

Another Annual Booklet of

POEMS: FOR 2004

BY TCWright

October 15, 2004
Denver, Colorado



POEMS: FOR 2004

A Booklet of Poems

by TCWright

October 15, 2004

Terrence C. Wright
1523 Quitman St, #1209
Denver, CO 20204

720-904-3513

Fax 303-623-6208
TCWright@aol.com

Poems: for 2004

Table of Contents

A Poetic Trio	1
How We Love	2
Down Payment	3
Present Always	4
Disqualified	5
Beyond the Wrappings	6
Fruitful Digging	7
On Being Wasted	8
Seeking the Sun	9
Terrible Towers	10
Mind To Mountain	11
Never No Need	12
The Belly of a Whale	13
Collaborative Limits	14
Coors Field	15
"Play Ball"	16
Unfair, Unjust	17
This Lump in My Throat	18
Still More, Please	19
A Poet's Thank You	20

Welcome Hello

As sleep jerks its
covering canopy away
with the clock's
sandpaper buzz
my consciousness
flounders frantically
to assume
its responsive
attentive role
and what bursts
with warm loving
presence
into my solitary
newborn day
is you.

A Day Alone

Autumn day
all to myself
nothing nags
space-time opens
to receive
my self and its
desires, solitude
the most promising
possibility. Like a
sculptor standing
before a mound
of clay, I welcome
definition's absence.

Apprentice

My mother
managed
our home
for half a century
without a dryer.
Wet clothes
and sheets
went on the
clothesline each
week, swishing
gently in the
breeze, their
texture and smells
a wonder
to a small boy
pinching clothespins.

How We Love

No matter
how much
we love
there is not
enough love
in the world.
We search for
the meaning
of love and try
implementing
our ideas, yet
even as we do
our love fails
to meet the
needs of
self and others.
We generate
guilt and
try harder.
Then we see
love is not
quantitative
but only a
qualitative
touch.

Down Payment

It is anathema
to speak ill
of friendship.
But the past tells me
fragile friendship
is worth nothing at all,
though it seems to be
the only kind available.
Friends are too often
fickle, concentrating
on their own unspoken
agenda of possibilities,
content with a
temporary drive-by
covenant as their
maximum investment.

I wish to urge a less
cautious style in our
relationships; experience
will tell us when really
rewarding friendship is
offered or sought. One
knows real friendship
when it hurts, and it
always hurts.

One has to decide to
accept this pain as the
foothills of a great
adventure, at least
once in a lifetime taking
the risk of plunging in.
Friendship will grow
in amazing ways if it is
built on a foundation of
necessary pain.

Present Always

There is no illusion
that you are here
beside me
replacing spirit
with flesh.

But there is the
consuming reality
of your important
place in my life
these days, and
the constant
surveillance of
the days ahead
seeking a time
and place we
can be together.

Why that is
important is not
entirely clear, for
we hold to our
unbending resolve
to avoid romance,
yet to hold fast to
the silver gains of
mutual regard.

Such are the viable
horizons of a fruitful
and caring life-long
relationship.

Disqualified

It was entirely
unspoken;
attitude and speech
concealed the
phantom-like
arsenic of ill will.

My antennae were
keen, inclusive,
and my courage
intensified.
I voiced what she
could not say,
offered clues
she could only
partially answer
until the ugly side
of her expectations
became more clear.

I saw that I
could not fulfill her
dreams (could any
person?); the core
of them was a
demand for
obedience and
perfection; I could
not keep up. I
failed her many tests.
In a moment of dark
epiphany made light
I could see that she
was no longer one
I could honor as a
candidate for my
companionship
and love.

Beyond the Wrappings

Only jelly mints
when I had promised
Hersheys takes the edge
off the surprise and turns
my little one's anticipation
bitter blue.

There is always a stretch
between what we expect
and what we get;
it is never all of each
nor one of either.

We need to be less
exacting about what we
expect. Perhaps a lesson
in cynicism would shape
our wants, our demands,
our expectations, so that
they are based on realistic
possibilities, not just on
our fantasies.

Eventually my little one
will learn to express
gratitude for what she has
actually received, knowing
simply that life has once
again blessed her with a
gift in the plain brown
wrapper of surprise.

—TCWright
May 20, 2004

Fruitful Digging

Let me say
what my deepest
memory and intuition
are saying:
I cannot live creatively
without community.

I follow an animal spore
into the past—
as the search for
my roots, my family
history, my native ground,
my vocation succeeds and
unfolds its myriad of
surprises.

I thrill at the story
of community taking form
with my emergence from
anonymity to selfhood.

On Being Wasted

Even a blind mouse
must learn to be ferocious,
to wear hardship on his
arm hidden up his sleeve.
To feed even just one's self
one must become like the
gray wolf, ready in a moment
to attack, to take without
receiving an offer.

Apples rot because they have
no ferocity. Timidly they hang
from the trees, offering their
flesh to whatever bug or monkey
from 10 to 100 who comes by.
Not a bad way to live off the land,
seeing that fruit and people
are never wasted.

