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## The Open Door (May 1989)

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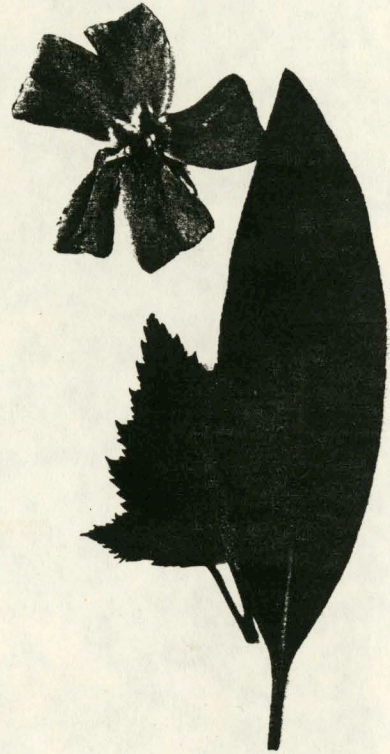
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*A collection of poetry and prose by Lesley College Students*

*MAY 1989*

## Friendship

Friendship is like a roller coaster.  
It has its ups and downs.  
Like the waves, it comes in and out.  
Like a rolling rapids, it sometimes moves quickly with bumps,  
yet sometimes is smooth.  
Like an echo, it goes back and forth.

Friendship, like a grade,  
cannot be bought but must be earned.

Like a balloon, it can grow bigger and bigger,  
but like a chicken in the oven, when it's done, it's done.

Friendship can be like a newborn colt.  
It can start off weak, unable to stand,  
and end up on strong legs.  
Like a diamond, it can sparkle or be dull.

Friendship is like a ticking clock.  
It looks toward the future and not the past.  
Like a shooting star, it bursts forth with flashing colors.

by The Threshold Writing Class, Threshold



## **My Grandmother's House** by Carol Streiter, Threshold

When I was a little girl, one of the most special places to me was my grandmother's house. Every time I went over there, she'd be baking cookies and the whole kitchen would really smell good. I used to be her official taster after she was done, and often got to lick the bowl or the spoon.

The other place besides the kitchen that was special to me was the cellar. This one wasn't like they usually are. It was warm and comfortable down there, and she had plenty of paints, paper, coloring books, and crayons to draw with. When I began school at age five, this was where I used to do homework or other things. If I didn't understand something, she'd try to help me, but if she couldn't do it, she'd tell me to ask someone at school. I was always glad to go down there.

Now, my grandmother's house has changed since she passed away. It went up for sale because after she had gone, my grandfather couldn't live alone anymore. He was too upset to stay by himself. A new couple has moved in and they repainted it from gray to a yellow color. Whenever I go there, I get so many flashbacks of the way it used to be, and really wish I could go back to this special place again.

## **QUEENIE**

by Gretchen Mayfield, Threshold

My favorite place to be, which you might think is strange, is the cemetery where my grandma Queenie is buried. This cemetery is called Spring Grove Cemetery. I have only been there twice and both times were very special to me.

Spring Grove is very big and it is very pretty. There are acres on acres of beautiful green grass and flowers. This place is the perfect place for her because she was the type of person who enjoyed the outdoors. She loved to be around flowers, trees, and birds. She is buried right under a beautiful, big tree. She would be very happy to know that where she is buried is near an oak tree.

My grandma brought a lot of joy and happiness to our family. She was so special to us and we loved her very much. We still do.

I remember her inviting us to her apartment to sleep over. One time my cousin and I slept over and she put us in the room with the hardest mattress I have ever slept on. The mattress was hard, but she was the warmest and softest person to be around.

This is why the cemetery where my grandma was buried is my favorite place to be. I expect to visit as often as I can.

"Grandma if you can hear me, I love you very, very much. Thanks for the wonderful years you gave the family when you were alive. We miss you a lot."

## One Tiny Star

As I looked into the dark, blue sky,  
a tiny star caught my eye.

