Types and Shadows





Yes,
I came across this picture of the young gorgeous me (19 years old) and couldn't resist posting it knowing I'd get a ton of compliments.

So I post these side by side.

I'm not one of those women who has tried to outrun my age. I'll be 67 in November, and I've got four grandsons. That sweet sleeping child is 47 years old now.

That beautiful girl had her first cancer diagnosis 8 years after the picture was taken and has clunked through illness after illness all while being a long-distance runner, vegetarian, professional theatre founder/artistic director/actor/writer/blah blah blah.... Nothing untypical for a child sexually assaulted by three strangers at the age of 4. This is what happens. KNOW THIS. It's not about me. It's about all of us. And this is what became of that gorgeous young woman who actually hated this picture, thought it was severe or something.

Thought the collarbone betrayed the anorexia and people would judge. Oh, girl. The one who judged was YOU. The one who robbed you of the fun was YOU. If you could only know how much fun you're having now. Yes, even with the Parkinson's and the getting lost and the everything. You laugh A LOT these days, and you don't worry about things. What is there to worry about? Nothing matters, really.

It's all temporary. We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep. Eat the ice cream, girl!

Jeanmarie Simpson

Issue ***#109*** Autumn 2026

Journal of the *Fellowship of Quakers in the Arts*

FQA *Types and Shadows*

Issue #109

www.fqaquaker.org
facebook.com/quakersinthearts

***T&S** Editor*

Chuck Fager
chuckfager@AOL.com

Layout Designer

Martin Parker
parquillian@gmail.com

***FQA** Board Members*

Doris Pulone, Co-Clerk & Treasurer
Bonnie Zimmer, Co-Clerk
Liz Di Giorgio, Recording Clerk
Pamela Williams
Jeanmarie Simpson
Jennifer Elam
Jonathan Talbot
Chuck Fager

Types and Shadows is published quarterly by the Fellowship of Quakers in the Arts (FQA), Editorial: chuckfager@AOL.com

Membership is $35/yr
Membership dues payment and profile entry at *fqaquaker.org* ***or***
FQA c/o Bonnie Zimmer
17211 Friends House Rd. - Apt 201
Sandy Spring, MD 20860

T&S **Submission deadlines** are:
Sept. 15, Dec. 15,
March 15 and June 15.

FQA is an art ministry for Quakers and others under the care of *Trenton NJ Monthly Meeting*.

Cover Photos: *Ray Parshall (left), Dan Bishop (right)*

Tri-Quarter Gathering 2026

The South Jersey Tri-Quarter Gathering has brought together Friends annually for over forty years, mainly from Burlington, Haddonfield and Salem Quarters --in New Jersey. It happens among the beautiful pine trees, and wandering deer, by the crystal clear lake of YMCA Camp of the Pines in Medford, NJ.

This September 150+ people of all ages created art of many kinds, enjoyed dancing, singing by the campfire (well, at least during the one dry spell). FQA supports the art show, performances, and workshops. A few books by our artists were sold, we had a brand new FQA display area complete with our new tri-folds, and collected donations for photographs of our late member Joanna Patterson. Many people had fun browsing through 500+ of Joanna's fine photographs to choose ones that spoke to them.



Photo by Doris Pulone

Kandy Lippincott with her political cartoons.

All of the arty goings-on inside the buildings this year really helped folks cope with the continual rain. The camp's Frank De Martini Art Building, our home at Tri-Quarter, was built after the 9/11 attacks, where De Martini lost his own life saving 75 others from WTC 1. It has a special feel to it. More FQA artists are always welcome at Tri-Quarter. Email Doris at ***dpulone@comcast.net*** *or text her at 609-670-7625 for more information.*

Once you experience Tri-Quarter Gathering, you just might get hooked!



Keith Calmes and Francis Valencia-Turco play as Rocky Wilson recites poetry.
Photo by Doris Pulone

Featured Quaker Artist

Jeanmarie Simpson



Photo of Jeanmarie Simpson

Jeanmarie Simpson is an actor and activist playwright. She has also been Clerk of FQA. She has founded several theater companies and was recently named an Unsung Hero of the arts in Arizona, where she lives near Phoenix. Record breaking heat there is reflected in the lines of these poems.

