

IT'S NOT TOO LATE

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FREDERICK DOUGLAS HARPER

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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO

My Maternal Great Grandmother

Mary Elizabeth Williams Harper
1860-1945



Mary Elizabeth gave birth to 16 children who all lived to adulthood. She married three times, living into her 80s and outliving all three of her husbands. She had 12 children with her first husband, Dewitt Clinton Stewart, who was White, and four children with her second husband, Rev. John Calvin Harper, who was Black. Family members remembered her as a strong woman of character and religious faith, who maintained a kind and peaceful disposition. My mother's father, Charlie Calvin Harper, was Elizabeth's 14th child.

ADMONITIONS

*It's not too late to search out our ancestry, to find out
who we are and from where we came*

It's not too late to find and pursue our rightful purpose in life

It's not too late to do what we wish or should

It's not too late to save those whom we love

It's not too late to save that which we love

It's not too late to save our individual selves

And

*It's not too late to save our human race
from premature extinction*

“Our lives are not our own. We are bound to others, past and present, and by each crime and every kindness, we birth our future.”

David Mitchell,
Cloud Atlas (2004)

“At all cost, we must assure the perpetuity of our human species and our highly developed technology and scientific knowledge. There is nothing more important for the human race.”

Frederick Douglas Harper,
The Durabone Prophecies (2011)

As author, I express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Edith Báez Báez and Ms. Jacqueline A. Harper for their editorial feedback on the manuscript for this book.

PREFACE

After writing 13 poetry books and one novel, I prayed repeatedly in words out loudly and in thoughts privately for the theme and the title of my next book. As prophesied, I knew that I was to write *The Stories* as the stories over my lifetime; however, I was not feeling that it was the right time to start. After praying or asking spiritual energy beyond me for my next book, the title, the poems, the prose, and the ideas began to flow through me within a timespan of about three months. The thoughts and poetic topics were a continuation of my previous work, but focused primarily on the theme, “it’s not too late.” Therefore, the title for this book followed the theme.

It’s not too late for each of us to ask, “What is my purpose here on Earth?” It’s not too late to pursue a found purpose or mission in life. It’s not too late to ask, “How can I change my life for better or do more than I have been satisfied to achieve or accomplish in life thus far?” It’s not too late to ask, “How can I change my lifestyle in order to be a better human being for myself and others?” And, as a human race, it’s not too late for us to ask, “How can we save ourselves from premature extinction by preparing to survive as a species here on Earth and elsewhere in our Universe?”

This book contains both poems and prose. In some cases, it’s difficult to distinguish poetic form from creative prose, such as with my two longest pieces within this book: “And Still We Had the Strength to Smile” and “And God Spoke on TV.” The first four pages of the spiritual piece, “And God Spoke on TV,” came to me in a dream. The dream or spirit energy awakened me one night and caused me to grab a pen and pad to write continually without stopping as if thoughts were flowing through me from a spiritual place or dimension beyond my existence.

“And Still We Had the Strength to Smile” is a piece of indelible and sometimes painful recollections from my past during the unfortunate era of racial segregation, racial oppression, and racial terrorism in the United States. In my

advancing years and during my recent retirement from 42 years of university teaching, I have garnered the time and summoned the emotional strength to reflect on these past experiences of my life and write about some of the stories.

All the material in this book is new. There is no poetry or prose reprinted from my previously published writings. I trust that you will enjoy the reading of this book, and that its words and messages will be of meaning to you and those about whom you care.

Frederick Douglas Harper
June 2013

AND GOD SPOKE ON TV

And God interrupted all televised programming as the biggest "Breaking News" in television history. God spoke to all TV viewing human beings through thought transference as well as to others, who were not watching TV, through their wakened conscious thoughts or in their night dreams:

I am God your Mother and Creator of this Universe, its galaxies, stars, and solar systems. I created your Earth as My precious Garden of Eden.

I am God your Mother and Creator who did not make you in My image, because I am all, whole, and one, which you can never be. I am not an anthropomorphic being apart from you. I am all things including you and your spirit. You are one with me as I with you.

I am God your Mother and Creator who can communicate with you and make things known to you and make things happen through your spirit and energy. I control the winds and the waters, the volcanoes and the earthquakes, and all heavenly bodies, including the asteroids and comets. I control the spirit of the living and the dead.

I am God your Mother and Creator of life on Earth from dust of an exploding star that was crushed with the force of My will—a benign act that was necessary to create a new star as your sun, your entire solar system, your Earth, and you;

I am God your Mother and Creator who is one, whole, and connected to all existence; who is omniscient, omnipotent, and ubiquitous.

I am God your Mother and Creator, who sent prophets and messengers over eons of times to warn you to do the natural and right things, but you have not listened well; therefore, I have come directly to you in Spirit to communicate My last

warning to you, which is to change or be destroyed as a species.

I created the ingredients for life, what you call elements, but it took more than four billion years to create the complex forms of life that you see on planet Earth today.

I created life through Earth's trial and error—I smashed asteroids into Earth to make it bigger and bigger, using gravity to crush it into roundness. I broke off a large chunk of developing Earth to create your moon as a source of occasional light for night's darkness. Getting Earth's temperature right was a challenge. At first, Earth was too hot for life as a fiery ball. Then it was much too cold, frozen all over its surface with thick ice. At one time, there was too much oxygen; plants grew too much and some animals grew to be too big. The dinosaur began to eat much of Earth's living things, so I had to eliminate dinosaurs by smashing Earth with a large rock [asteroid] to create deadly shock waves and to cast dust into the atmosphere to block out sunlight so necessary for life.

Now, after billions of years to get Earth right and create you as My prized species, you have chosen to mess up My global creation. You have been a disappointment to My expectation. Therefore, I have come in Spirit to warn you that you can be the next dinosaur if you don't wake up in time and change your ways.