It was the first star out that summer night,  
glistening, sparkling, all shiny and bright.

Before I could make my wish that night,  
Other stars came and shone just as bright.

So the star I thought was the only, the best,  
was a grain of dust among all the rest.

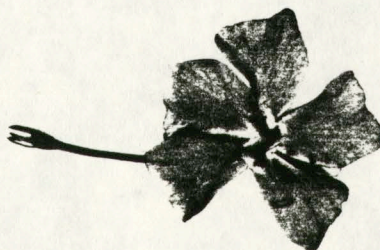
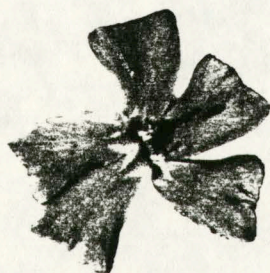
Though many are larger and prettier by far,  
my heart still belongs to that one tiny star.

by Jill Epstein, Threshold

## THE WATER'S EDGE

by Catherine Farquhar, UGS Early Childhood Education/Moderate Special Needs

A walk by the ocean can be beautiful during a winter storm. Granted, my bones become chilled and my teeth sometimes chatter, but as I stop to take in my surroundings, I discover a beauty that doesn't exist in the summertime. My dog, Jenny, also discovers a world that she can only experience in winter, for summer brings the great crowds of people and the usual "NO DOGS ALLOWED" rule. We both feel the turbulence created by the wind and snow squalls, which keep us from standing still very long. As I walk, Jenny romps through the gathering snow, playfully nipping at my mittens, teasing me into playing with her. She bites jovially at her leash that I carry and pretends to walk me down the beach. When we tire of the game, Jenny runs off to explore near the water's edge. White capped waves crash upon the shore, leaving in their wake a thin crust of ice upon the sand. The snowflakes swirl violently downward from the sky and melt instantly upon touching the water's surface. We hear the foghorn sounding frequently, warning boats to beware of jagged rocks that lurk beneath the ocean's surface. Together we watch the seagulls that fly close to the water's surface, seeking shelter from the storm. A brisk run back up the snow blanketed beach warms us both up. We finally reach home where it's cozy and warm. Both of us are content. I have had the chance to observe what I feel is beautiful - the ocean during a winter storm. And I know Jenny is happy because she loves to go for walks no matter what the weather!



## Untitled

by Judith Vincent, GS- Weekend Learning Community

It is in the deep of the night when the land is ruled by the chaos of dreams, and small bodies curl semicircle against the plaster wall, a pillow their only protection and morning is a shore far, too far away, that he comes to visit. His huge hands white and glowing slip beneath her nightgown and move over soft skin.

Jannete hears his laughter like fine ribbons floating in the cold air above her head, lazy, swelling up on the breeze from his lips.

The first time it happened she asked him, "Daddy? ." She asked "Daddy?"

"This is me lovin' you." He said. His touch was so firm, so warm. This was her big, strong Daddy who held the world in the circle of his arms.

The hand moved down.

She stopped asking.

### II.

Jannete shook the mouse back and forth. Her small fingers pinched tight around the tip of its tail. Her belly fluttered as it squealed, head whipping back and forth, tiny paws curling and uncurling.

"Jannete!" She heard her mother's voice calling from down the hall. "Jannete!" Again.

Jannete shook harder. The mouse gave a final squeal and fell from her fingers, leaving a sheath of tail skin behind. Horror screeched across her teeth like chalk on a blackboard. Jannete dropped the tiny pelt and watched in fascination as the wounded mouse ran in circles inside the blue aquarium, its remaining stump of tail pink with blood. The mouse slid into a corner and shivered. She breathed deeply. There. That good feeling. Like a circle closing. She pressed her nose to the glass. "I love you." She said to the mouse.

