

**An Illustrated  
Book  
of Poetry**

**Vol II**



**Vicki Claireaux Simon**



# An Illustrated Book of Poetry

## Volume II



by

**Vicki Claireaux Simon**

To Sylvia (a "belated"  
Christmas card)  
With Love

Vicki  
✓

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photoart DC Dore

A special thanks to my darling  
daughter Deirdre, who with much  
loving care, and her own special  
brand of artistic talent has  
emblazoned my simple poems,  
turning them into an elaborate  
work of art.

Yours the "Toto"

Love You Much

Mum.

## “Publisher’s” Notes

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While reading over the poems my mother Vicki has written since her first chapbook of poetry, I was struck by how clearly they convey her spirit; what she loves (jelly babies, her family, steak and kidney pie, her doctor), what she laughs at (getting whacked with a kipper, herself, her dentist), what she battles and what she remembers. All infused with her own fiery warmth.

She is tactile and funny and loving, and her poetic musings show that. I know there have been some tough times; in some of the poems in this book she talks of the losses. Her brother’s was particularly hard and for awhile I believe she was unable to put her emotions into words. But finally she did. She says she cannot write on demand, but rather when she’s inspired to. Well this year she has a brand new source of inspiration; lovely Charles Auguste, her fifth grandchild.

Many of these poems have already been published in the Hadleigh Community News and other periodicals. I have put them together here in mostly chronological order.

I decided to add some illustrations, family photos but also I wanted to illustrate this book with mom’s other passion, knitting and crochet.

As I laid out the collection of sweaters, scarves, rugs, blankets, throws, hats that she has knitted for me over the years, in every colour worsted comes in, I realized that beyond function these pieces were vivid works of art on their own.

The photos don't begin to do the originals justice, each of them stitch perfect. So many times I sat there, aghast on her bed, while she ripped out the whole back of a sweater she was working on because she found one tiny mistake in the second row; perhaps uttering one small "dammit" then a sigh and starting again, *click click*. I dreaded when she would peer over at what I was knitting and say "darling...you've got a slipped stitch back there."

She is equally fastidious about her word creations. So now I hand Mom the red pen, to find the slipped stitches in this book.

It's been nearly 4 years since I put together my mother's first chapbook of poetry, what a joy to bring out her second volume.

Deirdre Claireaux Dore  
August 8, 2004



## **A House That's "Lived In"**

The rags you used to wash your car  
lie strewn around the garage floor  
3 pair of socks, an odd one too  
accompany this new eye-sore.  
WE HAVE A HOUSE THAT'S LIVED IN  
A slew of empty plastic bags  
find refuge in the upstairs den,  
along with scraps of paper which  
are "gently used" by Fax and pen.  
WE HAVE A HOUSE THAT'S LIVED IN  
Newspapers gather on the chairs  
or any surface near at hand,  
some paper clips join forces with  
a bowl of fruit and rubber band'  
WE HAVE A HOUSE THAT'S LIVED IN  
A book that's taken from the shelf  
that no one ever wants to read,  
a dirty glass, all by itself  
all waiting for these hands to heed.  
WE HAVE A HOUSE THAT'S LIVED IN  
I could go on and on to nag  
and summon up a few odd tears  
but futile all my efforts are  
My man is blessed with two "deaf ears."

We have a house that's LIVED IN.

*September 2004*  
*(just in time for press)*



## **My Brother**

---

All through my childhood, there he was  
To help me through those fragile years  
To teach and guide and comfort me  
And wipe away my fretful tears

He was the one I ran to, when I'd had a nasty  
fall  
And if somebody picked on me, he'd drive  
them up the wall

Behind him on his bicycle, I rode with him for  
hours  
To reach the special spot we knew, to gather  
wild flowers  
I never could quite fathom, how to make a  
figure eight  
He'd put two O's together, to help me get it  
straight

Down Tinker's Lane we used to play, and  
paddle in the brook  
He'd piggyback me to the spot, where  
shallows overtook  
In catching tadpoles in a jar, no one could be  
so quick  
Or cut a branch from off a tree, to make a  
walking stick

