

# Liberty Après les Heures

*A collection of poetry by  
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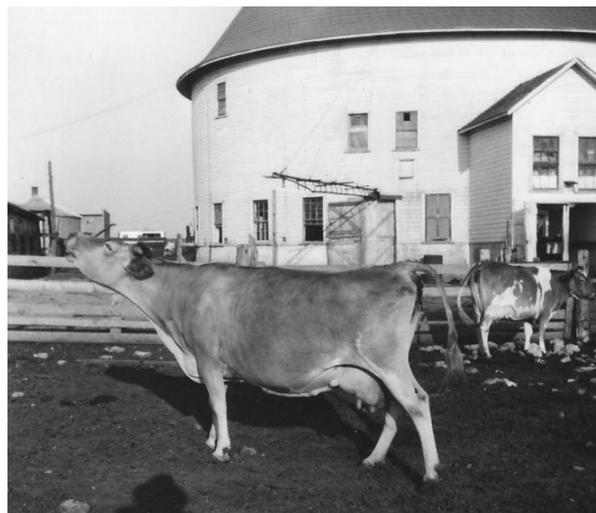




*ANNIVERSARY DEDICATION*

Ten years now of Liberty  
on Page 3 of Illinois Times.

this year's collection  
is dedicated to  
the many of you  
who keep shoving  
this fermenting critter  
from the ease  
of the stall  
to the work  
of the pen





*January 2*

**newyear's poem #9**

hi folks and happy january I have  
good news we can't destroy our earth  
no matter how we whack it frack it  
pollute it subject it to every outrage  
we can't destroy it we can do in a lot  
of species including ourselves but this  
terrestrial ball will keep on orbiting  
it can change itself radically though  
without our help when the biggest  
volcano on earth blows it will destroy  
life as we know it I'm talking about  
yellowstone you can't see the cone  
shape except from outer space it's  
sixty miles across it will be worse than  
the dinosaur killoff NPR says we'll get  
some warning but where to go I asked  
my nephew he guides at yellowstone  
well he said those slugs and shrimp  
that live on sulphur by those flumes  
in the deepest sea and don't need sun  
they'll be all right but it will take a  
couple billion years for us to re-evolve  
from them-- you ask where to go? I  
plan to be in the middle of the caldera  
with my lawn chair and a six pack

*January 9*

**appreciation poem # 4**

demi if you are anywhere out there  
in the great everywhere where you  
can hear my heart I am thanking you  
for your minnesota boots and heavy  
sock liners we are having minnesota  
weather and now that I've had the  
foot ops your boots fit and are exactly  
what I need right now along with your  
minnesota gloves cap coat scarf you  
have clothed me today I am grateful

*January 16*

**familystory poem #23**

our family traveled after the war  
once gas wasn't rationed we went to  
florida over christmas played on the  
beach en route we slept in those little  
separate tourist cabins that predate  
motels mother final-checked the room  
my sisters and I had been in found her  
good fountain pen under a bed no  
ballpoints back then for the next 20 miles  
we were berated—first that we hadn't  
even asked then left it behind her anger  
spent she finally opened her purse dropped  
the pen inside right beside an identical pen  
why didn't you say you hadn't taken it?  
mother wailed chagrined but we each thought  
a sister the culprit so we'd all stayed silent

*January 23*

**strange weather poem #7**

oddest bit of weather yesterday so odd  
it was mentioned on the local news mild  
out sun yet it was suddenly snowing and  
no ordinary snow - evenly spaced, blue  
between, and no ordinary flakes either  
but snow pancakes big as silver dollars  
they didn't drift down hither thither nor  
rapidly but at a steady near-rapid pace  
I haven't even the words for it maybe  
like big white polka dots on a dark blue  
dress the speed and size and pacing all  
combined they were divided like domino  
dots they came down for about ten minutes  
then it was over no wind most missed it  
but when I saw the strange snow through  
the window I dropped my project and ran  
outside they were not snowball shaped but  
flat and when they plopped on the walk  
they melted and then it was over ten minutes

*January 30*

**arachnid poem #13**

I'm sure you want to hear about spider sex  
males do not have copulatory organs they  
spin a small silk mat deposit their semen  
on it dip in their feelers then plunge these  
into the wife's abdomen a male is usually  
much smaller than the ferocious female  
who will eat him during the act if he is  
clumsy certainly afterwards to prevent this  
some males tie up the legs of their mate while  
she is in an amorous mood or attempt to make  
her less hungry by offering his lady-love a fly  
wrapped in a neat silken package how do I  
know these details I refer you to *The Spider*  
by Crompton old book but (likely) true facts

*February 6*

**music poem #16**

my sister was nine when mom took  
her young violinist to a fritz kreisler  
concert in milwaukee at its close  
they went backstage the famous artist  
was surrounded he was perhaps sixty  
joan wormed her way through adult  
legs till she was directly before him  
gazing up in adoration he noticed her  
laid a hand on her head said a single  
word—"child" --so quietly so gently  
so reverently that it contained the  
promise of all the past all the future

*February 13*

**on a monday morning**

*by John Knoepfle, former poet  
of this column; 91 on Feb. 4*

well dear heart  
what to say this sunshine hour  
it is a blue sky day  
the threat of the storm is gone

you will be out awhile  
as I struggle with these lines

what happened to ambition  
the desire to put something  
down on a page  
something arresting  
careful readers will cherish

I don't know  
how to say I love you  
as if it was the first time  
anyone had thought to say this

well I do you know  
and have these sixty years

well now a dog is barking  
and my train of thought  
slips out of mind

I leave you these poor lines

come home soon  
they will still be here  
these husbandly ideas  
waiting for you my dear

