Rising Voices
Reading List Posted
Read to Keep Your Mind at Peace and Your Heart Strong And Open

By Jack Tipple

You’re quite welcome to read this stellar edition online at noevalleyvoice.com. But consider that you may be getting too much blue light exposure already. And we continue to provide this old-school, tactile method of communication. Behold! Words printed on paper. Your nearby neighbors and some not so close have provided a wealth of written material in the forms of poetry, short fiction, essays and informative columns for this edition. There are offerings here that will engage you with their humor, and pathos. All the stuff of aligning with the real world, made right here, and not far from downtown Noe Valley.

When you’re ready to turn out the reading light we hope you’ll consider that your time with these pages was well spent. They’re only words but they can provide the alchemy you need and encourage you to greet tomorrow knowing it’s going to be a great day. “Be your brightest!” a friend has advised. Read on to find some of the fuel to allow yourself to shine.

Welcome to Neo Valley
By Bill Yard

Editor’s Note: Writer, editor and friend Bill Yard died in July of this year. We had been working on an introduction to reprinting some of his columns written for the Voice in the early 1980s. We honor him by carrying out the plan. This first piece was published in the December 1979 / January 1980 issue.

The other day the rainy season came back to Neo Valley with a vengeance, washing the dropped scoops of butter brickle and the roaches and the belated thoughts of suntans into the gutter at 24th and Castro.

I ducked into Finnegan’s to nurse a screwdriver and wait it out. On days like this, the bar fills up early, acting as a screen over a drain, so the less ambitious among us aren’t washed away.

Carlos the plumber walked in and pulled up a stool. His real name is Carl, but a long time ago he figured out that a Third World surname was a good prop. He bought a Heineken’s and adjusted the “Question Authority” button on his shirt.

“What’s up, man,” I asked. “What’d you do today?”

“Well,” he replied, “this morning I decided to put up some phony notices on the bulletin board at the Meat Market. I wrote one about a one-bedroom flat for rent at 25th and Sanchez. Victorian, hardwood floors, fireplace, deck, no deposit, kids and pets okay, the whole fantasy.”

“How much was the rent?”

“One seventy-five,” he said. That explained the riot police and tear gas I’d noticed earlier that afternoon.

I got up to take a leak and check my progress on the pool table’s chalkboard. There were only seventeen people in front of me so I figured I’d have another screwdriver and hang out.

A few weeks ago somebody named Hallinan brought his entourage to Finnegan’s to further his campaign for District 5 supervisor. Well drinks were 25 cents cheaper, beer was 50 cents and the candidate got up and made a little speech and hocked bumper stickers.

Only problem was, they covered the pool table with hors d’oeuvres. Hallinan thereby alienated at least thirty voters who otherwise might have been in his camp. Hors d’oeuvres on the pool table at Finnegan’s is indicative of the changes in Neo Valley the last few years.

When I got back to the bar, I noticed a young “earth mother” type sitting on the other side of Carlos, a tear running off her nose into her double gin-and-tonic. I nudged my friend: “What’s wrong with her?”

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“Same old story,” he replied, sipping the last of his beer. “Her old man got a job washing dishes at the Acme a couple weeks ago. Now he’s got pink hair, he’s lost forty pounds….”

Jog Early and Often. Members of the Noe Valley Run Club gather for a group portrait featuring their new club hats. Whether you’re fast on your feet or slow, Sanchez Street is the place to go Friday mornings. More on page 4.

Photo by Vicki Powell

“You’re My Blue Sky.” This view of the long forever was taken in June from Diamond Heights. Downtown San Francisco seems like it exists in another land entirely—and that’s actually true. If Noe Valley doesn’t have it, you probably don’t need it. From house plants, to auto repair, to olive oil and so much more. Shop and play locally.

Photo by Sally Smith

MORE NEO VALLEYS BEGIN ON PAGE 7
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Letters to the Editor

The Noe Valley Voice welcomes your letters to the editor. Write the Noe Valley Voice, P.O. Box 460249, SF, CA 94146. Or email editor@noevalleyvoice.com. Please include your name and contact information. (Anonymous letters will not be considered for publication.) Be aware that letters may be edited for brevity or clarity. We look forward to hearing from you.

That’s the Breaks

It’s summertime and most of the regular Noe Valley Voice features and columns have this month off. They’ll be back with the September edition. The Crossword by Michael Blake, Crime Report by Cheryl Root, Library Books and Mazook’s Rumors will all return then, refreshed and restored.

We hope you enjoy this edition of mostly creative writing, essays and observations. Many of you may recognize some of the names of the writers who have contributed in previous January and August editions.

One of those needs special mention: Bill Yard missed the deadline this time, but without the introduction Bill had agreed to write. Bill penned a column titled Welcome to Noe Valley in the late 1970s and early 1980s. With humor and pathos, his vignettes of life in this neighborhood are presented again in these pages for perhaps a new readership and a memory lane visit for those who knew the Noe Valley of decades past. Long time residents will recognize the names of some of the shops and venues that once graced 24th Street and environs such as Finnegan’s Wake, Accent on Flowers and Hopewells.

We miss many of those places and we miss Bill. But life goes on and the press and internet search engines continue to roll. And as long as we’re granted the time to rise of work and push again, we’ll see you right here in September.

