

POEMS

OF

OUR

LIVES

By

Women in the
Atkins House Life Skills Group

York County Prison
York, Pennsylvania
July, 2003

Carol Peck, Instructor

PORTRAITS IN POETRY

Love to me was a far-off thing
I never could obtain;
It slipped right through my fingers
Every time I had it made;
Now I am learning the loneliness
I am causing the ones I love--
I no longer feel like
Their beautiful Dove;
Now I realize the pain everyone is in,
For I am a soul living in pain;
My dream is that of everyone to forgive me
For my bad choices
And welcome me back
With their caring voices.

--DINA CARROLL.

I'M ALETHIA!
I'm like the Sky Blue,
Because my heart is true;
I'm like a rosebud,
Ready to grow into new life;
I'm like the air smooth,
Soft with a breeze;
I'm like the mist
Of sweet-smelling perfume
That comes and goes;
I'm like an angry alligator
But melt like butter;
I'm always saying "no,"
But my heart always says "yes;"
I am a child of the Most High
And His name is God the Father
And Lord Jesus Christ--
That's who I am,
Love of Love,

--ALETHIA JOHNSON

PRECIOUS IS SOMEBODY

Precious is very precious to me,
Precious has new meaning to life,
Precious is sparkle in my heart,
Also the love of my life;
Precious is everything I need--
I wouldn't give her up for the world;
Precious is better than money--
Nothing can ever take her place;
Precious is always getting into stuff,
finding her way;
Precious is always going to be precious,
That's why I love her so much,
my Baby Girl.
From Mommy to Precious!
--ALETHIA JOHNSON

TONY

Tony is the bone of my back;
Tony is the other half of me
that helps me stay on my toes;
Tony is the love of my life;
Tony is like the sun that shines
in my heart;
Tony is a peach that is so sweet
it can be bitter at the same time;
Tony is the "for better or for worse"
in my life;
Tony is the one I will always say,
"I do" to;
Tony is my husband,
Anthony Robert J.;
I thank the Lord God for him.
--ALETHIA JOHNSON

SUMMER--BLACK

I am as a bright sunshine,
He is as a **Black** opal fully round;
I am as a beautiful blue sky,
He is as a triangle-shaped turquoise stone;
I am as a white sandy beach,
Black is as white limestone chips . . .
I am as crystal clear ocean water,
Black's as a flawless clear diamond . . .
Diane's a beautiful Florida palm tree,
Black's a California palm tree . . .
I'm a 2-piece bathing suit,
He's a pair of **Black** silky trunks . . .
I am as sandals between the toes,
He is as being between me;
I am as a picnic in the grassy park,
He is as lying in Hawaii on **Black**
sandy beaches . . .
I'm like long coastal drives,
He's like driving through a cool, dark
green forest . . .
I'm not there this summer . . .
You're away this summer . . .
That's what makes this summer truly **Black**.
--DIANE WEBB

AUGUST

This summer thrives on hot, humid days . . .
The days are the longest ever;
I feel if you can make it through August,
 each year, you've gained another year.....
What's left to be said about August?
It's her death month--year after year;
I tried and tried to get this over--
 never does it go away;
I feel this August will be different--
I want to let her free for Heaven
 and for me . . .

Dedicated to my Grandmother

--DIANE WEBB

I'M SOMEBODY

I am the dolphin that cries out,
 always in need of help;
I am the color green,
 hard, yet weak;
I am like thunder--
 you never know when I will go off;
I am the sound of music--
 you never know what to expect;
I am the taste of a sour apple,
 very mischievous, yet manipulative;
I am the feeling of happiness,
 always has a smile;
I am the texture of colors

--JESSICA RECK

YOU ARE SOMEBODY

You are like a mouse,
 slow, but sneaky;
You are like the color red,
 bright, but easy;
You are like the wind,
 you come and go;
You are the feeling of a teddy bear,
 soft and cuddly;
You are the sound of a cat's meow,
 sharp but weak;
You are the smell of happiness
 which is yet to come;
You are the texture of string--
 you can never make up your own mind;
You are the son of a lion
 who has the courage to keep going.

