

Wild Flower

GROW INSPIRED

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 3 MARCH 2025

Irishness and Pineapples

“Do you allow
pineapple on
your pizza?”

As I considered my options for this month’s essay topic, I was tempted to discuss my Irish heritage in a nod to March’s Saint Patrick’s Day. Unfortunately, I just don’t *feel* Irish. I don’t like to wear the color green. And even though two of my kids are gingers, we just don’t spend a great deal of energy in our household marking Saint Patrick’s Day, although I do contribute Irishness to our family via my Quinn ancestors. My daughter even made a clothespin doll in third grade depicting an Irish relative from an extended branch of our family tree. I’m glad that of the three clothespin dolls I’ve carefully saved, at least one highlights my heritage. The other two are Norwegian ancestors from my husband’s line.

While I have made my family corned beef—and yes, even cabbage to go along with it, and while I do think that **Conan O’Brien’s visit to Chicago’s Trinity Irish Dance School** is about the funniest thing I’ve seen in a long time, the truth is: when World Cup soccer rolls around, I’m pretty much rooting for England (maybe Brazil or France), and not Ireland.

Therefore, the topic of this month’s essay is pineapples. Pineapples because they are so multi-faceted and fraught with history and meaning. They’re also divisive: does pineapple go on pizza or doesn’t it? I’ve featured a few choice images of pineapples in this issue of *Wild Flower*, and I think they’re quite stunning, don’t you agree? I mean, if you didn’t know what it was, and you encountered a pineapple in the wild, just sitting there next to your walking path, would you ever imagine that beyond the spiny, spiky skin and sharp, pointy leaves awaits a bright, juicy, delicious, acidic fruit?

Pineapples are the quintessential “fresh fruit” signal. If you have a pineapple riding in the top of your Trader Joe’s shopping bag, peeking out like a gopher out of its hole, you are saying to the world: I display fresh fruit in my kitchen. Because where else do you set a fresh pineapple once you bring it home? You don’t put it in the fridge, do you? Maybe you do. I just think that of all the fruit family members, pineapples deserve to be displayed prominently in the home. Even though the task of slicing open a fresh pineapple is neither easy nor particularly enjoyable, it’s worth it, every single time.

I’m a pineapple-on-pizza person. Canadian ham and pineapple are up there as my number two pizza toppings combination. My first choice of pizza toppings are pepperoni, green bell peppers, sausage, and olives. But I always make or order a pizza bearing the yellow fruit. I keep a large bag of frozen pineapple in my freezer



Luck o’ the Irish: at least one clothespin doll highlights my heritage.

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so that it's always ready to be a pizza topping. Frozen pineapple also tastes amazing sipped through a straw after going through the blender with some banana and coconut. I also keep a bottle of pineapple juice in my fridge. Splash a little over ice, add some cold Pellegrino before sipping, and your taste buds will give you a standing ovation.

Canned, crushed pineapple can also be helpful. It's usually an ingredient in a quick dump cake or as a substitute for applesauce. It's a good way to find out if your family recipes are considered weird by the rest of the world. For example, I've grown up always enjoying 'Sunshine Salad,' which is lemon Jell-O, crushed pineapple and shredded carrots. But I made this once for friends, and they thought it was very odd. They ate it, but only to be polite. And then,



of course, there are the rings of pineapple, encased in a can. I've pulled out these rings and toothpicked them to the side of an ham before. Why? Because I've seen pineapple rings used like this as garnish in cook books.

One of my favorite uses of pineapple *flavoring* is in Piña Colada lip gloss.

Remember Lip Smackers lip balm? I do, and **they're actually still around for purchase**. My lips love it!

What about you? Do you allow pineapple on your pizza? Have you enjoyed pineapple in any unconventional ways?

This issue of *WildFlower* features one of my favorite people and just an all-around generous and loving person: Jill Pang. Keep reading to learn about how she cultivates inspiration. ♡



Inspiration: Poetry

Before the Snow

Bliss Carman

Now soon, ah, very soon I know,
The trumpets of the north will blow,
And the great winds will come to bring
The pale wild riders of the snow.

