

# WESTWINDS

KA MAKANI KOMOHANA



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## KA MAKANI KOMOHANA

Winds from the West

This and That,  
I guess to be,  
Spoken of  
With Clarity,  
But,  
The Chameleon  
Will,  
In times of doubt,  
Stay invisibly in  
Or visibly out.

\*\*\* Ben Forsland



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## *Editor's Comments*

Greetings from the Editor's desk. As you have probably noted, The Magazine has been renamed "Westwinds."

It has been an exhilarating experience being editor. In retrospect, two interesting experiences emerged throughout the editing and correlating of Westwinds: partnership and seva. We became a partnership sharing ideas, exploring and solving problems, and meeting deadlines. Seva (pronounced sa-va) in Sanskrit means "selfless service" — a word that describes my editorial staff perfectly. Respectfully, I have come to value these experiences because without them, Westwinds would not be.

A brief description of selecting the submissions to Westwinds - I personally handled all submissions. The submissions were then presented anonymously to the editorial staff and independently voted upon. The results of those arduous decisions are what you now hold in your hands.

Billie Jo Benner

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### Acknowledgements

The Westwinds Staff would like to express its sincere thanks to the following individuals for their contributions:

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William D. Prideaux

Frank X. Sammis

Gaylord H. Wilcox

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## BROOKLYN ALLIGATOR

Jerry Barton's shriveled right arm hung limply from its socket; concealed by the long sleeved surplus army jacket he habitually wore even on the hottest days of summer. He did, however, occasionally remove that oversized, grimy garment when, from time to time he engaged in minor street brawls. These adolescent squabbles were common during those hot days in Brooklyn in the summer of '45. The fact that Jerry was sans one arm neither deterred his adversaries or himself from engaging in these seemingly one-sided contests.

Win or lose, no one ever asked for a rematch with Jerry. His winning tactic in these fights was to maneuver his adversary into a rear scissor-grip with his legs, then wrap his withered snake-like arm around his opponent's neck. Thus, with Jerry's ostensibly, boneless arm encircling your neck like a some limbless reptile, your next strangled words were usually, "Uncle." This utterance was quickly followed by Jerry's opponent dissolving, as it were, into a quivering, quaking lump of gelatinous meat; with all the consistency of Jerry's jelly-like arm. He certainly had no stomach for further battle.

Jerry's paralyzed arm, useless from birth, may account in part for his exceptional success as a shoplifter. But, only in part; the flip side being his unabashed boldness and lack of shame. Anyhow, stealing was Jerry's way of getting even with a world that had, in his view, stolen one of his arms. Stealing was something that he could do better with one arm than his peers could with two. Hell, the crux of the matter was that he could do it better with one arm than they could if they had had eight. Jerry didn't just have a flair for filching things, he was an absolute genius.

As highly skilled as Jerry was in the art of larceny, he would have never characterized himself as a professional thief. No! Jerry wielded his one armed purloining wizardry more for fame than gain. Jerry was what you might call a fringe member of our group, which today would be called a gang. In order to advance from the periphery to the center he would often demonstrate his skill in craftiness. To those of us who had suffered the agony, distress, and embarrassment of being caught in the act, Jerry was held in absolute awe.

Jerry, in fact, became so good at stealing any and all kinds of goods from all manner of stores that the ordinary was no longer a challenge for him. A favorite pastime of the group became thinking up new demands on his shoplifting skills. Some, not myself of course, took sadistic delight in daring Jerry to steal such unlikely items as a fresh fish from the ice filled display trays in Eddie's fish market. Or, once, a large uncut quarter of beef from Abe's Kosher Butcher Shop. All of which were subsequently thrown away—it being next to impossible to explain to your mother how a thirteen year old kid obtained a forty-pound slab of wartime rationed meat. I once made the grievous mistake of bringing home and presenting as a gift to my mother a purse Jerry had lifted from a fashionable boutique. The ensuing interrogation was a cross-examination worthy of the top echelons of the Gestapo.

"Where did you get it?"

"A friend gave it to me, Mom."

"What friend? Do you have any idea what a purse like this costs?" Of course, I should have known that Jerry wouldn't steal anything cheap.

And so it went—until, one day when we took Jerry to the Bronx Zoo. Actually the zoo was no more than a side-stop, the Bronx Park, which included the Botanical Gardens, being

the objective of the day. It was there in the reptile house that Jerry appropriated the baby alligator. We first noticed Jerry's new pet as he was attempting to feed it a portion of his hot dog. The alligator was about a foot long with tiny needle like teeth which were disregarding the frankfurter Jerry held in favor of his mustard covered finger. Jerry had, with this achievement, attained new stature in the eyes of our group. A group of which contained not one single soul with the wit or sufficient gray-matter to anticipate what a twelve-inch alligator might become given enough hot dogs or fingers.

Getting a seat on the subway for the hour-long return trip to Brooklyn proved to be a relatively simple matter after Jerry displayed his prize. Secured about his mid-section with a scrap of stout cord. Jerry's unnamed pet quickly cleared the forward section of the car and the remainder after the next stop. The rest of the trip proved relatively uneventful for the alligator and Jerry, both whom seemed to enjoy the remainder of the ride becoming docile. Not so Jerry's mother, who, after being introduced to the alligator, is reported to have beat him senseless. (Jerry, not the alligator) That is, of course, after she climbed down from the top of the refrigerator.

Now finding a home for an alligator in Brooklyn in 1945, or perhaps in any era is not, as Jerry found out, as easy as stealing one. As we later learned Jerry released it in the basement cellar of Luke Heany's apartment house. It seems that for a time Jerry would sneak down there, taking care to avoid Luke's father, the janitor, and feed it. Then just disappeared.

Just as well. Luke had been fearful of his father stumbling across it. Stumbling is what Mister Bud, a nickname assigned to him by the group in homage to his preferred beverage, likely would have done. Mister Bud made several trips to the basement each day in order to shovel coal into the furnaces that provided hot water and heat to the building. At least he did so when he couldn't con Luke or one of Luke's friends into doing it. When not engaged in that activity he could be found at the corner tavern telling his pre-depression tales of great wealth to other former financial nabobs and mugwumps of the past.

It must have been about six months later that the two finally met. Several of us were sitting in Luke's front parlor playing Monopoly, I had just landed on the Boardwalk when a dazed Mister Bud walked in and slowly sat down in his easy chair.

"How you boys doing?" he asked—rhetorically, with just the slightest slur. "Ya know what—I just seen in the cellar, the biggest, ugliest looking, red-eyed, God-Damn cat I ever saw. Threw the shovel at it missed the son-of-bitch though."

—Frank X. Sammis

Malia's Song  
Momma's in the kitchen  
Sipping pink wine.  
Sister's in the livingroom  
Sesame street time.  
Daddy's at the office  
Who knows when he'll be home.  
I'm in the bathtub  
Playing all alone.  
\*\*\* Agnes Leinau

## WHY I DIDN'T MARRY MY BABY'S DADDY

Mama used to say I came into this world kicking and screaming and I haven't stopped yet. But what would mama know about it? I mean how would she know I was kicking and screaming? She told me in those days, women having babies were given something called "twilight sleep." They were so groggy, most didn't know or care what was happening to their bodies or babies for a couple of days.

Not me, I'm real proud I had my baby natural. No drugs and no docs cutting me open like a slab of meat on the butcher block. Whenever Mama hears me bragging about that, she always adds, "and no husband for yourself, nor daddy for your baby neither." Mama figures I did it backwards. I was so careful to take care of myself during my pregnancy. I ate right and got enough exercise, and later refused anything "unnatural" during her birth. Mama guesses I got my priorities wrong. She believes having a man around for me and the baby is the most natural important part of the whole baby-making business. For all my big talk, in her eyes, I skipped the most important step—getting married.

I think mama feels sorry for me. She supposes my baby's daddy didn't want to marry me. It's not true. I could've married him, but I knew I couldn't trust him to love me forever. You know how men are, they love you for a little bit and then they leave you.

