

A JOURNEY OF LOVE,
HOPE AND FAITH



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Elijah Levy, Ph.D.

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JAMES ALLEN FERGUSON

I am James Allen Ferguson. I was born in a little town called Red Springs, N.C. to Mary Lou Smith. I was born out of wedlock and was born at home.

My mother passed away when I was eleven and from that point I was shifted from hand to hand. I had uncles and aunts who had children of their own and did not have room for me. In spite of all the problems I managed to graduate from J.T. Peterson High School with honors in 1958 at which time I moved to New York City and attended New York University and Manhattan Business College earning a degree in English and Business Management.

I have always had an eye for business and a gift for leadership. In school in Church or wherever I went I was always placed out front. I also went to beauty school and graduated, owned my own beauty salon in Beverly Hills for eight years. I worked at Sacks 5th Avenue, B. Altman in New York and Groden's Men's Store in Los Angeles. I went to Bible College for 12 years while working and graduated with a Doctor of Divinity Degree.

I am now in the Carmelitos serving as President of the Board and sitting in Dr. Levy's class. It's been a journey but thank God I made it.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my writings to my dad and spiritual father who taught me how to have a personal relationship with God. Because of this teachings I am who I am today.



SPIRITUAL MIND TREATMENT

Written by Archbishop William Morris O'Neile

The words that I speak are my law of good, and they will produce the desired results. Because they are operated on by a power greater than I am.

Good alone goes from me and good alone returns to me. This word is for myself. Everything I say is for myself and about myself. There is one life and that life is God. That life is perfect and that life is my life right now.

My body is in manifestation with the living spirit; it is created and sustained by the one presence and the one power. That power is flowing in and through me right now, animating every organ and every function of my physical being.

There is no congestion, no confusion and no inaction. There is perfect circulation, perfect assimilation, perfect elimination and perfect action.

I am one with the infinite rhythm of life, which flows through me in love, harmony and peace.

There is no fear, no doubt and no uncertainty in my mind. I am letting that life which is perfect control me and flow through me right now.

I am a master. God made me a master, no thing outside of me will I allow to master the power inside of me. It is now done. It is complete. Because of this, everyday in every way, I am richer and richer and richer. I now express life. Eternal life in mine, right now.

Spiritual Affirmation: Know, State, Accept, Announce

In loving memory of my dad.

THE TRUE SERVANT OF ST. MATTHEW 16:24-27

I read this passage of the Bible many times. I have noticed it more than that. I just got a real revelation on it a few days ago.

A very few of us have been singled out to do special works and to make special sacrifices. I don't say this to brag. I say it because this is how God humbled us. Things we do, sacrifices we make most others would never make. This is a work one must be prepared for. It is a very hard and thankless job.

As a child I was verbally abused, shifted from place to place, not loved, judged. Some stuff I didn't even understand until I was an adult. So most of my life I cried and cried, I did not understand the rejection or why I was treated so differently.

As an adult, things are still the same. Even now the Lord has used me to help several churches and Pastors in a real way. None of them respond to me today. In Oakland, CA there are three churches that the Lord blessed me to work with and through the ministry he gave me these churches which became solid ministries and the people were blessed because of it. I never hear from any of them. I mean great works were done. I can't even get them to give me a service. I wonder why? Mind you, we did not have a falling out. We parted in good standing when my work was done; true service is a thankless job. And Jesus said if any man would come after me, he must first deny himself and follow me.

So many people the Lord has blessed me to be real good to. I never hear from them. It's a thankless job. Here in LA there are several churches that I go to in fellowship, they do not return the favor. They don't come out to my services, it's a thankless job. Even the church I grew up in, spent more than 50 years with, but there is no fellowship. The church I am working with faithfully now, I feel like an outcast, not respected. My life from birth to now has really been a hard journey but I must hold on because I am a true servant and I really know what Jesus meant when He said you must first deny yourself if you are to follow Him. Yes, I have many times felt like quitting, walking away

and never looking back but I made a vow one day that if you would use me Lord, I would go, I will stand, and I will serve. Suffering will make you strong and then weak and then it will make you twice as strong again.

Yolanda Adams declares the battle is not ours, it is the Lord's. God knows what we are going through and somehow or other, He is keeping us strong. The word also tells us that God's greatest power is shown in our weakness. We are weak but He is strong.

However, I must say that there are about three or four people in my life who have been and are there for me. GOD BLESS YOU! You know who you are and so does God. I promise you that He remembers when others forget. Please keep loving me and praying for me. I need your strength.



THE BLESSING OF BEING GIFTED

Psalm 100:1-2 Psalm 133:1 Psalm 122:1

May I say to us that it is a good thing when God gives us a gift. It is even better when we allow that gift to be a blessing to someone else. After all, that is why He gave us the gifts that we have, so that we might be a blessing to someone else. The gift is not worth much if it is not shared. The healer needs to heal, the teacher needs to teach, the prayer needs to pray, the preacher needs to preach, the musician needs to play and sing. Freely God has given and freely we need to share our gifts with others. Remember the guys with the talents in the Bible. The ones who shared got more, the one who didn't got cast away.

I am really surprised at the Preachers and musicians today that may be able to share their gift and they will say, I really don't want or I will do it because you asked, or I am tired or can't someone else do it? Don't they know that the only reason God gave the gift is so that the gift can bless others. It is not to make you grand. It really should humble you.

"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, serve the Lord with gladness." Be happy for whatever you can do on God's program. I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord because when I get there I can share my gift so someone can be blessed. I must remember that the Lord said that it is good for us to assemble ourselves together. I am coming to the house to share my gift.

In my early years in the church, people were dedicated and you did not have to ask them to share their gift. They came asking what can I do or they just went to doing it. After all, God gave the gift and I want to give it back. I want him to know that I am glad for the gift he gave me and I know it was to bless others.

Please Saints --- let's get back to basics. Let God be glorified and not us. Remember 2 Chronicles 7:14. The Lord really wants to bless us, but we need to devote ourselves just a bit. Be mindful of the fact that the same gift you have, God can give someone else. He does not need you, He just needs a body. Might I add a willing body. All the honor and all the glory goes to God.



KNOWING GOD

The first thing I would like to say is that we are living in a different time. Most things and people have changed. We don't have the faith we used to have. We don't trust God like we used to trust Him. When we didn't have much money or much education, we declared that the Lord would make a way. We could not see our way but we need to somehow or another, the Lord would provide. We did not have a choice, we had to depend on God. Our existence was a living miracle daily. We lived from day to day trusting God.

I must say, in the old days, our parents and grandparents were much more spiritual than we are today. Today we believe God. In their time, they knew God. They knew that God was going to make a way somehow. They knew that the Lord would provide. So they went on with trusting God for shelter. They didn't have money for the doctor so they trusted God for their healing. Whether it was a common cold, a sore or a major illness, they trusted God for a remedy and whatever the Spirit told them to do, they did it and it worked. In other words, they listened to the Spirit and did what the Spirit said and the Lord worked it out. They were spiritual for real because all they knew to do was to depend on God. They wanted to hear from Him and they moved. They knew that the Lord would never let them down.

As a result, they raised a house full of children with nothing. They fed them with nothing. They took care of them with nothing because they understood that the just shall live by faith. They knew that the earth was the Lords. They knew that the Lord would provide. I am trying to remind you that they knew the Lord for real. With all of our education and this and that, we need to get back to that place. The place where we trust God for everything. David said, I will lift up mine eyes to the hills from whence comes my help. My help comes from the Lord, not my books or my bank account or my education, but from the Lord. God is my refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble. Whatever you are going through, know that God is there for you. Ask the Savior to help you. I declare He will; He has done it for me, for many, many years.

I need you to stop believing God and get to know Him for yourself. If you know God, I mean really know, all things are possible. Try Him and prove Him and see what He will do for you. God bless you as you move forward in faith.

Life with a Purpose

May I say that God had a plan for all of our lives when he created us. We are supposed to bring something to this world that has not been offered.

He made us all different so we could make a different contribution. We all have different talents so that our gift to the world will be our very own.

We don't have to follow the crowd or a trend. We can set our own precedence Read Psalm 27. We have been given the tools, it's up to us to use them in a productive and creative way. Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Lord. He lives in us to teach us, to guide us and to take us where we need to go. If we are not creative, it's because we don't listen to Him. Don't listen to people, they will only tell you what you can't do, what you don't have or what you don't know. The Gospel writer Paul said I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. You must tell yourself my life has purpose. I am not just here. God has a special plan for my life. I will give myself to Him that He may fulfill His purpose in my life. I need my life to mean something to this world.

We have been able to feed many hungry people this year. We were able to bless several with scholarships this year. We were able to share the simple gospel of Jesus Christ this year. We were able to clothe some people this year. We were able to help some churches this year. We were able to put a new face on St. Michael's this year. We are so happy that God used us to do ministry in our community.

We thank God for our official board, they are the best in the world. We have been able to build come walls because we had some working people.

In 2011, we are looking forward to bigger and better things so we ask that you (all of you our friends and well wishers) get on board and help us to continue to carry on the work that God has given us to do. We bless you for your prayers, good thoughts and support. Love is a wonderful thing.

Please keep your ears and eyes open. As God reveals to us what to do, we will surely share that with you.

Lets pray for our local Pastors as the church is on trail we must pray to win.

The Lord has blessed us with a 24 hour prayer line. You may call in 24/7-365 days a year for prayer. If we ever needed prayer, we need it now. PLEASE LET'S PRAY.

GOD AND MAN ARE ONE

Genesis 2:7 | Cor. 3:16-17

So many people in Church don't understand their real relationship with God. They feel that God is high above them and they can't reach him without a lot of work or effort. That He is way up in the sky. We thank God for the understanding that God and man are one and cannot be separated. The evidence of this is found in Gen. 2:7 and the Lord formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul.

1st Cor. 3:16-17 further states that our bodies are the temple of the Lord and the Spirit of the Lord dwells therein. The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

This lets us know that God did not only breathe life into but that he lives in us as well. The very life that exists in us is God. This is why we have to be careful what we say and do in our bodies. We must strive daily to live and think as clean as we can. After all, the Lord is in his Holy Temple. We are always in the presence of the Lord. He sees all we do and hears all we say. He even knows our very thoughts.

Someone may ask, how can I really come up the standard that I need to come to? Please the God in me? This is indeed a good question. The Bible says that these things come through fasting and praying. The more we sacrifice, the stronger we become. Practice makes perfect. We become what we do. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. The more we realize that fact that God is inside of us and that we need a clean Temple for Him to live in, the easier it becomes. After a while, it will be second nature. You will just be practicing living clean without even thinking about it. Righteous living is not hard, it's a choice we made God ever bless you and we pray that you will be happy that God chose you to live in.

FOSTERING AND PARENTING IN MINISTRY

To foster is to aid, nurture to befriend, to rear up, to bring up, to nurse, care for, to take in, to feed, to support, to protect. When I first thought of fostering in Ministry, I thought, we are God's children and we don't need fostering. We all belong. But after I looked at my Roget's thesaurus I realized I was wrong. I also realized that is the problem with our ministry today. WE ARE NOT FOSTERING. To aid God would have us be there for one another. To nurture God would have us putting our arms around one another to truly love one another. To befriend – to be there for each other in the time of need. To rear up – to help one another grow in love, spirit and in the other ways of the Lord. To nurse – to labor together until deliverance comes. To care for – I am my brother's keeper. To take in – don't be afraid to reach out and help someone else. In whatever way they need help. Food, clothes, shelter, talk, listen to whatever the need may be. Expect nothing in return. That's what Jesus did. To protect – don't allow anyone to back bite, lie on, gossip, to wound the soul that is trying to grow. Remember, it is not about you but that soul that is trying to grow in Christ. Isaiah 40:11 will bear all of this out.

We are responsible for the young lamb. Roget's pocket thesaurus says that a parent is a mother, father, sire, begreter, procreator, creator, originator, produce, original model. After studying this, I found out that most of us in the Church or should I say ministry has it wrong. Those of us in position of authority seem to think we have the right to boss the people of God around. To dictate to them. To make them do something, totally wrong. WE ARE NOT THE PARENT. God our Father is and he said in Isaiah 40:1 Comfort ye, comfort ye my people. As Bishops, pastors, Evangelists, Missionaries or whatever our title may be, we are supposed to lift the burden not make it heavier. When the people of God go through all they go through during the week, when they come to Church they should find relief, joy and peace. They can shut off all the things of the world and come into the house of God and declare THAT THE LORD IS IN HIS HOLY TEMPLE LET ALL THE EARTH BE QUIET. I am in the presence of the Lord where peace abides. For these three hours all I have to think about is the glory of God and to thank Him for good He has been. I can know that I have a Good parent who loves me in spite of me.

I AM SO HAPPY

I am so happy to see
all the joy Christmas brings to me.

The sparkling stars in the sky
reminds me joyfully that Christ is nigh.

The beautiful lights on the tree
makes me bow my bending knee.

The way that love fills the air
reminds me strongly of how Christ cares.

So join with me and help me care
for this is a time we all can share.

LOVE

Keeep love in your heart. A life without it is like a sunless garden when the flowers are dead.

Generosity

Real generosity is doing something nice for someone who will never find out.

Maturity

Maturity is the ability to think, speak and act your feelings within the bounds of dignity. The measure of your maturity is how spiritual you become during the midst of your frustrations.

Forgiveness

We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies.

Confidence

I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something I can do.

PRESENT

The clock is running. Make the most of today. Time waits for no man. Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift. That's why it is called the present.

Change your position – you can change your condition. There are many ways of going forward, but only one way of standing still. From what we get, we can make a living; what we give, however, makes a life. Life is an adventure in forgiveness,

Kindness in words creates confidence. Kindness in thinking creates profoundness. Kindness in giving creates love. Gratitude can transform common days into Thanksgiving. Turn routine jobs into joy and change ordinary opportunities into blessing.

I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy.

Focus on the journey, not the destination. Joy is found not in finishing an activity but in doing it.

Find a place inside where there's joy and the joy will burn out the pain.

From what we get, we can make a living. What we give however, makes a life.

GARDENING FOR THE SOUL

Plant three rows of peas:

1. Peas of Mind
2. Peas of Heart
3. Peas of Soul

Plant four rows of Squash:

1. Squash Gossip.
2. Squash Indifference
3. Squash Grumbling
4. Squash Selfishness

Plant four rows of Lettuce:

1. Lettuce be Faithful
2. Lettuce be Kind
3. Lettuce be Patient
4. Lettuce Really Love One Another

You can't have a garden without turnips:

1. Turnips for Meeting
2. Turnip for Service
3. Turnip to Help One Another

To conclude our Garden we must have Thyme:

1. Thyme for Each Other

2. Thyme for family
3. Thyme for Friends

When freely with patience and cultivate with love. There is much fruit in your garden because you reap what you sow.



100 YARDS OF RAILROAD

It is amazing how life and things change
so greatly, but yet they remain the same.

When I see 100 yards of railroad,
I think of all that the railroad could have been.

I was connected to miles of tracks that transported people
from place to place.

It transported fruits and vegetables for human consumption,
for our well being.

It transported livestock for us to eat as well as other things vital to life.

After many years of being productive,
the railroad had to be retired and now all we have
is 100 yards of railroad left to remind us of
how great the rail once was.

This is so much like our lives.
We were young and vibrant.
We worked to provide for our families.
We bore children.
We took care of others.
We got educated.
Now we are retired.
Our steps are slow.
Our memory is short, many physical conditions.
Now we only function in part jut like the 100 yards of railroad.

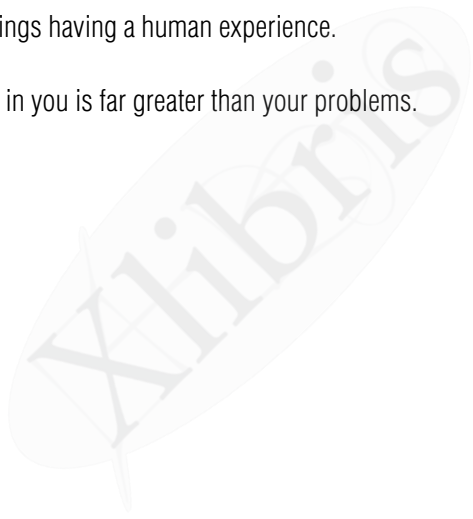
These are lessons I have taught in the past. Lessons are for encouragement and inspiration.

God is greater than anything that can happen to you.

You are victorious.

We are spiritual beings having a human experience.

Remembering God in you is far greater than your problems.



HOLD ON OLD SOLDIER

Job 14th chapter

Job 24th Chapter

I am proud today to be writing to you to encourage you in your Christian walk. Sometimes we get caught up in what we are doing, on what we are going through. I am so sick. I am so lonely. I am so confused. I am so hurt. I am so angry. I am so depressed. My children are giving me problems. My husband or wife. You know the story. The beat goes on and on, I know, I know you Lord but where are you now? I need you today. I can't go on. May I tell you that he's in the same place he was in when Job was calling on Him. He's allowing you to have a stronger testimony so your faith can be renewed. If you don't go through anything you will not know anything. Jesus had everything and if he had not lost it, he would have never known that God could restore him.

We must understand that there is a reason for everything that happens to us. Either it is pay back or the Lord is testing your will. If it is payback, you have to suffer through. If God is testing your will, it is so he can take you to another level in him. Just as Job was tested, we must be tested also. So please hold on soldier. This is not the time to give up or quit. The harder the test, the greater the victory will be. After walking with the Lord so long, one learns to count it all joy. We must be willing to stay in the race.

Reverend James Cleveland said "nobody told us that the road would be easy, know He didn't bring us this far to leave us now." You can make it if you try. God in us is bigger than anything than can happen to us. David said I have been young and now I am old, I have not seen the righteous forsaken not his seed begging bread. Whatever you are going through, may I tell you that the storm is passing over. Day is about to break. The sun is about to shine. There is an Angel hidden in your problem and he is working it out right now. Don't look at the problem, look at the solution.

Hold on soldier, God will see you through. When your back is against the wall and it looks like there is no way out, that's the time the Lord steps in and works it out.

LET'S LOOK AT THE CHURCH TODAY

Matthew 16:13-18

Those of us who really love God and love ministry carry a great burden for the Church today. It seems that the Church has lost her purpose. The Church was never established to make preachers popular, to have big bank accounts, to have great names on roll or to do most of the stuff we are doing today. In fact, we were encouraged to strip down and come clean before the throne of grace. The whole purpose of the Church is that God would be glorified not man. As leaders we are to humble ourselves. We must decrease so that God can increase. Only one light can shine at a time. Personally, I want Christ to be the light that shines in my life.

