

The Window

Written By David Trujillo

Spring winds rattle the window.
It is like a breathing human
In and out blowing all the time.
In the end we all battle
to breathe and give life to our bodies.
The wind calm for a
moment and you notice
The sweet smell of a
bucolic field in the
distance, not that far away.
MY pastoral dream
of spring and sweet smells,
wafts past my senses.
Come to that place
where spring shines
and it is a new day.

Mark and Baseball

Written by Katelyn Feldman

The love a young boy has for the game.
Mark loved third grade. He was in gifted
classes. He was bored easily and disrupted
his class a lot of the time.

His cousin Brooks, would come over to play
once Mark got stuck in the tree branch. His
mom had to help him out.

The summer of third grade the true love of
baseball began. Mark and Brooks tried out
for the team. They made it.

Brooks was the tallest kid on the team, most
of the kids were small or short. The coach,
Mark's dad, wanted to win one game for the
season. The boys struggled. The Aggies
struggled.

The other teams were bigger and came to
win. The Aggies needed bigger, taller
players, better hitters, and better catchers
and pitchers.

Mark's grandfather Paul Hall told him about
the Astros, the iron man Joe Niekro, who
played for the Astros for ten years. In 1979
iron man was made pitcher of the year.

Paul feild his two grandsons with all the
good players from the 1970s and up. Paul
thought that baseball was amazing and
should be shared.

Mark's grandfather collected baseball cards
for years in the sporting shops.
Paul gave Mark the best ones and shared
the newspaper and magazine clippings of
Astros highlights of the best players.

Paul loved both his grandson and his two
granddaughters as well. He shared his love
for the game.

Brooks showed off in practice today. He was
ready to win a game. The other kids were
frustrated with Brooks and wanted a team
practice.

Brooks began to fight with everybody
including Mark. Tom, Mark's dad and coach
of the Aggies, knew it was time to take Mark
and Brooks to the Astros game.

Tom asked his sister, Brooks's mom, if it
was okay to take Brooks along. She said
yes. They planned it for a Saturday. The
tickets were almost sold out. It rained the
whole day. The sets were soaking wet. The
Astros won.

Tom, Brooks and Mark were sick for a week. Mark got more than a cold, he got very sick from the game. It was a long ride home.

After a few weeks Mark's mom let him play baseball again. They won their first game. Brooks helped Mark strike someone out. They worked together to win.

Mark and Brooks spent most of their time at Paul's and Ann's house. Paul had another story of how the Astros won three division titles. It was Billy Wagner, the special player who helped them win in 1997 to 1999.

Mark remembers the time he played on the same team as his cousin. Mark remembers being barely big enough for his uniform. He remembers his love for the game.

Mark Appel ended up being the number 1 pick in 2013 to help the Astros win the world series in 2017. He played his hardest and hard work paid off.

The end

Untitled Essay

Written By Terri Ticer

Love is like a garden. One must cultivate the soil, plant the seeds and tend to it carefully while weeding it for it to thrive. Most people have goals around love. Once the garden is in bloom, or they've tied the knot reaching their goals, they stop tending to the garden and let the weeds overcome.

Generally, one will try to save the garden while the other seeks pleasures elsewhere because

maintaining a personal garden is too much work like love.

I have cultivated a few gardens in my life. I have also had the list, the last trip, and the comparison of touch. While in the beginning he was kind to me, and I speak collectively of all my exes, once his goals were met, he was not mostly because of unrealistic expectations and demands imposed – all of which were impossible for anyone to meet.

Generally, people have their ideal fairytales, king or queen not just for a day, but for all eternity. When reality is anything but, they place higher demands on their sig other instead of appreciating the struggle of building and fortifying stronger together as one in life. When that happens, one works hard to survive, while the other strives to leave. When one works to leave, any excuse will do.

It's called the sacrifice of life generalized as casting out the old to bring in the new. The new one who will make me happy when I expect too much and contribute too little. Entitlement is the death of everything.

It's not easy to let a garden die, and it's even more difficult to struggle to keep it alive while another destroys it as, if we place too much effort struggling against the death another imposes, we die with it.

I appreciate everything my exes brought to the table in the beginning. I will always cherish them for the things I learned from them as they are the greatest gifts of all. Their gifts expanded who I am. I also appreciate the conclusion of the relationships as I learned when and how to respectfully leave and still remain friends. I learned to survive death, and the illusion of love.

Unrealistic expectations will kill anything. When something is dead, it is better to move on to the land of the living. Relations are about growth or death; whether we stay in or leave, we either grow and blossom, or wilt and die. It's only a matter of how much poison or love we give and take.