Old Agreements

This morning the weather
finally came to its senses.

I went out with the cat food
for the little syndicate of fugitives
living under cars,
behind hedges,
wherever a feline can make
a country out of shade.
And there it was—

cool air.

Not cold, mind you.
But cool enough
that my skin noticed
and said

well, look who's here.

Autumn.

Meanwhile I have a cold.
In ordinary life
a few miserable days and
a wastebasket full of tissues.

But I am in treatment now
so even a cold has acquired
a small official importance
which annoys me.
I would prefer
to be left alone
with my red nose
and my grievances.
My big left toe
has produced a hangnail
seems like sufficient evidence
that civilization has failed.

I would like to go back to bed.
I would like somebody
to bring me coffee
and tell the world
it can manage without me
until noon.

But across the way
the grackles are already at it
in the citrus trees,
those long-tailed businessmen
in sleek black suits
arguing over the citrus,
air rights,
inheritance,

conducting
their territorial racket
on the morning
when the earth arrives
at one of its old agreements
with the sun.

Equal light, equal dark.

The cats eat.
The birds squabble.
My toe hurts.
My coffee is getting cold.

Still,
for the first morning
in I don't know how long,
the porch is not an oven.

More Jeanmarie Simpson, page 4 >>

>> *Jeanmarie Simpson, from page 3*

Genuflection

Religion got to me long before language. Water on the head, hands, my mother standing near, the Blessed Mother keeping an eye on things.

Later there was the table. The mouth had two jobs: swallow and behave. A refused mouthful would cost dessert. A wrong sentence would cost more.

Fork, plate, hand, belt.

Eventually we got away with arguing.
My mother and grandmother could keep one word of scripture alive until the food went cold.
Grace. Sin. Virgin. Free will.
What does it mean?
No, what does it really mean?
Read it again.

My father, a convert with old Protestant weather hanging around him, would finally push back his chair and leave. We kept at it.

I knew where I belonged.
Two thousand years of Catholicism at the table and somebody still had to pass the salt.

The women carried it in their hands. Forehead, chest, shoulder, shoulder. Candle. Rosary. Incense. Knees. The Sacred Heart hanging there outside Christ's chest, flaming, bleeding, thorned, and nobody saying, well, this is a little much.
Catholicism knew how to make a wound beautiful.

Desire needed supervision. Pleasure needed an explanation. Sex arrived with a clerk taking notes.
I got angry at the Church the way you get angry at family.
It got there first.
And Mary was the worst because I loved her.
The perfect mother. The untouched mother.

No man entering her. No semen. No ordinary heat.
Meanwhile every mother I knew had blood between her legs, milk in her shirt, stitches, hunger, a baby worrying her nipple at three in the morning. Ordinary mothers came through the body.

I wanted Mary's body back.
Give me Miriam before the marble. Young, Jewish, dusty feet, frightened, irritated, sweating. Give me whatever she wanted. Let it remain hers. Give me the breast, the blood, the son dying in front of her.
If the conception was mystery, let it stay mystery.

Years later I could enter a church again. Smell wax and find my grandmother before I found God.

Cross myself because the hand remembered.
Kneel if I wanted. Stand if I wanted.
Nobody hit me.
Eden bothered me.
Not the fruit.
The shame.

Before the fruit there were already bodies.
Mouths. Bellies. Genitals. Hunger. Animals mating.
Fruit swelling. Seeds splitting. The whole world busy being juicy without anybody calling it indecent. Then knowledge. Nakedness. The leaf. Hiding.

Maybe the old wound was not that we were animals.
Maybe it was forgetting.

Later I sat among Quakers.
At first the silence made me nervous. I waited for someone to do something embarrassing.
Nobody hurried in to save us from it.
The silence had furniture.
My body learned it could be quiet without disappearing.

More Jeanmarie Simpson, page 5 >>

>> *Jeanmarie Simpson, from page 4*

Judaism gave me a clock.
Stop.

