

Making time to listen and to act



Stories Celebrating the Life and Work
of Jacinta McKoy



Jacinta Daphene McKoy
August 1, 1959-March 19, 2004

This is a compilation of stories, poetry, thoughts and letters
from a few of the many who loved Jacinta McKoy.

The author of this is unknown, the circumstances of why Jacinta had this displayed in such a prominent place in her home is unknown. How literal it is, is unknown. But, in knowing Jacinta I think she would love it if we took even some of it to heart, as you choose.

—Richelle Potter

Desire Chronicles

Traces...

In Coming
to Terms with Death (excerpts)

Celebrate the passage with music:

With drums and horns

And use bright colors:

bright oranges, and bright reds and bright blues—

And wear purple:

Purple scarves around black hats with parrot feathers in the band.

Smoke cigars and drink:

Wine and rum, and read poetry,

And dance to the music inherent in the words

I live with intent.

I live with the assumption we were created to roam.

Home is where my brother is buried—

Regardless of where I live.

Don't waste money on a grave marker.

Leave some of my ashes on my brothers grave.

And scatter the rest over the sea.

If you've loved me while I was alive

Then my grave is in your chest

With all the other loves of your life.

If that is not enough then go to the sea.

Dance for me and dance for you.

And laugh and love—

To Jacinta of the remarkable smile,

I remember years ago when you first crossed the mountains from east to west, a frisky, young women from an arid city traveling to study in the rain—how you struggled at first, asked hard questions and searched for answers that unfolded like petals opening in your mind. Ideas flowered, danced from deep sources as they passed through you to root in this raw, earthy place. You were unafraid to try too much and learned, in this topsy-turvy world to give yourself as an extravagant gift wrapped in layers of elegant cloth. You walked into communities and made space, not just for your dark and gleaming self, but for networks of touch and love and give.

You were the student too useful to lose—
one who knew how to make life rich.

Generous, you chose to stay, went to work, struggled in our imperfect roost to smooth things out, to organize, create a space more equal and kinder than the one you found. Dispensing tea and wisdom, even to those who shuddered when you uttered too much truth, you sung out uncanny revelations people needed as much as breath. Over years, you spun so many threads together, wove a strong web the same way Spider Woman used her luminous line to bind the planet into being. Now that fate has closed your windpipe, and the electric pulse that filled you has been called away to other work, we are left to startle at endless connections, the seemingly seamless way that you joined the layers of your life, and we are struck—struck by the memories of sweet chocolate melting on our tongues,

of herbs brewing in cups you lent us, of the sweet word, "Honey," filling your mouth when you called out to us. Girl, for years, memories of you will live in me, your lessons will possess me because when a goddess comes to earth, it is just too hard to let her teachings go.

With love,
Gail Tremblay

I am a student working in the First Peoples' Advising Services Peer Support Office that just found out the sad news of her passing. Recently she led a workshop on journaling with some of our students at this year's Day of Absence and encouraged many students to attend a students of color conference. She was a wonderful person who had the warmest smile ever.

Below is a poem that I wrote in one of my classes that I feel is nice enough for this memorial.

Sister Leaves Me Behind

Sangre de Cristo sunrise
stirs and wakes Cascade Boy from dreams of
Pahlkmana dancing dew drops and
Spilyii howling huckleberry songs
sitting in his dorm room Cascade Boy sips cups
of coffee brewed strong enough to
send the space shuttle to Pluto.

—Miles R. Miller

There are no remarks that can accurately describe the incomparable Jacinta McKoy. In the ten years that we were friends, she could be counted on to provide the most incredible wisdom in any situation. In a world that was hardly worth of her many charms, she will be grievously missed.

Essentially anyone that ever made a film between Portland and Seattle knew (or knew of) Ms. McKoy. From her earliest days at Evergreen State College (which she attended as a student in 1982, became an employee there four years later and not long thereafter was elevated to the Media Arts Coordinator where she remained until her unexpected death a few days ago), she was a fixture (in the best sense) at the renowned liberal arts institution. When I briefly attended the school in the mid-1990s, Jacinta and I struck an immediate solidarity. We spent a great deal of time together over the next half-decade. When we would occasionally encounter my other friends, I would introduce her as my "favorite person in the whole world." Truer words are rarely spoken.

Although we spoke regularly in the last few years since I relocated to California, it was with particular disappointment that we failed to talk in the days before her passing. She wrote to me while I was in Austin (at SXSW); I telephoned her when I returned to San Francisco with the intention of dining together when I visited Seattle a few days later. She sadly passed away mere hours before my flight arrived. Her humility and humanity, amongst other things, that will never be forgotten.

—Jonathan Marlow

From Wave to Wave

Jacinta, oh Jacinta,
How could you depart so soon,
your wave cresting onto a shoal
long before arriving at the distant shore.
But oh how you rode the great ocean,
rising and falling with the wind
and the swelling of the sea,
glistening in the sun
as you cascaded from crest to crest,
thrilling the eye and the heart
with your affirming and intuitive love;
riding out the storms and troughs,
to rise again and again and again.
And now you have passed from us,
so sudden, so soon,
to remind us to be mindful,
(as you were, as you lived,)
of the eternal joy of the
present moment, this day,
this friend, this meal,
this love, your love.
My wave has been propelled
by yours, and I merge with you
in this great ocean forever.

—David J. Biviano
3/29/04

I met Jacinta at the Urban Onion, a tagalong with my partner, Mario Martin, for a meeting about an upcoming retreat she would do for Black Hills Pride. As I consumed my soup and sandwich, I was also consumed with the beauty and energy of this extraordinary woman, and knew that I had met a very special person. It was a several years later that Mario referred her to me, confirming my own thought, as someone who could step in on short notice as a co-facilitator for a one-day diversity training. We met in preparation, and then conducted the training as if we had

been work partners for ages—so seamless and intuitive was her collaboration with me and a curriculum new to her.

We continued in this partnership with several more clients, and became dear friends, as so many have who have been privileged to meet her. I have rarely met, and value dearly, the kind of person she is, who is so affirming and present to you that you feel like the only other person in the world at the moment. Her heart embrace was definitely a womanearthcreation!

I am so fortunate that she was one of eight women in my life around my table before I departed for the Peace Corps. She brought a gift of poetry for our shared reading, but especially that gift of her presence and warmth. I had several lengthy phone conversations with her before my departure, but I shall always treasure that dinner party now as a celebration of her presence in my life, of the present of her life, always present in my heart and spirit.

Jacinta, I see you, you are here among us – thank you, mille grazie!

—David J. Biviano

My name is Mario Martin, a former co-chair for Black Hills Pride (a steering committee in Mason, Thurston and Lewis for the Pride Foundation). I first met Jacinta on a referral from Anna Schlecht just a few years ago when I was to organize a one-day planning retreat for the volunteers of Black Hills Pride.

Jacinta agreed to facilitate this retreat on short notice. As I observed her bring the retreat from concept to reality she helped me gain new understanding of what it means to create space for others to find meaning and truth in their lives. She made me more aware of the gift of the presence of others in this space. And she did it with an inimitable style!

—Mario Martin

As Tears Go By

Jacinta...

you tip-toed through my mind
these past few days...

while I sat in the stairwell of LAB II
coaxing... caressing... an ethereal,
throbbing, echo-y, purple rendering
of this old Rolling Stones song.

out of my hands, out of my mind
out of the steel bar groaning the strings
of the resonator guitar I bought for
the college back in the 70's.

I said

when I checked it out
that I was working on some stuff.

You said

you wanted to hear me play it when I got
the performance together...

but then you said

"...naw, just let me know sometime when you're playing it,
so I can come and listen..."

but it was too early... before 6:30 a.m.
the days I filled the stairwell
with reverberation... and pain...

no intrusions...

I would've welcomed yours..

but,

it was too early...

it was too early

.....too early

AS TEARS GO BY

(M. Jagger/K. Richards)

It is the evening of the day
I sit and watch the children play
Smiling faces I can see
But not for me
I sit and watch
As tears go by

My riches can't buy everything
I want to hear the children sing
All I hear is the sound
Of rain falling on the ground
I sit and watch
As tears go by

It is the evening of the day
I sit and watch the children play
Doin' things I used to do
They think are new
I sit and watch
As tears go by

—Tom Foote

One of the first things we shared when we began a friendship over twenty years ago was the presence of birds...and light. We used to walk in places around Olympia where we could watch them, especially water birds and crows.

We talked about my mother and her grandmother... how they liked listening for the sounds of first birds in the morning and last ones in the evening. That is one of many memories I hold dear about times with Jacinta.

An image for Jacinta

...the tide slides out to sea
mud sighs. footprints disappear.

.small birds rise on flashing wings
 hearts fluttering
 daylight dims
 blooms fade
 a whisper tells them it's time to go.

.branches weep
 leaves no longer hang on
 wings in the wind whirl
 spiral up, down
above the world's horizons.

.sounds in motion
 birds eye view.

. what have they seen?
 where are they going?
 facing into the wind
 rise on wheeling wings
dissolve in sound.

...silence
 in motion...

—doranne crable

Please pass on to the McKoy family the condolences from the staff at Top Foods, West Olympia. We were all deeply saddened to hear about Jacinta.

We have been fondly sharing our memories of this truly gracious lady! I am a checker on the front end during the evenings and we have been recalling the wonderful and positive impression she has left on us. Jacinta has such a presence and aura about her. Her dress was impeccable; it was always like watching a fashion show when she walked through the door. Her pillbox hats and flowing jackets and scarfs would whirl around her as she entered our front door (which is actually an "air door"). It was like the fairy godmother appearing. Whoosh—there she was. Her smile was always radiant. You couldn't help but smile back. Everyone lit up when they saw her. Then she would say, "Hello, darling" to all of us. She always had such a serenity and calmness about her. She knew how to enjoy life. Her laugh was infectious. She bought herself treats such as bath oils, lotions and I remember how much I admired her for taking time to enjoy those luxuries in a day and age when everyone is so busy. She took time out to enjoy dinner with friends or go to a play. Our short conversations were always so interesting. She was enthusiastic about life. And when she left the store, we always talked about what a really, really neat lady she was and how much we loved her! How we wished we could emulate her and what a great role model she is for others.

Jacinta touched everyone she knew in such a positive way. All of us were so blessed to have known her. And, each of us holds dear to our hearts a piece of her.

My words hardly seem eloquent enough to describe her. I have never met such a glowing person. However, she leaves behind a legacy of caring, sharing, loving and living life to the fullest. Truly the best tribute we can give her is to share with others the memories of an absolutely beautiful woman!

We will miss her very, very much.

—the staff at Top Foods, West Olympia

Dear Jacinta's family,

In 1986 I was a pregnant, twenty-two year old college student when Jacinta came into my life and blessed me with her unconditional warmth, support, and nurturing energy. Not knowing her very well, I was astounded by her random act of kindness when she purchased a beautiful, flannel, maternity nightgown for me to wear so I would be able to nurse my baby while staying warm. Along with our friend Rusty Post, she purchased a state-of-the-art stroller that was used for several years and then passed on to a chain of other Olympia families. When my son was a toddler and I needed to earn money, Jacinta hauled me into her office at Evergreen, sat me down at a computer and gave me computer lessons and tutorials, supplying me with a foundation of occupational skills.

