

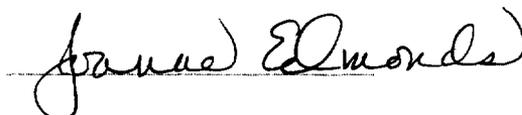
A Collection of Poetry: Shades of Life Experiences

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

Renee Miracle

Dr. Joanne Edmonds

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joanne Edmonds". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Ball State University

Muncie, Indiana

April 18, 1995

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For my senior Honors project I have gathered and revised works of poetry that I have written. The project is divided into three sections. The first section contains selected poetry written for different courses during my four years at Ball State. The second section contains poetry from a book that my Uncle Garth Fisher is in the process of having published. This book contains twenty of my poems. It is entitled Fortune Cookies: Recipes for a Master in Training Volume II, and should be going to the publisher in April of 1995. The third section consists of poetry, some recent and some from many years ago, that I thought should be included in this project.

SECTION ONE

During the spring semester of 1993 I took Mrs. Edmonds's Honors 202 class. Among the great works of literature we studied was Dante's Inferno. I wrote a poem called "Concentric Pain" in response to this literary work.

Concentric Pain

Vile trinity.
Mouths of three.
Center of evil,
Wings wafting fear and fury.

Dangerous distance,
Far from the sight of God.
Far from the warmth of the Light of Truth.
Cold with the ice of injustice.

Ripping, shredding,
Gnawing upon the souls of three
Fallen from the rock of God
Into the pit of eternal torture.

The archetype of a sinner.
Treachery to any is treachery to God,
As treachery rips apart unified will.

Being eaten
As they fed off of others in life.
Torn in tumultuous treachery.
Aspiring to their own heights.

Cold, icy spirals enslaving souls,
Who killed each other for evil goals.

Now the deceitful
Are a multitude of shadows.
Suffering, each sense afflicted,
Groping, horrid.

They struggle now for life,
As the truth they once corrupted
Struggled for life.

Rotten, dirty, stinking,
Animals, yet men.
Agony in their own afflictions.
Now victims of their own sins.

The men whose souls shone with the
Light of talent on Earth,
Before in deceit they snuffed this light out,
Twisting their souls in vile darkness,
For men's reasons.

Now this same evil encircles them,
Wrapping around their bodies tightly as snakes,
Constricting their breathing
Taking their will as they stole from others.

Their hands are bound, the source of their sins,
Burning into ashes, and emerging into life again.
As the phoenix, forever reborn.
Only into vile misery and venomous pain.

Round and round the tiny path,
Men smiling on the outside.
Dressed in light cloth,
Moaning internally, wearing the leaden weight
Of robes of hypocrisy and remorse.

Endless, tireless circles,
Run by the trek of unnatural violators
Rain which would be so sweetly dripping on Earth,
Cool and quenching from the heavens above,

Here turns into burning drops of hot remorse.
Fire upon blistering sand.
Parching pain.
Beating out their inner violence which could not
be tamed.

Blood dripping in a circle
For the violent and the slain.
A wood containing hollow pain.
Red voice reverberating the agonies which
Still remain.

I elected to take Dr. Matthis-Eddy's course for one of my Honors Colloquia. This class was on naturalist poetry and prose writers. Some of the naturalist authors we read included Henry David Thoreau, Henry Beston, and Edward Abbey.

As a final project for this course, I compiled some quotes and wrote poetry in response to the works we read. Three of the poems that I wrote for this course were accepted by my uncle for publication in his book. Those poems were "My Field," "A New Age," and "Peace."

I included in this section two poems that were written for this class and not put into my uncle's book. The first one is about man's disconnectedness from nature; it is called "World Under Glass." The second one questions which way society will go in regard to the natural world and its preservation or destruction. That one is called "Place of Peace, Place of Promise."

