

Liberty Endures



*A collection of poetry by
Jacqueline Dougan Jackson
Illinois Times - 2010*

Liberty Endures



Dedicated to Damaris Jackson



Damaris was my cherished eldest daughter and much loved sister of Megan, Gillian, and Elspeth, who after more than two years of illness, left us on September 19.

Demi has figured in many poems in these Liberty booklets over these six years, sometimes by name, often not. In this volume, several poems published after her death center on her. One writes where the heart is. However, I do not think you will find this collection a downer.

It's also dedicated to Damaris's sisters, who gave unstintingly, to her cousins Jerry and Debby, and her many, many friends, particularly those who visited from afar or contacted often: Talie, Knox, Carolyn, Sarah, Nancy, Glo, Michael, Martha, Carla, Liz, and those others Demi knew of; and those who helped create her growing Springfield community: our writing group, Unitarian Church friends, the Springfield Choral Society, and specific persons: Heather, Sonja, Yosh and Larry, Martin, Jamie, and especially Gary and Larry. All these gave Demi two and a half more years of life than she would otherwise have had, much of it enjoyable.

January 7

newyear's evepoem #1

it's new year's eve
frigid clear and there's
a blue moon I have seen
blue moons before and
expect to see a number
more but I will probably
not live long enough to
see another blue moon
on a new year's eve

January 14

hitchhike song # 1

thirty five years ago michael reid
maybe nineteen hitch hiked illinois
his banjo on his knee singing names
to the tune of the irish washerwoman
later at walker church minneapolis
his first theatrical performance he
called it land o' lincoln, give it a try:
chicago joliet coal city dwight
odell pontiac chenoa lexington
towanda normal bloomington
funk's grove mcclean atlanta lawndale
lincoln broadwell elkhart williamsville
sherman springfield glenarm auburn
farmersville atwater litchfield
white city mount olive livingston
warden hamel edwardsville troy
east st louis belleville . . .
michael I drove much of that route
yesterday sang the towns I passed
also the ones the highway missed
but has exit signs such as mt pulaski
and then there's benld but how to
work that one into a song beats me

January 21

technokids poem #2

wyatt, seven, sequestered
(by choice) in the large closet
under the front stairs
cell-phones his mother
four times with different
instructions on how he wants
his sandwich prepared then
phones the kitchen again to
ask why it's taking so long

January 28

great autos' song

from the musical, the endless pavement

rockin' rollin' down the pavement
rockin' rollin' down the pavement
listen to the great computermobile
listen to the great computermobile
can't -- stop -- gotta -- go --
can't -- stop -- gotta -- go --
can't stop, gotta go, can't stop, gotta go,
can't stop, gotta go, can't stop, gotta go,
stop go, stop go, stop go, stop go,
stop go, stop go, stop go, STOP!

vroom to the left! vroom to the right!
spin your wheels! windshield wipe!

rockin' rollin' down the pavement
rockin' rollin' down the pavement
listen to the great computermobile . . .

February 4

children's school pledge

from the musical, the endless pavement

I pledge allegiance
to the great autos
and to the asphalt
on which they roll
one pavement
under Ford
indivisible with
mobility and
power steering
for all

February 11

lovepoem #7

I long to be back with pam hiking
the cornwall coast the waves far below
curling then crashing but there's no pam
to hike with anymore I long to be back
with jessie amid the bluebells in the
dorset lanes laughing at what her mum
had to say on everything "ketchup is
an insult to the cook" and "men are a
necessary nuisance" but there's now
no jessie to laugh with I long to be back
on white horse hill listening to the larks
looking down the apron where the lambs'
treble voices the ewes' middle voices the
great rams' bass voices echo then walking
the ridgeway to wayland's smithy the
ancient burial barrow I long to be back
in the bodleian with chad and eva turning
the great pages of ancient books later
searching unkempt st cross cemetery
nearby for kenneth graham's grave among
the willows but there's no chad and eva
anymore I just want to be back be back
be back while there's still a me to be back
I'll take you with me will you come

February 18

green

from the musical, the endless pavement

do you believe
in green grasses and trees?
well I do, well I do
do you believe
there were blossoms and bees?
well I do, well I do
what did green look like?
how did green feel?
what did green taste like
when green was real?
was there a green sigh of wind
in the pine boughs?
was there a green scent of hay
in the hay mows?

do you believe
in green rushes and moss?
well I do, well I do
do you believe
in the milkyweed floss?
well I do, well I do
was there a green skylark
singing a birdcall?
was there a green wormy smell
after rainfall?

