



Liberty Dissected

*A collection of poetry by
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Dedication

This year the dedication is to those
cherished and talented friends we've
lost from our current writing group:

Joe Hennessy
Carol Manley
Julie Low
Lola Lucas

and earlier:

Rosie Richmond, Celia Wesle,
Bob McElroy, LaVerne Smith,
Marty Whitaker

This is the 11th year of Liberty,
the weekly poems in Illinois Times.

Again the cover was chosen and
designed by J. Mitch Hopper, who
again produced the whole booklet.

We leave to you any dissection!

Last year I managed to send out
only a few of Liberty Après les
Heures and kept scant record.

Let me know if you lack yours;
see 2014 Manet on this back cover.

January 1

newyears poem #11

you may have stacks of
moldering dishes piles of
disheveled clutter a hamper
of odorous garments a car
full of indescribable litter
snow to shovel letters to tend
bills demanding their due
but when someone reaches
out to you in friendship or
in need you turn your back
on all the gottas oughtas
haftas and take that hand

January 8

storypoem # 22

these poems may not be poems
I just tell stories in a column or
embroider whatever I'm thinking
here's something found in a family
letter often a rich source my dad
is at phantom lake Y camp he's
probably fourteen—he hiked with
a group to sleep overnight in the
open, spread out his blanket it
was dark they were in a pasture he
couldn't get comfortable it seemed
the roughest ground he'd ever
known “like sleeping on coke” his
letter reads—when he picked up his
bedding at dawn he found he'd
lain all night on a pile of dried
horse apples I suppose a moral
is in order poems often end with
a deep thought this one dad
supplied himself “you should
always look before you sleep!”

January 15

poem for january 15, 2015

today's her birthday or was
it's not that I loved her more
than I loved—love—you three
I loved her different just as
I love each of you different
and now that particular much
loved much valued difference
is gone except it surrounds me
in the very air I breathe and
so I play the stupid word games
that absorb my errant thoughts
just as she did to absorb hers
except her thoughts were demons
what can I call mine when I don't
go to bed to delay dreaming where
all night long I swim swim swim
try to make things tidy and protect
children or fail to protect them

January 22

swimming lessons poem #1

I don't recall how kids 3 and 4 learned to swim I do have a found scrap from ellie labeled "courage tests" the list headed by "swim through seaweed" so she was swimming before writing but I well recall kids 1 and 2 — with demi, age 3, we used the book—she knelt on the dock followed red cross instruction submerged her face in the tub of water, blew bubbles, did this over and over then the next step and next finally into the water, floating etc., etc., by summer's end she was a swimmer now comes kid 2 book and tub on dock would megan blow bubbles? none of that for her she balked at any instruction finally I said in exasperation well then swim! and she did

January 29

conundrum poem # 1

volume four of my round barn saga
will be in print pretty soon it's the
last of the "trilogy" so I can soon
relax but here's a question for you
I'm including a lively letter from my
dad to his kids circa 1950 a trip he
takes around the state delivering corn
he eats lunch at the farmhouse of a
salesman says the house is dirty the
wife blowsy and the seven or eight
children beautiful he names the town
the family its surname is unusual
on a hunch I look up that family that
small wisconsin town I find the area
full of folk with the odd appellation
well yes with those many children so
someone will surely spot my story
now what do you advise do I fake a
family or do I print as is do I let them
know ahead of time (I might sell books
to the clan or be chased from the county
with a pitchfork) well I can say my own
house is dirty and that with only four
kids I was blowsy and still am—ah
the problems of creative nonfiction

February 5

goatspoem #1

juniper bursts from her stall when
the gate is opened leaps nimbly onto
the milking bench buries her nose in
oats while gillian washes her udder
then pulls a stream of milk from each
swollen tit into a cup to be sure it's ok
fastens on the syringe of the homemade
milking machine (long plastic tube into
a mason jar, garage hand-pump at
40 bucks total instead of 150) gillian
milks the tits dry then each gets an
iodine dip now it's piñon's turn she
has waited patiently since her sister
throws a fit if she isn't first their kids
cottonwood, chinquapin blat lonesome
in the yard almost as big as the moms
and these nursing nannies are hefty
(kids rowan, thistle are farmed out)
gillian turns them loose for their hay
we carry full jars to the kitchen pour
fresh goat milk in our coffee later will
come herbed goat cheese whey soup

February 12

valentine poem #6

thought it was our own idea my sibs
and I cut open our stuffed teddys dogs
rag dolls put in candy hearts that said
I love you sewed them up sometimes the
recipient got a little sticky if it fell in the
tub got a pink splotch on its fur or frock

but yesterday I leafed through a gorgeous
reference volume on dolls of all eras saw
raggedy ann, andy in the modern section
the text said they came with candy hearts
inside with the I love you motto on them
so maybe we got the idea from our anns
and andys and extended it to all our toys

maybe we all have mottos on our hearts

February 19

gmos poem #1

GMO sounds like an
STD
well, isn't it?