Have we forgotten that Jesus is our perfect example and he came to us in the lower state, born outdoors, lived outdoors, and died outdoors. We don't expect anyone to do all that today but we could follow his example. Live in fellowship, love one another, care for one another, be kind to one another, share with one another, and strengthen one another. Jesus did all that he did when he was here to show us that we should reach out to each other. You know the story of how he healed the sick, raised the dead, gave sight to the blind, made the lame walk, the dumb talk, fed the hungry, provided for the social need. All these things he did to demonstrate to us that people who need people are the most blessed people in the world. We have allowed all kinds of evil spirits to creep into the Church and I am sad to say we entertain them. We are self glorified, we are jealous of each other, we back bite each other, we set traps for each other and the list goes on with things we are allowing in the Church that should not be there.

Let's go back to our Bibles, and read 1 Corinthians 13th Chapter, Galatians 5:22-23 you have seen the Church in its first glory. Matthews 16:13-18 How do you see the Church now Romans 12:2 the Lord is depending on us (the leaders and true Christians) to be a light in this dark world. It is time for us to get on our job so that folks can be saved and delivered in our Churches again. To all that is in leadership and who say we know and love Christ and the Church we will be held accountable for the state the Church is in and for the lost souls that we could have saved if we had lived better lives and been better demonstrations for the people. The Ward Singers reminds us that we need to go back to the old landmark. God ever bless and keep you is our sincere prayer.



LORD, HOW MUCH DO I OWE???

PAY GOD!!

Malachi 3:8-10

St. Matthew 6:33

Romans 12:1-2

I find that most folks in Church today spend a lot of time complaining about how much time we spend in Church. How much we give in Church. How much we are expected to do in Church. We have more than we ever had. Nice homes, nice cars, nice clothes, and nice families.

All around we are doing better than we ever did, good job, and better pay. The Lord has brought us from a mighty long way and we seem to take it for granted. We don't seem to consider the fact that the Lord has blessed us with good health, good minds, all of our organs functioning properly, children doing good, we are eating well and we have a little money in the bank.

Lord after you have done all of these things for me, how much do I owe? How much can I pay? Is there way I can pay you for all your goodness to me?

When I look back over my life, and I think things over, I can truly say that I am blessed. I am a testimony. You gave me life Gen. 2:7 You gave me the Holy Ghost as my keeper Acts 1:8

Since the Lord has done so much for me, I have to ask myself: How Much Do I Owe? Answer I owe him everything. I owe my all and all. So the least I can do is obey Malachi 3:8-10. Give him the first dime out of every dollar I get.

I can obey St. Matthews 6:33 by putting him first in my living and giving. I can certainly obey Romans 12:1-2 by giving him my body in service and by not allowing the things of the world to trick my mind. You don't have to do what others do to be

accepted. You do what the spirit of God instructs you to do and you will be blessed.
PAY GOD !!!!!!!

I want to take this opportunity to thank God for the wonderful ministry He has allowed to come through me. I have taught and preached spiritual truth with the Holy Ghost from New York City to California. I have established four spiritual fellowships, two in Northern California, one in Baton Rouge, LA and one in Los Angeles, CA I founded two churches, Hope Tabernacle of Christ in L.A. and Tabernacle of Faith and Miracles in Oakland, CA I released a music CD of worship songs and in October of 2014, I was blessed to receive my Doctorate in Divinity. God has really blessed and used me in ministry for which I am eternally grateful. I pray that these writings will bless and encourage someone and if anyone would like to purchase a CD, you may write me at P.O Box 4625, Long Beach, CA 90804 God bless and keep you all.



YVONNE JENKINS

Yvonne was born on October 21, 1944 in her parent's home in Los Angeles, and is one of three children. As a child she attended 79th Street School, Cleveland Elementary in Pasadena, Washington Junior High School and John Muir High School in Pasadena. In high school she enjoyed math and history. After graduating she became a mother and had three kids while living in Los Angeles. She worked at an after school program then started her day care "My Day Care Yvonne's Care" out of her house. She had a total of 13 children but two passed away. She operated the day care for seven years. Yvonne is a people person and she enjoys being around others. She sees her children and has 15 grandkids and 20 great-grandchildren. Yvonne moved to Carmelitos in 2011

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my writing to my loving family.



WHAT I FIND IN JESUS

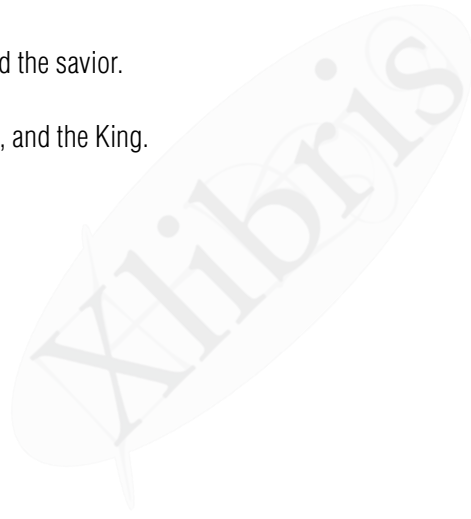
I find peace
and the Prince of peace.
I find righteousness, and the righteous one.

I find counsel, and counselor.

I find wonders and the wonderful one.

I find salvation, and the savior.

I find the Kingdom, and the King.



TO MY SISTER, MY FRIEND

Through the years, we had grown into a very special kind of relationship.

And although I feel lucky to have had you for a sister,
I felt more fortunate that I had you for a friend.

A friend I could count on anytime, anywhere.

It was great to be able to talk on the phone whenever I needed to talk,
knowing that you'll listen and understand, and that I could trust
you with thoughts and feelings.

I thank God for the closeness between us and how much it meant to me
that I was able to share so much with you.

My sister, my friend.

DON'T QUIT

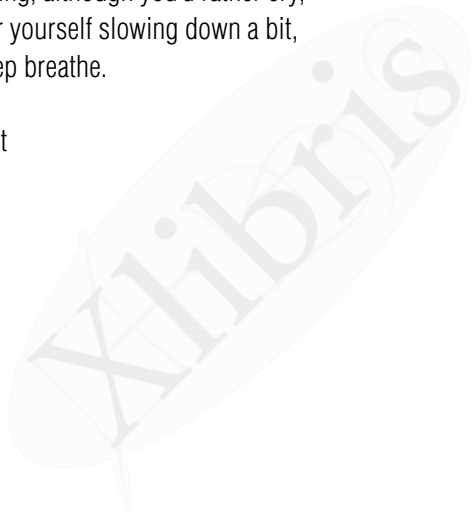
When people pull you down
As they often will.

When the battle you're fighting is all uphill.
When the funds are low and debts are high.

When you're laughing, although you'd rather cry,
When you discover yourself slowing down a bit,
stop and take a deep breathe.

Stand up and shout

"I will not quit"



THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Make peace with your past so it won't screw up the present.
What others think of you is none of your business.

Time heals almost everything, give it time.

Don't compare your life to others and don't judge them.
You have no idea what their journey is all about.

So stop thinking too much.
It's alright not to know the answer.

They will come to you when you least expect them to.

No one is in charge of your happiness except you.
So smile, you don't own all the problems in the world.

THE FLOW OF LIFE

I am in the flow of life,
and I move easily with flow.

I am radiantly and enthusiastically alive.
I am free from tension, stress and strain.

I go forward in the flow of life,
unhurried and unworried.



SIN IS COSTLY

Sin will cost you more than you want to pay.
It takes you farther than you want to go,
and keeps you longer than you want to stay.

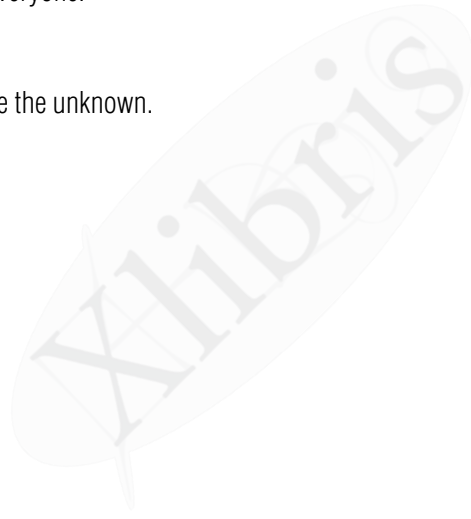


GET ON THE TRAIN

It was freezing,
pouring a mix of rain and snow.

I finally made it to the front of the line.
To my greatest surprise,
I ran to the train station
to get away from everyone.

I got on the train.
I didn't want to face the unknown.



It is not the answer that enlightens, but the question.
The soul will have no rainbow if the eyes have no tears.



BROKEN DREAMS

As children bring their brokenness
with tears for us to mend,
I brought my broken dreams to God.

Because He is my friend.
But then --- instead of leaving Him,
in peace to work along,
I hung around and tried to help with ways
that were my own.

At last, I snatch them back and cry how can you be so slow.

MY LIFE IS AN INSTANT.

My life is a moment which I have
no power to stay.

You know,
O my God,
that to love you here on earth
I only have today.



LEGION

I had to let go
and it's breaking my heart.

But I had to give you up
to the Glory of God.

My child
come home to me,
from all your burdens
and I'll set you free.



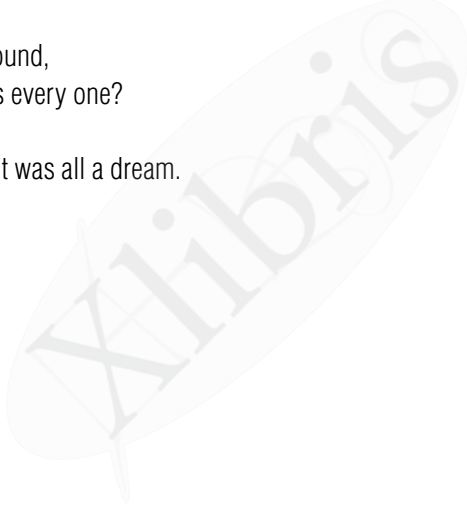
A MONUMENT TO LONELINESS

I had a dream last night.
I was following the railroad tracks into town.

But it was different, run down, dilapidated and abandoned.
I wandered into a shop and there was no one behind the counter.

I eagerly turned around,
wondering where is every one?

But then I realized it was all a dream.



DANGERS OF RAILROAD TRACKS

Trains on the tracks with so many cracks
can cause a series of chain reactions due to no traction.

Now cars stacked like rocks on top of one another
and they can't go any further.

When guard rails come down
and you hear the whistling sounds,
don't go around it.

It could possible end your life.

That is a true fact.

The danger of railroad tracks.

RECEIVING TRAIN

I've always had a thing
for railroad tracks.

Always fantasized standing on them
and watching the train come with my
arms spread open wide.

Waiting to receive my son.



NORMA JEAN SANFORD

Norma was born on July 5, 1942 in Covington, Kentucky and graduated from Dixie Heights High School in 1960 and went to work for AT&T. She started as a long distance operator in Cincinnati, Ohio and was married in 1961 and had two children, a boy and a girl. Norma was divorced after seven years and transferred to AT&T in Hollywood, CA in 1971. Norma later relocated to Santa Monica in 1971, before moving to San Diego in 1975. She retired in 1992 from AT&T. She later worked at a hotel gift shop in San Diego. Norma lived in San Diego from 1975 to 2002 and moved to Santa Monica to care for her aunt. She goes to the gym twice a week and enjoys walking everywhere – even as much as 10 miles. Norma moved to Carmelitos in 2006. In high school Norma enjoyed English classes and business courses. Currently she enjoys memoir writing. Her last husband was a musician and being married to him was exciting and wonderful.

DEDICATION

In loving memory of my husband Jaasah Sanford.



ANOTHER DREAM

I dreamed I was at a mall looking for the restroom in a department store. It wasn't where I remembered it to be. I finally found it.

I went into the stall, the lock wouldn't lock. The room was crowded. Two women pushed into my stall and were putting on makeup. They were looking into the mirror as if I wasn't even there. I asked them to leave, but they ignored me. I finished my business and left.

There were thousands of people crowded around me. I was lost. I realized I didn't have my purse or cell phone. I remembered my purse was yellow (not a color I would normally have) and I was wearing all pink (not my normal choice).

Then I realized I was looking for my husband (who had been dead for seven years). We would usually call each other if we got separated while shopping. Then in the middle of that monstrous crowd I saw him.

He was wearing a bright turquoise blue, shirt (not something he would normally wear). We grabbed each other and held on. I was very happy. Then I woke up.

My Interpretation of the Dream

The colors yellow, pink and blue. The colors for new born babies.

If you believe in reincarnation this could symbolize new beginnings that this life is over and we meet again in the next life.

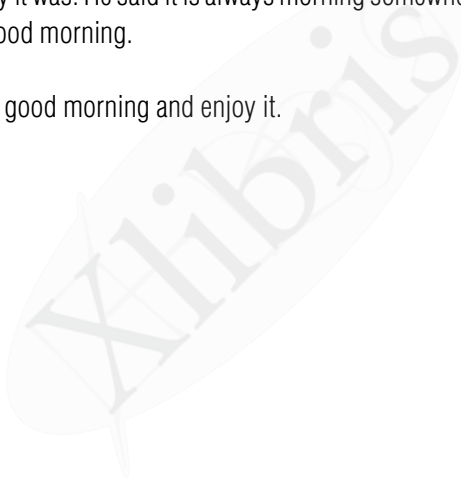
MORNING

Outside my window I see little yellow butterflies flying across the plants in the garden. The sun is shining bright in a clear blue sky.

The wind is blowing gently through the trees. I open the window, the air smells fresh and clean.

I'm alive, life is good. A friend used to always greet everyone with a "Good morning" whatever time of day it was. He said it is always morning somewhere, and any morning you wake up is a good morning.

So I will accept my good morning and enjoy it.



DREAM???

I have this memory of a reoccurring dream.
I'm walking across an arched bridge.
The kind that goes over a road or stream.
The night is quiet and serene, the air is clear.

Suddenly the sky is filled with falling snow.
The snow is not white, it is brightly colored (technicolored snow).

I had this dream over and over again.
I wondered what it meant.

Many years later some friends, including my mother were talking.
My mother told me about the night that I was born.
She was walking across a railroad bridge on the night of July 4th, 1942.

She was stopped in the center looking up at the sky when
suddenly the sky was filled with fireworks (my technicolored snow).

After that I never had the dream again.
I was born about eight hours later.

Was it a dream or the first memory of my as yet unborn brain?

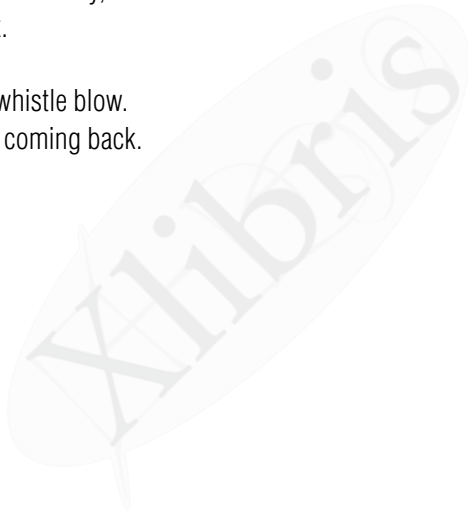
LONELY TRACKS

Two rusty, crusty rails coming from no where.
Going no where.

A symbol of what used to be.
What now is going to become of me?

Somewhere deep in memory,
I hear clickity clack.

I hear a lonesome whistle blow.
I know I want to be coming back.



You're walking, you fall down.

It hurts, you scrape your knee and elbow.
No one is looking.

Would they care if they were?

You get up and keep walking.



ISMS

Life is very much like a movie.
It isn't over till the credits role and the music ends.
Only then can you leave the theatre.



I am an honest, trustworthy person.

I have a strong work ethic.

I do my very best at every job I undertake.

I respect others and their right to be as they see fit.

I expect to be respected by others and allowed to be who I am.

I take care of my own needs and give to others as I can.

My father was a proud man and would not accept charity.

I also try to be self-reliant but also try not to be so proud that I will not accept help when needed.

I want to continue learning and keep an open mind.

I don't like too much technology.

I like being able to talk to a live person on the phone or face to face.

I fear that future generations will not be able to write or spell LOL you know.

CROWS

I'm walking down 7th Street in Santa Monica enjoying the sunshine. I pass two large Crows or Ravens squaking at each other. They eye me as if I didn't belong on their sidewalk. As I walk they follow me, matching step for step. I stop and turn around to look at them. They also stop, stare at me. I start walking again. They start again. I felt like the pied piper with my buddies the Crows.



ANOTHER DREAM LOST?

It's not what happens to you that shapes who you are,
but the way you react to them that creates your personality.

I had a dream of going from room to room and climbing steps
that went to places that I didn't intend to go.

The rooms all seemed to be strange and unfamiliar.

One was a bar with lots of people that I didn't know.
I was passing through it, but no one noticed me,
as I was a ghost.

Another room was full of people picking through stuff that had been
donated and given away for free.

There were bags of balloons that were Lakers colors and Lakers
shirts and other clothing.

I pick out some balloons thinking I would give them to some children.

I carried them with me as I started up another set of steps,
they took me to a hotel lobby that was unfamiliar to me.

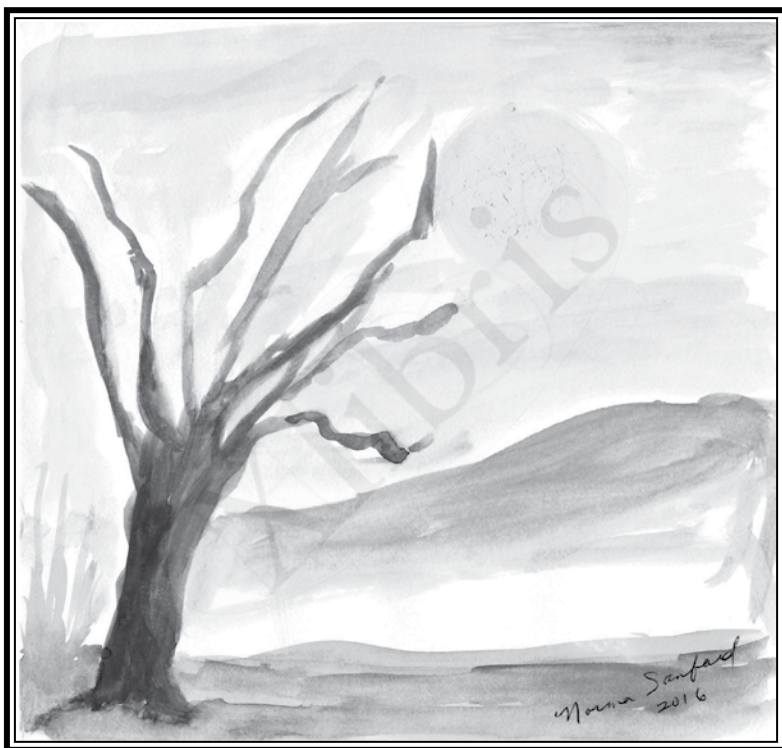
I went down some more steps and wound up in a kitchen where there
were a lot of cooks.

