

My Writing Life



May 2013

Dear Friends,

Spring comes suddenly in New England. A few Sundays ago, we were trudging through several inches of late snow on a visit to a friend whose hilltop property included a sugar house. The sap had been running that week and a group of neighbors were gathered around the stove as the liquid boiled down to the perfect amber of maple syrup.

Fast forward to this past week. It started with the budding of a bush with delicate, paper-thin purple blossoms just outside my kitchen window. I have no idea what it's called, but it is the first sign that the earth is reawakening. Every morning now I wake up to a new burst of color in the garden--vivid yellows and blues, the first crop of chives, and then, today my Japanese cherry tree, pictured above, exploded with life.

I am always in awe of this amazing rebirth. I never tire of it, and feel as if I am witnessing a profound secret. I hope that you are reveling in the same warmth and vibrancy.

Sit Down to Dinner with the Dante Family in Support of Diabetes Research

As many of you may be aware, every year I participate in [Brenda Novak's Annual On-Line Auction for Diabetes Research](#). Diabetes has touched my family several times, including my father and my brother's son, so this is a cause I am passionate about.



Enjoy a meal prepared with the traditional Italian ingredients Rose Dante always used when she cooked for her family or her customers at Paradiso. As she liked to say, there is no pain that cannot be eased by a dish of homemade pasta. You can bid on the basket pictured above [here](#).

And, as one of The Three Glindas, I've joined with my sister authors Ann DeFee and Geri Krotow to donate a Kindle Paperwhite and an Amazon gift card to stock your e-library. You'll find that [here](#).

I hope you'll join me in supporting Brenda's extraordinary efforts to find a cure by bidding on the unique and wonderful items on the site. The auction takes place during the entire month of May. Thank you!

The Poet

An excerpt from my work-in-progress

The artist's hand moved across the page as if in a caress. But instead of stroking my face, he was sketching it. The late afternoon sun in the garden illuminated not only his reluctant subject, but allowed me to study him as he worked.

The hand holding his pencil was scarred and stained, the pigments from his latest masterpiece embedded in the deep lines of his palm. The hand had neither the elegant proportions of his David nor the evocative power of his Adam on the Sistine ceiling. But it was a strong and beautiful hand to me, a hand that had reached out to me and lifted me up. A hand that had encircled my own and filled its emptiness.

A light smile played upon his lips and I found myself reflecting it back to him.

"I don't know why you are doing this when you have so much other important work that begs for your attention."

"I do this because I can give both of us long life by depicting these faces of ours."

"You intend to make us immortal?"

"A thousand years from now, people will see how lovely you were and how wretched I. But more than that, they will see how, in loving you, I was no fool."

I shook my head. "But you are a fool. What do you know of me to love me so?"

"I know enough. When others looked at me, they saw only a rough-hewn block of hardened stone, an impassive shell. But you, like a sculptor, carved away at me until you found the soul within."

"So you know the woman who arrived in your life fully formed, shaped by other hands. You do not know how she came to be or why she was so willing and eager to find you beneath the pain that separates you from the world."

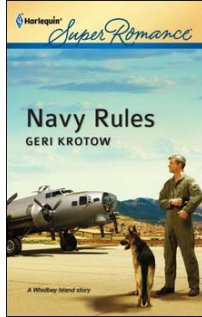
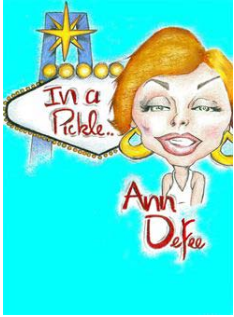
He put down his pencil. "Do you want me to know who you truly are? Will you tell me how you came to be here in this garden, in my life?"

I hesitated. Although I had accused Michelangelo of hiding behind the façade of his impenetrable melancholy, it was I who lived behind walls. The person I presented to society, while certainly not false, was not all.

"Are you sure you want to hear my story?"

"There is nothing I want more."

Recommended Reading



I'm adding a new feature to *My Writing Life*--notes on books new and old from some of my favorite authors. This issue, I'd like to steer you toward the latest words penned by my friends [Geri Krotow](#) and [Ann DeFee](#). We three met on a steamy night in Atlanta when Harlequin was launching a new line with our stories of "everlasting love." Several years later, we continue to celebrate our friendship, usually over copious amounts of good food and wine.

Ann is the Southern belle among us who has never lost her Texas roots despite living all over the world. Her stories are laugh-out-loud funny, her heroines are quirky and brilliant, and her understanding of a life well-lived is full of insight and warmth. Her most recent book is [In a Pickle](#).

Geri, a U.S. Naval Academy graduate who speaks at least four languages that I know of, has woven her experience of life and love into a rich tapestry of stories that range from Belgium to the Pacific Northwest. She's currently writing a series set in the Navy world of Whidbey Island. [Navy Rules](#) was the first book in the series and *Navy Orders* will be released in July.

Upcoming Events

May 2, 2013

Book Club Discussion
Cortlandt Manor, New York

July 15-21, 2013

Romance Writers of America National Conference
Atlanta, Georgia

November 16, 2013

Panel on Historical Fiction
WriteAngles Conference
Mt. Holyoke College
South Hadley, Massachusetts

Spring 2014

Dinner Speaker
Greater Lawrence Italian Women's Club
Andover, Massachusetts

If your book club or group is interested in having me speak or offer a workshop, please [contact me!](#)