

### Season's Signature

What the  
winter solstice  
prompts in  
flower gardens  
is creative  
devastation:  
multicolor  
turned to  
the light tan  
of earth  
with white  
edges  
blossoms  
transformed to  
dark seed  
a touch of  
frost clings  
in early morn  
a sepia and  
gray snapshot  
is the image  
retained by  
the eye.

# Poems

## Season's Signature

by TCWright

December 15, 1999

In appreciation  
of the kaliedoscope  
TCWright  
8.3.00

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Cover	Season's Signature
1.	Holiday Wishes
2.	Morning Wins
3.	Morning Finesse
4..	Abandoned
5.	What Readers Know
6.	Weeping Willow
7.	Sound Realities
8.	Balloon on the Make
9.	A Thousand Year Life
10.	Millennial Occasion
11.	Millennial Thoughts
12.	Millennial Home
13.	455 Sherman
14.	American Proletariat
15.	Skyscraper
16.	Soco House
17.	The Greeks Taught Us Well
18.	The Width of Living
19.	Influential Pairs
20.	The Surprise Factor
21.	Wear No Shoes
22.	New Country
23.	Context of Heroes
24.	Pledge Jester
25.	Exculpatory Fame
26.	Multilevel Humanness

## **Holiday Wishes**

Notes of song  
falling on our ears  
like crystal snow  
dusting the earth;  
each song a tale  
of year-end delight  
as we share the warmth  
of this ancient season.

## Morning Wins

Night is doomed,  
only moments from  
the sparkle and  
glow of a rising sun.  
We wait to see  
which will win  
even though  
we know from  
many mornings  
that the sun will  
appear, its timing  
good to the second  
for past generations  
and far into its  
certain future.

People who can  
foretell agree firmly  
that the sun's habits  
will be running  
true to form, and night  
will resist leaving  
until day has  
decided to bloom.

## Morning Finesse

Shaving is  
an ancient  
magic ritual --  
what you do  
to mark the line  
between before  
and after.

You rise from  
somnia  
not really ready  
for another day.  
It is shaving  
that puts an  
exclamation point  
at the end of  
waking up  
and startles you  
with the private  
knowledge  
that you are new  
and capable of  
moving ahead.

The smooth, clean  
skin is sensuous  
to the touch;  
awareness is  
heightened by the  
sting of after-shave;  
you are ready  
for the crisp edges  
of the new day,

almost as though  
you had overcome  
being disqualified.

## Abandoned

Dark beauty  
and gentle.  
Inquisitive--  
does not hesitate  
to ferret for the  
answers.

Unsure of herself  
among new, hard  
decisions.

Philosophical  
about the past;  
future dimly seen,  
mostly unknown,  
and alone.

Time spinning;  
priorities unsorted.

Clear about  
time-frames,  
yet alone, lonely.

So lovely  
such a gift to others;  
such potential to  
herself.

So alone.

## What Readers Know

Anyone who still reads knows  
that there is a price for  
not opening the doors and windows  
that reading provides. It is so  
easy to narrow our focus, let the strength  
of our insight drain away and exchange  
oxygen for a vacuum.

Reading lubricates our thoughts, feelings,  
and identity. It challenges us  
to look at our own lives and connect  
perception to consciousness.  
It lifts us and takes us to places  
we have only imagined, or perhaps  
suggests a perspective that has been  
unconscious within us our whole lives.  
It can be like stepping on a  
jellyfish or hearing for the first time  
what we have said or done.  
It can offer a new method of  
appropriating life and utilizing its clues  
to find knowledge and awareness.

Reading is one way we piece together  
the picture puzzle of our lives, making it  
possible for us to either capture  
or avoid a facet that shames us or to  
see for the first time our strengths.  
It is the gift of a mirror by which  
we are freed to see ourselves anew.



## **Weeping Willow**

A great white  
trunk rises to  
the top of the tree  
straight as a  
lodgepole pine.  
Its branches  
reach and bend  
with tendrils  
and leaves  
cascading in  
unison toward  
the ground.

A sad tree,  
for its neighbors  
have branches  
that soar upward  
to the sky.  
A tree of  
contradiction  
even as we are  
at times  
in our lives.

Sometimes we  
seem to collapse  
with the weight  
of our troubles  
and the difficulty  
of our decisions.  
Then we weep  
and our backs  
are bowed--  
wondering  
how life can be  
so cruel;  
or perhaps we bow  
in deep humility  
at the amazing  
realities of being  
alive at all.