*February 20*

**opera poem #4**

just viewed a magnificent aida from  
the met cast of thousands egyptian  
sets animals no elephants though  
pleated skirts familiar music but I  
have to confess in that final scene  
with the lovers radames and aida  
entombed beneath the altar amneris  
prostrate up top snuffling (the split  
set sort of resembles a dollhouse)  
the pathos is somewhat lost on me  
I keep hearing mr rosewater from  
kurt vonnegut's god bless you mr  
rosewater when that gentleman  
watching a performance of aida  
leans over the balcony, calls out  
"you'll last longer if you don't sing"  
a line I've found useful in a number  
of situations not all involving song

*February 27*

**estrus poem #1**

how can you tell when a cow is in heat well  
looking is the most sure way to detect estrus  
but if she's far off in a field with other cows it  
helps to have a dye patch on her flank which  
when disturbed will give her a big red splotch  
(yes virginia cows have homosexual tendencies  
and will harry another cow) if a bull is present  
an altered bull you don't want any old bull for  
your cows he can wear a chin ball marker that  
hangs under his chin like a giant pencil stub it  
will scribble with dye on her back when he tries  
to breed then there is the electronic chip glued  
near her tail head she will signal back to her  
owner's computer that she's waiting for the  
inseminator more info yet can be transmitted  
by an embedded chip which will report on her  
temperature indicate belly burbles any health  
problems to the farmer as he quaffs his coffee  
in front of his screen and pokes a key to alert  
the breeders co-op next question please

*March 6*

**rye poem #1**

I found an essay my sister wrote when she was a college freshman her prof must have asked for an autobiography it is of course interesting to me for we shared the same childhood and some of the same memories I find it telling how certain things were strong enough for both of us to have later written them down one such is that our father sowed the yard of our new farmhouse to rye I recall it was timothy but pat's essay says rye well close enough anyway he did it for a nurse crop but it killed the new grass rather than nursing it now why did we both single out this item when there are a thousand others you'd think more memorable pat writes "we had to battle our way through the rye to the front door" maybe it's because we didn't know anyone else whose yard came up to their chins she ends her essay nicely I feel I am halfway between childhood and adulthood if I hang on tight I'll come out of one and go into the other right side up the paper has no grade I'd give it an A

*March 13*

**storypoem #14**

in the car the whole family driving  
north I was eight I discovered a metal  
whistle a slush pump by blowing and  
sliding the plunger up or down one could  
make swooping sounds I soon realized  
by stopping on a note then moving the  
plunger spot to spot one could make tunes  
I was totally entranced it was one of those  
rare moments in life of absolute bliss until  
mother said jackie stop that noise it's  
bothering everyone I held the forbidden  
treasure in my lap the ride turned sour

March 20

**first day of spring poem**

*My snowdrops are up, shivering, but visited  
by honeybees, and so I offer you my mother's  
love poem to my dad, written in 1924, while  
their May marriage was pending.*

Because of You  
by Vera Wardner (not yet Dougan)

This year, because I know you,  
Spring is lovelier than it ever was before:  
The skies more blue;  
Spring magic in the swelling buds that hold  
New life. And on this day  
I never knew the wind to be so gay!  
The sun so gold!  
The earth mystic with promise—  
Trees serene with secret joy!  
The spring enchantment's in the air anew  
I wonder why it is—because of you!

*March 27*

**babylon #1**

woke up worked drank coffee worked  
emails phone calls worked rearranged  
manuscript last minute stuff worked  
worked didn't think a single thought  
about you till I was driving late to  
church and the car was flooded with  
all that baroque music you loved so well  
played so well it was then I bawled I  
remember an oratorio we sang in the  
teen choir in the methodist church I  
grew up in: choir practice was the  
social event of the week I learned more  
there than music—but we did sing  
and sing words, sometimes scripture  
“by the waters of babylon I sat down and  
wept when I remembered thee . . . if I  
forget thee o zion may my right hand  
forget its cunning” oh my first born I will  
never forget you even when both my hands  
lose cunning it is alright though to forget  
and then remember and weep and forget  
remember again weep again sometimes  
not weep for a day or even two days for  
you who stayed, chose to stay, in babylon

*April 3*

**musicpoem, sort of #1**

when we were kids we took our music  
lessons in madison every saturday at  
the wisconsin school of music a big old  
house with sound pouring out of every  
fissure from squeaks squawks scales to  
cdardas and the goldberg variations  
when you entered the house you faced  
a fireplace never any fire but on the  
mantle a ceramic dish shaped like the  
palms of two cupped hands ready to  
offer you candy or some sort of goodie  
or conversely to receive something  
never anything in it one saturday my  
sister patty put a little sign above the  
dish: "Help P.D." when she came back  
the next week it held a dollar and forty  
three cents in change pat kept the cash  
after all it said help P D and she was  
P D we all marveled who would give to  
P D not knowing who or what P D was  
it must've been those expectant hands  
or maybe the cacophony of all that music

*April 10*

**poop poem #2**

back to unpoetic topics here are two grossies about dog poop! I was in madison working with my nephew he lives three blocks from my sister he wasn't up yet I figured I'd go share a cup of coffee with my sister it was raining I have to tell you about my sister she is my big sister three years older and even at our advanced ages she says comb your hair stand up straight corrects my grammar so when she let me in and pointed to her front mat and said "Look at that!" in an indignant tone I thought she meant "At your age haven't you learned yet to wipe your wet feet?" so I wiped them in dog poop of their new puppy it took a few babbled minutes for her to understand why I'd done such a thing it gave my brother-in-law a huge laugh--the other story? I related the above to a friend she told of a friend's son a paperboy he'd sit on the rug beside his paper pile to fold them a call came one day to the editor a customer reported she'd received dog poop folded up in her paper one should tell things in threes so here's a bonus lincoln library's central display is called "everyone poops" it has an easter theme don't ask me why but go vote on your favorite diarama even frankenstein poops

