

The background is a dark, circular labyrinth with intricate, concentric paths. In the center of the labyrinth is a circular opening that reveals a landscape with a rainbow and mountains. Overlaid on this opening is a large, detailed human eye with a blue iris and a black pupil. The title text is superimposed over the upper part of the labyrinth.

A Poet's Labyrinth

by
Remo Perini

Perini, Remo.
A Poet's Labyrinth.
[1. Poetry]

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Poem Menu

Dedication.....	vii
Introduction.....	ix
Read With Me.....	1
Breadcrumbs.....	3
Touching.....	5
Outside.....	7
The Baton.....	9
Sometimes.....	11
Did I Tell You?.....	13
The Trodden Path.....	15
If.....	17
My Nose.....	19
Poet's Chimes.....	21
Be the Worm.....	23
A Turtle and a Little Fish.....	25
The Planet Doesn't Care.....	27
Help.....	29
Path.....	31
Life Worth Living.....	33
Aging Hand.....	35
Gifts.....	37



Poem Menu

Youth Dreams.....	39
Sidewalks and Streets.....	41
Two I's Dance.....	43
In the Kitchen.....	45
Forgetting.....	47
Adolescence.....	49
Final Breath.....	51
Celebrate the Journey.....	53
Far Apart.....	55
Tuba.....	57
Loss.....	59
Consciousness.....	61
Integrity.....	63
Fulfillment.....	65
Little Boy Blue.....	67
Hi-Fi Heaven.....	69
Tomorrow's Yesterday.....	72
We Are Two I's.....	73
The Profit Prophet.....	74
Tangle Are We.....	75
Seclusion.....	76
Art Attribution.....	77
Author's Bio.....	81



DEDICATION



This book is dedicated to my sole sibling, Dr. Sean Perini, my favorite brother. Sean was not always a doctor. Like myself, he was born a small child. When I was five years old, I came home from my first day of kindergarten crying. My mother was distressed and asked, “What happened”, to which I replied, “They called me Rainbow”. My three-year old brother, placed his hand on my arm and said, “Don’t worry Remo, they call me Seanda”. It was unclear who the “they” were that he was referring to, since he was three, and had not yet gone out on tour or even out of the house unaccompanied by one or both parents.

Sean and I have always been somewhat competitive in a fun-spirited, humorous kind of way; like wrestling to the ground on the floor of a restaurant as we both reached for the check, or calling “shot gun” and racing across the parking lot for the passenger seat of the car driven by one of our gene providers.

Both Sean and I are over-educated, and while he has done well in the stock market, I make a better onion soup (based on a meat stock). You don’t need to buy low and sell high to afford onions, but he does have a fancier kitchen with a three-door refrigerator. Sean has medical patents in the area of “I have no idea”. He likes to build things (like houses), and aspires to spending his silver years sailing into a literal rather than figurative sunset; with a 40’ yet-to-be-named boat currently on order.

On the other hand, Sean has five more fingers. He was supposed to retire at the end of 2022 but the boat isn’t ready yet, so he is consulting. I get a discount if I keep my calls to him under a minute. He prefers a meatless tomato sauce to almost all types of salami, as a typical vegan would. Once while herding a colony of mallard ducks across a busy intersection, he paused for photographs to appease a tourist bus filled with drunken sailors from Singapore. No ducks were injured.

He probably won’t have time to read this book, but if it comes out as an audio book, I hope he enjoys it.

This Page
Intentionally
Left Black

INTRODUCTION

Prior to completing “A Poets Labyrinth” I decided to discuss the state of poetry, entirely from my perspective, based on zero research. It has been my observation that many “modern” poets are largely divested from the “burden” and rules of rhyme and meter, allowing free verse to broaden the universe of possibilities for expression. Rhyming verse is not as popular as it once was.

As the yet unsurpassed master of the written word, Shakespeare’s gift to humanity was to make free verse seem as enchanting as a magnificent painting or musical overture. Shakespeare talent is irrefutable. I do not have or aspire to developing such talent, but my artistry is a gift, not one that I possess, but a gift I offer to those who wish to share my emotions, thoughts, and feelings.

Who are the recipients of this gift? Adult reading overall has diminished and is continuing to decline. Fewer than 5% of Americans are avid readers (one book per week), and only 13% are frequent readers (21 books per year). The internet and the numerous ways it can distract us is a contributor to this demise. But we are also confronted with the largest wage gap in history that forces 99% of Americans to work more hours to pay for rent and food. Hence, fewer readers. Interestingly, there are more writers due to the ease of self-publishing.

To attract readers, authors try a multitude of techniques, such as addressing current social topics and in the poetry genre, finding new ways to express feelings and emotions that we all share. I have tried to merge imagery with the written word and mix a variety of styles. I believe brevity is also important in poetry. I often take a longer piece and divide it into two or more shorter pieces.

I am going to suggest here, based again on zero research and only my own opinion, that the prevalence of non-rhyming free verse may be a contributing factor to the decrease in poetry readership. Yes, rhyming and meter is harder to compose, and the story and expression becomes constrained by the limitations imposed by rhyme and meter, but....

I enjoy the endeavor, it makes me feel clever,
I take extra efforts to rhyme,
Not shirking complaisance, a well-structured cadence,
Is worth extra effort and time.
Whether speaking of Love, or what Faith consist of,
I'll decide if its fits to be lyrical,
To make verse inspire and a reader admire,
Finding rhyme schemes is sometimes a miracle.

The plight of the poor, the middle-class roar,
Or the loss of one's faith or conviction,
Are captured herein, without any chagrin,
With meter and rhyme-centered diction.
The pages inside, I present with some pride,
A mixture of free verse and rhymes,
Like soft melodies, played with strings or on keys,
I strive to make verse ring like chimes.

This, my second book of poetry, contains a mixture of personal emotion mixed with humorous verses and a few abstract works. I have also included five pieces from the previous book, *Evens and Beginnings, A Collection of Odds and Ends*. Just because.

If I can make you smile, bring a tear to your eye, provide a new perspective, or make you introspective, I have succeeded.

READ WITH ME

Read with me and I will show you my heart.

Read with me and we will share feelings of bitterness.

Read with me and we will share the painful loss of a companion.

Read with me and we will share a path of love and laughter.

Read with me and we will smell fond memories.

Read with me and we will share melodies selected by the wind.

Read with me and we will share a journey to inner peace.

Read with me and we will sail with the wind to a quiet haven.

Read with me and we will see the world through the eyes of a newborn.

Read with me and we will share ways to live an honorable life.

Read with me and we will see in an aging body the youth in all of us.

Read with me and we will share the gifts given by great artists.

Read with me and we will examine the complexity of youth.

Read with me and we will see a painting that looks upon its visitors.

Read with me and we will take our last breath together.





BREADCRUMBS

Sailing enthusiastically to a far-off quiet haven,
Sailing with a tailwind, for a chance to be a maven.
Just wanting to lose myself, left breadcrumbs as a trail,
I might need to return sometime, should my prospects fail.

I am answerable to no one, no girlfriend and no wife.
I afford myself the prospect of changing my whole life.
I need to look inside myself to find what might be next,
I want to take another road, entice my love for text.

I chose a place to visit, quite distant from our homes,
With exceptional surroundings to stimulate my poems.
Away from the familiar, new surroundings, new frontier,
It's time for a new journey, new perspectives, new career.

I settled in and organized, a proper place to work,
With monitors and keyboards, for writing and artwork.
To my dissatisfaction, my old work had not ended.
To assure I started something new my voyage was extended,

The second week began to show, unexpected prospects,
That slowly started to unfold a host of thrilling projects.
To stretch the prior metaphor, the breadcrumbs coalesced.
Like making chicken cutlets, by pounded chicken breasts.

A golden coat around my life, with bits of new and old.
My new work merged with prior work as if from the same mold,
I started tweaking written poems, some prose turned into verse,
Some lyric verse reduced to prose, to make it sound more terse.

My words became symbolic, and my topics more complex,
My cool remote location inspired a list of new subjects.

My personal life story, took an unpredicted turn,
A new path and new travel plans, with very much to learn.

For my upcoming future, I plan to travel widely,
With solitude, no tourist sites, I won't be dawdling idly.

I'm seeking inspiration, my remaining life agenda,
But now I'll scatter panko crumbs.

To keep my writing tender.



TOUCHING

Our sense of touch is not defined,
By neurons near the skin,
True feelings come from poetry,
And words contained therein.
As author of these bits of verse,
I aim to touch your heart,
And hope my words caress your soul,
Though we're physically apart.

I think of you my reader,
My future intellect,
And I, a writer from your past,
that hopes that we connect.
I seek the perfect catalyst,
To waken your emotions,
Though divided geographically,
By borders, hills, and oceans.

Sometimes I paint a picture,
Of beauty, pure and sweet,
Sometimes my words show bitterness,
betrayal, or deceit.

On words of love you may reflect,
The passion you have felt,
Or if my words are bitter,
Some bad cards you've been dealt.

