

inklings

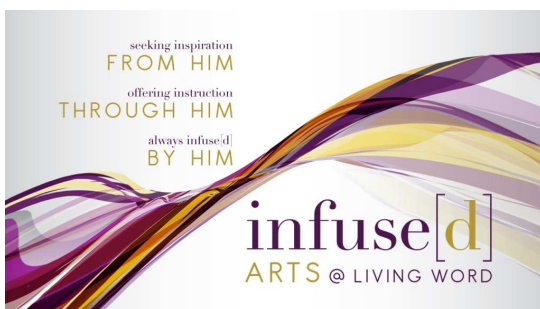


Celebrating the art of written expression
composed by people from the
Living Word family

WINTER EDITION
[January—March 2012]

INFUSE[D] ARTS @ LIVING WORD

Infuse[d] Arts is designed for artists, writers, poets, and creative souls who sense a longing in their heart to explore their God-given creative voice as a way to draw closer in relationship with Jesus.



www.lwcc-arts.blogspot.com

Questions? Contact deAnn Roe, *Creative Arts Director*,
at 755.0089 x126 or droe@lwccyork.com

***Inklings** is published four times a year: January ~ April ~ July ~ October.
To submit your written piece(s) for consideration, email deAnn Roe.*



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ABOUT INKLINGS

Inklings is Living Word's in-house publication featuring written expression composed by people from our church family. Anyone can write for **Inklings**. Are you a poet? Like writing short stories? Or are you someone who is introspective and enjoys writing spiritual reflections? The next issue of **Inklings** is the spring edition, April 2012. If you have work that you'd like to have considered for publication, please send it to deAnn at droe@lwccyork.com.

Deadline for the April issue is Monday, March 19, 2012.

You can also find this edition of **Inklings** and past issues online in the form of .PDF files, in full color! Go to:

www.lwccyork.com/creativearts

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If you have any questions, please call or email me!

Grace & peace,

deAnn

deAnn Roe

Creative Arts Director

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MY BEAUTIFUL CHRISTMAS TREE

I was dreading decorating the Christmas tree all by myself this year. Not because I was suffering from any personal crisis or tragedy, but just because this is the first year both Lynn and Eric are not home to help. (Another reminder that my family is moving into a new phase.) So I turned on my Pandora Contemporary Christian Holiday station and began. As has happened before, the Lord encouraged me to be open to the joy of this new experience. Seeking the perfect spot for each and every adornment I felt a different, no less rewarding, satisfaction of this year's process. Wow, what fun, what freedom! No poorly placed heavy ornaments on top, no fighting about who placed the star at the end of decorating. As I peacefully unwrapped each ornament and hung it my mind and heart were filled with memories and love. Just the Lord and me thinking about how wonderful my life has been, soft music in the background. He is gently saying to me, "See this time as not only a goodbye to wonderful old traditions but hello to new experiences that can be just as joyful!"

By Ann Malinak

OPEN MORE THAN YOUR EYES

Like a daughter mourns for a mother I sing to my father,
wishes of a past that never came to a beginner.
I've seen places without leaving that even a missionary would ignore,
but I conquer a mission that I pour out my heart for.
These storms come clear; we hear your whispering eye,
this evil's taking souls and my loving spirit cries.
It's a gentle time for my life believe it or not,
I tell of a story; you'll only relate to one book.
Steady comes your dreams that soon take hold,
I intensified life by reaching mine told.
The sun's only setting on people like me,
but involves many stars that sing inside me!

By Birranda Kay King

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and



REAL LOVE

Real love in any relationship takes time. It is oh so much easier when the person is open to receiving it, as well as wonderful when he or she reciprocates in a similar way. But what about relationships that have been hard? Or what about the person who seems to get under your skin? God calls us to love each other, even our enemies. When I internalize the scripture that speaks of this, if I sense that there is something not right in a relationship that I have, I must look at my part in the relationship. After all, I am the only one I can change. I begin by asking God what He wants me to do. Then I look at any place I need to surrender to Him in the situation. Many times I find out much has to do with something that is going on within me, some form of pride, anger, or jealousy. More often than not I sense God asking me to have grace and compassion for the person and that drastically changes the way I respond.

We are broken people who are in need of someone to show us the Savior's grace-filled love. As you read the lyrics of *Loving a Person* by Sarah Groves think of one good relationship and one hard relationship in your life. Consider writing out a prayer to God concerning the dynamics of both, reflecting on what these words may stir in your heart.

*Loving a person just the way they are, it's no small thing
It takes some time to see things through
Sometimes things change, sometimes we're waiting
We need grace either way*

*Hold on to me
I'll hold on to you
Let's find out the beauty of seeing things through*

REAL LOVE

*There's a lot of pain in reaching out and trying
It's a vulnerable place to be
Love and pride can't occupy the same spaces baby
Only one makes you free*

*Hold on to me
I'll hold on to you
Let's find out the beauty of seeing things through*

*If we go looking for offense
We're going to find it
If we go looking for real love
We're going to find it*

When you think of a relationship in your life, what makes it good and what has kept it a lasting relationship?

I pray that in your relationships with others you recognize where God is inviting you to love others as He loves them. I pray that you embrace each and every relationship in your life. I pray that you would sense the invitation to surrender to the hard work and experience the beauty of seeing things through.

