

**“I AM... THROUGH OUR OWN POETRY”**  
**WORSHIP SERVICE ON NOVEMBER 27, 2011**  
**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF THE QUAD CITIES**

**Opening Words**

By Cindy Sadlek

Welcome to our post-Thanksgiving feast of poetry! This morning we will be sharing pieces of who we are as individuals through our own poems. Our sharing will be both direct, in choosing to say something about ourselves, and indirect, in choosing to say something about what we do, love or hope for. Whether directly or indirectly, by writing and sharing our own poetry, we are courageously choosing to be seen and to be known in a more intimate or direct way than might be possible in a casual conversation. Because, poetry can get right to the heart of a matter, or transcend language which is often meant to conceal. It can open a window to another reality beyond our ordinary consciousness. Reciprocally, by respectfully and deeply listening to others' poems we are privileged to see and to know others in a more intimate and direct way. In both seeing and being seen, knowing and being known, we also invite the possibility of understanding and being understood, accepting and being accepted and loving and being loved. As we weave individual threads into the tapestry of our beloved community this morning we will also be capturing a snapshot of this tapestry, of who we are as a Unitarian Universalist Congregation. Since Cathy and I have asked you to share something of who you are in a poem, I conclude these opening words with my offering:

**I AM...**

By Cindy Sadlek  
11-27-11

I am  
A pusher of possibilities  
A what if dreamer  
A far horizon scanner.  
It's the excitement of becoming  
Who I am  
In my core self  
With you  
Becoming who you are  
In your core self,  
That propels.

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**I AM... From the Mouths of Babes**

By the UUCQC Youth  
November 27, 2011

I am blue and green and pink and purple  
A dolphin in the sea  
An owl in the tree  
I'd be red if I could  
Or a palm tree  
Science is my thing

And playing games on my computer  
I am a lover of reading  
I am the air you breath  
And the rain which goes everywhere  
Back to the sea  
where I am again  
a dolphin

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### **WINNERS**

By Jerry Wala  
10/30/2011

W Welcome the day and look for the sunny side.  
I Integrate and maintain Integrity.  
N No excuses.  
N No giving up.  
E Ever and always have fun.  
R Reward self and others.  
S Stay on the sunny side, always on the sunny side.

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### **60 Something**

By Judy Kasper  
11/03/2011

I was always good  
but thought I should be perfect.  
Now good is enough.

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### **I am a Dead Zone Dreamer**

By Kriss Wells

I am a Dead Zone Dreamer.  
I drive and drive and drive and drive  
the Dead Zone.  
But I dream of the River.  
And I dream of the Prairie.  
And I love the Wind.

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### **The Song**

By Dan Bush

I felt like I was singing a song  
that I had never heard before  
Self consciousness sinking in  
as those around me  
know it by heart

I try to keep up  
falling a step behind  
Trying to catch the cadence  
and line up with the notes

Hoping not to misstep  
as to catch eyes with a stranger

The second verse comes  
and I'm holding on  
As my stutters and hiccups  
start to disappear

I relax my shoulders  
and cling to the melody  
as if it were written for me  
And it feels right

Finally, by the last verse  
I have embraced the song  
and the song has embraced me

And although each voice  
is different and unique  
With each member bringing  
a slightly different pitch and sound  
We sing as one.

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**Remember**

By Nancy Huse

Only to care  
For the things that are,  
The love I have, the words.

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**Angels Unawares**

By Cheryl Draeger

We go to church together,  
Coming and going for many years  
Greeting warmly, but do not know  
Who each other truly is.  
Some are doctors, some are teachers,  
Some are pastors, some do social work,  
Some are wealthy, some live on welfare,  
And some are Angels Unawares.  
Who are these hidden angels, and how do we know them?  
Weekly we listen to one another, have coffee together, smile  
Join committees, nod our heads, spend a while,  
Not knowing who each other really is.  
Sometimes one of us ends up in the newspaper,  
Over a special event, achievement, or death.  
Then we learn more about one another,  
Sometimes revealing our hidden angels  
That we were unaware  
As they walked in our midst.

What is really important is not the income or titles,  
But who we are to one another,  
As we listen and care,  
Pray, support and share.  
Each member is unaware  
That they also could be an Angel Unawares,  
Walking in our midst,  
Blessing us with their presence,  
Caring for many  
Sharing a great deal.  
The Bible says, to be careful of what we say and do  
As we could be entertaining Angels,  
Our Angels Unawares.

