



Author photo copyrighted 2020 by Christopher Arnold Rubin, is used with permission.



RDIANA
Kwiatkowski
Rubin



FEATURED PUBLISHED

WRITER



A Poet's True Story

By Diana Kwiatkowski Rubin

Under the Waning Gibbous moon phase, I took my first breath on December 30, 1958, in New York City.

Remembering the times my parents were firm Roman Catholic and religious. My father, a strict man, was of Polish descent, and my mother, Gladys, was of Irish ancestry. My father, Leo, previously married as a young man to a woman who had died young in a car accident, and he had a daughter from that marriage when he met and later married my mother. After my

father and mother married, they moved to Maspeth, Queens, New York City, and started their family. Mom and Dad grew an exuberant house giving me five wonderful sisters to cherish and love.

Nevertheless, we grew up doing several activities together, and I remember having a boundless enjoyment in our town of Maspeth. As a child, I became a member of the Mespatches Drum and Bugle Corp. and I twirled my baton and entered and placed in competitions for my baton twirling. While attending Saint Stanislaus Kostka grade school as a child. During grade school, I joined the squad and transformed into a gleeful cheerleader for the school's basketball team. Eventually, I made friends



in the second grade with my best friend, Rosemary, and we have remained lifetime friends. Also, Rosemary is like a sister to me. To this day, I still attend reunion events at St. Stan's and socialize with some of my childhood friends.

When it was time for high school, I attended the St. Nicholas High School in Brooklyn, New York, along with Rosemary and her sister, Peggy, and two of my younger sisters, Laura and Beth. Showing potential as a promising artist as a young person and often called upon to draw or paint as needed. For example, when our high school performed the play "Marne," I created some of the props and sets for the stage. Needless to say, my parents were local civic leaders, and through connections, they had with the Maspeth Town Hall, Rosemary, Laura, and I all had summer jobs as camp counselors. Employed by the City of New York, we experienced quite an adventure.

Towards the end of my high school days, my parents divorced; and it was enormously traumatic for me. In my opinion, my parents were opposites like fire and ice, but I suppose I never imagined my parents not being together. Fortunately, around this time, I met my first real boyfriend, Walter, a young man who was of Russian ancestry. Absolutely, we had countless incredible times together, and he was generous and exhilarating to be with and often took me out riding in his car and for dates at nice restaurants. Uplifting my mood, which was quite depressed at that time due to the upset in my family situation. Unfortunately, after a year of dating, Walter and I separated ways as do numerous other young high school couples.





During this time, money was quite sparse for my parents. Going to college did not appear to me as an option even though I was a solid student and wanted to attend school to study art and literature. Decidedly, my mother made it clear that I must obtain a secretarial job after high school. Therefore, I trekked to visit and take a scholarship test at The Wood School, a business school in New York City. Consequently, winning the scholarship for the work-study program, and I matriculated in the one-year secretarial program. This meant that I must commute from my town of Maspeth into Manhattan each day, taking first a bus and then the subway, to arrive at school for my studies. Swiftly time passed and I graduated and started work as a legal secretary in Manhattan. And remained for seven years at Random House Inc., the major publishing company, where I learned much about the book publishing business. However, my determination to return to school and study and achieve what I sought with my life.

Furthermore, I had a secret, reading poetry since I was very young. My uncle and godfather, Jim Dempsey, had given me as a gift the book, **A Child's Garden of Verses** by Robert Louis Stevenson. At the mature age of fifteen, I began writing poems. The classics books that I remember reading like Lord Byron in my sophomore year in high school and various other poets. The captivation of their brilliance took my heart and I loved the poems of Robert Frost, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and Emily Dickinson, among other poets. Constantly immersed I enjoyed Shakespeare's exquisite work. The main goal was to become a poet and a

writer more than anything else. Naturally, my early poems were inexperienced and quite simplistic. Nevertheless, nothing discouraged me as the remarks of editors, readers, and others authenticated what I knew, I had something to create.

After I was working for a year, I applied to Marymount Manhattan College in New York City to attend night school, college classes. The college had a transfer program where they would accept some of my secretarial school credits and let me continue my education. After I received an Associate's in Occupational Science Degree and then, much later, a Bachelor's Degree in English and American literature.

