

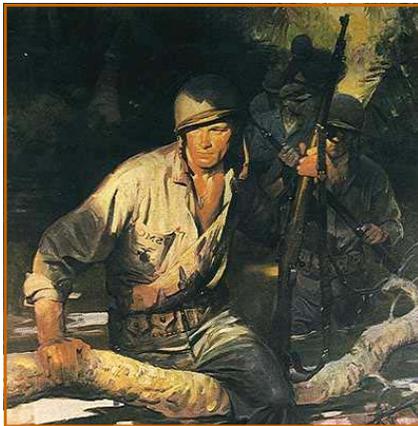
The Storyteller

© Andrew Kloak

Tim drove along the George Washington Parkway in the direction of the Pinewood Nursing Home. Here was a son, coming home from a faraway place. He knew all the restaurants and hotels around where his Dad was like the back streets of his boyhood home on the south side of Chicago. It was hard enough when he had to deal with his Dad leaving that two-story red brick home four years ago after he suffered a stroke.

It was not long ago when his father welcomed Tim into the world. Looking down into the eyes of the newborn baby in his arms, he was filled with great pride and hope for the future. It is a universal moment that all parents feel at that moment even if it is never spoken in words.

Tim recalled his most recent visit about two months ago. "They took my candy," said his father. "Who took your candy?" Tim asked. "The candy you brought me last time... the nurse took my candy. I had it right here, and she took it," he said as he opened a metal drawer near his bed. Tim saw black and white socks and handkerchiefs in the drawer, but no box of candy. "Dad, I'll get you more chocolate," Tim said. "Don't take my candy," his father said



in the direction of a nursing home attendant who peered in from the doorway. "Don't worry about *that*, Dad I'll get you more," he said.

Tim pulled open the glass doors of the nursing home. "I would like to see my father in Room 3K," he said to the attendant at the front desk. "Your father's been moved to Room 3R," he told him. As he walked to Room 3R, a nurse caught him from behind and told him that his father suffered another stroke. Tim stopped to absorb what he just heard.

"This stroke was on his left side. Now he can't speak or even swallow," she said.

"What does the doctor think? How much time does he have left?" Tim said.

"It's hard to tell, maybe just a few more days," she said.

Tim could see into the neighboring third-floor rooms as he walked down the hallway toward a sterile-looking door that would read "3R." Through the open doors of some rooms, TVs were blaring into the hallway. The way they looked at him as they sat on their beds or shuffled around their rooms made him sad. Most of these



An Uphill Climb

© Alice Spencer

I'm climbing up my mountain —
Been doing this for years.
I've paid for my progress with failure
And purchased my laughter with tears.

I inch my way up the rocky slope,
Getting higher than ever before,
But on a bad day, I trip over nothing
And backslide to even the score.

It will likely take more than one lifetime
To attain the view from the peak,
But, after all, I am getting closer,
And I'll never find what I won't seek.

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people don't get visitors. He felt guilty that he could walk straight down the hall. He passed several women hanging on to the rail along the hallway. They stopped when he passed. Most looked up at him with eyes that had lost the sparkle of who they had been.

He was startled when someone grabbed his arm. "My name's Rose and I'm 91 years old," she told him in a southern accent. "Does your family come to visit you?" he said. "They're all gone. I'm from Georgia...when I was a little girl my father used to tell me stories about Andersonville during the Civil War," she said. Looking at the light colored peach fuzz on her face, Tim could see before the gray that she used to have red hair. "I am here to visit my own father," he said, wishing he could say more. She let go of his arm. When he got to the door before 3R he slowed down, afraid of what he would see his Dad becoming. "Hi, Dad," Tim said as he entered his room. His father was looking out the window as he came up from behind him. He noticed the twisted frame of this tall man in the wheel chair. The television in his room was playing the major league baseball game of the week as the Brewers were playing the Angels. "Dad, I came as quick as I could," he said. A smile came across his father's face.

"I see they gave you a haircut," he said. His father shook his head to answer yes. For 35 years he was up early for work for his job as a traffic engineer for the city. Every night he was home, coming through the black iron gate on the side of the house for dinner.

The things Tim couldn't make sense of at the time were becoming defining moments that he admired about his father. When Tim was 14, his father took him out to see a movie. As they drove around the crowded streets of the Chicago neighborhood near the theater, Tim said to his Dad, "It doesn't look like we're going to find a spot to park. We might have to park in a lot and pay." "No, we'll find something...here...here is a spot," said his father. "We can't fit into that space. Those cars are too close together," said Tim. "We'll get in ...watch," said his father. He proceeded to maneuver the big black Oldsmobile into the tightest spot Tim ever saw. Five minutes later Tim and his father were shutting the car doors. They were

walking toward the theater when a woman on the other side of the street was being harassed by two men. "Leave her alone," his father boomed out. When they did not respond, his father started to cross the street to the other side. They took off running.

"Dad is there anything I can do for you?" said Tim. His father shook his head no. "I can't believe all this that has happened," said Tim. His father's eyes filled with tears and so did his. Tim couldn't look at him as he tried to regain his composure.

He wanted him to be something more than the steady and reliable man who pays his bills on time. "Dad, a whole lifetime you showed me through your actions that you were proud of me, that you understand, that you love me but you never said 'I love you,'" said Tim. "Now all we have left are words." Tim knew that those words could only come from him.

He saw that his father could not speak at all. There was nothing left Tim could do but to hold his father in the comfort of conversation. "Dad, I know I haven't told you this, but I love you. I am who I am because of you. You are my connection to the past, to our ancestors, to life. You are always with me." Tim could barely get the words out. Tears were running down his father's face. A river of tears flowed down Tim's cheek. Neither was embarrassed or afraid now to let them fall.

Tim knew his father liked the summers best. He remembered a place on their farm in Indiana where only he and his father went. He called it "Dad's Place." They would go behind the forest in a little patch of open area along the barb-wire fence and watch the sun set across the fields of corn. It was their place of understanding. His father would tell him stories about his days in the Marines during World War II. During his stint in the 2nd Marine Division, he served in the South Pacific in places with names like Guam, Sipan and Okinawa. His father had given him so much, but it was the stories that came back to Tim. He thought it odd how such details could stay in his mind so clearly. Now the listener became the storyteller.

"You remember you had to swim in toward an enemy-held island during the

night to survey and map out Japanese positions and then get back out of there? You always showed me how to swim the dog paddle without making a noise to stir up the water," Tim said. "What about the time you had to do guard duty of the camp water tower along a 90-foot path in the forests of Okinawa? That must have been the longest night of your life as you walked up and back for eight hours, worrying about your life."