He taught me how to ride a bike, and how to  
do my sums

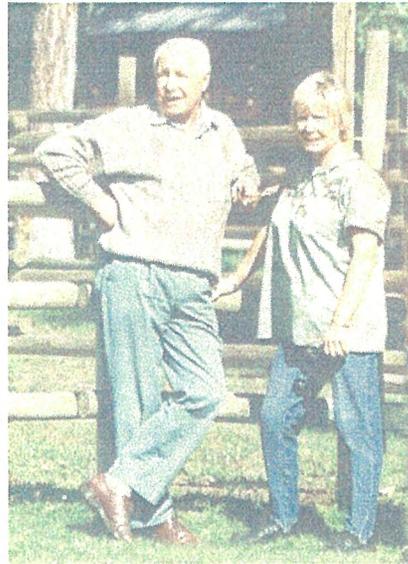
To tie my shoes, and make a bow, I seemed to  
be all thumbs  
His pockets always held a stock of raw peanuts  
or sweets  
And what a joy to always know, he'd share  
with us these treats

And in my adolescent years, when doubts and  
fears prevailed  
He'd be the one to council me, where all the  
"gurus" failed  
A thousand things he taught me, I owe it all to  
him  
But one thing he could never do, was teach me  
how to swim

In later years, when war broke out, he joined  
the RAF  
And when I said goodbye to him, the heart  
within me left  
Each night I prayed that he'd return, in one  
piece if he could  
Then one fine day, some long years hence on  
our doorstep he stood  
All of my dreams and all my prayers were then  
personified  
To see him smiling back at me with arms  
outstretched - I cried  
He told me that throughout the War, my  
picture helped him through  
The unbelievable events that only soldiers  
knew

Now he is gone and only I have all these  
memories to hold  
But always I will treasure my big brother's  
heart of gold

*June 2000*



## My Mum

A clout upside the head is what I got if I warn't good  
Yet she always would always pamper me and  
give me all she could  
Six kids she had, but none of them as  
troublesome as me  
Yet always I felt special when in her company.

When Grandad's hairbrush would come down,  
a-crashing on my head  
I knew how much she loved me by the words  
she left unsaid.  
She said them with her steak and kidney  
pudding for a start,  
Her roast beef with the Yorkshire, fish and  
chips and custard tart  
Her dinners were to die for and how often I  
wish I  
could duplicate her prowess in the making of a  
pie.

Each morning when my Dad arose, to face the  
daily grind,  
I'd clamber into heaven where I knew I'd  
always find  
my Mother's arms in feather bed, so warm, so  
soft and cuddly  
Transporting me to paradise since my shared  
bed was puddly.

That feeling of such utter bliss, remains within  
me still  
That absolute security that only children feel.

But when I was unruly it was clearly  
understood  
That anything she had at hand, she'd whack  
me with – but good.  
A loaf of bread, a kipper, wooden spoon or  
frying pan  
It didn't matter what she held I felt it – lest I  
ran.

Her secret weapon was that half inch wedding  
band she wore  
and when you felt the heft of it you didn't  
wait for more.  
My father always rued the day he ever bought  
her that  
For he would bear the brunt of it each time  
they had a spat.

Her cure-all for each malady, we children  
would acquire  
Was a good old-fashioned enema to help put  
out the fire  
How we would scatter when we saw her filling  
up that can  
But she would always catch us, that's when the  
“fun” began  
Especially when it happened to some other one  
of us

It's strange though how it seemed to work  
despite the fray and fuss

But really I was such a pest I'd drive her up the  
wall

So any whacks that came my way I quite  
deserved them all

But I adored my Mother and I wish I could  
atone

For being such a rotten kid which mostly I've  
outgrown.



## Floridian Quandary

I've been working on the recount  
All the live long day  
Toiling hard to meet the deadline  
Just a few hairs breath away  
My tormented eyes are failing  
"Hey there, you're standing in my light"  
My poor aching back is wailing  
No relief in sight  
Two more votes for Gore  
One in the Bush for George  
Who will get the dimpled so n so?  
Four more chads for Al  
Two more chads for George  
Danglers up for grabs, "Oh No",  
So, let's make up our minds both parties  
Why not give them each the treat  
Of pooling their resources together  
On the heated Presidential seat.

