

*With love,  
Lotus*

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**Writings by Lotus employees, family and friends  
to benefit AIDS care**

0005373

*The proceeds of this book will go to the Philanthropy division of Lotus Development Corporation and will be distributed on a grant basis to a variety of AIDS service organizations throughout the year.*

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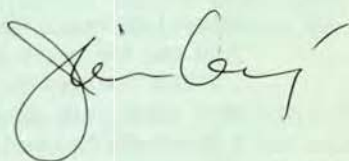
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Dear Reader,

I continue to be astounded by the ability of employees to exhibit such a high level of energy outside their demanding professional lives. Lotus is comprised of individuals of limitless commitment. Our success as a company is testament to that. The same dedication and vigor that give Lotus products a competitive edge in the marketplace distinguish the company's volunteers in the community. By publishing *With Love, Lotus*, Lotus employee volunteers have once again demonstrated that a corporation can serve as a locus for community action.

The problem of AIDS is one of health, education, prejudice and fear. Responses to the epidemic require courage and creativity. I would like to congratulate everyone who contributed to *With Love, Lotus*, especially the poets, for their creativity, energy and sense of responsibility. May their work be as inspiring to you as it is to me.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Manzi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "M".

Jim Manzi  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Lotus Development Corporation



## Dedication

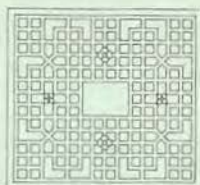
To our two friends and co-workers,  
victims of AIDS, who,  
in life and in death,  
touched our lives with their light:

This book is dedicated with Love.

*Kathie McHugh*

When I do count the clock that tells the time,  
And see the brave day sunk in hideous night;  
When I behold the violet past prime,  
And sable curls all silver'd o'er with white;  
When lofty trees I see barren of leaves  
Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,  
And summer's green all girded up in sheaves  
Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard,  
Then of thy beauty do I question make,  
That thou among the wastes of time must go...

*William Shakespeare*



## Preface

Love. A small word for a big subject. A subject that is still not understood in this high tech world where computers play chess and keep careful record of our lives. We talk about Artificial Intelligence, but never Artificial Love. In fact, no one has ever programmed a computer to love. And if someone did, how could we know if the program succeeded?

Yet Love is a most essential if inexplicable human trait. Judging by the folklore and myths that have come to us from every culture, humans seem to have always had a need not only to be loved, but to love. Love links us to our mates, to our families, to our friends, and to the universe that surrounds us. It even links us to ourselves, for in respecting our own self worth and cherishing the value of our being, we gain the courage and the strength to reach out to others.

Writing poetry is also a very human trait. Poetry speaks not the language of computers, which is dry and precise, but the language of the heart, which uses image and nuance to reach those places of the soul that words alone cannot reach.

In this small volume, these two human traits are joined. In the rhythm and flow of poetry, unique voices speak of Love and what it has meant to them. The voices are young and old, male and female; they are American, Irish, Puerto Rican, and more. They speak of tears and of laughter, of contentment and of loss. In the mirror of their words, the readers may see the reflections of their own loves — bright and dark.

The proceeds from this book are dedicated with Love — love for those battling a disease that our technology has not yet conquered. It is a disease that touches all of our lives, but some more terribly than others. We honor their struggle and their courage.

May this book bring joy and compassion to you. May a cure for AIDS be found soon.

*Nori Odoi*



Preface

THESE are the first of a series of books which will be published in the near future. They are the result of a long and arduous task in which the author has been assisted by many of his friends and colleagues. It is a pleasure to acknowledge their help and cooperation.

The book is a study of the history of the English language from its beginnings in the early centuries of our race to the present day. It is a study of the changes which have taken place in the language and of the reasons for these changes. It is a study of the influence of foreign languages on the English language and of the influence of the English language on other languages.

It is a study of the very history of the English language, which is a very interesting and important subject. It is a study of the changes which have taken place in the language and of the reasons for these changes. It is a study of the influence of foreign languages on the English language and of the influence of the English language on other languages.

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1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes that this is essential for ensuring transparency and accountability in the organization's operations.

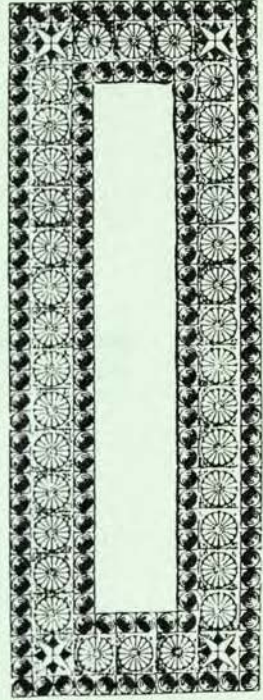
2. The second part outlines the specific procedures and protocols that must be followed when recording and reporting data. This includes details on how to collect, verify, and document information to ensure its reliability and integrity.

3. The third part addresses the role of various departments and individuals in the data management process. It clarifies the responsibilities of each party involved, from data collection to final reporting and analysis.

4. The fourth part discusses the challenges and risks associated with data management, such as data loss, corruption, and unauthorized access. It provides strategies and best practices to mitigate these risks and ensure the security and availability of the organization's data.

5. The fifth part concludes by summarizing the key points and reiterating the commitment to high standards of data management and reporting. It encourages all staff members to adhere to the guidelines and contribute to the overall success of the organization's data management efforts.

Love  
& Romance



Love

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L





Love is a seeking for a way of life; the way that cannot be followed alone;  
the resonance of all spiritual and physical things.

*Ansel Adams*

Love consists in this: that two solitudes protect  
and touch and greet each other.

*Rainer Maria Rilke*

Don't threaten me with love, baby.  
Let's just go walking in the rain.

*Billie Holiday*

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## **It was a lovely thing**

It was a lovely thing  
He was imagining  
(not that I was in  
his dreams) me.

*Elizabeth F. Hendricks*

## **Obbligato I**

...we are  
travelling now, we  
are shaking earth  
and travelling, we  
are crossing boundaries,  
we are leading  
ourselves for once  
others will follow.

*Miroslav Jarek*

## **Obbligato II**

My beloved  
and I,  
we burn.  
Our hearts?  
A torch between us.  
Whose path is lit  
by this?

*Miroslav Jarek*

## Shed Your Skin

I roll over in bed and discover you sleeping there.  
My eyes come out of a sound sleep, focusing on your bare back and tousled hair.  
Your breathing coincides with the beating of my heart.  
I don't want to wake you, so I touch your neck gently and do my best to stop my hand from wandering over your entire body.  
I prop myself up on my elbow and quietly lean over you, catching a glimpse of your peaceful face.  
You have the eyes of an innocent child, with lashes overflowing and skin as pale as a cloud.  
Quite a contrast to the leather jacket, vest and earring next to my bed.  
When you are with me alone, part of my world, the tough skin peels off, opening you up to drown in my love.  
Out in the real world your porcelain features are engulfed by toughness and a hard edge.  
With me you let that collapse.

*Lisa Levine*

## If your eyes



If your eyes were  
brown, I'd love the  
earth  
the earth  
and sparrows, if

your eyes were green  
it's the sea and  
hills of long, cool  
grass I'd sing for —

I'd thirst for  
storm clouds, birch bark  
and rain  
if your eyes were grey.

*Miroslav Jarek*



## Snow

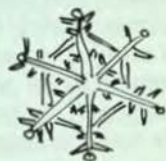
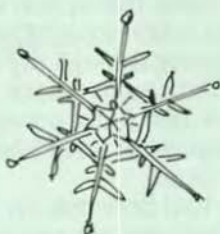
I think of you —  
I think of snow.  
I think of how, if we were lovers,  
we would watch the snow fall.

It would fall as softly  
as your breath upon my lips  
just before a kiss.  
All night the snow would fall.

All night we would listen  
to the snow fall, hear each flake  
whisper its secrets to the windowpane  
as we would whisper ours.

All night the snow would fall.  
And in the morning we would walk  
out into the city, clean now, and quiet,  
the world made new again, glittering and white.

*Helen Betz*



## First Love

Evening sets soft and I have not forgotten  
the way the sun bore down upon us  
high up on Mt. David.

This is my love, I said to myself.  
His flashing smile, his bent knee, his  
steady outward gaze,  
all of these will stay in my mind.  
My arm wants his waist, he is so slender,  
his hair is soft,  
his eyes bright.  
His voice I remember as I remember waves,  
our words incomplete and filling our heads.

This is my love, I said to myself.

Do you suppose that I was merely anticipating  
the unfolding of the great world?

*Jennifer Nadeau*

## Guitar Sunrise

He wanders down my street every morning before dawn, softly strumming a beat-up guitar, cradling the instrument in his arms like a sleeping infant.

His melody saturates the air for miles, illuminating the crisp breeze with dew covered notes that splash upon each blade of grass and soothe the early birds and fuzzy scrambling creatures.

As I toss gently through my dreams this morning, the open window lets in his music. The curtain above my bed flows romantically like satin, breathing slowly back and forth, transporting his soft song to my subconscious. Opalescent droplets of sound fall to my ears, penetrating my body and blossoming in my heart.

Each easy turn between my sheets further meshes dream and reality, as cloudy inner fantasies are populated with nondescript characters that unite with the music that provides the only sound in my head.

With my next breath, I awaken from a sound sleep to slide out of blankets and pillows and wrap a cotton robe around my exposed skin. Through fuzzy eyes I gaze out the window to see the music-maker walking slowly by my house, steps taken in time with his simple tune.

I notice him staring at the fingers that give life to this mysterious melody. His face is hidden behind charcoal black hair, straight and shiny. Dressed in t-shirt and jeans, not quite enough for this chilly morning, with sneakers dragging untied laces across the pavement. His appearance is unassuming and just as gentle as his music.

My town is small so I must know him, but every morning I remain staring at a stranger. Tomorrow I will break the spell and unveil his face to my eyes. No more invisible music-maker.

I wake myself early and wait by the window. He enters my picture like any other morning, walking in a trance, a human music box. The old guitar is worn and plain, but very much a vital extension of his young, slim body.

I take my robe, slip on white sneakers and join him unannounced on the road. Our legs move in sync. I feel unnoticed until he turns his head and opens his eyes, exposing two, cool blue ice crystals that burn with incredible intensity and warm the air around my face. We walk for miles. Not even cold at all in the early morning air.

In the distance I see our town's pond. On the edge, a collection of blankets and pillows softly appears. The music-maker continues on, not uttering a sound except with his old guitar. I understand every word and continue to follow.

We reach the water together. He sits on the edge of the pond and plays his melody over and over. I never tire of it.

The homemade bed is enticing, I lie down and snuggle up tight. Sleep overcomes me right in the middle of this ethereal picture and I do not awaken until a ray of sunshine splashes my eyelids. Draped over my own bed now, I feel the curtain fluttering above. In the distance I can hear the stranger's tune fading away in the early morning peace.

