

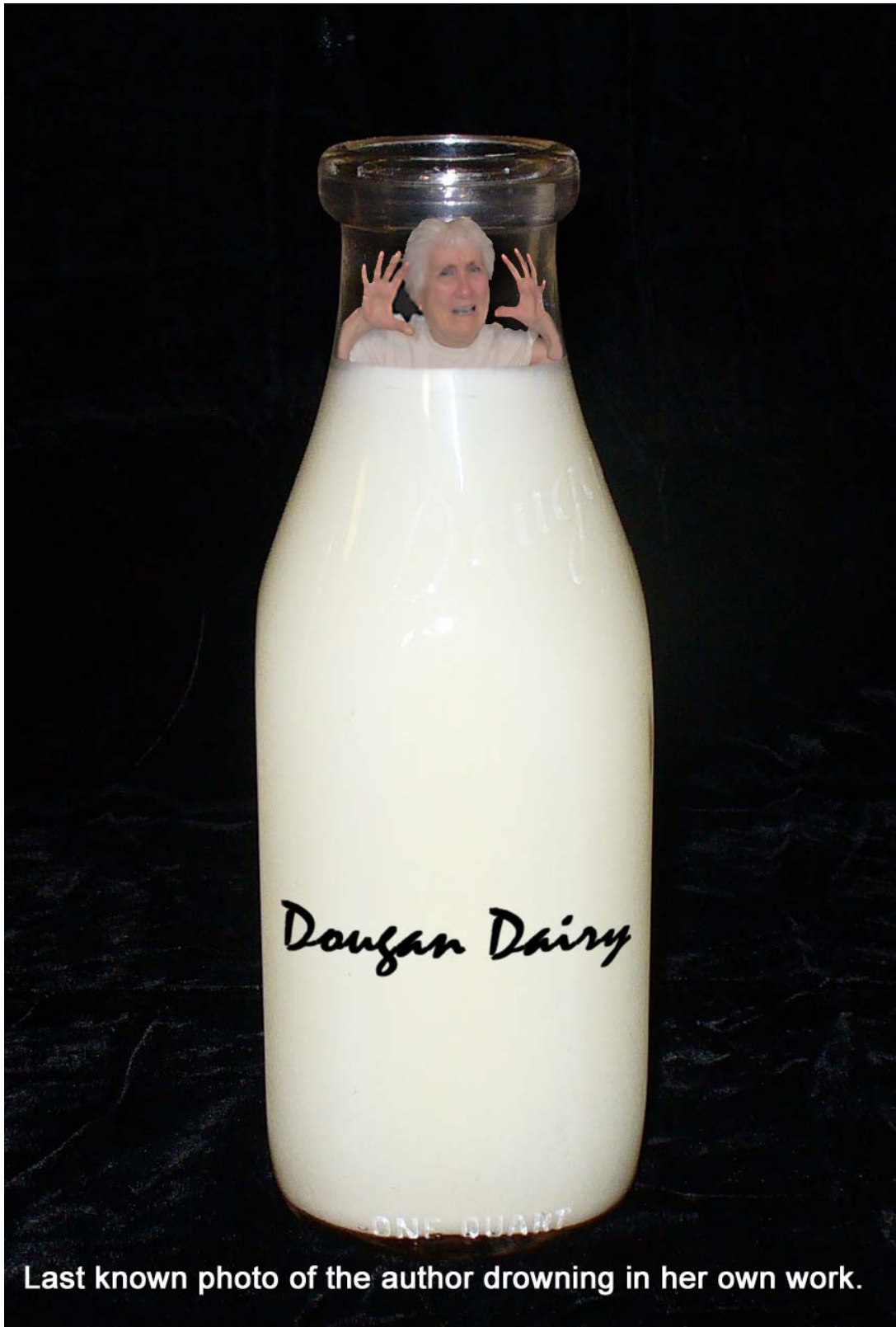
LIBERT, VANQUISSE



Περιπτώματα!
Μισώ όταν
συμβαίνει!

Translation inside back cover.

*A collection of poetry by
Jacqueline Dougan Jackson*



Last known photo of the author drowning in her own work.

The poems that follow here were published during the year 2009 by the Illinois Times.

Introduction

This year's Liberty booklet is dedicated to Carol Manley, whom Rodd Whelpley has described, "If not the heart of our writing group, then the heartbeat." We lost her suddenly on July 29; she was only 55. A number of poems here, and in previous booklets, can be credited to her or her active participation. And she's had a splendid book published; see the end pages about it. This booklet also is again dedicated to Roland Klose, who started me on this path, and has participated in the poems, too.

