

Lox and Bagels for Brunch

50 poems
by a housewife out to brunch

by
Erica Abbott

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Our morning ritual

Kettle is on, our two coffee cups are there waiting.

My husband presses the coffee, an amazing smell comes straight out of heaven.

I pop the toast, butter it hot then add orange marmalade which always hits the spot.

We hold our cups and sip the brew and watch as the morning sun starts breaking through. We chat briefly about the day. The toast, marmalade and our shared caffeine make up our lovely morning ritual.

As I look into his deep-blue eyes admiring me, I feel we are blessed with our compatibility, which until I wrote this poem I did not actually see.

~ ~ ~



A prayer for a chair

I'm hereby addressing all designers and manufacturers of chairs, please lend me your ears.

The bare essential of all chairs is they must be comfortable or even better, feel wonderful.

Inevitably, I groan when getting out of a chair; then I must stretch out on the floor before I can sit anymore!

I don't stand alone when I voice my moan after watching your customers stumbling as they struggle out of your chairs. They are groaning, moaning and feeling a wreck with cricks in their necks. I have even heard some of them swearing, "Curse that damn chair!"

As a senior citizen, having searched high and low online and off and not ever finding any decent chairs anywhere, here is my prayer to all furniture makers everywhere,

"Please provide seating that holds our weight and when we get up, we can feel great and hopefully even stand up straight!"

Let me suggest finding a few people, at least middle-aged, to test every design and see how they feel. After you do this, you can make chairs that will have much more appeal.

Please let me know when this is done so I can quickly order one!

~ ~ ~



Let's go to the beach

Feeling morbid after two days of non-stop rain, I pray for it to stop before I go insane! I'm wearing my polka dot bikini, so there's no delay going to the beach when the rain goes away.

Looking out, there's not a dog or cat about and the roads have turned into rivers. I'm about to scream but instead, I start to clean. The last straw is mold around both the shower and bathroom floor, which I just decide to ignore.

Suddenly, the sun pops out, so now it's time to go to the beach.

I open my eyes and shake my husband who is sleeping next to me in bed and say, "It's a sunny day, let's go to the beach right away!"

He opens one eye and looks at the clock, then he looks out the window and grumpily says, "It's 4 AM my dear, it's still raining,

and you're having that dream again! I need more sleep, so please don't make another peep."

So, I cover my head, put my cold feet on his warm legs and ignoring his groans, get back to my lovely dream about going to the beach.

~ ~ ~



No sunset tonight

My husband and I walked to the beach nearby to enjoy an evening sunset. When we got there the clouds grew darker and we noticed there was no-one else around. There was a rumble in the distance, and it started to rain out at sea.

We sat on the bench waiting for the sunset to appear but suddenly a lightning bolt struck nearby. Then it started to rain.

"Oh my, it's time to go, we are caught in a Florida thunderstorm!"

Our evening walk had suddenly turned into a desperate dash for home. We sprinted with our shoes splashing in puddles that were not there moments before. We tried to outrun the deluge, but it was obviously no use as the rain came down in sheets and our clothes became totally drenched.

A bolt of lightning struck a nearby tree. I cringed in fright as the flash nearby was very bright. The thunder roared loud like a fighter jet and my husband grabbed my soaking wet hand and said, "It's too dangerous to go home now!" Then he pulled me into an open garage that was luckily close by.

Safely under cover his smile calmed me down, even as the lightning continued to strike all around. For five minutes I clung to him in great fear and the rain, like a furious waterfall, continued roaring down.

At last, there was a pause in the thunder and lightning. We exchanged a knowing look and started running home quickly through the lingering storm.

With very wet clothes clinging to our skin, we arrived home panting from our desperate run. Our walk to the beach had not been much fun.

We opened the door and dripped all over the floor. We both knew we needed a drink after this harrowing storm.

I try not to think of that night because it gave me such a terrible fright. They say that soldiers under fire become best mates forever. I know that night brought us even closer together.

~ ~ ~



Barking at the moon

It's four in the morning. I'm awake, tossing left and right, while my husband is snoring next to me.

All's quiet at this time of night. Our curtains are gently billowing in the cool, midnight breeze.

Wide awake, I'm watching the drapes and patterns moving forward and back, forward and back like a metronome, calming me but I'm feeling so alone.

Then a dog down the street barks at something, so I get out of bed to see who's around. I draw open the curtain and see a most gorgeous full moon smiling back at me, so I whisper, "La Bella Luna!"

Feeling like a small boat alone on a vast ocean with nobody around, I make the decision:

I'm going to wake up my slumbering husband who long ago took a vow, "for better or for worse." And now, I'm going to share with him my insomnia curse!

~ ~ ~

La Bella Luna (Italian) - "The beautiful moon"



Orphaned in war at age four

Orphaned in war at age four, my dad vowed never to be poor.

He found a smart wife and together they worked hard and with only a bit of strife, they had a very good life.

Dad would encourage us three kids to never be a liar, a complainer or a crier. With a clear goal and lots of hard work he built a booming business, and he taught us by example to set our goals higher. My success in life came from this wise advice.

I shared dad's story and his advice with my three kids, and they all have done very well. They too are under my dad's magical spell.

I love you, dad.

~ ~ ~



If only I could lose ...

I woke up this morning, the first day of Spring and looked out to see a million shades of green on the trees and hear the chirps and buzz of birds and bees who have now returned after the winter's long freeze.

When I stepped outside, I started to sing. There were a thousand tiny buds on the bush all announcing the beginning of Spring!

When looking closer, I noticed a batch of furry caterpillars who had just hatched, nature's wonder indeed!

Soon, there will be a multitude of magnificent butterflies all fluttering about. The kids will have fun trying to catch them as they run around and shout.

I love the feeling of sun on my arms as I'm walking with my bare feet on the ground. Mother Earth is waking up and saying good morning to me.

I spotted my neighbor, Dean, who I've hardly seen and waved to him. He's been hiding away with his family since Halloween.

After months of bagels and marmalade that have stuck to my sides, I'm carrying some extra fat that I am trying to hide.

So, I pretend I`m in a race and speed up my pace; with a bounce in my step, I reach the top of the hill and of course, I win my race!

Sitting on the ground and looking around, to my delight, I discover a four-leaf clover!

I make a wish that I cannot share with you because you know what will happen if I do. My wish might not come true!

But I`ll give you a hint. I really want to lose something that rhymes with cat, it makes me look flabby, but it's not my hat.

~ ~ ~



Music, rhythm and all that jazz

Saturday night, disco's packed tight,
fluorescent lights flashing red, blue and white!
Couples jiving, more arriving,
girl's turning, boys admiring,
all singing to Elvis's wailing and crooning, *Blue Suede Shoes*.

Blaring music peaks and dips and girls all shaking lovely hips;
stiff petticoats swinging round, feet sometimes touching ground.
Colored bows, pointed toes, ponytails, ribbons, everything flows;
the room's rocking, everyone's grooving and moving,
tapping their feet to the rhythm of the beat!