Light the candles before dark.
Bless the bread.
Remember.
Let the week break open whether the laundry is finished or not.

God could be argued with and still be God.
The dead stayed near through names and food.
Questions outlived the people who asked them.

I knew that table.

The mesquite keeps its thorns. Dogs smell what interests them. Fruit drops, splits, goes soft.
Flies find it. Seeds travel through guts.
Blood disappears into dirt.

One morning a barn swallow landed on the fence.
Its feet closed around the wood. Its chest moved.
Air in.
Air out.
Hunger, feather, gravity, fence.
No opinion on creation.
Then she left.

I knew that table.

Somewhere in there I began calling myself a nature-worshipping Quatholic Jew. I keep Sabbath badly. I light candles. I forget things. There is wine if there is wine and coffee in all circumstances. I always cross myself.
I sit in silence. I stand under mountains until every religion in me quiets down.

A rosary is not a menorah. Mass is not meeting.
Sabbath is not Sunday.
Mesquite is mesquite.

Let the tree be a tree. Let the apple be an apple.
Cut it.
White flesh. Dark seeds. The wound browning in air.
I eat.

Now there is another table.
Mine.
Bread. Salt. Coffee. Candles.

My mother is in the way my hand sets down a plate. My grandmother arrives whenever somebody uses a word carelessly. The dead have terrible manners about boundaries.

People come. The one who left the Church. The one who stayed. A woman sets down a grocery bag, red marks across her fingers. The old lady with her beads. The dog under the table. A moth banging stupidly and faithfully against the light.

Nobody is forced to swallow anything.
Speak or don't. Stay or go.
Bread is passed.
The door is open because the night is cool.
An actual door.

Wind comes through. A paper lifts. My hair crosses my face. The candle bends and stays lit.
A bird lands on the fence.
Its feet close around the wood.
I put my hand flat on the table.
The wind comes through again.

My body bows.



Photographer unknown

Jeanmarie Simpson in the Mikado, 1977

More Jeanmarie Simpson, page 6 >>

>> Jeanmarie Simpson, from page 5

Learn Your Lessons Well

for Susan, who was there.

Our Catholic school librarian organized the trip, a weekday matinee of Godspell at the Bayview Playhouse. In Toronto. Before we went she told us that the boy playing Jesus was Jewish.

A Jewish boy could play Jesus.

Apparently this was something I needed to know.

I was an awkward child, though awkward is one of those words that gets kinder after fifty years. It can sound almost charming.

I wasn't charming.

I was the kind of child other children rejected and adults corrected. Too intense. Too strange. Too much in one direction and hopelessly behind in another.

I talked too much. Once I started, I couldn't stop.

Other kids seemed to know when to speak, where to look, how long to stay, when the thing was over.

I could astonish an adult one minute and make the same adult wonder how I'd managed to tie my shoes the next.

My body knew things I couldn't name.

I didn't know sequencing or regulation or overload. I knew there were instructions. Everybody else had them.

I didn't.

Most rooms seemed built for somebody else.

The Bayview seated more than five hundred people and somehow it felt intimate. There were costumes. Found objects. Bare bulbs hanging down. A high chain-link fence that looked like a chain-link fence and wasn't ashamed of it.

No flats.

No fake wall pretending to be a real wall. No sofa doing all the acting. No painted window with somebody's idea of Toronto or Jerusalem or wherever the hell we were supposed to be.

The actors made the place. Their bodies made it. Their voices made it.

And I understood.

Immediately.

That was the joke. There were a thousand ordinary things everybody else seemed to understand that I couldn't, but give me a bare stage, a chain-link fence, some strange clothes and a bunch of people pretending their asses off, and suddenly everything made sense.

Entrances. Exits. Cues. Rhythm. Repetition.

A place to stand.

A way to leave.

An object could become something else because somebody picked it up differently. An empty patch of stage could become a doorway because somebody walked through it. An actor could become someone else because they stood differently, spoke differently, entered at the right moment.

Jesus was Jewish.

The actor playing Jesus was Jewish.

Nobody died from the information.

Nobody apologized for the strangeness.

