

# Grief Faces and Places, With A Few Smiles In Between



From Kathy and Jill with Love and Hope

In August, 2016, my daughter Jill drowned in a kayaking accident on the Nolichucky River in Erwin, Tennessee. She grew up in Milwaukee along the shores of Lake Michigan, and she loved nature, lakes, rivers, kayaking, the Earth. In her will she directed that her ashes be scattered in water, so I left some of them in the Nolichucky River and some in Lake Michigan. Besides a legacy of kindness, friends, and compassion, she left her poetry and other writing.

I have been posting her poems on Facebook, on the Memorial site that her friend Sue created to honor and remember her. It seemed appropriate to collect her poems in book form as a part of her legacy to family and friends. She took or drew all of the accompanying pictures and the pictures of her were taken by the people who love her. I hope you read, ponder, and appreciate her poetry.

Kathy Warnes



To me this Lake Michigan beach and the Nolichucky River shore symbolize a vast eternity full of light, possibility, and the majesty of God's creation and love.

I chose them to scatter my beloved daughter Jill's ashes and wish her Godspeed on her journey.



## Part I: Jill's Journey



## Work in Progress: 70's child, 60's Soul's Poetic Autobiography

Heart wide open, veins filled with green growing hope,



Toes in earth, head in clouds, hands in work.

I dance with dandelions, walk in wilderness, dig soul gardening,

Sun, fun, and water loving. Entranced by quietly falling rain,

Lakes, rivers, streams, oceans, nature's quiet beauty,

Changing light and star splashed moonlit nights.

Find it easier to write than speak.

Love to adventure seek.

Nurse to survive, heal the bruises and wounds in life,

Music and instruments

my living.

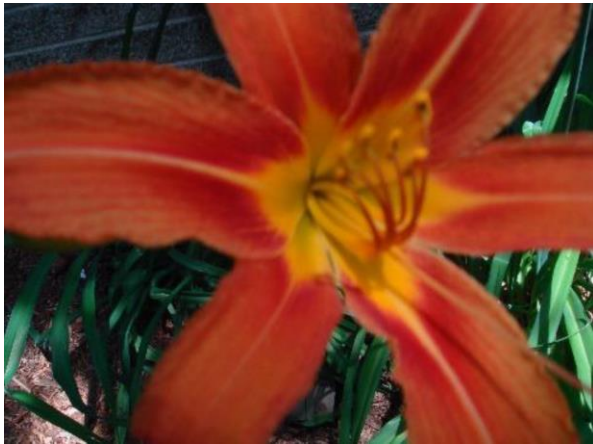
In this universe of creative brilliance

Want to shine in my place, beautify my space,

Maintain balance without knocking others out of place.

Know the world can turn without me.

Red carpets, limos, fame---things I don't need.  
Will know I made some mark  
If I light a fire inside of someone  
And never quench the spark,  
Am mostly sunny, Sometimes funny,  
Want to grow love and hope



Like flowers in February snow  
To spread happiness and joy  
To make people smile  
Help them cope.  
Don't like conflict but will stand for  
rectitude.  
A gentle warrior for my truth,

I straight shoot, crapshoot,  
Am Soft. Am Strong. Am Tough,  
I'm a calico quilt---  
Flannel, worn denim, satin and silk.  
Peace love and harmony priority with me—  
For people to be able to read,  
Sleep safely, have enough to eat  
Receive high quality medical care at need.  
Like strands in a rope, I believe  
Far stronger together than apart are we,  
Though no one else can find your meaning—  
Your passion and reason for living.  
Wandering, wondering what it means

To love, to be smart, to succeed

Answer carefully—we all think differently.

Take me or leave me,

Be direct,

Be kind, Respect,

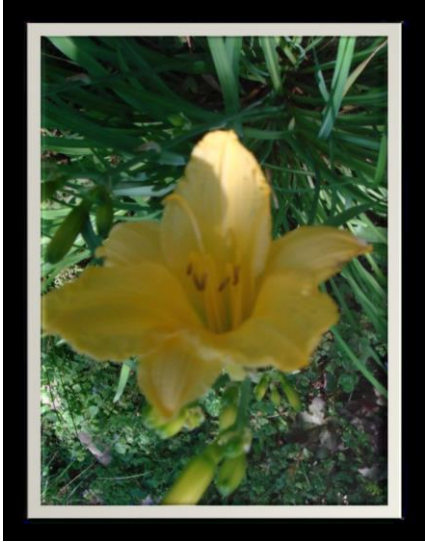
Wishing you blessings,

Hoping

You enjoy the journey

With Me.

## Blooming



Petals Unfurl...  
Fragile splendor  
Newfound freedom  
Awesome world  
Grow!

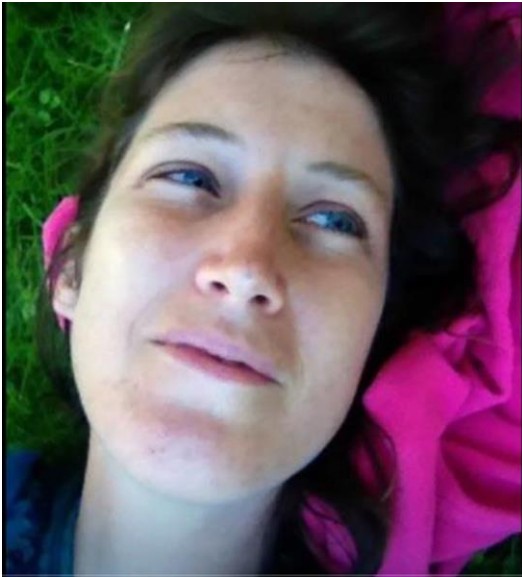


## Beyond Hope

I will meet my Maker

Survive

Dressed in my best



## Outside and Inside

Even though I have no Control

I see the world and I know

I am of this life but made for More

Potential and Goodness Beyond

What shows—Stored, restored, reborn—

Moonlight through dark clouds

Buoyancy and foam.

## Bang Your Head



When she was small

Insubstantial

She played upon the shore

Imagination soared

Far from the ravenous world

Woman grown

Banged head against walls

Till she became part of them

A see-through ghost in fashionable tatters

Beauty matters

But destroys

Shocking mood

Flight arrested

Whose is the sword

That dealt death blow

To grown-up child ignored?

# Autumn

Breathless with excitement



Milkweed pod groupings  
Waiting....waiting....POP!  
Ripened stalks, golden grasses tall  
Seeds rustle

Leaves yellow and brown  
Wither and fall

Silky seeds dance on brisk offshore breeze  
blown

Bumblebee harvest – hurry! hurry!

Clinging to wind—tossed golden rod seas

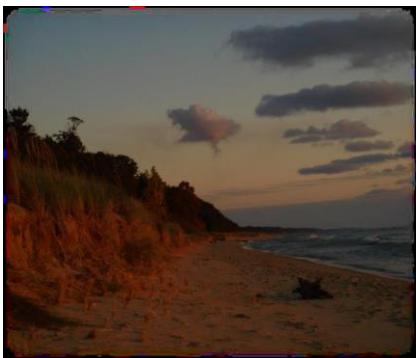
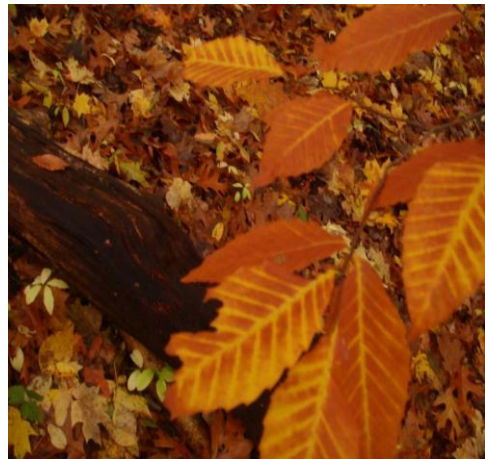
Spot of orange on purple aster--

Majestic monarch migration southward

Big surf foams

Sound of World

Breath of Fall.



Perennial



Still pretty

Even deep at the core of me

Ready to reseed!

## Who Masters Our Fate?



Why requires it  
Dark apocalypse  
To change inner climate  
External forces  
Care naught for us  
Be we minions to their whims?  
Or will we master  
Our own beings?  
Our own ways of living?

## Healing



Peaceful strength

Open blossoms  
Nature's healing  
Divine intervention.



## Dirt Roads

Gentle pace, gentled thoughts



Green growing and  
immediate

Bark of fox, call of thrush

Smell of loam, water's  
rush

Rebirth inside of peace and  
love

Aware of time but  
unappalled

Rising in air before it falls

No despair at dust to dust

Like me, all part of a cycle

Years and life going on well

Neighbors in a pickup truck

Picking strawberries growing  
wild

At the end of this dirt road

Life sweet, sufficient in itself

Beautiful fullness of present  
moments

Live Now – No time to be lost!



## Dream with Me



Dream with me!

Glorious possibilities

Love eternally

Deeply, certainty

Expelled musically

Touched spectrally

Oh, so tenderly

Defy cleft destiny

Lover, prithee

Dream with me!

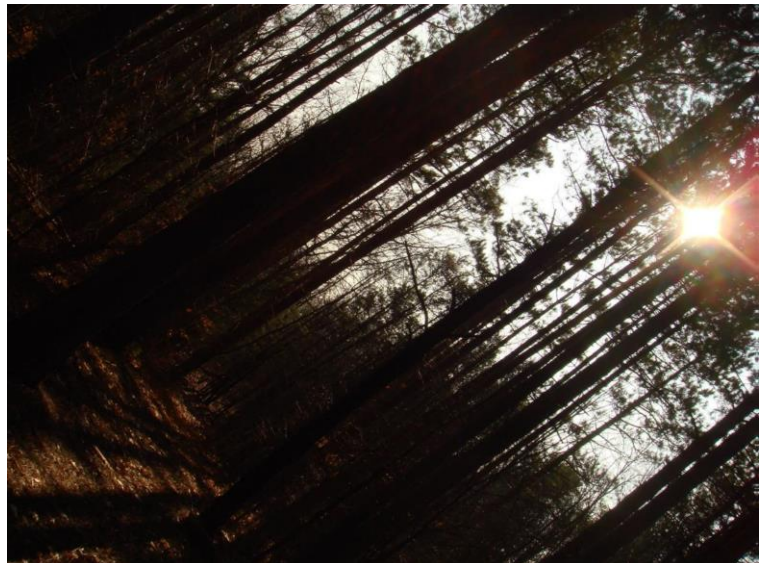


## Tree Teachers



Vivid light  
Air I breathe  
Approaching night  
Immersing me  
Sound and color  
Without fury  
Warm fragrant air

Dark shadows of trees  
Reaching for sky  
Rooted beneath  
Reminded now forcefully  
Of sap rising  
In all things green  
Growing wild  
Life's immediacy!



## Favorite Things

If heaven doesn't have ...

lovely old trees

flowers in countless varieties

...Laughter



...Clouds, lakes, and streams  
...Oceans and rivers...  
Flannel sheets and shirts  
Chocolates... cuddly pets... and hugs  
I'll be coming back to earth!

Our Maker laughs at my obstinacy...

...Creator of all my favorite good  
things...

To suppose they'd be denied me is just  
silly.

I work now to be worthy, knowing...

Eventually we find our wings

And the delight and the wisdom we need

To fly free!



