

A Journal of the Arts & Aging

Edited by Karen Close & Carolyn Cowan

NUMBER II, SPRING 2014

SAGE-ING

WITH CREATIVE SPIRIT, GRACE & GRATITUDE

KNOW YOURSELF. BE YOURSELF. LOVE YOURSELF. SHARE YOURSELF.



A PUBLICATION OF THE OKANAGAN INSTITUTE

AVAILABLE ONLINE AT www.sageing.ca

A Journal of the Arts & Aging

Edited by Karen Close
& Carolyn Cowan

NUMBER II, SPRING 2014
ISSN 1920-5848

SAGE-ING WITH CREATIVE SPIRIT, GRACE & GRATITUDE

A PUBLICATION OF THE
Okanagan Institute

1473 Ethel Street, Kelowna BC V1Y 2X9
www.okanaganinstitute.com

Copyright © 2014 Okanagan Institute.
All rights reserved. No part of this publica-
tion may be reproduced in any form
without the permission of the publisher.

This publication is available for online
viewing and downloading at:

www.sageing.ca

Email sageing4@gmail.com

Cover painting detail by Renata Kerr

EDITORIAL

The *Sage-ing* Journal is proud to be at the forefront of the community arts movement, the growing voice of those who are promoting creative engagement practices within small groups and communities. These practices herald a new way of thinking. The intent is to democratize art by embracing a diversity of individuals and a wide range of activities. There is an emphasis on the benefits of people creating together as much as on the finished product. There is growing recognition that creative energy is generous, nurturing and compassionate. It is healing energy generated when we support each other to explore the essence of who we are, and all we can imagine. Recently, York University in Toronto, as well as its Fine Arts Department, has initiated a certificate program in Community Art Practices. Are we indeed realizing that creative expression is a human need necessary for healthy individuals and communities? Six years ago, a small group of us founded heART Fit, a volunteer run and funded, intergenerational group who share spontaneous process painting and creative fitness as a lifestyle choice. Members' stories are regularly profiled in this Journal.

The wonder of the internet is that we can all be linked with those who share our philosophy. One group is ArtBridges

<http://artbridges.ca/community/profile/280>. In the United States, the National Centre for Creative Aging <http://www.creativeaging.org> focuses on research, policy and practice related to promoting creative expression as vital to healthy and productive aging. It has identified community art programs as a theme for its June conference.

Since inception, the goal of the *Sage-ing* Journal has been to build an online community open to all who choose to reach out and engage with each other by sharing creative aspirations and accomplishments. We are delighted to observe new perspectives and meanings related to the arts as they emerge, inspire us, and dominate the Journal's pages. Throughout history, the arts have initiated thought and change.

In his article, *Alchemy: Re-imagined: Transformed* (ART), contributor Ed Bownes cleverly captures a new perspective on creative spirit. He encourages a curious, open heart, enthusiastic as it re-visions the familiar. Donna Rubadeau in *Oh, The Places I'll Go* shares her delight when she tastes the unfamiliar that is community in other countries. In *Pop-Up-Poetry* Lesley-Anne Evans moves out on to the street with her art. Regular contributor, Lisa Lipsett, reminds us of Thomas Berry's words, "We are here to become integral with the larger Earth community". Karen Smithson shares how joining in community and then glimpsing down into The Grand Canyon from an airplane opened her creative spirit to discover she did, indeed, have *Something To Say*. We all do. *Sage-ing With Creative Spirit Grace and Gratitude* welcomes your participation. We are very grateful to the contributors and readers who create the Journal's online community arts sharing platform. By sharing our stories we support each other and give definition to the role of expressive arts in our culture. As our publisher Robert MacDonald writes, by *Paying Creative Attention* we create life.

Editors Karen Close and Carolyn Cowan

ISSUE CONTENTS

- | | |
|--|--|
| 3. SACRED ART: THE POETRY AND PHOTOGRAPHY OF DIANA HAYES
Mary Ann Moore | 27. WORDS FROM THE HEART - POETRY |
| 8. SOMETHING TO SAY
Karen Suzanne Smithson | 29. THE JOURNEY INTO ME Pam Nelson |
| 11. PAYING CREATIVE ATTENTION
Robert MacDonald | 31. ALCHEMY: RE-IMAGINED:
TRANSFORMED Ed Bownes |
| 13. OH, THE PLACES I'LL GO
Donna Rubadeau | 33. ART IN TRANSIT |
| 16. THE SLEEPING BEAUTY OF THE ELBE
Harold Rhenisch | 34. CREATING POSITIVE INTENTION
Lorna Dieleman |
| 20. POP-UP-POETRY Lesley-Anne Evans | 36. CULTIVATING A KIND SANCTUARY
Shauna Paynter |
| 23. DOODLING: THE JOY OF
SPONTANEOUS ART Lisa Lipsett | 39. FINDING MY WAY BACK Renata Kerr |
| | 42. HAVE YOU EVER? Diane Allan |

SACRED ART

THE POETRY AND PHOTOGRAPHY OF DIANA HAYES

Mary Ann Moore



Photo by Lance Sullivan

While Bob Dylan’s lyrics may have caused her to pick up a pen to write poetry at the age of eleven, Diana Hayes went on to literally live the images of her dreams in her poetry, photography, and healing journey from breast cancer. Swimming in the ocean near her Salt Spring Island, B.C., home almost every day has become part of her wellness plan along with what she learned about healing in various parts of the world including the renowned healing sanctuary in Abadiania, Brazil.

DREAMS

Diana’s dream experiences have taken her around the world to sacred places such as the Rosario monarch sanctuary in Michoacan, Mexico; the Greek Orthodox monasteries of Meteora in Thessaly, and to the stone beehive shaped huts on the monastic island of Skelig Michael in West Kerry, Ireland.

In 2002, Diana had what she considers a dream of transformation. It inspired a photographic sequence called *Swimming with Trout*. The dream led Diana, in her waking life, to the sea. Jim Scott, creator and editor of the electronic news site, Salt Spring News, wrote of Diana’s fine art photographs: “Swimming with Trout reaches a level of alchemy that is witness to Diana’s enriched and maturing poetic vision.”

The photographic images from *Swimming with Trout* were taken on a cold February day in 2002 on Sombrio Beach, Vancouver Island.

It was the dream of transformation that urged Diana, in the middle of February, to begin the quest as a sea-going swimmer. She bought the equipment the next week. It was almost as if the dream were pointing her in the direction of the ocean. In the same year of 2002, Hayes established an open water swim team of like-minded women who, according to Diana, thrive on the restorative powers of the sea. They call themselves The Salt Spring Seals. They swim with seals and other marine life, and raise awareness, and funds through swimming events. Their fundraising focus is the Island Natural Care Wildlife Centre on Salt Spring Island:

www.dianahayes.ca/SaltSpringSeals.htm/

Diana believes that dreams are like salt water. They can heal if we immerse ourselves, and understand their symbology as archetypes – light keepers guiding us on our life’s journeys.

According to Diana, three days a week of ocean swimming keeps you fit, acclimatized to the cold, and dissolves all of your problems. Your headache will be gone. Aches or pains will be gone as if transformed. “We wear a full mask so we can see. The water is a big part of what we do: watch the seasons, the different current patterns bring different sea life.”

Diana Hayes by Barry Peterson





POETRY

Diana, who has some Irish background on her father's side, studied Irish writers William Butler Yeats, John Millington Synge, and James Joyce. While at the University of Victoria in the mid-seventies, she studied poetry with John Montague, a poet born in Brooklyn, New York, raised in County Tyrone, Ireland, and a writer-in-residence at the University.

While at university, Diana was influenced by poets Patrick Lane and P.K. Page. Later, Diana got her Master

of Fine Arts in Creative Writing at the University of British Columbia, in Vancouver.

She remembers working on an essay on P.K. Page's work, and meeting with the poet at her home on a number of occasions. "I think it was the privilege of sharing her vision and work that year which set me on a path where I would not be content with the capital 'I' of contemporary poetry. She introduced me to Rumi, Loren Eiseley, and many other visionary and naturalist writers, and gave me reason to believe poetry is a sacred art."

In one of her books of poetry, Diana writes "Anadromous, or sea-going trout, share their Celtic mythology with salmon. Both species are associated with sacred waters, and represent the knowledge and wisdom of the other world and the premonitions of gods". *This is the Moon's Work: New and Selected Poems*, Mother Tongue Publishing, 2011.

Diana followed the archetypal dream in poetry and photographs as she meditated at Southey Point on Salt Spring Island. When she began to swim in the ocean in her light-weight wetsuit with hood and gloves, she found the healing potential of the sea offered a freedom from physical pain.

At the end of the introduction to the anthology book of poems titled *Coming Home*, Rainbow Publishers, 2003, in which the poems of Hayes appear, Brian Brett writes "Home is a dangerous place full of memories of magic and the ocean just out there". The anthology includes other poets such as Karen Shklanka and Chris Smart with whom Hayes has been meeting in monthly workshops for over a decade. In Diana's words, from her poem *Vesuvius Bay, Winter*, the sea *brings me to a wilder place of belonging*.

HEALING

In 2000, Diana had had a *questionable* biopsy that led to the diagnosis of breast cancer. As she was undergoing radiation treatments, her mother was dying from breast cancer in a Vancouver hospice.

In 2008, a year after Diana's first mastectomy, which was recommended



Top: Sequence: Swimming with Trout
Photo by Diana Hayes

Above: Swimming with Trout
Photo by Diana Hayes



Salt Spring Seals

Photo by John Cameron

Back Row – left to right, Ellen Mae

Simmonds, Carole Eyles, Peter Eyles, Ann Donahue

Front Row – left to right, Ellen Garvie,

Diana Hayes, Pat Parkes, Elly Silverman, Gail Eyles

“Walking to the sacred waterfall becomes part of the healing process. Homemade soup is also prescribed and served each day on the Casa grounds, for free. At the Casa, you step into a different world and experience a new paradigm of medicine”.

after a recurrence of breast cancer, Hayes travelled to Casa de Dom Inacio, named for St. Ignatius of Loyola, the patron saint of the Jesuits. Located on the outskirts of Abadiania, the Casa is two hours from Brasilia, the capital city of Brazil. The healing work is called Spiritism, a form of energy medicine based on the early work of Allan Kardec, a French practitioner and healer.

Diana explained that a large percentage of Brazilians practice this form of healing. Spiritism extends into the realm of social services. They run soup kitchens and community centres, and provide healing for all those in need, for free.

As for the healing sessions, they fall within the realm of practices such as therapeutic touch, healing touch and Reiki.

“Walking to the sacred waterfall becomes part of the healing process. Homemade soup is also prescribed and served each day on the Casa grounds, for free. At the Casa, you step into a different world and experience a new paradigm of medicine”.

At the sacred waterfall, Hayes witnessed the Blue Morpho butterfly. It was a rare sighting. Her guide, Angelika Kramer, told her it was a sign of complete healing if visitors to the Casa witness this incredibly iridescent, and large, beautiful creature.

Diana sees the Spiritism healing practice as being in unison and in addition to western medicine. Her experience at the Casa was also a preparation for healing that was required for the surgical procedure to follow, back in Canada.

In January 2011, Hayes had the beginning of breast reconstruction surgery which she found miraculous, and rather like science fiction. Dr. Chris Taylor, Dr. Allen Hayashi, her “second-in-command guardian angel”, and the others on their team in Victoria, performed the surgery called DIEP (deep inferior epigastric perforator) flap reconstruction. She feels transformed by the surgery and has put behind her a whole decade of dealing with breast cancer.

MY LIFE IS MY WORK

All of it has found a way into her poems and stories. She provides reflexology and Reiki treatments for those in need. Diana is on the ArtSpring board on Salt Spring Island which she finds to be an interesting bridge between involvement with the arts and helping the community.

She started Salt of the Earth Productions in 1984 which became Salt Spring Theatre Alive Society. Diana assists with theatre productions as well as literary arts productions. Along with Brian Brett and his wife Sharon Doobenen, Diana applies for funding through the Canada Council and the Writers’ Union of Canada to host writers at literary events. She loves hearing other writers read their work, and so she puts up with the administrative details it takes to get them to the literary events.



