

THE JOURNAL OF Creative Aging

SAGE-ING

with Creative Spirit, Grace & Gratitude



A PUBLICATION OF
THE OKANAGAN INSTITUTE
NUMBER 29, SPRING 2019
EDITED BY KAREN CLOSE

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When we allow our hearts to resonate with stories, we feel a reverberation, the echoing spirit of all humanity, and the universe itself, beating within. We are called into harmony, and we feel our spirits aligned with all that is. As Wedlidi Speck states in his introduction to this important book:

Reconciliation is storied differently by different people... In the end, by sharing the stories in this book, we may just find the definition of reconciliation is embedded in each story shared... Readers will find that reconciliation is personal, and it includes family and aims towards community. To that end, in order to understand the fullness and richness of reconciliation, we hope each reader will find a role in reconciliation by placing all these stories together in a mixing bowl of sorts and coming up with a broader view that will heighten our country's cultural awareness, deepen Canadian sensitivity, sharpen Canadian agility and grow cultural safety in all our country's homes, villages and work spaces.

The Journal of Creative Aging

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SAGE-ING WITH CREATIVE SPIRIT, GRACE & GRATITUDE

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Cover image by Heidi Thompson

FROM THE EDITOR

Last November I took a beautiful Okanagan drive to visit an artist in residence at the Caetani Cultural Centre in Vernon. Upon entering the drive, the property's authentic and idiosyncratic charm was evident. I knew the history and the dedication that has gone into keeping this centre striving to manifest the goals of its donor and wanted to pay tribute. On April 27 it will be twenty-five years since Sveva Caetani deceased and left her home to the city. As I collected the articles for this issue my enthusiasm grew. The dead are not dead. Under the abundant vegetation, randomly sprouting on the Caetani property, there is a rhizome. I felt the analogy with the underground life force that is creative energy. It keeps our species alive.

Virginia Woolf comforted herself with this belief: "I mean all human beings – are connected with this; that the whole world is a

work of art; that we are parts of the work of art...we are the words; we are the music; we are the thing itself."

Poet, painter, essayist, author and playwright e.e. cummings said it in his way, "The Artist is no other than he who unlearns what he has learned, in order to know himself...to become alive, or one's self, means everything."

This issue is an expression of gratitude to Sveva Caetani and her vision. We have contributions from her biographers and those who have been influenced by her vision of self exploration through creative expression – some knowingly, some unawares, but guided. For me the delight of bringing the Sage-ing Journal to you is that it has become evident that there is a growing community of self exploring artists, across our country and indeed around the world. Like all rhizomes, the creativity rootstock contains nodes from which more

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roots and shoots originate where conditions permit. A dialogue evolved among contributors. The neologism RhiZoom B(l)oomers was suggested and embraced. Susan McCaslin concluded, "This just proves how 'rhizome energy' emerges when mind and hearts conjoin through inclusive communities."

Let me repeat my urging in Issue 28. "May 'the Force' be with you...allow your creative spirit to meet your deepest needs and lead you to come to your natural wisdom." Please then share your wisdom with us. Be a RhiZoom B(l)oomer.

— Karen Close, Editor

SUBMITTING AN ARTICLE TO SAGE-ING

- Article is to be related to aging and creativity, in any of its many forms, as a path to gaining wisdom and self awareness and/or the act of harvesting life's wisdom as a legacy for future generations.
- Article to be attached as a document in .rtf format;
- 500 to a 1500 word maximum;
- Photos: Please attach each photo separately including: the writer's headshot photo and four or five photos, related to article . All photos should be attached in high resolution jpg format with a caption;
- Insert the word "**photo**" with its caption within the article where you would like each image placed (we'll try to honour this request as layout permits).
- Please include brief bio information (one or two short paragraphs) placed at the end of your article; this is meant to give the reader an idea of who you are, your passions and/or what you do and have done with your life that feels relevant to the article. Include contact info: email, website, blog address – whatever you want to include. Our next issue will be Autumn 2019. In conjunction with the 10th anniversary of Culture Days and its theme of Creativity, Arts and Well-being, our issue will have a special focus on that theme.
For that issue the due date for submissions will be July 15..
- Email the article and photographs to karensageing@gmail.com

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

— Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics* 1246b

SVEVA CAETANI

THE ENDURING LEGACY



Karen Close

“The Artist is no other than he [she] who unlearns what he [she] has learned, in order to know himself[herself]; and the agony of the Artist, far from being the result of the world’s failure to discover and appreciate him [her], arises from his [her] own personal struggle to discover, to appreciate and finally to express himself[herself] ... to become an Artist means nothing: whereas to become alive, or one’s self, means everything.” – e.e. cummings, poet, painter, essayist, author and playwright

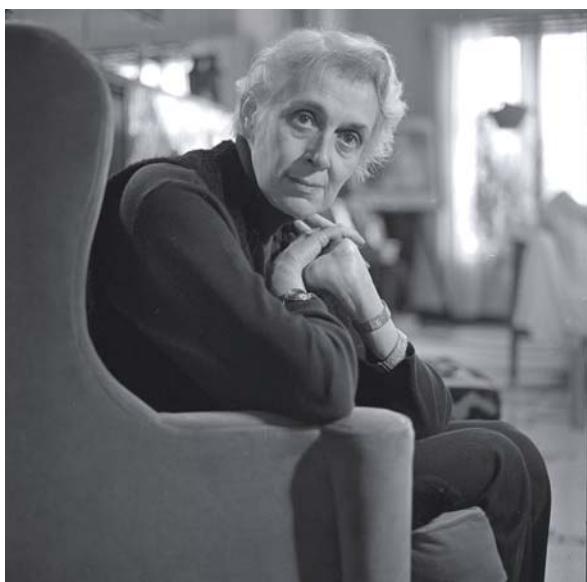
The struggle to discover, to appreciate and finally to express oneself is the human struggle. *Know yourself. Be yourself. Love Yourself. Share Yourself.* Cummings’ lifelong belief was a simple faith in the miracle of every human’s individuality. Sveva Caetani passed away on April 27, 1994. Her life story and legacy are significant. They mean everything.

Spring 2019 will culminate twenty-five years of dedication, loyal support and hard work by those who have understood Sveva’s wisdom. Vernon’s *Caetani Cultural Centre* (<https://www.caetani.org>) manifests the enduring legacy of Sveva Caetani.

“After a life of isolation, heartbreakingly loneliness and – in later years – physical disability, Sveva gathered all her courage and strength to embark on a mental and spiritual journey that took her to the deepest, most painful and joyous places in her past. There she examined the conditions and people that shaped her life and mind. In the process she gained insight about truth, humanity, love and herself.” – Heidi Thompson, in Sveva Caetani’s *Recapitulation: A Journey*

Below left: Sveva Caetani (photo by Heidi Thompson)

Below right: Sveva in front of a *Recapitulation* image (photo by Heidi Thompson)





From 1978 to 1989 Sveva painted *Recapitulation*, a series of images recounting her experiences and perspectives on life, loosely based on *The Divine Comedy* in which Dante describes his mental and spiritual journey through Hell, Purgatory and Heaven. Despite failing health, Sveva completed her series of 47 large watercolour paintings five years before her death. Her story is one of overcoming adversity and rising above her circumstances. After her death in 1994, Sveva left her 1.5 acres of gardens and historic home to the community of Greater Vernon with the express wish that it serve as a community cultural facility for artistic and critical exploration. *Caetani Cultural Centre* offers three funded creative residencies for creatives from around Canada and the world to explore a diverse range of arts practices, theories and experiences. As well, the centre offers a variety of workshops, programs and special events. With the support of those who appreciate the generosity and wisdom of Sveva's sage visionary gift, she continues to nurture creative spirit into the future. Before her death, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts in Edmonton gratefully accepted the *Recapitulation* collection and continues to preserve it.

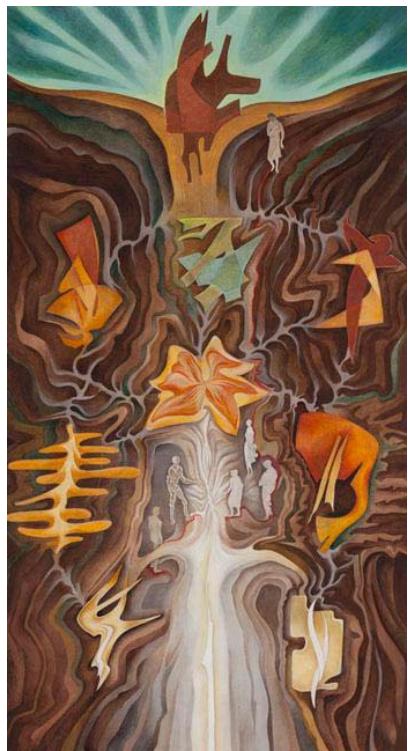
In the prologue to his *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Carl Jung writes of seeing life "like a plant that lives on its rhizome" or mass of roots. Life above ground is "ephemeral." But underground, something lives – "something...lives and endures underneath the eternal flux. What we see is the blossom, which passes." For humans the rhizome is perhaps creative energy that is humanity's connection to the energy of the universe. Jung describes the collective unconscious as common to all human beings and buried within each as inspiration and the nurturing source for the Self, the soul. In describing "The Tree Beneath the Root" from the *Recapitulation* series, Sveva explains, "I have inverted the original Jewish Tree of Life to show God as I feel Him to be, working up from the very ground of things, rather than down to the world. I have placed myself near the surface of the earth, since I am still living." Her description seems a visionary understanding of how a life sprouts from the human rhizome.

By gifting the property that sustained her during her creative journey to achieve confirmation of life's meaning, Sveva is preserving the rhizome, providing sustenance for the creative growth of future life explorers. As e.e. cummings noted, "to become alive, or one's self, means everything."

Twenty-five years after her death, few remain of those who felt the depth of Sveva Caetani while she was alive. Vernon artist Heidi Thompson, principal editor of the award-winning book *Recapitulation: A Journey*, by Sveva Caetani, is one of those. This issue of *The Journal* celebrates Sveva's enduring legacy, evidence of what Susan McCaslin speculated is the "underground regenerative power of the rhizome to create ever more rhizome-nourished beings." Creators Daphne Marlatt, Penn Kemp and Devon Muhlert each share how they have been affected by Sveva, and indeed still feel her nudge. The legacy of Sveva Caetani endures.

Top: With support Sveva prevailed (photo by Heidi Thompson)

Above: The Tree Beneath the Root
(copyright Vernon Art Gallery)



NEVER STOP FIGHTING FOR YOUR DREAM

Heidi Thompson



In 1974, Sveva Caetani was a guest speaker at our high school in Vernon. Her passionate discussion about art, humanity and history was the most inspiring experience of my life. I remember she ardently emphasized that we must follow our dreams, learn about art and history, and always strive to achieve our goals, no matter the obstacles. After graduation, I moved to Europe to study art and photography. During those nine years, I always remembered Sveva's words, "Never stop fighting for your dream." At that time, I had no idea that one day I would truly understand why these words were so important for her.

In 1984, I returned to Vernon a trained photographer and painter. I felt isolated being away from the inspiring European culture. I needed to find someone who would understand my struggle. I heard about this artist woman living alone in a large house on Pleasant Valley Road. I went into the fenced yard, up to the house and knocked on the door. Out stepped a towering woman who leaned on a cane and bellowed, "What do you want, Child?" I was 26 years old, but still felt very young. First, I didn't recognize her, but later realized it was Sveva! She found out I was a photographer, and changed her tone. She asked if I would be willing to document her paintings. She ushered me into her home. I was immediately drawn into her mystical and marvellous world of art, books and history. That was the beginning of our ten-year friendship, a friendship that helped me through countless ups and downs struggling as an artist.

During those ten years, Sveva would invite me over to photograph her paintings. These works were to become a monumental project she called *Recapitulation*. She told me that one day, while driving home from teaching in Lumby, she experienced an epiphany. She saw in detail forty-seven paintings and knew what she had to do – paint them. She set to work, using every spare minute and working late into the night. Each painting took about six months to complete. Each painting illustrated a part of her life, an aspect of her personal journey through Hell, Purgatory and Heaven. *Recapitulation* was inspired by Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

The more I listened to Sveva's stories, the more I learned about her illustrious Italian heritage. A great-uncle, generations removed, was Pope Boniface VIII, one of Dante's nefarious characters in the *Divine Comedy*. I learned how the Caetani family had been influential in shaping Italy. Sveva talked about her father, Leone Caetani, and his scholarly work rewriting the

history of Islam. Leone was a socialist and liberal thinker, and inspired Sveva's views on life. I learned that at age four, she, her father and mother immigrated to Vernon to escape Fascism. She told me about Leone's tragic death from throat cancer when she was 18. She talked sadly about the ensuing twenty-five years when she was forced to stay within the confines of her home. This was to appease her autocratic mother who suffered from anxiety attacks and possibly agoraphobia. Despite her virtual imprisonment, Sveva never spoke unkindly about her mother and always expressed admiration and compassion.

The most important time in Sveva's life was when she was forty-three. Her mother had passed, and Sveva was free to pursue her dreams. How her life blossomed! She would light up with joy as she retold all the stories about getting a teaching degree, being the first to teach French in Vernon and getting hired as an art teacher at a Lumby high school. She proudly described getting her driver's licence and getting known for her wild driving habits. For many years she dedicated her life to helping educate young people. During our visits, many of her old students would stop by and pay their respects. Sveva had a following of students who loved her. Why? Because she encouraged them to follow their dreams, she helped them improve their art with positive critique, and she provided a living example of what it means to be an artist. Sveva loved these old students as if they were her own children.

As Sveva grew older, her health seriously declined. Her legs kept breaking due to a hereditary disease of the muscles. She was forced to retire.

