

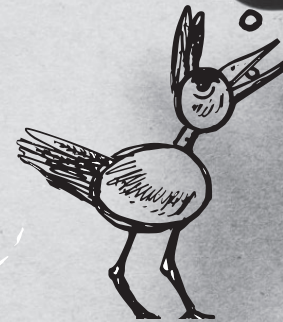
**Lotus Place Creative Writing Group thanks all our wonderful contributors, some of whom attend regularly (So have more than one piece included) and others more occasionally:**

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Chris Bannah  
Pierre de la Croix  
Cecily van Gessel  
Natan Southee  
Lynn Stott  
Dawn Grey  
Colin Lofgren  
Denise Pipinis  
Gloria Lovely  
Colleen Stevenson  
Bobby Hodson  
Bryan Hartas  
Ali*

**Also thank you to Edwina Shaw (group facilitator)  
Jeni Warburton (project organizer) and  
Carmen Douglass (design coordinator).  
Special thanks to Katie McGuire of Lotus Place.**



Drawing By Bryan Hartas



**ZiNe**

**&**

**HEARD**



**Lotus Place Creative Writing Group**



## Hope Farm

*Sherryl Munson*

This is a place where all things grow  
Food for our body  
And so much more.  
A place of peace for troubled ones,  
A lack fulfilled –  
Knowledge, guidance, building home  
What grows here?  
Our hope, our self-love,  
our joy in life.



## TREE

*Ali*

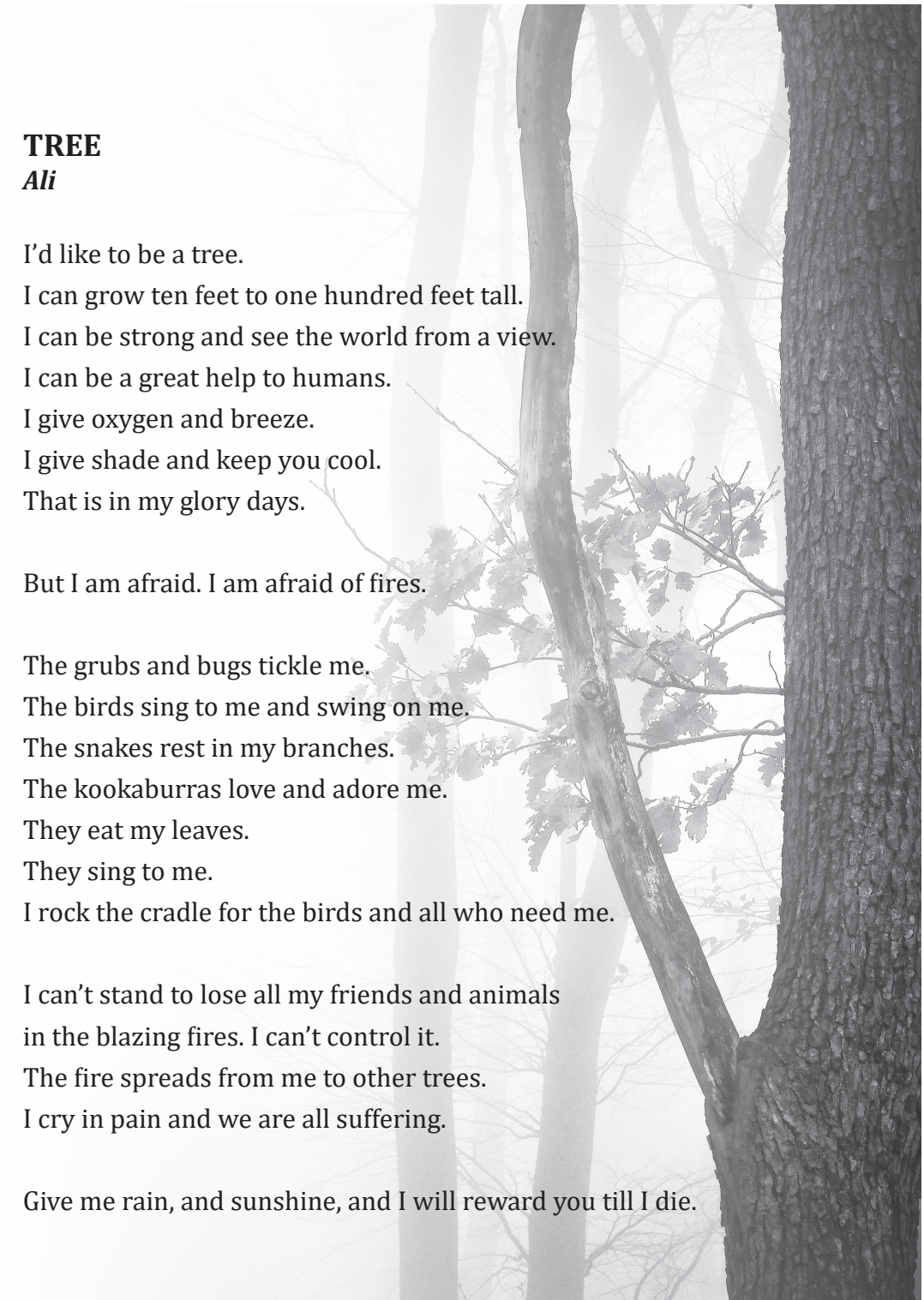
I'd like to be a tree.  
I can grow ten feet to one hundred feet tall.  
I can be strong and see the world from a view.  
I can be a great help to humans.  
I give oxygen and breeze.  
I give shade and keep you cool.  
That is in my glory days.