February 26

accounting poem #1

found in a letter to my doctor brother

here's from my dad maybe 1968
—should warm the cockles of all
accountants' hearts: "I realize
with a big work load it is hard to
find time and energy for anything
as prosaic as bookkeeping. However
there is a big satisfaction in a good
set of books, and a lift from a trial
balance completed. I think accounting
is just another of the arts, and its rules
as rigid as those covering composing.
A well turned out statement is
as thrilling as a fugue."

March 5

gold poem, for the Veaches

*Friends, I wrote this poem two years ago,
at the Veach Golden Wedding celebration,
and Jerry's death, but didn't print it.
Now I do; I've been with the Veach family
the past two weeks, at Becky's death and at
her loving, moving ceremony. We are Family.
Many of you will remember Becky from her
Chatham and SSU days. She was my first
student, in 1970.*

what can I say about gold
that's not cliché? well I'll
tell you about becky and jerry
not having had a traditional
wedding they'd eloped now
thought it would be neat
to renew their vows in a
golden wedding celebration
children and grandchildren
present it was held last week
in the golden autumn a moving
meaningful service but in a
bedroom for jerry was bed-
ridden stricken the week
before yet he held his wife's
hand squeezed it for replies
we sang laughed ate cake told
stories hugged all around
jerry died the next morning
what wonderful awful timing
tomorrow is the funeral it will
be gold with poetry and song
for jerry and becky have always
been pure gold the golden heart
of their giving golden family

March 12

bovis poem # 3

I know you have been on
tenterhooks to hear the
names of prize bulls well
I won't keep you waiting
any longer Green Notch
Segis Ginger was pretty
good Highland Caesar
Lochinvar didn't live up
to his name neither did
Tidy Burke Forbes but
Dorothil Colantha Lucifer
now there was a bull who
earned his keep as did
Glengary Lloyd Royal
but he unfortunately
died of nitrate poisoning
now how did that occur

March 19

exam essay question #1

make a serious stab at accounting for these two books' incredible longevity influence popularity (even though few read them these days and knowing them is the mark of an educated person) not many children read them either and they're not often included in the canon of victorian lit—that's because they don't fit—don't tell me it's the fault of disney—you'll note I'm not asking if you like dislike enjoy etc the books add that in if you wish but only if you give reasons remember the mad hatter red queen most of the denizens of wonderland would consider what YOU like or dislike quite irrelevant after all WHO are YOU?

March 26

veach poem #2

my close friend becky put together a family cookbook telling us which ones not to eat (broccoli casserole) and other choice opinions she also made a book called when grandma was a little girl lots of growing up stories of herself her kids my kids others I recommend everyone do this for their families priceless and the whole back of the volume is a long researched genealogy by long I mean she went back to earlier relatives lost in indian raids though some must have hid in the root cellar to insure the gene pool anyway she did something else among all the birth death marriage dates of ancestors and current kin she included health issues should you take special note of your heart lungs liver based on family ills this too is priceless about first son she wrote "asthma at age 2" (news to him) second son "tendency to arthritis" third son "nothing so far but HE SMOKES so we shall see!" (toby says, if you print this be sure to say I've long since quit!)

April 2

alps poem #1

I was torn before at the news a hundred
fifty lives lost in the alps especially those
students and teachers returning from a
happy exchange in spain I hoped no one
saw it coming till the last second but with
this morning's news I am haunted haunted
that one man chose to take one hundred
forty nine persons with him on his suicide
plunge the locked-out head pilot trying to
smash in the cockpit door screams from
behind all this deduced from a mangled
box the co-pilot is breathing easily through
his deliberate descent it is too too awful
I see the experts huddled over the box
playing it again and yet again till one says
play it once more, and do you think what
I'm thinking can you possibly think—and
their horrified stares as they do think it—
the mesmerizing news informs us this has
happened before gives dates numbers dead
I recall in my youth a man put a timebomb
in his mother-in-law's luggage he killed her
all right and a plane full of others he set it to
explode over the grand canyon so no clues
could be found but the plane was late went
down in a recoverable area that awful story
has been buried in my mind for decades
now I think about those innocents fleeing
from villages all over the world starved sick
and wars we should never have started and
the young man I saw today wheelchaired a
metal pole for his leg and birds without a
nesting place and climate naysayers who
can buy elections with their billions while
funding huge gifts to the smithsonian and
I weep for humankind and all else that is
plummeting with us as we press the button

