

CreativeVoices



**Creative works by members of the
Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Cincinnati**
includes the 2013–2014 report to the membership



Inside

Poetry and Prose

Dust by Vince Bennett 2

June Brides by Judi Morress 3

Elevator Talk by Kathy Richardson 4

Flight 93 National Memorial by Dick Hellmann 5

Getting Into — Getting Out Of by Judi Morress 6

When I Was Young, I Thought ... by Judi Morress 7

Letter to Deceased Parents, Brother, Husband
by Pauline Lutmer 8

Overthinkers Anonymous: A Confession
by Jim Jennings 10

Little Things by Judi Morress 12

Old Soul by Pamela D. Hirte 17

*Reunion50 (598 Months or 2601 Weeks or
18,298 Days or 439,152 Hours)*
by Andrea Angell Herzig 18

The Realm of Seniors by Annie Mikel 20

On a Bench by Donald Wenker 21

The Discovery Garden by Pamela D. Hirte 22

The Family Silver Finds a New Home
by Sally Moore 23

The Immigrant by Joan Murray 24

The Present by Mary Anne Sanders 25

The Rabbi and the Youth by Mark Rinsky 26

And So It Goes by Helen Fox 29

Painting and Photography

Spring Grove Serenity by Virginia Cox 2

Lion from Cincinnati Zoo by David Brafford 2

Untitled by Judy Stewart 3

Sunrise in Eden by Judy Stewart 4

Queen Anne's Lace by Helen Fox 5

Attic Treasures by Bernadette Clemens-Walatka 7

Day's End by Meg Ruwe 8

New World by Donata Glassmeyer 10

Local Color by Helen Fox 12

Under the Sun by Sue Wilke 17

Game Over by Richard M. Lingo 19

Dingle Peninsula by Tim Langner 20

Rippling Memories Evaporate across Time
by Peter Nord 21

Flowers in a Blue Vase by Donata Glassmeyer 22

Bee at Work by Richard M. Lingo 23

Tyler Davidson Fountain by Howard Todd 24

Modern Sculpture by Virginia Cox 25

Liberty at Central, Over-the-Rhine by Sue Wilke 27

Untitled (Robin) by Janet Smith 28

Dahlia by Larry J. Pytlinski 29

Report to the Membership 13

<p>Each year, OLLI at UC invites members to contribute their creative work in the form of short fiction, poetry, nonfiction, and visual art. <i>Creative Voices</i> is published by the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Cincinnati.</p>	<p>Publisher Cate O'Hara</p> <p>Editors Sally A. Peterson Judy Stewart Connie Trounstine</p>	<p>Design University of Cincinnati Creative Services</p> <p>Cover photo Foot of Main by Richard M. Lingo</p>	<p><i>The editors of Creative Voices wish to thank all those who submitted stories, poems, and works of art.</i></p>
--	--	--	--



**Spring Grove
Serenity**
by Virginia Cox

Dust *by Vince Bennett*

Though she's ashen gray
Her fire has not gone away
I see embers in her eyes
As her fire slowly dies
Every loving tear
Is another silent prayer
Hoping she breathes in
I try to keep from breakin'

*God give me the strength if I must
Watch her turn to stone before she
turns to dust*

She's always been my rock,
But the hourglass sands still drop
Every minute I'm more alone

As she slowly turns to stone
Dark bleeds into my life
As I lose her lovely light
Lord, I never thought
I'd ever feel this lost

*God give me the strength if I must
Watch her turn to stone before she
turns to dust*

I know God understands
God holds us with caring hands

*God give me the strength if I must
Watch her turn to stone before she
turns to dust*



Lion from Cincinnati Zoo by David Brafford



Untitled by Judy Stewart

June Brides

by Judi Morress

For Judy Sears

I see those fresh-faced girls we were,
peering at the future through our bridal veils.
The aisle we were about to walk down
was the only path we thought was open.

You wanted to paint, I wanted to write.
But we were hemmed in, discouraged from college,
got jobs that couldn't support us. It was time.
Time to do something.

It was time to grow up.
We told ourselves that we were in love
with those boys, so we got married.
It was the only way to be an adult that we could see.

We were so earnest, with our little checkbooks,
our little casseroles, our little children.
We were so busy stretching grocery money,
changing diapers, cleaning, doing laundry.

Every once in a while, we would make a sketch,
or write down the beginning of something,
but our husbands pulled our apron strings and
our children pulled our heart strings and we said, "Later."

We thought we were on clear protected paths.
We had no idea how brave we would have to be.
We raised our children alone. We got jobs.
Against all odds, we made lives for ourselves.

We each found love again
and learned that nothing lasts forever.
That's the good news and the bad news:
Nothing lasts forever.

So, my dear friend, after all these years, here we are,
Safe, secure, surrounded by family and friends,
And we ask, "What do we do now?"
You paint. I'll write.

Elevator Talk

by Kathy Richardson

MAYBE LOVE IS never more serious than when you are young, when you first feel magnetically joined to another, when life is still vague and gauzelike. Perhaps love can hurt more deeply before you land your dream job, before you miss that promotion or are squeezed out of your job through a merger, before you cook your first Thanksgiving turkey or sign a mortgage, before you know the sweetness of cuddling your newborn baby. Maybe especially when life is new and experience limited can rejection reach deep inside you and pull out your guts.

Yesterday when I walked into the back elevator on the twelfth floor of my condo building, a teenaged boy stood leaning forward against the control panel, faded jeans taut across his slender legs, his left side against the wall, his right arm raised and curled over his forehead and shielding his face.

Concerned, "Are you all right? Can I help you?" I asked him. Straightening, he glanced at me through teary lashes.

"No," he replied. He hesitated. We had never seen each other before. "My girlfriend just broke up with me." I shifted the plant I was carrying to Spring Grove Cemetery to honor my late husband's birthday.

"I'm sorry," I consoled. I reached over to press the lobby button and paused as he pressed his tousled brown hair against the wall again. "Do you think the breakup is final?" I added. The elevator began its descent.

"I hope not," he said. "She . . . got mad . . . at me . . . because I . . . smoked a cigarette." His eyes teared over again as he looked blankly and mournfully at me, then turned away.

The elevator continued toward the lobby. "What are you going to do about it?" I asked. The elevator door opened slowly at the lobby; he backed away, continuing down to the basement.

He looked earnestly at me. "I'm not going to smoke another cigarette," he replied. A workman with a cart edged

on as I moved slowly out. Looking over my shoulder, I said, "Anything else? Like maybe a note and flowers?" The door closed on him and his misery.

As I walked toward the parking lot, a montage kaleidoscoped through my head: a montage of early romances, of forty-nine years of marriage, of sickness and health, for better and for worse, of two daughters and their years of dating and their broken—or at least cracked—hearts and then their beautiful weddings, of vacations at the beach, of doctor visits and radiation treatments—all these memories flashed through my mind.

"Who is to say?" I thought. "Who is to say his heart doesn't hurt as grievously as mine did when I sat beside the bed, holding Ed's hand as he breathed his last?" If only the boy knew—if only any of us could know—what lies ahead.

There is always more to the story, isn't there?



Sunrise in Eden by Judy Stewart



Queen Anne's Lace by Helen Fox

Flight 93 National Memorial

by Dick Hellmann

A FEW YEARS AGO, my wife, Kathy, and I found ourselves taking respite from barreling along I-76/70 by overnighting in Somerset, Pennsylvania. Somerset sounded slightly familiar as we checked in. In the morning we found some literature that explained why: Somerset is near the crash site of Flight 93 on September 11, 2001.

We interrupted our trip home and drove ten miles through rolling hills of simple farms and minor hamlets, following the zigzags of our GPS, finally down a twisty road to a dusty parking lot. Thinking “OK, what’s here?” we let our eyes follow the line of people straggling from the few cars into a rusty Quonset hut.

We parked and went in to find a plain but well-done exhibit—touching in its simplicity—a straightforward timeline of events laid out in text, no multimedia, and two sets of folders: one simply a transcription of Flight 93’s cockpit voice recorder and its disjointed voices as the terrorists invaded the cockpit, the other a transcription of passengers’ phone calls to loved ones.

We went back out and down a path to an overlook. Below was the valley where the airplane had plummeted nearly vertically into the ground. What was a site of death and conflagration was now a peaceful expanse, beautiful and hauntingly quiet.

Down below, bulldozers scraped the earth bare in preparation to turn what was simple hallowed ground into a thousand-acre national memorial with visitor center and winding paths of trees and granite slabs leading to the crash site.

Quiet, sun-soaked sky
Tree-ringed valley of Queen Anne’s lace
and black-eyed Susans
Their bright heads ripple in a soft, hot
breeze
Miles off, slowly turning wind turbines
stand sentinel on their ridge
Three dozen of them, a dozen of us
We don’t speak
We already have our memorial

Getting Into — Getting Out Of

by Judi Morress

I'VE BEEN THINKING about these two terms lately: "getting into" and "getting out of." It seems to me that they pretty much describe everything we do. "Getting into" something is an action we take on our own initiative, and that can be a good thing. For example, getting into a good book is enjoyable. But if it's a not-so-good book, we say, "I just can't get into it. I wonder if I can get out of reading it." You usually can get out of it unless you're a student and said book is required reading. So you grudgingly read it and then complain, "I just didn't get anything out of that darn book." It appears that the only thing you wanted to get out of it was you, so you didn't even try to get anything else out of it. Shame on you!

Do you remember your mother saying something like, "Now, don't you kids get into trouble while I'm at the store!" But you did anyway, didn't you? That wasn't so good, was it? Then you tried to think of a way to get out of a spanking. "Getting out of" seems to me to be kind of a weasely thing. Something that you got into didn't turn out to be what you thought it would, so you then have to try to get out of it. Is the "getting out of" it a good thing or a bad thing? It depends. Take divorce.