I'm sick for laughter
the laughter of trees
I'm sick for greenness
alive on the breeze . . .
do you believe? do you believe
in green?

February 25

publiclibrary jumprope rhyme #1

city city count the cost
how many book folk have we lost?
one--two--three--four--
no one reads any more
five--six--seven--eight--
let us set the record straight
nine ten eleven twelve
who is left, books to shelve?
13--14--15--16--
17--18--19--20--
don't you think that is plenty?
no we have to can some more
so lets scrap another score
okey-doke we're saving dough
no one reads, let them go

city, city, count the cost
how many branches have we lost?
north it was the first to go
near northsiders loved it so
west is shuttered though it had
busy patrons, lass and lad
now southeast is going too
patrons cry boo hoo hoo hoo
all the kids for story time
all the teen agers on line
that's ok, a saving caper
wrap 'em up in butcher paper
send 'em down the elevator
stack 'em on the bottom floor
no one reads anymore

readers, readers, what will help?
shout and scream, yell and yelp?
it's never worked but try a coup--
take out books, take out a slew
take them out from roof to floor
pile them by the mayor's door
how many books should we check out?
1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 --
keep on going more and more . . .

March 4

aroundthecosmos poem #6

by Ethan Whelpley, 8

infinity means
that you give up
even though
you know
there's more

March 11

demopoem # 1

with all the interest in the film
julie and julia and also local
cooking schools let me tell you a
story about my springfield friend
tom (doc) durr he was attending
the culinary institute of america
when julia child came to visit
the white-clad students lined up
respectfully at long tables behind
their designated specialties while
julia accompanied by famed
chefs and dignitaries reviewed
the troops doc had a whole
raw chicken splayed in front
of him when julia reached his
station he barked "demo!" the
culinary order to demonstrate
julia promptly peeled her gloves
and dismembered the chicken
on the spot to the delight of
everyone except the chefs and
grand dukes who could have
swung cleavers right through
doc's head too bad that scene
wasn't in the movie n'est-ce pas?

March 18

northfifthstreetpoem #9

hard-hatted burly friendly men
are digging two holes in front of
my large red brick victorian house
seen lately on the front page of the
state j-r, albeit as backdrop. the pits
plunge down into the berm (as it's
called in ohio; devil-strip in wisconsin
--what in illinois?) the grape hyacinths
are deep-sixed, just as they were about
to grape out. in their place will be
shoe-blackening-black lampposts, one
tall curved, the shorter like a candle,
both designed from an earlier era.
more will line the curbs, an avenue
of elegance. benevolent beams will
discourage the denizens of the dark
who frequently frequent this street.
sixth street is already in full bloom,
our turn next. I recall night walks up
our wisconsin country lane, the stars
so thick in the velvet sky you'd reach
up with your mitten, grab a handful to
stuff in your pocket. today north sixth
is broadway. tomorrow or next week
north fifth will be broadway, too.

March 25

hymn

from the musical, the endless pavement

O hail to thee O great tv
who fills our waking hours
early and late and in between we
spend our lives before the screen
plenty to do stare at the view
it's inviting it's exciting
it's delighting it's frightening
no need to think of what to do
just view just view
it's refreshing it's caressing
it's distressing it's oppressing
no need to think of what to do
just view just view
just view just view
just view . . . view . . . view . . .

April 1

farmer retirement poem # 1

*(from a letter to Jackie from
her father, spring, 1969)*

now that we don't have milking
we can travel says your mother and
I agree--there are lots of places
in rock county I haven't seen we
haven't visited chamberlain
spring in newark township in
15 years. the romance of names turns
me on (see how easily I pick up
the jargon of the young only
a few years after it is obsolete)--
emerald grove, tiffany, afton, avalon,
brass ball corners, hog run are all
fifteen minutes from here I must
take mommy some day it will do us
both good to get out I'll go anywhere
as long as I'm back in my own
beddie-bye by 8 pm shopiere tavern
offers as much nudity as the
folies bergère and one can
understand the double entendres