## Visions

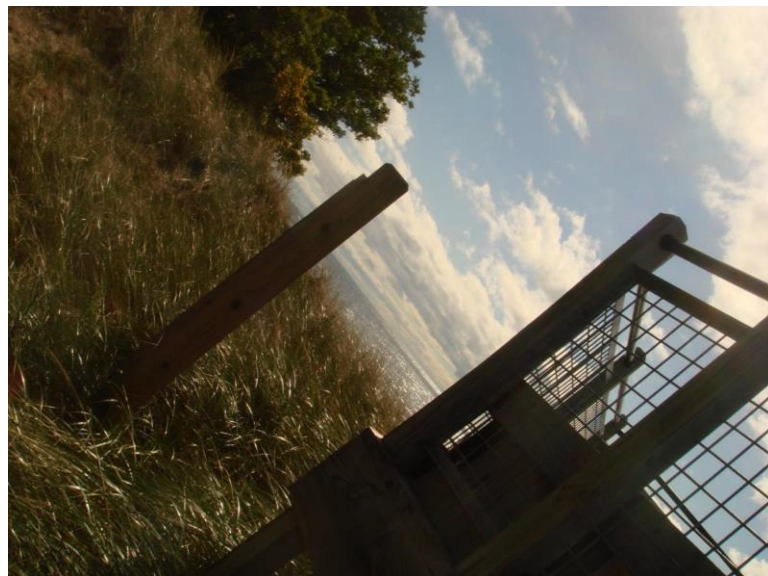


Do you see  
Illuminating  
Shading  
Mingling  
Possibilities?  
Two way  
Roads  
Many-faceted  
Souls  
Celebration  
Self-abrasion  
Dark... light... shadow

Unknowable  
Life muddled

Struggling or peaceful

We shall go  
Where we must  
Become  
Who we are  
In light  
and in dark.



## Time, the Teacher



The sky is not enough!

We reach for all the stars  
Consume them one by one  
Ever-hungry hearts  
Time wrapped upon itself  
Sometimes does stand still.  
It knows all there is to know  
Far more than we do or ever will  
Perhaps we would be wise  
To follow its example  
Learn to progress all in good time  
Learn to cycle, learn to flow  
Then space races would be run  
Upon a peaceful course.

## Perfect Song



Exhortations to practice  
Shrugged off or ignored  
Frightened music would become work  
Another crisp-burnt disappointment  
In my painfully imperfect world.  
Terror hidden behind a cocky façade  
Natural knack, some talent and much bravado  
Carrying through performances  
Mozart, Beethoven, Bach  
Melodies in languages I never fluently spoke  
Music, solace, challenge and fathomless  
whirlpool

Competition, politics seats orchestra  
Coveted or fled from  
Simple sensory joy pursued  
Found alone, high, in leafy green chapels  
And Forest awe  
Outdoor silence and song profound  
Only approximated by one unsurpassed performance—  
Private teacher's group recital  
Resentment over prompts to push myself and grow  
Washed away bathed in jewel-tones  
Of sun-splashed notes 'neath stained glass windows  
Vibrato and soul

Far beyond humble abilities I had to compose

I played what I felt

Experienced one piercing moment

Of unsurpassed wholeness

Fingers shaking as God spoke.

## Patience



Bemoaning life's Snail's pace

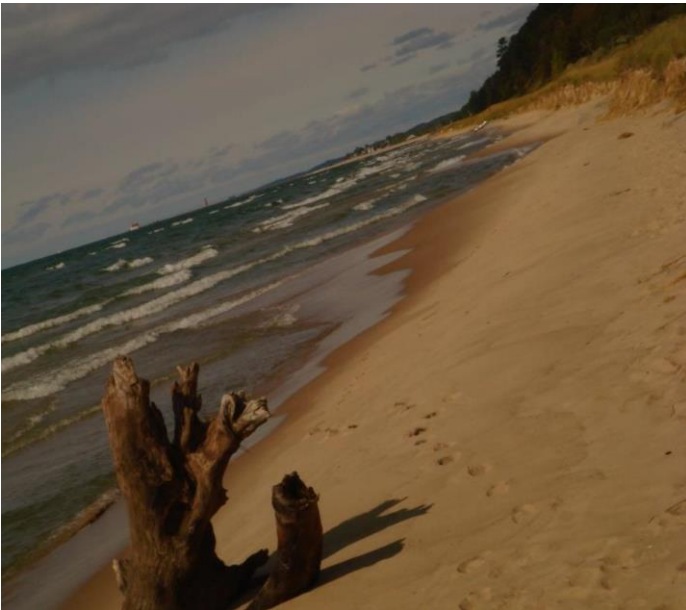
Or rat race

Slow and steady wins they say

I wouldn't take that bet

Rather place my faith

On creatures and Maker



Wise enough to mark time,

Not in minutes

But overlapping waves.

Peaceful  
I do not dream in Technicolor  
Any more  
Quiet and slow  
Rhythms  
Faces and music  
With full plot  
Though implausible  
Have I learned to forgive  
And let go?  
Go with the flow?  
Love life for  
its all rather  
than just the good?  
softer focused  
The microscope  
broke  
backlit  
no glare spotlight  
I like the world  
In this perspective  
Unmagnified  
Unreduced  
Unreproached  
Overall overview





Enjoyable

WHOLE

Even with pimples

and holes

pain welded to joy

The glass is still

Half full!



## Rainbow Show



When I see life  
In black and white  
Or endless shades of gray—  
All colors run together  
Or too few show,  
I pray for balance, comfort and  
The courage I need to grow  
Then look to heaven  
For hope  
And see the Rainbow.

## Well-Earned Rest

Here softness dwells and peace reigns

At close of hard and long work day

Filling meal, harmonious  
conversation

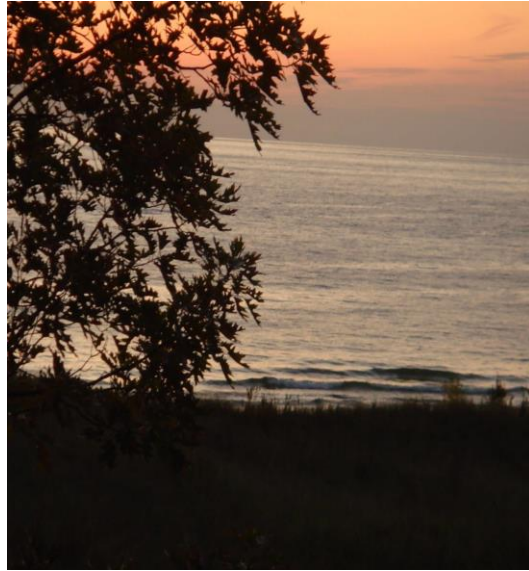
Bathing in beauty and relaxation

May sun go to sleep each night

Content with effort, satisfied.

As I with my place in life!

Setting fills me with delight.



## Roads to Realization

Mysterious roads into the unknown,



Adventure, danger, wonder,

Which to take?

Unsure?

Insecure?

Tap the brakes

Make mistakes

Lucky two-lane

Try again

Way found

To turn around

Or another

To turn down.



## Sculpted



What is beautiful?

Making the most of what you were born with.

What is sensual?

At home in your own skin

At peace with yourself

Confident

Comfortable.

## Secret Garden



Sun slants through leaves Bright gold gifts through the shadows  
Dappled we lie  
Contentedly below.



## Shifts



Crystalline overlay

On deep world of wave

Moon and outer space invade

Inner terrain of calm water.

Sun blazes path

Through snowflake landscape

Fighting off moon

Crystal freeze meets heat

Dawn kayaking in early spring.

## On the Road and Water



Jill owned a little red truck for about ten years and kayaked her way through several states and over countless rivers and lakes. She saw God everywhere in nature. She took many photos of sights she saw, played several instruments, and wrote many poems during her kayaking and traveling days.



## Stewards

At Earth's fiery heart  
A core of life,  
A phoenix rising.  
Human occupation of her crust  
So very recent-  
In planetary time, a blink of the  
eyes.  
Sun worshipers beneath fragile  
skies,  
We live only on the surface,  
A thin layer between magma and void.  
We are guests in this house  
Those too rude she'll cast out.  
Trust we so greatly  
In solar hospitality?  
It is good to breathe—  
To explore inner and outer  
spaces  
In the comforts of home.  
Neither rented nor purchased,  
This place is ours on loan.



## Anger Management



Flashing Crashing

Never could find release in  
rage

Love the power of nature on  
the rampage

Ozone mystic

Air ballistic

Burned clean by lightning

Flashing, frightening

But free and unappeased

A relief from the me

Who cannot release those storms

Except in carefully chosen words

No surprise, then, that I love a tempest

Unfettered

No longer caught

In the net of my promise

To do no harm

Let rain wash away my pain

And lightning flash its honest message

Beyond kindness, beyond vengeance

Majestic

Empowering.

## Personal Power

Dear Divine

Wishing you laughter



Hope  
Strength  
Courage  
Endurance  
Freedom from pain  
Openness to  
the love we send  
across to

boundless living energy

And the peaceful light within and peaceful refreshing rest.

You are loved by many—



You are not alone  
We can hold the plank while you  
Keep your balance in the middle  
It is okay to ask for help,  
To tell us what you feel  
To ask for what you need,  
And to say “no”. to things that are  
sometimes difficult.  
When all energy is tied up in the  
struggle

May you be buoyed by thoughts and prayers

And by God and human love

And pet therapy rocks, if it's an option!

# Discovery

She's in there

Somewhere...



That woman who rides bareback

Fearlessly free

Yodeling for joy

Clothes worn to perfection

Body

Seamless,

Blending of use and beauty.

Nothing shading steady eyes

That clearly see reality

And face it bravely.

Years and tears

Weathered, unbending

Smiling, loving,

Working, playing

In this wild place of her choosing.

Not just some honkey tonk dream

Y'all come to see there in the bathroom mirror

Yes ma'am, she's in there somewhere!

## Fly Me to the Moon

Savior,

Upon mighty wings!

I entreat you

Witness fierce hope

Sharp struggle

Carry me above myself

Out of limited world

Open possibilities door!



Beloved!

Do you think flight simple?

You have wings of your own

Unfold, test, take off

Struggle, but become upward bound!

# Spirit



Unfettered  
Fire  
Dreams of air  
Bursts from  
earth  
Demon  
Or creative  
force?  
Depends—

Are you rock



Or clay

Or wood?



## Cataracts



Such fearlessness  
Needed to take on  
Challenges  
Posed by this world  
Unavoidable facts  
Must find our path  
Even when obstructed

Or sight misted  
By cataracts.



## Hindsight/Foresight



Lovely Bygones

Dreams and days gone away

Sparkle in my memory

Funny how looking back we see

Things so very differently

Comedy and travesty

Looking forward I can dream

And believe in things unseen

Lovely Yet-to-Be's!



## Scoping and Shopping

Scoping out guys is like shopping for cars



Beware of smooth lines and interchangeable parts

Always plenty of room for questions and doubt

Cause you need a grease monkey and a lie detector to figure out.

How fast will it go? How much will it cost? Will the thrill of newness last?

Will it fit into my daily life—is it up to the task?

How safe is it? How reliable? How many miles on that odometer?

And, if I keep it will I be proud to take it home to meet my mother?

Does it overcome rough spots like an SUV, sport car, or minivan?

Is it temperamental? Low maintenance? A little boy or a grown man?

Does it make me feel lucky with handling and moves that simply leave me in awe?

Or will it just leave me crazy and wanting to invoke the lemon law?

Will I be taking care of it or will it take care of me?

And is what I'm getting actually anything like what I think I see?

Well, baby, you know I do enjoy the parts of you I can see,

And I really love the way you ride and the show you put on for me

But I know just like that new car smell, you'll soon be long, long gone  
And I enjoyed the test drive, but now it's time to be movin' on  
I'm looking for a classic—proven, but not too worn out to speed  
And you surely look like what I want, but you aren't what I need!



## Inner Peace

Bebopping through my head



I poke my nose into closets  
And nooks long overlooked  
Thinking to clean them out  
But cobweb free and sans old  
bones

It's starting to feel like home

When did I begin

To love the skin I'm in?

When did I abandon pain

And just accept my brain?

