



*A collection of poetry by
Jacqueline Dougan Jackson
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Cover Art Bastardization by
J. Mitch Hopper

Dedication



Karl Francis Schmidt
1922-2016

my beloved brother-in-law
always an unfailing joy
inspiration and support

Karl was at Wisconsin Public Radio for 75 years!
The best known voice in Wisconsin.
When he died, they announced,
"You can still listen to Karl for two more weeks!"

January 7

deception poem #1

my stalwart upright grandfather
“took the pledge” when a youth
never to touch alcohol never did
nor did the farm men a stipulation
of their hiring those found drinking
were fired on the spot I was eight or
so when my mom made a genuine
plum pudding for a holiday dinner
grampa and grama were our guests
mother poured the contents of a 7-up
bottle over the mound on the platter
held a match to the liquid—flames
flared up danced atop the confection
we cheered it was magical we were
served after the fire had died grampa
ate his delectable portion with gusto
but for several years I wasted many
a match trying to set 7-up on fire

January 14
demi poem,
uncounted

it's your birthday again
tomorrow

by taking your own life
you spared yourself
old age

you also spared yourself
your mother's
old age

January 21

tintin poem #2

WILL has opera on saturday
also classics by request not sure
which this was on but I've always
liked the announcer john frayne I
listen in the car didn't get in on the
first bars of a soprano singing a
florid aria lots of high notes trills
volume john frayne at its finish said
that was the jewel song from faust
by gounod then he paused added
those of you who love tintin will
recognize this as the song the grand-
opera diva bianca castafiore is always
singing well all my kids at four learned
to read on tintin have loved bianca
castafiore the bane of captain haddock
and professor calculus when I called
my youngest to tell her she promptly
began warbling "oh my jewels beyond
compare!" we wondered who now has
"The Castafiore Emerald" I'm sure we
had multiple copies wore out all our
tintins bianca shows up in other tintins
herge knew when you create a gem of a
character you don't let her go the fine
tintin movie also knew wrote her into
a dramatic part where at the climax her
high notes break glasses when she sings
—you guessed it—"the jewel song"

January 28

apologia poem #1

now that I'm getting sorta old
I better make my apologies to
you kids while I still can and
am fairly sane too late to say to
demi but here goes for you other
three: I never meant to hurt
any of you but I know I did I
never meant to embarrass you
never meant to reveal something
you didn't want revealed well I
was sometimes guilty of that
but sorry afterwards I never
wanted anything but the best for
you especially in the fulfillment
of your abilities and your dreams

so now I've said it not in a way
you'll probably like but if I said it
some other way you might not like
that way either I've tried to show it
by actions and attention though I
know neither are ever enough and
often done ineptly I also tried to
protect you but can anyone ever
manage that? still I tried I tried

February 4

prom dresses poem #1

enter the downtown Y folks and be
dazzled by the bedazzling display of
prom dresses white gold black silver
every rainbow hue some plain some
patterned choose from slink to poof
how about yellow bouffant strapless or
demure silk satin tulle crepe you name
it (no burlap) banglely sparkly sequinsy
why here in the Y? well these are for
teens needing prom attire prom is a
killing expense nowadays in my youth
mom and her out-of-area friends had
a round robin of dresses circling so
we always wore a “new” one exciting
when the long box came in the mail
you seldom questioned your mom's
friends’ tastes a few pins made it fit we
had many formal dances Hi-Y Rotcy
Glee Club every org put on its ball
high school gym themed transformed
no expensive dinners before no rented
tuxes for the boys a gardenia corsage
you were dizzy with its heavy scent I
asked for daisies with my favorite gown
a kind of patterned cotton spring green
white daisies yellow centers it’s still in
my attic yes it went the rounds was worn
by distant belles but traveled home again
prom well prom was maybe special but
with both a jr prom a sr prom not the
big deal it now is so I huzzah the Y its rack
of wonders clothing our beauteous babes

