

To Erika
A Little Doggerel at Her Half-Century Mark

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We must confess, it is a stress,
our skills for poems in such a mess.
We shake and quake with fears and tears
to find choice words through all these years.
We've gnashed and thrashed and pulled our hair,
this meager offering's all we bear.

Our rhyme and meter are rather weak,
the empty page looked very bleak.
With time to praise her at its peak,
and poets like us so shy and meek
uncertain even how to speak.

Without the dope of Poe you know,
it's hard to make the verses grow.
Absinthe's a pain, and hash won't fly,
and booze removes the will to try.

Yet though our muse is dim of late,
and better verse requires more wait,
it's really not too hard to find
some words to praise a friend so kind.

And if it gives perhaps less lift,
than would a more splendid gift,
it saves us from more debts for now—
We'll spend the money we saved on chow,
and give the Hokansons a bow
of thanks for asking us anyhow.

We've shared the good times and the pain,
(without the latter there's no gain):
of slogging, jogging, endless stew,
of parties, smarties, Doogan's doo,
of muddles, Cuddles, Bruce's view,
of perks and quirks, how gardens grew,
of power walks (a frenzied race),
her hectic frantic bustling pace,
(yet somehow ages not a trace),
her ample voice and gift of grace,
the radiant glow we've loved so well;

both tales of woes and joys to tell,
of rebel kids—yet angels too,
she guided, hammered, loved them true,
gave comfort when their moods were blue,
Nicole, and Mad, and Erik too
gave trial to patience but not her heart,
and they succeed now from her part,
(and Bruce's too)— she learned the art
of raising teens who'd take the roles
someday of useful working proles,
and join their parents in the goals
of doing what the Prez. extols
by getting on tax-paying rolls.

So when the Moving Finger's done,
and having writ, she too is gone,
and joined the angels in heav'n above,
departing those who share her love,
(Not soon but after fifty more,
or fifty again would we implore)
And those who knew her that remain,
will pause amidst the falling rain,
recall with joy how hard she worked,
no unkind streak within her lurked,
around her always our spirits perked,
a gifted hostess who had a ball,
a better world she gave us all.

Now lift your glasses high and toast,
the gentle subject of our roast,
and hail the friend that we have known,
(though gray and stooped she may have grown),
and celebrate our days with her,
both those to come and those that were.