



reflections

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“Reflections”

A Collection of Short Stories & Poems

By Seniors of Oregon

2020

*Reflections contains original writings submitted to LeadingAge Oregon
by residents of member communities.*

These authors have vastly varying backgrounds and experiences.

All are published here in their entirety, as originally submitted by the author.

published by: LeadingAge Oregon
7340 SW Hunziker Street, Suite 104, Tigard Oregon 97223
503.684.3788
2020

LeadingAge Oregon is the statewide association for not-for-profit and other mission-directed organizations that are dedicated to providing quality housing, health care, and related services to the elderly and disabled.

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BEAR WITH ME

It happened in Banff National Park, soon after I had started a new job taking pictures for a travel guide. Walking back to my car at dusk, I came upon a black bear and two cubs. Their little snouts were buried in huckleberry bushes beside the parking lot. I stopped to watch as they pawed down branches that kept springing back up.

It's a good thing their mama is with them, I thought. The last thing I'd want would be to come between a sow and her cubs. Although a rookie on the wildlife scene, even I knew that. Then a small voice in my head whispered: A sow can have more than two cubs. I looked to my right. Cub Number Three was exploring the far side of the lot. I looked to my left. Mama returned my gaze. Then she started walking. Straight. Toward. Me.

In between me and Number Three was a glassed-in telephone booth. I bee-lined for it, mentally chanting the mantra, "Never run from a bear." Backward glances confirmed that Mama still was following. With great relief, I stepped into the booth and closed its folding door. The glass was reinforced with chicken wire, which surely would shield me – from chickens.

Mama reached the booth and stood outside as if waiting to use the phone. Then turning her back to the door, she plopped down on her ample bottom just two feet away.

Recently, I'd been reading a book on time management. It advised readers to keep asking themselves, "What is the best possible use of my time right now?" OK, so what should I do? I took out my camera and finished the roll with shots of bears. None of the pictures would turn out; Mama was too close, chicken wire blurred the foreground, and all the shots looked as if the photographer's hands had been shaking.

Mama scratched her ear with a hind foot, just like a cat. What was the best possible use of my time right now? I phoned the office and made my weekly field report. I was too embarrassed to mention my predicament. Still Mama sat.

What else could I do in my captivity? I tried to review my assignment book and cursed the fading light that made it hard to read. I put fresh film in the camera and labeled the roll I'd removed. I thought about dinner and tried to calculate if my expense allowance would cover a real, sit-down supper instead of more fast food.

Then Number Three broke into a scamper and ran toward his mama and me. She gave him a lick in greeting, rose, and without looking back, led him to join his siblings in the berry patch. Reunited, the four bears ambled away. I walked shakily to my car, applauding myself for making such good use of time.

It wasn't until years later that it occurred to me the best possible use of my time might have been to simply watch and wonder at the bears.

*Written by, Lindsey Daniel,
Holladay Park Plaza*

HOLDING THE LIVING

The cell becoming us,
becoming tongue or tendon,
becoming the thing that holds
we call hand,
is meant for the gentle knowing of living things.
Breath of sleeping dog lifts warm
before it disperses;
leaves expand, cooling
as they drop;
turned soil shifts under the beetle's mighty work,
then firms under the weight of frost.
The hand knows them.

The hand knows them, the living things,
as it cannot know light's needle prick
or press of space or time's betraying shifts-
but a smile's shape in the dark -
the listening hand knows its curve, the tender moment
of its vanishing, as it knows itself.

But oh -
the letting go of a living thing —
this, the hand refuses and it clings
to the silk of skin,
its warmth, its swarming meanings,
disbelieving any wresting force is stronger
than the hand's will.

On the river, a water skier bursts the morning
rapt,
his mind holds nothing,
thrum of water beneath,
blur of shore trees, leaves shivering down,
not his concern.
Hands joined to the rope sense the perilous next,
but the moment held in air - he does not imagine
its escape, its being gone
as he will be gone - in fact,
as he has already passed from sight
journeying into the water, laughing.

*Written By, Joyce Adams,
Willamette View*

20/20 VISION FOR THE YEAR 2020

I **ENVISION** a better world in 2020 where,
Hope conquers over Fears of:

Bigotry over **Brotherhood**,
Confusion over **Clarity** of thoughts
on private gains over **Public Good**,
Polarization on Racism policies
over **Harmony** amidst disparate groups.
A wish and a need for renewed loyalty to our American motto:
E Pluribus Unum.

I **PRAY** for the victory of :

Compassion over Cruelty in people relationships;
Faith in **Facts** over Fiction on climate change;
Decency and Decorum over Rudeness in communication;
Conscience based actions in lieu of political expediency;
Moral principles over the might of money;
Calm Reason over frenzied thoughts of conspiracies;
Hope over Despair under the crushing weight of fear;
Truth over Mendacity.

I **YEARN** for the **recovery** of all the sterling human qualities under recent assault,
which have suffered a mortal blow and reduced to ashes.

Hence I **DREAM** of :

The Greek mythical, magical **Phoenix**,
coming to our rescue.
Helping us to **arise**
from the deep dark depths of ashes of despair and
Lift the **Revitalized** human spirit
with **Renewed Hope** on its large glorious wings,
and swiftly move upwards,
to the Eternal **Bright Shining Light** high above.

Dum spiro spero (Cicero)
(While I breathe , I hope)

*Written by, Sati Sil,
Capital Manor*

A DOG'S BEDTIME PRAYER

so now I lay me down to sleep
the king-sized bed is soft and deep
I sleep right in the center groove
my human beings can hardly move
I trapped their legs, they're locked in tight
here is where I pass the night
no one disturbs me to morning light
when morning comes I want my food
so I sneak up slowly to begin
as I nibble on my human's chin
because morning's here, it's time to play
I always seem to get my way
so thank you God for giving me
the human person that I now see
the one person who hugs and holds me tight
and shares their bed with me each night

*Written by, Steven Pierce,
The Village Retirement Center*

A HIKE IN THE FOREST

After following a logging road, six hikers made a left turn into a thick fir forest – no path. We dodged around trees, straddled and crossed old logs and climbed and climbed. Then suddenly, the trees ahead of us thinned. We could see a clearing – a little green meadow with a bright blue sky beyond it. We had unexpectedly found one of the most beautiful sights in all of Oregon.

My brother Cliff, who led our family on this hike up the mountain, was a real outdoorsman. He had been an adventurer from an early age. Beginning at age 16 he spent summers fighting fires for the Oregon State Department of Forestry. As soon as he turned 18, he applied to become a smoke jumper. He was accepted, went through training and then was assigned to a camp at Cave Junction with the U.S. Forest Service in Southern Oregon.

With another fire fighter, he would jump from a plane into a new fire that had been located by a Forest Service lookout. Their job: extinguish that blaze before it spreads. At a trim 6' 4" tall, he could scramble quickly through the woods to the site of smoke. All the equipment and supplies he needed were in his 80-pound backpack. This included a heavy double-headed Pulaski, a half axe, half adze firefighting tool, used to clear fire lines around smoldering trees.

He loved his work, from the excitement of jumping out of a plane to successfully putting out fires and preventing lightning strikes from spreading. In the process of frequent jumps into inaccessible places, he had discovered vistas few others ever see. On our trek, he was about to treat us to one of them.

Now beyond his fire-fighting days, Cliff was working on a Ph.D. at the University of Oregon. He and his wife Ann had picked up our third- and fifth-grade daughter and son in Lake Oswego a couple days earlier to camp with them along the McKenzie River, east of Eugene. My husband and I had joined them at their campsite the night before our hike. Cliff had an almost uncanny ability to find his way through dense forests, long before there was such a thing as a GPS. Despite the thick underbrush in the Douglas Fir forest, we had no doubt he would lead us to the spot he wanted to share with us and would lead us safely back to camp again.

As we reached the clearing, we found ourselves in a verdant meadow, sprinkled with wildflowers – Indian paintbrush, columbine, lupine and tiny pastel blossoms we couldn't identify. We walked across the grassy floor before us toward the endless blue sky and discovered that beyond this meadow was a drop-off. We could see the tops of the trees far below us. Beyond them rose the snow-capped Cascades to the east. We had often seen these same mountains from the east side and easily identified the parade of snowcapped peaks: Mt. Jefferson, Three-Fingered Jack, Mt. Washington, the Three Sisters, Broken Top and Mt. Bachelor. While the elevation of two of them is just under 8,000, Jefferson and the

Sisters top 10,000 feet! We had never seen them all at once looking from the western perspective. What a breathtaking sight.

There's something about breathing in the beauty of such an unspoiled natural scene that lingers over the years. I still can see it in memory fifty years later.

*Written by, Carla Harris,
Willamette View*

A LITTLE BOY IN SCHOOL

It's a beautiful spring Wednesday
and the little boy in third grade
sits at his desk
looking out the window
at the tree outside.
Subtle hints
dance around his mind about being
under that tree's branches
rather than where he is.
Thoughts roll lazily in his head
as he watches the leaves,
barely moving on its boughs.
The minutes and hours
progress much slower than
being behind a farmer's tractor
on a curvy country road.
And the teacher drones on,
and on and on,
as she talks of rules and
clouds and numbers
and words and desks
and Dick-and-Jane
and pencils and paper.
The boy dutifully sits still
and stares at the tree.
Suddenly his world brightens
when a little bird comes to entertain him.
It preens, and flutters its wings,
sings a sweet song,
and even looks at him with a seemingly
understanding heart that says,
I'll see you on Saturday.

*Written by, Donna Comfort,
Friendsview Retirement Community*

A MIND MEANDERING

It was 2 a.m. and I was awake. Soo – it was another one of those nights when my mind was working overtime. I warmed a half glass of milk. The serotonin, I thought, would help me go back to sleep.

I wandered back to bed. On the way my mind told me I really should brush my teeth. My long habit dating back eighty some years is that one should always brush one's teeth after eating or drinking anything. Well, anyway, I brushed my teeth.

Two of the most overused expressions – so and well, anyway. How often have you heard a person, when telling a story, begin every other sentence with so and continue with well, anyway. Now, what does that phrase do to enhance the story? I'm not sure, well, anyway, it drives me crazy. Soo, that's another phrase that I wonder about. Does it really drive me crazy? Well, anyway, maybe I am just a little crazy and saying it out loud just emphasizes that I acknowledge that fact.

Soo - whatever happened to better English? And on the subject of better English, don't get me started on spelling, i.e. texting! That really drives me crazy. Well, anyway, that's the end of this story.

*Written by, Joan Graves,
Capital Manor*

A PAEON TO OLD AGE

Where are the thin legs outrunning my childhood friends?
And where are those Betty Grable legs drawing whistles from boys?
Where are my ankles now, puffy and unrecognizable?
Where is my waist where once my love encircled his hands?
Where are my slender hands where he placed a diamond?
Where are those hands now, twisted and dotted with spots?
And my brain. Where has it hidden? What is my best friend's name?
And what is the date today? I notice sad looks when people greet me.
My words are few these days, greeting people with a smile to hide my fear.
Death, please visit me. Oh, the joy of seeing my beloved husband again.
Or maybe my hope is fantasy. Have I lived a lie?

Snap out of it Girl, I angrily say to myself.
Life is real. Life is Earnest. Or so I'm told.
I hear the laughter of a child. Then a small hand in mine.
I see the mischievous eyes of a grandson as he runs to me.
Then a granddaughter's laughter, her hair sparkling in the sun.
Yesterday a butterfly startled me as it landed on my shoulder.
And today a spring snowfall, snowdrops as big as quarters
Slowly falling to new bright green grass.
My friends gather and we reminisce about old times.
Laughter feels so good. And then the joy.
Living long enough to welcome the next generation
Great-grandchildren I reach out to.
Maybe life is not so bad after all.

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*Written by, Loretta Hoagland,
Mary's Woods at Marylhurst*

A SMALL CHILD'S HAPPINESS

If I had a penny, how happy I'd be
For getting a treat, a penny's the key
Shall I buy gum? Peanuts? Popcorn? Candy?
Licorice? Fudge? Peppermint? Taffy?

If I had a nickel, such choices for me!
I could go to an afternoon movie,
Go to town on our local trolley
Ride on the merry-go-round pony.

A dime I'd send to the missionary
Who, in a heathen land across the sea,
From their bound feet sets little girls free.
And yes, since I gave, the Lord now loves me!

*Written by, Julia Brown,
Holladay Park Plaza*

A THOUSAND SHADES OF GRAY

Oregon skies have taught me
a thousand shades of gray.
Some tinted yellow, some mauve;
others streaked and ribboned through
with pink or white or purple—
reminding me of lilacs in the
garden you planted in rich soil,
then painted on canvas.

Today, ghost-like clouds emerge
behind the early morning sky—
pressing forward through the gray bank,
appearing like the embossed fabric dress
I wore to Mother's funeral.

While I lay remembering that day—
the smell of lilacs, candles burning, you weeping—
an unseen sun lights up a pale blue ceiling
high above cloudpuffs
suspended phantom-like.

All the time mist rises
from the river hidden among firs,
a single bird flies by.

Last night at midnight,
as I shuttered my view,
three deer in single file
cautiously crossed
the road below.

Later, I dreamt I lay splat across the
front end of a locomotive surging,
soaring into a starlit future
—and my sparrow heart
trembled with joy at being alive
in such a mysterious universe.

*Written by, Elizabeth Burke,
Mary's Woods at Marylhurst*

A TINY CHILD

**In a manger laid a babe
Born on the first
Glad Christmas Day
Angels came so Near the Earth
And told the Shepherds of
His birth.
The wisemen came
from very far
Guided by a nova star.
To us was born
In Bethlehem
The hope of
Truth and life.
A gift so great
Though very small
This tiny child
Born in a stall.**

*Written by, Mary Warren,
Dallas Retirement Village*

A TRIP TO THE BAHAMAS

When I was 11 years old, in the mid-1950s, my parents took the family, my two younger brothers and sister and me, to Nassau in the Bahamas to cruise among the islands.

In Nassau my father chartered an old wooden shrimp boat, the “Last Chance,” 42 feet long with an old diesel engine, and he hired a Bahamian guide, named Hugh Smith, to pilot us through the islands. Hugh was a man of the islands, cheerful, confident, uneducated, about 35 years old. He was bigger than my father and more muscular, with perfect white teeth and very black skin. He was always barefoot, with khaki shorts and a white strap undershirt and a floppy canvas hat. He loved to laugh.

Hugh knew the islands well. He looked at the charts from time to time, and he looked at the sky very often, and the rest of the time he steered the boat as casually as we drive cars on familiar streets.

We cruised mostly in the protected seas inside the chain of islands that separate the shallow Bahamas from the deep Atlantic. We trolled with simple handlines tied to the rigging and caught small tuna and amberjacks. At anchor in the evenings, for the excitement of it, we fished for sharks with a strong line made fast to the stern of the old fishing boat, leaving most of the line coiled in a bucket on deck. Some creature would take the bait, one of us would give the rope a sharp tug to set the hook, and the line would streak out of the bucket. When it came to the end, the boat would shudder and the line tore out of the water and ripped back and forth, with several of us excitedly pulling on it. Often the creature was a big shark, seven or eight feet long, a big dark powerful form, that would glide back and forth behind and under the boat.

When the shark tired, my father and Hugh would maneuver it into a noose on a rope through a pulley and hoist it out of the water. Then Hugh would get out his .45 automatic and shoot the shark. It was the quickest and safest way to kill it, so we could cut the hook out and drop the carcass back in the water to feed others. Hugh kept the pistol in an old leather case in a compartment just inside the hatch from the after deck, by the steps that led down into the boat’s main cabin.

One late afternoon, five or six days out, I noticed that Hugh was more serious than usual. I thought he must be uncertain of our course for once. We trolled our handlines, but Hugh’s attention was to the sides and front. He and my father were talking quietly and intently up by the wheel.

My father said I should go see what the other kids were doing. As I started aft, Hugh and my parents got closer together. Hugh was pointing forward, where a small boat with two Bahamian men had emerged from a cove of a low scrubby island. Hugh looked at the craft with binoculars and nodded seriously to my father. Then he turned our boat toward a gap between two outer islands. I thought he meant to go outside into the open ocean, but

instead we soon turned into the current flowing with the tide out between the islands and anchored. In the small boat we could see one of the men pulling the starter rope on the outboard engine. They were far away; the men were just forms moving.

At this point my father called us all together. He said “We don’t know who those men in the small boat are. They seem to be coming this way. Hugh thinks they might want to sell us something, or maybe they need gasoline or water or something...or they might be robbers. So, just to be safe, I want the four of you to stay in our cabin below and keep very quiet, until we know they are friendly. I don’t want them to know you are here. We’ll come get you as soon as we know it’s OK.”

We went below.

We were scared. I was the only one who had observed the looks and serious conferring of the adults, but we had all picked up the change in atmosphere, which had been most marked in Hugh. Our mother had gone quiet but fidgety, washing and putting dishes away and glancing out every other minute. Mary, the youngest, at six, found a small nook at the foot of the bed and pulled a pillow over her. My brothers and I just looked at each other round-eyed and whispered questions to each other, with no answers, and waited.

Soon enough we heard the uneven roar and splash of an outboard approaching and shouts and the bump of the small boat against the stern of the Last Chance. The outboard engine stopped. We heard Hugh’s voice call out and another man’s voice saying something about water. There was some discussion we couldn’t understand, and then Hugh said, loudly, “No, mon! Stay in your boat!” The other men clearly did not like that, and there was confused shouting and bumping of the small boat against ours.

I peeked into the cabin. My mother and father were standing to the right and left of the closed hatch to the after deck, listening intently to what was going on outside. My father had Hugh’s pistol. He held it by the barrel, with the grip forward.

The shouting became angrier, and there was scuffling and pounding of feet on deck, as Hugh evidently tried to keep the men from coming aboard. Then the chunk of a machete blade sticking in wood, and quiet. Hugh said, in a strained voice, “OK, mon, no trouble. I get it. You take it and go... Finish!”

The latch rattled and the hatch opened. Hugh’s head and shoulder and right leg started down into the cabin. His right hand extended, my father placed the pistol grip in it, and Hugh turned. The hatch hung open. I could see Hugh’s back. I heard the loud bang of Hugh’s gun, a cry of surprise, another bang, and muffled thumps. There was silence.

After a long half a minute, my father said to my mother “keep the kids below,” and he went cautiously on deck. He closed the hatch behind him.

We came out of the forward cabin into the main cabin, forgetting to pretend we hadn't been watching. Our mother was shaking. We looked at her. She took a deep breath and said that it was all right now, that Hugh had scared the robbers away. She said he had been scared, too, and he was upset and wanted to be left alone a while, so we should stay below until he felt better. Our dad was helping him. She set about making cocoa for us.

We sat in silence, understanding to various degrees what had just happened, listening intently and drinking our cocoa. We could hear Hugh talking in a high voice very rapidly and then lapsing into "huh, huh, huh" sobbing. We could hear my father's voice, low, comforting, reassuring. There was quiet for a while. Then my father's voice again, this time sounding matter of fact, and the sound of feet on deck and dragging and a couple of quiet splashes and some more muffled talk between Hugh and my father. We heard them dipping up buckets of seawater and sloshing it on the deck and the low aft railing.

It was evening when we went on deck. The deck was wet and clean. The robbers' boat was gone. We said very little before we went to bed.

My parents decided they had done enough solitary cruising. In the morning we made what speed the Last Chance could to Cat Island, where I'm pretty sure my father misrepresented our recent route to the other boaters. I think Hugh did the same among his friends there. He returned to the boat late the first two nights, wobbly and quiet. He sat on the step beside the cabin hatch with his elbows on his knees and his chin on his hands for a long time. Sometimes he and my father sat side by side on the dock, talking, feet hanging over the water, probably cementing the story in their minds and their trust in each other.

A week later we made our way back to Nassau, anchoring in the evenings by island villages known to Hugh. Our spirits improved. We enjoyed the lovely waters and the sun, and we caught more small tunas and amberjacks, but we didn't fish for sharks anymore.

At home, when the family talked about our adventure in the Bahamas, we always talked about Hugh Smith's bravery in scaring away those robbers.

We never returned to the Bahamas.

*Written by, John Holderness,
Willamette View*

A WORD OF ADVICE

To those of you who dabble in poetry and Scrabble,
I have a point of view I'd like to share.
In both, the need is quite the same:
For the poem and the game,
You have to choose your words with utmost care.

When the going's getting tough, the right word is not enough.
There's one more thing and you had better face it:
If you would achieve success
And not end up with a mess,
First find a likely word, then wisely place it.

That is all there is to say. Mark my words — you'll do okay.
This is the basic guidance that you need:
Choose words smartly, use them well.
I can't promise (who can tell?) —
The chances are, my friends, that you'll succeed.

*Written by, Alan Meyer,
Friendsview Retirement Community*

ALIAS

I have had several aliases during my seventy five years on Earth, some whimsical, others serious, but non I hasten to add, used for criminal purposes. No, all my aliases were unintentional and a direct result of the names I was christened with. My full name is John Thomas Adrian Roberts, quite a mouthful, but not unusual for children born during the 1940s in England.

The blame for my situation, if any is to be apportioned, lies with my mother and my maternal grandmother, who decided that as first male grandchild, I should carry the names of my two grandfathers, John and Thomas, as well as the name of their favorite classical musician, Adrian. I was simply “Ade” during my formative years, but things changed when I entered grammar school. In 1960, a court case against Penguin, an iconic British publishing house, ruled that a banned book, *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, by D.H. Lawrence was not obscene, and could be sold for public consumption unexpurgated. There is nothing like banning something to make it even more attractive, so numerous copies of the book were sold, and my mother bought one, which she duly bound in brown paper and secreted in a drawer in her bedroom. I found it one day and proceeded to read all the “naughty bits.” Imagine my chagrin when I discovered that the gamekeeper called his penis John Thomas, my first two names. Well, it didn’t take long for my friends to discover this juicy fact from their own purloined copies, and so for a while I was addressed as Dick, Willy and other (worse) words for the male member. Fortunately, like many things during adolescence this wore off and I was returned to “Ade” by my schoolmates. However, an additional alias during that period was supplied by my great uncle whom I worked for during the summer months, as a farm laborer. He objected vehemently to my “sissy name,” Adrian, and decided to rename me Sam. So, I was known as Sam amongst the other laborers for many weeks each year and even had my pay packet addressed to Sam Roberts.