April 8

birthday poem for gillian

I always led the van but now with
this injured foot I sit atop a breezy
hill the season's first warm day
while family and friends' voices
grow faint as they wend their way
down the path toward the dense line
of leafless trees that betray a hidden
stream they are soon out of sight
and earshot I hear spring peepers
though and bird calls and rustlings
in the tawny tangles around me
the sun silvers each branch edge
the blue stretches on forever my
belly is comfortable with good
milk oranges avocado cucumber
cold root-veggies baked then
marinated by two daughter-cooks
today the birthday of one much
beloved the group returns they
have seen a turtle there is a lot to
grieve on this beleaguered planet
but today on this country farm
it is an afternoon for jubilee

April 15

the humans' song

from the musical, the endless pavement

no need to hurry
no need to worry
life is regu-
life is regu-
lated
from the birthmobile
to the hearsemobile
by the GREAT
COMPUTER-
MOBILE

no need to hurry
no need to worry
life is regu-
like is regu-
lated
from the eatsmobile
to the sleepsmobile
by the GREAT
COMPUTER-
MOBILE

April 22

friend's story poem #6

my friend annette says she's
still unearthing forgotten
treasure in her backyard her
boys many years ago buried
the contents of her jewelry box
as focus for their pirate maps
she keeps hoping she'll find
something that matches or her
precious small gold baby ring
I say make those strapping
sons come back start sifting

April 29

housingpoem #1

it's not that I don't like robins it's
usurpers I deplore but are they such?
they came they saw that it was good
they sat down squirmed around at
least the wife did trying it for size
all it took was some grass and mud
to remodel the nest into their style
how were they to know I'd fed the
original builders (and an over-fat
squirrel) sunflower seeds all winter
scattered on the back porch where
were those cardinals anyway to defend
their turf off visiting gramps across
the street? they weren't foreclosed
not behind on their mortgage just
careless I know they're in the yard
somewhere I hear their chucks their
voices saying birdee birdee birdee
and robin-mom is such a faithful squatter

May 6

environmentpoem # 10

I was flabbergasted that in the earthweek issue of this publication one of the tips was headlined put it all on the line then breathed nary a word about hanging wash outside the only energy used is yours of course those who live in la-de-dah neighborhoods are forbidden we don't want to offend anybody by seeing our underwear but have you ever slept between sundried sheets or washed with a windfluffed towel? while I'm ranting most folk really don't need to change completely every day don't need to shower either unless you're a milkman or such as a kid my mom running clothes through the maytag wringer I chucked my school duds every afternoon pulled on my jeans rode and curried my horse those jeans weren't washed till they stood alone studies now cite the too sterile child let them play in the dirt farm kids have stronger immune systems kids who daily walk through the barn rank highest of all and you know what would prevent our spending millions on another lake and save those wild lands oh what a radical idea how repulsive but you don't need to flush the pot every time you pee

May 13

laundrysong

from the musical, the endless pavement

(enter washarolla and
dryarolla chanting:
wash-a-chug, wash-a-chug
fluff 'n' dry, fluff 'n' dry)

washarolla (sings):
bring your dirty duds
to the washarolla
to the soap and suds
of the washarolla
put your laundry in
I begin to spin
agitate, agitate, agitate

dryarolla (sings):
bring your drippy duds
to the dryarolla
the the warmth and fuzz
of the dryarolla
put your laundry in
I begin to spin
fluff'n'dry, fluff'n'dry, fluff'n'dry

(both sing):
bring your dirty duds
to the washarolla
bring your drippy duds
to the dryarolla
put your laundry in
we begin to spin
(last lines in unison)
agitate, agitate, agitate
fluff'n'dry, fluff'n'dry, fluff'n'dry

(exit: wash-a-chug, wash-a-chug
fluff'n'dry, fluff'n'dry)

May 20

musicopoem # 14

have had the glorious strains of
marion van der loo's choral concert
running nonstop through my head
(read oliver sacks' musicophilia if
you want to learn about music in
your head) but this morning at the
y pool the radio was blaring out
chattanooga choo choo now the
melodies of hebrew love songs are
interspersed with eight-to-the-bar

May 27

farmerpoem #9

*from a letter from Ron Dougan
to daughter Jackie, April 7, 1963*

just had word a close friend in the
seed business near janesville has
decided to throw his whole operation
in with funks--a big national seed
corn company--and discontinue
wisconsin strains entirely. this is
a blow because we were growing
for each other and working on
development. john holmes' dairy
sold out to a rockford firm the first
of the month looks like there's no
place for the small operator anymore