April 9

half-lincoln marathon poem #2

wow the biggest event of the spring I've
just been watching 2000 runners stream
past my door all colors ages sexes plump
skinny a few kids with parents a few
parents pushing babes in wheelies saw
a runner on blades he was among the
leaders going fast lots come from afar
37 states even from overseas many wear
vivid garb tutus over stripy tights glitter
stars lincoln hats paisley shirts matched
running club t's I recognize some runners
liz curl our own bud farrar don from the
Y pauses to hug he'll be walking across
spain in may of course I'm not on my
porch but at the corner with a cowbell
while my neighbor amaiya gives high
fives to spur the panthers on if there's a
slow moment she cartwheels she counts
the hand slaps 950 she'd have made
1200 except the TV interviewer took up
time she'll be on the news tonight saying
she's done this half her life she's eight
traffic backs up on fifth street well what
did you expect you bozos relax and enjoy
actually nobody's honking there are times
like today when I am proud of our city

April 16

trivia poem #7

here's a trivia question when was
pizza invented well I will have to
tell you for you'll never guess it was
before 753 BC I was just rereading the
aeneid (in translation) and when you
get to the part where they land on the
shore where rome will be founded sick
starved sore from their travails they
know it's the destined spot—the harpy's
curse prophesied they'd be so famished
they'd eat their tables the tables the
latins give them are flat wheaten cakes
pizza crust right? and atop these disks
are sprinkled herbs and fruits no tomato
sauce for 2000 more years but it is still
pizza probably olive mushroom so aeneas
was the first I prefer salami myself with
green pepper onion but some do like ham
and pineapple some even like plain cheese
though it would've been goat cheese then

April 23

culinary poem #4

my greek friend sonia
(she grew up in crete)
was making me a greek
omelet I asked “what makes
a greek omelet greek?” she
responded “a greek cook”

April 30

lincolnpoem # 14

it gives me pleasure to go past
the statue of lincoln in front of
the state capitol more often than
not children are climbing around
jumping off the blocks tag and
catch me at the feet of that great
complex simple man two small
boys yesterday with a dad who
didn't forbid today six or seven
grade schoolers no adult nearby
their leaps and dashes almost a
ballet one little girl paused to hold
his hand she wasn't posing for a
snapshot or saying look at me only
a moment of quiet companionship
the good man looking down kindly

May 7

lincoln poem # 15

what a weekend all us lincoln lovers
local and out-of-towners united
the effort was worth it people were
respectful from where we were on
fourth street stood silent as the hearse
went by its black ostrich pompadours
six horses pompadoured too ornate
harness the band with museum-loaned
trumpets how different history would
have been had he lived how we now
need lincoln-hearted people in power
to put need above greed to honor
of the people by the people for the
people how we need the compassion
when I saw the lonely coffin inside
the hearse a lump closed my throat
it was almost as if I had been there

May 14

mother poem #11

for a long time I've considered
myself "young-old" pretty soon
I better start thinking "old-old"
if I knew then about old what I
now know I'd have been more
understanding more helpful to my
"old-old" mother—mom, I'd have
coaxed from you your untold stories
harkened to any fear behind your
words realized when you rubbed
your wrist it was hurting but you
weren't complaining for you'd said
long ago you wouldn't be a chronic
complainer like grandma; I should
have demanded a few complaints!
I'd have remembered with you many
of the things you did with and for me
for us all from childhood on so you'd
know these were appreciated the trips
to the orthodontist to music lessons
to your playing the piano-part to my
"piece" after I'd finished my many
scales even though you were weary
I'd have told you how I loved to hear
you play and sing "Sylvia" and "I Love
Life" and your own "Moon and Sea" love
songs and the comfort your constant
presence gave to my life I would have
brought out pictures and letters and
asked for details and I'd have listened
and listened and listened and listened