All this could be summarized as fun and comradery, but it became far more serious when my wife and I applied to immigrate to America. Computers entered the scene and created much confusion, some still existing today. The first inkling of pending trouble was at the US Embassy in London, when the officials called out for John, and neither of us reacted until the “last call.” However, the extent of the problem did not become evident until I started applying for things in Illinois—security badge, driver’s license, credit cards, bank account, etc. The forms all had spaces for first name, followed by one initial. J T Adrian Roberts did not fit; so I had to be John T A or Adrian J T, but in either case the computer would drop one initial. And in some cases the computer came up with its own version. We started collecting the variations and they ranged from the sublime to the ridiculous, such as J Tadrian Roberts, John T Adrian (Adrian can be a last name) and J.Tar (Jack Tar?). As a result, I have several names on credit cards even today, and it is hard to remember which is to be used. At the doctor’s office, I am known as JT, for example; and for voting registration I have listed all the reasonable aliases just to be sure. The only saving grace is that if I get telephone callers who ask if they can speak to John, I know that it is an unwanted salesman, unfamiliar with my name.

Juliet in Shakespeare's epic play says, "What's in a name...." Well, if you have three, with one a bit unusual, and introduce computers, it clearly becomes a recipe for trouble. Should I officially change my name to just Adrian? It would simplify life I suppose, but I would no longer be "ME," and I wouldn't feel special. To support my position, I have done some research; I put J T Adrian, John Thomas Adrian and just Adrian Roberts into Google search engine to find out who else might have my name. There are quite a few Adrian Roberts', more than ten, covering several professions, from singers and actors to financiers and insurance salesmen. Clearly, Adrian has become a very popular name for both boys and girls. But, there are no recorded John Thomas Adrian Roberts; and there is only one J T Adrian Roberts— ME. I rest my case; I am keeping my name, with all of my aliases.

*Written by, J.T Adrian Roberts,
Willamette View*

AN ELDERLY ROMANCE TOLD WITH HAIKU

Life without flavor,
Comes a man I can savor.
So spicy and sweet.

Smiles of silly joy.
Loving one and being loved.
My heart awakened.

Love bomb and move on.
Other women want my charms.
And you're just too old.

Cute, mustached charmer
Transformed into a pissant,
A sham full of lies.

Your words were a sword.
They sliced and diced at my heart.
I bled with my tears.

I survived. Still strong.
Sticks and stones I can handle.
But lies hurt me so.

Forgive. We're all flawed.
Forget "What's his name". Be still.
Accept. Life has pain.

*Written by, Marjorie Shapiro,
Rose Schnitzer Tower*

AS I SEE IT

During twenty-six years as a Realtor, I was never able to make a choice about many activities—what to do, when or how to balance family, home, and work. It was all there. The order was a small choice, but not really one of mine—they all had to be started and finished.

As a retired divorced mother of three grown children with three houses, in 2000 many major decisions loomed! My first job was to sell and dispose of possessions in the Albany, N.Y. house and relocate to Nantucket in summer and Dunedin, FL in winter. There were many good choices to be made. I took art lessons, sang in choruses, made seaweed art and joined the Nature Printing Society.

Two of my three families lived in Nantucket and that was a big plus. In Florida I met Walt and we enjoyed life together for eighteen years until he died in 2018 of pancreatic cancer. I am telling all this story for it will also be that of many others, and comfort may be had by your hearing it from someone else who survived.

Big changes were in the wind again. My daughter Jennifer had lived in Portland for almost thirty years. The east coast was not easily visited. When here, however, as a guest it was a wonderful place to be. However, I was warned about the *winter rain*!

It did rain, each of the ten days of my Christmas stay in 2018. Not all day, but usually from 4pm to sometime in the night. It stopped long enough for me to see the full Christmas moon scoot across the sky through roof skylights. The rain was misty, light, occasionally a downpour, temperatures in the 50° Fahrenheit. Same foliage was still on trees, the grass was lush, flowers bloomed. This was a place I could be happy!

Right after Christmas, Jenn and I went house hunting. Four CCRCs were chosen to examine. Housing was tight! Waiting times for occupancy were two years or more. UNTIL we came to Willamette View. It was #4 on the list, 2 ½ miles from Jenn's home in Sellwood, and after consultation, lunch in the recently opened Riverview dining room, a tour of facilities, drawing of my one-bedroom apartment, and a move in date of August-November. I signed on the dotted line and rendered my deposit. Everything was perfect. The best part, however, was the friendly manner of the many people we met. Their demeanor was genuine. Even walker and wheel-chaired folks moved with a happy destination in mind. It was my kind of place!

Selling two condos, emptying their contents, saying good-bye to lifetime friends and getting to Oregon was monumental! Six months of hard labor. Choices were many. Jenn and the personnel at WV were very helpful. I hired excellent realtors in both places. Friends from my art world and others I'd never known before helped me take my belongings to people in need. Condos do not allow garage sales. That was not helpful to me! But we managed. On May 12th, movers took six pieces and twenty-five boxes to Jenn's house, and a car carrier loaded my Subaru. On August 20th I flew into Portland.

Reasons

I moved into North Pointe at Willamette View early as the crew was finishing up apartments for the forty-seven new tenants. It was August 23, 2019. That day, all the present Willamette View residents had been invited to an Open House from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. I was among the invitees. Surprise. No one—including me—had seen the new wing or its apartments before 10:00 am that day. There were many Ooh's and Ah's as the staged units were examined and compared with their homes.

I too saw my new home for the first time. Then it was to the Mart downstairs to purchase a dresser and bookcases, and at 12:30 I received keys and planned for my Sellwood family to move me in right before supper.

New people here all had reasons for coming. There were many and varied, but they mainly revolved around three things: family nearby, prior knowledge and/or being in proximity of Willamette View, and the friendliness and final living and care arrangements that would be given in this facility. It felt like a GREAT place in which to really live to the end.

Skyline

It's always been important for me to view something special. How lucky have I always been to look out at farmland and a pond, the Gulf of Mexico with southern view down the long coast of Clearwater Beach, or the 17th hole of Kings Way Golf Course in Massachusetts on Cape Cod. Here in Oregon at Willamette View, my apartment has a sky view over apartment house roofs to the north. In between, just outside my eight-foot window is our car port with a green roof. The joke was on me, for my idea of a "green" roof was a long roof over a forty-nine-space carport painted green, but turned out to be squares of succulents, a real live entity!

Two Spring Days

There are two late winter/spring days that have always been milestones in my life.

One is Valentine's Day. The men in my life always made it special. My Daddy commuted to New York City and often brought home fresh veggies from the West Houston Street Market. But on Valentine's Day, from behind his back, he presented Mom, my brothers, and me a heart-shaped, red box of Whitman's Chocolates. We even sampled one before supper.

Later in life, there were presents of candy, plants, and bouquets of out of season flowers, and always cards. Some were serious and sappy—tear jerkers—and some laughable and filled with jokes and quips. I loved them all, and the men who gave them.

The other special day was May 1st, for sometimes we did indeed dance around the Maypole. We girls would get dressed in our best frills, patent leather shoes, and white gloves. Each of us with a ribbon tied to the top of the May Pole. We would wind it around as we sang to welcome in the spring. That day from school we made paper May baskets with handles. These were filled with real flowers and put on elderly neighbors' doorknobs. No names of the givers, just a card that wished the receiver a Happy Spring.

Memory

The three places in downstate NY where I grew up had one thing in common — a nearby sugar maple tree. My Aunt Emily lived with us in my earliest years and she shared her vast knowledge of natural happenings with me. A most memorable one was eating maple-sap icicles together with lime candy sticks. You may think this was No Big Deal, but for me it was magic. The sugar maple trees always had a branch near the ground that was broken off, probably by my aunt, and dripped sap that then froze into a maple icicle. The lime sticks were penny candy from the corner store. It was scrumptious!

All this happened more years ago than I care to disclose. You can imagine how delighted I was in our candy store at the Marketplace at Willamette View. Divine candy sticks of many flavors practically flew into my hand. The one I opened for dessert last night was mango flavored—not lime—and it was perfect. Now today I must find myself a sugar maple tree or use my freezer!

The Giants

When one has lived in the flat countries of Ohio, Florida, Nantucket and Cape Cod, Massachusetts, trees were windswept and short. They looked like hills or even mountains in the distance. There were hickory, maple, sassafras and scrub pine among others in the north, and oak, palms, and cypress in the south.

Not so in Oregon. Here, in ancient times, riverbeds were scooped from softer rock. Solid rock ridges called palisades remained. With time, wind, and rain, the rocky surfaces were scarred and creviced. Soil and water blew in to make pocket gardens for the seeds that landed there and thrived. Perhaps that's how the giant pines and firs got their starts. Maybe that's how moss and fern spores carpeted the rocks like blankets.

Always from the huge windows in the Riverview dining room, I am amazed by the scene of everchanging sky, eagles soaring on the river wind, and the real giant trees on the western palisades. All fill my heart with happiness.

Sometimes life goes full circle. In a way, it has for me. After WWII, my dad sold lumber in New York City. Every year, the largest supplier to the company was from Tillamook, Oregon, and they sent huge boxes of holly, evergreen, and mistletoe. What a huge treat! There was also a stick and a crock of cheese.

Now there is a block of Tillamook cheddar in my WV refrigerator!

*Written by, Ann Warren,
Willamette View*

AT THE END OF THE ROAD

I know every twist and turn of the narrow, winding road to the lake house where once upon a time we lived a wonderful dream. I know the viewpoints, the boat launches, the steep, clay wall covered with lush, Maidenhair ferns, the marsh filled with western skunk cabbage (so beautiful, so undesirable), the osprey nest, the old, dilapidated cabins and neglected, weathering docks, the turnoffs to new developments, community docks, and the county wayside park. They're all still there, even though quite changed after 18 years.

Finally, about 3 miles in, here is the turnout where straight ahead, across the Osprey Cove, sits our former home overlooking the lake. I've come searching for you—or, at least, a feeling of your presence, however momentary. It's been a year since I lost you. Although I've stayed strong and have concentrated on only pleasant thoughts, I find some things are fading from my memory. And, so, I search. . . .

I drive past the private drive to the house and down the hill to the adjacent, public property called Enchanted Valley. From here it is a rugged walk to the lake shore, but I am determined to do it.

Crawling over fallen trees, I keep to the creekside, singing as I go because it is bear season. Blackberries and huckleberries abound at the lake. They are so tedious and difficult to gather, but the sweet blackberry cobblers and delicious huckleberry pancakes are so worth it. The bears think so, too.

It rained last night, and, as I walk along the forest edge, I breathe in that unique, forest fragrance . . . the musty, pungent, spicy scent of fir trees, dense brush, and rotting timber. Here and there, I spot a "nurse log" rotting into bark dust yet revealing new life in little pocket gardens of the trunk, often the coiled fiddle necks of baby ferns. Moss is everywhere, soft and spongy under my feet.

Soon, through the trees I catch a glimpse of our dream house. I hear the chee-chee-chee of an Osprey so I know I'm close to the lake. I push my way through the tall grasses and bullrushes, startling a large frog who harrumphs at me in scorn. At night the frogs of the lake strike up a deafening chorus that can stop and start at a moment's notice as though a conductor is orchestrating them with his wand. It is beautiful music for lulling you to sleep. How I miss it!

A little further, I come upon a mother deer and her spotted, twin fawns. Stopping to silently observe them, they watch me as well. After nonchalantly taking a few more bites of green foliage, they move into the brush and out of my sight. Now I spy the gleam of the water to the side of our house—our very own cove with a tiny peninsula of land extending into the water carrying the shallow creek along to merge with the lake itself. Before moving to the water's edge, I pluck two pink, wild

Rhododendron blossoms. Along the water's edge is a growing, jungled mat of water lilies . . . some pink, some yellow . . . all strikingly beautiful.

Last summer . . . out there . . . beyond the lilies, I placed your ashes into the dark, mysterious water along with two Rhododendron blossoms. I watched your very essence along with the flowers slowly waltz in a swirling motion, then drift into a wispy trail. It took a long while to finally disappear. A free spirit at last, yet somehow grounding yourself to this place . . . this moment in time. But today I came not to say "Goodbye" again but to say "Hello my heart." I toss the two blossoms I picked as far out into the water as possible. They dance and swirl in the waters of the cove attempting to mark the spot for me. I stay for awhile observing a pair of Mallard ducks swimming contentedly together. I fill up my senses in every way so that I can take some of you away with me—the coolness of the water, the fragrance of the forest, the sights and sounds of the beauty and wildlife all around us . . . both you and me.

As I reluctantly leave, I take a last look at the cove flora growing rich and exuberant and wild. Like life . . . always changing, yet unchanging like our love.

*Written by, Cleve Boehi,
Mary's Woods at Marylhurst*

ATOMS

How can I not be amazed
when I see stars, like our own sun,
burning brightly millions of miles away.
They are all made from the one blob
that blew itself into space
They too have their planets,
so how did it come to pass
that our little planet, Earth,
became the place where life began?

It is miraculous those little atoms
found each other in that beginning
when it was all burning wildly,
oxygen and hydrogen meeting
in that inferno, joining
with others, then with atoms
that were different,
millions of years it took.

Now when I look up
and see the geese flying
in formation, honking,
I am amazed again
that such a beautiful bird
is the result of little atoms
working together by some
incredible design

Trees that put out oxygen
so that I can breathe it in,
lupin blooming down a hillside,
interspersed with poppies,
the air perfumed for me and the bees,
dogs that wag their tails
and snuggle beside me
in my bed, all made of those atoms,
performing as they should.

And me myself, so am I
the result of atoms, their affinities,
their constancy, behaving
as wonderfully as when those first atoms
took that first leap be together,
and I wonder if everyone
is as equally amazed.
I wonder.

*Written by, Evelyn Cole,
Rose Villa Senior Living*

ATTENDING YOUR OWN FUNERAL

Drinking coffee
without tasting it
wastes it.

Might as well wear
a new outfit
to your own funeral.

Sip your coffee as you like it.

Too hot? Add cream.
Stir.
Cool it with your breath.

Embrace cremation when
your cup grows cold.

*Written by, David Greysmith
Capital Manor*

BABY ELEPHANT

One Christmas season

Lipman Wolfe, the now vanished department store in Portland, Oregon
had a baby elephant for sale.

It was on the fourth floor, where Santa Claus and the Cinnamon Bear held court.
It cost 3000.00 dollars plus delivery.

The elephant was small (for an elephant).
She was charming, friendly, and eager to be petted.
She made me laugh.

But

When I reached out to touch her fuzzy back,
it was full of prickles.

This was a lesson to my 6 year old self.

As you come close to the softness of charm,
sometimes you come across the sharpness of truth.

*Written by, Lucretia Gardner,
Westmoreland Union Manor*

BLACK PATENT SHOES AND BAND AIDS

She fills the space of a room with sunshine and laughter. You can hear it now. Her life-path, like a well-worn trail map of adventures, spirit-filled searching and curiosity, is etched on the surface of a treasured oak table.

Who is this lovely creature and how does she grow?

Her first soulmate, JB, fills her very young world with mischief-making and sharing of playtimes and quiet times. “Who made this mess?” JB, of course, who shares the scold. Natural consequences are the rule. We learn to keep the bedroom door closed so things don’t spill out into the hall, or escape...

Raggedy Ann, stuffings exploding from seams worn thin from hugging and dragging from place to place by one arm, secreted away to a health spa for restoration and renewal, returns fit for adventure and her love once more. Perhaps she recognizes the transformation – who knows?

No canine or feline escapes her attention or is passed without the arm about the neck, the pet, the pat and the exchanging of names. Such travels around the block to explore her piece of the world have not changed. Everyone is a friend worth greeting, knowing, loving and listening to with open heart.

Travel is encouraged at a young age by siblings who help her pack. She trudges down the walk in pajamas, to who knows where, with pillowcase plump with toys and treasures, confident that the world is safe and she will conquer it.

One spring, a stylist cuts off the tangle of blond hair that traps the evidence of her play in the park and the sand and the trees. She emerges from under the cape a striking young woman. How did this happen so quickly while my eyes were turned away?

The path forward is not always happy and smooth, but often marked with sharp stones, detours and disappointments. She uses them to build strength and endurance. The marks in the oak table expand and grow deeper.

The beautiful fawn becomes a doe and has fawns of her own; caring and coaching, teaching and nurturing. They carry the seed of this strong will and vision, walking a path well-lit by luminaries of compassion and justice she places there as a guide.

The ways of the world and the heart are such a mystery. The marvelous *surprise* at the rising sun and the new moon brings her heart to a wonderful and exciting place and her life expands in ways she never imagined. Love fills it now with joy beyond measure. Her Beloved is all of JB, and Raggedy Ann and every kitten and the stars and the open sky to beyond forever and ever.

Written by, Diane Pinney,
Terwilliger Plaza

CAUGHT

"Nelda, you forgot to water my begonias again," says Anna from her chair.

"I'll do it before I leave for class, Mama."

"Ach! Why do you always leave my things for last?"

Nelda takes a breath while glancing at the trio of windows spanning the south end of the dining room, their wide sills arrayed with pots of deep pink flowers. "You canicula," she mutters. "It's your things that have priority --- if only to keep you quiet."

My last year of teaching at the high school, she thinks as she fills the watering can. May already here. If Latin weren't still required for college, I'd have been out of a job before reaching this age. Every few years its place in the curriculum is debated but that's no longer my problem.

Now I've got to find plausible reasons to be out of the house at least part of the day. But she reminds herself, I have to make a safe arrangement. If her mother used her cane to get out of her chair by herself, she'd likely fall, break a hip or a leg, and be completely helpless.

I shouldn't expect a friend like Maud to sit with Anna during the summer as she has so often during the school year. That would be too imposing when I no longer have to be somewhere else.

What would her sister Elsie do? Twenty-five miles away, with a husband and two children plus her hospital work -- she can't expect much help from her, but she might suggest something.

One more block to school, and she thinks of her sister Christine. She won't be any help even though her farm is just four miles from town. When she's not tending her vegetable garden or canning its products or cleaning the house or filling the stove box with corncobs, she spends most of her time feeding chickens, collecting their eggs, candling them, washing and filling bottles with milk from the four Holsteins so Chester can deliver them all over town. That kind man. He's the only farmer she knows who treats his dog like a companion. She's seen him pat Shep and let him in the house when it's rainy or if snow is about to fall.

Damnare! I'm stuck for good. Why didn't I marry Lloyd and move upstate with him before Mama declined? He was kind and asked me over and over: Was it his hands? They were often stained green or black, and his fingernails were never clean from running the plow or the seeder or some other machine. Do farmers' wives cringe when they're being touched?

If I do find someone to sit with Mama, I'm not going to use my free time to start patrolling the two farms. The renters have enough to do. They don't need my interference except about crop rotation. I won't be a nuisance to them. When I want to walk through the field of hardwoods on the east farm, I'll park on the shoulder down the road. They may not even notice.

Then she sighs. If I don't find someone, I won't be able to take that walk through the trees father planted. No more maples or hickories or oaks. No more seeing where deer have slept.

The island of trees circled by fields of barley, oats, and corn that she can see from her classroom window has often been her transition and refuge between the high school and Anna in her chair. Except for the brush of wind across their leaves, they're silent. They don't whine or carp. They just *are*-- bending in farewell to their leaves in fall, dormant in winter, unfurling new leaves in spring, quietly feeding in summer. She smiles at the thought of Anna transformed into a tree as she opens her classroom door.

Oh, dear. What to take? What to leave? Her dictionary, atlas, and umbrella are definitely coming to the house as well as her cup. The boxes of Kleenex and chalk can stay. The pictures meant to inspire students? Leonardo? Curie? Edison? Freud? Shakespeare? Franklin? Mendel? Jefferson? James? Einstein? Tesla? Fermi? She must take all of them down from the wall behind her desk and bring them with her. She nods her head. They can't be left. She'll line them up across the wall behind the piano. The next teacher can find something else for this wall.

What more comes? She glances at the walls, the student desks, her desk. Oh! The small etched glass bell she uses to alert students. Of course!

All right. I know what comes. But I still don't have anyone to be at the house when I need to get out. Most of my friends have been forced into retirement homes or are dead if I do think of someone maybe I could occasionally sub. Could still teach Latin and English -- maybe algebra if I brush up. That might be fun. So would an occasional drive to Cedar Rapids for window shopping or a look at the river. Maud said it's still covering part of the civic center island.

She hears a swishing sound in the hall and turns to look out the window of the classroom door. Seeing nothing, she opens the door and finds Walter, the janitor, with his mop.

"Earlier than usual," he says, giving her a jaunty nod.

As she smiles toward him, she notices the bank of teachers' boxes farther down the hall, the yellow cards for leaving messages, the bulletin board, and her feet move as if on their own accord.

Her box is empty, but she stands beside it, deciding. Yes!
She takes a pen, a card, and begins writing, first in capital letters:

TUTORING: LATIN, ENGLISH, ALGEBRA

Monday – Friday
4:00 – 6:00

Saturday
10:00 – 2:00

\$2.00 per hour

Nelda Fraum
2 6 Loft Street
Phone: 328

She pins the card to the bulletin board. If she can't find someone to sit with Anna, she may be able to bring people in to distract herself!

She'll put the bell by Anna. It should give her a sense of authority, and she might hesitate to use it if students are present.

*Written by, Molly Gillcrist,
Willamette View*

CITY LIGHTS

A woman who marries into wheat
is carried into the house of a stranger,
then spends the rest of her life
looking out a kitchen window
while her husband farms his true love,
his dust covering everything
he thinks he owns.

When the air dews,
fireflies near the silo rise off grain
like embers from a fire;
their blinking reminds her of night streets
and she dreams of Paris.

*Written by, Brian Williams,
Capital Manor*

CONVERSATIONS WITH A DRUID

The weather forecast for the Central Oregon Cascades in the last weekend of January was nasty. It was going to be cold, windy, and snowy. Blair and I had made plans to climb Diamond Peak's north ridge to its summit at 8750'. It would be a serious winter trip. We told our bosses, and I also advised Dawn, that we might not get out until Monday. Everyone was content.