You have soiled My sacred oceans, lakes, and waterways. You have killed each other in repeated bloody wars and human conflicts driven by your greed, fear, and your leaders' lust for power—power to become earthly gods. Now, you are teaching your children to kill by being poor role models for them. You have climbed mountains not so much for good purpose but for your selfish egos and needs. Too many of you have engaged in selfish acts, such as breaking records to get your names in that *Guinness* book, using another or others for pleasure, wrongful taking from others, and hurting or killing the innocent and the helpless. Many of you are having fun for yourselves, while turning your backs to millions of the poor who die from hunger, contaminated drinking water,

and diseases—diseases that can be easily cured with your medicines or my natural, medicinal plants.

You have become confused about what's right and what's wrong. Too many of you are valuing bad as good and good as bad in your daily lives, on your TV programs, and in your movies and computerized games and media. Too many of you are now worshipping guns, money, power, glamour, fame, status, gold, diamonds, and pleasure while demonstrating little regard for the welfare and development of the young and each other.

I've given you planet Earth as My Garden of Eden, and you have messed it up—you have dirtied My house. I've given you a brain to create and choose wisely, and you have used it much too often to destroy that which is natural and good. I've given you the ability as My trustees to create human life, and you have unnecessarily and unnaturally destroyed the lives of your adult selves, your children, your babies, and many species in My Garden of Eden. You have assumed My Godly job to determine what lives and what dies and when—who lives and who dies.

Listen to my thoughts. Just because you can fly in your airplanes like birds, don't let that go to your heads. Just because you can sail on water in boats and ships, don't let that go to your heads. Just because you can navigate under water like a shark, don't let that go to your heads. Just because you have gone to the moon and sent earthly objects to other planets of My solar system, don't let that go to your heads. Just because you can drive in your fuel-driven vehicles faster than any land animal can run, don't let that go to your heads. Do know that I can take all of these things away from you in an instant.

If I were to take from you electricity, fossil fuel, and electronic gadgets, what would you be or do? You would be lost and ill-equipped to survive among other species in My global Garden of Eden. At birth, your babies are helpless—unable to walk or run as many other animals can do soon after birth. Your muscles are weak when compared to My stronger and larger animals. In the future, you may no longer be the predators of helpless prey but the helpless prey

of superior predators, many which are bigger, stronger, and faster.

I warn you to heed My thoughts now as I transfer them to you. You have taken things for granted that all that is will remain as is—

- ❖ Again, do you realize that I can take electricity from you as I gave it to you?
- ❖ Do you realize that I can block out My sunlight and create another ice age while making it nearly impossible for you to grow food so necessary for your survival and the survival of the animals which you depend upon for food?
- ❖ Do you realize that I can stop My oil supply that powers your ground vehicles, airplanes, and industrial machines of production?
- ❖ Do you realize that I can deplete your atmosphere of the oxygen that you so very much need, or that I can dry up Earth's water which is necessary for your existence and survival as a species?
- ❖ Lastly, do you realize that I can wipe out practically every species on Earth and start over again in search for the model species as I hoped that you would be and become—My caretakers of Earth and not destroyers of Earth?

Hear My thoughts to you; hear My warning to you. You must learn to live as ants—their many species work together for survival of the group and not survival and greed of each individual ant. You must be one cooperating and collaborating human race, if you wish to survive as a species. Again, hear My thought to you: *You must be one human race for each other.* I will communicate this once more: *You must be one human race for each other.*

No, don't think about turning off your TV, because you can't and it wouldn't matter if you could. I am now in control of your energy, thoughts, time, and destiny, and it is you who must now listen to truth and follow My laws, or, surely, you

will die by way of your arrogant disposition and egregious ways of life.

I have no TV commercials, because I have nothing to sell. I'm here only to communicate to you that this is your last warning. That is My message; that is My sales pitch to you. Again, I speak to you through thought transference as you can witness. You know My mind as I yours, because in this moment we are one. So listen now as I come to your consciousness with mind-changing truths.

I have flooded your cities and coastlines to warn you of what could happen on a much larger scale if you do not change your ways. I have sent powerful winds of cyclones, hurricanes, and tornadoes as warnings of what could happen on a much larger scale if you do not change your ways. I have sent asteroids as close calls to warn you to change your ways and prepare for survival on Earth or elsewhere in this Universe. As warnings, I have repeatedly shaken your world with powerful earthquakes, but to no avail on your part. I have caused hot lava and ash to spew from sleeping volcanoes to warn you to change your ways or die from volcanic ash from a massive volcanic eruption that would block out precious sunlight so much needed for your life on Earth. Yet, still I see you as being preoccupied with too many of the wrong things to pay attention to My warnings—too much trivia, too many fun things, and too much selfish misuse of Earth and each other.

You have not listened to My warnings and messengers over times and cultures—to My prophets and chosen ones:

- ❖ I sent Moses, but you did not follow well My 10 commandments.
- ❖ I sent Jesus, but you did not follow well his message to forgive, give, and love. You did not follow his benevolent example as a healer and teacher who helped many. You've spent too much time talking and writing about how Jesus died on the cross and not enough time addressing how he lived on Earth as My spiritual messenger and role model. You have not followed his

way of goodness in order to be rightfully born again in spirit.

- ❖ I sent Muhammad, but too many of you have distorted some of his good teachings to serve your selfish or twisted needs. Too many of you have used the religion that I gave him as a platform for violence and as a doctrine to oppress women and girls.
- ❖ I sent Mother Teresa to save the least of those among you—the sick, the poor, and the homeless—but you gave high praise to a princess (Diana) who died, and you gave little attention to the death of Mother Teresa, a saint who died just a few days later. Don't you realize that I choreographed these deaths of two famous women so you could recognize your misplaced values for beauty, youth, glamour, riches, and status over a value for spirituality and its unselfish service and creation for the benefit of humankind?

Listen in thought as I give you truth from the Divine Source as I, because you have ignored and misinterpreted the messages of My messengers, sometimes purposefully for your selfish individual needs and even sometimes for the selfish needs of your religious institutions. You have misinterpreted scriptures of sacred books, and you have created words and religious institutions, at times, for your selfish purposes and needs—churches, mosques, synagogues, temples, and other religious sanctuaries that are too often preoccupied with the status of their leaders, levels of power, ornamental decorations, misuse of funds, and exploitation of members—even the abuse of young, vulnerable children.