Your life and your experience,
Add depth to my expression.
With re-enforced intensity,
That adds a new dimension.
As you read, some parts of you,
Combine with parts of me,
Convergence of awareness,
A shared realty.



OUTSIDE

The light is bright, the air is cold, why did I have to leave?
I feel alone, where is my warmth? I struggle to perceive.
I cry out loud, my first such cry,
Which seemed to get attention,
I'm wrapped in cloth, I'm warmer now,
And feel some soft protection.

If I could only just return to where I was before,
I promise that I won't complain or kick you anymore.
I miss my warm and watery world,
I don't like this outside,
But I suspected all along, an exit was implied.

The buzzy noise and blurry lights,
Are scary and confusing,
The cloth is rough, the noises shrill,
This change is not my choosing.
I feel a softness on my lips,
A new way to get food?
With a pull, a liquid squirt,
It does taste kind of good.
So many frightening changes,
I don't know what to do,
I'm being held by gentle hands;
I hope I can trust you.
Blurry shapes are all I see,
Nothing makes much sense,
I'll fall asleep and have to trust,
I have no self-defense.

And as I drift into the depth of dreams and relaxation,
The person taking care of me must be a close relation,
From her I feel another sense, embracing like a glove,
A substitute for my lost womb, I sense that feels like Love





THE BATON

It's come to pass, I'm now alone, it's now just me and I.
No hand to hold, no precious smile, no twinkle of an eye.
We shared a life, but halfway through, you passed the race baton,
And now it seems there is no goal, the finish line is gone.

An imperfect analogy, we raced through life together,
A bond so tight, the baton we clutched, a light and loving tether.
We were the perfect couple, our joie de vivre was envied,
Our life was filled with friends and fun, our schedule was frenzied.

Too busy to get married, we didn't see the need,
I was yours and you were mine, and thus our love decreed.

Despite our healthy habits, your health a hurdle hit,
Disease that swiftly weakens bones, albeit your being fit.

Amidst the pain and weakness, 'twas me she would console.
To my surprise she passed to me a small handwritten scroll,
It said, "I'll always Love you. For me, don't dwell on grief,
You must have fun for both of us, your joy will be my peace."

I called a public notary, we'd bed-bound "walk" the aisle,
And by her bedside we were wed, which made my new bride smile,
Her grasp on life was weakening, that precious smile was strained,
And in what seemed an eyeblink, her grip was not maintained.

A last embrace, our honeymoon, a moment marked in time,
Her race complete, the final pass, across the final finish line.

How does one resume a life, when half that life is gone?
The hole does not seem fillable, but yet I must go on.

After the condolences, the friends have let me be.

I mope about the kitchen, I make a cup of tea,
In solitude I've realized, there really was no race,
The prize that I was reaching for: the smile upon her face.

Without her kind and cheerful laugh, and love that felt eternal,
Pursuing joy, her last request, is now my greatest hurdle.

My time is spent in gratitude, a tribute to my bride.
The baton is now my walking stick, forever by my side,



SOMETIMES

Sometimes it's the darkness,
That makes light seem impressive...

...and
sometimes it's
just starkness,
That make
words feel
expressive.





DID I TELL YOU?

**Did I tell you? I moved out of the apartment.
I got something smaller.**

Downsizing. I don't need so much space.

Did I tell you? I had a garage sale.

I'm getting rid of lots of stuff.

It's hard to part with some things... So many memories.

Did I tell you? I quit my job.

My savings and social security will be fine.

I don't plan to travel anymore,

And I don't want any more "stuff".

Did I tell you? I'm on a diet.

I need to reduce my dairy intake.

I still have coffee with creamer in the morning.

The 10-15 minutes of coffee,

Helps me decide what I will do during the day.

Did I tell you? I started writing.

Mostly just my thoughts.

I'm not very good.

But I have feelings and emotions,

That I want to get out.

Did I tell you? I miss you every day.

I think of you when I am having my coffee,

I thought of you at the garage sale,

When I got rid of anything that you had touched.

I missed you desperately when I left our apartment.

And I miss you more and more,

With every word I write.



THE TRODDEN PATH

I took the road less travelled and found myself alone.

I looked for inspiration in a field, a tree, a stone.
I found that as I walked that path, what hampers my creation,
For me, artistic impetus is lost in isolation.

My steps retraced, I took instead the trendy trodden way,
And grew my art through paintings, through music, and ballet.
My voice evolved, my art inspired, reflections shared with friends.
With some that just appreciate, and some that wield pens.

A great man joked of difference, in roads that are less travelled,
The humor was meant for a friend, but soon the joke unraveled.
The friend was indecisive; he joked about distinction,
But readers took it literally, embraced the contradiction.

There really is no difference in the paths your life can trace,
Our plans and goals and paths and dreams all end in the same place.
So better to surround yourself with joy and love and laughter,
A trodden path of happiness, before the “ever after.”



IF

...if, if, if... so many ifs.

If I were to write these words,
With the quill of a younger man,
One who has not yet experienced the void,
The depth of silence, the darkness that pushes
through daylight, and the long years through
which the void remains.

A younger man will not realize,
That as one tries to fill the void,
With happy memories,
They are consumed,
Making the void grow larger.

If I were that younger man,
I might not realize as I do now,
That the memories, the joy,
And the laughter are the elements,
That create the void.

I might still not know that the twinkle of an eye,
The touch of a hand, the gentle pairing of lips,
Can create a gap in one's life,
That cannot be filled.

But I am not that younger man,
And I have around me a vast array of voids,
Each built upon precious memories.

As my days grow short,
And the silent voids fill my world,
I find myself drawn,
Into their inescapable depth.



A close-up photograph of a person's face, focusing on the right eye and the bridge of the nose. The eye is light-colored and looking slightly to the right. The nose is prominent in the lower left foreground. The skin is fair and the lighting is soft, creating a gentle, intimate atmosphere.

MY NOSE

I have a pink protuberance,
Between my two blue eyes.
It doesn't get much notice,
it's average in size,
When people look me in the eye,
It hardly even seen,
While it's supposed to smell the world,
At that it's not too keen.
Upon my face it's central,
In charge of smells and scents,
But if a smell's not powerful,
That smell may not be sensed.

Despite poor smelling, it does wield,
The power to obtain,
Connection to lost memories,
From deep within my brain.
On occasion my dear nose,
Perceives a wafted smell,
Evoking distant memories,
Upon which I might dwell.
I wish my nose was more adept,
At conjuring the past,
So much I have forgotten,
So many years elapsed.
My nose and I, we made a deal,
I give it no directions,
And in return it brings to me,
Joyful recollections.





POET'S CHIMES

Hanging near my patio,
I've placed two sets of chimes.
The wind will blow their melodies,
That beckon heartfelt rhymes.
Their sound is clear and resonant.

Each note persists a while,
Transcribing sound to poetry,
Comes swiftly with a smile.

Mellifluous and soothing sound,
Like laughter from a child,
But softer and more random,
Calm and soft and mild.

To say the sound is "golden",
Hints at vision, not a sound,
So, let's just say it's very pure,
And heard from all around.

The chimes are tuned to complement,
Not tinkle, buzz, or blare,

It's not a ringing, not a gong,
Smooth chords through gusty air.

The bluster fashions a ballet,
Poetic symphony,

Leaves and branches pirouette,
Conducted by the breeze.

The dulcet sound's pastoral,
A choral art tableau.

The whispered canvas of the wind,
Resounds my patio.

My writing space has overtones,
The chime's motifs engender.

My prose and verse evoke the sound,
Of nature's quiet splendor.



PREVAILING THOUGHT

BE THE WORM

Fraught to apply substance, to uncover a shred of brilliance,
The hopeful scholar quests to wrest new wonders,
From an ocean teaming with market variety crustaceans,
Imbuing commonality through a long history of changing shells.
The graduate turns to a woefully slim lineage of human wisdom.

To be considered by committee, conventional contexts are,
Cultivated and contrived to convey a compelling contribution.
An adequate model is assembled, ambiguity is accepted,
The world is not enriched when prior art is cleverly re-stitched.

Through dissertations tomes cloistered on unbroken ground,
We plod along, barefoot through the mud,
Rolling in the recycled soil cultivated by others,
Trudging along horseback paths,
On broken sidewalks and dead-end lanes.

The committee accepts the apple, laced with prevailing thought.
The darkness of tired truths, the thread worn structure,
Bereft of breakthrough or novelty, produces new Ph.Ds.

To uncover unplowed fertile soil,
To till the creative ground of original thought,
One must be intrepid to confidently tear the texts, break the mold,
Rip the structured cloth and unveil a universe of unknowns,
Hitherto hidden by haphazard half-baked hypotheses.

Rethink recognized reality, legitimize abstraction,
Replace prior thought with disruptive inquiry.
Go beyond imagination to consider the abstract.
Apply quantum thinking to macro reality.
Pursue the ideas that seem implausible.
Stretch the bounds of truth and explore uncertainty.
Don't accept the offered apple unless it contains a worm.
Examine the holes left unfilled by prior scholars.
Defy the accepted canons that follow the tree-lined path.

