

When Love Impales the Heart

**A Doctor's Poems of Loss and Hope,
Love and Understanding**

Michael R. Berman, M.D.

Dedication

To all my patients and to the Profession of Medicine.

Marquis

For Joseⁱ

When love impales the heart,
a child's heart,
and first breaths bellow,
and his gentle hands
and soul so mellow
beholds the gift of life so dear,
we affirm that what we hear,
resounding cry without thought
or pain or tear,
is his marquis,
his sentinel of
what we do
and why.
And now he claims for us nobility,
this guardian of ancient temples
royalty lusting to comfort;
longing to heal; unsparing in compassion,
leaving with honor and beneficence
his name undying,
a bequest to us who love him
and to our hearts ...forever crying.

© 2025 Michael R Berman MD

Preface

When Love Impales the Heart has been a working manuscript of self-reflective writing which I began while a medical student, seeking reason for the injustices of severe illnesses and deaths that I witnessed. Although my first book, *Parenthood Lost*, contains some of the poems and thoughts found here within, this living and growing manuscript reveals past and present reflections of my career as a physician and my life as human being. *When Love Impales the Heart* has a focus, a mission: to use the written word to inspire hope, when hope seems lost; to brighten the spirit when sorrow drapes the day; to celebrate love; to honor those close to us; to memorialize those lost to death; to praise those whose goodness needs praise and to instill ethic and purpose and humanity to generations absorbed in the omnipresence of new technology.

Introduction

I am first a physician, a distant disciple of Aesculapius and Hippocrates¹; a clinician, a teacher, a and a student. I am an Obstetrician. I stand before my patients² and facilitate their births. I share their joys; I feel their pains. Yet, caring for the well-being and the illnesses of patients and their families is to accept that medical science in all its depth and possibilities is not precise and that human mind and flesh are perishable. We are today steeped in myriad medical technologies that in themselves bring hope to previously hopeless conditions and pathologies. Yet there is inexorable suffering which accompanies failures and tribulations of all new medical technologies. The paradox of new technologies to cure and cause pain is real and evident. I believe that I as a physician have been granted by oath and by ethic the privilege to examine and treat, to counsel and advise a fellow human being while using albeit modulating the use of these technologies. Indeed, the future is bright for medical innovation and the alleviation of suffering, but we must be careful not to allow this technology to wedge the doctor-patient bond. We must recognize and heal those ‘unspeakable’ losses evident when medicine and technology can longer treat and the physician can longer cure for when technology fails, the physician must not. Physicians must set their patients and their families on a course of acceptance, comfort and understanding. We must sit at their bedside and in the pews at their funerals for when our deeds and actions, our skills and intuitions no longer can heal, we must not abandon the *soul* of our patient. These tenets must be propagated and preserved in the education today of tomorrow’s health professionals.

“Medicus Nihil Aliud Est Quam Animam Consollatio”³

“The best doctor is also a philosopher.”⁴ Inherent in what defines the physician-patient partnership is an unfaltering responsibility of the physician and an unconditional trust of the physician by the patient. Together these bond the chasm between the vulnerable patient and the knowledge and experience of the physician, a synergy of the *need for care and the privilege of*

¹ In Greek mythology, Aesculapius, son of Apollo, the god of healing, was a famous physician. His mother, Coronis, a princess of Thessaly, died when he was an infant. Apollo entrusted the child's education to Ciron, a centaur, who taught Aesculapius the healing arts. Aesculapius was skilled in surgery and in the use of medicinal plants. Hygeia was his daughter and considered the goddess of health and healing. Hippocrates, a member of the Asclepiadae-priest physicians whose origins may be traced to the mythical personage, Aesculapius- referred to Hygeia in his oath which begins: "I swear by Apollo the physician and Aesculapius, and Hygeia..."

² Obstare from the Latin meaning “To Stand before”; the root word of *Obstetrics*

³ A Latin Proverb translating to: “A Doctor is nothing but the constellation of the soul”

⁴ Proposed by Greek Physician Galen of Pergamum c.150 BCE

caring. I believe the medical professional at all levels must step back from each moment in his/her patient care routine, and reflect on what he or she is doing, why it is being done and what influence it is having on their patient's lives. This self-reflection is integral to professionalism for it encourages the formation of a philosophy of care and ethic of practice, which in turns fosters self-examination and meaning, empathy and compassion. ⁵

Poetry is my venue for "self-reflection". A synergy exists between poetry and medicine for each share from their origins themes of life and death, sorrow and despair, love and futility, promise and hope. A simple poem can transfer frosts of despair and gleams of elation inwards, and when written on the occasion of a birth or a death, a tribute or a memorial, a secret feeling or a revealing epiphany- when these poems have a *name* and a *reason*- they answer in the affirmative, "does poetry matter?"⁶

I am increasingly engaged in dialog with my students and young faculty members about the privilege of being a physician, why we do what we do and how we can best help serve our patients. This is a most promising time to become a health-care professional for there is in our immediate future enormous promise in human genomics, cancer therapies and other capabilities of advanced medical technologies. Yet, we must infuse this science with humanism⁷. We need to assure that the benefits of these technologies are fully realized and that their expanding sphere of influence does not disenfranchise the patient, depersonalize the physician-patient relationship and above all, that they permeate each and every family in *every* community.

Like most every physician, my career is rich in poignant stories of patient's lives and illnesses, which have impacted and shaped my career. All have juxtaposed finite technology with the ephemeral human condition rendering both hope and tragedy. My patients have been my teachers, etching in the crevices of my mind human lessons and insights. Their medical, surgical and emotional travails helped me become a complete physician.

When we are ill, vulnerable and in need of care and although our spirits may fade and our viscera may bleed, we are enabled by the agents of our humanity empowered by ancestral song and promise (Berman, 1999). Furthermore, all who require care must have access to receive that care with expertise, respect, dignity and compassion. "The body, impotent to maladies; thirsts for harmonies of cure by gentle ways and artful skills to dignify countless souls' infirmed and helpless wills..."(From *Nadiyb*, 2014. Berman). Furthermore, the human dimension of healthcare is a personification of humanism, which I believe can be best described by the words of my esteemed mentor, Dr. Sherwin Nuland:

"The physicians of the Hippocratic era called medicine "The Art". They knew that the care of their fellows was an act of creativity. They also recognized that each patient and his or her physician form a bond that is unique unto itself. That bond is the foundation upon which healing takes place. The bond's formation and maintenance is the fundamental aspect of 'The Art,' no less

⁵ Professionalism is the basis of medicine's contract with society. It demands placing the interests of patients above those of the physician, setting and maintaining standards of competence and integrity, and providing expert advice to society on matters of health... **Medical Professionalism: A Physician Charter** (Abstracted from *Annals of Intern Medicine* 2002;136:243-246)

⁶ Dana Gioia, Does Poetry Matter,

⁷ Humanism-"The concept that concern for human interests, values and dignity is of the utmost importance to the care of the sick."American Heritage Dictionary

a creative act than is healing itself. It goes beyond the notion of mere empathy and sometimes comes very near to be a form of love. It is when we cannot cure that the bond of patient with doctor reaches its ultimate challenge."(Sherwin Nuland in *Parenthood Lost*)

Central to many of my poems is the theme of death before, during and immediately after birth. When the outcomes of our patient's pregnancies end in miscarriage, stillbirth or infant death, we struggle to find the right approach to break the news to them, treat them medically and/or surgically, help them recover physically and emotionally, and console them in their grief. Most of us have not been taught to provide this bereavement care. We learn fast that there are hospital nurses and social workers, bereavement counselors and therapists, support groups and religious ministries to whom we can refer our patients for immediate bereavement care and subsequent follow-up. We can do the D and C and we can attend and assist in the birth of the baby who has experienced an intrauterine death. But then, for many Obstetricians, we refer our patients for bereavement care. When we hold in the palm of our hand an eighteen-week-old fetus immediately after our patient miscarried or attend the stillbirth of a term pregnancy, our intellectual knowledge and rational thought fade as we struggle to find the right words to say. Unlike the repetition of performing a surgical procedure, no matter how many times we have experienced a loss with our patients, it does not become easier. Although the stillborn baby which might have been born viable represents the greatest emotional and management challenges, we must recognize any loss in pregnancy as a life-altering event for our patients.

The care of the patient experiencing a Pregnancy Loss is a paradigm for what we do as physicians. It tests not only our clinical skills and judgments but stretches the fibers of the human aspect of caring very thin. Although we might ask, "how can we heal when our patients' children are incurable, when they are suffering or when they die or what do we do when the advanced technology that has become a part of our black bag fails", we must understand that we can heal by providing comfort, empathy and hope. As bad as this experience is for our patients, we can make it better. If we remain aware that we are the link between the stillborn baby and the bereaved family, that we were the first to touch and hold their child, albeit their stillborn child, then we can share this with them, remember this with them, and from this point forward, heal with them. The bond we form becomes the unbreakable fiber, which strengthens and indeed cements our role in the doctor-patient relationship.

There is art as well as science to caring for the parents of a child who has died, either before birth or afterwards. Countless mothers and fathers and those close to them silently grieve with little resolution over the loss of their pregnancies, newborns and children. Seeking reprieve from their sorrow, they cry and yearn for solace and hope, many times for years following their loss; cries that are but a muted weeping of despair as a child so longed for is not born, or is not born alive, or dies during childhood. Pained by these losses, their lives seem devoid of hope. The joys expected from normal childbirth and child-rearing turn to sorrow. We as physicians share with them in this tragedy as now the balance between caring for the well-being of the child shifts to caring for the tolling physical well-being of the mother and father, the agony of their emotional well-being and that of their immediate family. The shadow of their grief will be indelibly imprinted in their minds and souls. Death may strengthen or threaten to tear apart the bonds of their relationships with friends, family and themselves. We, their physicians must recognize the impact of these losses, be the first responder in this time of need, and abet the healing process, no matter how long and difficult. The loss of a child brings to us pain that is primal and endures forever. Poetry enables us to ask why even when we already understand how. It permits us as healthcare providers, witness to the frailties of our humanity, to abet healing through the very

core of what makes us human, our language and our personal emotions.

The impact of words and thoughts at these difficult times are universal. Sometime ago, I received a note from a father who just had lost his prematurely born daughter to the condition called twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome. One twin died in utero and the remaining twin was born at 25 weeks, gravely ill and on life support systems in the Newborn Intensive Care Unit. After a brave but futile struggle, she, too, died. Her father contacted me from England, asking if I could suggest some words to read at the memorial service for his children. I sent a few lines to him and his bereaved wife. In their reply I learned that they placed these words upon the headstone of their twins' grave:

“Let us not succumb to this portent,
The solstice of our darkest hour.
For it is but a finite point
Upon an infinite journey
Which began with all creation and
Upon whose path walk
The souls of our children;
Pure as the silence of the virgin winter,
Alive with winds of indomitable hope”

Poetry enables me to ask why even when we already understand how. It permits me as a Doctor of Medicine, witness to the frailties of our humanity, to abet healing through the very core of what makes us human, our language and our personal emotions. It is my platform to tell my ‘stories, to honor my patients, my friends, my family and indeed, the essence of humanity, the “family of man”. It is my hope that this volume, my complete writings and thoughts collected on the occasions of loss and celebration, love and understanding, observation and introspection will permit the reader to borrow my words in times when theirs are lost.

“ Poetry, by making us stop for a moment ... gives
us an opportunity to think about ourselves as
human beings on this planet and what we mean to
each other. ” ⁱⁱ
Rita Dove

The Poems

The Covenant

I am an artisan,
A painter of hues unfading
To blend upon my pallet
Infinite promise
And emblazon on my soul
A landscaped canvas
Stretched to infinity
Between pillars of prayer.

Neither stalked nor
Conspired against am I.
Only Fate has been my betrayer.
And although the defenses
Of my mortal flesh have weakened,
The borders of my body
And the cisterns of my soul
Are strong, alive
With pulses of blood
And liquors of hope.

I will not lament
Nor ask of this from you.
I will not know defeat
Or the wrath of any pain
For I, like a solitary seedling
That yearns to taste the falling rain,
Know well that God's eyes alone
Will shed but triumphant tears...
...Upon my brow for me
And for my covenant of victory.

*The Gift*ⁱⁱⁱ

*“Out of my window the strings of the
harp are struck, Oh, my heart! How is
it so deeply entangled in the echoes!
There is the limitless sound of the trees,
there is the limitless brightness of the moon”*^{iv}

Today the sun cast hues of hope.
Open eyes and grimaces,
Heart beat flutters,
Angel cries.
And then serenity.
A life lived long enough
To taste the sweetness of
A mother’s kiss,
A fathers kiss;
Caresses and caresses
And whispers,
And kisses again and again.
Blessings, prayers, tears;
Moans of weeping.
Silent moments.
Raging thoughts.
Peaceful thoughts
Which memory’s keeping.
No shadows.
Pure light.
Eternal light.
From sun and stars and moon glow.
Save the *night* of *today*
When the moon eclipsed, turns umber.
And Teodora be our gift, forever.

Scholar^v

He, the doctor;
plays the theatres of maladies,
thrusts deep into
entwined complexities
of life's forces which
penetrate nearly to death...
and to death,
while spectator-less
scenes amass of wretched disease,
spurning wrath of reason,
and frames of frozen helplessness,
turn towards thresholds of despair...
but not crossing.