But I am afraid. I am afraid of fires.

The grubs and bugs tickle me.  
The birds sing to me and swing on me.  
The snakes rest in my branches.  
The kookaburras love and adore me.  
They eat my leaves.  
They sing to me.  
I rock the cradle for the birds and all who need me.

I can't stand to lose all my friends and animals  
in the blazing fires. I can't control it.  
The fire spreads from me to other trees.  
I cry in pain and we are all suffering.

Give me rain, and sunshine, and I will reward you till I die.







## THE MOON

*Sherryl Munson*

I am the moon that shines out at night.  
Many people look up at me when they are thinking about  
someone they are missing and I look back at them and  
smile, and say to them...  
The answer is in the stars.

## Old mate Smoking

*Bryan Hartas*

He is an old man, around 80.

Smoking a favourite pipe, which dates back to the early 19 th century.

He's staring into space, enjoying every puff.

He's wearing a bent and twisted fedora which speaks of  
a man who is a hard worker.

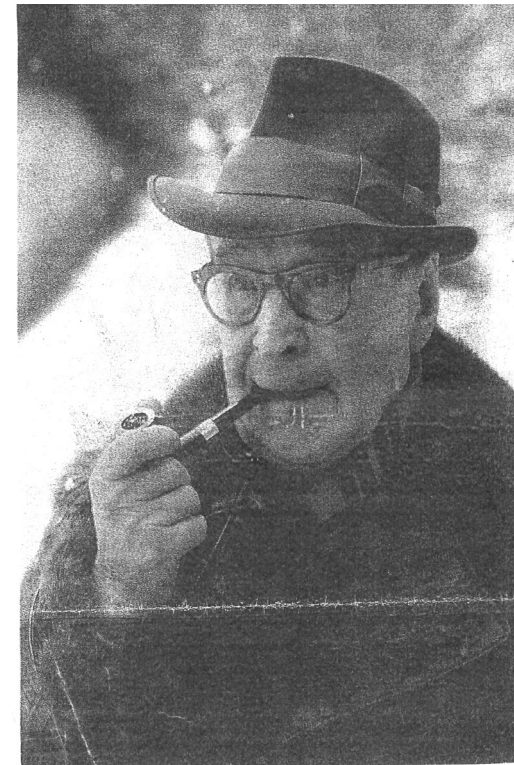
Someone who has led a hard life – weather-worn like his hat.

His glasses are thick-rimmed and  
egg-shaped assisting him to look into nothingness.

Big bushy brows in urgent need of attention.

An ex-wharfie, his hands show the hard repetition of labour.

He's rugged up, fighting the cold with scarf and fur coat.