Getting into something was very popular in the sixties. Someone would say, "Oh, he's very into Transcendental Meditation" or Buddhism or whatever people were getting into, often with the help of various herbal aids. Some then got into rehab; others were busy trying to get out of the draft.

Back when I was a teenager (when dinosaurs roamed the Earth), a girl who became pregnant without the sanction of wedlock was said to have "gotten into trouble." In fact, it was often said that "she got herself into trouble." Even with my sketchy understanding of the mechanics of the whole thing then, I was pretty sure that she didn't do this all by herself, no matter how much the boy wanted to get out of it. Things have changed so much since that time that now the happy couple (wed or not doesn't seem to matter anymore) will announce, "We are pregnant!" Ah, would that this could be so. "We" (the would-be parents) can be expecting. "We" can take equal responsibility for childcare, etc. But . . . "We" cannot be pregnant. "Pregnant" is a medical term, and you just sound stupid if you say "We are pregnant."

What got me into thinking about "getting into" and "getting out of" in the first place was a couple of experiences I had recently. There was a problem with my shower, so I took a tub bath instead. Well, I haven't had a tub bath in probably twenty-five years, ever since I found that I could shave my legs standing up in the shower. You understand that I'm not quite as agile as I was twenty-five years ago. I finished bathing and then sat there and wondered, "How do I get out of here?" I tried pushing myself up on the rim of the tub, but I kept sliding around. My son was due to arrive at my house soon, but I didn't want the experience of helping his seventy-four-year-old naked mother to her feet in the bathtub to be how he remembered me. I'm sure he would agree if I ever told him this, which, of course, won't ever happen. Finally, I rolled over, got on my hands and knees, and crawled out of the tub.

When my son arrived, he began cutting the grass. I needed to run some errands. I went out to my car and found that my son had parked so close to my car that I could get my door open only about six inches. No matter how you turn me, I'm wider than six inches. I didn't want to interrupt my son; after all, he was cutting my grass, so I went to the passenger side and got in. Back in the olden days, cars had bench seats, and you could slide from one side to the other (see paragraph above re: "girls getting themselves in trouble"). Nowadays, we have bucket seats with a big hulking console and gearshift and emergency brake between them and, by the way, no place to put your purse. (Several years ago I read that a major auto manufacturer conducted a survey to find out what women want in a car. Overwhelmingly, they want a place to put their purses. So far, it hasn't happened.)

Anyhow, I was now in the car in the passenger seat. How to get over into the driver seat? Hmm. I rejected the headfirst approach, thinking I'd just get stuck. Butt first would probably have the same result. I took a deep breath, leaned back on the passenger door, swung my legs over the console, then leaned forward, grabbed the steering wheel, and pulled myself into the driver's seat.

If you tell someone that your major accomplishments for the day were getting out of the bathtub and getting into the car, they'd probably think, "Poor soul, she really needs help." They'd be right.

When I Was Young, I Thought . . .

by Judi Morress

When I was very young, I thought:

- That dogs were boys and cats were girls.
(I still think dogs seem manly and cats feminine.)
- That men's hair never got long. When I asked my mother why, she said, "They get haircuts."
- That the angels never brought babies to unmarried ladies.
- That grown-ups never did anything just for fun and that they were never wrong.
- That no one died until they were very, very old.
- That grown-ups never cried.
- That cars looked like faces, with headlights for eyes.
- That silverware was a family. The fork was the mother, the knife was the father, and the spoon was the little girl.

When I was a bit older (but still quite young), I knew:

- That every species has both boys and girls, and why (although the mechanics of why seemed strange).
- That sometimes unmarried ladies did have babies, but they gave them away.
- That grown-ups did do things for fun but never in front of the children.
- That grown-ups actually could be wrong! (Pointing this out to grown-ups got me in trouble!)
- That even children could die. (I still don't like to believe this one.)

When I was a young adult, I thought:

- That once you were middle-aged (thirty-five), everything was settled, and you could coast till you died.

That nothing bad would happen to you as long as you followed the rules.
That I should not argue and should not stand up for myself.
That there would be no drama and no surprises.

Now that I am old, I know:

That there are all kinds of families.
That if I don't stand up for myself, chances are no one else will.
That life is full of drama and surprises: Some good, some bad, Some deserved, some undeserved, and You just have to take it as it comes.
That I am wrong sometimes, and
That I will laugh and cry and have fun till I die.



Attic Treasures by Bernadette Clemens-Walatka

Letter to Deceased Parents, Brother, Husband

by Pauline Lutmer

HEY Y'ALL. I've been taking this writing class, and we have an assignment to send our deceased parents a letter to tell them some things we never had the chance to say. I know you're looking at one another and thinking, "How in the world can anyone who talks as much as she does have anything left to say?" The truth is I've had a heck of a time coming up with anything. It's now 5:00 a.m. on class day, and I finally got inspired. (You know I work well under pressure.) Actually, I have a few things to say to four of you: Mom, Dad, brother Patrick, and, of course, husband Donnie. So sit back, relax, and I'll make this as painless as possible.

I must begin with something I never

told you, Mom. Remember when we lived in Belvidere, Illinois, and were two miles from St. James Catholic Church and School? I was in second grade. One morning you gave me half a dollar (we don't even see those anymore, by the way) and told me to go to church at lunchtime and light five votive candles. On my way to school, I worried something awful that there might be people in the church when I went to light the candles, and they would hear me drop in one coin and then light *five* candles! Proudful little stinker, wasn't I?

I guess I blocked out the whole thing and totally forgot about the candles during the day. I was walking home alone (don't know why) that afternoon and

suddenly remembered the half dollar in my pocket. Oh, geez. I was going to be in big trouble. You'd find the money and scold me for not lighting the candles, blah, blah, blah. What to do? I had to get rid of that half dollar. So I did what any enterprising young child would and stopped in Woolworth's dime store and bought candy. The only "store" candy I recognized was crème drops. Remember those sickeningly sweet chocolate-covered creamy candies Dad loved? I swear they must have been five cents a pound! The clerk gave me this huge bag of candy, and I headed home, stuffing the candy in my mouth as fast as I could swallow. Finally, unable to eat one more bite, I threw the bag away, went home, and (ugh) ate



Day's End by Meg Ruwe

very little supper. To this day I can't stand the sight of those awful candies. Can you believe you can still buy them? (Hobby Lobby—two bucks a bag!)

Now, fast-forward to April when we second graders were preparing for our first Communion. You know that this huge event was preceded by our first confession. Rats! I suddenly remembered the fifty cents and the unlit candles. My conscience just about killed me. Sister Gene Raymond was teaching us how to make our confession and used examples of "sins," such as sassing our parents, fighting with our siblings, telling fibs . . . all the things little kids do. Oh, Lord. I had stolen from the Church! I had to tell the priest, and I just knew he wasn't going to let me make my first Communion. Mom, you'd be so upset and embarrassed. Cripe, my life was over, and I was only seven years old. I fussed and worried about it for days!

The Saturday for our first formal confession finally came. As I stood in line, I was terrified. Then it was my turn to go into the dark little confessional. I began, "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. This is my first confession." Deep breath. "I stole money from the Church." Dead silence. (I'm sure he was trying not to laugh.) Then the priest asked me to explain. Well, I did, and much to my relief he said, "I will give you absolution, but you must promise to make restitution as soon as you are able." Whew! I gave my heartfelt promise—even though I had no earthly idea what "restitution" was—and made my first Communion with my classmates. I couldn't believe my good luck: no one knew about my great "sin." For years and years, I would recall that confession but seemed *unable* to remember if I had paid back the fifty cents. So the next week I'd put fifty cents extra into the collection basket. I probably paid back a hundred dollars before I felt ok about not throwing in an extra half a buck every week. Glad I finally told you, Mom. Wonder if one of those candles was for me?

I must tell you ALL that I miss you and wish you were reachable by telephone. There've been ups and downs in my life, but the older I get the easier it is to overlook the tough times and remember all the hilarious events that continue

to pepper my existence! Fortunately for me, you passed on a sense of humor that has provided me with hours of entertainment as I've observed my fellow humans. Obviously, it doesn't take much to amuse me. I've also discovered that other people seem to find some pleasure in hearing my personal version of "The Perils of Pauline," so I'm a happy camper . . . TRULY happy, content, and very grateful.

Many of the things you told me come to mind often and have been helpful. Remember, Dad, how you said our house was too little for anyone to fill up the space with bad moods? You also told me that trouble was inevitable but misery was an option. Do you have any idea how much power there is in that statement? And, Mom, you always were a whiz with a budget . . . something I learned and used and that has helped me make my living. Believe it or not there are people who don't realize that your income must exceed your outgo or you're in serious trouble. I still set up budgets for clients and help them get out of debt. You always said you didn't care how much Dad made as long as it was steady. You could squeeze a nickel till it cried! We didn't have a lot of extras, but it was from you I learned that you need only what you need . . . and it's important to be able to differentiate a "need" from a "want."

I remember all the times we laughed at inappropriate times, Mom, like when the priest was saying Mass at our house. The gospel was about the women whose work was never done: "rising up at dawn and being the last to retire at night." We glanced at each other and got the giggles. Dad kept giving us dirty looks, which only made it funnier! Or the time when I'd just gotten home from the convent and we took my new/used car to a shopping center. By the time we got out of the store, it had turned dark. Not only didn't we know where the car was but we weren't even sure what it looked like! So we stood on the icy pavement, freezing and laughing like loons, thinking we'd have to wait until the other few hundred shoppers left before we'd be able to find the elusive auto.