You see my own daddy left me and mama when I was real little. I remember waiting and waiting for him to come back. It was like one day he's here and the next day he's gone. Finally, (I don't know how long it was) I asked mama where my daddy was? She told me my daddy died and then she never mentioned him again. It wasn't until I was older that I found out daddy left mama and me for another woman.

My cousin Dolly told me the real truth. Dolly is ten years older than me. She and I were real close, just like sisters. But the only thing about Dolly is she's always got to be one on top of everyone else. The day she told me the real truth, we was talking about her daddy.

My Uncle Bud was a mean one. He used to beat up on Dolly and my Aunt Lea all the time. Dolly was planning to move out soon as she could manage it. Anyway I told Dolly I missed not having a daddy. But I'd rather have a dead daddy in heaven than the one she had anyday. Funny thing about Dolly, she'd cry and curse Uncle Bud. She'd swear he was an evil man and hated him with all her heart, but let anyone else say anything even a little bit not nice about him and she'd get angry—at that person. Dolly is real clannish.

So she looks at me and says, "It's time you learned the truth about your quote dead daddy unquote." I ask her what she's talking about? Then she tells me my daddy ain't dead. Or if he is, he didn't die a long time ago when he first was gone. Dolly says daddy left mama and me to marry another lady. I don't say a word. I just stare at her real shocked-like and she keeps talking. Looks like the whole family knows the story 'cept me. Mama made them promise not to tell me until I was old enough to understand and then she was planning to tell me herself. "I guess ten is old enough to understand and then she was planning to tell me herself. "I guess ten is old enough to understand." says Dolly. "Who'd he marry?" I ask. All kinds of feelings is going through me. I feel sick, and hurt, and mad, and dizzy all at the same time. In fact, I am so busy sorting out which I feel the most, I don't even hear her answer. I don't care—I just let her jabber on and on, and then I go home.

When I was little, mama and me had this little bath time ritual. She'd bathe me and as she washed me, we'd talk. We'd talk about anything or nothing in particular. It was just

our time alone together. By the time I was ten, mama had stopped bathing me. For one thing, I was old enough to do it myself, and for another thing, she was real busy all the time. Now she working at new job as a cashier at the exchange. She was also doing some sewing at night for people she worked with for extra money.

The day I came home from hearing Dolly's revelations, mama was cutting out a pattern on the floor. She looked up as I came in the room, and told me she didn't have a chance to go to the market, so we'd just have vegetable soup for dinner. She said for me to go take a bath and then we'd eat. So then I ask her to give me a bath. She looks at me funny because its been a long time since she had to wash me. But all she says is to call her when I'm in the tub.

I don't tell her about what Dolly told me right away. I let her talk about the dress she's making for another cashier. I close my eyes and let her wash me, enjoying the cool water running down my back. I'm real quiet not saying a word. Then mama says, "What's on your mind baby?" Without looking at her, I ask real fast, "Why did my daddy stop loving us and who did he marry?" She stops washing me. I raise my eyes to look into her face. Mama looks like she's been hit. "Who's telling you such trash?" I ask if its true? She takes a long time to answer, then with a tired soft sadness in her voice she says, "It's true, he did leave us and marry someone else." I ask, "Who?" She says it don't matter. I ask, "Why?" She answered, "Honey, your daddy just didn't want us anymore." I start to cry and I keep crying because I can't stop. I scream, "I hate him!" Mama says, "Don't hate him, he ain't worth it. Someday he'll realize what he threw away and he'll be the sorry one."

I'm still crying long after I'm out of the tub. I can't eat the soup mama serves because I'm still teary and I know I'd choke if I tried to swallow any food. I felt like I had this big rock of pain in me. It's all hard with jagged edges. Those sharp edges keeps giving me little jabs of hurt whenever I think about my daddy. I thought if I kept crying, the rock would break up into little pieces. Little pieces are easier to handle than this big lump of misery.

I never did see my daddy again. I used to have big dreams of finding him. I searched all over the house when mama was at work, looking for clues for where he could be. And everytime my aunties came over to visit with mama, I hung around hoping they'd mention his name even once so that maybe I could figure out a little more about him. But I never turned up anything in my searchings, and my aunties never mentioned his name to mama.

My imagination used to work overtime with all the fantasies I had of tracking him down. I'd knock on his door and when he opened it and saw me, he'd cry and beg me to forgive him. He'd tell me how much he loved me and missed me all those years. He'd say he'd never leave me again and how he's going to take care of me and I'd be his little girl again. Then he and mama and me would live happily ever after.

That big rock of pain never did break into easy-to-handle pieces. Maybe it turned into smaller chunks, but it never got easier to handle. Before I knew the truth, believing my daddy was dead was easy. I could pretend he was an angel in heaven looking down, loving me and still protecting me. Even if he wasn't around, it wouldn't have been his fault. But knowing he CHOSE to leave me and stopped loving me or maybe never loving me at all—that hurt worse than anything else.

So that's why I didn't marry my little girl's daddy. I don't want to marry and end up alone anyway. I don't want to love some man with all my heart and have him hurt me. I don't

want to have to need a man ever again. I don't need the pain.

I know there are couples who stay married. I also know there are people who look down on me cause I'm an "unmarried mother." I don't care.

I'm ok and I never ask for anything from anyone. My baby is too young to even know what a daddy is. Not that it means so much. To me, the words, "daddy" and "pain" are the same. I guess someday she'll ask me where her daddy is. I'll tell her, "He's dead."

—Lisa Teves

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*"Seance"*  
by  
*Michael Hirakawa*

## THOSE EYES

### Chapter Five

Michael's thoughts joyfully wandered through the events of the last six hours as he lay in bed with Kristy sleeping peacefully in his arms. The evening had taken him by surprise from start to finish. Kristy appeared nervous and quite shy when introductions were made at the front door of Julie's house, but by the time dinner was served she was talking freely about everything. Her unabated smile was the first thing to disarm him and by the time dinner was finished he was sure that she was the most intelligent and inspiring young lady that he had ever had the pleasure of knowing. He realized, as they extensively discussed Dostoevsky over the last of the Chablis, that her character was multifaceted and he inwardly hoped that he would have the pleasure of spending more time with her exploring each and every facet in greater detail. They talked more in the back seat as they rode home; Farris kept making funny faces in the rear view mirror in reference to the uncontrollable smile on Michael's face. At the stop light he heard Farris say to Julie, "Look! They're holding hands." To which Julie replied, "Aw, how cute."

The car reached home much too soon for Michael, but as Farris pulled the car up to the curb, Kristy leaned over and kissed him.

"I want to stay with you," she whispered, and Michael's heart began beating faster.

"I—a—it's just that—" Michael tried to explain.

"I'm a big girl Michael, old enough to make my own decision." It had been said to him, but directed towards Julie. "I got the old beater running," Michael found himself saying, though he knew it to be untrue.

"You make sure and bring her home later," Farris commanded Michael in an almost parental manner just before they left.

Once alone and inside, with their mounting desires left unchecked, they quickly found themselves on the bed engaged in heated foreplay. She spoke softly into his ear with her warm uneven breath,

"Make love to me," she beckoned, both her blouse and skirt were unbuttoned and they lay deep within each others arms. Nothing in Michael's life had ever seemed as peaceful as lying there with his bare skin touching hers. Nothing could ever be so right as making love with her now, he thought to himself, but he had promised Farris and he knew he could never hurt her.

"I can't," he said as he kissed her passionately, then pulled away to look deeply in her eyes. He took in a deep breath through his nose getting the full intoxicating effect of the jasmine fresh on her softly, moistened skin.

"I love you," rolled from his lips with the poetic effect that only spontaneity could evoke. Her smile shone brightly up at him as tears rolled down her soft cheeks.

"Oh Michael, I love you too," she cooed, nestling in closer to him. Michael was overwhelmed, not by the fact that he had never said that to anyone before, but because he realized, like a flash of insight, that what he had said was true. And there he lay with her head on his chest, her sweet fragrance surrounding him. In his arms, safe and secure, with the steady sound of the rise and fall of her breath he slowly drifted to sleep.