The healer;
lusts against disease,
at his rostrum his faculty
to gift preservation,
to imagine suffering
and bring imaginable defeat;
to lift endless torment
with gentle hands of dignity;
to gaze at pain but see life;
to ponder its wonderment
and ironies, peel away its injustice,
and unearth the marbled core of its soul;
to smile, to cry, and now to pause.

The scholar;
who unaccustomed to
senescence, though lighter now
of visible labour, will remain
to till our minds with wisdom and
leave in its furrows, the very families
of humanity he served and bettered;
a shining light, arousing and inspiring,
a never-exhausting actor who compels
an operating theatre of great drama,
of untiring hope...
and amidst the extremes of misery,
of indefatigable compassion,
for it is *he* who defines
"physician

Rohin

I have born my soul to God, my son.
As he slipped into the crevice of death,
I could not watch nor see his image before me,
But I knew of the perfect beauty of his body
Even when he nestled within me,
For he is loved as a mother loves a son
And no pearl nor ruby nor even diamond
Can light the shards of shattered dreams
More than this love.
Peace will come to me, I know
And my son, my soul,
Will take from each
Of my uncountable tears
Eternal sustenance as he rests
Now in the body of our earth
And learns that what we know
As the *saddest sadness*
Is but a gate into the mystical
And miraculous wonders of
Tribulation, promise and hope.

Eurus

The East Wind connected with Aurora, the Dawn^{vi}

“If she is a saint, then her symbol is the Thistle”

Born with skin as soft as thistle-down,
And tearless cries resounding,
You are of the wind which bellows in our breasts,
A miracle in a world of miracles.
You have severed the doubts of uncertainty,
With vestal vision you bind our hearts in unity
And when we speak of love and peaceful dreaming,
We look at you and see the fringe of daylight
Streaming into our hearts
Porcelined colors of the dawn.

Deeya^{vii}

In my home, you were my light.
Your blood, my life,
Your love my love.
In my home all your heartbeats were for me.

And when my heart,
Once a fleet and aflutter
With sonorous marching did now falter,
I had not the wish
To forewarn nor advise.
For I could hear the calling
Of an angel's rhapsody and
From afar see small lights
Marking passage heavenly,
Trailing 'embered' footsteps
To forever guide your thoughts
Of me your child.

Anauraga^{viii}

For Georgia^{ix}

You the Master of Art
Witness no illusion to
What you have done,
For you have written scriptures
For promise and yearning,
You have wedded victoriously
The intellect and the passion,
The form and the fashion...
For...learning,
Necessities, as the shoulders of our children
Carry forth from your faculty
Weights of truth and discovery
Summoned when the silence of the night
Is pierced with calamities
And the arduousness of the day
Crave creative wonder.
And we know...although the assent,
Set in the scorched air
Of ten Augusts passed,
Is now completed
In the shining of this Springtime...
Reverence and friendship,
Like the very soul of Art
Is never lost,
But as the seasons themselves,
Endures in cascading timelessness.

For William^x

I know where songs are made
And where simple words are born.
It is in the hearts of dreamers,
And in souls of those who mourn.

With lyric, love and tearful sorrow,
Music comes alive,
Giving death a reason,
Assuring we'll survive.

And when the music dissipates
And only words remain,
It is the words that last forever,
Soothing sorrow, healing pain.

Words inscribed indelible
In our books for young and old,
Words that open minds as flowers
Whose petals in the spring, unfold.

William has bequeathed to us
Like these words of which I write,
Enduring love and gilded wisdom,
Every minute, hour, day and night.

So read the books and see their words
Enlighten your children's' minds,
For there is no greater beauty
Than the beauty words define.

Mentor^{xi}

*"...I am part of all that I have met;
Yet, all experience is an arch where through
Gleams that untraveled world whose margin fades
Forever and forever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnished, not to shine in use!"^{xiixiii}*

i.

They number hundreds of thousands, his words;
Arranged in manuscripts;
Theses, hypotheses;
Truths,
Nestled between the long shadows of science
And the tall pillars of
scientists;
Searching to unravel the paradox
Of chaos from the order which is life.

ii.

They number hundreds, his students;
Children of his intellect;
Beneficiaries of his passion,
So vital that its privilege
Is not of teacher, but of Mentor;
With wisdom to be guide and
Faithful counselor
As he feeds the fires of their aspirations,
And the fragments of their dreams,
Each a child itself,
Longing to grow and understand
And conquer the haunting
We call disease,
The maladies of illness.

iii.

And they number twenty-two, our years together;
Father to his students,
Father to his children,
Grandfather to his greatest joys;
We celebrate [tonight] our
Privilege of being his colleague
And share in his transition from leader to
Forefather
Of what remains to be discovered,
As our Mentor pursues
Those fortunes of medicine
Which as the ancient's decried:
 'Will vanquish misery
 And grievous disease

Mitzvah^{xiv}

i.

Summoned by the voice of destiny,
We peel our skins of daily toil,
Our moments of banal routine,
And stare beyond reflection as
Azure skies blacken and
Blossoms freeze and fall;
As elements seek reason.
Yet living remains a promise,
Beckoning, yet not begging.
Nesting in sinuous branches,
Forgiving; not forgetting.
Singing; not rejoicing.
Weeping; but not crying.

ii.

For there is no tarnish
On his breaths of gold;
No decay.
His virtue reigns,
Fusing generation to generation,
Parent to progeny, young to old.
Though mortality is certain,
Its finality, its eternity,
Endures in those sacred passions
And deeds bequeathed, today;
As we shed our carapace
To unfurl life's grandeur
Of simply love and grace,
And gifted time...
Beyond dismay.

Beyond the limestone Obelisks ^{xv}

O child!...On thy head

The glory of the morn is shed

Like a celestial benison!

Here at the portal thou dost stand,

And with thy little hand

Thou openest the mysterious gate

Into the future's undiscovered land

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Beyond

the limestone

obelisks

and spired temples'

towering climbs,

come miracles

from your children

who touch

a simple candle flame

and with neither

fear nor pain,

turn fire

to wick and smoke,

and welcome

peaceful darkness,

...who vanquish

massive pyres

that burn

portraits to ashen sketches

to scatter

about the crevices

and pitted skins

of ancient stones,

who quell the squalor

of fallen hopes

and fill our cisterns

with art and poems

Behold

your children,

wisdom be their strength.

In conflagrations

their reach

will quench

life's

weightless fires

to shine

a promise

through window panes

upon your Temple's spires.

Matthew^{xvi}

As you mourn,
And as you grieve,
I know what you think and say,
For whispers from within a heart
Sound louder when you pray.

I taste your tears
And smell your scents
Feel love though here I lie.
As you ask again and again
The unanswerable question, why?

“Why this loss?
This fate for Matt,
Our son, our brother, our friend?
Why should such a benevolent man
Suffer so tragic an end?”

Though I cannot make answer
Nor understand,
Reasons that be.
I can tell all as you lie in prayer,
My affirmations, I promise, will be.

Façade^{xvii}

Love insists our hope
Hidden in winter's façade.
A child. An image.
A memory. A promise.
Yet,
We shall unveil its wonder;
...The gift of tomorrow,
And why we love, today.

...Even the stars have cried

*In solemn silence we walk the woods
beneath the boughs of willows, wailing*

In a room of silent tears
You gathered in your sorrow
Hovered, hugged;
Gazed bewildered;
Why I'll not live tomorrow.

In a room of silent tears;
If I could, I'd cry;
Out loud; To tell
Of this secret moment
Of why today I die.

My lot was cast at this hour...
Which birth and death both share,
Yet understand the sense and reason
God Loves; God calls;
God cares.

I now reside in peace...
As you grieve and say goodbye;
Shedding tears with immortal heavens
Yes, even the stars have cried.

The Passing Tides^{xviii}

I loved the river:
Enchanting.

I loved the wind:
Caressing.

I loved the daylight:
Soothing.

I loved the starlight:
Haunting.

I loved my 'dear ones':
Being.

I am now all that I loved:
Blessing.

Tiferet

Tiferet, in the discourse of Jewish mysticism is one of the ten Sefirot and represents beauty, harmony and truth.

In prayer we plead return,
And in dream, awaken!
We fall to stare at gleaned grasses
Scattered about forgotten fields,
Singed by a senseless lot,
And thirst to cry forever.

Yet,
We will not be draped
In the blanket of loneliness called solitude.
For deaf of song and absent of vision
Of who we are and who are our children,
Its veil will descend, then disappear.
We are "alive together".

The margin between breath and breathless
Is narrow, like twilight and darkness.
Moments of simple thoughts
Become ageless memories.
There is triumph to taste,
Love to embrace;
Havens of hope to inhabit.

Soon, the curtains of chaos
Will rise with the setting stars
As memories of joy
Bond with joy itself
And we will smile once more,
At last to breathe a painless sigh
Of what is love.

I could not cry, though my eyes wept.
I listened, then paused,
Mesmerized.
Tantalized.
Digesting.
I felt a fury. I craved to hear more.
I asked how could this be?
This young Doctor
Who writes and speaks as an elder; a prophet.
Knowledgeable of the flesh which marks us;
Of our souls which bind us;
And of the tapestries of humanity,
Fragile and vulnerable as they are,
Who strive to overcome
Stains of prejudice and disease.
And then I listened again,
To her, the *Accentor* of a profession,
Struggling with its privilege and meaning,
And I smiled,
For I know I have heard from her tongue,
The trumpet-call of Hope.

Netzah

Eternity^{xx}

Could I have died so soon,
So soon that my cries
Were silenced in your womb?

So soon that I'll never touch
Your breast nor feel
Your hands caress
My brow?

So soon that you never got
To sigh and cry
Sweet tears of joy,
For your first child,
Your first born boy?
Could I have died so soon?

I suspect not,
For I felt the passion
Of your love around me
As my heartbeats slowed,
Then stopped.

As I lay motionless,
I heard the misery
In your cries that
I would not be born alive
And wondered, why?

Yesterday father, you fathered me.
Today dear mother, you birthed me.
I was there, you were there.
We all stood witness.

I heard your whispers,
That you love me.
I heard you tell each other
How beautiful I was viewed
In my eternal quietude.
I even felt your soft caress
As you held me to your breast.

On this morn, mourn not for me.
With ethereal grace I have a name.
I have a home; I have a life...
To live through all eternity.

Madeline^{xxi}

Alabaster columns of sunlight, gleaming,
Illumine the darkness of this day.
Nightmares turn to peaceful dreaming.
Awesome fears fade far away.

Though now my soul no longer dwells,
Upon the world as I have known,
Still I live beyond the pastel
Elysian fields, which are now my home.

Weep no more for me, beloved,
For I can sense no pain.
At one with God in heaven above
You; I'm at peace, and at peace shall I remain.

Elyssium^{xxii}

Our first-born cries.
A golden dream with
Expectations as promising as
The expansive petals of the
Sunflower....and hope,
To learn the provinces
Of a virtuous world:
Kindness compassion,
Benevolence, caring,
Integrity, tolerance, delight
In sharing... as she emerges
From her veil of childhood to
Bathe in the joys of her
Life;

Commencement ^{xxiii}

I bear today
A countenance of promised dreams;
Sanguine visions sweetened with
May-time baskets
Of floral scents and sights
To smile upon the face of
Spring's delights. And while
The frosted tears of winter's cry
Melt and flood the
Mountain streams,
I pause to wipe the joyful tears
I've cried
For my daughter's life and being,
And her countenance of promised dreams.

Rainbows

I remember the rainbows.
The simplicities of youth: smiles, laughter,
Quixotic dreams; my mind filled with
Poetic thoughts of conquest.
Of stormy nights and of
Rain-soaked days there were many, but
I only remember the rainbows.

When I sat in the woods, I
Watched the light from the morning sun
Gleam through a phalanx of oak trees.
And I climbed to the highest rock and dreamed,
That I was one with the clouds, afloat,
Above the verdant land
That was my home.

And then, set upon the shores,
I would stare at the waves rolling softly towards
The beach. And I questioned how long the sea
Has been the sea, and wondered if these same waters
Were traveled on by the ancients.

I bemoaned the poor and the sick and the weak.
With vows to help I sought out my fate.
With rapture, and a spark of enthusiasm,
I've become a healer.

Betrayed

Liquor about my child
Entombed,
confined within
My faltered womb
How you betrayed all my
Life's hope.
Yet it is hope
That will befriend and bath
her primal soul
With sweetness to
Eternity's end.

Jordan^{xxiv}

Listen all to the music of trumpets,
Of harps; of lutes.
With harmony they announce a joyous birth.
Her namesake a river whose banks
Of fertile soil caress the ripples of its
Vital waters. Her life full of wonder,
to flow endlessly, yet willingly,
Into larger seas with unknown boundaries
And infinite depths.
For as the river flows out from the wilderness,
So from our bodies her life began;
With love and hope,
Our angelic daughter, Jordan.

Memnon^{xxv}

My tears are watermarks
Which imprint forever
Sentient reminders of gentle hopes
And dreams subdued.
Extant in painful thought they are
And sleep afar
In caves of ancient echoes
Wailing for my perished child
Who now guised in angel's silk
Sings madrigals of sweet delight
And turns my tears heavenward
To drift peacefully into the
Forgiving canyons of winter's night.

Hymettus^{xxvi}

Softer than the softest rose
are the clouds on which I sleep.
Sweeter than the springtime honey
are the thoughts that I now keep.
Farther than the farthest star
is the home where I shall live,
Deeper than the greatest love
is the love I've yet to give.