The unmarked trail is the way to uncover new truths.
The worm is of more interests than the apple.
Be the uninvited worm. Break through the shiny surface,
And create novel concepts that will change everything.



A TURTLE AND A LITTLE FISH

A turtle and a little fish, crossed paths at sea one day,
And in the Buddha's presence, these thoughts did he convey.
Ten virtues that we all must learn, on journeys of ascendance,
This journey will take many lives, to slowly reach transcendence.

Dana is one virtue: generosity and sharing.
Metta is the virtue of good-will, kindness, and of caring.

Proper conduct is Sila,
Nekkhamma is renunciation,
The wisdom virtue is Panna,
Adhitthana is determination.
The Khanti virtue is patience,
Sacca is honesty,
Viriya is our diligence,
Upekkha equality.

And to the fish and turtle, he explained the rebirth chain,
You both were human recently and soon will be again.
Virtues are Paramitas, which translates to perfection,
In each re-birth perfect yourselves, toward pure karmic connection.
The Buddha explained, we all come back, the soul's reincarnations.
Perfecting virtues that we missed in prior instantiations.

Whether you are western, or grew up in the East.
Whether you are Buddhist, a rabbi, or a priest,
These virtues are appropriate, for humans universal,
Each day to be more virtuous, there is no dress rehearsal.

Western faiths offer one chance, from sin you must abstain.
The Buddhists preach a cycle, to try and try again,
The final goal of those re-births, completeness and quintessence,
Nirvana at the cycle's end, Immortal, Zenful essence.



THE PLANET DOESN'T CARE

You may enjoy attention, celebrity, and fame,
But you are just a tiny speck, the Earth knows not your name.

The Earth does not grant favor, to us of such short lives,
Three trillion trees outlive us all, have yet to catch Earth's eyes.

In the cosmic scheme of things, our numbers are not countless.
Compare our race with insects, quintillions are more boundless.

Four trillion swim the ocean, the rivers, and the sea,
When we're extinct, they'll still be here, swimming happily.

From pyramids to satellites, we've built impressive things,
Our arrogance neglects environmental damage that this brings.

While our race is building stuff and tearing up the land,
We've yet to make a dent that will resist the blowing sand.

The Earth will barely notice, no matter what we do,
We've filled the air with poison, and lakes and rivers too.

We can't control volcanoes, or just one thunderstorm,
What makes us think that we can fix an atmosphere gone wrong?

Disregarding science is suicide protracted.

Through greed, profits, and wastefulness, our species is impacted.

Most animals and birds and plants, will outlive our demise,

It's time for global planet-care, it's time for open eyes.

As a species we are fragile, without consistent care,
We won't survive a thousand years; the evidence is there.

As a race we must think big, stop focusing on wealth,
We need grand plans that focus on our human species health.

We're not killing the planet, it's just humanity,

The current actions of our race reflect insanity,

If roaming creatures are all gone, and the planet is left bare,

Another race would soon evolve, the planet doesn't care.



HELP

I'm not sure how it came to this, we had a nice apartment,
My employer fired half its staff, removing my department.

I missed the monthly rent and then,
Our stuff was on the street,
I have no one to move in with, I can't find food to eat.

I have a four and five-year-old,
They're crying cause they're hungry,
I've never had to beg before,
We don't have any money.

A homeless shelter, miles from here,
Is where we'll have to go,
But I'd prefer to find a job,
Near places that we know.

Were hungry and we're destitute,
We're also quite embarrassed,
We never thought we'd ever need,
Someone to take care of us.

We're suddenly unfortunate, I don't know what to say,
I regret remarks I made, to homeless yesterday.
Now I know that anyone, can wind up on the street.
Even the most honest folks that never steal or cheat.

I feel so bad my kids need food, the shelter we must go,
To see the optimistic side, at least there isn't snow.
One business suit for interviews, I hope it isn't wrecked.
I've learned a lifelong lesson: Treat Others with Respect.



PATH

Through yoga, reflection, quiescence of mind,
Indefinite dimensions within infinite time,
There's a path one can follow, a mountain to climb,
That will change your existence beyond one lifetime.

With infinite potential within unmeasurable distance,
You can choose tread worn paths,
As your choice for existence.

You can sing life in symmetry with dear mother earth,
Relax with the comforts you were offered at birth.
The prayerful have faith in omniscient divinity,
But steadfast devotion decries fact-based infinity.

To reveal a rapture that is unknown to faith,
Release your attachment to what scriptures saith.
Reach beyond senses to a pure conscious state,
There you'll find solitude, lying in wait.

The Zenful Nirvana, is life that's fulfilled,
Find peace deep within when your senses are stilled.
To become awakened, and find life's true essence,
You must shed the connection with corporeal presence.

This takes many years, or a master to guide you,
Our society's teachings exclude what's inside you.
The path to enlightenment, requires separation,
From all that you know and all your sensation,
From the external world, from consciousness, from rhyme,
From happiness, from reason, desire, and time.

When you're free of all concepts,
And your thoughts are just bareness,
You're left with just pure, unsullied awareness.
To find deep within you this path to be taken,
You've started your journey for your mind to Awaken.



LIFE WORTH LIVING

It's not about the money,
Or the fancy cars we drive.
It's not about your house,
your boat,
Or latest scuba dive.

It's not about the things you do,
Unless they're done for others.
Like taking care of children,
Or of poor expectant mothers.

Working in a shelter,
Bringing food to struggling poor,
Donating to youth groups,
When they're knocking at your door.

In a flood or in an earthquake,
There are ways you can pitch-in,
Building houses for the poor,
Or manning a kitchen.

With lives so short,
some ask themselves,
"What did I achieve?"

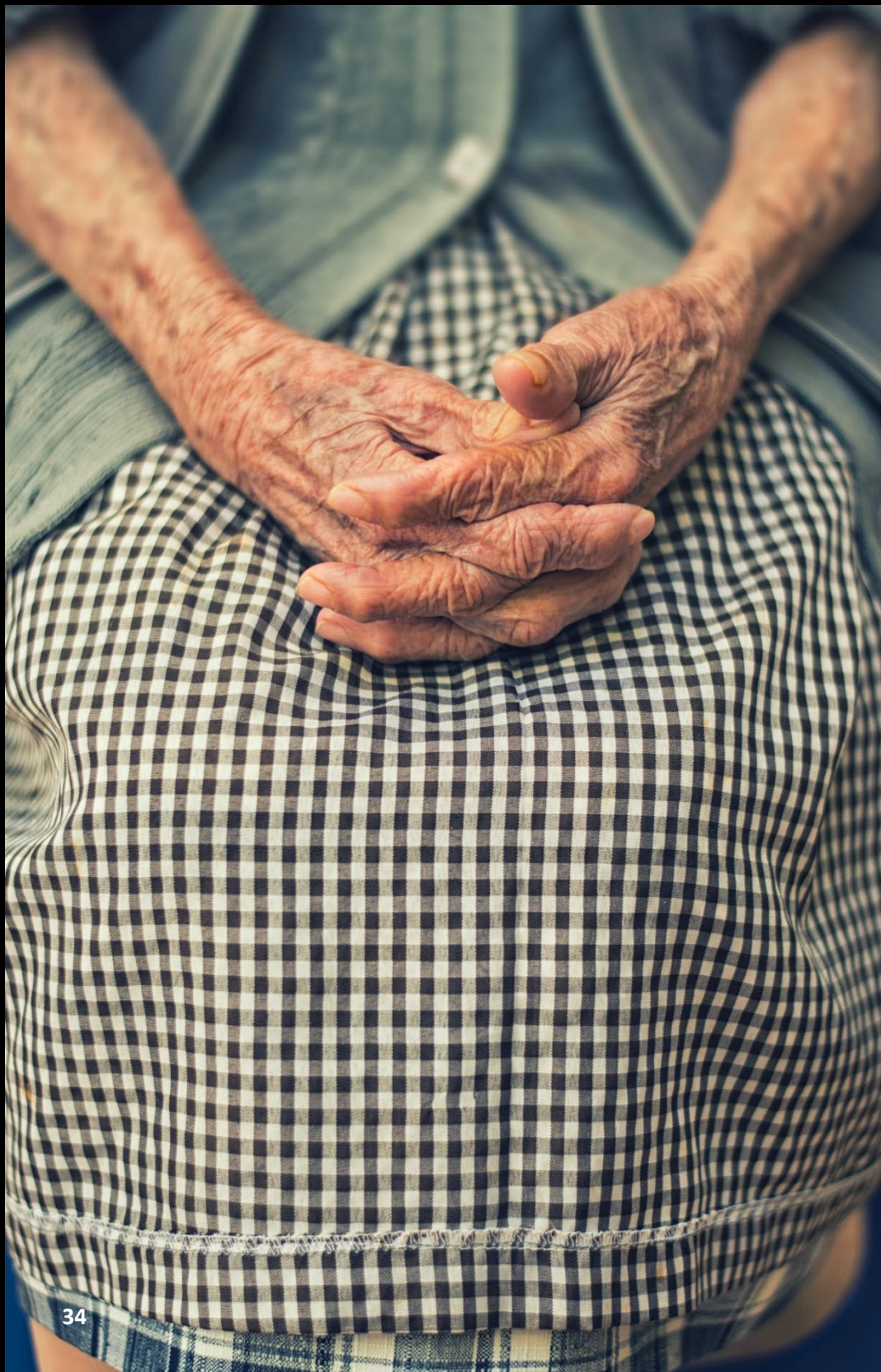
Will the marks I've made on Earth,
Survive me when I leave?

