

Meme, Myself & iPhone:
LYRICS, PHOTOS & THE STORIES BEHIND THEM

Tui Snider

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ISBN-13: 978-1537078045

ISBN-10: 1537078046

First edition

Tui Snider

About the author:

Tui Snider is an award-winning author, photographer, musician, and speaker who specializes in quirky, haunted, and downright bizarre destinations. As she puts it, “I used to write fiction – but then, I moved to Texas!”

Snider's writing and photographs have been featured by a variety of publications, including Coast to Coast AM, FOX Travel News, LifeHack, the City of Plano, *Wild Woman Waking*, and more.

Snider's books inspired by the Lone Star state include *Paranormal Texas*, *The Lynching of the Santa Claus Bank Robber*; and *Unexpected Texas*.

Tui has several new books in progress, including *Messages from the Dead: A Field Guide to Cemetery Symbols*. Each Friday, she co-hosts a streaming radio show called “Para Mysteries.” She enjoys connecting with writers, readers and creative folks all over the globe.

For more information, or to contact the author, visit:
TuiSnider.com

Tui Snider

*To Larry, Naomi, Teal, & my parents:
Thanks for helping me shine!*

Tui Snider

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About this Book

The Positive Power of the Internet

We often hear about the damaging side of the Internet. And while bullies and trolls are a part of our modern landscape, there is a positive side to online connectivity that often gets overlooked. Case in point: *Me!*

I wouldn't have created *Meme, Myself & iPhone* if it weren't for the encouragement I've received, and connections I've made through social media and the Internet. In fact, if I hadn't started a blog in 2008, I'd still be writing, taking pictures and singing songs – but no one would know.

It's not that I'm reclusive, I simply made a crucial mistake. In my twenties, I showed my work to some very negative people. They made me feel ashamed for wanting to write, take photos and make music. Unfortunately, I listened to them. Even so, I could not suppress my creative urges completely. Despite believing those people, I couldn't stop creating. I just didn't talk about it. It wasn't safe.

But then, along came the Internet!

It Started with a Blog

Like so many others, I started blogging. In 2008, a magazine editor read one of my posts and offered

me a monthly column. They even paid me! From this one opportunity, a full-time writing career emerged as I began writing for one travel magazine after another. In 2014, I published my first book, *Unexpected Texas*. This guide to offbeat and overlooked destinations quickly became a bestseller for Dallas – Fort Worth Travel and remains so over two years later.

Photography came next. Magazine editors appreciated when I provided photos with my articles, so I started sending pictures with every piece. Even so, I was reluctant to call myself a photographer. Once again, the Internet came into play. After I started using Instagram (a social media app for sharing photos) opportunities and encouragement continued. For instance, my photographs were featured in a poetry book and the City of Plano invited me to take part in a Photo Walk.

More and more opportunities came my way – speaking engagements, writing gigs, and book signings – and always through the Internet. After attending Tarleton State University’s *Langdon Review* Weekend, I was so inspired that I dared to apply for their residency program. Much to my surprise, they chose me as their writer-in-residence for 2016.

Since I included several photos in my proposal, *Langdon Review*’s editors, Moumin Quazi and Marilyn Robitaille suggested a month-long photography exhibit along with my residency. The

photography exhibit is entitled *Meme, Myself & iPhone* as an homage to the power of the Internet and the fact that all my photos were taken on an iPhone.

Photos - Books - Music

What started as a photography exhibit has grown into a “Photo show, Book & Music Release Extravaganza” because my husband, Larry, kept saying, "You really ought to have a CD of your own music playing during your photography show." Although I doubted I could pull it off, I took the challenge. In less than a month, I recorded a 10-song album of original songs called “Come to My Senses.”

Meme, Myself & iPhone is a companion book featuring photos from the show and lyrics from the album. It also includes a brief description about how each song and photo came about. Why? Because every time someone else's song or photo captures my imagination, I find myself wondering what the story is behind its creation. I want to know what inspired the artist and what made them follow through. How did those lyrics come about? Are they based on a true event? Where were they when they snapped that picture? Why did that image call to them?

