



Profile: Linda Hoag

Linda Ann Hoag



I came to meditation fifteen years ago because I couldn't figure out what the deal was with suffering—other than to note that there seemed to be a bunch of it! My previous (unsuccessful) attempts at handling suffering included drugs and alcohol, overwork and self-recrimination.

Meditation works a lot better.

I am a Marriage and Family Therapist, employed as a school counselor at the California Institute of the Arts. In my work with students, I draw on insights from my experience with meditation, my interest in the work of Masatake Morita, a Japanese psychiatrist who was a contemporary of Freud's, and western behavioral/cognitive therapy. Before I came to Cal Arts, I worked with people with life threatening illnesses, particularly AIDS.

I enjoy writing poetry because, like meditation, poetry helps me pay closer attention to the world around me.

3 Poems written by Linda Hoag:

Los Angeles

Got to wonder why I love her so much,
this old slattern of a city,
so promiscuous with her favors,
a hibiscus tucked behind each ear,
and earthquakes like a hoochy koochy dancer.
Got to wonder why I put up with
the miasma of her perfume,
ozone, bus fumes and burning rubber,
her hair, shaggy as unkept palm trees,
her eyes, like headlights coming in the wrong lane.
I told her I was leaving a dozen times,
but she served me up mole negro,
prik king, chicken and waffles and ube cake,
just the way I like it,
spun the Santa Anas on the turntable,
said I was the only one
who really understood her,
cried big, fat tears which rolled down the Arroyo Seco,
so I put my head down on her soft right breast,
just at Mount Washington,
and looked up to see
she'd gotten the stars to spell out my name.



A Couple Embraces by the Silver Lake Reservoir

Her pink top has spaghetti straps.
His sweat pants encircle years of fine dinners.
These two are not small.
This is a good omen.
Today will be a generous day.
All the herbs in Los Angeles,
rosemary, lavender, basil, thyme,
will expend their perfumes in the sun
with no thought of recompense.
Unexpected birds will arrive in backyards
with flashes of vermilion and tunes from Bali.
See, the little hills are Odaliques,
boldly inviting a lover's glance.
Don't be shy. Don't worry if your butt looks fat.
Lean forward, take it all in your voluptuous arms.

John Cage In A Landscape

"Everything we do is music." John Cage
John wakes up smiling
from a dream of Merce's knees,
sets a kettle on to boil
for bancha tea, taps his pencil,
answers a letter requesting an interview,
listens appreciatively
to the jackhammer down the street,
notes the timbre and the duration,
swishes the kitchen counter
with a soft cotton cloth,
counts the beats
in the teapot's rattle,
pours a glissando of drops,
lifts the teacup to his lips,
breathes in the fragrant silence.