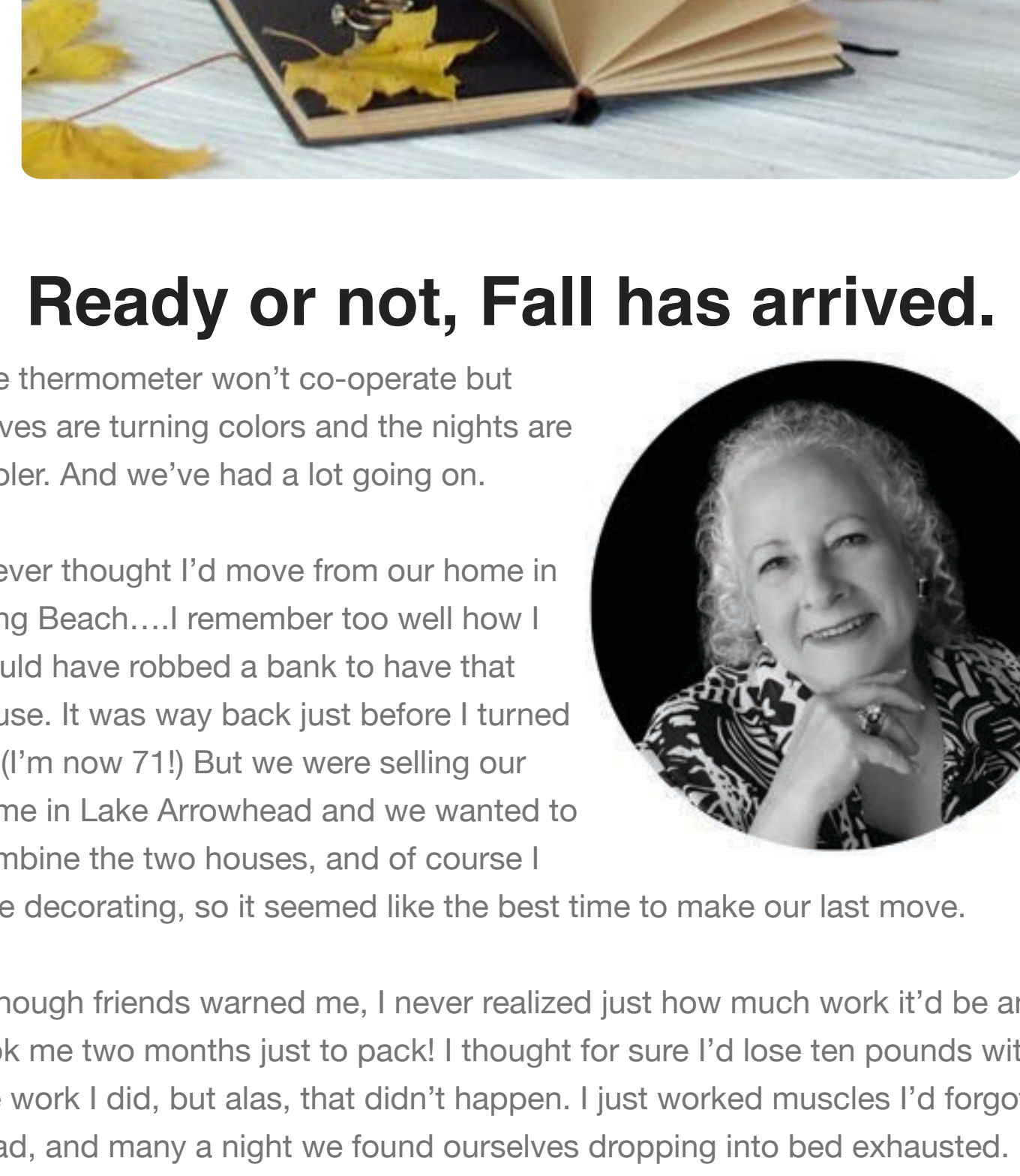


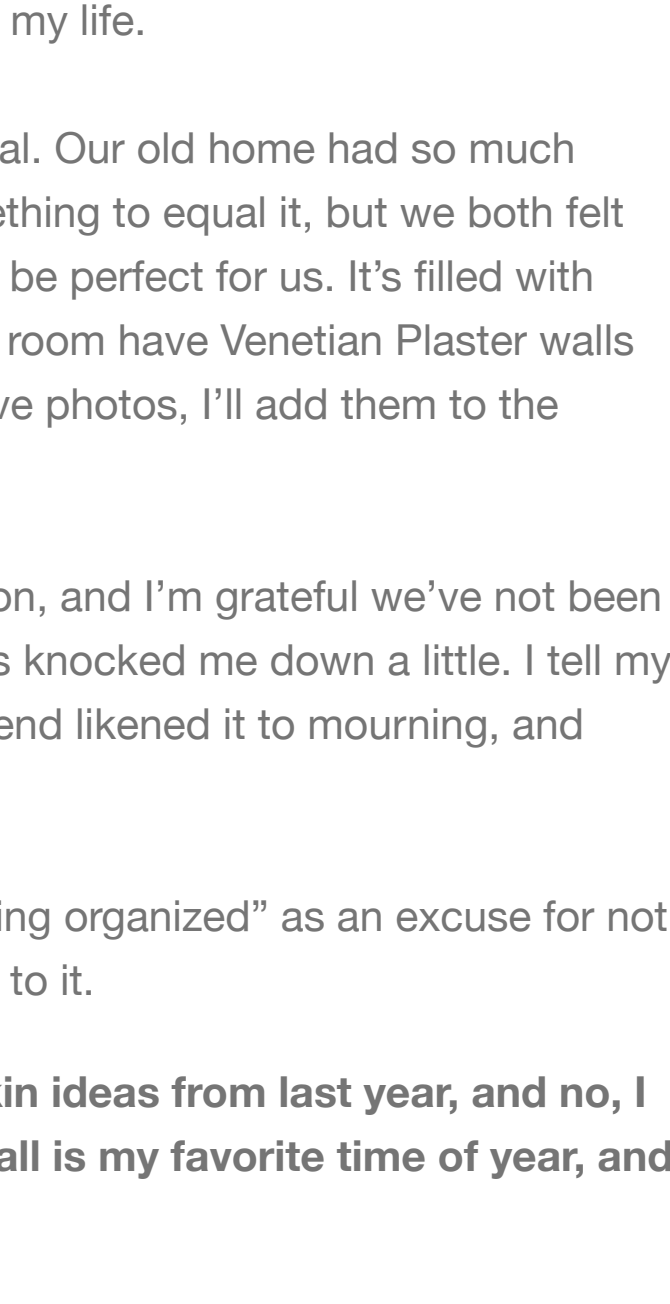
Chrysteen Braun author

Welcome Fall



Ready or not, Fall has arrived.

The thermometer won't co-operate but leaves are turning colors and the nights are cooler. And we've had a lot going on.



I never thought I'd move from our home in Long Beach...I remember too well how I would have robbed a bank to have that house. It was way back just before I turned 40 (I'm now 71!) But we were selling our home in Lake Arrowhead and we wanted to combine the two houses, and of course I love decorating, so it seemed like the best time to make our last move.

Although friends warned me, I never realized just how much work it'd be and it took me two months just to pack! I thought for sure I'd lose ten pounds with all the work I did, but alas, that didn't happen. I just worked muscles I'd forgotten I had, and many a night we found ourselves dropping into bed exhausted.