"Jannete, what are you doing? I called and called!" Her mother paused in the doorway, a damp dishcloth in her hands. "Jannete, what is it?" Her mother moved into the room and turned the child toward her. The little girl's eyes were filled with bright tears.

"It's my mouse," she cried, "My mousey, it hurt itself."

### III.

Daddy was only the first in a long parade of abusers, rapists, fast-talkers, salesmen, psychiatrists, neighbors, and lovers. The child that Jannete had been was lost, buried beneath the pain, silenced by necessity. But without that child's eyes she could not see the truth, and so the parade continued.

### IV.

Jannete was 35 when her little girl returned to her. Jannete was horrified. The little girl was terribly emaciated, the bones of her skull poked through her skin and her arms and legs were like sticks. With her she carried the memories of what happened so long ago.

Then the little girl vanished and she saw her Daddy's face bending over her. "This is me loving you." He said. She saw his huge hand reaching for her, "This is love." He said.

Before he could touch her she saw her own hand lash out and grab him by the wrist.

"LIAR" she hissed.

## No Time For Love

Is anybody out there to hear my calls,  
Or am I screaming into silent walls.  
Did anyone see the rose I grew,  
Or is it crushed under the horseman's black shoe.  
Will someone read my words, written so tame,  
Or were they burnt by the eternal flame.  
Did you cherish my heart, I devoutly gave to you,  
Or did you so fervently break it into two.

by Bridget A. Wood, UGS

## Devin

September 15, 1985

some day i will look back  
and ask myself if it was right  
and you will still be there--somewhere--  
a part of me, yet unknowing  
though i knew you once,  
in the very beginning

who will you become? i will never know  
--only you--  
i will be who i am and you --  
you will be separate, complete--yourself.  
yet somehow i will know you are happy  
that it was right  
and, in knowing, i will be happy, too

you--always you  
unknowing, even as i have known

--and then there was you



by Shelby Vaughn, UGS Human Sevices

# EVERYTHING WAS OKLAHOMA

by Victoria Hensch, UGS - Elementary Education/Moderate Special Needs

Until I was eight years old, I thought everyone and everything fit into my own little world. The land was flat and you could see for miles if you were out of the city. Gentle rolling hills blocked your view from time to time, or a stand of trees, a house or a building, but the obstacle was brief and unchallenging. I had, of course, seen globes and maps; my teachers, parents and friends had talked about this country and planet--what it looked like--but I didn't believe it. I couldn't picture or understand anything different than what I saw around me, until I saw the Rocky Mountains.

I saw them from the distance as our stationwagon slid along the highway, but they weren't mountains--they weren't real--until they blocked my view. They weren't mountains until their shadow covered me, our stationwagon, and my whole world. They loomed before me: huge and jagged. There was even snow! although it was summertime and hot, hot, hot. We piled out of the car and ran to the hard crunchy stuff, made snowballs, and posed for photographs. We were on our first REAL vacation: camping in southwestern Colorado for a whole week.

Our stationwagon was so full we could hardly breathe. There were seven of us, plus camping gear, and food, and God know what else in that car. We had prepared for that trip for ages--made lists, revised them, packed and repacked. But nothing prepared me for that long, windy drive up and down the Continental Divide. We zoomed around the curves--kids squealing, Dad smiling, Mom's clenched fingers on the car door and her hair blowing with the wind. My eyes were as big as the millions of peaks everywhere around me. There were no guard rails on those steep mountain roads, and I hoped that our stationwagon wouldn't go screeching off the edge and tumble down the rocks the way my brother said it would.

The wild and wonderful drive brought us to Mesa Verde National Park. We walked and talked and explored our way through the cliffs where Indians had made their home thousands of years ago. My world had grown. How was Oklahoma going to fit into it? Oklahoma had been everything to me, but now there were mountains and ranger hats and huge pine trees. During one of our cliff tours we had to climb a forty-foot ladder that was fastened to a sheer mountain wall. We were warned by the park ranger not to look down, which made this challenging ascent all the more thrilling. Halfway up, I considered ignoring the warning for one quick glance. I was a young Oklahoma girl and wanted to see the view thousands of feet below me. But something crept over me... a new respect for the mountain, and the certainty of danger if I was careless. I learned and I grew as I climbed, and I didn't look down as the next hand, the next foot, found a new rung on that endless ladder.

