

Liberty Sinking!



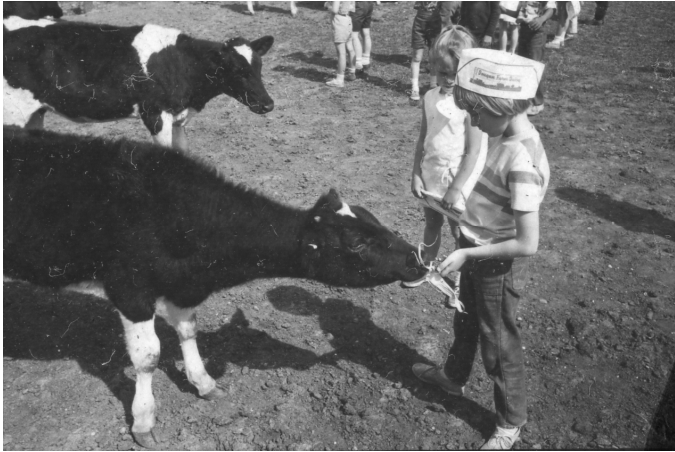
*A collection of poetry by
Jacqueline Dougan Jackson
Illinois Times - 2019*



© 2020

Cover Art Bastardization & Typesetting by
J. Mitch Hopper

This issue is dedicated to all creatures
great and small on this endangered planet.



Thursday, January 3, 2019

archival discovery #14

found my oldest sister's well documented baby book the rest of us had semi-docs or no baby book at all in it jo's mom wrote an anecdote: "Little Joan, 3, had heard us speak of playing cards but had never seen a game. One day she called that she had something to show me. I found her on the arm chair, her hands on one arm, feet on the other, her body arched over the seat. 'Mommy,' she said, 'I am playing bridge!'" This story was not new to me – us kids had heard it all our growing up but I'll send the book to my sister so she can see it written down: me, I go on sorting yellowed papers finding stuff to save or pitch or pass on I should write about when my cousin paul got run over by a motorcycle on an escalator in germany that's more of interest than bridge

Thursday, January 10, 2019

Belleau Wood Ceremony Revisited

I erred in the dating of Belleau Wood: it was July of 1923. In a letter home my father writes, "My scouts and I started early and hiked there in time to see the notables arrive. I only recognized Marshall Foch but among other highups was the Major who commanded the Marines who took the wood in 1918. . . The ceremony was held in a cleared space in the woods with German trenches all around. A flagpole stood in front of the speakers' stand. As soon as Marshall Foch finished his speech recounting the history of the place and formally giving it to the United States the French flag fluttered down as the band played the French National Anthem, and as our flag went up, the Star Spangled Banner." My mother, then, was not in France till autumn. She did recite her poem on Christmas Day 1923, as part of a ceremony held in Chateau Thierry at the mission house where she and Dad met and married--the mission located there because it was but a few miles from that worst battle, the war's turning point, and so many widows and orphans needed aid. I cherish my dad's photos of that momentous July dedication.

Thursday, January 17, 2019

a kind of glory

my folks remodeled an old farmhouse
a mile from the dairy when I was nine
my cousin paul architecture student
was a laborer every noon the workers
came down to eat dinner at our house
then sprawled on lawn floor couch eyes
shut for the rest of their break all but
paul he sat at my mother's grand piano
played bach mozart chopin I lay under
the instrument listening it was heaven
tonight I attended an ettinger open house
bonnie artist beyond measure began to play
I crawled under her piano lay and listened
the dog and me it was heaven revisited

Thursday, January 24, 2019

anniversary poem 2019

my daughter's birthday is come around
again sometimes I think it's probably
better she succumbed to her own demons
(though she claimed they weren't her own)
for if she'd lived how could she endure our
present demonic days? nato nafta threats
brexit threat to her british birthland – climate
catastrophe plus human greed and need
gobbling up life on this puny pleasurable
planet – worst of all thousands of lost kids
unnamed even, but maybe I underestimate
her – I bet her fury would be up she'd be
fighting here beside us all to preserve
each other, our commonality, our world

Thursday, January 31, 2019

Empty Nest poem #1

for 25 years I published a newspaper
The Empty Nest News Letter it went
first to family but its popularity
caused the mailing list to grow to
200 its masthead featured a bird
with empty nest later she preened
the current news there was always
a bird quote commenting on the
contents (“hail to thee blithe spirit
bird thou never wert” – shelley) and
copying NY Times motto “All the News
That’s Fit to Print” Empty Nest’s was
“Something to Offend Everybody”
the first year anniversary editorial
quoted this motto and told readers if
they were not yet offended to notify the
editor and she would see that this was
rectified ENNL once printed a space-
filling snippet that got a lot of response:
“Cousin Paul got run over by a motorcycle
on an escalator in Germany” wow did
the mail pour in demanding details

THE EMPTY NEST NEWSLETTER

VOL VI NO1 OCT 1987
“The yeaer winds daun, the birdes stille...”
--Chaucer



EMPTY NEST CREAKS ALONG

NO FANFARE MARKS 6th YR OF PUBLICATION

Thursday, February 7, 2019

Another SOS to IT Readers!