## Ripple in the Water

*Chris Bannah*

Her head popped out of the water and she struggled to breathe as she reached the bank. She lay limp for a while then stood up slowly. Her beautiful long dark hair sparkled as the rays of the sun trickled through the trees. With her hair dripping wet, she looked like a siren. All around her, the purple tulips stood stately in line as if they were waiting for the command to march.

But as she regained her composure, she realised she had reached the lowest point in her depression and it had clouded her mind.

She had lost her greatest love to the river.

He had fallen in and not resurfaced. His body was found a week later caught under weeds – all too late.

She blamed herself for leaving him sitting on the jetty even though she had told him not to move until she got back.

Many years had passed and her time was mostly filled by sitting on the jetty watching the ripples in the water.

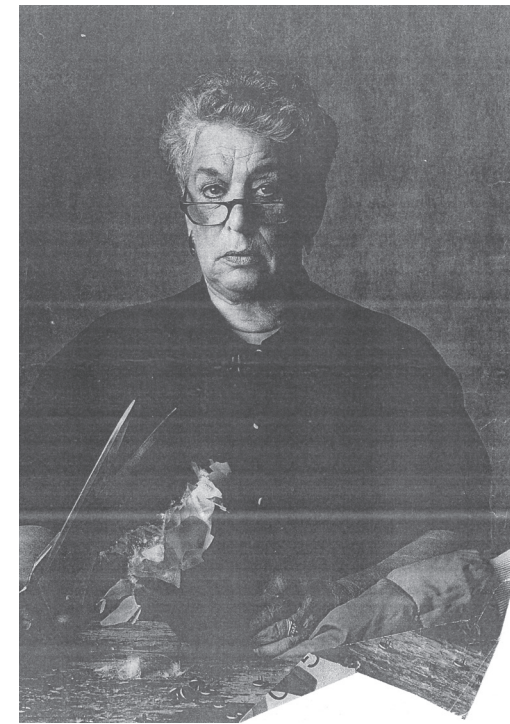
She had never got over her loss or guilt.

It was the water that took him but it was also the water that pulled her out of her clouded mind.

She finally realised that if she gave up her life, no one would tend the grave of her four year old son, and she needed to keep his memory alive.

As she stood there thinking about what to do, she looked at the tulips realising her life had changed.

With her hair still wet, she picked up her paint brush and painted a picture of the beautiful riverbank and a small boy smiling.



## The Hidden Face

*Bobby Hodson*

This is a picture of an oldish lady with lightish grey streaks through her hair, with a dark complexion, And a hard face with wrinkles on her forehead that stood out like valleys in the landscape, and floppy skin falling off her face. She had deep piercing brown eyes, so deep that you could see the pain within them, and a solid build with strong arms and a long pair of scissors in her hand, I would say twelve inches long. She had a good ring on her finger. I would not like to come across her in a dark alley, as she is scary. It was an old picture, say from the mid fifties, and she looked Jewish. The thing I can think of was that she had been in the Holocaust, when Hitler killed the Jewish race in Poland in 1939. I'm putting a name to this face, Gretel, who in the Holocaust was living in the ghettos with her family on the fourth floor of the apartment building. You could imagine the state of the place with peeling paint off the walls and water damage and mould hanging off the ceiling. Also the stench "would make you sick", and there were twelve to fifteen people in each apartment even in one bedroom. How could you live like this? It wasn't Greta's fault as keeping all the Jewish people in one small group gave you total control. Hitler was using the SS and a group of thugs for this intimation and to belittle these people. Their evil intention was to destroy a whole race. How dare they?

Gretel did not always live like this, she had lived on a farm.