Now, it's time for a drink.
Everyone takes five.
Most go out for a smoke and some evening air.

The room goes quiet because there's nobody there.

After a while, everyone wanders back.
Lights are lower, the music is slower.
Elvis's baritone voice is singing *Love Me Tender*.

In the darkness couples kissing, just shadows barely moving.

Arms wrapped tightly round one another,
secretly speaking words of now and forever.

~ ~ ~



What's worse?

It's such a lovely time here in autumn as the leaves turn brown and fall to the ground. We do enjoy taking walks to a nearby school or sometimes sunning at midday near by the pool.

On Wednesdays the gardeners come around, their leaf blowers are so loud they drown out every other sound!

Like an army of ants they scurry about persistently blaring, shattering the calm of the nearby woods and trees and what's worse is, their dust makes me sneeze! They don't look or care if anyone is glaring at them, they just carry on.

We must get away, so we start on our walk and what bliss, we can now hear ourselves talk.

On our return it's such a relief to find the blowers have gone and things back to normal again. But something much worse has

begun! The sublime silence has been ripped away by a steady stream of words from our neighbor, Mrs. Faber.

Her piercing, rasping voice is like a battering ram knocking down our door. She is not very near, yet it is all very clear. Like a freight train's horn, it's persistent, insistent and blasting when she's talking to her husband, who must be quite deaf in both ears.

The leaf blowers and Mrs. Faber both blow hot air. It's a double curse! Which do you think is worse?

Hint, the leaf blowers are only here on Wednesdays!

~ ~ ~



My friend Rose

My friend, Rose, was a good-looker, tall and well-formed for only thirteen, she had the poise of a queen.

She took out clothes one morning to catch the early bus into town, then quickly brushed hair and put on her underwear.

In front of her mirror, she stopped, looked, then stared, opened both big eyes wide, pouting and glaring, then put on her pink lipstick and purple mascara. She worked on her looks for more than an hour.

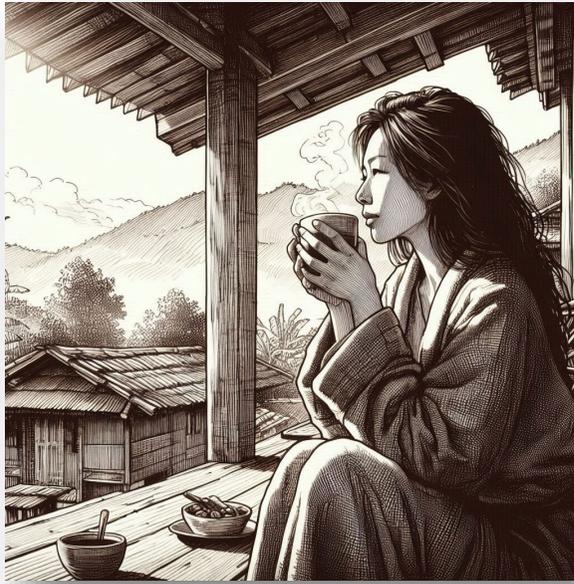
The old grandfather clock chimed the hour of nine. She thought out loud, "Oh dear, my bus must be near, it's panic time!"

Rose snatched her purse and bolted out the door, took a short cut over the fence, ran fast, then somehow managed to jump onto the bus just before it went past!

As she was paying her fare the driver gave her such a strange stare. She sat down and the lady next to her leaned over and whispered in her ear, "It appears you've forgotten something very important, my dear."

Rose looked down at her dress, which wasn't actually there.
"Oh, my goodness, I only have on my underwear!"

~ ~ ~



Irrefutable argument

It appears we are stuck here in the present, somewhere between the past and future, where the only thing certain in this world is what each one of us can feel, hear, taste, smell and see, like land, grass, ocean, a bird, or a tree.

This morning, while sitting under the awning, drinking my hot coffee and enjoying its rich aroma, I listened to the bluebirds calling.

It was then I felt the strong presence of my creator, so real to me. And I had this thought, “How else could such a delicious cup of coffee come to be?”

~ ~ ~



A dog's best friend

With my scratching and bleating, I quickly learned to get attention from my mother who was always nearby. I soon grew stronger, a puppy, weak and wriggling no longer. Life was so much fun. Many friendly scuffles with all my sisters and brothers.

Then one special day my life suddenly changed.

A human child with red hair like mine picked me up off the ground. She cuddled me close and carried me out the door to my new home. She named me Sunny, which I thought was kinda funny!

We have loved each other ever since that special day.

Now that I've grown up, I know my job is to protect my very best friend, Malaya.

~ ~ ~



The important question

“Is the dishwasher dirty or clean?”

This is the question we ask every day.

Our friend who we call the “Hungry Monster” is always ready to chew up a scrap or two, as you probably know.

With everyone loading dishes all day long he patiently waits for someone to come along and switch him ON. Then we hear the hungry monster hum his cleaning song.

Later in the day confusion usually does arise, because we never know if the hungry monster actually got turned on.

A family discussion quickly ensues with many explanations and accusations passed around; everybody gets very confused and there's doubts and shouts and the whole family gets the blues.

I take charge, lean over and have a closer look while everyone impatiently waits for my final verdict. I stand up and announce, “Most of the dishes are clean, but I unfortunately found some greasy plates way at the back.”

Then our hungry monster is turned ON again and the meeting is adjourned, until tomorrow at the same time.

~ ~ ~



I try not to be difficult

Women can be fickle, not like men at all;
when it's Summer we'd rather it was Fall.

I hate walking outdoors when it's humid and hot because my hair curls up in a frizz and my boobs start to drop. I break out in a sweat then my hair gets all wet and I drip like a tap under my soaking wet cap. I look at my husband and say, "I am getting too hot so I'm turning back!"

When we get home, he turns on the air conditioner and then of course I get too cold. My husband reassures me, "I understand my dear, you are just getting old."

My husband tells me my hair is getting more gray and then reassure me it's all going to be okay. I try to take his advice in the best sort of way. My hormones must not be so great but it's not my fault, it's just another one of my womanly traits.

Maybe he thinks I`m being too difficult because he has booked a long ocean cruise. He said, "You'll have great fun down under my dear, visiting the kangaroos!"

But I'm a bit worried about his latest news, because I don't know for sure if he's coming along on this down under cruise.

~ ~ ~



Africa calls

Drums beating, feet stamping,
beautiful, black bodies moving,
all singing while clapping and dancing.
There's no doubt it will be perpetually happening.

Cold ocean west, warm ocean east.
They meet at the southernmost point of the African coast,
a must for everyone to see.

