

Wild Flower

GROW INSPIRED

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Cats and Dogs

First, I apologize for how late this *Wild Flower* is in getting to you. August is always a busy month for me, but this month was especially packed with extra work and travel! Thanks for your patience.

There's this so-called debate over having a cat for a pet versus a dog. Many people, including me, have both types of pets, and like them both, but does one species edge a little higher in favor? Maybe? It depends upon whom you ask.

My very first pet was Misty, a gray tabby kitten given to me for Christmas by my parents when I was eight years old. I loved this kitty, but after only a month or two, she slipped out the front door, and we never saw her again. I was pretty inconsolable for a while: it was just unnerving not to have closure about what had happened to her (for the record, we were not living in an area populated by coyotes). Eventually I settled upon the belief that Misty had been adopted by another kind girl like me and was living a good life.

After Misty, we adopted a stray cat that had befriended my friend's grandma at her place of business (a mortuary, not that it matters). I called her Princess. This kitty was the most beautiful dilute calico cat you've ever seen. People would compliment her coat upon first meeting her. She had these swaths of fur the color of butterscotch candy. And other parts that looked like chocolate ice cream next to vanilla ice cream. She was the sweetest kitty, and she'd previously given birth, so she was extra gentle and patient. She wanted to sit in my lap anytime I sat down, or if I was asleep in my bed, she wanted to curl up next to me.

When I was 11 years old, my parents agreed to let me choose a puppy out of a litter from my uncle's dog. This puppy was a pure-bred black Cocker Spaniel, and I named her Abby.

She was a typically high-strung Cocker who barked at every door knock and was completely insane on a leash. But I loved her. She was obsessed with tennis balls—she loved fetching and hoarding them. Fast forward about fifteen years, and we were married but hadn't started our family yet. We had a few different cats—no dogs—but the feline that lasted the longest was Pito ("El Guapito"), an all-black domestic shorthair. Pito was an expert at catching flies and balancing up high in the most extreme places.

"Princess was the most beautiful dilute calico cat you've ever seen."



Princess the dilute calico kitty, circa 1987.



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Later, we moved into a house and had two kids under age two. Just like Misty, Pito had slipped out the front door just a few months after we moved in and was never seen again. Long story short, I ended up rescuing an 18-month-old “Jack Chi” that we named Summer, because we found her on June 21, the first day of summer. Summer was a dog with many quirks, but she was protective and I never worried about her around my small children. She was quite photogenic, too, with her blue eyes. Summer was “my” dog from 2010-2024, when I had to put her down due to her health—which was super hard. During those years, there was a time when we had our dog, two cats (Holly the orange tabby joined Pito II),



two bunnies, a gecko and a backyard tortoise. It was quite a zoo.

These days, we're down to just Pito II and the outside bunnies, and oh yes, the tortoise, who makes brief appearances between hibernation. Though my kids protest, I haven't yet been inspired to replace my dog of 14 years. I'm in a cat era, it seems, where he comes and goes and doesn't need me too much, but is always good for a chin scratch. He's quiet, too. Unless he hasn't been fed his third breakfast.

What about you? Dog or cat? Or both or neither? This month I'm featuring my college pal Angela, who is super talented and has a knack for connecting with others. I hope you enjoy my interview with her. ♡



Inspiration: Poetry

One or the Other

Kristen DeAnn

When I visit a friend
Whose beautiful, furry
Excited, jumpy, waggy
Enthusiastic, large
Mouth-breathing
Dog
Greets me
With wet nose
And solid poochness
Squirming in glee
Up against me
So that I lose my balance
It's then—in that moment—
That I think fondly
Of Cat

Who needs me not
Except for food
Who slinks silently
Around the house
From nap to nap
Curled
On blankets, beds
Beanbag chairs, and hoodies
Tucked deep into the
Towel cabinet
Or wound tightly
Upon a dining chair
Secreted under the tablecloth
Appearing daily at 4 pm
On my desk in the office
Walking past and onto my bookcase
To stare sagely at me
To Make Known His Presence
He taps me lightly
With a paw
If I ignore him, taps a claw
This savage, shrewd specter
Such a silky, velvet creature
Singularly dominant
I'll take you any day

*WildFlower is a monthly publication
featuring writing, interviews, stories,
designs, observations, recommendations,
encouragement and reflections on faith
and creativity.*

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otherwise credited.*

The Performers

Melissa Rutland

Ever so strangely when the curtain falls
The show begins
They come one by one ever so
mysteriously
Right on cue
And oh how they perform consistently
Night after night
Never any practice, never any mistakes
The audience raves
But no sooner than the show began
The curtain rises and the spotlight
shines
The performers fade
Until the next show begins.