"The meaning of 'preservation' thus suggested is not saving apart, as under glass, but sustaining the creative power, that which keeps the world continually renewing." Henry David Thoreau

World Under Glass

Underneath a dome shaped glass,
Disconnected and perverted,
Lies our "wilderness",
Separated from all things, including us.

Discontented and divorced from life,
And yet, living and breathing,
Struggling and surviving.
It is the wild, unwild, under glass.

It is as artificial as a greedy man's smile.
It is sick as a patient with AIDS.
It is as perverted as a molested child.
And as dying as our own souls, separated from us.

Irrationality reigns.
Freedom and spirit in chains.
Everything is broken and controlled.
Mere existence is taking its toll.

Reality has been perverted.
Can we say what is real?
Can we control the turn of the tide?
And the ways that we feel?

What can we master?
What can we devise?
Our own hearts under glass?
Before our very own eyes.

"This great expanse of deep blue water, deeper than the sky,
why does it not blue my soul as of yore? It is hard to
soften me now. I see no gulls myself." Henry David Thoreau
March 1854

Place of Peace, Place of Promise

I went there with a great hope.
I suppose the hope of being reunited with nature,
And therefore, myself and God.

I wanted to find meaning in the world again.
To find that the world's meaning is also mine.

Instead, I discovered a sense of dread.
The cool, calm, blue waters I had hoped for
Were now brown and grey.

I paused for a moment and wondered about the creatures
who lived there.

I saw an aluminum can,
Held there by thick grey muck.
And I wondered where the turtle was,
Who should be there instead.
And as I wondered what he would be feeling now...

It occurred to me to wonder what we were feeling now.
If we are at all.

And if we aren't feeling,
How long will it take?
How much thick grey muck...

Perhaps enough to cover us?
Before we decide to move
And do something to restore our world and the turtle's.

But when we do decide to move, will it be too late?
Too late for us and far too late for the turtle.

In Dr. Brown's Honors 203 class, we had a unit on existentialism. I gave an oral presentation on the writings of Kierkegaard. As a supplement to this project I wrote poetry in response to existential ideas.

I have chosen the one that I thought was the most expressive to be included here. Another poem I wrote for this class is being published in my uncle's book. It is called "The Nature of Existentialism." I took this class in the fall of my junior year (1994).

The Quest of a Solitary Hunter

In the essence of everything,
Is nothing.
If someone has to teach you,
Then you do not know.

Every man
A Solitary Hunter
Solo seeker
Of his own truth.

Every man must find
His own Light,
Upon which
His path to shine.

Every man
Asks the question
And it must be his own voice that answers
In order to be right.

Every man who knows himself,
Knows everything,
Every man who knows everything,
Knows nothing.

This poem was written for my Eng. 354 class. This was an African American Literature course taught by Dr. Maude Jennings. I took this class fall semester of my senior year (1994).

In this class we had to read and respond in the form of written papers to various African American authors. The authors included Carey, Baldwin, Ellison, Hurston, Williams, Hughes, and Morrison. For our final projects we were allowed to write creatively in response to one or more of the works we read.

I chose to write a poem about Zora Neale Hurston's book, Their Eyes Were Watching God. It is the story of a young black girl who is growing up in the South at a time soon after slavery became illegal. Janie Crawford is the character whom we see develop into an amazing woman.

Janie lives originally with her grandmother who was directly affected by slavery and is raising Janie because her daughter ran off. Grandma had been a slave whose master raped her. Janie's mother was the child who was born as a result of that, and Janie had been born after her mother was raped by a white school teacher when she was only seventeen.

Janie looks for comfort in an ideal man who will love and marry her. Grandma, being old, has other plans for her, and she sees to it that Janie is married before she passes away. Janie is unhappy in this marriage without love and without her grandmother to turn to for help. She runs off with a young black man who is determined to become a powerful person.

In her marriage with this man, Jody, she finds that she has missed again. He wants her to be someone she is not. The love she has been searching for is not here either. Janie stays in this unhappy relationship until her husband, Jody, dies. Then she marries Tea Cake, and finally she has found the relationship she has been desiring to have for so long. The relationship with Tea Cake is a short and sweet one that changes her for good.