I went through there and wound up outside on concrete steps
going through a park and garden.

I was trying to get to a street below.

The dream ended and I didn't get there.



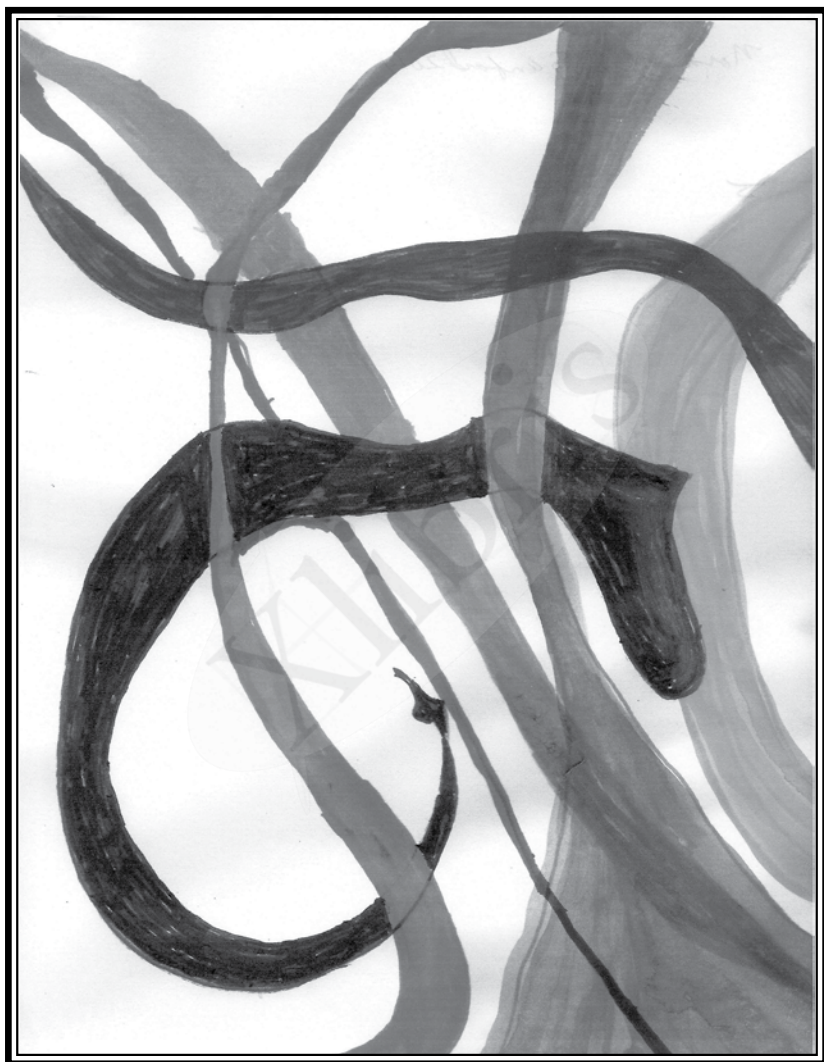








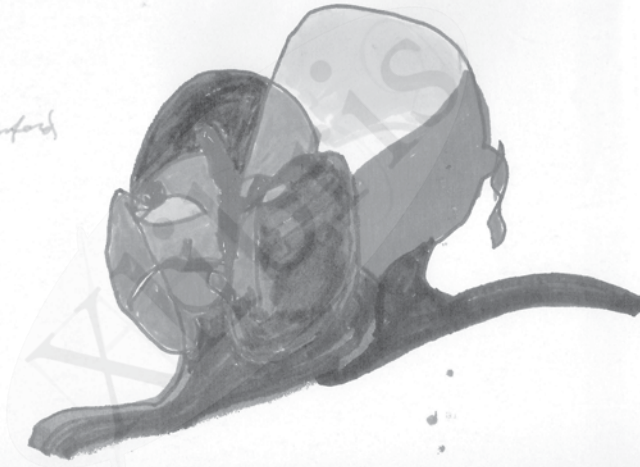


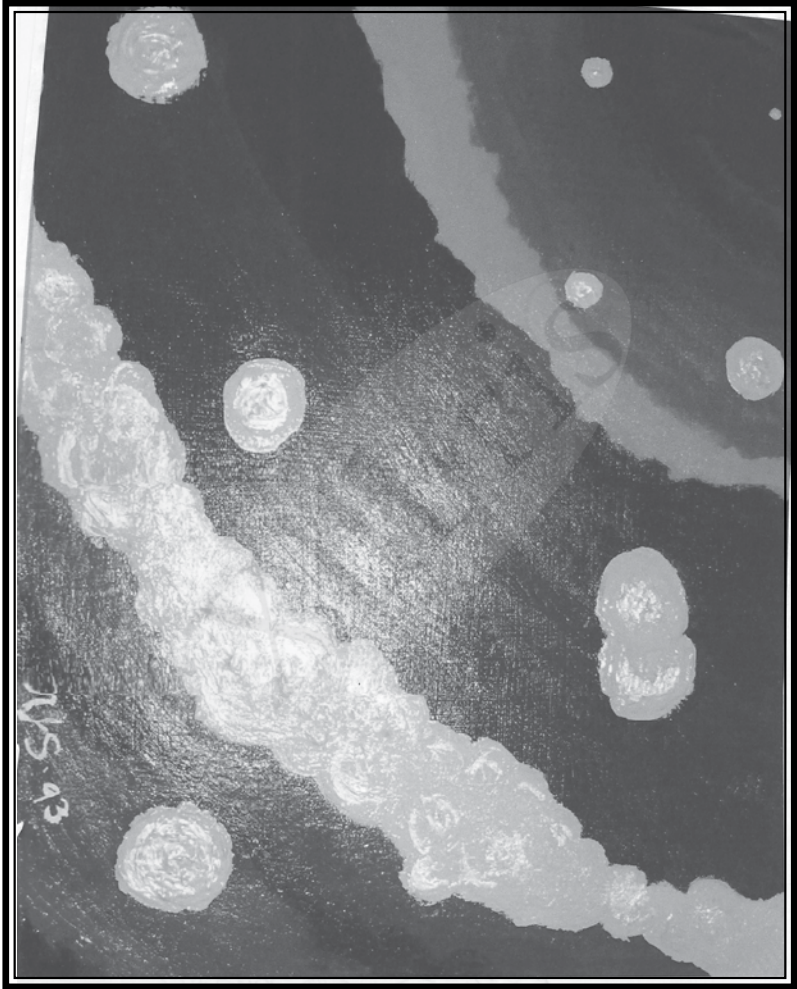




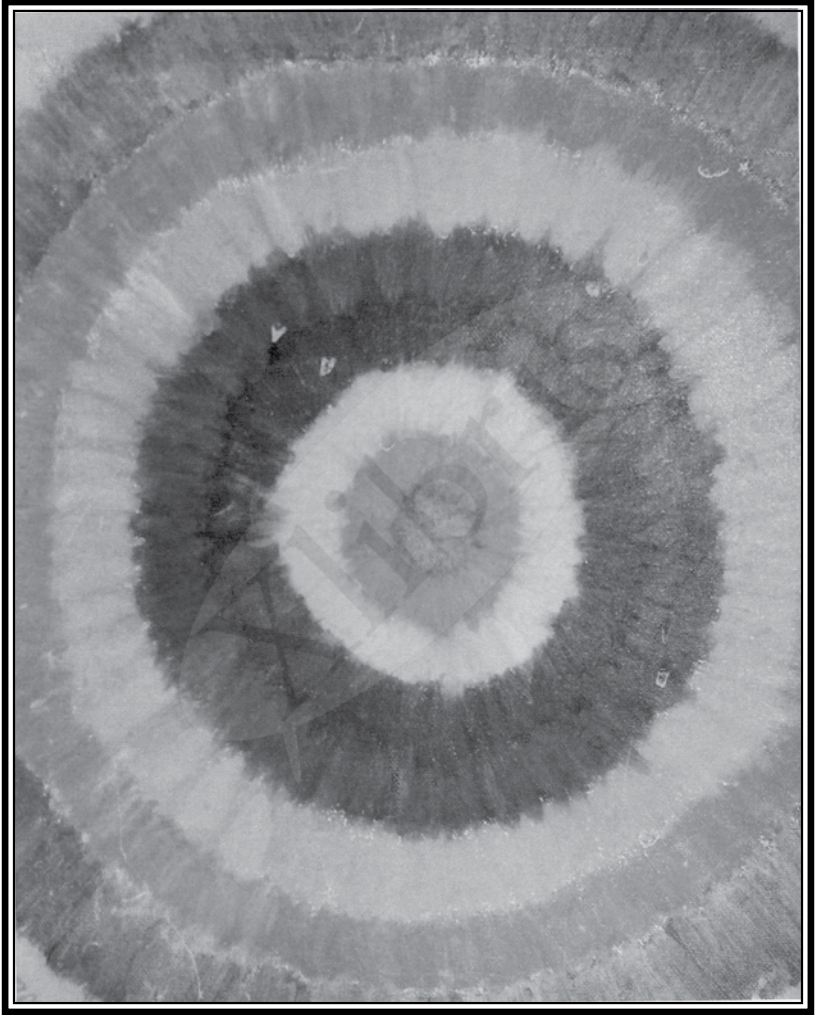
Sometimes
I feel a
little
Confused

Norma Jean Sanford
April 2015









LINDA BANTON

Linda was born on June 11, 1948 in Washington D.C. and was adopted. She attended Palmer Memorial Institute for a boarding school and was there two to three years as an adolescent. She liked the independence of being away from home and she met lots of nice people. She enjoyed biology, home economics and sports like basketball. Linda graduated and went to Spain as a foreign exchange student for six months then home to Manhattan and worked for Eastern Airlines in their executive sales department. She worked there 10 years then moved to Detroit and got married. Linda had one child from her first marriage. In Detroit she worked at AAA in their travel department for six years, then moved to Cerritos, California with her husband. Linda then divorced and moved to Long Beach, where she worked as a travel agent at The Travel Center She also taught travel and tourism at Travel and Trade Career Institute for 15 years fulltime. She retired 2004 and moved into Carmelitos in 2006.

Linda's hobbies include caring for indoor plants, animals and painting and writing. Her daughter lives in Long Beach and she is a grandmother of two, and a great grandmother of two.

DEDICATION

I dedicate my poetry to my family and loved ones.



NOBODY KNOWS THE REAL ME

Nobody knows how many times I've sat in my house crying.
How many times I've lost hope.

How many times I've been let down.
How many times I've had to hold back the tears.

How many times I've felt like I was going to snap.
Sometimes you just need someone to simply be there.

Not to do or fix anything in particular, but just to let you know that you are cared for
and supported.

Sometimes the strongest people are the ones who love beyond all faults, cry behind
closed doors and fight battles that no one knows about.

I try to keep myself together for the ones I love.
Only those who have known darkness can truly appreciate the light.

I'VE COME TO REALIZE

I've come to realize that everybody is not your friend.

Just because they hang around you and laugh with you doesn't mean they're for you.

Just because they say they got your back doesn't mean they won't stab you in your back.

People pretend well.

I learned the hard way that I can't always count on others to respect my feelings.

Being a good friend doesn't guarantee that others will be good friends too.

Nowadays friends do the same as enemies do.

I have to stop expecting loyalty from people who can't even give me honesty.

I must remember that I can only control myself and how I choose to be as a person.

As for others, I can only choose to accept them or walk away.

Be thankful for the bad things in life,
for they open your eyes to the good things
you weren't paying attention to.

The greatest challenge in life is discovering who you are.

The second greatest challenge is being happy with what you find.
You're never too old to feel young.

When you meditate you connect with God.
When God lives in you, life becomes meditation itself.

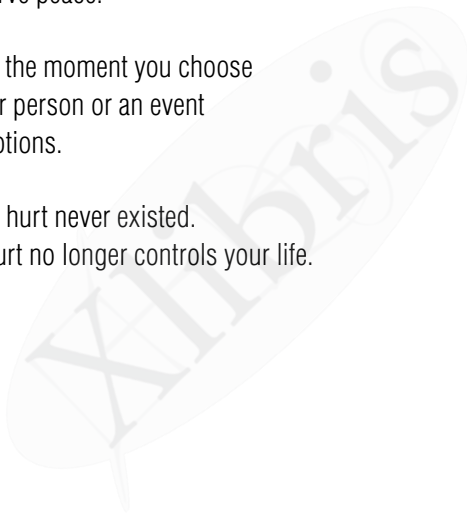
INNER PEACE

Have you ever noticed that people would rather stop speaking to you instead of apologizing when they are wrong?

I've come to realize that I must forgive them.
Not because they deserve forgiveness
but because I deserve peace.

Inner peace begins the moment you choose not to allow another person or an event to control your emotions.

It doesn't mean the hurt never existed.
It just means the hurt no longer controls your life.



HOW I MISS YOU

Oh how I miss you my dear old friend.

There's an emptiness in my soul.
You brought laughter, joy and happiness to my heart.

You were a ray of light.
Just like your name Sunshine.

Part of me is happy that you're free.
No more suffering, no more pain.

The other part of me is sad that you are gone.
May the Lord bless you and take care of you on your journey home.

Oh how I miss you my dear old friend.

FORGIVENESS

It took me a long time to understand what it meant to forgive.
I often wondered how could I forgive someone
who deliberately chose to hurt me.

But after a lot of soul searching, I came to realize that forgiveness
is not about accepting or excusing someone's behavior.

It's about letting go and preventing their
behavior from destroying my heart.

I know now that being mature is learning
to walk away from people and situations
that threaten my peace of mind, self-respect,
values, morals and self-worth.

When I can't control what's happening I must challenge
myself to control the way I respond to what's happening.

That's where my power is.

I know it's not going to be easy,
but it will be well worth it.

FAKE PEOPLE

Beware of fake people.

A fake person is someone who is not genuine and will do whatever it takes to make themselves look good.

They will take credit for the work of others or down play the good of others to illuminate themselves.

Fake people are dishonest, and they will lie and will turn off their friendship the moment it's no longer a benefit for them.

They will change their personality to fit into a certain group or situation.

So be aware of fake people.

read something one day.

It was so true.

It said "Take a piece of paper and crumble it up.

Then try to straighten it out like it was.

You can't !

People's hearts are like that piece of paper.

Once you hurt them, it is difficult to leave them
the way you found them to start with.

So, before you hurt someone you care about,
think long and hard about what you do or say to them.

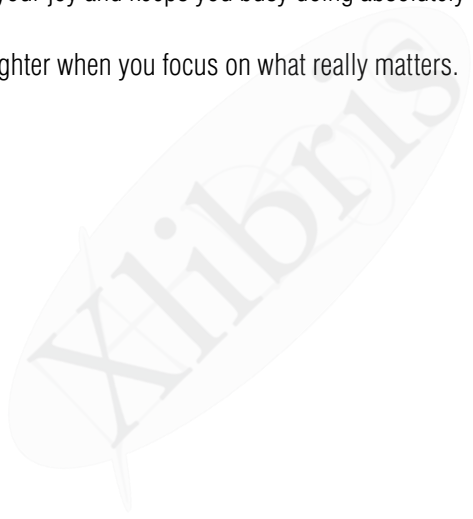
Your mind gets angry but your heart still cares.

This smile on my face doesn't mean my life is perfect by no means.
It just means I appreciate what I have and what God has blessed me with.

I've come to realize worrying is a total waste of time.
It doesn't change anything.

All it does is steal your joy and keeps you busy doing absolutely nothing.

Life is so much brighter when you focus on what really matters.



STRONG WOMAN

I never knew how strong I was until I had to forgive someone, who wasn't sorry, and accept an apology I never received.

As a strong woman you can't give up even though your heart may feel heavy.

You have to keep going.
Take one more step, then another, then another.

You will come to realize that you can't make anyone respect you.
However, you can refuse to be disrespected.

Yes, I know it's hard to move on.
But once you do, you will realize it's the best decision you ever made.

I think the hardest thing about being a strong woman is no one ever asks "Are you Ok?"

Even with tears in my eyes, I manage to say I'm Ok with a smile.

KAREN D. WASHINGTON

Karen was born on 2-20-1960 in LA at Martin Luther King Hospital. She is one of 10 children and attended Grape Street in Watts, Bunch JH and Centennial High School. Karen enjoyed science and typing in high school. She also played volleyball in high school. After HS she got babysitting jobs and worked in restaurants as a cook for two years in Los Angeles. She had eight kids and stayed home with her children. Her hobbies include writing, cooking and decorating and she is a people person. She has nine grandkids and no great grandchildren. She has been at Carmelitos since 2010.

DEDICATION

I dedicate my writing to my whole, loving family and grandchildren.



STILL

I still wake up thinking.
I still walk all day.

I still cry sometimes.
I still talk to people.

I still have things to say.
And I still go and do the same things everyday.



THIS IS HOW I FEEL

I wonder what is going on today. My eyes are wide open and listen to what people are going to say. Today is how I feel.

Walk and talk to friends on the way to stores or do you know they are your friends. I wonder or should I wonder no more.

This is how I feel.

Smile at me. Some things get mad at me. Sometimes talk to me, let me know what is in your heart or show friends. Be friends or should friends fall apart.

This is how I feel.

Look around you and let me know. This world is something else or did you know. We can talk, walk and smile and eat. Look at all of this and then you all let me know what is a friend, a man or boy.

This is how I feel.

I love to learn about things. I love my school. Dr. Levy's class that I am in. I will not let no one get me down even when I act like a clown. I will still smile at everyone. No matter what because I have God on my side. And to me that is Good Luck.

And that is how I feel.

A TRAIN AWAKENING

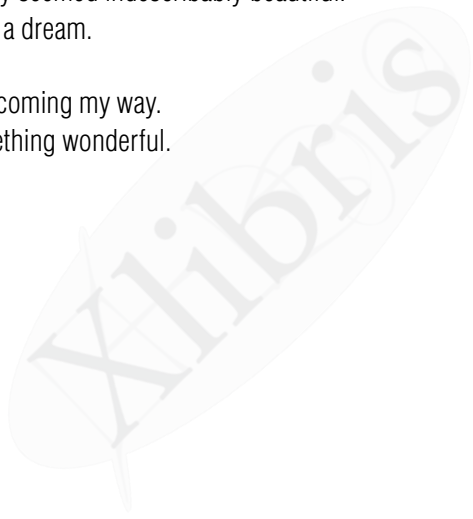
The streets were silent.
Unspoiled whiteness.

Everything around me, the falling snow,
the powder blanketing cars and branches.

The dark, heavy sky seemed indescribably beautiful.
Maybe this was all a dream.

But then I heard it coming my way.
The sound of something wonderful.

A train.



MY CLASS

Dr. Levy is the teacher of my class.

We have to listen to what he says and that is that.

He is the best teacher and I don't mind.
He gives us education, cooperation and much more.

Come to my class and you will see what I am trying to say.