And Bill, if you’re reading this, all is forgiven, but I’m still pissed that you’re gone.

You are an independent newspaper published in San Francisco. It is distributed free in Noe Valley and vicinity during the first week of the month. Subscriptions are available at $10 per year ($15 for six issues) by writing to the above address.

The Noe Valley Voice has a staff but we also love our role as a volunteer-run, volunteer-edited voice of our neighborhood. We welcome your letters, photos, and stories, particularly on topics relating to Noe Valley. All items should include your name and contact information, and may be edited for brevity or clarity. (Unsigned letters will not be considered for publication.) Uncoli tated contributions will be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Editor: Linda Lavelle
Clipper Street

Editor’s Note:
Thank you Linda for your kind words.

Keep on Smiling
Editor:
Thanks for all you do, Noe Valley Voice. I really enjoy reading our neighborhood paper!

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A Modern Victorian Retreat

Behind a picture-perfect Queen Anne Victorian façade is a modern, light-filled master work that literally sits above it all in Noe Valley, yet just a few blocks from the culture, shops and restaurants of 24th Street. Recently completed on one of the best blocks in the neighborhood, this exquisite 4-bed, 3.5-bath residence offers an urban, modern aesthetic with clean lines, walls of glass and luxury finishes on 3 levels. The distinction between indoors and outdoors blurs, as glass walls give way to views over rooftops and hills that will take your breath away.

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Welcome to Neo Valley

By Bill Yard

The Empire Strikes Out

Joey came around the corner, heading up 28th Street. He did not look at the fence of weatherbeaten grape stakes, the gate or the stone path beyond, leading to the cottage. He did not deliver there anymore.

Again this summer he’d gone to work for Surf Super, delivering groceries to Neo Valley customers. And again as the summer waned, his thoughts turned towards the plans and events of adolescence in autumn, but sometimes… sometimes he would think of his friend in the cottage on 28th Street. He had met her in June, had delivered her groceries each week after that, and was surprised to feel her change during that time, and turn to him to speak, first in carefully bound phrases, later in the nearly ravenous crescendo of the dependent. And of course, he didn’t know what to say in return.

At first she merely met him at the door, pressed a couple of quarters into his hand and took the bags, not looking back. Until one day when the great ragged cat that shared the tiny house took his chance and bolted through her legs, out the door and over the neighbor’s fence.

“God damn cat,” she slumped, then quickly, “What’s your name?”

“I’m Joey.” He felt as if maybe he should go.

“I’m Sylvia. It was nice of you to look after my cat. Joey, More coffee!”

In short order he learned that she lived alone, that she worked, whether as a cocktail waitress or as a freelance typist or as a seamstress, as little as possible, and that the furnishings of her small and irregular home, from the chimes above the window box to the oak and corduroy couch, were made by hand.

Except for the thick blue rug on the kitchen floor, she said, and the tomcat, who came with the apartment.

“And they’ll be here when I leave,” she promised. “You see, the cat has liver problems, but the carpet is hydraulic. It grows longer, day by day. He must rub his belly on it so it does not outgrow its strength. Or so he can withstand the transitory peace that was drowning in the window box where chimes once split open crystals of music, a cloud of silence had gathered.

But on the kitchen floor, ignoring the transitory peace that was drowning in this dwelling’s bile, the aging tomcat waited, rubbing his belly on the center of the ever-growing rug. His purr smeared across the silence.

Now of course she was absolutely correct. In the following week, as he approached her door with the usual two brown bags, he felt the gaze of the tom-cat from her windowsill, the long black tail snapping silently and the eyelids sagging under the weight of the animal’s dependence upon her.

But Sylvia was a pleasant despot, at least until Joey mentioned that he had registered for the draft.

“Don’t go,” she said. “My father,” she began, then sank into the view from her kitchen window. “He came home a little over ten years ago. At first, we were ashamed to admit… He changed so much. On a summer evening, he would have worked on the car. He would have chased my mother to the end of the world with his gregy arms and her giggling. But that all went down the tubes. Even though he taught us there could never be a justification, a rationalization for taking a life.

Her words stumbled off into her cigarette smoke.

She picked them up again, however. She was obviously feeding them into the machine of her heart. It was clearly unpleasant, like herding cattle into the machine of her heart. It was clearly unpleasant, like herding cattle into its strength.

“Don’t go,” she said shivering.

“His killing for the profit of men who plunged his love for animals (especially cats), the San Francisco Giants, teaching, winning, music, and expressing love in all its forms. He was quietly silly, intense, flawed and loving. He fought his demons like the rest of us, sometimes winning and sometimes losing, and he was consistently generous, especially near the end, desperate to provide his stepdaughters with opportunities only available to them in the U.S.

With this in mind, a GoFundMe account was set up 28th Street. He did not look at the fence of weatherbeaten grape stakes, the gate or the stone path beyond, leading to the cottage. He did not deliver there anymore.

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Bill Yard most recently lived in San Diego. He was by his own account, known to hide inside old Coltrane tracks, hike alone, and somehow scroung out a living. Good fortune often tracked him down, despite his best efforts.

