

By The Way

THE JOURNEY OF A WONDERING SOUL

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2019

11 Year Gestation

Moments ago, I stumbled upon a note I scribbled 11 years ago. Dated January 27, 2008, it was in reference to roads and paths and ways, the literal conception of what has now shaped up to be Stories ByTheWay.

Over the course of the last 11 years, I have incubated this concept in my creative womb as I journeyed down various paths toward a destination. I have been trying to find that place, unsure of the way. So I traveled the road in every sense of the word.

I walked. I roamed. I journeyed. I veered. I trudged in weakness and ran in vigor. I ventured up-and down, to-and-fro. I fared. I wandered. I pivoted. Most recently, I whirled.

In desperation, I took her—my baby—down dark and dangerous paths.

Some days I was faithful to nurture her. Others I feared I would lose her to miscarriage. I even had thoughts of aborting.

I've been weighed down with envy, bitterness, resentment, shame, guilt and remorse. But I'm learning that our greatest victories are hidden in some of our deepest miseries.



A LAKE EAST OF YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

So today, I wonder about what will come of her when she is introduced to the world. I have been experiencing excruciating labor pains. And she is well on her way. I wonder if she isn't the next turn on that journey, which will take me closer to that destination. Is she the very thing that will awaken

this Wondering Soul to truth and lead me home?

I want you to be the first to meet her. I plan an official launch to introduce the rest of the world to her when she arrives. But you are invited to join me in welcoming her.

Stories ByTheWay

Since the last issue of my newsletter went out, I have been hard at work trying to secure a website. I encountered some hiccups but I've learned to embrace them, knowing that I simply have to take another route. Delays and detours are one of those unexpected things we experience on our travels ByTheWay.

All that to say, I am excited to announce that I have new turf on which to develop and expand my new business venture. Please visit my [website](#) and explore the various cogs in the wheel of [Stories ByTheWay](#).

What are they?

See page two...

Next Steps

“If you don’t know where you are going, any road will take you there.”

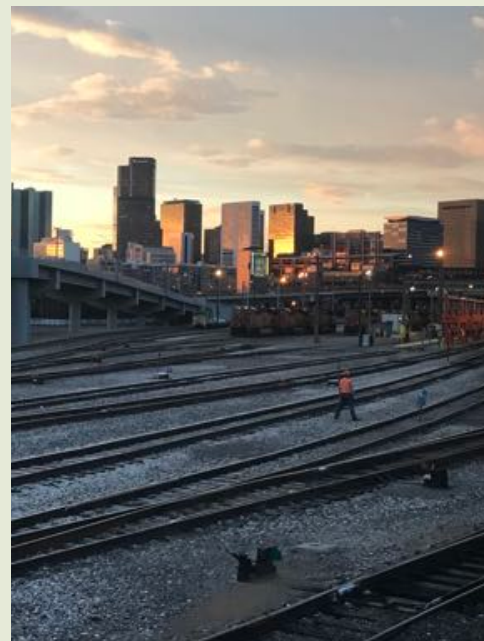
- Lewis Carrol, Alice In Wonderland



A STREET IN NASHVILLE, TN



A FLIGHT OVER FRESNO, CA



A TRAIN DEPOT OUTSIDE OF CHICAGO, IL

As I continue building on this vision, I want to pave out next steps for you in each issue. The purpose is twofold: one, it keeps you in the know and two, it keeps me accountable. As I begin molding my business into branded form, I intend on building upon the foundations I’ve laid for each of the following:

Podcast

Since the last issue of the newsletter, I have been working on the outline for a podcast. I started recording last January and the first three episodes are [available on my website](#). They give you a little inside scoop into how this vision has been developing over the years. Future episodes will highlight the stories of people, businesses and non-profits in the community and their Stories ByTheWay.

These Hands

I created These Hands, a photo project, to capture personal life stories. They are the legacies of Wondering Souls, begging to be told. To view an example, visit [My Hands](#). More stories are coming soon. Connect with the [Facebook page](#) and be on the lookout or those. [Contact Stories ByTheWay](#) if you are interested in having your own story, or that of a loved one recorded.