Sveva in her garden (photo by Heidi Thompson)



When I met her she was walking with a cane, subsequently relying on a wheelchair. In the later years she was bedridden, dependent on a lift to get her in and out of bed. However, despite severe arthritis in her hands, she continued painting. It was painstaking. She used a fine-tipped brush, and built up her watercolours with thousands of tiny dots and lines. Nothing stopped her and she rarely complained. She was determined to finish her *Recapitulation* series before she died. Even before she completed the project in 1989, Sveva offered to donate her forty-seven large watercolours to the *Alberta Foundation for the Arts* in Edmonton. She also announced that she would bequeath her house and property to Vernon to be used as a cultural centre to support artists.

Every visit with Sveva to photo-



Sveva with her work

ries along with her philosophical poetry and prose. She accepted graciously, and we began working together on the content and design of the book. Sadly, however, Sveva died April 27, 1994, and never saw the publication completed. I will be forever grateful for our friendship, and will always remember what she taught me – never give up your dreams. Before Sveva passed, she wrote: “Each of us is alone at the end. First you say goodbye to those you love. Then you walk the narrow sword-blade of reality and face the evil and weakness in yourself. Then you hear the voice of God and the voice of God tells you, ‘You will never know or understand, you can only love.’”

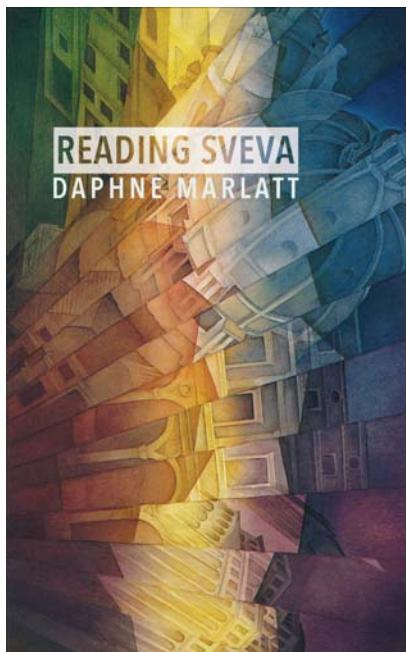
Heidi Thompson was born in Vernon, B.C. After graduating high school, she moved to Europe to study art. From 1975 to 1979 she attended the University of Art & Design in Zürich, earning a diploma in professional photography. Heidi then moved to Nürnberg and apprenticed with German painter Oskar Koller. Koller recommended that she continue her art education at the Akademie der Bildene Künste Nürnberg. Heidi was accepted, and spent one year under the guidance of Professor Ernst Weil. However, seeking a more traditional art school, she moved to Budapest to study painting with Professor Kokas Ignac at the Hungarian State University for Fine Art. In 1982, Heidi returned to Canada and worked as a freelance photographer, painter and book publisher. Her book, *Recapitulation* by Sveva Caetani, won the VanCity Book of Excellence award. Heidi is married to Edward Thompson; they have one daughter. Currently, Heidi Thompson paints full-time and exhibits her art in Europe, Canada and the USA.

graph her work was enthralling. Sveva was dramatic in her delivery, and there was never a dull moment listening. Her greatest talent was her ability to see inside you, feel your passion, know your struggles, and encourage you to continue following your unique path. She always spoke to that inner being within. I think that is why so many people loved her. I knew many young artists who pursued their journeys because of her encouragement. Sveva always encouraged me to be myself, never copy anyone, never change my style to suit someone else, and work towards finding my unique, individual expression. She said life is not easy, but the struggle is worth it. After ten years of friendship, I looked back and realized why she had encouraged us students the way she did.

In October 1993, I asked Sveva if I could publish her *Recapitulation* se-

SNAPSHOTS OF SVEVA

Daphne Marlatt



Excerpts from “Introduction to a Gifted Life,” *Reading Sveva* by Daphne Marlatt (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 2016)

...[S]he emerged into her own remarkable vision and art. How she must have struggled for belief in herself and her talent.

...(Recapitulation) introduced me to her vibrant painting and in equal measure, to her joyous embrace of life and her antipathy towards the meanest and most violent aspects of the human psyche. Here was an artist who had lived most of her life in small-town Vernon but whose intellect found deep sources in Christian, European, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, and Buddhist cultures, as well as Western philosophy and contemporary scientific research into the atom and the universe. A child immigrant, the only daughter of an Italian aristocrat who was also an internationally recognized scholar of Islam, Sveva had lived a privileged and highly cultured life until his death when she was in her teens, after which she was compelled to live in seclusion and mourning with her widowed mother. At the age of forty-three, suddenly liberated by the death of her mother, a death she also grieved, she came out into the world of Vernon and had to earn her own living for the first time. Remarkably, none of this deterred her “great gusto for Art and Life.”

...And so began my curiosity about Sveva Caetani and my admiration for her as an intellectual seeker and visionary narrator of her own life with its immense transitions.

...Sveva was three years old when they arrived in Vernon with thirty pieces of luggage, Leone’s valet, Ofelia’s secretary, and an Italian cook.

...Ofelia, habituated to the haute couture salons of Paris, the Roman villa Leone had built for her, Russian novels, and Parisian culture, insisted that each year the family return to Europe for a few months

...He (Leone) imparted his intellectual curiosity and learning, as well as his pleasure in sustained physical work, to Sveva..., who had for company both father and mother, governesses who were often young, as well as the endlessly patient Miss Jüül, and a series of family dogs both large and small with whom she played, but no other children. She displayed a talent for art and was given six months at an art school in Paris.

...Then, in 1934, Leone was diagnosed with throat cancer and admitted to the Mayo Clinic where he was treated intensively for almost a year. After a brief remission at home, he went to the Vancouver General Hospital where he died on Christmas Day, 1935, a life-changing event for both Sveva and her

mother. While at the Mayo Clinic, he sent a telegram to his daughter urging her to memorize the whole of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, perhaps as a way to distract her from worry and grief. It's difficult to know whether he foresaw the subsequent years of his daughter's life. In any case, he willed their Pleasant Valley home in Vernon to her.

...After Leone's death, Ofelia, who had a weak heart, went into seclusion for twenty-five years, taking Sveva with her. Ties to the outside world were cut off, although her daughter had not yet completed grade twelve. Sveva was forbidden to leave the property and any letters from her Crofton House friends were intercepted. She was encouraged to read books but painting was forbidden as "a waste of time."

...On New Year's Eve, 1960, Ofelia died, leaving the little money she had to Marie Jüül and her Roman property to the Catholic Church. This left Sveva with the necessity of supporting herself and the elderly Marie, always a patient and a affectionate second mother to her. When Ofelia died, Sveva was forty-four and had never worked outside her home. She was given a teaching position in the parochial school attached to St. James Catholic Church. On the advice of kindly neighbours, she joined several clubs in Vernon, including the Naturalists' Club, bought a car, and formed a number of lasting and very supportive friendships... [W]ith financial help from friends, she moved herself and Marie to Victoria where she completed her grade twelve, then enrolled for two years at the University of Victoria, gaining her certificate.

...In the summer of 1972, Sveva and Marie returned to Vernon. Hired to teach art and social studies at Charles Bloom Secondary School in Lumby, Sveva rented a little house for the two of them in that small community just east of Vernon. Marie died there the following spring.

...(In the spring of 1973) Sveva embarked on an intense period of both painting and teaching, soon exhibiting one of her watercolours in a group show of Okanagan artists at the Burnaby Art Gallery. In 1976, she moved back to her Pleasant Valley home and set up a studio for herself while continuing to teach. She had already begun to sketch, in writing, scenes from her life in the form of a spiritual journey based loosely on the structure of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, with Leone as her "Virgil" guide.

...In 1978, she began to paint what would become the series of fifty-six images that comprise her vision of contemporary *infernos*, *purgatorios*, and *paradisos*. Tiny figures of Leone, Sveva, and very occasionally Ofelia, poled in a punt-like boat by Leone's cousin Lovatelli as "Charon," appear in many of these paintings. From 1975 to 1989, *Recapitulation* preoccupied her. Each painting arose first as an "image-spark" she would draw, then paint in successive layers of dry-brush watercolour and comment on in writing.

...What particularly interests me in *Recapitulation* is the way her work couples autobiographical content with social commentary in dry-brush watercolour paintings that glow with a visionary intensity. Karen Avery, in her thesis on the autobiographical narrative of these serial paintings, notes how Sveva represents herself as "a moving character in a drama" so that "the

subjectivity in *Recapitulation* is in a constant state of flux.” This could not be otherwise for an artist interested in paradox, in movement (as a driver she was a chronic speeder), in energy and its materialization in the universe.

...Although I was intrigued by the complexities of the Caetani family romance, what increasingly drew me to Sveva’s work is the ontological question expressed in much of her writing: What is the role of human consciousness in the larger orders of the cosmos?

...Self-awareness meant for her an understanding of how we are apprehending particles in waves of inter-relation, mind-bodies embedded in what we know of history, culture, our immediate surroundings, pervaded by the unknowable energies of the cosmos. She would concur, I think, with Marilynne Robinson’s definition of this kind of awareness as an active engagement of “the self that stands apart from itself, that questions, reconsiderers, appraises.” It is this questioning mind that is so apparent in much of her writing.

...My poems address her frequently as “you,” a mark of how much my thinking about her work and life became an intimate engagement. In these one-sided dialogues with her, I have tried to read some of the energy of her questioning, reconsidering, and appraising “self.”

Beo

(Ofelia’s nickname for Sveva).

West Coast poet **Daphne Marlatt**’s many titles include *Steveston, The Given* (awarded the Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize), *Liquidities: Vancouver Poems Then and Now*, and *Reading Sveva*, a poetic response to the work of the Italian-Canadian painter Sveva Caetani. In 2013, House of Anansi published a new edition of her critically acclaimed novel *Ana Historic*, with foreword by Lynn Crosby. In 2017, Talonbooks released *Intertidal: The Collected Earlier Poems 1968-2008*, edited by Susan Holbrook. Marlatt was awarded the 2012 George Woodcock Lifetime Achievement Award. She has taught and served as writer in residence at half a dozen universities across Canada, edited two oral histories and co-founded the bilingual feminist journal *Tessera*.

you with the knobby knees, long legs, flat-footed Beo sending
 missives to Mau, declaring love, love for lion mother Bast of
 alabaster skin, inscrutable
 e belle, si belle
 you outgrowing yourself beside her, you chatty and thin beside
 mother cat who held all promise, chatoyant, urbane,
 mercurial
 e feroce
 with a cat mother’s strength to protect
 single-minded

Beo bébé who adored
 who would be oh
 so much more

than Beo caged mynah or mine. could she have foreseen, so
 naming you so
 young then gangly one cartooning yourself *Beo Bibliotecario, Beo Postino*,
 Beo with pen –
 you opening yourself to the world?

CATALYST FOR CREATIVITY

Penn Kemp

Sveva Caetani is very much a symbol of the rhizome of creativity. Her own imagination was vividly encouraged by her father, the patrician Leone Caetani, through an in-depth cultural education. After his death, her mother, Ofelia, just as actively discouraged Sveva's creativity: she was allowed to read widely but not to write nor to draw, and Ofelia demanded her daughter stay home at Caetani House. With Ofelia's death, Sveva's inventiveness flourished in a whole series of marvellous paintings, *Recapitulation*, honouring Leone as Virgil.

A local teacher, Sveva influenced the lives of many, not only her students, but her gardener of thirteen years, the Vernon poet John La Greca. He writes: "Sveva Caetani was a mentor. A friend. A godsend. I read her books and magazines, drank her tea. We discussed politics, history and art, plus a bit of local gossip. In certain ways, I am who I am because of her.... She said I should write more poetry after seeing my work."

Sveva was an inspiration in her lifetime, and after. Her bequest of Caetani House has been an extraordinarily influential gift, expanding creativity for the Vernon community and beyond. *Caetani Cultural Centre* is an active hub for artists in many disciplines throughout the area. When Kalamalka Press offered me a month-long residency at Caetani House for October 2018, I was delighted to accept.

From my journal:

"Caetani House is up the hill from the town centre, a smaller house than I imagined, but elegant in the vernacular fashion of the late nineteenth century. Susan Brandoli, the director, greets me warmly and leads me to the second floor. My room is spacious and open, with three large windows facing north to a grove of mature horse chestnuts planted by Sveva's father. I learn that the room is where Sveva slept with her mother, Ofelia. I settle in quickly to this sweetly creative space – welcoming, friendly, and offering invaluable writing time.

"Sveva's benevolent influence on my imaginative work has been direct and unexpected. She is the guiding / presiding angel of creativity this month. Encouraging me, Sveva appears nightly, delighted to have a vehicle to act through. A kind ghost haunting my dreams, she expresses her determination to change the world however she can. This is her chance, she thinks, as in her current state she can do nothing. Anxious to solve all the world's problems, she presents scene after scene of catastrophes that I not only witness but am required somehow to fix. Natural disasters, typhoons, floods and earthquakes. Exhausted, I explain my limitations.





Top: Gardens out my window
Above: Mist over the garden

"Realizing I am mortal and my energy limited, Sveva decides to focus her intention. Concerned about the plight of children, she presents a flood of images, kids in trouble. What am I do? Her visitation my first night was a series of oracular dreams through many dimensions, in elaborate, awful detail. It did not further me to watch all these disasters without being able to help, as Sveva hoped I could. Lightly, she surrenders her first request, that I would be able to enact her plans, her solutions for all suffering. The elongated, mournful call of a train blows through the room.

