

A Collection of  
Louise Dart's Poetry

How blissfully my day goes by  
It takes a lot to make me cry.

I'm gleeful when I turn a phrase  
Parts of speech enrich my days.

With fixed intent I look for joy  
When proper words I can employ.

They satisfy an appetite  
I seem to relish every bite.

True poetry's a work of art  
I'm glad to have a minor part.

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## Nostalgia

A love there was that never can return  
Through bud and bloom full cycle grew and died  
Its lingering ashes can no longer burn  
In memory only will it even hide.

Time-earned strength, of years of toil begotten  
A rugged fortitude from hardships grew  
Gone - all gone, but surely not forgotten  
The full and lean years both so quickly flew.

Never can we quite again recapture  
Those first emotions, or that virgin faith  
Nor can we practice that first joy and rapture  
Stamina becomes elusive wraith.

Once more we travel now the well-worn pathways  
Seeking to relive remembered thrills  
Wandering over memory-haunted highways  
Trudging up and down imagined hills.

Ever moving, seeking, finding, losing  
Plodding, slowly, blindly, arms entwined  
Through the dusk of life, confused, confusing  
What is just ahead with what's behind.

The Spring of hope: the dawn of budding powers  
Mature decision, Summer's practiced fun  
Autumn's harvest, golden, full-ripe hours  
Winter, soon to come - the day is done. (1975)

## Taking Correction

(1)

When, with tact, my glaring fault you bare  
It's well that I be mindful and aware.

It merits pondering to adjust my course  
I profit more from guidance than remorse.

So seldom can I simply make amends  
And it's on learning that repair depends.

Can sharing skills that you already hold  
Insult my willingness to change the mold?

Correction is a gift from one who cares  
Whence comes the stigma criticism bears?

(Printed by the National Library of Poetry, 1996)

(2)

The old stigma of criticism  
is ruining our Education System.

(3)

If it is politically incorrect  
To point out failure or neglect,  
Children reach maturity  
Ignorant of all their frailty  
And learn what's right much later, when  
They fail again and yet again.

### Not Having It Your Way

Decrepit Granny's hoary head  
Though seasoned many years  
Is prone to stark senility  
Her tales elicit tears.

Old friends have now preceded her  
(A shunning by attrition)  
She's lost all those who needed her  
We pity her condition.

Survival in declining years  
Seems tragic to endure.  
Illness lurks to feed one's fears  
While lonely death seems sure.

So tenuous and brittle have  
The threads of life become  
One anxiously anticipates  
The day it will be done.

At last, in wilted listlessness  
Helpless she rocks and stares  
And endlessly awaits some sign  
That anybody cares.

If you have read this sorry tale  
Critiqued this dreary rhyme  
You're practicing the patience  
You'll need when comes your time.

### My Man

My man, my partner, and my mate  
Was soul and master of my fate.

Politeness he personified.  
His gentleness can't be denied.

Noble, honest, brave and kind  
Loyal as any man you'll find.

Neat and orderly and clean  
Never rowdy, rough, or mean.

Lofty-minded, heart of gold  
Never selfish, careless, cold.

Ever cheerful, ever bright  
No argument that he was right.

No need to ask me how I know.  
We married fifty years ago. (1996)

## Stiff Winds

The North wind and the South wind  
Are having quite a fight.  
The North wind started blowing,  
Attacking in the night.

Then from the South, a warm front  
Blows hard against its foe,  
But only briefly, fleeing  
Before a greater blow.

Our flagstaff starts to crackle  
To sway and strain and bend  
According to the strength of  
The rivals who contend.

Wind and flag together  
Can make an awful racket.  
It seems this sort of weather  
Can pierce my warmest jacket.

Birds all search for shelter;  
Squirrels choose to hide.  
A cat will find a motor car  
Where heat remains inside.

The North wind and the South wind  
Are in a bitter battle,  
Perhaps to see which one of them  
Can make the windows rattle. (1996)

## Mathematics of Old Age

In human terms, I'm growing old  
By reason of time's flight.  
I've added to my age each year  
Subtracted from my height.

Appreciation's multiplied  
By troubles and by cares,  
Dividing my attention  
To details and repairs.

My day is filled with pondering  
Confusion and neglect,  
Nights, with dreams, adventures  
I sustain, but can't direct.

My friends and my acquaintances  
Diminish and decrease,  
Adding to my loneliness  
While frailties increase.

## The Semi-Perks of Old Age

Aging's an experience  
That's quite a joy to me.  
Consider the alternative  
And you will soon agree.

I gain a lot of privilege  
Just sporting pure white hair.  
But sitting in a wheel-chair  
Just proves I am not there.

My body may be damaged, but  
I won't admit I hurt.  
I can't let being penniless  
Make me as cheap as dirt.

I've finished raising offspring,  
The best course I could take.  
To count myself impoverished  
Would be grave mistake.

## South Padre Island

Splashing along at the water's edge  
Aware of sights and sound and smells,  
This unreal place, the salt-damp breeze  
Conscious of self and shells and swells,  
We feast upon freedom to move about  
To scream at gulls, and laugh and shout,  
Kick flotsam and jetsam along the beach  
Move ropes and shells within our reach.

What phantom magnet brings us here  
Despite our weak resistance?  
Did we deposit treasure here  
In a previous existence?  
As though in some forgotten past  
We dig in with our spoons,  
Was it perhaps our treasure chest  
Secreted in these dunes?

Swift sundown dulls the blowing sand  
Erasing every trace of man.  
With ending day comes color-blindness  
The nighttime sea is free from kindness.  
But who are we to criticize  
The color of water, or wind, or skies?  
New color will come with the coming dawn  
And all is well - except we've gone.

### Finishing Touches

I know my days are numbered  
Wish I knew Number One  
I wouldn't start new projects  
But finish what's begun.

I'd have a fresh shampoo, I'm sure  
I'd pick up all my clothes.  
I'd leave all letters answered  
Before I took my doze.

When what was left was counted  
Furnishings all sold,  
I wouldn't leave for others  
My pan of unbaked rolls.

I know my days are numbered  
My hair has long been white.  
What I don't know is whether  
They'll end by day or night.

March 1999  
Dear Travis,

I am getting very eager  
Your trips to visit are getting meager  
Please write another little rhyme  
To bring in hand, not mailed this time.  
I have a wish that can't come true  
To share the days of our lives with you!

Gram

Maxim

Success is based on aptitude  
Flavored well with attitude.  
This is no idle platitude  
It's true in any latitude.

### For Rent

I have a nice old duplex  
Cozy as can be  
Hard beside the Catclaw  
Feels like home to me.

It comes with handy parking  
Underneath a tree  
The birds you think unwelcome  
Will be chased off by me.

I need a nice new neighbor  
With whom I can relate  
A young and working couple  
Or lady without mate.

I'd like to keep the household  
Completely free from smoke  
My aversion to tobacco  
Cannot be deemed a joke.

So if you are a candidate  
Be sure to let me know  
I think I'm needing only one  
Don't line up in a row.

### Doing Double Duty

Permit my day to so begin  
That I may wish I were a twin.

Let me be ever optimistic  
Seldom wholly moralistic.

I would always wear a smile  
As though a frown were out of style.

Deliver me from noisy crowds  
And sudden gloomy threatening clouds.

Prepare for me a jolly greeting  
For every person I'll be meeting.

And may my words ring ever true  
Especially when I speak to you.

## Survival Guide

Survival may be limitless  
Reserved for those with little stress,  
Who keep their hands and bodies clean  
Avoid all things remotely mean  
Shun the crossings where lights are yellow  
Give right-of-way to the other fellow  
Sit and relax with any good book  
Don't give skis a second look  
Avoid bicycles and pick-up trucks  
Eat their peanuts without the shucks  
Eat oats and apples and stop to chew  
Whose words are kind and always true  
Leave the liquor to someone else  
Finish a cone before it melts  
I could go on ad infinitum  
Like "pet your dogs, but never bite 'em".  
Longevity is a joyous gift  
For some with humor, joy, and thrift.

## Keeping House

When I was but a little child  
I'd build myself a nest  
Or make some small clay dishes  
And treat my doll as guest.

Growing up, I made a home  
Of every house we had  
Mothered many children  
And kept them fed and clad.

My greatest joy has been to see  
My grown-up brood together  
Without or with their progeny  
Regardless of the weather.

Now I'm playing house once more  
Have only me to please  
Unless there's someone at the door  
It's just me and Louise.



## Life Beyond Retirement

Today I'm sitting pretty  
Satisfied and smug  
Complacent on this joyride  
Without a dog to hug.

I shop alone - no quibbling  
I cook just what I will  
Sleep well, sans spouse or sibling  
No static, hushed nor shrill.

I may have lost some marbles  
And play with half a deck  
But when I look for money  
I need only write a check.

I'm practicing frugality  
As all ancestors should  
Striving toward civility  
I hope that's understood.

My shelf life now is limited  
My warranty expired  
Life's been more than I had hoped  
Since I have been retired.

## Incompatibility

It's not the talent hid from me  
That I possess  
Brings me distress.

It's gifts of mine you cannot see  
I must confess  
Brings strife and stress.

'Twixt you and me

It's talent that I lack, but know  
I do command  
On every hand  
That makes me feel so very low.

When you admit  
I've none of it -

That is the blow.

Impugn my faith, deny I'm gallant  
My efforts flout  
But never doubt

My latent talent.

### Ailments

My headache to you may seem trivial  
To me it is less than convivial.  
Arthritis you may think is minor  
I can list a dozen things finer.  
My sinus congestion is chronic  
I'd rather the fault than tonic.

--My personal theory of relativity

### Rhyming

At the slightest hint of a catchy phrase  
Especially in these lonely days  
I rhyme.

Even when I put out the light  
In early, mid- or dead of night  
I rhyme.

From early days of childhood  
When little, if any, I understood  
I rhyme.

In the boredom of retirement  
Good humor, the sole requirement  
I rhyme  
And rhyme and rhyme.

### How Are We Raising Our Children?

An appetite for horror  
Among our children thrives  
Nurtured by the cable  
And games that fill their lives.

First guns, and swords and arrows  
Then in reality  
They play at death and wounding  
And foster savagery.

As though it's a case of us or them  
They practice hate, inflict mayhem. (1996)

## U.S.A. Travel Limericks

This old Texas gal named Louise  
Drove all through the country with ease.  
When asked her opinion  
About the dominion  
She answered "I thought I would freeze."

She drove through the state we call Kansas  
Where softly a gentle breeze fans us  
We passed a used cow lot  
And breathed the wind, now hot  
We take whatever life hands us.

In southern Nebraska the flowers  
Nourished by gentle, cool showers  
Inspired a study  
By me and my buddy  
That surely will take many hours.

The lovely green hills of Nebraska  
I'm tempted to tell ya, not ask ya  
All topped with white blooms  
And grasses with plumes  
I doubt I will get to Alaska.

While driving across Minnesota  
Just east, as you know, from Dakota  
I passed through Duluth  
I tell you the truth  
Consuming some figs called Kadota.

Up and around Lake Superior  
I drove, though the trip got much drearier  
Past iron ore docks  
And customs and rocks  
Toronto, to me was much cheerier.

Wild blueberries grow in New York  
Ignoring the arduous work  
I ate some, the rest  
(But only the best)  
I brought home then ate pie with my fork.

A beautiful state is Virginia  
You should go there if you've got it in ya  
The roadsides have poppies  
I wish I had copies  
But you can't copy poppies, now kin ya.

When through Arkansas I was traveling  
While trying to keep from unraveling  
A sign said "Rough Road"  
As any fool knowed -  
The Highway Department was graveling.

When voyagers venture to roam  
They drive cars embellished with chrome  
But coming toward me  
As plainly I see  
Not a truck - not a bus - but a home.

## Miscellaneous Limericks

Calming stress with a tasty Cream Cone  
Was a habit to which I was prone  
At a place where one dines  
Was a space with two signs  
"Handicaps" and "Tow away zone."

I think I've been put to a test  
While having my usual rest  
With no time to duck  
I survived with pure luck  
My ceiling fan fell - what a jest!

A kindly old lady next door  
Dropped by, as often before  
Returning my dish  
Now, could she just wish  
I'd be filling it one time more?

Arthritis, the bane of existence  
For all who have lasted the distance.  
It comes and it goes  
Almost never shows  
It's noted most for its persistence.

Magnificent fields of sunflowers  
Present their big blooms to the showers  
Doing their best  
To turn to the west  
Although it's been raining for hours.

On Mondays, for sure, I go swimmin'  
With several anachronous women  
We look for no change  
But hope to arrange  
To go on with our difficult livin'.

Most music's akin to pollution  
At best, it could use some dilution  
They play it so loud  
Their head's in a cloud  
The problem defies resolution.

## Duster

There was a blue budgie named Duster  
Who used all the words he could muster  
He took to a tree  
And soon so did we  
Lest Duster should lose all his luster.

In order to make him come nearer  
We flashed his toy bell and a mirror  
He fell for the bait  
Of bananas, but wait!  
How come little Duster seems dearer?

### Louise-isms

Much of my time lately is being spent in gathering inclination.

Neither ignorance nor darkness has much to recommend it.

There's no use looking for a bubble that has already burst.

My toes are inured to ill treatment, having been kicked around by a heel for their lifetime.

Respect is earned  
Success is learned  
Offensive pity spurned  
The useless burned.

### Quotes

"Days of rage following yesterday's attack..."

"This is unbelievable, if it is true."

"Hey, man, like you know, look - right?"

"Evaporate the people in time of flood..."

"A frustum is the bottom of a cone when smaller cone is removed from top."

"You wonder whether Enough is ever Sufficient."

### He said - I heard

"Rely on the Weather Channel." - "We lie on the Weather Channel."

"I'd love for your analysis [urinalysis] to be correct." (Limbaugh, 6-3-98)

"I have made it clear the Bosnia effort would entail [inhale] some risks." (Clinton)

### Optimist

It's proof that I'm an optimist  
It's very plain to see  
When twenty-seven puzzle books  
Come addressed to me.

--

If evergreens should learn to shiver  
Think what a load of snow they'd deliver!

--

### Policy of Optimism

Life is great and I am glad  
For all that falls my lot,  
Happy to accept with joy  
Whatever comes my way.  
Essentials and necessities  
I take with thankful heart,  
Knowing well it won't be long  
'til I perforce depart.

### Wrong Way

Rings in her earlobes  
On her fingers, more rings.  
Rings on her eyebrows  
And intimate things.

Paint on her eyelids  
On her mouth, more paint.  
Tattoos almost everywhere  
Rings and paint ain't.

What a bold statement  
These wild things tell.  
We were headed for heaven  
But maybe we fell!

### Observances

Holes in the heels  
Runs in the knees  
My poor old hose  
Are on their last legs!

--

Fringes and ruffles  
A placket and a pleat  
Jackets and mufflers  
Hide what we eat.

--

Sometimes to move forward  
You must retreat  
As though there be a peanut  
In the way of your shopping cart.

