

FOR ALL OUR VOICES

Issue No. 10

February 2013

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Winter . . . Brrrrrrr. The holidays are over, the greenery carted off to mulch. Relatives gathered in to heart and hearth have flowed back to their lives again, and here we are in the New Year where, just a short while ago, we thought all things were possible.

I don't know about you, but I am just as twisted and finite on January 1st as I was on December 31st. Champagne does not equal change, though I see it has all the right letters in it. We need to be patient. New life takes a while to sprout. Winter is the hedge that looks like it will never be a leafy margin again.

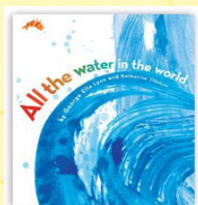
But it is also soup and firelight, fuzzy socks and book after book after book. May Sarton wrote, "Plant dreaming deep," and this is the season for it.

NEWS

PICTURE BOOKS:

"Which Side Are You On?" *The Story of a Song* has won the Aesop Award, given by the Children's Affiliate of the American Folklore Society. My thanks to the Society and the Committee for this honor, to Christopher Cardinale, illustrator extraordinaire, and to all at Cinco Puntos Press who bring such artistry and passion to their work.

I just received the first proofs of *Planes Fly!* illustrated by Mick Wiggins. What a thrill! It's so beautiful, elegant and witty. I pored over those pages, delighted as a kid in all they reveal. A jumbo-jet of thanks to Mick; to Richard Jackson (our editor); Deb Sfetsios, the art director/book designer; Ariel Colletti, and all at Atheneum who made this possible. *Planes Fly!* will take off in the fall.



Check the cereal aisle: *All the Water in the World*, illustrated by Katherine Tillotson, has been selected for General Mills' Spoonful of Stories series. It is coming to you in specially marked boxes of Cheerios in March!

POETRY:

Many-Storyed House, a memoir in poems, is in production at the University Press of Kentucky. I am still dreaming about it.

Children's Poet Laureate J. Patrick Lewis and I have collaborated on a YA collection of poems spoken by people at the 1963 March for Jobs and Freedom,

better known as the March on Washington. Being immersed in this material has been life-changing, and working with Pat has been a deep delight. Tentatively titled *Voices from the March*, the manuscript is with an editor now.

QUOTATIONS recently copied into my journal

What are days for? / Days are where we live. / They come, they wake us / Time and time over. / They are to be happy in: / Where can we live but days?

--Philip Larkin

"I summon every version of myself to join this workshop, this force, this legion."

--Leonard Cohen, on songwriting

WRITING EXERCISE and POEM

POEM/SONG:

Have you had the experience where someone says something you've heard a thousand times but all at once you hear it differently? That's a great writing moment! Here's the first verse of a song that began that way for me.

Fairy Tale Ending

I have just not been myself.
I've been everybody else:
Cinderella in cracked shoes,
Old Snow White singing the blues,
Jailed Rapunzel who can't keep
her golden hair from falling out
the tower window at the prince's shout
And I know
you know
how it is

You can hear the whole song by clicking on this [link](#). My thanks to the Kentucky Foundation for Women for a songwriting grant in 2012.

WRITING PROMPT:

Make a list of very familiar phrases, like the one this song begins with. Say them out loud until one of them shows you a new meaning. Let your writing follow that energy wherever it leads. If the phrase is one you associate with a particular person, you may be drawn to write about him or her as well. Don't hold back. Let one thing lead to another..

like winter to spring!

Meanwhile, may the time of your life be truly yours,

George Ella Lyon