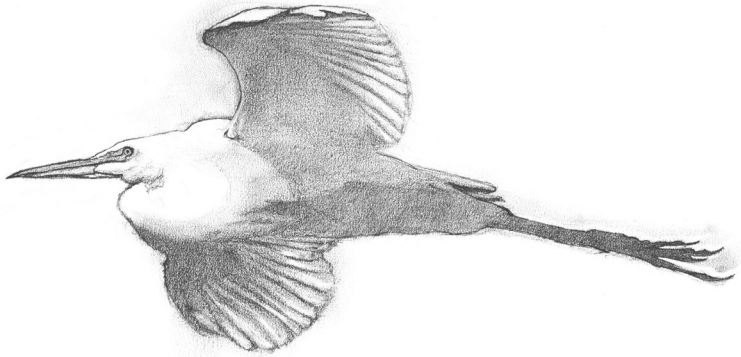


# ***EGRETS RISE***



*“By silent consent  
the egrets rise”*

Jerolyn Lockhart



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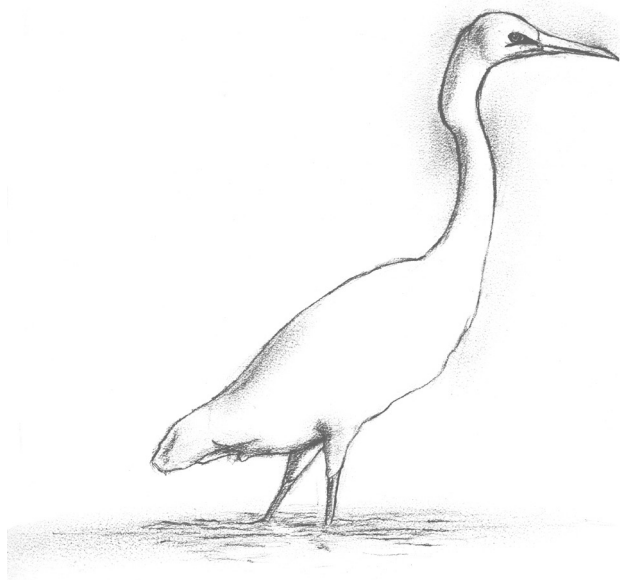
Cover art by Joshua Lockhart  
Interior art by Aaron Lockhart



*Dedication*

To my husband John,  
whose love helps me  
“reach beyond the far star”

And to my sons, Aaron and Joshua,  
who make my life brighter  
with their love and support



Cover art by Joshua Lockhart  
Interior art by Aaron Lockhart



# *Egrets Rise*

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***SOUTHWEST SONG***





## *HER PEOPLE*

The barefoot woman speaks of her people of the north,  
the Tlingit tribe into which she was born,  
and how she misses the connection of her people.  
She tells of how her grandfather  
would heal with herbs and roots,  
how he taught her the medicinal plants  
and the plants that cause sorrow.  
She speaks of the oneness of her people,  
of their rituals and customs,  
how she misses them since she's been gone.

She was lured to the cities of the warm south,  
seeking an imagined freedom,  
a new life she could call her own.  
She schooled in universities  
and found work in the museums  
of other peoples' histories,  
other peoples' cultures,  
feeling disconnected from her own.

Tired of the city, she  
finds a plot of land  
rich, fertile, lovely,  
and works it with her hands.  
She grows plants of healing,  
sharing them with others  
as she shares her tales of home;  
her stories and the comfort of the soil  
drawing her back to her people,  
her heart back to her tribal home.

## *TEXAS NIGHT*

My skin is caressed by the  
sound of the blues  
wafting along the  
hot summer night

The come hither of hickory  
glides along the breeze  
enticing and delighting  
the senses

Fireflies declare  
their arduous love  
against the background  
of forest trees

A chorus of frogs  
join to complete  
the evening  
star-lit serenade

## *HAWK*

Hawk sits on a fence post  
back turned to the roadway  
oblivious to the traffic that hurries past  
feeling the last rays of sun as  
eyes are turned to the field  
searching  
searching  
for the slightest motion  
movement that might indicate  
one final meal  
before the sun sets  
a mouse nice and warm  
to stave off the hunger  
'till morning calls to  
search  
search  
hunt once more

## *MOUNTAIN COWBOY*

The cowboy from the old Coors poster  
walks across the mountain meadow,  
his dog leading the way;  
follows the routine of decades,  
living the life that was meant to be his.

The quiet man with the craggy face still laughs easily,  
the time in his features disappearing for the moment.  
He tells a good joke, and takes delight  
in recalling stories of tricks played on him -  
and those he's played on others.

With slow gait and weary posture,  
he goes back to the same unending tasks -  
taking longer with each year,  
challenging his body more and more,  
daring to continue another day.



## *ALONE (?) IN THE CEDARS*

### I.

Free  
Standing here laughing as I feel the wind  
Watch you running in perfect motion  
As your childish dog comes following behind

I laugh with the feeling of life

Hole in the cliff wall  
A perfect throne for a king  
But I break the royalty  
With my blue jean/work shirt body

Ha! She passed right by and didn't know I was here  
I let her go silently and wait  
To laugh when she was gone

“Happiness runs in a circular motion...”

