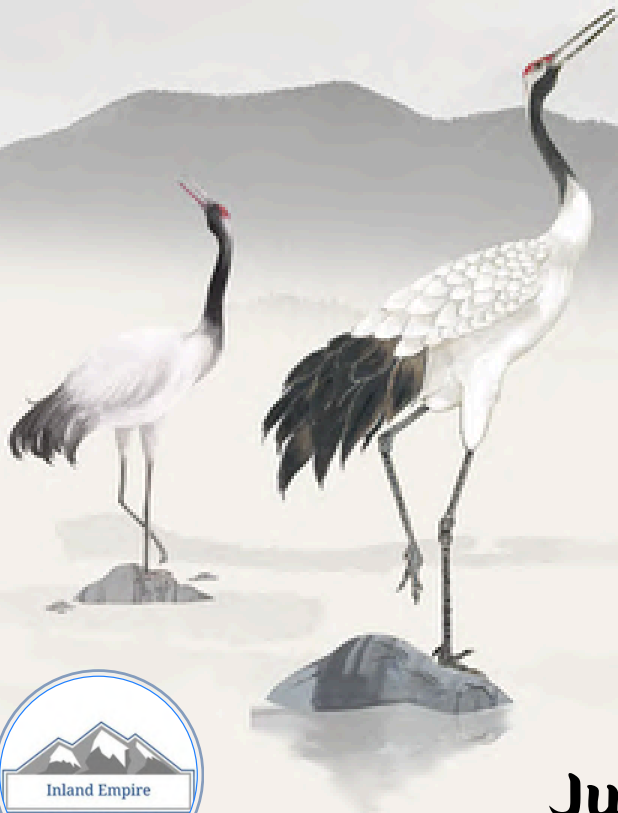


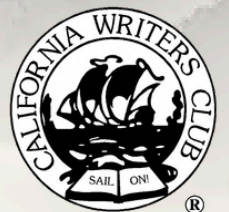
Inland Empire
California
Writing Club



Fresh Ink



June 2026



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello Writers!

June is officially here, bringing the magic of summer! As a mid-June baby, the universe gave me the ultimate birthday gift: freedom from school!

Growing up on the prairies, my summers were packed with activity thanks to my grandparents. We spent endless days finding wild roses, searching plowed fields for arrowheads, and picnicking beside jade-green rivers filled with fossils.

While Southern California summers might be a bit too hot for that kind of outdoor exploring, it makes it the perfect season to stay inside. Turn on your air conditioning, grab a cool drink, and let's write!

What's Coming Up: A Series of Show & Tell Workshops

To mix things up, we are pausing traditional presentations. Instead, starting in **July**, we are launching a series of interactive **Show & Tell Workshop Sessions**.

We will break down core writing elements every month: getting started, genre, character, plot, dialogue, and POV. We share key elements like the first page, cause and reaction, complications and resolution.

How It Works & How to Participate

Each session will feature a focused discussion where we explore examples, share ideas, and answer questions using both your past and present projects.

- **For All Levels:** This series is designed for both beginning and advanced writers. If you have advice, an idea or a work in progress. Bring it!
- **Your Contribution:** I kindly ask members to participate by bringing examples, samples, or materials related to the topic.

I am excited to dive into this myself. I plan to apply these very sessions to my own work as I begin drafting some family stories.

Let's beat the heat, inspire each other, and make some serious progress on our manuscripts. See you at the next meeting!

Regards,

Judy

EDITOR'S NOTE

This issue was edited using
Canva



Hello Readers!

Happy June! As summer begins, classes are ending, graduation ceremonies are wrapping up, and many of us are looking ahead to new chapters. June also marks the halfway point of the year, which feels hard to believe. The days can feel long and routine, yet the weeks and months seem to pass by in an instant.

With that in mind, the theme of this newsletter is **transience**. I was inspired by Judy's President's Message in May, where she shared that the club would be focusing on haiku this month. The fleeting and temporary nature of life is a central theme of haiku, making transience a fitting focus for this issue.

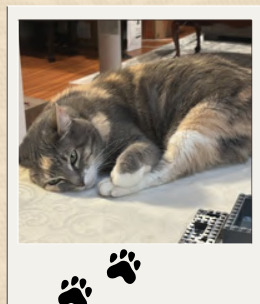
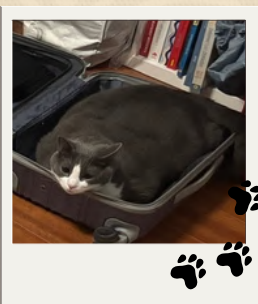
To reflect this idea, I drew inspiration from Asian ink paintings and traditional patterns throughout the newsletter's design. Working with these elements brought me back to my time studying abroad in Japan. At the time, that experience felt like such a significant part of my university life, yet it was unexpectedly cut short by the COVID-19 pandemic. Looking back, it reminds me how quickly even the most meaningful chapters of our lives can pass.

While impermanence can sometimes feel unsettling, it does not have to be viewed negatively. Like a haiku, there is beauty in fleeting moments. Their temporary nature often makes us appreciate them even more.

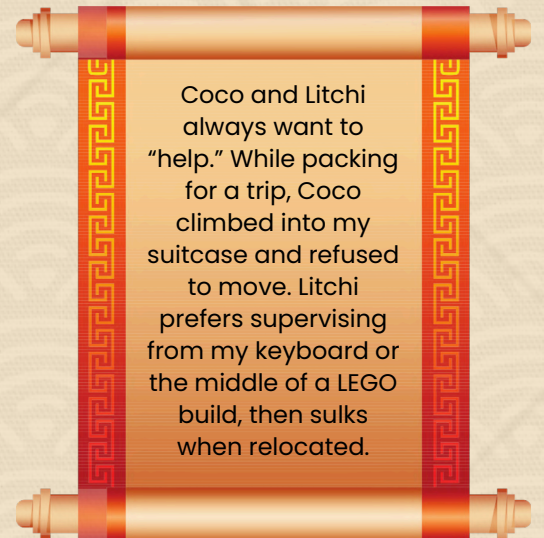
The stories in this issue celebrate that same beauty through creativity, imagination, and storytelling. I enjoyed reading them, and I hope you enjoy them as much as I did.

Ink to page, tales unveiled.