## Conclusions and Deductions

I need independence  
I require peace  
Hunger for security  
As needs for aid increase.

I desire comfort  
Crave some calm seclusion  
I admire excellence  
And avoid delusion.

I relish calm, not conflict  
Intelligence, not folly  
Prize promptness, and integrity  
Not what to some seems jolly.

Gratuitous unkindness  
Leaves me feeling rotten  
I recall a few experiences  
I'd rather I'd forgotten. (1997)

## Appreciation

I thrive upon appreciation  
Approval spurs imagination  
So influenced, I'll be prolific  
Mostly generally, not specific.

Production has been on the wane  
Applause has brought it up again  
Acknowledging your attitude  
I accept with gratitude.

When again I lose the muse  
I'll look to you to light my fuse! (1998)

## The Joys of Children

A stalwart son refined with time  
Is a joy surpassing measure;

A tactful girl with wit sublime,  
A truly lifelong treasure;

Healthy twins who can't yet climb,  
The ultimate in pleasure.

And How Are You?

I'm good as gold - fit as a fiddle  
A bit past old - and thick in the middle.

I'm as well as they come - Feeling just fine  
Except for my temper, a ray of sunshine

I'm sharp as a tack, clean as a whistle  
One thing, however, can make me bristle:

When asked "How are you?" I'm inclined to say,  
Not wanting to argue, "I'm lame today."

I'm right as rain, so don't complain  
Nor ask me how I feel again. (1996)

Dear Doctor:

When I sleep at night,  
My hands both go to sleep  
And there begins within my palms  
A pain both sharp and deep.

My first two fingers and my thumb  
Are aching at the nails  
And sometimes when they move just wrong  
An urgent pain prevails.

So please do something, do it quick  
I think my hands both make me sick.

-=-

The boughs on trees  
Are bowing to the breeze

-=-



### Sibling Memories

Once I had an older brother  
Whom I scarcely knew at all.  
Of course I knew his name and age  
And that he grew quite tall.

The oldest of ten children, he;  
I, seventh - almost lost  
'mongst the big boys and my sisters  
Seldom hugged - but often bossed.

When we moved from Minnesota  
Older boys had left the nest.  
Only later I remember  
Their pranks, their repartee, and jest.

Now the calendar has captured  
Nearly all my kith and kin.  
Only now I read their writings  
Knowing not where to begin.

Sorting through my filing system  
Finding things I couldn't toss  
Getting newly reacquainted -  
For the first time feel my loss. (1996)

Correspondence to the Hubble Telescope

(1)

The Hubble, poor Hubble  
Has terrible trouble  
And who do you think will care?

A near-sighted telescope  
How can it ever hope  
To see what's away out there?

But Hark! There's a plan to go  
Up through the sky we know  
To make complete repair.

Then we can truly see  
All the activity  
Telling us what, when, and where.

Hobbling Hubble,  
Bundle of rubble  
To float with a limp is no fun.

When Hubble's in trouble  
We'll come on the double  
If it dials 9-1-1.

Now Hubble, dear bubble,  
Don't get into trouble  
Away up there in the sky!

Avoid the black holes  
One of their goals  
Is to swallow whatever goes by!

(3)

Oh, Hubble - Hey! Hubble!  
Start looking for trouble!  
Jupiter's being bombarded.

Get into this game  
Defend your good name  
Or explain how you'll be regarded.

(5)

Thanks, gentle Hubble  
We hope it's no trouble  
To furnish the copy you yield.

Recall your objective  
Your lens is effective  
And a nebula's out in left field.

(2)

We sent the Hubble to scan the sky  
We watched and waited; it went awry.  
We sent men out to nudge, repair  
And mend its flaws - above the air.

What awful findings mark its work  
A world somewhere may maybe lurk  
In dark and cloudy Milky Way  
Or past the biggest dipper, say.

We boldly sent it to inform.  
Our brightest minds made it perform  
Eager to know what it could unveil  
They risked chagrin if it should fail.

I guess that some things might be worse  
Scouting the expanding universe.  
Hubble may find a hole that's black  
But please don't ever bring one back!

(4)

Take care, little Hubble  
You're in for more trouble  
For, down in La Silla, Chile  
There is a device  
That seems so precise  
That the stars dance in sparkling  
array! (1994)

(6)

Now, Hubble, hear this  
Prepare for a shift  
We're planning a move for you

Not exactly a gift  
More like a lift  
Just farther into the blue. (1996)

## More Correspondence to the Hubble Telescope

(7)

Hark, Hubble and hear  
How early next year  
Comes "Origins"  
Helper and neighbor

Then a few years hence  
After efforts intense  
You'll have an assist  
In your labor

Then, Little Hubble  
With much, or less trouble  
You'll be reduced  
To obsolete rubble

Scrapped, I might say  
Without much delay  
Replaced, improved  
Much to my dismay

(8)

Hello little Hubble  
This isn't real trouble,  
We've come to improve and renew.

To change out some parts  
Keep you in tune with our hearts  
And your troubles are bound to be few.

We're on a space walk  
Using tools and not talk  
An art used in earth-bound ballet

Now that you're ready  
Just hold your gait steady  
And soon we will be on our way.

## Bryan's on the Honor Roll

I rocked a tiny infant boy  
Sixteen years ago,  
A little bell-like tinkling tune  
Proclaimed the local news at noon.

With flashing eyes, the baby turned  
To reach - to touch the welcomed sound.  
From that day on he seemed to yearn  
To search for news - He loved that sound.

From that time, too, his good right hand  
Refused to serve him well.  
Why others chose right-handedness  
This boy could never tell.

New lenses help his tired eyes  
So reading now is "cool".  
Basketball provides more fun  
Than other games at school.

The accolades he's garnered  
Make this granny wince.  
Rewards are hard to furnish  
Regardless of the hints. (1995)

New contacts, now - Time marches on  
High school is behind him  
Computer science - college bound!  
Sarah, where'd you find him? (1998)

## Water Exercise

Arthritis is a common human plight  
It comes to stay all morning and all night.  
Then, taunting, leaves, so soon to reappear  
It scares me, though I have a modest share.

When pain replaces motion in a joint  
We'll buy most any potion to anoint.  
Now I must try to lose a bit of weight  
In water exercise participate.

Some doctors can, whenever pains increase  
Prescribe a pill, our faulty joints to grease.  
Of course we're grateful for a bit of peace  
The problem is they cost a buck a piece.

So, in the pool, before we face the day,  
In groups, arthritics wade, and swim, and play  
And kick and stretch, and will joints to obey  
No cure we find, but hope defies decay.

## Wet Ones

It's true she thrives in water  
It's plain as it can be  
She's at the pool each morning  
With such vitality.

She swims and sports and splashes  
So long as we are there  
She bubbles, blows, and thrashes  
To dissipate all care.

## To Sarah

Bless My little grey-haired girl  
Bless every tiny silver curl.

Bless with many happy days  
All those who serve in loving ways.

Bless obliging weary feet  
Sustaining mine, no longer fleet.

Give calm composure and reserve  
To one whose pleasure is to serve.

Hold her hand when trials loom  
Help her straighten up her room.

Bless my little grey-haired girl  
My crowning glory is a pearl

#1 - National Library of Poetry, 1995

Heroic are they who  
with nothing to say  
Cannot be persuaded  
to say it.

How weak a defense  
has one with good sense  
Who insists on a chance  
to display it.

There may be a way  
for someone to say  
"Sit down!" and have  
them obey it.

A vacuous wealth  
of tales of ill health  
Is a dragon with no one  
to slay it.

#### Time

The sanctity of time should be  
Exalted as we build,  
Treated as the shrine with which  
Our very life is filled.

The measurement of time began  
So many moons ago.  
Today each span is registered  
Neither fast nor slow.

We live our childhood as though  
It's made of wasted days.  
But in the tender years, we know  
Our learning evokes praise.

The time afforded each of us  
We slight or sanctify.  
Our element of impetus  
Is finite in supply. (1996)

### On Being and Doing

Don't tell me I "ought"  
Don't tell me I "should"  
Whatever I am, I am.

Don't say "You might"  
Or "I wish you would"  
Whatever I do, I do.

I don't want to hear  
"Why don't you try?"  
Whenever I can, I can.

However I live  
I'll never deny  
Whenever I'm through, I'm through.

### What to Do

My sheets are clean  
The dishes done  
What shall I do  
To have some fun?  
No feast to cook  
No race to run  
No use to sit  
Out in the sun  
Play Solitaire?  
Concoct a pun?  
A PUZZLE BOOK!  
The game is won.

### The National Budget

We need a balanced budget  
In Washington, D.C.  
So close a base in Arkansas  
And some in Tennessee  
But not the only income source for  
All my family.

We need a balanced budget, yeah,  
But not at any price  
No budgetary license  
Or any such device  
For each of us, a senator's  
Allowance would be nice.

We need a balanced budget  
But not on any terms  
All your former efforts  
Tend to make us squirm  
Save us all our apples;  
Just discard the worms. (1996)

'Tis the Season

Check the list  
Send a card  
Make a snowman  
Pack it hard.

Deck the tree  
Hang a star  
Welcome children  
From afar.

Wrap a gift  
Tie a bow  
Hang a sprig  
of mistletoe.

Find a Santa  
Make a snap  
Of the children  
on his lap.

Dress a dolly  
Knit a mitten  
Buy some holly  
Give a kitten.

Pop some corn  
Watch it go!  
It's Christmas  
If you didn't know.

What's in a Name?

My mother called me "Weezie"  
My father called "Snooks"  
Sometimes I wonder who I am  
Should I go by the books?

When voting, I sign Mildred  
It's Louise K. on my checks  
When married, I became a Dart  
I wonder what comes next.

## A Full Life

In eighty years, or so, I've seen  
Fields of corn grow lush and green,  
Niagara Falls and ocean waves,  
Redwoods, geysers, canyons, caves.  
I rode cross-country on a train  
Later to fly back again.

I've seen a swan on man-made lake  
His reflection, and his wake,  
A humming bird upon her nest,  
Robins pulling worms with zest.

I've seen a mother deer with twins,  
A river where it first begins  
A chick that struggled from its shell  
A feat accomplished very well.

A son upon a marble slab  
My heart rebounded from the stab.  
I've seen a plane fall from the sky,  
For plane and pilot, sad good-bye.

A snake upon a fig-tree limb.  
I wasted little time with him.

Royal Rhyme - Apology to Chaucer (ababbcc)  
[iambic pentameter]

The Royal herd stands in a stagnant lot,  
Expecting to be fed some hay or grain.  
All feeling most unwieldy and besot.  
Adulterated feed destroyed their brain.  
Please, sir, what justice can a cow attain?  
They struggle, slip, and stagger 'til they drop.  
Please signal 9-1-1 or call a cop!

## Commitment to Excellence

The wise man bests disaster in his youth  
Riches lost can rankle mature souls  
Natural growth from child to man, in truth  
Is upward, ever upward toward your goals  
But trip, and fall, and land back on the dole  
Like chicks left out in rain, you wilt and die  
Through life, let "ever better" be our cry.



### Our Flowering Display

Our garden is surrounded by  
A sturdy fence and gate.  
Inside, a formal garden that  
Devoted hands create.

The fountains all cooperate  
They splash, or turn to ice  
And leave the air unscented  
But smelling rather nice.

But blossoms are the essence of  
This lovely little place  
They are treated with a deference  
Befitting their true grace.

Rolling chairs are welcomed at  
Our flowering display  
A come-and-go reception  
To view this grand bouquet.

Gardeners will keep the walks  
And blow the leaves away  
And replace with healthy plantings when  
The older ones decay.

The pattern of the plantings  
So completely fills the plot.  
What happens when there's more to plant  
But not a vacant spot?

### Living and Dying

The tapestries of life have shown  
What she had made or bought or grown  
Should be spent or tossed aside  
For, after all, she will have died  
Having reaped what she had sown.

When I have died, I'll have no need  
No wishes, preferences nor greed  
In having taken my last breath  
Relinquishing life's hold on death  
I'll have no options, none indeed. (1999)

### At the Pool

In seasoned rhythm, in each day  
An hour or so we spend  
An aging lot, like it or not,  
We reach, and stretch, and bend.

The pool is brimming, some are swimming  
The wading group is in action  
Splashing is banned, the music canned  
There's little room for factions.

We try to keep a patterned measure  
Some for healing, some for pleasure  
We work together very well  
But, under water, who can tell? (1998)

### The Weather

The morning sky is redder than fire  
Along with white and blue  
With purple, gray, and orange  
Tawny and silvery, too.

Wait till the sun peeps over the hill  
Of a sudden, the colors diffuse and fade  
Only the clouds hang light.

What kind of weather will this day bring?  
We'll know before the night. (1998)

### Misses Rister Greet Mister Rister's Sister

Mister Rister's sister  
Came to visit one day.  
Misses Rister kissed her  
Invited her to stay.

However, Mr. Rister  
Blushing with dismay  
Allowed as how  
It's just for now  
Come what may.

## Humanity

Strangers touched my life today  
Quietly, gently giving cheer.

Reflecting on humanity  
Tears would fall from there to here.

Sometimes in life's capricious ways  
Experiences compel displays.

Moments of nobility  
Exhibit life's fragility. (1999)

## Poetry

Words and cadence of my design.

## A House, a Home

Let this house become a home  
Where gracious souls will like to come  
Where blessings are extended from  
Where neighbors hear a cordial greeting  
Of muted tones at every meeting.  
Let there be no lack or dearth  
Of love or harmony or mirth.  
Let this house become a home  
With polished language, glossy chrome. (1996)

## J.D. Stone

Today, and to my great delight  
I met a very gentle man  
Whose skills affect my family  
As much as any other can.

So softly-spoken, none could tell  
How nearly deaf he is.  
Of voices heard throughout the house  
The softest tones were his.

The make-up of this gentleman  
His attitude toward life  
I gathered indirectly  
From sitting by his wife. (1996)

Back in an Hour or Two (limerick)

So long, adios, and adieu  
For a while I am parting from you  
The pool's at the brink  
If I don't sink  
Will be back in an hour or two.

So long, adios, and adieu  
For a while I am parting from you  
The pool's at the brim  
I go for a swim  
Be back in an hour or two.

So long, adios, and adieu  
I go for a restful shampoo  
In an hour or two  
I'll appear before you  
With an attractive hair-do.

Over the Mountain (doggerel)

In the spring time, the rippling rills,  
the new-born streams emerge  
from among the rocks of the Northern Rockies.  
They suddenly change direction  
at the Great Divide.  
Noticeably growing as they descend  
the Western slope, producing  
a great stream within a few miles -  
This mountainside view  
is awe inspiring  
as it gives rise to deep reflection.

Dignity Wanted!

True dignity, it seems to me,  
Is very hard to find.

In most of us Americans  
It cannot be defined.

Play-acting is the nearest thing  
Society can yield.