*April 17*

**just-is poem #1 (or #1000)**

a car  
hit a car  
hit a car  
hit a car  
hit my friend  
ron stopped  
innocently  
at a red light  
he checked out  
okay at the  
hospital I  
could add  
philosophic  
clichés here  
web of life  
out of the  
blue left field  
but you can  
do that for  
yourself with  
little effort

*April 24*

**found poem: letter from my father**

To the editor of the Beloit Daily News:  
This note is addressed to the family who discarded their family cat on Colley Road just east of the I-90 underpass. This cat visited all the area's family farms. Some fed her. She finally found our homestead which is forty rods north of the road. We too fed her, but we didn't need a cat. She found some mice, poisoned, because our warehouse must be protected against rodents. She went into decline, could not eat. Today we had to dispose of her in spite of her wanting love and welcome into our home. So your sick cat is dead. We have numerous animals abandoned on our property. Maybe the most memorable was a dog locked inside our screen porch to be found the next morning. Or was it the six kittens, still sightless, left in a box at the foot of our lane? Whoever abandoned their pet cat in early March, for whatever reason, might like to know how she suffered and how her life ended on March 29, 1985. R.A. Dougan, Beloit

*May 1*

**philanthropy poem #1**

lately I have been writing a lot about  
john rockefeller prentice grandson of  
john d my new book is full of him and  
his tireless work in producing better  
cattle I knew him he gave me a copy of  
treasure island in latin a mt hope classic  
his father had arranged with scribners  
so that his children would have books  
interesting to read as he flogged them  
into learning latin and ancient greek as  
living languages it has the original  
wyeth illustrations rock signed it to me  
“macte virtute!”—“practice virtue”—  
I write about how he poured his money  
into research hiring all the best scientists  
how he was considered a rich man yet he  
was broke borrowing from his mother his  
sisters how he was generally despised  
because he was “wealthy” and probably  
also by jealousy for his research was two  
years ahead of the universities and don’t  
we all know universities should be doing  
the research not rich men (do you realize  
all the advances for women’s reproductive  
health have come through cow research?  
the pill to in vitro?) anyway rock spent  
millions developing a vessel to transport  
liquid nitrogen at almost absolute zero it  
was to carry perishable semen anywhere  
in the world it is vital to every hospital in the  
world now—for transplants and many other  
uses did rock prentice patent it? he would  
have gained multi-billions but no he gave it  
to the world a gift freely given I write all this  
thinking of montsanto patenting genes and  
everything else their scientists violate; they  
sue small organics off the land etc what has  
rich montsanto given the world but gmo’s?

*May 8*

**it's a strange world poem #2**

in the car I bellowed along with  
tannhauser that tremendous heavy  
measured theme with all those  
little squirrely bits you hardly  
hear sort of like a heavy tree trunk  
with tiny spring leaves fluttering on  
the thin branches around it or a  
giant striding surrounded by swarms  
of gnats good gnats a good giant then  
lohengrin came on the prelude to the  
third act with those cymbals bombastic  
trombones which suddenly calm into  
one of the sweetest most moving duets  
in all music with the oboe and cellos I  
played that cello part once and you  
wonder how people who write such  
incredible heart-wringing music can  
have anything but pure souls yet  
wagner was a vicious anti-semite

*May 15*

**frustration poem #gazillion**

when you're hunting for something  
really important and can't find it  
you turn up a lot of other stuff that  
should've been tended to yesterday  
or last week or last year or even before  
they flood you with intents purposes  
unfulfilled and even if you find what  
you were looking for which is only  
half likely you end up in total dis-  
traction--self-discrimination--and  
go off and play a computer game

*May 22*

**immortality poem #2**

I wonder if it ever crossed tenniel's mind  
when he was having fun with caterpillars  
smoking hookahs a neck stretched up to the  
tree tops a lizard flying out a chimney a cat  
vanished except for its grin that he would  
achieve immortality not for his great political  
cartoons so popular in punch but through alice

and I wonder whether arthur sullivan in  
whatever heaven he's in feels resentful that  
all that anyone remembers of the music he  
composed the music he counted on to bring  
lasting fame are the operettas written with  
gilbert--gilbert's name coming always first  
those will last forever the two had a rocky  
romance even enmity at the end sullivan  
does have one non g & s song remembered  
but he must feel as though he's the lost chord

*May 29*

**musicpoem #32**

driving listening to music over NPR  
visualizing choreography costumes I  
got to wondering what music can't you  
see dancers real music I mean well bach  
but no there are all those giges gavottes  
but a brandenburg? the third? dancers  
would be exhausted before the end of the last  
movement dervishes unless they took turns  
oho here's good ol' flight of the bumble bee  
didn't know it was by rimsky korsikoff those  
dancers would fall dead in only 1 min 20 secs

*June 5*

**quandary poem #4**

“We were just married,” Harlan the herdsman told me, “and we’d moved into the apartment over the milkhouse. They were butchering. Grampa Dougan climbed the stairs, knocked, and stood there holding the cow’s tail —long, brown, the white hairy plume on its end, the bloody stump at the top. He handed it to my bride. ‘There, lassie, is your wedding present,’ and left beaming. Neither of us knew what to do with it; we finally sneaked out that night and buried it in a ditch half a township away. Only later did we realize Daddy Dougan assumed any farm wife knew how to make oxtail soup and that he’d really presented us with a handsome gift.”

