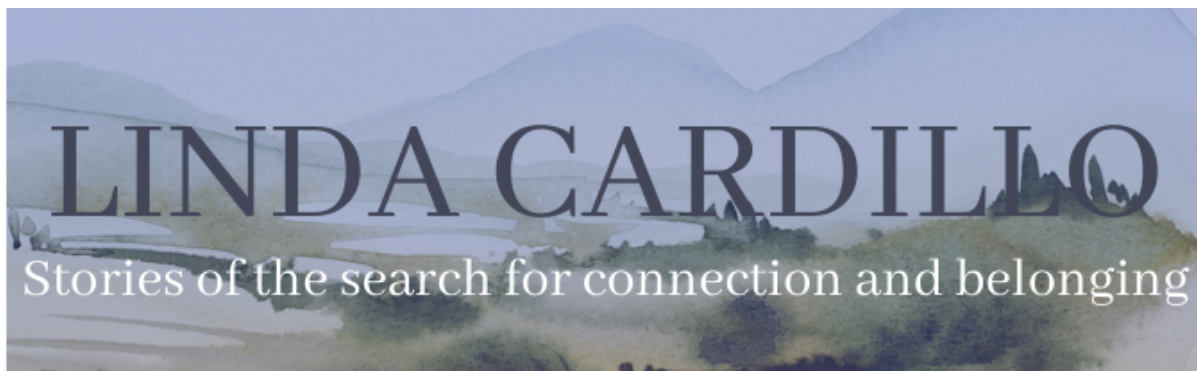
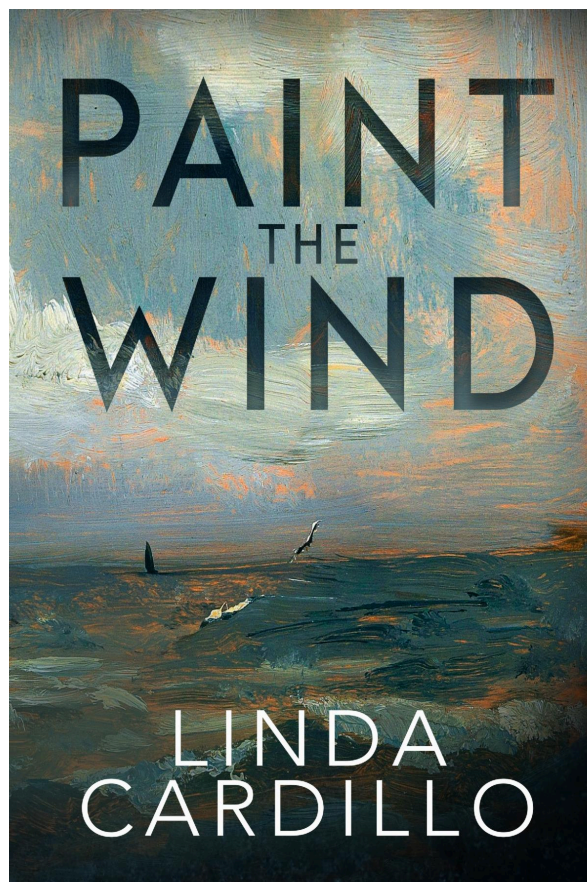




May 2025

Cover Story



About the Cover

I'm thrilled to share with you the cover for my upcoming historical novel, the result of a deep dive into the art created by Austrian women artists at the turn of the twentieth century.

The painting that forms the background of the cover is *On the North Sea* by Olga Wisinger-Florian, an avant-garde Impressionist painter whose later work embraced the vivid colors and bold strokes of Expressionism. Her paintings appeared multiple times at the Vienna Secession exhibitions, as well as in Paris and Chicago. She is one of many Austrian women

artists of the time whose compelling work and challenging lives were part of the inspiration for Maya Sircos, the protagonist of *Paint the Wind*.

About the Book

Maya Sircos, daughter of a Greek shipping entrepreneur and an Austrian aristocrat, has never quite fit into the upper class world of Vienna in 1900. Caught up in the crucible of intellectual, artistic, and scientific transformation that defined the city as the cultural capital of Europe, she defies her upbringing and scandalizes both her family and Viennese society by becoming the muse and nude model for an ambitious young artist.

Banished by her parents to her grandparents' home on the Greek island of Skiathos, Maya encounters a visiting woman painter who challenges her to create art herself, rather than continue as the object of someone else's vision.

When she returns to Vienna, she is driven to reinvent herself, achieving some modest recognition. But to establish herself as a serious artist, she must overcome the art world's perception of her as merely a model, navigate an unexpected pregnancy, and confront the hostility of the culture toward women painters.