Wind whips through here quickly, loudly  
Not stopping to look at what it has created  
But goes on, continually working

Carefully making my way up the hill  
Checking each stone before I take a step  
Slowly/hurriedly climbing-  
Cautiously, but with life

## II.

Remembering  
A past long ago  
But not so far away  
Laughing  
For you are there  
Crying  
For you can never go back

Retreating to the old ways  
Sucking the sweet nectar of living flowers  
Chewing the dry gum of toppled stems  
Putting flowers in your hair  
As you did when you were young  
Chanting forgotten songs  
Speaking forgotten tongues  
Thinking forgotten prayers  
Praising forgotten gods  
Living forgotten lives

Remembering the stories you told yourself  
Long ago when you were a child  
Before you were a child  
Before you were  
The stories of forgotten ancestors  
Proud and noble  
Proud and simple  
Proud  
Stories of hardships, realities  
Stories of a willingness to go on  
Stories of people/living things trying to survive  
Stories of death

But never stories of a broken spirit  
For the spirit lives on and can never die  
Its fire rekindled with new hope and lives

Within and without there is a roundness  
A circle whose ends meet  
And with the meeting of the circle  
The meeting of all life  
What was, what is, what will be

Running on and on  
With no purpose  
Except to run  
Flying across  
Brush and cactus  
Freely

Dancing in the middle of nowhere/everywhere

The hoop is repaired  
And the tree of life  
Once more grows on the mountain  
The grandfathers speak from the ages  
The visions come as before  
And the song of life, again is sung

## *WIND DANCING WITH CROWS*

Lifting off of the broken branch,  
one crow following another  
in perfect pattern set by its mate.

Aligned together they catch the breeze  
wing tips nearly touching  
as they slowly spiral upward.

Black dancers of the air  
synchronized and silhouetted  
in the backdrop of sky and cloud.

Figure skaters of the sky  
in perfect harmony as they circle and glide  
oblivious to the earth below.

Spirits reach up and reach out  
as the solemn joy in their movements  
meet the silent music of the wind.

My eyes follow their precision -  
my heart beats to their rhythm as  
I find myself wind dancing with crows

## ***RIDING THE RAILS OF THE SANTA FE TRAIL***

Look out at the plains of history  
feel the sway of wagons  
as we follow the ancient trail

The rhythmic clack of the train  
lulls the mind to a distant past  
remembered only in books and native song

In the distance the Spanish lady lies  
her snow covered peaks inviting all  
to climb into her bosom

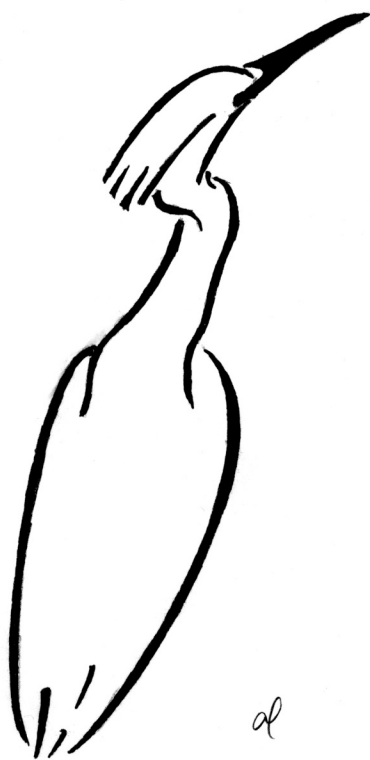
Antelope roam across the prairie  
while invisible bison scatter on winds  
of a land that once was theirs

Gentle grasses sway while  
tumbleweeds travel hurriedly onward  
stopped by arroyos or soap weed

Sun and stars still shine the same  
guiding seasons and travelers  
to destinations unknown



# ***WORD WORK***







## ***BOOKSTORE REVERIE***

Browsing through the book store,  
knowing what book I would purchase  
(poetry, *The Year's Best...*),  
what type of cappuccino (almond mocha, grande),  
yet searching the aisles for something else;  
comfort, solace, surprise.  
Taking in the sound, the smell, the feel  
of literature, paper, leather.  
My mind surrounded by pleasure,  
anticipation, hope;  
promises hiding around each corner,  
security lurking in each over-stuffed chair;  
time stopped for the hunt, the kill.  
Life is nonexistent.  
All that is needed is within these walls,  
these shelves,  
these pages.  
Living these many lives  
without living my own,  
safety in living a life  
whose ending is already known,  
already told.

## *WORD PLAY*

Words playing in and out  
swirling and dancing upon the pages  
a synchronized joining of letters  
to form a marvelous symphony  
an orchestra of thought  
sometimes subdued and  
following one another quietly  
then sneaking up on the reader  
and leaping out in joyous surprise  
Windows peeking into lives and  
substance of the mind  
A thought concerto  
played gaily on sheets of white  
secure between ornamented walls  
so they don't all  
dance out

## *SCHOOL LIBRARY*

### **I. Computer Lab**

The click of the keyboards -  
Students at work  
Searching out information  
Tapping out reports  
Hopefully absorbing  
The knowledge before them

Classes come seeking  
A broader world than  
The one they now know

Time slowly ticking  
Leaving behind its wisdom  
With gentle strokes of each key

## **II. Middle School**

Adolescents wondering who they are  
Hoping to find themselves  
In a book's pages  
Be it fiction or non

Young people hiding  
Escaping the existence  
They live with each day

### **III. Elementary School**

Giggling girls  
Finding their books  
Boisterous boys  
Trying not to

Gleeful children  
Engaged in the stories  
Traveling new places in their minds

## *Librarians!*

Librarians run amuck in a major bookstore  
Hopped up on **grande** doubledouble-shot cappuccinos!  
**Mass** (but orderly)

C

H

A

O S

Ensues!