Well, guys, you get the picture.

You already know that I'm about as sentimental as a rock, so there won't be any poignant, deeply moving remarks

from me. But I remember well our shared love of music and so have chosen a song for each of you. Mom and Dad, my choice for yours has to be "Thanks for the Memory."

Now, on to Pat. I'm sure Heaven for you is a quiet place with an endless supply of canvas, paper, wood, paints, pencils, and charcoal . . . and a wondrous sound system playing the exact music you need for whatever work of art you're creating at the moment. Thanks for all the childhood secrets we kept from Mom and Dad. And for being there for me when I left the convent. For you, brother, I have only five words: you were always my hero. Your song has to be "Wind beneath My Wings" . . . schmaltzy but accurate.

And finally, Donnie. Lord, I miss you! You who walked into my kitchen one winter night, stayed ten minutes, and totally shattered my resolve never to marry or commit myself to anyone or anything after the convent disaster. But there you were, a total stranger. While you were mumbling something about moving my car from the driveway, I was thinking, "There'd better not be anyone in your life, big boy, because you are *mine*!" The rest is history. I was so darn mad at you when you died so young . . . and mad at God, mad at the doctor who misdiagnosed the pneumonia that killed you, and pretty mad at myself for letting you wiggle into my heart. I know that your Heaven consists of lots of dogs and cats to spoil and an inexhaustible supply of chocolate! Enjoy it now, baby, because when I get there, it's back to broccoli. Your song? You get two: "You Belong to Me" and "I'll Be Seeing You." I love ya, darlin'. You are still the best guy in the whole United States and Canada!

Hope you all know how grateful I am that you played such key roles in my life. We laughed, cried, argued, and did all the things people do with family. You will all live in my heart forever. Oops! Almost got all mushy there, didn't I?

I'll close now with the immortal words of Porky Pig: "*That's all folks!*" Won't be that long till I get to see you all again. So stock up on earplugs because (please excuse the bad grammar) I got LOTS more to tell you.

Overthinkers Anonymous:

HELLO, MY NAME IS JIM, and I'm an overthinker.

Looking back over my life, I know that the tendency toward overthinking took root very early. It's probably a genetic thing—my parents were overthinkers, and maybe that proverbial apple really doesn't fall far from the metaphorical tree. Of course, we all crave a little fun in our lives, so I turned to recreational thinking. Just a little light weekend thinking at first, nothing serious. More and more I found myself resorting to the outside stimulation of a book to feed the habit. Edgar Rice Burroughs was among the early boyhood tempters, but I soon graduated to the harder stuff: Ayn Rand, Jack Kerouac, Joseph Heller. Before I realized that I had a problem, I'd stumbled into Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus.

There were lost evenings—and then lost weekends. “Just a couple chapters” turned into all-night page-turning binges. Afterward I'd feel the shame, and I'd rationalize my behavior and swear never to fall into abstract reverie again.

Friends grew distant, as did my family. I know they wanted to help, but no one dared discuss existentialism with a teenager. I could sense a gulf developing between me and society, but there was nothing I could do. I watched football, I went to school, I snuck the occasional beer with my pals, but none of it stifled the urge to think. I had lost control.

In adulthood, I found certain acceptable outlets for thinking. I could read while someone else had the television on; I could think while in a public place but not be noticed doing so. (My natural expression of subtle stupidity served as a mask, a social construct.) I could walk aimlessly with seemingly purposeful strides, brooding and mulling all the while.

I led a double life, reacting to the mundane events of the daily routine and yet compulsively thinking within the confines of my own mind. Some may have suspected, but I kept the signs hidden or at least obscured.

I didn't really care where my thinking was leading me so long as I could keep at it. I became greedy and self-indulgent, finding stray moments to think. I would make excuses to slip away from others

and wallow in long bouts of abstract cognition. My closest friends became enablers, offering me new ideas for yet more rumination. I knew it was wrong, but I was too far gone to care.



A Confession

by Jim Jennings

Then, in late middle age, I left my job. In doing so, I lost my safe haven. I no longer had the refuge of the office where I could go to stop thinking for hours and hours every weekday. Instead,

I found myself lying in bed each morning, coffee in hand, long after the alarm had gone off, deep in thought. Living alone, I shaved and thought, showered and thought, brushed my teeth and

thought. I'd dress respectably, stop by a convenience store for a newspaper, grab a table at the coffee shop. To all outward appearances, there was minimal thinking involved. I was maintaining the lie that life was normal, that I was only paying attention, not really thinking.

But I was thinking. I weighed evidence, I pondered alternatives, I played devil's advocate. I thought I could stop thinking—or at least cut back—but every attempt ended in failure. I was lost in the cranium with no way out.

Except . . . an intervention. Not one, single dramatic moment with friends and loved ones looking serious. No, I endured a series of less confrontational interventions, each one valuable in causing me to see myself from the outside, to sense the heartache that my overthinking was causing others. Acquaintances would cut me off in conversations before I was even into the fifth paragraph of how I felt about the weather. My eight-hundred-word, carefully reasoned email messages would receive two-syllable, anatomically impossible responses. The counter guy at the chili parlor would hand me my change brusquely, long before I had reached the conclusion of my critical exposition on the subtle nuances of that day's batch. Overthinking had taken over my life.

And so, brick by brick, the little interventions began to sink in (like a mixed metaphor gone bad). They say that the first step is admitting that you have a problem, that you need help. I found that place one dark early morning, sitting alone after a night of frenzied and ultimately pointless thinking.

And so I stand before you today. A recovering overthinker, accepting the challenge one day at a time.



New World by Donata Glassmeyer

Little Things

by Judi Morress

You can make a life out of little things:
a cup of coffee, clean sheets,
a perfect, crisp apple.
Sometimes that's the best thing to do:
keep your head down,
focus on what's right in front of you.
Lift your gaze at your own peril—
it might break your heart.

If you have enough little things,
you can build a wall with them,
but it's a tumble-down thing—that wall.
Big things will break right through it.
So you build it over and over
until one day you lift your eyes
and make a doorway and enter
the world again.



Local Color
by Helen Fox

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Cincinnati

2013-14 *report to the membership*

A Vibrant Learning Community

Letter from the Chair

Dear Members and Friends of OLLI:

This issue of Creative Voices is the result of the energy, enthusiasm, and creativity of our members. If you were an accountant in your “past” life, you can learn to be a writer of children’s stories in your OLLI life. This is what sets OLLI apart and makes it such a stimulating experience. We are free to explore both what is familiar and what is entirely new to us. I’m sure each of you has taken a class based on “I wonder what that is about” and come away with knowledge and insights that opened a new part of the world to you.

OLLI exists because people want to share and learn. As you may know, all our courses are taught by volunteers. They are OLLI, and without them OLLI at UC would not exist. They deserve our heartfelt thanks. The talent and diversity of this group is amazing. The number and variety of OLLI courses are a direct reflection of their interests and dedication.

Moderators are not the only volunteers who make OLLI work. The OLLI Board of Trustees and committees are also made up of volunteers. The Curriculum Committee recruits the moderators then somehow magically creates the schedule that slots all those moderators into times and days of the week. The result is a curriculum that offers us more choices than many of us can schedule. The Marketing Committee oversees the purchase of paid advertisements as well as informal means to tell the OLLI story and attract new members. Other OLLI committees—Finance, Governance, Friends, and Special Events—work behind the scenes to help manage the organization’s budget, bylaws, fundraising, and social events. A special thank you to them all as well as to those who volunteer at the office and on special committees.

As you can see, OLLI runs on volunteer efforts. I would encourage you to please consider joining one of the committees to keep OLLI strong and vital.

In addition to all those volunteers at OLLI, we have two paid staff members. Program Director Cate O’Hara has been with OLLI for about a year and a half, and Program Coordinator Gay Laughlin joined OLLI just after Cate. Cate’s energy and experience with nonprofits and Gay’s knowledge of UC and its workings give OLLI the ideal professional support we need. We cannot thank them enough.

Finally, I would like to thank the University of Cincinnati and the Bernard Osher Foundation for their support. The endowment from the Osher Foundation provides a solid base for the OLLI budget. Because of this support, we have been able to keep fees low. UC has been a great supporter of lifelong learning since we were founded in 1990 as the Institute for Learning in Retirement. During that time, UC has provided OLLI with classrooms and office space as well as financial support when times were lean. We are proud to be part of the lifelong learning experience at UC and want to thank present and past administrations for their unflinching support.

Dan Domis, Chairman, Board of Trustees

Volunteer Contacts

OLLI runs on volunteer power! Please consider how you can help OLLI grow and improve by volunteering to join a committee:

Curriculum

Joe Warkany, 513-871-6359

Friends of OLLI

Tim Langner, 513-831-7560

Marketing

Sally Peterson, 513-742-3474

Special Events

Barbara Smith, 513-233-9216

Office Work

Cate O’Hara, 513-556-9174

Friends of OLLI at UC

Who makes OLLI great? You do!

Whether a veteran member or new to our program, this school year you have experienced the exceptional courses, tours, lectures, and special events that support OLLI's mission of providing opportunities for lifetime learning and social interaction to the mature residents of Greater Cincinnati.

You've stretched your intellectual and social muscles—reached out and tried something new and met others who share your love of learning.

Your classmates also share your love of OLLI. For example:

- Ruby H. and her classmates overcame stage fright in “Public Speaking is Not Bungee Jumping!”
- Jackie K. brought her never-used digital camera to “Adventuring into Photography” and discovered a new artistic outlet.

