

# Liberty Goes Granite



*A collection of poetry by  
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Illinois Times - 2013*





LIFE EXPERIENCES

POETRY  
POETRY  
METAPHOR  
RHYME  
IAMBIC  
POETRY  
SIX-LE  
POETRY  
POETRY  
BLANK  
VERSE  
ANY OLD THING  
POETRY



### *From the author*

The 2012 issue gave Liberty's history and explained the cow connection in so many of the poems.

This year I've continued my life work (see back pages). Volumes 3 and 4 will be out in April; these are the last. I plan to send out notices.

### *Dedication*

This year's dedication is to the members of the Thursday night writing group, whose presence, work, and critiques gladden my heart.

It continues to be dedicated to those listed in 2012, who, like Dr. Dolittle's pushmi-pullyu, are pushing and pulling to be sure Round Barn reaches completion: Reg Gibbons, Roland Klose, Jeremy Schmidt, Mitch Hopper, Rodd Whelpley, Annette Hunsaker, Tom McBride. Brian Jackson, and more!

This work has truly been a team effort.

Again, thanks to Mitch Hopper for producing this booklet, and another inspired cover.

(He is trying to figure how to use a Picasso and still make the author recognizable.)



*January 3, 2013*

**skylark poem #1**

I am thankful to those who made us  
memorize as kids useful stuff yes like  
multiplication tables but I'm thinking  
of poetry miss lala dixon my eighth grade  
english teacher she of the shapeless dress  
drooping boobs she talked a kind of baby  
talk her name was pronounced layla but  
we called her la-la behind her back she  
made us memorize parts of shelley's to  
a skylark: "hail to thee blithe spirit// bird  
thou never wert// who from heav'n or near it  
pourest thy full heart// in profuse strains of  
unpremeditated art" what magic words for  
young minds six syllables to unpremeditated  
and the way your lips teeth tongue wrap  
around blithe (try it) and "we look before  
and after// and pine for what is not// our  
sincerest laughter// with some pain is fraught  
our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest  
thought" how generous of her to give us those  
treasures in our heads to last for life I loved  
larks before I ever heard one now my wish is  
to lie next spring on whitehorse hill down the  
ridgeway from wayland smithy's longbarrow  
listen to the lambs all a-crying look up into  
the fathomless blue and be drunk with skylarks

*January 10, 2013*

**post-holiday poem**

NPR's this American life had stories about the lengths some parents have gone to make the good saint real I was too young to recall when he brought our pony but there are photos of my sisters and me astride the gentle beast and a rather thin Santa holding the bridle my folks were realists: of course Santa didn't come down the chimney ours was too narrow he came in the door and in the morning the cookies and milk were always gone I won't repeat the worst NPR story but my parents never threw horse apples on the roof to show reindeer had been there—well, they needn't would they as he did come through the door horse apples in the yard wouldn't have been mistaken for reindeer turds—where were the hoof marks anyway we knew horse apples—used them frozen for snowballs when snow was scarce



*January 17, 2013*

**water turned off:  
sorry for the inconvenience**

oh how did they pee  
in the PAC  
when the pressure became burning  
at our local place of learning  
did some take a paper cup  
and try not to fill it up  
for it was sure to spill  
in a case of overflow  
did some try a filing drawer  
which would hold a little more  
did some sneak out to the bushes  
and bare their frosty tushes  
hoping no one would report 'em  
or worse make fun and sport 'em  
did the male profs write in snow  
as they did oh long ago  
did the women stifling cries  
press tight their throbbing thighs  
p'raps there was a jamboree  
when no one got to pee  
in the lavator-or-y  
at our university  
when the water was turned off  
in the PAC

*January 24, 2013*

**found remark poem # 8**  
*from Gillian at 17*

“I have to write a  
Canterbury tale  
tonight. How long  
did it take Chaucer?”

*January 31, 2013*

**globalwarming poem #5**

okay folks we can quit worrying  
this human-driven climate change  
catastrophic weather is going to  
be over in about 500 years I heard it  
from a major scientific mouth saw  
graphs photos that's because we'll have  
used up all the forests oil coal by then  
plus the CO2 will have sunk to the  
ocean floor where it's being absorbed  
into the dead coral then things will  
ease back to our normal climate  
change cycle what will happen to us  
through those years as our numbers  
grow exponentially is an easy guess  
arable land will dwindle waters rise  
droughts increase fracking make our  
wells undrinkable tumble our peaks  
into our streams foster revolutions  
against the gated communities but  
hey we can grow parsnips near the  
south pole and maybe if we reproduce  
even faster we can cut it to 400 years  
or adopt by global choice or more likely  
non-choice zero population growth

