

50th Anniversary
By Mike Healey

Lately in the evening when I look out in the yard
I remember starting out times were tough and hard
We had nothing but each other to make it go
But we did it! Yes we did it...don't you know
I believed in you... you believed in me

Looking back I remember a love so sweet and true
50 years and counting as long as it's with you
Through pain, joy, and happiness ups and dipsy doo's
It really doesn't matter dear as long as I'm with you
I believed in you...you believed in me
I believe in you ... you believe in me

As days and years go rolling by our love will build and grow
Living life with your dear...it's all I know
So thank you for the memories thank you for the ride
Thank you for the life we share side by side
I believed in you...you believed in me
I believe in you...you believe in me
I'm in love with you...you're in love with me

Barn off the Highway
By Gary Stessman

I have travelled the same highway year after year,

Adapting to serve those who venture its path.

There has stood a barn off the highway,

although worse for wear, it holds fast.

A structure for signs, spray paint, and political candidates,

it silently remains,

as if to not to disappoint,

those who strive to make their name.

I wonder if those names

look at the barn the same as I?

In my memory, the barn out-served its intended purposed before I first rode by.

Yet, it remains.

Standing in the way, during planting season and harvest.

Much older now, a bit unstable

it remains to serve a purpose,

as long as it is able.

Becoming A Teenage Hussy

Come back here, girl,
no child of mine is going out in public
with a skirt that short!
Why, Lordy, it's way
above your knees!
The neighbors will think
I'm raising a hussy.
Do you think any boy
will respect you with
all that leg showing?

Unrolling my skirt band
I shake the pleats and my hair down
And with sullen face
Close the front door with a click.
I go out with a swing
To meet the tempted
once I've rolled that skirt back up.

God's Beauty
By Georgia Ebel

Butterflies are dreams with wings
Dreams of God's beauty hidden in things

Meant to be shared with sister and brother
Even a busy father and mother

Because our job we were meant to share
This is how we show we really care

We were not meant to journey alone
But meant to have hearts of love not stone

Gone Dark
By Kay Golden

Gone dark,
I walk the long halls of evening,
lined with the portraits of all who have gone.

Yes, memories hang!

I come unthinking
to a green house
bruised with dusk
beneath a scarf of ashes.

Yes, dwelling bleed!

Behind drawn drapes,
what can the widow of one day
be doing?
Not playing her piano,
not grasping a key,

but pressing her ear
to the steel door of history.

The irons of silence will bind her.
She will come glued in the mortar of grief.

Yes, lilies weep!

I stand there wooden with pity,
stalled in the cadence of loss.

Night falls in sharps
only the hurt perceive.

"Heroic Qualities of the Old"
By Wendel Kuhlman

It was a dark and stormy night,
Making golfers abandon their tees.
The wind flashed loud after lightning cracked,
And thunder howled through the trees.

The timid tiger squeaked with fright
While the mouse roared gleefully skyward.
The ominous omens echoed back shrill,
And politics was by a byword.

The people neared panic as these strange things occurred.
They wondered if this was the end.
"Has Armageddon arrived on this day?"
Each man felt a threat from each friend.

All light from the clouds was hidden by moonshine;
All windows were darkened with fear.
And no one could guess that in this eerie place
Our hero was soon to appear.

Our hero: not brilliant nor physically strong,
Not gallant nor dashing nor bold.
But our hero possesses the one thing we need
To conquer the threat of the cold,

Dreadful shiver of fright that we feel
When we face such a fearsome display....
Conditions were such that we only desired
To scream loudly and hasten away.

But our hero (Let's just call him Jo.)
Seemed impervious to human dismay;
He even smiled in a shy sort of way
When tornadoes appeared on that horrible day.

"Aren't you afraid?" the people all screamed
As Jo casually stifled a yawn.
"I feel kinda sleepy," Jo said with a grin,
And he sat in a chair on the lawn.

The townfolk, astounded, gathered 'round in the night
And gained confidence from Jo's aplomb.

"Jo isn't afraid,' they all said aloud.

"So this can't be the birth of 'the BOMB'."

The people all quieted, as soon did the storm,

And peace was established once more.

They all were embarrassed by what they had felt

When the elements had been aroar.

"How could you be so thoroughly brave?"

Asked old Granny Sykes. "Was it some kind of error"

You've never been gallant nor dashing nor bold.

So how could you face such a terror?"

Our hero named Jo saw Granny's lips move

Because they were right in his face.

"Whadya say, Granny?" he quietly asked,

"What's going on in this place?"

"My glasses are broke, and my hearing aid's dead.

I can't see nor hear very well.

Did something just happen that I failed to notice?"

And granny just snapped, "Go to Hell!"

Hussy Days Forgotten – Almost

By Jean Circo

Come over here, grandma;
maybe you could buy these.
Look, the pants have elastic tops
and are designed so nice and lose.
Here are the matching jackets
with sailboats on the front
or do you like this one
With roses and long sleeves
to cover your arms?
You will look so nice and
are sure to be noticed
in these stylish clothes.