I put down the broom

Sit and enjoy the room

It architecture fine

Through arched windows watch sun shine

Hear those I've loved and lost

Living behind the doors

Marked "Treasured Memories"

What riches they gave me!

Down an airy hallway

I quietly stray

Pausing to visit living friends

Up for vacation from Heartland

Then take my first step forward

Towards those open doors

Marked "Possibility"

Which one will I be?



## Past Heartache

Love cut the living heart out of her chest



And took it beating, as a  
souvenir.

It mattered not. Her body  
carried on—

Gray, insubstantial, ashes  
drained of cheer.

A testament to love's eternal  
flame

That scorched the joy from  
life and killed the lover

While loved one danced  
merrily upon the way

And found joy and ease and  
passion with another.

Red—color of hearts and  
passion, blood and death-

She would not choose to  
wear that one again.

Instead, she wrapped herself  
around with green—

And healing happened,  
growth and Life remained  
Then faded into mist her

dreary gray,

New colors gently crept into her life.

Love went with memory far and far away.  
And she buried deep at last the bloody knife.

“I don't believe in Love,” she softly said  
And laid a lush green leaf upon the grave.

## Puppy Love



Moxie, the puppy Jill found and adopted while she served in the Peace Corps in Guyana, South America.

Before my racing, platter-sized paws  
Endless smells and adventures await  
The world is full of bounding joy!  
And I shall kiss its face!

## Realized Dream



I was limited to swimming with dolphins on Earth,  
Now I look up at her  
From my serene seat below a satellite,  
Gazing through portals across endless space and time.  
Here I can BE a dolphin.



## Realistic Dream or Dreamy Reality?

Yon beastie from the silent realms  
Of flickering dreams and fancy's flight  
He haunts the otherworldly planes  
That fill the spaces of my nights.  
The cloak of eyelids fallen down  
Unveils a world of shadow things  
That walk and live and talk and play  
Until the light the morning brings.  
I wake sometimes to darkened rooms  
And shadows long, quite real it seems  
And wonder then, before the dawn,  
Just what is real and what are dreams?



# Reverb



Vibrations  
inside of me

Single  
string

I sing

Reverb

Constantly  
touching

Notes  
melding

Harmonies

Not lonely

Reverb

Synergy

Creative energy

Symphonies

Glorious We!

## Running Wild

The vet is tired and underpaid;  
Saturday operations, bathtub ICUs,



Kitten farms made  
By unneutered toms, and  
Barely adolescent furry moms.  
I hope Heaven doles out Justice to those  
Who throw cats from their homes.  
“Oh, they’ll just eat mice.”  
Send these folks back, Lord,  
Four-footed and tailed,  
Or two-footed with fate  
On the wrong end of the sharp-edged stake,  
And some aristocratic queen saying,  
“Let them eat cake.”

Cat IV’s that beep  
In hours wee,  
And fleas,  
Practical results of ideals—  
Saving the strays that  
Others throw away:  
Soft cuddly balls of meow and play.  
Ofrostbite and gangrene,  
Unnoticed suffering:  
Starvation—times are lean.

## Snow Below



Downhill was a  
trip—  
And a few broken  
bones,

Guess I'm just  
not cut out

For the Arctic  
zones.

I tried swishing to  
a standstill

And butt, braking,  
too,

But the score  
stands at three  
hill,

Nothing novice  
ski-do!

Perhaps I'll try



baseball—

Once I get out of traction,  
There's a short maximum fall  
And quite enough action!

## Was It Good For You?



You speak of life and loving  
Like everything is black and white  
And there's no value in the struggle  
If you don't win the fight,  
And you feel worth less than nothing  
Because you can't do all you thought you'd do  
Well, my friend, there's still some road  
To walk before you're through!  
In life you've done what you have done  
And you'll do what you will do

And these questions will ring out at the end of your time

When you talk with the one who made you:

Did you drink less and dream more?

Make more love and less war?

Did you find what you were looking for?

Was it good for you?

Did you manipulate to get your way?

Run fast enough from yourself to get away?

Work hard enough to forget your pain?

Hey, was it good for you?

Did you share a smile on parting?

Help someone along the way?

Fall asleep contented?

At the end of the long days?

Did you share yourself with someone?

Did you give and did you take?

Did you make your mark, keep your promises?

Do your thing and say your say?

Did you show someone you loved them?

Did the words you said ring true?

Did you feel love enfold you?

Was it good for you?

Did you live your life completely?

And was it good for you?

## A Good Goodbye- a Lullaby to Lay Fears to Rest



*Sung by the dying person*

I planned to die in my sleep, not in painful inches

So what happens now that I cannot go gently into that good night

And I have no will or strength to rage against the fading light?

Please don't back away from me now—I don't want to be alone.

I was wise in the ways of this world, but now I just don't know.

How best to say goodbye, how to let life go.

*Sung to the dying person*



Eternity is too big for me, too.

All I know is here and now.

But I will help you as much as I can, in any way  
that I know how.

We may not have much time, but we have a lot to  
share.

Just tell me what you want.

When you need me, I'll be there.

*Sung by the dying person*

So, is life a struggling flame?

A candle in the wind?

I dream of rest and pray for ease, yet wake wearily again.

Suffering and pain will go from me with the coming of the night.

So out out brief candle, out. I can no longer stand the light.

I will not cling to what I know or cry for battles lost.

The fight to beat back impending death comes at too high a cost.

Warriors don't always go to glory screaming defiantly

I want a peaceful resolution. I've laid down my weaponry.

Now it is time for remembering—a time of life review.

I forgive those who caused me pain and I ask forgiveness, too.

I am human and imperfect. I have often been unwise. If I admit my limitations,  
will it redeem me in your eyes?

*Sung to the dying person*

Why did this happen and what's next? I'm uncertain  
what to do.

The one thing that I do know is I'm here to help, not  
judge, you.

There is only one you in this world.

No one else can take your place

And there is no substitute for the smile on your face.

No one else does what you do.

No one else says what you say.

No one sees the world like you.

No one cares quite the same way.

There is only one you in this world.

How I wish that you could stay.

*Sung by the dying person*

I'm a traveler seeking answers in an unfamiliar land.

Are death and life a cycle? An unbroken circle? All part of a master plan?

Where did I come from? Where am I going? Who made me, and how?

What was important to me before? What is important now?

Will you still care for me even though achievements are replaced by needs?

I grieve for things I left too late-- undone, unsaid, unseen.

Was life meaningful? Did I plan and dream? Did I leave a legacy?

Will those left behind forget my faults without forgetting me?

When I lose the race with time and death, will my soul come through alright?

Will I walk through the valley of the shadow of death into the heavenly light?





*Sung to the dying person*



Some questions have no answers or they  
change with person, place or time.

I've been blessed to be part of your life and to  
have you sharing mine.

Now you're going through another change, to  
another destination

I feel loss and helplessness, sadness, and  
desolation.

How I respect your bravery. You have my admiration.

Maybe life and death are a grand adventure. Why not a celebration?

*Sung by the dying person*

Yes, smile and laugh and feel joy with me!

Make merry while we can. I have so little energy, such brief concentration

Though my body fails me often, I long for conversation

Sometimes you're shocked by things I say or do or think or feel.

But time is short. What do I have to lose if I choose to just be real?

I may wish only to be alone or want someone to hold my hand.

These things change as my body does. I hope you'll understand.

I need comfort, compassion, honesty, to be accepted for who I am.

I'm glad you choose to be here, listening, and are not afraid to care.

And when I am beyond responding, I'll still need somebody near.



*Sung to the dying person*

When we were born guardian angels held us close

And gave us their bright blessings and their love

As we live, they rescue us from perils and a million foolish acts And, as we die,  
they lift our shining souls gently from tired bodies

Do not fear. Angels are near.

*Sung by the dying person*

I will not fear, because angels are near.

I will not fear, because you are with me.

Life's a journey we're all on. No one knows how long it will last

One day it's here, the next it's gone. It always goes too fast.

We cannot see the journey's end or know when it will be.

The only things that we can do are live and die graciously.

And I am not a wounded bird who has forgotten how to sing

Even though weariness has grounded me and illness crippled both my wings  
Suffering, grief, anger and fear are not who I am or want to be

There's more to a life than meets the eye-- my body isn't me.

So please don't cry for the sick, wrecked shell that's left for the world to see  
Remember that my spirit lives on, and my soul flies free.

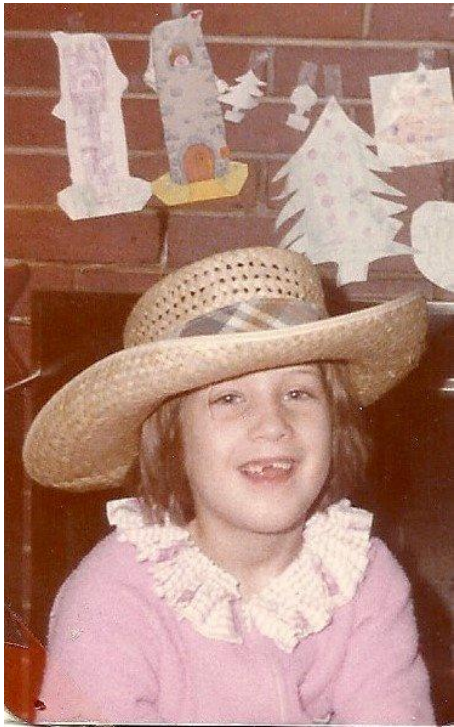


## Good and Evil



Legend speaks of Kelpies, horses of the deep  
That lure mortals to mount on land, then plunge to watery doom  
And of a gentle pony with frost upon her muzzle  
Ridden across the snowy steppes to a peaceful numbing end.  
Does it matter if I drown in the deep or freeze? Am I not still dead?  
Dark or light, white or black, regardless of look,  
I still have been Unmade.  
Good and Evil—Choices in Life—  
Chaotic shades of pink and green and all hues in between.  
To Live is to walk winding roads between Extremes  
Wandering and wondering if I'm wrong or right  
Without answer, yet won't give up the fight.  
I choose to Live, mostly choose the Light.  
Because it matters to Me.

## The Way She Caught the Light.



*Jill wrote this about a dear friend of ours. It says meaningful things about love and about the struggle of people who love those caught up in addiction of any kind-*

She had an inner radiance that shone through her smile and bathed those it landed on in warmth and love. An ever-present sense of playfulness and discovery. An enjoyment of the moment and people she shared it so freely with. I recall her garden full of ferns, edibles, and blossoms. Magical trips to her country cabin beside the lake, where dogs ran and barked, wagged and swam, and turtles and toads and garden snakes basked in the sun.

Shared fireside chats. Shared beauty and magic.

Hers was a house full of magic. An antique pump organ and a cabinet-sized combination record player/stereo that taught me to love music from Moonlight Sonata to Julio Iglesias. Games like hopscotch, Jacks, Cooties, Chutes and Ladders. The attic, with its collection of books – the Nancy Drew series, antique tables of swamp witches and frontiersmen. LIFE magazines from the 50s and 60s. A twin bed tucked beneath the eaves. It was an extraordinary, private world – like a cabin in the clouds. When I slept there as a young adult, I noticed the cold. But as a child I noticed only the adventure.

I recall porch forts made of card tables, boxes, and blankets. The smell of fresh bread rising from the bakery down the block. The sound and sight of trains clacking by carrying passengers and freight and dreams of faraway places. Jumping with her into piles of freshly raked fall leaves dropped by the oaks surrounding the house. The deep wildness of neighborhood acres before the condos and swimming pools arrived. I spent hours in her basement where cabinets held a natural history collection garnered from many trips, rivaling that of Chicago's museums – shells and butterflies, rocks, geodes, pottery and pictures. We spent hours together in her warm kitchen, where she made the best soup I've ever had

and bountiful, satisfying food that could warm you through and comfort your insides all day.

