



## Love Letters: What Matters Most

In his book *The Four Things that Matter Most: A Book about Living*, Dr. Ira Byock invites us all to incorporate the themes of love, forgiveness, and gratitude into our daily lives. What do we want to tell the people we love? What do we appreciate about the people in our lives? How can words help us heal? Given that we never know what tomorrow may bring, how can we honor and strengthen the relationships in our lives each day?

### Writing Opportunity

Inspired by the themes of love, forgiveness and gratitude, please select one of the following:

- 1) Write a letter to an individual who has taught you something about these themes.
- 2) Write a reflection/story about a person who taught you to love, forgive, or express gratitude.
- 3) Write about how incorporating these themes allowed you to be able to say goodbye to a significant person in your life.

You may send your writing to [jane.dohrmann@iowacityhospice.org](mailto:jane.dohrmann@iowacityhospice.org), by fax at 319-351-5729, or by U.S. mail to Jane Dohrmann, Honoring Your Wishes, Iowa City Hospice, 1025 Wade Street, Iowa City, Iowa 52240. Please include your name, email address, and phone number. Submissions may be shared by Honoring Your Wishes™ to promote the themes of love, forgiveness, and gratitude within our community. Writings may be publicly displayed as a part of exhibits or used in media.

### Writing Prizes

Submissions must be limited to 1000 words and received between February 1 and July 31, 2018 to be considered for prizes. Writings will be judged by community leaders. The first prize winner will be invited to read his or her submission on Sunday evening, October 7, 2018, at the Coralville Center for the Performing Arts as a part of the UNESCO City of Literature's Iowa City Book Festival. Dr. Ira Byock will be the evening speaker. The winning entry will be printed in *Little Village* magazine, and the second and third prize winners will be published in the online magazine. The top two winners will be invited to have lunch with Dr. Byock on Monday, October 8. The top three winners will receive a signed copy of one of Dr. Byock's books.

### Writing Circles

You may choose to share your writing in a writing circle. This is an opportunity to share your work and receive support and feedback from others.

*Request for writing circle leaders:* Please invite participants to submit their own writings or you may submit their writings with their permission. Please share with the director of Honoring Your Wishes how many people participated in the writing circle, how many times you met as a group, and any feedback you have about this community-wide activity.



## Judges for Writing Submissions



**Inara Verzemnieks** has written for *The New York Times Magazine*, *Tin House*, *The Atlantic*, *The Iowa Review*, and *Creative Nonfiction*. She is the recipient of a Pushcart Prize and a Rona Jaffe Writers' Award and was named a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in feature writing. After working for thirteen years as a newspaper journalist, she received her MFA from the University of Iowa's Nonfiction Writing Program, where she now teaches as an assistant professor.



**Matthew Steele** is publisher of *Little Village*, *YogaIowa*, *Bread & Butter*, and the new magazine for skilled workers, *Iowa Blueprint*. He received a BA in Anthropology and an MFA in Media, Social Practice & Design from the University of Iowa.



After completing her Ph.D. in English literature at the University of Iowa, **Syndy Conger** taught a variety of literature courses for 30 years in the Department of English at Western Illinois University. She published two books, edited others, and wrote many articles, primarily about 18th and 19th century novels and novelists. She now lives in retirement with her husband in Iowa City, where she occasionally offers courses at the Senior Center.

Please contact Jane Dohrmann, Director, Honoring Your Wishes, at [jane.dohrmann@iowacityhospice.org](mailto:jane.dohrmann@iowacityhospice.org) or 319-688-4214 to share writing circle information or if you have any questions.