The most recalled accomplishments:
Health, happiness and laughter,
Warmly holding aging hands,
Making smiles that last long after.

The spirit of philanthropy,
The opposite of greed.

Is giving gladly of oneself,
To those that are in need.

It's not about tax write-offs,
Or about how much you give,
The beauty that comes from the heart,
Reflects a life well lived.



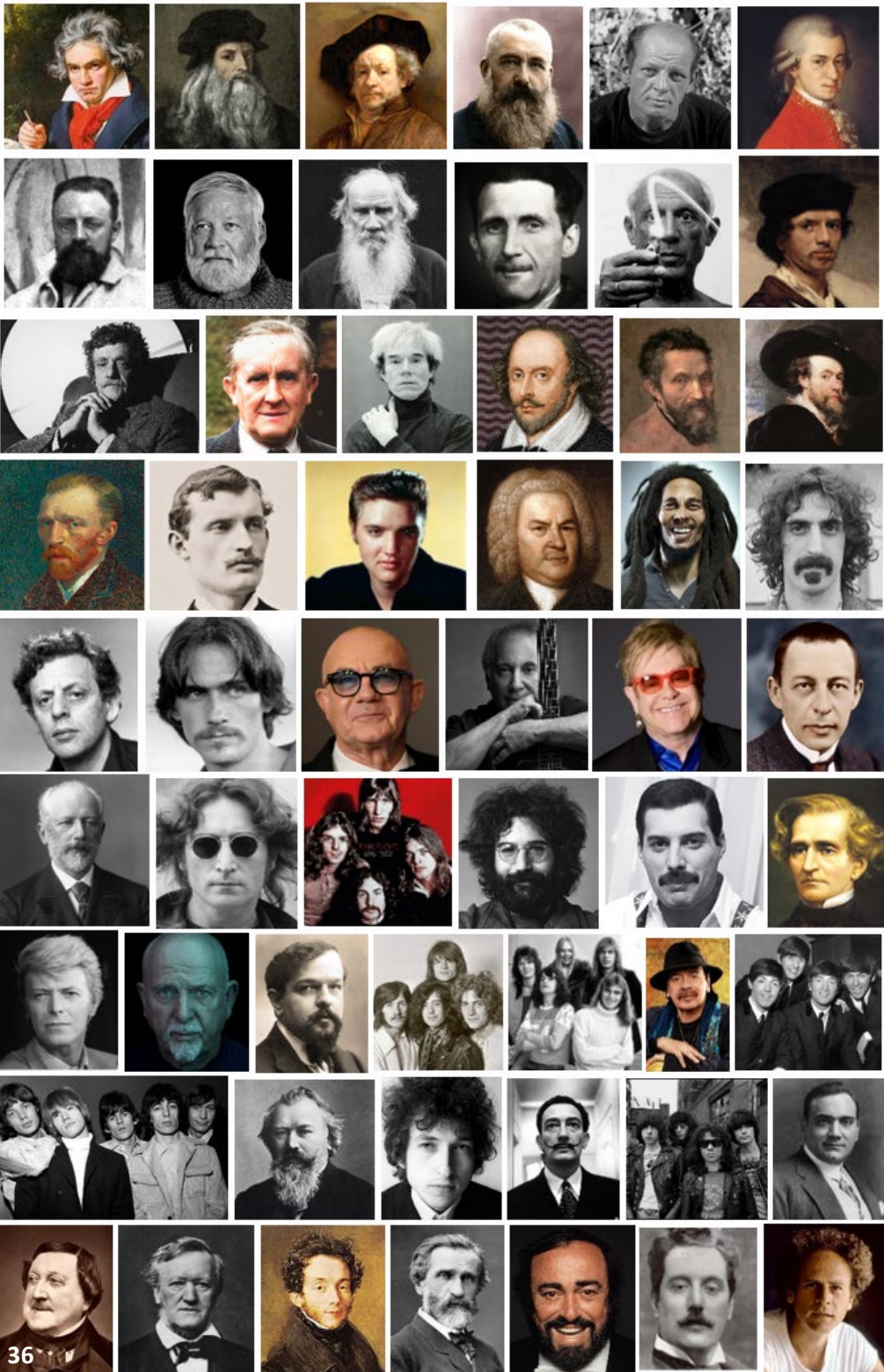
AGING HAND

The brown spots
Are so numerous,
I cannot even count,
Blue veins protruding everywhere,
And sores of no account.
The last remaining teeth are cracked,
And battered by decay,
The wrinkles and the
Pock-marked skin,
Have seen a better day.

But deep within there's beauty,
A teenager so fair,
That all the boys would dream of her,
Blue eyes and auburn hair.
A smile that shed such radiance,
When entering the dance.
A female form, that turned all heads,
With poise and elegance.

But even now those memories,
Begin to be forgotten,
Of holding hands,
And love's first kiss,
The smell of leaves in Autumn.
Of summer breezes at the beach,
And smiles of pearly white,
Of dogwood trees, and
Children's laughs,
Romance and candlelight.

Your nannies and your family,
Take care of all your wants.
Still enjoying every meal,
Too weak for restaurants.
Each day could be the final dance,
But sunsets can't be planned,
As long as cheerful smiles emerge,
When we hold your aging hand.



GIFTS

The artist offers selfless acts, as gifts to humankind,
Through music, art, and written word, creations of the mind.

Beethoven and DaVinci, Rembrandt, and Claude Monet,
Jackson Pollack, Mozart, Matisse, and Hemingway.

Tolstoy and George Orwell, Picasso and Vermeer,
Kurt Vonnegut, and Tolkien, Warhol and Shakespeare.

Writers, Poets, Painters, whose genius was applied,
Advancing brilliant visions, eternally inscribed.

Reubens, Michelangelo, Van Gogh, and Gustav Klimt,
Male artists, world renown, their art is our gift.

Musicians whose distinctive styles created a new class:

Elvis, Bach, Bob Marley, Frank Zappa, Phillip Glass.

James Taylor, Bernie Taupin, Paul Simon, Elton John,

Their ballads grasped our kindred souls, with potent, heartfelt song.

Rachmaninoff, Tchaikovsky, John Lennon, and Pink Floyd,

An endless list of music greats whose works we all enjoyed.

The Dead's Jerry Garcia, Queen's Freddy Mercury,

Berlioz and Bowie, Peter Gabriel, Debussy,

Led Zeppelin, Yes, Santana, The Beatles, Rolling Stones,

Johannes Brahms, Bob Dylan, Dali, and the Ramones

Operatic superstars: Caruso, and Rossini,

Wagner, Weber, Verdi, Pavarotti, and Puccini,

These brilliant men devoted lives to sharing their great art,

Some sacrificed their sanity; few famous at the start.

So many greats not listed here, some challenge lyric rhymin'.

Some names are hard and some are not: Garfunkel versus Simon.

These artists and a thousand more deserve great recognition,

For gifts they gave to all of us, and making art their mission.



YOUTH DREAMS

I have but one dream left in me, from hundreds in my youth,
I dreamed of dreams so big that they, could not be based on truth:

The first gymnast to execute a one-armed iron cross,
A global high-tech company admired as the boss.

I thought that I'd be famous and ride in limousines,
A well-known band, best-selling books, my face on magazines.

I thought that I'd have money, with lots to give away,
And folks would wish that they were me, even for one day.

I dreamed of love so intimate, we two were almost one,
I dreamt a life of great content where every day was fun.

But as I reached adulthood, the choices that I made,
Removed some possibilities and dreams began to fade.

Another decade soon flew by, I don't know where it went.
Ten years of working nine to five to pay for food and rent.

Where is that world-wide cruise I dreamt?

Or mansion near the ocean?

When I patronize a restaurant, no fuss or big commotion?