Thanks go to all the writing group for their support and critiques, and especially to Mitch Hopper. He's created the cover and put the booklet together again, and also has contributed--anonymously--a poem or two himself.

politicopoem #4

January 1

so we start
the new year
luv
with
or
without a
gov

Illinois has a bumper sticker, "OUR GOVERNORS MAKE LICENSE PLATES." Rod Blagojevich, pictured on last year's Liberty cover, was impeached shortly after this poem ran.

cellopoem #1

January 8

I watched gerrall practicing
the back legs of her folding chair
were neatly wearing shoes perhaps
to even the seat more likely to keep
the chair from moving a cellist can't
have a chair that moves I always said
that unlike violinists a cellist plays
as much with the seat of her pants
as with her arms and fingers

kidquote poem #8

January 15

(scrap found written by daughter #4, age ten years, counting her blessings)

1. I am alive
2. I am here
3. I have friends
4. I am not an orphan
5. I have sisters
6. I am skilled
7. I am clothed
8. I have a kitten
9. I have camp
10. I am not retarded
11. I have shelter
12. I have love
13. I have all my senses
14. I go to a good school
15. I have many friends
16. I have pierced ears
17. I have an allowance
18. I have my own room
19. I have all my stuffed toys
- 20.
- 21.
- 22.

winterpoem #4

January 22

had to do something to cut
the gloom and doom around here
so proposed a hike to the cemetery
to see the frozen raccoon my
grandkids discovered yesterday
it was still there still an object of
fascination I could have taken them
to see their dead geocache too
tessa and trimble's kiddie cache
which unlike the sad winter kill
can be revived in the spring

inaugurationpoem #1

January 29

with ten official inauguration balls
to attend I bet the new president and
his radiant lady got in precious little
cheek-to-cheek I trust that later he
didn't say sweetheart it's been a long day
I have a headache that the white house
bed was wide warm welcoming and
had its unofficial inauguration too

friendquote poem #13

February 5

well had I
known that
poetry was
simply
composing
a string
of words
with a
defective
word processor
I could have
been
a poet
from the
git go

sonnet to a furious raccoon

February 12

you do not understand the ways of men
who have a fondness for the furry wild
and keep you not through meanness we beguiled
you from your natural haunts into a pen
we led you fed you fattened you and then
carried you in tonight to please a child
we did not know that you would be so riled
hissing glow-eyed from out your sofa den

do not be angry at us fuzzy coon
snatched from your hibernation's solitude
to crouch in terror before enemies
we know the pleasures that you bring die soon
man-heart coon-heart are close together viewed
we see our own fear-mad uncertainties



Bundle the Raccoon getting
a shot

winterpoem #5

February 19

our children remind us of stories
we never should have forgotten
how could I have left a small child
in front of city day school in the
bitter double digit wind chill not
checking that she got inside how
when she found the doors locked
she stumbled the several blocks to
the hillistad house by the park it
wasn't her neighborhood sheltering
often behind trees to keep from
freezing how the bishop's wife
fed her hot soup how she spent the day
playing with the many hillistad kids
and basking in the warmth of carol's
love don't you remember mom I
begin to and from this distance bless
carol dead too young from cancer for
being there enfolding my little one
I oblivious was at work I presume

foodthugs poem #3

February 26

this is a notice sent the
contra dance group which
my daughter #3 attends:
"Our Sweetie Pie Dance
will be at the Children's
Museum of Northern
Nevada at 813 Carson St.
Contrary to our original
invitation, we are NOT
having a pie and ice cream
social at the dance. The
health department has
told us we need a permit
to have a potluck." my
daughter labels all such
emails to me "food thugs"

to mark a march day thirteen years ago

March 5

my ancient cat died in the night
curled beside me as she always did
I knew it in my sleep I buried her
limp body in the back yard clean earth
her only shroud just two weeks before
my daughter my niece myself held
each other in a long three-way embrace
then my niece--a nurse and his grand-
daughter--pulled the plug on my father
we laid our hands on him as his red line
went flat then quietly left the room he
was buried in the shadow of the barn
the one with the farm's motto life as well
as a living written on the silo his ashes
in a post hole we all troweled in dirt
death demands such busyness decisions
meetings calls notes to mail to answer
how can I mourn my cat when I have
not yet had time to mourn my father

govt follies poem # 77

March 12

recently sold my daughter my pickup
she changed title insurance got new
plates but didn't bother to switch
there was still some illinois grace
period yesterday she opened the packet
found wisconsin had issued her
F U TRUCK she called me how can
I be a respectable high school reading
teacher driving F U TRUCK her friends
whoop think the state out of its mind no
surprise with government they'll probably
change them if you ask but it's a nuisance
I say why not fix a flap to hide the letters
when a cop stops you lift the leather ask
what he'd suggest or maybe get some paint
change the F to P the U to O then you'd be
P O TRUCK only piss off the post office
you're F U full of good ideas says my kid

friendquote poem # 14

(written by Gary Smith)