## A Cage Of Bones

*Pierre de la Croix*

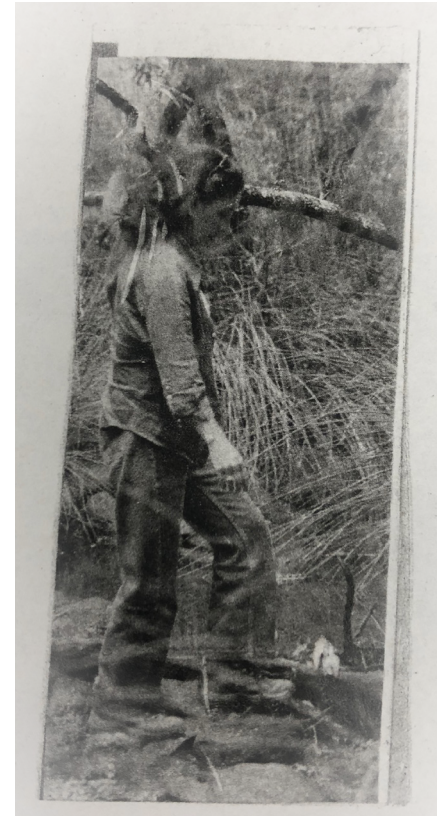
Life was flesh on a bone...  
My heartache was my own...  
Treasures were far and few between...  
My being was flaking but never seen...  
Time verses time – walls of sorry gaining  
strength only to rob me of any depth of  
love; peace and joy ever since I was a boy...  
As a boy there were no toys; no laughter or song...  
Time verses time; flesh of me was not but a bone  
Cage with no heart and soul...  
Such a heart to the world was much darker than black...  
Thy soul singed of its flesh biography...  
My evolving life was one of Pantheon crumbling...  
A pyramid scaling of slaved blocks building...  
Liking to thy cage of bones, I am not of fleshed luv ...  
I am simply an impounded, imprisoned sculpture of  
No valid reasoning other than a fragile science figure.



## Joan

*Sherryl Munson*

Joan is an adult ecologist, who checks waterways for pollution causing harm to the fish. She has a love of nature, with her great wish to save the environment. In the picture, she is a bit puzzled by all the rubbish in the creek, and feels the need to get back to the office to report it. She went to this area for a holiday, but while she was there, she was asked to check what was happening in the local environment. She wants to phone the government, and organise to get some unemployed people to come down to clean up the area and learn some skills. She is driven by the need to preserve nature, and feels that if responsible people were living in the area, they could look after the local environment. Maybe a local club could be started up that could look after the creek. Joan always wears a ring she was given by her mother when she was a child. It connects her to her mother, her childhood, and even nature, as she spent her childhood in the country. Later she moved to the city but she likes to go back to the country whenever she can. She teaches her children the same values that she grew up with.





## **SOFT MATERIAL**

*Cecily Van Gessel*

The softness of this piece of material reminds me of being a small child.

Safety was only felt in the warmth of my younger siblings.

Mothering them was the only love I knew.

It is just now that I understand this.

All my life I have loved softness but didn't realise I was looking for comfort – the comfort of a small child lying close to its mother.

## **A Drive**

*Colleen Stevenson*

My dad was going to take mum and I for a drive to the country.

I went to get ready to go and I was so excited.

We started off our drive and when we got there, mum went for a walk.

Dad and I went to look at the trees.

I was five or six years old, and my dad was my hero.

I loved leaves of all different kinds.

I was so happy with what I had and we were going home with mum.





## The Wheels are Turning

*Natan Southee*

Haircut of the day, clean shave, hair gel, combed my hair.

There I am, a man looking at me in the mirror.

My hair is not blonde, in fact quite grey.

Now I am a man, thawing, courage to be vulnerable, safe surroundings, the storm subsiding, the sun is shining, spiritual concepts, universal program.

I say good day, hello, hi. My inner child is typing, within me, that's right inside, we are together, his head dress, for now our higher power abides, one day at a time, easy does it, let go let god.



## Me, Just a little shell

*Gloria Lovely*

I am called a shell.

I am small but beautiful, but most of all I have an important use.

I am home to a living creature.

He can come into me.