I shake my head, adjust my glasses
and turn my weary self
to look elsewhere and everywhere,
searching for something
remotely classy. You know, something
with just a touch of hussy, hustle and bling.

Life, Love, Labor
By Georgia Ebel

Once upon a time in a faraway land
A young lad said I don't understand

So Grandmother sat in her old rocking chair
And drew him close to make meaning of life clear

I've traveled a long way on a journey called life
Sometimes the road's been weary; sometimes full of strife

But true joy often comes even in our darkest hours
As our omnipotent God his graces faithfully showers

From the tiniest flower blooming on roadside display
To the magnificent stars sprinkled across the Milky Way

Our Creator has shown with each bird's song
The order in the universe; only man can choose wrong.

He has given us a pattern of right choices to follow;
Ten Commandments lest in our sins we would wallow.

These laws are good for every person, family and nation on earth
They help to protect a soul's great worth.

Furthermore, there is love so sublime
As taught by Christ Jesus in ancient time.

Amidst all of the slaughter and violence of our nuclear age
Only Christ's love, living in us, can transcend the hatred and rage.

The great energy this Christian love promotes
Helps to separate the sheep from the wayward goats.

Then someday we'll hear the voice of the Lord,
"Step into my kingdom for your just reward.

You have forsaken the selfish glitter of worldly dross
Instead you have chosen each day to pick up your cross."

When did people stop listening to me? Ask me what I want to “be” and tell me why not. Tell me what to do and when to do it, who to love, how little to eat, what I shouldn’t say...but don’t listen to me. Only summers ago I was running through woods with cousins. I didn’t know this social anxiety, this torturous impulsivity, guilt, and pressure – relentless pressure. Thoughtless works poor from me at loved one’s, anger, resentment and confusion. Take me back to the woods. One thing I know with certainty, is this world is mine and here I will remain forever with this rich hair and kissed skin.

“Excuse me, can I go around you?”

by Michelle Alberts

When did people forget how to
talk to me? When did I become
a Halloween costume? When
my hair became an angry storm
cloud? The moment my skin
read like a map for the years,
scars and crevasses, constella-
tions in starry skies. I'm still
here after all these years. It's
everything else that's changed.
A cholera survivor with a pen-
chant for brown eyed boys, a
mother, and later a widow.
When did I become so ignored,
so afraid, alone, exploitable,
outspoken and unapologetic?
When did I seem to frustrate
everyone around with opinions
on my life? "Sorry, am I in your
way?"
This is the fierce final stand of
all that I am.

by Michelle Alberts

Prime
By Gustavo Larsen

Others are born inside of me
when a man and a woman turn eighteen,
ripping through my demons and laughter.
They arrive from a bastion of irreverence while I'm here,
feeling glad that I have wept and doubted my joys.

They carry the flesh of new memories,
renew the cities, the latitude of a smile,
and the inevitable absurdity of chasing certainties.
Someone washed them with a dirty cloth rag in a lake at birth,
or sprayed then with a bourgeois scent
to reaffirm social strata with their arrival.
I cannot tell.

Their strength declares all that I have built to be puny,
turning hallowed marble into clay.
The elusive truths laugh at me,
while they feast on my roots.

It is not known if they already are the seeds of fire
or deluge in the eyes of others
who will soon venture into their days.
They are unaware of all the pains and deities of life,
and that makes them even more sacred.

My familiar certitudes of streams with a destiny of salt
lay in sacrifice on a pyre they have just improvised.
The universal doubt is confirmed and celebrated.

Stress and Release
By Janet Walden

School is opening

Time to meet old friends

On a team or supporting or supporting "our" team

New classes, teachers, books, and clothes

Resolve to make good grades, be college ready

Need a job to help with expenses

Need a car to get to the job

The car has needs of its own, gas and insurance

School is opening with many subjects

Look forward to Homecoming

Teen Despair
Wendell Kuhlman

“Yer kid’s at it again,” the man mumbled
As he shuffled out to the bar.
Antoine heard him leave,
Heard the deep rumble of his care.

His mother came running
As she so often did,
Her concern truly genuine
For her one and only kid.

Antoine wanted desperately to stop,
Wanted to have it all end.
But the ache in his heart
Was just too dee to mend.

The tears that were falling
Were rapid and fast.
And his power to stop them had long since been past.

He wanted a father,
A man he could trust.
He wanted a confidante,
But his dreams were just dust.

His mother tried hard
To provide for his needs,
But her values were shaky
As water-bourne reeds.

So he sat on his mattress
And the tears rolled on down.
His mother approached
With her worrisome frown.

“I’m OK,”
Antoine managed to blurt.
“It’s really nothing.
I’m really not hurt.”

And so his mother left him
As she was wont to do
Went looking for another man,
Which hurt him through and through.

He often pondered suicide,
Wondered how it felt
To have your neck snapped clean in two
While hanging from a belt.

But that would take action
And he wasn't there yet.
Maybe tomorrow?
It was a reasonable bet.