Anaïs Hamel



@globetrotteuse99



Coco and Litchi always want to "help." While packing for a trip, Coco climbed into my suitcase and refused to move. Litchi prefers supervising from my keyboard or the middle of a LEGO build, then sulks when relocated.





The Healing Power of Art



Gabriella De Leon-DeHaan

JUNE 27 10 AM-NOON

Come and hear about a Southern California educator's extraordinary ability to fuse Chicano style art with her family's history as told through paintings and stories — "Recuerdo y legado" (Memory and legacy)

Ovitt Family Library
215 E. C St., Ontario, CA 91762
FREE AND OPEN TO ALL

Inland Empire California Writers Club

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APRIL 2026 MEETING REVIEW

Poetry Open Mic Overview by Ben Alirez

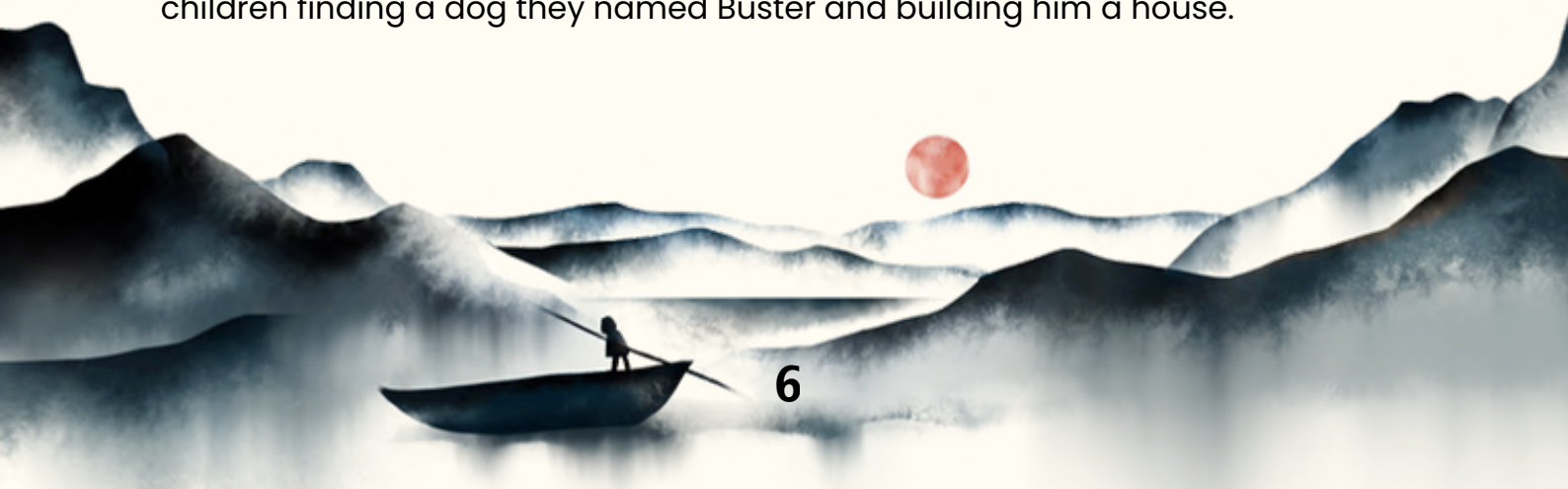
Saturday, April 25, 2026
Ovitt Family Community Library
215 E. C St., Ontario, CA 91764

In homage to National Poetry Month, the Inland Empire California Writers Club (IECWC) hosted its annual open-mic poetry reading. Our trusted Treasurer, Sam Nichols hosted the event, calling up Sal Morano of Corona to start the branch meeting. Drawing from his young and innocent experiences in Catholic school, Sal's first poem was titled "Church Bell" and centered around the memory of kissing a girl. His final poem was called "Kick Ball" and whimsically unraveled with the daunting task of sending a school ground kick ball over the twelve-foot fence, a feat reserved only for the most physically gifted students.

Next came Wendy Van Camp, an Anaheim poet laureate and resident. Some of the recitals featured her Planets Collection, largely inspired by her backyard escapades and Vandenburg rocket launches. She shared additional poems on a young woman's love for surfing despite a disability. Her final contribution was about a woman wishing to carry on the writing legacy of her mother. More of her works can be found on Instagram @nowastedink.

Hospitality Chair, Shirley Timura opened with a variation on "What to do with the time you have left," proposing instead, "What to do with the words you have left." She performed three poems in all.

Departing from the subject of poetry, Critique group leader Constance Cassinelli read an excerpt from her historical novel, *Caro Nicola Promise Kept*. The chapter detailed the naming of the street "Principio" where her ancestor cleared a future road in exchange for naming it. The story also revolved around children finding a dog they named Buster and building him a house.



Vicki Peyton contributed a short story on her real-life childhood experiences with her late grandmother Evie and a wing-backed chair she prized, a fanciful enterprise that also included cigarettes and Olympia Beer. Eventually Vicki's own mother took up residence on the reupholstered chair, and to this day it remains a treasured fixture in the family.

With a special guest in attendance, Sam took the opportunity to introduce the month of June's speaker, Gabriella DeHaan. A duo language schoolteacher in the Inland Empire, she is a gifted writer and artist who shares the history of her family through her projects.

Ann Casas provided an entertaining collage of poems titled "*The Resident Secret*," "*Homie Loves Hamburgers Too*," "*When I'm Dancing*," and a speculative piece about the conversation between Jesus Christ and Satan during the Messiah's triumph over death.

