

Community Writing Project Issues #2 & #3

Editor: Golda Solomon poet-in-residence BDAC

Your writings welcomed and the google meet link available at:
gs@goldajazz.com meet.google.com/yug-vpxj-ems

Our next on line ArtSpeak/FPTP is **Saturday June 6, 1:30 PM**

Dear Community of Writers, Artists, Friends, Readers and Neighbors,

Issue #2 & #3 owes special thanks to Michele Amaro, Karim Ahmed, Jill Austen, Russell Evans and all the ArtSpeak/From Page to Performance early May participants.

Issue #1 was a quilting of lines and potpourri of offerings. Issue #2/#3 contains 'raw'/first draft writings with the permission of the ArtSpeak Participants.

Enclosed is "Thirteen Greens of a Hummingbird Feather", Jill Austen's poem that 'prompted' our pens to create and to both Jill Austen and Russell Evans for their art that ekphrastically prompted.

Free-writes and then shared aloud with the group, buffed and polished at home –some using the ever dependable and always welcome list poem, the 'landay,' a two line couplet plus form of Afghanistani/Pashti origin that challenges writers with a syllable count, the cento poem- the taking lines from various sources and re-ordering them and adding originals.

Responding to Jill and Russell's art and to prompts culled by yours truly,

golda

Thirteen Greens of a Hummingbird Feather

I.

I was undecided.
Was it tango green or flamenco blue,
that seductive glow of aurora borealis?

II.

Remember the crisp green-apple taste
of well-chilled *vinho verde* in summer;
it is like the awakening of young Juliet,
like the quivering new green of a delicate fern
claiming freedom in spring.

III.

At the blurry edge of morning I do not know
where to focus; I pause
first on the soft lunar-green of a nocturnal moth,
then, the dewy perfume of prairie sweetgrass.

IV.

Bearing the weight of Egyptian gold,
an ancient green-shelled beetle lumbers
over the garden stones.

V.

Listen to the veiled rivulet
gurgling in a lace-green grotto;
it is the murmur of seven generations of women
who cling like Irish-green to steely rocks.

VI.

February thrashes the Normandy coast
with ice-green gems, their emerald light
dissolves into mist -
its memory immutable.

VII.

The afternoon was lost.
We drove through a field of green lines
measuring a vineyard in southern France.
At the end of the road, a peacock
strutted its shimmering color wheel.

VIII.

The boat sliced a bright ribbon through the Caribbean Sea,

like a plow turning furrows in a field. Boat and plow
are seasons, partners in a waltz of seafoam green -
the waves, like windswept blades of grass.

IX.

Two bracelets of abalone
were one, and changeable -
iridescent silver, rippling blue-green.
One bracelet was stolen, one sister died.

X.

Unseen,
another day slipped below the ocean horizon.
Sunset's final breath flashed green, electric and elusive.

XI.

Captive in the black-out cloak of tropical nights,
tree frogs ransom their skins for a lime-green song;
the calliope whistles, drilling the air with trills
until its blazing liberation at dawn.

XII.

Before sunrise, a trumpet vine traces
vast curlicues in a race across the garden wall;
its green-glazed arabesques cover the Ottoman Empire.

XIII.

You ask which I prefer -
the whirling far-flung opals,
wildfire-green and glitter-burst orange,
of Orion's newborn stars, or
the white butterfly's powder-green
pixelated underwing
half hidden on a leaf?

----- Jill Austen

ArtSpeak May 2, 2020 -----Jill Austen

1. Landay Poem:

My good friend called with news: *Critical*,
she said, *fighting for his life*. She thought I should know.

I never speak of you, but she knows –
I've not spoken of us, not once in twenty-six years,

but she knows my heart is caged in bones
of slow-burning grief. In the silence, she must know, too,

I will dream of you tonight, afraid
you'll cross the veil, a chasm too far from morning's light.

Un-quarantined we'll meet, holding tight
our parallel lives, where you vowed you would die for me.

Inhale, exhale, I would breathe for you.

