

2021
ISSUE 1

WCA

WORDS



Welcome to the first issue of WCA WORDS, a literary journal. The idea for this monthly publication came from the Women's Cultural Alliance (WCA) Creative Writing group. WCA also offers a Memoir and a Short Story Writing group.

There are WCA members who like to write but don't belong to any of these groups. Then there are members who have never written but would like to try. We want to encourage everyone to write

So, the committee thought it would be helpful to provide a publishing platform for anyone who belongs to WCA. The result is this first issue of WCA WORDS, a literary journal. If you are not a writer, we hope you will be a loyal reader.

The WCA WORDS committee has developed a format and some guidelines. This is a work in progress. For now, please check out the guidelines listed on the back page of this literary journal and send us your prose, poetry, fiction or non-fiction. It could be something you wrote ten years ago or yesterday. Maybe, just maybe, we'll encourage you to sit down with paper and pen or laptop and write something for the very first time.

We are grateful to WCA members Wendy Israelite, for designing our wonderful cover and to Robin Mintz, who made WCA WORDS into an online journal. Thank you to WCA President Patti Boochever, who was most generous with her time to help make this project a reality.

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Contents*

God Goes To The Apple Store by Judith Huizenga

Let Me Introduce You To My Nephew by Linda Denning

My Singing Bowl by Rosie Hyman

Pandemic by Edythe Cohen

GUIDELINES For SUBMISSION

* The opinions expressed in WCA WORDS reflect only the views of the author and not those of WCA. Articles cannot be reprinted without the permission of the author.

God Goes To The Apple Store With Apologies To William Blake

by Judith N. Huizenga, MD

From heaven, God sees a long line
of customers that snakes
along the corridor
stopping at the store
with a sign that pictures
a bite out of an apple.
Ice glass walls show the gleaming shelves,
silver tablets,
colorful phones,
and gold watches, just like Dick Tracy's.

"Apple, this is me, God.
I would like to buy a watch where I can hold the world
in the palm of my hand and also
includes a heart monitor."
"Your feminine voice
doesn't sound like God.
Remember not even you can enter the sacred
Apple store - Covid 19 precaution."

God joins the line of smiling
customers outside the store.
They receive blessed packages in shiny white bags.
She avoids the haggard patrons grasping
torn brown sacks filled with broken
laptop computers, tablets, phones, dangling
charging cords and password lists.
They wait endlessly for help from Apple's
genius bar.
God gets her bag, leaves.

Surrounded by white clouds,
God sits at her mahogany desk,
laden with folders and Apple's instruction sheets.
"I can't set up this watch.
No one answers at Apple Care.
I must have some computer experts here.
Send down for Steve – Steve Jobs."
The clouds part. Steve appears.
"Steve, how are you doing in Hell?"

Did you repair your relationship with your daughter
whom you denied, scorned and used as a baby sitter?"

"God, I know, but I was adopted."

"No matter, Steve.

I need your help to set up my Apple watch
so I can hold the world in the palm of my hand."

God and Steve unwrap the black band
and the watch with a rose gold trim,
just like Dick Tracy's.

"You can program your watch with my outdated iphone.

But you need your own password, God."

"How about Hallelujah ?" "

"Too weak, put a dollar sign at the end.

Then you can hold

the world in the palm of your hand."

God presses the golden crown.

Tiny white, blue, green, orange, red circles dance on the watch face.

'God , the green runner is exercise:

Chose walk, run, swim, bike, or spin.

This is the watch, messages, phone, compass, and calculator,

The red circle is the heart monitor.

You can synthesize, colonize, collapse every moment

and digitalize, customize, and calibrate all actions."

Now you can hold the world in the palm of your hands.

God gazes down on the verdant summer trees,
the dogwood blossoms browned from the heat,
the sparkling oceans,
the majestic peaks that puncture the clouds, and
directly below, a crying newborn baby.

God removes her watch
whose black case is dark as the space beyond
decorated with an eternity of stars.

Let Me Introduce You To My Nephew

by Linda Denning, July 26, 2020

Nile is one of my several nieces and nephews. Named for the great river, Nile was created from the confluence when two great families, from different parts of the world, met in New York City. He is a great chess player, encouraged and taught at a young age by his dad, my youngest brother. Nile loves kids. As a teen, he volunteered at the Boys and Girls club in the Bronx, where he rescued a disabled boy who had fallen into the swimming pool. He was subsequently recognized by the mayor and received a college scholarship. He earned a BA in philosophy, and another in education, and teaches primary grades in a public school in Queens.

Our family is spread out geographically, so I haven't had frequent contact with many of my relatives. Last summer, though, on a trip to New York, Nile met us in Manhattan for dinner. After, we all walked to the Empire State Building, rode the elevators to the top floor, and looked out at the full moon and the Manhattan skyline.

Nile is so warm, confident, and unassuming, that I was shocked to read his Facebook post on June 9, 2020, in response to the Black Lives Matter protests after the murder of George Floyd. It gave me much to ponder. The title reads '*I Was Called a Nigger Today*.' He spoke about traumatizing experiences that had become normalized because of how common they had become. He said "as a teenager, I was handcuffed dozens of times. I was thrown against walls and searched. My picture was taken and my information written down. I was once smacked in the back of my head for talking back. Sometimes I was grateful if the officers let me go in time to catch the next train for school. I'd even say thank you." He said that he was never arrested. "I never broke a law..... I was calm enough under pressure and well spoken enough to get on with my day, but plenty of my friends were not as sophisticated and got their asses beat for it. Real talk. Let's not mince words here." "This happened because I was powerless and because the city {police} knew that they could get away with those kinds of tactics.... And being powerless and underrepresented is a staple of the black experience in America."