A love that is immortal
and will grow with each new dawn.
What in our lives we shared together
will remain to be reborn.
So grieve no longer upon my death,
my soul is still; at peace.
I suffer not upon this journey;
my ascent to ethereal grace.

Cameron xxvii

I no longer see the stars; I am the stars.
I no longer breathe the wind; I am the wind.

I am the sweet smell of honeysuckle after an
Evening rain.
I am the dew on the rose petals in early
Morning.

I am harmony and I am peace.
I am love.

In sorrow, my mother and father cry,
But they need not fear. For I am strong.
My heart is whole and in union with my soul.

I understand my fate and I smile.
For nature's will is my destiny
And my guide through eternity.

Pax^{xxviii}

Far above the obscure shore
The sky cast forth a "darkness visible"
That speaks your sadness forever more,
Of a loss that's ever so insensible.
But above these clouds where the sun beams glow
With no shadows to cast or eclipse,
My soul lives on; I feel no sorrow
For in my world, I still exist.
To those who love me, I feel your love.
There is no pain, I am at rest.
I have my peace in this heaven above,
And with your prayers I am forever blessed.

Ventose^{xxix}

The chilling winds of March do blow,
As on this day we mourn.
And from our eyes fresh tears do flow,
...our child will not be born.
With God's consent did she ascend,
To his Empyrean throne,
A refuge surely to transcend,
This grief we feel at home.
So as the 'Ventose' winds abate
And springtime flowers bloom,
We know her soul is incarnate
In Heaven's immortal womb.

Megan

Every cell in my body cries.
I want to reach out, embrace you and
tell you I care.
I feel your pain, I know your needs,
but I cannot find a way to comfort you.
I watch the sun at dusk and sense
its strength
And know it will rise again.

Immortality^{xxx}

Arise from behind your shadowy cloaks,
Sinuous branches of olden oaks,
Reveal thy life and thy glory;
Your luminescence of immortality.
Forever have you shown yourself
Upon this earth where mortals dwell,
To remind us we live for eternity,
If not on earth then heavenly.
With lenity and grace, you comfort,
When from our loved ones we must part.
You give us all the strength to bear,
The formidable burdens of our despair.
And a lessening of our sorrow,
As we live, love and delight... beyond tomorrow.

Amaurot^{xxxi}

"All we know
Of what they do above,
Is that they happy are,
and that they love."

Edmund Waller

If I could wish myself a dream,
It would be to retreat for a lifetime and hide
From a world of unjust suffering
Where mankind's afflictions and pains reside.
I'd labor to quarry limestone and granite
To fashion for my very own
A sanctuary to spend infinite years;
Eternity would now be my home.
I'd cultivate gardens of forsythia and violets,
Plant olive trees and harvest grains;
Grow apple orchards and grape vineyards,
From their full bounty would I be sustained.
Of lyres and harps there'd come splendid music,
Beautiful children would dance and be gay.
Sadness and crying would never bear witness,
Illness and sorrow would remain far away.
You'd be the first to visit my home,
Sweet child whose earthly life has been taken.
For here you would live and love and be blessed,
With God at your side, your eternal beacon.

Sonnet of Faith^{xxxii}

Appareled in a veil of grace,
Angst and despair showed its face.
Yet from your eyes a gleam did shine,
A hint of nature's grand design.
To teach us all that we must cope,
And never lose our faith and hope.
That all things bad and all things sad
Will be eclipsed by what makes us glad:
Love and trust in one another.
Wholesome values as father, mother.
Embracing our children sweet and fair,
Holding their hands, combing their hair.
These are the flames that within us burn,
The passions strong for which we yearn.
So, while today your loss brings drear,
The morrow's sunshine will again appear.

Saline^{xxxiii}

I grasped his strong hand
weeping edema beneath
mottled skin and
pulsed coded messages.
Then with a kiss
placed gently upon his brow,
withdrew, and said good-bye.
Around us, aprons of sand
embroidered shores of saline oceans.
Inland, grasses wove their tapestries.
Grains, blades and salted pools mingle;
reservoirs for creation,
repositories for death.
Silent is our
morning's song,
lost our morning's glory.
The grasses stilled by quiet winds sleep
day-long now. Rays of crimson sunbeams
like thorns, pierce
the clouds of our despair
as our dissonant cries fade
into nothingness.

Windows^{xxxiv}

Gather
every morsel
of hope,
precious gift,
and open your eyes
to its wonder;
common images
earthly sights
hourly routines
that maintain
the equilibrium
of why and how
you live
and lived.
Delight
in what are your joys
and then
for just a brief moment
let them close
to the darkness
and paint
upon the canvass
of your soul
portraits
of secret longings
that come alive
in these minutes
of solitude
called dreaming,
art forms to dance
from the palette
as you revel in
this secret world
of unspoiled vision
and immortal promise

Obsidian^{xxxv}

My shrouded body
lies interred in frigid
caverns of blackness,
as you mourn and fear
the coldness of my death
and the abyss
of my nothingness.

But neither barren
nor alone nor pained
am I, or will I be
for as the midnight
at full moon, I'll gleam
God's light
through all eternity.

Rhapsody^{xxxvi}

Gone are ten thousand days
of perfumed winds
bellowed from the
lungs of God with
gusts and drafts that
scattered wandering seeds
of despair, craving
earthen roots to anchor
their promise of reborn
hope.

The Morning Dove^{xxxvii}

By reason unexplained
came the wrath of nature's
will and pain upon an olive tree,
to cleave unequal its fair soul
and hurl each fracture into
stormy destiny. And as time
and hope and prayer
within an earthen womb
nurtured tendril branches
where buds and blossoms bloom,
I cried, for I was first to
see a morning dove bear a leaflet
in the Spring and fly
homewards... for eternity.

Sean^{xxxviii}

The moon's thin crescent
casts dim spears
of speckled light upon the
path I walked this night
with your hands in mine.
And although darkness
hovers close above our bodies,
warmed with dew's sweet tears,
you turn your eyes to mine
to see the embers shine
and burn to ash all despair
within the abyss of my soul
and praise tomorrow's scented air
I breath, for now my body's whole.

Martyr for Desire

for all children, lost

You are my quiet darling.
Your eyes, like morning burn
The minutes of futility
To contrite hours, turn
Eastward where begins the dance
Of ocean tides, and slumbers still
The famine of our grief, to hide
So deep within my wounded will.
A promise poisoned from the start
So brief without reply or song
Did graze your spirit in my field.
"Return to me" I cry, I long.
As chaos prods my anguish, yet
Neglecting fortunes in my soul,
Tinted hues of destiny
Are tender thoughts which sorrow stole
From me when first I heard your voice;
Each murmur on your breath that sang
Like harps converging as a choir,
And chimes afar, with passion, rang.
You are my quiet darling
Within a cold and flameless fire,
And I, a prism in the shadows;
A silent martyr for desire.

Spire^{xxxix}

From oblivion to infinity
without origin or finality,
our minds petrify like fossils
ancestral passions
to consummate all life's promises,
while above us wind-songs cleave
one cloud in two,
two to four, four to eight
and create
infinite dispersions
so we may see
stars flicker,
moonbeams' shadow
sentinels for sunlight's travel,
...and watchtowers for the treasures
of eternal hope.

Divus^{xl}

I loved
the quiet time I spent
when every heart beat
you had sent
to my flesh
and to my skin
flowed forth to bring
me peace within
your silent womb,
...I loved the silent time.

And even as
my tiny heart
labored at death's call
before my start
at birth and life,
and as I ailed,
soon no longer
to inhale
or feel your pulse to mine,
...I loved the quiet time.

My body now
apart from yours,
still lives, yet not
upon your shores,
and suffers not
nor is in pain
for within
its new domain
I can love the quiet time.
...I loved the quiet time.

Yekhida^{xli}

Thee,
I've touched
and kissed,
and loved you...
... now I
float in
clouds
above you.

Memories
please me
from my
past
transparent shadows
purely
cast.

Though my
corpse
on earth
remains
My spirit lives
in this
domain...

...And like a rose
in desert's
sun.
A miracle
is what
I have
become.

The Mist^{xlii}

*When winter's gloom succumbs,
and grief melts in the sun,
warm currents on my breast will stream,
and turn frosted tears to sunbeams...*

Sadness moistens my brow like
mist. Silent tears coalesce upon my cheeks.
Petrified by the cold of winter,
Forgotten by the spring thaw,
I shiver and feel lost
in this the season of my sorrow.
Loss has embraced me more than
once, yet it has never seized me.
Hope has been my reclamation,
My emancipation,
From the bondage of despair.
Hope exists in the swelter
Of summer and persists
As the leaves fall in November.
Hope thaws the snows of winter.
Hope does not forget.

Evening's Song^{xliii}

I know the scents of evening's-light,
The sweetness of its songs,
And its taste of honeyed dew
That fills me as I watch it greet
The fresh first light of dawn.
I feel the silks of evening's-clouds
Caress my weakened frame,
To the music of a symphony;
Resounding, ringing, beating, singing
Tearing at my pain.
Beyond meadows, valleys, mountain-crests,
Riverbanks and streams,
I've known the joys of giving;
Touching, caring, loving,
For this is what I've dreamed.
As landscape's margins meld together
As dusk seams itself with night,
My body mends without it fearing:
...From the deepest darkness
Comes the brightest light.

Courtney^{xliv}

Winds rush about me
fueled by earth and sky
to purify stagnant basins
where thrives the praise
of autumn's last remains,
its gentle rain,
its moonlit frost,
the falling ocher leaves
that cluster in brittle piles
to blanket earthen roots
whose petals now are lost... .
..and I, confined and desperate
to smell the scent of pine
adrift in winter's frigid winds
in darkening December skies,
about to touch the promise gleaned
that now within me lies.

Longer Days ^{xlv}

Today, my senses are paralyzed
In frozen chambers of dismay
As in solitude I chant
Silent notes of prayer.
Like a leafless tree writhing,
I long for blossoms
At spring's first dawn
When the brightest days
Are longer than
The darkest nights,
When the breezes are warm,
And the air is fresh
With the scent of laurel,
When climbs of roses
Bring new hopes to bear
And tears of time
Drown my despair...
...When oblivion is home
To all my dismay.

My Heart Be Yours Forever ^{xlvi}

I make you both a promise
In these my infant days,
Half my heart be yours forever,
The other for God- in praise.
For he has blessed me with abundance,
Granted more than I can give,
Never will I feel dismay,
Your love is why I live.
When you hold me very close,
Your pulse feels slow and sure
Which calms the flutters of my heart
And gives me hope that's pure.
As my parents you are frightened
That my tiny heart is frail
That my body cannot endure assaults
Fate to it assails.
So, I must tell you mother, father,
I implore you...be assured
Spirit transcends my adversities
Horizons harbor my cure.

Butterfly Breaths ^{xlvii}

Every day awakens
With kisses on your brow;
With mist that veils the early light
And hides the morning clouds.
With butterfly breaths of longer days
Where heard are fewer sighs,
And echoes from a mountain's song,
Dissolving plaintive cries.
No longer will the seasons part
The year; dividing into four.
Now hours blend to days and weeks,
Weeks to months, forever more.
Every day awakens
With visions of what's to be:
Spheres full of joy and wonder,
Timeless moments of Infinity.

Winds drift on ephemeral wings
To watch the sun's veil lift.
Distant, darkened skies crack clouds.
Humans cry out loud.
As I kneel to meet my death
Mortal and frail, I fall
With ravaged mind abused
And hide in temples
Of immortal winter sequestered
From one life's end
To the end of all and wait
As infinity becomes my soul.

Suri

Earthen trails confuse in
Lost loneliness of nightfall.
Darkness that blinds
My path is like shadows
That fleet with the sun
Rising and falling
Appearing and disappearing.
Yet in those aged fortified forests
Where loneliness and fear
Bring profound blackness
And where despair shivers
Have I found my way.

For Oliver, Born of The Sun

Our senses light ephemeral
Like a mist whose song is sung
Upon the glory of the dawn,
And then moments,
Even hours later
Stretches towards
The silvered profiles
Of slivered moons
To watch as scars
Crevice the substance
Of your heart
And mark its passage
To our love;
...And now we dream
As tiny angel breaths,
Warm with endless promise,
Melt to spawn
Infinite acts of faith.

Hesed^{xlix}

You are a muse of healing.
Your hands
Like summer meadows,
Catch silent silhouettes of
Gentle breaths which caress
Forsaken hearts
To dance about again,
While instruments of Sunlight stream
On fragile leaves of promise....
And in quiet shadows
Of peaceful dreams,
Play duets of hope and affirmation
Uplifting curtains of uncertainty.

Return

Return home
Upon the long and winding road,
Where etched is your pathos.
You empowered the breeze
To make shadows sway,
Silent voices speak,
And all grace rejoices.

Return home
Upon the long and winding road,
Conjoined with faith,
To dance among the boughs of spring.

Obstare¹

I have stood here before
When birth deceived and
Surrendered to my hands
The very spirit and soul of humanity;
The essence of life save life itself.
And I have touched before
The angle hair and silken skin;
A child lay bare, still and silent
In these outstretched hands
As my will cried out
To scream a breath of life
Into his pale lips
Now frozen in the mist
Of endless dreams.
Yet today I smile
As I have smiled before,
For from such drear
Comes a voice;
A voice, so serene
That it transforms
The searing pain felt in
Our hearts into song;
Melting stones of sorrow
Into liquors of love,
Forever a memory
of our dear Child.

