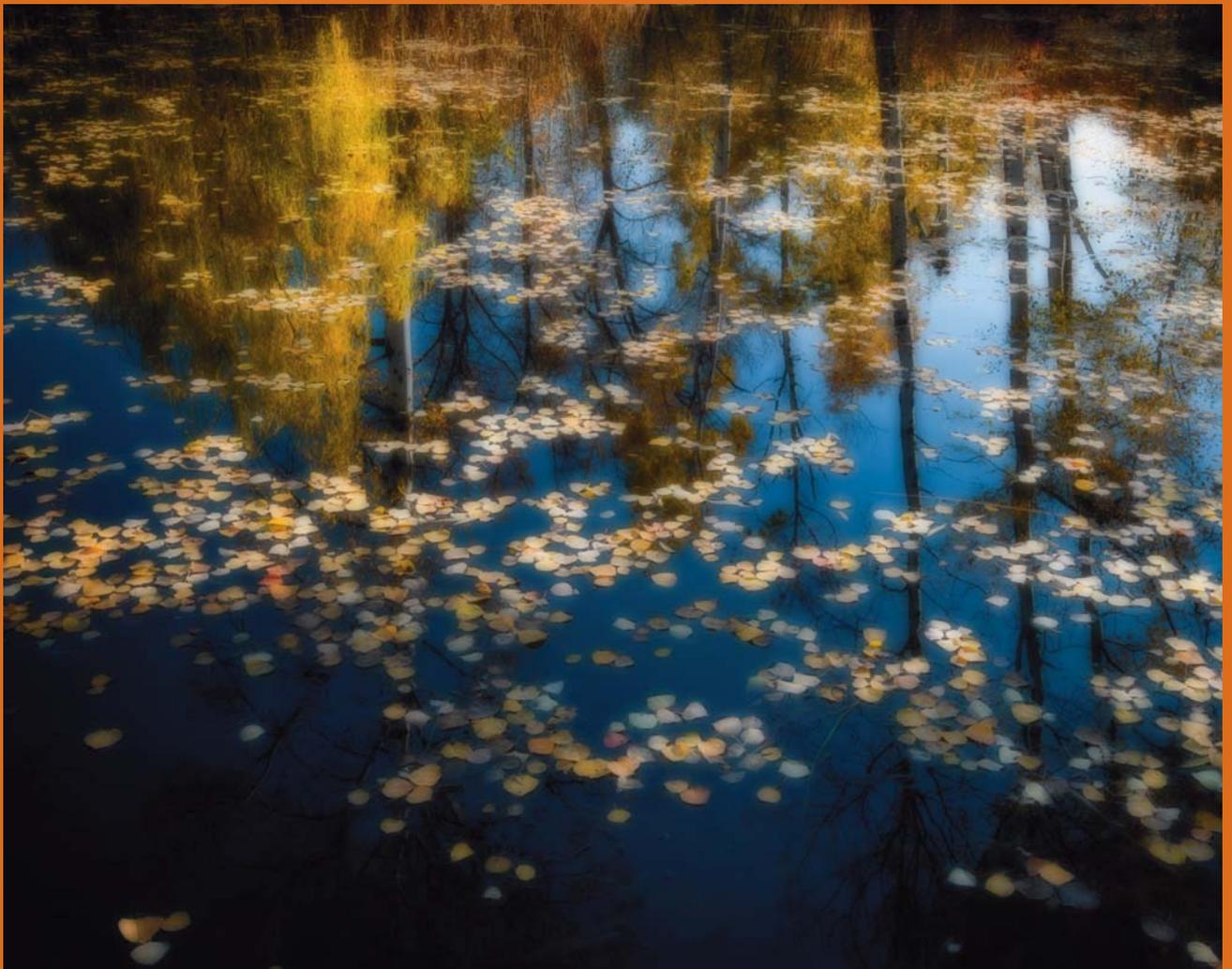


THE JOURNAL OF Creative Aging

# SAGE-ING

with Creative Spirit, Grace & Gratitude



A PUBLICATION OF  
THE OKANAGAN INSTITUTE  
NUMBER 18, WINTER 2016  
EDITED BY KAREN CLOSE

KNOW YOURSELF. BE YOURSELF.  
LOVE YOURSELF. SHARE YOURSELF.  
AVAILABLE ONLINE AT  
[www.sageing.ca](http://www.sageing.ca)

# The Voices of Creative Aging

**CREATIVE AGING** is a powerful new social and cultural movement that is stirring the imaginations of communities and people everywhere.

**This is the first book to document the movement.**

Often called Sage-ing, Creative Aging takes many forms: academic, social and personal. It includes festivals, conferences, classes, group sessions and individual creative pursuits. The Journal Sage-ing With Creative Spirit, Grace and Gratitude was founded by the Okanagan Institute in 2011 to honour the transformational power of creativity. Intended as an initiative for collaboration and sharing, the Journal presents the opportunity for the free exchange of wisdom gleaned from creative engagement.

Sage-ing is about seeking – satisfying inner gnawing and transforming it to knowing and action. Aging can be alchemy when one allows the realisation that to Know Thyself and contribute that

knowing to our culture is indeed one of life's highest purposes. That knowing brings the gratitude, grace and integrity that a life deserves. The creative journey into self is a strong aid to health and wellbeing

for the individual and to our culture. Creative Aging brings together more than 50 essays and galleries of images that showcase the power of the imagination expressed and enjoyed.

## CREATIVE AGING

STORIES FROM THE PAGES OF THE JOURNAL  
SAGE-ING WITH CREATIVE  
SPIRIT, GRACE AND GRATITUDE  
EDITED BY  
Karen Close and Carolyn Cowan



# The Journal of Creative Aging

EDITED BY KAREN CLOSE

NUMBER 18, WINTER 2016  
ISSN 1920-5848

## SAGE-ING WITH CREATIVE SPIRIT, GRACE & GRATITUDE

A PUBLICATION OF THE

### Okanagan Institute

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Cover image by Ursula Wedmann:  
Reflected Glory

Special thanks to Charmaine Wagner for  
her careful copy editing of this issue.

## FROM THE EDITOR

A glance at our homepage and the covers of 18 issues of *Sage-ing With Creative Spirit, Grace and Gratitude* fills me with appreciation for the willingness of so many to share their talents, reflections, and insights. The Journal is a call to harvest creative passion and build a generous community committed to reflection growth, transformation and the power of creative spirit. As individuals shape and share their stories humanity blossoms. Creative expression fosters strong and sustaining inner wisdom and empathy. In her article *Moving to the Rhythms of Your True Self* Cori Devlin reminds us of words she received from a mentor, Cathi Malchiodi: "Artistic expression is far more than self expression and has much more astonishing power..." Choosing to sage with creative spirit will excite you about who you are, what you have, all you can be and the wealth of human ingenuity that is our greatest resource. The Journal is proud of our maxim: *Know Yourself. Be Yourself. Love Yourself. Share Yourself.*

As I assembled this issue I imagined a magical garland

portraying the many faces and forms of creative expression joined together by an intricately woven cord of human endeavour. This is the garland that links generation to generation. In their articles many have referenced family members who have influenced them. John Maurer still uses his father's paintbox; Charmaine Wagner joyfully shares a family recipe; Antoinette Voûte Roeder blesses her parents as she shapes musical phrases in her poetry. The inheritance of creative spirit is rich in this issue's articles. The stories of Ursula Wedmann and Ellen Churchill praise how creative spirit is a ready support when one is in need.

As we enter this new year consider the words of Dostoyevsky, "The first creation always takes place in the perfection of beginnings ..." We invite you send us your experience of *Sage-ing with Creative Spirit, Grace and Gratitude* for the Spring Equinox.

Happy Holidays,  
Karen Close

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## SUBMITTING AN ARTICLE TO SAGE-ING

• **Article is to be related to aging and creativity, in any of its many forms, as a path to gaining wisdom and self awareness and/or the act of harvesting life's wisdom as a legacy for future generations.**

- Article to be attached as a document in .rtf format;
- 500 to a 1500 word maximum;
- Photos: Please attach each photo separately including: the writer's headshot photo and four or five photos, related to article . All photos should be attached in high resolution jpg format with a caption;
- Insert the word "photo" with its caption within the article where you would like each image placed (we'll try to honour this request as layout permits).

• Please include brief bio information (one or two short paragraphs) placed at the end of your article; this is meant to give the reader an idea of who you are, your passions and/or what you do and have done with your life that feels relevant to the article. Include contact info: email, website, blog address – whatever you want to include. For each journal, due date is the 10th of the month preceding release date.

We release around the equinoxes and solstices. **For next issue due date is February 10**

- Email the article and photographs to [karensageing@gmail.com](mailto:karensageing@gmail.com)

Antiquity identified a sage as a wise person ... wisdom is a form of goodness, and is not scientific knowledge but another kind of cognition.

– Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics* 1246b

# EXISTENCE HEIGHTENED

## Karen Close



*“There are moments of existence when time and space are more profound, and the awareness of existence is immensely heightened.”* Charles Baudelaire

Mary Smith McCulloch, senior Okanagan printmaking artist, is showing me her art. A sense of Baudelaire’s words settles with me. I feel it in her works, and in her exuberance. Mary denies the word profound. “I’m just Mary.”

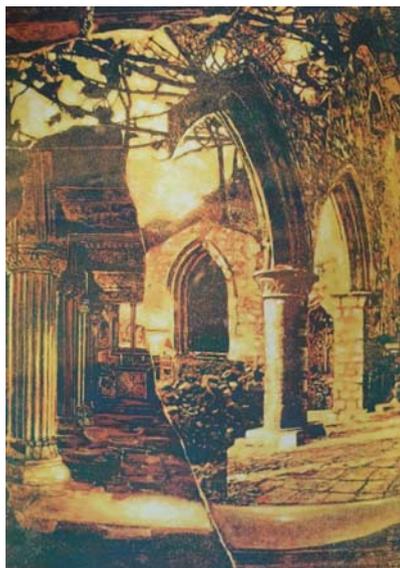
She and I stand together on her staircase while I look into the large monoprint, *Iona Rosslyn*. The work, which appears to be a favourite, is a kind of collage of places and times woven together in the artist’s mind. It gives vision to an intimate layering of memories, emotions and imagined connections. Creating images that are inner landscapes, merged from the external, drives McCulloch.

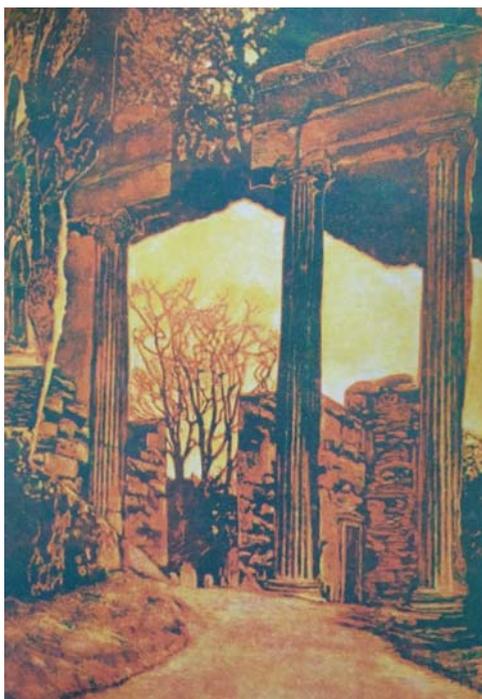
The long experience of her craft, evolving since receiving her D.A. in Printmaking from the Glasgow School of Art in 1964, informs her work. In her presence one senses the love for both her art and life. Images are deeply considered and seem to present a kind of time travel. She protests, “I just like to travel and see the world and bring it home to my own studio. It’s a kind of sifting through my thoughts and bringing them together in my way. It’s how I think.” It is a process that creates highly unique and personal interpretations of human existence. Her works are private meditations about the meanings of time, history and place.

“When I work in the studio there are two areas of concentration: the place where I live, the Okanagan Valley, but I also love to go back in time, sometimes way, way back. I like to look at history from my own internal view.”

*Iona Rosslyn*, combines two images of historical chapels with references to where she grew up in Scotland, but also to the Okanagan and the view of the sunset outside her studio. The fragment of lake and sunlit skyline in the bottom right continues from the shaft of light on the step of the Rosslyn Chapel to the left bringing unity. In the arches and columns of Rosslyn Chapel Mary saw visual resonance with the Iona Chapel. She explains the Island of Iona is a very spiritual place. It’s from here that Celtic Christianity spread out to the rest of Britain. Now Iona has

Left: Mary in her outdoor studio  
Right: *Iona Rosslyn*, monoprint





Top: At her press  
Middle: Glenmore Orchard  
Bottom: All is Vanity

been restored by the Scottish National Trust. That gives permanence; it is a place where people who are really interested in spirituality like to visit. As a young child Mary remembers the discussion regarding the restoration of Iona Abbey. Later in life, she and her husband Jack would take their children to Iona for vacations because her brother took a summer home on the island.

“When I go into the Abbey I like to sit in the place where Saint Columba sat, and feel the energy remaining from his time. It is thought that The Book of Kells was actually first created on Iona. The overlap between Paganism and Christianity has always fascinated me.”

