

CELEBRATING *P*OETS OVER 70



Edited by Marianne Forsyth Vespry and Ellen B. Ryan

WRITING DOWN OUR YEARS SERIES

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To order, CONTACT

**McMaster Centre for Gerontological Studies, KTH – 226, McMaster University
Hamilton, ON L8S 4M4**

Tel: (905) 525-9140 Extension: 24449; Fax: 905-525-4198

E-mail: gercntr@mcmaster.ca OR info@writingdownouryears.ca

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CELEBRATING *P*OETS

OVER 70

Edited by
Marianne Forsyth Vespry and Ellen B. Ryan

McMaster Centre for Gerontological Studies
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario
Canada L8S 4M4

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Ellen B. Ryan, Series Editor

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Foreword

Who would have imagined ten short years ago when Robert Kastenbaum (2000) argued that people continued to be creative in their later years, that so many poets over 70 were busily composing and publishing their work? At that time he had to explain why it was possible for artists to continue their productivity. After all, many years of research demonstrated that lyric poets were highly unlikely to continue writing much past their 40s, the 'golden years' (Kastenbaum, 2000, p. 387), the supposed peak time of creativity and the decade when so many Romantic poets died.

Instead I learned from perusing the biographies published in *Celebrating Poets Over 70* that poets in their 70s are the younger folk in the collection. At least 48 of the artists were in their 80s when they submitted their poems while 8 were in their 90s. One remarkable centenarian, Marion Fields Wyllie, had three poems accepted. She reported that she was "still writing in her 103rd year." More poets would have been in their 80s and 90s than I could count, for some did not give their ages. It's time for the wider world to recognize these productive individuals and give them the credit they deserve.

Until recently, however, few were aware of the number of writers' groups featuring poets over 70. When the Humanities and Arts committee of the Gerontological Society of America started the *Journal of Aging, Humanities, and the Arts* in 2007, we began receiving submissions of some very compelling poems. But even Dana Bradley and I, the co-editors, had little idea that the poems we received represented a small percentage of the whole. It turns out that Canada and the United States have many older poets working alone or in supportive organizations that encourage their productivity.

When Marianne Vespry and Ellen Ryan put out a call for submissions to this volume, they were inundated with poems, many of them impressive. Aided by volunteer reviewers they spent three months sorting through the submissions, selecting ones that they felt demonstrated poetic voice and poetic vision, making hard choices among the poems each poet had submitted, and dividing them into appropriate chapter groups. The result is a splendid collection of poetry, written by serious artists. Many of them have published earlier work in books, magazines and newsletters. Thanks to Ryan and Vespry's hard work, however, the poems will appear in an anthology which, we all hope, will bring them to the attention of additional readers.

Out of curiosity I checked where the poets were living. About 106 were from Canada, 93 from the United States, 1 from England, and 1 from Australia. Slightly more than half the poems were written by women, but

considering the odds of men surviving as long as their female age mates, the men were remarkably productive. Approximately 21 mention having grandchildren. Most of the others discuss their careers and their publishing histories instead. Several have had distinguished careers as poets, but most have written for their own pleasure and that of their families and friends.

The editors divided the poems into 12 chapter groups: Childhood, Generations, History, Love, Encounters, Aging, Death, Nature, Reflections, Dementia, Memory, and Words. The best way to demonstrate the range of the poems is to select a few representative ones. There are too many groups to mention poems from each of them. Instead, I have concentrated on ones that amused or moved me. Some of the verses are very startling.

For example, one might expect that the section on Childhood would look back to the poet's past, perhaps in an elegiac mood, or towards the future in the birth of grandchildren. Such poems appear, but some of the most moving are about children who died many years ago. To name one, in "Stillborn", Marie St George, a visual artist and poet, writes of the death of her fraternal twin in 1929, the year she was born. His failure even to be born alive still reverberates 80 years later. She imagines having tried to wake him "with a nudge, the way a cat will rouse / the slow one in her litter . . ." and describes the funeral and its aftermath with "father standing alone / holding a small white coffin" with

"mother / spent and silent in her bed" (p. 2). Another poem of loss is "Catherine" by John Corvese, a teacher of law. In it he describes being haunted by the presence of a sister who died before he was born. She was "alone, / discarded and forgotten / and left me . . . her unborn brother forlorn with the evil spirits" (p. 3).

Poems in other sections display a mixture of humor and pain. In History, a poem by Sheila Blume, "J. C. (The First)," reports that Julius Caesar "lives today in movie, play and ballad, / Obstetrical procedures, and a salad." (p. 16). In contrast, Bennett Gurian in "Holocaust" mourns the loss of a woman, possibly his mother. "I went left / She went right / I walked by the ovens . . . My skin was spared / My heart was charred." (p. 18). In the section on Love, Elmer Billman's "Mary's Smile" stands out. He describes a dining room in assisted living in which only the aides broke the silence. But then Mary caught sight of him at the door, "And suddenly her face lit up the room" (p. 26).

Another surprising one, "Pretending," appears in the section on Death. Naomi Wakan describes a married couple beginning to contemplate their deaths. The wife remarks that, inevitably, one of them will die first. The husband replies that he "was / thinking just that as I read / of the death of Darwin's daughter." He wanted to give his wife a kiss but did not wish to disturb her. The poet concludes sadly: "we are just foolish / children pretending for a moment / that it will never happen." (p. 57).

Dementia has some poignant examples of moments that might happen to us all. The speaker telephones a

friend in Mara Levine's "63rd Anniversary." The friend's husband suffers from dementia but the speaker reports hearing his "robust baritone" on their answering machine. He says, "I'm not here right now, / but hope to get back to you / soon as I return." (p. 86). Sadly the man's mind, according to his wife, is "disappearing." He will never return.

Finally Kilian McDonnell, a Benedictine monk, writes with humor of "My First Hearing Aid," a topic that is bound to be of interest to those of us with hearing problems. "Must you mumble, garble / consonants, rush to the end / drop last syllables? / . . . if only diphthongs were purer, / vowels and lives did not decay" (p. 101). The juxtaposition of "vowels" and "lives" caught me off guard when I read the poem.

As these fragments I have quoted suggest, readers of this volume will be able to spend many happy hours savoring this collection. There is enough variety in the poetry to keep readers who have different interests engaged and pleased. I can imagine that the late Gene Cohen who wrote so movingly about late life creativity would be delighted by these poems. Moreover, one can hope that this volume's publication will encourage other elders to make their voices heard.

Reference

Kastenbaum, R. (2000). Creativity and the arts. In T. R. Cole, D. D. V. Tassel, Kastenbaum (Eds.), *Handbook of the humanities and aging* (pp. 381-401). Second Edition. New York: Springer

Anne M. Wyatt-Brown is an Emeritus Associate Professor in the Program in Linguistics, University of Florida and elected fellow of the Gerontological Society of America. Her publications include: *Barbara Pym: A Critical Biography* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992); *Aging and Gender in Literature: Studies in Creativity*, 1993 (a co-edited collection). She also edited the book series, *Age Studies*, for the University Press of Virginia (1993-2001). She is founding co-editor of the *Journal of Aging, Humanities, and the Arts*, sponsored by the Gerontological Society of America.



*I*ntroduction

We're all getting older. What's to celebrate in that? Maybe our local transit system gives us free passes after 70, but life doesn't. The possibility or actuality of disability, dementia, death sit in the corners of awareness, or rage in its centre. Families, lovers, friends leave us; loneliness looms. Memory serves up big helpings of old grief, as well as former innocence and joy.

Old age, we say, isn't for sissies.

But look at it another way (and as poets we are good at turning things over and looking at them in other ways) and we would have to say: Life isn't for sissies. We've been learning about loss and grief all our years, but also about finding the strength to go on – through the love of family and friends, through faith or sheer stubbornness, or because 'they' (so many 'they's) depend on us, and letting them down simply isn't an option.

And celebrate? Even that: there's plenty, it turns out, to celebrate. We've made it, we're still here, we are

still writing poetry, or perhaps learning yet another skill, even now learning to write it. We are survivors; have survived beyond expectation. We have lost and won and lost again. In spite of all we have not been silenced. We have turned memory and hard-bought wisdom and love and dreams into poetry. We have turned pain into poetry. We are still writing, still sharing our verse, still hoping, still laughing.

Our contributors indeed wrote and shared on a scale beyond our expectations. We received many more submissions than we could print, even when we chose to print the shorter poems. We decided we needed a website. It will contain the printed poems, plus one poem from each of the other poets who submitted, and short biographies of all the poets.

A few words about the arrangement of this volume:

The poems are grouped into twelve themes, so that the reader can easily savour a number of takes on a topic, on Childhood, on Nature, on Words and writing, even on Death. (Who would have expected so many funny poems about death?) We don't mean to suggest that any poem is "only" about one theme. A poem found in the "Nature" section often describes an Encounter, includes the poet's Reflections on the scene, may also be about Aging or Memory or . . . Poems are like people; they don't classify easily.

Many poems could be placed in any one of several sections, even perhaps in the Introduction, thus:

Old poet writes

“I need a photograph,” I told my niece
“Old poet writing
grandchild looking on.”

I sat at the picnic table
with pen and notebook
Mia across from me.
I wrote “Mia’s poem,” then . . . ?
how to engage five-year-old attention
while her mother takes pictures?
“What shall I write?” I asked

“Once upon a time?”
Without a pause
she took up the tale:
“In a land nearby
lived a girl called Mia.”
She dictated and I wrote
adventures fantastical
beginning in a forest
and ending with lunch
at the CN tower.

*Old poet writes
grandchild looks on?*

Mia does not look on.

*Young muse dictates
Old poet records.*

Marianne Vespry

Acknowledgments

On behalf of the McMaster Centre for Gerontological Studies and the Tower Poetry Society we are most pleased to acknowledge all those who contributed to this anthology.

First and most important, we would like to thank those who submitted the poems you are about to read. Thanks also to writing groups and to friends and family who encouraged and assisted especially new poets to “give it a try!”

We would also like to reiterate our thanks to the colleagues who assisted in reading and evaluating the 1,000 plus poems that we received: Mike Alegria, Margaret Bennett, Alan Bishop, Paddy Chitty, Ramona Carbotte, Rhoda Howard-Hassmann, Ellen Jaffe, Eve Kliman, Joanna Lawson, Kay Lyne, Valerie Nielsen, Wilma Reynolds, Brett Reynolds, Alexa Roggeveen, Patrick Ryan and Ed Woods.

With most sincere gratitude,
Marianne Vespry and Ellen Ryan

Childhood

First Grandchild

Buds of babies-breath
Dawn-scented weanlings
Cuddlier than teddy bears
Snuggles in cradles –
Ever so softly unfold
Like the youngest of winds

As pink as babies-breath
A four-toothed mouth
Beams with budding poems
Dripping with honey –
All syllabic – with mostly
Ba and Da and Pa

Yala Korwin

Bret Andrew, February 5, 2003

I smiled all day:
this is the kind of news
that can set the tilting world
up straight.

A new person arrived,
eyes squeezed against the glare,
fists holding tight
the dreams of his prenatal sleep.

He is all possibility, watching
his narrow world with wide dark eyes,
searching for meaning
in sound and speech.

He has no opinions,
has yet to learn the stories, to taste
bread and onions, to flex muscles
in a great leap, or share ideas.

He knows nothing of how land folds
as it swells into mountains,
of garden fragrance coaxed onto night air
by the silver invitation of the moon.

I smiled all day,
rocking with the tilting world.

Marion Frahm Tincknell

Strange

In the depths of this strange January
of bitter cold and spring-like melt
my granddaughter is waiting for the birth
of her daughter, strange that to me
to know the sex
have seen the shape of life within.
Would I have wanted this?
I keep presents wrapped
not wanting to spoil the suspense
reduce the element of surprise.

Not strange to her, what is
is trying to imagine how it was
I tell her you cannot walk
in the shoes of yesterday
try as you might
you can't erase the present.
Nothing stays the same
now everything accelerates
moves quicker than scudding clouds
swifter than a coloured sunset.
Yesterday's miracles are today's norm
tomorrow's obsolescence
but your new daughter will know
in those few seconds after the cord is cut
as she makes her first cry of outrage and surprise
that in the end the essential remains.
The rest is gift-wrap.

Marion Beck

Stillborn

1. Elegy for a Fraternal Twin 1929

Our mother knew three days before our birth – couldn't
catch her breath as though the cord had curled around her
throat instead while I lay kicking in my sac that curved so
perfectly to yours we wore each other's shape and smell.
I tried to wake you with a nudge, the way a cat will rouse
the slow one in her litter ask your name – strained to see
the contours of your face – the mirror image of my own or
someone strange? The colour of your hair? Did you have
my eyes?

2. Finding Your Grave

A few square inches of grass lot 252, section H crowned
today with a solitary dandelion richly gold and sturdy
bursting out of grave #1 as you could not burst from the
womb but were booted out lifeless by my push towards
breath here you are at last eighty years later no marker
remains only a number on a cemetery map not even
your given name just "baby....." though Mother called you
Thomas what a chase you've led me Brother no records
but my sibling's recollections crossing that big bridge bare
trees sodden leaves squishing underfoot father standing
alone holding a small white coffin quiet grown-ups
waiting patiently in the cold then tea served with raisin
cake sisters tiptoeing in with some for Mother
spent and silent in her bed

M E St George

Catherine

Now, the photo every day haunts me.
A constant reminder,
that I could not help her.
Forgive me Catherine.
I was not yet born.
The photo is old, blurry . . . faded by 80 years.
Innocent she lay snug in her carriage,
on the unknown sidewalk.
She is alone in the black and white photo . . . the
street around her . . .
Deserted!
Desolate!
No one to comfort her.
Who took the photo?
I do not know.
It is all that survives of her.
My Sister.
From the carriage her tiny sad eyes search in vain
with infinite love for her unborn brother
. . . me
Thirteen months of age,
a baby when she died
alone,
discarded and forgotten
and left me . . . her unborn brother forlorn with the
evil spirits.
Destiny dictated we should never meet.
Sister and Brother
I was not asked,

but soon, as I am old now.
No siblings followed my guardian angel,
just me
born to a woman we called mother.
A stranger we never knew.
Catherine, why did you leave me all alone?
I see you always.
You are in my wedding photos, a woman of middle age
with serene visage
looking with pride
at me your unborn brother.
My Sister
You are playing with my children and grandchildren.
Sister I never saw
Mother I never had
Sister, Mother, Aunt
All my photos, you are in every one,
watching over my family and me.
Catherine, why did you leave me all alone?
John Corvese



“Life, a chapter in a serial story opening in purity, ending unresolved.” – *Royal L. Craig*

A Grace-Note for the Nursery

Whoever Cock Robin was, Walpole or
some Norse demigod slain by mistletoe,
it's the children who mourned him for generations:
the stiff body lying, breast up,
arrow straight and deep,
inkblot of blood neat and final,
sad hieroglyphs of feet pointing heavenwards.

They couldn't imagine the mild-mannered sparrow
committing murder, although they could see
his talent for blending into a crowd
could be taken for cunning.

They were sure he confessed under duress.
Their prime suspect, the owl,
trowel poised, scowled from the lithograph,
gave them bad dreams.
He had motive and opportunity:
cursed the luck of those frequent flyers
wintering in the tropics;
slipped through darkness
while the others slept.

Not being able to close the file,
the children risked a lifetime
of guilt and inadequacy
that, pre-dating Freud, had no deliverance.

Poor Cock Robin.
Now even the children snub him, expand

their avian vocabulary with Big Bird,
never learn the teamwork
of putting a funeral together
so that everything scans and rhymes
and the dirge is catchy

leave a-sighin' and a-sobbin'
to night-air stirrings
around those tiny, white crosses
in the garden, beyond the nursery walls.

Sylvia Adams

Basic Needs

here on this earth
there's nothing
more fair to share
than a bare breast
full of milk

with a hungry helpless
infant sucker

a baby critter
that didn't beg
to be begotten

on a hopeless
starving stage

Jerry Andringa

First Love

Hand in hand we often went
Down the lane together to school,
To learn the rules of arithmetic –
Reading – the firmament.
Our lives were eagerly one – as we
Visited the playground – climbed the tree –
Slid down the slide – teetered on the totter –
We mounted the make-believe fort –
Skipped – hopped, and ran to be with others.
We read books – She – *Little Women* –
I, *Tom Swift* and *The Rover Boys*.
We became one – two little hearts
Growing – experiencing life together –
We two.

But many years have come and gone,
We have each led a separate way –
Seeking other worlds and realms.
She – becoming a nurse – found a new love –
I – a school teacher – found a new love.
Each of us became parents
And now, in the evening of our lives
I wonder if we have ever caught
The same feeling of belonging
One to another – as we had
When we were kids, walking down that lane –
Hand in hand – hearts beating as one –
Ecstatic and glowing – in that *first* love!

David C Berry

Uneasy Lies the Head That Wears a Crown

In Rebecca's school it was understood
Crowns were given to those who were good
I heard Rebecca lost her crown
From starry heights she went one down
Could she have done something really bad
That she will not tell her Mom or Dad
Did she make a terrible noise
Is she flirting with the boys
Did she refuse to clean up her mess
Make a remark she could not suppress
Did she talk aloud in class
Did she make faces in a glass
Did she refuse to eat her lunch
Did she deliver a well-aimed punch
Was it anarchy in the playground
Or was it notes from underground
Was it despite what grownups say
Impossible to remain a queen every day
Did she on Friday just embark
On a spell of naughtiness as a lark
Anyway accept this my rhyme
You'll regain a crown in your own good time

Ann Rempel

"Knishes, Buy My Knishes"

She stood outside the school beside her small charcoal burner
singing her aria, "Knishes, buy my knishes."

The children delighted in seeing her there.
Eagerly they handed over their few coins for a taste of paradise.
Sometimes, there would be hot chickpeas or chestnuts,
but mostly there were knishes.

The winters were hard on the prima donna of knishes.
Her voice often cracked as she vocalized her wares.
"Knishes, buy my knishes."

In the snow she was almost unseen,
a tiny bit of humanity desperately earning a few cents
for survival.
"Buy my knishes, buy my knishes,"
she sang in a *sotto voce* voice lost amid
the many sweaters and scarves she wore,
the babushka almost covering her entire face.

The children could hardly wait
for the end of the school day
eagerly clutching their coins
as they swamped her with their orders.

"Missus, here missus. I got a nickel.
Please Missus, a knish, missus, a knish."

One wintry day, she did not appear.
The children were disappointed and surprised.
"Perhaps she'll come tomorrow," they chorused
But the knish diva's tomorrow never came.
She had disappeared like the snows of April,
a tiny fragment of humanity, unknown,
unsung, but not unmourned.

"The knish lady is no more," wailed the children.
How happy she would have been
to know that her life had touched the lives of others.

Lillian Kormendi

Depression Child

I was a depression child.
Depression, now a tropical storm,
then it was hunger.
We grew our own food or we didn't eat.
Hand-me-downs were like new clothes.

Discipline was easy,
if you didn't work you didn't eat.
Sounds like communism,
who cared about politics on an empty stomach?

The kids teased me about my black sateen welfare shirt,
but Ms. Doty, my teacher, stopped this hurt,
"I like your beautiful shirt," she said,
as her icy stare froze on their faces,
the room fell quiet.

Dallas D Lassen

At Recess

I used to fight at recess,
trading whopping thumps
and wild taunts
with almost anyone
who dared to snag my anger.

Except on days when
placed upon a slippy wooden chair
I'd listen to the principal plead
that surely I did not prefer
to spend recess in the office.

At those times I'd sit encased
in forged defiance,
scowling at my bitten nails,
Too cagey by far to tell her
that yes in fact
I did.

Joan Newton

Looking Back

Do you remember Grade 9?
starched crinolines
all girls' class G9G
conjugating the verbs to be
in French or Latin.

The bell rang
and we walked the halls
in one straight line
furtively eyeing
an all boys' class
passing by the other side.

Those were the days of 3 ring binders
bulging with homework
that we dutifully completed
as we waited for a life
beyond G9G

Marlene Monster

Great Grandmother's Funeral

*Martha Ellen Wham
Illinois – Wyoming
1861-1942*

Your head rests on the dining room table
moved to the parlor for viewing by
cousins to-the-third twice-removed.

I don't remember you in life, only the
silhouette I stood on my toes to see,
white as the chalk bluffs close by your

farmhouse, where wind carved deep furrows,
deep from water hauled three miles in barrels,
deep from wheat crops and children lost.

A face, harsh as the Pequod's prow,
battered by storms, hardened by the
search for haven you never found,

calm waters to cradle you as gently as
the feather bed in the attic that kept
me warm three nights in December, 1942.

Jay Payne

Earliest Memory

Squeak of cutter's
steel runners
over hard-packed
moonlit snow
harness bells ajingle
I remember too
the round brown motion
of the chestnut mare
the barnyard scent of her
the warm plaid blanket
covering us three
my Great Aunt Clara
my young mom and me
a call of *giddyup*
into the frosted air
my ancient aunt
guiding black leather reins
to take us all the way
a dozen miles or so
from Mindemoya village
on to Providence Bay

Norma West Linder

Apology

Mrs. Peppinger was the first American lady,
other than my first grade teacher,
whom I became acquainted with.

Mrs. Peppinger was the mother of Hermina
in my class – Hermina, who was the way
I wished I was.

Secretly I also wished my mother was
the way Hermina's mother was: powdered
and even rouged and lipsticked,
and smelling sweet, like dollar bills.

Once, in Mr. Deetchock's butcher store,
where my mother sent me for a soup bone
with still a little meat attached,
Mrs. Peppinger was by the counter.
I stood close to her, hoping somebody
would think me hers.

Mama. I am old now
and you are long in heaven.
Tomorrow is your 113th birthday
and I write you this apology.
I am so, so sorry, Mama.
I truly am.

Ina Jones

Fried Mush for Breakfast

Fried mush for breakfast,
All buttery crunch outside,
Soft and grainy within.

Turning me soft within, too,
With warm taste of memory.
Twelve around the table;
(That was lots of frying!)
Mush was possible, even during hard times
When Papa raised the corn
And all helped shell it around Mama's washtub
Near the wood stove on long winter evenings.
In the wagon next day we little ones rode
With Papa to the mill
Anticipating mush and milk for supper
And fried mush for breakfast.

Ah yes, fried mush for breakfast!
Stirs memories of a preacher-farmer papa,
A patient, quiet mama,
Five boy children, five girl children.
Twelve around the table.
Lots of perseverance,
Lots of love,
Lots of hope,
In fried mush for breakfast!

Viola Pearl Diener Stahl

**There Were These Two Brothers
And They Had Onions On Both Sides of the River**

I am ten years old and sitting on my grandfather's porch and my mother sits with her sisters and they are talking about someone named Garnet and

My uncle nods slowly says *When thieves fall out* to my grandfather who nods and says *When thieves fall out* –

They pass this sentence back and forth a few times nodding –

Who are they talking about? I whisper to my mother who says *Shhh. I'll tell you later* –

Dragonflies flit and hover in the tall grass next to the river which holds its own conversation with itself –

My mother never told me who Garnet was or if he were a thief –

All I was given was the stillness of cornfield summer and the quiet voices on the porch –

Eugene McNamara

Blue Willow

I am in the *Humble Administrator's Garden* in China. One most of you will know from its image rendered into perfect stillness on china cups and saucers.

As a child I gazed deeply into that painted landscape. I would enter the path that twisted among unfamiliar shrubs, purposefully placed rocks as I strolled under dripping Willows enchanted by miniature waterfalls.

I always met a Chinese Princess taking tiny tortured steps across a bridge on her tightly bound Lotus feet. She never smiled, stoic in her pain. Over her shoulder a parasol kept sun's burning fingers from her perfect ivory skin.

Now suffering from jet lag, I listen to the tour guide recite the garden's long history; the beauty of its trees and rocks obscured by swirls of sweating tourists. I close my eyes and see the cool blue garden of my childhood – at this particular moment, the one I prefer.

Lois H Davis

The Image

*His thoughts may be halting to our ear,
but we might forget to listen to his heart.*

Dear god, my folks tell me
I am made in your image, is that true?
Do you have a limp,
and a tick in your right cheek
that embarrasses you,
or a bully you're trying to avoid?
Do you have trouble
with numbers and triangles?
Are you curious about drugs
until you see someone wasted?
Is skin color a problem for you?
Are you a bit short for your age?
Do you find sports a bit too hard?
Do you have bad guys down the block?
Is there one you're so in love with,
that you could lie down and die for,
that doesn't even know you exist?
Are you in our neighborhood ever?
I bet I could recognize you
walking down Windermere Street,
you'd be the one that is limping,
hoping for something better than this,
just like me.

Royal L Craig

Good Hair Daze

When I was five,
mother thought
severe features of
an American Indian
belied her ethnic bambino's
true identity, and
straight hair deserved a curl,
processed and cooked
until the coif was frizzed and teased.

No wonder the crone now refuses
any hint of cut or tint.

Maria Keane

My "Always" Child

Sleep on sweet silent keeper of my heart
While gossamer smiles slip in and out
Around the corners of your pristine mouth.
Soon you will wake
To watch the storm clouds
Bumping in the sky
Or race between the dancing
Branches of the trees
Whispering child secrets
To the wind
And watching, I will smile
Knowing that God, thru you,
Has touched me
With His love.

Louise O'Brien

Roll Back the Years

To feel thirteen again
fill your pockets with wild rose petals
leave them there to dry

To feel thirteen again
go to the beach
flop down on a cold wet towel
on burning sand
open your ears to the waves
to the cries of children and seagulls
eat a bologna sandwich
on white bread smeared with mustard

To feel thirteen again
colour your restaurant place mat
make the trees purple, the sky green
Throw a snowball
at a passing stranger
Learn to play the guitar
Wish on the first star
Avoid mirrors

Norma West Linder

Leave-Taking

This is our last day of camp. It's August.
The weasel that we found in winter-white
in June trapped inside the ice-house by now
is sleek and fat and brown. On the last night,
we lie awake and listen to the loons.
All day they have been courting. Bill clicking,
head rubbing, splash diving. Now they rest,
white breast touching white breast, their shrill
cry stilled. Their garnet eyes closed. At daybreak,
we wade to where the waterlilies grow,
gliding our hands to their murky bottom so
that we can put them in a bowl, where, when
we're gone, their petals will turn brown and die
and the slimy scum on their slippery stems
will break up, decay and decompose. Why
do we have to go? Must we leave this place?
In the empty ice-house, we find a few
pieces of ice in the sawdust to chill
our lemonade. Dragonflies with see-through
wings dart by us, glued to one another
by the tug of male for female. We sit
on the dock, then strip, and swim to the raft.
Cool water on flesh disturbs the slate-grey
lake sending ripple after ripple to
shore and it is the end of our last day.