Lacking a nobility  
Our dignity's concealed. (1996)

## State Park Picnic

Our cooler is loaded  
Our hamper is packed  
State park is waiting  
That's a sure fact.

Be ready by four and  
We'll roast a few dogs.  
Dress in loose clothing,  
Comfortable togs.

And after our supper  
We'll pop us some corn  
And sit by the fire  
Till early next morn.

We'll toss a few Frisbees  
Pitch a few balls  
Run a few races  
Sustain a few falls.

Put up a tent  
Hang a tall swing  
Do crazy, insane  
And immature things.

Preparing our fire  
We'll choose a good site  
If there's competition  
We'll put up a fight.

## Fick Fossil Facility

Fick Fossil Facility  
Has some fancy stuff  
Of a famous female, foxy and tough.

There fossilized fragments  
She frequently found  
By her frontier flat as she walked around.

She fashioned a flag, fully unfurled  
All figures and pattern and shapes in the world  
Formats with symmetry, color, and grace  
Frequently framed and in its own space.

What fabulous talent, to fabricate things  
Of fibers and feathers and frivolous strings,  
And frame them with fossils fixed all around  
And hang them where families and friends will be found.

## Cable TV

Cable TV in review  
Warrants quite a few  
Catcalls and a "Boo".

Comedy, though amusing  
Holds little that's worth using,  
But some will bear excusing.

Soap operas have little worth.  
Compared to life on earth  
They don't produce much mirth.

Religions have nothing new  
Unless you're very blue  
They offer dull review.

I can't warm up to sports  
No matter who reports.  
So spare me greens and courts.

Cartoons all leave me cold  
I've passed their childish hold  
Perhaps I'm just too old.

Politics could be fun  
When all is said and done  
Depends on who will run.

What remains is news  
So that is what I choose  
So what have I to lose?

### Purse Inventory

Periodically I check my purse  
To see what's down inside  
I find my old, elusive comb  
And see where gum balls hide.

I find a few old pennies  
And pencils in the cracks  
I tip the whole thing over  
And give it two hard whacks.

And there, to my astonished glee  
I find my often lost car key  
And Grandma's old gold wedding ring,  
Or some such other silly thing.

And, if I'm lucky, traveler's checks  
Left over from cross-country treks.

### South Dakota Bus Trip

With luggage packed and bags in hand  
We left this town to view the land.  
We rounded corners, crested hill  
Emerged from tunnels, sensed the thrills.  
Over bridges, around pig-tails  
Down new paths, scarce more than trails,  
Saw fossils lie where they have lain  
Since days of Abel and/or Cain.  
Amazing bridges, made from trees  
Like lovely fashioned porch settees.  
The rocks looked stacked there - in their places  
Mountains seemed to have carved faces.  
Absorbed, immersed in scenes like these  
How could we but return well-pleased.  
Europe may be the place for fun  
But USA is second to none. (1992)

## Superlatives

The heights of sympathy can soar,  
The essence of true friendship glows,  
Aroused when nursing child or friend.

There's enmity, malicious war  
In-born, in-bred, as natural foes  
When serpents and the beasts contend.

See nature's grandeur symbolized  
In lofty falls and misty spray.  
Niagara ever flows the same.

Utter dependence summarized  
Is in a new-born babe today  
Helpless, devoid of strength or blame.

There seem a kind of rivalry  
A sort of stubbornness is there  
Between a kite string and the wind.

There's grim responsibility  
That falls upon the hank of hair  
Whereon a chignon has been pinned.

## Geriatric

Lord help us each to daily strive  
To help ourselves to stay alive  
As age pursues with daily strides  
And stark decline haunts us, besides.

Grant us Lord, a humble heart  
And quiet spirit, for  
We need more patience to accept  
Our future's fearful store.

Deliver us from friendlessness  
We do not care for grief.  
Our loathing for all loneliness  
Is nearly past belief.

But when our old infirmities  
Make living past endurance  
This grudging breath will yield to death.  
We leave you our insurance.

### Childhood Lost

What has happened to our kids?  
A whole generation is on the skids.

Little girls skip their childhood  
And leap headlong into motherhood.

Why do children mature so soon,  
Erupting full-blown from their cocoon?

Something's been added to their oatmeal!  
And other things - What is the deal?

Vitamins, colors, something sweet  
To make them grow and have big feet!

Uncle Sam, help! There should be a law  
Take away additives and help us find pa!

### Ocean Visit

The ocean is waiting  
That's a sure fact;  
We're coming a-visiting  
Without or with tact.

Weigh anchor, you sailors  
Rig up your sail;  
Our vans and our trailers  
Will come without fail.

Prepare for a camper  
A group, or a throng;  
We're loading a hamper  
We'll bring it along.

So show us your cajuns  
And your own chateau;  
We're eager - and aging  
So speed up the show.

And when we're together  
Again as before,  
No matter the weather,  
Just keep down the ROAR! (1992)



To Mr. Charles Osgood

I want a copy of the tomes  
That hold your news contained in poems.

I like the rhymes and rhythms, too  
About things either old or new.

Please send a single copy, for  
I'm sad I can't contribute more.

It tickles me to think I might  
Be first to order what you write.

So send it soon and greatly please  
This white-haired grandma named Louise. (1990)

#### The Tax Man Cometh

There's a tax to be paid on my earnings  
A tax on whatever I spend  
One of my innermost yearnings  
Is to know if it ever will end.

A tax is attached to my dinner  
They say there's a tax in my bread  
Because I am not a beginner  
I know there's a tax on my bed.

My house is a target for taxing  
It's hundreds of dollars a year  
They're using computers, and faxing  
I'm in taxes up to my ears.

My car can't escape all their taxes  
Whenever it's fixed, there's a tax  
A tax on the gas and on waxes  
There's nowhere I know they relax.

They tax me to pay their own wages  
Then vote each other a raise  
I pay in one lump or in stages  
I'll be paying the rest of my days.

And while I am taxed so severely  
It's wasted and squandered away  
It's loaned and dispatched cavalierly  
As though there's no piper to pay.

It's time now to vote for some changes  
A time to ask for relief  
As far as influence ranges  
According to each one's belief. (1992)

### Tercet

Sometimes a dreary day drags on  
I have no one to lean upon  
My energy has come and gone.

I have no gossip tales to swap  
The mailman even fails to stop  
My trusty car is in the shop.

But night will come and will provide  
Me with a self-assured stride  
I'll lose my loneliness and pride.

Doors will open by themselves  
Exposing treasures on the shelves  
Where anyone can help themselves.

Or throngs will court me, folks in streams  
Will lure me into rare extremes.  
Can "Candid Camera" match my dreams? (1994)

### Consciousness - A Near-Death Experience

I think I judge the soul to be  
A breath of wind beside the sea  
A speck of all humanity.

And when the dust returns to dust  
As sure as taxes, come it must,  
It's final fusion will be just.

Now when I know my end is near  
I will accept it without fear  
For every doubt will disappear.

Then what theories are best?  
At last, when comes the final test  
We'll have the answer to our quest.

Though darts of doubt at me be hurled  
My banner only half unfurled  
I owe this wisdom to the world!

### All Caught Up!

My kitchen smells of gingerbread  
My knick-knacks all are dusted  
My garden tools are put away  
Where none will become rusted.

My house was never cleaner  
My dishes are all done  
My garden never greener  
The weeds pulled - every one.

My windows gleam, or so it seems  
But I'm about to drop  
The mail is in - the garbage out  
My car is in the shop!

### My Shadow and I

I have a little shadow who  
Looks lumpy on the rocks  
I have a hard time telling  
His shoe tops from his socks.

He never wears my colored shirts  
But likes my floppy hats  
He doesn't have my blondy hair  
Blue eyes, and such as that.

He folds up at the corner of  
The garden's wooden fence  
And after supper, stretches out  
He doesn't have good sense.

And when we go a-fishin'  
He keeps a perfect hush  
When his head is in the water  
Or even in the brush.

My shadow's always hungry  
Whenever I am too  
We have a perfect friendship  
And good friends are so few.

### Making Notes

I had a little memo  
Where it is I cannot say  
I wrote it on the back of there  
And threw it all away.

I know I can't remember, so  
I'm careful to make notes  
I write them on a paper pad  
Then use it to make boats.

I keep looking for my memory  
Or anything I wrote  
I'm a champion forgetter  
And it always gets my goat!

### My Eighties

I'm sailing through my eighties  
With break-neck speed it seems  
By the time that I am ninety  
I'll think it's all been dreams.

Today I'm busy fixing  
My elbows, hips, and knees  
My weight and my blood pressure  
And problems such as these.

My fences all are mended  
Relationships are cool  
And I have my diploma from  
That old and well-known school.

I'm content now, being all alone  
In a quiet neighborhood,  
But I admit a visit from  
My kinfolk would be good.

### Construction Crew

The noise had begun with the summer,  
Chattering all the day long  
The whole atmosphere was a bummer  
They never quit playing that song.

With fork lifts and mauls and great log chains  
They hoisted, they urged and they prized  
Brought in dump trucks and air hammers  
Made racket we hated, despised.

Their cohorts with blustering power  
Relentless, resolved, resolute  
Disrupted our garden and bowers  
Shattered our charming repute.

Then with cool and calm resolution  
They folded their tents to retreat  
And cooling their well-fashioned sidewalks  
Opened new paths to our feet. (1995)

### Nursing School

A nurse is cool, orderliness on the march  
Our hospital day holds so much sober starch  
Emergencies, crises, predicaments, plights  
Routines and complexities - seldom delights.

But, babies are blessed, the elderly, sweet  
We wash them, regardless, from crown to the feet  
We've pampered, protected, persuaded, cajoled,  
And wheedled and charmed both the young and the old.

With patience we practice salubrious skills  
Assisting and aiding the ailing and ill  
We've cuddled and coddled, injected, infused  
Massaged and inuncted the battered and bruised.

Sarcoma, scotoma, no illness we fear  
Systemic, pandemic, contagious, severe  
Undaunted we tackle both wheezes and welts  
As long as the pain is in somebody else. (1963)

### Medication Aide

I peddle pills both big and small  
While trudging up and down the hall  
I tap your door and barge right in  
And greet you with a cheery grin.

I offer headache pills or stomach  
While you sit there on your hummock  
I listen to your least complaint  
Common ones, or maybe quaint.

Then fetch the pills prescribed to cure  
I try to bring them clean and pure  
Pills at night or when you waken  
I'm glad I'm givin' - and not takin'.

### Upon Graduation - 1963

Our achievement now is obvious  
Our gratitude sincere  
For progress and accomplishments  
Attained throughout this year.

We're happy and excited that  
This day has come at last  
To take responsibility  
School days are really past.

We acknowledge our indebtedness  
To all the personnel  
Whose patient guidance helped us  
To learn our lessons well.

We pledge ourselves anew today  
That hence in our career  
We'll help maintain and elevate  
The standards set forth here.

May heaven bless us each with sense  
Pray, give us wisdom, Lord  
That we'll do honor to our school  
When we assail State Board.

## Retirement Home

The freezer here buzzes, it hums and it drones  
The furniture catches the cadence and tones  
The clicking and ticking could be a distraction  
But I try to deem each trait an attraction.

Strange little murmurings, snapping in walls  
Curious rhythms occurring in halls  
The Otis lift broadcasts its own cryptic rune  
Akin to a riddle - almost a tune.

Air coolers rattle, vibrate and purr  
I cannot decide which sounds I prefer  
I prize the calm quiet of my big old house  
Should oxygen normally sound like a mouse?

Poltergeist, poltergeist, leave me in peace  
Such as I 'visioned when signing my lease  
Remind all the others formerly here  
To please settle down or just disappear. (1995)

### Scott and White Clinic

You walk the endless halls  
Then wait till someone calls.

Your packet shows your route  
You hope you'll soon get out.

You breathe when you are told  
Unless you're put on "hold".

You tinkle on demand  
Unless it's ordered canned.

Then when you've told your story  
You feel you're old and hoary.

Still, hope remains eternal -

SO FIX MY SORE INTERNAL!

Dear Doctor:

Please, and pretty please  
No Rx for my pain!  
I promise I will not cry out  
Nor yet again complain.

However, if I needed one  
If I could hide my pride,  
I'm hindered by the lock-top jar  
With all the pills inside. (1996)

### New Camper - First Trip

Major happy camping  
As you wend along your way.  
Many happy memories  
Closing every day!

Major happy miles  
On the way to there from here.  
Many lovely smiles  
Throughout a major year.

Many happy hours  
Through rain or sunny miles.  
Major stark surprise  
Every little while.

Enjoy a great adventure  
All along the way.  
It's my time for envy  
And scribbling every day. (1996)

### Cataract State

The Texas sun is plentiful  
Shining far and wide  
In time, we know its influence  
Can fairly tan our hide.

In generous good measure  
It gives us cataracts  
We've been told so often  
By now we know the facts.

Often we seek surgery  
To brighten up our vision  
And anxiously we wait our turn  
For a surgical incision.

My right eye got an opening  
Shaped like a map of Texas  
Left eye sulked and turned away  
Why should that perplex us?

Now, in a kinder, gentler key  
To maintain our integrity  
And limit animosity  
Perhaps a map of Tennessee? (1996)



### Getting Along

He never takes liquor  
Her family gets drunk.  
His language is clean-spoken  
Not that he lacks spunk.

When taken aback  
She shoots him a glance.  
She gives him no slack  
While waiting his chance.

If looks could cause bruising  
They both would turn blue.  
Is this battle their choosing  
Or must each out-do?

Soon, in seclusion  
Consensus is found.  
They return to calm pleasantry  
They rally, rebound.

Two peas in a pod  
Where, for personal growth  
There must be such crowding  
But, please, without oaths!

### Taking a Risk

I casually forgot your name  
I beg to be forgiven.  
In retrospect, recalling it  
Could influence my livin'!

Imagine what could happen  
If I accept your candy  
And promise of a future  
Where everything is dandy.

But, if that fine exterior  
Is hiding selfish wiles  
The brevity of my future  
Could end my happy smiles.

I risk what future still remains  
By rolling down my window  
Without a risk, I will remain  
A tired and lonely widow.

### Awaiting Lens Correction

Clouds and sunshine fill our days  
A bird still sings.  
Rain may cause some slight delays  
Or better things.

Although I stumble, trip, or fall  
Sunshine bounces off the wall.

I rest and close my eyes to light  
Yet breezes fill my room at night.  
I grope and feel my way around  
Honey-suckle blooms abound.  
I close my eyes and take a bite  
My cream cone is a sure delight.

A satin pillow rests my head  
A cozy blanket warms my bed.

Remembering my former days  
My heart takes wings.  
Imagining tomorrow's ways  
My spirit sings.

### The Season (free-form)

The season nears (importance of sentiment)  
As days and weeks go by.  
Time selects its pace and proceeds  
Inexorably toward the great event.  
Weather becomes demanding and without promise.

The season is honored or ignored  
Take your choice.  
Memories and traditions intrude,  
Enhance the days  
Simple, or extravagant  
Take your choice.