--JESSICA RECK

RIA MIA

Being apart from you
Is even harder than I
Thought it would be.
Sometimes I close my eyes
And hold a picture of you
In my mind and imagine
All the things I'd say
If I had you here.
You know we've both
Been around the block;
We know a thing or two about relationships
And we both have the scars to prove it.
So here's what I am thinking . . .
If I can love you, *just you*, as is
(slight imperfections and all)
And if you can love me, *just me*,
as is (faults and all),
If we can just try to be our best
for each other,
Then maybe this can work.
No Drama, Games, or Pretending,
No Hedging, Contingencies,
or Holding Back,
Just openness and honesty,
Just us, together, giving love
A Brand New Shot . . .
What do you think?
You just can't imagine
How much I miss you sometimes!
I know you're not in Asia or anything.
I feel like you're so far away
from me, though.
I guess what I want you to know
Is that even though we're apart now,
I still feel closer to you than I do
To many people I see every day in C-pod--
That's just a fact.
And I thought it might
Make you feel good to know
How very important you are to me . . .
No matter where they put either of us.
I love you.

--JODI MONG

I AM

I am satin, slithery and smooth
until turned over--you'll see
my coarser side;
I am the smell and taste of lemons
and oranges, refreshing and lively
but at times shockingly strong
until sweetness is added;
I am the feeling of uneasiness,
for I am always self conscious;
I am the thought of compulsion--
I never rest till my heart is fulfilled;
And at times I can be thunder,
never heard until the storm,
But usually the Florida sun shower,
warm and bright, but aware of
sad things as well;
I am soft pink--warm, but barely noticed,
But yet flashy and sneaky,
because I am the fox;
I am the daughter of knowledge
but not common sense,
thoughtful, yet not thinking;
I dream to be the dream of a child,
warm, maternal, with playfulness
in my eyes.

--SARAH FLETT

I AM

I am a mother--at times I'm happy
and at others sad;
I am like the sky, still and calm,
but yet cloudy;
I am the feeling of worry, not knowing
what to do or say or think;
I am the smell of freshly cleaned fruit,
tasty and biteful;
I am the sound of a dove, quiet and peaceful;
I am the daughter of a butterfly,
free and helpful;
My dream is to be happy, careful,
and meaningful;
I'm the texture of water, clear yet useful.

--MICHELLE VILLEGAS

I AM

I am a long-haired cat, soft and will purr
but can hiss and scratch;

I am the color red, alive with passion
but yet very shy;

I am a faraway thunderstorm--
you can hear and see me,
but I bring no harm;

I am the feeling of scared, want to run away,
but I can't--I need to know;

I am church bells ringing,
loud but pleasant;

I am the smell of fresh-cut grass--
some love me, some don't;

I am the texture of silk,
will easily slide through your fingers;

I am the taste of an apple, sweet but tart;

I am the daughter of the moon--
sometimes I let you see all of me,
sometimes only part of me;

My dream is just to let tomorrow come.

--WANDA ALABRIGHT

ROADS OF LIFE

JOURNEY OF LIFE

I'm standing here, remembering . . .

At the beginning, the road looked so long,
it went on forever;
I'm a small child--the road is so beautiful.
I have my parents holding my hands--
I feel safe and secure.

Then I am a teenager, the road still beautiful.
Parents are close by, watching,
letting me explore on my own;
When I fall, they come and pick me up.

Now I'm a young adult, the road still beautiful . . .
I can see a curve up ahead.
My parents stop to rest; they encourage me
to go on.
Now I can't see them, but I can hear them
saying, "We're close by, just keep going."

Now I'm older--my dad has taken the road
to heaven;
My mom seems to be lost without him.
Now I'm alone--it's getting darker--the road
is going uphill;
Sometimes I'm scared, but I can't turn back,
I must keep going.

Look--I see light--I'm almost there--
Don't give up!
Now I'm at the top--the rough parts
are behind me.
I'll still stumble from time to time
But I'll pick myself up and keep going
And pray my mom finds her way,
And we'll all be together again
At the end of the road.

--WANDA ALBRIGHT

DUSTIN

You are the lion, strong with a loud roar
but soft and loving;
You are the color Royal Blue,
bright and bold;
You are a hurricane--your strength keeps
building, you hit with such force;
You are the feeling of despair, not sure
which way to go, but you never give up;
You are the sound of laughter--you warm
the hearts of others;
You are the smell of rain, hard to describe
but pleasant;
You are the texture of silk, slipping through
my fingers, I can't hold on;
You are the taste of lemonade, sweet but tart;
You are the son of a chameleon,
changing all the time right before my eyes;
You are my first-born and I love you!
TO MY SON DUSTIN, LOVE, MOM
--WANDA ALABRIGHT

RENEE

You are the gazelle, graceful but awkward
at times;
You are the color pink, soft but strong;
You are the wind on a warm summer day,
cool and inviting;
You are the feeling of comfort, always there
but with discipline;
You are the sound of a marching band,
start out quiet but end with a bang!
You are the smell of lilacs, sweet but not
overbearing;
You are the texture of a baby blanket, soft,
but you bring security;
You are the taste of champagne, bubbly
and intoxicating;
You are the daughter of a Baby Bear,
cute and cuddly but wild;
You are my dream come true.
TO MY DAUGHTER RENEE,
LOVE, MOM
--WANDA ALBRIGHT

MY ROAD

My road is a lot of temptation,
Don't know if I shall commend it
or leave it.