*Lisa Levine*

## Jones Beach Summer

In motion.

The foam scurries in to meet  
the feet of the summer lovers.  
Retreating at the slightest hint of capture.

Moving with you  
holding back.  
The confidence of your words  
draws the sand  
from under my toes.

Settling me in  
you move on.

*Denise Clancey*



## A gentle breeze

A gentle breeze, a dark night  
A lonely beach  
Two people sharing the night  
The darkness — no stranger to them  
The sound of gentle waves breaking on the sand,  
The echo of splashing children in the bright sun is present  
in the fading waves  
The dark of the night is like a blanket  
Covering the day's events only to unfold in the new sun.  
The sand is cool — yet the water splashes and it's warm  
He puts his arm around her as though the breeze were cold.  
As they walk along the cool sand, hand-in-hand  
with only the comforting moon to light their way...  
How much in-love they are.

*Leslie Blake*



## It was so good

It was so good to see you again  
A pumpkin smiling  
in the window  
greeted me first  
I hated driving on Halloween  
and missing all the fun  
of trick or treaters at my door  
But the pumpkin smiled  
and I smiled back  
seeing you  
tall, blonde, caring  
anxious to see me  
warmed my heart  
I'd missed you  
What a difference  
to sleep by your side  
to reach out and touch you  
a kiss anytime I want it  
Boy, it's good to be home

*Diane L. McGary*



## Always

Since the first time that I saw you  
My world hasn't been the same.  
It seems that the birds sing louder  
The air is sweeter, and life is finer.

Since the first time that we danced  
Music has more rhythm,  
Making love is better  
I want you to be mine  
Always

*Micheal Latimore*



## Golden Memories

Since in life I treasure all the words my lover says to me,  
I always hope that time will bring them with the wind...  
When I'm looking out the window and I see that spring is here  
I hope there'll be no end to our wondrous love affair...  
And all the love, those passions that are untamed...  
and time that seems to fly away  
When the light of dawn comes brightly shining right outside our door  
my eyes wake up and see that you're in love with me,  
Since I'm saving all the tender moments both of us have shared  
in lonely days of rain, my heartache will be spared...  
And all my memories golden they will be,  
of all the times that you have spent with me.

*Milagros M. Andino*

### There is a voice

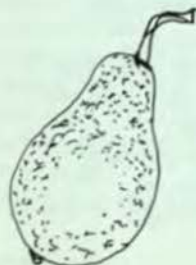
There is a voice  
Imitating a love bird  
Calling soft and mellow  
Trying hard to be heard

There are two hearts  
Drawing closer together  
Two hearts among many  
But alone, just like one

There is a love  
Growing precious and stronger  
A love, tried and true  
Reaching deep, deep within

There is a passion  
Springing up from inside me  
A wonderful feeling  
That won't be denied

There is a fire  
Burning bright in my soul  
Smoking, red hot and glowing  
Almost out of control!



*Joyce Williams-Mitchell*

## Reawakening

A wave of contentment  
in the unlocking  
Like a yellow butterfly  
pursuing thoughts  
above a railroad junkyard  
A speck of life  
amongst the metallic stillness  
A finger kissed  
and lightly touched against  
the cinders of a heart.

*Doreen Fleming*



## Envelop

Crescent moon  
glimmering rays  
of light and dark shadows  
beckoning the night,  
and loneliness  
without you

My heart's song  
sings out to you,  
craving you near me,  
piercing  
the night  
needing and wanting  
my love,  
all of her,  
wrapped within me  
in endless moments  
of tenderness  
and joy

Come to me,  
envelop me with  
your soul,  
take me with you  
to a place only we  
know  
where our sun  
brightens  
the night

*Ron Elkin*

## Yours

Green blue eyes,  
endless oceans  
of love  
within

My heart  
my existence  
is yours,  
to travel through  
clouds,  
time beyond,  
where only we  
can be,  
together

Press me  
into you,  
for  
I am yours,  
wanting to share  
each season,  
each moon and sun,  
each shore of eternity  
as it develops,  
builds  
and carries forward,  
to life's paths,  
forever more.

*Ron Elkin*



## Just Friends

I stand, yellow rose in hand,  
Thinking back to when we began.  
If you knew which screens linger  
In their fullest color,  
Like me, you might not question.  
I fade back to your expressions,  
Which too often hide.  
I revel in your laughter and want  
You to turn to me when it dissolves.  
Oh, yellow rose, I've known you long.  
How much longer until your petals  
Graduate to red?  
Or must I cling to the yellow rose instead?

*Amy Carmusin*

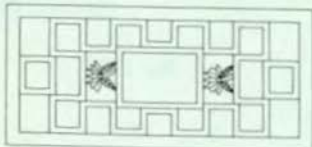
## Richter Scale

Your steps fall  
    on the hardwood  
heavy at first  
    perhaps softening

I feel the rumblings and see  
    a question register on your lips  
    mouth moving  
    brows rolling in uncertain furroughs or  
tentative peaks  
    mounting in comprehension  
    still hesitant to overturn  
    beginning to tumble  
on doubtful ground

And then your eyes  
    drop  
    they graze the floor  
    the tremors cease

*Kristen Hughes*





## Ebb Child

Frolicking like shore ponies  
you scrawl your name  
    shaping the very ground  
    on which we walk

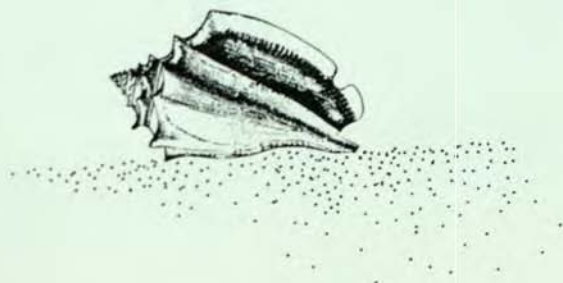
Wrestling with the forces that pull you away  
to leave bubbly, frothing eddies  
Your laughter trickles  
    behind you  
in damp, mossy strands  
Fragrant as your musky wet hair  
and the pungent grasses

I walk the disconsolate sands,  
dig around,  
    poke with my toes,  
    pry at the surroundings  
for some treasure  
you might have left behind  
    in your hesitant wake

Bracing myself  
at the Sunday swingtide  
    against the flood of memories  
    that rushes back  
    in your absence  
too soon, when I should be dry-shod  
feet already burning on the stretch ahead,  
for the spray to return  
to my face  
(only Tuesday!)

And long before you return to quench  
my longing ground.

*Kristen Hughes*



## A Valentine Reflection

In Spring  
Winter's somber sepia yields  
To the careless iridescence of life.  
About the dainty iris, the uncombed buttercup sprawls.

In jade-green Ireland, two lovers stroll  
Along a meadow's lane.  
Two miles down, a patriotic bomb removes the village pub.

Laughter roars and dancers dance  
In New Orleans' bright Mardi Gras  
A child cries in El Salvador,  
    "Mama, they are killing me. My sister is already dead."

London fests a regal wedding  
With red-clad guards and glinting jewels.  
In the Sahel, the children starve —  
    their bellies swollen, their hair gone red.

In gay Paree, they model gowns  
Designers toast the new year's fashions.  
In Brazil, they raze the endless forests  
    and civilize tribes to poverty.

And before the world's kaleidoscope  
I stop —  
Born unnaturally unblind.

But before the world's kaleidoscope  
Are you —  
Rooted in the earth and knowing of your path.

You soothe the trembling of my rabbit heart.  
You heal the paralysis over me.  
And once again, I look up and note:

In Spring  
Winter's somber sepia yields  
To the careless iridescence of life  
About the dainty iris, the uncombed buttercup sprawls.

*Nori Odoi*



## On a Night Like This

In the amber half-light  
The final scene of the lottery  
Your eyes are cobalt volcanos,  
Gypsy Queen.

I am moving through you now  
At first slowly  
Then, as in the rush  
Of dreams at dawn,  
Pressing against every curve  
Of your warmth  
Like the hot lights  
Of the tailing car  
Fighting them off with his brakes.

"Yes," I agreed,  
"You can never tell what will  
Happen on a night like this."

*Duncan Sanger*

## The Sea of Honey

Different from oceans of water  
The Sea of Honey buoys  
A body for longer.  
Far from land,  
Or hope of rescue.  
You cannot be saved from the Sea of Honey.

There are no sharks in this sea,  
Circling below shipwrecked sailors,  
Nor desert wanderers' vultures drifting above.  
The sky is azure, the temperature even here.  
No waves disturb the surface of the sea;  
And while your limbs are still strong  
You tread gently,  
Suspending your head  
Above the wafting ripples of gold.

Fresh from the hive,  
The honey in the sea is sickly sweet.  
While treading you lick the viscous surface  
Your tongue feeling every moment of the taste.  
You swallow;  
The honey gives you the energy to go on  
Treading.....  
.....Floating.....  
.....Treading.

Soon muscles tire of servitude.  
Resolve slips away;  
Hope and irony will soon follow.  
You laugh, and cry  
For it's hard to believe you're drowning  
In a sea of honey.  
Something so sweet.

But down you do.  
Slipping beneath the golden surface,  
Bright light turns dusky amber,  
Your lungs fill with honey  
And love dies

*Duncan Sanger*



## Addicted

My love is a drug —  
it reaches  
down  
to my very marrow  
and pulls me inside out.  
Aching,  
blinded,  
I stumble in the dark  
hoping for  
a solution.  
Back and forth,  
my thoughts careen  
crying for relief.  
With it,  
without it,  
the highs and lows  
play havoc with my numbness.  
Will knowledge ever come —  
strong enough  
to end this madness?  
But, till then,  
I have no other master.

*Lyra Ward*

## Rowing

Forgetting how the sight of you  
affects me, I am surprised again  
and again by my *desire*.

the force that pulls through  
my blood in your particular  
presence. *Sexual energy*,

you would say, naming it and so  
containing it in me and out-  
side yourself, but *love*

is what I call it when I think  
of you, though you would say  
that certainly *love*

means different things to each  
of us. Still, at the sight of you,  
I feel that pull:

oars through rough water.

*Helen Betz*



## I think of you

I think of you  
And you're alive in me.

Reaching into my mind  
And into my soul

As close as myself!  
You're always with me.

Just touch me,  
And again we'll be as one.

*Joyce Williams-Mitchell*

9/6/87

She's a vision

In ivory and veil,  
We've never seen him,  
In ascot and tail.

With close friends and family, from far and from near,  
To celebrate with them this day they hold dear.

He's been a rover,

He's done many things.  
She's lived all over,  
Life's been interesting.

When souls walk the same path, they're bound to entwine,  
They walk hand-in-hand, heart body and mind.  
When they walk together, no world is as fine.