March 19

LARRY

At the park
putting out food
for the cats
he said listen

I heard nothing
just a truck going by

It's a robin
listen
you hear them
when it's clouding up
or going to rain
or at 4:30 in the
morning right before
the sun comes up

Listen he said
do you hear

Yes I said
I do now

ecopoem # 17

March 26

in switzerland in '54
I heard children on the
playground chanting
this singsong rhyme:
ce qui plait--l'esçargot--
ne plait pas a tout le monde!
what's pleasing to the snail
does not please all the world!
a truth worth chanting
though now belatedly
we are seeing our need
to please the snail the whale
the cod the bee the tree the soil
plus all those micro-organisms
upon whose pleasure
our pleasure and our
survival are so entwined

farmpoem # 11

April 2

my father speaks in similes
some are his own I think
flat as a flea between lovers
useless as a fifth tit hunches
along like a constipated
meadow lark some are
common coin cold as a
witch's tit slick as snot on
a doorknob worthless as
a bucket under a bull
however in the breeding
business my dad is in
a bucket means big bucks
though getting the gold into it
makes the bull sort of techy



Ron Dougan and Rocky Prentice

kidquotepoem #11

(from Xavier, age four)

April 9

I really don't like
going to bed
you might call me
nocturnal

earlyspringpoem #2

April 16

tiny green trillium trefoil tiny
pied trout lily leaves tiny
fronds dutchman's britches
tiny spring beauties already in
blossom other leaves and
shoots unidentifiable I'm sorry
to be stepping on you here in
the woods you wee ones are so
many amid the crunchy drifts
of leaves the fat plush bluebells
are easy to avoid some already
blooming makes me wonder
though what else where else
who else I've been stepping on
because I'm not bothering
to look to think to be aware

newspaperspoem #3

April 23

now that illinois times has gone
to staples which nobody likes
it's lost its easy usefulness as
birdcage bottomer I don't have a
bird but I hear complaints
however those with serious
birdcages or big litters of puppies
might consider subscribing to
the macoupin county-carlinville
enquirer-democrat (the best of
two great newspapers) it's the
widest I've ever seen sixteen
inches I measured yes virginia
there's still a use for print media

grandkidspoem #7

April 30

rachel eight has been holding
school for grandma mother
little brother she lines us up
we have to enroll formally
last night's class was spells we
each wrote five then were told
which were efficacious her mom's
to make a child do something the
first time asked did not receive
approval mine were vetoed as
just nonsense words I did not
know how to play yet so the one
accepted what would it do when
I used it? that's what makes it
exciting says the teacher today's
class is art draw yourself or a
person or a face I draw myself
fat bellied my daughter draws
her daughter teaching us her
brother, his, he explains, his
is the face of the wind

feathers poem # 8

May 7

were I a true birder I'd know the cycle
of cardinals or else be recording how
long it's taken the little green wife to
build the nest by the kitchen window I'd
be keeping track of how many sitting
days how often she takes a brief break
how many days from hatching to empty
nest how many songs her worthless
husband sings yes yes he's entertaining
her maybe he'll help with the feeding
we'll see meanwhile I don't go out the
kitchen door I navigate from stove to
sink on hands and knees so as not to
catch her wary eyes through the pane

friendquotepoem # 17

May 14

I'd love to visit but
this time of the year I'm
knee deep in seedlings and
planting stuff tomorrow I'm
getting 25 trees last week I
planted 15 blueberry bushes
and a bunch of fruit trees add
to that a one-eyed horse I
recently adopted named him
jack and a brooding hen I'm
trying to keep the rooster
from bothering so for
a while I'm pretty tied up

graduationpoem # 2

May 21

I missed my university's graduation
first time in years but did go to wyatt's
from daycare to kindergarten complete
with caps gowns diplomas sealed and
ribboned pomp and circumstance at
the university they chew gum here
they pick noses there they cross legs
whisper laugh don't wear socks here
we're favored with song medleys
involving bunny ears teapot motions
I tell my friend sam who is night man
at a kennels he says we have graduation
too with caps and gowns tailored to the
bassetts and bloodhounds dachshunds
and dobermans they carry their diplomas
in their teeth and wag their tails through
slitted material but I'm afraid some of
them have to repeat obedience school

letterpoem #4

May 28

dear aunt jackie by the way
we loved your 2008 illinois
times poem book I especially
like ecopoem #6 my heart
aches reading it as you know
we lived near the dairy until
I was 14 years old one of my
most wonderful memories is
of stephanie and my riding
our bikes from our house on
colley road to chez nous . . .
feeling the spring sun on my
face seeing the corn springing
up from the fields on either
side of the road and hearing
and seeing a meadow lark
flying into the air the land
was so sparkly and joyous
love, your niece jackie jo