February 11

valentines day poem #6

this starts happy ends bad
the spirit club in the wisconsin
high school where my daughter
teaches decided to do something
nice to celebrate valentines day
on post-its they wrote encouraging
or complimentary words stuck
one on each locker you're cool
keep up the good work we like
your smile when my daughter
arrived early on february 14 the
corridors were riots of color, joy
then the kids came in some jerks
went down the halls peeled off the
post-its restuck them on the locker
of a particularly popular kid so it
had 400 while the rest were bare
I asked over the phone did they
catch the ones who did it did they
do anything about it no said my
daughter she added I've always
hated valentines day

February 18

potluck poem #1

if it's got
cornflakes
on top
it's bound
to be good

February 25

cosmology poem #10

I am clothed by the dead
my daughter's breathtaking
jackets she stitched herself or
pulled from the buck-a-bag
at a minneapolis thrift store
a kashmir from india via
the smithsonian she had an
eye for the beautiful valuable
ditto my mother's crazy hats
my father's heavy collared
frayed sweater full of holes my
grandma's quilt I sleep under
(as a kid I watched her make it)
my best friend's pullover it
comes to my knees covers
the open seam in the seat of
my favorite pants so I don't
need to repair them well why
not be garbed by those now
gone every particle of our
living flesh is made of dust
from exploding super nova
billions of years ago is being
recycled forever through the
bodies of the quick and the
dead minerals veggies animals
and will continue so when
our earth a spinning cinder
in the milky way is clothed
by baby stars not yet born

March 3

farm poem # 27

after we moved from the little house on the
dairy to our own place up the road the browns
moved into the little house earl was a milkman
geneva did piece work at home for the shoe
factory a certain hand-sewn sports shoe two long
threads a needle on each then cross stitched her
folks lived there too and helped they'd thread
the needles it sped up the work increased the
family income her father's favorite occupation
though was to take a chair station himself near
the corncrib with his 22 rifle and shoot rats

March 10

jeopardy poem #1

*This week's poem is by permission of
Robert Erickson, brother-in-law to
Springfield's Delinda Chapman.
He is in hospice, and hopes to live to
see these prescient words printed in
Illinois Times.*

Having Survived Double Jeopardy and Made
My Wager, I Anxiously Wait for Alex To Begin

A reminder, the Final Jeopardy category is:
World Events.

And the Final Jeopardy answer is:
Their hypocrisy, rapacity,
and total and benighted indifference
caused the end of all life
as we know it
on the face of the Earth.

Players, be sure to frame your response
in the form of a question.

*From: some thoughts I had some things I did
some words I wrote
2010, Crofton Creek Press*

March 17

note on kitchen table

hi dad hi mom I know being elected prez of the whole high school senate can't compare with head of the free world but it's pretty big stuff for me yeah that was my winning platform—big stuff, my big stuff is bigger than your big stuff your big stuff is really pretty puny stuff that took care of julio I decimated savanna by pointing out that her big stuff hardly rated even being called stuff destiny should have run she's got really really hot stuff but I don't think she could've won over my big stuff she'll make a good v p especially if I say let's stuff it ha ha my winning slogan was "TOM's big stuff on the aTOMIC button! Blast our class to BIG STUFF again" don't wait up for me I'm partying love ya Tom

March 24

personal thanks poem # 4

I'm not the one hoss shay yet but
had an irate heart recently as many
IT readers know came out okey doke
now a member of the stent sister- (and
brother-) hood: pills exercise dullsville
food no-no's but want to say this here
at Memorial ER I was swarmed over
like bot flies on a you-know-what
a most able efficient posse of pro's
then barreled via wheelchair a wild
ride through halls to the cath lab (or
whatever it's called) a team of maybe
five six swung into rapid action their
precision marvelous like a ballet each
knew exactly when and what to do
I was awake informed could have
followed the action on the nearby TV
had I known the modern art screen with
black squiggles plus varied shades of gray
was my own giblets when the surgeon stood
and I could see eyes over his mask I asked
when are you going to cut me open we
aren't he said we're all done it took 21
minutes to thread the stent up through
my artery latch it where it belonged had
a hospital sleepover by some grapevine
visitors trotted in my grampa died of this
how science has advanced! here I want to
sing praise to ER also give heartfelt--pun
intended--thanks to that skilled surgeon,
that perfectly coordinated team now I'm
wondering what do they do there in that
white bright room day and night waiting
for the next broken heart to come careening
in—play cribbage? play I spy with my little
eye? and stay alert to spring to action with
two minutes warning? p.s. thank you, yosh