While I was still attending school, I used to travel out in New York City to various places. A favorite extracurricular activity, I loved to dance when I was young. During my single days, it was the "disco era." One night when I was at a food and music club, I met my husband, Paul Rubin, who walked over to me and asked me to dance. Instantly attracted to his handsome looks and intelligence I knew he was the one. He and I chatted that special night, and





I realized that he came from an artistic family – his mother was an artist and his father was an art dealer – leaving me quite impressed. In my own family, being a writer was never truly encouraged. Unfortunately, I do not think my parents ever considered poetry being significant at all, sadly.

When I was eighteen years of age, I then published my first poem.

Throughout the seventies and eighties, there was a serious small press literature movement, and several independent press magazines existed where new writers could submit their literary efforts. After my first publication, I received encouragement to submit writings to other magazines. When I was twenty years of age, a literary magazine editor, M. Karl Kulikowski, of Gusto Press contacted me to publish a collection of my poems. In 1979, my first book, **Panorama**, was published. Shortly afterward an invitation came inviting me to read my poetry at various places in New York City. Reading my poems for a veterans hospital, a literary theater, a small press book fair at New York University. At the small press book fair, I met Len Fulton, the publisher of **Small Press Review** which emanated from San Francisco.



Len Fulton later asked me to do book reviews for him which he published. For a plethora of years, I reviewed poetry books for him and then later for Bob Olmsted of **Northwoods Journal**, among other independent press magazines. The Gusto Press asked me to edit a poetry anthology about the life and times of Pope John Paul II which became published in 1980. Sterling Publisher later asked to publish my book, **Spirits in Exile**, and JVC Publishers to publish my book, **Visions of Enchantment**. Gradually, my publishing career began to take root. Throughout the decades, writing poetry has introduced me to multiple literary friends.

On a personal note, at this time Paul and I dated for some time and eventually married in January of 1986. Setting up our new life we moved to Edison, New Jersey after we bought our house together. In April 1989, my son, Christopher, entered the world. Two years afterward my daughter, Pauline, came later in October 1991 and my youngest child, Katharine, greeted us in February 1995. Life and everything that accompanies it was joyful for us for fourteen years. Admittedly my husband was extremely successful in his career, we traveled on nice vacations and had parties for our children and a nice lifestyle, until one day, a light went out permanently. Suddenly, my husband died on June 14, 2002. Our world immediately flipped upside down and it was devastating for me and the children who were quite young at the time.

When you lose someone you love, often people tell you to "move on with yourself," which is something I always thought sounded ridiculous. Does one have



any other choice but to migrate on with the rest of life - short of ending one's self? The acknowledgment that struck me the hardest was how easy it was for the rest of the world to journey on while we continuously suffered the unbearable loss day after day.

In time, my children and I began to create new ways to exist, but we have never "gotten over it." Rather, even though it has been eighteen years now, we have learned how to live without a person who meant so much to all of us.

Moreover, when I married, I continued to write my poetry and continued studies at New York University in the evening so that I could earn my master's degree. When I graduated from New York University, it was an extremely celebratory day for me.

Finally, I actively began writing my poems and short stories with prodigious passion. Nevertheless, I published a book for children and a cookbook. Additionally, in 1999, I was awarded the Sparrowgrass Poet of the Year Award which meant a cash prize and the publication of my book, **A Gathered Meadow**. Unquestionably, I am proud of my achievement. Especially, as my literary career continued to rise. In 2010, I published another collection of poetry, **Renewal**. Later I traveled to the Los Angeles Times Festival of the Books at the University of Southern California to do a book signing and reading from the book, and I had a wonderful time meeting fans and new friends. Today hundreds of my poems are published, both nationally and internationally including a plethora of short stories that were published.

Consequently, after my husband's death, I returned to the workforce and continued to stay active and busy. Before my eyes, the children grew into fine young adults and all three have college degrees. With each milestone, I felt especially proud of my family. My daughter recently married, and our family has grown to include my son-in-law, John. Unfortunately, I have recently suffered the loss of both of my parents, who were in their eighties when they died but had also been in poor health before their demises. The loss of my parents was heartbreaking for me. Not a moment goes by without me reminiscing about them every day and remember our wonderful times.