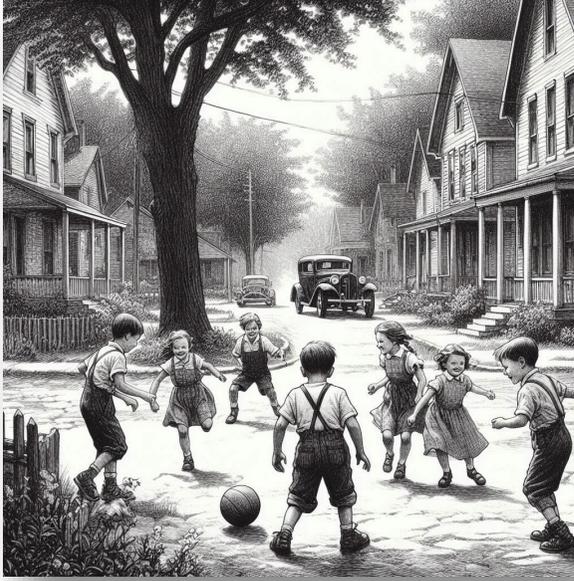
I recall it like yesterday. I took the cable car up to the top of
Table Mountain where I could see both blue oceans and their
pristine white sandy beaches spread all around me. Feeling happy
and free, I felt honored to be a daughter of South Africa.

Today, I am married to a Yank and live in the States.

Yet, the vibrant music of Africa is always in my mind, reminding me of my wonderful life in South Africa and like a mother, keeps calling me to come home.

~ ~ ~

To listen to one of my favorite African songs go to this website
www.hydeparkpublishing.com/erica/two
or
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vhgb60Qsjrs>



Yesterday

Long ago I lived in a country town with wide, open spaces, bumpy, gravel roads where everyone was my friend, and every day seemed to never end. One long main street with everyone on foot, stopping to meet.

Us kids grew up freely there with lots of spare time. Every Saturday we would go to a movie and pay only a dime.

We found special treats like mulberries and gooseberries on almost every street. I picked the green leaves for my silkworms I kept in a shoebox, then stood by and watched over them till they burst into butterflies and started to fly.

Many happy memories of this small country town; where time, like a wandering river seemed to slow down and the people there were so friendly and never had a frown.

As I think about growing up in that small country town, I`m reminded of the Beatles who sang,

"Yesterday, all my troubles seemed so far away."

~ ~ ~



Go dine on someone else

I'd like to discuss a tiny pest that never ever lets me rest.

Fleas mostly enter the house by hitching a lift on our four-legged friends. They are so hard to find or see; mostly in a warm, humid environment like carpets, bedding and even my upholstery.

Little Dracula's, they like to feast on the blood of an unsuspecting host, but it's obvious to me they prefer a grandmother's lovingly aged blood the most!

Their bites can cause scratching, inflamed skin and little sores that continually appear. I am the delicious snack they are forever seeking under the sheeting.

I'm thinking it must be I taste sweeter or because I have more hair than hubby on my head. Maybe they're avoiding his snoring, which is lucky for him as then I'm the one that gets bitten in bed.

Please, please drop me a note if you know how I can somehow make these hungry, little Dracula's go dine on someone else.

~ ~ ~



Shopping Disorder

Ladies, there's a lurking danger I'm sure you know all about, especially if you're mature. Instead of moping, hoping or worrying, it's far better to get out and go shopping.

Shopping, however, has a few important rules which you can choose to ignore, abuse or use.

Rule one: Call a very good friend to accompany you. She should know the trends, won't pretend and has an eye out for a bargain so you can save a dollar or two.

Rule two: Beware! Shopping is addictive, so can lead to overspending on ten or twelve brand new pairs of shoes.

Rule three: You know you've almost gone too far when you come home with only a dollar and a quarter and get diagnosed with a shopping disorder.

Rule four: You know you've really gone too far if you get home with three adorable spoodles and place them on the table. Be warned, your husband will be extremely distressed because he knows exactly who is going to be cleaning up their ongoing mess!

~ ~ ~



Women of note

There are some amazing women of note that have captured the world's admiration.

First to come to mind is Florence Nightingale, the lady with the lamp who trained nurses in the war. The founder of modern nursing, she was a blessing to many.

Julia Child, famous chef, TV personality and author introduced fine French cooking to the public. She gave the average housewife confidence in their cooking.

Golda Meir, the first female Prime Minister of Israel. She did not waste time to promote peace in the Middle East.

Queen Elizabeth II, the strongest monarch in the United Kingdom, was always gracious and beautifully robed. Reigning gracefully for seventy years, she was both dearly loved and respected around the globe.

Margaret Thatcher, a strong statesman, known as the Iron Lady, was the first female to hold position as Prime Minister of Britain. For twelve years she helped her country flourish and prosper.

Vice President Kamala Harris is well known for her amazing way with words and unique wisdom.

If Julia Child was alive today, I am sure she would be very impressed with Kamala's fruity word-salads!

~ ~ ~



The cool times of 1957

When Elvis, the king, arrived on the scene us teens started wearing tees and blue jeans. This was the beginning of the baby boomer's generation.

We had a dance every Saturday night.

Few girls and boys all aged eleven, hanging out in 1957.

A vinyl record was playing when I arrived.

I found a partner and started to jive.

Dancing and grooving for hours at a spell,
rocking and rolling to Elvis singing *Heartbreak Hotel*.

Stopping only for popcorn and Sprite we all took five,
then back again hopping and bopping till nearly midnight.

When the music got slower and the lights dimmed down lower,
we drew closer and stole a kiss or two.

I would just love to live 1957 all over again!

~ ~ ~



Walking about

Whenever I'm walking down the trail, I meet others walking towards me. When I smile and say the first, "Hi" they suddenly look up and shyly reply.

It seems natural to me to wave, nod, smile or say "Hi" but if I don't, we mostly just walk on by.

Perhaps their minds have not yet gotten out of bed, or they are just stuck in a rut inside their own head?

Cyclists, however, are different. They seem to follow the friendly road code. They always manage to nod or at least lift a finger off their handlebar.

Would it not be nice for everyone to greet when we meet on the road, whether we are taking a hike or riding on a bike?

Don't be shy, next time you see me just wave and say, "Hi!" You'll make my day in a friendly sort of way.

~ ~ ~



Indecisions lead to waiting.

When you can't decide,
you've kind of lost your mind
and you will fall behind,
perhaps, with little chance of dating or mating.

Too much contemplation can leave you waiting forever at the train station. You really need to know where you're going and which train to get on.

Self-invalidation causes dreaded procrastination.
Then everyone around you suffers endless exasperation.

