

A Sampler of Poetry



by **DOROTHY BODWELL**

*Every experience deeply felt in life-whether it be through
Works and music, chiseled in stone, painted with a brush
or sewn with a needle is a way of reaching for immortality.*

-Thomas Jefferson

A Sampler of Poetry

By Dorothy Bodwell

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*With my pen I write
With my needle I quilt
With my brush I paint*

Dedicated to

my son and daughter
Grant Bodwell and Elaine McTigue
and my five grandsons

Special thanks
to the Crystal Writers Workshop
for the kindness and care they have shown

Special thanks to Grant Bodwell
who did the photography and scanning
for this book.

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Quilting and Poetry share a common link. Starting with an idea and the urge to create, a quilter and a poet find structure in traditional forms-a starting place to develop a unique expression with color, sound and touch. Her they can join hands with the wisdom of the past and bring something new into the present.



Love That Sonnet

With thanks to Shakespeare, now I've found my voice
a vehicle to sort my deepest feelings
when faced with rhymes, I'm forced to make a choice
words set to music like a church bell pealing.
Within your framework I go deep within
then take a fragment of a fearsome thought
and lighten in iambic tum-de-dum
--that momentary flash is finally caught.
For fourteen lines I carefully wend my way
delighting in new insights as I go.
I search and somewhere find the words to say
the truth that mind and heart together know.

I still don't understand you, William dear
but sonnet's guide will make my meaning clear.

Shakespearean Sonnet

Crossroads

A signpost at the crossroads, here I stand
where pilgrims in their travels look to me
for guidance in confusion as they scan
far landscapes, searching for a strategy
to bring direction to their lives. I wish
that I were more than mere convenience
I'd be a sage --wise words said would vanquish
shadows and I would thrill at competence.
It's not to be --I'm only what I am
utilitarian implement for use.
My voiceless arms are merely diagram
for others inate wisdom to deduce.

We share this moment to which we've been drawn
as they look to me for choice and journey on.

Shakespearean Sonnet

Choice not Taken

Deep silence pounds and throbs in emptiness
a void as deep and wide as timeless sea.
It's filled with shadows, goblins--mute caress
on ears accustomed to loquacity.
I listen for a message in the drone
dare I open flood gates deep inside
acknowledge that I'm truly all alone
when in the stillness there's no place to hide?
My peace can come in freedom from the din
cacaphony that batters on my shell.
Response not needed, I'd find peace within
if I would welcome stillness, not repel.

Afraid of confrontation, I retreat
into diversions that I know compete.

Shakespearean Sonnet

Still With Me

No longer present, you are still with me
you can't escape the boundaries of my heart
Remembering you said, "I would be free."
I'm still earth bound and we are not apart.
I hold you in a lifetimes memories
imprinted through the daily duties shared
for though my mind insists I should release
my blood and bones remember that you cared.
I know that when you left all this behind
your wish came true to fly in airy space
I wonder if in freedom you can find
the faintest dim remembrance of my face.

While I still live, I won't be free of you
does some small essence of me linger too?

Shakespearean Sonnet

Memories of a Marriage

Reflecting on the years we spent together
a failure to see clearly is a trap.
I sense I'd rather gloss in this endeavor
then look at every milestone on the map.
I know that I'm afraid to face the pain
of those dear moments lost forever now
the memories will overwhelm again
and I'd be lost --the pain I can't allow.
Defending with the petty irritations
has been a shield to keep the passion out.
I'm afraid to welcome back sensations
that now are gone and I must live without.

A revelation--now I know I'm fleeing
fear is keeping me from truly seeing.

Shakespearean Sonnet

Adversaries

That death now has you isn't all my grief
although it must be said I loved you dearly
beneath it all a feeling of relief
at struggle over, now I see it clearly.
I mourn that lives that could have been much more
without the bid for power in each one
what could have been a friendship turned to war
of egos fighting--now that battle's done.
But still the struggle brought vitality
neither one could quite subdue the other.
We compromised to build reality
lives in tandem, links that didn't sever
until your life was over--I left behind
without the constant challenge to my mind.

Shakespearean Sonnet

An Epitaph for Doris

Her music like cascading springtime showers
-silver notes a blessing as they flow
renewing thirsty spirits earthbound hours
with rainbows, lightning, thunder from her bow.
Touching with her generating powers
seeds waiting for the magic touch of spring
she opened shells and turned them into flowers
whose voice is found and now they too can sing.
It's time baton is handed on to others.
heeding overture to seraph song
she heard and answered urgent call of winter's
north wind whispering, "Here you belong."

Misty sunset glows, her spark a fire
as she takes her place in the master choir.

Shakespearean Sonnet

The Memorial Service

I came to say goodbye but you were gone
flowers, pictures, tributes where you should be
can't fill the emptiness where you belong
and help me recognize this tragedy.

I came to stand beside you once again
recall the many times that we have shared.
I need to see your face and now-still hands
and somehow let you know how much I cared.
But you weren't here, you didn't wait for me
you've slipped away beyond that final wall
now sorrow's dusted over --I can see
and know tears mustn't be allowed to fall.

My mind denies my heart this time to feel
deep pain of loss--these wounds deferred can't heal.

Shakespearean Sonnet

Sonnet to Virginia

I'll try to understand the mystery
of how you stepped beyond my searching heart.
Our lives were linked in decades history
--sometimes near and sometimes far apart.
In ways you're nearer than you were before
fond memories a rainbow granting grace
to treasure in my life forever more.
We shared so much, both happiness and pain
a laugh, a treasure search, rebuilding lives.
Those poignant moments surely will remain
reminded by the real things that survive.

Our spirits blended then in friendship dear,
although now out touch. you still are near

Shakespearean Sonnet

Terrorists

Fear spreaders massacre our peace of mind
with words, not guns or bombs that we can see.
Energy, well being is undermined
they shake our calm and equanimity.

Thanks to science, the major plagues are gone.
the bugs that killed us young are quickly squashed.
Surgeons rebuild--a new phenomenon
we're overfed, with famines in the past.

We should enjoy this time of potency
feel free to dance and sing in this new age
instead we're crippled by a tendency
to cringe when bullets fly from every page.

The experts with their eyes on ego goals
have left us with our wealth shot full of holes.

Sonnet

War Wounds

Pearl Harbor bombed on that December day
They dived in planes that zeroed on our ships
“. . . will live in infamy,” began the fray
and everyone resolved to “beat the Nips.”

They lost the war and many years have passed.
On Waikiki now strolling side by side
another generation is recast
as friends, not foes that once were occupied.

They bring their money, language, cameras
and wear our shorts and munch on Mighty Macs
the ones who fought remember that morass
and wonder if we ever can relax.

Times power blends for those who were not there
remembering loved ones lost, we'll always care

Shakespearean Sonnet

Meeting Place

Earth and water colliding on this beach
chant tales of continents and boundless seas.
Vast oceans stretching far beyond eyes reach
mingles here with ground beneath my feet.

Surf creeps onto the sand, foams, bubbles, breaks
behind me, breakers roar, raw powers surge.
Ruthless battering on land's gate
is driven, crashing by moon's tidal urge.

Dunes, rocks, and cliffs yield fragments , interchange
commits them to the deep, receives debris
and builds new soil. Plains merge with mountains-range
on range all marching to another sea.

Surrounded by wild pounding on the shore
I sense deep strength resisting in the core.

Shakespearean Sonnet

The Fallen Giant

For sixteen centuries the Founder's Tree
stood proud and tall, tip reaching to the sun.
Through decades, rings recorded history
of nature's, human battles lost and won.

Birds nested, raised their young who flew away
and then returned to shelter once again.
Limbs filtered coastal breezes--interplay
refreshed the air, the fog, the dripping rain.

Great redwood nourished mosses, lichens, gave
protection to the creatures on its floor.
Roots burrowed--symbiotic even trade
of taking, sharing, richness from soil's store/

Now toppled to the earth, it rests and gives
continued sustenance to all that lives.