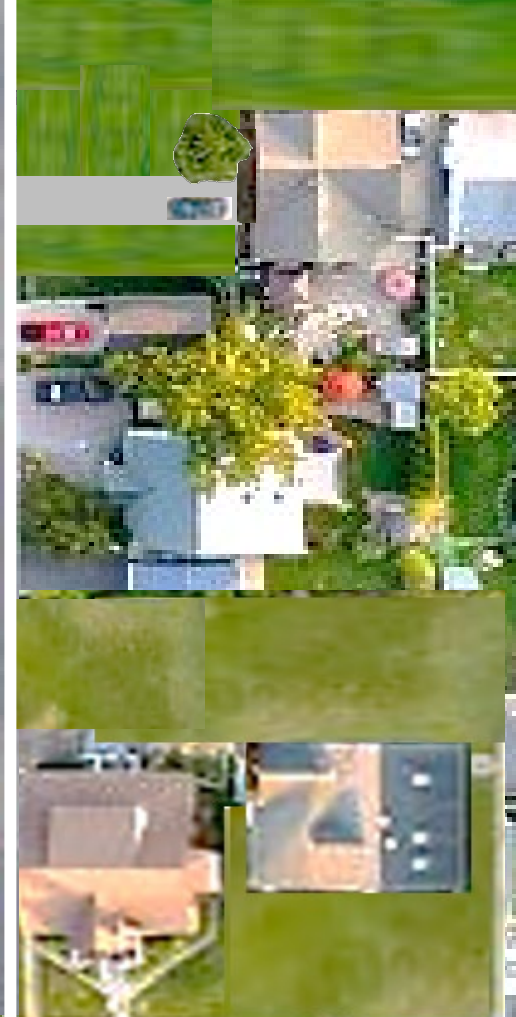
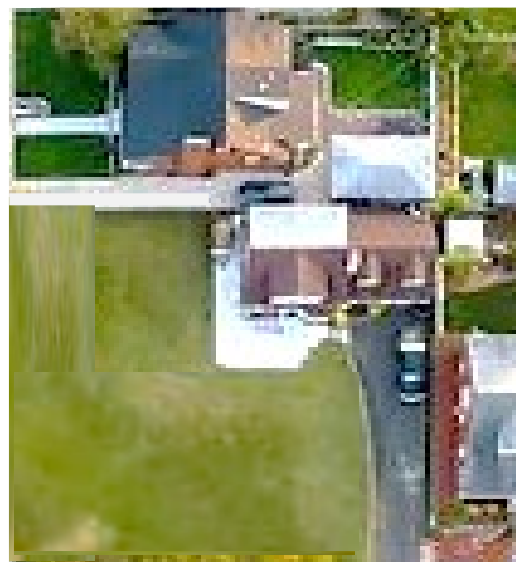
So here I am, I'm growing old, my triumphs are my own,
I sit at home and write some poems and spend most days alone.

Among the few dreams I still have is hoping I might find,
A lady friend to dance and dream, together side by side.

My most important cherished dreams are focused on my kids,
I dream that they will live their dreams, better than I did.

With magical accomplishments, fantastic to attain,

I support them as my parents did,
Youth dreams should be sustained.



SIDEWALKS & STREETS

We live on
A street with
Its own appellation,
In a box with a number
that marks our location.
All the boxes around us
And on nearby drives,
Were designed, built and sold,
To host people's lives.

Box numbers and street names
infrequently changed,
But inside routinely it's all rearranged.
There are births and there's deaths,
And when people move out.
The inside's repainted, decor moved about.
For the new dogs, new cats,
new kids, and new owners,
The street name and number,
Are borrowed as loaners.
When the owners move out,
They abandon the name,
But inside the box, the memories remain.

The roof and the walls, the ceilings, and floors,
Retain the vibrations of lives lived indoors.
The doors and the shutters, the windows, and walls,
Perceive our movements, our heat in their halls.
Inanimate objects prepare to observe,
New people, new pets and the lives they will serve.
No matter if middle class, poor, or elites,
Everyone's welcomed by sidewalks, and streets.



TWO I'S DANCE

Figurative foundations. Piquant pabulum.

Waking is merely curtesy,
Neither chalant nor sequitur.

Thankless chivalry in bold azure gestures,
A portrayal of tomorrow's sorrows.

Colloquial tin snips, yesterday's arbitrage,
Buried in the essence of never again.

Still squinting, do you seek solace?
The semblance of abstract affluence,
Forever perceived yet untouched, come hither.

Ashore, the squawking seems unreal.
The melody extant, the rhythm strangled,
In myriad oblique angles.

Two I's feign a passive dance,
Amidst the poet's beleaguered rants.

Bangles at the fulcrum,
Tarnished planking now laid bare,
Revealing stringent softness in the shadowed street.

The façade of a still far-off yet-to-be,
Is pursued, acquiescent, cherished, pithier, and plaid.

Our tainted souls accept with a whisper,
The barnacled challenge,
As we gingerly open the creaky cellar door.





Polecat Bl

IN THE KITCHEN

www.traditionalmusic.co.uk

We Fail,
We Toil,
We Love,
We Hurt,
We Build,
We Grow,
We Learn.

We're Sad,
We Create,
We Mature,
We Achieve,
We Get Sick,
We Get Well,

We Observe.

We Seek Help,
We Feel Pride,
We Are Robbed,
We Give Thanks,

We're Intimate,
We Look Forward,
We're Astounded,

We Live in the Present,
We Lose One We Love,
We Give and We Share,
We Feel Grounded.

We Develop Identity,
We Spend time with Friends,
We Accept our own Limitations,
We Feel Anger, Frustration,
Our Frail Bodies Decay,
We Return to Basic Foundations.

We Listen to Learn, then we Learn to Listen,
We look back and Reflect on Long Ago,
Through each live-long day,
Our soundtrack was played,
In the Kitchen on,
Dinah's Banjo.





FORGETTING

Childhood and the bending of leaves,
Adolescence with meaning in abeyance,
Maturity blurred by feverish quests,
Seniority with murky hindsight, knowing what we did not.
Forgetting what we did.

Memories of marching bands and little town parades.
Of elementary classes counting jellybeans,
Searching for peanuts colored red, green, and blue.
Digging for cherrystones, littlenecks and steamers.
A maroon mustang carrying kids to and from school.
We were merchants with heartfelt tales,
Peddling burgers from a bus, hold the onions.
Memories too distant to reconjure.

Now, inquisitive strangers rush to find mysterious pills,
Fumbling their burdens as they preach,
While pantheon gods and forest dwarves,
Treat wounded soldiers. The boneyard is quiet tonight,
No need to do your hair for the dancing moon glow.

Belligerent persistent gloom again,
Reflecting on a clouded yesterday, but why this room?
Condemning in soliloquy, the wheels and unused stairs.
Dependent on offspring heirs to take care of affairs.

Childhood returns to aged, sallow bodies,
Unlearning everything we once knew.
Unable to find the old chess set or the camera.
Maybe in the old garage where we used to live.

The Golden Girls and Aunt Bee are company.
The phone doesn't work, turn down the TV.
Rotating helpers that have been here for years,
Have names impossible to remember,
But if we are nice, we might get some chocolate.







ADOLESCENCE

The youth too young to realize,
Until they have grown old,
Self-consciousness will fade away,
As life's toils take their toll.

The things important to adults don't matter to a teen,
A crappy cup of coffee's fine,
As long as it's caffeine.

Youth is beauty manifest in soft and wholesome skin,
Some are heavy, tall or short, all wish to be too thin

Girls fret about the way they look, the boys don't really care.
For girls: High heels, make-up, skirts peeking underwear.
The boy teens need to have a car to impress teenage ladies,
Most girls don't seek intelligence, just cash and a Mercedes.
Awesome hotties, gorgeous bodies, thinking the same thing.
Girls may wonder, "does he dance?"
The boys think, "back-seat fling."

To stay out late is freedom, and sleeping late required,
But late for work repetitively results in getting fired.
When asking Mom or Dad for cash they say be home by ten,
When unfulfilled that promise is, it may not work again.
Cockiness or bashfulness are ways to hide uncertainty,
Bravado mixed with naivete, reflecting immaturity.
Hearing far-off laughter, unsure what might be funny,
Concerned with knowing words of songs, or running out of money.

Finding bars that don't ID and drinking the cool beers,
Getting into college, acceptance by one's peers,
While making fun of other's may be recognized as cruel,
When done with several other friends, it makes the group seem cool.
Body shape, skin color, ethnicity, and height,
Affect a kid's self-confidence, especially if they're bright.
Violating curfew, hormones that boost affection,
Overcome by insecurity and fearful of rejection,
New responsibilities. No care about life's essence,
Unsure about the future. The pains of adolescence.



FINAL BREATH

Brief moments of cognizance, amidst a downward spiral,
Your faculties are winding down, you've not spoken for a while.
You did say you're not feeling pain, so sweet to let us know.
But losing muscular control, is a grisly way to go.

"What is your position?" A strangely uttered query.
But indicates that 'till the end, you somehow remained cheery.
Your skin and bones distressed with age, your demeanor was elusive,
You remained brave, accepting fate, diagnosis inconclusive.

For several years before you left, your mien was not paternal.
Yet courage through impending death, your valor is eternal.
With every day grown weaker, you remained unafraid,
Sometimes you even tried to smile, your courage thus portrayed.

Despite most of your brain intact, the body lost control,
Intravenous nourishment, lips wet with water from a bowl.
Your request per advanced directive was to kindly pull the plug,
Except the intravenous nourishment there's nothing to unplug,

Though you can't communicate, to us there is no question,
You would not want to live this way, life absent of expression.
There is no cure, you cannot speak, or eat or drink or walk,
And though your mind is still intact, you cannot write or talk.

