

Back Story

Footprints from the Past

August 2018



Hello all! Welcome to August, the dog days of summer. I'd grumble more about the heat – but I'm not going to do it, because I know what follows after. (Winter...of which I am not a fan!) At least the past few weeks have been in the 90's and not the 108 degrees that we had for almost a week here in Texas. But I can't complain, because I hear from others across the nation and it's been broiling in other states too.

Give us a good reason to stay inside where it's cool...and READ! (Or write, if you're a writer.)

The short story in this month's Back Story is one I wrote a few years ago, Grandma's Quilt.

Stay cool!

Trisha Faye

texasrishafaye@yahoo.com

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Publication News

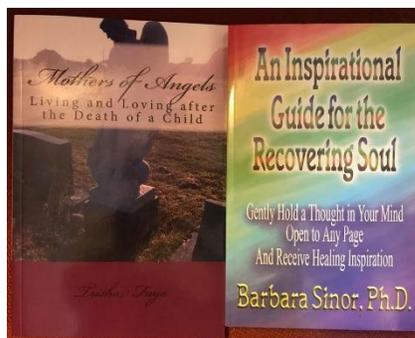
Purpose magazine accepted an article for their September 2018 issue, 2,920 Gifts from God – the extra days that I've been given since my Sudden Cardiac Arrest in 2010, and how that gift has changed my attitude.

Prairie Times, accepted several pieces this year. This month I have an article, *To the Moon and Back*, about the summer reading program when I was in 6th grade. More stories coming in October and November!

The Secret Place's fall issue has a devotion that I submitted a while back, talking about accepting our own unique gifts from the Spirit.

Mothers of Angels: Living and Loving after the Death of a Child released last month. The response has been terrific, with many parents (too many) relating to the pain, heartache, and healing that takes place after losing a child. So far six copies have been donated to other grieving mothers, to help them through their pain.

Mothers of Angels Special Sale



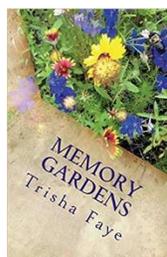
Author Dr. Barbara Sinor and I have teamed up for this special summer sale. Purchase **Mothers of Angels: Living and Loving after the Death of a Child...** and get Barbara's book **An Inspirational**

Guide for the Recovering Soul for **FREE!**

Mothers of Angels – regularly priced \$15.99

GET BOTH FOR \$15.99, plus \$3.55 shipping

August Book Sale – Memory Gardens



Create a Memory Garden to honor and remember your loved ones that have passed. Your special garden may be a full sized garden, complete with markers, wind chimes, and a bench to sit and reflect. Or, it may be an area with a potted plant and a special marker.

Memory Gardens: Botanical Tributes to Celebrate our Loved Ones includes:

- Ideas for planning your own individualized memory garden, along with basic garden planning information
- Namesake Plants
- Plants of the Month • Symbolic Meanings of Plants
- Memorial Symbols • Basic Plant information, including common name, botanical name, height, zone and sun and water requirements.
- A list of plants containing animal names for those special pets you'd like to commemorate. • Worksheets for your own memory gardens plans.

REGULARLY PRICED \$9.99

ON SALE \$7.50, plus \$2.85 shipping

Appearances Coming Up...

July 31 – August 21: **The Tales We Tell** 6 pm – 8 pm
Four week class on Writing Your Family Stories
Southlake Public Library
1400 Main Street, Suite 130, Southlake, TX 76092
817-748-8243

August 16, 2018: **Memory Gardens** 6:30 p.m.
Watauga Public Library
7109 Whitley Rd, Watauga, TX 76148
(817) 514-5855

September 13, 2018: **Writing Your Family Stories** 7:00 p.m.
Haslet Public Library
100 Gammil St, Haslet, TX 76052
(817) 439-4278

October 11, 2018: **Memory Gardens** 7:00 p.m.
Haslet Public Library

October 30 – November 20: **Writing for Magazines: The Basics** 6 pm – 8 pm
Four week class on Writing for Magazines
Southlake Public Library

November 8, 2018: **Preserving Family Memories with Signature Quilts** 7:00 p.m.
Haslet Public Library

Vintage Daze Short Story



Grandma's Quilt
South Bend, Indiana 1966

"... and he walks with me, and he talks with me ..." She turned a small dish slightly, turned another in a different direction, poured a little water, and plucked a small brown leaf off of several. "... and he tells me ..."

"Mildred, what on earth are you doing?" Cecil stood in the doorway, lunch pail in hand and a puzzled expression on his face.

Sitting the little green watering pot down, she explained, "Why, I'm singing to my African Violets."

He shook his head as if he'd never understand this woman he'd married so many years ago.

"You know I always talk to my plants. Why do you think we have one of the best gardens in town?"

"But that's not talking. That's singing."

"If they like to hear me talk to them, don't you think they'd like to hear a beautiful song about the Lord too?" Mildred tucked a wisp of stray gray hair back into her bun before continuing with her task of caring for the small pots of violet and yellow blossoms nestled amongst the velvety emerald leaves.

Cecil gave his wife a peck on the cheek before heading down the porch steps towards the car parked at the side of the house. "I'll be stopping at Nestor and Emelia's after work today. He's having surgery in the morning, so I want to have prayer with him before he goes under the knife."