We got our gear together during the week and drove down Friday evening to Willamette Pass. We parked in the Cascade Summit area lot at 5130'-complete with a valid Recreation Pass, and slept soundly in the back of my station wagon until just daybreak. We left a note of our plans on the driver's side window. With an early start on snowshoes, we took a compass route south through the woods for about seven miles to the base of Diamond Peak. There was so much accumulated snow that we were moving along above the tree wells and it was good going but with little break in the weather.

Winter days are short. Late in the day we reached the start of the north ridge, stashed the snowshoes, and climbed up to a sizable bench at about 5500'. With the help of an aluminum grain shovel, we dug a big hole and staked in our North Face VE 24 tent. We loaded in our gear and were tight and comfortable and protected. Blair had the cook detail and went about fixing an evening one-pot meal that would fill four ironworkers. I knew I was hungry and I also knew I was really tired.

I had a C. J. Box paperback that I wanted to read but it was hopeless. I got snug in my sleeping bag and just went to sleep. All of a sudden I was awake and Blair was earnestly telling me about some girl. She was really pretty and had long black hair and a great figure and a wonderful talker and a fine listener and she was just out of college and she liked the outdoors and he liked her and she liked him and blab, blab, blab, blab. So I listened and made some careful remarks and he kept talking and I must have gone back to sleep.

But who knows for how long. I came slowly awake and Blair was in full throat. She was interested in insurance and there were big insurance companies in South Dakota and she had contacted some of them and what was so interesting about insurance and where was South Dakota anyway and were there any decent mountains in South Dakota and how did you maintain a relationship with a beautiful woman miles away in South Dakota and anyway Oregon is a fine place and blab, blab, blab, blab. I was barely awake but made some grunt sounds and he continued to review all the possibilities and for the first time in my life I fell asleep on my back.

This time he shook me awake. They were in love or he was in love and there must be insurance companies in the Northwest and he could live in South Dakota even if it was flat and he was going to lose her and hadn't I been married for almost thirty-five years and what did I think and what should he do and he was going nuts and blab, blab, blab, blab.

This was getting old! I told Blair to relax. I explained that in the morning—which was fast approaching, we would try to climb up a 3200' ridge, which with the current state of the weather, was going to be the consistency of Ivory Snow Flakes. We would have to be very careful, very protective, find good belay stances, and be alert for surface avalanches. Bottom line, let's sleep. Put the girlfriend on hold!

I crawled back into my sleeping bag, but this time with my ear plugs. I slept. I don't know what Blair did. At daybreak I was very groggy. Blair was dead wood. I started melting snow with the idea of coffee, oatmeal, and chocolate brownies. Blair never moved. There was some wind and it was still snowing. As the water warmed I got partially dressed and crawled out of the tent for a break and a real look at our ridge in the gathering light. Oh, it did not look inviting. I moved a bit up the ridge and I was snow plowing in knee deep fluff! Even crampons are going to be trouble. And it sounded like our north part of the mountain was enjoying snow avalanches. I got back to the tent in time for the water to boil and started breakfast.

A short while later Blair woke up and rolled over and sat up. The very first thing he said to me was to ask about conditions on the ridge. Well, that was a good sign. I said to him that I would really like to hear a lot more about his girlfriend.

We made a big breakfast. He talked. I listened. We got home at a reasonable hour Sunday night. The North Ridge would fall another time. And yes! He married her!

*Written by, Hugh O'Reilly,
Mary's Wood at Marylhurst*

COPING WITH THE TERMINALLY TIDY MAN

Auntie called and said she had a new story to tell me so I turned on the office teapot and waited. This dear lady (actually a nosy old busybody, some would say) loves to talk about the problems young ladies encounter when venturing into the mating briar patch. To those who emerge with scratches, she tells me, she offers a sympathetic “Poor baby!” and an arm-around-the-shoulder hug. She can—and has---given advice through clenched teeth like **“Dump that schmuck!”** when she thinks the guy is not “husband material”. She arrived wearing her shawl and a smug look. Anticipating another tale of her ministry among the love-struck, I welcomed her and prepared to listen.

Woody, the office dog, sniffed her ankle, recognized her and hopped up onto the sofa beside her, anticipating the usual back rub. She took a sip of tea, sighed and shook her head---not a good sign, I thought. Her story was about a young lady who decided that having a man around would be a welcome change. “She had lots of help and advice from married friends,” Auntie said, “and some increasingly pointed hints from Mom dreaming of an almost co-starring role as ‘mother of the bride’. Some potential mates were identified, including a few who shaved regularly, didn’t have nose rings and often wore clean shirts”. Leaning forward, Auntie added, “They almost all wore *real shoes*---not flip-flops—and only a few had tattoos. In this select group,” Auntie said, leaning further forward and speaking with notes of both wonder and sarcasm, “one stood out. He was *always* crisp, neat and minty-fresh. This evoked an ‘*Oooh, nice!*’ response from the aspiring bride—and from Mom! It was inevitable that she would be attracted by this seemingly *very* desirable male, and who could blame her”. Auntie’s voice then rose enough to wake Woody. “An alarm should have sounded in this young lady’s head, telling her that he is a *Neatnik*---and that **such men are from Mars!**”

“When---and if---the relationship blossoms,” Auntie continued with a wicked smile, “he will invite her to his apartment, and she will see that he is not only organized and neat but is *terminally tidy*. There will be *no* half-eaten pizza slices, unwashed coffee cups or empty beer cans on his polished kitchen counter and *no* dirty dishes in the sink. His neatly trimmed, well-fertilized and watered house plants grow in a neat row of color-coordinated pots”. Auntie leaned forward, her smile changed to a smirk and with her voice rising, she said “And where normal men keep their issues of Playboy he has *air freshener refills*. Don’t expect to find dust or smudges *anywhere*. The ‘Very Neat Man’ leaves *no* traces!”

“When she visits this young man”, Auntie said with a slight shake of her head and a truly evil leer, “his eyes will follow her as she walks around the room, but he will be worrying that she might leave heel marks on his polished floors. Ever the good host, he will offer her refreshments---and then will carefully note whether the napkins and coasters he has provided are properly used to protect his polished coffee table. Will she remember,” Auntie smirked, “not to breathe on his stereo equipment while admiring it? Will she scan one of his magazines and not put it back on the coffee table with the bottom parallel to the table edge? Hah!”

“One wonders,” Auntie speculated after Woody stirred, yawned and resumed his nap, “what caused his transformation from a normal male into a Very Neat Man. Was he a Very Neat Child whose mother chose to ignore that gross abnormality? Is it possible that she **encouraged** this deviant behavior? Did she bore other mothers by proudly describing her neatnik son’s lifestyle?” Auntie asked, her voice rising, “Really, what mother could restrain herself from talking about a kid who brushed his teeth and flossed daily, changed into clean clothes without maternal browbeating and kept his toys neatly arranged. His teachers **must** have noticed this gross divergence from the norm and marveled at his behavior. Did they gossip about him in the teachers’ lounge?” Auntie wondered with more than a touch of sarcasm. “What teacher wouldn’t **love** a kid who always smelled nice, kept his desk neat and turned in his homework on time?”

“Could he have evolved into a Very Neat Teenager, that **most** abnormal of individuals?” Auntie asked, shaking her head. “Later, some brave young lady with matrimony in mind might try to bring him back to a normal young male life-style. Any woman attracted to this man,” Auntie said, her voice rising again, “should do some no-holds-barred testing before even **thinking** of any commitment. While visiting him she could kick a throw rug out of line with the squares of his parquet floor. Then,” Auntie said with an evil smile, “she should note if he can carry on a conversation without jumping up to straighten the rug—and **ignoring** her. How long can he tolerate the sight of a lamp shade she had pushed slightly askew? Will a kitchen cabinet door she left slightly open cause him to leap up to close it”?

“A really brave woman might marry the Very Neat Man and **then** attempt to modify his life-style,” Auntie said, frowning and looking serious. “That battle of wits and wills promises to be full of surprises. He might pop awake in the night, wondering if he had remembered to water the Christmas cactus on schedule. He might even wake her from a sound sleep to ask if she had remembered to clean the lint trap in the dryer!” Auntie said, rolling her eyes in wonder, her tone again rousing Woody.

“So—what can she do?” Auntie said. The wicked grin reappeared along with a glint in her eye. “The Very Neat Man, when expertly managed, has a **lot** to offer,” Auntie said slowly and emphatically, clenching her fist, “If she is clever and persistent, she may **never** have to do housework again. To reach this very desirable goal she must be ready to probe **mercilessly** for all the soft spots in his psyche.”

“How, you ask? Persistently, and without pity,” Auntie said grimly. “When she is doing the laundry, slip a pair of colored socks in with the white clothes. He will notice and tell her that one should **never, ever** do that. If she then coyly apologizes, he will very likely take over the washing machine. When mopping the floor, she should leave a few spots. He will see them and may not let her use a mop again. When fixing supper,” Auntie said emphatically, “overcook the veggies. He will politely eat the limp broccoli, and she may **never** have to cook again,” Auntie said with her ‘cat-that-ate-the-canary’ smile, “Instead of doing boring things like cooking and housework she can turn on the TV and **enjoy** the leisure time she earned in her venture into behavior modification”.

Auntie stretched and Woody woke as she sipped the last of her tea. She left, promising to visit again with another story about the pitfalls of that most interesting of human ventures, mate selection.

Basic concept derived from--

“Men—an Owner’s Manual”. Stephanie Brush.

(Auntie is a figment of my ninety-seven-year old imagination.)

*Written by, George Genevro,
Capital Manor*

COUSINS

Cousins are a wonderful lot
We love them to death when we're young.
At Grandmas we meet, we run and we chase,
We yell and we squeal with delight
Grandpa sits in his chair feeling such pride,
To see such happiness there.
Going home in the car we fall fast asleep
Content we will do this next week.

Then our focus does change,
Girls talk of school, of girl things and boys.
Boys talk mostly of cars, and of girls that are cute
Those interests are foremost in mind at the time.
It's a mate we are wanting with haste.
Cousins are not the company we are seeking.
Another family is now our future.
It is siblings we see most these days.

So time goes on, and our parents are grandparents
Our children run and chase the cousins they love.
They fall fast asleep in the car going home,
And we smile and remember those days long past
When the best thing to happen was cousins.
In the cycle of life what happened to them?
There are first, and second, and even some third,
That we hardly remember we once loved.

It's a pity indeed,
When we come to that place
When we hardly remember whos who.
With our parents long gone
Who will keep us together?
It's important we do stay in touch.
So a reunion now and then is a time to enjoy,
And to see who we now have become.

*Written by, Evy Nickel,
Dallas Retirement Village*

DEAD END STREET

I live along Dead End street! The sign says it!

Oh, if you saw it

You might not think of it as a street.

It has no addresses

There are no driveways

No one calls it their street.

It's the way to the gardens

in the Village.

Many people walk on it,

Propel wheelchairs and walkers on it

Drive cars and golf carts on it

Ride bicycles, mopeds and tricycles on it

Leash dogs and cats on it.

Cottontails cavort and court on it.

Daughter-in law thought it an intriguing name

In a community where people come
to spend end of life days and years.

Ultimately, often, their last days.

So the name and sign: Dead End?

Dead End Street takes people to the gardens.

Raised as well as back-bending

In this Village

where seniors come to spend their mature years
gardening, gossiping, growing fruits and veggies.

Living life to the fullest as they pursue life
enhanced by using Dead End street.

So the street I live on is not a dead end.

Except perhaps by definition.

There's no way out for cars except
via Dead End Street.

I'm glad I live along Dead End street.

*Written by, Larry Eby,
Mennonite Village*

DEAR ADDIE

Dear Addie,

Spring is here! I hope you are seeing the birds return, new buds appearing, and greening everywhere. Have you spied a downy feather, a hummingbird's egg, a robin's nest, a shiny pebble? Be sure to tell me about your collection. I'd like to hear about your finds.

Isn't it wonderful, wherever we are, sharing a love of the outdoors and collecting bits of nature? In fact, many years ago, another young person enjoyed doing just that, too. Wherever he lived, John Audubon spent a large part of his life wandering the woods, fields, and wetlands. His way of collecting what he found, — the birds, plants, and animals, — was to draw and paint them in their natural surroundings. Later, his drawings and paintings would become his life's work.

John was born in Santo Domingo, now called Haiti, a country in the Caribbean Sea near Florida. During his growing-up years, his family lived in France. John's father, a sea captain, wanted him to follow in his footsteps to become a seaman or an engineer. But John loved being outdoors and spent most of his time hunting and fishing, painting and drawing. Finally, John's father found a partner to help him purchase a farm in faraway America. He sent John there to manage the Pennsylvania farm. But it didn't work out, and eventually the farm had to be sold.

In the New World, there was so much to interest John. Near the farm John grew curious about the birds. He came up with an idea to tie threads to the legs of several birds. So when the next spring came, and the Eastern Phoebe returned to their nest-sites, John knew which ones had migrated. Because of John Audubon's experiment, bird-banding is still used today to study bird migrations around the world.

In 1826, John Audubon published a very special book of bird pictures he had painted. It is called Birds of America. It has 435 pages with lots of pictures of birds, — 1,065 pictures! Every bird is painted as John had seen it outdoors, and every bird is its real size. Some of the birds in the book are now extinct, meaning there are no more of them living on our earth. But thanks to John Audubon we can see what the birds, plants, and animals looked like in the American wilderness so many years ago.

By the time he died at age 65, John was well-known for his books of bird paintings. He had not always been a business success and even went to jail once because he was bankrupt, but throughout his life, he loved nature and the outdoors, believed in his abilities, and never stopped doing his very best.

My hope, dear Addie, is that you are blessed in these same ways, — that you love nature and the outdoors, that you believe in your abilities, and that you strive to do your very best!

Love you, and see you real soon,
GMB

*Written by, Estelle Leong Bergstrom,
Friendsview Retirement Community*

DEDICATION AT A COST

The bus wound through the sage and bitterbrush landscape of the Nevada hills that late fall day carrying me, my friend Cecile, and a throng of other students chatting excitedly in anticipation of this promised freshman-orientation event. The desert retreated behind us as we ascended the spiraling Mt. Rose highway, lined by frosted firs and pines, and finally pulled up at the Galena Creek turnout near other buses already parked. After our bundled-up, 45-minute ride from the University, we emerged to brilliant sunshine and bracing mountain air chilled at that elevation by recent early snows. We trudged up the cleared path to the ancient stone warming hut near the rocky creek bed. The low, gray hut nestled amid surrounding firs, their snow-mounded branches brushed intermittently by the breeze, dusting down tiny sparkling crystals like icy confetti around us. Inside the hut, hot chocolate was quickly downed as fuel for our activity.

Back outside, frantic preparations began, people loudly hailing others, joining “sides,” packing snow for ramparts, stockpiling snowball ammunition, and finally on a signal, launching the war. What fun we all had! I was breathless with hurried effort and laughter, eyes watering and nose running from the cold air, and had bent to pack another snowball when I was suddenly smacked on the head and sprayed with snow, to the delighted glee of a couple of nearby young men. Next to me, Cecile was firing back at them, and as one of her missiles made contact, we heard one fellow say what sounded like “Dat vas a good vun.” During a brief break from battle, Johan and Friedrich introduced themselves before returning to action; and thus, we met two of the new German exchange students.

Afterward we visited with them a short time while warming in the hut before climbing back into our designated buses for the return to campus. The German boys had told us how they and two others had been selected and funded to come here from Berlin—with the accord of our government—to study for one school year and then return to share with their country what they had learned, part of a special program intended to help rebuild Germany after World War II. Later, on campus we met Klaus and Hans only briefly; however, since Friedrich and Johan shared some of our class areas, Cecile and I formed a friendship with them. They spoke English well but with pronounced accents.

Friedrich, the oldest of the four at twenty-five, was a man—not a boy—appearing tall due to his noticeably erect posture, with a stiff, seemingly rigid bearing, dark brown eyes, and a long, straight nose. Distinctively marking him as “foreign” was his dark brown hair combed severely straight back from his high forehead, an unfamiliar and unattractive hair style to Americans, whereas the hair of the younger German boys was indistinguishable from that of American students. Although he always appeared reserved and serious, Friedrich’s intelligence, polite manner, and eagerness to learn, along with his exotic background, appealed to me, so I decided to introduce him to some of the special aspects of our area during his short time in the U.S. My parents and I welcomed him to our home, three blocks from campus, and weekends and school breaks gave us time for a few scenic trips in the car his sponsor had loaned him.

As we spent time together on trips to alpine Lake Tahoe, the desert Pyramid Lake with its American Indian lore, and Virginia City with its fascinating mining history, Friedrich's stern manner began to relax, revealing a shy and gentle nature. He was delighted to teach me some German words, and he told me about aspects of Germany and of the war that I, as a child during that time, had been unaware of. He confided reluctantly that he had actually been a member of the Hitler Youth, the branch of the Nazi party that all young men were expected to join, and that his father had been killed in the war, leaving his mother a widow, with himself as their only child. He explained, "Now of course, we realize that Hitler was a madman, but at the time he came to power, we thought he was our savior, lifting Germany from a terrible depression, with no work or money available and people starving." To avoid embarrassing him, I did not voice my skeptical thought that yes, I could see where building a 'war machine' would give people work and where claiming superiority over all non-Aryans might restore a national pride! I did begin to see how a young, conscientious, and devoted son could be programmed to become a trained, militarily correct disciple—a likely result's being his regimented demeanor. The other German students, being younger, had possibly escaped such intensive training and therefore could now be more adaptable and spontaneous; and they perhaps had not experienced as much trauma as Friedrich must have known.

Friedrich had told me that though all four had been very good students, Johan was really brilliant, which was why he was selected at the young age of eighteen. Johan was fair-haired, short and stocky, an energetic dynamo, with large, prominent blue eyes and a fun-loving, amused and amusing nature, a boy we found delightful. He immediately proceeded to immerse himself in everything American and began to discard his accent. Between classes Cecile and I enjoyed occasional coffees with him at the Student Center.

On International Day regular students were charmed and amused to see the German students wearing their Tyrolean hats, with feathers, and lederhosen, knobby knees and all. When I bumped into Friedrich at the Student Center that day and complimented his attire, he smiled shyly and charmingly appeared to redden with pleasure. The date for the Military Ball was approaching, and Johan and Friedrich invited Cecile and me to double-date with them. I felt a bit uncomfortable about publicly dating Friedrich, whose reserve was still apparent, but I considered him a friend, and now aware of his vulnerability, I didn't want to hurt his feelings. Then too, I knew it would be fun for us to be with the other couple.

Cecile and Johan danced together freely and companionably, whereas partnering with Friedrich was like taking a dance lesson: his arms stiffly at correct position, his back rigidly erect, each step precisely paced, with little conversation. A bit later, a waltz was announced, and Johan asked me to dance. I was wearing a yellow, off-shoulder, full-length gown—and I soon discovered Johan to be a waltz master! I didn't even need to think! I could just revel in the rhythm of that graceful music as my smiling guide deftly flew me around the floor in widening circles. The yellow tulle of my dress billowed out with each

swirl and my heart raced with the delight of it. It was the loveliest dance of my life and I've remembered it with joy, and fondness for Johan, ever since.

By the last semester that year, Cecile and I seldom saw our German friends on campus, since their studies, unlike ours, concentrated on government, civics, politics, and economics. One spring day near the end of school, Friedrich phoned saying he had an important decision to make that he would like to share with me. I felt honored to have his trust. As I listened beside him in his car, he explained that Nevada's powerful U.S. Senator Pat McCarran had gotten a bill through Congress to allow the University of Nevada's German students to gain U.S. citizenship. [Such assimilation of bright foreign students is now known as "brain drain."] Friedrich continued, "This is such a wonderful opportunity for us, and the others are eager to accept—and, of course, I too would love to become an American!" He looked away, adding sadly that the others didn't realize what their loss would mean to Germany, with the sponsors vesting their efforts, finances, and hopes in the return of these young men to aid their country's recovery. Acknowledging that he could not let down the people who had put faith in him to fulfill this obligation, he added that he could also not abandon his mother, who loved her home and surely would not leave. I told him I would feel the same ambivalence and wished him well in making this life-defining decision.

A dedicated man among boys, Friedrich did return to his country, keeping his commitment—and his honor. He wrote me a few times at first, saying he was working for Voice of America. We soon lost touch as our lives diverged; however, I'll always admire and respect his wisdom and integrity, an ideal combination to contribute to any developing government. Friedrich would surely have had regrets from whichever decision he made—I just hope that in retrospect he has been able to believe he made the right one.

*Written by, Joline Shroyer,
Willamette View*

DRIVING ME CRAZY

The first car I drove was a 1947 Plymouth sedan that my husband, Jim, paid 400 silver dollars for before we married. I really wasn't supposed to drive it. I had no license and zero experience. It was the fall of 1955 and Jim was working at Chuck's Diner at night in Newberg and enrolled as a sophomore at George Fox College. I was working days in Portland at Newberry's Dime Store as a waitress to help put him through school. I rode the bus which stopped downtown on 1st street. Jim often got a ride with a friend from school to get to work.

One evening after work, about 10:00, Jim was too tired to walk home. He called on the telephone we shared with the two girls who lived in the other upstairs apartment of a house 507 North Meridian street.

"Bring the car down so I can drive home" he begged.

"How in the world can I do that, I don't have any idea how to drive".

"Just get in, put the key in the starter and turn it on. Leave the gear shift in neutral..."

"How will I know where neutral is?"

"It's in the middle. Push the clutch down with your left foot. The gas is on the right, the brake is in the middle. Put the car in reverse..."

"How do I get in reverse?" I began to perspire.

"Reverse is when you push the stick all the way to the front and be sure to keep the clutch down."

Well that sure made sense! To make the car go backward you push the stick to the front. Illogical.

He went through the steps sounding exasperated and tired. He must be tired to trust his vehicle to his brand-new bride who couldn't drive. He had surgery on the toes of both feet just before we were married, and they still weren't completely healed. He had been on his feet all day in the restaurant and his feet hurt. Although it was only a few blocks, I couldn't believe he was asking me to drive his car.