*As I write these words it is with full confidence that God calls us to love each other with truth. I would in no way want to give the thought that people should stay the way they are, as that would be contrary to scripture. What I am asking is where do you begin to love others? Love them where they are now. If you are waiting for change it may never happen. Watch for opportunities to speak truth in love, do your part to love them as God loves them, and you may be quite surprised at what takes place. :)

THE MEASURE OF AN EAGLE

(A Tribute to BSA Eagle Scouts)

With a piercing eye toward a distant destination,
The young scout pursues a focused intent.
The measure of an Eagle is taken
by years and by merit,
by ordeal and by mission.

His continuous commitment requires strength -
such that he did not recognize in himself;
but as the increasing ascent brings him closer to the mark,
the scout soon realizes that his strength is in his heart.

Because his goals, his hopes, and his dreams require
much thinking and planning, doing and seeking,
the scout finds his wingspan is broader and stronger
when he opens himself to the goal of the Eagle.

He now gathers with a few who, like him, started under the wing,
and soars the sky with a contingent whose dream
was the goal of the Eagle, who did what it took,
to fly higher than others and wear the badge of a few.
These who said "yes" to the goal and now grasp in their talons
the honor of the Eagle and flight of the proud.

By Janet Velez

DANCING FOR DADDY

You would have thought we were attending a Michael W. Smith concert, the way parents staked out their front-row seats an hour before the show began. Buzzing with the noise of conversing friends and families, our elementary school's multi-purpose room played host to the evening's annual spring concert.

While I sat scanning my program, chatting with my mother and daughter, I noticed a man in the row ahead of us adjusting his digital camera to perfection. If anyone had a picture, this man was ready! Finally the concert began and, after listening to the older children sing, we reached the more animated (and entertaining) part of the program.

As the first-graders filed in, some marched right to their place on the risers, while others more timidly found their spot. However, they all sang with great confidence as their part of the concert opened up with a lively rendition of a children's song, complete with hand and body motions. These kids were into it. But, one little girl especially, was REALLY into it!

Not easily hidden because of her prominent place in the front row, this little girl stole the show. Dressed in a pink flowing chiffon dress, she was nothing short of a ham. And, ham it up she did! From the time she took her place on stage, this small performer worked to charm her audience. Her hand gestures, grins, and curtsies set many an adult giggling, which only added fuel to an already stoked fire.

Assuming that the audience's reaction had spurred this child on, I noticed she immediately stepped up the intensity of her act. Now, while the other children only sang, she sang AND danced, from side-to-side. Her candor and boldness were amazing. Obviously, it didn't bother her a bit that everyone was focused on her.

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DANCING FOR DADDY

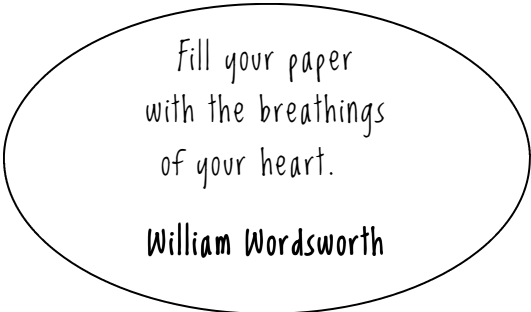
Then, I saw the man in front of me grin real big and it suddenly hit me. This man was the little ham's father. Studying her again, I saw that her gaze was fixed completely and totally on him. Of course! She had every reason to ham it up. Daddy was watching. Now it all made sense.

This little girl had no need to be ashamed or embarrassed because she had the attention of the only one in the room who mattered to her. Her father! How wonderful this innocence of childhood, able to block out irrelevant factors and tune in to the most important - her daddy.

How precious it is to be watched by our true Father, knowing that we have His full attention. I imagine Him waving to me from the audience as I stand on the risers of life. Am I watching Him, too? Will I boldly wave back, or shrug and look away?

He knows I want to do my best for Him. I hope that, like a little child, I would say to those around me, "Hey! That's MY Father and He's the greatest! Would you like to meet Him?"

By Kelly Hayes



Fill your paper
with the breathings
of your heart.

William Wordsworth

REFLECTIONS ON TURNING 60

A child of God
A personal relationship with Christ
Finally knowing my purpose in life
Being shown my mission field
Grateful for His blessings
So undeserving

Experiencing His unconditional love
Surrounded by His grace
Learning to be still and know He is God
Trusting the plans He has for me
I can hardly wait for tomorrow
Jeremiah 29:11

Short-term missions
How God changed my heart
How my life has been transformed by His hand
Being touched by those living so far away – on the other side of the Atlantic
Yes, Lord – use me as your servant

Appreciating my Mom and Dad
Godly Christian parents
More unconditional love
Always having my best interests at heart
Dad - my first leadership mentor
Mom – my best friend
Thank you, Lord Jesus – they're dancing with you now
I tearfully miss them though
Romans 8:31

REFLECTION ON TURNING 60

My son, Rob

A gift from God

Such a joy and precious treasure in my life

Keeping me focused on Christ

“How can Granny be going in the wrong direction when she’s going to be with Jesus?”