"Tell them I'll be praying for them too." Mildred hurried in the house after Cecil drove off. So much to do. She didn't go out to work anymore. She'd worked as a nurse before they were married. But she hadn't worked since they'd gotten married. Her ministry was in raising their family of three boys and keeping the home clean and tidy so Cecil could concentrate on working for an income and serving the Lord as a minister in their small farming community.

Donning her straw gardening hat and pulling an old pair of nylons up over her arms, she was ready to face the garden before the heat of the day set in. She grabbed a few tattered baskets sitting on the back porch, along with a hoe and set out to the huge patch of tilled land. Larger than the house, their plot supplied much of the food they ate, with enough bounty to pass along to friends and neighbors.

Hours passed before she returned to the house with laden baskets. Green beans filled one almost to overflowing. Another held more tomatoes than the two could eat. Most of them would end up canned in glistening quart jars sitting on shelves in the cellar. Some onions, a few large shiny leaves of swiss chard, and a handful of berries filled the third. Sitting them down in the shade of the mulberry tree, she wiped the perspiration off her brow. (After all, ladies in that day and age didn't sweat – they perspired.) A quick trip to the back side of the barn to check on the progress of her rhubarb brought a smile to her face. Her mouth watered anticipating the fresh rhubarb pies she could bake from this fine crop.

A sliced tomato on fresh bread made a tasty sandwich for lunch. A few slices of the bread and butter pickles she'd made the week before followed the sandwich. After which she spent some time in prayer and devotion, before commencing with the rest of the chores awaiting her.

Later, after the laundry was washed, folded and put away, the green beans were simmering in a pot and a chicken was roasting in the oven for supper whenever Cecil arrived home, Mildred was free to spend some time in one of her favorite leisure activities. She went upstairs to one of the spare rooms, where her scrap fabrics and pieces for quilt blocks were spread out over a guest bed. She picked up her template and began cutting tiny hexagons out of the scrap fabric laying on top.

She was stringing matching hexagons onto a thread when Cecil called up from the bottom of the stairs. "Mildred? I'm home. Where are you?"

She dropped the strand of calico pieces onto the bed and headed downstairs. "I'm coming. I was just up working with my piecing for my next quilt."

Sitting his lunch pail on the counter, Cecil stretched, getting the kinks out of his back. "I still don't understand why you insist on doing your quilts by hand. You have a perfectly good sewing machine up there that you rarely use."

"I use it for mending. But for quilts, especially when I'm working with the Grandmothers Flower Garden pieces, I like to piece by hand. It looks nicer and besides, it's easier. Plus, it's very soothing for me, to sit with my handwork, running the needle in and out of the fabric, making precise even stitches."

Mildred pattered around the kitchen getting supper ready to serve, Cecil rambled on about news from the trailer factory where he'd worked for many years in addition to his pastoring a small church in the community. He added, "Nestor's looking a little gaunt. He was worried when I got there, but after I prayed with him, I think he was a little more peaceful about tomorrow's procedure." The phone rang, interrupting him and he headed to his study to answer the call.

He returned to the kitchen with a huge smile plastered across his face. "Well, what do you think about that?"

"Must be good news by the beam in your eye."

"Yes, yessiree, it is. We're going to have us some company. Luther, Mae and the children are coming for a visit next month."

Mildred clapped her hands together with delight. "Praise the Lord! I haven't seen the little tykes in so long. I'll bet they're getting so big. When are they coming?"

"Next month on the 28th. It's a Saturday."

"I've got to get the guest rooms aired out and ready. I'll need to put my quilting supplies back in the cupboards under the eaves. I'll get the bedding washed up and back on the beds. We can take the children out to Herman's fruit stand. I think Patsy, Butch and Susie will like that. He has the nicest strawberries and we can make some fresh strawberry shortcake." She pulled out a notepad and started jotting down notes.

Cecil chuckled. "If you don't have everyone too busy, and the little legs need to run some energy off, I'll send them out to catch potato bugs for me. I'll promise them a nickel for every potato bug they capture. The garden will be picked clean I have a feeling."

"How long will they be here? Will they be here for church?"

"Luther said they'd be here a week. They'd leave out for home the following Sunday, after the

Singsperation at church."

"Lovely! They'll be here for the sing. I'll ask the children to sing a song with me. It would do my heart proud to play and sing a special with my three grandchildren."

"The congregation would enjoy that, I'm sure," Cecil nodded in agreement. "What do you think you'll sing?"

"Why, In the Garden, of course. It's my very favorite hymn."

The children did sing a special with their Grandma Cline, In the Garden, as she played along on the piano. The fresh strawberry shortcake was remembered for years, although whether or not it was a 'Herman' they got the strawberries from is highly doubtful. The children collected many nickels from their Grandpa Cline, as payment for capturing the hungry potato bugs caught devouring the plants in the garden.

And the quilt pieces? They were stored in the wall to wall cabinets build along the eaves of the top floor. Patsy especially enjoyed looking at the colorful fabrics and examining the matching pieces strung together on threads. She'd end up with one of Grandma Cline's quilts, but it would be many years before it came her way. Long after Grandma's death, when Patsy was a mother herself, Uncle Arnold and Aunt Phyllis delivered a hand pieced and hand quilted quilt to Patsy, along with other keepsakes and mementoes.

Most people see a quilt and think it's just a blanket, something to give warmth. A quilt can be much more than that. It can carry memories through the years, sending people back to their childhood, a lasting tribute of a loved one that created it.