After hearing the instructions and half pretending, I understood and feeling that more explanation would just be more confusing I went down the outside

staircase into the dark behind the house and climbed in the car.

The seat did not adjust so I had to stretch to reach the pedals. I could see through the windshield by looking through the space between the top of the dash and under the top of the steering wheel.

I started the car and pushed and pulled on the choke until it sounded okay. A steady sound but not too loud. I found the switch for the headlights and put my foot on the clutch and tried to move the “stick”.

Gggrrrrriinnndddd. A horrific noise engulfed me!

Stretching my leg until I was barely sitting on the seat, I pushed harder on the clutch. Hanging onto the steering wheel with my left hand for balance, I reached with my right to move the stick again. Over and over that horrible sound of a machine gargling rocks rose from under my feet.

I was in tears.

I turned everything off and jumped out of the car and ran up the stairs sobbing. I called Jim at the diner and waled “I can’t do it, it only makes an awful noise and I’m scared”. His feet must have hurt him desperately because he insisted I could do it.

“Please, just go out and try it again”.

I hung the receiver on the wall phone in the hall, stepped into our apartment for a pillow and without enthusiasm went down the stairs again.

The car smelled of smoke when I got in. I put the pillow on the seat and the extra boost helped a little. Again, I turned the ignition key and the engine came to life, with little confidence, I adjusted the choke and pushed in the clutch. This time I managed to back up enough to get the car aimed out into the alley and turned onto the street. The car felt like a tank, heavy and lumbering. Turning the wheel took both hands which took the one gripping the gear shift. My brain felt totally disconnected from my feet which were dancing back and forth on the three pedals trying to find the right combination for “forward without excessive noise”. I crept through stop signs on the silent dark streets and prayed that I wouldn’t have to stop because I didn’t know if I could get started again. Fortunately, the streets

were free of traffic at that time of night. I kept my right foot so very lightly on the gas while my left foot hovered tensely over the clutch. The car reluctantly roared along in first gear. Could I make it to First Street? One quiet intersection after another slid slowly past until I was finally at First Street. There was a stop sign that I could not ignore. Brakes! Put on the brakes.

Okay, I thought, no gas.

Take right foot off gas!

Left foot off clutch!

Left foot on brakes!

No, left foot on clutch!

No, right foot on clutch!

Brakes, brakes! Left foot on brakes!

Right foot.....well now it doesn't matter, because the car has abruptly stopped running.

Okay, how do I get it started again?

At this point I'd just as soon get out and push the stupid machine. I struggled to get it started again and with a jerking, jolting, jarring motion covered the last three blocks to Chuck's Diner to deliver the smoke filled car to my husband.

I didn't drive again until six years, four children and three cars later.

*Written by, Louise Clements,
Friendsview Retirement Community*

FAREWELLS

Might there be joy in farewells?

Trace a face toiling eagerly

Yet glancing back at the furrow.

I have known blissful beginnings.

Might there be joy in farewells?

Confiscate the vision of despair.

Learn kindness, swallow anger.

There are treasures in time and reflection.

Oh, bring me joy in farewells!

Love lies beyond my crazy heart.

Perhaps in an Eternity.

I am partnered yet in God's creation—

I'll plant a flowering tree!

*Written by, Dorothy Wysham,
Terwilliger Plaza*

FLUMMOXED BY PRAYER

Unless painful and invasive, dental appointments are right up there with visits to the cleaners or grocery—necessary, routine but uneventful—or so I used to believe.

Walking into Dr. Wendling's all-woman-Lake-Oswego dental office gives me a chance to engage in pleasant but mundane chitchat with Office Manager Karen before the dental cleaning and probing begins.

Naturally poised and blessed with an angelic smile—Karen (as I know from prior visits) is a very private person, friendly and accessible for a minute or two, but primarily focused and adept at scheduling and processing patient plastic in her office VISA machine to extract high-end fees, all the while creating a sea of tranquility and putting a smile on your face with caring and perfectly nuanced conversation. Over several years we have come to know each other well enough to share bits of family information when pointedly asked.

On one visit she quietly shared with me a recent event that started routinely with a simple request from Dr. Wendling. "Karen, would you please come in here and hold Marilyn's hand, she is trembling anticipating my drilling?" As the story unfolded, she told me she immediately froze and steeled herself to respond negatively to something she could never bring herself to do—physically touch a patient. Her response was crisp and brief. "Doctor, I cannot and will not do it." Then came the reply. "But Karen, I need you now, please come." To which she responded "No—not now, not ever."

The office became still. Request. Refusal. Tension. Chill. Quiet. Then a new call. "Angie, would you interrupt your patient cleaning and come now?" To which Angie responded, "Certainly, I'm coming Doctor."

It was a week before the office returned to 'normal' and everyone was able to laugh about and appreciate Karen's aversion to touching.

Arriving for my next appointment months later, as Karen greeted me, there was no mistaking she was watermelon pregnant. Abandoning my usual reluctance born of a fear of avoiding a classic and possible male blunder—mistaking obesity for pregnancy—for this much older guy to ask an attractive young woman such a question, I confidently asked how she was doing and when she was expecting. She fixed her gaze on me and asked if I was ready for story both troubling and bizarre. So uncharacteristic, I thought to myself, in every way. She was serious and somewhat trembling as she voluntarily shared the details.

Several days prior, a 60-year-old male who was a regular patient had arrived early for his appointment. Karen said he had noticed her obvious pregnancy and made a request for her to come from behind the desk into the patient waiting area. Thinking nothing of it, she complied. Abruptly, the patient dropped to his knees, placed both hands on her baby in

the womb, closed his eyes and began praying audibly and fervently for the soon-to-be-born baby, and for Karen's health and safe delivery.

She shared with me her humiliation and recounted every detail of her crimson-flushed embarrassment. She had been violated, rendering her flummoxed, confused and speechless. Her exact words to me were "I do not want anyone touching me—especially not like that—ever again."

At a recent dental checkup, I inquired of Karen how now-seven-year-old Jack was doing and asked if she would like a word of prayer for him now. She flashed a broad knowing smile and surprised me *again* by telling me about advice she had received from a dear friend after sharing her original unwelcome prayer story.

"My friend told me . . . if the worst thing that happens to you in life is having someone pray for you and your baby, you are leading a charmed life. Just get over it. So, I did. Almost."

"Oh, and that will be three hundred eighty-nine for today's visit please."

*Written by, Dennis Gilliam,
Willamette View*

FOR SALE: A BOYHOOD DREAM

He opened the paper and there was his ad, complete with photo: *"1957 Chevy 210, \$14,000 Please email, call, or text for more info. Serious buyers only! Randy 921-781-5958."* Placing this ad for his beloved car had been a difficult decision, but it was time to let it go. He could no longer afford the insurance, license and expense of its upkeep....not to mention the space it took in the garage while their other vehicles were parked in the driveway.

Randy had been in love with this car since he was eleven years old when he first saw it in his great-aunt Lizzie's garage. She had hired him that summer to mow her lawn every week for which she paid him \$1.00. He wasn't thrilled about this job, and the meager payment, but his mother had convinced him it would be a kind thing to do for dear Aunt Lizzie who lived alone, was deaf, and led a rather lonely life.

She lived just a few blocks away and he remembered the first time he rode his bike over to do the mowing. She opened the small door to the dark and musty garage to show him where the lawnmower was kept and there it was – the beautiful old Chevy, half hidden with a sheet draped over it. He couldn't keep his eyes off it as Aunt Lizzie explained how she liked to have the lawn mowed and telling him to be sure and clean the grass off the mower before putting it back in the garage.

The car was the incentive that made this weekly \$1.00 mowing job worth his while on those hot summer afternoons. They had arranged a day and time when he was to come and she met him at the door, gave him a warm smile as she pressed the folded crisp dollar bill into his hand and gave it a loving pat. She had no children and he knew that he and his sister were very special to her.

He had heard stories about the car from his parents and grandparents but now he was especially curious and asked questions like why did she even have a car when she didn't drive. His grandpa, who was Lizzie's brother, told him that she and her husband Fred were very conservative and hard-working people and were never extravagant with their money. All of their family and friends were surprised when they purchased the car and were happy they were enjoying it.

Then just two years later, Uncle Fred had a heart attack and died. Randy's grandpa had helped Aunt Lizzie sell their farm and find a house in town and had planned to sell the car, but she insisted on keeping it. To her it seemed to personify Uncle Fred and the joy it had given them and so it had remained in the garage, undriven, all these years.

For the next few summers Randy continued his weekly \$1.00 mowings and coveting the classic Chevy. He'd caress the smooth finish of it and sometimes sit behind the steering wheel and imagine driving it. Once he asked his parents if they thought Aunt Lizzie might sell him the car when he got his driver's license. They

were doubtful and reminded him that it was now considered a classic which made it expensive to buy and maintain, and probably not a practical car for a young man.

Randy grew into better summer jobs, graduated and was living 150 miles away in Minneapolis when Aunt Lizzie died. He came back for the funeral and wondered what would happen to the Chevy. His grandpa was in charge of her affairs and said it would have to be auctioned along with the rest of her estate and he was having a mechanic get it in working condition for the sale. If only he had enough money to buy it, which of course he didn't so he put it out of his mind.

A couple months later he got a call from his parents telling him about the sale and the surprising news that grandpa had bid on and got the Chevy -- and he was giving it to Randy's parents. It would be kept in grandpa's garage and he would keep it in driving condition so whenever Randy came home, he could drive it, which he did...enjoying every minute of it. While his parents weren't really into old cars, they often took their friends for rides in it and occasionally drove it in local parades. The only reason they were keeping it was because his grandpa drove it on rare occasions and liked showing it to his friends. It was still in prime condition with very low mileage.

It was 12 years later when his grandpa died and his parents said if he still wanted the Chevy, he could have it. Overjoyed, he got a friend to drive him to pick it up and made the 150-mile-trip back to Minneapolis without incident, but drawing a lot of attention from passing motorists.

By this time Randy was married and he and his wife made room for it in their garage. They had fun showing and giving rides to their friends and participated in some local car events, but maintenance was costly. After a few more years their lives became busier with a family and interest in the car had waned. His boyhood dream had come true but now it was time to say farewell to the old car.

Just then the phone rang and he answered. A young man's voice said: "I'm calling about your ad. Can you tell me about the Chevy?"

*Written by, Jo Ann Parsons,
Mary's Woods at Marylhurst*

HAZEL JONES

Hazel Jones was twice my age when we first met at church in the fall of 1964. Sixty-four sounded old to me then, but now it sounds young. She was already widowed. Her son, Bill, was married, and her daughter, Shirley, was living in a nursing home. Shirley had been born with Cerebral Palsy. She had lived at home during her childhood and gone through a special-education program.

Hazel lived out in the country. She came into town on Tuesdays and spent most of her days with Shirley and her nights at Nelly Copley's, a church friend, until Friday evening. Nelly took her grocery shopping, then she drove Hazel home so Hazel could prepare Sunday dinner for a family she had invited. That family drove Shirley home from church to spend the day with Hazel.

For Sunday dinner Hazel fixed an abundance of tasty, nourishing food. Usually she fixed two different kinds of salad, two vegetables, potatoes, meat and gravy and often biscuits. Her specialty desserts were red cake or pecan pie. Is it any wonder Shirley liked going home for Sunday dinner?

Hazel's husband, Willard, had built their house with a nice large rock fireplace at one end of the living room. In the winter, Hazel built a fire and made popcorn, which Shirley loved. Willard had also built window seats in the alcove where dinner was served. The seats opened to reveal all kinds of games such as dominos, tri-ominos, checkers, Lincoln logs, and coloring books and crayons. Our children had plenty with which to entertain themselves on a Sunday afternoon.

A large black walnut tree was in the side yard, with an adult sized swing hanging from a limb. Hazel liked to relax by swinging in the evening after a long hard day of work. Many of the church groups enjoyed picnics under this tree in the summertime. The children and any of the adults who cared to do so could take a turn on the swing.

A steep hill with wild blackberries made up the back portion of the yard. Hazel kept them trimmed enough to get to the berries and invited church families to pick what they wanted. She would come pick alongside them so she could visit as they picked.

She also planted a big garden each year. She canned, froze, or made jam and jellies. If she had more produce than she wanted, she just gave it away.

At Christmas time, she mixed up big batches of cookie dough and invited the preteen girls for a day of cookie baking and decorating. This was fun for her as well as for the girls. It also gave parents a chance to go Christmas shopping without the girls knowing what they were getting. I think Shirley got to be home to enjoy watching the girls.

I well remember one night when we were ready to leave our house to go to a school program, our phone rang. It was Hazel. She had turned water on in the bathroom and then stepped outside for, "just a minute." She got busy and forgot about the water. She needed our help mopping up.

We dropped the girls off at the school and hurried out to help her. I was amazed how much water had overflowed from a dribbling faucet. Stacy used her heavy mop and I used absorbent rags, soaking up and wringing out, soaking up and wringing out many times. Hazel was busy picking up shoes, waste baskets, clothes hampers, rugs, etc. I picked up the edge of the bedroom rug and say it was edged in green. No, it was not moss growing, but paper money, neatly placed there. I was surprised and so was she. By the time we had soaked up the water, Hazel was so exhausted we were concerned about leaving her. But she promised to go right to bed.

A little park up the hill above her place belonged to her sister and brother-in-law. One summer when our youngest daughter and her best friend, Donna, were about 10, we asked permission to camp there a couple nights. Hazel got out her two walking sticks and hiked up to visit us one evening. We invited her to stay and have supper with us. After we ate our meal, we sat around our campfire, roasting marshmallows, while she told stories about the olden days. It is too bad I had not taken up writing yet or I might have thought to write down one of the stories.

Hazel gradually slowed down to the place she did not see Shirley during the weekdays anymore and only had Shirley home every other Sunday when Bill, Hazel's son, could bring them home and prepare the dinner.

The Lewises, one of the church families who lived close to her, shared her garden spot one or two years. One day while they were working in the garden, Hazel fell. She just laughed and said, "I'm sorry about laying down on the job."

After her sister and brother-in-law passed away, their place was leased out to a couple and his dad. Hazel got them started coming to church. The older man started walking over the Hazel's each day to visit.

Some time after she had reached her 96th birthday, she had to give up her home. She asked Bill to move her to Rose Vista where Shirley was living. That way Hazel got the care she needed and also was able to see Shirley every day again.

Hazel passed away in 1997, at age 97. Bill had people come to Hazel's home and get what they wanted. He had advertised it as a sale, he knew the church people had cared about his mother, so he gave them whatever they picked up. I have a little teapot and her tri-omino game.

Shirley was moved to a nursing home in Battel Ground. C-tran transported Shirley to her home church until her final weeks of illness at Salmon Creek hospital. Her

brother, Bill had been faithful to visit her after Hazel passed away. Shirley had lived to the age of 70.

The old house, the park and her sister's place have all been torn down and a community of new homes built. I have passed by the park area many times, but I have not wanted to see where Hazel's house used to stand.

*Written by, Fern Marriott,
Homewoods on the Willamette*

HER PIRATE

She once loved a pirate
Three-hundred years ago
His ship laid in the harbor
Long enough for love to grow

They met for days in secret
'til he begged to be let go
Her life he would not tarnish
Nor a curse on her bestow

Her hope to keep him tarried
Then like an anchor sank
The day he drew his pirate sword
And made her heart walk the plank.

*Written by, Patricia Mitchell,
Columbia Terrace Retirement Community*

“HOPE”

I woke up this morning,
And saw a sunrise,
Of a crimson sky.
I took hope,
And wrapped a
Red bow around it.
I added a gold bell,
To match the sunrise,
To shine on this glorious day,
Where I had the choice,
To work or play.
The anger faded,
Silently away,
With the feeling of dismay.
Hope sang eternally,
Like the summer rain.
Like patters on the window pane.
My soul sang like a trumpet,
Of a mellow choir,
Like the ambers,
Of a smoldering fire.
Hope is eternal,
Grab it in your hand,
As you see the marching band.
Playing a tune,
Marching to the wonderland.
Fini

Dedicated to my brother Edward.

*Written by, Barbara Warner,
Rose Schnitzer Tower*

INGENUITY: THE DAY RUBY ROPER GOT AWAY

Once upon a time, there was a mining town that was very deserted-except for this lady, who was quite old but had lots of energy. Her name was Ruby Roper.

Ruby is trying to find her place in society, and she figured that jumping rope was the way to do it. And she's doin' it! Even though she has one leg! Let's hear it for Ruby!!

She has only one leg because she was hit by a train. She went to the hospital and was given a peg leg and she likes the peg leg better than an artificial leg because she can tie it on...and off she goes. There was some concern about her ability to dance. Could she dance? Sure!! She is working hard for people to see her face, her smile. In the background there is a ship and she needs to back up to board the boat which is ready for her to go.

Ruby misses the boat-in more than one way. She is missing something. She's crazy but she is happy. She will be all right even though she has one leg. She does make it onto the boat, and she will sail away!!

*Writing by, Participants at Cedar Sinai Park,
Adult Services at Cedar Sinai Park*

IS OLD AGE A DISABILITY?

In reading the obituary for Stephen Hawking I was once again struck by the amazing accomplishments he performed in his lifetime despite what many would consider a devastating disability. It made me rethink the definition of 'disability.' If this label is applied to you, what does it mean in practical terms? Are you given certain advantages not offered to others? Is less expected of you? Are you given more praise when you do accomplish some 'pedestrian' task because you had to overcome your 'disability' to achieve it? In Hawking's case, he didn't seem to lean on his physical shortcomings--he used his brain to achieve an expansive theory of the universe. And he contributed to this knowledge by writing books to explain his findings.

This led me to wonder if the term 'disability' could be applied to the aging process. As we age, we lose many of the physical activities that we took for granted--our balance is compromised, our legs and arms are weaker, our lungs and heart may not function as well as in the past, our sight and hearing is diminished, and we may have new aches and pains that don't seem to go away as quickly as in the past.

If we consider our 'new normal' as a disability, do we give up trying to be creative or useful? Or can we, as Hawking did, use different faculties to make a meaningful life for ourselves? How can we still provide services and/or lessons to others that will have value? An Interesting conundrum!

*Written by, Pearl Steinberg,
Willamette View*

IT'S ABOUT TIME

We claw and clutch at the
Passing scenery of our lives.

Capturing an image
Clinging to a child's darling phrase
Cherishing a touch
Or a smile
Determined to stop time
Or slow it a little

Then one day
A parent stares back
From a mirror
Where lately lived a youth

A sister dies
The well-tended illusion of
A Truce With Time
Shatters

We have only today.
Maybe not all of that.

*Written by, Daniel Roberts,
Mary's Woods at Marylhurst*

JOY

Leaf, sap, limb await
Breeze caresses lightly
Ah – the dance begins

Limbs stretch with pleasure
Leaves laugh – tumble down side up
God's Spirit at play

*Written by, Patricia Sears,
Friendsview Retirement Community*

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE KOMODO DRAGON SIGHTINGS

FILE: KOMODOS

Approximately four months ago a small Nigerian registered freighter, with all navigation lights off, put into the port of Newport, Oregon. Under cover of darkness, and with the vessel blacked out, the crew off loaded five undocumented items of cargo, transferred them to a truck waiting on the dock, and weighed anchor to return to its home port of Lagos, Nigeria. The vessel never reached Lagos and has never been seen or heard from again. It is presumed to be missing with all hands. Interpol surmised that the Nigerian-based shipper “disappeared” the vessel and crew to maintain his/her secret identity.

Two weeks later, hikers found five large, very stoutly constructed wooden crates that had been battered to destruction from the inside. The crates smelled foul, very fishy, bottoms covered with excrement and large amounts of a highly toxic, unusual smelling substance akin to very thick saliva.

The hikers observed many large amphibian-type tracks with exceptionally large nails. They notified the County Sheriff, who, after observing the site, notified the Oregon State Police and researchers from the University of Oregon’s zoology department. Researchers quickly identified the residue as that of five full grown Komodo Dragons. These reptiles are native to a few islands in the Galapagos group.

According to state police trackers, the dragons moved through wooded rural areas traveling north and foraging along the way. These reptiles are carnivorous apex predators. Full grown males 12 to 15 feet long, weighing about 600 pounds. They are extremely aggressive, highly dangerous to all life forms. They move with lightning speed and can sustain speeds up to 30 mph for distances of 150 yards. Their preferred food is humans. We are far easier prey, have no hides or fur, thin skin, and small fragile bones. The dragons consume every morsel of their prey leaving nothing but blood-stained ground.

Recent sightings place them in the Oak Grove and Milwaukie, Oregon area. If sighted, stay well clear of these dragons, stay well downwind from them, exit the area immediately. Notify local law enforcement immediately. Do not attempt to make contact with them in any way, get as far away from them as soon as possible.

BACKGROUND:

Shortly after the empty crates were found, the NSA listening post in Scotland started receiving intercepts regarding these crates and their original contents. In the last few days, the number of communications referencing dragons has increased dramatically and has been identified as originating at the ISIS World Communications Center located somewhere in the Hindu Kush.

A comprehensive analysis by the National Security Agency and Homeland Security indicated that ISIS has developed a long-range worldwide plan to train and deploy teams of

5 to 6 dragons in a manner similar to the deployment of U.S. Special Operations components like Navy Seals, Army Rangers, Delta Force, and Air Force Para Rescue.

Dragons are very stubborn, making them hard and risky to train.

The insertion methodology open to ISIS will be limited. Additionally, and fortunately, due to the dragons' inability to operate in cold climates, their service range will be somewhat limited.

Documents discovered by a U.S. Navy Seal Team clearly states ISIS's intention to roll out a multi-stage development plan to upgrade and weaponize dragons.

THE ISIS PLAN:

Stage 1: Is to develop dragon breeding nurseries to significantly increase their numbers.

Stage 2: Is to genetically engineer the dragon pups to increase their size, skin thickness, speed, and lethality. A pilot program is also being developed that will hopefully make them more aggressive to all potential targets.

Stage 3: Is to develop methodologies to weaponize dragons. Potential weaponization techniques may include but not be limited to (a): fitting heat/blast shields on the dragon's skin in areas where "devices" may be attached; (b): employing a variety of explosive devices, including nuclear, that will be triggered by GPS devices and/or altitude sensitive devices.