*(to the tune of I've Been Working on the Railroad)*

*November 26, 2000*



## My Sister Yvonne

There was a time long years ago  
When I approached my mother  
To get for me a birthday gift  
Distinct from any other  
A baby sister was my plea  
A blonde and blue eyed treasure  
A real live doll to call my own  
To fill my life with pleasure

“Well I don’t know,” my mother said  
“We have four kids already.”  
But stubborn and insistent, I  
Pled long and loud and steady.

Then came the day when you appeared  
Our fair and green eyed vision  
Surpassing all my day dreams of  
A wondrous new addition.  
How proudly would I show you off  
As through the town I strolled  
With brand new pram and your sweet self  
Pink cheeks and hair of gold.

Not many years were shared by us  
It broke my heart to leave you  
In marrying my GI John  
My future lay far from you

And so to this New York I came  
Far from the shores of England

Deciding then if fate allowed  
You'd join us in this new land

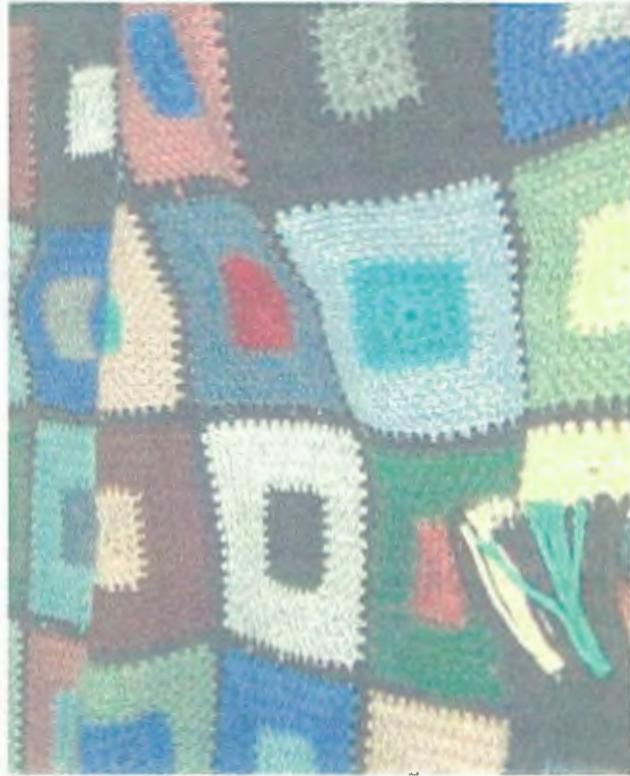
Well many years have come and gone  
You married your own GI  
And moved to Massachusetts where  
You're 'relatively close by'.

Close enough to "chat it up"  
And share each others "knit wits"  
To laugh and recount stories that  
Include some "juicy tidbits".

These Autumn years that take their toll  
In health and strength and vista  
Are so much more acceptable  
Because you are my Sister.

*And I love you*

*March 2001*



## Journey Into Then

Going back to England  
To Hadleigh my home town  
Was like a trip to Wonderland  
And finding half a crown

There was the school I hurried to,  
    invariably late  
Was sent to Mr. Nicholson  
Who by the way was great  
Never did he punish me  
Nor yet a scene create

There was the cricket meadow  
Where once I used to play  
Along with Kady, Kate and Maude  
My friends of yesterday

To stroll along the High Street  
Where once my penny bought  
A pound of jelly babies  
For which my brothers fought

Visiting my family  
Exchanging smiles and tears  
Reliving ancient memories  
The wartime ration years

A trip to Shotley with my brother Clive  
    His crew and Pat  
Then on to Brighton, there to visit  
    Marky at his flat

With Gill we went to Felixstowe  
With Vicki and Paul's bunch  
While Sandy and our Ellen would  
Concoct an awesome lunch

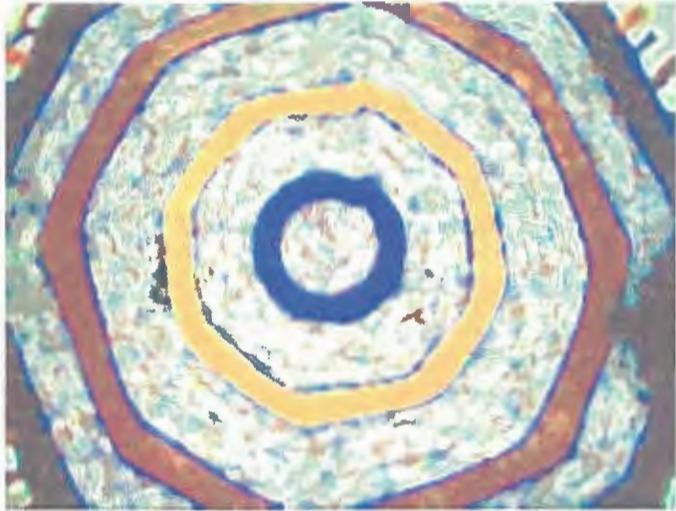
Then up to Cemetery Hill  
To visit loved ones there  
To take a moment then to grieve -  
A pretty sad affair