Personally, I like herb gardens as they are healing, and partnerships in relationship for as long as they last. Realizing that, I also know some of the best loves have no romance for romance is nothing but an illusion we beg for and are often deceived by. When we are deceived, even if it's by self, love dies.

Regardless, gardens only grow when tended to; whether it is a garden of weeds or exotic flowers, what we tend to thrives.

Letting go: Children leaving home

Written by Terri Ticer

Letting Go is not so much about cutting the apron strings, but about letting our children grow out of them so they can become something else. The sooner we do this, the more capable they are. When they are ready, there is nothing to fear.

While many parents have difficulty letting their children go, it was different for my son and me because he was prepared in ways I was not when I left home.

Although I was confident in him, I worried when he moved out; but I never doubted his ability to care of himself, or to make the

right choices. I only wanted his first flight to be a success. I knew he needed my faith, so I gave it to him.

As it was, he was prepared to leave when he did, so he was successful! This did not mean he floated by on a magic carpet doused by white privilege, it meant he worked harder for his independence than he had ever for anything in his entire life.

His courage still astounds me. When he was 17 and left for college, and yes, he did this all on his own, I realized he would be okay as he had been raised to think for himself, and to be fully responsible for his own actions. From the time he was 4 years old, he was not punished when he made a mistake; instead, he learned other options of how to do things better so he learned more from a mistake, or poor choice initially, than he would have if he would have done everything perfectly the first time around.

Mistakes offer us deeper understanding of the issue, while first time perfection offers little. So, it is better to learn from a mistake than it is to do things right the first time as if things mess up later, we are not as prepared as we are if we learned from a mistake.

Just as well, if he didn't want to do something, he wasn't forced as I was as a child; instead, we respectfully and pleasantly discussed a myriad of actions for various results. Based on his choices, he lived with the consequences without judgement. His decisions were respected

until he decided to make change. When he wanted change, we discussed many possibilities.

In this way, he learned his actions determine his destiny.

As it was, it was simple for him as child. If he did not want to brush his teeth, I was fine with it. No reason to argue as he claimed his power in a negative way instead of a positive one. All I said was, "Don't worry about it. If you don't brush your teeth, they'll go away and then you can have dentures like Grandma." He responded by stating he had his adult teeth still to come in, so it didn't matter what happened to his baby teeth. Since he didn't believe me when I linked the health of both, I had him talk to his dentist about that. He never failed to brush and floss again and he did so without a reminder!

If he didn't want to do his homework in First Grade, he didn't have to. He could stay in First Grade for all his life if that's what he wanted. As long as he was happy with the results, I was. Moreover, I would only be pleased he could drive himself and all his classmates to school while I slept in! He got one F, and after that, all A's. "He wasn't going to be driving cars and still be in the First Grade."

Again, I was impressed by his final decision as the only thing important about the journey is how it ends.

Falling back on the old rule of: *Tell me, I forget. Show me, I learn. Involve me, I*

remember, it was like this with everything. Basically, the most which was said when advice was refused was, "Well, let's see what happens if you do it like that? Who knows? You may teach this old dog a new trick or two!" Believe it or not, sometimes he did! When he did, I was relieved because he was right and I was not. This was good for his self-esteem.

These lessons he learned fast and never forgot.

Having the power to make his own decisions, he was always responsible as he knew from a very early age you earn what you put into something. If you don't like something, consider what you gave to it, and change yourself first as all will change with you and your input. If not fairly compensated, make a boundary, work things out, and figure out how to respectfully never let that happen again. Don't have a fit. Good manners and consideration of others get you much further in life.

Treat others as you would have them treat you.

All of this was habit for him by then.

After having been fully responsible for himself in all ways for a few years, one day he said, "Adulthood is no fun." He wondered why he rushed into it?

It was then I realized my boy had become a man and actually had been one for a very long time, and long before he left home.

As I looked at the man who stood before me now, I recognized how graciously and courageously he had faced every challenge of his life and mastered all. He never gave up until he got it right. Every change he realized was a change he made in himself first.

This young man had not had an easy life; but he is so graceful and compassionate in all things, one would think he has led a life of privilege because he has become wise and he never played the victim, nor did he ever blame anyone for anything as he realized his power to make his own destiny.

In all that we do, we become.

Those are the words he grew up with.

It's not how the journey begins; it's how it ends which counts.

Excellence is achieved after much failure and effort.

Look at what all you've learned!

If someone doesn't like you, don't worry about it; find someone who does.

Respect is not commanded through fear, it is earned through compassion. We have earned each other's respect. What we have earned is precious.

