

# FOR ALL OUR VOICES

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You haven't heard from me for a while because my mother, Gladys Hoskins, passed away in July. If you have gone through this passage, you know how it can turn your emotional, physical, and spiritual world upside down. So many memories and feelings to sort through . . . and in this case the contents of the house where she'd lived for sixty-eight years.

Mother was a remarkable person and I have studied her all my life. Through Mandy in *Borrowed Children* I tried to imagine her childhood, so different from mine. Here's a picture taken after the flood I wrote about in *Come a Tide* ("It got us this time, / we had to admit, taking lunch at the rescue wagon.") Mother is the one in the striped shirt.



[photo credit: Harlan Daily Enterprise, 1977]

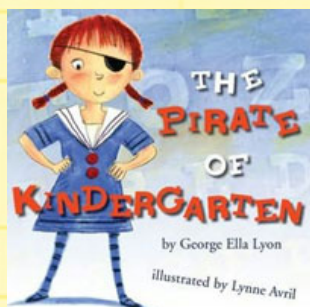
## NEWS

### picture books

*You and Me and Home Sweet Home*, illustrated by Stephanie Anderson, is just out from Atheneum. Kirkus called it "a heartfelt addition to any collection." SLJ wrote "Lyon's reputation for lyrical writing is well established, and the pleasing cadences in this moving story do not disappoint."

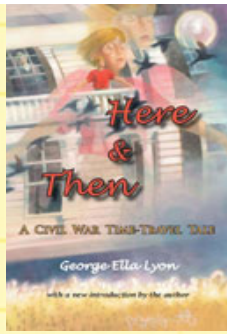


*Trucks Roll!* has been licensed to Scholastic for their Book Club.



I've seen the first proofs of *The Pirate of Kindergarten*, illustrated by Lynne Avril (2010), and am thrilled at the way she captured my experience as a child dealing with double vision. Till I was in fifth grade I thought everyone saw that way. Lynne has brought wonderful energy to the palette, the main character, and all those double exposures.

### novels



A new edition of *Here and Then: A Civil War Time-Travel Tale* is just out from MotesBooks. It includes an introduction about the writing process and there will be a teacher's guide available at [MotesBooks.com](http://MotesBooks.com)

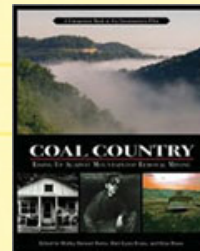
Brenda Bowen has agreed to represent *Oh, Baby!* I'm now working on revisions, including a new title.

### poetry

"If This is a Story, How Come There's No Plot," "How Could She," and "Unacceptable" are just out in *The Journal of Kentucky Studies*.

### other

Selections from our *Public Outcry* CD are included in the CD that accompanies the [new film \*Coal Country\*](#), released by The Sierra Club. I also have an essay, "Blood and Coal," in the companion volume of writings against mountaintop removal coal mining.



### POEM

I often ask kids to write about a person or a moment that changed their lives. It doesn't work well if I just give them that prompt and ask them to write. Instead, we do a lot of material gathering. I ask them to quickly sketch the moment, without judging the drawing, and then I ask them to put themselves back there and take a sensory inventory. What can they smell, touch, hear, taste, see? Often they take notes right on or around the drawing. I ask who's there, how old they are, and whether anybody says anything, searching for texture, character, dialogue. Then I ask if anything changed in that moment. With all these different ways to approach the memory, they are ready to write. Here's an example:

#### THE VISITOR

That man, that shining man!  
grackle-black hair, dancing eyes  
a voice like effervescent velvet  
sitting on the rose couch  
in my parents' living room  
strumming a guitar - a guitar! -  
and singing

*Once a jolly swagman  
camped by a billibong  
under the shade  
of a coolibah tree*

his Australian mouth kissing  
strange words into song  
almost like laughter.

Why, he was an adult and alive!  
happy as a kid, I could tell,  
with my ten-year-old knowing,  
and this was sweeter than the blackberry  
cobbler Mother had served in his honor.  
Right there, that night, Desmond Tease

waltzed my sky with a whole new  
matilda of stars.

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## EXERCISE

Now it's your turn. Don't forget to do the drawing and the questioning. You may be surprised by what comes back to you.

## QUOTATIONS recently copied into my journal

"Health is the natural result of the attention all the parts pay to each other."

--Ron Kurtz

"You might as well answer the door, my child./ The truth is furiously knocking."

--Elizabeth Alexander (inaugural poet)

"I love my daydreams in music. I see my life in terms of music . . . ."

--Albert Einstein

Happy Holidays! Happy writing!

George Ella Lyon