Over the past seventeen years Jacinta has consistently blessed the Olympia community with countless beautiful smiles and hugs, warm wishes, and her ever, graceful presence. She continues to bless us with the challenge to be more like her—to embrace and diffuse her qualities of kindness, integrity, light, and love. I believe Jacinta's spirit will continue to shine in our hearts and hopefully our actions, carrying forth her intentions of compassion and peace.

Thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts. My thoughts are with you.

—Kristi MacLean

for jacinta

Jacinta,

The world is dimmer without your sweet light.

—Mian Bond-Carvin

I met Jacinta briefly a couple months ago. The next time I saw her she remembered my name and everything we had discussed. I was amazed, weeks had passed. She is one of those special people that validates other humans and made me feel like she really saw and heard me and that we had a human relationship. Every time I ran into her she was so real and kind and took time to look me in the eye and talk to me. She made me feel special and I hardly knew her. I miss seeing her and her rare and light filled presence.

—Jennifer Collier & daughter Mia, age 3.

I am a junior at Evergreen and in the Mediaworks program. I just had a few words to send you about Jacinta:

I only talked to Jacinta maybe once or twice and didn't know her well at all, but whenever we passed each other on campus she seemed to always be laughing and she always smiled and said "hi" to me. It always brightened my day to see her and I often remember saying to myself, "She's great! I wish I could be more like her." I think it speaks a lot to her great personality and character that she could make a stranger like me admire her. She was definitely a unique and special person who brought much needed joy and cheer to this world. I will miss seeing her around.

—Anni Mackin

Jacinta McKoy, Centering the Community

Like many of you, I have been resisting the reality—refusing to accept that we have lost Jacinta. On Friday, a group of us gathered with John Ford to do a KAOS remembrance of Jacinta's life.

Through the beautiful poems by Leonard Schwartz and Gail Tremblay and the words of many others, we got a little closer to our sense of loss, memory—and celebration of Jacinta. I brought along one of the many messages I'd received from Jacinta over many days and years.

"Greetings All. Since bell hook's visit I have thought long and hard about our work with Community-Based Service Learning DTF. . . . So much of bell's words of love and community rekindled my optimism."

Jacinta opened the door and invited the world in. To sit, talk, exchange ideas, make big plans, think critically, offer suggestions, play with ideas, shape strategies and make promises that we wanted to keep. She knew how to stand still and create movement. She had a quiet urgency about the need for what she talked about as "community that grows out of mutuality and reciprocity of respect." She often expressed concern about ignoring community, taking it for granted, forgetting. Jacinta's life seemed dedicated to not forgetting—to remembering what might be all too easily overlooked or belittled. Jacinta took things seriously through acts of great celebration of the life she was in.

Were it not for Jacinta we would probably not be opening the doors of the Center for Community-Based Learning and Action here at Evergreen. She had been helping to guide, cajole, coax and inspire us to be a little more out there. To be more present in the world.

Jacinta's work in community goes way back. As a student in 1983-85, she worked as an intern with Russ Fox and Jean MacGregor in the Center for Community Development. She was quickly recognized as someone who had a finely tuned sense of group process, consensus-building, participatory research and sustainability. Although funding came and went (as of course is often the way), Jacinta sustained a dream that such a Center be

opened again. Over the years, as her life shifted from student to staff, she became more determined to be a part of a college that was critically attentive to community on-campus and community at our doorstep and beyond. She often spoke of the Tacoma Campus with its mission of "Enter to Learn, Depart to Serve" as the model that the whole of Evergreen should aspire to. Jacinta wanted Evergreen to live and breathe in the world – both in very big and very small, everyday ways.

In 1997, she built on her efforts and interests when she became a part of the Service Learning DTF. . . in Evergreen-speak, a Disappearing-Task-Force, which could also just be called a group-of-interested-folks. Jacinta was at the center of this work for the three years we worked together. She served as Co-Chair in 1998-99, when we were very busy shaping plans, consulting with students, staff, faculty and alumni. . . and most importantly "going downtown" and beyond Evergreen to meet with community organizations.

Jacinta, more than most of us, paid careful attention to both mission and process. She was always thinking about ways to pattern our meetings and connections in the region so that we would see our shortcomings, take credit when we deserved it, and move on to something stronger. Jacinta planned and facilitated meetings, helped chronicle our efforts, collected materials and archived resources. And she did a lot of writing. There were letters, notes, plans, invitations, research profiles and reports. . . all keeping people attentive to the group's efforts. She worked with Bonita Evans, Larry Geri, Betsy Diffendal and others to stir the campus and stay in touch with neighbors.

Jacinta's strong determination helped us see that Evergreen could and should do better in connecting with the communities around us. When the DTF was scheduled to "disappear" Jacinta would have no part of it. The absence of funds and of a real place only meant that there was work to be done. Jacinta continued to keep the dream alive. Just a few things that she'd been doing. . .

- In the fall of 2001, she worked with the "Local Knowledge" program to open a small Community Center in the Communications Bldg; through her support of students and

teachers, this became a sliver-of-hope for the more richly resourced Center that was being dreamed of.

- Over the past few years, Jacinta convened evening meetings where we would eat, share community-relevant ideas and resources from our classes and make plans... always the plans for something more. She kept us connected between meetings, not letting us fall into the “just another meeting” mode.
- She worked with Stephanie Kozick, Joe Tougas, Emily Lardner and Gillies Malnarich to create the 2002 summer institute “Off and On Campus: Partnerships between Evergreen and Our Communities.” This was a spirited gathering of faculty, staff, students and community activists who shared ideas, resources, art, strategies and good conversation.
- Jacinta proposed to Doug Schuler’s “Community Information Systems” that students develop a virtual center website; they took up the challenge.
- Through hallway conversations and the sharing of resources, Jacinta helped many students come closer to their dream of engaged work with the community, near and far.
- When we learned that Les Purce was directing some of the Atlantic Philanthropies award to making the Center a reality, Jacinta helped with the planning, including her ideas for a celebratory opening... this May 19th.

In thinking about Jacinta and community, Mukti Khanna offers this from one of Jacinta’s favorite authors.. bell hooks’ *Killing Rage: Ending Racism*...

“What those of us who have not died now know, the generations before did not grasp, was that beloved community is formed not by the eradication of difference but by its affirmation, by each of us claiming identities and cultural legacies that shape who we are and how we live in the world.” (p 265)

Identity, legacy, beloved community
.....Jacinta.....

I wish beyond anything that Jacinta were here with us to open its doors. I know she’d want us to celebrate it and work hard to keep it alive.

For some time now, I’ve quietly thought about the center as “jacenter”... that’s how I’ll know it.

Thank you, Jacinta, for everything.

—Lin Nelson

Today, like every other day, we wake up empty and scared.
Don't open the door to the study and begin reading.
Take down the dulcimer.

Let the beauty we love be what we do.
there are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground

—Rumi

Jacinta Lessons

Watching her walk by the Faculty and Staff Lounge one morning, I noticed for the first time that she seemed to float. There was absent that bobbing we humans do when we walk. No, for her there was no bobbing. With head held high, a **smile** on her **beautiful** face, she floated like a **spirit**. I was taken aback when I realized this. I couldn't see her feet because of the limitations of the window in front of me. She could have been on skates or pulled on a platform for all I knew. No, she was not walking she was **floating**. She *always* floated.

At that same moment two words came to mind and helped me to recognize something about her—or about my perception of her. *Peace* was the first word. 'She has a **peaceful** spirit,' I thought. The second word was *fun*. 'She is so much **fun** to be around, and I mean fun in every true sense of the word' (amusing, enjoyable, entertaining, pleasurable).

I enjoyed every conversation she **shared** with me. And with each conversation I wanted to know more about her. She was an **enigma** who shared bits of her mystery with me. I always felt good after being with her.

She validated my journey toward intellectual clarity of racism. At the same time, sharing with me her discovery that racism is neither intellectual nor clear in its ignorance. What amazes me most is that she could be, oh, so cool in the midst of the chaos of racism. Even though she said she just “handled it” differently than some. She felt it, and dealt with it. She “learned how to deal with it.” She said that I was “still learning,” that I was “in transition.” She could “show me how” she was able to maintain a quiet spirit and to **meditate** through the learning process. ‘She is **cool**’, I thought. She never gives up her power to the ignorant. Yes, she is a **powerful** spirit!

That is what I was thinking that Wednesday as I watched her float through my line of sight. The experience itself, though brief, resulted in an image so vivid in detail that it resulted in these thoughts.

On Friday morning I heard that she was *gone*.

My thoughts later that evening were selfish. I wanted to spend more time and go to Paris and Africa with her—I was working on the dates. I wanted to learn how to manage my anger towards racism and those who embraced it. I wanted to know that a peaceful spirit lay at the end of this learning process. She said it, therefore, it must be so. Yesterday I thought, ‘I need more time with her.’ But, today I understand that what I truly need is to **remember** what she shared.

It pleases me to know that I was not the only recipient of **Jacinta lessons**. The words of **praise** and loss have done much to help me grasp how infinite her **graciousness** was—is. She’s still sending us messages, through each other. She let us **connect** with her, now she is showing us how we are connected to each other.

I will not—cannot—dwell on whether others are actually getting her messages or experiencing the learning. It’s enough to know that she shared her precious being with so many of us. It’s enough

to know that I will get through this transitioning process and, one day, leave the anger behind. I give thanks to the Great Spirit for sharing this beautiful being, who before our very eyes completed her own transition from gracious Earth Angel to immortal spirit—the spirit known to us as Jacinta McKoy. I shall never forget you.

—JoAnne Jackson

Jacinta,

After the first time, no introductions were necessary when we communicated through the decades. Ever. What I thought was the uniqueness of this connection I have learned was a regular occurrence in your life. The gifts of your joy and understanding were shared so freely.

Knowing you had the certainty of refuge for me, regardless of the time passing. I’ll remember our last lunch together. . . you were late. After your dramatic arrival, the lateness didn’t matter because I was, as usual, stunned by my sheer joy to be with you. You had a Martini and fries. . . I had a salad.

I need to believe you are surrounded by gentle breaths, peace, beautiful textiles, joy, abundant gifts, love, and lot’s of laughter; the best of what you experienced with us.

I’ll carry on without you and attempt to share your spirit and the honor in which you lived, and will keep the brown velvet dress forever.

The Rumi poem I picked at your gathering says so much about my experience of you: Someone who sees you and does not laugh out loud, or fall silent, or explode in pieces, is nothing more than the cement and stone of his own prison.

Oh, how I’ll miss you. . .

—Christina Koons (Diva Darling)

I can't get her out of my head. I went to hear jazz at the Washington Center the other night and found that I was looking for her. I always saw her there. Either we liked the same kind of music or she went to everything. I wouldn't doubt the latter.