"Sveva's energy streams down from behind the bed's headboard, a sympathetic grey vibration. The paintings above my bed are copies from *Recapitulation*. There's *Her*, beautiful Ofelia, and *Their World*, her parents, wrapped in each other. She's the invisible third, between them, behind them, attentive. Sveva kindly guides me through this first week. How to serve her? Sveva's expectations are demanding but we are learning to work together. As an artist, she understands the creative impulse and appreciates my writing project. She knows this is my chance to complete it. So we'll compromise.

"Not sleeping well because I'm coming down with a flu, my head is stuffed and incoherent. Perhaps Sveva prefers me thus: would it be easier to flow through me with my mind in a fog? No. I ask for healing. Without strength, without health, I can do nothing for Sveva, for anyone. This morning, I'm drawn to a bush of Oregon grapes on the property: eating the purple berries clears my sinuses instantly. I check online; Oregon grape roots are antibiotic. That's all I find on medicinal qualities. But that sinus infection is gone!

"Resting, I wait for the amorphous environment of the Caetani family history to see through my pores. I meant to write 'seep' but might as well let such a Freudian slip fall where it may. I casually glance at a painting, a poem framed. I flip through the giant pages of *Recapitulation*, Sveva's book spread out for perusal in the common room. This is not the time for study but for more open reflection.

Falling asleep, I dream that Sveva admonishes me to be gentle with myself as well: *Wrapped in her usual mist of grey shawl, Sveva stands close as I wash the kitchen dishes. She chides me gently. "Be careful. In working so hard on all these literary projects, you are leaving Being behind. You are caught up in thought, reason and will. You are sacrificing the essence of what you are attempting to articulate. Come back to your right brain, the spacious part of you that experiences these grounds in their reality."* Warned, I take heed.

"Sveva's words I hear clearly, but do not wake to jot them down exactly. Instead, I paraphrase the gist and comply. Every afternoon, I wander the grounds as Sveva did. On the perimeters, the most interesting weeds flourish: fervent burdock and intrepid dandelion, already clocking in a second spring. Out harvesting, I forage among calendula beds, violets in bloom. Chickweed and rampant geranium with tiny pink flowers cover the compost. I startle a

sweet covey of twittering quail and discover a patch of edible field mushrooms out back. I stir-fry them with greens, gathering dandelion and beet leaves.

"The Caetani property is my circumference here, just as it predetermined Sveva's imaginal realm. I peer into her playhouse; the door is bolted. Writing, I'm basking in orange leaf-light, in this tree-surrounded bower. Orange, drooping maple leaves and tawny crinkled horse chestnut leaves brighten the grey day. A conker falls with a resounding thud. Two deer munch roses under the trees Sveva's father planted. The leaves are receiving the first light rain drops, promised earlier. Clouds are closing in. The mountain to the north hovers pale grey, only slightly denser than the air. What a propitious month, October, to be in touch with this place's resident spirit. In golden Okanagan light, the vale between worlds thins and the days draw close.

"Sitting in sparse sun to read in the garden, I look up at a breeze. Suddenly, there's Virginia and Leonard Woolf, sipping tea with Lytton Strachey in their English garden. Leonard, intense, leaning forward, listening. Virginia at her tightest, laconic ease, reclines in her chair, elegant legs out-stretched. Strachey regales them with gossip from town. Words arrive but, because I haven't my notebook, they are snatched by the breeze out of short-term memory. Only the scene remains, vivid but lost to poetry as what's seen, not sound. Virginia and her darker sister, Sveva: the same taut, angular intensity, intelligence alert in each lined and lovely face.

"On-line, I learn Sveva emigrated to Canada in 1921 with her parents. She was born August 6, 1917, in Rome and died April 28, 1994, in Vernon, age 76. Sveva was only two years older than I when she died. Still, she is my elder and mentor; I know no better for creative aging. Sveva bears the solid weight of noble tradition and generations of culture on her slim shoulders. Born third generation in Canada, I can respect European culture without feeling dominated by it. I am free of inheritance as burden, free to interact with the trees of this continent, their roots and branches.

"Thanksgiving is a lovely soft grey day here, celebrating the 'mellow fruitfulness' of the season, of this time of life. I pick tart purple plums from Leone's tree. Sveva's soft grey presence prevails all the while I am writing. If I glance quickly enough, I spot her at my left side, patiently watching. 'Maintain,' she says. 'Maintain.' And I will. All Soul's day approaches and I'm heading home, replete."

The month at *Caetani Cultural Centre* has been a joy in discovery, appreciation and connection. Thanks to Kalamalka Press for the opportunity! My dreams have been inspiration for more poems that seem to come directly from Sveva. So deeply rooted and profoundly at home, she continues to flourish and encourage all those who enter her sphere. Thank you, dear *genia loci*, protective spirit of this place.

Winds Chime

Poets give voice to the voiceless,
the language we don't understand—

a breeze ripples throughout all
the aspen siblings down to roots
they share across a single source—

Sors, source, spring, sing sorcery.

A single tree may live a century in
clonal colonies while its system of
roots lasts millennia as the oldest

living organism. What would one
Trembling Giant whisper across
the river to its neighbouring clone?

"Hold on. Hold fast. Changing,
changing, elemental mingles,"
uttered in slow, unsteady sibilants.

And silver leaves quake response.

Sveva moves in to say something.

But no, that's up to me. She patiently
smiles, waiting alongside for *le mot
juste*, a phrase that will lead the poem

into green terrain as yet unknown.

Penn Kemp, poet, performer and playwright, has been lauded as a trailblazer, "a poetic El Nino," and a "one-woman literary industry." A keen participant in Canada's cultural life, she was London's inaugural Poet Laureate. Her 2018 books of poetry are *Local Heroes* (Insomniac) and *Fox Haunts* (Aeolus House). Forthcoming is *River Revery* (Insomniac Press, 2019). See www.pennkemp.weebly.com.

BRIDGE TO A NEW WORLD

Devon L. Muhlert

The curative value of artistic expression is a passion I have lived. When I facilitate music meditations and guided visualizations, I ask people to select an image from the mental pictures they have just experienced, and write Haiku from them (Haiku is a 17 syllable minimalist form of Japanese poetry). Some fear anything literary, so it's a gentle start some find empowering.

The arts have always been healing for me. A child criticized for real and imagined offenses, my mother always second-guessed my motivations. She lamented my tin ear in an extended musical family. I withdrew into extreme shyness. With few friends and fewer words, my thoughts went onto paper – in poetry and stories that promised escape.

At fifteen, I picked up a flute.

A revelation: where was the tin ear now? At university I played flute and French horn in the UBC band, and graduated as a music teacher. While teaching choirs and band in several schools in northern B.C., I arranged and wrote compositions for them. My groups won festival awards, which was exhilarating and validating for both them and me.

Soon I acquired husband Alex, a dog and a daughter, in that order. We lived in Port Coquitlam. Our rescue Shepherd cross was as happy with us as we were with her, very protective of our baby daughter. And perhaps even musical. One hot summer day, sitting idly on the front steps on Eastern Drive, Alex watered the garden while the dog guarded. I stuck my mouth-piece, all that remained of the French horn, into the now-empty garden hose. A few harmonics, like a muted horn, choked out and the dog howled in agreement. My husband says now that my playing the garden hose was his crazy idea because I whined about the lack of horn.

In 1981, B.C. mortgages were out-of-sight. Alex, an electrician, was hired in a Northwest Territories mine in a town of about a thousand. Now we had three children and lots of friends, having learned to be more social. We had most of the conveniences of our old home, among them a pre-school. Reluctantly volunteered as financial officer for the playschool, I did my inexperienced best. Then disaster struck when the company announced a final shut-down. They'd predicted twenty-five years, and we'd now only had six. Things around town still functioned, but resentment brewed. The account books were demanded returned. I was being accused of – what? When pressed, the school director presented me with a list of misdoings, bullet points of bank protocols about which I knew nothing. Shades of childhood. Now people crossed the grocery aisle just to avoid me. Again, withdrawal was the strategy. But I had my piano and spent hours lost in *Bridge*



Devon with her violin



Submerged flute



Top: Urban enchanted

Middle: Aquaprism

Bottom: Urchins at play

over Troubled Water by Simon & Garfunkel. We shortly moved happily to the North Okanagan.

Our Spallumcheen acreage was a place to dream. Crossing artistic disciplines helped me create several inspirational one-woman dramas that I performed in character: Catherine Schubert, one of the Overlanders, a mime that grew out of one of my poems, and Biblical characters Sarah and Esther. Occasionally, Armstrong's *Asparagus Theatre* claimed my time as music director or crew. At church I was also music director, and we created innovative services and performed two original musicals.

Hired as music director in Nelson, in the Kootenays, we made beautiful music with choirs, including a hand-bell choir, and two concerts a year. After three years, my hours were cut, and it hurt. I came home.

I finished my diploma in healing music as a Certified Music Practitioner (CMP). My music meditations are like internal massage – the pitches, especially when sung, vibrate our insides. As new co-ordinator of volunteers at hospice, those meditations became my volunteer contribution. Many residents joined in. At hospice we talked of healing into death – resolving long-term issues to relax into peace. One lady loved our sessions so much that her walls filled with the coloured sheets I typed up with her Haiku. She needed help because a brain tumour had compromised her speech and her hands. On December 16, 2004, a short time before her passing, Doreen Monty wrote:

“Echoes of my life. I think with invisible ink, bridge to a new world” (by permission).

Seventeen syllables can become profound. I think of life as a “Haikoan” – my made-up word for Haiku combined with a koan (Japanese riddle). Life often is a puzzle – we don’t see all the pieces or know how to make them fit.

When asked to write a column, *Devon’s Delusions* appeared. Now I could dream up columns from home, unlike driving miles to interviews. I also got to poke fun at all the craziness of the news. (If you read them now, you’d think I was delusional!) That stint was interrupted by the suicide of my only sibling, which shocked me almost out of my body. We had been estranged, but the only family member left to lay him to rest was me. My supportive family helped, and as well that I could escape into that weekly column. It still took two years to almost recover.

My column lasted four years, or about 200 columns. A previous body of work had earned me awards, and the column contributed to my Okanagan Arts Award. Then the paper terminated their Vernon columnists in favour of Kelowna obits. I began teaching privately – guitar, flute and saxophone.

Life intervened again with a heart attack in Newfoundland. We had bought an old house on a bay where we spent summers. In hospital there for a week, my classical guitar helped pass the time, and I sang to the lady who brought meals. A year later, in Vancouver, another heart attack – one on each coast! While in VGH waiting for a quadruple bypass, music again kept me relatively calm. My son made a mix tape of my favourite music to block



Devon in front of Caetani mansion.

Devon L. Muhlert, B.Ed, CMP, is musician, photojournalist and composer. She has directed 11 choirs, worked with 15 editors, written and translated international articles, and released two CDs. She has written over 100 songs, some of which are in her original collection of inspirational songs, called *Songs to Lighten the Load*. She has published at least that many articles and features, and three manuscripts wait to be polished into publication.

She likes numbers, and music is a numerical game. She has the same husband 40+ years later, and their three children have produced four grandchildren. Muhlert loves to explore creativity with the grandchildren. She can be reached at devonelle@telus.net, or 250-241-9655. Her books *Cadence of Colour* and *Songs to Lighten the Load*, as well as some art, including photos on canvas from different locales, are available on her website, Devonicity.ca (through Weebly).

hospital noises. It was comforting. Heart patients were in “the penthouse,” and I got great camera shots of the Vancouver skyline in its many moods – dawn, early sunshine, magical afternoon.

Artistic evolutions kept happening. From facilitating or teaching (photography, music, creativity), to writing and translating for the International Choral Bulletin, based in Belgium, I graduated to playing with paints and collages. Newfoundland beaches are very colourful with bits of rope, netting and colourful tags from washed up lobster traps. The bits and driftwood became art projects, with added new items.

My second daughter viewed them skeptically. “Mom, that’s just garbage.”

“No, dahling, that’s helping to clean up beaches and using the colour.” Others must agree because I’ve sold several and had two visual art shows using them. *Washed Up on the Other Shore* was my first show; the second one was *Rhythms, Prisms and Haikoans*. While in Newfoundland in 2018, we noticed they’re taking clean-up more seriously. The beaches aren’t nearly as colourful.

Another recent project was a book combining narrative with photography and a song. It is about a woman who loved to paint, but was banned from any artistic expression for almost twenty-five years – by her mother. She later turned it around and became an inspiration to many. Called *Cadence of Colour: Sveva Caetani and her Mothers*, the book traces Sveva’s history. My little cottage, where I teach and have since added therapeutic singing and songwriting, is located on the grounds of the *Caetani Cultural Centre*. My newest project for 2019 is *Bashful Balladeers*: a singing group and gentle start for adults who were discounted as children by being told they had a tin ear, or to “just mouth the words, dear.” The *Bashful Balladeers* had its start February 27 in Vernon.

Artists love to get together and brainstorm. In dialogue or in new ideas, we uncover new artistic impulses. Artistic expression is healing because, as it takes us into ourselves, it takes us out of ourselves. There is a catharsis as we download our hurts into the paintbrush or the pen to transform them into ways of overcoming. It’s a way to bring hope to each other, maybe even a bridge to that new world.

“Driving rhythms form life: ocean waves, seasons, our beating hearts.

The sonogram of my beating heart said not ‘ga-lub,’ but expressed delight:

‘Wow! Wow! Wow!’

Prisms shout colour, promise, inclusivity. Rainbows appear,
and the worst is over. Lazily drifting music, prime colour notes

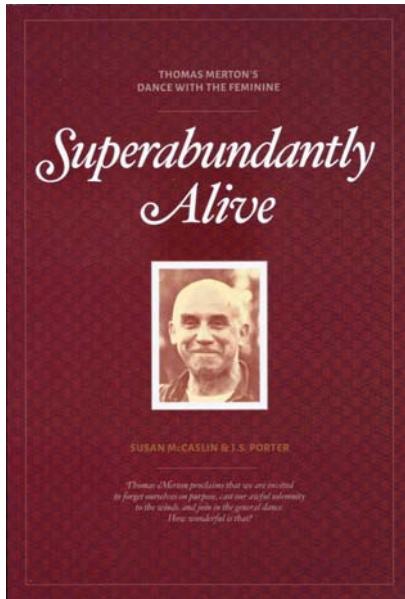
beyond hearing, do they transcend our stratosphere?