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By Sandra Evers

In midlife I learned I was a verb  
We are all verbs, especially Unitarians  
At three score and ten I realized  
I was also an adjective  
I am curious

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**METI**

By Sue Witte

M - Memorable twinkly smile - 4 shiny tiny teeth  
E - Ethiopia in Africa - land of birth  
T - Traveled to USA - to Davenport, our QCA with parents, Becky & Will  
I - Illumined my life now & for years to come

Smile on, Meti, baby sister of Lola & Jimmy  
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**Definitions**

By Rev. Jay Wolin

How can I let others  
Dictate what is mine  
How can I let others  
Drive me far from home  
Why do I doubt  
What I know to be true  
How can one day  
Change what is within.  
If there is an eternal  
And if I want to search  
No one else can stop me  
They can only look down from their perch  
Look down and beat me down  
Throw hurdles in my path  
Throw hurdles to salvation  
With piety as their wrath

Why could they not see  
What I know is inside of me  
What others see and assure me  
Is the righteousness of my path...  
They made me doubt myself  
They made me question my way  
They are like the drain in my sink  
That sucks the life of water away  
The water goes down and goes out  
Goes about its way  
Not staying where it cleansed  
But into another place  
A river, a lake, a sewer  
To add to some other life  
Maybe it makes it way back  
And then again maybe not  
But it flows just as life flows  
Sometimes resting  
Sometimes turbulent  
I'd rather be the water,  
Then the rock standing  
In idle judgment  
The rock that is pounded  
As water rushes by  
The rock that is hardened  
By life and is set  
The rock that never changes  
Yet they are both  
Part of the river  
They are both  
An integral part of life  
The river has a path  
Defined by its boundaries  
Of land and rocks  
On either side  
So is the water truly alone  
Is it truly free  
To flow where it wants...  
Once it reaches the ocean  
Of all oneness, it interacts  
With all the other water  
But even then  
It is confined by continents  
So we all have some boundaries...  
Until we are flooded by all that we are  
Just as times the waters flood the land  
But they eventually recede  
To allow all to live in harmony  
For the land to view  
With beauty and awe  
The beauty of the water

And the sun rise  
And the sun set  
And yes, I would rather be the water  
Providing such beauty and awe  
Than be the land which looks on in awe  
Which is defined by which  
Land by water  
Or water by land  
Or do they coexist  
Do they define each other  
Can we define ourselves  
Or are we defined by others...  
When we define ourselves  
Is that when we overcome  
The others  
But at what price  
For if the water overcomes the land,  
it will destroy the land  
If the land overcomes the water  
It will dissipate the water  
How does one find harmony  
With their surroundings  
How does one find self  
Amongst other competing interests  
Trying to force their own definition  
There is only one answer...  
We are either all separate beings  
Vying for power  
Or we are all the same being  
Trying to work together  
When we do not realize this  
An imbalance occurs  
And one definition reigns  
I cannot define myself  
Without taking account  
Everything else that is around me

I cannot define myself  
Without realization  
That all that is  
Is interconnected to me  
There is a purpose  
To all that has led me here  
There is a purpose  
To all that I do  
I will be respectful  
Of all around me  
But mostly  
I must be respectful  
To myself  
To what I know is true

To who I am  
To the whole of creation  
To the beauty of life  
To the wonders of the universe  
And never forget  
That I am a part of it  
That I am  
Not because I think  
Just because I am  
And I will rise  
And I will fall  
And I will love  
And I will hate  
And I will grow  
And I will evolve  
And I will evoke my will  
To be who I am  
For I am who I am  
that was enough for God  
It should be enough for me  
And if it is not enough for others  
Then at least  
I will be who I was  
I will be who I am  
I will be who I want to be  
Not who others want me to be

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By John Bowman

In church services  
contemplating Jay's Sermons  
strangers are like friends.

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**POSSIBILITIES**

By Ellen Kelley

Today the air is filled with maple seeds;  
Accompanied by wind they leap and twirl  
By thousands, then glide into a patch of weeds,  
A dancing school gone wild; I watch them whirl

And land; few of the airborne dancers will  
outwit the odds of taking root in earth  
already clogged with roots; but yet, one still  
will find and fit itself into a tiny berth.

