

From Away

Beverly Werber

I came to Maine more than a year ago from away. Away for more than three decades beside the other ocean and another decade in the desert hard by the other border. I came from away after a childhood in New England and summers in Maine. I am from away, and it defines my love of others who have come to this beautiful and sometimes severe place from away.

The 47 names read aloud on a sunny warm day on Malaga Island lived removed from those feelings of the other. They lived close to generations of family and neighbors. They kept tight and felt safe. Until that day when the bonds of time, island-place and separateness could not hold off the forces of upheaval.

On that quiet day of remembrance this last summer I heard the names of the 47 and felt the presence of their ancestors buried in peace but dispersed in anger. I heard the hymns from away sung in celebration of their lives. A sweet sad cry of celebration. A deep loving cry for the Malaga Island people and the souls who settled the land before them. A century-long song of remembrance.

I hear the hymns still and my soul stirs first in regret and then, later, in hope. I am from away but have been made welcome in this land. With the memory of Malaga in my heart, I seek that sense of home for those who were dispersed, laid to rest away from their home and for the others who will follow.



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