

# Cynthia



Fine lips, weak chin, tanned  
Body, smiling eyes, wrinkles  
It's good to be seen





*Scholar • Photographer • Professor • Writer • Haiku Artist • Lover • Friend*



So simple: when one  
Is awake, one only has  
To pay attention

With her every breath she  
taught us how to pay attention.  
I hope this book expresses the  
attention and love that defined  
Cynthia's life—and our own.

*Linda Moyer • April 2017*

*Photo & Haiku by Cynthia Lee Katona*







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One of the last photos taken of Cynthia • October 25, 2016 • On the road to Tahoe to get married



# Cynthia Lee Katona

Cynthia was born in Hollywood, but moved with her family to Castro Valley when she was a teenager. It was at Castro Valley High that she discovered her love of reading and literature and where she was enthusiastically welcomed by a group of students that would become life-long friends. It was also there that she met her future husband, Dennis, who passed away in 1991. Upon graduation from high school, Cynthia attended California State University Hayward (East Bay), receiving both a Bachelor's and Master's in English Literature. She began her teaching career at her alma mater, but ultimately took a full-time position at Ohlone Community College in Fremont.

Cynthia was an integral part of Ohlone College since her hire in September 1975 as a member of the English Department. Her contributions to the Department were extensive, including many new courses and innovative delivery systems. She also taught in the Journalism program, was the advisor for the student publication *The Legend* for many years, and established the Women's Studies program. Active in Study Abroad, Cynthia guided many students through the delights of travel and study in other countries, including England, Australia, Costa Rica and China. Cynthia's dedication to her students, to high academic standards and to the College was both inspiring and ceaseless. Cynthia traveled the world, not only through the literature that she read, but literally, visiting dozens of countries and making it to all but one continent.

She thrived on experiencing unfamiliar places, interacting with diverse groups of people, and savoring an area's cuisine. Whether she was driving through Sicily or the American Southwest, she was thrilled to be on the road. She captured the memories of her travels both in her stunning photography and the detailed journals she kept of

each trip. Her photography won numerous awards and was featured year after year in Photographer's Forum.

Cynthia was also an author. Her published books include the following: 12 books of Haiku, each illustrated with either her beautiful photographs or her own watercolors, *Book Savvy* (a reading resource found in almost every library in the US), *Modern Ivory Netsuke*, a gorgeous coffee table book, *The Cocktail Chronicles with Recipes*, a memoir of sorts, and *Graffiti: The Audacious Alphabet*. Her just-completed book is the appropriately titled travelogue *Redeeming Miles*.

Upon her retirement in 2009 Cynthia continued traveling, photographing and writing, but she also became active in the Fremont Police Department's Volunteers in Police Services Program (V.I.P.S.). Cynthia really enjoyed working with the department personnel and the volunteers. She also put her photographic skills to good use for the Tri-City Animal Shelter in their pet adoption efforts.

While it is true that Cynthia will certainly be remembered for her contributions as a scholar and teacher extraordinaire, she will be remembered for much more.

Her friends will remember her for her endless curiosity about the world, her wonderful sense of humor, and the way she always brought her happiness with her. They will remember her delight in good food, whether at a street vendor in China or a 5-star restaurant. They will remember how she enjoyed deep intellectual conversations on a multitude of topics. They will remember a person that left a legacy far beyond what most of us can hope to achieve. Cynthia had a special circle of friends that she cherished, just as each cherished her. She will be dearly missed by these friends, but most especially by Christine Bolt, who was her traveling companion, colleague, road trip navigator, LaoTong, and spouse.

# Redeeming Miles



Cynthia was a master storyteller. She took experiences from her life and wove them into exquisite verbal vignettes for the lucky listener.

A few years ago, she wrote down some of these stories and the result was her delightful book, a “memoir” of sorts, titled *The Cocktail Chronicles: with recipes*.

“The Cocktail Chronicles” made it clear that when Cynthia strung words into sentences and sentences into paragraphs, that she had the reader at her mercy. She could make us laugh or cry or both at the same time.

Her stories allowed us to enter her world, where she showed us that, even in the most heartbreaking of circumstances, you can experience joy, beauty, humor and love.

The following story, “Arizona 1993,” is from Cynthia Lee Katona’s unpublished work “Redeeming Miles,” completed in October 2016.

## Arizona 1993

My ex-husband, and best friend, contracted AIDS in 1981, when it was still just a “clinically observed phenomena,” and before it even had a name. He took part in all the early medical trials in San Francisco, and fought the good fight for eleven years, but while celebrating New Year’s Eve at the Grand Hyatt with him in 1993, it was clear to me that, despite his enduring optimism and cheery attitude, this would be the last time I would be ringing in a new year with him. So the following week, I asked him quite seriously if he had any last wishes, imagining something simple, like helping him write his epitaph, or sorting out some of his belongings to make sure each of his friends got something special. He had already been thinking about this as well, and he had his answer ready. He wanted me to take him to see Sedona, Monument Valley and The Grand Canyon.

Although I was thoroughly prepared to do anything he wanted, I had a number of serious misgivings about



this trip idea. First, he was already nearly dead—in fact, he had so few t-cells left that we were joking about naming them. I was afraid that if we had an emergency in those isolated parts, we could not find any medical care for him at all, let alone doctors who

knew anything about AIDS treatment. Second, there was still a lot of stigma about AIDS in the early 90’s, especially once one got out of the big cities like San Francisco and New York. And he had that very advanced-stage gauntness which is so characteristic of dying AIDS patients. There was no way people would not know that he was gay and very ill, and I did not want his last days to be marred by any ugly incidents of homophobia or bigotry. And third, I had never been to these places myself, and so I realized I might not be the best prepared tour guide. I expressed all of

these concerns to him, and added the fact that just the simple exertions of any trip might very well kill him. He simply replied, “I can’t wait to go” (double meaning intended).



## A Real Bone-Rattler of a Ride

So, a week later, I popped him into a free wheelchair at the airport, and with our “special boarding” passes we were whisked onboard the plane to Phoenix, and then into an enormous Pontiac Bonneville, which he thought would be a cushy ride, but which turned out to be a real bone-rattler on the bumpy, dirt roads that were our destination. We arrived in Sedona late at

night to a host of no vacancy signs, so we didn't have a very favorable view of the silver-and-turquoise, power-crystal, kachina-doll center of the universe, until the next morning, when the magnificent reds of the rocks almost made us forget how exhausted we were. After brunch, I

discovered that one good thing about a spiritual vortex is that one can actually find an acupuncturist who will treat an AIDS patient. Much renewed, we cruised Cathedral Rock and all the sites that could be seen clearly from the car. He could not do dinner, but later in the night, I watched him eat the leftover cottage cheese off of our big, flat, oversized, retro



room key, and said quietly to myself that any way he can get food down is a good way.

Next day on to the Grand Canyon. It was clear from our day in Sedona that my trip companion could not even make it to the view points, so I got us a high noon reservation for a 1.5 hour flight over the Canyon. I know these little airplanes are very

controversial, and I would never have booked one for myself, but I must admit it was one of the most wonderful experiences of our lives. Even from the plane, the Canyon is almost impossible to comprehend. Our pilot pointed out one relatively small-looking golden peak, sitting on the

mountainous canyon walls, and informed us that it was over thirty stories high. I say all this with real enthusiasm, even though I was as green as the plane for most of the flight and had to use both the “comfort containers.” Luckily, my flying buddy was so frozen, he didn't even have to heave. After our flight, we drove the length of the Canyon, and he thawed

## “I Can’t Wait to Go”

out slowly in the car, as I photographed what I could from the curbs.

The next days would be the most grueling, and the most memorable. We travelled through a pretty depressing town called Kayenta, where to get gas, I had to pop my co-pilot all the way back in his seat and cover him with a blanket. It was easier being

hassled as a lone woman, than to have folks there get a look at the seriously ill fellow riding gunshot. The tank full, we headed to Goulding’s Trading Post, where the man at the reservation desk immediately asked if I needed the number for the local medivac station. That was a wake-up call. In a

strange way, we were having such a good time on our trip, that we couldn’t really afford to notice how much things were deteriorating. Monument Valley the next morning was extra glorious. Blue skies, puffy clouds, huge ravens, two roadrunners, grey squirrels, a few lizards and a herd of sheep with their sheep dogs, all bade us welcome as we bounced our lumbering Bonneville around Left and Right Mittens. Way ahead



of our time, we took our first “selfie” there together, by propping our camera up on the car roof. We look remarkably well as tiny specs in front of The Three Sisters—nature, as usual, putting everything into perspective. The next day, driving back to the airport, I stopped at a small Mercado for waters, and was delighted to see tables full of Kool-Aid colored baby

chicks, a sure, and much appreciated sign, that spring is always around the corner.

He passed away soon after in October. I was sorry that he never got to see the Christmas card I made of us that year, looking like perfectly normal, doofy tourists in Monument Valley.

Needless to say, I never got to spend another New Year’s Eve with him, but that doesn’t keep me from toasting to his health and remembering to say, as he would, whenever anyone asks me to do anything fun: “I can’t wait to go.”

*Moral: “When you arise in the morning think of what a privilege it is to be alive, to think, to enjoy, to love ...”*

**Marcus Aurelius**

*A Sampling of Cynthia's Friends & Lovers*





## *We Went Everywhere Together*

The year was 1961. I was a freshman at Castro Valley High School and was very afraid. Big school, hundreds of kids. I noticed a girl kept showing up in all my



*On our LA adventure*

classes. She was my height, skinny (how I envied that), dark shoulder-length hair, and so funny.

I cannot tell you when Cynthia (Cindy) and I first spoke but I do know that it was probably only about a week of meeting her before we became fast friends. I found out she lived

one block from me and so we walked home together every day. I learned that she had moved from Los Angeles. She had a mom, stepfather and younger brother. And she had three best friends in elementary school: Camille (Cammy), Maureen (MoMo) and Norbert (Norby). She had been in Catholic School all through eighth grade and when she and her family moved to Castro Valley, she decided she wanted to go to a “regular” school.

She told me that if we remained friends for all four years, we could go to Los Angeles after high school graduation for a couple of weeks. Her grandmother was living there and we would have a free place to stay. She also said that we would go to college and get an apartment together. We had such plans.

We went everywhere together. My parents loved her. In fact she came and spent a week at our house. We drew up adoption papers and her parents and my parents signed them. We wanted to make it official.

She was over every weekend and if we didn’t have anything planned, my dad would tell us to have a party, so we did. They were mostly impromptu gatherings, but if we wanted a theme Cindy would always come up with something. “Come As You Are,” “Wonga.” Ah Wonga. I asked her what Wonga meant and she said that it would be what ever anyone thought. So we told everyone to dress Wonga. It was great fun. She was always very creative. She vacationed with my family in Reno, Virginia City, Disneyland twice, Santa Cruz, Pincrest, Playland-at-the Beach and the Zoo in San Francisco. When we visited Ceres, where I went to elementary school, I couldn’t wait to introduce her to all my friends. She was an immediate hit. Everyone liked her so much. She went “steady” for a while with one of the fellas I had introduced her to, one that I had known since second grade.

In high school there were 13 of us that all ran around together, three that I knew from eighth grade, whom I introduced to Cindy. We were all fast friends but Cindy was so special to me. Not only were there the parties



## *Triskaidekaphobia Tromp*

but we also went to school football games and dances. Cindy even named one of the dances that was to be held on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>. She called it the Triskaidekaphobia Tromp (Fear of Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>)



and the committee loved it. We would go to the park and play baseball, go to the movies, bowl, and we even went to church.

I didn't attend church, but occasionally Cindy would stop by on her way and ask if I would go with her. Catholic and in Latin!



And sometimes, shhhhh, she would just stay at the house and not go.

It was so obvious that Cindy was so different from me—that is, a brilliant student: Honor Roll all four years of course, straight A's all the way—and she was a joiner. She belonged to committees, such as the Girl's League Council, Caduceus Spartan League, Logos, Grecian Festival, Big Sister

Tea, Senior Ball, Spartigras, Sound-Off Rally, Class Girls League President and Christmas Basket Drive. She even ran for Sophomore Vice President during our Freshman year! She didn't win but we had a great time making posters and banners at my house. I thought she was so brave.

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EDNA McNEELY BOWCUTT

Cindy was pretty much everything that I was not. I was not a joiner nor was I ever good academically until my Senior year of high school. We did have the same sense of humor though. And when I turned 16, my parents threw me a surprise party that Cindy was instrumental in organizing. She passed out invitations at school and I never knew a thing.

When we turned seniors, we were all dating in the group. Cindy dated Dennis Katona whom I had known in eighth grade and whom I introduced her to our Freshman year.