May 21

knee surgery

a friend writes her husband is
an easy patient he just lies there
in the living room doesn't really
want anything the children are
delighted to use him as
warm furniture

May 28

cowcount poem #1100

mitch you're totally wrong
when you say why do I need
1100 cows on my computer my
reply is if you need 11 cows it is
good to have 1100 to choose from
we have the singing cow the
suspicious cow the bellicose cow
the contemplative cow we have
cows in parades cows reluctant
to go in the barn cows coming
from pasture eager to be milked
cows that are beauties a cow
really ugly with crumpled horn
spavined hips whose name is
actually beauty we have cows
surrounded with schoolkids
cows being milked in the barn
daisy being milked in a milking
contest at a college field day
we have two farmhands sitting
on a cow fields of contented cows
and we haven't even got to bulls
and calves yet—no, 1100 is not too
many mitch when you dive to photo
coral reef life do you want just 11
fish no you really want 11 hundred

June 4

words poem #9

“I’ve lost my fitbit” said the gym room
sign my daughter and I knew naught
of fitbits found the word quick in the
saying tried making it faster: fat, fet, fot—
none better though all used mouth parts
nimble we considered words slow in speech
sway swallow swine drift draft drink
recalled the word megan used last night
“a sisyphian job”(describing shawna’s
restocking books at the library!) I’d never
known that adjectival use we finished by
reciting lines of a great poet painted on
our vermont cottage wall known well to
us—tiger tiger so illustrates a thick slow
pace—“what dread grasp dare its deadly
terrors clasp” —it takes time effort to wrap
your tongue around those consonant clumps
it’s followed by the liquid “when the stars
threw down their spears and watered heav’n
with their tears”—such limpid swiftness yes
pace is in the words creates the feelings too
did she find her fitbit? do’ know do’ know

June 11

canoe poem #1

we canoed on the wisconsin river four
days of wilderness wind water the trees
a closed screen on either bank depth of
water too suddenly shallow for power
craft sand always shifting our small group
alone except two anglers on farther shore
autos a shock when we paddled beneath a
bridge a quick storm a rainbow the green
on trees nearby and at the distant bend
dark to pale luminous—tolkien has a line in
bilbo’s song “in every wood in every spring
there is a different green” here we were
awash with different greens we glided by
low cliffy areas riddled with holes vast
condominiums the gnat-filled swallows
swooping dipping pausing at their doorways

June 18

state debt poem # 2

*Immediately after his election our new governor
ordered the closing of the entire Illinois State
Museum System, six facilities, supposedly to save
money, though the system brings in more than it costs.
It was a political move. A senior museum scientist
said it was an act of "malevolent anti-
intellectualism."*

why stop at the museum, guys?
there's nothing here we really prize
lop the lib'ry, what's left of it—
no one reads so why not shove it
close the parks, let geezers take
their horseshoes to a cheaper stake
those highway rest-stops are a drain
can't tourists pee out in the rain?
the zoo must cost us quite a sum
kids giggle at the monkey's bum
let's see, what other cake can go?
the schools! they eat a chunka dough
nobody learns there anyway
except to take a-test-a-day
the colleges? let's squeeze 'em more
we know the subjects are a bore
we'll stay at home and strike a key
avoid that high-cost misery
well this is getting quite a list
you can supply what I have missed
go tell those powers up on top
to keep on slashing do not stop
just smile and say when they hear grumbles
"that's just the way the cookie crumbles"

June 25

genesispoem #1

I think our great maker had it okay
maybe a little confusion about light
and dark but on target until that
sixth day I think things would be
a lot better now and back through
much of the last six hundred thousand
years had the female been created
first or better yet if there'd been a
padlock on eden to keep sapiens in let
the rest of the world get on without us

July 2

cheesestory #4

the story is that my grampa
as a young man in college
boarded a train at madison
carrying a large package of
limburger cheese he carefully
stowed it on the overhead rack
at one end of the warm coach
then made his way to the far
end and sat there now is this
bit of history worth keeping in
perpetuity sure why not it's
already been kept this long what
I wonder is who saw him do it
and told on him or did he tell it
on himself maybe a passenger
under the odor complained or
maybe he asked for crackers