back in 1981 a musical “The Endless Pavement” was performed on the new SSU auditorium stage (not yet finished) 40 local kids in little cars they’d built The Great Computermobile controlled all the humans the kids sang danced drove their cars defeated The Great Computermobile it was a grand success Jim Grimes at the vocational school had his students film it now that film has surfaced! I have put it on disc ready to give each kid for free if I can find them: so kids (now grown) parents! claim your view of self and show by contacting me care of this paper I already have found Katy P, Lari G, a few others I have all your names in a program I especially want to find the girl who had the lead she slew The Great Computermobile with an apple Kristen Bartollas where are you also Marco Formigoni, Psychyarolla

Thursday, February 14, 2019

n fifth street poem #32

when we moved into this big empty
house in 1970 the kids put up their
homemade but genuine tepee in the
spacious back yard a few of the poles
were promptly stolen so they moved
the tepee inside into the main room
the one with the big bay window and
thirteen foot ceiling nothing else was
in that room but the tepee the kids
slept inside the structure in that bare
room for the next month sometimes
with guests how I long for a room
that empty I'd put the tepee back up
(we still have it) and sleep in it myself

Thursday, February 21, 2019

different sort of tweet #2

my friend took her african grey parrot
to the urbana avian vet for her yearly
checkup – pokes prods peers down her
beak up her bung takes temp takes blood
she doesn't like it at all (would you?) spits
snaps snarles grumbles complains “you
must think this is the end of the world”
the vet is sympathetic then “how does
she behave at home?” “well she's already
upset with this shit storm in the white house”
the vet turns to the parrot, says gravely
“you need to stop watching the news”

Thursday, February 28, 2019

bugastrophy poem #1

our cynical joke has been when
homo sapiens has done itself in
planet and cockroaches will be
all that's left that's now highly
unlikely a recent study shows
one third of our bugs are already
almost extinct the poles haven't
even finished melting the other
2/3 will be gone in a century due
to CO2 warming and flagrant land
misuse so bugs will go before us
we won't be far behind with this
vital gap in the food chain we need
bugs to survive I picture that last
cicada coming up after 17 years
looking all around, saying "uh-oh"
the last cockroach on her back
her six legs curled into her she's
maybe muttering "whata bugger!"

Thursday, March 7, 2019

archival poem #1

1921 letter, to his son, my father, a
freshman at Northwestern University,
from his father, my grandfather:
“Your detailed letter received. I
liked it very much in that it told
exactly what you were doing but
it displeased me greatly that you
were doing as you are. I am not
going to write a lecture, you know
what I think and what I expect you
are at school for. You are not getting
it and I cannot see that it is possible
for you to do so at that school with
your present environments and at
your present age. I would not object
at all to have you drop school at once
and take a new start in a year or two
when you are more mature in your
purposes. There is one thing I must
warn you of. You indicate that you
are getting in with a new flock of
girls. I do not like the tone of your
letter regarding this. . . .”

Thursday, March 14, 2019

springfield poem # 27

I appreciate that springfield
is wanting to keep us walkers
and riders safe from the new
faster trains but the big red
and white barriers blocking some
downtown streets are not only
unsightly but in one case making
it almost impossible to find the
large plaque erected for our
most unsung famous citizen
not lincoln not lindsay they are
always in our face but robert
fitzgerald springfield high school
grad harvard prof whose iliad
odyssey translations are world
known world used but try to
locate his history his home site on
jackson street you have to loop
twisty turny plus have considerable
luck to locate it should we install
blinking lights like steak and shake

Thursday, March 21, 2019

archival letter #34

Uncle Trever to Jackie

“I resented Aunt Ida for always favoring the first born. When your dad and I were going to town school for awhile and we boarded across the street, she’d always have a nice surprise for Ron like a skip rope or a ball and jacks when we came in from school. I’d drop my lower lip and she’d hasten to say that when I got to be Ronald’s age I’d get the goodies too. I knew I’d never catch up to Ronald’s age.”



Thursday, March 28, 2019

music memory poem #7

here's a partial list of music I've stayed
in the car to hear the finish: a partita –
bach – for unaccompanied violin, a hayden
concerto I thought was an unfamiliar
mozart, thais meditation, vaughn williams'
fantasia on a theme by thomas tallis for
double string orchestra (I played the
cello solos in that one) the overture to
midsummernight's dream (donkey brays)
percy grainger's jolly handel in the strand
maybe half-dozen others – back to the
tallis: when the music came to a certain
spot where the time changes abruptly to
double my brain automatically registered
“33 1/3 before S” I phoned my violinist
sister “what does ‘33 1/3 before S’ mean
to you?” “nothing” but I bet had I been able
to call my other violinist sister – she died
recently – she'd have promptly replied,
“that's the ‘tallis’, where teacher always had
us start rehearsing – that tricky timing bit!”