villanelle #6

June 4

baby wee-weed on my shirt
just as I was going to change her
it was just a little squirt
baby wee-weed on my shirt
but too quickly to avert
ere I knew I was in danger
baby wee-weed on my shirt
just as I was going to change her

junepoem #1

June 11

the loony laughter punctuates the lake
the fire dies in embers at our feet
our halcyon time is over and I ache
for trials that tomorrow we must meet

milkman poem # 3

June 18

our lanky legged milkman
lawrence langklotz said to
my dad you know ron that
old lady over on moore street
who's so crippled up with
arthritis well she waits for me
every morning and I put her
pint of milk in her refrigerator
and then before I leave I kneel
and tie her shoes I wonder
what she'll do now that we
are going to every-other-day
delivery maybe I should
mention it to her postman

kidquotepoem #7

June 25

(with thanks to Xavier's grandma Carol Manley)

grandma, xavier says,
are you thinking
what I'm thinking?

well, I say, I'm thinking
about how the square of
the hypotenuse is equal
to the sum of the squares
of the other two sides but
I'm also thinking I wish
I had some popcorn

I'm thinking that too
xavier says

welcomehomepoem #1

July 2

the new ac unit upstairs
fills with water there's no
way to drain it easily spent
a lot of time mopping no way
to keep it from leaking turned
it off dragged bedding down-
stairs slept on the floor demi
already asleep on the couch
up at four checked the ac
which even off still leaking
banked it with towels we have
mice saw a cockroach a biggie
fiddling its feelers smished it
washed my foot demi spotted
a small one this morning maybe
we have babies that's all we need

politicopoem # 7

July 9

what, no wailin'
for the bailin'
of ex-gov palin?

she's slammed the door?
there ain't no more?
she's gone home sore?

she's on the rocks?
don't bet your sox
ain't she the fox!

This poem needs an explanation: I was gone, and Roland Klose came over to free a trapped bird, then wrote me this poem, in my Illinois Times style. I used it as my own.

freebird poem #1

July 16

my drill ran out of juice
I cursed it and my luck
still I managed to pry out
two bottom right screws
bent the grill from the pane
grabbed the trapped bird
it flew to a nearby tree
sat on a branch indignant
it's ok – I didn't expect
any thank you for
giving it what it deserved

In response to the previous week's poem, Carol Manley wrote this, for Roland hadn't known who'd put up the grillwork on the windows. It was Bob McElroy, a much-loved member of our writing group who had died of a heart attack several years earlier, at the age of fifty. None of us knew that Carol herself, 55, would have cardiac arrest one week later. This version was for our group and not published in Illinois Times.

freebird poem # 2

July 23

the window's metal grill was
placed there by a young man
to keep me safe now a bird
was trapped between it and
the pane my drill ran out of juice
I cursed it and my luck still
managed to pry out two bottom
screws bent the grill grabbed
the bird it flew to a nearby tree
sat on a branch indignant
it's ok – I didn't expect any
thank you for giving it what
it deserved I only wish I
could have given a fresh
chance on life a few years ago
to the deserving constructor
of the grill he left us too soon

typopoem # 1

July 30

from our neighborhood Enos Park Banner "In the Garden " column, July 2009

"herbicides are chemicals
that kill weeds use only
as a last resort any misuse
can potentially lead to serious
health problems with your
plantings, yourself, your children,
your poets, and wildlife.
if you must use them read
the entire label some garden
chemicals cannot be removed
from our systems once they've
entered use them correctly
and wisely giving them the
caution they deserve."
yes, we cannot afford
to lose one single poet

on wednesday, july 29 poem

August 6

things can change so fast
at nine this morning I picked
sweet corn in a sunny field
at eleven in the ICU I laid
my hand and lips on the
cooling forehead of my
dearest friend may you
find peace carol you who
brought so much laughter
wit wisdom and yes tears to
so many in your fifty-five hard
triumphant years you showed us
all how to live to love to see

for carol manley

by john knoepfle

August 13

at four oclock the birds in the garden
attend to their psalms
it is that sort of day
beginning with a consecrated hour

overcast perhaps

a weekend saturday
we will go to the farmers market
this morning later

what to find there
all that our far flung neighbors
have drawn from this rich black earth
our central illinois legacy

