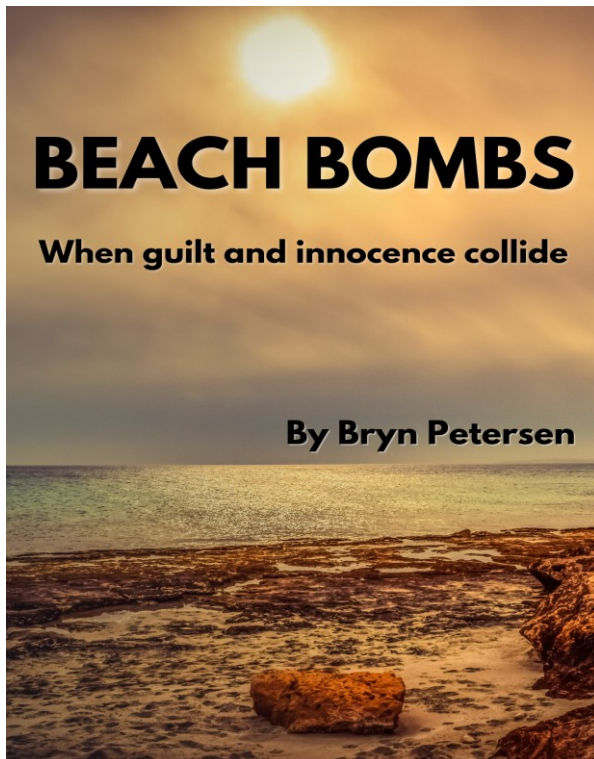


2023

BRYN AND FRIENDS



Bryn Petersen

30th May 2023

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FOREWORD

It's almost four years since I began this creative writing journey, and one of the things I love about it is that every day I learn something new. Every day throws up something new, exciting or unexpected.

I'm still the same shy and timid soul I was before, but every new challenge, discover, experience and learning curve is amazing and I am so thankful for every one of them.

In this issue, I want to introduce readers to a beautiful new writing friend, the wonderful Debbie Buxton, who has a very touching short story, 'Believe in the Impossible.

Also in this issue, we have some more poems from the very generous Noel Wincote.

It only remains for me to offer my most sincere thanks to both for their kindness and generosity in providing their creative contributions.

BP

BELIEVE IN THE IMPOSSIBLE

"Look, Mummy, look!" The child pointed to the patch of blue sky between the skyscrapers where an enormous bird soared and then dived, twisting and turning on invisible currents.

Curious passers-by stopped to look and froze in wonder at the aerial display above them, for they soon realised it wasn't a bird that flew with such elegance and agility but a young woman, her summer dress rippling and her dark hair streaming out behind her. She descended slowly in decreasing circles and, as the small crowd gasped, landed gracefully on her feet in front of them.

For a moment, no one spoke, just gazed at her, open-mouthed. Then a hesitant voice broke the spell, and suddenly everyone was talking at once, clamouring for an explanation, their questions tumbling over each other.

"Who are you?" "How did you do that?" "What are you?" "Where have you come from?" "Are you a witch?"

"No, I'm not a witch. I've just discovered I can do this. Maybe we all can, I'll show you how."

"Don't be stupid," a male voice boomed. "It's impossible for humans to fly. You're not of this world. Grab her before she can harm us."

The crowd shrank back, fearful, not knowing what to do next. But the young woman smiled serenely, her eyes kind and reassuring. "I'm as human as you are, I work over there."

An hour before, after a long day, she had finally left the air-conditioned comfort of the 71st floor and stepped into the sizzling heat of the city. Hurrying across the shaded square as usual, she'd decided to sit for a few minutes and watch as the sun lit up the immense glass structures, turning them into pillars of burnished gold. The square was empty and silent, time stood still, and she closed her eyes, savouring the moment.

When she opened them, the sunlight had reached a corner of the square, and with childlike delight, she'd walked over to stand in the pool of gold, tilting her face to the sun and closing her eyes once more. She stretched out her arms, luxuriating in the heat and felt the strangest sensation; it was as though her feet had left the ground.

Lowering her arms quickly in alarm, she felt a slight jolt. Intrigued, she slowly stretched out her arms again, and this time she could feel the warm air swirling beneath her bare skin, lifting her. She opened her eyes and almost screamed to find herself hovering about two metres off the ground. Breathless, she gazed around the empty square. *What was happening to her? Was she hallucinating; this surely couldn't be real.*

As she looked down and lowered her arms slightly, she returned to the ground, landing gently on her feet. Bemused and with her pulse racing, she'd extended her arms once more, letting the warm air lift her higher and higher. Incredulous, she flew around the square, quickly realising her body moved in whatever direction she was looking and gained speed if she brought her arms closer to her sides.