Haikoans: The mystery of our life: a thought in one nuanced breath.

An enigma, an algorithm we don’t yet understand,
but in rear-view mirror, the web glows, a luminous mosaic.”

PARTNERING IN THE GENERAL DANCE

Karen Close



Cover of *Superabundantly Alive*

Since my purchase last December, I keep returning to *Superabundantly Alive: Thomas Merton's Dance with the Feminine*, a unique reading experience written by Susan McCaslin and J. S. Porter. From my first glance at Merton's mischievous grin on the book's cover and its words of invitation, I was ready to partner in this dance.

"Thomas Merton proclaims that we are invited to forget ourselves on purpose, cast our awful solemnity to the winds, and join in the general dance. How wonderful is that?"

I heard McCaslin exclaim, "Merton opened me to the wisdom of the East and its Zen sages and wisdom teachers, both ancient and modern," and Porter proclaim, "Merton danced when Joan Baez offered to drive him to Cincinnati to see M. (this trappist monk's lover) when M. got off the night shift, and he danced to his best writings. He knew how to dance and he knew how to laugh." I wanted to share / dance in *Merton's Dance with the Feminine* in me and bring his wisdom (and McCaslin's and Porter's) to readers of *Sage-ing With Creative Spirit, Grace and Gratitude*. I detected a common bond with this man who, if alive, would be one hundred and four years old, but had in fact been dead for fifty years when I started reading *Superabundantly Alive*. Isn't that what we all want to be for our time on this earth?

In *New Seeds of Contemplation*, Porter notes that Merton begins, "Every moment and every event of everyman's life on earth plants something in his soul." McCaslin shares how her fascination with Merton has influenced her over the years to feel invited into "his garden of love." I pondered how I might enter. Is it a door open to all of us? Susan explains, "For Thomas Merton, every human being, living creature and natural phenomenon is an embodiment of Holy Wisdom—Sophia." Susan's words reinforced what I've yearned to hear:

"Sophia is that in God which longs for incarnation...the Divine Sophia, play, wisdom, is by no means a fourth person or hypostasis, yet in *creation*...hypostasized, so that creation itself becomes the "glory of God" (from *Turning Toward the World: The Journals of Thomas Merton*).

In her personal spirit of play and creative imagination, Susan created poems that were then composed in graphic design by Afton Schindel. In Chapter 5 of *Superabundantly Alive*, Susan shares these creations she calls her "Grotto of Sophia Ikons," poems devoted to some of Merton's personal saints from the human spheres. She invites readers to add their own sophianic figures.

In the hospital, when
six-year-old Tom's
mother lay dying, she wouldn't
let him see her pain.

He later wrote she had been
cold, distanced, demanding,
not adding intelligent, loving, sensitive.
In *Tom's Book* she recorded his every infant
word and step, leaving a legacy of journal-keeping:
"When he hears music he begins to dance, changing
to fast or slow steps as the music changes. Sometimes
when he is playing he sings. When we go out, he seems
conscious of everything. Sometimes he puts up
his arms and cries out, "O Sun! O Joli!"

**She, his broken poetry wing,
his absent-present Sophia**

St. Ruth Jenkins Merton

With long black hair gleaming,
you step into the hermitage
Of the famous monk, robust
in mid-life, looking like a cross
between Henry Miller and Pablo Picasso,
you on the parabola of youth,
he in the tumult of his midsummer love,
playing over and over your ballad
"Silver Dagger," lament for a mother
who, betrayed by her husband, teaches
her daughter to sleep alone
with a dagger at her side. Did he find there
traces of what seemed his betrayal
of M. and of himself?
When you keen against the murder of Joe Hill,
union activist, newly disempowered workers
rise before our eyes and we long for a time
when songs could change the world.
Your voice still as strong as in those heady days,
only deeper, fiercer
like the luminous beauty
of St.

Joan Baez

When Susan and I began to correspond, I explained an idea dancing in my head about how perhaps creativity is the underground, subconscious, rhizome of humanity. Susan eagerly responded with the following article. McCaslin, a retired Faculty Emerita from Douglas College in British Columbia, where she taught English and Creative writing from 1984 to 2007, shares with me similar passions and the same birth year. When I mentioned this, Susan responded, "What was going on astrologically in 1947?" We are the vanguard of the baby boomers. Was there something underground reaching out everywhere, nourishing our souls to "cast our awful solemnity to the winds, and join in the general dance"? How wonderful would that be? In speculating that many of our readers might be boomers rhizoming along together, growing sagely and hopefully wiser, Susan suggested a neologism she and poet Penn Kemp worked out together – *RhiZoom B(l)oomers*. I see Matisse's 1910 painting *Dance*.

Invite you to let Susan McCaslin and John Porter convince you to hear Thomas Merton's call. The twenty-first century needs "Merton Momentum."

Check out Superabundantly Alive (Wood Lake Books, 2018).

www.woodlake.com

RHIZOME MONK

THOMAS MERTON



Susan McCaslin

“A rhizome (also known as rootstocks) is a type of plant stem situated either at the soil surface or underground that contains nodes from which roots and shoots originate. Rhizomes are unique in that they grow perpendicular, permitting new shoots to grow up out of the ground. When separated, each piece of a rhizome is capable of producing a new plant.”

– <https://biologydictionary.net/rhizome/>

“Rhizome (philosophy) ... Rhizome is a philosophical concept developed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1972–1980) project. It is what Deleuze calls an ‘image of thought,’ based on the botanical rhizome, that apprehends multiplicities.

“Deleuze and Guattari use the terms ‘rhizome’ and ‘rhizomatic’ to describe theory and research that allows for multiple, non-hierarchical entry and exit points in data representation and interpretation.”

– [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhizome_\(philosophy\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhizome_(philosophy))

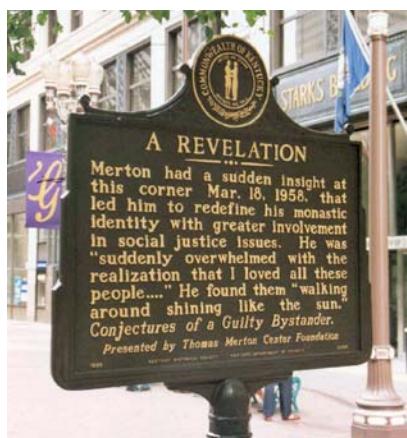
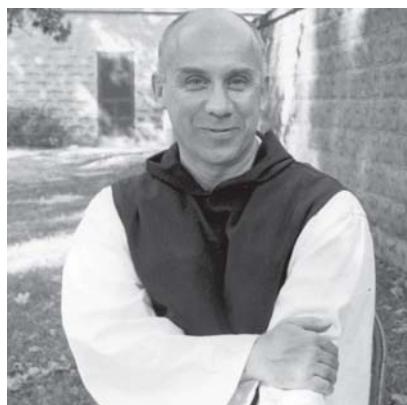
“This is what I think my real mission is, an ecumenical underground, that reaches out everywhere, to Buddhists and the Lord knows where.” – Thomas Merton

I don’t intend to inundate you with scientific definitions, but botany has its biological, poetic and philosophical resonances. I like to think of science and the imagination as intermingling. When you consider rhizomes, then, think ginger root, turmeric, lotus, potato. Think bamboo and cottonwood tree. Think lumpy, bumpy, horizontal, entangled, non-linear. Think underground, subterranean, hidden.

Flourishing In The River of Imagination
(photo by Karen Close)



I am a poet and a Thomas Merton scholar and aficionado who has just published a collaborative book of creative nonfiction with my friend John Porter about the paradoxical monk, inter-spiritual seeker, writer, contemplative, activist Thomas Merton. Therefore, I find the above definitions suggestive of why we titled our book *Thomas Merton: Superabundantly Alive*. It’s the best phrase we could find (borrowed from Tom’s best friend Robert Lax) to capture Merton’s wild, contemplative, mystical,



Top: Thomas Merton

Above: Fourth and Walnut (now Walnut/Muhammad Ali Blvd.) in Louisville, Kentucky

poetic, generative energies that many readers have experienced emanating from both his life and his supernaturally abundant writings.

Karen Close, founder of *Sage-ing*, in an e-mail brought to my attention the notion of Merton as rhizome. I soon found myself looking up various definitions of the word. Karen's note also included a relevant passage from the prologue of Carl Jung's *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*:

"Life has always seemed to me like a plant that lives on its rhizome. Its true life is invisible, hidden in the rhizome. The part that appears above ground lasts only a single summer. Then it withers away – an ephemeral apparition. When we think of the unending growth and decay of life and civilizations, we cannot escape the impression of absolute nullity. Yet I have never lost a sense of something that lives and endures underneath the eternal flux. What we see is the blossom, which passes. The rhizome remains."

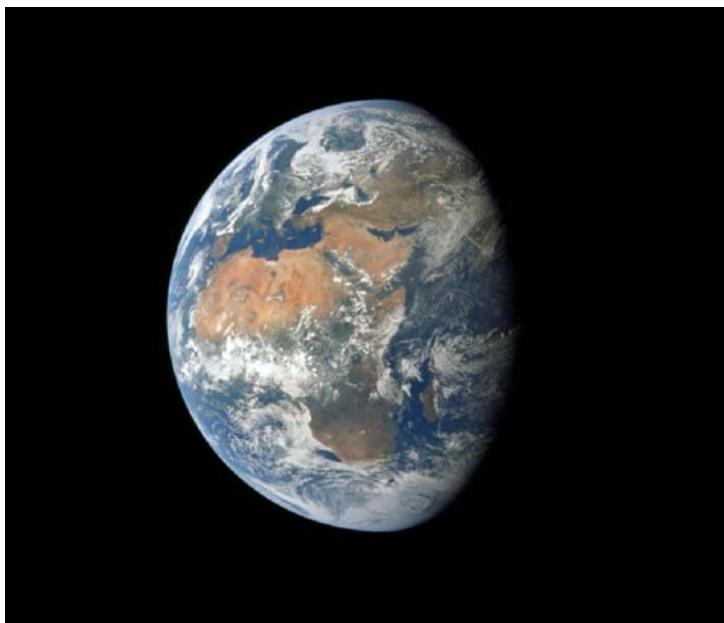
Rhizomes, as I was rapidly learning, are all about collaboration and reciprocity.

Merton was and remains a mass of richly entangled roots energizing sprouts through the non-dual, underground regenerative power of the rhizome to create ever more rhizome-nourished beings. The whole is greater than the parts, yet the parts participate in what Merton called "a hidden wholeness," "the *pointe vierge*" or pure place of higher consciousness alive in each of us, even when we seem most flawed, fragmented and anything but holy.

Now I have come to see Merton more and more as a rhizome-connected force of nature. What characterizes him and others like him is a subterranean grounding in a unified field of being. For him, life is a series of paradoxes held within a dynamic "hidden wholeness." He was a hermit, yet deeply engaged with the world through his writing and vast correspondence. His early flight from the world and grounding in monastic silence transformed in the early sixties to political-social engagement. He began to speak out more boldly (in underground letters after he was silenced by his Trappist order) against the Vietnam War, the nuclear arms race during the Cold War, the exploitation of Central and South America through unregulated corporate capitalism, and racism in America. Rather than turning away from contemplation, he insisted on silence and solitude as the necessary ground for effective activism.

Merton was a solitary who engaged in meaningful relationships with over a thousand correspondents, men, women, and even children, of diverse ages, demographics, nationalities, religions and social contexts. The subtitle of our book, "Thomas Merton's Dance with the Feminine," acknowledges not only Merton's relationship with saints and archetypal figures of Holy Wisdom, such as Sophia, but flesh and blood women like the social worker Dorothy Day who founded the Catholic Worker Movement, the young feminist Rosemary Radford Ruether with whom Merton carried on a lively correspondence two years before his death, the poet Denise Levertov, the folksinger Joan Baez and numerous others.

We also examine the passion and contradictions inherent in Merton's



Planet Earth seen from outer space, a photo sent to Jim Forest by one of the Apollo astronauts when Jim was in prison during the Vietnam War for a non-violent protest against the draft. Merton and Jim became friends, corresponding and meeting at Gethsemani, Merton's monastery in Kentucky. Jim Forest is a peace activist and Merton writer, currently living in the Netherlands. Thank you to Jim for use of his photograph.

brief but intense love affair with a student nurse known in his journals as “M.” In 1966, a few years before his final Asian tour, he became the paradox of a monk in love with a woman. Though he was unable in the end to give up the solitary life for marriage, Merton, who had never experienced a truly holistic relationship with a woman in his dissolute youth, finally came to know with certainty that he was capable of loving and being loved. John and I agreed, in a dialogue included in our multi-genre book, that the love affair with M was a cataclysm leading to Merton’s further growth. Because of M’s admirable silence on this matter, we do not know her side of the story. Certainly, Merton castigated himself in his journals for the affair more than anyone else, but also embraced his full humanity before moving on towards his death at the age of 53 outside Bangkok during his Eastern tour.

For me, Merton is a rhizome person because, as he withdraws from outer structures, he connects ever more deeply to the world of nature and to his fellow humans. The culmination of this realization is in Merton’s famous “Fourth and Walnut” epiphany on March 18, 1958, where he recognizes an affinity with the women and other people on the street who are all “shining like the sun,” at an ordinary intersection in downtown Louisville.