How this Book is Organized

In the first part of this book, I share the lyrics to the songs on my album, “Come to My Senses.” I also explain a bit about how the music was created and what inspired the lyrics.

In the second part of this book, I share a dozen photos (all taken with my iPhone) and tell a little bit about the story behind the picture. There are three different themes to the photos here:

Travels - through Texas and Beyond
Shadow, Reflection and Rust
Historic Graveyards.

Also, for the photography exhibit, I have created a photo calendar for each one of those themes as well as a notecard set.

My Ultimate Goal

While my photos, album and books are for sale, selling is not my primary goal. As someone who kept her own creative spirit bottled up for many years, I truly hope everything here inspires you to share your *own* artistic projects with the world. In fact, if you enjoy this book, feel free to send me an email at TuiSnider@gmail.com. I'd love to hear from you!

~ Tui Snider, August 12, 2016

Part One:

Lyrics

1. *Indra's Loom*

by Tui Snider, 3:56min

Was it chance that brought us here?
Beneath a careless moon
Strands of silver gossamer
Shine on Indra's loom

Chorus:

Shine on Indra's loom... I'm still drawn to you...

Tangled patterns from the past
Weave a ragged edge
'Though I wonder, "Could it last?"
I'm still drawn to you

I know we fought, but what about?
I forget when we're near
I'm so tempted to reach out
I'm still drawn to you

My life's gleaming tapestry
Woven light and dark hues
Unintentional design
Shines on Indra's loom

About the Lyrics:

Indra is an ancient Hindu god who creates the universe by weaving it out of nothingness. There are many variations to this myth, with Indra's creation variously described as a net, a spiderweb, or cloth.

No matter which metaphor is used, the important part is that at each and every intersection of this net/web/cloth, Indra has placed a gleaming jewel, and within this jewel the entire universe is contained.

Nowadays we have so much knowledge at our fingertips, but to think that the ancients had a grasp of what modern day scientists refer to as the “holographic universe theory” amazes me. I often wonder how many things we once knew as a species, but could only express on a more intuitive level.

Also, it often seems to me that the Internet itself is a tangible metaphor for humanity’s interconnectedness. Social media, in particular, often feels like an outer manifestation of a deep yearning we have to merge consciousness and truly know what everyone else is experiencing.

But what do we choose to do with all this knowledge? Where does it take us? Looking back at our lives, what design emerges from all the seemingly random choices we have made?

So the lyrics started off as I mused about the holographic universe and Indra, but also ended up

being a love song.

Does this couple get together in the end? Who knows? I suppose in one reality they do, and in another they don't!

About the Music:

This song started out with a few guitar chords. I enjoy composing on guitar because I really don't know what I'm doing! By that, I mean it's easier for me to just noodle around without getting all cranial and thinking, "Oh, I just went up a third - how cliche!" as often happens on the piano if I'm not careful. And by "being careful," I mean getting out of my way, and using my ears and not my brain to create.

The flute solo was a nice surprise. I was listening to the song while making dinner and suddenly felt like it could use a breezy little solo.

2. Swamp Fire Dreaming

by Tui Snider, 3:46 min

Memory's net
Loose weave scoop
Sifting through dormant truth
What is held back?
What is decided?
Where is the line for what's divided?

Chorus:
Ooh... Swamp fire dreaming

Spanish moss
Weeping trees
Suppressed thoughts grow like weeds
This sense of place
This range of feeling
It makes sense here
It's quite revealing

Lost debris
Fermenting
Waking cues
Returning
Unfolded wings: See what they've become
Unfolded wings: Transformed, renewing

About the Lyrics:

I have a lifelong fascination with dreams and have kept a dream journal off and on since my teens. For many years I worked in coffeehouses, and my coworkers and I often helped our early bird customers interpret their dreams. In 2000, my first paid online writing job was for a site about dream interpretation. It was a lot of fun!

Even though I tend to agree with Sigmund Freud's comment that, "An uninterpreted dream is like an unread letter," I have a lot of unopened mail!