So sorry dad, we chose hospice, where you can pass at home,
They take away the nourishment, and so you won't last long,
A gentle man and loving soul, so sad to see you starving,
I miss your strength, your intellect, your joy when you were carving,

You gave your love unselfishly, just cared that we were fine,
Your carvings were your legacy, my poetry is mine.

The last day spent together, I sang you lullabies,
The ones you sang to your young child, so he would close his eyes.
Before you passed we sang five words, together soft and slow,
The last words of the song we sang, "Strumming on the Old Banjo."

It wasn't too much longer, before your final breath,
We are alone when we are born, so too we are in death.
Your love is deep within me now, it's felt as I reprise,
The times you rocked your baby boy, singing lullabies.



CELEBRATE THE JOURNEY

We celebrate the year it takes for Earth to loop the sun,
We measure this from our first breath,
To where that birth begun.

For kids this is a joyous time, it marks a year's duration.
Eating cake and getting gifts, their day of celebration.

But as adults, our journey's worth, is based on being kind,
In sharing life with others, being selflessly inclined.
We all take separate lifetime paths, but those that fare us well,
Are those we share with other folks, even for a spell.

When crossing paths with strangers,
Perhaps we'll share a word,
Or just a brief respectful nod that says sans being heard:
"I'm glad that we crossed paths today,
I hope you're doing great,
Perhaps we'll meet again someday.
If so, we'll celebrate."

By taking just a moment, to chat with someone new,
You've found a fellow journeyer,
Whose life path crossed with you.

It only takes a minute, to share some laughs or smiles,
The joy of those encounters, can warm our souls for miles.

Celebrate the journey and the friends you meet enroute,
To all those folks whose paths you've crossed:
A forkful cake salute.





FAR APART



We've been apart for ages,
I miss your warmth and laughter,
I often thought the two of us,
Might "happily ever after".

Sometimes you seem so far away,
Like stars of stunning distance,
The gap seems so unfathomable,
Imperiling coexistence.

But sometimes when I think of you,
I gaze upon the moon,
And at these times you seem so close,
Like lamps that light my room.

So, look with me up to the sky,
Though not in the same place,
Because it seems our staring eyes,
Perchance can cross in space.

A dreamy moon, we both can share,
Same moonlight on our faces,
Me from here and you from there,
Together in different places.





TUBA

It's not the most melodic,
It's the bass-line in a band.
A "newbie" in the Orchestra,
A string bass bowed by hand.

The Tuba wields greatness,
Its low notes calm and round,
Cavernous, Majestic,
Soothing, Solid sound.

Anchoring the harmony,
Full-bodied and sustaining,
With deep and earthy,
Weighty tones, euphonic,
Entertaining.

Its resonance unfathomable,
The rumbling, rhythmic bass.
No other brass-group instrument,
Can take the Tuba's place.





LOSS

We are here but for an instant, but when that instant ends,
The wings of time take us away,
And time stands still for those left behind.
We wish we had spent more time. We wish we had shared more.
We wish we had paid more compliments.
We wish we could re-live special moments.
Those moments and the memories, the smiles and the laughter,
The pain and the sadness shared,
The places visited, the gifts, the secrets.
They are within you, within me,
And within everyone whose life that they gently touched.
When we think of those moments, as we will forever,
I know that they wish us to do so with happiness, not with sadness.
I know this because we share one heart, across all humanity.
As individuals, we leave the tiniest of marks on the world,
And the marks we leave are frail, erased by the blowing sands.
The mighty wings of fleeting time carry us away,
With a barely audible flutter.
The journey ends, as do the carefully laid paths,
And dreams, of great and lesser men and women.
The roads less traveled and those well-trodden,
End in the same place.
Whether there is an eternal soul that carries our essence,
Or the essence we leave is the spirit contained,
Within the joyful memories they left behind for us,
To hold and to cherish,
That spirit, that essence,
The inspiration of a life so beautifully lived,
Is now at home in all of us.
And there, they have found peace.



CONSCIOUSNESS

Some species of Earth animals, display complex emotions.

Some think and feel and show remorse,

And other abstract notions.

Gorillas, apes and chimpanzees present as self-aware,

They groom themselves, and clean their teeth,

And love to groom their hair.

They're very social animals, they're funny and they laugh,

And those that live near water, will often take a bath.

Each tribe maintains a structure, a hierarchy, and rules,

They live in a society and know how to make tools.

Dolphins, whales, and porpoises, also have big brains,

Experience frustrations, enjoyment, fears, and pains.

They help the group evade attack, with tactical approaches,

Whenever there is danger or a predator encroaches.

Helping others with their young, for protection and for feeding,

Mating dances are performed, prerequisite to breeding.

These mammals all communicate with highly complex song,

That travels through an ocean path, five thousand miles long.

Many different mammals, with emotions and intellect,

Similar to humans, except for one aspect,

They're grounded in reality, throughout their evolution,

No superstitions, myths, or gods, no dogma or illusions,

Despite their fear of danger, their view is quite empirical,

No searching skyward for support, no concept of a miracle.

But humans are quite different, ingrained in our psychology,

There persists a strangely primal need, for spiritual ideology.



INTEGRITY

When our business won the work, it was a dream come true.
In one great leap we tripled size, impressive well-earned coup.
But right away their leadership, did not act in good faith,
Violating contract laws, attorneys were engaged.

The depth of their dishonesty, took us by surprise,
We treated them with honesty, and they replied with lies.
We maintained our integrity, and showed them their mistakes.
They hurt our team financially, and then they raised the stakes.

Inflicting grievous penalties, to make the matters worse,
Ignoring pleas for fairness, our win became a curse.
While disregarding contract law, can customers be right?
Despite their clear dishonesty, the client won the fight.

The legal experts cautioned us, we've got to let it go,
There is no chance for fairness, we're running short of dough.
I do not see a lesson learned; five years of work destroyed.
And even worse I need to fire, great people I've employed.

Perhaps an opportunity, will come and save the day.
But as for now I only wish, this dream would go away.



FULFILLMENT

Our weeks are filled with errands,
Careers, and work frustrations,
With insufficient paid time off,
To visit other nations.

The only work-life that we know,
The dismal nine-to-fives.
Through jobs we take,
We sell ourselves,
For most of our short lives.

Free time is spent relaxing,
Or the “pastimes” we prefer.
Waiting for the weekends,
That go by in a blur.

Our culture’s stressful work ethic,
Ingrained in us since birth,
Five days per week we toil for pay,
That robs from us our worth,

Our healthy years forsaken,
We’ve sold our time for naught,
No value has our money,
Or all the stuff we bought.

We need some time to clear our minds,
Some time to decompress,
Consider well the paths we’re on,
Take time to reassess.



LITTLE BOY BLUE

I hang in California at the Huntington Museum,
My friends hang all around me, I hope you come to see them,
I centerpiece the gallery, they call me *Little Boy Blue*,
As you stand and look at me, I'm looking back at you.

I'm famous for my blue silk suit,
And shoes with blue silk bows.
My best friend here is Pinkie,
Pink ribbons on her clothes.

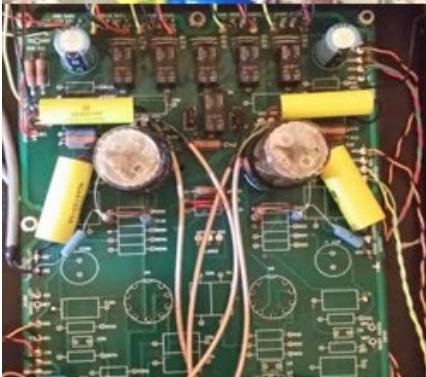
When the gallery closes, we jump upon the floor,
At times we meet new characters, on loan or on a tour.
When you're looking in at us, as we look out at you,
We'd love for you to hop on in, to see life as we do.

But our respective media aren't suited in that way.
We were birthed through artist's hands,
And yours are feet of clay.

Not suggesting flawlessness, but artists take much care,
To accurately position every wrinkle, stone, and hair.

The museum has variety, a collection that includes,
A gallery of pin-up girls, artistic female nudes.
That room makes Pinkie jealous, when sometimes I peruse.
But I am merely made of paint and can't take off my shoes.

Please come to take a visit, we're waiting here for you,
There used to be so many people waiting in a queue,
Its slower now, the days are quiet,
We gaze from where we're hung,
When evening comes we dance and laugh,
For we're forever young.



