

November 2024

Musings as the Year Draws to a Close



A Year Marked by Change

As I reported in my last newsletter, it has been a year of profound change in my personal life. I am happy to share that my husband is responding well to his cancer treatment and our lives have settled into a stable rhythm.

As a result, I took the opportunity to attend to my own health. As a caregiver for many years, I know the oft-repeated advice that we must care for ourselves as well. Three weeks ago I joined the ranks of bionic humans and had my arthritic hip replaced. Now, I have always considered myself fairly fit--I spend six months of the year working on a farm one day a week (see below), I garden, and I work out at a gym. I expected to sail through the surgery and recovery. But I didn't. I will spare you the "organ recital." I am fine now, but I spent an anxious week confronting the unexpected and my own human frailty.

The experience was a sobering lesson. I thought I'd had enough of those lessons this year, but, alas, I still had more to learn.

Taking pleasure in small graces is one way I am countering the effects of change, both personal and national. The photo above was taken at the wildlife refuge in my town, a haven for migrating birds and the home of swans, a bald eagle, and a screech owl--all of whom successfully nested and raised cygnets, eaglets, and owlets this year. When I need a respite, I take myself there. And the monarch butterfly below alit on chive blossoms in my own garden. Enjoy.

Thank you for reading this.

With warmest wishes,

Linda



Farm Girls



Our end-of-season gathering with a picnic in the greenhouse

For the last three years I've shared the work of planting, weeding, and harvesting on a local farm owned by a young woman who believes deeply in "tending the soil and learning from it, so that the farm can continue to feed folks and nourish nature." The farm is truly a community space, not only for the workshare crew (some of us are pictured above) but also for the families that support the farm with their community-supported agriculture shares. We trade recipes and stories as we do the physically and emotionally satisfying work of growing vegetables, fruits, herbs, and flowers.



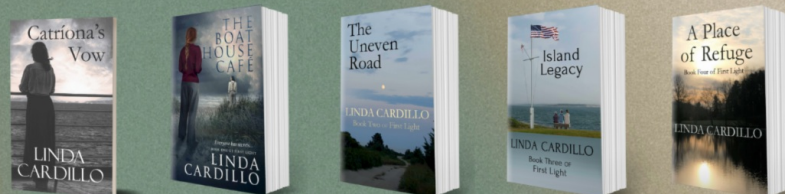
Holiday Gift Suggestions

20th Century Historical Fiction



Linda Cardillo

Martha's Vineyard Family Saga



Italian Stories



One member of our family always gives books as gifts, thoughtfully selected for each of us. Unwrapping the box is always a moment of delight and discovery.

At this time of year I am normally appearing at artisan and book fairs, talking with readers and selling books. Because I am unable to do that this year, I am experimenting with a virtual "book fair," and offering my newsletter readers the opportunity to give a gift that I hope will elicit both delight and discovery.

The price listed with each book includes shipping but does not include tax, which will be determined at the time of purchase. If you wish autographed copies, please **email me directly** with the name of the individual to whom I should inscribe each book. In addition, if you have any difficulty with your submission, please email me. This is an experiment, so please be patient!

The payment portal is through PayPal, but you will be able to enter a credit card.

Linda's Virtual Book Fair

My Gift to You



In movies, they are called outtakes, the dropped scenes that land on the cutting room floor. We have outtakes in novels, too—the scenes our editors draw slashing blue lines through, declaring them unnecessary to the core of the story. Historical fiction is particularly prone to those extra scenes. Our research takes us down intriguing rabbit holes, filled with rich details and historical context.

I have learned over the years of honing my craft that not ~~everything~~ *everything* that happened in the time and place in which my story is set is pertinent. But I have also learned to save every morsel cut from the final draft. It might be a short description or bit of dialog. But sometimes it is an entire chapter and therefore an opportunity—either to introduce a new reader to the characters and era or a bonus to readers already familiar with the book.

My gift to you this season, be you a new or old reader, is a chapter cut from *Love That Moves the Sun*. I hope it will give you some insight into Vittoria Colonna and her astute intelligence and subtle power. I also hope it will bring you some pleasure as winter descends.

Conversation with the Emperor

A Vittoria Colonna Story

A message came for me from my brother, Ascanio, full of self-importance and swaggering. I had attempted to communicate with him when Giovanna had left him so precipitously. But his state of mind or his pride prevented him from revealing anything to me about why his marriage had fallen apart. I had let him be, thinking it was too soon to probe. So his message came as a great surprise.

The emperor was traveling north from Naples and was planning to reside with Ascanio briefly at Marino before entering Rome, where Ascanio had offered to host him at the palazzo for his entire stay.

“I am in need of a hostess during the emperor’s visit and would be grateful if you would serve in that role while Charles is in Rome.”

I put aside the letter. Ascanio had only written because I could be of use to him. A part of me wished him to struggle for whatever sins he had committed against Giovanna. But other voices intervened, particularly the ghost of my mother, reminding me in a dream that Ascanio and I only had each other and must be loyal.

“Family is everything,” she reminded me.

I woke in a sweat and reluctantly accepted that I would help my brother.

[Read More](#)

Upcoming Events

The next few months, in addition to the holidays, will find me hunkered down in my writer's cave pushing through to the end of *Paint the Wind*, my novel set in the art world of 1900 Vienna. I hope to emerge in early spring to begin again my in-person appearances. I hope you'll put the following on your calendars and join me if you are in the neighborhood!

March 12, 2025

6:00 p.m.

Author Talk

Longmeadow Adult Center

211 Maple Road

Longmeadow, Massachusetts

June 3, 2025

6:00 p.m.

Writers' Night Out

Forbes Library

20 West Street

Northampton, Massachusetts

Contact me

if you would like me to visit with your book group

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