I made it to the top of the ladder--to the top of the world. I found a whole new world in one short week. After camping in the forest, wading in ice-cold streams, listening to stories of the mountains, and filling my senses with new sights and sounds, I discovered I was changing. At the time, I wasn't quite sure HOW I was changing, but if all this was out there--what else was waiting for me?

Trying to make my new world fit into a neat little package didn't work too well. I saw mountains on the horizon even when we were back to rolling hills. I dreamt of mountains and summer snow and ancient cliff dwellers. I carried the Rockies around inside of me everywhere I went.

As the years passed I knew one day I would live near the mountains. I planned to move to Colorado after graduating from high school, and live with friends in a cabin miles outside of a small town. I ended up in the Pacific Northwest, discovering new peaks and ranges. Mountains became an important part of my life--protecting me with their huge mass, assuring me with their beauty, and propelling me to visit them time and time again. I spent days and weekends and holidays hiking and skiing in the mountains. Everything amazed me: evergreen trees so heavy with snow that their mighty branches were left drooping, summer wildflowers delicately dotting the mountain meadows, layers and layers and layers of jagged peaks, nature grabbing me with its colorful hue--green leaves, blue speckled birds' wings, black-spotted squirrels' tails, yellow dandelions, purple irises, orange sunsets, and red roses.

Now I live in Boston. Flat Boston. It's a vibrant and versatile city, but has only one small hill--and that is smack dab in the middle of a concrete jungle. And so I fly, fly away...whenever I can...to Maine and the layers of hills and mountains, and the warmth and security of nature.

I'm hiking and see the mountain before me. My leg muscles stretch as I climb up and up. The world unfolds around me--sunlight filtering through the trees, wet rocks shining along the dancing water, squawking, chirping, rustling noises greeting me. I'm happy. I see how I'm a part



of everything--the earth, the forest creatures, the moss growing on the rocks, and the wind blowing colorful leaves around.

The End

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### **Living With An Alcoholic**

Sleeping next to a drunken lover  
What a severe blow  
The barroom stench lingers  
The unsatisfied lust drags on  
Almost like being next to a head injury victim  
Stupefied, Stupid Fried, temporary Alzheimers  
Again and again  
Continued masochism  
The bedding gets soaked with the smell  
That unmistakable drunken stench  
Ossified stink in the olifactory sense.

by Janet Singleman, UGS- Human Services

### **Tale of Co-Dependency**

Free of him  
The cuffs are off  
The chain is broken, the yolk has been removed  
Now on the delicate long winding road to recovery  
Recovering from an addiction, addicted to him  
Sober now the light can at least be observed  
Grieve and go on  
This time the light will not go out  
The self can come back  
Don't be afraid, have no more fear  
No more anvil hanging over your head by a thread  
No more Monkey on your back  
Free to breathe, the onus is gone  
The mill stone has disintegrated  
The light at the end of the tunnel is not an oncoming train  
It is the eternal infinite light of HOPE.

by Janet Singleman, UGS -Human Services

## Poem For When You Go Home

Often I've heard you say,  
"How will I survive the death of my mother?"  
It's extremely painful for you to allow yourself  
to even think about her death.  
It hurts deeply to think of life without her.  
Believe me for what I am to say,  
This much is for certain  
You will survive.

Often you've cried,  
By talking about her dying  
I've seen you ache, and feel horrible,  
You begin to blame yourself  
Because you may not be with her when she dies.

Often you've felt bad  
Disappointed in yourself  
For not being with her as she grows old.  
You've expressed how painful it will be  
If she were to die alone  
and you weren't home.