I know my road is the color of a rainbow,
so bright and precious;

My road has the color of red in it,
because it shows my love, so strong
and bold, yet looking for the one
whom I can share it with;

My road has the color orange in it,
to remind me even though I'm incarcerated
to never get discouraged or let up a frown;

My road has the color of yellow,
because even though I fell, I know
regardless, one day I'm going to be like
a sun and shine;

My road has green in it, not only to show
that I love money but to show that these
bars can't hold me as long as I put down
the trees;

My road has blue in it, to show others that
I'm loyal and most of all true
to others' blues;

My road has purple in it,
because regardless of what may happen,
I'm there to listen with one ear as a friend
and the other as a lover;

My road never comes to an end;
My colors soon tend to change,
But my road one day will be able to blend,
Blend your heart and the others
who know me

And I'll let that other color, temptation,
never come about me.

--JODI MONG

ONE ROAD

There's one road with a lot of
different directions,
Either I'm loving her, hating her,
or showing a lot of affection.
Walking on my road I may stumble and fall,
So if I can't walk any more, I shall crawl,
Crawl over the rocks and stones
Until my heart is pure and aches are
in my bones.
At the end of my road is a light,
But getting there is a fight.
It's hard as h--- keeping you on my path,
But if my love was a tub, you can take a
swim in my bath.
I love you more than you'll ever know,
I'm glad I let you on my road
so we can grow.
--JODI MONG

THE DAY MY LIFE HAD STARTED

It all started when I was 15--
I became pregnant with my first child;
I was just then being a teenager--
I had to change my life for the life I was
about to bring into the world.

I took the wrong road and began
my adult life too early,
But I learned to grow up and deal with
the road I took,
And now I'm happy to be a young,
wonderful mother of two;
Wow--life has so many choices--
what shall I choose?

As I think about the choice I made,
Some thoughts are amazing to the ears
that hear how life has choices,
some far and some near,
So the road I chose, it wasn't fun;
The journey of my life has already begun;
My life is like a diary--secrets lie untold. . .
Will any own the key to unlock
the unknown?
--MICHELLE VILLEGAS

THE ROAD

The road I have taken turns into a Y
And the end of the Y is where
I cry.
It's bumpy like life, with twists and turns,
No smooth short cuts are near,
I must move in low gear.
Once I hit a deep pothole
I begin to bottom out.
I realize life is more like a rocky road,
For we all get a rough ride on those
bumpy roads,
And hitting bottom is where we hear
Our loud cry.
--DINA CARROLL

WONDER WHY

I made wrong choices in life
and you wonder why,
I did bad things that made
my mother cry;
I chose friends to no one's liking,
It was like a cry for help,
and no one was helping.
Sometimes I think about
all my mistakes
And wonder why I'm left alone
with my life at stake;
In my life questions run through my head,
The feeling of doubtfulness lies in my bed;
So here are the thoughts of a lonely cry,
Stuck in jail from the wrong choice . . .
And still I wonder why,
Wonder Why.
--TIFFANY EASTER

LIFE

Life is like a card game--
A hand dealt, but will it be played to win?
Never know until you play your hand,
And maybe, just maybe you'll win.
A hand was dealt, and playing it right
was left up to me;
There were some obstacles and tasks,
but they didn't seem that hard for me.
I played it out, made moves carefully,
"Cause I want my hand to come out
top notch, you see;
All because life's card game isn't as easy
as it seems,
The hand is of thirteen, but beware of
the ups, downs, and in-betweens;
The game of life isn't all peaches and cream,
So try it out, you may win,
Then you shall be pleased;
So play your cards close to home,
Don't let them roam the world
they aren't ready for;
If your move wasn't right,
Flushed off the table, and there goes
your life.

--TIFFANY EASTER

PATHS OF LIFE

I chose the wrong path, 'cause I never knew the right,
All through my life it was a fight;
During my childhood some bad things happened to me;
As the days went by, I never knew what was going to happen.

