

## SHARING FROM THE WELL

I Am From  
—John Merrill

I am from the big river, first in shoes and booze and last in the American League

I am from rusty parts and things reused—share croppers, hot summers and orphanages

I am from lightning bugs, trains, and sweaty t-shirts

I am from strong coffee, shaky hands and thick cigarette smoke

I Am From  
—Elizabeth Johnson

I am from the Bitterroot, the Rockies, the sharp and wild Cascades

I am from abuse and reparative conversations and pain that bubbles tenaciously throughout my lineage

I am from forgiveness and hugs and 'if you can't say anything nice, don't say it at all'

I am from far away travels and 'don't get hurt!'

I am from love, not wealth

From duty above pleasure

saving before spending

service before self

I am from the heartache of having a child perish

before my ending of life

I am from optimism and fear always holding hands

I am from belief that it will all be ok

I Am From  
—Marv Klassen-Landis

I am from a farm beloved by nine generations of Landises,  
A farm replaced by an industrial park

I am from carving whistles and digging up Sweet Cecily roots  
and grafting apple trees with Grandpa,

fishing and birdwatching with Grandma,  
gardening and laughing and crying and flower arranging with Mom,  
milking and haying and communing with hawks with Dad,  
roaming the fields and meadows and streams with siblings and cousins.

I am from four-part harmony congregational singing, shoe-fly pie,  
Pennsylvania Dutch accents and “but what will people think?”

I am from sudden “too-young” deaths: Grandpa—heart attack,  
Dad—car accident. And long cancer “too-young” deaths—Mom,  
her sister.

I am from hitchhiking and riding freights around the U.S.,  
Searching, searching....

I am from marriage, home, children, grandchildren, community

An Excerpt from a Reflection Paper  
Patty McDevitt

Yes, I know grief--I am continuing to learn its wisdom--to make peace with it  
(this so very intimate part of life), it, grief, just keeps taking pieces of me.

And I am shattered, and I am whole, and I hold both and find my center.

An Excerpt from a Reflection Paper  
John Merrill

I think we experience grief and mourn for individual growth and transformation; I also think we  
have a responsibility to the community to mourn. It sets a tone and example for others and  
gives support and validation to others.

Music Recommendation  
John Merrill

I recommend a song by a midwestern folk singer, Greg Brown from Iowa. He put music  
to some poetry by William Blake in 1985. I still listen to "On Another's Sorrow" at least  
weekly, for me it really captures the shared nature of grief and suffering. [Album:  
Songs of Innocence and Experience]

## Migration

Marv Klassen-Landis

I walk into the bay up to my chin  
and lose myself in windless water  
and cloudless sky. I turn, slow as sand  
through an hourglass, look back  
to the smudged line of beach.

An undulating ribbon appears  
to hover just above the water;  
I wait and watch a line  
of butterflies approach,  
then pass, so close that I see  
the light glowing through each  
orange-and-black wing.

## Mist

—Marv Klassen-Landis

you are not sinking  
    the mist is rising  
allow yourself to float  
    love will hold you

Collaborative poem from October webinar:

Grief

Grief echoes in the night

    Night wraps me in love

Grief lingers and grief deepens

Grief is ever near

Grief hovers above me in the sky

    Sky is dark but there are stars

        Stars are hidden tonight

Grief is transforming

    Transforming my life one cell at a time.

Grief is the teacher I never chose

Grief—I'm lost in thoughts and words

    Words escape my mind and heart

        Heartbroken, I miss your love and presence

    Words are lost beneath the tears

        Tears flow endlessly

        Tears heal my soul

            Soulfully I awaken deep parts of the unseen

                Unseen I sit on the cushion

                Unseen scar of grief

                Unseen love awakens gently

    Tears are hidden

        Hidden, alone

            Alone I walk in the evening of life

            Alone on the edge of the unending flow of river

    Tears arrive from nowhere

        Nowhere can I see you....Ah! There you are

    Tears open me to the life force of the world

Grief is my companion

    Companioning is a journey of being

        Being happens in the moment

            Moment by moment the journey unfolds

        Being is enough, today I need not do

Grief envelops

Enveloped in a feeling of truth, I play

Play without hesitation, dance without restraint