But for now he could sit
For now he could stare
For now he was alone
For right now he didn't dare.

The Foster Child
By Mike Healey

When I think back on developing years
I can't hold back those trickling tears
Knowing that along the way
Someone tried...Someone cared...
Someone took me in and share themselves
Not from your body was I born
But a foster child...so forlorn
Came to your home to stay awhile
You made me smile...You helped me cope and understand
Encouraged me to try again...To like myself
And love the world we live in
In time that bruised and broken boy
Found you in a sense of joy
A feeling someone really cared
All this you shared
Sometimes a teacher
Sometimes a friend
Most times our parents make us men
But in my case I think of you
In time of need
You saw me through

The Genius Bar
By Marjorie B. Vandenack

When I need to get perspective on the teenage views of life

I refer without embarrassment to the two teens I know best

For of my five grandchildren just two fit that spot

I am not one who chases Pokemon across a busy street

Nor do I read and text when I am at the wheel

But when I need a new emoji, Anna with her deft touch

Provides for me the smiley faces that I love to use.

There is a point in teenage life, when their folks have heard

“I am the only one in class who does not have a phone.”

“It becomes a safety matter,” the mother tells the dad,

“We can phone them and know that they are safe”

So the wireless bill becomes a family plan

And limitations and restrictions and admonitions

Are the order of the day. Quiet teen agers are often busy with a phone.

“Is your homework done?” Mom asks.

“I am doing it now” responds the student, phone in hand.

I am all for progress, and the wireless phone is that.

And so there was a day when a great pleasure came to me

I pressed an icon on the screen and a grandson said:

“How did you do that!”

The Proof
By Janet Walden

The calendar shows Fall season is here

Where is the proof?

Flowers are blooming in great profusion

Lawns are resting in vivid green

Leaves are firmly attached to their branches

Temperatures range from Summer highs to Summer lows

Is it really Fall?

There have been no sights of migrations of birds or butterflies

People are still wearing shorts and white shoes

Saturday's TV schedules are full of college football

There you are, you can reason

Fall is marked by the football season!

The Spoon
By Marjorie B. Vandenack

I just love my Apple, it is my friend in need!

On any given night you'll find me,
MacBook on my lap, ear buds in my ear.

It could be email that I am checking

Or chatting with a Facebook friend

Or reading online the morning news before the paper hits my door.

Sometimes it is just me and my computer

Playing cards with a Rummy Robot

Who makes the same smug remarks so often

I mute its mindless talk.

Some friends think I am tech savvy,

I-phone, I-pad, MacBook in hand

My knowledge is quite limited, a secret I don't share

But when I have computer problems I know just what to do

My children and then spouses are kind enough to help me.

And while they may delight in my ineptness

The never say a word

For once on Facebook there was this post

"Remember kids who it was who taught you to use a spoon"

The Train
By Gustavo Larsen

He has taken the shape of a whisper in choir of fog and sepia.
He comes from a place where so many relics were born,
and yet his eyes carry very few years I would consider important.
I have already turned my back on the language of his decades.
We are both going deaf, but for different reasons.

He has been deprived of the songs of others,
and of the voice of a forgotten bird whose feathers
are –more than ever before- prisoners inside of him.
He sits there, stripped of all the words that will surely be
everything there were not in his memories.
A new poem grows in him, but castrated of its music.
Of that opera he still remembers,
its senseless death and final kiss
have been disrobed of the polyphony that vindicated them.
Streets, horns, and shouts smell an easy prey.
I give him no voice
but to sink in the dreads of just listening to himself.

His seat in the train is about to be sold to someone else.
The tracks have already filed his baggage down to a portable size,
so we leave him to the fate of hulled park benches.
Our chugging away confiscates his peer status,
while pigeons and a pair of fading hands
forge another absurd friendship.

Visitor to a Grave
By Kay Golden

As cast leaves spin around the trunk of this, your guardian ash,
I stand the wind to tell you this, Lucy Rain Bird:
Your son came looking for you today
Wondering why you gave him away.

When I told him you'd passed on
He sank like a man who has missed his train.

I explained the way it was back then,
How a pregnant girl alone
Had done the only thing she could for him.

Still his face cracked like the earth when the rain just won't come.

He asked me if he looked like you.
I searched his face and said I could see some resemblance, yes.
He wanted a photograph, some extant thing
More palpable than memory.

And so to this he turned:
The image of a porch, a house, a girl in whose dark eyes
Some prescience weighs.

He left a rose upon your roof
And watched the native grasses rustle,

Anchored, yet aloof.

Why waste time?
by Gary Stessman

My grandpa plays in a rock band.

He says it's cool.

I think it's awesome.

I am no fool.

My friends tell me different

But I just don't care.

At least my grandpa, has all his hair.

His parents didn't like the music,

Grandpa listened to.

Too loud! Too fast!

I wonder why I do?

Sometimes life is confusing.

But I just don't care.

Why waste time refusing, all that is there?