Music & Poetry ByTheWay

In the months to come, I plan to take my completed songs to the recording studio. As they are recorded, they too, will be made available on my website. Until then, I’ve put a couple of examples up and hope you will [give a listen](#). Next month, I will also be attending my first open mic. Follow

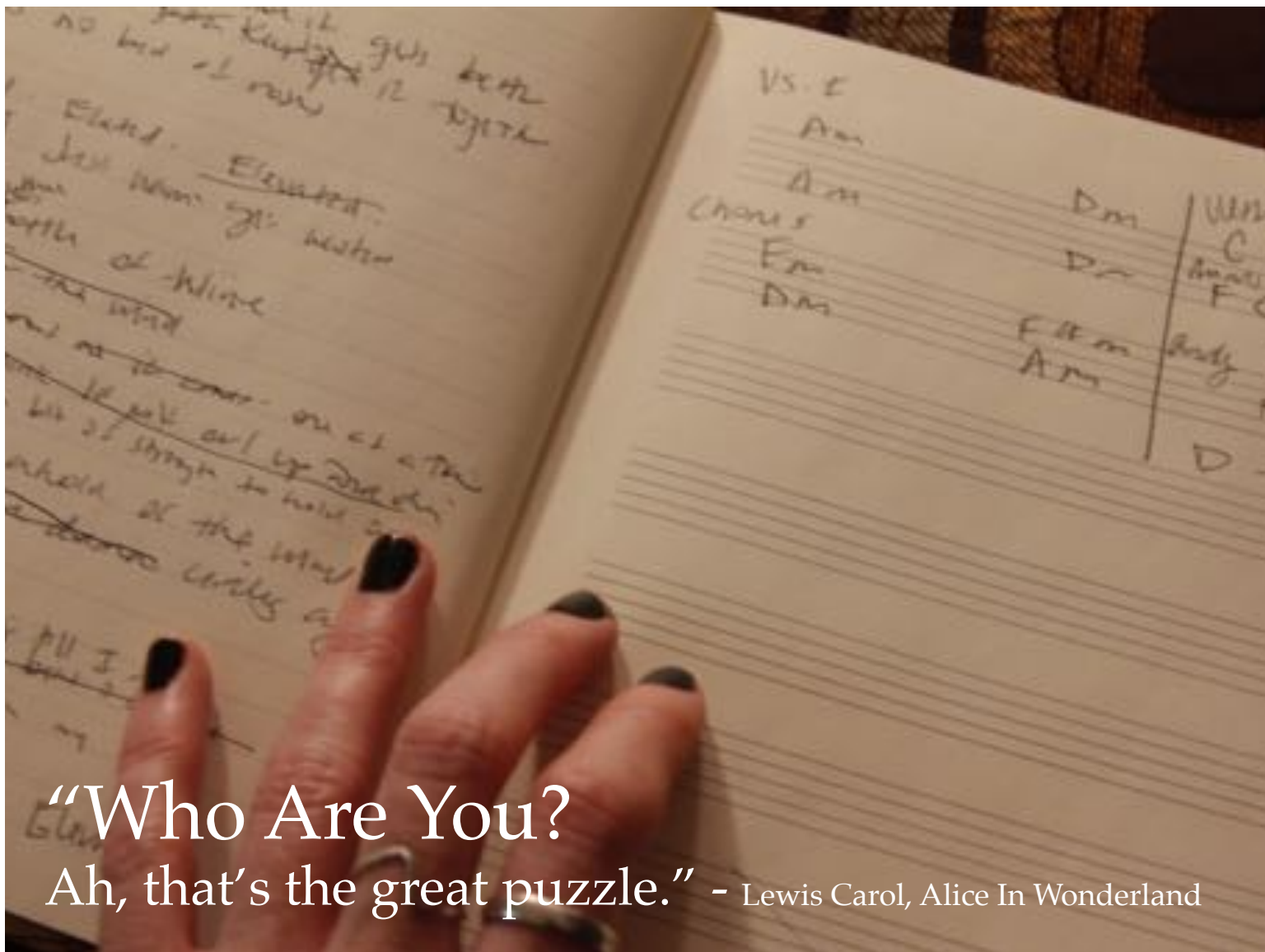
the [Facebook page](#) for future announcements.

Fresno Freelancer

This is the branch of Stories ByTheWay which exists to help local businesses and non-profits meet their marketing goals by telling their stories. Visit [Fresno Freelancer](#) to view an archive of feature stories, blog posts, bios, press releases, photographs, speaking engagements and more. Contact [Fresno Freelancer](#) if you are interested in a consultation.

Workshops ByTheWay

Once my foundation is laid, I plan to begin offering workshops. I am outlining this phase of Stories ByTheWay and hope to launch them at the beginning of next year.



“Who Are You?
Ah, that’s the great puzzle.” - Lewis Carol, Alice In Wonderland

Leah. I’ve spent 36 years getting to know her. She’s observant, sensitive, introspective, creative and though she’s a rule-follower on the outside, there’s a free-spirited gypsy within.

The search for her started way back in 2002 when I stood in front of my dad’s business at the edge of my city. As I looked down the main street to the east, I saw traffic and lights and buildings and billboards. There was a certain kind of invitation that made me feel

that I *belonged* there among the hustle and bustle.

