

Write Your Life

A micro memoir writing project

Recall a figure of speech you acquired, when and where and what it means to you.

The Horses Are Tired

“Non dare baci,” my father-in-law used to say. “I cavalli sono stanchi.” *No kissing. The horses are tired.*

When we were standing at the front door of their house late afternoon, he and my mother-in-law, me and our two kids. I had dropped them off on my way to work that morning. It was late afternoon pick-up, everyone tired, sometimes one or both kids cranky. Adding to the commotion, I rarely left the house those days without food in my hands, a corning ware dish of her ragu; a pot that would leave the house full of minestrone and come back empty the next morning; a chunk of ciambella, a simple cake she made. While we managed bags and hands in the foyer, there would also be some ceremonial kissing. “Dammi un bacino,” she would say. The kids would hang their arms around her neck. *G’bye, Nonna. G’bye g’bye g’bye.*

When they turned to him, he would say it: “Non dare baci. I cavalli sono stanchi.”

He must have heard that when he was a kid in San Marino. *Let’s hurry this up. We’ve traveled a while. The horses are tired.* I think it also meant, I’m old, and I’ve had enough of all this kissing business. When he consented, he turned a cheek to them. *Non sulla bocca.* Not on the mouth.

I say it now to our grandchildren. *I cavalli sono stanchi.* I want them to hear it. I want to hear myself say it.