June 3

farewelltopaul poem

nephews nieces cousins of all ages
we searched the serene chicago
cemetery sunday alone except for
the myriads of departed but where
was our departed the heirs who carried
his coffin through the february drifts
said he's here somewhere the snow was
over the tombstones then but now with
sun and grass and flowers . . . we never
did find the plot but before leaving we
called paul we're here we've had a grand
weekend did you hear us sing for your
ninety-third birthday and tell your stories
the time you got locked out of your room
in the middle of the night naked and the
hotel people wanted identification and
the time you got run over by a motorcycle
on a german escalator but we could relate
only a fraction we needed our favorite
raconteur thanks for footing the bill for
us all to come we love you and miss you
it's fitting you're near meis van der rohe
you were his last living student we can't
find his grave either but trust you're
communicating, also with louis sullivan
. . . far across the greensward a first cousin
(thrice-removed) age seven leaps from
stone to stone a woodland sprite in the forest
of arden he ends with a dozen cartwheels
before running to rejoin his extended family

June 10

poem: all roads lead to

ever since that great toad of a
walmart went up off south sixth
smothering the green field wait
I like toads they're good for the
garden so spell it with a "u"
no that word also means good
stuff the cow pats kept our fields
fertile well anyway ever since
then I've avoided that route to the
university going instead through
the area some poll named as one
of the ten worst neighborhoods
in the country that stretch by
withrow school however last week
forced to drive the old way I came
through the maze of new concrete
to what would be the extension of
eighth street whenever they cut
through the woods spotted the sign
some wag in the city's employ
has named it "octavus via" he must
have once had elizabeth graham
at springfield high remembered a
little latin I laughed outloud was
glad to find in springfield's sprawl
something worth laughing about

June 17

wordspem # 3

at a scrabble party the other night
we found that asshole isn't in the
official dictionary my quarrel with
that scrabble authority has been
it omits the two-letter solfege
syllables except those popularized
by sound of music no di ri fi si li
but now we can't use the f word
the c word or any other word
currently bleeped by the radio
(yes dr johnson we did look them
up) interestingly it includes bitch
not as a female dog but to complain
and gives a number of variations
so we all indulged in a bitchery
about the bitchy scrabble dictionary

June 24

beepoem # 1

we brought the bees home tonight
a whole swarmed hive's worth
home to my daughter's on the high
desert in nevada we set them beside
the other hives opened the small
hole droves crawled out covered the
front where are we why are we here
gillian assures me they won't fly off
in the dark come morning she'll
untape the main entrance see what
happens these are descendents of
carniolans no miticides pesticides
they'll be survivor bees small celled
regressed the size honey bees were
before greedy breeders bred them big
I'm learning a lot about bees didn't
know till now about propolis or the
difference between the circle dance
and waggle dance go read for your
entertainment the internet bee postings
bee people are passionate about bees

July 1

psychiarolla's song

from the musical, the endless pavement

how are you today?
have you got it together?
are you feeling okay?
how is your weather?

any screws loose? any crossed wires?
out of juice? spinning your tires?

if you're not hitting
on all cylinders--
come see the psychiarolla!
come see the psy-chi-a-ro-ol-la!

July 8

tappitbrotherspoem #1

some NPR listeners loath click 'n' clack
but I love 'em they're such smart guys
MIT PhDs and from a fair city I once
lived in and the cars they know so much
about get into such ridiculous brouhahas
we had one once worthy of the program
we were driving through desert nevada
camped late at night at an oasis where
the whole place was lit up with bright
little eyes next morning driving away
we heard overhead the pitter patter of
many feet no nothing on top of our old
chevy we drove on more pitter patter
could it be? yes, mice had sneaked thru
rust holes into our goodies-laden trunk
and were now playing tag between the
cloth ceiling and metal roof no getting
rid of them we had to drive ninety miles
before coming to a crossroads where
we could buy mousetraps and cheese
can't you just hear tom and ray laffin?

July 15

sciencepoem #11

our dna is what we be
we close kin wit chimpanzee
the blowfish haf more genes than we
o awesome ee-vo-lution!

our complex eye not just appear
yo, man it took ten million year
we moved our jaw to make our ear
o awesome ee-vo-lution!

wit heart of cow and valve of boar
looks like we goin to ee-volve more
go buy our spare parts at the store
o awesome ee-vo-lution!

so where you tink we volvin nix?
our labs all say we has our picks
let's fly like arch-e-op-ter-ix
o awesome ee-vo-lution!