Through joy and through sorrow,  
'till death do us part.

Today and tomorrow  
The special joy of sharing two hearts.

Beginning to end,  
Imagine the feeling,

To share your joy, your life, your love with your best friend.

So very happy,

They make quite a team.

So very hopeful,

Much more than just dreams.

They face one another, with rings bound to stay,

They whisper "I Love You" on their wedding day.

They whisper "I Love You"

*Dave Friedman*



## Home

I want to thank you for my first week  
of making a house a home,  
though it had its ups and downs  
they were ours and ours alone.  
The evening ends in your eyes  
and the night time melts my skin,  
the morning reflects on shoulders  
as I let the day begin.  
As items find their places  
and we in kind will too,  
I'll remember our first week  
and how much I love you.

*Robin Friedman*

## There Will Be More Tomorrows Like Today

It's Saturday in Vermont  
The sounds of Autumn are closing in on this August day

Pick some of those tiny pine cones from that tree  
We can take them to our son

He would like that  
We can include them with the arrowhead you bought at the gift shop

Do you hear the chain saw?  
Did you see the daddy longlegs?

Look at that cloud  
So white and puffy as it floats past us  
As we drift in our world of peace



Oh, and the breeze  
Do you feel it as it gently caresses your cheek?

Later I'll try to repeat the sensation  
When I touch you and hold you close

You say it's been half your lifetime  
We've been together

It's not long you know  
Compared to what's ahead

There will be more tomorrows like today

More pine cones to pick  
More arrowheads to buy



And clouds to pass our eyes  
And yes, the breeze to touch your cheek  
When I'm not with you to do it myself

It's Saturday in Vermont  
The sounds of Autumn are closing in on the August day

There will be more tomorrows like today  
I promise

*Leo McCloskey*





## love you two ways

love you two ways  
in my mind  
and in my soul  
oh how i wish  
i could keep  
this love under control  
the love in my heart  
boy, it burns and it cuts deep  
but i'm afraid it's a love  
that you won't want to keep

a love that you won't want to keep...

now what about my mind  
and the love that hides there?  
i suppose it's because  
to me, girls like you are so rare  
you keep me going round  
pick me up when i am down  
you show me light when there is darkness  
and banish all my frowns

banish all my frowns

somehow i go to work  
somehow i go to sleep  
even though the days, to me  
man, they seem to creep  
i've asked you the question  
i'm waiting for your call  
staring at the telephone  
hanging on my wall  
waiting for your answer

waiting for your call.....

*Fergus MacGettigan*



## Reaching

Standing here  
under the moonlit sky  
watching tall,  
slender fingers  
reach out

Crying,  
hoping,  
unsure  
what tomorrow will bring

Tears light my eyes,  
of thoughts,  
of touches,  
of warmth,  
of you

As the arms and fingers  
of nature  
caress the moon,  
my mind  
caresses you,  
reaching out  
through the vastness,  
looking,  
finding  
our star.  
its brightness,  
my eternal light,  
inside me,  
will always  
be light for you.

*Ron Elkin*

## The Price of Freedom

Used to spend our days together  
At night my thoughts of you  
But now I spend my days alone  
And wonder what to do

You meant the world and more to me  
And none shall e're compare  
Our love was something wonderful  
Till you felt pangs of fear

You could not bear the thought of it  
You chose to turn and run  
And now I'm left with empty heart  
And love to give to none

I'd give the world to have you back  
And say that you love me  
But since I truly love you dear  
I'd sooner set you free

For if our love is truly there  
Well this we shall soon see  
'Cause then my darling one true love  
You will come back to me

*Sandy Smith*



## As No Other

She had loved him. Even when he slipped away for a short psychic coffee break. Only a strong hug pulled him from some thin obscurity. Then he returned in another dimension holding a tall glass of milk. After that, no splendored rhapsody. Only she quivering paced a path across the floor. Stars scattering. Everything as before but different. Staying home nights, he looked for warmth from the tv and sharpened knives. Occasionally throwing a typewriter across the lawn. As a means of quality control he carefully swallowed: the car key, her heart, remembering, love exquisite.

*Elizabeth F. Hendricks*

## The day you packed

The day you packed and went away  
The sun left, too; it rained all day.  
The sky cried down its tears of rain.  
And I cried, too, in silent pain.

I wandered, lonely, in the daze  
Feeling lost and in a haze;  
It was as though a part of me  
Were missing — and you held the key.

I long to have you touch my face,  
To know your soul with warm embrace,  
To find you by my side each night,  
To be as one, and know we're right.

You left with me a treasure rare —  
You gave yourself and we did share  
A unity of brilliance bright  
That lit up Montreal at night.

You told me time could be a friend  
Or enemy — it did depend;  
But time will be my enemy  
Until it brings you back to me.

*Judi Lazerus Karras*



## Lovesick

Never thought I'd have such energy  
I'm such a slug-like thing  
Never thought my face would glow  
Unless from oil slickering

Never thought I'd feel adrenaline  
Without a crisis near  
Never thought my eyes would shine  
Without shmutz that made them tear

Never thought I'd feel so alive  
I've been physically fitter  
Never thought I'd be whistling  
Whilst cleaning kitty litter

Never thought of life as blissful  
While doing mundane chores  
Never thought I'd be delighted  
Hearing nasal, grunty snores

I'm in love, a walking grin,  
And it's all because of you  
You're my little sugarplum  
And I'm your kissie-poo

So let's bottle this feeling  
And hope it never passes  
Market it as an Eau-de-Pew  
And sell it to the masses

*Bonnie Eve Gosset*

## Let's Try

Let's forget about our foolish pride  
Let's not hold back the feelings inside  
Let's run away together, if only for  
a moment, if only for an hour  
Let's get lost in the love we both  
so much desire  
Let's walk together through the fire  
Let's take the path that leads to this  
Let's not slow down, there are no clocks  
in heaven  
Let's forget about our foolish pride  
Let's just touch each other's heart  
Let's try.

*Micheal Latimore*



## Now That I Have the Chance to Tell You

I don't know how  
to tell you this,  
but you said that  
you wanted me  
to write you  
a love poem.  
I wanted you;  
to be with you  
forever, plus  
you talked with me  
about eternity.  
"The long of it  
and the short,"  
you said, "is  
love and trust."  
Now is the time  
to say you are  
the only one  
I ever loved  
without a reason.  
Now is my chance  
to tell you that  
I love you.  
My love for you  
is from the heart,  
the only place  
I know now, love  
may start. I love  
you now as I  
have never loved  
before. And not  
because of  
this or that  
But just because  
I love you.

*Elizabeth F. Hendricks*





## My Love for You

I love you more than words convey  
And always beside you I will stay  
For I am yours today and forever  
Creating a bond we will never sever

In your arms is where I belong  
Holding each other all night long  
I give to you all of me  
To join together and become we

We through life, you and I  
No one else need apply  
For I have found true love at last  
All my heartache is in the past

So take me when the time is right  
And make love to me all the night  
For nothing has ever been so true  
As the need and love I have for you

*Sandy Smith*

## One Cycle

the poems shared, the song sung low  
the whispered words from Cupid's bow  
the stolen touch and glancing eye  
the muffled struggle, final cry

the swelling and the sudden rush  
the suckling and the gentle hush  
the nights awake, the tears to dry  
the "love you" and the question "why?"

the "I" who speaks and simple shames  
the dollar made and little fames  
the door that shuts then opens up  
the stranger that is all grown up

the other one upon the stair  
the held concerns, the offered cares  
the proposition, mine, but not  
the future memories I sought

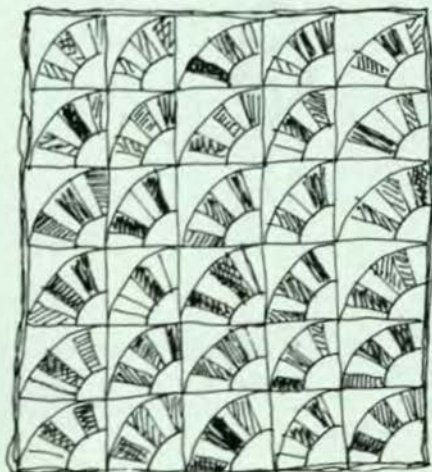
*Jonathan D. Lettvin*

## Your heart is broken

Your heart is broken  
You're holding back  
Tears of hope, yet sorrow  
It's funny how feelings are as simple as that  
I'd like to  
Take your hand  
Lead you away  
From all these clouds of darkness  
There's no turning back  
Now, there's no turning back...

And we would see  
Bright clouds on the horizon  
White clouds floating across the sky  
The sun shines through, one beautiful moment  
And its peaceful beauty lights up your eyes  
Its dancing rays clear away your darkness  
As a calm cool breeze blows away your sighs  
And as the moments pass, your spirit rises  
We leave our troubles and woes behind  
I'd like to take your hand and lead you there  
To a dream world full of surprises  
Out of the shadows and into the brightness  
In the lush green meadows in fresh country air  
To wipe the laughter back into your blue eyes  
To see again the smile that once was there.

*Fergus MacGettigan*



## Alone

This morning  
I reached  
for you  
and you were  
gone

leaving only  
a hole  
which opened wide  
its jaws  
and swallowed  
the world  
the people  
the buildings  
the trees  
leaving only  
me

walking through drifting snow  
encased in fog  
pierced by  
winter's  
sharp  
blade

*Nori Odoi*

## Something Lost

It's a Saturday  
And the wind is up  
And I seem to have left something behind  
Somewhere.

A lock, a trunk  
Decayed and forgotten  
Some key perhaps  
A girl

Maybe  
Some serene lift of bird  
Some hypnotic stare open-mouthed  
Fragile snow against still water  
Somewhere.

In the meantime  
I will hold myself firm in the wind  
A candle, a small, sure light in the night  
And wait for her return some deep day in Spring.

*Chip Carter*



Nothing is true

It's a feeling of...  
and the world is...  
and I want to be...  
something...

A few more...  
because you...  
I don't know...  
I don't know...

There's a...  
I don't know...  
I don't know...  
I don't know...

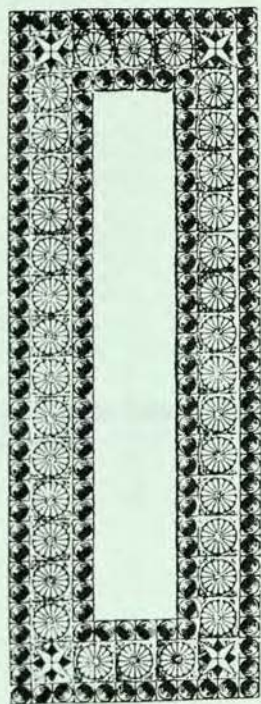
It's a feeling...  
I don't know...  
I don't know...  
I don't know...

and then





Family  
& Friends



Family  
& Friends





There is something in staying close to men and women and  
looking on them, and in the contact and odor  
of them, that pleases the soul well,  
All things please the soul, but these please the soul well.