So many seeds—with husks, in cones, in flesh  
Of fruit; that fly and float, that stick and grasp;  
Within those tiny spheres, the Source made fresh,  
and live again, keeps safe the past.

If this be true, where lie the seeds of peace,  
Of hope or truth; what triggers their release?

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**HOUSE OF LOVE**

By Jeffrey Mason

Did your eyes need tall shadows  
Cast by this house of my love for you,  
And settled thickly like dust in a weathered  
Cupboard, exposed to sea and wind and rain.

What we were to each other, old salt  
Stains that blemished wood, and patience  
Worn by the urge to fathom light shone  
Brilliant; the flux of tide and swelter – our sin.

Brine laced your taut muscles, I recall,  
And furtive glances to witness the  
Distance we covered, intrigued by one  
Another to reckon the consequent why.

How we grasped the sun-withered hearts  
So completely that the beguiling would never  
Be cherished, and the betrayal preserved in the  
Way sand etched pores into our souls.

So these rooms are empty now, the walls a  
Faded aquamarine that pours into the lightening  
Shaped cracks in this wall or that, as a sea wall  
Perpetually breached and unobserved.

And the light unwillingly harsh, as your  
Deference to shadows without clarity grieved,  
Faded tears that seep into cups of acceptance,  
As beneath the height of our love.

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**ME**

By Katy McCluskey

I sit here in this room today,  
While I'd rather be much farther away.  
I'd prefer to be by a babbling brook,  
Reading a well-worn library book.

I'd rather be hiking a woodland trail,  
And seeing a deer, or just its tail,  
Or dig my toes in some sandy shore,  
To hear the ocean's thunderous roar.

I'd sit by a campfire some night in June  
And listen to wolves howl at the moon,

Or hike a trail on a mountain side,  
And watch a hawk in a swooping glide.

I'd love to be in a quiet canoe  
To hear the calls of a loon or two,  
Watch a flick of birds take flight,  
Or hear raindrops on my tent at night.

I no longer enjoy a life in the rough,  
For I just can't do that wonderful stuff;  
So I'm sitting right here in this room today,  
When I'd rather be much, much farther away.

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**Baby Boomer Bewilderment**

By Kathy Bowman  
11/19/11

Two dollars off a movie ticket  
at Rave Cinemas, a dollar off  
the car wash on senior Tuesdays.  
Two for one senior lunch at Ruby Tuesdays.  
Unsolicited advertisements  
for hearing aids, prescription drug insurance,  
reading glasses.  
Membership in AARP, applying for social security,  
trying to fathom Medicare.  
Elegant personal letters:  
ads for mortuary planning services, the final solution.  
So how did I get here, to this date,  
this hour, so soon, with such little intention?  
Have I learned anything  
in these past 60 years?  
Learned patience, learned how to be joyful,  
learned how to share, learned how to be useful  
to fellow travelers?  
Patience has taken time,  
sharing has always come naturally,  
striving for usefulness is ongoing, but the crux  
of the problem is in learning  
to be joyful.  
A slow, sweet Baby Boomer  
Bewildering Joyfulness.

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**On a Home Birth**

By Aubrey Ryan

APOLOGIES TO ALL. AUBREY'S POEM WILL SOON BE PUBLISHED IN A MAGAZINE AND  
IT WAS ACCEPTED AS AN UNPUBLISHED POEM. SO WE WILL PUBLISH THIS POEM  
LATER!

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**The Holidays**

By Connor Dusch  
Marcia Gable's grandson

The holidays are fun.  
The holidays are the best  
Time of year like Christmas and  
Thanksgiving and Valentine's day.  
I wish the holidays were every day.  
I wish the holidays were every day  
One each month.

The holidays are fun  
Just like the birthdays.  
Sometimes holidays are funner  
Than birthdays.  
Sometimes the birthdays are funner  
Than the holidays.

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**It Was There**

By Margaret Skinner  
10-14-11

It was there, all along,  
Subdued by the ocean roar of life.  
It was there, all along,  
Endured by alien forces of strife.  
It was there, all along,  
Obscured by circlets of dizzying zest.  
Over my shoulder  
I glanced the problems of fate.  
Life does slip by  
THE END does come  
A new journey has begun.

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**Seventeen!!**

By Edye Pearson

I feel a gay impulse to laugh,  
--Can there possibly be strife?  
But then I'm only seventeen  
I guess I'm just in love with life.

It isn't Spring; it's rained all day--  
The grass is brown instead of green;  
But everything's so glorious  
I guess because I'm seventeen.

