

# LINDA CARDILLO

Stories of the search for connection and belonging

## My Writing Life

August 2021

## This Day in History



During the night of August 12-13, 1961, the German Democratic Republic began the construction of the Berlin Wall, dividing the city and preventing East Germans from crossing into the West. A symbol of the Cold War, Die Mauer, as it was known in Germany, came to represent the divisions between Eastern and Western Europe until it was finally demolished on the eventful night of November 9, 1989.

## A story inspired by my experience living in Germany's wine country

I was a newly arrived expatriate in Germany in 1988, when the country was still divided and travel between Eastern bloc countries and Germany was severely restricted. My husband had been offered a position in an exchange program run by his company and we embraced the opportunity for our children (then nine and three) to experience life in their father's

hometown.

In the first few months we were living in a hotel while we searched for a home. Looking for ways to entertain my daughter while her brother was at school (and preserve my sanity), I set out with her one morning after breakfast to explore the neighborhood. To my relief, I discovered a playground not far from the hotel. It was early in the day, and the only other visitors were a mother and her two little boys. Ursula von Breitenbach and I struck up a conversation that day that was the beginning of a lifelong friendship. During that first autumn she introduced me to her family, her village and her life as a vintner in the Riesling wine region called the "Rheingau."

My memories of the time I spent on her hillside vineyards and in her centuries-old winery became the starting point for a story that also reflected the extraordinary moment in Germany's history when the Berlin Wall fell.



This story first appeared as a novella in the anthology *The Valentine Gift*. When the book went out of print a few years ago, I was fortunate to obtain the rights back and once again share this tale of a resilient love that withstood the challenges of a divided Europe. Because I now control the rights, I was also able to give the book its original title, *True Harvest*, which was inspired by this wonderful quotation from Thoreau's *Walden*.

“The true harvest of my daily life is somewhat as intangible and indescribable as the tints of morning or evening. It is a little star-dust caught, a segment of the rainbow which I have clutched.”

—Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*

# True Harvest

LINDA  
CARDILLO  
*a novella*

Buy now from Amazon

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A reluctant daughter takes over a centuries-old winery in Cold War Germany

A Polish physician crosses into the West during the harvest

A love story that defies time, distance and political upheaval

When her father has a stroke, Marielle Hartmann gives up her rising career as a banker to return home to run her family's 300-year-old winery just as the harvest season begins.

Because she's been away from the land, Marielle lacks the knowledge, the instincts, and the confidence necessary to achieve a successful vintage. Encouraged by her mother to seek help, she grudgingly turns to Tomas Marek, a member of the Polish crew that has worked her family's vineyards for years.

Violent weather, different world views and Marielle's pride work against them, but a near-fatal accident with one of the crew forces Marielle to trust Tomas if she is to save the harvest.

As their relationship deepens, will it survive both political barriers and family loyalties keeping them apart?

## Thank You!

### #1 New Release

"Linda Cardillo can make any era of Italy come to life, from the Renaissance to the early and mid twentieth century, when the stories in this collection take place. In each story, the women appear to be subjugated, yet they wield their power in their own mysterious ways, emerging triumphant despite the odds that are stacked against them. Cardillo is an atmospheric writer--and a gastronomic one, describing food with mouthwatering sensuality. Poignant, enigmatic, and filled with heart, these stories

are a delight." - *USA Today* Bestselling  
Author Judith Arnold

**Many thanks to my loyal readers, who  
helped to make *Italian Tales* the  
#1 New Release on its launch day!**

Buy now



## Another Wine "Story"

Because this is the wine issue of *My Writing Life*, I want to share with you a surprise gift I received from my niece and her Italian husband, who discovered the winery Masseria Cardillo in Basilicata, Italy. This precious bottle travelled from Italy to Vienna, Austria, to my home in Western Massachusetts, hand-carried by my brother-in-law.

Someday we'll open it, but right now, it has pride of place in my home. I'm fairly sure the bird perched on the "C" of Cardillo is a goldfinch, which is called "cardellino" in Italian.

My paternal grandfather, Federigo Cardillo, the inspiration for Paolo Serafini in my novel *Dancing on Sunday Afternoons*, owned a saloon in the early 20th century. One bottle survived from the bar, etched with the words "Cardillo's Private Stock." I think he would have appreciated seeing his name continuing to be associated with the fruits of the vine.



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Many thanks for your continued support of my writing and  
my warmest wishes for good health!

**Linda Cardillo, Author**

P.O. Box 298,  
Enfield, CT 06083  
(413) 567 3278

[Contact Me](#)