*Walt Whitman*

Long were you a dream in your mother's sleep,  
and then she woke to give you birth.

*Kahlil Gibran*

One's friends are that part of the human race  
with which one can be human.

*George Santayana*

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## To My Father, Farmer

What better occupation than  
writing poems to my father?

What could better serve  
the glory of the hazel field

as it looked on the evening when  
we inspected the ripening crop

conscious always of the river  
close behind the wavering elms?

Old Sam Haney's shed  
still smells of bootleg wine.

My father's father watched his boys  
reeling in the wet grass.

Let's drive down there now.  
Smell the potato dust!

Remember how hot we were  
planting them last spring,

bending, groping in the bucket  
full of clammy wet seedings,

mud on our hands, dry mouths,  
till our mother walked down

and we ate lunch under  
that skinny little ash?

How did we all fit! Andy  
threw rotten spuds

at the dog who slept  
with his feet in the air.

Let's drive down there now!  
Is it different? It's raining.

It must have rained before  
or those seeds couldn't have grown

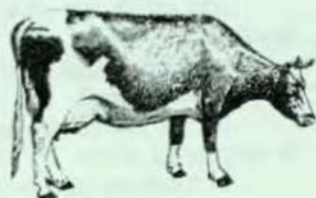
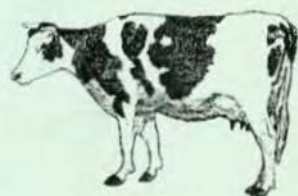
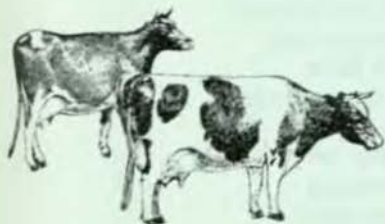
but I don't remember  
this much mud. Let's go.

This is not the same place,  
though there's the ash tree

a little bigger than before,  
and there's the sack —

“Spaulding” seeding spuds—  
caked with earth.

*Jennifer Nadeau*





## A Mother's Prayer



Sit patient my child  
your turn will come,  
your feet  
that barely touch the floor  
sway anxiously  
awaiting more...  
So small your sneakers  
seem to me  
housing your tiny  
growing feet.  
Yet they performed  
when called upon  
to carry your being  
to and from  
investigating  
all affairs  
peering down halls,  
round corners, up stairs.  
Let loose like a pigeon  
you always return  
to the place in my heart  
you've reverently earned.  
You fold softened hands  
in angelic praise,  
but I know the trouble  
I read on your face.  
Sit patient my child  
your turn will come,  
there's plenty of time  
for the world beyond.  
Allow me a moment  
to study your soul  
In love with the person  
I helped to grow old.  
Sweet tears salt your cheeks  
when often you find  
you can't always have  
the things on your mind.  
Silver blue eyes  
enrapture my love,  
pleading and speaking  
my innocent dove.  
Please stop the tears  
and smile my child,  
uncover the soul  
so tender and mild.  
Your golden heart  
brings joy to my being  
in sorrowful times,  
in morning and evening.

*Anonymous*

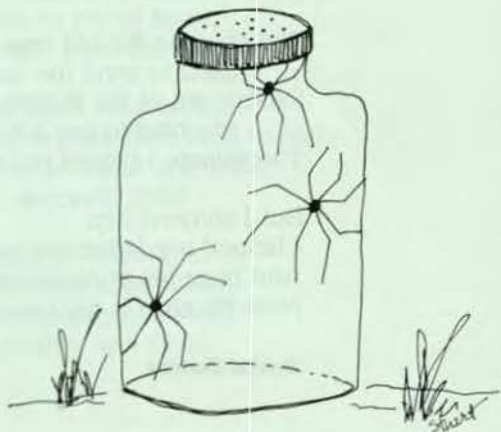
## Childhood

Mud pie parties every Saturday.  
The little Jewish boy down the street  
brought  
bouquets of dandelions which stained our faces.

And our Daddy Long Legs danced  
in the glass jars.

The trick was to see how long  
you could walk  
along Mother's garden edge before falling off.  
Then run to pick snails off the neighbor's house.

*Denise Clancey*



## Flower Nymph

Flower nymph, child of the stars  
Come sit upon my knee  
And sing a song of universe  
In rainbow melody.

And tell me all that you can tell  
Of something that you know  
Or show me how to touch the sky  
And teach myself to grow.

Come touch my mind and kiss my soul  
We'll swim upon the dew  
And I will learn eternity  
As one will merge from two.

*Judi Lazerus Karras*



## The Boogey Man

The shadow the old tree made with the moon  
used to send me under the covers.  
Silhouettes of the Boogey Man  
reaching to put a hex on me  
The minute I closed my eyes.

But I showed him.  
I helped my father cut away his limbs  
And buzz his trunk away.  
Now his stub is my haunting ground.

*Denise Ciancey*

## My Daughter's Hands

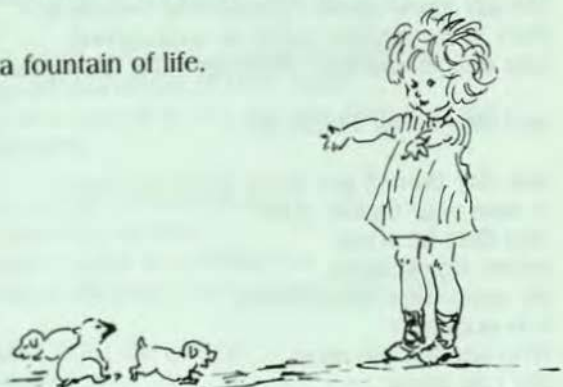
My daughter's hands are indeed a treasure of warmth and beauty. They are little, delicate and very active. They move in a funny way like the wings of birds in their first attempt to fly.

Her hands are soft as cotton and slippery as silk. Like tiny little stars in the sky, her nails are always shining. They possess a special, mild and unique fragrance, which inspires love and protection.

The humidity on her hands reflects sparkling lights that involve tenderness. Oh yes, oh yes....

My daughter's hands are a fountain of life.

*Isabel M. Vargas*



## Mother and Child

Mother and Child, a sight to behold,  
With loving understanding, a lifetime to mold.  
From a painful birth, to joy of heart,  
Inseparable love, right from the start.

The savage hunger upon your breast,  
To peace and contentment, then time to rest.  
An angry disposition, reckless and wild,  
To Angelic beauty, serenely mild.

Endearing love, nurtured with time,  
Tried and tested, sweeter than wine.  
A growing beauty, ecstatically styled,  
Warmth and love, Mother and Child.

*Edmond Catania*

## A Boy

Some of those Brandon Boys  
Still love to drink and smoke.

Fugitives from public school  
They built quick, flimsy hideouts in my shop  
(A dangerous, familiar place).  
Afraid they would be torn down,  
Afraid they wouldn't,  
These zit-faced manipulators,  
Black-belts in moral Jiu-jitsu,  
Guffawing masters of protection and provocation,  
Already knew about buttons and switches.  
They knew nerves could be unsheathed  
Like delicate hickory shavings off a hard plank.

And they knew I built, too.

One day Darnell got in my face and said,  
"I hate your fuckin' guts"  
And then he wept.  
Before he escaped  
My arms were around him.  
I do not know  
Who needed the most  
But I do know  
That for one brief moment  
I woke from a dream  
Of spurious self-isolation  
And I have remembered this shining-sun of a boy.

So when my dirty purple boy breathed —  
little old man forehead pressing puffy eyes shut —  
I thought  
He, too, had arrived in a dangerous place.  
I hoped  
He would teach me the Darnell lesson  
Over and over  
About tender, vulnerable hard wood  
And the live oak in Louisiana.

Then  
I saw  
A guileless boy with head raised up  
And I wept.

*Chip Carter*



## The Moon and the Star

Tonight I saw a star dangling from the moon.  
I could imagine the thread that bound the two.  
They were bright lights against the blackest sky,  
And the moon's cycle was only one-quarter old.

I remember a little boy's hand wrapped around his father's;  
Each held shopping bags proportioned to their sizes.  
The little boy looked up and waited for his father's face to smile.  
Only then did his do the same.

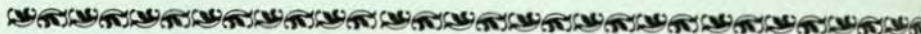
The ducklings were half the age of their mother.  
But they glided just as smoothly as she.  
They completed their swim single file behind her.  
Not a peep from their beaks although their journey was long.

Tonight I watched the star, but I fell asleep.  
I envisioned its birth in space.  
I dreamt the star shimmeyed the thread to the moon.  
When I woke up, daylight had drowned out all the night's lights.

The next night, I half expected two —  
Two moons, side by side, each with a trail of little stars,  
Who strove to be what they wanted to be.  
We all need to learn from someone.

*Amy Carmusin*





## To Brother on Your 26th Birthday

When I was one and three years old  
And you were one and five,  
I remember your teasing, smiling face  
Our souls had come alive.

Your head was always closely cropped  
like quills of porcupine,  
I remember the day behind Jeff's house  
You threw the burrs in mine.

That night you bravely used a scissors  
to cut my silky hair,  
I remember the lie we told our dad  
"Some gum got stuck in there!"

Revenge had come one winter's day  
I threw a snowball straight,  
Smacking the shield of a passing car  
And the beating was your fate.

Beneath the covers late at night  
A flashlight would appear,  
I remember your quest for the book of knowledge  
Which so often you would share.

Sneakily one Maine summer day  
We found a cigarette,  
I remember my first grown-up smoke  
A tree-house fire was set.

Time flew by, so did the years  
Some cruel, some harsh, some neat,  
The hours together in our dad's house  
Were often bittersweet.

We fought and hit and kicked and bit,  
We shoved, and pushed, and swore,  
We kissed, and cried, and smiled, and lied  
Engaged in a love war.



One day his home was closed to us  
No place to call our own,  
God sent his workers through the land  
To find us a new home.

At mom's again we were united  
In and out of time,  
But together we saw hardships and fights  
For this was our design.

Your sorrow was my sorrow too  
Your happiness my joy,  
I turned my eyes to follow you  
For you were the older boy.

Like bird in hand we went together  
With tears, and smiles, and fear,  
When distance places us apart  
Your soul is always here.

*Anonymous*



## To Grandma, Love, Liz

She is someone who is another mother to us.

She is a bundle of love.

She is homemade spaghetti sauce and meatballs.

She is the family doctor.

She is the family seamstress.

She is someone who changes all the furniture around when she comes to your house.

She is someone whose whole life is built around the home.

She is someone who makes you homemade chicken soup when you're sick.

She is someone who tries to fix you up on a date with someone you don't like.

