



CELEBRATING THE SEASON OF GOING PLACES

First and foremost: Welcome, dear friends and new subscribers! I'm so glad you're here!

What do books, poems, and vacations all have in common?

They take us places!

I am continually inspired by the beautiful world we live in. I credit my parents: They're the ones who took me and my four siblings to live in Saudi Arabia for 2 ½ years. They're the ones who decided to take time to travel with us around the world before returning to the States. Y'all, this experience shaped me in myriad ways!

The one place both my parents said they'd like to return to? EGYPT. (photo above from our family slide collection, circa 1977!) Which is why Paul and I will be traveling there later this year!

Another reason is that my next picture book (coming spring 2026) is set in Egypt. It's titled A GOOD MORNING FOR GIDDO, and I co-wrote it with my soul-sister Dahlia Hamza Constantine. We wanted to offer readers a beautiful, whimsical day at the Cairo marketplace... and also feature a few of our favorite Egyptian arts. Tentmakers of Cairo, anyone? More on this adventure very soon!

VISIT THE TENTMAKERS

Of course one doesn't have to go far for adventure. Paul and I recently took a one-night trip to the northwest corner of Alabama. We love exploring history, nature, seeing quirky sites, and eating good food! Here are a few of the places we visited (all in about 36 hours!):

[Jesse Owens Museum](#)

[360 Grille](#)

[Muscle Shoals Sound Studio](#)

[Key Underwood Coon Dog Memorial Graveyard](#)

[Dismals Canyon](#)

[Natural Bridge of Alabama](#)

I have been around the world, and these sites are every bit as wondrous as anything I've ever seen. I was breathless at Dismals Canyon. I got a lump in my throat over a story I learned about Jesse Owens. I have never enjoyed a piece of swordfish more than at 360 Grille. And when I saw the first gravesite featuring a beloved dog's collar? Y'all. I lost it.

And yes, I added many lines, ideas, and inspirations into my writing notebook!



POEMS FOR TRAVELERS

"Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts." - *Mark Twain*



Also coming up:

June 24: Poetry! Poetry! Poetry! sessions at Clay Public Library (Pinson, AL)

June 26: All Things Gee's Bend at Oneonta Public Library (Oneonta, AL)

Questions for you, dear reader:

Where will you be traveling next?

*What one place you've been
would you most want to return to?*

Hit reply and tell me all the things!

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR BEING A PART OF THIS CREATIVE LIFE.

HAPPY SUMMERING, FRIEND.

Irene



PO Box 122

Oneonta, AL 35121, United States

Don't want these emails anymore? You can [Unsubscribe](#) or [Manage Preferences](#).