



Reflections—Scrooby Club's Literary Publication

March 2019
incorporated in NEWS

We hope you enjoy receiving Reflections each month, printed separately from Pilgrim Place NEWS so you may pull it out and save the creative writing of your friends and neighbors. -- The masthead photo by Ruth Hager shows St. Francis and the Birds, a gift to all of us by Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat. -- Why not 'get published' yourself! Send your prose, poetry, lyrics, humor, book review to me as an email attachment (no pdf please), not over 600 words, shorter preferred.

— John Denham, editor

Clichés from the Clueless by Terry Hager

Maybe I just woke up on the wrong side of the bed this morning, but I decided it's time to speak the truth to power. Too many folks are not playing with a full deck. Their attitude seems to be: if it ain't broke, don't fix it. They refuse to think outside the box. Don't they realize that this is where the rubber meets the road?

In a situation like this, you have to hit the ground running because otherwise you'll find yourself in a perfect storm. It's time to connect the dots; that's the only way to ever see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Now I'm not saying the only solution is to have boots on the ground and I'm not saying we have to reinvent the wheel, but, duh! Last time I checked, nobody wants to go down that slippery slope.

Every creature is sister and brother to us, made through the word of God spoken in love, made anew when the Word a creature became bearing creation's travail and pain. When we fill up the heavens with heat that destroys, and plunder earth's bounty and sicken the soil, those who suffer the most are the poor and the least, ever first to be harmed by short-sighted greed. — Bob Hurd

**THREATENED WITH RESURRECTION:
PRAYERS AND POEMS
FROM AN EXILED GUATEMALAN**

by Julia Esquivel

reviewed by Liz Moore

This book, a gift to the library by Jim Lamb, is written in Spanish and English on facing sides, which seems appropriate in that she is speaking of the suffering and ways of life in both Guatemala, including massacres in which the United States permitted and participated in on the opposite side, and the opposing life-styles of dominance and despair. The introduction is by Rosemary Radford Reuther.

This is a Prophet speaking. Her poetry comes from religious experience and conviction and speaks to a situation of oppression of the Indian peoples by the Christian invaders that continues and is very timely in this time of refugees and refused asylum.

Her poetry is beautiful, real and demanding to be heard in the name of all who suffer and all who would respond to God's call for change a new way of life of peace and equality.

It's in the Women's Perspective bookcase in the Pilgrim Place Library. Do read it!

LOVING by Jim Lamb

To Love someone is perhaps the greatest human experience.

Children, partner, friends, Creator.

Who especially?

No, that is not a helpful probe.

Love is ALL encompassing.

We become Lovers or we do not.

We connect with Love or we do not.

We just need to begin.

Stay open, stay alert.

The experience of Love is amazing, is it not?

It launches anywhere, any moment.

Gently or like a July 4th spectacular night outburst.

Love is so spectacular, perhaps so quiet and sudden.

A gift beyond measure.

And everywhere, anywhere.

Are fellow creatures waiting to be loved.

Disguises or inhibitions are profuse

But we can know – and become

One with the Greatest Human Experience.

Why else were we created!

Dear Eleanor,

*I want to share with you some of my thoughts upon reading your extraordinary book, **The Compromise**. You have a wonderful gift of character portrayal. In this book there were many characters interwoven, and you conveyed their depths both as individuals and as their characters were revealed in relationships with each other.*

It is quite a feat for so many characters to be so fully portrayed that I felt I really knew them. I think I mentioned earlier to you that when I felt my empathy siding with one of the major characters, the course of events would encourage my empathy to shift towards the other one. I was quieted with the realization that all were in need of grace, and they all seemed to give grace, even within the complexity of their interwoven lives.

There was comfort and truth in finding no "clean and clear" solution to the context and compromise in which they found themselves. You did not ignore or minimize their pain (I felt it!) that the compromise brought to their lives; even so love was found and joy was experienced.

The book felt solid, grounded, and true while revealing a story line unexpected in the mid to late 20th century and in Kansas! Because most of us live with some of our dreams realized and some not so, their story of compromise is our story too, even if not so extraordinary. Beautifully written!

Congratulations!

— Joyce Kirk Moore

If it is not hard, you are not dreaming big enough. — Betsy Bacon

MEDITATION

by DarEll T Weist

It is an awful thing to be captured by God. You understand that in a very vague way that task is to do God's will. Your will and God's will are all mixed up together. You are not in possession of any document that outlines the process or the marching orders. You have people to see it, but you must be careful because they might not have it right. You have to be crazy enough or bold enough or stupid enough to follow. But only in a very light way do you ever give voice and sound to these ideas. You have already had a Bishop who is convinced that since you are administrative you can not be spiritual. You refuse to take his words at any more than face value.