Everyone in my class gets along.
We all say how we feel and so on.

My class is real, that I can say.
So go on Dr. Levy, teach another class.

But before you do, see if they have class.
Like my class.

Business is business, that is what you say.
So when you teach another class
tell them that your other class says have a nice day.

THOSE I LOVE AND TO THOSE WHO LOVE ME

From your sister "Karen"

To my brother Tony R.I.P.

When I am one, release me, let me go.
I have so many things to see and do.

You mustn't tie yourself to me with tears.
Be happy that we had so many good years.

I gave you love, you can only guess how much you gave me in happiness.
I thank you for the love each of you have shown.

But now it's time I travel on alone.
So grieve for a while for me, if grieve you must.

Then let your grief be comforted by trust.
It's only for a while that we must part.
So keep the memories within your heart.
I won't be far away, for life goes on.
So if you need me, call and I will come.

Though you can't see or touch me, I'll be near.
And if you listen with your heart, you'll hear all my love around you soft and clear.

And then – when you must come this way alone,
I'll greet you with a smile, and say:

Welcome Home.

Karen 6-22-14



WHEN YOU LOOK INSIDE YOURSELF

When you look inside yourself, what do you see?
A face, a smile – relate; when you look at someone else.

What do you say?

Hi – Hello and have a nice day.

Take one day at a time and you will find that when you look inside yourself, you are looking inside of your mind.

Think about that when you look at yourself next time.

HAVE A NICE DAY

When I went to sleep last night, God woke me up this morning to see another sight.

The sky was blue, the trees were green, what a sight to see if you know what I mean.

People talking and smiling, going on about their day.

I am wondering what they have to say.

Good things, bad things that is all that is going on.

But I hope that they keep the bad things at home.

Go on and have a good day and have a very merry Christmas and go on your merry way.

TO MY GOD SON NAMED BELIEVE

Believe in yourself.
In the power you have to control,
Your own life, day by day.
Believe in the strength that you have deep inside
and your faith will help show you the way.

Believe in tomorrow and what it will bring.
Let a hopeful heart carry you through
for things will work out if you trust
and believe.

There's no limit to what you can do.

THANK YOU

Thank you for being there for me when no one else was.

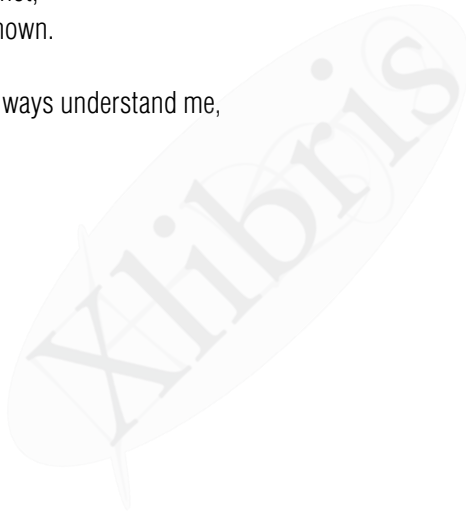
Thank you for knowing me,
knowing me when no one else does.

Thank you for showing me the right way to go
because if you did not,
I would not have known.

Because you will always understand me,

My love.

Love you Dad.



FOCUS

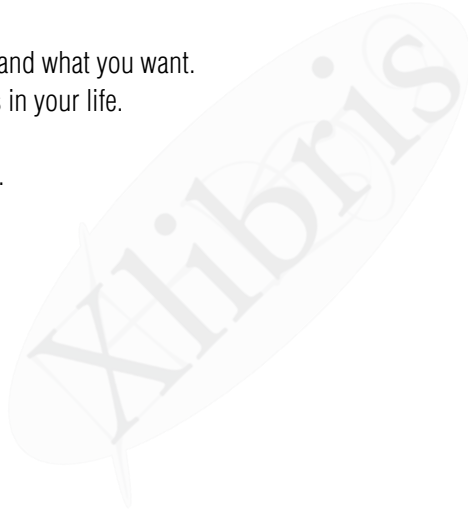
Focus on whatever you do each day of your life.

Focus on your grandmother, grandfather and family.
Make sure that everything is alright.

Call and make sure and tell them that you care.
Say I love you and to take care.

Focus on your life and what you want.
Have joy and focus in your life.

That is what I want.



OUTSIDE OF MYSELF

Outside of myself, I am a very kind person.

Not knowing what to do next.
Being kind and loving,
and trying to understand myself.

Outside of myself.
I have to keep going on,
walking, talking
and trying to do nothing wrong.

What can I say to make my bad dreams go away?

People think they know me,
but they don't.

Trying to understand me,
but they won't.

Outside of myself.

PERHAPS

Perhaps I was wrong to say what I said.
And perhaps I was wrong for doing it that way.

Perhaps I am sorry.

Perhaps I am not.

Perhaps you were wrong and I was not.



UNDERSTANDING

Think about what to say, and how to say it.
Talk to each other because there is no way around it.

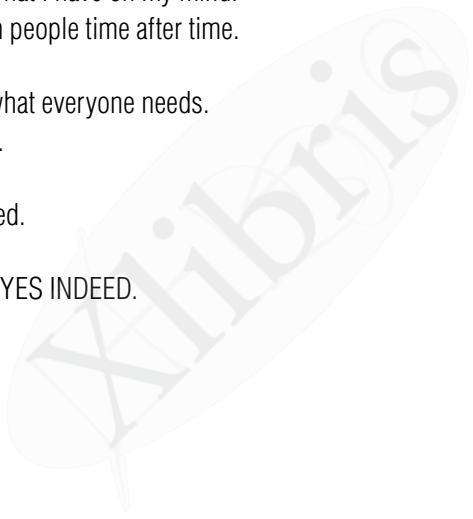
Kids are our loved ones in every way.
They understand us every day.

Understanding is what I have on my mind.
Because I deal with people time after time.

Understanding is what everyone needs.
Pray for each other.

That is what we need.

Understanding --- YES INDEED.



OPEN BOOK

When I open a book – what do I do?

I read it.

Look at the pictures and the people in it.

Read to someone else so that they can hear me aloud.
So that they can tell me again to read aloud.

An open book is something that you do best.
But you try to do your best.

Try to learn the best that you can.
The open book that I am talking about is the Bible in your hand.

WONDERING

Wondering what to say.
Wondering what to do.

I think the same way.
How about you?

Wondering about things on the outside. But not in.
Then what the hell are you wondering about my friend?

Wonder no more.

Because the time has come to go outside and have some fun.

Look at the birds, look at the trees.
Look at the ocean, and you will see.

You do not have to wonder no more.

YES INDEED.

PROBLEMS

Problems is something you cannot handle by yourself.
Talk to someone or get some help.

Problems will make you sad or maybe not.
If you can handle it by yourself, why not?

Problems are all over the world.
That I know.

Look at t.v. and then you will know.
Problems come and problems go.

Problems will never go away that I know.

PERRY A. COLE

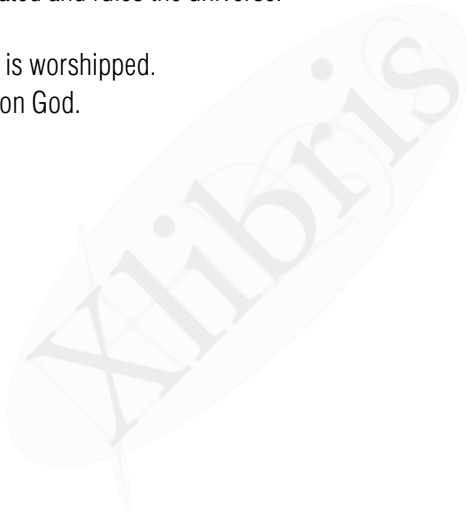
Perry was born on January 18, 1948 in Inola, OK He attended elementary, junior and high school at Booker T. Washington. In high school, he enjoyed drafting and engineering classes and he attended OK State Tech, Okmugee and majored in design and engineering. After graduating in 1969, he relocated to El Segundo CA and worked as a design draftsman at Litton Ship Engineering. He was at Litton Ship for five years then transferred to guidance and control engineering with the same company for 10 years. His last job was with McDonnell Douglas which he left in 1994 and was hired in 1987 at McDonnell Douglas as an associate engineer designing aircraft; working on C-17 project. He is married to Juanita, who he met in high school and they have two daughters named Stephanie and Marsha. He's been a writer his whole life enjoying creating writing and memoir writing. Perry's hobbies include drag racing and reading reference books.

THE LIE ON GOD

Most individuals lie on God,
saying that God fights their battles.

But God is the perfect and all powerful spirit
of beings that is worshipped,
especially by Christians, Jews and Muslims
as the one who created and rules the universe.

He is the spirit that is worshipped.
Please stop the lie on God.



WHY WE ARE SO LAZY?

Lazy is doing nothing.

Lazy is not talking.

Lazy is letting the room stay dirty.

Lazy is not thinking about anything.

Lazy is part of not doing anything.

So that is a part of living.



WHY DO I NEED THE BIBLE

When I am Islamic?

Islam defines God as one only.

A perfect and all powerful spirit or being that is worshipped especially by Christians, Jews and Muslims.

But the document is the Koran.



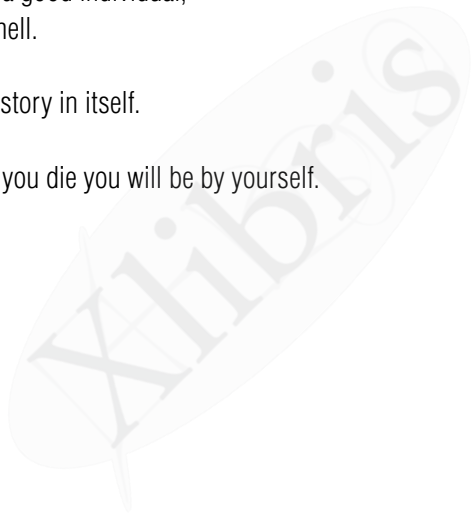
WHY I AM AFRAID OF DYING

Dying for some individuals is hard because the individual do not know where they will end up.

Because if you not a good individual, you will end up in hell.

But that is another story in itself.

But do know when you die you will be by yourself.

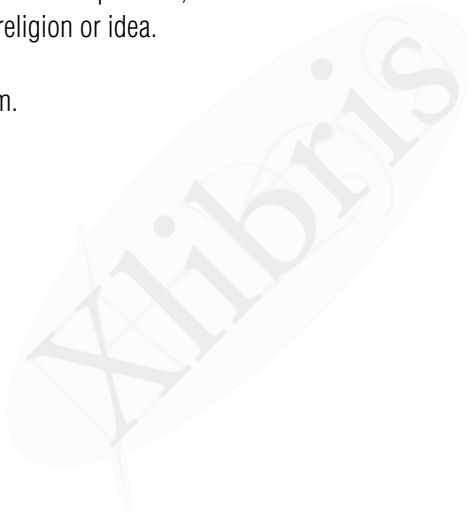


WHY I AM SO INTRANSIGENT

I refuse to agree
or compromise.

Uncompromise, inflexible or
who refuses to agree or compromise,
as in politics, law, religion or idea.

Yes that is who I am.

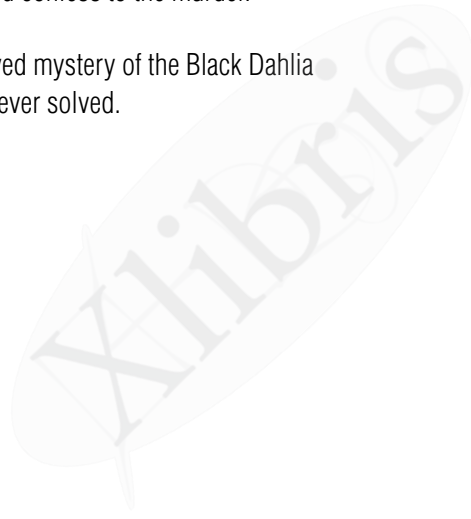


THE BLACK DAHLIA

Was a nickname given to Elizabeth Short?
The American woman who was the
victim of a much publicized
murder in 1947.

As the years followed more than 69 years
more than 40 would confess to the murder.

To me is an unsolved mystery of the Black Dahlia
murder that they never solved.



I AM A BIGOT.

A person who is overly intolerant
of any differing creed,
belief or opinion.

That person I am not.



HOW TO BE A FATHER

A father teaches how to be good.

Responsible to the family, financial, commitment.

How to deal with distractions so he can unite with his wife and family.

A father must understand his job is never done.



WHAT LIFE SHOULD BE

Life is something that a person wants to do to be free.

It is what an individual likes to make a child, project, home.

Etc. Enjoys his or her family ideas without individuals trying to be a Lord to him or her

So let me enjoy life.



BEING RESPONSIBLE

You are responsible for what you let in your head or what you eat.

Responsible takes in a lot it and leads to the right health and making right choices

It helps the individual to choose a friend, finance and so lets be responsible.



A MOTHER

Without a mother life will stop, creation, the future.
There will be no doctors, lawyers, teachers.

These individuals are what life needs

so lets stop trying to forget about mothers.

Without them we cannot grow up, and be a grandmother

The world needs mothers so God bless.



INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE LORDS

A small group of people make money.
How these individuals make money is through religion.
Or God, law, education or health.

Those individuals make money on you without you knowing it.



HOW TO NOTICE A SELFISH PERSON

One they make excuses.

Second they will not listen.

You talk if it is not about them.

Third they always asking you to do something for them.

Fourth they like to control your ideas.

So be careful of these individuals.



BELIEVE IN GOD

Believing do not make you a better person.
You have to put hard work into a job
so that it means you have
to understand yourself.

How to love yourself, be fair with yourself.

This is what it takes.



THE DEVIL

The devil is very selfish and will not listen to you.
It lives on your fear, hate and your selfish love.
So be careful of someone who talks about love, hate, respect.

All the time it might be the devil.



WHY I DON'T PLAY WITH GOD

God: the perfect and all powerful spirit or being that is worshipped specifically by Christians, Jews and Muslims as the one who created and rules and the universe. But still individuals lie about God. If God is basic on truth or lie, a lot of individuals would not go to heaven. But is basic on faith.



DEATH

Death is something every person will do.
Sooner or later.

Death is being alone, with no one with you.
You know no one lives forever.

So get ready for death.



BARBARA GOWER

I'm the fourth oldest of twelve siblings, born into a two parent home in the deep, deep south of the state of Mississippi. My father is interracial of a Black father and White mother. He was an Achondroplastic dwarf; four of his children are also, for which I am one. With no formal training, my father worked as a Welder/Mechanist most of his life, while my mother, with a six grade education was a stay-at-home mother. My parents' expectation for all of their children was the same, that we would excel.

My encounter with school due to my dwarfism created a lot of physical and social barriers. Nothing suited my high and nothing was ever done to correct it. From the age of six to nine years old, I was energetic, but was teased and bullied throughout grammar school. I became less assured of myself and very introverted. As of Junior High and High school little changed in my personality. I graduated from High school with a high "C" average in 1964.

After High school, I didn't have a clue as to what I wanted to do with my life. Although, it was expected of me to go to college; I wanted to get married. I thought this was going to save me from myself. I met someone and entered into a "Common Law" relationship. What a mistake that was. That relationship produced two daughters for which I was most proud of. I had relatives in California and decided to come here. I found a job taking care of other people's children as I explored avenues to college.

I enrolled in Long Beach City College with the help of the State Vocational Department. I entered college with excellent Math skills, but poor English skills. After two years, I transferred to Cal State University graduating in 1974 with a B.A. Degree in Social Welfare.

I have worked in various social service fields. I'm a people person who enjoys helping and inspiring others toward a better life. My daughters are grown and married and have given me three grandchildren.

As an adult, my daughters were my greatest inspiration for coming out of the box I had put myself in. I learned to have value in myself and deal with life as it comes.

I spent and spend a lot of time volunteering. I find it most rewarding, giving back. My latest volunteering effort will be a Tenant Commissioner for Los Angeles County Public Housing. As a senior citizen, I am still looking forward to learning how to paint and draw, become better at writing and taking up singing. What a life! What a life!

DEDICATION

I dedicate my works, first to Dr. Elijah Levy for putting forth the efforts in assisting me as well as others in seeing how full life can be during the winter years of one's life. I fully appreciate all the experiences, starting with my parents, siblings, children, friends and sometime foes that contributed to me being a better person. Love to Tracy, Michelle, Jasmine, Jarett and Jordan.



R & R TRACK DESTINY

Here you lay, rustic and forgotten.
Your rail no longer shines from the grease of the wheels.

What pray tell was your destiny.

There were times of great events.
You were the track taking people to and fro.

Or the rider of mighty machinery brought to one's door.

Now weeds comfort your way,
occasional wild flowers and tall, straight trees
no longer lean to your fast going power.

Was your destiny tragically cut short?
Or had it been your time run out?

I hate to think of your time gone by
as I drive across your track and wonder why,
and yet remember the sounds of clickety clack.

There were times your track extended further than
the eyes could see.

Again, what was your destiny?

EVERY LITTLE CHILD I SEE

I wonder far and long, who will you be.
Your life is a mystery; storms are brewing.
Yet, you laugh and play without a clue;
your innocence is apparent in everything you do.

You awaken each day full of zest,
to your mother's arms who are the best.
Who will nurse you to grow faster than a weed,
free, tall and true to every deed?

How will life events shape your character
in failing or succeeding?
What will you borrow that may lead you astray
or will you vacillate back and forth as the ocean goes,
not knowing what's in store?

Will the undercurrent prove to be too much,
that will make you long for that innocent perch?

You have no hesitation, doubt is not in your name.
Love of life is now your game.

Give the pains of life away.

Absorb the majesty of wonderful.

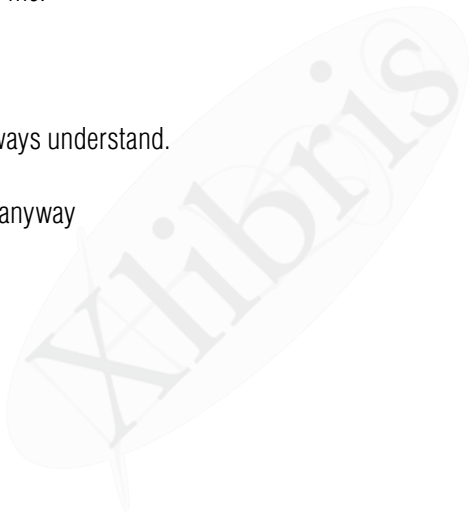
I'm more than the sum total of what you see.

Try me, Try me, Try me.

I came.

I saw and didn't always understand.

But I took the path anyway



BUT...I WAS JUST WONDERING

Hey God, excuse the less than respectful salutation, I mean no disrespect.
But...I was just wondering.

I know it is a tough job dealing with us people. I also know that You are up for the task.

I hate that they beat my Brother Jesus, the way they did.

As deceitful as Lucifer is, I would not wish to see him beat like that.