Fulnio Native

Photo Diana Hayes

Taken after a healing ritual and dance performed by the Fulnio Indians, in Brazil.

They were willing to have a photo taken and I then added a filter to make it look more like a painting as I didn't want it to look like a portrait.

Now, Diana Hayes is stepping into a new unknown, yet she knows the next body of work will be an intensive healing journey. And she says that if we listen to our dreams we can't go wrong.

Brian Brett writes in his introduction to the poetry anthology *Coming Home*: "We live on Salt Spring because we demand the natural world. And when you look the world in the face, there's joy, and there's sorrow, and there's a load of manure to shovel, children to feed, salt water bays to swim, real sheep to count." It seems Diana Hayes has had her share on the island where she went to write a book in 1981, and never left.

The following two poems are composed by Diana Hayes. A third poem, Vesuvius Bay, Winter, referred to in this article, can be read in the Words from the Heart – Poetry section of this Journal.

THE ANGEL OF ABADIANIA

for Wania Roggiani

She walked like any one of us in the evening streets of Abadiania
yet her step was not worldly, did not make a sound on the cobbles or stir up the dust.
Ivory fabric brushed against my arm, barely
as she glowed in the rhythm of this pilgrimage.

We spoke little, her voice lyrical, at ease
Intention all amethyst and light, unencumbered
Rod of Asclepius at hand, present and invisible
as the serpent in the night's grass.

Is this the girl who sat with us at our table each morning?
Fruits of papaya, seeds of watermelon melting from her hands
Transatlantic angel sent to nudge the healing,
the rest of us not prepared for this veil to lift.

BLUE MORPHO

Brazil, Cachoeira de Lázarus, my nature is yours

A black dog that followed me
on the hot road from the Casa,
copper-coloured dust sprinkled
on his paws like ceremonial boots
now out of sight, plunges into the pool
as I step across the bridge
to the Cachoeira de Lázarus

At the edge of the jungle, in silence
women prepare for the sacred waterfall
down stone and earthen steps
resting at the guardian tree
to wait on benches as pilgrims
pass in rows of contemplation

A man is carried by his guides
legs hanging like a doll's
while his eyes dance through

the canopy to the light
A woman takes her husband's hand
blind and reaching for the blue dome of day

As they walk back up the path
the waterfall still cool on their backs
Angelika takes us each by the hand
shoeless, speechless, dressed in white
the sweat of humility
dripping to the earth

No learning or unlearning prepares us
for this water's current
the whole jungle lifted in octaves
beyond the cochlea's range.
A tremor follows me across the slippery bridge
joining women who wait their turn
for water, release of primal sorrow

Our eyes in disbelief
witness wings as large as flying hands
iridescent and slow-moving
no bells to silence, except the taste of nectar

Blue Morpho, Angelika whispers
the healing complete

Diana Hayes can be contacted by email at dehayes@islandnet.com. More of her photography, including the remaining photos in the Swimming with Trout sequence, is included in the Art in Transit photography section of this Spring issue. To read more about Diana's work, visit www.dianahayes.ca.

Mary Ann Moore is a poet, writer and writing mentor based in Nanaimo, B.C. Her poetry has been produced on CD and published in several chapbooks, literary journals and anthologies. One of her poems, Spring Equinox, is published in the Words from the Heart – Poetry section of this Journal. The poem is from Mary Ann's full-length book of poetry, *Fishing for Mermaids*, to be published by Leaf Press in April, 2014. Mary Ann created a mentoring program called Writing Home: A Whole Life Practice, which is available by email, mail and telephone. She offers weekly women's writing circles. Monthly poetry circles called Poetry as a Doorway In ... and a Welcome Home began in February, 2014. Mary Ann can be contacted by email at flyingmermaids@shaw.ca. To read more about her work, visit www.maryannmoore.ca.

SOMETHING TO SAY

Karen Suzanne Smithson



Karen Smithson by Ken Smithson

Being creative is about having ideas. It's about having something to say. Some of us have the natural exuberance to *shout from the rooftops*, some of us *speak* with great ease and fluency, while others take a great deal of time to *gather their thoughts* and are fearful that they may somehow be unworthy. I seem to have been in this latter category for most of my life ... that is until the past four months!

My late father was a composer, quite well-known in his day for his pioneering work in Japanese music and for the influence of that culture on his own compositions. My mother was a singer and a pianist with gifts as a poet and an artist. I grew up in a household that oozed culture and creativity so it is surprising that I showed little interest, as a young person, in creating my own art. I guess I didn't think I had anything special to say. I did, however, choose music as a career.

As a classical flutist and teacher, my time and energy were devoted to the interpretation of other people's music and to helping others learn that skill. In addition, from 1973 to 1983 I had the opportunity to sing and play flute with *Vancouver: Your Town Band* which performed Top 40 hits as well as lighter material, all of it other people's music. During this time I developed a desire to learn how to improvise, but the results of any trial attempts were disappointing. I figured it would take a whole second lifetime of training to learn this art, to say nothing of applying it stylistically. Little did I know that in my later years I would be given that second life in the form of my retirement. Truly, there is no word in the dictionary that is so inaccurately defined!

To be brutally honest, my retirement did not begin well. I had begun losing interest in my career after my father's death at the end of 2001, at which time I desired nothing but to work on cataloguing and digitizing his vast body of work. My husband Ken (also a musician) retired in 2004 so the following year I made the decision to stop as well. We decided to pursue our dream of moving to the Okanagan where we took up residence in the spring of 2006. My elderly mother moved with us and I became her full-time caregiver for the next year.

Caring for someone with Alzheimer's can take its toll on the professionals; for a novice, and a daughter, it was simply devastating. Even after Mom was admitted to a long-term care facility the depression lingered for the next four years. During this time, Ken got involved in music again but I had no interest in joining him. He pestered me and pestered me until I finally relented. I had barely touched my flute in years and I thought I'd try guitar

**Caring for someone
with Alzheimer's can
take its toll.**



Top: Gallagher's Canyon residents' "British Invasion" party (photo credit: Henri Fontaine).



Above Gallagher's Canyon resident's summer "Hoedown" (photo credit: Henri Fontaine).

This band, called "3 Four All!", saved my life.

with which I'd dabbled in high school, but our steel-stringed guitar hurt my fingers and gave me little pleasure. Then Ken suggested that we buy an electronic keyboard. Although my heart wasn't in it I decided to give it a try.

Over the few years that we had been in Kelowna, Ken had met a number of musicians, first through "Basement Musicians" and then through a jamming group in our community. He wanted to begin reliving his youth, form a band and have me participate. I had no interest at all, but I gave in when I realized that I would be spending a lot of unhappy time by myself when he was out rehearsing. The rehearsals ended up being held at our house making it nearly impossible for me not to take part.

As it turned out, this band, called "*3 Four All!*", saved my life. I am happy and busy and the depression is a distant memory. The band is now in its fourth year. We play regularly for community parties as well as occasional gigs at other venues which have included the Elks Hall, Okanagan Lake Resort and events at private homes. I am reliving my youth, too, but with the twist that I am predominantly a keyboardist now, proving that there are exceptions to the famous rule about tricks and old dogs!

My adventures in creativity began shortly after *3 Four All!*'s formation when, by complete chance, I discovered a book called *Improvising Blues Piano* by the British jazz pianist Tim Richards. It is brilliantly laid out and designed for classical piano students with no more than a Grade 3 level, which pretty much described my own piano skills. Using the most basic of musical ideas the very first page provided an opportunity to improvise along with guidance on how to do it! I was in heaven! I now work daily with all four of Tim Richards' books which address jazz and Latin styles as well. I will never be the next Oscar Peterson, but the added dimension that this study has brought to my life is immeasurable.

In November 2013, at the age of 59 I experienced a strange occurrence. A string of words, complete with melody, lodged itself in my mind and I realized that it was completely original. For the first time in my life I had a snippet of something going around in my head that had not been created by somebody else. I realized that the snippet I had been "given" was good enough to expand upon and maybe even develop into a song. We were leaving for a Mexican holiday the following week so, in advance, I bought a little notebook that I could keep in my purse and jot ideas down whenever they came to me.

Then came the serendipitous moment that seems to be involved in many life-changing events. I love flying and I try to get a window seat whenever possible so I was disappointed when we were assigned a middle and an aisle seat on the plane. But when the occupant of the window seat arrived at our row he asked if he might have the aisle since he and his wife hadn't been able to get seats together. We happily changed seats and I will forever be obliged to the gentleman from West Kelowna. The window seat on this particular flight provided me with an overwhelming musical inspiration. By the time we landed I had a sketch of a significant portion of a song, words, music, and all.

The stuff of our creations sometimes requires decades of ups and downs to be deposited in one's life like the layers of strata in the earth.

When we arrived home a week later, I completed the song which I called *Day Flight*. It is about the view that I had out of the window of the airplane of the Grand Canyon, a place of special significance to my family. The view of it from the air is indescribable except in poetry or song. In the meantime, I had “received” more material to go with the pre-vacation snippet and, in fairly short order, I had a second song completed called *Out of the Shadows*. On Boxing Day I finished my fifth song, *Moonlight*. That was the weirdest experience of all. The music just flowed out from under my fingers at the keyboard as though I wasn't even there. When it was completed I just sat there and wept. Where was all this coming from and why? And why now? What was I finally releasing from my soul? Had this been there all along and I just needed to get out of the way? Had I just been too busy all my life to allow the muse to speak? Had she been tapping me on the shoulder since I was a child and I just hadn't paid attention?

Whatever it is, I am so deeply grateful for this new-found creativity. Hardly a day goes by without ideas that are worth jotting down. Usually it's words alone but every now and then they come with a tune. In one instance, I got the tune first and needed to develop words to go with it. Now, in addition to my first five songs, I have completed one more with three others substantially on the way. My “jottings” will undoubtedly coalesce into other songs as the months pass. I have no grand plans for any of them. The fact that they exist is enough for me.

The stuff of our creations sometimes requires decades of ups and downs to be deposited in one's life like the layers of strata in the earth. The time to make sense out of all these “deposits”, the time to listen to that inner voice, that muse who has been trying to speak all along ... this kind of time and this kind of awareness, may not be available to the young. Sometimes it takes an older soul to have *something to say*.

Karen Smithson is the daughter of the late composer and UBC music professor Elliot Weisgarber and his wife Beth. Since 2006 she and her husband Ken have made their home in Kelowna where they are busy musicians with their band “3 Four All!”.

PAYING CREATIVE ATTENTION



Robert MacDonald

Our life - who we are, what we think, feel, and do, what and who we love, our passions and compassions - is the sum of what we focus on.

Some of us specialize in relationships and mostly explore bonding and caregiving. Others concentrate on work and test ways to be productive and creative. Still others look to philosophy or religion and investigate the way things are and on finding the truth about life and the universe.

Our experience depends on the material objects and the mental and emotional subjects that we choose to pay attention to. When we focus on an object or a sonnet, a waft of perfume or the stock-market, our brain registers that *target*, which enables it to affect our behavior. In contrast, the things we don't attend to in a sense don't exist, at least for us. All day long, we selectively pay attention, and more often than most of us suspect, we can take charge of this process.

If we could look backward at our years, we'd see that our life - what we confidently called "reality" - has been fashioned from what we've paid attention to. We'd also be struck by the fact that if we had paid attention to other things, our reality and our life would be very different.

Looking ahead, what we focus on will create the life and person yet to be. When we think in terms of the present and future, we intuit lurking in our mind the notion that if we could just stay focused on the right things, our life would stop feeling like a reaction to stuff that happens to us and become something that we create - not a series of accidents, but a work of art.

There's no convenient *attention centre* in the brain. Instead, an ensemble of alerting, orienting, and executing networks collaborate to attune us to what's going on in our inner and outer world in a coherent way that points us toward an appropriate response.

When we focus, we're spending limited cognitive currency that should be wisely invested, because the stakes are high. At any one moment, our world contains a storm of information, whether it is objects, subjects, or both, which is often too much for our brain to depict clearly for us. Our attentional system selects a chunk of what's there, which gets valuable cerebral real estate and, therefore, the chance to affect our behavior. This thin slice of life becomes part of our reality, and the rest is consigned to the shadows.