Tim could see from his father's facial expressions that hearing these stories meant a lot to him. "You remember the train ride from Chicago across the United States to boot camp on the West Coast? I can remember you showing me the very place in Neetles on the Arizona-California border where the Indians were standing on the side of the tracks to see you off to war. What about the time in Nagasaki, you could see the rats scatter as you turned on and off the lights of your jeep as you drove through Nagasaki at night a few weeks after the bomb was dropped on it in 1945."

Tim saw that his father was growing tired. Even though he could not contribute to what was being said, he was happy to listen to the voice of his son. Tim saw that it was time to go when his father's eyelids began closing. "Dad, I am going — getting late for you. I'm going to be here to see you tomorrow morning," Tim said. Tim went and got the nurse in the hallway to put his father to bed. They both lifted his weakened body out of the silver wheelchair and onto the clean white sheets of his bed. "Dad, I'm going to go now, and I will see you in the morning," said Tim. His father smiled and reached out for him.

Tim gave his father a hug. He could feel the whiskers of his father's shaven face rub against his cheek. It reminded him of the comforting feeling listening to stories in his father's lap when he was young. As the whiskers rubbed against his head he could feel the combination of a rough surface of whiskers covering the soft skin underneath. As he walked out of the nursing home, Tim felt he was lucky to have a father like this.

The phone ringing in the night awakened him. "Tim, I'm sorry to have to tell you this news. Your father died in his

sleep last night,” said the nurse. “How could this be? I was just with him a few hours ago. Everything was all right,” said Tim as his voice broke off. Uncontrollable tears burst forth. He ended the conversation quickly, unable to say much more. He felt sadness and pressure now. He thought this happened too fast. He wasn’t ready. He had more to say to him, more to ask him. It was like it was just beginning with him, and now it’s over. He saw how much his father meant to him all at once.

The cold cloudy Tuesday came upon him quicker than he wanted. The funeral procession drove past the home where his father was born. Tim’s connection to an earlier time was his father. Born in the mid-1920s, his father was brought into the world by a midwife in his immigrant mother’s bedroom. “Good-bye, Dad,” he whispered as they lowered the casket into the Indiana soil not far from the home he was born in. Tim didn’t want to talk to anybody or receive condolences. He wanted to get used to things if he could before facing the words of others. He stood in silence with his tie flapping in the wind.

All that day Tim tried to hold back his tears and stop the reappearing tightening feeling in his throat. Tim had this uncontrollable closing of the throat sensation just one time before. During the explosion of sadness and happiness he felt as he sat in a darkened movie theater watching *A River Runs Through It*. Funny and sad, happy and tragic, they all mix up in your mind. Tim told himself at the time he just needed some time to sort them out.

People talked about how they would not forget about the loveableness of his father. Tim thought that when his father was gone people would forget about all the good he had done. All that would be left to symbolize his service to the country as a veteran would be a small American flag fluttering in the wind by his grave. All that would be left to remember him as a human being would be these stories carried on by his son, but in the end even those would be forgotten.



Tulsa

© Lee Prosser

I had concluded a busy night past midnight, involved in research concerning incantations and spells and magick of Ancient India and Ancient Egypt. During the wee small hours of the morning, I was awake within a dream, and the trance-like situation was as real as touching a new budded rose on a mellow early spring morning — everything in the dream was remarkably firm to my touch. I was in a tiled cave, with art work and a rocking chair nearby. A wonderful warm glow of light illuminated the large cavern. Somewhere I caught the scents of sandalwood and daffodils, and it was a pleasing aroma! I walked to the chair, stared at it, and every cat I had known and loved during my lifetime appeared suddenly in the seat of the chair, each one fading and reappearing as a different one!

Then at last there was Tulsa the Cat sitting in the chair purring. One of the most gentle, gray-striped, green-eyed, handsome male cats you could ever hope to associate with! I stroked his fur, saying, “I miss you, Tulsa. I miss you since you died. I miss having you resting at my feet while I typed. I remember you with love and miss you!”

Tulsa winked at me with love in his eyes, and said in response: “The soul is immortal and takes on a new form every time it returns. I will return soon as a male cat, my choice.”

“What is death like?” I asked. This cave seemed like a second home to me. Forgotten, yet remembered, a sense of past encounters having taken place here. Tulsa regarded me with a keen interest, then licked his paw and said: “Like stepping from one room to another. I remember dying in your arms. The next thing I knew I was here. Nothing to worry about. Death happens.”

I realized this was a shamanic journey and asked: “You have come to give me a message?”

Tulsa stretched, laying back in the rocking chair. Tulsa said: “First of all, you must endure; everything else is secondary. That is the message for existence, and living a meaningful, honest life.” As Tulsa started to fade, he added, “I will love you always.”

I awoke then, feeling as if I had suddenly dropped into my body from a great height. I jotted the dream down on some notepaper near the bed on the night table. Then I had one of the most peaceful sleeps I had had in a long time.

— from *Sweetwater Creek Remembrances* by Lee Prosser

“Only when one is ready to peer into the darkness will they be given the gift of life.”

— Unknown



HUNTING

© Hal Zina Bennett

As a boy up in Michigan,
I sat under burdened skies
and learned to wait. Birches
like timid sketches rose
along a narrow valley
slanting to the Manistee.
Fragile limbs, leafless, now bore
dustings of snow that spilled as
the wind tipped their slender,
gray-dappled boughs; they
wove a screen that all but
hid snow-blurred hills, gentle
behind me, where my own tracks
dotted the trail I followed here.

Hills, birches, and sky merged,
white on white, like memories
abandoned to dream. I waited,
my back against a burned out
cedar, Winchester carbine
across my lap, magazine heavy
with eight shiny brass rounds,
Remington 30-30 hollow cores.

Three circles of frost, the size of
dimes, iridescent in the soft light,
stained the blue-black gunmetal
where my warm fingers left
prints in the finely tooled breech.

There's an exacting beauty
in guns that have known death,
beauty to teach me, even at 16,
why everything that matters
happens in the good hunt.

That day, Peter, my hunting partner,
circled 'round the broad span
of birches toward the cedar stands
down deeper in the valley. Born
without fingers, hands like

short mittens, he didn't shoot well
but bragged he knew how and could.
I never challenged him. His mother,
sipping Mogan David from a jelly jar,
finishing supper in her woodstove-
warmed kitchen, said, "A man
knows *hissself* through violence at
his own hand. And Peter never will."