Seeking the Sun

Bold, warming sunshine
pours through the trees,
the summer fullness
of leaves casts intermittent
shadows on gray concrete
and white plastic chairs.
I lounge, seeking warmth
in chill summer clothes,
waiting in early hope
for the correct public
transport to take me to
this morning's important
gathering.

The day is beautiful
as it starts, sky bright blue
and wind's gentle mountain
coolness, clouds not missed
in their unanimous absence—
though later the consensus
will change as their white puffs
appear, grow, assume
dominance over the blue,
perhaps even bringing
welcome rain.

For now I move my white
plastic chair for the third time,
to a position where I can
once more absorb the
dramatic, intensive light
of an early, deceptive
morning sun.

Terrible Towers

We chatted about
our concern with the
great cumulus towers
rising over the divide;
our innocence greatly
disturbed at the threat
of rain and turbulence.

But of course, rain
promised is not
necessarily rain
delivered. More likely
wind and lightening
will stay the day, much
like an irresponsible
genius offering few
helpful results from their
potentially deadly play!

So far as we know,
clouds do not think or feel,
but simply respond to the
laws of nature. But within
one's own thinking and
feeling are forces equally
powerful, towering over one's
security, generating pain
and smashing all remaining
shreds of hope.

Mind to Mountain

It towers over me,
craggy and blunt
as my own aging face,
permanence beyond
my puny imagination,
an apostrophe in the
story of the Universe.

I have been up its sides,
struggling to the top,
gazing at the awesome
ancient view, clearly
aware of its years there:
millennia in the making,
centuries by the billions.

My journey just another
playing of a timeless
rosary honoring both
the given and the gotten
in the slow grinding out
of a Universe intimate
and infinite at once.

It is that familiar
stretch that wonders me;
I see the small and
imagine the BIG,
knowing that both
are real yet often caught
gazing at the one
and missing the other.

I tend to be mistaken
in the selection
of the appropriate,
blinded by the wrong
common sense, climbing
the peak when it is
the anthill which calls.

Never No Need

"No need," he said.
"Never no need," I replied.

Every moment colored
by some intensive lack;
the other side dormant,
intensive need, lurking there
to sabotage our pretence of
calm self-sufficiency or
unacknowledged pride.

Needs web themselves
together into a pattern
of brilliant, foundational
color, its texture of
reassuring boldness,
a voice of confidence,
our most vibrant
need this day.

We often do not
recognize our needs,
even the life-threatening
ones. But they are there
in every moment, requiring
attention, sapping our
consciousness,
diminishing our aliveness.

Accept the clues and
read them to win
the possibility of a new
and enlivening presence.

The Belly of a Whale

The old roof, square, flat,
now hidden by several
full-blown, soaring sails
billowing in the gusts
of new being.

Light bounces from the
shadow side of the
new civic structure's
great overhanging reach.
An open-sided tunnel
pierces the building, giving
car and train access to the
other side of downtown.

Inside the penetration
the best mercury light
illuminates the darkness
twenty-four-seven,
precious space not to be
abandoned to night.

The train on its jointed
track echoes in the
subterranean silence;
rough human builders'
voices, barely heard,
stir excitement and awe
at the mating of tunnel and
overwhelming, seductive structure.

To win in a bold, complex
city means carefully
defining the primary problem
of street and space occupying
the same quadrant and then
invoking enormous creativity
to overcome the opposites.

Far more meaningful than the
sequel circuses cycling
through the great new space
inside is a trick: pretending
that giant soaring and
easy, innocent penetration
set a paradigm for a new,
successful metropolis.

Collaborative Limits

This white electronic box gives no assurance of success; only occasional hints that what we are working toward together is some literary or financial marvel. I am jealous of the whipped cream purity of its products, overcoming my logic and my belief—gifting me with that which I cannot envision nor create.

My jealousy hides a secret resentment that this box, this thing, has come to be so important to me and my work, revealed by my literary impotence whenever it decides to be “out for lunch,” or to drain my financial reserve for repairs or replacement or some computer toy.

If Jobs had simply left it in his garage wouldn't we all be happier and richer?

A barbell held up at its precise middle will balance in that position, beautifully and functionally neutral. Oh that my electronic box had such a skill in balancing the sides of truth and the impact of our actions. I've never seen it do such a commonplace thing and no longer expect to see it; for such would be a challenge to my terribly uneven mind.

Coors Field

Concrete, brick and steel
Concrete, brick and steel
The ballpark consists
of little else than
concrete, brick and steel.
Inside is mostly outside,
open to weather, daring
the occupants to sit or to
stand in rain, sun or snow,
shelter only for top-dollar
folks, weather for
everyone else.

Structure of steel, massive
beams and columns
openly brag of strength,
everything braced and
cross-braced, open to
examination. Like
sinews and bones, rigid
but planned for maximum
flexibility.