In 1994 her brother, John Smith, the British Labour Party leader, met an untimely death and was buried on Iona. In the image, *Iona Rosslyn*, a torn edge divides the composition separating the early Iona Abbey from the later 15th century Rosslyn Chapel. There is a change of time and place from Iona to the village of Roslin, Midlothian, Scotland. Since the late 1980s, the chapel has also featured in speculative theories concerning a connection of Freemasonry, the Knights Templar, and the Holy Grail.

“Perhaps you remember the Rosslyn Chapel from the book *The Da Vinci Code*, but I was working with the location before that book was released.”

The large tree in the upper background, is drawn from her memories of vegetation around her family’s home in Ardrishaig, Argyll in Scotland, and unites the two sanctuaries into this highly personal glimpse of an artist’s internal landscape. Reminiscing, McCulloch recalls returning to her home and finding it overgrown, the house almost hidden by vegetation. Some things are lost as time moves on. In 1967 Mary and her husband moved from Scotland to Canada. In 1970 they moved to Kelowna. Her reflections on an accumulation of her cultural roots and travel influence her works.

“My sense of place is right here in the Okanagan. This is where I am, but I like to travel and see the world, then bring it home to my studio.”

Mary Smith McCulloch is an internationally exhibited artist, a retired printmaking professor, wife of 49 years, mother of a son and daughter and grandmother to two grand children. She bursts with enthusiasm for the riches life has given her. Each of these parts of who she is finds meaning in her studio, in her work. Still a Professor Emeritus at UBC Okanagan, she retreats daily to her studio to consume from her thoughts, journey with her active mind and make art.

“I’ll never stop making art.”

Mary’s enthusiasm for what creative expression brings to her exudes in all conversations. She loves the stories making art has brought to her life. She lives her art and it affects everything. She’s never been concerned about sales. Her



Top: Alcazar Seville  
Middle: Alcazar Gardens Seville  
Bottom: Cordoba

art is about expressing who she is. She'll only talk about it after it is finished, if at all.

"The visual - the shapes the colours, the lights, the darks - all those dynamics mean so much to me. Where is the eye taking you on this hopefully strong visual journey?"

Travel at all levels is important for Mary and informs her work. A visit with friends last year to Krakow Poland spoke to her imagination. Her mind is eager and she observes and discusses all her encounters. She recalls relations between Canadians and Russians in Poland, and questions where these relations might lead. "The other day my son teased me. You are constantly asking, why."

Back in 1986 Mary chose to examine the Okanagan orchards in a series of etchings. "My prints preserve what the orchards were, strong imprints of man's impact on the landscape of the valley. I walked on the hilltops of Glenmore over and over. Now these orchards are gone; they have become repeated peaked rooftops. Why?"

Does her image *All is Vanity* answer that question? "You know, I put the path in this plate right on the printing press before I pulled the image, but I knew the visual composition needed the path. Then I thought, we make paths into things and places, but what is life about? In my art I can consider and re-examine the paths I, or others, have taken, but maybe all is vanity."

"Really, my commentaries are nothing very deep. What I have to say is in the visual. It is important to me that the shape and form fit into what I'm trying to say. That is what I work at in my compositions. Some of the orchard etchings are horizontal and long because that is the format that expressed what I saw."

Soon after our first conversation, Mary and Jack left on a trip to Spain. Creative spirit travelled with them bringing enrichment to how they travel, the photographs Mary takes, and the memories they create. Travelling with creative spirit heightens experience.

Mary and I speak again after their trip. "I was particularly pleased to return to the Royal Palaces in Seville, to the Alcázar. The arches speak to me and I feel those same feelings I feel in Iona. It's about the layering of history. Buildings become something else as time moves forward. Certain places give such resonance that I feel I must respond as an artist. I like getting to what the heart of the matter is for me. You can see it in my photos. The visuals of some things just speak to me, and I have to make a record, first with my camera, then into drawings and perhaps some aspect will later emerge in my art or not."

Mary recalls her father always reminded her to take time to meditate. He wanted his daughter to savour the richness of being, but she laments that she can't really meditate, except perhaps when she walks.

I laughed. "Isn't meditating what you do here in the studio? As you process your thoughts and memories into art, you're meditating aren't you? It seems your awareness is heightened and brings deeper introspection."

"Yes, perhaps that state was my fathers hope."

# THE GREAT ESCAPE

## Ursula Wedmann



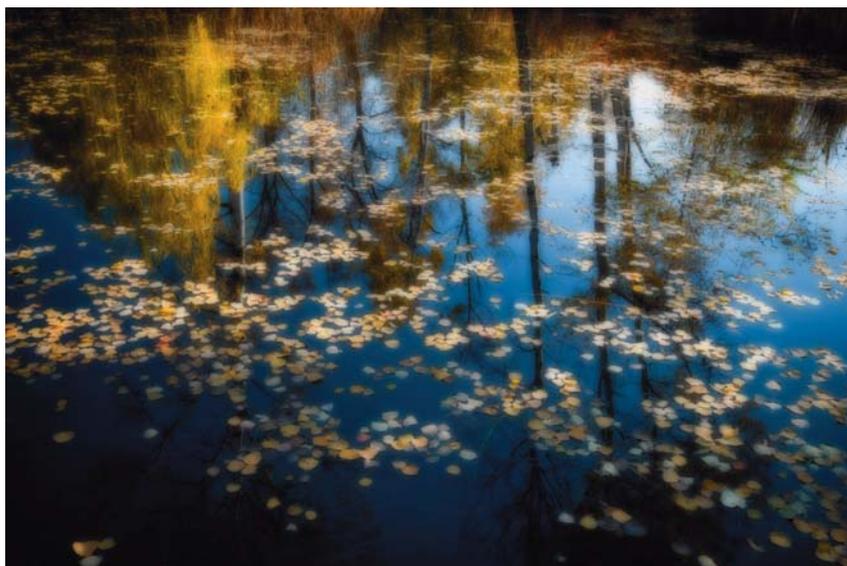
My mother and I travelled her journey to the inevitable end of ALS together. It was a road of progressive losses, deep sadness, precious tenderness, renewed love, sustaining faith. During her last year, that journey was my life. Being her primary caregiver was intense, exhausting, stressful, frustrating, the most difficult thing I've ever done, and yet, the most meaningful.

Sanity breaks were essential for me. My outlet was not only to get away for a few hours, a few days if I was fortunate, but also to engage the creative passion that had been the source of much joy in my life — photography. I needed to reassure myself that the photographer still existed. I made a lot of bad photographs that year, but there were a few gems among the dross.

It was a gorgeous autumn day, the sky an intense blue, the golden leaves still on the trees. Our privately-hired (you'll understand later why I mention this) home care worker was with my mother, so I escaped to my secret pond. Surprisingly, I entered the "creative zone" right away. I played with intentional camera movement, with multiple exposures, and captured some of the essence of that special place. Now, when I look at the photographs from that day, I remember ... how sick my mother was then, how she died 5 weeks later, how free I felt during that brief respite, and how the beauty of nature revived me.

One month before my mother's death, after another of many frustrating conversations with the community care bureaucracy, I hung up the phone and out poured the following parody. My foray into black humour provided much-needed stress relief. Sometimes, our wise, creative selves know what we need.

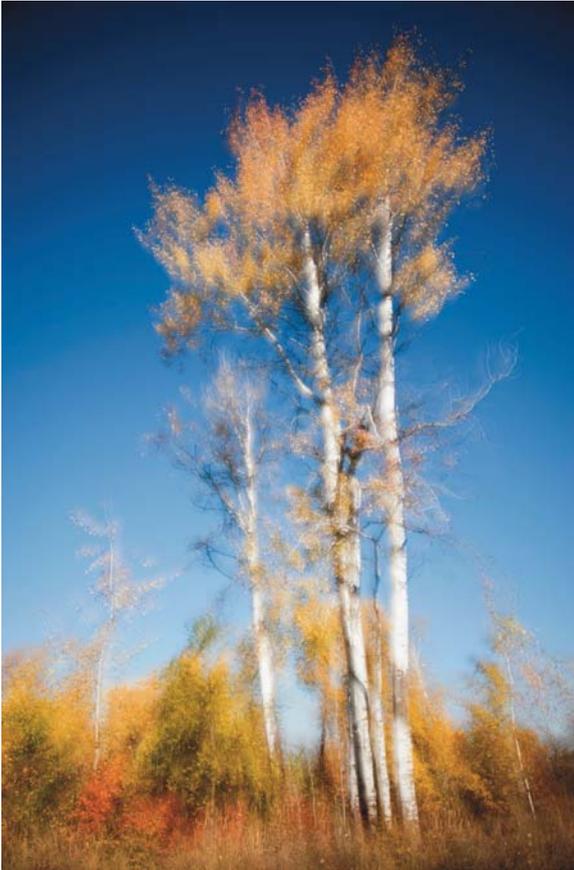
Reflected Glory



## How Many IHA Nurses Does It Take to Change a Lightbulb?

A lightbulb flickers and fades. Its owners request assistance from IHA, the Illumination Health Authority, which is responsible for providing home care for sick lightbulbs and their owners.

First, two IHA nurses visit to make sure there really is a lightbulb. It takes them one hour and 49 questions to ascertain that, yes, the lightbulb ex-



Skyward Gold

ists.

Then a case manager comes to the house to verify that the lightbulb is actually sick. One hour and 49 questions later, she concludes it is sick. She forwards the case to the Sick Lightbulbs department.

Next, a nurse from the Sick Lightbulbs department comes by to determine how sick the lightbulb is. One hour and 49 questions later she decides the lightbulb is only a little sick and doesn't require much attention.

The lightbulb's owners report to IHA that the lightbulb is declining and providing very little light, and they need more help. Two more Sick Lightbulbs nurses are dispatched to check on the lightbulb's condition. After one hour and 49 questions, they find that the lightbulb's condition has deteriorated.

IHA is not sure if the lightbulb's care should remain in the hands of the Sick Lightbulbs department or if the lightbulb is on its last legs and requires immediate attention from the Dying Lightbulbs department. Four nurses, an occupational therapist, a respiratory therapist, a social worker, and a case manager meet to discuss the matter. They decide Sick Lightbulbs needs to re-evaluate the lightbulb and its owners.

A Sick Lightbulbs nurse visits for one hour and asks 49 questions. She returns to the office and tells her team that the lightbulb is, in fact, very sick. They believe the Dying Lightbulbs department would be better qualified to handle the lightbulb and its increasingly demanding owners, so they refer the case there.

A nurse from the Dying Lightbulbs department visits. She stays for one hour and asks 49 questions. She reports back to her team that, yes, the lightbulb is not doing well, but she's suspicious that the lightbulb's owners might be trying to take advantage of IHA's limited resources to get free light.

The Dying Lightbulbs and Sick Lightbulbs teams meet to discuss the case. Dying Lightbulbs is reluctant to accept responsibility because lightbulbs afflicted with Amyotrophic Lightbulb Sclerosis can linger for years beyond their prognosis, and their department deals only with short term cases. So they decide that Sick Lightbulbs should retain responsibility for the lightbulb.

The lightbulb's owners protest that their dear lightbulb doesn't have regular ALS but a rare form of the disease that causes it to quickly flash and burn, and then go out. They are worried that the lightbulb might go out in the middle of the night and leave the owners in darkness without any support. They believe Dying Lightbulbs needs to take on the case because they provide 24/7 support, unlike Sick Lightbulbs which isn't available during the night.

IHA dispatches a nurse from Sick Lightbulbs to determine if it's true that the lightbulb, in fact, has this rapidly progressing form of ALS. The lightbulb,



Squiggles

true to form, puts on a brave face and shines briefly for the nurse. The owners inform the nurse that, despite appearances, the lightbulb really is not doing well and spends most of its time resting in the dark. Confused, the nurse returns to her office and meets with the Dying Lightbulbs nurse to discuss the matter. They decide to submit a report to the case manager.

The case manager does not know whether she should believe the Sick Lightbulbs nurse who reports that the lightbulb is very sick or the Dying Lightbulbs nurse who has seen lightbulbs in much worse condition and doesn't believe this one is ready to burn out soon. So what does she do? She calls a meeting of the two teams. They discuss the lightbulb's condition. And they plan to dispatch another nurse with ... 49 questions.

That night, the lightbulb gives off its last glow, leaving the homeowners in darkness. They sit quietly and reminisce about all the wonderful light the bulb has provided. Finally, they realize IHA isn't available to help them at night, so they must help themselves. The homeowners drive to the 24-hour Home Depot and buy themselves a brand new baby lightbulb. Once home, they gently screw the baby bulb into its new socket. With a flick of the switch, the baby bulb springs to light.

At the same time, a Dying Lightbulbs nurse drives by the home on her way to work the night shift, and she sees the house blazing with light. "Aha!" she says. "I knew that lightbulb was faking it." Once at the office, she reports her discovery to the case manager who immediately dispatches a team of nurses to the house. They barge into the house, all huffy, hands on their hips, ready to demand an explanation, only to find the homeowners in the backyard, laying their dear departed lightbulb to rest in a freshly-dug hole. Sheepishly, the nurses skulk back to the office.