Still, Peter bragged he had enough
Sioux blood, though thinned
by Scot and Irish, to make him
a good tracker. And he was.

Appointed the shooter that day,
I dozed, waiting for Peter
to emerge from the woods or
drive the game along the trail
where I sat, quiet as shy love.

My right hand dropped
to my side and fingers curled
over an icy rock. Its shape
intriguing, I picked it up,
brushed off the dirty snow
and discovered the sculpted
perfection of an ancient tool;
the stone ax, tomahawk head,
lay heavy in my hand,
holding secrets of a life
very different from my own.
Awed by precise, smooth
edges and notch, visions
of its maker rose in my mind.

In dreamspace, he carved
granite with flint, squatting by
the river, dipping both rocks
in the stream, whetting them
as he worked. Intent on his task,
his world alive in my mind's eye,

I knew this was his ground, his
forest, his river and sky, his
sun and stars, his air, and
wondered what lessons
his handiwork would tell.

Then, like solemn emissaries,
three deer strode from the birches,
two does and a large white buck,
proudly displaying a bony rack
of at least 12 points. On his broad
white breast he bore a single blaze
of tan, a badge of honor or nobility;
surely this insignia meant something.

He stopped, looked me over with
a piercing calm I would experience
again thirty years later in the gaze
of a Buddhist monk...infinitely present,
dissolving all that I believed I knew.

And I could not rival him
with the power of my gun.

He passed unharmed with his does
while I held in my hand the sculpted
rock that would embody these moments
forever; the only spoils of the hunt, I
would carry this back.

Peter's curses rose from the
trail below me. Waving his arms,
his shrill profanities echoing,
I was "*damned to fucking hell*"
for losing my courage and
missing the trophy of my life.

"There was something I could
not kill..." I began, but stopped,
knowing better than to argue,
not yet knowing why I couldn't.

Red Riding Hood and the Good Gray Wolf

© Victor Walter

Homo lupi lupus

Jane Logan, chief of the Lupine Restoration Unit in the National Forestry Service, said to her colleague from the western division, "I know what I'm talking about, he'll get along fine in New England."

"I don't know, Jane," her colleague replied.

"We've had resistance in Texas," she said, "But in the northeast I think we've got a better chance. Sympathetic farmers who are skeptical but open, no worried ranchers, and no pelt poachers to speak of. If the program gains acceptance there, the media will pick it up, and we can use it all over."

The wolf sat waiting on the threshold. "He's in beautiful condition, Jane. You took good care of him."

She called the wolf who bounded forward, ears cocked, tail wagging, and she stroked his fur between the ears. "Touch him, talk to him."

He whistled and said, "Howdy Mr. W."

The wolf did not leave Jane Logan's hand, but turned his head to her colleague and wagged his tail faster. The man did not offer to touch, but kept his hands close to his body. "He can communicate with humans," she said.

He smiled. "Must be a new subspecies."

Taking him seriously, she replied, "Not at all, just an ordinary timber wolf, *Canis lupus*."

"Speak, wolf, speak!" her colleague commanded. The animal remained silent, but still wagging his tail, opened his jaws and let his tongue hang out.

"He's shy around men. When he learns to trust you, he'll say something."

"How long have you had him, Jane?"

"A hunter brought him to me before his eyes were open."

"Then he imprinted on you. He thinks you're his mother."

"I hate those woolly speculations about animal behavior, but it's true I raised him as if he were my own baby, nursed him from a bottle, kept him warm, sang to him, read him stories..."

Her colleague laughed out loud. "You read him stories?"

"He loves stories, especially feral child stories — tales of human children raised by wolves."

"If he's so tame, will he make it on his own?"

"I took him hunting and watched him devour a rabbit."

"And did he drop it at your feet?"

"Don't be funny. He's not a dog. He could tear you apart in the wink of an eye."

Her colleague put his hands in his pockets. "I'm aware of that. The question is can he survive against predators?"

Impatiently, she replied, "The question is will you sign off on the project, will you back me up? This is a crucial experiment."

"Of course I will, and wish you luck."



When everything was ready in the spring, she drove to Massachusetts, followed a trail into the Quabbin forest, stopped the van in a clearing, and let him out of the back. She wore an Australian bush jacket over a khaki shirt and pants. Kneeling on the ground under a maple that was still unfolding its leaves, she wrapped her arms around the wolf's neck and said goodbye. "Take care of yourself. I'll come back in the fall. If all goes well, I'll bring you a mate to start a family. I know you won't let me down."

Long after she left, the wolf thought of her all the time, but knew his duty was to thrive in the forest. When she brought him a wife, they would replenish the species. Eventually, wolves would roam the forest again. Life here was easy, plenty of rabbits, squirrels, birds of all sorts. He enjoyed stalking deer. He wondered what she meant by predators. Bobcats fled up trees, foxes ducked into holes, bears turned away.

On a fine day in early summer, he heard a human voice and ran to the edge of the forest. Crouching in a thicket with joy in his heart, he observed a woman singing to herself as she picked wildflowers. She wore a red cloak with a red cape over her head, carried a red pack on her back and a basket in her hand. He crept closer and sniffed. Her fragrance made him hungry, but reminded him of Jane Logan. Crawling on his belly, he approached. She looked up and cried out, "Oh, a wolf!"

"Don't be afraid," he said. "I'm a friendly animal."

"You startled me," she replied.

"Please don't stop singing."

"What would you like me to sing?"

"How about Little Bo Peep? Do you know that one?"

"Of course," she said, and sang the whole thing. Then they stood silently, gazing at each other.

"Where are you going on this fine summer day?" he asked.

"To my grandmother's house."

"May I walk along beside you? Where does your grandmother live?"

"In a little cabin deep in the woods. She's the ranger." The wolf walked happily by her side, looking up at her face. She stopped for a moment, removed the red pack and took off her red cloak. "I don't need my raincoat after all." When she removed the cape, long golden curls tumbled round her soft, chubby face. Under the cloak she wore a very short red dress, revealing bare and shapely legs. The wolf licked his chops, remembering Jane Logan always wore trousers. "My grandmother is such an inspiring woman," she continued. "She went back to school after she retired and studied ecology, then got this job with the Forest Service. Now she looks after plants and animals. She's a very caring person."

"And what do you have in the basket?"