July 22

father's song

from the musical, the endless pavement

there was a great person once
his name was detroit
and he made the first auto
and he made the first auto
and he bulldozed the land
and he covered the sand
with pavement, with pavement,
with endless, endless pavement

he made a great auto with
with a cybernetic brain
that took over all the thinking
that took over all the thinking
and it wouldn't take no sass
and it covered all the grass
with pavement, with pavement,
with endless, endless pavement

it put all the people
in the slow traffic lanes
it did it for our safety
it did it for our safety
and it bulldozed all the trees
so to vroom and zoom with ease
on pavement, on pavement,
on endless, endless pavement
on endless endless endless
endless endless
endless pavement

July 29

cornpicking poem #1

this is a locust year
at dusk the sky all
pinky mauve the locusts
shrill loud and louder a
rhythmic pulse they fade
to a chrrr stop silence then
start again shrill as before
we travel deep in the green
rows snapping off corn ears
fat with brown hair tangles
more than we'll ever eat
plenty to share blessing
our farmer friends blessing
the earth's bounty blessing
the little bobwhite nearby
who sings bob white
pauses
then again
bob white . . .
bob white . . .

August 5

financepoem #3

I have made
such an investment
in life it's a pity
someday to have to
close the ledger
I'm banking that
it will keep on
paying dividends
after my checkbook
is cancelled

August 12

grosspoem #7

greater love hath no friend
than to help another friend
clean out her cesspool this
was many many years ago
we excavated to the buried
lid then pried it up what an
awesome sight rather lovely
if you can divide beauty from
substance mostly brown but
people had been consuming
corn-on-the-cob I won't get
more graphic than that well we
shoveled muck into the wheel-
barrow carted off load upon load
finally sought some husky help
burned our clothes now my friend
needs to do something with that
cesspool again these things come
around but where oh where is it
I hear she's hired a soul gifted
in such matters to douse for it
were I there I could stand on the
exact spot point earthward no charge

August 19

featherspoem #8

you can't sleep
on the porch
at the lake if
you don't like
owls
they chorus
so close
you can feel
the size
and the breath
of their lungs

August 26

literarycritic poem #2

my father wrote inside books
what he thought of them
also shared ones he liked
he called nearly every night
while reading watership down
to report on fiver hazel
bigwig's adventures and
soon thereafter rabbit facts
from the locksley source whence
richard adams drew his info
I didn't hear much about shardik
but dad's annotation says it all:

"Really builds up in a
never never country. Stay
with it. However I still miss
Watership Down and The
Private Life of the Rabbit
Bless their little twitching noses
Oh to be a rabbit for a day--
or for that matter a boxer dog--
or a stray cat . . . Ron May 1975"

I've just given shardik to a
book sale but have carefully
cut out my father's commentary

September 2

wastepoem #4

I waste time
a lot of ways
might as well
waste some on
church
the early fathers
referred to
holy waste
does holy waste
come from
holy cows
come to think of it
simeon stylites
(his saints day
just yesterday)
sat on a pillar
of the stuff

September 9

sciencepoem #12

just read an article on the discovery
of x-rays aka roetgen rays after the
scientist who won the first nobel prize
there were horrendous photos monster
machines doctors who'd lost hands
when I was a thirties kid our major
downtown shoestore had an x-ray
you stood on a little platform stuck
your foot into a bottom space looked
through the top window pushed the
button saw your foot bones inside
your shoe of course we all put our
feet in again and again while our sibs
were being fitted our hands too a sib
peered in the top then traded places
we'd have stuck our butts in if able
the machine disappeared I know not
when the shoestore too the whole
downtown has vanished victim of
malls and walmarts but I'm curious
where are the foot the hand cancers
from our unsupervised excesses could
they have travelled elsewhere to bones
breasts cervixes has anyone made a
study of shoestore x-rays in the thirties