He asks as she lay dying

Psalm 127:3

My husband, Chris

God’s hand everywhere in our relationship

A Godly man

More than I could have ever asked for

Never knew a man like this existed

A man of grace, love and joy

More unconditional love

As for my and my house, we will serve the Lord

Joshua 24:15

My “sister” and good friend, Sharon

Now with Jesus

Way too young to leave us

I miss her so

We were so very close

Living life “out loud” together

2 Timothy 4:7-8

Love my career

Nursing’s in my blood

Working in hospitals since I was 14

REFLECTIONS ON TURNING 60

God showed me my passion, my vocation
My mission field
Never “worked” a day in my life

Unbelievable life
Unbelievable love
Unbelievable joy
Unbelievable grace
All because of a very believable, real, and loving God

Valerie S. Sprenkle
June 2011

CartoonChurch.com



I AM FINDING IT DIFFICULT
TO CONCENTRATE BUT I
AM NOT SURE WHY

Distracted? Need a Writers' Retreat?
You are in luck—see page 34.

LOST IN HIS GOODNESS

Peace, perfect peace, like the quiet waters roll
Over my body and over my soul

'Til I am at rest in the Savior alone
Lost in the goodness of Him whom I love.

I have no anxiety of what lies ahead
No fear for my future, no semblance of dread
For I am a child of the King of all Kings
So I will rejoice and evermore shall sing!

When all of my comforts no longer abound
Still resting in Jesus my joy yet is found.
When all else is taken, and I'm all alone
I'll flee to the mercy seat, there by God's throne.

No terror shall taunt me, no dread shall exist,
For I am God's
child and my future is this:
That one day in Heaven surrounding His throne
I shall join the masses whom Christ calls His own.

Then I'll be at rest with the Savior above
Lost in the goodness of Him whom I love

By Jane Collier Daugherty
March 5, 2011

MEETING MY FAMILY IN COLLEGE

For an 18 year-old boy, autumn symbolizes school. More specifically, the beginning of school. So, when September first hit on my eighteenth year, the fact that school wasn't starting felt absolutely strange.

Many of my classmates from the previous year had already started their college experience. Most of my fellow knife sellers were back in school as well. But as for me? I was back to the daily grind as a knife salesman extraordinaire. This wasn't because I didn't have college plans, mind you. But my classes didn't begin until part-way into October. So, I had over a month to sell knives and generally enjoy life.

Surprisingly, that September didn't win the Best Fall Ever award for me. It was mostly just working and getting used to independent life. That's not to say it wasn't eventful. This was September of 2001, mind you, but it was October that really ignited my fire.

I moved out of my parents' house and into an apartment with a guy I spent a grand total of an hour with. My mom took me to Wal Mart and we got all that I needed for my apartment. Soon, I would be starting Design School. This was perhaps the most exciting thing to me. One step closer to a career in video game design.

Then it came. October 8, 2001. This was my first day of college. A lot happened, but all I can remember was my drawing class. Our teacher went by his first name, Joel. He looked like a skinny Viking. He had a big honking mustache with long hair. But it was the kid sitting next to me that caught my attention.

Continued...

MEETING MY FAMILY IN COLLEGE

He had a short haircut and bright blue eyes. He was wearing a Troy Aikmen Cowboys' jersey. I introduced myself and he seemed very nice. He told me his name: Justin. I found out that we had the same major, Multimedia Design. Most of our classmates were majoring in Graphic Design. I figured that Justin and I could end up being good long-term friends.

That was until the weird kid interrupted. He started talking to Justin and seemed to supercede my friendship with him almost instantly. This weird kid was weird. Tattoos. Funky spiky hair. Verbally obnoxious. And he didn't seem to be able to decide which subculture he was a part of. Was it hip-hop, ska, or hardcore? He obviously couldn't make up his mind.

We had a few more classes that day, but nothing else caught my attention. I wasn't sure where this weird kid was going to stand in the great scheme of my friendships (or enemies).

Day two of school we had our first Computer class. The instructor was kind of a prototypical blond—very cheery and social. She became very curious about what I was hiding underneath my wool hat, as there was visible mass underneath it. She asked. I pulled the hat off. My 2-foot-long dreadlocks spread out like a wild tribal party.

At that moment, the weird kid sat straight up and exclaimed, "It's like a white Busta-Rhymes!" For whatever reason, from this point on, he and I became good friends.

Continued...

MEETING MY FAMILY IN COLLEGE

It wasn't long before he introduced me to his close circle of friends. First was his girlfriend, who was entirely red. Her skin was white, but her hair, clothes, and makeup were fire-engine red. Then I met a tall and quiet Puerto Rican fellow who seemed to be an outstanding illustrator. He was pretty modest in his dress, but very proud to be Puerto Rican. Then there was red girl's sister who was also very unique. What she didn't have in extreme appearance, she made up for in extreme personality: abundantly friendly, abundantly intrigued, and extremely extroverted.

Little did I know that these four individuals would become my closest life-long friends, along with my church family (a statement that in and of itself seemed quite foreign at that time). The following couple of weeks seemed to slow down time for me. My time with them made me the happiest I had ever been up until that time.

By M. Joshua Cauller

GRACE COMES WITH LONG EARS

I have a partner in this pilgrimage for the understanding of Grace. Each Tuesday and Thursday we meet and walk, rain or shine, cold or hot. Sometimes my partner is a little reluctant, other times he is waiting for me when I arrive and anxious to go. It's kind of funny how often our moods match in that regard. Sam, Sammy, or Samule – he answers just as well or as poorly to all of his names. Samule, a 1200 pound mule was rescued from slaughter after a long work career in the fields of Lancaster. When we met, he was underweight, needed significant dental work and could not eat, had a skin disease and hoof problems. He was dirty, had confidence issues, stank, and was shaven clean of his mane and back and tail hairs. He was discarded from his work and offered for sale to a protein-processing plant. He had outlived his usefulness and was sold to be killed.