"Meat pie. It's delicious." They stopped at the door of the cabin. "The van's gone, so she's not home. Please come in while I wait. I don't like to be alone." Inside the cabin, she put her red

cloak in the closet, hung her red pack on a chair, put the basket on the kitchen counter, opened the lid and took out the New York Times, removed the pie as well and set it in the oven to warm. Then she carefully spread the newspaper on the floor. "I'm laying it out so you can sit by me when I read," she explained. The wolf yawned. "Why don't you stretch out on the bed and take a nap?" she suggested.

The wolf did not feel tired, but he thought this would be a new experience because he had never lain in a bed. Even as a pup he had slept comfortably on a mat beside Jane Logan, but always on the floor, never in her bed. As he lay happily on the ranger's bed, he inhaled the aroma of the meat pie. "Come and eat," she said. "Just a slice, because I want to save the rest for grandmother." She set a plate on the floor and watched him gulp down the slice of pie.

"Aren't you going to have any?" he asked.

"I'll eat later with grandmother." When he finished, she said, "Now let's take a nap together." Another new experience, he thought. To lie in bed with a human.

As he crawled back on the bed and stretched out, bouncing his head on the pillow a little, he watched her take off all her clothes. She lay close to him and stroked his muzzle. "You're a fine specimen," she said. The smell of her flesh overpowered him, saliva gathered in his mouth, and he slobbered. She jumped up and found a towel, returned to bed and wiped his muzzle. "Don't want to soil grandmother's pillow," she said.

"You smell delicious," he replied. "I'm glad you're not afraid of me."

As she lay naked beside him, stroking his muzzle, she answered, "I've had lots of experience with wolves."

He was feeling sleepy, and his eyes fluttered. Touching his brows, she said, "What big eyes you have."

"The better to see you, my dear," the wolf replied.

"Then she patted his muzzle. "What a big nose you have."

"The better to smell you, my love." Sleep spread over him like a blanket. His mouth opened and his tongue hung out.

"And what a big mouth you have." The wolf snored. "That stuff works fast," she said.

Quickly, she leaped out of bed, seized his tail, pulled him onto the floor, dragged him over the New York Times, and rolled him on the newspapers. She ran to her pack and drew out a large black plastic bag, then opened the basket and took out a bone-handled hunting knife, tested the edge on her thumb nail. Keen as a razor. She found a basin in the kitchen to catch the blood and slit the wolf's throat. Expertly, she made one long cut down the belly. In less than an hour, the carcass was in the bag and the wolf's pelt stretched out on the floor of the cabin.

As she washed off the blood spattered on her body, she observed, "What a good idea to take off my clothes." Making the ranger's bed carefully, she checked for stains and tidied up the cabin.

The wolf pelt lay as if he were on his belly, paws stretched out, eyes open with a thoughtful look as if he had a question on his mind.

"For an illegal skin in fine condition," she said, "I can get at least five thousand dollars."



Dawn

© Sonja Britton

I woke up this morning
Just as
The day was due
And caught the clouds yawning
As the
Sunlight brought them to.

Like a babe, new born
Shades of pink
And red and blue
They welcomed in the morn
With the
Future peeking through.



Dusk

© Sonja Britton

Sunlight kissing the earth goodnight
Causing it to blush.
Shadows playing with the light
In the evening hush.

Crickets sitting rhythm for the
Dancing of the stars.
Voices of the night singing
Notes upon the bars.



Ranch Robots of the 21st Century

© Joan Leslie Woodruff

One look and you know windmills are special. It is a treasured treat to sit and listen while one churns the wind, creaking and groaning and cranking out kilowatts. And in the night, beneath the dark New Mexico sky, where shooting stars skate like ancient flaming arrows shot from a hunters bow, windmills sing songs of romance and magic to any soul whose good fortune lets him hear their melody.

As we greet the new millennium, we seldom see them; but for New Mexico ranchers, they are assets and still considered tools of the trade. On land where water is more precious than gold, many households also rely on windmills for their entire supply. When you drive through central New Mexico, you are more likely to see working windmills in yards than you are to spot a front porch attached to a house.

These mechanical giants resemble big friendly robots harnessing the wind for the purpose of creating power to pump water from beneath our arid soil. Such an everyday sight to those of us who have them, we forget they are unique and rare. Beyond film or photographs, most people have never enjoyed their magnificence, which is why we are blessed. They are our familiar helpers, these huge decaying wonders of history.

When Cervantes created the delightfully silly and impractical Don Quixote, he must have known readers would forever cherish the images of a comical Quixote drawing his sword and tilting endless hours with a pesky arch rival such as that harmless rusty windmill. Cervantes knew he spilled multiple metaphors about the pages, turning both Quixote and his windmill into romantic idealists stretching the boundaries of modernization, reaching desperately back to a time when things seemed more peaceful and simple.

Where did these great creatures come from? They originated in Europe, growing into her primary source of energy during the 12th century, and remaining at the top of the energy food chain until the Industrial Revolution booted them into retirement. They operated with four to six sail arms which were often made of wood or canvas, and later of metal. The sails turned a shaft, which is what stretched beneath the ground and carried up water. Their energy output can be as low as one kilowatt, or as high as 2,500 kilowatts. Can you grasp all that power from the wings of a metal beast? It's true, windmill blades politely tease nature, turning breeze into valuable energy.

Several types of windmills can still be seen around New Mexico. The most popular is probably the Aermotor. Aermotor came out of Chicago in 1888 and sold only 45 windmills the first year of operation. By 1892 they'd sold 20,000, and today this machine stands on more ranches supplying water with more efficiency and reliability than any other.

Another windmill that is still around is the Flint & Walling Star Mill. This windmill has a trademark F&W and symbol of a star prominently seen on the rudder. It was born around 1866 when David Walling and Simeon Flint merged a foundry with a mill in Kendallville, Indiana. Eventually, the Star was improved and the wood traded for steel. This company is still around and remains in Kendallville.