- Pat M. attended “Is Skydiving on Your Bucket List?” and then jumped out of an airplane at 12,000 feet.
- You have all explored art, history, new technologies, current events, financial planning, French and Spanish conversation, exercise, nutrition, literature, music, philosophy, religion, writing, travel, and much more.

Please consider showing your love for OLLI with a tax-deductible gift to Friends of OLLI. Your gift will be put to good use to ensure OLLI's viability for years to come, keep fees low, purchase necessary classroom equipment, and provide scholarships for your fellow members with financial need.



Friends Contributors *January 1–December 31, 2013*

Regent

(\$500 and up)

Horseshoe Casino Cincinnati
Clement & Ann Buenger
Foundation
The Kroger Company
Carol S. Friel
Neal P. Jeffries, PhD
Cecilia & Tom Kloecker
Ms. Barbara J. Pierce

Dean

(\$100–\$499)

Mr. Stephen B. Appel
Mrs. Dorothy L. Bailey
Rev. David D. Beran
Richard C. Bozian, MD
Richard W. Goetz, PhD
Robert J. Hasl, MD
Mrs. Anne P. Heldman
Ms. Nancy B. Herbert
Jane Hopson, PhD
Mr. Timothy J. Langner
Mrs. Marion F. Levy
Ms. Joan Murray
Ms. Marilyn Z. Ott
Mrs. Marilyn W. Peters
Ellen D. Rember, MS, RD
Mrs. Martha G. Schimberg
Mr. Ethan B. Stanley II
Mrs. Beatrice R. Winkler

Professor

(\$50–\$99)

Melody Clark, EdD
Mrs. Barbara E. Clarke
Mrs. Jean Z. Donaldson
Mrs. Margaret J. Halberstadt
Mr. Robert B. Maehr
Mr. Saul Marmer
Mr. Morris H. Passer
Mr. Jay E. Price
Mrs. Suzanne M. Terwilliger

Friend

(Up to \$49)

Mr. Harold Brown
Mr. Sterling A. Euster
Mr. Charles C. Jung
Mrs. Frances J. Lowenstein
Ms. Patricia M. Monteith
Ms. Monique Rothschild
Joel Weisman, PhD

*This list is based on
outright gifts, gifts-in-
kind, and matching
gifts received during
2013 and designated
to Friends of OLLI or
Osher Lifelong Learning
Institute. It does not
include other gifts to
UC.*



Please accept my gift for:

\$1,000 \$500 \$250 \$100

Other \$ _____

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

- Gifts of \$1000 or more will also receive recognition and benefits through UC's Charles McMicken Society, including free OLLI tuition, free campus parking, bookstore discounts, and more.

- Your tax-deductible gift can be doubled or tripled with a matching gift from your employer. Many companies match gifts from retirees. Please check with your human resources department.

Name Today's Date

Address

City, State, ZIP Telephone

PAYMENT OPTIONS

Pledge: Payments will begin _____

And will be paid Quarterly Semi-Annually Annually

Check enclosed (*payable to UC Foundation/OLLI*)

MasterCard VISA Discover

Card Number Expiration Date

My employer matches gift contributions

My matching gift form is enclosed

Mail form and donation to:

OLLI at UC

PO Box 6249

Cincinnati, OH 45206



Thank you

OLLI moderators

Without the volunteer moderators who donate their valuable time, expert knowledge, teaching skills, and good humor, there would be no Osher Lifelong Learning

Institute at the University of Cincinnati. We thank these moderators who taught multi-week courses during the 2013–14 academic year.

Pedro Adams
Rafael de Acha
Gordon Air
Edward L. Apfel
Stephen Appel
Heather Arden
Kathy Baker
Michael Ballard Sr.
Jedediah Belanger
Dan Bender
Thomas Bentley
Jack Bishop
Brandon Blackford
Richard Blumberg
Jymi Bolden
Sandy Bolek
John E. Bossert
Joe Brant
Charles Bretz
James Bridgeland Jr.
Alan Brody
Elaine Brown
Harold Brown
Everett Campbell
Bob Carroll
James Cissell
Bernadette Clemens-
Walatka
Maggi Cobb-Wessling
Frank Colón
Tracy Connor
Jim Coogan
Barbara Cox
Weller Crandell
Jim Daiker
Emil Dansker
Rosemary Deitzer
James Dempsey
Clyde Dial
Elizabeth Dodd
Dilly Dooley
Bob Dreyer
Patricia Ellis
Karen Everett
Fouad Ezra

Alan Flaherty
Paul Flaughner
Tom Flautt
B. S. Foad
Muriel Foster
Debra Frame
Jean Fredette
Kent Friel
Mary Fruehwald
Karen Garrard
Josephine Gately
Janelle Gelfand
Gloria Giannestras
Ivy Glennon
Richard Goetz
Len Harding
Bob Hasl
David Hawley
Paul Hendrick
Mary-Pat Hester
Wesley W. Hinton
Kirtland E. Hobler
Katie Hoffman
Stella Holding
Gary E. Hollander
Sam Hollingsworth
Donald B. Hordes
Gerry Houchell
Jeannette Humphries
Marcha Hunley
Deanna Hurtubise
Nancy Huth
Doug Iden
Donald Jackson
Lloyce Jefferson
Neal Jeffries
Carol Braddock Johnson
Regina Johnson-Phillips
Gene Johnston
Patrick Jones
Charles Jung
George Kalomeres
Ben Kaufman
Linda Kegg
Dennison Keller

David Kempton
Glenn King
Carol L. Kormelink
Pamela Kuby
Barbara Kuroff
James K. L. Lawrence
Dick Lenz
Edward L. Levy
Marguerite Levy-Feibelman
Kathleen Lynch
Saul Marmer
Rick Marra
Keith Marriott
Dan Marshall
Bruce Martin
Marco Mechelke
Jeanne Miller
Gilbert Minson
Dean Moore
Sally Moore
Jeba Moses
Joan Murray
Lawrence Murray
Patti Myers
Rod Nimtzt
Patrick Niskode
Everett Nissly
Peter Nord
Dennis O'Keefe
Charles Parsons
Sally A. Peterson
Bunny Phelps
James P. Rauf
Barry Raut
Donald Rhoad
Greg Rhodes
Kathy Richardson
Lynn Ritchey
Karen Rosenthal
Bob Sauerbrey
Judith Sauerbrey
Rik Saylor
Kimberly Scardicchio
David Schiel
Tom Schimian

Raymond Schklar
Ken Schneider
Kenneth Schonberg
Nancy Schpatz
Alison Schultz
Abby S. Schwartz
Ina Schwartz
Richard Schwartz
Herbert Sedlitz
Charles Seibert
Bob Shanklin
Michael Shryock
Michael Simpson
Dick Siningar
James Slouffman
Wiley "Rufe" Smith
Roger D. Smith
Judy Snyderman
Barbara Solomon
Donna Jean Spaeth
Koti Sreekrishna
Marty Steer
Tony Steer
Rick Stein
Flo Sterman-Schott
Philip S. Thompson
Howard Todd
Julie Toren
Lee Tougas
Connie Trounstine
Mike Vagle
Martha Walker
Dick Waller
Rick Warm
George Weber
Richard G. Wendel
Dan Weyand-Geise
Martin White
Kathy Womer
Shannon Womer
Rollin Workman
David Yockey
Karen Zaugg
Zeke Zekoff
Debbie Zook



Under the Sun by Sue Wilke

Old Soul

by Pamela D. Hirte

Across the hills over a blue lake,
An eagle soars within my shadow.
I reflect upon who I am,
An ancient mountain soul.
I am massive. I am old. I am Appalachia.

Home is woodlands, wildflowers, and whitetail deer;
I live deep within every ridge and valley.
Hickories shade sunlight from my forest floor.
Cool waters trickle downstream,
Aged memories float away.

I gaze downward at life below.
Rivers alive with fish and beaver,
Black bears binge on blueberries,
The hunter-gatherer savors his catch.
I am fertile, filled with life.

My hills hued like a rainbow.
Azalea drips with purple petals,
Ripe, red strawberries, sweetened by the sun.
I paint nature with every color of the universe:
I am wild, without constraint.

From rhododendrons bluebirds sing.
My heart beats an ancient rhythm.
Heaven, hear my humble hymn.
I reflect upon who I am:
I am massive. I am old. I am Appalachia.

Reunion50

(598 Months or 2601 Weeks or 18,298 Days or 439,152 Hours)

by Andrea Angell Herzig

“**IF I KNEW THEN** what I know now” were the words that rang in my ears as I contemplated my fiftieth high school reunion. That I would even consider the possibility of going back to high school astounded me. While I received a sterling education at Brighton High School in suburban Rochester, New York, I do not count my years there as the happiest in my life.

I was that painfully shy, socially awkward, too-tall, too-skinny girl with the bad complexion who yearned to make herself invisible. I kept my head down as I walked in the hallways, dropped silently into my desk in the back of the classroom, and prayed that the teacher would not call on me.

Oh, how I envied the beauty of Roberta or Alana, the homecoming queens. Oh, how I wished I were athletic like Bonnie, Betty, Carol, or Roberta. Oh, to be popular like Vicki or Debbie and be elected to student council. Oh, the girls at the very top of every high school food chain—the cheerleaders. Girls like Char and Daffy, who were popular and athletic and beautiful. Oh, how I longed to be them.

But I wasn’t those girls. I was graceless, tongue-tied, and self-conscious. I could barely whisper a few words to those girls and never looked them in the eye. And if I ever actually said more than “hello” to any boy, I don’t remember it.

