

FROM

THE CHINCOTEAGUE WRITERS PROJECT

Marge Bradach
Alice Brown
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Marge Bradach

Marge now lives in Gargatha and started to paint the minute she unpacked her moving boxes. Retirement brought the freedom to follow other deferred dreams. She took the opportunity to join the Island's writing group. Marge has always written "in her head" and now, thanks to the support of the group, is able to put pen to paper with confidence. She mixes her serious observations of human nature with a dollop of humor to make the medicine go down

High Up

I love the sound of live music. September ads informed that the "Divine Miss M", a.k.a Bette Midler, was appearing at Wells Fargo's Infinity venue in Philadelphia. Got tickets, but had no idea where the seats would be. They were touted as "best available".

Our erratic GPS system finally got us to the place two hours before the doors opened. We entered a small holding area filled with a crowd of ticket holders vying for places in line at food concessions circling the lobby. Compacted, shoulder to shoulder, barely air conditioned quarters with little seating, corralled us for the 1 ½ wait until the theater doors opened. Blood pressure rose slightly, but excited.

We found the escalator. Then up-up-up we went. The numbers on the tickets led us past the rotund lobbied doors endlessly to the left. Peeking through I realized the height of our seats. My stomach started to knot and my temples throbbed.

The door to my seat was suddenly in front of me. My stomach now felt as though it had risen up to my throat and it was getting difficult to breathe. My head was throbbing and I began to sweat. I could feel my heart pounding and I thought everyone could hear it. The usher looked at the ticket and nonchalantly pointed to a seat four rows from the very top of the ceiling.

I can't do this, but I wanted to see this show so much! I looked down at the tiny stage and my legs started to falter. I turned quickly towards the steep stairs and railing. There was no room for error; a misstep would send you tumbling. I crawled, bent over with one hand on the stairs and the other on the lower part of the railing. My hand was slippery with perspiration. The lights seemed very bright and sparkly, it was hard to focus. I irrationally despised other imperious ticket holders instructed to wait while I attempted my tortuous climb. "Give her room."

Finally my seat, but I couldn't turn around to sit down. I kind of maneuvered sideways and sat down holding on to the cup holder until it felt like I was cutting my hands on the metal. I looked over my right shoulder at the people directly across from me. My breath became shallow and fast. I am really, really high up off the ground. Gripping with both hands I looked down. The seat in front of me was at my feet. If I tipped forward it would be like falling off a cliff. I was s-o-o-o tempted to tip forward and get the tumble over with. Please don't let anyone come and ask me to stand up so they can get to their seats!

My whole body began to shake in short bursts of tremors. I can not sit here! My dear husband made the trek to Customer Relations and returned with new seats in the handicap section. These, however, are only 12 rows lower than the BEST available we have now!

But these seats are behind a knee high glass partition with no one in front, just a sheer drop to the floor. My brain transitions me into thinking that this short wall of glass protects me. The undeniable truth of physics is that loosing my balance and falling over this wall is a sheer drop, a fall to death. This distorted perception of fact lets my heart slow down. I love it when my brain lies to me!

I finally peer at the stage, visible with my binoculars. What great seats!

Alice Brown

As a school teacher, I tried to expose my students to thinking and writing creatively. After retiring, I finally had the time to actually write myself. I have been fortunate to be able to join the CCA Writers' Project and am working to improve my craft.

An Illusionary Tale

The old man walked slowly through the marsh grass of the secluded island, his arrival masked by the cawing of birds as they flapped overhead. His sturdy little motor boat, stripped of paint and well worn, was his conveyance through the meandering creeks to this lonely place, silent but for the sounds of the creatures that inhabited it. He had come here on the boot of a dare given by one of his card playing cronies who insisted that this marsh contained mysteries that no one could explain. One of which was the disappearance of some town folk who had stumbled into it and had never returned. His curiosity aroused, he had undertaken the trip to this area of grass, mud, and silence.

He had moored his little boat on a wedge of sand connected to the green and brown wetlands which spread deep into the island. He then disembarked the boat gingerly and with a tenuous step had ventured a foot onto the unstable surface. It held. With some confidence, he proceeded on his journey, not really knowing what to expect. He halfway didn't even believe what his friend had described, but felt a faint pull to investigate not understanding where this came from. Maybe

a hint of adventure added to his dull and routined life.