*Honorable Mention, Lawrence County High
Microcosm, April 1993*

*Microcosm is the student literary publication of
Coppiah-Lincoln [Mississippi] Junior College -*

Humanities Division. April 1993, v. 20

Spotlight on Author Angela Dolbear

Where did you find inspiration for creativity when you were younger, and where do you find it now?

I've always had a vivid imagination. When I was little, I created stories and adventures for my Barbie dolls. They got to date my older brother's G.I. Joe dolls—um—action figures, which, back then (in the 70's) were the perfect height for a Barbie love-interest.

Now, all my inspiration comes from my relationship with God. As one of His believers for over 34 years, I have learned a great deal about love and other driving aspects of life, which I incorporate into my writing to encourage and/or move my readers and listeners.



Angela is a singer/songwriter at heart and has loved music her entire life

What sorts of things inspire you in the everyday?

Nature feeds my creativity.

For the past six years, I have lived in the hilly suburban part of Nashville, TN, which exhibits all four seasons every year. I was born and raised in Southern California, so watching the super dense vibrant green foliage turn gold

and red, then shed to silvery gray branches, and then, after a time, sprout tiny green buds, is an amazing wonder to me every year. Growing things and animals, which all come from God, bring me peace. He is so good.

What are some projects you're working on currently? Please describe some of your hobbies.

I just completed the first draft of my fifth novel, *The Mid-Century Breakfast Club*. As Stephen King suggested in his book, *On Writing*, I have put the draft away for two weeks before I start editing it. During the two-week novel hiatus, I plan to finish my "Vintage Barbie Pool Party" diorama. Building the backyard scene for my vintage 1973 Barbie pool has been my "Sabbath Time" activity on Sunday afternoons. I love creating things, so gluing tiny bricks in a landscape design around the "grass" of Barbie's backyard has been so relaxing.

Do you have projects and interests in more than one type of artistic expression? (writing and music, for example, or dance or baking...do you collect anything?)

I'm a singer/songwriter at heart. I have loved music my whole life. There are always a few melody and lyric ideas playing in my head that are waiting to be written down and recorded. And then there are always more stories to write.

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Angela's Roasted Romas With Pasta

Ingredients:

6-8 ripe Roma tomatoes
10 fresh sweet basil leaves
2 Tbsp. olive oil
1 tsp garlic powder
Salt and pepper to taste

6 oz. pasta of your choice (my fave is Rao's Linguine), save a ½ cup of pasta water
4 oz. Grated Parmesan cheese
2 pats of butter (optional, they make the sauce more creamy)
2 Tbsp. white wine (optional)

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Cube the tomatoes and toss them in the olive oil. Add 4-5 basil leaves, and add salt and pepper to taste. Pour the tomato mixture into a roasting pan or cast-iron skillet. Bake in the oven for 30 minutes. Boil 6 cups of water. Drizzle olive oil in the water and sprinkle with salt to enhance the pasta's flavor and to prevent it from sticking together. Pour the roasted tomato mixture into a skillet. Scoop pasta into skillet, save ½ cup of pasta water. Cook for 10 minutes on low. Add butter and wine. Slowly add in Parmesan cheese, stirring continuously. Add in pasta water until the sauce is the desired consistency. Serve pasta and sprinkle each dish with fresh sweet basil leaves. Since I like to make a meal of this dish, I add a shredded pork loin I had cooked in the crock pot in a mixture of Better Than Bouillon Italian Herbs and my favorite spices. I also served this dish with garlic bread. Yum!

How do you nurture creativity? Is there a spiritual dimension, and how does your faith play a role in how you make space for inspiration in your life?

It's imperative for me to spend half an hour in the morning with God, in gratitude, prayer, and study. After I feed my two dogs and cat, I sit on my couch in my beautiful mid-century home with large windows on all the walls, making it feel like I live in a stylish tree house (I'm super blessed—hence the gratitude!), and talk with God. And I try to be still, and listen, too. I love His voice.

What are you writing/reading/listening to/cooking/growing/knitting these days?

This spring, I planted a garden for the first time in my life. It was amazing to watch the seeds I planted sprout and grow into miniature plants. And then the little plants grew tall and produced vegetables (or fruits) that I could cook up for dinner! I felt like a junior farmer. I have a lot to learn about gardening, like next year I have to get a “cucumber trellis” for better health for the plants. Roma tomatoes are my favorite, so I picked up a couple of sad-looking plants in the sale section at our local Lowe's. After a few weeks of water and sunlight, I had to get stakes to hold up the large plants that were heavy with leaves and little yellow flowers. It was like watching a miracle as those tiny flowers turned into light green balls, which elongated and ripened into bright red, juicy tomatoes.

