

Crescent Dragonwagon

Author, Speaker, Writing Coach



Photo Credit: Jason R. Henneke



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Windmill Hill
Nature
Reserve
and Trail

Crescent Dragonwagon is a freelance genre-bending author of children's books, cookbooks, novels and memoir. She is the developer of Fearless Writing and a speaker/coach. "I write, help others write more easily, and aid self-identified nonwriters in breaking through the crust of their limits, using writing as a tool." She describes herself as sensual social ecologist, passionate gardener, compulsive reader, exuberant, goofy, good cook. More about Crescent at dragonwagon.com.

As a child, my summers were spent right here in Westminster West, on my aunt's farm (where I now live year-round); winters were spent in Hastings-on-Hudson, New York. From age 16 until 51, I lived in a small town in the Ozark Mountains of Arkansas.

In 1957, my Aunt Dorothy took a train from New York City to Bellows Falls, Vermont, to look at a piece of property she was considering purchasing. She brought with her her 5-year-old niece: me. From that moment on, Vermont and the farm, as she called it, were part of my interior as well as exterior landscape, a kind of personal and fundamental True North.

When, at age 18, I was the victim of a violent crime, I came here to recover. When, at age 48, my marriage of 23 years to my adored husband came to an end when he died in a bicycle accident, I again came here to recover.

This time, I let go of my old life, both geographic (in Arkansas) and emotional (in a committed, vibrant marriage) and stayed to create a new life. I am an old-timer and a new-comer; the consistency of this extraordinary place in my life, as well as my work as a writer, are what have provided continuity and sanctuary.

I stay for the 20-mile view from my office window; for the fact that I agree with almost every bumper sticker I see in the co-op parking lot because unlike most states, which give tax breaks for developing property, Vermont gives tax breaks for *not* developing property, thus insuring continuity and protection into the future. I stay for the extremity of the seasons, which test, delight and challenge me. I stay for snow-shoeing, my big-ass garden, the gardens of others and being within 20 minutes of improv theater, performance at all levels of professionalism and lectures by brilliant, internationally known speakers.

Springtime brings the wildflower walk across the Pinnacle trail or down the abandoned road to Athens; the hike up Putney Mountain—wear boots, it is muddy (take a wildflower identification book and a digital camera); tilling the garden on Memorial Day weekend and hustling to get everything in the ground fast!

Summer brings local organic strawberries and blueberries (including Pick Your Own at many places along Rt. 5 and the West-West road), the Fourth of July parade at Saxtons River and fireworks plus concert at Grafton. Walker Farm. Getting takeout from the Vermont Country Deli and picnicking. The funky incredibly reasonably priced Royal Diner. Yellow Barn concerts. And farmers' markets (the Brattleboro one in particular).

Can't forget winter's snow shoeing (world's easiest sport; challenging aerobically, but totally safe for the uncoordinated—if you can walk, you can snowshoe). Especially under a full moon at night. The Winter Solstice sleigh ride at Fair Winds Farm. The Women's Film Festival in Brattleboro, or seeing the steam coming up from the sugar houses.

Fall has its own rewards. Getting two or three of each of the dozens of varieties of heirloom apples, Post-It-ing them with the variety's name, and then tasting each and making notes on flavor, texture, juiciness, tartness, sweetness, aroma—like a wine tasting. Then making a huge apple pie combining all the varieties. Visitors can experience the



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Crescent's garden

Dummerston Apple Pie Festival...In fact, many food festivals, like the Gilfeather Turnip Festival, and the Garlic Festival).

Any time: an art workshop at River Gallery School or a performance at Hooker-Dunham; a lecture at Marlboro Grad Center; an Interplay class with Judith Reichsman (drop-ins welcome); the Friday art walks in Brattleboro and Bellows Falls; the vegetarian dumplings at Shin La; the grilled bread and antipasto at Boccelli's; browsing at Basketville in Putney (an experience I remember even from childhood); dining at the Old Tavern in Grafton; visiting the cheese factory there, and now in Brattleboro; seeing Circus Smirkus. Shopping at SEVCA's Good Buy stores and hospice's Experienced Goods. Also, the libraries in both Putney and Rockingham (Bellows Falls) have an extraordinary number of lectures and workshops, as well as Internet access. Wholly different from each other in vibe and architectural style, both welcoming. Browsing the bulletin board at the Putney Co-op.



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