It seems that I can't live enough  
I wish that I were three or four  
So that I could laugh and love-  
And-well-just a live a little more.

I'm like a sponge that's brimming full  
And swollen 'til it's apt to burst-  
I think that I'd feel glad to be,  
If life were mean and at it's worst.

And over there beyond that ridge  
Where sky and wooded hilltop meet,  
FOR me there's something nice in store  
Fate has prepared some regal treat.

Some day I shall write a book,  
Or be a duchess--maybe queen--  
My name will be on every tongue--  
It will--I know!! I'm seventeen!!

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**Autumn at 3707 Eastern Avenue**

By Joe Maciejko  
2011

Some call her a Church. Some dispute that.  
His muse takes him there each autumn. Kathleen would say it's his "Persona Grata" who calls him.  
He can't see her yet from the lower lawn.  
The trees gather around her to shield her. The big maple flaunts her fall colors at the still green oak.  
The grass is short and even—Jack and his tractor mower saw to that!  
Flowers still circle the signboard that proclaims the theme of the week.  
He walks up the curving drive and she appears.  
Her prow points South and Up toward the sky. Not a Michelangelo is she, but perhaps a little of Frank Lloyd Wright.  
She doesn't yet suspect he has come again as he does—year after year.  
She basks quietly in the rays of the setting sun, the golden hour light.  
At her feet a gray squirrel pokes into a drainpipe, hiding his plumping body but not his bushy flagpole tail.  
He finds his spot beneath more maple branches, taking the size of her.  
He moves to get a tighter view while crunching through the fallen leaves.  
The fading sun casts gold upon her left while deepening shadows clutch at her right.  
He raises his Canon, catching her in his sights.  
He pauses, he breathes, he shoots.  
"Got her again," he thinks as he drives away, her image captured anew.  
Got her again this year—He wonders how many more.

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**no fiddling on my roof**

By Dave Coe

the umbrella above my home  
gladly shields me  
from baptismal water  
overflowing from clouds above  
a safeguard against  
dogma-drench

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## **A Springtime Plea**

By Velma Graham

04-22-06

As nature bursts abundantly  
in existential freedom  
I sense its joyous urgency!

What is being felt within,  
acknowledged within  
graced within?

Oh! That I could be  
that leaf  
that bird  
that flower, or  
that blooming tree!

Just for an instant of knowing  
that unquestioning freedom  
of just being.

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## **Day 1, Genesis PICU**

By Kathleen Lawless-Cox

11-19-11

A cold wind blows through me  
As I watch the naked branches  
Bow low, bow low  
Whirl up again...  
Leaves from mounds on ground  
Are tossed wildly into air  
Helter skelter ballet of leaves  
Higher, sometimes than my windowpane  
And, sometimes, small birds  
Are buffeted within the turbulent air...  
A merciless force has stripped my Spirit bare..,

No more pretence  
No more lies  
The Life Force  
Can be as vicious as Guantanamo  
As the rape of innocents  
Vicious as 9/11  
Meaningless as a cutworm...

Call "it" as you will,  
I have had enough  
Of its Power and Glory  
I look forward  
Like Jeffers "Hurt Hawk"

To "death Redeemer,"  
New birth - freedom

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**Closing Words**

By Cathy Weideman  
11.23.11

The ancient, eternal, inevitable question: Who am I?  
We strive to supplant the mystery with substance and  
Material made of words or dance or sculpture or paint.  
Who best to expose the soul than the self?  
Who best to dance the dance, cast the color, sing the song  
Whisper the words of private explanation? The process of  
Seeking itself results in a subtle shift of  
Form.  
We discover in the search for soul and the description of ME, the  
Assurance of uniqueness and the  
Surprise of similarity. We come upon the  
Performance of sharing through which  
We achieve connection to  
Frame.  
And so in the end, the ancient, eternal, inevitable answer is  
This is Me  
And this is We.

Today our UU Congregation has had the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of who we are through the creation and sharing of poetry written by our members and by listening with open uncritical loving ears and hearts to these personal reflections of self. We heard about angels, hunting photographers, verbs and words and letters, water, wind, prairie and seeds, children from Africa, aging and birthing, being 17 and strangers and friends, with allusion to shadows and freedom and love and membership. We are grateful for the who we are as individuals and for the who we are as humans, and for the caring and sharing.