

**Sandy Reay, Author**

## **April 2024 Newsletter**

**The word for this month is chance.**

**Sometimes life gives you chances. It's up to you to take them. Or not.**



### **Times I Didn't Die: Photographs**

#### **1. Family Trip, Florence Italy, Aug 1984**

We were first through the door to the Uffizi Galleria. Knowing people will follow one another up, I headed up the stairs toward “The Birth of Venus” (aka Venus on the Half-Shell). It had just come back from being cleaned and restored. And I had it all to myself, sitting on a bench, memorizing every detail, until the crowd made it up to the top floor and pushed in front of me.

I wandered around that floor and found a small room off to one side. It was filled with portraits, mostly of men, all by Rembrandt. My tour of the top floor led me to an open window. I leaned out and spied the far half of the Ponte Vecchio (which crossed the Rio Arno), the oldest bridge in the city.

I leaned out the window to get the best shot: a view of the full bridge in the rain.

The old building had thick walls, measured in feet, not inches. I wiggled forward on my stomach. The outside wall ran down into the river. Which I could see when I glanced down. And, someone holding a bright yellow umbrella walked under an arch.

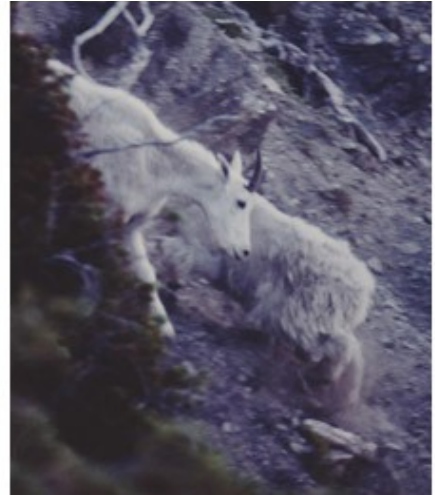
My sister grabbed the waistband of my jeans and pulled me back in. Or tried to.

“Let go. I have to get this shot.” I fumbled with my camera.

“You're going to die.”

“I’m fine.” I braced my elbows down the side of the building, leaning further out, and caught one shot before the yellow umbrella disappeared into the darkness. And realized how far out I was leaning.

My sister pulled me back in.



## 2. Logan Pass, Glacier National Park MT, July 1985

Same camping trip as the Hellgate fire, driving on a rutted dirt road, looking for a camping spot. We passed a herd of mountain goats. My friend stopped and lit his pipe. I grabbed my camera and the long-distance lens. Wearing sandals and cut-off jeans, I pushed through the brush and eased down the gravel-covered slope to get the best angle: two goats climbing down into the far side of a ravine. I had to inch further down the steep slope to get a shot with white water.

I didn't notice where they went after they crossed the gorge. I stopped shooting when all the goats crossed the ravine.

I was surrounded by goats. The young ones butted each other; the older goats checked me out. They'd walked up the path I was on—their path—under my camera lens.

I tried to turn around on the slope. Each quarter-inch I shifted, I slid down another inch or two. Some of the bigger goats wanted to check my pockets. The small ones quit butting each other and headed toward me. One gentle push and I would slide down on my butt (if I was lucky) into the snow-melt water in the rocky ravine.

I smelled smoke. My friend, puffing on his pipe and wearing hiking boots, had crept down the slope toward me. He held out his hand. I just had to push between two goats to reach it. One bit my back pocket. It probably smelled crumbs from a granola bar.

I leaned toward my friend and stretched. He grabbed my wrist just as the goat let go of my pocket. One not-so-gentle push from the disappointed goat, and I slid through the brush, pulled up by my friend.

### **The Sinister Umbrella**

I'm still writing the first-draft of [The Sinister Umbrella](#), a novel about a young woman whose life is destroyed in a car accident and her struggle to build a new life. It's a young-adult horror story, with a touch of humor and a twist (or three). If you want to know more, click on the link. The protagonist reaches the dark night of the soul. All of her friends/allies are gone. And, a person out of a dangling subplot reappears. Wahoo!

### Monthly email.

I'm working on Version 12 of my memoir, [You Are the Road That Led Me Home](#). I use memes from Facebook for prompts in my journal. When I think I'm on to something, I copy it into a file and save it for a time when I can concentrate on my memoir. But my subconscious mind is processing. Instead of sending this newsletter out, I wrote long emails to myself this week, capturing a new perspective on two events.

**If you wish to unsubscribe, please reply and put “unsubscribe” in the subject or text.** I won't send another. Unless you reply after the next monthly email. I have no idea when that will be. Probably not before my critique Zoom meeting, which is on the 14<sup>th</sup>. Maybe Mother's Day.

**If you want to read past newsletters, check out [Archives](#).** If you can't see the old newsletters and want to, please email me. I found a work around, but it will take time to fix. [Times I Didn't Die](#) has its own page, with some incidents that weren't included in newsletters. The other micro-memoirs from the newsletters are posted on the [Inspiration](#) page.

### Necessary blah blah

I add content to my author website when the inspiration strikes (usually monthly) and mention what's new on the home page. Re: the “Not Secure” message at the top of my website. That means I didn't pay for a certificate because I don't do online commerce. All my websites display information. (I've been building web sites since 1998; I keep 'em simple and watch out for suspicious files on my server.) I don't collect or save your information **unless you choose to email me**. All I save is your name and email.

[Sandy Reay, Author](#) – ideas to encourage creativity, where to find inspiration, short stories, micro & flash fiction, true stories, and a memoir (in progress for a decade—don't hold your breath)

[Colorado Sandstorm Music](#) – songs and poems written and co-written by Sandy Reay and Friends, and an online Cowboy Poetry Book: [Another Horse to Saddle](#)

[Colorado Sandstorm Productions](#) – info about all the other websites plus concerts

[AcousticByLines](#) – when and where you can hear supportive musicians, co-writers, and find me sometimes (when I'm not hibernating or self-quarantining)

[Sandy Reay and Friends' songs and poems on YouTube](#)

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