I craned my neck to look up in the right front orchestra to the area from where I once heard her yell out a request to Kelly Joe Phelps. She liked that sad bluesy Kelly Joe stuff. Twelve string, lap slide, tunes recorded in an empty house somewhere in Portland. Lots of mystery. Lots of guts.

She wasn't there.

Jacinta was gesture, elegance, posture, and a blaze of color. Her face was all high contrast: red, black, white. Elemental. More so than she gave herself credit for. She was bright eyes and flashy teeth. She was notice and concern. She was a damn kick.

Moments. Moments. I saw her the Friday before she died. I thought to myself, she doesn't look quite right. I didn't see her so often. Everybody I see looks older and different. Hell, I don't know the woman in the mirror. Put that concern aside, I said to myself.

We laughed and fussed at each other. She told me the story again of how we first met. I picked her up on the campus parkway. She said, as she had said many times, I wouldn't be here today if you hadn't picked me up that day. Whatever happened was memorable for her. I know I met her when she first came to Evergreen. I know she had been studying fashion. I know we became friends right away. But the story I've got stashed away was different from hers. I was in the women's locker room getting dressed after a swim. A beautiful young woman in capes and cap walked over, checked out my clothes, or lack thereof, and said, "nice boots."

That day, standing in a hallway, she asked me to sing at some future event. I gave her a book. We sent a couple of electronic messages to each other the next day or two. Then that was all. Damn, we could at least have sat down together, sipped some tea, told some truths.

We circled around each other for years. Sometimes it was professional. Sometimes it was pure fun. Oh, Jacinta, you and I were such hellishly awful tennis players. But I remember the time when a gang of us went to Sun River. I don't remember the games, I don't remember who won or who lost. But I remember it was your birthday. I remember you told me some stories about your young life.

I remember another time when you were having a hard time with asthma and suffering the side effects of a powerful medication. I came and sat with you then. I took the time then. We had grand visions together. I could do nothing better than join you in the world you spun that day. It wasn't enough. I would have worked my way into your secret gardens if I'd ever thought for a minute that there would be a day so soon that I would never have the chance again.

You were too young to leave us but I know where ever you are, you got a home there.

"the last day's done and the darker hour draws nigh
Might the wings of gold surround me and my salvation fine
Let me hear your hosanna
Come on and let me hear your prayer
I'm going down to the city, I got a home there
no more than the sinner needing faith and love
Simple grace my soul and my shield and armor to run this
Christian race
Let me hear your hosanna
Come on and let me hear your prayer

Yeah

I'm going down to the city, I got a home there"

Kelly Joe Phelps

Hosanna

Roll Away the Stone album

—LLyn De Danaan

I don't have any particular story or anything, but did wish to express my sadness at Jacinta's passing. She will be missed.

—Ron Jacobs
TESC '90

Salute to Jacinta

It seemed Jacinta was everywhere. Unlike so many northwest types who seem to hunker down and stay invisible during those long dreary months of rain, it seemed Jacinta was out every day, laughing, eating, chatting, listening, advising, scooping up those around her. I can't remember when I first met Jacinta when I arrived at Evergreen and Olympia five years ago. I only know that she was here, she was dining in restaurants like Ramblin Jacks, she was strolling the shelves of Radiance, she was buying flowers at Top Foods. There are few people who can look comfortable eating alone in a restaurant (or at least that has always been my challenge). Not Jacinta. She looked out over a restaurant as if everyone in there was dining with her only at other tables. She engaged with waitpersons, with other tables of diners, or she just gazed out across the room or a window perhaps involved in blessing all of us who shared space with her that evening. But usually, Jacinta was dining with others—and it always seemed that her table was having the most fun.

I recall another time of bumping into Jacinta at Radiance, the local herb and magic potions shop. I was with a friend who was very pregnant and concerned that her doctor's convenience would prevail in inducing her labor. So we set off for Radiance determined that we were going to bring this baby to the surface, before Christmas and before medical intervention. However, we had no idea what to look for as we gazed at small bottles and nervously thumbed through women's herbology books. Who should appear but Jacinta, guiding us with clear certainty about

what to buy and what to do. This wise woman emerged on that day of confusion and desperation, advising us that all would be well; women have always cared for each through pregnancy and delivery and we could do that now. Needless to say, 36 hours later a natural childbirth unfolded.

One of the last times I saw Jacinta was in Top Foods on a Friday night. I was buying food for a book club meeting the following morning; Jacinta was with Walter Grodzik, theater faculty. We were loud, we were laughing, Jacinta was wearing her wonderful green iridescent gloves that she proudly bought at Big Lots for some absurd price. Was it just me who thought we were the most interesting and alive shoppers in Top Foods that night? Was I mistaken that just being with Jacinta could feel like a marvelous party that left you smiling as you returned to more mundane tasks? I will miss her brilliant spirit.

—Niki Amarantides
4/9/04

When I was a student at TESC between '98 and 2001, I would often encounter Jacinta while walking across red square with my daughter, Chloe. Jacinta would stop and chat with us, and take time to pay attention to my daughter. Our exchanges were always friendly and warm. My daughter loved Jacinta's wonderful clothes and hats. I never got to know her well, but I was always so happy to see her those times we would connect in passing. I'd be all stressed out about school, on the way home in the afternoon, and just seeing her for a few moments would just cheer me up. It was easy to know she was special without knowing her well.

—Adrienne Newlon

Jacinta McKoy & the Struggles of Labor

Jacinta was a long-time supporter of the Labor Center and of the labor unions on campus. The last conversation I had with her, about a week before her death, she talked about this idea she had for buying jackets that Labor Center and Community Center staff and supporters could wear around campus. If I remember correctly, the jackets would be like those letter jackets that high school athletes wear. The leather sleeves would be black, the front red, and the back green, with some sort of logo or message on it. The idea was to tell something about our values through the colors (red and black are old radical labor colors, and green of course is the color of the environmental movement, and also of the college) and to actively demonstrate solidarity through wearing really cool and conspicuous jackets. The solidarity, of course, would also demonstrate resistance and freedom, or at least the potential for freedom that can come through spirited resistance.

I will of course always remember the strength of Jacinta's personality and the way she cared for so many people, but I'll also remember her because of the ways she expressed her freedom. Through her humanity, and the way she brought out the humanity in others, she demonstrated the possibilities of not being reduced to the status of a role. She reminded us that a person is greater than the definition of his or her job and invited us to think anew about how we might transform both our work and our



Jacinta at the Summer School for Union Women, June, 2003

relationships with each other. In that way she stood in the tradition of the Wobblies, syndicalists, situationists, and other modern members of working people's resistance who have brought their imaginations, vitality, and freedom into the present in part in order to anticipate what a different future can look like. Jacinta did it so well that her passing seems impossible—it's like she's present whenever we feel joyfully alive despite the burdens of our work, as if she's going to enter the room at any moment. Since she won't, at least not physically, the Labor Center will have to honor her spirit by remembering the life-affirming nature of her struggle, which someone expressed in the great Lawrence, Massachusetts strike of 1912 as the fight for bread, yes, but the fight for roses too.

—Peter Kardas
TESC Labor Center
April 8, 2004

So many wonderful statements have been made on email and in the halls about Jacinta's kindness and her wonderful work as unofficial morale officer not only for the COM building, but for the entire campus. I want to address another of her wonderful qualities. You see, there was something REGAL about Jacinta—so much so that whenever I had to email her a complex request (and that was fairly often), I addressed her "Jacinta Maxima." Or, if it was a really long list of needs, "O Queen of the COM." (By the way, I always got an expeditious and detailed reply.)

Jacinta Maxima was the Queen of the Com. She had a long and fruitful reign over her realm, but it was cut short much too soon. Words cannot describe how much we will miss her.

—Meg Hunt

There are so many truly wonderful things that could be said about Jacinta. And I'm sure a lot of them will be said. I too have many wonderful experiences I shared with Jacinta over the two years I worked with her as a work-study student in the Comm building ('89-'91). But quite honestly, it's Jacinta's office, of all things, that my mind keeps coming back to over and over again since hearing of her death. And if you ever visited her there, I'm sure you'll get what I'm about to say.

Jacinta's office in the Comm. Building was her. It was all Jacinta. It was like stepping into another time and space ... a secret garden of sorts. The fragrance would just envelope you. Sweet, organic, warm, authentic ... with a hint of lavender, and some kind of ... I don't know what ... herbal tea? Maybe? It was so hard to put your finger on exactly. I just knew it was nothing I'd ever smelled before. It was so much more than a scent ... it was an atmosphere. It was a feeling. It was truly the essence of Jacinta ... real and good. And just like Jacinta, it always made me feel welcome, cared for, special & loved. All of these things were Jacinta's special gifts. Jacinta made people around her feel this way ... everything about Jacinta was this and more.

I am deeply saddened by this ENORMOUS loss. The sun doesn't seem to shine as brightly without her.

—Amy Donnelly

You've made it out of the city,
that image of your body, trembling with traffic
and fear slips behind.
Your face arrives in the redbud trees, and the tulips.

You're still restless.
Climb up the ladder to the roof.
You're by yourself a lot,
become the one that when you walk in,
luck shifts to the one who needs it.
If you've not been fed, be bread.

—Rumi

In memory of Jacinta McKoy

So many wonderful memories. I remember when I first met Jacinta learning how to produce an event on campus, and then we went on to co-produce not Earth Day but Earth Month back in 1988. I learned all about packets and presenting oneself in a professional manner. Jacinta had a wonderful aesthetic sense, which anyone could tell from her dress. I remember her and Melissa giggling all the way through a Joanna Macy despair to empowerment workshop at that event, saying she had been to so many of these types, she couldn't help herself.

I'll never forget going to an early WOMAD with her and listening to some great music and having a perfect moment listening to Oyub Ogada playing kora. Later she introduced me to no less than the director of the festival. Jacinta was the production queen! We later went to see Salif Keita in Seattle.

I remember sitting outside with her at her cabin, in the late 80s, sipping a cool drink, watching the horses in the field whom she didn't really like, but talked to none the less. Of course the two stuffed animals—the cow—she had in her car Willow were special friends of hers. I remember Jeanette and Jacinta stopping by Rainy Day after eating lunch at Saigon Rendezvous.

Jacinta introduced me to the Vipassna Center, where I attempted a ten day sit. Then when I couldn't complete it, and I was blubbering on the phone with her, she assured me that I was still an ok person. And more than one occasion where she consoled me while I cried about something. She was my rock. I loved her. She always had advice about a health matter or a recommendation about how to go about doing something. Always bearing gifts and hugs, I can't think of a more direct and honest individual. She was one of the reasons that life was good and worth living. I will miss her so.

—Tim Russell

It's hard to know what to add, as her many gifts have been expressed by so many. I always appreciated the thoughtful way in which she approached and appreciated indigenous cultures. I always felt that she valued the power of people of color coming together behind a powerful, positive vision. I admired her integrity, her hospitality and the inclusive and respectful way in which she worked.