Shakespearean Sonnet

Charlie

Give me time to readjust my mind
it seems as if I blinked and here it is
that magic day, the start of a new time
a challenge that can make the future his.

A trice ago he raised his baby head
today he wears a tassled mortar board.
First teeth, then gaps, now well-braced smile instead
Cub Scout, Boy Scout, new Eagle Scout Award.

Music, ballgames, school pictures every year
bootees, sweaters, bright afghan knit to last.
Hallow'een birthdays, Christmas ever near
he went from trike to pickup in a flash.

Today we see him marching with his peers
another phase beginning--bright new years.

Shakespearean Sonnet

Elegy To A Marriage

In faraway Winnetka, falling snow
drifts gently down, soft comforter, new quilt
on earthy bed. Deep silence, deathlike still
as flakes are covering the stones below.
Protecting branches bend beneath white load,
hard granite softens in the winter chill.
Two names engraved so time will never dull
their presence here among us years ago.
Long lives were true and faithful, suffering
the pain, enjoying goodness of the times.
Serene in rest, the earth is offering
complete communion; this new paradigm
gives perfect ease beyond all finite erring,
the cemetery now a winter shrine.

Petrarchan Sonnet

Hindsight

When I consider how our lives were spent
then yoked together blending to a team
that merged and struggled in a hidden scheme
not understanding what the effort meant
so much involved we couldn't see intent.
Now looking back I think I see the theme
our role assigned by nature to redeem
and carry on new generation's bent.
I see new families built upon the base
that we provided--values carried on
our children curb, support so their's can face
the challenges to which they must respond.
In master plan, we were creation's pawn
a tool to carry on the human race.

Petrarchan Sonnet

Praise Him!

All glory be to God for wondrous things
for cobalt skies and sunsets streaked with red
for curdled clouds that tumble to earth's brim
for tree frogs who in early evening sing
for ravens soaring high with wings outspread
and all bright creatures, images that limn.
All things close and dear and all things strange
whatever is seen or felt or heard or said
live and free, flying, earthbound, sheltered dim
whatever is stable, moving, fluid, changed.

--Praise him!

Curtal (short) Sonnet

Thanks Be

Thanks be for all the many little things
for well-worn bowl, my teapot on the sill,
for whiff of baking bread with jam jar near,
for sunbeams marking day's awakening,
clean window panes, a glimpse of daffodil
a yellowed letter, cherished souvenir.
The little things--first snowflake on my face,
a kitten's purr, the call of whipporwill,
a loving touch, a whisper in my ear
for little things that are so commonplace.

Thanks be!

Curtal (short) Sonnet

Plea for Peace

Deliver me from icky-picky things
from minutes of the meeting, ants in honey jar
and folks who thrive on trivia.
From stepped-on toes and coffee-table rings
from talkers, talkers, talkers, snide remarks
and car keys lurking in oblivion.
I'd do without those cloudy bad -hair days
from double booking on my calendar
slammed doors, sharp words when you are combative
and peddlers, telesalesmen in my face.

Deliver me!

Curtal (short) Sonnet

SOS To the Villanelle

My thoughts are vagrants, drifting here and there
I need to catch them in a safety net
--perhaps a villanelle can be the snare.

I'm useless now --can only sit and stare
I hope French form can ease my fret
and thoughts like vagrants drifting here and there.

If forced to limit rhymes to just a pair
repeat two lines so mandates can be met
--perhaps a villanelle will be the snare.

I'll have to sort ideas and compare
organize, discard disorders that abet
my thoughts so vagrant, drifting here and there.

With three lines each, five verses to declare
the sense I've found, the order that's been met
--I hope a villanelle will be the snare.

Now four more lines to conquer my despair
sum up ideas, so I won't forget
I pray a villanelle will be the snare
for thoughts now vagrant, drifting here and there.

Villanelle

Noah, Don't Get Me a Date

I wouldn't be allowed inside the Ark,
I'm just myself, no longer have a mate
the tyranny of pairs has left its mark.

Reminded once again by chance remark
anathema is now the single state
I wouldn't be allowed inside the Ark.

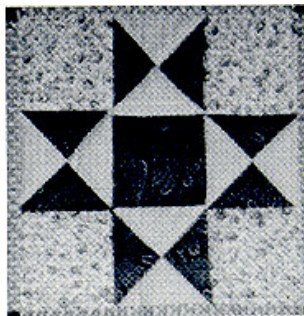
I watch and ponder as the twos embark
the only value drive to procreate?
The tyranny of pairs has left its mark.

I must admit that death has left a scar
the only choice is build and recreate
I wouldn't be allowed inside the Ark.

I tell myself that status cannot bar
in many ways this time can liberate
the tyranny of pairs has left its mark.

I'll search until I find a different star
your boat is not the only ship of state
I wouldn't be allowed inside the Ark
the tyranny of pairs has left its mark.

Villanelle



I'm Retired!

Another Monday morning, I don't care
the clatter of the workplace is behind.
This day is all my own, I am not there

I've traded office bustle for my lair
released from crunching of the weekly grind.
Another Monday morning, I don't care.

The others will awake to face the glare
blinking with reluctance, bedazzled, blind
this day is all my own, I am not there.

They'll have to shape up, gird for wear and tear
they've had their precious hours to unwind.
Another Monday morning, I don't care.

A new body in what was once my chair
will answer to demands they have outlined.
This day is all my own, I am not there.

The choice is mine to rush or sit and stare
direction now will be my own design
Another Monday morning, I don't care
this day is all my own, I am not there.

Villanelle

On the Cusp

Retirement looms and I can hardly wait
I've spent my years attached to other's goals
Now wonder if in freedom I'll create

a brand-new life when I walk through the gate.
It's kind of scary, I'll have lost my role.
Retirement looms and I can hardly wait.

In all these years, I never could be late
reward is knowing that I'm on the roll.
Now wonder if in freedom, I'll create

a daily structure that will validate
my worth, or put me in a pigeon hole.
Retirement looms and I can hardly wait

to see if this new time will liberate
or will it be another rigmarole.
Now wonder if in freedom, I'll create

a new and satisfying alternate
completion that I hope will make me whole.
Retirement looms and I can hardly wait
now wonder if in freedom, I'll create.

Villanelle

Feeding Frenzy

They chase the stories with malevolence
no prurient details are too gross to tell
a public slaving with salaciousness.

“They need to know, they need our eloquence.”
flamboyant words resounding like a bell.
They chase the stories with malevolence.

They dig and dig in searching out malfeasance
always hoping that their flagrant tales will sell
a public slaving with salaciousness.

“Our search for truth is not maliciousness
we owe them,” is their flimsy rationale.
They chase the stories with malevolence

“The judge and juries are superfluous,
we’ll crucify them, nail them to the wall.”
They chase the stories with malevolence
for public slaving with salaciousness.

Beloved Coffee

I hardly think about you anymore
although we shared those cozy days and nights
the lovely times are now forgotten lore.

The warmth and comfort that you brought, the core
the heart of many deeply felt delights
I hardly think about you anymore.

I never dreamed that I would feel so poor
feel so bereft, so shorn of daily highs.
The lovely times are now forgotten lore.

My seeing others joy makes my heart sore
I turn away so I can't see such sights.
I hardly think about you anymore.

With no remorse, he took away succor
so much at stake, I had to realize
those lovely times are now forgotten lore.

My most contented times were when I'd pour
that cup of coffee as my morning rite.
I hardly think about you anymore
the lovely times are now forgotten lore.

Villanelle

Spring Lament

When soft spring breezes melt the crusty snow
A heartfelt pang that there will be a time
I will be gone, I will no longer know.

The rolling hills will bloom, a golden glow
with frothy almonds dancing to and fro
when soft spring breezes melt the crusty snow.

Some other hearts will quicken to this show
of sprouting tulips, mustard, parsley, thyme
I will be gone, I will no longer know.

