

Liberty Survives! *(for now)*



*A collection of poetry by
Jacqueline Dougan Jackson
Illinois Times - 2020*



© 2020

TO RUTH BADER GINSBERG



The only way we can repay our debt to her
is by carrying on her ideals.

BLANK ON PURPOSE

Thursday, January 2, 2020

easing into 2020 poem #1

let's begin the new year with some
dubious catholic school humor: my
friend tells of seeing the class cutup
deliberately wind his uniform tie into
his typewriter till his chin was on the
roller "sister! I'm caught!" the nun
strode over "I can fix THAT!" and
with her scissors snipped his tie
totally off at his neck this was long
ago; in a more recent classroom my
friend's first grader reported the
sister made him go stand in the hall
what? what did you do? "well she
asked who knew a word starting
with 'C' I said 'crap' and she sent
me out" her son looks thoughtful
then says "maybe it starts with a 'K'"

Thursday, January 9, 2020

dramatic dousing poem #2

maybe I've written before how
our dad bathed us at the Little House
all four crammed in the tub four arms
out washed four legs stuck up washed
swivel repeat on our other side four backs
washed four turns four bums four faces
slapped with a washrag (eyes scrunched
shut) oh yes eight ears dug into all out
everyone dripping shivering four towels
here's your toothbrushes pajamas – craig
wipe that snot off your nose – maybe I
didn't write of us lining up in the hired
men's washroom at the Big House where
one by one daddy thrust our heads under
the hot faucet scrubbed our hair – how
often were we subjected to these mass
productions? maybe twice or thrice in our
young lives I write this now to say when
in adult years we recounted daddy's baths
our mothers feelings were deeply hurt "I
bathed you children every night, separately
and gently!" why don't we remember those
loving ablutions? we should mom and in a
crevice of our hearts the memories must exist
but life isn't fair mom never fair to any of us

Thursday, January 16, 2020

anniversary poem #

my lost daughter's birthday here again
what can I say I've not already said
write what I've not already written
think what's not already thought
forget what can't be forgotten?
I could write about other lost children
though – lost at walls lost in cages
in plane wrecks car wrecks home
wrecks – I could but it's too painful

Thursday, January 23, 2020

ads poem #1

the news blurs in its speed so here's my
grading of ads that surround rachel &
cronies: F's: the sleek cars spoiling scenes
of splendor (I do like where the gal grabs
boyfriend's truck) F's for all ailing innards
from breath to bum – A's: farmers who know
a thing or two bcz they've seen a thing or two
plus their catchy tune others try to emulate
some liberty mutuals: the aspiring actor when
they show the whole thing even though his lips
don't match his words, plus potentate whose
walls fall down and he unicycles off to call a cab
(F: their keys of the city ad) A+ to st jude's bald
sweetly articulate kids so sensitively done – and
A++ for the deliberate slow turkey who quits
smoking – we see it at home working a puzzle
(red barn) mixing a smoothie, outdoors warms
its bung after a slip on the ice, spreads pretzels
with mustard buys a paper before boarding the
bus: three ads so far! I want a whole movie of that
remarkable bird living its contented ordinary life
character animation art work story line exceptional!

Thursday, January 30, 2020

archival memory #11

us methodist kids junior high age
went to epworth league sunday nights
we got the prayer hymn any bit of
program out of the way fast for then
came the games! “poor puss” was a
favorite we sat in chairs in a circle
“it” blindfolded stumbled around till
he – or she – found a lap sat in it the
“sittee” said “poor puss” and stroked
the kitty’s back kitty had to guess
whose lap – ah the physicality! but the
best game was a kind of reverse “hide
and seek” – “it’ hid anywhere in the
dimlit church when you found “it” you
crawled in with him or her the next finder
did the same the site would get more and
more crammed more and more tightly
packed all of us silent except for stifled
breathing a few giggles till only one kid
was still hunting – the last to find the
crowded cache (we’d all then tumble out)
was the next hider I’m sure you recognize
why "sardines" was a hit – but didn’t we
have adult supervision? well yes but
they’d survived the sport ten years before
and saw no harm in any stolen squeezees

Thursday, February 6, 2020

voyage poem #1

over a hundred years ago shackleton
rowed 800 miles over antarctic winter
seas in an open boat to get help he made
it back months later saved all the sailors
left behind on a few black rocks they
were down to their last penguin for fare
that voyage is now famed in history nova
nat geographic documentaries do you
suppose our environment, soc security etc
can survive on rocks stripped bare there
are no shackletons now among posturing
powers nor the cringing crews they control
strong rowers yes sturdy schiffs schumers
but can they make the 800 miles bring us
back, ahead, to an uncertain future safety?