She is someone who buys out Jordan Marsh.

She is someone who forces you to eat more than you can possibly finish.

She is someone who embarrasses you when you go shopping because she talks to everyone she meets.

She is someone who can make you laugh until you want to die.

She is someone who cares so much about other people besides her family.

She is someone who never buys anything for herself.

She is someone who has worn the same clothes for years.

She is someone who will do anything for you any time of the day.

She is someone who is always there when you need her.

She is someone who is loved by so many people.

She is someone who raves about her garden.

She is someone who has patience for everything.

She is someone who loves to read her grandchildren's school books.

She is someone who gets upset if you don't start the morning off with a fresh glass of orange juice.

She is someone who is as strong as a bull and is never sick.

She is someone who says she hates the family's cats and dogs but always feeds them and saves them leftovers.

She is someone who can never keep a secret in the family.

She is someone who is always comparing cousins to each other.

She is someone who is very proud to be Italian and wishes everyone could be too.

She is someone who cooks the biggest meals.

She is someone who says that our things won't shrink when they are put in the dryer until they come out tiny.

She is someone who carries messages between cousins.

She is someone who never gets mad at you.

She is someone who is always helping her children.

She is someone who is very close to God.

She is someone who has gone through a lot.

She never forgets anyone.

She is someone who always comes back with things for you when she goes shopping.

She is someone who appreciates anything you do for her.

She is someone we all love and we appreciate her just being here with us.

*Elizabeth Corsi, age 15*



## Runaway

the years of anxious  
anguish  
melt away  
at the sound  
of your sweet  
southern drawl  
at the touch  
of your  
loving hand  
and the generosity  
of your soul  
we revel  
in the knowledge  
that you are  
ours  
our lost child  
alive  
and vibrant  
you take us by storm  
flattering us  
with an outpouring  
of love  
and we  
so flattering you  
with acceptance  
matching your love  
with a force  
you couldn't have possibly known  
existed  
our baby  
has come home  
at last  
and we  
like a flock of proud parents  
gather around  
showing off  
our prize  
marveling at the  
beauty  
of our rare find

we aim to treasure you  
for always  
in the warmth  
of our love



*Chris Swarms*



## My Mother's Hand Upon My Shoulder

It's been a long time that you've been gone  
The days and years have passed  
My life has changed but somehow I am the same

I walk through two sides of life at the same time  
I drift from one world to the other

When I am awake I find myself with you  
Doing those things we used to do  
Saying those things we used to say

When I am awake I also find myself in a world of needs  
I am a wife  
I am an employee  
I am the servant of God

I do all that life requires but I am still with you

At night when the world is mine, however  
It is only you that I spend my time with

I can't let you go because there was so much  
I didn't say  
I didn't do

I am still your little girl  
I don't want to grow up in the world without you

It was funny, the other day I went to Maine  
It was a beautiful day and we went to a lighthouse

As I climbed the stairs  
I suddenly grasped for air when I felt a hand gently touch my shoulder  
When I turned to see who it was  
I realized it was your hand, guiding me safely to the top

When the day turned to night the stars filled the sky  
The milky way was so crystal clear  
My only thought was for you to see the beauty that filled my eyes

I didn't see you looking at the stars  
But I again felt your gentle hand upon my shoulder, reassuring me it was OK

No one understands how I feel about you passing  
I am a soul filled with endless pain

But I must survive this life

For the world of after  
When we will again be together

Until that time shall come again  
Your hand upon my shoulder shall always be our sign  
Our bond of faith and understanding

*So please don't stop putting your hand upon my shoulder*

*Sarah G. McCloskey*

## **We Are Not Alone**

In life we all must suffer the pain of loss  
We feel at times like no one else can understand our burden

But we are not alone, those of us that hold the sensitivity  
To care  
To love

We may be few but we do exist as does the silent majority  
We bare our grief and cry in silent testament

To the one we loved and lost to life's greatest weakness, death

But we are the winners, you and I, in spite of our pain  
For we can hurt because our hearts were open to love and sharing

God knows our burden is unbearable  
So he has given us the vision to see the good in the bad

Whenever our thoughts fill us with pain  
Thinking of the one long passed

God helps us think of the good times  
And the love given and taken in life's course

God has allowed us to blend our tears with a smile  
or a lump in the throat  
as we recall the happy times

We have pride and dignity in our knowledge  
That we loved our special person in life

We have no regrets in what might have been  
Our knowledge keeps the love alive and the memories returning

In life we all must suffer the pain of loss  
But we are special because we have the sensitivity  
*To love*  
*To care*  
*To miss*  
*To go on*

*Leo McCloskey*

## My Husband

I watch him  
wheel his Dad  
slowly down the hall  
carefully out the back door  
over by the car  
he set the chair  
as close as could be  
"Ready, Dad?"  
The old man  
grabbed the car  
and slowly  
painfully  
pulled himself up  
His son  
in one motion  
grabbed his Dad's belt  
gently pulling the old man erect  
while pushing the wheelchair away  
"Straighten your leg out, Dad."  
"That's good."  
Slowly patiently  
he eased his Dad  
into the car  
such loving caring strength  
in each motion  
that must be why  
I love him

*Diane L. McGary*



## Last Leaving Thoughts

I left you in the cold ground  
and I prayed a fevered prayer  
May your blanket of earth  
keep you warm inside  
your black, eternal lair.

I left you in the cold ground  
but I see you everywhere  
Pictures and letters,  
cherished testaments,  
to the bond we shared.

I left you in the cold ground  
but you're here with the family  
Forever illuminated  
in my mother's eyes  
and locked inside of me.

*Bonnie Eve Gosset*

## Friends

I used to wake up daily wondering  
if God would deliver the  
blueprint of my life today.

Who will I become? What will I do?  
Where will I go?

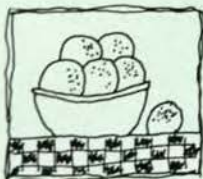
I have come to know that  
life is a journey, a series of  
experiences.  
Some relationships will flower,  
others will wilt.  
Some goals will be reached, and  
others will remain distant.

I know now that I will not  
simply wake up one day and  
have arrived at a fearless,  
all-knowing state.

God has given much and  
taken away much from each of us.  
Life is not pure.

But for this day, I will be  
grateful for what he has given me.  
I will accept people, places and situations  
as they are.  
And I will reach out to my friends,  
for they are truly God's gift to me.

*Don Roche*





## Eyes of Hope

I never thought much about  
the steps I took or the  
air I breathed.

They didn't seem to require much thought,  
and so I never gave them any.

And then the accident happened.  
The car had been demolished;  
her life had been crushed.  
My soul had been taken.

I felt loss, I felt hurt,  
I felt anger.  
And I felt each deeply.

Friends helped.  
They listened to me,  
cried with me,  
felt for me.

My questions were many,  
while the answers were few.  
I felt the weight of being alone.

Then my best friend's  
little boy came over to me.  
Neatly groomed and uncomfortable.  
He smiled and took my hand.  
He didn't say anything, but my  
unnameable hurt seemed to step back  
a bit.  
I saw life and innocence in his eyes.  
His world was full of hope.  
And I decided mine should be too.

*Don Roche*



## Michael

Friend of the friendless, you held bread in one hand and  
Laughter in the other.  
Soup kitchen minister in shabby jeans,  
You would always be good for a hug no matter how bad somebody  
Stank.

Looking at you was a contradiction. Cock  
Eyed, you always looked two places at once. What did you see?

You hung out at street corners, at home with the homeless.  
You saw the spirit still dwelling in the dispirited  
and with many small breaths you would puff it back  
To life, sometimes.

You were not a saint. You yelled at Tom in  
noisy fights, and danced and drank in  
the bars all night  
when young.

All your human  
grief and joy  
Died last year.  
Your pillaged people, your alley dwellers  
miss you, miss your bread and laughter.

*Anonymous*

## Fast Friends

She saw him searching for food.  
He saw her looking.

She had heard it was difficult feeding the likes of him.  
But it couldn't hurt to try.  
If he was truly hungry he would come.

She slowly and gently approached him.  
He became stiff and wide-eyed.  
Smiling, she extended a delicate hand containing the intriguing morsel.  
He wondered if it was worth it.  
A cracker or safety?

He was hungry and she did have a cracker.  
He started coming closer.  
She sensed his trust and started to smile.  
Her heart was beating fast and so was his.  
Probably a lot faster than hers.

He touched the cracker with his quivering mouth and took it.  
Looking into her eyes he found a friend.  
Instead of running away, the squirrel remained in front of the young girl  
and enjoyed his gift with pleasure.

*Lisa Levine*

## For Geoffrey Jones (1959–1988)

He celebrated life,  
always attuned to *festival!*  
In touch with the dance...  
riding on a laugh.

He understood the off-beat  
and he understood the downbeat.

He understood the love and suffering of women,  
and he loved the music that they made —  
Billie Holliday,  
Dakota Staton, Dinah Washington,  
Randy Crawford, Semanya McCord.  
He shared music with his friends  
like a sacrament.

He was as comfortable as a bowl of soup  
on a cold winter Sunday  
with a friend and two good books.  
Yet he was wild as an open car  
in sunswept hills above Barcelona.

He loved my wife.  
In subtle ways, like a cat,  
he helped me to love her more,  
to see her in new lights —  
in the bawdy reds of carnival,  
and the smoky sheen of midnight R&B.

When Geoffrey got sick  
he encountered Christ.  
We will not forget his eyes.

Goodbye our friend.  
Now we mourn our loss — but later,  
we will celebrate the peace you've reached,  
the living love you leave.

*Frank Ingari*



## Unchaperoned Cat

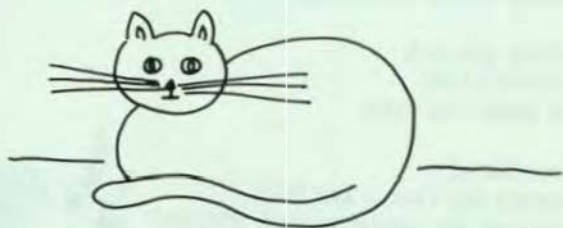
I had set a date with Dr. Death for six o'clock that night  
for my little catty, for my sweetest little girl,  
to get a ride to heaven on the floorboard of a Saab.

Yes, that's how Death will come here, as absurd as it seems.  
We'll hear the Saab's alarm beep on, and then a grating  
as the gate out front crushes any snow that's 'neath it.

The doorbell will scream and Dr. Death will come in,  
bearing Newman blue eyes and a needle.  
They both will be piercing, my heart will be leaping,  
as if jumping in ice water and sinking.

But in the meantime my little muff and I sit closely  
and wait in the warmth of our bond that's like a fire's ruddy glow.  
But time circles closer and Dr. Death soon arrives  
to keep his date  
to take my sweetest girl.

