

# THE INKWELL

By Lynn Berry

With expecting our first-borns, (the "s" is not a typo, twins), and the delivery date drawing near, I have been at awe and inundated with the kindness and thoughtfulness of friends—from friends I see everyday to friends where our contact is only a few times a year, and it helps me to reflect on how our friends are so essential to our well being and to our creative spirits.

One of my most cherished mentors told me that who we surround ourselves with, tend to define us. So step back, and objectively ask yourself what kind of souls do you attract? Most of us have an array and a variety of friendships that fulfill us in different ways at different times in our lives, with some of us depending on a plethora of friends, and some of us relishing in only a few close friendships. Some of our friends are thoughtful nurturers, some friends make us laugh, some friends are good listeners, some friends are doers, and others act as mentors and others advice seekers. When I was younger, there were the friends who taught me to risk and live dangerously, and then later, there were the friends who taught me to grow up and live consciously. The important question to our artistic perseverance is which friends support and encourage you? Which friends drain and discount you? Sometimes the courageous act and grace of letting go of a friendship that no longer serves you is more important to your health and creativity

then the gain of any new friendship. No matter what type of friend we are blessed to have, it is important that a friend encourages us, in their own way, to reach our higher potential. Each friendship is its own microcosm of our human experience in a particular place and time in our lives. All are important and significant. All can teach us about ourselves and our world. Most of my friends have taught me the gift of how to be a better friend. Am I perfect friend? By all means, not even close. But I'm a better friend than I was last year and the year before. My cherished mentor also told me, "If you want a friend, you need to be a friend," and "always check your own motives for seeking out a certain friend." It can only help if once in a while we step back and take an honest look at ourselves and ask, "What kind of friend am I?"

One of renowned poet William Stafford's poems, Friends, contemplates the significance and value of face-to-face intimacy and human contact with friends, --his understanding coming from experiencing the loss of that contact, and yet, he also leaves the reader with the importance of literally reaching out and being a friend as well:

## Friends

How far friends are! They  
forget you,  
most days. They have to, I  
know; but still,  
it's lonely just being far and a  
friend.  
I put my hand out---this chair,  
this table---  
so near: touch, that's how to  
live.  
Call up a friend? All right, but

the phone  
itself is what loves you, warm on  
your ear,  
on your hand. Or, you lift a pen  
to write---it's not that far  
person  
but this familiar pen that  
comforts.  
Near things: friend, here's my  
hand.

-----William Stafford

---**Writer's Idea:** Create a piece of Art that symbolizes one or many of your friendships.

---**Writer's Tip:** To change up your creative spirit, try creating your art in a different location. For example, if you usually write at that same table in silence, try writing on the floor with some background music; if you usually paint in the same room, pack your gear and paint under a shade tree.

---Please send your original submissions to, (or if you would like a copy of any of the published poems in their entirety), InkwellVernonia@gmail.com or by mail: PO Box 333 Vernonia, OR 97064. Please include your name and contact information.  
Write—Express—Expand.

Lynn Berry holds an M.A. in English, specializing in feminist literature and literary criticism. She has spent several years teaching Literature, Composition, Poetry, Creative Writing, and Critical Thinking at various school districts and colleges, and occasionally provides writing workshops.



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## FOR SALE

**Weekly Auction**--New auction hours. Weekly auctions every Thurs, preview 5:30 PM, auction 6:30 PM. We buy gold, silver, coins, household items, estates. 114 S. 17th Street, St. Helens. 503-396-5898 or www.EstateAuctionsNW.com

**Treharne Firewood Service**-- Fir cut, split and delivered - \$150/ cord local. Jerry Budge 503-429-1811

## SERVICES

**Concealed Permit Class** - OR & UT, Aug. 14 at 1:00pm. UT includes WA, Vet/Union discounts! Best Western, 585 S Columbia River Hwy, St. Helens. www.handgunfreedom.com or 503-969-8717

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## HELP WANTED

**9-1-1 Communications Specialist** - Columbia 9-1-1 Communications District (C911CD) is conducting a hiring process for full-time Communications Specialists. Log on to www.columbia911.com and click on Hiring or information will be mailed by calling 503-397-7255 ext 2221 and leaving name and mailing address. Deadline to request information is Thurs, Sept. 8, 2011 at 3:00 pm. Deadline to schedule attendance at the informational meeting is Thurs, Sept. 15, 2011 at 3:00 pm.

**Free Horse Stall**-- Board your horse, self care in exchange for farm work/cleaning stalls for small livestock. Approx. 10 hrs total labor per week. Great riding trails close by. Near Vernonia Airport. Contact Heather 503-502-6703

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## PUBLIC NOTICES

**Need Food Assistance?** We're willing to help. Vernonia Cares Food Bank, 627 Adams Avenue. Open Tues and Thurs, 10am - 2pm. Call 503-429-1414.

**Thank You** - For the many acts of kindness and love shown to me and Marvin's family may I say "Thank You". The prayers, calls, food, cards and visits will long be remembered. Ellen Meyers