You did say love one another.

I thank You for my Brother, although, I have been several generations removed.

I know You are all powerful and all knowing.

But...I was just wondering.

Jesus said, "my Father has many mansions, if it were not so, I would not say so.

I'm not interested in a mansion, but if you have a small shack, at the end of the street, that would be fine for me.

I'm really not interested in cleaning and cooking anymore.

I figured, if Moses could live in the desert all that time without new clothes; I want need a closet.

But...I was just wondering.

Do You ever laugh? Or, are You laughing at this wretch soul writing this?

Will I see the sunsets and sunrises with the same splendor? Or the birth of a bird coming forth

after a long winter.

But...I was just wondering.

If there is no sorry in heaven, will I know my parents, siblings and my children?

What will I be doing for an eternity? Will my job be only to give you praises?

For I know I will have no need for earthly things, that brought joy to my being.

But...I was just wondering.

I believe, trust and have faith in You, although, I waver in my own trust, belief and faith in myself.

Am I enough to have that little shack on your street of gold?

I think I am; I think I am.

But...I'm still wondering.

Do I know I am?



“A BROOM AND A DUST PAN”

Almost a year has passed since Charlie died. We were married thirty years. He was my life and he always made me feel like I was the most important person in his life. He is gone now and I have buried myself in our home for the past year. Our personality mesh so well until we seem like one person. Although, that wasn't always the case. We worked hard at not sweating the small stuff, because with time, there will be greater challenges. Our oneness may not have worked for other couples; it was great for us.

I was at his bedside when he died. He had pancreatic cancer. By the time the doctors discovered it, he was given only a few months to live. He braved all kinds of aggressive treatments, but to no avail. He was in a lot of pain. He did his best to hide those days from me. The weight lost was apparent. Whenever I came see him, there was always a smile. When moments permitted, he would hold my hands in such a gentle assurance way. Sometimes, he would caress my face with both hands, draw me near and smile with all the love in this world. One of the last thing he said to me was, “don't allow this house to consume you, find your way and live.”

It is Saturday morning. I just finished my breakfast, sitting at the little square table in the kitchen that Charlie and I shared for so many years. Our conversations were so lively, debating newspaper items or commenting on the beauty of a Humming Bird outside of the window going from blossom to blossom. The tears flooded my eyes as I remembered Charlie's last words. I kept saying, as if Charlie is here, okay today is the day. I hurried fast to our bedroom closet for fear I would change my mind. I pushed back the sliding mirror door to see what I would wear. The plastic hangers made clicking noises as I went through my clothes. I was on a mission to leave the house. I remembered having a sleeveless pleated yellow georgette dress with a matching jacket with one button fastened to the left side. It was a favorite of Charlies. He would always compliment me saying, “you are as lovely as the annual Daffodils that comes every spring.”

I put on my dress, added a small white purse, pearls necklace, earrings and white low hill shoes to complete the outfit. I left the house walking, not knowing where I was going. Charlie did all the driving. So, I figured I would walk until I was tired. I walked down the sidewalk, hearing birds chirp, people talking and an occasional dog barking as cars zoomed by. It is odd how little one notices things while driving as opposed to walking that same street. The houses construction were the same, a two car garage, and a straight walkway to the front door with variation of muted colors.

After two more blocks, I came to a cross street named King Solomon Court. It was a one way street going toward a two story white building. My interest was piqued. As many a times Charlie and I passed this street, I never noticed it. The street was lined with these tall lush green trees that looked like a perfect awning covering the street. It gave such a serene peaceful feeling; I had to see what was at the end of the block. I went the way of the building enjoying the shade from the trees; it was very warm that day. As I walked, a black shinning limousine passed me and parked to the right of the white building. It took me a few more minutes before I reached the end of the street that gave way to a two story church named King Solomon Baptist Church. The white church stood with a cross over the doors and four impressive columns that held up the façade with a circular driveway headed in the opposite direction. As I stood there admiring the building, a young lady exited the black limousine dressed in a pastel pink antebellum dress with a matching hat and parasol. I wanted to see more. This had to be someone's wedding. There were two tuxedo clad young men standing at the door welcoming the guests. I thought for a second, should I risk it just to be turned away? I held my head up, walked straight toward the door as if I belonged inside. The young men opened the doors with a smile. I greeted them with a tip of the head and thanked them. Once I passed them, I grew weak in the knees. I had not intended to stay long; I just wanted to see. Inside the foyer area, well dressed men, women and a few children were hurrying about to get to their seat inside the sanctuary. I went right alone with them. I sat at the very back row of the church, hoping to make a quiet exit in a few minutes.

The sanctuary was filled with soft music professing this solemn occasion. The scent of spring flowers permeated the air as balmy breezes made the pastels colored bells sway back and forth. The noisy chatter from the guests only enhanced the gaiety of the event. I was so in awe of everything, I forgot the time. I stood to leave, just then the wedding march started. Utter silence came to the church. I eased back into my seat. The stately dressed attendances opened the sanctuary doors. Two angelic creatures dressed in white apparel entered with lit candles making their way down the aisle to

light two candelabras positioned on each side of the altar. Thus, the ceremony had begun. The flames on the candelabras seem to be dancing to the sound of the music as the groom came in and stood near the altar. How grand he looked in his white tuxedo trimmed in gray with a matching bowtie.

The ribbon was cut that gave way to an aisle laden with white rose pedals dropped by the flower girls in white satin apparel. One by one, the bridesmaids in their antebellum pastel colored dresses came in with their escorts. The matron of honor was next. She was smiling but seemed nervous. I overheard someone say, she was married here six months ago. We were in awe to see the little gentlemanly dressed ring bearer. He appeared to be about four years old, staring down that aisle with a frown on his face that said, I really don't want to do this. But he did and made his way to stand next to the groom. Suddenly, the tempo of the wedding march echoed throughout the church. The groom stood nervously biting his lip. The bride came down the aisle in her father's arm in a white antebellum off the shoulder gown and veil. The next few minutes were cloudy with my own thoughts of Charlie until I heard the minister say, you may kiss your bride.

The music played as the wedding party exited the sanctuary. I again attempted to leave, but the attendant kept saying, this way ma'am to the reception hall. In line I went with the other guests. I stood at the very back against the wall not wanting to infringe upon a dinner that was paid for the guests. The reception had open seating except for the wedding party table. There was a table near me with two empty chairs. I sat at a table and had a glass of Champaign. I ate the meal of roast beef, garlic mash potatoes and mixed vegetables.

It's now time for the new husband and wife to dance the first dance. They came out onto the floor dancing to "you are my lady, you're all I need." The music brought me back to Charlie. I could not hold back the tears and the memories were overwhelming. In the mist of the crowded dance floor, I could see Charlie waving his hand, beckoning me to come onto the dance floor. I stood on the floor, eyes closed swaying from side to side. I could see Charlie when we first met.

It was late March, he was coming down the hallway of the building I lived in at that time. Our eyes met for a moment as he was passing by and I was entered my apartment. About two hours later, the doorbell rang. I opened the door. He stood there saying, my name is Charlie. I'm helping a friend move into apartment 411. Do you have a broom and a dust pan I can borrow? I promise to bring it back. I'm the guy you

passed in the hallway a while ago. I looked at him with puzzlement but gave in to his request. My parting words, as I gave him the broom and dust pan were “don’t have me looking for you!” A short time later, he returned the broom and the dust pan. He thanked me with a smile and left.

A month later on Saturday before Palm Sunday, the doorbell rang. I opened the door. There stood this person saying, “do you remember me?” I’m Charlie. I said no until he said he was the person who borrowed the broom and the dust pan. I was taken aback as to why he was at my door now. He kept saying, “I’m not some crazy person.” I just want to get to know you. I backed away from him. He then gave me his drivers license and his business card. I took them both, looked at the license and card and returned them. He insisted I keep the card. It had his work address and phone number as well as his home phone number also. He said, call me sometime, if you are single. He left, I thought how odd. I put the card in the trash. Later that day, for some strange reason, I took the card out of the trash and laid it on the coffee table. It stayed there for more than a month. One evening while bored, I picked up the card and read it. He was in a management position with a major hotel chain. The next day I called the hotel. I was told he was at a sister hotel in another city for the day. A week later while I was at the Assessor’s office with my sister who was investigating a property she wanted to buy, I entered Charlie’s name and address. The information came back that he was owner of the property where he lived. I surmise that just maybe he was an okay person.

A week later, I called his home. We talked and talked for more than two hours. We found, we had a lot in common. We were both avid readers. We would read the editorial page of the newspaper and discuss the pros and cons of the article. He often talked about his chess games and the “going on” at the hotel. We both like theater plays. By now, we had been talking over the phone for a couple of months. Then one day he said, “when can I take you out for lunch or dinner?” How about this Friday here at the hotel? I agreed. On Friday, Charlie picked me up at one o’clock. We arrived at the hotel fifteen minutes later. It just so happened, the Brinks truck was there for a pick up. Charlie had parked in front of the truck in order to help me out of his car. The Brinks truck blew the horn for Charlie to move. Charlie held his hand up in a jester telling the truck to wait. I thought wow, he had the Brinks truck waiting on me. We were seated at a table with a view of patio garden. A bottle of red wine was ordered as we talked the evening away as if we had known each other for a long time. I knew then I wanted to spend the rest of my life with this man. By the end of the year, we were married. The children came and grew up so fast. He was an excellent father. He spent a lot of time engaging in conversation about life with our children. He was always a good listener

when they had something to say. After the children left home, we were back doing the things we did before.

The music had stopped. I was still on the dance floor in my own world of memories when someone touched my shoulder. I had had a most wonderful time today knowing Charlie's memories would always be with me. I picked up my purse from the table to leave. I felt guilty being an uninvited guest. I found a church envelope and put fifty dollars in it. I wrote a note thanking the couple, then laid the envelope on the gift table and left. As I walked home, I thought about that broom and a dust pan that brought me a wonderful life. My tears are gone and my heart is full.



CRIMSON HANDS

Flooded with thoughts, a just right dungeon.
Did I not know what would come?

A far off glare turned into twenty-four eyes
of a cold bloody stare.

The ease of righteous people will dig this hole.
Was it the color of my hands that gave up the gold?

I washed and washed them with my plea.
But no sounds fell upon their ear.

As they looked at my face and said,
it will be a long, long time and then you are dead.

Ten years of dread, year after year
Until the end, until it's clear

A CALIFORNIA DAY

A morning dip in a pool or lake
tell me excitingly I'm awake

and a bright day ahead of me.

O' how this take me back to Bodega Bay

where the days were filled with sunshine rays.

An ocean view is just as great

but I still prefer the warm water of a lake.

There is nothing better than California sunshine

to fill the void of a wondering mine.

There are places to go and people to see

but all I'm concerned about is just me.

What shall I do, where shall I go?

It doesn't matter, let me hit the door.

A day like this should never end;

I cross my fingers with the Trade Winds.

But...as the sun sets in the western plains,

I know tomorrow will be just the same.



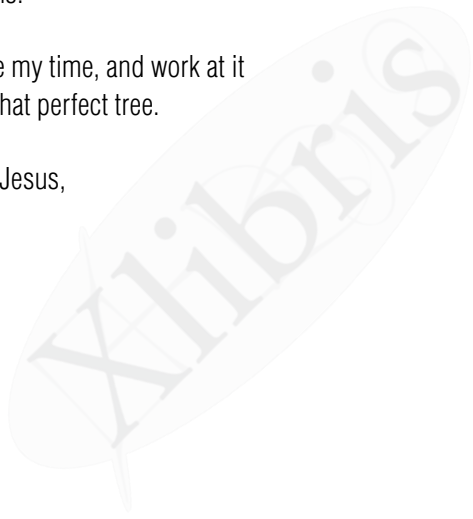
A TREE

Into the woods I went, looking for that perfect tree
it had to be as Jesus is
that strong body to support the branches
as Jesus did for the world.

Limbs to tolerate all the heavy ornaments
as Jesus did for sins.

Have patience, take my time, and work at it
for the rewards of that perfect tree.

Are the rewards of Jesus,
especially for me.



LOVE THE LIFE

Love the life, live the life.
Every splendor has a place,
a blade of grass makes the case.

Uniqueness of it all, the part we played
in leaving a foot print in every space.

Create destiny not to be forgotten.

Make it your life, although not perfect,
having no regrets
of things and people you met.

Brave experiences are blueprints to the light.
To say what can be beyond the night.

Take the gift as a divine order.
Mold it, shape it as a willow bend.

It is your life after all, until the very end.

DEATH AND WHY

Here I am all sixty-five pounds at six year olds, becoming aware of this thing called “Death.” I can see, hear, smell, touch and feel which made life good. How and why could this include “Death” as a component to my life? And better still, why was this “Death” to become a part of my parent’s life? When I understood at this age being born is to die was horrific. I lay awake many hot and wintry nights with an old tattered quilt over my head, asking the question why. I dare not think of the probability of my parents dying before me. I could not think of life without them. My heart, mind and existence could not adjust to this thing called “Death.” Then I asked myself, why was I born into such a state? I could not see living without my parents. I was held fixed in a box with this strange fear. I could not speak of it for fear death would come. I lived in fear that death was every day and the next day.

By the time my father died, I had been away from home ten years. Some of my fears resigned. I guess the distance and time had put a buffer between me and “Death.” It had taken the body of my father but could not take his memories away. The memories provided the comfort to transcend “Death.” Then along the way came Jesus who gave me peace and a place upon this earth. The days are no longer dark with fear. Let it come, I will fight and fight without fear until my time is up for “Death.”

A GOOD DAY FOR A FUNERAL

Characters

Timothy (Aileen's son)

Jimmy (Mr. James Bonneville's son)

Aileen

Mister James Bonneville

Miss. Sarah Bonneville

Bae (Aileen's mother)

Grandma Sade (Bae's sister)

Jeffery

Barbara Aileen (Sade's granddaughter)

Good Morning Grandma, "how are you feeling? O' baby, for an old woman, I'm blessed by the grace of God. How is my sweet baby? "Give your grandma a hug. I love having you here with me. I guess it's good because your mother and daddy works all the time. I see that they always provide a decent place for you to live and that take hard work in these times. Grandma, why do you still live in this house on the old Bonneville Plantation? Wouldn't you rather like to live in town? I like that about you Barbara, you are inquisitive. Well baby, I have spent my life here; I'm old and use to it. The Bonneville's have made improvements to the house. I have electricity, running hot and cold water with an in house bathroom. What more can I ask for? I remember when this house had none of these things. This house is in an area of the plantation where the old barn stood and all the working animals and farm equipment was kept. There was only a remnant of the barn, rustic equipment and no animals that once gave life to the plantation. Johnson's grass, trees and other vegetation had reclaimed the land. My cousin Aileen lived here then. The old plantation has lost its luster except for the "Big house" where old Mister Bonneville relatives use for weekend parties. I make a little money cleaning the "Big house" after their parties.

Monday morning came; the sun is barely up. Barbara Aileen, wake up! "Come and go with me to clean the Big house this morning." It's going to be a hot day. Barbara jumped out of bed. She was anxious to see what a Plantation house looks like inside. I fixed some grits and bacon with a glass of milk for Barbara, as I sat and finished my coffee. It was a short trip up the gravel road to highway 49 to get to the Big house. It took ten minutes to get to the Big house steps. I could have taken a short cut through the grasses field but the snakes are plentiful catching frogs and field mice. We arrived at the paved driveway from the highway to the house. It too was once a dirt and gravel road. The sun was beginning to come through but the dew of the morning was still lingering. As we approached the house, you could imagine the grandeur it once held. It was white, two story and stood three feet off the ground on a red brick foundation. To the right and left of the driveway, the house was surrounded by tall oaks, hickory and pine trees that provided great coverage from the setting sun. On the north side of the porch, it was a screened in for those bygone days of sitting in rocking chairs, enjoying the summer breezes and fighting off mosquitos. We made it to the steps. Grandma, Barbara said, why is this house so far off the ground? As I was trying to make it up the steps, I told her this place use to flood out from time to time. I was on the fourth step, when I stop to catch my breath. It's getting harder and harder to get up the steps. We made it to the front door, again stopping to catch my breath. I then pulled out a long black key with a cord tied through a round hold to open the door. This is one of the original keys to the Big house that hang on a nail in my room at home. I stuck the key into the key hole, grab the door knob, did a half moon turn until I heard the click. I turned the knob and pushed the door open.

Barbara went in first about three feet examining everything she saw. Move child I said, there is work to be done. The foyer area is white with green carpet running from the entrance to the rear of the house. In the center of the foyer stood a brown maple table, with a potbelly green vase sitting on a white knitted scarf. To the left of the foyer was a long maple staircase to the second floor. Pass the staircase was the dining room. It was dark due to the floor to ceiling velvet curtain, a chandelier that sparkle like diamonds and a large picture of Mister James Bonneville grandparents. There was also a large maple table with ten chairs centered on a green velvet rug. It had a polished hardwood floor. I

called out to Barbara, “hurry girl, I got work to do.” Barbara did little work as she went through every room allowing her mind to image the life of that time.

It’s about twelve noon and we finished the cleaning. We went through the front door. I pulled out the same long black key with the cord and lock the door. I had to hold on the rail as I went down the steps. I told Barbara I didn’t know how much longer I will be able to do this. “These steps and stairs are going to be the death of me.” As we walked the driveway back to the highway, Barbara stood there for a moment wondering about the house and the people who once lived in it.

By the time we made it home, we were exhausted, hot and thirsty. The sun was in full force. We had lunch and refreshed ourselves under the old black four bladed electric fan. It felt good being in the cool house under a fan.

Its late evening, the fan was brought into the bedroom. We took a bath and went to bed. We had had a full day working at the Big house. Barbara wasn’t sleepy; she kept asking questions about the olden days at the plantation. She said, Grandma.” Mother said my middle name came from your cousin. Mother never told me anything about her. What was she like? “O child go to sleep.” She finally turned over and fell asleep. As I laid there, in the quiet of the night, listening to the blades slice through the air, I remembered Aileen and her son Timothy.