We did end up in Los Angeles for two weeks at her grandmother's. We went to Disneyland, and she took me everywhere she used to hang out with her friends. I got to meet MoMo and Cammy and Norby.

She was accepted to University and I could only qualify to go to Junior College, and as things happen we didn't get to see each other that much anymore. I got married, and she got married, and I had three



## *A Best Friend Anyone Could Ever Want or Have*

children and the time together just became farther and farther apart. Two different directions and now not much in common, and I moved away. We never lost touch though. Letters and cards were sent and received about three times a year. How I looked forward to those letters to hear how her life was. So exciting compared to mine. And how different her life was from mine. The next time I saw her was at our 20<sup>th</sup> High School reunion in 1985. We immediately fell back into that easy way we had back in high school. And life continued on with cards and letters and the next time I saw her was at our 50<sup>th</sup> High School reunion in 2015. She walked across the room and the years melted away. We were in high school again. Laughing and telling stories, along with three of our lucky 13 group we had in high

school. Sharing stories of the eight of our group that were no longer with us.

We made plans to meet a month later and she came to my house in Jamestown, California, in November 2015. We laughed until our sides hurt. She wanted to go out in the dead of night and hunt for the frogs we could hear in the pond across the street. Our venture found us laughing hysterically when an owl dived at us—and not one frog to be seen, only heard. The years melted away and we made plans for me to come visit her in Fremont after she got back from her trip to New Mexico with Christine. We talked about how we wouldn't let any more time go by



without doing things together.

*And then, just like that, I lost a piece of my childhood. The best friend anyone could ever have or ever want to have.*



## “Miss Katona is a Real Teacher”

*I cherish many memories of Cynthia Katona, whom I knew, for over three decades, as Cindy. Forgive me if I refer to her by that name.*

I met Cindy on the early Washington Boulevard campus before Ohlone College moved into the modern buildings on the hills above Mission Boulevard. As part of her graduate work at what was then Cal State Hayward, Cindy was assigned to be an intern to one of Ohlone’s first English teachers, Frances DiPippo. The first day of the term, Frances introduced Cindy to the students by saying, “Miss Katona is a *real* teacher,” so the entire class, Cindy would later laugh, immediately got the message that she *wasn’t* a real teacher. Frances then disappeared and left Cindy, for the rest of the quarter, to run the class by herself.

Frances and I rarely saw eye to eye, but she was right in this instance: Cindy *was* a real teacher. All the English teachers liked Cindy, which was a considerable achievement because, at that time, we didn’t all like each other. One camp—the faculty responsible for setting up and advocating the benefits of the writing lab—included Frances, Barbara, Budd, John, and Dennis. The other camp—the faculty who detested the writing lab and considered it a travesty of teaching—comprised me.



When Ohlone hired Cindy, I had brief hopes that I would no longer be alone in my one-woman battle against the evils of mechanized pedagogy. She and I spent hours discussing the department and the lab, and she said she agreed with my position, but she didn’t want to be as “damned unpopular” as I was. Always politic, she managed to get along well with everyone. And though I couldn’t get her support in my crusade, we became good friends.

We disagreed on other things too. The faculty union. She didn’t believe in faculty unions. The only time I even had her *consider* joining was when I made her a list of the other faculty who didn’t believe in faculty unions.

Sometime in the 1980s, Cindy and I worked out a team-teaching plan. We combined our English 101A classes in a big classroom and divided up the teaching responsibilities. Each of us maintained a teacher-student relationship with our own class, and we read papers for that class, but we shared our ideas and alternated leading class discussion. Cindy liked lecturing, from one spot behind or on a table, and she was good at it. I liked pacing back and forth in front of the room and asking questions. Student reviews of the arrangement

*Photo: Florence Reynolds, Karen, Cindy & Anitra Dark*

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KAREN ROSENBAUM

## *Unexpected Snowstorms, Comma Splices and Falconry Lessons*

were positive, though we probably learned more than the students did.

Both Cindy and I admired—almost revered—Florence Reynolds, advisor for the campus paper and the backbone of the journalism department. Cindy took over the campus magazine; my creative writing students and I were seriously invested in the campus magazine. When Cindy took a sabbatical, I advised the campus magazine—able to do so only because she had trained the editor so well. Perhaps it was then that I became aware of how important Cindy was to so many of her students.

One Veterans' Day weekend, Florence invited five women up to her cabin in Pioneer—librarian Jean Hammerback, speech teacher Kay Harrison, P.E.-turned-business teacher Barbara Knowdell, Cindy, and me. An early, unexpected snowstorm severed the electricity and clogged the roads. I don't remember how we managed all the details of our lives (the well pump was electric-powered, which meant no running water and no flushing toilets), but we sat around the big wood stove in the cozy and comfortable living room. For water, we melted snow in big pans. No one seemed unduly stressed. We talked and laughed, occasionally venturing out



on the deck to look at the early winter wonderland and take pictures.

During an unusual lull in conversation, I piped up. “I’ve been thinking of writing a computer program to use when reading student papers,” I said. “Instead of just scribbling CS for comma splice on a student’s paper, I’d give the student a sheet of little lessons that would help her understand how to fix the problem.”

The room came alive. “You could get a grant for that!” someone said.

Everyone called out suggestions. I grabbed a pen and paper and started writing. Before the electric power was restored, I had ideas and support for a grant application. Cynthia signed on as my assistant. We would get that grant, and we would prepare the materials—she the manual, I the little floppy discs—and we would discuss the program at conferences and distribute the materials to every

community college English department in the state.

Cindy was the ultimate traveler—and the ultimate semester-abroad teacher. In 1991, she led the second group of Ohlone students to Stratford. A semester-abroad assignment is a 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week job, but Cindy managed to work in falconry lessons during *her* time there. Two years later, when I had the

## *Autobiography, Barbara Hendrickson and a Family Portrait*

Stratford leader assignment, I took my students out to the falconry site. I shuddered to think of how she had actually worn one of those thick leather gloves and held one of those wild and wonderful raptors.

Cindy was always trying something new. She initiated an autobiography class, which she taught to drowsy seniors at the public library. Her enthusiasm for the course waned; most of the class kept nodding off. She gave the class to me, and I added a journal-writing component, advertised widely, and offered the class on the main campus. I conducted autobiography and journal writing classes the rest of my tenure—probably the most rewarding class I taught—and it was a present to me from Cindy.

We both learned how to do elementary genealogical research—this became a basic part of the autobiography class—and explored our own ancestral roots. One day I ran into Cindy on the mezzanine level of Building 1. She had been absent the day before.

“Are you okay?” I asked.

“My father died,” she said.

I knew her father had disappeared from her life many years before although she had related to me affectionate memories of him. “I’m so sorry,” I said. “When did he die?”

I can’t remember her exact answer—maybe she said ten years ago. “But I just found out about it,” she added, “so I took the day off to mourn.”

It was always a source of wonder to me that Cindy had married young and that after the apparently

affable end of the marriage, she had kept Dennis’s name. *Katona* is a more memorable name than *Davies*, I agreed. I remember the period when she helped care for Dennis as he was dying, how she gave him a splendid gift—a trip to a place they both wanted to visit, someplace warm and deserty, as I recall. She considered it her responsibility to take care of

him even though they had been apart for a long time.

Cindy and I were very fond of Barbara Hendrickson, who had mentored us both, at different times and in different ways. Barbara saw Cindy as her heir in women’s studies, and they shared materials and appreciation for the women who flocked to those classes. Cindy was one of the very few friends that



*Barbara’s triptych is now bringing the past to life at the home of Melissa Billington.*

**KAREN ROSENBAUM**



## *A Woman in Uniform*

Barbara, by then thriving as an artist, consented to paint. Barbara used the same process she used on her own autobiographical paintings—working from photographs. She went beyond the photographs that Cindy had given her and because of some ethereal connection the two shared, Barbara was able to produce a brilliant triptych of Cindy’s past, in which Cindy’s father, absent in most of the photographs, plays a prominent part.

In Barbara’s last years, when she was uprooted from her Hayward home and suffering from cancer and dementia, Cindy drove her around Santa Rosa and tried to map out a route that Barbara could follow in the hope that she could better adjust to the house where she and her husband Chris had moved. When Barbara was moved into a nursing-hospice home, Cindy, adamant that the staff treat Barbara with the dignity she deserved, wrote a tribute, including many of Barbara’s accomplishments in literature and art, and sent it to the home with instructions to read it to her. Cindy wanted those who read the tribute to admire the woman so altered by sickness.

Never satisfied with the ordinary, Cindy sought knowledge and experience in surprising ways. She became something of an expert on netsukes and

illustrated a gorgeous coffee table book on the subject with her photographs. When my book group read Edmund DeWaal’s book, *The Hare with the Amber Eyes*, about the author’s family’s collection of Japanese sash ornaments, Cindy joined us and showed us her book (which I had seen for sale in the Asian Art Museum) and her own netsukes.

I knew retirement wouldn’t slow her down. She took even more splendid photographs. She wrote haiku and collected them into books. She traveled, traveled, traveled, especially with dear Chris Bolt. Her south-of-Market loft provided a way for her to be both a San Francisco art, theater and restaurant connoisseur *and* a suburban rose and dahlia grower in Fremont. Her most astonishing (to me) post-retirement undertaking was her volunteer work with the Fremont Police Department.

She was exhilarated about the training, the uniform, the hours on the beat with “real” police people, and the other facets of the program—with lost and abandoned animals and with lonely seniors.

*It is Cindy’s excitement that I remember most. The large space she occupied in my life is filled with these memories and many others. How lucky were we, her friends, to share her experiences and her passions.*

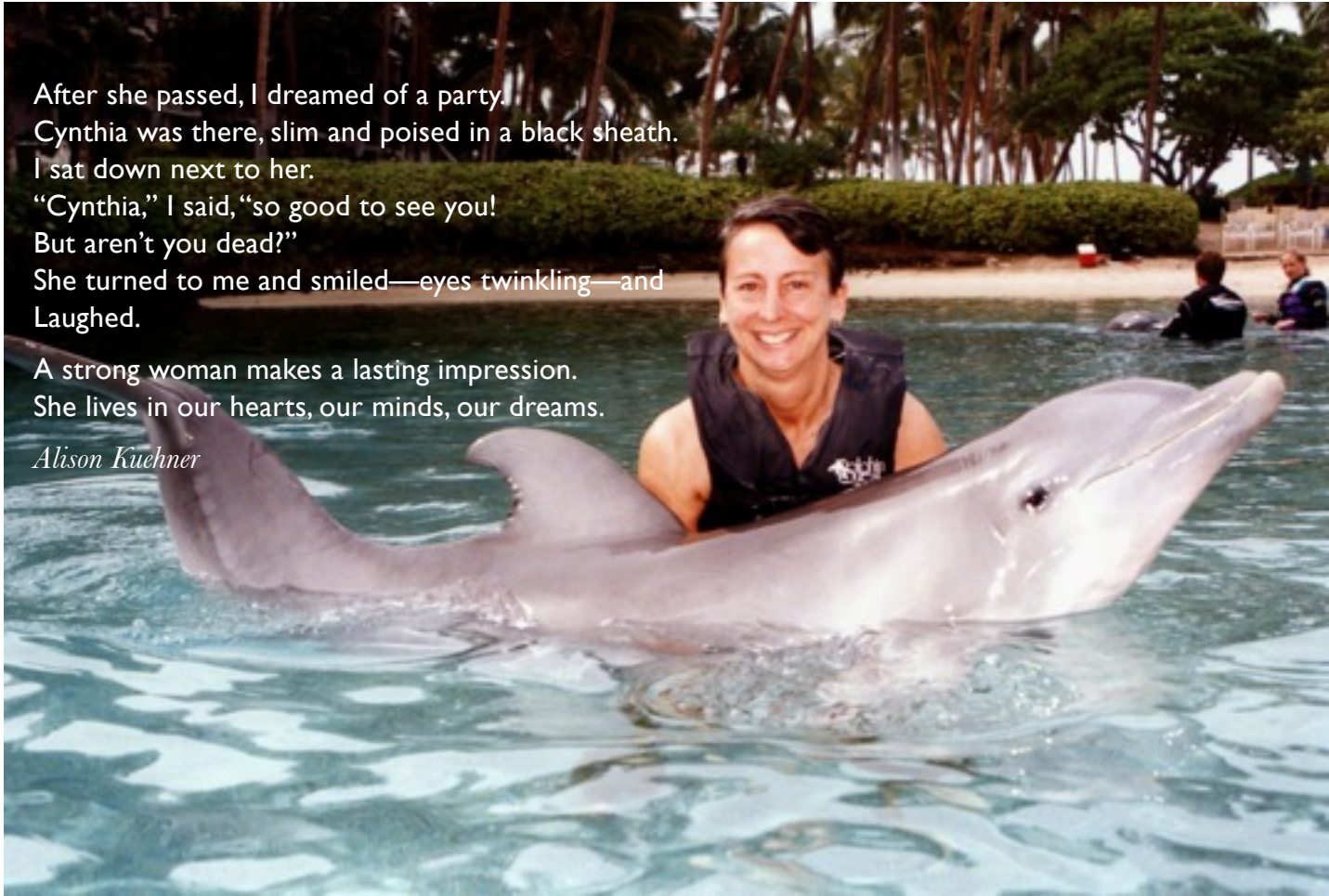


## Ode to Joy

After she passed, I dreamed of a party.  
Cynthia was there, slim and poised in a black sheath.  
I sat down next to her.  
“Cynthia,” I said, “so good to see you!  
But aren’t you dead?”  
She turned to me and smiled—eyes twinkling—and  
Laughed.