*June 12*

**ingenuity story #1**

back in the days of old-fashioned devices  
a huge group picture at a Y camp the  
photographer's camera would sweep  
the crowd so that one end was recorded  
before the other well there was this kid  
who stood on the beginning end of the line  
as soon as the shutter clicked ran like hell  
behind everyone to stand at the other end  
thereby appearing twice in the same photo  
grinning of course why do I tell you this  
it reminds me somehow of a student at the  
start of SSU he cased the school a few days  
returned at the start of the second quarter  
signed up for enough classes to complete  
a degree in one term paying one fee his  
schedule was a miracle grid he attended  
all classes took all exams met all deadlines  
postponed all papers took all incompletes  
then at his leisure finished off his work  
got his non-credits changed to grades  
and graduated you can bet the university  
closed that loophole in a hurry you were  
now forbid to take more than 16 hours  
without permission of your advisor I've  
sometimes wondered what's happened  
to both those kids I'm sure they've gone  
far not by illegalities but by their ability  
to leap into unimagined opportunities

*June 19*

**spur of the moment poem #1**

the woman ahead of me in the  
checkout line paid for her groceries  
in quarters the cashier made many  
little stacks and checked them again  
and again to be sure there were four  
in each the woman was more defiant  
than embarrassed my cheerful remark  
was probably out of line looks like you  
robbed your piggy bank she said to me  
you'll be here some day my reply was  
I already have been

*June 26*

**where I grew up poem #3**

the house is gone the bam is gone  
the metal com bins are gone the  
drying bins gone the com storage  
building gone the com processing  
building gone (the one with the  
mural on it you could see from town)  
even the old smokehouse is gone but  
the asparagus still grows in abundance  
wild roses bloom at the end of the lane

*July 3*

**on remembering poem #7**

daddy bathed us four in the tub  
a gentle word bathe but with daddy  
it was four left legs aloft scrubbed down  
with a soapy cloth four left arms stuck out  
ditto all turn around four more arms  
four more legs stand up four fronts  
four bums turn around four backs  
four butts faces up eyes screwed  
shut against the whirling cloth eight  
ears dug into four necks everybody  
down rinse climb out here's your towels  
it wasn't brutal just a rapid assembly line

I recalled this to my mom when I was grown  
her feelings were hurt-- "I bathed you children  
every night one at a time maybe two no rush  
all gentle don't you remember? your dad  
only scrubbed you a few times in your whole  
growing up!" I wish I'd said then her care  
about everything was remembered in our  
bones blood it made us thrive but most often  
it's the blatant bizarre that sears into brains

*July 10*

**phish poem #1**

well odd things happen I am at a phish  
concert in saratoga springs not exactly at  
more beside in my car but I can hear the  
throbbing drums sometime a wail of a  
vocalist the crowd's roar I wandered  
that crowd thronging the park's entrance  
quite a few with a bent finger aloft that  
means they want to buy a cheap ticket  
I was offered wine a can of lite beer pot  
a granola bar I accepted the bar since  
our supplies were down to peanut butter  
and chips on this long drive to vermont  
my grandson took the humus dregs and  
crackers into the concert where he stood  
in bliss for hours in the rain he'd earned  
this unplanned hiatus in our trip he'd  
driven all day with calm and expertise  
through violent downpour after violent  
downpour you couldn't see the road the  
other cars I didn't want to spend the  
bucks though to hear phish but why  
shouldn't he I do think I deserve an  
award as best grandma of the year

*July 17*

**vermontpoem #36**

I weep a little  
this first night here  
giving this place up  
where I've been coming  
summers for sixty years  
the colorful poetry wall  
in the bathroom blake  
tolkien leguin tennyson  
my own kids' writings  
the lake quiet out front  
clouds shield a half moon  
I'm surrounded by my  
dead daughter her  
creativity her presence  
fills this place but even  
this place she so loved  
couldn't save her and I  
weep a little for all of us  
mortals who live to give up

*July 24*

**specificity poem # 1**

grandchild cressie not yet three  
busy with pencil and paper--her  
mom heard her say "grass"--  
thought this worth a look since  
pictures so far were circles and  
scribbles nothing really specific  
sure enough a short row of  
little lines at the bottom seemed  
grasslike above was an oblong  
a line crossed it near the top  
with a small blob on each end  
a body with arms, hands? tell me  
about this said her mom oh said  
cressie that's just a straight line

*July 31*

**vermontpoem #37**

a tiny lavender blossom  
five petals fringed leaf  
on the path to the shore  
a moment of happiness

*August 7*

**vermontpoem #38**

on our first night here 2 a.m. awful  
crying strange not an owl could  
it be a dog trapped somewhere  
in the woods no not a dog it's  
like nothing I've ever heard but  
what to do I can't go plowing  
into the brush but then came quiet  
next day a report—the day before  
all had been eating at the long row  
of picnic tables a raccoon came  
stumbling under the tables between  
everyone's feet they scrambled onto  
the benches the animal swayed out  
into the trees it seemed sick in body  
and mind the police said shoot it--it  
sounds like hydrophobia but it was  
gone I think it died later that night in  
the woods near me in terrible pain  
alan heard it too and he agrees