Aileen was one of five children born to Bae and her husband Henry. They had four older boys and one girl, Aileen the baby. They both worked for Mr. Alvin Bonneville, Mister James Bonneville’s father. The plantation had been in the family since the 1800’s. Bae was the cook while Henry toiled the fields as a share cropper. Bae had made dinner for her husband and oldest son John. John came to the house, picked up the food in a little silver bucket with a divided tray inside. They had beans, ham hocks and cornbread. There was also a jar of cool sugar water. John walked back to the field, but as he got closer. He noticed that the old tractor was at the end of the row on its side. John could not see his father, so he ran toward the tractor, dropping the food. As he got nearer, he could see his father faced down on one of the rows. He went to his father, “hollering,

papa, papa are you okay? He made it to Henry, turned him over wiping the dirt of his face. Henry's body had no life. John pulled him to the shade of a tree and ran home to his mother. As he ran home, he was calling for his mother. He made it to the kitchen saying, "mama I think papa is dead!" John told Mr. Alvin Bonneville what had happened to daddy. Mr. Alvin took to his horse and told John to bring the old Ford truck. Mr. Alvin arrived first at the place Henry was under the tree. He could see no life in Henry also. He helped John to lay Henry's body on to the bed of the truck and took him home to Bae. John drove slowly as tears streamed down his face. All the while they were gone to see about Henry, Bae was praying "God don't let it be, don't let it be! They brought Henry's body into the bedroom and laid it upon the bed he shared with Bae. Mr. Alvin summoned the County Sheriff. He came right away. The sheriff was told what John said. The sheriff went to the field to investigate; the tractor was still running on its side when the sheriff made it to the field. The sheriff stated that it does look like Henry fell of the tractor for some reason and the tractor ran over him. We won't know what happened until the coroner examines the body. The coroner came and took the body away. It looked as if Henry had a stroke or heart attack. A couple of days later, Henry's body was at the mortuary.

Bae went and got Henry's only suite; it was brown, a bit tattered but clean. Bae bought Henry a new white shirt and tie to go with the suite. Two days later, he was buried in the cemetery the first Bonneville set aside for his family, slaves and now share croppers. The cemetery was divided by an acre of tall pine trees between them and the colored. The Bonneville side of the cemetery was next to the highway all trimmed flat land and with headstones. The colored side, the soil was being washed away due to a gully at the far end. We constantly had to add dirt to that side of the cemetery to make sure members that were already buried would not wash away.

On the day of Henry's funeral, John the oldest, told his mother he was going North as soon as he can. He said Papa worked all his life and had nothing. Bae didn't want to hear that on this day. It was hard enough losing her husband, but now John wants to leave her at this time. There were three brothers under John plus Aileen who was five years younger than the youngest brother Joe.

John kept his word. He continued to work the fields his papa died in. He also sought outside work as much as possible to earn extra money. John waited two days before he was due to leave to tell the family. He gathered them together one night and told them of his plan. Bae's eyes welled with tears. With Henry gone, they all relied on John. As they gathered around, he told them that he was going to hop the freight train that comes through the City. John told his mother not to cry. He is doing this for all of us. John looked at his three brothers and said, Robert, the next oldest, I'm putting you in charge as the man of the house. Junior and Joe you must obey Robert. They both agreed. John told his mother once I get settled, I will send for Robert, then the rest of the family will come later. Meanwhile, after I find work, I will send money to help out. The family was told not to tell anyone where he was going.

Bae was afraid, but she knew she had to let him go. There was danger in riding the rails. John packed three changes of clothing, a light jacket and a pair of his daddy's shoes. Bae cooked chicken and biscuits and gave him a mason jar with water. By nine o'clock that night, John was hiding in the bushes near the train tracks. The train had to slow down when going through the City limits. That would be the only time he would be able to catch the train. Once it passes through, it picks up speed. He could hear the whistle on the train as it was coming. John watched to see if any of the doors were open on the box cars. Finally, he saw an open door; it was near the end of the train. It was now or never, John sprang to his feet, threw his sack across his shoulder and made a mad dash to the train. At last, he made it. The box car had a really bad smell. He lit a match and could see what was left from hauling a box car of hogs. Maybe, this is why no one else was in the box car. He found a place to curl up and go to sleep. The train ran all night getting into Chicago the next day, Saturday. He rushed to get off before the conductor found him.

Back on the plantation, it was business as usual. Mr. Alvin Bonneville died this winter and his son James Bonneville took charge. Mister James had been married before, but his wife and son died in childbirth. He was on his second wife, Miss Sarah. She too had lost her husband and had no children. In between marriages, Mister James spent his time drinking, gambling and womanizing. He really wanted children. By the time he married Miss Sarah, she was thirty

five years old with old money. He had lost most of his money. Taxes were due on the estate and he needed money. Miss Sarah had inherited a small fortune from her parents who were one of the notable family in the County. After they were married, Mister James seem not to care for Miss Sarah. She wasn't really pretty, but she was educated and connected in the County. When he wasn't on the plantation, he was gambling and around questionable houses. After a couple of years, still no children came. Being near forty was a dangerous age to start having babies.

After being out one night, Mister James came home in a drunken stupor, asking his wife why she isn't pregnant. In every other aspect, she tried to be a good wife, but not producing a child was pushing her self-worth as a woman over the limit. She became reclusive, drinking as much as Mister James.

Just about a year had gone by since John catching the freight train. Bae thought something had possible happened to him. Then at Thanksgiving, a letter arrived from John. Robert has gotten the letter out of the mailbox. He ran the short distance home to his mother. He opened the door calling her. We have a letter from John. Bae took the letter; her hands were shaking as she opened it. As she unfolded it, two one hundred dollar bills fell out onto the floor. Everyone was scrambling to pick the bills up off the floor. Bae read the letter. John apologized for taking so long in writing. The first few months of being in Chicago was very hard. He has a small apartment and a job as a mechanist. He wants Robert to take some of the money and catch the Greyhound to Chicago. Year after year as the brothers became of age, they all went north.

Bad health was taking its toll on Bae's body. She had rheumatoid arthritis. She would often send Aileen to cook at the Big house. Aileen is sixteen and cooking well as her mother has taught her. Every day before she goes off to school, Aileen not only prepared Bae's breakfast, but she is also at the Big house. She had to rise very early in order to do this. She never complained; she knew soon she and her mother would go to Chicago also. After school, she is back at the Big house making supper. Most times she's back home by seven o' clock. Most evenings, Aileen would bring left over to her mother.

One day Aileen met Jeffery at school; he was a grade ahead of her. He lived in the City with his mother, a widow, who was a school teacher. Jeffery's father died while serving in the Army. Jeffery would often bring Aileen home from school in his mother's car. One evening, Aileen invited Jeffery in to meet her mother. Bae liked him right away, especially knowing his mother is a teacher. Jeffery was around a lot. One evening while he was dropping Aileen off at the Big house, Mister James walked up to the car, asking what was he doing to that gal? Mister James had been drinking. He looked at them both, laughing and went into the house. He made them both very un-comfortable. Aileen told Jeffery to leave. Jeffery did as she said. Aileen went into the house and prepared the Bonneville supper. Just as she was about to head home, she heard Miss Sarah tell Mister James she was pregnant. He said, "it's about time." She was about three months. She didn't want to say anything until she knew everything was alright.

Aileen arrived home that evening telling her mother what she heard Miss Sarah say. In hearing this, Bae thought, at last, maybe Mister James will have purpose in his life and stop drinking.

A month had hardly passed, when Miss Sarah took to her bed. Miss Sarah was put on bed rest for the rest of her pregnancy. The doctor was in the house weekly. Mister James stay close by, but continued to drink. One morning at about two o'clock Miss Sarah went into labor. She was in a lot of pain. Mister James ring for the doctor. He came immediately. The bed had been prepared for the delivery. One of the day helpers was there to assist. It was a long and hard delivery. The baby came out with the umbilical cord around his neck. The doctor didn't know if there would be permanent damages to the child. It was a boy, weighting in at seven pounds. Miss Sarah was very weak from the delivery of their son, James (Jimmy) Beaumont Bonneville Junior. Miss Sarah had hired a nurse to take care of Jimmy. The doctor discussed with Mister Bonneville what had happened during the delivery. We will watch him as he developed. Other than that, he seems a fine boy. Mister James went in to see his son, and his wife. They were both asleep. He smiled as he looked upon his son face.

Little Jimmy is moved into the nursery where Mister James visit with him every day. Miss Sarah sees Jimmy very little. She has given his care over to the nurse. Her recovery from the pregnancy and birth was slow. She knew Mister James would want more children. She also knew that she did not want to have another baby. One night Mister James came into their bedroom to go to bed. Miss Sarah told him to use another bedroom from this night on. He became very angry, left the room slamming the door. From that night, they no longer slept in the same bed. Miss Sarah remained in her bedroom most of the time and taking her meals there also. Mister James continued to spend time with his son; he was most proud. He was also still angry that he was out of their bedroom and eating supper alone. He went back to his old drinking heavily again and taking solace in other women's bed.

Bae was at the Big house to tell Aileen she is riding with Minnie to prayer meeting and won't be back until nine- thirty tonight. Aileen had not made it there yet. Bae asked Mister James if he would let Aileen know. Mister James murmured yes and continued his drinking. Aileen arrived ten minutes after she left. Aileen didn't have to cook but had to heat the pot roast, corn, okra and corn bread. She served Mister James in the dining room and sent Miss Sarah's meal to her bedroom. Aileen finished cleaning the kitchen and went home. Mister James, still drinking at the table, remembered what Bae had said. He walked the distance to Bae's house stumbling all the way. Once he was there, he opened the door without knocking. Aileen was sitting at the kitchen thinking it was her mother. She got up to meet her mother but came face to face with Mr. James. He said, your mother told me to tell you something. But. . . I think I can give you something better. Aileen was un-easy with his tone. She was afraid; she moved around the room, asking Mister James, what did mother say? All the while, she was trying to get to the door. Mister James closed the door behind him and grabbed Aileen. He took her down to the floor, pulling and tearing her dress. The unthinkable happened. Mister James pulled up his trouser, looked at Aileen crying and left. She laid there crying. Five minutes later, there was a knock at the door. She thought it was Mister James again. She pulled herself up from the floor. She did not say a word until Jeffery said it's me. Jeffery could hear Aileen crying. He turned the doorknob and the door opened. He could see her torn dress as she tried to turn her face away. She told Jeffery to leave. He

said, why! I just saw old man Bonneville leaving here. He went to comfort her, but she begged him to leave. Still crying, Aileen went into the bedroom. Jeffery could see there had been a struggle. He picked up one of the chairs and sat in it. He buried his face into his open hands only to imagine what took place here.

Suddenly the door opened, Jeffery jumped from chair thinking it was old man Bonneville. It was Bae. She said, "did I scare you Jeffery?" Jeffery had an angry look on his face. Bae said, "what's wrong? Where is Aileen? Jeffery pointed to the bedroom. Aileen, Aileen is there something wrong? Aileen is sitting on the floor next to the bed crying. Bae could see her dress torn. What happened, did Jeffery do this to you? Jeffery said from the other room, I came by just as Mister Bonneville was leaving and found her like that. O' my God! O' my God! What has happened to my baby? Bae asked Jeffery to leave and not say a word to anyone. Jeffery left, got into his mother's car, turned the ignition and cried. Jeffery went home, told his mother he was tired and going to bed. He too didn't sleep. Bae dragged the old tin tub into the house, heated some water to give Aileen a bath. She pulled Aileen clothes off and eased her into the tub. As she bathed Aileen, she kept telling Aileen, everything is going to be al-right. Aileen was put to bed. Bae sat up the rest of the night thinking of what she should do. She decided to go to the Sheriff or send Aileen to her brothers in Chicago, or just say nothing. The next day Jeffery told his mother what had happened to Aileen. His mother told him that it is probably best he stayed away from there for a while.

Bae was still sitting at the table the next morning when Aileen came into the kitchen. Aileen sat at the table with her head down. Bae reached across the table touching her face saying, you have nothing to be ashamed off. It is that bastard Bonneville! I want to take you to the Sheriff to register a complaint. Aileen pleaded no, then everyone will know what he did to me. I can't deal with others knowing. I will die from shame. Aileen continued to plea with her mother. Finally, Bae said okay if this is what you want. But as soon as you finished high school, I'm sending you to your brothers.

Jeffery saw Aileen at school but things were never the same. She avoided him all the time. He tried to talk to Aileen, but she still bore the shame of

what had happened. On a day of shopping with his mother, they stopped for some gasoline for the car. Jeffery pumped the gasoline and went in to pay the attendant. As he got to the door, Mister James was coming out. Jeffery with his arms down and fists clinched, told Mister James, I know what you did and one day you will pay. Mister James looked at him with a smirk and kept walking. Someone said, are you going to let that boy talk to you like that? Mister James kept walking. Jeffery's mother called for him to get into the car. What is wrong with you approaching that man like that? You will get us both killed. Mama, Jeffery said, I know he hurt Aileen. That may be, it's her mother problem now.

It was Aileen last year of school. She is looking forward to leaving this place and leaving her problem behind. She no longer went to the Big house. Bae went back to work at the big house. It was hard cooking for Mister James. She often thought of putting a little rat poison in his food. She had to deal with him because they lived in one of his houses on the plantation and couldn't afford to move. Miss Sarah, asked Bae, what had happened to Aileen. She told her Aileen was focusing on her school work. This is her last year. It was painful for Bae to work, but she would do what she needed to do for her child.

Aileen was coming out of her shell and bringing a little order to her life. She missed a period but thought nothing of it. It has happened sometimes in the past. The next month came and she missed it again. She became afraid. She didn't want to tell her mother but she didn't know what else to do. Bae came in that evening very tired. Aileen told her she had missed two periods. This was something Bae didn't want to hear. Bae took her to a doctor, who confirmed the pregnancy being about two month. She wrote her son and told them what had happened to Aileen at the hands of Mister James.

The sons were enraged that Mister James had touched their sister that way. On a cool morning in October, Aileen boarded the Greyhound for Chicago. Bae was a lone, still cooking for Mister James. She got closer and closer to putting the rat poison in his food. She thought about putting it into his whiskey. As much as she wanted him dead, she couldn't bring herself to doing it.

The one bedroom apartment that John first had is now a two bedroom apartment for four brothers, a sister and soon a baby. The brothers were eagerly to make room for their little sister. Aileen kept house while the brothers work. Her little stomach grew fast. In May the baby came. She loved her son. She no longer cared about the circumstances of her pregnancy. The baby brought her so much happiness. The baby was healthy and very light in color. She named him Timothy. The brothers grew an attachment to Timothy because Aileen loved him and was happy. Aileen wrote her mother and told her about her first grandchild, named Timothy. They were all doing alright, but had spent most of their saving on the baby.

Bae had to stop working and was too sick to travel. She asked Aileen to come back and take care of her. At first, Aileen didn't want to go. She had gotten beyond that part of her life. But she knew her mother needed her. Two years had passed since she was there with her mother. She packed the suitcase for Timothy and herself and went home to her mother. As she rode the bus, she thought what she will do if she sees Mister James. She looked at her son, then looked out the window pondering the thought.

She arrived back in her hometown about midafternoon. Aileen stepped off the bus with Timothy, looking around. She had to find a ride out to the plantation. The town looked the same. She walked a distance to cross the railroad track, hoping to find a ride. She stopped at a café called the Blues Room. She went inside but did not see a face she recognize. She sat at a table; a lady came over and asked her, what will you have? She ordered a coke cola and some cookies. Aileen was tired carrying the suitcase and Timothy. The café had air condition; she will sit here and rest. Music was playing and people were talking. Aileen gave Timothy a sip of the cola and cookies to eat. He was happy. Aileen gathered up Timothy and the suitcase to leave. An elderly man sitting across the way, called out to her. Ain't you Bae's daughter? Yes sir, I'm trying to get a ride out to Mama's. He said, come on, I will take you. Aileen hesitated; it was getting late so she went with him. Aileen got into the old Chevrolet and sat Timothy on her lap. It took about twenty minutes. During the ride Aileen said very little. The old man did the talking. He said that Bae and Henry were always good people who work hard. The old man kept noticing Timothy. He

said, that's a fine looking boy you have. Is he your son? Aileen nodded her head without saying anything else. The gravel road was still in front of the house. He drove up to the house and blew the horn. He told Bae he had a present for her. Aileen and Timothy got out of the car. Bae was glad her baby is home with her grandson. Aileen thanked the old man. He waved, and took off down the gravel road. Bae hugged Aileen as she looked at Timothy. She tried to pick him up, her back would not let her.

Aileen went into the house where it all started. She took her suitcase into her bedroom and looked around. The long black key with the cord through the hole is no longer hanging on the wall. Evening had come, they both sat at the same little table in the kitchen talking and eating. Aileen fed Timothy, wiped him down and put him to bed. Bae talked of what was going on. Jeffery went off to college and his mother got a better job in another city. Many of the people have left the rural area looking for employment in the city. Most farms are using equipment that takes the place of many worker. After Mister James found out his son will not be normal, he is seldom here. Miss Sarah is always gone or having parties. They have a live-in person taking care of Jimmy. He is a handful. I feel sorry for the child.

Bae told Aileen there are new businesses in town up on the highway. You may be able to get a job and I will keep Timothy. Aileen said, will I be able to get back and forth? It is a long way to walk. Bae said, I have contacted the Sycamore family. They bought a small farm further down the highway. One of their daughters does house work in the town. I have already talked to the mother. She said you can ride with her daughter, Gladys. The next morning Gladys came early for Aileen. She was dropped off in town. Gladys said, it will be about four o' clock before I'm back. That should give you enough time to wonder around. Aileen stood on the corner looking both ways. She went into a hardware store, a bakery and a furniture store; no one was hiring. She came upon a beautician shop for Whites. There was an opening for a cleaning woman. The owner, Miss Louise asked her, where she worked before. Aileen told her she use to be a cook for Mr. Bonneville. Just then, Miss Sarah raised her head from the washbowl, look at Aileen, nodded her head to Miss Louise. Miss Louise told Aileen she could start tomorrow. She told Aileen what the pay was which was

disappointing. At least, it is a start. The work wasn't too hard. When there was nothing to do, she would run errands for Miss Louise. From time to time, Aileen would see Miss Sarah at the shop. There were looks and smiles, but nothing was ever said to each other.

Mrs. Duckworth, an old Negro midwife, takes care of Jimmy now. Jimmy likes being outside. She brought him to Bae's house to play with Timothy. Jimmy is a year older than Timothy. While Bae and Mrs. Duckworth visit sitting in old rocking chairs, Timothy and Jimmy ran all over the yard playing. Mrs. Duckworth noticed how much they looked alike, but said nothing. She said Jimmy is a handful. He is much more controllable when he is outside playing. Jimmy and Timothy act like two peas in a pod. Mrs. Duckworth spent most days, if the weather permitted, at Bae's house. Bae did not tell Aileen at first that the boys played together.

Months then years went by, the children became the best of friends. At six years old, Timothy went off to school and Mrs. Duckworth was working with Jimmy just to do basic things. Timothy was very good in school. Everything he learned, he would show Jimmy. Timothy would read to Jimmy from his book and show him pictures. Jimmy loved to look at the pictures. Mister James came to get Mrs. Duckworth and Jimmy in his truck. He beckoned for them to come. Timothy and Jimmy came out arm in arm. Jimmy was nine and Timothy eight. He was taken aback how fair skin he was and looked like Jimmy. This is the first time he had been this close to Timothy. He could see a half moon crest birthmark on Timothy shoulder like the one he has.