Currently, I am writing a new book of haiku and poetry, and writing more short stories which I would like published someday as a collection. Notwithstanding my life has had its share of ups and downs, but I am grateful each day for my family, the beautiful pets I had throughout my life, and for my talents. As a deeply spiritual person, I truly feel that I have been blessed by God.



BYGONE MEMORY

Now a wraith, she gradually approaches
 The revolutionary gravesite, knowing
 Her lover belongs there and to history.
 After a bloody battle, there was this resolution,
 And the longing of what could have been
 And the soft babies never born and raised
 As his brave arms which held the weapons
 Freed a budding young nation in glory but
 Left her to ponder the loss of love and his life,
 The liberty banner pressing boldly on two souls.

Diana
 Kwiatkowski
 Rubin

POEMS

RETURNING

It is vacation time again,
 but I cannot come home
 to you for your house
 had been sold and bought.
 The new owners have
 renovated to their liking
 into an unrecognized space.
 It has been years since
 I vocally spoke to you —
 two and a half decades,
 rainfalls and holidays passed
 since I remember summer
 with you in your garden,
 your kitchen cooking and
 trips to the store to prepare
 sandwiches and salads and
 sweet ice cream scoops in
 a glass bowl melting in the heat
 and still your essence returns
 to me like a rosebud on stem
 ready to open and blossom
 while embracing my heart —
 you—one of the very few —
 Whoever really loved me.



Gary Drury Ministries



bright golden leaf hues
seasonal stroll through forest
autumn paradise

Blue Blood Moon rising
Astronomical specter
Halloween night sky

Early autumn moon
The young lovers paradise
Glistening river

One sole companion —
To free my snow laden car —
Opalescent moon

into the sunset
destination recovered
brave hawk flying home

Diana Kwiatkowski Rubin
HAIKU



The lake was manmade, an oval-shaped, stagnant pool centered upon the front lawn of the old house on the abandoned farm. It was an eerie sight, the kind psychics can read when someone has gone missing.

The night of the accident the moon was blood red. The road running along the edge of the farm was dark and unlighted. Kelly was driving too fast, in a hurry to pick up her son from the babysitter. It had been another long and hard day at the office. It was a job Kelly, who was both underpaid and underappreciated, hated. She was obsessing over a slight at work when the doe entered the road. She slammed the brakes hard, but it was too late.

CRYPTID

By Diana Kwiatkowski Rubin

The crash was horrific—a twisted scream of metal and glass to flesh and bone. What was left was not good.

When she awakened hours later, the police were on the scene as was an ambulance which was not moving. Her car was totaled, and the miserable doe was glassy-eyed, bloody, and lifeless.

Kelly approached the scene, calling but she could not speak—sad but she could not emote. She felt different somehow, more cautious and aware, larger and heavy. Then Kelly looked down, and soon she realized what had happened. In the terror of the crash, both she and the doe had been transformed into one single being. Her upper torso was conjoined to the doe's body and its four legs. She was something she didn't recognize and did not want to be. She screamed silently, her brain reeling in shock, as she hid in the woods, a frightening spirit.

It is not known how long she disappeared in the solitude of those deep trees or how many seasons. Time both passed and stayed the same. The moments no longer mattered. The seasons continued to roll, as the leaves fell and the snows came. The new buds of spring lightened the landscape. Kelly was alone, one with nature, dead but alive in a miraculous way. Her transformation baffled her, but it also challenged her to find new scattered happiness within an ambiance of peace.



In the evening, she would listen to the creatures in the woods—all of the hoots, chirping, and songs that only the darkness can evoke somehow quieted her heart and soothed her soul. As the sun rose, she would lift her face to greet the evolving day.

Occasionally, in the evening, there would be someone or something which could actually see her and she would be drawn to that radiant beacon of clairvoyance as she attempted to reveal herself. Their gaze would meet her halfway, as they turned away from the bizarre in a confused mixture of terror and shock. She was their imagination, after all, they reminded themselves, as they either ran or drove away.

Her moment became their awakening to something beyond the world they knew—the recognition of a portal opening to the unknown. She became one with the wind and the earth. Water was her friend. Fire purified her. She had no fear, for she was eternal, free of all bonds and a companion to all forces.

She was magnificently brave, and she was fiercely beautiful.

Books by Diana Kwiatkowski Rubin

2000 A Gathered Meadow

1999 Breath of spirit: A collection of short stories

1991 Visions of enchantment