They'll laugh with joy and happy tears will flow
I won't be here to share this moment prime
when soft spring breezes melt the crusty snow.

I won't be here to see the shining rainbow
bright iridescence--nature's paradigm
when soft spring breezes melt the crusty snow
I will be gone, I will no longer know.

Villanelle

Neighborhood Watch

They warn us that the world's a fearful place
where villians lurk just waiting for a chance
to pounce and wipe us from the human race.

They tell their stories, case on case
of careless folk who forego vigilance.
They warn us that the world's a fearful place.

Alarms that shriek, the dead-bolt locks and mace
will stop them cold, preventing circumstance
to pounce and wipe us from the human race!

Until they came, I floated through my days
felt warm and safe and free--such ignorance!
They warn us that the world's a fearful place.

My windows, doors were open--smiling face
I never dreamed of constant vigilance
so theycan't wipe me from the human race.

My peace is gone, it left without a trace
and worried frowns now mar my countenance.
They warn us that the world's a fearful place
and they will wipe me from the human race.

Villanelle

Soapy Sestina

Apex of the day, I step into a fantasy
and for a magic hour, I live in a world
unfettered. Beloved images flash onto the screen.
Old friends--we've suffered and rejoiced together
they ever young--I forget my years and join
Bold and the Beautiful for a roller-coaster ride

of lust and rage, extravagance and power. The ride
a mad vicarious adventure, fun inner fantasy
that gives expression to my hidden self. I briefly join
The Young and the Restless," and the corporate world
where they scheme and connive, fall into bed together.
Can't take anymore --commercials flash onto the screen.

I should be more discriminating. I should screen
what comes into my mind--not go for any ride
that Proctor and Gamble, Nabisco puts together.
Something intellectual--not steaming sudsy fantasy.
I should be turning the dial to *News of the World*,
maybe the League of Women Voters would ask me to join.

On second thought, I really wouldn't care to join.
There'd be responsibilities --back to the screen
where I don't have to cope with issues in this scary world.
I'd be where emotions fly and we can take a merry ride
a caricature of mundane life, breathless suspense--fantasy.
Here we're free to explore all avenues of life together.

No constraints on time or money, we soar together.
Every hair in place, perfectly garbed, always ready to join
in still another escapade. We click into another fantasy
when one tale gets dull, unlike real life-- a new screen
new suds foam up. *Joy, Lemon-Liquid*, commercial ride
screams that we must make this a cleaner, fresher world.

Like Cinderella, I live in the everyday world
trying very hard to bring it all together.
When the clock strikes eleven, I'll take a chariot ride
the magic wand will touch me and I can join
that fairyland of phantoms on the screen
leave behind my woes and revel in a fantasy.

Click, the ride is over, I'll join the world
refreshed by this interlude of fantasy
leave them all together behind the darkened screen.

Sestina

Recreation

I look at my dull days with jaundiced eye
What once was vibrant now has lost its glow.
I need a lift, some way to brighten up my life
and elevate my spirits, bring them back.
I search my mind for what I've done before
I know--it's time to take another trip!

Enticing brochure promises I'll "Trip
the Light Fantastic 'if I use my eyes
to feast on gaiety, reserve before
I check on VISA card and lose that glow.
I worry--can I ever pay it back?
Remind myself I must improve my life.

I'll move ahead, it's time to look at life
beyond confining walls. A well-planned trip
will take me out of this--not coming back
until I am rejuvenated. I'll
make the reservation, feel the glow
recalling tips from trips I've had before.

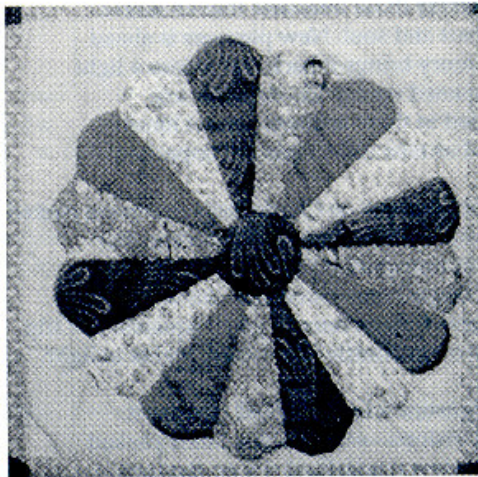
Don't forget a comb this time. Once before
I used my hands for days. On with life
and packing. Suitcase taking on a glow
that shines on all that's going on this trip!
In new surroundings, I won't bat an eye
I'll charge around, not ever looking back.

I sally forth, new threads are on my back.
Colors, styles, I've never dared to wear before.
I'll look at what's before me with new eye
entering into energizing life.
I'll be trim and graceful. I'll never trip
and stumble, always poised with calm, cool glow.

I see before me distant cities, glow
a halo of delights to come. My back
is turned to commonplace; this welcome trip
will open to delights not known before.
I know that it will renovate my life
I'll view expanded vistas with glad eye.

In looking back at trips I've had before
Life glowed a I discovered brand new I

Iambic Pentameter Sestina



Tripping Sestina

I settle down, remembering the trip
that occupied whole chunks of last month's time.
Anticipation, trepidation stirred
my thoughts as picky details came to light
and forced some kind of order as I packed
and pondered on delights that lay ahead.

The high is gone--there's no more fun ahead.
My VISA couldn't stand another trip.
Now sorting out impressions--brain is packed
with people, places, memories of that time
so recent, yet now fading with the light
of new events. I really must be stirred

to organize those treasures that so stirred
my heart and soul. New pleasure is ahead
as memory brings it back and shines a light
that opened up my life. Another trip
is folded in these artifacts--great times
relived as new collections are unpacked.

The cobblestones on Charleston's streets are packed
and firm against my feet. Hot breezes stir
and I'm transported to another time.
Don't linger here --Savannah lies ahead
with ante-bellum homes, green squares. The trip
moves on to Shuttle Base--new flights to light.

St. Augustine's fort has shed new light.
Bright visions--sailing ships holds packed
for this new world. First city on that trip
and country's cornerstone laid down. Past stirs
new pride in what has been and what's ahead.
Enchantment in kaleidoscope of time.

A leap into a man-made world--big time
extravaganza. Disney's glitz of light
on foreign lands and I-Max years ahead.
Hot pavement, shimmering lake, shuttles packed
with shorts-clad tourists, thunderstorm that stirred
and drenched us--grand finale to the trip.

Mementos of that trip are packed away.
They've stirred an opening to other times
and light my plans for many trips ahead.

Sestina

Mini-Trip

Seven girls with grandmother faces
packed duffels, prescriptions, were off on a lark.
Three days and nights in a house at the beach
promised escape and companions for loners
not by choice. A time to share and play
at being a family around the table once more.

Far from being a palace, it needed more
attention to soft sofas. The neat freak's faces
glared a dust bunnies in the corners. "We can't play
'til this is fixed, place is clean. It's no lark
chasing dirt but somebody has to do it. Loner
or not, there's work to do before the beach."

Wild winds, hail, attacked the beach
house and it shuddered all the more
as night progressed. We weren't loners
now. We shared the darkness and the many faces
of the storm. When morning came, all agreed it was a lark
and remembered we had come up here to play.

Weather kept us in so here was a chance to play
Scrabble, hard-fought games while staring at the beach
through rain-swept windows. The deer had a lark
cavorting on the grass, searching for more
of our popcorn. They turned inquisitive faces
to a group of friends; for now, no longer loners.

The kitchen was a merry place for displaced loners
where dull chores were transformed into play
the dinner table rimmed with laughing faces
as we shared our lives and woes. Windswept beach
and glowing sunsets inspired us to take more
and more snapshots as mementos of our lark.

Another housecleaning frenzy, flurry of packing. The lark
was over, we turned homeward now relieved to be loners
and free to pick up our independent lives once more.
Three days and nights to compromise, relate and play
were over as we left behind that haven at the beach
--self-sufficient girls with grandmother faces.