I smile as I recall the living room's cunningly crafted round wood storage boxes called "firkins" and her gentle voice saying, "Somethin's lurkin' in the furkin." In a home where gnomes graced the mantle and coffee table books, it was easy to believe pixies and other shy creatures lived in the nooks and crannies.

She loved colored glass. Blue and purple and green. Bumpy or smooth, with graceful curves. Delicate and airy or solid and useful as a country pitcher. As a broke college student, in Germany briefly through the Air Force Reserve, I searched for a souvenir for her. I was at wit's end. I couldn't bring her wine or a beer stein. The excellent breads wouldn't make the transatlantic trip.

Then I saw it – a pretty little glass mobile. Delicate tulip-shaped purple glass bells hung prettily from various lengths of shiny thread. It glimmered magically and spun daintily in the air, as through fairies joyfully rode the translucent glass flowers. I bought it, brought it home, gave it to her with my usual clumsy inadequacy of spoken words, unable to convey what she or it meant to me. Unable to explain that precious sometimes has nothing to do with expensive. She hung it in the archway between her living room and dining room, where sun and moonlight poured in through bay windows. We both loved the way it caught the light.

She was the kindest, most gracious soul and one of the best listeners I've ever known. She took in strays – people needing shelter in their journey through life, dogs, injured wild things, crooked Christmas trees. She saw, nurtured and brought out beauty in people and things no one else could make beautiful. She cared enough to bother. She was a person who taught me much about generosity, about giving and receiving love, and about coping with life.

Her glass, literally and figuratively, was always half full. Drinking made her frail and angry. At times she was honest about it. "I drink too much and I'm too set in my ways to change...love won't change that part of me." More often she wasn't.

Loving her meant feeling my eleven-year-old heart break when the two people I loved most fought about her drinking and she kicked us out of her house in a drunken rage. Loving her meant understanding that some things cannot be taken back, when she relented the next day, but we moved into an apartment some distance away.

Loving her meant fearing she'd do herself an injury by falling down the basement stairs in a drunken haze, burning the house down by tipping over a table full of candles or falling asleep with a lit cigarette in hand.

Loving her meant accepting that she forgot appointments and promises. Loving her meant coming back to see her even after she hit me hard in a moment of drunken

anger. And loving her meant accepting a loss that came too soon when her body gave out under that abusive flood of alcohol.

Perhaps it's not too surprising that I'm not much of a drinker. Liquors and beer will always convey to me a bittersweet draught of love and sorrow. I can appreciate the beauty of wine – the clear ambers and jewel tones as light pours through a delicate glass.

For me, the glass is still half full. Life and liquor are what we make them – a luxury to be enjoyed or a sea to drown in. I often think of her now, when I'm on the beach or in the woods watching the wild creatures she loved playing in the wind-blown grasses and trees and the sun playing in the waves.

How I loved the way she caught the light!

## Heretic

I ponder the crux of this  
dilemma:

If dualities of good and evil,  
heaven and hell,

Are realities in our sphere,?

Then they must also exist

Within Us.

Yet.

We insist

On behaving as if

Each other and ourselves

Dwell in and inherently

Are one or the other

Rather than mixed impulses

Struggling for Balance.





Hope  
Hope  
Flutters,  
Magic born,  
Borne upward  
On wings of light.



## Nature Human

Even in the clear checkerboard

Of a black and white world

Does shimmering potential

Live in gray areas?

Marshmallow swirl

Clouds whirl,



Do we live cut and  
dried,?

Predictable design,

Patterns and lines,

Or thrive in  
undefined

Chaotic storms.

## Immortal Lies

Call me Marilyn or Helen to match my skin and origin

I'll embody your twisted idols and ideals



Come to me for comfort, help,  
encouragement, release,

Once victorious, You ignore or  
vilify

Oh no! You cannot justify.

Ships are launched by hatred,  
not faces

It is not for me that cities  
tumble down

You fight for booty, glory,  
power,

Dominance of races

It's not for me men lie buried in the ground.

Pawn, shield, or tool, to further your cause,

An extra stage hand in the movie of your life

I clean up the blood once you've fallen on your sword—

Brash courage immortalized while your children starve.

You will not be controlled, Yet you seek control

Branding your conquest, rings band identity

A cage of golden bars is still a cage

What bars cannot hold, you destroy in rage

Yet love is a grasping thing from which You flee in horror!

Oh no, You cannot justify.

Ships are launched by hatred, not faces



It is not for me that cities tumble down

You fight for booty, glory, power, dominance of races

It's not for me men lie buried in the ground.

It is not for me that cities tumble down

Not for me men lie buried beneath the ground.

## Inner Beauty

We shine signs  
Of times  
Reflecting  
By decorating  
Our bodies  
With piercings  
Hair dyes  
Perms  
Enhancements  
And straightening  
Let's make it  
trendy  
To let others see  
Our inner ink!



## New Year

This year no castles in the sky

Only foundations

Brick by brick laid

For dreams to rise

And grow upon-

Parapets of poem



Old load stones thrown down

Leagues traveled

Words spoken

And songs sung

Before the court

Or upon waves of clear air

Faced frightening freedoms

Meeting of enchantress, angel

Dream, and practical work

Envisioned for year to come.

## Positively Nuts



Highway robbery

Gotta shake dat tree

Crunchy holiday treats

Working' for dese eats

Havin' us a ball

Cashew pistachio and wall

Happy Holidays to all!

## Seraph Angelic



What does Angelic mean?

Kind, beautiful, well-behaved, we  
define

Yet, perceptions contrast-

Guides, messengers, envoys, heralds,

Ageless, tireless, Gofers of God?

Avenging, war-like, peaceful,  
merciful

Spiritual beings or desirous objects?

Risen or fallen spirits?

Cherub mischievous or  
compassionate?

Full realizations or renunciations of  
potential?

Nearer than God, more tangible, accessible?

Good or evil, untroubled, devout?

Human form judicious, guardians powerful?

Victoriously opposed to demon devil?

Did the angel wear black leather or denim

On the Highway to Heaven?

Or robes aflow? Or nothing at all?

And how do you know?



# Snow Kissed

Still Air  
Cold



Snow  
Glides  
Banks  
Twirls  
Shimmers  
Glitters  
Swirls  
Cool kiss  
Warm lips  
Winter magic.

Blessings  
Smiles  
Color  
The World Happy!

## Twist Tie



If all we need is love

Why is it so hard to give

To receive

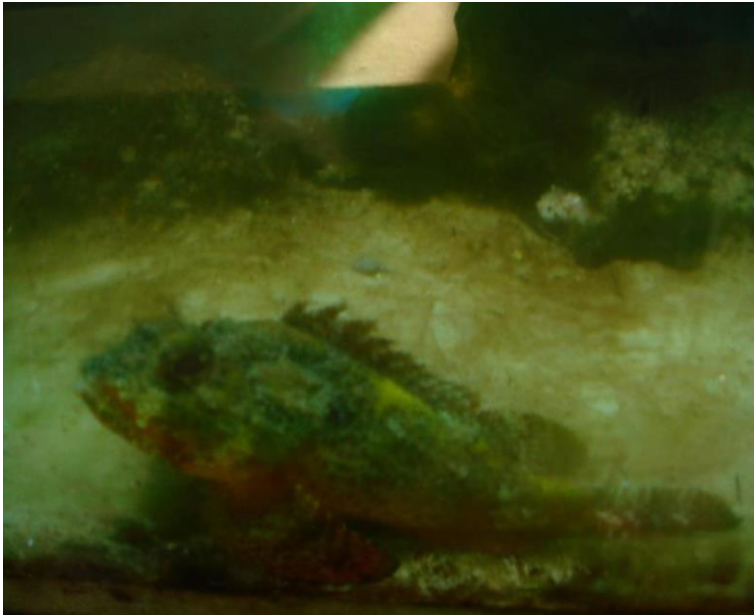
To believe

To entrust

Our hearts?

Why do we become so twisted up?

## Underwater View



Wet and green  
Favorite things  
Fins Flipping  
Fine fish dreams!  
Roots  
Shy and wary  
Rooted deep  
Soft and sturdy  
Growing me.  
Blue

Sometimes outer like inner

Light is dusky

Like the light,

I will change

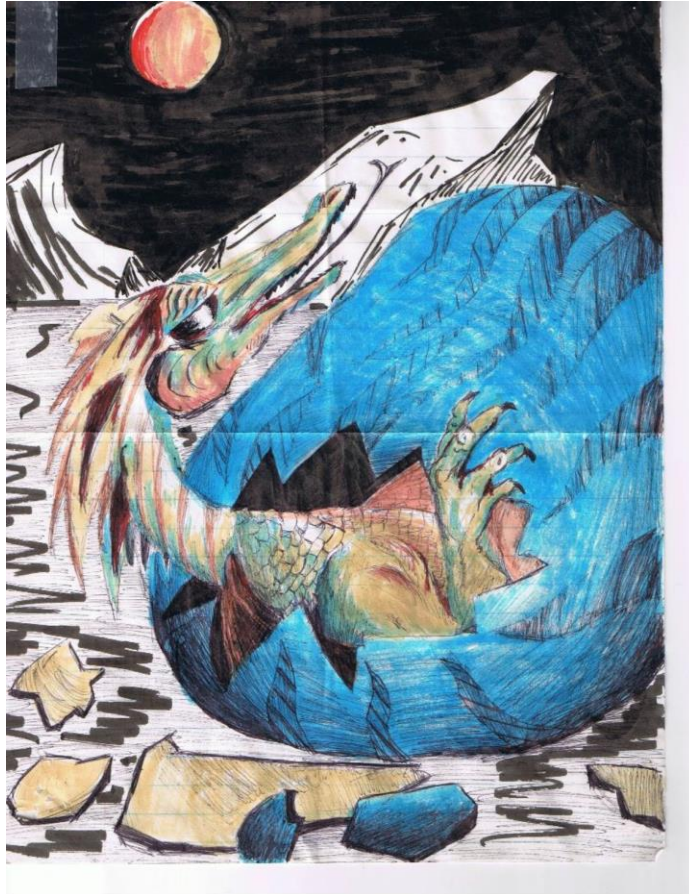
And turn green.

## Biological Family

Pain is inevitable, suffering is optional – Unknown-

Inside every adult survivor lives a crying child.

We can do better for the children of this world.



evil. This me, a  
vortex of feeling, Prevails.  
They think you wonderful Surreptitious this  
sorrow I have carried,  
Shame and disgust in endless waves  
Shackled to this attached animosity  
You have thrust upon me.

Stop the Abuse!

Should I feel sorry that I will not  
devolve

Injustices visited upon me

Unwelcome impositions?

Shall I simply pass them on and  
pretend not to see

Truth, although unpalatable,  
uncanny?