Still, it's interesting how specific settings, characters, and themes recur in dreams. For me, a certain swamp setting with Spanish moss and glowing fires has reappeared in my dreams for as long as I can remember.

Swamp Fire Dreaming is about getting to know my way around my own subconscious, and how it's simultaneously familiar and foreign - even a bit scary at times!

After all, who really knows what you might discover in that flame-lit swamp? Who knows what you've taken there from your day and what you will return with when you wake?

About the Music:

There's no guitar in this one, but I wanted to express a feeling of movement and exploration. That's where the drum and bass line came from.

I chose the “male chorus” synthesizer voice to connect each verse because it fit with a dream I had in which a trio of Gregorian monks followed me through a primordial swamp. Like so many dream images, it seemed deep and meaningful at the time, but when I woke up, it just seemed surreal and silly!

3. *Madrona*

by Tui Snider, 4:05 min

Oh, Madrona twisting red
Branches claw above my head
I know I'll never see you spent
Your beauty comes from your torment

Chorus:

Challenged by the southern wind - you chose this
Skeletal and pliant - you chose this
Challenged by the southern wind - you chose this
Twisting and defiant - you chose this

Oh, Madrona dance with me
Speckled shadows scatter me
Lift me up to see the view
If I were brave I'd be like you

Oh, Madrona dressed in black
Cloak the sky and turn your back
Slick with rain your shiny hide
Shake your mane from side to side

You could hide in forests deep
Pray the lord your soul to keep
Living like a quiet sigh
But instead, your head's held high

About the Lyrics:

I wrote this song in my mid-20's while living off the grid on a small island in the Pacific Northwest. The lyrics started as a non-rhyming poem about a certain tree I enjoyed watching from my living room window. I've long admired how Madrona trees thrive in the most challenging environments. This one, for instance, stood on a rocky bluff exposed to the brunt of the prevailing winds.

About the Song:

When I play this song on guitar or piano and sing along, it's rather pensive and slow. For some reason, when I recorded the guitar part for "Madrona" for this project, I found myself strumming faster than usual. Was I just nervous about getting the song done in time?

I really wasn't sure if I liked the song at this tempo, so I decided to listen to it while doing the dishes. I often turn to menial chores when I'm stuck in the creative process. As my friend, Char Mandell, likes to say, "The dishes are your friends. They are always there for you." While scrubbing away, I suddenly heard a rather catchy bass line. I decided to go with it, and this is the result. Thanks, Char!

Also, at the very end of "Madrona" you can hear

a brief tambourine part. That's not actually a tambourine, though! It's my cat, Kalliope, shaking her collar. I decided to leave it in. There are a few other moments throughout the album where you can hear Ms Kalliope K's jingly contribution to the songs, but this one is the most obvious.

4. Love (it Just Is)

by Tui Snider, 3:34min

Chorus: It just is... Love, just is...

I tried to change love - but it just is
Somehow rearrange love - but it just is
Sometimes it's strange, love - it just is, it just is

I tried to hold love - but it just is
Somehow shape or mold love - but it just is
Timid or bold, love - it just is, it just is

I tried to ignore love - but it just is
Sweep it right out the door, love - but it just is
You can always have more love - it just is
It just is

I tried to earn love - but it just is
Kept on waiting my turn, love - but it just is
We all deserve love - it just is, it just is

I tried to define love - but it just is
Work it out in my mind, love - but it just is
It's yours and it's mine, love - it just is, it just is

I tried to hide love - but it just is

Stuff it way down inside, love - but it just is
My heart's open wide, love - it just is, it just is

About the Lyrics:

This song tumbled out in a big rush. The lyrics didn't start as a poem or journal entry, but as a brief epiphany after a meditation session. I don't meditate as often as I should, but I am working on making it part of my daily practice. It's kinda like flossing my teeth. I go on jags where I floss every day, but then something happens and I quit for a while.

I don't know about you, but I sometimes feel so bombarded by social media and the 24 hour news cycle that I need a break. Between my husband's scary trip to the ER, yet another mass shooting, and all the political vitriol I witnessed online, I felt frazzled and emotionally raw.