Magnanimity takes charge  
Secrecy presides  
Wealth and safety become secondary  
Until, suddenly  
The tree is stripped  
The feast is finished  
We all face our new debts, and  
The angel goes home to  
Her cotton-lined box  
In the attic. (1997)

## Haste

Be quick to restart my failing heart  
Take measures to help me inhale  
If I should convulse, check on my pulse  
Try not to miss a detail.

Add pressure wherever I bleed  
If I should look pale,  
Or otherwise frail  
Make efforts to stop it with speed.

If choking, remove what impedes  
Restore me to vigor  
Avoiding a rigor  
Just try to foresee all my needs.

Revive me in case I should swoon  
Inject if you must,  
To make me robust  
First checking to prove I'm immune.

I come to the fate that haste might create  
I have but one worry -  
You'll be in a hurry  
And bury me somewhat too soon!

## Swim Group

Silver-haired seniors  
Among whom I'm counted  
Have many conditions  
That can be surmounted.  
A moribund group  
With problems galore  
Count on smooth action  
To mend and restore.  
Removing the stiffness  
From arthritic points  
Restoring hips, knees,  
Or various joints.  
Impelled by the cadence  
Of rhythms and song  
Designed just to keep us  
Moving along.  
Day after day  
Week after week  
Our numbers keep coming  
It's progress we seek.  
So women in swimmin'  
And ladies in wading  
Continue relentlessly  
Hope never fading. (1997)

--

Swimmin' women are ladies in wading.

--

### Lost Friends

My friends and my acquaintances  
Are prone to disappear  
Without goodbye or fare-thee-well  
They're just no longer here.

No poignant resignation  
No please, or by-your-leave  
Lonely separation  
No special time to grieve.

No civil invitation  
To come and say goodbye  
Friendship's termination  
Is enough to make me cry.

### To Bryan

For weeks and weeks  
I've planned this day  
But haven't yet  
Learned what to say.  
Why does your work  
Enhance my pride?  
Who knows? but still  
I can decide  
To help you  
As you take more schooling.

My offer's real  
I am not fooling.  
I mean to help you  
Pay the bills,  
Deposits, costs,  
Whatever's due  
Until you demonstrate  
Your skills  
And your sheepskin  
Comes into view.

We do not want  
A dilettante  
But a serious man  
Of science.  
A steady mind  
No heady kind  
On whom we'll build  
Reliance. (1998)

### Two Too in the Wrong

Two sheepish people  
On our ship of state  
Too deep in lies to steer it straight.

Two sleazy people  
Under one quilt  
Too deep in blame to hide their guilt.

Two shameless people  
Self-centered pair  
Too deep in arrogance to care.

Two sordid people  
Thinking they are bright  
Offering two wrongs to make a right.

Two slippery people  
Speaking tongue-in-cheek  
Declare themselves to be both wise and meek.

Two sultry people  
Trying to look brave  
Too deep in lewdness to behave. (1998)

### The Garden

Our pansies show collective grace  
Each neat, precisely in its place.  
Begonias blend their bursting buds  
White as snow or red as blood.  
Pretty portulaca's plight  
It feeds a squirrel's appetite.  
Verbenas, varied, hug the ground  
Where the ladybug is found.  
Gardenias, all a single hue  
A princess and her retinue.  
Then comes winter's frosty breath  
Committing some to certain death  
But leaving seeds or rooted pledge  
In the soil beneath a hedge.  
Charming beds our eyes engage  
And now the garden's on this page.

### Advice Aplenty!

Build a house of wisdom  
With garden filled with joy  
Befriend your wife and children  
Every girl and boy.

Let patience glow with comfort  
Through life, however long  
Practice moderation  
Righting every wrong.

Aim to conquer ignorance  
Eschew the hurtful word  
Try to be informed and "hep"  
While skirting the absurd.

Call no man your master  
Plot no jokes or prank  
Avoiding most excesses  
Contrive to pull no rank.

Inflict no harm on friend or foe  
Display not everything you know. (1998)

### Anomia

I know just what I need to say  
But can't spit out the words  
They hide inside my troubled head  
And huddle there in herds.

"I'll substitute another phrase"  
I think, but that phrase fails me  
My tangled brain betrays itself  
Revealing what assails me. (1998)

### Goodbye to Ruth Jones

My mind is in turmoil  
My nerves are on edge  
This treatment's unfair  
A most would allege.

My rest is uneasy  
I'm shocked and I'm scared  
Abject consternation  
Just can't be compared!

Like all of the neighbors  
I'm living among  
I've just been evicted  
And we're no longer young!

## Ants

Hundreds of ants in my kitchen sink  
Surprised me one morning. What should I think?  
Coming through tiny crack and chink  
Marching in line, each living link.

Over and under each other they tramp  
Across the stove they scurry and scamp.  
Back and forth to where they encamp  
I mean to discourage their shuffling stamp.

Dashing along the drain board, up to the window sill  
Seeking their objective with military skill  
In and out of my cupboards, they hesitate, then mill  
I will, quite impolitely, disrupt their little drill.

They thrive in tiny spaces  
They leave no tracks or traces  
Nor show their little faces  
They just keep up their paces.

Little races taking place  
At once in two directions  
Boldly, bravely, "in my face"  
And not without detection.

Like chain gangs, all with even pace  
Designed for my inspection  
The rascals move from place to place  
An animate connection.

I try to break their secret code  
At least disrupt their data mode  
Intrude upon their usual road  
Attempt to find their dank abode.

When I wipe them all away  
They reappear in great array  
Reincarnated every day  
No stupid animals are they!

Business as usual at night  
At any hour I join the fight  
Display my greater strength and might  
Temporarily, they take flight.

Their numbers are diminished, true  
But here and there, I see a few  
Wandering, dazed, without a clue  
Of where or when to rendezvous.

Resigned to start each morn's assault  
I daily try to call a halt.  
I have no feelings of default  
Guarding my sugar and my salt.

One little ant in my garage  
Can't evade my broom's barrage  
Sweeping him from his safe menage.

Timid, trusting, tiny bug  
Busy, purposeful, and smug  
Stay out of my honey jug  
Or face again my noxious DRUG! (1993)

If (with apologies)

If you can find a pin when buttons vanish,  
Or, failing this, a needle and a thread;  
And quickly bring the ice, the pain to banish,  
When little Johnnie falls, and bumps his head;

If you can feed the family on Sunday  
A nourishing and mineral-balanced feast,  
And do the wash and ironing on Monday  
Without complaint, not tiring the least;

If you can mend a kite, remove a splinter,  
De-flea the pup that followed Junior home,  
And know why nights are longer in the winter,  
Explain cocoons; locate the hidden comb,

Can sacrifice your sleep to nurse the ailing,  
Can answer abstract questions with a fact,  
Prognosticate the weather without failing  
And entertain the T.V. crowd with tact.

If you can keep the toys all off the stairways  
And sit through weekly Western double features,  
Endure confusion that pervades the air ways,  
Compete in popularity with teachers;

If you can lend and give, but never borrow,  
And brush and clean and wear last season's hats,  
Conceal your tears, disguising every sorrow,  
And calmly referee fraternal spats.

If you can watch your offspring trip and stumble  
And fall and rise again, and smile through pain  
While stoically you stay your hand, nor mumble  
Whatever harsh abrasions he sustains.

If you can face tomorrow without worry  
And meet the future for each one serene,  
And find the time to read a bedtime story  
And tell the toes of each wee foot tucked in -

Yours is the fate of almost any mother  
If you can claim a routine such as this  
And this reward surpasses any other -  
Your baby's awkward hug and sticky kiss.



### The Frenzy Family

I found the Frenzy family  
As I ventured forth at dawn  
Filing from a fissure  
Trailing toward the lawn.

Fickle Freddie Frenzy  
Followed Frantic Frawd  
After Freakish Frieda  
Who offended Manic Maude.

This was no flight from freedom  
Nor fearful fast retreat -  
Just one safari finished  
Only to repeat.

This fractious Frenzy family  
At whom I like to gawk  
Goes to and from their barracks  
A frequent fruitful walk.

I fancy Father Frenzy tries  
To put each one at ease  
While calmly ascertaining  
Where he had left his keys. (1995)

### Ice Storm

Each twig was sheathed in glistening glass  
The sheen of silver on shafts of grass.  
The shinnery shivered, all shiny and bright  
Each shanty wore shawls of sparkling light.  
Splendid sharp shards on shaggy trees  
Shimmied and shuddered in the breeze.  
A blinding glare, a glittering glow  
Of a lot of ice and a little snow.  
Acres of diamonds on every side  
Like a shimmering sea or a dazzling bride.  
The showy scene, the shining glare  
Like frosty jewels everywhere.  
No sliver escaped its shroud of ice  
Now it's gone, but wasn't it nice?

### In a Restaurant

I was sitting in a restaurant  
Proper and sedate  
As usual, ate everything  
I had upon my plate.  
I ordered figgy pudding  
And thought the brush could wait.

I have an awful toothache  
Behind my upper plate.  
I ask myself quite silently,  
"When will this pain abate?"  
I answer, also quietly,  
"It must be what I ate." (1996)

### If You Want My Company, Scratch My Back

I'll brook no aspersions,  
No animadversions  
I'll countenance none of your sass,  
Censorious slander,  
Or vain reprimander.  
No critical chiding will pass.

Contrive commendation,  
Produce approbation,  
Ascribe some extravagant grace,  
Or, wherever you go,  
You may as well know,  
I am staying away from that place.

### Daily Routine

I wake up in the morning, and rub my sleepy eyes.  
I find the clock, and estimate the time I must arise.  
I yawn, and stretch my weary bones, and think of exercise.

I contemplate the weather and marvel that it's dark  
And wonder what could irritate that dog who starts to bark.  
As blood begins to circulate, I wash off all the cark.

First thing in the morning, I gently try each door  
To vindicate my failure to check the night before.  
I drop my key and hesitate - I cannot reach the floor.

I spray the kitchen air again and start a ceiling fan  
Because the water boiled dry and ruined one more pan.  
I'm planning to initiate cold breakfasts if I can.

A few soap operas later when the sun is going down  
I'll fix my mind on sleeping, and don my well-worn gown.  
It's how I most appreciate the quiet of this town.

I wake up in the morning and rub my sleepy eyes  
I find the clock . . . .

### St. Jo Island

I picked up a shell with a clam inside  
Also one where a crab could hide.  
I gently put them with angel wings  
Sand dollars, barnacles, and things  
And carried them off in a plastic sack  
And boarded the ferry and took them back  
To the family home, where we carefully rinsed  
And took them aboard the car where I winced  
When I noticed some very unusual smells  
From the sack with the vacant and clean bag of shells.

When I couldn't find the source of my grief  
I folded the bag and looked for relief  
In packing and hiding the bag underneath  
The luggage and kids, but when we were done  
The smells had escaped, the result was no fun.  
With bleaches and soaps, I washed them and soaked  
But, still the air wasn't as sweet as I'd hoped.  
I've decided to bury the offensive things  
And hope that the perfume will no longer cling.

### Super Market Confusion

I go to the market for something for lunch  
Soon to return with grapes in a bunch.

I search through the shelves, choices are many  
I find what I need, or go without any.

Exotic concoctions I pass on the run  
Six kinds of bananas? I need only one.

Large boxes, less in them, in no way appeal  
Get on the ball, please - and offer a deal!

How many kinds of potato chips are there?  
When I find the old-fashioned, I never look farther.

Too many choices confuse more and more.  
So throw out the top shelf and clean up the floor.

If you want the busiest market in town  
Cut out the improvements, and bring the costs down.

## No Driving

"I'm so confused" was my complaint,  
Molly saw me about to faint.  
Sarah was called  
She wheeled me to the new E.R. -  
Not the end of things, by far.

I woke up on the seventh floor  
Of Collier Wing - and what is more,  
Their pictures showed a likely source  
Of what was ailing this old horse.

"No doubt you've had a little stroke,  
Your driving, we, of course, revoke."  
"Says you!" I thought. "I go to swim!  
You can't deny that on a whim."

Through foggy days I lived and stewed  
Working up an awful mood  
Worse pictures of my stark old age  
I can't imagine. I'm enraged!

But Martha spoke to save the day  
And this is what I heard her say:  
"I will take you to and fro  
And elsewhere when you need to go  
In these hard times I'll see you through  
Why? 'Cause that's what  
Daughters Do." (1997)

## What Daughters Do

"What daughters do" has come to mean  
Varieties of things  
In many ways, when pain is keen  
The worst that fate can bring.

When any disabilities  
Reduce my self-assurance  
When loss of my agility  
Replaces my endurance.

When my feet ignore commands  
And clumsiness befalls my hands  
I ache in all my bones and glands  
I'll call for help within the clan.

Seeing this, a daughter comes  
Dependable and kind  
To offer calm and solace  
And gentle peace of mind.

Eager help is proffered  
My abilities are few  
There's frequent opportunity  
To Do What Daughters Do! (1998)

### A Helping Hand

This silver-haired dowager  
Direly distressed  
Hailed a likely passer-by  
Who seemed to be well-dressed.

Understandingly enough  
This manly modern knight  
Made the needed phone calls  
To solve the problem right.

He called upon a daughter  
He knew what daughters do  
Then about his way he went  
Convinced the helping hand he sent  
Was capable and true. (1998)

### To Sarah

You like to sing just like a bird  
Breaking out in song  
Practicing deep breathing  
The whole day long.  
You flit about as though on wings  
A canary when you sing.

So - I eat just "like a bird" - ?  
You're absolutely right.  
I swallow, swallow, swallow  
All day and half the night.

Ah, but Martha bests us both.  
She's as happy as a lark.

Evicted!

My appetite has vanished  
My strength is on the wane  
I feel as though my energies  
May not return again.

My judgements are invalid  
My tired brain deceives me  
I don't understand me  
No wonder none believes me.

I fear ahead are pitfalls  
Of which I'm unaware  
I wish that I could waken  
From this terrible nightmare

To feel so sad and lonely  
No matter what I do  
This optimist can scarce believe  
The skies are really blue. (1998)

### Clinton's Mistake

"I made a mistake, I made a mistake!"

"Tell me, kind sir - what mistake did you make?  
While trying to prove that he is the rake,  
You think Ken Starr should jump in the lake.  
Obvious truths you deem to be fake."

"But whatever I do is done by the book  
I thought that you knew, I am not a crook.  
My little mistakes you should overlook."

"I think, Mr. Clinton, that you take the cake.  
I say, Mr. Clinton, you are a mistake!" (1998)

### Willy, Willy, Don't Be Silly

What ridiculous things you put forth as fact!  
You "deeply regret" being caught in the act -

Your head has been turned by skirts and by lace  
Your lies are as plain as the nose on your face.

Don't change your story, just change your ways  
And one day you'll learn deceit never pays

Give up the game, take off the hat  
You must be tired of being laughed at.

Do "what you have to" the screws have been turned.  
You've been playing with fire -  
That's how you got burned! (1998)

To William Jefferson Clinton, Esq.