Gardening has taught me a lot about God's love. Like a plant, if I stay in His light and presence, I will flourish. He provides everything I need to live and grow. I don't need to strive for anything. He waters me with His word. The more time I spend with Him, reading it and taking it in, the more I grow and bear much fruit. Beautiful, useful fruit I can use to serve others (like writing!).

With my bounty of beautiful tomatoes, I created a dish to enjoy their sweet, tangy flavor. Fortunately, the spiritual lessons contained in gardening were not lost on me. It makes me want to pay closer attention to the things going on around me, which I might take for granted or not realize contain lessons from God inherent in them. God's love is everywhere. He's good like that.

What's a place that inspires you, and why that place?

Any place in nature, especially if it is cool, calm, and quiet. Too much stimulus zaps my energy. But I do gain inspiration from traveling. New York City is loud and bustling, but I love the energy and the old architecture. The Rose Reading Room in the main library on Fifth Avenue is one of my favorite places to write. It's so beautiful with its large arched windows and fresco-painted ceiling. No wonder it's a setting in so many films!

Could you please share a favorite artist, album, playlist, or music genre that inspires you and brings you joy?

I've been a big fan of Sarah McLachlan for years. I love that Spotify will make a playlist of her songs for me. I also listen to Andrew Ripp and Crowder. Their music and lyrics help me worship God in a close and loving way.

Can you tell us about a forthcoming book you're writing? What are some links to your stories online?

The first draft of the fourth book in *The Garden Key Tales* series, called *The Mid-Century Breakfast Club*, is now “stewing” in the “drawer” in my computer. When I finished the first draft, I imagined printing it out and then slipping it into my desk drawer with a large binder clip for two weeks.

It's good to have space from a project like that, so I can come back to edit it with a fresh perspective.

All the books in this series are in the women's contemporary fiction genre, and they can be read on their own. But they are much more enjoyable to read in order. I have several short stories and another novel in the paranormal genre called *A Tormentor's Tale*. All these works can be found through my [author page on Amazon](#) or my website, which has links to my music as well, at [AngelaDolbear.com](#).

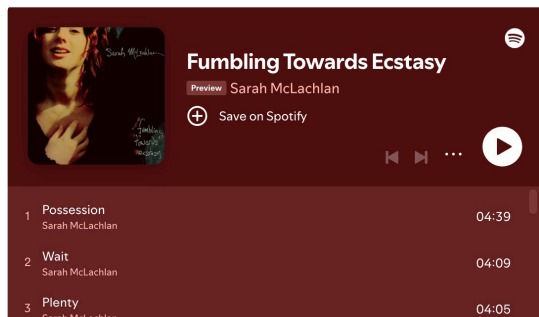
I write a monthly column, called “[Unearthly Thing](#),” for [A Bundle of Thyme Magazine](#), an online publication. Also, I have the privilege of writing a devotional every month for [VineWords.net](#). 🌿

Keep scrolling to read Angela's music and shopping recommendations!



Recommended Listen: Sarah McLachlan

Angela loves listening to Sarah McLachlan, and I second that choice. Listening to this album immediately takes me back to my college days. Sarah's voice is ethereal and haunting, and I've always loved her lyrics. Give her a listen:



I have also become a big fan of the [YouTube channel ASMR Weekly](#), especially the Harry Potter-themed videos. It's surround-sound immersion in a HP scene, with or without music. I love it having it on for concentrated design work. Check it out! ✨



Mid-Century Artist: Donna Mibus

Angela says that when she and her husband Tim first moved into their beautiful 1959 ranch home in Nashville six years ago, she looked to Amazon to help me find all the unique mid-century décor to make her house a home. She bought art from a fantastic mid-century artist, [Donna Mibus](#), who later agreed to help Angela redesign the cover of her books. Now, Donna and Angela are good friends. ✨

Fun: Nordstrom

I'm just going to say it: I love Nordstrom. I first found Nordstrom thanks to Jennifer H. at one of my first jobs working at a PR firm in Irvine. Jennifer once suggested we go and check out the Anniversary Sale at the nearby South Coast Plaza Nordstrom after work. She had previously been an associate, and she knew all things Nordstrom. Well, thank you Jennifer H., for the introduction. I love [BP](#) for my girls, as well as [Caslon](#), and of course the [Nordstrom](#) brand. There isn't enough room to list all my favorites, but I'll mention I still own Nordstrom sandals from 2001 (two pairs, black and taupe) because they are so high quality. Hats, gloves, coats, shoes—you can find it all, and often, surprisingly, at reasonable prices. [Nordstrom.com](#) ✨



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The End: Until Next Time



I hope you've enjoyed this issue of *WildFlower*. I'll be back next month to share an interview with another sweet friend of mine, as well as some original essays, writings, and inspiration. If you'd like to submit content or ideas, please reach out to editor@wildflowerjournal.com. ✨