

# 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



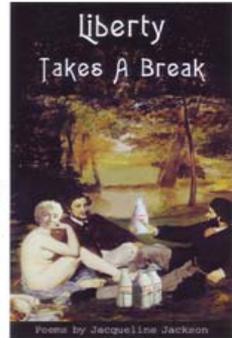
Previous collections of poetry  
published in The Illinois Times



2005



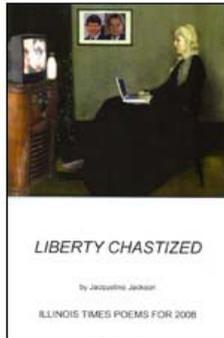
2006



2007



2009



2008

Thanks to J. Mitch Hopper (Custom Video Systems Co.) who designed and saw to it that the 2010 Liberty volume was produced, and to Roland Klose who first asked for these poems.