September 16

countyfairpoem #2

here we are at the yearly walworth
county fair the grandkids sang again
in the junior american idol show
neither won we suggested to a
harried judge all finalists be awarded
certificates they worked so hard
nachos brats elephant ears soothed
them I spotted the lamb kabob booth
too late this time we hit the barns
first monster turkey toms hens smaller
all with numbers on their backs like
marathon runners number 64 had laid
an egg the rabbits and cavis still a draw
we lost wyatt in the swine barn after
watching a blue-ribbon winner eat and
pee at the same time for me the best part
was the judging of dairy goats brown
and white kids like I had when I was
a kid now the grandkids are onto the
rides hideous at hideous prices this
fair is one hundred sixty years old I
was six in this spot when I learned
any ride but the merry-go-round
and ferris wheel made me puke my
daughter number two was six when
she reeled out of the fun house crying

September 23

In Memoriam

Damaris Jackson

January 15, 1954--September 19, 2010

in england after my first child was born
I wrote my parents about the baby blues
how I felt totally skinless as though
every nerve was outside exposed
paining stinging maybe it was explained
hormonely even then but my theory amidst
pain was one I'd never heard before the
realization that along with incredible joy
I 'd also brought death into the world this
blessed beautiful babe would some day die

* * *

It is all the points of joy in between that
we count. She loved singing, art, dance,
her viola, gardening, all her family, all
her many friends. She did not want to leave
us. Resquiat in Pace, loved, beloved Demi.

September 30

enospark housetour poem

ok folks laugh but this house
IS on the enos park house tour
october 2 noon to 5 will we
clean it well sorta at least sweep
the kitchen floor tidy it well
sorta but there'll be a sign enter
at your own risk maybe lincoln
will hold it you know he stood
inside this house once there'll be
crime scene yellow tape so you'll
know where to walk to see the
awesome attic or the alice loo
WHO are YOU on the porch'll be
all us writers hawking our stories
poems articles pitchas shared here
yes some for sale many set in our
own springfield meet us authors
the wallpaper is the same as when
I moved in here 40 years ago it
was probably old then it looks it
does this sound like an ad well
it is what's in it for me nothing
but fun and meeting some of you
WHO are YOU and maybe selling
a book or one of us will and it will
make the president of our enos park
neighborhood association so happy

October 7

xavier, just 6, poem #4

We've had several poems by Xavier in this column. He lost his grandma, Carol Manley, familiar to readers of Illinois Times, a year ago. He loved my daughter Demi and wrote a book for us, a line and picture on each page.

"For you. Illustrator bi Xavier"

"I am sorry you miss Demi.
Demi will still be with you.
At least--she will--still be
loveness for you."

October 14

ballad to a biker's buddy:

17,006 miles, 10 states, 3 years, 4 months.

froggie would a riding go, um hum.
froggie would a riding go,
wheth'r he ever meant or no, um hum

while hopping once across the street um hum
a roaring biker he did meet
ended 'neath the driver's seat um hum

his life was gone, he stuck there fast um hum
his spirit saw the world flash past
he said this ride has gotta last, um hum

he's riding still, his leathery pelt um hum
nor rain nor snow can ever melt
he clocks the miles beneath his belt um hum

all froggies in the heavenly swamp um hum
croak come and join us don't you want
but froggie says just one more jaunt um hum

October 21

measuring longitude

by Natalie Alexander

“90 ° of longitude,” says the sign,
“ ¼ of the way around the world.”
I’m driving to the funeral, filled
with grief—anguish of love in loss.
The highway is straight, yet
every moment is a bend in the road.

I think about the difficulty of
figuring how to measure longitude.

Two days after the funeral,
I’m driving home, filled with grief
—solace of stories in friendship.
A grey heron glides towards me,
then wheels a graceful turn
—and I cross 90 ° of longitude.

October 28

autumn poem

by Damaris Jackson

*written when she was twenty-four,
on the death of a friend's father.*

An afternoon,
 it is an autumn
When the osage and
 the apple part.
The fruit drops,
 settles,
mingles with the earth,
While, rising up,
 a winging bird
instinctively turns south.

One apple, one bird,
one afternoon
and it is autumn
when we stand
amid the branches,
yet not winged
nor free to travel,
listening,
 waiting to hear
 the joining
 of the flock.

November 4

froggie limericks:

*by the biker himself in response to the recent
froggie ballad published here.*

There once was a fellow named Mitch,
whose traveling story was rich!
While riding in a fog
he picked up a frog
And now they can't tell which is which!

There once was a critter named Frog
who wanted a ride on a hog.
Impaled on the frame
of a bike with no name
he now has ten states in his log.