After my timer went off and I sat there blinking my way back into the day, I thought of how people always say, "Love is all you need," and how - while that sounds nice - it has never really meant anything to me from a practical standpoint.

This time, however, a feeling went through me that is difficult to describe, while the phrase, "love just is" popped into my head. It didn't last long and even now as I type the words, "love just is," the epiphany I had in my post-meditation state is lost. But in that sparkling little moment, it made sense in a way I hope to remember and express in my daily

life again sometime.

I wasn't planning to write a song, but as I began sorting the laundry, a melody and lyrics started running through my head. I picked up my guitar and the song practically fell into my lap.

At the moment of creation, I liked it! But afterward I felt squeamish and embarrassed by the simplicity of the lyrics. My inner cynic finds the song easy to ridicule, with thoughts like, "Who do you think you are - the Beatles?" and "Kum bay ya, everybody!"

About the Music:

Despite these misgivings, I decided to record the song - but just for myself. I started with acoustic guitar, then added effects pedals to make it even more twangy.

My mental visuals for this song are sparkly yellow lights with bursts of light green, like the color of new pine needles. (I can't say why, but I thought I'd share that for any synesthetic readers out there!)

I wanted the song to start simple, even a bit timidly, then let the harmonies build up to a crescendo. Putting together the harmonies made me feel so hopeful and happy that I decided to share the song, after all. Kum bay ya, everybody!

5. *Undertow*

by Tui Snider, 3:09min

I threw my luck to the tides
Thinking the moon was in control
What a perfect couple, they'd say
The current swept me along

Where did my choices go?
Into your undertow
Where did your promises go?
Into the undertow
Into the undertow

You took my chances; you pulled me under
The surface remained so calm
Will I be another driftwood corpse soon,
Stacked upon your shore?

Where did my chances go?
Into your undertow
Where did your promises go?
Into the undertow
Into the undertow

Water is a colorless reflection
Of the changing sky
Why'd I keep my eyes on you?

I could have learned more from on high

Where did my future go?
Into your undertow
Where did your promises go?
Into the undertow
Into the undertow

Water is a colorless reflection of the sky...
Water is a colorless reflection of the sky...

About the Lyrics:

Here's another set of lyrics inspired by island living. I think they speak for themselves!

About the Music:

That sassy instrument you hear at the start of the song is my clarinet. Several people have pointed out that it sounds like Klezmer style music, and I can hear what they mean. From my perspective, snaky clarinet simply felt like a good way to express how frustrated the singer was about being sucked into the emotional undertow of a manipulative person!

6. Come to My Senses

by Tui Snider, 3:10min

Coffee cups and instruments
Are strewn about my place like old friends
If I come up too soon from this mental space
I might get the bends

Ooh-la-la land beckons
So I'm putting on my fishnets and lace
But more than anything I just want to see
Your sweet shining face

Come to my senses...

I'm really fond of make believe
But I hate having to pretend
Will someone please tell me when this
Crazy charade's going to end?

Ooh-la-la land beckons
So I'm putting on my fishnets and lace
But more than anything I just want to see
Your sweet shining face

About the Lyrics:

Unsurprisingly, “Come to My Senses” came about while I sat in my basement apartment, surrounded by coffee cups and instruments. Often when writing, taking photos or playing music, I slip into a rather dreamy state. I think a lot of creative folks do this, which probably contributes to the “absentminded professor” stereotype. And while I’ve never hooked myself up to any scientific gizmos to verify this, I’m pretty sure I spend a good portion of the day in an alpha state. I know the word “trance” might freak some people out, but the alpha state is merely the natural trance we all go into when we’re absorbed in a good book or even just watching TV.

In any case, I am happiest in this creative daze. Sometimes, however, I get so deep into whatever project I’m doing that if I suddenly have to step into the “real world” and, say, visit the bank, it’s pretty jarring, as if I’ve been abruptly woken from a dream!

About the Music:

This song started out on the guitar and the lyrics quickly followed. I forgot to mute the metronome when I put down the guitar track, but decided to leave it in. You can hear it keeping time at the very end of the song.