A strong woman makes a lasting impression.  
She lives in our hearts, our minds, our dreams.

*Alison Kuehner*



## *Renaissance Woman*

If you've thought of it Cynthia has done it. Her intrepid spirit opened her to any new experience to which she brought her laughter and joy. I recall having a foodie dinner with her where I couldn't pronounce nor identify anything we ate and then kicked back later in the evening for a Cuban cigar and conversation on a range of topics. I know few people as accomplished as Cynthia in so many different



areas. Her photography is spectacular to behold and told the story of her life, her writings take you on her journeys as if you were with her, and her art reflected the love she had for the diversity in people. I will always remember her as an inspiration for how to live, USE IT UP!

*Always with admiration,  
Bennett*

## *A Good Person*

I so admired Cindy while I was at Ohlone College. I worked in the Media Center and researched and scheduled films and tapes for the instructor's classrooms. Several times I received such nice notes from Cindy telling me how she appreciated the work I did, and she was very happy with the films I found for her. She was a good person and very pleasant and nice to everyone. I know she is missed by many people.



*Jean Kelly*



*Karen Rosenbaum, Cynthia, Christine Bolt & Jean Hammerback*

## *A Mutual Fan Club*

Cynthia loved libraries and she was especially fond of Ohlone College Librarian Jean Hammerback, pictured next to Chris in this photo taken at the "Book Savvy" signing by Ed Leys.



## Going Up

I met Cindy (as I knew her) when she came to Ohlone's first campus on Washington Boulevard. I taught English part-time then and was the journalism instructor and student newspaper adviser. I was assigned as her mentor as she began her initial year of teaching English. It didn't take too long before I began to feel our roles should be reversed.

During the years that followed, we shared many fun times together: One summer I left my husband at home, and Cindy and I flew to New York City to share a room for five days at the New York Fashion Institute's student dorm. The rooms were rented during student breaks for very little money—right in the heart of the city. We set out every day with a camera around the neck to see all we could. One event stands out in memory: We wanted to get to the top of the Empire State Building.

When we arrived, there was a long line in front of the elevator to the top. With her usual assertiveness, Cindy led me to another one going up. We joined a rather frumpy looking man who eyed us suspiciously, then asked what floor we wanted. Cindy said the top so we could take pictures. He responded that we could do that from his office. We got off, followed him through an impressive oak door marked F. Lee Bailey, past astonished secretaries and a massive legal library. He indicated windows bordering his offices which



filled the entire floor and told us to take all the pictures we wanted. We did and left as quietly as we could.

Another year while Cindy was advising the student literary publication, we signed up for a journalism-related conference in Seattle. We went up together in my Toyota 280Z that Cindy loved to drive. With her at the wheel, we arrived in record time. We attended some of the presentations (Cindy dreaded meetings) and went to a vendor's show of supplies and equipment.

A salesman showed us a device for trimming articles out of pages. He said we also could use it for sewing. You can imagine Cindy's response to that remark.

When my husband and I decided to travel abroad, she encouraged and helped me arrange the trip on our own, as she often did for herself.

Then we both became quite involved in establishing and teaching classes for the Semester and Summer Abroad program.

After we retired, we continued the friendship, corresponding and meeting for lunch. In fact, we planned lunch together a short time before she left us.

A few years ago she requested that I call her Cynthia rather than Cindy. I could understand that, but found it difficult to do. So I must close this with a tribute to Cynthia my fun-loving, adventuresome friend that I came to trust and admire. And miss.

## *A Remembrance of my Friend and Colleague*

I first met Cynthia when I started as a full-timer in the English Department in 1996. Although I felt welcomed and supported by everyone, there was something unique about how our friendship developed. It didn't take long for me to discover that she was the kind of professor I wanted to be. I wanted the students in my transfer-level classes to know what a college-level class was really like. I didn't want them to think this was (as my father joked) "high school with ashtrays," or a watered-down version of what would be happening in the same class at any four-year institution. I began to hear from students in the Writing Lab how challenging her courses were and what her expectations were.

When we first started chatting beyond our classrooms, I started learning about other things that I would later become interested in, namely how Senate worked and what the roles and responsibilities were for full-timers.

And then, when we would have the occasional time to chat about life beyond Ohlone, we started talking about our shared (but distinct) experiences of growing up Catholic. Those conversations continued for 20 years and, to be honest, we were not done. Cynthia wasn't at all surprised to learn that I had considered religious life quite seriously. She recognized the importance of not just religion from the perspective of faith, but she respected anything rooted in the "big ideas" that everyone needs to ground their lives in.

Once Cynthia retired, I accepted that we might see less of one another and while that was true for a period as she concentrated on building her life after Ohlone, we began getting together on a regular basis, usually for Japanese food. Dinner or lunch would be long, as she wanted to be caught up on any Ohlone gossip that she may have missed out on. During these discussions, I sometimes felt a little bad that I would start asking her for advice on a problem or issue I was having with something involving work. A retired person, I thought, really shouldn't have to hear this. But, of course, Cynthia was happy to offer what she could in terms of advice. And I was happy to get it. These were the moments where Cynthia's incredible memory and sharp sense of humor were on full display.

Her illness and passing came so quickly and I hardly knew what I could do for her, but I wanted to do something. Cynthia knew I had developed a relationship with the Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose and so I asked her permission to ask the Sisters to pray for her, put her name on the "prayer board" in the Dining Room when I went to visit the Sisters at mealtime. She knew this was not miracle-seeking. She knew this was not pity. Cynthia wouldn't stand for either of those things. Rather, I asked the Sisters to hold her in prayer in her final chapter and that she feel peace and, in particular, the love and affection of so many people who held her in their hearts. I believe that she felt these things.



Cynthia,  
Know that I hold you in my heart and in my prayers. I picture you  
with a smile on your face at a life well-lived, as it should be.  
*With much love and gratitude, Jeff*

## *Seeing a Master Teacher at Work*

*Cynthia impacted my life in many ways. I have many fond memories. But I will share two.*

### *Desktop Publishing Class*

I taught computer applications in the Business Office Department for many years. I was the one who usually developed the new courses that used computers. When I created a Desktop Publishing (DTP) class, I knew that I was fine with the technical parts of how to use the computer. However I didn't have a lot of experience in other aspects that are more "art" than science. Things like color theory, photography, and page layout and design were not my forte.

So I asked Cynthia for help. I remember fondly how generous she was in sharing her expertise with me. We had many meetings where she coached me on the "art."

For the first two terms, she taught the lecture and I taught the lab portions of the class. I attended every lecture and learned so much. Also I got to see a master teacher at work. She was exceptional. After that, I taught both the lecture and lab. I could never

equal her level of expertise on the "art." But, because of her help, I was able to do a competent job.

### *Hiking in the Forest*

I remember fondly a time we went on an all-day hike in the Forest of Nisene Marks near Aptos. It is a dense 2nd and 3rd growth redwood forest—now a state park. I was in my element—very shaded and cool, no people, very quiet, only bird sounds and some rustling in the bushes. We never actually saw any critters—just heard them. Cynthia, however, seemed a little tense. She had her camera, of course, and took a lot of pictures. I had to chuckle to myself because I think she would have been much more comfortable in a city with people all around—a place where I would have been very anxious.



### *Final Thoughts*

I remember Cynthia as such a wonderful person. She was so smart and so talented in so many areas. I'm very grateful that I had the opportunity to know her. I admired her and was in awe of her. I will miss her.



## *The Gift of Friendship*

I think that everyone is born with a gift. One that will allow them to fill a special place in the universe that absolutely no one else can fill. A gift of incalculable value to the world when it is uncovered, explored and embraced. Certainly Cynthia was that kind of a friend, a true gift.

Cynthia's values were always evident in the way she lived her life. She valued integrity, honesty, humor, fun, privacy, punctuality, learning and beauty. I saw her live these values without talking about them.

One of the things I most admired about Cynthia was that she wasn't afraid to go against conventional pieties—she was truly an independent thinker. You could have a conversation with her about anything, and even when she disagreed, she did so with

humor and  
tolerance of  
differing points  
of view.



As Nora Ephron once wrote: “Be the heroine of your life, not the victim.” This was the way Cynthia lived her life. From her childhood on—she found a way to write her own story. She was adventuresome—always seeking out interesting and unusual places to go and new things to learn. She was also mischievous, caring and courageous.

So, Cynthia, here is what I will miss about having you in my life—in no special order:

Talking about books and movies • Long phone conversations • Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners • Traveling to new destinations • Poking around in museums • Laughs • Dinners in restaurants • Attending plays • Listening to music on road trips • Learning about new things such as scholar's rocks, netsukes and haiku.



*She was packin'  
a gun even then.*

## *Costa Rican Snake Catcher Extraordinaire*

*I am happy to say that I sent this letter to Cynthia before her passing. I had no idea that her transition would come so soon.*

Hi Cynthia,

I find myself thinking about you so often and I just wanted to pass on some thoughts to you. First of all, I want you to know how much I've always admired you. I have considered it more than flattering to be considered one of your friends. I've always looked at you as a Renaissance Woman, but let me be more specific. You have always been one of the most admired and highly praised instructors at Ohlone, particularly sought after by the excellent students, and turning some who weren't into excellent students. You're an accomplished and published author, critic, and photographer. Besides that, you've been a financial wizard, even hired to manage retirement funds by one of the Silicon Valley companies. Then, add being an adventurous world traveler, envied by all, as well as one of San Francisco's most knowledgeable cultural enthusiasts. (And that doesn't include being a Costa Rican snake catcher extraordinaire:-)

You have, indeed, led an amazing, interesting, and full life.



I have also appreciated your concern for maintaining standards for students at Ohlone, an important battle for educators of integrity, and your work for faculty and student rights in the Faculty Senate and elsewhere, sometimes at the expense of your own personal peace and well being.

I particularly admire your grace and nobility in facing the great adventure that all of us want to postpone indefinitely. I have often thought of Socrates' words to his disciples as they were trying to talk him out of taking the hemlock. He said something to the effect that the next step would either be a long, peaceful sleep or a wonderful new life in a wonderful new world, and either would be better than trying to outrun the law. I believe it will be the joyful, enlightened consciousness, for which many of us strive. In any case, I think it is the journey that all

of us on the spiritual path — and I consider the literary life to be one of the beautiful forms of the spiritual path — have been preparing for our whole lives. You have clearly done it well, and I would only hope that I can be as peaceful as you seem to be when the time comes.

Blessings and peace to you, my friend. You have always been and continue to be an inspiration.

*With warm affection,  
Gloria Reid*

## *Her Beautiful, Contagious Laugh*

It's been quite a few years since I've seen Cynthia, and still, her beautiful, contagious laugh still rings in my ear and makes me smile. Cynthia was an important part of the wonderful experience that for me was Ohlone College. Her memory and positive influence lives on in the hearts of the thousands of lives she so deeply touched.





## *Take Our Hearts on Your Journey • Myth, Literature and Fine Arts*

Once upon a time, there was a Golden Age at a small, but lively, college named for the Ohlone Indians of the San Francisco Bay Area. That Golden Age, as I remember it, occurred during the all too brief presidency of Dr. Bill Richter. It was a time when the faculty could do “faculty projects” to enhance their teaching, as well as to gain recognition and even a few extra shekels for their trouble. We, who worked in the Library’s Media Center, were able to participate in the production of these projects. Cynthia received the commission on the topic “Myth, Literature and the Fine Arts.” It consisted of a tray of slides coordinated with a scripted tape cassette, a cutting edge technology at the time.