Attention's selective nature confers tremendous benefits, chief of which is enabling us to comprehend what would otherwise be chaos. We couldn't take in the totality of our own experience, even for a moment. Whether it's noise on the street, ideas at the office, images for an artwork or feelings in a

Looking ahead, what we focus on will create the life and person yet to be.



"A Young Daughter of the Picts", attributed to Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues, circa 1585. Watercolour and gouache, touched with gold on parchment. Yale Center for British Art, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

The Picts were a group of late Iron Age and early Medieval Celtic people living in ancient northern Scotland, who were reported to have extensive decorative skin markings. Therefore, this fetching young woman is probably a distant forebearer of the writer of this piece, who first encountered the original when visiting Yale in the late 1970s.

The Picts have long been regarded as enigmatic savages who fought off Rome's legions before mysteriously disappearing from history; wild tribesmen who refused to sacrifice their freedom in exchange for the benefits of civilization. But far from the primitive warriors of popular imagination, they actually built a highly sophisticated culture in northern Scotland in the latter half of the first millennium AD, which surpassed their Anglo-Saxon rivals in many respects.

A Pictish monastery at Portmahomack on the Tarbat peninsula in Easter Ross, Scotland, shows that they were capable of great art, learning and the use of complex architectural principles. The people who built the monastery did so using the proportions of the *Golden Section*, or *Divine Proportion* as it became known during the Renaissance, hundreds of years later. This ratio of dimensions, 1.618 to one, appears in nature, such as in the spiral of seashells. It can be seen in Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, the Alhambra palace of Granada in Spain, the Acropolis in Athens and the Egyptian Pyramids.

relationship, we're potentially bombarded with stimuli vying for our attention. Electronic information and communications technology continually add to the overload. By helping us to focus on some things and filter out others, attention distills the whole universe into our personal universe.

Along with performing the task of organizing our world, attention enables us to have the experience that underlies life's deepest pleasures, from the scholar's study to the carpenter's craft to the lover's obsession to the artist's epiphany: of being completely absorbed, engrossed, even transported. Some of us slip into it readily, and with some reflection, experimentation, and practice, all of us can cultivate this profoundly attentive state and experience it more often.

The focused life, however, requires a capacity not just for paying attention but also for the discerning choice of targets that will invite the best possible experience. Much is made of the fact that human beings are the only creatures to know we must die, but we're also the only ones to know we must find something engaging to focus on in order to pass the time. As Ralph Waldo Emerson put it, "To fill the hour – that is happiness."

Some decisions, such as which profession to pursue or person to live with, automatically receive serious attention. Other choices may be less obvious but are just as important to the tenor of our daily experience: deciding to concentrate on our hopes rather than our fears; to attend to the present instead of the past; to appreciate that just because something upsetting happens, we don't have to fixate on it, and most importantly to discern and chase the creative spark that lives in all of us.

Deciding what to pay attention to for each hour, day, week, or year, much less a lifetime, is a peculiarly human predicament, and our quality of life largely depends on how we handle it. Leonardo da Vinci got his focus from his nearly supernatural creativity. We have other motivations and gifts, and most of us have to go through a more complicated process to find the right things to focus on. We must resist the temptation to drift along, reacting to whatever happens to us next, and deliberately select targets, from activities to relationships, that are worthy of our finite supplies of time and attention.

The difference between "passing the time" and "time well spent" depends on making smart and creative decisions about what to attend to.

Robert MacDonald is a designer, writer and publisher. He is the director of the Okanagan Institute, which contributes to the quality of creative engagement in the Okanagan through publications, events and collaborations. He writes and publishes the weekly newsletter, *Freshsheet*. He is also the Vice President of the Society for Learning in Retirement. Robert is the director of Proof, the Club for Creatives, which will open its doors this summer in Kelowna to facilitate social, culinary, collaborative and learning opportunities for creative individuals, groups and organizations.

Email: info@okanaganinstitute.com
 Web: www.okanaganinstitute.com
 Twitter: www.twitter.com/okinstitute
 Newsletter: www.freshsheet.ca
 Proof: www.proofclub.ca

OH, THE PLACES I'LL GO ...



Donna Rubadeau

"See the pyramids along the Nile
Watch the sun rise from the tropic isle ...

Fly the ocean in a silver plane
See the jungle when it's wet with rain ..." (From the song: You Belong to Me)

It had been many years since I'd sung those lyrics, but yes, yes, I wanted to do all those things and more. There was no shortage of fabulous places to visit in this world, and there was no shortage of excuses that were stopping me from getting to them: a more convenient time; when funds became more plentiful; when pigs fly. Then the e-mail arrived and changed everything.

It was a typically gray February morning in Kelowna when I read the most delicious invitation I'd ever received. "Hi Mom," my daughter wrote from India. "How would you like to meet me next winter for a week or two at a spa in Thailand?" Would I ever! My teaching career was about to end so that I could fly the ocean in a silver plane in mid-winter, and Thailand was going to be my destination.

When it came to travelling, I was a merry-go-round kind of gal with no speck of a tilt-a-whirl gene within. That is to say, mine was a safe, comfortable kind of travel: "safe" being the operative word. K, on the other hand, had adventure in her blood and was comfortable and experienced with travelling solo to exotic locations. She was definitely a tilt-a-whirl gal, and I was thrilled to be stepping out of my box with such a confident, experienced tour guide.

That trip to Thailand in 2007 was our first trip together, but since then we have covered a lot more territory, shared much more of the decision making to relieve her of that burdensome tour guide responsibility, eaten delicious food, determined that three weeks of clothes can fit in a carry-on suitcase (the pulling of which is a whole lot more comfortable than carrying a backpack) and, most importantly, through trial and error which included the biting of one's tongue, discovered that we could spend 24/7 together-time and survive to tell the tale. And what wonderful tales there are to tell!

Many of our best memories have to do with food. While most people we encountered in Thailand knew at least some English, we underestimated the word "spicy" when we ordered a fish curry one night at an outdoor food court in Chiang Mai. The vendor said, many times, "Spicy, spicy," but although we assured him that, "Yes, we eat spicy food," he seemed a bit dubious. After a couple of mouthfuls we realized that our mouths were seriously on fire. Just inhaling a normal breath was like adding oxygen to a flame. Luckily a chapati from a nearby vendor helped us get back to normal, but it didn't happen

My teaching career was about to end so that I could fly the ocean in a silver plane in mid-winter.



Top: Hoi An, Vietnam, morning fish market

Middle: Exotic Dish

Above: Chiang Mai, Thailand Sunday street market

quickly. We hadn't meant to make spectacles of ourselves but, clearly, the food vendors had had their eyes on us as we dug ravenously into the curry. We managed to provide a little unintended entertainment, and they went home with a story to tell. So, of course, did we.

There are bargains to be had in markets around the world, some of them of dubious quality but, hey, a deal's a deal. However, the food markets are the most intriguing.

If cleanliness and refrigeration are bugaboos for you, then you'd be disappointed with the public health standards in most parts of the world where refrigeration is scarce and insects are plentiful. In some countries, listless dogs and scrawny cats meander through the markets or lounge pitifully amidst the wares. If seeing huge sacks of nuts tantalizes your taste buds and tempts you to purchase a small bag of cashews, be prepared to have the who-knows-when-it-was-last-washed hand dig into the sack and grab a handful to weigh.

You could never imagine seeing such an extensive array of intriguing-looking fish anywhere other than in an aquarium, but markets by the ocean overflow with exotic, usually dead, sea life.

You'll find meat there, too, such as the pig's head which smiles up from the tray upon which it has been strategically placed surrounded by other edible pig parts. In South Korea, where kimchi is the national dish, dozens of the hundred varieties can be found in a single market stall.

Locals stop by the open markets to pick up the ingredients for supper, and it can be a fun way to graze your way to a very full stomach. The senses are assaulted not so much by smell, because the markets are, surprisingly, not particularly smelly, but by the sound of chatter in an unfamiliar language and the sight of uncommon and fascinating concoctions. Our dialogue is a series of exclamations: Oh, look at this! or What do you think **that** is?

While we mostly heed the warnings to avoid unwashed produce and unfiltered water, K and I tend to do most of our eating on the streets where we generally seek no-meat options. Early one evening in Thailand we collected all kinds of vaguely identified goodies from various vendors in an indoor market but, unlike our mall food courts in Canada, there didn't appear to be a place to sit and eat. We managed, with fractured English and dramatic hand gestures, to indicate to someone that we were looking for a spot to spread out the spread when the various women vendors started conversing loudly with one another. We thought we had upset them or that, perhaps, we were the subjects of their ridicule: the stupid foreign women playing tourist in the local Thai neighborhood.

Before we could fully comprehend the situation, one woman had cleared a spot for us behind her stall while another provided toilet paper for napkins, an uncommon commodity in Southeast Asia. Our "hostess" scooped ice into a cup for our bottled water, at which gesture K and I exchanged glances that said, Uh oh, how do we avoid using that ice? Do you think it's contaminated? Better not take the chance. But how do we do that politely? Once we had



China Night Market

I consistently marvel at all the things we've experienced that are the way of life in other countries.

been provided with bowls and spoons, stools to sit on, and all the grinning compatriots were satisfied that each had contributed to our wellbeing, we dug into our delicious mini-buffet. It was one of our favorite suppers – among so many – and a heartfelt memory of the power of communication when spoken language is a barrier.

There is a difference between the markets of the morning, afternoon, late afternoon/early evening, and night time. While there may be consistencies and similarities among them, each has its own idiosyncrasies, specialty items, and clientele. The morning food

markets are perfect for choosing the freshest ingredients for the day's menu. Planning to take a cooking class? A cook's tour through the morning market is best with a guide who can help you identify the difference between the many different basil, or six kinds of eggplants, or the other produce native to the region but uncommonly found back home.

The night markets are exciting, maybe because exotic fare takes on a new face after sunset when the dark has settled in. Fast food is different throughout the world, and where French fries are commonplace to us, larvae sizzling in brine are a pop-in-your-mouth treat in Korea. You'll easily find a meat kabob in the Mideast, but skewered food in China is more likely to be wiggling starfish, sea horses, and scorpions that stop wiggling once the skewer is lowered into the hot fat for deep frying. If meat is your preference, you won't find a portable corn dog to eat while browsing the rest of the market. But you might enjoy munching on a very bald, marinated, roasted pigeon stuck on a stick, not unlike our rotisserie chicken but smaller and with its head intact.

I consistently marvel at all the things we've experienced that are the way of life in other countries, but are unlikely to occur in Canada because they wouldn't meet even the most basic health and safety standards. And yet, I rarely have felt unsafe. My beautiful, adventurous daughter has helped me find some footing on this unfamiliar terrain, and it feels good.

Donna Rubadeau One of Donna's first big journeys was with her husband when, as young newlywed university graduates, they immigrated to Prince George, B.C. from the suburbs of New York to start their careers in education. Nothing in her experience had prepared her for the culture shock of life in the Canadian North, 500 miles from the nearest big city. But the universality of homemaking, family raising, going to a job, and establishing one's self within a community, made it easy to make strong connections with others starting out the same way. New friends were also young, educated, and from somewhere else, and all had a story to tell. Now, retired from decades of teaching opportunities in Central Okanagan elementary schools, enjoying the next generation of family raising, and still finding myriad ways to contribute to her wonderful community, Donna finds that this time in her life's journey is especially rewarding because human connections continue to be made and all new friends, especially those in her peer group, have stories to tell of lives that are especially rich with color and surprise. Donna can be contacted at dbrubadeau@gmail.com

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY OF THE ELBE



Harold Rhenisch

When you are on the road, you are on the move. That's simple, but you'll never find your path that way. You'll find the end of the road, but as I learned on the ancient road called The King's Way in Eastern Germany, that's not exactly the goal. After getting lost over and over again in the hearts of grey, decaying cities, I eventually figured out that the path doesn't go anywhere. It's just there. To understand the delicate charm of that, it's time to go to the ruins of Riesa.