This piece was originally published in the August 1980 edition of the Noe Valley Voice.
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Welcome to Neo Valley

By Bill Yard

The End of the Animals

He’d run out of empty pages, and she’d used up her purples and reds, so they were heading to Coloredcrane for crayons and a notebook when Alicia spotted the dog.

“Look, Daddy!” The dog crawled out from under a card table in front of Real Foods. A man stood beside the table, holding a clipboard, talking to an old woman. They looked up and smiled when Alicia squeaked and ran toward the dog. Mark watched his daughter, playing with the dog, and thought, she’s torn her new dress.

That morning Mark had watched her, herself, her dress? “What a nice little girl,” the man with the clipboard said. Then he asked Mark, “Are you a registered voter?” Alicia squinted up at her father. I must set an example, tell the truth, he thought. “Yes.”

While the dog licked her and she giggled, Mark listened to the man with the clipboard. “Let’s go, Ali.” He began to walk, but the girl ignored him.

She was kneeling on the sidewalk wrestling with the dog. One of her ballet slippers had fallen off, and now she and the dog played tug-of-war with it, while she laughed and the dog growled with gentle ferocity, the slipper clamped between its teeth.

That morning Mark had watched her, brimming over with energy, so he had set out overall and sneakers for their afternoon of errands. But she had insisted on the slippers, the tights and the dress. They had argued, over breakfast, in the window of Real Foods. “I’m sorry,” he had said. Then he asked her again, “Are you a registered voter?”

She had finally given in. And now her dress was stained and her tights were torn, and there were teeth marks in her slipper.

“Ali!” The dog dropped the slipper and crawled back under the table. The man with the clipboard stopped talking to the old woman and looked up. The old woman turned, leaning on her cane, and stared at Mark. He realized she had seen the animals, along paths he could never find, and she had not disturbed them. She watched him, her uncertainty betrayed.

Then Ali’s gaze, as clear and steady as the old woman’s, reached him, and he felt the blood that had rushed to his temples drain off into new and unexplored directions.

Alicia climbed into his arms and up to her favorite perch, atop his shoulders. From there she could see over the crowds and beyond the traffic, farther even than he could. She held him tightly around the neck, her little hands clasped beneath the stubble on his chin, and she looked up and down 24th Street, taking stock of her world.

He carried her through the herd of cars backed up outside Bell. He wanted some tapers to burn that night, with the oysters and the wine and the rest he had bought. With candles and laughter he would light up the big dark house, for a special woman who was visiting, whose face he could never forget, not since the day he had called out to her and she had heard him, and then ignored him.

They reached the sidewalk and Ali scrambled down. She could smell familiar secrets lurking inside Common Scents. She ran into the shop ahead of her father, searching for the small soaps, carved into bears and ducks and alligators, like the ones that the woman who was visiting had given her. Alicia would lay in her bath and wait for the animals to dissolve, night after night, into the warm and quiet water.

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The Noe Valley Voice • August 2022

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at The Noe Valley Ministry

RISING VOICES

fiction, poetry, essays, nonfiction • the noe valley voice

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Slepping from the post office, into the afternoon sun, Charlie did not know which way to turn. He had the money for flowers, or for a few beers at the bar, but not both.

The bouquets lined up outside the flower shop swayed easily in the wind. Then a car pulled into the space beside them, and a man and woman got out. Charlie knew them both, and liked them, and he envied them together.

“Hey, Charlie,” the man said as they passed, “you go into Finnegan’s?”

“Later!” Charlie replied, thinking I have to consider this for a minute. He crossed the street and sat on the concrete bench next to Hopwell’s.

One morning, years earlier, at dawn, stumbling back to Neo Valley from a party in the Mission, he strolled through the J-Church easement between 21st and 22nd. Tentatively, watching his feet, he began to step along the gleaming streetcar track. Then he glanced up and lost his balance.

Waves of color tumbling town the old concrete wall. Thousands of purple and yellow and orange flowers sprouting from convoluted vines opened for the sun. He’d never noticed them when he rode the J to work. But standing between the tracks, his breath the only sound, he’d been startled by the colors between the tracks, his breath the only sound, he’d been startled by the colors between the tracks, his breath the only sound.

He’d finished the salad and laid out the plates, and thrown the dirty socks into the closet and was just about to change his shirt and clean the mustard trimmings from the sink and stick the copy of Playboy in a drawer, when the doorbell rang.

He opened the door and somehow looked into her eyes, and she smiled. “Hi! I brought some wine.”

Charlie blushed. “Make yourself at home I still have to um—”

“Relax,” she said, “I’m early.” She wandered through the apartment, glancing at the titles of his books, running her finger over the dusty, rippled surface of a painting. “Did you do this?” she asked.

“I got it at a garage sale last week. Haven’t had time to frame it.”

When he brought out the salad, she was looking at a photograph on his desk. “Is this your lover?”

“Sister,” he replied, and the ease with which she’d asked, without either jealousy or relief, just simple curiosity, unnerved him. “I mean, I’m not, um, at least right now—”

“Here,” she’d noticed his distress, and took a cork screw from her purse. “I’m not very good with these. Would you mind? I’ve been out in the sun and I’m thirsty,” she explained, although both of them knew she didn’t have to.