July 9

canoe trip poem #2

you may not believe that a toilet seat
can be the most beautiful sight in the
world but maybe you would if you're
an ol' woman on a four-day canoe trip
on the wisconsin river eating sleeping
on sandbars where your facility is a
trowel and you seek out a spot screened
by thin willows in addition to the
unaccustomed posture you see your
bare bum's shadow plus shadows of
mosquitoes around that bare bum I
think REI makes a camping stool a
good investment for the next trip it's
of course something humankind has
done since time immemorial half the
world still does I was impressed though
when at the ruins of ephesus I found a
spacious seated latrine for those ancient
greeks with provision for running water

July 16

ancient history poem #4

back in rome in
the time of its
decline emperor
caligula appointed
his horse to be a
member of the
governing body
well at least it was
a whole horse

July 23

another cheese poem

I called a recent poem “cheesestory 4”
have I really written three times on
cheese hard to believe what did I say
well in england on one student trip
the going remark was tough cheese
carol corgan said it often but where’s
the story? how about this one—when
we were kids and our dairy had a
special on cheese the ad was printed
on a paper cuff we dropped those
cuffs over the neck of each milk bottle
as it came off the merry-go-round
filler so that customers would know to
order the special it would be cottage
cheese with chives in it or pineapple
chunks the office girl (as ruby was
called in those sexist days) took a pair
of shears cut wild chives into bits
to stir into the cheese my pet goat
one time ate up the wild chives there
weren’t any for the special ruby had to
go to another farm search their grass
well that’s a story have you heard it
before and that we only got paid a
dime to drape those cuffs? if that’s
not story #2 it’s now story #5 and I
still can’t remember those others

July 30

n fifth street poem #23

this is a big public thank you to
the Catholic Heart Work Camp
scores of young people with their
leaders who swarmed into our enos
park neighborhood to do what was
needed at individual homes at mine
they unbricked the brick sidewalk it
had been oozing toward the street
laid down sand replaced the bricks
evenly then scaped the large front
porch gave it two coats of deck paint
took clippers to the bushes and the
rampant clematis that grows like
kudzu at other places they climbed
ladders cleaned gutters did many jobs
I think they were in more areas of
town than ours maybe 300 kids from
four states their organizer our david
knoepfle, franklin middle school math
teacher his students never forget him
or the equations dance he teaches them
I mention david and a grownup will
suddenly do the dance thank you david
thank you southeast high for sheltering
the vast numbers and all who provided
meals our community is richer for the
labor and cheer of these young people
who are learning the joy of giving while
we experience the equal joy of receiving

August 6

canoe river trip #3

my daughter put three pix on facebook
one for each day the first: two bald
eagles maybe ignoring us from a dead
tree behind the willows of the sandbar
we retreated to our tents at dusk when
mosquitoes arrived the birds were gone
at dawn the second: the rainbow after
a storm that sent us scrambling from
canoes onto a sandbar a curve hugging
the horizon more than I've ever seen a
parenthesis on its side the third: a full
turtle shell gutted pulled onto the sand
surrounded by three pronged tracks
a feast for cranes she labeled this one
"nature or murder?" might be both but
I also saw a broad figure 8 track of a fat
turtle leaving and reentering the river
so one made it back safely not though
the babies inside scattered shattered
shells torn ping pong balls lots of little
raccoon hand prints did a few babes
get away? after all a turtle from the
year before had lived to lay that clutch

August 13

vermont poem 2015 #1

awake at 5:22 the sun just gilding the
pine tree tips across the lake the mist
great whorls cartwheels roll down the
water on the hills' reflection then when
I awake again at seven the mist gone
jimmy is in his paddle boat hardly larger
than a card table his feet pump the pedals
a soft pat pat pat pat he is shaded from
the early sun by a blue awning

August 20

frabjous day poem #1

the cowardly lion lies pierced
by an arrow dorothy scarecrow
tin woodman aghast dorothy
says no not the wicked witch of
the west some minnesota doctor
reread just now jabberwocky "he
took his vorpal sword in hand"
why did that singular beast merit
slaughter the beamish boy galumphs
to his daddy who no doubt mounts
the head on his trophy wall bids
the son to now seek the jubjub bird
the frumious bandersnatch all you
who've really read the alice nightmares
know they're rife with creatures who
practice deception decapitation chronic
rage pepper spray so what else is new

August 27

vermont poem 2015 #2

it takes some learning to sit on it the
new composting toilet my grandkids
just expertly installed (I came out here
to help but haven't because I zonked my
arm on a wall in the dark) you need to
climb on the gleaming alabaster like
an empress a little fan whirrs under you
well not right under you afterward you
add a scoop of some shredded something
look ma no water now they're scraping
the cabin front I'll leave when they do
can't stay here alone I've proved I'm
not safe in my own cottage they've also
moored my tiny johnboat to a log in the
lake who needs a dock with such ingenuity
I think I'll keep these two besides they can
beat me at scrabble mark and quianna
why must you leave so soon we still have
the mushroom puzzle to do the ancient
car one and the grand medieval wedding