Love Contained^{li}

Music floats on streams
Of summer's final breath
As rains of hope
Wash famine from my lips.
And now *love contained*
Within my marrow sleeps
And I am left to dream and wonder
While angst becomes my silent partner,
Dueling with the rain.

I love the music
Which floats on streams
Of summers final breath
And hear it even as
Sadness mutes its song.
For its rhythm is certain
As the pulse of my heart;
Its voice everlasting,
As my memory is long.

Courage^{lii}

*"Until the day of his death,
no man can be sure of his courage"*

Jean Anouilh, Becket

He was a being in search of his destiny,
And with abundant virtues and dignities,
He filled his days with endeavors of selfless devotion.
A sage with a love for mankind,
He cared for the needy with reverence.
Though the sorrow we feel is deep,
We must not share in his suffering, but
Triumph over his death by committing our
Hearts, our bosoms, and our most visceral spirits
To profound purpose.
Yes, stand tall, thy men of courage,
For a leader amongst us has fallen.
With gallant humanism, and valiant resolve,
He leaves our mortal plains and hills of despair
To ascend his mountain peaks of glory.
With his inspirations of vitality and hope,
Everything was beautiful and good.
We lament his short life yet find comfort that
His mortal being was but "a fleeting gleam"
Between two eternities of tranquil salvation;
Be comforted; for now, His soul is at rest,
Cradled in peace.

*Beneath their feet the parched leaves crack.
Lifeless, fallen branches fracture.
To mend the pains of endless thirst.*

A mother cradles to her chest,
The newborn child upon her breast,
And while gazing towards the cloudless sky.
Asks why to be born if now to die?
Wasted by their arid land,
Children beg with outstretched hand
Their feeble voices impotent,
To cry; A Death-Watch all too silent.
Hunger cries but finds no ears,
None to help their doleful tears.
Impoverished people bearing sorrow.
Starved today; entombed tomorrow.

The Din^{liv}

a clamor.
louder
than the searing noise of
jackhammers,
trucks, motorcycles
and the like,
pains my ears:
gunshots and sirens,
screaming mother's tears.
murdered teens-
just children you know,
dead now over some drug deal
or gangland ego.
a disordered, senseless waste
of human life and vigor,
granted to every person of every
of just equality.

yet of those who escape
the leaded missiles
from wanton guns,
or needles
infected with contagion;
of those not starved
for food or love
or for learning;
nor for clothes
or shelter or for yearning
to have a solitary chance
to breathe
per chance.
the fresh air of a country
morning,
i ask:
"what is it you fear,
what clamor do you hear?"

Birth^{lv}

I have seen the caul
like honey glazed
contain and bathe
in sweet succor,
kept watch as
mother's wombs
tear in pain to
bear their child
and then as if my first,
stood aside and
cried with awe at
the birth, that quiescent harbor
where life sings
psalmic verses
of calms and storms
rains and draughts
sun lights and dark nights,
agendas to live on forever.

Aoide^{lvi}

The first song on earth
Was a child's cry,
A canticle of absolute beauty.
Each note a bequest for eternity;
Ageless music of heart-sounds
And first-breath sighs
To immortalize
The promise of humankind.

.

A Silent Gravity^{lvii}

When great men fall, great legacies remain,
Perpetual incarnations of words and deeds...
And family...
Which thrive while silent gravity
Mends our pain and binds our souls
With joyous song,
In recent moments which pass too slowly
As cobble stoned thoughts struggle day-long
To find symmetry.
And our memories like dreams appear and disappear
Becoming random glimpses of sunrises,
Blurred by the haze of mourning,
Yet glistening with mists of love
Which lift our life one step higher, every day.

Egeria^{lviii}

*It is in these moments that we gaze upon the moon,
It is in these moments that Nature becomes our Egeria^{lix}*

Today, near May, the harvest is behind us
Yet as much, it lies ahead.
We plant our seeds even as the icy sun
Strains to warm the earth.
We prepare. We are sure the
Brilliance of the blossom will come to be
And the scent of the lilac tree briefly will penetrate
The early mist of springtime once again.
In this glory infinite, there will be
No longer mourning of what has been.
For I have loved, and I love still,
And created a child and another-
Who walk distant frontiers,
To torch and fade despair
Into transparent exile...
Silhouettes emblazoned heavenwards
As I watch and turn a smile...

...and watched as ponds
And serpentine streams,
Relentless in their ebb and flow,
Carved channels of ancient thoughts and dreams
Like fossilized intaglio.

Yes, I have lived and I have known
And traveled on northern trails,
And western peaks and pastel fields.
I have sensed the scents of daffodils
And the melodies of songbirds.
I have reveled in the excesses of my heart;
The splendor of the day;
The quietude at night;
Countless raindrops on countless petals;
Sunrises splashed in pink and white.

And today, near May, though the harvest
is behind us, yet as much, it lies ahead.

Tinos^{lx}

To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment. Ralph Waldo Emerson

Fortunate, are those...
whose lives so fragile,
And in just being, so struggle
To feel a sense of freedom
From the pain
Of malaise and hunger,
And the maladies
Which from the formative years
Steal their persona;
Fortunate are those...
Whose lives are touched by you.

You have learned and witnessed,
Taught and practiced
The tenets of what it means to give,
And live your dream.
And now, with profound kindness...
You will overwhelm the pity of physical agony,
You will plant seeds of happiness in gardens
Disrupted by blight and sorrow.
You will care when caring seems lost.
You will cry when caring has lost.
You will smile when your kindness creates peace.

And of tomorrow,
You will see
Through mists of uncertainties
Which veil the newly born and older.
And with passion, skills and fervor,
Pursue cure and order
For afflictions of a blameless child.
As no greater worth is there
Than for you to share what
Rests inherent in your heart:
Your Art, Your soul, your sense
Of right and wrong.
And above the rest,
A righteous ethic that strives,
Without pretense, to heal, lifelong.

Ayam (אֵימ)

(a glow)

for our first grandchild, Olivia

we loved before we heard your cries
before we saw wide opened eyes
before we touched and held and kissed
before our tears spilled forth with bliss
we loved you free without condition
and now you're here, our apparition
an image of our sweetest thoughts
that your birth today has brought
the winds of love blow in our minds
involute thoughts that seal and bind
the goodness that your life will know
fan embers in your heart-to glow
scorching deep beneath the skin
as your gentle life begins
embraced forever by those who care
who care for every breath of air
you savor; every breath sublime
to love you every moment,
to love you for all time.
and now, Olivia, you have a name
and another, Ilana; yet one, the same
precious child, swaddled with love
as the sun drapes its hues far from above
to warm and to nurture, spark hope and inspire
a life that is whole, for you we desire
and your smiles and giggles, laughs and coos
that delight us today, will bring words that you'll choose
to speak, and to think, ponder and dream
with a fire in your heart, and a glow that will seem
muted and calm when compared to your passions
to follow the goodness-your parents will fashion
and know sweet child of our child your dear mother
you are beloved for yourself and for no other
so Livi...live long, live well, be strong
never know hatred, angst, pain or sorrow
never know sadness, nor shed sadness' tears
live with promise, with wonder and love- all your years.

Reverence^{lxi}

We seek answers for questions which cannot be answered.
We grieve at a time when we should be smiling.
A moment in a century of years which has come too soon,
Unexpectedly, with a force we cannot combat.

Among us, there is no better person.
Among us, no better Physician,
Then this man we gather today to honor.
We cry aloud not just to sound our sadness
But to trumpet our love.

Our thoughts confuse us. Why?
His Life, His Missions are now our memories.
Indelible in our ephemeral thoughts.

We will always hear
his gentle tones of gentle words
And feel the caring others knew when they,
Frightened and sometimes frail,
In desperate need,
Alighted from their illness, free
Of morbid pain and agony.

If we feel richer today...
Amidst the drear of Funeral and Eulogy,
It is because we revere
A man we strive to emulate.
And thus, through death and legacy
We come and magnify *our* goals,
To unravel every morsel of *our* souls,
And strive to live as Gordon lived.

Facta non Verba^{lxii}

Open your hands and embrace the
Matters of affairs and intricacies of
Those who need counsel.

Let not volumes written
And words carved
Between the cornices of courthouses
And spoken
From the benches of courtrooms
Stand alone in defense.

Empower with skills and judgment;
With knowledge gained and growing.

Stand tall.
Be a watchtower of integrity.
A source for security;
Advisor consummate;
Trusted advocate.
Be proud. Be Noble.
Win accolades.
Servo puteus, serve well.

Vernalis^{lxiii}

Belonging to the Spring

Undaunted, I greet the paradox of spring.
I dream ...of golden notes
Floating in the silent night.
Joys of breaths and heartbeats
Simple passions of delight
Sing on winds diaphanous,
Of the glory of the bloom
Which never disappointing,
Soon, bathes all beloved
With perfect hope.
It is the season of opulence
When sweetness obscures
Dark halls of winter's liar
And dew upon the grasses
Cast light of morning's hour
Into the windows of the soul
Where fragments of loveliness...
Of love, coalesce
Into being,
Magnificence.

Self-Examination

"The mass of men lead lives
of quite desperation"^{lxiv}

i.

With myself, alone I share
Private thoughts of what I care
For truth; for love, for death and birth,
Humility, humanity; my own self-worth.
I have known my traveled paths
Though now uncertain of what fate's cast,
I believe that my life's purpose-
Its true meaning-has yet to surface
Upon the shimmering white-capped sea
Of moral souls; what lie ahead for me?
Shall my vessel point tomorrow
Into the Doldrums filled with sorrow,
Or Eastwards towards the rising sun,
Adrift in days of Halcyon?
I say the latter bests the former,
I've not the fashion of a mourner.
I need to feel what is to be,
Can only be more good for me,
And my family and of Man.
What lies ahead is nobler than
What thus far is fate complete.
...Lotus leaves I will not eat
Nor to Capua make a journey
But with virtuous harmony,
I will meet my destiny
With courage, vigor and integrity.

ii.

Judge not what be chanced our childhood,
Youthful rituals oft more understood
By self than one's mentors,
Balancing rights and wrongs and what-fors.
Yet within the asylum of our youth
Is discovered much of truth.
Cyclonic powers of morality
Awaiting well-nurtured maturity
To awaken like the lily chaste;
Virtues to cherish and embrace.

iii.

I awakened in the early night
As the gleam of moon's gray light
Diffused through old cracked window shades,
Listening to radio tunes that made
Echoed songs of adolescent years.
Music that even now I hear.
Music that helps me to recall,
Those wee morning hours all,
Reading, thinking, planning, dreaming,
Sketching, writing, inventing, learning.
Hours, days, months, years,
Preparing for life which today is here.
Introspection had begun,
For I was determined to become
One with science and with humanism,
Brother of Aesculapius, a good physician.

iv.

At this century's sure demise
How (after fifty-six years!) wise
Will I be? What will I have attained?
Dreams, kindled like a flame
in my head for one half century
Or nothing more than mediocrity.

Antares^{lxv}

You are my bright star,
Aglow with a radiance far,
Equaled by only Aurora, herself.
You shine in the evening
With a splendor equal to her dawn.
And deep into the night you illumine,
From the soft light cast through the
Frosted panes of the moonlit window.

A score of years has passed. I reflect.
With no regrets, I suspect
Another score or more we will spend
Together, with our children and theirs.
Generations to care; and to share
our love.

Rhapsody

You are a consummate obsession,
A mind's sole possession.
A shadow cast from memory
Of splendid specter and rhapsody.
A venerable vision, if only a dream,
Closer to reality so it seems.
But dreams end abruptly when the body awakens
When from one's mind they are suddenly taken.
Not to appear for seasons to follow,
Yet always returning like the augural swallow.
Now, such dreams return to my mind,
To quest for the truth, be it blessed or unkind.

Heart sounds^{lxvi}

When you were twenty-two years old,
And I was twenty-four,
We met and felt a passion deep,
We hadn't felt before.

The evening air was cool and breezy,
The starlit sky was clear
The city's ambient pulse-beats,
No longer could I hear.

For above this din, my heart did pound,
As we spoke those first few words.
And with my senses overwhelmed;
Heart sounds were all I heard.

Returning

I will see you once again,
Before my final dream,
When winter's coat of snow remains,
In springtime pools and streams.

I will gaze within those pools,
Upon your bright reflection;
Mirrored image of virtues true,
A dearest recollection.

I will be with you in love,
Your life I'll rhapsodize.
A deeper passion need not I prove,
When death doth close my eyes.

Samaritan^{lxvii}

Bonds of blood cannot bend
For upon these bonds we all depend.
To care for family, we obligate.
When we cannot we designate
Other persons to care and treat,
Persons we trust to bring defeat
To the ailments of those whom we love so much,
With skill and kindness and a caring touch.
I thus acknowledge with true approbation
Your virtues: Trust. Excellence.
Compassion and Inspiration.

.

In Search of Manu ^{lxviii}

*"The earth we abuse and the living things we kill
will, in the end, take their revenge, for in
exploiting their presence, we are diminishing our
future."*^{lxix}

i.