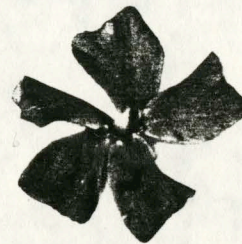
This much is for certain,  
By giving you what you need and  
By telling you what you need to hear  
Will comfort you;  
It's hoped these feelings will lose their intensity.

Dearest Lee,  
You have so much to keep the spirit of your mother alive.  
Only in time, long after she's gone  
Will you begin to realize what I've just said.

Someday when the pain is no longer sad,  
You'll have the courage to open many of those  
typewritten letters she sent you.  
Remembering how carefully you filed each one  
As if unconsciously, you anticipated the need to  
preserve and protect them.

Once you've opened them again  
and you're slowly reading through the many years  
of correspondences,  
You'll begin to recall  
the occasions, reasons, and seasons for when each arrived.  
What you were doing back then,  
How you reacted to her messages,  
Whether some things really were as important as they  
seemed,  
Surely will touch you.

Especially how she kept herself busy.  
Letter after letter,  
filled with energy and enthusiasm for her many activities.  
Lovely, poetic comments describing her social, cultural,  
and civic interests.



But, her life wouldn't have been complete without  
Her obsessive worrying!  
This old, too familiar side of her personality  
Surely will touch you.

The nostalgia of beautiful memories  
will leave no room for sorrow.  
The exchanges of love between the two of you  
through the years  
Will blossom into a separate peace.

As you mourn her loss  
Your heart will temporarily feel empty,  
Someone has been taken and can't be replaced.  
Someone very dear and close to you.  
This loss brings your worst fear  
"How will I survive the death of my mother?"

Remember one night, at the beginning of the summer  
we were lying in bed talking,  
and you told me.  
"Gee, when I'm sixty-two in the year 2010,  
Mom will be 91."  
Do you remember what I told you?  
"She may still be living."  
It seemed strange to you to even think about that  
possibility.

It's scary and frightening, once our parents are dead.  
We're all alone in the world.  
The experience of living becomes dramatically changed.

My dear Lee,  
Your mother's death will be like a fire.  
As her flame flickers out,  
The glow from her fire  
Will light up your soul,  
and will burn forever bright in your heart.  
With God's blessing,  
and with your good sense for continuing the tapestry of  
your roots,  
Her personal belongings,  
letters, mementoes, documents and deeds,  
Like seeds in the good earth,  
presupposes that there is life after a fire.

by Teal Plummer, PMBI- Training and Development

## CONNECT

by Carl Schwaber, GS - Creative Arts in Learning

Josh comes in real late one night. I'm asleep but anticipate the sound of our wooden door moving and I'm awake. Both of us were out with women the previous evening. We generally exchange stories after such occasions. My penchant is to narrate and expand the tale, with much affect and emotion. Josh tends to listen and edit particular assumptions I make and conclusions I draw. Where my story spills over like boiling water on a stove, Josh's story unravels only as a result of my provocative prompting. These exchanges of ours are timeless and somewhat of a ritual. I look forward to finding out on which points of my story Josh will focus attention. He gets tickled by the dramatic tone with which I embellish my telling. He also takes pleasure in witnessing my responses to his accounts. When he speaks of a definite interest shown in him by someone he is fond of, I give him back a dose of playful hostility, jealousy, perhaps self-pity, coupled with some supportive bliss.

So I pop out of bed at this hour and talk to him (in the bathroom). We both seem to have had pleasant evenings. I feel now that my experience has been recorded and taken account of. It is my testimonial. Posterity will somehow inherit it. Josh is my window of self-reflection. His response affects my behavior in the next interaction. Our discussions are like a game of squash. I fire the balls hard at Josh the steadfast, and he sends them back to me at a new angle. I must make an adjustment to stay in the game. I come out of it so much the wiser. Josh, for his part, emerges more amused.