Thursday, February 13, 2020

love poem

glen gould plays bach and hums
hunched over the keyboard he
plays bach and hums
you listen for the humming
you wait for the humming
you smile when you begin to hear
the drone bass to the partita
you love the humming because
glen gould loves bach so much
he has to hum and you can't help
loving bach played so superbly
by someone who has to hum
because he loves bach so much
and you can't help loving glen gould
they've now perfected a way to take
the hum out of glen gould recordings
but who'd want a glen gould recording
without glen gould's humming?

Thursday, February 20, 2020

hopeful song #1

rule of law is falling down
falling down falling down
DOJ is on the ground in
our fair nation!

take a barr and pick it up
pick it up pick it up
take a barr and pick it up, save
our fair nation!

a barr will only bash and bend
bash and bend bash and bend
a barr will only bash and bend in
our fair nation

what it needs is us, good friend –
us, good friend--us, good friend –
gazillion votes in hand can mend
our fair nation!

Thursday, February 27, 2020

piscatorial poem #1

doing a tedious job just now
shredding fish for a potluck
casserole – I decided to think
a pleasant thought-an unbidden
one wasn't pleasant: I was 7 or so
on a dock at a little wisconsin lake
a small boy at the end of the pier
flung back his fishing line prepared
to throw it again into the water his
hook snagged me right between the
nostrils just where you'd catch a fish
my mother said she'd never forget
seeing me stumbling along the path
to our cottage crying holding the pole
worm hanging below my chin a doctor
removed the hook gave me a shot
I'm planting a potato he said as he
brandished a needle I've not asked
potatoes but being planted must be
painful do they even need tetanus?

Thursday, March 5, 2020

porcine poem #3

saltina a vietnamese potbellied
pig once popular as pets she
was little cute grunty had had milky
oatmeal for breakfast as had I
when I stayed overnight with a
once-neighbor on a cross country
trip my laden purse was open on the
floor I looked down saw salty nosing
through the contents – papers wallet
keys etc with her dripping milky snout
recently I learned of salty's adult life
at first she'd eaten a special import to
keep pigs lean but ohio ran out so salty
grew to 300 pounds on free day-old
bakery eclairs banana breads etc – a
monstrous mound in the living room
butchers couldn't take her – she was a
“protected pet” she finally was accepted
at a soap factory thus ends saltina's story
a happy life with finale in worthwhile use

Thursday, March 12, 2020

gender poem #1

there reigns here a bishop paprock
directing the folk of his flock
to disown their kids
who show sexual skids
will no one suggest he defrock?

Thursday, March 19, 2020

pandemic poem #1

now's the time to hunker down
ovid 19's come to town
never thought there'd be an issue
over soap and toilet tissue
and if we weary of the media
we still can read the encyclopedia

Thursday, March 26, 2020

pigeon poem #3

pidgie who thinks she's a chicken
has held center stage here before
today she rose to heights of glory
a squirrel invaded the henhouse he'd
done it before eaten the eggs but not
this time "for," reported my son-in-law
who came on the scene "he met pidgie
sitting on the hen eggs" (you recall she's
an ever-hopeful mama) "and pidgie
flew into attack mode, drove the rascal
out" bless you, little pidgie! would we
could reward your bravery with a chick

Thursday, April 2, 2020

frugality poem #1

many years ago my sister and husband
both musicians got visiting jobs for a
season in the honolulu symphony:
place perfect pay imperfect so strict
economy was in order they made a
game of it who could manage with
least the younger daughter won in the
t.p. division by managing with only
one square – just thought I'd tell you

Thursday, April 9, 2020

sequester poem #1

my friend gary once student emails
“Larry REALLY REALLY misses shopping.
We store our food on shelves in the
basement I said I'd tape price stickers
on the items and sit behind a little desk
with my calculator and he could peruse
the shelves pick out food pay me for it
and I'd bag it for him. He wanted to know
if I was going to price gouge him. I said
there'd be a whole price range of items.
12 cents for a can of oyster soup (ugh),
3 cents for a can of spam, and all the way
up to 13 dollars for a can of chili (yum)
9 dollars for a bottle of jalapenos. He
decided not to play shopping, but we both
got a big laugh” nancy another former
student wrote him the game might relieve
her husband's boredom: “Let's do Laundry”
and “Let's do Dishes” were falling pretty flat.

