

Morning Song
and other poems

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To Elena,
my favorite poem

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Spirit

Morning Song

Morning dew glistens
as nature listens
to the music of the dawn.

Chipmunks chatter
and sparrows scatter
while the roosters crow their song.

The rising sun
says the day has begun.
I can't help but sing along

as the songbirds fly
and the dewdrops dry:
I'm alive, and I belong!

Spirit

Your Glory In the Sky

(based on Psalm 19)

Oh, Lord, your glory is shown near and far.
I'm awed as I look at all that you've done
when you placed the lights in the sky: every star
and the moon for night, for the day, the sun.

They don't speak a word yet I hear what they say
as they teach of your measureless wisdom and might.
I'm ready to learn as they lecture each day
and I know they keep telling of you every night.

You've built a grand home for the sun above.
It awakens each day with the glowing face
of a honeymoon man refreshed with love
or a long distance runner eager to race

from the start at the eastern edge of the sky
then on to the finish line in the west.
As it runs it heats all the earth, and I,
as well, am warmed as I worship then rest.

Oh, Lord of the universe, Lord of my heart,
continue to warm me, continue to guide.
Help me to follow and not stray apart
from your road map so I will stay by your side.

May the words that I say and all that I think
be pleasant to you, my Redeemer, my King.
And when my life takes me close to the brink,
to you, my Fortress, I'll flee, praise, and sing.

Spirit

Fullness

In the fullness of time,
from the fullness of the womb,
came Immanuel,
born in a stable,
to break free from a tomb,
come that we might have life
in all its fullness.

John 10:10

Spirit

Advent thoughts

Dark earth
God saw
stable birth
manger straw

Sudden light
shepherds heard
strange night
hopeful word

Sin-worn
saw child
hope born
king foiled

Still night
sin-worn
sin foiled
Welcome!

Spirit

Could This Be Love?

(a villanelle)

I asked if love from you could feel so good,
could this be love? Perhaps your love is blind.
Why has it been so long misunderstood

what love entails? "And why have you withstood
the pain I've caused, through word or deed maligned?"
I asked. If love from you could feel so good

I need no longer act as if you would
return the wrong. Instead, you are so kind:
Why has it been so long? Misunderstood,

you hung your wide embrace upon rough wood
and hoped I would at last find love enshrined.
I asked if love from you could feel so good--

I had to learn your love would act: I stood
and knew I need no longer seek to find
why. Has it been so long misunderstood,

your love? Oh, yes, but it has yet withstood
my doubts; I grasp this love that you've defined.
I asked if love from you could feel so good,
Why has it been so long misunderstood?

Spirit

Let It Break

Let the dam break.
Let the water flow,
a trickle,
a stream,
a river,
renewed,
refreshed,
washed clean.

Spirit

Boulder River

A stream ran just outside our tent.
Nearby, the Boulder River never tired
of talking to itself. Intrigued, I went
to listen in on what it had to say.
I couldn't understand a single word
and yet I sensed the river spoke in tongues
of praise. Perhaps it was that what I heard
was worship, uttered as a stream of speech,
the language yet unnamed.

Spirit

Altar Egos

The orators ascend the steps
before the waiting crowds
and from those heady heights they speak
of what they seem to know.

In case the transcendental one
they claim to deify
is distant, deaf, perhaps asleep,
they shout so he can hear.

The shouting echoes off the walls
of cold and barren rooms
where seekers listen quietly
and hear a softer sound.

Spirit

Thirsty

Yes, lead me to the water,
but please don't make me drink.
I need some time to check it out,
some time to feel and think.

And while we're at the water,
where I realize I thirst,
it would be a help to me
if I saw you drink first.

Spirit

My Name

(three cinquains)

Gazing

up above me,
at stars in puddled milk,
I stared at length, but never saw
my name.

Waiting

at the altar
for her to walk the aisle,
I saw her glowing, and she smiled
my name.

Adrift

at sea and lost
in fog I heard no sounds
until the harbormaster called
my name.

Spirit

Offshore Breeze

Heated by the sun's warm light
the earth breathes out an offshore breeze
to cheer those working in the night
on the cool, dark sea.

Likewise, I wish I might
exude the warmth absorbed by me
to cheer those working in the night
on their cool, dark sea.

Spirit

Fall Leaves

Fall leaves must die
and so must I
before I can show
my best colors.