*February 7, 2013*

**strange sight poem #1**

our river flooded and froze  
when the water receded the  
kids and I winter-hiked in  
the sangamon bottomland  
each tree, thick and ancient  
to sapling slim, was circled  
about waist high with a white  
ice tutu a vast corps de ballet  
sleeping beauties stilled by a  
cold enchantress or perhaps  
waiting for the cue of swan lake

*February 14, 2013*

**zen moment poem #1**

by guest poet Delinda Chapman

the next day, in the  
stillness of the moment,  
noting the candle's  
rhythmic flicker I knew  
the walls were singing,  
reverberating from the joyous  
sounds of forty choir-camp voices  
as they raised the roof of my home

*February 21, 2013*

**inconsequential poem # 15**

demi said hang on to  
that thought while  
I empty the hot water  
bottle but I don't know  
whether wondering  
when and where  
baloney originated  
is a thought worth  
hanging onto

*February 28, 2013*

**downtonabbeypoem #1**

well it was a crummy trick  
not up to masterpiece standards  
I understand the brits got hit  
with both childbirth deaths on  
successive christmas days we  
were clobbered in february  
matthew it seems and maybe  
sybil too wanted out though it  
must have been making both  
a mint folks worldwide hanging  
on this glorified soap opera it  
reinforces why I prefer print  
two-thirds through mr rochester  
doesn't decide to walk off the set  
nor darcy heaven forbid head for  
greener pastures; yet we do have a  
hazard with books we'll never solve  
the mystery of dickens' edwin drood

*March 7, 2013*

**politico poem #11**

the institution where once I so  
proudly taught has introduced a minor  
called liberty studies partly funded by  
the koch brothers urbana turned it down  
but not us are we so desperate for dough?  
in the article a senior student is quoted:  
“Nobody will be forced to earn a minor in  
liberty studies, concerns about academic  
freedom and critical thinking in the  
program might be overblown, given  
that most UIS students take a pragmatic  
approach to their studies and rarely  
speak up in class. They know if they  
don’t say anything, the course is over  
faster and they can leave sooner.” Ah  
me—in 1970 we began with such ideals  
my students and those of other profs  
couldn’t wait to get to class they stayed  
beyond the allotted time we couldn’t  
shut them up how far we have fallen  
are the koch brothers the new salvation  
for learning? our home state sure ain’t



*March 14, 2013*

## **babblepoem #1**

you word lovers out there have you  
discovered babble on the net it's free  
for a bit then continues so without  
stats to help but life membership is  
peanuts it's a combo boggle-scrabble  
new grid daily it's challenging but  
here's what's most fascinating the  
babblechat bar where clever clues  
are given babblers greet old friends  
welcome new, pepper gridbabble with  
states of health one has a depressed  
grandson not finishing his dissertation  
so talk ensues on deadlines as well as  
mental health today someone is going  
to synagogue this eve, who's jewish in  
babbleland for advice on garb? she  
doesn't want to offend turns out many  
are qualified on this topic I learned  
orthodox reformed the pros and cons  
of pants vs skirts r. c.'s chimed in on  
catholic events a muslim contributed  
clothing mores you get to know these  
wordhounds from canada u.s. u.k. aus  
the grid flips at midnight central time  
all have monikers my daughter no. 3  
is rastapopoulos from tintin uusue  
must be unitarian she hasn't told us  
that uu's wear jeans though as head of  
a department somewhere she had wise  
words on late dissertations yesterday

*March 21, 2013*

**obitpoem #1**

a recent obit in the state j-r is  
too good to pass up who wrote it  
nephew maybe niece the account  
is of an ordinary life if such be  
birth education job etc etc then  
“she became adventuresome in  
her old age” at 80 skydived 81  
got a butterfly tattoo other daring  
exploits follow punctuated with  
more butterflies then at 84 she  
ziplined and shortly after “flew  
off to join her lord” way to go  
maggie! may we all be so gutsy grab  
life by the oysters in our waning years

*March 28, 2013*

**funnybiz poem #6**

how about a joke in this space  
my daughter #2 reports she  
got a t-shirt for her son it had a  
group of marshmallows sitting  
around a campfire with terror  
on their faces the marshmallow  
storyteller was saying “and  
then they took the chocolate  
and then graham crackers . . .”

