

Giving Thanks

Posted on Nov 22, Posted by [Lois Lowry](#) Category [Uncategorized](#)

When I was clicking various things to get to this place where I can add a post to my blog, I saw briefly a little headline that said "Study Shows Fetuses Yawn in the Womb" Was this from the Science page of the New York Times? Or was it an ad from a Right-to-Life group? I don't know. Maybe I will look for it again when I am finished here. Who is yawning, and where, is always valuable information to have.

I am thinking about Thanksgivings Past.

When my kids were young and growing up in Maine, we always came down to Massachusetts for Thanksgiving at the home of relatives. Then, returning to Maine at the end of the weekend, we saw car after car coming from the opposite direction with a dead deer strapped on its roof. It was always the end of hunting season in Maine. "Bambi's mother!" the kids would say again and again as those stiff, staring corpses whizzed past us heading south.

In later years there were the many Thanksgiving dinners with huge numbers of people as Martin and I combined families, and grown kids acquired inlaws and eventually children.

I remember a Thanksgiving in Germany...it would have been 1994...when my granddaughter Nadine was just one year old. It would be six months later that her father, my son Grey, was killed. Of course we didn't know then that tragedy lay in the future. What I remember was Grey, who was a great cook, complaining about the smallness of German kitchens..and oven...though he produced a wonderful dinner nonetheless, and among the guests was an unmarried fighter pilot who had just returned from Kosovo, where NATO was carrying out the first airstrikes against the Bosnian Serbs. I remember his describing the complicated situation there...the "ethnic cleansing" (I think it was the first time I had heard the term) and realizing as he talked that sometimes violence can (has to) be a humanitarian response.

I remember an earlier Thanksgiving, in 1989, when a lot of family was gathering at our home on

Beacon Hill, and I had instructed the guests in advance that each of them should write a Thanksgiving poem. But Martin's sister, Edith, died late on the Monday night of that week. In the grief and confusion of Edith's death and the ensuing memorial service, most of the Thanksgiving plans were set aside. But on Thursday I cooked a turkey, and a few people gathered at our house. Suddenly, mid-dinner, grandson Jamie, six years old, said loudly, "When do we say our poems?" Gulp. There were no poems. Except the one that Jamie had written and memorized. He stood proudly in our living room and recited:

THANKSGIVING IS HERE,

AND OUR FAMILY IS NEAR.

SORRY ABOUT YOUR SISTER,

MARTIN DEAR.

I think it remains my favorite Thanksgiving poem ever.

I am waiting now for company to arrive and thinking how thankful I am for many, many things...most especially, perhaps, for those two grandchildren...Nadine, now 19, and Jamie, now called Jay, now 29...and for the two grandchildren born in more recent years. And for friends, including those I had dinner with last night, and many, many others. And for my new skylight, which means that I don't have a gaping hole in my bedroom ceiling anymore. And for my insurance company, which has agreed to pay for all my hurricane/fallen tree damage.

I am thankful that someone once invented the concept of pie.

I am thankful for dogs, and for cats.

And for "Homeland". And the Patriots.

For books. And music.

Amen.

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