Darkening the sun with level flight
At arrowy speed, they will alight,
Unnumbered as the desert sands,
To bivouac on the edge of night.

Then I, within their sombre ring,
Shall hear a voice that seems to sing
Deep, deep within my tranquil heart,
The valiant prophecy of spring.

The O.A.C. Review, Volume 36, Issue 7, March 1924

Spring Marches On

Jane Rochester

Spring marches on regardless of the enemy.
Daffodils spearhead the campaign,
Crocuses shyly peep through the earth,
Blossom waits patiently in the wings;
Nature is still in a state of high alert.

Temperatures plummet and the advancing army stops in its tracks.
Branches tremble in the icy wind like new recruits
Preparing to discharge a volley of leaves,
Brave snowdrops ignore the impeding doom.
Earth is poised to awake when the battle is over.

The new season is victorious at last
Flowers begin their trumpet voluntary,
Insects are roused from their sleepy slumbers,
Regiments of migrating birds return to their homeland,
A glorious amnesty has been called.

A Poem for All Seasons: A Collection of Seasonal Poetry, 2013

The Blind Girl

Louise Glück

When I was ten God sent
two arrows, meant
for my eyes. Two arrows,
two capsules of snow
that shattered, so the bandage
froze to my face.
When they took it off
I was blind. Nurse,
how strange the darkness is,
not black at all but the passive
color of absence, as though one
afternoon
an image came—of autumn, of a
garden
where all color had converged to
fade—
and faded and was not replaced.
I listened:
I heard voices, I heard my own
voice
rising from the still
transparent body of an angel
as calmly as the wind lifts the
edges
of the curtains, letting in
the measured light.

The New Yorker, March 28, 1977

WildFlower is a monthly publication featuring writing, interviews, stories, designs, observations, recommendations, encouragement and reflections on faith and creativity.

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Spotlight on Encourager Jill Pang

Tell us a little about your yourself.

I'm Jill Pang. I'm married to Art, and we're raising two teenagers. I work as a social worker at St. Jude Hospital and live in Yorba Linda.

Where did you find inspiration for creativity when you were younger, and where do you find it now?



Jill's thriving succulents, clustered in larger containers.

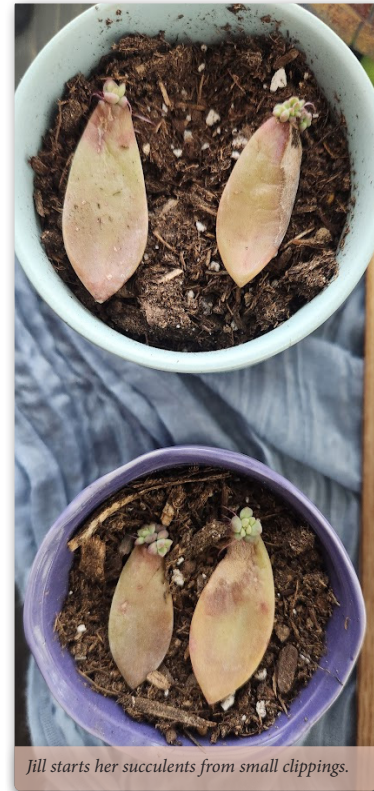
I've always been a big reader and writer. As a child, journaling was an outlet for me. I loved escaping into books. As I got older, I didn't have as much time for journaling and reading. Now, I try to maximize my bang for my buck. I spend my free time by taking a walk and getting exercise in nature.

I do still journal, but less frequently. I don't get to read as much as I did when I was younger. I feel like when I do journal, it's my prayers, my conversations with God. It's not just what I did that day, but my feelings: things I'm

asking for, things I'm grateful for. I focus on gratitude and find it helpful to reflect on thankfulness.

Please describe your hobby propagating succulents! Where did you get the idea and how did you get started?