Stage 4: Deployment options for dragons appear to be very limited. The following common deployment techniques have been tried and have proved to be not appropriate for the dragons themselves. Halo airborne, scuba, and rubber boats. What has been tested successfully is airborne cargo drops using specially constructed containers engineered to provide safety for the dragons, while allowing them to exit the containers when on the ground.

SUMMATION:

The clandestine landing at Newport, Oregon harbor was in fact the alpha test which proved successful. Our security apparatus is convinced that this is the future of ISIS incursion techniques on the U.S. mainland. Beware the dragons; they are loyal only to their hunger.

To date, the dragons landed at Newport have yet to be precisely located and brought to bay. They are proving to be stealthy, resourceful, and very successful at avoiding capture or death. They have and continue to leave a trail of killed and consumed dogs, cats, children, adults as well as cows and goats. Trackers report they are faring very well and moving quickly to the north toward Portland. Once in Portland, secure hiding places are limitless.

Sleep well.

*Written by, Lee Eisner,
Willamette View*

LAZY EIGHTS

When I was thirteen years old my parents moved to an apartment about two blocks from the Edmonton Airport. I began to spend all my free time nosing around the airport. There was no airport security, so I was able to freely roam the field inspecting parked airplanes, watching mechanics at work in the hangars, sitting in the pilot's lounge reading aviation magazines, and listening to the pilot's flying stories. I became a known fixture.

Eventually, I became brazen enough to ask for rides. The most lucrative opportunities were when manufacturers sales reps brought their planes to Edmonton and gave demonstration rides. They wanted to show off the performance of the planes with a full load, so I was welcomed added weight.

After awhile I started getting offers to go up without asking. One day, at the Flying Club, a pilot asked if I would sit in the front seat while he made some practice flights for his instructor's test. In many small two-seater planes of that time period the student rode in the front seat and the instructor sat in the back, so I played the role of student and had a great view out of the windshield.

Once we were airborne he told me we were going to practice Lazy Eights. I didn't know what that was, and I didn't care... I was up in the air once again!.

I discovered that the Lazy Eight maneuver requires the pilot to fly the plane in a figure eight pattern while staying within an imaginary rectangle of airspace. The pilot has to fly the loops of the figure-eight at the ends of the rectangle at a higher altitude than the cross-over in the middle. It's harder than it sounds.

To perfectly execute climbing, descending, and turning, while keeping the aircraft out of a dangerous flight attitude, the pilot constantly monitors the altimeter, airspeed indicator, vertical speed indicator, and artificial horizon, while at the same time, keeping visual contact with reference points on the ground in order to stay within the boundaries of the imaginary rectangle.

A passenger has nothing to do except try avoid motion sickness and the potential nausea that could follow. After about a dozen Lazy Eights I was sweating. Up, left, down, cross, up, right, down, cross... over and over. After a few more repetitions the situation was getting desperate. There was no bag in the plane to use in case I tossed my cookies.

Maybe the pilot saw some evidence of my growing discomfort. He tapped me on the shoulder and asked if I wanted to do more Lazy Eights. I calmly responded, "I think maybe it would be good if we head back to the airport."

I was certain I never again wanted to experience Lazy Eights as a passenger. But I wanted to someday become a pilot and do perfect Lazy Eights.

*Written by, Ron Dupas,
Mary's Woods at Marylhurst*

LETTERS HOME

February 1903

Dear Mama and Papa Utter,

We received your most welcome letter. Oh, we miss you so very much! Good news. Bernard has become the school master at a small school across the lake from us, so he rows a boat to and fro each day. Our little Pearl is one of his students. When Opal turns six, she will go there, too. Since Bernard is the only teacher, it has become my task to plan social activities for students and their families. At Christmas time the children invited their families to an evening of songs, poetry, and some games. Everyone brought treats. Of course, the high point of the evening was when Bernard dramatically recited the alphabet backwards. He is such a card!

We are looking forward to planting soon. You may remember my writing you last year that shortly after we planted our garden, the lake began to dry up. Soon after the water was gone, hundreds of sunflowers began to grow in the lake bed. When they all began to bloom, it was a glorious sight. Unfortunately, beauty only feeds the soul, and we have bellies to fill. We are hoping and praying for a full lake this year.

Springtime not only is time to plant; it is also time for the Indians to cross our place. I don't know where they go, but they frighten us. They demand food, and, of course, I give them what I have. They may be friendly, but they look fierce and are not shy about coming into our house without an invitation. Last time they came one of the men tried to buy Pearl from Bernard for, as he put it, "a kitchen wife". Normally when we see them coming, I hide the girls in the cellar under the house. We give them a lamp and things to do, and we know they are safe.

Unfortunately, there are lots of rattlesnakes on our place. We watch the children carefully so they aren't bitten. Last summer our big dog Jack was bitten by one, and he was very sick from it. His head swelled up, and he couldn't walk. We fed him cream, and he finally got well. Now that he is well, no snake is safe from him. He will attack one and shake it until it flies into pieces.

Our best crop so far is tumble weeds. They are huge bushes with stickers and shallow roots that blow with the direction of the wind. Sometimes between blowing dust and the tumble weeds we can hardly see to move about!

We have chosen a path that is a hard one, but we are young and strong and our faith in God sustains us.

Love,

Anza

February 1904

Dear Mama Utter,

Bernard and I are so saddened at Papa's illness and passing. The time we lived and worked on your beautiful farm has given us wonderful memories of his generous and loving ways.

We have left the homestead. It was a disappointment from the very first. The weather was much too hot in the summer and freezing cold in the winter. Trying to prove up the place was too much for us.

Harry and Clarice invited us to come and rent a small house near their place and the oil fields where Bernard works. The best thing about this place is the fenced yard. We can even have a few chickens for fresh eggs. Both girls like to play in the yard, and I like the fence for safety's sake.

Bernard works six days with Sunday off. It is hard work. We attend a small church nearby. Bernard says going there gives him strength for the coming week. I made new dresses for both girls and myself and a new shirt for Bernard. They have become our Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes.

Today was beautiful, so Pearl and Opal and I packed our lunch and went to the park to eat. The girls took off their shoes and played in the cool grass. They both look so sweet today. I braided Pearl's blonde hair into pigtails and put a big bow on each one. Opal doesn't need a ribbon to decorate her black, curly hair.

You would be so proud of the girls—even if I do say so myself. They are well-behaved and almost never squabble. Several days ago I overheard them playing

with some make-believe dolls. Opal told of the beauty of hers and the fancy name for her and described the doll's beautiful wardrobe. Pearl was able to give her doll even more enchanting clothing and features. It surprised me to hear them playing with made-up dolls, as I made each of them a rag baby doll. Much loved, but not fancy.

Bernard is working hard, and we save nearly his whole paycheck every month. When the time comes to move again, I will pack the big coffin box we use as a closet with most of our belongings. Bernard will get it loaded on the train. I will pack plenty of food for the journey, and away we will go!

When we settle down, the big box will turn into a closet again. Bernard dreams of our forever home where we can be happy for the rest of our lives. He says that when he sees it, he will know at once that it is for us. He talks to many people about the different places they have seen and has heard of a place in the center of Washington State called the Yakima Valley. He says it sounds like the Garden of Eden. Perfect from the weather to the abundance of fruit trees and grape vineyards. I think a move will soon be in our future.

Love,

Anza

February 1906

Dear Mama,

We have arrived in a little town called Zillah in Washington State. I now understand why Bernard kept looking for our dream place. Zillah is small, but the weather is not too cold. I understand the summers are beautiful. There is a grocery store, a post office, and a barber shop. A railroad runs through the edge of town, and it has a station for travelers to wait in. The soil must be very fertile, as everything growing here is lush. We have chosen a house with some acreage around it for our growing family. We will soon be adding another little one. I wonder if we will have a boy this time. There is a cherry orchard, a small barn, and space for chickens and a large garden.

The people here are friendly, and we have already been invited to help build a new church and become charter members. That is so exciting to me.

Mama, the road to our hearts' home has not been an easy one, but I know that Bernard was right all along. The struggle has been worth it, and our feet are firmly planted on the wonderful path to our new life.

Love,

Anza

Epilogue

February 2020

Dear Reader,

Bernard and Anza had indeed found their hearts' home. They raised four daughters in their large house and lived there for the rest of their lives. The little farm in Zillah flourished, and they shared its bounty with their neighbors.

The congregation of their church outgrew its building, so they happily helped build a larger one. Anza finally gave away the coffin crate because she knew their search for the perfect home was over.

*Written by, Maybelle Baird,
Meadowbrook Place*

MAKALA WIND

The canyon, lush and green pulls back from sea, and cradles
buildings, homes

The walls steep folds of velvet green, look down on stately
palms, whose leaves bend down to mass of brilliant bloom.

These giant leaves, that now lie still in noon-day sun, will
soon be whispering to breeze of afternoon, or they may
thrash in rhythm with the stormy gale.

Makala wind sweeps in from sea like some Hawaiian god,
who vents his wrath by whipping palms and shaking homes
and "whistling" at the cracks .

Dark stormy day and restless night mysteriously recede to
quiet light of dawn, the "coo" of doves and fragrant flowers,
sweeter still, remembering the wind.

*Written by, Barbara Nelson,
Capital Manor*

MANZANITA

It's hot, this April.
Too hot for the beach
Along the shore, the surf spreads in submission.
The heat muting its roar.

Hidden onshore, a garden settles in warmth,
The bees fat and satisfied in the heart of the rosemary.
A neighbor rustles in his yard like a small foraging animal.
Sticks crack
Hard in the stillness.

The air is hot, breathless; but nothing is still.
Leaves push indolently at the pressing air
The wind pushes back, rustling the underbrush, hiding the birds.

The rocks sing silently in their clamlike voices, mingling
With the chatter of crows.
Brave purple blossoms bare their petals.

You sit
Languid, accepting, in the heat,
The sun on the crown of your head.
And Elijah comes to you in the wind,
Whispering words you are too frail to understand.

*Written by, Fran Gardner,
Rose Schnitzer Manor*

MUSINGS ABOUT MY DAD

Dad has been in my thoughts a lot recently. He was the son of a Texas sheep rancher. Not a particularly good scholar, he graduated from high school as the middle male student in his class. There were only three...and eight girls.

When he was a teenager, he ran some of the electric wires from the main road down to a cave; the cave had electricity before the main ranch house!

He got an alternate appointment to West Point as a skinny little eighteen-year-old who weighed about one hundred and thirty pounds. He ate EIGHT bananas so that he weighed enough to get in! At West Point, the plebes were sent to get horseback lessons; when they got to the stable the instructor (a Sergeant) singled out my dad and asked, "Cadet Longley, approximately how many hours have you previously been on a horse?"

Dad promptly answered, "Approximately 2,837 hours, SIR!" He immediately got put on the polo team. He also sang in the West Point Choir and was a star member of the pistol team.

We moved around a lot in the 1940s and 1950s; I was born right before Pearl Harbor and Dad was in the Orient during World War II and the Korean War. I remember the two times he came home. When I was four, my mom, my sisters, and I went to the San Francisco Harbor to pick him up. All the khaki-clad men started pouring down the gangplank. They looked like brown ants crawling out of a hollow twig I had once cut open. One of them was going to be my Dad, but I had no idea how we would be able to find him. The next thing I knew we were scooped up in his loving arms!

The second time I was playing in the back yard of our San Jose home and all of a sudden I ran through the house to the front door, yelling "Daddy". He had just been dropped off by a taxi and we both opened the door at the same time!

When Mom complained that we dawdled too long in the bath tub, he announced that he could give all three of us a bath in ten minutes! He handed us each a washcloth and a bar of soap and gave us commands: "Left ear! Right ear! Neck!" etc. Sure enough he was toweling us dry in less than ten minutes!

When we were shopping together, he would make us march in unison ("Left, left. I left my old lady in forty-eight states without any gingerbread LEFT, LEFT"!)

One characteristic I particularly enjoyed was his mischievous nature. He taught us how to hide lima beans (which we kids and he deplored) in our empty potato skins and get rid of the evidence when we cleared our plates. He also did silly things like handing you a Coke to drink while we flew in his private plane with him...and then he did a loop-de-loop (what a mess!).

Here is my last and fondest memory of my dad: Mom was hospitalized with pneumonia in January, 2001. Dave and I had just been there for Christmas but we were going to Culebra, Puerto Rico, in February, and I was afraid that she might die while we were gone. So I decided to return to Utah for another visit before we left. I was doing W-2s and 1099s for tax clients (due January 31). When I got on the plane, I was preoccupied that I hadn't done everything, but then I realized I would be of no use if I spent the whole five days worrying about what was undone. I closed my eyes and asked God if he would please let me know the reason for the trip so I could have peace of mind.

Dad and I were in the house alone and thoroughly enjoying each other. When we were going to lunch at a Mexican restaurant he drove over the curb and looked at me and said, "Guess I cut that a little close".

His friends had been urging him to stop driving (he was nearly 90). I remarked, "I'll never tell".

The next morning, I was microwaving oatmeal; Dad was sitting at the end of the dining room table eating his usual corn flakes. I set the microwave wrong, and more oatmeal was outside the bowl than inside! Dad looked at the mess and grinned, saying, "I'll never tell if YOU won't tell"!

Another event I remember fondly was when we were visiting Mom at the rehab center. I heard group singing down the hall and told Dad to join them. Mom and I both could hear his gorgeous voice ringing through the building. That's how exquisite the entire five days were.

At 2 a.m. on Valentine's Day when I was in Culebra, the phone rang. The caller was my sister. She said, "Daddy died". Mom was still in the hospital, so I questioned, "Daddy?" My next thought was, Thank you, God, for letting me know the reason for that trip; it was to spend that precious time with Daddy.

When I got to Utah the next day, I looked for something in his desk drawer that Mom had asked for. I found the Valentine's Day card he had planned to give her. I brought it to her, and we both had a good cry. It said: "I loved you the first day we met; I love you even more today. May we have many more Valentine's Days to spend together.

Love always, Cam." My Dad!

*Written by, Jo Heck,
Homewoods On the Willamette*

MY GRANDPA

My Grandpa makes the moon
disappear with his thumb.
Of course, I help him.
We sit in the big chair on the deck,
He holds out his arm and sticks up his thumb.
Then he says, "Okay moon, away with you!"
I touch his wrist and feel the little hairs
on the back of it; then I hold on
and move Grandpa's thumb in front of the moon.
"It's gone!" I tell Grandpa, and he says,
"Good job, Doodle-bug."

When we walk in my Grandpa's back yard,
he holds my hand—not too tight—
and stops at special bushes
to pick off some leaves.
He rubs them between his fingers,
and puts them under my nose.
They smell like the salads
my Grandpa makes for supper.

My Grandpa says that when I am older,
we will go find an old bicycle that nobody wants,
and we'll take it into his shop
and use his tools to fix it up.
He says we'll paint it
any color I like; I like red.
Then it will be my bike, and I will ride it
and use tools to make it work right
if it needs a little adjustment.
My Grandpa says sometimes he needs
a little adjustment, too.

My Grandpa has ten bird feeders.
When we lie in the hammock
or sit on the deck drinking lemonade,
he tells me the names of the birds—
Robin, Titmouse, Meadowlark,
Wren, Towhee, Flicker and Finch;
Hummingbirds, too, and even once
a Great Horned Owl.
Grandpa knows their calls and songs,

and whispers their names in my ear.
His breath smells like licorice.
Grandma comes outside sometimes
and pretend-scolds Grandpa
the way she pretend-scolds me
when I spill my juice or rub the cat too hard.
She tells Grandpa he should drag
his old bones inside and
do something useful.
She doesn't mean it though.
Grandpa says that's how she tells us
how much she loves us.

When I sleep over, my Grandpa
reads me stories before I go to bed.
He always gets the voices right,
and when he reads my favorite book,
he lets me say "I do not like them Sam-I-Am"
at the right moment, and we laugh every time.
Then he tucks me in and clicks off the light
and kisses my nose—not too hard—
and tells me "Nighty night."
I know that tomorrow he will make
animal pancakes, just for me.

*Written by, Patsy Steimer,
Willamette View*

NOW

Do you see me now?
Sitting in your chair,
Reading the paper,
Sleeping late, eating oatmeal
In my flannel pajamas,
Looking out the window
At the hummer eating,
Thinking about my day
With nothing worth doing.

I see you,
Sitting in your chair
Reading the paper to me,
Words I have already read,
Taking your last breath
As your iPad slips to the floor.

I move the couch across the room,
Your chair to the opposite wall,
And yet I see you,
No matter where I put it,
Even when I sit in it,
I cannot make it mine.

Do you see me now?
Trying to adjust,
With only your memory
To make it through my day?
Looking to others
As though my life is okay,
When it is not.
Wearing a mask,
Keeping sadness to myself,
Or not.
Looking forward to the Holidays,
Seeing our children and grandchildren,
But missing your enthusiasm
For turkey, potatoes, pumpkin pie,
Your favorite.

But what do you see now?
The river, glassy like a lake?
The double rainbow in the sky?
The crows amassing in the park?
Or am I seeing it

For
Both
Of
Us
Now?

*Written by, Patricia Watne,
Willamette View*

OLYMPIA

One thing led to another. Our book club read and discussed “The Boys in the Boat”. We were impressed by the description of the 1936 Berlin Olympics and the prowess of the Washington University rowing club, winning a gold medal in a tough international competition. We were intrigued by the acclaimed Leni Riefenstahl film of these Olympics. I ordered the two-part film from Netflix, received the first instalment waited for the appropriate moment of calm, and watched.

I knew that Leni Riefenstahl was a gifted dancer, a movie actress in competition with Marlene Dietrich, and a well-known photographer. I was not ready for the supreme beauty and poetry of the film.

The first part, called “**The Festival of Nations**”, opened with unusual poetical views of the countryside, tree branches, leaves, clouds and landscape in sunny weather. The camera also scanned the stadium filled with spectators, and the special tribunes where Adolf Hitler in full uniform and his cronies stood. The stadium was also lined with many red banners displaying black swastikas. I shivered at the souvenir of similar banners on official buildings in Marseille in the early 40 during the occupation of the city by German forces.

The camera next covered the parade of all athletes of the world: huge contingents of Germans wearing swastikas on their uniforms, of Americans displaying the stars and stripes, of Japanese, British, Australians, Italians, French, and a smattering of citizens of other nations. The camera focused on various views of faces and muscles. It took me a while to realize that the whole was filmed in black and white, imaginative angles playing the role of color, All the way throughout.

Followed a long series of sports events, mostly track and field. My children and grand-children spent their growing years competing in track, gymnastics and swimming events. I cannot remember how many hours, days and weekends we spent in stadiums or pools anxiously awaiting to hear results. It was so rewarding I know we made many friends at many meets and learned to be very gratified by improvements of minutes, even seconds over previous records!

So, I thoroughly enjoyed the many events. 100, 800, 1,500, and also 10,000meter races... Leni Riefenstahl made even watching the marathon races fascinating... She showed hundreds of faces, and bodies. Her camera was agile and showed unusual and beautiful views of muscles, or the emotions on the faces of the competitors. The high bar events showed athletic bodies flying slowly, high in the sky. Discus and javelin strangely reminded me of the beauty of the bodies of athletes immortalized in many museums of the world.

I was ready to enjoy the second disk appropriately named “**Festival of Beauty**” covering the water events, including diving and ROWING, as well as the closing ceremonies. I had seen parts of the diving, showing enchanting athletic bodies flowing in the air, in a show brought once by an artist friend to our plaza. Sadly, we heard soon afterwards that the disk was broken; and Netflix advised that there were no more copies available...

*Written by, Sabine Wild,
Terwilliger Plaza*

PIANO LESSON

I walked around the city block to Mrs. Putz's brownstone,
up the cement steps to her first floor railroad apartment,
you could see a plant in the window
and parted lace curtains
from the street.

I didn't like going there for piano lessons,
didn't like the doilies on the arms and backs of chairs,
didn't like the small plants neatly placed on side tables,
didn't like the smell from the cup of Ovaltine
she sipped during every lesson.

Mrs. Putz never smiled,
her lips pressed into a straight line
as I played Hanon Scales
and Bach's Minuet in G.
Perhaps it pained her to teach
an unprecocious 10 year old
week after week.

That day, the phone rang during my lesson.
She walked to the black receiver,
I heard her say "Oh."
She came back to the piano
and in a low firm voice told me to leave right away,
to take my things quickly
and go.

Days later, my mother told me
Mr. Putz had died.
I never saw Mrs. Putz again,
and never felt quite as safe
having been within inches of someone
touched by death.

*Written by, Carol Miller,
Mary's Woods at Marylhurst*

PIONEERS - PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Those who are pioneers or possess a pioneering spirit are often admired for their courage, optimism, perseverance and faith.

My paternal grandfather, Duncan, and his best friend, Mike Mulcahey, were strapping young men in the late 1870s languishing in the tiny community of Mahers Grant in Nova Scotia. Their economic future looked dismal and they wondered if they would ever be married and raise children of their own. They received a letter from friends in Minnesota informing them that good jobs were available if they could possibly make it from Nova Scotia to Minneapolis. The two men somehow gathered together the fares for a clipper ship from Nova Scotia to Boston. Once there, they began walking to their destination, stopping along the way in communities to dig graves, work on road projects or wash dishes in restaurants for their board and keep. In less than ninety days, the two bedraggled walkers reached their destination. Soon after arrival, Duncan and Mike met two of the Coakley sisters, Annie and Mary Anne. Courtship and marriage soon followed and both men put down deep roots in Minneapolis and became pillars of their neighborhoods and society in the years ahead. This extraordinary pioneering story about my Grandpa Duncan has made him a talisman for our clan ever since.

Our nation's history is replete with other more famous examples of our pioneering spirit. What could possibly be more remarkable than the epic story of the Voyage of Discovery, the almost other-worldly adventure undertaken by the explorers, Lewis and Clark, at the direction of President Thomas Jefferson. Unlikely leaders, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, demonstrated the epitome of courage, perseverance and uncommon ingenuity to open up the West to our emerging nation. To visit Fort Clatsop on the Oregon Coast is to immerse oneself in the deprivation suffered by this band of explorers and the awe that hearty band must felt when they first heard, and then saw, the Pacific Ocean crashing on the Oregon shore.