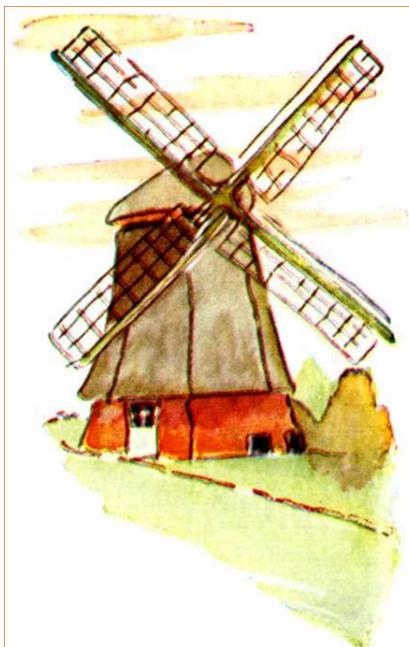
You can also still see some Dempster windmills. Originating in Beatrice, Nebraska in 1878, it began as a small windmill shop. The first mills were solid wheel, wooden blade windmills. Later, Dempster produced the more popular steel windmill and is still in business in Beatrice.

Allen Baker established Baker Manufacturing in Evansville, Wisconsin in 1873. He came out with the first Monitor Vaneless. Eventually, he built the steel open geared vane mill. Both are still around, and very rare, if you know where one is located. His later steel mills are more common. Some types of his Monitor

Windmill are still build by Verdun in Hutchinson, Kansas.

Two other windmills you may still see, but which haven't been manufactured for a long time, are the Fairbury Windmill from Fairbury, Nebraska (1920-1961) and the Woodmanse Steel and Woodmanse Oil Bath (1892-1933).

If you've never enjoyed a windmill in real time, perhaps you will want to tour New Mexico's ranch country. Then, if you get the opportunity, sit quietly and record this magical mystical experience with your senses. One day there won't be any windmills around; but if you absorb the memory, you will always have one in your mind, creaking and groaning and cranking out kilowatts while gently lassoing a piece of the wind.



Free-Falling Forward

© C. Schaefer Manette (April, 2001)

In the summer of 1998 I wrote these words in “Mystery Tent or Second Sight Light:”

*Perhaps what seems like a lighted path
Is only a detour to someone else’s home.
Perhaps what seems like a blackness
Is only my not having penetrated an unknown deeply enough
To see the true light at the other side.
Perhaps what seems like a fading light
Is only a dissipation of my own energy
Setting off in all the contrary, parallel, and adjacent
Pathways other than my own.*

This has been a phenomenal year — one of deep pain, yet also incredible love, joy, and even ecstasy. A year of total energy depletion and topsy-turvy health, yet also a reclamation of power and self and a deepening of faith. This has been a year of shifting relations — deepening friendships to an extraordinary depth and finding new friends. This has been a year I never could have imagined or predicted to unfold as it did. This has been a year of holding on and then letting go, surrendering fears and free-falling into arms that are so much larger and more expansive than my own, and with so much more promise than my own — the arms of Creator. This has been a year of re-membering self, and uncovering dreams, a rare archaeological find, long ago buried and lost. This has been a year of still trying to please others, especially those I love, and then letting go of this and giving myself permission not to heed the voices of others but to listen to and honor the voice of my inner core and to live my life as I have never done before. This has been a year of risk taking. I do not know where I will end up, but I do know that I am learning to embrace my own power, learning about energy in new ways. I know I still will falter, but even so, I sense a new courage to help me through any resurfacing doubts and fears. And at last, I once again am working with the dearly beloved and most extraordinary teachers — horses.



But before I could get to where I am now, I had a few more curves to take in the path, and a few more dips. First I had to get off the treadmill of four years of heavy cerebral work with long hours, a sea of paper work, a wealth of criticism, and a world of analysis that has so little respect let alone recognition for

intuition — the wonders of veterinary school. By the time I graduated I felt relieved, drained, exhausted, and nervous. And that was the time I had to work through the expectations of others, and those incorporated into my own beliefs, of how to use this newly earned and expensive degree. Now I was supposed to be looking for a veterinary job, and I had no enthusiasm for the task.

I knew I needed to get grounded, get out of my head and back into the soles of my feet. But this was to prove more challenging than I had imagined. Fortunately, I had glimmerings of grounding, breathing the Earth up through my feet and feeling the Earth breathe me, when I camped out in May and began my daily walks with ritual. The intentional walks and grounding opened me to visions from spirit guides. Hiking and horseback riding with my new friend in the wilderness in Montana — at the heights where bighorn sheep and mountain goats reside, surrounded by glorious wildflowers in wonderful colors and shapes (pink elephant’s head, Indian paint brush varying from orange, to red to fuschia as the elevation changed, pink sticky geraniums, yellow buttercups, yellow and white daisies, blue lupines...) and punctuated by a camp site visit from a moose, tracks of coyotes, wolves and bobcats, naked dips in pristine chilling, glacier-fed waters, and climbing and descending thrilling heights — also would assist me to soften back into my body. But this still was not enough. I had allowed veterinary school to take too big a toll on me.

After a brief internship at the Caine Veterinary Center in southern Idaho, I took a couple of months to interview for jobs. In this process I flew across the continent and back, and my health crashed. I felt as though someone had poured lead into my being. It took tremendous conscious effort to stand up when I was talking with people, let alone move and have any emotional affect. Allergies, particularly an all-out bout of eczema, which sometimes literally disfigured my face and obscured my vision, would persist for over nine months.

A dear friend suggested I... stop... and go on retreat to re-collect myself. First she helped move my belongs into storage as the home I rented had been sold. Homeless, I first stayed with her a few days and then briefly at two different monasteries. Experiences here would assist incipiently in grounding the earlier experiences camping and in Montana. However, they were to prove more pivotal in my process that would unfold months later, both because of a power object received and the beginning of my organizing my inner self that occurred at the first one, and the private morning prayers I had on the island shores of the other, along with two key people and a family I met there.

But my allergies were persistent and for over a month even taking in food was a challenge to my body. I left the monastery at Shaw Island and now I was in yet a fourth residence in two months. Here, trying to meet the needs of others and surrendering the desperate needs of myself, I was ensconced in a black hole of depression and suicidal thoughts. The tension in my

body heaved my shoulders up to my ears, the heaviness and blackness consumed me. Where I was now was not a sanctuary, though it was with dear friends, and it was a necessary step in the process of remembering myself. Cougar came to me, stepping into my circle, licking me, and turning outwards.

Three days before Christmas I would move from this residence to the house of friends newly met at the Shaw Island monastery. This family offered me their home as a sanctuary to heal. I was their “resident farm hand,” delightedly taking care of their thirteen cattle and four horses, as well as their two dogs. I was very much included in their family and shared in basic family responsibilities and fun activities and even was called “Aunt” by their five-year-old grandson. I was given the space to do what I needed to take care of myself while they withheld giving me any advice. I stretched, walked, wrote, prayed/meditated, did ceremony, did opening walks beginning with ritual, cried and now and then connected with two or three very supportive friends... until the pieces of me started to come together... and the veiling blackness started to shift from a suffocating heaviness to an invitation to fathom life’s mysteries. I had plunged into the bottomless, obsidian pool of shadow-darkness... and found my soul richer, deeper than ever.