I met him on one Saturday in November. I was just a few weeks away from having put a mule down that had gotten sick and was not interested in adopting another mule when we first laid eyes on one another. My thoughts were to pay for correction of his physical conditions and ailments, thinking that with those expenses gone, someone would find him more adoptable in this economic down turn. My farrier was called and his hooves were corrected. Two weeks later, the dentist fixed his teeth and he started eating. Daily grooming helped with his skin issues and dietary supplements were added to his food to put weight back on him. The vet came and examined him and gave him his vaccinations and his Coggins. The weeks continued and I went shopping for a halter and blanket as the temperatures continued to drop. The New Year was approaching and I was soon to leave for my second missions trip to Ethiopia. I was worried about the mule and made the decision to adopt and moved him to his new home two days before I flew out on the trip. Through all of those weeks, a bond of

Continued...

GRACE COMES WITH LONG EARS

trust was developing between us. He followed me on lead wherever I would walk. I read a book called the “The Moonshine Mule” about a 1,500-mile walk a guy made from Mexico to New York with a mule, in 2001. A thought of Samule and I walking and tent camping was planted in my mind.

Since my return we have spent hours and hours a week together, walking, talking, grooming, or just hanging together. So many metaphors come to mind as I ponder his traits and demeanor. But mostly Grace comes to mind. Mules are widely misunderstood and much maligned in equine culture as well as in popular culture. Often they are said to be stubborn, but really it is a strong sense of self preservation that is being witnessed. They actually will go out of their way to please, truly wanting to do all they can for you. They respond with a quiet eagerness. They are not proud animals, like say a track thoroughbred, but instead are meek, mild-mannered, well-behaved, and ever-pleasing.

When I think of his condition and plight when I first laid eyes on him, I have to consider that I am much like he was: broken in body and spirit, a castaway in the great scheme of things, ill-tempered and misunderstood. Not a healthy self image. Not unlike the ministering to his needs and condition that I provided to Samule, the Holy Spirit comes to me and restores me to the image of a child of God. The Spirit nourishes me, tends to my needs, and restores my health and my confidence. Through the Grace of God, this broken, sinful, self-absorbed person can set aside selfish gain, recognizing that all comes through and from our God. All belongs to the Creator, all Glory and all Praise and all Credit. I have nothing and am nothing before the throne of the Lord, yet His Spirit and His Grace reach down to lift me up out of the messiness of life and restore me to His Most Splendid purpose of

GRACE COMES WITH LONG EARS

extending his Grace and Love to all. As I have walked, I have grown so much, but there is much less of me now. Sammy and I walk together, receivers of Grace, restored toward the image our Creator meant for us.

By Mike Johnson

TELL HIS STORY

I had assumed the relaxation position. I had an ice cold Mountain Dew sitting on the coffee table next to me and I was reclining on the sofa with the remote control in my hand. As I began flipping through the channels, I realized quickly that my laziness was missing just one thing, something to watch on TV. Finally, I decided to watch Happy Feet. I've always thought it was one of those movies that I could take or leave. Not particularly a movie I would just put in and watch, but still a movie that I can at least sit through. I turned to it right around the scene where the main character Mumbo is making his trek to the coast to figure out what has happened to the fish. He quickly discovers that the humans are responsible for disrupting the food chain and have taken away all the fish. Having vowed to save his fellow penguins from starvation, he makes the ultimate sacrifice, he dives off a cliff and follows the fishing boat to stop them from taking the fish.

Now right around this point is where I started to notice my throat begin to clench and moisture begin to appear near my eyes... yes I was beginning to tear up. I started thinking about it and how he didn't know if he would return or if any of his efforts would have any impact, but he knew that he had to do something, anything. He told the other

TELL HIS STORY

penguins to tell his family goodbye and that he had done all that he could. Then he really did all that he could and followed the boat until he washed up on shore completely exhausted and near death. Love-lace, one of the other penguins, shouts in a loud booming voice after him, that he would be telling his story long after Mumbo is dead and gone.

The moral of the story is the sacrifice that Mumbo shows through his actions. He chooses to sacrifice himself so that the colony of penguins can survive, despite the fact that they rejected him for being different. Now, sure, this a kids' movie, and please don't take this as an assault to your intelligence, I just feel that we could learn a lot from it. This is the same kind of sacrifice that Jesus showed us. He gave up His life so that we may have life abundantly. He chose to give us His life despite our first condemning Him. Whenever I see that kind of sacrifice, something deep within me wells up inside and pushes me toward a desire for greater surrender.

Continued...

pages

Writing Workshops

Pages meets every Wednesday *every other month*: October, December, February, April, June, etc... from 6:30-8:00 PM in the large conference room.

For the topic of each month, go to:
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Contact deAnn Roe with questions:
droe@lwccyork.com or 755.0089 x126.



TELL HIS STORY

The title of my blog is "Longing for Passionate Surrender." The Passionate Surrender that I'm talking about is the kind of surrender where you are so devoted to God that every part of your being shouts His praises. It is the kind of surrender that denies self and seeks to lift up others. It is the kind of surrender that seeks to change the world—the kind of passion that is always seeking to bring glory to God. Whether it be by bringing a meal to the homeless, doing your job with integrity, or speaking an encouraging word to someone. It is about living every moment in step with the spirit of God, conforming to His will. It is the surrender of every part of yourself to God's purposes.