March 31

n fifth street poem #23

why can't kids play on the
playground next door to me
it's fenced locked except during
school hours liability says our
neighborhood president well
why can't we extend insurance
to cover all hours this area needs
play space the kids use it anyway
they come into my back yard
throw their bikes over the chain
links scale the fence use the swings
slides hoops they clamber back to
pee behind bushes in my yard I
don't mind what's a little pee I
pee in cornfields on the highway
—sometimes in the middle of the
night 2 or 3 a.m. I hear thump
thump thump on the playground
some lonely kid with or without
a home but having a basketball

April 7

lincoln half-marathon 2016

awaiting the lincoln half-marathon
yellow directional abe signs up for
weeks no parking ones since thursday
I've got on my genuine lincoln top hat
liberated from clayville when our school
sold that priceless village down the river
no inventory so nobody missed it the mad
hatter has worn it lots but it represents
abe today will we have blade runners?
wheelchairs? my neighbors at corners
are ready to give out drinks we're near
the course's end stragglers will pant by
till eleven here come the front runners!
two, three, sinewy legs, oh the thrill of
life on n. fifth! stats will later tell who's
winner who's last who came farthest ausi
maybe? —now pairs coming clusters here's
a golden liberty next a babe in a 3-wheeler
pushed by her folks a legless man's arms
gyrate as he spins by what colorful gear I
covet stripy tights! . . . slow ones now, walkers
a man with kid on back ringing a bitsy bell
mommy runs up joins daddy kid bell for the
final lap I spy three lincoln toppers shapes are
wrong (irish) I'll try to nab the abe sign in my
yard uh-oh too late cops have grabbed it but left
“no parking”; show's over! 1500 runners I
hear; elsewhere en route a car was pissed
at a two minute halt in his impatient day
tough rocks buster I'm proud of our runners

April 14

weather watch, lake springfield

furious winds whip
whitecaps on the roiling waves
ducks paddle serene

April 21

manzanar

the name means apples lingers on your lips
like honey yet the place it names is sandy
dry with ice-cold winters baking summers
rows of drafty barracks barbed wire
armed towers soldiers all these to guard
the many thousands (half are children)
sent on shrouded trains they carried only
what they could homes shops taken over
pets left behind some given a week's notice
some only days to gather a life it was
a mistake president reagan said in the
rose garden later some scant recompense
but what could bring back sons in special
units dead in france italy what could remake
scattered lives it's now one of our nation's
parks there's a film yet here we are again
spewing detention deportation danger
women children again behind ten-foot
barbed wire 2400 in dilley tx, 500 plus in
karnes guarded by US Home Security kids
scared of soldiers unfamiliar inadequate
food read for yourself LATimes April 11 '16
how short how very short our memories
how shrunken our compassion how ugly
we renew our fear we who are aliens all

April 28

insect thoughts #4

on my kitchen floor in a bowl of water
lives a live tick I found it on my neck
after burning charlie's prairie last week
don't think it had time to bite isn't swollen
has its mouth parts six appendages I have
studied it several times with a magnifying
glass consulted wikipedia it's probably a
female deer tick might carry lyme plainly
can live underwater tough little bugger
seems immortal that's no surprise—our
sapiens species will likely be extinct in a
thousand years is the prediction so insects
will inherit the earth—haven't named it yet
while on this subject there's a somewhat
new bug invading from the south thanks
to climate change wikipedia says its looks
will send you screaming they seem a cross
between cricket grasshopper black spider
skinny legs don't chirp just stare at you
they like damp places they are too fast to
catch but I have trapped four in my cellar
you can buy a really sticky pad I mean
really sticky don't touch it or you'll be like
the man in the folktale with the sausage
on his nose only it will be on your fingers
feet you have been warned but what an
effective way to eliminate crab crickets
now about walking in woods we need a
jacket made of that gluey stuff a cap a
neckerchief will those ticks be too canny
to be fooled you'll get everything else
though flies mosquitoes even tiny critters
it's probably patented but worth a try
maybe they'll pay me for a testimonial

May 5

friendly conversation

this writer emails her old buddy aka computer guru after he's rescued her once again from her electronic cesspit:

"I know I am a trial to you . . ."