I made choices, some bad, some good,
Never once did I think twice about the outcome;
There was a voice that danced in my head,
The voice of confusion rested at my bed.

So the worst choice it left for me was incarceration . . .
Wow--when shall they set me free?
So I pray to God He sees a way
To put me on the path of righteousness today.

So the path of life isn't fun nor easy,
It takes focus, please believe me;
So when making choices please think twice,
They are good and bad paths of life.

--JESSICA RECK

THE SAME

I'm a princess running down a street
called the same,
100, 200, 300 block, 600 still calls my name.

The trip on that trail was a two-way ticket
Back to the county jail,
First time was more than a month--
I didn't have adequate bail;
The second stay I have a detainer,
I'm here for drinking ale.

I don't belong in a cage,
Not taking action or turning the page;
I've got to give it up,
The booze, the drugs, the roughnecks,
the thugs.

I need to fly, breathe the air so sweet,
Later for jogging all night and running
the street.

--DANA WILLIAMS

JOURNEY

I started my journey down the good path,
Always doing what was right and expected,
But soon so many obstacles got in my way.
Then, all of the sudden, I was lost,
I was going down a path I did not know,
Scared and lonely all the time;
I didn't know which way to turn--
Everywhere I looked seemed like more
chaos and pain;
There was always so much darkness
and hurt;
My mind would tell me one thing,
But my heart would take me to another.
At times, I'd get down and pray,
"Dear Lord, let me find my way."
I believe He heard my prayers,
For now I am here in this place;
I am finding myself with each new day;
I now know which path to take
to ease my pain.
Thank you, Lord, for leading me this way.

--RACHAEL BLAIR

HIGHWAY

In the beginning, the right highway was set
before me;
Everyone around me was doing right--
We were good, but different;
We were all in different lanes.
My age progressed and I explored my
surroundings, driving slowly;
others drove faster, others slower.
It seemed all the faster cars were more
expensive; there were dozens, all seeming
to be better than the slower.
I wished my car looked like theirs,
but I couldn't afford it.
However, I could try to keep up with them,
So I did--just a car length behind.
Every time we stopped, I added something
new and shiny to my car.
Soon enough, I was traveling alongside
these racers.
Then I realized . . .this road looks different,
more colorful, more fun.
I really enjoyed it and noticed I was now
in the midst of the race cars,
not beside them.
Every gas station I filled up with
higher and higher octane.
I noticed a slow car going by--
I knew them once--
They are not like me any more.
Then all of us racers pulled out
to get on the highway.
Funny--that slow car was getting on
a different highway.
I must have made a wrong turn somewhere,
but when?
I justified that the wrong turn was too far
behind, so I just stayed on.
Where were we, anyway? What road is this?
Who cares? Every time I ask that,
I'm a few cars further behind.
So now I speed up to catch up.
Oh, no! Somebody wrecked!
I'll pull over to help--but there is nothing
I can do, so I keep on.
I am way behind--I'll speed up.

Where is everyone? There's one,
there's another.
Where is . . . Boom!
Something happened to my car!
I can't get out--what if it blows up?
How did this happen?
Am I that careless?
Now I still sit in this garage . . .
My car won't be fixed for a while.

What's that? A hole in the wall?
There's light I want to see more closely.
I see a road outside the hole--it's bright!
Down this road it is so happy!
It feels so good to be on this road;
There are lots of others here,
No car accidents.
The cars are in different lanes--
They are so different!
But one isn't better than the other.
I don't need to fix my car any more;
I'll just leave it behind in the garage.
Someone sees me and stops,
"Do you want a ride? It's free!"
"Yes, please, I've been stuck here for so
' long, I need a change."
As we drive, I realize there are two people
in each car--
This road is so different!
How did I miss this road before?
Finally I'm happy--if only I had seen
this road before!