But I blossomed in college, so I was totally uninterested in going to my fifth high school reunion, which would be so trite. As a busy wife and mother, I couldn’t have cared less about the tenth, fifteenth, or twentieth reunions. At the twenty-fifth I had a full-time job to add to my family responsibilities and could not possibly take time off to travel five hundred miles for a tiresome reunion. I think I submitted a short biography for the thirtieth reunion class book, and for the fortieth I never even opened the reunion invitation that arrived in the mail one early spring day.

So when the 1963 BHS Class Reunion Organizing Committee emailed the details for the fiftieth reunion, I amazed myself by saying, out loud actually, “I think I would like to go to this.”

It’s been fifty years since I graduated from high school. My classmates and I are sixty-eight years old. We were born as World War II ended and just months ahead of the baby boom. We lived most of our lives under the threat of the atomic bomb. We were polio pioneers, we danced the twist at sock hops, and the “bad kids” were the ones who chewed gum in class.

We grew up fast when, five months after graduation, John Kennedy was assassinated. Then there were King and Bobby Kennedy. Children of the sixties, we marched for civil rights and sat in against Vietnam. We’ve seen wars in the Middle East and watched the Twin Towers fall. We’ve survived economic booms, bubbles, and busts. We saw the end of the Cold War. We sang and danced to the Beatles and the Stones. Computers and the Internet changed how we work, play, and communicate. We’ve seen men walk on the moon.

Two days before the reunion, a final email arrived from the organizing committee: class picture at 6:00 p.m. sharp Saturday, directions to the county park for the opening mixer on Friday, and a roster of attendees. I remembered all the names; would they remember mine?

The reunion weekend finally arrived. I packed my suitcase with a sundress for Friday night’s opening event, Capri pants and a brightly colored top for the school tour and boat ride Saturday morning, and for the dinner-dance that night, my favorite black dress with red shoes, purse, and pashmina (Even with global warming, I was sure summer evenings in Rochester would still be chilly.)

I closed the lid of my suitcase. As I zipped it shut, I began to think that each alumni of the Brighton High School Class of 1963 would have a story to tell

of a life filled with love and loss, triumph and disaster. Each story would be unique and special. In each we would see a bit of ourselves. Our humanity is universal.

And so I returned to Brighton High School to celebrate that collective humanity with people I hadn’t seen in fifty years.

My wonderful husband agreed to let me drag him along. “Let’s just get a drink that we can hold for a few minutes,” I said to him as we drove to the opening event. “If this is awful, we’ll know right away. We’ll put our drinks down, slip out the door, and go somewhere for a nice quiet dinner, just the two of us.”

We found our way to the meet-and-greet and walked up to the door. A large, fair-haired man welcomed us warmly. “Hi, Lance,” I said smiling broadly at the class’s “gorgeous boy” posing the way we always knew him—with a can of beer in his hand. “Remember me, Andrea? I’d like you to meet my husband, Ed.”

Next it was on to the registration table where Judy and Lynne, looking the same as they did the last time I saw them in June of 1963, gave us our nametags. “How great to see you,” I gushed and gave each a warm hug. From there, Ed and I followed our plan and picked up two glasses of wine. “Oh, Robert, so good to see you. How are you? Where are you living now?”

I shared warm hugs with Norma, Donna, Nancy, Marc, Barry, and Joyce. Ed and I talked about travel and jobs with Cess, Bruce, Cree, Ron, and Jack. In high school our smiles were broadest when we talked about getting our drivers’ licenses, but now it is the word “grandchildren” that produces ear-to-ear grins on the faces of alums like Jackie, Jane, Meredith, and Roger.

My voice grew hoarse as I shouted over the noisy crowd to share a memory of kindergarten with Nancy. Later, my feet aching, I had to walk across the room one more time to talk to Don and Suzanne about our favorite Spanish teacher.

At the tour of the school the next morning, Ed held the school door open for me and a lovely blond woman who introduced herself as Elizabeth. “Muffy!” I exclaimed. “It’s great to see you.”

“I just go by Elizabeth now,” she laughed as she held my hand in both of hers. “Muffy always sounded like a name for a house pet.” But I remember thinking she was lucky to have such a cute nickname, while mine was gender-confusing no matter how I spelled it: Andi.

When our guide showed off the brand-new Olympic-size swimming pool, Betty, a terrific athlete who is still fit and slender, said, “I hated those cotton bathing suits they made us wear. They went transparent as soon as you hit the water and stretched out of shape. How could you swim with the straps falling down—stroke, pull up the strap, stroke, pull up the strap?” In school I was sure I was the

only teenager embarrassed to the point of tears by those ghastly uniforms.

Sunny, breezy weather propelled our boat ride on the Erie Canal. I sat down at a table on the lower deck as lunch was served and looked around. The last time I saw these people gathered in a group, we were seniors in high school; now we’re senior citizens. But everyone had plans for the future. One is moving to a new city to be closer to children and grandchildren. One man is building a vacation home at the beach. A woman is leaving the hassle of the big city for life on a farm, while another is selling a suburban Queen Anne house and moving to a contemporary downtown condo. Most are retired, some are planning to retire soon, and a few want to work for as long as they can. Some volunteer, some golf, some embark on second careers, and everyone travels. It is the hope of a future

yet to be discovered that twinkles in their eyes and beats in their hearts.

At the weekend’s concluding dinner dance, I walked around the room to be sure that before the night was over I had said hello to every single classmate. I chatted easily with the beautiful ones, the popular ones, the smart ones, the athletic ones, the talented ones, the quiet ones, and the geeky ones. Everyone is all grown up; whatever baggage we carried in high school is stowed someplace far away and long forgotten, and we are all comfortable in our own skins. We all know now what we couldn’t possibly have known then.

I went to my fiftieth high school reunion. I still don’t know what compelled me to go, but I’m glad I went. I still don’t know what I expected to find there. But I know what I found—I found me, Andrea Angell, BHS Class of 1963.



Game Over by Richard M. Lingo



Dingle Peninsula
by Tim Langner

The Realm of Seniors

by Annie Mikel

WHAT CLUES WERE THERE that I had crossed the threshold of middle age into the realm of seniors? Was it when I stopped fantasizing how I'd spend the money I won from the lottery? Was it when the most erotic dream I could conjure was a trip to Kroger to buy a bunch of carrots? Or was it when on Christmas Eve—nestled in my bed—visions of bankruptcy danced in my head?

Is aging a mere physical loss, or is it a toilet into which all life's "could-have-beens" are flushed away? How come I'm still afraid of the things that I feared as a child? Don't you grow up when you grow older? And all those things I was so sure I knew: the only thing left is a pile of answers to questions I've forgotten. Oh yes, that forgetting thing. I was going to say something about that, but I can't remember what it was.

Enough caterwauling! I'll go back to rubbing the belly of my aging bulldog. He doesn't give a damn about the realm of seniors.

On a Bench

by Donald Wenker

We sat upon a bench on the top of a hill
Overlooking the tree-covered valley below
A small stream traversed right to left
Its swift waters a dirty brown
Two kayaks dodging the hidden rocks
Canoeists are soaked to the skin
An accident waiting, waiting to happen
Disappearing from sight round a bend

A hawk soaring high in the blue sky
Riding the crest of a southern breeze
Looking for a meal among the rocks
A long smooth glide downward
Disappearing behind some dead wood
Only to appear a short distant away
With a garter snake in his grasp
High in a bare tree he devoured his prey

We heard a mighty sound in the distance
Iron wheels grinding upon twin steel rails
Heading up the valley to Shakerville
There is an old-fashioned turnabout
Just past the train station the tracks divide
Three cars are detached from the engine
Backed up a siding and reattached in reverse order
All is ready for the morning return trip

Passengers disembark into waiting vehicles
For some, it's a short walk to their small abodes
Laborers unload the boxcar cargo into a warehouse
They fill it back up with freight going to the big city
The stock car is cleaned for a herd of cows
They will be loaded in the early morning
After they are fed grain and watered
Come 7:00 a.m. passengers will board

I will be one who boards the train
My love is by my side, holding my hand
One sweet moment, until a parting kiss
Remembering our yesterday together
High on the hill sitting on our bench
I will go into the big city far, far away
To board a boat, to fight a war farther away
Hopefully, I will return to our bench

Three years later I returned to Shakerville
Met by my widowed mom and my dog Duke
Both old and grey, and slow of foot
A Purple Heart pinned to my chest
I slept soundly in my childhood bed
At the first ray of dawn, I woke up
Out the door and up the hill to our bench
Where I sat looking out over the green valley

I remember the sudden flash of light
Waking up two weeks later in a hospital
My legs gone along with my manhood
My face and head covered in white bandages
IVs hung from a bar above my bed
A plastic tube where my manhood used to be
Nurses changed the bandages on my head
I saw their faces of shock and tears

I wear a ski mask when out in public
I remember the day at the hospital when
A young boy called me Frankenstein
Most of my army buddies have wives
I feel so lonely all the times I'm by myself
I read the Dear John letter from you
Telling me that you don't love me anymore
That you have found a new and better lover

I feel pain in my legs, but that can't be
For I don't have any legs
I don't have anything to look forward to
What will I do when my mom dies
I sit in my motorized wheelchair
I open the wooden box strapped to my
chair
Take out the snub-nose .32 pistol
A shot rings out, and I'm at peace

They bury me alongside the bench
A young corporal plays taps
Ten sergeants fire a six gun salute
My name inscribed on the headstone
When Mom came to pray for me
She found Duke lying dead upon my grave
A place where I found rest



Rippling Memories Evaporate across Time by Peter Nord

The Discovery Garden

by Pamela D. Hirte



Flowers in a Blue Vase by Donata Glassmeyer

IT IS NO ORDINARY DAY when I roll my wheelchair outside alone for the first time. I take in my garden, still there after a three-month hospitalization from a near-fatal car accident: Flames. Explosion. The smell of gasoline in the air. Helicopter landing. Seven hours of surgery. New blood given; the ability to walk taken. Each day filled with lengthy physical therapy. Here in the garden, I reunite with my soul, and the healing process begins.