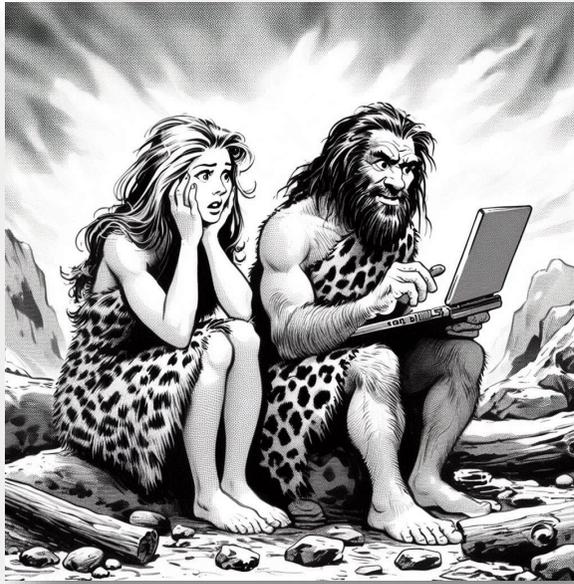
Debating is maybe a solution to the curse of indecision.
It gets one to make a choice, pick a team or express their voice!

Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark, was visited by a ghost and told of a horrible crime by his uncle. For many days he sat and just thought about it. Finally, he said to himself,

"The time has come, and I must act!"
He made a plan that solved the crime, justice was quickly served,
and the uncle got his just deserves.

No more indecision, no more contemplation.
Get off the fence, pick a side, kiss your bride,
choose your role and achieve your goal!

~ ~ ~



Why does the past never last?

An area of progress I want to address is flooring, which I hope is not boring.

First there were cement floors, later replaced by wall to wall carpeting but this attracted so much dust that continuous vacuuming became a must!

Then something new and modern, a wooden floor. The designers claimed, "This is lasting value forever more."

Little rugs became popular on wooden flooring, which on their own many felt was cold and kind of boring.

In modern times, hot water pipes are embedded in the cement flooring. In the winter when it gets cold, hot water is pumped through the floor and the whole house stays nice and warm and it's a pleasure forever more.

What will they think of next! I'm wondering how Elon will take floors to the next level.

Now that typewriters are gone, computers have AI and they have become bestselling authors. G-d help us, they may soon become famous poets! And I will be out of a job before I know it.

I predict we'll all soon have chips in our brains.

From the past to present things have changed fast, nothing ever seems to stay the same. I must ask, "Why does the past never last?"

Maybe check back with me after I get a chip in my brain.

~ ~ ~



Madeline and I

Like Carol Burnett, I am often cleaning and feel like screaming!

My daily orders and chores here are clear. Sweeping, dusting, and cleaning the grime till everything's shining and sparkling like a bright, new dime. "Then, fill the bucket and mop all floors and, don't forget wipe down all walls and doors!"

At night I sometimes wake up screaming because I'm dreaming about cleaning a Persian carpet.

So, to get a break, I'm thinking I could pop over to my friend Madeline next door; or with a bit of luck, I might sneak off for a few minutes nap in the rocker. No, maybe not, as I won't have time to go and watch my kids play soccer!

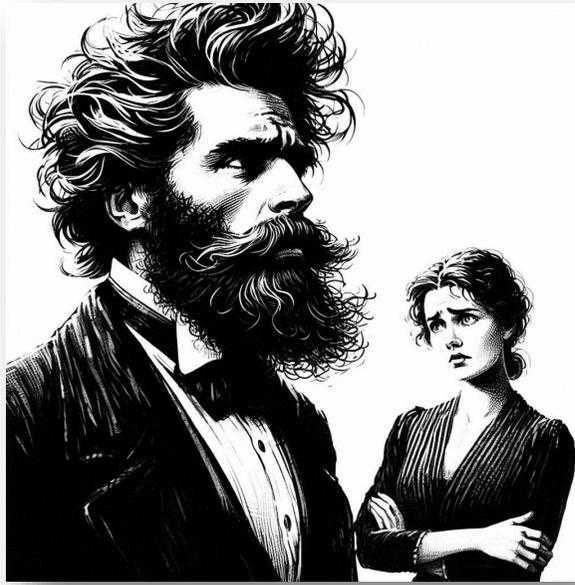
Of course, the guys in the den are watching the match on TV all yelling and cheering. At half time they will shout out to me, "Dear, could you bring us some beer?"

Well, I've decided I'm not going to do it much longer! Instead, I'm going to ask my guy to give me some extra money so I can hire a maid to do the floors and all my never-ending chores.

I'll call Madeline and tell her, "Enough is enough. I have dropped my mop and now have some money. Let's go off for a five star dine and share a bottle of fine French wine!"

~ ~ ~

Note : Carol Burnett was a comedian on TV shows many years ago, her character was a cranky cleaning lady



You look like a bear

My husband was not too aware of the unsightly hair on his hands, legs, back and shoulders till I pointed it out to him, saying bluntly, "You should be aware of this, or everyone will start to stare!"

With my sharp and unwavering intent and bit of bribery and begging, he finally agreed to endure a weekly shaving.

"Okay dear, you are right, I fear my whiskers are starting to feel prickly and they keep us apart at night!" So, the task of shaving begins with his whiskers falling off his face and landing all over the place. I try not to weep and not make a peep, rather stoically sigh as I sweep and sweep.

I'm happy now I don't have to hug a prickly bear for the rest of this week, however in a few days he will need another tweak. At least for the next twenty-four hours he'll look less like a bear and more like James Bond, very, very sheik!

Whew!

I'm thinking, that next month I'm going to send him down-under to Australia, because they know just how to shear a shaggy sheep.

~ ~ ~

sheik: a man held to be irresistibly charming to women like James Bond



Choose your game

We come into the world pretty fast, with a smack, then a cry. In a flash seventy years pass by, we gasp, then we die.

It's a game for some, for others it's not very much fun. So, pick a game that is fun for you! You might win or lose, but at least it's a game that you love to play.

If you are not interested in a game, you won't do well and it won't be much fun. Playing a game, you want to play is much more fun. In the board game *Snakes and Ladders* for example, sometimes you win and sometimes you lose; it doesn't really matter because the purpose of a game is just to have fun.

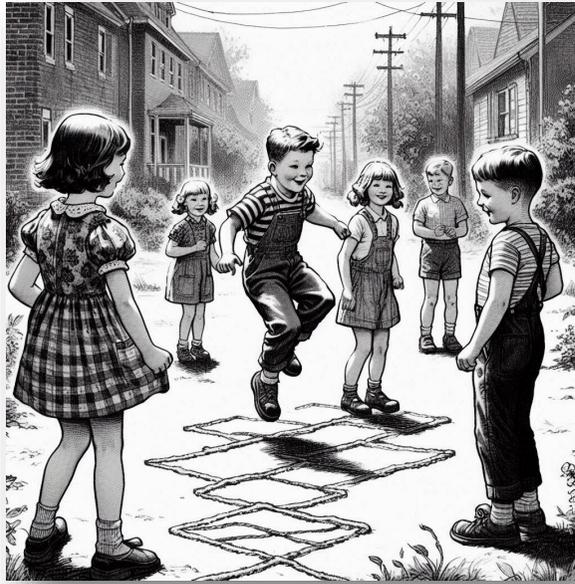
You can develop your skills, like a topnotch batter who can swing and knock the ball right out of the park!