7. Terrified

by Tui Snider; 3:59min

Why am I so terrified
To be feeling so alive?
To be feeling so in love?
I just cannot take it in

Chorus:
I'd rather lose it all
Than lose this sense of wonder
Than lose these memories
I'd rather lose it all

What are you supposed to do
When there's nothing left you want?
But you still don't feel complete?
I don't want to fake it through

Why am I so terrified
To have gotten my own way?
I thought that I'd feel content
Does that mean I've gone astray?

About the Lyrics:

“Terrified” is about a weird fear that strikes sometimes when things are going well, as if I can’t

quite believe it, truly digest it, and perhaps I don't even deserve such happiness! It also touches on another fear I get from time to time, when I feel as if my life has lost momentum and I'm not sure what to do next.

About the Music:

This song started out on the piano, and I sometimes sing it at home with just the piano behind it. In the recorded version, I'm playing the piano part on a synthesizer, and after recording that part, I decided to add some drums. I wasn't going to have an instrumental interlude in this one, but I felt like this song needs time to let the listener "space out" a little bit!

8 Lighten Up

by Tui Snider, 3:40min

You know I love philosophy
You know I love to pick your brain
But sometimes it's exhausting
Sometimes you drive me insane
You tell me I'm a child
You say that I'm a little strange
You tell me that I'm wild
But you don't seem to be complaining

Chorus:

Ooh baby, lighten up
Lighten up, just brighten up
Ooh baby lighten up
Lighten up, just brighten up
Ooh baby lighten up
What if, what if, what if you'd...
Ooh baby lighten up
What if, what if you'd lighten up

The world's a crazy place, I know
It's been that way since Cain and Abel
So let's have fun while we are here
It's the only thing we can't use up
You tell me I'm a child

You say that I'm a little strange
You tell me that I'm wild
But you don't seem to be complaining

About the Lyrics:

We all have that friend or family member who, either in person or on Facebook, manages to put a cynical spin on everything. And sure, this person is smart and knows lots of stuff and can quote cranky philosophers and dire statistics at will - and yet, they never seem able to take responsibility for their own state of mind. They never choose happiness. They mistake anger and snark for actual action. Simply being angry doesn't accomplish anything expect for bringing other people down. Many cynics seem to think that if they risked smiling or being happy it would reveal them to be a naive Pollyanna who doesn't care about the world. I think they are both missing out on and missing the point to life. This song is for them!

About the Music:

I nearly skipped putting “Lighten Up” on this album because I couldn’t get it to work. The song originally started out with a jaunty riff on the piano. I tried to replicate that while recording it, but it just didn’t translate! Next, I tried a version built around the guitar. In order to make the lyrics clear, that

version was quite a bit slower than what you hear now. The end result was heavy, trudging, and a bit grouchy.

Ironically, the song itself needed to lighten up!

I finally settled on a happy little flute riff and some bouncy synth. I did the reverse vocal part on a whim and it cracked me up so much that I decided to keep it in. For the first take, I tried to be really clever and sing stuff like, “Now, I’m singing backwards and it has no deep meaning,” but it didn’t sound good. For the next take, I pretended to be Ella Fitzgerald doing a jaunty scat solo. When I reversed that, it actually fit the song. I was tempted to do more takes, but I wanted to keep things fresh, while I was still laughing about it!

9. Acknowledged

by Tui Snider, 3:35min

I wish that you could see me
Not who I pretend to be
but who I really am
I wish we shared a secret
Oh...nothing big
Just something to laugh about

Chorus:

'Cuz all I really need
Is to feel acknowledged
I think I could heal
If I could be acknowledged

I wish that you could hear me
Not what I'm saying - no
But what I really mean
I wish that you would hold me
Not only in your arms
But in your mind

I've seen your truth
And it was lovely
Whoever said
That truth is ugly?

If you see my truth
Will you still love me?
Or will you sneer
And feel above me?

About the Lyrics:

I wrote this one at a point in my life when I didn't have anyone to confide in, talk to, or turn to. I was surrounded by people who saw me only as someone to fulfill certain roles, but they couldn't or wouldn't see past that. I felt like they only saw me in black and white and not in my true technicolor. It made me feel undervalued, expendable, and very lonely.

