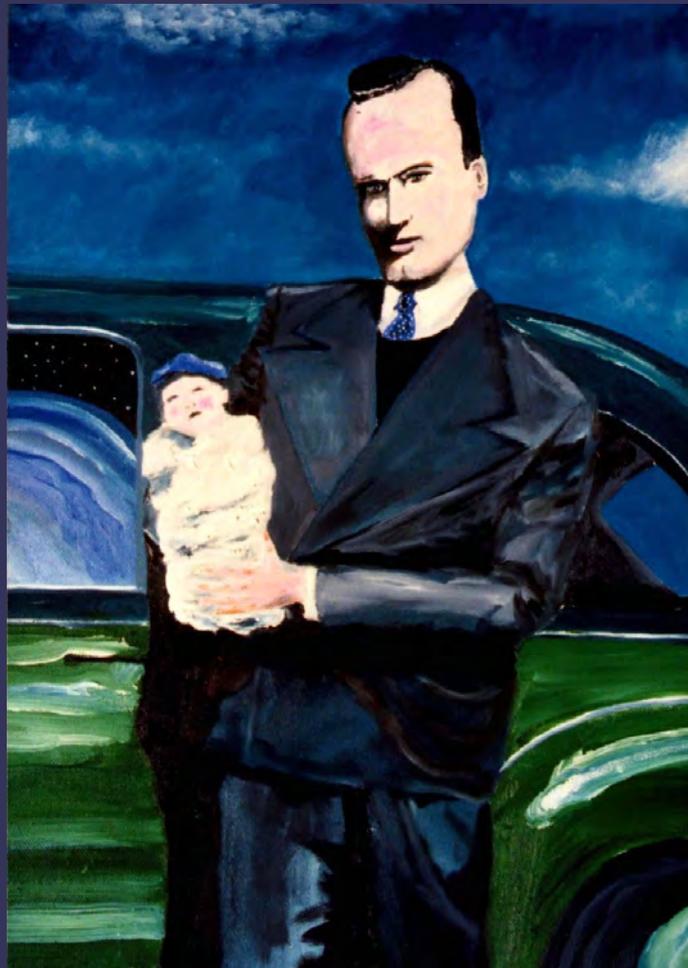


NEW MEXICO MEN'S WELLNESS

MAN ALIVE!



FATHER!

FALL EDITION 2018

WELCOME!

Here we are, on our third digital publication of Man, Alive!

We hope you continue to find these contributions informative, contemplative and enjoyable. We continue to be amazed by the artistry and compassion of the contributions.

The theme for the Fall edition is “Fathers!”, which parallels the theme for the 2018 Men’s Wellness Conference at Ghost Ranch in Abiquiu, New Mexico October 25-28. Hopefully, the fall edition will motivate more of our readers to attend this remarkable gathering.

Fathers...span generations, genders, eras, influence world events and personal development and struggles. In our current world, the need for fatherly wisdom, strength, compassion, gentleness and vulnerability is critical. So it is also that we need the experience, resiliency and wisdom of sons and daughters... Hopefully, the writings, art and photography will serve as a gentle catalyst for all of us to embrace the positive power of the father and the importance of the need to be kind, gentle and strong...

Thank you all again for reading and contributing.

Blessings and love,

Hank



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DAD

Doug Booth

Your scent entered my bedroom every evening.
The unmistakable mixture of crowds in Grand Central,
Sweat from your walk from 70th Street,
Broiled chicken with rosemary nibbled in the kitchen.
The scent of safety and intrigue for me at three,
Redolent of the mysteries and wonders awaiting me.

Sailing to Europe age eight on the SS Flandre,
The universe on a ship!
Movies, swimming pools, gyms, kid's dining room,
Deck chairs for watching the boundless sea spill over the horizon.
You gave me a diary to observe the world and,
Record my impressions.

Arriving in Paris you sent me out to explore,
Providing me with an I.D. card should I get lost,
Instructing whomsoever to take me,
To the US Embassy where we'd meet.
No problem, the world was safe.

But, your world wasn't particularly safe.
Watched your father go insane at six – alone,
Forced to eat your meals in the Lawrenceville infirmary,
“Poor digestion” they said.
Expelled from school,
“Poor grades” they said,
Your stepfather observed,
“You can always do something with your hands, John.”
You were hell-bent to prove him wrong.