*April 4, 2013*

**poetrypoem #11**

my brother once got booted from  
a ninth grade english class for his  
reply to a reprimand “oh butcher  
spare yon tender calf” yes a poetic  
quote but archy and mehitabel  
must not have been included in  
that teacher’s accepted canon  
wat the hell wat the hell

*April 11, 2013*

**north fifth street poem #17**

seventy score and seven runners passed  
my door this morning many in blue t-shirts  
the lincoln half-marathon: I've lived in  
lincolnland over 40 years now; one gets  
inoculated though I used to take classes to  
his home on mary's birthday give cake to  
passersby I've been slow to read team of rivals  
finished it last night fought tears throughout  
his later years the repeated deaths fought the  
depths of my child's death though I have not  
walked through battlegrounds strewn with  
bodies sprawled thick as stones on a scree  
touching the dying no wonder his profound  
sadness punctuated by the humor he needed  
to endure no wonder mary was as she was I  
see her now living across this street a recluse  
dishonored estranged from the remaining  
child who committed her I see lincoln in my own  
foyer 1860 exchanging banter with the workmen  
he who shook 1700 hands in a white house hour  
it's a true legend this house visit it fits and now  
I watch 1700 runners, thinking how different  
our country would be had he lived had his  
children lived he of the 70 times seven  
griefs did not spurn individual ones how I too  
would be different were my child here loving  
this spectacle: my house, our street, these running  
feet we all are hallowed by his presence among us

*April 18, 2013*

**ZenMomentPoem #2**

**by guest-poet Delinda Chapman**

The visiting choir director  
When speaking with the children  
Asked their favorite song  
As they shrugged their shoulders  
She asked then their favorite animal  
“Cows” said a boy,  
“The cows say ‘Moo Moo.’”  
Within minutes the director  
Had the whole congregation  
Singing in a rousing round,  
“The Cows say Moo Moo”  
“The Cows say Moo Moo”  
“The Cows say Moo Moo.”

*April 25, 2013*

**bostonmarathon poem #2**

two unbidden pictures keep filling  
my head neither from tv screens one  
that kid younger than my grandsons  
lying in his pooled blood in the beached  
boat waiting for the inevitable he'd  
surely gathered news on his flight the  
dead 8-year-old others with shattered  
bodies severed limbs did he feel any  
remorse was it all rage defiance his  
mother screamed I heard that on the  
air the other is of a 7-year-old  
her brother gone her own leg gone had  
she been taking ballet like my young  
grandkids she surely played tag rode  
her bike I hope she'll meet our spunky  
illinois congresswoman both legs lost  
in warfare that shouldn't have been  
I hope her mother's head heals: her  
crippled heart is needed and the dad's  
too I heard a caller-in saying yes let us  
praise police and boston bravery but  
remember remember butchered syrians

*May 2, 2013*

**earthday poem #3**

went to earthday festivities at  
union park: encouraging displays  
greeny ideas demonstrations  
so cold and rainy not many came  
the decorated refrigerators caught  
my heart they should be a traveling  
exhibit green trolls popping out to  
sing green limericks thumb noses  
at gas guzzlers and get this if you  
want a green whole-body burial  
you can now be shrouded in jute  
and lowered in a wicker casket  
you'll join the earth quite quickly



May 9, 2013

**earthday-ecopoem # 11**

*“A major study commissioned by the British government concludes in its yesterday report that rapid and substantial spending to combat global warming is needed to avert a catastrophic reduction in worldwide productivity on the scale of the Great Depression that could devastate food sources, cause widespread deaths and turn hundreds of millions of people into refugees.”*

-- Los Angeles Times, Oct. 31, 2006

our span will not outlast the dinosaurs'  
our great-great-grands will not enjoy s'mores  
those long-lived beasts were done in by a stone  
we can manage thank you all alone

*May 16, 2013*

**ecopoem #17**

everything living  
on this thin skin  
that supports life  
has three missions  
eat to stay alive  
for the same reason  
avoid being eaten  
and breed in order to  
perpetuate your line  
so it can go on eating  
and avoid being eaten  
all the rest is frosting  
like the bruch first  
violin concerto

*May 23, 2013*

**operapoem #2**

when you hear over WILL that  
the opera will start an hour early  
you automatically think wagner  
and sure enough here come the  
leit motifs of sigmund or seigfried  
or whoever (our cows never milked  
well during ride of the valkyries)  
my intro to real stage wagner: a  
high school classmate enamored  
of opera coached my sibs and me  
on the ring cycle for months then  
we all took the train to Chicago  
for a live performance singers and  
orchestra oh it was thrilling all right  
and we were well prepared but it  
got to be eleven our train's departure  
and brunhilde had not yet lain asleep  
in her circle of magic fire no way were  
we leaving we stayed through the  
final bows then took the milk train  
home to wisconsin jammed in with.  
early editions of the tribune no cells  
in those days our folks didn't much  
worry just eager for postmortems

*May 30, 2013*

**skylark poem #2**

her ashes—my brit child's—were in a  
baggie only about a palmful I left a pinch  
at the dorset farm she loved another on  
white horse hill near the town of her birth  
sun wind skylarks brilliant kites and folk  
from all over giving the prehistoric chalk  
carving its yearly cleaning a third pinch  
in cornwall's lost garden of heligan back in  
the trees a giant troll head half out of the  
ground its nose a long root its lush hair  
waving greenly I left some ash in the corner  
of a merry eye (a mosaic of white and blue  
pottery shards) call it a tear of joy the last  
bits I scattered the length of the green maid  
asleep in the woods from her cradled green  
head to her toes most on her toes the toes of  
the green child I kissed one by each one my  
final lonely act before leaving her lost form in  
the e.r. sleep gently beloved demi in woods  
you loved now part of a form that enchanted  
you my lost child in the lost garden of heligan