All this was happening while I was exploring possibilities of working with horses and waiting for a license to practice veterinary medicine in New York. I prayed to the Big Holy to close doors that needed to be closed, and open doors than needed to be opened. The New York application arrived and I filled it out and returned it just a few days before receiving a call from the veterinarians in New York: they could wait no longer and had offered the job to someone who already had a license. One door closed. I was to pursue the path with horses.

Beginning with the May camping and Montana journey, and what was yet to follow, I ultimately would drive the trustworthy 1984 rusty blue Subaru wagon, the Blue Lady, over 6,000 miles to find my present destination in the southeast corner of the United States, a location I never ever would have imagined I would live. Only just now, as I write this, am I realizing that earlier this year, in my birthing or grounding struggles and when I finally took the leap into Spirit’s arms, I was enacting the visions I had received in May. One is still in process. I was embarking on an adventure, one that would reconnect me with my Self, reconnect me with horses, reconnect me with my body and energy work. I also would connect with a thrilling sense of trembling throughout my body — a love that would fill me with an extraordinary vibrancy.

Rainbows now were charting my path. I only needed to have the faith to step onto their fragility and find they were not illusions after all... but substantial guides into a life that is only just now, after all these years, having a childhood; only just now, beginning to dream; only just now, beginning... to feel worthy of being lived.

And I, gratefully, have taken the first step onto their colorful storied ways.



Always Here

© Miriam Strauss

Oft when gazing at a star,
It starts me wondering where you are —
So far away, yet always near,
Locked in my heartheld mem’ries dear.

Inky skies hold mysteries
Of timeless space and histories.
Teasing us with winking lights
Holding court on cloudless nights.

Vanishing when day breaks through,
Quite unlike my thoughts of you.

THE POETRY OF MONEY — FIVE INTERCONNECTED HAIKU

© Patrick Snetsinger

Thirteen cents a day,
will feed a boy in Belize;
what about his soul?

Cash will nourish him.
Keep flies from his haunting eyes.
How much for his life?

My gold-card limit?
There are children to be fed!
Who will rescue them?

Here’s all my money.
I hear cries for attention.
When will they laugh, play?

Thirteen cents a day,
anyone can afford that.
But it’s not enough!



First Light

© Hal Zina Bennett

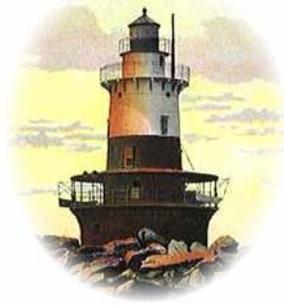
I

The day mother died
a hornet crept up my pant leg,
unnoticed...

II

Mother said, "It's bright..."
"What?" I asked. "...bright in here,"
she said. "Shall I pull the shade?"
I asked. Shook her head, perturbed.
"Not there," she said, a wave
of her hand, fingers like feathers
seeking an open window. "Hush!
Not that. The lighthouse,"
she said. "Don't forget what
you promised." A week before,
looking back for comfort,
she remembered the lighthouse
her dad tended on Lake Superior.
"One morning he woke me
early," she'd said. "Before dawn
he carried me in his arms
up the long iron stairs
spiraling into the light room.
Then out on the catwalk
he held me tight as the first
light raced over the waves
like the world being born
for the first time ever,
right before my eyes." Tears
came in a tide of awe,
celebrating beauty beyond the
spell of words. "Tell me
when it's time," she'd
said. "Remind me with
your voice. If you could
only sing it!" I couldn't,
knew I wouldn't, then she
laughed turning her head
to speak with someone
I could not see. "Who?" I asked.
"Who are you talking with?
Dad? Jesus? Angels? Grandpa?"
Again the hand, fingers
poised like feathers soaring
close to the sea now. "No one
you know," she said. "It's..."
She paused...studied my eyes,
said, "Not time yet for you
to know. Not yet," turning
from me, spoke again
to those I could not see,

then laughed, eyes shining
as they might have on the
catwalk over Lake Superior.
I wondered what she'd
seen that day, fingers curled
in her father's beard. What
awe gave comfort for this
day even then, at five, thick
in her mind, eighty-one now.



III

I felt a beacon in the room,
not the pillar of light we'd
expected but knew it was
what she'd been seeking.
"The light," I said, wanting
to say more but could not,
would not sing for her.
Laboring for breath that did
not come, fragile fingers nested
in my hand. She turned away,
mumbled something to the unseen
guest, laughed, then turned to me,
spelled out: T-H-E-Q-U-I-E-T.
"The quiet?" I asked. She nodded,
turned away, chest rigid,
struggling for breath that
would not come, distressed
for the first time in months,
but did not complain.
Fingers rustled in my hand
then finally stilled as life
lifted away, dispersing gently,
easily, like the last light of
sunset darkening the water.

IV

The hornet crept further
up my pant leg, then stung...

A Happening

© Miriam Strauss

Dusk was falling on that summer day, and the setting sun cast long shadows like bony fingers trying to grasp things out of their reach. I looked up from the book I was reading, as the words were beginning to fade on the page. I hadn't noticed that the room was darkening, I'd been so engrossed in my book. Nancy Drew, my favorite heroine, was about to discover a hidden staircase. For a ten-year-old, this was heavy stuff! How could I stop at this exciting moment? I felt compelled to follow Nancy down that hidden staircase, my heart beating like a trip hammer in anticipation of what she might find, armed with nothing but a flashlight.

As I got up from the big easy chair I'd been curled up in to turn on a lamp, I glanced out of the open window next to my chair. A large bush grew right outside the window — and I gasped and stopped dead in my tracks to see two round, glassy and enormous eyes staring in at me. My hand went up to my throat. I wanted to cry out, but couldn't. My skin crawled, but I stood there frozen, unable to move. The eyes continued to stare at me. Was this some kind of apparition? I could faintly see an outline of an odd-shaped body surrounding those glassy eyes. It was unlike anything I'd ever seen before.

After what seemed hours, in reality only minutes, the figure in the bush moved, turned, and silently flew off the bush. I watched its flight — it was so strange looking, flying upright just like a person walking in space. Then it dawned on me. An owl! It was an owl! I had never seen one before, except in pictures. This was a creature of the night, like the bat, and not given to looking in people's windows, or coming close to humans.