September 3

vermont poem 2015 #3

now that we have a composting toilet at
the lake we've put its handsome blue
traditional predecessor with walnut seat
and closed cover at the end of the picnic
table the hole at the very back where the
plumbing came in is just the size for your
own drinking cup the adjacent bolt holes
can hold straws or maybe those little flags
from hinesburg's fourth of july parade

September 10

bug-off poem #1

Do I see you pout? Do I see you cry?
Do you dance about? I'm telling you why
The bad bed bugs have come into town.

Have you made a list? It's surely not mice
Cannot be fleas, mosquitoes or lice
The bad bed bugs have come into town

They'll bite you when you're sleeping
They'll hide when you're awake
They visit homes of rich or poor
So you all had better quake

It'll cost you a mint to get them to go
Friends will shun you, and your house a no-no,
The bad bed bugs have come into town.

September 17

in praise of labor poem #1

on labor day marched with over sixty folk
wearing save the illinois state museum T's
the viewers were sparse saw no city officials
state either marching or cheering from the
curb no gov of course scant media coverage
the real sight was ranks of union members
group after group each contingent wearing
its bright T-shirt red gold green yellow-green
purple black-and-white—oft emblazoned
with intricate designs and logos—also the
heavy machinery that go with taxing jobs
fork lifts to cherry pickers—yes, candy was
flung to the kids but there is no candy for
workers who keep us going just more and
more pink slips for the unprotected such as
the bunch out at UIS working on digitizing
the lincoln papers 14 jobs smished in abe's
home town to save the state their puny pay

September 24

URGENT POEM READ READ READ

*Dedicated, in sorrow, to Joe Hennessy, who
conceived, designed, and built the Play Museum.
He also designed the major exhibit of the State
Museum, "Changes."*

KIDS! KIDS! KIDS! tell your maw
tell your paw tell your gramp & gram
tell your teachers tell your friends
yell it out to springfield town we gotta
go we gotta go where is it that we gotta
go? the state museum! on this day
this saturday yes saturday the 26th
the last last day of Play Museum
where we dig up fossils where we
wear white lab coats where we learn
the how of science where we learn
our planet's past--the last last day
before barred doors and no more
play museum no more state museum
where we see the giant bones the
ground sloth bones the mastodon the
tiny things that dig creep crawl they'll
all be gone the things you love and if
you wonder ask the guv why this is so
if he says dough tell him he can't be
wronger museums make a state the
stronger bring in jobs bring in brains
you're letting these go down the drains?
but so far he is saying nix so KIDS!
REMEMBER TWENTY SIX! that's
the day this saturday the last last day
that you can play at the play museum

October 1

playdate poem #1

on a recent new yorker cover a room's
prominent wide window reveals back
yard greenery swings a ball trees clear sky
inside two young girls sit back to back but
yards apart each intent on a screen each
playing her own game books toys art stuff
in the room each screen shows a child on
grass with clear skies though not the same
game the cover's title is "play date" these
are the kids I now know really not know
for we adults are furniture sometimes
convenient even their own peers often
ignored this picture shows it but then I think
what if my childhood had contained such
mesmerizing toys we had jacks jump ropes
marbles gangs of kids playing kick the can
but had we keys to press electronic games
would I not have succumbed totally addicted
not read secret garden not filled notebooks
with ideas drawings even now I am caught
by the sticky claws of devouring media have
to resist but our kids don't know they're the
prey of our culture that they need to learn
balance that there's lasting value in a board
game in capture the flag even in standing
alone on a windy hill with nothing but one's
own thoughts to entertain puzzle challenge

October 8

firearms poem # 1

just saw a photo of an AR-15 assault
rifle on sale at spike's tactical in florida
the store is a declared muslim-free zone
the gun's three-way trigger boasts peace-
war-god wills it; a crusader cross is
attached to its left side on the right a
quote from psalm 144 well the psalm
author knew not of assault rifles and
was of muslim blood himself there is
some ugly history in the bible I didn't
learn in methodist sunday school like
when the israelites made friends and
converts of a rival tribe got them all
circumcised got them drunk to ease
the pain then slew them in their stupor
probably not one of our favorite bible
stories also read we are averaging one
gun massacre a week so far this year
mostly schools why not the elementary
school next door to me or our university
or community college just thought
you'd like to know, folks, that's all —