Relieved, he began to open the wine while she turned to look at the photo again. “Ah, I see the family likeness now. Except you have more lines around your eyes.”

“I’m getting old,” she guessed.

“Oh, yeah,” she laughed, “practically dying on the vine,” and he saw that there were lines around her eyes too.

“You do mind if I take off my shoes? Charlie, this is a nice little place. I mean, from what you said before, I expected—”

She stopped when she saw the flowers on the table, and sat down. “Beautiful. Do you have a garden?”

“Oh, no. You know the shop on 24th Street, next to the Mitzie Box?”

It turned out she’d bought a pot of mums there only that morning.

Through the salad and the halibut and the strawberry ice cream, along the way somewhere, Charlie forgot to watch his words, and he began to tell her a little about himself. Then it was her turn, and he listened. They talked about parents, alive and dead, and loves, lingering and lost. They laughed about a foolish friend they had in common, and argued over a movie they had both seen. And then she asked if he’d seen the new film at the Castro and he’d shook his head and she asked, “Neither have I!” and Charlie realized that, the whole time, he had been looking her in the eye.

“Well,” she finally said, “I have a rehe-arsal first thing tomorrow.” Charlie nodded, also feeling the warm fatigue of the evening settling in. He started to yawn, and didn’t try to conceal it, and she yawned too, and for the last time that night, they both laughed.

As he closed the door behind her he realized that they had not planned a future date. But it seemed beside the point. Well, there was that movie neither of them had seen. Charlie looked at the dishes and said to himself, I’ll deal with this in the morning. He turned off the light and dropped into a deep sleep.

At the break of dawn, sunlight filled his apartment. The tightly curled petals of the rose began to unfold. When Charlie went to clear the table, he saw the rose standing in the middle of the bouquet and thought. I forgot to give this to her. Gracefully, he leaned over the table to smell it.

First published in the July/August 1984 Neo Valley Voice

Welcome to Neo Valley

By Bill Ford

The Reprieve

By Bill Ford
Eve knows Noe

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Kiss The Wind
By Grace D’Anca

Kiss the wind without guilt.
It chills and pants at the back door
with wild tiger cats waiting for scraps.
Pop open the purple umbrella and dance
in no-rain to percussion in your head
while another withers more and more.

Capture the essence of beauty in a cup
with a broken handle, waders web
on the window sill, though another
sees only snakes and petrified trash.

House your dreams in a hoosier,
in the back room that looks on the cyclone
tree the troubled child climbs
no matter what voice calls to him.

Imagine. Survive the embittered arena.
Jitter and jump on Saturday mornings
when the house is vacant. Slide the hallways
on slippery feet. Fling doors open. Dare
when the house is vacant. Slide the hallways
on slippery feet. Fling doors open. Dare

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Would she plant another garden then.
He would eat only garlic, onion and
potatoes from their first garden. Would she
plant Bougainvillea to climb the fence, papaya
pattas falling like husks and a tulip tree to
bloom stoically in the flat of winter
when each day becomes minutely lighter.

Would she paint the rooms soft pastels
with shocking sherbet trim.
Would she put lace curtains over the mun-
dane blinds and hang her bodacious art without reserva-
tion.
Would she wax the kitchen floor so slick
the grandchildren could see their faces in it.

Would she get two rambunctious kittens for entertainment
a dog for endless love and a reason to go out.
Would she rise early
and light every room
and stay out all day.

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**JESSICA BRANSON**

- Top 4 All San Francisco Listing Agent, 2022 so far
- Top 8 Overall Agent City Wide, 2022 so far
- Noe Valley Property Owner
- Stellar marketing, intelligent strategy, amazing results!

The Fed raised interest rates again in an effort to cool off the economy and to balance historically low unemployment and high consumer spending with a slow supply chain, and higher prices on goods. The increased rates have pushed many potential home buyers to the sidelines as they worry about increased mortgage payments, getting less home for the money, and a potential recession caused by the ensuing market inertia. There is definitely a cooling in the market here, with some homes staying on the market and more price reductions. It took a few months from when the big economic changes began, but the high year-over-year appreciation rates of recent years are now dropping fast in Bay Area markets — and in San Francisco, the rate turned slightly negative in June for the first time in years — though the degree of any actual, longer-term “correction” to prices, if it occurs, remains to be seen. There is still tremendous wealth here, and many buyers are looking for the perfect pandemic work from home abode. It can be tricky for sellers to navigate this changing market.

As a top SF realtor for 15 years, Jessica is an expert at timing, strategy and preparing property for successful sales. If you are considering selling your home, make sure to interview Jessica, and let her intelligence, experience, and wisdom guide you! Her record of success speaks for itself. Call Jessica today at 415.341.7777 for a free, no strings estimate of your home’s value.

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  4019 29th St | $2,500,000

- **LibertyHillBeaut**
  20 Hill St | $4,046,000

- **BuenoVistaVictorian**
  525 Divisadero St | $1,885,000

- **ViewsOnBarnview**
  160 Barnview St | $1,600,000

- **LuxeMissionModern**
  977 Florida St | $1,590,000

- **BarnstBliss**
  101 Santa Monica | $1,377,000

- **StarParkDream**
  762 Chinary St | $2,930,000

- **NoeValleyBeaut**
  4434 23rd St | $2,795,000

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San Francisco, CA  415.821.7652
I’m a San Francisco native and have lived in Noe Valley for 18 years. I work as a landscape maintenance contractor and my crews and I regularly service many Noe Valley gardens. This spring, after 60 hours of training, I completed the UC Master Gardener education program and received my Master Gardener certification.

