

Submissions for issue 5, before Mar 7th, midnight
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Share creative time on *Healing the Hurt*, at 8 pm Mar 4th [on Zoom](#)

The kNUUCklehead: An Origin story

Peter Marmorek



I couldn't work apple trees or mangers into it, but here's our origin story...

Covid had not been good for our congregation at the Neighbourhood Unitarian Universalist Congregation, aka NUUC. We held Zoom services, but it wasn't the same, despite our best efforts. Everyone missed that deep human contact. I tried to keep my Neighbourhood writing group going online, but the little squares didn't seem quite real, and two people could only make audio contact so we couldn't even see the Zoom versions of them. After the requisite number of meetings were over, I let it slide.

Meanwhile acrimony was breaking out all over. Partially that was due to Covid making everyone more stressed, but it was also due to the strain of selling our building and renting a new one, of designing the renovations, of differences that got exacerbated by what could fairly be termed as failures of empathy. The selling of our building meant we were in the black financially, for the first time in our 20 year history. When a group who's never had money has to manage money, stresses arise. When a friend asked if I thought our congregation would survive. I had to think about it, and finally said I wasn't sure.

I was doing a lot of tech work during this time, partially because it was needed and I could do it, partially because as everyone agreed it was needed there was low stress around it. And I surreptitiously withdrew from the commitments which involved yet more time in groups on Zoom.

But I did want to do something to try and pull the community together a bit. One indolent Thursday night, as I mused on how I wouldn't be holding the Neighbourhood writing group that evening, the epiphany came to me. Why not put out a literary magazine? Obviously not a paper and ink one— they're going under by the bucketload— but an online one? The idea coalesced: if I put it out as a pdf, I could include photos. And those could be photos or art images. And while I couldn't include music files (too big), I could stick the music up on Soundcloud and put links in. I didn't want to send the magazine out to everyone— we all get way too many pieces of spam in our email boxes— but I could put it online, somewhere people could either read it or download it to read at their leisure.

It was one of those happy moments when the ideas cascade together, each one on the heels of the previous one. A title was clearly needed- and I flashed back to my brother's term for members of NUUC, whom he once referred to as knuuckleheads. It would be a perfect title: it made it clear it was by and for members of the congregation, and it was light-hearted and self-deprecating. I didn't want anyone to not submit pieces because they felt they weren't a *real* writer or artist. But how could you feel intimidated by a magazine that called itself the kNUUCklehead? I needed a logo, a downmarket equivalent of the New Yorker's Eustache Tilley, that guy (mostly) who's been staring through his monocle at a butterfly for the last 94 years. A quick Google search for images

for the word knucklehead produced a lovely image (“Don’t be a knucklehead” it said). I stole the picture, added some text in Goodfellow, a bizarre font that I love but can never use anywhere serious, and I was set to go.

My theory was that the kNUUCklehead wouldn’t take up a lot of time. People would send me their work, and I would paste it into my publishing program, and print it up as a pdf. Easy-peasy. Boundaries were needed: I set myself a rule that I would publish the magazine, but not edit anyone’s work. What they submitted was what I would run.

Then I wondered: what if someone submitted a racist, sexist, piece of vitriol? I knew it was unlikely (I mean these *are* Unitarians!) but we do have at least one member of the congregation whose views are pretty out there, in a Q-Anon sense. Rose, Neighbourhood’s president, coined the felicitous phrase “a seven-principles sieve”. Nothing would get run that was contrary to the Unitarian seven principles (“The inherent worth and dignity of every person”, etc...). I found two other people who would help me if we ever had to decide whether a particular piece fit through the sieve; three is a good number of people to make such decisions. Small enough to be quickly available, an odd number so votes don’t end in ties.

Now all I had to do was to make it happen. I posted a birth announcement for the kNUUCklehead, and a deadline for the first issue. I found a website (DocDroid) that would let me post pdf’s and let other people read them online or download them. I watched in pleasure as submissions came rolling in. And I started to publish....

I just put out the third issue on Valentine’s Day, bookended with two romantic pieces about love. The first issue had just under 140 views; the second just over 150. That was roughly twice what I’d been hoping for, so I am hugely pleased. A few people have submitted to every issue, but many have submitted one piece only. There has been some lovely art, some beautiful music, some exciting soundscapes as well as poetry and prose. Only one person has complained that the name is too informal, which is fewer than I had expected. And today I learned that other UU congregations are reading The kNUUCklehead and thinking of doing the same thing in their congregations, which totally delights me.

I had thought the kNUUCklehead might be a way to share positive creative energy among a group of people for whom I care deeply. That was my hope; I am pleasantly surprised that it seems to be working. No one kNUUCklehead can save the world, but maybe -just maybe- we can do a bit to save NUUC.