Thursday, April 4, 2019

Governmental Greatness

I will be astounded if
the rage (controlled)
of Adam Schiff
does not in future history ring
with JFK and MLKing.
Yes Adam billions echo, say,
“It’s not OK!” “It’s not OK!”
the Nunes were shown
for what they be
the goons of sick psycopathy.
With those like you
to dam decay
our country cannot
lose its way!

Thursday, April 11, 2019

archival poem #31

Uncle Trever writes Jackie again

“You know that little brook running through our pasture – well, your dad and I were making a sod dam so we’d have a swimming hole when we first laid eyes on our cousin Karl Trever. We were naked as jay birds, he was in neat little pantaloons and pinafore. With no signal at all between us Ron and I clobbered him with mud from head to toe. He immediately stripped, charged us full tilt. I always thought he was glad to be able to shuck his ‘going to visit relations’ fancy duds!”

Thursday, April 18, 2019

music (?) poem #22

one reason I go to the UU group on
sundays is to listen to Bonnie E play
I wanted to learn piano as a kid so
did my sister yet there were too many
notes all at once we did much better
on strings but here's how we gained
keyboard aplomb we'd take a hymnal
sit together on the bench patsy with
two fingers would plunk out the hymn
notes for soprano alto I'd do the same
for tenor and bass our chords were
halting seldom together sounded
simply awful yet it was a fun sport
our gifted pianist mother covered
her ears went somewhere else
later she'd accompany us on our
violin sonatas – sweet sounds – but
a Bonnie E? patsy and I were not!

Thursday, April 25, 2019

facial feature poem #1

now that these last few years I've
become a news junkie I've seen
the faces on TV not just read their
words or heard their NPR voices no
this isn't a political poem it's about
the leader of the judicial committee
Jerry Nadler's left eyebrow – maybe
you've noticed how it has a life of
its own it doesn't move in concert
with its buddy my dad had such an
eyebrow so pronounced so individual
that when he visited a writing class
of mine at UIS one of the students
wrote "An Ode to Ron Dougan's
Left Eyebrow." I cherished that brow
now I am cherishing Jerry Nadler's!

Thursday, May 2, 2019

archival find #16

*My mother wrote this poem to my father
I think in their courting days. It seems
suitable for our spring now springing.*

Inevitable

A stream is singing lullabies,
Its song has reached my ear;
And though I'm far and far away
 How can I but hear?

Violets are blossoming,
Their hue has come to me;
And though I'm far and far away
 How can I but see?

A heart is holding tenderness;
Mine once it set aglow;
And though I'm far and far away
 How can I but know?

Thursday, May 9, 2019

mothersday? poem #1

pidgie has dwelt in the henyard a number of years now; my daughter and son-in-law healed her broken wing let her fly away shooed her skyward – several times – but after each brief foray she was back home again awaiting entrance to familiar feathers she has a strong mother instinct: she makes little nests and lays many eggs the size of medium marbles all alas infertile why don't you find her a papa pigeon I ask but the reply is she thinks she's a chicken besides the hens would kill the chicklets when gillian removes the small eggs pidgie undaunted sits on hens' eggs the fowl pay no heed to this rude intruder they brood the clutch too we have a photo of such layering a hen's nest, the owner on her eggs, but pidgie's head peeps from beneath the hen's bosom; she was there first! – when I call my daughter I always say greet for me this unfulfilled frustrated mother lately gillian found that a pigeon can live thirty-five years pidgie will outlive me and all my sympathies



Thursday, May 16, 2019

wordsy poem #1

I'm fond of words that's no
surprise I like little big old
new made-up made-down smiley
saintly smutty it's evident though
that "individual one" goes heavily
for the latter it does seem to be
catching – our general populace
has permission to use much more
freely this new normalcy of
insultsiture the barr has surely
been lowered I am currently
contemplating the word "sniffy"
(which is the way I heard it)
used with disdain about that
carefully crafted letter from the
special counsel might the a.g.
mean "snitty"? "shitty"? "shifty"?
surely not "spiffy" or "nifty" – his
visage voiced his views (I'm an
admirer of alliteration also) albiet
he dismissed the writer as "staff"
(isn't the signer staff too?) (was the
report to sniff the truth, maybe lies?)
well here's a new usage to ponder
can't categorize as "guttery" though
not "from heaven or near it" which
reminds us of that poet who used a
six syllable word to praise a skylark

Thursday, May 23, 2019

archival find, current times #3

*My grandfather wrote to a U of Wis
Ag prof, 1932, about the Depression.*

“My neighbor is a pessimist, he has no hope for better conditions on this earth. Therefore his spirit takes the joy out of hard struggle. I am Irish enough to feel the bigger the fight, the better the fun!” I wish we were all “Irish” now with the biggest battle of our successful evolution at fast-forward too few fighting too many denying – my kids too scared to discuss the cessation of our species by our own thumbd hands and numbed brains we’re taking almost everything living with us: microbes mosquitos manatees we’ve had thirty some years of warning maybe more – now should be the summit of a united world’s cooperative efforts a prayer I learned eons ago may fit: set us afire, lord, stir us we pray, while the world perishes we go our way, purposeless passionless day after day . . . we have purpose passion aplenty just not drastic awareness of essential focus nor will we with this ranting ruling regime it’s likely too late already if even possible – read eliz kolbert if you can bear to; dare we hope to share my grampa’s fun in the fight?