Margaret Kay

Generations

The Sandwich Generation

My daughter comes to visit
I know it's not for fun
She feels an obligation and
Is always on the run
She also has two grandkids
And babysits a lot
No doubt she dearly loves them
But is really in a spot
She is a sandwich filling
And is caught on either side
By kids and old folk
Without a place to hide
Am I too late to teach her
The magic word of "NO"
Can I be the nosy preacher
With only love to show?
I do hope so.

Diana Jamieson

Traditions

They're gone. All of them. A whole generation.
They who upheld the family name.
My grandparents. My parents.
 The aunts with their crafts,
 The uncles with their war stories.
The last has gone and only I remember them.

They're gone. A new awareness overtakes me.
I am free of family traditions.
No one is left to criticize me:
 No elders I can embarrass
 No family name to ruin.
No one to say, "What will the neighbors think?"

They're gone. I study their faces in my albums.
No one is left to set my boundaries.
I can act with abandon if I wish:
 Insult rude people I dislike,
 Take a lover of my choice.
What does it matter – the family reputation?

They're gone. The generations pass on.
I am challenged by my new choices:
 By the passing of time,
 By gaining control.
No need now to embrace the old culture.

They're gone. But am I really free?
There are new voices to whom I must answer.
I am both parent and grandparent now:
 Admonishing the young,
 Criticizing their new ways.
I remain, Carrying on the family traditions.

Joan S Stark

A Grandmother's Lament

Jason and Jamie, and two-year-old, Pat,
Sitting cross-legged on the worn orange mat,
Staring, intense at a flickering screen,
Slaves to their era's infernal machine.

Beginning so innocent, there on the floor,
Invisible guests of the "Polka Dot Door".
Round eyed and wond'ring, while each little seat
Gradually numbs throughout "Sesame Street" .

The fleeting years pass; they are toddlers no more,
But still, scorning chairs, for a place on the floor.
Each face cupped in hands, on their bellies they lie,
And continue to gaze, while the years pass them by.

They could name every car that zooms past their fixed gaze,
They could name the top ten of the DVD craze.
Yet, ask them to name any poet of rank,
And their brows are drawn down, and their faces a blank.

Oh, Jason and Jamie, and dear pre-teen, Pat,
Still jostling for space on the old orange mat
I haven't the heart to forbid you to look –
But I wish that your pleasures were found in a book.

No doubt you would reckon my own youth deprived,
For I was full grown before TV arrived,
Yet my childhood was rich with the stories and plays
That I read to myself in those good olden days!

Yvonne Garry

The Impossible Journey

My daughter said "come visit me." I hate to fly.
There are no roads from our house to hers.
I get seasick on a ship.
I decided to walk on water.

I packed my gear, in waterproof sac,
Including GPS and cellular phone,
to let her know my ETA.

The cab driver stared at my flippered feet
when he dropped me off at the beach.
I waded into water and waved goodbye to land.

I caught a swell which like a salver borne from Neptune
carried me along the sea
then gently served me upright on the golden shore.

"I'm here!" I called my daughter, announcing
I was ready to walk on land again.

Eloise Van Niel



*"I stopped writing poetry to raise three wonderful
children, and only began again at age 72."*

– B L Schukar

Sisterhood

I look deeply
into the gorilla's eyes
and she looks back at me
for a long minute.
She holds her baby
as I held mine.
A rush of recognition,
Sisterhood.

A young mother in the mall,
rushing, frowning,
dragging her toddler.
I look into her eyes,
I feel her pain.
I send her understanding
and love.

An old woman
in a wheelchair
reaches out to me.
I take her hand and see
myself along the road.
I see in her the girl she was,
remembering my younger self.
Recognition. Sisterhood.

Naomi C Wingfield

Jessica

Let me tell you about my granddaughter Jessica.
I, Nana, took care of her while her mother gave birth to her baby
brother.
In the morning I woke her up and said, "We must get up and dress
for the new day."
She answered, "I can do it myself."
Up she went to her room and down she came with a pile of clothes.
She said, "Do they match?"
Ever since then, I, Nana, have to have all my clothes match too!

Harriet Fields

Saving

Hazel's mother grew up
during the Depression
lived by "waste not, want not"
made hash from leftover beef
boiled soap scraps and formed new bars
turned shirt collars and cuffs
sewed quilts from old suit jackets
mended overalls
until the patches sported patches.

After her mother moved to a nursing home
Hazel cleared out her house.
In a kitchen cupboard she found a jar labeled
string too short for anything.

Sharon MacFarlane

History

J. C. (The First)

Gaius Julius Caesar he is born,
Becomes a Roman general, conquers Gaul
Then turns and conquers Italy, Rome and all,
And treats her nervous Senators with scorn.
He has himself made first *dictator for life*,
Beds Cleopatra and a lot of others,
Leaves bastard sons and disappointed
mothers
Which greatly annoys Calpurnia, his wife –
And several Senators (who strategize
With patriotic motives) even more so –
They plunge their bloody daggers in his torso.
Surprised, he cries *Et tu Brute*, and dies.
He lives today in movie, play and ballad,
Obstetrical procedures, and a salad.

Sheila Blume

Falcons and Their Kings

A hooded hawk
knows it is blind.
Cold winds ruffle
dusty feathers
of once-bright pinions.
It hears the king's voice:
"I have covered your eyes,
you are kept from your kind.
You shall know only me."
Hawks do not know
the language of kings.
Kings are too grand
to fiddle with bonds.
A devoted drudge
comes hooding the captives
and cleans their cages.
He brings dead mice.
The birds receive
that royal bounty.

On rainless mornings
the falcon's master
rides to the hunt,
raptor chained upright
on gloved fist.

Eyes open, it's free
to harry from heaven
whatever remains
of colour and song.

There are no kings left.
All have been thrown
from palace windows,
shot down in cellars
by bearded dreamers,
sent to grow cabbage
in lowland gardens.

Everything flows,
says the old dark wisdom.
Blood flows, tears flow,
falcons are flown.

Francis Sparshott

Unknown

I never met the man
I would have married
Loved, honored and cherished

He was killed in war

Heart and breath, rhythms of life
Brutally ended
Before we could begin.
He died before he had time to live
And us to love

We did not share children
To embrace in joy
To hold in hurt
Because death did us part
Before we met

In a war to end all wars
Which did not stop them
In a war to make the world safe for democracy
Which did not bring safety nor democracy

In the "good" war which freed the camps of death
But left the world in nuclear fear
In jungle/desert wars of futility
Which as always exposed killing fields

I never met the man
I would have loved

For in any war
There is

No rhyme
No reason.

Joan S Nist

Photo of Whitechapel High Street

London 1958

Lanternflame of tulips blanched by cold,
Their faces glow in dark of morning light
With frowns that sigh the covenant of wounds
Sam Johnson knew that man was chosen for.
Children of the Pentateuch or Cross,
Gin's pale armour . . . even cloven hoof;
They could not know that Hitler's cleansers soon
Would kill the whores of Cable Street and equally

The kindly hearths of nanas' kitchen wombs.
Stammered buildings loom above the trove
Of faces only God is keen to loot:
In eyes that wage the war on pain with love
– Time dying at its birth . . . forever gone
Reborn forever where the photo longs.

Ralph Cunningham

wings

a sparrow flew too near the center –
he was somewhat jaded, somewhat careless,
the world being what it is these days –
in the city where everything is something else
so you can't locate a leaf in a whirlwind
but he liked the square opposite the university
known once to einstein and bonhoeffer
who sometimes left their studies at night
and heard the mobs entering the opera house
and thought life makes sense, doesn't it.
After all his nose sniffing, the sparrow landed
like a fleck of dandruff on a brown shirt.
He spotted other sparrows and the preoccupied
strolling arm in arm across the square
and – puzzled – a couple kneeling
before thick glass set into gray pavers,
not knowing there was a memorial under
the stones of perfectly white bookshelves,
empty as the thronged streets after the sirens,
on this spot where once the fuhrer shrilled
and whipped his party boys into misbehavior –
that is, to burning books hauled from the library
across the street. The sparrow skipped sideways,
quicker than quick, as sparrows will do
when curious. But really nothing
there much to see presented itself, just
a few spiders racing back and forth, fixing
nets around minuscule wings, wings slighter
than torn fingernails. The sparrow moved on,
letting warm thermals loft him out of Berlin
where, you'll agree, nothing was happening,
towards the latest dustup in the desert region.

Daniel Daly

Holocaust

I went left
She went right
I walked by the ovens.

Why has that
Unnatural selection
That burned her, spared me?

I exist
A living envelope
With a dead letter.

My skin was spared
My heart was charred.

Bennett Gurian



*“When I am screaming inside at not hearing in
the dining room or not being able to read, the
creativity of writing a poem helps me to live
gratefully.”* – Naomi C Wingfield

Bogdan Wlosik

Hear me out, old friend.

We buried you today Bogdan Wlosik,
and even you would not believe your eyes.
Thousands came to say their last good-byes.
This many people you had never met.
They vowed they would not let the world forget
the senseless way in which you were gunned down.
I told you you should not go into town.
We buried you today Bogdan Wlosik.

Everyone from the mill passed in review.
They had to say their last farewells to you.
And all the guys from Solidarity
spread banners on your box in sympathy.
It got to be a pretty festive day.
We fought to see who'd carry you away.
We buried you today Bogdan Wlosik.

The guys at work pitched in and got a band.
You know how they all liked to lend a hand.
Your sister cried a lot but you know girls,
they weep at anything as life unfurls.
Your mother hugged your casket while she could.
She can't accept the fact you're gone for good.
We buried you today Bogdan Wlosik.

The priests keep telling us to keep our cool.
Anyone making trouble is a fool.
They say it like they don't believe it's true.
They witnessed all the violence as it grew.

They're telling us that we should not get sore
But some guys want to even up the score.
We buried you today Bogdan Wlosik.

There's quite a rhubarb here since you've been gone.
The underground keeps urging people on
to fight against the rule of martial law.
It's worse now than it's ever been before.
We buried you today Bogdan Wlosik.

Sleep peacefully, old friend. We all regret
your tragic death. It's one we won't forget.
Nowa Huta, once communism's jewel
now is your shrine whose earth will keep you cool.
We buried you today Bogdan Wlosik.

Edward Grocki

Remembering Anna Politkovskaya

Not a brash and green reporter
But a journalist extraordinaire;
All knew the gov'mint had committed
Many heinous hidden crimes:
Assassinations, executions,
Disappearances, tortures, threats,
But she had the hidden facts, the dates
That others could not find.
(There was no disputing that
Highest authority made the calls.)
Seventeen murdered journalists
And no murder had ever been solved . . .
Now she had the full report
And the media awaited.

As she walked the boulevard
A fast car came up very close,
Men grabbed her, dragged her, hog-tied her, shot her
And dumped her on the edge of town.
She'd yelled for help but no one spoke:
Paralyzed with fear no one gave help.

With Chechnya's chief fighter gone
Lesser flames soon sputtered out.
So mourn, weep and shout "Outrage;"
Then say, "We'll not forget you,
Anna Politkovskaya, journalist extraordinaire."

Joan Lee

9/11

The streets marched
like an obedient army
around the steel and glass
colossus, seen from the sea,
a captain tall, invincible
until molested by devils in the sky.
Screams, racing hearts, and running feet
to escape the monster cloud.
Eyes of disbelief dared not look back
could not look back at the horror.

Yet, beyond that holocaust
babies were born, toast burned,
coffee perked, scholars lectured,
bees gathered nectar,
and moms made peanut butter sandwiches.

News on the TV came
in machine gun words rat-a-tat -a tat
while my neighbor frantically
mowed his grass back and forth,
back and forth, back and forth
until the ground was bare.

Jane E Pearce

Love

A Love Poem

Come my love and take my hand. We are
each other's paths to ourselves.
Alike in our long endured loneliness;

you a business man of disciplined
seriousness and I an artist and teacher
spinning dreams and rainbows.

The darkness of the soul has passed.
Longing, sacred and ritualistic,
mingles with wild moments of giddy joyfulness.

Because we are still growing and changing,
our love has undefined edges
and hinges yet clearly lights the way.

We now have something meaningful
to share in this newness together, and
find the attraction is in the surprise.

Come my love, take my hand and sing,
fall, winter, spring and summer –
our forever is now.

Elizabeth Bayless Johnstone

Reunion

From the golden grounds beyond earth's bounds
My love returned to me.
We didn't speak as I laid my cheek
On his shoulder tenderly,
But the long lost dearness of his sweet nearness
Wrought a wondrous alchemy,
And the pent-up flood coursed through my blood
In a torrent of ecstasy.

As the ice jams break on the frozen lake
Sets the surging waters free,
Love in barrenness, joy in emptiness
Over spilled in me.
As molten gold fills an empty mould,
So my hollowness was filled,
And the frozen ocean of love's emotion
Was no longer stilled.

Though sweet our meeting, dreams are fleeting,
And winter must needs return.
To be loved forever, to be parted never,
Such heaven I oft-times yearn.

P Rosemary Brown

Speak Low as You Speak Love

On that hill in Indiana
when the old car stalled and Papa, resigned,
climbed out to discover why – while we children
tumbled about impatient and clamorous;
on that hill, did I begin to register love's complexity,
glimpse its sometime divisive loyalties?

When he was out the car, Mama murmured so low
(I may have been the only one to hear)
"He looks so tired – "
as though she'd noticed only then our 'now',
after weeks of looking back to Belgium
and the ties of home – "so tired."

Was it then I first recognized adult anxiety;
sensed dimly the pangs of her fear;
knew sorrow in the lines of his body
as he worked to fix one more failed thing –
my war-shaped father; mostly merry,
until the next "Great War" loomed dead ahead.

And here we were in Indiana,
far from war-threatened shores;
Papa hopeful, Mama looking back in tears
to the receding security of the familiar.
Did I learn then that the unspoken
informs more searingly than words?

I was newly eight.

Years later, living out long-widowed years alone,
save for children's visits from afar,
did Mama ever recall that moment on the hill?

I never spoke of it.

Gabrielle Traxler

Prom Night to Golden Anniversary

Soft strains of Stardust drifted through spring air,
You'd brought a rose for twining in my hair
At intermission. Fireflies winked and danced
Along the pathway where we walked – entranced.
Only the moon observed our twilight tryst,
His gentle smile approved when first we kissed.
You felt the magic too – the certainty –
That love enfolded us – our destiny.
It seems like only yesterday – but no –
It happened half a century ago!

Madolyn Berry

Lamb of God

In memory of Agnes Sunderland

Watching the news from Israel, I think of you,
smoking yourself to an early death, cigarettes
doing what the Nazis couldn't.

Our first meeting in a classroom:
you walked in and sat beside me,
elegantly dressed, a bright scarf flamboyantly
twisting around your neck.

It was hot: the rest of us wore shorts and sleeveless shirts,
fanning ourselves with the papers in front of us.
All that hot autumn you kept your jacket on,
nipping out now and then for a puff,
returning to argue once more
with passionate intolerance against
the injustices of our time.

Not until years later,
strolling through the fields close to the farm,
did you roll up your sleeve and show me
the number branded on your arm.
"A present from Auschwitz," you said.

Even twenty five years after your death,
still in my head I hear your throaty laugh.

Oonagh Berry

Under an Opal Moon

Under an opal moon,
The music of a guitar,
A bowl of oranges, and
The soft stillness
Of the garden.
In the shadows
The old alchemist
Turns leaden thoughts
Into drops of gold,
And your disappearance
Becomes a harbour
For silent ships
And calm thoughts,
Of long journeys
Through the seas
Of the mind, in
A white ship, steered
By the stars.
Your hair
Blowing in the wind.

Stephen Threlkeld

Come Kiss me, Says Adam to Eve

Traipse with me, says Eve to Adam.
They traipse and they kiss under the maple tree.

Come dip with me, says Adam to Eve
She dips and she cuddles and they nudge
And they dive under the water narcissus.

I'm going to the moon, says Eve to Adam.
I'll come with you, says Adam to Eve.
Not if I don't want you to, says she.

Come sleep with me, says Adam to Eve.
I can't hear you-ou-o, she shouts from the moon.
I'm he-e-re over the rainbow for a wh-i-i-le, says she.

Come dance and traipse with me, says Eve to Adam.
Why now? says he from his shade under the apple tree.
You didn't think of me when prancing in space, says he.

They jump and they frolic to a tuneless sea
The water is too rough, they don't dive in
They hear the call of the beluga from a distant shore.

They traipse & they kiss to the music of a silent sea.

Soraya Erian

Concealment

We hide deep emotion,
secrete vulnerability.
Access to our soul
must not be allowed.

We disguise devotion;
laugh it away as nonsense.
Do not confuse it
with true steadfastness.

We camouflage all friendship
as obliging alliance;
frightened to stripmine
the veneer of self.

And when it comes to LOVE,
we lock it in the remote
corners of our heart,
feigning its presence.

Lest our mask be removed.

Albert Busendorfer

Didi

Didi, you sweet ol' thing
To step right up at meeting
And kiss me warmly on the neck
Breaking down my resistance
To your silent charm.

That first kiss held a promise.
I liked you too.
You're shorter than I am
And I'm not tall
But I've never cared about brawn.

Bare feet and shaggy hair all grey
And that dangly thing
You wear around your neck
Appeals to the Bohemian in me
Tell me you're not too old for love!

I liked your spontaneity.
I didn't grow up with hugs and kisses.
I'm a little shy with men,
Even been called a prude.
But you're sure to understand.

Your love is so pure
And unconditional.
Teach me to love like you.
You can show me how, you know,
Because
You're a dog.

Elizabeth Quan

The Wind's Shadow

Thank you George MacDonald

From the Back of the Wind
to the Front of the Day
From the Heart Beat of Pain
to the steady Always
is a long, lonely journey.

Yet,

then,

still,

Love claims us
commands us
demands that we hear.

Demands

You are Loved

By those imperfect, near,

By the Perfect, far.

Rejoice!

For You Are.

Sandra Seaton Michel

The stakes are high,
and it is not money we seek.
It is a side arm of love,
of which we so desperately speak.

John Amsterdam

Empty Spaces

I learned to love empty spaces
quiet times in my heart
old wounds healed
love lives there

silence between the notes
quiet times in my heart
filled with shining darkness
love lives there

dawn's hush before birdsong
quiet times in my heart
dew moistens the earth
love lives there

sunlight weaves the curtains
quiet times in my heart
dark clouds bring change
love lives there

exhaling after a good cry
quiet times in my heart
laughter bubbles up
love lives there

evening breezes caress me
quiet times in my heart
birdsong tucks in the day
love lives there

sunset dances with my spirit
quiet times in my heart
Morpheus waits in the wings
love lives there

Pauline Winkle

Mary's Smile

I had entered the dining room from the hall.
The tables were lined with carefully coiffed and sculpted hair,
Fresh from the salon, mostly bright white,
with a sprinkling of artificial reds.
Underneath, the minds were dulled.
Some chairs had arms and wheels.
Absent the voices and activities of the staff,
The room would have been quiet.
A very patient aide coaxed an occasional small spoon of food,
Or sip of Ensure, into Mary's mouth.

From a distance she saw me,
And suddenly her face lit up the room.

Elmer Billman



"I write as a way of talking. Something occurs, I react, and a poem results. Feelings turn into language and language validates my feelings. I see poems on the page, tactile and real; that makes me feel good." — Viola A Jaffe

Old Valentine

To Beloved Shirley, My Wife of 64 Years

While winter's winds refrigerate my frame
My eyes imbibe your spirit's warming glow
So even if a swirling blizzard came
I'd feel no chill from falling flakes of snow.

The sun, far south and somewhat wan and cool
Draws back its rays in which I love to bask
But still your spirit's like a tropic pool
Refreshment is its pleasure-giving task.

The trees stretch branches bare into the cold
Tracing webbings lacy in the sky
In Spring new leaves and blossoms will unfold
Nurtured by your spirit reaching high.

Your spirit is my flag freshly unfurled.
Old Valentine! How new you make my world!

Irving Leos

I would like to gather some kindling wood

Sprightly, orangey, its dried pearly poignant
Sap clinging to my hands
Make a neat pile in a wood clearing
Light it and throw in your old clothes
The torn jeans, shrunken shirts, stained sweaters
And watch them go up in flames
With a pyromaniac's delight
Then I would dress you in a shirt
Not white
But in the moon shade of a pale rose
Its pristine folds sprinkled with evening dew
Gradually turning crimson by the setting sun

Fredericka Barker

One and One are One

Body heat
sears my skin
melds us fast –
me to him
into night
lover's flight
till we peel
limb by limb
he from me
me from him
each to reach
best we may
separate selves
born with day.

Sandy Wicker

Illusion

"It's never too early
for the fish to bite."
With that bit of philosophy,
he had pecked my cheek,
gathered up pole and tackle box,
and headed into gray dawn
to the far end of the dock.

I am content to remain
on the cabin porch,
warm mug in hand,
sipping coffee
and gazing out
where he now sits, pole in hand,
so intent he is motionless.

Maybe he, too, is thinking
of his upcoming surgery.
Minor, they say,
"They" who will not experience
the incision.

That's why we came here –
to enjoy time together,
do things that will be put on hold
until recovery is complete.

Absorbed,
I fail to notice the sunrise,
its reflection a blinding glare
on the rippling water.

Suddenly,
this man I am watching,
his pole, chair, and all,
are nothing more than silhouette –
black, paper thin.

Coffee splashes
as I abandon mug
hurry to check
if the fish are biting.

Betty J Van Ochten

Thirst

The thirst you awakened in me
From long time slumber
Now cries for quenching.
Small sips regularly given
Would perhaps suffice;
In fact, I believe I'd flourish.
But the fragrance of joy would fill the air,
From big blossoms of lavender or blue
Or even your favorite hue,
If you would fill my cup.

Ruth E Chappell

Encounters

Passing Through

Hoping to stay here sixty years or more,
we rent the furnished house on Shady Lane.
The highest house in town, antiques galore,
acres of garden, fields; each window pane
a lens that frames a cherished view of trees
or flowers, hills, the twinkling lights below,
and Venus on her plinth with peonies.
Each week the gardener comes to weed and mow.
We watch the seasons change and have our meals
out on the porch, play games, and hear the ghosts
of former tenants tell us that "We feel
like you, we love this magic place the most."
They whisper from the rooms and on the lawn,
but leases end and then we, too, are gone.

Patricia Brodie

Building a Mobile

First of all, birth dreamshapes;
azure star-twists, golden crescents
risen up like dolphins from realms
below your sight. Silvery scimitars,
pale spirals too, cut, id-guided
from spangled posterboard
and dayglo banners.

Sprawl these out in riotous array
to tease your ordered ego and
whisk it faraway. Hang them
in sibling two's and three's
on balance-beams to twirl
like soothing constellations
above our quirky hurts.

I'd like to be a mobile,
swirling softly over
whipped audiences of earners,
gentling them to rest, with
time to muse on destiny,
their wives, or other
minor matters.

Jay Albrecht

Far Cries

I hear them on the west wind.
Across the Bay from the mainland shore,
they float back in faint waves.
Those mixed familiar voices, calling.

The old wooden ferry, bearer of cattle,
pigs, milk cans, cars (only seven) and
passengers of all sorts, now lies still
drawn up along the shoreline, dreaming.

Reliving the Friday trips to town;
surviving blustery chops of the Gap,
echoing jibes from the Island crew –
virtual farmers and fishermen all.

They yell back and forth, banging milk cans
on the dock, directing the placement of cars.
The Captain shouts down from the wheelhouse,
the whistle blows, the ramp winds up with a bang!

The horn bellows and she chugs away once more.
Her pistons throb, pulsating an uneven beat
as the tall, gaunt engineer struggles, swearing.
Somehow the old machinery holds, yet another trip,

The sound of her engines fade as she proudly
crosses Quinte Bay now running smooth.
A white phantom silhouetted against the
darkening sky, faithful link between two worlds.

On the Island dock, old cars splutter away.
Black and white cows low at the water's edge.
Daylight fades, the years pass by, yet sometimes
even now, alone at night, I hear far voices cry.

Joan Rippel

Emigrants

we left our souls behind
by leaving

across the ocean
a different sky
you sleep – we toil
while we see the sun
the moon watches over you
our quiet rains you cannot hear
when your snow falls softly
we do not see it
we travel through
each others' lives
only in thought

we left our souls behind
by leaving

Giselle Braeuel

Under the Bridge

As twilight darkens to dusk he sits
huddled in the fall-cooling breeze near
the old iron stove under the bridge, the one
he once sketched in his grade six art class.

Only a few of the regulars have shuffled in
yet more will arrive later bringing their
whispers, whimpers and cries to solo or
harmonize with late night winds.

His drawing of the bridge taped
to the fridge door by his father on one of
his sober afternoons, saying,
How are your others?

The “others” meant the maths and spelling,
the art and stories the boy loved were okay.
But wadda ya gonna do later? Be?
Be? He was ten.

He wanted to answer, *Happy*.
And he was. Not so dad, who was
a widowed boozier with one son
he didn't really see.

Now, thirty years on, the son crouches
in the dripping shadows with those
who have folded and stapled their dreams
into the shattered corners of their lives.

He flips open his sketchbook and
with his pen begins to open his box of wonder
and become what he wants to be,
Himself.

Jack Livesley

Stitched

I sew time and six buttons
on a shirt

let thread pull seconds
and anchor each one

then fold arms
down the body
minute
upon minute

until today
lies secure

Joanna M Weston

Lotta Fish

Who would ever have thought
that on this grey
winter-born day
of late December,
that the man
behind the eye-glass counter,
who turns out to be
a Kensington Market
Portuguese-Canadian,
would become
in the twinkle of an eye
a lyric poet of the sea
and all its creatures

as with waving arms
and exciting mouth utterance
he describes
with all the care of a brain-surgeon
the step-by-step dissection
for the family table
of first a crab
and then a giant lobster –
the waves of the Atlantic
suddenly beating on the shores of Portugal
right outside this very store
on Dundas Street West!