We're not sure how many IHA nurses it takes to change a lightbulb. They never actually did.

**Ursula Wedmann** is a fine art photographer, aspiring painter and sporadic poet who lives in Kelowna, BC. [www.ubqphotography.com](http://www.ubqphotography.com)

# MOVING TO THE RHYTHMS OF YOUR TRUE SELF



## Cori Devlin

I would like to share a story about an unexpected journey from emptiness to overflowing. In the fall of 2014 I was experiencing, for the first time, an empty nest. I had not invited nor expected the profound grief and uncertainty that came to live with me. I was lost. In the literature of Depth Psychology transitional times and spaces that lack clear boundaries and definition are referred to as liminal zones or in-between places. These experiences are recognized as being ripe with potential and possibility as well as turmoil and risk. It is my hope that this very personal story is able to transcend my own unique experience and touch and awaken something that can speak to us all. Clarissa Pinkola Estes writes that a story is a gift, and that within each of our stories is the power to transform lives and nourish souls. It is in this spirit that I share my story with you.

I was not naturally graceful or even comfortable in my body as a young woman; even athletics were somehow for the other girls. I struggled with my body image daily at that time and so my interest in dancing seemed like some misguided and unrealistic dream. I kept this desire locked away deep inside, almost embarrassed by it. I also loved to draw and paint, and so my identity was developed as a visual artist, and later as an art therapist. This seemed to be my place and it provided me with a deep sense of purpose and great meaning in my life, although the yearning to dance remained.

As a young Mother of two beautiful daughters I wanted to provide them with every opportunity available to explore their interests and creativity. This included dance classes. At first it was a class a week, then it became two and before we knew it the girls were both dancing up to five classes a week. It was a joy to watch them move and find strength and grace in their bodies. I found myself working at their dance studio, helping with everything from organizing costumes to painting and designing huge backdrops for year-end shows. I was at ease in this role of promoting and supporting others. I found great pleasure and fulfillment in empowering them to connect with, and express their creativity. I was vaguely aware of my own urge to dance, but that door remained closed. I would not give myself permission to take that risk.

The years flew by and my daughters were each setting off on their own adventures; I was alone for the first time in my life. It was then that the somewhat irrational inspiration to go to Cuba to Salsa dance for three months hit me. This time there was no denying this urge. Once the decision

**It is my hope that this very personal story is able to transcend my own unique experience and touch and awaken something that can speak to us all.**



Ready to dance

**I recently said to one of my dear friends that dancing has become my favorite way to pray.**

was made and I began to share my plans the right people and chances emerged, I signed up for a weeklong dance intensive in Havana that November of 2014.

Even as I stepped into my first all Spanish salsa class I seriously considered that I had completely lost my mind. *Baila en Cuba* (dance in Cuba) is a weeklong event that culminates in each participant performing on stage with a group in front of hundreds of people. As I walked up the stairs and onto that stage my knees truly felt like they would turn to jelly and drop me to the floor; my heart was racing and I couldn't remember anything. The teacher turned and looked at us, the music began and everything slowed down and became vivid and clear. There was nothing but sound, movement and touch. Every cell in my body felt alive and present. I let go and I simply danced. As my group finished we all hugged one another with tears and laughter bubbling out of us, not because of how we performed, but because we had shown up and experienced it. What we had shared opened us and connected us to something so beautiful and somehow bigger than ourselves. In the following months I continued to be challenged. Havana and my circle of friends there opened my heart and my mind in ways I am still discovering.

In the final scene of the movie *Zorba the Greek*, the intellectual and uptight writer, Basil, asks the exuberant older man to teach him to dance—and thereby embrace life. In dancing there is surrender to the life that is present - an allowing and an accepting of one's own body, and a freedom to move with the rhythm and the flow of the music. Ironically, dancing has allowed me to connect to a deep well of silence and stillness within myself. This connection provides a rich and nourishing source of energy and vitality.

*“Artistic expression is far more than self expression and has much more astonishing power. Artistic creativity offers a source of inner wisdom that can provide guidance, soothe emotional pain and revitalize your being. More important it is a wellspring that enlivens, rejuvenates, restores and transforms and it exists within everyone for health and well-being. – Cathi Malchiodi, Art Therapist*

Dancing was the medicine my soul needed to navigate this passage in my life. The rewards and benefits of dance include all the healing qualities of other forms of creative expression, plus the added benefits of the physical aspects of movement and social connection. Dancing is a dynamic and fun way to meet new people, to keep your body flexible and strong and to keep your mind challenged and active. In *Finding Flow* Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi writes about the value of participating in activities that require us to develop a high degree of skill and commitment in conjunction with utilizing our imagination and focus. He advocates that these kinds of activities cultivate self-awareness and a strong connection to our emotional lives. They provide an antidote to the proliferation of entertainment that involves escaping into passive and mindless states.

In addition to the physical, mental and social benefits of dancing there are what I would describe as the transcendent or spiritual aspect of this art form. While all arts offer the potential for aligning with, and giving voice to,



I needed to dance

something beyond one's individual self, in the experience of dance there is a unique way in which body, mind and spirit are all active and engaged simultaneously. It seems this union has been uniquely transformative for me personally. I recently said to one of my dear friends that dancing has become my favorite way to pray.

**Cori Devlin**, MA, Registered Clinical Counsellor & Expressive Arts Therapist has a private practice offering psychotherapy and expressive art therapy to individuals of all ages. In her free time she can be found enjoying all the wonderful things life in Okanagan offers including organic gardening, hiking, and of course Latin dancing. At the time of this publication she will be dancing under the stars in Havana, Cuba.

For inquiries regarding Expressive Art Therapy Cori can be reached at 250-215-1835, [cdevlin@telus.net](mailto:cdevlin@telus.net) or [www.coridevlin.ca](http://www.coridevlin.ca)

#### Latin Dance instructors in Kelowna

Latin Dance Kelowna-Samuel Galvez, 250-899-0216

Latinesque Dance Ballroom and Latin Dance- Samantha Sambreilaz, 250-863-7791

## THE DANCE

Oriah Mountain Dreamer

I have sent you my invitation,  
 the note inscribed on the palm of my hand by the fire of living.  
 Don't jump up and shout, "Yes, this is what I want! Let's do it!"  
 Just stand up quietly and dance with me.  
 Show me how you follow your deepest desires,  
 spiraling down into the ache within the ache,  
 and I will show you how I reach inward and open outward  
 to feel the kiss of the Mystery, sweet lips on my own, every day.  
 Don't tell me you want to hold the whole world in your heart.  
 Show me how you turn away from making another wrong without  
 abandoning yourself when  
 you are hurt and afraid of being unloved.  
 Tell me a story of who you are,  
 and see who I am in the stories I live.  
 And together we will remember that each of us always has a choice.  
 Don't tell me how wonderful things will be . . . some day.  
 Show me you can risk being completely at peace,  
 truly okay with the way things are right now in this moment,  
 and again in the next and the next and the next. . .  
 I have heard enough warrior stories of heroic daring.  
 Tell me how you crumble when you hit the wall,  
 the place you cannot go beyond by the strength of your own will.  
 What carries you to the other side of that wall, to the fragile beauty  
 of your own humanness?  
 And after we have shown each other how we have set and kept the  
 clear, healthy boundaries that  
 help us live side by side with each other, let us risk remembering  
 that we never stop silently  
 loving  
 those we once loved out loud.

Take me to the places on the earth that teach you how to dance,  
 the places where you can risk letting the world break your heart.  
 And I will take you to the places where the earth beneath my feet  
 and the stars overhead make  
 my heart whole again and again.  
 Show me how you take care of business  
 without letting business determine who you are.  
 When the children are fed but still the voices within and around us  
 shout that soul's desires have  
 too high a price,  
 let us remind each other that it is never about the money.  
 Show me how you offer to your people and the world  
 the stories and the songs  
 you want our children's children to remember.  
 And I will show you how I struggle not to change the world,  
 but to love it.  
 Sit beside me in long moments of shared solitude,  
 knowing both our absolute aloneness and our undeniable belong-  
 ing.  
 Dance with me in the silence and in the sound of small daily words,  
 holding neither against me at the end of the day.  
 And when the sound of all the declarations of our sincerest  
 intentions has died away on the wind,  
 dance with me in the infinite pause before the next great inhale  
 of the breath that is breathing us all into being,  
 not filling the emptiness from the outside or from within.  
 Don't say, "Yes!"  
*Just take my hand and dance with me*

# WHAT ART SHOULD DO



## Wanda Lock

When I was a child every once in awhile I would come across a dead animal, usually a bird, sometimes a mouse or other small rodent. After looking, observing, and contemplating the quietness and beauty of the deceased creature, a few quick impromptu words would be said, and I would bury the critter. A week or so later I would return to the burial site and dig up the now decomposed body. I searched the earth with anticipation, curiosity and uneasiness, much like my art-making process in the studio. The world that one discovers when digging through the earth goes beyond the initial beauty of the dead creature. It reveals a world that talks about decay and nature and the cycle of life, and provides a far deeper understanding of the subject and its surroundings. This is what art can do, or, in my opinion, what art should do.

**I am interested in pulling away the layers of a given subject - exploring, dissecting and discussing the purpose of art and the role of the artist.**

So what does this little anecdote have to do with me being the new curator at the Lake Country Art Gallery you ask? I'm hoping it will give you some insight into where I'm planning to go with upcoming exhibitions and future projects at the gallery. I am interested in pulling away the layers of a given subject - exploring, dissecting and discussing the purpose of art and the role of the artist. I realize this all sounds a bit ambiguous and cryptic, but these thoughts and concepts give me a foundation to form ideas and give shape to exhibition plans. I'm also an avid fan of pop culture, I am interested in making the arts a part of the public's everyday experience by linking the arts with music, film and literature.

The Lake Country Art Gallery has four curated and four member/community exhibitions each year. As curator, I want to bring together artists with diverse and contrasting art practices as well as artists entering different

Left: Works by Jim Kalnin

Right: Works By Lucas Glenn





Top: Looking at art  
Above: Hanging for Under 100

**I am interested in making the arts a part of the public's everyday experience by linking the arts with music, film and literature.**

stages of their art careers. My first exhibition as curator this fall was 'WildMen' featuring work by Jim Kalnin and Lucas Glenn. Although Katie Brennan (former LC Art Gallery curator) did all the work putting this exhibition together, I did advise on the details and installation of the work in the gallery. This exhibition included large scale oil paintings (Kalnin), installation (Glenn) and collaboration work involving both artists. 'WildMen' is a great example of what I envision regarding the types of exhibitions I would like to see in the Lake Country Art Gallery. This exhibition had everything on my 'must have for a successful exhibition' list.

Additionally, it is most helpful that the gallery is a flexible space with moveable walls that can be easily transformed into an installation space as well as a more formal layout. I have been busy working on exhibition plans for 2017, I'm delving into the narrative, introducing the concept of 're-directed' art, exploring art, love and relationships, and having a good long look at the male nude.

The four community/member exhibitions are opportunities for local artists to display work in the gallery and to show the public what they are up to in their studios.

The juried exhibition in late winter involves invited guest jurors coming to the gallery and pulling together an exhibition from the work submitted by participating members. The shows are quite different from year to year and the jurors are practicing artists with various art backgrounds.

The Intergenerational Exhibition brings together artists from different backgrounds and generations. It provides the opportunity for artists and community members to collaborate and have open discussions about diverse approaches to making work. This is an open-ended exhibition and evolves from year to year.

In September the gallery hosts an exhibition based on the year's Lake Country Art Walk theme and is open to gallery members and participating Art Walk artists.

Our last community exhibition, which is currently showing at the gallery, is titled 'Under 100' and works sell for under \$100. This exhibition brings together artists from across the Okanagan and displays over 700 small-scaled art works. This annual event is not only a fundraiser for the gallery, but sales also support the individual artists.

The Lake Country Art Gallery now has a gift shop located in the back room of the gallery. The new space opened in September and the space is chock full of items made by local artists and artisans- definitely worth a look. Inventory changes frequently so stop by often.

Next door to the gallery is the Art House. Inside you will find artist



24. photo: Gallery giftshop

25. photo: pop-up art



studios, workshop space and the Pop-Up Gallery. The Pop-Up Gallery is a quirky, fun, temporary, non-curated exhibition space available to artists for a five day show or special event.

The mandate of the Lake Country Art Gallery is to foster understanding, interest and enjoyment of art throughout the Lake Country community and the Okanagan region. We offer a schedule of diverse exhibitions and public programming initiatives for adults and youth. The gallery showcases a range of art by established and emerging artists, as well as community members.

I am looking forward to building on the great foundation laid by past curators Jim Kalnin and Katie Brennan. We live in a digital age and a global community; it is important that we expose ourselves to a variety of viewpoints and experiences. I will continue to work with local and regional artists and feel it is integral that national and international artists be brought into the exhibition schedule whenever possible, giving a broader view and understanding of the world around us.

I am also fortunate that I get to work with the fabulous Petrina McNeil, manager of the gallery, plus all the amazing volunteers that help make the gallery a great success.

The Lake Country Art Gallery is located at 10356 Bottom Wood Lake Road in Lake Country. Gallery hours are: Wednesdays 8am-6pm, Thursday/Fridays 10am-4pm and Saturday/Sundays 11am-3pm.

