

Just Write

Gloucester County Library System

Logan Township Branch

Writers Group

Selections

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TEA TALK

We went to tea yesterday. It was a quiet spot where we could talk and not be hurried. The waitress knows me and made us feel welcome and special. It was just the right atmosphere.

Not knowing exactly how to begin, I said, "I've been your friend for a while..." Jen laughed a little nervous laugh. No doubt she began to see this visit as something more than just a casual time of "girl talk". I went on, "You've been brave through this trial." She had been looking at her nails but her eyes flew up to my face; trying, no doubt, to read my expression, to prepare for what was coming.

I continued, "I just want to encourage you; to tell you not to quit, even in the hard times. A family is a treasure worth fighting for. A few years ago one friend said to me, 'I am so glad you told me not to quit, that the best is yet to come. You were right. After twenty-five years of marriage I see the value of bracing oneself for the long haul. There are rewards I hadn't anticipated.'" I had told her to persevere having learned through my own experience and also what I had observed in the lives of others.

Jen was watching me carefully, her eyes filled with tears. She said, "Everyone else says, 'You don't have to put up with this,' or, 'He's not worth it.' But I still love him, even when I don't like him."

No one interrupted so we took our time and we spoke of ways to build a home that can stand when the world around us is trying to tear homes and families down.

In a little while, we'll have tea again. I have a lot of good news for her about what it's like to weather the storms of life and still stand.

(This piece is the result of a "prompt" given during our regular meeting)

© Jane Harre

NOTWITHSTANDING

In our language there are words
Some as thyme rhyme with time
Others such as boards
Rhyme within towards.

But then, we are human
And not lacking acumen
Lend ourselves some bitumen
So as to be out told.

Or not even cold
Breathing in mold
Living in thinking
Wondering what was sold.

So back to the think tank mold
Shaped and frozen squeezed
And finally somewhat pleased
We parry forth and not be bored.

Oh look see that bitumen
From eons old
Look these now are mounds.
No faceted pounds.

Silly in carrots err karats
Now known as diamonds....
Not sold by the ounce
Or not even bounce.

Do you know any diamonds
Baked in lifes fronds
As in osiers ossified as in an oast
Mostly unwanted just like burnt toast.

So once again again we say
Around and around we go
Does anyone know
We do and its okay today.
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For NOTWITHSTANDING: 9/19/12

Acumen- keenness of perception; sharp awareness

Bitumen – conglomeration of hydrocarbons(heavy oils, crude oils , asphaltic ends of crude oil);
-was used as a cement or mortar by peoples of old

Osiers- willow tree or dogwood; used in basket making

Ossify – to change to bone; become drunken; fixed in thinking and opposed to change, to harden
to be saturated with liquid ie drunken

Oast – a conical kiln house used to dry products such as tobacco, hops, other grains, an oven.

Fronds – large leafs such as a palm leaf; symbol of victory of old; used in south islands as a
baking mold for food preparation.

Bitumen to hold us together.

To not be left out or behind.. a negative situation

Mold spores and dangerous to breathe

What of us was sold out. Did we miss something, were we sold out or burnt out.?

Mold as in a shaper of us. Squeezed, hammered, packed in

Pounds means of agio or exchange ; money; lucre-- a measure of wealth or to many worth.

Mounds of ruins, piles of rubble or buried under as in a dump without shape.

Diamonds as in karats or measures of worth.. if you were on a desert island and hungry which
would you wish for?? Yea right. Maybe starving would provide the impetus for the final
decision.

Bounce as in ability to come back; reliability. A positive term.. a ball bearing was tested by
bounce. ie how high would it bounce a test of strength and resilience.

Diamonds as formed under pressure and heat over eons as opposed to burnt out empty

Fronds cooking leafs like slices of bread; osiers a streech on fronds but are building material for
making baskets and other containers or seats.

Ossify to harden to life or become a slang ie a bone head – or slang for to be drunken , as in the
use to mean saturated with liquid, usually alcohol. A connection to as to dry out as in an oast.

Which would be unwanted like burnt toast a play on words eg over done osiers or hops or grains
as in bread

Lifes a merri-go-round but brings us back to reality

Its also some play on words.

Does refer to life and being aware of burn out and spirituality.

NOTWITH STANDING despite; it will happen anyway.. despite what you believe or have

For to follow the poem NOTWITHSTANDING

©John Witkowski

At the Paulsboro Academy

Buddy Dean: I am glad to see you again, Lisa. Come. We can use these seats...

Did you have any difficulty finding this place?