I caress a leaf, and my life opens. I pull down on the branch of the Korean viburnum and smell the spicy fragrance of the welcoming white blossom. I rub my fingers over the coffee-colored branch; it is rough and woody. Then, I hear a bee buzzing noisily nearby and pollinating a black-eyed Susan. My roses with their ripe red flowers tell me that the new blood in my veins is now a part of me.

It is no ordinary day when I revel in my summer garden after missing its spring. I touch the carnations and press their pink petticoats to my face. The green hakone grass grazes my legs as if to heal them. Lavender perfumes the air and seeks my attention. My beloved collection of nandinas lights up like a firecracker, dazzlingly red-faced. They are all here to greet me and welcome me home.

Before me lies a long road of recovery to whom I was. Will I ever walk again? I discover that my garden fills me with hope of recovery. I look up at a blue sky and see the sun burst from behind a cloud. I forget the trauma and renew myself with the help of nature. It is here where I begin my journey from despair. It is no ordinary day when I discover the garden is where my real therapy takes place.

The Family Silver Finds a New Home

by Sally Moore

I FIRST BECAME AWARE of the existence of this family silver around 1982 when my mother-in-law, Grace Moore, died. At that time, her daughter mentioned that her mother had wished my daughter, Helen, to inherit this silver flatware. Helen, at the time, was barely eighteen and not very interested in silver table settings.

Still, in due course, my sister-in-law dispatched a large carton to Helen. She must have sent it to Helen's Baltimore apartment as I have a memory of seeing Helen using the silver for everyday eating and noticing the forks looking quite tarnished. By this time, Helen was a student at Johns Hopkins and living in a dilapidated flat in a seedy part of Baltimore. Using the silver knives and forks seemed particularly incongruous. In any case, I gathered them all up and brought the silver back to Cincinnati.

It was a motley collection of more than one pattern—six knives and forks in one style, two more knives and forks in another. There were just four soup spoons but an abundance of teaspoons in different styles, plus plenty of smaller forks for salad or dessert. I didn't place a lot of value on the collection because it was silver plate and rather light in weight, not comparable in my mind to my own sterling silver. But I could see it was old and noticed two teaspoons, one engraved "Gracie, Dec 25, '03" and another "Grace 1908." Nobody is alive now to tell the history of the silver, whether it might have been a wedding present or perhaps even inherited from Grace's mother.

I cleaned up the forks and put everything back in the original carton, storing it in a closet near my own silver. Over time, I used some of the pieces whenever I had a party and needed extra cutlery. Gradually, I came to think of it as "my" flatware, although every now and then, Helen would say, "You know, Grandma Grace left that silver to me!"

This Christmas I needed extra forks for an open house, so, of course, I opened the old carton. Everything was looking rather tarnished—a testament to the fact

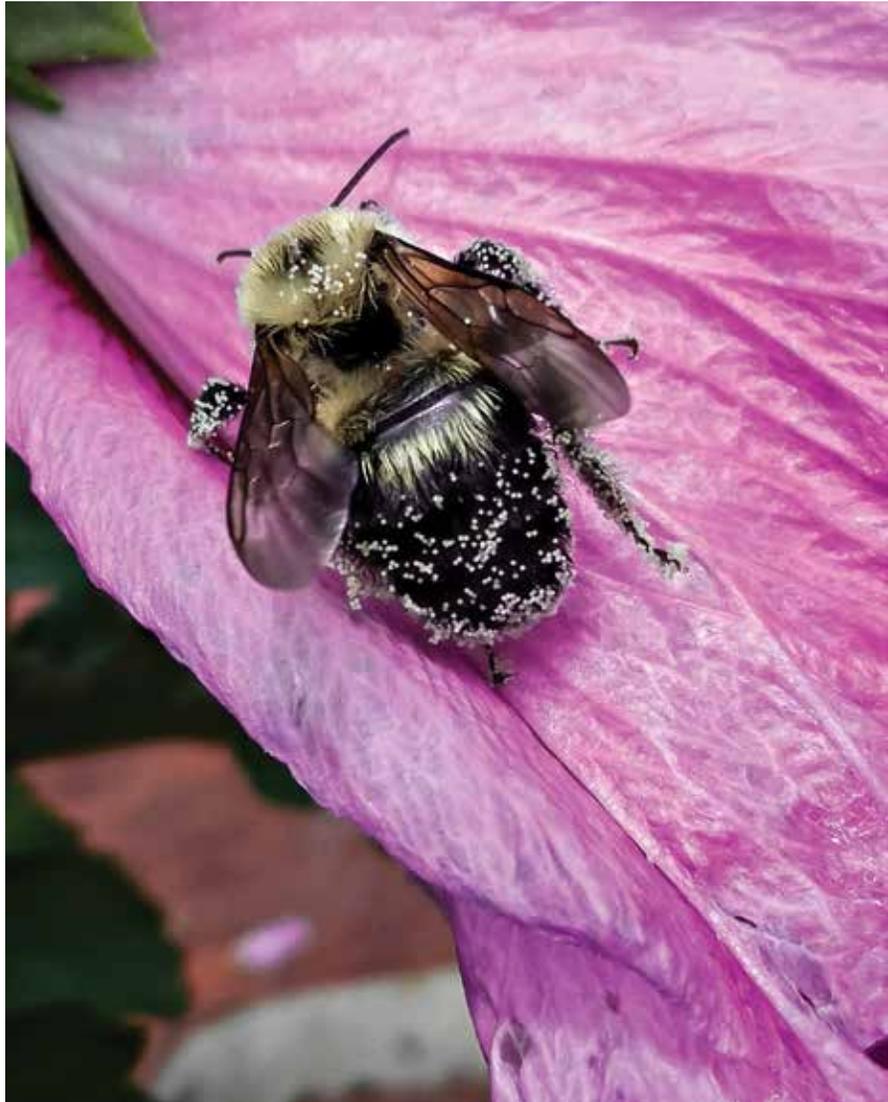
that I don't use the silver often. I cleaned everything again (luckily I like cleaning silver) and thought to myself, "Maybe Helen and her husband would be interested in taking some pieces back with them to England. Perhaps they could use extra teaspoons or dessert forks."

Over the holidays, I showed them the collection. My son-in-law in particular was interested in everything, thought it was all charming, and exclaimed, "Look at this beautiful old soup ladle and this antique carving fork! We could use a lot of this." Helen concurred, and they

decided to take the whole lot back with them, probably about fifty pieces.

After thirty years of guarding the box, I sent it off to a new home, the contents carefully divided among their four suitcases. It all arrived in England without mishap. My son-in-law remarked that he too likes cleaning silver, which is good as this silver tarnishes easily.

It seems like the end of an era but an appropriate one. The two engraved spoons will go soon to my granddaughter in Boston for her sixteenth birthday. She also is named Grace.



Bee at Work by Richard M. Lingo

The Immigrant

by Joan Murray

She came from the west of Ireland
Sent by family to work in America
Beauty did not accompany her
She was all crags and pitted rocks
Tiny with rough red skin and absent teeth
One leg shriveled and stiff
Provided her a galloping gait

She stood hours in the stifling crowd
Limping her way through Ellis Island
Clutching papers
Her ticket to the streets of gold
The speckled streets of New York City

A distant cousin proved aptly named
Shared a miserly corner of her flat
Nora found domestic work
Occasional comfort in local pubs
A hard worker I was
Croaked her ancient brogue
I had nothing over to send back home



When the voices began
Subtle at first
Then tore her down
With taunts of failure
Frightening thoughts
She was at their mercy
Sent away for a time to hospital

A nephew awaited her in Cincinnati
Kinder kin, helped her find work
All went well for a time
Then the voices
Louder and more defiant
Took her down once more

Doctors at the asylum
Sent me to help her socialize
She wasn't having it
Reluctantly agreed
For smokes and coffee

She admired my clothes
Asked to touch the fabrics
Linen, cotton, silk, and wool, she crooned

*Nora, do you remember a time long ago
When you wore something beautiful*

A long extinguished inner light
Burst through deeply driven scars
Found the way to her tortured face

*I wore a suit for Easter Mass
The jacket and skirt were fine Irish linen
It was lime green
I wore new pumps with a heel
Oh, and a fine hat*

We sat close on the familiar bench outside
No words broke the quiet gentle breeze
Nora rocked to rhythm of the air's caress
Lost in a lime-green reverie

Tyler Davidson Fountain by Howard Todd



Modern Sculpture
by Virginia Cox

The Present

by Mary Anne Sanders

“**DR. BLASS ASSIGNED ME** an aria, Daddy!” I said.

“Oh?” The Lucky Strike appendage between his fingers, he’d been submerged in the Albert Speer World War II memoir. As he gave attention to his only child over Albert, I felt like a high school senior turned La Scala diva.

“It’s from *Don Giovanni* by Mozart,” I gingerly enunciated.

He offered his microscopic smile. “Well, you better get over to that piano then.”

A few weeks later, Daddy was dead at fifty-one. The death certificate stated a heart attack, but I knew better. A broken heart was the cause, a series of wounds to the soul. The wound of his father abandoning him, another of a flighty mother who handed him over to his grandmother, and yet another of being ostracized for his ragged clothes despite achieving the highest grades in his class. Then there were the emotional lesions of World War II.