*August 14*

**norway poem #1**

we climbed a stony path to our snug  
cottage my granddaughter and me  
I walked with decorated poles  
their tips blunted our hosts' cottage  
was below they raised their shades  
to show us they were up we raised  
ours to show we'd breakfasted and  
were ready for the day (the fridge  
was stocked with cheeses meats breads  
brown eggs juices even two cans of beer)  
our time was gentle unhurried a walk  
along a wharf where a viking ship was  
being built a copy of the real one in  
the oslo museum fish soup at a  
seaside table a whole afternoon on  
the sunny sea threading our way  
among small and large islands  
humping their smooth rocks from  
the water like great whale backs  
another day among the farmlands  
green gold fields barley wheat onions  
carrots a white church 500 years old  
its graveyard where Nils' parents are  
at rest the farm Nils was raised on  
we know this man for he worked  
a while at the farm I was raised on  
we twice ate at a quiet restaurant  
our view an ancient stone lighthouse  
its light had been glowing coals in a  
basket raised on a pole seagulls are  
alert to snatch our bread Marie tells  
us the name of this rocky island tip  
is Verdens Ende—"End of the World"

*August 21*

**norwaypoem #2**

I am in norway how  
refreshing to be in a spot  
where everyone speaks  
a tongue that is not mine

norwegian is a musical language  
light its phrases end in upbeat  
reflecting the country and people  
at home I can always tell when a  
person speaking english is native  
norwegian the accent the rhythm  
is unmistakable a delight to hear

*August 28*

**laborday poem #1**

a 1952 news item just found:

“Dairy Workers to 5-Day  
Week” --ten years before  
this clipping I heard my  
grandfather say “We can’t  
go to a six-day week until  
we breed a six-day cow.”

*September 4*

**grampa poem #3**

in a letter to his second son  
my grampa writes, “If I try  
to tell you what you like and  
what you dislike I may play  
the role of the shoe maker who  
was fitting a pair of shoes to  
a customer. The customer said,  
‘These shoes pinch.’ The cobbler  
replied, ‘What do you know  
about it? You are no cobbler!’”

*September 11*

**dairystate poem #2**

our area of wisconsin has lovely  
lively names afton avalon tiffany  
carvers rock beckmans mill darien  
delavan elkhorn hog hollow I went  
with my grandfather to a township  
meeting of some sort in emerald grove  
the little white church where they all  
met was spare in decoration but had  
many tall clear windows it was as full  
of sunset light as san chapelle a site  
I would someday visit I was enchanted  
yet emerald grove on its single strand  
had a gawdawful antique store with  
stuff spilling out and filling the lots  
on either side with rusting-car-type  
junk a place to gasp at it is still there  
the carbuncle of the tiara yet recently  
at its battered counter inside I bought  
a milk bottle from our defunct dairy  
it had our name on it a true amber gem

*September 18*

**trauma poem # 6**

royce by pulling  
that trigger  
you've deprived  
yourself my  
grandkids'  
growing up  
their school and  
sports successes  
their loves and  
losses and given  
them instead a  
burden they'll  
never outgrow  
though its  
present pain  
will recede  
somewhat  
in time

*September 25*

**midsummer vermont #22**

today's excitement—  
very early morning  
erratic drumming  
more a thudding  
slow with pauses  
could it be? I'd heard  
them in the woods but  
never seen one yet here  
one was—a piliated  
woodpecker on the  
dead tree by the porch  
clear in silhouette  
long sharp beak, crested  
head, supple neck, body  
big as a hen but slim  
it circled the trunk  
hammering breakfast  
no rat-a-tat drilling like  
smaller woodpeckers  
it tore chunks off the  
wood the lake beneath  
soon strewn with large  
irregular chips I swam  
to gather one from the  
water after it flew away  
gillian on the porch  
actually saw it arrive  
a flurry of feathers  
saw it settle upright on  
the trunk begin to work:  
this can last a heart  
quite a while

*October 2*

**springfield 66 poem #1**

busy time this fri eve in springfield  
route 66 gala already begun hard to get  
to the old pharmacy to see tom handy's  
photos of palms and their latticed shadows  
jim hawker's unforgettable bored child  
embracing a curb it was like those mazes  
in a kid's puzzle book you start out reach  
a dead end retrace erase detour till with luck  
you find your destination it was harder still  
to return a library book to 7th street I nearly  
drove over the grass through the multicolored  
fountains but managed to park nearby walked  
along a pavement past a row of gleaming  
'66 autos lined up in neat fashion against the  
sidewalk their fronts wide open gaping maws  
waiting for tongue depressors big as table tops  
to make them gargle "ah" even in the street's  
dimness you could see all the way to their  
tonsils well even beyond—no guards--an  
awesome sight well worth the inconvenience

*October 9*

**ebola poem #1**

the thin child perhaps nine  
leaning against the slim tree  
weeping her mother just dead  
the mother who helped a  
collapsed pregnant friend into  
a taxi to get her to a hospital  
the trip was in vain the woman  
died so did all the others who  
helped the woman now no one  
will go near this crying child  
no one will touch her for she  
had touched her mother the  
photo of this scene was on the  
front page of the madison  
state journal yesterday even  
the photographer shot the  
picture from a distance

*October 16*

**vermontpoem # 41**

this morning the lake is still  
no ripples mar the surface  
not even my own as I swim  
no little swallows (black tops  
white bellies) dip and wheel  
to catch their insect breakfast  
their name I think is “least  
swallow” usually there’s a dozen  
no rower in a swift scull near the  
far shore no plip of a feeding fish  
but a thin mist is rising for the air  
is 48 degrees above the warm water

last night was full of activity though  
two owls calling to each other from  
far sides of the hills a hoo-hoo duet  
our lonely loon’s eerie cry—again—  
then again—followed by a loony laugh  
and when I woke at three and looked  
from the porch onto the glass mirror a  
million stars had made the lake a sky