Nile wasn't seeking sympathy. What he wants to know is whether you are okay with any kid being targeted and having their fourth amendment rights violated. He asked, "if black people demanding justice looks un-American to you, then what does that say about what you think America is?"

I had no idea. Not that injustice occurs everyday in this 'land of the free and home of the brave.' After all, I had read 'the New Jim Crow.' I just had no idea that it hit so close to home. I felt so sad for Nile, and I had to take stock.

The words 'white privilege' are new to me. I have what I recently heard called my 'anti-racist credentials,' and I never thought of myself as privileged. It never occurred to me that by being white, I have unknown advantages that I take for granted.

I have a son, who is older than Nile. I don't fear that he could be casually and without cause stopped and manhandled by the police. I have felt protected rather than threatened by law enforcement personnel. I have not had to prove that my home or car belongs to me. I can enter any store and not be looked at suspiciously. I don't have to be careful about being too loud or too boisterous or too grand. I was not discouraged from looking at potential homes, or turned down for a job because of my skin color. I can't imagine what it's like to have to prove myself every time I leave home, or to have my home violated for unwarranted searches. I naively believed that punishments fit the crime, instead of sometimes being handed out to innocent people, just to close the file. I take for granted that the justice system will work favorably for me and mine.

There is a great reckoning going on in this country. Where will it end? Where do you stand? As Elie Wiesel said, 'silence only helps the perpetrator, not the victim.' Dare any of us remain silent?

My Singing Bowl

by Rosie Hyman

According to the book by Marie Kondo entitled *The Life Changing Magic of Tidying Up* we should only keep objects that spark joy within us. It seems like I have a lot of objects that spark joy and since I'm a very sentimental person, it's often difficult for me to part with "things."

One of these objects that stands out in my mind that I will never part with is my "singing bowl." For those of you who have never heard of a singing bowl, it is usually made of metal and produces sounds and vibrations when hit or circled with a mallet. Those sounds and vibrations are supposed to help you relax.

My singing bowl speaks to me on so many levels. It was a gift from my dearest childhood friend who passed away almost eight years ago. We were the same age however, I always felt like she was my mentor and my confidante. My dear friend Jane was wise beyond her years and helped me through some challenging times in my life. Even long before she got her Masters Degree in Spiritual Counseling, she had the unique ability to listen, advise when asked and be a comfortable sounding board for me.

When I would tell her how grateful I was to her for helping me navigate life's traumas, she would always remind me that I had helped her through every difficult time she had encountered in her life also. I did not have the professional credentials that she had and always felt like she helped me more than I did her. She completely disagreed with my assessment.

She gave me the singing bowl twenty years ago after my first husband passed away. She thought it might help in my period of grieving if I used the bowl to calm my nerves, meditate and try to be more mindful. Along with her presence, I felt like the singing bowl did help me center myself at a time in my life when I felt, at sixty-two years old, I had been set adrift on an uncharted course.

Now I look at my singing bowl and all my memories of my friend Jane come racing back to me. We had so many private jokes, mutual friends and things we would laugh about together until our sides ached. We knew each other's families and practically lived at each other's homes. I adored her parents, idolized her older sister Coco and got a kick out of her younger brother John. She felt the same way about my family. We would affectionately refer to her parents as El and Hill and my parents as Mill and Bill. (El and Hill were short for Eleanor and Hilding and Mill and Bill were abbreviations for Mildred and Bill.) Our parents became friends as a result of our friendship and they always felt like we were a good influence on each other.

Now my experience with my singing bowl is bittersweet. It reminds me of happier days and makes me miss my friend Jane so much. At the same time she still comforts me with the memories my singing bowl evokes of her wisdom, her brilliance and her deep spirituality.

Pandemic

by Edye Cohen

Now you're here again
I was only one when you paid your first visit

You took my father, not me, my mother or older brother

It happened so very fast

Like a blast of cold Russian Air
I was so sick I lost all of my hair
They called you Typhus

In 1918 we didn't welcome you Spanish Flu
We really didn't know what to do

Now I am 103, again you come to call
They call you Covid 19

But we are much wiser
We have a vaccine developed by Pfizer

Yes we are much wiser!

GUIDELINES for WCA WORDS

What is WCA WORDS?

WCA WORDS is a literary journal open to any WCA member and will be published approximately once a month. Our goal is to provide a publishing platform for members who like to write.

How do I submit a piece for publication?

- Your submission must be your original work. It can be poetry, fiction or non-fiction of 750 words or less. A submission should not be an announcement of events or book or movie reviews.
- A submission should have a title and be typed in a format (not PDF) that can be edited for spelling, punctuation and typo corrections. We will contact you if any substantive corrections need to be made.
- Submissions are sent to Iris Shur (irisjimshur@aol.com).

What are the Publication Policies?

- Proofreading and determination of appropriateness for publication will be done by a committee chaired by Iris Shur. Publication is also subject to review by the WCA Board.
- Per Jewish Federation of Greater Naples (JFGN) guidelines, “Items of controversial opinions and points of view about political issues will not be accepted for publication.” Please keep your language and subject matter appropriate for the WCA audience.
- It will be clearly stated that the opinions and viewpoints of the author do not reflect the opinions of WCA or JFGN.
- Work that you have previously published elsewhere will be accepted, so long as you have permission to do so.
- Writers will need to agree to a release form before the work can be published. The form will be emailed to you after receipt of your submission.
- Although writers may submit multiple items, only one submission per member will be selected for publication in any given month.