More pioneers just kept coming. Imagine the unbounded courage of those people who climbed on board Conestoga wagons in Missouri to begin a long and tortuous trip across the prairies and mountains to the Oregon Territory. The earliest of the travelers could not imagine what lay in front of them as they began their journey. Did they have enough provisions? Would the Native Indians they encountered along the way be friendly...or not. All of the trekkers heading west must have wondered if they would ever again see family members left behind. As importantly, they wondered what life

would be like if they were successful in reaching their destination. Only people with extraordinary optimism and faith would have willingly set out on such an adventure. And yet, these pioneers were needed to really open up the west and pave the way for others who would come later.

The space age introduced us another band of utterly fearless pioneers, the original astronauts who were carefully selected to begin the national project of exploring space and our solar system. Everyone immediately sensed the danger associated with each new probe into the ether. There was an unspoken understanding that any slip up, any miscalculation would almost certainly produce a fatal event. I wonder how many of us thought about what it might be like to be lost in space, untethered from a mother ship and floating in unending blackness for all time. Our very human astronauts must have given some thought to that concept, however fleeting the idea might have been. Over time, we all suffered through a number of incidents which were fatal to our brave astronauts. We all wondered how the astronauts must have felt during the time between catastrophic failure and their untimely deaths. Were they stoic, calm, resigned, panicked? We cannot help but wonder. We considered their bravery as a spectacular affirmation of the American spirit.

These public displays of pioneering activity grab our attention. But, we must not forget the quiet pioneering work being done on a daily basis in universities, medical laboratories, computer centers, hospitals and a host of research facilities in hundreds of industries and places. The vibrancy of our national innovation heavily relies on the pioneering research that is routinely done in thousands of places every day. This effort is pretty much taken for granted by most of us.

The pioneers I really want to focus on are the senior citizens of the United States. In 2019, this group represented about 16% of those living in this country, or about 53 Million people who are 65 years or older. No matter how you classify the ages of this cohort—"new-old," "old" or "old-old"—these people are immersed in intense pioneering activity every day. To one degree or another, all of these folks are dealing with brand new experiences. Diminished energy, reduced strength and flexibility, slower reaction times, poorer eyesight, loss of hearing, lower metabolism, decreased mental acuity—those losses are just natural things that affect almost all people as they reach "old" age. Some must face more debilitating conditions: Glaucoma, Macular Degeneration, Type 2 Diabetes, heart or vascular disease, Cancer, Parkinson's and a host of other illnesses. For

many, the daily chores of living an independent life become more difficult with each passing day. It may be necessary to engage care givers to assist with basic functions like showering, dressing, toileting and even eating. Activities taken for granted like driving an automobile, participating in a favorite sport or traveling are suddenly fraught with difficulty or no longer possible. And, like it or not, many arise each morning recognizing that yesterday was better than today and this gradual diminishment will repeat itself tomorrow. Yet, even accepting that all these depressing facts may be true, we know that better medical science, good nutrition and daily exercise is responsible for increasing life expectancy.

Yes, today's senior citizens must certainly be called pioneers. Faced with the inevitable difficulties of old age, this group seems to move forward with general optimism, a lot of courage, a great deal of perseverance and hope for the future. Just like my Grandpa Duncan, Lewis and Clark, the travelers on the Oregon Trail or the NASA astronauts, our senior citizens may not always know what is around the next bend or over the horizon but they plod forward as best they can living their lives with graciousness, dignity and hope.

Let us all celebrate what this cohort of people means to our community, our country and to the world.

*Written by, Greg Hadley,
Mary's Woods at Marylhurst*

POMEGRANATE

In 1935, Hoover Dam was soon to be dedicated by Franklin D. Roosevelt. It would block the Black Canyon of the Colorado River between Nevada and Arizona.

I was a child of the Intermountain lands between the coastal volcanoes of the Pacific Northwest and the Wasatch range of the Rocky Mountains to the east. We lived in Utah, but the summer I was nine years old my father decided we should see more of the desert world that would soon be covered with water and took us on an automobile trip through the desert. We traveled in a 1930s Ford with scratchy seats, no air conditioning, little room in the backseat for my little sister and me.

I remember little of Hoover Dam under construction other than being held up high in the air on a viewing platform with my mother pleading, "Get her down!"

I remember trying to conquer boring hours by whispering in my little sister's ear, "There really isn't any Santa Claus," and her shrieks that almost made my father run us off the dusty road.

He took all of us down a wooden ladder deep underground into a kiva that could no longer be used by the Indian tribe. Deep earthy smell.

We stopped at a trading post, and he bought me a little turquoise bracelet which I still have. On the porch, a cowboy fell in what I know now was an epileptic seizure, and my mother knew to put a stick between his teeth to keep him from biting his tongue.

We stopped at the side of a road so my sister and I could go potty, and I caught a horned toad, put it in a little box to take home. Further on we saw an old Indian man who had come from a side road from the mountains. He sat by a little wooden box filled with red round fruits. My father asked, "What are those?" The Indian man's brown face wrinkled as he smiled, took a sharp knife and slit one red globe in half. Red juice and seeds poured out, spilling on the ground. "Pomegranate!" he laughed.

When we got home from our trip, my parents began to rush around instead of unpacking our things. Word had come that my grandfather had died, and my father had to catch a train to go to the family home in the Midwest. My little sister and I were sent outside into our cool backyard, pleasant after our desert adventures.

I opened the box with my horned toad. It crawled out slowly and six or eight little horned toads followed slowly. They vanished into the unfamiliar green grass and all were gone.

Where had they gone? I began to cry. My mother came out and said they could not live because it was too cold, that they had died. Died. Is that what that meant? Is that what it meant for my grandfather to crawl into the cold?

*Written by, Mary Bothwell,
Willamette View*

PORTRAIT

In the portrait gallery, the painted faces,
gazing out, lips parted as though to speak,
are framed by all the emblems of their lives:
The children laughing among lilies in the garden,
the young girl singing at the spinet, the jeweled lady
posed within the jeweled drawing room,
the landowner gripping his horse's reins,
standing before the house his fathers built.

For my portrait I would choose Grandmother's porch,
sit under the azure ceiling, my feet bare
against the worn white boards, books piled
beside me on the old swing, my journal
open on my knee. The mockingbird's full-throated
cascade of whistles, chirps, rolling trills,
is pouring down from the live-oak branch.

I reach out, inviting you to join me.

"Listen," I am saying.

Listen.

*Written by, Robin Gault,
Holladay Park Plaza*

PRUNEFACE

My dog, Pruneface, has a face full of wrinkles. He is a very dear dog; we agree on most issues but not on taste for perfumes. His idea of a nice scent is odiferous. He likes to come home reeking from rolling in a manure pile. I've explained to him if he wants to roll, please do it in the clean grass in the back yard. "Yesterday when he came home wearing his powerful sent, I said, "Ok time for a big scrub." I hosed him off, then stuck him in his bath tub with plenty of bubble bath. Then I followed with several rinses. He came out smelling like a rose. "My dear, "I said, "I would like to anoint you with chanelle #5 but I won't because it would displease your pug nose. Pruneface looked at me with that big eyed soulful look and wagged his tail in agreement.

"Now, Pruneface, I'd like to tell you a true story, about a 5yr old, Robert who was spending the weekend with his grandmother. She took him to a church bazaar to which his Kindergarten class was attending. They were standing in line to get their faces painted. The girl ahead of him was a snit. She turned around and said, "Robert, you can't get your face painted. You have freckles and they are ugly!" Robert was a little gentleman so he didn't sock her but he started to cry. His grandmother got down on eye level and said, "Robert, freckles are beautiful; I can't think of anything more beautiful can you?" "Yes Gramma, "he sobbed wrinkles"

"And you, Pruneface, have plenty of wrinkles and they are beautiful. And I am 88 and am getting plenty too. Yes, Pruneface, have you noticed I am 88 getting more beautiful every day? (ha)

*Written by, Sr. Mary Julia Steinkamp,
Mary's Woods at Marylhurst*

RESURRECTION

Yeah—well, God and I have not been on speaking terms for quite a while now.

It's almost thrilling to just up & say it—in print, out loud, even in church.

I am surprised my friend does not jump back, afraid she might be taken,
collateral damage in the thunder bolt that will surely engulf me.

I am taunting God, like a kid on the playground who wants to pick a fight.

There is an orchard of ancient walnut trees we pass practically every day.

Just a remnant actually—maybe a dozen trees max?

They are old; no one knows how old; they none of them bear fruit.

Do any of us ever bother to give them more than a passing glance?

In the winter they are skinny, black, bent--like scary Disney drawings—
members of a forest you'd be a fool to explore.

And every winter I am certain they are dead for good. Really gone.

And that belief stretches for weeks and weeks,
pressing on into spring. Yup, dead and outta here—
absolutely for sure this year.

But then: wrong again.

Brave little leaves peek and emerge, taking their first gulps of air. Bright green.

Brand new.

Perfect and full of promise.

Not everywhere—but mostly. Something like all but 3 trees are back.

And God? I'm not ready for dialog. I'm not listening.

I want you to know that I'm not paying one bit of attention.

*Written by, Judith Lothrop,
Holladay Park Plaza*

SANCTUARY

The Pond in Central Park is calm and sweet.

Softly wave the waters in the breeze.

So many winged creatures take their ease,

A skyward hop from the adjacent street:

Tall, stately herons **seek** their evening treat,

Their **wings well** camouflaged among the trees;

And egrets too, escape the dread disease

Of people squalor, foul air, and concrete.

We stroll together •round our private lake,

Savoring these moments of rare bliss.

Perhaps one evening we may start to make

Important plans, or perhaps forsake

All thought for now; and then 'twould seem that this

Is probably the time to pause and kiss.

*Written by, Enoch Davis
Mennonite Village*

SEA LIONS

I was feeling much older and I went to my wife and told her
That I couldn't assemble my ninety pound telescope anymore!

And macular degeneration gave me much consternation,
Now so hard to see the stars; well, what was next in store?

She took it in stride and then she replied
That she, our only driver, felt our high desert cabin was too
distant by car!

And if we could, sell it we should,
And purchase some place that wasn't so far!

And so we discussed it, and from the mountains we readjusted
And found a picturesque place on the coast!
A condo in Astoria, not quite euphoria,
But offering some things we now enjoy most!

And now I must be truthful, though we're far from youthful,
We find nature an amazing thing to behold!

In Astoria it started with sea lions, those unruly salt water
sirens,
About three hundred of them on the East Mooring Basin dock
all told!

I don't know how they got to me, but their bleating "orks"
went through me,
And I slept better than I ever had before!
Perhaps it was the empathetic feeling that I found appealing,
A feeling that we share this life together that I could not
ignore!

And the feeling that they're keeping vigil, doing something
beneficial,

Intensified this linked-together notion!
The bleats were reassuring and through the night enduring
From these beasts in the briny deep, wide ocean!

But one day in June, close in date to the full moon,
Those beloved "orks" I heard no more!
So I wrote the city manager, of sea lions likely no amateur,
On behalf of my new found friends to implore!
Because in asking around, I'd heard, to me a complaint absurd,
That "ork"-ing sea lions were a menace to the ears!
But Jenn, the lady who wrote back, and assured me there was
no attack
Or untoward behavior toward my friends, calmed my fears!

She explained that June is mating season, and really for that
reason
The sea lions, all male, head south to California to see their
lady friends!
And that if I will be forbearing, in a couple months they'll be
back sharing
The dock of the East Mooring Basin before the summer ends!

So the sea lions in August indeed returned; I needn't have
been so concerned!
And their "ork, ork, ork"-ing still puts me to sleep!
And now I reflect and admire the things that nature can
inspire -
Falling asleep to the sounds of sea lions - no need for counting
sheep!

*Written by, Rufus Day,
Holladay Park Plaza*

SINGING THE PEAK

We see the peak now —
alpine hair white like our own
ravines and crags mirrored in our faces,
gnarled fingers caressing history.

We came from molten rivers longing to be born,
waked from gentle mornings
to ford streams strewn with stones;
learned to sing our way through darkness.

We sang songs that had not been sung -
anthems of those muted by history,
cities burning, people dying, wars that ended
and those begun.

We grew in courage, grace, acceptance;
saw that good can fail and evil succeed.
We learned to lean in with open eyes,
seeing light streaming from behind dark skies.

It takes sitting astride many years
to understand the songs we were meant to sing;
the heavens blue above us,
our life scattered like wildflowers below.

*Written by, Susan Shumway,
Mennonite Village*

STAINED GLASS WINDOWS IN THE CHAPEL

On June 17, 2008 the Chapel at Capital Manor was dedicated. Two stained glass window panels were installed. These panels were done by artist Gary Swanson of the Stained-Glass Studio in Mill City, OR.

As I sit in the Chapel looking at the vibrant stained colors, I feel inspired. The brightness spreads a glow of reflection from the colors and beams throughout the entire room. It begins by carrying our faith and guiding us on a path to our journey. I see the red ribbon that flows through the glass as the element of our faith as we think of eternal life. Some of the layers of pieces are very large and others are very small pieces. The larger pieces represent the layers of our lives and our journey. The smaller pieces are a variant of how they impact our walk and where we are going.

The embedded Alpha and Omega symbols ("A" and the "O") in the middle of the stained glass remind us that as we make the journey there is a beginning and an end. The cross with the letter "P" reminds us of our ancient Christian forefathers and our Christian fellows at the present time.

Some days our journey is a struggle, a challenge or hurdle. The ribbon that floats through the panels carries us along the way of our daily lives of disparity, hope, bending and twisting. It is our faith that guides us on our path from Alpha to Omega. We are a part of all that has been and of all that will come.

*Written by, Darlene Boday,
Capital Manor*

THAT TIME OF YEAR

The repeat of the vocal rise and fall of the word “mayim.”
There it goes again...majestic...and terrible.
A reminder of what was...and what might yet come to be...

It is that season of Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Days of Awe...
And what happened? Is it five years ago already?
Time flies...and sometimes crawls...
It flies when we're not paying attention...and crawls when we are suffering or struggling or
in The Land of the Incomprehensible.

It was to that particular Land we were emotionally dragged after Aryeh, a Rabbi and my
friend, went to the wedding of his oldest son in Mexico. This was a son from a marriage in
his younger years...one of three fine sons.

Aryeh performed the wedding ceremony in Hebrew and in Spanish so as to be inclusive to
his Mexican daughter-in-law and her extended family.

It was a good wedding, they all said. And congregants said that in English, in Hebrew, in
Yiddish, and in Spanish.

And the wedding and his blessing and the reception had gone splendidly, so they all
said...and then...Aryeh and his family visited the ocean...

The afternoon sun warmed him, his wife, and their twin boys of four. There was splashing,
and Beth thought her husband was waving to them at the shoreline. And then the waving
stopped. And he stopped...and floated in the waist deep Mexican waters out in the middle
of a nowhere beach.

And his physician wife could not resuscitate his life back...and the twins watched...and
then the family waited until the police finally arrived to take his body away...

And I, who almost drowned at seventeen, dragged out by a riptide on a New York beach,
appreciate the feeling of not being able to catch a breath...and to lose the ability to know
up from down...and then to choose to let go of caring and fighting towards life because it is
impossible and too exhausting.

And so, at Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year, I honor my longtime friend and brother
of my heart and I chant the Unetanetokef...“Who shall live and Who shall die. Who shall
die by fire and who by water...who shall live and who shall die.” For this is the time of year
when we confront ourselves and we ask God, take pity on us so that we might live a bit
longer.

And so, we ask for rachmanas...mercy. And we promise to be better and kinder people...for that is the myth...that God will notice...and sentence us less harshly.

And we do this because to not believe in the myth is too hard a reality. And so, we believe or pretend to believe.

And so, I sing...and have sung...the same niggun...the same tune... with the same intonation...for five or more years, no matter my mood. I honor the dead.

And I sing to the soul of my friend because I want to believe that he hears me.

*Written By, Ruth Friedel
Willamette View*

THE BIG OAK TREE

The autumn leaves are changing from green to
golden brown.

And soon the grass will change, to snow upon
the ground.

The tree will soon stand naked against
the winter cold.

So tall and strong and sturdy and looking
very bold.

But no one knows the big old tree is very
sad today.

As all his feathered friends are going far
away.

He'll be so lonesome standing, alone out in
the cold.

Just waiting for the springtime, when birds
again he'll hold.

So if you have a minute, while passing him
today.

Just stop and say "hello" to him and watch his
big arms wave.

*Written by, Carol S. Winkler,
Dallas Retirement Village*

THE FAMILY

A complicated corporation
made of many different parts
yet a whole.

Many personalities
Bound together
by the love
that gave them life.

At times the cord is loose,
other times tight, constricting,
testing the strength.

We are united by the ties of
Love
Commitment
Choice

and the Will to Endure.
In spite of the disappointments
and abrasions of daily life
YOU are my family.

*Written by, Ann Hudson,
Willamette View*

THE GIFT SHE IS

She thinks she's of no use; it's time to go
like a garment faded and unfit.

Although a gift and pleasure early on,
now it simply takes up space and maybe
should have been a discard long ago.

Feeling disenchanted with herself -
a light gone out - she wonders at the friends
who visit sometimes weekly, sometimes more,
and sit with her or tell her news from town.
Though they wish for her to see they truly care,
she gently tries to tell them not to fret,
she'll understand when they can't come around.

But she forgets her spirit doesn't age,
isn't just a flame with certain end.
Born yester year from seed inside their hearts,
she held her place in who they came to be
like a subtle, special note composed in song.

The gift she is can never pass away
nor her presence greeting them today.

*Written by, Sandra Felkenes,
Willamette View*

THE LAST ONE

I want to remember
when I next see you
that it might be the last time.

I want to remember this
so that I can touch your skin now
press my hand softly against your cheek
or hold your hand if even for a nanosecond.

I want to remember
the smile you just gave
as it may be the last one offered me.

I want to remember to say words
that affirm and don't hurt
tell you why I like you
why you are special.

I want to remember the next time I see you
whether you are bagging my groceries
standing behind me waiting for coffee
or sleeping on the church steps under the awning
that I might be the last person
to offer you kindness.

*Written by, Esther Elizabeth,
Holladay Park Plaza*

THE MAILBOX IS BULGING

I thought the elves and fairies had it good living in the forest but too many forest fires caused them to migrate to the city and become slaves in the junk mail industry. The Leprechauns thought the grass was greener on the other side of the rainbow and followed their cousin's path. The munchkins moved from the Emerald City to the country and are working from home now with 5G generating all the mailing lists. All the gnomes left Germany due to far right extremist and came to America, but are having trouble with immigration rules. The goblins left Greece due to economic conditions. The Dragons left China because of COVID-19 and are now stuck in quarantine. The Witches came from Russia and Ukraine because they were being hunted. The Wizards left Hogwarts due to BREXIT as they could no longer benefit from the EU trading partners.

Who knows how long these groups will be detained before they can work in the junk mail industry which provides a big boon to our GDP. There just seems to be no end to the migrant workers who are well suited for this industry which no one else wants to do.

However, it doesn't stop there our recycle bins are overflowing the collectors haul it away and it gets recycled into more junk mail. Do you think AI's would allow this to happen? Maybe they will be our saving grace.

I hope you are enjoying your daily and weekly presents. I don't get any.

*Written by, Carol Helm,
The Village Retirement Center*

THE MEMORY CAFE

The church I attend is a church in the country south of Canby, Oregon. A few years ago, our pastor started having a lunch on the first Friday of each month during the fall and winter months. It is called the Memory Cafe. A wonderful cook from our church would prepare a healthy lunch for us to enjoy. It was no ordinary lunch. We were served things like a baked potato with tahini dressing, Brussel sprout salad, rice bowl with oven baked miso tofu, wild rice broccoli salad, to name a few.

Our pastor would arrange for speakers to come to our cafe and give us information on different subjects. We had representatives from the American Cancer Society, the Alzheimer's Association, a pharmacist, a person from the Aging and Disability Resource Connection, balance and fall prevention, a nurse told us about the importance of sleep. Professors from Willamette and Western Oregon Universities, both current and retired including Dr. Rob Whiningham, a leading expert on brain wellness.

Four of my cousins and I meet every other month to have lunch together. We meet at different places through the year. One morning I get a call from my cousin and she asked me what time I was picking her up? I said and where are we going? We are going to the Memory Cafe she replied well, I said it starts at noon so, I'll pick you up at around 11:30. After the call was ended, I thought now why didn't I know that we were going to the Memory Cafe this month. So, I called her and asked her why I didn't know we were going there this month and she replied "Jan said last month that we would meet there again next month" Well, I suppose it was casually mentioned that we would meet there again next month but I certainly didn't remember it when I returned home, or I would have written it on my calendar.

One day I got a call from a friend of mine and she told me that she had missed me yesterday, I said and where was I supposed to be? At the Memory Cafe she replied. I had a doctor's appointment so I couldn't attend. I do hate to miss The Memory Cafe.

*Written by, Arlene Peterson,
Hope Village*

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STREET

In the 1940's and 50's in Portland, Oregon, near where I was born and raised, there were very few Jewish people and Negroes. The Chinese people lived in Chinatown, one small area in the city and the Negroes lived in a part of NE Portland. My father worked in the City and he rode the bus to and from work. In those years after the Great Depression, our parents worked very hard to try to make a better life for their families. We didn't have TV yet, and we did not travel around just for fun or enjoyment. So, I had no personal contact with other than White Protestants and Catholics.

In 1949 I enjoyed the real treat of a week at Bible Camp in Troutdale, Oregon. And, there I was introduced to the very first black person I had ever been around, she was one of the 12-year olds with whom I shared a cabin along with 10 other girls and our counselor.

This girl, Betty, had sparkly eyes and a delightful sense of humor. She kept us laughing a big part of the evenings when we were supposed to be settling down for the night, and by the end of the week, we all had developed a real bond and respect and it was difficult to leave each other.

In December 1955, during my high school senior year, in the eastern part of our country, Rosa Parks who was the Negro woman who stood her ground and refused to give up her seat on a segregated bus. This made the news out west, but didn't seem to affect us very much.

After completing high school, I attended Oregon State College in Corvallis where I majored in Business Education. During those years that school's attendance was about 9,000 students, and even then the only black students I observed there were on the college sports teams, and of course that was from a distance. One of those boys was especially popular with the whole student body. He was very handsome, an outstanding football player, and an admired student body officer.