When my son left home at age 17, I thought he was all grown up and he would not need me anymore. But that was not true. Still, at the end of the day, he'll call about something. Sometimes just to chat by now; other to contemplate the day, or to share

thoughts and feelings about things as we have always done from the time he was very young. He calls to wind down. I am humbled he still needs me, and honored he grew up to value my opinion.

Although I thought the apron strings had been cut when my son first left home, now I realize they've only been re-tied in a bow like the Circle of Life when it becomes Infinity.



For A Moment, Rest,

Written by Jodi Drinkwater

Rest, Sweet, in lullaby.
 Moon dips down.
 Stars smatter
 across your mind.
 Rest, My Sweet, for now,
 for journey's end.
 Not over.
 Just begin, again.
 But not yet, Dear.
 Now comes sleep
 and safe harbor.
 Safely here, a gift,
 to carry home.
 Not now.
 Now come lilting waves
 and rocking air.

Now's time
in another place
where dreams gestate,
where body's toil can wait,
but for a moment.
For a moment, rest,
and languor—
a moment carry lightly
as foam,
as lightly as stars
to carry home.

Rains on the Vast, Lost, Array

Written By Jodi Drinkwater

FADE IN:

EXT. THE PLAINS OF SAN AUGUSTIN -
DAY

The cowboy refused to call it The Very
Large Array.

NARRATOR

The cowboy refused to call it
The
Very Large Array.

SID

It's not poetic . . .

NARRATOR

. . . he argued.

Then he rode Brisk out of the
wood
that lined the river that ran on
the south edge of the Plains
of San
Augustin.

SID

(v.o.)

The Plains of San Augustin .
. .

NARRATOR

. . . the cowboy thought.

SID

Now that's poetry.

NARRATOR

The plains stretched out
north and
west, and the cowboy had
long since
left the lonely dirt road that
allowed tourists to enter and
the
few scientists to access The
Array.

The plains stretch out north and west,
and the cowboy had long since left the
lonely dirt road that allowed tourists to
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The Array.

FLASHBACK: EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

He had always come to the Plains of San
Augustin alone.

This was his place of aloneness. But the
cowboy didn't consider that entirely bad.
There was a wild and free part of him that
no one could tame, and here on the wild
prairie, his heart ran wild and free.

NARRATOR

He had always come to the
Plains of
San Augustin alone.

This was his place of
aloneness. But the cowboy
didn't
consider that entirely bad.
There
was a wild and free part of
him
that no one could tame, and
here on
the wild prairie, his heart ran

brow. Nothing.

JONAH

. . . Wha wha wha hey? Isn't they any fishies in this gaw-forsaken sea-yuuuuuuuuuuuuuum?

Jonah gathers in the string hand over chubby hand until he retrieves the hook. He clumsily pinches the hook and turns it over inspecting it with one big eye.

JONAH

Hooooks gotta croooks in't.

Jonah sits back down with the hook and smooths out the bend with his thick, calloused fingers. He tosses the hook back over the side of the boat and props the stick on the top of his foot.

JONAH

Hooooks needsa bendsa catch us some fishies. Can you seessum? Fishies? Nothing happens.

JONAH

(pounds fist)
Weeee neeeeeds fishies.

The boat rocks.

JONAH

The gaw made us a fishyman, and (pounds fist) weeee neeeeeds---

The string startles, and Jonah jumps up, teetering the parrot on his shoulder and hauls back the stick.

JONAH

Weeeeeee gotsus a sumpin.

He tugs again on the stick and the string resists, snagged on something in the water.

JONAH

You thinka wee gotsus sumpin, Gaw?

The parrot SQUAWKS with the jostling of Jonah's movements. The string relaxes again.

Jonah yanks on it.

Nothing.

Jonah plops angrily back down on the bench.

JONAH

We don'ts gotsus a gawdamm nuffin.

The bird SQUAWKS. Jonah's eyes widen.

JONAH

Ooops. Notta supozed tuh speakie you name in bain.

The parrot lets out an approving PEEP.

Jonah checks the line again.

Nothing.

Jonah's stomach GROWLS and GURGLES audibly.

JONAH

The tum tum angwee. Weee needsta catchus a wiggler.

Jonah looks out over the ocean. There is no sign of shore. Jonah is lost far out at sea. He gazes out, his forehead wrinkled.

JONAH

We no seezy the lan, Gaw.

He places his hand over his eyes like a visor and squints.

JONAH

We no seezy nuffin . . . nuffin
but

wahwah an stars.

(pause)

Howa wuzit we's gets here,
Gaw?

Howa wuzit we's gone git
home?

(TO BE CONTINUED....)

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Please send a bio and up to three short
pieces of writing (approximately 2000
words or less) to
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lfeldberg@thelifelink.org by June 25th.