So what do rhizomes and rhizome people have in common? Rhizomes lie hidden deep down; they dwell in liminal places, paradoxical places, yet nourish life at the surfaces. They are “both/and” beings, non-dual, uniting upper and lower, inner and outer, self and other. They withdraw from the surface of things to connect at unconscious, even supra-conscious levels. The more fully grounded they become, the more expansive their influence. They don’t spread out in linear patterns like roots but grow in many directions at once to nourish other life forms. I think again of Merton in his ability to become a Jew with Jews, a Muslim with Muslims, a Buddhist with Buddhists, without compromising his own lineage in his Christian mystical heritage. Rhizome people are incarnations of bio-spiritual diversity, thriving on inter-spiritual dialogue. They flourish outside dogmas and fixed ideologies. They find and lose themselves in webs and networks of being. They demonstrate love and respect for the “other,” who is only apparently other. They live their truths in webs of inter-being. Merton’s creative explorations were diversely unified: essays, mystical theology, poems, journals, letters, photography, Zen sketches and ink drawings, jazz. Rhizomes thrive on the play of diversity.

A rhizome person knows that not just a quick fix, but a major transformation of consciousness is necessary if humans are to survive and thrive. Living in harmony with nature creates permacultures, in the sense of human-tended gardens existing compatibly with Earth’s vaster gardens, not gardens

cultivated simply to serve our limited purposes, but gardens that are part of interconnected ecologies acting in accord with a larger whole.

A life form or person in process of awakening experiences how moving from indifference or hatred towards love is essential to social-political transformation. Merton is one of the rhizomes who calls for a new-old spirituality, based not on belief and dogma, but on action, compassion, love flowing from a realization of our intimate interconnections with each other, other species, mother Gaia and, most of all, the fragile blue planet Earth on whose life we depend.

Susan McCaslin is the author of fifteen volumes of poetry, including her most recent, *Into the Open: Poems New and Selected* (Inanna, 2017). She has recently collaborated with J.S. Porter on a volume of creative nonfiction, *Superabundantly Alive: Thomas Merton's Dance with the Feminine* (Wood Lake, 2018). Susan taught at Douglas College in B.C. in the English and Creative Writing Departments for twenty-three years. She has published a memoir about the contemplative life, *Into the Mystic: My Years with Olga* (Toronto: Inanna Press, 2014). In 2012, she initiated The Han Shan Poetry Project in a successful effort to save a rainforest near her home along the Fraser River outside Fort Langley, B.C. Susan can be found wandering along the river with her dog Rosie in the presence of Douglas firs, hemlocks, and cedars. www.susanmccaslin.ca

BC ARTISTS GUILD

Just over a year ago a small group of women artists got together, and with great enthusiasm brainstormed ideas on how to exhibit their artwork. In the discussions that ensued, it was realized that not only all members of the group were aging women, but also that the desire to create and display their paintings at this time in their lives was every bit as powerful as if they were starting out in an art career. Hence the BC Artists Guild was formed.

The BC Artists Guild currently consists of five artists sharing their unique artistic perspectives: Arlene Currie, Suzanne Dansereau, Cecile Derkatch, Dianne Postman, Cherie Sibley Wasyliw.

DARKNESS INTO LIGHT

CREATIVITY ENHANCES ALL LEARNING

Arlene Currie-Plumpton

The BC Artists Guild currently consists of 5 artists sharing their unique artistic perspectives: Arlene Currie-Plumpton, Suzanne Dansereau, Cecile Derkatch, Dianne Postman, Cherie Sibley Wasyliw.

For me creativity has had tremendous “transformational powers” throughout my life. In the 1970s, quitting university to marry a university educated man was an acceptable, even admired, behaviour. Although I had completed three years of my four-year degree, it had been a struggle; I was haunted by situations that required me to take written tests and exams. Truthfully, I felt that I had been rescued by my marriage. For almost a decade I settled into the demands of wife and mother of two young sons. During those years I did often find satisfaction through many creative forms of fibre arts, specifically sewing, crocheting, embroidery and quilting. Life seemed just fine.

In 1985, however, my husband lost his job. His anger, which for years had been raging just below the surface, finally emerged. The next six months were hell for me and my sons. My husband plummeted into depression, started drinking heavily, and then became abusive. I left. In those days, “child support” did not exist. Because I had chosen to spend nine years being a wife and a stay-at-home mother to my sons instead of finishing my university degree, my options were limited. I was forced to go on welfare, while I figured things out. Then, in the fall of 1985, my creativity and ability to work with my hands rescued me. Within six months I had completed the theory portion of a cosmetology program in Penticton. Eighteen months later, I completed a Red Seal Cosmetology licence, making me both employable and self-reliant. However, although hairdressing is a creatively rewarding and lucrative profession, it was also extremely physically demanding, and required me to work most evenings and weekends. This left little time or energy to spend with my young sons.

In May of 1988, only eleven months after completing my cosmetology licence, a life changing gift arrived in the mail. The University of British Columbia Registrar was contacting all students from the past 20 years who had started, but not completed, a Bachelor of Education. The university was changing its program requirements. If I did not complete the degree, which I had started back in 1973, by September 1990, I would only be accredited two years towards a now five-year degree. By week’s end, after intense family conferences with my parents and financial aid from my maternal grandmother, I made a decision to temporarily relocate to Vancouver and re-enrol

Below:Arlene with her current works
Bottom: My first haircut



in the UBC Art Education Program that September.

For the next 10 months, the pressure was intense. I existed on four hours' sleep a night, and took a full course load, timetabling morning and evening classes. I spent mid-days cutting hair for fellow students in exchange for babysitting, spending money, and day-to-day needs for my sons. Much to my relief, almost all of my courses were studio art courses and essays. Creativity ran freely through my veins as I completed hundreds of art projects in all the disciplines required to teach elementary school art. In the spring of 1989, with a 4.0 grade point average, I earned my Bachelor of Art Education.

My professors were amazing, and so supportive of my situation. As I was making plans to apply for teaching jobs, I was approached by one of my professors, asking if I would stay and help him create an art program for one of the schools in the Vancouver area. The university then informed me that a second professor, who was impressed by both my desire to succeed and my intense desire to create new directions in teaching, had submitted my name to the Society For the Advancement of Women. I was offered a full scholarship and a living allowance to remain at UBC another year. As I reflected on this unexpected honour, I recalled how I had struggled to pass my first three years of university a decade earlier; I believe it was my creativity that enabled me to find this new success. By the summer of 1990, I had completed a fifth year, earning a High School Art Education degree and an instructor's certificate for the International Baccalaureate Art and Design Program.

When I entered the teaching ranks, I had my sights set on being hired as a high school visual arts teacher. Instead, in September 1990, I was hired in Kelowna as a full-time elementary classroom teacher. Perhaps this was another gift. Although required to teach all subjects, I found ways to use both my creativity and artistic abilities to enhance the creative skills and overall learning of my students, in every discipline from math to science, to drama, to physical education. For the next decade, my goal was to create opportunities for my students to feel significant, competent and powerful. As a teacher, I was creative, caring, dedicated and competent in many areas. I translated the course content, the delivery and evaluation process down to an art.

Below left: Arlene with her art work being reviewed at UBC

Below right: My first art student





My painting for my master's thesis depicts layers of success a child goes through to gain knowledge

In the spring of 2002, after yet another very raw interaction with the parent of a child whose learning disabilities were far beyond my present level of creativity and skill set, I realized I needed to go back to school. What I needed were strategies and wisdom to help me reach the increasing number of troubled learners in my classrooms.

In September 2002, I entered a two-year Master of Arts program for teaching at-risk students, at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington; it had an educational philosophy of educating the whole person. Again, my creativity found ways to make the assignments exciting, enjoyable and professionally rewarding. Instead of illustrating my understanding of Don Lowry's *Color Personality Topography* through intellectual prose, I hypothesized that in his children's book, *A Charlie Brown Christmas* (Simon and Schuster, 2001), author M. Schultz had developed each of his characters through colour. Charlie Brown is a GOLD. Snoopy is an ORANGE. Lucy is a GREEN and Linus is a BLUE. Together they work magically to create, truly, "the merriest Christmas ever." In her evaluation, my professor, Dr. Geri Shepard, deeply validated my creativity: "Arlene, this is absolutely brilliant. Your creativity and insight have taken you deep into this assignment and beyond. Thank you! Please allow me to share it with your colleagues."

In the second year of my master's, I took a part-time leave of absence so I could better focus on my chosen thesis project. Early in the 2003 school year I had been approached by Norman Bradley, the School District 23 (Kelowna) Secondary School Curriculum Development Coordinator. He was on a B.C. Education Board and their new mandate was to begin placing trades-related programs into B.C. high schools. This would allow students to begin the schooling for a trade career while completing their grades eleven and twelve. He had heard that I was a Red Seal Licensed Cosmetologist, and he was interested in funding me to put a hairdressing program into Mount Boucherie Secondary School. I enthusiastically agreed. The next twelve months flew by. During that time, with the aid of my boundless creativity and my significant experience teaching, developing curriculum and hairdressing, I wrote the curriculum for seven Grade 11 and Grade 12 hairdressing courses, and designed the Mount Boucherie Hairdressing Lab. I taught my program for the first eight of the fifteen years that it has been in existence (<http://www.mbs.sd23.bc.ca/ProgramsCourses/Career>). The Mount Boucherie Hairdressing Academy is one of five B.C. Accelerated Credit Enrollment in Industry Training (ACE IT) programs, which prepare students for successful careers after graduation.

In 2015, I retired from teaching. My decision to leave when I did was not an easy one, and my first two years were scary and lonely. Fortunately, I have

been blessed with six rambunctious, loving and delightful grandchildren who live close enough to visit often, yet far enough away to allow some creative “me” time. Each Wednesday I paint with an amazing group of retired women. We call ourselves the BrushStrokes Club of West Kelowna.

In 2018, four other generous, inspiring and talented “sage-ing” women and I co-created our newly formed group, the *BC Artists Guild*. Located in the heart of the Westside wine trail, our goal is to inspire and encourage the creative development and professional advancement of our members. Collectively we promote, exhibit and sell our art work.

My twisted, swollen fingers tell me that the arthritis in my fingers and wrists is advancing, but the boundless creativity I put into my paintings knows no age. My curiosity is ageless. During my entire life, the act of creating has truly had tremendous transformational powers. I am proud that many of my creative accomplishments were not traditional, but rather they were created by me. I believe that the act of creating has been my soul’s journey. Creating will always be my meditation, my healer and my closest friend. Creativity is the light that gives all darkness its meaning.

Arlene Currie-Plumpton: “Just the idea that ‘a picture could tell a thousand words’ beckons me to paint. I’m drawn to images that push visual boundaries. Using vibrant colours and quirky compositions (gathered with my camera), I bring my next visual story to life. Painting in series allows me to extend my storyline. My mind holds much deeply imbedded art theory, but my creative spirit often runs amok with its rules. Using full body acrylics, I capture my compositions with a quick, loose underpainting of lights and darks, and then add a final layer of yummy, luscious traditional oils on top. All of my work is done on stretched canvas. Although I occasionally work small, I prefer to work on canvases that are larger than 3 feet by 3 feet.

Since our formation of the *BC Artists Guild*, I’ve watched how both my commitment to paint and my desire to improve have increased, as well as my sense of health and well-being.”

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See her work at <https://www.bcartistsguild.com/arlene-currie.html> or on Facebook at Art Alp (West Kelowna)

AN ARTIST OF THE EVERY-DAY



Dansereau in her studio

Suzanne Dansereau

Growing up in a small town, I was surrounded by some very creative people. My mother was an extremely gifted seamstress. She kept reminding us that all the material goods surrounding us were made from human hands and that we too could learn whatever interested us.

I learned to sew and do handicrafts at a young age. I do recall checking the sewing room waste basket for bits and pieces of fabric to add to my collection from which I sewed clothes for my dolls. I also loved making hats and caps. My head form was a log with a cotton-stuffed top for pressing and displaying my creations. Then I awaited my mother's comments.

I married Andre, and the Armed Forces took us to North Bay, Ontario, and Montreal, then later to B.C. with our three children. Several years later we moved to Saskatoon with our now four children. As they grew up I began to sew at a serious level. I designed and sewed a "one of a kind" clothing line for Petites. It was a very interesting time.

My interest in painting began one day as I stopped to observe an artist painting. It was an "Aha" moment, and so began my journey into the arts. I worked for Harders Gallery & Art Supplies, and loved being surrounded by all that artist talk. Unbeknownst to them they taught me precious bits of information. I also joined the Broadway Painters, where I was exposed to various styles and mediums.

Being self-taught, I benefited greatly from workshops over the years. The one week spent at Emma Lake Art Camp was a turning point for me. I had some success with French dyes on silk, a process that lent itself to creating those magical prairie skies, whose beauty I still refer to as my daily bread.

My work was being represented by Ripplinger Fine Arts Gallery in Regina. It was a rather exciting time because my lack of formal training was ever present on my mind. In silk painting there is a great deal of waste created in the steam fixing process, so I developed a method of laminating layers of silk; from then on a jewelry line happened, which I sold wholesale for several years. I had learned well from my mother, and my creative curiosity is an important part of who I am. After my husband and I retired to the Shuswap, I joined the local painters, and over time we formed the "Sorrento Seven"; it was a fun loving creative time for all. Then another challenge presented itself when I developed an interest in encaustic, a 2000-year-old medium that had been set aside because of the toxic damar varnish being used in the mixture.

Fortunately the medium is now composed of damar crystals from trees in southeast Asia, beeswax and oil paint. Encaustic is a very trying medium, but very exciting as well. Each layer is brushed or poured onto a firm support.