When my graduation time rolled around in 1959, businesses from all over the US sent recruiters to interview and hire us as employees before we

ever received our degrees! Those were the days! I and two of my graduating girl fiends were hired by a government agency in Washington, D.C. to begin secretarial work there and then be able to travel to other countries! How exciting this was! My work would begin in September of 1959.

I enjoyed a happy, care-free summer packed with play and with continuing the secretarial work for the Oregon State Board of Health in Portland. This office had hired me on every vacation all through college. This building where I worked was high up in the State Office Building, about seven blocks from “Downtown.” At times on my lunch hour that summer, I would rush down to the street from my 7th floor office and walk as fast as I could to the City Center. Now that I had a “real job” lined up for September, my mind enthusiastically dreamed of my big trip “East.” One day I scouted out the only Airline office In Portland then—United, and it was small.

One of those days on my lunch break, I visited that office on Broadway and purchased my very first ever airline ticket to go on my big adventure. I was so excited and could hardly wait!

Finally, September rolled around. Mom and Dad had gifted me with my very own luggage for my birthday and now my things were excitedly packed many days early, I might add.

As my parents drove me to the Portland airport that big day, there I sat in the back seat, my mind soaring with excitement of actually being able to fly in one of those planes I had only watched as a child, sprawled in the grass behind my house chasing my dreams.

In those days there were no security checks and people could walk right up to the gate to send off or greet their loved ones. As we arrived at my gate, there was that giant United Airlines prop plane out there just waiting for me! I caught a glimmer of tears in my dear Mom’s eyes as I stepped out the gate. She feared she’d never see me again. But off I went to chase my dreams!

I was glued to the window on that flight with the awe of my first experience being in the clouds, feeling freedom, and seeing how huge our country really is. All went very well and we were met by my girlfriends' parents in Washington, D.C. They helped us find an apartment in Georgetown. And from there we three young, inexperienced girls from the "far west" reported for our new jobs. We were filled with the excitement of that beautiful historical city and of beginning our first real independence.

After about a month, a sorority friend from OSC contacted me that she and her new husband were stationed in Ft. Lee, Virginia. And, she invited me to come stay for a weekend. It was a 3 ½ hour bus ride from DC, south with a bus change in Richmond, Virginia. I enthusiastically made plans and when the day came for me to go, I found my way to the Greyhound Bus Station in the City, picked up my tickets with the one transfer and climbed aboard.

As the bus rolled on south, I gazed at the view from the windows of that part of the country which had been settled for so much longer than our little suburban area on the Pacific Coast. On we traveled through Alexandria and Fredericksburg.

The buildings and homes were mostly old and brick and many looked poor. As we moved further into "the South," I also noticed more and more black people. At last we pulled into Richmond, Virginia, where I needed to transfer from Greyhound to a Trailways bus. Now, how would I find the Trailways station?

I followed some people to the glass Exit door, but just as I was to pass through it, there was a Black lady loaded very high with parcels about to enter. Of course, I took the door handle, stepped back and held the door open for her as I would for anyone. The woman stepped back with wide eyes and was determined not to pass through. This behavior shocked and puzzled me as I had never seen anything like this before. We stood there apart, our eyes just fixed upon each other. I would not give in to moving ahead of this woman with the gigantic load until she finally moved on in.

Not more than three minutes later I was on the street and looking around, wondering where the Trailways terminal was. With crowded streets and unfamiliar area, I moved toward a gentleman and asked him, "Could you tell me how can get to the Trailways station?"

His response left me puzzled and trying to sort out his words. He used his finger and pointed as he told me, "Cross this street right here, turn left, and walk five blocks down this same street but on the other side. Then cross back over to this side, and you'll see the terminal right there."

What? I thought. Can I not just walk down this side? Must I walk on the other side of the street? It was then and there that I, this naive your girl from the Pacific Northwest began to understand segregation. I was shocked and puzzled with this next experience, but I followed his directions with sadness and a heavy heart.

At the station I boarded my bus and traveled on for another 1 ½ hours to Ft. Lee where my college sorority sister awaited me. She had been teaching grade school there for just a few weeks. I could hardly wait to discuss these things with her when she met me at my bus stop, but she quickly shushed her finger to her lips, telling me to wait until we were inside to talk.

This was my first experience encountering the powerful feelings of racial inequality.

With the celebration just two weeks ago of Martin Luther King's Birthday which enhances education an awareness of racial equality, I thought again of this, my limited racial experience in our South 60 years ago.

*Written by, Darolen Sorum,
Friendsview Retirement Community*

THE PLIGHT OF THE HUMMINGBIRD

A call came in on Audubon's hotline from an administrator of a Head Start School. A hummingbird — a female Anna's from the description — was loose in one of the classrooms that served the 3-5 year old students and couldn't find its way out. This type of call is just one of the incredibly varied that a Wildlife Resolution Counselor at Portland Audubon's Wildlife Care Center is asked to address. Such calls range from window strikes, cat-caught birds, swifts in chimneys, swallows unable to feed due to weather conditions, abandoned baby squirrels, teen-age coyotes in yards — many of the issues migratory and seasonal, with each month the calls taking on new perspectives. Then there's always a twist that is challenging, a new wrinkle to a common problem. There is never a shift during which I don't learn something new — from bird behavior, from research that I do, or from the three staff members, all walking encyclopedias of bird/mammal-related issues.

After 9 years as a volunteer Wildlife Rehabilitator in the Care Center's hospital I decided to try out this newly created position. In my early 70's my body told me it was time for a younger body to take over the hard, demanding work of the hospital that I loved so much. It was with reservations that in the late fall of 2013 I sat for the first time at a desk just outside the hospital area, little knowing the fulfillment I would derive from the calls of strangers — experiencing their problems, their concerns.

It is these callers themselves that continue to astound me to this day, the lengths that people, just average people, are willing to extend themselves to help our furred and feathered creatures. I leave each shift humbled, reinvigorated, their stories washing through me like cleansing tidal waters — my heart singing with renewed joy, gratitude and hope in my fellow man who continually proves to be anything but average. The Anna's Hummingbird call proved to be such a story.

The school room had very high ceilings and the administrator had tried leaving all of the six lower windows open — sash types that swung outward from the top — but with no luck. Birds cannot distinguish between windows glassed and open, hence the high number of window strike casualties that we see in our Care Center. The administrator wanted someone to come out to rescue the bird. However, even a long-handled net could not reach high enough and then there was the possibility of damage to the bird's fragile wings to consider. Normal bird rescue of this nature would not work either as that required a seed eater along with a trapping cage. So, what to try?

My suggestion was that the administrator leave only one window open, dropping the blinds on all the others. I asked if a hummingbird feeder could be located or purchased, preferably one that sits flat with lots of red on it, along with sugar, water and a measuring cup. "Definitely," was her eager reply. The sill outside the open window would be a good place to set the prepared feeder while leaving the classroom empty for several hours. Emphasizing that getting food into this little hummer was paramount as it had been flying around for over 4 hours with access

to only minimal perching areas, I stressed that this species of bird, because of its high metabolism, needed to restock on a regular basis. If by time school was out and the bird was still in the classroom, the next step would be to leave all lights out but place a flashlight near the feeder for the night.

The administrator was prepared to give it a shot. Several hours later a *very* excited voice on the phone, her words tumbling over each other like pebbles in a sunlit burbling stream. When they had gone back into the room no one could see the hummer anywhere. Going to the shade by the open window to draw it up for light, they found the bird clinging to the cord, still inside but near the feeder. The administrator grasped the hummer in her hand but it refused to release its grip on the cord. Smart gal that she was, she passed the hummer on the cord, out the window, to a teacher surrounded by her young students who were jockeying quietly for the best viewing position, their fresh upturned faces filled with the wonder of this small miracle seen so close. She closed the window on the cord, ran around to the outside, and then gently placed the hummer's bill inside the feeder tube. It promptly began a marathon feeding. The bird finally released the cord so that its feet could be placed on the edge of the feeder where it continued to draw in the nectar with quick flicks of its long unfurled tongue, its iridescent emerald feathers flashing in the sunlight. The decision was made there and then to keep the feeder hung on a nearby tree branch. The administrator thought that the whole venture had been just wonderful. She couldn't thank us enough for being there for them, and the experience had been so educational for the young children. They were involved in the process the whole way — some going with her to buy the feeder, others preparing the nectar under the guidance of a teacher, others placing the feeder on the ledge. She had researched Anna's Hummingbirds and talked with the students about feeding, migratory habits and needs. She had explained "torpor" in simplified terms, telling them that this little bird could go to sleep by locking its feet onto a branch and slowing down its heart rate and body temperature — all of which would allow it to save its body fat and its energy when not feeding. She was so thrilled, the students were jazzed, and I? I sat there with tears in my eyes. Who needs to be paid to do this job? Not me.

*Written by, Rie Luft,
Mary's Woods at Marylhurst*

THE SILENCE

I was born and raised in a crowded lower middle-class urban area in the northwestern corner of Indiana completely surrounded by steel mills and oil refineries. Even though I was lovingly nurtured by my parents and a large extended family, I realized very early in life that there was something drastically wrong with the environment I lived in. The sky was filled with smoke and soot, the odor of the air varied constantly depending on which industrial plant was upwind at the moment, and the rumbles, roars, and whistles of the manufacturing processes made quiet times non-existent.

As a pre-school toddler, I found myself burrowing deep into the shrubbery in our front yard to screen out the cacophony around me and to look for nature. I found nature by watching ants orderly marching along defined trails, finding various beetles and moths, and occasionally stumbling upon a rat.

As I grew older, I began to wonder if and when I would ever get the opportunity to explore the natural world. The opportunity was provided during the summer of my thirteenth year.

My uncle had access to a lone cabin on isolated Cloverleaf Lake in the backwoods of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. He would be taking me and my grandfather there on a fishing trip. We would be traveling by car 400 miles due north. I packed up my fishing tackle and could hardly wait to get started.

After a 10 hour ride, we turned off a gravel road and headed off through the brush finally arriving at the cabin. I was very excited.

I struggled out of the back seat of the car and tried to drink it all in a single gulp. At long last - the fabled Northwoods. I heard the wind whispering through the tops of the pines and rattling the leaves of the birch, I smelled the spruce and balsam. I heard the melodic tinkle of small wavelets lapping at the shore of the lake. Everything was new and exciting yet, wonder of wonders, it all seemed so familiar. I got the distinct feeling of coming home after a long journey. I had spent the first thirteen years of my life in Indiana surrounded by a large nurturing and loving extended family, yet never had the sense of place seemed so right as it did at that moment.

Timothy Egan, in his book "Lasso the Wind", writes: "People do not make intellectual attachments to land. They become passionate because something clicks, some esthetic connection. They get a dose of religion . . . sometimes from an angle of light at dawn, but it is seldom rational in its origin." Egan's words are a far better explanation of what I experienced than I could ever come up with. Something clicked in me, certainly not the result of any rational thought process. Although I wouldn't recognize it for many years, the sound of that click was the

linchpin of my life being locked in place.

I enjoyed the banter and the camaraderie of the men in camp, and I was accepted as a peer. But I soon became aware of a driving need for solitude. I wanted to experience the North Country face to face, with no other human within sight or sound. For some reason, this idea became extremely important to me, and I began to formulate a plan to make it possible.

There were two metal boats beached on shore that we used for fishing. Off to the side almost buried in reeds was an old green wooden boat rather worn but still seaworthy. I couldn't find a set of oars for it, but I did find an old canoe paddle. I showed my uncle the boat I had resurrected from the weeds and the canoe paddle. I just came out and asked if I could have the exclusive use of the boat, and if he would mind if I fished by myself for awhile. He looked the boat over, and quickly agreed to my plan. Perhaps he understood my need more than I thought he did.

Cloverleaf Lake was aptly named. It consisted of three large bays arranged almost exactly like the petals of a cloverleaf separated by heavily wooded peninsulas that screened each bay from the others. I headed out as fast as my paddle could propel me to the farthest unoccupied reach of Cloverleaf. I did not believe it possible for life to be any fuller or richer. I had my own boat, propelled by my own muscles, loaded with my own fishing tackle, in what amounted to my own lake out of sight or sound of any other human. But, as exciting as it was, it wasn't the fishing action that made the greatest impression on me. My epiphany, when it came, was totally unexpected and unforeseen.

It was a pleasant warm evening with a slight breeze and a cloudless blue sky. The sun was just starting to slide behind the tree line on the western shore. I was alone and letting the breeze move the green boat parallel to the shoreline while I cast my lure towards all likely looking spots.

Suddenly, it happened.

The breeze stopped completely. The ripples disappeared from the lake, and the surface became glassy smooth. The ambient sound of mosquitoes and buzzing insects stopped. Everything was softly bathed in the warm, rich, orange light of the setting sun. My ears strained for sound, as a drowning man might strain for breath. There was none. I stopped fishing. I shifted on my seat and my foot grated on the bottom of the boat. The noise seemed obscene, and I sat perfectly still, afraid to make another sound, as if sound would shatter forever this crystalline world that seemed to encapsulate me.

I don't know how long I sat there, still and silent. Then a slight breeze caught my cheek. I heard once again the hum of mosquitoes and somewhere along shore a

frog croaked. It was as if the North Country stirred back to life and went on about its' business of settling in for the night.

When I got back to camp that evening, I never told anyone about my experience. There was no way I could conjure up the words to adequately describe what had happened. What I did do, however, was to see if I could recapture the same sensations on other days. I found that I could, not on each and every day, but on many days.

I was enthralled with my discovery. If I had ever thought about silence at all before, I considered it to be merely the absence of sound. Yet what I had discovered was not the absence of anything, but rather a palpable fullness and completeness.

I wondered if anyone else had ever had a similar experience. Certainly, I had never heard anyone speak of it if they had. Many years were to pass before I would discover the writings of Sigurd Olson. In his book "Wilderness Days", he captured the essence of my experience with what he called "The Silence" when he wrote of being beside a northern lake: "Standing there alone, I felt alive, more aware and receptive than ever before. A shout or a movement would have destroyed the spell. This was a time for silence, for being in pace with ancient rhythms and timelessness, the breathing of the lake, the slow growth of living things. Here the cosmos could be felt and the true meaning of attunement."

All too soon, my time at Cloverleaf for that summer came to an end, and I returned home to begin high school. But Cloverleaf and The Silence had changed me. Like Olson, I had discovered the meaning of attunement. All my life I have marveled at the feeling of belonging that I first felt on Cloverleaf. There was simply no doubt that the woods and waters were home, and that they irrefutably defined who I was and fixed my place in the cosmos.

Experiencing The Silence as a 13 year-old irrevocably fixed my future. During my high school years, adults in the steel mill country commonly asked "what do you want to be when you grow up"? My immediate response was always "I'm gonna be a forester". After the surprised look on their faces faded, they wrote off my response as some sort of teen-aged insanity.

But I did become a forester, and I had a long career in the Douglas-fir forests of Oregon. Even now, in the 9th decade of my life, I can sit back, close my eyes, and fully relive, in great detail, my first experience with The Silence.

*Written by, Ron Sadler,
Mennonite Village*

THE TREE NAMED GUARDIAN

I noticed the towering tree the first time I used the Mary's Woods swimming pool in the summer of 2015. Exercising at the pool's deep end and observing the tree through the window, I became enchanted by its huge trunk, its balanced branches and its stately presence. One day I told a fellow swimmer that I was going to give the tree a nickname _ Guardian because of the way it seemed to stand watch over pool users.

Later, I learned that Guardian was one of a few Giant Sequoias on the premises. Out of curiosity, I took a tape measure and went out to the tree's trunk, wrapping the tape measure around the trunk to determine its circumference. I was just about finished when a deep voice said, "What are you doing down there?" Startled, I looked around. I saw no one. Again, the voice rang out, "You are doing something with my trunk. You owe me an explanation." Suddenly, I realized that Guardian was talking to me. No, I thought, that is ridiculous. Trees can't talk. Still, I didn't know what else to do so I talked back. "I'm just measuring your trunk's circumference. I think you're such a beautiful tree and I want to know more about you. I've even chosen a nickname for you Guardian because you seem to be protecting the pool and its swimmers."

There was a short pause and then the voice returned. "Well, it's flattering that you are so interested in me. As for the nickname Guardian, I kind of like it. Feel free to call me that." By this time, I felt as if I was allowing myself to be drawn into some kind of twilight zone. But I was loving the experience and decided to go along with it.

I finished my measuring job and said, "The circumference of your trunk is 22 feet, 6 inches. Could you tell me your height?"

"I don't know exactly but I think I'm about 175 feet tall," Guardian said. "Of course, I'm still growing."

Then I inquired about Guardian's age. He told me he was 57. "That probably sounds old to you but, relatively speaking, I'm just a kid," he said. "Giant Sequoias sometimes live for as much as 3,000 years and grow as tall as 300 feet."

Guardian explained that he came to the site of what would later become the Mary's Woods senior living complex in 1959 along with three other Giant Sequoias. The four were in their infancy and were shipped to the Oregon Province of the Sisters of the Holy Names by the California Province as a gift in recognition of the 100-year celebration of the founding of St. Mary's Academy and the Oregon Province.

"They originally planted all four of us in the Novitiate yard next to what would later become the Sandpiper Room," said Guardian, and his voice sounded as if he was excited to be telling me his story. "A couple of years later, in the early 1960s, the sisters realized that we would become much too big to stay located there. So, they had us transplanted."

Then he explained how he and the three other Giant Sequoias were moved to their current locations, long before the Durocher and Dufresne buildings were constructed. "I had no idea at the time that I would be next to a swimming pool where I would be able to watch people coming and going," Guardian said.

Of the other three California-born Giant Sequoias, one is located not far from Guardian next to the Mary's Woods artificial-turf putting green. Another has an awesome presence in front

of the main entrance to Dufresne. The fourth thrives near the Dufresne parking lot and close to Holy Names Drive.

"At the time of our transplanting, none of us had a clue that our locations would be so much a part of the community that has blossomed here," Guardian said. "Our lives underwent a major change in 2001 when Mary's Woods was created by the Oregon Province. Residents began moving in and, suddenly, there was a lot more activity around us. It has been delightful."

By this time, I had quit trying to understand how this conversation could be possible. I asked Guardian why Giant Sequoias can have such a long lifespan.

"We are something like our cousins, the Giant Redwoods," he replied. "We have strong bases and our bark is very thick, making it resistant to insects and disease. Some people have referred to us as the ultimate old-growth trees."

Then Guardian mentioned that, while Giant Redwoods are located mainly in northern California, Giant Sequoias are prevalent in central and southern Nevada and also have significant numbers in the Portland area of Oregon. "The climate here, with plenty of moisture, is good for us," he said.

Finally, Guardian suggested that I not tell anyone that he had talked to me. "They would think you had gone off the deep end," he said. "There's no way they would believe you and I wouldn't reply if any of them came out and tried to start a conversation. I don't want to become a sideshow."

"Does that mean that you won't talk to me again, either?" I asked.

"That's correct," he replied. "I've probably said too much already."

*Written by, Bob Robinson,
Mary's Woods at Marylhurst*

THE UNEXPECTED HONEYMOON JUNE THROUGH SEPTEMBER 1954

When you're 18 and graduating from high school and engaged to the most fabulous guy you ever met (six-foot tall, about 200 pounds and a tuba player), you don't always think about the decisions you are about to make.

Dean Fitzwater and I had announced to parents and friends that we would be married in December.

For most of his life Dean and his family spent summers working for the US Forest Service. In the 1940s many young men were serving their country in the Second World War. Dean's father, an attorney, left his office for five months every year to work in the Dale (Oregon) Ranger District to protect our national forests.

In 1952/53 Dean worked for the Walla Walla district of the Umatilla National Forest.

Early one morning the phone rang at my parent's home. Dean excitedly told my mom "that if we could get married in June, he and I could have a job on a lookout tower for the summer." My mother was not nearly as excited as he was. She tried to explain that you couldn't plan a wedding in two weeks. His response was "sure we can." How romantic.

Fast forward to June 19th when we were married. We spent the next week living with his parents. We got everything together -- clothes, food and other supplies we would need for the next three months to live at a lookout tower, 45 miles from the nearest main road; and me a city girl.

A week later we left for Walla Walla. During the previous week Dean had purchased a used pickup truck. He detailed it, including the oil pan, which was full of gunk, from top to bottom.

Early on a Saturday morning we headed out. We got as far as Bridal Veil Falls when we had a flat tire. We stopped on the side of I- 84. The spare tire was under all of our supplies in the pickup.

While Dean was changing the tire, he noticed that oil was dripping from the bottom of the truck. We drove on to Walla Walla, stopping when necessary to add oil. When we arrived at the home of our boss, he dumped me with them and put all our supplies in their garage, then drove back to Portland. I sincerely doubt that truck received much oil.

He took the truck to the dealer and traded it for a 1937 Plymouth pickup and drove it back to Walla Walla.

We headed for Hoodoo Lookout, about 45 miles from Tollgate, Oregon. It took us four hours to drive the 45 miles. Trees were down, parts of the road were washed out and there was other winter damage. Our summer job had begun. Not quite as romantic as I thought it would be.

When we arrived at Hoodoo Ridge Lookout (now a national historic site), I saw a tiny house (20' x 14') that was built in 1933 by the CCC and a 101-ft. steel tower with a 7' x 7' cab on top. Out back was an outhouse and a garage. My home for the next three months.

The cabin was really just one room divided into two. In the kitchen was a wood stove, a table, a sink and a little counter with drawers underneath and some cupboards over the stove. In the other room was a bed and a couple of chairs.

We worked seven days a week in the cab built on top of the tower. To get to the top we climbed 133 steps. We went up through a trapdoor into a room with windows on all four sides and an amazing view. It also held an Osborne fire finder and the turning board used to find a directional bearing (azimuth) in order to alert fire crews to a fire. It was the scariest thing I had ever seen. I had no sense of direction.

Dean got paid for five days and me for two. Down the road was the guard station. On the way up Dean told me a story about the trail crew who had worked there the year before. They weren't terribly happy with an 18-year-old kid routing them out in the middle of the night to fight fires. I envisioned these big burly goons ready to beat him up.