Like a successful skyscraper,
it moves with the wind and
the load but does not break.
Like most human beings,
it will bend under stress to
yield maximum service,
but it does not collapse,
it does not disappoint.

"Play Ball !!"

Too many
or not enough
spinning white missiles
in productive patterns,
batter and fans
often frustrated by the
leathered hands
of the defense.

Who can tell the outcome
from a single hit,
a single catch?
Twenty thousand guests
roar their approval of
the performance of
white and gray.
Even the boos seem
knowing and constructive.
But win-or-lose remains the
only marker of success.

Sometimes another
kind of momentum drives
players and fans:
doing becomes more intense,
raw energy flows, evoking
a deeper, buried knowledge
of how to be player or fan,
participation soars,
excellence happens.
The "joy of the game"
becomes the crowning touch
of mutual success.

"Good game!"
we cry to each other.

Unfair, Unjust!

Twisted legs,
hurting once again,
toes to crown,
reminding of
years creeping by
with the arthritic
awareness
called pain.

Life insists on a
normal human
entropy. Shouldn't
hurting less, slower
decay, be the
the reward for
honest effort and
good behavior? A
curse of pain such
as mine, when no
price is justified
save the audacity
of staying alive?

I fervently reject
the necessity of pain
for any of us. Mine is
shamefully minor, but
30,000 dead by the
impartial cruelty of a
force of nature, or
mass graves ordered
by a tyrant, seem absurd
and a gross layer of the
ashes of nature's
injustice.

This Lump in My Throat

At work again.
The smiling responses to my greetings
replacing for a moment
the addiction to furrowed brows
as fans seek their way
to the good time promised.

Laughing crowds
jostling their way onto the "down"
motion machine, reminded
by my smiling "g'night now,"
that with the fun time delivered,
another segment of their lives
was waiting. The beer was smooth,
the sausage a gourmet treat;
wife still pudgy and back to her
silent nag. Warmth at the moment of
reality taken neat dwindles toward
postponed lifelong wisdom.

— o —

The presence of pain artfully dodged
with a cocktail of chemicals
artfully assembled and artfully applied;
rogue vertebrae held for the moment
in a basket of fake grass.
I wonder at the earthy purpose
of infection and decay.

— o —

It threatens my life, they say,
this chunk of foreign matter being
where it need not be. By being here
it passes the test of citizenship,
but it is not welcome. It needs high,
serious fences and a woven razor-wire ceiling.
Even evil genius is lovely in its place. It is
welcome on the planet, but
not in my body.

TCWright, July 31, 2004

Still More, Please

I sit here today,
minding the rumblings
of a sick bowel and
the ache of a chest
invaded and plundered.

It is as though a price
is being paid for years
of excess and abuse.
though I do not know
what earthly instrument
there is in a loving Universe
to name such a price.

Beauty is on hold;
creativity seems spongy.
The shadow of being gone
lurks at every corner,
beaming its joy at the
prospects of winning.

I resigned myself long ago
to living life under a
perpetual shroud,
though I have never been
sickly and inside I receive
life's symphony with joy.

I now give myself to
being new in sorrow
and in pain, hoping for
still more of life while
knowing the odds of
inevitability.

A Poet's Thank You

It is always a
boost,
a privilege,
to have those
who know the
game listen to words,
reflect with care, then
unveil their wisdom
to me, and to
my listeners.

Words become
diamonds of insight:
original, cut to the
most valuable facets,
cherished by
all of us who
listen for depth
and pertinence to life.
Newness of thought
is generated among us
whether we speak of it
or not. Sometimes
lives are changed,
now or down the road.

Whether the process
spawns an improved
quality of work
for any given writer
is a private matter,
a personal judgement;
Collectively, we
pronounce the encounter
good.

—T.C. Wright
April 5, 2004

Biographical Sketch

Terrence Charles Wright was born in 1935 in Bertrand, Nebraska, and grew up in Kansas and Nebraska. He has the degrees Bachelor of Science in Architectural Engineering and Master of Theology. He has worked for twenty years in the field of architecture as a registered architect, including a time as President of MCB Architects, a Denver architectural firm. In 1962 this architectural career was interrupted by seminary plus service as a pastor in several local churches. He has also been both a part-time and a full-time volunteer with The Institute of Cultural Affairs since 1967 and has visited and taught in many places around the world. Terrence is retired, divorced, and living in Denver, Colorado. He has two offspring, Denison and Sarah, each married and living in Colorado, and two beautiful granddaughters, Arie and Hannah.

Since 1988 Terrence has been writing and presenting poetry, stories and essays. About fifty of his works have been published in a variety of periodicals such as *Poetry Plus*, *For Poets Only*, *Writers' Exchange*, *Smile*, *Dana Literary*, and *Prairie Times*. Also included are *The Node*, a quarterly journal of the Institute of Cultural Affairs: Canada, and a new magazine, *Emerging Lifestyles*, being published by a member of ICA-USA. In his writings he strives to articulate images of some aspect of reality and then pushes with thought and feeling for the depth insights that emerge.