Check out the gallery's website at [lakecountryartgallery.ca](http://lakecountryartgallery.ca).

**Wanda Lock** was born in Oliver, British Columbia in 1969. In 1989 she enrolled into the Fine Arts Diploma program at Okanagan College before transferring to Emily Carr College of Art & Design where she graduated in 1992 with a studio major in painting. Lock returned to the Okanagan in 1992, and since then she has had numerous critically acclaimed exhibitions.

According to her significant other, Wanda watches too many coming of age movies. She is also known to Pearl Jam and even a bit of Soundgarden while working in her studio. She is not sure what her fondness of grunge music or teenage angst movies have in common with her current body of work, but she is convinced that all will become clear in good time.

Lock's recent exhibitions include:

'Sotto Voce', Lake Country Art Gallery 2014,

'Tall Tales', St. Albert Art Gallery 2013,

'Terrior:Physically Speaking', Penticton Art Gallery 2013,

'Flying Machines and Poems Sung by Strangers', Kelowna Art Gallery's Satellite Gallery at the Kelowna International Airport 2013

'Personal Topographies', Kelowna Art Gallery 2012.

# THE PRESENCE OF THE EXTRAORDINARY IN THE ORDINARY



## Antoinette VouÛte Roeder

Ever since I can remember, writing has been a lifeline for me. It started when I was just a child in The Netherlands when mail was delivered twice a day and letters were a normal means of communication. I wrote letters to family members and to friends which included drawings, and sometimes dried leaves or flowers. My correspondence took on greater significance for me after we had immigrated to the States and I was suddenly cut off from the only life I had ever known. I do believe I wrote my life, or wrote my way into life.

During my tumultuous teen years I began to write short stories that were inspired by my reading. They were highly romantic, impossibly sentimental. I would submit them to my English teacher in high school who patiently read them and provided pithy commentary in red ink in the margins. It was he who urged me to try my hand at poetry. I found the shorter form, the concise expression and the intimacy of poetry very appealing. Thank God for writing. It would see me through some very difficult periods of my life.

In writing we can express what we might never say to anyone, we can test our ideas, we can release every nuance and extreme of emotion without anyone being the wiser for it. I started keeping diaries and journals as a teenager and still do today. Even now the ability to express in words what I am feeling gives credence to my experience, makes it real, makes me real.

My poems emerge from my observations, my life experience. In our age of information the world is with us instantly whether we like it or not. The feeling of powerlessness to change the enormous problems besetting our world has inspired some of my poems. Many poems trace my love of beauty in nature, my sense of the sacred in the earth, indeed in the cosmos, and in the personal details of our lives. They are an expression of gratitude for the gift of life, the miracle of our bodies, the relationships we attract and nurture.

It is a meditation, this reading, then moving into writing. I move with the essence and rhythm of poetry and am delivered up on the shores of a poem of my own. It is a threshold world I indwell and flow through: silent, a gliding, also precarious. Don't tilt too far this way, don't dip too far down or I lose the thread; eyes gentle, breath easy, and words will fall from the fingers, be they icy or not.

## Write to Live

When the space  
between the words  
begins to pulsate  
with life  
the poet falls back  
lets the poem lead her  
to their destiny where  
like an angel or  
an eagle it emerges  
from the darkling mist  
fully formed  
poised for flight  
into the world  
but first  
it turns  
to write her  
into the text.

## The Body Asks To Be Silent

Reading poetry  
into the hollow of  
the day, the body uncertain,  
cold fingertips despite summer heat,  
weary without discernible reason.

Read Stephen Levine, Tranströmer,  
John Keats, even Browning, the husband.  
On a flight through the cosmos,  
a very slow plane or pair of wings, I  
am knit continuously into the stars,  
their burn and flicker, their inevitable  
death.

## Quantum Physics

Inspired by Brian Greene's *The Elegant Universe*

I have always been alive  
(you too)  
in the universe

You could take my life today  
for I have always been alive  
in muons, gluons, bosons,  
other-ons yet to be discovered  
(or not)

In super strings, loops of vibration  
the resonance that is the music  
of the spheres, of all, of us, and so

I have known you  
You have known me  
We recognize each other though  
we've never  
met  
before

More and more I recognize the presence of the extraordinary in the ordinary. When younger I wanted to make a mark in the world, to be remembered for something special. Even as recently as a decade ago when my first poetry volume was published, I had hopes of reaching those people that by virtue of their own professions might be able to carry my work into the world. Instead, I was blessed with a circle of friends and people I had met either through my spiritual direction practice or my retreat facilitation. These individuals not only purchased and read my books, but continue to read them to this day. Some have even committed poems of mine to memory, the way I myself know a Robert Frost poem by heart. My poems have been read to me by someone else. That is an amazing experience. Suddenly those words aren't just mine anymore, they have become universal. They fall on my head as a blessing. I shall not be a Mary Oliver or an Emily Dickinson; I will be read by very few people, but those people form a precious web, a community of like-minded souls, with whom I feel true kinship. What could surpass that?

Poetry is a wonderful vehicle because it lends itself to such a variety of experience. When I spoke of the extraordinary in the ordinary, I also refer to poetry's subject matter. I have written a poem about an empty beanpot (*Still Breathing*, "The Beanpot", p 101), a poem about bagels shared with a friend (*Still Breathing* "Lunch", p 76), about the weary woman who runs the Laundromat ("Mrs. Tiggywinkle", *Still Breathing*, p 77). Some poems lend themselves to a tongue-in-cheek attitude. Others are serious and deep: a friend who lies dying, prayer, God-poems. Some poems emerge from particular places on the globe, a bird sanctuary in New Mexico, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the harbor in Victoria. Everything is material for poetry.

"The unexamined life is not worth living," are words attributed to Socrates in his defense of open mindedness. Poetry lends itself to reflection, to tracing the interior journey, to the path of soul and the workings of the heart. In that manner, poems have been my prayer and my meditation. There are times when a poem seems to give itself to me in its entirety—what that involves is, to a great degree, a mystery. I sense it as movement within the universe, something that breaks through the barriers I put up; it is grace. Most times a phrase or an image pops into consciousness and I start to weave. There is a strand that already indicates what the next strand might be. I love this process. I am both the participant and the observer. After the initial writing, I let the words sit for a while. Then the play begins. Playing is what I call the reading, rereading, and tinkering I do to create poems. They may go through many versions before I'm content with rhythm, cadence, placement, and sound.

Music and art are part of the fabric of my life. The creative and re-creative spirit was first nurtured in my youth. I was blessed with parents who were creative; my father played the violin, my mother painted with oils. We heard music all the time and as children, my sister and I were often taken along on

## Demons In the Closet

We poets write  
our demons out  
of the closet

and so I whip  
through cloying sentiment  
and nice observations  
till the rocky bottom  
lies revealed in all its  
cavernous dustiness and

digging through  
the murky past  
my hands come up

with glittering treasure  
yet to be explored.

## Pertinent Measurements

"Halfway through your life, death turns up  
and takes your pertinent measurements."  
—Tomas Tranströmer, Black Postcards

What would they be  
those measurements

my height, my weight  
my roles, my career

how many of this  
how far from that

I take the measure  
of pert-inent

take pert apart

To pert or not to pert.

Measure that  
in centimeters

Measurements are  
im-pertinent  
impoverishing  
impermanent  
and perfectly  
indifferent

Look through Hubble's eye

There are no pertinent measurements

painting expeditions with my mother. Music was the first vehicle for my self-expression; I started piano at age five and later majored in it at university. Sound, rhythm, rest, cadence, and tempo play a role in poetry, certainly in mine.

Creativity, in general, is a source of energy and liveliness. People talk about retirement in terms of cruises and travel, resorts and golf. Retirement is not on my horizon. Not because I want to work the rest of my life, but because I want to go on playing! By playing I mean the graced interaction between subject and object, the free exploration and adventure of sculpting words and ideas, of shaping musical phrases, of continuing to expand my boundaries and find my edges. I support my creativity by long walks outdoors, by exercise and yoga, by a meditation practice, by some very deep friendships, by adult children and a grandchild, and a marriage partner who has accompanied me through thick and thin.

For the past twenty-plus years I have been practicing the art of sacred listening, commonly referred to as spiritual direction. People need a place for their stories, particularly their spiritual explorations. I am privileged to be asked to join in their journeys, sometimes to offer a different perspective, to create a safe space, confidentiality, insight, and prayer. For an hour at a time we dip deep into soul work, a different sort of poetry, and I feel like Moses when he encountered the burning bush. For this I am grateful beyond words, and ever more aware of the extraordinary in the ordinary.

In some cultures and traditions the elder is respected, consulted, and included. I feel very blessed that I experience some of that. I have yet to be relegated to some dusty shelf. My life and my interests are no less passionate, but they are definitely less driven. I allow for more space, more grace, more flow. This is what I wish for all of us, regardless of age.

Antoinette Voûte Roeder [a.roeder@telus.net](mailto:a.roeder@telus.net)

is the author of 4 books of poetry available from the author, Audrey's Bookstore Edmonton, AB and Amazon.ca

Weaving the Wind (2006)

Still Breathing (2010)

Poems for Meditation: An Invitation to Prayer (2014)

The Many Singings (2014)



My books

# DO YOU LIVE IN A “MUSIC HOUSEHOLD” OR A “TV HOUSEHOLD”?

## Ellen Churchill



**My father was an accountant by day and a musician by night.**

I remember television in my home as a child, and the fights over what we watched (I ALWAYS lost as I was the youngest and the only girl), BUT ours was definitely a ‘music household’.

My father was an accountant by day and a musician by night.

He started gigging professionally at 15 years old after touring with the Kitsilano Boys Band in High School. (While in LA on a Coldwell Banker Conference last year, I discovered he played Hollywood Bowl at age 13...and I thought I was the celebrity of the family!)

Our house rules were strict: no eating with your fingers; sit up to the table; don’t talk with your mouth full. Dinnertime was an opportunity to discuss news and current events, regardless of your age. Everyone was encouraged to voice their opinions, as long as it didn’t include “why eating french fries with your fingers should be allowed”.

I fought going to bed almost every night, but what made it tolerable was falling asleep to records playing: Big Band albums like Ted Heath, Stan Kenton, & Harry James, or singers Frank Sinatra, Sarah Vaughan, Ella Fitzgerald, Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorme. My life was always filled with music as far back as I can remember. I played my Dad’s 78s, my parents’ 33s & my brothers’ 45s!

We all played instruments and would have family jams with “Music Minus One” albums: Dad on Alto Sax, Bruce on drums, Lorne on Trumpet or Trombone, me on Clarinet.

Mom sang. She sang to us as small children, she let me get away with playing my brothers’ records when they weren’t home, singing along and choreographing huge numbers with my hairbrush microphone. She enrolled me in every type of dance: ballet, tap, jazz, character and figure skating, clarinet lessons, singing lessons. Her brother, Ed Cowan, was a professional musician. He played trombone with legendary artists who toured through Toronto like Tony Bennett. He even sat in with a young Oscar Peterson at a Jam early on in his career.

In his later years, Uncle Ed moved to the West Coast and played with Dal Richards and even sat in with a young singer at the Railway Club named Ellen Churchill. I have always loved feeling sound running through my body. I feel emotionally, physically, mentally & spiritually altered by the experience. In



Top: "Dad (Lorne Churchill Sr) gigging at 15 years old!"

Above: "Uncle Ed performing at my parents' supper club, 'The Tara' in March 1963."



the early part of my career I focused on developing resonance, as much resonance as possible, as I was studying and emulating Sarah Vaughan's sound.

This area of voice was my teaching focus: exploring the masque, feeling your cheeks and forehead buzzing, making your bones shake...trying to feel that resonance all the way down into your thighs! My students were varied. I loved teaching and wanted to be challenged. I took on many interesting pupils: as young as 6 up to mid 70s. I taught hearing impaired, visually impaired, special needs, and children with mental health issues. I taught Voice Therapists who came to me for more in-depth training. I taught professional musicians who wanted to improve their singing or add singing to their stellar playing capabilities. I witnessed the impact music had on these students: painfully shy, young kids blossomed, and came out of themselves; young adults discovered their sexuality; two students met, fell in love and married each other! And yes, I went to the wedding!

But nowhere did I see the impact more than with my mature students. Many of them came as a hobby, to fill their time, to overcome a fear or stigma from childhood that they "couldn't sing" or they "shouldn't sing". As with all my students, I was demanding: I expected daily practice, expansive song repertoire and focus on applying technique to song. Students were to learn how to work with a band: write charts, describe feels, count in tunes, lead the group. They recorded a CD and performed live, they were recorded on video and

required to analyze their performance.

These mature students ate it up! They grew immensely, and some, in a very short time. They grew in confidence, coordination and ability. They began to express themselves more eloquently, in life and in song. They broadened their choice of repertoire and started listening and learning styles they had not previously been exposed to. These students were not aging, they were growing!

During this time, my uncle, who had been such an influence on my career, was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. The progress of the disease was rapid and devastating. Although he was in hospital in Surrey, I made a point to travel to the West Coast to see him. I was on my own that day and was resolved that he would likely not recognize me and possibly reject me.