*June 6, 2013*

**remember poem #8**

in sunday school  
one sunday  
I was five or six  
I wanted to  
go back to  
the sand table  
but they said  
you're too big  
a girl for that

*June 13, 2013*

## **brewpoem #1**

here are the brews we drank in england  
piddle from the nearby village of piddle  
there's a cluster of piddles including  
piddle in the hole we drank hobgoblin  
dark ale from the wychwood brewery in  
witney. heligan honey, roosters elderflower  
recommended in the "spit or swallow beer  
review", crop circle from hop back brewery  
about those circles our farmer host says  
I could make one myself the only puzzle  
is how the fellows keep from being caught  
it takes a little time maybe the field's owner  
is in on the sport this did not diminish our  
pleasure in the ale we also quaffed magpie  
magic though real magpies on the lawn  
were being lured into live traps (another  
magpie needed for bait) and transported  
they kill valued fledglings like swallows also  
what is happening to cuckoos notorious for  
usurping nests for their own eggs and leaving  
the hapless wee owners to bring up a ravenous  
foster child we heard nary a cuckoo during  
our stay michael says he hasn't heard one in  
three years I'm off the subject aren't I well  
to finish how about a dumb joke from my  
childhood when the lord passed out ears I  
thought he said beers so I says gimme big ones

*June 20, 2013*

**estate sale poem #1**

one should not feel regret  
for the things not bought  
at an estate sale after all I got  
the presents for my grandkids'  
joint birthday bash due that night  
a fleet of bright little motorcycles  
well-made 50c each and an artsy  
dragon music box that played a  
rather unmagical puff for only  
three bucks but what I really  
wanted was the worn pull-toy  
from the 30s a cheerful wooden  
donald duck hammering on a  
xylophone and honey bunch her  
first visit to the farm prob 1910  
but donald was 150 bucks and  
honey bunch a measly \$4.00  
I at least should have bought  
honey bunch but I thought I  
had one of that series in my  
huge collection of ancient books  
for kids and who's going to want  
that collection anyway what will  
anyone want with a set of worn  
st nicholases and honey bunches

*June 27, 2013*

**paleo poem #5**

friends who spit in a bottle  
have found their genes are  
between two and three percent  
neanderthal let us sing praise  
to our heavy-browed ancestors  
let us take comfort that even if  
our wise species did them in  
(and how shall we ever know)  
they still exist in almost all  
of us no doubt contributing  
valuable bits to our DNA



*July 4, 2013*

**word poem #6**

this babble game on the net  
sorta like boggle isn't a complete  
waste of time yesterday I learned  
"isohyets" are lines on a map that  
connect areas of equal rainfall I  
see that useful in conversation I  
already knew "oriel" a window but  
it pleasantly recalled st chapelle  
another "feces" familiar enough  
yet a reminder of our common  
humanity broader though for all  
creatures defecate even bacteria  
the weight of an old bed pillow is  
said to be half dust mite excretia  
sobering thought maybe no one  
will want to talk to me today don't  
know I even want my own company  
let's see what the current words net  
ah here are agora aristate gnat and  
gnaws hock hogan and this oddity  
ringtaws accepted in the grid but  
the babble dictionary gives no hint  
nor taws alone does no one play  
tops or marbles anymore we did

*July 11, 2013*

**independence day poem #1**

driving home after a july 4 picnic  
the sky blossoming with fireworks  
explosion after explosion and  
on the radio the 1812 overture  
with real cannons at the finale real  
church bells a smash performance  
by the minnesota symphony boy  
did that piece curdle our cows' milk  
when they heard it in the barn and on  
July 4 every dog covered under a bed

*July 18, 2013*

## **enos park poem #1**

hey guys hows about some good news  
here's enos park on the humble near  
north side we have a sculpture garden  
across from susie q's a pink and blue  
tuxhorn behemoth swung our first  
large statue into place and there's the  
west side christian church with its  
scores of volunteers come to give  
mcclernand school a face-lift surely  
a spirit-lift too (it sure lifts mine all the  
trees trimmed in my yard because I'm  
surrounded by the school) and what  
about third presby on n. seventh it's  
serving a meal free every thursday to  
the community you don't need to be  
poor or homeless everyone is welcome  
the pastor brent says it's because folk  
don't walk to church any more they  
seldom know their neighbors so this is  
to meet them presby also has a well  
stocked staffed attended kids' library  
while kumler methodist is fostering  
garden plots in our vacant lots we also  
have a bike doctor who'll help you fix  
your bike there is more yet going on  
rehabbing houses habitat involved a  
house rent free for our very own cop  
a rehab store with doorknobs light  
fixtures staircases saved from the  
wrecking ball don't forget the art ass'n  
we need our bard, lola, to write another  
book include marilyn steve bud andy  
michelle bernie carol amaya sheila jack  
can't list all names of this group effort

*July 25, 2013*

**you can't make this up poem #1**

in texas at the statehouse  
the security guards took away  
from the women entering all  
feminine materials what  
concealed carry is in a tampon?