I fear for my cherished land,
With a sorrow in my heart,
As I witness our modernity
Tear the fragile earth apart.
I look above, the chromatic skies
Where hawks and eagles soar,
And tremble silent with my thoughts:
They'll be safe harbors nevermore.
In pain I bare witness as
Emerald columns of evergreen,
Majestic redwood, oak, and elm,
Vanish from our forests' scene.
And of our noble canyons
Where the mighty rivers roar,
Weakened by the will of time,
They collapse upon their shores.
Yes, I fear for my cherished land,
With a sorrow in my heart,
As I witness our modernity
Tear the fragile earth apart.

ii.

I cry for my Nation's living,
Nature's children who must endure
Imminent peril of extinction,
Man, and beast, Rich and poor.
Ancient species' sacred homes,
Vanquished by iron plow;
A necropolis of whooping cranes,
Condors, Wolves, and Spotted Owls.
Habitats of graceful beauty,
Perfumed flowers, and plumage,
Fragmented, isolated, wasted
By our civilization's pillage.
Nor are spared the vibrant seas,
Where Fish and Whale and Dolphin
Struggle to survive a refuge
Ravaged and polluted: humankind's
destruction.
Yes, I cry for my nation's Living,
Nature's children who must endure
The imminent peril of extinction,
Man and beast, Rich and poor.

iii.

I'll be father to my land,
The earth is my estate.
I'll be teacher to its children.
So shall be my mandate:
I'll not hand industry license
To effuse its waste in our water,
Which destroys the ancient ecosystem:
Tantamount to mass slaughter.
Through treaty, vow, and summit,
My pledge to global neighbors:
Deter cataclysmic collapse;
So our survivors can be our inheritors.
Through my sovereignty I will affirm
That Mankind and Earth are entwined.
Flora and Fauna and each human being,
Cohabit one home; pray we thwart its decline.
Yes, I'll be father to my land,
The earth is my estate.
I'll be teacher to its children.
So shall be my mandate.

Epilogue

*"The Earth does not belong to man; man
belongs to the earth."*^{lxx}

Marushka

I love to explore
the sandy coves
and crunch the spinous shells on the shore,
quite numerous when the tide is low.
Rows of cat-o-nine tails
bow to the wind.
Furled sails
rest motionless like mannequins.
The current creeps slowly
southward; each ripple
a softly
folded wave on calm, mirrored waters.
Riggings sing.
In tiny pools seaweed floats,
whirl and cling
to barnacled pillars and aged boats.
My *Marushka*, maiden fair
of the sound,
leans to port in breezy air.
Serenely, the sea around
me beckons, as nighttime's shroud,
vaporized by the sun awakening,
disappears among the cloud-
less sky of this great morning.

Credo

Bare no malice, anger,
prejudice or hate and
extinguish
all searing conflagrations
of your fellowman; his plights of
sickness and poverty; his homeless pain
his depressions and day by day strife's.
Abet others who be sicker or poorer,
ailing from greater oppressions, and
look beyond the facades of hypocrisy
and denial and un-roof the truths.
For it is here you will find your naked self;
mind and soul and physical being of your
birthright.
Forego your shelter, your clothes, your moneys.
- all amenities, and stand
stripped to your fragile core,
exposed, and vulnerable.
Primal equality.

Our Voyage

We are not lost, we are not gone
Though beloved, you fear this be.
We are but, on a sojourn,
'midst the solace of the sea.

We'll not request asylum here,
And soon we shall depart,
The world as we have known it,
With much comfort in our hearts.

Our lives have been like orchids,
Thriving in the rain,
Our children cast as seedlings,
Of their flesh, we now remain

In spirit, soul and courage,
They will live what we have taught:
Unbridled deeds of goodness
Impelled, without forethought.

For those who ask if we might feel
A corporal sense of pain,
We whisper but a single line,
"Our God is God humane."

There is a oneness between us now,
Union of bosom and soul,
And it will endure for eternity
May this thought, for you, console.

Israel

There's a song that I hear, it comes in the night
and sounds like the music of dreams,
It tells of the hopes of our sovereign land
and sings of a promise supreme.

There's a light that I see, it rises at dawn,
and gleams like the rays of the sun,
It shines within all of our hearts everyday
and the hearts of our daughters and sons.

There's a scent that I smell, throughout the land
that smells like the lilacs of spring
It sweetens our spirit and brightens our souls,
No more joy could a sense ever bring.

These elations of life all cause me to cry
Tears oh so sweet and so real,
For I have to leave-but I shall return
To my land, to my home, Yisroel.

Solstice ^{lxxi}

The sun
staring upon me
has stopped
for one immeasurable moment,
a lone pause in an
infinite journey,
a slivered chasm in a
timeless wandering.

The sun
staring upon me
has stopped
to embrace
and welcome me traveler
to the borderless
boundaries of
Eternity.

The sun
staring upon me
has stopped
to comfort;
Its light transcends
the darkness of despondency,
Its warmth melts
the icy crust
of mourning.

The sun
staring upon me
has stopped
to deliver
a quarry
of hope out of hopelessness,
tranquility from turmoil...
...and peaceful dreaming
forever.

Promised Light

I have shed my garments and
With calloused feet walk naked
Into the straw meadows of the dark.

My sustenance though vaporized
Floats like the clouds,
Glisters like the stars.

And as I search and cry in fear
I glance into the blackened sky
To see droplets now appear

Like diamonds from our sacred earth
That burnish in this darkest night
To become dreams of promised light.

The Stones and The Sand^{lxxii}

*There is not much our lives to long
but breath the air, hear a song,
walk beneath some sapling pines
search a dream, slow the time,
See truths distant horizons hide
float on waves at even-tide.*

You touch my golden hair
With silken fingers
and hands afire with
Embers of love.

Like earthen stones
And sea-born sand
You are the infinite
Minerals of my life.

With you,
I am the mountains,
The forests and the seas.

With you
I have foundation,
Elements, for my being.

Every breath I breath
is for you,
And you, for me.

For always...
my dearests.
my family.

For Annie^{lxxiii},

*“The camera is an instrument that teaches
people how to see without a camera.*

If our mind be our camera, memory its film,
Eyes, a lens through which we view;
Then you be our image of dearest affection,
A childhood unveiled, a light shining through.

As dreams of tomorrow, unfold and evolve,
To flourish in times which challenge and try;
The Life thus far lived becomes your foundation,
A friend for those moments, soon to pass by.

Joy comes often to those you have touched,
Fashioned from unselfish caring and deeds;
Without provocation, or retribution,
Your kindness befalls friends and family in need.

We cannot overstate the pride we both feel,
A pride that will grow with each passing day;
Dear Annie, we wish you years of contentment,
As we watch your “commencement” to High School today.

Rubicon ^{lxxiv}

i.

Our home is
Filled with love,
And you.
Flowing.
A caress of the sea.
Sweet.
A chant of the wind.
Glowing.
Electricity in our veins...
Pride
Bright dreams.
Promise.
On mountains draped
With mist;
Mystery.

ii.

Freely
Fly with butterflies.
Love gardens;
Love deeds,
Worth,
Compassion.
Ensheathe yourself
With the garments of humanity:
Morality.
Hope.
Beauty.
Let aspersions of the moment, melt.
Savor peaceful dreaming,
A silent poem,
A mellow thought.

Commence and share.
Plant flowers
In arid air
Where misfortune breathes.
"Guide seekers to the land of bliss."
Begin each day with a kiss
Be aware.
We Love you.

For Annie^{lxxv}

*"This is not the end,
it is not even the beginning of the end.
But it is perhaps the end of the beginning."*
Winston Churchill

Our hearts are all a-flutter; our minds are full of song;
The May winds are rejoicing; as we celebrate day-long.

Honoring your learning, loving who you are;
Another blessed daughter with a fate to cast a-far.

We pine inward at the flight of time, but openly we smile
And beam for your achievements and your loving, giving style.

Our pride is like a mountain peak, no higher can we climb,
You have finished your baccalaureate, in four years the proscribed time.

And now more learning to pursue, commencement if you will,
Preparation for tomorrow's dreams, a lifetime to fulfill.

We wish content and hope for you, love, success and more,
And the wonders of your life ahead;

The Means^{lxxvi}

*“The Existence of virtue
depends entirely upon its use”*
Cicero

My friend.
Our Integrity is measured
Not by the expense of time
But by its means:
How we live,
Whom we love,
What we sense and feel.

Fueled by spirit,
Kindled by reason,
We assume a purpose.

Furrows of our palms
Map our travail;
Fingers, its instruments,
Voice its praise.

Traversing age of years,
We are valued by our deeds.
And our prosperity becomes
The reward of our virtues.

Reminisci^{lxxvii}

Naked are our thoughts,
Our souls are crying..
We are your voices,
Denying,
Sorrow's silence.
For as we speak, alas,
We sing;
And proclaim to all
Our love for you
And from you the love
You bring.

Forlorn, with tears
And cries, am I.
To lose you to your death
Without but even gasp or sigh,
Save a wisp of Angels breath;
...the darkest sorrow
I have known. Yet,
Your image burnt in my
Soul is my gift, my grace,
And always will I see your face
Upon the simmer of
Placid ponds
And in the clouds where
Sunbeams hide
And raindrops form,
...And I will speak kind words
And write of you
And sing in sweet demure,
In early morning's dew
And in the crown of daffodils
Which bloom amidst the storms
Swept cross my brow,
In every dream
In which it seems
You come to me.
My love forever
Do I avow.

Tendrils^{lxxix}

How we love to come here
With our innocent hearts,
Here where blossoms bloom,
Garden-trees flower and
Shadows shiver in gentle winds;
Where fertile soil sows its fruits
Hosting moments of passing time.
Where in early morning, dew
Drips from satin petals
And tendrils of daylight stream
Until whispers of evening breezes
Float off the Sound;
As our wondering thoughts
In silent moments
Of peaceful dreaming
Lighten, and at last,
Our hearts adorned,
Unfold to plant unfailing roots
And reach for moonbeams
And beyond.

Respice, et Prospice

Look backward and forward (L)

Passion remains, privilege endures,
while life and lifeless,
each lifted by my hands, coexist.
On journey long, journey full,
with origins beneath golden skies,
I strive to heal, diminish fear;
making real, priceless promises of life each day.
And yearn...for it is not time
to reach the edge where breath beats
and heart sighs succumb,
still from imagination and contribution
nor where dreams drop to stagnant pools,
ripple towards silted banks then disappear
into crevices carved by debris
and rain and all things natural.
Not time to leave visions
of reformation, reclamation;
to leave pathways lit by opportunity
covered with vines of spirit
and climbs of renewal.

But a time of great hope.
Hope to affect lives, teach tenets,
create paradigms; counsel, care, mentor,
affirm a promise; a fate perhaps
as fortitude, my foundation of resolve,
rushes in my blood, every pulse a wave
approaching unfamiliar shores,
mighty and assured.
I will leave love behind
but will not lose it.
It will not fade to vapors
as common as fog
but rather guide me to be proud
of its wondrous years of caring and of healing;
years that turn now not to clouds but to earth,
To root something once unimaginable:
to marvel again and again
and by word and deed,
to create and bond
what means and brings for all, good life...
...a good birth and beyond.

Silence

No longer do I fear my death,
For my weakened body now reborn,
Will witness every dawn of every morn
That is yet to cast itself upon
The remnants of my past.
And thus, the light above me now,
With rays aglow in silent symmetry,
Will forever shine far into that eternity
Where I will be
At peace.

Sidney^{lxxx}

Clothed in winter's vale of lace,
Stands an aged tree.
Awaiting springtime's youthful face,
To birth its hues of green.
Yet here upon this winter eve,
A birth did not await.
A daughter whom from love conceived,
Born pure and delicate.
Her father's hands were first to touch,
This soft and graceful form.
A special being to love so much,
And rejoice with each new morn.
So, as the snow drapes on the boughs,
Of olden elms and oaks.
Know well this child of winter now,
Is blessed with spring's new hopes.

Rhapsody II

Gone are ten thousand days
of perfumed winds
bellowed from the
lungs of God with
gusts and drafts that
scattered wandering seeds
of despair, craving
earthen roots to anchor
their promise of reborn
hope.

The Tree

Be free
Imprisoned one,
Last remains
Of a fallen tree
Fractured by an
August storm,
Sapped and devoured,
Hollowed from decay,
Destitute of life's
Precious humors.
Debris encrusts your
Body like a death shroud,
Yet the poet knows your spirit,
The artist your beauty.
Be free.

Antares

We are a constellation.
Our wonders and turmoil:
Of caring; grasps science and skills with hope;
Of understanding; grasps measurement and analysis with insight.
Caring; understanding;
Beacons of what drives us to do what is best.
We are a constellation.
Compelled by mission.
Consumed with passion;
No one leader;
A team of many;
With many bright stars
But none brighter
Than whom we honor
A devoted voice
For the patient;
A just and reasoned voice
For us all.
A thank you cannot be enough
But our blessings are abundant.
Thank you and greatest of wishes.

Nadiyb

Truth.

*The frigid air frosts our skins. March, unrelenting, chills us.
The carapace of virtue stripped bear with one last breath; a sigh,
a thought, a song, a prayer, a plea, perhaps a smile.
Aware that we must all leave but before, must cleave
from every moment every morsel of that which humanity has gifted us.*

He knows of scythes that gleaned, of seeds spilled then
rearranged, in wombs of fragile, fallen leaves where rooted
embryos await to season next; incarnate, reverent, to bare and bloom,
to live again and die and live and die and live.

And we know the seeds of all nobility remain alive in deeds
of noble men as he.