## Sound Realities

Music provides us  
first of all with a  
picture of notes  
on a scale, dancing  
along the lines and  
matching sounds  
with the rhythms  
of a starry sky.  
Quiet music,  
loud music, fast  
or slow, it strikes  
our consciousness  
with a wake-up call  
by dancing along  
our spines and  
dusting off old  
nerve endings  
with a touch soft  
as a kitten's fur.

Each note lies  
like a dot of ink  
in an artist's sketch,  
but there is a lot more  
than a collection of dots.  
Look for the  
connections of  
the dots and their  
relationships  
to one another.  
Finally it is the  
patterns of dots  
that creates a theme  
or melody.

Composers  
deliberately skew  
their arrangements  
to produce  
somnolence or  
soaring, tears or  
pleasures, and  
no one else  
will hear the same  
saving sounds  
as you.

## Balloon on the Make

Of all things,  
a single white  
balloon  
wafts its way  
up and out of  
the stadium  
and beyond to  
the glistening  
skyscrapers  
rising and falling  
innocently with  
the breeze  
no plan  
no destination.....  
now gone from  
sight, hoping for  
what it knows  
to be its fate:  
to be grasped  
firmly in the hand  
of some small  
child, taken to  
some nice home  
away from the  
careless crowd  
and tied to the  
bedpost of the  
child, until it wilts  
as it ends the few  
given days of an  
all too brief  
existence.

## A Thousand Year Life

I am not impressed  
by the notion of  
a thousand years.  
To me that is a day  
or week gone by with all  
the immediacy of my  
consciousness expanding.

Every day we hear of  
a rock that is millions of  
years old,  
    or a star some billions  
    of years in the making  
    or a billion billion galaxies  
    in the known Universe.

A year of my own making  
is a pragmatic invention  
overlaying a time frame  
that is simply given.  
    How many kingdoms live  
    and die in a thousand years?  
    What happens to a skyscraper  
    when it is a thousand years old?  
    Will it outlast the Sphinx, or hun-  
    dreds of clay soldiers buried  
    in an emperor's grave?

These days we are beset  
with such abstract numbers  
as these and have learned how  
to make a thousand years  
an effective part of our  
personal historic context.

## Millennial Occasion

It is difficult  
for any one of us  
to imagine  
the ebb and flow  
of days, months and years  
without the screen  
of time of day  
day of week  
month of year  
year of millennium.

This screen was  
invented by  
one of us  
and we learn  
as babes  
to place ourselves  
within the  
socially accepted  
mode of time-taking  
into which  
we were born.

So as we dance,  
scream, and kiss  
on this Eve of  
the new millennium  
let us give ourselves  
to one of the  
oldest of  
human inventions,  
knowing that  
we could be wrong  
in our timing  
but not turning  
our backs on  
a perfectly good  
celebration.

## Millennial Thoughts

The notion  
of a millennium  
is ignored  
for 990 years;  
then our intuition  
is stirred and  
we begin to  
imagine  
such a spectacular,  
overwhelming event.

No one on the  
planet  
has ever  
lived through  
a year's end  
that is also  
the end of  
a thousand years!

What would  
be the point of  
a New Millenium  
Resolution?

This invented  
happening  
is the most  
awsome event  
of a lifetime  
because it expands  
our life context  
to ten times  
that of a century.

To wake up  
to a new day  
that is also  
the first day of  
this expanded context  
is a gift from some new  
God-phenomenon--  
sensed, but as yet  
neither named  
nor explained.

### Millennial Home

We learn early  
to stretch  
our minds and hearts  
to take in a year.  
Then we begin  
to learn about  
decades and  
centuries and  
we push and pull  
at our imagination  
until we grasp  
what those words  
mean for life's  
history and tenure.  
That expansion  
is followed quickly  
by the image of  
a thousand years.  
Suddenly  
some of us  
learn to think  
in billions of years  
as space makes room  
for what we  
know about  
the Universe.

As we wrestle  
with order and  
chaos we find  
that a simple  
millennium  
is not so  
overwhelming  
as we once  
found it to be  
and, in fact, we begin  
to think of it as  
our home.....  
and our friend.

## 455 Sherman

Trees, flowers and  
bushes nearly  
hide the quiet street.  
Rain caresses the  
landscape and  
creates a mood of  
being cared for.

The lovely space  
in which I sit  
invites the garden  
to enter and blend  
with the entry  
like coffee and cream.  
The gentle greenery  
of the lawn is the  
backdrop for the  
enlivening accents  
of great plants and  
trees in the lobby of  
brick and tile, and  
I no longer see  
the line of glass  
between.