what am I saying
all that is alive this day
should lift us up

should hurl us all heaven high
beyond our needs beyond
all that we could ask for

hold me kindly in your thoughts dear
as I write these lines for you

artsycraftsy poem # 1

August 20

there's this college kid, see, who
due to inspiration or a few beers
stole several of those barrels
striped orange-and-white that
surround road construction he spent
a few hours making a fifteen-foot
creature thumbing a ride returned
the monster to the roadside he was
apprehended of course the hitch hiker
destroyed can't remember the sentence
a fine community service maybe a
little jail time but the interesting thing
people loved the barrel behemoth
so did the firm that makes the barrels
they want him to construct another
maybe it will stand on their landscaped
lawns be their logo I'm not sure there's
a moral to this tale except I admire art
boldness inspiration action humor the
kid didn't swipe any barrels whose lack
would send a pedestrian or motorist
plunging into a tar pit I'm pretty certain

featherspoem #8

August 27

hummingbirds we thought but why
nesting so late in the season and on
a hemlock bough over the dock where
on rare sunny days we lie on our backs
and watch their comings and goings they
fly like hummingbirds nest looks right
but how can eggs or babies survive our
thrashing downpours they'd be tossed out
or drowned well turns out they're finches
audubon says we have only ruby-throat
hummers in these parts and of our pair
one is yellow one brown they nest late
for they're seed eaters and have to wait
for thistles we enjoy them no less today
a huge osprey was struggling on shore I
didn't see his fish thought he was tangled in
fishline no it was just dinner a first for me

goodadvicepoem #1

(words from a friend)

September 3

remember the main point is
for you to have decompression
time sit in the water walk in the
woods turn your face to the sun
listen to the birds eat some
healthy food eat some junk food
survey the stars talk trivially with
your friends avoid a newspaper
paddle your canoe write some
poems put your feet on the couch
nap in the afternoon watch the
sunrise watch the sunset count
loons you only get ten days don't
squander them the world will
turn without you for a bit

insectappreciation poem #3

September 10

here at the cottage we don't use the
bathtub the primitive septic system
couldn't take it anyway there's the
lake but the faucet drips and little
drips add up so we keep the plug in
after a few days there's a couple
inches stop reading if you don't
like grossness spiders and bugs
fall in drown pale daddy-long-legs
splayed in unnatural poses on the
bottom occasionally I bail dump the
water on the hill a winged beetle long
as my thumb was swimming this
dawn I ignored it but when it was
still swimming five hours later I
thought such dogged perseverance
should be rewarded cupped my
hands under it lifted it out it pinched
me hard did I drop it back in once I
managed to shake it loose leave it to
its watery fate ungrateful wretch no
I got a paper towel took it outside
let it go I don't hold grudges

countyfairpoem #1

September 17

behind as I sit on the foot-weary's bench at
wisconsin's walworth county fair is SPIN-OUT
before me the WHEEL OF FIRE beyond is
ORBITER then ZIPPER where my grandkid's
terrified SCREAMS are making them stop the
fun ride to let her off though I don't know
this till later for the competing BLARE of sounds
which you can't call music drowns out all else
scantly clad body types mostly fat stroll the
midway munching brats and elephant ears
sipping six-buck lemonade: refills only three
stuffed bears are big as the carriers t shirts
BLAST rude messages except those with green
tractors there's an inflated cow her pink tits
so HUGE you can swing on them I insist
before we leave to visit something real
outside the farm tent is a labeled growing
garden inside you can roll in soy beans
at the small animals barn the only noise is
crowing roosters some with blue ribbons the
grandkids forget the rides are enamored by
ducks geese turkeys banties then the rabbits
giant flemish, netherland dwarf, jersey wooly,
lop ears snub noses my grandson pokes his
hand in every cage caresses fur feathers he'd
climb right in if he could a 4-H boy lets him
cuddle a cavi we see shorn sheep without tails
later as we head to the parking lot we spot two
yellow balloons escaping into the blue blue sky

valueofbooks poem # 2

September 24

a librarian told me this got it
from her friend at west branch
so it's true I can supply names
an elderly woman reported a
lost book wanted to pay for it
the librarian said why don't you
just wait a little longer it will
probably turn up no said the
woman I want to pay for it now
the librarian remonstrated if
you'll wait a little longer look
around some more--the woman
interrupted look honey you don't
understand you're not getting
that book back my husband was
half through it when he died I
put a marker in it and tucked it
in his casket my friend's friend
did not know what to reply I read
recently a quote by someone
whose idea of heaven was one vast
library I picture this husband after
the last page looking around for
where to return the volume to its
proper space on the celestial shelf

couldbeworse poem #1

October 1

david visiting his folks with his
two small children in tow took
them to the barn horses he'd known
all their lives he patted badger's nose
badger bit him bit off the end of
his ring finger right hand a plastic
surgeon had to sew him up cover
the stump it was most painful
at dinner the other night the digit
still in a conspicuous cast david's
mother-in-law said the irish have
a way when things are bad of saying
well they could be worse your bite
could have been worse badger might
have bitten off your middle finger