Listen to My transferred thoughts to you, because I speak of truth as the Universal God that is One and All and Whole:

- ❖ The Garden of Eden is not a place on Earth. It is Earth itself, and Earth is not the only planet in your Universe that bears life. There are other life-bearing heavenly bodies in this Universe as well as in other universes.
- ❖ The first human that I created, after many years of molding and shaping life on Earth, was not a man but

a woman. It is woman who is the sacred temple of birth and creation. Man came from woman as a son is born from his mother.

- ❖ I did not create human life instantly, but rather I created *the conditions* for various forms of life to be created over eons of time. I also gave humans, as with other species, the capacity to reproduce their kind. Therefore, I have assigned woman and man as My trustees to reproduce My human life on Earth.
- ❖ There is no such thing as a place called hell and an individual called the devil, except in symbolic representation. I consider human beings as a work in progress, not yet perfected but rather vulnerable to their shortcomings. Therefore, some human beings are inclined to be destructive or what you may call evil or bad, and some are inclined to be constructive in their propensity to give, serve, and create for the good of others. Still, some are confused, and, thus, they can be influenced toward either direction of destruction or construction. After human death, all spirits come to me and become one with me. It is the unnaturally destructive or so-called bad ones who I have to spend time in cleansing, and it takes longer for them to find their way to a full connection with heaven as you know and call it.
- ❖ The Holy Bible and other sacred books of scripture are intended to be open books to be added to over time as spiritual lessons and stories arise. These are My messages to you through the writings and life stories of others. Therefore, search for meaning and messages in the stories of the Kennedy and King families and record these in scripture. Much of sacred scripture is to be interpreted symbolically and not literally as written. There has been harm done by those who both misinterpret sacred scriptures or wrongly use particular scriptures for their selfish purposes.
- ❖ All leaders with religious titles in your so-called ordained ministry were not called by Me, but, rather, some, if not many, chose or called themselves, often

for their selfish needs and purposes. There are spiritual leaders without religious titles who were chosen by Me to help many, and they chose not to pursue a religious title for themselves but rather simply to serve and create for good in My name. Many have been spiritual leaders, but others have been scientists, music composers, authors, singers, artistic painters, sculptors, inventors, philanthropists, healers, teachers, and community servants.

- ❖ What you know and call time is not the same in My existence, which is in the spirit world. In another world that you may call heaven, time does not exist at all or as you know and see time. In My existence, everything is connected and unchanged. When you die and cross over, you will retain your image as you were when you died, and you will be born again in spirit in another dimension of existence. It is an existence or world of calm, peace, love, good, and beauty of all things that were, are, and will be. It is a homecoming to all whom you have known or known of—those who have crossed over to My spirit world. Because everything is connected, there is no distance between spirits. Because nothing changes, there is no aging or changes in spirit energy. All is constant and connected and of one mind or consciousness; therefore, your concept of time cannot exist in heaven. All knowledge of all things past, present, and future are available in a reservoir of universal knowledge which your religions may call the big book or the Akashic records.
- ❖ You and your science are too limited to understand all energy and all existence. What you call the Universe is really one of many universes. Existence of all things is beyond your ability to know and understand—beyond your present telescopes, mathematics, astrophysics, and theoretical minds to conceptualize possibility. Your senses are too limited to detect universal truths except as through spiritual knowledge such as that which I give to you.

- ❖ You can do all the research that you wish, but there is no greater truth and knowledge than that of “to know.” You know by simply listening to rightful spirit messages that come to you.

You have been playing God of late by altering the natural way of life on Earth and the natural resources of My Garden of Eden. I have the omnipotent power to eliminate you from Earth by allowing the impact of a giant asteroid or comet. Yet, I still have hope for you as My prized species—My humanalia animalia. It is still not too late to save yourselves as a species. I have given you choice, and it has been your choice to prepare for the destruction of each other rather than to prepare for the prevention of the premature extinction of your species.

Again, I come to you, because you have ignored the spiritual messages that I have sent to you in the past through messengers such as Abraham, Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus, Mary Magdalene, Muhammad, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Mother Teresa. So instead of sending a message again through an earthly prophet, I bring you My last commandments as your last chance. I command you humanalia animalia to:

1. Care for and respect My global Garden of Eden. Kill no animals and destroy no plants except as necessary for your survival.
2. Love one another, give to one another, forgive one another, and accept genuine forgiveness from others. I command you to *forgive those who have erred or failed to do right, give to those in need, and love those regardless of their shortcomings and human differences.*
3. Love and protect your children and all children, because they are your future; they are My future for the continuation of your life on Earth as a species.
4. Give and help the least of those without—those who are sick, hungry, thirsty, and in dire need of help.
5. Use your medical science to improve the quality of life and to save life only as appropriate, but you must also

allow the very old to die with dignity when the time comes for them to die as I intended.

6. Clean the oceans, lakes, rivers, and lands, and keep these clean.
7. Continue your medical and scientific advancements for good and not for destruction to life and Earth.
8. Live together as one human race and avoid violence, competition, and selfishness among countries, racial groups, ethnic groups, religious groups, and between woman and man. Remember, there is only one racial group, the human race or what you call Homo sapiens.
9. Men, respect women, and women respect men, because you are one, equal, inseparable, and interdependent for human survival.
10. Stop the killing except as necessary to survive as other animals have to do.
11. Remember, you must be one human race for each other. You cannot continue to live as separate groups and individuals fighting among yourselves.

Again, be warned that you have been warned for the last time.

***Note.** The idea and initial pages for this poem came to me in a dream. I was awakened during the dream, and I grabbed a notepad and wrote down as much as I could remember as fast as I could to avoid loss from memory. As I wrote, additional thoughts came into my consciousness as if a power from beyond was dictating truths to me and through my mind's pen.*

AND STILL WE HAD
THE STRENGTH TO SMILE:
REFLECTIONS ON THE
BLACK AMERICAN STRUGGLE

*Scenarios of My Struggle for Human Rights
And My Witness to Racial Injustice*

As prior to 1950 in the U.S., the decade of the 1950s plus much of the 1960s was a period of racial segregation, racial discrimination, White racial violence against Blacks and against Whites who stood up for racial justice, and, in some cases, outright terrorism against Black Americans and their communities. Nonetheless, as Black Americans, we somehow survived all of this and more, and we still found the strength to smile and even laugh among ourselves as we protested and stood up for human rights, civil rights, and dignity.

