

AUDACIOUS
WOMEN
FESTIVAL

AUDACIART WEEKLY

Crossing the Line

8 May 2020



Image: Crossing the Line

An Audacious Women Publication



AudaciArt – Crossing the Line

This week's theme, *Crossing the Line*, was suggested by a quote from Shonda Rhimes (TV producer, writer/creator Grey's Anatomy)

You can waste your lives drawing lines. Or you can live your life crossing them.

AudaciArt

Hallo Everybody

Here we are with the 5th AudaciArt publication. This edition is being published on VE Day. Whatever your views on how – or even if – that should be celebrated it's great to have Hilery's contribution about it.

For those of you who haven't come across it before, Audaciart is a weekly collection of words and pictures inspired by a quotation by or about an audacious woman. Women are invited to create and submit any type of creative work inspired by the theme.

Do think about getting involved!

The theme for Friday 15 May @ noon is: **I Reject**
and for Friday 22 May @ Noon it's **The Wall**

Physical Distance – Not Social

During these days of Covid we have all been asked to remain *physically* separate from each other. We at Audacious Women do not believe that this means we need to be *socially* distant. In fact, quite the opposite. Here in lockdown, keeping in touch is more important than ever.

So during this period of physical distancing Audacious Women is running a series of [online events](#) to help build women's community, and to keep in touch with each other and our audacious natures.



Contents

| | |
|-----|--|
| P4 | Crossing the Line : Anonymous |
| P5 | The Spirit of the Games : Jo Cameron Duguid |
| P7 | Crossing Over !! : Anne Conrad |
| P8 | From Dear Old Bidy to Wicked Witch : Hilery Williams |
| P10 | Untitled : Lizzie Ashworth |



Crossing the Line

Anonymous



I was doing an art breathing exercise and the teacher said not to worry about crossing the line. It seemed too coincidental not to send it in for this week's quote.

The breathing is a kind of meditation: *With closed eyes draw one line on an in breath and one on an out breath.*

There are many variations in the way it's done. It's to settle the mind and to make without worrying about what you are producing.

It breaks the tyranny of the blank paper!

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The Spirit of the Games

Jo Cameron Duguid

What do you do when you move to a new country in your mid-fifties, fall in love with it at first sight and are desperate to make sure you can stay there forever? This was the situation I found myself in when I moved to Scotland in February 2007, after twenty five years of the rat race in London. I thought Edinburgh was heaven (I still do) and, for the first few months, lived in fear of a knock at the door in the wee small hours, and some uniformed official telling me I was being deported back to England.

Well, I got myself onto the electoral roll at the earliest opportunity, and registered for council tax and kept my payments up to date. On a less official note, I also set about familiarising myself with Scottish culture - I listened to clarsach music, was whirled around dance floors to the accompaniment of demon fiddlers, and sampled more single malt whiskies than was probably good for me. And then, one June morning, my husband and I made our way to Markinch for our first ever Highland Games.

The morning passed in a blur of tartan, as lone pipers played their sad pibrochs and lads and lassies demonstrated their highland dances. We were intrigued by the running and cycling events, where men and women of all ages competed in the same races, with a 'handicapping' system to give everybody a fair chance. Just before lunchtime, we wandered down to an enclosed grassy area where the pipe band competition was taking place. As we made our way back around the perimeter of the ground, we noticed that members of the public were being invited to take part in some races, with the MC encouraging people to join in 'the spirit of the games'.

We watched a race for teenage girls, where three friends had linked arms and walked in a rather desultory fashion to the finish line together, well behind the evidently less cool competitors who had actually demonstrated a desire to win. An announcement was made that the women's race was next, with 'grannies' to come after that. To begin with, not many women were responding to the call. 'Go on then,' said my husband provocatively. It's true that I have had a love/hate relationship with jogging for much of my adult life. It's also true that I was once overtaken by a one-legged man in Holyrood Park, so I'm not exactly eager to court public humiliation by pitting myself against others in any kind of race.