But shopping round the Market Place  
With Dorothy in tow  
Was nothing short of fabulous  
Such scrumptious wares on show

Then once again to savor  
Our English fish and chips  
A steak and kidney pudding  
Ambrosia to the lips

If there's a heaven up above  
And who is there to know?  
Then surely here on earth we have  
East Anglia below.

*July 2002*



## Just Hanging Out

I've got nothing to do today  
And I've got all day to do it in.  
Should I just sit and watch TV  
Enjoying cups of Earl Grey tea  
Or send some e mails possibly  
Or call my daughter in B.C.?

My mending has been piling up  
And needs to be attended to  
But first I'll have another cup  
Of tea, while I think what to do.

I could do laundry I suppose  
Though everybody's got clean clothes  
So no, I shall do none of that  
But maybe I should feed the cat

A solemn promise I could make  
And execute without delay  
Is not to make my lemon cake  
I'm on a diet anyway

The weather's good, my knee is bad  
So raking leaves will only add  
Just one more project not to do  
Not even if I wanted to.

So many other chores await  
For me to sit and contemplate  
A better thought runs through my head  
I think I'll crawl back into bed.

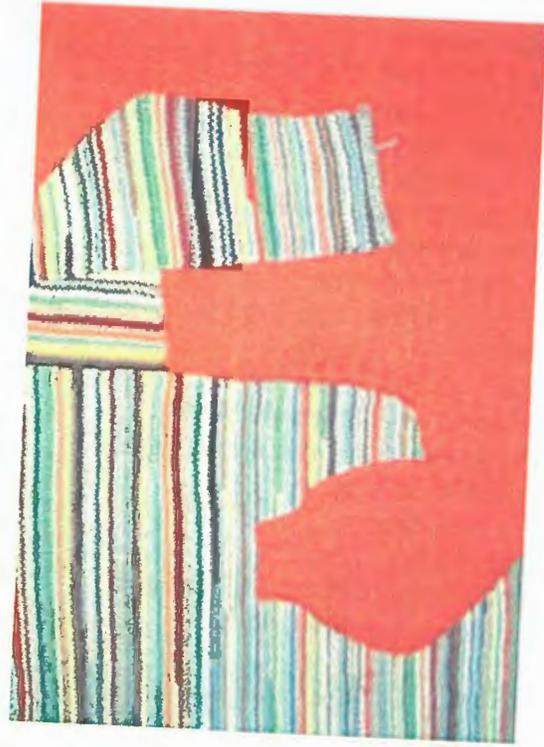
*April 2001*



## Day of Infamy

We watch in horror, disbelief  
The scene before our eyes  
Our mighty New York City  
attacked from out the skies  
We watch the agony on faces  
Fleeing that fiery hell  
Such magnitude of evil  
No one ever could foretell  
We watch with tear filled eyes  
Our heroes, firemen and police  
Endangering their own lives  
More victims to release  
Our hearts go out to families  
Whose loved ones they have lost  
The whole world shares along with you  
The suffering it's cost  
Our city has been crippled  
Temporarily by 'slime'  
But justice soon will be dished out  
For this vile inhuman crime.

*Sept 13 2001*



## Anglo American Tears

I cry for our country  
Our beautiful country  
That bandits attempt to destroy  
I cry for our brave troops  
Who gallantly fight  
For the freedom that we now enjoy

I cry to see dissent  
Amongst our own people  
Who add to the turmoil at hand  
I cry now because no matter the cause  
How can we disrupt  
Our own land?