As I write these words I am sitting on Iona, "the Holy Island." Columba, as we now call him, came here in 563 for all the wrong reasons. Maybe he had participated in a number of battles promoting his family authority to rule Ireland and was in this place for penance. Maybe as a son of a royal family and a leader in the Church he was here to pledge allegiance to the kings and rulers of Scotland on behalf of his royal family. Maybe he was here to establish churches in Scotland. Maybe it was parts of all three. But what happened was that God's will was done and Iona became and remains a "Holy Island."

Columba founded a community that we would love to romanticize as a Celtic Church over against a Church based in Rome. But it was just a Christian Church following God through the insights of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures.

Did Columba know that he was doing God's will? I doubt it, because you follow what you know to do in the ordinary time. As you look back it becomes extraordinary. It even takes on the miraculous.

How did you do it? How did you manage it? Tell me what you did so I can do the same. Never, "Why did you do it?" Never, "Why were you so stupid to sign your name to all those property documents for affordable housing thousands of times?" Don't you

know that if something went wrong you could end up in jail?

The other principle is that you must do what you are called to do. Then, because it was not you that did it, you must leave it. Yes, your name is there on the plate but you are not to stay and sojourn. You need to move on. God has other things for you to do. You proved faithful in this one minor item. Then you need to move on to the next calling of God.

I am fascinated that this has happened so late in my life. Why? Was the first part of my life a preparation for this? Or did I not hear? Was I too afraid? Or too burdened down with my Midwestern conventions? I still struggle with the notion of where my will and God's meet. I think that the success that we have had is God's will. I still think that all the people along the way who have helped means that it is God's way. They too have been caught by God. They too have seen something in building affordable housing which is more than me. It was also more than just the ego of First United Methodist Church, Los Angeles. It was more than just taking advantage of good present opportunities. It was God's involvement that made 252 units of affordable housing happen in the center of Los Angeles.

Well, I will always wonder, "Why me, Oh Lord. The prairie boy in the city; the one who hates working with his hands making things the most?"



RIVER RAFTING ON THE KUNENE

A Cautionary Tale *by Lynne Juarez*

I was ready for a relaxing day on the river ... or, so I thought ... bathing suit, sun hat and sunglasses. Then, warning signs ... a helmet(?!), life jacket, lessons re what to do should our ten-person raft capsize. Wait ... this is supposed to be a leisurely float down the river. Maybe I should leave hearing aids in tent? I do. Seven of us elderly adventure seekers and three guides, all young, take our seats in the large van. Raft securely fastened to roof. We're off!

It's a beautiful, crystal clear day! Blue, blue sky, bucolic, slow moving river (so far), the Kunene. That river creates the boundary between Namibia and Angola. No signs of hippos or crocs. But neither am I looking for them! We drive upstream for about an hour. The large raft is taken off the roof of the van and positioned in the water. All watch with at least a little apprehension. Then, everyone seems relaxed and chatty. This is reassuring. Guides seat us. I am in the middle, on the left side with three others. Four on the right, guide in front and one in back. We learn to respond to calls, "Row left! Row right!, All row!" Pretty straightforward.

Off we go. Others are laughing and relaxed. Not me! Totally focused. Then, it happens ... "Hey, this is fun!" I begin to relax and find myself laughing out loud as we maneuver rapids under the almost expert guidance of the young men. Out of nowhere I see it coming ... in an instant, from the starboard side. A giant rogue wave flips the raft out of the water dumping all ten of us, flailing, into the Kunene River.

My first reaction is, "oooh, the water is so soft and cool." I fully expect to pop up to safety. I am wearing a life vest and, we've practiced, right?

That does not happen. I cannot find "up"! Squinting to protect contact lenses from drifting away, holding on to my precious sunglasses (really don't want to lose those!), black, broad-rimmed sunhat which I would happily remove if not for the fact that it is under my helmet...dark it was! I cannot find the light. ... have no idea where I am, no sense of "up". I am in trouble! I can feel a person! "Don't touch," I think. "Don't want to drag him / her down!" Soon enough, but after what feels like a very long time, I realize that I can no longer hold my breath. "Oh, I guess this is what it feels like to drown." Just as I am about to take a gulp of water it happens. Light! I move frantically for it. I am ... up! Gasping for breath but ... up! A Guide, standing on overturned raft holds out an oar. I grab it and find the edge of the raft, holding on for dear life. I am the last one up and ... I am alive!

My experience on the Kunene River offers up a powerful metaphor. Life often, especially in these times, feels like something more than an easy float down the river. Only now, it's not just the rapids that want to grab me and take me down. It's those crocs and hippos that keep popping up all over the place! Even with training and proper equipment (drills, life vests, helmets, Guides) bad things can happen. Also, I should learn to let go of non-essentials (sunglasses, contact lenses) and, to do that, I must learn what is necessary and what is not. Unnecessary attachments can work against my wellbeing!

All together now: "Row!" Don't drag anyone down! If I can just stay focused on the light. Now I see it. Now I don't. We're all looking for the light, all of us. Together, we just might find it. Then again.