Top: Reflections
Above: Prairie

Then each layer of the medium must be heated onto the support with a heat gun or a blow torch. Unlimited layers will create texture, transparency and great excitement for me.

My every-day begins with a quiet hour giving thanks, journalizing and preparing myself for what the day has in store for me. This exercise helps to keep me grounded and focused, which leads to positive thoughts and energy for creativity to flow.

The one painting titled “Prairie” is one that I can’t explain how it evolved into a finished work. It sort of fell off the brush as though it was painting itself. While working on it, I do recall thinking “this is just an experiment – so just let it flow.” The painting sold the first time it was shown, earning an award of excellence. I now realize that the knowledge I have acquired over the years in working with various mediums has come together in allowing me to create art with this amazing and magical medium.

As an artist of the every-day, I feel I have arrived where I can let my passion stir my mind, body and spirit, as I am being led to express myself with gratitude. I feel very fortunate to have been able to observe my mother spin and weave magic into our everyday lives with her sewing abilities, knitting and cooking, for 12 children. In her later years she sewed mainly bridal wear. She had learned to sew at the very young age of twelve, when her own mother died, and she was left to accept the responsibility of being the mother for her brothers and sisters, cooking and cleaning for them and her father. I can still hear my mother saying, “Every day is precious – we have no time to lose.”

Suzanne Dansereau: “When drawn to a subject, I need to see it in my mind’s eye before I can begin to paint it. Then, after a few brush strokes, painting becomes a spiritual exercise, where I totally lose myself in the moment and my painting energy level is renewed, nurturing a grand passion.”

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See her work at <https://www.bcartistsguild.com/suzanne-dansereau.html>, <http://www.gallery421.ca/project/suzanne-dansereau/>

COMPULSIVE CREATING AND COMPASSION

A LIFE PATH TO THE EXTRAORDINARY



Cecile and her works

Cecile Derkatch

As far back as I can remember, I have had a compulsion to create. As a child, I used the walls as my canvas. My parents then made the wise choice of buying a roll of paper, which they taped to the walls, for me to draw on. As a teenager, I doodled so much when on the phone that my dad hung a drawing pad there to save the walls.

I grew up the youngest of twelve children and was brought up in a very supportive and caring environment. My father insisted that we all show respect for ourselves and for others, to know who we were, to make goals and to share the enjoyment of any knowledge we had with each other. We all had to take music lessons and learn to cook. We were also taught to make our own things rather than buy them. I was taught to sew at a very young age. Creating doll clothes for my many nieces, sewing poodle skirts and pedal pushers became a passion. Photography was another passion. I received a little Kodak Brownie camera, and spent most of my allowance on film and developing my prints. I liked to compose the photos I took, and then crop them into all different shapes and paste them in my albums with fancy printing. This in turn led me to learn calligraphy. A great event in my growing up years was in Grade 9 when the young princess Elizabeth came to Edmonton. A contest was put out in our school for creating an artistic album of her trip to Edmonton. I loved that project. I was so happy that my album was chosen. I can still remember the feeling of accomplishment I had when my winning of the contest was announced in school. After I got married there was always a creative project, such as making drapes and clothes for our three children. I loved creating my own clothes too. Going to Woodward's and picking out beautiful rolls of fabric was a great experience. A favourite memory is the undertaking of designing and sewing my daughter's elaborate wedding dress. I also made her five-tier wedding cake using my grandmother's fruit cake recipe.

Klondike Days in our home was a big event. Using wood panels with wool, fabric, paint, glue and any other materials we could find, we created giant murals in our basement rec room. Our children had murals of cowboys or princesses painted in their rooms. I now realize that perhaps it was at this point that I developed a huge passion to create through paint or the sewing machine. I understood I needed creativity in my life to be happy. I even took all the cake decorating classes possible, and have made my own cake



Plein-air painting at a winery

creations for years. It didn't matter what the project was; as long as I was making something, I loved it. My mother was a gardener, and I also fell in love with her passion. Growing flowers and veggies with her was fascinating. From her I learned to talk to the flowers and plants. Often I would sit in the garden drawing, while she was sitting having her cup of tea and watching me. It was a glorious time in my life, but still another adventure was ahead.

My husband and I decided to go into business. My husband, a former policeman, decided to purchase a Manufacturers Agent business. He looked after the exporting and importing of goods, and I did the book-keeping and went back to work to make ends meet. Through business, we travelled to Europe and the United States, and I made it my mission to go to as many art galleries and museums as I could. In the sixties, I had hoped to go to university, but that was not possible with the business and the arrival of three small children; so, in the seventies, I decided to take all the classes that the University of Alberta's Fine Art Department was offering. I did this for four years and then transferred to a private art school in Edmonton

for four more years. I also completed the docent program at the Edmonton Art Gallery, where I enjoyed doing tours for schools and groups of adults for a number of years.

In the late seventies, I started making porcelain dolls from scratch; now I have a large collection of handmade dolls and accessories, which I am keeping for my children and grandchildren to enjoy. These dolls became such a focus that I started to paint pastel portraits of them.

I am compulsive, but I also began to realize I had so much to share and wanted others to discover my pleasure in creating. My teaching days started at a local frame and art shop in Sherwood Park, Alberta. I taught classes at night after closing hours, until I was asked by the Muttart Conservatory in Edmonton to do weekly classes in their beautiful pyramids. With access to all their greenhouses of orchids and beautiful flowers, I was in heaven, and had a show there at every opportunity. Some of my Muttart students wanted personal classes, so I started teaching in my home studio; I then expanded to buy a warehouse, where I took over the top floor for a teaching studio, an office and a frame shop, but I realized teaching was my true love. If I could help people to learn to express themselves with paint, I was happy, and it seemed to make them happy too. I was particularly fortunate to experience the progression of two of my legally blind students. After I created a method for them to identify their mixed fluid acrylic colour palette with braille markings, it was a joy to see them grow.



It takes two to tango

be the compulsive creator of my extraordinary life. I intend to be in this “sage-ing mode” for a very long time. The writing of my journey has made me realize what a lucky life I have had.

Cecile Derkatch: “I find a uniqueness in every individual person I meet and in every flower I see. I like to simplify shapes and concentrate on the abstract design necessary to the foundation in an artwork. I consider rhythm and flow of pattern to be qualities that guide the eye through the piece. I also feel that there is an art to the way life is viewed. I truly believe that by thinking creatively and with a positive attitude, I can achieve that quality in my work and in my life.”

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Journeys: Pathways of Ordinary People to Extraordinary Achievements. Twenty-four artists were chosen to be linked with a famous person. I was thrilled to be chosen and matched with Ray Charles, one of my favourite musicians. Life was indeed extraordinary. I achieved my FCA status and was very fortunate to be included in three art tours to New York City, Chicago and San Francisco. Absorbing the artwork in these great cities was incredible.

The arts community has been so good to me, I knew I wanted to give back. For eight years I was on the board of directors for Festival Place, a cultural centre in Sherwood Park. I also volunteered at the Edmonton Cancer Clinic for five years; there I learned true compassion, and received life’s preparation for a future turn on life’s path. In 2007, we moved to Kelowna. In 2017, I fought my own battle with cancer. My art sustained me. I am so grateful that I am who I am and do what I do. Cancer made me do some serious thinking about what I have accomplished in my life as a wife, mother, grandmother and friend. I thank God for the gift of helping me

FULFILLMENT

Dianne Postman



Diane at an Okanagan show

I was born and raised on the prairies in a small village in southern Alberta, predominantly farming and ranching country. Ours was a very musical family and, along with my siblings, I took piano lessons for many years. There was really no choice in the matter, and as we all progressed through different musical skill levels, we were encouraged to play for choirs and in local church services. To this day I am grateful, not only for the joy that playing the piano brought to me, but also for the self-discipline it instilled in me. Today it stands me in good stead when I make art. Often, when standing at my easel, I still hear my mother's insistent words of encouragement, "Practise, practise, practise."

I loved to draw at a young age, which was evidenced with the designs made in pen and ink I did on my dolls. I used to steal the mercurochrome and iodine bottles from the medicine chest and used them to paint on paper or even my own skin. I owe a huge thank-you to my Grade 7 art teacher who recognized my interest in art and provided enormous enthusiasm and encouragement. I credit her with cementing my creative side. Even though art was not a priority in my upbringing and was definitely not encouraged when planning for the future, it always stayed with me through the years.

I was married and a mother at age seventeen. I found myself busy, raising three children by the time I was twenty-one. Those early years were difficult times for me. Just before my twenty-third birthday, however, two momentous occurrences happened in my life. The first was a decision I made to remove alcohol completely from my life. The second was when I received a set of oil paints as a gift. Removing alcohol from my life set off an incredible journey of freedom and self-realization that continues to this day. That gift of oil paints began for me a remarkable adventure of recognition through self-discovery in the visual arts. I was delighted to discover networking and the world of wonderful things that opened up to me when I joined in where other artists met. I became involved in a local art club, painting on a weekly basis. I also painted with a small group of women, where we posed and sketched for each other. We took turns looking after each other's children to free up a few painting hours. Since I was a stay-at-home mother, I set up a small studio in the master bedroom. Through all the busy times of raising a family, I managed to attend some local art workshops, and took the opportunity to attend also summer art courses through Lakeland College in nearby Vermillion, Alberta. I was definitely hooked and excited about the creative process.

All dressed up





Top: A grape walk

Above: Experimental art

Dianne Postman: "This quote by Winston Churchill, from *Painting as a Pastime*, written in 1950, sums it up for me: 'Painting is complete as a distraction. I know of nothing which, without exhausting the body, more entirely absorbs the mind. Whatever the worries of the hour or the threats of the future, once the picture has begun to flow along, there is no room for them in the mental screen. They pass out into shadow and darkness. All one's mental light, such as it is, becomes concentrated on the task. Time stands respectfully aside.'"'

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 Facebook: www.facebook.com/dianepostmanart/

Eventually, when all of my children were enrolled in school, I had to find work outside the home. For what turned into many years, I worked at various jobs that I enjoyed, but, although suspended temporarily, the desire to paint was never entirely forgotten. Fortunately, at the age of thirty-eight, I found a job with a remarkable company, which placed me in their purchasing department. They also generously paid all the costs associated with my training and education to achieve my Professional Purchaser Certificate. I worked forty hours per week, took some night school classes and on the weekends did online courses through Athabasca University. My career became the priority, and I found the challenge and satisfaction that was missing from my previous jobs, but sadly art remained on the back burner. Then in 2006 I was fortunate enough to be able to retire, and the first thing I did was set up an art studio in my home.

It was so exciting to realize that I could spend time drawing and painting pretty much every day. I volunteered at the local art gallery, where I became a board member. I also worked closely with four other artists, renting and sharing a studio and learning from each other. I entered group art shows, and a local gallery accepted some of my paintings. I worked with a life coach for four months and set artistic goals; my self-confidence took giant leaps. I learned how to build my own website and tackle social media. Suddenly, our small garret exploded into a new world of even more discovery.

My art is about exploration. Yes, I love painting landscapes and everyday life from the 1930s and 1940s, but generally speaking I am all over the map with my art. Some may call it eclectic, which is the term we use when we embrace a large canvas and paint with a broad brush. Really, it is trying new things that intrigues me. I am constantly trying to figure out what medium works with charcoal, how to work pastels in with my acrylic paints or mix watercolour with acrylics, what mediums create texture, etc. I create some interesting messes, but it is the process of exploring and pushing the mediums in different areas that is so exciting for me. I am up very early in the morning and into my studio working. Painting sets the course of my day; sometimes I never leave the studio. There are closets filled with my paintings; my studio walls are covered with my paintings; there are boxes of drawings in the storage room, and still the desire to create is strong. When a painting is finished, I am on to the next one.

Since moving to West Kelowna in 2014, I have become an active member of the Federation of Canadian Artists Central Okanagan Chapter. I am a member of the Brushstrokes Club of West Kelowna, and I have helped to start a painting group at a retirement resort here in West Kelowna.

Recently I have had the good fortune to set up the BC Artists Guild with four other artists. It is exciting knowing that we are a small group of aging women who feel like we are young emerging artists eager to share and promote our art together. This collaboration has enabled all five of us to discover the teamwork needed, not just to explore our artistic merits, but also to become involved in the displaying and marketing of our art.

LIVING LIFE

THROUGH ART AND A RESPECT FOR NATURAL BEAUTY

Cherie Sibley Wasyliw



At my birth my proud dad saw the world in his daughter's face. He was a naturalist at heart, and taught me early on to pay attention to nature, to respect it first and foremost, and to protect it. I soon began to see the world through my father's eyes. We lived in the deep woods on seventy-five acres in rural southern Louisiana. There were seven years between me and my older brother, so much of my early years were spent alone. This forced me to use my imagination, to invent things to do – to create. I started making things with my hands: Barbie clothes, Barbie furniture, Barbie houses out of cardboard boxes and Christmas wrapping paper. I used whatever was at hand. I was an introverted child, and my parents humoured me until my confidence grew. I began sending my pencil drawings to those ads in magazines that encourage one to submit drawings for a scholarship. During family holidays I insisted on going to every art museum in every town we visited.

Yet, ironically, I did not study a lot of art in junior high or high school, but in my first year of college that desire to make things with my hands exploded inside me. I realized I had a gift and could do anything, from pottery to sculpture to painting to etching. I tried it all. As my college experience continued, I discovered that I loved creating in three dimensions, so I focused on sculpting in metal, wood, stone and plexiglas. I finished college with a BFA in sculpture with honours. Those college years were some of the happiest times of my life.

After college I was faced with the tsunami-sized problem of making my way in the world as an artist. My first job was in an architectural firm as a graphic designer, then I worked as an art director in several advertising agencies. My path was not direct, but it brought me to San Francisco, where I started my own fledgling design company.