Manuscript Milestones

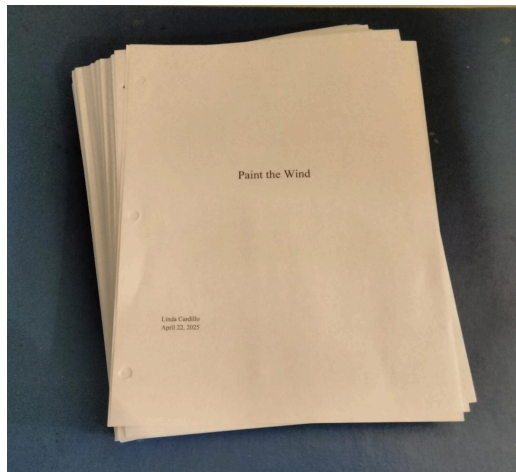
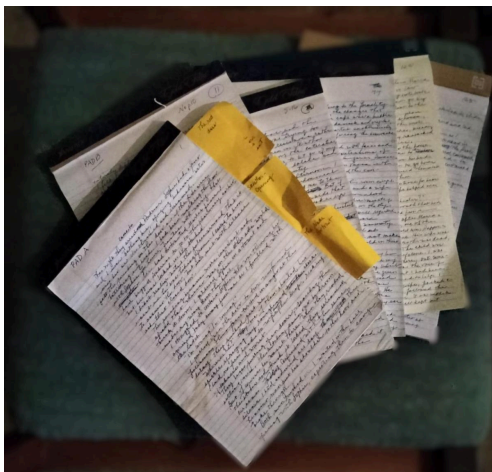


There is something deeply satisfying about a physical marker of progress. Writing a novel for me is akin to running a marathon—the need for discipline, commitment, and resilience, especially when it gets really, really hard.

We have four marathon runners in our family, two of whom have run the Boston Marathon in recent years. The rest of us make sure we are visible along the route with bold, colorful signs of encouragement.

I find I need my own signs, especially as I pass the midpoint of a novel, approach those last chapters, and make the push to finish.

I recently completed Parts One and Two of *Paint the Wind*, with Part Three well underway and Part Four simmering in my head. It gives me a much needed boost to see the accumulated words, not just on a computer screen, but "in the real world," so here's a peek at what a manuscript in progress looks like, both the handwritten first draft and the printed pages.



An Excerpt from *Paint the Wind* Coming in Fall 2025

On the island of Skiathos, Maya meets Elise Goldberg, an accomplished painter traveling the world with her brother. The two women form a friendship and Elise, impressed with Maya's sketches, has invited Maya to paint with her. The following excerpt is Maya's first day facing a canvas of her own.

The following Thursday at seven in the morning I headed for the meadow supplied with a leather flask of tea, an egg sandwich, a full tray of baklava wrapped in paraffin waxed paper, a wide-brimmed hat, and one of YiaYia's old aprons.

Elise was already in the meadow, her easel assembled and a wooden box open on the grass beside her, filled with an array of pigments in tubes and small bottles of linseed oil and turpentine.

As I got closer, I was jolted by the smells, pulling me back to Andreas's studio so suddenly that it caused me to gasp.

"Are you unwell?" Elise's face reinforced the concern in her voice.

"I'm quite well. Just remembering how much I missed these familiar aromas."

"Please help yourself. I've prepared a canvas for you. It's propped up against that boulder. We'll have to find a carpenter who perhaps can replicate my easel. So what do you want to paint today?"

"I'll wander for a few minutes. Please don't let me disturb you."

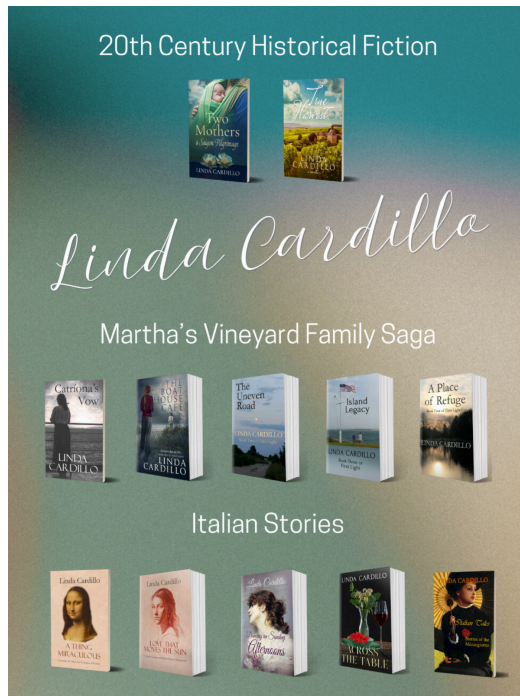
She picked up her brush. "Very well. I have only one piece of advice. Begin boldly. Your drawings are quite precise, almost architectural, which suits the medium of pencil and paper well. But paint is more freeing, at least for me. See color before you examine the details. Observe the light as it becomes obscured by clouds or spills over the hillside unimpeded. Go forth!"

And so I did. I wandered, letting my eyes sweep over the landscape. I remembered Elise speaking the other day about absorbing through all one's senses, not just sight. I had moved away from her paint box and lost the studio smells, but what wafted toward me on a gentle wind was the aroma of spring, of green shoots and yellow pollen. I sat down and removed my boots and stockings and felt the moist earth between my toes. I heard humming and fluttering and chirping. As Elise had suggested, my eyes registered swaths of color.

And then I picked up the canvas, a brush, a palette and began to paint.

[Read More](#)

Upcoming Events



May 17, 2025

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Artists and Authors Fair

Pleasant View Senior Center

328 N Main Street

East Longmeadow, Massachusetts

June 3, 2025

6:00 p.m.

Author Talk

A Thing Miraculous

Writers' Night Out

Forbes Library

20 West Street

Northampton, Massachusetts

Tentative (To Be Confirmed)

Fall 2025

Author Talk

A Thing Miraculous

Zoom Presentation

October 18, 2025

Historical Fiction Panel

with Susanne Dunlap

WriteAngles Conference

Greenfield Community College

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