It took a lark, a few days at the beach
to transform loners into girls with smiling faces
once more enjoying individual work and play.

Free-verse Sestina

A Surgical Sestina

“It must come out,” my doctor gravely said.
I quailed at knowing that it had to be.
Five years reprieve was coming to an end
with choices gone if I’d enjoy old age.
The surgeon next, I listened to his plan
the put my faith in morphine, skill and God.

My friends and family, instruments of God
rallied to my side. The surgeon said,
“Any Monday, Wedne sday fits our plan
with X-rays, lab work done, arrange to be
checked in at midnight.” Waiting seemed an age
but time ticked by, hiatus at an end.

Then well and strong, hoping for good end
I put myself in hands of man and God.
Five hours just a trice to me, an age
for waiting family. Finally, the surgeon said,
“We did what we set out to do, she’ll be
In ICU --we feel that is the wisest plan.

Helpless now, I fell in with their plan
the center of a web of tubes. No end
or start to days and nights. Must it be
so noisy, so much laughing, banging? God
knows we need some rest. “Too bad, “they said
X-Rays at four a.m. by lab tech half my age.

With so much TLC--forgot my age
became a child again, pain free the plan
“Good news,we found no ca ncer.” doctor said
I smiled, that worry over--at an end.
This wasn’t fun but now I’m sure that God
and I will build and heal to what can be.

Seven days of that then tubes could be
removed. Now time to act my age
get on my feet and struggle through their plan.
‘It’s time to move, 6th floor for you,’ they said
Now broth and jello--morphine at an end
dependent on the caring hands of God.

Cards said, ‘Get well, we pray that you will be
restored to health, God’s will for coming age.’
An end to interlude, the plan complete.

Free Verse Sestina

Autumn Musings

Woodbine glowing on the fence as leaves drift down
--kaleidoscope of nature offered for my view.
I note the shift of seasons as they come and go
and try to reconcile spring's dance and summer heat to this new time.
I know that winter's respite, bareness, chill are just ahead
I must somehow find a way to meld the future and the past.

Last winter's peaks and valleys have now become the past.
At times my moods were up--and sometimes down.
Remembering that time should help me plan ahead
with higher peaks and fewer valleys in my view.
I shouldn't be a victim as I move through time
buffeted by gales, bright heat, battered as the seasons go.

I note these epochs in my journey as I go
through life--experiences that illustrate the past
--and wonder at the tapestry that colors this life time.
I'll retrieve those poignant moments --quickly put them down
thoughts now grounded, brought to earth are brought to view
to make a better scheme for what's ahead.

Looking back, I realize I've drifted with no plot for what's ahead
simply letting time meander, accepting what would happen as I go
chagrined as unexpected hurdles come into my view
I hadn't learned a thing from what is past.
Now with clearer vision, I'll stroll down
that murky lane--thankfully unwrap this gift of time.

I can measure what has happened in those bygone times
but only have a glimmering of what's ahead.
With map in hand I'll travel down
new pathways into looming future more directed as I go
recognizing pitfalls that have stopped me in the past.
discriminating, as alternatives come to view.

The calendar will dictate landmarks that come into my view.
Events will happen at their own appointed time.
Rain will fall, roses bloom as in the past
I'll find my part to play in days ahead
aware that I can choose the way to go
I'll enjoy the woodbine, watch the leaves fall down.

This autumn view of what's ahead with glance down past
inspires me to embrace gift of time--- use it wisely as I go.

Sestina



Summer's End

Shadows closing down the day too soon
the high of summer past, I mourn
June's solstice peak, a golden time
to revel in the warmth and light.

The high of summer past, I mourn.
We just had spring, please give me time
to revel in the warmth and light
restore, refresh, build up reserves.

We just had spring, please give us time
before the chill of fall curtains.
Restore, refresh, build up reserves
to face withdrawal of the light.

Before the chill of fall curtains
a respite in relentless axis turn
to face withdrawal of the light
build strength to weather winter nights.

A respite in relentless axis turn
June's solstice peak, a golden time
builds strength to weather winter nights.
Shadows closing down the day too soon.

Pantoum

Creation

The urge to do, to build, create
drives us on to doing something new
not satisfied with what is there
we carve, combine, subtract, a force

that drives us on to doing something new.
In search for beauty perfect form
we carve, combine, subtract--a force
that uses restless minds and hands

in search for beauty, perfect form.
We'll join with others in the quest
that uses restless minds and hands
to take what's there and make it new.

We'll join with others in the quest
and move beyond and into other realms.
We take what's there and make it new
constant recreation, destiny fulfilled.

We'll move beyond and in to other realms
constant recreation--destiny fulfilled
not satisfied with what is there
--the urge to do, to build create..

Pantoum

To Earth Again

I'll write a poem, maybe start a quilt
to calm my restless mind and hands
gather fragments floating free
and weave them into something new.

To calm my restless mind and hands
I'll paint, I'll cook, I'll plant some seeds
--weave them into something new
then join the choir, knit some socks.

I'll paint, I'll cook, I'll plant some seeds
enthusiasm drives my dreams.
I'll join the choir, knit some socks
--bright pictures flood, confusion reigns.

Enthusiasm drives my dreams
where is the time to do it all?
Bright pictures flood, confusion reigns
proliferation's creeping up.

Where is the time to do it all?
I'm overscheduled as it is.
Proliferations's creeping up
--new schemes are much too grandiose.

I'm overscheduled as it is
be calm, be calm my mind and hands
new schemes are much too grandiose
I've *writ* a poem, tomorrow maybe start a quilt.

Pantoum

Winter into Spring

Life withdraws to solitude
suspension circled by the cold.
Separate as birch trees are divided
this time to know myself and grow.

Suspension circled by the cold,
body warm in cocoon nest.
This time to know myself and grow,
strengthened by the season's rest.

Body warm in cocoon nest
expands, unfolds in coming spring.
Strengthened by the season's rest
it's good to melt, release my wings.

Pantoum

The Fire Dancer

Papinta danced through starry nights
in-far-flung cities, continents
with mirrors, butterflies, arc lights
Papinta danced through starry nights.
In yards of silk, she reached new heights
of whirling, swirling elegance
Papinta danced through starry nights
in far-flung cities, continents.

Papinta sleeps through starry nights
on hillside's sloping prominence
she shared with all her life's delights
Papinta sleeps through starry nights.
She left a legacy of lights,
of twirling, graceful opulence
Papinta sleeps through starry nights
on hillside's sloping prominence.

Double triolet

Papinta

Proud monument above the Strait
standing taller than the rest
Papinta and her cherished mate
now sleep on hillside breast.

Long years ago, she danced and danced
a fiery serpentine
five hundred yards of elegance
whirled around fair queen.

With mirrors, arc lamps, butterflies
all rich extravagance
performances would tantalize
and starry nights enhance.

She traveled many continents
to make their dream come true
charmed audience after audience
swirling the whole night through.

The farm with live oaks, palm and ferns
a spot of sylvan loveliness
gave them refuge, brief sojourn
a time for perfect happiness.

They had eight years to hope and plan
when cruel fate stepped in
that day in March, the young ranch man
fell ill and left his Caroline.

The crystal maze reflecting lights
that magnified her show
contained the kernel of her doom
slow poison's a fterglow.

She carried on a brief two years
then joined him on the hill
their love was true and deep, sincere
it's fragrance lingers still.

Ballad

New Dimension

When I was with you, whispered her dead husband
I was selfish and concerned with no one else.
Now I blend into everything, like the breeze
caressing your hair.

I was full of myself and crowded you out
even though I loved you, I couldn't hear you.
Now I can expand and glory in peace--free
to see you clearly.

Our time was clouded by those things I wanted.
I didn't see the longing, feel the aching,
know your throbbing pulse. I pushed aside your need
to breathe together.

I'll wait for you in the wind and sky, he said.
We'll be united in a new way, flying
free behind it all, time and space forgotten
our souls entwined.