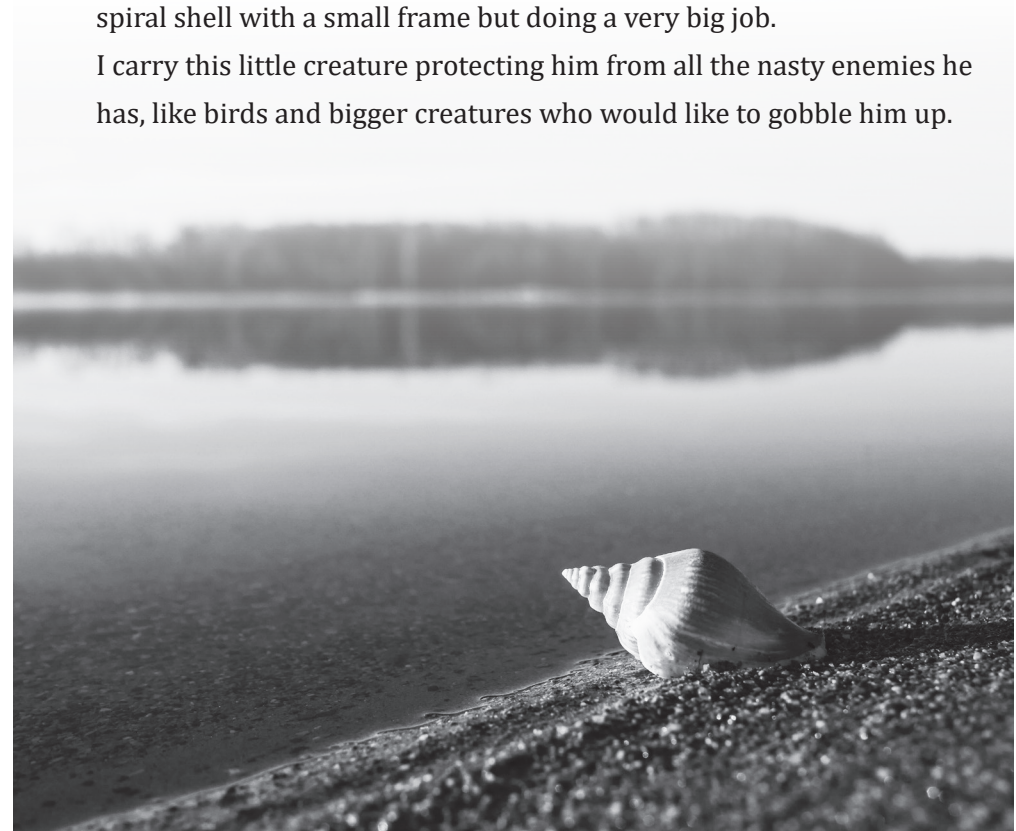
I am his protection, which is most important to him.

So I am very happy to be able to help him by providing this shelter.

I may look frail but I am strong enough to carry him through his life and the battles he has to face, because you know I am from the big, wild, rough sea and so is he.

Sometimes it is calm but mostly it is not, so here I am, this beautiful little spiral shell with a small frame but doing a very big job.

I carry this little creature protecting him from all the nasty enemies he has, like birds and bigger creatures who would like to gobble him up.





## THE MIRACLE

*Lynn Stott*

Many years ago, we had horses. Albert my husband decided to buy a horse float. We ended up getting a horse truck.

One day, while I was standing at the back of the truck helping the door to go up from underneath it, the string broke and the door which weighed over three quarters of a ton came down on my head.

It took three men to take it off me.

The ambulance came, and as I was going up the hill to the hospital inside it, I died. The ambos started my heart again as we got to the PA hospital, but I died again. The doctor told my husband and sons that they couldn't save me and they were going to let me go.

But they went in again and started my heart one more time.

I was taken into a room.

When I woke up there was a male nurse sitting next to me.

I asked if he was an angel.

He was very handsome! I thought I had died and gone to heaven.

He said, "No, I'm a nurse."

I was in hospital for nine days.

I broke my foot and ribs and my head of course.

I am very lucky to be here, the doctors told me.



## PINK RIBBON

*Denise Pipinis*

Pink ribbon, sequins and hat elastic.

They came together one time and said,

"We could all look great together, let's connect, hey?"

The pink ribbon was smooth and long.

The elastic was also long and stretchy.

The elastic connected with the silky ribbon gathered up so you could still stretch the elastic.

"Something was missing," they said.