You compiled a book of interviews with the world's great stage
actors,
Sir John Gielgud, Lynn Fontaine, Anne Bancroft, Helen Hayes.
I worked the stop switch on your tape recorder,

While you transcribed the tapes, earning the wheels for my soapbox racer.

You founded "TKTS" in Times Square and Leicester Square,
So those of modest means could attend the theater.

My first Broadway show was,
Camelot with the beautiful Julie Andrews, whom you knew,
"Come back-stage, Douglas, and meet her!"
Terrified, I remained frozen in my seat.

Then, guilt and shame crept onto my young, furrowed brow,
Like smoke creeping over a transom.
Not always sure what I'd done wrong,
But, your criticism was devastating, Dad,
Like monsoon clouds approaching,
Clenched jaws, narrowed eyes, stiffened back - steam seeping from
your ears.

And the world froze - there was no escape,
No reprieve. *Must* find some safe-haven or be annihilated.
So, I learned to build fortresses, battlements and moats,
Safe places where I could breathe, protect my heart - survive.

"Talk not to me of blasphemy, man,
I'd strike the sun, if it insulted me." Cried Ahab.
I know Ahab. I see him every day - in the mirror.

Those defenses took a toll.
One must penetrate those walls to find me.

Fled to the west coast, outside Dad's jurisdiction,
Went to law school. Did it my way - "People's College of Law"!
Haven for radicals, dissidents and bomb-throwers,
My kinda place!
Practiced for thirty-seven years,
"Booth Law Offices - "Underdogs 'R' Us! No case too bizarre"

Then two marriages - companionship - delight - joy - love - ah!!

You came to live with us in your last six years,
Three years of contention,
Then three years of peace.

You died with a smile on your face.
Lay in state for two days,
Encircled by a garland of flowers – your smile deepening.

Now at sixty-seven,
I'm still adventuring the world,
Still carrying that chip on my shoulder,
But it's smaller now,
The compassion for you, Dad, comes easier,
As does the compassion for myself,
While I continue to set down the burdens,
I need no longer carry.



My Rock

David River

I walked into your apartment and found you face down, sound asleep. The cat at your feet looks at me with sleepy eyes. “Dad? Dad? ..” I gently touch your shoulder. “Huh?” you say with a start, rising up on your elbows. “Oh, hi kiddo. What’s happening?”

“Hi dad. I have some sad news. It looks like Ellie might be dying. Her daughters just sent me a message. It may be time to say goodbye.”

“Can we see her?”

“Yes, absolutely.”

“Okay, I guess we better.”

Among the greatest challenges you present to the staff at the assisted living apartments – as well as your two “lovely, young” private caregivers – are the daily tasks of taking showers, shaving, brushing your teeth and combing your hair. But in this moment, without saying a word, you swing your feet over the side of the bed, put on your shoes, struggle up with the help of your walker, and go to the bathroom unassisted. With more care and diligence than I have seen in years, you comb your hair, pull your electric shaver over your face and chin, and brush your teeth. As a departure from most moments over the past few years, you remember the task at hand.

“Ready?”

“Ready.”

We slowly walk down the hallway to the elevator and walk across the courtyard to the memory care unit. After your 15-year, unexpected, and wonderful relationship with Ellie, there is no complaining about getting old, or how the walker is in the way, or the pain in your back. You walk with a stoic reverence.

I recently read about the “complete oedipal cycle.” I knew the cartoon outline of the myth that Freud adopted for his theory, in

which the boy has an ambivalent relationship with his father and bonds with his mother. I certainly recognize how I dismissed you as a twelve-year old, soon after I first recognized that you carried weaknesses and faults. I remember the deep disappointment I felt as I witnessed your anger and despair and I resented being cheated of an imagined family happiness. Rather than a rock and superman, I began to see you as a sad and unpleasant man. Though I never had erotic feelings towards my mother (at least that I was aware of), I gravitated towards her and we bonded over our shared struggle to live with your depression.

My journey of forgiveness began in my twenties, when I realized the tremendous sacrifice you made. In a transformation of my own view, I saw that *even in the midst* of your depression and anger, you kept me safe, gave me everything I needed, and supported me as I pursued anything I wanted in my life. What previously seemed like failure became a testament to your dedication and strength. Yes, I suffered with your depression, but you struggled mightily to give me whatever gifts you could manage.