Sleep? Had sleep come? Michael wasn't exactly sure when he had crossed over, but now he stood outside. The icy wind whipped across his body, cooling the sweat that poured down his skin. Except for a few barren trees, the horizon in all directions was pitch black. The wind picked up and its sound changed from the soft whistle of before, to the haunting melody that plagued his sleep. "Michael," the soothing voice called from behind him, as always, and Michael's body was ablaze with desire. He slowly turned towards her voice, fighting himself every inch of the way.

"Come to me Michael, I love you!" she spoke and her voice was like a feather tantalizing his skin.

"I love you," echoed in his mind. He strained, concentrating on placing the phrase. He knew he was facing her now though his eyes were squeezed tightly shut.

"Look at me, Michael I need you," she taunted. But he knew if he looked at her... if he looked in her eyes there would be no escaping.

"Please, Michael, I love you," she pleaded, and even with his eyes closed he could see her smiling. He began unbuttoning his shirt unable to stop himself now. "I love you," echoed again in his mind, in a voice of another. It was vaguely familiar but he just couldn't remember from where.

"I need you," she demanded and there was pain in her voice. The wind chilled his bare chest as it ripped across his bare skin and into his nostrils. But again there was something different. A smell "I love you," reverberated throughout his body. And then he recognized it. Jasmine. The sweet smell of Jasmine.

His eyes opened to see Kristy laying next to him peacefully sleeping.

"I love you," he told her, reassuring himself. He squeezed her tightly against him and took in a deep breath of the sweet fragrance that had freed him. The phone rang obnoxiously and Michael rolled over quickly, picking it up before it could ring again and wake her. "Hello," he said in sleepy tone.

Farris's angry voice jumped out through the receiver,

"You're a dead man. You know that? What in the world were you thinking?"

Michael leaned back over and hung up the phone, turned off the ringer, and headed towards the bathroom. Farris's car pulled up in front as Michael slipped on his shoes. Farris ran up the walkway consumed with anger. He leaned forward to bang on the door just as Michael opened it.

"I thought we had an agreement here Mikey, and you screwed up. What were you thinking? Do you know who her father is?"

"Calm down Farris, everything's okay."

"Okay? How can you say that? Julie calls me this morning at six-thirty, hysterical 'cause Kristy never came home last night."

"I know that, Kristy's inside asleep. Besides the beater's not working after all."

"Great, just great, you take advantage of a naive little girl and have the nerve to blame it on your car not working."

"Listen," Michael said animatedly, grabbing Farris by the shoulders, "Nothing happened last night. Well, not exactly nothing, but what you think happened didn't. She slept here last night, that's it. In fact I think I love her." Michael's head bobbed back and forth as he spoke, his face still plastered with the goofy grin from the night before.

“ Love her! Huh! You, love her? Do you know how many times I’ve heard you say that?” Farris paused and his expression became one of bewilderment as he realized what he was saying.

“ No,” Michael bated, “ how many times have you heard me say that?”

“ Ah—never,” he complied, “ Are you serious?”

“ Serious as a heart-attack. Do you mind me borrowing the car to take Kristy to school, when she wakes up? “

“ Sure. I guess,” Farris responded, still a little confused by what he just heard.”

Michael ducked back in the house saying, “Let me just write her a note telling her where I’ve gone and that I’ll be back soon.” He reappeared a few seconds later to find Farris still lost in a daze.

“Don’t worry. I’ll fill you in on the way to dropping you off,” as the two of them climbed into the car.

—Tracey Switzer

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## LIFE

Life exists like the way of a majestic waterfall.  
We can accept the free flowing beauty in the present as it  
is.

There is no concern of what it was like yesterday  
nor what it will be like tomorrow.

We must realize and flow with awareness,  
Commit ourselves to change,  
And give ourselves credit for the achievements done today.

It is when we have peace within ourselves that life begins.

\*\*\* Debbie Tasato-Kodama

## INNOCENT VICTIMS

Mary sat in the brightly lit courtroom listening to the judge deliver the verdict, but she didn't hear. She drifted to a day fifteen years earlier when her first and only son was born.

Labor pains began that Sunday morning as she stared at the mountains beyond her home. Fall had come early that year. The leaves had already burst forth in full coloration. Suddenly, the tightness in her body made her stiffen. It broke the calm. She wasn't alarmed, just surprised. Mary called to her husband Jim. The bags were packed and ready for the trip to the hospital. The pains came regularly now and a call to the doctor confirmed what Mary knew. The time had come. As they drove to the hospital, Mary and Jim smiled and talked about the names they'd chosen: James, Jr. for a boy and Katherine for a girl. At 9:10 that night, their son was born. The delivery was long and hard. Mary was nineteen years old. Later, as she held and nursed her new infant, Mary told him how happy she was that he belonged to her. He was a beautiful, little blue-eyed boy. She wished her mother were still alive to see him.

Her life in the country left her isolated but she didn't mind. It gave her more time to devote to Jaime, the one person she felt she could give all her love. Jim worked long hours in the mill, fifty miles away. He left for work before sunrise and returned after dark. Some days he stopped for a few beers after work with the boys.

As Jaime grew, Mary read to him and told him of all the wonderful things life had to offer. When Jaime was three, Mary noticed that he seemed more quiet and shy than she had expected. She guessed it was because he spent so much time alone with her.

His first day of kindergarten proved painful for both of them. She walked him down the long driveway and waited for the school bus. As she helped him up the steps to the bus, the friendly busdriver assured her that his crying would stop as soon as the bus pulled away. He'd seen it many times in his ten years of driving. Mary waited until she couldn't see the yellow bus anymore before she slowly headed up the hill.

It was her first day alone in the house since Jaime's birth. The tiny red shingled house felt cavernous. She busied herself doing laundry and baked a batch of chocolate fudge cookies with sprinkles on top, Jaime's favorite.

Miss David, Jaime's teacher, recommended he repeat his first year of school. She felt he was socially immature. Miss David felt the extra year would help him adjust before beginning the more demanding schedule of first grade. Mary was disappointed. She secretly feared her overprotectiveness had somehow failed her precious son, but she agreed. She wanted to do what was best for Jaime.

The following March she discovered she was pregnant again. She wanted a large family but Jim was spending more time away from home and money was scarce. Her happiness over the prospect of another child was tempered by a fear that she wouldn't have the extra time to help Jaime. His teacher had recommended Jaime for special education classes. He just didn't fit into the regular classroom—Jaime was retarded.

Katie was born the week before Thanksgiving. She was bright and active. As she grew, Mary realized how different her children were. Sometimes she lamented Jaime being born first. If she had had Katie first, maybe she would have recognized Jaime's problems earlier.

Katie's progress seemed to accentuate Jaime's failures. He became more withdrawn,

his acting out became more aggressive. The teachers found it harder to restrain him during those times when he lashed out at them and his classmates. At home, Jaime spent most of his time alone in his room. He never showed any of the violent behavior the teachers complained of around his family; he was just quiet.

Saturday was Mary's day to drive into town for groceries. Jim usually stayed home with Jaime and Katie, but the mill had called and asked him to work. The extra pay came in handy. The kids were old enough to stay alone for the two hours it took for shopping, besides, Katie at nine years old seemed mature beyond her years. Jaime stayed in his room all day anyway.

Suddenly, the bright lights of the courtroom came into focus as Jim grabbed Mary's arm. She heard the judge say, "Guilty." How did it happen? Why had Jim been so careless? She hated guns. Jim said they needed it for protection. Why hadn't he locked the gun in the shed instead of leaving it in the closet?

Amy and Katie were best friends. Three years ago, Amy's family had moved into a new house not far away. They met on the school bus their first day of first grade. Since then, they were inseparable. People who didn't know thought they were twins.

Katie obeyed her mother's warning not to leave the house while she was away. Amy came to visit her instead. The girls played house and dressed their dolls. They giggled about the new boy in school and decided they would share him as a boyfriend. In the room next to Katie's they could hear Jaime talking. Katie thought it must be her mother. She opened her door and looked toward Jaime's room. His door was closed. She walked to the door and knocked. No answer. She heard Jaime's voice again only louder. He was yelling now. Katie knocked again and opened the door. Jaime pointed the gun and screamed, "Get out!" Instinctively, she slammed the door and turned to run. She stumbled into Amy who had come up behind her. Katie didn't say a word but Amy followed her into the bathroom. They shut and locked the door.