I must admit that these lyrics are so plain and unadorned they embarrass me, but I can't deny their sincerity. I'm happy to report that I no longer feel this way, but for anyone who might be going through a similar situation as I did all those years ago - this song is for you!

About the Music:

This song started out on the piano, but quickly moved to the guitar. It just has a certain "sitting around the campfire spilling your guts" kind of feeling that a simple guitar part fits with. The bass line seems very 1950's doo-wop to me, and I didn't like that because it seemed to add yet another layer

of “golly gee” sincerity to my simplistic-yet-heartfelt lyrics. I couldn’t seem to hear any other bass line, though, so I finally gave in!

10. Islands

by Tui Snider, 5:20min

Islands connected
Islands protected
Separated by water
Connected by water

Flowing ... Stranded... Protected...

Attitudes so slippery
Controlling emotions
The scenery
The good or bad
Revealing beliefs I have

Freedom... Searching... Forever...

Choices curling like smoke
Voices forbid or coax
The chokehold of my ideals
Withdrawing so I can heal

Hoping... Waiting... Transcending...

About the Lyrics:

As I mentioned earlier, I spent 5 years living off-the-grid on a little island in the Pacific Northwest. The lyrics for “Islands” was inspired by a free-writing session in my journal while sitting up on a bluff one foggy morning, staring out at the islands that surrounded me.

About the Music:

When I decided to work on my music back in 2013, “Islands” was the first song I recorded. Since it came out as such a slow, dreamy, shoe gaze style song, I figured my entire album would probably be like that.

As it turns out, the rest of the songs, while still dreamy, are much more upbeat. I don’t really know why. I don’t try to boss my muse around too much. For one thing, it’s fun when your own stuff surprises you, and for another, I’d probably get bored if it didn’t. So even though I knew the melody and the lyrics for all of these songs before recording them, I didn’t really know how they would end up.

That said, I like how there are “book ends” to this album. The first song, “Indra’s Loom” is about interconnectedness, and the last song, “Islands,” is also about interconnectedness, so that made sense to me.

And, frankly, “Islands” is so slow and spacey, I thought it was a nice way to end. A person might even put this album on and fall asleep during this track. I’d take that as a compliment!

Part Two:
Photo Exhibit



11. Booked Up

In 1988, Pulitzer Prize winning author Larry McMurtry returned to his hometown of Archer City, Texas with the dream of transforming it into a book-themed town. While his independent bookstore, Booked Up, spread through several city blocks, the rest of the town never quite caught up. Over the past thirty years, other bookstores and book-themed restaurants and inns came along, but failed to thrive.

In 2012, worried that Booked Up might burden

his heirs, McMurtry downsized his stock from some 450,000 books to a more manageable – but still huge – stock of around 200,000. I snapped this photo while researching Booked Up to include it in my guide to offbeat and overlooked travel destinations, *Unexpected Texas*. Seeing so many empty shelves made me a little sad, but despite the massive purging, Booked Up’s stock still fills an entire city block, and you can feel that it is a labor of love.



12. Hitching Post

With its brick streets, horse drawn carriages, wrought iron railings, and abundance of Greek revival architecture, a visit to Jefferson, Texas can make you feel like you've stepped onto a movie set for New Orleans in the late 1800's. This town's resemblance to the "Big Easy" is no mere affectation, but a genuine part of its heritage. In

fact, Jefferson has so much in common with New Orleans that it's sometimes called the "Little Easy." They've even been celebrating Mardi Gras for over 100 years! This decorative hitching post is just one of the many vestiges of days gone by visitors can discover while exploring this picturesque East Texas town.



13 East Texas Downtown

Here's another photo taken while strolling through Jefferson, Texas. I had just stepped out of the general store (where you can actually buy a good cup of coffee for a mere 5 cents) when I noticed this wonderfully Texan scene, complete with a man in a cowboy hat lounging on a bench. Thank goodness for my iPhone, because moments after I snapped this, he called out to a friend across the street and sauntered off!