*August 1, 2013*

**greenpoem #4**

a friend tells of her sister who  
when very small recited a  
catechism with the line “god is  
the supreme being who rules  
heaven and earth”--for years she  
thought “supreme being” was a  
“string bean” entrusted with this  
formidable job it seems to me  
we could do worse a string bean  
is upright reliable you can count  
on a string bean it is humble  
unpretentious respected and  
right now green is a popular  
even powerful symbol we  
need all the green we can get

*August 8, 2013*

**vermont poem # 17**

evening still light, ashley, six, stands on  
the dock watching me swim she is in her  
shorty yellow summer pajamas a green  
frog splashed across her belly she states  
to me gravely, "I am exploring the world."

*August 15, 2013*

**foodie poem #5**

a friend lately led a class to china  
saw many wonders took tons of pix  
one sight was not so palatable at the  
zoo you could purchase a live chicken  
or even an entire cow and feed it to  
the lions you could buy just a haunch  
of meat if you were squeamish or  
watch a movie of a tiger tearing into  
a bellowing bovine here's a way to  
save public money we should suggest  
to our henson robinson zoo how about  
for-sale bunnies to feed their big cats

*August 22, 2013*

**north fifth street poem #22**

I appreciate west side christian in its  
marvelous makeover of mcclernand  
it included me luckily surrounded by  
that school they trimmed my trees leveled  
a long dirt barrow carted off my behemoth  
brush pile it took a fork lift cleared the  
adjacent jungle where a volunteer swung  
on the vines whee and my neighbor of  
27 years said he'd never known a gate  
was there my yard now looks like a kid  
who's had his back-to-school haircut all  
neat all scalped new shoes on his sole-tough  
feet I really, really do appreciate being part  
of mcclernand's transformation the church's  
grand generosity but—but -- I have watched  
a small rabbit wander the grass what has  
happened to its homeland and a possum too



*August 29, 2013*

**vermont poem #24**

forty-five—maybe more—biggies  
gliding swiftly on the water before  
our shore black gold identical stately  
as swans a long trail of geese a bit  
bunched here and there I'd heard  
them recently across the lake gabbling  
fighting maybe just conversing now  
profiles that look unwaveringly ahead  
a silent egyptian mural going where?  
I later found their pit stop a grassy  
knoll on shore coils of snake-black  
poop so huge you couldn't pick your  
way a few feathers too I never saw that  
flock again oh maybe three skimming the  
surface but never that long string of  
regal waterfowl making the lake their own

*September 5, 2013*

**marylebone waxworks poem #1**

mom wanted to visit madame tussauds  
famous wax museum when they were in  
london dad wasn't eager he'd binged his  
knee was on a cane but he hobbled along  
past lifelike ax murderers kings beheaded  
queens winston churchill philanthropists  
poets till tired he stood tall and still beside  
a pillar hands in repose on his cane seemed  
a waxwork himself a tourist came by looked  
him over glanced down at his feet to learn  
from the placard who he was there wasn't  
one of course she looked back up at him  
puzzled and he winked her scream could  
be heard farther than buckingham palace

*September 12, 2013*

**hearing poem #1**

I have a friend with tinnitus he  
has sound in his head all the time  
sometimes it's a buzzing he says  
sometimes a hissing but it's constant  
always there sometimes he tells me  
I stand out on the back step in the  
early morning feel the breeze see  
the leaves moving and I wonder  
what does silence sound like

*September 19, 2013*

**cicada poem # 17**

my backyard is shrill with sex  
no it ain't no coffee kletch  
all the guys that fill the trees  
are shrieking git me with their knees  
locust ladies loose their thongs  
choose the studs with shrillest songs  
such a skirl of sound is ringing  
lustful lassies come awinging  
join in great gigantic ceilis  
with the wankiest of the wailies  
does every adam grasp his annie  
every frankie frig his fannie  
every stewie smooch his jill  
till finally the trees fall still  
surely some unlucky boys  
who have not made successful noise  
must practice their seductive screeches  
if they hope soon to ease their breeches