*Bonnie Eve Gosset*



## Her Buddy

Like worn comfortable shoes  
they grew old as a pair,  
alone and together,  
each fitting the pieces of a solitary life  
into the empty spaces of the other:  
a mutual dependence  
based on separate needs.

And the years passed.

She,...slipped into slow infirmity,  
and ventured little out-of-doors,  
(though there was nowhere to really go),  
her rooms a familiar map,  
the rugs tread into trails,  
comfortable and comforting.

And the years passed.

He,...slipped less often out-of-doors  
and for shorter forays  
(he had certain places he had to go),  
his paths familiar only to him  
across streets, through bushes, under porches.  
She and he, reunited like sweethearts,  
when his faint mew sounded at the door.

And the years passed.

Their habits, blissfully entrenched and routine,  
became their lives, their life,  
alone and together.  
Reading and sleeping, she and he,  
in their bookend chairs, close, content.  
She,...pillows stacked around her back,  
lap quilt covering her knees.  
He,...curled into the space he had pressed  
with his presence into the threadbare cushion.

And the years passed.

The car that hit him  
left him there on his final trail,  
caught between peace and chaos.  
She missed him for a day...and knew.  
She could never sit in her chair again  
across from his empty one  
so she sat in his and joined him  
on their new trail to the stars.



## Ode to My Tercel with a Broken Fuel Pump

Alas, my friend,  
What haunted you?  
What cracked your heart that day?  
A sure, dark vision of your death,  
Of youth that fades away?

I felt you wince  
Beneath my feet  
I heard your wondering sigh  
As rusted flanks — once bright and blue —  
Trembled, as if to cry.

You shuddered next  
As deep as fear  
As gentle as despair  
And though I called you to hold on  
I felt your brave heart tear.

200 thousand  
Faithful miles  
You bore me in your steel  
Could you have guessed my fickle hands  
Now seek another's wheel?

How brief is love —  
Though bright its flame —  
Its glory is its pyre.  
How soon we turn to newer joys  
And light another fire.

They towed you  
Forty miles and more  
To men skilled in repair  
They opened you, replaced your pump  
You drive again without a care.

And so, my friend,  
I envy you  
The ease with which you healed.  
The pain of broken human hearts  
Is not so easily repealed.

*Nori Odoi*

## Life of Angels

*Dedicated to Edward C. DeRenzo*

more and more  
I feel you

pulling at me  
a  
lonesome  
dark night's anxiety  
before  
winter's first snow

my dreams  
buoyed up  
which hung like anchors  
now bobbing  
wake and  
sleep

you are here  
in this underworld dream  
life of angels

*Joan Carroll*




## Life's Thirst

My friend:

We cup our hands  
like beggars  
ragged at the desert's edge  
to catch our Time  
like water  
trickling  
with  
crystal  
clarity  
from hidden springs.

And though we gulp it  
deeply,  
greedily,  
like water  
it seeps  
through our grasp  
escaping  
to the arid breeze  
and vanishing  
quickly in the sand

Even as those things  
we prize:  
homes and cars  
plans and dreams  
and  
even  
that sweet treasure  
youth  
seep through our lives  
and disappear.



Yet you  
will I remember  
when  
I forget  
those homes  
and dreams;  
when youth's  
bright shine  
shall fade at last  
into my darkening memory.

In those last droplets  
that I savor —  
diamonds  
in my empty palms —  
revealed again will be  
your eyes  
dancing with your inner light,  
your lips that laughed  
and arms that held;  
the shoulders that did share my grief.

For when I leave  
reluctantly  
for greener lands,  
with gentler stars  
I will look back  
on this dry desert  
And know  
that here  
my thirst  
was quenched.