It was shocking to see him at first. He weighed under 100 pounds, and his hands were bound to the sides of the bed. I had been told that, although he could not recognize family members, he was still playing tunes on only the mouthpiece of his trombone. Now, if you've ever tried to play trombone, you will recognize the magnitude of this feat! A trombone slides to different positions to create a variety of pitches or notes. He no longer had the slide or



Poster for Billie, Ella, Sarah Tribute.

**I witnessed, first-hand, the power of music to communicate beyond the verbal, more deeply, beyond the final stages of dementia.**

the instrument, so he was using his embouchure and the mouth-piece to articulate the notes.

What was even more amazing is, they had now taken away the mouthpiece and he was still “singing” the notes using his embouchure! His brain still had the ability, even in the last few days of his life, and with the severe deterioration of the majority of the brain, to process a very difficult task and create the sounds required to make a song. I witnessed, first-hand, the power of music to communicate beyond the verbal, more deeply, beyond the final stages of dementia.

In 2007, I made the decision to pursue a career in Real Estate. It had been a passion for some time and I wanted a change, a new way to help people. My style as an entertainer spilled over into my real estate world and I attracted clients with whom I developed close, personal relationships. Some of those clients experienced Strokes, Dementia and Alzheimer’s and the lights went on when a client called me asking if I would be involved in a new charity he was working on.

His name: Nigel Brown His charity; [www.singforyourlife.org](http://www.singforyourlife.org)  
It clicked. This was to be my charity.

I could promote music as a form of medication and healing, de-emphasize drug usage, work with a talented fundraiser (Nigel won the Queen’s Jubilee Award for creating the Children’s Miracle Network) and contribute to my clients, friends, family and community in need.

I sponsored the film presentation of ALIVE INSIDE in our community and helped Nigel connect with professional musicians who would be good fits as facilitators. Although I was not as involved in music as I had been, I could assist others to connect. Ironically, it awakened the need for more music in my life! I had become a workaholic and yes...a “TV household”.

Arriving home no earlier than 6:45PM most nights, I was using the TV for company during dinner preparation and evening homework for next day business. I am now getting back to my “Sunday Morning mellow music”, “Friday Night party tunes”, pre-gig singing sessions and practicing in my car.

I am increasing my gigging and working on new material. Funny thing is, I am busier than ever with Real Estate.

Let me encourage you. Awaken the deepest areas of your mind, reach out to your friends, family and community, share in the listening and making of music. Remember, it’s called PLAYING an instrument.

Every gig I do I say, “there’s not enough singing and dancing in the world...so GET BUSY!”

**Ellen Churchill** is an award winning vocalist, professional entertainer, instructional consultant and Top Producing Realtor, living and working in the Okanagan Valley.

She lives 20 minutes from her 80+ year old parents, still sings at Christmas parties, Weddings & Bar Mitzvahs and plans to play the harp, sculpt and grow her hair long when she retires! [ellen@coldwellbanker.ca](mailto:ellen@coldwellbanker.ca)

# MAINTAINING PASSION

## Karen Close

I have always felt Matisse had a double entendre when he said, “Without passion there is no art.” Passion is life force. It propels. Not only does the artist need passion, but for art to speak, passion must also reside in the heart of the viewer.

Matisse knew that with passion connections are made. We move into *kairos*, an ancient Greek word for moments that are opportune, embody many layers of meaning and remove all barriers. Creative spirit lives in *kairos*.

This past September I was very fortunate to have lunch with eighty-five year old, London, Ontario resident Nancy Poole. For almost five decades I have felt drawn to what I had heard about her passion for art, for bringing it to people’s attention and for making a gallery integral to community life. I was born in London and for me she had become a legend, but we had never met.

On a recent trip to London I wanted to change this. I felt called. As we set September 30th for lunch, she mentioned that the day before she would have her book club; the founder and host was 101 and the meeting time was carefully preserved. Impulsively, I asked if I might come and take a photo; she agreed. My heart jumped when I heard the address. This was a street on which my grandmother had lived when she took her first apartment after the death of my grandfather, when I was two. For the next eight years I had played along that street. I had many fond memories. Despite a bit of drizzle, I chose to walk for my visit to photograph this small group of vital women still maintaining their passion for literature and sharing ideas.

I arrived glowing with memories and eagerly grasped the welcoming hand of the woman who had brought me to this moment. When I explained my enthusiasm I was shown how a life lived with passion sharpens the mind and gives meaning to moments. Art does that too. “Why I know your grandfather,” Nancy exclaimed. I’ve kept a photograph of him with my father and another doctor on my mantle for years.” They had presented at a medical conference together and she loved the synergy she saw between them. They shared a passion for medicine.

For our lunch the next day Nancy had chosen that we should meet at Museum London, formerly the London Regional Art Gallery. The building, with its great arches, is located on the forks of the Thames River, and is the site of one of the stories that creates the legend that is Nancy. Her passion for the arts and artists has created her life. My memory begins in 1971 when she opened The Nancy Poole Studios on Hazleton Lane in Toronto’s art district. Nancy had felt deeply moved when her friend, and father of two young

Below: Nancy Poole is a woman of vision  
Bottom: she is an active member of her  
community and embraces each day  
Photos by Debra Rogers.





Top: passion urges sharing, The Book Club left to right:  
 Front- Nancy Poole, Marie Peterson (club founder)  
 Back- Susan Downe (author), Nancy Schiefer (book reviewer London Free Press)

Above: Sunday Morning #2 gained Jack Chambers great attention in 1970 when it sold and made him "Canada's highest-earning artist."

children, thirty-eight year old London artist Jack Chambers was diagnosed with Leukemia. Compelled to advance his reputation, and finances, while he was alive, Nancy started a gallery to sell his work. The first opened in London in 1969, and then a second gallery in Toronto two years later.

Under Nancy's direction The Nancy Poole Studios were successful until she sold them after Chamber's death in 1978. Still the Hazelton Gallery maintained her name until recently. In 1985 the London Regional Art Gallery was in financial difficulty and called Nancy back to lead. She carefully guided it to become a loved destination in the community. I was eager to join Nancy in this building where she had so passionately shared her love for the arts.

Although she uses a walker, Nancy drives herself. When she parked her car out front of the gallery for our lunch I followed the guard who rushed out to greet her. She is still loved by the present gallery staff. In the dining room overlooking the Thames River we were seated at Nancy's corner table.

As we sat down Nancy thoughtfully handed me a bag containing the photograph of my grandfather and her father taken in 1936. I liked my grandfather's expression and was delighted to get a new glimpse of the man I knew only through story. Nancy explained my grandfather was a man of great enthusiasm and that he and her father had had great admiration for each other.

Shortly, our conversation moved to art. Nancy had just returned from a visit to Montreal with her daughter to visit an exhibition of Rodin sculpture.

"This was a beautifully created and wonderfully installed exhibition, and I learned a great deal from seeing it. Still, it is painting that really excites me. Colour, line and light, those are the things that really excite me. Balance is important to me too. I understand Feng Shui. When things seem properly placed, it brings me an inner harmony. Although I don't like the new popularity that expression has, I like the calm feeling, and it's the only way to really describe it. I can go into a gallery and I don't have to make any decisions. I am just a grateful consumer of the energy I get. There is enormous pleasure for me in looking at the works of great artists."

I asked Nancy if she had ever had any particular creative activities she enjoyed.

"I used to knit during the war, but I was never very good. I did take art lessons from Jack Chambers. That was how we met. He was having classes. I was okay, but I knew I would never be great, although Jack said I had a good eye. I took my eye in another direction."

"Do you think that there is a mentoring role that is needed today to awaken people to appreciating art?"

"I think to know oneself is a most important exercise, and it is a constant one, because your experiences are always changing. As you move from one



At a 1936 medical conference, my grandfather left, Nancy's father right

**I am very grateful to have this gift for seeing and loving art.**

phase of your life to another, you can surprise yourself. You change and you respond in a different way, but in the process of constantly seeking to know yourself through looking, you grow. Every time I look at a work of art, no matter how many times I've seen it, I see something new depending on my mood, and I find that exciting. Number one for me, the most essential part of my life, is seeing. My hearing is lousy, but what would I do if I lost my sight.

I like to think that I would be able to face it because instead of seeing I'd still be able to feel. I do have a very good mind's eye that has trained itself since a very young age. I guess I would look more at sculpture through the sense of touch and feeling it through my fingers."

"This way of feeling pleasure is something everyone deserves, yet a criticism is often made that galleries cater to the elite. How do you feel about that?"

"During the years I ran this gallery my mantra was that the gallery must be free and that we must welcome everyone. We had special Sundays of films and classes for all ages. Upstairs I would have coffee served so that young moms, often on social assistance, could relax and know their children were looked after, and enjoying learning about art. They could have two hours to do as they pleased - enjoy the gallery or go for a walk. I was accused of being a social worker rather than a gallery director. Well they may have been right, but I don't know that the two can't marry quite happily and that's what I did. This place was humming every Sunday. I don't know whether it was often the same women, but I do know I still have women who will stop me in the street and say, 'I brought my children every Sunday to the gallery and it was wonderful.' I had a marvellous staff and bringing these mothers and their children in made them feel good too. Our donation box was a giant hand, and people did donate to the hand and to the gallery because they saw that what we were doing was important.

My second passion is the history of London. As I said, I always had a mind's eye, as though I had a movie camera in my head. I can still recall streets and scenes and people. I can bring them alive, and because I'm a bit of an historian I can make connections, put these images into a kind of context, and find meaning. I find great pleasure in doing this. Perhaps it's a kind of artwork. I haven't decided to retire yet. Nobody is paying me, but I am still not retired. It's what I do for love - the love of art, and it keeps me alive. I am very grateful to have this gift for seeing and loving art."

Nancy and I parted, each thanking each other for understanding how art can affect one on a very personal level. We acknowledged that although our parents and grandparents had not really understood the arts, they had shown us how enthusiasm seeds passion and connections are made. I think we experienced *kairos*. I know I found a woman who showed me a purity of passion and philanthropy that inspired me to continue her legacy in my own way.

# MY STORY IS SAVOURED BY SAGE-ING



## Erika Lambert

Neural file drawers, in my brain, opened and closed. Synapses like fingers scan, find, stop and read a half century of stored information. Vernon Clarence Fulton Senior High Class of 1965 was gearing up for a big class reunion planned for September, 2015. The organizers plied classmates for details about our last half century of living: “Where have you been and what have you accomplished since Graduation?” they asked. A 2015 yearbook on the class of 1965 was planned. My neural files responded with a chaotic flood of memories. What did I want to say?

As I researched my life through various photos, letters, journals and past memories, I realized I had approached my last half century from an artistic view. For years I have been a visual artist. At first, my paintings represented the natural landscape and animals in a realistic way. In time, I embraced the unknown territories of abstract expressions, plunged into various paint methods and allowed creative emotion to guide the brush.

Art activities became blended, and nourished my inner self. My muse became amused and inspired! For years I had also dropped into writing activities; some of my pieces had been chosen and printed in various media. On paper, I then organized and summarized my life into five decades. These eras were eventually expressed in a 55 lined rhymed and rhythmic poem - a life narrative. I planned to send a few lines from my poem to be printed into my allotted space in the new annual.

*Learned, worked, played, loved: living life with the beat of my heart.*

*Love oneself and be; a bequest I'd like to impart.*

*Not too late to walk on water and be an upstart.*

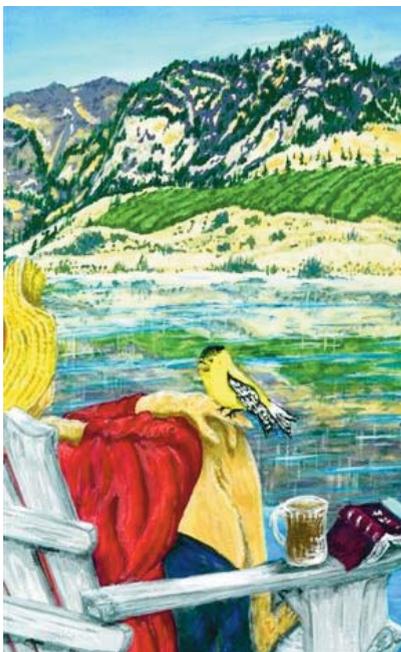
*Fifty years! Envision! Twenty Fifteen's the Restart!*

This exercise summarized my past fifty years and showed me the major lessons I have learned and the progressions I have made into my more true creative self. My mind expanded as the sight of the life, which I struggle with, became clearer when I transposed it onto paper.

“People all over the world are connected through their tummies. Be true to ourselves and follow our passion,” said an artist who had caught my attention. My stomach conjured up my German traditions with sauerkraut. Saliva built up on my tongue, and I was reminded of the short story journal I produced this past summer in one of those writing activities I attend. My story is titled *Food for Thoughts*.

Earlier in the spring of this year my eyes and eyebrows had lifted wide,

Rest and Reflection





Abstraction

**My mind expanded as the sight of the life, which I struggle with, became clearer when I transposed it onto paper.**

and my being tingled when I read a University of British Columbia Okanagan promotion email for an upcoming summer intensive course in Creative Writing. I remember I sat still at the computer and let the message percolate. Later, after discussions, my friends prompted me to participate in the course. After going through the intensive on-line registration process (which in itself warrants credits), I applied as a Senior Student.