"Trial???" he responds. "Trial???"

Test, ordeal, burden, worry, hardship, tribulation, anxiety, difficulty, misery, adversity, exasperation, aggravation, abomination, even liability perhaps—but trial? Whatever would make you think such a thing?"

May 12

endings poem #14

when something catches my breath
on the car radio—WILL these days--
a brandenburg for instance or brahms
variations on a theme by hayden (that
seventh bell-like variation is the one
where if I weren't driving I'd close
my eyes) sometimes I pull off into a
deserted alley to await the final
cadence delay my arrival wherever
I'm going slow down before green
lights in hopes they'll turn red and
pause my journey hey am I writing
a metaphor? not so many years
before my own cadence I better find
more alleys to pull into but when
the recapitulation comes and with luck
a coda what better way to switch off
the ignition than drenched in bach?

May 19

**When the
Prodigal Returned**

*This week's poem is by
guest poet John Knoepfle
who began this poetry spot
in IT fourteen years ago.*

sad moos
in the barn

May 26

lincoln statues poem #4

most of you are aware of the
numerous depictions in this
area of our most famous son
the volkmans even wrote a
booklet with numbered photos
well there's a new statue just
dedicated in an impressive event
out on the university grounds
concealed beneath a blue veil till
the ceremony's proper moment
the sculptor stood modestly by
during the speeches portrayed
is the young lincoln it's well done
competently rendered but my
favorite remains the bulky one
in front of lincoln library at 7th
and capitol the one of lincoln
disguised as the tin woodman

June 2

on writing your stories #3

*from a 1995 letter of Copeland
Greene: our fathers were members
on the first American Breeders
artificial insemination board.*

I am curious as to the progress of your book. My impression is that you have an overabundance of material difficult to sort. To establish a central theme and an interesting story flow are a cross every author bears. We, children of Howard and Elsa Greene, are experiencing such a problem as we write a series of short stories about the family and business. Our kids are urging us to write the stories we tell them about our younger days. We are not sure whether they use it as a technique to shut us up or are truly interested. But we are having so much fun we really don't care. We are finding our impressions of the same event to be quite different!

June 9

on writing your stories #4

long long ago here's how a
clever chap got himself in print
I forget where I read it he
wrote to a newspaper that
had a q-and-a column giving
a line of his own poem and
asking did anyone know the
author he signed a fake name
then a week or so later he
answered the query telling
who the author was—his own
name this time—and “Here is
the full text of the poem,” then
signed a different fake name to
the authority who supplied the
info you can still self-publish
today a lot of us do but it costs
more we need some of that guy's
ingenuity don't you think?

June 16

transition poem #5

my dad came from country school
small for his age shy insecure he
told me of that first day walking up
to the huge doors of the city school
he felt everyone was looking at him
he was wearing clumpy shoes like the
girl of the limberlost in the continued
story he was following in the daily news
but in six months he was running down
the halls slamming locker doors

June 23

on writing your stories #5

seem to be on a roll so why not go on
what about my first publication I was
ten writing a long oz-like tale have I
told you this before the heroine had
a snazzy name orania turquoise she
and her buddy what did I call him
hopped from one cloudland to another
had adventures a good bird character
named talka was their virgil though my
countries were benign a friend of my
mom the editor of a galesburg weekly
liked my story published it by chapters
one week on the front page a boxed
notice: "Jackie Dougan! Authors should
not let their publishers get ahead of them!
Send in the next installment pronto!" I
was on a trip with my grandparents
that night I sat up at the little hotel desk
by the mississippi a puddle of light on my
paper wrote a chapter it was the last
my characters quickly returned to earth
I couldn't stand the tension of a deadline
ever since I've refused deadlines except
of course this one for illinois times I
haven't missed a week yet (sometimes do
stay up late) the galesburg post story I
found out ran more than four months