One hot day, they took the boys down to the lake on the property that was past the old barn. Timothy and Jimmy had the best of time, looking at tadpoles and chasing dragonflies. They played at the edge of the lake in very shadow water. By the time they headed home, the boys were completely wet. Bae and Mrs. Duckworth removed their shirts before going home. Bae walked Mrs. Duckworth home before going home with Timothy. Miss Sarah was sitting in a rocking chair in the screened in porch. Timothy and Jimmy were saying their goodbyes, when Miss Sarah came to the door. She too had not seen Timothy this close up. She noticed the fairness of his skin, but then saw the half-moon

crest birthmark. Her face turned red; she surmised Timothy was Mister James' son. Now, she understood why Aileen stopped cooking for them. The next day, she told Mrs. Duckworth not to let Jimmy play with Timothy. Mrs. Duckworth tried to tell Miss Sarah Jimmy's behavior is so much better when he plays with Timothy. Miss Sarah repeated what she said then added, I don't want him playing with that little colored boy. That night, Miss Sarah told Mister James, she will not have her son playing with his bastard colored son. Mister James went to his room slamming doors.

Timothy as well as Jimmy didn't understand why they could no longer play together. One day, Mrs. Duckworth caught up with Jimmy on the highway headed to Timothy's house. She had a hard time dragging him home. Jimmy was getting too big and strong for Mrs. Duckworth. Jimmy's behavior is becoming more and more erratic. The method they use to calm his is to ply him with sweets and lock him in his room with toys.

Bae saw Mrs. Duckworth at the doctor's office. Mrs. Duckworth told Bae Jimmy could no longer play with Timothy. Miss Sarah forbids it. Timothy asked his grandma Bae, why he could not play with Jimmy. She would always say, Jimmy isn't feeling well. Sometimes Mister James would pass by Bae's house and see Timothy playing in the yard alone.

Aileen avoided Mister James at all cost; she left the house early in the morning and returned late in the evening. Bae and Aileen would sit on the porch in the cool of the evening, as Timothy ran around catching fireflies to put in mason jars. Bae told Aileen what Miss Sarah said. Maybe that's just as well. They are brothers but they will never be brothers.

Mister James could see Bae hanging sheets on the line near the rear of the house. He went and got Jimmy out of his locked room to ride with him. Next to Timothy, riding in his daddy's truck was the next best thing. Mister James drove to Bae's house. He had Jimmy to call out to him. Timothy looked up, saw Jimmy and ran to the truck. Mister James reached across Jimmy and opened the door. So excited to see Jimmy, Timothy ran and got in the truck. Mister James pulled to the side of the house where Timothy called to his grandma Bae saying, "I'm

going for a ride with Jimmy. Before Bae could say stop, Mister James drove off. Bae was frantic he wouldn't dare do something to Timothy with Jimmy in the truck. Bae was worried if Aileen came home before they returned. Mister James drove around the country roads as he watched the children interact with pure joy. For a moment, he smiled himself. After about forty minutes, Mister James returned. Timothy ran into the house telling his grandma how much fun he had with Jimmy. Bae didn't dare let him see how worry she was. She calmed her voice and asked, "Where did they go? "Up and down the road, we passed a farm with lots of cows and we saw a deer says, Timothy. Timothy was still excited when he went to bed.

Mister James went home and put Jimmy in his room. He went to Miss Sarah's room to tell her, "you will no longer keep the boys apart and that's final." Even in the mist of Miss Sarah anger, she knew Jimmy is much more manageable with Timothy around.

Aileen came home about seven o' clock that evening. Bae told her about Mister James taking Timothy and Jimmy for a ride. Aileen asked, "do you think he would hurt Timothy?" I don't know replied, Bae. But this I do know, Jimmy loves Timothy more than he loves them. Aileen thought, maybe I should get a place in town. Timothy and Jimmy have an unusual attachment. Timothy is becoming more and more protective of Jimmy. It seems Timothy knows he need help. Aileen didn't want Timothy riding with Mister James, especially, if he is drinking. Bae would pay more attention to Timothy, if Mister James is around. The next time Bae saw Mister James, she said she would appreciate him asking her first before taking Timothy. Mister James gave her a stern look, but agreed.

For the next few years Mister James, Jimmy and Timothy were all over the place. They often fished in the lake on the plantation. Then, one day Timothy came home asking Aileen "who is his daddy?" Aileen was taken off guard with this question. Aileen said, "don't I take care of you." What do you need? Why are you worried about your daddy? Mama, these boys keep teasing me. He said his grandma told him old Mister James is my daddy. Boy, Mister James is Jimmy's daddy. Don't believe what that boy said. Aileen knew she may regret

telling Timothy that, but she thought it was the best at this time. She knew one day she would have to tell him the truth.

Timothy continued to excel in school. He absorbed everything. On the other hand, Jimmy struggled with every task. Whatever Jimmy lacked, Timothy was there to help him. He continued to ride with Mister James and Jimmy. During one of their ride around, Timothy sat next to Mister James who was about to shift the gear, when Timothy grabbed and shifted the gear. Mister James was amazed at his ability. He looked at his own son and wish he could do that. There wasn't anything Timothy couldn't do once he put his mind to it.

Come that winter, Bae died and was buried in the old plantation cemetery. It was a harsh day. The ground was frozen; the digging was hard and the mud was the worst. Bae's sons came from Chicago with wives and a couple of babies. John asked Aileen, "what are you going to do?" Aileen had no answer right then. She knew whatever she did, it had to be in the best interest of her son. The Bonneville's are getting older with no immediate family other than Jimmy. Maybe, there will be something here for Timothy. All the money is about gone, but there is the land.

Timothy is driving the old stick shift truck with just Jimmy. Jimmy is too old for Mrs. Duckworth. Mister James leaves Jimmy in Timothy's care, when Timothy is not in school. When it's hot, they use the truck to go places. Timothy is able to get into places, Negroes aren't allowed, because of Jimmy. They are still two peas in a pod. Everyone knew Timothy is his care taker. During the winter, Timothy has Jimmy with him hunting. Timothy and Jimmy attachment grew as they grew up.

It had been a bad winter that year. The evening fog was heavy at night. Aileen was driving home from work. A big truck had stopped on the highway. Aileen didn't see it in time to stop. Her injuries were major. It prevented Aileen from working. Timothy is doing his last year of high school with the intention of going to college. He was worried about his mother. They got through the winter and Aileen went back to work. Aileen told Timothy come fall, be ready for college. Aileen insisted that he go; she will be alright. Timothy was conflicted

knowing his mother was still ill. She will need every penny to live on. She said she had waited for this time and he must go. You may be able to get some help at that school or a part time job. Spring came and Timothy graduated from high school in the top of his class.

This summer is his last before he is off to Jonesville State College. Timothy tries not to think about leaving his mother and Jimmy. What will happen to Jimmy, he wondered. That summer, Miss Sarah died. She died from drinking and a broken life with Mister James. She was buried in the family cemetery next to the highway. Aileen and Timothy drove by as they stood at her grave. They could see Jimmy standing next to Mister James alone with other relatives. Aileen said, it is a good day for a funeral, unlike the day we buried Mama.

Timothy attends his first class at college. It is history taught by Professor Jeffery Jensen. Mr. Jensen called rolled and asked each student to tell the class something about him or herself. Timothy stood gave his name, Timothy Bostic of Deville County. After the introductions, Professor Jensen gave an overview of the class, the syllabus and dismissed the class. Before Timothy could leave, Professor Jensen asked Timothy to wait a couple of minutes. After all the students left, Professor Jensen asked Timothy if he is a relative of the Bae Bostic family. He said yes, that's my grandmother. She died some years ago. All of my Uncles are in Chicago, it is just my mother and me now. Professor Jensen was the same Jeffery that was there the night Mister James took Aileen. The Professor can see the end results of that night standing before him.

Timothy left not knowing the secret the Professor held. Jonesville was fifty miles from home. If you didn't have transportation, home seemed like it was a hundred miles away. The bus cost money and hitchhiking was always a maybe. Timothy seldom came home but he would write often to inquire about her and had she seen Jimmy. Aileen wrote back, say everything was alright. She didn't want to worry Timothy. Health problems from the accident were coming back. She told him, she sees little of Jimmy. People have said, he roamed the roads and woods aimlessly. Timothy didn't know how to help his best friend. Mister James spends more time drinking.

Winter break comes at Christmas and Jeffery went home. When he saw his mother, she was very weak and had lost a lot of weight. He was frightened, asking why she didn't let him know she was sick. His schooling was more important to her. He told her he would skip the next semester, find a job and take care of her. Jeffery settled in and started looking for a job right away. While he was home, he also went looking for Jimmy. He checked the Big house and saw Mister James laid out on the floor in the living room next to the fireplace. Jimmy wasn't home; Timothy went to the lake. He could see Jimmy sitting up against the Mulberry tree staring at the lake. He called out to him a couple of times before he turned around. Once Jimmy saw Timothy, he ran to him. Jimmy was in overall, needing a bath, haircut and shave. He was taken back to the Big house to get clean up. The workers were gone except for a lady who comes to cook sometimes and do a little cleaning. The house is a long way from the glamor it used to be. Timothy found a book he use to read from with the pictures Jimmy love to look at. When he had the time, he would read the book over and over. The book was about a family with two children and the things they did together. A far cry from his own like.

Timothy found a job at the Pulp Wood factory on the other side of town. He had to walk or catch a ride with anyone going that way. The walk would be okay on good days, but when the weather was bad, he didn't know how he was going to make it. But, he must try. Somedays he did walk a distance before he caught a ride, other times someone would pick him up. Most evenings, he was home by seven thirty. He would eat and sat with his mother talking. He told her about Professor Jeffery Jensen who asked about Grandma Bae and how much he enjoyed his class. Aileen looked away, knowing Jeffery shared her secret. Aileen said, what else the Professor said. He said that was it.

It is spring, the cold air is still with us, but you can see patches of green grass coming alive as well as a few buds on the trees. Aileen caught pneumonia and died. She too was buried on the backside of the cemetery near her mother. Before she died, she asked Timothy to sit on her bed next to her. She asked for forgiveness for what she was about to tell him. Aileen cried as she told him the story of his birth. From the moments he was born she said, he became her life and love. I have resigned myself to what happened because I got you as

a gift. Timothy held her hand, saying it okay. But . . . anger was building inside toward this man who raped his mother and who is the father to his best friend he protected all these years. It was a lot to think about.

Spring is in full bloom. Timothy saw Mister James headed toward the lake. This is the day he would challenge Mister James about his mother. When Timothy arrived, Mister James already had his pole in the lake. Jimmy was throwing branches into the lake near where Mister James was fishing. Mister James told him to stop but he didn't. Mister James started whacking Jimmy with the pole, calling him an idiot. Jimmy's face turned red and he started toward his daddy. Mister James kept hitting him with the pole saying, he was good for nothing. Timothy ran to Mister James to stop him from hitting Jimmy anymore. Timothy grabbed Mister James and took the pole. Mister James told Timothy, "boy this is not your business." Don't you ever touch me again! Timothy said, it is my business because Jimmy is my brother and I know you raped my mother. Timothy was in Mister James' face. Mister James pushed Timothy away from him and commenced beating him with a stick he picked up off the ground. Jimmy forcefully ran into his daddy slamming his body into the Mulberry tree. Mister James eyes rolled back as he slid down the tree trunk leaving a stream of blood. Jimmy stood there rocking from side to side mumbling. Timothy rushed to Mister James calling his name. He never answered. The Mulberry tree had cracked his skull. Timothy told Jimmy to go home. He didn't want to tell Jimmy his daddy is dead. So, he told Jimmy his daddy was tired and needed a rest. Timothy sat there trying to figure out what just happened; what is he going to do. Timothy couldn't think with Mister James, his daddy's, lifeless body up against the tree. He dragged the body up the hill to some bushes and covered it with old leaves and dead branches. He took mud, leaves and water to clean the blood off the tree and ground area, pushing all of the debris into the lake. He took the fishing pole and laid it up against the tree as Mister James does. Timothy left for home.

As he walked passed the Bonneville side of the cemetery, someone was digging a grave. He hurried past it not wanting anyone to see him leaving the area. After he reached the house, he paced the floor. He thought, if he said it was an accident and Jimmy did it. They may not believe me or put Jimmy

away or me in jail. It would be hard to prove our innocence. Jimmy wouldn't know how to defend himself or me. I have washed away the evidence. And the court of public opinion will be made up of people like Mister James. It's about one-thirty in the morning. Timothy knew if he was going to do anything with the body, he had to hurry. Then he remembered the grave being dug. He went to the old smoke house, where they use to cure meat, got two large croaker sacks and a rope. He went back to the body. It was dark, but the moon gave enough light to see his way. At the body, he pulled the branches away and the leaves. He looked at Mister James, his daddy and wonder why: his mother was raped; why she didn't tell him sooner; why Mister James couldn't accept him; why has this end come to his life. Timothy took the sacks and covered each end of the body. He took the rope and tied the body tight, just leaving enough space to throw it a cross his back to lumber to the open grave. The body was heavy; he walked cautiously, hoping no one sees him. He laid the body on the flat side of the grave and rolled it in. Timothy looked at it saying I'm sorry, may God forgive me. He took enough of the dirt from the digging taken out earlier and covered the body.

The next day Timothy went to work as usual. When he returned from work, they had buried the person the open grave was for. It was about a week before some people were asking about Mister James. He was known for disappearing for a few days at a time. They thought he was off drinking at some ones house. Timothy continued his work schedule and stayed away from Jimmy. He thought it was best. He hated not being with Jimmy but the chances were too great. There were times he sees Jimmy going to the lake. Jimmy was probably wondering if his daddy was still at the lake. A month passed, they were all over the county looking for Mister James. There wasn't anyone taking care of what was left of the plantation. No relative would take over the care of Jimmy; he was taken to a home for adults. Jimmy didn't like his new home. He would often leave and find his way back to the plantation. Twice, they found him at the lake. There was little of nothing left for Jimmy, not even the land. A third cousin of Mister James assumed the plantation debts and took it over.

By summer's end, Timothy had saved most of his earning from the Pulpwood factory. He had already written and told his brothers, he is coming to Chicago. He hated leaving Timothy. One day he said, I will come back for

you. As he made his last trip on highway 49, he looked out at the cemetery and said, "it was a good day for a funeral," as he headed north.

Timothy got to Chicago and found work as a janitor while he took night classes at a local junior college. He remembered what his mama said about the importance of getting an education. He often thought about Jimmy and how was he getting along. Timothy great Aunt Sade would write from time to time. She would write that the home Jimmy was in found him at the lake again. She also said, a storm came through, flooded the area and the levee broke. The cemetery was flooded and washed out many graves. Everyone was accounted for and re buried except for one person. They now know from the fishing boots he wore, they at last found Mister James. I got to go now, I see the sheriff at my door. . . .

?

JUANITA COLE

Juanita was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma in a black hospital and was named after her mother. She grew up with lots of family members. Juanita enjoyed elementary, junior high and high school and she worked in the office and in the bookstore while in high school. In high school she enrolled in cosmetology courses and later discovered she was no longer interested in it.

After graduating she attended college at Oklahoma State Tech in Okmugge. She majored in data processing. Juanita met her future husband Perry in high school and they married in 1968. After marrying she had two girls and Juanita worked at Fedco in Inglewood as a stocker. They moved to CA in 1969 and has been married for 47 years. Juanita began writing in high school – in the yearbook. She enjoys memoir writing. Juanita also worked at Cookie Jar as a biller and did temp jobs and volunteered at King Drew Medical Center as a clerk. Juanita also worked in accounts payable at Ashton Tate, a computer software company. Several years ago she volunteered at LBVA as a clerical worker. Juanita truly enjoys volunteering and she considers this to be her hobby. She her husband Perry came to Carmelitos in 2007.

WHERE THERE IS LOVE, THERE IS HURT

When the knowledge of knowing that the man
that you seen was your father,
no one told me is was a hurting feeling that I had.

But their time is hurting less.

I try to forget about the pain.

I wish in life
this won't happen to oneself.

How to love the one that hurt you.
The one that hurt me I call her mother
and I call him dad.

But I could say that. Cause mom didn't
let me know everything about him.

After years I learned that was dad.
From the person I called mom is what really hurts.

Going through life without a dad,
You will never know life without a dad.

I will never have the joy to explain the defeats between girl and boy.
I will never know to feel about prom night.

My father will give him the rules.
About me and respect for my daughter.
I walked into my father but did not know who he was.

Now what do you think about that?

When a woman hurt, when she hurt, no one know the feeling.

The child suffers pain that is caused by the woman.

Cause the man love, but didn't want her, only the child.

So by her feeling, the child will never know about the love of a father who loves her.

What she can do is not to make the same mistake.

If she does, just be ready to tell the child that she could be in her father's life.

She don't need to hurt.

WHAT CHRISTMAS MEANS TO ME.

It's the trees, moon, stars and water.

And life, and with each moment it makes me happy to be alive.

Being with family and friends, others.



LODI ANN GIPSON

Lodi was born in Oakland, CA to Annabelle Boston and Clarence Thomas who was a truck driver and mom a cook. Lodi is an only child and she graduated from McClymonds High School in Oakland. After high school she went to nursing school to become a nurses aid. She worked as a waitress and Nurses Aid in a convalescent home. Lodi also worked in a nightclub and was a teacher's aid. She was baptized at age 13 and was in a choir and in Baptist Training Union at Church and was a Sunday school teacher, in addition to being an usher and sang in the choir. She got married in 1972 and she lost her husband in 1990 – James Gipson. Lodi has four sons, one in Hayward, Los Angeles, Hemet and Arizona. She enjoys art, bingo crossword puzzles, word search, hook and latch and she loves to cook.

DEDICATION

I am dedicating the writing to my sister Alfreda Embry, my four sons, five grandkids and great grandkids.



JOY

A baby in a manger.
A star in the East.
God's love reaching out to the lowest and the least.

A heavenly future.
A place to call home.

The security of knowing you're never alone.
A deliverance from darkness.

From fear and from shame.
Complete and total freedom.

All wrapped in the name of Jesus.

A life without limits.
A day that overflows.
That's my story in a nutshell

MOTHER

Your arms are always welcoming.
You show how much you care.
Your heart is filled with ENDLESS LOVE.
That we are blessed to share.

Written on Mother's Day, 2014



THE WORLD

When the world was “young and restless”
and we were worried about “the days of our lives”
God said “you are all my children”

Let me be your
“Guiding Light” and I will take you to
“Another World”

August, 2016



God is everywhere.

God isn't far away.

He is the light of this day.

He is the sky above you and the life of every living thing.

He is in every smile, in every thought that gives you hope.

In every tear that waters your soul and in every moment you can't face alone.

He is the love on your loved one's face.

He is in the friends along the way, in strangers you have yet to meet
and blessings you have yet to receive.

He is in every good thing that touches you.

He is in every step you make and every breath you take.

He is never far away.

August, 2016

ESTHER SINSUN

The brightest star which shines in the night sky.