*September 26, 2013*

**foodie poem #4**

those of us who live alone talk out loud  
to ourselves, come up with varied games  
one of mine when the larder is bare yet  
going to the store seems onerous is to  
play freezer surprise select something  
long frozen unmarked undated of course  
defrost and see what leftover is for supper  
yesterday's did not look promising a sort  
of grey sludge rather like pudding but  
lumpily suspicious it proved to be thick  
pea soup tasty with hunks of ham not all  
choices are as lucky my criterion in this  
game is would a soccer player in the andes  
eat it my depression-child upbringing  
makes the answer invariably yes

*October 3, 2013*

**suicide poem number what**

well it's three years today since  
she chose to leave us I shouldn't  
feel any different today since I  
think about her every day but  
somehow your bones remind you  
more strongly. I guess I have some  
things to be thankful for that she  
didn't take a messy way out with  
shotgun or fatal jump; overdose and  
drowning is neat but if gary and  
larry hadn't sought her found her  
still swimming it would have been  
a mess to find her in the lake the  
shore full of gawking folk while  
divers dove and dove so I can be  
grateful to her to Gary and Larry who  
surrounded her with love at the last  
grateful to friends family all who  
loved her and still miss her keenly  
she was desperately ill of course or  
she wouldn't have put any of us  
through it I hope there is no afterlife  
or if there is she didn't take her  
demon with her well as the final line  
of lycidas says tomorrow to fresh woods  
and pastures new the only way to keep on

*October 10, 2013*

## **bowdlerpoem #1**

a pure minded pedant of yore  
(starts like a limerick don't you  
think? never fear) well this guy  
purged ancient literature of any  
offense he eliminated all such  
tainted material but he was too  
much a scholar to get rid of it  
totally so he put it in appendices  
that meant all us latin and greek  
students didn't have to search for  
the naughty bits they were nicely  
collected for us in one spot which  
brings me to book banning and  
other school ills when we lived in  
rockford they were trying to oust  
the superintendent a good one  
I wrote a ballad the local paper  
didn't have guts to print though  
I heard it was posted in their  
newsroom one verse went thusly:  
they're reading stuff in high school  
that they hadn't oughter to be  
I haven't seen the stories but  
they're pure pornography  
and if you think that dirty words  
are really something new then  
look at old will shakespeare  
and that smutty bible too --  
if you fancy more rhymes ask  
for the rest of the ballad with  
chorus also the name of that busy  
scholar has entered the language as  
bowdlerize something *IT* doesn't do

*October 17, 2013*

**farmer letter poem #16**

thursday we had the university  
down harvesting their corn yield  
test plots then yesterday we made  
sixty-five cows happy by telling  
them the extent of their pregnancy



*October 24, 2013*

## **prayerpoem #4**

today's prayers were in luganda  
mukama tukwebaza, olwobulamu  
bwafte era tukwebazza olwabantu  
bonna abali wano embanjawulo  
abakazi abassajja aberu nabadugavu  
lord we thank you for our lives and  
we thank you for everyone who is  
here whether man woman black white  
I heard about a school in uganda  
and two orphanages one filled with  
children who have lost both parents  
to the aids virus the other filled with  
children who themselves have  
received the hiv-aids virus my  
nighttime dreams are so often of  
children lost or of my trying to  
protect children so they will not  
be lost how could I not contribute

*October 31, 2013*

**weedseed poem #1**

going through old farm stuff I find  
a folder called wis crop improvement  
ass'n it holds a 1965 program for an  
area meet that includes a workshop on  
weed seed identification and ends BE  
SURE TO BRING YOUR GLASSES  
SINCE WE WILL BE LOOKING AT  
WEED SEEDS there follows a list and  
descriptions starting with quackgrass:  
“about 38 inch long, narrow, hollowed  
on one side with rachilla at base—green  
to straw colored.” do you want to hear  
descriptions of the rest? yellow foxtail,  
green foxtail, wild buckwheat (black  
bindweed), ladysthumb (smartweed),  
red sorrel, curled dock, lambsquarter,  
white cockle, yellow rocket, ragweed,  
hoary alyssum, wild mustard, wild  
radish, leafy spurge, dodder, buckhorn,  
oxeye daisy, canada thistle, sowthistle,  
velvet weed—what? no? I didn't think so

*November 7, 2013*

**north fifth street poem #17**

every weekday morning I hear the  
pledge of allegiance it's broadcast  
all over the neighborhood no I don't  
stop what I'm doing composting  
the garbage or wiping up a spill to  
stand with my hand on my heart  
facing the flag the only flag here is  
a small one atop a paper umbrella  
over the stove unless in july when  
one is always on the calendar but  
there's no daily pledge in july I do  
though in my heart join in wishing  
a happy birthday to every child  
announced and hoping she or he  
will receive a natal day present not  
flimsy or plastic that will break by  
bedtime or has too many pieces  
prone to loss and that that special  
kid is cherished today and every day