Raymond Souster

Deportment

"Seminude subway riders raise eyebrows in Toronto"

That we were admonished
When we were growing up
Did not seem inappropriate
But only what was needed
To insure predictability in social situations.
We learned to speak softly and wear a pleasant expression,
To cross our legs
And never, never pick our noses in public.
If we had body parts that needed attention,
We took care of it in private.
What would they think of us,
Those young girls
Who are not embarrassed to sit on subway trains in their
underpants
(although wearing thongs is not encouraged)?
Perhaps they would be astonished that
Corseted by so many restrictions
We did not even have the sense
To feel outraged.

Joan Shewchun

Tiffany's

On leave in New York City
decked out in my number one's*
Canada flashes and badges of gold
agileam, I enter Tiffany's

well before Truman Capote
Holly Golightly and Hollywood
present its refined opulence
to the world.

Needing change for a dollar
I pose my dilemma
to a sartorially perfect gentleman
courtly as a knight.

He extends a hand
places the bill in a cylinder
pops it into a vacuum tube
and Whooooooooosh! it is borne aloft.

My surroundings snap into focus:
precious gems wink seductively
elegant women glide sedately
toward a phalanx of waiting clerks.

I smile uneasily.
My gentleman smiles back.
The cylinder returns. A sprinkle
of silver is placed in my palm.

"Do have a pleasant day," he bids.
I square my shoulders, escape
through magnificent glass doors
into Fifth Avenue's heady air.

* *best uniform*

Rosalee van Stelten

Epilogue of a Romance

Narcissus
camellia
prunus

three flowers of spring
the Chinese said
symbols of new life
new beginnings.

They ate plums
the deep wine fruit
oozing upon the lips.
She carried daffodils
dripping with bridal creeper.
He wore a pink camellia
in his lapel.

When winter struck
baring the branches of the plum
he was living with a divorcee
in Joondalup.
She had gone home to mother.

Laurel Lamperd

To my Periodontist

In the beginning we needed each other.
I needed your skills.
You needed my trust, my money.

But time passed,
Trust was gone,
Along with the money.

Like the divorce lawyer,
You took twice as long as expected.
Charged double the estimate.
Delivered half the promised result.
Caused immeasurable discomfort.

I followed through with the divorce.

But, you and your surgery
I'm leaving.

Judith Cleland

Glorious!

my friend Gloria
is the huntress
I long to be

even now
pushing seventy
she looks at
the world
through the eyes
of a squirrel

every man
she meets
is a nut
she wants to
hide away
for the long
lonely winter

Merle Amodeo

Jet Lag

From the dark stopover sleep
she resurrects
in the Honolulu Surf Hotel
under a dazzle of counterpane flowers.

And the sun too can hardly be believed,
beaming deep into the room
from an unequivocal blue sky
as if it had never been away.

But a heaviness like clay is on her.
Gently her limbs are shepherded from sheets
and guided into clothes, like invalids
long shut away from living.

Later, there's a small breakfast
in a room that melts to open air.
The chair and table are as light as twigs;
a small bird hops, pauses.

She drinks deep of the orange juice,
great drafts into the veins.
She wants to hold on the sun, until the blood
begins to run again.

Norma Rowen

One Summer in the City of Light

Paris

An explosion
in *Boul. St. Miche.*
I was not there last night.

Paris

He bought me pastry
after church.
I don't remember his name.

Paris

Mime performs for lunchers
in *Rue de la Harpe*,
holds out his skull cap for alms.

Paris

Le font Deschatelets
spills coolness
on the steamy pavement.

Paris

Poodle leads owner
on winding paths,
le parc Montsouris.
Do not step on the grass,
S.V.P.

Paris

Statue in sculpture garden
meditating.
The Thinker, by Rodin.

Paris

Monet's Hay Stacks
dress the wall at *Jeu de paume.*
In the Louvre
Mona Lisa smiles
behind her layers of glass.

Paris

On the bridge *Alexandre III*
we hold our wallets close.
Street children watching
casually approach.

Paris

Flea Market day.
A damsel with a donkey
offers thread and needles.
I buy an unmatched
demitasse and saucer.
Five *francs.*
It's Limoges.

Paris

Eternal summer
in my memory.

Patricia Trudeau

Intimacy

three guys around a pool table
Redhead racks the balls
Black Jacket keys numbers in cellphone
Cowboy Boots talks earnestly
back to table ear to cell

Redhead breaks
four eyes turn at the crack

Black Jacket tucks cell in pocket
eyes line cue on cue ball
crack rumble ball jumps
hits floor rolls under nearest booth "Shit"
Black Jacket scrambles
retrieves ball fingers fly on cell

Cowboy Boots pockets cell
cradles cue clears table
retrieves cell punches numbers
"Put my girl friend on"
cigarette in hand leaves

Black Jacket cell to ear departs

Redhead cell to ear heads for bar

Joanna Lawson

The Picture

In the crypt of St. Peter,
a statue.
Forever young:
forever serene,
as she studies
the open book lying across her hands,
communing with infinity.

In the golden surrounds
candle flames reflect
many times
the muted glow
revealing the purity of her face and form
despite the Nun's concealing habit.

I raise my eager camera.

One slender statue finger lifts,
waves fore and back,
admonishing gently.

I bow acceptance.
She returns to immobility.

I put away my lens,
it is unnecessary.

The picture is engraved on my heart

David Glyn-Jones

Counting

*On being part of a McGill Medical School study
of Post Menopausal Women and Sex.
A 200 strong sample . . . (It paid \$65!)*

How many sexual partners have you had the
psychologist asked
Oh. Casting my geriatric mind back
Along a long forgotten track
I surmised 10 or 15 or so it would seem
Now I have to fill the gaps
In case I've had a mental lapse
Put a face on to them all
From those mists of long ago

Sure beats
Counting sheep!

Ann Lloyd

Hiding

a breeze swirls the leaves, tinkles the chimes
geese glide high in a bright blue sky
mothers push cute babies by
unaware I am here
seated in my chair
hidden by the
juniper
watching
life

Sylvia Findlay

Delayed on the Nineteenth Hole

The golfer had finished his Saturday round,
when he stopped for a drink at the bar.

It took several pints to settle his score:
to pay for his bogeys,
to his buddies who shot
an eagle, four birdies and par.

His beagle dog gave a welcome bark . . .
his wife kept on knitting. The kitchen was dark.

*"Sorry, I'm late, darlin',
but our game was delayed.
I was hopin' my supper
might be warm on my plate."*

Without missing a stitch, her answer was crisp:

*"The stew is still warm.
You 'll find it – inside the dog. "*

Elsie Ellis



*"I write to see what could happen to an ordinary person in a
familiar situation."
– Joan Newton*

Dancing Shadow

Sea floats silently to ebb.
Stars peek through a canopy of grey.
Moon shines silver tracks on drowsy waves,
And over rippled sand and dunes.

Hand in hand with sorrow,
I stroll the night-still shore.

When I turn and look,
I see my shadow self,
Alone, elongated, aloof.
But then, in the periphery,
I glimpse another shadow,
Dancing there beside me,
On that empty moonlit beach.

Zan Robinson

Time Travel

I walk
bent a little
steps flagging
but in my mind
I do the quick-step
and trees whisper
and dance with me.
Through the rhythm
of the wind
I lift
my pointed toe
in pirouette.

Sharon Rothenfluch Cooper

Dance Man

let the beat
of earth thrum
in your bones

let the drum
carry your feet
in the spirit
of sound
spin the rhythm

leap to the echo
of the roll
the riff
the ripple
that lift your feet
and move deep
in your blood

Joanna M. Weston



“What Grandma Moses did with colour, I am doing with words.”
– Ursula R. Weissgerber

Piano Finally Speaks Her Mind

Come, put your hand on my frame –
what you feel is potential energy brimming,
wanting conversion – into kinetic Mozart.
Or touch my strings – they're quivering Scriabin
even though no hammer strikes. Something circles
inside me, a word? a memory? Name it.
Brahms' Intermezzo in A Major. Yes,
that's the piece. I remember your zeal
as you brought it to life. I know what I am
and why: a gift given long ago for love. Therefore
play me. Bring your sweet fingers, not fearing
the smallness of your gift.

Sheila Rosen

Killing Me Softly

On the drive back Lily turned off Roberta Flack
on the radio, "Killing Me Softly with His Song"
Wondering what to do about her husband Mac.
On the drive back Lily turned off Roberta Flack;
The counselor said softly she should come back,
"I'm the one you love; to stop would be wrong."
On the drive back Lily turned off Roberta Flack,
on the radio, "Killing Me Softly with His Song."

Carol Smallwood

Security

for Alan Gillmor

An ecumenical crowd,
our heads mostly balding or grey, bowed in reverence
before Brahms or Schubert, otherwise alert
to every nuance or missed note, we gather each July
for a buffet of chamber music,
all-you-can-hear in twelve days,
a hundred and ten items on the concert menu, served up hot
in sundry airless churches.

Meanwhile in the USA

as bodyguards swarm convention halls, 'credible intelligence'
about impending attacks on New York or Washington
raises the stakes to orange, depresses the markets.
Yet here we are oblivious, fleeing office blocks at noon
for a quick swig at a Bach cantata or four part harmonies
in Christ Church Cathedral. We have no illusions that even
the Canadian Brass could bring down
the walls of Jericho or Manhattan's Babel towers.
As for police sharpshooters here, or razor wire,
forget it: we have retained
Beethoven, Mozart, Dvorak
to provide our security.

Christopher Levenson

Golden Anniversary

I guess it's still an anniversary,
Exactly fifty years since we were wed
With heartfelt promises 'till death do part'
That echoed in that huge old chilly church.

For many years, it seemed, our life was charmed,
Endowed with earned degrees, a lovely child,
And grander houses every time we moved
On up the ladder. Earnestly we swore

There was no gap, no continental drift,
Until we could not hear each other's rails,
Although we shouted loud and louder still.
So, disobeying vows, I sailed alone

Towards a life of freedom to explore
Strange worlds, and to discover my own self.
The journeys, and the ports, have taught me well.
And now - surprise! - you are my friend again.

We meet from time to time and tell our tales
Of very different fantasies and trails.
Tonight we sit and raise our glasses high
To celebrate lives richer than we dreamed.

Pat Harvey

Sleepless Night

The night is long
still,
dark.
Sleep hides in a corner
and won't come out
to comfort me.

Too many thoughts
push on my pillow,
crowding
wrestling,
won't leave me.

Outside my window
tree branches wave
Lazily,
sleepily,
brushing away the dreams
I am waiting for.

Gisela Woldenga

Now I Lay Me

As I lay on my bed
listening to the sounds
in the street below
I thought about the play
we had done :
a melodrama
faceless characters
exaggerated actions
magnified emotions.

Rose was in it
the persecuted heroine
more sinned against than most
and I was the manly hero.

Rose, I said, meet me
on the bridge at midnight!
And the words
of the deep-dyed villain
rang in my ears :

You shall pay dearly
for this night's work!

I lay back and wondered,
What would it be like
to meet Rose at midnight
here in my room? and What
would I have to pay so dearly for?

As I stretched out, near sleep,
the giant garage door
of the Apex Hauling Company
across the street

emitted a long, rasping groan;
it creaked, broke into sections,
and lifted on its rollers to
let the trucks enter for the night.

Bill Reynolds

One Night

The door is opened
lamps are lit
 the cat rolls over
 purrs a welcome
lavender lilac
 scents the room

laughter rings round
friends are here – new and old
 there's help in the kitchen
 wine runs free
words come fast –
 tongues get tangled

moon shines –
stars shoot
 happiness shimmers
 and I'm lit
like the lamps
 on this warm May night

Joanna Qureshi

**Haiku Written in Honor of the 50th Class Reunion at
St. Louis Park High School, Class of 1956**

Joy to reunite!
Perhaps if we are lucky we find
A lost self.

Years collapse into one pile
Making a confusing, rubbled
Treasure trove.

Neural pathways slashed open
As memories return.
I cannot sleep.

Hard to believe, but here
I make a new friend
From an old acquaintance.

Lined faces and old eyes
Glide into youth
As dusk darkens into night.

Looking into eyes
across the years
We find our young togetherness.

Grey coals of passion, long asleep,
Spark in the breath
Of a gentle fanning.

We cry as we embrace.
Do our hearts know it may be
For the last time?

For tonight the clock plays the fool.
Is Death no wiser
for the disguise?

Mary Gergen

Joy

Sometimes the joy overcomes me
When I hear
Birds singing on top of a tree
Or see
Birds flying free
Sometimes the joy overcomes me
When I hear music
Kind to my ear
When I dance to a Latin rhythm
All alone in my sanctuary
Or weep to the sweep of an anthem
Sometimes the joy overcomes me
When I hear your voice
Tremor and tone – richly deep
Laughing – splitting our sides
Remembering – sharing tales
Of when we were together
Our hearts beating as one
Sometimes the joy overcomes me
When tears fill my eyes
And I cry
Sometimes the joy overcomes me

Barbara Elizabeth Mercer

At This Ungodly Hour

So I'm driving my guy to the hospital
to find out what's wrong.
(Nothing by mouth after midnight,
be showered, shaved, there before six.) This is April,
and we're on daylight-saving. Dark still.

Vic General was hacked
out of hard grey rock and coastal
forest. Douglas fir, Arbutus,
tangled undergrowth and serrated Oregon grape
clustered with flowers that long to be blue and spherical,
overlap the edge of the parking lot.
I turn off the engine, walk over to the ticket machine
which wants a toonie or my Visa card –
it doesn't care which.

We seem to be the only ones here at this ungodly hour.
Just a few cars – reflecting the long arc lights
fluorescing over precisely-white-lined tarmac –
and one insistent little bird
whose clear notes pouring into the dark
could break your heart
or fill it full of joy
though the branches of the trees are black and dense
and it's impossible to see
the singer of the song.

Anne Swannell

Chance

out my condo window I chanced to see
a man pass by with long black hair
– beautiful straight black hair
on the street below folks turned to stare
at the man and his black, black hair
confident he strode along in shirt and jeans
unaware of curious stare, concrete towers.
or the traffic muttering by
sunlight glinted on his hair and I felt somehow
the scent of Sweetgrass followed him
and he knew the beat of drums.

Kathleen M Lyne

Touching Memorial

In early Memorial visits
I never touched "the Wall."
It was Yours and the Others,
Untouchable to me.

Today I touched "Your" name
Slid my fingers over "Others,"
Touching them became Renaissance

Thank You
and The Others
For my Peace.

Andrew Jerome Zoldos

Hats

Inside the ancient country church
With Norman tower and noble tomb,
The wedding service passed me by,
I hardly noticed bride or groom.

What captivated me were hats,
A fashion feast before my eyes,
Row on row of elegance,
Each one worthy of a prize.

Picture-hats in rainbow colors,
Voluptuous, festive, rich with trim,
Ribbioned, flowered, feathered, fringed,
I marvelled as I sang a hymn.

So hat-distracted was I that
The words "I do" I did not hear,
The wedding service was a blur,
Only the millinery was clear.

Like Wordsworth, who in pensive mood,
Saw golden daffodils in bloom,
I see those hats that graced the church
With Norman tower and noble tomb.

Brenda M Corr

Rain

A fine rain – a rain so fine
I tilt back my lavender umbrella,
glad I left home my old ratty boots
sneaker my way around and through
gathering estuaries and puddles
as I move among on-rushing co-eds
all backpack, jeans and hoodies –
fooling no one.

Sandy Wicker

Tai Chi Musings while Repulsing Monkeys

I thought
when I moved to Warfield,
this small village in the Kootenays,
that monkeys
would be the least of my problems.
Yet every Thursday night
I find myself in a silent crowd of
people, slowly retreating, step by step,
repulsing monkeys.
The monkeys, equally silent,
push back with invisible hands.
Century after century
they have been repulsed.
But here they
are
again
in Warfield of all places.

Lynne Phillips

Aging

I Don't Do Old

there are things to do,
lilies to grow.
Stella d'ore's blooms
are my galaxy.
irises' blue . . . fill
my eyes with
ecstasy,
i don't do old
i do global warming
with Suzuki, Schindler
and Al Gore's concern
with climates
in crisis.
my affinity is with
the arctic – ice, melt, water,
polar bears
drowning –
i don't do old.
god's creativity,
and ideas light
my spirit.

art, literature
can fill me
with awe.
life is sweet,
never, i will
never age out,
i don't do old.
kindness spins
my web,
altruism, a.i.d.s, h.i.v.,
world poverty
are my bonds . . .
entanglements of
laughter are the gossamer
threads that
tie my connections together . . .
i won't do old

sterling haynes

Visiting Day

Yesterdays
thin out
in crumbling light
of blue veined years

bone-lean survivors
cocoon
twiddling
their thoughts
marooned in lapses

speech is sidetracked
by spillover words
and people plots

On visiting day
we laugh together
at scattered perceptions

hug
loose - wired
memories

wheres and whens
rebound
for brief hiatus

Adele Kearns Thomas

Chimney Sweep, November

A colonoscopist of brick, he's come to ream us out,
clear winter's cinders, summer's flying squirrels
and young raccoons with Santa fantasies.

The traditional top hat, but iridescent plumes, hawk
and cock, sprout from the band. A dandy's eyes
and crinkly beard are gray from ash and age.

He decries our fireplace doors – trickster glass leaks heat –
ignores the mismatched andirons, adjusts the damper plate,
says pine logs are okay if dry, saves my pitched manuscripts.

He wears the leer of men who peer up more
than sooty shafts. I pay no mind, for like the hearth,
I know: when we no longer burn, we die.

Elisavietta Ritchie

Fallow Fields

Sterile times, barren
as shriveled stalks
flattened by ruthless winds.
Yet something stirs
beneath this emptiness.
New growth sprouts
when all seems dead.
A hint of greening amid
the gloom – there is yet
life in these dry bones.

Barbara Mayer

The Forester

He scans his face in the mirror, counts the spots
he measures the vigour of an ever more feeble body
he analyzes the odours and humours of the night
that consigns him to the morning
and reads the writing of his blood
under a skin
ever more transparent

They are notches the forester
carves as he passes on the trees
which next season he'll return
to cut down.

Diego Bastianutti

The Shell of Age

Oh could I crack the rigid shell of age
And softly swell in each unfettered limb,
Disperse the adamantine cast of thought
And burst apart restriction's boundaries.

Now let me glide in any plane I choose,
Maintaining it at any pace preferred
And for as long as fancy pleases me,
Delighting in the freedom of the young.

May all my senses glitter diamond-sharp.
To smell the lilac bushes and the rose,
To relish Louis playing West End Blues,
To capture every nuance of Monet.

May I regain the rosy mind of youth,
The certainty that life is full and fair,
That time brings greater wisdom, little else
And those I love will always be at hand.

Adrian M Ostfeld

Late Summer Love

Tangy with flower scented breezes
and lemon colored skies
late August tastes of early autumn wine.

Cured by summer's heat
the cask of love fills quickly
with its ripened harvest of desire.

Nightcaps of pungent air
bring seasonal closure
to familiar sunny beds

as frosted arteries
highlight change
along the corridors of night

where youthful urges once
brought needs for refills
the glass of summer slowly empties.

We raise our goblets to the winds
savoring the rich dark flavor
of our aging lives. Embracing life.

Peggy Fletcher

A Page Turner

I am in the winter of my life
but I continue to revel
in the autumn of my being,
vibrant, colorful leaves
reflecting my spirit . . .
or I the leaves . . .

Choosing to gently take
one leaf from a tree
I loosely place it in my
book of winter pages,
not as yet having read that far,
more caught up where my bookmark is. . .

When I finish the book
I am hoping for a sequel that
goes beyond my then pressed leaf
new pages to keep reading
new chapter upon new chapter . . .
But in this time, this day

the exhilaration of Fall
fills my senses
and I take delight in the joyous
'hanging on' of the leaves
before I gather wood and
read by the winter's warmth

Lois Batchelor Howard

Change

My attic has changed.
For fifty years we stored our treasures there,
my mother's wedding dress
great-grandfather's solemn face in ornate frame
love letters from high school days.

Change. My house is sold.
I return grandchildren's drawings.
My brother's wife cherishes letters from war-time years,
My daughter has my mother's dress.

The attic is bare,
but my heart is full
of what has been.

Naomi C Wingfield

Waiting for the New Hip

I watch my feet and miss the world.
Sheer plod to get somewhere. Or nowhere.
Gulls fling themselves into the gale.
A stained mattress slumps in the lane.
Chasing the sunrise,
the brightest peaks the highest.
Get yourself to the music store.
Step into a sea of sound. That's transport for you.

This slow motion, like watching a tree grow.
Patience Impatiens

I am that cottonwood, heavy,
motionless in the fog.

Barbara Wild

Blossoms on an Aged Tree

Its trunk is bent;
Its bark is scarred and seamed.
Its broad, green canopy
once spreading grateful shade,
has vanished with the years.

Instead of once-abundant bride-like lace,
shedding abroad a fragrance to entice a thousand bees,
only a few small branches bear scant bloom.

We, in our bent and wrinkled age
no longer fit to shade the young from scorching heat,
or yield much nectar, sweetening our world,
can only flower now in tremulous laughter
and kindly words
and the shared fragrance of a memory.

Marion Wyllie

Lifetime

It is eleven o'clock

Etta is a small woman,
stylishly dressed.
Her smile enrobes one.

In Paris Etta taught English to Chanel.
She talks of trolleys pulled by horses in Manhattan.
She chats in lively fashion
of today's events and mores.

Her spectacle lenses are fishbowls.
Her eyes, magnified, dart and glisten
in their depths.
She sees very little
and takes in all.

At one hundred,
Etta is *au courant*.
Her watch talks to her.

It is eleven fifteen.

Carrie McLeod Howson

To Me

Dear T., takes pains today to have some fun,
Because today's the last day you'll be seventy:
Your age tomorrow will be seventy-one
– Unless tonight you go to heaven, T.!

T Melnechuk

Time

Time is a river, the song says,
and just like birthdays you never
step in the same water twice.
At my advanced age time flows
faster, so I capture it with my watch,
the clocks on my desk and walls,
calendars and diaries, preserving
my slice of eternity, an atom among
a universe of atoms, a grain of sand
on all the world's beaches – a candle
with a disappearing wick.

Don Gralen

She or I?

She pushes her shopping cart
All she possesses – precious old shoes,
A sweater, a blanket, half an old sandwich
No soap, no toothpaste, no make-up –
All things I need – but she's not me
I'm not her – except in my recurring dream –
She could be me, I could be her – why not?
What would I need from the cart?
Toothpaste, soap, friends, relatives, a life.

Viola A Jaffe

A Lot Like Me

We're gettin' old, you and me
Ain't we?
Your eyes are clouding over
And your hair is turning grey
Your legs, they kinda' wobble
They ain't what they used to be.
A lot like me.

We're gettin' old, you and me
Ain't we?
You don't greet me anymore
With your joyful puppy glee
When I come home worn and tired
I'm just glad if you don't pee.
A lot like me.

We're gettin' old, you and me
Ain't we?
You just stand there with a stare
When I let you out the door
'Cause you can't remember what it was
You wanted out there for.
A lot like me.

We're gettin' old, you and me
Ain't we?
You curl up in your easy chair
As peaceful as a pup
But snap and growl at anyone
Who dares to wake you up.
A lot like me.

We're gettin' old, you and me
Ain't we?
You burst out with excitement
When I take you for a walk
But you come home, tail draggin'
After once around the block.
A lot like me.

We're gettin' old, you and me
Ain't we?
Your needs in life are simple
Just a quiet place to be
A gentle touch, a soothing hand
A loving family.
A lot like me.

Libby Simon

Gravity has gone physical on me

Some things I won't let you see
It started on the top of my head
That's why I dyed it red
And then the eyes – not a surprise
Now the face – not a disgrace
But difficult to erase
The neck!
Oh, the neck!
That's where you start to look like a wreck!
I won't mention the breast
And all the rest
I just cover up
It's for the best.

Lottie Pincus

how different inside the dark

my dogs leap into daylight barking
in the pearly light of moon
their gentle breath upon my neck
speaks of need to go outside
i open up the door
in silence pepper sniffs the air
in silence joey waits behind
single file they glide down steps
into the silver dark of nearly dawn
looking not so much on tiptoe
as if floating in canoes through fog

now in the dark of my life
i too peer into shadows
certainties turn amoeba
changing shape as we pass by
silent and listening
passion turned watchful
i travel through the kingdom of the night

june mitchell

Encounter

Two old faces
our eyes saying what wasn't said before
as we sip green tea

too late our hands touch
then let go
let go

Patricia Brodie

Mirror Mirror

I am frightened
By my image.
I face a mirror
That doesn't reflect, but predicts.

Boney hands
Can't pick a flower,
Can't raise a glass
To make a toast, to memories.

I've lost my touch
And don't know
Whether it's better
For tomatoes to be green or red:

To be innocent and sour
But have potential,
Or to buy one delicious
Moment In the sun, then drop and rot.

I don't see well up close
And distant things are blurred.
I am wounded by the shift
From clear to dim, and friends are gone.

Bennett Gurian

This is not my body!

This is not my body anymore,
just foreign territory, invasion so total now,
there's not one organ nor patch that I control.

First, minute infiltrations
of well disguised spies, those pseudo
friendly beings were easy to accept,
just small accommodations made to allow
sharing this joint or that crevice.
Giving over local governing of some minor
jurisdictions: sagging skin, blurry eyes, acid reflux,
was just lessening the burden of running my carcass
that was always in for servicing.

For awhile, I ordered a wrist,
an ankle, the odd spare rib
to behave, but soon even these minor offices
were removed from my regulation.
Wayward guts and rebellious lipid deposits
did their own thing.

I don't really inhabit this body,
maybe just need the idea of having head,
heart and limbs; so mingling with others
I sometimes visit this shattered shell,
stuck together with stitches here and there,
with some semblance of upright posture achieved
by space-age designed and out-of-this-world priced
underwear and underwire.

Now I don't even recognize myself
on occasional drop-in appearances,
just to see if improvements have happened –
to try out a dance step or two,
sway side to side, even a deep knee bend,
as opening jars and doors befuddle me,
hands can hardly clasp each other
– except in prayer.

Bernice Lever

Records of My Life

Stacked and scattered,
tall and tumbling,
mounds of records,
each a thought, a feeling,
or a melody.

