

Holiday Greetings from Your Editor

As I was reading the incredible submissions for this issue of *The Rose in the World* shortly before Thanksgiving, I began to notice a beautiful theme emerging. Each of the pieces chosen for this issue present us with a gift. Maybe I just had the upcoming holidays and my growing to-do list of gift buying and giving on the brain, but I think it is much more than that.

I remember this time last year, the feeling of the submissions were very different. Many were still acclimating to the election results. Happy, sad, or indifferent to the winning candidate, it felt like there were big changes coming, that an up swell was in the works. In many submissions, not included here, that theme is still very present. People are still waiting to see what this new phase of our country will bring us, they are trying to find their place in what, at times, feels like unfamiliar territory.

All of this and more is why this issue and the articles within are so important right now. They each give us a gift: the present of being present, a moment away from everyday life, a glimpse into the depths of ourselves, our relationships, and our world. These gifts do not come from the department store, are not delivered in a smiling box, and cannot be bought with a credit card. These come from the experiences of a life well lived. They are bought by grief and pain and loss and with laughter and hugs and a playful spirit. They also come from dreams and love and even, sometimes, Angels!

As the articles and artwork unfolded before me, this theme began to take root. Each one mentioned a gift they had been given in one way or another. Once I finished them all, and the articles to be published emerged, I turned to the inspiring dreams that had been submitted to be "*The Rose's* dream for the world." I always save these until the end, because it should be the guiding vision for the issue and kicks each one off on page 2. The first dream I read was the "Train of Dreams." As I read it I began to smile. Then, the night I was finishing up the final edits, getting everything ready to send off to the printer, another synchronicity. Every year, my mother sends me a Jacquie Lawson advent calendar online. Today's gift to open was a short animated video. As it plays, I smile again. It is a train pulling into a station and unloading a huge load of colorful packages. I can only imagine these must all be full of dreams! The guiding hand of Wisdom, of the uncon-

scious, was surely at play here. All I could do was silently chuckle at these synchronicities that brought this dream to this issue and to my attention. It truly felt as if Wisdom's hand was thumbing through every page along with me and knew, long before I did, where this batch of submissions would lead. Wisdom knew and she confirmed it again, even on the final night.

What better time than the winter to gain such treasured wisdom? This is the time of the year when life begins to slow down, just as the holidays are gearing up. The daylight hours fade and darkness offers us a chance to reflect and remember. For without the darkness we would not be able to see the light. It has been a tough year in so many ways: natural disasters, mass shootings, social upheaval. At times the darkness may seem even darker with these events in mind. This is a time to embrace whatever little light can be found.

In many Scandinavian countries at this time of year, when the days are so dark, *hygge* becomes lifeblood. *Hygge* comes from the Norwegian term for hug and often means "wellbeing." In Danish, *hygge* is often translated as "cozy," however it means something much more expansive and deep than either of these. Remember your

happiest moments from the winters of your life: friends and family around the fire? Caroling? Lighting a candle in the early morning hours before the sun comes up? Watching a favorite holiday program or reading a favorite book all snuggled up in a warm blanket? A mug of hot cocoa? A warm hug? Any of these and more and you might be getting close to *hygge*.

This is what I hope this issue of *The Rose in the World* will bring to you this holiday season. Each piece a gift of advice gained from an encounter with Wisdom, words from Divine guides and guardians, a letter to a loved one long passed, moments of childlike joy, and so much more. All to give you a sense of *hygge* as the dark days of winter saunter on. Think of this as your candle in the darkness; as a gift from an old friend; An embrace from your beloved. May it inspire you to light your own candle of love even in the darkest of moments and may it bring you comfort into the new year and beyond.

Peace and love to you and yours this holiday season,

Sarah D. Norton



Photograph by Lane Norton, my mom, taken in Strausburg Cathedral December 2016