My home garden is my personal laboratory: a space for me to experiment with plants, veggies, fertilizers and pest controls. I’ve had my share of failures (aka: an opportunity to try again) but also a number of amazing triumphs (aka: “Wow, that worked!”).

One tremendous success is my Meyer Lemon tree, named Edith, in honor of my home’s previous owner. When I moved in, Edith was scrawny and unattractive; she produced a lemon or two... when she felt like it. But after years of proper care, Edith has become a star: fragrant blossoms, shiny leaves and a year-round bounty of plump, juicy fruit. Perhaps Edith and I can inspire you to consider your very own lemon tree.

**The Case for Lemons**

Compared to other citrus, lemons are perfectly happy in our relatively cool climate. These trees can be planted now, in summer, but in temperate Noe Valley they can really be planted any time of the year! While most fruit trees are deciduous, the hard-working lemon keeps its foliage and produces fruit year round. The lemon tree’s sweet blossoms, shiny leaves and year-round bounty of plump, juicy fruit make for an attractive plant. Edith is a Meyer shrub; she is now at 30+ years old.

**Where To Buy?**

Lemon trees are usually available in big box stores throughout the spring and summer. Choose a plant with larger containers; larger containers are more mature and therefore will be more expensive. You can usually find Lemon trees at nurseries, farmer’s markets and big box stores throughout the spring and summer.

**Mouthwatering Desserts**

- Delicious Pastries
- Healthy Breakfasts
- Custom Drinks
- Offering 50 Varieties of:C • O • F • F • E • E

**Resources: For more on Lemons:**
http://pmg.ucanr.edu/PMG/GARDEN/FRUIT/lemon.html

By G. Montana edited by Maggie Mah; UC San Mateo/San Francisco Master Gardener

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Edith the Meyer Lemon tree.

Photo by Greg Montana

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**Visual Observations**

by Judith Levy-Sender

Local artist Judith Levy-Sender illustrates cards featuring poems and aphorisms by writers and philosophers. She lives in Noe Valley.

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**Noteworthy Resources:**

- [RISING VOICES fiction, poetry, essays, nonfiction • the noe valley voice](http://pmg.ucanr.edu/PMG/GARDEN/FRUIT/lemon.html)
- [UC San Mateo/San Francisco Master Gardener](http://pmg.ucanr.edu/PMG/GARDEN/FRUIT/lemon.html)
- [Mouthwatering Desserts](http://pmg.ucanr.edu/PMG/GARDEN/FRUIT/lemon.html)
- [Healthy Breakfasts](http://pmg.ucanr.edu/PMG/GARDEN/FRUIT/lemon.html)
- [Custom Drinks](http://pmg.ucanr.edu/PMG/GARDEN/FRUIT/lemon.html)
- [Offering 50 Varieties of:C • O • F • F • E • E](http://pmg.ucanr.edu/PMG/GARDEN/FRUIT/lemon.html)

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**Care and Feeding**

For the best output, lemons require two basics:

- Water – Lemon trees need moist, not soggy, soil – particular in their early lives. Your soil type – sand, clay or other – will inform how much water is best and a consistent irrigation schedule is ideal. Edith (who is planted in clay soil) began to thrive when I installed an automated drip system.

- Fertilizer - Maintain a regular fertilization program to keep your lemon tree healthy. They love organic nitrogen fertilizer in the winter and again when spring arrives. Citrus trees occasionally exhibit chlorosis, the term for yellowing of leaves. This is usually the result of zinc or iron deficiencies and can be addressed with an organic liquid chelated iron micronutrient fertilizer in the spring.

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Edith (who is planted in clay soil) began to thrive when I installed an automated drip system. When I moved in, Edith was scrawny and unattractive; she produced a lemon or two... when she felt like it. But after years of proper care, Edith has become a star: fragrant blossoms, shiny leaves and a year-round bounty of plump, juicy fruit. Perhaps Edith and I can inspire you to consider your very own lemon tree.

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Most plants contribute their own unique beauty and gifts to a well-curated garden. But some plants elevate their rewards with gifts that enhance your home, your lifestyle and your senses. What’s that Edith and all lemon tree can do, and it’s pure joy.

---

**Location Matters**

Lemon trees need plenty of sun so select a location that gets the most sunlight throughout the day and it should be protected from the wind. Planting in the ground is great – but a large container will also work. Tip: put your pot on wheels so you can move it around as sun patterns change.

