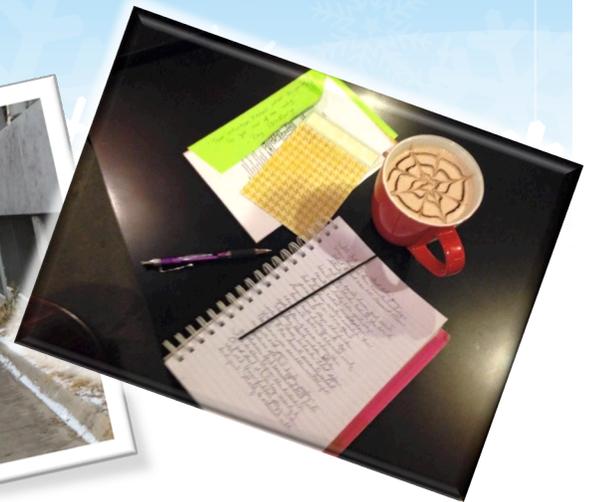


NeWP Writing Marathon

I only went out for a walk, and finally concluded to stay out till sundown, for going out, I found, was really going in. -John Muir

Lincoln Haymarket

The 2016 winter writing marathon launched from McFarland's and Sons Irish Pub in the historic Lincoln Haymarket. From there 13 writers set out on foot to explore with their pens and fellow writers. This launch opens the Nebraska Writing Project's eighth year of writing marathons. Popular writing spots were Crescent Moon, Indigo Bridge and local art museums.



Save the Date!

2016 Spring Marathon

Stuart, Nebraska
April 9, 2016 at noon

The 2016 spring marathon is set to launch at the Cast Iron Grill in Stuart, Nebraska, on Saturday, April 9, 2016 at noon. All TCs, family, and writer friends are welcome to join in exploring Stuart and the surrounding communities. RSVP to dweis@cox.net

Our plan is to wander, to settle easy, and to write. To read what was written and to smile and say thanks, and to let the sparkle of the eye say all that true teaching needs to say.

Our plan is to listen, to watch, to wait at the corner where dawn turns red to gold.

Excerpt from Reflection on the Writing Marathon By Kim Stafford



We Meet Again

By Bailey Feit

We meet again.
The quilt that inspired my poem about grandma and sewing being passed down
Generation to generation

Seeing this quilt for a second time in the same gallery as before
2 years later
Helps me center myself

Brings my thoughts back to family
Family is at the core of my life
Not only the family I was born to, but my school family,
the family I married,
and my writing family

Even though I may not know everyone
in my writing family personally
we are still a
family of writers.

I'm overwhelmed by the connection I feel with these pieces
and to the artist.

She learned how to quilt and sew from her
grandmother and
mother
As I did

We
Our Universe
Family
We Are Here





those Lincoln residents combined wild nature with sedentary settlement, into which a relative stranger as myself could move. And who can look upon them but

By Kristofor Hans

I've heard it said that if you work in a bakery, the last thing you want to eat is a donut. How then, as an arborist, do I enjoy my days off in Lincoln, a city defined trees? Am I to be reminded of work wherever I go? To look at every tree and think, 'How would I climb that?' or 'That tree looks like an (expletive deleted) nightmare?'

Upon recently moving to Lincoln, I was perplexed to see such robust trees in an area so removed from water. My father explained they are the legacy of a strong Arbor Day group that set to planting in the 50's. When I look at these trees then, I cannot but dwell on their origin: a time capsule that is not static but continually growing. In an age where we barely think past the present moment, what of those who gifted trees to people whom they would never know?

I suppose I should thank these forebears for providing me a means of employment. But more so creating a world of wonder. We humans are great at terra-forming, but usually a concrete landscape or monotonous croplands. By planting trees,

be captivated by organisms older, larger, and more mysterious than ourselves?