Sapphic

Today's the Day

Today I think I'll write that perfect verse
For years I've studied meter, rhyme, and form
and moved my words around for better and for worse.

I've tried so hard to make my thoughts conform
to patterns that great poets have set out
then realize I couldn't quite perform.

Again, again, I've overcome my doubt
with metaphors that make my meaning clear
and similies to show what I'm about.

I'm ready now with dictionary near
with pen in hand, I know this is the day
to write at last the poem that all will hear.

I listen for a message to convey
in panic, I don't have a thing to say!

Terza Rima

A Time of Grace

Atop my fence, the woodbine glows
deep red and maple feaves fall free.
Adrift, their intuition knows
it's time for autumn's jubilee.

I share this hour of nature'e peace
give thanks that I have found release.

The thrust of spring's behind me now
when sap flowed richly unrestrained.
--growth on every vine and bough
was lush with promise it contained.

I whirled as gily as the wind
and dreamed my dance would never end.

Now unattached, unique, distilled
my heart abandons what is past.
This readjustment time is filled
with joy in drifting free at last.

My patterns, too, are redefined.
New autumn plays within my mind.

Workshopped

My words, my thoughts, my children
conceived in joy, brought forth in pain
I fall in love with freshness
of creation once again.

I want to keep them always
precious infants that they are
my words, my thoughts, my darlings
to me perfection--not a mar.

But growth encroaches on my dream
I shudder at the thought
Light thrown on my treasures
infant turning into tot.

The golden curls of babyhood
drop irrevocably to the floor
The perfect phrase, a lovely thought
gone forevermore

I dry my tears and carry on.
there are blessings in disguise
helpless infants running free
inspiration flies.

Other minds, other hearts
add dimension to creation.
My children find maturity
all join the celebration.

Victoriana

We've got a bed, its quite a bed, inlaid with glowing gilt
four posters rise majestically, it's spread with downy quilt.
It was a place for slumber, respite and surcease
'til history buffs discovered a queen had found release
from the burdens of her duty within its sturdy frame.
A carved VR reminds us of a well-remembered name.
Victoria stirs up an image of a disapproving frown,
straitlaced and stiff decorum--heavy was her crown.

This bed we share with royalty may be the finest ever built.
But how can we rest easy when we're overcome with guilt.

In An Eagles's Nest

I am an eagle flying high
the hand of God encloses.
My spirit soars in ecstasy
my own--far distant places.

Swooping and soaring far above
concerns of everyday
land below--clouds in sky
a universe for play.

When night has come and time for rest
I find my place of peace.
From earthbound things I've made my nest
restlessness will cease.

Now far above though linked with earth
my life spread out to view.
I am an eagle--lord of all
each moment life is new.

The Precision Instrument

The silent lance of time
mercifully cuts clean.
What seemed a barnacle of pain
has disappeared unseen.

Accepting what this moment holds
no shadows mar my vision.
Pain and I are unified
for perfect transformation.

I am my anguish and release
offered to nature's blade
the healing touch of time's keen edge
makes darkness retrograde.

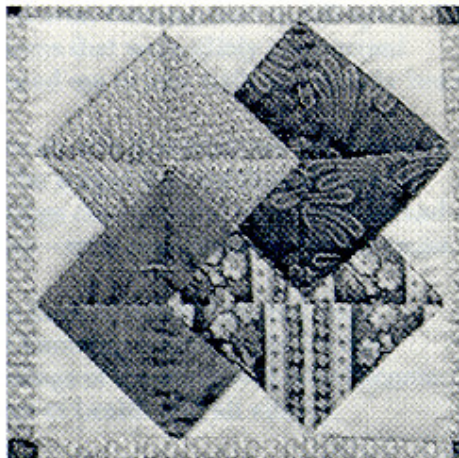
Down to Earth

I'll spend my time with folks who never heard of Buber
we'll eat and laugh and talk as if we knew it all.
We'll delight in sharing all our foibles and our bloopers
our tragic moments and our whimsical.

If it should happen in an inadvertent moment
I'd drop a name, for instance, Plato, in the chatter
eyes would glaze, they'd wonder where the day went
and find an urgent need--or trivial for that matter.

So I'll put my book aside and rock the baby
it's not what I say or think but what I do that counts.
No need to interpose those other minds into you, lady.
I've found that hidden place that's paramount.

I know that I can jog in place with other thinkers
if I delve as deeply into meaning as they do.
I'll enjoy those minds as friends, as cosmic linkers
demystified together we'll discover what is true.



Autumn Blues

Fall with a sadness and feeling of loss
its beauty is tinged with regret.
In faint apprehension of what is to come
why do I worry and fret?

Am I feeling the loss of the thrust of new life
that surged through creation in spring
or the burst of fruition at midsummer's peak
that the richness of harvest can bring?

Expectation is gone, reflection the mood
nostalgia an ache in the soul.
The faint haze of fall is winter's prelude
will withdrawal of warmth take its toll?

Seasons have come and seasons have gone.
Deep inside I hope all is well.
Though the time of transition makes me feel woebegone
I must wait out this blue interval.

Experts Begone

There was a time not many years ago
when food was fun and relished as a treat.
With joy we settled at the festive board
to share our boundless blessings, drink, and eat.

But so-called experts rear their ugly heads.
“It’s good for you, it’s bad for you.” they say
“Our studies show that many now are dead
who gorged and pigged and carried on this way.

I count the calories, cut out the salt.
All kinds of sweets are far beyond the pale,
bad habits coming to a screaming halt
the only hope, the sages will regale.

So every toothsome morsel that I touch
is examined closely with alarm.
I ponder the nutrients far too much
afraid that what I eat will do me harm.

Just when the pundits have me mesmerized
their hard-won theories start to fall apart.
The systems that were glibly glamorized
have caused me to lose faith and mostly heart.

We’re not so sure that what we felt was fact
is quite the gospel that we thought it was.
New studies clearly show us that we lacked
a vital key--now new research for the cause.

Alas, I’m back to where I started from
an inner knowing what is right for me.
The blessings of the earth will now become
the source of health and all vitality.

Happiness Is. . .

The weather man knows how to scare us with snows
a wizard who blows up a blizzard.
He sits in his den, poker face on again
while my body congeals like a lizard's.

Please, weather man, forecast sun if you can
a warm sunny day, if you please.
Soft breezes blowing, forget about snowing
that makes us all snuffle and sneeze.

I'll be happy again if you forget about rain
tell me only what I want to hear.
You're wrong half the time, give me something sublime
a day that is balmy and clear.

Nature's Guardian

Earth and water, air and fire
all stirred by the master hand.
Nature's ingredients each require
their place in the master plan.

Color and sound, texture and taste
whirl in the blender of all.
New forms emerge, the old is replaced
with scarcely an interval.

Living and dying, birth and death
are all in the Guardian's plan.
The time of transition a shibboleth
that through pain, new growth began.

The spirit of nature is living
outward chang a suble expression
of infinite variety given
--protected by life's Guardian.

The Cutter's Song

A cutter's song from long ago
a memory that sings
of runners squeaking over snow
as a distant church bell rings.

The air is filled with sparkly frost
old Duster clops along.
Dense clouds of breath surround his head
--the cutter sings its song.

Warm and snug in the little sled
with a hot brick on my feet.
The cold kept out from toes to head
by layers of woolly heat.

This little glimpse of the distant past
thrills the caverns of my soul.
May the joy and delight of these flashes last
as the multi-moments roll.

Morning Prayer

New day of truth and growing
my heart salutes the dawn.
The stream of life is flowing
as I sing this morning song.

Open the petals of my mind
to the richness that is there.
The dawning light sheds wisdom
as I sing this morning prayer

The truth will dawn eternal
kept alive through darkest night
in the hearts of those so faithful
to the sacred ark of right.

New day is here for action
the truth exemplified
in service to creation
the truth is sanctified.