After we arrived, he told me that he had to go back to the guard station to get water for us. When he hadn't come back, for three hours, this city girl began to panic. What would I do if he never came back? What if those big guys were there? Long story short, he had been cleaning up around the building and fixing the road. Never once thought I would be scared.

One day, after we had been on the tower, we were coming down the stairs when I challenged Dean to a race to the outhouse. I was well ahead in the race when he dashed by me, threw open the door, and jumped in with both feet. The floor of the outhouse went all the way to the bottom of the hole. Enough said.

Friends of ours came to visit and I decided I should bake a cake. I had little experience baking cakes or using a woodstove oven. I dutifully timed the cake, opened the door, reached in and tapped the side of the cake. It felt to me like it was done. I took it out, let it cool for a few minutes, and put on the frosting. When it came time to serve, I found the middle had flopped to the bottom of the pan, only the edges around the pan were completely baked. I cut out the middle and hid it in the cupboard. I served the outside pieces for dinner. The next morning, when I came into the kitchen, the guys were having coffee and a piece of what they called UUGGG cake. It was the centerpiece I had hidden in the cupboard. To this day they have never let me forget it.

We saw very few people that summer. Other forest service personnel were most of our visitors.

One day the District Forest Ranger came by with another gentleman, and they brought a large pail of huckleberries. The Ranger announced that they would be back for dinner the next night and wanted huckleberry pie. I had watched my mom bake pie, but I had never made one by myself. When I looked in the cupboard all I had were two four-piece pie pans. The next day I made enough crust for two small pies. That evening when they came to dinner, I cut the first pie into thirds and served them to the men. I cut $\frac{1}{4}$ piece out of the second pie for myself. The Ranger ask for a second piece. When I asked him if he would like a large or small piece, he said, "I will just take that piece that's cut," and finished the rest of the pie.

We had been at the lookout for about two months when we had a very large rainstorm. Our boss radioed and said we could take the weekend off. We decided, for some unknown reason, to drive to Lewiston, Idaho. It was approximately 10 miles on gravel roads to Troy, Oregon and about 57 miles on a very narrow switchback road to Lewiston. It took us about 4 hours. We stopped at one end of town at a Chinese restaurant. Then we walked down Main Street to the grocery store and to the Dairy Queen. We ate ice cream sundaes, walked back to the car, and drove all the way home. We couldn't afford to stay at a motel.

I had never driven a car. My husband tried to teach me. The pickup had a stick shift. One day, when Dean was gone, it started to rain. The pickup bed was full of supplies. I decided I could back it into the garage. When he came home, he burst out laughing for I had jammed the garage door between the fender and the bumper. I truly don't remember how we got it out.

We had an amazing summer. If you honeymoon on a lookout two things will happen. One, you may wind up hating each other. Two, you feel like you can conquer the world and spend the rest of your life together. We chose the second. Forty-nine years later, four children and six grandchildren, we felt like we had conquered the world.

You have to promise me you won't tell anyone. I spent the entire summer in fear of overlooking a fire. For no matter how hard I worked at it, I never could get my directions and coordinates in the right place on that miserable fire finder. If it had been my responsibility to send out a crew, they would have been hopelessly lost.

*Written by, Patsy Wiemken,
Willamette View*

THE VISIT

“Please, Mom. I’d rather not visit Grandma Joan.”

“That surprises me. Why not?”

“I want to remember Grandma the way she was before I left for college. She’d been forgetful and confused once in a while, but now she’s in that place. I don’t want to see her going out of her mind.”

“Shelly your grandmother isn’t out of her mind,” Carol said. “The dementia is progressing, and that’s why we placed her where she will get the care she needs. There are days when she recognizes me and remembers recent happenings. Other days, she’s in another place, another time.” Carol paused. “It isn’t easy to see her change, but this is what she has been given. She needs us. We must help her through it as best we can.”

“Oh, Mom.” Shelly shook her head. “I just don’t know.”

“Seeing you may jar her memory, or she may have no idea who you are. Don’t worry. She doesn’t rant and rave or froth at the mouth.” Carol’s tone sharpened. “I want to leave in half an hour.”

Carol took a deep breath to hold back the tears. Shelly said nothing. Thirty minutes later, they were on their way to the care center.

“Mom, if it gets to be too much, may I please step out?”

“Shelly.” Joan snapped.

“Nan, a friend at school, has a favorite aunt who has Alzheimer’s. One time, she tried to kiss her aunt on the cheek. The woman screamed bloody murder, calling her terrible names. Nan began to cry when she told me about it.”

“You’re a sensitive young woman, which explains some of your misgivings. Please relax.” Carol paused. “She’s your grandmother. You’ll know the right thing to do.”

They reached the care center and signed in at the desk.

“It’s good to see you,” said a friendly young woman. “Mrs. Lacey is waiting for you.” Shelly smiled, but the flutter in her stomach refused to subside.

An attendant unlocked a door and led them down a hallway where each room had the occupant’s picture and name posted. A small table held flowers, figurines, or other mementos. Shelly assumed this helped the residents feel at home.

When they reached Grandma Joan's room, the attendant knocked, opened the door and called out, "Mrs. Lacey?" Shelly's grandmother stood inside. She wore a lavender pantsuit with a crisp white blouse. Her makeup was perfect, and silver curls framed a still beautiful face. She smiled happily.

Shelly was pleasantly surprised to see the large room furnished with pieces from her grandmother's home. Even the familiar drapes had been resized and hung at the windows. She began to feel at ease.

"O, Marianne. I'm so glad you've come. It's been such a long time." The small, slender woman held her arms out to Carol, who stepped forward, enveloped her mother in a long embrace and kissed the soft cheek.

"Kathy," Joan said, opening her arms for Shelly's hug and kiss.

Today Joan thought Carol and Shelly were the daughter and granddaughter who died three years ago in an automobile accident. Shelly felt the misgivings return.

"Doreen," Joan called to the attendant who was turning to leave. "Don't bring the tea until I ring for it." The young woman, whose name was Martha, smiled. "Of course, Mrs. Lacey." Doreen was Joan's longtime maid who was dead.

Carol realized her mother was back to a time when her other daughter and grandchild were living, and today they were visiting her in the house where Carol and Marianne had grown up. There had been servants, and afternoon tea was Joan's favorite time of day, especially when she had guests. Carol smiled at Shelly to reassure her.

"It's been a long time since I last saw you, Marianne." Carol caught the querulous note in her mother's voice and didn't remind her of the visit two days ago. "Carol hasn't been here for quite a while either." The older woman frowned.

"Mother, your granddaughter is home from Newcomb for the holidays."

"Oh, yes. I'd forgotten," Joan said, chuckling softly. "I was a Newcomb woman too. What wonderful years they were."

Joan began to recall her life as a college student, naming friends and where they were from. The parties and fun were endless. She recounted her memories in such detail that Carol heard anecdotes she'd never heard before.

"World War II came, and I met Ensign James Winthrop Lacey, fresh out of Annapolis. He was so handsome." Joan sighed. "It was love at first sight for us, but we decided to wait and marry when the war was over. He served on a ship in the Pacific for two years. How I worried."

The older woman paused a moment, then resumed reminiscing. Carol and Shelly were caught up in the telling and asked questions that prompted more revelations. At times, the three of them laughed until tears ran down their cheeks.

“Oh, my dears. I haven’t had such a lovely, afternoon in ages.” Joan said. “Don’t you think we should have tea? I’ll ring.”

“Grandmother? Please let me see to it. I’ll make sure everything is just right.”

“A good idea, Shelly. I know you will.”

*Written by, Irene Ertell,
Mary’s Woods at Marylhurst*

THESE HANDS

They have a lot of character, I think. If you look closely and read between their lines they tell a little bit about my life.

When I was in grammar school, adults often said my fingers were so long that they would be good for playing the piano.

When I was 20 years old and working at Grand Avenue Personnel for the Los Angeles School District one of my co-workers commented that my hands had so many wrinkles that they looked like old lady hands. Needless to say they never lost their wrinkles.

I am so thankful for these two strong hands the Lord assigned to me for they have...

Each held three eggs as I packed them into lugs at the Patterson's chicken farm when I was in 8th grade

Milked two goats

Packed countless boxes for about 20 moves

Unnamed spots of various shades and shapes

Large bulging blue veins

Petted my very own childhood dog, Maybelle

Massaged the feet of tired and weary friends

Ironed countless bags of sprinkled clothes for other families throughout high school



Provided stress relief as I picked my finger nails into my 20's

Sewed. Darned, knitted, crocheted and embroidered

Kneaded dough for bread and rolled out dough for pie crusts

Panned for gold in a creek just outside of
Ft Jones in Scott Valley, CA. Be under the blazing sun or
chill of the winter, I was there, creekside

Just the other day a three year old, as she stood with eyes
lap high when first we met, looked my hand over then
touching it asked “what happened to your hand”? “It Is old”,
I replied.

Best of all lovingly caressed adorable, precious, dear to my
heart Caroline and Dewey...and David, Cassie, Jacob and
Delaney. And embraced countless other infants, savoring
their scent as I snuggled them close so they could feel the
beat of my heart. .  

*Written by, Elizabeth Nigma,
Rose Schnitzer Manor*

THIS PARTICULAR DOT IN TIME

Life unfolds
a thousand transitions
talents waxing and waning
experiences expanding
beliefs evolving.
I am a part of all that I have met,
more than a layering of selves
or a set of nesting dolls,
each containing the one before.
I am a collage of selves stitched together,
a kaleidoscope
of moving shifting colors.

Name another period in human history
when white women
had more rights,
were more able to stand
independently before the law,
could be in charge
of their maternity.

Children of *the greatest generation*,
life spans the longest,
freedom and opportunity
the most abundant
for many in our country,
for me.

I am a museum of memories
uncounted images
and emotions
cares and commitment,
living longer than Elizabeth I or my father,
twice as long as Jane Austen,
ten years less than Mother.
I gave birth to three children,
affected lives, strove creatively,
corrected some mistakes.
Most importantly,
I always tried.

It's almost done.
I wake into NOW,
 life narrowing,
grateful for another day.
I send my thanks to the universe
for allowing me to inhabit
this particular dot in time.

*Written by, Karla Klinger,
Holladay Park Plaza*

First 5 lines inspired by Amor Towles, *A Gentleman from Moscow*

TIME

I wonder,
can I write a poem
while having lunch?

Will this become a poem
or simply an excuse,
my excuse for running out of Time.

Time does clearly run away
in all directions
much of the time.

A daily contest not known to pause,
this balancing of Time and Life
includes my check book, or exercise;

Don't forget the laundry.
Read a book, but first a magazine
or take a walk; surely the sun is out by now.

Early morning has been my goal,
writing a poem as the winter sun comes up,
and the world around me changes.

Ah yes, Time finds her running shoes
and runs away with Life, and Balance,
while I am needing food again.

Perhaps today, I will write my Life,
or maybe tomorrow will give me a little
Time, my best friend, running in all directions.

*Written by, Lois Manookian,
Holladay Park Plaza*

TO MY BOYFRIEND

I am a mother without being wed
Because I listened to what you said.
You told me you truly loved only me-
To be cherished was wonderful, I had to agree.

You whispered I adore you and your passionate kiss
Made me realize nothing could be sweeter than this.
I'm not that kind of girl I quickly admitted
But you assured me everyone did it.

I'm too young, I declared, for such grown-up stuff-
Just getting through high school is hard enough.
I informed you I planned to wait until marriage
Before I'm pushing a baby carriage.

I said my mother would die, there is no doubt
You sneered how will she ever find out?
I threatened you saying my dad has a gun
But you just laughed and said isn't this fun.

You called me old-fashioned and out of date
And cried there's no reason for us to wait
Besides we'll get married by and by
And I was dumb and believed your lie.

So we hugged and kissed and the next thing I knew
I had done what I swore I never would do.
When I told you I'm pregnant how angry you got
You screamed you may be pregnant but my baby it's not!

My mom knew what had happened before she was told
And my dad's fury was a sight to behold.
Too late I found out you didn't mean what you said –
You only wanted to get me in bed.

I had to quit school when the baby was born
I was the object of gossip and scorn.
I know other girls were relieved and glad
They hadn't been caught the way I had.

Now I have a baby and you're still free
With no plans whatever to marry me.
You want a wife who's untouched and pure
And you state for certain I am not her.

You said you really and truly love me
But that wasn't true love I now plainly see
So I alone must bear the shame
And our baby is known by my last name.

*Written by, Ann Ingermanson,
The Village Retirement Center*

TOBY: OUR FIRST AND LAST

We married in October, Don and I,
The fall-into-winter of the year.
We married at 80,
The fall-into-winter of our lives.

When Pippin died,
I campaigned for a new cat
So as not to grieve the old one.
I've done that more than once.
(And, more than once, it worked.)

At the Humane Society,
My heart was taken by a small Tuxedo—
Black and white with golden eyes.
Don said he would like this cat
But never love him.

I didn't care.
I would love Toby enough
For both of us.
Turns out I didn't have to.

Just six months old,
Toby kissed, purred, and leapt headfirst
Into our lives, creating kitty havoc
Among our three old lady cats and us.

His humans came to adore him.
But the old ladies didn't.
Partly because we did.

He'd flip on his back: "Let's play!"
"We're napping," hissed Jazzy.
"Get away!" spat Sasha.
"Whippersnapper," they mumbled
Under their breath.

In six months, Toby was too sick to play,
Too sick to do anything but growl
At the pain in his belly
As he walked across the room.

He'd hold his hind paw in the air
To ease the angry, stressed bladder
Around which his life, and ours,
Began to revolve.

He was our beloved Tobias Pipsqueak.
His vet did her best, but we were
Helpless to help him.

Memories of Toby are everywhere—
Dancing after flies or moths,
They had wings,
But he'd bag them anyway.

He'd fly down his cat tree,
Gallop across the kitchen floor and
Come to a stop only when his head
Met up with the refrigerator.

Whereupon, he'd do it all over again—
Delirious with the joy of being young,
Strong, and a cat.
And now he's gone.

He takes with him our half-spoken belief
That he was the only child
We would ever have
Together.

And that his youth,
His love of life
Would enliven our lives
For about 15 years.

Long enough to love and be loved
By an irreplaceable cat.
By our Toby.
By our boy.

*Written by, Carol Borjesson,
Willamette View*

TREES

Sullivan's Gulch has
a wonderful name,
and a plethora of trees,
which hold the ground
of our being
as residents.

As changes happen in
our lives, the trees
provide a vista of
stability and grace
as they lose their
leaves and regain
them after being
naked in their bark
all winter.

As a child of seven,
I watched my father,
take the red wagon,
black paint and a big brush,
a mile from home
to Chevy Chase Circle,
where a car slammed
into a tree, leaving
a giant removal of
bark.

My dad, a traffic engineer,
began his repair on the injury
with paint and brush
as careful as a surgeon.
His love of trees
was like his love
of family and was
passed on.

So now, as an old woman,
confused by electronic
nonsense,
all around me,
I just have to look out

my window
to be soothed
by my friends,
the trees.

*Written by, Betsy Cameron,
Holladay Park Plaza*

TWO GIRLS

Two girls stand close, not together.
One stiff, cold and resisting,
With the other one trying and trying.
That one whispers in the other's ear
But she shrugs the word away;
A touch and the caress, but "no"
Yet she tries to draw her in,
Kissing at her ear, and missing.
What's the clear "no" they're enacting?
"No" - to public display of affection?
"No" - to being a lesbian in public?
"No" - I'll never, ever, forgive you?
The whole future seems lost.
But something in valuable's said
And the two lean close to each other.
The Mysterious Magic has worked.... again,
And they stroll away arm in arm.

*Written by, James McGoodwin,
Terwilliger Plaza*

WAITING

I had gone forth seeking to prepare for who I thought You called me to be,
Only to find You had placed an inner longing in me
That didn't fit *what I sought*.

The same thing happened to Saul of Tarsus.
He studied Your law then sought to destroy those who did not follow it,
Until he found himself lying on the road wondering what happened.

You happened, Jesus, for You are not as we supposed!
You didn't want either of us to be slaves to rituals and robes,
But servants learning to love others as You love us.

Your ask seemed impossible to me, and I knew full well I would need your assistance.
But asking for help did not come easy, and I knew—You knew.
You waited on me to ask for help, while I waited on You to answer.

Patience is one of your eternal qualities
.You have the time, Lord, while we humans age towards our finite demise,
Before we cry out, sometimes with our final breath, "Help!"

We feel like *our* waiting is so long and painful, while
You patiently wait on your creation to respond as You know we finally will.
Each generation goes through the same ritual while You lovingly wait.

You are distinctly different, and we are created in your image, but each quite original.
You and Your creation's commonness come in waiting.
I have never realized how You wait on me; may I join You as You wait?

I have been hung up in writing this phase of my life,
Because I realized part of my waiting with the Lord was a rather helter-skelter time,
It covered more than fifty of my years.

I had to be reprogrammed from my past and I was a reluctant participant.
I found this majestic God become my Papa-God who drew me near
And comforted me into becoming His love!

I'm still in process, as all His creation is.
Looking back to my former self is a rather humbling process,
But it is encouraging to know I have been growing and hopefully will continue.

Caleb, your father grew up through this time and may have a different perspective.
I'm very proud of him, and how we both have matured even with our mistakes.
Our goal now is to task together and help *you* learn to "wait upon the Lord."

*Written by, Allan Wilson,
The Village Retirement Center*

WAXED or UNWAXED

Why should an upcoming dental appointment set me into a frenzy of intimidation.

I was told by the dental Hygienist at my last visit that by flossing on a daily basis

I can threaten, even destroy little microbes.

Microbes!

I don't think I want to buy into those.

I don't even know what they are and I'm too embarrassed to ask.

If she says that they are alive and in my mouth and oozing their way from one gum socket to another without even a, "By your leave." I don't want any.

"Well," she says. "then floss your teeth."

So, of course, I can't wait to go right home and get busy.

After three days of religious flossing I get bored with the whole procedure.

It's not my kind of fun to stand before my reflection flicking microbes, splat, against the mirror. So I quit the exercise.

Eventually I feel a wave of conscience as I notice my husband's microbes accumulating on the glass while mine are noticeably absent.

So with an unaccustomed attack of virtue I flick out a recommend allowance of creepy crawlies.

In no time at all I am relieved of this attack knowing that in another six months my teeth will be saved by a flurry of flossing just before I again must reveal to the hygienist my deepest secrets in the form of the inhabitants of my mouth.

Is this cat and mouse game really worth the biannual anxiety? I doubt it.

What the heck. If you can't fight 'em, join 'em.

Here's to a new movement: 1000 Friends of Microbes

*Written by, Mrs. Jean Thorpe,
Terwilliger Plaza*

WHEN I AM EIGHT AGAIN

Dare I go back to younger days
Should I come 'cross the Magic Phrase
But just where to begin
Perhaps to be eight again.
Push reset to reach that perfect age
Standing on my childhood stage
Does one travel deep within
To find the child therein
Or out into the universe
To help put old age in reverse.

Oh, to have a mind with unlimited space
Where why and why not interlace
Perchance to trade these old bones
For a bicycle bell or an ice cream cone
Exchange an age of aches and maladies cursed
For a scrape of a knee and a body of 'Firsts'.

Firsts, like the smell of dinner cooking
Or a fresh new baseball glove
The first school bell ringing
That sweet kiss from my First Love
I even miss that rough brotherly tug
And so much so...my mother's hug.

My earthly treasures
Would I not give them all
To spy a youthful Spring
Not stare at the end of Fall
I wish...Oh, I wish to begin
To where I am eight once again.

*Written by, Peter Dueber,
Westmoreland Union Manor*

WHY SAY CAN'T

I doubt I could avoid the use of *can't*
that commonplace contraction of *cannot*,
quite often caught in conversation—clear
in meaning--though at times it clouds the air!
When nephew Joe confides, “I can’t tell red
from green,” he tells the truth; he’s color blind.
Conversely, little lies might follow *can't*
or catty rumors, judgments, diatribes!

With me, I am a “*can'ter*” far too much
in thought and speech; my *can'ts* may well convey
what’s so—yet often they’re a weak excuse
or self-constructed wall I crouch behind.
Past eighty now, my old self-confidence
has suffered much; there’s physical decline--
can’t dance, can’t sing, can’t open lift-top cans!
Small doubts will swell to cyclones in my mind!

I frequently commiserate with friends
about our countless losses: balance, strength,
co-ordination.... Then we’ll laugh, enjoy
our coffee time, compare our plans and dreams.
Last week Dot showed us her accomplishments
that coaxed her mind and body out of bed:
two scarves, crocheted, that she will give as gifts.
We cheered and clapped and took encouragement.

How long I’ve wrestled with my *can'ts*; how long
I’ve chased these lines through fractured days and nights!
A clear conclusion kept eluding me...
but now, I have decided just to stop!
I’ll coach myself to speak more candidly
and cease my ever ready use of *can't*--
except to claim what’s true. I hope I CAN!

Written by, Shirley A. Hilts,
Mennonite Village

WONDER

Sitting on the deck
surrounded by trees
and beyond the pond,
I look to the hills.

To the maple trees
and at the ridge top
Douglas firs
spike the sky
in undulating design.

Then like crows heading to roost
737 Jets sail eastward
above the saw tooth line of firs
following the path to PDX

On cue
the humming bird
buzzes by
to feed on
red impatiens.

The bird flies
out of deep time.
The jet from yesterday.
Mysteries beyond
comprehension.

*Written by, Bob Watt,
Rose Villa Senior Living*

YOU WONDER

You wonder
how long it will be
before there are faces you recognize
and you try not to look at them
relegated to the back pages
of the newspaper

but you can't help glancing every day
and then one morning
when you've become accustomed
to the litany of unfamiliar names
there she is, looking just the way
you remember her

and you moan out loud at the big smile
with a few more lines carved on each side
and the same hair with soft bangs,
the girl who sat beside you in English class,
the cheerleader who did back flips on Friday nights
and you wonder.

*Written by, Betty Bezzerides,
Holladay Park Plaza*

*“Not all of us can do great things,
but we can
do small things with
great love.”*

Caregiver quotes & Tips of Great Love Linda Brendles