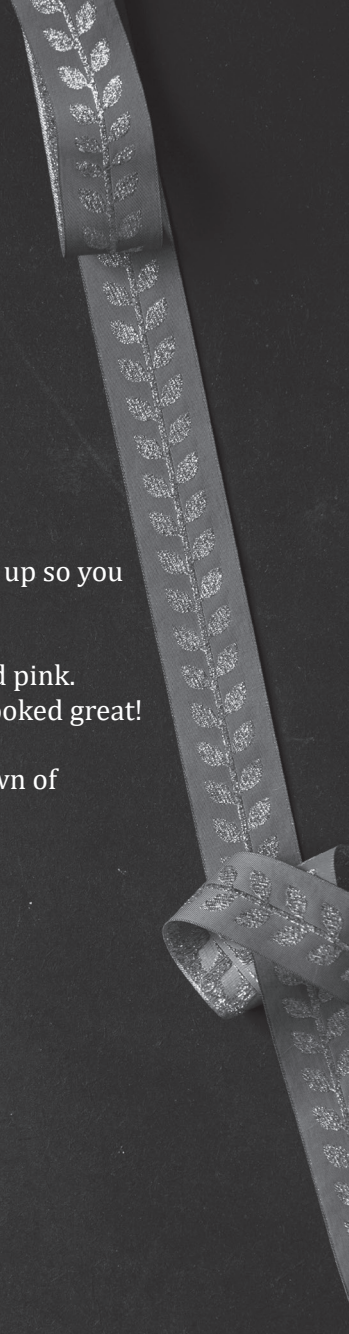
So they invited sequins to join them. Bright small and pink.

Many were attached to the ribbon and elastic. This looked great!

It felt right, as if it was a good combination.

Not only did it feel good but it was a feeling deep down of

"Look at me! I look good and I feel good!"





## Time

*Pierre de la Croix*

Stumbling within the depths of the near forest, I sat on a fallen tree; passing thoughts of “only if this tree could talk, what would it divulge? What would it have to say for itself?” Would it start from its junior stem years telling us of the varying conquerors of this land; man coming via long boats; beasts big and small that prowled its wonder lands; the hunted and its prey, whether they were meat eaters or dined on fauna or the enriching rubbished jungle floor right through time till now. Will it elaborate in showing its disgust with humans and their constant greed for our substances? Through my peripheral vision I was drawn to what appeared space like; a series of muskmelons with a canary yellow fur-like form housed on the forest basin. Immersed in some free time with my new-found detected revelation, I found that we may have something in common with a rough protective exterior with our structural inner substance that was of a soft pliable matter aiding in our shaping silhouettes. Our differences apply in that mushrooms only endure a prevailing time of life whereas my standing has a bigger task to sieve through more laborious fodder to enjoy a much longer stage of life.