Thursday, May 30, 2019

tolkien poem #3

years ago in a snowstorm I chased
a car all the way across town because
the license plate said ELROND I finally
trapped the King of the Elves in his
driveway invited him to our Lothlorien
Banquet the following night he politely
declined just yesterday I spotted a plate
MDL EARTH I didn't chase that vehicle
there was no elven banquet to lure its
driver the meaning wasn't certainly sure
and what if gandalf gimli galadriel weren't
within but gollum with an orgy of orcs?

Thursday, June 6, 2019

advancing age poem # 4

I think I still have all my marbles
but sometimes some of them roll
under the table or bed and I find
them somewhat difficult to retrieve

Thursday, June 13, 2019

father's day poem #1

if you have to explain a joke it's no
longer funny when I tell this one I
draw blanks but when I was a kid the
elopement-ladder-to-the-girl's-window
was as common a cartoon site as is the
perennial desert-island-with-palm-tree
my friend says her dad really meant it
though when he told her and her six
sisters he'd buy them each a ladder and
tape a hundred bucks onto each rung if
they used it. . . . what? no laughter yet?

Thursday, June 20, 2019

vermont report june 2019

lately every obscure little roadway
in vermont has had to be named
neat green signs white letters some
are places suttons farm o'neills farm
most are nature appropriate hidden
pastures whippoorwill lane sunset
view mulberry place maple lane fox
run (close to whitetail ridge!) if our
road weren't already named – dull:
upper access – I'd go for a fun tongue
twister like thistle path try saying
that three times! my daughter a
botanist has shown me early june
plants new to me nannyberries
enkianthus thick with white blooms
high cranberry more like a tree and
lovage what a sweet name but it
is in the celery family grows gigantic
has a strong taste and is stringy

Thursday, June 27, 2019

archival find, 1952 letter

My dad responding to an applicant for a job: "I am afraid you are a little young and therefore lacking in experience for the job of assistant herdsman" and ends with "Now for some unsolicited advice. While most employers know that a man's main interest is the wage it is much smarter for the man also to show interest in other elements of the job offered. For instance, if you expect to farm yourself some day your interest should not be as much money at your age as finding a place to work where you will be able to learn. All of us can't go on to school but by wisely choosing the right job in the profession we wish to follow an excellent education can be secured. Sorry I can't be more optimistic as to your qualifications for a job with us." Had I been reading the letter to this high-schooler I'd have added, "Come shovel cow pies or spud burdocks; you'll get a fine education on our farm!"

Thursday, July 4, 2019

family memory poem # 11

my niece jackie jo maybe seven
riding with parents sister headed
toward a northern wisconsin lake
jackie held her red swim suit
out the window it flapped in the
breeze “if you drop that” warned
her dad “we won’t stop to pick it up”
the inevitable occurred she dropped
it despite screams sobs her father
kept on going jackie spent the week
swimming in her underwear but
homeward as they drove through
a village her father said “isn’t this
about where jackie dropped her
suit?” they peered out the window
there it lay scrunched against the
dusty curb urban flotsam her father
braked while daughter snatched the
intact item the back seat was now
a hysteria of incredulous roiling joy

Thursday, July 11, 2019

science exodus poem # 17

goody he's draining the swamp
some more: this time it's those ag
"experts" and other scientists who
say we're going to the bowwows
though these warn there won't be
bowwows either – it's just scare
science, folks, they have to move to
kansas city right now or be fired
that far city won't be bothered
long for whoever of the evil gang
complies will have no equipment
no office no time to find a family
home pretty clever eh they tried
to form a union but got scotched
saves us honest taxpayers moola
get it, moo – ha ha though the hay
they say is getting less nutritious
but what do they know guess they
knew something once when the
dumb brits had them develop,
produce penicillin but that was
a long time ago ww 2 – now is now
and who wants polar bears or
greenland anyway hey (ha ha get
it?) he should be sending them to
greenland but we don't own it yet

*(“greenland” was written here before
it was mentioned in politics)*

Thursday, July 18, 2019

some things you don't forget #7

we lived in the country the end
of a long lane a car sped up a
stranger saw us four kids playing
on the lawn spied the iron rabbit
sitting in the grass grabbed it by
its metal ears said here's a dollar
shoved the rabbit into his trunk
gunned back down the lane the limp
bill left behind we stood stupified
I sometimes wonder where that
cherished valuable piece of statuary
is now I don't really want that man
to sizzle forever beyond the styx
but I do really hope he singes a little
in fact quite a little and weighted
down by a large grey iron rabbit