There's a cancer on this presidency  
It happened during your residency  
No more delays or hesitancy.

The American people are hard to please  
Perhaps it would help to get on your knees  
It can't be evaded with a trip overseas.

We want you to feel our abject shame  
No light-hearted jokes or shifting of blame  
Jokes and repentance are not the same.

You can't get by with acting the part  
It must appear to come from the heart  
You reap the result of whatever you start! (1998)

## Monica

Monica, Monica,  
How do you do?  
I do as I please, sir.  
How about you?

Monica, Monica,  
Give us a reason.  
'Cause that's who I am, sir.  
Do I commit treason?

## Aptitude

What wondrous force has aptitude  
While lending authority to prestige.  
It reveals itself in gratitude.

## The Frugal Life

I hate to see things wasted  
That someone else might need  
I hate pure ostentation  
And wanton waste and greed.

Frugality has been my life  
Throughout my many years  
A rule of thumb was "use it  
Until it disappears."

Of all good fortunes of my life  
The greatest boon as I'm aware,  
The years of poverty for me  
Have given way to Medicare.

No more am I resilient  
As in my youthful years.  
Resources now at my command  
Combat those latent fears.

I now may choose three meals a day  
And all my medications,  
But not too many cruises  
Or I might have complications. (1999)

### Correction Fluid

Something funny happened  
As I made my record here  
Of verses and remembrances  
Of old things I find dear.

I put a bit of Clorox  
Into a tiny jar  
And used a pick to bleach out  
Every mark that seemed to mar.

Early on the morrow  
As authors like to say  
I looked and found my toothpick  
Eaten half away.

### Creative Block (and Tackle)

My muse has left me stranded  
My trusty pen is still  
But only temporarily -  
I'll fall back on my skill.

And when the spirit moves me  
I will have much to say  
My fertile brain won't fail me  
But might lead me astray.

--

My stack of ideas, thoughts and surmises  
Grows every day - the pile just rises.

--

My muse is working overtime  
My pen's in highest gear

At this rate I will soon be at  
The height of my career. (1996)

### Worthwhile Written Works

Written works, to be worthwhile  
Should educate or raise a smile.  
Must be appealing, entertain,  
Stimulate, or tax the brain  
Maintaining brevity and style.



### Ideas

Dreams and impressions  
Are fashioned and grow  
Published where any  
Can find them and know  
The author had brains  
He delighted to use,  
The reader finds notions  
Concepts and views.

### The Golden Years

The shadows seem to lengthen  
The golden years are here.  
Most of my acquaintances  
Appear to disappear.

I owe a lot of gratitude  
To competent physicians.  
Especially for their attitude  
Concerning my condition.

There was a day when competence  
Was measured by my deeds  
Today, I can but vocalize  
Concerning all my needs.

### Can't Reach My Shoe

What ever am I going to do?  
No longer can I reach my shoe.  
Wouldn't it be really neat  
To have a brand new pair of feet  
With shoes already painted on  
And nails that never grow too long?

### The Character of Tyranny

To live by the law of vengeance  
Is to die, the result of hate.  
An eye for an eye, by nature spawns  
The urge to retaliate.

Callous provocation  
Promotes a wish to kill  
The attitude of "tit-for-tat"  
Cultivates ill-will.

For violence, pain, and cruelty  
Reap vigilance, fear, and sorrow.  
The venom of today begets  
The despots of tomorrow.

## Christmas Program

### Merry Christmas!

A brass band boomed acclaim and anthems rang  
In vespers, psalms, and glorious praise they sang.  
So foreign to my ears, the pomp and power.  
Impressive service held at any hour  
Beautiful, sensual, enchanting, and gay  
I hadn't thought I'd live to see the day.

### Hesitation (El Niño)

After three years of dreadful drought  
Come two of torrents and floods.  
Choose dirty, dusty winds to breathe  
Or drown in dirt and mud.  
Farmers who've chosen this row to hoe  
Decide to stay, or choose to go.

### When I'm Done with My Body

My body, when dead, I'll be done with.  
I leave it to your loving care.  
You may bury it, burn it, or hang it  
Because I will not be there.

Carve from it parts that for others  
Might bring them reprieve or relief.  
Don't let the matter distress you  
But perhaps assuage your grief.

But, if you should deem it useful  
That I be mummified,  
It will not bother me at all  
By then I shall have died.

After all, it's only a body  
Which I have already worn out  
And, in my final judgement  
That's not what life is about. (1996)

### Growing Confusion

I assail my cluttered memos  
Expecting them to inspire  
Then get off on a tangent  
Subsequently I retire.

The result is - I leave behind me  
More notes than ever I've used.  
The pile of waste generated  
May leave my message bemused. (1996)

### Growing Confusion (edited)

Cluttered memos I assail  
Expecting inspiration  
Disorganized, I turn the page  
And meet with consternation.  
Then find that I have left behind  
More notes than I have used  
Unfinished "good ideas"  
I'm mentally bemused. (1998)

### Running an Errand

I'd back into my parking place  
Do it exactly right  
If my eyes grew behind me  
Or my head weren't on too tight.

I'd quickly start my trusty car  
Directly back it out  
Signal at the street before  
I recall what this trip's about.

### Watch that Car

Watch that car!  
He's going slow  
Just don't know  
Which way to go.

Is he blind  
Or is he not?  
Just trying to find  
A parking spot! (1996)

### The Worthiness of Character

One may demand respect; however  
Who will respect the demand?  
True worth must first be proven  
Then we'll understand.

To command respect takes credentials  
Written or by reputation  
Noised abroad, or confidential  
A true discrimination.

-=-

Alligators demand respect.

-=-

To demand respect is an exercise in futility.

-=-

### Respect

To command respect requires dignity.  
To show respect is to esteem with courtesy.  
Due respect is earned by polite comportment.  
To show respect inspires respect. (1996)

### Ambition

I may in time be proven wrong  
But, whether my life be short or long  
I'd rather be dead, gone, forgotten  
Than live to be useless, vile, and rotten.

### Through the Century

Early in this century  
Few advantages were there  
We watched them burgeon and emerge  
Almost everywhere.

Unheard-of then were radios  
Electric lights or phones  
Now we deal with robots  
Remote controls and clones.

### When You Miss It

You never miss the water  
Till the well runs dry.  
You never miss your vision  
As long as you can see.

How often have we wondered  
And questioned Why?

Don't ask me!

### Reading Poetry Aloud

Romp through the verses  
Tango with the rhymes  
Give a lilt to syllables  
Pause tactfully at times.

Stress important portions  
As the words progress,  
On basis of completeness  
Finish with finesse. (1996)

### A Glowing Message

The poetry of earth is never dead. (Keats)  
It must be made to vibrate when it's read.  
By labor, fashioned into polished thought  
A glowing message never comes to naught. (1996)

Bob Klem -

Red blood from the Poet's pen  
Flecks the fey on tundred fen.  
Poetic gods do not intend  
It perish, ever.

--

True poetry will never die  
But, cherished, it will edify.

--

### Making Rhymes

I'm making rhymes  
'most all the time  
I seldom lack for rhythm.

I never cease  
To speak my piece  
If I'm against or with 'em.

Postcard poetry and  
Sundry verse  
Is offered as a blessing  
Accepted as a curse.

### Hardest to See

Gradually I'm going blind  
I grope my way around, and yet  
The hardest thing for me to find:  
An invisible hair net.

### Garden Improvements

Our garden's been improved upon  
To emphasize its beauty.  
Imperfect specimens are gone  
The gardeners know their duty.

### "Colas" (Cost Of Living Allowances)

The fallacy of fairness  
Dispensed percentage-wise  
And insurance that pays off  
Only when one dies  
Are a lifelong disenchantment  
For any, one and all,  
Who suffer disappointments  
And whose income remains small.

### Eighty Years

Eighty years

On these two feet.

In all these days

I've yet to meet

Any sorrow I'd call sweet. (1996)

### Melon

My knife sliced through that melon

Like 'twas made of melted grease

And into skin and muscle

Of the finger underneath.

Not the measure of my vigor

Nor the sharpness of my knife

Merely that I relish melon -

One high-ranking joy of life!

### Too Many Helpers

Too many cooks may spoil the broth

Is an axiom oft' repeated.

Too many helpers may make one wroth

And chief chef left defeated. (1996)

### Dieting

Eat your dinner slowly

Swallow at least twice

Every time your fork or spoon

Delivers something nice.

### Loving Life

The love of your life

Should be your wife.

The love of life

Is better than a wife.

### Manufactured Luck

Our worries are over!

Our troubles are over!

Someone has cloned

The four-leafed clover!

### Just Imagine

There is a time when apple trees  
Seem to give a giant sneeze  
Releasing petals in the breeze.

Dry leaves lying on the lawn  
Scamper for shelter when we run.

When squirrels cross the traffic lane  
Let chaparrals run though your brain.

When winter-withered leaves blow by  
Someone sees a butterfly.

--

Imagine MOM upside-down - WOW! (1996)

--

### Beautiful Words

We cherish thoughts of kindness  
We've gleaned throughout a day  
And lest they be forgotten  
Rehearse them when we pray.

Beautiful words, like beautiful flowers  
Garnered on fruitful days  
We save to brighten up our hours  
With blossoms, or a phrase. (1996)

### Birds Will Sing

Birds will sing as though it's spring  
As long as the sun is shining.  
A cat will wait till the chicks emerge  
And then begin his dining.  
Birds will sing - the fact is plain.  
But who has heard one, singing in the rain? (1996)

--

Old age, by definition is  
A moribund condition. (1997)

--

### Babies

There's a world full of babies.  
Both healthy and ill  
Who cause joys and worries  
Like nothing else will. (1996)

### Political Parties

Violent and unscrupulous,  
They call themselves "militias".  
Menacing and infamous,  
They might be called "malicious". (1996)

### Paradise Lost

My life is marked by sadness,  
Frequent and repeated.  
My address book is obsolete  
Decrepit and depleted. (1996)

### Life Is Short

Life's too short to be spent  
Recouping my mistakes.  
I'm going to get it right this time  
No matter what it takes.

### Memory Loss

I'm losing things more rapidly  
Than any time before.  
I've just about decided  
It's time to lock my door.

Once I've hunted everywhere  
And find they've been replaced.  
If I have been complaining  
Already, I'm disgraced.

### Parade

Let the leader prance  
See his baton dance  
To show who's in command.  
No baritones, no xylophones,  
Give me a marching band! (1996)

### Stripes

By his stripes you shall know him!  
One earns his stripes of sundry sort  
Correction, tribute, drama  
The stripes on sleeves of uniforms  
Or all-out striped pajamas.



### Hugging

Hugging should be a two-way street  
Reserved for two old friends who meet.  
Offered, accepted, shared, enjoyed  
Not foisted on any who seem annoyed.

### Turning

He signals with his steering wheel  
To let you know he's turning,  
Regardless of the fact that now  
The other blinker's burning.

### Lower Case in Proper Nouns

Learn this little lesson  
And learn this lesson well  
Never write my name again  
Without a capital "L".

Also learn, I beg you  
Lesson number two  
Don't omit the little "i"  
Another small taboo.

### Louise

#### While I'm Alive

While I'm alive, I must maintain  
Such vibrant bloom and glow  
That when I'm finished on this earth  
Assuredly, you'll know.

No painted smile, no powdered blush  
Our social customs, now.  
I'll just maintain my happy grin  
Until my final bow.

### Contributing

Perhaps I may,  
I know I should,  
Contribute to  
The common good.

## Avoiding and Improving

By avoiding misdemeanor  
Avoid incarceration.  
With sympathy and kindness  
Improve the entire nation!

## My Permanent

I have a brand-new permanent  
A fizzy-fuzzy "do"  
A virtual Phyllis-diller  
Its benefits are few.

My brittle stand-up permanent  
Makes of me a Chico Marx  
I corral it in a hairnet  
And avoid the windy parks.

Each day my permanent and I  
Take to the swimming pool  
I bridle its contumely way  
To spare me ridicule.

## Let Me Be There

In weather either foul or fair  
In chilling wind or balmy air  
However changeable or rare  
Let me be there.

Among my fellows lame or blind  
Whatever lot I be assigned  
Up in front, or far behind  
Let me be kind.

Whether far away or near  
Anywhere upon this sphere  
With the folks I hold most dear  
Let me be here. (1997)

### One of the Few

Of the few good men  
I'd like to be one  
To see the world  
And have some fun.

To keep the peace  
And learn a trade  
Then, surely I would  
"Have it made".

Then after I had  
Done my time  
I'd go to school  
--Be in my prime  
--Learn to rhyme?

### No Smoking

I'll survive a limb's amputation  
I can grow a new head of hair  
Rebuild a poor reputation  
But, please don't sully my air.

(Second try)

Abuse your own body  
And I will not care.  
Disgrace your upbringing  
As much as you dare.  
Befoul your language  
If you think it's fair.  
But what gives you license  
To sully my air?  
Keep your tobacco smoke  
Out of my hair!

### A Mother

A mother means to me  
All that's bright and pure and free.  
Her smiles, fair  
Her kisses, rare  
Mean all the world to me.

Mother is perfect in  
Her children's eyes.  
And my mother's perfection  
Shows up in her pies!

(1928, 1930)

### Reviewing the Past

I welcome the nights  
When in dreams I move faster  
I fly up the stairs  
And zoom past disaster.

By day I go limping  
Along with my walker  
Or sit by TV  
And become a mere gawker.

At night I review  
Events from the past  
It always ends well  
Success comes at last.

### Beating the Odds

I have been told I should be dead  
They call it actuarial.  
Resisting, still, I keep my head  
I call it necessarial.

### New Yorker Cartoon

I appreciate wry humor  
Though politically incorrect  
But in the public library  
They're not what I'd expect.

"But when," you might ask solemnly  
"Was there a quiet time  
Still enough to motivate  
Your clever little rhyme?"

### I Will Not Be Obese

Deliver me from corpulence  
I will not be obese.

Let all the fatty livers  
Be in portly geese. (1998)

To Martha - doer of good deeds

These are things that daughters do  
More than just the vital few:

Sometimes offer to drive or fetch  
Knowing patience will have to stretch.

Give a bit of precious time  
To telephone or read a rhyme.

Hang a picture, find a plumber  
Repair mistakes, dumb or dumber.

Make suggestions to be repeated  
Ignore remarks that seem conceited.

Offer husband's savoir faire  
When there's more than you can bear.

Make the toilet fit my seat  
Deeds like these just can't be beat! (1998)

#### "Assisted Living"

Today's "assisted living"  
Has no appeal for me.  
It's less - much less - than glamorous  
"Spare me" is my plea.  
Although I'm thinking slowly now  
It's plain as it can be:  
Given the choice to use my voice  
I'd take the hanging tree. (1998)

#### Energy Conscious

Harness the winds,  
the sun, the tides  
Find energy everywhere  
Energy hides.

Spare a resource  
Before it's depleted  
Mistakes will be made  
Let none be repeated.