As toddlers in the racially segregated U.S. South in the early 1950s, my mother walked my sister and me about a half mile in night's pitch darkness from the bus stop to our home. During one night's walk home from the bus stop, our mother was hit in the stomach by a lemon that was thrown from a passing convertible car of laughing and taunting White teen boys or young men, who saw it as fun to terrorize Blacks in our neighborhood by throwing lemons and eggs under the cover of night. My mother was hurt of body and saddened of mind,

and we felt her pain as helpless Black children. Yet, in days and time, we still found the strength to smile and laugh once more.

§

When I was age 15, my sister and I were in the back seat of my uncle's car along with his wife (my mother's sister) and my mother. My Uncle and his adult nephew were both sitting in the front seat of the car. My uncle had been drinking a bit too much, so he allowed his nephew to drive, because his nephew had not been drinking alcohol. We were about 15 miles from home on the highway en route from Blackshear, Georgia when we heard the sound of a police car's siren and saw the flashing red lights of the police car as it approached from behind in the dark of the night. After pulling us over, one of the two White policemen walked up to the driver's side and asked my uncle's nephew for his driver's license. He didn't have a license, so the police took both my uncle and his nephew to jail when they learned that my uncle had been drinking and that he had allowed his nephew to drive his car without a driver's license.

The two policemen showed no concern for the welfare of the women and children passengers, and simply left us in the car by the side of the highway. They didn't even ask if anyone else in the car had a license to drive or express any concern about how we would get home or to safety. Although I didn't have a driver's license, I was the only person who could drive a car. Luckily the police left the keys in the ignition; therefore, I was able to drive everyone home. All the way while driving, I was hoping and praying that we would not be stopped by police once more. My uncle and his nephew paid a fine or bond and were able to come back to our home late that night.

Although everyone was disgusted and disappointed by the police leaving women and children on a dark highway, we still found the strength the next morning to smile and laugh.

§

In 1960 at age 17 and as a member of the NAACP Youth Council, I headed to downtown Jacksonville, Florida to join a protest

against a racially segregated Woolworth store lunch counter. I was late getting to the protest, because I stopped on the way to get a haircut. As I approached the site to join the protest, I witnessed a White, angry, jeering mob and what I learned later was the beatings of Black NAACP protestors who had already assembled—public beatings on the street with axe handles and baseball bats, while police did nothing to stop the violence. The Whites with axe-handles and bats were not only attacking Black protestors, but I learned later that they were attacking any Blacks who were on the street in front of the Woolworth store or nearby.

I vividly recall an old White woman among the crowd who spotted me approaching the intersecting street from a half block away. She screamed out, “There’s another one; get that nigger.” Her angry face and that mob remain in my indelible memory. I had to think quickly. I immediately ran into a JC Penney store within the same block and, after a while, I exited on the other side of the building where I eluded the crowd and avoided a viciously undeserved beating with axe handles and baseball bats. I phoned an aunt who gladly met me at a downtown parking lot frequented by Blacks. She and my mother had seen the bloody mayhem on local TV, and they knew that I was headed downtown to the protest.

The event gained local and national coverage on TV and in magazines which referred to it as the bloody axe-handle beatings by White men—reportedly many from the KKK and the White Citizens Council. After my shock and fear and that of my family, we still found the strength to smile and laugh once more, while being relieved that I escaped without bodily harm or loss of life. As a teenager incensed by racial injustice, I would gather my courage to continue to stand and fight for civil rights and equality of opportunity.

§

A few months after the bloody axe-handle beatings in downtown Jacksonville, two Black teenage boys and I were walking to school at around 8 a.m. We were just several blocks away from our all-Black Jr.-Sr. high school when a police

cruiser abruptly pulled over and stopped a few yards ahead of us. Two White policemen quickly exited the police cruiser, one brandishing a shotgun. They confronted us, and the one with the shotgun asked what were we up to and what did we have under our shirts. The one with the pump shotgun pointed it at us and cocked it, creating a clank sound that I will never forget, as one of us calmly answered that we were just headed to school and didn't have anything under our shirts. Growing up in the South as Black boys, we knew not to raise our voices or take issue with White policemen. After a few minutes of questioning and terrorizing us, they returned to their police cruiser and quickly drove away. Although much afraid, shocked, and puzzled as to why they stopped us for no apparent legal reason, at school, we later got the strength to smile and laugh once more.

§

In 1961 at age 18, immediately after graduating from high school, a good friend of mine, Samuel Newman, and I founded a club named the Progressive Youngmen's Club (PYC). Its purpose was not only to enhance the social, educational, and cultural experiences of Black youth, but also to fight against racial and social injustices that prevailed in our city of Jacksonville, and other southern cities. In 1962, three of us as members of the PYC decided to walk into an all-White, local bowling alley and attempt to bowl. We realized that safety was a concern, so one club member stayed in the car with the motor running, while two members and I, as President, walked boldly into the bowling alley.

As we headed for the desk to register to bowl, a White staff member met us with an expression of surprise on his face, if not shock, as many other White bowlers paused to look around—also in surprise if not shock as to why three young Black males would have the gumption to walk into a racially segregated, all-white bowling alley. When the manager or staff member asked us what we wanted, we politely and confidently stated that we wanted to bowl. When told we couldn't bowl there, we stood our ground as the staff person looked at us speechlessly while other Whites began to pay attention to

the matter by just curiously staring at us and then looking at each other in amazement and confusion. Suddenly, a big burly White male yelled out from his bowling lane, you damn Yankees better get out of here. He and several other males began to move toward us, which was our cue to back up and walk quickly toward the front door. Once outside, we ran across the street to the safety of the waiting car, and the driver sped away. In the car, our anxiety turned into laughter as we released tension from a close call of nearly being mobbed if not killed. Although we were not successful in racially desegregating that bowling alley, we still retained our courage and commitment to struggle for our rights and to smile once more.