June 30

insectpoem #9

my current focus has been cecropia a
lovely moth now in its beginning stages
a botanist at my sister's elderliving
establishment has glass jars set up with
unhatched eggs strings of pale pearls
and all the numerous hatchees—tiny
black fuzzy worms long as a fingernail
busily munching box elder leaves a ledger
details progress: five instar stages they
split their skins keep gorging till at the
finale they are fat green long as your
pinkie finger they then spin cocoons sleep
all winter emerge as moths in spring to
start the cycle all over again the botanist
on holiday left my sister in charge so I've
helped pick leaves remove chewn greenery
nudge the wee beasties toward lusher fields
studied them with the convenient magnifier
was sorry to leave my sib almost sorrier to bid
farewell to the thriving tribe but this morn my
sister phoned the first has split its skin! it's
into instar two! thrill thrill! she promises pix
oh their poops are pepper-speckles lots and
lots I knew you'd not want this bit omitted

July 7

treasure poem # 2

we perched on the big wood flour box
next to grama's stove a good place
out from underfoot but close to the
action of mincemeat doughnuts pies
rolled out on the marble tabletop
when the supply ran low someone
emptied a sack of flour into the box
a sneezy cloud grama made dishtowels
from the flowered sacks my dad sat
on that box as a kid maybe fourteen
argued evolution with his mother till
she was red with upset we are not
descended from monkeys! and she
stirred the pudding so fast it splattered
I saved that worthless box when the
farmhouse went it had been painted
pink it's been in my cellar till today
when kids doing volunteer work in our
neighborhood applied elbowgrease plus
stripper it needs sanding polyurethane
but will soon look like it once did will
my kids grandkids greatgrands value
it as a family heirloom probably not--
they never had the privilege it bestowed

July 14

gift poem #2

last year this column warmly praised
scores of helpful high school kids
they came again this June some 300
volunteers from Minn to Miss, Boston
to Bakersfield. I recently wrote of
Group 14 who while painting and
tree trimming also stripped the old
flour box at my house their names
Jordan Anthony Matt Maritza Dave
and Caleigh O'Neill there are other
such students all over our country
sponsored by their local Catholic
parishes or their personal pennies
(note: kids from other churches,
mosques, temples are doing this too)
here they slept on floors at Southeast
aided a Baptist congregation with its
Bible School helped an Enos Park
group form one. You could see them at
Camp Widjiwagan Boys and Girls Club
Sojourn many orgs many individual
dwellings sanding painting clearing
rocks weeds you name it bringing
order cheer Springfield salutes again
David Knoepfle Christine Teichman
your teams staged an impressive final
extravaganza an intricate ballet with
"work movement" choreography; photo
show; and many of us testifying what
had been done in our neighborhoods
come again come again you give us faith
in generosity goodness warmth youth
thank you Catholic Heart Work Camp

July 21

personal poem # 14

once on a time I put in (at my job) for
full professorship that's the pinnacle
of pay and prestige I got turned down
the committee chair told me "you have
not yet internalized the professorial
ethos" I was co-teaching then with a
prof who also had an administration
post so he was rungs above me he came
walking across the parking lot briefcase
good suit I was alone in my car reading
phil hopped onto the rear bumper climbed
to the trunk traversed the roof jumped
to the hood then front bumper finally
the pavement sauntered off without
a backward glance I sent him a note
via campus email: "you have not yet
internalized the professorial ethos!"

July 28

summer advice poem #11

if a bear steals your backpack
and you're alone on the trail
starving you can eat porcupine
raw it even provides its own
toothpicks of course if you are
vegetarian you'll have to make
do with nuts roots blackberries

August 4

quotes poem #16

found these from my dad Ron Dougan in an old letter sent my kids: “The world’s a MESS! Too bad I’m not going to be around to straighten it out!” and “Some day I’ll be an old man. I’m not looking forward to it!” He sometimes shared his nighttime visions: “I dreamt I was cloned and all around were lots of Ron Dougans looking just like me. I’d talk to one and everything I had to say he already knew. I’d ask another a question, something I really wanted to know, and he’d say, ‘I dunno.’ Anything I knew, they knew, and anything I didn’t know, they didn’t either. I was so bored I was glad to wake up.”