*November 14, 2013*

**irony poem I guess # 2**

with the world deteriorating  
in almost any area you think of  
consider farmland gobbled up  
oceans dying ditto the humanities  
I hesitate to mention that as a kid  
I found the crackerjack prize was  
worth ripping open the box to  
get at now they're just paper bits  
maybe a tattoo transfer mine has  
printing on the back says that some  
vintage prizes are collectors items  
worth thousands of dollars well duh

*November 21, 2013*

**from a great-grandkid poem #1**

one hears family stories that are  
revealed quite late sometimes only  
as conjecture for instance my friend's  
paternal great-grandmother when the  
black clad men pulled up in their black  
hearse-like cars she shoved all her  
children under the dining room table  
its cloth to the floor the men went  
down to her basement came up left  
she lifted her long skirt rolled a wad  
of money into her stocking it was  
prohibition one of the tablecloth kids  
told her granddaughter who told it  
to me what's your guess?

*November 28, 2013*

**thanksgiving poem #7**

one of the happiest events at  
our university has occurred  
yearly since '77 the international  
festival last week was no exception  
colorful native dress and design  
tasty native foods familiar and  
unfamiliar tongues the variety of  
games music and oh the dancing  
cheered on by the appreciative  
crowd irish scottish with bagpipes  
little ones still learning the steps  
but included with the bigger folk  
honduran indian many varieties of  
african each different poetry spoken  
with drum beats hip-hop too made  
you want to jump up swing into a  
grand celestial do-si-do I laughed at  
well fleshed gauzily draped bellies  
women daring flaunting drama with  
that exposed anatomy it gave me  
heart for my own protuberances  
any part of us can dance at any age  
my grandson will star in two scenes  
of nutcracker granddaughter in one  
both knowing the joy of movement  
I felt tears though remembering my  
mother nimbly skipping over and  
around crossed swords and then my  
daughter wildly improvising to  
simon's fiddle until the two swayed  
and slowed to a hushed diminuendo  
how she would have loved tonight  
how both would have loved tonight  
loved living in their lithesome bodies

*December 5, 2013*

**storypoem #16**

nellie needham a spinster schoolteacher  
my grampa's second cousin loaned him  
money in 1911 to build the round barn it  
was paid back very slowly over the years  
during the depression she lowered the  
interest to match the federal land bank  
wouldn't take no for an answer my dad  
inherited the debt told nellie he'd pay  
interest and some principle every due  
date but only if she first wrote to him  
she did but never mentioned money a  
lively correspondence ensued over many  
years I met her once in watertown I was  
15 she was over 90 tiny wrinkled  
spry bright eyed she said the chariot had  
missed her door if it didn't swing low  
soon she and her friends were going to  
charter a bus she also said every day  
she raised her kitchen shade if it stayed  
down her neighbors would know she was  
in trouble when my father paid the last  
installment she returned it wrote that of  
all the family she'd lent money to he and  
his father were the only ones who ever  
paid it back I have the file of mutual  
letters it is sweet reading she says old  
age has been kind to her with health  
home friends what more can she need?  
nothing, but the world needs more nellies

*December 12, 2013*

**longlastinglove poem**

it's been over forty years since jim  
a former herdsman worked in this  
barn he stands here looking around  
feeling its emptiness reminisces  
my favorite cow was a big rugged  
gentle cow of good production, I-9,  
she always stood just at the entrance  
to the lower barn beside her stood  
my other favorite J-2 her sister  
another favorite, K-5 stood about  
one fourth of the way around to the  
right then there was H-9 who was  
being milked when she rode on the  
float in the fourth of july parade



*December 19, 2013*

## **My Gift**

*This poem was written by my mother,  
Vera Wardner Dougan, to my father,  
for their first Christmas together, 1924.  
I'm repeating it here, for it is so  
simple, appropriate, and tender. JDJ*

If I could give to you one only gift  
To hold forever, in remembrance of me  
T'would be the peace that enters in the heart  
When love comes there to dwell, all silently.

I'd wrap it in the silver of the moon,  
And tie it with the distant purple haze;  
I'd seal it with a baby's little smile,  
And send it so, to gladden all your days.