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**One tremendous success is my Meyer Lemon tree, named Edith, in honor of my home’s previous owner. When I moved in, Edith was scrawny and unattractive; she produced a lemon or two... when she felt like it. But after years of proper care, Edith has become a star: fragrant blossoms, shiny leaves and a year-round bounty of plump, juicy fruit. Perhaps Edith and I can inspire you to consider your very own lemon tree.**
Dementia Caregivers Support Group
By Nancy Evans

The first Monday of each month
We gather in the conference room.
We, the fallen and the captured,
Felled by another’s infirmity,
Prisoners of compassion
And a love
That will not let us flee.
Wearied but comforted
By our shared experience,
We report conditions and events,
Triumphs and tragedies,
Fumbles and stumbles
at home and in the real world,
Strategies for coping with
a slow-moving tragedy
of unknown duration.
Our stories bring tears and laughter
and gratitude for understanding
our common and unique new worlds.

Nancy Evans is a health science writer and editor, a 31 year survivor of breast cancer and a women’s health advocate. Her latest book, Long Ago Poems and Other Words is available on Amazon.
I've been able to distinguish three sounds—up to 20, they can even cluck. Throaty and not as clearly defined. But, feathers over its beak? By listening, distinguish that one is smaller, or has more of them side by side how are you to distinguish that one from another. But if you don’t see a Common Raven. Both are corvids, a birder can identify. This song is often the standard cawing means more than I had seen in previous years. It is the sound the crow makes when possible that this comes in the natural sequence of things: You start identifying what birds look like, then you start recognising the sounds specific birds make, then you know where to expect certain birds to show up, then after some time, you notice how their behavior changes over the seasons.

In any case, I think there are two juvenile Anna’s Hummingbirds exploring the back garden. They do not have purple gorgets—or patch of throat feathers—and while they could be female (who only have tiny bits of sparkle on their throats), in my experience it is rare to see two females flying together. Today I got a closeup look at one of them, and it looks as if the mature feathers have not yet grown in. They also hover at various levels around the yard, almost on fact-finding missions, probably also feeding on the abundance of insects in the yard. These are not the behaviors of the resident male Anna’s. I’ve come to know: Shooting straight from yard to yard, zooming down to feed at the feeder, sitting on favorite perches. I’m hoping, instead, these are his progeny, getting to know the area after having fledged a nearby nest. That would mean we now have a family of hummingbirds, a bouquet or a shimmer or a hover or a glittering or a tune of them! A lovely way to describe them and to mark their urban survival story, at a time when those of us who have done so mark our survival of this world pandemic.

There is the raised voice! a call of a number of crows at once when they are telling neighborhood cats sitting underneath their tree, for example, to “Get out of town!” This alert call can go on for some time. It’s basically a racket, and will draw the most disinterested observer outside to see what the heck is going on. My neighbor’s walnut tree is nearer to the height of the top of a building. This sound is almost a meow! You might think you are hearing a cat.

While some days it seems the only birds in the sky are the black forms of crows, or pigeons, this year it seems I am seeing a variety of juvenile birds. Earlier in the spring I also noticed more birds gathering nesting material than I had seen in previous years. It is possible that this comes in the natural behaviors of the resident male Anna’s. I’ve learned a lot more about birds since March 2020, adding to the solid foundation my father provided early in my life. I’ve learned more about very common birds. The familiar caw of the American Crow is something even the person least likely to be a birder can identify. This song is often how I know I am seeing a crow and not a Common Raven. Both are corvids, they appear very similar in form, and are often described by how they differ from one another. But if you don’t see them side by side how are you to distinguish that one is smaller, or has more feathers over its beak? By listening, Ravens make more of a rattle, it is throaty and not as clearly defined. But, not so fast. The crow has many possible sounds—up to 20, they can even cluck. I’ve been able to distinguish three.

There is the standard cawing mentioned above, the everyday, all-purpose voice of a crow. I consider it a very clear, defined sound. Then there is the “raised voice” call of a number of crows at once when they are telling neighborhood cats sitting underneath their tree, for example, to “Get out of town!” This alert call can go on for some time. It’s basically a racket, and will draw the most disinterested observer outside to see what the heck is going on. My neighbor’s walnut tree is a great place to witness this. Then there is the sound the crow makes when taunting hawks. Oftentimes, this occurs very high up in the sky and can be hard to hear but audible if the chase is nearer to the height of the top of a building. This sound is almost a meow! You might think you are hearing a cat.
“May Day, May Day… this is flight 2022. Come in. Over!” I scream into the mic. I look over at my cargo, one human soul. My shadow made manifest.

“Can you land this plane?!” he yells at me at the top of his lungs.

“This is ground control, Flight 2022.” a voice crackles over the radio. My young passenger exhales a sigh of relief for a second, then looks nervously back at the fog ridden space outside. A total white out. I have to pull myself together, and be calm.

“Ground control this is Michael Bloom, Captain of the Apocalypse, come in – over.”

“Go for Ground Control.”

“We seem to have lost use of all our instruments.”

“Yeah, that happens in the Triangle sometimes. Not to worry, just hold tight. You’re about to hit K-Space.” Funkadelic’s “Maggot Brain” suddenly came playing out of the microphone. I let go of the mic, and as it hangs there, I realize we are weightless. Looking over at my passenger, I see myself, at my wedding 11 years earlier. So happy, so hopeful. Then the ground began to shake and erupted into a violent earth-quake. As the guitar solo explodes into space, all my friends and family were erased suddenly – and my bride became a flaming corpse. I hear the crowd screaming for more blood, and the scene fades to white – then I realize I am looking out the cockpit window.