Many years later and many layers down, I remembered the moment as a young teenager when I thought that the family would be better off with you dead. In that moment I wished you would follow through with one of your threats to “end it all”. My anger and disappointment in you as a father was, to a large degree, an attempt to cover up the fact that I had even thought such a thing. An Oedipal moment, to be sure.

When I acknowledged my cruel thoughts and apologized to you (some 20 years after the fact), it was as if the last layer of my previous anger blew away, like dust on an old shelf. What was left was just you and me, complete and present. It is from this calm and quiet place that I have been with you in your elder years, witnessed your loss of memory, and supported you through your various health crises.

We knock at Ellie’s door and her daughters let us in. Ellie is laying in her bed, breathing infrequently, with hard-won, shallow breaths. You sit at the bedside chair, reach out and hold her hand. After a few moments, I watch you lean close to her face and hear you say, “Goodbye my dear sweetheart.”

The complete cycle happens when you fall in love with your father again, this time not as a young child but as an adult. Watching you with Ellie, everything that is great about you floods through my emotions. Unfailing courage and generosity shines through the fog of lost memories and failing physical health. You are the rock that I have always relied on. I have nothing but admiration.

We walk back to your apartment.

You say, "I'm sad," and ask, "Why am I sad?"

"Ellie is dying."

"Can I see her?"

"We just came from there. You said your goodbyes."

"Oh. Then I think it is time for bed."



My Father My Father

Victor LaCerva

In the spring, I helped my 91 year old father die at home in Florida. I basically took care of him 24/7 for three weeks, with some support from hospice. I wrote this shortly afterwards.

I don't so much miss the father I had, but I still mourn the loss of the one I didn't. Let me explain.

My father was an incredibly generous man. I have so many memories of him bringing cookies and snacks to his care providers, the bank folks, and even his mechanic. He gave assistance to anyone needing it, from monthly Smile Train donations, helping repair cleft palates in African children, to the \$1000 he once gave a lab tech that drew his blood, whose daughter had been injured. I remember him emptying his wallet without looking – probably about \$50 – to give one of his ICU nurses money for schoolbooks, as she wheeled him out of the hospital. If he saw someone struggling to pay their grocery bill at checkout, he would offer to pay it for them.

He also had an amazing memory. Ask him about his car and he would start to tell details of the guy who sold it to him 14 years previously. Not just his name, but fragments of that person's life and job. He could recount many of his wartime counterintelligence incidents and Arthur Murray days as if they were yesterday, with the kind of specifics one experiences in a waking dream. He was the family historian, the one who could identify anyone from an old photograph. Details of his time in Australia and his European visits – with his many adopted sons, mothers and family – poured out with great clarity, an ongoing storehouse of comfort for him.

He was a lifelong learner, and no doubt a wonderful entertaining schoolteacher. He loved to be on stage. Many students remained in contact, and spoke of his positive influence on their life

trajectory. He remained multi-lingual to the end, often researching or learning something new every day.



And for 91 years, his computer literacy – a lifeline of connection through e mails and google earth visits to favorite places –was truly remarkable.

Imagine for a moment that you lost your mom at age 2 and your dad at age 12. How would that have changed your life? My father fashioned a pretty good existence for himself, in spite of those early hardships. His elder sister Mickie’s determination to keep the 5 siblings together – and stay deeply connected to three other half sibs– was a great source of resiliency. He often called her “sister momma.” He had a system for everything, which helped him to function so well independently: from how to store plastic bags, to his fridge eat soon shelf, to every Thursday cleaning chores, to keeping the stove light on while it was hot; Whether it was how to wash a fry pan, or carry things up the steps to his condo, he created a sense of order and control. It was when these positive habits became smothering house rules everyone had to follow, because they were the “right” and “efficient” way of doing things, that the fun began.

He could be the most critical, impatient, judgmental narcissistic person I have ever encountered.