*March 20, 2003*



## **Blackout 2003**

---

Suddenly Judge Judy's face  
No longer fills my screen  
The lights go out, the A/C's off  
And heat controls the scene  
My next door neighbour calls  
and asks "Vicki, do you have power?"  
I answer "Yes, I do have that,  
But not for this black hour."

My son Claude calls from Georgia  
My daughter from B.C.  
Telling me that outage spreads  
From sea to shining sea

My husband's in the city  
On the 7<sup>th</sup> story floor  
Watching thru the window  
A thousand folk or more  
Filling up the sidewalks  
Spilling out of every door  
Wondering how to find the way  
To get back home once more

Meanwhile I light my candles  
Tie ice bags round my neck  
With flashlight at the ready  
Read my book, and what the heck  
"This too will pass," I tell myself  
We've been thru this before  
We are survivors come what may  
Prepared for storm or war

And only blackout could prevent  
Judge Judy from her "Say"  
So hopefully she'll fill us in  
On her case of yesterday.

*August 14, 2003*

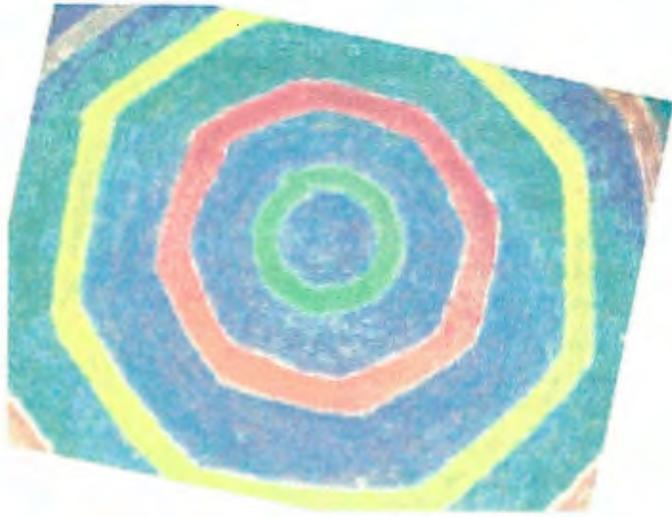


## **Louie's Funeral**

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Should I wear a skirt for Louie  
on this his funeral day?  
Or shall I wear my new black pants?  
He not will notice anyway.  
We came with mixed emotions  
To lower him to his grave  
ending many years of suffering  
his tormented soul to save  
At last his brother John can now  
Forgo his constant care  
and once again be free to tend  
his own obscure welfare  
So now Lou's with his Paula  
side by side eternally  
At peace at last along with  
Momma, Pop, and our Abie.

*September 8, 2003*



## **Our Ed**

---

Today we celebrate the birthday of our friend  
How old is he? Nobody knows.  
But from us all we send  
Best wishes, love, a kiss or two  
To help that ankle mend,  
Here is a fellow, full of charm,  
integrity and style,  
Who entertains us with his gift  
of wit, with winning smile  
Nobody can replace our Ed  
In the telling of a joke  
Of course we've heard them all before  
But each time they evoke,  
A burst of laughter all around  
This very special bloke

*October 2003*



### Epitaph to Doff (Upson)

Goodbye dear friend, my schoolgirl chum.  
    of many moons ago.  
I spoke with you, just New Year's day  
    you sounded rather low  
Missing your loved one Georgie,  
    who also was my friend  
Now you are with each other  
    United at the end.  
I still can see you dancing  
    on the Corn Exchange platform  
Pretending you were on the stage  
    How well you could perform.  
We each took turns there, after you,  
    Our 'talents' to display  
How clearly do I now recall  
    Our antics of each day.  
I promised I would call you  
    in a little while and so  
With tear-stained verse  
    I call you now  
Your friend from  
    down  
        below.