Thursday, July 25, 2019

archival find - family letter #14

my nephew in college 1980 informs grandparents he's writing a manual for his former h.s. band leader to emphasize to parents that despite budget cuts and the "back-to-basics" drive that music, arts, are not mere frivolity; I quote a portion: "The difficult idea to get across is how important aesthetic experience is for high school kids. An outlet for all those turbulent adolescent emotions – but try explaining that to a bunch of folks who don't already know it? How to begin? How to define aesthetic in concrete terms without sounding like you're talking down, or from some dream world that hardly anyone can relate to? The booklet is supposed to point out how music theory, fine arts, help kids think, analyze, as much as physics or math problems and often offer much more . . . " Tom continues, but you get his gist. He's now teaching fifth grade, I trust his charges are enjoying liberal arts: as the gryphon and mock turtle avow, we all need to study Laughing and Grief; and we know well that Arts abound in these

Thursday, August 1, 2019

catholic heart work camp #4

here's another grateful tribute to the Catholic Heart Work Camp – 90 kids from all over our land poured into town last week were divided into small groups did chores big and small built a handsome fence around Enos Park's apple orchard (its odd location made it a magnet for fly-dumping; I suggest we now plant milkweed amongst the trees for monarchs); they tore down a shed did much much more – at my house both porches were washed and painted; weeds cut; bushes trimmed; choking vines cleared in the school's parking lot – their last eve they had a gala show at Sacred Heart-Griffin auditorium I went with David Knoepfle's folks; he plus a co-leader yearly host this help-freely-given influx (I found from my crew each kid must raise 400 bucks for the unique privilege of working for us for no pay) – anyway how did the kids have any oomph left for a raucous – and often moving – show? we much enjoyed! so thanks to all especially the gang that toiled at my house: Melissa, Pat, Brigid, Kaylee, Rachel, Olivia, Leslie

Thursday, August 8, 2019

the way things are poem #7

these days things have to be accurately
labeled – in wales a welsh standards board
told the black mountain smokery that they
could not market a popular spicy sausage
as “welsh dragon” because it hadn’t any
“dragon” in it the smokery had to amend
the name to “welsh dragon pork sausage”

Thursday, August 15, 2019

encounter drama #1

scene 1: on one side of path, small dog on leash. on other side of path, large turkey mother, a dozen chicks lined up behind
action: dog and turkey eye each other
further action: none

scene 2, next day: small dog on leash, same spot
turkey mom leads chicks past other same spot
action: turkey gives stupendous squawk flies to branch dislodges sleeping owl who's almost to ground before he manages to spread wings
further action: chicks scatter in all directions

scene 3, third day: small dog, leash, same spot
on other side large turkey mom stalks past with dozen docile chicks in tow
action: dog and turkey eye each other
further action: none

Thursday, August 22, 2019

literary tour poem #1

24 students our coachman myself had left
whitby where dracula came ashore bent on
blood from virgin veins we were wending
our way across cumberland when we
realized we were passing near the clinic
of james herriot (all creatures great and
small) though retired we knew he came in
frequently “derek, hit a dog!” cried a
student “then we can take it in and
meet him!” the others objected – only
a few would be so privileged, they
needed a larger ailing animal a quick
conference brought an answer “derek,
run over the tail of a python then
all of us in a row can carry it into
the surgery meet the famous literary
vet! maybe even seigfried, tristan!”
alas there was no python nearby for
us to lay a wheel on so we continued
our trek to the lake district and the
garden of mr mcgregor (stop, thief!)
where peter’s father was baked into
a tasty rabbit pie by mrs mcgregor

Thursday, August 29, 2019

eco-poem #31

we were warned some forty years ago
much of this planet realizes we are
dooming ourselves is taking steps
a date has even been set for when
life-as-we-are-accustomed will cease
we will all be eco-immigrants with no
place to go – here in vermont I've
been keeping a wary scary eye
invasives are clogging our once clear
water the season is late this year but
now we've seen indian pipes kingfishers
a nuthatch heron robin and yesterday
a dozen turtles sunning in the swamp
no bats they have a disease – but the
loon family is making it through no
eagle has grabbed the chicks I won't
live to see or not see armageddon but
my great grands will who knows perhaps
we will all wake up and take preventative
protective measures to save us from ourselves

Thursday, September 5, 2019

rescue poem #3

she returns with the herd: distressed
no longer pregnant where is your calf?
asks ron – how can you lose a baby?
girls, he asks the others, where is it?
for everyone knows when a bovine
birth is in the wild the others circle and
watch (curiosity? protection?) he sends
out pasture search parties his grandkid
age nine hears a faint bleat finds the
infant in tall grass on the far side of a
barb wire fence it must have rolled under
at the moment dropped been inaccessible
grandkid with some difficulty lugs it back
to the barnyard returns it to its grieving
mama who licks it, noses it to a swollen tit

Thursday, September 12, 2019

power of literature? #1

you all know bemelmans' madeline
("twelve little girls in two straight lines")
my granddaughter five read reread
reread the book the morn she got it
in the afternoon she complained of
belly ache it's an appendix how sweet
said the adults how she has internalized
the story at supper she complained of
worse belly ache at 10 pm she still
complained they took her to the doctor
she was rushed to milwaukee by
ambulance had her appendix out