Then--I realized--I'm still in the garage!
My driver stayed here and just showed me
a movie!
It is a beautiful movie of a beautiful road.
As soon as I'm able I'll leave the garage--
I'll become a famous actress in another
beautiful movie.
And my driver is the most famous director
of all.
I remember wanting to act before . . .
I just forgot that this director
Wanted me the whole time.
--SARAH FLETT

REFLECTED LOVE

I have ventured several roads and paths,
Yet not one have I dared nor regretted
to go back;
Still there's one path I haven't been down
among many,
Its gate wide open, calling my name . . .
Why am I so scared? I am so ashamed
My palms are sweaty, my body tense,
Sweat rolls down my face, my knees
are weak, and I fall,
I fall as if I'm in slow motion, my eyes teary
but wide open;
I see me, standing strong, face pure
and clean, no dark circles, no pain,
hair glistening like the morning dew on a rose;
I'm dressed in a white gown that flows
so elegantly with the wind's breeze;
I twirl in circles like an innocent little girl,
I am at such ease and peace.
I hit the ground, hands and knees dirty, cut,
and bloody;
My clothes are ripped, my hair is matted,
I am sick.
Oh, God! Where did that untouched me go?
Was she even so?
I beat my fist into the ground (pounding,
pound, pound),
It's so quiet, no one around, no sound;
My mouth is dry, I'm quenching for thirst;
I look and find nothing . . .
A sign, waterbed this way----
It's through the gates, but I don't hesitate;
I run and run into the mud;
I fall into an empty creek, an empty
waterbed, all but a bucket's worth of water;
I cup my hands to drink and again, in a
moment's blink, she, I, was there;
She, I, said, "Don't stop to think, quench
your thirst, there's plenty to drink."
Then I felt my mind, body and soul burst,
with love and life, and came to realize
I was lost in my own self demise.
Then I yelled out and cried, "Thank God
I'm alive, I'm alive, I'm alive."

--SARAH DURAN

For Wayne Washington

Did I know you while you still graced this earth?
Yes, I've known you all my life, since the evening of your birth.
You're the fellow who struggled each day as you tried so hard to live.
You're the man who walked the extra mile to see what he could give.
Many obstacles were strewn upon your path,
Many walls that seemed so high. . .
Yet you just kept on going. . . not believing it was yet your time to die.
There was so much more you had to do. . .
So much you never saw. . .
There were lives you tried so hard to touch. . .you wanted so to do it all.
Your time came much too quickly. . . you weren't finished yet. . .
But you got as far my friend as you could really get.
The legacy you left behind, the love you always shared. . .
The person's you reached out to. . .oh, how much you cared.
I'll grieve for just a moment as I gaze upon your tree. . .then I'll smile and thank our God, that
you are finally free.

--Freda Joseph
Atkins House Resident

Music

Music makes magic
It's soothing curves go around my mind.
Even when it's loud I love it.
Music forever shapes me in all directions.
I like different types of music
The voice of one with song can be sweet.
My favorite music sounds of Holy Angels – High up in the Heavens.

--Diane Webb

I believe He died for me

High tides that caress the shore
Like they did last time and the time before.
The rifts in the sands and paths of sea shells
We're all walking in Gods hands.
This ocean collides with this land once again, only given temporarily to man.
I submerge my feet, forgotten city, no concrete.
Now waves crash against my legs, no sad soul left awaiting on the edge.
Under water up over my head, no its not suicide, yes I'm dead.
I hear a man's voice call, "It's o.k., come with me, welcome to life."
Pulled up by my brothers and my new father which is the Lord Christ.
Today I have a new life, I learn like a child to walk by faith and not by sight.
Jesus spoke to me said, "this was right."
I believe in Our Lord, Jesus, Our Christ.
This I pray every day and every night.

--Sarah Duran

I Believe

I Believe in God.
I know he answers prayers.
Yes there is a God
He has answered all my prayers.
God has shown me the right path this trip around.
God has me here for a reason.

--Marie Wagoner

I Believe in Me

I know I can do the right thing.
It's been a rough road for me.
But I seem to get deeper and deeper
But I believe in me.
I know I can pick myself back up.
Yes I can do the right thing for once in my life.
I believe in my children
Jesse and Nicole.
I know they believe their mom can do it.
I love my children.

--Marie Wagoner

HEAVEN ON EARTH

I believe in earth –

I walk on it,
I play with it,
I reap from it,
I revel in its awe.

I believe in wind—

to circulate,
to refresh,
to sway,
to change.

I believe in water –

to cool,
to cleanse,
to heal,
to quench.

I believe in creation –

perfectly molded,
perfectly planned,
perfectly intended,
perfectly loved.

I believe I am:

molded,
planned,
intended,
and Loved,

By the Creator – Whom I love.

--SARAH FLETT

KEN

I know your love because

You are my heart and

I believe we will never part.

We will always be one

for our life together

has just begun.

Like a bird up in the free sky

I'm glad you are openly my guy;

I know you will never hurt me enough to make me cry.