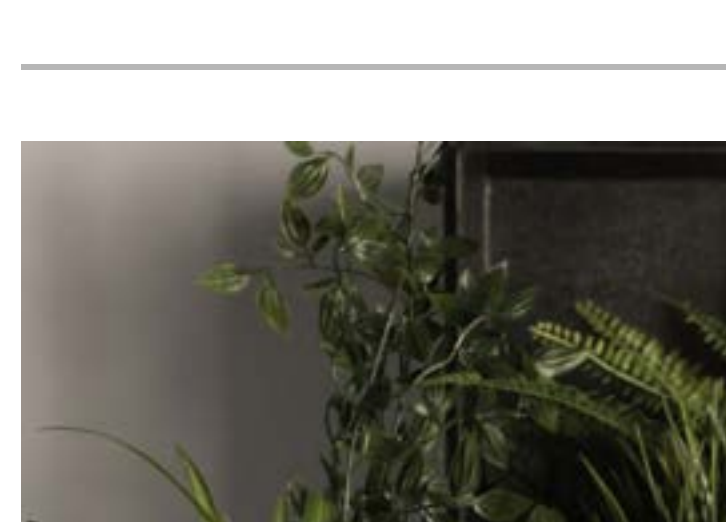
I've always loved decorating, hence my career in design and remodeling, and I've also always been interested to see where people live. So I've added photos of our home before it sold, and if you'd like, check out my website, chrysteenbraun.com and get a glimpse into my life.

Our new home is what I call Spanish Colonial. Our old home had so much character, we thought we'd never find something to equal it, but we both felt as we stepped into it, this new home would be perfect for us. It's filled with color and the dining room, library and living room have Venetian Plaster walls and hand painted ceilings. As soon as I have photos, I'll add them to the website and let you know.

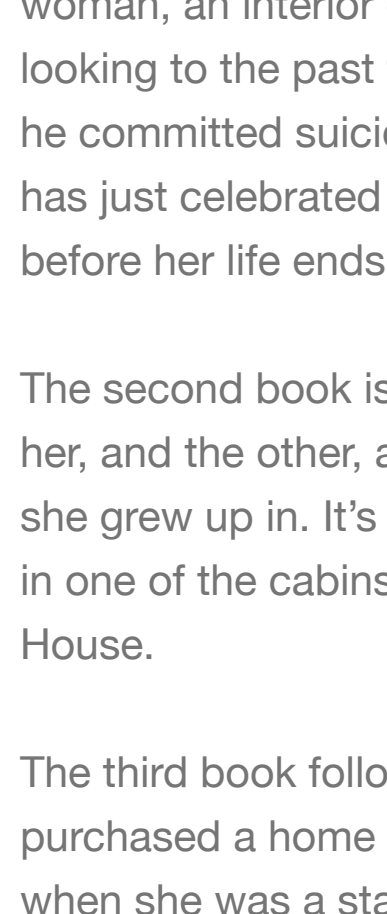
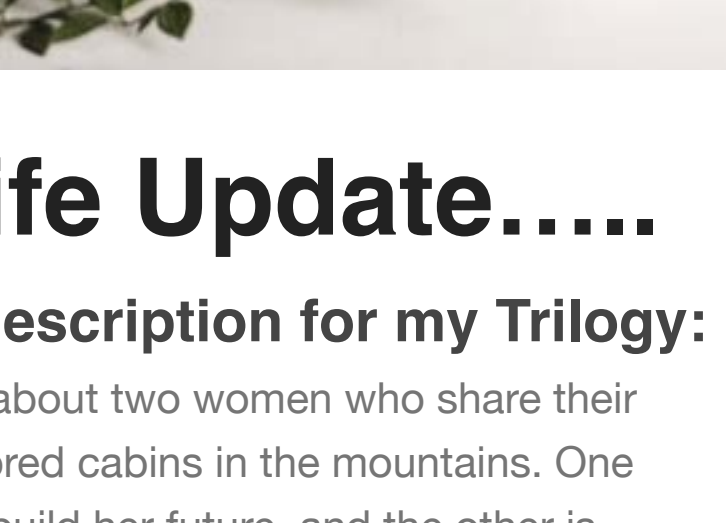
I've always been an upbeat motivated person, and I'm grateful we've not been sick, but I'll have to admit that Covid-19 has knocked me down a little. I tell my husband I need to find my Mojo again. A friend likened it to mourning, and when I thought about it, she was right.

