road to our table.

I pour a cup of tea and listen for  
the soft, inverse pop-pop of lids  
sealing in the fantasies.



## GREEN TOMATO CHUTNEY RECIPE

*(As in all good cooking, amounts are approximate. If you have more of something, put it in!)*

- 5-6 c. firm chopped green tomatoes
- 1-2 chopped apples
- 1 seeded chopped lemon (or substitute  $\frac{1}{3}$  c. lemon juice)
- 1-2 chopped red peppers
- 1 chopped garlic clove
- 2 c. dark brown sugar
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  c. golden raisins
- $\frac{3}{4}$  c. currants
- 2-3 inches fresh ginger, chopped
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  t. sea salt
- 1 t. cumin
- $\frac{1}{4}$  t. cayenne
- 2 c. malt vinegar
- 1 t. cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$  t. cloves
- $\frac{1}{2}$  t. nutmeg

*Simmer for 2-3 hours in a Dutch oven without a lid so the liquid gets syrupy. Stir occasionally so the goodies don't stick. Put the chutney in sterile jars and seal. It makes a wonderful condiment for chicken, turkey, pork, and ham.*



# A Packet of Seeds

© by Louisa Fordyce

In third grade, I went door to door in the neighborhood selling packets of seeds as a fundraiser. I don't remember what we sold, how much the seeds cost, or what the money was used for, but I remember the colorful packages. I wished that I could grow the flowers and vegetables pictured on them, but my family wasn't interested in gardening, so I never bought any seeds or started them at home.

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*Watching annual flowers  
burst into bloom  
never ceases to amaze  
and please me.*

---

Once I grew up and had my own home, though, packets of seeds were on my shopping list every spring. They still are today. Although buying potted plants from greenhouses yields quicker results, it seems like cheating, so I scour the grocery store racks and visit local greenhouses to find old standards and try new varieties.

I love putting a hard-coated seed into the ground or a starter pot and waiting in anticipation to see the first hint of green appear. It takes longer to see the fruits of my labors, but there is great satisfaction in eating tomatoes and cucumbers started by my own hand—plus it costs a great deal less to buy a packet of seeds instead of one plant. Watching annual flowers like zinnias and nasturtiums burst into bloom never ceases to amaze and please me.

It is also exciting to try new plants. The vines *Cucurbita cylindrica* *Luffa*, started this year, will produce loufa gourds that will dry into scrubbing sponges. And will I succeed in getting cup-and-saucer vine (*Cobaea scandens*) to propagate this time? That one is always a challenge.

Through the years, packets of seeds have taken

on additional meanings. My gardening friends and I start a variety of different plants each year and share seedlings. Some of them reseed.

When I see new plants emerge the following year, I always think of the giver: "There's the Aztec nicotiana that Joyce started; I can't wait to smell the flowers." "Here's the cosmos that Sue gave me. How nice to see it again this year."

Some of the plants we start from seed are perennials, such as rudbeckia and monarda. When they can be divided, we share them with more friends. The cycle continues.

In recent years, my love affair with seed packets has taken on yet another dimension. I joined a volunteer gardening group that maintains the public flowerbeds in our town. Each year we sponsor a fundraiser in which members sell perennials they've potted from their gardens and plants they've started from seeds.

A simple packet of twenty-five moonflower seeds (*Ipomoea alba Calonyction*) costing less than five dollars can translate into as much as fifty dollars in earnings for the group. The profits are similar for other plants started from seed: small investment, large payoff.

In addition to making money for the group to replant and renovate the town gardens, the sale lets us talk with the customers every year. Sharing our love of gardening and knowledge with others is a priceless bonus from that little packet of seeds.

A packet of seeds means many things to me: flowers, fruits, vegetables, accomplishment, shared knowledge, and camaraderie. That is quite a return for such a small investment. ♦

**Louisa Fordyce** is a long-time resident of southwestern Pennsylvania, married to Ron for 34 years, and a lifelong writer and nature lover. She is currently employed as full-time faculty/staff administration with University of Phoenix, teaching a variety of English classes.