Watercolour and Masking Fluid Experiments Lauren Renzetti

(Left down: *Fireworks over water*; *Sparkles & Dots*; *Summer Night Music*.
Top right: *Summer Buzzing*)



“Letter to Myself – Return to Love “

Ahna Joy

Date: Today, This moment, Now.

Dear Ahna,

When you return to love... What does it feel like?

Do you feel vibrations? Is it a feeling of awe, wrapped with wonder and delight? of pleasure ...perhaps even passion?

Does it feel like the moment you wrap your naked body in a towel, just pulled out from the dryer – warm and satisfying or is it the feeling of the sand seeping playfully between your toes, almost tickling you? Is it that feeling of flight – you know this one well – it’s deliriously intoxicating? Perhaps it’s that feeling you are left with ... of your adoring lover’s lingering kiss and touch on your skin – sometimes electrifying, mostly familiar, and tender. Is it that feeling you have when you’re having sloooowww delicious, juicy, deep in your bones, love making? mmm desire.

Ever cradle a brand new, fresh newborn in your arms? Mmm beginning. When you return to love...

What does this smell like? Is it that freshly baked chocolate cake that reaches you when you open the door, or that waft of morning’s first coffee or tea? Maybe, for you, it smells like the salty sea air, or the sweetness of a fragrant spring garden after a midafternoon gentle rain shower – lavender, roses, rosemary, earth or the musk of the deepest forest. Maybe it’s the scents and essence of the essential good weed.

What do you see, when you return to love...?

Colours – , mystical -- like in the aurora borealis? Shapes, lights, images ...? What are they? Are they lucid and within your reach? Do you see a toddler asleep – wondering what *they* are seeing in their dreams? It’s a sweet moment. Do you see a dear one struggling with hardship and hurt? Do you see your heart expanding?

What is it like for you when you return to love?

What music do you hear? I wonder, Is it celestial – like the God’s cricket choir ... slowed down to sound like angels, or the peals of ridonculous pee inspiring laughter,

or perhaps it’s the sound of tearful weeping, at times your own? . Do you hear heartbeat...? ... more than one?

Is it the silent whispers in the full and yet expectant stillness of the full and generous moment that you hear?

... is it in

the moon and waters, in the song and earth, in our tears and in our joy...Do we

breathe it and it us.

What is it like for you...when YOU return to love?

Are you there now? How about now? And, now...?

You're welcome.

Yours, truly, madly, deeply, in loving authentic joy and a state of loving kindness forever and for all ways,

Ahna Joy ,

Aka, The Mailbox Whisperer

After words but definitely not an after thought. "How may I be of service?"

***** got mail? *****



Collage by Ahna

Overwhelmed

Karen Richards

Overwhelming rush of sorrow from a daughter seeing her broken mom

Compassion fills my entire being
while a steadfast grace flowed into a welcomed hug

Words tumbling out of me...
I'm so sorry
a brief look and response
Thank you

Compassion as I watch people trying to cover their tracks ?
Not so much...
even as this human heart understands their fear and dread

Step away
Let it play out
Out of my hands
Further thoughts ...
Only if you ask
--