It seemed like an eternity before they heard Jaime's bedroom door open again. He pounded on the bathroom door and screamed. Katie crouched in the bath tub while Amy leaned heavily against the door. A shot rang out, then dead silence.

Mary remembers finding Katie cowering in the tub. The shock of Amy's limp body lying on the blood swollen floor paralyzed her. The police found Jaime in the tree house Jim had built for his seventh birthday.

Mary sat motionless as they led Jaime from the courtroom. He looked the same as he had that first day of kindergarten—so sad, so scared, so alone. She couldn't protect him this time. As much as she wanted to believe it hadn't happened, she knew Amy was gone.

Since the funeral last spring, everything had changed. Jim blamed Mary for leaving the kids alone. If she were a better mother, none of this would have happened. She blamed Jim for being irresponsible with the gun. Amy's parents moved away. Katie was starting fourth grade soon but the once bubbly little girl now seemed old.

Jaime's attorney tried to explain that sentencing would come at a later date. Most likely, Jaime would be sent to an institution. In view of his age and mental incompetence, he would not go to prison.

Mary listened but she didn't hear. She was locked away in a not so distant past that seemed awfully far away.

—Carol Mullen

## MY FASCINATING GRANDMOTHER

Grandmother is an eighty-three year old wonder. No matter how much her body aches, she's always loving and cheerful. Longevity hasn't dulled her curiosity or enthusiasm for living. In her mid-seventies she could shop all day, cook dinner for half the neighborhood, and still be ready for a Chinese opera or a spiritual channelling when someone suggested it. Although her physical stamina has faded a little over the past five years, she believes the secret of a long life is making yourself get out of bed each morning. But for her, that's an understatement

She has always taken life as a gift and any heartache as God's will. Six months after her family survived the grueling voyage from Italy to America, her youngest brother drowned in a creek. Married at sixteen to a man who spoke little English and no Italian, she went to night school to learn Spanish. A few months after their first anniversary, she faced life's deepest heartache when her first born son passed away at the age of three months. She begged and bartered her way through the Depression with three children, and worked as a waitress for four dollars a week during the war. When she was sixty-five, she left her husband after thirty years in an unhappy marriage. As if completing some duty, she left shortly after their fiftieth anniversary.

Most of the time she's quiet, but it's not unusual for her to yell, "go scratch" or "stunad" at her soap opera characters. They're also the only people I've ever heard her gossip about. For people she can influence, she has a knack for pulling the best out of a person. In short and simple sentences she can pierce the most confusing problems and bring a person miles beyond their distress. Our family calls her a professional mourner because she attends funerals as often as most people receive paychecks. But mourning is only a part of what she's doing. Her main concern is helping families gather and nurse their trust back to life. The grace of her aged and tiny frame, like a fragile masterpiece, encourages faith and quiets the soul. She's always trying to turn people away from wasting time with sadness or complaining. Given eighty-three years, to her, life is still too short.

She has stayed in touch with the world and her advice is as timely for her grandchildren as it was for her children. In times of trouble, she hides her great-grandchildren behind her skirt, just as she did her grandchildren because she knows her endless patience and adoring love impart something more vital than any lesson. I'm fascinated and moved by the life, philosophy, and vigor of this woman, and I'm deeply grateful that she's my best friend—my grandmother.

——Roxanne Earnest

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## THE PATH

Walter looked about himself in wonder. How had he missed this trail and the spectacular vista it offered?

Uphill rose ridge after ridge of lush vegetation in hues ranging from the yellow-green of shower trees to the olive-green of pines whose tops pointed straight up to cotton ball clouds drifting across the sky. Walter lifted his face to the sun as a soft breeze ruffled through his hair, keeping him cool despite the mild exertion of his hike.

He hadn't felt this good in ages. His wife's support and his doctor's insistence that he control his diet and get off his duff were paying off, improving his health and keeping a heart attack at bay.

Enjoy the moment, he told himself. This was one of those rare times when he wouldn't let himself worry. The bid he needed to prepare for the project on Maui; warning Chuck, his new plasterer, to pay attention to his work or else; the late shipment of bricks for Mr. Castle's new patio and pool enclosure — all were nearly forgotten as he allowed himself to relish this newly-found serenity.

The delicate flowers waving beside the ferns and grasses along the foot-path beckoned his eyes downward as he placed one foot in front of the other, continuing his leisurely journey up the hillside.

Spying a clump of tall grass, Walter hunkered down in front of it, plucked out a long blade and twirling it between his thumb and forefinger, remembered something he hadn't done since he was a kid. He smiled and stuck the slender reed into his mouth chewing and sucking its sweetness. Then he stood, resting his hands in his back pockets continued sauntering up the hill.

It was so quiet, so peaceful. The cooling of doves and branches rustling in the breeze were the only sounds. Walter couldn't even hear the traffic on the road he thought he'd just left. Had he traveled this far so quickly? He thought he'd never find such solitude. How he welcomed it.

But from somewhere not too far below him, he began to hear the muted rattle of a motor along with the faint tinkling of voices raised in laughter and song. He craned his neck, trying to make out the glimpses of color through the thick growths of bamboo and koa. An old truck headed in his direction. Following the path he had chosen he watched with arms akimbo as it drew nearer. Then he grinned and shook his head. Sonny and Herman were standing unsteadily in the truck's bed, their flailing arms trying to catch Walter's already rapt attention. George's ever-present ukulele and vibrant falsetto provided accompaniment to Dukie's whoops and shouts of laughter. Even Charlie looked like he had dubious control of the steering wheel with half his upper body lifted out the window, so enthusiastically did he wave at Walter.

"Come on, Walaka!" shouted Sonny. "Hop in!" Get plenny pupus!" He pointed to the huge cooler George sat on, and Walter knew it must've held a feat of goodies, from sushi and beer to raw crab and cuttlefish.

Walt smiled but again shook his head as he watched them advance until they were inching along beside him. "No thanks, guys. I'm really enjoying the walk. Next time, okay?" He braced himself for the rough time he knew they were going to give him.

“What, you nature boy now? Come on, Brada! We going the same way you are. And Keoki hea’s getting lonesome widout your — your heavenly harmonies!” kidded Sonny as he fluttered his eyelids skyward. The others doubled over laughing, slapping their knees and Sonny’s back.

“You kolohe buggas!” Walter felt himself stepping toward the truck, giving in to them as he tried in vain to hold back the chuckles itching to burst forth at their antics.

“Walter! Walt, honey! Get up! Please!”

Walt’s eyes shot open. He felt as though a vise constricted his chest. His gasps as he fought for air had awakened his wife. She darted into the bathroom, waking him to dampen a cool washcloth for his furrowed, sweat-beaded brow. But by the time she returned to his side, his breathing had steadied and the clamp around his heart had eased.

“Honey, are you all right? The doctor said you were doing so well and now this. I’m so worried. Shall I call him?”

“No, no. I’m okay, really.” He felt much better and he stroked the length of her arm to reassure her. “I’ll make an appointment with Dr. Wakai in the morning just to check things out.” He smiled at her and patted her hand and was grateful to see the fear in her eyes lessen.

Then he looked off past her shoulder and hesitantly whispered, “Honey, the dream I just had ...” and he stopped short. He moved his wide eyes back to hers and related how he’d been hiking along the most picturesque path he’d ever seen, how his buddies had come along and had tried to persuade him to join them, and how he’d nearly gone along.

“But Walt,” she whispered, “They’ve all been gone so long — Sonny, Dukie, and George killed in the war, Charlie in that awful wreck, and Herman . . .” She sadly looked down at their clasped hands, then up to meet his eyes with her own. “Have they been on your mind? You must still miss them so. Oh, honey . . .” With that she leaned over and wrapped him in a consoling embrace.

But the tightness of the embrace he returned revealed the fear that suddenly hit him. If his wife hadn’t wakened him, Walter would’ve joined his dead buddies that night, both in this dream and in reality.

——Uluwehi Pena

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### Ode To Chuang Tzu

I see the sun rise and set  
I see the moon wax and wane  
I see the seasons slip away  
I see the endless chain  
I see the hungry children  
I see the drought dry plain  
I see the war torn streets  
I see men die in vain  
and I know that I know nothing  
I know.