In the late 80s, the first computers were just appearing. Prior to this I had produced graphic art designs by hand; then came the Mac, and I bought one despite having no clue about how to harness its amazing (at least it was amazing then) abilities. I taught myself how to use it, and started designing in a new way. Then life took me to Puerto Vallarta for a convention.

I fell immediately in love with this city, situated among such natural beauty. I informed everyone I knew that I would move there. They all laughed and laughed and laughed until four years later, in 1996, I did in fact move everything I owned. I made four promises to myself that I believed would assist me to create the life I truly desired: I would return to the fine arts of my early life; I would learn to speak Spanish; I would learn to cook

I love painting nature





Top: Dolphin

Above left: My jewelry

Above right: Nature inspired

authentic Mexican food; I would buy a house. It took a while, as it always does when you reinvent yourself, but creating who you need to be is life's purpose.

Almost immediately, I met a woman who was an artist and taught classes, mentoring me and introducing me to her friends. Puerto Vallarta was looking more and more like home. I painted with this artist for about four years, using watercolour and then acrylics, until I left to start a small art school to teach painting to adults. Promise number one achieved.

I then enrolled in intensive Spanish language classes, and achieved enough proficiency to communicate with a near perfect accent. Promise number two achieved.

When I enrolled in Mexican cooking classes, I met an instructor who would become a boyfriend and a life long dear friend. Promise number three achieved.

Finally, I started a small real estate company, assuming that eventually I would run across a home that would speak to me. I did, and have been living in it for the last eighteen years. Promise number four achieved.

Although I switched to oils, I continued to teach and paint, until eventually I improved enough to get my work into PV's *Galleria Dante*, where I have had numerous one woman. It was during this time that I realized how much I loved painting nature and the life that can be found there. It all started with a small lava heron, which I painted under a pier in the Galapagos Islands. From there I flew into making paintings focused primarily on water birds. Subsequently I have continued to paint water subjects, the last of which is a series of eight large-scale paintings of aquatic animals (whales, dolphins, turtles) casting their reflections on the underside of the surface.

As one who tries never to get bored, and having been a lover of artisan jewelry all my adult life, eight years ago I started to learn the art of silversmithing. I studied with two Canadian silversmiths, one in Canada and one in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico; I have honed my skills to a level such that my unique, one-of-a-kind pieces are highly prized by collectors.

As I reflect, I understand art has always been my beacon, my siren song, my grounding when the world gets to be too much for this introvert to deal with. I continue to teach both painting as well as silver smithing in an effort to facilitate others finding their expressions. There is no finer work to be done than sharing with others in this way. And then, at the ripe age of fifty-seven, art also brought me my soulmate, a Canadian. One of my art students introduced us.

Art has brought me everything I could desire in this world – an adoring husband and uber art supporter; loving, like-minded art friends; two brilliantly beautiful homes; and the fulfillment of work that continues to challenge me at every turn. It was a slow process to get to the artist in me, but early experiences and my father's lessons on nature all made me and my work what they are today.

In the words of the great American artist and teacher Robert Henri, "Art is Painting, not painted."

Cherie Sibley Wasyliw: "My number one goal is to bring peace and calm. One has to live with the art one purchases, so why not make every effort to bring harmony back into the lives of our patrons. My paintings are a constant reminder of quiet times in the past, when we were lucky enough to be surrounded by nature, and witness a little of its glory."

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See her work at <https://www.bcartistsguild.com/cherie-sibley.html>

<http://www.cheriesibleyw.com/> or <https://www.facebook.com/cherie.sibleywasyliw>

PHOTOGRAPHY AS EXPRESSION

A POWERFUL MEDIUM



Lynda Miller

“Photography, as a powerful medium of expression and communications, offers an infinite variety of perception, interpretation and execution.” – Ansel Adams

I've read that expressive art activities promote an active engagement in life that keeps us living life in positive, healthy and fulfilling ways. Brushes and paint on a canvas have not worked for me in making art. However, creating an image on my computer with my digital photographs, software and imagination does intrigue me.

I wanted to learn more, so that I could dig deeper and really create with my camera. Encouraged by a good friend, I travelled to Bella Coola in June of 2018 to join nine other photographers who wanted to develop creative vision. If you can imagine the excitement of a duckling that has just been shown water, you will understand how I felt from my first day in Bella Coola.

In addition to some of the techniques I was already using, I learned many other ways to photograph creatively. What I enjoy most is the multiple exposure function, and my camera has it. Even more exciting, I have learned to move my camera and use it as my paintbrush to create art – my art. Gaining appreciation for what one can do is a great morale booster. Using the blend modes in my camera has helped me to create photographs that express my unique vision. Even working beside another photographer, it's amazing how different our images can be. Each image is one of a kind; so much so, that I would not be able to duplicate it, even thirty seconds after I have just created it. In my more reflective moments, I realize photography is teaching me a bit of life philosophy too. My current images are abstract, colourful, and some have a blurred impressionistic look.

The experience of the environment – its beauty, colour, sounds, smells and feelings – influences me when I make my images. When I pay attention to those things right in front of me and let their essence filter through me, I am filled with gratitude. I don't look at the subjects intellectually, that is, for things, centre of interest, etc., but I do check my emotional response. Often the images that catch my attention are abstracts. When I look at them I ask: Do I see something that makes me feel cold, warm, happy or confused? Regardless of what technique I have used, the concepts of line, shape, texture and colour still contribute to a great image. When someone views my photographs, I hope to convey a sense of what I felt, and maybe stir a memory or invite questions.

Below: Nakusp, 2018; Dark mode;
Light mode



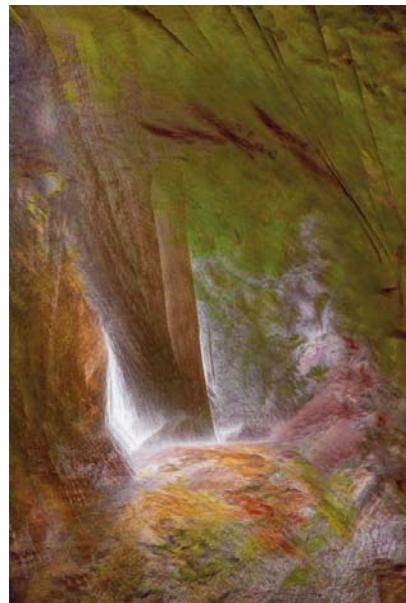


Top left: ICM up and down

Middle: Aberdeen columns

Above: Net Loft

Top right: Cell phone using ME app and rotating camera



This type of photography I'm exploring is very experimental. Sometimes after twenty tries one image will stand out, or it might take fifty or more experiments before an image works. There are many variables that I can change as I combine the shots in my camera in one multiple exposure. I can even begin with an image already on my SD card. It might be an already completed multiple exposure image in one mode, and I can start using it again in another mode for even more different effects. The options make my head swirl and life with my camera becomes full of possibilities.

What I photograph and how I capture it is limited only by my imagination and what my camera can do. I am constantly experimenting with different ideas. There are so many creations waiting for me to find!

Sometimes I bring out my cell phone and use an app called "Multiple Exposure Camera." My phone is always with me, so it offers the opportunity to get creative, instantly. I have shared some of the ideas and experiences of mine, and I hope I've encouraged you to become engaged with your life through your camera's lens.

"With increasing skill and artistry came a vision to not only share the wilderness for enjoyment and adventure, but to embark on a path of intention and consciousness, and of sharing that vision through the art of photography." – Chris Harris

Chris is one of many photographers currently making creative images in their cameras and sharing online. Chris Harris, www.chrisharris.com, Valada Bailey, <https://valdabailey.com> Doug Chinnery, www.dougchinnery.com and Stephanie Jung www.stephaniejung-photography.com.

Lynda Miller is currently the Zone Director for the Pacific Zone (all of B.C. and the Yukon) of the Canadian Association for Photographic Arts. She is the liaison between this organization, known as CAPA, and the District Representatives throughout the entire zone. She is a CAPA certified judge for digital images, and often assists in presenting the judging course to other photographers. To help in developing her skills, Lynda has attended many professional development workshops, including, on Vancouver Island, Image Explorations; a digital painting workshop by Jeremy Sutton in San Francisco; as well as two workshops by Bonnie Lhotka in Boulder, Colorado, to learn a process for transferring digital images onto textures and unusual substrates in order to create unique artistic works. In 2017, Lynda attended a "Develop Your Creative Vision" workshop to learn new ways to think and see photographically. Using her knowledge of photography, Photoshop and Corel Painter, Lynda enjoys helping others of all ages discover new artistic possibilities. She has passed on her knowledge and enthusiasm at presentations and workshops at Lake Country Art Gallery, the local photography club and at workshops throughout British Columbia. lynda-miller@shaw.ca

LET'S GET GROUNDED, BUT NOT TOO MUCH

THE WRITERS' GROUP, WEST KELOWNA:



Mel Kazinoff

I think it is time for us to leave the heavenly bodies to their fates and come down to earth. We live right here on our beautiful planet. We write here, we dream here, we imagine here. So we will proceed with our story here.

Since the last issue of *Sage-ing* we have become famous. We have appeared on CHBC television and in the *Capital News*. We have had several of our Christmas stories on display (that seems a long time ago) and a showcase of some of our published books.

All of this has brought several new members into the fold and our life is exciting, to say the least.

Oh! And I almost forgot. We have another published and launched book, *Is This A Dream*. This is something I shouldn't forget since it is mine. It is a sequel to my previous novel, *Broscombe Manor*. The journey in its creation has been mostly joyous and rewarding, except for the time I wrote myself into a corner and didn't know how to get out. A few weeks away from the resistant document, a little prayer and some meditation, and eventually the answers came. Off and running once again. Phew!

Importantly, we need to have a follow-up on the launch and ongoing events related to Geneva's book, which we have discussed in previous *Sage-ing* issues.

CREATION IS AN ON-GOING PROCESS ... ENDING IN JOY Geneva Ensign

Book Displays.



"I used to think of creation in the past tense, something as having been inspired, yet completed, something finished. However, I have learned that writing, publishing and launching a book is a never-ending process of creating; one task leads into another. In the spring edition of *Sage-ing*, my soon-to-be-published book, *Community Healing: A Transcultural Model*, was featured in the Westbank Writers' Group section. It had taken me three years of nose-to-the-grindstone work to try to capture in book form the essence of a forty-year career as an individual and group psychotherapist.

"After submitting the manuscript to the publishers, I created what I thought was a meaningful cover for the book. It depicted a circle of people with a rainbow of love binding them together – symbolic of "community healing." However, my publisher was not convinced, and, through collaboration through many back and forth e-mails, my now-published book has a new cover.

"My next act of creation was to design and organize book launches to introduce my "labour of love" to the world. Surprisingly, synchronicity took over the process. Robert Louie offered to host the first launch at his beautiful

and elegant Indigenous World Winery, West Kelowna. It was a balmy evening in early September; we sipped wine and enjoyed warm bannock on the patio overlooking the valley and Lake Okanagan. The Louies honoured my work with an eagle feather, an overwhelming and emotional experience. It was a magical evening in a magical setting.

"Indigenous women whom I had worked with for many years in Maskwacis, Alberta, came to celebrate with me. They are designing a Facilitator for Community Healing training course, based on my book.

"As the first launch was limited due to space, the Peachland Arts Council offered to host another one at their art gallery on September 29th. Again it was a wonderful celebration with friends, accompanied by wine and bannock. A former chief spoke about community and healing, and I related my late co-therapist's journey from a very hurt and angry woman to becoming a powerful leader of healing circles. And we were reminded that ALL of us need healing, not only the Indigenous community.

"George Jason, a long-time friend and jazz pianist, provided background music, ending in a triumphal rendition of 'Ode to Joy.' A very special part of the evening was that my colleagues in the Writers' Group, Westbank Library, came to celebrate my creation – and me. Shared joy is especially sweet!

"Perhaps the most exciting aspect of creating this book is that creation doesn't stop with the writing or the publication or the celebration, but it will continue as individuals and communities become inspired to take some of the ideas and continue the creative process of community healing in their own ways."



Now for a new name and face to our *Sage-ing* submissions. Reverend Ann Carter has joined our group and has made herself an invaluable member, getting involved in so many areas. Let's hear from her, and then share a story.

"I found the help I needed to turn my ideas, memories and journals into books when I found the Writer's Group. I would make up stories for my children, and now as adults they are urging me to write. My youngest son and I have written a Reiki Course Book that includes the information we use when teaching. I am working on another book myself, and hope to have it finished before summer 2019. I always enjoyed writing, but never thought about publishing till about 10 years ago. Now, in my late 60s, I am finally doing something I only dreamed of before. It is never too late to make dreams come true!"

And now for a story from Ann.

DEMENTIA AND OUR FAMILY – THE BEGINNING

Ann Carter

We entered the world of dementia blindfolded and unaware of where to go for answers. We thought my mother-in-law was just forgetting things because she was getting older. If we had known about the early signs, maybe we could have made her life easier. She was complaining that family

members were coming into her home and taking items. She was very upset about this, and we discussed it a few times.

I first became aware that there may be more to this when we were shopping together one day, which was something we did regularly. We enjoyed our time together, and I miss those days. One of our favourite places to visit was *Prince's*, in Washington State. We would make a day of it, travel from Summerland, shop and lunch, and then return home. First stop at the store was always the washroom. I was washing my hands, and from one of the stalls I heard her frantically say, "Ann, are you still there?" and I answered quizzically, "Yes, I will be right outside the door looking at fabric." Her voice had a fearful sound, like a child not wanting to be left alone. I made sure I was there when she came out. She seemed confused about where she was and what to do. This was very unusual, as she always went directly to the crafting area. I asked her if she would like to look at the crafting supplies, and then she lit up and said, "Yes," with a twinkle in her eye and a smile on her face. There were little things throughout the day that caught my attention, but I thought maybe she was just tired and her diabetes was acting up. After shopping we went to the park to have the lunch we had brought with us, and she seemed to perk up.