Free Verse is like a crazy quilt or a water color quilt--moving word by word, piece by piece balancing each word or piece as you go somehow making a coherent whole. It has been said that you must go through all the traditonal forms to liberate yourself--then you will know what you are doing.



My Words

Words, words, words, words like raindrops
beating drums--elusive as scampering mice.
They spring from ancient wells
bubbling up, tossed together, olio of sounds
struggling to make sense. Jigsaw pieces
railroad cars that need a track, labels--verbs and nouns.
One word evokes another until there is a sentence
that can be said.

I need your ears, eyes watching, caring
as I struggle to form a pattern for my thoughts.
A tree falls, a bell rings dissolved to nothing if not heard.
I need you as a mirror to my musing
to heal the loneliness and tumult I endure.
I'll watch and wait for hint I seek
an open gate, a road where we can meet
but may not.

That Nightmare

Trying to get ready
huge racing clock announces the deadline.
Wedding too soon and I am the bride.
Stockings are lost, dress all rumpled
--can't go this way.
"Where is the iron?"
Drops in my eyes--it's all a blur.

Tick tock, tick tock
"Here comes the bride."
Hurry, hurry, everyone's waiting.
Must make good impression.
They're all so perfect, I'm such a slob.
Groom is the same, over and over.
Dawn hours ago, now shadows creep.
Can't walk down the aisle barefoot.
It's all here someplace.

Clock face immense, hands moving, moving
Vise tightens, squeezes.
I faint into morning.

Promises, Promises

Any mindless, stultifying jobs
to satisfy the voters.
Keep them punching keys, time clocks
turning screws
digging ditches
so they can collect pay checks
count up vacation days
and add up sick leave
in case of disaster.

Keep them using VISA
to buy, buy, buy
Nintendo
designer jeans
beer and ball games
to fill the empty spaces.

If unemployment shrinks
popularity will increase.
I'll go down in history
if I can just deliver.

The Talker

Hot wind
from the south
searing my senses
with words dinned
In torrents from a mouth
that never stops.

I yearn for Frost
cool, white page
who speaks only when bidden
sparse words tossed
by cryptic sage
sly humor hidden.

Soul's edges are singed
faint breath is fading, I wither
consumed
caught in the path
of her everyday weather.

My Daimon

Who are you, traveling companion
-- shadowy presence that urges me on
when my present niche is warm and safe?

My climb has been steep and rocky
sunshine and storms have whirled around my head
and now I am here enjoying the view.

Where are you taking me, unknown friend
as you beckon me around another bend?
My strength is failing and my courage faint.
I'm afraid of what can be ahead.

Why must we go so fast
when there is so much to learn in so little time.
My mind is a maze of unsorted impressions
--I beg for time to put it all in order.

When will you reveal it all to me, unseen mentor?
The mysteries that cloud my path and keep me wondering
are puzzles that obscure my view.

Take me where you will, my daimon
you are my guide
I'll go where you go.

Hang in There

Faith
is a handhold
on a sturdy plank
as the kitten
sinks one claw into the wood
as the climber
breathless and determined
hauls himself up
to a new ledge
as the moon and stars
hang in their places.

God only needs a finger touch
to link with Him
just a tip
with life force pulsing through it
and courage.

Courage like firecrackers
cannot be concealed
even a breath
even a small pop
So if you have only a slim beam
God at one end
will energize your grasp
as easily as plugging
in a table lamp.

Fallen Angel

Tumbling from the heights
as laid my spirit low.
With feet made out of clay
I'm not a saint.

I'd be angelic
always soft of voice and touch
understanding, gentle, loving
a shining light
--it's all too much
I'm not a sai nt.

I pick my kitty up
for her own good
she fights in panic
as I hold her close
and sinks her claws in me
who loves her most.
She's not a saint
but then, she never tried to be.

Pals

Two wheels rolling down the road
side by side but hardly ever touching.
We come from there
pause briefly here
then roll ahead
down that dim path.

We search each other's minds
for maps to show
where we have been and where we are.
Affirm that it's all right to wobble
squeak, hesitate, if only
we keep rolling down the road.

Dearie is Gone

The breeze of August
loosed her slender hold
and now I am alone
a lonely leaf left clinging
in dark November chill
my time to come.

Our twig was safe, secure
strengthening sap sustained
we lived as one.
When tender leaves unfurled
we sang the April song
in perfect harmony.

I hear the north wind calling
an echo of her voice.
I drift away.

A Glimpse of Grandpa

He paused beside the grove
and picked wild prairie roses
even though the thorns
were sharp against his hand.
She sees him still
arms filled with splendor
--beaming
as that moment etched itself
in family's memory.

They couldn't know
his time was short
a father torn away too soon
who left a legacy of roses in his place.

Family Reunion

We're drawn from every corner
with memories of our matriarch
Norwegian pioneer who grappled hand to hand
with all that life and seasons thrust at her.
She left familiar fjords, sailed to praires half a world away
facing language, people, places strange and new.

Her challenge as she laid the groundwork
for our future in Minnesota's fertile soil
were cruel winters, summers hot with promise.
Left alone to carry on their dream
the load lay on her shoulders.
She built a family, made a home
for hers and those who had no home
--a quiet presence accepting what was left.

"Hope for the best and prepare for the worst,"
her motto was she went about her life.
Earth bloomed beneath her touch
yielding food and flowers to sustain
and add a rainbow to the storms.
Jams and jellies lined her cellar shelves
--stained-glass cathedral
she the priestess, we her flock.

I remember summer twilights
supper coals are crumbling in the stove.
Day's work is done, we pull the hairpins from her hair
it falls still chestnut, heavy, to her waist.
I brush and comb, as time dissolves
our voices mingle in the dusk.
"At least be half-a-decent," echoes through the years.
We pause and muse, "As Grandma always said. . ."
Her wisdom now a part of us
our talisman on paths we've yet to walk.

Alone

It's in flashes that I see it
burned into the warp and woof of me
loneness, separate as an icicle.

Earliest, snatched away from home
on the first day of school.
I nibble on my peanut-butter sandwich
with strangers who laugh
in wonder at my frozen face.

Again, stretched out on the grass on a star-filled night
staring at infinity
vast ceiling, pushing down.
I'm suddenly a part of it
but only a tiny speck
among the stars.

room

Again, faced with the ultimate grief in the emergency
my life's companion gone. I shivered in the icy wind
molting bird, now unadorned
naked, feathers blown away
on changing winds.

Later, there will be day or night that spells the end
of what I know.
I'll have to take that solitary step
move beyond the ashes
into star-filled night
alone.

New Dimension

Now free
from footfalls on the earth
I fly
and enter into everything
a singing bird
a baby's smile
fresh breeze against your cheek.

The midday sun
has peaked
and sheds my light
to mingle with your flame.
Entwined
transformed
we rise above what was
and move together to another realm.

Plea From the Heart

Don't look now God, we're all right
heart monitor's tracing someone else.
Our empress, our watchcat, our parasite
preens at our glance. The house creaks
awash with papers and yarn. In the kitchen
soup stews in its kettle, in the freezer
Sonoma steer waits in strange barn.

Flowerbeds glow and maple leaves dance
on boughs stretching to heaven
squirrels munch on acorns long hidden.
The yardwork now mine, I prune too deep
he glowers and fumes, we glare
then walk, hand-in-hand.

Please God, we're all right here. Please leave us alone.
Don't burst our bubble, take away our bone.

This Time

Brisk in July flowers
flit butterflies and humming birds.
Phone in hand, I watch through the window
coffee cup handy
enjoying her friendly voice.

Safe in my house
I live in this time
half hearing a radio
playing in the distance.
“Love is a flower.”
echoes through dark halls
of another summer day
when we couldn’t see the sun.

Together we remember that month
when darkness rolled over us
a cloud that seeped
through every cell.
Somehow the fog has lifted
and roses bloom again
butterflies hovering
careful of the thorns.