These aren't ancient ruins, and not artificial ancient ones like the ones the poet Goethe erected in the Park on the Ilm River in Weimar. They are fully modern ruins: a ring of abandoned steelworks and heavy industrial factories turning to rust around a city grey with neglect. Welcome to post-communist East Germany and its images of walls — in this case a hedge of iron thorn bushes around Sleeping Beauty's castle. Well, that's as good a description as any.

All the garden cities along the Elbe, Saale and Ilm rivers were similarly ringed by communist ideology. East Germany was, after all, The Republic of Peasants and Labourers. In it, hand labour was prized above all things. The goal of the state was to obliterate the past and to make a glorious new future. Cities, which had been built for a class of people representing different economic circumstances, had to be replaced by concrete apartments on the edge of town. Factories were the new art. What a welder could slap together in the factory art club after work was installed in the streets, to replace not only Goethe's romantic ruins, but the Venus de Milo, and even art and history themselves.

Like all these river cities, Riesa is on the King's Way, the old road I've been telling stories about here in the *Sage-ing* journal. The road rose from donkey paths that tracked through the dark forests from monastery to monastery, and stopped now and then at fortresses and market towns.

A road like that could lead to a story about gardens, because Germany had no colonies. It had to colonize itself. The result has been five hundred years of revolution. Throughout most of it, Germany was the Holy Roman Empire, and the centre of Christian culture outside of Rome. As monastic settlements in this Christian story introduced agriculture and grew into towns and the towns swelled into cities, the floodplains at their edges, where no one could build, remained green refuges. The floodplains were reminders of a time before there were no cities at all.

Germany had no colonies. It had to colonize itself. The result has been five hundred years of revolution.



The city of Jena tells this part of the story best. There, the green thread of the banks of the Saale River that flows through the city is called Paradise. There's even a beauty salon called Paradise, and a train stop called Paradise, and students come across the river from the university, lay out their towels on tiny strips of grass between the willows, and catch a bit of Sunday sun. They look like characters in an etching from 1750. That's because they are. It's not the passage of years that matters here on the road. History is not a story here. The communists got that right. Things don't change in the East.



Top: Changing With the Times
Because private building supplies were unavailable in East Germany, this garden hut represents considerable ingenuity.

Above: The walking path along the Elbe river, Riesa.
The remains of the old aristocratic gardens are on the right.

The heart of each of these cities in the German forest is no city at all.

That's totally different than the way things are in Canada, of course, especially in the Okanagan where cities are built on real estate developments marketed as images of paradise. In East Germany, though, cities are built around monasteries, which are built around miracles in the wilderness. Whatever came later has that intensity at its heart. To put it another way, the monasteries didn't grow because they were destinations. They grew because they were on one: the road, the King's Way — Christ's way, if you like. In such terms, what mattered most was staying still and being found.

That took some effort. As Germany grew in power over time, German princes built dozens of copies of Versailles and sculpted their gardens into symbols of fertility. When the middle class rose in the early 19th century, gardens were remade as places for Sunday promenades with parasols. They stretched from the old palaces and abbeys down to the rivers. What followed that were the Schreber gardens — a movement so successful that soon every city had them, often on land subject to floods. Schreber gardens were the invention of Daniel Gottlob Moritz Schreber, a pastor from Leipzig, who wanted to give poor, coal-sickened children places to grow food on the edges of sports fields — on what was otherwise under-used land. The movement grew into a system of community gardens, each with its own little hut, which saw Germany through two world wars and by the end of the communist period was producing 85% of East Germany's fruit and 55% of its vegetables.

They were far more than that for a people who could not escape an ever-watchful government. East German citizens lived in decaying houses, in streets choked by car exhaust and coal smoke, and without a scrap of green in sight. Schreber gardens were where people maintained individual lives, some privacy, and some kind of travel. Peach trees were popular; they could be coaxed to give fruit in a land without sweet fruit. People could sit under



Top: Garden house and barbecue in Jena. Everyone had a peach tree, because there were no other peaches.

Above: A Little Bit of Paradise. A well-cared for Schreber Garden in Riesa

them and be, in a way, on the Mediterranean. Since the country was a prison, they weren't going to get to the Mediterranean any other way.

The people took their gardens to heart. Every Friday in the spring and summer, children dressed in their bathing suits and held impromptu parades, with gymnastics and marching bands and laughter, on their way out to the gardens. Along the way, people gathered in their windows in the narrow, winding streets and laughed and clapped and cheered them on. It was a gentle protest, and a quiet way to begin constructing an alternate country.

The Schreber Gardens of Riesa stretch for a square kilometre on the edge of a city about the size of downtown Penticton, British Columbia. Each group of garden plots opens from a central path. Their gates bear the names of the real communities of Riesa: Land of the Sun, Friends of the Flowers, Golden Heights, and so on. It's all a little kitschy and outdated now, yet even now the gardens aren't empty. In some, old men sit and grill a single sausage under their ancient peach tree and drink a single tin of beer, wondering, perhaps, where all the children have gone. Well, they went on the road.

Not all of them did, though. The Schreber Gardens in the Paradise of Jena stretch up the valley under a statue of a creature called the Erl King, erected in 1891 to commemorate a song by Goethe and set to music by Franz Schubert. The Erl King points out over a frog pond. In the song, he is an ancient Celtic god who drags children into death.

It goes a bit like this: you pass the sunbathers in their centuries'-old etching in Paradise, then the sport fields just outside the communist-era apartment blocks, and then the former state-run greenhouse cooperative, with its barbed wire and its threatening signs. You pass the Schreber Gardens, and at the very end, where the road disappears into the oak trees, is the Erl King. The road is a favourite of bicyclists. I once came upon a family there:



The Erl King of Jena. An old Celtic god looks for children to haunt.

a mother, a father, and two boys 10 and 12 years old. I was taking pictures, trying to get a shot that included both the frog pond and the Erl King himself, when the father asked, “What’s this?” I popped up from the rushes and explained. He dropped his bicycle with glee, and pointed it out to his sons. “Look! The Erl King! Here!” And he sang the whole song, while they looked at him without comprehension. Still, they did clamber up to the king, and looked down with him over paradise, and much later pedaled off through the gardens into town, which is, of course, only a clearing in the forest and a resting point in the road that leads nowhere but is everywhere.

The Schreber gardens? Well, those are the old monasteries that brought agriculture to these woods. They’re small, designed for single families instead of vast communities of faith. They contain no prayers now, but they have sustained the individual lives of people through the industrialization of selfhood in

the modern period, all because a single German pastor reached out to the poor kids of his own neighbourhood, on the old monastic model that to feed the soul you must first feed the body.

And that’s the way the King’s Way became a path through a garden.

Harold Rhenisch has been writing poems and histories of the Okanagan for over thirty-five years. His work is based on a wide range of models from literature to ancient prayer, myth, and spell-craft. He is currently exploring the deep roots of the language in Old Norse and Anglo Saxon. After twenty years in the Cariboo and on Vancouver Island, and after two long journeys on the German section of the Camino, he has returned home. Harold lives in Vernon, where he writes the deep ecology blog, www.okanaganokanogan.com, and is the webmaster for Gallery Veritgo, www.galleryvertigo.net, in Vernon.

POP-UP-POETRY

Lesley-Anne Evans



Photo by Giovanni Vidotto

A large part of story is in the telling. While artists give themselves to the creative process and creation of art,

Illumination installation, Okanagan Regional Library Mission Branch, Kelowna.



Narrative, meaning story, is a buzz word in popular culture. We are mesmerized by the narratives of friend and stranger, hero and anti-hero. We crave the magic within story. We look for it on the big screen, in books, in tabloids, in other's lives and within ourselves. Story compels us to find meaning in how we live our days and how our small narratives enrich the bigger story that connects us to others.

As a poet, I'm enticed by this notion of narrative. I've come to see that my poems are small stories that can open up worlds to us in just a few lines. Poems are rich in their potential to share what is common to us all.

A large part of story is in the telling. While artists give themselves to the creative process and creation of art, there always comes a time when the creation is ready to encounter others. The work of creativity is never fully done, the artist never fully satisfied, and editing can continue forever. But, at some point, the work is set down and deemed worthy of exposure.

Here's how I've begun to look at what it means for me to be a poet; this narrative of creating and sharing poetry, distilled into my artist's statement:

I believe art fulfills a purpose within us, first for the artist, then for humanity. Art is the realization of our innate need to express the Divine thumbprint of creativity within us, to create BEAUTY. "Beauty will save the world." (Fyodor Dostoyevsky) Our creative gifts bear generative power that lift the human spirit in an overflow of Divine glory and somehow transform us through participation in the Divine creative economy.

Living a creative life continues to shape me and ask me to test out new ways of applying what is creatively life giving. How I might live in the integrity of the above defining statement is something I ask myself as I dig deeper into the meaning of my art, morph and change.

I have been writing for over ten years in various capacities, but two years ago I was compelled by a needling desire to get out from behind my laptop and do something bold. I began to notice subtle changes to submission guidelines within literary journals and contests. Guidelines that discouraged previously published works now included those previously published online, and for the first time I became dissuaded from sharing my poetry there. I needed a new avenue to express and share my work.

The idea to pop up spontaneously and read poetry to complete strangers was planted in my mind when I took a trip to Vancouver and experienced *Pop Up* retail. I came across a movie company that set up shop for two weeks in a vacant storefront to sell off



Above left: Pop-Up-Poetry, Illumination Installation, Cultural District, Kelowna



Above right: Pop-Up-Poetry Illumination Installation, H2O, Kelowna

I installed my poems around Kelowna, posted in lanes, on mailboxes, fences, trees, inside out houses and homes under construction.

props. When sales were complete, they vanished. I learned the same thing happens in clothing and art, short-term shops literally pop up overnight and are gone within days.

I thought this a very cool idea. I felt giddy with the prospects. I researched, discovered there are poets already doing similar things. I found a New York group of poets who perform their work randomly on the subways. And others who leave poetry like a gift to be found by passersby. Like the flash mob phenomenon, and yarn bombing, I found a fresh way to take what I have and offer it freely to others with no strings attached and no issues effecting future literary publishing.

I began to see how a poet can be a cultural philanthropist. It grabbed my heart. I started an initiative called “Pop-Up-Poetry.” I kept my heart and mind open.

My first foray was to read poems to shoppers at Mission Park Mall in celebration of National Poetry Month. Someone asked why I wasn’t reading my own poetry, and that got my attention. Shortly after, I began to read my work, experimenting with various ways of delivering it. I auditioned and got a busking license with Festivals Kelowna, and performed at designated Busk Stops. A musician friend asked if she could join me, and we collaborated with words and music.

I installed my poems around Kelowna, posted in lanes, on mailboxes, fences, trees, inside out houses and homes under construction. I took Pop-Up-Poems to California and installed them there. Open mics were yet another opportunity to grow, so I stepped up and read my work with trepidation at Streaming Cafe, Inspired Word Cafe and other public gatherings. I became an active participant in Culture Days and 60 Artists in 60 Spaces. I felt myself becoming more energized through my personal word interactions with people.

At Christmas time, I joined with Trinity’s initiative, City Light, and installed my poetry and my handmade luminaires at random places and times



Pop-Up-Poetry Installation, Fort Warden State Park, Port Townsend, Washington

While artists give themselves to the creative process and creation of art, there always comes a time when the creation is ready to encounter others.

around Kelowna. In the dark of winter, I offered words and light as an act of kindness.

Most recently, I've begun Flash Poems on Facebook, calling on friends to share their words and phrases, then I work with their submissions and create a poem, reposting the finished creation. It's fun. People see their words become an integral part of a creative whole.

My journey of installing, performing, and gifting poetry along the way continues for me. Pop-Up-Poetry is an adventure in giving and receiving. When people read my poetry they often connect, email me, or find me on Facebook. People are affected positively. They encourage me to continue.

Pop-Up-Poetry and any other means of putting my writing out there is risky, exciting, and required. It is the necessary overflow of my creative process. It allows me a means to relate and commune with the world, to expose my humanity through my words. It is bold. It is not always easy. But I know I must continue to press on.

I've always appreciated words, to read, write, listen and consider the words of others, and now I get to share mine as well. Some days it's almost too good to be true.