Ceaselessly, the needle touches
this, then that,
jumps around at random,
cuts deep into the groove
of a memory, a pain, a plan.

Whether smooth or grating,
can I ever slow the tune
long enough to catch my breath,
hear the silent little spaces
in-between?

Sigrid Kellenter

Life in the Fast Lane

Somehow butter slips off a dish, then
the dish slips out of my hand and shatters
into tiny pieces mixed with butter on the floor.

If a neighbor knocked at my door right now
to ask if I needed some help,
I would instantly believe in miracles.

Look at it this way, my younger son would say,
at least you didn't fall.
It's true, I didn't.

And when you think about it,
isn't it a miracle that the universe
bothered to exist at all?

It probably wasn't for you,
but here you are,
and you can enjoy things like

Baker's unsweetened chocolate baking squares
made into a sauce –
the recipe's on the side of the box.

If you don't drive anymore,
which is a drag,
that sauce is a great morale booster.

And those grabbers they give you at rehab
are pretty good for picking things up –
but not butter.

Lynne MacDonald

Old Women

Where was it written
That old women are mute.
Silent and wrinkled, invisible.
Gave away their voices long ago
Out of fear that no one listened
And silence had, at least, a bit of dignity.

Where was it written
That old women are not invited
To the table?
Must sit in the kitchen
Shelling peas and shining silver
So they don't intrude on serious conversation
Ladled into fancy plates
Along with artichokes and escargots.
Too rich for old women
The language indigestible.

Where was it written
That old women can't stomach complicated texture.
They, who wrote the very recipes
And sang the family history
To soothe those in the dining room
With lullabies.

Frieda Feldman

Retired

I am not a lazy person.
I just like to sleep in late.
Not really, really lazy,
it is housework that I hate.
I have to sleep my sleep
so my blue eyes won't be red
and I really get so much done
sorting out my thoughts in bed.
I don't think that it's lazy
when I don't get dressed 'til two.
I haven't got the time
when there's so much I want to do:
the poems that I have to write,
the letters that are due,
the little things I have to knit
in yellow, white and blue,
the pictures that I love to draw,
soap figures that I carve,
the children's stories that I write,
crocheted table scarves.
And who would call it lazy
when the phone is off the hook,
the fire is burning brightly
and I have a good new book?

As you know with housework,
you don't ever get it done,
so why not do things worthwhile
like walking in the sun?
like walking in the pasture,
looking at the trees,

watching ripples in the creek,
listening to the breeze,

count the daffodils in bloom,
check the violet bed,
let the calf eat from your hand
And toss the ducks some bread?
It doesn't matter when I rise
Just so I get things done.
And if I haven't found the time,
There is tomorrow's sun.

Edna Selthon

Have I Ever

Have I ever dreamt of
a home by the ocean

a rock
to sit and view
the endless waves

and feel the gentle breeze
a beach
to walk and chew
my thoughts
my toes embedded in the seas

a storm
to wash away the stains
of aged hurtful pains

Have I ever dreamt of
a home by the ocean

John Jansen in de Wal

Poem Written on a Wednesday

An older kid on our block
Tom went long ago . . . in his 80s
and Lukey went a year before him
in the bathroom middle of the night
found him next morning . . . cold
staring at little holes in the ceiling tile
all three of us joined the army on a day
that now seems so long ago and
got rip-roaring drunk that same night

Now Harry he was shaking
moved his jaw the way old folks do
and Ted had Alzheimer's and
couldn't remember my name
same class with me all through school
both of them gone now . . . and me?
here I sit in my 93rd year unto heaven
wizened by the tincture of time

I get up every morning
you know the old body check
before putting her in gear for the day
this morning my fingers came to ten again
three days running . . . nothing wrong with me
last week I had a nine, though
this is Tuesday isn't it?

Frank Young

Macular Degeneration

Some rusty pipe inside
bursts, spilling spent blood

upon the macula,
blots out the light.

Neither time, nor space,
nor mass, said Einstein,

are true constants;
only light.

Why then this black
hole? Sure,

God, like yeast,
transforms by corruption.

Yesterday I was indestructible
eighteen, the sea

was deep; today
decaying in the shallows.

Kilian McDonnell

Gracious Lady

My grandchildren think I am old.
My children think I am older.
I think I am ageless!

I remember loves, sadness, triumphs, and defeats.
I remember little dogs, gardens, and the smell of oil paint.
I remember moonlight, dances of butterflies, buzzing of
honey bees,
the laughter of children splashing in water.

I remember the pounding of the surf, the smell of salt air,
the crunch of sand under my feet.
I remember cries of newborn babies, delighted eyes when
tummies were filled.
I remember Christmas, I remember snowfalls, I remember
strong arms around me. Sadness, defeats, even triumphs
have moved on.
I am too old to carry them, now – happiness sustains me.

Barbara White



*“Now retired, participating in a lifelong learning institute,
learning music, and exploring mysteries of the written
word in verse . . .”* – Peter E. Schmidt

Opening the Cottage: June 2008

Now 70, they open the cottage
Slowly
On a hot day in early June:
Daybed to the porch, then sit a while;
Kayak by the dock; weed eating can wait.
He cannot remember
Where he stored the clothes line
Or how to change the battery
In the smoke detector,
Chirping, like the goldfinches
Eager for thistle seed.
Breaking through the skin of pollen
On the pond's surface,
He lets the glacial waters
Refresh his aching joints;
Not as cool, though, as he had hoped.
Through the porch screen, the clothes line,
Which she had found, of course,
The Adirondack chair, the bird feeders
Now in place:
Things where they belong,
The world as it is supposed to look.

Robert Demaree

Death

Pretending

I am sitting in a hot bath,
when, from nowhere, I say to him
"One of us will die first."
"Yes," he replied, "I was
thinking just that as I read
of the death of Darwin's daughter.
I wanted to rush out into
the garden and give you a kiss,
but I thought you would be having
a good time and didn't want
to disturb you."
"Yes, I was," I reply.
"I was pruning away like
someone possessed and feeling
like it was a purification.
I would have hated to think
about death at that moment.
I wasn't ready." I add,
"I don't want us to die."
He leans over the bath to kiss
my upturned face and we both smile.
We know it is inevitable
and that we are just foolish
children pretending for a moment
that it will never happen.

Naomi Beth Wakan

Farewell to Friends

dedicated to Carolee Bailey

Now they are starting to fall –
Some as lightly as leaves in autumn,
Gold fading to brown
As they drift gently away,
Others as sudden
As trees felled in the forest,
And the earth trembles
At the shock of their absence.
And the long snows of winter
Softly settle upon them all.

Joan Shewchun

Obstinace

A single leaf trembles
on the slender branch
holding on, holding on,
too stubborn to
let go. Some people are
like that, ignoring all
signs that the end has come.

I'll be like that leaf,
hang on to that damn
limb no matter how hard
the gusts whip me around.
I never knew nor cared
which way the wind blows.

Nancy Gotter Gates

Bye Bye

I'd rather quit this life
Jumping with both feet
Into the . . . you know what
Without a backward look.
I'd rather go running there
Arms wide open
Than slowly ambling
One foot in
Over the edge
Dingle dangling.

And no my darlings
Not the slightest jot of fear
And nothing of regret.

But for the rest of me
I'll stand by laughing
Remembering this body
That served me so brilliantly
Through sunshine and other stuff.
I'll thank it profoundly
And move on, singing
But this time . . . ah this time,
IN TUNE!

Miriam Jordan

Really Simple

My family owned three hills
All beautiful to see
Hill one was soil
Hill two was stone
I'm buried on hill three.

We planted on hill one
We quarried on hill two
We buried on hill three because
It had the nicest view.

Bennett Gurian

Sooner or Later

Off we go, like I told you
With the wind at our backs
Feet over the pavement
By inches,
Moving, always to the next place.
Sooner or later
We all pass by.

Frieda Feldman

Celebrations

We celebrated her life
with anecdotes, slide shows
and music and afterwards
talked incessantly, unwilling
to finally confront the silence
of her loss.

Don Galen

Movin' On

My body, once a stately home
With sturdy frame and golden dome,
Has o'er the years, I must confess
Become a rather chewed up mess.

I tried to keep it all in shape
With firm support and loads of paint,
But over time, despite such care,
And patching up the signs of wear
There came a day midst roar and rumble
The whole damn thing began to crumble.

The firm supports now creak and groan
And thatch grows on the golden dome,
The walls cave in, the beams lean out
There's rust around the water spout.
The heating system, once first-class,
Has started leaking noxious gas.

I tried so hard back in my prime
To halt these ravages of time.
With great alarm I viewed each crack
And strained to hold the mildew back,
And then one day, with great delight
I realized I'd lost the fight.

With sheer relief, I quaffed a stout,
Why hell, I'd soon be moving out!

Myra Woods

Moratorium

Let's have a moratorium on death.
If friends would quit dying
maybe I could get some work done.
As it is, going to funerals,
getting drunk at wakes,
writing obituaries,
and mouthing condolences
takes up too much of my precious time.
It's all about them, while I,
still trying to figure out how to live,
flounder more helplessly each day.

Tom Greening

Passage

Peace be to you!
So speaks your look of serenity
to me, as I enter your room.
Your words have ceased
but your body speaks
as never before.
Depths of meaning pass between us.
A Presence overwhelms me.
Is it because God is so near?

Sr. Maria Francesca Forst

Heart Troubles

Of course they would all end up
Leaving me behind.

How did it happen?
What was their problem?
Heart troubles I was told –
Pains in the chest,
Couldn't catch my breath
Palpitations –

This was before Science and low fat diets.

They all did have the largest hearts,
At least as far as I was concerned.
Big hugs and smiles
And lots to eat,
My little glass of wine waiting at the kitchen table.
All the old pictures show us snuggling
No heart troubles then.

Until I got older
And they did, too.
I was busy, recalling my childhood
from a distance.
Only coming home for the funerals.

Louise Bonar

Dear God

Please, not under fluorescent lights
or in and amongst stainless, sterile things
about a fluster of people

or in the middle of a summer's day
(if it can be avoided).
The wrench would be too much.

Though, under a full moon
on a walk through a summer's night –
that would be altogether satisfactory

but if I am to have my druthers
might I go, in a quiet comer somewhere
under subdued light and after a gourmet meal;
a Caesar perhaps,
pheasant in a blackberry coulis,
a glass of a good Chablis
followed by crepes Suzette?
Then, just as I'm finishing a fine cognac . . .
(before the waiter brings the bill)
Oh, and God, just one more thing,
might you arrange for Kirsten Flagstad
to be singing. *Mild und leise* . . . ?
Cordially,
yours etc., etc.

S J White

Nature

Beloved

We came on circles where deep grass
swirled and flattened like a nest.
They sleep in these she said,
 they're hidden in the clear.
That afternoon, three does --
 ears out like paddles, browsing
at the far edge of the field, brown bodies
fat for winter, fat on her grass.

They fed together for an hour, pausing,
turning heads in our direction, moving
down the field --
 some complex pattern
I couldn't understand.
They came to the tree line, stopped,
looked back as if they were not
done with us,
 then entered the dark.
We watched for them,
 long after they disappeared.

Dick Capling

A Glance into Eden

Glancing out the window
on my daily scan to see
if I can spy my reclusive
neighbor of the woods,
I once more feel that rush of joy
spotting the caramel colored doe,
those pointy ears like antennae
monitoring every breeze
as she grazes leaves and grasses,
her head popping up
like a periscope at any noise.
Such dignified grace,
like a queen strolling in her garden.
How carefully she places every hoof,
soundlessly slipping thru the woods.
What lithe strength and beauty!
Perhaps we too should be vegetarians!

Helen Vanier

The Deer

You astound me here
on the lawn of the Historical Society
this snowy January morning.
You don't belong here,
invader of gardens,
bearer of disease.

Ah, but the narcotic
of your delicate grace –
I long to know your secrets.

Your encounter with the town
ends badly for you.
Now in summer
you lie by the roadside,
even in death
the form of a goddess.

Dorothy Schiff Shannon

Twilight at Senior Housing, Ithaca, New York

Cool, clear evening, gentle sky.
In silence three deer saunter past,
sample greenery, evaporate into dark.
Lone lifeless tree, draped in feral
vines, stands at forest edge.
Two branches, shaped like a harp,
tower over nearby living trees.
As light ebbs, a raven maintains watch.

Annette Corth

After Rain

The trees are green,
the ground is wet,
the sea looks dark and angry, yet
quite lovely with its
pounding waves and wind-tossed foam.

Mountains lift their green-tressed heads
into shrouds of dark grey clouds
which move before the post-storm breeze,
The air is crisp tho' moisture-laden
as the threat of further rain subsides.

Seagulls seek their sustenance ashore
being too wise in weather lore
to return to sea 'til the storm has passed,
the wind has ceased, the surf has calmed,
and the sun is out once more.

Joe Gould

Fog

Did you ever live in London
When multitudes of chimneys befouled the winter air
With clouds of yellow fog
So thick – you could not see the way?
You knew it well, you walked it every day.
Is this the turning I should take?
Or have I lost my way?
At last the air begins to clear
And I am left with memories of fear.

Yvonne Moody

Fairy Penguins (Australia)

visiting my brother in Melbourne twenty-five years ago

The sun set
And the golden sand
Faded to silver grey.
 The breakers,
Catching the last glint of sunshine,
Sparkled white against the darkening sea
When, from the frothing wave
 A single penguin
Leapt to its feet
Amidst the ebbing tide.

Finding itself solitary on the beach,
 Turning
It threw itself into the following wave
 Which as if in jest
Deposited five more
Upon the shadowed shore.

They too peered round
In anguish at their exposure.
Then chattered with relief
As each successive wave
Increased the nervous crowd.

At last with one accord
they turned and ran
Towards the plaintive cries
Amidst the sand dunes.
Where the hungry young pleaded for food,

Tackling every adult as it came,
until they found their own.

Each dawn their parents' underwater flight began
 Seeking for food some forty miles at sea,
Returning at the apparent safety of the dusk
To the abandoned offspring in their sandy nests

Reunited at last comforted and fed
They settled for sleep.

Silence returned to the dark beach,
Save for the mewling cries of orphans
 Whose parents failed to run the gauntlet
Of seals upon the offshore reef.

Justinian

Ducks

Bay waters so still, so calm,
Ripples breathe in and out with a sigh,
Silence broken by a baying hound.

Ducks arrive,
Landing-gear feet spread in front,
Swooping low over the calm sea.

They land with a splash,
Drift soundlessly along the shore,
Dive and rise and shake their spray away.

Jean Jordan

Food Chain Reaction

it is a predictable performance,
this single file family of mergansers, the crested red
head of the mother, iridescent green of the father,
the string of ducklings following like a tail,
all moving rapidly along
the west shore of a mountain lake, a parade for
the gawking eyes of summer residents from decks
of cottages lined with early summer ease, watching

them dive now, with precision, one sudden submersion or two
or several, beside or under the docks, leaving
only faint ripples, to emerge on
this side of the lake that provides passage for the river,
negotiating upstream,

not in any water ballet, no, nor
any Houdini disappearing and escape act, only a

simple foraging of waters for nourishment, insects or
minnows, or whatever else makes for
duck feast or duck luck;

when eruption intervenes with
honks of alarm, a
barrage of flapping and
explosion of flight, turmoil
ascendant in a panicky brief journey
to the shore, all fifteen of them now
looking at the lake, their body language
anxious.

"It must be the otters," I say, even as
we look over waters
from which nothing emerges, as we
wait expectantly, as we
wait
and wait

for those torpedoes of the deep,
who emerge with graceful motion
water slipping off their sides
these two,
male and female,
sliding up from the surface
to rest on a nearby dock,
sleek in shining fur.

at leisure, they
nuzzle, preen and groom
soak up sun and time
"They are so cute," says a seven-year old
as his father gingerly moves their boat
from the adjacent dock,

and otters turn their heads at once
in quiet alert
for they know there are
predators
other
than those who like minnows
than those who like
baby ducks.

Ian Adam

Morning Is Always Young

A silken lake, rocks golden with algae under the sun.
Near shore their suddenly creased greyness flusters
the surface to a crinkly sparkle.
Squinting, I look to either side, a habit born in youth
– who now will pause to look at these old folds? –
My towel shrugs to the dock-boards, one foot reaches down
to the stepping stone
for a quick slide into water.
My body feels as fluid as the loon's grace looks
as she dives from her carefully kept distance.
Alone, her call reverberates. The air, for a moment, thickens
as she waits.

Ann Elizabeth Carson

The Evening

Tucked into the treetops' layers
Are houses, rooftops, lines, and squares,
And bricks and windows, slopes and stairs,
Geometries straight, of curvatures bereft;
But when the sun sets, dull and grey
After a semi-rain-filled day,
Those linearities fade away,
And the groves of evening have no colours left.

David J Murray

Longing

My oars dip into the black water
Creating beautiful labyrinths
Which float out behind the boat
In ever widening circles

I would love to walk those labyrinths
But I cannot walk on water
I lack such special power

If I could, I think I would have
Many profound secrets of life
Revealed to me

As I long for illumination
The brilliant orange moon
Comes up in majestic rise
Above the dark and jagged horizon.

Frances Cameron

Horizon Bound

We sail upon the blue seductive lake,
Thrust onward by compelling breeze.
On close-hauled tack we carve a curling wake
To stretch the confines of these inland seas.

Prepare to tack. Ready about. Lee ho.
Pull the boom across. Cleat the jib sheet tight.
Swiftly the bow comes round and off we go
To race the wind beyond the harbour light.

At dusk we jibe and set a course for home.
A soaring gull with all sails set we steer
Through rolling waves, across the surging foam.
Sails furled, at last, we rest beside the pier.

Bare mast erect we wait to sail once more
Horizon bound, free from this rocky shore.

Neil Galloway

“The County” Trilogy

Presqu'ile

bay breeze whispers
in hushed silence we hear
echoes of sailors lost

Wellington Park

october's last breath
chases ruffles of white lace
across stone shoulders

March on Consecon Lake

lake ice breaks
sun bestows its warming kiss
seasons part as friends

Eileen Holland



*“I find that poetry is a good medium for capturing stong
emotional moments.”*

– Joan Shewchun

Decaying Log – And Me

No longer stretching in the wind, growing taller
No longer attached to green and growing tree
You've let go. You're grounded. Shaded.
Reflecting complex patterns of light and dark,
mysterious cycles of living and dying.
Areas of your surface are bleached, peeled free of all
obstruction;
Openings where your deep core reveals itself;
Places that are crumbling.
And cradles for moss, ferns, and baby trees,
places offering nurture to new life, safety for growth.
More crevices – hidden and revealed – where birds sit and
sing,
insects nest, snakes shelter.
Rest now, and be. Open to rain and sun. At one with Life.
Let me be as you are: Peaceful. Joyful. Grateful.

Trudy James

Driftwood

Abandoned ignored all Summer	Waiting to be cut up burned
An amputated tree washed ashore in the ice age of last Winter	So big to move Taking up space like a beached whale quiet expressionless
Trapped on shore ant laden rotting chipped white weathered	Letting the next stage just happen

Joan Kehoe

In the Moment

Loosed from routine
of morning juice and coffee, afternoon
tea and toast, evening news,
I stroll the shore, pocketing stones
and silvered pieces of driftwood, touching
the shine of rain on lacecap hydrangeas,
watching black-tined crows rake the air.

Pang of return after a long
absence to a place ghosted,
echoic. But when sun shreds
the cloud tarpaulin,
glorious Mount Rainier rises
as though by parthenogenesis.

That this sight will continue
into tomorrows I'll never see
should console, not occasion
the bronchial, scapular ache
of envy. I should live in the moment,
like Aunt Louise at 97. *Look!*

at the table, she exclaims,
how the glass top catches the sky!

Ruth Roach Pierson

Snow Day *(March 2008, the longest winter of my life)*

From the window
Snow, like meringue, sparkles over smooth round cheeks
And crisp sharp crests, tauntingly seducing me
Into believing that I can shovel through it
With my puny winter muscles, having lifted nothing
Heavier than a pen or perhaps a bedspread,
For months, thinking that this marshmallow fluff
Can't keep me from my busy day.

The back door needs a push to open.
Snow leans high against it.
The dog refuses to go out.
The cat disdainfully looks down
From the top step, asks only for a treat.
And watches as I don my down-filled coat,
Toque and mittens with sheep's wool thumbs,
Designed to make this task a pleasant venture.
Little do I know of their wisdom until
I step out and up, onto the glistening surface.
Realizing that, blinded by the superficial beauty
I have not considered that which lies beneath.
The crust from five hours of freezing rain, gusty winds, blowing snow,
Yesterday just words repeated and repeated on the weather channel,
Now as real as a root canal when the anesthetic wears off.
Perched on top I am effective as a sparrow,
Pecking with my plastic shovel, when
I need the abs, pecs, and pick-axe of a lumberjack.

Retreating to the kitchen, past the superior stare
Of the cat on the step, and the welcome wag of the dog's tail
I put on the coffee and my thinking cap
To ponder just what to do
With another day as a snow captive?

Judith Cleland

Dawn

January dawn
Morning sun sky
Streaked pink, indigo, yellow

Regard frost
Boughs of pine trees
Crisp snow crusted

Behold spruce trees
Shagged in ice
Glittering in the distance

Harry Jordan

Winter Magic – Quiet Beauty

Deep, dark blue sky
Bright, white blanket of snow
On stark, black arms
Of trees reaching upward.
Golden reflection of midnight moon
Etched brilliantly
On luminous, crystalline icicles
Descending from the edge of the roof
Above my kitchen window
On a fabulous, frosty night!

Ursula R Weissgerber

-50C

Champagne air, dry, biting,
dances with light.
Wind-scoured snow, trackless,
flashes with diamond fire.
Winter sun, haloed with rainbow colour,
flanked by companion dogs
gives light without warmth –
too pure, too passionless
to pity the frozen land.

Isobel Spence

Winterkill

Little remains of Violet or her young cousin Iris
Their sere bones lie undiscovered beneath the birch
Itself a skeleton, bleached and accusing
Their deaths go unnoticed
Though leaves are impounded nearby
And garden tools arrested;
Locked away in a medium security shed

The graveyard lies now in the despotic grip of winter
The grim corpses well-kept secrets beneath the snow
Were they murdered by cruel frost, that ancient serial killer?
Their lower extremities hacked off by a gang of cutworms?
Were they garroted by brutal bindweed?
Violently raped by the dread Weed Whacker?

Iris spends the long winter nights in longing
For a skilled forensic botanist
But Violet dreams a better karma
And hopes to return as a long-lived oak

William Dexter Wade

Lace

Frosted panes by lamplight,
Lace with glittering sheen.
Hoarfrost twigs at twilight,
Lace fit for a queen.
Branches bare in sunlight,
Blue lace across the snow.
Leafless trees in moonlight,
Black lace against the glow.

Web-like tracings full of grace.
All around us winter lace.

B Salvin

Cannot Be Reproduced

I walk from the copy center
into an empty plane of falling
snow, everything black and white.

Overhead a stream of crows Xerox
a path through porous
skies draping every edge, tipping
sky to ground, uprooting
ground to sky. From nothingness
the birds rise in the North and swell
toward the blur of the South. The raw edge
of their call punctuates
deafening snow, and I stand
like an exclamation
mark, knowing this flight through
white density will be
one of a kind.

Lynore G Banchoff

When All Danger of Frost Is Past

December's moon has long since arced the sky.
Sharp rolling blasts of January's cold
Confirmed the forecasts pundits told
Of a slow unraveling winter slide

Into spring. Little cost, one can't deny,
To trade one hour for longer days, scold
The squirrel at the suet cake, boldly
Scattering finches, chickadees nearby.

The robin returns, fans snow off the beam –
A diva in springtime's leitmotiv
Of disappearing frost, a rushing stream,
Young blooms, daydreams, small signs of fading grief.

Ah! Let the heart take note of nature's scheme:
Warming earth, rain, time to sow, a hint of leaf.

Mary Gardner

Haiku: Tulips

tulips bloom
her red
lips

rain drenched tulips
my inside out
umbrella

Sonja Dunn

Maternal Duet

Not until I hosed down the patio
for spring cleaning did we set up
acquaintance. I, wearing gloves,
overturned her clump of bark,
and she leaped at me, bowing her
eight black legs, refusing to run.
I dismissed the hose, squatted
beside her, and examined her
exquisite pearl of silk, swollen
with eggs, attached tenderly
by filaments of gossamer
strong as steel wire.
We conversed in silence, I
admiring, she at bay. Her
sleek ebon belly
echoed the shape if
not the size of her treasure.
Not once did she tremble.

We discussed children, the
difficulties of rearing and protection,
the rewards of courage and
chance meetings. In the end
I put the bark nest back where she
had founded it, promising never again
to lay hand, gloved or ungloved
upon it. I choose
to think she
believed me.

Shirley Windward

Shameless Spring

I walk in Central Park
Mother nature introduces her many daughters.
Across a pond,
one tosses cherry blossoms in her hair.
A willowy willow sinuously waves her pale
green tresses
tendrils ends caress the water.
A genteel breeze kisses my cheek
and spreads a moving mantilla of lace
across the sparkling bosom of the lake.
I am pleased by the perfume wafted
by these spring maidens
as they seduce me shamelessly
out in the open
in sight of everyone.

David Goldberg

The Kingdom of God

It must have been a seed, tiny as a mustard seed
dropped by a bird, that took root in my yard.
I thought it was a weed, but decided to spare it
from the yardman's cruel shears. Then one day
yellow petals, black pistils, a perfect bloom appeared
followed by many blossoms I arranged in a vase.

The bush grew shapeless, spread out, stopped blooming.
"Cut it back," I instructed the yardman,
who attacked with his machete, cutting so much
that I feared he had killed it.
But it grew back stronger, again blooming.

The yard has grown unkempt since I gave up
my periodic attempts to tame its lushness.
The bush has grown so tall I cannot reach the top,
but enough flowers bloom on the low branches
to fill several vases. And in its foliage,
from predator and weather,
birds of the air find shelter.

Noemi Escandell

Thoughts in a Garden

See how the gate beckons. I peer over its weathered framework – see the winding pathway bathed in shadows and I must explore.

It leads me to the garden. A garden born in fairyland, I think – so miniature, yet large as life. A bench beside a birdbath speaks to me; its yawning emptiness implores – come sit with me and look upon the beauty all around. And so, I sit.