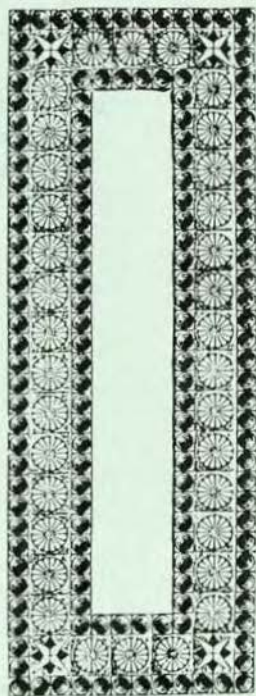
*Nari Odoi*

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Humanity  
& the World



Humanity  
& the World



~~~~~

If the world were merely seductive, that would be easy. If it were merely challenging, that would be no problem, but I arise in the morning torn between the desire to improve the world and a desire to enjoy the world. This makes it hard to plan the day.

*E.B. White*

Oh, let my weakness have an end!  
Give unto me, made lowly wise,  
The spirit of self-sacrifice.

*William Wordsworth*

Autumn's bright moon,  
However far I walked, still afar off  
In an unknown sky.

*Kaga no Chiyo*

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## The Path Beyond the Meadow

What lies down that path we didn't travel today  
What if we didn't stop along the way in that meadow  
If we hadn't rested on the cushion of soft green grass  
What would we have seen

In the meadow we saw the blue sky with the tide of changing clouds  
We heard the crickets' symphony providing us with their song

We felt the breeze that brought the scents of nature  
We saw the woodpecker, with its multicolored coat, pecking the solo

Would our lives have been different if we didn't stop  
What mystery was missed on the path we didn't choose to follow

I guess the mystery we found in the meadow  
Was too precious to ask  
What if

Perhaps tomorrow we can try the path  
But our devotion will remain in the meadow

There is a path beyond the meadow  
We didn't choose to follow

But the mystery we found  
Was what we were seeking

*Leo McCloskey*





## On Tools

The glazing shine of a porcelain cup  
reflects the hand that touched it up  
and hands so sure from practice long  
carve the handles smooth and strong  
to hold the blades of scythe and hoe.  
I quietly hum, and till my rows  
so certain all the tender strokes  
will draw forth all their craft evokes.  
No craftsman I, with patient care  
to carve clay, wood or metal dare  
but on a recorder bored to suit  
I'll play sweet music to my fruit.  
Or spade to turn the garden soil,  
then pause, with cup, between my toil  
and leaning forward, thank my friends,  
their loving works held in my hands.

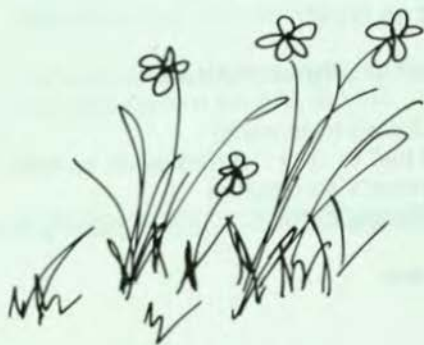
*Kristen Hughes & Walter Kittredge*



## On Sassafras Rock

Mid-stride  
we pause  
to commune with each other  
pouring the season  
deep into ourselves  
to taste the promise of spring  
in a mood of dazzling leaves  
as summer's incense  
trails away out of burning trees  
stirring  
even as  
the moorish cloak gathers to settle  
on the piles  
and to drink in a simple moment  
brimming with life  
the draft of an early harvest.

*Kristen Hughes*



## Today the sun

Today the sun through the trees suddenly  
yellow! yellow! what are you sun star  
locked in immeasurable embrace  
with another spherical fellow?

Sun when did we first fail to honor you?  
That day Eve and Adam felt their heads  
hot upon the thorns?

Sun I see now that you have been  
as steady as the seasons your children  
and we have banished ourselves  
from your garden our paradise.

What is this moment still  
tugging at mind-self this eternal  
moment as I speed along dirty  
winter road in late day?

Who is responsible for this  
endless travelling always in transit?

One moment alone stands out  
in my mind and it is a moment  
as familiar as breath.

It is the sun shining on the earth.

I could not stop to worship  
because I had to "get" somewhere.  
But a moment's recognition  
is the beginning of love.

*Jennifer Nadeau*



## Prayer

We are not here by right  
Nor She by chance  
We are here as a privilege  
And She as a miracle

She is Earth, Air, Fire and Water  
We suckle upon her take her strength  
She is Mother, Father, Lover and Friend  
We steal from her and drain her

She is a life body  
We are visitors upon Her breast

She loves us by giving Her gifts freely  
We hoard them and claim them for ourselves  
She loves us by blessing us with all Her wealth  
We take it from her like thieves

We must learn to love Her more  
Must She love us less?

For we cannot thieve from an empty house  
And She cannot love skeletons.

*Christine Stuart*

## The Fire Burning

Wander down  
dark staircases,  
shadowed halls,  
through twisting passages  
and past closed doors,  
to reach  
the depths.

Ablaze with light  
from a raging bonfire;  
so bright it fills the eyes,  
yet its silence is overwhelming,  
wells of soundless fire  
disappear below,  
tracing veins of heat  
and passion.

Hidden from all,  
this room inside me  
is the source  
of my being,  
with fires too deep to see,  
waiting,  
for the spark that sets  
them free.

*Lyra Ward*



## Saltwater Tears

Degrees of love forever expanding  
Some so casual, others demanding  
True feelings aren't obvious all of the time  
Some we harbor and keep inside  
So as not to confuse these thoughts of mine  
I walk with whispers by the seaside  
Exchanging secrets with this vast blue ocean  
While its waves surround my every emotion.

My sea is calm-quiet night  
Glistening water such a delight  
Cool sands, warm breeze, beams from the moon  
Unfortunately it will be daylight soon  
Sand ripples will remain in memory of  
My goals, my dreams and all that I love.

And if by chance storm waves should crash  
Upsetting my reason for being  
I will not despair from its splash  
Instead I will look for its meaning  
Having faith the fury would soon subside  
Is all that I could do  
To see the debris left in the tide  
Would show me how I knew  
That nature's course takes its toll  
Through experiencing life's joys and fears  
Hidden lessons taught to fill one's soul  
To remain throughout the years.

*Diane Marie Williams*



## Self, I Said

I feel safe within myself, yet seek solutions  
There are corners of my life I need to fill  
The short confusions are the paths on which to travel  
The paths are open now and travel them I will

Some of the calendars of my life passed by, they passed too quickly  
So many more, I feel the interest in them yet  
I'll need protection from the days that lose the sunshine  
So I'll fight to accept each day that dawns without regret

I am small upon the earth but I am feeling  
And if I cut, it's life that seeps from within my veins  
So it's adjusting to my life as simply being  
And accepting proof of birth with its pleasures and pains

If I could advise and reach one open mind to listen  
It would be gratitude I would feel if they could hear  
That the only pathway towards the apex in a lifetime  
Is, take a step, it must be up, and consent to the fear

All the right words have been written before, there have been many  
To me it's enlightening to know I'm not here by myself  
Yet even the writers expressing themselves in moments of wisdom  
Must remember that even the classics return to the shelf

I know that the ways of the world are not all of my choosing  
For if they were then all of my questions would need no reply  
And a tiresome lifetime with perfect solutions is simply boring  
So it's the challenge for living through ducklings and swans  
that gives me a high

*Sandra Ferolito*

## Comes the Dawn

After a while you learn the subtle difference  
Between holding a hand and chaining a soul.  
And you learn that love doesn't mean leaning  
And company doesn't mean security.  
And you begin to understand that kisses aren't contracts.  
And presents aren't promises.  
And you begin to accept your defeats  
With your head held high and your eyes open  
With the grace of a woman, not the grief of a child.  
You learn to build your roads  
On today because tomorrow's ground  
Is too uncertain for plans, and futures have  
A way of falling down in mid-flight.  
After a while you learn that even sunshine  
Burns if you get too much.  
So you plant your own garden and decorate  
Your own soul, instead of waiting  
For someone to bring you flowers.  
And you learn that you really can endure.  
That you really are strong  
And you really do have worth  
And you learn and learn....and you learn  
With every goodbye you learn.

*Anonymous*



## Game of Life

I go through life playing this game  
The people I meet are all the same  
They say they always try their best  
To me it's like a game of chess

For the pawns are my body, which work and fight  
The rooks are my eyes like windows, let in light  
The knights are my voice, which speak of pride  
The bishops the kindness that lies inside  
The king is the brain, which controls this game  
But the queen is my heart that feels the pain

Each day is a move in this game of chess  
Like the game of life, I try my best  
So why do I even play this game?  
For the queen to be happy and not feel the pain

*Robert Anthony Williams*

## Breathless (Fear and Joy)

Puddles of light,  
framed by darkness,  
pass slowly,  
then gather speed,  
blurring...  
I try to focus,  
grasp  
at reality,  
but am swept up  
by the rush  
of wind  
and speed.  
Breathless,  
eyes tearing,  
I gasp,  
torn by the joy,  
craving more,  
yet I reach out  
and try to stop.

Carried along  
on wings that beat too swiftly  
for my aching heart,  
I laugh  
and cry,  
terrified to stop —  
lest I return  
to the  
empty dark,  
and yet fearful also  
of the light  
that may await me.

*Lyra Ward*



## Helen to Aphrodite

I wore the boredom of my days  
content enough in my husband's house  
until you swept from heaven  
and wrapped me  
in the shimmering robe  
of your voice  
You told me  
whom to love  
whom to follow.

Sister, it is you  
I love,  
and I follow  
mortal men only because  
you wish it.

Lust and greed will drive them to war.  
My beauty will bear their blame.

I do not care.

Your love is worth  
all the men  
of Greece and Troy.

*Helen Betz*

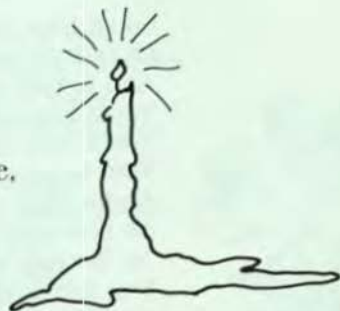
## Said the Candle to the Flame

Pert little flame,  
Approaching my graceful form,  
Thinking with your brightness  
That my cold heart you can warm.

Bright little flame,  
Your heat will melt me you surmise,  
But look down on my long slim flesh  
As cold and hard as ice.

But fire, you've found my quick, my core,  
You burn with heated passion,  
My flesh is softening, pliable,  
Relenting to your fashion.

Fire, see me melt beneath you  
As my cold hard flesh you warm  
Look and see my thick red blood  
Run down my graceful form.  
I am yours, little flame.





## Today I'm great

Today I'm great  
How long will it last?  
It won't last long  
I'll think of the past  
And maybe of the future  
And what might be  
Life's pretty tough now  
As far as I can see

And in through the door  
A bright light shines  
And it comes in quiet movements  
It doesn't make a sound  
We engage in conversation  
But I don't say out loud  
The words on my conscience  
Maybe it's because I'm too proud  
Or am I too lazy  
Or too scared to say  
The words that plague me  
Both night and day?

But don't get too down  
Who knows what's ahead?  
Right now you're aching  
Your heart feels like lead  
But maybe in time  
This light will shine through  
Who knows the answers  
And why people do what they do?  
I've asked myself that question  
And believe me it's no lie  
If you were to ask someone these questions  
Instead of the truth, I think they'd lie

So sit back on your chair  
Or look out at the night  
And in that bright light of darkness  
You'll find out what's right  
You'll pick up your spirits  
Your heart will feel free  
And in dark moments like these  
As you watch shadows cast by trees  
As the pale moon rises and  
You feel a light breeze  
It's then you'll find the answers  
To life's mysteries.

*Fergus MacGettigan*

## Bounded

Uninvited yesterdays are knocking.  
Greet them like Stallone.  
Hello, missed chances and old friends!  
Like the tulips in my garden, you erratically reappear.  
Yet sometimes I'm remiss on how to care for you.  
I act as a slave to you, icons that guide me  
Through my ruin, scene by scene;  
I close my eyes, but his light up;  
My bedroom's scent is his;  
The FM dial stops on our song —  
Snapshots of a life fighting pieces of you.  
However, the sequel exploits your defeat.  
A rematch finds painful memories  
Neatly tucked behind promise.  
And tomorrow rings even louder than today.

*Amy Carmusin*

## Springtime

I look upon the springtime hills  
Rolling through a great blue sky —  
The wind caresses reborn trees,  
And for its beauty I could cry.

The birds, I see, come back to nest  
And build their homes among the trees  
The greening grass begins to dance  
And sing upon the gentle breeze.

My senses pick up many things  
That all through winter seemed to die  
But in the Spring I am reborn  
And in the sunshine I am high.

*Judi Lazerus Karras*




---

## Martin and the Jew

You and I  
Played like the Man with the blue guitar,  
A tune beyond us and yet ourselves.  
We clung to them, we made them;  
Selma and Nazareth.  
Ordinary flesh and mind –  
Our highest affirmation –  
Demanded not that we transcend our times  
But that you embrace Israel and I Mississippi.  
We learned to accept our finiteness  
To accept the nakedness and mortality of all people.

Our bonds with the suffering world  
Showed a few  
The spectres of temptation and exploitation.  
Your Pharisees were my police  
And if they are seen as less than normal men  
Who needed normal healing  
Our truth has not been served.

Most still do not feel our embrace;  
You have been cursed with uniqueness,  
With taking nothing from your rich past,  
And I have been dismissed  
With the pettiest aphorism  
Of political envy: "the right time and place."  
History selects for its own purposes –  
A friend said truthfully  
That your message has been disfigured  
And has become a religion of Kings.  
Rome and my country could have surrendered completely.



A ripe fruit nourished us  
For detachment in our movement among creation.  
Such detachment, an attachment to all things,  
Is not born of the world of half-truths.  
We were guided  
Persuasively and painfully  
Toward an adhering participation  
That molded new life  
From the existing and relative one.  
We are not unfamiliar with the pain of birth.  
Our reluctant readiness to suffer made clear  
The blue guitar's voice during many Gethsemane's,  
And our unwillingness to inflict suffering  
Gave our opponents the freedom to live fully.

Even as your disciples in the world nod unbelief,  
As you and I have done on occasion,  
Maybe the Truth of your tree can be discovered  
In this readiness and this rejection.  
I am certain that you discovered it.

*Chip Carter*

## Back to Basics

Going back to basics  
It's easier said than done  
Because it probably means  
Mass re-education

Basic things like kindness  
Sometimes basic mildness  
Young ladies' basic shyness  
Are gains no longer won

From the biggest to the smallest  
From the richest to the poorest  
We just can't seem  
To get basic things done

Basic things like caring  
Basic things like sharing  
Basic things like  
Honesty and pride

Basically, love thy neighbor  
Basically, help a stranger —  
Basically, lend a hand  
Where and when you can

*Joyce Williams-Mitchell*





## Lend a Hand

Lend a hand  
Help people out  
Isn't that what life's all about?

Give a smile  
A ray of hope  
And soon we'll all learn how to cope.

Don't turn your back  
Don't look away  
Often the worst can turn out okay.

Don't be afraid  
To give it a try  
And if the worst happens just breathe a sigh.