But we're now settled, and I can't use "getting organized" as an excuse for not working on my writing. So I'm getting back to it.

In the meantime, I've saved these pumpkin ideas from last year, and no, I never tried them but hopefully you will. Fall is my favorite time of year, and I'm hoping it is for you too.

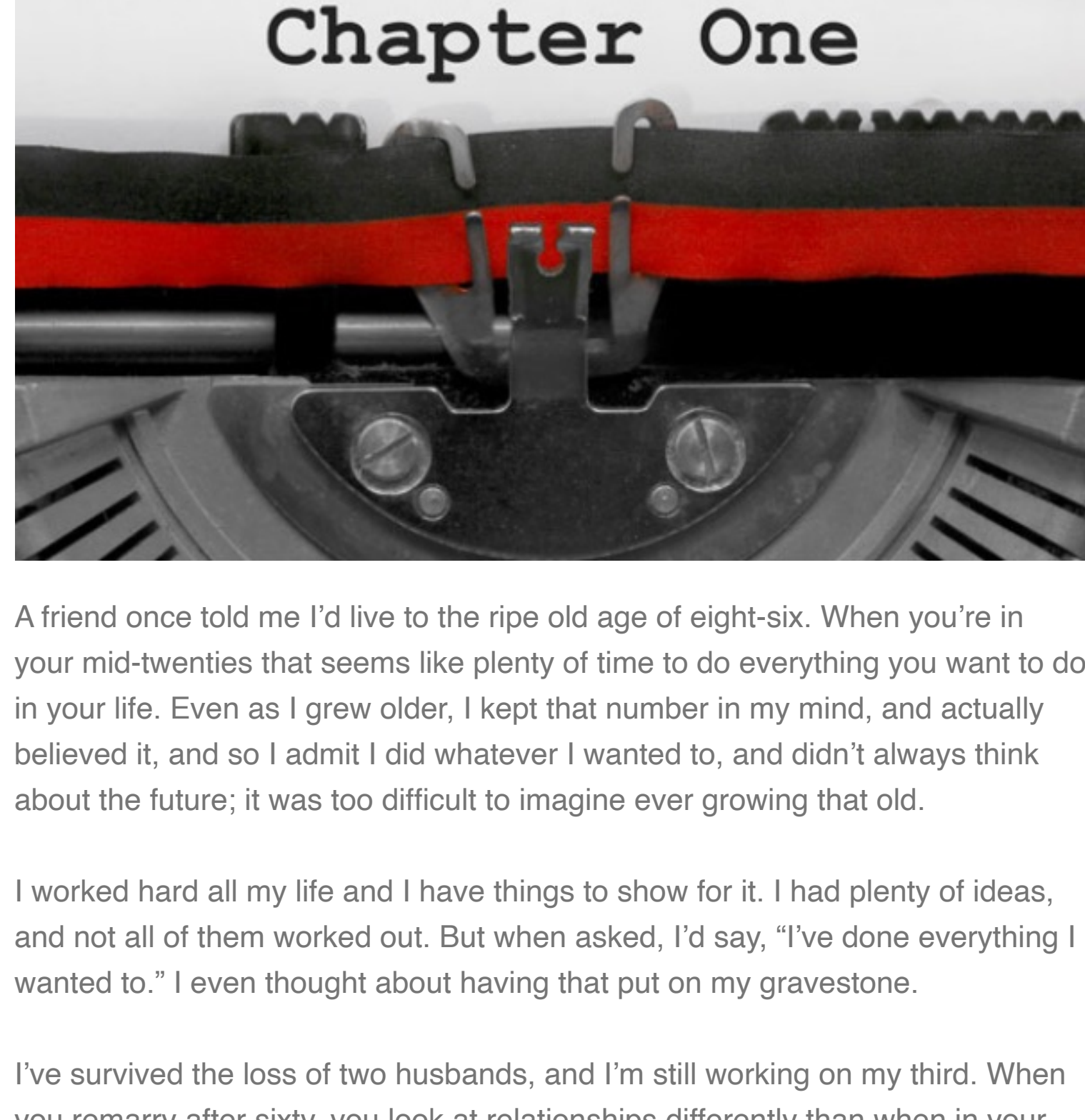


We've sold our store, At The Cabin, in Skyforest (Lake Arrowhead) and while I'm ready for the next chapter in my life (no pun intended) I do miss buying for it. I should probably change that to I was addicted to buying for it, and it's taken me awhile to stop thinking of things to buy! What's been interesting, and encouraging, is that a couple of people