

AMAZON TRAIL

Thanks giving

'Tis the season for one lucky dyke to recount her blessings while dreaming of good fortune for all of us

by Lee Lynch

I'm learning to enjoy what I have. To take the time to relish my life and feel gratitude for how I live and who I am.

There are no anti-gay lawn signs here, despite an upcoming election. When we moved this year we didn't do it willy-nilly. We sought someplace nurturing, and it wasn't going to be another town where I was nervous sporting a Clinton/Gore bumper sticker on my Ford.

I share our new home with the lover who's perfect for me. I'm not perfect, she's not perfect, but our imperfections seem to fit well together.

The house isn't exactly perfect either. It's over 50 years old and boasts electrical outlets with no juice, 2-foot closets and a basement that seeps not only heavy rain but heavy fog. The *pièce de résistance* is the big old wood furnace that belches smoke and heats only the first floor.

past 30! Not for the first time, I worked myself sick trying to support my writing. As a consequence, I lost my confidence. I had some health problems. One of my symptoms was fear of travel. As symptoms go, it could have been a lot worse.

All I have to do to stay well is sleep at least eight hours a night. I have to listen to my body when it tells me I'm carrying too much firewood. I can't work at my job until 2 am to give myself time to write the next day. With less available time, I've given up work I believe in, like reviewing lesbian books. It takes a little prodding to remind myself to be grateful that I can still write two days a week.

I'm also grateful for aging, when I consider the alternative. This is good that I've made it to my 50s, and I'm learning to act my age.

My cousin was a welfare mom. She saw the



Yet if I look to my left, the window frames a river. I've been watching an egret wade along the bank on its stilt-like legs with a mallard couple dogging—or ducking—its steps.

I'm always aware how good it is to be alive to enjoy these things. Roxy Ellis and Michelle Abdill were murdered almost two years ago in Oregon. I don't open a gay paper without reading about the murders of gay men.

I have a job. It's wobbly right now, but I work for a boss who doesn't lay off at the drop of an account. I'm not, at the moment, on an unemployment line, although I've been there too.

I could try to support myself writing, but I couldn't pay the mortgage. Still, I work with a book publisher, a magazine publisher and scads of newspaper publishers. Hot diggety dog. How many people get to realize their dreams?

There's something else I'm grateful for. Growing older.

The past few years have been tough for me. I've learned that not only am I not 17 anymore, I'm well

writing on the wall and got off a few years ago. Her health problems are a lot worse than mine, partly because she's got so little money and she's got this child to raise. I can't imagine. This past year, she was able to leave her physically demanding job for a higher-paying, less-stressful position that lets her spend more time with her daughter. Another dream come true.

I was able to see her a few weeks ago, which is always a joy because she's an amazingly cheerful person. And I saw her because I flew cross country. I did it!

In the airport limo coming home, the driver told me how glad she and her husband were, when they moved here, to find a huge gay community. They wanted diversity for themselves and their kids. That's my kind of homecoming.

As if my blessings weren't piled high enough, our best friends are moving to their dream home nearby. I'm one lucky dyke. My dreams are of good fortune for all of us.



In Other Words Women's Books and Resources
presents a
Reading and Booksigning
with
Nancy Manahan
On My Honor:
Lesbians Reflect on Their Scouting Experience

Edited by Nancy Manahan (*Lesbian Nuns: Breaking Silence*), *On My Honor* contains thirty-two essays, photos of the authors as Girl Scouts and as adults. These women love Girl Scouting. They remember their inspiring troop leaders and counselors, the magical worlds of camp and nature, and the idealistic principles and aspirations they absorbed along with the examples of female competence and self-reliance. They understand why 64 percent of women in *Who's Who of American Women* were Girl Scouts and why U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno, herself a lifetime Girl Scout member, has predicted that a Girl Scout will someday be President of the United States.

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