Look up, look up – those trees, they talk to me. See how they flutter their dark green leaves. I smile and lift my arm to pluck a leaf or two.

How strange, yet so becoming. Stillness lingers in this pretty place defying the unrelenting roar of racing traffic, yet when a siren stabs the air – a shrill and shrieking sound – it shrinks the splendor that surrounds me – cover your ears, cover your ears.

This crate of color holds me captive, warms me with its reds and oranges, soothes me with its calming whites and pale pink blooms. Close by the purple stems of lavender beckon – open the gate to memory. I bend to rub a bloom between my fingers, inhale its pungent perfume and remember.

See the busy bees going about their business. Thoughts of honey fill my head. I taste the sweetness, think about the pleasure bees provide.

As sunshine slides across my shoulders I glance towards a patch of grass beyond, craving the coolness of its

shadowy sanctuary, while wanting to linger longer in a world of warmth.

Time is forever within this garden refuge. Now time demands I leave. I close the gate behind me then step into my world.

Ursula Forrestal

Nasturtiums

You: Nasturtiums--
Glorious, uproarious!
In your bright, bold beauty,
Nodding, bending,
Peeping from 'neath the
Cover of your
Green umbrella leaves.
You splash my plot of
Earth with brilliance.
Yellows, oranges, russets,
Sending spicy fragrance
Each time a breeze
Ruffles velvet petals,
Rivaling the softness
Of a baby's cheek.
Greedily I pluck
Your saucy blossoms,
To fill a crystal vase
Or jelly glass.
With delight I think of
Joy I'll share with friends
When I give to them
What God has given me.

Dolly Clum

Late Summer Warning

The wasps are in the windfalls,
Take care, my dear, don't touch!
Late summer's fruits are over-ripe,
Her glut of gifts too much.
Her throbbing warmth, her blazing reds,
Her humming, fragrant breeze
Bemuse the fruits and passions 'til
They rot beneath the trees.
Soon winter's cold will put to sleep
Her pulsing love affair.
The wasps are in the windfalls,
Take care, my dear, take care.

Muriel Jarvis Ackinclose

September

September
with her tresses of goldenrod
bursting at her seams with harvest
starting to show her age
like me
holding on
to this next to last season
of life.

Patricia Bourdow

Seasonal Haiku

Autumn crocuses –
first curtain call for summer
and changing seasons

Leaves turning to gold
and autumn scents in the air –
summer all but gone

Succulent fruits fall
in this bountiful season –
eat, drink and enjoy

Chestnuts ripening –
visions of an open fire
and snug evenings

Soft autumnal fog
creates watercoloured scenes
and shrouds the mountains

Ripe rowan berries
also known as mountain ash –
red by either name

The last leaf to fall
sees on its earthbound spiral
the first buds of spring

Julie Adamson

Autumn

The sun, fatigued from steep ascents
and summer incandescence
reluctant now to rise, with modest climbs,
declining and retiring early
to calming rest for future seasons;

But on this morning sends a warming glow,
illuminates the forest dressed in Joseph's coat:
shows maples' blaze in heatless flames
emboldened by a cloudless aqua;
and birches sowing golden showers
in lazy floating fall;
yet other leaves translucent pale,
while some in futile desperation
cling still to hues of deeper green.

We're far from mad cacophony
of man-made noise;
Here only gentler music sings
without composer or conductor:
The ostinato of a tumbling brook
in leisurely descent,
the rhythmic rustle of dry leaves
that telegraph unhurried steps,
a chipmunk's sharp staccato chirp,
a raucous blue jay's dissonance
joins avian aleatorics.

The forest too prepares for rest
its miracle rebirth foretold,
while one last autumn follows our
inexorably fading summer,
flaring in a brilliant nova
of subtly grand transcendent beauty
before the frosty final winter.

Peter E Schmidt

Geese in September, St. Lawrence River

Two geese yapping
non-stop
flying south low
over wind-racked water

Paired for life
this old-wing couple
barking for Florida
bitching about the trip

"Why go so early
we'll hit the hurricanes"

"Flap it up can't you"

"Too many tourists
let's wait a month"

"Let's not"

And so on until they're out of sight

Joan A W Kimball

Reflection

Shards of Glass

It did not seem like a loud explosion,
but more like a gradual erosion
when leaves turned to yellow, red orange and brown
and, just like my dreams, came fluttering down.
They lie, like pieces of coloured glass,
mixed with gravel and weeds and grass.

But why should I sit on this heap of rubble,
crying vexation for loss and trouble?
Out of the wreckage I'll patiently dig
some things I fancy, though not very big;
something that's funny, unusual or sad –
not like the grandiose dreams I once had!

Something may waken a tear or a smile,
or brighten for someone a wearisome mile.
Life holds no prospect of public acclaim.
Millions will never have heard of my name;
but I can reflect back the sunshine's bright beams,
recovering sky-tinted shards of my dreams.

Marion Wyllie

Bridges of the Mind

Bridges are the world's great striders:
Span after span out of the memory rising
Into each bright and complex city –
Every human mind among us –
From the many other shores
We once have stood on
As evanescent
as this is

Bridges are highways suspended
To bear us into unknown territory
Foretold in our imaginations –
Till our destiny receives us –
To bring us into new realms
Where strange stars rule and
Our future is
impending

Earth changes: shores alter; are gone.
Our bridges however may linger till after
The transforming moment invoking
The new world we hardly envisioned –
Our full realisation that
Now we're in harbour
And time is beyond our
recalling

Michael A Mason

I

The air cools,
the night crawls stealthily
like a lynx on forest path
and snow begins to fall
on the black statue
in the square,
a bird looks down
from its shoulder
to find a better shelter
from the cold.

II

I lived my life
and now night approaches –
I would be asked two questions:
did you love?

Indeed I did – so much and deeply:
the roses in my yard,
children' s smiles,
stars winking from above,
even this winter cold with
fleecy snow – and him.

The second question:
did you sin?
and here I smile –
I'm too old to recollect.

Gedda Ilves

Thoughts of Afterlife: Immortality

I'd be a tree
in youth lean and supple.
Bowed, bent to accommodate
winter winds yet
re-leaving in full beauty
in my middle years.
Each fall a little rest,
each spring a resurrection.
A cycle onward, outward . . .
there'd be no final death.
My leaf litter rotting
as ancient limbs crack,
returning to earth
from which new life
and seeds will spring.

*(Inspired by a reading from Sum: Forty
Tales from the Afterlives by David
Eagleman)*

Barbara B Feehrer

A Disappearance

The peacocks have all died.

No one knows why. I imagine
their raucous cries growing more and more muted
as the light goes out of their shimmering feathers,
their costumes from a summer pageant, a festive touch
along the walks and over the lawns of the Zoological Gardens
where they have been allowed to roam freely
parading their arrogant plumage and jeweled eyes
past the torpor of caged animals, until,
like a race of trans-dimensional beings,
they all dissolve at once.

I've always thought them exorbitant creatures, grotesque
illustrations of natural extravagance, but there are those
who say what little magic the post-modern world
still holds has begun to desert us. Others hope
this erasure augurs a more equitable distribution
of glory throughout the lower realms. We look for signs:
curtailed flamboyance among the flamingos, toucans, macaws,
or streaks of increased vividness
in the subdued, the endangered,
but nothing seems to have changed.

Perhaps the peacocks were
intrinsically transitory, like the leaves
that turn crimson, saffron, old gold, and fly
off in the wind. When they're gone, the sky
fills the trees with uncluttered light. Still,
we're not entirely cheered by their evanescence,
or by the news that they'll be replaced come Spring.

George Amabile

Peonies

Ants crowd the surface of the buds
in early May sucking the nectar
that seals the petals closed. Day
after day they work, attacking
the petals' edges. Week after week,
the buds grow larger, and then
one morning, there they are:
the petals in the night have given in,
the ants are gone, and the buds have
flowered into a lovely white tinged
with pink. Other buds attract no ants
for some reason, or not for long, and
forgetting the promise of bloom, they
harden and wither away.

Marriages are like that.

Bill Reynolds

What If These Days *(Inspired by Charles Olson)*

What if these days
I let myself float along
without plans
without the need
to know
what comes next?

What if these days
I let time
carry me along
 on currents
 of sun wind air?

What if these days
I let go of time
Stopped counting
 minutes hours days years
Would I still be me?

What if
I allowed each hour simply
to carry me
Would I fear the face of eternity
Would death become alive?

Or could I let each precious day unfold
without

Evelyn Torton Beck

Limited Limitations

So little time!
So little time
in which to learn
everything!

I want to experience
I want to know
I want to feel
the velvet purple of the iris
watch the English dogwood
explode into
thousands of
symmetric disks
in petaled beauty.

I want April's aesthetic
pleasures in August.
I want July's luscious
fruits, in May.
I want September's
voluminous harvest,
in December.

I want new beginnings
in all my endings.

My
needs
are satisfied!

T Garvice Murphree

Mindful Soup

While onions and garlic are sautéing,
and I am drawing fresh, filtered water,
a woman is walking many meters
to dip a bucket into a well
at a refugee camp in Uganda.

While slicing organic carrots and celery
carried home from the farmer's market,
a four-year old boy and his six-year old sister
are sorting food scraps
in a garbage heap in Managua.

In goes clean barley, scooped from the grocer's barrel,
while a man in Myanmar, a woman in Somalia,
are stirring a kettle above an open fire,
rice gleaned from their village's diminishing crop,
by cyclone or drought, by soldiers torching fields.

Into my garden for chard, spinach, basil,
green and fresh, planted by my own hands,
while the child in Sierra Leone whose
hands were severed during civil war,
now a young man, begs in the streets.

With each ingredient, I become smaller.
The pot simmers, I stir, taste, season.
A roadside bomb kills an American soldier
and two Iraqis, the streets of Tijuana
splatter with blood. A woman in Congo,
left to bear her rapist's child.

Sylvia Levinson

Reading Obituaries

*are we related to something infinite or not –
that is the telling question.* – Carl Jung

Your passion, I read, was Bingo.
But what I want to know is:
When you slapped down your counter
and yelled Bingo!
did you for a split second
enter samadhi?

And you, I read, loved to crochet.
Patient hooker,
a lifetime fell from your fingers.
What link did you find
in those filigreed chains
and who let them drift
into bins at the thrift store?

This one loved to go fishing,
loved his lures, his fisherman's luck,
his small wooden boat. Fisher,
alone at dusk,
the sea a mystery around you,
did you ever see yourself
inside a fish's wild eye?

Loved ones, when you write my obituary,
say this: Once, sitting still,
she changed into a tiger.

Mildred Tremblay

One Potato Two

When I look at my body,
its knobs and foliage,
sinkholes and scars,
furrows of flesh,
I reflect that
going back
to the far mists of Ireland,
to my O'Reilly
and Dolan and Kennedy forerunners,
to Queen Maeve herself
I am

mostly potatoes.

The first solid food
spooned
into my baby bird mouth

was potatoes.

Twice a day on the table
my mother
slapped down
great heaping bowls
of white fluffy clouds
laced with butter and salt.

In Heaven the Holy Family
eats nothing but potatoes.
Sacred Potatoes

washed clean
in the tears of Christ,
cooked to immaculate perfection
by Mary.

In the kitchens of Purgatory,
semi-devils
burn the potatoes
on purpose.

Hell is worse. Hell is
no potatoes at all.

Mildred Tremblay

Widow's Weeds

When you died, I decided to wear
black for a year

The year passed, but I don't know how to
undo
When I dress, I still reach for
noir

But spring's in the air
Will it bring me will to wear
white with the lilacs
jonquil yellow
heart's blood rose red
and giddy greens of all the season's weeds?

Marianne Vespry

Winter's Gift

I curse the endless frigid months
hug self-pity with a mug of tea
huddle close to the fire
the power's out again

I sit and wait

finally hear whispers of truth
meaningful messages stirring me
spiralling down into stillness
a new lightness rises
bringing a brighter time

acceptance reigns over chaos
thoughts that would drag me down
into despair
lose their power

I'm lifted up
and start to understand
the struggles of my life
knowing that with letting go
life can be simple and joyful
if I just let it

and the lights come on!

Valerie Nielsen

Presence

I saw a new heaven
and a
new earth

Red horizon, dark waters
melt and merge
With clouds and waves.

The yellow blushing sunset
Reflects in waters below
Which shimmer and flash
creating a
spectrum of
chromatic dispersion.

Moments pass
The sun sinks
slowly to rest.

The Graced One's
Celestial mystery
gives way to
Night.

Sr Mary Doris Pook

My Enemy / My Friend

My husband read it somewhere:
"Make food your enemy."
He actually tried to pass
that piece of advice unto me.
Me, who never met a morsel
I did not like . . .
except maybe anchovies.

I'm now supposed to do an about-face,
turn my back on a friend.
If food was my enemy,
I'd have long ago been stabbed
by a chunk of cheddar.

The advice does have merit.
So I studied thin people in restaurants.
Yes, they do seem to loathe
what's on their plate,
complain of over-generous portions.

They even poke their fork at salads,
fearful there's a calorie lurking
behind a lettuce leaf.
Or they rudely shove food aside,
leave it behind.

Not me, food and I are pals
and I don't desert my friends.
Dessert?
Did someone say dessert?

Betty J Van Ochten

Hyannis

Our mother
slips behind the moon
and enters stars, silver
over a Cape Cod sea
on a perfect night
as a poem slips words
over paper, ships
of the mind –
sea salt everywhere
after the storm.
Our mother
clips our swimwear
to the line –
while her breath goes on
for a hundred years.

Edith Van Beek

Exercise

Those gurus of our health care thus advise:
"Bestir yourself, get out and exercise"
But as for me there'd be no worse a fate,
Than in activity participate.
What? I should walk or jog or run a mile?
The thought's so ludicrous it makes me smile.
To my well-being what a horrid menace,
To slave at badminton or squash or tennis.
Beside my well-filled glass I lift no weights,
And you will never see me dead on skates.
With dignity, as to the manor born,
I just disdain to climb the Matterhorn.
And if you wish to talk of climb – 'nuff said,
The only climb I do is into bed.
Develop muscles – pectoral, abdominal . . . ?
There's surely nothing could be more abominable.
Avoid all risk, go nowhere near a gym,
And only in my bathtub will I swim.
Row, row, row my boat gently down the stream?
No! No! No! I won't! – not even in a dream.
What? Someone saw me paddle a canoe?
That vile, malicious rumour's just not true.
You spy that guy who expertly can ski
Come swooshing down the slope? That sure ain't me.
I spend my days in *dolce far niente*,
Which is the only thing I do in plenty.
Each day is filled with non-accomplishment
And zero calories is all I've spent.
But all these thoughts have made my head so ache
In self-protection this resolve I make:

From all my mind to totally excise,
That horrid obscene word of "exercise"
And any need to cogitate I'll slake
With wondrous thoughts of cookies, pie and cake.

Noel E Derrick

Let Sleeping Cracks Lie

Every other week my mind prepares to mix
a spot of lime mortar to fill up
the crack in the wall,
just a cosmetic job
to deny spiders some territory
– just a way of showing propriety
at the comer of the window frame.

If then one day my hands were to fix the hole,
how long would it be before the living strain in the wall
slowly,
politely restored its balance
and handed me back
the natural crack
I'd taken away?

Alan George

Getting There

It took over half a century for my selves
to fit comfortably inside this familiar skin

The Curious Child
questioned everything

The Mute Poet sang freely
undaunted by mirrors

The Everlasting Learner
learned how much she had to teach

The Clown dropped her crutches
to join freely in the dance

The Fool found the wisdom
to become her own best friend

The Storyteller spun tales
part myths, part truths

The Parent abdicated their futures
to her daughters and her sons

The Evangelist laughed
abandoning the crusades

The Advocate
stopped playing god

The Pacifist fought
to find inner peace

And the old Survivor
healed her wounds with words

Lorna Louise Bell

lonely as a line cut kite

aloft in distended sky
i flap with restless to and fro
in swells of wind that bind me here
between a yielding downward glide
or a final upward flight

i am suspended in such solitude
by cumulus dreads of oh so wanting to please
against an oh so never measuring up
forgetting all sticks and stones
in the gale of careless words
sharply fragile as a changing mood

yes these quotidian shames
rising in vapours of unseen anger
seclude me in the tangled air
where i yearn for celestial spheres
to grant release oh ever peace
from outer faults and inner blames

what is the tether chord of living
that reels enough of space to ascend
above the cling of mortal grasp
yet guides return to now another earth
where heaven loves through little loves
– but the long strings of forgiving?

Eugene Coombs

The Voice of Silence

Saint Francis said
to preach without
the use of words,
to keep the tongue
untarnished by
fine phrases
when talking to
wild animals
and birds
and to their lice.

God is in the silence
as Christmas lights
are more luminous,
more numinous,
reflected on
a polished floor –
their scented haloes,
cinnamon and aloes
aromatize the eyes
of the soul
just as
the spirit hears
without the aid of ears
and from the windows
of the body peers
through cyberspace
into eternity.

George Whipple

The Shepherd & His Goat

You never leave,
You are before, behind
and all through me.
When You hold me
in the hollow of Your hand,
how can anything go wrong?
When I walk the cliff-edge
of earthly desire,
Your staff is a verdant hedge
against my falling.
When I insist on being wrong,
just for the thrill of it,
Your rope tightens
and I feel the sharp tug
of Your disappointment.
Surely, goodness and mercy
are spread out before me
like a carpet of wild flowers,
and You will shepherd me home
in spite of my meanderings;
for ultimately You have faith in me,
Your goat of awkward dimensions.

Royal L Craig

Dementia

63rd Anniversary

Whom the gods can't break
they exile

He's disappearing more each day, she says.
In the cradle of her arms
she strokes his face,
feeding spoons of memory to stall
the hooded stranger,
crooning melodies to lift the lidded eyes,
lead him to the dappled forest paths
they used to wander.

Sometimes when I phone
and she's not home
a recording greets me,
something unerased,
a robust baritone:
I'm not here right now,
but hope to get back to you
soon as I return.

Mara Levine

Missing

He stands before me every day and
I can't tell who is here
I miss
who is absent

Here's nothing of the lusty
red hot fury of concentration
steam and sweat of heavy work

No rush to do
only impatience

with an unfamiliar voice,
accent
question
printed sheet
painted symbol All seem threats

What hums in his chest?
What presses on his frowning brows?
What word grasps the wish
but comes out twisted?
What name lost and
lost again
has disappeared?

Phyllis Hotch

Morning Musing

It's possible, she thinks,
as she turns the water on for her bath
wonders if today is the day she'll begin –
to forget. Wonders when it began
for her mother, her grandmother.
She climbs into the tub. It's possible – it will miss her.
She prays it misses her daughters. That merciless
memory thief. She's seen first hand
how it takes and takes and takes
until all that's left is one working heart,
locked inside a warm empty body
that's forgotten how to die.

She lies back in the warm water,
tests her own memory with facts:
name, address, numbers, phone, pin,
her passwords. All still there.
A few words disappeared yesterday.
Most of the time she manages
to ignore this familial specter,
tries to live knowing life is uncertain
for everyone, makes deals –
with God, the devil, herself.

The water cools as she contemplates her future,
the ifs and whats, the when and how.
She thinks she would want to end it early,
but how soon into the forgetting?
She knows she doesn't want to travel far
down that tunnel losing the past in the dark,
the present in the flit of a butterfly's wing.
Reminds herself to save her sleeping pills
except – she'll never remember where they are,
supposes she'll have forgotten
why she ever wanted them.
She talks to her reflection in the mirror
as she dries herself, reports the news this morning,
about the test that can predict whether –
or not she's on the forgetting track.
She doesn't want to know.

Perhaps one day they'll discover a cure.
In the meantime, she'll avoid aluminum,
do crossword puzzles, take vitamins, herbs, hormones,
do yoga, acupuncture, laugh often.
Today she decides to write a poem,
says you never know which one will be
my last. Writes: It's possible, she thinks...

Diane Buchanan

Requiem

Our mother died six years
Before she died.

They first called it a psychotic break – a transitory
problem;

But I believe it was
A fracturing . . .
Of thought from word,
Of soul from body.

Later, they called it dementia – hopeless and permanent;
But wasn't it really

A profound withdrawing . . .
From a reality too painful to endure?

Transparent boundaries between her worlds
Became more permeable;

Rivers of words flowed endlessly from
The clouded pool of her mind,

Clearing now and then to show us
Momentary glimpses of who she had been . . .

"Don't ever bring me flowers again,
They're not practical."

Alternating with prophetic glimpses of her future . . .

"When can I go home?
I'm ready to go home."

Finally, we called the priest – I'm not sure why;
He did what priests do . . .

Whispered the words,
Spread the oil,
Made the sign.

Her last breath was anti-climax,
Our eyes were dry.

Patricia A Cummings

And I Lost You

Yesterday you were quietly setting me right
My friend and my lover my wife and my light
You were comfort and ease
You were laughter and tease
You were memories of
All the joy and the love
Once a fire then a glow
That continued to grow
Till a part of you left
And I lost you
Each morning I eagerly look in your eyes
But the spark that I hope for is gone and it lies
In some far away place where I cannot go
And it's then that I know
That I've lost you
You were comfort and ease
You were laughter and tease
You were memories of
All the joy and the love
Once a fire then a glow
That continued to grow
Till a part of you left and I lost you.

Herb Stewart

A Matter of Life and Death

"She was nothing when she died. She had no personality, no capacity to speak."

(Widower, on his wife's six years' terminal illness).

". . . a self, another brightly wrought illusion"

(Ian McEwan, Saturday, 2005).

Yes, "nothing" is possible. Once she lived, no doubt, as if it were not – at least for her: others' fate as strange as myths to all who still act, think, live. And what depths had he touched, who shared her bed to the end, propped by no "brightly wrought illusion" or deceit of change, to say at last "she was nothing" – a blasphemy to some, or a brave truth . . . Dying, did her "soul" purified float free, somehow capable again of speech and knowledge? Does that define the soul, or is that, too, nothing – vain symbol of self-belief?

Michael Thorpe

Poem for Allan

You keep running away.
Nurse: *At least take your walker.*

The one who scooped you off the floor like a doll,
over and over. You want to send roses.

House sold, sits there empty
as if waiting.

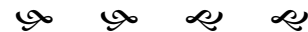
Your workshop, fifty-three screwdrivers.
Not a screw you couldn't undo.

What do you do all day – dream
the dead are alive? this is all a mistake?

Remove hinges, lift down the door, easy now
keys in hand, car at the curb –

You know exactly what to do.

Barbara Wild



"I turned to poetry at age 62 as a way to express my feelings about my husband's Alzheimer's, and found it an avenue to celebrations of life."

– Carrie McLeod Howson

Memory

What's in a Name Anyway?

Of course I remember you.
You're the person with that beautiful azalea
in your front yard,
the one with the huge pink flowers on it.
And your husband,
he went to Michigan State.
Your son played hockey with my grandsons
and I remember your mother,
she made the best lemon pie.
You are an artist or a writer,
you used to wear your hair shorter.
I just can't remember your name.

Patricia Bourdow

Sugaring

Tapping the trees of memories
boiling down the sap
of long and challenging years,
siphoning off old sorrows and the dross,
I gather at last
that sweet syrup of life!

Helen Vanier

Ghosts

The driveway is haunted by bodies
of cars that rust in weeds and rubble
on the edges of towns where nobody goes:
the 39 Plymouth that even when parked
leaned, squealing, into a sharp right turn;
the 47 Dodge we drove from the running board;
the 51 Nash with the knob on the steering wheel
that made u-turns spray a perfect circle of dust;
the 56 Chev with the huge trunk for smuggling
a trio of friends into the drive-in theatre.

Haunted too by the teen-ager who filled his tank
with syphoned gas while the neighbours slept,
who borrowed his father's car for a game
of chase, the rough side of town, lights
extinguished, the hidden bump that launched it
into the long, breathless silence. . .
the landing that broke all the shocks.
Haunted still by that boy
who thought for too long
that cars were what mattered.

Robert Currie

Midnight at Wilmette Hill

From your house to my house
There's only a short walk
Through the avenue of friendship,
Along the pathway of memory,
Around the corner of time.

Ingrid Bjornsfelt

Her Voice

Flipping through
Her old brown box,
Searching through
The yellowed cards
For the Burnt Sugar recipe,
I saw her writing,
So firm, so clear.
“One cup sugar,
stir until it melts
and burns
in intense blue smoke.”

I could see her
In her apron
At the old stove
Stirring the sugar
In a black iron skillet.
I could see her,
But I could not hear her.

There was a time
After she was gone
When I could hear
Her voice, so firm, so clear.
But the years passed
And sometime
When I was not listening
Her voice just went away.

Verniel Lundquist

Memories

Strange how memories can maim or
Sustain us.
Consider the pear tree
Its white blossoms
Waving kisses at me every spring
In my fourth floor aerie
Causing poetry to spring unbounded
From some deep well of forgetfulness.

Though gone now,
It can still bring forth a resurrection
Every spring
And yet unleash
The despairing fruit of buried memory.

Dorothy E Morris

Dreams

I feel not alone
In my little room
With dreams framed
On its wall.
The dreams of all
The "Might have beens"
That my psyche can recall.
My dreams have
All the grace and poise
That proper revelers should
They speak only when spoken to
And share nothing but the good.

Barbara Lipson Schukar

Memory

I heard the wind in the night.
It whimpered through the bare trees.
It whispered insistently:
Remember! Remember!
But I could not.

I heard the wind in the night.
It rattled the window pane.
It cried compellingly:
Remember! Remember!
But I would not.

I heard the wind in the night.
Drifting into sleep,
I heard the banshee howl,
I felt the searing blast,
I saw the tattered trees,
I smelt the scorched grain,
I tasted the gritty air,
Of a drought-haunted childhood.

I heard the wind in the night,
And I remembered.

Isobel Spence

Fisherman

He fished life's streams,
valleys,
mountains.

He knew much about fish,
human nature,
habitats and habitants.

He ran a fish company
on the North Spit
across from his future home.

He loved the bay,
the water,
the birds.

He still likes to cook
a mean steak,
salmon, pierogies.

His fishing days:
great memories,
great times.

Halia Pushkar

Sometimes

Sometimes I wish my mind
Would dump
Recycled symbols.

Sometimes I wish my thoughts
Would leave
My head alone.