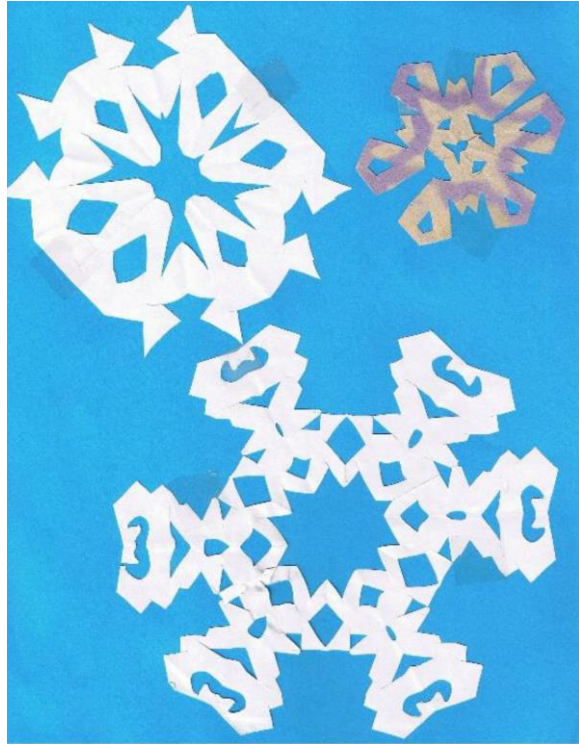
My other self, a gentle soul,

Would wish you well, dispel the



Given opportunity you created  
Such scenes of disarray,  
It was not supposed to be this way.  
But what matters a girlchild's individuality  
Compared to a man's needs?  
This my evil twin's disaffected recitation.  
In the winter of life they ask for sympathy  
And forgiveness of past sins,  
My joy in life's manifold wonders  
Is not squelched by their resolve "to do the right thing,"  
No matter how belatedly.  
There is growth in such simplicity-  
The ability to forgive  
The knowledge that we are not here to judge  
And all must be forgiven in our turn.  
Yet I cannot accept their generic methodology  
So trite, so easy,  
So lacking in personal accountability,  
Cannot condone their pincushion mentality—  
Push the pain in deep

Piercing to the heart of me  
While they withdraw screaming from the  
slightest prick.  
I cannot forgive you obstructionists  
Or accept as recompense a nebulous  
specificity  
Half-acknowledged truth,  
Covertly sought apology,  
Justice mockingly just out of reach.  
I will no longer bleed.  
Truthfully,  
You saw what you chose to see,  
As do many-  
These random preponderances  
who live in their glass houses  
as they hurl stones.  
Ironic how their lives lack transparency.  
The last time we talked it ended in screams,



Meaningless concretions—  
The accuracy of hurled names  
Who deserves the blame...  
It is a precise obstruction  
A never-ending question...  
Just whom should be killed  
Before they multiply?  
Not even the thrown stones know.

I would break this cycle,

So let us move on.  
Do what must be done.  
Why should I continue  
To swim upstream against your opposing current?  
I have built a raft of friends and hopes and dreams  
And a good life independent of your means  
Just leave me alone to heal and grow.  
Lose yourselves and atone for your lies  
In your children's lives  
Care for them better than you care for me,  
And keep them safe.  
I have found my own fortuitous fecundity...  
My Creativity





# Singing the Blues

Singing sweet



Notes bluesy  
Pain's lights flash free  
Heart's moans released  
As strings weep  
And reeds shriek  
Accompanying rhapsody  
Midnight symphony  
Soul-sustaining  
Human, weak kneed

Comfort within reach  
Beautifully blues speak  
Of loneliness, of solidarity  
Wholly being, fully feeling.

# Hope



Hope's sails and infinite possibilities

Unfurl

Unlimited

Horizons stretching away

Winds prevail

Before change's arrival

No longer becalmed.

## Cat Cold



Wind chills

Cat sleeping

Grin blissful

Sun sinks in

In sinks sun

Blissful grin

Sleeping cat

Chills winter.

Winter

Daydream/nightmare

They say...

The devil rides a coal black  
horse...

Pegasus rules the clouds...

And magic realms

Are guarded by unicorns.

I sleep deeply, dream  
vividly,

And wake with the warm wuffle

Of a horses' velvet nose

Caressing my palm.

Gentle you

Sweeping through

Cobwebs cleared

No more fear.



## Autumn Art

Deco-light streams

Glamorous

Shape texture

Color Vibrant

Fall art Magic@

Blue and White Dreams

Rare Moment

Of fascination.

Tremendous brightness

Darkness turning day

Your dreamed fancy

I, deemed wise,

Illustrious

By sleep-glassy eyes

And whiter lies

Smile silence.



## Prayer



Let the way I live and work today reflect my gratitude and respect for those who have contributed positively to my personal and professional growth.

Give me the grace to feel and also make others feel... ..emotionally, physically and spiritually good to be around ...welcomed and sought after ...relaxed, contented and happy ...intelligent, capable and self-sufficient ...responsible, reasonable and relied upon ...worthy of time, effort and compromise ...possessed of good judgement, common sense and valuable insights ...capable of both giving and receiving comfort, support and help ...accepted, appreciated, approved of and enjoyed ...shared with, listened to and trusted ...allowed to take risks, make mistakes and learn as we go ...practical, proactive and positively focused on what's important, where we're going, and how best to get there.

## Flight

Eloquent speeches made  
about leaps of faith  
certainties and meant to be's  
while we're sadly collecting memories  
of angry words and mistaken deeds  
Conversations filled with jousting  
wrangling passionately and endlessly  
Where's the trust and where's the peace?  
We're too damned clever to be happy  
Honey keep on looking  
for that angel that you seek  
I am just a woman  
can't fly yet, but I'm learning  
Love told and shown in understandable  
ways  
we share that simple need  
Both struggling, hurting  
seeking, trying to be  
what we are, what we're not  
never giving each other comfort  
Love's not a game of sacrifice  
Love like this makes the angels cry  
I spread my wings and flew today  
Cause I like who we are when we're free  
One day we'll know the strength of our wings  
And reach our best possibilities



## Old Soul Prayer



Creator

I pray thee

On this, my rebirth day

Make me what I need to be

To learn what you would teach me

Give me form that suits your end

And the wit to use it well

So one day I may return

To mist and magic

Peace and You.

## Jill's Footprints



Footprints of all the people whose lives Jill touched would cover many beaches, but she prayed that they would lead to growth, freedom, and God.





## Part II

### Kathy's Journey

## Life Is Good, Jill's Glass Half Full!



I see you in the

spring and summer trees,

I feel you in the gentle breeze

Gentle like you and whispering to me,

“Life is good, and much is yet to be!

I read your writing on a greeting card,

My heart still shatters, the tears rain hard,

The phone rings and I strain to hear your voice,

It would be you if I only had a choice,

Then I hear you whispering to me,

“Life is good, and much is yet to be.!””

## Jill Day



From the bridge, I saw you  
The kayaker in the sunshine  
I hugged you with my mind and wondered  
If missing you will always be  
A heart beat in time to the paddle.  
The sunshine blazes a kayak path across the water  
Melting water and sky together  
Surrounding earth with heaven.

## Look UP!

I think of you throughout the days  
That I must live without you here



And I wonder about the  
whys

Ask where you are and  
are you near?

I know you don't want  
me to mourn,

Try grieving in different  
ways

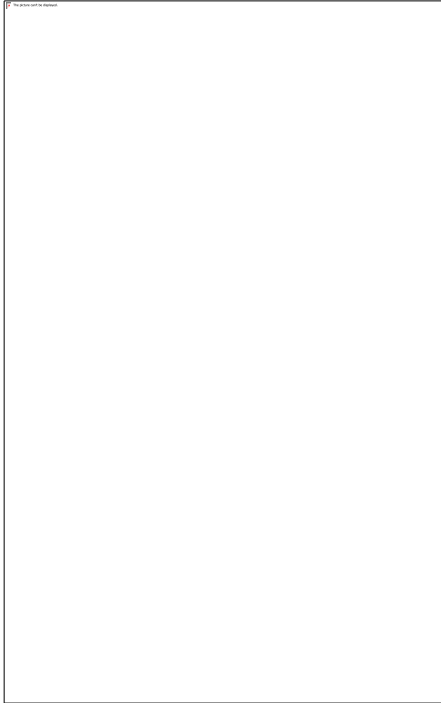
Look up every once in a  
time

From my living my own  
life haze.

Keep trying to better  
express

The humanity of us all,

To be kinder and more patient,  
Catch others gently when they fall.  
You don't always have to be brave,  
God is by your side when you grieve,  
Feel your sorrow, but then look up  
Look up through your tears and just breathe.



Email to Jill @ Seventies child, sixties  
soul

Summer kayak by, wave hello,  
On autumn days rake leaves with me,  
Count honking southbound geese we see.  
Winter snuggle in a warm nook,  
Warm my heart with a gentle look.  
In spring dance free with the flowers,  
Raise them with gardening hours,

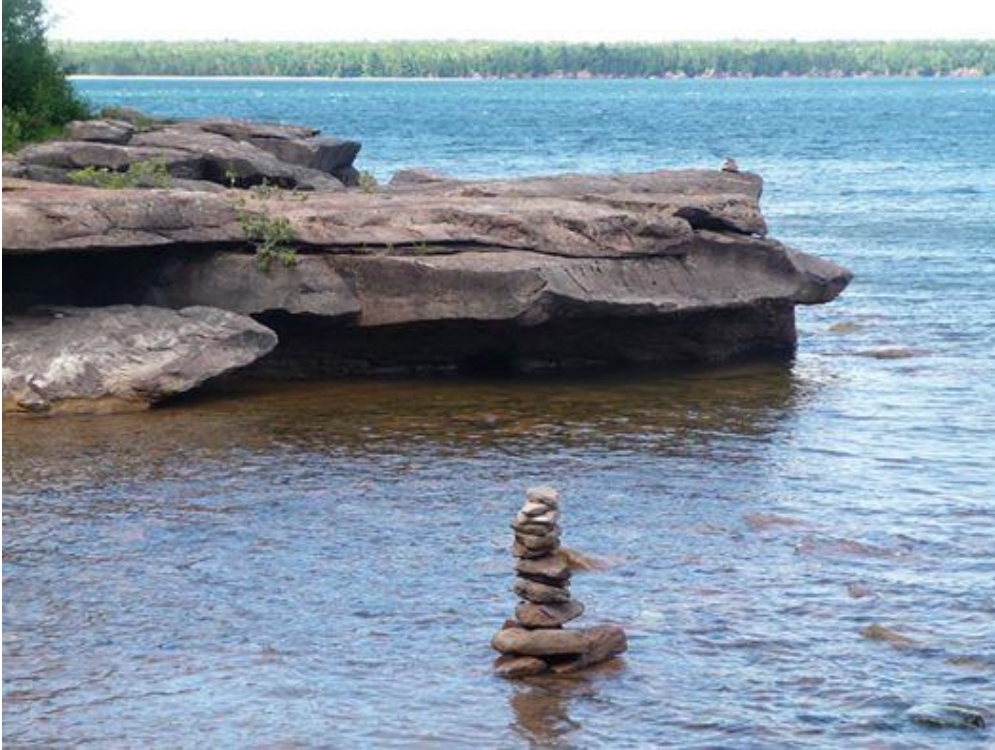
Your sixties soul in each season,  
Spreads love , joy and peaceful reason,  
Seventies child, sixties soul,  
I miss you all year 'round, you know!

## Jill and the Tree of Life



I see you in all season trees,  
I feel you in the gentle breeze  
Gentle like you and whispering to me,  
“Life is good, and much is yet to be!”  
I read your writing on a greeting card,  
My heart still shatters, the tears rain hard,  
The phone rings and I strain to hear your voice,  
It would be you if I only had the choice,  
Then I hear you whispering to me,  
Life is good, and much is yet to be!”

## Missing Jill



Head wisdom says that missing you and your face  
Will fade from memory and each time and place  
And moment of the life I live without you,  
“Lairs, my heart shouts. Head wisdom isn’t true,  
I see you in skies, I hear you in earth song,  
Shake my head in despair, how can you be gone?  
There are no depths and boundaries to sorrow  
The rock bottom faith: “ I’ll see you tomorrow.”

## Seeing and Dreaming Seasons of Leaves



Seeing is dreaming -dreaming is seeing  
Your new life brings sorrow to my being  
Dark life leaves scatter scars across the sky  
My mortal self ponders the way and why  
I look away from God, a second stray  
You and the dream sky seem so far away.  
I wish you were here, please end this bad dream,  
Your dreams and leaves aren't always what they seem.  
The piles of leaves resting in fall heaps  
Welcome spring through rebirthing winter sleep,  
The spring sky with its split second chances  
Encourages wild spring leaf dances  
Summer leaves burst with the joy of living  
Proclaiming the God of love and giving,  
I gaze at the sky, see as my heart grieves,  
Heaven in seasons shining through the leaves.



