

A Little Star E-thology

Something magical happens when people write together spontaneously. We write differently than we talk and think. Stories, poems, memories appear suddenly, surprising both writer and listener. There is excitement in the few minutes of creation kindled by a new “spark” that I provide each day. (You’ll see a few of these in *ITALICS* below). Then in the reading and listening, deep connections are often experienced. I call it windows and mirrors – into each other, into oneself. By request I have compiled pieces, one each selected by those who chose to submit one, to share with the larger LOAS family. Robert Frost wrote, “Poetry is that which evaporates in translation.” I hope that you can minimize that evaporation as you imagine 20 people sitting in a circle in the Pink Parlor on a morning on Star and catch a whiff of the raw storytelling that takes place there. If you don’t know the author, you can meet her through the piece. And if you do, you will get to know a new side of her.

Ellen Schmidt Fall 2011

YOU MAY NOT KNOW THIS ABOUT ME.....

...but you will soon! I eep.
It’s a sort of high-pitched squeak.
On its own, it bubbles up and leaps
from throat to lips. “Eek!
Is there a mouse?” someone will speak.
Embarrassing eeps will peak
in somber settings, deep
silence. And if I eat
too fast. But I don’t seek
a cure. I’m complete;
it’s unique. I eep!

Barb Crane

“You may not know this about me,” says the little green rosette of broadleaf plantain at my feet, “but I can help you with that mosquito bite you’ve been scratching all the time you’ve been standing here. I’m guessing by the way you’re peering all around, scanning the taller plants at the edge of the lawn that you’re looking for my sister-in-chlorophyll, the jewel weed. She’s very showy, with those topaz-yellow blossoms dancing like elf slippers hung out to dry, and those lush, succulent stems of hers, so translucent you’d think they were just pale green tubes of clear water, and mostly they are. I think I’ve seen you, at a distance, snapping the stems for the clear sap inside, rubbing it gratefully over your itching skin. It makes sense to you that something so exotic-looking would have the magic balm to heal your little wounds; you expect to have to search a while to find the aid for your trouble. You probably never guessed that common, dull, boring old plantain, the pest in your lawn, the plant you never fret to step upon, has just the cure you need, if you would only take hold of my ordinary, boring leaves and press them close to feel the healing.”

Liz Cooper

You may not know this about me, but I have had a fantasy for many years of being a lifeguard. When I was a teenager, I dreamed of sitting in a high chair, beautifully tanned, of course, the object of admiring, perhaps salacious eyes, if eyes can be that way. If someone was in distress – perhaps a frightened child or a suddenly-stricken elder – I would dive gracefully off my post and perform a rescue.

Well, I bet you didn’t know that my fantasy was partially fulfilled yesterday right here at Star Island. I was lolling around in the polar bear pool because I can’t really swim well, but it’s practically impossible to sink in salt water if you’re a woman with a well-padded rear end (which I have). Then someone yelled, “Maurine, get it!” To my amazement I was being expected to actually swim over and fish an object out from under a rowboat. And I really did: I grabbed an old shoe and handed it up to a woman on the dock. I’m so proud of myself. I finally achieved a rescue!

Maurine Beasley

SO MUCH DEPENDS UPON.....

Mutations long past took us up from the sea, down from the trees, across the earth, onto the internet, and into a warming, much conflicted world.

Life expectancy tables predict that I may be around five or six more years. Time for five or six more late summer visits to Star Island; lots more writing circles. Time to eat a lot of ice cream. Time to watch a lot of British comedies. Time to attend too many funerals. Half a dozen more springs and falls. Oceans of time.

Hank Beasley

so much depends
on sunlight
pushing new life up
from soil
illuminating thoughts
and days
feeding, warming
drawing in our breath
driving winds
oceans and rains
basking in its glow
truly we feel
as children drawn
from the same heat
reassuring
knowing on this Earth
we are not alone.

Drew Bush

FEELING ALONE, BEING ALONE, LONELY, ALONE AT LAST.....

Being Alone

“Come sing a song with me, come sing a song with me, come sing a song with me, that I may know your mind” (words and music by Carolyn McDade) I chose to be alone on the two days called “Back to Backs”. Part of the training for the 2000 Avon 3-Day Walk for Breast Cancer was to walk 15-20 miles each day back to back several weeks before the big work. I knew I could not walk with my training buddies: Carol’s pace was too fast, Julie’s too slow. I had to do it on my own.

I was alone in my thoughts, when I wasn’t listening to the local rock n roll station on my Walkman. And when I wasn’t listening to my radio or to my thoughts I would sing “Come Sing a Song with Me”. For someone who likes to be with people, I was for two days alone with myself and it was O.K.-it was comfortable-it was good. “Come walk in rain with me, come walk in rain with me.....”

Shelly Psaris

Jenny Doll

I am held so tightly. My rag doll arms are pressed against the dwindled stuffing of my body. It doesn't hurt. My little girl loves so. She carries me everywhere.

Last week, we went to dinner in China Town. She fed me egg drop soup. A few days ago, I had chocolate ice cream. And now I have new polka dots on my skirt.

I help her fall asleep. She snuggles me next to her heart. . . .Today, we are playing jump rope on the sidewalk.

Oh. Now she has put me down on the steps. She said, "You sun yourself." Oh, she is going away with Gloria Martinez.

Oh, where is she?

Irene Bush

Conversation

-Hello?