Sometimes my soul
Feels like a bowl
Of cherries,
Ready to be eaten.

Sometimes I wish
I could remember
What I wish.

John Zyp

Back of Silence

Caught up in nostalgia
I reel in yesterday's
gone-ahead relatives
in their posing clothes
moth-balled & pressed,

swathed
in lilac's headiness
and tobacco's pungence . . .

ungroomed faces
etched in wrinkles
like veins on leaf
and lopsided grins
below crinkled eyes,

I see them
in sunshine moments
wrapped
in plain skin,
in touch
with their sweat,

streamlined thinkers
who dissected goals
with lasered zeal,
dispatching their genes
in the subtlest ways,

I know their voices
rising & falling
from the back of silence,
this ear-splitting
Silence...

Adele Kearns Thomas

Memories

Scenes of a previous time:

I wish they could be trapped, set in worded sequence
with adjectives and adverbs

painting in colors of action and feelings,
captured silences,

like a best selling novel precisely bound.

But memories come in jumps and spurts,
sometimes foggy, fuzzy gray with fragments that splinter
and make one wonder, "Was it like this . . . or that?"

They come like pictures in an album . . .

no . . . more like clutter in boxes here and there,
disjointed, elusive names, muddled dates,
waiting to be recognized, sorted and relived.

Or a flower, a song, a smell, a phrase
may stir memory of a previous time
hung in the cobwebs of our bygone days.

Scenes play a tantalizing game of
hide-and-seek in the dusty, musty corridors of my attic.

Memories

Viola Pearl Diener Stahl

Words

I Love Words

Some words sing – like wing.
Some words thunder – like blunder
or plunder
or softly creep – like sleep.

Some words are harsh
and croak like frogs in the marsh.

There are homely words
like box and barrel;
and is there an uglier word than snarl?

The word thump sounds like a bump.
Then there is March, stiff as starch.

Words can murmur or can shout.
Words can shake my thoughts about –
words of comfort and of grace
or words that put me in my place !

I love friends and flowers and birds.
I must add, I do love words!

Marion Wyllie

On Hearing Things Male

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth A wind from God swept over the face of the waters Then God said, Let there be light; and there was light. Genesis 1:1-3

Did the author of Genesis hear Yahweh's voice
like the rumble of thunder over Mount Zion?
And did the man say to himself, as though spitting
against the wind, this boom must be male?
Male ears hear things male. Even medieval giants
decreed, *Whatever is received, is received
according to the mode of the receiver.* And if
Yahweh drops her hairbrush in the desert,
who can hear it? And write it in the book?

Kilian McDonnell

Iowa

What a strange happiness.
Sixty poets have gone off drunken, weeping into the hills,
I among them.
There is no one of us who is not a fool.
What is to be found there?
What is the point in this?
Someone scrawls six lines and says them.
What a strange happiness.

Robert Sward

Sex after 70

I sit across
from my publisher
who cuddles his coffee
and explodes with "What!"
"I'm writing a book on haiku,"
I repeat calmly.
"On haiku!" his face a red.
"Why can't you write
something people want to read
like 'fishing on the west coast?'"
"Or sex after 70," I counter.
"Yes, sex after 70,"
his eyes switch from
exasperated to hopeful,
"Now there's a promising title!"
We both fall silent.
I imagine he is weighing up
the odds of me being informed
on the subject, while I
do a quick survey of
a possible table of contents.
Sex and osteoarthritis –
the joints locking
in positions unheard of
in the kama-sutra.
Choices – orgasm or muscle cramp;
whether to allow myself
the pleasure of orgasm
or go into the pain
of a concurrent foot cramp.

Whether to focus on the vagina
and the blissful dissolving
or the foot and get that spasm
dealt with and those
toes straightened out.
Decisions, decisions and
before I know it I am
thinking of nouns . . .
those nouns of haiku
and how each noun
condenses a universe
and packs a wallop
and how two, or three nouns
together, if carefully chosen,
can tumble you into the void
and to Universes beyond,
and how the pause, the pause
at the 5th or 12th syllable
opens so many possibilities
to dwarf all orgasms or cramps
come to that, and transforms
dark crows on bare branches
into cockatoos on plum blossom.
"I'm writing the book on haiku,"
I firmly address my publisher
across the steam of his coffee.
He sighs, takes a sip and asks,
"When's the first draft ready?"

Naomi Beth Wakan

I am the poet of my courtyard

the minute hand hurries
to catch slow passing hours
we tick together
search for words
until dusk descends
and night chinks white
across the icy courtyard

ice flowers whirl
fireplaces breathe
sculpted trees stand
strong and stark
new born leaves hidden
inside furrowed bark

I read poetry
and for a short time
live inside a stranger's world

rage at winter's vitality
as a stiff wind blows
salty curtains of snow

Rita Katz

Windblown

Borne on the wind
 borne on the wind
My words over the years
words of help
 guidance
 truth
whirling around the ether
 ignored
 unwanted

I imagine them falling
 smacking to the ground
lying there, a jumble of abc's
Being picked up, wondered at
 then hurled skywards again
 to start a new journey
While my voice gets weaker and weaker
From the effort of it all

Dorothy Surtees Goodman

Late Bloomer

I used to say it's never too late to be a late bloomer.
But now I'm not sure –

Now, as the words I reach for
run away and scurry under the furniture
like dust bunnies.

All fuzzy and unrecognizable.

Behind the couch a conundrum of nouns huddle together
trying to make sense of themselves.
Echinacea, Chet Baker, colander –

Whatever are they up to?

Ramekin, catkin, rhomboid, rheumatoid
And that guy who did Art Nouveau wallpaper and was
a Bourne-Jones buddy. The something or other
Brotherhood.

A perfectly sensible conversation lurches to a halt –
right in mid-sentence,
clobbered by the blank page in the dictionary
of my mind.

Somewhere there's a parallel universe
where even an elderly poet
can frolic through a limbic thesaurus
reach out for a word and capture
just that perfect one that ran away today.

William Morris, that's his name.
The wallpaper guy, Pre-Raphaelite.

Laurie Lewis

Soliloquy

Westward the course of empire takes its way;
Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown;
The curfew tolls the knell of parting day;
I hate to see that evenin' sun go down.

Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest
When that Aprille with his shoures soot
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest
Of Man's first disobedience and the forbidden fruit

Of perilous seas in faery lands forlorn
Abandon hope, all ye who enter here
The undiscovered country from whose bourne
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer.

Lo, the poor Indian! Whose untutored mind,
A thing of beauty is, a joy forever.
I must be cruel only to be kind;
Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever.

Sweet are the uses of adversity;
As dreams are made on, we are such stuff.
Neither a borrower nor a lender be,
And damned be him that first cries, "Hold, enough!"

Ted Melnechuk

Report from the Front

All over newspapers have stopped appearing,
and combatants everywhere are returning home.
No one knows what is happening.
The generals are on long distance with the President,
Surveying the planet from on high.
No one knows even who has died, or how,
or who won last night, anything.
Those in attendance on them may,
for all we know, still be there.

All over newspapers have stopped appearing.
Words once more, more than ever,
have begun to matter. And people are writing
poetry. Opposing regiments, declares a friend,
are refusing evacuation, are engaged instead
in sonnet sequences; though they understand, he says,
the futility of iambics in the modern world.
That they are concerned with the history and meaning
of prosody. That they persist in their exercises
with great humility and reverence.

Robert Sward

The Word Choreographer

I yearn to be
a choreographer of words
that whirl and twirl like dervishes
across the page,
with dazzling elegance and power,
forming duets and trios, quartets and more.
Magic words that sparkle,
inspiring, inviting, exploring, imploring;
Crisp consonants and vivacious vowels;
Ordinary words transformed,
and plunged into sentences.
My pen is poised,
awaiting sensuous semantics
and wordy turbulence
to explode
from my writer's brain.
I wait for the fire
to ignite
a conflagration
of eloquence
and passion.
Instead,
a spark,
a sudden blaze flares up,
then quickly dies.
Undampened,
I await
tomorrow's hope.

lone Grover

A Letter to Old Poets

(Inspired by Rilke's Letter to a Young Poet)

You are never too old to write poems
even if you never wrote them before
within you is a lifetime of feelings
begging to be in notebooks or published
share the long journey you have made
reveal all your hidden secrets and lusts
As elder, you can get away with anything
write outrageously, courageously and often
what can they do to you at your age
if you speak truth to power in poems
or mock the sacred and silly which now
makes no sense to you or just amuses
in these years of your earned wisdom
write your learning, fantasies, hopes
recall beauty that made you gasp
or ugliness that made you groan
give yourself permission to write
imperfectly for yourself or others
please put down on paper what you can tear up
or give those who need to hear the old poets

Ruth Harriet Jacobs

Forgery

No more ink,
nothing wet.
Just fine black powder
sprayed on paper and bonded in a flash
of electrostatic forgery.
Letters, words, sentences appear
faster than meteors
fizzing and sputtering through the atmosphere.
Quills, lead, even rolling balls –
things of the past.
Poems and stories conjured today
by Maxwell's demons and Schrödinger's cats.

Imagine *Hamlet* emerging
on a Hewlett-Packard laser jet.
Never mind a million monkeys
typing for a million years.
Now it's countless motes of black dust
shooting through space,
falling willy-nilly on the white surface,
cast into shapes and forms
that say, "To be or not to be."
Well is it?
Is dust destined to speak,
to replace ink and even thought?

Roger S Jones

An Ode to Rhyme

There was a time when poetry
Fair sang with grace and symmetry.
Doomed lovers swooned, ab, ab,
And soldiers died quite rhythmically.
When ribald tales rolled off the tongue,
And epigrams with candor sung,
The rhyme was crucial to the tale,
In sonnet, ode, or villanelle.

So by your leave, and with your grace,
With strength of purpose, straight of face,
With reverence for iambic feet,
And just a trace of tongue in cheek –
With meter, stress, and anapest,
We'll try to lay free verse to rest.
A mite contrived? A trifle trite?
What matters – is the meter right?

Myra Woods

To a Cabbage

My Muse, in vain, has often toiled
To write an ode to cabbage boiled,
And likewise strained to weave a ballad
In fitting praise of cabbage salad.
In pretty phrases I would flout
The merits of hot Saurer Kraut
And even cold-slaugh seems to me
To lend itself to poetry.
But when, with inspiration toiling,
I sniff some lovely cabbage boiling,
And tenderly inhale the vapour,
Pedantic phrases fill the paper.
And though I know it is my duty
To elevate with simple beauty,
I feel a deep desire burning
To fill the page with words of learning.
For simple words do not belong
To anything that smells so strong.

John Sullivan

Free verse is not always free

It's worth about two cents to me
For poetry that does not rhyme
Is like a clock that won't keep running

Blaine Arthur Way

My Love Affair with Libraries

As an abused child
I escaped to a library
from a discordant home
full of screaming, anger
loved library peace
read and dreamed there

I who had few possessions
possessed for two weeks
transcending books.
The children's librarian
made me feel important
loved in that library

As an adolescent
in a bad city high school
I got my real education
in the public library.
Librarians were my teachers
finding me books
libraries a sanctuary still

As a young reporter
I found in libraries
background for assignments
a quiet place to write.
Libraries made me a writer

As a young mother
I shared the library

with my children.
Now as a gerontologist
I love to see elders
in reading rooms and
at library events
finding refuge, stimulation
companionship, information

Now I speak at libraries
my books are in libraries.
I give a little to libraries
in gratitude

Ruth Harriet Jacobs

My First Hearing Aid

Must you mumble, garble
consonants, rush to the end,
drop last syllables?
Must I teach phonetics again?

Speak with precision. Like
Professor Henry Higgins,
I'm a reasonable sort of man,
bearing malice toward none,
if only diphthongs were purer,
vowels and lives did not decay.

Kilian McDonnell

It Will Come to Me

the word is there
i know it well
i will sound rusty chords
place my tongue just so
move my lips in aged patterns

the word is there
part of a thought
waiting for the word
to make it whole
it will do my bidding
in its own time

lost in the labyrinth
of a convoluted brain
it sits inert
in a cul-de-sac
a rock settled
deep in place
stubborn unyielding

it is not my first word
formed in an unmapped mind
it is one of many
saved from a lifetime
 listening
 sounding
 singing
the melody of language

the word sits poised to move
this word will tell you
what I need you to know

it is my word
i will speak it to you
wait with me until it comes

Dorthi Dunsmore

They Say, I Say

they say
cut to the chase
shorten your stories

I say I'm trying to
share an experience
why must I boil it down
to its essence
deglaze it
evaporate it
to an extract
what will we talk about
in the spaces
around the words
you say I should leave out

please
relax
listen
slide into reverie
linger with me

Joyce Harries



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Poet Biographies and Author Index

Muriel Jarvis **Ackinclose** Saanichton, British Columbia
Age 88, mother of 2, grandmother of 5, greatgrand-
mother of 12, married 66 years. Loves music, gardening,
volunteering and writing. Has had 2 books published,
biographic memoirs of self and father. Has been a musician,
beautician, seniors' centre director and happy housewife.
p 73

Ian **Adam** Calgary, Alberta
Taught for many years at the University of Calgary
and since 1997 has worked as a freelance writer and
consultant. His most recent book of poetry is *The Nomadic
Marchesa* (Touchwood Press); his writing has been published
in numerous magazines and anthologies. p 64

Sylvia **Adams** Ottawa, Ontario
Poet, novelist, editor and book reviewer. A member of
Canada's Field Stone Poets, she has instructed poetry
groups in Ottawa and Chile. Her poetry collection, *Sleeping
on the Moon*, was runner-up for Arc's 2007 Scott-Lampman
award. Her children's book, *Dinner at the Dog Pound*, was
published in 2009. p 4

Julie **Adamson** Victoria, British Columbia
Born 1936 in New Zealand. After living in several
different countries and a career in librarianship, retired to

British Columbia in 2002. Poems to amuse her
grandchildren were followed by the delight of haiku.
Constant inspiration comes from the breathtaking landscape
and seasonal changes surrounding her. p 73

Jay **Albrecht** Tarrytown, New York
Mother Goose rhymes captured his third-grade
interest, then Edward Lear's comic lines, then limericks,
quatrains on the sea and boyhood; it was all uphill from
there. In the intervening 68 years he has written several
hundred poems seriously and comically on nature, love,
politics, dance, and space, rhymed traditionally, internally,
or not at all. p 29

George **Amabile** Winnipeg, Manitoba
Has published in over a hundred anthologies and
magazines including *The New Yorker*, *Harper's*, *Poetry*
(*Chicago*), *American Poetry Review*, *Botteghe Oscure*, *The
Globe and Mail*, *The Penguin Book of Canadian Verse*,
Saturday Night, *Poetry Australia*, *Sur* (Buenos Aires), *Poetry
Canada Review*, *Canadian Literature*, and *Margin* (England).
His most recent publications are *Rumours of Paradise /
Rumours of War* (McClelland and Stewart, 1995) and
Tasting the Dark: New and Selected Poems (The Muses
Company, 2001). p 77

Merle **Amodeo** Oshawa, Ontario
Turned 70 in January 2009. Retired teacher.
Published all these poems in a chapbook: *Because of You*.
First novel, *Call Waiting*, published by Hidden Brook Press,
2009. p 34

John **Amsterdam** Dunnville, Ontario
Born 1929, Amsterdam; educated in the Netherlands.
Married 1955 to Reina Scharn. Because of the housing

shortage they emigrated to Canada in 1956. They were ordained as ministers of the gospel in 1973. Now retired and living in the Grandview Lodge in Dunnville, Ontario. p 25

Jerry Andringa Wetaskiwin, Alberta

Born 1933. Having a keen interest in communication, pursued journalism and later a B.A. in psychology. Due to a late start in schooling, has gone through a variety of jobs, mostly in Alberta and B.C. Likes poetry and is striving to get the knack of writing stunning short stories. p 4

Lynore G Banchoff Menlo Park, California

Began writing as a child, but most of her poetry dates from 1980. Some has been published in journals and books. For her 70th birthday she published: *Past Tense and Parts of Speech on Beech Street*. She is enjoying the independence of these years and her 3 children and 6 granddaughters. p 69

Fredericka Barker Albany, New York

Born and educated in Austria. Like many immigrants she knew the restlessness of immigration, experiencing the uprooting, acclimatization, challenge and also the joy of gaining new knowledge. She relishes the language of her youth as well as the language of her adopted country. p 27

Diego Bastianutti Burnaby, British Columbia

Born in Fiume, Italy. Retired university professor who has re-discovered the pleasure of creative writing and painting. Published 3 volumes of poetry, the latest a winner of a prestigious international prize. Award-winning short-stories and poems have been published in literary magazines and anthologies in North America and Europe. p 46

Evelyn Torton Beck Washington, D. C.

Professor Emerita, Women's Studies, University of Maryland; holds PhDs in comparative literature and clinical

psychology. Has published widely on many topics including Kafka, Kahlo, visual art, and issues of identity. Currently offers workshops integrating poetry and circle dance, focusing on personal growth and well-being. Serves on the Board of the National Association for Poetry Therapy and was keynote speaker for the 2009 conference. p 78

Marion Beck Regina, Saskatchewan

Born in Rossendale, England; a Regina resident since 1966. Won the Short Grains Prose Poetry competition in 1991 and the People's Political Poem competitions in 1995 and 1996. Her work has been broadcast and has appeared in a number of literary magazines, most recently the *Malahat Review* and *Arc*. Her most recent chapbook, *Frustrations of an Urban Gardener*, was published in 2007.

p 2

Lorna Louise Bell Whitehorse, Yukon

Born and lived half her life in northern Alberta; began writing poetry as a child. She earned her living in various interesting jobs (psych nurse, Laboratory and X-ray Tech, Adult Literacy Instructor and Librarian) but parenting was her true vocation. p 84

David C Berry Palm Harbor, Florida

Born 1918, he holds BA, MA, and EdD. Served as Education Consultant, US Army in Europe, retiring from the Army as Lt. Col. Published regularly in local media. His book of poems, *Moments in Time*, was released in 2005.

p 5

Madolyn Berry Palm Harbor, Florida

Born 1918. Has published two poetry books. Has entered, won, and judged poetry contests. She is being published in a local monthly newspaper. For several years she taught a poetry class, and currently speaks for social events. p 22

Oonagh **Berry** Vancouver, British Columbia
Born 1938 in Dublin, Ireland. Has lived in Canada since 1968; now resides in Vancouver. She has published poems and short stories in Canada and in Ireland, and is co-author with Helen Levine of *Between Friends* (Second Story Press, 2005). p 23

Elmer **Billman** Greensboro, North Carolina
Born 1917 in Shelbyville, Indiana. Taught mathematics for 11 years and worked as an actuary for 25 years. Retiring in 1979, he began travels in Mexico and Western Europe. A widower with four grown children and one grandson, his hobbies are art, music, and literature related. p 26

Ingrid MacGillvary **Bjornsfelt** Sidney, BC
Age 82. Born in Victoria of Swedish and Scottish parents. Her father was a story-teller, and mother was an artist; she inherited both gifts. Holidays took the family to a small, remote, sheltered island with 100 years of family ownership. "I write of an enchanted Swedish cottage – such stories fall from my pen." p 90

Sheila B **Blume** Sayville, New York
Age 75, retired addiction psychiatrist living on Long Island. She began writing poetry after joining the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute program at Stony Brook University, and attending a poetry reading group. "I suddenly found myself writing poetry." p 16

Louise A **Bonar** Brighton, Massachusetts
Wrote poetry in high school and college. Nearing retirement, she took a poetry course with B.G. Thurston. When the class ended, five women continued to meet. Surrounded by support for five years, they meet monthly to write and to listen to each other. p 60

Patricia A **Bouradow** Saginaw, Michigan
Born 1935, mother of 7, grandmother of 17 and great-grandmother of 3. As her children flew the nest, she had time for other pursuits. She joined a poetry group: River Junction Poets, and has been writing ever since. p 73, 90

Giselle **Braeuel** Kanata, Ontario
Born 1934 in Germany. Widow with 2 sons and 2 grand-children. Hobbies besides writing are travel, piano playing, and chess. Has been volunteering for 18 years at the National Gallery, taking reproductions to local schools to teach art appreciation. p 30

Patricia **Brodie** Concord, Massachusetts
Clinical social worker with a private psychotherapy practice in Concord, MA. Her poems have appeared in *The Comstock Review*, *The Lyric*, *California Quarterly*, *Raintown Review*, *The Pedestal*, *Phoebe* and other journals. Her chapbook: *The American Wives Club* (Ibbetson Street Press) was published in 2006. p 29, 51

P Rosemary **Brown** West Flamborough, Ontario
Her daughters are very proud of their mother's independence. She is living on her own, still hosting open gardens, and winning Trillium Awards for her large garden. p 21

Diane **Buchanan** Edmonton, Alberta
70-year-old poet and essayist. Began to write about 15 years ago after retiring from nursing and raising 4 daughters. Has had 2 collections of poetry published: *Ask Her Anything* (Rowen Books, 2001) and *Between the Silences* (Frontenac House, 2005). p 87

Albert Busendorfer Burbank, California
"Has been on this earth for 77 years. While working and trying to solve the problem of life, he developed a romance with the written word. The romance will continue to the end, whenever that will be." p 24

Frances Cameron Lynden, Ontario
Born and raised in Toronto. Always loved to read, reading by hidden flashlight when quite young. Earned an Honours BA in psychology at the University of Toronto. "My father wrote beautiful poetry and my mother wrote very clever doggerel." When they bought a cottage in Temagami she was inspired to try writing 'serious' poetry. p 65

Dick Capling Ancaster, Ontario
Began to study poetry for the second time, following retirement from Mohawk College. "It's been an exciting learning curve since the first time I studied poetry, at university in the 1950s when EE Cummings was avant-garde." Has poems published in *Antigonish Review*, *Prairie Fire*, *Windsor Review*, *Tower Poetry Society*, and *Main Street*. p 61

Ann Elizabeth Carson Toronto, Ontario
Born 1929. Mother of 4, grandmother of 6. Retired counselor, course director, lecturer, York University. Private practice in psychotherapy. Published: *Shadows Light*, poetry and sculpture; *My Grandmother's Hair: How power plays out in family and social stories*, mixed media; Submitted, *We All Become Stories*, *Transforming old age*, writing, *Catch the Tail*, poetry. p 65

Ruth E Chappell Hamilton, Ontario
Born 1927 in Nova Scotia, one of 7 children. Came to Hamilton in 1949. Worked in business as an administrative assistant; then from 1958 until retirement, as a free lance

paralegal. Recreations: water color painting, gardening, piano, writing, dancing and travel. p 28

Judith Cleland Kingston, Ontario
Artist and writer. Published a small collection of poems: *Voice of a Brown Bird*. "Delight in all things natural, and true affection for the ancient wisdom of female elders have provided the life force for her writing." p 34, 68

Dolly Clum Valley Falls, New York
Age 77. Retired R.N., mother 6, grandmother of 11, and great-grandmother of 1. "I enjoy writing about my feelings – sometimes in poetry, sometimes in prose. Still volunteer at a local hospital, tend my flower plots, sing with a contemporary folk group, am an active member of a hiking club, knit prayer shawls with fellow parishioners and enjoy my family immensely (especially feeding them)." p 72

Eugene Coombs Hamilton, Ontario
Born in the southwest, studied at Trinity University, San Antonio and Columbia University. Professor Emeritus of McMaster University. As a runner he completed numerous marathons and shorter races. He contributes regularly to academic journals, local newspapers, poetry journals. He has published *Runpoem*, a synthesis of his two passions. p 84

Sharon Rothenfluch Cooper Portland, Oregon
Poet-in-residence at Argonaut's Boat and Soldiers-heart.org and member of the World Poets Society. Her poetry has appeared in numerous international, hard copy and internet magazines. Her chapbook, *Reach Beyond*, won the MAG Press, 2005 International Chapbook Competition. In 2005, 23 of her poems were presented in the play, *Soldier's Heart*. p 38

Brenda M Corr Kanata, Ontario
Born 1931 in England; came to Canada in 1955 where she met and married an Irishman in Vancouver. 4 sons and 2 grandsons. Took an MA in history part-time at Carleton U. Interests: tennis, classical music, dancing, poetry, reading.
p 44

Annette Corth Ithaca, New York
Retired science librarian. "I started writing poetry when I was 73 years old and never stopped." Writes poetry and flash fiction, paints, gardens, plays pool and mahjonn, enjoys classical music, theatre, word games. Published two books of poetry, *Explosion of Dragons* and *Turquoise and Mahogany*. Third book under way. Loves seeing her work in print and sharing what she has to say.
p 62

John Corvese Burlington, Ontario
Retired from teaching law, he has published short stories and poetry. Three short stories have won awards: *Mother's Day (Summer Tapestry 2008)*, *In Pacis* and *The Journey* (J.K. Galbraith Literary semi-finalists 2008). His poem *Eulogy* (2010) and short story *The Boatman* (2009) appear in *Existere, Journal of Arts and Literature*.
p 3

Royal L Craig Huntington Beach, California
Born 1922 in Quebec, poetry at 5, childhood in Port Arthur, schooling in Toronto. Design: de Havilland Mosquito fighter-bomber; post-war off to California, aerospace design. Retired; esoteric studies of America, Europe, Far East; Life, a chapter in a serial story opening in purity, ending unresolved.
p 11, 85

Patricia A Cummings Minneapolis, Minnesota
After a brief career as an English teacher, she spent 25 years in the field of philanthropy, most recently as executive director of the Phillips Foundation in Minneapolis.