## Missing You

Your chair is the same with its cat nooks behind,  
Your smile and your dress are bathed in lamp shine  
I touch the things you love, pretend you're still there,  
I kept them – your camper and your teddy bear,  
Slashing memories supposed to dim with time,  
Flare glaringly brighter than a neon sign.  
My glass is empty instead of your half full,  
Until my fingers trace the imprint of your soul.



## Mountain Climbing



Life creates different mountains and mine  
Throws rocks of every possible kind  
Grief and challenge and changes that plummet,  
Cloudy visions of the distant summit.  
Some days I'm climbing on broken knees.  
Tired spirit droops for vanished shade trees.  
Stumbling over rocks- they come by thousands,  
Sunlit love keeps me climbing the mountain,  
Faith grows soothing leaves and ledges sturdy,  
Hope carves toe holds in rock reality.  
When rocks bombard you below the tree line  
God makes a difference in how you climb!

## Why Can't Ducks Be Angels?

If the world became more paddle struck,  
By the acrobatic antics of ducks,  
People could travel different places,  
Create different mind and soul faces.  
Embrace and enhance God's created earth,  
Bottoms up paddle height death and rebirth,  
Each raising raucous voices God-given,  
Quack, quack quacking our ripple to heaven.



## Listening



Water shouting against rocks  
Sometimes our voices do the same,  
When we listen to each other,  
The water whispers our names.

## Smiling Through Tears

The paths we walked together,  
Today we travel apart,  
Some days a log blocks the road  
Sends a splinter through my heart.  
The path shoots up a steep hill,  
Until the climbing is done,  
Your voice rustles in the leaves.  
And you smile in the sun.



## Bridges



Sometimes the bridges between us are long,  
Slippery with confusion, right and wrong,  
Viewing the bridge from many directions,  
Causes collapses in people connections.  
There in the middle, God walking beside,  
Calms rushing life waters rolling in tide,  
Leaps from the bridge and kayaks to the shore,  
Confronting shape changing waves at their door.

## Duck Directive



Water ripples that ducks increase  
The place to collect the peace  
To wage life's daily battle  
Beyond a kayak paddle.

## Shadows and Light



Yesterday's shadows haunt  
The windows of today  
The lamp light silhouettes  
Heart love now gone away.  
Some days the light is dim,  
No silhouette in sight,  
Then the hope of your life  
Fills the room with God light.



## Stone Strength

The strength of self-sufficient stone  
Facing life erosions alone  
Isolated, but within reach  
Of kind waves touching on the beach.



## Sand prints



Smooth sandy waves giving toes a swirl,  
Gritty grains each a possible pearl,  
Ballerina steps, each dancer unique,  
Flowing together to create a beach.  
Sandy footsteps twist, jitterbug random,  
Sand beach footsteps slowly dancing tandem,  
Gathering small steps from each passerby,  
Waltzing gracefully with the lake and sky.

## Moving and Busy in Guyana

Not this time the moving van truck,  
Or the car waiting for back up,  
Mattresses seek household to be  
By cart and slow moving donkey.  
Moving through life on just one road,  
Makes a slow, sturdy cart seem bold.  
Countless carts and roads God given,  
Many mansions wait in heaven.



## Doorways



Bricks and trees combine to draw a life wall,  
Bricks and trees combine to keep a soul small  
By keeping visions fastened to the ground,  
By seeking treasures lost instead of found.  
Bricks and trees fashion a foundation strong  
Bricks and trees encourage hope to hang on,  
Build brick doorways to leave despair's dark night  
Look up through the trees to see God's sky light.

## Leaf Lives

Leafy patterns skip and finger trace  
experiences across the face  
of the accepting sky.  
Dancing leaves change and grow through seasons  
without giving plausible reasons  
Skipping through how and why.  
Patterned leaves, but not cookie cutter,  
individuals in group clutter,  
Giving earth life a try.

Leafy colors proclaim as they fall,  
we're different, but God made us all!  
why do some of us sigh?



## Jill's Park, Lake Michigan

The whisper of waves shout life abounds,  
The slapping of waves , crash a healing sound  
The rolling of waves – God's love giving  
Fighting the fierce fires of living.  
The power of waves thrown by God's hand,  
Shape a drop of water, the endurance of sand.





## God's Shadow

Sometimes life can move to tunnel narrow,  
With a center shadow cross aimed like an arrow,  
When wooden walls are full of splinters raw,  
I cast many shadows, trying to dodge them all.  
God protects in shadows near or far apart,  
God doesn't cast a shadow, living in my heart.





# Hope

Every day I sit on the park bench in my soul  
And thank God who makes the flowers know  
When to nod and dance and shelter all  
Hope- when life builds a brick wall.



## Six Month Voyage



Every day I look  
back, stumbling  
on todays  
If I had known  
that the ordinary  
days,  
Wouldn't stretch  
into a misty far  
future,  
I would have tied  
them up and took  
them prisoner.  
Six months after  
you kayaked away  
I'm still selfish

enough to want to say  
In my quiet but firm mother tone,  
“Jill Marie, you and your kayak come home!”

Then I think of you and heavenly friends,  
Books and poems and learning without end,  
Happy in your guardian angel career,  
I wipe away at least one torrent tear.

To my daughter, Jill, in Heaven on New Year's Day:



If I could turn back time to another  
year,  
I'd choose them all to have you here,  
I'd relive every precious minute with  
you,  
Although I know that's a selfish thing  
to do.

We didn't always have fun together,  
There were some thunder storms to  
weather,

We didn't always agree with each  
other,

I often heard your words, "Oh,  
mother!"

But we both cared enough to stay  
Through the bottom line of day to  
day.

Now life has flipfopped and I know,  
I have to love you enough to let you

go.

In my heart and head she's here today,  
Smiling and loving , brushing tears away.

To Mom and my friends on earth this New Year,  
You didn't lose me to heaven, I'm still here,  
Let's walk alongside each other instead  
As we both continue our journeys ahead.

## January Child Sweet and Mild



Feisty and strong fighting life's wrongs,  
Quiet in hidden rooms, beating wrong doings with brooms!  
J is for the joy of living,  
I is for intelligent and giving  
L is for loving without end  
L is for loyal daughter and friend.  
Your birthday will be happy and I know,  
Kayaking in heaven is where you'll go!  
January child, sweet and mild.

## Jill's Teddy Bear

Jill always looked on the positive side of things and she often got upset with me when I didn't look at the positive side of life or moaned about events. "Life is good" was one of her favorite things to say. Since her death, I have tried to carry on that belief .It's the hardest thing I have ever done, because I feel like a major part of my heart has been tore out and memories really do bless and burn! I see a slideshow of her life and death in my mind and heart every day. I grieve for her, but I also believe that she would want us to turn our grief into something good for others, whatever that may be. To me her teddy bear is a symbol of her love and caring and her kayaking which caused her death is a symbol of her belief in doing and learning and adventure and enjoy life to the fullest. I can hear her saying, Merry Christmas everyone.

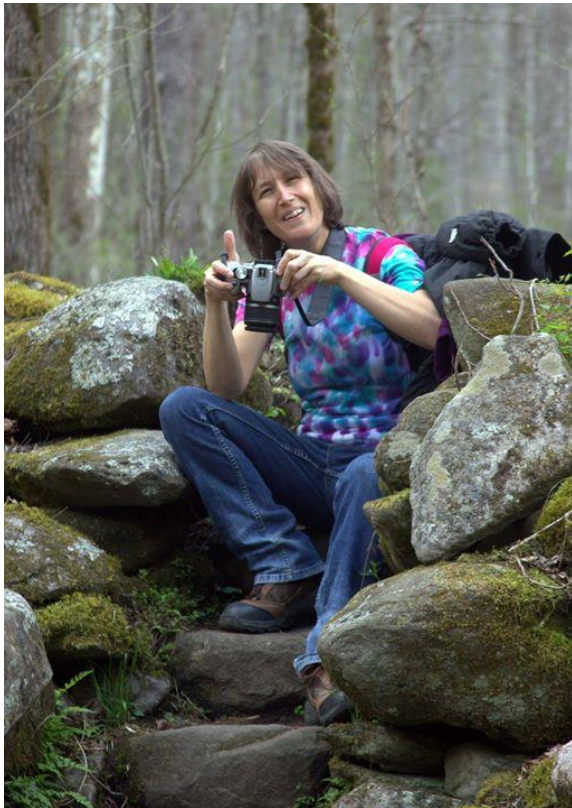
Life is good Make it better for you and others!



## Jill's Twelve Days of Christmas Commandments

*Jill's friend Sue took this beautiful photo of Jill. She said, "It was in April and we were on a hike with two other friends and the Eastman Photo Club. We had such a great time that day. I loved that smile of hers! She never knew just how beautiful that smile really was. I miss her every day.*

- Appreciate your individuality. Don't compare yourself to other people.



Everyone is different and our uniqueness makes each one of us special.

- Set your own goals. Value the opinions of others, but only you know what is best for you.
  - Cling to the things closest to your heart and let them define your life, for without them your life is empty.
  - Live your life one day at a time. Don't let your life slip through your fingers by living in the past or the future. Live each present day to the fullest.
  - Give while you still have something to give. Don't give up because nothing is really over until you stop trying.
- 
- Admit that you are less than perfect. It gives you room to relax and improve.
  - Take risks. Taking chances teaches you to be brave.
  - Give your love wings and whether or not it is returned, set it free.
  - Dream in surround sound, enhanced color, and widescreen with no time limits.

- Hope without end. Hope will make your life endless.
- Walk, don't run through life. Excessive speed causes crashes!
- Spread joy. Joy fills the valleys of grief with healing mountaintop sunlight.

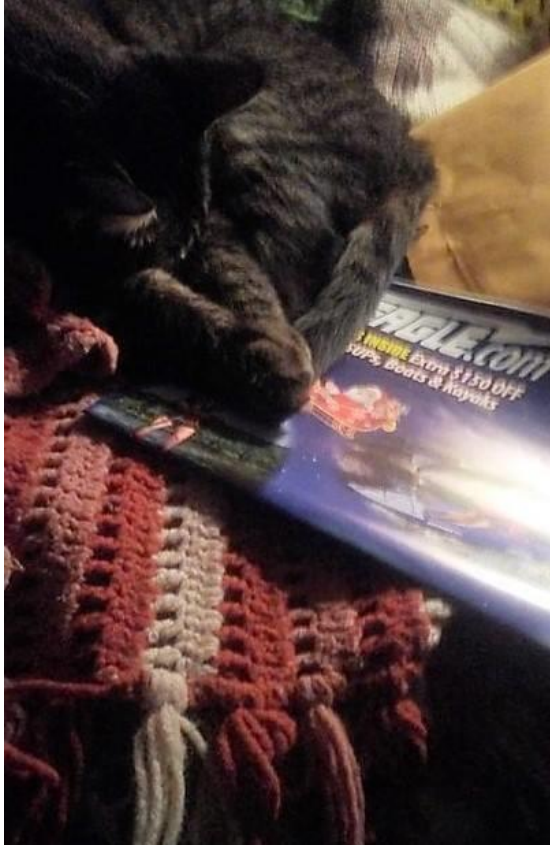
## Sunflower Power

Sunflowers bring a burst of relief  
Lighting dark and lonely corners of grief  
Plant sun flowers instead of a sigh  
In the soul of every passerby.





## Jill's Jottings



Thoughts to help you avoid discouragement

- Look at life as a journey and enjoy the ride. Get the most out of the detours and realize they're sometimes necessary.

- Do your best, but if what you've been doing has caused you discouragement, try a different approach. Be passionate about the process, but don't be so attached to the outcome.