No book unlooked,  
No patron safe!  
They're everywhere, they're everywhere,  
In every corner,  
Nook,  
And chair!

WIDE-EYED maniacs reading  
To every body going by,  
Or sitting in clusters  
Whispering and **LAUGHING**  
In their book-crazed madness.

Sold and worn left and right-  
T-shirts with **reading children**,  
Bookstore logos,  
And Groucho Marx  
(*Outside of a dog, a book is man's best friend. Inside of a dog,  
it's too dark to read*)

All books,  
magazines,  
coffees and  
merchandise

CATALOGED

Please, we beg you...  
if you value your sanity,  
quietly walk to the nearest exit, then...

**Run for your lives!**

## ***WRITERS GROUP***

The meeting of friends, strangers  
Called from different parts of life  
Somehow coming together to meet  
In a corner  
A room  
A library

Bringing together various  
Ideas  
Faiths  
Talents

Coming together with  
Words  
Pens  
Desires

All daring to dream  
To work  
To envision  
Making a life of words

Hoping someone will connect with their  
Stories  
Poems  
Lives

So they may continue to  
Write  
Exist  
Dream

In worlds outside their own



## *SLAM*

Angry poets spitting out sonnets  
of hatred and wrath  
spewing their venomous words  
to the passersby

Slaying the souls  
of those who hear  
injuring spirits too delicate  
to withstand their verbal assault

Tend to yourselves, acrimonious bards  
before your bitterness of heart  
leaves you withered and dry  
as you demolish the lives around you

Rather

Let me cry out silently  
with pen or #2 pencil  
not of destruction  
(though maybe of desperation)

Reach out to those without voice  
raise them up to see  
hope and wonder  
at the miracle of a new day

Let me patch wounded spirits  
with healing ink of  
images to soothe them  
and words to nourish their tender hearts

***AND THE POINT IS...?***

(for Sherry)

To paint pictures on the heart,  
to sing softly in your mind,  
to draw rhythm from silence,  
to think nobly in rhyme,  
to weep openly on pages,  
to bring rainbows from tears.

To hear love from a pen,  
to laugh wildly in ink,  
to open up life,  
to live on the brink,  
to bring you along  
on this journey of song.

## *POETS*

We feed on the written word  
and the sound of letters;  
are satisfied when paper  
meets pen once again.

Join the ages in this  
revelry of language,  
the beautiful dance  
of written expression.

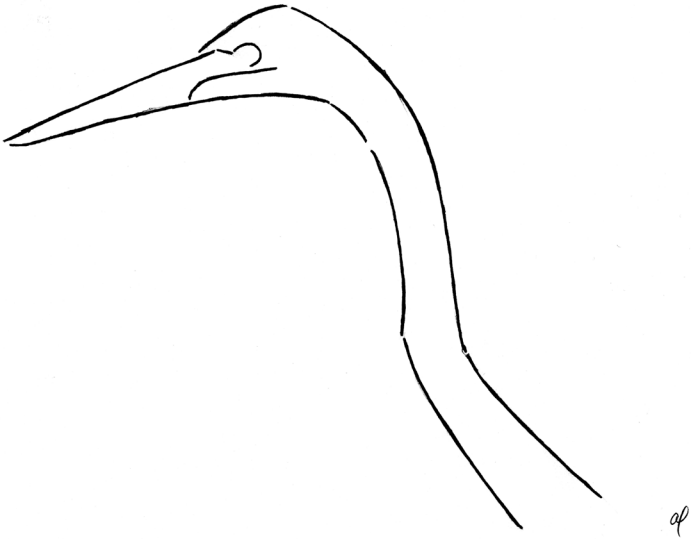
Throw open life's pages  
And discard inhibition!  
Write for the life  
of a glorious path!

Swoon with the moment,  
chase stars to earth's corners  
'till ink runs in rivers and  
poems float from the sky.

## *HAND WRITING*

Signs in the air  
portraying the images of our thoughts,  
speaking fluently the beauty and pain of the world,  
the glories of life,  
the everydayness of existence.  
Quietly exploding sounds and sights appear in our minds,  
enthralled by the “speaker”,  
the master of sight and silence, signing feverishly,  
emotion spontaneous and overwhelming  
as the hands and fingers fly through the air.  
Transformed into another land,  
a land of blazing solitude, a land of intensity,  
noiseless and booming, exploding in the senses,  
in the eyes of the mind.

***PSALMS OF FAITH***





## *MARY'S CHILD*

This perfect child,  
My baby,  
So small,  
So helpless,  
So beautiful.

I can still hear  
The angel speak.

“You have found favor with God.”

Of precious gift!  
How can one such as I  
Be so humbled,  
Be so blessed!

“You shall name Him Jesus.”

Jesus,  
Yeshua.  
What a wonderful name,  
A strong name,  
A saving name.  
“The Lord is Salvation”  
Has been born unto me.  
Blessed be the name of the Lord!

“He will be great and be called the  
Son of the Most High”

This lowly maidservant  
Is now a mother,  
Mother to the  
Son of the Most High God.

“The Lord God will give Him  
The throne of His father David”

My little babe - the promised King.  
Born in a cattle stall  
Birthed to the lullaby of livestock,  
Wrapped in simple cloths,  
Welcomed by shepherds of the field.