Now retired, she is on the board of her senior co-op and volunteers in her community.
p 88

Ralph Cunningham Toronto, Ontario
Born 1932 in Toronto, lived all his life in Toronto. Attended Jarvis Collegiate Institute and the University of Toronto. Worked for a time in CBC film. Published 4 books: *Lovesongs and Others, ...No Continuing City, Mirrors of Memory* and *Schwanengesang*.
p 17

Robert Currie Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan
Born 1937, Saskatchewan's third Poet Laureate and author of 4 chapbooks and 9 books, most recently *Witness*. Currie spent most of his working life as a teacher of English and creative writing at Moose Jaw's Central Collegiate.
p 90

Daniel Daly Riverhead, New York
"I am 72, a scribbler for over half those years, have placed poems in *Poetry, Poetry East, North Dakota Quarterly, NY Times, America*, elsewhere. I keep alive at Stony Brook University in an adult learning program."
p 18

Lois Howarth Davis Akron, Ohio
Born 1930. Emigrated to the U.S. with her own family (3 children) in 1966. Attended college, then practiced Social Work/Sex Education until age 65. She immediately attended writing classes, switching to poetry at age 70.
p 10

Robert Demaree Wolfeboro, New Hampshire and Burlington, North Carolina
Author of 3 collections of poems, including *Fathers and Teachers*, published April 2007 by Beech River Books. Winner of the 2007 Conway, N.H., Library Poetry Award. Retired school administrator with ties to North Carolina, Pennsylvania and New

Hampshire. He has had 375 poems published or accepted by 100 periodicals. See <http://www.demareepoetry.blogspot.com>
p 56

Noel E Derrick Kingston ON

A native of Australia (Brisbane), has lived for many years in Kingston ON, with his wife Jane. He is a father and grandfather. Retired from his career as a psychologist, he now has time for volunteer work and hobbies, including writing. p 83

Sonja Dunn Toronto, Ontario

Born 1931. Poet, storyteller, television writer, host producer, and actor, who has performed her work for children and adults internationally. Also writes fiction and criticism ; has been published in over 100 anthologies, magazines, newspapers and journals. Currently studying haiku. A former teacher and drama and language arts consultant, has BA and MA degrees. p 70

Dorthi Dunsmore Winnipeg, Manitoba

Has been writing since the age of 12. Joined the Manitoba Writers' Guild 1991, and began taking workshops in Creative Writing. Also took courses at the University of Winnipeg. "Writing is my passion. I am 83 and write every day."
p 102

Elsie Ellis Swift Current, Saskatchewan

Lived in rural southwestern Saskatchewan; retired to Swift Current. Published books of poetry are: *Sand Hills and Sage* (1988), *Sand Script* (1992), *The Land of My Undoing* (1998: used in Sask. high school English classes), and *From the Hilltop* (2004). p 37

Soraya Erian Hamilton, Ontario

Has 7 published books of poetry with her drawings, and 2 novels with her paintings. Her most recent novel is *Mystic Loon*. She taught literature, creative writing, and communications at

Hamilton's Mohawk College, and is currently a full-time author and artist. She has won several Best Poem awards in Canada and the U.S.A. p 24

Noemi Escandell Coral Gables, Florida

Born 1936. in Havana. In 1955 won a scholarship to study in the US where she met her husband. In between 4 children and several relocations she earned her BA, MA and PhD. Taught for 20 years, then took early retirement to pursue other interests. p 71

Barbara B Feehrer Bedford, Massachusetts

Retired elementary school teacher. She has written poetry for many years, is currently a member of Concord Poetry Center and has published work in *The Boston Globe*, *Women Outdoors*, *Spotlight Magazine* (Tufts University), and other local publications and newsletters. "Turning 70 was a joyous occasion celebrated while on a three-generation camping trip in Maine!" p 76

Frieda Feldman Worcester, VT & Key Largo, FL

Born in 1930 into a Russian immigrant family. Lived early years in Brooklyn NY; spoke Yiddish until she started school; has been writing poetry 'forever'; Was an RN, retired with her husband, went sailing, still writing; Summer in Vermont, winter in Florida Keys. p 53, 58

Harriet Fields Bronx, New York

Age 85; lives in an assisted care building in Bronx NY. A retired NYC teacher, she taught kindergarten for many years as well as other grades. "My desire was to teach children how to read. I never wrote poetry until last year after I attended a poetry talk about how one should write about one's own experiences." p 15

Sylvia Findlay Ottawa, Ontario
Born in rural Manitoba in the late 1930s. A childhood of isolation and exposure to nature gave her an appreciation of her surroundings. Has lived in Ottawa for 40 years where she continues to enjoy the flora and fauna. Member for several years of Writing for Enjoyment. p 37

Peggy Fletcher Sarnia, Ontario
Age 79, born in Newfoundland; has lived in Southwestern Ontario for many years. Widely published, and has won numerous awards for her poetry. Her concern for nature and human rights is reflected in her poetry and painting. "Her muse continues to lead her by its insistent hand." p 47

Ursula Forrestal North Vancouver, British Columbia
Her work has appeared in a senior anthology *Who Will Wind The Watches? Between Friends* is a self-published book of short stories. Her writing was included in the Simon Fraser University Harbor Centre Downtown Memory Project Exhibit in 2008. p 72

Sr Maria Francesca Forst Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Born 1926 in Arkansas. Spent 52 years in the classrooms, both elementary and high school. Currently working in Pastoral Care in a diocesan nursing home. p 59

Neil Galloway Hamilton, Ontario
Born and grew up in Hamilton, Ontario. His first poetic work appeared in *Kairos*. His nonfiction has appeared in many periodicals, including *Forever Young*, *The Muskokan*, *The Technologist*, and the *Lutheran*. Has eclectic interests: an avid curler, practices Martial Arts: Tai Chi, Chi Kung, and Karate. p 66

Mary Gardner Skaneateles, New York
Her poetry has been honored by the National League of American Pen Women, the 2007 Syracuse Art Poster Project (illustrated haiku), *Happy Birthday, Mr. Lincoln*, an anthology published by the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, and was selected for the 2009 Skaneateles Festivals' commissioned chamber work by composer Carter Pann. p 70

Yvonne Garry Dundas, Ontario
Born and educated in London, England; emigrated to Canada, 1955. Settled in Dundas, where she married and raised a son and nephew. Widowed in 2001. On staff of Hamilton Philharmonic for many years. Currently writing her memoirs as a member of Dundas "Scribblers" group. p 14

Nancy Gotter Gates High Point, North Carolina
Age 78, she lives at a retirement center. She's had dozens of poems and short stories published as well as four mysteries. Her newest book, *Sand Castles*, a mainstream novel, was published in November 2009. p 57

Alan George St Albans, United Kingdom
Age 71, married, 5 children. Recently gained his doctorate at Bath, where he researched into The Aesthetic in Practice. He returned to writing poetry and short stories in his 60s. p 83

Mary Gergen Wallingford, Pennsylvania
Professor Emerita, from Penn State, Brandywine. Taught for over 20 years in psychology and Women's Studies. Now retired, an editor of the *Positive Aging Newsletter* and Board Member of the Taos Institute, a non-profit educational organization. p 42

David Glyn-Jones Coquitlam, British Columbia
Born 1922 in Wales; RAF, Canadian since 1948. He is a retired professional actor and singer, with an Elizabethan novel published, another waiting, and an almost finished modern murder mystery with a theatre background. He has published articles, short stories, and occasional poems. p 36

David Goldberg New York, New York
"82 Years in Fifty Words: Orphan Asylum – Foster Parents; Working age 14 after school; U.S. Navy, age 17 - WW II, Korean War; Working life – 38 years; Three marriages, 2 daughters, 3 grandchildren; Retired – Senior Center, ceramics, art classes, writing workshops, seventeen years; Artist, Writer, Poet, Teaching ceramics, stained glass." p 71

Dorothy Surtees Goodman Hamilton, Ontario
In her 80s, a great-grandmother. After retirement became a writer and a water color artist. Has had poems published in England, the U.S. and locally; has had two essays read on the CBC, one by herself, and also had one appear on the CBC's *Story Engine* on the 'net.' p 96

Joseph Gould Fairhope, Alabama
Age 88. Avid poetry writer and retired Navy Capt. He was on the inaugural Honor Flight South Alabama in May, 2009. The flight took 92 veterans to see the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. He wrote "*Honor Flight South Alabama*" upon returning home. p 62

Don Gralen Burr Ridge, Illinois
Born 1933 in Oak Park, Illinois; he took business and law degrees from Loyola University in Chicago and practiced law for many years. His poems have been published in a number of reviews and journals. In 2001 he published a collection of poems entitled *Black Granite and Gold Leaf*, and in 2006 another collection entitled *Sailing to Dalmatia*. p 49, 58

Tom Greening Los Angeles, California
Received his BA from Yale and PhD from the University of Michigan; psychotherapist and professor of psychology. Editor of the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* from 1970 to 2005. A book of his poems, *Words Against the Void*, was published in 2008 by University of the Rockies Press. p 59

Edward Grocki Saratoga Springs, New York
Retired salesman; part-time actor; poet. Has published poems and produced a 90-minute cassette of 115 poems. p 19

Ione Grover St. Mary's, Ontario
Born 1932 in Toronto. Her father was a newspaper editor and columnist who encouraged her to follow in his footsteps, but she did not try much writing until her older years. She spent most of her life as a wife, mother of 2 and a social worker. Divorced in her 60s, she was ordained as a minister and explored and gave workshops on the possibilities of elder hood. "A few years ago, I discovered poetry as a vehicle for self-expression." p 98

Bennett Gurian Brookline, Massachusetts
Age 77. Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School; active staff at the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Boston; Medical Director at Jewish Family and Children's Service; Fellow of the Gerontological Society of America and the American Geriatric Society; and a practicing Geriatric Psychiatrist. p 18, 51, 58

Joyce Harries Edmonton, Alberta
Born 1928. Began writing creatively at a seniors' center in 1996. Her first book, *Girdles and Other Harnesses I Have Known*, was published in 2000; her second, *Twice in a Blue Moon*, in 2007. Full member of the League of Canadian Poets. p 102

Pat Harvey Asheville, North Carolina
Born 1934 in England, married a Texan and came to the US 1957. Graduated Radcliffe 1962, PhD (Anthropology), University of Rochester 1975; teaching at Boston University, Curry College and University of Massachusetts. "In school in England in the 1940s I loved poetry, but never imagined myself as poet. In my 40s, surprised by life changes, writing poems became a new way, both introspective and impersonal, challenging and deeply satisfying, of rediscovering and expressing myself and the world." p 40

Sterling Haynes West Kelowna, British Columbia
Age 81. Has been writing stories and poetry since he was 70. In 2003 his book *Bloody Practice* (Caitlin Press) was on the BC bestseller list. Has written for *The Medical Post*, *Okanagan Life*, *Alberta Views & C.* A book of 30 stories, *Wake-up Call*, will be published by Caitlin Press in 2010. A retired physician, he wrote a humor column in the local newspaper until 2008. p 45

Eileen Holland Wellington, Ontario
Age 71; BA in History and Education. Most of her writing has been short local color articles and research essays. "During a health crisis in 2006 I began to write Haiku type poems spontaneously. I have written many different forms since." Member of the In-formed Poets of Wellington, Ontario. p 66

Phyllis Hotch Taos, New Mexico
Author of two books of poetry: *No Long Time* (La Alameda Press) and *A Little Book of Lies* (Blinking Yellow Books). Her poems have appeared in journals and anthologies. She has presented readings, and read on radio. She works in the writing community as an active Board member of SOMOS. p 86

Lois Batchelor Howard Desert Hot Springs, California
A much-published award-winning writer. A University of Michigan graduate in music, she especially likes the music of words. She received 1st Place in The National League of American Pen Women's Biennial Competition 2008. p 47

Carrie McLeod Howson West Orange, New Jersey
Grew up in the Arizona desert; a proud graduate of Bennington College. She turned to poetry at age 62 as a way to express her feelings about her husband's Alzheimer's, and found it an avenue to celebrations of life. p 49

Gedda Ilves Los Angeles, California
Born in Harbin, China of Russian parents. In 1951 she came to Los Angeles with her late husband. Her first book of poems: *Grains of Life* published in 2005; the second: *A View from Within* in 2008. Her poems appeared in several literary magazines and a couple of anthologies. p 76

Ruth Harriet Jacobs Wellesley, Massachusetts
Age 85. Gerontologist, sociologist, playwright, educator, poet., author of nine books including *Be an Outrageous Older Woman* and *ABC's for Seniors*. She is a senior scholar at Wellesley College's Center for Women. She speaks widely and teaches in lifelong learning programs. p 99,101

Viola A Jaffe Doylestown, Pennsylvania
Born 1918 in New York City, died 2009. Viola worked in teaching, counseling, and peace/social justice. She moved to Assisted Living in 2007, where she began writing poetry, although she had previously penned light verse for family occasions. "I guess I write as a way of talking. Something occurs, I react, and a poem results. Feelings turn into language and language validates my feelings. I see poems on the page, tactile and real: that makes me feel good." p 49

Trudy James Seattle, Washington
A multifaith hospital chaplain, retreat leader, and group facilitator. She spent 20 years developing volunteer CareTeams for people living with AIDS in Arkansas and in the Puget Sound. She has 3 children, 2 grandsons, 4 granddogs, and a little red car. She loves her Art Group, her Dream Group, trees, Adyashanti, and Italy; and she will soon travel to Indonesia. p 67

Diana Jamieson Westmount, Quebec
Born 1924 in Ontario. Moved to Montreal; educated in Winnipeg. Degree in Art History from Concordia Montreal. Owned and ran an antique store for years. Was a guide at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts for 14 years. Member of Westmount Manor poetry class. p 13

Elizabeth Bayless Johnstone Visalia, California.
Born 1928, youngest of 7. Graduated in fine arts; Became Program Director for Head Start Educational Program. Retired, went back to school, became a paralegal, and worked for Tulare County Council. Now volunteering for California Legal Services serving low-income clients. p 21

Ina Jones Cobleskill, New York
She came to the U.S. from Germany with her parents in 1928, when she was 8. She has had poetry, short fiction and memoirs published in literary magazines and small press anthologies. In 2001, she published *A Final Wine*, a collection of her poems. p 9

Roger S Jones Minneapolis, Minnesota
A native New Yorker, he was a physics professor at the University of Minnesota for 32 years. He published two popular physics books, and wrote a fantasy play, *Trial by Fire*. Now retired, he enjoys biking and writing short stories, essays, poems, creative nonfiction. p 99

Harry Jordan Sidney, British Columbia
Born 1931 in Scarborough, England, home of the famous literary Sitwell family. This had nothing to do with his interest in poetry which started in the usual way in the sixth form of the local grammar school. More recently he has enjoyed contemporary poets such as Wendy Cope, Billy Collins and Patrick Lane. p 68

Jean Jordan Sidney, British Columbia
Born 1937 in Vancouver. Graduated from Burnaby South High and a year later from Vancouver Normal School. She started teaching in the company town of Kitimat where she met her husband. They raised 4 children while teaching, and then started a children's book business. They have recently moved to Sidney, BC which they enjoy greatly, especially the sea-side walks. p 63

Miriam Jordan Orangeville, Ontario
Born 1927. to sadly unmatched couple in London, England. Evacuated out of wartime London (1939 war) to the country. Returned to parents at age 14 and worked for 5 years in offices, shops & a factory, but then trained as a ballet dancer and danced and acted professionally. Fell in love & (usual story) threw over truly promising career for marriage & children in Canada. p 58

Justinian Dundas, Ontario
Age 81. Her pen name is Justinian, an Irish family name. She taught science in Canada and England. She retired from Hillfield Strathallan College and returned to England with her husband in 1985. They came back to Ontario in February 2008 after travels in Egypt, Australia and Fiji. She now resides at the Georgian residence. p 63

Rita Katz Port Washington, New York
Member of the Graphic Eye, Poets Circle-Port Washington, NY; contributing poet to Taproot Senior writing workshop and Magazine; author of 6 chapbooks; winner of the McCarten award (first prize awarded by The Academy of American Poets) 1999 and 2000. Poetry published in the *L. I. Quarterly*, *Avocet*, *Long Island Review* (honorable mention); and in two anthologies, 2008-2009, *Seasoned Women* and *Primal Sanctities*. p 96

Margaret Kay Allston, Massachusetts
Graduated summa cum laude from U/Mass. Boston at age 71; studied under Lloyd Schwartz and Martha Collins. Since age 70 has published 50 plus poems. Grants from Money for Women and Thanks be to Grandmother Winifred Foundation. Received summer residence at Ragdale (Artist colony at Lake Forest, Illinois). p 12

Maria J Keane Wilmington, Delaware
Graduate of Hunter College (BA), New York and the University of Delaware (MA). Adjunct professor of Fine Arts at Wilmington University (since 1984), Newcastle, Delaware. She is an Arts and Letters member of the National League of American Pen Women. Her study and writing of poetry has led to the publication of several poems. She is a fine artist who received a Works on Paper Professional Fellowship jointly from the Delaware State Arts Council and the NEA. p 11

Joan Kehoe Scarborough, Ontario
Immigrated from England in 1948 as a little girl and lived her life in Scarborough. Retired from teaching after a career spanning 40 years. Earned two degrees; one at age 40 and one at 50. Has published poetry in assorted venues and won two awards over the years. Member of two choirs (Serenata Choir and Bel Canto Choir). p 67

Sigrid Kellenter Schenectady, New York
Born 1938 in Bulgaria, raised in Germany (1944-60), then came to the US, married, had 3 children, completed her education, and taught German (1978-2003). "I wrote research papers, but never a poem until my first "vita in verse" for my 70th birthday. Since then, I have joyously engaged in word play." p 52

Joan AW Kimball Concord, Massachusetts
Grandmother to 7 girls, she began submitting work when she was 71. Her poems have appeared in *Measure*, *Raintown Review*, *Lyric*, *Avocet*, and others. She belongs to the troupe, "X. J. Kennedy and the Light Brigade" that performed its humorous verse at the Massachusetts Poetry Festival, 2008 and 2009. p 74

Lillian Kormendi Stony Brook, New York
Age 74. Member of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute associated with Stony Brook University. Has taught many courses on literature and history and has also taken many courses. Was a librarian and also an amateur pianist. Writes mostly short stories and memoir pieces. "Writing poetry is a rather new endeavor but one that gives me much pleasure." p 6

Yala Korwin Flushing, New York
Has achieved professional status in 3 art forms: sculpture, painting, and poetry. She is a retired librarian. She authored the book *To Tell the Story - Poems of the Holocaust*. Her poems have appeared in numerous magazines: *Midstream*, *Blue Unicorn*, *eleven*, *Orphic Lute*, *Mobius*, *The Hypertexts*, etc. Some poems appear in anthologies and scholastic handbooks. p 01

Laurel Lamperd Esperance, Western Australia.
Born 1934. She lives on the south coast of Western Australia. She writes poetry, short stories and novels. She has published 3 novels, *Substitute Bride* and *Wind from Danyari*, and a children's novel, *The Battle of Boodicuttup Creek*. Her website is <http://laurel6346.tripod.com> p 33

Dallas D Lassen West Jefferson, North Carolina
Age 82, retired from a career in Civil/Architectural Engineering. He and his wife have a home business in professional genealogy. They are writers and poets. He taught creative writing and genealogy for 10 years. Married three times and never divorced; 6 children, 9 grandchildren, 1 great-grandson.
p 6

Joanna Lawson Ancaster, Ontario
Raised in Ontario. After her husband died, she immersed her grief in poetry. The book *Journey with Grief* was the result. Two of her four poetry books won the Poetry Award from Arts Hamilton, *Inner Voices* in 2005 and *Bundle of Life* in 2008.
p 36

Joan D Lee Ithaca, New York
Born 1922; now living in a retirement home in Ithaca NY, after years as a full-time secretary at UMass and librarian at Amherst College in the evenings. Sold her home and moved because of a bad back. She enjoys classes at Ithaca College, raising roses and establishing bluebird houses.
p 20

Irving Leos Commack, New York
Born 1920, New York City. BA Brooklyn College; married Shirley in 1944. Work experience includes shipping clerk, shipfitter, editor, writer, PR; retired from being a PR and fundraising consultant to non-profits in 1991. Has dabbled with versification since pre-adolescence.
p 27

Christopher Levenson Vancouver, British Columbia
Born 1934 in London, England, he taught English and creative writing at Carleton University, Ottawa, from 1968 until retirement in 1999. With his wife, Oonagh, he moved to Vancouver in 2007. He has published 10 books of poetry and edited 3 poetry anthologies.
p 39

Bernice Lever Bowen Island, British Columbia
Writer, editor and teacher. Her 9th poetry book is *Generation*, Black Moss Press, 2009. She edited WAVES, 1972-1987. Great grandmother; has read poems on 5 continents. Her grammar & composition book is *The Colour of Words*.
www.colourofwords.com p 52

Mara Levine Northport, New York
Born 1934. Her poetry was first published in an *Anthology of New York Poets*, Mark Van Doren and Marianne Moore (Eds). She enjoyed a career of teaching, theater, creative arts seminars for the New York State Education Department, and later as a psychotherapist. Her book of poetry, *Generations*, was published in 2003. She is currently a co-editor of the poetry journal *Xanadu*. She and her husband, Marvin Levine, give performances that combine poetry and music.
p 86

Sylvia Levinson San Diego, California
Publishing credits: *Snowy Egret*, *Blue Arc West*, *City Works*, *San Diego Writers Ink*, *Poetic Matrix*, *Christian Science Monitor*. Awards: City Works, American Society on Aging, San Diego African-American Writers and Artists. *Gateways: Poems of Nature, Meditation and Renewal* is available at:
www.sylvialevinson.com p 79

Laurie Lewis Kingston, Ontario
Fellow of the Graphic Designers of Canada. Editor and art director of *Vista*, the magazine of the Seniors Association in Kingston, Ontario. Her work has been published in *Contemporary Verse*, *Queen's Feminist Review*, the *Ottawa Citizen* and in several anthologies. A chapter of her current manuscript-in-progress was shortlisted for the 2007 CBC Literary Awards in Creative Non-Fiction.
p 97

Norma West **Linder** Sarnia Ontario
Member, Writers' Union of Canada, etc. Author of 5 novels, 9 poetry collections, memoir of Manitoulin Island, a children's book, biography. Poetry published in many anthologies. Taught English 24 years at Lambton College, Sarnia. Wrote a monthly column, shorts stories published internationally & on CBC. Has two daughters and a son. p 8, 12

Jack **Livesley** Toronto, Ontario
Born 1928 in Brantford, Ontario. He is the author and coauthor of 4 books on media and education. Has had several poems published in *Tower Poetry*. He taught English, Music and Drama in Ottawa schools and spent 20 years in television as a writer, producer and on air host. He has conducted workshops in writing and media across Canada and the US. p 31

Ann **Lloyd** Montreal Quebec.
Born 1938 in Wales. Author of *Lurching in the Looney Bin*, *A how-to book on downsizing to a nest of self chosen memories before being thrust into a room in a residence*. Teaches poetry writing to Seniors. Gives lectures and workshops; Seniors advocate. Upcoming: *Geriatric Erotica: The Oxymoron*. p 37

Verniel **Lundquist** Evanston, Illinois
Grew up on a farm in Nebraska and attended a one-room school. High school English teacher for 33 years. Her passions are literature and travel. She now lives in a retirement home, where she is active in a writing group. p 91

Kathleen (Kay) Mary Prewer **Lyne** Hamilton, Ontario
Born 1930 in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, she was raised in a family that valued poetry. In 1950 she married William C. Lyne. Their first daughter and her ARCT Piano Teacher arrived in 1952. Subsequently moving to Hamilton where two daughters and a son were born. She obtained a BA (Hon. Psy) McMaster

University, 1974: an MSW, Wilfrid Laurier University, 1982. Her poems appear regularly in *Tower Poetry*. p 43

Lynne **MacDonald** Sandwich, Massachusetts
In 1943, she left Seattle to appear in the production of *Junior Miss* on Broadway. After touring, she resumed writing plays and publishing poems. A member of the poetry group of the Unitarian Church of Barnstable, she has been the featured poet at the Calliope Poetry series. p 53

Sharon **MacFarlane** Beechy, Saskatchewan
Born 1939 in Beechy, Saskatchewan where she has lived all her life. She and her husband live on a farm. She began writing in her 40s and has published a book of short stories: *Driving Off the Map*. She began writing poetry about 5 years ago. p 15

Michael A **Mason** Kingston, Ontario
Born 1924 in England, taught English in British high schools and universities in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and Canada, retired from Royal Military College in 1991. Poems have appeared in *Seven x Seven* (Moonstone Press), *OCTE* Anthologies, *Northward Journal*, and *English* (in the UK). p 75

Barbara **Mayer** Kansas City, Kansas
Member of the Benedictine Sisters of Mount St. Scholastica. She has been a teacher, journalist, editor, public relations director and writer. A freelance writer and poet, she has been published in various magazines including *Celebration*, *The Best Times*, *The Midwest Quarterly*, *Grit* and *Blueline*. p 46

Kilian **McDonnell** Collegeville, Minnesota
Age 87. Theologian, Benedictine monk, ecumenist, author of numerous theological books, founder and president of the post-doctoral Collegeville Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research. He began writing poetry on biblical personages and

themes at 75. He does not write pious verse. His third book of poetry: *God Drops and Loses Things* (2009). p 55, 94, 101

Eugene McNamara Windsor, Ontario
Author of 5 collections of short fiction and 15 volumes of poetry. His novel, *The Orphan's Waltz*, appeared in 2008. His stories and poems have appeared in *Best Canadian Stories*, *Best American Short Stories*, *Ontario Review*, *Saturday Night*, *Malahat Review* and *Queens Quarterly*. He is Professor Emeritus at the University of Windsor where he taught English for 35 years. He founded and edited the *Windsor Review* for 22 years. p 10

Theodore Melnechuk Amherst, Massachusetts
Born 1928. Earned a BA at Columbia University, where he shared poetry prizes with classmates Allen Ginsberg and John Hollander. A scholar of neurosciences, psychoneuroimmunology and science communication, his published poems appeared mostly in scientific journals and books. Since retiring to Amherst MA, he has written mainly limericks. p 49, 97

Barbara Elizabeth Mercer Toronto, Ontario
Born 1933, Galt/Cambridge, ON. Author, poet, visual artist; writing poetry since childhood. Poetry books published: *Echoes From Cabbagetown*, 2009, *Secrets*, 2008 [launched International Oslo, Norway Literary Festival 2008], *Legacy*, 2007, *Self Portrait*, 2006, *Mystic Wills*, 2005. *Pub. Cyberwit*, India. Co-Author *When Poets Collide*, 2006. Member: Canadian Poetry Association. www.barbaraemercer.com p 42

Sandra Seaton Michel Wilmington, Delaware
Born 1935 in Hancock MI. Her publications include *My Name Is (Jaybird)* (Houghton Mifflin, 1972); *No More Someday* (Lenape, 1973); *From the Peninsula, South* (D&N Press, 1980); *Thomas, My Brother* (Pencader Pub, 1981); *Visions to Keep* (D&N Press, 1990). p 25