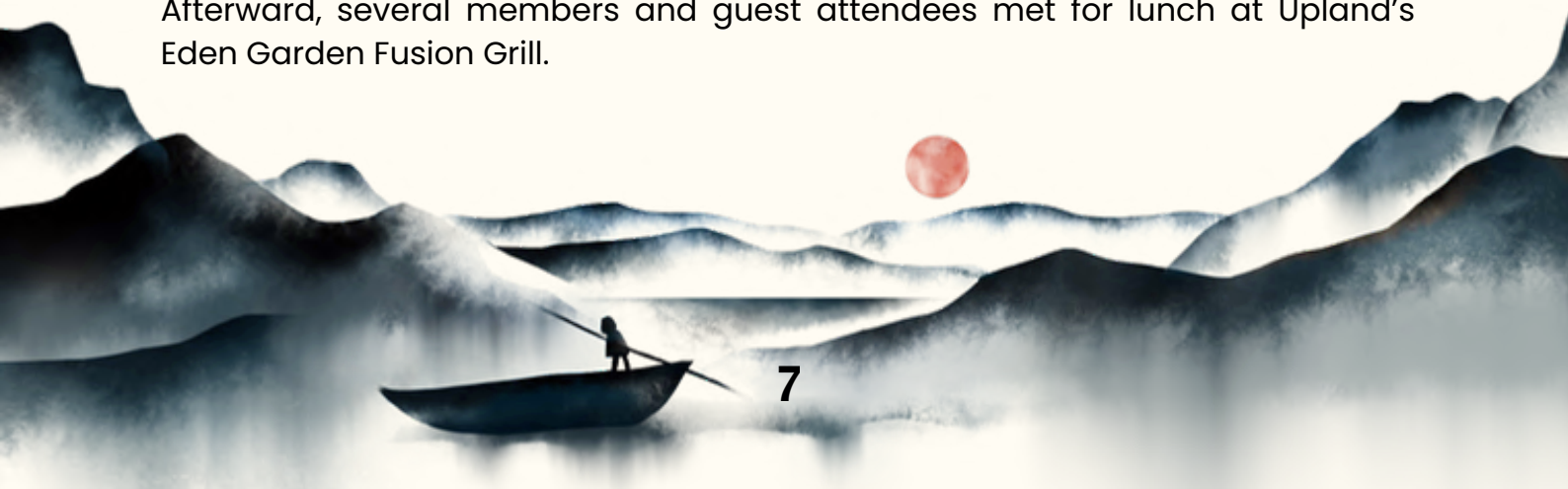
Following Ann, was her friend and guest Veronica Michalowski, an experienced poet with published works. Reciting several of her citations like "*Alphabet Suite*," "*Intensity*," her poignant contributions touched on her father's father, an interaction at her sister's deathbed, and a couple in the habit of playing a game of cribbage.

Social Networking Chair, Cindy Demone, added poems inspired by technology, the plants in her garden, and the mania concerning the harmful effects of plastics.

Reciting from the pages of his chapbook *Shadow Boxer*, guest Martin Cossio of San Bernardino read personal sonnets detailing the innerworkings of a fighter and how people might acquire more of his thoughtful poetic works.

Closing out the delightful session was Abigail Handojo, USC college student and former IECWC Fresh Ink editor. In a surprise announcement, she is republishing her chapbook *Attached* with additional selections such as "*The Cerulean Blue Sky*," a touching piece about a cherished family member and the memories it rekindles.

Afterward, several members and guest attendees met for lunch at Upland's Eden Garden Fusion Grill.



Benefits of IECWC MEMBERSHIP

- ALL AGES are welcome!
- Entrance into monthly meetings
 - (in-person or remotely through Zoom)
- Access to monthly speakers on topics related to the craft
- Exposure & practice by submitting to our monthly literary newsletter, FRESH INK
- Network with other club members
 - (various levels of expertise, mentors)
- Participation in Critique Groups
 - (in-person or remotely through Zoom)
- Your OWN PAGE on our Club website at no additional cost
 - Highlight your bio, photo, website, social media, and published books
- Opportunities to serve on the board or on committees of our branch
- Camaraderie among other writers at all levels, all genres, and all ages!
- Partake, volunteer, and/or help plan our Spring and Fall Conferences which are provided at little (or sometimes no) cost to our members
- Annual opportunity to showcase your work at Open Mic events.
- Annual opportunity, each January, to attend/appear on our Panel of Authors
 - Members who were published the year before
 - Learn/share advice on the publication process, ask/answer questions, and buy/sell your books on site
- Annual opportunity to submit, read, and assist with judging the competitive Statewide CWC Literary Review, with readership of about 2,000 members and their readers and associates
- Simultaneous Co-Membership into California Writers Club
 - Our state-level parent organization at www.calwriters.org, with additional volunteer opportunities

- Read/advertise in the Tri-Annual CWC Bulletin available online, free of charge
 - Access to news from the other CWC Branches throughout California, gaining perspective about other serious, mostly published, writers, editors, Web designers, graphics experts, etc.
- Potential for your writing to be chosen to be displayed in the Southern California Writers Showcase at www.socalwritersshowcase.com
- A wonderful addition to your curriculum vitae or resume!
- Access to the monthly IECWC Blind Review Team
- Utilize our FACEBOOK PAGE to get your works word out to the public interested in writing

JOIN or RENEW at:

<https://iecwc.com/membership-meetings/>

**Active
\$65**

**Supporting
\$65**

**Student
\$15
ages 8-22**

**Renewal of Membership
\$45**

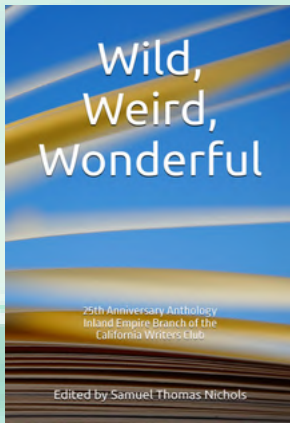
Renewal deadline September 30.
On October 1, CWC shall drop all delinquent members from the rolls. If dropped, you must pay the new \$65 member enrollment fees.



THE SMALLS

The Smalls includes selections from the California Writers Club 2024 "Big Contest for Small Poems and Prose." This is a vibrant collection of unique voices chosen from the contest entries.

<https://a.co/d/45iqsdm>



Wild, Weird, Wonderful: 25th Anniversary Anthology Inland Empire Branch of the California Writers Club

<https://a.co/d/0SVxuPT>

This collection includes short stories, poetry, memoir, nonfiction, memoir, original drawings and photographs, and one novelette entitled *Murder in Huckleberry Heights*.

This anthology contains the varietal work of eighteen members of the Inland Empire Branch with several genres being represented.

Vision & Verse: A Fusion of Art, Photography, Prose and Poetry

The multi-talented artists and writers featured within these pages have come together to create a dialogue between their respective mediums. This collection showcases the beauty of visual art married with the magic of the written word.