Thursday, April 16, 2020

word poem # 8

walter de la mare's peacock pie
a book of poems for children was
given me as a kid some poems I
liked some I never even read it
was a big book a favorite was
(and is) "Silver": "Slowly, silently,
now the moon walks the night in
her silver shoon" I didn't need to be
told shoon's meaning of course it was
an old- fashioned spelling of shoes and
how much nicer the poem continues
with moon-silvered "homely" images –
"Couched in his kennel, like a log, With
paws of silver sleeps the dog" – silver fruit
on silver trees, silver fish motionless in a
silver pool I am finding in these days of
distancing it is calming to think on silver
on shoon – saw it in a recent crossword

Thursday, April 23, 2020

“favorites” poem #1

we could play favorite – how about sounds
one of my very favorites is “practicing” –
I grew up listening to my mom playing piano
my sisters practice violin I didn’t just like
my sisters’ pieces but all of it – scales
ševčík’s bowing exercises the repetition
over and over of a hard passage till it was
right I liked my brother singing along in
his terrible voice with someone’s practicing
I liked my own practicing and of course I
do like knowing all the concertos my sisters
played – brahms mendelssohn beethoven
lalo at the time I didn’t tell myself this was
a favorite sound but I grew to know it
was, especially the bach double concerto
when Jo and Pat played it together; it
still brings a lump into my throat –
so let’s share – what’s one of yours?

Thursday, April 30, 2020

archival find #

my dad has interesting dreams
in one he's a little kid out in the
back pasture dangling his feet in the
small pool he and his brother made
by damming up the meandering crick
he sees jesus gliding across the water
jesus looks just like his pictures on the
sunday school wall "young man," says
jesus, "is this the sea of galilee?"
"no, sir," replies ronald, "this is
spring brook" jesus looks confused
"then what am I doing here?" he says
vanishes and that's the end of the dream

Thursday, May 7, 2020

another archival find: my earliest book

in third grade a spare notebook
inspired me to write a book –
I filled the pages with short tales
one about a winter posy blooming
in snow holds this line: “She dared
not touch it lest it be poison for
flowers in February are very scarce.”
obviously I took my syntax from
fairy tales – my daughter Demi, 5,
desiring something said “I beg you,
I implore you, I WHEEDLE you!”
I burst out laughing, gave in to her
wishes – daughter Ellie, 7, at the door
of springfield’s first presby church
as a playmate scampered after a parent
said to the other parent beside her
“I fear she does not heed your call.”
(that parent later told me) you can see
not only did I absorb words but likewise
my kids – reading is good to do in this time of
distance: what are your choice words, books?

Thursday, May 21, 2020

family story #23

my dad had another dream
about spring brook he was again
a little boy sitting by the water
in the back pasture – on the hill
were three figures on a log wearing
green bay packers sweatshirts hoods
but ronald knew they were the father
son and holy ghost god said I've not
been back here in a long time and
things are really a mess the other two
nodded I see three things I could do
god said I could just roll it up into a
ball and throw it away the other two
nodded or said god I could start from
scratch and let it evolve all over again
the other two nodded or said god with a
sigh I could just sit here and watch awhile
see what happens they all sit silent then
god looks down at my father by the brook
and says ronald what would you advise?