Discussions with the course professor brought anticipation, yet hesitation followed when he said, “I’ll have a look at your past writings to help you make sense of where you’re going with them. What do you expect to get from this course?”

Panic rose in my chest; I pondered and replied, “I need to be connected with creative thinkers to be inspired. I want to be a better writer.” There followed moments when thoughts of me, from my older generation, being in a class of young masters and doctorates, overwhelmed me. In those moments friends continued to encourage me.

Challenged and determined, I embraced the course’s two weeks held outside in the extreme heat. Every day desperate to escape the heat, I searched and found reprieve under the green canopy of the trees in Woodhaven Eco Centre. Grabbed by my intense attraction to the variety of topics presented by guest speakers, I assured my ‘robotic’ ears were always with me. Perhaps my words, “Ah, could you please repeat that” could have been an irritant to the younger students, but they seemed to be a generation inclusive with everyone’s ‘handicaps’. The interchange of ideas stimulated my inner muse’s voice to gurgle forth and contribute with reference to lessons from my life’s experiences. “Thanks for your honesty Erika,” was the professor’s genuine evaluation.

His words brought a pleasant rush of satisfaction. A classmate hugged me and cooed, “Keep on sage-ing, Erika!” We had had previous discussions on how some students had responded to my input of ideas. My curious daughter, pondering why a senior would want to continue to learn, asked, “Why, mom?” That’s when I felt the real rush. With pride, I felt more assured of myself. My eyes shifted up and leftward, and queried into my brain’s creative right hemisphere; I searched for a response. “So I can improve my written word, be more readable and encourage others to enjoy the creative process as I do.”

The excitement of my Summer Course and my Class of ’65 Reunion is still with me. I have just reread that short piece from *Food for Thoughts* from my summer writing. I am pleased with my progress.

## Food For Thoughts

July 15, 2015

My blue lunch bag is packed with a new sandwich today. Gluten free – ancient grain ivory teff tortilla rolled around tongue salivating sauerkraut,



Remember the lava lamp

**“Although you do not believe in energy, I have observed that the mood and energy of our chef is transferred into the food via its preparation and its cooking method.”**

Our feast is ready



smoked beef deli cut meat, Dijon mustard and a couple slices of marble cheese. The other items in my bag are the usual items I had been bringing every day.

Again, I needed to bring my lunch today, as a back up. Would there be a slow cooker full of food to feed our tribe? Would there be enough to sustain us? Yesterday’s meal, although yummy, filled with calm comfort food energy had not been enough for my ravenous tummy by the time lunch rolled around, sometime between noon and 1:30 pm. “Thank goodness I have my lunch bag to settle the gasping in my tummy.” My mind wandered, thoughts passed in and out of our discussions.

This morning, I had arrived to notice two tables had been placed just outside our discussion circle, in front of the house, away from the house. Main house locked. Closed and shut! Screen door to upper mid deck locked. Closed and shut! It looks like we’re in for another change, in such a short span of time.

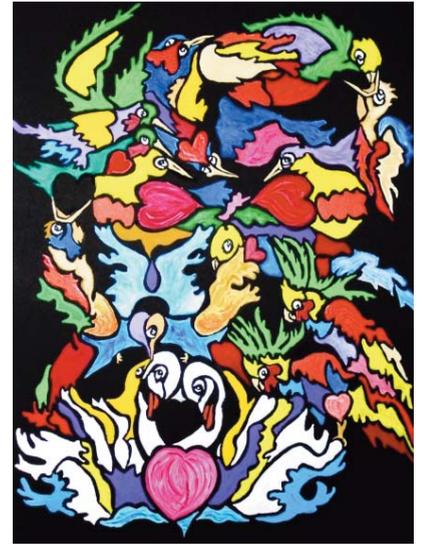
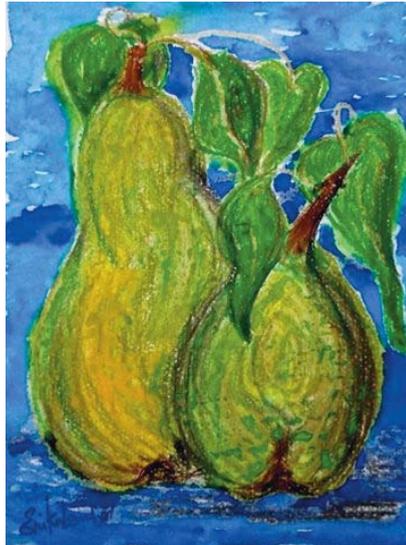
Create boundaries, squeeze rambling space and humans, us people, will need to readjust and find other places to conglomerate. Like those oily globules in a lava lamp – join together, break apart - create new shapes. Then settle into another place – some respite from change before the next globule comes along.

Lucy, our resident sous chef, arranged our lunch meal communal table. White tablecloths and a hodge podge of cutlery scavenged from the other suites. Salt and pepper, the jar of hot spicy chili sauce – Sambal Oelek, which is almost empty, by the way, and good ole soya sauce. After all, we are feasting on rice, again.

We discover Lucy had prepared most of the meal today, under our resident chef’s careful suggestions. Cauliflower, big chick peas in a liquid; an aromatic bouquet of mixed scents drifted from the slow-cooker pot. Who needs a workshop “In Praise of Slow?” What were those small red pieces stirred throughout the mixture?

I spoon this mixture over the white rice, not skimping on the broth sauce since there was plenty of it, onto a sturdy beige coloured paper plate. With chili sauce added to the rice, I grab a spoon – today the spoon is needed to capture the liquid sauce - and find my chair situated within the discussion circle, not the comfy chair on the patio.

Cooking smells had wafted in and out of our discussion circle during the morning, found space in my nostrils, added to my anticipation and made my tummy feel hungrier than it might have otherwise. Between Ashok and Mark we had discussions around ideas of the ins and outs of place within communities. “Talk about in and out of spaces.” I thought, as I noticed the smells and the topic words float in and out of my awareness. Observing the globules forming around the communal table, I decided to get up and stand by the



table, beside our resident chef, this time. I meandered over in that general direction, well aware I was soon to become one of the oily globules and situated myself beside him and wait my turn to catch his attention.

“I notice that the meals have been easy to digest”, I mention, “like his words of wisdom which were also food for my thoughts.” As a side, I throw out, to him, half expecting him to poo poo my idea and my thoughts, “Although you do not believe in energy, I have observed that the mood and energy of our chef is transferred into the food via its preparation and its cooking method.”

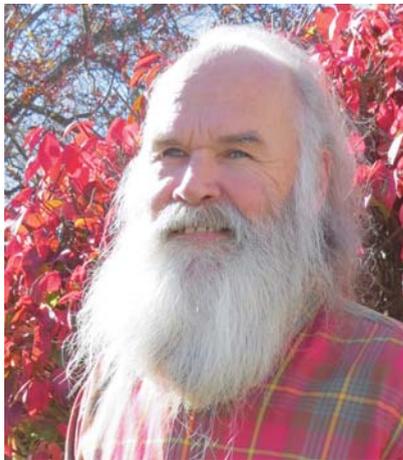
“Yes, I sometimes, too, have noticed that a cook’s anger could be transmitted into his cooking.” He provided a straightforward, matter of fact, response as his feet shuffle into another direction. He saunters off to another reformed globule, leaving me to understand our resident chef from another perspective. This chef had not seasoned my food, my thoughts, with angry ideas!

I look down at the pink fuzzy slippers on my feet and listen to soft music, warmed by the fireplace heat as the season’s weather cools. There is a strong contrast to this summer’s intense temperatures. My eyes scan the view outside my window and I am captured by the flutter and fall of gold, red, orange and yellow leaves. I notice nature continues her own spontaneous process to create her artistic expression of autumn.

I feel tranquil, uplifted, more confident, assured by the experiences of this summer’s creative encounters.

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# A LIFETIME OF LEARNING AND CREATING



**John Maurer**

## Mentorship embraced

My father was my first influence and triggered my pursuits in the arts. He spent time in the commercial art field in his younger days, holding positions in England and Toronto. Although he spent most of his career in sales, he always had an artistic air about him, whether in his stylish handwriting or the craftsman-like approach he took to all of his endeavours, especially carpentry and fishing. He started to paint during retirement using an old wooden paint box from my own school days that I had given him. He painted with strong colours, but unfortunately not for very long. I always wished I had spent more time with him in his final years. I could have learned so much more. Carrying on his legacy in a way for the next generation, I started using that same box following my some 50 years in the commercial art field, as I moved into retirement.

I am currently spending most of my time working on my art, and helping out at a local Gallery. As a gallery artist with *Art With Panache*, in London, Ontario, my goal is to continue on my journey of growth and development by living creatively and sharing broadly.

## The practical experience of life gives one purpose

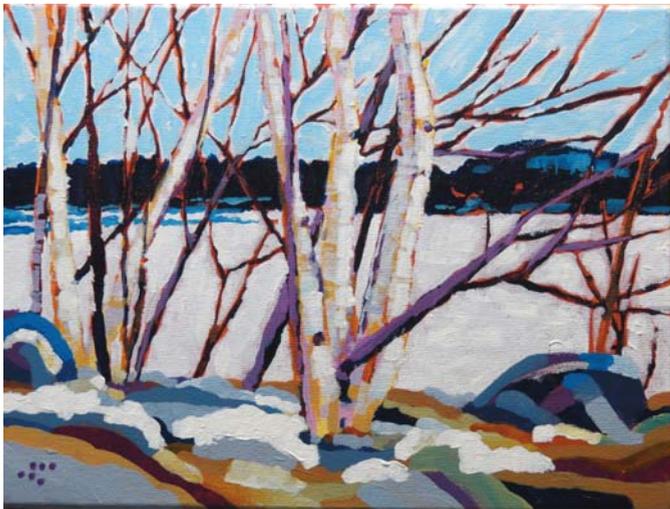
My first thoughts of being an artist evolved from my early years in Muskoka at the age of five, while sitting at our cottage window looking out across the lake. Exploring the landscape, I was fascinated how every tree, rock and body of water was totally unique to itself. Although perhaps similar in shape and size, individually each object proved as unique as we are as a species. These early years of exploration also confirmed my love of the outdoors and all things natural and living in such a wonderful environment.

After my father's death, I realized how truly unique we are as individuals, often accomplishing things in our lives that no others could claim. As individuals we are truly blessed just by being different from everyone else. Personal expression is just that: your own interpretation of a particular scene or rendering of a given subject matter. The interpretation is yours alone, regardless of its source; no two brush strokes are the same regardless of who applies them.

My major artistic focus has been and continues to be the

Still using the same paint box today 53 years later.





Top: My painting. Reference used Tom Thomson's panel Northern Landscape 1915 (copied from the book, A Treasury of Tom Thomson by Joan Murray 2011, p.73)

Above: My painting. Reference used Tom Thomson's An Ice Covered Lake 1917 (copied from the book, Tom Thomson, The Last Spring by Joan Murray 1994, p.34)

*Tom Thomson 100 Project.* It's a project to study the work of Tom Thomson with the intention of improving my own interpretation of the landscape and develop new skills to render the landscape more effectively. For me, no other artist has been quite as prolific in such a short period of time, or able to assist me in my own personal development. I have chosen Tom Thomson as a mentor to discover my own unique style and approach to art and life.

Whether it's emulation, referencing, copying, or a host of other facsimiles, I believe replicating someone else's efforts is the only way we learn. As we take our own journey through life, we learn to imitate others in order to form our own values and opinions. Even when sitting before the raw subject, it is still a question of our own interpretation.

### Follow the leaders

By mimicking movements and patterns, we can evolve. By referencing Tom Thomson as a mentor I hope I will help to further his legacy a hundred years after his death. As I recreate 100 of his original works, each new panel has its own challenge and presents an opportunity for me to learn, experiment, and grow into my own talent. While practice does not always make perfect, when combined with patience and perseverance, it offers a step in the right direction. Each new panel allows for many problem solving situations that I must deal with based on applied or learned

knowledge on the spot through trial and error. Often one needs to fail to know what it is like to succeed.

Learning should be an enjoyable experience, and even though you can learn from others they cannot really teach you. They can only show you their methods or the methods of others, and you ultimately have to learn by teaching yourself - by doing. A good attitude and a good work ethic are both critical for success. After all I only have to please myself. If I can attain a level of confidence and pride in my work, perhaps I can persuade others to find similar dedication and efforts rewarding too.

I ask, how can we leave some kind of footprint of where we have been on our journey? Perhaps through art we can do just that. Painting is like writing a visual biography of oneself to share with others and enjoy as their own. In my mind, it does not get any better than that.

### The TOM THOMSON 100 Project

A proposal to study the work of Tom Thomson to improve my own interpretation of the landscape, and to develop new skills to render it more effectively.