Emboldened, she flew higher, circling on the thermals, knowing the air would somehow support her. With a flick of her head, she could change direction, and as her confidence grew, she swooped, streamlined, hurtling towards the ground, filled with exhilaration, then stretched out her arms again as she soared towards the sun, elated.

"All you need to do is stretch out your arms like this, look upwards towards the sun, and....."

The crowd gasped again as she rose gently into the air, smiled down at them and then lowered her arms slightly to land on her feet. People began spreading out immediately, but the same male voice called out again. "It's not possible. You're a witch or something. She's dangerous, don't listen to her."

Try as they might, no one else could fly, and wonderment was rapidly turning to hostility when the child stepped forward. "I would like to fly, please. Can I try with you?"

"Do you believe you can?"

The child grinned at her, brimful of excitement. "Of course I do." The young woman stood by her side, took hold of her hand, and they gently rose into the air together.

Tracy awoke with a start. She hardly ever remembered a dream, but lying in the darkness, listening to the soft whistle as her slumbering husband blew out each breath, she knew what it was like to be able to fly. She could still feel the joy of soaring higher and higher and the thrill as she swooped, plummeting towards the earth, the rush of cool air against her face.

As had become the norm over the last few months, she didn't wake again until mid-morning, long after Lee had left for work. The sudden redundancy had left her reeling, her career in tatters due to her employers' cost-cutting exercise. For the first few weeks, she'd relentlessly pursued any possible lead to find suitable employment, but despondency had given way to depression, and now she could barely be bothered to get up in the morning.

Sipping her coffee, she thought again about the dream. No one else but the child had been able to fly with her because they didn't think they could. It was a message; to be happy again, she needed to believe that she could be.

"It's so good to see you looking well again, love."

Her mother's face lit up as she hugged her several weeks later.

"Your dad's in his chair, I'll make some tea."

Tracy sighed as she approached her sleeping hero, once a mountain of a man, reduced by emphysema to the waif-like figure slumped against his pillows. The oxygen mask dug into his sagging cheeks a little more as she took his cold hands in hers and he woke, smiling when he saw her.

"I've got some good news, Dad," she told him, her eyes shining. You know I've enjoyed volunteering at the school, and I was considering applying for teacher training, but an agency contacted me this morning. An unexpected vacancy has come up, and I have an interview next week. I can't believe it."

Her father took several shallow breaths, determined to speak. "There you go you see, the power of positive thinking." His watery eyes twinkled with amusement as he squeezed his daughter's hands.

"Did I ever tell you I dreamed once that I could fly?"

DEBBIE BUXTON

THE CENOTAPH

There the grey stone edifice
To honour the fallen stands
Guardian of its Humanity
For the Immortals of this land
Those forgotten without names
Are Letters Forged and Raised
To honour and to educate
Reads an honest written phrase

It does not speak of morality
Of veiled or hidden prize
It marks a day of homage
For those who could not rise
Before the marching music plays
As the lonely widow weeps
Silent stands as trumpet sounds
In taps, full fellowship.

NOEL WINCOTE

BONFIRE LIGHTS

The night is cold, but the excitement is hot
Fires are burning, the Guys on the top
Off goes the fireworks, whoosh how they roar
Into the darkness, see how they soar

Off goes the rocket, off to the moon
Expectation is gathering, but not too soon
Shattering the silence, as it went with a bang
Beautiful colours, all over this land

Up goes another, to the oohs and the ah's
Making a spectacle, of pretty blue stars
Red is the next one, then yellow and white
Sparkling flashes, the flowers of light

Out of the shadows, another explodes
Seeking the heavens in noisy repose
Bright are the lights that fill up the skies
Then they fall silent, in a peaceful demise

NOEL WINCOTE

THE FINAL WORD

It's time for me to say thank you to the readers of Bryn and Friends.

As you will have noticed, this issue contains contributions from my lovely friends Debbie Buxton and Noel Wincote, for which I am sincerely grateful.

It is my usual practice to include something from my own creative writing catalogue, but on this occasion, I have reluctantly had to pass because I am working flat out on the rework of my current work in progress, my second novel and sequel to Another Arbor, which I have titled 'Beach Bombs'.

I am hoping if I work really hard on it, it could be publish-ready by August or early September.

As always, thank you for reading; take care and please remember to always be kind.

BP

THE END