While we were driving home, she asked me if I would go to the doctor with her, and I said I would. She was concerned about going alone; I think she knew something was not right. She said, "Sometimes I feel like there is sawdust in my head." I thought that was strange, because she was always so alert. That woman could add up a column of figures in her head faster than someone could add it on a calculator, and she never forgot anything. She was an accountant, and was always on top of what her clients required. She had retired several years before moving to Summerland, but still had a few clients who did not want anyone else to do their books. A few years later, she decided not to do accounting any longer, and only kept one client who insisted she keep them.

If I had known more about the signs of dementia, I might have questioned why she asked me to take over that client, and was insistent I do it for her. The day came for the doctor's appointment, and I went in the room with her to talk to the doctor. I will never forget that day. After her exam, and the doctor asking her questions that I thought were weird, he looked at us and said, "Betty, you have Alzheimer's dementia; we need to start thinking about you making changes, and thinking about living with someone and not alone." Those words would haunt us from that day forward because we did not know what we were dealing with. She had a mobile home on my brother-in-law's farm, and we thought she would be okay for the time being. The doctor said there would come a time when she would not be able to be in her own place, as she would need someone with her 24/7. He asked if it were possible for her to move into an assisted living home or with family when the time came. I saw the panic on her face, and I promised her right then that she would not have to go into a facility; she could live with us and not to worry,

we would make it work. The doctor said it was necessary to start getting ready for the move, so that we could transition quickly when the time came. I agreed.

The doctor then asked a nurse to take my mother-in-law to check her weight and arrange for lab testing. As soon as she went out of the room the doctor looked at me and said, "You need to know your lives are changing drastically from this moment forward." This doctor had majored in geriatrics, and we could not have asked for a better doctor to help us through what was to come.

Learn about dementia and how Canada is helping those who live with the disease. Visit the Government of Canada website

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/dementia.html>

And, as Monty Python might say, "Now for something completely different." Again, from the Rev. Ann:

THE FAMILY

Ann Carter

The day is bright and the sun fills me with warmth. I am flying on a long trip today to meet my betrothed. Our families are from generations of Danaus, the king of Libya, his twin brother Plexippus and their great-grandfather, Zeus. We will create our home in a land called Milkweed, where our children will be born.

It is time to depart. The flight makes me anxious, and I am hopeful that my betrothed will accept me. We have never met, and I know I must follow the path of previous generations. It is time to land for fuel. I can see bright colours surrounding the landing area. I enjoy the smells that surround this land and fill me with nourishment.

It is time to continue the flight. The land of Milkweed comes into view as the flight comes to an end. Now I must locate my betrothed. I am told he will have wings and there will be a spot in the middle of each. There he is; we connect, and I know we are meant to be together. Our wedding is quickly celebrated; others of our generation surround us, wishing us a full life together. It is time to consummate our union; my prayer is that it will be blessed with many offspring to carry on for us.

The air is cold and winter is coming. It is difficult to find food during this time, but spring will be here soon. Spring arrives and my children are being born. My children are hidden away to protect them as they grow. The children are healthy, but do not understand why I must leave. It is time for me to depart this world, and leave them to survive without me.

"Why has mother left? What are we to do? I remember her beauty, but my surroundings are grey and blurry. The walls are falling away and the light from the sun emerges. I smell sweetness and see colour all around me from my brothers and sisters. We are beautiful, just like our parents. Our path is to create more life as well as generations after us. Our lives will be short, but

our fourth generation will be longer and filled with a long journey."

"We are the fourth generation and our journey has begun. We take flight soon, and will land in a warmer climate to begin the process our ancestors did before us. Once we complete this, we will join our ancestors."

So begins and ends the life cycle of the monarch butterfly.



I have known Jozan Eland for about twenty years, and she knows a few of the other writers in our group. But she is not a member of the Westbank Writers. Why, you might ask. There are several reasons: First, she lives in Kelowna. Not a big deal you might say. Second, she no longer drives. Well, that could be a problem. And then there is the kicker. She is ninety-four. Still active mind you, still writing, and would love to join us if she could. But when you are over ninety you deserve to be able to put your feet up and have people come to you. So, unilaterally, I am making her an honorary member, for this issue of *Sage-ing*, at least. Let's check out what she has to say for herself.

"Writing is the most intimate way I can talk to myself. Journalizing, letters and writing stories are great ways to sweep away stress and mind clutter. Writing clarifies my thoughts and lays them to rest. Publishing doesn't cross my mind, but oh how often I bless those who are published. From early childhood, books have been my joy and great pleasure. Charles W. Eliot best describes how I feel about books: 'Books are the quietest and most constant of friends and most accessible and wisest of counsellors and most patient of teachers.' I have learned so much from those whose consciousness is far above mine. I'm also indebted and grateful to the publishers. What a wonderful gift *Sage-ing* brings to its readers."

Thank you, Jozan, for your insightful words. And now for your creative side.

MOTHERS TO DAUGHTERS

I say to you my children.
You are souls
Whose bodies were fashioned
Within my body.
Your father's seed
Joined with mine
To set the cells of Light Into motion,
To multiply and differentiate into
Tissues of wondrous design.

But the nurturing
Was all mine.
I cradled the bones and flesh
Fed from my quickened blood
To form the temple for you,
Dear daughters,
That you could enter
And begin life on earth anew.

We, your parents
Gave you raiment, shelter and food,
And you began the process
Of bringing order out of chaos.
It was you who chose
From you learning and ensuing experiences
What you deemed important for existence.
Not I, but you!

What I know now
I did not know then,
That mind and emotions
Are the tools of soul.
Only servants, not masters,
Giving expression of the highest being.
Choose well my darlings,
For you truly are, captains of your own fate.
And I, the bystander,
Am ardently wishing you well
With the only gift I can give,
A deep abiding love from my heart.

Because my life was nomadic
I was able to give you the wings of
freedom.
Come not to me under any authority
Other than friendship,
To share the treasures of Truth and
Wisdom.
For isn't the rest
Relative to one great truth?
The reality of creation exists,
And we are but sparks
Of that Reality.

So there you have it for another edition. There's never a dull moment when such a talented group gather together. Down to earth? Yes. Up in the stars? That too. We wouldn't want it any other way.

NO MORE MONSTER IN THE BEDROOM

Terry Lee



The author with his father at his home in Florida in 1996.

During a warm-up jog for a morning run around Fresh Pond in Cambridge, Massachusetts, I was suddenly transported to a tiny bedroom on North Townsend Street in Syracuse, N.Y. I was five years old and my brother was three. There was a monster in the room. No – not the kind under the bed – a real monster hovering over us.

This was our bedtime ritual, kneeling bedside for the “Now-I-Lay-Me-Down-To-Sleep” prayer. Very Norman Rockwell, except for the monster. That would be my father.

For whatever reason, my little brother refused to say the prayer that night. In this episode of my life, I learned a lesson as my father raged, both verbally and physically abusive. *Comply.*

Much later, when I was hoping for a white-collar job right out of high school – it was 1969 and that was still possible, barely – my father shamed me with a cruel tease in front of the family. With my eyes closed and the family tittering around me, he put an industrial string mop on my head, not the suit pants I had asked for. The life lesson I learned then was *detach*, I-don’t-care, nothing-can-get-to-me indifference.

Why were these episodes suddenly popping into my 67-year-old head as I launched into my two-and-one-half mile run around Fresh Pond? Life review? It happens to all of us, spontaneously. Long-ago memories rise up. Our mental stage becomes crowded with uninvited actors from the past. But I was also incubating life review, *inviting* those actors onto the stage. What I learned has changed my life.

Let me back up for a minute, and note that my father was a monster only when disciplining my siblings and me. He also had a gentle soul, which I came to know and love as an adult.

The late gerontologist Dr. Robert Butler coined the term *life review* in 1963, recognizing in his elder patients that ages-old memories start popping up, often prompting an individual to revisit a difficult time in his or her past, maybe a time when something life-changing happened. And, just as importantly, Butler realized that elders who share old memories and stories should be listened to, not told that they are, sadly, living in the past.

I became interested in older people when I was a lot younger; I became interested in my own elder self about a year ago when I retired. I also have an active interest in psychology, especially in how stories affect us psychologically.

It was the psychologist Dr. Karen Horney who came up with the terms *compliance* and *detachment*, and others. Her theories help to understand how children cope with the sometimes overpowering influence of parents. The upshot for me was that I discovered I have lived a life of detachment because I feel safest on the outside of things. Ironically, this perspective was a pretty perfect fit for a news reporter, the white-collar job that I did get right out of high school. I found a career as a photographer and documentary video producer. I watched other people have relationships, and kept my own to just a very few.

What I especially like about both Dr. Butler and Dr. Horney is that they make the past relevant in my life at this moment, and in a way that helps me understand how I am and why I am that I am. This understanding produces insights, insights that I can act on to change who I am. All it takes is a little honesty.

Knowing where my detachment comes from opened a big door. I joined a dream group, something that I had always wanted to do, and I had fabulous connections sharing with the others. When a friend recently criticized me fairly harshly, I responded by saying that he had hurt my feelings and really wounded my self confidence, instead of ignoring the criticism – detaching. We both profited.

I have just completed training as a hospice volunteer. I had been a volunteer before in a different state, but my role was to shoot life-story videos for the patients – an observer on the outside, as it were. Next month, I'll be sitting bedside with a 90-year-old, listening to her stories, holding her hand, and enjoying a wonderful new relationship.

I have no more monster in the bedroom, and I am proud of the more compassionate “I am” I have become.

Terry Lee is a professor emeritus from Christopher Newport University, where he taught journalism, British literature, and a documentary studies class in which students documented in video the stories of community elders. He lives now in Watertown, Massachusetts, and is the author of *A New Path at Midlife: Transformative Relationship and Story for Men* (Men's Studies Press, 2006). tlee@cnu.edu

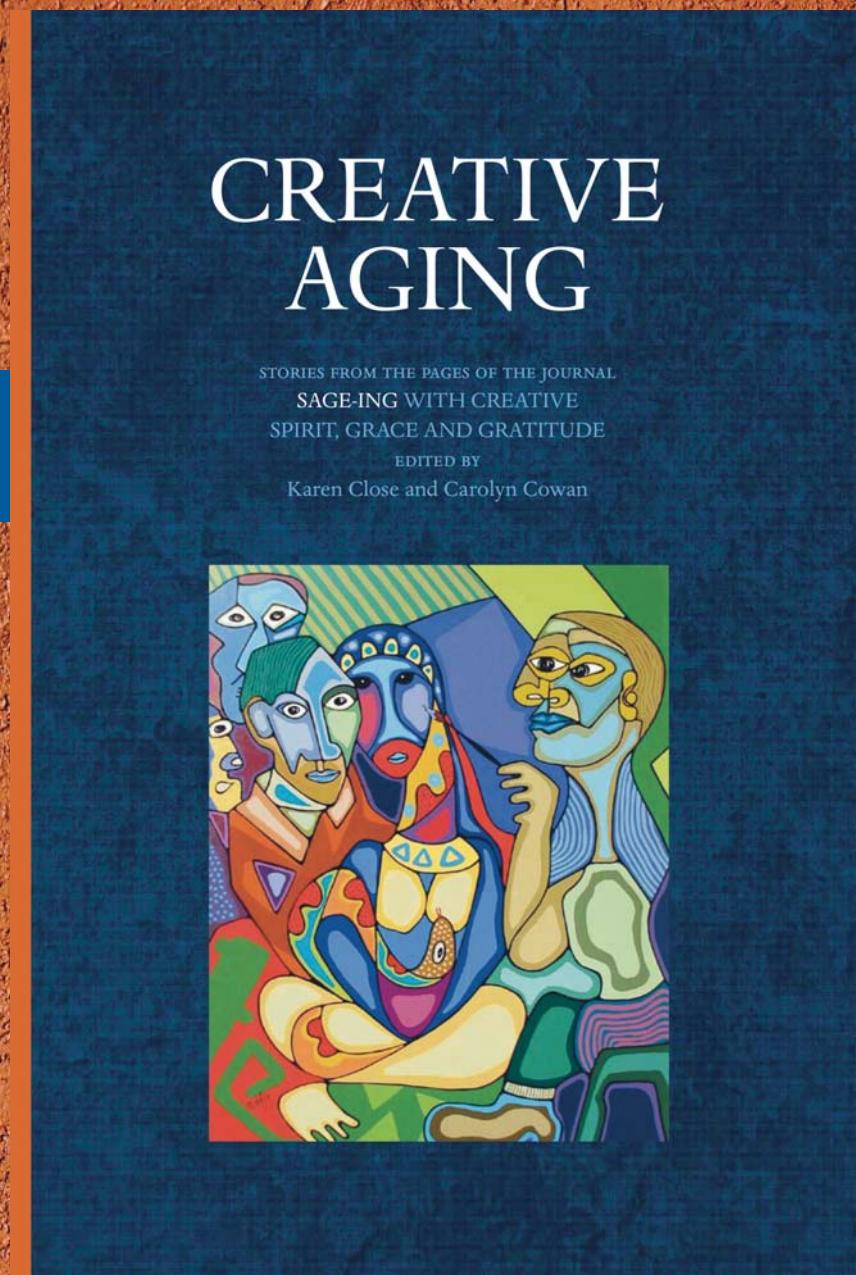
The Voices of Creative Aging

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

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

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

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



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

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

SAGE-ING WITH CREATIVE SPIRIT, GRACE & GRATITUDE

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