2. Inspired by Russell's drawing, "Portrait":

becoming a portrait
curling lines
twist and rise from the void
black marks, sharp birds
nest on tangled brow
eyes pierce tornados
furious lips hurl the
language of black and white
no gray can escape

One sister Russell Evans

One sister stolen
One brother died, one of me
the heroin, the toothpaste, the tin of beer
He got up, disembarked, the saying goes
A different stop, a station.
loose change he left so I wait

*One night he whispers in my dream
Sitting on a pebble beach
I hear breath, that's all, tidal breath*

One brother stolen
Lent or given away
Thunderbird and coke eating years
Of his bony arms, holding a ticket
And leave before the last stop

One sister stolen or mislaid
I'm careless like that, it happens
In ten books, three chapters or here in one line

his birthday, tomorrow like it is every day
I never get his age wrong
Like he doesn't mine

Ekphrastic Response (after Russell Evan's drawing) golda solomon

camera zooms in on russell's title
the stage is set for some 'bach'
a man would have sat in this chair
listened as notes wound down
so much light on the
other side of the door
a family in there talk eat laugh
he was invited and did not go in

untitled cento(after Jill Austen's Thirteen Greens of a
Hummingbird Feather)

at the blurry edge of morning
i was undecided
heard murmurs of generations of women
the awakening of a young juliet
one sister died
another day would slip below
the ocean horizon
we are all seasons in a
waltz of sea foam green

colors of green

dance with me tango green
apple of my eye green
moist fern green
soft far away lunar green
you are hard beetle shell green
emerald green ring on a finger
irish faerie queen green
new spring grass green

will you walk outside freely again
the birch tree wants to know
from sappling to full grown
new green leaves on branches now
nod and look in my 4th floor window
watch me at my computer
herald spring no matter what happens
the wind has a 'this a way' and 'that a way'
rhythm as clouds roll east

Pandemic poem Sheila Benedis

I feel alone

Isolated with fear

Stimulated by zoom workshops

Reflective thinking reinforced

Response to Russell Evans painting

High in the air

Currents twist and turn

Move swiftly

Before coming down to earth

Faced with reality

Fears silenced

Hope persists

The Lotus

Perfectly imperfect

eternal progress toward

simple purity

soft serene

positive energy

imperfect to beautiful

stunning lotus flowers appear

float pristinely above the water

inner strength

soak up the sun

stretch outward upward

struggle toward the light

high in the air

seed pods ripen

burst and bear fruit

bend down

return to muddy depths

grow from deep dark still waters

stalks and leaves emerge

roots buried in mud

We Will Get Through This Together

By Dr. Rosemary J. Uzzo

We will get through this together
But who and where are we together?
Pandemic rages on
Hotels sit empty
Restaurants rely on takeout
Hospitals hum with activity
Medical centers filled to capacity with you know what
Frontlines fighting the battles, nurses, police, firemen
Will this 2020 Scrooge be behind us?
Scrooge leave the planet, please!

"I Forgot About the Different Ways to Look at the Blackbird"

By Dr. Rosemary J. Uzzo

"I forgot about the different ways to look at the blackbird"
Don't be so hard on yourself, Rosemary!
Finally, I was made to stop and think without the running, thinking
creature which life created
It is only a bird with black feathers
Or is it a time in life to look into the brown-eyed runner?
So how does one start?
With new adventures, new learnings, new creative forces which the
running may have overlooked?
What is the proof?
What is the change?
Let's begin with the precious 1985 orange ski boots
On the shelf, me looking at them for years and them looking back
Down from the shelf but not for skis
But for powerful orange planters that sit on the patio shelf
Don't be so hard on yourself, Rosemary!
The blackbird is stirring up new thoughts

My husband Matt does the laundry.

By the washer there is a framed
wall hanging of a mother breastfeeding,
and a Doors album cover: Strange Days.