\*\*\* Agnes Leinau

## ROSES

“Roses are red, Violets are blue. . .” How many times have we heard that romantic little ditty? On a subtler note and just as familiar is poet Robert Burns’s melodic “My love is like a red, red rose. . .” Gertrude Stein was more to the point: “A rose is a rose is a rose!”

Roses have long symbolized love and romance and have probably been included in literature more than any other flower. Shakespeare’s famous play “Romeo and Juliet” has the memorable and profound line “That which we call a rose by any other name would smell so sweet.” Of course, in this case, the reference to the rose did not symbolize love alone, but represented the conflict between the Houses of Capulet and Montague. The fragile love that young Romeo and Juliet shared was in spite of their lineage yet ended tragically, not fading slowly like the petals of a dying rose.

Shakespeare fictionalized another conflict which in true life had the rose as its symbol. The War of the Roses (1455-1485) was a conflict between the Houses of York and Lancaster who battled for the throne of England. The Yorks’ family symbol was a white rose, the Lancasters’ a red rose. The long battles between them ended with both Houses united by the marriage of Henry V (House of York) and Elizabeth (House of Lancaster) in 1446. This account is given in Shakespeare’s plays “Henry VI” and “Richard III.”

The rose itself has stood the test of time. The perennial shrub is found throughout the world in temperate climates; the Caucus Mountains of Russia are known for the cabbage rose, a wild rose with large pink blossoms; the lovely Damask rose with its heady musk is found in Syria; and a most popular rose, the tea rose with its lilting fragrances of tea, is a native of China. The Rose of Japan is not a rose at all, it is a camellia.

Roses have been named after famous people: “Mister Lincoln,” a dark red Damask rose is named for the sixteenth president of our country; and “Kennedy,” a delicate white tea rose is named for the thirty-fifth president, John F. Kennedy. Roses have been named for a variety of personalities: Helen Traubel, a popular opera star of the forties’ and fifties’, has a peach-pink hybrid tea rose named in her honor; while Queen Elizabeth’s namesake rose is also pink, it is a large, many-petaled Grandflora rose. Some rose names conjure fantasies of romance, adventure and far-off places: “Little Darling,” “White Knight,” “Tropicana,” “Camelot,” and “Don Juan”!

The rose has not been limited to being named for people, places or ideas. The rose has also been immortalized in song. “Roses of Picardy,” “The Yellow Rose of Texas” (which happens to be the state flower of Texas), “My Love is Like a Wild, Wild, Rose,” “Moonlight and Roses,” and “To a Wild Rose,” to name a few. And we need not forget those lovely fictionalized ladies named “Rose.” There is “Rose of Washington Square,” “Rose, Rose, (I Love You),” “Second-Hand Rose,” and “My San Antonio Rose.”

Some very famous “real” women carry the beautiful name of the flower. Rose Kennedy, the mother of one of our most popular presidents is one that comes to mind immediately. And did you know that Queen Elizabeth’s mother, the Queen Mother’s, name is Rose? Speaking of mothers, the second most popular day that we celebrate in the United States (after Valentine’s Day) that favors the rose as a gift is Mothers’ Day. A young woman born in Lima, Peru in 1586 was not a mother but exercised maternal care of hundreds of others through her piety and mystical gifts. She became canonized as a Roman Catholic saint in 1671.

She is the patron saint of South America and the Philippines, Saint Rose of Lima.

Roses are grown in such abundance you'll find them everywhere; they are the most popular home gardener's choice. Though not the easiest to grow, having a delicate nature and demanding pliable, rich humus, their final beauty is what makes the toil worthwhile. In the United States the commercialized growing of roses is a major industry. Canada and England also grow large commercial crops of roses. So it remains that the rose is the most popular flower no matter what trends of taste come and go at different periods of time—the rose has been enduring.

So the next time you stop to "smell the roses," think about all the different things roses have symbolized through the ages and you are bound to come up with some of your own. It's a sure thing that the most famous symbolization of the rose is LOVE!

— Audrey Bush



*"Sweet Waianae"*  
by Thrina Barrett and  
Stefanie Tanksley

## RESOLUTE

She slowly stirred the sauce she had made for that night's dinner. As she stirred, she practiced the look of determination she would use when she told Mike of her decision.

"What's for dinner, Mom?"

"Mom, I've finally decided on the courses that I'll be taking in the fall. I can pre-register so all I have to worry about are the student fees."

She nodded her approval, adding in a low voice, "That's good. You need to learn how to handle things like that. I won't be around the rest of your life. Try to handle things on your own." The ides of March.

"Huh?" Robbie's eyebrows lifted and a confused expression spread across his face trying to make the connection.

The greatest gift a mother can give her child is its independence; push the babe gently out of the nest. Raise your children so that they will be ready for exportation. If necessary, give them a firm shove. Besides, she needed to begin prepping the kids for the divorce. She needed them well-adjusted. On no account did she want to disrupt their lives. One of the girls at the tennis club had told her that a major emotional upheaval did terrible things to a child's life and it usually showed up in adulthood. Lord knows she didn't want Robbie growing up to be a murderer or a rapist. Besides, what would she tell her friends?

"I'm hungry, are we eating soon?"

A clean-cut, amicable divorce would be the best thing. If the single life turned out to be a farce (she had heard that younger men were fun to have affairs with but totally lacked substance), she would be able to come back to Mike. That was her lateral strategy. But she needed a reason for divorcing him. Her friends had told her that the judge actually asks you why. It was doubtful that they permitted breaking the bonds of matrimony on the grounds of "lacking in excitement" She was sure that one of the girls would have advised her if that was so since they were experts in the field. So here she was in front of the stove psyching herself out in hope of finding a reason for it all.

The truth of the matter was that there was no real reason for the divorce. It's just that the "in" thing was to be, more or less, depressed. You know, you should either be coming out of a relationship or going into one. It was unheard of to be married as long as she and Mike were. Most of her friends were either stylishly divorced or having clandestine affairs. How exciting it all was—trysts and nocturnal rendezvous. She would sit there and fantasize every time one of them would relate an episode in their love life. To add salt to the wound, she never had anything to contribute at their get-togethers. Someday, someday, she would have something to brag about. In the meantime, she would have to keep quiet, ashamed of being happily married; destined to live a lackluster life.

She thought of approaching Mike with a creative format—they could get a divorce, but remain living together. It would be great and there wouldn't be any wear and tear on the kids. She understood that many couples stay together just for the kids. Everybody would be happy and to think, she would be able to work on having something to boast about at the next hen party. Maybe the added stress on her life would set off an artistic flair; she could be become a dramatic actress or maybe a writer of gothic romances. Get ride of the albatross.

It was so exciting! Now, she'd have to re-do her wardrobe, re-do her hair, maybe even

change her make-up. So many things to do; so little time.

First things first, she needed to consider all the negative things that Mike had done in the past. If she had that at her fingertips, it would put her in the right mood. How about the time she had gone home to visit her parents? He had forgot to pick her up at the airport and she had waiting for three hours. She had flown home on the red-eye and finally got so tired of waiting around she hailed a cab and it cost her \$80. to get home. She thought the most horrid thoughts about catching Mike in bed with another woman; some luscious blond (he loved beauty pageants), and the both of them caught up in throes of passion. While the cab driver eyed her in his rearview mirror, she practiced her look of horror and disgust and exactly what she was going to say. This had to be why he wasn't at the airport to welcome her home. When she finally got home, he wasn't even there. He said he just plain forgot. That was Mike au naturel. Plain and simple, pure and unadulterated, although she doubted that it would be viable grounds for divorce.

She thought back to the last time Mike had ever bought her a gift without any prompting from her. She, on the other hand, would go through great pains with presents for him. She would be saving for his birthday present six months in advance. Christmas presents would be planned for in June. But he never would do that for her. His mind could not think that far in advance. Not even a card. He would hand her some money and tell her to go buy something. On one occasion she had suggested surprising her with flowers and candy. "Not worth it," he said.

