

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Writing Prompt: True Wealth

Charity Hume · Wednesday, May 14th, 2014

This week's writing prompt from Charity Hume: true wealth.

Who were the people who made you who you are? Was there a teacher, a neighbor, someone in your family, who said something to you and helped you find your path? Was there a companion in a time of uncertainty?

When I was ten years old, my guitar teacher, Mary Miner, became a weekly source of wisdom for me. In our lessons, she wrote out songs and chord diagrams with meticulous print. Gradually, our visits included her advice, her wisdom, her guidance with hundreds of small questions I needed to resolve with someone I truly could trust. Our friendship lasted forty years, until her death a few years ago. All over America, hundreds of her students feel somewhat "related," because of the shared memories we have of our beloved teacher. She was famous in her New York neighborhood for the yearly "hootenanies," guitar fests where scores of students performed their tunes and took breaks for a mountain of munchies that truly appealed to kids: party franks, M&Ms, bowls of pistachio nuts. When I think of the influence and lasting memories she created with her laughter, perspective, and attention, I realize the value of her presence in my life. How lucky I was to have known her.

Make a scrapbook, either in a computer document, or by using a notebook. On each page write the name of a different person. If possible, find or create an image of the person you are describing and paste it under the name. If you don't have an image, skip that phase and go straight to the following: Be free and think about people who've given you something important through the example of their words, their actions, their artistic and human legacy. Later on, you can include anyone particularly inspiring from public life, but begin by thinking of people you know personally who have helped you better understand your true nature, your purpose, your potential, or your dreams. Allow yourself to be forgiving if there are few people who come to mind at first, and be happy if there are many. Give yourself permission to recollect the words, phrases, physical details and memories that give you this "charge" of happiness, centering, or understanding and write them below the pictures. The points of connection, contact, and communication with individuals throughout your life will begin to come to you. As you mine your mind for the treasures you've buried within for so many years, you will discover your true wealth. Dig.



"Nurse Reading to a Little Girl," (1895) by Mary Cassatt, courtesy of Wikipaintings

This entry was posted on Wednesday, May 14th, 2014 at 9:12 am and is filed under [Theatre](#), [Fiction](#),

Poetry, Visual Art

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