It is the same  
world in which  
fine things are  
smashed and  
people killed  
in the name of  
peace. This slice  
of paradise lies  
untouched by the  
world's tragedies;  
yet its occupants  
seem oblivious  
to its peacefulness  
and conscious  
only of its  
utility.



## American Proletariat

Strawberry formica  
under my  
blue-striped plate  
purple silk iris  
provides adornment  
brown naugahide  
upholstery in a booth  
intended for me on this  
glowing spring  
morning.

"The Kafeneon"  
welcomes me with the  
warmth and character  
of a small town eatery  
complete with  
urban farmers  
drinking coffee and  
swapping stories.

No grand facade  
no glitz, cash only,  
a waitress who  
remembers my  
four jellies with  
rye toast.  
A simple view  
of life built on  
friendliness  
and survival.

## Skyscraper

What's happening  
right now on the  
100th floor?  
Does business and  
play honor the  
amazing feat  
of raising this  
tower of concrete  
and steel with its  
gleaming skin of  
blackened glass?  
Are the occupants  
queasy at the  
thought of a  
few seconds ride  
of 100 stories  
up or down?  
Is the view  
mesmerizing  
as if one stood  
on a granite  
mountaintop?

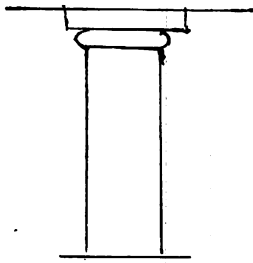
To imagine all this  
is not beyond us  
and in fact stretches  
our mundane view  
of life's goings-on  
with our feet  
planted firmly  
on a concrete  
sidewalk.

## Soco House

Forest of  
oak, elm and maple  
dense enough  
to block the sun  
on all sides  
of the cozy  
house; not just a  
single large lawn,  
but four mini-lawns  
edged with  
vibrant green leaves  
and perfect flowers.

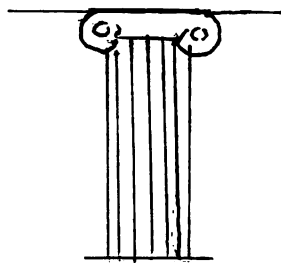
In the center  
of this peaceful,  
natural glen  
a house  
with native limestone  
and blue trim  
engages the forest  
in constant  
small-talk  
as though  
the dwelling  
is at one with  
its surrounding  
life-system.

The whispers  
speak of our  
gratitude  
for this serene  
spot of beauty  
in a bustling city  
of a billion  
priorities  
and schedules.



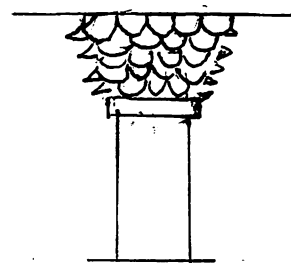
DORIC

At first the artisans of Greece made their columns very plain, utilitarian, but with perfect form, rising to a simple curved plate that says the column stops here and the roof begins.



IONIC

As the years passed competitors sought embellishment and their creativity added more curves to the column top in the form of an ancient scroll bearing knowledge.



CORINTHIAN

Later on still a master of ecology introduced an echo of the natural world by carving bouquets of leaves and flowers rising in a great crescendo to the roof beam.

Not one of these decorations was necessary to the structural soundness of the building.

Each of these embellishments was art, integral to the spirit of it's time.

Ever a larger story, as pride and enthusiasm melded with hand carved stone, imagination released, intensity manifest; simple, beautiful proportion left behind, as it is so often among mankind's efforts to enlarge upon perfection, always searching for the secrets of the gods and goddesses to enhance the mundanity of the less-than-ideal world we are given in which to shape our home.

## The Width of Living

It is not enough  
to be sensitive and  
responsive to the  
heights and depths  
of life, for that is like  
being confined  
in a narrow  
canyon where  
peripheral vision  
is useless.

If we value  
being present  
to the whole  
of life, we must  
tear down  
the walls that  
surround us  
and take a good look  
at what is revealed --  
that we are part  
of a wide, busy field  
of people, cultures  
demands and events;  
it is threatening  
at first, but  
soon recognized  
as the dynamic  
world we are  
part of from birth.

In a moment  
we see that  
blindness, however  
helpful to a horse,  
are the very nemesis  
of our capacity to be  
widely human.