"Your Honor, my husband does not buy me expensive gifts."

She could imagine the divorce hearing and the judge asking her, "Mrs. Blake, what is the basis for your divorce?"

"Your Honor, I am tired of having to occasionally check my husband's nice pulse."

"Is your husband ill, Mrs. Blake?"

"No. Just dull and boring."

Well, she felt justified about the whole thing. Some of the women's magazines that she read purported and affirmed that she was entitled to a life of her own. Not only are they entitled to a space of their own, they were entitled to vent it out, you know, bitch and complain.

She heard Mike's car pull up in the driveway. The door slammed. Familiar footsteps up the walk, then the jangle of keys in the lock. He would come into the kitchen because he knew the family would be congregated there. Today, she would tell him. Today, she would tell him that she was divorcing him and leaving him for a life of excitement.

In his usual routine, he came to her first. He slipped one arm around her waist and put the other soothingly on her shoulder. Then he nuzzled his face into her neck and seemed to inhale all of her into him.

"How are you honey? Have a nice day? Played tennis today with the girls?"

And she thought to herself why did he have to be so goddamn gentle and kind, so reassuring and secure.

Well, she would stay married to him for one more day and that's all. Tomorrow, definitely tomorrow, no doubt about it.

—— Freely T. Resuello

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## My Only One

The only thing I can do to make her happy,  
Is the hardest thing I've ever known--  
With tears in my eyes I say, "I just can't make it."  
But she just says, "Leave me alone"--

Four days,  
Five days if that long, before I call her on the telephone--  
I just can't seem to leave her alone,  
She use to be my only one--

She always seems to tell me what she wants me to know,  
But it never seems to be the truth--  
Some nights I beg her for one more chance,  
And other nights I know there's no use--  
'cause love is just a game that she likes to play,  
She says she does it for fun--

If your wondering why I know so much,  
She use to be my only one--

Her happiness is found in another's arms,  
and that's a hard one to accept--  
Times the only thing that can ease the pain.  
and it hasn't seemed to happen yet--

My love for her goes on and on,  
No matter what she's done--

My friends say I'm crazy;  
They don't understand,  
That she use to be my only one.

\*\*\* Tracey Switzer

### Sweet Melinda

It was a **joy** to watch her **performance**,  
for in her world **all** were her **audience**--  
With the movements complex in their subtleties,  
and meticulously **rehearsed**,  
For the appearance of pure spontaneity,  
and for the most part the **deception** would work--

So many were left there to **wonder**,  
As they depart with their brimming smiles--  
Of her naive ways and thinking,  
So **pristine** as to so **beguile**--  
With her beauty as yet **undaunted**,  
The performances will go on--

But when the youth has turned decrepit,  
Will she be **embittered** by what she has done ?

\*\*\* Tracey Switzer

## MR. DILLY-DALLY

I witnessed the first time that wretched being latched onto my son rendering him useless. Before the accident, the nine-year-old created many imaginative ways to fill his time. He loved fishing in the harbor bordering our back yard, organizing clubs and doing extra-credit projects for school, consuming adventure stories, and slaying video nemesis. He regained honorably over the neighborhood court, appointing his brother as steward, while accepting the neighborhood children as councilors and knights.

This was before the accident, before my son became enslaved by the ruthless and unrelenting Mr. Dilly-Dally. Perhaps nine-year olds specifically are not his prey. Perhaps he chooses first born males with erratic parents, I do not know; but I say it happened and remember it well. My son was at the edge of my fingertips, yet I was unable to snatch him from the blunderings of Dilly-Dally. It happened as if in slow motion. My child, my first born, had been consumed. The evidence was unmistakable: a blank stare, deafened ears; and aimless wandering, lethargic gestures all brain-dead type symptoms. I wanted to grab him and cradle him in my arms, but it was too late. The force had consumed its victim, spitting back the inedibles.

I found my salvation in P.A.D.D (Parents Against Dilly-Dally). Their motto, "We Shall Prevail", I have adopted as my own. At the monthly meetings we share the grim stories about Dilly-Dally's tactics and support each other through the worst of times.

Each day at 2:00, I begin the mental exercises P.A.D.D. taught me. If the children are grumpy and tired, be patient and understanding. If they have homework, provide gentle, yet firm guidance for establishing responsibility. If the weather is appropriate for outdoor play, be aware of locations, activities and suitable playmates. Most importantly, don't feel guilty. Dilly-dally must be understood as a disease, randomly crippling nine-year-olds around the world.

Armed with the confidence the P.A.D.D. had given me, I headed for the after-school rendezvous point. Both children had met at the designated location, indicating that the nine-year-old had succeeded at finishing his in-class assignments, or had wandered aimlessly out of the classroom without his teacher's knowledge. Being optimistic and relieved that Phase one had proceeded without mishap, I rewarded the children with a special stop at the mini-mart for an after-school treat, while simultaneously providing praise as positive reinforcement as P.A.D.D. had instructed. These brief moments of group cooperation give our family a true sense of unity balanced atop a narrow dowel on an amateur tight rope walker's nose, thirty feet above the ground, without a net.

After allowing for adequate after school snack/rest/procrastination time, I implemented Phase II—the gentle and firm homework plan. My kindergartner proceeded to remove a dittoed paper with directions to color the two out of three dogs in each row that were the same, leaving the different dog uncolored. In one row a dog wearing a big bow tie stood out blatantly beside the other two donning traditional leather collars. This seemed simple enough. He finished rather quickly and disappeared into the great out-of-doors to summon the other members of the king's court. As he moved into Phase three I realized that the nine-year-old had not yet begun Phase two. Trying to avoid hasty assumptions and remain within my resolve, I offered some (gentle) constructive suggestions. While he unloaded his well-

worn backpack, I proceeded with busying myself around the house. When I returned, a stack of text books, work books, folders and papers had appeared on top of the table. My son sat at the table, his eyes penetrating the wall opposite of him, his mouth slightly ajar. I knew he was fading quickly.

In a desperate attempt to ward off Dilly-Dally, I (lovingly) tried to bring him back to reality. “Do you have your assignment book?” Confusion. “Did you bring the right books home?” Panic. The nine-year-old excused himself from the table, ran outside, jumped on his bicycle, and raced toward his school. As he disappeared from view, I could see him glancing back over his shoulder as though he were desperately trying to escape from an invisible foe.

—Sue Grant



### OFF WITH THEIR HEADS! OR ONE MORE IDEA TO HELP DIVERSIFY THE ECONOMY

My grandmother use to tell me stories of Hanging Day at Oahu Prison. It took place on Sunday afternoons. People would bring their families and sit down on the lawns with a picnic basket to enjoy the festivities. She said the executed prisoner would be left hanging until his tongue turned black while the children played nearby and the adults chatted and visited with each other. Grandmother claimed this form of capital punishment was the best deterrent for would-be killers and an enjoyable way to spend a Sunday afternoon.

Now imagine how many people would turn out to see a beheading! Forget all the Friday-the-umpteenth or Freddie’s Nightmare Revenge movies—a beheading is chock full of horror thrills unsurpassed by any other means of violence. People seeking a real scare, wanting capital punishment in all its bloody glory would love it! They’d get a real show!

Hawaii could even advertise nationally. There could be special tours made up selling a real Hawaiian adventure! Japanese tourist are particularly open to new, interesting, and unusual attractions or exhibitions. I’ve read of special tours from Japan to China which climaxes on the last evening with a dinner featuring live monkey brains! Can you doubt that any group willing to shell out \$1,000.00 (dinner price) to eat a live monkey’s brain while the poor creature screams in agony and its eyes bug out in horror. Would this group fail to miss a beheading?

Lets not forget small businesses. Postcards, miniature models of the device used to behead, copies of the judge or jury’s decisions, or the prisoner’s confession, as well as, picture-taking before and after the act. All of the above could become lucrative forms of enterprise for the creative and innovative individuals.

I believe I’ll send a copy of my ideas to Governor John. I’ve heard he’s looking for ways to stimulate the economy. Imagine the possibilities.