August 11

summer cottage #17

this place used to be nice
it will be again after a bit
but this summer we arrive
to plumbing problems power
problems worst is mice they
have been into everything
bedding shredded drawers
fouled not a dish you dare
eat on it is hard to be an
owner from a thousand miles
away oh well the woods are cool
white indian pipes on the hill
stand in clustered phalanxes
the lake's pewter ripples reflect
every color as I swim in the
sunset—and we have a loon

August 18

summer cottage # 18

I try to connect with my grandkids
it's not easy but I think I got my
grandson's attention he was fishing
flinging his line around though not
dangerously I said I got hooked once
he showed interest so I continued how
I was nine on a dock when a younger
kid swung his line back caught me
neatly between my nostrils I stumbled
home along the shore path in loud tears
holding the pole the hook's worm hung
down over my lips a doctor cut out the
barb gave me a tetanus shot
grandma said my grandson did anybody
suggest they throw you back?

August 25

summer poem # 19

we visited the ben and jerry factory
near our vermont cottage a popular
stop for tourists and locals alike a
little kid tipped his cone the pink ball
of ice cream flew out I caught it in my
unhygienic hand slapped it back into
his cone before he got out the wail
rising in his anguished throat he gazed
at his treat hiccupped as I melted into
the crowd licking my peppermint palm
his mother never saw a thing

September 1

captives poem #2

a teacher guy writes on the chat log:
my cell phone is a very old model
at work I look on the deathly silence
and see an ocean of kids with their
earbuds head phones on their faces
bathed in the harsh light from their
smart phones, other mobile devices
often I expect to see drool running
from the corners of their mouths
an electronic leash is around their
necks but they hold the end of it I am
the loneliest guy in the lunch room

September 8

wordpoem #17

there's this net wordgame babble
I tune in for company with morning
coffee it starts my cogs rolling I aim
to locate half the words the grids
are sometimes huge though a recent
one was only forty-four I favor about
a hundred thirty sometimes there
there are five E's or six U's I find
every word congers up an image a
crazy random patchwork I like best
to listen to players on the chat log
they know each other range from france
to scotland australia canada holland
israel ireland keep track of births ills
jobs deaths I am a lurker just listen
to lexi-lovers all over the globe they
exchange clues for the hard words
today one was aruspex someone said
what a strange word someone replied
it's divining by animal entrails—
what's so strange about that?

September 15

north fifth street poem #22

the stump's base two yards across and
hollow a few inch circle of live growth
supporting the most majestic leafy
crowned tree in our neighborhood
it had to go every storm huge limbs
crashed down I watched its demise
but left before the saw found the
raccoons habiting its core four
hastened away to seek new homes
in enos park the fifth maimed by
the unknowing blade had to be
killed I'm glad critters live hidden
on fifth street maybe raccoons are
already in my trees maybe the four
displaced dispersed will find dens in
my hollow trunks they'll be welcome

September 22

advice poem #3

not mentioning any names or anything
but teenage kids here's a warning word:
if you ask a parent for money to go to
the fair and you're given admission the
cost of elephant ears turkey legs rides on
stomach lurching ludicri etc and you
come home money spent saying you had a
grand time at the fair you had better check
around before the parent hears the next
morning that the fair had been evacuated
empty a bomb scare there wasn't any fair

September 29

great grandson #1

far from any city lights here in the
central nevada high desert country
the almost cold breeze blows through
open porch windows and you burrow
deeper into the comforter the farm's
guardian crows imperiously but it's
still dark you lie seeing a black sky
spangled with stars you remember
that word used with sky in a childhood
song—a cow, a country lane, a spangled
sky—the rooster realizes his error goes
back to sleep and so do you musing
how you will sing that song to a small
round smiling face in the morning
when you and the feathered songster
are awake again and all are ready for
singing a face like his mother's at his age
hers like her mother's, who is your child,
he calls you grandma in two languages
you'll ask if there's a word for "spangle"
in french—if not let's fashion one together