For me, they are more than a remote obelisk to be revered. My work requires I be intimate with them, exploring every branch. While the cut of a saw is hardly a caress, in removing deadwood I improve the tree's health, extend its longevity. And when I prune live tissue, I must consider how it will benefit the tree, not just today but years and decades from now. It is then I have insight into the thoughts of those who planted them in the first place. I will not see the result of my work but it must be passed on to future generations. And so on my days off, as I encounter omnipresent trees, I no longer fear having "work" on the brain. Rather, I envision cycle of life.



At the Great Plains Gallery

by Jen Stastny

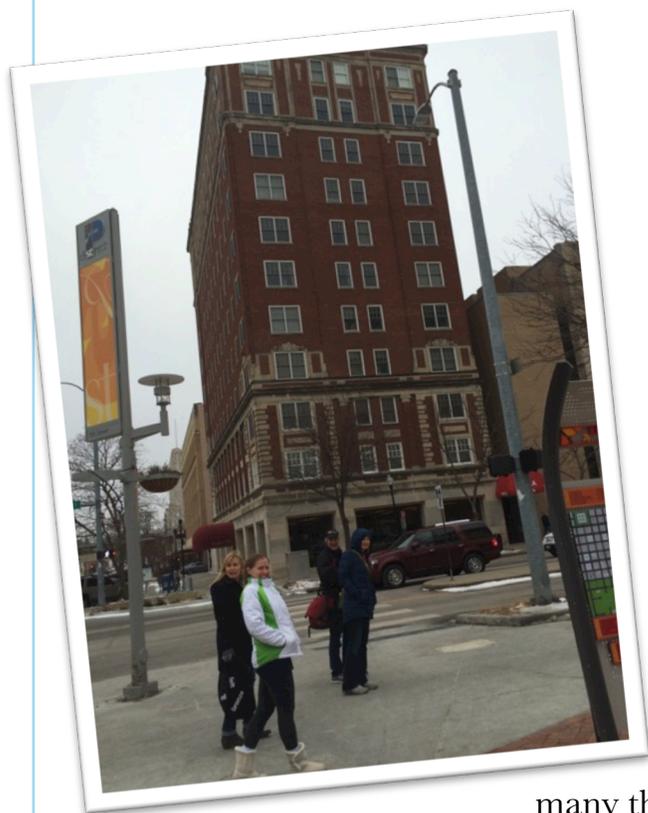
“We are star people”

We are women who create needlework – the commingling of art and functionality to express ourselves and to always prove our worth until the expression becomes the value and comfort is incidental. Art feeds and clothes us.

The sheer white drapery and blue smoke figures – humans coincident in the magic of experience – on the radio during my drive, an author’s voice fading through the static of a weakening signal, she said, “Though the dead do not sit beside us, they are with us every day.” Anyone who doubts that has only to listen to the mother and child – father and child – to see how we pour ourselves into others – how we receive what we do not intend – and how we, if we’re lucky, hear the voices of our dead wisp from our own mouths like the spirits we hope are real. When I say, “Oh, very good,” to my students, they hear tepid praise, but I hear generational love and deepest affection as my dad’s marveling at the brilliance of children’s minds is my marveling, too.



WINTER 2016



At A Novel Idea by Jen Stastny

What is it about the puzzles of mystery that intrigues us? Our minds, like the arms of the octopus that lurks in my mind’s eye today – exploring paths, pulling threads of ideas – electric lights leading, tripping along towards understandings.

A compulsion – a need that follows the inhale of the oxygen that makes it possible. Even in sleep, we think. Even in think, we think. More oxygen clarifies. Without it, we breathe deep and dream.

“Where’s your husband these many a days?” the plaintive nasal voice croons (music in the bookstore). That is a mystery whose threads I do not wish to pull.

This room is part of the Lincoln of my nostalgia. When Katherine is here, I am transported to a time when my life was ideas and their interchange. So

many threads to pull. So many enigma smiles – eyes to recognize – and a whole me to explore and to meet. Hot nights on the capital balcony.

Ringling laughter.

The flat thumps of chucks on concrete as we walked our dreams in the nights.

