

*Kristin Linklater nous a quitté dans la nuit de vendredi 5 juin. Je vous propose ici le témoignage émouvant de [Merry Conway](#), amie et collègue de longue date*

The news reached us about the death of voice legend, Kristin Linklater, in Orkney last Friday. My deepest condolences to Hamish, Lily and the children, and Kristin's family and friends. Oh, how to even imagine it?

It was Trish Arnold, my movement mentor, who got me to Shakespeare & Company in its first fall. Trish had taught Kristin at LAMDA and subsequently worked with her as she developed her work in America. At S & Co. I met the wonderful band of actors, and organizers Tina Packer, Dennis Krausnick and Kristin Linklater. Kristin kept this [poem by Guillaume Apollinaire](#) on a wall of her little house there:

"Come to the edge," he said.

"We can't, we're afraid!" they responded.

"Come to the edge," he said.

"We can't, we will fall!" they responded.

"Come to the edge," he said.

And so they came.

And he pushed them.

And they flew.

I have always remembered that poem because, for me, it perfectly describes Kristin's own capacity to exhort people to take audacious risks – urging them to bring themselves into their fully-voiced self. She would be right there beside them, supporting their courage. Often she herself was a bit more fierce than their internal demons of doubt, and so they did leap, and they did fly.

That same jumping-off quality was encapsulated in an event she led -- the breath-taking experience of spontaneous poetry. This sealed my love for her, on that very first Shakespeare & Company Intensive, Jan. 1979. We – teachers and participants alike – were invited to launch ourselves, standing in front of the audience, into some poetic utterance which came spewing out with no preparation and only a few guidelines; it was pure slalom of the imagination. I did "spon po" with her on many a night, in many a location for years thereafter, and never tired of the leap.

In all those years of exploration and friendship, I witnessed her unflagging passion for a deeper, or more incisive way to say whatever she was currently interested in, her curiosity activated by a new idea or reference that opened up her work further. Not to mention the great sense of humor!

By 2013, Kristin wanted to return to Scotland. She had brought up Hamish, her wonderful son who became an accomplished actor. She had completed a full and successful teaching career at both Emerson and Columbia, and was still conducting workshops worldwide. She conceived of the idea of creating the Kristin Linklater Voice Centre in Orkney, so people could also come to her. This was a mighty leap to make, and I was with her on several evenings as she weighed the risks of pulling it off, and having it succeed. And then she did leap, and it succeeded. She built a beautiful Centre for voice learning, a haven for people to come experience the work, cossetted by a wonderful team, Yvonne, Rena and Julie, who each offered incredibly capable care and warmth. It is set in the wild rocks and sea and wind of Orkney's elemental landscape. I went there to teach with her on three occasions—standing at the opposite end of the room from her. I witnessed her re-creating and re-imagining her material with each class for the participants. We would each lead 20 or so minutes at a time, alternating movement and voice and also comedy text and wordplay; throwing the progression of our thought back and forth, each trying to lean into the other for an improvised and fresh inhabitation of our material. Her passionate intellect, darting and prodding, flying the crest of an exercise and surfing down the other side, was a thing of beauty. I will never forget it.

I am grieving her departure now, but afterwards, I will make a space for Kristin deep in my heart, next to Trish. I hope the glow of her vitality will challenge and live in me for the rest of my teaching life. Here's to you, Kristin. Thank you for everything. I love you so.