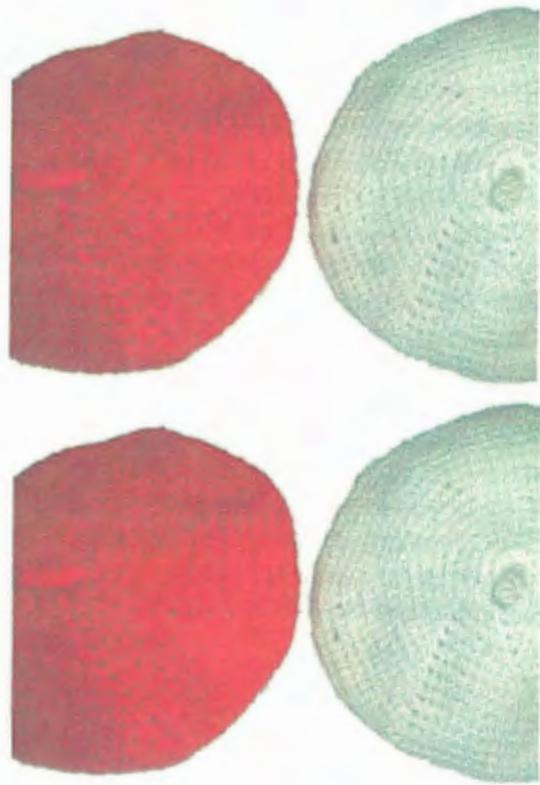
*January 2004*



## Wondering

Where was God when Satan sent  
His henchmen to attack?  
To slaughter, maim and decimate  
To stab us in the back.  
Where was God when terror struck  
and walls came tumbling down?  
Was he asleep or on a break?  
Or merely out of town.  
Where was God when a little girl  
Was killed in Sarasota?  
Had he run out of all good deeds  
And just used up his quota?  
Can anyone supply me with  
The answers to these thoughts?  
I'll try to respond tactfully  
With logical retorts.

*February 2004*



## In Praise of Doctor Feld

Why were you so insistent  
That I follow your advice?  
To come in for a treadmill test  
A torturous device.

I knew I had no problem  
As the hospital proclaimed  
No heart defects, no murmurs  
No maladies unnamed.

Just a rather nasty heartburn  
To slow me down a bit.  
A whole night in the hospital  
To help get rid of it.

But you my guardian angel  
Were hovering nearby  
Determined that a final test  
Was critical to try.

I tried my best to cancel  
The appointment of the day  
But you stood firm  
Would not let go.  
Must come without delay

And there you found the problem  
Blocked arteries the cause.  
Was hauled off to St. Francis  
Without a moment's pause.  
So you, my gifted Dr Feld  
I'm inspired now to say  
because of your instinctive art  
I sing your praise today.

*February 2004*



You seemed to be a trifle miffed  
at my praise of Doctor Feld,  
and so I bring to you these thoughts  
that were hitherto with held.

### ODE TO DOCTOR FRIEDMAN

A visit to the dentist  
Is not the highlight of my day  
To see those instruments of torture  
Laid out there on display.

In the hands of Doctor Richard  
Who knows what kind of pain  
Will be inflicted there and then?  
And you're powerless to complain.

With two hands delving down your throat  
Holding a tray of "goop"  
You try your best, not to throw up  
Your lunch of chicken soup.

And the needle, 'ah the needle'  
Will have you writhing in its wake  
In preparation for the 'hammer'  
Which tries your jaw to break.

And all the while you're listening  
To a string of racy jokes  
To which you simply can't respond  
As with water pick, he soaks.

When he says "Open", "Close" again,  
My teeth close on his thumb  
And as he yelps, my first thought is  
"Let me quietly succumb".

But all of this is tongue-in-cheek  
For we love our Doctor Rich  
And wouldn't trade him, not a chance  
    That rambunctious  
    Son of a Bitch

*April 2004*

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### **Falling Leaves**

Appalling leaves drift by my window,  
I wish they'd drift some other place  
They fill my back yard  
cover my front lawn  
clog up my gutters, attack my face.  
Tho' I rake and bag, fighting the breeze,  
I turn around and find  
they've reached my knees,  
and it doesn't help to see my neighbours  
blow falling leaves, through my trees.



### The Game of Bridge

Come play with us and join the fun  
of matching wits with friendly folk,  
We laugh, or yell at anyone  
Who sends our contract up in smoke.  
But oh, the feeling of elation  
When you can triumph over all.  
Ridding you of past frustration,  
When last week's game took such a fall.  
Refreshments are another plus  
Provided by our friendly Fran,  
But better still enticing us,  
Are cakes home-made by Mill and Anne.  
Director is a low-key fellow  
Whose name is Mayer, discreet and mellow,  
So hasten to explore our charms  
We welcome you with open arms.