The strangeness had a job.

Years later the names became names. Gilda Radner. Martin Short. Eugene Levy. Andrea Martin. I was twelve. I had other problems.

They trusted us.. . .

Some part of me is still at the Bayview Playhouse, a kid in a theatre of more than five hundred seats, under those hanging bulbs, behind that ridiculous fence, watching people make a world without building one. A kid who'd spent years being told, in one way or another, too much, too little, too loud, too late, too strange, sitting there in the dark and understanding everything.



Photographer unknown

A 1972 Godspell performance, in Toronto, that inspired 12-year old Jeanmarie Simpson

More Jeanmarie Simpson, page 7 >>

>> *Jeanmarie Simpson, from page 6*

My Playwriting *A Partial Listing*

A Single Woman

I founded a theater company because I wanted to make theatre. I spent years producing classical work in churches, museums,
coffeehouses and historic opera houses.

After 9/11, I turned toward the lives of women whose political choices had placed them in conflict with their societies. One work led to the next.
One city led to another.

The next great leap was ***A Single Woman***, about Jeanette Rankin (1880-1973), a lifelong pacifist, suffragist, and splendidly difficult woman. She was the first woman elected to Congress and the only member to vote against United States entry into both world wars.

Finding Jeannette Rankin was a blessing.

I realized almost immediately that she was the character I had been looking for all my life.

Beginning in 2004, I wrote and toured ***A Single Woman***, about Jeanette throughout the United States and performed it more than 250 times before taking it to New York.

Through it I met an extraordinary number of peace activists, people whose lives and work intersected feminism, Quakerism, anti-war activism, and peace and justice work. That was an incredible blessing.

I joined the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, which was a wild ride all its own.

I was also asked more than once to run for office. Apparently I channeled Jeannette convincingly enough that people occasionally confused the actor with the candidate. I assured them I was no politician.

But Jeannette changed my life in a way that went much deeper than politics or theatre.

She led me to Quakerism.

Along the way, I was invited to perform ***A Single Woman*** at several Quaker meetinghouses. I found incredible peace and comfort there. I was particularly drawn to Quaker process: the gathering, the waiting, and the way unity can happen almost as if by magic. People can enter with positions that seem irreconcilable, with no apparent hope of agreement, and somehow, through the process, something emerges that wasn't there when they came in.

I began attending Meeting in Reno, then Boulder, then Tucson.

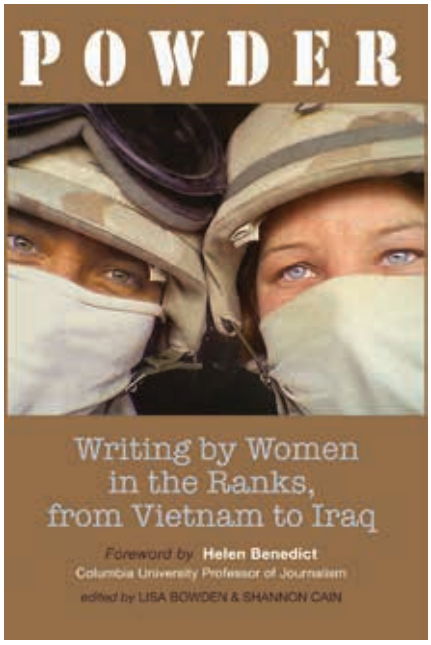
A Single Woman went Off-Broadway. It became a film....

It was an astonishing thing to have happen to a play.

And then the blessing became a nightmare.

The nightmare was not Jeannette, and it was not the play. It began ... at a time when I was extremely vulnerable, I was persuaded to give up the copyright.

I deeply grieved the loss of the play.
But still had Jeanette, and turned to other work.



Coming In Hot

Coming In Hot began when Shannon Cain brought ***Powder: Writing by Women in the Ranks, from Vietnam to Iraq*** to a WILPF meeting in Tucson. She read a piece by a Marine who had served in a mortuary, and afterward we looked at each other and knew:
this needed to be a play.

My agenda, insofar as I had one, was feminist: these women's voices needed to be heard.