Thursday, September 19, 2019

specialness poem #1

sometimes there comes a perfect day:
a shallow river near our vermont lake
meanders unconcernedly among rocks
earth drops sends the stream plunging
a spectacular waterfall the flow spreads
in a great foaming fan all other sound
blocked the land below is now a cliffed
gorge my grandsons leap and leap from
incredible heights into the deep pool the
stream's become my daughter climbs
down the rocks swims in the pool up to,
then behind the waterfall – a ledge lets her
vanish into the raging white – I marvel
from atop the cliffs finish picnic crumbs:
wait, there's more – we go a few miles on
to mount philo a pimple compared to
the green mountains behind but high enough
to view lake champlain and the adirondacks
beyond the grandsons fry brats mushrooms
set up a telescope on loan from the library
dusk deepens to night a billion stars light the
sky the brightest is jupiter a gold ball we spy
four of its many moons grandsons spread
sleeping bags stay atop the mount we drive
home still adazzle to fall asleep listening to
lapping waves owl hoots loons eerie callings

Thursday, September 26, 2019

extinction poem # 9

did you hear her words last monday?
16 year old greta thunberg of the youth
led climate strike at the UN? “you have
stolen my dreams and my childhood with
your empty words” “I want you to feel
the fear I feel every day – and then I want
you to act” “change is coming whether
you like it or not” “collapsing ecosystems
mass extinctions climate change sufferings”
“our leaders are not mature enough to tell
it like it is” “this is an emergency, our house
is on fire” “you are coming to us young
people for hope” “I don’t want you to be
hopeful, I want you to panic” “you are
failing us and if you choose to fail us
I say we can never forgive you” – well
I heard greta’s words, know my own kids
grandkids are too scared to talk about the
planet’s future what’s in store for us all –
unless – unless –

Thursday, October 3, 2019

Penelope, from Tennyson's "Ulysses"

Ulysses you scumbag go ahead stuff your
rucksack row away with your new buddies
you didn't return any oldies all transformed
to pigs or done in by Scylla & Charybdis –
who raised your son for twenty years? little
Telly was only one when you left now he's grown
you moan about a still hearth – why not bestir
yourself to lob a log on the coals? and "matched
with an aged wife" well you're no Narcissus now
yourself – besides you'd've been home sooner if
you hadn't dallied with Circe then spent seven
Calypso years while here I fooled the suitors who
wooed your wealth and wife by daily weaving my
wedding veil ripped it out by night – as to "meting
laws unto a savage race" it's rough to rule serfs
who seethe at orders from a fem – I don't see you
toiling at taxes tithes tweets: since I now know
computer, cloud, why should you? so go drink
life to the lees smite those sounding furrows Zeus
knows I could do some smiting myself I'll have
a ball, those tiresome suitors slain (your sole
bravado) I'll gaze on untravell'd lands some
farther than Ithican shores – oh, and don't forget
the dog – the shock of your return revived Argos
– can't stop piddling – his heart-worm pills are
on the third shelf in the vomitorium –
purple bottle on the left –

Thursday, October 10, 2019

swimming poem #11

I swam young can't recall any
lessons – for my first child I used
the red cross guide put a tub of
water on the dock little demi age 2,
blew bubbles in the water, docily
followed all directions hold your
breath etc she gradually learned first
on land then out from shore now along
comes daughter #2: I again get tub book
try to get her to follow the rules she will
have none of it no tub on the dock no
blowing bubbles no breath-holding finally
in frustration exasperation I explode
you wanna swim? THEN SWIM! she jumps
in the lake paddles off to join her sister

Thursday, October 17, 2019

family story #16

a sitter was tending my kids while I was teaching one night they had a fire in the fireplace were roasting whole chestnuts gillian maybe twelve bit into a hot one it exploded and shot the searing inside nutmeats against the back of her throat with none of it touching her mouth cavity: cheeks tongue palate etc I arrived home just as she was rolling on the floor in agony took one look at the blackened area far back in her throat rushed her to the emergency room before I could explain she vanished with doctor, nurse – the doctor came past me a couple minutes later saying to another doctor "It's the damndest thing – it looks JUST LIKE A BURN!"