On Christmas Day, we buried him in the pine box

he’d requested. When my mother and I got home, she gazed at the sagging bereaved Christmas tree. “It’s still Christmas. Let’s open presents. Why don’t you pass them out?”

I couldn’t have cared less about gifts at that moment, but I performed my annual task. “Mary Anne, that green one is for you.”

It was heavy and uncouthly wrapped. When I tore the paper and saw the title, I knew. “He spent his own money on it. Ordered it from the Book-of-the-Month Club,” she said.

Opening the *Treasury of Italian Operas*, I examined each record, recognizing singers and titles I’d only read about. I rushed to my room and started listening. But mostly, I cried.

Seven years later, I stood onstage and sang “O mio babbino caro” for a Metropolitan Opera competition. I got only one callback, but that didn’t matter.

I knew he was in the auditorium, listening.

The Rabbi and the Youth

by Mark Rinsky

THE GAUNT FIGURE'S CLOTHES were old but not tattered. They suited him well. He was frail but carried himself with dignity. He was eighty-two years old, the rabbi and revered leader of his parishioners, many of whom had suffered as he had in the Nazi death camps. He was the last to leave his unattractive synagogue, which had been converted from a dilapidated schoolhouse.

At his back he heard the curses and taunts of the neighborhood youths. As usual, he was perplexed by them; as usual, he ignored them. But there was something different in the air this Sabbath night—inexplicable, indefinable, but palpable.

A jagged, miniature boulder rushed through the air, first rising, then descending. Four pounds of concrete scrap—a formidable missile.

It struck the rabbi squarely on his back. The resounding thump silenced the raucous jeering of the youths. Such a blow should have crushed bones, let blood, and knocked down any creature of similar mass, but somehow the rabbi still stood.

He turned.

The young harassers fled in fright—all but one. He was a powerful figure: muscular arms crossed before bulging chest, a smile of flashing white teeth contrasting the sneer of his mahogany face.

The rabbi spoke first. "What, are you trying to kill me?"

The black youth laughed. "If I was trying to kill you, you'd be dead by now, old man."

"You throw a rock like this, you could kill someone!"

"I'm not stupid, old man. I know what that rock can do."

"So would you mind telling me why you threw it?"

"Did you see me throw it, old man? What makes you think I threw it?"

"Well, did you?"

"What's the difference? You seem all right." The youth approached. The rabbi stood taller, and the youth halted. "Take it easy, old man, I'm just curious

now. Just wanna see if you was wearing some kinda armor. I saw you whacked real good with that thing, and you didn't even move. Maybe you used some kinda magic?"

"I'm no magician, young fella. I'm not sure why I'm still standing. Perhaps it was God. Perhaps God protected us both."

This angered the youth. "I don't need no protection from your God. Ain't never had any before. If there ever was a damn God, for sure he be a white God. Ain't no God looking over my black brothers. And don't be calling me 'young fella.' I ain't young. I take care of my family. Never had no chance to be young."

"What's your name, son?"

"I ain't your damn son either, and you don't need to know my name."

The rabbi seemed unaffected by the tirade. "What shall I call you then?"

"I ain't your son, I ain't a fella, and I ain't young. I'm a man. That's what I am, and that's what you call me." The youth snorted.

"All right, Man, I will respect your wishes. Will you show me the same respect and call me Rabbi?"

"Ha! You don't understand much, do you, old man? I don't have no respect for you. You're nothing to me. You're mine if I want you. Ain't nobody 'round here to help you. Just you and me. I call you what I want. I make the rules here. This is my world."

"Do you really believe that?"

"Believe what, old man?"

The rabbi was fascinated. "Do you really believe that this is your world—that you have control?"

"If I wanna kill you, you're dead, old man. If I want you to bleed, you'll bleed. Ain't nothing can stop me. If I wanna laugh at you eating dog shit, you couldn't keep me from stuffin' it down your dry old throat. Yes, I believe it."

"But what about the law, the police, or others who might be stronger or more well-armed than you. How long can this continue to be your world?"

"As long as I can keep it, that's how long. A smart man knows when to fight

and when to run. A smart man knows to think on his feet. A smart man knows when to make friends and when to lose them. I kept my eyes open when I was a kid. I seen a lot of people killed or taken away 'cause they weren't smart. I ain't gonna let that happen to me."

The rabbi fingered his beard before speaking again. "So let's say I agree with you. Let's say that this is your world, and you control it. Why bother a helpless old man like me?"

"Cause I can, old man. It's more fun than a movie, and it don't cost me nothin'. And 'cause you're here where you don't belong. Why're you here anyhow, old man?"

"Ah," said the rabbi. "That is an important question. Perhaps in the answer we have something in common."

"No way, old man. No way you and me have nothing in common. We're like night an' day, like black an' white." The youth laughed at his unintended joke.

"I would beg to differ with you, Man."

"Ah-hah! I like when people beg me. Go on, old man, beg all you want. But I gotta tell you, it ain't gonna help you."

"I don't think you understand. I used a figure of speech. I'm not begging you. I'm just trying to—"

"Ain't nothing you could try that would work, old man. See, it's you who don't understand. You can't be rid of me. I'm gonna put you down, old man."

The rabbi shrugged his shoulders. His countenance showed not fear but puzzlement. "So you are trying to kill me?"

The youth shook his head and smiled with disdain. "You just don't get it. You must be one real dumb old man. I do what I please. Don't nobody tell me what to do! And someday lots of people gonna do what I say. You hear me, old man?"

The rabbi shook his head and smiled without disdain. "Yes, I hear you, Man."

"You afraid of me, old man?"

"Yes, I'm afraid of you, but not for the reasons you think."

"I'm gonna kill you, old man. You got to be afraid of that, right?"

"No. My end is near anyway."

“You got that right!” The youth raised his fist and flexed his arm. The dimming light danced off rippling muscles.

“I’m afraid of what you and others like you mean to the future. That is my fear.”

“Future? There ain’t no future. There’s only now. Now, do you hear me, old man? Now! There was no future for my father. He was killed over a few rocks of crack. I never even met him. My little brother never had no future. He was shot dead walking by a drug deal what went bad. You wanna know what the future means to me? My momma’s got a future. She’s got AIDS. Some future, huh? My sisters’ll likely get it too, if they don’t already have it. The future don’t count. There’s no such thing. Only thing what

counts is now.”

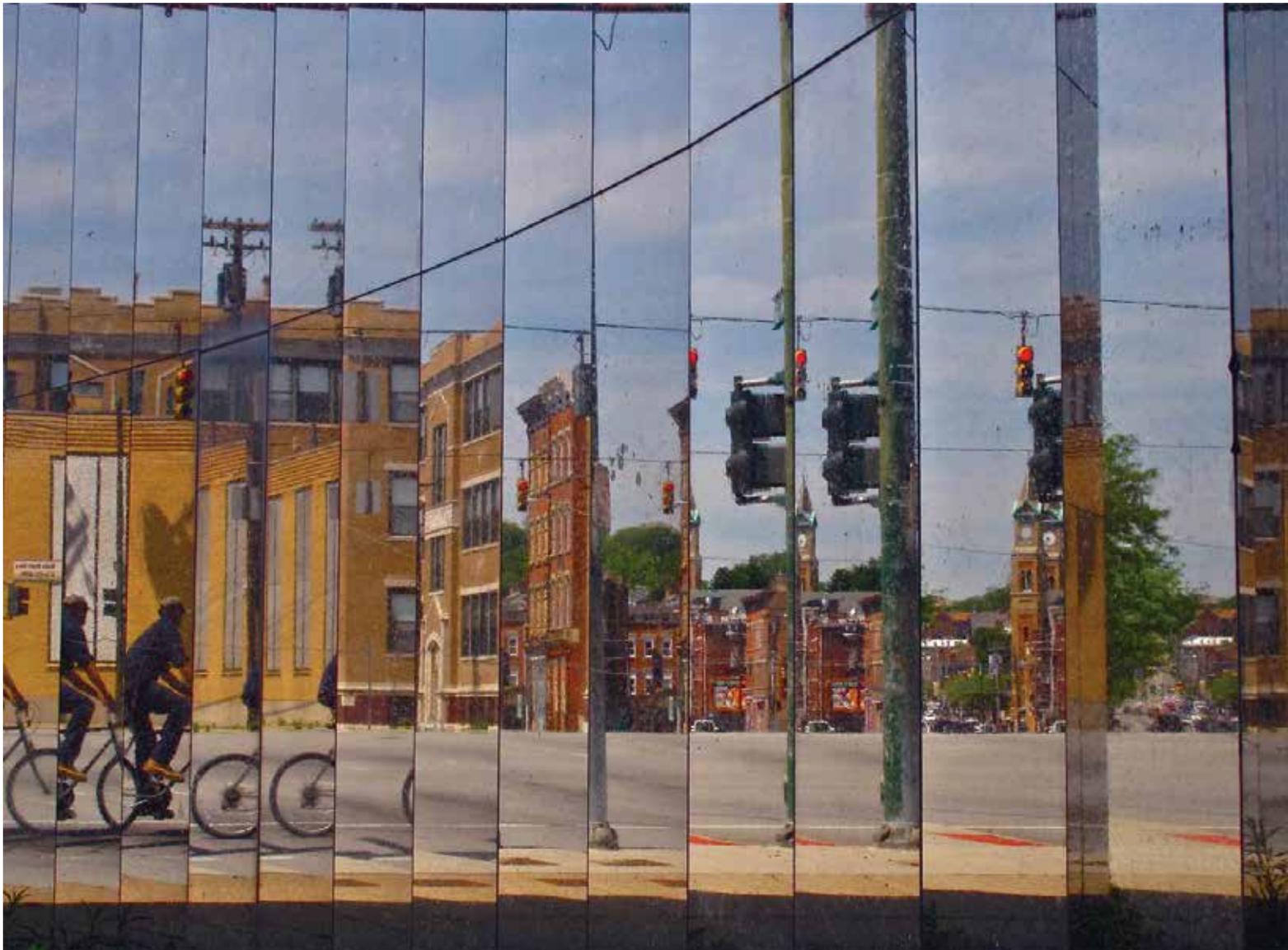
The rabbi became angry. He paced as he spoke, never taking his eyes from his captor. “This is America! Land of the free! You don’t know what you have here. Everyone can have a future in America. That is why I brought what was left of my family here. So that they might have a future.