### Try Moderation, Not Regulation

I do not need the White House  
To tell me I'm obese  
Nor other useless info  
That they choose to release.

I have a small spare tire  
That I'd be glad to shed  
But regulations measure  
Just height and weight and spread.

Defining hypertension  
Is none of their concern  
Why don't they measure competence  
And watch the Congress burn?

It's not my generation  
Who most exceed their diet.  
Moderation is the key  
And more of us should try it.

### Miscellaneous Limericks

Magnificent blooms of seen flowers  
Present their big blooms to the showers  
Doing their best  
To turn to the west  
Although it's been raining for hours.

-=-

West Kansas is known for miasma  
It threatens to curdle my plasma  
The gas is too thick  
To stir with a stick  
And it does nothing good for my asthma.

-=-

I watch my nutrition intently  
I work out with rhythm, but gently  
When I mature  
And if you concur  
I'll continue to live opulently.

-=-

Wild flowers, varied, abundant  
Grow freely, but mostly redundant  
At home, I exclaim  
And try to explain  
My descriptions all wax orotundant.

### I Chose to Study Nursing

When first I ventured from my home  
To seek an occupation,  
I signed on at the "State School"  
And here's my observation:

Starting out at five A.M.  
Every single day  
We hose our "students" stem to stern  
While on a slab they lay.

A student from a nearby ward  
Carried them to and fro.  
The experience had its toll on him  
You might expect to know.

He grumbled loud and mumbled long  
It fell on heedless ears.  
He missed no opportunity  
To tell how many years.

Then when occasion once arose  
He took his own poor life.  
To change my course, at once I chose  
To get another life.

### Hot and Dry

August weather is hot and dry  
Billowing clouds float on high  
The rain crow calls in the morning sky  
When did the rain crow learn to lie?

A few drops here, a sprinkle there  
But none where his song fills the air  
The lawn is getting brown and bare  
Maybe his voice is but a prayer. (1999)

### The Terrible Ninety-Twos

Beware the terrible twos  
Is a warning you have heard.

Beware the ninety-twos!  
It's time you got the word.

In the start and at the end of life  
We toddle around creating strife.

### Proclamations of Immaturity

Rings on their fingers  
And paint on their toes  
Gold on the eyebrows  
And stuck through the nose.  
Rings on the ears and navel are hung  
And places imagined by only the young.  
Chains on ankles and 'round every neck  
The mere contemplation could make me a wreck.  
My dignity rankles.  
    What's left to expect?

### Good Grammar

I beg you and I plead with you  
To watch your English diction.  
The value of good grammar -  
Is my own predilection.

This laid-back age, I don't dispute  
Not much communication.  
How does our attitude compute  
With those of other nations?

### Salud

I'm glad to have my body whole  
I'm glad for peace within my soul.

I need to strive to stay real well  
But little things may ring my bell.

Although my kids don't call enough  
They never try me with their "stuff".

There's dozens of ailments I've never had  
And those I had were not too bad.

A "second opinion" is all I ask  
But I could use a younger mask.

### Asked for Help

Someone asked a favor of me  
    And my heart soared!  
Not since nineteen ninety-three  
    Had anyone asked for help from me  
    And I've been bored.



### The Celestial Chorus Sings

No matter when our death knell rings  
Come, it must, to knaves or kings.  
We're occupied with mundane things  
While the celestial chorus sings.

We weave our tangled world-wide web  
While temporal life begins to ebb.  
We'll leave a car in each garage,  
A mouse in every house.

### Salesmen

We're crowning in excesses now  
Of almost any kind  
The choices that are offered  
Simply blow my mind.

Where has the role of salesman gone?  
They're in the parking lot  
Where they can sell the gullible  
Anything they've got! (1999)

### Short-term Memory

I made a funny, catchy rhyme  
I thought it ought to glow in time  
But when I poised my pen to pad  
It lost all life it ever had.

### Mail

The postman comes. I pray for mail  
He surprised me with a packet  
So big it held nine postage stamps  
On its beautiful brown jacket.

### Proliferation

Nothing promotes proliferation  
Quite as much as publication.

### I Answer to None

My way of life, in great degree  
Is free from care as it can be.  
Except for laws, I answer to none  
My time's my own; I do what gets done.  
I eat what I cook and cook what I please  
What I don't eat gets put in deep freeze.  
Few demands are made of me  
I've no responsibility  
But with foreboding and misgiving  
To avoid "assisted living".

### Caring for Me

I wield a mean broom  
In spite of the gloom  
Resulting when muscles rebel.

My sidewalks don't shine  
But these rooms of mine  
Are clean, as best I can tell.

I merit a raise  
I can do without praise  
But the jobs I perform I can't shirk.

Caring for me  
As any can see  
Is arduous, difficult work. (1999)

### Ants, Again! "Off" Again

Ants have invaded my private domain  
In numbers I dread to see again.

Up and down the telephone wire  
These little rascals never retire.

I welcome them with my noxious spray  
Urging them to stay away.

I move, and behold, the ants move too  
They like me more than most folks do.

They seem to like to congregate  
Under a bottle or cup or plate.  
Perhaps it's there they choose to mate. (1999)

### Growing Season

The old mesquites are leafing out  
Hurrah, now spring is here  
Gardens are up and in full sprout  
Summer must be near.

Hyacinths have come and gone  
Daffodils have had their day  
Mowers are busy on the lawn  
What more can one say? (1999)

### Change

"You never miss the water"  
The ancient saying goes  
'Til you're a "displaced person"  
I timidly suppose.

You never miss the water  
'Til you're rudely moved around  
Where nothing new seems normal  
Though amenities abound.

The change is for the better  
(If normal can't be worse)  
But generally speaking,  
Most changes are adverse.

Bear up, my little children  
Accept what you can't change  
Make do - it's temporary  
Soon things will rearrange. (1999)

### Weary

I am weary as weary can be  
I feel like a cat up a tree  
Afraid to climb up or fall down.

My arms and my legs are both tired  
As though in deep mud I were mired  
At resting, I'm best in this town.

I'm planning to see the M.D.'s  
Perhaps they can give me some ease  
Before in self-pity I drown

I think I'll drink grape juice, perhaps  
Lest I take two steps and just collapse  
Then I'll crawl into my gown. (1999)

### Our Impeached Leader

Our august and dignified Senate  
In their sober and serious fashion  
Returned the reins of our country  
With their usual prudent compassion  
To our exposed and impeached dear leader  
A dishonest, bold-faced deceiver  
Who riddled our lives and his reputation  
Earning disfavor in most of the nation.  
Enjoying the charm of dishonor and fame  
Steadfastly denying all sense of shame  
He cuts a fine figure, refuting all blame  
And has earned our disgust - his game is so lame. (1999)

--

Pillory Hillary!

--

Deceived

Too bad,  
so sad,  
been had!

--

"Where the truth lies -"

Poetry Characterized (copied from a dictionary)

Poetry is characterized by meaning, sound, and rhythm.  
Without the rhyme and rhythm  
There's little meaning in 'em.

### Muddy-Pawed Cat

I'd be happy with things the way that they are  
If no muddy-pawed cat walked the length of my car.

### Prayer

Give us this day our daily pills  
Prescribed for our assorted ills  
Provide some water, food, and beds  
To fill our tummies, rest our heads  
Protect us from inclement weather  
With blankets that are light as feathers  
Keep us safe from mischief-makers,  
From many givers, and all takers.

## Quaint Complaints

Digital time is a major crime  
Daylight saving's a crock  
Disrupting retirement habits.  
Next they'll recall my clock.

It seems life's in a constant flux  
Changing by the hour  
Just when we've learned a routine  
A change will turn it sour.

Shopping takes longer and longer  
Since shelves are stocked to the sky  
Such changes are not for the better  
So "why," I ask you. "Why?"

## Renovation, Reclamation, Reparation - YMCA

They've come and closed our pool, my friends  
What varied feelings stir the heart  
Our choicest pleasures meet their ends  
Our closest friends obliged to part.

Our time to exercise with zest  
Whichever class each one pursued  
To do whatever suits one best  
Has surely made for better mood.

Though grateful for the time we've had  
Patience smolders, growing thin  
Procrastination leaves us sad  
So, OPEN THE DOORS AND LET US IN! (1999)

## No Guarantee

Hand me a pretty apron  
It won't cause me to work.  
You know the very thought of it  
Prompts me more to shirk.

To sharpen me a pencil  
Won't inspire me to write.  
And you could sing a lullaby  
All my wakeful night.

To call me on the telephone's  
No guarantee I'm home.  
Stand me on the podium  
I couldn't read a poem.

Don't give me a computer  
There's no chance that I'd compute.  
Why preach your deepest theories  
Which I would but dispute?

So when I come to beg of you  
To share with me your money  
You've every right to answer:  
"Don't even think it, honey."

## My Brother's Poetry

My brother was a poet beyond the use of rhymes  
He left me his emotions as beautiful as chimes.

If I had known my brother who wrote those jolly rhymes  
I'd have helped correct his spelling and punctuate his lines.

Now I can read the poems of that old and lonely man  
And appreciate the errors as true compassion can.

If I had known my brother when he was young and tough  
I could not have defended a man so plain and rough.

But his poetry affects me as any kindred would  
He best reflects my sentiments.  
Now I know that he was good! (1999)

## Hubble Refreshments

Hello, little Hubble  
Out there in the sky  
We bring reinforcements  
While Earth hurtles by.

New gyroscopes have we  
And computer that's new  
Get back on track, now  
And do what you do!

We've fixed your equipment  
And tightened a screw  
In this lack of atmosphere  
It taxed all our thew.

With all these refreshments  
Which cost us a few  
We bid you God-speed  
'Till our next rendezvous.

As for the accolades  
To which you are due  
You share with the astronauts  
Who envy your view. (1999)

--

Something's always taking all the joy out of life! (Anonymous) (1999)

--

## Child-proof Caps

Child-proof caps -  
Bane of my existence  
Seldom can I manage them  
Without a child's assistance.

Incomplete instructions  
In print so fine I opt  
To forgo decoding it  
And shelve the thing still stopped.

## Full Moon

Full moon's at its height tonight  
So big its orb, all burnished bright  
So seldom seen: such lustrous sheen  
Its brilliance glowed, enticed.  
Time and again we gaped and gazed  
No simple glance sufficed. (1999)

### Unbought Book

I am that book that no one buys  
I am a writer recording my lies  
Colorful, clever, creative are they  
Surpassed by few along life's way.  
Twice stymied am I, spending hard time  
Unpublished secluded  
With many a rhyme.

### You Brushed My Hair

You brushed my hair when I could not  
Did essentials on the spot  
Fetched and carried at beck and call  
Walked me up and down the hall.

You pushed the wheel-chair to the car  
Brought the service up to par  
Invited me to share your home  
Worked your knuckles to the bone.

With daughters doing what daughters do  
Why fret that there are only two? (2000)

### My Walking Wheels

If I want to do a thing or two  
And think it may be taxing  
I take my trusty walking wheels  
To speed me toward relaxing.

### Busy Y2K

It's January the second  
Soon the month will be gone  
It's all down hill from here on  
Can we ever get it all done?

### Oh! To Be a Bird!

To spend the days on the wing -  
Days of light and hope and joy.  
To experience nest-building, hatch babies  
And teach the young to sing.  
To rail at cats and squirrels  
To tweak their tails, and  
To cause children to laugh.



## The Three Lives of Louise Dart

### Chapter One

At first I was a little girl  
Little and lame and lonely  
Seventh of ten siblings, I  
Sustained by bits and dribblings.  
Almost all I did was cry  
My schooling started early, and  
Was rigidly pursued.  
Immediately thereafter: began my ample brood.

### Chapter Two

When mine were fed and clothed and schooled  
I studied nursing's laws and rules  
And after working twenty years  
And paying taxes through my tears  
I got new hips, then volunteered  
To do for those who needed aid  
And spent my half of what I'd made.

### Chapter Three

Advanced in age, I sit and brood  
With little need for man nor food  
Recalling things I might have done  
Extirpating one by one.  
Still these latter days are fine:  
The stunts I pull are only mine.  
So, sober, diffident, and blunt  
I gloat with pride at my last stunt. (2000)

### Art the Cat

I'm changing my cat's name to "Art"  
I doubt it will break the cat's heart  
The strategy's fresh on my part  
People will walk to see ART!

He sits by the window - upstart!  
Wanting a chance to depart  
A privilege I will not impart  
I'm changing the cat's name to "ART". (2000)

### Silence

If your word is worthless  
'Twere better you were wordless!

### Refrigerator Logic

I know I need never be hungry  
And here's my sure-fire plan  
I'll live on yesterday's surplus  
Adding just one more can. (2000)

### Edify vs. Stultify

A scholarly argument edifies  
Bickering, squabbling, stultifies  
Clothes alone can't glamorize.

### Shoe Styles

How poorly do I tolerate  
This year's clunky shoes  
Rather would I ambulate  
In size thirteen canoes.

Styles may soon have come and gone  
I'll not so much as try one on  
Such clumsy, awkward, bulky shoes  
Are not the kind that I will choose.

Ungainly, ponderous, dull, and stout  
There's one small thing I'm scared about:  
This year's styles may never wear out! (2000)

### Salubrious, Gratuitous Monarchs

Abruptly, in summer, there are risen  
From a homely larval prison  
Hosts of nature's wealth arise  
Brightly, sprightly butterflies  
Perpetually in exercise.

Quiet, graceful, pleasant, clean  
Regal, beautiful, serene  
The lovely monarch butterfly  
Achieves its goal to dignify  
The healing art of being seen. (2000)

### AHKlem

He was honest and fair  
And willing to share  
Reserved and hardworking  
A stranger to shirking  
In silence bore pain  
Not known to complain  
Tireless and tough  
Enough was enough

### Modern Hieroglyphics

There's writing that just baffles me  
Though meant as illumination  
These modern hieroglyphics are  
In need of some translation.  
Please supply interpreters  
Or English explanation!  
They're in important places  
But mostly on the dash.  
Of the many buttons there  
Which one should I mash?

### A Sterling Reputation

I loaned a kid a bit of cash  
Without a note - a deal that's rash.  
He said "I'll pay, I'll pay, I'll pay!"  
Directly, he just walked away.

I'd call him up and call him down  
Because he lives right here in town.  
But he might say "I paid you once  
You must think that I'm a dunce".

I'd lose my chance to teach him this:  
(I wouldn't want this chance to miss)  
"What thing's worth the most to you?  
A reputation tried and true!

"Neither of us should be without  
This little thing to think about:  
When next you come to get a loan  
Your chance has fallen like a stone." (2000)

## Dreaming

In the initial moment of waking up  
At the apex of a dream  
This instant of insipid life  
Will at times evoke a scream.

For a period of this limbo-time  
I reach out as though I'm there  
Attempting to stay a catastrophe  
But getting a fist-full of air.

I dream of the boredom  
That a kind of sleep induces  
Yet has no relation to  
The emotion it produces.

