

Say Cheese.

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This morning, by appointment, a photographer came to the farm to do a portrait of me. Not a head-and-shoulders smiling photo for a book jacket. But a here-I-am-in-my-milieu portrait to be included in a possible book of Writers in Maine, the proceeds of which would then go to the Maine Writers and Publishers Alliance, to a restricted fund for Maine's independent bookstores to use for author visits, signings, book parties. etc. All in all a good thing. And I for one would buy such a book...not to see myself in it!...but because I love to peek into other people's lives, especially other writers' lives; and because I love photographic portraits, no matter who the subjects are.

I did find myself hoping, before he arrived, that he would not do yet one more here-she-is-in-front-of-her-bookcases pose. I would have been willing to do that if that's what they were looking for. But...whew...they weren't. He wandered around the first floor of my house; and then through the studio, which is separate from the house, and then...YAY!...into the barn. The barn is my favorite place, at least for photographs. The light sifts in with little bits of dust floating in it. The wood is weathered and in some places gnawed by critters of past generations.

Many, many years ago, my great aunt, a photographer back in the early 1900's, did a photograph of a young boy in a barn. He stands in a hayloft, with the light from a window behind him, making him into a silhouette. I don't know the history of the boy or the photo...only its date, 1911. I used that old photograph as one of the illustrations in my book *The Silent Boy*.

This photographer selected an old staircase leading to a loft in my barn, and I sat there on the rickety steps beside a wooden post scarred with toothmarks (horse? cow?) and watched him move the dials of his Hasselblad and remembered fondly the days when I also was a photographer of people and looked for the right light, the right backdrop.

I just found an old photo of the stairs on which I sat this morning, and another of the back entrance to my barn...there is Alfie, looking out. He wouldn't sit with me on the stairs today for a portrait!





Like with several barns where I thought the past might lie.
Tags: Untagged