Empty Air

Green hills flow past in afternoon shadows.
Who is more alone
than the woman
saying, "I did it, hon!"
to empty air?
thinking because the car leaps ahead
the road wide open
fringed with waving poppies
that the door should open
and he'd be standing on the doorstep.

The mail box is empty
a TV dinner waits in the freezer.
A single wine glass
to toast myself.

Walking Meditation

It's spring again, my dear
the leaves are green
and mustard glows against the hills.
I walk and wonder where you are
soft breeze against my cheek
or far beyond the morning star?
I sense you near
a part of all my memories
but blowing free
now loosed from footfalls on the earth.
I walk and search the atmosphere
another spring and you're not here.

Memories

Grief's red-hot poker
fading into sunset glow.
Peace come to me
and let me hold
those moments that were dear
live again those happy times
unblemished
by the iron fist of pain and fear.
I'd keep the embers
close to me
to warm my days
with kindly, loving memories.

Miss You

Cat brings home her mouse
to share with just an empty house
Where is the triumph, where is the glow
an empty victory if I can't show
this prize to you, my other half
receive my praise, pat on the back.
Habits of a lifetime's need for sharing
don't just dissolve
I'll always miss your caring.

Nature's Balm

I picked a Peace Rose yesterday
golden yellow
pink-tinged hue
then rested on the garden gate
and thought of you.

I listened to the tree frogs singing
in the dark last night
reminding me
of evening chats
in other times.

I remember glowing sunsets
ablaze across the sky
reflecting
glory on our faces
--you would never die.

In my hand, a bunch of violets
fresh in morning dew.
Comforted
by nature's touches
I feel you here with me.

Emily is Gone

Only yesterday
I watched from my window
down in the parking lot
bright against the chill.
someday soon.”

Not that we saw much of her
she always kept to herself
“My own best company,” she said
Even in her eighties
she brought home armloads of books
and read all day
still in her robe.

It’s so quiet upstairs.
I listen for her footsteps
the rush of water filling the kettle
that creaking floor board.

The Toy Box

Battered remnant of the past
is empty now
except for dried-out bits of clay
stray puzzle pieces
wheels from Match-Box cars.

Release of memories floods my mind
and echos through my empty arms.
Goodnight Moon, the *Muffin Man*
shouts of glee at Frisbees sailing high
piping voices singing *Twinkle, Twinkle*. . .
trusting hands in mine.

I close the lid again
on this crucible of time
and move the box to a lesser place

Missy

Flash of burnished bronze
mischief in her eyes
escaped again.

She always knew
when I was leaving
the instant I knew it myself
and was off on tiny legs
to keep me home.

Eight years of this have ended
leaving chewed couches
down escaping from the quilt
where toe nails dug
holes in the lawn
from Doxie gopher hunts
and silence.

No more loving licks
no more yips and barks
no warm body
closer than close.

New Grandson

Mother Nature said in no uncertain terms
“Now is the time.” and it was so.
He came into the world to make it his
and all of us his people.
We’ll serve as loyal subjects
and he’ll accept it all
as his just due.

Panic strikes.
Little system out of balance.
Science rushes in
and tries to do what nature
isn’t doing. He needs time to get it together.
God give him time!
God give him time!

All support goes into helping
that tiny system
function on its own.
Around the clock, no effort
is too much to make.
Bonding not an abstract term
but now a screaming need
to help this little soul
at any cost.

The family all together
clustered at the window
awe struck at the tiny bundle.
Much as wise men long ago
came from far away with gifts
and wonder at new life
that sleeps, not knowing
or caring that he is at the center.
Only that he’s warm and fed
and safe.

It takes a lot to keep things going.
I rush to this store, that store.
I need ‘extra tiny.’
‘Ready to eat.’
Announcements--bugle call to all the world
that Baby’s here!
Baby’s here.

He tries to raise his head
and turns to see
who’s calling out his name.
A sober view of this new place
and all the sights and sounds
that make a world.

He likes to waltz with Willy Nelson.
Whatever makes him happy
I will do. He looks at me with sober eyes
and suddenly breaks into a fleeting smile
and eyes grow soft and loving.
This was not gas, I know for sure.

His first party--debut into the world
all dressed up in ‘Niner” jog suit.
He doesn’t care.
All those cooing faces meaningless
beside the one who gives him dinner.

He loves to ride,
settles into snoozes when he feels the shake.
It’s time to eat and nothing there to eat.
He screams in fury and frustration.
Mother calls it ‘meltdown.’
I see it as the beginning of the end.
Sure enough, the shaking of the car
reminds him that he loves to ride
and back to sleep again.

He dozed through Christmas Eve
unknowing and uncaring
about this time that peaks the year.
Someday he'll be swept
into our maelstrom of presents, food
extravagances that stretch to the limit.
Now he has everything
--no need to chase the star.

Baby wore two grandmas out
on New Years Eve
We walk and pat and talk
and still he stews.
Whatever works, we'll do.
To leave him to his rage and grief
-intolerable.

We see the New Year in rocking together
We've walked, had two suppers
hiccupped, cried, done everyuthing we could
and now he gave it up
and sleeps secure while whistles blow.

Another week--where is that tiny infant
that I could drape around my arm?
He's changed into a solid
kicking boy who needs a firmer hold
and much more strength.
He smiles a big, wide, smile
with eyes atwinkle.
We melt in adulation
at his favor.

Then he fumes in rage
Something is amiss.
Lip jutting

brows furrowed.
We try to make amends
to his little lordship.

A week away and he's moved into another stage.
I mourn the infant that he was
--the bond that bound us day and night.
He looks away, would rather swing
and go inside himself than play.
From being someone special
now I'm just another figure
in his world.

Whistling in the Dark

The world waits in silence
for my voice
singing a song
that has never been sung before.
I take my place
knowing that my time has come.
No more hiding
in the choir
in awe of other voices.
This is my song
filling the silence.

Short Poems and Pillow Tops are a splash of color, a wisp of an idea to brighten up a corner, bringing freshness to what is there.



What Makes a Person

a collection of tankas

May pole, straight and true
random dancers unified
around the center
reaching to infinity
firmly rooted in the earth.

Integrity

Mind's plainsong river
joining thoughts, free current
flowing here to there.
Flotsam drifting on the tide
leaves its mark for all to see

Fluidity

Deep well, pouring forth
shares its treasures openly
Feelings, thoughts are there
to blend with others; reaching
out, not fearful holding back.

Expressiveness

Bubble, cloud on high
floats in wispy solitude
escape from footprints
in the sand--free of shackles
roaming in the stratosphere.

Day Dreaming

I will write this poem
manana, can't think today.
my feet are dragging.
Tomorrow inspiration
maybe, Please don't count on me.

Procrastination

Cowering in fear
I dare not venture into
strange, untempered lands.
Now safe, secure from failure
in my cave, I'll stay untried.

Fear of Failure

Notice me, I'm here
trembling in fear, my Being
needs your praise and love
to validate my living
proof that I am one with you.

Need for Attention

I'll not tell it all
what you don't know won't hurt me
Some pieces of my
psyche too tender for your
gaze--knowingly, I'll cover.

Secretiveness

All at once mind knows
the truth; gift wrapped, a present
from the inner Self
that puts it all together
shines its light where there was dark.

Intuition

A bowl of jello
all dressed up for smorgasbord
out of safe, cool depths
and into heat of living
--tentative, vulnerable.

Ego

Castle on a hill
untouched by distant rabble
gateway locked on moat
protecting from sly arrows
guarding inner flame from draft.

Withdrawal

Fear of change will keep
what is familiar even when
its wrong. Mind can't think
its way to freedom, clutches
what is known, represses new.

Ultraconservatism

Fear casts a shadow
on the light. Unbidden dark
obscures, makes cloudy
crystal of the mind, distorts
the truth without our knowing.

Self Deception

Fear of want, a day
might come when hunger looms, he
saves and saves, can't share
with anyone. Mean spirit grasps
and holds him captive, strangled.