kidquotepoem #11

October 8

don't get any more of that
limeade brand it reminds me
of gas station bathrooms

dancepoem #3

October 15

the superlatives in the program blurbs
can't do justice to the ukrainians
at the sangamon auditorium last night
nor can I begin to describe the color
artistry variety complex weavings in and
out of these ballet trained folk dancers
the gravity defying leaps of the men
not once twice but twenty times around
the stage till we could stop gasping
and breathe again the rapid costume
changes how could they manage and
humor pathos joyousness their energy
energy energy filled us too the sparse
audience made up for it in yipping
hollering cheering we hollered and
cheered too clapped our hands raw
afterwards behind the building I
spotted the huge semi to hold trunks
the rows of buses for the cast of
fifty and their support folk surely
a hundred all told straggling out in
sweatshirts pants looking tired ordinary
I drove home, thought:
what have we been doing all our lives?
why aren't we all dancing?

tolkienpoem #3

October 22

in a blizzard I once chased a car
all the way across town trapped
him in his driveway his license
said elrond if I have to tell you
who that is you shouldn't be
reading this I invited him to our
lothlorien banquet to be held in
my attic the following eve nuts
fruit honey pure sweet wine the
strumming of a harp candlelight
reflecting silvery mallorn leaves
he refused were he truly elrond
he'd have come his wife's mother
the ethereal galadriel on his arm
his card says elvish consulting
yet he passed up waybread with
a dozen elves to say nothing of
arwen bilbo frodo samwise gimli
legolas pippin meriadoc gandalf
boromir treebeard and the great
and unassuming aragorn himself
maybe he thought he'd have to
sit by lobelia sackville-baggins

*I received the following poem shortly before
this booklet was printed. It's in response to the
Tolkien poem, from Elrond himself, and
shows there are readers of Illinois Times as
far away as Middle Earth!*

once I was followed in a blizzard
by someone inviting me to a
lothlorien banquet the following night
however, I had final exams that were
scheduled during the banquet time.
I appreciated the invitation,
however
even elven kings cannot bilocate.

hallowe'en poem # 2

a woman on our street
this was out east
gently set kittens
into the held-out sacks
of six enchanted goblins
princesses vampires
two came back that night
four the next day

October 29



hallowe'en poem # 3

rachel has rubied her shoes
till they are nearly rubied out
wyatt is hoarse from his roar
scarecrow is mom tinman dad
grandma if she arrives in time
will be the wicked witch pointy
hat black cape ready in the car
at the end of yellow brick
there'll be a feeding frenzy
sugar highs tantrums tears
except for those of us who
will be sipping irish cream
a gift of glinda and the wiz

newsquirkpoem #1

November 5

you know you could write a poem
a week from any item in the quirky
news column of illinois times take
that funeral home burglar when
the cops came he lay on a viewing
room table played possum but
they saw him breathing now when
we were little and wanted mom to
think we were asleep we'd lie still
take shallow soundless breaths that's
how she'd catch us because of not
breathing we learned to inhale deeply
plenty of chest motion oh how asleep
we seemed I'm surprised that thief
hadn't perfected tricks of breathing
not breathing before he was three

farmer poem # 13

cows they're big when
you lean against one
she's liable to lean
toward you try to
get her to move over
get off your foot or
something she'll lean
against you even more
but on a cold day you
can slip your hand along-
side her nice warm udder
that makes up for a lot

November 12



W.J. Dougan and
Marie of Sarnia

musicpoem # 11

November 19

my father sat on my sister's first fiddle
left on the couch she was seven he was
so mad he grabbed it by the neck smashed
it to the floor where it finished dying
with a doleful twang the good thing was
they got her another better one we had
no more violin violence till much later
when sister #2 in a fit of pique broke her
bow over that first sister's head so much
for music soothing the savage breast that
first sister also left her valuable fiddle out
in the rain she used to practice under the
sky a strolling minstrel both sisters
are still fiddlers still play solos trios
chamber music orchestras and I who
never met musical violence except
within my own breast--tears dribbled
to my chinrest when I was practicing
the third violin part to nobody knows
the trouble I've seen--that's when they
figured a cellist was more needed than
another fiddler and I was switched--now
I'm the one who seldom rosins a bow turns
a peg guess I traded that passion for a pen

kidquote thanksgiving poem # 3

November 26

thank you dad and mom for
buying a race track but
remember I left it on my
floor and everybody stept
on it thank you for buying
that race track and the four
batteries to the race track but
this time I want a skateboard

politicopoem(local) # 11

December 3

what shall we do with the homeless-o
what shall we do with the homeless-o
what shall we do with the homeless-o
turn them out into the snow

what shall we do with our dollars-o
what shall we do with our dollars-o
give them to our scholars-o
west of town where the soybeans grow

what shall we do with the old school then
what shall we do with the old school then
bingo den? homeless pen?
tear it down and start again?