—Tina Kuckkahn
Director, Longhouse Education & Cultural Center

Verse 4 from

Eight Verses for Training the Mind

When I see beings of a negative disposition,
or those oppressed by negativity or pain,
May I, as if finding a treasure,
Consider them precious, for they are rarely met.

—The Dalai Lama

worked in the bookstore at TESC and loved Jacinta. She was such a warm, loving, spirit. We shared many hugs, laughs, and a tear or two.

My daughter-in-law worked with ceramics and made an angel for Jacinta. She wept when I gave it to her. I can still remember the tear that ran down her cheek as she looked at the gift. Now she is the angel, not that she wasn't always. What a tremendous loss for her community in Olympia, at TESC, and those of us who loved her. She will always be remembered as a smiling, joy-filled spirit.

—Marda Moore

Loss Who Only Gave For Jacinta Mckoy

Big.
Big person.
Big spirit.
Whose greetings
were big.
Big. Big visions.
Big plans.
Not the kind of
big plans as in
overweening
ambition,
but as in kind,
kindling, readiness to build.
As in heads up
to being big hearted,
would steady your hand,
would greet you heartily
behind wide robes.
Who was and was not
Cassandra as nothing
and everything
is always predictable,
always ignored.

Big. Big spirit.
Embrace expansive of empty air
if need be, making of emptiness
a person to fill it when
you came to her empty.
Yes? Yes.
Yes, big.
Quick to the chocolate -
quick to give the chocolate -
and that flirtatiousness

everyone should always show
everyone else,
being attractive.
Big on that, big with that,
big in that.
And now
without big, a big without,
all those loving heartbeats
yet to beat.

Jacinta, it still doesn't seem possible.
Almost spring for example, things flowering near
Comm building, commingling, communicating,
In that sublimated language of the force of desire.
(Notice those trees locked together by what they tell.)
Tom W. said you made your own weather
And Mr. Wolmendorf was right, Jacinta did
Make her own weather, and then of course
Contrived to put one in that weather front,
Kept on praising and praising and praising you and all,
Omnibus of affirmations, warmth bathing the body. -
You can make your own weather but not your own seasons.

Jacinta, forgive me, you reminded me of my mother.
Always the luck to inhabit the building of an
encouraging woman.
Child wrapped in adulthood's outer amenities,
I in the act of becoming another,
Now and then entering the streets of your smiling city.
That all we have is the womb that swells with everything
And I'm that womb now, or was, because it already
Moved, everything always moves, lost among
Cubicles and towns in which paradise is parsed.
Kneel and kiss the ground, it is moving in a hundred ways.
Of your suffering you would not speak.
You were trying to tell me something that last week.

Jacinta, you were trying to tell me something that last week.
And I was half-asleep; people live in bottles.
Can a bottle ever make itself pour?
I think you had the knack for getting us to try.

Now shock awakens us; you were so much not shock.
Trapped in a window, window trapped in a wall.
As you refused such boundaries, boundless, talented,
Making words happen inside yourself to pour into us
Couldn't open to receive them, koi bumping side of tank.
Kneel and kiss the ground, there are a hundred ways.
Often, because the mind is always singing,
You catch the hum of the other mind and sing along.

Because of his great beauty
Hyacinthus, in Greek mythology,
attracted the love of Apollo,
that god of healing,
that god whom Cassandra
attracted and then repelled.

By accident – by accident! –
Apollo killed Hyacinthus.
Out of his blood there grew the flower
Known as the hyacinth.
The word “hyacinth”
In its Spanish, feminine form
is “Jacinta.”

Jacinta.

And McKoy?
Who could doubt
She was the real
McKoy.

No one can replace you.
Nobody here will stop ruminating
On what you wanted us to see,
To receive, to be.

—Leonard Schwartz

I wrote out some notes the day after Jacinta died. The news was so shocking, I felt I needed to confirm her place in the world right away. I did not know her well, but her presence had a profound effect on my family.

She came into our lives as one of the early board members of the Kitchen Garden Project. My husband had met her when she acted as a facilitator in a Pat Labine program at Evergreen. He remembered her skills and made contact with her in passing at the co-op, around town. He asked her to be a board member of the fledgling non-profit organization and after a year of asking, she agreed. She taught us what a Board of Directors is, how it is supposed to work by gathering resources to support the work of the organization. In the case of the Kitchen Garden Project, the work was to build vegetable gardens for low-income people at their homes or at community garden settings. We did not know how to run a business. Jacinta gave us support individually and by standing up in front of the other board members and speaking for what we were doing. She initiated elements of the board structure that made the work possible and are still in place today in the organization. She was not timid and she modeled organizational and personal limits for the rest of us. She was a wonderful influence on us.

The work of the non profit happened at our home so the board would gather in our home office. She came into our home at the same time. She always took the time for a personal interest. She taught us compassion for our children in the early stages of being parents. She inevitably lingered and shared parts of herself with you and it always felt like a blessing to sit and talk with her, basking in her openness, strength, and calm. Inevitably late for the next appointment on her schedule, because she was so present, that she couldn't always push on to the next thing.

She was the epitome of grace. She was the queen of Olympia. I will always see her purple and black presence and I will always hear her deep and soothing voice.

With Love,
—María, Richard, Esther, Ray Doss

There's something about meeting a stranger in a coffee shop and discovering you really like one another. Jacinta and I found ourselves in this situation. It was puppy love but we weren't puppies.

Our conversation, full of laughter and surprise, gave us hope and a reason to exchange phone numbers. After that, we never saw one another again. Our only connection was by phone.

Calling one another on the phone was a chance to chit chat about ourselves without really taking the other person into our daily life. It was simple and compartmentalized. We shared stories about our youth and home life, which we both remembered with tears and joy. We shared stories of love lost and gained, art and culture, food and children.

I know what we enjoyed most was not having a shared past between us. We could talk openly and candidly without fear or apprehension about our personal history. We were uncomplicated and unfettered.

Jacinta understood the truth of her own character. She was no phony. Although not perfect, she approached living with dignity and relevance. She could reveal things about herself, which made it easy for me to be more open about myself. We ate from the same apple.

Jacinta looked to the future with a creative spirit. Her interest in how one creates their own culture, articulates one's own vocabulary and voice, permeated our conversation. What seemed to inspire her most: looking forward with verve and joy.

My memory of Jacinta McKoy is how she lived from her heart. There was so much light inside her, she illuminated us all. She was an artist who believed that life itself was truly the most creative medium.

—Tom Landis

Love Letter to Jacinta

Jacinta sweeps,
majestic Jacinta.
Direct, warm, powerful.
An assembly of care
in one mahogany woman.

Jacinta's magic found in the
details, attention
to today, here now
what's between us
a small world
an exchange blooming
into an empowered community.

Jacinta's dream.
Jacinta's everyday efforts.
Jacinta's glory, bursts
of feminine power.
Her face will always
be a celebration, one
wild woman with a hearty laugh.

Jacinta, her place
in the lineage of leaders
who loved
this world.
Mothering us to wakefulness,
in ordinary moments.
A roar, a flourish, a mighty
hug, Jacinta's offerings.

Jacinta's song, an eternal gift,
living inspiration.

Thank you, boss,
teacher, friend.
You sheltered me
in my most fragile
years, saw me
writing in my journal
on the job. You paused,

said you must
love yourself to take
the time, helping to make it so.
I love you,
Star, precious hero.

—Shaun Rose

I worked as an office assistant for Jacinta in the COM building
from 1993 to 1995. I was fortunate.

Luna Bars, Mental Yoga, & Sand Research

I met Jacinta my Freshman year (2002-2003) at Evergreen while I was taking performing arts classes. Jacinta helped me schedule rehearsal space for my performance work, and was always helpful and encouraging, but I didn't get to know her very closely until this year when we served together on the planning team for the new Center for Community-Based Learning and Action. Working together with Jacinta during this time, I have gained my most cherished memories of her:

One of the first days I attended a planning meeting with Jacinta I recall that she was a little tired. It had been a busy day for her, but she joked that she was ready for action because she had a Luna bar with her. I mentioned that we might all need Luna bars to get this project off the ground. I woke up early one morning to ride with Jacinta to a 2-Day Campus Compact Members Meeting at Western Washington University. Jacinta surprisingly showed up late to pick me up for the event. She confessed that she had made an early morning run to her office to take care of a few last minute tasks before leaving. Even though she woke up before sunrise, Jacinta was as prepared as ever. She passed out folders to Russ and I containing the agenda for the meeting and passed out her secret weapons. Indeed, we all got Luna (or Clif) bars. After the

conference, Jacinta took me shopping and we went out to eat together in Olympia. During our meal, Jacinta had many friends stop by to say Hello.

It seemed that everyone in Olympia knew and loved Jacinta, and who could resist? She's one of the most enjoyable people that I have ever had the pleasure to know. She had a presence and energy that was uniquely Jacinta. She was serious and hard working, but also funny and laid back. When she called a meeting about plans for an interim community resource room in the COM building. She opened the meeting by requesting that we do a session of "mental yoga" and then share our favorite desserts with each other. As Jacinta began an informal discussion about the space and the history of community-based learning at Evergreen, the meeting took on loose and "chatty" feel, but that didn't mean that Jacinta wasn't already on the ball. She soon produced a stack of information packets that she distributed. Each packet was stuffed with information and reports that she had prepared for us in advance. She then asked about what classes we were in and began joking about my study abroad project in Hawaii. Jacinta suggested that we write a proposal so that we could all travel to Hawaii to do "sand research."

I wrote Jacinta an e-mail one day letting her know that she has been a big inspiration to me and that I looked up to her as a mentor. She was always assisting me with my personal development, and I would often run ideas by her for approval. I'm in Hawaii now, doing "sand research" and this is where I heard about her passing away. Part of me is saddened because I have lost a friend and mentor and that Evergreen and Olympia have lost an amazing spirit. At the same time, I am happy because I know that she has accomplished so much and touched so many people during her life. I have even met people here in Hawaii who remembered meeting Jacinta. Her life was so filled with joy and love that it is difficult for me to be sad when thinking of any memories that I have of her. I am so proud to say that I knew Jacinta, and to honor her legacy by contributing my memories to this compilation.

—Jeremy Stutes
Student, The Evergreen State College

I knew Jacinta since about 1990. I so much miss the things that we were going to do together this year and in the future. The random always happy meetings downtown...

I have not so much a story as a realization about Jacinta--

She was a person who in a moment, took you in entirely. Saw the weak points, normally guarded, and she protected those points. That's how she inspired the instant love of us all.