Of men that live and write of worth and truth
and yearn to teach, abet and heal and love the words of centuries past,
unfinished some, and others cast anew to burn in hearts where shadows
rise and fall to crave his wisdom, pillars forged by mind and hands for all.

His scalpel carves it path. The body, impotent to maladies;
thirsts for harmonies of cure by gentle ways and artful skills
to dignify the countless souls infirmed and helpless wills;
and of those he healed, now left to wail, doleful as diaphones
in morning fog they mourn until they sleep.

Truth.

Our heavy hearts will lighten as we remember brighter moments.
His deeds bequeath immortal dreams. Petrified in our senses,
visions indelible, a benevolence to appear and reappear like seasons,
and remind us that we shared in words or voice, in thoughts or touch,
the sacred air he breathed each day.

Nadiyb: Hebrew: A Nobel Man A poem dedicated to and in memory of Shep Nuland, my mentor, friend, renowned author and Professor at the Yale School of Medicine

Distant Sunsets

We look to distant sunsets,
Where muted dreams are dreamed
And searing pain's extinguished
To learn that in the silence
We can still hear music play,
Velvet notes which cushion
Every thought of darkest sorrow,
And believe despite our pining
There will live in distant sunsets
Forever thoughts of you today
And in our muted dreams tomorrow.

Erinyes^{lxxxi}

What I am, I am.
My afflictions are my affections.
My chaos, civility.
Tides pause, breaths sigh.
Those who dream, dream.
While I with pleasure cast
Ravages and travail obscene,
To a venomous sea, to shatter
Upon the cliffs of despair,
Forgotten forever
As I travel, un-traveled avenues
Of promise.

Quietude of the Stars

For Mary Rose with love^{lxxxii}

i.

in profound silence,
tears cry into the abyss of eternity.
blossoms pause, scentless
for a moment, to mark
the grip of grief we witness,
a mortal conflagration, senseless,
beyond the reason we know or have known.
agony, seared into our hearts
by a flaming stake of fate to reside
everlasting leaving us lonely, afraid,
mere broken remains of healers
enslaved by *her* pain
and the void of *her* beloveds.

ii.

infinite stars yearn to glow and
crackle in the night sky,
but today neither glimmer nor glisten;
mired in a quietude of blackest blackness,
shadows in a universe amid
the lengths and depths of piercing despair...
...yet each remains a vigil;
each awaits the awakening
of hope that always comes
from dreams and prayer
that drive even the bleakest and the weakest
towards sanguine promise.
as too we wait, we pray, we cry,
for the precious, interred, and
and for *her* to awaken, eyes to open
to the majesty beyond the sky
of bluest, blue, where quiescent stars
arise to shine again
to crackle and glimmer and glisten
in their infinity.

Alcyone^{lxxxiii}

Dedicated to family, friends and colleagues
for the New Year, 2020

*“...then for the teeming quietest, happiest days of all!
The brooding and blissful halcyon days!”*^{lxxxiv}

Let us wish to:

retreat from all unjust suffering,
banish afflictions, vaporize pain;
fashion peaceful harbors and orchards,
cultivate gardens, plant trees, harvest grain.

dream of lyres’ and harps’ splendid music,
watch beautiful children dance and be gay;
never see sadness and crying bear witness,
keep illness and sorrow far, far away.

abolish the hunger that threatens the fragile,
crave for vision and prescient wisdom;
nourish each other with love and kindness,
live with bountiful hope and compassion.

seek out always life’s streaming sunbeams,
dissolve each dark cloud in sunlight’s way;
entwine outstretched hands with one another...

...and turn all tomorrows to halcyon days.

Anemoi^{lxxxv}

*You who soon will light
On wing tomorrow
And soar to cross the roads
The rivers and the borders;
Breaths of change to cast
From depths of wondrous purpose past,
And build with blocks found here
That anchor work and deeds
And many passions dear;
Fear and feel no void,
As forever sealed
Like gold in vaults
Within its earthen mines,
Your memories will be never stolen
From the purses of your mind.*

*You at the core, the soul,
The vitreous beauty of place and time,
Your home to first breathes
Day after day after day...and year after year.
Where special moments
Awaken miracles, as
You behold each child's cry,
A wish for all to hear.
And fervor for each,
A wind-rush, bending stalks
And stems earthbound
With a gravity, holding fast ...a witness from the start;
Outstretched hands to touch
To love, to yearn with open heart.*

*Now, you will flourish
And you will heal
As you have healed,
Forward as the sun each day
And you will smile when you remember,
Those you knew from yesterday,
Yet best is what needs to be,
Each to march your destiny
Like royalty towards fertile fields
Where hands and hearts again combine
To better lives of those who need
Devotion, skills and presence
That you so beautifully define.*

Sinan

The compass or "south-governor"
(sīnán 司南)

To find our way when night shines black,
And life's work struggles to raise the bar;
To create a difference for all on earth,
At times, you know, we need a star.

The bar of truths that science lends,
To souls and thoughts of certain minds;
To genius rare -yet here today,
A man whose equal none will find.

A granite pillar holding strong,
His vision un-roofs mysteries;
And heavens to reach with inquiry,
To learn what makes us live and be.

An artist etching intaglio,
On canvases of academe;
Sustaining us his protégés
And our collective, purposed dreams.

A Magnet he for his own ilk,
Humanists, ethicists, scientists, scholars;
Venerable, formidable, leaders and friends,
Who trust, revere, respect and honor.

Yes, when our night shines black with doubt,
When all seems hazy, uncertain and grey;
Nate remains our enduring compass,
With prescient wisdom, illuming our way.

Noelle^{lxxxvi}

even strangers from afar know of you
and the aura of your birth,
the darkened hope and hue of stormy clouds
that shadow streaming light,
and know the flawless shards of love
disguised in tear drops crying day and night
one by one, gleaned tears from loving faces
reach towards pinnacles of immortality
and makes us all believe
that as the flutter of heart beats breach life itself,
love too ascends, cast heavenly
upon rainbows and shooting stars,
our gifts to comfort for eternity.

and in the longer nights of winters liar,
your beauty can be seen by all
and in the frozen air where bellowed breaths of hope inspire.
Though today it lives, a chrysalis,
laced in grief and pain,
one day it will awaken
when winters snows spur springtime rain,
and fuse sadder thoughts with memories
that with distant smiles bind
eternal love with hope and promise,
even strangers from afar can find.

The World is Weeping^{lxxxvii}

The world is weeping.
The breathless wind
Hungers to inhale once more
The spirit now lost.
Among sinuous trails and parched deserts,
Lie vacant forms once full with
Lust to thrive but for brief moments;
Alas to dust return and sleep
And dream enchanted thoughts
T'll season next awakens
From the frost of winters liar
To burn anew as if its fire
Was invented to ignite eternity.
Yes, once again its flowers sway
And dance, reborn of majesty,
While we of human soul and heart,
Mortal on this land go forth
To live and give and love and then
Depart.

The world is weeping,
Yet in this season,
In this moment,
The wind is breathing; it's
Gentle breezes ripple mirrored
Ponds where float ivory swans.
Whispered breezes among autumnal
Flora, sing as they swoon,
The woods soon to be shorn,
As we in quietude, in solitude,
Recall a life, forlorn.
Too young
To fall to human frailties;

A life, whose hands so gentle
Did extend to guard the births
Of child and children
Who yearned to breath the naked air,
Unblemished by the throws of
Sorrow or despair
That we too well know.
The child adorned,
Draped with hope to cast
To the brink of earth's confines;
Boundaries that she,
Our beloved friend,
Made better in her time.

Today, whisper-cries and
Muted songs are heard;
Harmonies from the crevice,
Deep within, etched words
And pictures as those that dwell
In ancient caves by
Impassioned souls to
Mark their time eternal;
While shadows slowly disappear
And sunlight streams upon our
Mourning, and joy returns
To joyless days, lightening sorrow
To beget once more the splendor
We have thirsted for
In recent times,
Quenched by words that eulogize
And on winged dreams, immortalize.
When thoughts again appear,
And she in our hearts unfailing,
We'll forever cherish and revere.

Friendship^{lxxxviii}
(Amicus Certus)

The silence of a burgeoning tree,
Speaks louder than the streaming sea,
The beauty of the lark at song
Is greater than the falcons strong.
As of the scent that's twice as fair,
The flowers in the morning air.
Each small wonder that does abound,
Marvels all of sight and sound.
But what is greater than nature's awes,
Each creature's beauty particular?
What should we revere, what should we worship?
Simply, to cherish our cherished friendship.
We needn't be sad because of our distance,
For we needn't be close to feel our closeness.
Our minds sense how we feel for each other,
And recall those moments we've spent together.
Sure friends are we through glory and strife;
Sure friends tomorrow and forward, for life.

Iddan^{lxxxix} / *Tuyshtak*^{xc}
For Eleanor^{xc}

The Mount, two towering peaks,
Majestic in the glory of the morning,
And Bay in sight yet afar,
Willow thickets on her western slopes
Thrive among the char...
Burnt grasses of
Savannah and chaparral,
Lie like un-gleaned straw
In parched farm fields
Quenched with raindrops
Of hope over time.

Above, wind-chimed melodies
Flirt on amorphous tufts of cumulus,
Pillars that float over foothills and faults,
As eagles fly and circle and search,
And hawks hunt,
And kites^{xcii} hover and soar,
All sky dancing
To heal and resurrect.

We see in this all,
Even in the midst of shadows cast
An apparition aglow
In red and orange, to live and last
From dawn eternal
And upon her beauty and
The beauty that is Eleanor...
Her image smiling,
Shining as a sacred beacon
To uplift our spirits
Like tectonic thrusts.

She, as if upon *the* southern slope,
Drenched in
Sunbeams and laughter;
Altruism and grandeur;
Love and loving;
Passion and compassion;
Family and friends,
Faith and promise.

Time as certain as the dawn,
Insist our remembrances,
Symbols uniquely folded
In the furrows of our mind
Like volcanic crevices;
Age-old, timeless, indelible.

Longing for Amalthea^{xciii}

A poem for Thanksgiving

i.

Dream... of infinite oceans to nurture infinite life;
And rivers too, their flow and rush through time,
That nudge the silt and sand, like knives,
To furrow banks where thirsty
Game and fowl find feed and fuel;
While in the lush of groves and pastures,
Lavender scents and primrose petals
Sweeten the air, and distant vines climb skyward
And fruit trees bloom and spring wheat, sown
In perfect rows, await the autumn's scythe and sickle.

Dear autumn when greens turn umber and the harvest
Of the summer's crop calls before the frost,
When cows and deer and lambs
Remain to graze on gentle sloping hills
As the days of fall are waning and are lost.

ii.

...And of springtime when we sow
New seeds to germinate,
Then wait;
Again, to gather, basket, shape and bake,
To form the art of the chef,
Sculpted monuments,
Sometimes simple,
Sometimes not,
To invite our taste and more;
To satiate; permit demeanor
And repose, alone, together,
At home with friends
Or in their kitchens,
...And at cafes
And where city gardens bloom;
Where our social moments and
Conversations rise above the din and
Come alive in daylight and beneath the moon.

iii.

And dream...of those, and thank,
Who reach beyond the bar,
Whose conscience lives both near and far
To hear the cry; hunger's cry,
And stand steadfast, aware
To know *their* vision be to share
Their harvest with those they've seen
To sleep on city streets
and upon parched earth,
where leaves once lush and green now crack,
and lifeless, barren branches fracture ;
Where famine be the slayer.

iv.

Dream...
To cherish cornucopia;
The beautiful; the bountiful;
The tasteful flesh and fish,
Seeds and nuts,
Fruits and gourds;
Grains to flour, flour to bread;
Morsels to beget the thread
Of meals that weave lifelines
Into the fabric of our every day;
And with every breath and thought,
As we taste the meal and feel alive in every way;
The meal that makes us, us.

On the occasion of a retirement of
A friend and colleague

Our friendship of forty –two years
Has more life to grow
Although we no longer touch
The children with common hands
Before and after birth, we know
What paths we took and are to take
Will entwine us, never to dim or perish.

Years upon years of effort and method and love layer
Like pages in a book, set to bind; cohesive, orderly,
Complete. This be your mission, now bound in perpetuity
For all to look back on extraordinary deeds that your
Hands and mind and caring heart have done.

For the tiny, breathless child; children, lay vulnerable within a
Cocoon of oxygen and tubes and wires; as nurses with
Indomitable skills drive on, determined to open the vice of
Despair and futility, aware that such caring comes from many...
But is led by one.

Led by he,
Whom through trust and visible truth and calm demeanor;
He with eyes that sometimes tear as fear
Grips the reality of what might be;
Yet also eyes that gleam more so with hope
That science and the human spirit embedded in the core of what we do,
Forged from years of learning and study and thinking, will heal.
He the scholar, the teacher, the learner, the humanist.
He is you.

Plant not roots in these days to come but wings to move,
To sail; to seek the vision of longing aspirations.
Hold and love and bond again; do not recant, do not regret.
For all who know you wish you happy times
And deserved rewards that await as daily routines relax,
And strains of work although enveloped in love
Now collapse and fold away
As distant memory.

Yachad^{xciv}

Those who love you;
From afar; from nearby;
Family by blood;
Family by marriage;
Families of same name, unrelated.
Friends of many years;
Friends that are new.
Celebrating.
90 years of living;
65 years of marriage.
Not ordinary milestones
Your milestones.
Not ordinary persons.