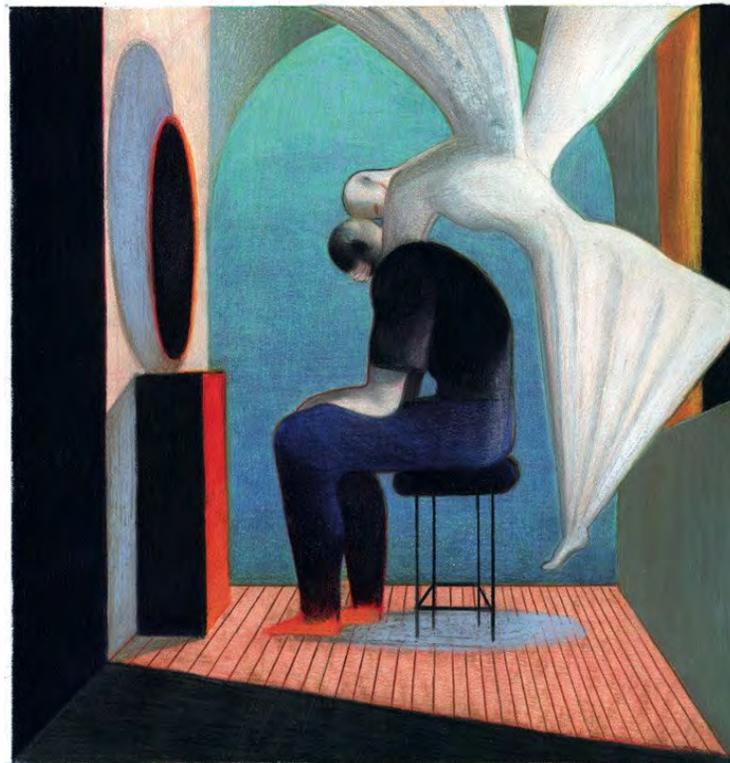
Many friends and family had only brief glimpses into his dark side—certainly not as intimately a view as I had. I remember driving him to my daughter's graduation at Duke, because he no longer wanted to fly. The entire journey to North Carolina and back from Florida he asked me ONE question about my life. When he turned 80 I started to call him every day to check in. He would commonly ask about my daughters on the telephone and immediately, usually after a single sentence, reference whatever I said back to his own life. Time on the phone and even during visits was about him talking and me listening.

There is certainly room for compassion in there, given those early challenges and the poverty that engulfed the family for so many years. But he never quite grew up emotionally – like many men of his generation. He would lash out like a child with a temper tantrum, refuse to “discuss” anything – incapable of working through a conflict – and explode decades-old resentments like live firecrackers. He saw everything from his unresolved lens of abandonment: don't come visit me cause I feel bad when you leave; I won't tell people I have cancer because then they will call me when they hadn't bothered to before. The master of the double bind.

He was a great teacher for me—even when showing me how *not* to be in the world. In his presence, in order to survive, I had to learn patience, to quickly drop into compassion, and to create healthy boundaries for myself. I developed my DING technique: Whenever he made a nasty, judgmental, or critical remark or gesture, or his abusive impatient anger polluted the room, I just said DING silently to myself. Like a rock bouncing off a shield or a finger pointing back at him to remind me it was his stuff and not me. Also like the ringing of a Buddhist awareness bell.

There was so much to admire about the man, and I am grateful for all of his gifts—his love of family, travel, food, music and language, all universal connectors. I once made a list of 100 ways I unconsciously had tried to emulate my father: everything from wearing black socks and not using an electric razor, to speaking

Italian, building a house at the end of the road, and being generous with friends. His ability to “adjust and adapt” as he aged and his determination to have a good death at home were truly inspiring. This is a time for honoring, and appreciating **all** the lessons he provided. Making peace with our parents is ongoing consciousness work, an aspect of masculine wisdom. When we give ourselves the gift of contemplative time, and the space to feel deeply and discover our truth, we can then appreciate their gifts, and heal the wounds we received from them. Like all of us, my father was a being of light and shadow, love and fear, and joy mixed with grief and loss. Rarely did we have any deep, meaningful conversations, or fun travel times together. I usually felt a sense of somehow not living up to what he wanted from me—rather than being affirmed for who I was. I’m sad that there was so much unexplored potential for deeper intimacy between us. So yes, I don’t so much miss the father I had, but I still mourn the loss of the one I didn’t. I try to remember the best forget the rest. I know he attempted to be a loving dad, as I did to be a good son.



Charles E. Cockelreas
1680 95th Ave NE
Salem, OR 97301

I Am Not My Father's Son

My father is the land
and I am the sea.