We deal with ancestors, progeny, too  
Then rouse in bed alone.  
Such mixing of generations  
Can shake me to the bone.

I dream in terms so vivid  
I recall them as facts next day.  
It's hard to tell truth from fiction  
Experiencing both that way.

## Drought

In drought the crops all wither away  
No water, no harvest, a dull display  
Of crops that sprout, but can't mature;  
This rainless state cannot endure.

How sad to see a big brown field  
How much corn can a dead stalk yield?  
"There's always next year," we hear you say  
But who can assume a rainy day?

And by the time we see the rain  
We should have planted corn again  
Who cares how low the price they pay  
For crops you can't grow anyway? (2000)

Dear Travis,

It's hard for me to waste the space  
Of lines between my verses  
For practice, now I'll leave this page  
Till my resolve reverses.

## Some Houses I Have Known

A little guy named Travis  
Has come into our lives,  
He likes to play with flashlights  
And likes to sharpen knives.

He brought me such a pretty book  
I find it hard to use it,  
For fear my poor handwriting  
Or comic verse abuse it.

But as the years go speeding by  
I feel I must be brave  
And somehow start to write therein  
So he'll have it to save.

Here are remembered stories of  
Some houses I have known.  
None of them was better than  
The one you call your own.

I've lived in several houses (homes)  
None of them brand-new.  
I remember most of them quite well  
Exceptions here are few.

The house (home) whether large or small  
Got much of my attention  
Details we chose to there install  
Too numerous to mention.

Whenever we had well-improved  
And settled in location  
Behold, we up and sold and moved  
To my exasperation.

And so this odyssey progressed  
Mostly in small towns  
That's how our zest for living grew  
My whimsy still abounds.

Now I relate this tale to you  
That you be not too wary  
Of anything unusual  
Curious, or scary.

Diverse events will mark your life  
Take everything in stride  
Do the best you can with it  
And I will glow with pride.

Before my measured time began  
There was a forest fire.  
My dad cut down some damaged trees  
'Till he began to tire.

Then with the wood, (refreshed by then)  
He built a nice big house  
Where I was born, "when time allowed"  
Said mom, his legal spouse.

The seventh in that family  
I lived a special child  
I could not walk as well as most  
But some ways I was wild.

Jeffers, Minnesota  
A tiny little town  
Many decades later  
It seems not to have grown.

When afterwards my family moved  
And settled on a farm  
I once climbed up a windmill  
Lest big geese do me harm.

About that time, exploring with  
My little brother Tom  
I fell into a deep, cold spring  
Then went a-dripping home.

When four years old, I went to school  
With siblings twice as old  
I tried to learn my phonics, and  
Was duly there enrolled.

When school was out and chores were done  
We played at games together  
Running, hiding, guessing games  
Depending on the weather.

Each day I walked to school across  
A stream within a grove  
The ice was thin and I fell in.  
"Teach" dried me by the stove.

I was a wayward little one:  
When walking was too hard  
I cried 'till someone carried me  
Back to my home and yard.

Some Houses I Have Known (continued)

One springtime when the River  
Had overflowed its banks  
Our fields were under water:  
One more of nature's pranks.

Our house was big and made of stone  
The walls were thick and strong  
Progress took that house away  
It grieves me that it's gone.

Built on the black and yellow trail  
Called the Hyman place  
Hard by a quarry which prevails  
Today it leaves no trace.

Where the garden once had been  
A field of corn now stands  
The road up toward the schoolhouse  
Has quit its wonted plans.

Come summer nineteen twenty  
My father's restless soul  
Induced a trip to New York State  
For land he could control.

We went by train to Hamilton  
We got a great big farm  
Four rooms upstairs and six below  
Cut wood to keep us warm.

From third grade all through high school  
I "rode the bus" to school  
A horse-drawn sleigh with benches  
Or wagon was the rule.

Lilacs grew beyond the fields  
The orchard beyond the hill  
An evening's lovely outing  
The apple bin could fill.

There was a big old willow tree  
Close to the kitchen door  
Years later, visiting, I knew  
It moved ten yards or more!

But this, a younger willow  
Replaced the older tree  
A triumph, true, for nature  
Surprising shock for me.

We had good crops, with solid work  
Milked cows, fed chickens, hogs  
Tilled fields and gardens, orchard  
Kept some old cats and dogs.

On weekends we went dancing  
With neighbors old and young  
With music, food, and laughter  
How the rafters rung!

No friends had I among my kin  
At school acceptance shrunk  
My leg was nightly rubbed with grease  
Extracted from a skunk!

I learned to hunt for clovers  
That had four leaves a piece  
Had lots of time for schoolwork  
Or watch the moon increase.

The winters were the hardest  
They kept us working hard  
The long, dark nights were coldest  
No playing in the yard.

Some week-ends we made popcorn  
Or went up hill to slide  
We always got along indoors  
Or else were sent outside.

In Spring we tapped the maple trees  
In Fall picked apples, pears  
In Summer tended crops and flocks  
And all such farm affairs.

I was the farmer's daughter  
He was a handsome guy  
No one could stop our marriage  
We both were young and spry.

Right after we were married  
We lived on Charles Street  
Compared to many others  
Those days were mighty sweet.

The little home was roomy,  
Cozy, clean, and neat  
It stands today all red and proud  
At twelve on Charles Street.

Some Houses I Have Known (continued)

We moved about in wartime  
Uncertain as we felt  
One thing we learned then surely,  
To tighten up our belt.

One time we lived on Spring Street  
Below a grassy hill  
The land is now "developed"  
The old house stands there still.

We had successive children  
As nature could provide  
We took four kids to Texas  
Three little ones had died.

Our few brief months in Arkansas  
We lived a pauper's life  
Then took the train to Texas  
The kids and man and wife.

In Childress was a tiny house  
With peach tree by its side  
No friends, no car - streets of mud  
I thought I could have died.

We soon were off to Sherman  
Tired of Childress' goo  
A big "box" house with play yard  
Where a big hackberry grew.

It stood across from Tony's house  
Close to the trolley stop  
And when we walked to church, we passed  
Right by the ice-cream shop.

And then we moved to Abilene  
By plane we learned to fly  
This town we seemed to grow up with  
We entered from the sky.

A little house, four rooms and bath  
And I recall it well.  
Just off the road on Ash Street  
Where it stood no one can tell.

Bulldozed, leveled, hauled away  
Its walls and floors and ceiling  
As though in castigation  
For illegal substance dealing.

Four rooms, six folks: How could we share  
In any peaceful way, or fair?  
We felt so cramped, we made a search  
For some place bigger, near the church.

We settled for Meander Street  
The kids agreed "This will be neat"  
Out the window, up the stairs  
They scrambled, singly, or in pairs.

We grew up here, and learned to drive  
Some went on to college  
Pursuing education  
And academic knowledge.

Twenty years or more we stayed  
Our several students made the grade  
And off to college, off to wars  
Reunions were within those doors.

There had been room for beds and toys  
We took in kids and there was noise  
Then mama went to nursing school  
And life was fairly calm and cool.

Army, navy, and marines  
Each took one of the boys  
And sent them back much later  
Presumably with poise.

And Sarah then became a nurse  
Complete with registration  
Which demonstrates a true resolve  
Determined calculation.

Martha left to prove herself  
In studied relocation  
Subsequently married  
To begin regeneration.

Then for a year we tried our lot  
Down in the valley - where it's hot  
We learned to love the ocean's beach  
But came back home, so Ken could teach.

This hardest time of all our life  
The worst of all for stress and strife  
We spent beside the Rio Grande  
Close to the ocean and to sand.

Some Houses I Have Known (continued)

When we returned to Abilene  
We found a house on block fifteen  
of Hickory. With Andy there  
We tried to live and work and share.

The neighborhood soon showed decay  
And so we made our get-away  
To Shangri-La we came to stay  
And Camelot remains today.

You know the big brick ranch-style house -  
You saw the hole made by a mouse  
This house is where you came to play  
I hope you never stay away.

Someday someone may steal this book  
But you must always feel  
The pleasures that we shared today  
No one can ever steal.

Our family tree has sturdy limbs  
And you're a lively little twig  
How great the possibilities  
For you when you are big.

You now must work and strive and grow  
And be the kind of man  
Who'll make the name you bear today  
The pride of all our clan.

For me this precious little book  
Was far too thick you see  
Perhaps when you have had a look  
You'll finish it for me! (1994)

Recitation

My growing grandson, Travis  
He's met an awful plight  
He has to read my verses  
And remember what I write.

In sympathy I struggle  
(Try vainly to recall)  
I not only can't remember  
I can scarcely read them all.

I now add to the rhyming  
Compounding his sad state  
Incredibly bad timing  
A condition which I hate.

So if you'll just forgive me  
For the moment I will stop  
I fear I'll take it up again  
Until at last I drop.

(1995)



## Some Houses I Have Known (abridged)

A little guy named Travis  
Has come into our lives,  
He likes to play with flashlights  
And likes to sharpen knives.

Here are remembered stories of  
Some houses I have known.  
None of them was better than  
The one you call your own.

The seventh in that family  
I lived a special child  
I could not walk as well as most  
But some ways I was wild.

Jeffers, Minnesota  
A tiny little town  
Many decades later  
It seems not to have grown.

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of Hickory. With Andy there  
We tried to live and work and share.

You know the big brick ranch-style house -  
You saw the hole made by a mouse  
This house is where you came to play  
I hope you never stay away.

To Travis and family,

I appreciate your little poem  
About your granny's former home.

Now, grace my present domicile  
By dropping in once in a while! (1999)

## More Poems

The world will little note  
Nor long remember  
The few good things I wrote  
Since last September

Who sees the meager value  
Of a quote  
I filched and saved to use  
In late November?

Who cares what lonely hours  
I devote  
To watching sparkling stars  
Or glowing embers?

How tenuous the brain storm  
I'll promote  
Before December

---

Colored black or colored white  
Without regard to weight or height  
Pink or yellow, red or brown  
Anyone can smile or frown  
All of these, and you and me  
People are colored to some degree

---

I can't sing and you can't see  
Which is crippled, you or me?  
Display your talents gracefully

---

My blood-pressure's like a butterfly  
It flits about, too low - then high  
I treat the ill with wearied eye

Light as a feather  
Fickle as weather  
Even at rest, wings flap together

Bi-polar, it can bring me fear  
That my demise is near, or here  
So please pass me another beer

Whee! Look at me!  
We are the nation's elderly-  
We have struggled, won or lost  
'Till our hair began to frost

We first slow up and then slow down  
Poorest memory in town  
Deteriorating ears and eyes  
Can't distinguish truth from lies

Of late, we'd be the last to know  
What's genuinely apropos  
That we don't make the fist string team  
Does nothing for our self-esteem.

---

Just outside there lies a riverbed  
Where seldom flows a goodly stream  
To wet this watershed  
When meager precious water flows  
We scarcely note 'twas mud instead

Time offers us items of which  
We are quite unaware  
A growth of long long fingernails  
And a wealth of silvery hair

---

11-1-2000

Never in any one year, have I  
So often heard "How time does fly"

This is November - and not July  
How can time so soon go by?

This one thing I'm sure about:  
One day at a time, without a doubt.

4-6-01

Moving is not a one-day chore  
There's weeks of preparation  
One day a truck is at the door  
Then comes recuperation

Rooms take on a new dimension  
They're full in no time flat!  
Kids are helpful - not to mention  
They respond to "not like that!"

However, when your routine's back  
And all is a before  
Your little inner self might say -  
"Let's do this one time more"

4-6-01

Life's a lovely filigree

With give and take appropriately  
Contrasting, changing interestingly  
Enjoy, embrace them appreciatively  
To treasure and accept respectfully. (respectfully?)

#77          Rain I

The rain today is not for me  
It's for a crop of wheat  
The footing's slick, It's quite a trick  
To even cross the street

While the rain is pouring down  
I might as well relax  
I know the rain is mostly gain  
On which we pay no tax

Shall I check the mailbox  
Under my umbrella?  
To find that all the mail today  
Was for the other fella!

I think I'll sit and sip a drink  
My usual cup of cheer  
Pretending I live in the pink  
And hope the sky will clear

I'll use the same old cup I've had  
For lo these many years  
I'll use it stained, or since it rained  
Wash it in heaven's tears!

#78 Rain II

It isn't raining rain for me  
My cup's already full  
My grass is green. I've never seen  
So many weeds to pull!

It isn't raining rain for me  
It's for the farmer's crop  
My porch is wet. The more we get  
The less I like to mop.

It isn't raining rain for me  
There's plenty in our lakes  
And it's already plain to see -  
Or do I make mistakes?

It isn't raining! now I see  
The grass is dry as sand  
Let it rain - Let it pour  
Just make me understand.

It isn't raining rain on me  
A fair and equal dose  
But if it's not exactly true  
Admit it's mighty close.

#79 Rain III

It isn't raining rain today  
Today it's raining mud  
And all the shiny auto tops  
Look like heaps of crud.

It isn't raining yet, today  
Our street's still flowing strong  
In case the flood gets deeper  
How will we get along?

But when the sun begins to shine  
The grass will stretch its top  
Then, rain or shine, I'm not inclined  
To either sleep or shop.

But will I start the mower,  
And push it 'round the yard?  
Not while I live and rest in peace  
I cannot work that hard!

#80

Go gently, coach driver, my muscles are sore  
Last week at the barber's, I fell to the floor  
I rolled myself over, got up, and went home  
Today I feel achy in each of my bones.

Go gently, good driver, we'll arrive in good time  
The pool and the sauna this hour are mine  
Then come with your pumpkin and ferry me back  
To my home in "the square" where I'll hit the sack.

Tomorrow, dear driver, I'll meet you again  
We'll speed to the pool for another good swim  
Then off for my haircut, if I'm still alive  
One day, I hope that I'll learn to drive.

#81

I dropped in for a haircut  
    Before I scarce could blink  
My feeble knees and trusty wheels  
    No longer were in synch

I dropped down two steps extra,  
    Feeling graceless - rude  
That in these posh surroundings  
    I should so intrude

I knew that I had lost control  
    When stars flashed through my head  
And I proceeded on my trip -  
    But, to the rug instead

My left ear met a table  
    During my descent  
A minor inconvenience  
    Of the incident

It's time for a decision  
    A judgement - a resolve  
To mind my steps intently  
    When I am so involved

#82

For these several years, now  
Words have been my life  
To clear the air and rescue  
My factious self from strife

To offer you a point of view  
To settle kids' disputes  
And record my history  
However things compute

When I could snatch occasion  
I'd use these words of mine  
Intuitively knowing  
That lines must always rhyme

To serve the progress of my days  
Record in rhyme each passing phase  
Then, when at last I take my leave  
You'll know there's something up my sleeve.

June 11 -01

A willing candidate am I  
For solitude - seclusion -  
Today the noise assaults our ears  
Producing pure confusion

Silence takes a gilded bloom  
In the wake of such bombardment  
Of screaming kids and shouting mothers  
Giggling schoolgirls - whistling others

The wisdom of our times, I need  
The patience of the ancients  
So when at last my pen runs dry  
We'll have a chat - just you and I.