I still can't explain how it happened but, suddenly, I took my rucksack off my back, thrust it at my husband with a quick, 'Here. Hold that for me, will you?' and ducked under the boundary rope to line up with about 15 other women who had by then come forward. He told me afterwards that he was completely astonished, as he had never expected me to actually do it! Meanwhile, the starter was instructing all those under 20 years of age to stay where they were, and those between 20 and 30 to move forward a few yards. He then asked those who were between 30 and 40 to stand further forward again. He was about to start the race when I, left at the back with some fit looking women young enough to be my daughters, piped up, 'Hang on



a minute! I'm over 50!' Another woman, eyeing me suspiciously, said she was also over 50, so the two of us were brought to the front, and then we were all off!

I thundered towards the finish line like... well, probably like a woman in her fifties who's entirely lacking in athletic talent. I expected the other runners to overtake me within a few strides, but the funny thing was that I was out on my own. And then I made a fatal mistake. I became convinced that I'd misheard the starter and that the others were still standing back at the start, leaving me looking very foolish indeed, so I looked round to see what was happening. At that moment, I was indeed overtaken by several women, but I still managed to cross the line in fifth place! Honestly, I could not have felt more proud of myself if I'd won an Olympic medal! Basking in glory, with hubby even more impressed than when I notched up my second 1st class honours degree, I knew it was the closest I'd ever come to sporting victory.

Afterwards, I had my response ready, should that knock ever come on the door: 'I'll have you know that I've competed in the highland games! Surely I've earned the right to be considered a Scot!' Now, if I can just learn all the words to Auld Lang Syne...

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Crossing Over!!

Anne Conrad



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From Dear Old Bidy to Wicked Witch

Hilery Williams

My neighbours thought I was a sweet little old lady, with my grey hair, walking stick and posh accent. I fitted in well (or so it seemed) in this prestigious part of town with village atmosphere and green spaces in abundance to which I'd recently moved.

My true colours only emerged when an invitation through the ether included a poster from the Pageant Master (no, don't laugh) of the Royal British Legion with a suggestion that we 'get involved' this Friday.

I replied:

I am astonished and, frankly sickened, at the jingoism of the suggested "Celebration" (not even a commemoration) of the 75th anniversary of VE Day.

Vera Lynn? The Queen?? Churchill???

Seriously????

I find the mawkish evocation of 2nd World War metaphors and imagery surrounding this crisis to be abhorrent. The language of war - heroes, medals, Red Arrow fly-pasts - is utterly inappropriate, as is the suggestion that we collectively "celebrate" a "Victory" over our closest neighbours (some of whom may even be next-door neighbours).

To assurances that, *It was just a thought not a particular political, ideological or personal statement or viewpoint. I did not create the poster, I pinged this back - I was on a roll:*

To accept the status quo without question is to be political and ideological.

The modern army of nostalgia mongers cynically and deliberately manipulate some people into accepting the status quo passively. Incurious acceptance is a political and ideological stance, like it or not.

The cynics who are propagating a vision of those terrible six years of the war, in which the predominant flavour is selective amnesia, are consciously attempting to blind us to reality. The VE event is a brash example of this. Comparing the trials of war to the very different crisis we are living through now is beyond cynicism.

So that's a NO from me.

My neighbour clearly is a polite person, who tried hard to smooth things over. She reiterated that her suggestion was motivated purely by a desire to have a social get-together and was in no way political or ideological.



To which I replied:

This unreflective lethargy - this denial of the fact that everything we do has a political component - ensures that the radical changes necessary to improve our society never happen: Café Nero or Di Georgio, Amazon or The Golden Hare, Tesco or Tariq? It's our choice.

Let's by all means get together in community; just not, for me, with bunting and jingoism.

PS I'll bring the scones.

Today I am thinking of the relief and celebration that came with the end of conflict. I am remembering the losses of war, past and present, soldiers and civilians. Peace begins within ourselves, within the family, in our meetings, in our work and leisure, in our own localities, and internationally. Peace is a process to engage in, not a goal to be reached. That's why I wear a white poppy on 11th November.

Oh, and I'm sure the neighbours have noticed that I have ceased to 'Clap for Carers'. I'm putting my energies into actually trying to get a decent wage for them. A round of applause won't buy the week's food.

And that's how I crossed the line, with strokes of a keyboard, from being a dear old biddy to a scolding haggard harridan! Do I care? No.

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Untitled.

There's a space between me and her
where we share affection; where ideas
blossom; where hope dances; where we
walk hand in hand in each other's lives,
not crossing the line to become as one,
but growing together as our own selves.

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