*October 23*

**retirees' lament poem # 1**

the State has stole our pensions  
the State has stole our pensions  
the State has stole our pensions  
sing loo-di-doo-di-doo

that big ole bag of money  
we gave our savings to  
the State just took and stole it  
sing loo-di-doo-di-doo

there must have been some Interest  
'twas a humongous sum  
the State could have that gladly  
if they'd just left us some!  
sing loo-di-doo-di-doo-di-doo  
sing loo-di-doo-di-doo

*October 30*

**flu shot poem #1**

this is flu shot season my friend annette writes she can't take one on account of raw egg allergy she adds, "I'll always remember my grandmother's recollections of the 1918 Spanish flu. So many people died in Chicago that her parish priest couldn't keep up with the funeral masses. Instead he stood in the street with holy water and sprinkled hearses as they passed the church. She and my grandfather avoided the flu, so she said, by taking a shot of whiskey every night. She drank her shot-a-day until she died."

*November 6*

**remembering summer #5**

50 degrees when I swim  
this early sunny august  
morn a stiff north wind  
but these choppy waves  
are the same temperature  
as yesterday and last week

while I dry off on the hill  
I am gladdened to see  
before a rotting log a  
sentinel stand of pure  
white indian pipes they've  
sprung up in the night not  
grown in that spot before

*November 13*

**poetrywall poem # 1**

*My granddaughter, Cressida, wrote  
this poem on the Poetry Wall of our  
summer cabin when she was 10. She  
added a drawing of a cat calmly walking  
away, a dead bird on the ground behind it.*

the sleek cat stalks its prey  
silent feet creep up  
closer  
closer  
closer to its prey  
closer  
flat on its stomach  
crawling low  
as if a herd of  
predators  
were chasing  
after it  
suddenly  
front feet fly  
back feet follow  
silently  
it pounces  
it lands  
it kills

*November 20*

**farm poem #38**

my sister tried  
rolling down  
the ramp of the  
round barn  
in a barrel  
she regretted it

*November 27*

**thankful poem #7**

faithful underpants  
this is your last day  
your gaping holes  
can no longer be  
ignored your elastic  
is too flabby  
it's the ragbag  
tonight so I will  
say to you what  
folks say to me  
have a good day  
although when  
they say it to me  
I don't know  
as you now know  
whether to especially  
appreciate this day  
as the last--  
might my own  
elastic snap? so I  
suggest to you  
we join in living  
every day with  
thanksgiving

*December 4*

**family poem # 22**

at ten I went with my grandparents  
to visit my iowa cousins polly in  
ninth grade took me to her latin class  
I deciphered the first few exercises  
a farmer called agricola later I said  
to an older cousin latin makes you think  
she said “uncle wess asked me once  
did I know what was an educated man  
when I shook my head he said ‘an educated  
man is one who has taught his mind to think  
his hand to act and his heart to feel’—you  
can see where I’ve copied it in my notebook”  
I copied it into my own notebook too it was  
for me a description of grampa himself

*December 11*

**winter poem # 4**

on bitter nights when deep drifts  
blocked our long country lane we  
hiked up left the car on the road  
snowpants boots our white breath  
searing our windpipes we followed  
daddy's tracks as he pushed the way  
to light and warmth I loved those treks  
the sky its richest black and the stars!  
the stars so bright so close you could  
swipe down handfuls in your mittens  
in your arms hug the frozen milky way

*December 18*

**sleighting poem # 1**

as to one horse open sleighs we sibs  
sat in ours sang jingle bells but if we  
jiggled too hard and fell out it was either  
into hay on one side or a bin of oats on  
the other for it was propped way up in  
the loft unused unnoticed balanced on  
the tall woodengold wall that separated  
the two sections of the upper round barn  
its runners must have been secured on a  
small platform we never asked about it  
begged a real ride it was a relic just one  
of the many things around the place we  
took for granted then it disappeared none  
of us noticed either for the sport had  
limited fun without going anywhere the  
play usually lasted only a few verses  
when I remembered in my late teens or  
twenties and asked my dad where it was  
he said mr bumstead borrowed it I knew  
the bumstead farm beyond the hill farm  
they brought milk to the dairy in a pickup  
I'd never seen a sleigh there well didn't he  
return it no he backed a tractor into it—  
it was pretty bunged up well couldn't it be  
fixed it's a valuable antique didn't you  
make him do something at least gather up  
the pieces for us no I just let it go there is  
no good ending to this story I wonder if my  
sibs even remember or if a bumstead does

*December 25*

**PARODOX**

*By Vera Wardner Dougan*

*Holidays are portrayed as times of  
rejoicing but as we all come to know  
they are often fraught with grief. It  
seems appropriate to share this poem  
at this season. It was written by my  
mother in 1925; I have it in a booklet,  
Mirrors, that she put together for my  
father, family, and friends, before I was born.*

If you desire happiness,  
Purchase it with tears;  
The kind one buys with laughter  
Lasts not many years.

Give away all that is yours,  
And rich indeed you'll be.  
What you love best, only keep  
Within your memory.

If you wish to welcome Love,  
Prepare for more than one;  
Pain with Love comes hand in hand  
And stays when Love is gone.

If you would hold a treasure dear,  
It may be well to know  
A thing is never truly yours  
Till you can let it go.