Tiger Woods loved to play the game of golf. From an early age he worked very hard at his game, and quickly attracted millions of fans on the worldwide stage.

Win or lose, you never know but it really helps if you love the game you play.

If you don't play the game you love, it will be such a waste. Your life will most likely be a mess and you will be the only one to blame. Imagine if Tiger never played the game of golf.

~ ~ ~



Generation gaps

If you were alive in the fifties or sixties you may remember the frisbee, yo-yo's, mood rings and Cabbage Patch Dolls, pet rocks, hopscotch, Eskimo pies and the first shopping malls.

What joy we had wearing cowboy hats and playing beach bats. Snug in our new beanies and watching beauties in their first pink, brief bikinis.

My parents disapproved of every one of these fads. Now my kids and grandkids are into all kinds of different new fads which seemed to have started with the iPad.

Frankly, I think I now agree with my dad that all new fads may be bad. I am concerned about what the great-grand kids will soon be getting into. My dad must be turning over in his grave.

My husband tells me fads can't be all that bad because every generation seems to survive. I must be more tolerant of things changing every day because the generation gap is here to stay.

Now, I must text my friend Fay, who lives in Bombay. So, I need to find my iPad right away.

~ ~ ~



Forgetting things

I'm wondering if it is age-related that I tend to forget things more and more.

I knew a chap who it seems could remember hundreds of jokes, and whenever he told them he would get lots of laughs and even some tears. I loved hearing all his jokes over the years, but now when I need to tell a joke I can't seem to recall the punch line.

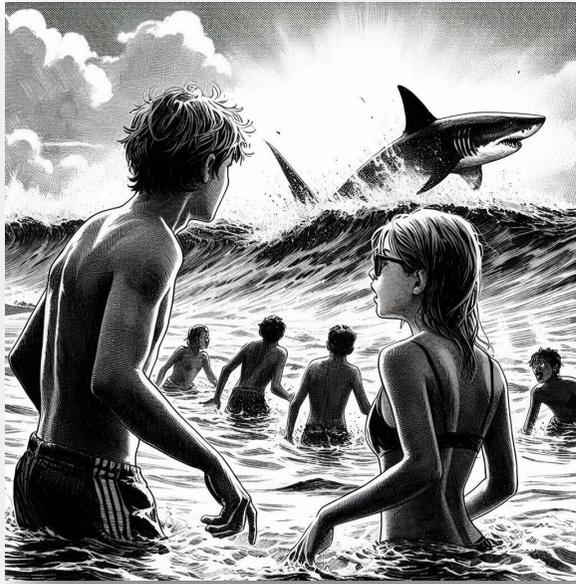
I bet you can't remember who attended your twenty first celebration? But I'm sure you can recall your own high school graduation!

I can still recite a poem I learned when I was just eight, but I cannot recall when I last saw my good friend Kate!

Over the years my husband has been telling me the same jokes again and again. I used to be annoyed. But now as I'm getting

older, I can't remember any of his silly jokes, so I laugh at them every time.

~ ~ ~



Consequences

Before jumping into something new, most of us like to think about it once or twice, even if the idea seems really nice.

Before you take a swim in the ocean, first ask the locals if it's safe. Find out if they're sharks about looking for a munch as you could end up as their lunch!

I told my teenagers to be careful on a date and not go too far, otherwise they could end up as parents in the back seat of some car.

If you drink and then drive you might feel a little high, but as they take you off to prison, you will be waving to your friends; bye-bye.

If you don't have a very smart friend to help you sit and think, you could land up with a crazy shrink or even in the clink!

One thing I have learned over many years, there are always consequences that either bring joy or end up in tears.

So be alert, the world needs more lerts!

~ ~ ~



Prunella

The sun, a golden ball, was already up and the fresh morning air was filled with the scent of Spring flowers.

Like two eager kids we headed for the nearby bike path, grateful to reach the shade and see the high leafy trees swaying in the breeze.

Soon we were greeting the bikers and other walkers, smiling when our eyes fleetingly met. I was looking forward to seeing Prunella again.

A few minutes later we saw three others had already stopped at the gate, so we had to wait. It was worth it.

Prunella, the friendly young pig, looked up and greeted us, then grunted when she noticed our hands were empty.

She looked at us as if to say, "Did you not bring something for me to eat today?" We looked at each other and then at her and we both sheepishly said, "Sorry, we forgot."

The grunts that followed were her list of all the things we could have brought: "apples, cabbage, carrots, and baked potato but please no green tomatoes."

As we walked away, she gave us a look of sweet sorrow, as if to say, "It was lovely to see you today, but please, try not to forget my treats if you can come again tomorrow."

~ ~ ~



My new friend

My best friend Tuffy is not scruffy nor fluffy but is rather focused. He does not talk but rolls around our place at a very good pace.

His programmed job is cleaning with purpose. He goes from one room to another without fussing, never getting tired, nor stopping to chat or go outdoors for a walk.

Tuffy is a hard worker and as silent as a church mouse. I'm so lucky to be spoilt by him cleaning our big house. All I do every Thursday is separate him from his charger, turn him on and get out of his way. Then it's quite okay to catch a quick midday nap, "Hooray!"

When I awake, it's time to put Tuffy away. I look everywhere but he's not in the kitchen, not in the study, not in the bedroom nor

the bathroom. He is nowhere to be found but the floors all look perfectly clean.

I finally found him in the laundry, on the mat, where he's fallen asleep next to my lazy cat.

~ ~ ~



My clean machine

My good friend Bessy, who is my faithful washing machine, never needs a break and keeps working from dawn until dusk to make all our clothes clean.

My grandmother had to wash her clothes in a dirty river, but my life with Bessy is much easier.

My husband's white shirts are usually messy with desserts and staining but Bessy cleans them easily with no complaining. Always ready for action, she takes another large load, then like an unstoppable athlete she moves into wash mode.

Soon after an hour or more, Bessy plays a short tune and calls me back to the laundry room. She's patiently waiting in her finish mode and now it is time I get busy and start my next load.

It's such a blessing to have my Bessy, such a faithful servant. She makes me feel just like a beauty queen, always fresh and very

clean. Bessy makes it so much easier for me, compared to what my grandmother had to do.

~ ~ ~



Lucy

The plane touched down. We drove along the California coastline up into the quiet forest, a wonderland, with giant redwood trees towering up towards heaven. We were immersed in the magical mountain air.

Warmly welcomed by our good friends for the long overdue visit, I was happy to get into our snug, warm bed, put my head down on the pillow and pull up the bedspread. Three deep breaths of the cool mountain air and I was in a deep, sweet slumber with not a single care.

In the morning while drinking some hot coffee, I happened to say, "Let's go for a walk." Not ten seconds later Lucy appeared with a leash in her mouth. A beautiful white, beige and brown Staffy, wise, with knowing eyes, affectionate and well-behaved. After breakfast I put Lucy's leash on her, and out the door we go.