Thursday, May 28, 2020

barnes poem #1

hi friends I have written a lot
about a barn this is about barnes
world famous hospital near us
where I just spent a week for an
eye op I blipped a bleb (look it up)
stellar experience excellent time I
thank the several spfld eye doctors
who got me there and now barnes
doctors schroeder xia lui hong I'm
surely missing some, nurses helpers
nina nicole bethany tammy many
many more on 6th floor whose
names I should remember they put
in eyemeds every hour round the
clock thank you all from my eyebrows
to my toenails you saved my eye you
were all cheerful pleasant I know over-
worked – p.s. food was toothsome but
if you order omelet omit the toast

Thursday, June 4, 2020

ax poem #1

what? you've never thrown an ax?
never even wanted to? I've wished
to, at certain folk, but haven't even
heft a hatchet – well let me tell you
there's a new establishment in town
called “realax” – get the clever pun?
it is relaxing empowering gratifying
the way you feel when the blade slams
into the wood yes there are non-living
targets though you can think what you
like animal veg or min so if you rage
at this covid crisis go to “realax” and
relax with a real ax this is not a
paid ad its proprietor happens to be
a respiratory therapist who knows
how often she feels the need of ax
therapy and the breath of fresh air
we all need these too – p.s. byob

Thursday, June 11, 2020

pandemic poem #3

my friend who works at a grocer's
bakery counter tells me he aspires
to be gentle, sympathetic with the
customers during this covid crisis
"People tend to be very emotional
about their cakes and doughnuts."

Thursday, June 18, 2020

word to the wise poem #3

the main thing you learn
about reading
history
is that nobody
pays any
attention
to history

Thursday, June 25, 2020

p o poem #

once upon a time the post office
delivered this letter to berea ky:
“To the president of a college
some place in Kentucky where boys
can work their way through school
do not know their address” years later
the burlington p.o. delivered a letter
to “chad walsh grumpkin hall vt” –
grumpkin hall is a tree house ten miles
from town! I myself have envelopes to
my grandpa simply “Dougan Farm, Beloit”
we can’t expect today’s p o. with its present
volume to be as creative as personal as of old
but it’s a hallowed institution underfunded – no
privatized trump p.o. will ever bother to deliver
my summer mail to podunk, vt – why even try?

Thursday, July 2, 2020

lincoln poem #43

abe at the park corner by the
museum his molded coat
blowing can view the giant
abe talking to a giant kid –
word is that statue is due to
move on – some people like it –
at the fifth st corner abe sits
on a bench his metal paper reads
“with malice toward none” you
could sit beside him yesterday he
was masked today it’s gone his view
is of a huge painting of himself done
in pixels covers a whole buildingside –
some people like it though it obscures
lindsay’s “rose and lotus wedding” on
the next wall (seldom noticed anyway)
I haven’t totted up all the variations of
lincoln that grace our fair city but “Abe”
I say (for I’m on talking terms with the
16th president since he leaned on my
newel post once) “Abe, what is it like to
see yourself every time you turn around?”

Thursday, July 9, 2020

cat poem #3

we had lots of cats on our farm
us kids named them all, some after
the intriguing return-addressees on our
mom's letters from around the state
(she was a state music clubs officer)
a black barn kitten had a mangey neck
our dad cured him with petro carbo salve
the kit became a long black cat with a long
black naked neck the hair never grew back
one day I was maybe seven I saw this cat
streak by with a bird in his jaws "Fernwood!"
I shrieked. "Bad cat! Fernwood Scrimshaw!
Drop that bird!" but the cat leapt into a tree
sat there crunching his catch I turned to see
my mother near a startled-looking woman
alongside a strange car "Jackie" my mother said,
"I'd like you to meet Mrs. Fernwood Scrimshaw."

Thursday, July 16, 2020

Vermont poem # 1

*2020 – (I am not there:
words by a friend in a long-ago letter)*

“This hillside cabin of yours has dispelled all our desire to see points further east. Climbed Camel’s Hump yesterday, our introduction to the Green Mountains – the beauty is over – whelming. Ate our picnic on a sunny ledge at 3000 feet. Five miles up a Vermont mountain is very different from the same distance on an Illinois flatland! I am now sharing my spot in the sun on your shoreline rocks with about twenty napping caterpillars. When they are activated by the wind they only roll over into more comfortable positions.”