Cynthia, of course, wrote the script. Dennis Roby narrated. Frank Kahl recommended a friend to

compose background music. Her name was Robin Goodfellow and she was just as puckish as her name. A music teacher in Oakland, she collected musical instruments from around the world and could play them all. And that was only the tip of the iceberg as regards her talents. She did not compose the soundtrack,

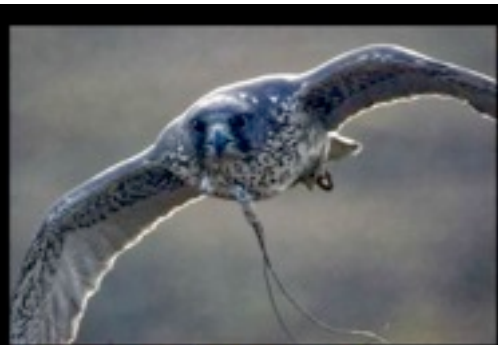
so much as she improvised it.

After reading the script several times, she chose one of her flutes and a slide whistle and, as Dennis read, she made it all up on the fly. It was my privilege and pleasure to record them and program the slides with the music and narration.

At risk of digressing, I was never able to spend much time with Cynthia outside of working hours, and remain envious of those of you who spent more, but maybe that’s why I so appreciate sharing this adventure of the mind. In fact, I was never

fortunate enough to see Cynthia in the flesh after I retired almost 20 years ago. Which isn’t to say that I lost touch with that wonderful woman.

Among other things, I am proud to have been on Killer Katona’s Mafia team, and she on mine, pillaging and plundering our way through Facebook until I had to join a witness protection program and go on the lam, as she told me her father had done many years earlier. I particularly enjoyed watching Cynthia on Facebook as she ran hither, thither and yon teaching, learning and photographing. I am a devoted fan of her haiku books.



Can the Falcon grasp  
All that falls within his sight  
Or merely his prey?

## *You'll Love Her Insights*

With that in mind, it may not sound so silly that ever since I retired back in 1998, I have wanted to translate Cynthia's project into the "new media," namely, digitized video, which would look more like a documentary by Ken Burns than one slide clunking around a carousel after another.

Some years ago, I talked to Cynthia and she did have a complete copy of the show. She packaged it up to send to me, but somehow it disappeared between the Ohlone mail room and my mail box. That put my idea back on the back burner. The only thing I had to work from was a cassette which contains the audio.

When I learned Cynthia was sick, I resolved to see if I could put it together, but I was being as optimistic as she. She was taken from us in a trice and I didn't even get started.

Since her death, I have reinvigorated my resolve and you can find the result on YouTube by searching the title "1978 Cynthia Lee Katona - Myth, Literature and the Fine Arts - Ohlone" or go directly to the URL <https://youtu.be/52yb58bMcJ8>

*If you love Cynthia, you'll love her insights on Myth, Literature and the Fine Arts.*



## *The Blink of an Eye*

If it's been forever  
Since we were Mafiosi,  
Standing back to back,  
Since we hoarded guns  
And other weaponry  
For pillage and for mayhem,  
Since we both sought Peace  
In witness protection programs  
Like your father,  
Then how long  
Since we sailed to Troy  
And fought beside that  
Spoiled brat Achilles  
Who claimed to want  
Nothing more than to  
Protect the virtue  
Of the wanton Helen?  
How long the many-stepped  
Anabasis following womankind  
From Zeus' girls, Leda and Europa,  
From fabled Phryne of the Acropolis,  
From Marys the Mother and Wife  
Of Jesus, who never came  
Home for dinner?  
How long the tour  
We took together  
From glorious Aphrodite  
To her slattern sisters  
Of the Impressionist canon  
And further down to  
Postmodern depths?  
Those millennia have been but  
The blink of an eye  
In your company.  
A journey I would continue  
With you forever.  
Will continue forever.  
With you and your memory.

## *She's Mine!*



We were always Cindy and Jim to each other.

Cindy was involved in so many things, it was hard not to notice her. But when I really got to know her was during the early 90s, when she was President of the Faculty Senate, and I was

Vice-President, for 4 consecutive years. The way she handled annoyed administrators, complaining faculty members, people suggesting slight changes in procedure, always amazed me. She listened, she explained options, and then would put the procedure up for a vote if it was reasonable.

A wonderful memory that has stayed with me over the years took place about 40 years ago in the Sushi restaurant across the street from Ohlone. I came in for lunch, and sat at the counter. Cindy came in with a friend, and the two of them sat alongside, with her friend next to me. We ordered and talked, and it turns out her friend was very charming. Apparently, I got a little flirtatious, because Cindy leaned over the counter, looked at me with a smile and said: "She's Mine!!" We all burst out laughing, and I'm laughing now as I write this.

We walked around Mission San Jose after lunch, enjoying the sights and the weather.

JIM KLENT

Cynthia died way too young, but she lived a life packed with more journeys and experiences than most people would experience if they live a hundred years.

*Miss you always, Cindy.*  
*Jim*



## *A Positive Force*

I was introduced to "Cindy" Katona when I was hired at Ohlone in 1999. It was immediately clear to me that she was a positive force in the English department and at the college. I knew her by her books, travels abroad with students and, after retirement, her book clubs. She was passionate about the fair treatment of faculty, and also of students as they navigated through their college experience and sought to become better writers and thinkers. Cindy and I had a long-standing lunch invite that would always elicit the same response from her: "I look forward to breaking bread with you." That lunch never happened, but I still hold dear memories of the brief exchanges we did enjoy.

PERRI GALLAGHER



## Words I miss from Cynthia

*Knackered* is my absolute favorite. I must try to use it in my conversation more.



I never knew Haiku  
You made it so real, so fun.  
I use it yearly,  
to update my joy with my job.  
I think my friends think  
I am as crazy as a loon,  
Knowing this was your "like language"  
makes me like Haiku.  
So many things I miss  
about you being in my each day.  
My hand still reaches out  
to click your name in my favorites  
for that chat while driving home.  
I now call Chris K  
to get my Cynthia fix.

My fun memory is going to test drive RVs in Gilroy with Cynthia. She was a natural at the wheel and this photo captures the day.

## *Fly with the Ravens*

I met my dear friend Cynthia in the mid 1970's.



We were in a small circle of friends who shared books, good food, music, art, and involvement in an active Women's movement. At that time most of us were students and Cynthia was already teaching. I looked up to her as a person of exemplary intelligence and knowledge and as a world traveller who walked the planet with curiosity, wit and humor. As time went on Cynthia and I became lovers and our friendship deepened. Through her camera lens, I learned about how to see myself differently. I owe her a great deal for giving me a sense of self at a time when I was still evolving.

As an artist, she inspired me to create art for her. I cherish our conversations about art and literature over these last 40 years. I eventually became a college professor of art. Cynthia was my inspiration for what a great educator could be. I relied upon her often for advice and fortitude to keep on in this profession. One of my greatest memories was her visit to my classes during her visit to Colorado. I had the opportunity to share with her what she had inspired me to become. On that same trip, we travelled all over Colorado. I wanted to make sure she had been able to see as many sights as possible and to take photos. One day in Estes Park, in true Katona style and to my terror, she insisted in positioning herself four feet away from two rutting male elk. She had to

get that "perfect shot!" Her true joy at capturing that moment, this and so many other times, is imbedded in my memory. I am inspired by her ability to live life with a child-like inquisitiveness, to experience every moment to the fullest, and to show that joy in her actions, her writing, and in her photos. Cynthia gave me many wonderful experiences in our time together. She inspired my art, inspired me to travel, and provided me an ear to lean on in troubled times.

Her absence has already made this earthly dimension less vivid, less exciting and less comforting. In her last months we spoke often about crossing over and reincarnation. She wanted to know more about my views on the afterlife. Much of the artwork I created for her over the years touched on these topics. I am honored that one of my works that she owned became a focus and comfort for her in those final months. I was moved by her ability to accept her fate with grace, dignity, and profound insight. She said her greatest sorrow would be not that she was dying, but that she would be unable to see what her friends would continue to do. That personifies who Cynthia was as a person.

Before her diagnosis I was working on a drawing of a flying raven which was another topic of interest that we shared. When I showed it to her in progress she asked, "Can I get this tattooed on me?" "Absolutely," I said. She never got to do that. My intention was to gift her that drawing. It was not to be.



I have not been able to finish the artwork. It remains unfinished. So it is with love Cynthia that I give this raven to you here and now. Your time here ended much too soon. I want to believe you have more journeys and vistas to experience and you are doing that in the next life. Oh, that I may I be inspired as I always have been, by your grace, wisdom and peace when I meet you once again.

*Fly with the ravens, Cynthia . . . .*



## “No One is a Born Reader”

Cynthia told me more than once she didn't like doing a book reading. If this seems a bit of a strange thing for a professor and a scholar, someone who is exemplary in carrying out their life work of standing before students and making knowledge clear to them, it is certainly true that we each get to have our own likes and dislikes. Our own likes and dislikes may not seem entirely sensible to anyone not inhabiting our skin, but they are still there nudging us along paths during our entire lifetime.

Perhaps the best of us tame our dislikes, channel our likes, and as a result others only see an interesting and complex person unfolding before them. See a person very much worth knowing for their spirit, for their take on the world, and with fortune, for their grace.

Yes, we are fortunate in having known Cynthia, and we are fortunate for having been within the field of her grace. The duration was too, too short, but our fortune was, and is, still immeasurable.

Let that stand as a preamble.



I myself was not at that many of Cynthia's readings, only two of them in truth—but despite her feelings, Cynthia was very, very good at them. And, I think she enjoyed more facets of the readings than she might have let on.

The first of the readings I attended was on September 27th, 2005. The reading was for Cynthia's just published *Book Savvy*, at Ohlone College's then library, and I believe it was Cynthia's very first reading. I

don't recall if Cynthia asked me to bring my camera, or if I just thought bringing one would be a worthwhile thing to do, but I brought my camera and photographed the entire event—before she stepped up to the podium, while she was reading and when she was meeting her fans and signing their copies of *Book Savvy*. I am not a photo-journalist, that was more Cynthia's area of photographic affection, but perhaps in the following set of photographs taken that day, the real Cynthia still comes showing through. I do hope so.



# Book Savvy



No one is a born reader; sometimes it just looks that way. We all expect the pert little girl who grows up in a perfectly civilized household—surrounded by colorful and enticing books, with parents who read to her every night before she goes to sleep and lovingly organize regular outings to the library (capped off with a stop at the ice cream store)—to grow up an avid reader. But . . . lots of children who don't grow up in such . . . environments still grow up to love to love books and reading, sometimes acquiring a passion a bit later in life, and some



. . . I was put in Advanced Placement English at Castro Valley High, where I had the most inspiring teachers. I imagine many people can trace some of the good things in their lives to a caring teacher, and I'm no exception. I remember particularly Mr. Rankin. . . . He encouraged us—in fact, he required us to mark in our books, which was extremely painful to me after all the teachings of the nuns. I still have my copy of *1984*, which I read and discussed with much delight in his class. Mr. Rankin taught me to “savage” the physical book but to love the characters, ideas and words



## *Light Things on Fire and Blow Stuff Up*

When I think of Cynthia Lee Katona, she is always smiling and about to laugh. And I don't have to concentrate too hard to actually hear her laughing.



I'd never read *The Little Prince*, so it was with great pleasure last month when I sat down to read her copy, that I discovered so many similarities between her and Antoine de Saint Exupery's little resident of Asteroid B612.

For me, Cynthia remains a person of “true understanding.” Someone with whom I could talk to about “boa constrictors, primeval forests, or stars.”

One time, after she had taken her Gothic Novel class on a field trip through a church, we sat together inside, and discussed with certainty that the door over there concealed Dracula's bedroom, wondered where Dorian Gray's portrait would be hidden, and hazarded guesses as to whether it would be Dr. Jekyll or Mr. Hyde who would soon be ascending the steps outside. While listening to the choir practice, we swore to each other that we thought we had just caught a glimpse of Frankenstein's monster turning a corner, and hoped that after all of these years, he was feeling a little less lonely.

Years ago when I was falling in love with Oscar Wilde and reading all of his works, I called her up to ask

what she thought would have been his favorite song. Her being the literature professor, I trusted her opinion on this very serious matter. Without pause, she responded with, “That's easy. The Stones. Beast of Burden.” And even went on to further specify that he would most assuredly blast the song from a red convertible with the top down while driving shirtless. Of course.

Once—and I cannot remember what we were doing, or about to do—I remember asking her worriedly, “Are we allowed to go in there?” to which she responded, offhandedly, “Can you run?”

In what had been a more recent email exchange, we were plotting the demise of our remaining Happy Meal minions. This exchange consisted of varying ideas on how to either send them aloft or make them explode. Her final words on this subject were that she was hoping that “there will be MANY opportunities to Light things on Fire and Blow stuff up with you.”





## Here's the Deal



Cynthia: Always delighting in playful imaginings; fully equipped with a core of joy, and a willingness for fun.

