



# My Writing Life

April 2020

## Reaching out in a time of profound disconnection

Dear Reader,

I've begun every message to friends in the last weeks with the phrase "I hope you are well and safe," and I extend the same to you. I listened to Andrew Cuomo, the governor of New York, today (as I try to every day) and heard him express a personal message after recounting the daily facts and figures of the Covid-19 pandemic. He talked about how our experience of the pandemic was going to be transformative on a personal and social basis, and our challenge was to make sure the transformation was positive.

I have already witnessed actions that are helping us to maintain our human connections despite our physical isolation. Friends have been spreading favorite inspiring words that have been rippling out into the world. Each day, a new poem or brief piece of wisdom arrives in my mailbox. My own offering was a poem I discovered by Gregory Orr that I share with you here now.

"Let's remake the world with words"

Listen

Let's remake the world with words.

Not frivolously, nor

To hide from what we fear,

But with a purpose.

Let's,  
As Wordsworth said, remove  
"The dust of custom" so things  
Shine again, each object arrayed  
In its robe of original light.

And then we'll see the world  
As if for the first time,  
As once we gazed at the beloved  
Who was gazing at us.

I think the poem resonated so strongly with me because that is what I try to do as a writer. I'm not a medical worker saving lives on the front lines, but I hope that with the words I put out into the world I can make the world "shine again."

Please enjoy the rest of this newsletter as a small respite from our withdrawal from the world.

## Web News (or what I do when I'm staying home)

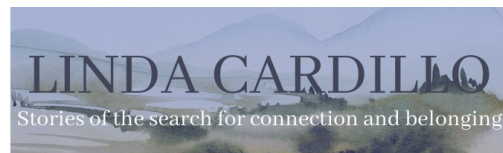


**Bellastoria Press** launched a new website this week to mark its growth and transition as an independent hybrid publisher and celebrate its new mission:

To discover compelling and beautiful stories from talented writers

To provide those writers with a pathway to reaching readers with well-crafted, skillfully designed and carefully produced print, digital and audio books in a supportive and collaborative partnership

Please share the site with writers and



I have also sent forth into the world the fourth incarnation of **my author website**.

I'm grateful to my author colleague and tech guru **Susanne Dunlap**, who created the site, taught me how to navigate and make it my own, and whose generosity and wisdom have been a welcome light in these pandemic times.

I invite you to visit, read an excerpt or try out a recipe. As a special bonus, if you don't already have one, you can download a copy of my cookbook, *Come Sit at My Table*, at the bottom of the **Recipes** page. Look for the book cover in the lower left corner.

## From the Archives

One of the more painful parts of writing a novel (in addition to the act of creating it in the first place) is letting go of "one's darlings." More than once I have reluctantly agreed with my editor that some material simply had to go.

But I've learned that cutting material from a book has allowed me the opportunity to tap back into that reservoir of words and share them in other ways. What follows is an entire chapter I cut from *Love That Moves the Sun*. When I found it today, it seemed particularly apt in these extraordinary times. In it, Vittoria Colonna returns to Rome seven years after the devastation of the Sack of 1527 and the plague that followed it.

"The Rome to which I return after so many years is not the city I had left."

[Read more...](#)

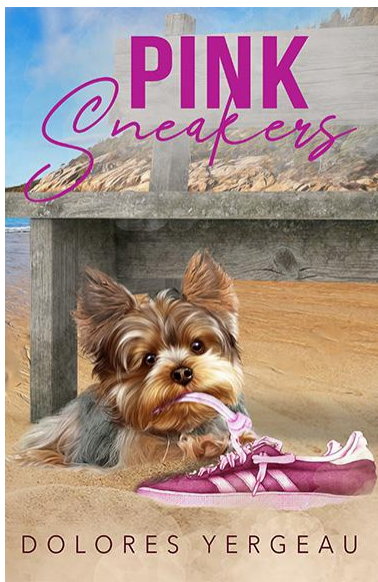
## Zooming into your book club

Like many people, I've been doing lots of Zooming—Friday night virtual cocktail parties with writer friends, Bellastoria partner meetings and discussion clubs that normally meet in one another's homes over brunch. It's been an opportunity to see and talk with friends, put on a little makeup and change out of the sweatshirt I've been living in for too many days. Recently, two of my upcoming book club events have been switched from in-person to Zoom gatherings.

If your book club is venturing into virtual gatherings and you'd like me to join you, please **contact me**. I'd love to share my thoughts on what goes into weaving my stories—where the ideas come from, how I do my research and how I get those words down on the page. And hearing from readers directly about their reactions to my books absolutely makes my day. Please get in touch!

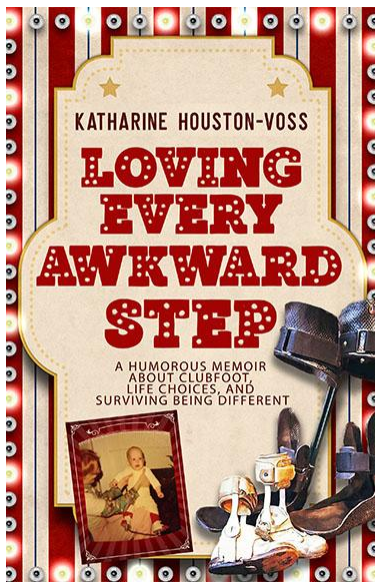


New Releases from Bellastoria Press



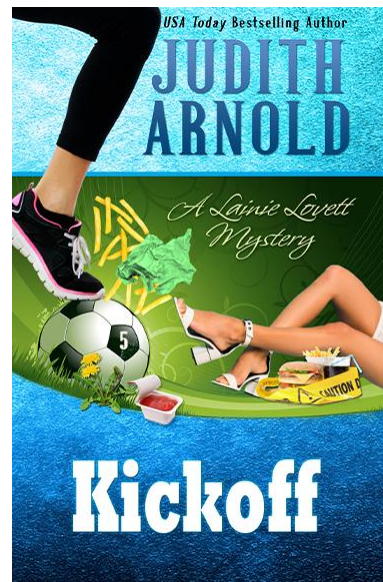
[Click on the image for book details](#)

**A story of second chances, self-discovery, and the power of art to bring people together.**



[Click on the image for book details](#)

**A humorous memoir about clubfoot, life choices and surviving being different**



[Click on the image for book details](#)

**Lainie Lovett steps in to help when suspected infidelity and a suspicious death threaten the marriage of one of her friends.**

## Family Celebrations in the Time of Covid-19



My granddaughter, Kaia, was born on December 22. In Korea, the homeland of my daughter-in-law, a baby's 100th day, or *Baek-il*, is a cause for celebration and gratitude that the child and mother have flourished. In these pandemic times, Kaia's *Baek-il* took place in photos shared with the family. Dressed in an adorable new outfit and surrounded by the symbolic foods offered in gratitude, my beautiful granddaughter presided with a regal bearing over the fuss being made by her parents.

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How are you celebrating important family moments in your life?