That became very important to me.
I could portray a woman who loved the military without correcting her.
I could portray another who had been traumatized by it without turning her trauma into evidence for something I already believed. I could inhabit contradiction without resolving it.

Some people in the peace movement were unhappy with that. They felt that presenting military women without explicitly condemning their choices amounted to endorsing or glorifying war.

I disagreed. I still do.

If theatre is going to illuminate human lives, we have to allow those lives to remain complicated. Understanding another person's experience does not require agreement with it. In fact, I came to believe that increasing understanding is itself peace work.

Looking back, I can see a straight line from ***Coming In Hot*** to the work I do now: observe before interpreting. Inquiry before conclusion. Let another person's experience be what it is before deciding what it means.

I don't think I had that articulated as an artistic method then.

But I was already practicing it.

More Jeanmarie Simpson, page 8 >>

>> *Jeanmarie Simpson, from page 7*



Heretic: The Mary Dyer Story

My relationship with Mary Dyer was different from my relationship with Jeannette Rankin. Jeannette opened the world for me. Mary helped me understand myself.

I related to Mary most deeply as a woman who had experienced untreated postpartum illness that led to psychosis. In trying to understand Mary's life, I began to understand my own.

After my third and final child, my daughter Emily, was born in 1985, I fell into a deep depression and really lost it. I was twenty-five. Emily was a newborn, and I also had two boys, six and four.

Having children made an artistic life enormously difficult. But after Emily was born, something about the dullness, the grayness, the numbness I felt convinced me of something I have never forgotten:

Without an active artistic identity, I would not survive.

It wasn't simply that I wanted a career. I needed to remain an artist in some active, living sense while also being the mother of three small children.

Six months after Emily was born, my mother-in-law died of lupus at fifty-six....

My mother-in-law's death frightened me for another reason.

It seemed as if her life had had no consequence or meaning at all. She was fifty-six years old, and suddenly she was gone. I became terrified that my life could disappear in the same way.

I don't think I've ever fully shaken that idea.

Years later, Mary Dyer gave me a way to understand some of this.

I wasn't interested only in Mary the Quaker martyr, the woman hanged on Boston Common in 1660. I recognized something in the woman who existed before the monument: a woman whose experience surrounding childbirth had profoundly affected her mind and the course of her life.

Through Mary, I could look back at myself at twenty-five with an understanding I didn't have when I was living it.

I learned about my own life through Mary's.

And perhaps the most important thing I came to understand was that the desperate need I felt to make art wasn't selfishness or ambition competing with motherhood. At that point in my life, making art felt necessary to remaining alive inside my own life.

That is what Mary helped me see.

When Churchyards Yawn

When Churchyards Yawn saved me artistically during COVID.

I was rehearsing Shakespeare in Love (playing the Nurse) when everything shut down. Suddenly there was no rehearsal, no performance, no gathering with other artists, no knowing when any of it would return.

I watched Shakespeare on film. One day I was watching Zeffirelli's Hamlet, and the idea arrived:

Hamlet and the rest in Purgatory.

And then something happened that had never happened to me quite that way before.

I was visited by the muse.

I don't know how else to describe her, and she is still with me. She ignites a flame under me that burns hot and bright until the story feels told.

When Churchyards Yawn, about Hamlet in Purgatory, essentially wrote itself in three days.

That has become the pattern with almost everything I've written since. When a story comes, it comes with enormous urgency. I write until it feels told.

The theme in Churchyards is:

Nobody gets out alone.

At the time I said, "We can either all go to hell together or we can make it to heaven together, but we can't do this separately."

I still believe that.

More Jeanmarie Simpson, page 9 >>

>> *Jeanmarie Simpson, from page 8*

Two other plays I must mention:

Churchyards also somehow opened the way back to Jeanette Rankin. I was able to rebirth her story from the ruins of ***A Single Woman***, as ***The Flight of the Dove***.

The Flight Of The Dove

The Flight of the Dove is a rebirth, a return pilgrimage to the Jeannette shrine that still stands empty.

Nearly twenty-five years after I first found Jeannette Rankin and realized she was the character I had been looking for all my life, the world STILL doesn't know about her.