Thursday, October 24, 2019

botony lesson #2

we are walking through a grove of
stately pines near lake tahoe trunks
rising high bark in thick knobbly
ridges with deep crevices between:
the trees all look alike to me “they
aren’t” says my daughter “smell the
bark” I press my nose into a fissure
“I don’t smell anything” “you chose
ponderosa” says gillian “try this
jeffrey pine” I smell a different
tree: the aroma is caramel! “some
think vanilla – the undercover here
is bitterbrush, those small white
berries – they smell like cinnamon”
gillian breathes deeply “whenever
I come in here I feel I’m in a bakery”

Thursday, October 31, 2019

abandonment

I cannot find enough
horrific words
(or guts) to tell the slaughter
of the kurds
of murders that have never had to be
all caused by gross insane insanity

Thursday, November 7, 2019

Innocence Project poem #3

a woman who'd been imprisoned for
17 years for arson and murder: burning
her house with her child trapped inside
was freed when new arson science proved
she couldn't have done it she was pregnant
when jailed the baby was given to the
grandmother – under the circumstances
her son was raised poorly, suffers now
the grandmother lost her wits the exonoree
talked to a university class, then over lunch
hour to others someone during the question
period asked why do you do this – recount
your wrenching story over and over reliving
its horror every time? the woman replied I
don't want those 17 years to have been in vain

Thursday, November 14, 2019

archival find in dougan materials

3 items, Beloit Daily News, 11/10/1911

Otto Bredeson, a Spanish American war veteran who was thought to be dead, has returned to his family in Beloit after an absence of 12 years but plans only a brief visit before resuming his globe-circling adventures.

Two Northwestern freight trains collided head-on in Clinton; an open switch resulted in the crash. Three hoboes were riding in an empty boxcar but were not hurt.

A horse owned by W.J. Dougan broke its tether and started for home on Colley Road while the owner was visiting his sister on Bushnell Street, Beloit. Dougan walked several miles home and found his horse and buggy waiting for him near the stable.

Thursday, November 21, 2019

armistice day poem #1

in grade school november 11 was
armistice day my favorite teacher
was miss herman we learned about
indians in third grade from unbiased
texts but never met an indian – "wash"
she pronounced "warsh" an ignorance
I forgave (in college learned it's a
regionalism) she fielded a student's
jeering our belief in santa by saying with
a slight smile her eyes focused out the
window "I've never met him but I do
know there is a christmas spirit" – even
my sister recalls a class disrupter would
have a paper towel loosely strung across
the mouth ear to ear we neither endured
that disgrace – she explained on armistice
day about the war to end all wars – at exactly
11 o'clock we sat at our desks hands folded
in silence watched the huge clock listened
to it tick as its hands crept forward three
minutes or was it five my thoughts were
how very slow time moves when you gaze
at the clock – today the holiday is renamed
as war after war most undeclared go on
and on while the extinction clock's minute
hand moves closer ever closer to twelve

Thursday, November 28, 2019

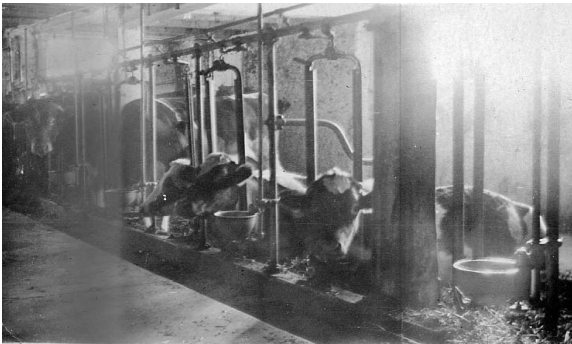
thank you poem

a "no-thanks" poem was my thanksgiving intent – no thanks for the oil-spewing XL pipeline, no thanks for family separation caging of kids hacking of habitat erasure of reefs whales insects sapiens etc etc etc but I've changed my mind and want instead to give heartfelt thanks to the courageous folk especially of our state department military and more for showing us what worth is what living up to commitment means what faith in our institutions instills: no I won't write a long list of names I will let two women typify for all: marie yovanovrtch fiona hill: and add that their testimonies (plus words of others) also strike home that we are a nation of immigrants except those here already – we know even these made their way here long ago across icy land bridges or via treacherous seas to populate this bounteous land and all have given – as my grandfather painted on his silo for us all to live by – “life as well as an honest living”

Thursday, December 5, 2019

archival find poem #32

in 1919 my grandpa installed cow drinking cups in the round barn they were set between every two cows making the cost \$2.50 a cow before they'd drunk only from the barnyard tank and spring brook he wrote an unsolicited (I think) letter to the james cup company with figures for how much more milk his herd was giving by drinking freely he said that in stormy or icy weather they were reluctant to go out and production would fall off he figures he's covered the cost of the cups in sixty days –
“With my herd managed under the one rule ‘keep the cows happy,’ we have very slight fluctuations due to changes in weather or feeding conditions” – us kids growing up often played in the empty barn one sport was to press down the cow-nose shaped metal grid (as the cow would do) fill each cup with water in readiness for its owner's return to her stall cow cups made cows happy grampa happy us kids happy though I don't think we ever buried our noses in a cup and drank after all we had unlimited supplies of chocolate milk



Thursday, December 12, 2019

second best

when my dad died and we dismantled the family homestead I laid claim to my father's second best knife: a small sharp tool that just fit your hand it cut anything scaled fish removed burrs I trimmed my goat's toenails with it my dad repeatedly said to any user "be careful of my second best knife!" we were; we all knew the value of that instrument all the years it's been in my possession I've used it a lot and always been most careful of it I have also come to the conclusion that there never was a "first best knife" – we'd none of us ever asked to see the valued object – and I've mused off and on about first and second best a first best of anything is often too special too precious it's put apart even enshrined maybe forgotten but ah a second-best gets regular use constant appreciation but usually with the caution of care I remember a young violist she sat by us cellos in sinfonia but vanished I met her later she said she'd quit, the world didn't need another second best viola but the world needs many second best violas just as it needs second best knives given a choice I'd prefer being second best of anything than being first

Thursday, December 19, 2019

Autumn Poem

by Damaris Jackson

written on the death of a friend's father.