The following poem is called "The Pear Tree Poem", and it describes Janie's story in other terms. Hurston uses references in her book to Janie's youth as a young blossoming tree, and symbolizes the love Janie searches for with the honey bee pollinating the fruit. I have incorporated this symbolism into my poetry.

A Dream Of Sweet Pears

Part One: Rotting Pears

"I wanted something more," said Janie,
Looking toward the door,
Desiring the sweet pear tree in the summer time,
But finding instead, the staleness of rotting
fruit.

Where is my soul? Bursting with the passionate
fruits of life?
Rancid love and deceit have taken its place.
Where is my innocence? Now that I have grown old
with knowledge?
All these years spent wasting away for what?

I am an object to the devotion of hatred.
Petty, controlling, unjust stifling of my soul,
Which cries so to be free!
I cannot escape these long locked chains
Which have slowly tethered my wrists and ankles.

Where is my freedom?

Under the bright pear tree,
Lavished with sweet juices of life;
Syrupy love, passion, and emotion...

But is this not for me?

I bite the sour, spoiled fruit of my passions.
How will I find love's sweet peace,
Lying under the rotting fruit of this pear tree?

Square toed death released Janie from her manacles
With death for Jody there was new life for Janie.

Part Two: The Honey Bee

Tea Cake, Tea Cake, the honey bee,
Buzzing around Miss Janie's tree.
Beauty long hidden, now will be set free,
By Tea Cake, Tea Cake, the honey bee.

Sweet life, sweet love ripen fresh pears
On the long forgotten tree of love.
Sweet nectar drips from Janie's lips
Life finally grown in the ripened tree.

Bright blue days for Janie,
Brightest of them all,

Though now she fears losing,
 What she had always searched to find.

Tea Cake, sweet fruit of love.

Love grows steady,
 Like the beans in the muck.
 Strong stems,
 Bearing sprouts of life, love, and laughter.

Janie finds equality in the muck.

Part Three: Turbulent Winds

Through time, the pear tree has grown strong and
 supple,
 Enduring the hard times, there grew a resilience
 in its branches.

Turbulence sets in on the sweetest of dreams.
 Whirling around and ripping at life's seams.
 Chaos and shouts from the wind and the trees.
 Whose eyes were watching God as it seems?

Saddest falling,
 Pity of tales,
 After the hurricane,
 The tree can't prevail.

Tea Cake, oh, Tea Cake,
 Dripping with sweat.
 What makes your mouth so dry?
 And your body so wet?

What is this affliction,
 That has turned your mind,
 So now you try to take the life
 Of the woman you saved and set free?

Tea Cake, oh, Tea Cake,
 The tale has a twist.
 Bitten with affliction,
 Your Sweet Janie, you kissed.

Letting sanity slip out of your reach,
 While sweet Janie, your wife,
 Whose eyes do beseech you,
 Can only save herself by destroying you.

Part Four: Only Janie

Janie, sweet Janie,
What sorrow is this?
That God gave you love,
And then took it for His.

Janie, sweet Janie,
Wise, delicate thing,
Your understanding is greater,
Than the wisest of beings.

Janie, sweet Janie,
Don't lay your head low.
Realize that you did have love,
As you now let it go.

And do let it go.

SECTION TWO

My uncle, Garth Fisher, currently resides in Wisconsin and has provided counseling services there for many years. He teaches relationship workshops and has had many articles published on related topics. He recently switched his area of practice to massage therapy and is dedicated to the healing of people on the mental, physical, and spiritual realms.

Over the years Garth has collected many insights from his work and his own personal journey through life. He published many of them in his first book, Fortune Cookies: Recipes for a Master in Training. He has now given me the opportunity to have some of my poems published in his second book, which is a sequel to the first.