I felt I still owe her something.

With ***The Flight of the Dove***, I took a story that had lived through the body and the physical fact of theatre and fashioned it for audio, where the audience sees nothing. I had to find what Jeannette's story could become through voice, language, sound and silence.

She remains the first woman elected to Congress. She voted against American entry into both World Wars. She never married, was a lifelong activist, and, to repeat, a splendidly difficult woman.

And still, the shrine stands empty.

On Track

A Vietnam veteran, S. Brian Willson became a longtime analyst and critic of American militarism. In 1987, during a peaceful protest in California against shipment of weapons to repressive U.S.-supported Central American governments, he was hit by a train and lost both legs below his knees.

When A Single Woman brought me to Arcata, California. Brian and his wife, Becky, hosted us.

When I first walked into their home, my eyes were drawn to a painting of a railroad track mounted high on the wall. I stood beneath it, unable to speak.

Brian looked at me. Then he looked at the painting.

Quietly, he said, "It was the track I was on."

That was how Brian Willson stopped being someone I knew about and became someone I knew.

Eventually Brian and I began working together on a play based on his life and memoirs, with his permission and cooperation. The project became very real. In 2007, the San Francisco Chronicle reported that we were collaborating on the play

But stuff happened. That production died.

The play didn't.

I kept returning to Brian's story for twenty-two years.

The problem was that I kept trying to make the play carry too much. The drafts became crowded, too theatrical, too burdened by the obligation I felt to explain everything.

Brian's life kept pulling me back to the ground.

Eventually, in 2026, I looked at the script again.

And suddenly I saw it.

I saw the didacticism. I saw the awkward theatricality.

So I stripped it all out.

The play is Brian telling his story.

That was the answer.

His voice. His life. His witness.

And once I understood that, the play finally knew what it was.

The muse stayed.

She is still setting fires under me.

Six Unpublished Plays

The Flight Of The Dove — Jeannette Rankin, the first woman elected to Congress, lifelong pacifist, suffragist, and splendidly difficult woman. A revision/successor to ***A Single Woman***.

Bambino Mio: Bright Little Flame — a somewhat true imagining of Maria Montessori, set in India in 1940, when she and her son were caught there by the war.

Mackers — a backstage haunted comedy after Macbeth. Because apparently I occasionally need ghosts, actors, stage managers, Shakespeare, catastrophe, and profanity.

Red Earth, Long Shadows — a symphony in three acts for audio theatre, based on the life of Daphne Sheldrick and her work with elephants in Kenya.

The Jewish Question -- has not been published. It has had a life, though: it was presented in our 2020 online festival, received Honorable Mention from the Jewish Plays Project in 2021, and later became an audio/sign-language production. So I should distinguish "unpublished" from "unproduced"; it certainly isn't the latter.

And ***An Uneven Mind*** is the newest creature wandering around the premises. It isn't a play, but an autoethnographic performance/inquiry growing out of my experience of trauma, cognition, and creativity—especially the difference conditions can make in what a person appears able to do. Its central question is: What becomes possible when conditions change? We're presenting it October 24, 2026 at Glendale Main Library, with a public conversation afterward. It is also beginning to grow into a larger educational inquiry.

These six are very different creatures, but they're all mine, and I would love to have them between covers.

Featured Quaker Artist

Alice Carlton

Newbie: A Story

Leila walked up to the door of the Friends Meetinghouse and stood. The sun felt warm on this spring day. She'd nearly missed the sign by the road, nearly hidden by a tall hedge. It simply read "Apple Hill Friends Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. Worship Sunday 11 am."

The building was red brick with double doors painted white, far from intimidating. Yet she felt unsure whether to enter. She was early for the 11am Sunday service, having thought for weeks about visiting. She had even come once before but never got out of her car, chickening out and driving away before anyone could see her.

Church had such traumatic memories for her. Even the sign out front of her old church scared her: "Going to hell? Find out how to be saved: Services Sundays 9 and 11 am and 7pm." Why would she want to risk trying another kind?

Yet she felt a longing. For what? She wasn't clear.

