

# My Writing Life



May 2012

I hope this finds you enjoying some glorious spring weather, digging in your garden or just relaxing with a good book! It's been a very full winter for me, with lots to report, so read on!

*Linda Cardillo*

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## A Writer's Corner

I am surfacing after spending a good deal of time at my desk in the last several months immersed in (and often consumed by) my work -- completing Part I of my historical novel, *Vittoria*, set in 16th-century Italy, and preparing a reissue of my short story, "Victory Parade." More about each of these projects later in the newsletter. . .

Most of the writers I know have rituals surrounding work—a piece of music; a special blend of tea; and a particular pen or notebook for those of us who write first drafts by hand. A writer's space often takes on meaning beyond its physical boundaries as well. Like our rituals, we attribute special powers to our place -- powers that can influence our ability to generate the words that are our livelihood. Our desks provoke, reveal and, like a well-trained surgical assistant, slap the right instrument into our waiting hand (or at least, have it easily within reach).

I thought you might enjoy the following catalog of my particular writer's corner, captured on a Saturday afternoon in the photo on the next page.

A wide-screen monitor and one of those curved, ergonomic keyboards dominate the surface.

Above the monitor, a bulletin board covered in images of Vittoria Colonna; photos of the places she lived; the drawings Michelangelo created for her; a few excerpts from poems he wrote for her, including "And consequently **terror**/ closely linked to beauty/feeds my great **desire** with a strange food;" a fortune from a cookie saved many years ago, "Fear and desire -- two sides of the same coin;" and an illustration from a *New York Times* article, "The Joy of Quiet."



A bookshelf filled with books on writing; a small album of photos taken on a visit to my great aunt, Zi'Ersilia, in our ancestral village; Italian and French dictionaries; *A History of Women's Writing in Italy*; and a biography of Marguerite de Navarre (a contemporary and friend of Vittoria Colonna).

A narrow-ruled writing pad containing my first notes on a potential new project, the first line of which reads "My mother was an opera singer; my father a botanist."

Two bracelets, one of teal beads interspersed with cloisonné balls and one cuff of hammered brass and copper. (I take them off when I type.)

A red teacup.

Hard copy of my "Victory Parade" story.

On the wall to the left, framed prints by the artist Wolf Kahn -- a gift from my friend and sister author Bethe Moulton. His vivid, evocative landscapes play with color the way I play with words.

What surrounds your desk? And what does it reveal about you?

## Upcoming Events

June 9, 2012

"Resistance and Resilience:

Understanding and Overcoming Challenges to Creativity and Career"  
All-Day Workshop with Geri Krotow

Capital Region RWA  
East Greenbush Library  
East Greenbush, NY

February 2013

"Vittoria Colonna--Poet, Heretic and the Only Woman

Michelangelo Ever Loved"

Guest Lecture  
Atalanta Club  
Longmeadow, MA

Would your book club or women's group enjoy an author visit?

Contact me at [linda@lindacardillo.com](mailto:linda@lindacardillo.com)  
or P.O. Box 298  
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### A Gift for You



**VICTORY PARADE**



### Help Support Diabetes Research with Your Bids at Brenda Novak's Annual Auction for the Cure of Diabetes

I have once again offered items for auction to support diabetes research. You can bid on my Italian feast, "[Sit Down to Dinner with the Dante Family](#)," and enjoy imported pasta, olive oil, balsamic vinegar, tomato and basil pasta sauce and chocolate biscotti along with autographed copies of my novel *Across the Table* and my cookbook, *Come Sit at My Table*. I've also teamed up with sister writers Geri Krotow and Ann DeFee for an [Amish-themed basket](#) from the Three Glindas. There's lots more to choose from at the auction site, which lasts through the month of May.

To view the auction, please go to [brendanovak.auctionanything.com](http://brendanovak.auctionanything.com). Thank you!

Several years ago, before the Kindle®, the Nook® and the iPad®, Amazon brought out a selection of brief electronic publications called Amazon Shorts. My short story, "Victory Parade," was one of them. When Amazon Shorts disappeared, so did my story. I've decided to reissue it as a gift to my readers who didn't have the opportunity to read it when it was first published. You can download a PDF of the story for free on my website at the "On the Bookshelf" tab at [www.lindacardillo.com](http://www.lindacardillo.com) or contact me at P.O. Box 298, Enfield, CT 06083-0298, for a print copy. Enjoy!

## Vittoria

*An excerpt from my work in progress. . .*

The procession from the harbor to the cathedral took nearly two hours, first in a carriage drawn by four of my father's best horses, sent earlier in the month to make sure they were calm and adapted to the stony terrain of Ischia Porto. Along the route the folk of the island pressed to the center, hoping for a glimpse of us as they tossed flowers and waved the colors of both houses.

"They love you!" murmured my mother in wonder, as cheers rose whenever I raised my hand to acknowledge the crowd.

"Why shouldn't they! She's a prize for Pescara and for Ischia," answered my father with a squeeze of pride as he circled my shoulders. What he didn't say, but we all knew, was that this marriage was a prize for my father as well. I thought back to the night so long ago when he charged me as his warrior as he sent me off to Costanza's court. In his eyes, I knew I had done well. Ferrante's love, Costanza's joy, even the rejoicing in the streets were the fruits of my years in exile.

Costanza was right when she described me as fortunate to have found passion in my marriage. Had I not - had Ferrante and I simply seen this marriage as duty to our families, nothing more - it would still have proceeded, with the same pomp and ceremony. My father would still have satisfied the wishes of the king; the houses of d'Avalos and Colonna would still have been allied; even the people would still have lined the streets, although probably more out of curiosity than genuine affection.

But I had done something more than fulfill the expected duty of any high-born daughter. I had won all their hearts, and to my father, that was as powerful as if I had conquered them riding at the vanguard of his army.

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Thank you for your  
continued enthusiasm  
for my work!