I have included the table of contents from his book, since the actual book is not included here:

Table of contents for Fortune Cookies: Recipes for a Master in Training Vol. II:
Chapter One: Crossing the Bridge
Chapter Two: Fortune Cookies
Chapter Three: Poems by Renee Miracle

This is a list of the poems that are being published in my uncle's book. They are listed in the order they appear in the book.

Wishes

Broken Child

The Nature of Existentialism

Somewhere Beneath White Stone Arches

The Caged Heart

Peace

Of Long Ago

Running to Stand Still

A Solemn Land

And the Tracks Lead Nowhere I Heard Someone Say

Melting Ice

Ancient

Look

Star

A New Age

Love and Understanding

Holding on, Letting Go

Across the Distance

In Flow

In a Room Without a Door

POEMS

BY

RENEE MIRACLE

OO
SOMEWHERE BENEATH WHITE STONE ARCHES

Somewhere beneath white stone arches,
A little child's soul cries out.
Somewhere in the depths of darkness,
A child tries to be heard.

And in a well-lit room,
A child suffers,
Again, a cry for our ears,
But do we not hear !

And each child in the night cries,
And though we seem to reach a higher point,
Millions of living children's souls cry to us,
And the sounds of a child's sorrow illuminates
the night.

And yet we sit, unmoved.
Not realizing what to do.

OO
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oo
PEACE

Return to me
Again and again,
Oh wave of hope.
And of all things,

Bring to me
The pleasure and the peace
Of knowing,
There is meaning beyond
What I see.

Roll away my fears,
Everlasting, dissipate them,
Draw close that calm,
That balms the wounds of my soul,
And leaves me content.

Endless Light,
Sea to shore,
Guide me to your peace
With the knowledge
That there is more.

oo

ANCIENT

Without a light to guide me,
Through silent paths I came,
While tugging at my heartstrings
Was emotion with no name.

A slight slur of color,
At the end of tunnel laid.
An amplifying distance,
A song that's never played.

Yet something keeps me walking?
Set deep inside my soul.
A tragic tale of turmoil,
That's never grasped nor told.

An ancient drum beating.
Till no more pain is felt.
In sorrow I marched onward,
While others stopped and knelt.

LOOK

Look beyond my features,
God knows what you'll find.
Look past my eyes and lips;
Look deep into my mind.

Somewhere deep inside me,
Although you cannot see,
Is a soul that's burning brightly,
Allowing me to be free.

Look beyond your mirror.
Look beyond your tears.
Fill your heart with love,
And make great changes through the years.

Look deep inside my soul,
Where even I can't see.
Look there deep inside,
And there you will see thee and me.

oo
STAR

The soft white light
Of the story ending,
Lights my way
Through the refuse of love.

Scattered and broken dreams
Lying all beside me,
Paled now,
By the bright redness of my life.

My lips part.
Words are spoken,
I reach out;
My hand is held.

No more echoes
Off of lonely walls.
I have joined in the fight
To save myself.

Love is within my own grasp.
Chance just plays with time.
I control my own destiny,
A star rising to shine.

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SECTION THREE

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A Crow's Song

Sitting by the firelight,
Holding hands in the moonlight.
A mirccosm of emotions
Between you and me.

Too meaningful for a common world to see.

Me.
Hanging my head down low.
Trying so hard
To let you go.

You.
Holding back the tears.
Knowing your numbness
To all these years.

We should have reached out long ago.
A little child's hand from beneath the snow,
Crystalizing a world of hope
Just to let each other know.

Pain
Between you and me.
So deep
No one else can see.

How can justice
in this cruel world be?

Where is Daddy's hope?

Sculpted
by the burden
Of two unhappy people.

Staring out the window
For someone to let the bird go.

Wherein
is ecstasy
In this burden
Between you and me?

You can't hear
And I can't see.
But neither deaf nor blind are we.

When can we let the pain go?
Yes, when can we let the pain go?