“He will reign over the house of Jacob forever,  
And His kingdom will have no end”

My son, my King,  
My child, my Savior -  
How do I nurture My Lord?  
How can I mother my God?

And I remember,

“Do not be afraid, Mary...  
For nothing will be impossible with God.”



## *A PSALM*

Praise the Lord!  
Though heart breaks and tears fall,  
God is to be praised;  
For His ways are not our ways,  
And He alone sees our paths  
Before we step forth.

His faithfulness is more than we can fathom  
And His love more than we can grasp!

There is purpose in all His works,  
His restoration is at their proper times;  
By His spirit we are strengthened,  
With His grace we endure,  
Blessed by His mercy we have life.

## *GARDEN PRAISE*

The garden moves my heart upwards,  
    lifting my thoughts to God.  
The fragrance overwhelms me,  
overpowering me with a sense of joy.  
Colors float about on the breeze,  
dancing on air, stirring up my world and  
    awakening the longing for life;  
    not the ordinary kind,  
    but of the free, the joyous,  
the overflowing life offered to me through Christ.  
How my heart spills over in this garden,  
wanting, willing to soar above all troubles on this earth.  
How marvelous the sensation of flight my heart feels,  
    too light to be bound on earth, but bound I am.  
The glorious nature of the garden,  
    refreshing yet fleeting;  
bound by time, but called to greatness!  
Inspiring bird to song, squirrel to play,  
butterflies to dance and hearts to soar;  
minds to wander, hearts to dream,  
    spirits to peace, life to live.  
Oh, the works of God's hand,  
    pointing to Him,  
    worshiping Him,  
    inviting me to join their praise!

## *MORNING PRAISE*

Praises to God the Father  
Praises to God the Creator  
Thanksgiving to the One who loves us  
To the One who showers us with blessing

As I contemplate the works of Your hand  
As I look out at the beauty of Your world  
I see Your joy  
I acknowledge Your wisdom  
I bow before Your holiness

The birds bring Your song into my heart  
The sun beams down the warmth of Your love  
And the glory of Your righteousness  
Trees dance in the moving of Your spirit  
And I feel Your presence all around

## ***GARDEN REST***

I just want to sit in your garden  
listen to the gentle breeze  
feel the quiet moment

I want to rest my mind  
breathe in the beauty  
see nothing but peace

Refresh my spirit, O Lord  
pour out your still water  
let me lie in the cool grass  
of your love

## *AS I OPEN MY HEART*

As I open my heart  
I pray you'll be kind  
That you'll tenderly hold it  
See what treasures you find

As I open my heart  
I know there's a risk  
That my heart will be ravaged  
And left in a twist

As I open my heart  
I know that you'll see  
The seeds that were planted  
Have grown into me

As I open my heart  
And let go of my fear  
I pray that my being  
You now will hold dear

As I open my heart  
And trust in your love  
Pray the contents will please you  
And you glimpse God above

## *OPEN APOLOGY*

For all the times I spoke in haste,  
Spoke unkindly,  
Spoke out of place;  
Please forgive

For the times when I was inattentive,  
Too naïve to understand,  
Too wrapped up in myself to listen;  
I'm sorry

For the times I've let you down,  
Brought you down,  
Put you down;  
Forgive me

For the times I disappointed you,  
Caused you pain,  
Gave you sorrow;  
I'm sorry - please forgive

When I was weak and you needed me to be strong,  
When I was strong-headed when I should have been meek,  
When I couldn't judge right from wrong;  
I'm sorry - please forgive

For times that I told you what I thought,  
When I didn't tell you what I thought,  
When I spoke without thought;  
I'm sorry - please forgive

When my actions didn't match my words,  
Didn't match my faith,  
Didn't glorify my God;  
I'm so very sorry - please forgive

*If we confess our sins,  
He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins  
and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.  
- 1 John 1:9*

## *NEVER ALONE*

When I walk the halls of depression,  
Or alley ways of fear and doubt;  
When I run through streets of panic,  
Or cross the streams of drought;  
When my mind screams out in terror,  
Or my body's drenched in sweat;  
Please turn my thoughts now to You,  
And don't let me forget,  
That You are here beside me,  
I never am alone,  
You stand to guard and guide me,  
Until You see me Home.



## ***PASTOR***

Preparing our hearts for God's kingdom  
You show Christ's love to us all  
Attending the hearts of the wounded  
Apply healing balm when we fall  
Teaching the word of the Father  
Operate in the Spirit of the Son  
Holding us up when we falter  
Until Heaven's gate we have won

We praise the Lord for your presence  
For the kindness we see in your eyes  
And the love we see in your actions  
For the Spirit you cannot disguise  
We thank you for gently leading  
And also for lending your hand  
We praise Him for guiding you to us  
Firm in God's Kingdom you stand

## *PASTOR'S WIFE*

Helpmate to her husband  
Mother to all children  
Friend to all who know her

Her hand reaches out to  
the poor in heart,  
the poor in soul,  
the poor.

Her arms stretch out to  
comfort the grieving.  
Her compassion goes out to  
encourage the weary.  
Her love spreads out to  
encompass us all.

Young women seek her guidance  
Old women seek her company  
All seek to take part in her joy

Blessed are you,  
O daughter of the Most High God!  
And blessed are we,  
that He has sent such a precious gift as you.