This project will encompass 5 years of work at completion. Started in 2012 with



a lot of reading and research and a modest production of early paintings, it will be ready for presentation on July 8, 2017. This five year period mirrors the time Thomson spent painting primarily in Algonquin Park from 1912 to 1917 - only 100 years later. Choosing Tom Thomson was easy for me. When selecting a mentor or someone to follow, I was looking for someone with a significant body of work where I could evaluate his growth through a precise period. Thomson was quite prolific during his short time painting and his style and approach suited my own desire to paint in that fashion. I could relate to many points made in the various journals produced about him and his work.

Our similar backgrounds in graphic design and commercial art, with no specific training in painting, have actually benefited both of us. Setting our own boundaries with no particular use for rules, I believe we have achieved a refreshing and insightful look to what may otherwise be less exciting. I have not intended to follow Thomson's work precisely, but by utilizing his sense of design, composition and colour theory, I have found them to be most beneficial to my own methodology.

At this point I've completed 50 panels, all 9x12 on both canvas and board. All of Thomson's sketches or small panels were completed on wood boards. He referred to them as records. Although only a fraction of the body of work he produced, the 100 panels will give me the opportunity to learn and grow as a painter. Each completed piece will be mounted and framed accordingly. I have put together all my own frames for this project to achieve a consistent look to all the images.

Each panel I complete presents new challenges and problems to solve. As I move through the process, I see significant value in both the understanding of his process and the interpretation I have chosen. After the 100 panels are complete I will likely produce some larger canvases to coincide with some of Thomson's larger and more familiar work.

I am also considering an educational component that would be delivered to primary grade school children. It will encompass a historic perspective on Thomson and Canadian art as well as a lesson or workshop in using specific methods to create your own interpretation of a painting. I want to impress on the young artist that they are all as unique as the work they produce and that the process should be fun, an experiment in learning and no one should sit in judgement of their creativity but themselves. My hope is to give them the confidence to express themselves as individuals and share their knowledge and their work with others.

John Maurer <maurer.john@gmail.com>



Top: My painting. Reference used Tom Thomson's Wood Interior 1917 (copied from the book, Tom Thomson, The Last Spring by Joan Murray 1994, p.29)

Above: My Painting. Reference used Tom Thomson's Early Spring 1916 (copied from the book, A Treasury of Tom Thomson by Joan Murray 2011, p.93.)

# ALL OF THIS NOW



## Angela Bonten

I have chosen to live my life creatively. It was a choice I made very early. Intrinsically, I knew that pursuing art on various levels, gave me an inner peace, great pleasure and contributed to my overall well being. Releasing my creative energy has allowed me to truly heighten the good times, and has comforted me through the bad times. Now as I head into retirement, I will not be gearing down but gearing up.

My artistic journey has taken me down many paths. I am not one dimensional, so it is natural for me to explore many areas of the arts. It wasn't until I was 30 that I went to formal art school. I first studied textile arts, exploring paper making and fabric dyeing techniques, then painting from realism, abstraction to sculpture. All of this now becomes part of what I call my visual vocabulary that I continue to add to. This visual vocabulary gives me the experience and knowledge that allows me to freely tap into my intuitive side without personal fear, criticism or judgement. I describe myself as a mixed media artist, but more importantly a mark maker who uses whatever tools I can find to make a personal creative mark. My work is diverse and exploratory.

For many years I was a resident artist and instructor at the Rotary Centre for the Arts in Kelowna BC. Teaching gives me an enormous amount of pleasure. It is so wonderful to watch the moment when students slip into that zen like state and are totally engrossed in the process of painting. I have been asked if I meditate; I reply, "yes all the time. It is a natural part of being an artist. Being lost in the moment of now and letting the creativity just flow."

In the past few years I have seen a shift in my artistic focus as it is becoming more about connection and community. The exhibition I created and titled "Evolutionary Fugue" challenged self proclaimed non creative people to go back to the innate creativity within themselves. I asked 15 people who had declared themselves as "lacking any artistic talent" to diarize on a large canvas for a few months, when it came back to me I began ripping up, stitching it back together and painting on it, creating a visual tapestry with the words on the canvas. The words were still there, but now changed and fragmented. Change is something that is inescapable in life. Each participant was asked to record how they felt about the project. It was poignant that the recurring theme was that everyone at first felt intimidated by writing what they thought would be viewed by others, but when they began they could not stop writing and the thoughts became more introspective. One participant described the process as cathartic. I realised that the project for me too was a healing process. Finding myself widowed after 25 years of marriage, I

**I describe myself as a mixed media artist, but more importantly a mark maker who uses whatever tools I can find to make a personal creative mark. My work is diverse and exploratory.**



Top: Tony Koenen and I create together  
Above: Cajun Angels are Calling Me

realised that the evenings alone were spent not only piecing together the artwork, but piecing myself back together.

A few years ago I met musician Tony Koenen. I discovered that we had both followed a similar path, choosing entrepreneurial careers that allowed us ample time to honour and hone our creative passions. Tony began playing his first instrument at the age of four. He is proficient on over ten different instruments including piano, saxophone, and harmonica. He is not only a multi-instrumentalist, but a singer/songwriter who metaphorically records his life through his music and songs. Retirement, and a hiatus due to personal circumstances, has given him more time needed to write and record. I leave my mark on a canvas, he leaves his in music and song.

When Tony and I came together we unleashed a wave of creativity by joining energetic forces. The result was first *Musartiq* a unique synergy of art, music and dance and then collaborations on artwork and sculptures. After a musical sojourn to the southern states, including New Orleans and Austin Texas, Tony began recording some of the songs he had written down south, and I started a series of paintings based on one of the songs “Cajun Angels”.

During that trip I stopped at a thrift store and bought broken musical instruments that I thought could be used for a sculpture. As we both began working on the sculpture it was a natural progression for us to begin collaborating on other art projects. I do the painting, pass it to Tony and give him *carte blanche* to add to it. Tony began incorporating different sculptural elements to the painting including musical instruments and even adding cell phones. When I get the piece back I respond to what he has done.

I never know what he will do and I give him no boundaries or guidelines, I just have to trust in the energy that is being passed between us. The trust and letting go is an important element for me. I have to relinquish control, and it has taught me the power that comes from a collective effort. It takes me to new elements that I had not thought of before. I am not attached to the result, rather the process is the most important part. I see a strong parallel in this approach, not just in my work, but also in my life. I allow myself to go with the flow, and not have a specific destination in mind.

Recently, Tony and I did a collaborative concert and art exhibition at the Mary Irwin Theatre in Kelowna, BC.

This concert was not just about recording what we do for future opportunities, but about having a visual record of the marks we leave. The songs chosen all had a poignant message, with originals such as *The Promised Land*, a song about understanding that this moment, is each individual’s



Left: Voices of the Soul  
Right: event poster

**TONY KOENEN**  
IN CONCERT AT THE MARY IRWIN THEATRE WITH FRIENDS AND MORE!  
Jim Rhindress lead guitarist, Mike Kleinberg, Bass guitarist, Ken Pendleton percussionist,  
Klim Foreman-Rhindress back up vocalist and guest appearance by singer/songwriter Tim Ford

An inspiring evening  
of great music and fine art

Plus live performance art by Angela Bonten and a collaborative mixed media art pre-show in the lobby to stimulate all your creative senses.

Creative Aging  
EXPLORE  
CREATE  
CONNECT

What do piano, saxophone, guitar, lap steel, harmonica, ukulele, and accordion have in common? They are just a few of the musical instruments singer/songwriter Tony Koenen has mastered. With his soulful vocals likened to Van Morrison, and his foot stomping R&B rhythms laced with Cajun funk, this will be a musical performance not to be missed!

**THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 17<sup>th</sup> 2015**  
Mary Irwin Theatre at The Rotary Centre for the Arts 421 Cawston Avenue, Kelowna  
Start Time: 7:30 p.m. Doors open: 7:00 p.m.

Select Tickets Single \$25 Group of 5 or more \$22  
www.selectyourtickets.com

For More Info contact  
RCA Box Office  
250 717 5304  
www.rotarycentreforthearts.com

www.tonykoenenmusic.com  
www.angelabonten.com

promised land - not the past or future but now, the present moment. Still the true highlight of the evening was seeing our families and grandchildren in the audience.

Moving forward to the next chapter of our lives, we are continuing to make art and music and keep them the main focus of what we do. We seize opportunities as they arise. We are going to travel, leaving in January to explore the North American continent and return late spring. I have been sourcing teaching and lecturing opportunities and Tony will continue to write, record and perform at select venues. We are hoping that we have a strong message to offer.

Tony and I know that age is just a number. We can now embrace the wisdom and knowledge that our life lessons have given us, continue to learn, and still retain our vigour and love of the contemporary. The best part of being passionate and open to what life offers is that you never know what treasures are to be found around the corner. We are hoping that others will be inspired to not only leave their marks, but to embrace their creativity on any level and to move towards healthier and more enriched lives. Together we will contribute to a healthier and more enriched world.

**Moving forward to the next chapter of our lives, we are continuing to make art and music and keep them the main focus of what we do.**

www.angelabonten.com | www.tonykoenenmusic.com

# TAFONI TOUCH

## THE SIMPLE BEAUTY OF MAKING ART WITH TEXTURE



### Lisa Lipsett

If the air is jam-full of sounds which we tune in with, why should it not also be full of feels and smells and things seen through the spirit, drawing particles from us to them and them to us like magnets?

– Emily Carr

**Knowing that our creative nature is tied so closely to our sense of touch can increase our ease and joy of art making.**

We live in a very tactile world and our sense of touch serves in multiple rich and important ways throughout our lives. Knowing that our creative nature is tied so closely to our sense of touch can increase our ease and joy of art making.

As newborns we come prewired with powerful senses that tune us for relationship with self, others and the world. “The eyes, the skin, the tongue, ears and nostrils - all are gates where our body receives the nourishment of otherness,” says eco-philosopher Dave Abram. In my Creative by Nature Art classes I begin with the sense of touch because I am so excited for others to experience how simple, yet freeing, it is to touch the living world and our deepest selves as we draw and paint. It is like going back to the beginning and experiencing the world anew. Maybe I do this because of my own unique sensory history. For the first 3 years of my life I lived in a mostly blurry world of colour, light and shadow because of pretty severe farsightedness. Maybe that’s where my fascination and trust of touch originates. As an adult, when I craved a creative practice in my life, I turned again to my sense of touch as a way into joyful spontaneity.

The more we learn about touch, the more we realize just how central it is in all aspects of our lives—cognitive, emotional, developmental, behavioral—from womb into old age. It’s no surprise that a single touch can affect us in multiple, powerful, ways.

Touch is the first sense to develop and it remains perhaps the most emotionally central sense throughout our lives. A greater proportion of our bodies is devoted to the sense of touch than any other sense.

In fact it develops while we are still in the womb. As an 8-week-old fetus we already pull away from an object that touches our face; by 14 weeks, we can feel with most of our body. Once born, we have an awareness not only



tafone mounds

of human touch, but of the touch of the breeze on our skin, variations in temperature and texture.

Newborns not only have a well-developed sense of touch, reciprocal touch relationships are vital to their survival. According to Dr. Ben Benjamin nearly all infants institutionalized in the United States in the early 1900s died from what is now called 'failure to thrive'. The cause of their death was not unsanitary conditions or lack of nutrition, Benjamin explains, but the absence of human contact. In 1994 *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, researchers reported that infants who survive their first six months, but whose mothers fail to provide adequate touch, fail to grow properly.

Michelangelo was absolutely right when he said "To touch is to give life."

The need for touch transcends age - from infant massage to the role of massage in elder care. The Touch Research Institute has conducted over 100 studies on the positive effects of massage therapy. Among the significant research findings are enhanced growth (e.g. in preterm

infants), diminished pain (e.g. fibromyalgia), decreased autoimmune problems (e.g., increased pulmonary function in asthma and decreased glucose levels in diabetes), enhanced immune function (e.g., increased natural killer cells in HIV and cancer), and enhanced alertness and performance (e.g., EEG pattern of alertness and better performance on math computations). Many of these effects appear to be mediated by decreased stress hormones.

In addition to having profound benefits for our emotional health and physical wellness, touch is a primary form of life-giving compassion that simultaneously affects self and other.

Touch is also profoundly nourishing when it is shared between humans and nature. Touch is a universal connector. *Greater Good Science Center* founder Dacher Keltner explains that one touch of nature makes the whole world kin and so compassion is literally at our fingertips.

Some believe that the natural world is also just waiting to be touched. If we are open to it, we are touched in return with awe, reverence and creative inspiration.

"Our hands imbibe like roots so I place them on what is beautiful in this world." - St Francis of Assisi



tafone crevices

According to Diane Ackerman in her book *A Natural History of the Senses* touch is a powerful way for us to remember and feel the textures of life. Beauty in this instance becomes a verb born out of the act of connection.

So exploring touch offers fresh ways of knowing and connecting with self and other. Creating with touch is simple, freeing and very powerful. In her Touch Drawing practice Deborah Koff-Chapin invites us to touch into ourselves and make marks with our fingertips on the page. Our hands become an expressive conduit for our heart's expression.