HI-FI HEAVEN

I learned today, one year late,
the news of your departure,
A tinkerer, a music man,
in your niche there was no smarter.
You, my friend, are unforgettable,
a man of wit and cunning,
Your vast array of audio gear,
breathtaking and quite stunning.
In your shop you always were
the smartest in the room,
By just a model number
you could guess the unit's doom.
From McIntosh to Halfler,
you knew Achilles heals,
With solder, scope, and DVM,
repairs were rapid deals.
I won't forget your workbench,
it seemed to me like chaos,
You strictly used technology,
no assumptions, guess, or séance.
One hundred dollars to open up,
Even if just a fuse, the \$99 additional
caused a couple bad reviews.
A true Falls Church legend,
an icon we now miss,
But maybe not the fire marshal
when inspecting your premise.
To know you was to "get you",
a strong personality,
I relished in your sarcasm,
mixed with geniality.
Equipment that was stacked
On shelves and throughout the floor
And in the two adjacent room,
there were some hundreds more.
More than just a customer,
but not quite a good friend,
I get you Brett, and sorry mate,
I was not with you near the end.
I reached out to your family,
don't know if they'll respond,
Not wanting to re-new their grief,
But let them know you're honored.
I have a bunch of amps you fixed,
and speakers that you sold me,
They're all now cherished items,
since you were a one and only.
The memories come flooding back,
with pictures of your shop,
I enjoyed each visit with you,
did not think that they would stop.
Your obituary made me cry,
I really dropped the ball,
Your numbers on my favorite list,
I wish that I had called.
I wish that I had known you better,
invited you to my home,
But all I have to offer now,
is this quickly written poem.



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Intentionally
Left



Excerpts From:

**Evens and
Beginnings**

**A Collection of
Odds and Ends**

Remo Perini

TOMORROW'S YESTERDAY

Tomorrow's Yesterday is winding down... again,
With everything to show for it in a pointed gesture.
Sometime and somewhere feel for a forever onward tailspin,
With *Never* among the luxuries to console.

Dreams fondle our reality with glimpses of fleeting fantasy.

Rivers of opportunity unfold before us,
Options left behind evaporate with every step.

Atop a near hill lies a two-car garage.

A large fallow field offers an enormous rosewood desk.

Around and up is wealth beyond compare,
Guarded by the angry toll of loneliness.

And along another road espousal waits,
With joy and love and companionship.

Each path is paved with possibilities,
Cobbled with countless opportunities.

Some are certain, some unsure and some are clearly laid.
For those who have auspicious goals, the preacher must be paid.

But daring not to take a step and waiting for a clue,
Will cause each day to wind on down,
With nothing shed anew.

So cast your caution to the wind,
With courage take a chance.

You'll find your dream, your wealth, your quest,
A beautiful romance.

Embark upon a voyage, for movement is the key,
The essence of a future dream, a new reality.
Before Tomorrow's Yesterday has made its final bow,
Release your fear and take one step,
No better time than now.

WE ARE TWO I'S

Tarnished planking. Barnacled grapes.

The tenth of every breath.

Challenge the fever,

Its stake is not our spoils.

Harlequin harlots, Transient talcum.

Wherefore the cellar door?

Beseeching rivalry,

No plan survives Spartan toils.

We are rushing, yes and you.

Erstwhile jewels of future friends.

Stringent softness now oblique,

Taken ashore by wanton chance.

Strangle and struggle

in the shadowed street.

Strange you did not hear?

I am near, you are far.

Heretofore, the poets dance.

We are two I's, this me and you.

Seek to blend, spurn to bend.

Acquiescent reticence trials forevermore,

Despite cherishing the essence.

The next is yet, but yet is still further.

Peering. Squinting. Blind.

Challenged by the wings of time,

Our sullied souls still

Search for semblance.



THE PROFIT PROPHET

The profit prophet comes to town and snickers at his host.
Our money, gold, and ivory, are what we cherish most.
He prophesies a number, and sells it with a grin,
We sell our souls, our happiness and let the wheels spin.

We trust his premonition; it hasn't failed us yet.
And when the jackpot has been won, we gladly pay our debt.
We pay from deep within ourselves, our spirits and our drives,
He takes our warmth, our tenderness,
The meanings of our lives.

We're trading our humanity for riches, wealth, and gold,
The profit prophet gets his fee, the happiness we've sold.
For just a smile he'll call a score and frowning we will win,
Our smiles are gone, the coins we've gained,
Have turned our hearts to tin.

We've always wanted riches, no matter what the cost,
But now that we possess them, we wonder what we've lost.
Perhaps one day we'll realize, a vision from above,
The profit prophet brought us wealth,
But now we don't have love.



TANGLE ARE WE

Material strengthens with hardness the abstract.

The scholar bends his trade.

No descriptions are necessary,

No prizes for profound conjecture.

Things touching things called this or that,

Catalogue and sample, shape, and color,

Size and name.

Theory lends no construction of why or how,

Demanding an effort to explain.

Tangle are we that remain of thought,

Complexions, Chaoticism, Confucius,

Reluctantly, I reach to grasp your reality,

Your models, your behavior.

With a loving embrace, you remodel my originality.

As I accede to conform, my light darkens.

And with the wings of time,

You disappear me.

A photograph taken from the interior of a dark, rocky cave. The cave's opening frames a bright, scenic view of a mountain range. In the foreground, the rugged, brownish-grey rock walls of the cave are visible. Beyond the cave entrance, a valley with green hills and a winding road leads towards a prominent, jagged mountain peak under a clear blue sky. The overall atmosphere is one of solitude and natural beauty.

SECLUSION

Seen from afar,
A memory becomes unbalanced.
A depth of stillness, rising in vain,
Told of misery, heartache and pain.
Another figment; solitude and a desert.
The dance of one bear,
in a cave all alone.

Hearting toward seclusion folds,
Nowhere becomes adrift too soon.
Taken then, ashore by your vision,
To another turn, another road,
Another song.

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Path / 30, 31	Statue from the author's home, background is Mahatma Buddha – Purple Effect Wallpaper MobCup #84
Life Well Lived / 32	pexels-julia-m-cameron-6994806
Life Well Lived / 33	Public Domain
Aging Hand / 34	Danie Franco: https://unsplash.com/photos/CeZypKDceQc
Aging Hand / 35	A part of a Poster in the author's home
Gifts / 36	Each face shot is from a publicly available source
Gifts / 37	Publicly available
Dreams / 38	Compilation of images
Dreams / 39	tim-mossholder-EgAduzpsvdE-unsplash
Sidewalks & Streets / 40	https://www.barrons.com/articles/the-housing-shortage-is-a-problem-for-racial-equity-51625782990
Sidewalks & Streets / 41	https://www.sfbetterstreets.org/design-guidelines/street-types/neighborhood-residential-streets/
Two I's Dance / 42	Part of an Oil Painting in the author's home
Two I's Dance / 43	jaye-haych-cX41r_bX7Eo-unsplash
In the Kitchen / 44	Publicly Available
In the Kitchen / 45	Compilation of banjo drawing parts
Forgetting / 46	www.lantau.gov.hk/en/exploring-lantau/conservation/clam-digging.html
Forgetting / 47	aleks-dahlberg-VLDapLMiTKA-unsplash
Adolescence / 48	pexels-david-radomysler-12149033
Adolescence / 49	christian-holzinger-kexmagtivxa-unsplash
Final Breath / 50	Lagoon in back of authors parent's home
Final Breath / 51	Personal photo taken at sunset in Key West
Celebrate / 52, 53	pexels-polina-tankilevitch-4109784
Far Apart / 54	javardh-URLIQPnfG6Y-unsplash

Poem / Page	Attribution
Far Apart / 55	pexels-tieu-linh-11635803 - Tiểu Linh
Tuba / 56	samuel-ramos-Md8c-amE5ms-unsplash
Tuba / 57	pexels-jack-carey-3331904
Loss / 58	pexels-andreas-14756703
Loss / 59	pexels-mathias-reding-4394073
Consciousness / 60	Public Domain : Puerrt Vallarta Brochure
Integrity / 62	pexels-salih-altuntas-9711427
Integrity / 63	Close-up of the Artemis booster rocket
Fulfillment / 64	Pexels pile-of-covered-books-159751
Little Boy Blue / 66	Snips from various public sources
Hi-Fi Heaven / 68	Pictures I took of Brett's shop
Hi-Fi Heaven / 69	Publicly available picture of Brett Mullins
Even & Beginnings Cover / 71	By local artist Artist Frankie McCarthy
Tomorrow's Yesterday / 72	pexels-anthony-132428
We are two I's / 73	pexels-ivan-puglisi-2642267
Profit Prophet / 74	pexels-pixabay-106152
Tangle Are We / 75	pexels-salah-özil-10919385
Seclusion / 76	pexels-m-venter-1659437
Art Attribution Bckground / 77-79	pexels-pixabay-220182
Author Bio Background / 80, 81	pexels-pixabay-326333
The End Page / 82, 83	pexels-lil-artsy-3876937
Back Cover	pexels-akın-akdağ-7990022



This Space has
Reservations

AUTHOR'S BIO



Poet, humorist, and children's book author Remo Perini first published some of the poems found in this book with the National Library of Poetry. His prolific writing has spanned decades which resulted in this second book of poetry, *The Poets Labyrinth*. Remo's unique poetic artistry has been influenced by a few progressive artists including musician Lori Anderson and writing techniques used by Kurt Vonnegut. Some works are designed to draw the reader in