-What?

-Are you Okay?

-Where are you?

-I'm fine. Are you Okay?

-Don't worry, Ma, I'll find you. We'll figure it out - - We'll figure it out.

-We always do.

Phyllis Shepard

Reunion

Gone. All gone.

Not just one. Not just two, or three. Or twenty. A-L-L: All.

In slow, deliberate steps I make my way down to the dock, and I think about my grandmother. She was the youngest of seven (not counting the two that died in infancy). And I recall standing in front of her brother's casket, my arm around her shrunken shoulders, and she just kept intoning, "The last of the Mohicans...I'm the last of the Mohicans."

I think of all the people with whom I have played music over the years; my colleagues and co-conspirators. I was sure I'd outlive some of them, but I outlived all of them.

The wet grass between my toes gives way to the rough and splintered planks of the dock; each falling behind like the members of my family. Working musicians often do not marry, and I am the end of my name.

I listen to the thud of the cane on the dock and as I get to the edge, I lower myself into a stiff sit and dangle my feet into the water.

I look up with eyes closed, and feel the cold water tingling the soles of my feet and the warmth of the sun seeping beneath the skin of my face; stretching my mouth into a slight smile.

I open my eyes and stare into the sun. My hand relaxes and my cane plops into the water and floats away. I let myself in and after and under it and I am immediately surrounded by fish. I take a deep breath.

It is ok. I am not alone.

John v Freund

YOU'VE RECEIVED SOME GOOD NEWS.....

You Begin

Here are your fingers
purple and shriveled
here are your eyes
enormous in your head
perched on its spindly neck.
You look around find there is nothing
nothing
but a swirl of color and sound.

You cry out
how strange your voice sounds
(not the wind, not a butterfly).
You scream louder
somewhere out of the swirl
comes the warmth.
She picks you up, cuddles you.
She is all yours, her breast your breast
her voice like music from some other room.
You begin to suck-- she begins to sing.

Then a swoop into the sky and---
huge hands—the ones that tickle,
the voice that booms
his tongue your tongue
his fingers yours too.

You begin to find your way
your head stops spinning
you see the same things over and over
kitty spoon fuzzy rabbit.
Here is the good applesauce
there the wretched smashed spinach
oh, the delightful plums.

One day you receive three crayons.
You draw huge blue circles
sky -- water?
long yellow lines
the sun?
the bright red rage of
No -- no -- no!!
You begin.

Ginger Williams

SONG TITLES

With a Little Help from my Friends

It is not a small task I face. A little help? The phrase implies that I can't expect much help. It will be up to me, mostly. I hope for a combination effort. I know these friends. They will quite likely think that help consists of advice, which could be time consuming and even annoying. On the other hand, I really don't have any clue how to go about this.

One of them has already said I should have started last month. More than one day of bad weather and I am scuppered. And I should have budgeted better as well. I definitely do not intend to seek any financial help from my friends. I'll manage.

I am truly confident that I will get it all done. I'll get along, yes, with a little help from my friends. A small idea is forming in my mind. All I need to do is to get some of them to come over while I am working on it. I'll tempt them. When they watch my skill level—I am ambisinister, equally awkward with both hands—they won't be able to stand it.

One of them will say, "Give me that. Here, let me show you."

When I hold back a little, someone else will say, "Oh for God's sake, just get out of our way."

Then I'll give in, reluctantly, a little sheepishly. I know it's going to be beautiful when it's all done.

John A. Williams

Yesterday

Sadness, loss and heavy heartedness beating through my torso

Where is peace?

Where is comfort?

The drapes of my eyes drawn down // Remembering mom

Inhale:

...memories

Exhale:

...memories

Remembering her presence: her frail body loosening its ability to support her

Silence –

Darkness –

Mom – I miss you

Emerging slowly... a softly glowing yellow center of light surrounded by a growing muted pink presence

A gently pulsing energy field of beauty and color surrounds me

soothing

embracing

calming

gratitude

peace in her presence

peace in every breath

Darlene Nadeau

Le Metro

1984. Junior Year Abroad.

How I envy ces jeunes filles on le metro in Paris
sitting on their boyfriends' knees.

Thin, lanky, smelling of fresh baguette,
yet weighing no more than 45 kilos.

Chocolate eyes, thick brown tresses,
high cut cheekbones. Minces, belles, elegantes.
Bien habillees toujours.

A black cashmere sweater thrown over her shoulder
and it never slips, not even when she and her handsome beau
make out for 15 minutes.

I, single, red headed, freckled, round thighed.
A standout in a Parisian crowd ,
never blending in with my broad American vowels.
I can never afford French couture.

Those happy, lucky girls sit there.
Gallic, adored, loved by their copins,
kissing in a Paris metro, embracing in full view.
Is Paris the only city in the world where even
public transportation is a place for love?

* * * * *

2011. Abroad.

I will return at 50, 26 years later, and sit on your lap.
I will be weightless, not even covering your lap,
but balancing, never precariously, on your knees.

And we will French kiss on le metro,
not even opening our eyes as the stations fly past:
L'Odeon, Le Louvre, Les Halles, Le Trocadero, L'Abbessesse.
The windows next to us will steam up
and you will write our names with "et" between them.

A middle-aged coupled entwined.
I will sit on your lap, thin enough, loved a lot,
envied by those young Parisian girls.

Elizabeth Ames