Lisa Forester: No. My husband has bought me a GPS. I entered the address you gave me and the rest was just "follow the voice directions". It took me less than fifteen minutes to get here.

Buddy: You drove from Mickleton, didn't you?

Lisa: U Hum. We are visiting my husband's sister and her family...So, How are you? It's been quite a few years. Was it 'ninety-four or 'ninety-six when we met last?

How many students go to school here?

Buddy: There are about ten resident here. Their rooms are upstairs, on the second and third floors. About fifteen other students from nearby areas come in for evening and weekend classes. They are enrolled in other local schools.

We also have some graduate students who go to Temple University who live here off and on. When they are free they assist in the teaching of Silat.

Lisa: Silat?

Buddy: It is an Asian name for a type of self-defense and health system training. Silat is the main thrust of the organizers of this school from its inception. The original owners, who have now returned to Malaysia, established that.

Lisa: Yeah. I can see that going on over there. How interesting. The students over there don't look like they could be undergrads.

Buddy: No. They are high school age or younger.

Lisa: The instructor there, is he the Guru?

Buddy: Yes. He is the chief teacher and owner of the premises. He is related to one of my former students. He and his wife have let me stay here for a while as I am sort of dislocated presently and homeless.

Lisa: It seems to me your life has become like that of the refugees of the war in Sri Lanka. Maybe there is some common destiny working out here; what the New Age people call karma.

Buddy: Perhaps...

Lisa: This is quite a large hall. At this end, I can hardly hear anything that the Guru is saying to his students.

Buddy: This part of the school is called the dojo. A Japanese word, I think. But it is used in many schools of this type of Asian martial arts. The students use it for their exercises. It also converts as a prayer hall when they have group prayers here, for instance on Fridays. People from the community also attend. The school celebrations are held here too. Many more people attend those.

Lisa: So... Have you been back to Sri Lanka recently? Have you published any of your stuff on all the work you did on the crisis there?

Buddy: Actually, no. I was exploring that possibility for sometime after our meetings in New York. But the war was still going on and there was no way not to read the depressing news every day. After a while, I decided that I would postpone writing about it until I could find some way not to be so unhappy about all the bad news.

Lisa: So you must be relieved that the war is over now and that the LTTE is no more?

Buddy: Yes, of course. Who isn't? But you know what they say, "The war is over but the conflict goes on". The problems are not all resolved. There are things to try to write about, when I get around to it... I put off the writing also because I felt that I needed to work on my writing skills.

I had a lot of notes from another project. I began working on those.

Lisa: What was that about?

Buddy: About dreams.

Lisa: Wow. That makes sense. You would be the kind of person that one would expect to be studying dreams. I know that your early fieldwork had something to do with the Sufis.

Buddy: Yeah, I have in a way returned to that experience. Actually because of a powerful dream I had much later in my life and because of the encouragement of some anthropology friends who study dreams and related cultures and psychologies.

Lisa: You did not mention anything about your interest in dreams during our meetings in New York. Did you know that I have a reputation for interpreting dreams?

Buddy: No. Tell me about it.

Lisa: Just among my relatives. Whenever some one has a dream and they want to talk about it, they call me up. I've been the family expert on dreams for a long time. It is just a natural thing with me. I have not really studied much about dreams and dream interpretation. It was not the sort of thing that had high prestige in my parents' house.

Also our colleague Bill Adams is a psychologist, as you know. He would want to know that you are now writing about dreams.

Buddy: Does Bill work with dreams at his school? Or is it a clinic?

Lisa: No, he is not a dream counselor. He has gone into this Conflict Resolution Psychology, which is how he came to work with us when we used to meet in New York City. But I am sure he knows about all the new developments in Dream Studies.

Buddy: That's good to know. Here comes the Dean of Students. Let me introduce you. I have told her about your visit. She said that she'd like to say "Hi".

© A. Muhammad Ma`ruf.

Musings at the End of the Day
By Marian M. Fay

You can't see that I worked hard today,
Folding, scrubbing, washing and deodorizing,
But my shoulder painfully retains each movement
I wonder why the mind can't hold onto memories
The same way as the other muscles retain
Painful echoes of the day's occupations?

If I don't write my thoughts down
I would wonder if this time did really exist.
I seem to move in similar patterns daily.
My body seems the same only the
Seasons and the clothes change.

I sit and rock and sometimes stop,
Either lost in sleep, dreams, or thoughts.
Time winds up and time winds down
Have I ever done anything to astound
People I know and people that I don't?
What legacy is purposefully left in my wake?
Is there anything for anyone to take?

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Meetings Held 2nd & 4th Wednesdays @

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