So here he was, trailing through this soggy and barren land, not knowing what to look for or expect, and following a vague story of missing people. As he rounded a sharp curve of land, he stopped abruptly. Up ahead, he distinctly made out a tree. What was it doing in the middle of a marsh? It didn't belong here, much like he didn't. He approached slowly trying to discover what type of tree it was.

As he drew closer, he detected an irregular line in its trunk. With a trace of foreboding, he touched the rough bark, and eventually his fingers grazed the line that had caught his attention. With this touch, the tree responded. As the old man backed away in amazement, a crack in the tree's bark grew larger, a bright light emanating from the crevice as it grew.

The old man, frightened yet intrigued, could not look away. A force of attraction grabbed him and slowly drew him closer to the opening. He had no will to resist, and part of him, although terrified, experienced a strange feeling of the familiar, almost like he had been here before. This is what it must have been like for the others, he thought, pulled gently into a new life, feeling a reprieve from the old one, and seeking renewal. He did not resist. The old man slowly and with understanding took his place among the other town folk. His new existence called.

Andrea Canfield

BookWire(TM) by Bowker says that “Canfield could be the offspring of David Sedaris and Carolyn Knapp.” She wishes she would write more.



Couple

Along the sidewalk, supporting each other
Dry to all touch except their own.
Mindful of wet leaves, they harbor in elbows,
remembering the old ease of warm nights and arms.

By their measured pace, one knows it has been years
Since they rearranged the furniture
Or burned supper on the stove.

Ode to The Internet

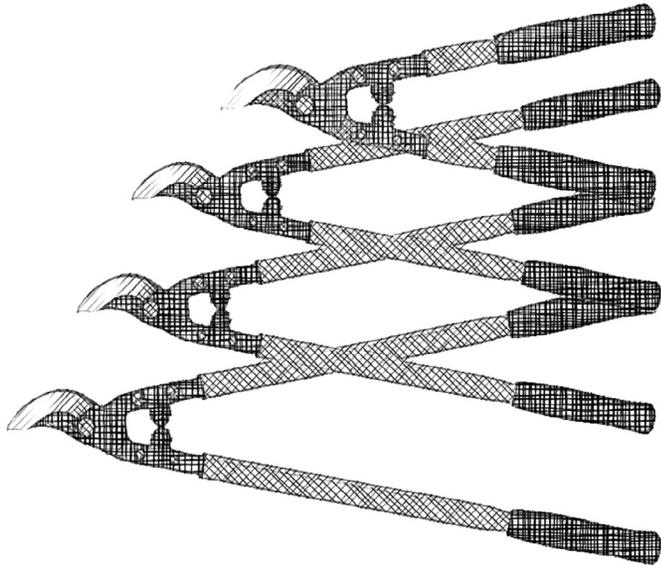
You support me, Dearest Internet, in this unplanned career.
You're the one no matter the time who is always there.
You send me Nabokov and Didion and let us not forget Dickens
I'm alerted to shark attacks and infectious disease outbreaks
Mostly caused from chickens.

Thank you, Dearest Internet, for opening up the world
With podcasts and on demand and ideas that have unfurled.
I can visit cities and countries and go global hopping,
And BTW I would be remiss if I didn't mention the shopping.

I've learned about payment gateways, SSL and brute force attacks
And, how sloppy security and no updates can lead to system hacks.
The checks that arrive in my PO Box are all because of you,
This ode, this poem, this written thanks has been long overdue.

Lisa Cannon

Writing, for me, is a way of finding out how I feel and what I think. When I begin a piece I'm usually not sure where it's going, but I know I need to be writing in that moment. Although the discipline of sitting down to write can be painful, I'm often surprised by the quiet joy that comes from just taking time to reflect on life.



Ode to my Fiskar's (in appreciation of Pablo Neruda)

Loyal soldier,
stalwart
and dependable,
sturdy
aide-de-camp,
you are my better hands.
A pair of swords,
valiant,

or
two curving eagle's talons
in whose deadly grip
no prey can
survive:
with you I am
transformed.
No longer constrained
by my woman's weakness
I am mighty.
Offending limbs,
rampant, ungainly roots
we, together, devour.
With you, I am become Paul Bunyan,
Ironman.
I am a gladiator in the arena,
facing the wild beasts of
sumac, wisteria, swamp maple,
even
the fearsome poison ivy whose evil
hairy tentacles
strangle the innocent and tender in
my garden.