An afternoon,
 it is an autumn
When the osage and
 the apple part.
The fruit drops,
 settles,
mingles with the earth,
While, rising up,
 a winging bird
instinctively turns south.

One apple, one bird,
one afternoon
and it is autumn
when we stand
amid the branches,
yet not winged
nor free to travel,
listening,
 waiting to hear
 the joining
 of the flock.

Thursday, December 26, 2019

Flocking Poem

This poem, written by a friend in response to one by my daughter Damaris which ends “waiting to hear the joining of the flock,” is dedicated to Demi by the author and printed with her consent.

Flocks, schools, swarms, hives, herds –
the animals move instinctively together;
for them, being is belonging.

We humans move awkwardly,
doubting ourselves, distrusting others,
we forget our animal nature.

Feathered wisdom has three rules:
 Don't crowd your neighbor,
 Stay aligned,
 Cohere.

That's all they need –
this murmuration of starlings –
to make their majestic migrations;
angelic calligraphy in the sky.

We die, yearning to align and cohere,
forgetting that whether we're
just arriving or just leaving this life,
we're always flocking home.

– Rebecca Armstrong, 2019

Also by Jacqueline Jackson:

The Round Barn

A Biography of an American Farm

“There is the land. At the center of the land are the farm buildings.
In the center of the buildings is the round barn.”

Begun with a promise to her grandfather when Jackie was just fifteen, ***The Round Barn*** is a collection of farm stories spanning almost seven decades. Meet “Daddy Dougan,” Ron, Vera, and the kids: Joan, Patsy, Jackie, and Craig; the hired men, neighbors, and the town beyond. With dozens of authentic photos, this book is touching, funny, tragic, and warm.



VOLUME 1
Silo and Barn
Milkhouse
Milk Routes

VOLUME 2
The Big House
Around the Farm

VOLUME 3
Ron’s Place
Corn and Cattle
Breeding

VOLUME 4
The Farm to
the World

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

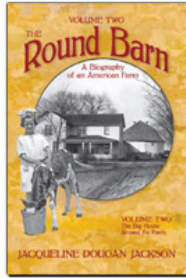
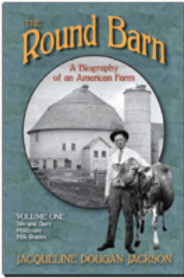
You’ll also find maps, movies, excerpts, and our blog!



beloitcitypress.com

some words about

The Round Barn



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

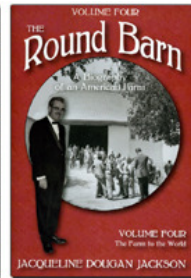
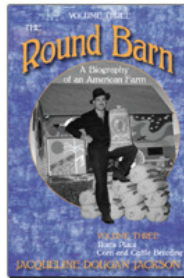
the Dougan cows are enjoying spring pasture!’ I’m wondering about why and how the farm ended: guess that happens in Volume 4. Writing about this book makes me want to go slather a piece of zucchini bread with butter.” - Goodreads, 2014

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

- John Oncken, Wisconsin State Farmer

“Perhaps the fullest, most concrete history of the heyday of the American family dairy farm. It is a Tocqueville of the barn and pasture and big house, the milk route, the cornfield, and the making of an honorable living and a beautiful life. The Round Barn is a unique, unprecedented, and incomparable work, a definitive American work,

a work of incalculable value to our history, our sense of ourselves as Americans, and perhaps our future.” - Reginald Gibbons, Northwestern University: Frances Hooper Professor of Arts and Humanities



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

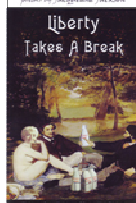
All four volumes are available now!



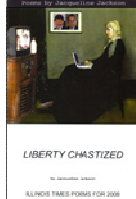
2005
Taking Liberties



2006
Liberty on the Ramparts



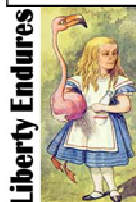
2007
Liberty Takes a Break



2008
Liberty Chastized



2009
Liberty Vanquished



2010
Liberty Endures



2011
Liberty Drums On

Is your collection
of “Liberty...”
complete?

No?

Contact the author.
She can help you
replace your
missing issues.

2012
Liberty Goes Gothic



2013
Liberty Goes Granite



2014
Liberty Après les Heures



2015
Liberty Dissected



2016
Oh, My Gawd Another Liberty



2017
Serving up Liberty



2018
Liberty Meets the New Reality