Really very strong she pulled me along, happily showing us the best walking trail. Watching her running ahead of us, she's so very cute. Her wiggles are gorgeous because of her charming, canine gluts.

My husband takes her off the leash to let her run free. Lucy spots a rabbit near a tree and takes off like a racehorse down the trail then disappears through the neighbor's gate while we wait. After a long while, she sheepishly reappears.

The forest around here is something out of a fairy tale, a magical place we were fortunate to explore, creating memories of Lucy, the reigning regal queen of the redwood forest who we will always remember and forever adore.

~ ~ ~



A Smile

There's nothing quite as special as a friendly smile.

The mood in a room can lighten up with just a beautiful smile, causing good things to happen. A baby's first smile is always special, never to be forgotten. A teenage crush often starts with just a fleeting smile.

It's such a magical moment when you look into a stranger's friendly eyes, and they smile back at you. You feel like you've found an old friend.

After a challenging start to a day, a beautiful butterfly, flitting from leaf to leaf captures my attention. I imagine he's smiling at me, inviting me to follow him and fly away.

Lovers, at any age, look deeply into each other's eyes and magically transform into a king and a queen.

The wonderful thing about smiles is we were given an endless supply of them.

Sometimes, I feel I can see God smiling at me when I look into the faces of my friends.

~ ~ ~



A nightmare flight

I've flown to many places around the world. Most of my flights were nice. However, recently on a night flight from Seattle to Tampa, almost six hours long, things could not have gone any more wrong!

My seat would not recline and so I had to remain up straight even though the hour was very late.

The stewardesses took turns checking the passengers throughout the night, so the cabin lights kept going out, then were suddenly switched back on, very bright.

I discovered on this economy flight they do not offer a snack or a meal, so I was certainly not impressed with this so-called "special deal." We were really hoping for a glass of wine or even a beer, but since it was a cheaper flight everything was horribly austere.

The young lady at the window seat on my right kept her blind shut all through the night. From take-off to landing, she stayed fast asleep but held her purse very tight. She never once made a peep or got up to take a leak. I can only assume she had flown this night flight several times before and knew well the difficult challenges that would lie in store. To ensure she got her beauty sleep I bet she took a sleeping pill or maybe even four. She was so fast asleep she didn't say a word, nor did she even snore. She slept with spider-like arms and legs spread over my seat. I had to share my husband's chair with my butt in the air, and my head on his feet.

I don't think there will be a day that I will ever forget this nightmare flight we really did regret.

I recall some words of wisdom that my father used to say, "Saving money on a good deal may not be such a good experience." Well, every one of the horrid irritations on this lousy flight certainly proved him right.

~ ~ ~



God save the queen

Many years ago, I was standing outside Buckingham Palace observing the many royal fans that had held their special spot all night to watch the Changing of the Guard.

A large crowd of locals and visitors from all over the world were moving around competing to get closer to the guard bar. Suddenly, they all turned towards the loud drums somewhere up the street. Like small kids waiting for a treat, eyes wide and mesmerized, everyone was holding a camera ready to record this very special sight!

At last, the platoon of guards appeared with shining rifles, marching in perfect time to the beat of the drums. Left, right, knees high, up and down, up and down, looking ahead without a smile or a frown. Polished boots hitting the ground,

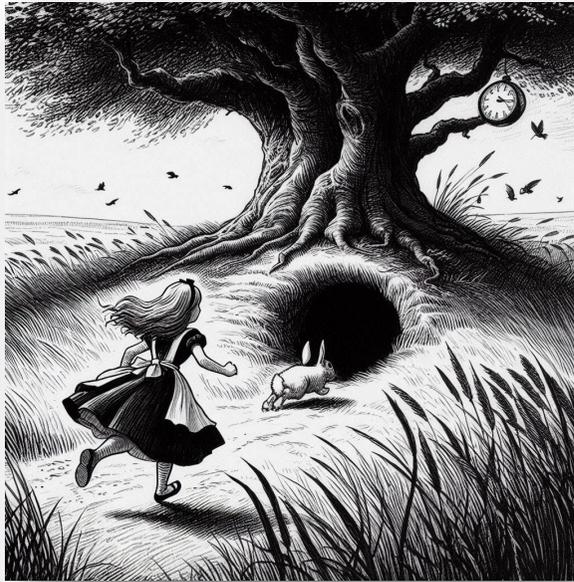
together in time march up and down,
up and down, left, right, left, right.

The crowd kept on cheering, long and loud. What a sight!

The queen appeared and everyone in the crowd accompanied the royal band and together we sang, *God save our gracious Queen*. This was a scene which I will never forget.

It was all very stirring, but it made me wonder:
"What the heck does it all mean?"

~ ~ ~



Why?

I'm curious to know why we are all born so curious.

The newborn baby, crying for warmth or food opens its eyes to follow people as they walk across a room. A child loves to explore and discover things galore.

It was curiosity that caused Alice to follow the rabbit down the rabbit hole.

A young man is most curious how to meet the perfect mate that he can date. First, they start relating, then they start dating, which might someday lead to mating.

The artist looks around, curious about shapes and many shades of glorious colors. He creates a canvas for his sisters and brothers, hoping to share his insights with many others.

I know even animals are curious. A dog, if he is let off his leash will take off for the nearby beach. A cat will wander off to investigate this and that. Do you remember Curious George?

It could have all started long ago with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. They were curious so ate the apple from the tree of forbidden fruit, and then sadly we all went down the chute.

I would like to know why God made us all so curious.

~ ~ ~

Curious George is a fictional monkey from a children's picture book



We can share some ice-cold beers

Mister Postman, I would like to thank you on behalf of us all for your countless deliveries big and small.

Today, I am anticipating you will bring my mail with an invite to a party and a gift voucher from my favorite store, so please Mister Postman don't get sick or accidentally fall.

Our weather report just came on the news and the weatherman gave this warning: "It's very hot and humid today, so everyone take care. Best if you get home early and cool off in your pool."

Mister Postman, I know when you leave home early every morning you are fresh and ready, but by midday, when the sun is hot you are probably very sweaty, and your bag is still awfully heavy. I want to offer you my pool at noon today so you can stay cool.

By the way, I'm also expecting a small check from my granny.
When you bring it, be sure to also bring your rubber ducky too
because you will need it in the pool.

If you bring my grannies check and your rubber ducky be sure to
knock on my door, then we can share some ice-cold beers!

~ ~ ~



A bowl of cherries

Most red cherries are perfectly formed and are deliciously sweet. Like honey, they are such a treat, especially after eating fish or meat.

Bursting juice from smooth, red skin, they pack a punch for a kid's school lunch. Important antioxidants and plenty of vitamin C, this super food sure delights the palates of everyone, including me.

It would be so great to have a cherry tree in my garden because I could eat cherries all day for free.

I've never really understood why George Washington would chop down his father's cherry tree.