I am nothing without you.
And I pledge that I shall always
clean and oil you,
protect you from the kryptonite
of rust
and salt air,
and honor
you,
my 3.5 inch
bypass loppers.

Cynthia Eddy

Cynthia is a poet who lives and writes on the Eastern Shore



Bloodletting

You are the needle stick
Through my finger tip
Silent bloodletting but for the quiet yelp
Finger to the mouth
Then the salt.

You won't be put down
Stitch after stitch
Color after color
Finger prick after finger prick
You threaten my skin.

Mamas

I learned early on
That Mamas could do anything,
Could make the sun set
And the moon rise
With a simple swing of the arm.

Their magic was a mystery
With one look you were
Turned to ice,
And with one kiss
Melted to a puddle.

Never a friend
Real Mamas kept your love
At a distance,
Though you knew somehow
Their love was never ending.

My Mama still expects
To be called ma'am
Still keeps a part of herself a mystery
Still makes the sun set

And the moon rise.

Patricia Farley

Patricia has been a lifeguard, secretary, social worker, textile artist, clothing designer, and always a writer. She lives full-time as a Chincoteague come here and is grateful for the people and vistas that inspire her.

Three Love Poems

Sunset

I bring you to my attic
Up the steep steps
To see the November sunset
Burning coral across the sky.

The room turns fiery.
We could melt together
Onto a fabric floor,
Or we can silently watch
The glow fade.
Then leave.

Either way, it is love.

One

It is not rope
that binds me to you,
but the blueness of our eyes,
and a certain knowledge
that we were once one.

Finding Me

This is how I want you to find me:
Eating blueberries and cream
In the early morning light of summer,
Dancing to Rachmaninoff,
While reading Neruda sonnets.

This is who I am
When I know you might find me.

Sarah Mason

Finding time to write is a struggle, but I feel compelled to express myself through the written word. And through food. Currently working on a book of recipes and stories.

Carnival Life

I love that the carnival means summer is truly here, and I love real, deep, sticky-hot, Eastern shore summer nights, when the trees hum with insect songs. At night the rides and the game booths light everything up quite romantically. The carnival, for me, is an emotional time machine; I am instantly reminded of the teenage excitement I felt when I attended the carnival three decades ago. There's nothing like the exhilaration of a teenager out after dark, parentless. I love listening to kids call out to each other while weaving in and out of the lines of slower adults around them, witnessing them operating on a truly different social plane. Everyone looks better in the yellow light of the Ferris wheel bulbs as we make the rounds of the booths, entering raffles, gossiping with the ticket sellers, eating junk food. I might throw caution to the wind and eat a

funnel cake. I love to play carnival bingo, because I was too intimidated to play it until I was an adult. Now, the more casually I play it, the cooler I am. I am exuding maximum coolness when I have four bingo cards and a pile of dollar bills in front of me, my hands are moving smoothly from card to card, I'm flipping the little red windows to the left, checking the board at the front for accuracy, not getting distracted by the loud guy with the camouflage hat across the aisle, making quiet exclamations and eye contact with my neighbor when some lady behind us yells "Bingo!" I love the easy community created by running into friends and neighbors and casually chatting about nothing with them while we watch other people parade by or mechanically fill out raffle ticket after raffle ticket after raffle ticket. And when I am there, when we are all there, we are fully present, in the enclosed loop of the carnival grounds, circling round and round, safe, all our needs met for the present, never needing to turn from the course.



The Chincoteague Writer's Project

Our group of the Writer's Project meets once a week for 2 hours during which we practice writing exercises, read the work of favorite writers, and most importantly, we share the work that we have written with the group, for input and friendly critique from fellow members.

The Writer's Project is an activity of the Chincoteague Cultural Alliance. The current group has reached capacity and is closed to new members. We are happy to help start another group if there is enough interest. If you are interested in participating please contact us at writers@chincoteagueculturalalliance.org.