<https://a.co/d/2zu0Afx>



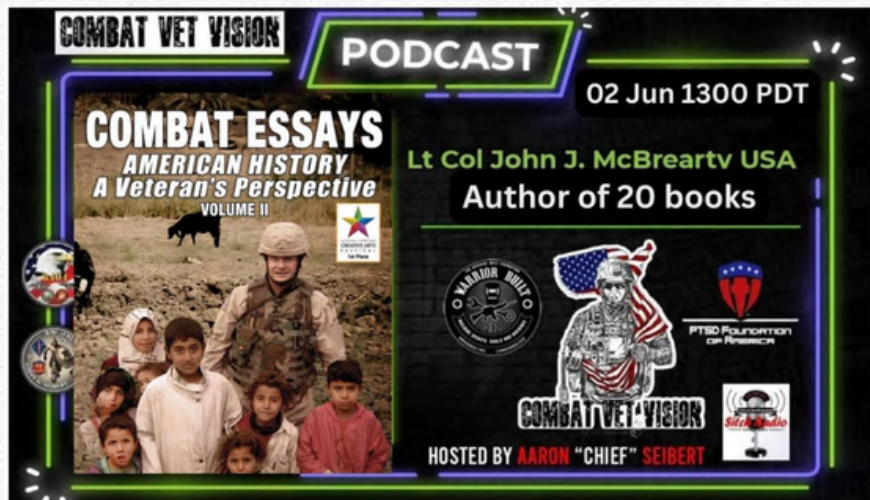
BOOKS

KUDOS KORNER

Congratulations to **Ann Casas** on the publication of her book, *Old Lady Running!* Ann has done an outstanding job balancing the demands of writing and publishing her book while remaining an active and valued member of our club. Her book is available on Amazon—be sure to check it out and show your support.



We would like to thank **Elisabeth Anghel** for her dedication and contributions to the club. She has been a valuable board member, serving as Program Chair, Secretary, and in many other roles throughout the years. As she begins a new chapter and moves away from California, we wish her happiness, good luck, and a smooth transition. We will miss her and hope she continues to pursue her passion for writing. Best wishes, Elisabeth!



John J. McBrearty continues to make an impact through his writing and community involvement. While celebrating the publication of his new book, *Burden of Command*, John also recently participated in an interview with world-renowned podcaster, and veteran Chief Aaron Seibert. In addition, he presented at the Corona Public Library on Armed Forces Day 2026, sharing his journey from military service to award-winning author and discussing how writing became his post-military mission. Keep up the outstanding work, John!

Check his work and chanel via the link below
[VeteransBreakfastClubMagazine
 https://www.youtube.com/@JohnWritesHistory](https://www.youtube.com/@JohnWritesHistory)

June Videos releases

2026-06-02

CPO Seibert Interviews John J. McBrearty

<https://youtube.com/shorts/I7ihkGLJNbA?si=OW5u5Ym5BvsOShjx>

2026-06-06

Burden of Command

<https://youtube.com/shorts/5m6V9xtXoYg?feature=share>

2026-06-14

Writing Tips with John J. McBrearty

<https://youtu.be/FIcgkojSAI8>

2026-06-22

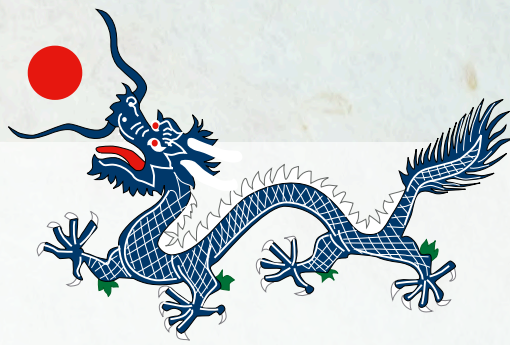
Armed Forces Day with John J. McBrearty

<https://youtu.be/YyZIPg3ozBY>

2026-06-25

Interview with John J. McBrearty

https://youtu.be/A64lqy_ZFro



PRESS RELEASE

Old Lady Running By Ann Casas



Old Lady Running is a powerful and intimate collection of short stories that explore what it means to cross invisible thresholds—into aging, into reinvention, into deeper truths. Drawn from years of lived experience, writing classrooms, and life-altering moments, these stories move between fiction and memory, humor and heartbreak, grief and grace.

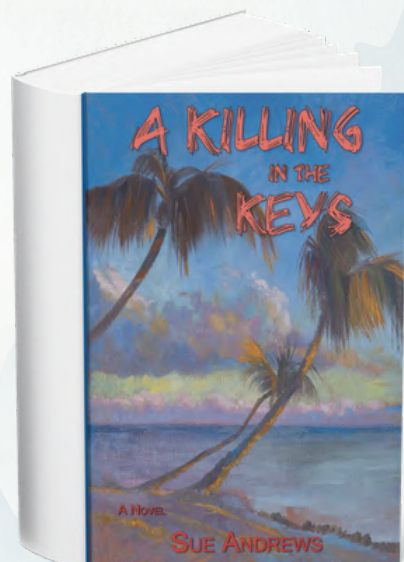
This is a book about continuing—about running toward creativity, toward language, toward the self that is still unfolding.

Check it out on Amazon: <https://a.co/d/024npJ32>



A Killing in the Keys By Sue Andrews

Jacksonville Judas' beloved hero, Wade Nevlin, has retired to Key West to forget his painful past in Jacksonville, rife with loss. After a friend introduces him to AA, Wade fulfills his dream of starting a charter boat company aboard the Beverly, named after his cherished, late wife. His new life includes a cadre of new friends, a charming cottage and his beloved dog, Sandy,



Check it out on Amazon: <https://a.co/d/0e1aHjoR>



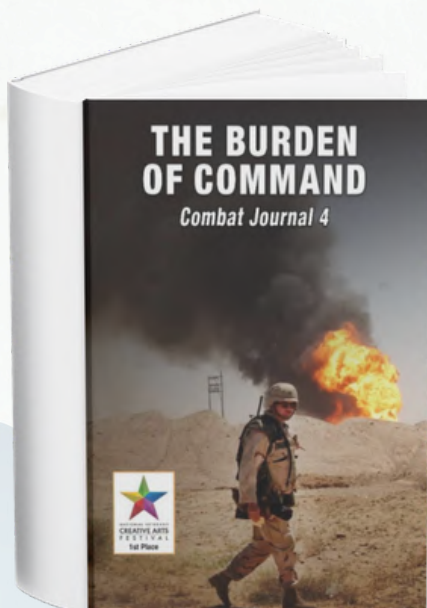
PRESS RELEASE

Amazon kindle Book release

On Burden of Command

Combat Journal 4

By John J. McBrearty



Set during Operation Iraqi Freedom, this memoir explores combat, loss, and the unexpected role of humanity—from rebuilding infrastructure to building a golf course in the middle of a war zone—as soldiers struggle to hold onto purpose amid chaos.