“Strange days have found us. Strange days have tracked us down. “

A squirrel had squeezed thru the dryer vent and its silver snaking tunnel.
Then it popped out to make mayhem, crashing into glass vases and pottery.
The dryer no longer functions: there had been a dryer fire that Matt battled
until there was no more air to breathe.

On the shelves, a hammock, a tent and lantern, boogie board, volleyball net and ball,
racquetball, tennis gear, ice skates and across from these,
our bikes and helmets that we haven't used in years.

Will there be opportunities to use them again?

I want to think so.

There is a shelf of animal skulls found in the woods, and one is painted.

It rests atop a glass and tin memory box where I've placed a photo of my husband
from his youth, before we met - he has a 'fro and wears a cool expression.

Nearby are plaster and terra cotta sculptures he created, three female and one male-
Guardians of our subconscious.

Five book cases, and five cases of Yellow Tail table wine -

I am well supplied for the plague.

My worktable where lesson plans are assembled for the postponed Brain Games
class.

Behind it, a bookcase stuffed with journal notebooks and travel logs,
capturing years filled with moments.

Two wall shelves of sorted seashells in tofu tubs await their entry into artworks.

Watercolors of Ganesh and Avalokiteshvara, removers of obstacles.

I painted it for good luck when Matt & I moved in as a couple, and
a woodcut of two zebras blending together. Blended lives.

The swish chimes tinkle as I glide my finger across them.

A cabinet crammed with a Japanese tea set embossed with a smoky dragon motif
and the Japanese figurines I'd selected when I was nine or ten
after each time my Great Uncle Mike took me to a Broadway show.

There are three music boxes on a shelf.

One plays Edelweiss.

Mom, that music feels so tender now that you're gone.

Inside is a collection of her Irish coins.

Ascending the stairs, we pass a poster of thumbnail photos of surrealistic paintings from the Brave Destiny art show, a calendar page from 1982 with a reproduction of Botticelli's Primavera, a poster of our precious National Parks, and an angel dangles from a nail. She's made from a pine cone with milkweed pod wings and acorn head gilded gold.

At the top of the stairs,
The Dalai Lama reminds me that today I am fortunate to have woken up.
I am alive. I have a precious human life. I am not going to waste it.
I am going to use it.

Insomnia Nora Freeman

eat turkey for dinner
drink warm milk
don't think about how repulsive "warm milk" is
just drink it already
breathe deeply
do yoga
count sheep
count elephants
don't think of elephants
don't think of soup
don't think of paper clips
count the things that flew out of Pandora's box
count backwards from X
count backwards from X + 100
call InsomniaCookies they're open until 3:00 am
open the window
close the window
get up after 20 minutes
wait another 20 minutes
go back to bed, rinse and repeat
don't think about why you can't sleep

Murmuration Nora Freeman

I look up and see a flock of birds
Flying together, dancing together
They are in a murmuration
Murmuring to the world
Of the joys of creating something together

Ever murmuring, un-murmuring, re-murmuring
Ever graceful, ever connected
The draw shapes across the sky
They all know what all the others are about to do
They are all part of a single being

COVID19 poem

People are breathless, losing their breath
They're afraid of each other, they're afraid to go out

Missing each other, can't socialize
Now we are socially distant and lonely instead

No restaurants concerts or crafts fairs
No arty gatherings at the Blue Door Art Center

No yoga but we have it on zoom
Zoom yoga: Namaste. Zoom poetry and Zoom school

Can it be I am going crazy?
In a weird and scary way I'm getting used to it

COVID19, coronavirus
A lurking menace all around us, unseen, unheard

Nanoscope bits of DNA
its A's and C's, T's and G's are controlling the world

MY CHILDREN'S ROOM Judi Saul

closed in on me.

I could not push away those times.

One window, facing the east rising sun, LI bridges, and the tops of trees
from the 14th floor.

The other window, south- once the trade towers and now the tallest buildings ever,
and a part of the George Washington Bridge, and much of the neighborhood.

If they stretched out that window toward the west, my children could touch the Hudson
and grab a piece of the Palisades.