--DINA CARROLL

ALWAYS

I believe in His love, it keeps me going through life most of the time;

I believe in His way, I believe in His word

They both go together always.

I believe in that certain one day

When God will come back and I too

Will go to the Light to believe in

Always

--DINA CARROLL

I BELIEVE - CREDO

I believe in God

Because He's the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

I believe in myself

Because I can conquer rough roads.

I believe in the sky

Why, 'cause the doves fly.

I believe I can achieve and also receive.

I believe in staying clean from drugs

Because if I don't the tigers will grub.

I believe in being last,

Because you get time to figure out which way you want to go, left or right.

I choose right.

I believe in life. Without it you can't fight to stay strong.

I believe in staying out of trouble because it keeps me from jail.

Boy that sure is swell, so please go and tell

The good news that is.

God Bless.

I believe in the sea because it holds big mysteries.

I believe in the sand because it's smooth like a plan.

I believe in love

Why, because it's sent from above.

I believe in staying away from trouble because it keeps you straight.

--ALETHIA JOHNSON

I BELIEVE

I believe in people; some encourage us to change while others try to bring you down.
I believe in places; some so beautiful and full of life, while others are not so amazing.
I believe in art, the ways are meaningful to those who believe.
I believe in dancing, sometimes the rhyme and rhythm sets one free.
I believe in chicken, macaroni and cheese, greens and cornbread; it soothes the soul so amazingly.
I believe in animals, some quiet, some loud, but all unique in their own way.
I believe in flowers; they bloom like the soul unravels its lonely cries of pain. They are so graceful in front of my eyes.
I believe in mountains; some so tall and others so short. It's so powerful the way they stand.
I believe in rivers so clear and pure the love is shiny like gold.
I believe.

--TIFFANY EASTER

I BELIEVE

When I was little I believed in many things.
I believed life was a fairy tale and I would live happily ever after.
I believed in Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny and the tooth fairy
All these things that are not real.

Now I am an adult and my beliefs have changed.
I believe in sadness and pain, because I have felt them in so many ways.
I believe in death, because it has taken the ones so close.
I believe in love, that one day I will find it.
I believe in joy and laughter, I have felt these so many times.

I believe in life, it has so many twists and turns,
Some are sad and full of pain, yet others are full of joy and laughter.

I believe that the meaning life is to find love, experience the feeling to come.

In the end there's always the same,
Death must take place.

--RACHAEL BLAIR

I BELIEVE

I believe in love, for it comes and it goes.
I believe in happiness, for it is meaningful and joyful.
I believe in freedom, for one day I will be home.
I believe in God, for he is always by my side.

--MICHELLE VILLEGAS

UNTITLED

I believe in God times 100 to the infinite power to the max and a half.
I believe a funny joke give a full throated, belly aching laugh.
I believe I am a good person inside of myself, watch the movie I direct, pick my book up off the shelf.
I believe in the prayer I pray before I go to sleep.
I believe in the feelings I feel when tears my eyes weep.
I believe in the pain that makes me bleed.
I believe in not giving up and fighting for my need., planting a new seed, doing some good deed, writing a new story, reading a new read.

--DANA WILLIAMS

ARRESTED

Another day without an addiction at lost,
learning now how to deal with the past.
Ready to surrender all of my will
over to God, ready to pay my bill.
Ready to give up the alcohol and drugs for life,
so that I can be a better me, a mother and wife.
Easy does it, one day at a time,
Living life on life's terms isn't a crime.
Serenity to accept the things that can't be changed,
courage to live with my life now rearranged.
Talking to others whenever I feel the need,
to use, will now be a part of my creed.
Every one of us in some way tested,
and for right now my addiction is arrested.
Down my new life I'll carefully trod,
While leaning on my Higher Power, God.

--KERRI M. SCHMIDT

Instructor Carol F. Peck taught creative writing for over 30 years at the University of Maryland and was a music teacher and Writer-in-Residence at Sidwell Friends School (D.C.) for 17 years. One of Maryland's original Artists-in-Education, she has conducted poetry workshops in schools since 1971. She also works with at-risk teens, teachers, prison inmates, hospice patients, and bereavement groups. She has published FROM DEEP WITHIN: POETRY WORKSHOPS IN NURSING HOMES, I AIN'T GONNA WRITE NO POME!, and several children's musicals and songs. Ms. Peck's articles and poems have appeared in *Christian Science Monitor*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *Teachers and Writers*, *Maryland English Journal*, *New Virginia Review*, and other journals.