This is not a story of heroics. It is a record of endurance, responsibility, and the cost of staying the course when there is no way out but forward.

“This memoir captures the moral gravity of command better than any battlefield report.”

Major Duke Flemming, U.S.M.C. Desert Storm Veteran

Purchase amazon Book Here:

<https://a.co/d/0a6EdiAH>



Help Wanted

WE ARE LOOKING FOR PEOPLE TO FILL
IN THESE BOARD POSITIONS!

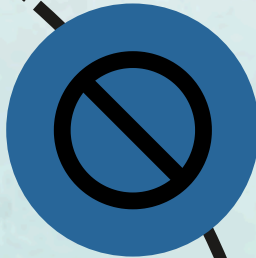
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
SAM NICHOLS SAMUELTHOMASNICHOLS@GMAIL.COM

PRESIDENT

PROGRAM CHAIR

Deadlines

Submissions are due the 20th of every month



Content Limits

Submissions with the following will not be considered:

- Excessive or gratuitous violence (violence for violence sake)
- Excessive or gratuitous profanity
- Excessive or gratuitous sexual situations or pornography
- Political or religious agendas that are meant to persuade or denounce



Form

- Prose word count <1,200
- No line count on poetry

Send as an attachment
Google or Word document
Times New Roman
12pt font



Photos

Accompanying images are optional

We can only publish digital images that **do not violate copyright**

You are encouraged to submit photos you have taken



Email

iecwcfreshink@gmail.com

Check your email periodically for suggestions from the editor



**FRESH
INK**

guidelines

Poetry Musings

By Samuel Thomas Nichols

Transience

Nothing lasts forever but ...

The (not quite a full generation of) youth that followed me would have no trouble finishing that line with ... *the earth and sky*, from the song *Dust in the Wind* released by the rock band Kansas in 1977. As I was well into my career with Xerox, a full-time college student, and had a newborn daughter at home, it would not be until the late 1990s before being introduced to Kansas's songs by a woman who was enamored by their music. I understand the song was inspired by a line from a Native American poem that I was unable to identify, but transience in poetry abounds. Take the last stanza of John Keats' (1795-1821) *Ode to Autumn*:

Where are the songs of spring? Ay, Where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river shallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.



Keats' life, like Autumn, was ephemeral - barely, it seems, lasting more than a day but his poetry has survived just over two-hundred years and may survive a few hundred more but, unlike the earth and sky, it will not last forever. But what of poetry? We know of the Mesopotamian *Epic of Gilgamesh*, which has survived some five-thousand years, and *The Love Song for Shu-Sin*, from about four-thousand years ago. We also believe that oral poetry likely preceded these extant examples by many thousands of years more. And while I may bemoan that the poetry of today doesn't look like the poetry I grew up with, I suspect poetry will survive as long as humanity - which is transient.

Nature's first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold.
Her early leaf's a flower;
But only so an hour.
Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day.
Nothing gold can stay.



This short-sad little poem, *Nothing Gold Can Stay*, by Robert Frost (1874-1963), is a concise reminder that we are all but temporary illusions in an illusive existence. But, we have poetry that, according to Jane Hirshfield (1953), "... allows us not only to bear the tally and toll of our transience, but to perceive, within their continually surprising abundance, a path through the grief of that insult into joy."Who doesn't want a path to joy?

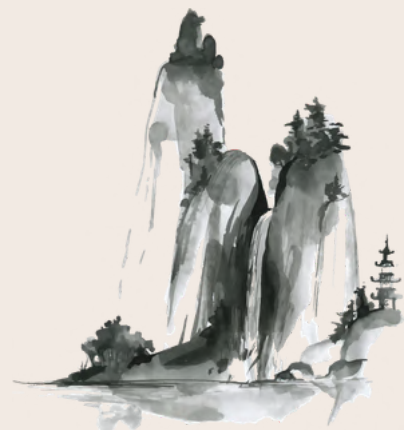
In our efforts to escape our transient existence, we seek solace in creating alternative stories, particularly stories that have a part of us surviving this life. Here, for example, is a glimpse of what might follow from the first stanza of *And death shall have no dominion*, by a favorite poet of mine Dylan Thomas (1914-1953):



And death shall have no dominion.
Dead men naked they shall be one
With the man in the wind and the west moon;
When their bones are picked clean and the clean bones gone,
They shall have stars at elbow and foot;
Though they go mad they shall be sane,
Though they sink through the sea they shall rise again;
Though lovers be lost love shall not;
And death shall have no dominion.

The love we have in life shall survive our terminus. An old theme, to be sure, but one we return to with great affliction. Yet, some poets waver betwixt continuing and not, such as Emily Dickinson, who explores the finality of life in her Poem 982:

No Other can reduce
Our mortal Consequence
Like the remembering it be nought
A Period from hence
But Contemplation for
Contemporaneous Nought
Our Single Competition
Jehovah's Estimate.



And embraces immortality in her well-known Poem 712:

Because I could not stop for Death --
He kindly stopped for me --
The Carriage held but just Ourselves --
And Immortality.

We slowly drove -- He knew no haste
And I had put away
My labor and my leisure too,
For His Civility --

We passed the School, where Children strove
At Recess -- in the Ring --
We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain --
We passed the Setting Sun --

Or rather -- He passed Us --

The Dews drew quivering and chill --
For only Gossamer, my Gown --
My Tippet -- only Tulle --
We paused before a House that seemed

A Swelling of the Ground --
The Roof was scarcely visible --
The Cornice -- in the Ground --

Since then -- 'tis Centuries -- and yet
Feels shorter than the Day
I first surmised the Horses' Heads
Were toward Eternity --

Ah, Eternity, it's everything Transience is not. What child doesn't dream that they will live forever. As a young man, I read Robert Heinlein's *Time Enough for Love* and had the audacity to imagine that I might become that fictional Lazarus Long, just as Woodrow Wilson Smith had, and stretch my existence out some five-thousand years. Well, as they say, it's not over yet, which is a sentiment that might be insane or optimistic. But what is insanity if not an augury of innocence?