Romans 6:3-4

Nature

Curtain Fall

Flaming orange, yellow, red
leaves of forest arms outspread
applaud the music of fall,
the year's final curtain call:
Summer's act is done,
winter's almost come.

Nature

Winter's Silence

A clear, crisp quiet rules the air
as sapless sentinels and I stand
listening, frozen in our tracks.
Movement seems irreverent. But
somewhere, a chilled branch, bare,
shivers, and its icy coat cracks;
the sudden snap echoes here and there,
then winter falls silent once again.

Nature

Reverie

Slowly, slowly the sluggish afternoon
awakens from its nap and stirs slightly
as the sun drops behind MacKenzie Crest.
The wind begins to whisper dusk's lullaby,
the same soft melody I hear nightly:

"Hush, child, stop and rest.
Listen to the evening breeze.
Night is coming, quiet your thoughts,
and hear the chimes of canyon trees."

Transfixed by twilight's tune I turn
my gaze above and catch my breath,
then worship as an unseen hand
brushes flaming golden, orange, then reds
above the darkening craggy rims.
The western sky appears to burn.
I dare not put that fire out:
It warms me as the darkness spreads.

Love

Love

Love,
was it bad?

It might have been,
it was not to be spoken.

And those who showed
their love
were laughed at.
Culture broken!

Broken,
unspoken
love.

Broken?
Break out!
It need not stay the same
forever.
I'll risk the word,
though heard,
and act
the fact,
I love.

Love

Growing Steady

(a sonnet)

I loved you with a love I thought could shield
us from each passing storm that came our way.
And yet no matter how much we had steeled
ourselves against the wearing winds of fray,
we were not galvanized against the rust
that creeps upon us after every rain.
So how can we unearth our bedrock trust
while raindrops fall corroding us with pain?
I anchor to that bedrock, stayed within
the tide of feelings' fickle ebb and flow.
I bind the tide of my love to the vow
we said must take us through the thick and thin.
Decisions dictate what the heart will know:
the love I vowed you then I give you now.

Twilight Song and Dance

Just below our eaves the wind chimes
five notes for the windsock tethered
not far away. Its weathered throat
dances to the songs and climbs
the breeze, one color for each note:
yellow, green, blue, orange, and red.
Of the latter two Mother would quote,
"These are colors which can't be wed."
But we don't think of clashes tonight
as we intertwine our fingers.
Nor do we light the lamp, but let
the house darken in the twilight,
and listen as the five notes linger
and the windsock dances silhouette.

Love

Our Evening Walk

Evening shadows fall across our path
as hand in hand we take our sunset stroll.
The quiet pines exude their cleansing scent,
refreshing tired body, mind, and soul.
Across the lake a loon's cry breaks the spell
of silent words we've spoken as we walk.
The years have kindly mellowed you and me
and what we share in quiet and in talk.

Twins

Some people saw our little twins
and told us, "Double trouble!"
But, "No," we said, "it's double joy."
(I hate to pop their bubble;
they just don't understand.)
Having twins is so much fun,
always there's a playmate,
and parents can each hold one.

Love

Fly, Fly, Birdies

We settled down in our family nest
to say our evening prayers,
and one by one we spoke to heaven
our thanks and heartfelt cares.

When my turn came I asked that we
would have some special days
for family time in the weeks ahead--
I dreaded our next growth phase

so much I couldn't pray the rest
and instead began to cry
the pain of a father about to watch
two fledglings fly good-bye.

The songbirds in our nest joined in
a chorus of bittersweet tears,
with parents and offspring sharing alike
the grief when parting nears.

I finally choked out the names of those
we'd trained to leave the nest,
then spread my wings around them both
and told them they'd be missed.

"So, fly, my dear, dear daughters,
fly away, soar, and roam
far beyond the hills and our valley
and then, when you can, fly home."

(This poem was written just before our oldest daughters left
for college.)

Haiku

Haiku

Pussy willows
bursting open,
warm, fuzzy Spring.

Fireweed
burning up the meadows
with their blooms.

A loon
cries forlornly,
rain is coming.

Our love chaps
in dry, complacent weather.
We pray for rain.

Campout wakeup clock:
a bluejay hawking his wares.
He lost our purchase.