Needless to say, I didn't finish Nancy Drew and *The Hidden Staircase* that night. I'd had enough excitement for one day.



"Write honestly about what you know, have seen,
and have been a part of."

— Christopher Isherwood

"Make visible what, without you, might perhaps
never have been seen."

— Robert Bresson

"Everybody is talented, original, and has something
important to say."

— Brenda Ueland

Unexplained Happenings – Miracles or Intelligence?

© Don Simons

Some years ago, I saw on television a man supposedly mentally retarded and blind. His life had been a hum-drum existence. Living with his widowed mother, he had no formal education and, while he could communicate with others, his level of intelligence was limited. Let's investigate this and other stories and let you answer — miracles or intelligence?

Wakened from a sound sleep one night, the man's mother leaped from the bed to investigate who could be playing the piano in such a grand manner; no one in that household had any musical talent or ability, or so she thought.

Seated at the keyboard with head held high was her supposedly uneducable, blind son, playing the most beautiful music imaginable. His music was coming from deep within him. His only exposure to music had been from recordings, the radio, and some concerts to which his mother had taken him.

The television show explained that the man could hear a piece of music, remember every note and chord, and then sit down at the piano and play what he had heard. Remember now, this is a blind person who cannot see the keys with which his fingers produced the music— a task very difficult for the sighted to learn with proficiency.

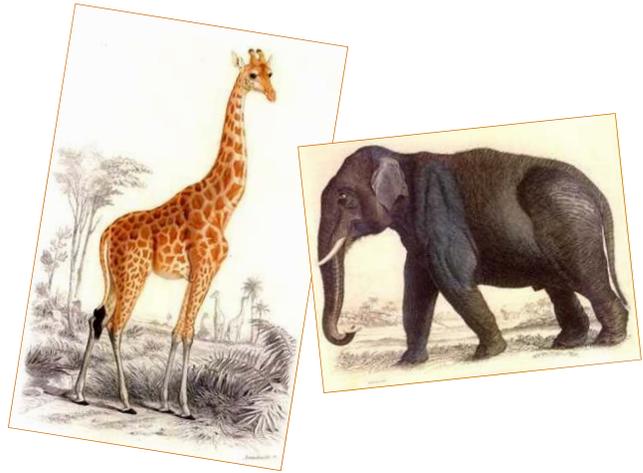
Can we call this proficiency? The dictionary defines *proficiency* as a well advanced state of excellence in any endeavor. The man of whom we speak had no formal training in music or piano playing and, of course, wouldn't know a Hannon-Shaum Fingering Exercise book from a magazine. Yet he fingered the piano in such an expert manner!

Then there was the young man who was unable to work at a regular job, considered too retarded for regular employment or to live on his own without help from others. His mother took him to the zoo, and there he saw animals of every description. He seemed to have a fascination for them and upon arriving back home, took a knife and some wood and proceeded to carve models of animals. He has a mystic and unexplainable talent for remembering the details of all the animals he saw at the zoo.

Before long, the young man was carving, in great detail, all the animals he had seen. He didn't photograph them or make sketches — he just stored the information in his memory, drawing on that information at home while creating accurate renderings of that which he'd seen. Could the reader of this paper look at a giraffe and remember how long to carve the neck or legs or proportion the animal? The man of whom we speak had a talent for that, but from whence did his proficiency leap? No formal lessons in wood carving or art were ever involved.

My daughter studied at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh. Classes in human and animal muscle, bone, blood vessels, and other details involved months of sketching limbs, eyes, heads, and body form. Lacking any formal training of this magnitude, what miracle bypassed the months of study and propelled him directly into the production of his lifelike creations? How in the world did he remember all the wrinkles in the body of an ele-

phant and the shape of their ears? It's an amazing story, and true. The brain's power is inestimable. Are the experiences of these special people miracles or is it a level of intelligence of which we have no comprehension?



Apparitions and Ghosts in My Life

© Lee Prosser

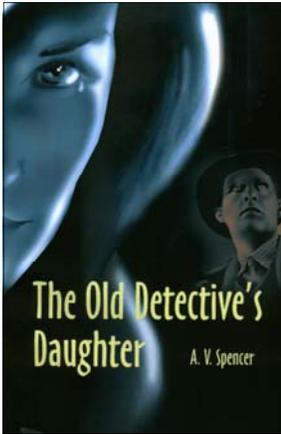
I was blessed with the gift of seeing apparitions and ghosts, becoming aware of the gift as a young child. I wish more people would develop this natural gift, for it opens new avenues of adventure and learning and understanding in the life of the person who comes to terms with it.

Such a gift should not be for hire or sale or bartered with, but shared freely with others of an inquisitive mind. Encourage the curiosity and inquisitiveness in your mind. Be open to life, be sensitive to the good unseen forces that are around you in one form or another. Be sensitive to the Unseen, and it will at some time reveal itself to you as another dimension close by. Sometimes the gift works better than at other times. But that is the value of a true gift from the Inner Planes: One must work with what has been given to one, and develop it as it fits into one's current incarnation.

The next time you see something out of the corner of your eye, pause long enough to see if it has a message for you. You will be surprised what the experience offers to you in a positive, natural way.

Love is an important force in living a meaningful life. It gives meaning to existence in an existential world. The exchange of love is a healing medicine, offering solace and peace to those in need. Love heals, in whatever dimension it is directed towards.





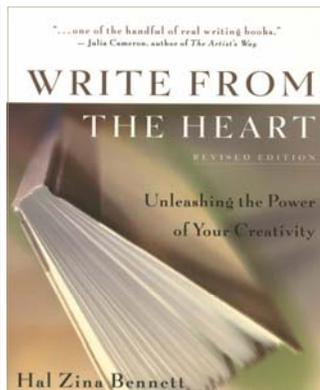
The Old Detective's Daughter

by A. V. Spencer

published by iUniverse (Writers Showcase) \$9.95

Foreword by Hal Zina Bennett

When the elderly Paul Fisher hires Therese Jane Montgomery to find his missing daughter, troubling memories and emotions invade the detective's mind. The mysteries of her own life merge with those of her client. Intrigues along the way take T.J. ever closer to the difficult truths of her own life, as her quest narrows the gap between her life and Paul Fisher's. Based in Chicago, this fast-paced story deals with several mysteries at once — moving swiftly from the search for a missing person, to the pathos of family conflict, to conflicts between the World War II and the 60s generations, to the ultimate mysteries of life and death. With a surprise ending, it is an ageless story of the search for reconciliation and acceptance — a story you'll long remember.