October 15

firearms poem # 2

autumn leaves falling
another school massacre
not worth the headline

October 22

tomatoes poem #1

frost predicted for tonight
therefore gathered green
tomatoes galore from demi's
little garden I have kept it
going these five years since
that september day she chose
death over torment it's as if
she bequeathed it to me along
with the basil frozen in neat
cartons each labeled "add
garlic for sauce" I gave those
to her sisters do they have
any yet in the backs of their
freezers I don't ask but I will
eat green tomatoes fried put
many in sauce for spaghetti
some will ripen red or yellow
on the cool basement floor
this past year I ate the final
of demi's saved tomatoes on
january 15 her birthday will
one of these last as long again

October 29

flower poem #2

tulip bulbs have come
it's soon time to plant them
heard a story once about a
person horticulturally challenged
planted her bulbs upside down
the tulips finally came up in july
their stems all sinewy evidence
of their frantic efforts I was as a
child always given a tulip on my
early may birthday one year I
think I was three I picked all the
blooms in my grama's garden

November 5

flowerpoem #3

the u.s. poet laureate
said he liked the word
daffodil then recited a
poem with that flower
within plus a lot of words
unrelated he must have
also liked those well I
like hollyhocks—the
word and the flower
but where have all
the hollyhocks gone
oh favorite blossom
of my childhood the
dolly gowns we made
the bumble bees we
trapped inside freed
them anon but now you
never see that lovely
stalk of blooms oh where
have hollyhocks gone

November 12

compassion poem #3

I hear trump visited
Our Fair City last night
convention center filled
heard people clapped
when he vowed he'd not
let syrian refugees into
the country those clappers
undoubtedly to a person
descendents of famine
wartorn immigrants he
said this in abe's home town
how very far we've fallen

November 19

work poem, first part

I've been thinking about work
telling my overworked friends
they are working too hard not
that I should talk but have just
had two thoughtful responses
this first from my nephew, an
editor: "There's a lot to be said
about the value of work, aside
from the benefits of income. I
feel like I matter—I'm making
a contribution, adding value,
shaping something. You also
interact with others. Even if you
end up disliking them and the
relationship ends, as it does
sometimes, you miss them.
They're part of the furniture
of your mind, your memories.
That's why, even if I had no
employment, I'd force myself
to do things. That said, as I get
older, I sometimes wonder if I
somehow missed the point. You
know, as our grampa painted on
the silo, 'life as well as a living.'"

November 26

work poem, second part

I shared “work thoughts 1” with a teacher friend single mom who works a second job her response: “Those words prompted me to think about what I value in this work too. I enjoy the catering for I get to interact with a very different set of people, in other employees and guests. I feel my work contributes to the wellbeing of everyone who attends an event—I get to take care of people even if they don't realize I am taking care of them. I get to be generous and kind in interesting ways, and I love the physicality of the work—the sounds, the smells, the work with my hands, the feel and weight of ceramic and glass and cloth napkins. Even dirty ones. And I like the pace of the work, the rhythm of it. What always amuses me is reading people's assumptions about me (and all of us) because I'm doing this work: I must be very needy, uneducated, unable to know worldly things. I don't dispel their notions. But this experience makes me wonder about my own assumptions of other people.”

December 3

remembering poem # 23

my daughter demi
knew how to take
small pleasures
small treats
when we drove to
wisconsin she always
stopped midway for
a bag of popcorn
when we swam at
lola and kevin's
pool we stopped
on the way home
for ice cream cones
and licked them
while we sat on a
ledge swinging our
feet like little kids

December 10

wordspoeM # —well, what was the number?

hey guys how about a new acronym
heard it from a psychologist friend
I was trying to bring up a word it
got itself as far as my mouth then
tangled with my teeth they wouldn't
let go no matter how hard it flailed
tongue lips no help at all I did
manage to hurl a few accessible
expletives at this increasing irritant
the ugly "a" word included my
friend said you've not got that yet
you only have ARCD—what? —ARCD
—Age Related Cognitive Decline—oh,
that! now I patiently wait the word
name memory whatever sidles out
eventually though sometimes middle
of the night an embarrassed pup in
a puddle on the rug but why rage
accept arcding it's the arch of life
be sure though to rummage in the
fabled pot at the foot of the bow you
might find what you're looking for