Pick yourself up  
Start over again  
And tell yourself, "I know I can."

If you follow this rule  
This rule of life  
To help everyone through times of strife

You may find yourself  
In need some day  
And that, my friend, is when your kindness will pay!

*Sandy Smith*



## The Meaning of Life

What is Life? Is it jumping up out of bed  
Every morning, and feeling always  
In a hurry, with lots of worries?

Is it waiting for the weekend  
To have your beer or your wine  
Or to invite your friends over  
And have a good time?

Perhaps it is watching TV or videos  
Late at night,  
Or hearing on the radio that tune that  
You like?

Well, listen to me, friend,  
What Life is all about  
You don't have to agree with me  
But listen, please, for awhile.

It is looking at my children run, play and laugh,  
It is hugging them against my chest and  
Saying, "I love you" and hearing them  
Answer, "Oh, Mom, I do too."

It is knowing God loves me  
And is always by my side,  
It is knowing I have his blessing  
No matter if I am good or if I am bad.

It is knowing he created everything  
Thinking of me,  
That he was there when I was born  
And will be when I am dead.

It is the birds, the trees  
The sky and the sea  
That is the meaning of Life for me.

*Isabel M. Vargas*

## Beating — Cancer

Woke up that morning  
To mist and drizzling rain  
Thought the sun  
Would never shine again

The whole day was gloomy  
Life seemed in despair  
Clouds of uncertainty  
Hung in the air

That night seemed longer  
Than "from dusk to dawn"  
Sad lifetimes were lived  
Though the night lingered on

Then slowly, the sun broke  
Through the mist of despair  
Shining brightly upon us  
In the fresh morning air

The birds were a-chirping  
To welcome the dawn  
Of a bright and beautiful  
Summer morn

Hearts and hope seemed to rise up  
And sing with the sun  
"Thank you, thank you, thank you,  
A better lifetime's begun."

*Joyce Williams-Mitchell*



## Remember

The sun's not shining like it did before "Why?"  
Because he's stirring up his world's nest,  
Trying to tell us it's our final test.

The whale and the dolphin are leaving the sea,  
But we can't see, what is coming to be.

The wind is blowing too cold for you and me.  
Can't we see, what is coming to be?

Too many people are dying, because they can't  
get enough to eat; instead, we make Whiskey and  
Vodka with tons of nature's wheat.

Yes, the rich are getting richer and the poor  
are getting poorer.  
The child doesn't listen to his mother anymore,  
And surely, there are no families like there were before.

God's earthly creatures are being misused and abused.

The water we used to drink, is the water we now refuse.

Can't we see what is coming to be?  
I hate my brother, and my brother hates me.  
And the trees, the trees today do not bear  
the same fruits of yesterday's seed.

The sun's not shining like it did before.  
Can't we see, what is coming to be?  
Wars and rumors of wars are now here for us to see.  
Oh why can't we see what is coming to be?  
Yes the lion soon will walk with the sheep.  
Why, can't we see what is coming to be?  
Why, oh why, oh why, can't we see?  
Why can't we see, what is coming to be?

This poem has nothing much more to say  
except, REMEMBER GOD, he works in mysterious ways...

*James Anderson, Jr.*

## Freedom

The birds' rising crescendo up  
over the river over the pines  
solitary on the rise  
above the town, beyond the tracks

make her think of freedom, somehow  
remind her of something never experienced.  
They seem to know what they are for.  
But they are in the sky, that

great stage of freedom,  
canvas of God and angels.  
Because they have wings and  
sun moon stars and clouds

are after all untouchable, and blue  
never looks the same on earth.  
That airplane godlike did he  
pray before he thrust himself

so imperial there  
where only musical creatures  
have gone before? Is he free?  
He is only as free as the people in him.

Altered by sleep, we dream  
our sins upon our selves, we  
pray we think words like  
freedom, truth, beauty,

echoing dimly beyond the curtain  
torn once and then forgotten  
deeper deeper sweet sleep —  
blind dreams sweeten the fall

Freedom. A word.

*Jennifer Nadeau*



## An Argument for the Existence of a Supreme Being

Atoms interact with other atoms whose polarity are opposites. This creates a force between the two. The two pull together to unite. Therefore for matter to exist, space, mass, time, it must have these forces. For everything to be motionless, would be nothingness. No opposite forces pulling together, no law of today says that there is a continuing force in nature. But what or whom creates the force? Who created the atom, pure life, and who created the electron whose charge pulls other particles together? The electron, a particle, a force, that exists infinitely. Yet as we think in terms of infinite, then finite becomes obsolete. Yet finite is the word that we are looking for. By using finite we are able to say that there is an origin, a beginning. A beginning force that created or continually pushes the electron through time and space. This force is the beginning of all forces, alpha and omega.

### The Beginning and the End

*Brian K. Griffith*



## Amen

He lifted us from sorrow and despair  
He brought the word of our Father to our ear  
He the keeper of good, He the deliverer from sin  
To His spirit we say Amen!!

Amen for He is our faith  
Lead us through the wilderness  
To a land of milk and honey  
We thank You Father  
And we pledge to You our faith  
In Your hands  
Are peace and eternal joy...  
Amen!!

*Micheal Latimore*



## In Search of a Miracle

What is this calmness I feel when close to it?  
This quietness, so deep.  
At first I'm nervous. This feeling is new to me.  
I cannot see a cord evolve which leads to God.  
It has touched me to my core and I am never the same.  
I'm restless for want of it and begin my search.  
My brain is spent.  
Name thy name and speak to me, my spirituality.  
Ahh!!....It is humility.

*Helen Corsi*

## Talking About AIDS

Here at Mujeres Unidas  
we always have a theme  
And this month we still  
have a lot to say about AIDS

It's a theme about life  
and it's a great concern  
so we are united  
learning about AIDS

Listen, my friend,  
about this problem for many  
If you use a condom  
the easier your life will be

This is a protection  
for you and your partner  
Your life is what is important  
and about that, there is no question

Drug addicts, by using needles  
shorten their lives more –  
with the problem of AIDS  
for them there is no solution

A little understanding  
and knowing how to talk with them  
could be the beginning  
for them to overcome addiction

This is a problem for all of us  
Look for more information  
That way you'll have the knowledge  
and you won't forget  
Remember that with AIDS  
prevention is the solution

*Genoveva Galarza*



## Hablar Mucho Más del SIDA

Aquí en Mujeres Unidas  
siempre tenemos un tema  
y este mes aun nos queda  
hablar mucho mas del SIDA

Es un tema sobre la vida  
y es una gran preocupación  
y estamos en unión  
aprendiendo sobre el SIDA

Escucha amiga mía  
este problema del montón  
mas si usas un condón  
mas fácil será tú vida

Esto es una protección  
para ti y tú compañero  
pues tú vida es lo primero  
y de eso no hay discusión

Los adictos par la inyección  
acortán más sus vidas  
con el problema del SIDA  
para ellos no hay solución

Un poco de comprensión  
y saber como hablarles  
podría ser la base  
para dejar la adicción

Es un problema de todos  
busca más información  
asi tendrás más noción  
no tendrás la mente ida  
y recuerda que del SIDA  
prevención es la solución

*Genoveva Galarza*



## Pensando en el SIDA

Ahora con este virus  
Igual que una maldición  
Debemos sentirnos seguras  
si actuamos con precaución

Ten cuidado amigo mío  
si no te quieres contagiar  
con la enfermedad del SIDA  
que es una escolla moral

Si quieres estar segura  
intenta usar el condón  
Dale información a tus hijos  
acerca de esta infección

Ayer en la clase de Inglés  
informaron en Mujeres Unidas  
de como debemos actuar  
si contraemos el SIDA

Si quieres estar informada  
investiga en Mujeres Unidas  
donde tienen información  
acerca de la Inmuno Deficiencia Adquirida

Al llegar al hospital  
insegura y muy nerviosa  
dejando atrás a mis hijos  
sin poder hacer otra cosa

Qué tristeza compañeras  
hablar de esta enfermedad  
pero más triste es verlos morir  
y tener que lamentar

Instruye y habla a tus hijos  
acerca de esta enfermedad  
y así estarán seguros  
que se deben de cuidar

*Delfina Rentas*



## Thinking About AIDS

In this poem, Delfina Rentas put her thoughts in writing regarding how this deadly disease is affecting her community, the future generations, and family relations. She believes that parents should start talking to their kids about protection and they should begin to inform them about AIDS, because it is harder to see them die due to the lack of knowledge and negligence.

She considers mothers an instrument of education in battling this disease. She is grateful that through the AIDS educational month at *Mujeres Unidas* she learned about AIDS and now she is able to pass the information along to her children and family. In one stanza Delfina writes:

Instruct and talk to your children  
about this disease  
so they themselves will assuredly know  
that they have to take care.

*Delfina Rentas*



## Last year my father

Last year my father almost died. One man from Everytown, NJ saved his life. I don't know who this man was, but what he did was so gracious, so wonderful, that all I could do when I heard about it was say, "God bless him."

Last March 10th, my dad was taken to Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center at one o'clock in the morning. His ambulance had a police escort from his home in South Orange, NJ all the way to the Harlem-based hospital. His brother followed in his own car, and my sister and mother rode anxiously and excitedly in the back of the ambulance with him. My dad was on the way to his heart transplant, thanks to one man in Everytown, NJ.

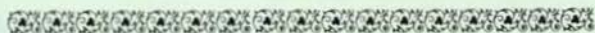
This man who we will never know and had never met saved at least two lives that night, my father's and another person's in Boston. My father used his heart and now is living wonderfully again. The other person in Boston took his liver and I hope is doing just as well. This anonymous man from Everytown had died, but in dying gave very much. More than any of us who are living could have. He gave his organs, a very generous gift indeed.

He wasn't any different from the rest of us. He didn't have any special training or background. He may not have known first aid or life saving, but he saved lives just the same. He was Protestant, Catholic, Jew, working class, executive, caterer, White, Asian, Black, Hispanic, married, single. He had brothers, sisters, a wife and children, he was an only child. He was every man believing in everyman. My dad said after his transplant that at first he wanted to know the donor, but then, he said, "I know him, he fears and loves God as the rest of us. Why else would he do this?"

Why else, indeed? I was thrilled when I found out not just that my dad's transplant was finally happening, but also that this man in Everytown gave all his organs. All of them. What a gift this man left behind. I wanted to tell him — to tell his family. "My dad wasn't ready to die and you saved him." But maybe he wasn't ready to die either — that might not be the most tactful thing in their time of mourning. But ready or not, when his time came and he heard "Ally, ally oxen free," he still gave. He gave a gift of life, a gift of love, to his fellow man.

Last March, a man in Everytown, NJ saved my father's life, anonymously and with great love.

*Diane L. McGary*



*All you need is love.*

*John Lennon*

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## Afterword



The planning, coordination and publication of this book have been a joint effort by a number of Lotus employees, all of whom are making a difference in the community and in the lives of our relatives, friends, and others affected by AIDS. The writings themselves have been only lightly edited and reflect the diversity of thought and experience in the Lotus community.

Kathie McHugh's vision for Lotus employees to submit poems, publish and market this book to benefit AIDS care, came out of her desire to get involved and to make a difference. After Kathie, Susan Smith took over as coordinator of the publication and contributed her organizational skills to further the project. Nori Odoi and Jennifer Nadeau brought the book to publication with dedication and love. Diane Williams is carrying the project forward into the future.

As Corporate Giving Specialist in the Philanthropy Program at Lotus, I had the pleasant job of supporting the project from infancy to publication. I felt that my task was simple, but even though I am so involved, writing this Afterword has been extremely difficult.

Should I talk about the need for ALL of us to get involved in educating others? Should I discuss the statistics that say one out of every ten babies born at Boston City Hospital tests HIV positive? Should I discuss the potential devastating effects of AIDS on the continent of Africa or the island of Haiti, or maybe review condom distribution and AIDS education by Cambridge Rindge and Latin School students? Because all these issues are important (and not being addressed) I thought I should touch on these things; however, I still had a hard time trying to figure out what to say.

A conversation with Paul Paternoster, a Lotus Volunteer Alliance Outstanding Volunteer of the Year, 1989, gave me the inspiration I needed to complete my task. Michael, Paul's friend and buddy of three and a half years, died recently. Paul's strength and courage in coming to terms with his loss impressed and motivated me. "There is a lot of grief in dealing with the death of a friend, but when that friend dies of AIDS, there is also a great deal of frustration, isolation and anger. Getting involved with a project like this is a creative, healing way to channel that frustration into positive action."

AIDS has had a major impact on the lives of individual Lotus employees as with the community as a whole. Lotus and its employees have responded, like Paul, with care and compassion. We want to thank the management and staff of Lotus for its honesty and openness in dealing with the issue of AIDS in the workplace, and for supporting the volunteers and managers who went out of their way to make this publication a reality.

Very special thanks to all our employees who have been and are buddies to AIDS patients, for the care and love they impart. Special thanks also to our project coordinators, past and present, and their committee members — Helen Betz, Jim Calderone, Paul Camuso, Chip Carter, Helen Corsi, Shoshanah Ferziger, Claire Rizzo, Bryan Simmons, Christine Stuart and Diane Williams — whose commitment, expertise and sense of humor were responsible for the production and distribution of this product; and extra special thanks to the poets — Lotus employees past and present, relatives and friends worldwide — for making this project exciting and possible.

*Joyce Williams-Mitchell*

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