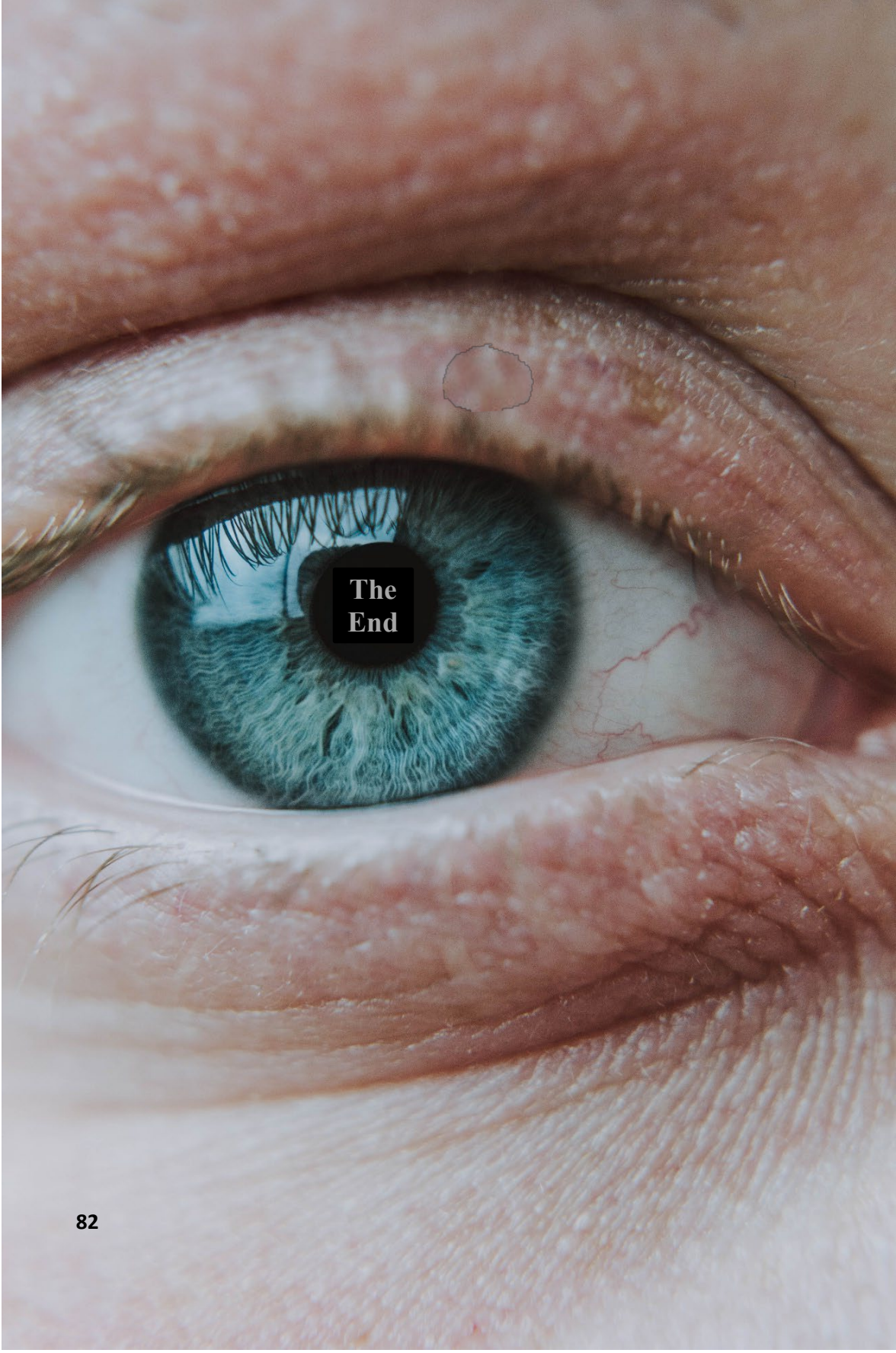
by playfully offering tidbits of meaning, while obscuring depth of understanding using words and phrases that are familiar but are used in an abstract manner to convey feeling rather than explicit meaning.

The emotions and panoply of human experience in *Labyrinth*, comes from a lifetime of thoughtful observation and broad experience. Remo believes that the quality of a book is not dictated by its subject but by the skill of the writer: "A great writer can write about a speck of dust that has been laying on a shelf for ten years and make it interesting and intriguing," says Remo. His hope is that all of his readers come away from his books with a sense of joy, curiosity, and/or contemplation from their experience.

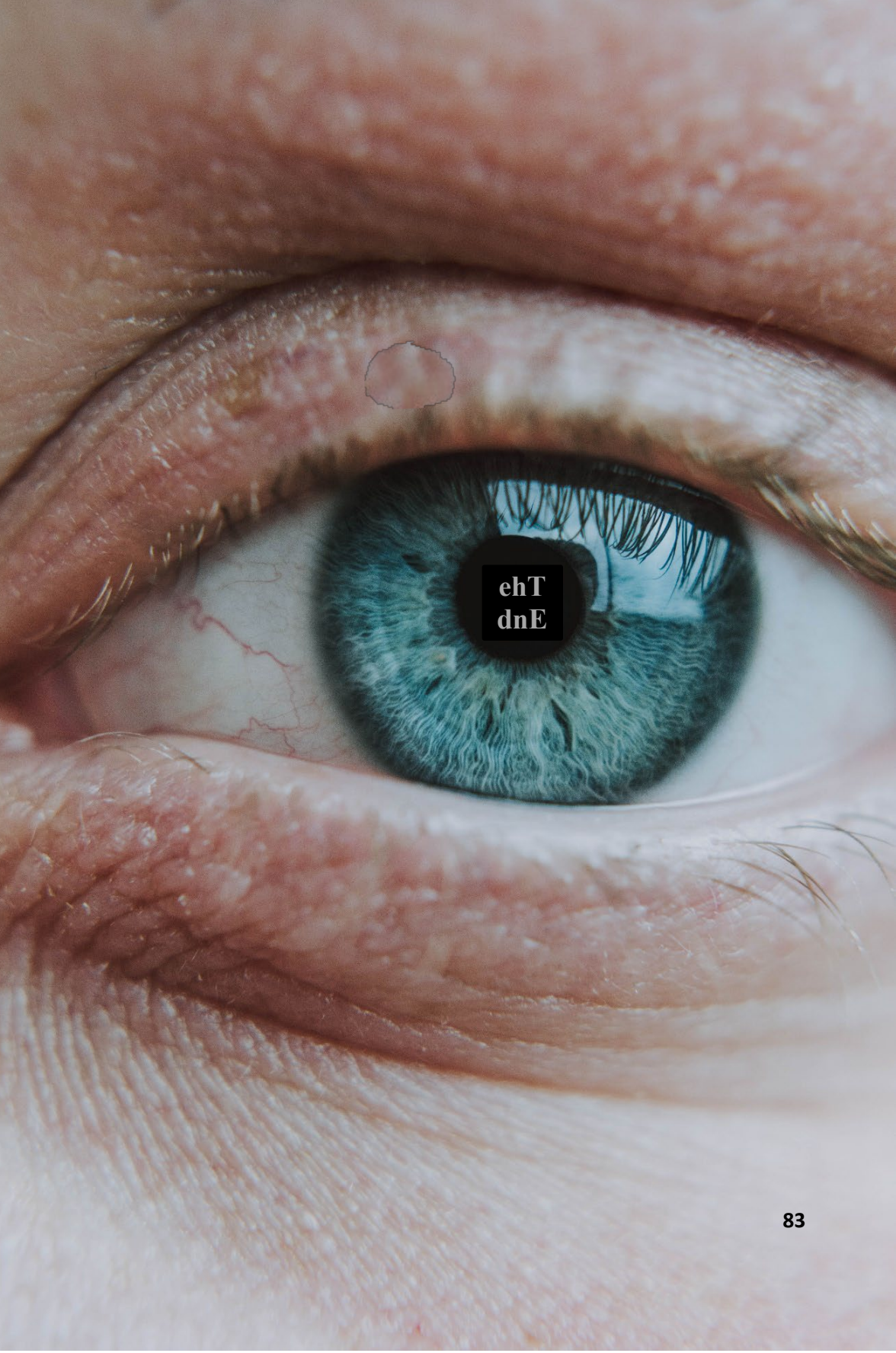
Remo grew up in NY the eldest son of two elementary school teachers. Moving to San Jose, CA after college graduation, he hosted a radio show on 89.7FM KFJC, called *The Gateway to Infinity*, and attained local celebrity through his satirical feature, "Bay Area Laundromats". Responding to a press release, David Letterman's producer said "We love your Laundromat idea but we only bring on guests of national interest." Then, displaying the sincerest form of flattery, Letterman aired a laundromat segment the next week.

In addition to his 2022 debut book *Evens and Beginnings, A Collection of Odds and Ends*, his second book *HA! Humanity's Absurdities* was released later in 2022. Remo has a series of three children's books with a protagonist named Eustace, beginning with *Eustace and the Christmas Swim*. Eustace is seeking a traditional publisher.





**The
End**



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