—Lisa Seifert

The Guest House

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.
Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.
The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.
Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

—Rumi

For the last three years, Jacinta was my life coach. Every few weeks, when I walked into her peaceful little office on the westside, Jacinta would have written "Welcome" elaborately on an easel. She always had a way of making you feel comfy even when you resisted or didn't make time to feel the change. She would offer me tea and a scrumptious snack she had picked up on the way to her office and pull out some books that magically related to the topics I wanted to cover. She possessed the ability to



touch upon a moment, its essence, in great depth and clarity. The book she brought along to our last session was Thomas Leonard's *The Portable Coach*. She suggested I take it home and read the chapter "Thrive on the Details." Now since I still have it, I'll be reading the whole book. What happens when your life coach dies suddenly? You quit whining and grow up—time to enjoy this life of luxury, the one that Jacinta embraced. I want to recount and share some of our session work in the form of daily "coach" cards... her questions keep me going.

How can I foster equal and respectful exchanges?

How can I clarify my needs and expectations?

How can I foster an environment of reciprocity?

Write a soul haiku for the moment (5,7,5)—and for channeled creativity.

What 6 qualities do I have? How will I protect each one?
How can I plant a seed for acceptance of each?

Take a sea salt and baking soda bath (with a few drops of black spruce essential oil).

How can I be more conscious of the day?

Where is my sanctuary? how can I create one?

Care for the soul—do I have a practice?

When do I feel most cared for?

What nurtures me?

What can I do for myself each day?

Compassionately listen to myself.

"The obvious is hard to commit to."

What do I want to add to my life
and what do I want to take away?

What does profit mean to me?

What seeds do I want to plant?

What are my gifts? What direction do they take me?

How do I find a harmonious workplace?

What are the top ten things I have always wanted to do?

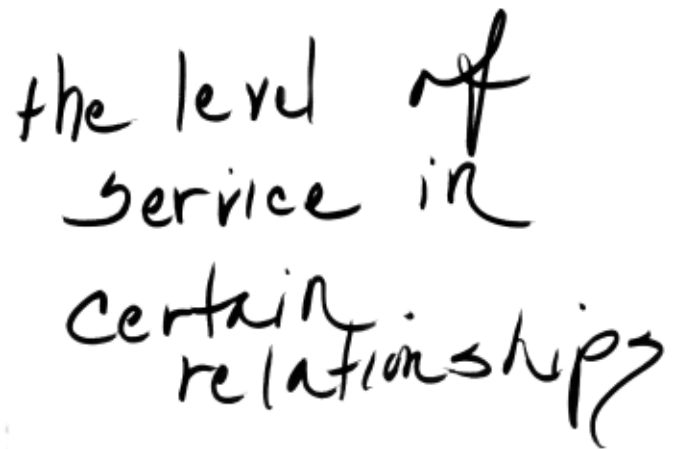
What is my action plan? (daily, weekly, every so often)

Conduct information interviews.

Take a retreat.

Write my dream job description.

What do I value?



Create a pie chart of where I want my energy to go.

"If you are giving an hour, are you getting an hour?"

"Breathing in, we greet our habit energy / Breathing out,
we smile towards it."

—Beth Stinson

Jacinta in this (still) young year

On Wednesday, March 17th of this year, the Seattle bookstore I work at helped host the Haitian-born novelist Edwidge Danticat for a reading. It was co-presented with the Central District Forum for Arts & Ideas, a fairly new and fairly lively African American arts & lectures group that is based in Seattle. The reading by Ms. Danticat was held at the Langston Hughes Cultural Arts Center, a beautiful onetime synagogue in central Seattle. There was a large, enthusiastic audience, which Ms. Danticat met with beautiful, precise, powerful language. The current travails of Haiti—a coup had just taken place, and chaos and violence were afoot—were much on people's minds. There was, with author and audience, a keen warmth and empathetic regard. Following the reading, as books were signed and people wound in a line across the stage, there were many exchanges of greeting, introductions, embraces. Creole and Haitian-accented English were in there among the many voices.

Coming down from the seating area and making her entrance quite grandly onto the stage as this all wound down, was Jacinta. She was beaming.

—Well, sir, another one of THESE evenings, she said.

She had been taking it in, the reading, the gathering, the aftermath.

—Yes, indeed, Madame. You were here the whole time?

—No, I got here a half hour after it started . . . Jacinta time, you know.

She hadn't been able to get away until 6, then made the drive up from Olympia, rush hour and all.

Jacinta was there for a few reasons, I would surmise. She and others and myself had been having meetings about making Evergreen and Seattle more connected. This had—and has—many possible shapes. Any one conversation with Jacinta,

ostensibly about one thing, would race off into any number of directions, some of them connected. She and I had had encounters and bits of conversation over the years. This year the pulse and pace had intensified. The branch of Evergreen that would be in Seattle was her vision. It was also the starting point for most of our veering off. I don't know if anyone knows how far this notion got along. Several were being enlisted by Jacinta—strategically. A site—the old Rainier brewery—had been scouted out to the point that Jacinta had charts, projected layouts, potential improvements, knew what the lease would cost. She would show you where her office would be and what view it would have. She wanted the water and mountains.

Part and parcel of all this would be what programs, what work this Seattle base would do, whom it would connect and serve. One was intergenerational learning, with an emphasis on Evergreen's own version of how its future might inherit its past. To make more and better use of willing emeritus faculty was one thing. Some form of urban ecological and community studies was another. Having Evergreen Seattle be an institutional host for a remarkable, international 'Cities of Asylum' program that provides sanctuary to writers from around the world was yet another. As much as Seattle would be talked of, there was also what could be done for and with Olympia. And Tacoma. (Among the many things still on my to-do list from Jacinta is to really to visit the Tacoma branch. Yes, Jacinta, I'll get there.) As we plotted out possible connections—authors we might be able to bring down who were coming to Seattle, she wanted Tacoma kept in mind as well as Olympia.

With this whole last realm of scheming, we went quickly from the abstract to the tangible. Earlier in March, Evergreen, with Jacinta's sleight-of-hand facilitation, had made possible a Northwest visit by the Iraqi artist and author Nuha al-Radi. Ms. al-Radi's book, *Baghdad Diaries*, is an extraordinary chronicle of her and a collection of family and friends enduring the devastations of the first Gulf War and the ensuing embargo. It's a book that Therese Saliba, unknown then to Jacinta or myself, had already taught in classes here. With Jacinta's having made the overture through me to Nuha, Therese pounced on the chance to have Nuha come and speak to her class and invited others.

Though she already had a more than full plate (I never was all that clear on what Jacinta, in the day-to-day, had to do. I know there was something major with the Communication Building, but so much of what got talked of was what else she wanted to do, even more what else simply needed doing), Jacinta went all out to make sure Nuha was welcome. She had taken up the reading of Nuha's book, and was fairly overcome at what people in Iraq had withstood. Yes, being bombed, being all but starved, being made pariahs of the known world, but also surviving, working together to endure, keeping humor alive—Nuha makes this, and more, human and tangible.

For Nuha's part, I wouldn't presume to put words into her mouth, but think she was both curious and apprehensive about coming out here. Her trip to the U.S. (New York) was really only for family and medical purposes. For reasons that don't surprise, she is not keen on what this country is doing in, and to, her part of the world. And has done to herself. It may well be that the cancer she is suffering from, that she is undergoing experimental and risky treatment for, is owed to our having blasted and bombed Iraq with depleted uranium. Nevertheless, she was moved and affected by the response, both public and personal she received here. Therese hosted her in conversation with her class. Then Jacinta, who had taken her on in arrival with soup and tea and chocolates, took her about the campus. It was a misty, still-aired, early March day. Nuha saw the kiln area, the Longhouse, the Library. She took it in—the relaxed but earnest studiousness of the place, the buildings and people, all the trees. Her home in Baghdad is in an orchard. Her home where she is living now—in Beirut—she laments, for it is so built up as to exclude the sight of the sea, and so noisome as to exclude the sound of birds.

Jacinta had also arranged a dinner that evening with invited faculty downtown. There was some down time before that, for which a bit of rest seemed a good thing. Knowing Nuha liked water and birds, Jacinta had us, in good time, down to Esmé and Raymond's house on Eld Inlet, right below the Evergreen campus. We wound down a steep, wooded driveway. It was perfect. Nuha loved the place, the house, the sitting at table with tea, with birds and water visible outside, Esmé and Raymond's easy hospitality.

Esmé, Raymond, Nuha, Jacinta, and I talked of work and homes, languages and nations, people and places. Nuha was both fascinated and uncomprehending of Jacinta's fondness for silent retreats. For ten days? How? Why? We could have gone on, but there was dinner downtown, and it was time. Before that, a quick peek up the driveway, at the new little house that Jacinta was beginning to move into. Actually, Nuha had need to use the facilities—perhaps Jacinta's first houseguest for the purpose. It was reason enough to get us in and see the new place. Jacinta had given herself the luxury, she said, of having two Olympia homes for the month (this with several places, it seemed, to stay up in Seattle). She wanted to be leisurely, not manic, about the actual moving. She was speaking of downsizing, materially, to make the fit in the new house. The house was sweet. It seemed ironic in that it was there, a skip and holler from the Evergreen campus, at the same time that Jacinta was starting to see her work and life more and more north—in Tacoma and Seattle.

The night after that Olympia visit, Nuha gave a reading and answered questions before a large and attentive audience up in Seattle at the Elliott Bay Book Company. Jacinta appeared, now off duty, bringing her friend Christine, whom she wanted to see Nuha. A C-Span television crew was there evening. The Elliott Bay and the Evergreen talks were the only public appearances Nuha was making in the U.S. on this whole visit. It was, as I said in introductory comments, a nationally significant occasion.

Following the bookstore talk, there was a gathering at a house in West Seattle. It was small and friendly and warm. Eight people were there and only one or two of us knew more than one or two when it began. By the time this night was over, these people, all variously from Baghdad, Beirut, Tunis, Cairo, Seattle and Olympia did have a sense of the other that they hadn't some hours before. One who was headed for Tacoma gave Nuha a ride to the airport. She was taking a redeye back to New York. There is a group photo of most who were there. Nuha, who later said how much this visit lifted her spirits, is especially radiant—there with an orchid over her ear. That flower was always there. Jacinta was not in the picture. Later, she said she was shy about such things.

She wasn't shy, though, about taking up the wearing of flowers in her hair.

I saw Jacinta a few times in the two weeks after that. Most every day there was a message or an email—meetings, follow-ups, possible collaborations, mullings, musings, reminders, requests, rejoinders, cajolings (Caryn of the Seattle planning group had gotten her a list of Seattle community contacts... and my list?). It seemed as though every time we got something crossed off a list, two or three more were added. These were part and parcel of the work she was doing with Evergreen and Seattle, to say nothing of the work she was doing on-campus. That, I knew, was a load. It was end of the quarter. Her building was production busy, and she was busy right with it.

In those Seattle visits and meetings of February and March, I feel I saw in Jacinta someone who was trying to do something unusual. Midlife—forty-four is supposed to be a person's midlife—is often a time of change. Many undertake radical change, at least on the surface. There might be a cross-country move, a total change of work. Life itself may be tempest tossed. It's hard to say—sometimes the upheaval is sought, sometimes it comes looking for you. Jacinta seemed ready for change, but wanted it on her terms. If I heard and saw her right, she was doing her best to bring this kernel of what she did and was in where she was and wanted to bring that glowing force along with her. She also wanted to return the favor, if it can be put that way.