But when I turned my head to the west, I saw open space and dirt, sparse traffic and blue skies. And again, something told me I *belonged* there. I felt an overwhelming mix of emotions.

So I did, what I’ve always done to process my feelings. I wrote. The following lyric ensued:

*Standing here I look to my right
And I can feel the pull of the
sweet city lights.*

*But off to my left, a quiet
country street
Quietly calls to my soul deep
down inside of me.*

*I’m a middle road girl
Feeling lost from within.
A stranger in two worlds
And longing for both of them.*

As the years have passed on, 17 of them to be exact, I’ve come to accept the fact

that the waging battle inside Leah is here to stay. That there are two of her, warring for who she will ultimately be.

So yes, she can write and play music. She loves people and taking pictures. She’s poetic and emotional.

But above all, she’s a Wondering Soul.

Who are you?

Why "Stories ByTheWay?"

When I visualize the journey we are taking through this life, I see paths and ways; I see resting spots and scenic views. I see dangers and passersby.

There are urges along the path we travel to run with haste, invitations to stay and rest a while, road signs suggesting we change route. Sometimes we stop and sometimes we even turn around.

From the bird's-eye view, it's a little chaotic. But our individual experiences help make sense of it all, if we observe them. They are the Stories ByTheWay.

There's also a duplicitous spiritual meaning, in reference to The Way, as we travel through life. The path is dark and rampant with danger. We are in need of light. For me, it's the search for truth.

Lastly since the phrase has already been coined in our language, it has a ring to it that rings "true" for me.

So why was I compelled to begin this journey in the first place? I wanted to get to the bottom of why we are all here. To find out what, if anything, our lives contribute to the big picture. I've felt lost on the journey and I've also felt that I've made progresses. I

know that others have too.

So I set out to explore, first my own story, and now yours, if you'll let me. I find beauty in them all.

We've hashed this out in more detail in the first three episodes of the [podcast](#), if you are interested in hearing more.

Why should someone visit Stories ByTheWay?

Because you are part of a bigger picture. You are not traveling this scary, beautiful journey alone. Stories ByTheWay is a celebration of your unique life and specific journey which intersects fortuitously with others. If you've wandered without a destination, care to swap stories with other sojourners or crave knowledge and understanding, you are part of the vision. Stories ByTheWay serves as a pitstop for broken travelers, a rest stop for the weary and a vista on the journey.

What does Stories ByTheWay say about me, the creator?

I care to be a part of the big picture. I want to illuminate other peoples' stories and expose my own soul in the process. I am a wanderer in search of a destination and a wonderer in search of truth and knowledge. I am only one of the Wondering Souls in history, who has happened upon this Earth only to ask herself why?

About Me



I am on a search for truth. Intrigued by creations and the stories behind them, I look at the world through curious eyes and have a deep sense of wonder. I never

get tired of learning about the mysteries of this planet (and beyond) or the complex life that thrives here.

I show particular interest in melancholy art forms that depict a timeless ache or wistful longing. And I have my own archive of creations in the form of photographs, stories, poetry and songs.

For a glimpse into my Stories ByTheWay, visit www.storiesbytheway.com.

Unless otherwise noted, all verbiage, photographs, music and poetry are property of Stories ByTheWay. When sharing, please credit accordingly.

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A D V E R T I S E M E N T



Ruth's Dolls & Memories

“Rosebud it’s time for you to bloom...

...One by one your petals burst in the rays of the sunlight.”



Giveaway

One of the early lies I chose to believe was that I could never share my music with others. But in laying that lie to rest, I want to explore the reality that I can, as I become truer and truer to myself.

You hold a special place in my heart as the first to stand behind me and my vision. I want to serve you well, but if I’m being honest, I’m not always sure how to do that. I’m learning though.

One of the things I promised in my last issue is that there will be giveaways. I’ve had a goal for a while now, to take my songs to the studio to

record. I’ve been working on a song and I would love for you to be the first to hear. And as weird as it feels for someone else to have my song in hand, I want to gift you with it. And it comes to you during a season of rebirth.

The song is about the transformation that takes place when you identify your true self and permit yourself to becoming entirely that person. It’s about the decision we must make to stop hiding behind someone we’re not, in order to become who we really are. Simply put, it’s about blossoming and it’s called Rosebud.

One of the reasons I refused to share my songs for so long is because I was afraid to share the real me with others. I was afraid I wouldn’t be relatable, likable. The reality is, I still may not be any of those things. But I will be me.

To take what I’m learning to be true of authenticity and vulnerability, I gift this song to you with more eagerness than ever, as I blossom into the person I was always meant to be, who in part, is a songwriter.

The song will arrive in your inbox soon and I hope you enjoy!

With Love, Leah