In a book of her haiku titled *Everything Pertains*, Cynthia Lee Katona writes:

*“For the true student,*

*Nothing is a digression. Everything pertains.”*

There were lessons she taught on the street in Sydney. One that took us to Grace Cathedral so we could investigate the mysterious rood screen found in gothic architecture. There were the kind that took place while we celebrated the first bouquet from her garden in the spring, and the ones which filled evenings on the balcony at her loft while we admired the Coke sign.

I find myself taking great joy in the lessons she taught me both in, and out of the classroom.

Towards the end of Exupery's book, he writes, “And when your sorrow is comforted (time soothes all sorrows) you will be content that you have known me. You will always be my friend.”

This is true.

These lessons, these adventures in “becoming,” are how she is still with me every day, and always will be —laughing, smiling.

So, Professor Katona, to use one of my many favorite expressions of yours, “Here's the deal”:

I will do my best to get through this sadness. Your absence is profound and the ways in which I will miss you in my life are infinite. It is no wonder that the whole of me is still processing the loss of you. But I promise I will work towards not focusing on the loss and getting to the

point where I can feel all of the joy that you brought into my life. I promise to not let the spectacular vision of a sunset go wasted. To take time to admire the beauty

in the wabi sabi of all things. Wholeheartedly, I promise most of all, that I will “say yes to the hearty adventure” of my life. Your friendship was one of the greatest gifts. I know you're up there catching up with Dennis, your dad, your dear friend Barbara, and having another Ouzo with Leonard Cohen. I promise to make you proud in this life, so I can tell you all about it in the next one.



## *She Never Ceased to be an Inspiration to Me*

Cynthia was my Hero for forty years. I first met her as a student at Ohlone College and then proceeded to take every course she offered—English, women’s literature, Shakespeare, several writing courses. I was 23—I had gone back to school after traveling around and was bumbling my way into my future.

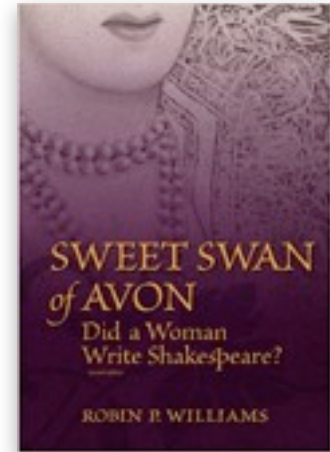
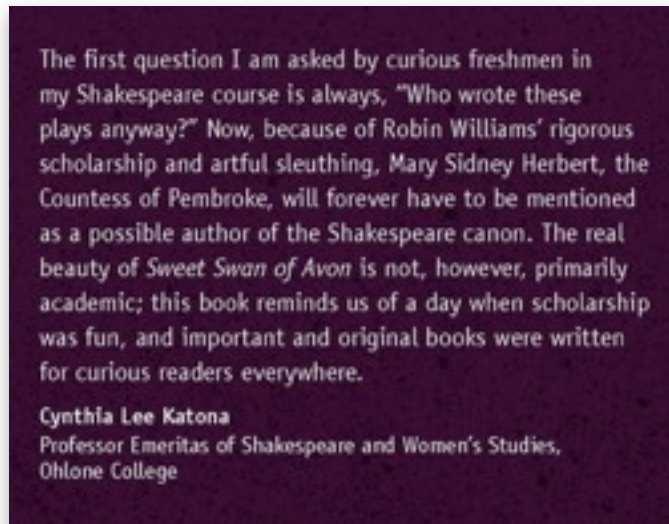
Looking back, I now realize she wasn’t much older than me, but from where I sat she had it all together. She was so so smart, so well read, so witty, she could write, she was a college professor, she was beautiful. I loved her. I got pregnant while studying that year but I continued in Cynthia’s



classes. She let me sit on the floor when my belly was too big to slide behind that little desk, and she let me show up with a baby at my breast.

I moved to Santa Rosa to continue studying in graphic design, then

later moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico with my three little kids. We stayed in touch throughout the years. I used her book on books in an example in a design book I was writing. She wrote a blurb for my



iconoclastic book about the woman who wrote Shakespeare.

She and Chris had property in Santa Fe so I got to spend time with her on some of those visits. She never ceased to be an inspiration to me.

Socrates said the only thing we take with us when we die are our memories. I am proud to think that perhaps Cynthia took some memories of me with her.

*I will miss her forever.*



A woman with short brown hair, wearing a red t-shirt with the text "Every Shakespeare" and blue pants, stands in front of a wooden fence. Behind her is a large, traditional building with a thick thatched roof and half-timbered walls. The scene is set in a lush garden with various plants and flowers.

## *So Long Lives This, and This Gives Life to Thee*

I took a Shakespeare class from Cindy many years ago, and I discovered how much I loved and appreciated Shakespeare because of her. I was impressed with her enthusiasm and it made me want to learn more. After graduating from Ohlone, I went on to study at Cal State Hayward and received my Bachelor's degree in Literature.  
*JoAnn Serran*

### *Sonnet 18*

*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.  
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is her gold complexion dimmed;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimmed;  
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,  
Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in her shade,  
When in eternal lines to Time thou grow'st.  
So long as we can breathe, or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.*



## *I Like this Lady!*

I met Cindy through her high school boyfriend/husband Dennis. He and I worked together at Crown-Zellerbach on Bush Street in San Francisco from 1976-1980. When I first met Cindy, she was already smiling. I knew it in an instant—*I like this lady! Wow!* And we did indeed hit it off mostly because of our mutual tendency to laugh at most things. Eventually our friendship included family-snowcat-over-the-mountains fishing trips, Freight & Salvage performances (I liked folk music and went there often), hors d'oeuvres parties (a Friday night once a month gathering), wine bicycle rides in Napa, major blow-out



downtown San Francisco tour-de-force celebrations (including but not limited to fine French

dining, champagne and high cal desserts). She was always game and that attribute is what I loved most about her. She also won the heart of my



wife. We had made plans to meet Cynthia for dinner around Thanksgiving last year—but alas we didn't get to meet up so that I could give her what she called a “JY hug”!

Undeterred, my sweet bride and I did indeed make that trip to San Francisco and we toasted

to Cindy throughout the trip! We loved her dearly and feel her spirit in our hearts every day.

*Love ya CK!*

## *An Outrageous Flirt*



I first met Cynthia at a lesbian shoe fashion show at Nordstrom sometime in the 1990's. Cynthia was enthusiastically taking photos of the event and I felt like she was my biggest supporter. Cynthia had that amazing ability to make everyone around her feel great—as if they were the most important person in the room. She was always complimentary, gallant, and respectful, while being an outrageous flirt.

The greatest gift Cynthia gave me was to introduce me to Chris, who has become one of my dearest friends. I remember Cynthia often saying—you have got to meet my good friend, Chris—I know you would be great friends.

*For this introduction, I will be forever grateful!*



## *She Took Me to My First Gay Bar*

There are so many remembrances, but let me start at the beginning. Cindy and I met at a consciousness-raising group, which were very popular then (1974 or thereabouts). She always talked about her “partner” but never mentioned the name of this partner.

Soooo, one day, feeling pretty confident I knew what the answer was going to be, I asked Cindy the name of her partner and without batting an eyelash she said, “Sue!” Some in the group were surprised and/or shocked, but the first woman I had a sexual experience with, Peggy, and I just looked at each other knowingly.

From there, Cindy took me to my first gay bar, The White Horse in Oakland, which is still standing. Cindy was secretly dating one of her students, that same Sue. They left me alone on the circular banquet in the middle of the room, near the fireplace, to gawk—and perhaps ponder my own fate.

From there our paths seem to cross regularly. I joined a weight loss clinic, Medical Weight Control, and the intake receptionist in San Francisco was a friend of

Cindy’s, who worked in their Hayward clinic! At this point she introduced me to dear Dennis Katona and it seems like it was a good ole time from there on! We never lost touch after that.

When Cindy had settled down with Kathy in Fremont, Rosemarie and I had bought a house in Oakland. We cooked gourmet meals for each other on a regular basis. Warm times indeed discussing food, movies, photography, you name it!

Dear dear Cindy Katona is never far from my thoughts and certainly not far from my heart. I know you knew this, Cindy, but I always loved you and I always will (and I know how you felt about me). There’s probably hundreds of us that can say that 😊

My only regret is that your illness took over so much and so fast that we never

had the chance to have one more of our hearty hugs—and a good cheeseburger together! And I must say that I am going to miss that cute giggle of yours!





## Streetwise Scholar

I met Cindy in the early 1970's when we were both just "20 something" at Peg's Place, a lesbian bar in San Francisco; connecting later at the Oracle women's



*Together in the mid-1970s*

bookstore booth at a book convention. From about 1975 to 1981 we lived together as a couple in Hayward: I remember tasting French cuisine for the first time; Shakespeare in Ashland; wine tasting in Napa; stirring ACT performances; posing for photos; Bread and Roses concerts; Metro and Tyger kitties; SF gay pride parades; discovering Asilomar; Castro Street Halloweens; romance in Paris, Germany, and Austria. Cindy was on my SJSU Women's Studies thesis committee, recommended me for my writing lab instructor 10 year stint at Ohlone College, and designed a 1981 performance flyer that I currently have framed on my guest bedroom wall.

Cindy was captivating and so seductively witty. She could think and write (in that lovely calligraphy of hers) faster than anyone I have ever met —already a cultured streetwise intellectual/scholar, born to travel. Best of all, even after we parted as lovers, we kept in contact, usually at what we called our

"quarterlies" to compare life notes over Chinese food and Rusty Nail cocktails—me always coming away amazed and dumbfounded over her latest exploits. I will miss those talks. Knowing someone so well for over 40 years is a long, sweet time.

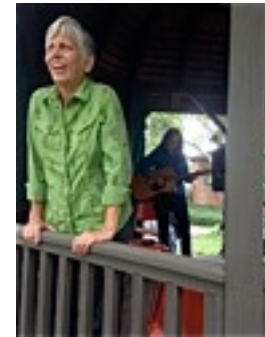
I sent this photo of me from a folk festival I performed in on October 1, 2016, to Cynthia after I knew that she and Chris were not going to be able to visit me and my partner, as planned, on October 3, in Prescott, Arizona, where Susan and I now live. The photo seemed to capture how I

was feeling: "how could Cynthia have pancreatic cancer?"

Cynthia wrote back: "What a great pic. I always knew you would grow older the most gracefully of all of us." I don't know about that, but it was so quintessential Cindy. I wouldn't

get to see her again, but we talked by telephone, something we rarely did, on October 5. It was good to hear Cindy's voice. She told me she wasn't afraid to die, but she was afraid of the pain, so I am somewhat reconciled that Cynthia went quickly and with as much control as she could, although way too quickly for the rest of us.

*I wanted another 40 years.*



*2016 Sharlot Hall Museum Folk Festival, Prescott, AZ, with sister Wendy*

## *The CLK Brand*

### *CLK Seals*

CLK working an elephant seal beach near Cambria back when you could hike out ridiculously close to these huge animals. What a fun adventure until the



realization back on the road that our shoes had absorbed months of elephant seal waste washed invisibly into the sand.

The odor was so intense that we were forced to leave our shoes and socks at the side of the road. We spent the next few hours barefooted until we could procure some new footwear.



### *CLK Brand*

Cynthia loved her initials and would put them on just about anything. This branding iron made her VERY happy.



### *CLK & Me*

Happy and grateful to have shared a sliver of experience with a remarkable woman—long ago and far away.

# CLK



### *CLK Working*

Cynthia posing for a “dramatic” working shot. Playful day. Best kind with CLK.

## *Pearls Before Swine: Words of Wisdom from CLK*

- Begin as you wish to proceed.
- Don't trust anyone who doesn't like their vittles.
- A Rusty Nail and spicy Szechwan food are a perfect pairing.
- When one is lucky enough to receive a financial windfall, splurge on 10% and invest the rest.

I don't always observe, but I always stand by your time tested ideals. In those stretches when I am not as mindful as I'd like to be and find myself in a muddle, I hear your voice telling me "...to clean up my messes!"

*Cynthia Lee, you are much loved.*



"Pearls before swine" and "casting pearls" refer to a quotation from Matthew 7:6 in Jesus's Sermon on the Mount: "Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces."

Pearls before swine - Wikipedia  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pearls\\_before\\_swine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pearls_before_swine)



## *Soaking Up Puppy Love*

Cynthia and I met at a gay house party in Santa Fe, late 2012. Our instant connection made us feel as if we'd been friends for years. Since we both were artists we agreed to exchange a favorite piece of each others. Surprisingly we both picked each other's favorite piece—I will always treasure my print of “Zen Mop.”



Cynthia, Chris, Robin and I so enjoyed our time together in Santa Fe. Robin served amazing meals. We drank fancy cocktails and talked about any thing and everything. But I think Cynthia's favorite part of our get togethers was the time she spent with our dogs and puppies. She would sit in the middle of the room and let them jump all over her, soaking up the puppy love.