Pop-Up-Poetry has a byline. It says, *Pop-Up-Poetry...in the thick of things*. I think that well describes how I want to live my life: open to the world and people around me, part of a Divine creative economy that allows me to be human and to create beauty. This gives me a profound sense of purpose. I am happy with my creative life, so far.

THIS KIND OF HAPPINESS

where you throw down your skim board
 in a shallow slice of foamed water,
 glide in one eighty twists and turns
 along the upended shore, me
 on my borrowed beach chair, your
 green eyed gleam and my breath
 heart held. To know
 this kind of happiness,
 your brown bodied orbit, hips
 here and again on the edge
 of uncharted. How
 I will hold this day
 and this kind of happiness,
 where you glow
 like Venus, outshine
 the sun.

Lesley-Anne Evans is a Canadian poet who is gaining recognition and respect. Her work is found in literary journals, chapbooks, and online. Lesley-Anne is a prolific writer, using words to touch lives through traditional means, and outside-the-box initiatives such as Pop-Up-Poetry. Lesley-Anne's musings on life, faith, and writing are enjoyed by many on her longtime blog, Buddy Breathing.

Email: mygracenotes@gmail.com

Websites: www.laevans.ca www.popuppoetry.ca

blog: <http://buddybreathing.wordpress.com>

DOODLING

THE JOY OF SPONTANEOUS ART

Lisa Lipsett



"We are here to become integral with the larger Earth community. The community itself and each of its members has ultimately a wild component, a creative spontaneity that is its deepest reality, its most profound mystery." - Thomas Berry

One day while I walked home along the back roads of my island home I noticed nature's doodles in the bark of trees, on blades of grass, in the dirt, on leaves. Even the cracks in the paved portion of my route had a doodling quality to them. The sheer number of these creations reminded me of a capacity we share with nature - spontaneous creativity.

This article is a brief celebration of this shared capacity and how utilizing it not only brings joy to our lives but strengthens our relationship to the living earth. Each time we create with no plan, we spark a powerful shift to feeling, intuition and sensation that puts us in intimate relationship with self and Earth. We access our inherent capacity for creativity and connection while we feel more whole as wild aspects of self jump into awareness and onto the page.

Practices that support this shift can be so helpful. To better understand the power of spontaneous drawing and painting, educator and psychoanalyst Marion Milner (1957) chronicled her personal journey to knowing self and the world through spontaneous expressive art, or what she termed free drawing. She titled her book *On Not Being Able to Paint* and used the pen name Joanna Field as hers was a deeply personal journey and ultimately stood in sharp contrast to educational and analytic values at the time. She took it upon herself to make a drawing or painting each time she felt a strong emotion or simply felt the need to create. She aptly described her experience of a shift to a state of more complete awareness, each time she created:

"When painting ... there occurred ... a fusion into a never-before-known wholeness; not only were the object and oneself no longer felt to be separate, but neither were thought and sensation and feeling and action."

She concludes: "So what the artist ... is doing, fundamentally, is not recreating in the sense of making again what has been lost (although he is doing this), but creating what is, because he is creating the power to perceive it. By continually breaking up the established familiar patterns (familiar in his particular culture and time in history) of logical common sense divisions of me-not-me, he really is creating "nature", including human nature."

The more we are able to nurture our own spontaneity, the more sustainable and ecologically sound our thoughts, actions and feelings become. We learn to trust what comes spontaneously as having a kind of natural connected intelligence of its own. Further, by awakening our spon-

By awakening our spontaneous nature we better align with other creatures in the moment and access our capacity to empathize.



Doodle leaves

Each time we create with no plan, we spark a powerful shift.

taneous nature we better align with other creatures in the moment and access our capacity to empathize. Empathy, compassion for all life, including ourselves is about feeling another's feelings, seeing through another's eyes, truly experiencing another without fear of losing self.

According to storyteller and ecophilosopher David Abram we are born wired to empathize with the living earth. "We have such potentially grand powers for empathy and communication, since there is something in us of every animal, and something of plants, and of stones and of seas, for we are woven of the same fabric as everything on earth, and our textures and rhythms are those of the planet itself."

Free drawing awakened Marion

Milner's creative nature. By following the core principles of creating spontaneously, it can do the same for you!

Spontaneous means *occurring or caused by natural impulse* (Chambers Dictionary of Etymology, 1988). The word spontaneous is synonymous with instinctive, automatic, involuntary, uninhibited, unforced and natural (Rogets College Thesaurus, 1978).

Spontaneous art creation can take many forms including but not limited to sculpture, poetry, drawing, improvisational music, painting, dance, movement, writing, and drama. However, the medium used is secondary to the nature of the process of letting go of the analytical mind and shifting to a place where creative impulses can run free. Most exciting for me has been the discovery that spontaneous painting and drawing can be done anywhere at any time.

The backbone of spontaneous creating involves proceeding with no plan. We let what is meant to happen, take place as it shall. In its purest form this is a challenge because the analytical habit of planning is deeply engrained.

"It is perhaps the most universal problem ... how to replace in us the will to form with the will to accept natural form." Wu Kuang-Ming

This is where closing your eyes, using your non-dominant hand, and using both hands, along with regular practice helps smooth the way to a shift from thinking to feeling, sensing and intuiting. We can also spontaneously create with dreams, body sensations, plants, animals, our sixth sense, texture, sounds, etc. In these instances, I often talk of drawing and painting as a way of tracking an experience but we can also riff with these experiences, like we



Top: Jeans doodle

Above: Phone doodle

are in one big improvisational dance.

In fact, spontaneous drawing looks and feels suspiciously like doodling. Yes doodling, that much maligned free-form drawing expression you might find yourself doing on a restaurant napkin, or in my daughter's case, on the leg of her jeans.

When she was seven, my daughter said she was double minded. She can remember every detail of a story being read to her while she draws, cuts paper or sews. She says it is harder for her to concentrate if her hands are not engaged in something creative.

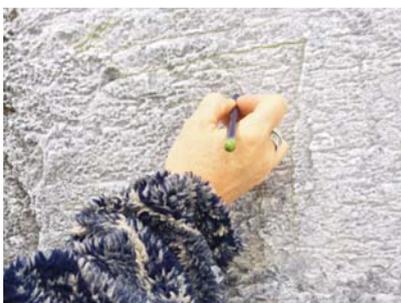
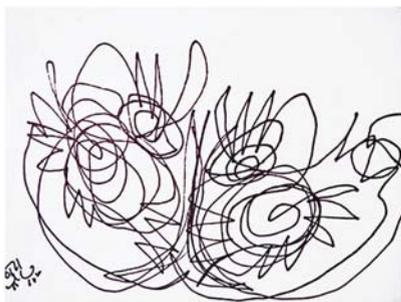
When I was a child, doodling didn't really get the credit it deserves."Stop doodling and do your Math", my grade school teacher would cry out. Doodling

was seen as dawdling, meandering without focus or purpose, wasting time, getting nothing done. I still like to doodle. I like to dream on the page, go with no plan, not apply myself and play with line and colour with a sleepy mind, with no particular direction. Somehow, when I doodle while on the phone I become deeply present with the person with whom I am speaking while I also understand more about how I am feeling as I watch an image unfold. I can actually see how the dialogue feels.

There is now research to support the notion that doodling helps to awaken more of our capacity for engagement. Doodling activist Sunni Brown agrees that doodling has had a bad rap. Click below to listen to her Doodlers Unite TED talk where she puts to rest the myth of doodling being a waste of time www.ted.com/talks/sunni_brown.html. In her latest book *The Doodle Revolution*, (2012), she claims to prove that doodling can ignite your whole brain. Psychologist, Jackie Andrade, published an article in the *Journal of Applied Cognitive Psychology* (February 2009) entitled: What Does Doodling Do? In it she recounts improved concentration and a 30% improvement in memory retention of participants who doodled while listening to a list of names over the phone versus those who didn't.

In conclusion, simply setting an intention to be spontaneous is a powerful, easily accessible channel for connection that makes us empathic participants in the earth story. If we pay attention to and act on what draws us in, we can spontaneously respond with a creative gesture to what nature presents to us anywhere, in any given moment, Over time, repeatedly creating spontaneously teaches us how to shift into a body-mind state that better aligns us to live in harmony with ourself and all earth beings. We are able to feel, to perceive, to meld more fully with the world. We activate our full human capacity for connection and participation. We access a fresh way to know self and earth through our creative nature.

I invite you to try it yourself. Grab three pieces of paper and a pen, close your eyes and let your right hand run freely across the page like a wild horse. Then turn over your page, switch hands and let your left hand out to play.



End by drawing with your eyes closed using both hands at the same time. What fun! Follow where your hands lead. Truly savour this time and rest your attention on the sensations associated with the movement of your hands.

Maybe your images will look something like this.

I invite you to follow this up with a nature walk. Where do you see doodles? Where can *you* doodle today? What draws you in? Maybe it's an icy rock, sand, a car window. The possibilities are endless.

Finally here's a link to a video called *Ice Art* I made just after the Ontario ice storm last Christmas. It demonstrates that you can truly be spontaneous anywhere at any time! <http://youtu.be/NvRiaNrI6y8>

Maybe it's time to start your own spontaneous art practice. There are lots of activities to get you started in my book *Beauty Muse: Painting in Communion with Nature* (2009). To learn more, visit: www.LisaLipsett.com

Top left: Two hand doodle

Middle: Car window doodle

Above: Drawing on icy rock

Top right: Coloured hand print

Creative by Nature Center – an on-line network with classes and event information:

www.creativebynature.org

Art – www.Lisalipsettimages.com

Blog – The Drive to Create: www.thedrivetocreate.com

WORDS FROM THE HEART

POETRY

SPRING EQUINOX

Mary Ann Moore

Many elements are different –
a labyrinth of stones,
bald eagle overhead –
but the yard with its lower pasture,
horses with their blankets,
Canada geese,
a row of poplars,
remind me of my childhood home
many decades, many provinces away.

The verdant morning air,
a small daisy along the narrow path,
renew my early imagination.
Here, I can be myself.
A meandering path to the centre.
A spiralling return.

From *Fishing for Mermaids*, poems by Mary Ann Moore, Leaf Press, 2014

VESUVIUS BAY, WINTER

Diana Hayes

I go down to the bay at dusk in winter,
in a strange skin not fish or woman,
and let my body walk away
from its life.
This moment here, that moment gone, no matter
that alarms ring, the mornings struggle on.
I walk into the sea with great relief
that my earthly self will not stare back at me,
that my skin, now electric with salt and pure cold
brings me to a wilder place of belonging,
in the company of seals and starfish
all eyes and whiskers, all rays of tangerine and mauve.
Here I sing to the great Neptune of this wet sanctuary,
I am here, I have arrived
without burden or restraint.
ready to swim into my life
now clear, no cloud or fear, nor loss.

From *Coming Home*, (anthology), Rainbow Publishers, 2003

Right: *Branch*, from the series, *Landscape for the End of Time*, 2010

Oil and charcoal on canvas, 4' x 19',
Stephen Hutchings



Below: *Approach*, from the series, *Landscape for the End of Time*, 2010

Oil and charcoal on canvas, 4' x 9',
Stephen Hutchings



LANDSCAPES FOR THE END OF TIME

Antoinette Voûte Roeder

Remember

the trees
mythical beings
many-branched
textured in leaves
The dappled shade
on sandy path
the living, breathing earth,

*Earth, the beloved,
briefly held.*

Remember

the rivers
broad and sinuous
curving into the
mist, mirror-glazed,
flowing off
the planet's edge,
planet earth

*the beloved,
briefly held.*

Remember

the seas, the sky
as at first dawn
when waters roiled,
stirred, became quiescent
Clouds took form, bloomed
bright and pastel shades

Remember

the last spasm
light unbearably intense,
halo of combustion
flames ferocious
and our earth,

*Beloved Earth,
briefly held, beheld, **behold!**
passes into memory.*

THE JOURNEY INTO ME



Pamela Nelson

Up until December, 2011, I had led a very strong left-brained life. I was an accomplished Business Advisor and Loans Analyst, had spent 25 plus years in business in the legal, technology and engineering industries. I had published my first book, *Broke Free Forever*, on changing personal money management behaviours. My first loves, aside from my family, were spreadsheets, websites, researching, writing and networking. As an extreme extrovert personality, I was involved in a number of non-profit organizations, on a number of boards, instigating projects, organizer of this and of that. In my spare time, I was tap-dancing, hiking, yoga-ing, and discussing how to save the world with my friends. I was the quintessential 'Get-er-Done' gal. Busy, happy ... always searching for more.