## ***WOMEN'S STRENGTH***

Women meeting together to search truth  
To gather knowledge and wisdom  
Women gaining strength as they  
Train their minds and build relationships  
Searching for answers and seeking guidance  
Questioning what had been taught to them  
Wanting to find out on their own  
What the truth really is  
To have questions answered  
By God Himself

Women gather strength and learn  
To dig deeply into the Word  
They come together to share the  
Knowledge they have gleaned  
Their hours in labor fruitful  
The hidden treasure of the seed  
Now shows its fruit maturing  
As knowledge gained is lived  
The bounty is being prepared for harvest  
With promise of more to come

## ***SILENT PRAISE***

*(a song)*

I have no voice to sing to You  
Though my hands feebly rise in praise;  
My legs can scarcely move  
But my eyes search for Your face.  
My ears, they hear Your glory,  
My soul, it knows Your grace.

My breathing may be shallow  
But in Your presence I have peace,  
My mind for You is seeking  
Knowing You are here for me;  
My body may be weakening,  
Your love gives strength within.

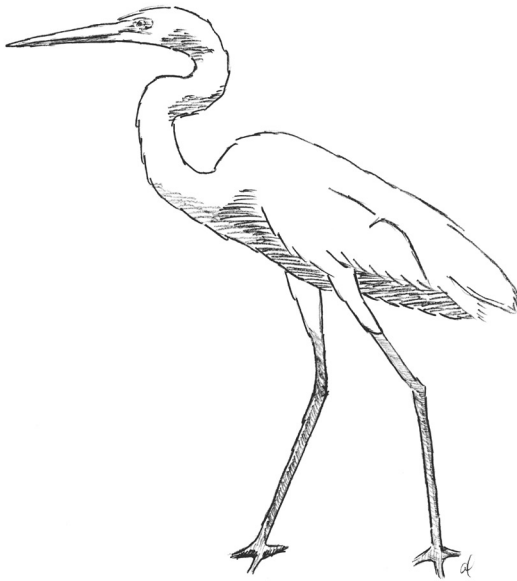
In my heart - I dance as a child before You,  
In my heart - eyes light up with joy;  
In my heart - prayer reaches up to touch You,  
In my heart - Your love is always mine,  
In my heart - You're the life that shines.

My Jesus, Lord and Savior  
How I need Your warm embrace  
Surround me with Your presence  
Surround me with Your grace  
Gently lead me Homeward  
Where forevermore I'll be  
Rejoicing in my Savior,  
My Jesus...Lord...I'm free!

Now I dance - I am a child before You,  
And I see - Your eyes light up with joy!  
My hands - can reach out now to touch You  
With Your grace, Your love is always mine  
In Your grace, Your glory always shines.



*LYRICS OF A WOMAN'S LIFE*







## *DISCOVERY*

I peer out of my cocoon,  
wondering what lies beyond the security of my home,  
the seclusion of self.

I slowly emerge,  
struggling to be set free from this bondage  
I have created for myself,  
hiding 'til I could appear in a different body,  
a different me.

My eyes are clouded from the long time of darkness,  
but there is now light trying to break through.  
A sudden brilliance of the world overcomes me  
and I am amazed at the fragrant colors  
crying out in greeting.  
I am overwhelmed by what I see.

Could the whole world have been waiting for me,  
waiting to see what had become of the ugly “worm” that I  
was?

Had it hope in my recovery,  
in my discovery of who I am?  
My soul is still my own,  
but there is a newness I feel;  
a lightness that was not there in the warmth of the womb.

There is an expectation in the air,  
a waiting for something grand and long anticipated.  
I test my wings gently,  
preparing them for flight,  
for a life new to me.

I'm not afraid now,  
as the gentle breeze beckons me,  
and the welcoming arms of the world open to embrace me.  
I lift my head and let the wind take me where it may,  
ready to enjoy,  
to revel in  
life.

## *BEAUTIFUL*

You're beautiful  
Lying on the dead grass  
As it mingles with new blades  
Faded blue jeans  
Dull, red flannel shirt  
Tucked neatly inside  
Your soft brown hair falling on your shoulders  
Oblivious to all but the goodness of the breeze  
And the warmth of the sun

Do you know I am watching you  
My heart going out to capture your serenity  
Do you know the hour of day  
Do you care  
Do your dark knowing eyes see  
The love I so try to hide  
Does your gentle smile show you are  
Content with the love I do give  
Or is it only for the fiery god in the sky

I feel good beside you  
Content  
Warmth  
Not from the sun  
But from your rays of light  
Dancing about as a ballet  
Of tender grasses and wild flowers

What is this power you possess  
To make all things disappear  
All but the things that are right

## *PRECIOUS CHILD*

I am awed by your perfection,  
the beauty of your skin,  
the smell of you.

I caress your perfect head,  
kiss your flawless brow,  
feel your tiny fingers in my own.

I could hold you,  
look at you for hours,  
oblivious to the surrounding day.

The look of peace on your face,  
in your relaxed little body  
that curves into my arms.

Total contentment,  
undisturbed by the world,  
secure in love.

Would that I could protect you,  
let you keep this peaceful day,  
let you feel the calm of night.

We embrace this quiet time together;  
I, contemplating the days to come,  
You dreaming peacefully in my arms.