Thursday, July 23, 2020

Vermont poem #2, 2020

*(I'm not in Vermont but here's word
from the Lake Iroquois Association!)*

“Dear Friends, /

We hope you have been enjoying our loon family swimming around the lake. Yes, they are back! Have you heard their laughter? Caleb Nye, a student at Champlain Valley Union High School, as part of his Eagle Scout project, has been working with Eric Hanson of the Loon Restoration Project. They have been setting up signs protecting our loon nesting site from boaters and hikers. This Friday Caleb will be passing out pamphlets on the loon project to all homeowners on the lake. He will be keeping proper social distance, just as we are all keeping proper distance from our loons. Be sure to polish up your binoculars, though!”

Thursday, July 30, 2020

vermont 2020 - perseids remembered

in the rowboat calm lake starry sky
no moon daughter demi and I talk
quietly or not at all keeping watch for
shooting stars tonight is the perseid
shower it's been an hour still no display
suddenly a giant ball of fire arches across
the sky horizon to horizon momentary
daylight we gasp we simultaneously hear
gasps from all along the shore we'd thought
we were alone waiting but that simultaneous
wonder proved all were out on their docks
watching too it was a moment never to be
forgotten the perseid shower will come here
soon watch on august 12th we are covid
quarantined but we can still survey the sky

Thursday, August 6, 2020

Catholic Heart Work Camp #5

this summer the Catholic Heart Work Camp with its units all over the country has been unable to visit anywhere including springfield but its local director david knoepfle nonetheless gathered a group of teenagers who have been busy here in enos park clearing alleys mending fences carting off brush trash other detritus again expecting no payment it's work of the heart demanding hot sweaty we thank you david and crew from the bottom of our grateful hearts

Thursday, August 13, 2020

current times #7

a new disease called coviditus is affecting I think most of us it's symptoms are you don't know what day it is what week it is even what month it is and as for time of day forget it in fact it makes us forget most things – where we left the phone where we set our book even which one we were reading what was I saying just now oh yes--and how many times we've told the same story to the same person over the phone once the phone's found – coviditus can cause irritability irrationality sometimes even whoop-de-doo throw shoes in the air who cares?

another malady is “Idiotitis”

also “denyititus” a third is “head-in-the-sanditus” we know who suffer those

Thursday, August 20, 2020

Hard Being a Farmer poem #1

my brother spent two winters in
arizona for sinus; here he's 13
in 1943. I was a lone kid on the
farm and sent him many letters.

“Craig, remember I wrote you about
that night walk Dad and I took to see
what was glowing in the nearby field
and found an ebbing funeral pyre of
animals, maybe sheep? Gruesome!
Today Dad asked Blodgett, who said
it was pigs, about 25 of them burning
that had died of a parasitic infection
of the intestines – highly contagious so
they had to be burned. So now we know.”
I felt bad for the pigs and our neighbor
but that companionable walk with my
dad over the silent fields I've never forgot

Thursday, August 27, 2020

good trouble poem #1

the words for the weekly space in this publication are being written after the days of the DNC they'll be printed with RNC in session I have modified my distrust of modern technology by seeing how it was able to convey humanity here is just one striking example – a ploy, sure, but a good ploy a true one like john lewis's good trouble – trouble we should all be engaged in-- and it has to be honest for any untruth can be revealed with – rapidity – it was just before biden's acceptance when he might give reason by missed word or blurred phrase to the opposition's claim of age or alzheimers it was the kid the v p befriended at a point in his past, admitted he too was a stutterer how to work on the disability how to face others – that earlier talk gave this young man strength to stand before a world audience tell his story push his words through his handicap what incredible bravery what a huge throng has been moved by his courage – and after him? biden spoke simply sincerely with scarcely a flaw

Thursday, September 3, 2020

lonesome poem # 1

In a 1943 letter to my brother; I'm 15, he's 13,
living out west for his health: he saved his mail.
"It's lonesome being an only child with you in
Arizona and Jo and Pat at college. I got home
from school – everything's a grey-green-yellow,
the sun shines brilliant and warm, spring in
November. I couldn't resist getting on my jeans
and romping with the dog and goat and cat
I greeted the cows, walked on the stilts, fed
Sugarpuss an oats treat, she nibbled from my
palm with dainty goat lips. I thought about
you and wished you were here because I am
lonesome, and we would be having fun. I hope
you are not feeling lonesome there at school."