To see a world in a grain of sand
And a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
And eternity in an hour.



This four-line poem, *Auguries of Innocence*, by William Blake (1757-1827) is one of only a few that I ever committed to memory (that was not a nursery rhyme). Nearly sixty-years later it still resonates even though it took me most of those decades to really appreciate what an augury was. And, what greater augury of the transience of humanity is there than that of Percy Bysshe Shelley's (1792-1822) *Ozymandias*:



I met a traveler from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed;

And on the pedestal these words appear:
"My name is Ozymandius, king of kings:
Look on my words, ye Mighty, and despair!"
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Shelley, my go-to poet in high school, and yet another ephemeral life. *Ozymandius* was another of those few poems that I once committed to memory, which too has passed away like the melting clocks in Salvador Dali's *The Persistence of Memory*, a painting I greatly admire, though I've never seen it hanging there in the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. Someday, perhaps, as they say, in this lifetime or the next. If not permanence, there is at least hope.





Epiphany
By Ann Casas

At sixth grade camp
My first time

Away from home
My world awakened
In the cold, clean whispers of the forest

I was in awe

The brown-gray mountains seemed giants
Their peaks cloaked in snow

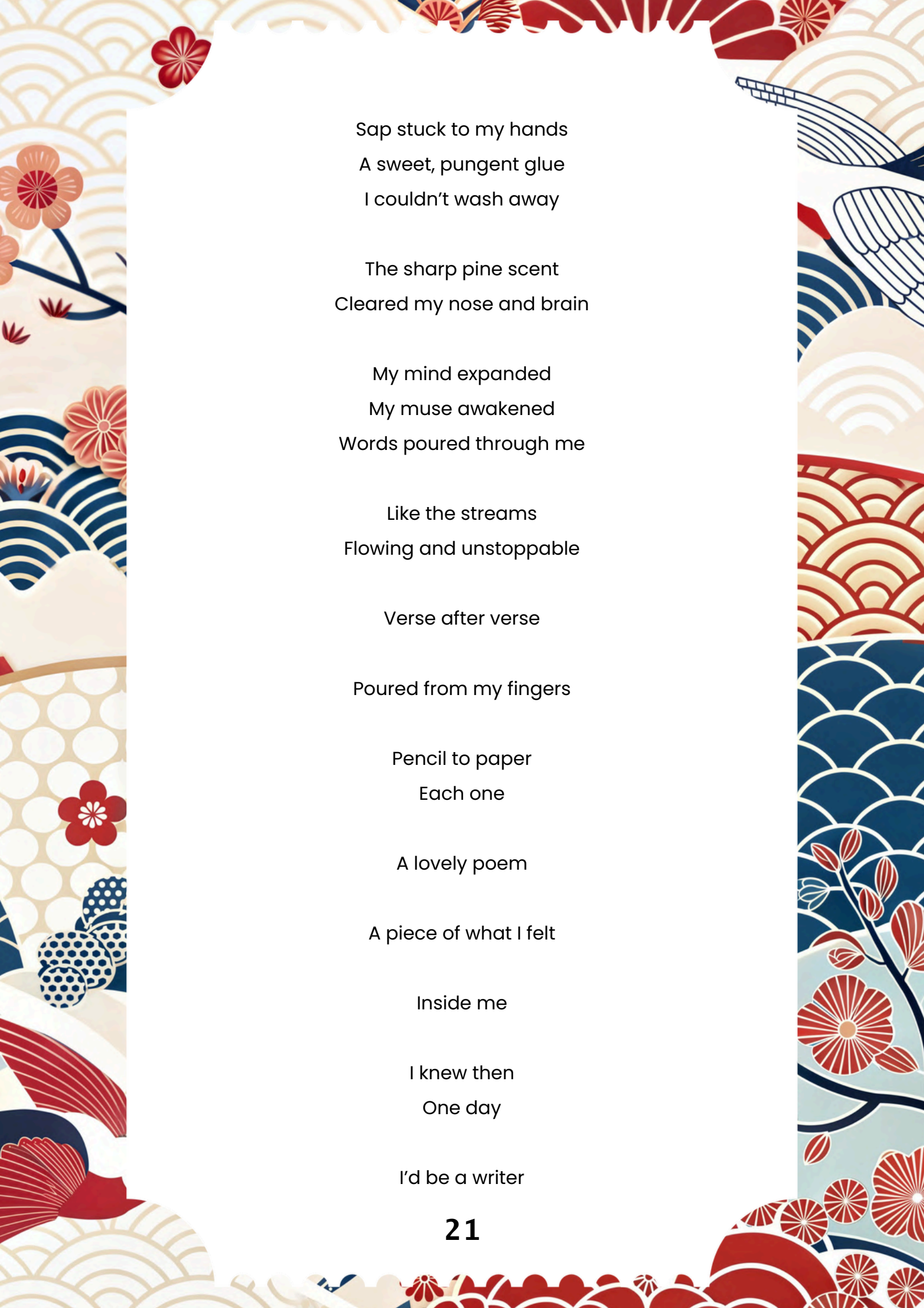
I viewed the earth
And all its splendor
In wide-eyed in wonder

Sparkling streams whistled and flowed
Sunlight skipped across the ripples
Its granite stones paths to cross
I cupped the cool water
Clear, biting, alive

A sudden shock

Yet refreshing

The evergreens towered cathedral-tall
Their branches wrestled with the wind
Pinecones big as bricks
Dropped thudding into dry needles



Sap stuck to my hands
A sweet, pungent glue
I couldn't wash away

The sharp pine scent
Cleared my nose and brain

My mind expanded
My muse awakened
Words poured through me

Like the streams
Flowing and unstoppable

Verse after verse

Poured from my fingers

Pencil to paper
Each one

A lovely poem

A piece of what I felt

Inside me

I knew then
One day

I'd be a writer

A Little History of Some Italian Foods...Perhaps

By Constance Cassinelli

Did you ever think that your favorite Italian foods might have their roots in ancient Roman civilization or have perhaps evolved over thousands of years?