Aspen bowed their heads
every time we stopped to pray:
they know holy ground

Potpourri

Falling

Slipping down the bluff wall,
I flail about for handholds
on shale and coal seams,
then drop off the lip
and f

a

l

l

I never hit bottom
in my dreams.

Potpourri

Memories

Freshly fallen time has blanketed
the landscape of the new year,
covering the stubble of the past.
I walk across the field every day,
leaving behind me tracks which last
a memory. Then flurries come,
erasing moments I have trekked.
But melting every Spring reveals
a trace where every footprint lay.
Memories fade but never disappear.

Potpourri

Sandrocks Sigh

The sandrocks must have sighed a name again:
an aged form is shuffling toward the hills,
hunched over from his heavy, sacred pack.
Tomorrow I will face the rising sun
for blessing as I climb to bring him back.
I know what I will see among the rocks
for I have tracked these elders in the past.
I'll find him tired, resting on a ledge,
and staring centuries of wisdom, not
aware that I am standing by his side.
I'll ask him to rejoin us at the fire
and share again the stories in his bag.
But he'll refuse and say that he's been called
to sit there by the piles of weathered bones.
And then he'll slowly lower his pack and say
that I may take it back to the campfire
and set it in the place which had been his.
I'll shake his ancient hand and lift his pack,
and he'll reach out to touch it one last time.
He'll lean his head upon the sandstone wall
and watch me as I start back down the trail.

Potpourri

False Promises

Storm clouds gather again tonight
as they have each night for a week.
The bleak wheat ripples along
as the edge of the front touses its heads
and approaches the west side of town.
Our trees awaken from their sullen nap
and wave to welcome the breeze
and another chance for a thunderclap.
But again, it's only a tease--
A few drops fall, leaving dark tears
in the chalky earth, not nearly enough
to deter the dust devils from dancing
across the fallow field to leer at us,
and taunt, "We fooled you again!"
Those dervishes swirl away to the east,
leading the way for the dark clouds
which also soon are out of sight.
We watch with resignation from the porch,
cooler than inside, until the night
falls, all color in the sky bled
from the sunset, a thick dusty red.
Tomorrow will be hot and dry again.

Potpourri

April

April is ambivalent these days:
ashamed to bare her pale limbs,
afraid to doff her winter coat,
yet eager to absorb the sun's
warm rays that bloomed the daffodils
and greened the grass she'd like to walk
barefoot upon. Today a late
snowstorm provides her an excuse
to wear her winter clothes in spring.
Maybe she'll take off her coat next month.
May, be!

Potpourri

Autumn Leaves

Autumn leaves without remorse,
her soul's begun to chill.
She blushes, not from shame,
but from a vanity
that wishes she could still
the wind of time that blows
her toward anility,
and farther from the warmth
of innocence she knew
before her fall from grace.
That fall has left the ground
beneath her feet covered
with the relics of her sin.
In time regret will rise
within her veins and she
will plead for mercy in
the thaw of her soul's spring.
Repentance brings, at last,
redemption to her face.

Potpourri

Poet Lariat

If I got some pointy-toed boots
and a cowboy hat,
could I be
a poet lariat?

Potpourri

Carpe Diem

I sailed upon the open seas, the day
was bright and happy,
I tried to grasp the moment,
seize the time, but butterfly-
like time cannot be seized,
it flutters on,
the clock will never freeze.
Each hour just keeps passing on.
No matter Latinate we speak,
each day will soon be gone.
So, seize the day's a waste of time
especially in my boat,
far better just enjoy the seas, the day
is meant to float.

Potpourri

Mary Had a Little Iamb

Mary had a little iamb.
Its foot was right, just so.
And everywhere that Mary rhymed
Her iamb was sure to go.

'Twas Anna's dog that Mary feared:
He bit her, growled his best.
In the yard, down the street, and to school everyday
She was chased by that dog, Anna's pest.

Potpourri

The Hunt

The stealthy hunter pads along
through jungled verbal scents
and keenly sniffs the air for clues
to senselessness and sense.
It's meaning stalking savory words
and when it spots its prey
it creeps in closer, leaps to kill--
and licks its chops all day.

Potpourri

Paranoid

(a limerick)

There once was a disturbed humanoid
who let everyone get him annoyed.
He thought all talk was attack,
out to get him behind his back.
His shrink said, "He's just paranoid."