Thursday, September 10, 2020

Swimming Poem #7

Time: Recent late afternoon

Place: Waterville, small VT village

Persona: My friend Caroline

Action: Caroline dripping sweat
nobody nearby, she strips clothing, leaps
into river, enjoys a refreshing swim

Further action: Caroline e-mails me
– knows I love to swim and will be amused
titles her e-mail “Emergency Swim”

Mistaken action: Wrong e-mail address

Unexpected recipient: ER, Illinois hospital.

Action: Swift call-back from COVID nurses
alerted by word “Emergency”

Result: Error explained, nurses howl with
laughter, tell Caroline she’s made their day

Conclusion: Friend calls me, shares story:
swears every word TRUE!/
/

Thursday, September 17, 2020

games poem #4 - peggy move up

ever play mumblety-peg? me neither
boys played it at my grade school
with jack knives us girls peeped
through the bushes from the girls'
side (no we didn't mix, yes it was
a public school) well you hammer a
peg in the ground then go through
a series of moves the knife having to
land blade erect in the ground the
loser has to pull out the peg with his
teeth ("mumble the peg") okay,
ready? here are the moves: first,
flip from your palm, then flip from
the back of your hand, flip by a twist
of the fist, flip by a twist of the wrist
throw by holding blade tip between
thumb and fingers, flip from between
teeth, throw from each shoulder or
from behind each ear, toss backward
overhead, throw around head from
the back. good luck! next: girls' side:
jump rope, jacks, peggy – move-up!

Thursday, September 24, 2020

Another suicide poem

I wasn't going to write about
my daughter's september suicide
this year, with the times so troubled
but my young friend maisy reminded
me this is suicide prevention month
so – we buried demi's ashes recently;
I didn't want to leave this earth with
her ashes still on my mantle. a friend
said "it means you've finally put it
behind you, you're moving on –
well, yes and no. I've moved on for
10 years now, but though I don't
dwell on it, it's never behind me;
with so many reminders, so many
things we might've said, joys, regrets
a truncation. we'll never know how we
might have prevented it, but I wish you
success during this special month, and
comfort if you don't succeed. What a
mystery – this life, love, and death.

Thursday, October 1, 2020

vulgar poem #1

how about a little mild vulgarity?
I wrote this limerick when my dad
had prostate surgery I published it
in a family newsletter; my nephews
wrote a clever ballad on the subject
much more vulgar but here is mine;
I'll be glad to accept compliments:
"Our worthy progenitor, he
Was finding it painful to pee.
With consummate art
They reamed out his part
And now it's all piddle-dee-dee."

Thursday, October 8, 2020

slightly vulgar poem #2

here's another slippery limerick
for these hard times I have writ
but two so please my loyal fans
don't clamor for more--this one
needs extra explanation – my
brother-in-law is a conductor
in this profession to be famous
you're either a child prodigy or
v ancient: Lew was neither but
like my dad needed a prostate
op – he chose to have it 1000
miles from his job my sister
told me over the phone and
mindful of our dad's poem said
"and DON'T write a limerick!" I
said I already had, but hadn't –
laid the receiver down and wrote
"A family member--not Ron –
Needed surgery on his baton.
We've received the directive
To call it "corrective"
And keep the conductor "anon."

Thursday, October 15, 2020

debate poem #1

I don't intend to make any
judgments on the high or
low points of last week's
vp debate except that I'd
be a pro-vaxxer if science
endorsed but I do want to
note that the fly was bored

Thursday, October 22, 2020

Abortion Poem #1

my foster-aunt, 15, hid her pregnancy
from my grandparents; my mother
helped deliver the child at home I have
told the story in my book but not all
my aunt eventually married the father
he had a scut job on county roads
she cooked for the crew she got pg
again you couldn't buy birth control
she again didn't tell parents it was the
start of the great depression no social
security no aca no cash for another
child she aborted herself in that
time-honored way a coat hanger got
septicemia nearly died could never have
another child I grew up with her son
my foster-cousin he was killed in korea

Thursday, October 29, 2020

heart operation

*in 2007 I had a pacemaker put in
I wrote this poem which is okay
to repeat for I couldn't get to our
lake season 2019, due to covid:*

i have two wires in my heart no big deal
but they have altered my actions for a while
also my observations this dawning I sat
in the shallows not allowed yet to
soak my sutures stretch my swimming
arms after gazing a time over the still
surface I noticed the action in the water
in my lap small green fish with little black
tabbed gills too big for minnies swimming
under my knees over my ankles up and down
the curve of my legs in lazy leisure but with
an occasional quick dart nothing in it for them
but curiosity nothing in it for me but delight