Perhaps is a very good word to use when attempting to put an accurate date on the actual origins of most of the ancient foods of Italy because much of what we know comes from the first time it became a written word or a drawing on the wall of a cave. In reality, it could have existed a thousand years earlier.

The Ancient Ligurii, the prehistoric aboriginal people of Northern Italy's Paleolithic period, feasted on what was naturally available to them. These various primitive tribes inhabited what is now, Liguria, northern Tuscany, Piedmont, part of Lombardy, parts of southeastern France and along the Mediterranean coast from the Rhone River to the Arno River. Those that lived during the earliest of Stone Age in what is now Liguria, likely hunted boar, rodent, and other wild animals and fished in the sea with their rough, chipped stone-tipped spears and mallets. This narrow strip of land with mountains on one side and the sea on the other was farmed by usage of terraces. It was also an ideal place to quickly escape and hide from the enemy. The Ligurii were initially driven back from the southern Pyrenees along the Mediterranean by the Celts.

Grain-paste flatbreads have probably existed since the beginning of stone usage as a culinary tool because they are a logical food and any seeds of wild grasses would have been used. There were three methods of cooking this bread. The earliest was to set the shaped dough on a rock to be hardened by sun and air. Another system was to place it on hot rocks. The third technique was to place it in ashes of the fire pit..

There are many theories about how and when this type of flatbread was introduced into Italy. Some form was probably used by their own primitive people long before the Etruscans and Greek invasions. We just don't have documentation yet, although there is evidence that the Swiss Lake Dwellers next to the Piedmonte/ Lombardia areas made flatbread 8000 years ago. Who is to say but what they learned this from the ancient Ligurii and not vice versa. Historians say this kind of bread was introduced to southern Italy around 6000BC during Magna Graecia occupation. Many regions would like to take credit because bread sustains civilization. The flatbreads were used as plates with food served on top. When the meal ended the bread soaked up any liquid, then was eaten.

This type of bread was the grandfather of pizza. Focaccia was the father and it originated in Liguria, which is the only place in modern Italy that continues to make the original unleavened bread of their primitive ancestors. Here the natural salt in the sea breeze (along with a very moderate climate) helped create deliciously dense bread that was in later centuries adorned with olive oil, salt, and herbs and occasional vegetables.

In the 3rd century BC., Cato the Elder wrote the 1st history of Rome and mentioned flat rounds of dough dressed with olive oil, herbs and honey that was baked on stones. 79AD Pompeii contained shops with marble slabs and evidence of a similar flour cake.

Many people are misguided in believing that early Focaccia was pizza. It is not. The original dough is not even similar. Throughout the centuries other regions began to make a modified version of Focaccia adding a yeast starter that was made of fermenting grapes, flour and water. Focaccia is documented to be 2000 years older than pizza. The birthplace of modern pizza was Naples. It was eaten in the 17th and 18th centuries but it became more popular around 1830. Pizza dough does use yeast. The acid from the tomato sauce in the center keeps the dough from rising in that area. Asian people brought water buffalo to that Campania area in the middle ages. The best mozzarella cheese is made from the milk of this animal and was often used on the pizza along with assorted meats and vegetables.

While sheep and goats acclimated to the mountainous lands of the northwest, massive amounts of ancient animal bones indicate that certain other areas also enjoyed a diet of cow. Central Italy used pig predominantly and the southern area along with the island of Sicilia seemed to prefer sheep.

Genova (founded 2000BC by Phoenicians and Celts) claims to be the birthplace of pesto. Etruscan spice traders brought basil to Liguria more than 400 years BC. This species of plant, with its small, intensely flavorful leaf, thrived along the Mediterranean coast. Their pesto was the best because they used the best ingredients...Genovese basil, Ligurian olive oil, garlic, pignoli, and Parmesan and pecorino cheese from the island of Sardegna. The first documentation of pesto was in the poet Virgilio's '*Bucoliche*' (around 40BC). He wrote, "The peasant Similo dines on a focaccia spread with '*moretum*', a sauce made of coriander, parsley, rue, and cacao (sheep milk cheese) ground in a mortar and bound together with olive oil."

Strabo's (63BC-24AD) famous '*Geographica*' contained history and descriptions of people and places all over the world as known to him. Four primitive tribes of Ligurii (the Oxybii, Decietae, Ingauni, and some Intemelii) "lived on sheep, milk and a drink made of barley. There were cattle and wild horses closer to the Alps. The Ligurii cut a great deal of lumber in the mountains and carted these trees, flocks, hides and honey to the Emporium in the ship building town of 'Genua' and received a return cargo of olive oil and Italian wine. Their own was bitter from pitch."

Italians lay claim to the oldest chestnut tree in the world, which is 3600-4000 years old and is located on the eastern slope of Mt Etna. It is believed these trees were introduced by the Greeks. Today miles of mountains thickly covered with Chestnut forests stretch from Piedmonte to Toscania, from Umbria to Basilicata. It seems quite probable this was also a staple to early people as it could be eaten raw, roasted, or ground between two rough stones to make primitive flour that could be converted to flatbread, or cereal with just a little water.

The Fava bean was cultivated in Egypt and Eastern Mediterranean as early as 5000BC and most likely found its way to Italy at this time as well. Often this bean was forbidden to be eaten, yet the peasants persisted as it was the bulk of their diet. Beans could be dried for yearlong usage. Gauls introduced chickpeas with their invasion into the north. Lentils in the south came from the Egyptians. Pliny (23-79AD) extolled the nutritious value of the fava and Apicius wrote numerous recipes. These were the only legumes until Christoforo Columbo returned from America with many new varieties around 1495.

Since the Bronze Age (2000BC) olives figured into the diet and wealth of the Mediterranean people for they learned to press oil. This condiment was used for sale and trade. Some of the best oil produced has traditionally come from Liguria and Tuscany.

By 241BC an annual tribute was demanded after the Roman conquest of Sicily that allowed Rome to provide wheat cheaply to its citizens. By 50BC Roman cultivation of wheat, spelt, barley, legumes, olives and grapes flourished. At one time Italy was the wheat capitol of the world.

An Etruscan tomb outside Rome (400BC) depicts a flat type of pasta being rolled out to enclose timballi and pies. Ancient Romans and Greeks used a broad noodle that was roasted on stones or in ovens. This was the birth of Lasagna...Italy's oldest known pasta. It was called legane by the Romans and laganon by the Greeks.