Finally, today she had come. She'd never heard of the Quakers until Sandra, a woman she met at the fitness center, had talked about them with such a glow. She was curious.

Leila was a newbie at the center, determined to lose 20 lbs, and very shy. They both attended the same exercise class. It was essentially a dance class that involved a lot of interaction and silliness. At first Leila thought it was stupid, but the class was full of laughter, and she hadn't laughed much in so long that she kept coming. The nightmare of the past began to fade, and she found laughter a kind of antidote.

Sandra was tall and willowy with silver hair. Leila couldn't believe she was eighty, but Sandra insisted it was true. Leila hoped her dingy brown hair would look like Sandra's some day.

She awoke from her reverie when she heard a familiar voice greet her. "Leila! You came! Welcome!" Sandra gave her a warm hug. "Come on. Let's go in. I'm so glad to see you!"

Sandra's hug felt like a warm blanket. She hugged her back. Maybe coming today was a good idea. "Nice to see you too," said Leila.

"You picked a good day to come," said Sandra as she led them through the door. "Today at the rise of Meeting we have potluck."

Leila stopped with a frown. "I didn't….."

Sandra chuckled. "Don't worry. We always have enough. It's like the loaves and fishes."

That sounded generous, but Leila wasn't at all sure she wanted to sit down with a bunch of strangers to eat. It sounded like too much for a first visit.

Sandra handed her a printed introduction for newcomers and led her into the meeting room onto a padded bench. All Sandra had told her was that Quakers believe that there is that of God in every person. She liked that idea, such a contrast to the church her father had made her family attend.

Sandra had told her Quakers sit in silence, in "expectant waiting for divine guidance." Anyone who felt led by the Spirit could stand and offer vocal ministry. Leila had no idea what that meant. Certainly impossible for her.

She looked around. The room was plain. No cross, no stained glass, no altar, no decorations of any kind. Everyone was sitting still with eyes closed. There were about fifty people there: silver-haired old people like Sandra, middle-aged others, a few young people and some children. Leila was amazed at how little fidgeting the children did.

The silence felt alien to her. Her former church was anything but: singing, group prayers, testifying and a sermon that felt like piercing arrows of dark words: sinners repent, the end is near!

As she sat, she realized she hardly ever just sat. Before she'd left home, she'd scurried around, stifling her frustration, trying her best to do whatever her father demanded she do. Then once she was living alone, she found it hard to slow down. Now in this new place she was expected to sit in silence and do nothing.

Strange. Difficult, this nothing. Very difficult. She found herself fidgeting, crossing and recrossing her legs, shifting her weight from side to side. In contrast, Sandra sat beside her like a statue. How? She was a bit in awe.

She stilled herself and looked at the introduction for newcomers. It opened with the phrase Sandra had mentioned: "expectant waiting for divine guidance." Ha. She'd lived years, her entire childhood to be precise, waiting for the next fiery brimstone to be hurled at her in angry tones. Her father's God was dark and angry.

Her father had insisted she live at home for college. After graduation, he expected her to stay home. She remembered vividly the day her mother, usually the prototype of the submissive wife, stood up to her father.

"You've got to let her go!" she yelled. "She's an adult! She needs to be free to start her own life!"

His face grew red. He sputtered. "H-how d-dare you?" He raised his hand to his wife.

Leila stepped closer and pulled her mother back. "Yes, I'm leaving! You can't stop me!"

They both stormed out the door and slammed it. Stunned, they stared at each other a moment and then burst out laughing.

"I've been wanting to do that for so long!" said her mother.

"Me, too," said Leila. "Now what?"

"Your Aunt Sally has been begging me to do this. Let's go to her house."

A few weeks later, Leila got her dream job as an assistant in a legal office with hopes of someday going to law school. She found a small apartment within walking distance of work. Her mother and Aunt Sally helped her move in and get set up. Her mother and Sally were having a great time as housemates.

More Alice Carlton, page 11 >>

>> Alice Carlton, from page 10

Now her father wasn't speaking to either of them. They didn't care.