—Lisa Teves



*"Reach For The Sky"*  
*Michael Hirakawa*

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NEVER AGAIN

Of all the places in the world that my husband, Joel, has visited while serving his country, Germany has remained to be his first love. We traveled there this past summer so I could experience the land of castles firsthand. From the Alps to the North Sea, Germany is a land of ancient towns, cozy villages, and industrious people. No visitor can fail to be charmed by its scenic beauty. Under its beauty, however, lies a country stained by the horror and bloodshed of the Holocaust.

I never fully realized during my five-year marriage to a Jew what being Jewish really meant until we visited the memorial on the site of the Nazi Concentration Camp in Dachau, West Germany. The memorial site beckons millions of people each year to witness the site of man's inhumanity to man. For my Jewish husband, it was like stepping into a cold, heartless mortuary.

It is hard to understand how such a beautiful country could have been home to ruthless people like the Nazis. Even harder to understand is how Germans who display so much affection for their country could say, "We didn't know it was happening." Many of my husband's German friends said they believed that most of the imprisoned were just

“undesirable elements,” just criminals, being isolated as enemies of the National-Socialist regime. We found that very hard to believe.

Even before stepping out of our car, we could feel the terror of the camp. No one smiled. No one even tried to talk. A ditch, an enmeshed barbed-wire obstacle, the surrounding wall, and a slogan, “Work Makes One Free,” welcomes you to Dachau as it did for over 200,000 people during the Holocaust. We learned that whenever a prisoner stepped on the narrow strip of grass, about thirty feet in front of the ditch, the SS guards in the guard towers shot and killed that prisoner without warning.

Deep foundation excavation line the main camp road. Above these excavations once stood many of the block barracks. Two barracks remain to demonstrate how they were divided into four stubens, a living room and dormitory unit. Two of these stubens had to share one washroom and a lavatory. One stube was to accommodate 52 prisoners or 208 prisoners per barrack. The camp became so overcrowded that up to 1600 prisoners had to live in one barrack building.

In front of the barracks stood the roll call square. Every morning and evening the prisoners had to parade on the square, and if a prisoner succeeded in escaping, all inmates were ordered to attend the subsequent punishment roll call, lasting a full night and half a day. While standing on the middle of the square, my husband claimed he could feel what it was like to stand there in sub-zero temperature in rags knowing that if you broke ranks you could be shot on the spot.

The museum contained the kitchen, the laundry room, storage for prisoners clothing and personal belongings, and the notorious shower baths where the SS would torture prisoners by flogging and hanging them at the stake. A high walled entrance to the museum displays the main concentration camps with their subsidiary camps in central Europe. It was overwhelming to learn that so many operated near cities, and yet Germans still claimed they knew nothing of their existence.

The main part of the exhibit begins with documents illustrating the seizure of power by the Nazis; the arrival and life in the concentration camp; and finally, the working conditions, punishments, and transfer of prisoners to other camps. Large, blown-up pictures depict the Nazis’ cruel experiments practiced on defenseless prisoners. Walking through the maze of these pictures and other documents was more than enough to make me cry.

The large crematory with its huge smokestack standing several stories high, however, was just too much for my husband to take. At that moment, I began to realize how much it hurt him to be there. Before leaving, we stood to look at the monument built in front of the museum. With wreaths at its base, its words “Never Again” cries out to be heard by everyone.

I have read many books and seen many movies about the Holocaust, but nothing can compare to experiencing a concentration camp firsthand. Through my husband’s eyes, I could feel the senseless loss of his people. He was only happy that members of his family survived to tell about it. I was only happy he was never there to experience it. It is not surprising that Jews are so close and family-oriented. They have lost so much that they take nothing for granted. They live life to the fullest, but within the laws of God. I may never learn the true feeling of being a Jew because it’s a total way of life, but visiting Germany and Dachau has helped me understand my Jewish husband’s view of life.

—Virginia M. Maimon

## THE MAGIC OF LIFE

Just reflecting on this day electrifies me,  
As it soothes the swelling rage of stress away.

Yet, it tingles my inner most being, with a feeling  
Far beyond what words can say,

Day by day I strive for success, and struggle violently  
within,  
To survive in this untamed world.

I hope in a conventional mean, to unscramble life's  
perplexing meaning.

I set goals, but discover, its beginning and its end,  
I go away feeling shorthanded of what life has to offer.

Then effortlessly, an incredible insight transcending all  
thoughts,  
Came to me one day.

The past is gone forever, just let it go and be here now.

The thought stayed with me till this day ever reminding me,

That today,  
I can start again to expand my perspectives,  
To grow beyond my wildest dreams,  
To convert a dream into reality,  
To actualize my potentials.

\*\*\* Debbie Tasato-Kodama

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## SHOELESS JOE

Joe Stroud was standing at the bar; he was quite drunk, which wasn't unusual, and without his shoes and socks on, which even in Joe's case was. Joe's lack of footwear might not have been as noticeable had he retained his brown socks. Or, if perhaps he hadn't been in uniform; or, in the heart of downtown Frankfurt, Germany; and even in the summer of 1953 it wasn't fashionable in military circles to have your toe nails painted bright red.

The fact that Joe was drunk was in no way amazing. We had both started the day not fully recovered from the bachelor party we attended the previous night for fellow Sergeant, Tony Delacruse. Now, considering that Joe had woke me that morning at what we sometimes

refer to as “Zero-dark-Thirty,” with a large beer in each hand and a reminder that we had to purchase a wedding present for Tony at the Frankfurt main PX, and reconnoiter the church and reception sites. I reluctantly arose, and joined him in consuming a quantity of beer that had it been gasoline would have taken us to France. Thus prepared, we proceeded to assault the day. Had I the least idea of what lay before us I would have stayed in bed.

The train from Gelenhausen, the small town where we were all stationed was our choice of transportation because primarily it was Joe’s contention that one was apt to meet such interesting people on the train. Especially in third class. I drove my 1949 Volkswagon to the station, parked it, and we consumed a few more drinks at the restaurant therein prior to boarding, several more on the train and at the Frankfurt station upon arrival.

Joe then decided to visit a few establishments he was acquainted with as a result of his previous assignment in the Frankfurt area in the Military Intelligence branch. Joe’s command of the German language was at least as good as any well educated native. His duties in the MI had included integration of line crossovers, agents both those working for us and others. His dismissal from the MI branch and subsequent reassignment back to the Field Artillery was, it was said, to be a result of Joe’s affinity for the two B’s—booze and broads.

So it came to pass that we slowly made our way, meter by meter, bar by bar, in the general direction of the Frankfurt main PX, reaching it at about noon. Joe, who you will note was making most if not all of the decisions had also decided that we must present the best possible appearance in order to impress Tony’s new in-laws, a family of some standing in Frankfurt.

“Just look at us!” Joe said, pointing to our slightly wrinkled starched khakis. “We look like we’ve slept in these uniforms.”

He was, of course, correct. At least I had attempted to, however, Joe kept waking me up to join him in quaffing another beer or moving to another tavern.

The result was our being fitted with a complete set of tropical worsteds or TW’s to include brass buttoned jackets and caps with a “rakish fifty mission crush.” The German PX employees efficiently served our Sergeant First Class stripes and division insignia on as well as, altering both trousers, jackets and shirts. Joe also decided that we should purchase new insignia. Instead of ordinary ribbons we would wear miniature medals, badges, etc. Yes! We were looking better and better and I was getting broker and broker, having at this point spent the better part of my monthly pay received only two days previously. As I pondered this, Joe approached with a wide grin and handed me a newly purchased set of branch insignia.

“Joe,” I said, “this is not Field Artillery brass, it’s chaplain brass.”

Joe smiled, holding up the small silver cross insignia and said “What could be more appropriate for a wedding than chaplains brass? It will not only give us the proper pious ambiance, but is the decorative accessory to support it.”

“It will also,” I remarked, “get our asses court-martialed if the MP’s catch us walking around wearing unauthorized officer brass.”

“No problem” says Joe, “We’ll have our regular brass and change after the reception.”

As we strode smartly through the portals of the PX in our new attire, hardly weaving, or giving other outward signs of our state of intoxication, and after a short stop accompanied by a quick drink or three, we plotted our staggered course to church.