Selfishness

Tumbleweed rolling
tossed by every wind that blows
rootless, mindless pawn
red passion, not admitting
what could be a better way.

Impulsiveness

Coals smouldering
in earth's core
fire that waits
for another breeze
to fan into a flame.
A stepped-on toe
throbbing
expecting still another blow.

Resentment

Early Spring

Bare branches pierce sky
leaves autumnal memory
not a trace of life.

Humming birds squabble
flutter where the feeder was
hope for sustenance.

Tulip tree blossoms
brief moment in the sunshine
new leaves push petals.

Haiku

Autumn Haiku

Grapes dangle above
my head tantalizing me
arbor out of reach.

Blackberries drip red
enticing me into thorns.
We bleed together.

Haiku

Haiku

Cat hears birds singing
could be delicious meals ahead.
Crouches into stalk.

Bluebells newly picked
safe from wild storms outside.
Prairie's gift of peace.

Mockingbird twitters
back again after long journey
brings us all bird songs.

Squirrel up in maple
walking high wire, good balance
carefree, playing, fun.

Tibetan princess
loving flash of shaggy black
sits closer than close.

Dale (1931-1950)

A star
a firefly
twinkling through our lives.
Light laughter
fun and games
another hand
sharing the load.
We didn't know
he was a shooting star.

The Old Ones

Like autumn leaves
they drift through twilight days
fragile
crumbling edges
cracker thin.

The field still theirs
but lesser now
retreating
in this crucible
of time.

Inside the Storm

Everything here is yellow and green
with rain falling, falling, falling
drenching acacias, bending daffodils

Listen to drumming on the window pane
staccato bursts and noiseless drips
wind racing through bare branches.

It's evening all afternoon
and spring within this winter day.

Lift Off

Burst
and pointing clouds
unites the world
in single awe.

Each now a little braver
each now a little humbler
an ordinary person dares
and is rebuffed.

Together now
as one we look afar
and raise our sights
to search
for still another star.

Pivot Day

Another Friday
drops down
gift from a finite supply
building a compost
of end-of-the-week Fridays
beginning of the week Fridays
TGIF Fridays
hippity-hop Fridays
leaden, gloomy Fridays
long forgotten Fridays.
 Thank God for another Friday.

Afterglow

When the jewel is put away
a shimmer lingers on
shedding its light
in the place
where it was.

Evolving

Leaves

autumn, mature
turning, reddening, glowing
maple, woodbine, aspen, elm
loosening, drifting, sinking
crackly, crisp
compost

Baby

cuddly, toothless
cooing, burping, crawling
toddler, climber, jumper, runner
yelling, slurping, punching
boy

Diamonte

Ballad of the Hjemkomst

She cruised in triumph, dream come true
and landed on that day.
The Hjemkost home on Norway's shore
at rest in Bergen's Bay.
Proud Viking ship, thirteen in crew, had sailed six
thousand miles
and received a roaring welcome
--all faces wreathed in smiles.
Three score and ten in length, mast soaring sixty feet
true replica of ancient times, this saga now complete.

The trip began on prairie soil with a yearning to explore
in Minnesota's heartland ten long years before.
Norwegian brothers laughed and schemed
"We'll build a Viking ship
retrace our forebears voyage and relive that bygone trip."
It might have been a phantom hope but nature intervened
a fall and broken bones to heal gave time to plan and dream.
Bob Asp, a teacher, studied hard
--researched the Gokstad ship
resolved to duplicate its form, served his apprenticeship.

The search began for white-oak trees
he combed the countryside
and found a farm with trees to spare
that more than qualified.
He thought fifteen would be enough
one hundred would complete
but none proved long enough for keel
which needed fifty feet.
So compromise and laminate creating what was needed
became the watchword for this task
as step by step proceeded.
Bob found a warehouse large enough
to shelter tools and wood.

and nurturing community supported all it could.
Hawley was a little town of eighteen hundred souls
they poured their love into the boat

adopted builder's goals.

All worked together, kin and friends
with hammers, saws and time
their purpose clear, intention strong
each with a single aim.

A shadow fell upon his life, leukemia's lethal blow
Bob pledged to carry on their task

Rose vowed to make it so.

Two brothers died within a year, the others labored on
more funds were raised, glad hands joined in
the battle would be won.

Nine years had passed, the day arrived
when Hjemkomst came outside
a truck and wheels made possible
two-hundred-mile long ride.

At last she rested in the waves on Lake Superior's shore
his victory, Bob raised her sail, enjoyed the happy roar
of whistles, sirens, shouts and cheers

flotilla's proud escort,

reward for all the many years of scheming and hard work.

His time was running out at last--he mused beside the bay
and said goodbye to Hjemkomst on that dark September day.
Three months later he was gone, a valiant fighter still
his family vowed to sail the ship investing all their skill.
The guiding light behind it all, at center was Rose Asp.
She never faltered even when all seemed beyond her grasp.
Her husband gone, her mother gone, then diabetes found
She learned another regimen--again Rose would rebound.

Hjemkomst Viking Inc. was formed
their skipper came on board
Erick Rudstrom lent his skill, fresh from Norway's fjords.

Applicants from everywhere were narrowed to a few
eight were chosen from outside, four Asps made up the crew.
New funds were raised, another June and Hjemkomst
 raised her sail
and challenged Lake Superior's depths combating every gale.
With turbulence, strong winds, and fog
 for forty days they fought.
through two more lakes, canals, and streams
 their progress dearly bought.
At last, East River, New York Harbor, Atlantic dead ahead
“We're off, let's go to Norway,” in unison they said.
Rose watched from shore as Hjemkomst left
 four children gone that day
she breathed a last goodbye to Bob
 went home to wait and pray.

With wind at fifteen knots they cruised
 and thought they saw a shark
getting settled for the trip, at last it was a lark.
The next day told a different tale, with rigging to repair
not only that, the shrouds and collar
 showed signs of wear and tear.
No easy job on rolling ship, they went aloft in twos
it took all day but task was done--they had no time to lose.
As storm approached, crew watched the sky
 and fastened down supplies
by night they knew a storm would hit
 the winds were on the rise.
When gale reached speeds of fifty knots,
 for sure sail must come down
the starboard gunnel getting close to danger water line.
The halyard tangled in the shrouds and caused another stir
they must not capsize, all hands joined
 to make the ship secure.
The wind died down but heavy waves
 cracked figurehead and hull
repairs were made at sea again, crew thankful for a lull.

They bailed and sailed and patched some more
halfway at sixteen days
adapting what they had for use in a dozen different ways.

The days rolled by, their goal seemed near
they changed to Norway time.
First sight of land, gigantic rock, to them a welcome sign.
They bypassed Scotland on the north
now Bergen straight ahead
where friends and family greeted them
with loving arms outspread.
Flying banners everywhere, Hjemkomst welcomed home.
the name on every tongue, Bob Asp
--obscure to now well known.
With accolades from everyone--our President on down
they sailed the coast of Norway
with a stop at every town.

The valiant sailors were exhausted
and the Hjemkomst battered too
good luck! a cargo ship had space, a ride back home her due.
Her sailing days are over now; she rests for all to see
in museum built to honor her--saved for posterity.

Ballad



About the Author



Dorothy Bodwell, a retired clerical supervisor from Contra Costa County, graduate of John F Kennedy University, is a widow with a son and daughter and five grandsons. She was born in Saskatchewan, Canada, grew up in Minnesota and has lived in Martinez since 1947.

She started writing poetry twenty years ago while enrolled in a Creative Writing Program at John F. Kennedy University and has won numerous prizes in poetry competitions. She is a member of Mt. Diablo Chapter of the California Writer's Club, Crystal Writers Workshop of Chaparral Poets and a member of the Ina Coolbrith Poetry Circle.. Along with writing, she has enjoyed quilting and oil painting classes and found that they all complemented and reinforced each other.