As far back as first grade, I've had these kinds of exchanges with Josh. We met the first day, in fact, in a V.W. van that picked us up early in the morning and whizzed us into the rest of our lives. I was nervous about starting school and didn't know anyone on the bus, or at school for that matter. Josh was in the same situation. Both of us, in fact, were the first members of our respective families to enter this particular institution. But I was equipped with a set of colored markers and decided to show them to Josh as he entered the van. "I got markers!" I said to him, as if to say, "Let me share my excitement with you, not just today but for the rest of our lives!" These days, in times of stress, Josh maintains that if we could only settle the marker issue, we could call a truce and go our separate ways. Of course, the marker fortress I had taken refuge behind didn't last very long. I dissolved into tears going up the steps of the building that led to the classroom. I didn't know the way to first grade. Josh and a girl named Susie took hold of my hands and comforted me, assuring me that they knew the way to class. Perhaps from then, I began to associate Josh with support and reassurance.

Josh and I were buddies throughout our six years together in elementary school. Rather than get involved in the all-male soccer games as some of our classmates did, we opted to play "jump-rope-kidnap" with the girls. We would run from them and then allow ourselves to be lassoed within the bounds of their jump ropes, all the while feigning misery and protesting vigorously. We loved it. This perhaps was the last time in our relations with females that we were ever able to take total comfort in a confined domain.

We took on more bravado as we grew. A bunch of us stood up on desks and played kazoos to accompany rock and roll singles playing on a phonograph. We actually thought we had come upon an original act and demanded class time to practice and perform for others. Toward the fifth and sixth grade years four of us formed a group called "The New Creation." We played music and sang for school assemblies. I don't know how good we were, but they did let us play. Josh and I had guitars, Danny played the clarinet, and Adam took the drums. I remember singing "Sugar, Sugar" by the Archies; the clarinet was used for the little melody that comes after the refrain.

On winter days, we took advantage of valuable recess time to have tag team wrestling matches. About six of us would form two groups of three, who faced each other on a wooden floor. We then commenced the process of trying to beat the hell out of each other. Two guys would start wrestling and would tag a team member's hand when they wanted to be replaced. I would usually face Josh; he was bigger than me but I always felt I could take him. I never did though. He always proved to be tougher than I was, and I never understood how I had misjudged him. He was my closest friend and yet I remember wanting to beat him up so soundly just to show the other guys, who were more athletic, how capable I was. But I never did.

Sleepovers were a big deal then. I looked forward to them immensely. Josh once had a birthday slumber party at his house. I remember a whole pack of guys forming a secret club that liked girls. We spoke a lot about Josh's older sister. I think we wanted to make her an honorary

member in absentia.

I often stayed over at Josh's house on my own. He had two single beds in his room, parallel to each other and facing a window that looked out upon his front yard. His big German Shepard, "Snooper," would sleep on Josh's bed, which was closer to the door. I slept near the clothes bureau that was along the side wall. The night my mother went into labor with my youngest brother, I was deposited at Josh's house. We were both nine years old. I was the oldest of three boys at this point, and I remember thinking what having a sister would be like. Josh wanted the baby to be a girl so that when she grew up, he could ask her out on a date. I don't know which one of us wanted a girl more. As it turned out, neither of us had much say in the matter.

The Beatles were doing it then. Josh seemed to have all the records. We liked hearing "Revolution," and "Hey Jude." Once, while bouncing on the beds as though they were trampolines, we timed "Hey Jude" in its entirety, including the "na, na, na" section at the end of it. It came out to be seven minutes and something. I still remember facts like this, along with the names of Josh's neighbors and his childhood zip code and phone number.