I am fluid in inevitable motion.
He is solid like a mountain
that cannot be moved, even by faith.

My voice is ripe with the siren's song.
His is the hollow rumble of caves
and the anxious cry of birds
on wind-swept cliffs that fear
for the sanctity of their nests.

Like a weight, he bears down on me.
I shift away like river over stone
and reappear as rain. When I move toward
him, intent on rounding his rough edges,
he rages, spits flame, opens fissures
neither of us can leap across.

In his fury, he splits off great surges
of stone, tries to crush me into a shape
that fits his need for a son. My goal
is only to smooth his surface, to make him
a gentler slope to lean against.

Touching is not our problem. We touch,
but we do not blend. Nor can we ever.
For I am wind and water.
He is earth and fire.

Rainbows

Hank Blackwell

Wherever you go,
however far away it is,
take my love
on your shoulders,
riding,
as I did
down those steep trails
to our fishing place
(the only time I remember embracing you
as a child).

Smelling the cigarette smoke, the sweat,
the canvas vest,
like perfume,
the smell of a father
to a son.

Wherever you go,
cast away your silent desperation
like a dry fly, into the current.

I will probably walk those trails
when you are gone...
crying, remembering how you were
during those magical times.
I felt your body move as it carried me
down to the river.
You, in search of trout,
me, hoping the trail
would never end.

You will die a stranger to me,
unable to attend to my desires
as a son.

I wished you could have been as gentle with me
as you were
when tying a fisherman's knot to the hook.

Perhaps I don't go fishing now because I fear
the intrusion of those trips we made,
or confusing fragmented memories of them...

the two of us
down that steep, rocky trail,
you fishing for trout,
me...for you.

I hoped often that you would look my way
and leave the rod,
the line and little fly,
and reel me in.

When you go even as a stranger,
I will hold those few trips
Like rainbows, in my little creel;
And I will remember you,
Carrying me down that trail....



Father

Marc Kolman

Writing about ‘father’ is such a challenging subject. Everyone has a father. Lots of men are fathers. It so happens I’m both. There are many lessons, tools, and insights from my relationship with my father. He died young at 49 of a heart attack. I was 20. One of the most profound lessons I learned from him was grief. I’m a father, a father of daughters. Writing about being a father seems much more interesting and current than writing about my father. I’m also a grandfather as of nine months ago.

A friend of mine recently said that his children didn’t come with instructions. I had a good laugh because I used to joke that mine were born with an instruction book pinned to their butts. Parenting is the biggest and most challenging learning experience because, of course, they don’t come with instructions and there’s not enough help, really good valuable help, available in our culture. We learn from our parents, friends, the media, our partners. When my children were younger, I got a lot out of support groups for parents and for men where we shared our struggles, triumphs, tears, anger, and frustrations. I used to read *Mothering* magazine. Does anyone else remember the ‘terrific twos’? The nuclear family model – two parents, however many children – is tough. It places a lot of responsibility with not enough resource for the challenges of raising a family. As much as I have a vision of and understand the need for alternative models of parenting that provide enough resource to effect substantive change in how we raise our children, I have yet to see any alternatives that seem to provide enough substantive change.

Parenting continues to provide lessons. It’s not possible to do everything right. It’s not possible to know whether what I did was right, or where I made mistakes. I have some ideas about what worked well and what not so well. My children have some different ideas. The balance between encouraging uniqueness and providing effective boundaries and structure has always been tenuous. I used to give my children ‘special time’ in which they got to run the show, tell me what to do, have me take them for treats, play whatever games they chose, or drive the car.

Pretty much anything so long as they didn't hurt themselves or others. The idea was to turn the balance of power so they were in charge. Some of the limitations they pushed up against were from me. On a much larger scale they were learning to push up against societal limitations. This was a huge contradiction to the limitations placed on young people by society, especially for young girls. I used to let them struggle for things, like getting to their mom, or getting away from me. I spent hours listening to them cry. Was I too permissive? Did I need to provide more defined boundaries? I believe that all parents try to do the best they can for their children. Paradoxes. Whatever I do is never enough and, at the same time, whatever I do might just be enough. I can always do things better, and yet, whatever I do is the best I can do at the time.



The Father I Love

Larry Ribnick

The father I love is within the father I know. I believe he is looking for me just as I look for him. I can find him -- know him -- if I can look into myself and discover him there also.