~ ~ ~



Coke and fries

My husband and I were at a restaurant recently and a family with three overweight kids were sitting close by. They all had their plates loaded high with junk food and french fries! When the waitress brought them each a large glass of coke, they grabbed one and started to drink. I leaned over and whispered to my husband, "You can't be serious!"

Moms and dads, it's not my business to interfere, but I have a tip for kids' health I just must share.

It's not right to encourage kids to eat french fries that are cooked in trans-fat. Instead make them in an air fryer with only hot air. They taste much better, are healthier too, and your kids will start looking more like Arny, and less like an air balloon. To do otherwise is not right.

In my motherly opinion, it is a form of child abuse. If you feed your kids right, they will be thinner, happier and extremely bright.

~ ~ ~Arny: Arnold Schwarzenegger, a weightlifter who was Mr. Universe five times.



The next generation

This is a plea to the next generation. We cannot abuse Mother Earth's planet any longer. I want to suggest some urgent changes:

It has now become vital that every John and Janet learns how to conserve this planet.

To do this the "3-R's" should be well taught at school so the next generation will not be fooled.

The golden rule for all kids to know is to love one another, despite religion or color, and consider everyone a sister or brother.

Mother Earth certainly can't be pleased watching us chop down all her beautiful trees. The next generation must all be made very aware their survival is threatened.

For hundreds of years the earth has been abused by mining and drilling without renewing enough. Debris, waste and plastics are

polluting our oceans. This will eventually kill all the plants, fish and eventually all of us humans!

Us baby boomers have helped to make this mess so the next generations simply must not rest. If they clean up after us boomers, they will be truly blessed.

John and Janet must learn how to save this planet, or they will just disappear like the dinosaur. If we can teach them this, there is some hope for the human race, however, there is no more time to waste.

We must prove to Mother Earth that we deserve to be here, otherwise I'm afraid our end may be near. If we don't, Mother Earth is going to just kick all of us, including John and Janet, right off her once lovely planet.

~ ~ ~



You can't be serious

God's creatures have a way of displaying idiosyncrasies.

There are some politicians currently on the news that we cannot help laughing at with their questionable ways and views. Between the bunch of them it's hard to decide who's taking a pill, who is over the hill, just hilarious, suspiciously nefarious or maybe even mentally ill.

Take mosquitoes, or fleas who make a meal of my face. They invite me to their power lunch, and I am the munch. I walk away with swollen eyes and big red ears. To hide their bites when I go to the mall, I wear very large sunnies and a floppy, wide brimmed hat. I think I look like Jackie, but my husband says I actually look kinda whacky.

The urban cowboy wears fancy cowboy boots, has a shiny pickup truck and drives around with his stunning, trophy wife. I can't

help smiling because I know they've not been to the country even once in their life!

As I look out my window I can't help laughing. Our silly neighbor Lulu Belle is standing in the pouring rain and watering her garden, again!

I find people funny, especially when they're unaware of being watched. Like when my husband eats toast and drips his honey or when an old lady at the busy check-out tries to carefully count out all of her money.

God's creatures are all rather funny. John McEnroe seemed to have been aware of this. Whenever the tennis umpire made a mistake John yelled loudly, "You can't be serious!"

Maybe, John McEnroe should discuss this with The Creator?

~ ~ ~

John McEnroe; an emotionally volatile tennis champion, would often yell at the umpire.

Nefarious; evil, very wicked

Jackie; Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis



An ode to a squirrel.

This morning, lacking inspiration to write a poem, my husband and I drank our coffee while sitting on the porch. We watched the parade of people walking by, smiling, greeting or nodding at those who caught our eye.

I looked up and saw the cutest little squirrel running along our telephone cable which made us laugh and I was pleased.

I had found my muse and picked up my notebook and pens. The little squirrel got me started.

As the sun broke through the trees, I quickly wrote down this poem and felt complete.

I then had my second cup of coffee, which tasted even better than the first one.

My writing day had begun.

~ ~ ~

Just a note to all you aspiring poets, this is exactly what Mary Oliver says
to do in her handbook on understanding and writing poetry
A Poetry Handbook



A warning to all mosquitoes

Mosquitoes, I've had enough, no bluff, lay off us humans, or you'll be fried, guys! Surprised? Well, you are going to cry, and then want to quickly fly away after you hear my plan for you to all die, oh my!

You'll be underground pushing up the daisies, no ifs, buts, or maybes. I'm sick of the woes from you bloodsucking, vampire mosquitos. I'm over the itching and scratching from your insidious and continuous biting!

So, this is my plan for you: There's a new blowtorch that I have just ordered from Amazon, which will be here today and will turn you all into smoke. So best you guys be gone before you are cremated with a blazing blast of red-hot fire! This is no joke; you're all going to croak! I've had enough of your infernal bites!

You and your mob should hop along fast. I suggest you all get going soon and head for the moon before I play your farewell

tune. You've bitten me once too often, so please, just hear my final warning,

“Better make a quick dash before you all get turned into ash!”

~ ~ ~



I need a vet

My husband was not aware of the unsightly hair on his hands, legs, back and shoulders. Also, the thick, dark hairs, peeking out from inside of his nose. I pointed this out to him, saying bluntly, "You should be more aware of this because everyone stares at these horrible hairs!"

With my sharp and unwavering intent and begging, he finally agreed to endure weekly body shaving. He begrudgingly said, "Okay dear, I hear my whiskers make you feel prickly, so please remove them quickly!"

After shaving, his hair has fallen everywhere: on the tiles, carpets and stairs. I try not to weep, rather stoically sweep and sweep. Then vacuum all carpets and floors, take rugs one by one and shake them outdoors.

Now I realize I don't have a husband; I actually have a furry pet!
So, for his next haircut and shave, guess what? I'm going to take
him to our vet!

~ ~ ~



Not long ago you were thirteen

On reaching the age of thirteen, with its magical power and dreams, teens try to find their way on a path of infinite possibilities. They daydream about being a football hero, mother, businessman, famous architect or artist. This list could go on forever.

Laughing often, teens plan adventures they intend to experience together, like stealing a cigarette and smoking it with their very best friend.

Teenage girls giggle together in the playground before school and scribble notes to one another in class, which they know is against the rule.

Teenage boys and girls think it's fun to paint graffiti on a garage wall alongside the mall.

After school, in quiet corners of a library, teens discuss the meaning of forbidden words they have heard whispered around the town.

Teens dance, cry, laugh and dream. One day soon they will become full members of the human race.

Remember, not long ago, you were thirteen.

~ ~ ~



Walk around the zoo

We make time to walk at least twice daily, early morning and then again late afternoon. It need not be for long, thirty minutes, more or less.

We chose different routes to go on so it's never boring, down to the waterway, along the bike path, to the lake. When rain is threatening or it is terribly hot, we go inside the mall and walk around until we find our favorite coffee shop.