A ray of sun, which warms my soul.

Your words of wisdom and laughter I yet hear,

in the depths of my memories which are so clear.

You are forever with me in all that I do and everywhere I go.

For your love, I hold more precious than any gem.

“A very special Mom” you are and I miss you so.

I long to have you here but it was time for you to go,

God said it must be but I know you still “watch over me.”

Be you at Peace and one day too,

I will walk again, along side of you.

March 2, 2005

MOTHERS

Mothers are the ones to always manage to be there for all the falls. Nurse those wounds and wipe the tears, hug you “just because.”

Mothers are a fond remembrance of those silly times and the ones when you think you got away with something but not really.

A sixth sense-mothers instinct. Something so special, being a Mother.

From the time your child is conceived to the first time you hold them in your arms, your life is changed forever.

A life time of experiences, some seem to fade in the years but how quickly the memory returns when history repeats itself... from Mother to Grandmother.

Mothers are the first teacher, the healer of the heart and soul.

The security of that hug, a warm smile and recognition when a job is well done.

Mothers place their child first in their life and love unconditionally.

Yes Mothers get angry, and don't understand everything but they are the most supporting people in our life.

A pioneer in their own rights, passing on that knowledge to be given to a newer generation. Mothers, the love so binding, given from day to day, in their prayers, and their dreams for us.

April 14, 2004

THERE IS A PLACE

In the deep darkness of the night, suddenly comes a
thunderous roar of the waves bashing ashore.

There is a strong wind blowing, accompanied with heavy rain drops.

The lamp posts lighting the pier gives the illusion of
rain drops converted to diamonds falling from the sky.

A strong smell of fish along with that salty ocean mist.

The city lights in the far distance off to one side,
giving a glowing border effect to the scenic view.

Quite a mystic overall sight for anyone whom
dares to venture the darkness.

There is a beauty in the darkness and strange,
how this same spot paints a new view with sun up.

I find the ocean a very serene place to lay my thought out,
a place of comfort and set my drams free.

November 2, 2003

I feel the soft cool breeze, like the brushing of a feather across my body, as I rest in the sun. The sun out, beaming against the rich blue sky, with the smell of the river in the air. Listen to the sound of the water as it ripples downstream bouncing from large boulders, to a quiet calm, as it makes the bend.

A beauty of God's creation and nature's freedom.

A place to lay your thoughts free, to drift along the flow of the river. The bigger more troublesome moving down stream, and the smaller ones catch hold along the bank, for those are the ones to work on first. They are more easily handled, for you can view them from all angles, and work on them one at a time. This enables you to work on bigger issues from the knowledge gained by working on the smaller ones first.

Although the water seems to rush with force, it gives the sense of calm and peace, because it too slows down. No walls to hold your thoughts in one place. I think God led me to a place like this because words are sometimes hard to express what the heart feels.

As the river flows, and takes my thoughts downstream, it leaves me with a refreshed idea of what to seek from life. This river has no boundaries, as our life has no boundaries. Each time I come to lay my sorrows down, I leave with a peace from this river, internally I feel relief on the mind and peace in my soul.

My love for nature and so much beauty it offers as I look at the desert, mountains, and ocean, are things to be appreciated. All of these places are a peaceful place of thought for me. Giving me strength, and a sense of security as it embraces me. Allowing me to think and sometimes to find myself when I feel lost.

A place for many, not only myself, to ease the hurt, pain or suffering inside. I grow with each visit, for no two are ever the same. As the terrain changes in accordance to the weather conditions, my life too, so changes in accordance to my ambitions.

July 16, 2004

God was looking for an angel. He spotted you among the crowd. He watches from a distance and makes his plans.

All debts are to be answered for. Yet, have no fear, he is a forgiving God. After all he gave his life for us, his children. We may not think of it every conscious moment of our life. Yet we can't hide from him. He knows our every deed, good or bad.

Some days we feel strong and others, we may be oblivious to our life, yet God is always there. We were born on "Borrowed Time." But have no fear, for our God is not a vengeful God.

Instead, his hand is reaching out with love, the same love he gave us life with. He is there to hold you and comfort you and lead you to a new Spiritual Life.

And as you walk with our Lord, may you know our love for you is deep in our heart. You gave us your unconditional love. With that love, we will have many memories until our time. This is not good-bye, for we will be together again.

March 9, 2001

THE DARK SIDE

Sometimes I fall into this dark side.

Alone and with totally no sense of direction.

A sincere sense of fear of the unknown, lost and empty.

I feel doomed for until I take my last breath, "Can't find my way out."

Mistrust, disappointment and separation all trigger this darkness.

Anger & revenge become stronger.

You want to be understood without being called crazy!

To be weak and cry is even worse.

My anger gains weight.

Being alone sometimes brings comfort!

Enjoying the comfort of nature in some free spirit spot.

Trying to comfort yourself.

For life wasn't meant to be spent alone!

Yet this is exactly where I am most of the time.

Always searching to be free of the dark.

FAVORABLE MOMENTS

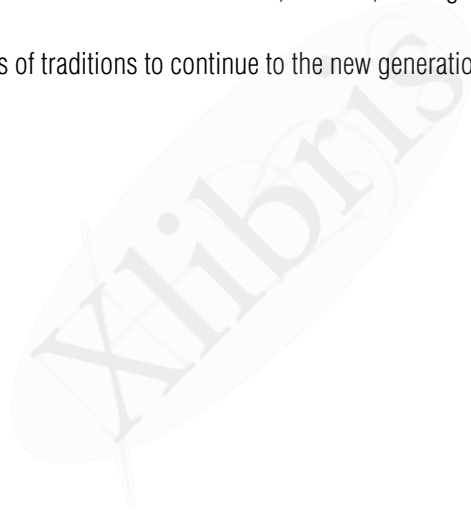
As the growth of those small pines from our childhood with their rich green color and their beautiful scent grew.

Lights cover everything. So has passed the years that left us with many cheerful memories.

Snow glistens like diamonds and a glowing blue sky and the full moon!

A smell of the kitchen creations on full steam, tamales, rattling of pans and the tree all aglow.

Precious memories of traditions to continue to the new generations.



A BLANKET OF LIFE

When Mom died, it was like a blanket of pain was dropped over me. A blanket woven of so many emotions, I never knew could exist, all at any one time. It was a blanket, difficult to lift. All I could feel was, "Could I make it thru today?" It was like a small child, stepping into Daddy's shoes. The child's body moves about, yet the feet remain in place. Like this child, which could not move its feet. The weight of "this blanket," my loss held me down. I was lost in pain, the empty feeling without my Mom. Loneliness of not feeling her embrace or her gentleness. Seeing her smile, listening to her laughter she was and yet today is my all. Mom taught me love and faith. Sometimes life deals you cruelty but you go on. My blanket has lost some of its weight, as I gain strength. I feel my Mother's love, in all the beautiful things I am surrounded by. A warm sunny day, with a rich blue sky and a gentle breeze. A favorite song, old movies she liked and her love of walking to the park to feed the ducks. All the memories I hold inside comfort me which I take as her love with me.

March 12, 2001 Revised June 18, 2014

MOM

Take me with you, my heart begged and pleaded.

The thought of living without you, I could not bare.

You were my strength, my everything.

You were my 'Sunshine.' The prettiest "Rose" in my garden.

You are my "PRIDE"! This I feel, so deep inside.

Now, I have come to let you go. In my heart, I will hold you dear. It's okay to shed a tear, but I know you are near.

One day we will be together again, and I will walk along side of you.

It is never, "good-bye," because my Love, for you will never die.

You are my life, you made me strong.

July 19, 2003

MY REFUGE

There was a special place of refuge I did find. It was my place that gave me peace of mind. Everyone has one, a place to block out other sounds of distraction. A place to let yourself be heard, release thoughts you don't want to share. A place to give you comfort and solitude in times of need. Mine so happened to be by the water, whether it was the beach, or by a stream of water. I especially liked the Colorado River, against the beautiful mountains. In the quiet of the night there is a moon light that shines on the water, the ripple of the movement of the river in the reflection. Maybe a small cluster of rocks to create the soft sound of a water fall. A rich blue sky filled with a million eyes watching you, as they light your way. Your shoulders, heavy with the weight of thoughts. You let yourself free of your burdens, if only for that little while. I feel the waves pull away the pressures and relax the soul. Walk, barefoot on beach and feel the sand massage your feet. The cold waters waken the spirit. Your mind adrift, not meant to be a real answer to one's problems, but a brief personal space to yourself. A comfort, sometimes when no one or nothing else can. My mind wonders and I reflect on childhood days or happy times. Choices to be made, I have the ideal place to lay them out. I let the waves take the deeper thoughts. Funny thing also, I even enjoy going in the night rain and walking on the pier. The reflection of rain drops around the light pole, looking like diamonds falling from the sky. I could see the shore line of homes, all lit up like a Christmas scene. The night fishermen waiting for the great catch, down the end of the pier. This was my safe haven—in my younger years, I would go there more often but as we age, you learn to leave certain things as a good memory, Only today when I get to see the river, it is still safe. I can never get enough of nature's beauty and comfort. A gentle rain, a light breeze and a glowing river.

GOD IS GOOD

God has a dream for your life.

Everything, past and present is God's way of preparing you for your destiny.

God's dream for you are so big.

He uses every event in your life to fulfill this purpose for you.

His love for you cannot be measured.

It is completely flawless, absolutely faithful and totally amazing.

Love your life . . . It is a gift from God.

Be blessed.

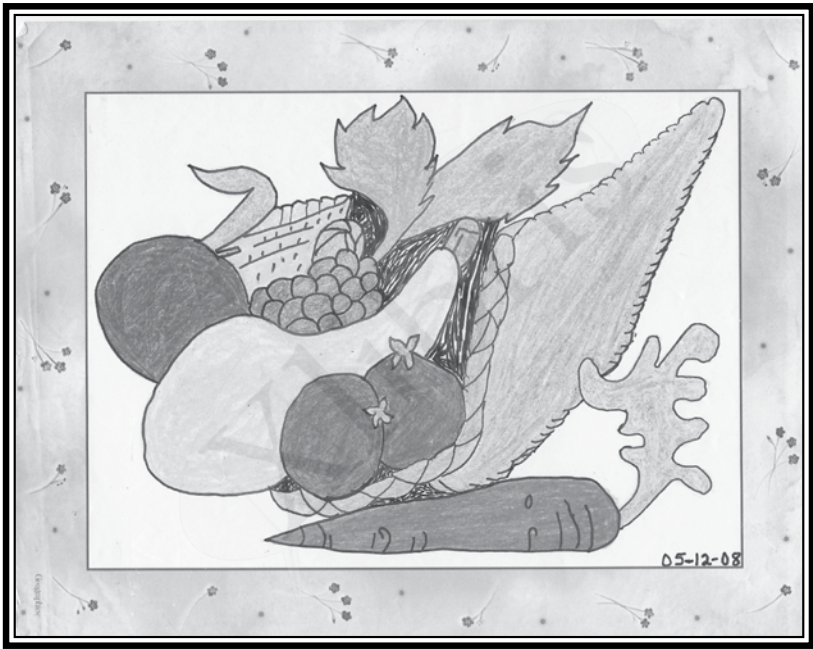
God will never stop blessing you.

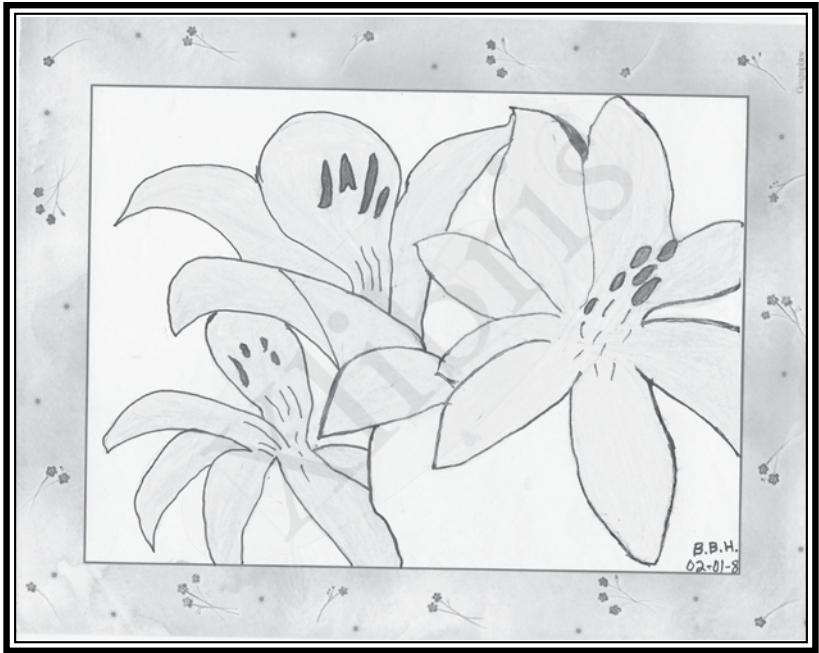
He will never stop loving you.

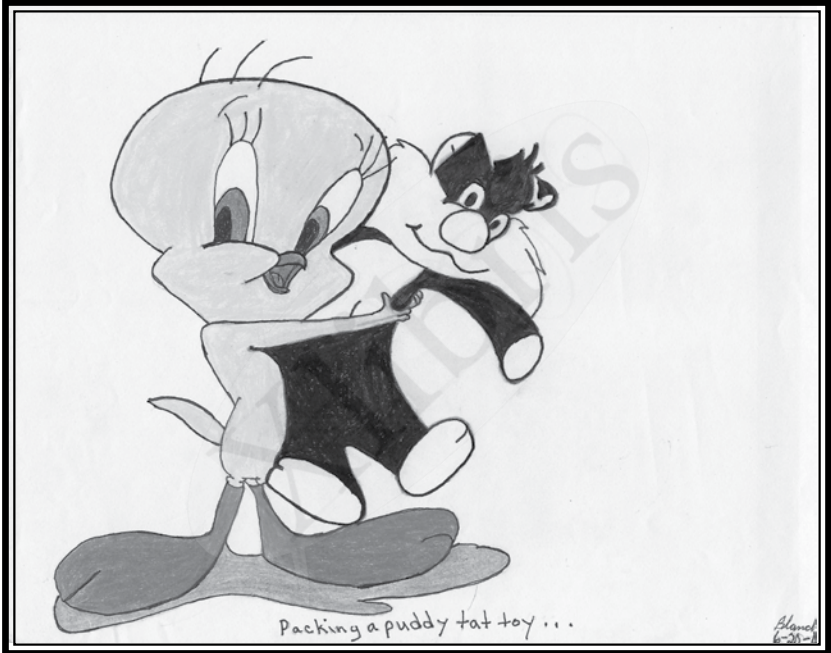
In His eyes, you are amazing.

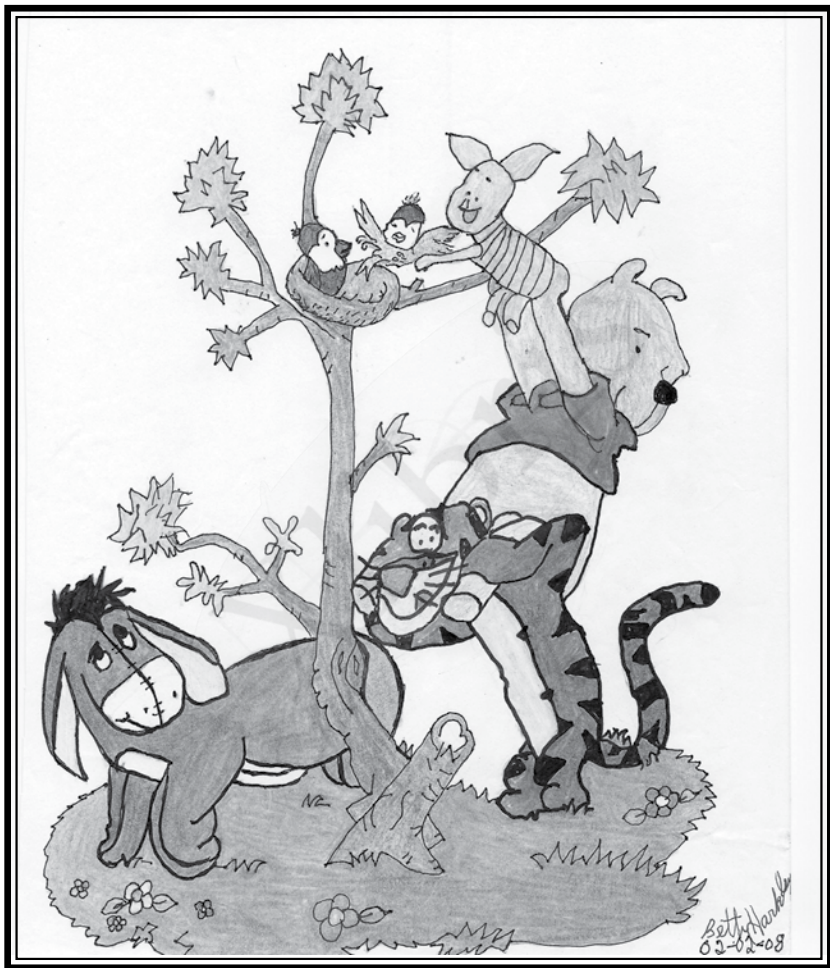
BETTY HARKLEY

Betty was born in Newport, North Carolina and she relocated to California in 1979. She has four children, 17 grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. For 20 years Betty was a housewife and then worked on an assembly line assembling devices. She later worked at Northrop as a custodian for five years followed by another five year period as a custodian at point Mugee. Betty moved to Carmelitos in 1996 and enjoys sewing, cooking and drawing.







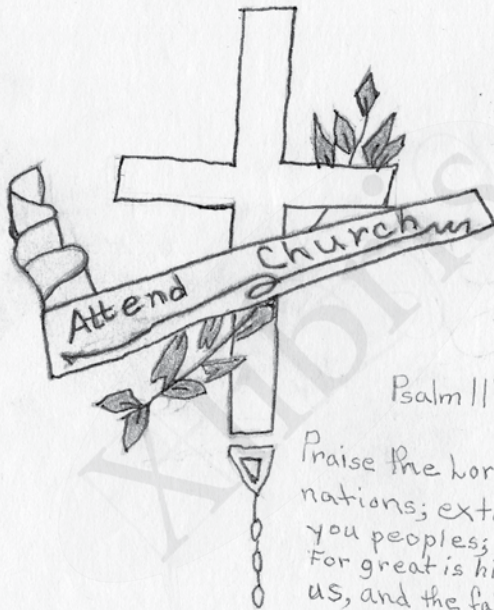


Bett Handley
02-02-08



Blanche

06-266



Psalm 117

Praise the Lord, all you
nations; extol him, all
you peoples;
For great is his love toward
us, and the faithfulness
of the Lord endures forever.