Thursday, November 5, 2020

curse words poem # 1

on the farm when grampa hit his thumb
with a hammer he didn't yelp, yammer
he cried ouchy ouchy ouchy! it got so all
on the place including us children be it
splinter or worse cried ouchy ouchy ouchy
this ditty will hit print after our election
I cast my vote for dr fauci I trust not in vain
I hope his bane is bawling ouchy another rhyme
grouchy is too tame for these cataclysmic times
– and my grampa never called us kidiots “idiots”

Thursday, November 12, 2020

Poll poem #1

To our readers: here is IT's yearly

Anticipated popular poll

“THE WORST OF SPRINGFIELD!”

Rules: Add your own categories.

1. Worst accident-prone intersection
2. Worst consulting co. on city improvement
3. Worst politician (choose your party)
4. Worst speedway street
screeching tires
5. Worst speedway street
deafening music
6. Worst holiday yard decoration overkill
7. Worst local zoom experience
8. Worst bar ignoring Covid cautions
9. Worst home bound squabbling kids
10. Worst barking dog you'd like to throttle

Thursday, November 19, 2020

previous pandemic poem #2

during the 1918 spanish flu pandemic
a friend tells me her grandparents
owned a chicago butcher shop across
from a catholic church – there were so
many parish deaths the priests couldn't
keep up with masses for the dead instead
hearses drove slowly by the church while
a priest on the walk sprinkled holy water on
each van – one by one by one – my friend
asked her granny why she and gramps survived
the flu “We had a shot of whiskey every night!”

Thursday, November 26, 2020

Heart operation, redux

what this summer I am denied is
what I love best about being here
naked in the still dawn the water
welcoming my gliding breaststroke
through the shade of the wooded
hill behind me till far out I come
into the sunlight on the water its rays
first on my hands a moment almost
sacred in its pleasure the warmth on
my hair my skin velvet as a newborn
my body supple as an eel as I dip
and surface – my heart when it heals
will another summer allow this joy
a time will come though when swims
will cease instead of pause – if heaven is
what we each make it then mine will be
swimming to meet the sunlight in the dawn

Thursday, December 3, 2020

thankspoeM # 8 /

with increased age I'd thought maybe
my sense of wonder had withered
along with other witherings but a trip
through the wondrous rockies my nose
glued to the amtrak window proved
otherwise – I recall the note left on
my dad's desk by my elderly grampa:
“Ronald, I had a glorious good time today.
The sky and clouds have been grand – the
team responded to every touch & were so
strong & willing – the machines were good
though old. That wonderful field of No. 1
grass is such a satisfaction – we have been
preparing for that these last ten years. Dad.”
thank you, gramp – we are never too old
to be filled with appreciation, awe, wonder!

Thursday, December 10, 2020

anniversary poem #1

hard to believe it's been fifty years
since a drove of dreamers gathered
to launch learning in a cornfield we
began in town though bcz the site
was silt no structures yet nor seats
(we floorsat at first) – but what a
grand time we had then and since
class could be held anywhere though
mine once met blindfold on the square
– in a cement yard – on traintracks—by
the luminous lake – we were evicted from
a bank too the door slammed behind us
times have changed of course but SSU-UIS
is fully fixed a star in state and springfield's
crown let's give huzzahs for this auspicious
anniversary. doff our floppy hats to fifty more!

Thursday, December 17, 2020

pastime poem #6

we take our entertainment in these times
of covid where we find it – today's activity
is hacking through a pale green gourd
tall, broad, bulgy as I am we have to hold it
with clamps it's called opo in the philippines
in italy cucuzza it has many other names
the next challenge will be to scrape out the
seeds bake the monster see if it's tasty with
salt and butter would feed a church supper
if it turns out inedible or all pith or woody
there are always the chickens who won't turn
up their beaks or it could be opo fertilizer for
this nevada garden I am currently visiting
I will report on this unfinished activity later

Thursday, December 24, 2020

Christmas poem # 15

*my daughter Damaris wrote this note
to her grandparents when she was 25.
I found it saved in my parents' papers.
Damaris – ever loved as she was loving –
thought of daily but more so holidays –!
left this life by her own hand in 2010.*

“Happy Yule 1978!