We were less than two blocks from our destination when we happened upon a crowd

of locals gathered about what was clearly the scene of a very recent collision of two fully loaded cars. They were extracting limp and bleeding forms from the crumpled cars and an even large crowd was gathering. Joe was temporarily swallowed by the mass of this morbid curious crowd which was pressing closer to get a better view of the carnage when I spotted him. A large corpulent woman was holding his sleeve gesturing wildly and pointing to the victims. Joe was listening intently and nodding as I pushed my way up to them.

“What the hell does she want Joe?” I asked. “Does she think you’re a medic or a doctor or what?”

“Not quite, “ says Joe. “She saw the crosses on my lapels. She thinks I’m a priest and wants me to give them.” Joe said, pointing to the nearest casualty, “the last rites.”

Well, needless to say, he did in spite of my protests. I barely got him out of there before the arrival of the emergency personnel. Hell, I thought he just might start hearing confessions or some other damn fool thing. At least he hadn’t gotten his brand new uniform splattered with blood. And, he seemed pleased with himself and his, as he expressed it—humanitarian actions.

The wedding and the reception that followed were for the most part uneventful. We behaved well, drank at a moderate rate and didn’t spill or knock over too many things. Joe having attached himself to what seemed to me a very good-looking but older female wedding guest told me they were leaving and he would meet me later at a nearby tavern. I reminded him of the curfew and catching the last train back to Gelenhausen and he assured me we would make it with time to spare. I was therefore surprised to see him standing at the bar when I entered later that evening; sans shoes and socks.

Joe had the contented look on his face that told me he had accomplished his mission. He also seemed oblivious of the fact that he was bare-footed in the bar. He did however, acknowledge the fact that it might be a problem walking past all those MP’s at the train station in both Frankfurt and in Gelenhausen.

“Guess we best go look for them, “ he said.

It was of course, hopeless. Had we had a week to search we might have had some success. As it was we simply were going from bar to bar attempting to find Joe’s recent paramour and of course adding a few more drinks to quell our anxieties. As we were about to leave the tavern a shoe-shine boy entered, spotted the two GI’s and approached us. The lad never batted an eyelash when Joe placed his bare foot on the pedestal of the boy’s box. No doubt he was well acquainted with crazy Americans.

He applied a generous coating of brown dye polish, and even removed the red nail polish which to this day remains a mystery. Joe tipped the lad and with his highly polished feet we were off to the train station.

The question of how good this subterfuge would have been would also have to remain a mystery as we encountered no MP’s in either station that night. I will say this—no one seemed to be paying us the slightest attention. And a good thing too, as Joe was still wearing that god-damned chaplain brass.

—Frank X. Sammis

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"Gentle Falls"

by

Thrina Barrett and Stefanie Tanksley

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Oh vanity fair  
Oh what do you care  
Just as long  
As you  
Can see yourself.  
You're glancing around  
Hoping you've found  
The way  
To always look your best.

Oh vanity fair  
Remember your hair  
Don't leave it  
behind  
On the shelf.  
You'll never grow old  
Glittering gold  
So proud of your skin--  
Deep artfulness.

Oh vanity fair  
Would you please share  
The secret  
Of knowing  
Thyself?  
It seems plain to me  
You're all you see  
You must know yourself  
To the fullest.

\*\*\* Ben Forsland

## THANK YOU

Commuting from the city to the rural area of Oahu where I've made my home for the last seventeen years, I settled into a seat and took out a crossword puzzle. I had spent another fruitless day in what seemed like endless job interviews. It was three weeks from Christmas and I was still unemployed—an interim of eight weeks that seemed forever. Needless to say, I was not looking forward to spending another weekend at home preparing resumes for the next week of endless interviews instead of cheerfully awaiting Monday morning with the prospect of beginning a new job. With my financial resources dwindling, there was real reason for concern. Usually pleasant and very positive, that day I was unfortunately very out-of-sorts with myself—feeling negative and very ungrateful.

I had turned from the classifieds to the crossword puzzle rationalizing that intellectual exercise would hopefully relieve my depression. I was determined to shut out the gloom of my situation and try to relax on the hour-long ride home from the city. The big double-carriaged bus was still loading passengers at the depot when an elderly Oriental-looking man took the aisle seat next to me. He proceeded to question me about the stops the express bus would make; he told me that he seldomed traveled into Honolulu and never had he returned by the express commuter and he was unsure where he would get off. Truthfully, I was annoyed: I wanted very much to sit in the corner of my window seat and have the ride commence without any invasion to my bitter and depressing mood.

Raised to have respect for elders and living all my life with the 'golden rule' syndrome, I could no more be curt with this kindly-looking gentleman than I could tell my own dear mother to "hit the road!" I did respond to his pleasantness and he said he was glad to be sitting with someone 'friendly' as he had found it so difficult to come into the city on his business as he felt a stranger indeed in the cosmopolitan life-style and the confusion of the the traffic and fast pace. He explained that he was retired and usually spent his days fishing on the Waianae coast and teaching others to fish the same old way he learned as a boy in the country. It was then I learned that he was of Japanese ancestry and he was born in Hawaii. He went on to tell me about how he has seen the life-style of the peoples change, about the invasion of Pearl Harbor, and of how he taught in the public schools before his retirement.

I found this historical oration of great interest and soon was no longer involved in my self-pity and depressive mood. He asked me what kind of work I did. I told him I was presently an unemployed student, but had worked in the secretarial field for the last six to eight years. Prior to that, during my marriage, I had done a great deal of community work and held several volunteer positions. Now being divorced, explained that much had changed for me. I had to find work soon in order to survive. Perhaps this gentleman picked up some quality of bitterness and disappointment in my voice. He said, "Don't worry about what you will be doing in the future, the important thing is to be thankful for what you have today, now!" He said to remember to pray and give thanks. "Often people pray" he says, "asking to be continually provided for and to receive things. But you must say 'Thank you!'" And then he went on to tell me this delightful and encouraging story.

"Because I have been a fisherman for many years, I raised all my boys to be fishermen from the time they were small boys. Of course, they have all gone on to college and have their own businesses and one is a teacher now. But I always taught them to give thanks for

what they have and not pray only for what they want. Now my grandson who recently turned six comes to visit and says, 'Grandpa, Grandpa, I want you to teach me to fish, too. I want to go fishing with you.' So I took him along with me. The first time before we put our nets and lines into the water we sat quietly in my small boat and I said. 'Now my boy, we will give our thanks to God for allowing us to enjoy this beautiful day and for giving to us our health and the benefits of being here today. And we give thanks for the food which he is about to provide for us. Well sitting there in my boat with our heads bowed and hands together in humble prayer, other fishermen were about in their boats and my grandson soon became aware that others would be watching as we gave our thanks. His face reddened and he asked why he had to pray in public. 'Because we are never in private with God, child. He sees us and knows what is in our hearts wherever we are, so why not thank him here on his beautiful ocean for the food he is about to grant us?

"The next time I went to pick up my grandchild to take him along with me to fish from our boat, he sat in the back seat of the car and was so quiet I was prompted to ask him was he all right? Upon looking into the rear view mirror for a glimpse of him in the back, I saw him sitting with his little eyes tightly shut. 'Why are you sitting like that?' I asked. He replied without opening his eyes. "See, Grandpa, I am praying. It's all right if we pray in the car before we get onto the boat, isn't it?"

This story made me think how often we take our daily lives for granted, how when we pray we mostly pray for the things in life to enhance our lives without giving true thanks for all the things we already have. How often do any of us really include the words of thankfulness in our daily lives. Just 'thank you'.

The gentleman left the bus before me, but when I departed I felt uplifted—walking home I was truly thankful for the wisdom of that old man and that he took time out of his day to give me something to be thankful for.

Thank you.

—Audrey Bush

Compound Eye

I see the world as a compound eye.  
I see it as an inscrutable lie.  
I see it superficially at odds.  
I see its dispute with lesser gods.  
I see it risen from primordial muck.  
I see that much depends on luck.  
I see malice, folly, pride and scorn.  
I see those who wished they'd never been born.  
And I know mankind is weak and frail.  
I know, but see, we will prevail.

\*\*\* Frank X. Sammis

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