Froggie wasn't paying attention.
I hit him though not my intention.
Now permanently busted,
on my shadow thirteen-hundred
His life's found a deeper dimension.

November 11
autumpoem #2

when
the leaves
blow off
the trees
then
you can see
abandoned nests
still held
in
the branches

November 18

namespoem #2

I tell our grieving guest, I like that you
call us all "dear heart." that's what my
mother called me Talie says. I say my mom
called us "lambkin" or "lambie," and I called
you daughters that too, and Gillian says
I call Cressie "punkin seed" or "punkin pie,"
or "my little bean" Ellie says mine are "hunbun"
or "honeybunny" or "pusscat," Megan says
I call all my three boys "sonshine."

November 25

musings poem #3

deep dusk I gaze down from the
little cessna at the california roads
now strings of bright moving beads
the little towns puddles of light
the big ones their mall areas awash
spaced streetlamps tiny points and
off in the dark hills here and there
the single gleam of a house a barn
I pick out a country road's moving light
as it inches slow as a bug. I think,
people in that little car I wish you well
then wonder are those persons aware
someone far overhead is wishing them well
probably not then wonder might there be
anyone down there amongst the thousands
who is glancing up at our blinking lights
red on the port wing green on starboard
wishing us well maybe so maybe so

December 2

toothfairy poem

by Rodd Whelpley

The most dangerous game
Is Tooth Fairy
A terrible bargain
In your moist palm
A Sacagawea
Under his pillow
A shard of bone
And if, at the wrong moment,
You cough
Or a nightmare wakes him
Or the dog growls
Or, or, or . . .
Then magic absents itself
From yet another world
Maybe his
But most certainly yours

December 9

lovepoem #15

my brother-in-law listened to
a life-weary friend of many years.

"Have you learned to love yourself?"
my brother-in-law asked.

"I try," said the friend, "but I
don't succeed. How about you?"

"I try too," my brother-in-law said

"but don't succeed much either."

the friend nodded. "It would help," he
said, "if I didn't know myself so well."

December 16

christmas story in two scenes

scene one:

in new haven we attended church
on the block where we lived we were
the only white family a black black
santa delivered bags of candy to the
children at the christmas party our
three small daughters had saucer eyes
the next day at the university party
a white white santa delivered bags of
candy to the children our small white
daughters again were thrilled: santa is
here again, santa has come AGAIN! ! !

scene two:

on north fifth street springfield when
the drug rehab house was right across from
us one christmas morn we heard a cacophony
of honking we looked out a black black santa
was in the snow shouting merry christmas
and waving at passing cars one car stopped
abruptly out hopped a white white santa
he ran around the hood of his car he and
the black black santa embraced pounded
each other on the back then the white santa
raced back to his car and drove off honking
while the black santa continued to wave and
call out to cars made merry on our street

December 23

christmas lullaby

*(My mother, Vera Wardner Dougan, 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.

December 30

gratitude poem, without number

we tried to keep track: this caring person
called at the house this one sent flowers
this one brought food this one wrote, emailed,
phoned, this one prayed or chanted or arranged
a meditation which literally circled the world
this one hugged actually everyone hugged
though many from a distance whole groups
participated in helping we want to thank all
of you we need to thank you with written
words of gratefulness, of our love for
your love and caring, but we get muddled
we do not always know for sure who
sent the perfect lilies who brought ginger
cookies and each of you said such special
things. we want you to know you're all
thanked appreciated loved even if some
of you may never receive our direct words

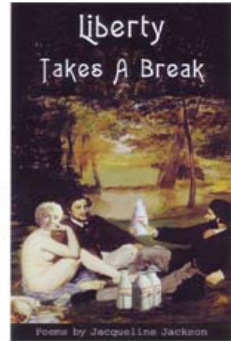
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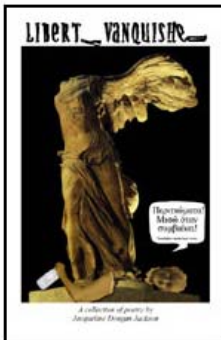
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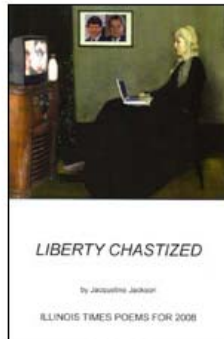
2006



2007



2009



2008

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