Josh and I never again were in school together, though we stayed in touch intermittently through the end of high school. We went to public secondary schools in different towns and indulged our individual interests. Josh took up journalism and eventually became chief editor of the school paper. I sang in glee clubs, acted in plays, and ran cross-country. Our rival was Josh's high school and the meet between our two schools was always the last one of the season. Nobody on our team looked forward to running at Josh's school, for the course included a tremendously steep and long hill. If only Josh had been there to run alongside, I would've had something to laugh at. But Josh, you see, wouldn't have been there. He is built much more like a wrestler than a runner and to this day will opt for the stationary bike over running. At separate colleges we pursued our interests further, catching up with each other occasionally during the summer.

I spent time overseas after college. Once I sent Josh a postcard with a hotel on the cover bearing his family name, claiming I could not elude reminders of him no matter where I was. That's all I wrote. I didn't need to sign it. No one else would write him such a card. Josh perfected his craft in New York City and is now a writer for a business magazine in Boston. I am involved in teaching and directing children's drama at various schools in the Boston area. Both of us have been in frequent contact these last few years in Boston. Recently, when between apartments, I came to stay with him and never left. He's a good guy to have around: he set up a bed for me, cleared a desk for me, even lends me his car on occasion.

He's the funniest guy I know. I'm the funniest guy he knows. Both of us have a cynical humor that is bent on exposing what the other is trying to hide. We both laugh very hard at each other's jokes. Sometimes we're the only ones that laugh. To the observer, our put downs of each other might appear callous and cruel; we often take no prisoners. But we manage to criticize each other's foibles and eccentricities, and even vent anger when we feel it, through a veil of humor. We're direct enough to hit the target, but the humor and tone betray enough affection to take the edge off. It's kept us honest. Whenever there's a crisis, we'll drop everything and talk with the other guy, meet with the other guy, time not a matter.

Sometimes we'll get into philosophical arguments about ridiculous points and go on for hours disagreeing with nothing. Nobody ever wins these arguments. Josh once told me that he was reminded of the character of our interactions by a scene in the movie "Diner." There are these two guys, and one wants a ride home with the other guy but can only ask for it if he can be sure it won't put the other guy out. The other guy won't give him the ride unless he asks for it; it goes on like this. I remember once coming in late to Josh's house for dinner and explaining that I had actually arrived early but had unexpectedly run into an old acquaintance around the corner and thus let time slip away. Josh maintained that whether I was coming from around the corner or from Southeast Asia, I was still late. The more I raised the volume, the more he did. Finally, we both gave up and laughed.

Josh is ever the recorder. He reads a lot, listens to people's stories, listens to my stories, takes it all in, reflects, writes, keeps account. He's always there for me, providing support I can depend on. He's a harbor I can sail into when my boat falls apart. He speaks when he has something of substance to say. He seldom imposes his values or agenda on others. Me -- I move all over the place. I run toward interactions with people, confrontations, affection, and human drama. I come to Josh with stories that entertain him, stories that gratify me in the telling. I hear his reactions to my accounts the day after, in my head; I may laugh out loud in the street as I walk alone on my way to somewhere. I feel that no matter how bad it is, how disappointing the matter, Josh has heard my account, my testimony. He knows what I'm feeling. He shares the load and it'll be okay. I may be misunderstood by the world, but I'm not beaten for it because Josh

understands. It's him and me against the world. We know the secret. We get the last laugh. Perhaps it originates in that laugh we had during kindap jump rope.

Josh isn't thrilled at the idea of turning thirty, a rite of passage he quite recently faced. He feels he hasn't kept pace with expectations - society's and his own. He feels all of a sudden very mortal. I can relate even as a twenty-nine year old. All of us used to yearn to be immortal, to keep forever that arrogant confidence we used to have, that told us we'd always get another chance. I would only wish for him the sensation I feel over our friendship, the keen, gut pleasure of having one's feelings embedded in a friend for life. The sum total of each our persons and worlds combined in such a friendship is in fact greater than the individuals involved. It is the closest thing to tasting immortality. With all the changes, things do remain the same. I seem to keep on displaying before Josh the colored markers, and he seems to keep showing me the way to first grade.

