

My Writing Life



April 2011

Dear Friends,

Happy (finally) spring! I looked out the window near my desk this morning and saw the first hopeful buds on our forsythia bush. The snow has disappeared and, although it's still not warm enough to forgo the flannel sheets, the longer, light-filled days have reenergized my creativity and encouraged me to get out of the house. I have new events on my calendar and new stories on the page that I look forward to sharing with you!

Upcoming Events

April 12, 2011
Tuckahoe Public Library
Tuckahoe, New York

May 18, 2011
National Organization of
Italian-American Women
Providence, Rhode Island

May 21, 2011
Book Club Discussion
East Longmeadow, Massachusetts

September 21, 2011
Scarsdale Women's Club
Scarsdale, New York

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

Please contact me at linda@lindacardillo.com

The power of imagination

My husband and I recently traveled out west for a whirlwind visit with our sons--the older one was in LA on lawyerly business and the younger one studies music there. Part of the trip included 24 hours in Vegas, most of which was spent on the University of Nevada-Las Vegas athletic fields cheering on and feeding the USC Ultimate Frisbee team. However, in the evening we made our way to the Bellagio (of the musical fountain fame) for a performance of Cirque du Soleil's *O*. We've attended several Cirque du Soleil shows in the past, but none has overwhelmed me with its imaginative power the way *O* did. It was

breathtaking. And as a writer who wants to take the breath away of my readers, I left the theater pondering why *O* was so captivating.

Taking risks... transforming the commonplace

I realized that the creators of *O* had done two things--they had taken enormous risks and they had transformed the way their audience perceived the commonplace.

I am curious about what captures your imagination. What takes your breath away in a story? I'd love to hear from you!

Opening Lines

I am at work on a new book, a work of historical fiction based on the life of the 16th century Italian poet Vittoria Colonna. Here's a glimpse of where I'm headed with it.

The morning Ferrante left me for the first time, the mists enveloped the Mont'Ermo valley and swallowed him as I watched from the vantage point of an upper-story window. The air was sharp and filled my lungs with a sensation that embodied at once both bitterness and clarity.

"I am the daughter of warriors,
a princess of the house of Colonna."

The warmth--from the fires in the hearth and in our marriage bed--dissipated quickly with every hoof beat that carried him away from me and towards his duty and his destiny. I had married a warrior, not a banker or a philosopher. And I am the daughter of warriors, a princess of the house of Colonna, whose strongholds ring the hills surrounding Rome--Merino, Paliano, Amelici, Rocca di Papa. It is my father, Fabrizio Colonna, whom Machiavelli names as the voice of knowledge and wisdom in *The Art of War*.

I know better than to indulge in idle dreams for a consort who would always be by my side.

I saw my life framed by that window--Ferrante in the gray-green distance of future dawns, always riding away; me, arms tightly wrapped around my nightdress against the cold, watching.

I turned from this view of present and future, stoked the fire and began to write.



Easter Traditions

When I was a girl, Easter dinner was always held at my grandmother's house (where else!). I have two vivid memories of Holy Saturday with my grandmother. The first is the visitation. We would travel to the Italian church in the city to view its display of Christ's crucifixion and burial. Although all the statues had been wrapped in purple throughout Lent, outside the church a grotto had been built to represent the tomb. It was incredibly elaborate and evocative, especially for a young child.

After the trip, cooking began in earnest for Sunday's celebration. I remember hearing the baa-ing of lambs in my grandmother's city neighborhood and realized only many years later that they'd been delivered to the butcher across the street. Despite the numerous accompaniments that shared the table, lamb was indisputably the centerpiece of our Easter meal, and remains so at my own family's celebration. You'll find side dishes, such as stuffed artichokes, and dessert (Easter Pie) in my cookbook, *Come Sit at My Table*. I'll be preparing our lamb roast on April 24 with the recipe on the right.

Roast Lamb

½ cup olive oil

¼ cup soy sauce

Juice of one lemon plus grated peel

2 tablespoons fresh rosemary or 1 tablespoon dried rosemary

4 large cloves of garlic, slivered

Boneless leg of lamb (4-7 pounds)

Combine olive oil, soy sauce, lemon juice and peel, rosemary and garlic in small bowl and blend well. Place lamb in a glass baking dish and pour marinade over the meat.

Cover, refrigerate and marinate for several hours, turning frequently.

Roast at 325° F for approximately 20 minutes per pound for medium rare, 25 minutes per pound for medium or 30 minutes for well done. Allow the meat to sit for approximately 10 minutes before carving.

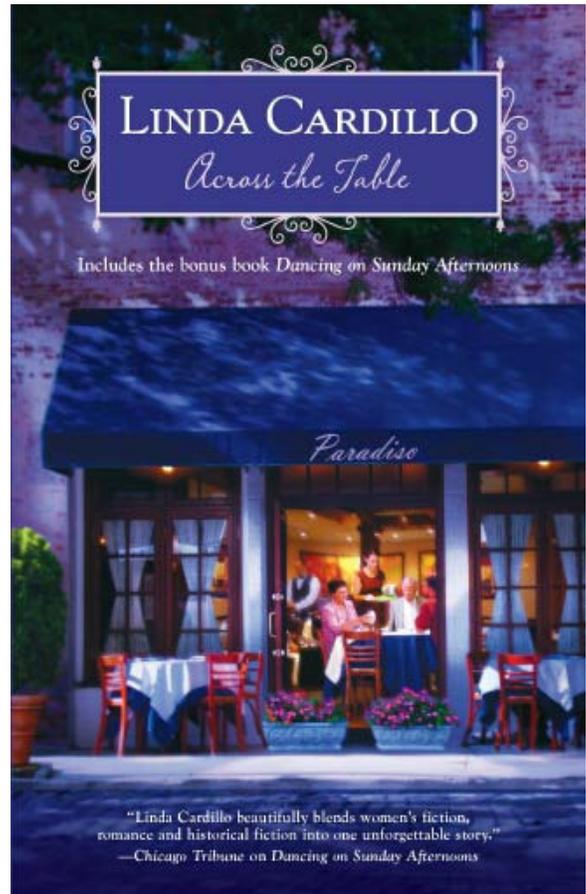
You can find additional recipes on my website and in my cookbook, *Come Sit at My Table*, available for order on the website at www.lindacardillo.com

Have you read *Across the Table* yet?

As you gather around your own tables to celebrate the coming holidays, I hope you'll turn to *Across the Table* for a story of family and forgiveness, loyalty and love.

From my mailbox

"I just wanted to tell you that I just finished reading *Across the Table*, and it was wonderful! Interesting, very real characters, compelling story, and I loved the little unexpected twists. The food talk was fabulous, too. Real people cooking and living. Beautiful prose, touching, emotional, but sharp. Congratulations on a fabulous novel."



An important note about the print version of My Writing Life.

With the increasing cost of printing and mailing the newsletter, I will be limiting the frequency to two times a year instead of four. If you would like to receive the e-mail version, which will continue to appear quarterly, please send your e-mail address to linda@lindacardillo.com.

Thank you!

Visit my website for news, excerpts and new events.
www.lindacardillo.com