*At the Glorious Upstairs Space Whose
Name I Do Not Now Know*

WINTER 2016

By Jen Stastny

Flowers of faces – flowering youth, a water lily of words on this particle board pond. I steal moments here outside the doore of Cassandra Morton, Whitney Williams, and Ashley Goodwin. They'll never know we were here. What do they do here in their space of marvels?

Large discs cut in the surface of the pipe fastened to the ceiling. A tin straw? A home for hamsters? For bees? A silk greenery arbor.

We are back to silk.

The music of her life washes over us.

Her rings are beautiful – the kind of pretties I'd like to make to highlight the natural – the silver merely a vehicle of transport and attachment.

This is a community of artists.

Mutually inspiring, I hope. Mutually appreciative of the gifts they are receiving.

Learning to appreciate the components of an art – the instruments playing a composition or the properties of the charcoals or paints.

What they do naturally and what they do not make the experiences more rich.



Record Store Meditation

By Diana Weis

There is a meditation in flipping through albums in an old record store.

An air of anticipation, of wonder of what comes next.

What the next flip might offer.

It's almost addictive,

like an early version of a computer screen,
arrowing through looking for one to catch your musical eye or soul.

The cover images, poster boards of youth,
pull us back to the memories,
emotions only songs can ingrain.

Now must-covered,
Nostalgia at its finest.

Each cover carefully depicting the theme it contains,
like aged tattoos.

Some classic, some tasteful,
some a faddish reminder of an impulsive youth.

Robert Brooke

Winter Writing Marathon January 23, 2016

*Gwen Westerman quilt/poetry exhibit,
Great Plains Art Center*

INA/FOR MY MOTHER (2005)
Gwen Westerman

Westerman says she started this quilt when her mother went on dialysis. A collection of turtles, swimming on a blue background of alternating sky and water; stylized turtles in many fabrics joining hands and feet in a border dance of staid energy. At the center, four turtles make a circle with their clasped hands.

I'm thinking of the artifice work of honoring our parents. The way my generation, and Westerman's, tries to craft something to articulate our parents' lives, as we understand them. Just this November, for instance, my Dad – now 86 – sent me his first musings toward a memoir, naming some of the power in his transition year (1986) between retirement and his new home, between life with his mother and life after her death. I'm a writing teacher. What I do is respond to early drafts, helping writers find what could and should be said from the first thoughts they put on paper. So my work over winter break was about how to respond to him – how to tell him his life transitions are fascinating, curious, and worthy of further exploration.

In our family, we've lost one Elder to kidney failure, so I'm interested that Westerman started this quilt at the very start of a family dialysis. My eye is drawn to the seven blood red turtles in

in her design. Seven of roughly thirty six, in a dancing border that just now looks like the blood stream to me – that pulse of blood and air that's part of any dialysis tube when it starts up, before that flow gets going. I'm remembering sitting with Kate's dad in the kidney center, the fleece quilt on his knees, the clear plastic tubes linked up to the dialysis unit. The turtle dance of blood.

Westerman says in the artist's note that "Ina" in her title is both our Mother Earth in the Dakota language, and also at the same time our individual human mother. Her Dakota family gave water names to all the siblings. Sitting in the space before the quilt, I can almost imagine the movement of that most ancient Mother Blood in the pre-creaceous seas, the basic ancient life stream that mothered us all.

Save the Date! 2016 Writing Marathons

Winter Marathon - Downtown Lincoln McFarland's and Sons'

Irish Pub 710 S P St.; downtown Lincoln, NE Saturday, January 23, 2016 Lunch at 12:30; launch at 1:30

Spring Marathon - Stuart, NE Cast Iron Grill

806 East Highway 20; Stuart, NE Saturday, April 9, 2016 Lunch at 12:00; launch at 1:00

Platte River State Park Marathon 14421 346 St.; Louisville, NE

Owen landing boat dock Saturday, September 24, 2016 Meet and greet at 11:00; launch at 12:00

Platte River State Park Retreat

Owen cabins 8 & 9 Friday, September 23rd-25th RSVP for a space in the NeWP cabin at dweis@cox.net