§

Later during that year of 1962, we attempted to desegregate another public place. Three of us from our Progressive Youngmen's Club went to a downtown movie theater in Jacksonville named the Center Theater. We made a point to wear dress pants and nice sports shirts in order possibly to appear acceptable to White folks. The White female ticket agent in the booth, knowing that the movie theater never accepted non-Whites, told us to wait while she consulted the manager. The manager came to the front, walked outside, and asked us, "What do you all want?" We simply answered that we wanted to see the movie. While outside, the manager looked around as if he may have been looking for other Blacks. Then he said something to the effect that the theater had never admitted Blacks, and no Blacks had ever come to try to get into the theater while he was manager. He told us that he had no problem as long as we would not bring any trouble. He said that he didn't need "those NAACP picket signs" that tended to bring TV coverage that would keep White patrons away. After we walked in and took our seats, we noticed how posh the theater was as compared to the Black movie theaters. We sat back in the large comfortable seats and simply smiled at each other—realizing that we had desegregated the theater without

fanfare or picket lines. We simply had the courage to walk up and ask to buy tickets for admission.

During that time, it was interesting to note that *most* African Americans of the city *individually* accepted their place in society without questioning or testing social rules. The most ridiculous thing that I recall as a child and teen was the sight of public, drinking water fountains side by side, one with the sign “Whites Only” and the other with the sign “Colored Only.”

§

In 1962, while in undergraduate college, I was chosen to participate on a court jury of six teenagers: three Blacks and three Whites. As a teenage jury, we met weekly in Judge John Santora’s municipal court in Jacksonville to recommend punishment or rehabilitation to the judge for teenage offenders. As a jury in the court, the six of us sat on the same bench to watch the court proceedings. However, as a practice, the three White teens refused to sit until all six of us were present before the judicial proceeding began. In other words, they wanted to make sure that no Black person sat between any two Whites. To prevent desegregation on the bench, they would all hold hands, press their hips together as one chorus line, and sit simultaneously. Several times, we tried to break in between a couple before they glued themselves together and grabbed hands, but we were never successful, so we just gave up. After leaving the court, we often smiled and even laughed at the effort that these young White teenagers exerted to maintain racial segregation—to maintain such ridiculous racial traditions.

§

During the summer of 1963, at age 20, I worked in West Palm Beach, Florida to earn money to help pay for college. I worked at a supermarket as a bag boy, bagging groceries, and as a helper in stocking shelves and cleaning the store. The Black teenage boys who worked with me brought bagged lunches or picked up food from a carry-out place nearby. I told them that I

was going to a lunch counter in a drug store just a block away, and they warned me that the lunch counter did not serve Black people. Surely, as I was warned, I was turned away and refused service when I went there and sat down. However, I returned alone again within days and sat at the same lunch counter once more to wait for service. The server on duty was momentarily speechless and nervous. After she told me she couldn't serve me, I remained seated and waited, refusing to leave. The server eventually went to get the manager. The female manager confidently looked at me and asked, "What do you want?" I calmly answered, "I want to eat." After pausing for a moment, she replied, "Who are you; what are you—Cuban, East Indian?" I calmly looked at her and answered. "I'm a human being, and I just want to eat." After standing and staring at me with an appearance of loss for further words, she looked at the server and told her, "Go ahead and serve him."

When I returned to the supermarket and told the other boys that the lunch counter served me, they were surprised if not shocked. I smiled and they laughed with the understanding that a small victory had been won. Nonetheless, these Black teenage boys were still afraid to try to eat at the lunch counter.

§

As one of the first two Black faculty members who worked as counselors at a predominantly White community college in Jacksonville, Florida in 1967 (although we were classified as faculty, there was no Black teaching faculty), the White secretary for the counseling center refused to type for me, although she willingly typed or did work for all the White counselors. She said to me nonchalantly, "I don't type for you"—interpreted by me as, "I don't type for Black people," because the only other Black counselor on the counseling center staff told me that she also refused to do work for him. After her refusal to type a letter for me, I went back to my office and phoned her White supervisor who forced her hand, literally. Later that day, as innocent students and faculty of goodwill, both White and Black, appeared in my space, I found the strength to smile once more.

§

In 1968, the night when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated, I was on night duty as counselor at the same community college where I worked. Each counselor had to work one night a week to counsel students, as needed, who attended night classes, and April 4th was my night. It was a college student who phoned me first to tell me the unfortunate breaking news that shocked, angered, and saddened me. During that night and for the next several days, Blacks were attacked on the streets and some Blacks attacked Whites and White business establishments. A young Black man in a military uniform waiting for the bus was shot and killed by a gunshot from a moving car of Whites. The next day at the college, I overheard from my office a White secretary in the reception area talking to a counselor, "He [Dr. King] was a troublemaker. He got what was coming to him." The White counselor replied, "I hope they don't catch the person who did it." Although I was disgusted and angered, in time, I gathered the strength to smile again and continue the struggle for the rights and the dignity of Black students at the college as well as continue my job of helping any and all students who came to me for counseling.

§

During my same 1967-1968 academic year at the community college, several Black students came to me for counseling regarding what I perceived as prejudicial and racist behavior of White instructors. For example, one English instructor refused to grade a young Black male student's essay, stating to him that no Black student could write a paper that well, and that she believed someone had written the essay for him. When I talked to the instructor about the student's claim and concern, she persisted in not being willing to evaluate his essay paper. She eventually required him to come to her office and write another essay during her office hours and under her supervision or rather watchful eyes. Although this circumstance was incredible and disheartening to both the student and me, we both later garnered the strength to smile and persist.