## Wall of Silence

---

How do I face another day  
Without a word from you?  
Without the sound of your dear voice  
Its message coming through  
To let me know that all is well and not to worry  
too.  
A careless word escapes the lips  
And causes you to build, this dreadful  
wall of silence  
The air between us chilled.  
If just one word is capable  
Of causing rift and pain  
Then I must find the proper words  
To bring you back again.  
What are those words? What must I say?  
How do I set things right?  
The family pride lurks deep and dark  
When will we see the light?  
Our love is surely stronger than  
A few words said in haste.  
Let's not allow this silent wall  
This precious time to waste.

*2001*

## Just a Pit Stop

It's always good to see your face  
Just for a moment, then  
I find I'm talking to your back  
And then you're gone again.  
I feel I'm nothing but a pit stop  
A handy place to fill your tank  
To lubricate your engine  
And to activate your shank.  
When those spark plugs need a-grinding  
And your carburetors slow  
When your starter buttons sluggish  
And there is nowhere else to go  
Then here you come a-chugging  
Looking for an overhaul  
Knowing I will always be here  
Best mechanic of them all.

*June 2001*



## Death

---

Staring at me in the face,  
awaiting opportunity  
to scoop me up, and whisk me off,  
to unknown realms of mystery.  
Wait, wait, I am not ready yet,  
I still have lots of things to do,  
come back when I am fast asleep,  
and really not expecting you.  
Creep slowly through my bedroom door,  
in black of night, without a trace  
of warning, for I cannot bear  
to look upon your dreadful face.  
Stop breathing down my neck I say,  
don't beckon me to follow you;  
when I am ready, you will know  
and I'll walk hand in hand with you.

*June 13, 2001*



## Our Leap Year Baby

At last, at last, at long long last  
Our little Charles arrives  
so anxiously awaited  
bringing joy to each our lives

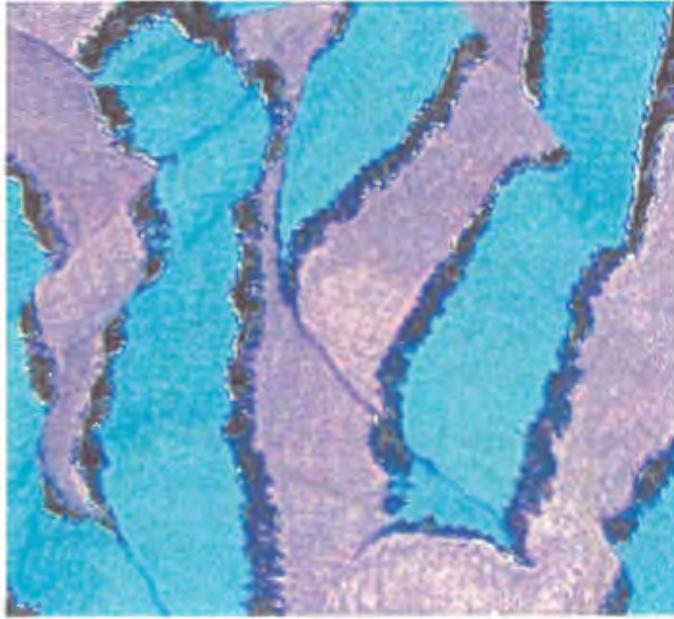
How splendidly you made the scene  
All pink and fair of face,  
Reflecting all the beauty  
of your Mum and Daddy's grace

For donkey's years we waited  
for our special little boy  
And you were well worth waiting for  
a bonus to enjoy.

I love your little heart-shaped face  
Intenseness of your eyes.  
Conveying that behind those eyes  
there dwells a mind so wise.

I can't begin to estimate  
the love stored up for you  
And just remember all your life  
Our love will follow through

*February 29, 2004*



When you were born, our Mother said  
in her own peculiar way.  
“Well that’s the lot,  
the scrapings of the basin, one might say.”

We sized you up, all five of us  
as we stood around her bed.  
Those “scrapings” were a work of art  
a masterpiece we said.

Yes, you were such a handsome child  
One that we thought we’d keep.  
With flaxen hair, and hazel eyes  
angelic in your sleep.  
Do you recall how you and Yve  
would rush to greet us when  
John came to town, with pockets full  
of candy now and then.

I do believe I bought for you  
your first long pair of pants  
How proudly did you show them off  
As down the street you pranced.