December 17

springfield peace vigil poem #1

my tall cup of sweet milky tea
on the seat beside me after the
grand meal served by the islamic
folk caught the eye of a small boy
tumbling with his buddies on the
soft carpet where soon rows of men
would line up to sing evening prayers
he eyed the cup, me, then took a long
drink ran off I drank he returned
solemnly drank again I drank too
he came back once more to share
the tea nodded when it was finally
gone this now strikes me as a warm
ritual of mutual trust him young
me old no thought of differences
what the event? the local interfaith
peace service hosted by the islamic
center this past sunday the place
was jammed five hundred anyway
all in our stockinged feet the brief
ceremonies moving heartstrong
words of unity afterwards I greeted
my pastor my senator my rabbi my
friends of all shades of ethnicity then
drank tea with this young man while
awaiting the crammed carpark to ease

December 24

christmas lullaby

(My mother wrote this lullaby for my oldest sister on her first Christmas, 1925.

You may remember this; I've printed it before.

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 31

Lola's poem - October Harvest

I wrote an article on Lola Lucas for the year's end issue of Illinois Times, "Lives that Mattered." I also used my space to publish one of Lola's poems. This one was suggested by Yosh Golden who observes, "Lola was a quiet master of words. Here, is lyrical imagery and a starkly objective conclusion."

Pumpkins, no less than oranges,
Hold the rain of spring
The sunshine of summer
In their flesh.

Entwined, the vines
Tangle, the dirt
Presses into the rind.

The overcast sky
Reminds that winter
Will arrive, yes,
"The frost is on the pumpkin,"
Not today, but soon.

In the October country
Of middle age
It dawns on us that we, too,
Are ripening toward a harvest.

Also by Jacqueline Jackson:

The Round Barn

A Biography of an American Farm

“There is the land. At the center of the land are the farm buildings. In the center of the buildings is the round barn...”

Begun with a promise to her grandfather when Jackie was just fifteen, *The Round Barn* is a collection of farm stories spanning almost seven decades. Meet “Daddy Dougan,” Ron, Vera, and the kids: Joan, Patsy, Jackie, and Craig; the hired men, neighbors, and the town beyond. With dozens of authentic photos, this book is touching, funny, tragic, and warm.



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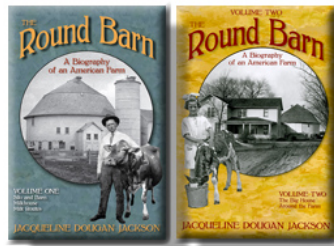
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The Round Barn

Volume 4 Coming Soon.

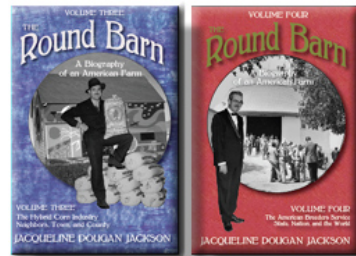


“After reading an inch into this almost 500 page book I crave my favorite dairy food every time I start reading again. Can you imagine having a close enough relationship with your dairy farmer that you can tell when the cows change their eating habits? Grace Croneis, wife of Beloit College’s president in the

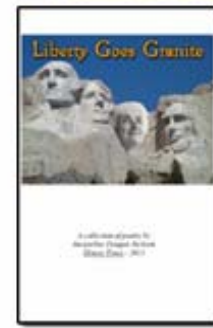
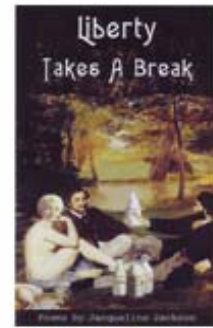
early fifties, is heard to remark, ‘Well, I can tell the Dougan cows are enjoying spring pasture!’ I’m wondering about why and how the farm ended: guess that happens in Volume 4. Writing about this book makes me want to go slather a piece of zucchini bread with butter.” –Goodreads, 2014

“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: Frances Hooper Professor of Arts and Humanities; Professor of English and Classics; Director, Center for the Creative Arts



“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, Keefe Professor of Humanities, Emeritus.



Eleven years of poems published weekly
in Illinois Times.

Some sorta good, some so so,
some funny, some not,
some of politics, some of bug or blossom.
Most are of-the-moment.
I do like writing them
and hope you enjoy reading them!