“I have sympathy for your family. I know the pain. I watched my own wife and daughter raped time after time while I sat helplessly bound and gagged. Is it unimaginable that I felt a ghastly relief when their cries were silenced by the slitting of their throats? I am no stranger to the horrors of this world. I could tell you hundreds of equally dreadful tales, and

there are millions more that my people have suffered. But that hasn’t stopped us from seeking a future.

“So many of us lost everything we worked for all our lives. So we came to this country and started over. With nothing, we started—couldn’t even speak the language. But we wouldn’t give up. We may never regain what we lost, but we’ll never stop trying to secure the future for our children. So we work, struggle, and save what we can. Maybe we’ll make it; maybe we won’t. But as long as we have a chance, we will take it. There are schools for learning; there are jobs to work. Why can’t you take a chance?”

The youth spat at the rabbi’s feet. “You ask a lot of questions, old man. It ain’t the



Liberty at Central, Over-the-Rhine by Sue Wilke

same for me—not even close. There’s no chance for me—no chance for us.”

“Are we not both the victims of oppression? What is the difference?”

“You think I don’t know how to answer your stupid questions don’t you, old man? You think I’m some lazy nigger who don’t ever think about nothing except drugs, sex, and kicks. Well, I can answer your questions. But why bother? You’re gonna be dead real soon.”

“I know, I know. But humor me. Consider it a dying man’s last request.”

Now the youth paced, eyes glaring down at the small figure of the rabbi. He pulled a pearl-handled knife from his pocket and sprung its menacing blade. Tossing the weapon deftly from hand to hand, he seemed torn with some internal struggle. Then, as suddenly as he had started, he stopped and focused on his prey. “Did your momma love you, old man?”

“Oh, yes.” The rabbi was surprised.

“Your daddy too?”

“Yes. Why do you ask?”

“I bet your parents helped you grow up. Am I right?”

“My parents sacrificed much for my sister and me. They guided our development with care. They would have done almost anything for us. I believe they would have died for us.”

“Yeah, I thought so. I think that deep down in her heart, my momma loves us too. But she never shows it—never. Well, almost never. She sure cried an awful lot when my little brother got shot. But most of the time she’s too busy with her booze, her drugs, and the men that keeps her going. Me, I’m just in her way. Only time she smiles at me is when I’m giving her money or crack. I grew up by



Untitled (Robin) by Janet Smith

myself. Same with all my friends. Only one of them gets a father living with him, and he gets a beating whenever his daddy’s drunk, which is most all the time. I’ll bet you learned a lot in school. Didn’t you, old man?”

“Yes. My parents stressed the importance of learning. It pleased them when I studied hard and made good marks.”

“All my momma cares about is not being bothered. She don’t care if I’m learning anything. Seems like the teachers be the same way. If someone don’t get arrested or bloodied, it’s a good day. School’s a waste. I learn what’s important on the streets.”

“But you need an education to get a good job, to have any chance of making something of yourself!”

The youth sighed; he seemed disappointed. “Haven’t you been listening? Look, you a rabbi, right?”

“Yes, that’s correct.”

“You supposed to be smart, right? You supposed to be a learned man.”

“There is much I don’t know.”

“Well it’s plain what you don’t know about me and most of my black brothers here in America. The land of the free—hah! My kind don’t have no chance in this world. We lucky if we grow up at all. Our schools are crap, and they get worse and worse as the rich white folk and uppity blacks get scared of us and move away. Don’t nobody want to hire us for nothing but a two-bit job cleaning or scraping shit.

“Drugs is where it’s at, old man. Drugs be my only chance. I can make more scratch from one small deal than I could cleaning shit for months. The big bosses be the only ones I look up to. They got it made with their fancy cars and foxy ladies. Now, I know it’s dangerous. I seen too many die not to know that. That’s why you gotta be smart. And I mean to stay smart. If I do, then someday I’ll have enough to get somewhere.

“If you be black and poor, and you’re not Michael Jordan or Jackson, then this is as good as it gets. You just be lucky if your momma didn’t drink or smoke crack when she carried you.” Without warning he threw his knife. It stuck in a crevice of the concrete rock inches from the rabbi’s feet.

The rabbi did not flinch. He didn’t

even look at the blade. “Thank you,” he said.

“What’d you say?”

“I thanked you,” replied the rabbi. “You have taught me, and I am grateful. I am more able to understand now the rock, the knife, the lure of the drugs. And I am saddened. Deeply saddened by the way things are, by the way things were, and most terribly by the way things will be.” He straightened his back and raised his chin. “I am ready to die now.” He stared at his tormentor.

The youth approached, knelt to retrieve his switchblade, then stood over the rabbi. He placed the steel point against his victim’s throat. The rabbi was a statue. “You really ain’t scared.”

The rabbi did not respond. But his mind was not idle. He was looking inward, reviewing his life. Yes, he was ready. He did not mourn himself but rather the world. Distracted by a movement, he refocused his eyes to see the black youth walking away. “Hey! Man! Where are you going? I thought you were going to kill me.”

“No kick to it anymore, old man. Be too much hassle to clean my blade. See ya’ around, Rabbi.” His figure merged with the shadows.

Both men thought frequently about their encounter over the next three days. The rabbi had been enlightened, and he shared his new point of view with his congregation. The youth was disheartened; the reality of his hopeless plight had been crystallized by his own verbalization. This led to carelessness in his next transaction with the big boss’s henchmen, and his throat was perfunctorily slit. He drowned in his own blood. To his own amazement, his last thoughts were of the rabbi.

At the very moment that life slipped from the youth, the rabbi felt an excruciating pain in his back. His spine shattered where the heavy rock had struck. This would explain the ensuing paralysis from the waist down, the severe depression, and the loss of hope. It would not explain why the rabbi never spoke again.

Perhaps this double tragedy was coincidence; perhaps it was God’s will. It didn’t matter. What mattered was this: the rabbi’s congregation would fear and hate the neighborhood youths more than ever.



Dahlia by Larry J. Pytlinski

And So It Goes

by Helen Fox

I REACH DOWN AND TUG GENTLY at the base of a beet plant, assessing its size. Leaning over, I pinch off some basil leaves. Then, just as I rise and pop a cherry tomato in my mouth, I see her. Or more accurately, I sense her. Looking on approvingly is the great-grandmother I never knew. She was a stern, no-nonsense woman, I've been told. A German immigrant tending her "wegetables" more tenderly than she ever did her children. I am nothing like her and everything like her. Down to our favorite color of purple and shared affinities for the poppy and iris. Mom would often shake her head and wonder at our uncanny similarities.

Sometimes when my son smiles a certain way or gives one of his quick, simple nods, I'm sure I see my father and perhaps his forefathers in those gestures. My father resides in this grandson's nature, too—a reserved demeanor belying a wicked sense of play and humor.

As I gaze toward the future, I feel certain that an as-of-now-unborn grandchild or great-grandchild will exhibit my mother's love of the stage, my own idea-du-jour proclivity, and perhaps even my husband's penchant for oatmeal! It is a fleeting but authentic comfort to feel the tug of this invisible connective thread. As someone who proudly wears her "unique" quirkiness, it gives me pause. Perhaps that trait, too, did not originate in me and therefore might not be solely mine to boast.



Vision Statement

OLLI is the premier organization offering educational and social experiences to mature residents of Greater Cincinnati by:

- Nourishing intellect, expanding knowledge, and exploring new ideas.
- Sharing interests and experiences.
- Cultivating friendships.
- Being a resource of the University of Cincinnati and supporting its goals.

Mission Statement

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Cincinnati provides opportunities for lifelong learning and social interaction to the mature residents of Greater Cincinnati.

OLLI contacts

Program Director

Cate O'Hara
513-556-9174

Program Coordinator

Gay Laughlin
513-556-9186

Chairman

Dan Domis
513-556-9186

Address

OLLI at UC
PO Box 210093
Cincinnati, OH 45221-0093

Website

www.uc.edu/ce/olli

Board of Trustees Chair

Dan Domis

Board of Trustees Vice-Chair

Karen Zaugg

Curriculum Chair

Joe Warkany

Finance Chair

Gary Hollander

Friends Chair

Tim Langner

Governance Chair

Nancy Herbert

Marketing Chair

Sally Peterson

Board of Trustees

Frank Colón
Rosemary Deitzer
Dan Domis
Lin Domis
Richard Goetz
Jim Goyette
Nancy Herbert
Gary Hollander
Sam Hollingsworth
Neal Jeffries
Tim Langner
Dick Lenz
Bleuzette Marshall
Sally Peterson
Jay Price
Jerri Roberts
Candas Stacey
Jane Veite
Joe Warkany
Richard Wendel
Karen Zaugg

Ex Officio

Melody Clark
Cate O'Hara

Founder

Aaron Levine
(1918–2004)

Advisory Committee

Stephen Appel
Gloria Giannestras
Joe Hirschhorn