At poetry group I encountered Arctic Heart, by Gretel Ehrlich, and this quotation, p. 35:

“Time takes two steps;  
light takes  
  
none at all”

### Influential Pairs

Time and light--  
apples and oranges--  
you and I.  
Such mundane  
pairs  
frequent the  
universe,  
seldom  
examined,  
shaping  
the world as  
consciousness  
opens to yet  
another  
oblique observation.

## **The Surprise Factor**

One need never be surprised by a surprise because life is generally back-to-back with the unexpected, and one gets used to being startled. For there is very little that we correctly anticipate.

It is a matter of the will to decide that every task, event, or conversation has its surprise element; every moment brings the gift of surprise.

One who says "I hate surprises" cannot have a peaceable response to life; this defiant stance shuts out so much that is rich and sustaining.

So clap your hands with glee that the unexpected has provided another moment's treat and wade into the surprise with excitement, grief, and gratitude.

## Wear No Shoes

The most commonplace reality in the Universe is space. Not simply emptiness, but a complex context which we can relate to and name. It is not often visible, but is always tangible and real.

To make a space sacred it must have meaning conferred on it by someone who cares -- someone whose life is touched by it.

It may not be a religious person or activity that provides the meaning, though doing so tends to make one religious in the real. Sacredness can be automatic like a habit. Or it may be that one's values include an awareness of the awe of being that blazes forth where and when we least expect it, suddenly inviting us to kneel in spirit and absorb its sacred presence.



## New Country

Each of us has his very own country. We develop our relationship to the geography of our childhood and the various cultures that are in play as we are growing up and then as we set about creating our own adulthood.

Each location has its own geography -- not simply dirt, but the where that our presence absorbs and shows forth. Contact with others is always a merging of our country with theirs, and can result in calm, turmoil, or indifference.

We never get home without a change in who we are, so we always come home with a new geography, a new country. To learn and accept that this is no accident is the supreme challenge that being human requires us to meet.

## CONTEXT OF HEROES

So very many.....!

So many friends  
I seldom see;  
so many colleagues  
I do not know.  
Such exuberance  
they share  
at a day's work  
well done.  
They feast and talk  
about visions  
held a lifetime  
and decisions  
agreed upon.

Powerful people--  
not in what  
material advantage or  
career contacts  
they own  
but in what they  
have decided.

Powerful decisions--  
that enable genius  
and enhance presence;  
that receive death  
as part of life,  
ready....and free  
because of it.

## Pledge Jester

Always a joke --  
some nifty nonsense  
that thins  
the blood and  
makes things  
flow.

There were  
four of us,  
but Charlie  
was King  
of Comedy.  
We were  
a fraternity  
pledge class  
and we  
dedicated  
ourselves  
to making actives  
miserable;  
so we laughed  
at those weak  
creatures and  
soon it was  
impossible  
to be serious.  
We had it  
made, thanks  
to Charlie.

I learned from him  
how to pace  
my own humor,  
and that is a key  
to livelihood  
and prosperity.

## Exculpatory Fame

*FAME*  
has eluded me.

I have not focused  
on a single vocation  
long enough to  
make my indelible  
mark on society  
and family.

I could have  
been "Terry Como"  
for vocal music  
was promising  
for a while, but it  
was not pursued  
past the church  
choir and barbershop  
harmony.

Architecture  
was glamorous  
and fulfilling  
and perhaps  
my major life  
pursuit, but  
a recession  
put an end  
to that.

I still practise  
theology but  
have nothing  
in print, no way  
to make it earn  
my living.

I suppose  
where I will  
blossom in my  
remaining years  
is in a life of service  
as a volunteer enabler --  
one who places his  
talents and concerns  
where others  
can use them.  
That is vocation  
and fame enough  
for a lifetime.

## Multilevel Humanness

26.

Today I live, functioning  
with all the appearances  
of a responsible, viable  
adult: remembering,  
anticipating, imagining  
    quick to respond  
    to others,  
making and keeping  
promises, grudges,  
capable of excitement  
and humor.

Yet for years I drifted  
with my decision-making  
lobe turned off,  
my senses gone  
underground like a  
January groundhog,  
not even all the  
vulnerability of a  
Rip Van Winkle,  
who after all was  
simply asleep.

I was imprisoned in  
this deception for  
six tumultuous decades,  
my hidden self  
perpetually upstaged  
by the necessities  
of each day's business,  
until I cracked like a walnut  
under tectonic stress,  
the plates of my being  
surfacing the lie  
and setting the stage  
for a journey toward  
wholeness and peace.