We talked long and at length about what Evergreen has been and is—and how Seattle would be better for being more exposed to what Evergreen offers. A list of such possibilities would be rattled off, re-worded, revised, revisited. It's still being composed in my head. Conversely, the campus in Olympia, wonderful and unique as it is, has some insulated, stillwater tendencies, some endemic to the academic world, some unique to Evergreen. Talking much of Evergreen soon started having the effect on me—thinking of this place that had fed me twenty-five to thirty years ago—that talking of Seattle had on Jacinta. I felt I wanted to know more of these people there she was talking about. And she, in turn, wanted

to know more of whom I knew, and what work these people did. Making certain kinds of connections up in Seattle seemed like a way to enhance and vivify both places.

One of these connections to be made was with the Central District Forum for Arts & Ideas. It was a pleasure watching Jacinta—who said she enjoyed being anonymous as she felt she was here in Seattle. I wanted to break it to her that someone with her bearing does not stay anonymous for long. Part of that bearing is that wherever she went she soon made warm acquaintance of whomever she encountered. Watching her—sometimes helping with the introductions—Jacinta, this is Stephanie of the Central District Forum. Stephanie, this is the Jacinta from Evergreen that I've been telling you about—and then getting out of the way, it was a pleasure to watch her grow into these new people and possible relationships.

That last full night she lived she was there in Seattle, first at Edwidge's reading. Then she got herself to Marjorie, the Belltown bistro that owner Donna Moodie has made into a tasteful, welcoming place. It was a planned after-reading party for Edwidge. Some invited people were there, and a host of others invited on the fly. As with the reading, so with this reception: Jacinta was the last to arrive. The gathering was well along, people seated at tables, a convivial warmth flowing about the room. Introductions were made, especially to connect Jacinta to Stephanie, the CD Forum's director, and herself a connector. Jacinta also took in the restaurant, which like so much in Seattle, seemed new and exciting to her. She was calculating audibly... a series of meetings was planned relative to Seattle and Evergreen, and she was juggling some peoples' preferences for places where alcohol could be served. To one of her new-adopted favorites, the Collins Pub, where drinks could be served, and the Panama, where they couldn't, she clearly was pondering Marjorie—with its Caribbean-flavored menu, blue walls and painted fabrics ceiling, and Buddhist paintings about.

Jacinta had herself seated with a group of Haitians who were newly moved to Seattle, five people who had not met before the

evening. I had seen them meet, one couple seeing that the others spoke Creole. One of the two couples that were among them had a little, toddler-sized boy. You almost couldn't tell who had him, as he was happily passed around from lap to lap. Jacinta made herself at home at this table, as the wines and food were poured and tasted. I have no doubt that by the end of that night those people had at least one of her cards (I have three different ones) and knew of Evergreen, knew even of people down in Olympia that they should know. And I suspect Jacinta had picked up words and phrases of Creole. It looked like a group of old and good friends.

The day had been long for me, with another long one looming ahead. I said my thanks and good-nights to those at my table. As I made to leave, I stopped by where Jacinta and the others were boisterously still at it. I thought that here was one person whose day and whose next day were no doubt longer than mine. And she, with the sixty miles to drive, to boot. Jacinta stayed seated. I gave her a little pat and hug from above. Did she know where, of her many possible places, she would spend the night? Had she even narrowed it down yet, to Seattle or Olympia? Even Tacoma, for all I knew. She smiled as if she hadn't even thought of that yet—and I suspect she hadn't. The night, even if she might have been tired, seemed young. As did she. Aglow she was.

A kiss on the cheek and words that there would be talk and messages the next day.

And the next day, in e-mail and voice-mail, there were. The work—with play and banter included—continued. What was next? She knew I was going out of town for a week—was giving me advice about Texas. She had notions of going somewhere quiet over the break. And when back—there were writers to work on, Alumni weekend in April, my list (again), questions about a program she was enlisting me for in Amsterdam in fall 2006, Alice Walker and Michael Meade. I don't think I'd told her about Coleman Barks coming through in May, but relished anticipating that. She was after me about a Sonic-Laker game, the Film Festival. What kind of films did I like, anyway? There was always so much.

For this night, though, it was a sweet good night and the word to drive carefully, wherever she was heading. Yes, with care, my dear. And saw the flower—the touch of Nuha—tucked between ear and hat.

Good night, Jacinta, good night.

Much the metta (I miss that) and more.

—Rick Simonson
Seattle
April 17, 2004

Wrong Side of the River

I watched you on the wrong side
of the river, waving. You were trying
to tell me something. You used both hands
and sort of ran back and forth,
as if to say LOOK OUT BEHIND YOU, LOOK OUT
BEHIND YOU. I wanted to wave back.
But you began shouting and I didn't
want you to think I understood.
So I did nothing but stand still,
thinking that's what to do on the wrong side
of the river. After a while you did too.
We stood like that for a long time. Then
I raised my hand, as if to be called on,
and you raised a hand, as if to the same question.

—Stanley Plumly

Jacinta and Radiance

I first met Jacinta when Radiance Herbs & Massage was located on Fourth Avenue next to the Rainbow Restaurant (now a café called “Plenty”). This was in 1985 or 1986. Over the years Jacinta was a regular customer of ours. She became so familiar with our products and the layout of the store that she would often bring friends in and give them a tour, showing them her favorite things and generating much celebratory energy. Jacinta came to Radiance almost every day. If a long-time staff person was not immediately available, it would not be unusual for a newer staff person to ask Jacinta if she knew a particular detail about a product that another customer was asking about. She usually knew the answer and was more than willing to share her knowledge!

I honestly do not remember when Jacinta began helping me as a business consultant. I think she offered to facilitate an all-day staff retreat nine or ten years ago. She helped me organize the day and found a Ropes Course™ facilitator to lead our group in some trust exercises. It was a very successful day and it was the beginning of our long working relationship.

As a small business owner I have sometimes made decisions that caused challenges for my staff. Jacinta was there to help create a safe place for us all to explore what happened and work toward healing. Through her patient and compassionate support of everyone, I began to learn communication tools that were useful and empowering.

Over the years I have learned, with Jacinta's great help, to be a better listener, to write with a tone of voice that is supportive and clear, and to understand how important it is for each person's perspective to be acknowledged. I still have a lot to learn, but I will be forever grateful for the skill I was able to observe and for the wisdom that Jacinta shared with me. She masterfully employed graciousness, respect, hospitality, kindness, compassion and clarity to bring understanding and hope. What a valuable gift she offered in a society where we often don't take the time to understand one another.

I am so thankful I had the opportunity to work with and learn from Jacinta. Some days I wonder how I will go forward without her support; other days I am at peace because her lessons are in my head and I hear her voice reminding me that that I can do this work. A wonderful teacher and friend, Jacinta was.

—Carolyn McIntyre
Radiance Herbs & Massage

The breeze at dawn has secrets to tell you.
DON'T GO BACK TO SLEEP.
You must ask for what you really want
DON'T GO BACK TO SLEEP
People are going back and forth across the doorsill
where the two worlds touch
The door is round and open
DON'T GO BACK TO SLEEP

—Rumi

Jacinta was such a warm and beautiful spirit. I have been in quite a denial about her death because she was so alive and I just can't imagine this world without her smile to brighten it up. Every time I talked with Jacinta she made me feel like I was such a special person and she truly cared about me as a person. She just made people happy when she walked up to them and said, “hello” with a that big, genuine smile with all those beautiful white teeth that made you immediately smile back. I remember the last time I spoke with her she said she had her Mother living with her. I can't even imagine how she is getting through this. I just feel a tremendous loss of something I can't put my finger on, but it's an emptiness I am sure we are all feeling. Jacinta was lucky in a sense because she seemed to live her life to the fullest and loved people and adventures. She will truly be missed! I know I miss her.

—Officer Lana Brewster, a friend

Gypsy Angel

Song by Oraea Varis, psychology student

Garden of Freedom CD, Copyright 1998, Heartstream Records

The last time that I saw her
She had a holy person's eyes
A rebel princess warrior
An angel in disguise

She came here from the Mystery
Into Mystery returned
It blessed me to have known her
And I've grown from what I learned

Never let 'em break your Spirit now
Never let 'em back you down
Never let 'em quench your sacred fire
Fight to keep your crown
And fly on your chariot of fire
Straight into the arms that hold you
Your war inside is over now

Fly free now, my sister
And I'll meet with you again
And I'll call upon my ally
When I need to take a stand

She was a sweet gypsy angel
Lived life on a dare
Riding on a wild wind
Riding on her Dream

—Mukti Khanna

I have been at the Bookstore for twenty years and I have always had a wonderful experience in talking with Ms. Jacinta. Last Thursday, her day to ascend, we shared a few moments about spirituality and what it meant to both of us. She said to me, "I have really loved this life." When I heard that she had begun her journey, I reflected on that knowing that she was ready for whatever life might bring. I will miss her kind heart and joyful welcome as she entered the Bookstore, "Hello darlings!"

—Wendy Sorrell

Jacinta was a pleasure to work with, respectful, free with compliments, prompt and specific with information, interested in every aspect of her building. At the same time she lavished her communications with personal attachments and inquiries, painting her emails with creativity and affection. She called people "Dear" and "Honey" and meant it. I regret her loss tremendously and will miss her every time my work calls me to the COM Building. She cared. Good bye Dear Jacinta.

—Aho'i Mench
Evergreen State College

A night full of talking that hurts,
my worst held back secrets: Everything
has to do with loving and not loving.
This night will pass.
Then we have work to do.

—Rumi

Jacinta and I knew each other from a couple of venues, Evergreen and the Community for Interfaith Celebration. One of my favorite Jacinta stories happened about a year ago (and involved Radiance):

Jacinta and I happened to run into each other downtown in front of the Washington Center. We stopped to chat, and she, of course, asked how I was doing. At the time, I had some probably running-induced ache, pain or injury, which I mentioned to Jacinta. She immediately said, “Arnica Montana (or maybe just “arnica”), and off I trotted to Radiance to get some.

It did the trick, and from then on, I always thought of Jacinta as the Herb Lady.

—Char Simons

Jacinta graciously took me around the COM building when I first came for my job interview in 1991, and has been every bit as gracious ever since as a hall-mate and friend. We shared our love for Sweet Honey in the Rock, Bobby McFerrin, and the dancer Savion Glover frequently, and she was constantly showering everyone in our shared hall with chocolates, ostensibly to conduct “taste tests.” In December during evaluation week she saw me hunched glumly over my computer, walked in with some “Soy Nog” and poured me a mug of it, saying “I hate soy milk. This is not soy milk. This is soy NOG.” (It was delicious and my glum mood evaporated instantly!) I also recall dancing and singing with her in the hallway, pretending to be the Pips (of Gladys Knight and the Pips)—no melody line, just the Pips. But the shyest little part inside of me got its strongest boost from her last week when she said she liked my newest poem.