musicpoem # 12

December 10

another on my unalloyed pleasure list
is playing in a good string orchestra
playing cello playing a fugue you hear
the tune three times on the upper strings
one by one before you come in then
you come in on the ground floor the
foundation of it all and all the compli-
cations follow and you are also the
voice to end it it is very satisfying
once sinfonia gave a concert in
grace episcopal church on the square
in madison wisconsin our finale was
bach's great fugue the organist found
that the church organ was in perfect
tune with the orchestra so our leader
had him boom in with us on the final
theme full volume the church rocked
to its foundations afterwards a little
old lady grasped our conductor's hand
oh it was thrilling thrilling at the end
oh! it sounded just like an organ!



Our conductor, Marie Endres

beautypoem #4

December 17

when we were kids the magazine
sat review asked famous folk their
most beautiful words or phrases in
the english tongue franklin p adams
headed his list with "cellar door"
many years later author ursula k
leguin in her book the farthest shore
named the island at the world's end
"selidor" she surely thought no one
would make the connection but I did
I did now for me the most beautiful
word in the language is "listen" --
just "listen" --
then silence
listen . . .
silence
listen . . .

christmas lullaby

December 24

(My mother wrote this lullaby for my oldest sister, on her first Christmas, 1925. I'm repeating it again this year. I'll send the music on request.)

Sleep, little baby, the daylight is fading;
Dim yellow stars the dark heavens adorn;
Once, long ago, in a Bethlehem manger
The little Lord Jesus was born.
Lullaby, lullaby, sleep, little baby, sleep.

Sleep, little baby, my arms are about thee,
A circle of love which enfolds thee secure;
So Mary cradled the wee baby Jesus,
The little Lord Jesus, so pure.
Lullaby, lullaby, sleep, little baby, sleep.

Sleep, little baby, thine eyelids are drooping,
Thy warm, tender body relaxing to rest;
Jesus thus slept in the arms of sweet Mary,
His dear little head on her breast.
Lullaby, lullaby, sleep, little baby, sleep.
Lullaby, lullaby, sleep, little baby, sleep.

l'envoi: poem for carol

December 31

our loved friend carol manley
two days before her sudden death
emailed me about the poems in
illinois times she wrote do you
need material maybe you can
do something with this from zay:
"the girls were chasing the boys
they wanted to put makeup on us
but our feet sang a song the boys'
feet sang a fast song the girls'
feet sang a slow song so they
didn't catch us!" carol carol we
ache at our loss and little xavier's
loss he growing up now without
a grandma to keep his feet singing
we without you to save his songs
without you to save the treasure
of your own songs not yet written



Xavier and Carol

Author's Afterward

Goodbye to Carol Manley, writer and friend

Printed in Illinois Times, August 6, 2009

It should be easy to write about Carol Manley, there's so much material; instead it's incredibly difficult. Were she at my shoulder (as she is?) she'd be saying, "You guys are Carol'd out, let it go!" except her remark would be witty and make me laugh.

Carol's sudden death last week, at 55, has left us all in shock. IT readers know her by her book reports full of insight and family stories, her Christmas stories that made us cry, her own poems in "People's Poetry" (Lincoln Library Poet of the Year is among her many awards); her poems often in my poetry spot, under "friendquote" — Xavier, 4, going for popcorn with his grandma, and, "Leon and I got married on my lunch hour yesterday. Seems to be working so far." Some of my work we wrote together; the rest she always critiqued, as she did for everyone in our writing group — with humor, thoughtfulness, expertise and kindness. She was as loving and generous as anyone we've ever known.

Carol came up the hard way — raising two beautiful children, Sarah and Jonah, through grinding poverty, in the ghettos of Chicago. By sheer grit, then with the help of a Catholic charity, she managed a bachelor's degree in Computer Science at North Park College, cum laude, and moved here to a state job and a better life for her family. She found her way to Sangamon State, where in my class, "Writing a Woman's Life," she composed her welfare stories which every lawmaker — and everyone — should read. She earned a master's degree in English, with Razak Dahmane as advisor and mentor. She wrote many other stories, poems and essays, won numerous first prizes in prestigious contests, and recently had a prizewinning book, Church Booty, published by a university press and reviewed in IT by Rodd Whelpley.