“What day is it?” is all I can summon to ask my young passenger, realizing I have just nodded off from a lack of oxygen, as the plane is collapsing in descent.

“Today?”

“May Day!” I yell back into the microphone.

I ask and answer my own question, as we lock eyes and he slowly says, “May 1st.”

“Today?”

“May Day!” I yell back into the microphone.

I ask and answer my own question, as we lock eyes and he slowly says, “May 1st.” Then suddenly I am transported to sixth grade in rural Pennsylvania. My teacher saying, “Today is May Day. What is May Day?” he asks. I raise my hand, and he calls on me, “Michael”.

“May day is a call for help. I saw a movie called Hurricane Fighter Plane, and they were about to crash, calling out…”

It’s Beltane! Who fucking cares! I grasp the controls with all my strength and pull upward toward Heaven asking, “What’s your name again kid?” as we spiral out of control.

“Matt.”

“Matthew?” I snicker as I think about it all. “Matthew May Day – Matthew 5:1” Suddenly the controls take their own direction, and the clouds part into sunshine. I take a breath in shock, and then look at Matthew. He’s transformed into a woman, with wings, like an angel, but with an Egyptian headdress.

“It’s actually Ma’at, not Matt.” I hear him say. “I am eternal justice.” She says as she holds a pair of golden scales in her hand. Suddenly she drives her hand into my chest and rips out my heart. She places it on her scales, as it is still beating. She pulls a feather from her headdress and places it on the other scale. “If your heart is heavier than my feather, you will be dinner for my pets (a hungry looking pitbull and a vicious drooling hyaena lay at her feet). As the scales begin to move, ever so slightly, I feel dizzy.

“Is there anything I can do to save myself?” I ask as my heart drops faster on the scales.

“Name that tune.” She says cunningly and winks at me, as her hounds begin to bark. “What’s your birth song?” she asks me.

I am beyond comprehension and ask myself, “What is my birth song?”; like a customer asking what comes on the burrito. It’s right there on the menu.

“Maggot Brain.” I answer with all my strength. “Maggot Brain is my birth song.” Ma’at stares at me in astonishment. “You son of a bitch!”

I wake up.

Michael C. Bloom is a resident of Twin Peaks, a congregation member of the Swedenborgian Church in El Cerrito and witness to the Apocalypse of Susan Taubes.
Ron Louie was born in China and arrived in California at age 12. He grew up helping in his family’s restaurants, and worked as a chef in San Francisco when it was clearly out. Finally Mr. Louie might have lived to a hundred if his cancer had been caught in time. Instead, he died in July 1992 at the age of 69. He kept teaching until a week before the end.

Afterward, I made one last visit to the studio and saw Marcie. I asked, “What do you miss most about him?” She said, “His outrageousness. He was not like the regular Chinese father, who is kind of quiet. He was like the ringmaster in a circus. My daddy would go around looking for action, because he could handle it.”

“Some of my friends, 10 or 15 years ago, they were all bums. Now they’re acupuncturists. They cheated to pass the state exam. If I want someone to die, I send them to a Chinese acupuncturist.”

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Aging in Place
By Jessica Anderson

He is quite thin now,
Muscles wasted into stiff sinews
Over a hundred, Hector is an old man
Still living at home
Aging in place as they say
He eats little and carefully nibbles
A medically prescribed kidney diet
Every day he munches down the bland food
The arthritis really slows him
Even his shoulders hurt walking up the endless stairs
He pauses often to gaze at the maples and the roses
And then he naps on the deck in the warm sun
He pieces at night
Sees ghosts and dreams
Gets confused in the dark and needs a night light
When he is too lonely
When he is too cold or
Sees ghosts and screams
He paces at night
And then he naps on the deck in the roses
He pauses often to gaze at the maples and endless stairs
Even his shoulders hurt walking up the endless stairs
The arthritis really slows him
A medically prescribed kidney diet
He eats little and carefully nibbles
Aging in place as they say

On My Own
By Helen Dannenberg

the moon has found me tonight
and I have found the moon
in the main room shining in
touching in
thank you moon
this unsettling evening
thank you for visiting
for shining where I could see
for another new another first in my new home
He used to call and say “Look at the moon”
Never again.
Now the moon must find me and I must
find the moon.

Invitation
By Sharon Elswit

If you cannot find me here
go to the top of the Day Street steps.
If I am not there, look east
and you will find a half-moon
in the middle blue sky
Reach out and touch the moon
which I have also touched
and our fingers will intertwine.

Aging in Place as they say
Jessica Anderson moved to Elizabeth Street twenty-seven years ago. Her garden, her cat and her neighborhood have been central recently. Anderson’s poetry reflects her patient joy here in Noe Valley.

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RISING VOICES
fiction, poetry, essays, nonfiction • the noe valley voice

AUGUST EVENTS AT OMNIVORE BOOKS

SAT & SUN
AUG 6 & 7
ANNUAL BOOK SALE! – SAT. 11:00 - 6:00 P.M. & SUN. 12:00 - 5:00 P.M. It’s time for our annual clearance sale! All books in the store will be 20%-50% off, so come stock up on cookbooks by your favorite authors. And don’t forget to bring bags!