October 6

familystory # 11

my bespectacled father small for his age
youngest in his class stayed out a year
between high school and college and
worked on the farm that job didn't last
for the married teacher in the one room
schoolhouse across the east twenty the
school my dad attended his first eight
years that teacher GASP got pregnant
and you can't have a pregnant woman
teaching children can you? so the board
hired ron he liked diagramming sentences
he and the kids skated so long on the
crick during recess they'd all have to stay
late to finish their lessons then were late
for their home chores he loved to read
aloud eliose tells me (she was in first grade)
he'd finish a chapter of The Count of Monte
Christo his feet on the desk sigh chuckle
then say well let's hear just one more and
read another chapter maybe the eighth
graders liked it but oh how I longed for
a single chapter of the Bobbsey Twins!

October 13

entertainment poem #4

now that I'm stented I use the
treadmill at the Y there are two
screens to alleviate boredom one
atop the other today I could choose
between walking in new zealand
massive rock formations ponds
bosky dells or viewing a cop and
scientist scooping half eaten body
parts yes human from galvanized
troughs of watery slop for hungry
pigs (they must have been shooed
away their jowls adrip I didn't see
the start) but it transpired the
killer might be a chess expert who
could craftily plot many moves in
advance I didn't stay for the finale
either but how can hills and skies
compete at least there wasn't a
political debate rerun and analysis

October 20

family story # 8

I'll tell you of great aunt lillian
young in 1890 a train dispatcher
alone in a remote rural wisconsin
shed kept a stout stick beneath
her desk just in case had a large
dog for company also a bluejay
the jay would bend straight pins
into circles when my aunt threw
a bunch on the floor also it would
wait till the dog was snoozing and
whuffling by the stove then peck
him on the belly one frigid night
nine men entered one by one each
tipped his hat evening ma'am sat
on the long bench said not a word
my aunt relaxed her hold on the
hidden stick the men took turns
stoking the fire at dawn they all
filed out tipped their hats thank
you ma'am (there'll be a sequel to
this aunt's tale you'll have to wait)

October 27

family story #8

to go on with great aunt lillian's story: it was a lonely boring job there in the country train station she listened in (illegally) to the dots and dashes the morse code chatter between various engineers one day she overheard a passenger was coming on one track a freight on the same track they would meet right at her station what to do no time to warn the trains of this fateful error she rushed outside cranked the handle shunted the freight onto the siding the engineer cussed her out from his window just as his caboose cleared the main track the passenger whooshed by the freight engineer shut up was this act of bravery ever lauded rewarded? no neither engineer nor the company breathed a word about it she was an unsung heroine I sing of it now to you

November 3

shakespeare poem # 2

spectacular uis macbeth last eve
don't miss it folks it's still on I took
my granddaughter years ago she
was nine we prepared by reading
lambs' shakespeare tales reciting
double double toil and trouble
shouting out out damned spot
at the performance she was on
the edge of her wooden bench we
were at the globe in bloomington
she didn't miss a word her eyes
were glued at a pause near the end
she leaned over and whispered
grandma they've added a lot!

November 10

early november haiku

getting nippy out
my tomato plants are blooming
too late now buddies

November 17

continuity poem #1

in my daughter's dining room I sit
at a table where I sat my first nine
years facing me the matched cupboard
my brother tipped over not once but
twice during those years broke all
mom's crystal behind me a marble
topped chest from my grandparents'
farm maybe via the rich relatives
to my left a graceful stand once pink
now black and gold from the house
where I lived from ten to twenty-two
(the farmhouse designed by the u.s.
dept of ag) to my right a seven-foot
glass front cabinet that lived sixty
years unnoticed in a cellar corner
of that house originally it came from
aunt ida's downtown we know because
its photo is in the background of uncle
jim his feet on a radiator (a curmudgeon
I never knew) now it's filled with nested
bowls spackled but familiar and eggcups
whose rooster cosies I made one year
my grandparents, parents, my daughter's
sibs her own two kids in framed photos
trophies fill a shelf a sign above the
doorway reveals my daughter's heart:
"home is where your story begins"
it's also where it continues—with love
memories faith for the unfamiliar future