Together you have beget
A loving family and code of living,
Worthy for many, followed by few.
Creeds and paths of goodness and
Values that are witnessed by every human
Heart that has shared your space, your words
Your thoughts and deeds.

Within your lexicon there is not "hate" nor
"for me's", selfish conceits that mire the
Wonders of whom we are.
You are like rooms:
Empty rooms;
Void of arrogance; negativity;
Furnished rooms full of elation,
Pride, wholesomeness, love.
You are like homes:
Hearth-warmed;
Comforting;
Sheltering;
Familiar.

Here together.

This is why today
We mark your marks in life
And wish for you a simple thing;
Joys for years to come
Joys life is yet to bring.

Affirmations^{xcv}

You are the dedicated and the dear;
Who bravely face the abyss
With courage that bespeaks
Your truths
To the unfaltering oaths
Upon which you swore;
A grace of caring
Which comes from your
Outstretched hands
and noble souls and more...
Your calling:
A strength,
To strike and penetrate
As coulters^{xcvi}
to shear each morsel
Of disease and despair
Into infinite shards;
To awaken the safely guarded
Hopes of humankind's promise
As life's order is at last restored,
Returning to us the dreams
To freely breathe the air,
To walk hand in hand
Upon the byways and the beaches,
And travel distant shores,
And speak of todays and tomorrows
Once again with smiles
And even drops of tears;
Gleams of gratitude and affirmations,
For you, the dedicated and the dear.

Prociedo^{xvii}

Going forward (I)

Today are times of much despair
Yet times of great hope
To affirm our oath
As unfiltered reason and purpose
Rush in our blood
Every pulse a wave
Approaching distant shores
To leave our prejudice behind
To fade into vapors
As common as fog
And guide us to plant
Roots to bond our humanhood and
Vines to grow our brotherhood
As we go forth into tomorrow.

Our Yearning Hearts

Come stay among
Our yearning hearts,
And sense us grasp
These special moments
When miracles unfold,
And we behold,
A child;
Appearing as a wind-rush,
Bending stalks
And stems earthbound;
A gravity, holding fast
Our wishes to hear
The fervor of his cry, her cry;
For a lifetime.

Antares II^{xcviii}

A team of many;
With many bright stars
But none brighter
Than whom we honor today.
A devoted voice
For the patient;
A just and reasoned voice
For us all.
Our “thank you” cannot be enough
But our blessings are abundant.
Seek what you love.
Find what you deserve.
Savor your life.

Constellation^{xcix}

“We are[sic] nothing but the constellation of the soul”

We are a constellation.
Our wonders and turmoil
...Of caring:
Grasps science with hope;
...Of understanding:
Grasps analysis with insight.
Caring; understanding;
Beacons of what drives us
To do what is best.
We are a constellation.
Compelled by mission.
Consumed with passion.

Anemoui¹

Aloft on wings tomorrow
You soar to cross the roads
And rivers and ocean vast
Breaths of change for you to cast
From depths of purpose past
And build with blocks that anchored
Work and deeds and passions.

Fear and feel no void for
Memories are forever sealed and
Never will be stolen
From the purses of our minds
Like gold in vaults
Deep within its earthen mines
Flourish and heal as you have healed
Move forward as the sun each day
And smile when you remember us
Those you knew from yesterdays

Yet best is what needs to be,
For each to march your destiny
Like royalty towards fields
Where hands and hearts combine
To better lives of those who need
Your caring, skills and presence
That you dutifully and beautifully define.

פֶּרִיחַ

(pe-ree-khah) ^c

For Charlotte

Today we come to celebrate
we the older and the young;
the birth of Charlotte and her name
today when songs and prayers are sung.

Now, just more than one year old,
with beauty and much childhood glee;
without pretense of worldly gifts,
we gift her love and family.

This core is all she'll ever need,
for life which beckons many years;
a life that may she propagate
with greatest joy and lesser tears.

A sister's arms with hugs surround,
a mother and a father's kiss;
grandparents, aunts and uncles love,
and that of friends...she is so blessed.

And is there more that we can wish,
can hope for such a wondrous child?
indeed, for her to walk her path
upon cobbled stones into the wild.

A wilderness of those in need,
of those who hunger and thirst in pain;
whom someday she may care to aid
from unselfish deeds, she'll be gifted gains...

...Gains of thoughts to think of others,
mores at home she will surely learn;
her strengths to conquer the unconquerable,
a humbled passion; to strive, to yearn.

So as we celebrate Charlotte's birth,
dreams and wishes and hopes, abound;
for her life, her virtues...for her just being,
may adversities be lost; prosperities be found.

Zachary

Where golden swans and princes dance,
My prince has danced and dances still.
As my heart with fire burns the pain
And turns its char
To sweet and boundless faith
Which love cements
From flesh to flesh to soul,
Dear prince who danced and dances still.

Cherished Purposes

The asphodel^{ci}

If my years be four score and ten,
Then at this midpoint I should pause to reflect
On what's to come and what has been.
I've amassed much riches, though not much wealth,
What has been my gold has been my health,
And my children and my loving wife.
No man has breathed more love than I
For a God that has given to me
These "cherished purposes of life"
For which I would die
So that they would survive for eternity.

My years now number four score, less five
With hope to live another score
Or more as I begin a new epoque:
Retiring the vistas of adventures not yet lived

בהיר

“Bright Star”

Every first cry, every first breath
is the promise of each prayer
prayed and each word said
when you, our new watchtower of hope,
now to our eyes appear,
at long journey's end.

You cast sunbeams that will
gleam forever upon us who love you
and from whom love gleams endless.
And we'll watch you thrive and step
steadfast over every boundary and crevice,
to define your purpose and seek success.

For we wish for you to sense each day...
the glory of dew-dropped, dappled scents
of wildflower fields that bloom in May,
and of rapid streams' rippled currents
and the snow amassed among aspen pines
...yes, sense this and more
in all life's finds.

Nolan, you're our tribune, our
sentinel, our lifeblood for good.
You will flourish and shine,
like a bright star above;
Endeared and cherished by
all of us here,
but sustained everlasting
by your mother and father
and sister Livi's love.

Angel Wings^{cii}

I lived my life on Angel Wings
Traveling not too distant miles,
Yet high enough to feel the wind
Wisk my face to turn a smile.

I found my gift in those I love
Knowing love was always there,
As songbirds sing and flowers bloom
I never doubted those who cared.

I learned so much from every day
About the meaning of why we live,
My wish will be my legacy
A wish to never cease to give.
I never want to hurt or harm
Or leave my loves with tearing eyes,
For you I plead rejoice and praise
In what we shared before I died.

So now the daylight streams so bright
As church bells chime and choirs sing,
And I to rest in earthen walls
My soul to soar on Angel Wings.

Epilog

A book of poems and stories, eulogies and celebrations, about a doctor's patients and their illnesses, their elations and failures could not be written if the doctor does not immerse him/herself into the emotions which accompany their care. Physician conscience becomes paramount in this care. Patients are not commodities or clients. That they utilize health care resources, they have been labeled "consumers". But they remain "patients" in its most enduring and meaningful definition.^{ciii}

Appendix I : A selection of personal eulogies and words of consolation

As the obstetrician cares for the unborn, the pediatrician cares for the newly born through childhood. Following is my eulogy to Janis, my very close friend, colleague and family pediatrician who died in the prime of her years; an extraordinary and compassionate physician whom I will always remember and be grateful to have known. "The darkness of an early, impatient winter has stolen Janis from us, paring golden dreams into sorrow. Yet, we have been granted a precious privilege to have known and loved her. First a colleague, Janis soon became our friend and then our daughter Annie's Doctor. When she labored with Adam, entrusting her care to my practice, I was with her and delivered Adam, and two years later, Rachel. We chose each other to care for ourselves and our families. Although we never discussed it, we reveled in this mutual bond, thinking that only the heavy weight of death could break it. I thought of Janis daily in her final weeks and months. I strained to withhold my tears and once shed, each tear made me realize how precious *is* every moment of our lives, albeit uncertain and tenuous. Janice gave us a courage that *was* certain. Nurtured by love, it was her final gift, cementing our bonds to her, now unbreakable. We share in Janis' loss knowing a part of our own *humanity* is lost. Janis would not want us to despair. Though our spirits may seem to fade we must learn from her courage to awaken the sorrows of our fallen dreams and transport them into the dawn of our collective lives.

Please accept my most sincere condolences on your loss of Arnie. I have been a colleague of his since I began my practice in 1977. I am saddened by your loss. I would like to share a poem which I wrote for a beloved friend who died several years ago. I would like to rededicate this poem to Arnie. Please know that my thoughts are with you at this time.

I have searched in my heart for words to express my feelings about Eric and have written the following lines which I would like to share with you and your children. I thought of Eric as a trusted friend and advisor. I admired his life's ethic and values. I am sorry I could not be present at his funeral. Please know that but my thoughts of him were with you and your family.

With sincere condolence,

Congratulations on Isabelle's birth. I know how worried you are and will be that Isabelle will be ok, but I remain hopeful she will- with all your love and caring. I want to share a brief poem I wrote a while ago for a daughter with a serious congenital heart problem who is now 12 years old and thriving.

Thank you for letting me share these words today in honor of Wyatt. As a doctor, it is the greatest professional privilege to participate in the birth of a child. Yet, the bar is raised when that child has died. As elation turns to grief and joy to sorrow; when in a brief moment the expected becomes the unexpected, this privilege becomes sacred. For we are first to see and touch him, we inscribe his image indelibly in our minds, and his death, in paradox, does not sear our bonds of caring but rather seals them.

Memorial services such as this, ceremonies and tangible items of remembrance are vital for healing after Wyatt's untimely death. They give us permission to remember and cry publicly as well as privately. Memories are what will remain of Wyatt, invisible bonds between mother, father and child, everlasting. Remembering and praising him today will help to make our darkness, visible.

I knew Gordon since 1976 when I as a young physician, fresh from my residency, joined his Group. The words which told me of his death last week were as arrows, coming from the dark, piercing my heart. It is not that Gordon and I were best friends but he was what I might call, a “best colleague.

Gordon’s death should remind us that great men live and great men die, but great lives endure in the legacy which they bequeath to us; *their humanity*; the consummate capstone of Gordon’s life.

Thank you for the honor of sharing this poem at Gordon’s Memorial Service. Please extend my condolences to your entire family.

I am so sorry for your loss today of Rohin. Words could never fully express what I feel in my heart but I wrote these few lines tonight with the hope that they may bring you some solace at this most very difficult time.

We are so sorry about your loss of Daniel. Although we did not know him, we have learned from the eulogies of his dear friends what a special person he was. Please know our deepest sympathies are with you at this time.

This morning, as I reviewed this tribute to Robin, I had some after-thoughts. First, today, it is cloudy. This does not matter because Robin has given us enough sunshine to last forever. Second, I have mixed some of the tenses, not discriminating the past and present tense. But this does not matter because Robin was with us in the past, is with us today and will be with us tomorrow. And last, I reflected on my routine when I visited Robin. I would go to the office, stop off at Hospice to visit Robin and then go to the hospital. On Thursday, this was to be my routine. I was planning on going to the hospital after my visit to hear a lecture by Dr. Eric Cassell about the doctor-patient relationship. It was to begin at 5pm. I was with Robin as she died at 5pm. As always, she had become my teacher this day.

I have been told that I am considered a part of Robin's family, but the truth is that Robin considered the world a part of her family. Robin's life affected everyone she knew and those who she did not know. Robin's family is the family of man. Robin possessed a silent gravity that drew us into her life.

I remember discussing with her and Joe the prospects of them having a successful pregnancy. We were hopeful. Joey is this hope and will remain so. Joey is Robin's inspiration; the force which drove her will and made her heartbeat.

I am attracted to and compelled by virtuous persons; those who place wholesome values and selflessness on their daily agendas and needn't struggle to carry them out. Robin compelled me. By simply being, Robin taught me what is truly important in our lives. Though sometimes in pain and sometimes dependent, often afflicted and confined, Robin's life was Saintly. She put others' afflictions before her own. Their afflictions became her affections;

her cause to live. She cared and was caring; she loved and was loving. She lived as she was dying.

I was with Robin as she died. It was a great privilege. I was present when Robin's failing heart was taken from her and replaced with a healthy one. This too was my great privilege. Her heart beat, uninterrupted, detached from her body for a long while. I stood at her head, in awe, as her life was resurrected. I touched her heart as she touched my spirit. But as she recovered, I learned what is absolute: That our hearts grant us life; but our souls render Love. Science and skills of devoted physicians could not keep Robin alive any longer. But this was Robin's time to leave us. She chose her moment. She was ready: unafraid; serene, at peace. Her soul will continue to render love to us all.

For us, there is such remorse today. We feel as if a part of our own humanity is lost, never to be found. Tears cannot justly portray our grief as we begin a search for reason and comfort. A daughter is not expected to die before her mother. A mother is not expected to die young. Husband and wife are expected to grow old together. The natural processes of birth, life and death should follow in an orderly and rational sequence through one's lifetime. Any death other than one from old-age after a rich and fulfilling life is premature. Yet when parents see their child die, and children see their parents die young, they must live on with this disruption of natural order. A bond between mother and child, child and mother is cemented. Death tears this apart, un-roofing conflicting, primal emotions of joy, promise, despair and hope. In remembering Robin, hope is essential for Robin was driven by *hope*. From today forward, our healing must take from the despair of our grief, its thoughts, memories and tears and within a framework of inspiration, introspection and time, transform this grief into promise and hope. This is what Robin would want from us, for she believed that hope is a singular gift we must never destroy in ourselves; that hope is an endless song in an endless concert; a nocturne bright in the darkest of nights.