in our new neighborhood, who also have homes in Lake Arrowhead, remember shopping in the store and one man said, "My wife loved your store!" I can't think of a greater complement than that. So thanks to you, too, if you came in when you were up there.



A lot of businesses have had a rough time this year, one of them being independent book stores. I came across this [article](#) on how those of us who love to read can do our part to keep these stores going until we can finally get back to what we remember as normal.

Take care of yourself and those you love. Fondly, Chrysteen



The Writing Life Update.....

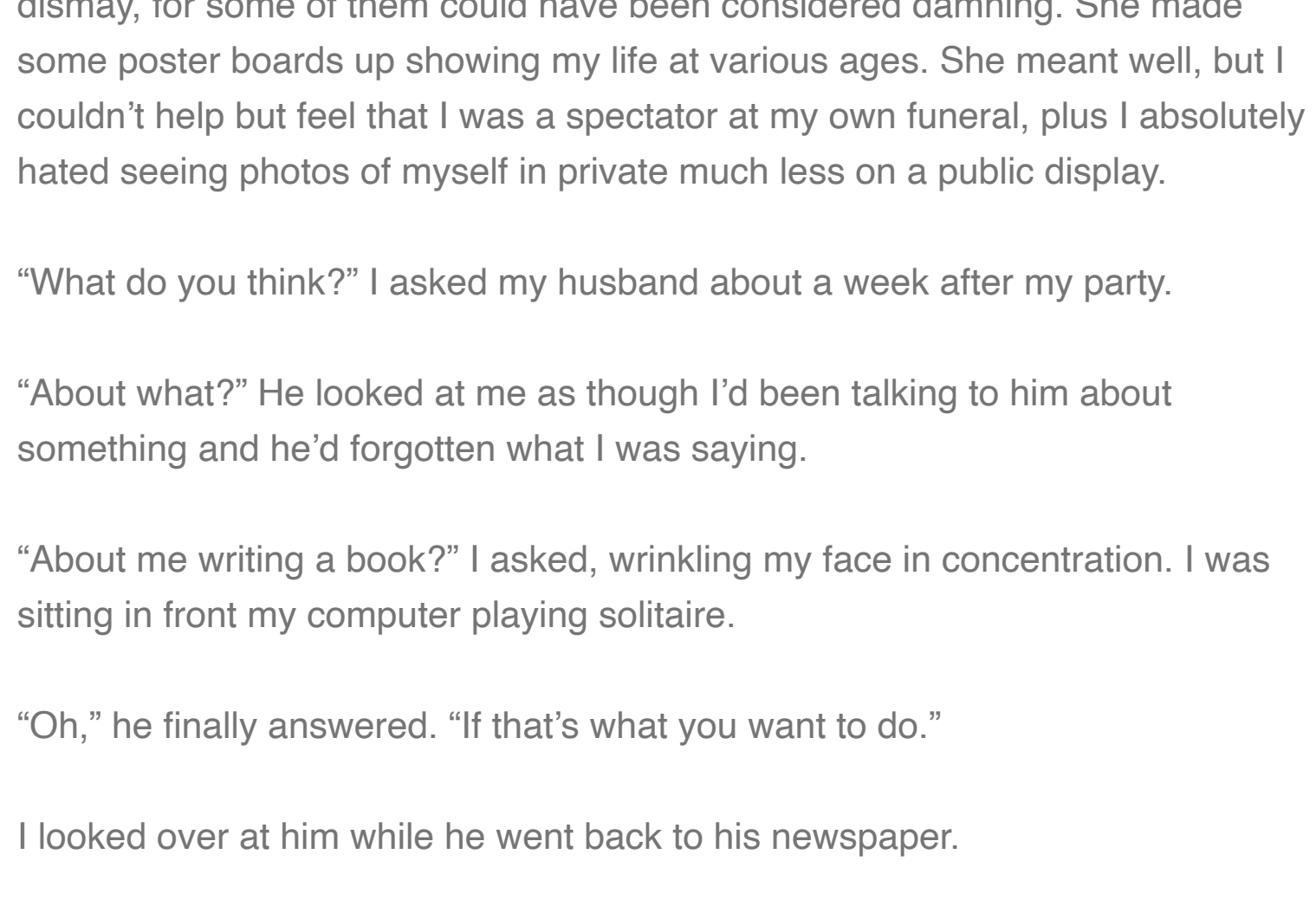
I've finally come up with a description for my Trilogy:

Book Number One is at my Editor's. It's about two women who share their stories and they revolve around the restored cabins in the mountains. One woman, an interior designer, is trying to build her future, and the other is looking to the past for closure. Her father stayed in one of the cabins the night he committed suicide. The narrator in all three books is a woman, Annie, who has just celebrated her 80th birthday and feels she has three stories to tell before her life ends.

The second book is also about two women; Annie, has put her divorce behind her, and the other, a new design client, has inherited the beloved lake house she grew up in. It's her grandmother's story that is so intriguing and she stayed in one of the cabins in the late 1920's, when she was a madam at the Tudor House.

The third book follows Annie but this time a gentleman client who has just purchased a home in the mountains learns his mother stayed in the cabins when she was a starlet also in the late 20's.

Here's the beginning of the first book.



A friend once told me I'd live to the ripe old age of eight-six. When you're in your mid-twenties that seems like plenty of time to do everything you want to do in your life. Even as I grew older, I kept that number in my mind, and actually believed it, and so I admit I did whatever I wanted to, and didn't always think about the future; it was too difficult to imagine ever growing that old.

I worked hard all my life and I have things to show for it. I had plenty of ideas, and wanted to do them worked out. But when asked, I'd say, "I've done everything I wanted to." I even thought about having that put on my gravestone.

I've survived the loss of two husbands, and I'm still working on my third. When you remarry after sixty, you look at relationships differently than when in your youth. You tend to over look a lot of the things that were so important when you were younger. Body parts have shifted for us both. I have saggy breasts, and he has little breasts too. We both have gray hair, everywhere. His legs have gotten slimmer over the years; mine have orange peeled more. We both have sagging upper arms; his from losing muscle mass, me from being overweight. We both have crepey skin, but mine bothers me more than his does him.

He's a terrific guy and while he's a little younger than I am, he has different issues than I do. His prostate gives him problems, and yet he has managed to live with the impact that's made on his life and ours. He's kept his Diabetes under control. Not so surprisingly, I have Diabetes. Neuropathy in my feet, and in fact have lost part of my smallest right toe. I have high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and have had two stents put in my chest.

But other than that, I'm in good shape.

If I take it easy, I can do just about anything I want to.

You know how when people hear your life stories, they say, "You should write a book." I suppose that means some of my stories have actually been interesting and lately, I've been thinking about *writing* that book. While I can't always remember what I had for dinner last night, I can remember things that happened to me over my lifetime, and I've also been known to embellish a little here and there.