## *LUNCH*

A crowded café

Moms and grandmoms  
out for a treat with the kids  
trying to converse between interruptions  
and urging the toddlers to eat “one more bite”  
shoveling food into the baby’s mouth  
while taking a bite of their own  
Speaking in the quick coded language  
that only mothers can speak and  
only grandmothers and children understand

The last bite, then  
Hurry and hustle -  
A flurry of children herded out to the street

Hush

Diners look around  
not knowing from where  
the quiet comes  
not sure what to do  
but eat the silent meal  
before them

## *THE BATH*

I prepare an oasis of fragrant bubbles,  
lavender bubbles,  
and step in -  
a book of poetry in one hand,  
a glass of wine on the ledge.

Easing my body into the tub,  
my mind drifts into restfulness,  
preparing for night's sleep.

Brahms plays in the air,  
Browning plays on the page,  
White zinfandel awaits in my glass.

Comfort flows in the water;  
weary muscles soak in the warmth,  
tired thoughts draw in the peace,  
and worries silently float away.

## *YOUNG PHYSICIAN*

His first diagnosis - age;  
and that's supposed to make me feel better  
than the other standard reply - hormones?  
"It's stress" he then says  
and listens with his head cocked  
and a sickly sympathetic smile  
as I tell him that can't be right.  
All he offers is a prescription of Valium,  
the mother's little helper of a generation ago,  
too quickly offered to middle-aged mothers with teenagers.

I want to scream at him that I had left a  
drug addicted husband and was  
desperately trying to keep my children away  
from using pot and pills for answers;  
and here he is offering "relaxers",  
drugs that would keep me from even caring.

I quietly thank him and say "no",  
then leave the room feeling no better in body,  
but much stronger in mind.

## *MIDDLE-AGED THOUGHTS*

I try to ignore the middle-aged stomach  
that now is visible below my  
sagging middle-aged breasts.  
Sitting is not very attractive to the eye,  
standing not much better.  
Thighs thickened with age,  
arms rounder and no longer toned  
by lifting children and swinging tots.

I look at my body and think of the children  
that I carried within me,  
grateful for the chance to give life  
even though I had not planned to do so.  
Thankful that I have grown sons to love,  
to talk to, to “play” with.  
Our games are different now,  
but they still bring smiles and laughs,  
fake anguish and mock determination;  
enough to give back some of my youth,  
some of my heart, and maybe,  
return a piece of my mind.



## ***MORNING THOUGHTS***

*(As I sit here in bed)*

I sit here in bed,  
Pillows fluffed,  
Supporting me with comfort,  
The sun streaming through the window  
Warming my thoughts,  
Lighting my notebook.

Leaning back, I watch  
The cars pass by  
And a squirrel run to and fro  
Trying to hide the nut he carries,  
Then on to find others he had buried -  
Or maybe one of his neighbors'.

The snow is nearly melted,  
Watering the trees that stand naked,  
A golden glow shining through their limbs  
To create tangled shadows  
And unnamed silhouettes.

Closing my eyes  
The sun shines in its true colors,  
Orange with halos of red,  
Warming my soul as the  
Sound of the heater warms the room  
Surrounding my bed.

## *NIGHT POEM*

My heart beats in rhythm to  
the sound of his slumber  
as I lie awake waiting  
for my own dreams to fall

Thoughts of the day  
weave in and out of the  
hopes for tomorrow  
forever dreaming with him

Friend, spouse, lover  
lies beside me asleep  
the one who helps me dream  
helps me reach beyond the far star.

His breathing calls me gently  
to join in the dance of dreams  
he whispers to me his love  
from out of the land of slumber

## *Fifty Years*

“With this ring, I thee wed...”

*Forever, eternally I take you as mine*

“To love and to cherish...”

*With all of my heart*

“For better or worse...”

*Through the joy and the heartaches*

“For richer or poorer...”

*From bologna to T-Bone*

“In sickness and in health...”

*God has seen us through*

“For as long as we both shall live”

*For eternity more I say “I do”*

*Fifty years we’ve shared our life;*

*I love you, my husband.*

*I adore you, my wife.*

## ***FAMILY VACATION***

*(Circle of Love)*

Brothers and sisters  
aunts and uncles  
now grandparents watching  
children play in the dirt  
slide into base  
drop “flowers” into the stream

Family members branch off  
to ride the trails  
fish the streams  
hike the paths

Always to return to surround  
the matriarch of the clan  
who doles out meals  
bandages and wisdom  
gathering them into a  
tight circle of love

## ***REMEMBERING HER***

My dear friend  
suddenly alone  
after so many years  
loving and caring for  
the true love of his life

He walks slowly  
through the house  
that once was filled  
with her laughter and  
her many songs of joy

The silence brought  
by her lingering death  
emptied the shell of home  
and hollowed the body of  
the girl/woman she once was

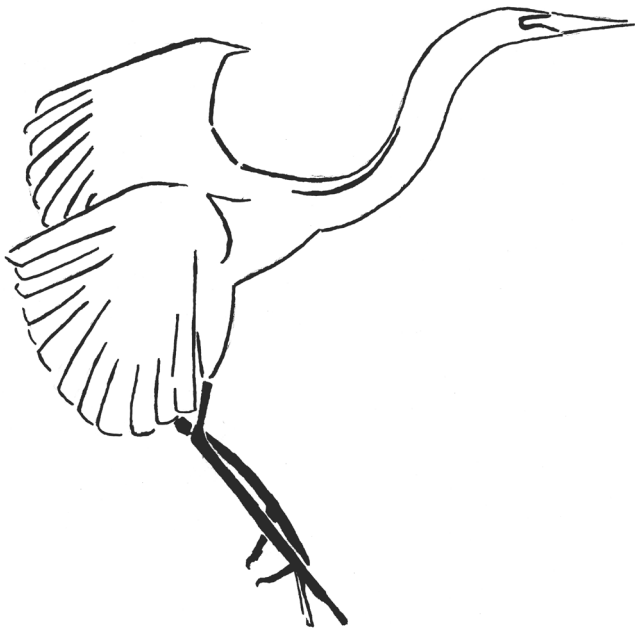
He goes about  
slowly and carefully  
sorting her things and  
smelling her essence  
that has lingered behind