One of the funnest times I ever had with Jacinta was when I invited her to travel to Ashland, Oregon with my “Performing Arts and Culture” program to see some Shakespeare plays. She

immediately agreed to come, and four of us (Jacinta, myself, Ariel Goldberger and Wendy Freeman) drove south, laughing all the way. We watched “Coriolanus,” one of Shakespeare’s rarely performed plays, with one of the handsomest men any of us had ever seen in the lead role. After the play as we were driving back through town, we saw this beautiful man walking down the street and all four of us were simply agog, staring at him like starstruck teens — the car was drifting aimlessly through an intersection before we realized that he saw us watching him. It was like getting caught ringing someone’s doorbell. This must have been eight years ago, but Jacinta was laughing about it with me just last week.

Every day I think of some thing or bit of news that I would like to share with Jacinta or ask her about. I used to bring her a hyacinth flower every spring (Jacinta=hyacinth in Spanish), and this week I brought one to place outside her door — along with the chocolates, ribbons, candles, teddy bear, photos, and notes. I will think of her when I visit her favorite places in town (and every time I go to Ashland), or listen to Sweet Honey in the Rock or Bobby McFerrin, or walk past her office, or think about how I can use my own warmth and friendship and concern and hospitality to make someone else’s day just a little bit happier.

—Sean Williams
Evergreen faculty in ethnomusicology

I’ll always remember . . .

Jacinta got very excited about this: “Lemonade!”

—Beta Anderson

Raise the Sun

What if the sun wouldn't rise unless you were watching?
What if all that light and heat reached all places seeking
your palms, hoping to find them upraised in welcome?

And what if the sun, having found you attentive, having
found your open hands, could settle in and illuminate
one more day; what if you were what the sun wanted?

And what if the light, as it fanned out toward you
and washed past you, what if that light relied
on your intention to animate form and vary color?

What if your love filled in shadow and polished
water's dance to a sparkle? Would it always be an honor
to draw trees taller and encourage shadows,

to deepen ravines with the waving of your arms?
Could you run your hands along ridges
each morning, sharpening their shape?

What if all it took was you remembering to rise,
to go out and simply bear witness to the immanent,
to just for that moment attend to the bend of climbing light,

making it rise: would that be a privilege? Could you love
enough to warm the side of a planet; would the sun find
you waiting each day, no matter what might come?

—Don Freas

Second Nature

It takes a long time, years
of practice. Make the moves
over and over—slowly
at first then faster. Memorize
patterns, train ear and hand,
learn to play with sound
and sense. Harvest
silence from crowded corridors,
rage from empty meadows.
Drill cadences deep,
carry them everywhere.

Then, when you are threatened,
when you have to move fast,
your body will know what to do.
Motions unfold like breath,
well-worn pathways channel
the moment into song,
and—never doubt it—
making that one poem
will save your life.

—Don Freas

Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing,
there is a field: I'll meet you there.

When the soul lies down in that grass,
the world is too full to talk about.
Ideas, language, even the phrase each other
makes no sense

—Rumi

Jacinta Smile

Could anyone smile quite like Jacinta?
It warmed me, welcomed me
and drew me in.

It was as if I'd met a soul from a previous life
Mysterious, yet knowing.
Spiritual and hospitable
yet guarded
What secrets lay beneath the cheery exterior?

Stress bubbling under the surface
from an unknown source
Pain carried inside
only momentarily glinting the outer
quickly hidden again.

I never knew about the asthma.
Never suspected how serious.
Never heard a word.
Guess I really didn't know Jacinta
only the side she chose to reveal.

What makes people hide who they are inside
Reaching for the "American Dream?"
Own a home
even if you live alone.
Try to fit in
Don't be unique and fabulous
Want security, need stability
Strive for order.

Now, the greetings are gone.
Yet, her spirit lives on within our hearts
our souls
our memories
Because smiles are contagious.
Always remember the laugh, the kindness
the meditative one that was Jacinta
the real McKoy.

—Jocelin Higgins

May I extend my sincerest sympathies and friendship to
all the greeners past and present who are grieving now.
May we move forward not only as friends but as a
community of family.

It has been more than a week since I heard about Jacinta passing
away. When I read her obituary online, and saw her photo, I felt so
profoundly sad and could only sit quietly and think. And I began to
remember...

I cannot say for certain when I first encountered Jacinta. I am
certain it was an official TESC event (spring orientation for transfer
students keeps popping into my mind, but 16 years later, I cannot
say for certain). But I remember that when I first looked at her, I
was taken aback by how beautiful and stunning she was. She was
smiling—not those forced smiles that we so often find ourselves
having to make, but a real smile that just radiated from within. I
could see it in her eyes, in her lips, in her body posture. It was as if
her whole being was saying "welcome." I remember when she first
spoke: how much kindness and warmth radiated from her voice,
and I thought to myself "this woman really has a gift of making
people feel special and cared for." I think it was at a performance
event at TESC that we finally exchanged introductions. I recall that
Jacinta was really interested in who I was, what I did at the college,
what I thought of the event, and so forth. Again, she gained my
utmost admiration.

During my many years associated with KAOS radio, I remember
Jacinta loyally supporting the station and always making me feel
like the work was worth it, not only for my own professional
satisfaction, but more importantly, as a resource of development
for the Evergreen community and the greater Olympia area (and
beyond). Jacinta would always enthusiastically offer gift tickets for
Evergreen Expressions events which I would offer to
member/listeners during fund drives. She would also hook me up
with some amazingly interesting performance artists, whether
musicians, actors dancers, poets, you name it. I did a lot of great
interviews on the "mighty K" thanks to Jacinta's generosity, which
extended beyond just publicity for the events themselves.

I don't feel as eloquent as most of the other writers who have shared from their hearts, but I have been thinking so much about Jacinta and I realize that, although born the same year, she seemed so much older than me in terms of wisdom, self-control, spirituality, organically... you name it. I admired her gentleness and calmness so much! And I believe that Jacinta had the potential to be a great spiritual leader and healer. Her soul radiated from within and it always struck me to be born of maturity and wisdom. I am not sure if I believe in the notion that "we keep coming back until we get it right" and each time back we garner more spiritual knowledge, but if I could think of anyone who would fit the adage of someone whose essence was much older than her physical years, it would be Jacinta.

I remember shortly before I left TESC and the United States to begin a new life adventure in Europe, I had a conversation with Jacinta where I confessed a lot of self-doubts about my health, physically and spiritually. She knew I was always trying to shed unwanted pounds and she talked to me in great lengths about a food program she found that was healthy and made her feel good emotionally as well. Although I never followed her advice, I was taken by how caring and centered she was. I only wish now that I would have told her that!

As I close, I wish I could find better words to encompass how meaningful Jacinta was to all of us. But as I write this, I realize that mere words cannot encompass the vastness of who she was and who she will continue to be, not only here on earth, but in her ongoing spiritual journey.

May she shine as an example of inspiration for us all.

Much love,
—Tom Freeman
'90 & '96
Greener in Europe

Creating Time

Jacinta had an omnipresence in Olympia. She seemed to be involved in everything and to know everyone. I knew her through... the Co-op... TESC's Labor Center... as a music and theater student in TESC's COM building... and as a frequenter of downtown. And more than anyone I have ever known—even those far less engaged in social and community commitments—she exuded relaxation, patience and took time to connect deeply and often at length. As strange as it may sound, I believe her powerful ability and willingness to focus—on the present moment and with present company—enabled her to actually create time.

I'll never forget one particularly bonding experience I had with Jacinta. It was the winter of 1988 and I was on the staff at the westside Co-op, the only Co-op store at that time. During winter holidays we staffed with only a bare bones of our 10-person collective—those who didn't have family commitments. With a significantly smaller team, however, we still kept quite busy.

One of my fellow staff members was a quiet, easy-going man who had been on staff for a number of months, and seemed very shy. He smiled a lot and seemed to have warm interactions, but although we were neighbors, we didn't know each other well. He lived close to the Co-op, and I lived nearly in the Co-op's parking lot. Because I lived so close, my house was a regular hangout, almost an extension of the store at times. So I wasn't completely shocked that he chose my home for an emergency visit. It was the hour that alarmed me—2:00 am.

Being an early morning produce worker, I was asleep and disoriented when he tried to tell me what was wrong. His eyes darted around wildly and he kept saying "something felt wrong inside"... that he had racing thoughts... and wondered if he had an inner ear infection of some kind... that his heart was beating too fast. He wondered if I could take him to the emergency room.

I quickly dressed and we were en route when he told me that his girlfriend was out of town, and that if anything happened to him, he wanted to be sure she knew that he loved her dearly and had always been faithful to her. It was clear that he was anxious on a fundamental level, but I was unable to track his thought process—he'd jumped from ear infection to last request in a few moments. He said he had no history of life threatening illness when I asked, so I couldn't quite put these pieces together. Hopefully, the medical staff could assuage his fears, I thought.

However, the situation intensified upon arrival at the ER. He desperately seemed to need my help through the entire admission process. I served as a sort of protective cloak while the clerk asked questions and issued forms. I felt rather maternal when he looked to me after each question—frequently pulling me aside to discuss the answer before responding.

His fear was palpable, but I still wasn't sure why. Was he worried about the expense? But we had health insurance through the Co-op. Was it his concerns about "mainstream medicine"? But we hadn't even gotten to the stage of prescriptions and treatment. His reluctance included putting information such as his social security number on the form. Hmmm... were we characters in a film about to uncover his checkered past? I tried to reassure him as the clerk looked back and forth at us quizzically. As I saw his "hippy aesthetic" through her eyes, I suspected she thought his paranoia was drug-induced. I had already broached the subject in private with him, and he assured me he was clean.

The ER visit unearthed no satisfying results. I can't remember if examination proclaimed him "normal" or if his paranoia got the better of him and we left before he was examined. I do remember a short sleep before deliriously stocking produce a few hours later. He had a sleepless night and arrived at the store early, but unable to work his shift. He had felt uncomfortable alone in his apartment, as the neighbors had been drinking and arguing. And he was still quite worried about his health. I invited him into my house, brought him food, and checked on him periodically during my produce shift, but found him frantically pacing each time.

His paranoia began to expand to distrust of certain foods and specific people. Simple conversations would turn into visions of conspiracy theories. As the person from whom he initially solicited help, and the one most experienced with his situation at present, I tried to notice trends. I feared with this trajectory of paranoia, his allies could soon be next. If we lost his trust, communicating with him—and therefore helping him—would be nearly impossible. While all staff members were compassionate and willing to help, no one had a clear idea about what to do next. Plus, the fact that we were operating the store under-staffed on Christmas Eve was an added stress.



I was exhausted and near wits' end when I saw Jacinta standing a few feet away, listening to me describe the situation to a staff member who had recently arrived at the store. I don't know if it was the tone of my voice, or the story itself, but Jacinta stopped what she was doing in her life and made a commitment to this ordeal right then and there.