Our call to surrender is one and the same as Lovelace's call in the story. God sacrificed for us and gave us the opportunity to share in the work that He is active in doing. He calls us to boldly proclaim the story of Christ—to show others how Jesus has impacted our lives. Paradoxically, we are to surrender ourselves so that we can have abundant life. Proclaim boldly the message of Jesus. Do it through your actions, your words, and by who you are as a person. May our message continue to repeat that Jesus IS Lord and may we never be too proud to accept the insights of a kids' movie.

By Ryan Johnson

AUTUMN MELANCHOLY

Autumn, a much-loved and favorite season for so many, stirs mixed emotions inside of me every year and even more so since my sweetheart no longer shares my life. Even though I am surrounded by so much beauty, I have to be intentional to search for the joys of the season. There is so much to be appreciated, especially being so blessed to live in the beautiful rolling hills of rural, southeastern Pennsylvania. With a prominent population of deciduous trees, I am treated to a feast of colorful progression that includes all the warm colors of the rainbow.

Thoughts of autumn engage my senses as I think about my favorite apple festival that takes place on the first Saturday in October, each year in Darlington, Maryland. Vendors line the small town's streets with canopies, tents, and farm wagons bulging with baskets of apples of every color and variety and heavy-laden tables filled with pies and dumplings. The air is filled with the intoxicating fragrance of cinnamon and caramel sauce. Everywhere you look is an explosion of color with lavender asters and mums of white, yellow, purple, rusty orange, and my personal favorite, burgundy, providing a sea of color for the throng of festival goers to wade through as they pick out the perfect ones to take home. Many playful scarecrows are created that day as families have fun stuffing plaid flannels shirts and old worn-out blue jeans to make whimsical characters to decorate their front porches along with their pumpkins, hay bales, and colorful Indian corn.

The fall season beckons campers to the outdoors to enjoy the last of the favorable weather. They are wooed by the joys of crackling campfires, cooking outside, and hikes on rugged trails, strewn with noisy, crispy leaves. I can almost smell the bacon and camp-stove coffee when I close my eyes.

Continued...

AUTUMN MELANCHOLY

Now is the season when we will see deer more frequently, since the monstrous combines have recently harvested the cornfields, exposing their secret hiding places. Of course, this also means we will notice camo-clad hunters as they enter and exit wooded areas at dusk and dawn in pursuit of meat for their tables.

Autumn conjures thoughts of honking, south bound, flocks of geese in v-formation under a perfect deep blue canopy with billowy, cotton-like white clouds. I think of long lines of yellow school buses, football games, homecoming dances, and chilly days that encourage me to dig out my favorite, warm, comfy sweaters and cozy blankets and throws. In my imagination I can smell the fragrance of crayons, earthy leaves, wood smoke, and simmering pots of soup.

Often, my favorite part of an autumn day is a gorgeous sunset when the Creator of all things bright and beautiful does His most amazing artistry, painting the sky with passion and indescribable beauty in shades of breathtaking pink, coral, and purple. It is my desire to be diligent in savoring all that this season has to offer, in order to overcome the melancholy that wants to rob me of the joy and beauty of this most colorful season.

The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders; where morning dawns, where evening fades, you call forth songs of joy. Psalm 65:8

I can only accomplish that commitment by depending on the daily strength that the Lord provides for me...Grace for Today.

By Renee Barnhouse

BEING

It hurts when you Love and don't receive likewise.

It's even harder to live a life of Love without accepting yourself.

Money is necessary to live in this world today.

But, I am not in this world because of it.

Friends are great to have by your side.

Except for the fact you don't always know which side they're on.

Eyes are opened in hopes of seeing beauty.

Even the blind knows when a world's worth saving.

Tears help in healing yourself.

They never make you weak.

Even the silent reach out to speak.

Promises lack meaning if your fingers are always crossed.

However, Jesus is Faith because lies die on the cross.

I hold truth to these words because they are honest for me.

As I say I'm not perfect, but damned to be special this way.

I curse a verse of light that many wish to see.

And leave regrets far behind to live my heart free.

"Just do it already!"

By Birranda Kay King

COME HOME

Come home to my arms,
my love,
the place you were created for.
come home to my love,
my love,
and rest your soul tonight.

You were not meant to carry those burdens,
that load belongs to me.
You were not meant to walk alone,
my love,
come rest your soul in me.

Come home to my arms,
my love,
and rest your anxious thoughts,
come home to my love,
my love,
and rest your soul tonight.

By Emily Stump

THE SACRED THREE

Ah, yes, St. Paddy's Day will be here soon...parades, green beer, leprechauns, wearin' o' the green, and for one festive day, everyone's at least a wee bit Irish. But this stereotype trivializes a people whom I admire greatly.

I've actually been there, and The Emerald Isle is well named. I'll never forget my first sight of the Irish countryside as our plane (loaded with our group of 40 travel team soccer players and parents) flew out of the dark of night and into the dawn. My heart aches, just a little and pleasantly, to return some day.

The Irish are a people who have suffered much in their history, and if it were not for their indomitable spirit and unshakable faith, the Celts would have disappeared as other ancient civilizations did. That will never happen. Every hedgerow and bird, every flowing stream leaping with fish, every buzzing bee circling a lady's slipper, all speak of God's handiwork.