14 At My Feet

Some people constantly gaze into the distance, seeking the grand panorama and the mountaintop vista. I, on the other hand, am often captivated by the view at my feet. This drives my husband nuts; he frets that I'll be struck by a car while composing the perfect shot of worn bricks and cobblestones. This one was taken at a nature preserve in South Florida.



15 Boat Shop Floor

Some of my favorite photos are ones I took while working as the receptionist for my husband's boat repair shop. When I started, I knew nothing about boat repair. I now know *next* to nothing, which is quite an improvement.

On sunny weekends, impatient customers often called with questions I did not know how to answer, and when they would lose their temper, it could be quite stressful. I dealt with this by taking photos in

between phone calls. Chronic floor-gazer that I am, I often turned my lens to the world at my feet. Many times, I discovered an accidental still life, just waiting to be noticed. This was one of those times!



16. *Unfurling Flower*

Here's another photo taken at the boat shop. It was early morning, and we had just stepped out of the car when I noticed this little flower in the ditch beside us. Later that day, as my husband and I were locking up, I noticed the same flower again, only now it was in full bloom. It made me so happy to see how it thrived!



17. Wall Maps

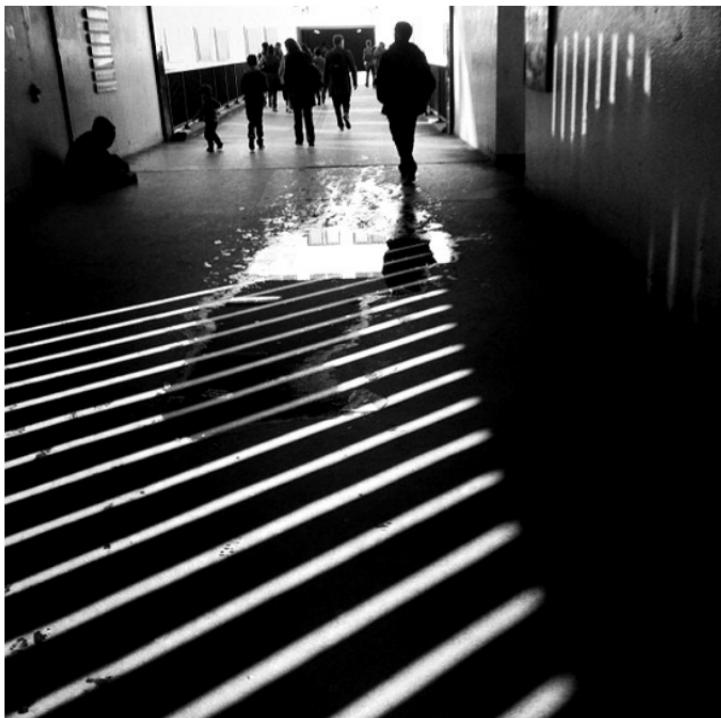
For my second book, *Paranormal Texas*, I researched as many allegedly haunted locations in North Texas as I could find, including the Crazy Water Hotel in Mineral Wells.

In its hey day, the Crazy Water Hotel's guests included a veritable "who's who" of celebrities from the 1920's through the 1950's, including Helen Keller, the Three Stooges, Frank Sinatra and many more. Even today, photos of these illustrious guests

feature prominently along the hotel's walls.

After the hotel went out of business, the Crazy Water Hotel became a retirement home. By 2010, however, it had fallen into disrepair, and the retirement home's license was revoked. Sadly, some of its residents had nowhere to go and simply left their rooms with all their belongings still inside!

In the summer of 2015, I visited the once-grand Crazy Water Hotel. It is still a beautiful building, and I would love to visit again. Will it ever be restored to its former glory? The sight of these maps, complete with thumbtacks and yarn indicating the route for a trip, made me wonder how many exciting plans here never quite came to fruition.



18. *Tube Station*

This was a lucky snap that I could not have captured without using my iPhone like a quick draw cowboy. While stepping out of a busy tube station in London, I was struck by all the beautiful stripes and reflections. Caught up in a crowd of people, there was no time to stop and compose a thoughtful shot. I'm so glad it's not blurry!