November 24

it's all ok poem #1

it's ok to grab others' busts bums
if you're rich enough it's ok to
lie also repeat lies over and over
till half the country believes you
that half incensed by faux news
foxes vixens if you're rich enough
it's ok to stab anyone not white
enough if you're rich enough or
even whites if they're poor or ugly
punts or males cuny enough to
be p.o.w.s its ok to buy billions of
ads to spew hate if you're rich
enough to pimp the media that's
serving as your pimp ever stop
to think who profits from all that
moola not you me or miniwage
moms or workers replaced by
machines or malasia kids making
seven cents a day if they're paid
at all the grossly compensated
ceos get some of it and save more
by paying high-priced lawyers to
loop the loops so they needn't pay
taxes your college kids walmart
greeters fifty thou in debt are
living with you since you are rich
again b'cz america is great again

December 1

sides

I'm sick of hearing there are two sides to everything there are three sides six a dozen a thousand and if really only two is each equally sound look at galileo look at tycho brahe look at giordano bruno who said before he was roasted at the stake "there was in me, whatever I was able to do, that which no future century will deny to be mine . . . not to have feared to die not to have yielded to any equal in firmness of nature, and to have preferred a courageous death to a noncombatant life." these are old examples who said more recently a fact remains a fact whether you believe it or not my college bio prof quoted thomas huxley repeatedly: "god give me strength to face a fact though it kill me" our earth is hotting up ask florida mayors ask the netherlands ask voiceless dead coral reefs statistics show correlation with dramatic co2 rise we are all tied to the stake sticks already afire yet our deniers hold sway other burning brands refer to jap detention as precedent torture has precedence too far earlier than the inquisition as to sides a moebus strip has only one even though you feel two between thumb and forefinger yet it is a never-ending seamless loop

December 8

thanksgiving poem #11

two weeks ago I sat in my silent auto
as the super moon rose over lincoln
park the visibility there unimpeded
last night I sat an hour in my driveway
surrounded by brahms (the reception
from WILL isn't good in my thick brick
house) hardly a day goes by that I don't
thank my grampa for taking us to a
clear hill to study sunsets thank my mom
for seeing we had music lessons thank
my sisters for their unremitting practice
so that I know all the concertos by heart
and that I myself learned joy and discipline
through practice a more lasting lesson
than any I learned in a classroom always
thankfulness goes to my many years in
sinfonia that gave shape and meaning to
my teens and the director who twice gave
me specific affirmation at a crucial time
I am thankful for many many people and
many experiences and growing up on a
farm with extended family and treasured
animals and my blessed children but these I
single out tonight to special note: moon, music

December 15

silence poem #1

people sing about silence write
about silence there must be space
between words between sounds
different silences have different
meanings some you know are
coming and you wait for--one that
will be coming soon I first heard
(or did not hear) was when I was
at my first messiah concert age 12
at the end of the overture comes
a long pause—six, seven seconds—
and then the tenor sings his first
words comfort ye comfort ye my
people it is that pregnant waiting
moment that affects my heart, guts
more than any hallelujah chorus—
all my life I have sung in played in
listened to this oratorio it is those
silent seconds I hold my breath for

December 22

My Gift

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

My Gift

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 29

apologia poem #3

dear cherished charities: smallest
frogs to largest shrinking icecaps
swollen babies' bellies to all helpless
homeless prisoned poisoned deformed
demented defamed defunded—I grieve
to be sending only tokens this season
I spent my pence (and more) on those
who if elected might protect you might
save you some won but greed trumped
need so you and all of us, people to
planet, are in even graver danger I hope
to do better next year who knows even
my pension might then be up for grabs

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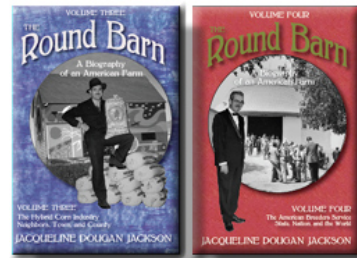


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