The first record of cooking pasta, *'De Arte Coquinaria per vermicelli e macaroni Sicilianda'*, was written by Martino Corno in 1000AD. In 1150 an Arab geographer Al-Idrisi reported Trabia, Sicily produced an abundance of "string shaped pasta that was being exported everywhere." The concept of extruded macaroni was likely introduced by the Arabs when they first conquered Sicily. The word *maccheroni* is perhaps derived from the Sicilian word *maccarruni* meaning "made from dough by force."

The first mention of ravioli was found on a statute in the cathedral of Nice/Nizza (of the Genovese Republic in 1233) with the words, *'Crosete sui rafirole'* suggesting ravioli pie. Medieval ravioli were four to five inches square.

Sicily was the first major producer of pasta but Liguria (1244 fidei) and Naples followed soon after. In 1279 a Genovese soldier listed in the inventory of his estate a basket of dried pasta. Eighteen years later (1295) Marco Polo returned from the Orient claiming he was introducing pasta to Italy for the first time. He was referring only to spaghetti. History books would repeat this silly and very incorrect notion of the origin of pasta for centuries.

The first cookbook, *'De Re Coquinaria,'* was written in the early part of the first century by Marcus Gaius Apicius, known for his exotic selection and preparation of food. Pliny the Elder tells us that Apicius moved in the circles of the Roman Emperor Tiberius (14AD-37AD) and son Drusus (who died 23AD). The following ingredients were posted in his book, however, there is no way of knowing the actual time in history they were first introduced into the Italian diet...Roman burger with pine nuts, honey melon, figs, apricots, dates, raisin-sultanas, fava beans, artichokes

onions, leeks, soufflé of small fishes, pear soufflé, pancakes with milk, boiled eggs, fried veal, steamed lamb, sea mussels, tuna, big shrimp, nightingale tongue, geese, pigs, chickens, dormice, grated sheep cheese, groats of oats, green olive oil, pepper, oregano, parsley, ginger, cumin, coriander, wine vinegar, honey, wine and honeyed wine.

His second cookbook was '*De Condituriis*' a modern confection devoted to garum and other sauces fermented and fresh.' The Romans often used *Garum* to hide the taste of spoiling meat. It was made with alternating layers of oily fish (like sardines) and entrails with lots of aromatic herbs covered in salt two finger high that was sealed in a container and left in the sun to ferment for several weeks. When stirred it was liquid. What is interesting here is that the concept of sauces was definitely in use at this time. (Poorer Romans ate a diet of fish, bread, grain, olives and obligatory wine. In 280AD Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius Probus gave permission for grapevines to be planted by common man.)

Pasta was originally sold by vendors at street corners. It was accompanied by an acidic sauce of vinegar or a little wine. People ate this with their fingers. A few centuries later other important sauces would begin to develop. Think of the Italian Flag...the green Genovese Pesto and the Milanese Parsley, the white Salsa Piemontese to which King Vittorio Emanuele would add truffles or the besciamella of Emilia-Romagna, and of course the more familiar reds of Salsa di Pomodoro alla Napoletana and the Roman Sugo Finto...just to name a few.

Perhaps one of the biggest contributions to Italian cuisine came around the fifteenth century with the discovery of the new world. Explorers returned to Italy and to Europe not only with new foods themselves but with rootstock, saplings, and seeds necessary to successfully cultivate the new crops. The tomato was by far the most important but so was the discovery of maize, squashes, manioc, potatoes, sweet potatoes peanuts, papaya, pineapple, avocado, chili pepper, cocoa, and other varieties of bean.

Since the beginning of time many civilizations invaded Italy and brought with them new foods and cultures, frequently reminding the 'conquered' of their superior intellect and lifestyle. 'Perhaps' we will never know the exact origin of these basic foods we love. 'Perhaps' some of the vegetation was already in use in another part of Italy. One thing is for sure. It was the Italian people themselves who captured the basics and then innovatively created something even better for us to enjoy!



Riverside, CA, May 20, 2026

Letter to my fellow writers at CWC Inland Empire Chapter,

Dear fellow writers of California Writers Club Inland Empire Chapter,

Using the definition of the current word assigned for this month, May, transience, I am here to announce that my husband Mark and I will be moving to Boise, Idaho to be close to our son and his family.

Saturday, May 23rd, I will have attended the CWC meeting for the last time.

Transience has many definitions of its meaning. For us transience right now is ending our 42 years of California life to go into a place very different as weather is concern. Also is very different as life style, shops, nature, opportunities for distance/international travels.

We will learn about exposure to the real transience of the life stock going to the mountain pastures in the spring and summer and back home in the low lands for the winter.

The yearly sheep transience or transhumance is a centuries old practice to maintain the natural pasture resources and ranching. It is still practiced in Idaho and largely in Europe. In Spain, historical contracts with the Kings, makes sheep transhumant protected by law. The sheep flocks move on their established route over the villages, vineyards, in vicinity of cities. The owners of the flocks are not liable for any damage that might be done as they go on their routs.

For us, The Anghels, transience is the realization that something I thought to be solid and permanent for our life time, proved to be temporary, ephemeral. The dictionary gives us synonyms as follow: temporariness or ephemeralness. The joy of being closer to family will take time to settle. The first reaction right now is being complete uprooted from a space where we grew as adults, as professionals, friends, neighbors, the beautiful places of California, the opportunities we were blessed with. We considered every achievement as a victory. A victory to learn the language, to get a job, to become more secure, raising our son, take the opportunity to develop our education, and last, but not least to meet the wonderful group of the California Writers Club, Inland Empire Chapter.

The autumn of 2016 was my first time to attend the club's meeting. A few months later I asked to join as a member. Through out the years I volunteered to work for the club in a number of positions: Program Chair, Secretary, report and describe in the newsletter the summary of the monthly club's events.

Amongst all the events at the club, I loved the January Published Writers Panel. Always I admired the work of our published writers and build a small personal library. Every one of them is a great role model. While I did not publish anything big yet, I had a few pieces in the two club's Anthologies and in the newspaper Fresh Ink.

Now, I probably need to end on a super optimistic note. I wonder if trying to replant some old trees with gnarled branches will be successful.

Always thinking of you,

Elisabeth Anghel, CWC IE Member





July Theme

Relaxation