How many who don't shamrocks for the day really know their significance? The triple leaves signify the Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They all watch over Ireland.

I'd like to share a lovely invocation by John O'Donahue.

The Sacred Three

My fortress be

Encircling me

Come and be round

My hearth and my home.

PLAY BY HEART

When I was a little girl, my hippie mom dabbled on the guitar and I loved to hear her strum "Country Roads, Take Me Home" or "Leaving On A Jet Plane" - both hits by John Denver. If I should by chance hear either of those songs today, I'm immediately ushered back to the mid 1970's, wearing the tie-dyed T-shirt "dress" my aunt Jill made me. Music is awesome that way. I admired my mom so much that I wanted to play the guitar. And I did. I learned how to play "Grandma's Feather Bed" by John Denver...remember that one?

A little later in life (as a junior high kid), I wanted to play in the school band. We didn't have money to purchase an instrument, so my mom checked with the band director and they had an old tenor saxophone laying around and offered it to me. That thing was bigger than I was. But I learned to play and I fell in love with it. It was a good instrument for me, I had (well, still have) a horrifying singing voice - with the sax, I didn't have to sing! *The world rejoiced!*

I entered high school and with that came marching band. I was so uncoordinated - trying to play AND count my steps at the same time! (Another confession: most of the time I pretended to play while marching because I would rather stay in formation!) Then we moved to a new school and they didn't have a saxophone for me. That was the end of my instrumental journey.

About nine years ago, a friend of mine was selling his alto saxophone for a drop-dead price. I had to have it! I brought it home and waited for a day when the house was empty. I was surprised at how hard it was to make a sound, other than sounding like the squeal of a duck in distress. I figured playing an instrument was like riding a bike—just hop on and you are rolling again. Yeah, that wasn't the case.

Continued...

PLAY BY HEART

I purchased a "Playing the Sax for Dummies" book and some of it came back, slow ly. Then I picked up a song book with tunes I know from church. One was really simple, only a few notes (chords? I don't know the lingo) - it is "I Love You Lord." I practiced and practiced that one song and got to the place where I could play it from memory.

One day, after my family left the house to run errands, I pulled out my alto sax and played "I Love You Lord" over and over...as I closed my eyes and gently blew air over the reed, pressing the right pads with my fingers - that song came *from my heart* as a sweet, sweet prayer to my Father - and it was the most amazing worship experience I've ever had. I felt God smile at me as I sang to Him through the tones of my instrument. His presence was intimately profound. Tears streamed down my cheeks as I continued to play "I Love You Lord" until I couldn't play any longer because I broke down and sobbed right there in His presence. *Play by heart*. Now, I understood what that means...

Can I play the saxophone? No, not really. Gordon or Chris won't be asking me to join the worship team, that's for sure. But can I play for fun, or to connect with Jesus? Absolutely. Of all the times I've ever played, even in school when I was good at it, meeting with Him through a few well-placed notes that I *play by heart* - that has the most meaning. To me, anyhow. And I believe it means a lot to Him as well.

Creativity is a wide path: musical, artistic, writing, culinary, dance, etc. Be mindful of your Creator as you exercise your creativity and may you experience His presence deeply.

By deAnn Roe

MIRROR

In my home I have a lovely full length mirror. This week it was not in its normal place because it was being used for an event at our church.

As it was moved from the room I actually thought, “Great, that will leave some extra space in here.” What I found out is that I use the mirror a great deal more than I thought and, even more importantly, I discovered how dependent I am on that mirror. After about two days without the mirror the Holy Spirit brought to mind many thoughts about looking at myself in the mirror.

How do I reflect Christ? What if I was as dependent on the mirror for taking a look at my spiritual life as I was for cosmetic things? Even though I can’t “see” my soul, what if I envisioned God on the other side of the mirror, looking out? What would He say? As I am gifted to love others how can I use this experience in my life to love them more?

Years ago you couldn’t have told me that this simple instance in my life would be where I saw God in the ordinary act of removing a mirror from its customary location. I have used mirrors all of my life to look at things cosmetically, but as God would have it, this simple act of removal has taken me to a deeper need of awareness in my life.

What in your life helps you look at yourself, that is, your character?

As you end each day what would it be like to look in the mirror and ask Jesus to bring to mind how you reflected Him?

By Celesa Hagan

HE IS!

He's the Lily of the Valley, He's the bright and morning star
He's the maker of the universe and more wonderful by far
Than all that we could comprehend, yea, ever understand
He is the sinner's loving friend, the rock on which I stand.

And this I know ..when all is done, when I go home to meet the One
Who died for me upon the tree, the cruel Cross of Calvary
That I will meet Him face-to-face, Ah! Can it be??!! Amazing Grace!
Then I by grace will journey home, to be with Him, no more to roam.

Ah friend, won't you come go with me... and journey to eternity?
Beyond the starry firmament, and be with Him from Heaven sent.

Come worship Him who died for thee, upon the Cross of Calvary
King Jesus, let us in Him adore, when we arrive on Heaven's shore
For HE is worthy of our praise, both now and for eternal days
Our rock and shield HE IS!