This room is warm. It is light. It speaks of them, now grown in their own rooms.

There is a bookshelf with books that are mine:

The Bronx- Lost and Found and Remembered- 1933-1975,

The Family of Man. The Joy of Sex. The Prophet.

A shelf for travel books and bird watching books.

There are centuries of photos. And photo albums.

There is a Webster's dictionary, worn from years of use, dusty now from years of disuse.

There are treasures- old trucks, toys, a jar of marbles, a duck decoy.

There are 2 corner bookshelves with childrens' things, those they didn't want or take:

A glass EXIT sign, A WOODSTOCK BY THE LAKE sign, a forest ranger's hat,

Anderson's Fairy Tales, Spin and Marty, The Hardy Boys.

And there are my husband's shelves-

Abraham Lincoln by Sandburg. Molecular Genetics. Freshwater Fishing,

almost all the books by Doris Kearns Goodwin.

And a photo of him and his brother as young boys near their fish tank.

There is the patterned futon at the window.

"Uncomfortable to sleep on", my children say, having loved their old bunk beds.

It is ok to sit on though, without them.

I can see their whole room when I do.

The carpet is white.

Textured, clean now from of wrestle and play.

Once there was the APPLE 2E mostly for Pac Man and Mario Brothers' games
and maybe a writing assignment from PS 24.

I have a new computer, with its own face and noise.

THE SIXTH GRADE PICTURE

We had to pretend we were having fun, Mrs. Bloch said.
Our hands in our laps, fingers tight and all of us wearing a smile.
I had on my sailor dress; Sue-Ellen a sweater blouse and neckerchief.
You could see Susan's long eyelashes and see how fat Sharon was.
The boys were silly smiling except for Horst, last one in the row on the right.
Mark and Frank and Leonard and Eddie and Peter wore jackets like work men
and Bruce had a bow tie. I had a crush on Bruce.
Only one kid was Black, Sylvester, with his jacket too, who had just come from the south.
I didn't know from "the south" and being black. I had not heard then of Rosa Parks.
Or Marion Anderson and her opera debut.
It was 1955. I was new, too, having come from Queens where almost everyone in my projects
was Black or Brown or moving out.
I do not know where these friends have gone in this half century time;
I can still recall their names and much about them.
How small we were. How hopeful. Even Mr. Brown
who had to threaten us so we all would pose, lean in, and bookend him.
It was 1955- There were 2, 755, 823, 00 people in the world.
The polio vaccine was approved. We would not be cripples.
Peter Pan was on our T.V. and so was the Mickey Mouse club.
And the \$64,000 Question.
James Dean died.
Disneyland in faraway California where my best friend Shelly moved had opened.
The 6th grade had its picture taken.
The 7th grade was just "up the street" -
It was a time for joy and hope.

THE KEY

Marcia Klein

I am a key.
I spent the last twenty years in a drawer alone!

I opened a lock to an apartment in Greenwich Village. I was put away, not needed and forgotten.

The apartment was bright and sunny. The inhabitants were senior citizens.

Visitors were always welcome, most were relatives of the inhabitants. Visitors included the couples children and grand children.

Everyone who visited was happy and loved visiting. Everyone visited whenever they were in the village.

All guests were offered refreshments. All were served food and drinks.

Twenty years before I was put away the woman resident passed away. Twenty years later the male resident passed away.

I was used by people who came to clean up the apartment.
I opened the door for people who removed the apartment's contents.

I miss the inhabitants of the apartment and
I miss hearing the visitors enjoying themselves.

f2f

Ysabella Hincapié-Gara

I prefer face to face interactions.

btw

I sit facing a screen that gives me
electronic faces, virtual kisses and hugs

I am supposed to feel as if they are on flesh.

lol

I hear voices everywhere

The radio. TV, a CD, phone

Utube, Instagram you name it!

Nobody next to me

Just Paco

My four legged

furry companion,

He gives me tons

of unconditional love

I hope to come out

of this together but

separate seclusion

And join the world

Together and f2f.