§

During the same academic year of my work as a counselor at the predominantly White community college, several Black students contacted me to complain about another White female English instructor who refused to call upon Black students in her classroom when they held their hand up for permission to answer a question. When I consulted the instructor and inquired about this to her, she stated with a sense of conviction that she didn't want to embarrass Black students, because she "just knew" that they didn't know the answers to her questions. After advising her to recognize all students, regardless of race or ethnicity, I went to my office and dealt with my disbelief and sadness. Later that afternoon when I went to my Black-White relations counseling group and looked upon the happy, hopeful faces of young Black students and White students there together, I somehow found hope and the strength to smile and believe once more.

§

As a doctoral student in the South in 1969 and while shopping in a local supermarket in Tallahassee, Florida, a White toddler in a shopping cart looked at her mother and then looked and pointed at me, "Mama, look; there's a nigger." Shocked and angered at first, I caught myself and realized that the little girl didn't know better, but had evidently learned this word, as associated with darker people, possibly from one or both of her parents. While the mother looked embarrassed, I found the strength to smile briefly at the little girl in an attempt to communicate to her a positive image of a Black American.

§

Yes, racial hatred and disdain dampened our moment and sometimes our day. Racial terror and violence momentarily brought fear to our consciousness. Racial injustice, discrimination, and prejudice brought much disappointment and lack of opportunity for quality education,

comparable healthcare, and equitable economic advancement. Nevertheless, we didn't lose our strength to fight for right, our spirit to continue the fight, and our perseverance to survive and smile or laugh, regardless.

GOD CALLED

THE SECOND SOLOMON

(The Calling of President Barack H. Obama)

And God spoke to the anointed one:

I have paved your way with many Blacks before you, who cried of pain and sadness and died for the rights of their people as My people.

I have paved your way with many Whites before you, who have cried of pain and sadness for wrongs and died for standing up with Blacks against blatant racial injustices.

I have paved your way by changing the minds and raising the consciousness and conscience of children and grandchildren of those caretakers and perpetrators of racism, racial degradations, racial segregation, and racial violence.

Hear me as I call you to lead as I did Solomon the wise one:

I will create you as I did Solomon to become a leader of My people.

I will lift you up in strength as I did Solomon.

I will send you to the trenches to learn of struggle for the poor and the disenfranchised. Then I will lift you up over time in the political arena of law and leadership among those who fight with their minds, the law, and political oratory.

Know that you will be both loved and hated, but you must trust in Me and trust your mind and heart while always harnessing the destructive urges, impulses, and emotions that can spontaneously rise within you and impair good work to be done.

Hear me now; never desist each day from My cause as your cause to do your best for the least of My people who are without.

Hear Me further; never desist from efforts to teach those with much wealth to turn away from greed and to share with the least of My children. I ask of you to pray to Me in your thoughts and words for a way to teach more of those with wealth to give much, to give more often, and to love abundantly in spirit.

You were called by Me to be My messenger and leader, just as I have called others in the past as leaders and teachers for peace, love, and forgiveness.

You were called to be a leader of your country as well as My global Garden of Eden in its declining state.

You were called to be a leader of the human race that stands at the precipice of premature extinction if it does not change its destructive ways. Therefore, always be aware of your high responsibility and obligation to your land and My global world.

I beseech you to make every day the most important day in carrying out My will. I have anointed you to do good for many, so listen daily for My messages through your thoughts:

Don't be sidetracked from your mission as My mission for you;

Don't be sidetracked by possible arrogance, seduced by pleasure, or drawn into acts of political or personal retaliation;

Don't be oblivious to those who may try to set or spring a trap for you in order to bring you down or destroy

your good reputation and image or stop your good deeds.

Know at times that you will continue to have to live and show courage, wisdom, compassion, sound judgment, creative thought, problem-solving, decisiveness, and bold action in doing what is right and necessary.

Continue to love your wife and children, but realize and remind them that your mission and calling are of the highest order, and it is they, at times, who must be about sacrifice and support in allowing you to do work of the highest order and importance for humankind.

I call upon you to be vigilant to protect yourself, because I do not need another martyr but rather one who must live to lead rightfully during this critical time of global conflict, confusion, selfishness, and technological slavery among those of the human species.

I need you as My message and messenger of good and right, as the leader for change for better, and as a spiritual force for global transformation toward cooperation and collaboration for the survival of the human race.

Therefore, continue to go forth with My mission and with the right disposition and spirit, knowing that I am with you every day and in every way. Go forth with My spirit, knowing that I will continue to be with you in your trials and tribulations and in your triumphs and exaltations.

***Note.** The idea and initial lines for this poem came to me when I was eating at the dinner table on March 27, 2013. A chill ran through my body, when the idea for the poem and several lines came to my consciousness. I had no other choice but to stop my meal in order to write a draft of this poem, as I believe that it was given to me by a higher source.*

IT'S NOT TOO LATE

Although you may have given up or you're thinking of doing such,
It's not too late to hold on or act now to change;
It's not too late to *be* yourself or *become* that self you really wish to be;
It's not too late to change a destructive lifestyle to a constructive lifestyle;
It's not too late to transcend addiction to a drug, substance, or negative way of life.

Listen to me please; it's not too late to love a child or even claim a child whom you have abandoned or have chosen not to know;
It's not too late to love a woman or man whom you didn't love before, but you should have—whom you left before but now realize you were wrong in doing so.

Listen, it's not too late to ask for forgiveness from one whom you have wronged once or wronged repeatedly;
It's not too late to stop the physical abuse of your child or spouse;
It's not too late to stop the psychological abuse of your child or spouse;
It's not too late to stop the abuse of any person whose is in your life;
Lift up another person and not put down that person's spirit or mood.

It's not too late to pray for strength to do right and good for yourself and others;

It's not too late to eat right, exercise, get sunshine, and relax when needed;

It's not too late to build your health or save your life from a disease that can kill you, if you believe and act positively to change your thoughts and lifestyle;

It's not too late to stop worrying about things that don't matter or that you cannot control—or things in your past that you cannot change.

It's not too late to learn as habit to practice social skills such as, "thank you," "excuse me," "please," and "I apology" or "I'm sorry";

It's not too late to practice being punctual or to do an excellent job at what you do;

It's not too late to motivate yourself to work smarter, harder, and longer, especially if your salary depends on a commission for sales or an incentive for work performance.