By Jane Collier Daugherty
Sept. 17, 2009

PLAYING BALL AT THE CHICKEN FARM

The stink of the chicken farm burns
My skin, my eyes, my nostrils.
The flies gnaw; for a break I yearn,
Yet the aroma 'round me fills

The air that wraps me and
Makes my clammy palms sweat;
Not to mention the bat in hand,
And the lurking baseball threat.

In the bottom of the ninth inning,
I've yet to smack one deep.
While the ball truly isn't spinning,
I hear it whistle as it creeps.

It is a must that I concentrate
As the ball is coming closer,
To my bat, to home plate.
Ever closer, it's coming, ever closer.

And so with fervor do I swing.
With a firm thrust I follow through.
The ball connects with a shallow ping,
And the ball arcs, soars; it's true!

But the chicken stink interferes.
The direction of the ball shifts.
Into my Grandmother's nose it steers.
And yet she laughs, the corners of her mouth lift.

PLAYING BALL AT THE CHICKEN FARM

In the stink, blood spurts from her nose,
And laughter explodes from her lips.
We celebrate my hit; draw the game to a close.
The smell resonates; the flies nip.

By Josh Holmes

NURTURE THE WRITER IN YOU



Writers' Retreat

+ escape the distractions +

Saturday, Jan 14, 2012

8:00 AM—12:00 PM in the Coffee Bar

Coffee, tea, and OJ will be provided.

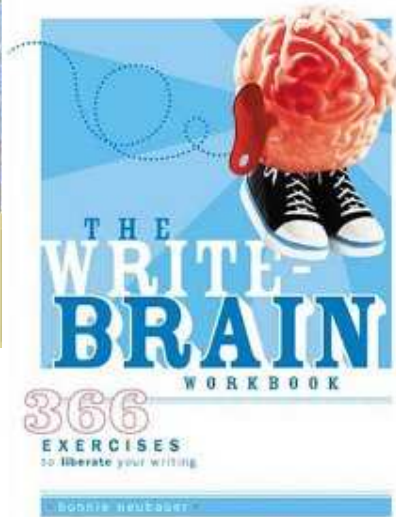
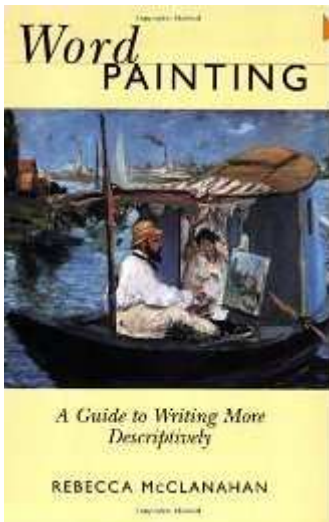
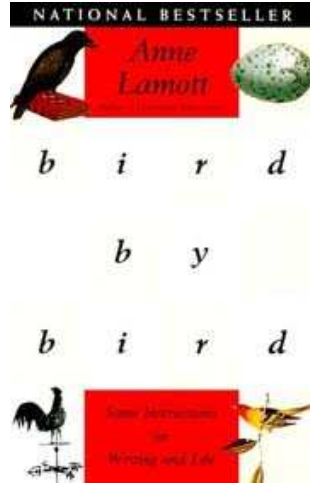
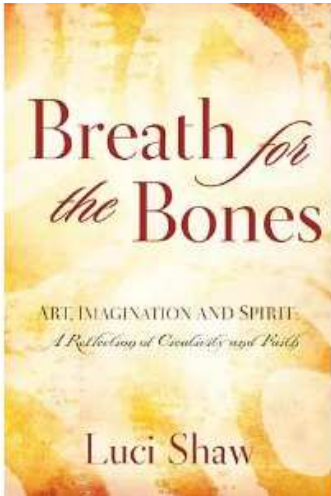
Please bring something yummy to share with others.

Bring your writing project(s) or simply
come prepared to write with prompts given that morning.

Laptops or writing notebooks are welcome.

Please RSVP: droe@lwccyork.com or 717.755.0089 x126

SOME OTHER TID-BITS



To me, the greatest pleasure of writing is not what it's about, but the inner music the words make. ~ Truman Capote

THE WRITERS' CORNER

BRING BACK THE INTERROBANG?

In looking back over past Writer's Corner columns, as I often do, I noticed that the last time punctuation was addressed was the summer of 2009. Remember "Hyphens and Dashes and Commas, Oh My!?" Of course you do (or at least humor me and pretend that you remember). Since it has been much too long, let's delve into some more pointers on proper punctuation, particularly on the finer points of the semicolon, the colon, the ellipsis, and a trendy little mark called the interrobang.

Don't be afraid of the semicolon; it's really quite easy to use. See? I just did it without even planning to. The semicolon is used to link independent clauses not joined by a coordinating conjunction (such as *and* or *but*). Basically, it's a longer pause than a comma. Take the sentence apart and if you can use a period in the middle and still have two complete sentences, then you may use a semicolon.

We can never predict what will come out of her mouth; she often speaks before engaging her brain.

The gym was filled to capacity on the second day of January; everyone's New Year's resolutions must have involved losing weight.

Another popular place to find a semicolon is before the word "however" in a compound sentence. Don't forget to put a comma after the word "however" when you are using it for this purpose.

He wanted to participate in the triathlon; however, his fear of sharks kept him from taking part in the swimming portion of the race.

THE WRITERS' CORNER

When punctuating a list or series of elements in which one or more of the elements contains an internal comma, you should use semicolons instead of commas to separate the elements from one another. This helps the reader decipher what it is you're truly trying to say.