*December 31*

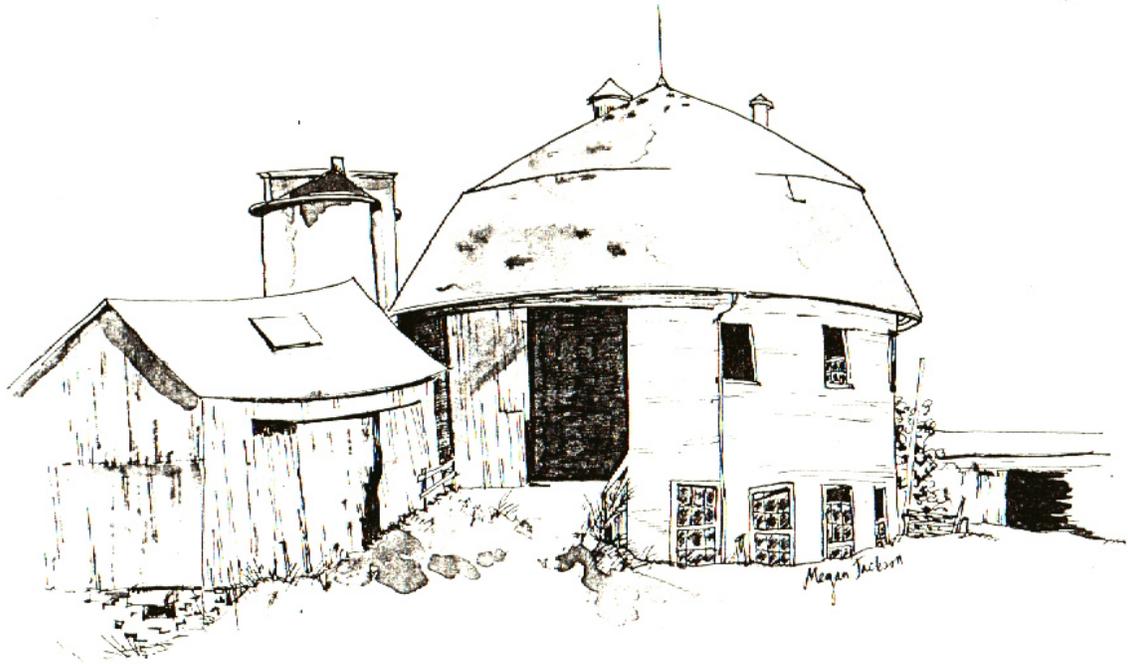
**december end poem**

a friend helping me clean my kitchen  
or try to clean it brought me a long flat  
rusty item resting across her palms what  
is this I said doesn't everyone keep a  
world war one bayonet in their pantry?

about that weapon: my dad picked it up  
in france 1924 from belleau wood where  
was the worst carnage trenches by now  
crumbled overgrown with weeds shrubs  
thousands on thousands killed here they  
had to clamber over the slaughtered to fire  
(though the enemies had a christmas eve  
truce drank wine together sang peace on  
earth) my dad drove a taxi for american  
and british tourists to see the area  
curiosity yes but for most a handkerchief  
to mouth eyes to grieve son or lover stand  
near the spot where that life ended  
they thought my dad a frenchman he  
spoke no english to his passengers as he  
pointed out poet joyce kilmer's grave his  
main job was nearby a sort of peace corps  
work being a big brother to fatherless  
boys games hikes tenting beneath the  
vast tree where napolean once stood

did the man who owned that bayonet kill  
someone before he was himself a victim is  
there blood mixed with rust in my pantry?

I gave away the shell casings from my  
dad's bottom dresser drawer when I  
cleared his room but I kept the blade



## A Word From the Author

I've described before (see Liberty 2012) how I, a non-poet, came to write all these poems--Roland Klose, then editor of Illinois Times, wanted me to--and I've been grateful to him ever since for widening my world.

I haven't written about my starting to write, in general, and here is a free blank page asking to be filled--and that was what started it, back when I was a kid. The manifest destiny of a blank piece of paper. I filled it at 6 with a poem about ducks. (Was that prophetic?) A blank notebook followed at 8 and so I wrote a whole book. Ditto at 9 and 10 and the 10-year-old book called Cloudlanders got published in weekly installments in the Galesburg (Illinois) Post. It ran for four months, and only ended when the editor ran out of material and on the front page asked me to send more, pronto. I did--the last chapter! I couldn't stand the tension of a deadline and have refused most of them ever since.

Once in junior high and high school I was taught how to write, and since I was doing it all wrong, I quit writing. But at college, here was a class called Creative Writing! I embraced it, and have been writing ever since, with many hiatuses (hiati in Latin) for other things. Raising children, teaching, etc.

Julie's Secret Sloth was written in graduate school, with a genius of a teacher--Roy Cowden seldom spoke, just held his pencil over a problem spot and under my eyes the problem in my manuscript would miraculously make itself clear. I've never been able to do that--with my students, I wrote all over the margins, dialoging with them, but never used a red pencil or corrected spelling. (Well, "its and it's.") (Or grammar, except for "between you and I.")

You can find lists of all my books and descriptions, as well as The Cloudlanders on my website, jacqueline-jackson.com. Even after all these years, you can still purchase all the out-of-print editions on the used book market.

Moral of this tale: Never underestimate the power of a blank page!

## Round Barn Volume 3 is here – Volume 4 is almost here!

Last year's Liberty promised the final Round Barn volumes to be out in 2014. We were wrong. Volume 3 made it, though unadvertised, and Volume 4 WILL be out in 2015. We'll have celebratory openings, send out notices, and trust you Liberty readers to spread the word, too.

This saga, as you know, has been a labor of love all my life; I've kept at it because it's been so participatory in its gathering, and too valuable not to share. The material is more pertinent than ever, in these days of Big Ag, Big Pharm, Big Oil, burgeoning population, and more and more strains on the environment and agricultural life.