July 1 -01

To Kevin

You've been a good boy  
So here's a new toy  
Be careful not to abuse it

If you have the knowledge  
To enter a college  
It's certain you know how to use it

If you make a mistake  
Just enter "out-take"  
And determine to right the concoction

With equipment like this  
You surely can't miss  
Just remember - failure's no option!

July '01

Babies

The young of almost every kind  
Are fetching, cuddly-cute  
Tiny replicas of forebears  
This we don't dispute

But grow they must - and grow they do  
Like others of their breed  
Their playful actions now are few  
Authentic valid laws ring true -

---

What is all the noise about?  
They called the Roto-rooters  
To clean the bagpipes out.

---

A syzygy is two coupled feet  
Applied to a dipody  
Sounds like a swift kick, doesn't it?

---

#83

Hummingbirds and Butterflies  
Are familiar in the summer  
Each has a separate history  
Either one a bummer

Hummingbirds, in springtime  
Will hide their little nests  
Keeping us in ignorance  
Of their traits that we like best

Butterflies, conversely  
Completely disappear  
Later reemerging  
That lifestyle is queer

So, when you see a woolly-worm  
Or low-hanging cocoon  
Imagine how it's going to look  
On orange blossoms soon.

Sept. 2 - 01

My favorite food is oatmeal  
To add to its normal appeal  
I douse it with Silk-a-Soy milk  
A quite satisfactory meal

I avoid most meats, roast or steak  
So Baked Beans and Peas, Sweet corn and cheese  
Spice up my daily intake

Hamburger gives me the willies  
Same can be said of all chilies  
But there's salmon, sardines and fish  
What more could I want on my dish

I mostly like things without bones  
But I don't mind a few cores or stones  
I shun things whose names are unknown

The length of a meal is sporadic, informal  
Diet is varied diverse, and abnormal -  
Seldom confused with what seems to be normal

Aug. 30 - 01

People of high caliber  
Choose to drive a bus  
Under their attentive care  
We move - the public - US!

But Benny's of a special breed  
Dignified, courageous  
Helpful, kind and cheerful  
His attitude's contagious.

Concerted, combined and collective  
The trade demands respect  
And special recognition's due  
Each time that we connect

---

Paratransit Service is a lofty undertaking  
A simple coach across town  
It certainly ain't  
The one who makes a routing plan  
Has to be s Saint!

---

A moving jigsaw puzzle  
Is the paratransit service  
Completing impossible jobs  
For unimpressible mobs

My favorite driver's on the way  
To take me anywhere I say  
In pumpkin or coach  
Without reproach  
Is the prince who's been driving all day

Discrete, reserved and cultured  
Polished - and with constraint  
The one who makes the routing plan  
Has to be a SAINT!

Sept. 01

A moving jigsaw puzzle  
Is the paratransit service  
Completing impossible jobs  
For unimpressible mobs.  
Whenever conflicts arise,  
Surprise, they organize!

If I were dealing the accolades  
To the most deserving  
I'd give the Ace of Spades to one  
Who does his best by serving.

Discrete, reserved and cultured  
Polished - with constraint  
The one who makes the routing plan  
Has to be a SAINT!

I'd give the drivers praises -  
But I know they'd prefer raises!

#84

The challenge of raising a family  
Is awesome, dreadful, stupendous  
Behavior in immature offspring  
Is vulgar, disruptive, horrendous

Mothers lose sight of their youngsters  
As they drive gaily away  
Fathers disrupt their instruction  
Minimizing the part they should play

None can avoid overhearing  
The jargon of tousled youth  
Ribald, ill-mannered language  
Parlance vulgar, uncouth

Aug 19 - 01

### Watermelon Pickles

Choose a melon with a rind that's thick  
If it says "Thud" it's the one to pick  
Or it's mostly white, if you choose to plug  
I prefer to just give it a slug

Eat the melon and save the rind  
Because it's the best one you could find  
Peel the green from off the top  
Pare the red part off - then stop!

Cut the pickles the size you like  
They need not look precisely alike  
In water and alum, soak them all night  
Don't bother to taste them, they won't seem right

The next day drain and rinse them well  
Just why isn't clear, so I can't tell  
For the next half hour, boil the lot  
Until they look clear - and not just hot

Now drain again and let them cool  
The cooling itself's no rigid rule  
But if you've decided to take a taste  
You'll decide the project's a big waste

If you have patience to proceed from here  
You're on your own I greatly fear  
Well-sweetened vinegar is the key  
Other than that, don't look at me!

Please don't clone my stem-cells  
I have defective genes  
They've plagued me many years, now  
Tap in on someone clean.

No respectable Martian  
Would think of using me  
So old and fat and wrinkled  
With nothing left pain-free

I'd really hate cremation  
Although I think I know  
I'd have a nice new manicure  
And would like to have it show.

Please don't hold a funeral  
Don't preach at my expense  
I'd rather be cremated  
Than left without defense

Let there be no burial  
Just let my ashes blow  
This is my last and final wish  
See that it's done just so.

#85

Your life upon this good green earth  
You may cancel at any time  
Change your ways, move about  
Just don't mess with mine.

Don't alter my rhyming  
Disrupt my timing  
Or mar the gist of my song  
Like it or leave it  
Believe it - receive it -  
But don't merely  
Give it the gong

A challenge I present to those  
Who may not find this funny  
I'm simply not soliciting  
Any of your money

Sept 1 - 01

My chairs are inclined to complain  
Hand-made antiques, no wonder each squeaks  
Profusely when I entertain.

My recliners conform to my shape  
Their meager appeal for resting one's heels  
Is a fact that few could escape

Which normally calls for a couch  
But search as they may It's plain as the day  
I furnish no couch for a grouch.

Communication's not my thing

My message needs to have a ring  
A special cadence, rhyme and swing  
A beat, a pulse, a throb or stroke  
Otherwise I'd rather choke!

#86 If I Could! I Would!

If I could re-invent myself  
I'd paint myself a smile  
I wouldn't fail to bring delight  
Every little while

I'd have a sense of fashion  
Present an air of class  
To everyone who sees me  
Any time they pass

An affable expression  
Would charm the ones I greet  
I'd cheer the population  
Friendly, but discreet

Somewhere along the way, I'd find  
A tolerance for noise  
I'd value sonic blaring  
Made by grown-up boys

If ever I should be alone  
I'd use my pen and paper  
To feel a sense of friendliness  
Just by this little caper

#87

A happy group of ladies  
Share a swimming pool  
Where anyone is welcomed  
And all the rules are cool

We stand and chat, or move about  
As the spirit moves  
Trade a thoughtful joke or two  
And no one disapproves

The secret in these pleasantries  
Is judged by how we feel  
When all go home contented  
We know we have a deal

Double benefit have we  
With mild and cool activity  
Social volubility  
All coincidentally

My joy is peer approval  
My craft is in the rhyming  
When the story's finished  
The ending's purely timing

8/11/01

In Favor of Domestic Tranquility

Content am I as days go by  
To take good care of me  
And leave the squabbles of the day  
To those across the sea

But I would make suggestion  
That they lay down their arms  
And soothe the population  
Who do each other harm.

They need the tree of life today  
To drop its healing leaves  
Bring calm to old Jerusalem  
And drop their sordid peeves

When they can't live together  
A man and wife should part  
Why should they stand with rock in hand  
Reluctant to depart?

L Dart



Bride is for taking and giving  
Birth is for giving  
By is for standing  
Care is for giving or taking  
Cat is for putting out  
Camp is for breaking  
Conclusions are for jumping to  
Your best is for giving  
Money is for laundering  
Envelopes are for pushing  
Elbows are for rubbing  
Triggers are for pulling  
Hearts are for breaking  
Favors for needing  
Tables are for turning  
Taxies are for hailing  
Hill is to go over  
Scenes are to return to  
Lightning is for greasing  
Music is for facing  
Tears are to laugh through  
Manners are for minding  
Magic is for working  
Backs are for turning  
Your neck is for Saving  
Cold is for catching  
Your eye is to bat  
Thumb is to be under

#88 In Veneration of Silvery Hair

With mounting apprehension  
We watch the sun go down  
In restive expectation  
Await our thorny crown.

The hapless mysteries of life  
Bring conflicts to an end:  
We do the best we can with that  
On which results depend.

A final resolution  
Defies our understanding  
The end of life will find us  
notwithstanding.

When this occasion then occurs  
Expect celestial overtures!

#89

Incarcerated by Car-lessness

I feel much like a wayward child  
Grounded, secluded, confined  
I've surrendered my license, relinquished my car  
Old habits are now left behind.

Retired in endless boredom  
Absent from groups I have known  
People have largely forgot me  
How quickly the languor has grown!

I sit and I mutter and mumble  
Try out my paper and pen  
My desk is a horrible jumble  
And my waste-basket fills up again.

I search my mind for the freedom  
Provided by hands on the wheel  
Transitions will never come easy  
However daring I feel.

#90 Feline Treachery

House cats are a restless breed  
Pacing, meeting an unknown need.  
Wanting to be returned to the wild  
They beg and plead like a willful child.  
"Mama, open this big old door  
I'll climb a tree and say no more.  
I'll catch a bird or rob a nest  
Or chase that squirrel. He's a pest!"

House cats have a delicate sense  
Of habits, wants and wishes intense  
And appetites fickle at random times.  
They'll pounce on a dust ball, pretend to climb  
Come and beg at the ice-box door  
Hoping it's tuna they smell on the floor.

Nervously cautious, skittishly jesting  
Curiously playfully trying and testing  
Voicing this plea "Do open the door  
So I can get out in the world to explore."  
I turned around to look at the weather  
And my cat had tied my shoestrings together!

"NO MORE CANDY!" a voice rang out!  
Dominance unquestioned  
A mother pushing a cart about -  
The child made one suggestion  
That little ball of red hot will  
Looked up with jaundiced eye  
Enough ill will to cause a chill  
In the growl of so small a guy  
He shook a tight fist  
What an awful twist  
Authority had taken  
That there exist  
Extremes like this  
I felt like I'd been shaken  
"He mimics his father"  
My instant observation  
A malevolent tongue  
In one so young  
Must take some cultivation!

#### Two Monkeys

Two foraging monkeys on one tree  
Eating fruits and tender shoots  
Each one signals "Look at me!"  
One dangled by his long, stout tail  
His neighbor, noting that detail  
Climbed it to reach a swaying limb  
To garner fruit that's close to him.  
Nonchalant, the bulky one  
Skipped no beat, but forged ahead  
Plucking plums at their mellow best  
From off the limb - then pats his chest -  
Sign language for "be my guest!"

#### A Modern Invention

There sits a little table lamp  
Sedately by my bed  
And when I touch its little base  
A blush glows from its head

A second touch - it starts to shine  
"How's this?" it seems to say  
Now with a third and gentle tap  
It shines its heart away

Then at the fourth connection  
It sits there, dark as pitch  
Not staring, only daring me  
To find its hidden switch.

## My Menu

I shop and plan my menu  
As well as I am able  
Understanding I'm the one  
Seated at the table

Only I need relish  
The nourishment I get  
I can twist the recipes  
Until they seem correct

If I don't like the salads  
Or the way they look  
I'm sure to eat them anyway  
In deference to the cook

## Elderly Patient and Experienced Physician

I have a new doctor  
    A gem of a fellow  
Astute, assured, composed  
He's thorough, efficient, serene, and mellow  
My needs are never opposed

This doctor's remarkably patient  
His vision reveals what's obscured  
I'm counseled, guided, persuaded,  
Comforted, calmed - and CURED!

A bird sat on my garden fence  
And sang to me this song intense  
Cornbread, cornbread, cornbread, ma'am  
Please, please, please, Louise

This awesome, urgent vital song  
Shrill, sibilant, and strong  
In demanding, fluid tongue  
To a feisty bird belong

Rehearsed, so well, the message  
Spontaneous and free  
The whole melodic message  
Especially for me!

It sat upon the fence post where  
Asserting its cunning demand  
If I had had the cornbread there  
'twould have eaten it from my hand

Help Make Texas a Better Place?

Sounds right silly - on its face  
What's so bad that you'd erase?  
Or even worse, that you'd replace?  
We don't need much extra space.  
We could adopt a spare airbase.  
That might help us just a trace  
And folks can't view that as disgrace.  
We'd take it in our big embrace.

## My Several Lifetimes

At first I was a little girl  
Little and lame and lonely  
Seventh of ten siblings  
Tactless, inept, and homely  
My schooling started early  
And was rigidly pursued  
Immediately thereafter  
Began my ample brood

When mine were fed  
And clothed, trained and schooled  
I studied nursing's laws and rules  
And after working twenty years  
And paying taxes through my tears  
I got new hips, then volunteered  
To do for those who needed aid  
And spent my half of what I'd made

And when I tired of routine things  
I traveled at my whim  
Whether or not accompanied  
And taught myself to swim  
The swimming I continue still  
The traveling has ended  
Relinquishing my license  
Made me feel offended

I rented then at Chimney Square  
All my furnishings were there  
Mail was delivered every day  
Laundry was but a block away  
In walking distance I could find  
Food and drugs and books and wine  
A hundred neighbors, more or less  
Alleviated loneliness

Advanced in age, I've time to brood  
With little need for man nor food  
Recalling things I might have done  
Recollecting one by one  
These latter days will still be fine  
The stunts I pull are only mine  
So sober, diffident, and blunt  
I'll gloat with pride  
At my last stunt

My final antic was to be  
Producing printed poetry  
But prudence and austerity  
Taken to extremity  
Made my hopes illusory

## Two More Poems

We came across two more poems, one enclosed with a letter, from my mother-in-law January 2022.

Dated November 18, 2000 (with accompanying letter)

I don't know how to thank you  
For all you do for me  
I can't return your kindness  
To any great degree

I beg for your indulgence  
To understand my plight  
That I can do so little  
By either day or night.

Whenever it's convenient  
And you all can get away  
A standing invitation  
Is issued here today

A monetary gesture  
Will be offered - time to time  
To show my lasting gratitude  
[For holding school for T.]  
And for copying my rhymes

It's obvious this jingle  
Has some mistakes, but still  
Consider, please, it's good intent  
And edit it at will.

Dear Ones:

I think I must have a classic personality that requires me to express everything in verse. As a nurse I met a patient who seemed unable to speak except in song! More than one in nursing communicated only in obscenities - Deliver Me!

[ . . . ]

As always, I'm eager to see you again.

With love, Mom (Grammy)

4-5-01

Moving is not a one-day chore  
There's weeks of preparation  
One day a truck is at the door  
Then comes recuperation

Rooms take on a new dimension  
They're full in no time flat!  
Kids are helpful - not to mention  
They respond to "Not like that"

However, when your routine's back  
And all is as before  
Your little inner self might say  
"Let's do this one time more"