This past fall, I had a rare day all to myself: the boys were camping, my daughter was at a band event. I went in **The Potting Shed** in downtown Orange. The store has a couple stories of plants and gift items, they host classes—it's all very cute stuff. One of my friends was getting ready to go into hospice, and I was looking for a gift to encourage her. She loves plants, and I was going to get her a plant of some sort. They had some cute little pots, but the plant I really liked was only available in a big pot. I asked if they had a smaller version of the plant I liked, and the woman working there told me how succulents are very easy to propagate into a smaller pot. She told me how to do it. Actually, that first plant was not a



Jill starts her succulents from small clippings.

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Jill's Chocolate Chip Cookies (with thanks to Stacy)

Ingredients:

1 lb. (four sticks) butter	6 cups flour
16 oz dark brown sugar	1 and 1/2 teaspoon salt
1 and 1/2 cup white (granulated) sugar	1 and 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
2 tablespoon vanilla	24 oz chocolate chips
3 eggs	2 cups chopped nuts (optional)

Cream butter and both sugars. Add vanilla and eggs. Beat mixture for three minutes. Mix together flour, salt, and baking soda. Add to wet ingredients. Fold in chocolate chips and nuts. Put spoonfuls of dough on a cookie sheet lined with aluminum foil (shiny side up). This is important. Don't forget the foil! Bake at 325 degrees for 12 to 18 minutes.

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succulent, but a purple flowering plant. It was pretty. I took her advice, snipped a few cuttings, and took it home to put it into water so it could grow. And it did just that! I was so fascinated and got hooked. As Christmastime approached, I thought: this year I'm going to try to make little succulent gifts—no one needs another candle! I ended up making one for everyone at work, mini succulent gardens.

Propagating succulents has brought me a lot of peace. It's stressful being a parent! So I've been working with my plants all fall for gifts. My bigger goal is to landscape our yard. I hope to figure it out small chunks. Everyone has latched on to my new hobby. My sister, my mom, and I got

together with breakfast and a ton of mini succulents one morning. We made some small hanging succulent plants—you have to have them set for a while to get roots. All of us made one. I especially love succulent walls—like the one at Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf in Brea on Lambert. I've been watching YouTube videos about growing succulents from one of leaf—I'm definitely no expert. It's just something I do for me.

How do you nurture creativity? Is there a spiritual dimension to your creativity, and how does your faith play a role?

I find inspiration when I walk. I'm usually praying, trying to look for the beauty in nature, and I enjoy walking on the trails around here. We can access trails easily from our house by walking up Valley View. We'll usually walk around there as a family and then come down Prospect and go to Avalon Bagel. If I'm by myself, I'm communing with God.

I do like cooking. It's calming for me for meal prep for the week and feel like I have things nailed down. It makes me feel good to have a plan for the week making healthy meals. There's a spiritual element in serving my family nutritious food. Last year I got into charcuterie boards, and I started trying different ones for the holidays and the Super Bowl.



Jill's succulent propagating project. She has cuttings that develop roots in water and are later potted in various mugs, pots and other containers.

Do you have any other hobbies?

We all have fun going out paddle boarding as a family. We just got the whole family paddle boards. I also love to make a Shutterfly book for each of the kids every year with photos of the past 12 months. I give it to them after their birthdays in March, and it's a nice reflection experience for me. I think, "Oh yeah, we have had a good year." They enjoy looking back through them.

What are you reading these days?

My favorite author is **Jody Picoult**, a fiction writer. She takes pressing issues of the day and puts them into a fictional story. She wrote a book on the perspective of a school shooter's parents and the victims. Her stories look at all the layers and from different perspectives. Another one of her books dealt with abortion. As a social worker, I appreciate looking at things through different angles. We often get stuck taking only one certain view. She's my "for fun" read. I'll probably read her next book, "**By Any Other Name**." I just finished "How to Stay Married, The Most Insane Love Story Ever Told" by Harrison Scott Key. I recommend it for all married couples. It exemplifies the uniquely beautiful gift of Christian marriage and the "die to yourself" notion and the power of forgiveness. Our pastor recommended it for any married couple, and I agree, it's a great read. Key has a funny way of writing. He writes about infidelity in his marriage, and how his faith helped him forgive. It's pretty inspiring and a cool example of a Christian marriage versus a worldly marriage: how they stuck it out through some tough things. I even recommended the book to Art because I thought he'd like it. It's something you could recommend to a husband. With so many things in our mind, sometimes it's harder to engage with an author. But this book kept me interested. I'm mentoring a college student right now, and she and I are going through a study on Philippians by Max Lucado. The study has questions to guide us—I recommend it! ✨