If you have the strength and courage, it's not too late to start your dream business, or find your ideal job, or take your dream vacation, or pursue a college degree, a hobby, or a leisure sport or activity;

It's not too late to give money or a gift of value to those who are in much more need than you or those who could benefit from your gift much more than your keeping the gift in your hoarding possession.

As parents, it's not too late to save your children;

As educators and politicians, it's not too late to save our children in the schools and on the streets;

It's not too late to feed the poor at home and in faraway places;

It's not too late to save dying children from starvation, disease, lack of sanitation, and violence;

It's not too late to save yourself or others from waste of talent or self-destruction;

Above all else, it's not too late for us to save ourselves from premature extinction as a species.

It's simply not too late to do the right thing;
It's not too late to believe in yourself—
To say to yourself that "I should,"
To say to yourself that "I can,"
To say to yourself that "I will,"
To say to yourself that "I must."

Also, keep in mind that it may not be too late to hold off on a decision or to stay where you are until you judge with confidence that there is a better choice to make or a better time to act.

JUST START

If you start on a worthy journey,
Others will join you en route
To your destination.

If you start a program
To help others in need,
There are those who will give
Their time and money to help
Your cause for the needy.

If you stand up for right and justice,
Others will find the courage and the
Inspiration to follow you and your
Cause and to stand up with you.

MISFORTUNE INTO FORTUNE

Misfortunes

My biological father left town when I was too young to know or remember him.

My maternal grandfather and grandmother died the same year when I was only seven years old.

Due to illness, my mother had to discontinue her job and was on welfare assistance when I was in 6th grade, and she cried when she could not afford to buy me a navy blue suit for my graduation program.

As an undergraduate college student, at times, I didn't have food to eat or paper on which to write lecture or library notes—resorting to write on paper towels from public toilets or brown paper bags during times of hardship.

Fortunes

Although I never met or talked to my biological father, I was fortunate and willing to meet my father's family several years after his death, including several cousins, his mother (my grandmother who was close to 90 and in poor health), and his sister to whom I became very close until her death.

Although my mother could not purchase a new suit for me for my 6th grade graduation, she bought navy blue pants and borrowed a navy blue jacket from a boy in the neighborhood. I felt self-conscious and

ashamed in a slightly mismatch navy blue outfit until I presented my speech during the graduation program as the charge to 5th graders—next year's 6th grade graduates. Then, others in the audience and I forgot all about what I was wearing.

Although I was hungry in undergraduate college at times, eventually blessings came to me when most needed in the forms of scholarships, loans, or temporary jobs during the summer and the Christmas holidays. I learned that I just had to weather the most difficult times until things got better.

Although darkness can shroud us at times, remember, as I, that the sun will rise again and that we must continuously search for a way to make things better in our lives—a way to turn misfortunes into fortunes.

Note. As author, the above poetic prose has reference to several of my personal life stories.

A TRIBUTE TO WHITE CIVIL RIGHTS ADVOCATES IN U.S. HISTORY

Let us pause to acknowledge and thank White Americans who stood up for right and justice when it was not popular to do so and when it was even dangerous—many who died for their stand, work, and advocacy for Blacks.

Let us not forget them; let us not forget their sacrifices for right and justice for others and for their country.

Let us pause to acknowledge and thank abolitionist John Brown who organized a raid on Harpers Ferry's arsenal in 1859 for a planned military uprising against slavery.

Let us pause to acknowledge and thank William Lloyd Garrison, abolitionist leader and journalist, who was editor of the abolitionist newspaper, *The Liberator*, and one of the founders of the American Anti-Slavery Society. Likewise, let us thank abolitionist Wendell Phillips and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* author and abolitionist Harriet Beecher Stowe.

Let us pause to acknowledge and thank Senator Charles Sumner who fought in the U.S. Senate to free Black slaves and to protect the rights of freed Blacks in the South after the Civil War and the end of slavery in the U.S.

Let us pause to acknowledge and thank Viola Fauver Gregg Liuzzo, who traveled to Alabama to help with the civil rights struggle during the 1960s. She stated that the civil rights struggle “was everybody’s fight.” She was shot in the head and killed by “the KKK” while driving her car to help provide transportation for Black civil rights workers.

Let us pause to acknowledge and express our gratitude to Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman, two White young men from New York, who traveled to racially segregated Mississippi in 1964 to help with civil rights efforts to register Black voters and were brutally killed along with James Chaney, who was Black.

Let us pause to acknowledge and thank the many courageous Whites who assisted Harriet Tubman and others in the Underground Railroad to hide Black runaway slaves in safe houses and assist in their escape to freedom.

Let us pause to acknowledge and thank White lawyers who volunteered their time along with Black lawyers to fight in the courts against racially segregated schools, colleges, public facilities, and job opportunities.

Let us pause in 2013 to thank all White Americans who took risks, stood up, and advocated for the rights of Black Americans and other persons of color during years of racial segregation, racial inequality, racial injustice, and racial violence.

DON'T REST ON YOUR LAURELS OF PAST SUCCESSES

If you have succeeded in your job or career or have been blessed to succeed in other areas of endeavor, then don't be satisfied with what you have done in life. Don't be satisfied with the past, but rather look forward toward new ideas or challenges.

It's not too late to do greater things, but if your brain is swelling and your ego starts glowing, it's easy to be satisfied with accomplishments of the past.

Don't allow your head to get too big.

Don't become too big for your britches.

Don't fill yourself with arrogance and pride of past successes and achievements.

Don't rest repeatedly on your past laurels and achievements and, thus, find little to no time or will to accomplish much more in life with that light of talent from within you.

ELECTRONIC SLAVES

Slaves to our times,
Slaves of our times,
Slaves without awareness of such—
Slaves to texting, computers, electronic games, Apps,
smartphones, electronic tablets, and more;
Slaves to electronic devices and habits of our day and
historic times;
Slaves to online conveniences for reviewing our
accounts—bank statements, credit card
statements, insurance statements, cable TV
statements, and more;
Slaves to inflated charges and fees for upgrades,
increased electronic speed, streamed movies,
add-ons, optional packages, and more;
Slaves to unfair charges, hidden debits, excessive
administrative fees, and promised but withheld
credits to our electronic accounts;
Slaves to agencies and businesses that collect
electronic information on our private lives with
and without our permission;
Electronic chains of slavery around our heads that
are much more difficult to remove, because it's
hard to find the key or
It's hard to use the key when found.