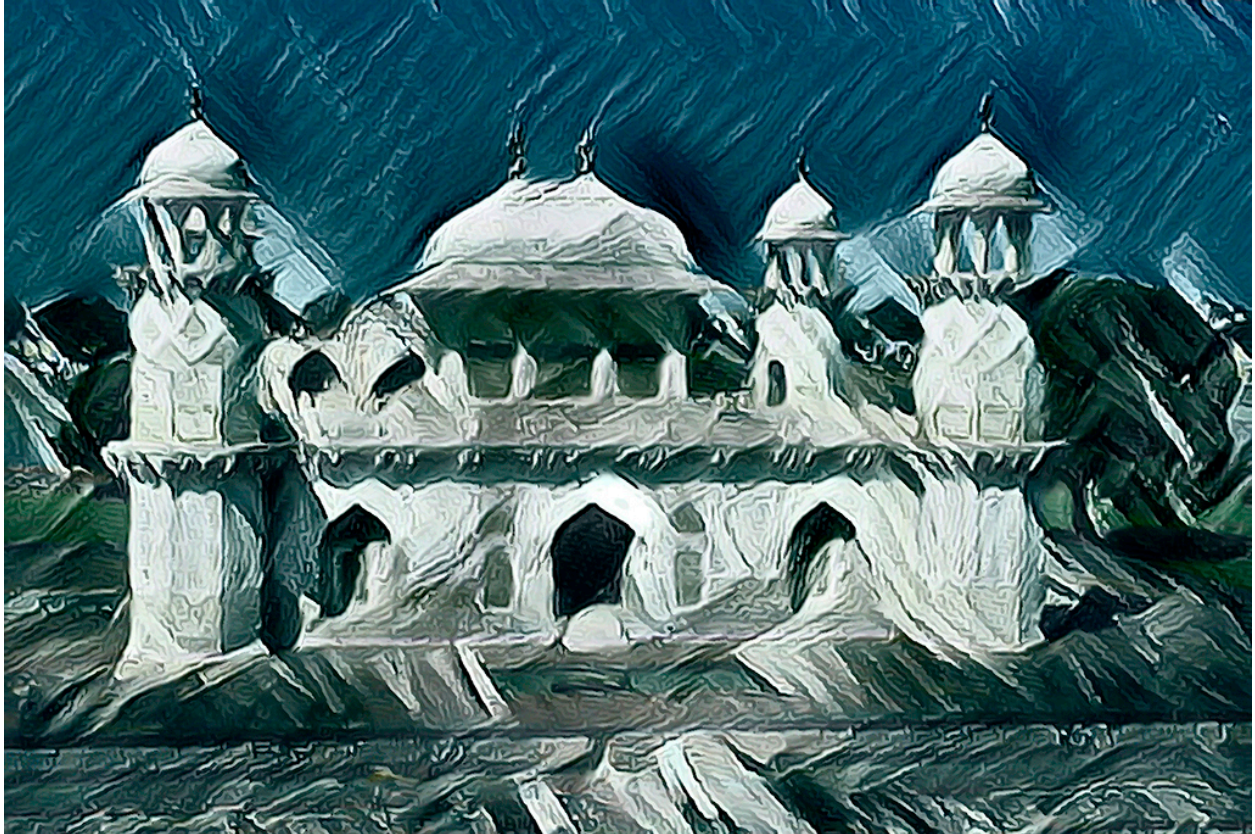


Image: Peter Marmorek

Poetry

Lauren Renzetti

summer

Grass is long and gangly
Like bangs on a reluctant, whiny child
Being dragged to the barber.
The Cicadas whine like that too.
Sunflowers are sagging with the weight
Of their burden- offspring
And the daisy's are looking at their feet
No matter how much I water
The summer is late
And even the plants want respite.
It seems spring lasted
One. Day.
And I am not looking forward
To the bleakness of winter.
I don't have the heart to cut the grass
I know it drives my neighbours crazy
So unkept and wild
But it is so cool on my ankles
-Andscary
The unknown can be so much easier
To hide in such a shag carpet
Than step on a beer bottle lid- ouch
Or the orange toms fresh poop- ewww
Than Unearthing the lawn mower.
~Aug 18 1996

Misgivings of Champagne while Pregnant

Yesterday a blind, naked, concrete
Marble blushed.
Ferocious after Champagne
I breathed a wild lingering
Word
And had a squirming broken worry
But - I trusted to change
And celebrated the
Velvet porcelain with a
Corduroy fever
But never desire
To drink their embrace
Again
-feb 1997

Wanted Womb Guest

It all comes down to waiting now
All . Is . In . Readiness
I am really truly....unconcerned with
what to expect
I know I will love him
Surely that is enough
Mostly I enjoy the silent totally internal
conversation
we have as he moves.

His foot is stretching into my left lung
Tapping out my heartbeat
he switches sides
stretching out hands and feet all over
the place
hoping for a better shot
at my pancreas
whaooooo
what. was. that?
I stumble a bit.
They tell me to breath
-My breath is gone.
They tell me
there is a beginning middle and end
Wrong
-this pain is constant
I lied.
I . Am . Most. Certainly. Not. Ready
feelfreetostay a bit longer
please - be my continued womb guest
what is another week or two after a
stay of 38.

Sept 22, 1997
Morgan arrived October 9.. 1997.

The Sound Page



Lumière and Sons Susanne and Peter

We combine music from the UU tradition and 40 years of travels to make a 6 minute video. [Just Click Here](#)

Rainbow Sleeve Douglas Crozier originally by Rickie Lee Jones [Just Click Here](#)

Aca-Stra Kurt Thomsen (IM-ACA-PROV)

An acapella orchestra!
The primal instrument is the voice. All the other instruments add new dimensions. Can the voice add a new dimension to them in return? How does the music change, or does it? [Just Click Here](#)

Bird Pond Steve Koller

You read the words in Issue #2: Now hear it! [Just Click Here](#)

An die Musik piano and voice: Susanne Maziarz, 2020 lyrics: Franz von Schober, 1796-1882 music: Franz Schubert, published 1817

Translation from the original German

O blessed art, how often in dark hours,
When the savage ring of life tightens round me,
Have you kindled warm love in my heart,
Have transported me to a better world!
Transported to a better world

Often a sigh has escaped from your harp,
A sweet, sacred harmony of yours
Has opened up the heavens to better times for me,
O blessed art, I thank you for that!
O blessed art, I thank you!

[Just Click Here](#)