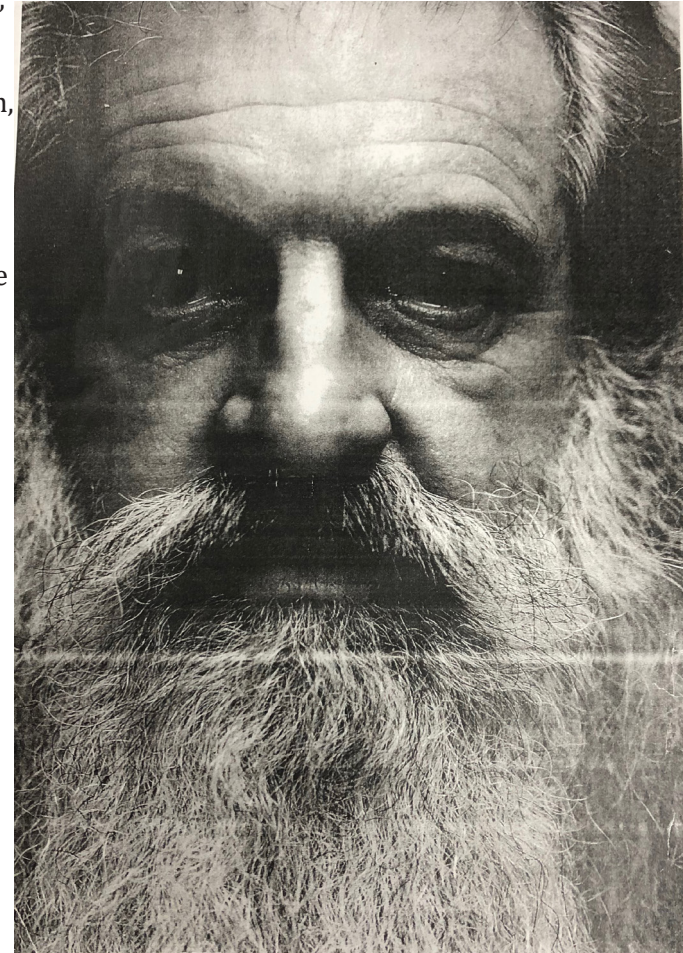
Photo by Colleen Stevenson

## Who

*Gloria Lovely*

I see a face full of sorrow. He has had a hard and meaningful life. He was a very hard worker, been through hard, tough times, a life full of history. Had he been a soldier through a war, a war full of battle scars, and most all suffered mental emotional scars? I also see he may have been a hard, tough worker of the land, been through a lot of droughts and flooded rains. He would have told of many stories of his life to his children and grandchildren, but who was he? Was he a well known entity? To me, he looks like he may have been an icon, an inspiration to many people. I would liked to have known him. Who was he? He reminds me of me.

He tells me a lot of things about himself, the despair, the many sad tales of his life. He saw his mother going through hard, tough times not only the physical troubled times in her life, but the raw, despairing, tortured emotional sufferances of her broken, damaged spirit. Has he learnt from his mother's pain, not to go through it himself? He tries his hardest but woe is he, life itself is tough. He has to be strong and carry on. Though try as he may, he cannot avoid life. Life throws one thing after another at him, but he is stronger than that, he battles on dealing with life. Life is tough in itself, but coping with people make it harder for him. Just look at his face, it tells the whole story.





## Joy

*Dawn Grey*

It is time of day for walk. But why not walk?

Human sits on the sitting thing in front of the lights and sound box but does not walk.

Hmmm. Maybe human forgot walk? "AARF" I remind her.

Human looks as me and says "blahblahblah WALK blah blah".

What? what? "Walk?"

Human bends down and puts on feet-coverers. Yes! It is walk!

I have to go to the kitchen. No! I have to go outside.

No! I have to go back to human.

Human picks up leash.

Is this the best thing that has ever happened? I think so! I can't wait! I'm going to catch a squirrel.

Maybe I will catch every squirrel in the world!



## The Great Meat Robbery

*Colin Lofgren*

Once upon a time in a town called Binglewood, there was a butcher's shop. The owner of the shop was Mr Claus, who was a very successful businessman, but a mean one at that. He was quite nice to the rich and their pets, but not to the poor and their pets. He sold the best cuts of meat to the rich, but the meat he sold to the poor was not even fit to feed to their animals. This went on for a number of years.

One day, there was a chance meeting between a couple of old friends who hadn't seen one another for a long time. The rich dog asked his friend about his life as he could see he was in poor condition. The rich dog was a maremma, and his name was El Salvador. His friend told him that his master had fallen on hard times, and the owner of the butcher shop was a very mean man to the poor people of the town.

El Salvador's friend was a golden retriever called Samuel, better known as Sammy by his master. He and El Salvador hatched up a plan to get their own back on the butcher. They recruited two other dogs, Timothy, a black Irish setter and Rainy, a black dog. The plan was for the two dogs to start a fight outside the front door of the shop. Meanwhile, the other two dogs would go in the back door and steal a leg of lamb.

Unfortunately, it did not go quite to plan. Mr Claus saw them escaping out the back door with the lamb. He chased after them yelling, "Come back here with that leg of lamb!" The dogs kept running, while the towns people came out to see what was going on. Meanwhile, the two dogs who had been fighting out the front of the shop caught up with the other dogs. The people of the town saw what was going on and started to laugh and laugh. After that day, the shopkeeper never treated poor people badly again. The dogs became the heroes of the town.