It felt like a superhero moment—Jacinta McKoy to the rescue—calm and completely determined, resource-laden, no second thoughts. I remember physically relaxing as she put her hand on my back and gently began asking me the questions which succinctly led her to an immediate course of action.

As I walked her to my house, she confessed that she barely knew him. I wondered for a moment, why she would be willing to drop all plans on Christmas Eve to help an acquaintance? Sure, I was doing the same, but he had specifically asked for my help. And we were members of the same worker collective which shared responsibility for managing a multi-million dollar store. I had no plans for this evening, but surely Jacinta had to be booked!

I gratefully accepted what she was clearly willing to give. She walked in the room with her enormous smile, and Don immediately returned with the same. She talked with him, made him tea, laughed with him. I returned to work with a weight lifted.

He would eat any food or herbal remedy if Jacinta offer it. I was nearly crying with joy as I watched her magic.

Jacinta was able to transform a situation that had reached nearly crisis proportions into a calm and manageable environment. Once she even left him sleeping on the couch while she drove home to get some relaxation tapes for him. He hadn't slept for days.

As the afternoon and evening progressed, it became clear he was not completely out of the woods. His sphere of "safe" people was reduced to Jacinta, myself and two others. We three spent hours and hours together that afternoon and evening, and were able to make a decision: he should fly home to visit his parents until he felt better. We made flight arrangements together and I agreed to drive him to SeaTac in a few hours.

Christmas Eve at the airport was everything you might expect: complete pandemonium. And I almost wanted to borrow Jacinta's relaxation tapes myself when I began to speculate about his paranoia vs. what might happen at airport security. Would he make it through the metal detector? I kept the image of Jacinta's serene smile in my mind. During the drive, he become less communicative. I had a sinking feeling I was about to be expelled from his "safe" list. Reminding him of Jacinta's words staved off his paranoia for a while.

Sure enough, the metal detector was a nearly harrowing experience, and by the time we got to his gate, his paranoia had extended to me. He asked me to go home rather than wait with him for his plane. Trying to reason with him only made him more distrustful. I respected his request, but feared his erratic behavior might arouse false suspicions from authorities. My stomach was twisting with images of him surrounded by cops. I had a great desire to communicate with his flight attendants so they wouldn't be alarmed at his behavior, and encourage them to be gentle and not too attentive. But seeing me talking to airport personnel, would surely set off the very behavior I most feared.



What would Jacinta do? I remembered her calming touch as she massaged my shoulders earlier in the day, and decided to call a co-worker for advice. I was a few gates away and out of his view. Together we decided that now was the time I should let go. Everyone would benefit by a dose of Jacinta's calm patience. She was able to give help without a hint of condescension. Perhaps this was her secret magic. Her support was always rooted in a feeling of absolute trust. I should trust that he could handle himself.

I returned home to a loving message from Jacinta. Even though I was exhausted and worried, I felt a wave of her peaceful grace wash through me. My superhero had now turned her healing energies to me! He arrived safely at his destination, but his original feeling that "something felt wrong inside" was largely correct. He ended up staying in California to heal.

The intensity of this situation was tremendous, and the experience forever bonded Jacinta and I. Her spirit is so full and vibrant, I feel its life inside me this very moment. Tears come to my eyes as I remember her unflinching kindness, her crystal clear focus and her willingness to create time whenever it is needed. And when panic tempts, I'll try to always remember: What would Jacinta do?

—Melissa Roberts

The clear bead at the center changes everything.
There are no edges to my loving now
I've heard it said, there's a window that opens from
one mind to another,
but if there's no wall, there's no need for fitting the
window, or the latch.

—Rumi

Sparkles and a Wand

Jacinta was the fairy godmother for the Co-op. It really feels like that. Whenever we were in trouble, whenever we were in transition, whenever we needed humor and wisdom, Jacinta would appear. She would listen patiently and then she would talk gently and wave her wand and laugh. We wouldn't only feel better, we would now have a plan and even better, we would have hope.

I have worked at the Co-op since 1984 which is around the time that I remember seeing Jacinta come in. In the mid-eighties, she was a volunteer cashier. Soon she became a staff substitute. She joined the Personnel Committee and helped us with hiring. In the 90's she became our facilitator for staff retreats. She became our Personnel consultant. She became our advisor and our mediator.

She was absolutely integral in the fabric of the Co-op. We watched sadly together as other co-ops and organizations abandoned their collective management systems, their consensus process, and their commitment to volunteers. As we struggled with maintaining our own systems, her will and support was absolute and her belief in the staff was unwavering.

I did most of the personel work and development by myself from the mid-eighties till the early 90's and then with a co-coordinator through the mid 90's. Her support for our personnel work got us through it. Jacinta understood the challanges and difficulties of that work in that special connective way that can't be described. She was so aware of the subtlties and nuances though weeks or months could pass between connections. She always cut right through to the real stuff. She gave deep, heart massaging support.

Jacinta shopped at both stores regularly. She made it her business to know all the staff and as many volunteers as possible. Sometimes, she spent hours shopping and would then come to the register with only 2 or 3 items. One of my favorite stories is how she welcomed 6 newly hired staff. We were planning our first training for the dingy, cement cracked floor meeting room. The place had been a mess that was generally ignored. When I arrived to get the coffee and treats ready, I walked into a transformed space. There were ballons and welcome signs and sparkles

scattered everywhere. What was once dingy and dirty was now sparkling clean and festive and joyous. She managed to do this without anyone knowing. She was so deliciously sneaky...

Words cannot express what Jacinta has meant to the Co-op. Words cannot express what Jacinta has meant to me. I don't know what can express these feelings, I only know how lucky I feel to have them.

Jacinta, I am saddened to the bone. You will continue to bring me hope and inspiration. And I wish I could tell you how much fun it is to visualize you as the the Co-op's fairy godmother. To see you flying in with your cape and your wand and your sparkles...

—Harry Levine

I was a close friend of Jacinta. We met at Evergreen and continued to be friends over the last 10 years or so. We spent Valentines Day together on a platonic "date" while my wife was out of town. In Spring of 2002 she agreed to become a reverend and marry us in August of 2002.

—David K. McMahon

I was one of Jacinta's coworkers in the Communications Building until last fall. I recall that Jacinta explained the meaning of her name, Hyacinth, with a certain amount of pride. It occurred to me that a mass planting of hyacinths would make a nice physical tribute to Jacinta, one that would return year after year. There might be an appropriate place in the community for this planting, or possibly around the Communications Building.

—Jennifer Kuhns

Jacinta

A sting keeps coming to my eyes today. And yesterday. I hurt. Lots of us do. There's a heaviness inside. She's taken a place inside my chest. Some part of her that's staying with me. I worry that she suffered. Deborah says she's somewhere better now or maybe she's nothing now or maybe she's with us all right now. I am one who can't get my arms around nothing even with a capital "N" but I like the idea of somewhere better and I feel her within us now.

That October night with you-got-a-right-to-the-tree-of-life Linda Tillery she gave me a string of Buddhist prayer beads and on the gift box the card was a photo. Not just any photo. A birthday party and there are 7 candles on her cake.

A swelling keeps coming up in my throat and a push in my ears and then behind my eyes, and I think I don't have a right to feel this kind of sadness for I didn't really know her all that well. Not really. Not deeply. And then I think of the farmers market that Saturday morning, a little too cold really to be out and about and sitting there for far too long with her and Anne and talking about the ways to take care. Lotions potions tinctures creams space time rest. And the water really pushes its way now. I think of fifth avenue and time and again when traffic stood still in a sense to make way for majesty. Then the stream of offerings would begin full of wonderfals and inspirings and the all you dos for this community yeah uh huh yeah uh huh. She to me, she to me and I think now wow how I took that in again and again and again .

How many times did I think she said the things she wanted to hear and in fact should have heard. My memory isn't full of any of the things I did say or might have said, my memories are of the things she said, always there with a blessing of sorts, always there with an offering. And now how I see that.

In the photo she looks directly into the camera. Directly. Her whole face glows and her smile is wide and behind her eyes is some mystery I still can't figure out and I saw it there when I saw her last and that was briefly a couple of weeks ago a passing moment in Traditions.

She wears a party hat and so do her nine girlie-girl girlfriends, all smiling faces shining black and white. Center stage hers is the only gaze set dead ahead. At least five sets of eyes are lit on the pink layer cake and the other eyes are on her. There are pink and white party plates on a white table cloth and blue plastic party spoons in ready hands.

She's from Spokane and that's a laugh we've had in common since before we met and a reoccurring hoot between us. She was once a princess there, a lilac city thing and I myself was a candidate a dreadful thing for me not her and now thinking back that all says more about Spokane than I ever really gave thought to, deeply.

In the photo I'm drawn to her little-girl shoulders, her small frame holds a delicate-ness I'm lucky to see this card this gift and to get to know the flutter of fear she housed in there with care, with knowledge, with understanding, with compassion. The things she came to know in herself about herself and so much about the rest of us.

I'm hearing again and again about the things she said to different ones of us. Things called strange, strangely intimate, strange, strangely out there with her feelings. How she felt about us, what we gave her, what she liked about us and even what she may have once not liked about us or me. Uncovered. Sometimes a little too uncloaked to look at. Hers was the only gaze set dead ahead even way back then at seven.

So the late night sighs in her comm building office blend with the cold damp market dialogues mix with the sunny market talks and the fifth avenue promenade punctuated at Water Street, and Columbia, and Capitol, and Washington and her stance her words her laugh wash through me in surprising heaves and spills.

Behind her in this photo hangs a large tapestry of the Last Supper. She laughed loud and hard when she watched me notice this in the lobby of the hall where Linda Tillery sang. It was intermission and she was there with our friend Angel, joyous, festive, glowing, with all that mystery nested in her old growth eyes as she watched and waited for me to find her in the birthday card looking directly at me looking back at her first in the card then in the lobby.

Generous spirit. Wild woman. Enormous presence. I imagine she's walking our streets smiling in the love of the songs and poems and stories and pictures and tears and ideas and memories celebrating her presence continuing in us.

The Last Supper. The tree of life. Suffering. Nothingness. Hereafter. Here and now she is most definitively in my heart and this is somewhat by surprise. For had I known I would have noticed that in each encounter she gave a little away. And I didn't know as I know now it took some root in me. Her ever-assessing, hospitality eyes, a mystery unfolding. I'm kind of seeing or feeling now as she'd stand and talk with me or us the thing I think she did, was

knowingly, she gave a little, and sometimes much, much more. An offering here, an offering there, her branches crossing and connecting. I haven't found a person in town who did not know Jacinta.

Her roots run wide and her roots run deep, her passing body is feeding the spirit. She leaves us with a million moments between us like flowers in the air, petals drifting and falling and gracing our way – yet one more offering - from the Jacinta tree of life.

—Marilyn Freeman
March 21, 2004



Jacinta McCoy at 7

Valentine for Jacinta



—Frederica Bowcutt

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