We share in Robin's loss knowing a part of our lives is lost. Though our spirits may seem to fade we must learn from her to awaken the sorrows of our fallen dreams and transport them into the dawn of our collective lives. This will be her legacy to us.

I know how difficult a time this is for you but the reason it is so difficult is that you and your Dad -and your Mom- had a very special bond of love which is never broken, not even through death. I wanted to share this poem with you which I believe personifies your Dad's life and death.

There is little that I can say which can comfort you at this time. Yet I am struggling for just a few simple words which can penetrate the shroud of *my* heart and escape into the wind to find its way to *yours*. As you sit by the bedside of your dear mother, your hand grasping hers ever so softly, her relentless pulse, pounding a glimmer of hope with each beat and your mind wanders to those beautiful and wondrous memories of your father, whose body has been taken so suddenly but whose soul and love will remain with you and your family forever, please know that with all my heart, I wish I could be with you today. I feel you are a part of my family and I feel a compelling need to be with you and Dave to comfort you. Please forgive me that I cannot be there.

Appendix II: Notes

-
- ⁱ Jose was a mentor and teacher of Obstetrics and Gynecology who died prematurely.
- ⁱⁱ In Bill Moyers, A conversation with Poet Laureate Rita Dove, April 22, 1994, billmoyers.com
- ⁱⁱⁱ For Teodora
- ^{iv} *Xie Bingxin ; Fanxing (Crowded stars); verse 21; 1921*
- ^v For a trusted colleague and teacher upon his retirement
- ^{vi} For Caroline, who was born after her brother, David, died shortly after birth
- ^{vii} A small light. Sanscrit
- ^{viii} Sanscrit, The Blossoming of Love
- ^{ix} Georgia is a beloved teacher of my children
- ^x William died shortly after birth. His devoted parents dedicated a *donate a book program* in his memory at their local library
- ^{xi} A Poem for a teacher and mentor and friend on his retirement from the Chair, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology Yale University School of Medicine
- ^{xii} Alfred Lord Tennyson, Ulysses, 1842, In Reading Poems, Oxford University Press, 1941, p.248
- ^{xiii} Mentor was a confidant of Ulysses whose form Athene (goddess of wisdom) assumed when she accompanied Telemachus in his search for his father.
- ^{xiv} Eric was a trusted friend and counsel
- ^{xv} For Dr. William Danforth upon his retirement as Chancellor, Washington University
- ^{xvi} Mathew died in a terrorist attack in Israel
- ^{xvii} Written for the forward of *Journeys: Stories of Pregnancy After Loss*, edited by Amy L. Abbey
- ^{xviii} Elton was Professor of Surgery, husband and father
- ^{xix} Naratva is a Sanskrit name meaning humanity and the human condition.
- ^{xx} *Netzah*, one of ten fundamental forces or Sefirot of Jewish Mysticism, means eternity and represents the conquest or capacity for overcoming. Alexander died in utero one day before his birth. This poem is the first poem I ever read at a funeral service.
- ^{xxi} Among the first poems I wrote and sent to a patient's family after she died from Uterine Cancer.
- ^{xxii} 1991 Written for my first born daughter, Stephanie. Elysium in Greek Mythology is the abode of the blessed; the paradise or happy land.
- ^{xxiii} 1993 Another personal tribute to my child Stephanie upon her graduation from high school.
- ^{xxiv} This beautiful baby girl was born with Down syndrome. Her brother, *Cameron*, born one year earlier died of congenital heart disease. Her mother is the epitome of courage and strength.
- ^{xxv} *Memnon*, the son of *Eos*, Goddess of Dawn, who mourned his death by weeping every morning.
- ^{xxvi} *Hymettus* is a mountain in Attica, famous for the sweetness of its honey. This poem is for a husband whose young wife suddenly and unexpectedly died
- ^{xxvii} After years of infertility, Cameron was born only to die soon after birth of congenital heart disease. Unlike most forms of congenital heart disease, Cameron's was inoperable and fatal. His courageous parents were with him every moment of his short but love-filled life.
- ^{xxviii} 1989 Written for parents upon the loss of their son, David. David was a young physician and cancer surgeon whose life was consumed by the very disease he treated.
- ^{xxix} 1993 Empyrean is the highest abode of God. Ventose in French represents the March winds. This pregnancy terminated in the fourth months after an infection developed in the uterus.
- ^{xxx} 1990 Written for a longtime patient, friend and young mother who died of ovarian cancer and whose daughters I continue to care for.
- ^{xxxi} 1993 Amaurot is the fictional capital of Utopia. I wrote this poem in memory of a child born with a most devastating birth defect and died shortly after birth. I dedicate this poem to all children who have died.
- ^{xxxii} 1992 Written for a young couple who underwent a termination of pregnancy for a lethal genetic anomaly. They had a wonderful understanding of each other and a devotion to their three old daughter that allowed them to face their bereavement with strength and hope.
- ^{xxxiii} 1993 For a close and loving relative.
- ^{xxxiv} 1993 For a special friend who was a special person. When she told me she had terminal cancer, I wrote this poem for her and gave it to her before her death.
- ^{xxxv} 1994 Written for a physician who died at the peak of his career.
- ^{xxxvi} 1993 Lines of profound past loss and future hope.

-
- xxxvii 1994 For a mother and newborn both critically ill at birth but in time were healed. The newborn, Jacob, was delivered at twenty four weeks gestation and weighed one and one half pounds at birth. I witnessed his growth to four pounds when he left the hospital for home.
- xxxviii For a brave young boy who went through successful neurosurgery.
- xxxix Written for a friend's mother and sent to her when I learned she had surgery for ovarian cancer.
- xl Divus is the Latin expression for a Godlike, blessed memory. This poem was written for and given to a patient whom I had not met- until she came into labor and was found to have fetal demise.
- xli A prayer of hope for immortality. In the Kabballah or study of Jewish Mysticism, Yekhida is the ultimate union of the soul with the essence of the Divine.
- xlii Six pregnancies, one child. This poem is written for a wonderful and courageous mother and father, desperate to have another child in face of overwhelming, medical problems.
- xliii A tribute to a colleague who is recovering from a bone marrow transplant as therapy for leukemia
- xliv The anguish of many years of infertility and the near loss of this child from extreme prematurity inspired me to write this poem for my patient when she was about to deliver her daughter, Courtney.
- xlvi Written for a patient who experienced abnormal bleeding from the onset of her long-planned pregnancy. Prenatal testing was carried out in an effort to establish the cause. A rare and fatal chromosome abnormality was discovered and she lost her pregnancy in her thirteenth week.
- lvii For a baby, Sydney, born with a serious congenital heart defect and who survived and is thriving today. Her mother just delivered a second healthy newborn
- lviii For a young girl, Ariel, who is undergoing therapy for cancer of the kidney.
- lix A Primitive Philippine Song
- lxi For a beloved caregiver. In the discourse of Jewish Mysticism, the human hand becomes analogous to Hesed or "grace" which is symbolic of one who performs a mitzvah.
- lⁱ *Obstare* is the Latin root for *Obstetrics* and means "to stand before"
- li This poem was written for twin boys, Andrew and Joseph, who died before birth. It was recited by their courageous parents at their sons' memorial service
- lii Written for a friend and colleague upon his death.
- liii Andira is a genus of tropical tree found in Africa known as a "rain tree". This poem is written in memory of all children who have died and are dying from the ugliness of starvation.
- liv For those who can see and feel and fear the horror calling at our doorsteps.
- lv This states best as I can the overwhelming emotion I feel, day by day, as I attend births.
- lvi Aoide is the Greek Muse of Song. These lines are a dedication to the labor and delivery suite of Yale- New Haven Hospital where I practice
- lvii Boris
- lviii In memory of Kate
- lix Lord Beaconsfield; Vivian Grey, III, vi; Egeria-A Roman muse, counsellor and advisor
- lx For Annie on her commencement in the healing arts, May 26, 2008. Tinos is a sacred Greek Island in the Cyclades and is considered the ancient center for arts and healing
- lxi For a friend and professional colleague. Gordon's death should remind us that great men live and great men die, but great lives endure in the legacy which they bequeath to us; their humanity; the consummate capstone of his life.
- lxii *Facta non Verba* : latin. *deeds, not words*. For Seth on the Occasion of his Law School commencement., May 18, 2008
- lxiii For Janis
- lxiv Henry David Thoreau
- lxv For Nancy on our Twentieth Anniversary
- lxvi For Nancy, February, 1993
- lxvii Written for those professionals who cared for my family member when being treated for cancer.
- lxviii The Manu Rain Forest in Eastern Peru which is still an intact biosphere and has the richest concentration of life on Earth. The Manu Rain Forest in Eastern Peru which is still an intact biosphere and has the richest concentration of life on Earth.
- lxix Marya Mannes, 1958
- lxx Seattle, Chief of the Susquamish Indian Tribe, 1851.
- lxxi For a friend's father. The solstice of summer occurs on June 21 and it is on this date that the sun at its extreme northern point appears to stand still.
- lxxii For Marie, mother of many friends.
- lxxiii For my daughter Annie on her commencement to High School.
- lxxiv For my daughter Annie on her commencement from High School
- lxxv For my daughter Annie on her commencement from College

lxxvi For my friend and colleague, George Lister, on his 50th Birthday

lxxvii Reminisci *L.*; To recall from the mind

lxxviii From Sanscrit meaning *Immortal*

lxxix Written for and dedicated to the Rooftop Healing Garden Smilow Cancer Hospital at Yale-New Haven

lxxx After having a pregnancy loss, this mother
conceived. She went into labor at home and did not
have time to get to the hospital. Her husband
delivered his daughter Sydney by himself at home

lxxxi April, 1999 In Greek Mythology, Erinyes is the avenger of wrong. For a young child recovering from treatment for Leukemia.

lxxxii For a colleague who lost her entire family in an accident.

lxxxiii *Alcyone* is named after Alcyone in the Greek myth of Alcyone and Ceyx. According to the myth, for two weeks every January, Aeolus, father of deceased Alcyone, calms down the winds and the waves so that Alcyone, now in the form of a kingfisher bird, can safely make her nest on the beach and lay her eggs. Hence, the term "*halcyon days*" which has come to signify a period of great peace and calm. Indeed, I wish for you and your families a year of 'peace and calm. (<https://www.greeka.com/greece-myths/alcyone-ceyx.htm>)

lxxxiv *Halcyon Days* by Walt Whitman Date: January 29, 1888, New York Herald January 29, 1888

lxxxv To all on Labor and Delivery and Mother-Baby. As the New Year falls upon us, we are well aware that this will be the last year of our beloved Labor and Delivery Floor and Mother Baby Units (post partum floors, nursery and NICU). I, a relative newcomer to our 'home', have grown to love all it represents and all who are working here. We are truly a family and a haven for our patients. We are a special place and hold a special place in the lives of hundreds of thousands of families who birthed their children here. We all will be sad and sorrowful that there will be no more births at Beth Israel; no more mothers and babies to take care of and that we will no longer all be working together. But I believe we must remember and be strengthened by all the goodness we are and we bring and be grateful that we have shared innumerable precious moments together. "In ancient Greek religion and myth, the Anemoi (Greek: Ἄνεμοι, "Winds") were wind gods who were each ascribed a cardinal direction from which their respective winds came (see Classical compass winds), and were each associated with various seasons and weather conditions." (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anemoi>)

lxxxvi I learned of Noelle's birth and loss through a colleague, and wrote this brief poem for her to bring some comfort at this most difficult time-though I did not know the family.

lxxxvii A poem dedicated and rededicated to colleagues who have died all too soon

lxxxviii For friends and colleagues who have moved on. Translated from Latin, *amicus certus* means a faithful friend

lxxxix *Iddan*-Hebrew: It is He who changes *the times* and the epochs; Daniel 2:21

xc The Chochenyo-speaking Ohlone from Mission San Jose and the East Bay area, called the mountain (Mount Diablo) *Tuyshtak*, meaning "at the dawn of time"

xc1 A beloved relative

xcii Isis is said in Ancient Egyptian mythology to have taken the form of a kite (bird of prey) in various situations in order to resurrect the dead.

xciii The horn of the goat that nourished Zeus

xciv Hebrew: *Here together*.

xcv A poem to honor the healthcare workers throughout my health system, Mount Sinai Health System, New York, and now to all healthcare workers and first-responders, world-wide.

xcvi From the Latin: *culter* meaning 'knife' or 'plowshare'

xcvii Some thoughts I put into a short poem about our profession of Medicine defined by current events, June, 2020.

xcviii Antares is the brightest star in its constellation Scorpius, and is often referred to as "the heart"

xcix "Medicus Nihil Aliud Est Quam Animan Consollatio" "A Doctor is nothing but the consolation of the soul"

c Hebrew: prosperity as in flowering, blooming and blossoming

ci The asphodel is of the lily family and was associated with eternal spirits

cii For Susan. See Appendix i for eulogy

ciii c.1320, "bearing or enduring without complaint," from *L. patientem* (see patience). Noun sense of "suffering or sick person" is from 1393