Like rain on the window,
When can my tears fall?
And your answers flow?

Oh tell me, Dad, I'm sure you know:
When can we let the pain go?

The Girl

She kind of lingers,
If only for a moment,
To see if where she is going,
Is where you want her to go.

She is open hearted.
Open to suggestion,
Hoping that you'll tell her
Something that you know.

Driven by the image
Of the dancing girl before her,
Driven by the will to grow,

Determined and yet subtle,
Holding on to something.
Holding on to what she needs to know.

Maiden Moon

Forming an enlaced, gray-blue veil,
Feathery clouds drift by.
Casting shadows against her pale,
Then blending with the sky.

A large tear,
Of which we do not know
Built up through the years,
And then began to flow.

Ripe with love
She descended
As magic began to call,
And to a tragic, teary end,
She abruptly ceased to fall.

Our maiden moon
Hangs peacefully in the sky,
Watching all the night birds
And the owls fly by.

Casting subtle hope
On the black world below.
Her softness soothes the darkness.
As the light of knowledge glows.

Passing Time

Shadows dance among the trees,
As you feel the cool night breeze.
Strangely quiet, strangely calm,
You feel the window with your palm.

Darkness strikes as you look out,
And then the sky begins to pout.
The rain drops softly to the ground,
And the breeze is blowing without sound.

Then gently shadows slip away,
Taking with them black and grey.
A misty cover meets the sky,
As the first small bird begins to fly.

So the Day

And time beats on,
Like the pale of a fading buttercup,
Daisies and rose petals
All in turn bloom.
Holding their sweet fragrance
And bright colors.
Knowing that they are passing,
They are bright with life.
And as precious things are
Too few and easily forgotten,
So the day takes brightness from a petal.

The Swan

She was a swan
Perfect.
Lasting.

Gliding across the dark abyss
Trailing sparkling ripples that
Touch my soul

She preens in golden sunlight
White feathers of comfort and nurturance.

Rippling are smooth hearts
Delicately brushed by her wingtips.

Elegant
Restrained
Powerful
Provider of all love.

Wasted Life

She sat there still crying
And inside and out she was dying.

Gone from sweet lips was the laughter,
Engulfed in the midst of disaster.

Why can't I run?
Herself she was asking.
Run and find a place
Safe, strong, and lasting.

For in my soul, pain is aching;
For the first time, I'm just awaking.

Love once in my heart,
Gone forever,
Questions I've always had,
Answered never.

Things I thought would change
Always staying the same.

For years and years never changing,
While I passed through life, rearranging.

Give me the courage,
So I won't be
The lonely, lost lady.

Welcome the Quiet

In the quiet
Is where dreams take form,
And fears are whispered into stillness.

There in the empty
Of the Quiet
Is where we find fulfillment.

In the Quiet
Is where we find ourselves,
Our hopes, fears,
Dreams and tears,
Our loneliness and our wholeness,
There together in the Quiet.

Fear not your quiet spaces,
For in them is the breath of peace,
And silence is all you ever need
Within your soul.

It is all right to be quiet.

The Wind

The freshness of green valleys,
The softness of the breeze.
The wind begins to whisper,
Teasing all the trees.

It bounds from crack to crevice,
Across the still sunlight.
On its way it races,
A smooth yet bouncy flight.

Encircling all the branches,
Among the waving leaves,
It calls to all the valleys,
And teases all the trees.

It swoops across a shadow,
Across the still grey-blue.
Then back into the sunshine,
Frolicking with dew.

It winds tiny tunnels,
Through the bright green grass,
And tickles the soft ground,
While rustling perfect paths.

Dancing flowers praise it,
With their gentle flow.
Onward it continues,
Jumping to and fro.

A playful pouncing kitten,
Upon the leaves it bounds.
Attacking them so quickly,
Then swirling up in rounds.

It runs and jumps so swiftly,
Around the far off bend,
And nobody can catch it,
Because it is the wind.