Can I? No! Not "Can I," will I? Who am I if I will not recognize him in me? I am denial. Who am I if I do recognize him in me? I am love.

Now doesn't all that sound hunky-dory? So much for theory. How do I get from here (denial?) to there (love?)? There seems to be an ocean of hurt, misunderstanding, tradition and much more that we've "pissed" between us. Is it possible to fly over that ocean and not smell, taste and choke on it? Or do I have to swim through it, bathing myself in it, cleansing it with my tears to come out of it as a newborn fights out of the placental fluid? I want to fly, but how much will I miss by flying? Is there only the GOAL of getting there, or can I grow tall (seems like I've always wanted to be tall until just recently) and strong and sensitive in the process?

Note: This is still theoretical, since I haven't convinced myself to risk the apathy of my father. He's hardly ever shown interest in me unless I had done something "wrong" or was in trouble. In fact, he was, and is, a man of very few interests -- none of which seems to relate to me. And that may be why I worry about being interesting. If I'm not interesting, I may be like my father whom I've completely rejected. And that again raises the question of whether I will recognize and accept him in me -- a prerequisite to finding the father I love.

Rainbows Revisited

Hank Blackwell

Six decades; sixty orbits
since I had last traveled this rocky trail,
down to the cathedral
where you found peace
and I found you.

Tracing those old footsteps,
aromas of a childhood

Came rushing in,
as powerful as the river below.
Arriving there, where the spring
bubbles from the ground
and pours itself into
the muddy eddies
of the Rio,

I fulfilled a promise,
Carrying you down that trail.
Returning the favor as you
had carried me
so very long ago.

I watched the trout rise in pools
where you had taught me
they would be waiting,
the water, still cold, present, reliable
as it thundered gracefully down canyon.

A small promise to you fulfilled
as your ashes coursed down the spring
into the mighty Rio.

It was at this moment
I realized the meaning
of this promise...
Another loving gift,
from you to me...

A POEM FOR PATER

Rand Lee

Pitty-patter, pity Pater,
Little feet upon the stair;
How can he get any work done
Knowing Baby is out there?

Pitty-patter, pity Pater,
Fatherhood comes with a price;
Growly, scowly, tired and jowly,
Still he must play Mister Nice.

Pitty-patter, pity Pater,
Progeny are rivals, now;
Momma's love is spent on kiddies
And the pets: meow, bow-wow.

Pitty-patter, pity Pater;
Shut the door and growl, "Away!"
When you could your heart be feeding
Playing with your kids today.

Pitty-patter, poor old Pater,
Fatherhood has dimmed your flame.
How could you act any different
When your father did the same?

Pitty-pater, pity Pater,
Wipe away his manly tear;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest.
Happy Father's Day, my dear.

Rain Dancer

Raymond W. Johnson © 2002

My father was a rain dancer.
 He walked between drops,
 Was dry in his daily exchanges,
 In his long dreams
 Lured growth out of everything.

My father would wear a black hat
 Just to evoke Zorro
 From his allies.

And rain followed him
 Up the desert arroyo.

My father would meet me
 Among boulders
 Where we would talk
 About essence and meaning.
 He didn't lecture. He was
 Too shy for that.
 But he would bring the rain
 Down to emphasize a point
 Like death as not a barrier
 But an Opening.

My father encouraged the timid
 Out of their hiding
 And spoke a hush word
 With his presence,
 A presence understood and lifted
 From the smallest particulars of life.

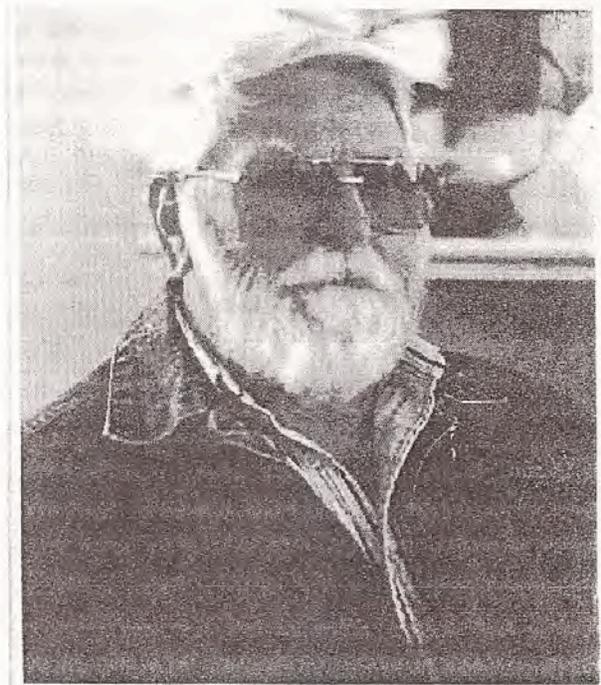
He was a rain dancer
 Without form.
 Ethereal drops would cool the brow
 And set us to wondering
 Why we cry at times with pain