Many people have heard someone say *and my life changed forever*. Though I did not know until much later, on December 18th, 2011, an event took place that did change my life, forever. On that Sunday, I plummeted off our ice-laden deck and came smashing down on my head. It was a terribly hard fall. First, I landed on my head, then my elbow hit, then my lower back and then my legs. I lay on the ground for a moment or two, or three? Who knows! I remember thinking – “Oh, crap”, or something like that. “This is going to hurt tomorrow,” as I took a physical survey of myself to see if something might be broken. I pulled myself up, went on with my evening, and returned to work the next day, a week before Christmas.

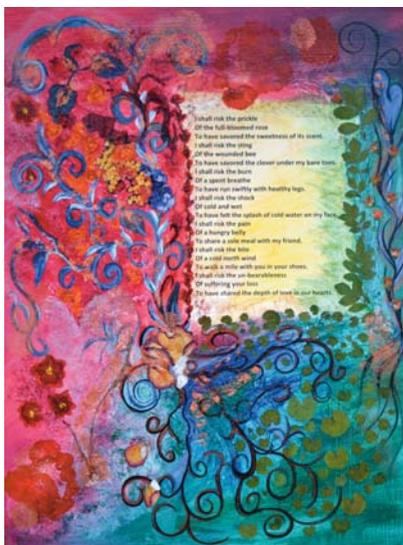
Despite my feeling stunned and scattered for quite some time - I'm overworked, need a vacation, it's the holidays - it wasn't until three weeks later that I learned I had suffered a severe concussion and whiplash. A colleague was concerned with my ever-expanding outward symptoms; symptoms I was overlooking as I was too stunned and confused to comprehend what was happening. After being sent home from work, it took another eight weeks of significantly diminishing cognitive ability before the extensive degree of damage to my brain finally hit a plateau.

Over a two-month span, I went from a very busy, driven life to one that consisted of basic grooming, eating, and staring out the window in quiet solitude, and of sleep. My neural processing slowed to a snail's pace. I couldn't even hold a conversation. I was isolated, confused, scared and no longer in control. My life had changed, forever.

I do not recognize this land. I hear my language and know that I can join the conversation, but my words come forth like broken English. My colours are all wrong, askew; they have changed and although I look the same, I appear differently. All of the effort, the years of work, of learning, of

Five Elements





Top: Power and Prose

Above: Risk the Prickle

If you were a ship
 sailing mightily over the seas
 and one day awoke on a track
 accustomed to trains
 would you no longer be a ship?
 Or would you be an ill-begotten train
 that clumsily tries to sail
 responding to the wind
 like a wing in the breeze,
 but is shackled by the tracks
 weighing heavily on the mast
 and breaking the spirit
 of the battered sails.

contribution, I am now silent to the masses, a shadow to the present, a whisper to the future.

In Lisa Genova's novel *Still Alice*, Simon and Schuster, 2009, the reader is taken on an incredible journey as the heroine, Alice loses her thoughts and memories to early-onset Alzheimer's disease. I have shared that journey, only backwards. Having suffered the immense decline of cognitive capability, I then slowly regained, reclaimed, and redefined my neurological structure towards recovery. It was the opposite journey to Alice's fall to Alzheimer's. Both journeys included experiences of confused mental status, lack of sustained attention, amnesia, slurred or incoherent speech, slow verbal response, memory deficits, headache, exhaustion, irritability, poor concentration, intolerance of bright lights and sounds, anxiety, sleep disturbances and depression. The significant difference was, as Alice was journeying into the abyss of neural malfunctioning, I was journeying away, healing and recovering from it.

Past the fear, sorrow, depression and despair, I was forced into a continuous solitude. I finally surrendered. I listened to the gentle loving and guiding voice in my heart. I learned to meditate, to work with crystals, to find solace in the sound of the trees and birds.

That is when I found the heART Fit program. I showed up having never painted, but with an open mind, a soft heart and a need to find a place to fit in. From the first stroke of my brush, I found solitude, comfort and healing. The weekly creative suggestions and challenges of the facilitator's email gave my heart some creative direction. This helped me to find, and connect with my creative being. Within heART Fit, I found permission to flow, to seek, to observe. The idea of my self-identity began to expand. No self-criticism; no judgment. I had permission to explore my heart, my heart communications through art, and to guide my recovery to a place of acceptance.

And then it happened. Validation. Acceptance. Not because of what I have done or achieved, but for *being ME*; for allowing my true heart to flow onto the canvas. And some people liked my work. Some people asked to see more. Within a span of nine months I went from picking up my first paint brush to having my art on exhibit at a conference, on the walls of Chai Baba Tea House and at the Delta Grand Resort. Oh, and I sold my first painting in November!

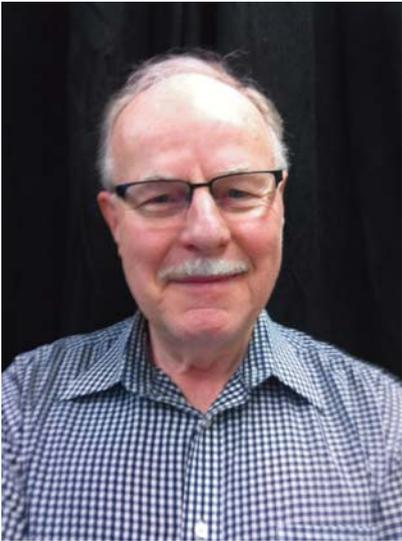
I don't know what is next, but I do know that the future is there, in front of me, with expanding boundaries and endless opportunities. I look forward to sharing my story of this journey, with my new insight, my fresh perspective, my grateful heart and my acrylic paints.

Pam

Website: www.pamelanelson.ca

Blog: <http://PreMeditatedProsperity.com>

ALCHEMY: RE-IMAGINED: TRANSFORMED



Ed Bownes

I, like many of you, could be described as a catalyst in the alchemy of change. This notion or analogy comes into play when we combine materials, elements and experiences that result in something re-imagined, transformed, useful and yes, to be enjoyed again.

As far back as I can remember, I was drawn to my dad's painting materials and in awe of the scenes he created on pieces of masonite (rough side out to give a look of texture). Through the years, I learned that his art was in part a result of a correspondence course he took during the 40's to make extra money in tough economic times.

Ever since then, he would create paintings to be given as wedding gifts for family and friends and after much encouragement, began to show and sell his works along with other local artists in Red Deer, Alberta.

As my wife, Edna, and I began to put our household together, we were fortunate to have *real* art to hang on our walls next to our new dining room suite. Over the next 40+ years, we enjoyed countless family meals, sharing stories at that table and experiencing the joy of watching our children and their families grow and develop.

When we moved to Kelowna, our beloved dining room suite would not fit into our new home. After trying to sell it, without success, I tried to give it away, also unsuccessfully. What to do?

I don't know if it's the Kelowna lifestyle or retirement, or the unleashing of my creative juices, but I have been driven to paint as my father did and build all sorts of things including jewel boxes, birdhouses, squirrel feeders, picture frames, cheese trays, etc. All these were built from scrap wood I've picked up at a local cedar mill. And guess what I ended up doing with part of the dining room suite?

We needed a new entertainment centre for our big TV and couldn't find anything suitable, so it came to me that we have the perfect pecan wood buffet just sitting there waiting to be given new life. That's exactly what I did. I refinished it to look "today", added glass doors to enable our sound systems to operate. We couldn't believe how great a fit it was for our needs - refurbished, repurposed, changed.

I didn't stop there. The table-top got cut into six inch boards that I then cut and glued together to make six inch cubes. This was the biggest transformation of all, becoming jewel boxes for our daughters-in-law for Christmas this year. Changed.

I don't know if it's the Kelowna lifestyle or retirement, or the unleashing of my creative juices, but I have been driven to paint as my father did and build all sorts of things.



Top left: Transformations

Top middle: Entertainment Centre

Top right: Bird House

Above: Jewel Box

The world today is seeking many ways to develop and harness renewable energy from something already in existence. Works of art and crafts are a form of energy transfer, proof that whatever the materials or the energy was like when it started out, may not in any way resemble what it became. Changed.

This brings to mind one of many stories in my work-life as a career consultant that represents how imagination and creativity exposes opportunity - what we see or think or do or have or feel, is not all that it can be. My client Jim came from the oil industry, and try as he did, he could not secure another suitable position. Frustrated and defeated,

he followed my suggestion that he revisit what makes him happiest, what he does or did best in his life, what gave him the joy of accomplishment. The lure of the oil industry, and the lifestyle he adopted basically buried his long forgotten skill and passion for the art of point or dot painting.

I encouraged him to follow that path to see if he could develop a future. If you know of the concepts in Spencer Johnson's famous book, *Who Moved My Cheese?*, an amazing way to deal with change, you would see the value in the statement, "imagining yourself enjoying new cheese will lead you to it". Cheese being the analogy for what makes you happy.

Sure enough, and as luck would have it, Jim found a way to transform his inner self (passion and skill as a dot artist) into a tangible and rewarding business. His business and life experience, coupled with his obvious painting talent soon took hold in the art world, and today he is invited to show in some of the most prestigious art galleries in the world. He is a happy man who applied the catalyst of opportunity and talent into a much different future than he left. Alive again. Changed.

ART IN TRANSIT

In reflection on the creative output of artists, we can be reminded that their art emerged from a far greater source of creativity, themselves. As the human race, we are genuine works of art, infinitely more complex and interesting than a crafted piece of art work.

The photographs displayed here pay homage to the beauty of the human form. They are a reminder that we are a work of art, always in the transit of aging. These photographs were created by Diana Hayes. The first two pictures remain from the photographic sequence created by her in 2002. An article on Diana is published on page 3 of this Journal.

Right: Swimming with Trout

Below left: Swimming with Trout

Below right: Angel Wania

This photograph was an unexpected surprise. I didn't alter it at all, and can only think that Wania was indeed an angel who shows so clearly in the photograph. My poem, *The Angel of Abadiania*, is dedicated to Wania Rogianni from Brazil.



CREATING POSITIVE INTENTION

Lorna Dieleman



My first time at HeART Fit was June 19, 2012. The experience touched deep into my soul and sparked a new sense of freedom I had never felt before. I felt welcomed and lifted by the incredible people that participate in this creative endeavour.

Two days later, my son who lives in Vancouver, and has no support system there seriously broke his leg. He needed our help and there were frequent trips to Vancouver for the next five months. Two months after his accident I discovered a lump on my neck and was diagnosed with a curable type of Non Hodgkin's Lymphoma. Thus began another incredible journey of discovery, of letting go, learning and acknowledging the lessons bestowed in a journey through cancer and the brutality of chemotherapy. Through all this, I longed to have the time and energy to go back and experience the magic of HeART Fit.

Returning to a clean bill of health in April, 2013, the summer was spent ridding the toxins in my body and rebuilding my energy; also preparing for the wedding of my daughter in September. HeART Fit was on my mind, wanting to go back, but feeling a fear of returning. I was scared that I couldn't touch that uninhibited freedom of spirit that I had experienced the first time I went. Venturing forward, I returned towards the end of October. I must admit there is a degree of frustration with the process of freeing my creative spirit in this arena of painting. I was challenging myself to let go of preconceived ideas, not to be critical of my ability and learn to *play* again.