Dear Gram and Gramp,
I want to send my best wishes
for the season and tell you again
that I love you both. I'm thinking
that I've seen the farm in a good
many seasons and weathers now;
the beautiful mountain ash, the hay,
birds on the feeder, alfalfa and corn,
the falling snow, the placid pond.
How wonderful to share this place
and these seasons with you.
See you soon!
Your granddaughter Demi”

Thursday, December 31, 2020

year's end poem december 31, 2020

what a difficult year this has been
isolation, lack of holidays, illness,
separation from those we love, deaths,
increasing fragility of our political
system, the list goes on and on how
can anyone write a cheery report for
2020, but there have been
some pluses – unexpected phone calls
from friends long neglected, time to read
unlikely books, some visits at social distance,
long moments to think and ponder, an amtrak ride
to visit isolated kids, I am not among those who
have lost house, job, money, I am even in a
position to help some, locally, politically,
and now we're on the brink of vaccines
we can hope to resume life at a new normal
perhaps this next year and I have had a surprising
benefit from this year: a renewed and deeper
acquaintance with the starry sky

So Long and Thanks For All The Fish ⁽¹⁾

It's been thirteen years since I started editing this collection of poems published weekly in the *Illinois Times* by Jacqueline Jackson. Thirteen years of searching for the right graphics, arranging font and format, being the liaison with the printer, and trying to keep the layout of her work accurate in spite of a total lack of connection with the rules of grammar and punctuation.

It's been thirteen years of joy, pleasure, frustration and vexation as well as the dread of seeing something I said turn up in a poem! But mostly it has been a yearly warm sense of accomplishment and camaraderie. It's been fun giving back to the person who taught me how to find my inner writer.

But, alas, all things must come to an end. I am retiring from this project and give my best wishes to her next editor who will pick up the torch and carry on.

J. Mitch Hopper (2021)

(1) ©1984, Douglas Adams

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.



VOLUME 1
Silo and Barn
Milkhouse
Milk Routes

VOLUME 2
The Big House
Around the Farm

VOLUME 3
Ron’s Place
Corn and Cattle
Breeding

VOLUME 4
The Farm to
the World

To order online or download an order form, visit our website:

roundbarnstories.com

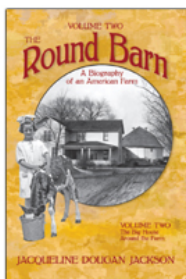
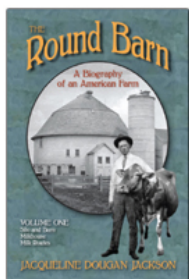
You’ll also find maps, movies, excerpts, and our blog!



beloitcitypress.com

some words about

The Round Barn



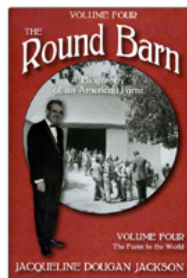
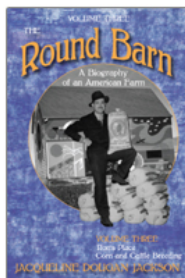
“After reading an inch into this almost 500 page book I crave my favorite dairy food every time I start reading again. Can you imagine having a close enough relationship with your dairy farmer that you can tell when the cows change their eating habits? Grace Croneis, wife of Beloit College’s president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

And now Volume 4 of The Round Barn is available as Jackie Dougan Jackson completes her almost unbelievable effort in creating what I believe is the most complete history of Wisconsin agriculture ever recorded. It tells of the farm's effect on the state, nation, and world.

- John Oncken, Wisconsin State Farmer

“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

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

All four volumes are available now!



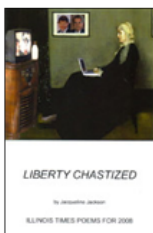
2005



2006



2007



2008



2009



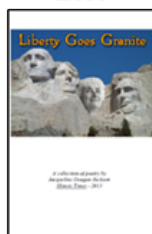
2010



2011



2012



2013



2014



2015



2016



2017



2018



2019