The End

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## CHINESE MARKET

A street of earth, alive  
with dark blue and green,  
plump children in pink and safety orange  
stare at my eyes.  
Bicycles clatter by  
carrying furniture and families.

Cabbage odor pervades  
Biting even the cold,  
lungs fill with dust,  
spit.

A squatting woman sells hot yams,  
yells to me a bargain.  
Her dry, fire warmed hands pat her sweated stomach,  
a yellow smile cracks her skin  
I take two.

A decrepit dog hovers  
by the pig carcass  
weakly wagging at absent flies.  
A dash of red alerts him --  
Just a fallen star.

by Kathleen Collins, GS-Counseling and Psychology

## Winter in Metropolis

And mufflers and topplers,  
and tuffles and tiffens,  
raincoats and rubbers  
and shrugglers with mittens  
and going and coming  
and sludging through rivens,  
of water and night snow  
and newly made visions  
of stepping and traveling  
commuting provisions

M B T A

bus drivers that whistle

by Diane Lisa Appel, GS -WLC

## The Struggle of Coming Into Your Own

I'm a woman trying to be brave  
I'm a woman trying to stretch  
to reach  
to push vile hindering waste  
out of my way  
I'm a woman  
trying to grab and pull  
at strangling weeds ensnaring my feet  
I'm a woman  
trying to be brave, to push ahead  
a woman  
I have soft skin  
but no one touches it  
I have blue green eyes  
but no man looks in them with  
                  love that means I want you  
I have friends, sure  
                  good chums and all  
but I'm a woman  
and I undercover  
underwraps  
under a cover of  
                  insulation  
my body well padded  
the hourglass well hidden  
the hours glassed in my own fears  
or lack of raw determination  
For you see this isn't the age of Boticelli's  
                  maidens  
this is not the European countryside of  
                  years past  
so to be a part  
                  of what beauty means today  
to be a beautiful woman  
I have to be less to be more  
I have to be less and move more  
I have to shed skin to really emerge  
I am a beautiful woman  
but I hide it well  
too well  
under layers  
I may be tired of hiding, tired of layers  
I may be ready to come out now  
love me anyway, won't you?  
see me anyway, won't you?  
the real me anyway --don't you know.....  
I've been here the whole time.

By Diane Lisa Appel, GS- WLC



## **Migration**

Dark wings scatter the sky  
They splinter with teeth  
of lightening

As a blaze, they shoot to Guatemala, Belize  
Then mingle with street colors  
speaking their foreign tongue

They wash the sky with rivers  
of Joseph's coats  
above brown men, skin rich with  
beads of sweat  
Transparent polished stones

In a cavern fragrant with tropical  
musk  
Deep ancient thought  
they sip buchu tea on limbs  
of ripe papaya

by Carole Shumans, GS- Education and Creative Arts

## Family

Eddie and Lottie live at the end of a dead end street  
with more than a few dogs  
and a yard full of cars.

He fixes car radios  
fixed them for years  
"Not like the guys in town, he says,  
they take the insides out and don't weld  
them together like I do."

Sometimes it isn't easy to find him -  
the car bodies, carburetors and engines  
surrounding him like a very large family.  
Each spring he adopts more.

Lottie sells junk, this is what she calls  
those things permanently attached to the insides  
of cars, in the barn, under the stairwell.  
Spoons, dolls, books, dresses clear a pathway  
for her to enter and exit.

There is something regal about her  
she wears jewelry like no ordinary woman can  
They are like the precious children she never had,  
the strings of pearls, amethysts and diamonds,  
emeralds the size of small almonds.

Lottie reads the cards at a flea market in New Haven.  
They ask to know too much  
and pay her too little.  
Still she goes to town to sell fortunes and visit  
the library;  
"You should see the education I get for free," she laughs,  
rubbing the string of pearls around her neck.

by Carol Shumans, GS  
Education & Creative Arts in Learning



Compiled and edited by Kesaya Noda and Liz Kauffman





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