The other walkers and bikers we see daily have become familiar. We meet them on the trail, we smile or nod and sometimes stop for a quick chat and get to pat their dog.

Our decision to step out twice a day is not always convenient or easy to do. One of us is usually busy or has misplaced a shoe.

I heard this fact: Employees working in a large corporation had to park their cars far away from the building and so had to walk

twenty minutes each way. The managers of the company parked on the ground floor. The workers rarely got heart problems, whereas the management experienced these problems quite often. Coincidence? I think not!

My husband and I are feeling fitter, sleeping better because we walk a lot. We also enjoy this precious time together.

~ ~ ~

This is a great rhyme to teach young kids:

**Find a friend, find a shoe,
even better if you can find two.
Then take a walk around the zoo,
you'll be happier and healthier when you do.**



There is no need for any fright

From age five, I found thunder and lightning most frightening. At night when it was stormy outside, I would be under my blanket hiding from the banging and flashing and rattling of my door. I would call mom or dad to save me and wait for the sound of their feet on my floor.

Dad would usually come to answer my call. He would close my curtain, kiss me goodnight, switch off the light and reassure me, "Everything will be alright, there is no need for any fright."

I recall one scary night when lightning struck a tree nearby and then all hell broke out. Our house really shook, I was so afraid I couldn't even look! I tried to be brave, bit my lip hard but felt threatened even under my warm blanket.

I shut my eyes, blocked both ears and screamed when it happened again, but in vain. As the storm continued, I shivered in fear and wanted to run like a cat in the rain.

I slept a few hours and the storm blew away. I got up and there was no thunder or rain. Only a gentle breeze and the first light of dawn was starting to appear.

Dad's reassuring words were so right on that awful night,
"There is no need for any fright."

~ ~ ~



This too shall pass

Disasters happen every day but eventually they all seem to pass away. Recently, I was reflecting on my life, and realized I've had no shortage of strife.

At age six, to help me overcome my asthma, which the doctor said the mountain air would fix, I was sent far away to the countryside.

I naturally felt sad leaving my family behind, but in a short time I made lovely new friends who were all very kind. I remember dad's last words as I was leaving home, "Hang in there darling, this too shall pass."

When I was a teen and my boyfriend shattered my heart as if it was glass, my mother reassured me with my dad's words of wisdom, "Trust me darling, this too shall pass."

On a tennis court, not too long ago, I slipped and fell on a wet patch and broke my wrist. I recall the surgeon's words regarding

the terrible pain, "It will hurt for a few weeks, but this too shall pass."

Long ago my son had a kidney-stone, which caused him great pain. I was amused when the doctor reassured him one afternoon, "This too shall pass."

When we are in a difficult situation, wouldn't it be wonderful if we had a friend around who would carefully listen to our moan, then confidently say, "This too shall pass."

If you don't have a friend nearby, just remember my dad's special advice and say to yourself, "This too shall pass."

~ ~ ~



Thanks to my mom

My mom worked every day, then came home and cooked dinner for us. Always some protein, a fresh green salad and a veggie or two. I would attentively watch her bake, cook or make a dish, despite her saying, "Don't talk to me now while I'm preparing the fish!"

I remember how she stuffed a chicken, which she made with bread, herbs, egg and some spice. Roasting it in the oven till it was brown, crisp and smelt really very nice.

The beautiful scones she made every week were a delight, so tasty and light. A dream with butter, strawberry jam and farm-fresh whipped cream. The whole family loved them and agreed they were supreme. I think of her every day when I start to bake or cook.

When she was at work, I would often make fudge, which everyone loved. Sometimes I'd make a cheese toasty for my two brothers and me.

Not a day goes by without me planning or shopping for some yummy things to make, like pancakes for our coffee break or bran muffins with lots of dates to keep things moving along. I also love to make curry flavored carrot soup with orange peel, butternut soup, oven roasted sweet potatoes, pickled fish with onions and cloves, and there's more.

Thank you, mom, for teaching me how to cook.

~ ~ ~



Lox and bagels for brunch

It's midnight and I'm lying in bed, still half awake, reflecting on the long, heavy downpours we've been getting and wondering if it's still raining. Curious, I move my warm body onto my knees then lift the blind.

A steady downpour of rain is still falling from a very dark sky, evidently not in any hurry to stop. The road outside has disappeared. Instead, it's a rushing river, as loud as a stampede of wild horses galloping by.

Shivering, I crawl back into bed and put my cold feet onto my hubby's warm legs. He groans as I pull our warm blankets up over my head.

In the morning, I wake to the chime of the old grandfather clock. Goodness! What a shock, it's now eleven o'clock!

I wake up my hubby and tell him the time. We look at each other then jump out of bed. We open the blind and we see a big, blue sky and a warm sun shining down on us. We simultaneously say, "We've missed breakfast and it's almost time for lunch, so ... let's go to Eddie's and have lox and bagels for brunch!"

~ ~ ~

About the author



Erica Abbott

I was born in Port Elizabeth and lived in Cape Town, South Africa. From an early age I discovered music, dancing and poetry. I studied these arts at university and became a speech and drama teacher.

I moved to Australia to be with my family there for some years. I met my husband Sandy in Melbourne. Then in 2021 we moved to Florida where I started writing poetry and published my first poetry book *Pancakes and Coffee Breaks* which received great reviews from around the globe.

Lox and Beigels for Brunch has kept me looking outwards for inspiration, humor and hope for our unique planet Earth.

~ ~ ~

Reviews

I just finished reading the poems from your second book, so very enjoyable! You have a wonderful way of painting vivid pictures, snapshots, if you will, by using words. Your style is very unique! Loved all the poems but the one about the dishwasher is my favorite because it happens all the time!!! G.W. Johannesburg, SA

What beautifully written poems! They're so relatable and make for a relaxing reading experience!

The illustrations are so spot on. A good gift or addition to one's bookshelf for art lovers! E.M. Saint Hill, UK

They are wonderful, full of life and adventures that most people have and can relate to. Your poems are captivating little rhymes that tell an entire short story. Very nice. I wish you well with your writing. M.K.C. Clearwater, FL

This collection invokes the beauty and simplicity of every day life, with a sense of wonder and contentment! Beautifully illustrated.

R.T. Cape Town, South Africa

Erica....your words fly through the air like raindrops fall to the earth.... Wonderful...wonderful...wonderful.... Thanks for sharing... S.C. Cape Town, South Africa.

Wow, Erica, they are amazing. Entertaining and a great reminder of the good old days. I enjoyed reading them and the pictures also add to them. D.L. Clearwater FL

I truly enjoyed and appreciate these poems as I could not help going down the memory lane with you. Easy to read and made me look forward to the next page and the following page. Also, Loved the pictures. M.C. Melbourne Australia

The poems are great, especially the Elvis ones. He was my heart throb growing up and my boyfriend at the time looked like and sang like Elvis. Swoooooon!! S.C. Boca Raton, Florida USA

www.hydeparkpublishing.com/erica

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