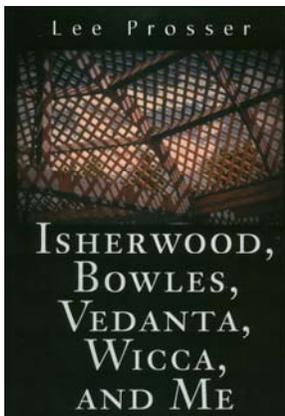
Write from the Heart: Unleashing the Power of Your Creativity

by Hal Zina Bennett

published by New World Library \$14.00

New Edition of the Creative Writing Classic — Revised and Updated Now with exercises

In his first edition of *Write from the Heart*, Hal Zina Bennett presented a spiritual approach to writing that showed both beginners and seasoned authors how to overcome blocks, unleash their creative voice, and see their books into print. In this edition, he gives readers an even more interactive experience by incorporating exercises he's developed during his many years conducting workshops. An all-new chapter on supportive critiquing shows readers how to make contacts in the all-important community of writers and how to get help with the process of writing and refining.



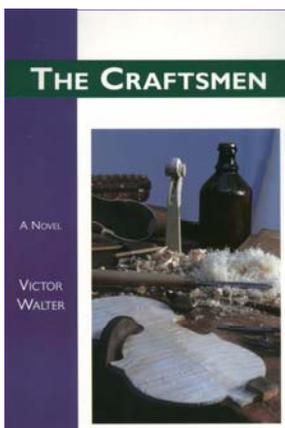
Isherwood, Bowles, Vedanta, Wicca, and Me

by Lee Prosser

published by iUniverse \$9.95

California in the 60s!

A candid memoir by Lee Prosser, including his early years and writing career, his friendships with writers Christopher Isherwood, Paul Bowles, Gerina Dunwich and others, his experiences and encounters in the California of the 1960s, and his involvement with Vedanta and Wicca. A remarkable reading experience, this memoir will fascinate the readers with its blunt honesty, surprises, encounters, and unusual happenings. This memoir is a classic of its kind.



The Craftsmen

by Victor Walter

published by Lyric Press \$12.00

P.O. Box 470493, Brookline Village, MA 02447 (617-566-0233) manush@bu.edu

Volume 2 of *The Destiny Suite*

The Craftsmen brings to life the legendary figures of classical and romantic music as they pass in and out of the Paris workshop of the famous Vuillaume. It tells the story of an inspired community of violinmakers and musicians with their shadow world of Gypsy fiddlers and luthiers. Mozart, Paganini, Berlioz, and Liszt come to life in a story as romantic as the period in which it is set.

The Craftsmen is the second book in a series, *The Destiny Suite*. *The Voice of Manush*, a mythic realist novel, described an enchanted string instrument from the workshop of Stradivari, which was capable of singing with the voices of the viola, violin, and cello. *The Craftsmen*, a more traditional, realistic story, tells about the people whose lives were touched by the instrument.

Voices

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Voices is an unscheduled publication featuring the work of new and established writers.

Subscriptions: To subscribe to *Voices*, send your name and mailing address with the annual subscription fee of \$5 to the address at left. Make checks payable to Alice Spencer.

Contributions: The \$5 annual subscription fee pays the postage for four issues, plus \$1.50 towards production costs. Additional contributions are gratefully accepted. Make checks payable to Alice Spencer.

Submissions: *Voices* encourages creativity! Why not share your efforts with our reader community? Submit stories, poems, and essays by mail, fax, or e-mail.

Themes: Each issue of *Voices* is focused on an announced theme, in addition to a seasonal theme. Content is not necessarily restricted to themes, however.

Next issue's theme: The Sound of Laughter (A little humor would be welcome at this point!)

Submissions deadline: March 1, 2002



Solidarity, reprinted from AOL.com

Happy Holidays!



An open home, an open heart,
Here grows a bountiful harvest.

— Judy Hand

All freezes again —
Among the pines, winds
Whispering a prayer.

— Riei

The turkey is in the oven, filling the air with the fragrance of anticipation, and my heart is glad. The pies are cooling on the rack, overflowing with the fruits of the earth, and my heart is full. Conversation, companionship, and conviviality transform the rooms of this beloved home, and my heart is at peace.

O beloved Spirit, truly you have given us so much, an extravagance of riches. Give us, we pray, one thing more. The gift of grateful hearts. Hearts that will not forget what You have done.

— from *Simple Abundance, A Daybook of Comfort and Joy*
by Sara Ban Breathnach



I open the door. The gorgeous guest from afar sweeps in. In her hands are her gifts — the gifts of hours and far-seeing moments, the gift of mornings and evenings, the gift of spring and summer, the gift of autumn and winter. She must have searched the heavens for boons so rare.

— Abbie Graham

Sacred oil in a temple. Loaves and fishes on a mountainside. Miracles are of Spirit, not any one faith. Miracles are for anyone who believes. That is the heart of Hanukkah and the soul of Christmas. The more we allow ourselves to recognize the wisdom and truth in other spiritual paths, the closer to Wholeness we become.

— from *Simple Abundance, A Daybook of Comfort and Joy*
by Sara Ban Breathnach



There are years that ask questions and years that answer.

— Zora Neale Hurston

All winter long
Behind every thunder
Guess what we heard!
— behind every thunder
the song
of a bird,
a trumpeting bird.
All winter long.

Beneath every snowing
Guess what we saw!
— beneath every snowing
a thaw
and a growing,
a greening and growing.

Where did we run
beyond gate and guardsman?
Guess, if you can!
— all winter long
we ran
to the sun,
the dance of the sun!

— Native American Song

Editor's note: Some historians hold that the era we know as the 60s began on November 22, 1963, the day that President Kennedy was assassinated, and extended into the early 70s.

When viewed from that perspective, it may well be that the new millennium actually began on September 11, 2001.



Prayer for the World

© Linda Weber

O Poor Sad World
what I would give
to see you Whole,
would that we didn't have
so far to go in our journey
towards Love, that
the Peace
and Serenity we seek
were not
so
elusive.

O Great Spirit
grant us the
Power
to negotiate this Time,
to tread lightly and avoid
the land mines of our fears,
to reach out to one another
across the seas
lest we forget
that We
Are One.