Jacqueline Dougan Jackson



“After reading an inch into this almost 500 page book I crave my favorite dairy food every time I start reading again. Can you imagine having a close enough relationship with your dairy farmer that you can tell when the cows change their eating habits? Grace Croneis, wife of Beloit College's president in the early fifties, is heard to remark, ‘Well, I can tell the Dougan cows are enjoying spring pasture!’ I'm wondering about why and how the farm ended: guess that happens in Volume 4. Writing about this book makes me want to go slather a piece of zucchini bread with butter.” –Goodreads, 2014

“As she finishes this third volume, Jackson has learned and relearned lessons about food, and more importantly, stewardship. She praises the rise of the small organic farm, the slow food movement, and the public's growing awareness of how food is produced. This story is more than a look back—it's a touchstone for a different kind of agriculture that could offer hope for the future—a future where we may again fall in love with our cows.” Anna Marie Lux, Janesville Gazette

“Perhaps the fullest, most concrete history of the heyday of the American family dairy farm. It is a Tocqueville of the barn and pasture and big house, the milk route, the cornfield, and the making of an honorable living and a beautiful life. The Round Barn is a unique, unprecedented, and incomparable work, a definitive American work, a work of incalculable value to our history, our sense of ourselves as Americans, and perhaps our future.” --Reginald Gibbons, Northwestern University

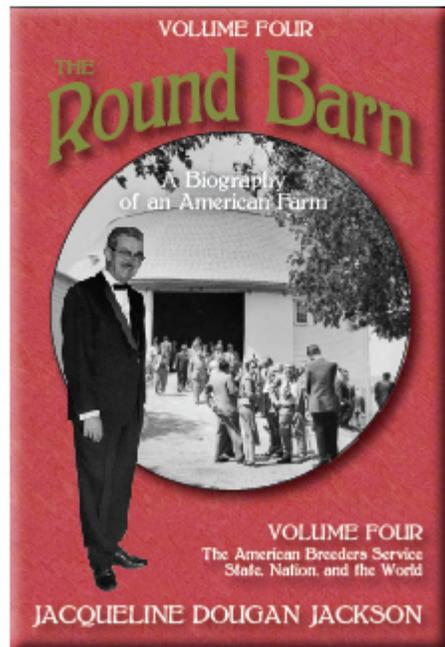
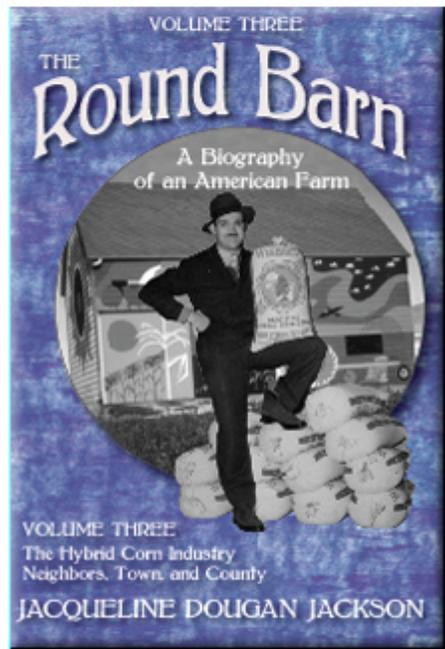
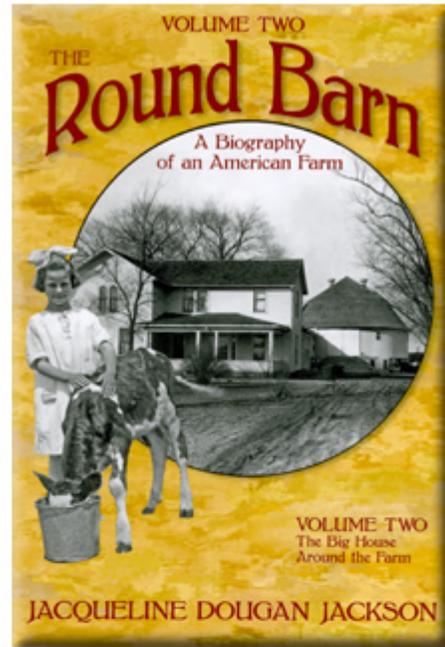
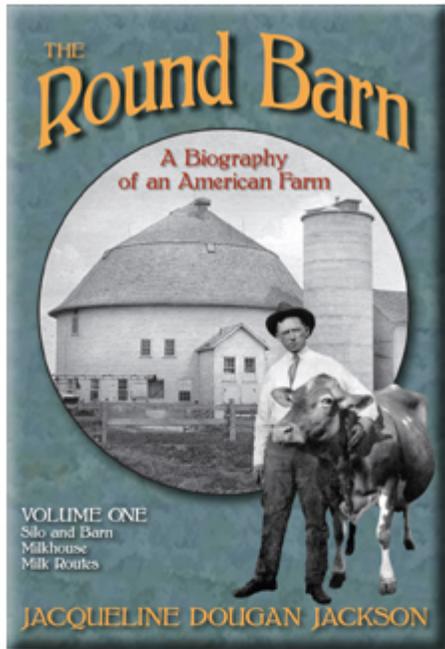
“Jackie Jackson has done it again. She's penned an epic, at once serene and exciting, lively and wise. It's a saga which you'd be well advised to read.” --Tom McBride, Beloit College, Keefer Professor of Humanities, Emeritus.



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Ten wonderful years of poetry published in the Illinois Times