Not many years were spent with you  
“But love” was always there  
to be revived each visit “home”  
with memories to share.

*March 2004*



*July 2004*

## Charlie's Eyes

---

Having to leave you when we did  
Was almost more than I could bear  
There you were smiling back at me  
With eyes intense-beyond compare  
They seemed to ask the question - "why?  
can't you stay and play with me,  
and sing to me those special songs  
sang to you on your Daddy's knee?"

The image of your precious face  
Your tiny hands that waved  
Goodbye to us, as we drove off  
Are now indelibly engraved  
Inside my head, to summon forth  
in reverie, and saved.

How very much it saddens me  
To know I shan't be here  
To watch you grow into the man  
Your Dad is - oh so dear  
And lucky you, to have such parents  
Whose every thought revolves  
Around their darling little boy  
As each new stage evolves

But Chassie, those bewitching eyes  
hypnotic in their gaze  
Can hold a body spell bound  
till your attention strays,  
So with these parting words, I say  
Remember me, your Nana,  
Who loved you long, 'ere you were born'  
And will, -- beyond Nirvana.

***& Two Little Rhymes for Mom***

---

*Instead of gifts I must confess,  
the birthday treats I hold most dear,  
are heartfelt feelings well-expressed  
and nestled in a poem, clear.*

*With tender prose and loving rhyme  
long miles between shrink down to nil.  
And I do hearken back in time  
to a child's pure love that I feel still.*

*Like tiny birds on melodic flight  
each word-beat flutters free  
and I applaud with much delight  
my mother's lovely poetry.*

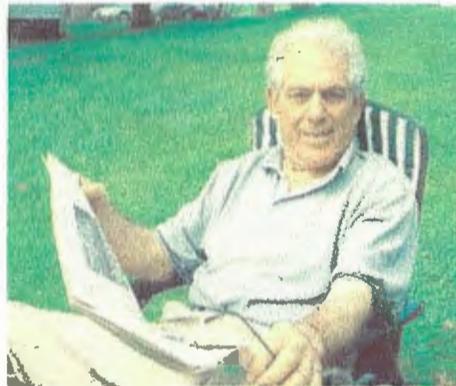
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*Under the sun in some loamy soil  
where the worms wriggle 'round  
and a gardener toils  
is a rosey bud and delphinium blue  
near a pink carnation covered all in dew*

*With a leafy sprig, they are carefully snipped  
and to your welcoming door now shipped  
bearing this message from me to you  
saying "happy birthday" and I love you!*

*by  
dede - 1998*

My wonderful Johnny, and my  
two beautiful grandchildren  
Johnny Zee and Samantha -  
who have given me such great joy.



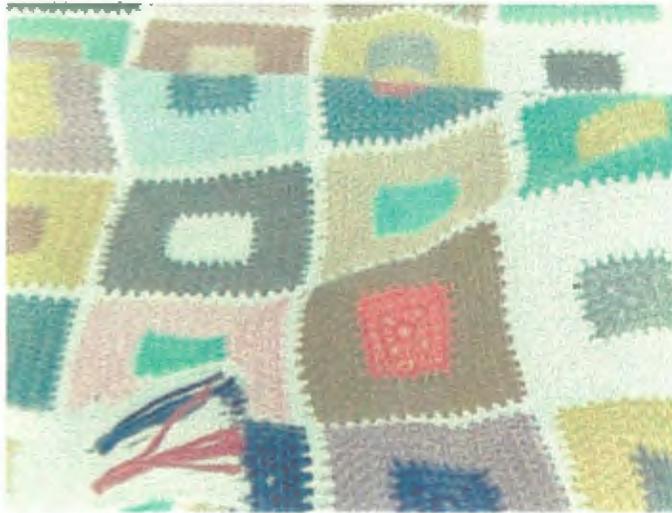
And who is this?



My beautiful grandchildren  
Forest and Chloe,  
my pride and joy!



*Empress Hotel, Victoria B.C., July 1995*







**Vicki Claireaux Simon** was born and raised in England and since the war has lived in New York with her husband and family. Her wide range of accomplishments include tennis, bridge, crochet, knitting, cookery and more. She is the devoted mother of 3 and loving grandmother of 5.

This is her second book of poetry.



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