



January 2026

Fiction as a Form of Hope



Olga Wisinger-Florian: *A Bouquet of Poppies by the Window*

In Lily King's novel *Heart the Lover*, the protagonist, a novelist, is being interviewed at a literary conference in Iceland. She's asked "Love in your novels, I think, acts as a form of hope. Do you believe this?" Yes, she answers. "It's the only form of hope we have."

When I wrote romance for Harlequin (20 years ago!) I also believed in the need for hope in my love stories and recognized how necessary it was. I knew I was not only offering an escape to readers, but also the possibility that one can find courage and overcome loss. I still believe in the power of story to offer hope, perhaps now more than ever.

I recently ran into a reader at our local grocery store. The market tends to be the kind of place where you are likely to have conversations not about what you are making for dinner but what challenges you are facing in life, followed immediately by "How can I help?" As soon as she saw me, the woman reached out for me and said, "Please don't stop writing! Your books are my respite."

I am so grateful that I can continue to find the words that bring a little light into the world. I hope my books are also bringing you respite.

Take care.
Linda

Upcoming Events

JANUARY 31

Straw Dog Writers Guild
Author Showcase

4:00 - 5:30 p.m.
Forbes Library
20 West Street
Northampton, MA

FEBRUARY 8

Philopotocos Society

12:00 - 2:00 p.m.
St. George Greek Orthodox
Cathedral
22 St. George Road
Springfield, MA

FEBRUARY 22

Book Party!

11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
The Traveling Yoga Company
2 East Street
Southampton, MA

MARCH 8

Book Club Discussion

11:15 a.m.
St. David Episcopal Church
699 Springfield Street
Feeding Hills, MA

More Accolades!!

**“Sensuous coming-of-age
foray of art, passion, womanhood,
and self-discovery.”**

Booklife Reviews Editor’s Pick

“Cardillo’s prose blends intellectual sharpness... and lyrical restraint, treating sensuality as an extension of artistic inquiry rather than a descent into vulgarity... aesthetic passion, emotional insight, and a young woman’s determined claim to a self shaped not by the world’s gaze, but by her own.”



Paint the Wind
Semi-Finalist

The Importance of Reader Reviews

If you are a long-time reader of this newsletter you know how important reader ratings and reviews are to the visibility of a book. Every now and then I do need to remind, supplicate, and entreat you to let the world know what you think of my book. If you could give it a star rating or pen a few words, I would be most grateful!

Meanwhile, here are some excerpts from recent reader comments.

"In a story of surprises, depth and scope, *Paint the Wind* will hold you in its spell, make you weep, make your heart swell with gratitude." Patricia Lee Lewis on Goodreads

"I loved this book. I could not put it down. The author writes beautifully and the characters stay with you well after you have finished the book." Lori on Goodreads

"This is historical fiction that honors both history and the women who lived through it. Linda Cardillo's historical research and descriptions of characters, scenes, and action make this a visual novel. You won't want to stop reading." Pat on Amazon

"As in all of her writing, Ms. Cardillo brings us into the lives of her characters with such detail you feel immersed in the scenes. You can almost smell the paint and varnish in the artist's studio and you feel the pain in this woman as she moves through her life." Kindle customer

"I was immediately drawn to Maya. I suspect every woman will see some of herself in this protagonist. I hope like Maya, readers will want to claim their power and share their visions. She reminds us we must evolve and be who we are meant to be." Cindy Lutz Kornet on Amazon

"Paint the Wind is an exquisite, inspiring novel about the power of art and the power of women." Judith Arnold on Amazon

"Linda Cardillo paints a lovely historical portrait of a woman artist of the early 1900's in Vienna. From a romance to the blossoming of a woman artist, we follow the trajectory of this woman's life at a time when women artists were often invisible. The support of other women is both believable and inspiring." Renee Schultz on Amazon

When Maya and her father arrive at her grandparents' home on the island of Skiathos in January, Maya's grandmother and aunts prepare a feast to celebrate the return of their son and brother. One of the traditional dishes they make that day is Fasolada, a hearty bean soup.

FASOLADA (Greek Bean Soup)

Ingredients

1 ½ tbsp olive oil
1 yellow onion diced
2 celery stalks diced
2 medium carrots diced
3 garlic cloves minced
1 tsp paprika
½ tsp salt
½ tsp pepper
¼ tsp chili flakes
1 bay leaf
2-14oz cans white kidney or cannellini beans drained and rinsed
2 tbsp tomato paste
1 ½ tbsp vegetable stock paste
3 ½ -4 cups water
Crumbled feta and fresh parsley for garnish

Instructions

1. To a medium-large soup pot add the olive oil and heat to medium-high. Once the pot is warm, turn to medium heat. Add the diced onion, diced celery and diced carrots. Cook stirring occasionally for 8-10 minutes until the veggies are softened and have developed some color.
2. Add the minced garlic, paprika, salt, pepper, chili flakes, bay leaf and rinsed beans. Stir and cook until fragrant, about 1-2 minutes.
3. Add in the tomato paste, vegetable stock paste and water, stirring to make sure everything is combined. Bring the soup to a simmer over high heat and then turn to medium-low. Keep the soup at a simmer with the lid most of the way on, leaving a bit of room for the steam to escape and cook for 30 minutes. Stir a couple of times during cooking. Taste and adjust seasoning with more salt and pepper if desired.
4. Serve the soup garnished with crumbled feta cheese and fresh parsley if desired.

Adapted from Food by Maria, <https://www.foodbymaria.com/>

Download a PDF version of the recipe

Contact me

if you would like me to visit with your book group.

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