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*If I fall asleep with a pen  
in my hand, don't remove it -  
I might be writing  
in my dreams.  
~ Terri Guillemets*

*I'm not a very good writer,  
but I'm an excellent rewriter.  
~ James Michener*

*You write to communicate to  
the hearts and minds of others  
what's burning inside you.  
And we edit to let the fire  
show through the smoke.  
~ Arthur Polotnik*

*Easy reading is damn hard writing.  
~ Nathaniel Hawthorne*

# Ligonier Valley Writers' Calendar of Events 2016-2017

— 2016 —

**July 22, 7:00-9:00 p.m.** *Loyalhanna Review* publication party. Ligonier Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art (SAMA). Garden and art tours, wine, hors d'oeuvres, readings, and camaraderie. \$10 per person; free to those published in this year's *Review*.

**August 15.** Deadline for submissions to Flash Fiction Contest. Cash prizes and readings of the winning entries. The topic this year is triskadekaphobia and/or -philia: a fear of or fondness for the number 13. Check the LVW website for guidelines.

**Sept 11, 3:00-5:00 p.m.** Award-winning dramatist FJ Hartland will teach a workshop on playwriting at St. Michael's of the Valley Church in Rector.

**October 9, 3:00-5:00 p.m.** Annual Ligonier Valley Writers potluck picnic. St. Michael's Church, Rector. Attendees are invited to read from their work in progress.

**A weekend in late October.** Readings of the winning Flash Fiction stories at local venues. Details TBA.

**Autumn (a Saturday, date TBA) 1:00-3:00 p.m.** The Book Nook at Craftique Collections in Greensburg (770 East Pittsburgh St.) will host a publication party for *Phantom Detectives on Vacation*, the third book in a mystery anthology series published by Greensburg Writers' Group as a fundraiser for LVW.

**December 4, 3:00-5:00 p.m.** Annual LVW Christmas Party. St. Michael's Church, Rector.

— 2017 —

**January 2017.** Call for Student Poetry Contest entries for students in grades 4-12. Cash prizes in 30 categories, no entry fee, and an awards ceremony and booklet of all the winning poems.

**March 11.** Deadline for Student Poetry Contest.

**April 22 or 29, 4:00-5:00 pm.** Student Poetry Awards Ceremony at Barnes & Noble. The winning poets in grades 4-12 will read their work to the audience. LVW will have a bookfair at B&N.

**May 1.** *Loyalhanna Review* submission deadline. (Reading period is February 1-May 1.)

Check LVWonline.org for guidelines.

**May, details TBA. Online Day of Giving,** sponsored by the Community Foundation of Westmoreland County. See LVW's published profile and details about donating at

[www.westmorelandgives.org](http://www.westmorelandgives.org).

Please check [www.LVWonline.org](http://www.LVWonline.org) for the latest info and date confirmations. If you have questions, email Judith Gallagher, LVW Publicity Director: [jgallagher@LVWonline.org](mailto:jgallagher@LVWonline.org).

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## Coming Soon:

### The Third Phantom Detectives Anthology

*Phantom Detectives on Vacation* is the third collection of short stories featuring seasoned Detective Brendan Manelli, who is aided in his search for justice and solved cases by the Sleuths and Serpents Writing Group, an eclectic band of authors who meet behind an arterial-red door in the archives room of a fictional town library.

To quote Detective Manelli: "After about six months and a dozen cold cases cleared, they let me in on their secret. Therein lies the rub. If I share the secret with anybody, they'll be coming to take me away, ha-ha. That's not even the worst part. Now I have a rep for solving the really hard cases. So guess what kinds of cases I get? Right.

"How do they solve the unsolvable? It's simple. They don't. They all have ghostly phantasms to help them solve cases. These entities are the fictional

creations of writers who came before them."

So each writer from the Sleuths and Serpents is inspired by a different paranormal sidekick who abets them in their quest for solutions, although somehow there is still a lot of legwork involved. Come solve crimes with Manelli and the motley band.

*Phantom Detectives on Vacation* is the third anthology created by the Greensburg Writers' Group, an offshoot of Ligonier Valley Writers. GWG members are as strange as the members of the Sleuths and Serpents featured in the book. Many of them also belong to Ligonier Valley Writers, thus their generosity of time and talent in creating this collection. Contributors to *Phantom Detectives on Vacation* are Ronald J. Shafer, Barb Miller, Judith Gallagher, M. A. Mogus, Michele Jones, Marge Burke, Thomas Beck, Barb Holliday, and Ed Kelemen.





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