19. Hemingway Cat

Not only was Ernest Hemingway fond of cats, but his name has become synonymous with a particular feline genetic mutation, one that causes cats to have extra toes. While these polydactyl cats are not an actual breed, they are often referred to as, “Hemingway Cats,” in his honor.

It all started down in Key West, where Ernest Hemingway lived in the 1930’s with his second wife, their kids and a polydactyl Maine Coon

named "Snowball." The cat was given to him by a local sea captain. While it's unclear how many cats shared Hemingway's Florida home, his affection for them is well documented.

Although Hemingway committed suicide while living in Idaho, his will stipulated that his polydactyl crew down in Florida continue to be cared for after his death. Today, more than 50 cats dwell in his Key West home, which is also a museum in his honor. Since Ernest liked to name the cats after movie stars and famous historical figures, the Hemingway Home and Museum staff continues this playful tradition. I have no idea what this particular kitty was named, but he followed me all over Key West's historic graveyard!



20. Marital Handshake

Hands are a common motif in historic cemeteries; sometimes they point up, sometimes they point down. Hands on headstones are often depicted holding objects, such as a rose or a book, and each of these things means something different.

While even a handshake can symbolize many different things when carved onto a headstone, in the photo above it is meant to let visitors know that this represents a married couple. This particular

marital handshake is the most detailed one I've ever seen, from the rope showing that the couple "tied the knot," to the words "Semper Fidelis" indicating fidelity, right on down to the masculine and feminine looking hands, fingernails, and cuffs.



21. Kiss of Death

When it comes to funerary art, European cemeteries do not shy away from dramatic symbolism. Jaume Barba's incredible marble statue depicting the angel of death is hidden deep within Barcelona's Poblenou cemetery.

Having traveled all the way from Texas to see it, my husband and I took our time to admire this beautiful carving. As we turned to leave, two

women approached. Not only did they speak English, but one was from Texas! We hit it off immediately and became Facebook friends while standing in the shadow of Barba's amazing winged skeleton.



22. Kites & Angels

I often tell people that graveyards are open-air museums, bringing history to life as you stroll through them. One of the best examples of this is Santa María Magdalena de Pazzis Cemetery in San Juan, Puerto Rico. This graveyard's sculptures would be a proud addition to any art museum, yet here they stand without a docent in sight, only a few

steps away from the Atlantic Ocean. It's incredible how well preserved this artwork is after more than a hundred years of being buffeted by salty air!

As I picked my way through the narrow path, I caught flickering shadows out of the corner of my eye. It made me a little jumpy until I realized these were shore crabs darting away at my approach! Iguanas and feral cats kept me company, too, while the fluttering sound of children's kites taking advantage of the trade wind on the hill above was a comforting reminder of all the life surrounding me.

Acknowledgments

Whether you helped with technical problems, shared information, or simply offered a kind word at the right time, I couldn't have completed *Meme, Myself & iPhone* without the kind encouragement and assistance I received from the following:

Brian Treybig, Shawn Emerson, Teal Gray, Naomi Morlan, Andrew Crusoe, Franklin, Dan & Jan Stober, MAC, Hugh, Patricia Lynne, StoryDam Twitter chat peeps, Alycia Forbes, Sheila Copeland, Linda Neas, Gail Bray, Joy Daley, Jimm McIver, Bambi Harris, Deb Atwood, Claudia Hall Christian, Jamie Mose, Georgina Holzmeier, Alicia Gaby, Raymond Huyge, Lori Reynolds, Vicki Newby, David Sumoflam Kravetz, Andy Hoenninger, Lareé Griffith, Morgan Dragonwillow, Cheryl Clements, Lisa Smith, Ghost Cat, Sharon Furrer, Gus from Down Under, Sheila Gay, Drew Ravenscroft, Karma Tenzing Wangchuck, Moumin Quazi, Marilyn Robitaille, June Zaner, Woofmutt, Ms. Kalliope...

...and all the friendly folks I've bumped into on the Internet along the way!