I've just passed my eightieth birthday, thank God, and as much as I swore I hated the idea of a party, my family and friends had one for me anyway....and I ended up having the best time ever. People I hadn't seen for years surprised me by coming, and of course talking with them brought up a lot of old memories. Some weren't the best, but most were recalled with fondness.

Like when the Helms Bakery truck came through the neighborhood and the moment we saw it stop down the street, we'd rush to our mother to ask for enough money to buy a brownie. We'd wait, almost jumping in anticipation, until that long, wooden drawer rolled out revealing all the goodies we had to choose from. I always chose the brownie, for it was pre-cut into squares and covered in a thin chocolate glaze. Sometimes, if I had enough money in my pocket, I'd get two and hide the second one in a napkin for later. I've never had brownies like those since.

My old friend Sarah from school was there, and memories of her terrible home life flooded back to me. One of my step children from my first marriage was there; sweet William. He was an old man now too, only ten years younger than me, although he looked *much* younger. He reminded me so much of David, I was shocked when I first saw him; he had that 'forever youthful' look about him. I hadn't seen him in ages and we had a lot of catching up to do.

My husband's daughter managed to go through my old photos, much to my dismay, for some of them could have been considered damning. She made some poster boards up showing my life at various ages. She meant well, but I couldn't help but feel that I was a spectator at my own funeral, plus I absolutely hated seeing photos of myself in private much less on a public display.

"What do you think?" I asked my husband about a week after my party.

"About what?" He looked at me as though I'd been talking to him about something and he'd forgotten what I was saying.

"About me writing a book?" I asked, wrinkling my face in concentration. I was sitting in front my computer playing solitaire.

"Oh," he finally answered. "If that's what you want to do."

I looked over at him while he went back to his newspaper.

"Well, that doesn't sound too convincing," I said.

"Annie, I think you should do whatever it is you want to."

"Do you think my life is that interesting?" I asked, knowing what answer I was hoping for.

"Of course I do. Just don't put in any sex scenes. They could be embarrassing." And he went back to his paper.

So there you have it. I've decided to write a book.

'Now I'll have to figure out what I want to write about first, and then get started.' I said to myself.

I pulled down a few of my favorite books to see how *they'd* started. I hadn't ever really thought about it. How a book started, I mean. I was sure there was some sort of art about writing, but I didn't have time to learn if I wanted to get anything written before it was too late.

So I started at the beginning.....or at least to the memories that my mind took me.

I'd love to know what you think. Are you interested in reading more? What about my voice? My writing style? Please email me your thoughts.

For some reason I don't always follow the trend of reading just the newest books out, but instead pick out books I think I'll like. Plus I must have at least a hundred books that I haven't read yet in my bookcase! My bucket list includes reading them all!

Here are a few I've just recently read:

Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil by John Berendt

I read this a long time ago, but I'd forgotten why I liked it. I realized I wanted to get an idea how the author seamlessly went from one character to another to tell this true story. It was very well done.

The Big House by George Howe Colt

This is about memories of an old family home and how the author recalled family members from his youth.

Little Giant of Aberdeen County by Tiffany Baker

This was a different kind of story about a young girl with an unusual disease that made her grow large.

Island Girl by Lynda Simmons

This is a story about a mother who is struggling to keep her memory. She has two daughters and the story is told from three points of view.

Falling Leaves by Adeline Yen Mah

This is a true story of a girl born into a wealthy Chinese family who in spite of all odds comes to America (Orange County) and becomes a doctor.

The Senator's Wife by Sue Miller

Told from two points of view, this is a story about a young wife and mother to be who moves with her husband, next door to a Senator's wife. The Senator's wife shares her life which includes enduring her husband's infidelities.

As I've said before, if you're interested in following my writing journey, all you have to do is "nothing". If you know anyone who might be interested in reading my books, please let me know and I'll add them to my email list. If however, you'd like to unsubscribe, please feel free to do so.

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