*December 26, 2013*

**oomphalos poem #1**

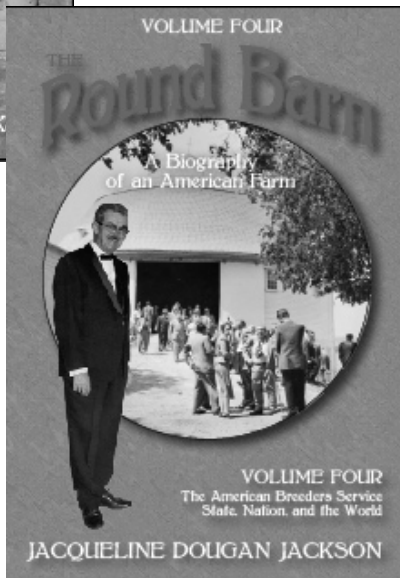
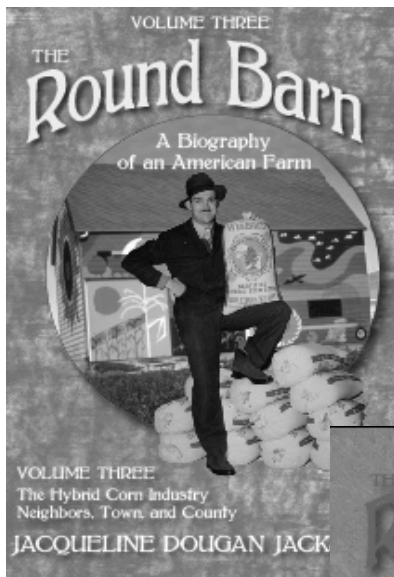
when my dad was sixty-seven he  
was in the hospital a couple months  
he was a terrible patient he wouldn't  
eat the food wouldn't drink the water  
"it tastes better in my horse trough!"  
and the coffee was strained through  
an irishman's sock mother had to  
bring him oyster stew in a thermos  
until he broke out all over in hives he  
recovered after a few gut operations  
the incisions had moved his navel far  
from home way over to the side this  
made him undisputed victor in the  
"trick" division of our belly button  
contests the youngest grandchild  
elspeth always aced "cutest"



The final volumes of The Round Barn, A Biography of an American Farm, will be published April, 1 2014.

Volume 3: "Ron's Place, The Hybrid Corn Business, Neighbors, Town, and County."

Volume 4: "American Breeders Service, State, Nation, and World."



“The rhythms of farm life pulse through the dozens of vignettes that make up the story of the round barn: the sheer, sometimes dangerous, work that keeps a farm going. We see how advances in science, the evolution of popular tastes, the vicissitudes of the economy, the world changing events like the Depression and two world wars affect the farm for good and ill. But Jackie's transcendent gift is her empathy for the family she loves and the people she meets growing up. The spirit of her grandfather, Daddy Dougan, pervades the book. His story exemplifies the intelligence, pluck, grace, and steadfastness that she sees in so many of the people around her.” --Joe Kolina, TriQuarterly

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"Jackie Jackson throws open the Round Barn doors to tell us an American story. She gives us a rich history of farm life at the mercy of the forces of science and the market, but grounded in rock solid Wisconsin values. In our world of '140' characters' Jackie adds depth and texture with the remembered word, the treasured memory, and the wonderful characters she met on her life's journey." --Dick Durbin, U.S. Senator-Illinois

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**[www.roundbarnstories.com](http://www.roundbarnstories.com)**

*The following is a sample story from the upcoming Volumes Three and Four of –*

The Round Barn, a Biography of an American Farm.

## Junior Schiz

It's 1955. Craig is in medical school at the University of Wisconsin. It's the evening of the variety show, the Junior Schiz, pronounced, of course, "skits." Craig is in it; his skit is a takeoff on the dean, a famous obstetrician. For his act he's paid a previous visit to his old friend Amos Grundahl, the artificial inseminator at the Rock County Breeders Co-op. He's borrowed a vital item of equipment for inseminating a cow.

The show is held at the student union on Lake Mendota, and such has been the popularity of the Jr. Schiz down through the years, that it's become a major university event, much anticipated. The acts can't be by just anybody who has an idea. There are auditions. Craig's audition was a shoo-in.

Tonight, the large auditorium is packed. For his skit, Craig has arranged for a hospital bed to be on stage. In the bed, under a sheet, is what appears to be a supine figure. Craig comes out, mimicking Dr. Campbell's distinctive walk and thrust of head. Everyone in the medical school recognizes who he's meant to be. They clap and cheer. He bends and peeps under the sheet, shakes his head, peers at the audience, then turns to check his instruments. He holds up an ice tong and nods sagely. The audience groans. He hefts a bundle of sticks marked TNT; the audience groans louder.

Then with thumb and forefinger he lifts the sterile packet that contains gloves and removes one. He inserts his hand in the glove and fits the fingers elaborately, holding his hand up to the assemblage after each finger is accomplished. Then, with studied nonchalance, he starts pulling up the cuff. There's an audible gasp when it reaches his elbow. As it reaches his shoulder the audience is laughing. Craig takes the strap, ducks his head through it and hooks it over his other shoulder, dramatically stretching out his sheathed arm. The audience is convulsed.

The dean, however, gets up and stalks out.