- Wish the best for everyone, with no personal strings attached. Applaud someone else's win as much as you your own.

- Trust that there's a divine plan, that we don't always know what's best for us. A disappointment now could mean a victory later, so don't be disappointed. There is usually a reason.

- Ask no more of yourself than the best that you can do, and be satisfied with that. Be

compassionate toward yourself as well as others. Know your calling, your gift, and do it well.

- Don't worry about something after it's done; it's out of your hands then, too late, over! Learn the lesson and move on.

- Have the attitude that no one, except you, owes you anything. Give without expecting a thank-you in return. But when someone does something for you, be appreciative of even the smallest gesture.

- Choose your thoughts or your thoughts will choose you; they will free you or keep you bound. Educate your spirit and give it authority over your feelings.

- Judge no one, and disappointment and forgiveness won't be an issue. No one can let you down if you're not leaning on them. People can't hurt you unless you allow them to.

- Love anyway...for no reason...and give...just because.

## Singing from Heaven



Jill traveled near and far to sing-a-longs at her friend Pat's house. Pat is on the left.

Dear Jill, Can't this just be another trip to the sing-a-long instead of heaven? I want you to come back.

Then I hear your song, "Mom, I never left any of you. I just brought God closer to you all."

## Eating and Remembering

Jill's nursing and kayaking buddy Rabbie and some of her other nursing friends celebrate her life with a special dish that Jill created.

Rabbie writes:

Jill Maier would be so proud of us! In her memory we are going to eat her Infamous healthy recipe lunch.

Okay, you ask what's in it? Kale, Spinach, Cabbage, Tomato with a touch of Ranch Butter sauce. Add chopped chicken breast and there you have it! Affectionately called Jill's delight. Everything is organic, free range, gmo free, etc. I'm going to dress it up a bit more with onions, garlic, mixed peppers, bok choy, in mine later. It's so yummy! O you non-believers!





## Jill's Jottings

To laugh is to risk appearing the fool.

To weep is to risk appearing sentimental.

To reach out is to risk involvement.

To expose feelings is to risk exposing your true self.

To place your ideas and dreams before the crowd is to risk their love.

To love is to risk not being loved in return.

To live is to risk dying.

To hope is to risk despair.

To try is to risk failure.

But the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing.

The one who risks nothing does nothing and has nothing – and finally is nothing.

He may avoid suffering and sorrow,

But he simply cannot learn, feel, change, grow or love.

Chained by his certitude, he is a slave; he has forfeited freedom.

Only one who risks is free!

-Author Unknown-

## A Thanksgiving Thanks for Jill



Watching her throw  
The bridal bouquet

Thank you for this daughter:  
Soul and spirit glowing  
Human but heavenly  
Striving and growing.

Thank you for this daughter:  
Treasure the years given.

God,  
Thank you for this  
daughter:  
Yelling, dark hair,  
Tickles and hugs,  
Brown teddy bear.

Thank you for this  
daughter:  
Snaggle tooth grin  
Tending her spirit  
Smoothing a band aid  
on her chin

Thank you for this  
daughter:  
Bringing sorrow and  
joy  
Peace and hair pulling  
Worries about that  
boy.

Thank you for this  
daughter:  
College going away

Still bringing joy and hope,  
From her kayak in heaven.

## Peace Corps Friends



### Emily Johnson

I can still vividly remember during the first month of training in Peace Corps, Jill did an educational session on Diabetes foot care. Little did I know how much I would use that knowledge and refer to her for questions and assistance regarding diabetic patients throughout my service.

To honor Jill's memory and service in the Peace Corps, her fellow Peace Corps Volunteers from Guy 23 collected donations for the Suddie Hospital Diabetic Foot Clinic where Jill worked during her service. Yesterday was World Diabetes Day and the donations were used to purchase supplies and gifts for the patients at the clinic.

## Mother Malfunction



If you have ever had to wear something that someone you love bought you that you secretly hate, then you know how Jill felt about her teddy bear sweater. I wasn't totally sensitive to hip teen and young women fashion, so I thought a teddy bear sweater would please her. After all, she still had the teddy bear from her toddlerhood! Her eyes widened when she opened the package under the Christmas tree - later I realized horror and not delight had widened them. When it finally dawned on me that Jill really didn't love the teddy bear sweater, I suffered great buyer's remorse and tried to get it back. She insisted on wearing it and insisted she really did love it when actually she loved me and my feelings, not the sweater! She was compassionate and enough to wear it until I finally wrested it from her. That was Jill- love and compassion. That is her friend Kat in the picture.



Kat Lamb. This is us in college. I can't believe that we were so young. We had fun being creative with top roman noodles which was the staple. 10 for a dollar. She was impressed with my culinary skills.

## Jill's Jottings



### Don't Quit

Is that what you want to do? Quit?

Anybody can do that.

Takes no talent,

Takes no guts,

It's exactly what your adversaries hope you will do.

Get your facts straight,

Know what you're talking about,

And keep going.

## Jill's Jottings

Shoot for the sun.....Even if you miss you'll be among the stars.



## Jill's Jottings



Courage is the price that life extracts for granting peace.

Amelia Earhart

## Jill's Jottings



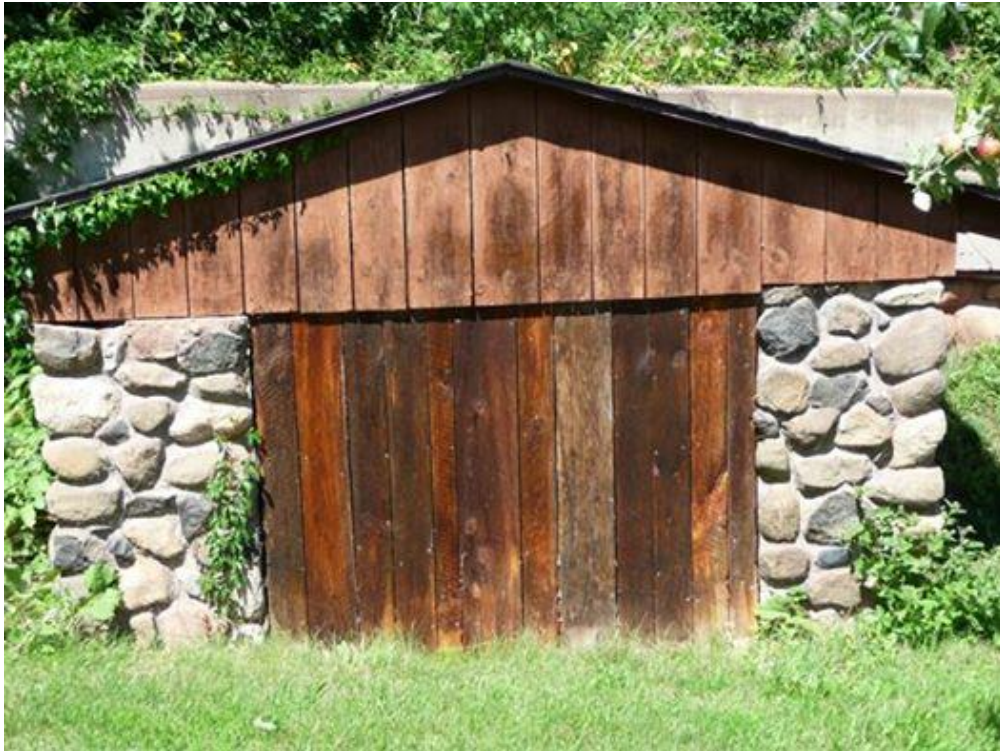
Anyone can become angry- that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way- that is not easy. Aristotle- The Nicomachean Ethics

## Hairy Happening!



This is a very bad mistake to make with your daughter's hair. When Jill was young I decided that I would cut her hair for her. You can see the results, even after a frantic trip to the beauty parlor! I never tried to cut her hair again, mostly because she wouldn't let me! I think she eventually forgave me!

## Jill's Jottings



During the devastating earthquakes in Kobe, Japan, an American newscaster did a short piece on a Japanese woman who set up a makeshift store out of boxes selling flashlights and batteries. When the commentator asked why she wasn't selling these essential items for more than the regular price, the woman answered, "Why would I want to profit from someone else's suffering?"

A Short Course in Human Relations:

The six most important words: "I admit I made a mistake."

The five most important words: "You did a good job."...

## Faith and Grief



There are parts  
of the journey,  
I don't  
understand  
Sometimes the  
road leads  
Through  
unfamiliar land,  
Sometimes I  
search  
Unsure of what  
I'll see  
but whatever  
happens I know  
That God is  
always with me!



## Music Moves into Meaning



Jill loved music at an early age. She used to sing in the bathtub and throughout the day at home and at daycare. She sang in the children's choir in elementary school and in her junior and senior high school choirs. Jill and I spent a few years playing and singing at local nursing homes for the patients. You can see the bow of her violin in this picture. I bought it for her in 1988 and she played it through August 2016. Part of me wanted to hang on to her violin because it was a dearly loved part of her, but the other part said that she would want someone to make use of it. I am glad a young person in Wisconsin will. That was my prayer when I took it to Wisconsin and left it there with part of my heart. It meant a lot to me, too.

## Practicing Patience and Mississippi Hot Dog!



*"Music has charms to sooth a savage breast, to soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak." William Congreve*

*Jill well knew that the savage breast, hard rocks, and knotted oak could be inside the mind and heart as well as the body and exterior life. I think that's a large part of the reason she loved music so much.*

## Practicing patience and Mississippi Hotdog

"...If a child hears fine music from the day of his birth and learns to play it himself, he develops sensitivity, discipline and endurance. He gets a beautiful heart."

Shin'ichi Suzuki

I was a clenched teeth determined single parent, vowing that my daughter Jill was not going to miss out on any two parent advantage. So, when she brought home a signup sheet for Suzuki violin lessons, I rented a violin for her and hurried to buy a Suzuki Method book for her to practice with and for me to study after she went to bed. I knew she was on her way to her debut at Carnegie Hall. I saw her bowing to seven standing ovations, with me, her relentless stage mother, a protective hovering shadow on the curtain.

### Suzuki Develops Radical Ideas to Teach Music to Children

That was before I knew that Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star, alias Mississippi Hot Dog, was going to be the major song in her repertoire and stick in my musical mind for months. Gradually, I learned the bare Twinkle Twinkle Little Star facts. Twinkle Twinkle Little Star comes from a French rhyme, "Ah! Vous dirai-je, Maman," that originated in the first half of the 18th century. A list of classical composers including Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Camille Saint-Saens, and Franz Liszt, have written variations on Twinkle Twinkle Little Star for piano, clarinet, and organ.

Shin'ichi Suzuki based his variation of Twinkle Twinkle Little Star on the violin, and for his time, some radical ideas for teaching music to children. He believed that even young children could learn to play the violin or any other musical instrument if they took small enough learning steps and the instruments were scaled down to fit their size. Carrying on the Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star musical tradition, Suzuki changed the rhythm pattern to match his title, Mississippi Hot Dog.

### The First Mississippi Hot Dog Practice

I had nothing against Mississippi or hot dogs separately, but together they created discordant notes at our house. At the time, we lived with our friend Nancy and her dogs Clancy and Clara. The first night that Jill brought her violin home and proudly took it out of the case to show it to me and Nancy, Clancy sniffed once and ambled out to the kitchen for a snack, and Clara yawned and went back to sleep with her head on the couch armrest.

Jill picked up the violin for her first practice at home. She played the first note of Mississippi Hot Dog.

"What's that?" I asked her. "It sounds like Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star."

"It's Mississippi Hot Dog, Mom. We played it in class today" Her tone of voice discouraged further questions, so I didn't ask any. I just tried to listen to the screeching that sounded like long fingernails sliding across a chalk board or a table saw attacking a stubborn piece of wood.