Carol's daughter Sarah has written, in part, "We feel solace that she lived a full life. She was in the process of creating new goals since she'd achieved all the goals she'd set. She wanted to publish a book, and she did. . . . She

wanted to own a home and she did, two years ago. She wanted to get married, and she and Leon were married last year. She was a wonderful woman and touched many lives. . . . She will live on in the hearts of everyone fortunate enough to have known her.” A friend, Lola, has e-mailed, “In her fifth-floor tenement days, she could not have dreamed of such a send-off as her life celebration today, or that so many would mourn so deeply.”

One of Carol’s unpublished stories none of us has forgotten. A grandmother is tending a feverish grandchild whose teen mother has been gone over a week. As the child worsens, Ella realizes she must get him to the emergency room, but has no money for a bus token, let alone a taxi. She bundles the child and sets off through the frigid night, away from the filth, broken glass, vacant buildings, to the cleaner, quieter hospital surroundings three miles away. Once there, waiting, she’s aware of the sign stating they could not reject anyone for lack of insurance, but could transfer a patient to another hospital. She is fearful. She’d barely made it here. And then a woman bursts from a curtained room, screaming, “Give me my baby!” while a social worker soothes, “We have to verify that you can take care of her.” Ella panics. Caseworkers look for bedrooms and beds, radiators that work and refrigerators with food in them. Ella ducks away, and holding the child, finds the warmth and anonymity of the cafeteria. She sees at the condiments table a worker fill a paper cup with ketchup. She edges near, takes a pickle, gives it to the baby. He sucks it, the first thing he’s shown an interest in, in days. She gives him a little drink of pickle juice, and after a bit, he seems to revive, the fever to lessen. She stuffs a few more pickles in her pocket, gathers the child in her arms and says, “Come along, honey, we’re going home. We’ve been to the emergency room.”

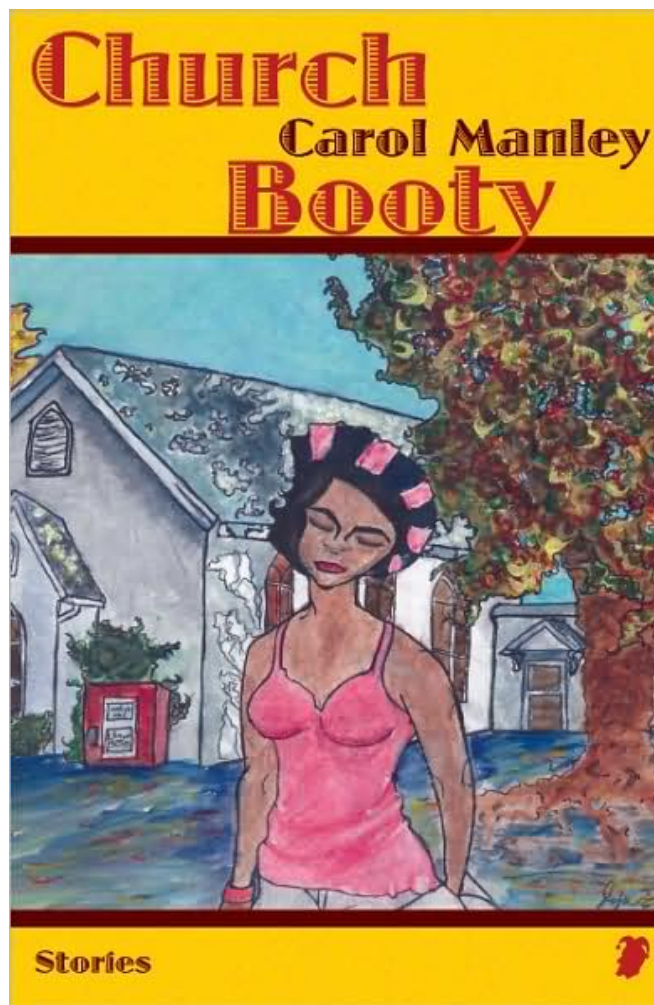
Beloved Carol, none of us had enough pickle juice for you.

Jacqueline Dougan Jackson

Our writing group is hoping all of you will read Carol Manley's prize-winning hilarious--and heartbreaking--stories. They're in the book pictured below. We know you'll then press Church Booty on your friends, and urge your library to purchase it. It's had thoughtful and enthusiastic reviews.

It can be ordered (in hard or soft cover) from Livingston Press, Station 22, The University of West Alabama, Livingston, AL 35470. (You might add, "Attention, Joe Taylor.") www.livingstonpress.uwa.edu

It's also available through Amazon and other booksellers, and your local bookstore will order it.



The Greek on the cover of this publication translates loosely to:
“Aw, shit! I hate when that happens!”

The other Illinois Times booklets:

Taking Liberties – 2005

Liberty on the Ramparts - 2006

Liberty Takes a Break - 2007

Liberty Chastized - 2008

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