Memories float  
keeping her alive  
in his sanctuary and  
placing her in the midst  
of his aching thoughts

Quietly a smile  
forms on his lips  
as he remembers the  
bride of his youth and  
the wife of his old age

Gently holding  
her in his mind  
his heart reaches out  
longing to join her  
to share her new home

*NATURE SONG*



sp

## *EGRETS RISE*

Midmorning breeze  
cools already warm day  
Diamonds on water  
too bright to see

Verdant pastures  
soothe the cattle  
Idyllic colors  
paint hidden music

Feathered bodies  
balanced on stilts  
By silent consent  
the egrets rise



## *BUTTERFLIES*

Butterflies  
dance freely in the garden,  
twirling and swirling as the leaves,  
gracefully they alight on choice blossoms-  
no longer the selections as a month ago  
but sweet flowers in new autumn hues.  
They rest, then tip-toe to other awaiting petals  
that welcome these dancers of flight,  
pursuers of sweet delight.  
Traipsing silently over the succulent banquet,  
they choose the delicacies that please their eye,  
knowing they will be rewarded with rich, full-bodied nectar,  
closer to the taste of heaven than at any other time.  
Once again they take flight,  
invigorated with new strength, new life.  
Dancing, floating above the flowers, the garden;  
like false lovers, they move on  
to the next yard.

## *HAIKU*

New leaves on old tree  
Spring marches out of the cold  
Blooms jump to applaud

Summer storm opens  
At the sound of heaven's voice  
Thirsty prairies drink

Leaves swirl to the ground  
Death raked into mounded pyres  
Autumn colors flame

Sun peeks into the  
Crystal dreams of winter morn  
The valley awakes

## *HUMMINGBIRD*

I hear a buzz, zip, hummm  
and look up from  
watering the flowers,  
only to stand  
face to face  
with a hummingbird  
wondering what I am doing  
at his blooms.

A brief inspection  
and he's gone for the moment,  
to return when the blossoms  
are again his alone.

## *MORNING TIDE*

The sun slowly wakes me  
Blushing through the curtains.  
I lie in bed listening to it rise.

I get up and don sweats and canvas shoes -  
Keds - like when we were children;  
Flat, white and one style fits all.

I step out onto the patio,  
A cup of tea warming my hands,  
A cool breeze caressing my skin.

Cardinals volley their calls back and forth  
While the killdeer stroll about  
Keeping guard over hidden homes.

A 'possum runs across the yard  
Making its way back to the woods  
Much like a vampire caught by daylight.

Hummingbirds dart back and forth  
From flower filled pots and baskets  
Adorning a simple, otherwise colorless, patio.

Mind awake and freshened,  
Spirit stirred and flowing,  
Stepping back inside, I begin my day.

## ***WALK IN THE WOODS***

I go to the forest in early morn  
before the heat, before the sun;  
before the snakes appear.

My companion, a small one-eyed dog,  
blazes the trail seeking adventures  
and the animals that hide before us.

He misses the rabbit on the path ahead  
but does find the tracks of an armadillo  
passing the night before.

Cardinals serenade our way -  
bright, red birds amazingly hidden  
in the green and brown of the woods.

Frogs jump before our path,  
blending in with the leaves  
but for their movement.

Ferns and fungi cover the forest floor  
cushioning the sound of our feet  
as we tread the familiar trail.

We hear the hum of bees  
before we catch the scent  
of honeysuckle in a grove.

An opossum's skeleton  
lies beside the path  
overgrown with tall grass.

The dog ignores the  
obvious treasure and goes on  
to challenge a turtle.

Satisfied he had won the stand-off,  
He trots off to drink from a  
rain puddle created during the night.

We near the edge of the woods,  
and avoid a bull snake  
seeking the warmth of the sun.

Stepping out into the meadow,  
we head for home, ready to relax  
from the adventures of the day.

## *LOOKING OUT*

Shimmering gold and coppers  
blaze up the mountain-side  
The remaining unchanged aspen quake  
anticipating their moment of fiery glory

Early morning walkers cross a bridge  
stopping to admire the reflections of  
jewel-toned mountains on the pond  
Fish jump through the images  
challenging the quiet illusion

## *ASPEN GLOW*

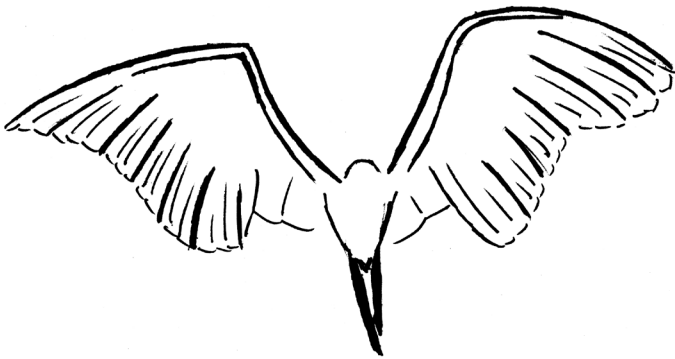
Aspen glow amidst the  
spruce and pine  
highlight snow covered peaks  
beyond reach of tree and shrub