SUN
AUG 14
ALI SLAGLE – I DREAM OF DINNER (SO YOU DON’T HAVE TO): LOW-EFFORT, HIGH-REWARD RECIPES in the midday blue sky. And you will find a half-moon in the middle blue sky. Reach out and touch the moon which I have also touched and our fingers will intertwine.

TUES
AUG 23
MONICA LO – THE WEED GUMMIES COOKBOOK: RECIPES FOR CANNABIS CANDIES, THC AND CBD EDIBLES, AND MORE • 6:30 P.M. FREE! Create delicious cannabis confections with this user-friendly guide to making THC- and CBD-infused gummies, jellies, soft caramels, hard candies, and more delicious edibles!
Ferries of snow whirled through the air. The sky was a bright gray and the ground was a solid, gleaming white. The forest was peaceful and still. The trees stood steadily in place, the leaves barely shifting in the air. The snow was fresh and untouched. It looked like it was a painting that belonged in a palace art display. If Aminah was any good at painting, she would have painted this scene and hung it in the Zalahliyan palace. Her old home. Sometimes, Aminah wished she still lived there. With its tall and mysterious towers, Minarets that pierced the sky. Domes of marble and stucco were covered in ornate flora. Forests with dense shrubs and obscure trees. However, going back there meant confronting her father. Aminah wasn't ready for that. She knew that she couldn't run from her father forever. One day, she would have to face him. Nonetheless, today was not that day. Today was a day for celebration. Or at least it was supposed to be, but Aminah's brother had decided to dump his lookout duties on her. Which meant she was stuck spending her morning in the forest on lookout while all her friends and the entire village of Chandkapatar got ready for the Sardi festival that night.

The festival of winter, or Sardi, was traditionally the day after the first snow. Everyone gathered in the town square, lit a huge bonfire with dead leaves and a paper with an intention on it. At the palace, it was usually celebrated differently. The palace would be dusted with light and all of Khubsurat would attend the Sardi ball. It was a time to celebrate the wonders and tranquility of winter.

There was a time to celebrate the wonders and tranquility of winter. It would be dazzled with light and all of Khubsurat would attend the Sardi ball. It would be dazzled with light and all of Khubsurat would attend the Sardi ball. It was a time to celebrate the wonders and tranquility of winter. Aminah flinched. She could've sworn she had just made eye contact with her sisters. Over their time in the quaint village, Aminah and her friends had become close with Alihsba and some other residents of Chandkapatar. Like most people, Alihsba wasn't in on their little secret. Rabiya shot a look at Aminah, signifying that Aminah needed to think of a lie. “Oh, you know, I just love snow,” she lied. Alihsba gave her a strange look. “Well, never mind that. Have you heard! The royal family is coming here!” “The royal family,” Aminah repeated slowly. “Of Zalahliya?” “No, of Shamsuin. Yes of Zalahliya!” Alishba exclaimed. “This will be incredible! The whole royal family will be here! Well, everyone except the missing princess and the prince Saif. You know Aminah, you and the princess share the same name. Isn’t that funny?” Aminah giggled. It wasn’t funny at all. “I uh… have to go,” Aminah took off, Rabiya at her heels.

A little later, Aminah and Neel were walking into the town square to help set up. Neel was droning on about the history of Sardi. Aminah winced. She could’ve sworn she had just made eye contact with her brother Ahmad.

“Why are you here? What are you doing?” Alishba asked from beside Rabiya. Alishba lived in Chandkapatar. Her old home. Sometimes, Aminah wished she still lived there. With its tall and mysterious towers, Minarets that pierced the sky. Domes of marble and stucco were covered in ornate flora. Forests with dense shrubs and obscure trees. However, going back there meant confronting her father. Aminah wasn't ready for that. She knew that she couldn't run from her father forever. One day, she would have to face him. Nonetheless, today was not that day. Today was a day for celebration. Or at least it was supposed to be, but Aminah’s brother had decided to dump his lookout duties on her. Which meant she was stuck spending her morning in the forest on lookout while all her friends and the entire village of Chandkapatar got ready for the Sardi festival that night.

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Aminah gulped. It wasn’t funny at all. “I uh… funny?”

“Of Zalahliya!”

“No, of Shamsuin! Yes of Zalahliya!” Alishba exclaimed. “This will be incredible! The whole royal family will be here! Well, everyone except the missing princess and the prince Saif. You know Aminah, you and the princess share the same name. Isn’t that funny?” Aminah giggled. It wasn’t funny at all. “I uh… have to go,” Aminah took off, Rabiya at her heels.

A little later, Aminah and Neel were walking into the town square to help set up. Neel was droning on about the history of Sardi. Aminah winced. She could’ve sworn she had just made eye contact with her brother Ahmad. “Are you even listening?” Neel tapped Aminah on the shoulder. “No,” Neel smiled. “We’re here! Aminah, you might want to look at your surroundings. You look a little green, are you alright?” Neel turned to talk to one of the people handing out supplies. Aminah was given the task of setting up the base of the bonfire. As she walked over, Neel ran up behind her.

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- A DEEP 2 CAR GARAGE WITH EV CHARGING
- LARGE STORAGE ROOM