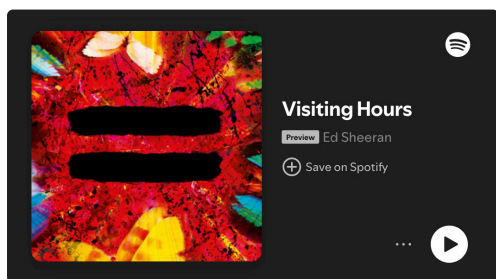
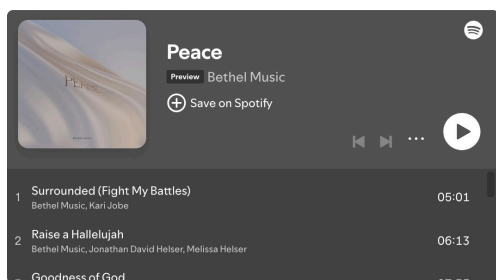
Keep scrolling to read Jill's music and shopping recommendations!



Jill's home-grown succulent gifts.

Recommended Listen: Ed Sheeran's "Visiting Hours"

Jill mentions that lately she's enjoyed Bethel's album, *Peace*. She says it's very calming. She also loves Ed Sheeran—anything he sings, but especially "Supermarket Flowers" and "Visiting Hours." She also like 80s music as well as some of the things her kids listen to. She admits she's not always good at knowing who sings which song, but she likes a mix of great tunes! 🌿



Shopping: StitchFix

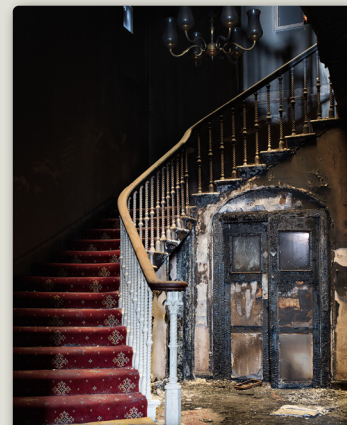
She's usually tight on time and isn't much of a shopper, so Jill enjoys having a **StitchFix** subscription. She likes that she can choose styles and colors that she likes and provide her measurements. Then a designer figures out outfits and sends them to her. Jill can choose which ones she wants to keep. Usually she gets a **StitchFix** subscription as a gift here and there. Jill says she likes to get dressed up for work. Her mom also passes along a lot of her clothes to Jill, "and she has some nice things!" Jill says, laughing. 🌿

Purses: Rough & Tumble

Truth be told, I love purses. My favorite place to find a lovely carry-all for my adventures is

Rough & Tumble.

Headquartered in Portland, Maine, the team at R&T creates some of the most beautiful pieces, and I have a collection. I bought my first "three-way convertible" hobo directly from Natasha Durham's Etsy shop in 2012, and it's been true love ever since. Besides the convertible hobo, which changes easily between backpack, shoulder bag and cross-body bag, my favorites to carry are the **Seven-Pocket Tote**, the Little Book Bag and the Baby Bella (both retired styles, but you can sometimes find them on second-hand sites). R&T's got a **preloved site**, too. If you make a purchase, please tell them I sent you. 🌿



"Abandoned Staircase" by Trougnouf (Benoit Brummer) - Own work, CC BY 4.0



"Windy Wedding" by Paul Haberstroh - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0

The End: Until Next Time



I hope you've enjoyed this special Irish-Pineapple issue of *WildFlower*. I plan to be back next month with an interview with someone who is the sweetest person ever, as well as some original essays, writings, and inspiration. If you'd like to submit content or ideas, please reach out to editor@wildflowerjournal.com. 🌿