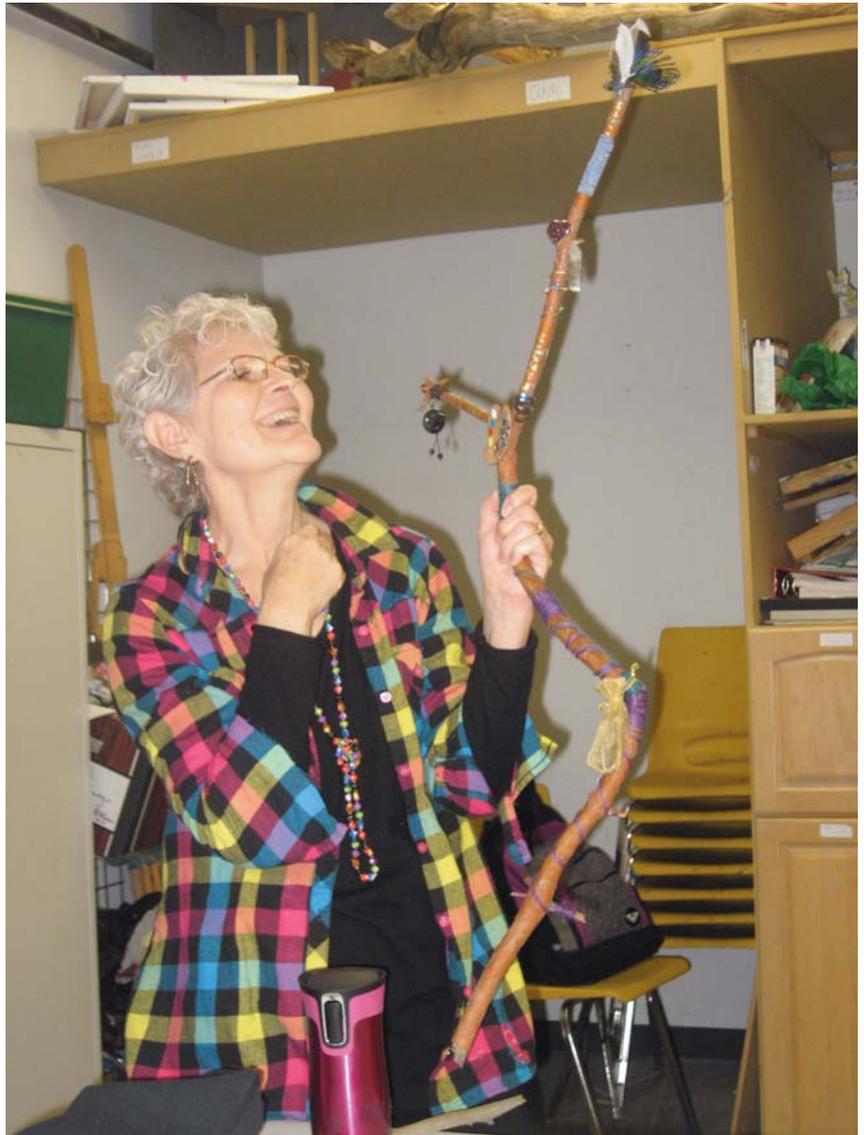
At HeART Fit, just before Christmas, some of us made intention or prayer sticks. I picked items to adorn it that meant something to me. I also had a deep concern about what intention I wanted it to express, or put out to the universe for assistance. First, my husband went on a hike with me to find just the right stick. This is significant because he journeys with me and supports me in all that life brings. I am so blessed to have him at my side. I wrapped the stick in areas with colorful burlap string from decorations my daughter and I had made for her wedding. On one branch, I placed a sparkly purple heart near a dangling crystal given to me by my son.

Spiraling up towards the crystal is a silver and bead bracelet that has a broken clasp, but is too nice to throw away as it was a gift from a friend. On another branch, I placed a leather woven necklace with a beautiful stone that I found lying in the road years ago. The necklace was a reminder that life often brings unexpected gifts into our lives. At the V in the stick I placed a broach

I was challenging myself to let go of preconceived ideas, not to be critical of my ability and learn to play again.

making memories

I do not aspire to be a great artist , painting wise, but to be a great artist in my living. Though creating a painting that I am pleased with will be a lovely bonus.



of a painter's pallet that had been my mother's. She was an inspiration to me to explore new things and question the norm. Above that is a single eye bead. Dangling in an organza bag are three metal tokens given to me by a beautiful friend who gave me Reiki throughout my cancer treatments. The words love, friendship and peace are inscribed on them. At the very top are feathers and a silver buebird because in the first painting I did at HeART Fit, a bird magically appeared in the painting. I interpreted this as a symbol of the freedom of spirit. Lastly, I wrote the words on the two forks of the branch, "Be gentle with yourself and Breathe free", the answer to my request to the universe.

HeART Fit is a gift I give myself. I am so blessed and thankful for all that life has brought my way. The people that frequent HeART Fit are part of that gift, nonjudgmental, welcoming, and encouraging. I do not aspire to be a great artist , painting wise, but to be a great artist in my living. Though creating a painting that I am pleased with will be a lovely bonus.

CULTIVATING A KIND SANCTUARY



Shauna Paynter

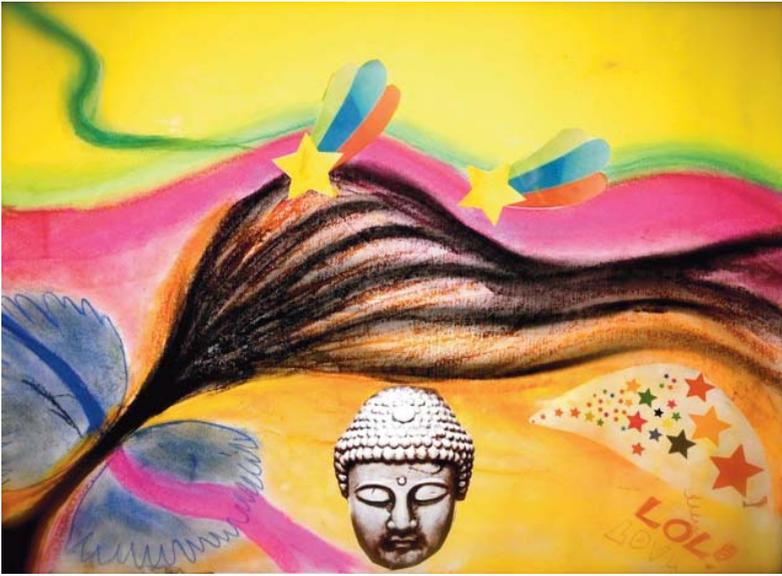
As an expressive art educator I strive to cultivate community enhancement from the inside out, where we engage in opportunities to consider, explore, and make sense of our lives using creative connection. Creativity is our birthright and one portal to inner wisdom and transpersonal awareness. By witnessing and honouring our personal creative process we delve into the relationship between creativity, intuition and multilevel awareness. Layering creative expression, even ritualizing it, assists in deepening this process to unearth and illuminate what might be lingering at the edge of our noticing. Through verbal and nonverbal activities, we safely access places within our psyche that are normally inaccessible to our waking consciousness. Through various exercises, geared toward deep listening and multiple ways of knowing, coupled with creative exploration, I support and facilitate others in embodying sacred details of their own lives – to expand awareness and weave together mind, body, and spirit such that our lives become visible signs of invisible grace.

Carl Jung suggests that expanding awareness into invisible realms of imagination and innovation is a necessary step in fully recognizing one's wholeness. Recognition and acceptance of the whole self can be accomplished through making meaning out of one's own experience. Various creative activities designed to touch the psycho-spiritual aspect of our being nurtures our inner essence. Building rapport with this inner essence entices the authentic part of our selves to step forth and support in living richer more meaningful lives: tenderly cultivating our hearts into a sanctuary of kindness where love pervades. To *make meaning* from the full spectrum of our experiences—including pain, joy, conflict, and deep love—augments our inner peace. And as we embody peace, we gift our circle of influence with peace, which ultimately enriches our community.

Recognition and acceptance of the whole self can be accomplished through making meaning out of one's own experience.

THE GIFT OF DUENDE

I am a student in an expressive arts program offered by Sofia University out of Palo Alto, California. My program of study is under the direction of Natalie Rogers, the daughter of Carl Rogers, one of the forefathers of humanistic psychology. One day we were assigned an expressive art exercise to complete with a partner. We would sit together and draw on a shared piece of paper without talking, allowing us to communicate silently, using other modes of expression instead of words. This non-verbal process would allow us to tune



Conversational Piece

Duende has been known to bring fresh feelings to old stories.

into the consciousness of the body, rather than the mind. When it was time to choose a partner, I found myself attracted to a tall dark and handsome fellow from Mexico named Juan Pablo. His first language was Spanish but he spoke English very well.

I could feel what I would describe as a *duende* energy rising in me before starting our non-verbal exchange. This feeling was familiar to me. It is my bodily response preceding a creative inspiration. A wild source of creative stimulation and power began to percolate deep in the marrow of my bones. On this particular day my mind felt civilized but my body wild. I wanted to

experience something out of the ordinary.

The word *duende* in Spanish has two meanings, one is *goblin or elf* and the other is used in artistic circles to describe the spirit of evocation or one's bodily reaction to art, music or dance. All arts are capable of inducing *duende*, but its greatest range is often discovered in music, dance, and spoken poetry. These arts require a living body to interpret them, a body holding its own stories of joy and hardship. *Duende* has been known to bring fresh feelings to old stories and to extract the unknown into the known, like a miracle emerging from within.

The *duende*, then, is a power, not a work. It is a struggle, not a thought. I have heard an old maestro of the guitar say, 'The *duende* is not in the throat; the *duende* climbs up inside you, from the soles of the feet.' Meaning this: it is not a question of ability, but of true, living style, of blood, of the most ancient culture, of spontaneous creation ... everything that has black sounds in it, has *duende* (Lorca, 1998, p.49).

When we began the exercise, Juan and I sat in a quiet awkwardness. We subtly struggled how to initiate our drawing with grace and ease, like a first kiss. It took time for me to settle into my bodily experience. Once there, I slipped beneath the veneer of ruminative thoughts and began touching upon the surface of a story. Sketching simultaneously in different areas of the paper we ultimately turned toward a more interactive process, touching and adding to each other's colours, lines, and shapes. I drew pink and yellow waves across the sheet while he added black lines stretching up from the bottom left corner to the middle of the page. The black lines appeared as a skinny hand or small broom. I was responding to his bodily reaction through my heart rather my mind. I was experiencing something out of the ordinary.

Within ten minutes we found ourselves standing, half turned toward one another joyfully sharing in this soundless co-creative piece. At the end of the process Juan Pablo added *LOL!* (laugh out loud) as his final item and I added the word *LOVE* underneath. The energy level between us lifted and imprinted upon me a memorable exchange.



THE MYSTICAL WE

Hidden inside of me and of you
is a sacred still place,
a field of magical opening.

Here,
blooming from blackness.
seeds of vitality and freedom
move from infinite to finite.
Unknown blissfully making itself known.

As
we step into
our innate
state of existence,
Joy and Love,
co-creation is honoured.

In this moment,
we are
re-awakening
to the truth of
Who We Are.

It was time for us to discuss our experience, but I had trouble accessing words. My limbic system had over-ridden my verbal capacity and *duende* continued to rise from within me. I experienced various emotions during our drawing process, including awkwardness, joy, sadness, uncertainty, love and warmth. In his reflecting, Juan Pablo disclosed his discomfort about adding dark components to our wordless conversation. He was worried that darkness might upset me or not fit with my intention. I was curious about his perception. In truth, I found the dark colours deeply satisfying as they gave foundation to our piece. I desired to explore this darkness further, to go into it. I felt it calling me.

This artistic concept of *duende* intrigues me. It is said to originate in the dark sounds, and in our case dark colour. Mutual reverberation between people necessitates this rising energy through the simple resonance of our humanness. Revisiting this piece one week later, on my own, I maintained my curiosity around the blackness in relation to this concept of *duende*: the rising energy that overtook me that day with Juan Pablo. Going into a quiet meditative state I took my time in amplifying and extending his dark colours using black pastel chalk. I extended these black waves into a graceful flowing horsetail. Then I superimposed a magazine cut Buddha face over a simple line drawing of Buddha that Juan Pablo and I had sketched together. I took this all on in hopes of bringing the unknown into the known. In doing so I began to feel a deep sense of liberation. Taking a luscious dive into this enigmatic fertile territory of black proved to elicit a somatically grounded experience with esoteric glimpses of a bigger story to be told. I discovered that within this blackness the call of my ancient blood was heard and spirit blew freely taking me to pristine pastures and gifting me new vision. The conversational art piece that Juan Pablo and I made became a catalyst for a set of words I wrote entitled *The Mystical We*.