When first learning to make art, or when looking for ways to refresh a creative practice, touching-in with both hands connects us to a time of innocent newborn exploration. We are able to do a complete detour around planning a drawing or painting, and instead focus on being connected in the moment while creating. As creative mindfulness teacher Wendy Ann Greenhalgh states, "We move from thinking mind to being mind." It makes no difference whether we touch-in to ourselves, to others, or to the natural world while creating. We learn that we can touch-in anywhere at anytime. We also divert around the fear of creating by simply closing our eyes and touching-in as we draw and paint, which frees us to be spontaneous, absorbed and joyful. We nourish a sense of belonging.

### Tafoni Touch- Art with textured stone

"The friendship between my hand and this stone enacts an ancient and irrefutable eros, the kindredness of matter with itself." David Abram, *Becoming Animal*

I feel touched by the sandstone cathedrals of our Salish sea, the large area of coastal waters off the south coast of British Columbia. I first became aware of Tafoni when I moved to Salt Spring Island BC 10 years ago. The soft rounded cave-like spaces welcomed a warm sit, embraced a timeless caring heart and reminded me of ancient cathedrals. They are places where I can take pause from daily concerns to sit quietly and see into a layer beyond the surface. I feel held in warm walls and textures.

Tafoni (singular: tafone) are small cave-like features found in granular rock such as sandstone, granite, and sandy-limestone with rounded entrances and smooth concave walls, often connected, adjacent, and/or networked. They generally occur in groups that can riddle a hillside, cliff, or other rock formation. Tafoni have also been called fretting, stonelace, stone lattice, honeycomb weathering, and alveolar weathering. Cristina Viviani in her book dedicated to all things Tafoni calls them nature's mysterious sculptural forms.

For me Tafoni and weathered rocks can be reminders of the resilience and tranquility residing deep within, particularly during times of uncertainty

**Tafoni and weathered rocks can be reminders of the resilience and tranquility residing deep within.**



and change. We indeed live in very uncertain and changing times so finding timeless constancy can very soothing.

## Try Your Own Touch Art Encounter with Self and Stone

### 1. Touch art encounter with your hands

Close your eyes and slowly trace the contours and textures of one hand while you simultaneously draw with the other. Explore with fingertips and thumbs all around the surfaces of this hand as you draw. Then switch your hands.

Try this encounter with a partner. Each explore the other's hands as you draw. Close by taking a moment to write down anything you noticed or wonder about. Express gratitude for your wonderful hands.

### 2. Touch art encounter with stone

Wander in your yard, neighbourhood or an area you enjoy and open to a rock that calls your attention. Your wandering could be with your eyes closed so it becomes more about opening to textures in your immediate surroundings. When you find a stone texture you enjoy set yourself up to draw with one hand as the other hand simultaneously explores the textured surfaces. Then switch hands. Painting with one hand while the



Top: touch a surface and slowly trace the contours

Above: Record your touch sensations. Make a series of contour tracings

other explores can extend this art encounter. Close by taking a moment to write down anything you noticed or wonder about.

## A selection of resources I touched upon:

The Power of Touch- Maria Konnikova  
New Yorker March 4, 2015

<http://www.newyorker.com/science/maria-konnikova/power-touch>

Hands On Research: The Science of Touch- Dacher Keltner, September 29, 2010 [http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/hands\\_on\\_research](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/hands_on_research)

Mindfulness and the art of drawing: A creative path to awareness- Wendy Ann Greenhalgh  
<https://artofmindfulness.wordpress.com/about/what-is-creative-mindfulness/>

Tafoni: Nature's mysterious sculptural formations- Cristina Viviani  
18Karat Books, 2008.

To learn more about Lisa Lipsett's art and Creative by Nature Art courses, resources, blog and book visit [www.creativebynature.org](http://www.creativebynature.org)

# FINDING FICTION



## Kaye Langager

When I started to write, I wrote mainly about life experiences and, in particular, about experiences living on a farm as a child, attending a one room school, having my mother as a teacher, having a father who believed little girls should not work on a farm, but instead just play and have fun, and any number of other things that occurred in my delightfully happy childhood and/or my delightfully happy imagination.

Many stories were written reflecting my various experiences. Most were written with a flair to the humorous side. Then one day, our Writing Instructor suggested we write a fiction story. I initially balked at the idea; I had no idea how to write a fiction story and then suddenly, it came to me to write stories based on the viewpoint of the fictional character. It didn't matter whether it be an animal, plant, forest or whatever else, and since then I have continued along that line and am thoroughly enjoying this perspective. I actually feel as if I can step into the viewpoint of the character.

When writing about Waving Goodbye, I was simply looking out the window at the leaves blowing around in the wind and the story was there.

## WAVING GOODBYE

As I look out across the vineyards and beyond into the forest, I see the many colours on the trees that make the forest look beautiful, vibrant and inviting. In order to get a better look, I start to walk slowly towards the forest. The rainbow of colours on the trees do create a spectacular view, however, the forest itself appears to be quiet and inactive. This state of inactivity disappears quickly as I advance closer. I watch as the whole forest seems to come alive. The entire forest, and especially the leaves, are alive and in motion.

The leaves on the trees are busy, in fact, very, very busy. They are getting ready for winter and are swinging back and forth and falling to the ground and waving goodbye. They are waving goodbye to their neighbors who they

have become so close to over the past few months. It seems such a short time ago, when they were just starting to bud; they were all strangers. Yet quickly they have become such close friends. Their minds are filled with warm memories of the great times they enjoyed together. They would remember the many nights, in the moonlight, that they would all get together and join in the leaf dance. The gentle rustling sounds that occurred as they danced was music to their ears. Those evenings were always so enjoyable. Other times, and especially on hot days, they would just hang out, visit and try to stay cool. That was a good time to catch up

Beginning to Wave Goodbye





Leaves In the Vineyard

on all of the news. And then on other days, when it rained, it was such fun as everyone showered and sang, in harmony, with the rain drops. Yes, those were all, indeed, wonderful memories.

The memories were also made possible by their host trees being so accommodating so they are also waving goodbye to their host trees and the many other trees around them and thanking one and all. It is all quite amusing as the leaves are so busy. Sometimes, the leaves in their anxious flurry to wave goodbye simply let go of their hosts and fall directly to the ground. Other times, they swirl around like colourful dervishes and go from tree to tree and from one part of the ground to another, just to say goodbye. There is so much laughter and enjoyment happening and the entire forest seems to be alive. However, as each day

passes, the leaves move more and more quickly, and soon their hosts are left shivering, getting prepared for winter and looking more and more undressed. With the leaves having left, the trees hunker down for the winter and start to do their own visiting with each other. With all of the bustling going on during the leaf season, it is most difficult for them to have any serious visiting time. So this is the time.

Soon enough, it will be spring again and the trees will temporarily say goodbye to each other in order to prepare for the coming of the new leaves. The excitement will begin and another season will start and fall will come and the waving goodbye will, one more time, begin and the forest will, one more time, come alive.

## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF SHIRLEY HEN

My name is Shirley Hen. This name was definitely not my choice. My peeps (short slang for people) gave me that name. Yes, I like the name Shirley, but the name “Hen” I find quite offensive. When I think about the name Hen, I think about pensions like OAS, CPP and Work Pensions. In addition, the word Hen conjures up a stew pot where the majority of old hens end up. Just to be clear, I am not old and not a hen, but instead I am a young, delightful and attractive Chick even though I am called Shirley Hen.

With the name explanation out of the way, I will now share with you a typical day in my life. I wake up very early in the morning due to the incessant noise and crowing coming from Rooster. As soon as the sun even thinks about coming up over the horizon, there is Rooster up on his perch, showing off, and screaming his lungs out ... cockadoodle dooo, cockadoodle dooo. He really takes a toll on me morning, after morning, after morning.

After that rude awakening, one would think that I could leisurely get on with my day. But, oh no, the peeps, who named me Shirley Hen, enters into



Top: Shirley Hen  
Above: 'Hot Chick'

my day. She is only five years old so one tries to be patient with her. It is not easy. She has a sister, a make believe friend named Mavis, dolls, kittens, wagons and other toys, but are all of those enough to satisfy her? No, they are not. Early on she decided she needed another BFF, and that friend would be me. When I was just a babe in fluffy feathers she spotted me and that was that.

I have asked myself many, many times why me, WHY ME? After all, to humans, don't we all look pretty much alike?

Each morning I hear her voice calling out Shirley Hen, Shirley Hen. I try to hide but, sooner or later, even my friends give me up as they cannot stand that continuous and irritating call. So once again, I find myself in the hands of my peeps. First thing she does is pick me up which immediately undoes all of the preening I have done. After she gets me tucked into her arm, her next decision can take us in a number of different directions. Sometimes, she decides she should dress me in her dolls' clothes. I cannot even begin to tell you what that does to me. Other times, she decides we should all have a tea party. I really do not like tea and it does strange things to my otherwise perfect body functions which is such a nuisance. And yet, another time she will wrap me in a blanket and take me around the farm in her wagon to show me off to one and all. My friends try hard not to break up into gales of laughter when they see this scene; however, all to no avail. My, oh my, oh my, what an embarrassment.

When she finally decides to release me for the day, I begin preening again. My peeps and her actions really do ruffle my feathers. However, I must get busy so I will look my very best when my many suitors come calling after dinner. I do, after all, have a certain standard to maintain if I want to hold on to my superior status as being the hottest chick on the farm. After the callers come, the fun begins. We dance, we play, we laugh, and have a great time. And then, before you know it, another day has passed and we rush home, get into bed, have pleasant dreams and await the next morning. Then the annoying rooster will start out my day and my peeps will come calling, "Shirley Hen, Shirley Hen, Shirley Hen," and another full day will begin.

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# PROFILE



## CHARMAINE WAGNER

### **I'm Going to Lick My Plate, I Don't Care!**

Believing that recipes are a very special art form, our publisher Robert MacDonald invited a class to tell a story of their favorite food and provide the recipe.



Right: I didn't care! It was worth it!

**I thought I had died and gone to heaven after just one mouthful of this incredible delicious combination of tastes!**

### **EATING IS A NEED. ENJOYING IS THE ART.**

"Hurrah it's fall!" As a child I would secretly and gleefully feel this enthusiasm, not because of the vibrant beauty of autumn-colored leaves, or the yummy turkey at Thanksgiving, or even the fun and excitement of Halloween and a bag full of candy treats. I looked forward to the autumn season because it was the season of Italian plums and freshly picked apples, which meant Mom's famous homemade fruit perogies!

The making of fruit perogi came from an old Austrian family recipe, which is different from the typical potato, and potato and cheddar perogies that you can buy in the store. Following her mother's recipe for perogi dough, my mother, in addition to making plum and apple perogies, would also fill the dough with cottage cheese, cinnamon and sugar. But my favorites were the plum and apple ones.

Just writing about it I can see the plumb perogies on my plate and hear my Mom say, "Be careful when you cut into the plum ones because the juice will squirt out onto your clothes!" As carefully as I tried to cut into those purple stained whole-plum perogies, I invariably would get one that was extra juicy and a fountain of plum juice was released. Plum stains are not easy to get out of clothes!

And then came the best part; the additional ingredients that make the eating of perogies an orgasmic experience. These were bits of bread that were indiscriminately torn from a loaf of dried bread and then crisply fried in lots and lots of butter. Added to this decadent delight were spoonfuls of sugar, white naturally, sour cream and a dash of cinnamon for the apple perogi.

OMG! I thought I had died and gone to heaven after just one mouthful of this incredible delicious combination of tastes!

As you can imagine after all the perogi were eaten there lay on the surface of the plate a layer of sugary butter mixed with sour cream and cinnamon, and maybe, just maybe, one or more of those crunchy butter-fried bits of bread.

As much as I tried to follow table etiquette, a spoon just couldn't get it all. And yes, the only thing that would was my tongue! Sliding my tongue around and across the plate over and over again, I managed to lick my plate clean in spite of disapproving looks from my parents.

### **Perogi Dough Recipe**

Mix together: Knead dough like bread dough until it no longer sticks to hands.

1 cup lukewarm water Add more flour if needed.

1 beaten egg Roll dough out until quite thin and even on floured surface.

3 Tbsp. oil Cut into squares. Place fruit in middle and bring corners of square

1 tsp. salt together at top. Then pinch edges together securely.

Gradually add 4 cups flour Boil in boiling water for 15 minutes or until all perogies float.

Top with melted butter, crisp butter-fried bits of bread, sour cream and sugar. Enjoy!

# SAGE-ING WITH CREATIVE SPIRIT, GRACE & GRATITUDE

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Sage-ing with Creative Spirit, Grace and Gratitude exists to honour the transformational power of creativity.

It is a quarterly journal intended as an initiative for collaboration and sharing. It presents the opportunity for the free exchange of wisdom gleaned from creative engagement. We invite all ages to contribute their discoveries.

Sage-ing is about seeking - satisfying inner gnawing and transforming it to knowing and action. Aging can be alchemy when one allows the realisation that to *Know Thyself* and contribute that knowing to our culture is indeed one of life's highest purposes. That knowing brings the gratitude, grace and integrity that a life deserves. The creative journey into self is a strong aid to health and well-being for the individual and to our culture.

This journal exists for all those serious in exploring their creativity, in a chosen expression. It is a forum for publication and exposure to other artists, both novice and established. This journal is an easel for any form of artistry undertaken out of personal intuition and imagination.