Her grocery lists were notoriously written in great detail: apples, organic with no bruises or unsightly spots; bread, whole wheat or multi-grain; and ice cream, any flavor but strawberry or butter pecan.

This leads us smoothly into a discussion of the colon, since one was used in the example above to indicate that a list would follow. The colon's main function is to eliminate solid waste from the body. (Just wanted to see if you were paying attention.) OUR colon's main function is to mark a major division in a sentence and show that what follows is an elaboration, summation, or interpretation of what precedes it. Capitalize the first word after a colon only if it is a proper noun or the start of a complete sentence.

The travel brochure promises this: The island never experiences inclement weather, no matter what the season.

His evenings were taken up by his two favorite hobbies: eating and watching television.

Contrary to popular opinion, an ellipsis is not a piece of equipment at the gym. It's not even the astronomical phenomenon that occurs when the moon moves between the sun and the earth. In the world of punctuation, the ellipsis consists of three evenly spaced dots (periods) with spaces between the ellipsis and surrounding letters or other marks. It is used to indicate the omission of letters or words, or to show a pause in the flow of a sentence.

THE WRITERS' CORNER

According to this article, "The best remedy ... is to get enough sleep."

Hortense thought and thought ... and then thought some more.

While we're on the topic of punctuation, and since there's no telling when it will come around again, let's talk about punctuation overuse. Many people overuse the comma (and you know who you are), but many also overuse the exclamation point. As writer F. Scott Fitzgerald said, "Cut out all those exclamation marks. An exclamation mark is like laughing at your own jokes." Really, what is everyone so excited about?!?! Have you ever seen a more ridiculous ending to a sentence than this?!?! It's as though someone tacked a comic strip curse word to the end of a sentence, and, you must agree, it's quite distracting. The object of punctuation is to help the reader understand what you're trying to convey, not confuse and distract with a multitude of extraneous marks popping up everywhere. Good punctuation is not even noticed—it's like subtle little signposts guiding the reader through the text.

Fortunately, in 1962 a new punctuation mark was conceived to convey "surprised rhetorical questions" and eliminate those messy strings of question marks and exclamation points. It was called the **interrobang** and it looked like this:



THE WRITERS' CORNER

Unfortunately, the interrobang failed to amount to much more than a fad and has not become a standard punctuation mark. So, in order to ask a question in an excited manner, express excitement or disbelief in the form of a question, or ask a rhetorical question we are again relegated to using BOTH a question mark and exclamation point. Let's try to keep it to one of each, OK?

He did what?!

Just what do you think you're doing?!

If history repeats itself, it will probably be a couple more years before we get around to more punctuation, but at least you'll have a more informed understanding of the semicolon, colon, and ellipsis. Who knows? By then the interrobang may have even made a come back and you'll be able to astound your colleagues by recognizing it right away. Or maybe by then you'll have invented an even BETTER punctuation mark. Let me know what you come up with and I promise to feature it in a future column.

By Lisa Long, our resident writing guru

INFUSE[D] ARTS @ LIVING WORD

The Studio

Artists' Workshops

The Studio, *freshly redesigned*, is every Wednesday of every other month (Sept, Nov, Jan, Mar, May, July) Each month has a different topic. January is **Book Binding** 6:30-8:30 PM in the Coffee Bar rooms E & F at LWCC.



+ NIGHT OF ART +

Wednesday, Feb 8, 2012

6:30-8:30 PM, Coffee Bar rooms E & F

Fee: \$4 for a canvas board,

a variety of art supplies, and a creative prompt.

Must RSVP: droe@lwccyork.com or 717.755.0089 x126



pages

Writing Workshops

Pages, *also freshly redesigned*, is every Wednesday of every other month (Oct, Dec, Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug) There is a new topic each month. 6:30-8:00 PM in the Large Conference Room at LWCC

Writers' Retreat

Saturday, Jan 14, 2012

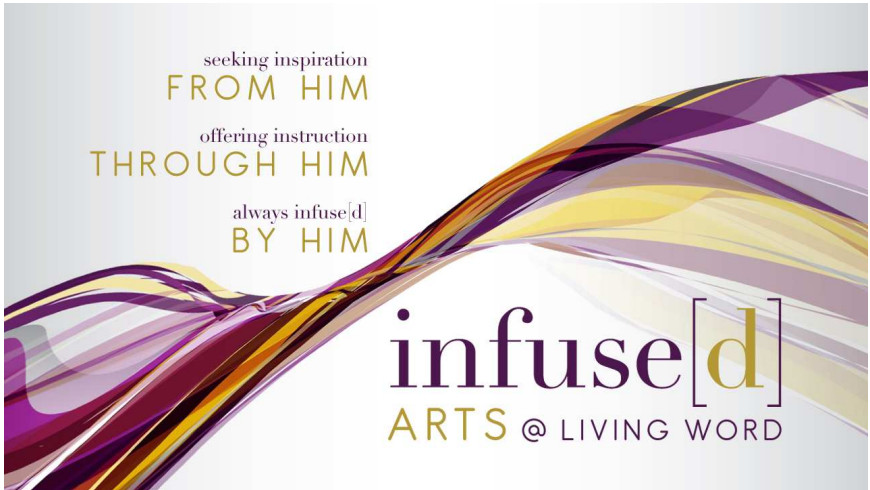
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