For me, this non-verbal exercise opened doors of appreciation and gratitude toward the darkness that grounds me into the artistry of my life in relation to others. Engaging in this interaction slowed my cognitive reactive state and augmented mindfulness through sensate awareness. This creative, playful, yet powerful surge through my whole body transformed into a sacred experience of *duende*. By embracing this blackness I unearthed a new vitality inside myself and more fully realized the power of two—and our ever-present co-creative capacity.

CULTIVATING

Shauna Paynter is from British Columbia, Canada and holds a Master of Art in Transpersonal Psychology with a specialization in creativity and innovation. Her first career was in teaching high school science as she holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology as well as a professional teaching degree. At this moment, Shauna is pursuing certification in Expressive Arts for Healing and Social Change through Sofia University under the direction of Natalie Rogers. She has a keen interest in dream work conducting weekly active dream circles in her community and also has a published children's book titled *Applestory*.

<http://www.shaunapaynter.myefolio.com>

<http://red-apple-publishing.com>

FINDING MY WAY BACK



Renata Kerr

When I retired and moved to Kelowna four years ago, I was anxious to start painting again, but couldn't quite get myself motivated. There was always an excuse: my studio needed de-cluttering, I needed art supplies, the house needing vacuuming, I didn't have time... The real problem was simply that I was afraid to start. Demanding perfection of myself resulted in my doing nothing at all. It paralyzed me.

Just over a year ago, I discovered heART Fit. Or maybe it was heART Fit that found me. In any event, that discovery profoundly changed me. HeART Fit is a spontaneous process painting group that meets every Tuesday morning at the Rotary Centre for the Arts. There are no rules or instructions, although the facilitator, Karen Close, provides a theme and suggests an intention for each week. We are encouraged to trust ourselves and the process of creative spirit. At the end of the session, participants display their work. We are given an opportunity to really look at our work and see what it might be saying to us. We then participate in a guided discussion of all the works displayed.

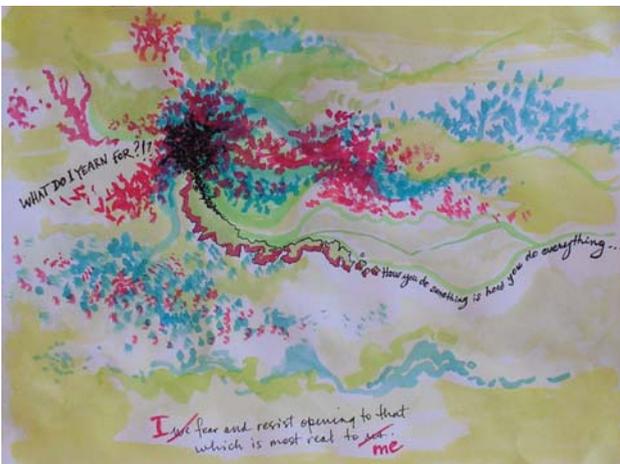
Coming to heART Fit for the first time was daunting. I was scared, self-conscious and unsure of what to do. What would I paint? What would people think of my work? What would they think of me? Would I be good enough? I am reminded of Virginia Woolf's observation, "Literature is strewn with the wreckage of men who have minded beyond reason the opinions of others." She of course could have been speaking of any creative pursuit. When I recall those early days, I suppose I did have reasons for feeling the way I did.

Firstly, having gone to the Ontario College of Art and Design (30 years ago), I spent a lot of time in the classroom defending and justifying every

stroke I put down on paper; criticism and rejection were daily occurrences back then. That feeling of needing things to be perfect stayed with me. I thought I would be subjected to the same kind of "critique" when I put my work up at the end of a heART Fit session. Secondly, my years of working as a graphic designer made me a very controlled, precise creator of applied art. As a corporate designer, the objective was always to pare down a design, be it a logo or page layout. When creating a corporate logo, for instance, my goal was to keep removing elements until I was left with the true essence of a company.

So coming to a spontaneous process painting class where there was no clear objective was very difficult for

tentative first effort (watercolour on paper)





Top: Wherever You Go (acrylic on canvas)

Above: Cyclone

me. After putting some marks down on paper, I found myself afraid to go further; I wanted to stop. I felt like I would go too far and ruin something special. My need to strip away wasn't allowing me to see where the work could take me. I was afraid to let go of control.

At the end of that first day, I timidly put my little watercolour on the wall alongside everyone else's work.

What a wonderful display of creative talent I saw up there from everyone! It was hard for me to talk about the feelings that went into my painting that day; my tendency was to criticize my work instead. But the supportive fellow heArtists got me through. Each subsequent session got a bit easier, although being an introvert I'm still not totally comfortable putting myself out there in that way.

Looking at all the work on display each week, I am struck by how very different we all are. Even when presented with the same theme, everyone's interpretation is vastly different. Everyone brings their own experience and bias to the painting process. No two paintings are ever alike, not even remotely. So why would everyone respond to a piece of art the same way? How is it even possible to try to please everyone? Short answer, it isn't. In the end, the only person you can please is yourself.

That realization has brought me a lot of peace (and not just with respect to my art), and a renewed sense of purpose.

I have rediscovered my love of painting and the opportunity it provides for creative expression. All of a sudden, I'm not worried about making something perfect. In fact, I'm embracing imperfection! I'm not concerned about the end result; it's the process that is most important. I don't even care (too much) about what other people think. I've come to understand that what someone thinks of my art is more a reflection of them, and not of me. I am very heartened, though, if my work touches a viewer in some profound way. Our energies connect at that point, and the experience is a healing gift for both of us.

I'm discovering new ways to express myself. I happily get messy using my fingers or hands as my painting tools. I randomly choose a colour, close my eyes, and start moving my hands across the canvas. My heart directs the movements. I have no idea where it will lead me. Not everything is a success. That's okay. I simply put that canvas away for awhile. Sometimes I'll come back to it a few weeks later and work through the difficult parts. Other times I'll paint right over it. The first time I obliterated a painting in this way was really tough; I almost couldn't make myself do it.



Top: Peace Above All

Above: Secrets

But whether these paintings were worked through to the end or totally reworked to become something else, I trusted my instincts. Thus, those works go deep; there are so many layers underneath, all contributing to the soul of the painting, even though those layers may be hidden from view.

People who know me will know that I live by the code “less is more”. So even I am surprised to see what I create at times! My paintings are filled with texture and vivid explosions of colour; they are full of movement. Perhaps I’m finally letting go of some of that control (and fear) I’ve been hanging on to.

I’ve come to believe in the healing power of art. The past year has been a tumultuous one for me, one filled with delightful highs but also incredible lows, including health scares and the recent sudden deaths, on separate occasions, of two members of my family. I have managed to keep my equilibrium throughout. Opening myself up to my painting has helped me, more than I would have imagined. As Brené Brown has written, “Unused creativity is **not** benign”. How very true that is. Painting is like meditation for me. When I’m working on a piece, everything around me disappears. I’m lost in my inner world. When I finally look up, I’m surprised to see that hours have flown by. In

that time, I have left stress and worry behind; all I’ve thought about is being in the moment and relaxing into the process. What comes through in my work is the authentic me, because it comes directly from my heart.

Renata Kerr was born in England to Polish parents. The family emigrated to Canada when she was a youngster, and settled in London, Ontario. After graduating from the Ontario College of Art and Design in the 1980s, Renata worked as a graphic designer in Ontario and Europe for 25 years. Since moving to Kelowna four years ago, she has rediscovered her love of painting and the opportunity it provides for creative expression. She believes in the healing power of art. Contact renata.lessismore@gmail.com

HAVE YOU EVER?



Diane Allan

Have you ever walked slowly out onto the grasslands, the ancient broad plain that flows thousands of miles across our continent? The great blue sky fills most of your eye. The hills roll so gently off beyond the horizon the uninitiated call it flat. In some places there is rarely a tree or even a bush to interrupt the long, slender fingers of land; brown soil bare to the carving hand of wind.

The sharp cliff edges shaped by elemental ice and running water shelter the darting cliff swallow and conceal the toffee faced badger.

Have you ever walked a fence line for miles; feet moving forward and ever forward to reclaim, reconnect to first home? Pretentious barbs attempt to claim a small sample; an artificial barrier meaningless and easily crossed in vast space. Coyote and deer still own it all, strolling and seeking family and food wherever they wish. The wild ones call this home and have earned the right.

Have you ever lain back and felt the millennial earth's story beneath you? Fossils of the first seas and dinosaur and buffalo bones make up the soil, along with the glacial dirt. The trails plotted out by the first peoples in their hunting and trade routes formed a limitless chain, links between tribes still followed today by dark ribbons of asphalt.

Have you ever lain in a place so long and so still that far-sighted hawks floating on thermals drift down to check for a possible meal? The sun is so hot

celestial





the seeming nothingness is cosmic

that the body melts into the ground like butter until only squinted eyes remain, watching mile high puffballs gradually take shape, move and flow and then wisp away. The swirling and whining mosquito eventually give up, the poison oiled on skin not to their liking. The flies just keep on coming, never tiring of tasting and licking salty sweat.

Have you ever felt your soul stir to the haunting whistle of a train, invisibly present by sound alone? Sage whistles in the tiniest breeze, grey green life relying upon roots deep in the damp underground, hiding from sun that bakes to dust in drought years. The greens and yellows and browns so subtly unique no palette could capture the glow. Small sparks of fiery orange and yellow bloom, bright lives short in their dry bed.

Have you ever sat and listened to only the sough of the wind slipping under your hat? It is the inestimable vast silence that draws me. Oh, the seeming nothingness is cosmic, full and wide open it holds me.

This is home. Love of this place lifts my spirit into the celestial.

Sunset and the swallows dip up and beyond the small brown bobbins that flit and fly between weeds seeking seeds. A spider leaps into the wind; she will go far, knows not where; a thread of my life, echoed in hers.

Diane Allan presently lives in Calgary and has been an Albertan all of her life. She recently retired from a very fulfilling career as a social worker. Raised on the prairies, the grasslands are in her blood. Being outdoors, walking, taking photos or doing nothing, but soaking up the surroundings are her favorite activities. In the last two years, writing poems or short stories about this strong connection to nature has been added to her repertoire. She is a member of an Art Journaling Group that has been supporting each others' creative efforts for a number of years, a group she is most grateful to.

SAGE-ING WITH CREATIVE SPIRIT, GRACE & GRATITUDE

A Journal of the Arts & Aging

Edited by Karen Close
& Carolyn Cowan

NUMBER II, SPRING 2014
ISSN 1920-5848

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

3. SACRED ART: THE POETRY AND PHOTOGRAPHY OF DIANA HAYES
Mary Ann Moore
8. SOMETHING TO SAY
Karen Suzanne Smithson
11. PAYING CREATIVE ATTENTION
Robert MacDonald
13. OH, THE PLACES I'LL GO
Donna Rubadeau
16. THE SLEEPING BEAUTY OF THE ELBE
Harold Rhenisch
20. POP-UP-POETRY Lesley-Anne Evans
23. DOODLING: THE JOY OF SPONTANEOUS ART Lisa Lipsett
27. WORDS FROM THE HEART - POETRY
29. THE JOURNEY INTO ME Pam Nelson
31. ALCHEMY: RE-IMAGINED: TRANSFORMED Ed Bownes
33. ART IN TRANSIT
34. CREATING POSITIVE INTENTION
Lorna Dieleman
36. CULTIVATING A KIND SANCTUARY
Shauna Paynter
39. FINDING MY WAY BACK Renata Kerr
42. HAVE YOU EVER? Diane Allan

A PUBLICATION OF THE
OKANAGAN INSTITUTE

AVAILABLE ONLINE AT
www.sageing.ca
Email sageing4@gmail.com

Sage-ing With Creative Spirit, Grace and Gratitude exists to honour the transformational power of creativity. We are a quarterly journal intended as an initiative for collaboration and sharing. We present 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. Ageing 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.