June Mitchell Regina, Saskatchewan
Born 1926. Grew up through drought, depression and war, received her BA and Teacher's Certificate, taught briefly, married, raised 7 children, then taught in Special Education and became Special Education Consultant. After retirement she traveled widely, but Regina has always been home base. She gives credit to the University of Regina Seniors Education Centre for keeping her writing. p 51

Marlene Monster Dundas, Ontario
Born in Kitchener, graduated from Wilfrid Laurier University, taught school for a few years. Lived in the Ottawa area, but mostly in Hamilton where she worked as a buyer at the McMaster bookstore for 25 years. She enjoys cycling, waterfit, Sudoku and being retired! p 7

Yvonne Moody Westmount, Quebec
Born 1920 on Vancouver Island. Moved to England, married, 2 children. Taught riding to the disabled; ran Support Group for Mothers of Disabled Children; phone support for suicides. 23 yrs ago retired to East Coast Canada; now, in happy retirement; member of Westmount Manor poetry class. p 62

Dorothy E Morris Quincy, Massachusetts
Retired as a Director of Information in a Boston financial company in 2002, and since has devoted her time to writing. She has published more than 20 poems in the *South Boston Literary Gazette*, won a first prize with the journal for short story. p 91

T Garvice Murphree Asheville, North Carolina
Age 85. He is 7½ years on his journey with incurable, but treatable cancer. Many of his poems in recent years pertain to or evolve out of his experiences with cancer, treatment, illness, joy and fulfillment in living with eagerness for more and more knowledge and understanding. Within the last year his wife has also experienced the onset of cancer. He desires that his direct

poems may be beneficial to medical personnel, caregivers, and family members. p 78

David J Murray Toronto, Ontario
Emeritus Professor of Psychology at Queen's University, Kingston. He has written *A History of Western Psychology* and other scholarly works. Since retiring, has published *Confusion Matrix and Other Poems*, *Surface Tension and Other Poems*, and *War-Wise and Other Poems*, all with iUniverse. p 65

Joan Newton Winnipeg, Manitoba
Born 1934. Writes plays, short stories and poems. "Whatever genre I am working on at the moment is my favorite. I write to see what could happen to an ordinary person in a familiar situation." p 7

Valerie Nielsen Stoney Creek, Ontario
Worked in teaching, counseling and ministry. She facilitates a writers' circle, and enjoys leading women's retreats on creativity and spirituality. Her interests include writing, choral singing, sacred circle dancing, painting, photography, nature and travel. She shares a blended family with her husband Robert. p 81

Joan Stidham Nist Auburn, Alabama
Born 1926 in Chicago, grew up in Hawaii. She interrupted her doctoral program to raise four sons. Taught briefly at Indiana University, Eastern Michigan University, and Austin College (Texas). Has lived in Brazil, Rome, and Munich. She is Professor Emerita at Auburn University, Alabama. p 17

Louise B O'Brien Wilmington, Delaware
Age 88. Widow, 7 children. Published in numerous papers and magazines; had a book published 7 years ago. Has been a member of Pen Women of America for 40 years. Writes children and adult stories, humor, Haiku, and poetry. p 11

Adrian M Ostfeld Hamden, Connecticut
Age 83. Physician, naval veteran of World War II. Married 58 years, 3 children and 6 grandchildren. "I began writing poetry at age 12, stopped because teachers belittled my efforts, and started again at 67." p 46

James J Payne Bainbridge Island, Washington
Born near Fort Laramie, Wyoming. "I learned the beauty of words from my mother. My father hated 'mutton' and despised 'sissies', which was how I felt about men who write poetry. Thank goodness for small ironies. Retirement lets me indulge these little conceits called 'poems.' As a hobby, I've written 4 novels, published several short stories, written a column for *The Aspen Today*, been a stringer for the Bremerton Sun, and written nearly 100 poems in the last 2 years." p 8

Jane E Pearce Wayne, Pennsylvania
Born 1927, grew up in Schenectady, NY. Retired RN. Recently widowed, 2 daughters (both nurses). "I have loved poetry from a young age and wrote many class songs as I went through school. After I retired, I studied writing and have written over 200 poems over the past ten years – some fairly good, others so-so." p 20

Lynne Phillips Victoria, British Columbia
After a lifetime of writing from life (hugging trees, saving the world, and paddling the Pacific Ocean) she is now settling into a decorous age watching birds and growing Russian kale in her planter boxes named for female Celtic Saints. p 44

Ruth Roach Pierson Toronto, Ontario
Professor emeriti of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto. Author of two books of poems, both published by BuschekBooks of Ottawa: *Where No Window Was* (2002) and *Aide-Memoire* (2007). The latter was a finalist for the 2008 Governor General's Literary Award for Poetry p 67

Lottie Pincus Miami Beach, Florida

Age 83. "I got the urge to write poetry in my seventies. My best ideas come to me in the middle of the night, which I scribble down in the dark. Much of what I write is indecipherable in the morning." p 50

Sister Mary Doris Pook Chatham, Ontario

Born 1919. Graduate of the University of Montreal, taught music 1940-1995. She has been a line-dance instructor for senior citizens, played the organ for the Ursuline Community, composed music, and published *Poetry and Musings* and a notepad of seasonal poetry, with proceeds going to development projects across the world. While a little less mobile, she plans another pictorial /poetry book about her new home Villa Angela, participates in a book club and continues to write poetry and play the organ for special events. p 81

Halia Pushkar Coos Bay, Oregon

Born 1935 in Winnipeg, Canada. Married in 1960; BSc & MEd from Wright State University, Dayton. Taught 30+ years in Canada and US. Currently writes poetry and gardens. p 92

Elizabeth Quan Toronto, Ontario

Born 1921. BA, DPT, University of Toronto. Canadian water-colourist who exhibited widely for over 30 years. She was the last protégé of Jack Pollock. She has published 4 books: *Once upon a Full Moon* won the 2008 IODE Jean Throop award. Her latest book *Present Perfect* (2009) is a collection of poems and drawings. She has 3 daughters. p 25

Joanna Qureshi Parksville, British Columbia

Born in London, England. "My mother's love of the English language, and poetry in particular, was a great gift. I moved to Canada in 1957. I've painted for many years and began writing poetry 4 years ago. These are now my greatest pleasures." p 41

Ann Lydia [Whyte] Rempel Ancaster, Ontario

Born in India, where her father was Civil Surgeon in Delhi and Shimla during World War II. After boarding school, she went to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts and briefly to a repertory company in the Midlands before becoming a nurse. She married in 1961 and came to McMaster in 1975. p 5

Bill Reynolds Brookhaven, New York

Recently has taught in the Writing Program at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Author of numerous professional articles for *The English Journal* as well as *The Language Game*, a biweekly column that appeared for three years in a local paper. His novel, *The Ringalievio Tree*, was published in 2004 www.publishamerica.com/books/6512 p 41, 77

Joan Rippel Coquitlam, British Columbia

Retired businesswoman originally from southern Ontario. She has been living and writing in BC for almost 40 years and is a member of the Federation of BC Writers. She has had numerous poems published and currently writes fiction and sci-fi/fantasy novels, along with Canadiana books. p 30

Elisavietta Ritchie Broomes Island, Maryland

Ritchie's books: *Real Toads*, *Awaiting Permission to Land*, *The Spirit of the Walrus*, *The Arc of the Storm*, *Elegy for the Other Woman*, *Wild Garlic: The Journal of Maria X.*, *Raking The Snow*, *A Sheath of Dreams and Other Games*, *Moving to Larger Quarters*, *Tightening The Circle Over Eel Country*, *In Haste I Write You This Note*, and *Flying Time*. p 46

Zan Robinson Whitby, Ontario
Maritimer, lived much of her life in the Toronto area.
Personal experience raising a family and teaching; the peace and
beauty of the ocean; the wilderness of Ontario; and problems
facing today's world prompt much of her writing. "Overly long
sentences are her greatest writing challenge." p 38

Sheila Rosen Burnaby, British Columbia
Born 1939 in and grew up in Greenwood, BC. She began
taking writing seriously in her 50s. Member of Burnaby Writers
Society. Her poems have won prizes and have been published in
various journals. She takes part in many literary events in the
Vancouver area. p 39

Norma Rowen Toronto, Ontario
Retired academic from York University, specializing in
children's and fantasy literature. Besides academic articles, she
has written radio scripts, aired on the CBC and the BBC, a
children's story, and poetry. One of her poems was shortlisted for
a *Descant* magazine poetry prize. She particularly likes to explore
the colours and shapes of words. p 34

Bobby Salvin Ottawa, Ontario
Born 1932 in Penzance, England. Widow with 3 children.
Graduate of Ottawa Teachers' College. Self published two poetry
books & *A Child's W. W. II*. Winner of 2nd and 4th prize, Poetry
Institute of Canada, four Editors Choice awards, The International
Library of Poetry, short story *H. M Canadian Stories*. p 69

Peter E Schmidt Newton, Massachusetts
Born 1938. Experienced wartime Germany as a child,
emigrated to the US in 1949. Careers as physicist and engineer,
married with two children. Now retired, participating in a lifelong-
learning institute, learning music, and exploring mysteries of the
written word in verse. p 74

Barbara Lipson Schukar St. Louis, Missouri
Born 1936 in St Louis, Missouri; attended Washington
University there. In 9th grade won first place in *The National
Scholastic Magazine* contest for poetry and a second place for
essay. Married 53 years. "I stopped writing poetry to raise 3
wonderful children and only began again at age 72." p 91

Edna Selthon Coos Bay, Oregon
Born 1918 in Coos Bay, Oregon, the first of 10 children.
Married 1942; widowed 1991; two sons. At age 89, moved to
assisted living house. Content, happy and busy; still writing
poetry. p 54

Dorothy Schiff Shannon Setauket, New York
She hoped to become a writer since she was 9. Retiring
after 30 years as a first grade teacher, she began to write poetry
and memoirs. Has published some poetry and won some poetry
awards. Widowed twice, brought up 3 children, sometimes as a
single mother. "I now have 4 grandchildren, who are the sparkle
in my life. I also take and teach workshops at Olli, a society for
mature learners at Stony Brook University." p 62

Joan Shewchun Burlington, Ontario
"Have always enjoyed expressing myself in writing and
have taken a number of writing courses and belonged to writing
groups. I find that poetry is a good medium for capturing strong
emotional moments. I am the mother of 1 son and grandmother
of 2 and taught in a preschool before retiring." p 32, 57

Libby Simon Winnipeg, Manitoba
Retired school social worker, now working as a freelance
writer. She writes poetry, humor, 'slice-of-life' pieces as well as
academic essays. Her work has appeared in publications such as
the *Winnipeg Free Press*, *Homemaker's* and *Geist* magazines,
Canadian scholarly journals and U.S. anthologies. p 50

Carol Smallwood Mt Pleasant, Michigan
Her work has appeared in *English Journal*, *Michigan Feminist Studies*, *The Yale Journal for Humanities in Medicine*, *Journal of Formal Poetry*, *The Writer's Chronicle*, *The Detroit News*, and anthologies. *The Published Librarian: Successful Professional and Personal Writing* is forthcoming from the American Library Association. p 39

Raymond Souster Toronto, Ontario
Born 1921 in Toronto and regarded as the Dean of Toronto poets. He is the recipient of many honours, awards, and distinctions, including the Governor General's Award, the City of Toronto Book Award, and the Order of Canada. p 32

Francis Sparshott Scarborough, Ontario
Born 1926, raised and schooled in England; came to Canada 1950. Taught philosophy at University of Toronto 1950-1991. Member of League of Canadian Poets since 1968 (President 1977-79). Has published 11 books of verse (most recently *Scoring in Injury Time*, Wolsak and Wynn, 2006); Widowed, one daughter. p 16

C Isobel (Campbell) Spence Lafleche, Saskatchewan
Born 1918 to a Canadian soldier and his English war-bride, grew up in Moose Jaw. "After life as farm-wife, mother of 4, teacher and participant in numerous local organizations, and several provincial ones, I now enjoy a happy retirement: reading, writing, and playing bridge and Scrabble." p 69, 92

Marie Elyse St George Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
Age 80, a visual artist and poet in Saskatoon who explores the interaction between image and words. She has exhibited widely, published and broadcast poetry and prose, including the CBC's National Poetry Face-Off. Her memoir, *Once in a Blue Moon*, won the Saskatchewan Book Award in 2006. p 2

Viola Pearl Diener Stahl Harrisonburg, Virginia
Born the 8th of 10 to a Mennonite preacher-farmer and his wife in Iowa; mother of 4 and grandmother to 10. Retired registered nurse. Enjoys people, history, and reading. Sustained a spinal cord injury nine years ago but is quite mobile in a motorized wheelchair; lives in the home where she and husband raised their family, currently owned by a daughter and husband who remodeled to include an accessible suite for her. p 9, 93

Joan S Stark Ann Arbor, Michigan
Before retirement, she was dean and professor of education at the University of Michigan. Mother of 4 and grandmother of 8, she has also been a high school and college science instructor. She has published widely on issues related to college curriculum leadership, has received many professional awards and is listed in Who's Who in America. p 13

Herbert Stewart Fullerton, California
Age 86. "I meet the age requirement of being over 70; however the *Poet* part of it is open to speculation. I retired from a middle management position with the Southern California Gas Co. in 1985 but I've been writing light verse since I was a kid. Actually, my submissions are song lyrics but I think they're somewhat poetic." p 88

John Sullivan Guelph, Ontario
His poetry was influenced by his boyhood experiences on a farm and subsequent love of nature, his father's storytelling and his wonderful imagination. His stories were music played out in words, words so carefully chosen that one could feel the drama. Even his photography excelled at making the ordinary extraordinary. (deceased) p 100

Anne **Swannell** Victoria, British Columbia
Born in England. Her poetry has been published in *Anglo-Welsh Review*, *Canadian Literature*, *The Fiddlehead*, *Malahat Review*, and *Prairie Fire*. She has three books of poetry: *Drawing Circles on the Water* (Rampant Swan Publishing, Victoria), *Mall* (Rowan Books, Edmonton, 1991) and *Shifting* (Ekstasis Editions, Victoria, 2008). p 43

Robert **Sward** Santa Cruz, California
Born 1933 in Chicago. Canadian citizen since 1975. He taught at Cornell University, the Iowa Writers' Workshop and the University of Victoria. A Fulbright scholar and Guggenheim Fellow, he was chosen by Lucille Clifton to receive a Villa Montalvo Literary Arts Award. He served in the US Navy during the Korean War and later worked for CBC Radio and as book reviewer and feature writer for the *Toronto Star* and *Globe and Mail* while living on the Toronto Islands. p 94, 98

Adele Kearns **Thomas** Sarnia, Ontario
Retired RN Nursing Supervisor, raised in the Laurentians. Her third poetry collection to be published soon. Her work appeared in *Quills*, *Carousel*, *The Prairie Journal*, *Kairos*, *Mediphors*, (Can. and US), and several anthologies including the *Sandburg / Livesey Award*, *Dark Lullaby*. Co-edited the Ontario Poetry Society's anthology, *Sounding the Seconds*, 2008. p 45, 93

Michael **Thorpe** Sackville, New Brunswick
Born 1932 in England, he came to Canada in 1970 after teaching in Turkey, Nigeria, Singapore, and Holland. Emeritus Professor at Mount Allison University. His poetry collections include *Out of the Storm* (Penumbra); *Bagdad is Everywhere*, *Loves* and *The Unpleasant Subject* (all TSAR); forthcoming is *Losing Elin* (Anchorage Press.) p 89

Stephen **Threlkeld** Hamilton, Ontario
Retired biology professor, specializing in genetics. Has been writing poetry since retirement nearly 20 years ago. His poems have appeared in a number of anthologies. A past president of the Great Lakes Sea-Kayaking Association, the Hamilton Barascuba Club, and the Hamilton Association. p 23

Marion Frahm **Tincknell** Saginaw, Michigan
Born 1928. She has presented poetry performances and workshops in schools, churches, libraries and gatherings of adults for more than 25 years, is a member of the River Junction Poets and the Poetry Society of Michigan, and has been on the Humanities Lecture Committee since its beginning in 1980. p 1

Gabrielle **Traxler** Evanston, Illinois
Age 80. BA, St Mary's, Notre Dame, Indiana, where she met her husband. "Proud parent with him of 5 stellar offspring." She was primarily a homemaker, and later a Library Assistant. She began writing late in life and participates in a writing group at her residence. p 22

Mildred **Tremblay** Nanaimo, British Columbia
Born 1925 in Kenora, Ontario. She began her writing career when she was in her mid-50s. She has had 3 books published by Oolichan Books - a book of short stories *Dark Forms Gliding* and two books of poems: *Old Woman Comes Out of Her Cave* and *The Thing About Dying*. Both poetry manuscripts were written when she was well over 70. p 79, 80

Patricia **Trudeau** St. Albert, Alberta
Born 1931 in Ottawa, Canada, retired teacher. Author of 2 published novels, writes prose and poetry. Her poems have appeared in Minerva Senior Studies chap books, Alberta Senior Games Creative Writing Competition publications, and local periodicals. p 35

Edith Van Beek Orangeville, Ontario

Has been writing poems reflecting on her centenarian mother who died when Edith was 72. She writes her memories of a Cape Cod childhood and her return journeys there with her energetic, elderly mother. She recalls their Sunday night phone conversations in the final years of her mother's life. She has published four books: *My Side of Fruit*, *Points of White*, *Rising about Us*, *A Himalayan Mind*. p 82

Eloise Smith van Niel Honolulu, Hawaii

Born 1922. A native of Cleveland, she moved from Troy, NY to Hawaii in 1965. BA from the College of Wooster, master's degrees in library science and history from the University of Hawaii. While living abroad with her family she wrote articles about Holland, Indonesia, and Malaysia. Since retiring as head of the Arts Section of the Hawaii State Library she has continued her interest in painting and poetry. p 14

Betty J Van Ochten Saginaw, Michigan

Age 76, lifelong resident of Saginaw. She was a reporter for the *Saginaw News* before becoming a wife, mother and grandmother. Poetry is her 'retirement hobby'. Her poems have appeared in *The Saturday Evening Post*, *MEOW*, *Peninsula Poets*, and several anthologies. p 28, 82

Rosalee (Auger) van Stelten Victoria, British Columbia

Served in the Royal Canadian Navy (Wrens) from 1952 to 1965, at the height of the Cold War. Her books, *Pattern of Genes* and *Pavlov's Elephant*, are published by Frontenac House. Has just completed a poetry manuscript about her Navy life. p 33

Helen Vanier Lebanon, New Hampshire

Born 1919. "I've had a long and challenging life. As a physical therapist I served in Africa with the 6th General Hospital in Casablanca. I was married there a year later and came home to raise 9 children of whom I'm inordinately proud. I resumed therapy work until retiring. Widowed over 20 years ago, I live quietly near the woods with the birds, chipmunks and squirrels. I write poetry to stay alive!" p 61, 90

Marianne Forsyth Vespry Hamilton, Ontario

Born 1935 on her parents' Manitoba farm. Attended one-room school on prairies, earned bachelor's degrees from Manitoba, Toronto. Since has studied in the school of experience, which charges exorbitant tuition, and shows no signs of awarding further degrees. Currently retired, writing poetry, working on her RIP. p xiii, 80

William Dexter Wade Winnipeg, Manitoba

Senior Scholar in linguistics at the University of Manitoba. In retirement, he has published three short stories. In 34 years as an academic, he published numerous books, chapters in books, and journal articles. He edited the *Canadian Review of Physical Anthropology* for 4 years. p 69

Naomi Beth Wakan Gabriola Island, British Columbia

Has written/compiled over 30 books. She is a member of Haiku Canada, Tanka Canada, The League of Canadian Poets and Canadian Tanka. Her poetry and essays have been printed in numerous magazines and she has read them on CBC. She lives on Gabriola Island with her husband, the sculptor, Elias Wakan. www.naomiwakan.com p 57, 95

John Jansen in de **Wal** Toronto, Ontario
Grew up in the Netherlands. He came to Canada, a multilingual teacher. He did the immigrant thing: working different jobs while gaining Canadian qualifications. He retired after a long and satisfying teaching career. His poems and stories have appeared in magazines and anthologies; he has published several books. p 54

Blaine Arthur **Way** Schenectady, New York
Born 1935 in Schenectady, NY; worked in rocket testing (Vanguard and XLR-99/X-15 engines), accounting, computer programming, and management. Retired in 2002. Avocations include research on natural taxonomy and light verse (counterpoise). p 100

Ursula R. **Weissgerber** West Chester, Pennsylvania
Born 1923, in Dresden, Germany, the 7th of 13 children, and raised in a highly literate, artistic, musical family. Most writing of verse occurred after family moved to the US in 1938; she has become more prolific in her 70s and 80s. "What Grandma Moses did with color, I am doing with words. Have written an anniversary poem every year for the past 25 years for Surrey Services for Seniors. Enjoy writing birthday and special occasion verses for my 3 children, 3 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren, and many friends." p 68

Joanna M **Weston** Shawnigan Lake, British Columbia
Has had poetry, reviews, and short stories published in anthologies and journals for 25 years. Her middle-reader, *Those Blue Shoes*, was published by Clarity House Press. Poetry, *A Summer Father*, published by Frontenac House, Calgary. p 31,38

George **Whipple** Burnaby, British Columbia
Born 1927 in Saint John, NB, grew up in Toronto and moved to Burnaby in 1985. Was profiled in *Canadian Author* and *Writer's Digest* (USA) and extensively interviewed in the *Antigonish*

Review #144. Has published 11 books and appeared in 17 anthologies. p 85

Barbara Rexford **White** Malvern, Pennsylvania
Mother of 2 sons, grandmother of 3 little girls. A cancer survivor, avid painter and writer. She can often be found working in her garden with her companion, Jack, a Jack Russell terrier. p 56

SJ **White** Brantford, Ontario
Retired photographer. He has written non-fiction all his life, and more recently, short stories and poetry, and is published in the usual literary magazines and anthologies. Has published three books of poetry: *Quaere*, Three Dimensional Press 2003; *About Time, Moments from a Dead World*, Craigleigh Press 2003; *Four Solitudes*, Serengeti Press, 2008. p 60

Sandy **Wicker** Commack, New York
She enjoys the Long Island poetry scene and participates in various classes, workshops, organizations, and competitions. Her work appears in several anthologies. She has published two books: *The Tennessee Waltz & Other Dances* and more recently, *Finding My Jewish Self*. A retired reading teacher. p 27, 44

Barbara **Wild** Vancouver, British Columbia
Age 80; began writing poetry around 50. In spite of workshops and writers' groups, most of what she sent out was rejected. Two years ago she met a younger poet also keen to get published. They keep in touch. Barbara is now doing better in the publishing world. p 48, 89

Shirley **Windward** Santa Monica, California
Has lived through several wars, moved 45 times, given up three libraries, married, helped raise 2 sons, traveled in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the States, and founded a successful secondary school in Los Angeles, where she lives with her husband and continues to write and publish poetry. p 70

Naomi C Wingfield Guelph, Ontario

Born 1912. Came to expressing herself through poetry in her early 80s. Until 2009, she had been writing with a group of women 25-40 years her juniors. In 2008 she wrote a poem for the 70th reunion of her McMaster University class of '38. "When she is screaming inside at not hearing in the dining room or not being able to read, the creativity of writing a poem helps her to live gratefully." p. 15, 48

Pauline (Des Marchais) **Winkle** Wellington, Ontario

Born 1936, in the Bronx, New York, but raised in Montreal because her father took them back to Canada in 1940. Graduated from D'Arcy McGee, married, had 2 boys, now 4 grandchildren. In 1992 realizing her dream by taking poetry courses at Loyalist College, Belleville. "Joined a poetry writing group where we read what we write at the Open Floor venues around Prince Edward County." p 26

Gisela **Woldenga** Coquitlam, British Columbia

Writer for many years: poems, short stories, children's stories. "Even as a child I put my emotions into poems (good or bad). I belong to a writer's group which has been a great help." p 40

Myra **Woods** Grimsby, Ontario

Retired from Sir John A. MacDonald Secondary School Business Department in 1986. "I have enjoyed the reading and occasional writing of poetry for many years, but increasingly need a prod such as the blurb in *Thirteenth World*, to force pen to paper." p 59, 100

Marion Fields Wyllie Owen Sound, Ontario
Born 1906 in Collingwood Township. First poem published 1920, in *The Globe*. Early schooling in Toronto and rural schools, some secondary school in Thornbury, no diploma. Proofreader in Owen Sound, copyholder *Toronto Evening Telegram*. Spare-time writer, while farming with husband and three sons for 45 years. Evening and correspondence courses. Still writing in her 103rd year. p 48, 75, 94

Frank **Young** East York, Ontario

Born 1916, still dabbles in poetry, having found years ago in his career in association management that it helped him on his job site in his many communication tasks. The *mot juste* came more easily. He has been published in various workshop anthologies. p 55

Andrew Jerome **Zoldos** Malvern, Pennsylvania

Born 1923. Education: Public, 4 Colleges and Universities. Service: 3 years. Married 58 years, 4 children, 6 grandchildren. Worked 42 years, retired 22 years. Poetry: 600 Haikus and other poems. p 43

John **Zyp** Edmonton, Alberta

Born 1928 in Holland, he wrote his first poems in Dutch. When he and his wife Bettie immigrated to Canada as farm laborer he started writing in English. After a variety of jobs he enrolled in the University of Alberta. He has an M.Ed. in Visual Arts, Literature and Administration. Retired teacher, a painter and a poet. p 92

About the Editors

Marianne Forsyth Vespry

Marianne Forsyth Vespry is a member of Tower Poetry Society, living in Hamilton, Ontario. She worked as a librarian, editor and administrator in Canada and abroad. The final thirteen years of her career were spent with the United Nations regional office in Bangkok. In addition to poetry she has published abstract bulletins, directories, thesauri, community editorials for the Hamilton Spectator, and a fantasy novel.



Ellen Bouchard Ryan

Ellen Bouchard Ryan is Professor Emeritus at McMaster University, former Director of the McMaster Centre for Gerontological Studies, and a member of Tower Poetry Society. Her psychological research examines how empowering communication fosters personhood and successful aging.

She edits the *Writing Down Our Years Series* of publications to encourage creative expression and sharing of life stories by older adults.



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