

FOR ALL OUR VOICES

Issue No. 4

June 2010

In This Issue

News

Poem

Writing Exercise

Quotations

Quick Links

[My website](#)



Forward this email to a friend

Subscribe to Our Newsletter!

Spring: a time of new beginnings: blossoming, gardening, nest-building, commencing! My younger son just graduated from college and the family gathered to celebrate. Yet it seems such a short time ago that I dropped him off at preschool and came home bereft ... Life whirls along.

My most recent book, *You and Me and Home Sweet Home* (illus. Stephanie Anderson), is about literal nest-building: a community comes together to build a house with mother and daughter Cheryl and Sharonda. It grew out of an all-women Habitat build I was part of in Lexington in 2000. Here I am with Diane James, aka Wonder Woman, our amazing leader.

Now, ten years later, *Home Sweet Home*, has been chosen as an Honor book for the **Jane Addams Children's Book Award!** My thanks to all involved in building both house and book, most especially Richard Jackson, my editor.

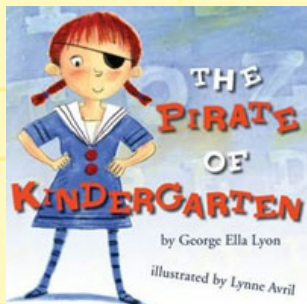
When I share this book with kids, I ask if any of them has ever been without a home or between homes or has left one home for another. We brainstorm about what home means and about how it would feel to help build one for yourself or another family. This opens up rich conversation and writing possibilities.



(L to R, George Ella and Diane James. Photo credit, Ann W. Olson)

NEWS

picture books



The Pirate of Kindergarten, illustrated by Lynne Avril, will be out in June. It's received **two** starred reviews already! **Kirkus Reviews** says "Ginny loves reading circle, but getting there is a bit of a challenge because only half the chairs are real. Figuring out which words to read is tough, too. See, 'Ginny's eyes [play] tricks'-she's got double vision and doesn't realize that's unusual. ... Lyon's simple, declarative text effortlessly puts readers into Ginny's head, and Avril's whimsical mixed-media illustrations give them her eyes, overlaying one image slightly off its original in a satisfyingly disorienting fashion."

novels

My YA novel, *Holding On to Zoe* (formerly known as, *Oh, Baby!*), was accepted by

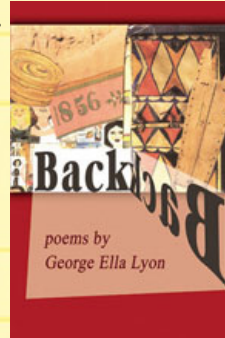
Margaret Ferguson at Farrar, Straus & Giroux. Thank you, [Brenda Bowen!](#)

poetry

As part of National Poetry Month, I had poems featured on three blogs: [Sylvia Vardell's Poetry for Children](#), [GottaBook](#), and [Bunny Eat Bunny](#). It's so exciting to be part of the larger conversation of poetry in this way. My thanks to all who made it possible.

I'll be part of the ALSC Poetry Blast at ALA in D.C. from 5:30-7:30 p.m. on June 28th. For a list of the full line-up of wonderful poets, visit [ALSC Poetry Blast 7](#).

Back: Poems will be out next month from [Wind Publications](#). Kentucky writer Richard Taylor calls it "a journey of spiritual exploration and transcendence . . . invoking the anonymous voices of our recent and ancient tribal past-among them a Gypsy, a Buddhist boy, a Sioux woman . . ." I've gone out on a limb of the great family tree here, and I am very curious to see if readers will follow.



other

I will be the [Featured Author](#) for the Summer issue of [Appalachian Heritage](#) magazine. In addition to new work (mine and that of lots of wonderful writers), it will include a biographical and a critical essay, and photographs by Ann W. Olson.

The script for Alec Volz's adaptation of *Sonny's House of Spies* is now available from [Playscripts, Inc.](#)

I wrote the Foreword for [Appalachian Children's Literature: An Annotated Bibliography](#), compiled by Roberta Teague Herrin and Sheila Quinn Oliver. This enormously helpful work is just out from McFarland and Company.

Much of my writing time lately has gone into editing *Harvest of Fire: New and Collected Work* by Lee Howard, to be published by [MotesBooks](#) in July. As I say in the introduction, Lee was "an Appalachian, lesbian feminist, working-class, God-haunted poet." She was also a dear friend of mine who convinced me, through our conversation and through her work, that I could write from all the voices of family and neighbors in my head. Lee died suddenly in 2003 at age 51, her one collection (*The Last Unmined Vein*, Anemone Press, 1980) long out of print. It's been my privilege to bring her powerful words together and hand them on. We need her voice.

POEM

To continue the theme of beginnings:

AT LAST

I am ready.
My bags are packed.
I have paid for my ticket
and paid and paid
all the times I got too scared
to go. I have the map
which I inked in and painted myself.
Look where I put the mountains,
the city, the sea!
I have my walking shoes,
my dancing shoes, hiking gear,
velvet dress. My Book of Wisdom

which is blank. A quiver of pens.
My traveling guitar.
And I have a compass-
waterproof, good at heights
or depths. It is my heart
in the right place
at last.

copyright© 2010 George Ella Lyon

WRITING EXERCISE

Consider what is beginning in your life at this moment, being aware that an ending is also the beginning of what follows. How did you get here? What takes you forward? What are you carrying? Is there a dream in your pocket? Free-write about this and see what emerges. Perhaps a narrative, perhaps a list of images that play off one another. Be open to what comes. See where the writing takes you.

QUOTATIONS recently copied into my journal

"You can never get enough of what you didn't really want in the first place."
--Michael Meade, *The Soul of Change*

[B]eyond any experiences we have had, however awful, is our soul, our essence, perfect and unassailable, our core. The soul's deepest wish is for us to see this and realize that it is this essence we have in common with all beings."
--Pat B. Allen, *Art As a Way of Knowing*

Happy summer! Happy writing!

George Ella Lyon