Robin and I will always be grateful for our last time together at Cynthia's house. We hugged, cried, laughed and spoke frankly about her condition. I believe that as much as Cynthia taught her students and friends throughout her lifetime, she continued to teach us in her passing: How to face the unthinkable with such dignity, strength and courage. Cynthia lived life to the fullest and left on her own terms.

We will always miss her, but she will stay connected in our hearts through her photographs, books, poetry and most of all our precious memories of wonderful times together.

## *The Girl Liked to Have a Good Time*

I didn't know Cynthia very long, unfortunately. Just long enough to adore her completely, and cling to every hour that we spent together or on the phone during her last two months. Our first phone call lasted 4 hours and 2 glasses of wine, and neither of us wanted to hang up even then. She was, quite simply, the most fascinating, talented and accomplished woman I have ever met—and was also so generous with her heart and her sweetness. She was interested in everything . . . literally everything, and never lost her joy in appreciating whatever experiences came her way. The girl liked to have a good time.

We shared a common vocabulary of all things involving Asian art, love of world music, photography and especially, literature. We discovered that both of our homes were filled with tansu, netsuke and other precious mementos from our travels, and agreed that it was a bittersweet

coincidence that we had found our doppelganger, but our timing 'sucked.'

This is the only photo I ever took of her, and as you can see, her enthusiasm was apparent as she prepared to eat (and she did) two huge pork chops. This renaissance woman may be gone from the world now, but the light she shined on me will illuminate my life for decades to come.

I was lucky to know her.



*Always the photographer, Cynthia catches Nelda looking at CLK's beautifully imagined books of Haiku.*

## *If Only the Chinese Would Buy Me*



I called Cynthia “Sicilian.” Though it acknowledged only her paternal ancestry, it seemed a better auditory fit than either her given name or her mother's ancestry (English). Sicilian and I carried on a rollicking email conversation for years, maybe a decade. There were long gaps, often when one or the other of us was out of the State/country, and then eventually we'd pick it up again. When we did, we went hard at it until we'd sucked every last drop of marrow from the exchange.

The form we employed for this communication was closer to live than to written conversation. Let's say she led with an email in the customary paragraph style. I would reply to her not in paragraph style, but rather with comments interspersed in her original text. She'd reply ditto. We used different sizes and styles and colors of fonts to render the conversation readable.

This eventually resulted in an email so lengthy as to be unwieldy, not to say inelegant. When that happened one of us, usually Sicilian, would cull the extraneous portions and return an email which contained only the threads still under development. Then the conversation would proceed in the manner described until it had run its course. I've attempted this method countless times with others over the years, but Sicilian is the only one who ever entrained with it. Hella smart, that girl.

What follows is the sole email exchange with her that I could find. It takes place over two days in 2013. It's the final in a series of exchanges which began who knows how long prior, and as such, is so severely culled as to perhaps be difficult to follow. Given the subject line, I suspect it was originally a riff off her trip to China. She had such a Thing for China. It's intact except for my email address and a few lines I sanitized to protect the innocent. You won't be able to see all the font indicators of who is writing what, but I bet you can figure it out.

**From:** [Katona](#)

**Sent:** Monday, May 27, 2013 10:51 AM

**Subject:** Re: If only the Chinese would buy me...But alas, unlike Napa, I have a very low chichi quotient. Well, if they won't buy us, maybe we'll have to buy one of them?

*I think we did that a while back, when they built the railroads.*

*I think we stole them back then. But that's an idea too.*

How the hell am I? Maintaining, still, some optimism and momentum in the face of factors so persistent we're both sick of talking about them. Maintaining is good....very good.

**Tell me a little about your “maintaining.” Please.**

I would cheerfully sell myself to the Chinese, to anyone who would be my techie, or to anyone who knows which is the working end of a screwdriver. I have been looking for a developer to turn my haiku books into an iPhone app for 3 years now...get in line. And peek here if you are in the mood: <http://>



## *We Might Even Get a Gratuitous Pedicure*

[store.blurb.com/ebooks/388133-see-for-yourself](http://store.blurb.com/ebooks/388133-see-for-yourself).

And yes that is my left eyeball on the cover.

*My, you are the prolific one! Nice eyeball you've got there, too. Well done on both counts.*

*Thanks. This is the 9th one, and I think I'm finally "getting it."*

Now, *you're* the one with stories to tell. What's been going on with you and women, for instance? I know you haven't been sitting on your hands, as it were.

Mostly. A six month affair with (SANITIZED)

Yes, I remember that LA candidate. Puts me in mind of my sole LA (TV writer) candidate, which never got past the phone stage...could tell right away I'd never abide any number of things.

I like the word candidate...so descriptive of what is really going on these days. I'm not really dating anymore. Lost the fire in my belly...so sad that. Channeling all that energy into haiku and a course I'm taking courses at the Fremont Citizen Police Academy. If you can't love 'em, arrest 'em.

**From:** [Katona](#)

**Sent:** Monday, May 27, 2013 8:20 PM

**Subject:** Re: If only the Chinese would buy me...

Yes, let's steal some Chinese tourists. I could use the ransom yen.

*Good idea. We might even get a gratuitous pedicure out of the deal.*

Sorry old thing, but I can't tell you "a little" about my life, though I thank you for asking. Can't be done when so much time has passed and so much has gone on. I've sworn off attempting to do this even in person, never mind by email. When I can point out a few identifiable events/developments in a succinct

fashion as you have done, it'll be a different, and more tellable, story.

*Well, if you ever want to drunk dial me and give me the long version: 510 656-XOXO.*

No, I'm not having a lot of house guests. I've never, not in a decade, been successful at luring anyone I wasn't sleeping with to my mumble abode—and it's been 5 years since that happened. I know, of course, that you have no guest room in your house, having been told early on that the only people who get to stay with you are people who are sleeping with you. I sent you Sedaris' tongue in cheek, and because I knew you'd think it was a terrific essay.

*It was terrific. I've always enjoyed his writing. And I'm thinking of trading in my bed for a twin...my queen doesn't get much use, and the extra room to walk around would be nice...:).*

**TUE, 28 May 2013**

**From:** Katona

**Subject:** Re: If only the Chinese would buy me

Before I forget, I've been meaning to alert you to the presence of the dread "retired professor emeritus" on your eyeball [blurb.com](http://blurb.com) page. [Blurb.com](http://Blurb.com) (one of your 8 earlier haiku works) may have been where I first saw it, but may not have been. In any case, I know it's been over a year since I first tipped you off, so as your friend, I must now absolutely insist that you scour the web for all instances of that redundant phrase and do whatever it takes to purge them, lest you do damage to your otherwise bulletproof credibility.

*Oh dear...I don't remember being advised of this before, but we retired emeritus have notoriously bad memories.*

*Will however get on that right away...thanks very much for your persistence and your good eye!*



## *A Thirst for Life*

In remembering Cynthia Katona, I want to be witty and clever, with lofty prose or poetry that would be worthy of such a brilliant, unforgettable person. In searching for the right words and recalling so many fond memories, though, a strange muteness comes over me. In my sorrow, I feel far from brilliant, clever, or witty. Cynthia had such a profound impact upon my life, and I will probably still be trying to figure it out for many years to come.

I first met Cynthia in September of 2005, as she and Chris were holding court at the counter of Mecca, a women's bar in San Francisco. I was fresh out of law school, trying to find my path in the world, and I was absolutely smitten by this worldly, charming, and handsome English professor with such lovely salt and pepper hair. I was one among many a young lady who fell deeply in love with Cynthia, only to suffer from a broken heart. But once the embers of a hot romance had long faded, I found the most influential and profound friendship I have ever had.

One of the greatest things about Cynthia, besides her warm smile and cute giggle, was her inquisitive, open mind and zest for life. She introduced

me to so many wonderful things, such as netsuke, scholars' rocks, Yank Sing dim sum, the decadence of sensual fabrics, the art of tea, and the delights of distilled spirits. In fact, it was through her influence that I found my career path and passion in life as a whiskey blender and professional "nose."

Cynthia and I spent many fun evenings at her Fremont house, eating the rigatoni she made from her recollections of her father's original recipe, having spirits tastings, smoking cigars, and talking about world travel, Mughal art, photography,

sartorial splendor, spirituality, philosophy and other intellectual musings. She often told tales of her varied and adventurous dating life, as we would laugh away until the wee hours.

I am not sure I will ever get used to the idea of Cynthia not being here. This special person deeply touched the lives of so many people, and I am thankful to have been among them.

*Thank you, dear friend, for sharing your thirst for life and the light of your precious being. I will love you for eternity.*







Her shadow shines bright  
In her photographs of love  
And the lives she touched



SHADOWS | Cynthia Lee Katona



## Life's Sweet Caress

*So often with Cynthia I wished to freeze time, to hold the day or the hour or the moment forever, to know always life's sweet caress.*

In her classroom, that first day in 1977 • When she invited me to lunch at her house in Hayward for her father's famous pasta Bolognese • The night we saw A.S. Byatt, Michael Ondaatje and Robert Haas in conversation at Herbst Theatre • In the village of Assos on the western coast of Turkey, eating fish kabobs and imagining what it was like when Sappho wrote poetry on the isle of Lesbos, which we could see in the distance • At the tip of Side watching the sunset and imagining Cleopatra and Mark Antony meeting for the first time • Drinking Turkish tea at a Tofas Fiat repair shop near Sulcuk while smiling Turkish mechanics replace a failed clutch • Visiting the Lobster Hatchery in Bar Harbor, Maine, and finding baby lobsters in the tide pools while beachcombing along the shore •

Exploring the Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Site in Nova Scotia and sharing the beer—the color of coca cola with an alcohol content that turns knees to butter—with two tiny, older French women and watching them sip then smile and say

“C'est bon, c'est bon!” • Enjoying an Italian dinner in Hong Kong at a restaurant with white linen table cloths and napkins after a month of



eating only Chinese food • Tasting beer after touring Henry Weinhard's brewery in Portland on her 50th birthday • Seeing a quirky play in the basement of a church about an electrologist who accidentally kills a client. It was great! • Sailing around the island of Manhattan on the Circle Line on a hot August morning • Watching her eat a gyro at her favorite Greek dive in New York City—just watching her eat! • Shooting pool at Cal Neva Casino, not in its glory days • Spending a few quiet days at Asilomar and lunching at Doris Day's hotel in Carmel to celebrate my 54th birthday • Listening to Leonard Cohen's “Old Days” on a February warm, sunshine bright, blue, blue sky day while sitting in her plush car with its exquisite sound system facing the expansive Pacific ocean and watching the waves crash to shore.

Cynthia Lee Katona was “my north, my south, my east and west.” She was my teacher, my mentor, my confidante and counselor, my editor, my favorite book and movie lover—my most beloved friend. She was my William Boyd “sweet caress.” She was the one person who made me feel “seen,” who endured “warts and all” for 40 years.

*If I could spend eternity with anyone, it would be with Cynthia Lee Katona.*



“However long your stay on this small planet lasts, and whatever happens during it, the most important thing is that—from time to time—you feel life's sweet caress.”

## *No Honeymoon for the Wicked...lol • Our Last Correspondence*

For the past 30 years I have had a person in my life who has brought me joy, laughter, comfort, excitement, well, the list is much, much longer. Suffice it to say, this is a relationship which, to me, has been the definition of a deep and lasting love, a love that makes the world full of bright colors, beautiful places, and endless possibilities, a love that rarely comes along, and once here, needs to be savored and cherished. So to honor that love, I happily agreed to marry Cynthia when asked last month. And as all mature, responsible adults do, we secretly ran off to be married in a tiny chapel at South Lake Tahoe, just the two of us. | The ceremony was actually perfect, complete with a favorite song of Cynthia's (Pachelbel's Canon in D), the minister's surprisingly touching words, an enthusiastic photographer, and the added bonus of a Native American blessing. | This special day was capped off by a great run of luck at the blackjack tables that evening, with both Cynthia and me winning big. Of course having Cynthia in my life has been the biggest win of all.

Love comes in all shapes and sizes. Sometime it hits you like a ton of bricks, and sometimes it sneaks up on you. Sometimes it is so deep and abiding that it simply feels like it has always been thus. Over the last thirty years, I have had all of these kinds of love, and a hundred more with Christine Bolt. My love for her has been eccentric and profound, comforting and joyous, challenging and rare. | So last month, I asked Christine to marry me, and I am honored to say that she accepted. We got rings and a license at City Hall, and then, of course, decided last week to elope to the Chapel of the Bells at South Lake Tahoe for a wedding as weird and wonderful as we are. We hope this makes you smile, as we have been grinning for days.