Ice glazed pond  
reflecting the season  
the chilled air steaming  
towards the sun

Silent snow  
tells the passage of  
elk and fox  
rabbit and deer



***FUGUE***



*2*

## *PIANO SPELL*

I watch your fingers  
go over the keyboard  
swiftly  
meaningfully  
music comes  
as if by magic  
yet I see you produce  
the beautiful sound  
I don't understand how  
one man can produce  
the sound of centuries

## *CAT TRAP*

The tick of the clock  
The purr of a cat  
The quiet of comfort  
On a cold afternoon

The stretch of a paw  
A rub on the chin  
The contentment vibrates  
On a calm afternoon

Hot tea in the cup  
Good book in the hand  
Cat curled up on the lap  
On this fine afternoon

***THOUGHTS ON A WINTER'S EVE***

Making snow angels in the sky  
Curled up on a cloud sipping tea  
Warming hands on a starlit night  
Skipping stones across the galaxy

# *SEATTLE*

## **I. Ferry**

Misty, cloudy sky  
Seagulls spiraling up, then gliding back again  
Dipping down into the sea  
Gathering the garbage upon the water

Tug working double-time  
Pulling a boat four times its size  
An occasional 'toot', but other than that  
An unnoticeable presence

Silent island up ahead  
Fairy tale cottages from various stories  
Quiet, peaceful, simple  
Memories of the future

Busy city left behind  
Big, ugly/beautiful buildings - different yet the same  
A kind of restless peace  
A hope (not) to forget past

## **II. Piers**

Alone

Quiet and alone

All about people

Working, talking, hurrying

Silence

A quiet peace

Customer and clerk

Bickering at the fish market

Solitude

Man cursing as he watches the departing ferry

Hush

## ***DAKOTAS***

*(Study in solitude)*

Riding through the barren farmland,  
Miles of browns and siennas in the fall,  
Wondering what could possibly await.

Old windmills, duly plucked  
With only their tail feathers left behind.

Bales of hay standing at attention, like  
Chess pieces on a checkered battlefield;  
Silent sentinels waiting for their order to move.

Pump jacks looking like a collection of glass ducks,  
Dipping their beaks into the ground and  
Bobbing up again slowly, over and over again.

Heading north into the cold;  
Snow covered hills  
Rolling in and out of the overcast sky.

Cream colored farm houses and silos  
Disappear into the earth,  
Noticed only because of frost laden trees,  
Their silver branches reaching out  
To surround the sleeping buildings.

## *MARCH HATTER*

Sitting at the windowsill  
gazing out through the dream-like mist  
feeling like Alice in the land of surreal  
not believing the reality  
of the world we've fallen into

A smile fades into the fog  
drums step into night  
the music floating on air  
weeping from the sky  
raising up the sun  
lulling the moon to sleep  
lifting color to blossom  
for us to breath in



## *FELINE THERAPY*

He presses his soft, sleek body against me  
his purrs reverberating in my chest.

He insistently calls me to rest,  
to get away from the busyness  
of home and work,  
calling me to lay aside my pen  
and come sit with him, hold him;  
to let his purrs massage the stiffness of thinking  
and soothe the mind with the  
mantra of purr, the zen of cat.

He stretches out to nestle under my chin  
then lays back to curl around all cares.  
He lulls me into quiet,  
into calm acceptance of rest.  
He keeps the mind gently kneaded  
and oiled with the essence of thought,  
the meditation of “meow.”



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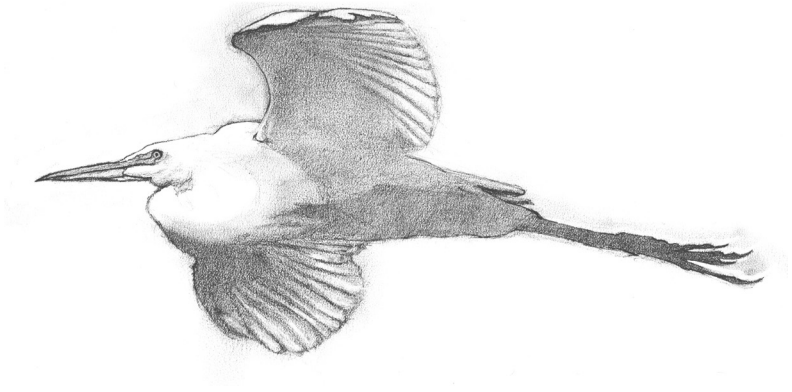
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## *About the Author*

Jerolyn Lockhart is a former school librarian and a member of the Academy of American Poets, a founding member of the Arkansas Valley Working Writers Group in southeast Colorado, and a member of the Brazos Christian Writers. A native of Colorado, she spends part of the year in central Texas, and finds the “dual citizenship” a great source of inspiration. A poet, short-story, and inspirational writer, her work has been included in *Chinook*, *Brazos Gumbo*, *Word Power: A Month of Devotions for Writers*, and on the internet in *The Tangled Web*.



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