And in this quiet worship room, Leila began, for the first time in her life, to hear herself think.

Hearing herself think, though, unleashed a whirlwind inside. Her mind buzzed so loudly she felt it must be audible to those on the bench around her. But maybe not. She took a deep breath and wondered what to do with this "noisy" silence.

Across the room a tall woman in a dark blue dress stood. "Welcome Friends." Radiating a big smile, she cast her eyes around the room. "As we center down into worship this morning, consider this month's query: 'How do I assess my ability to listen to others non-judgmentally and deeply?' " The woman sat down.

Leila's eyes grew wide. She didn't really know what a query was, but the message of this one couldn't be more opposite to what she had grown up with. Non-judgmental? Listen deeply?

Not something like Save the sinners from hell or face the flames yourself! She felt a knot in her stomach just remembering. With conscious effort, she turned her mind to this query and took a slow deep breath.

Center down into worship the woman had said. She still wasn't sure what that meant but it sounded better than what she used to hear. She took another deep breath. The silence began to feel a little less strange.



Photoby Chuck Fager

The sun shown on the leaves outside the window. A small bird hopped onto a branch and seemed to peer into the room. Hello little bird, she thought. She closed her eyes with a smile. The room remained silent for what felt to her like eons.

In a few minutes, Leila's attention was pulled to a shuffling sound across the room. She opened her eyes and saw someone stand up. A man about her father's age but with a softness in his face. He cleared his throat, and she instinctively tensed.

"Friends," he began. His voice was gentle. She relaxed a tiny bit and watched him closely. "I've been wondering how to open myself to the presence of Spirit. I know it's there but so often in my life I get only glimpses."

He paused and looked out the window. "When I center down in worship, so much chatter fills my mind. But then, if I watch and wait, I notice the bird outside the window, the breeze lift the leaves. I remind myself to take slow deep breaths and with each breath I get a little bit closer." He sat down.

So much chatter. That surely described her mind. Chatter that had her father's voice.

Center down.

There were those words again. Leila turned them over in her mind. She had never heard anyone talk like this. It felt to her like listening to a foreign language.

But maybe one she'd like to learn.

She closed her eyes and took more slow deep breaths. Her father's voice began to fade. Another eon passed. Gradually, she began to hear another voice, a quiet one she'd never noticed but that she somehow recognized as coming from somewhere deep inside her. She began to listen and, as she listened, she heard... no, it was more a feeling, a slight touch, a hint of wholeness. In words, she heard she was home.

At the rise of Meeting, a woman on the bench in front of them turned to greet Sandra. She had a warm round face and short auburn hair. Younger than Sandra but not by much. She reached her hand to squeeze Sandra's. Then she saw Leila. "Who do we have here, Sandra?"

"Meet my friend Leila, "said Sandra with a big smile. "She's a first time visitor." She turned to Leila. "Leila, this is my dear friend Hazel."

"Hello," said Leila.

Hazel's hand was out again. Leila took it and smiled.

"Welcome Leila, so good to have you." Hazel raised her eyebrows. "I hope you'll stay for potluck."

Hazel looked familiar to Leila, reminded her of a teacher she once had. Or maybe she just liked feeling so warmly welcomed. "Thank you," she said.

Maybe she would stay for potluck.

Maybe she would come again.

Types and Shadows, Journal of
the Fellowship of Quakers in the Arts
FQA c/o Bonnie Zimmer
17211 Friends House Rd. - Apt 201
Sandy Spring, MD 20860

FQA Statement of Purpose

To nurture and showcase the literary, visual, musical and performing arts within the Religious Society of Friends, for purposes of Quaker expression, ministry, witness and outreach. To these ends we will offer spiritual, practical and financial support as way opens.

In this issue...

Enjoy Exciting Quaker fiction, poetry, and theatre!

Cover: Jeanmarie Simpson

Page 2: Report from South Jersey Tri-Quarter gathering, 2026

Pages 3-9: Jeanmarie Simpson, Unsung Hero

Pages 10-11: Newbie, a short story by Alice Carlton

Back Page: Photography by Chuck Fager



Photo by Chuck Faaer