

Foreword

Every story has a beginning. A well-told work of fiction usually has a beginning, a middle, and, happily or sadly, an end. But the stories of our lives have many beginnings, many new chapters, created as we grow and learn, as we change with challenges, as we love and hate, as we age and simply progress from day to day. Each new morning is a new beginning.

The narrative of a life is not a once-upon-a-time tale; few of us ever reach “happily ever after.” Still, we strive for that moment, and seek opportunities to pursue it. Hopefully, we find enlightenment in each adventure, and have plenty of time to work our way out of plot twists, and to resolve conflicts and solve mysteries before we reach the last word of the final chapter. But, no matter what our personal story is, it is the most important story that we can share.

The events of our lives connect us, to our heritage, our sense of who we are, and the world beyond ourselves. Our stories can touch others; they can teach, bring joy, and invoke empathy and understanding. Sharing what we have experienced can help others to recognize their own humanity, the importance of who they were, who they are, and who they can become. Telling our own stories is the beginning of true communication and community.

In her 1992 “Storyteller’s Calendar” (Stotter Press), Ruth Stotter said, “...I think we’re made of stories!” I believe that stories are as essential as food and water, as necessary as air; they are vital to both the one who offers the narratives, and the ones who receive them. For many years, I have enjoyed the satisfying banquet of stories that is appropriately titled *Beginnings*, the collected works of adult students united

in the community of the Ohio Writers' Conference. This is a community made of stories.

This tenth edition of *Beginnings* offers us another banquet, with much to savor: personal experiences and remembrances, stories of renewal and celebration, tales of healing and humor, gifts of knowledge and love. Each published work chronicles a moment or thought, a life or phase of life, a chapter, a beginning. The authors honor us with the richness of words from their hearts, minds, and spirits, food for thought from the pages of their lives.

The authors share themselves with each reader. We become acquainted, and a new story begins.

Lynette (Lyn) Ford
Storyteller