After Jill played two notes, Clara scrambled off the couch and ran to her refuge under Nancy's bed. I knew she was huddled in the dark right hand corner under her blanket, so I didn't worry about her.

Clancy turned out to be the worry. He stayed and fought. He took Jill's sweater sleeve in his teeth and pulled. Jill stopped playing and told him to stop. Clancy didn't stop. "Mom, make him stop," she said, producing the table saw sound again. My hands twitched, desperate to fly to my ears. I clenched them by my sides and helped Jill sing, "Mississippi Hot Dog, Mississippi Hot Dog, Mississippi Hot Dog, Mississippi Hot Dog," as she played. Clancy howled along with us.

I finally had to carry detach Clancy from Jill's sleeve, carry him to the front porch and shut the door to the living room. Clancy didn't surrender. He just tried to drown out Jill's playing with his howling. Jill tried to drown out Clancy's howling with her playing. Nancy tried to stop Clancy's howling and I tried to stop Jill's playing. Nancy bribed Clancy with five dog biscuits and I bribed Jill with five dollars and the promise of the Dairy Queen after supper.

### The Will to Practice the Violin

Temporary bribery solves problems only temporarily. The next day and practice time came. Jill still screeched, Clancy still howled, and I still wanted to run but parental guilt and ambition glued me beside her. Nancy looked at me after the first note. "This makes me want to laugh," she said, laughing uncontrollably as she fled.

I came out of the shadows and shouted for the people at Carnegie Hall to get back into their seats and listen to my daughter. My dream dissolved into Jill's tears. "I don't sound good. Nobody wants to listen to me," she sobbed

."It takes practice. The more you practice, the better you will sound," I told her.

"How can I practice when Clancy howls and Nancy laughs and you give me five dollars for the Dairy Queen to stop?" she asked.

## Practicing With Mozart and Mississippi Hot Dog

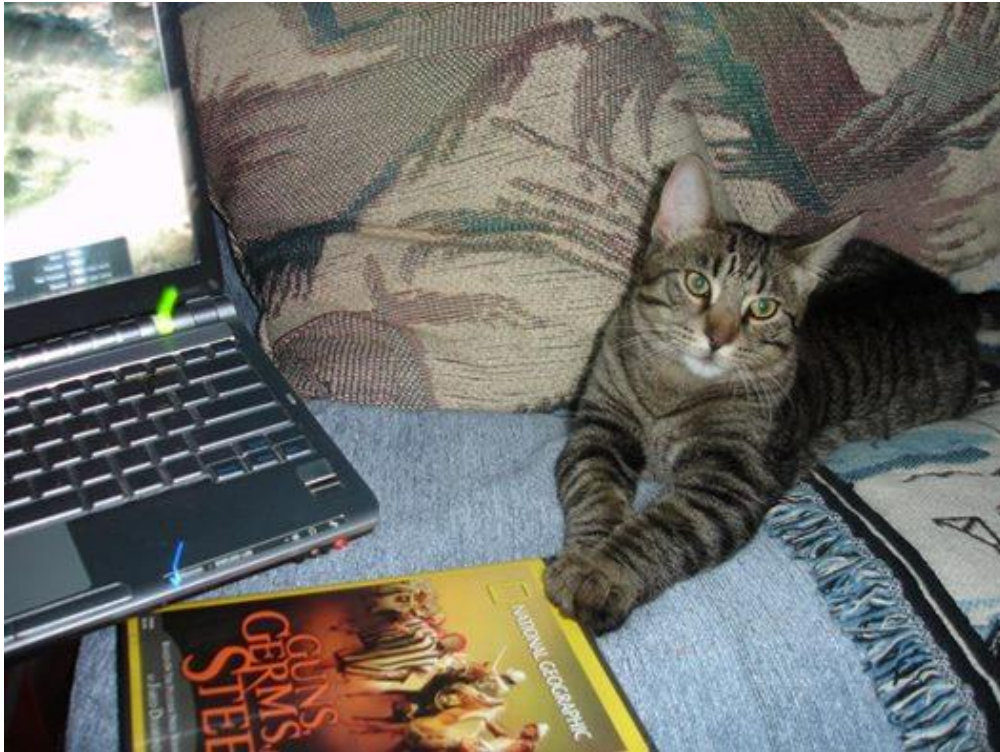
Just like Suzuki, I introduced a radical change and varied my approach. There were two bedrooms in Nancy's attic and every day when she came home from school, Jill and I went upstairs to the attic and closed the door. She practiced the violin, up in the attic with the door closed. Eventually, we tuned out Clancy's howling downstairs. We got used to Clara running to the bedroom as soon as she saw Jill pick up her violin case. Nancy and I both found ourselves singing Mississippi Hot Dog while we set the table for dinner and washed dishes afterwards. The only tune I couldn't change was Mississippi Hot Dog. Jill played other songs, but Mississippi Hot Dog was still her favorite and the one she played more often. My ears rebelled, but my heart stood firm, and so did our practicing practices.

With more practice, Jill gradually achieved the tone that Suzuki proclaimed is the goal in his method. With more practice, she sounded better. Clara stopped hiding under the bed. Clancy stopped howling. Nancy hummed Mississippi Hot Dog instead of laughing and running. I stopped imagining Carnegie Hall and embraced the more practical local symphony orchestra, varied music, and fun times playing together at nursing homes.

Music greased the passing years. Now that she is grown up both time and music wise, we still make reasonably good music together, but she increasingly creates her own songs. Thanks to Suzuki, she has a competent bowing technique and a beautiful heart.

## Jill and Harry

Harry the Cat and Jill shared a room when she lived in and later visited her Michigan home. She introduced him to the finer things in life and also she knew him for what he is, an unrepentant reprobate. She called him that frequently, but she loved him anyway. She did that for a lot of people.



## Tennessee Friends

Billie and her sisters sending balloons up to heaven for Jill Maier. Billie loves Jill so much. Jill was one of Billie's nurses for 2 yrs . Billie has had a hard time coping with Jill's absence, having tantrums and separation anxiety. We, as her nurses, remind Billie that Jill is in heaven watching over her. Jill was truly Billie's special favorite nurse. Oh, how we miss her!!!



## True Guitar



You strum in heaven playing your guitar,  
Musical notes that touch lives as they are,  
Sending sad earthly spirits to soaring  
Special hope songs cheering the despairing.  
God gives you time and a home to create,  
A log home and a garden with a gate  
Lessons on how to deal with earthly hate,  
The healing of the hurts in your own soul,  
The promise of all the places you will go,  
To spread the message of God's love and care,  
For all of these reasons I am glad you are there,  
But the selfish part of me still sheds a tear,  
And my heart still wishes you were here.



## Homemade Teddy Bear



One Christmas long ago, she traced a teddy bear,  
Cut it from cardboard and gave it hair,  
A hat, wise eyes, and a cheerful tie,  
I stare at the glowing Christmas tree,  
I ask her bear and God to tell me  
Why she couldn't have more earthly years,  
Christmas tree lights flash dance through  
my tears.  
How can I throw Christmas cheer a dart  
Sharp to pierce an aching, grieving heart?  
God smiles along with her teddy,

Love surrounds you boundless and steady,  
When you feel heart sore, unhealed  
She'll send you bear hugs Christmas sealed!

## Coming Together



Grief is like a jigsaw puzzle,  
Perhaps it isn't grief,  
But adjusting to new reality,  
Trusting  
That you and your meaning in my life will  
live forever,  
Like you didn't and I won't.  
Maybe grief is a circle,  
With no beginning and end  
Like God  
As you snuggle in his care.  
And the pieces come together.

## Sunflowers in the Valleys



Jill loved sunflowers, so I make it a point to plant them in the yard every year.

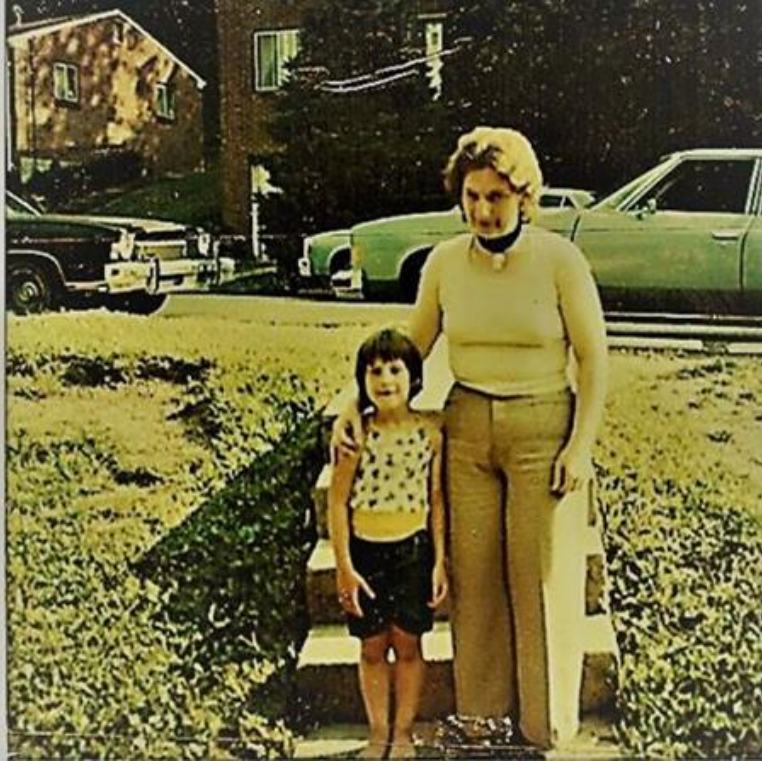
Waking, you stretched your arms, hugging the sun,  
Sleeping you dreamed the sun's waking power,  
You planted sunflowers for everyone,  
You filled your life with hopeful sun flowers.  
Valley days without you are dark and deep,  
You wouldn't approve, but my heart sorrows  
Shadows are long and cliffs endlessly steep  
No sunflowers bloom in my tomorrows.  
On sad days when I'm drooping on the ground  
You whisper, "You have to get up and dance."  
Like bent sunflower heads heavy and round  
I lift my head and give the day a chance.

## Coming Home



At night before my grief is blanketed by sleep,  
I imagine a movie of you in heaven,  
With scenes of your favorite things,  
A cabin in the woods  
Logs covered with daisies, sunflowers, roses.  
A vegetable garden bursting with edible colors  
For you to mix in a salad bowl palate.  
A stream eager for kayakers,  
Long, sensuous waves somersaulting in the sunlight  
Like you used to do in our childhood backyard.  
People traveling the shady path to your door,  
Spirits sagging, steps faltering,  
Until they see you smiling in the doorway,  
And stand on your eternal welcome mat  
With no need to knock.

## Memories



Memories of you  
in my heart and life  
curl snugly as a sleeping cat  
then leap and attack  
slash with razor sharp claws.

And then you and God,  
Convert them into paws

## Mixed Blessing



I see you happy, helping,  
creating,  
Pain free body and mind,  
My heart divides  
Rejoicing in your heaven  
Yet struggling with the shape  
Of earth life without you.



## Talking



Stop yelling at me  
I pile positive hopes  
In your empty chair  
Wipe my tears from your teddy bear,  
Keep repeating life continues each day,  
Tell myself you're just "away."

I yell at you,  
We had so many things to do,  
So many ways to say "I love you,"  
Every day my demand grows stronger,  
Why didn't you stay a little longer?

Time sometimes soothes strident grief,  
Faith changes despair into belief  
We touch each other from our separate homes.  
Seeking each other in peaceful tones.

## Angel Places



I miss you so much in my earthbound world,  
Each day I see you angel hovering,  
My part of your life scrolls my memory  
Leaving my heart no protective covering.  
I know that you are safe and happy with God,  
Busy with missions that make people smile  
Keep taking time out from your happy new life,  
Keep visiting earthbound people awhile!