*Congratulations*

Oct. 28, 2016 7:06am

Hi Cindy

Not sure how it will print since I used low res photos but does anyone print anything anymore?

Enjoy the honeymoon!

ooxx

L.

Oct. 28, 5:30pm

You know me well. Still love a hard copy of important things, and this is important, and beautiful.

Thank you so much for doing this gorgeous piece.

No honeymoon for the wicked...lol.

Love, CK

## *You were such a Southern California City Girl*

The words won't come. I have put off this task. I have started and discarded. Now balls of crumpled paper surround me. The words to describe you, Cynthia, the labels to attach to our relationship, the reflections on our time together—impossible to find. And now time has run out. The due date has arrived. I must get something, anything, written down.

As I put pen to paper, scenes from the past thirty years crowd my mind. Which ones do I choose? There are just so many. There is that first trip, years ago, the one to Santa Fe. You remember it, Cynthia. We flew in to Albuquerque in the middle of summer—straight from cool, sea level California to the mile-high, blistering New Mexico desert.

Our first stop was the fast food drive-through window for lunch. You seemed confused by this commonplace activity.

And as I handed you our sacks of food and began driving away, you asked if we were going to eat in the car in the parking lot. I have never forgotten your look of shock and horror as I replied that we were going to eat in the car as I drove. Ah yes, I taught you how to eat fast food in a moving car (well, never YOUR car). You got really good at timing when to hand me my food, and how to toss the debris in the back seat. How we laughed about this and acknowledged your improvement over the years. Of course,

there was my shocked expression when, on that same trip, first thing in the morning, you asked me what our lunch and dinner plans were for that day, as if that really mattered! So in due course you made a foodie of me, teaching me how to order, savor, and appreciate a wonderful culinary experience.

Maybe I should include the stories about how and when we celebrated your birthday each summer. For many years we were traveling on June 4, since we hit the road as soon as the semester was over. Remember that Yellowstone trip I planned? We flew into Jackson, Wyoming on your birthday. It was snowing. You looked at me accusingly and asked that if this was our summer vacation, why was it snowing? So we spent your birthday buying you thermal long-johns and hand warmers. You were such a Southern California city girl.



Or how about the year we were in the middle of nowhere in a Sizzler on your birthday? As we waited in line you said that what you really wanted to order was on the Senior Menu. Well, as any good friend would do, I pointed out that as of that exact day you actually were a Senior and could order from that special menu. As we doubled over laughing, all the people in line started singing Happy Birthday to you. Really, do birthday celebrations get better than the Senior Menu at Sizzler?



## *You Grinned Like a Kid and Hugged Each Celebrant*

Well, perhaps the one in Shanghai was a bit more memorable. We were in that fancy restaurant, with all our students and tour guides. Everyone was in on the surprise, but they all kept it a secret. The guide had really taken my message to heart to order a special cake. Not even my wedding had a cake as magnificent as that birthday cake! It was a grand evening, complete with touching toasts to you by each one of the students. You talked about that evening for a long time. Over the years, with each birthday celebration, it seemed as if your memories of disappointing childhood birthdays began to fade.

There is also the story of the last birthday we shared—June 4, 2016. We were on that short getaway, planning to spend a few days in your favorite place, Asilomar. You were so pleased that I found the Asilomar Conference Grounds just as enchanting as you had described. We had that great corner room with all the windows. I had brought bottles of port, which we sipped as we sat in front of the roaring fire in the common room next door. Remember how we promised each other that we would come and stay in that room at least twice a year? And how we needed to bring more port next time? But back to the birthday part. Your



birthday was celebrated on our way to Asilomar. We both had wonderful memories of a lunch with our husbands years ago and years apart at some clubby-type restaurant somewhere on the gorgeous 17-mile drive. (Was it a sign or just a cosmic coincidence that both of our husbands were named Dennis?) Our memories were hazy about the exact location but we knew we would recognize it if we saw it. Completely dedicated to finding the right one, we stopped at each restaurant along those 17 miles. Finally, there it was—The Tap Room at Pebble Beach! We laughed and joked with all the golfers in there who were enjoying a refreshing 19<sup>th</sup> hole. We were there strictly for the lunch and to remember good times with our Dennis's. As usual, Cynthia, you forgot it was your birthday and, also as usual, you were totally surprised when cake was served and a rousing rendition of the birthday song was belted out by a chorus of wait staff and slightly inebriated golfers. You grinned like a little kid and hugged each celebrant.

Will any of the multitude of stories that I could tell mean anything to anyone else? Will my words capture those moments of enchantment, all the laughter, all the love?

## *When Something “Went Kachina”*

What if I describe the time when it was just the two of us sitting on the top deck of the boat as it left Shanghai to go upriver, with the Bund ablaze in lights and the evening breeze like a caress? Or what if I include the time when we sheltered in the cave at Zion’s Emerald Lake during the downpour, the world around us hushed of voices, so sure that we must be the only ones in the entire park. Would anyone feel the magic as we did? Magic happened every time we traveled, didn’t it though? You said it was because we were open to magic and that’s why it could find us. Yes, you, the rational Cynthia, talking about magic.

And of course, it wasn’t just the travel that we shared. We had Ohlone College! Those two years when we worked so hard on the AB1725 Committee to ensure the faculty’s role in college governance. The multiple tours of duty on Faculty Senate, you as President and me as your trusty VP sidekick. You were so organized and efficient, with meetings always starting and ending ON TIME (a rarity for most Ohlone committees). And of course, I organized great retirement parties. You told me that was my job—the parties. We had such different, but complementary, skill sets. We just meshed so well. When we joked about our individual limitations,



you would say that it was okay, because together we made one complete person.

We couldn’t go more than a few days without talking, always having so much chat fodder. Oh yeah, chat fodder—two words that I put together that you found so appropriate for us. The term became part of the shorthand language we created. We knew exactly what we meant when something “went kachina” on us. Or when a situation warranted the words “Did you know...” a phrase coined in (dis)honor of that obnoxious blackjack player at the San Felipe Casino.

What do I do now with those phrases? They were just ours. No one else will understand them.

I could write more about our differences, I suppose, to highlight how we were such an unlikely pair.

The example of the beignet binge comes to mind. You know, that trip where we flew into New Orleans, arriving late at night, and then just took enough time to throw our suitcases into our room before heading to Cafe du Monde for a beignet feast. The outcome was me with my black pants and shirt covered in powdered sugar, a mountain of sticky napkins on the table in front of me. And then there was you with nary a speck of errant sugar anywhere and your side of the table in pristine condition, with only a clean

## *Now Find Me Something Pretty to Put in Front of those Clouds*

plate resting on it. Us laughing and noting how this was the perfect visual depiction of our personalities! To this day I do not know how you managed to not get even a tiny speck of sugar on you!

Or I could write about our similarities—for example, how we both shared the love of collecting Zuni fetish carvings. Remember how we could look at hundreds of them in a display case and then end choosing the same one? We would joke about whose house it should go home to. Sometimes you would turn to me and say “well, they will all end up at your house someday anyway.” And now, of course, they have. A few weeks ago I wrapped each one up, remembering when and where we first spotted it, smiling to recall how you would have me do a “quality control” inspection before you purchased it.

I carefully, almost reverently, boxed them up and brought them to my home. At some point, I will unwrap each one and savor again the memories of those moments with you.

This book is supposed to be a celebration of your life so maybe I should just write about our last trip because it was so perfect. We both agreed that it was our best trip. Everything went just right, even when things threatened to go quite wrong.

Fittingly, the trip was to Santa Fe—truly our second home. Together we had chosen everything for that huge remodeling project back in 2008: floor coverings, paint, light fixtures, even the Mexican ceramic sinks! Then throughout the years every piece of furniture, each piece of art, the rugs on the floors and walls—we searched for just the right piece and chose it together. We made that little condo our home, and christened it with cigars and tequila on the balcony (on more than one occasion).



So this last trip—how to describe it? There was the Graham Nash concert at the Lensic Theater, when all the power went out all over Santa Fe 10 minutes before show time. So Nash played a two-hour acoustic set by candlelight! And you had scored us seats so close to the stage (thank you!) that

it seemed as if he was just playing for us. Unforgettable.

And what about that excursion to the Jemez National Monument? We drove all the way out there and it was closed—again! Remember how surprised and happy we were when the park ranger took pity on us and let us in, giving us full run of this incredible pueblo ruin for as long as we wanted? You were in photographer’s heaven with those blue skies, puffy clouds and soft adobe walls. You always thanked me



## *You, Cynthia, Made It the Best*

for ordering puffy clouds. Whenever you would see the clouds you'd say "Okay, now find me something pretty to put in front of those clouds" and off we would go. Your delight in a good photography day was always so fun to see that I didn't care how far I had to drive or what kind of road we had to take.

Continuing on with the list of gone-wrong things on that trip was the unwelcome surprise closure of our favorite breakfast place. So we had to find a new place—and the one we found turned out to be even better. Then you found the perfect Iris Nampeyo pot, after hunting for it for 5 years!

Every day served up great food, stunning scenery, new Zuni fetishes and an abundance of sunshine and puffy clouds. Never had we enjoyed our friendship more. We savored the beauty of the area as if we had not already seen it dozens of times. We spent every minute of that trip in a state of grace, it seemed.

We commented to each other that we could not imagine a trip more splendid. Is there another word bigger or better than joy-filled? Or is that even a word? Help me out here, Cynthia. You are the word merchant. That last trip, a simple Santa Fe trip, was the best.



You, Cynthia, made it the best.

Well it is 3 a.m. and now I have written lots of words, but do any of them capture what you brought to my life? Do they convey what we meant to each other?

Remember several years back when I called you and I was all excited because I finally had come across a term that described our relationship? I said we were

LaoTong, or "old sames." I described to you the Chinese custom in which two women were pledged to each other for life, and how this custom resulted in an unbreakable bond, a deep, incredibly intense friendship that could not be undone by any of life's travails. We had this type of bond. We always knew that no matter what happened in our lives, our bond would hold and we would have each other.

So whether or not my words here have conveyed what you meant to me and I to you, it doesn't matter. You and I knew. We had it inscribed in our rings in those final days, but it was always written in our hearts.

*With love from your LaoTong*

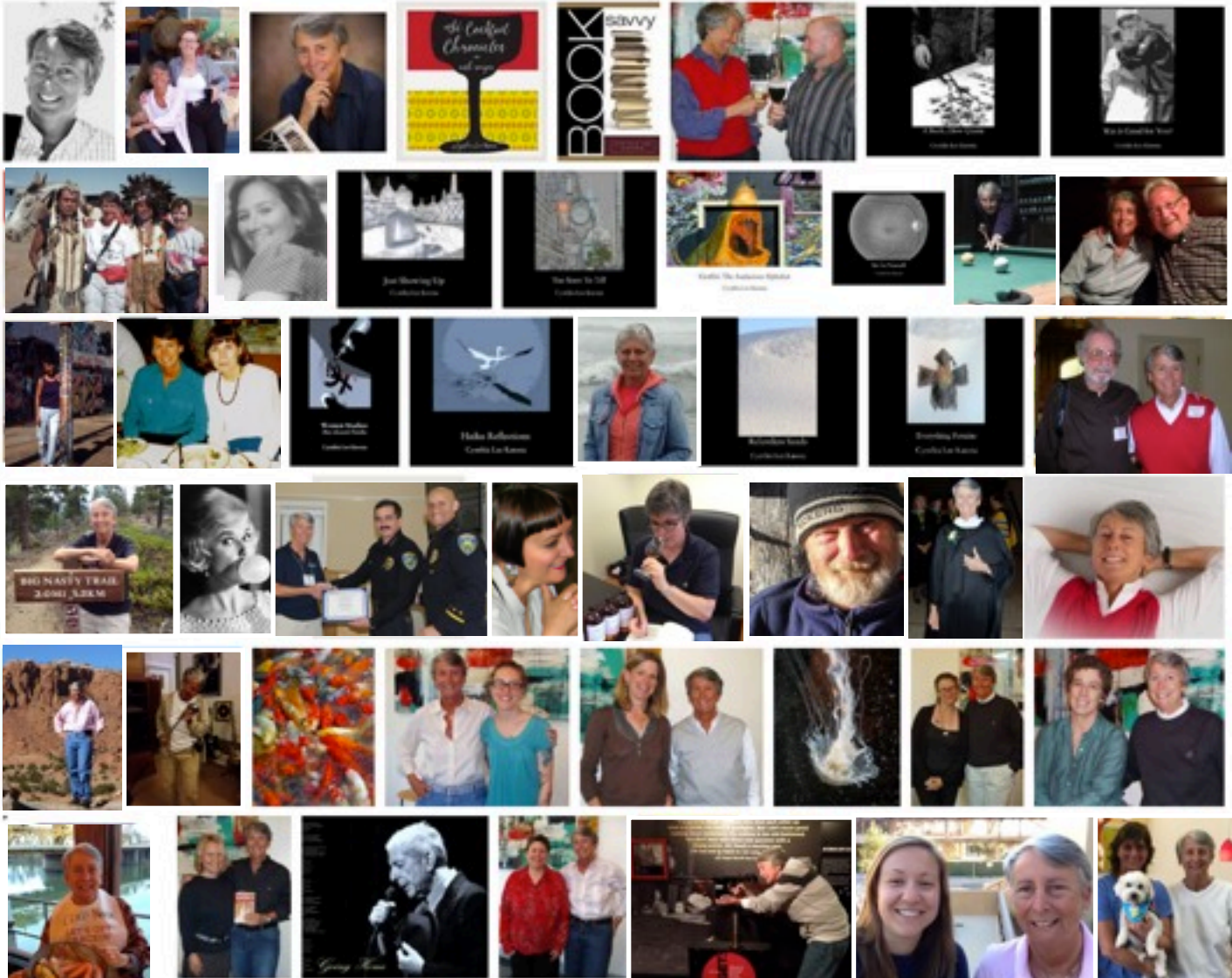
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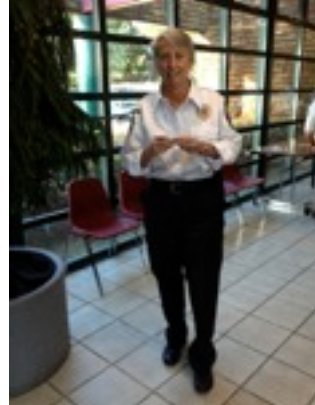