And laugh so buoyantly
 At the drop of a hat
 As when he tweaked reality
 With a smirk, a pun.

There always are people
 Tucked in the corners of the world.
 Who honor rain dancers
 And set up altars in the mind
 To remind them
 Of blessed liquidness,
 An opportunity to be aware.

The rain dancer chooses his time
 To gesture toward the inexplicable
 And precipitate over sand.
 His is a draw toward unity
 Without excess,
 A Lilac leafing,
 A subtle musical fragrance.

My Father the Rain Dancer.



The Rain Dancer

Like father, like son. Is this true for you?

Familiar Face

Hank Blackwell

My father sleeps fitfully,
White whiskers shading his pain.
I am not ready for his face;
I have not earned it yet...



WEB INSIGHTS--DO NOT MISS!

Robots are here! Especially the 12 minute video attached to the article.

https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-human-promise-of-the-ai-revolution-1536935115?emailToken=6d129e840a85e46135de7a0d4f4ecde2hEF/4byPT+c0SeUiPWhnP7LTsBzrmAfBXTOBf8EyNEwf2p0qAnDyD4Dt+8wLchQCpOGw+hvXljQPMp8aavccem+OroUqU+WiU2qR16lvGNo%3D&reflink=article_email_share

The Great Porn Experiment

<http://www.feedtherightwolf.org/2012/05/the-great-porn-experiment-gary-wilson-ted-talks/>

BARNRAISING

This section is intended to hold a place for announcements of relevant events and happenings, as well as invitations for participation, support, in the fashion of pulling your neighbors and loved ones together for an old-fashioned barn-raising.

We are pleased to announce that NMMW has partnered in brotherhood with NMMen (see nmmen.org) to co-sponsor another FREE Bring a Buddy Event on October 1.

Please join us!

Monday evening October 1, 2018 7-9pm

Fruit of the Earth Natural Health

903 Early Street, Santa Fe 87505

Held in the back performance space.

LEAD & FOLLOW

Leader and follower. These words can have particular implications in our culture; those of power, dominance and control or of weakness, passivity and zealot. In other contexts the meaning of leading and following is more fluid. In aikido, the follower is the one who initiates a technique and determines the force of the movement. In traditional Argentine Tango, leaders and followers have particular responsibilities, but when dancing the Spanish word *acompanar*, or to accompany, is used to describe their interactions. In both cases, with practice, the distinction between leading and following blurs to a new inclusive collaboration where both people actively lead and follow at the same time. In this gathering we will be using body centered exercises in dyads to experience ourselves as leaders and followers. The exercises will provide us the opportunity to investigate our thoughts and feelings about what it means to be a leader and follower and reflect on them individually and as a group. No martial arts or dance experience is required.

The intent of these evenings is to offer meaningful explorations of important topics in order to contribute to supporting conscious empowered masculinity. New men are especially welcome to experience what we collectively have to offer in an informal and fun manner. **Please come and make an effort to bring a buddy!**

Questions? Call Victor at 505-983-4233 or by email: heartsonsvittorio@gmail.com

Please show your support for the following event sponsored by NMMW:

What: Women and Men's Wellness Day
When: September 29, 2018 from 9:30am-5:30pm
Where: The Paradiso, 903 Early Street, Santa Fe, NM
Cost: \$30 (no one refused because of finances)
More Info: Vittorio LaCerva at 505-983-4233
or heartsonsvittorio@gmail.com

New Mexico Mens' Wellness Annual Fall Conference:

"FATHER!"

October 25-28, Ghost Ranch, Abiquiu, NM

To read more and register, please go to the web page for the conference at: www.nmmw.org/fall2018