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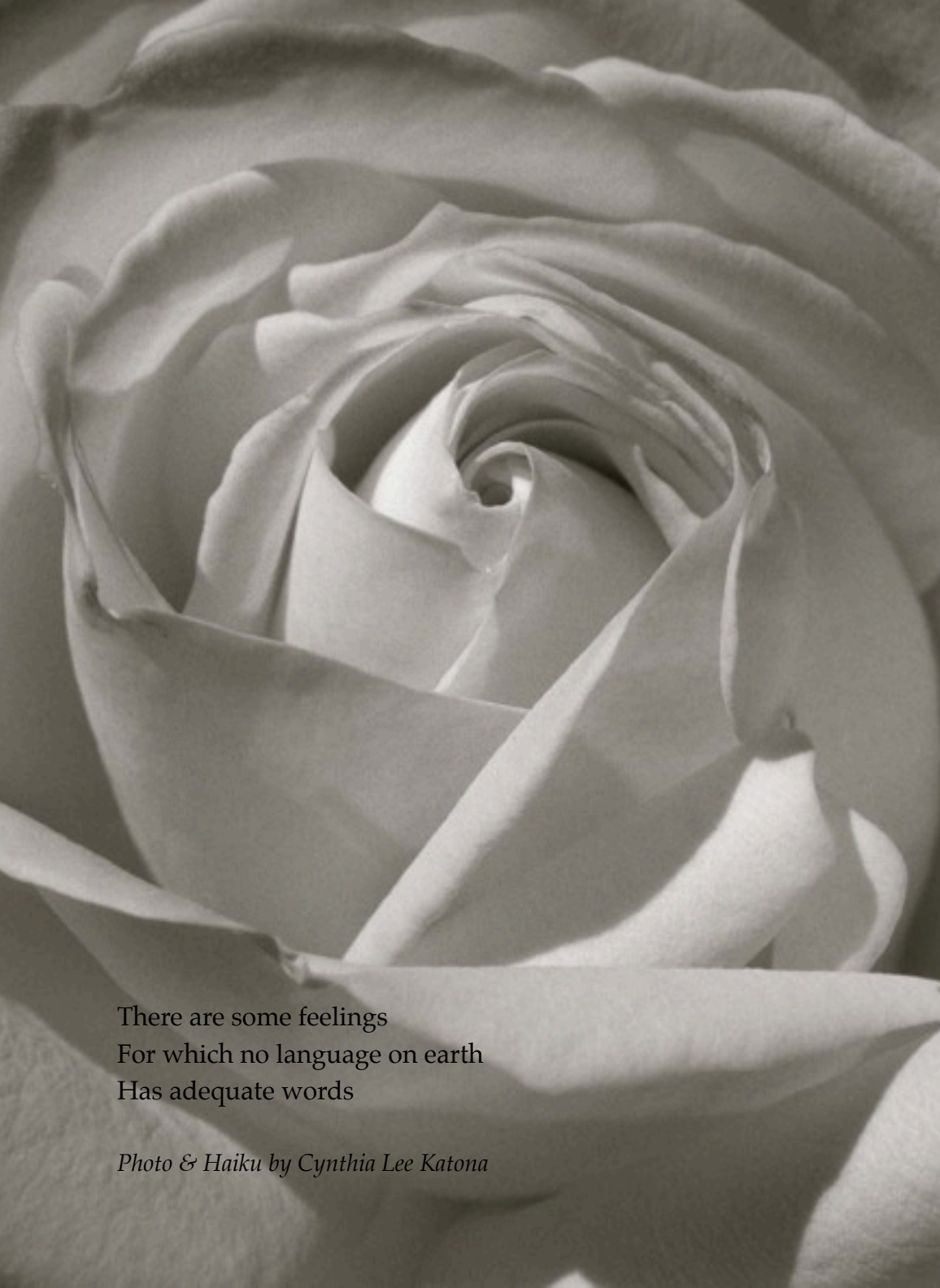
# JOY

My life was full of contentment and joy. Thanks to each of you for the essential part you played.

With all my love, Cynthia







There are some feelings  
For which no language on earth  
Has adequate words

*Photo & Haiku by Cynthia Lee Katona*

## Memorial Service Program

Sunday • April 23, 2017  
Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose  
Dominican Center Assembly Room  
43326 Mission Blvd. | Fremont, CA



**Welcome**  
Kay Harrison

**Reminiscences of High School**  
Edna McNeely Bowcutt  
Presented by Linda Moyer

**Reflections on a Distinguished Career**  
Dr. Jim Wright

**Tribute to the Teacher**  
Melissa Billington

**Memories of a Friendship**  
Kay Harrison

**Looking Back, Looking Forward**  
Christine Bolt



*Cynthia Lee Katona  
Memorial • April 23, 2017*



I cannot pretend I am without fear. But my predominant feeling is one of gratitude. I have loved and been loved; I have been given much and I have given something in return; I have read and traveled and thought and written. I have had an intercourse with the world, the special intercourse of writers and readers. | Above all, I have been a sentient being, a thinking animal, on this beautiful planet, and that in itself has been an enormous privilege and adventure. *Oliver Sacks*



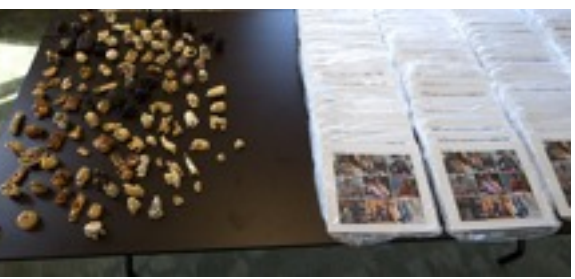
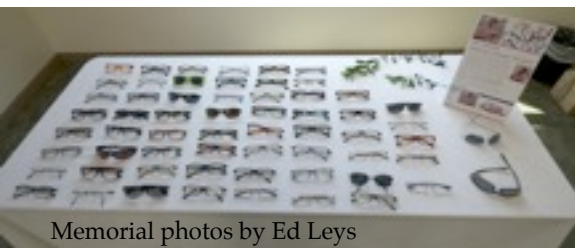




How objects are handed on is all about story-telling. I am giving you this because I love you. Or because it was given to me. Because I bought it somewhere special. Because you will care for it. Because it will complicate your life. Because it will make someone else envious. There is no easy story in legacy. What is remembered and what is forgotten? There can be a chain of forgetting, the rubbing away of previous ownership as much as the slow accretion of stories. What is being passed on to you with all these small objects?

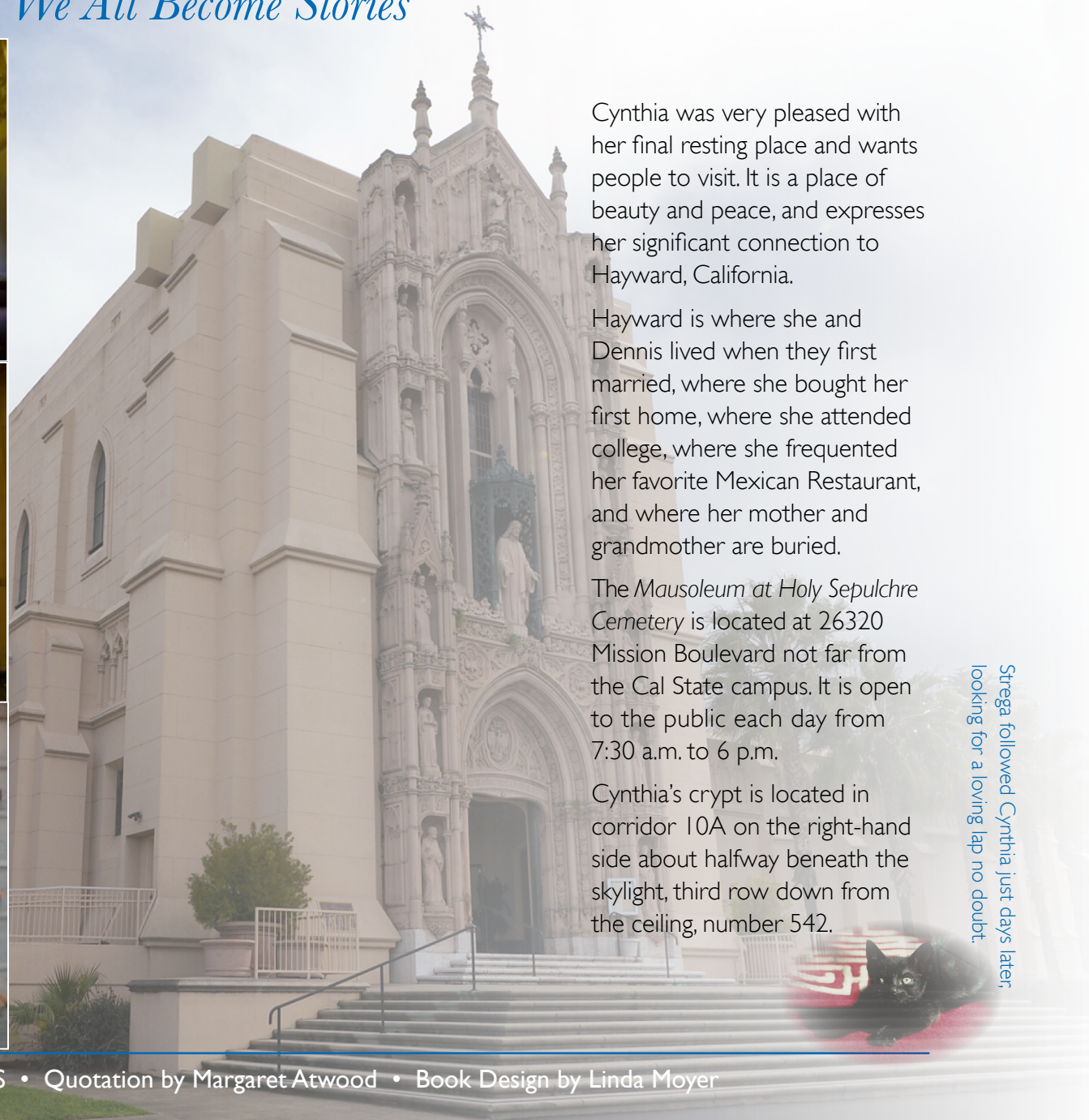


Edmund De Waal "The Hare with Amber Eyes"





# *“In the End, We All Become Stories”*



Cynthia was very pleased with her final resting place and wants people to visit. It is a place of beauty and peace, and expresses her significant connection to Hayward, California.

Hayward is where she and Dennis lived when they first married, where she bought her first home, where she attended college, where she frequented her favorite Mexican Restaurant, and where her mother and grandmother are buried.

The *Mausoleum at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery* is located at 26320 Mission Boulevard not far from the Cal State campus. It is open to the public each day from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Cynthia's crypt is located in corridor 10A on the right-hand side about halfway beneath the skylight, third row down from the ceiling, number 542.

Strega followed Cynthia just days later,  
looking for a loving lap no doubt.









Approach life with a  
Pair of chopsticks, in small bites  
With full attention.