QUEEN OF THE NILE

And one spoke:

My dear, it's not too late,
So come, please come and be with me
Of mind, body, and soul;
Fill my space with your sweet presence,
And fill my embrace with your warmth.
Come to be with me as my wife,
And I will give you the Nile and
Rename you Queen of the Nile;
Trust me, that I will light your smile
To show even more brightly,
From the coast of Africa's
Egypt to Ethiopia;
I will love you and treat you royally
As the queens of Africa's antiquity in the
Spirits of Cleopatra, Nefertiti, and Sheba;
Come hurriedly into my arms because
Life's time is fleeing still.

PAIN FOR “BEAUTY”

People going through pain
To look good,
To feel good,
To be much different—
Different from their past image
Or much different from others.

People going through the pain
Of multiple surgeries to look younger
And feel different about self—
To feel different and good about
Their face and other body parts.

People going through pain
To acquire tattoos and piercings of
Body parts—even the most private
Body parts.

Although body changes may be justified in
Some individual cases or some cultures,
The question is,
“What is a reasonable limit to body changes?”

BY EXAMPLE

Give and others will
Give back to you without
Your asking them to.

Keep your word and others
Will trust you without
Your asking them to trust you.

Listen to others and take an
Interest in what they say and do,
And they will likely respect and like you.

Be a good role model of living
And others will follow your example
Without your teaching or preaching
The rightful way to them.

LAST TO “BASK”

You can move up
Only if you believe,
Only if you believe and work hard;
You can move from
Last to “bask,”
If you believe, and
If you work at it.

If you develop the gift of talent given
To you, you can achieve and soar—
You really can; believe me.

You can move from last
To “bask”—to bask in the sun
Of being first, of being the BEST,
Of being the very BEST that you can be—
Of even being the BEST among the BEST.

MARTIN, MALCOLM, AND MEDGAR

Martin, Malcolm, and Medgar:
Three M's of the struggle—the civil rights struggle
Of the U.S. 50s and the 60s;
Three men against a White tide of resistance,
But sometimes with a White core of assistance;
Three brave and strong Black men
Who could only be stopped by
Cowardly bullets of hatred, if not conspiracy.

Martin, Malcolm, and Medgar:
They fought for our rights;
They fought for the rights of the oppressed;
They married strong Black women
Who continued their struggle for
Right and justice.

Martin, Malcolm, and Medgar:
Their deaths were not in vain,
Because they taught Black people to
Push for more and taught Whites to
Listen and change.

Martin, Malcolm, and Medgar:
Warriors for justice and just causes;
Their legacy grows, is celebrated, and remains;
Their good work continues through thousands
Of others across the lands and the sands.

Surely, they are remembered as great
Americans, and they always will be remembered
For what they sacrificed and contributed
To make America a better country.

IF

If you use the body much,
it will be useful to you.

If you exercise the brain with
frequent reading, talk, and thought,
it will likely help your memory,
mental alertness, and will power to do
what you ought.

If you love special others by your
gift of giving to them, then your act of
giving to them will be a gift to you.

If it is worthy to focus on yourself,
it is even more worthy to focus on
the needs and pain of another.

WORLD VIEW

How we view the world and
How we view our world
From our past experiences
And learned beliefs—
How we view our world,
A view that can change with time;
The Germans call it *Weltanschauung*;
In English, we call it *world view*.

World view, fluid and changing
With time and experiences—
With experiences over life's times;
World view, fluid and changing
With our changing needs and priorities;
World view, fluid and changing
With our interactions with each other,
With our interactions with the world,
With our interactions within our
Daily world.

WOMAN AS SAVIOR

Woman, you created life as God's gift
To bear life from the sacred temple of
Your body.
Now, you must protect human life
From premature extinction.

Speak up mothers and daughters;
Speak up and stand up for your children
And for all humankind;
Speak up in this critical time of climate
Change, global violence, and human
Exploitation.

Speak up mothers and daughters;
Speak up as God's first human creation;
Speak up now as daughters of God's stardust;
Speak up as mother of man and savior
Of humankind.

Speak up, because men and boys will
Listen to you when we will not listen to
Ourselves.

THE THERAPEUTIC POET

The therapeutic poet
Says what you know deep down
In your unconscious mind, but
You are afraid to admit to yourself.

The therapeutic poet
Says what others have said to you about
You as truth, but you have repeatedly
Denied their sayings.

The therapeutic poet
Says what you are afraid to say
Assertively to another or others.

The therapeutic poet
Says what you need to do in order to
Change your life, but you have not gained the
Insight or the will power to act.

EMPTY SPACES

Empty spaces in our Universe;
Empty spaces in our solar system;
Empty spaces in atoms;
Empty spaces in our homes;
Empty spaces in the cabin of our car;
Empty spaces in an inflated balloon;
Empty spaces in our refrigerator.
Unfilled spaces, why?
Unfilled spaces, why so much?
Unfilled spaces, why not?
Maybe, empty spaces are necessary
For some things to move within space
For purpose or destiny.

TAKERS

Those with no feelings for others—just concerned about their pleasure or the satisfaction of their selfish needs;

Takers, constantly alert to opportunities to take from another or others at the expense of others, at the expense of the loss and pain of others;

Takers, taking for the selfish self—meticulously watching for the right moment to take from those who trust them, those who may lower their guard;

Takers, violating the trust of others—violating a person, a family, or a group;

Takers, taking from the rich who can often be fooled by any scam that they believe would make them richer;

Takers, taking from the poor and the helpless—taking from religious institutions, schools, colleges, businesses, consumers, charitable groups, governments, their loved ones, and others;

Takers, robbers, embezzlers, extorters, cheaters, defrauders, swindlers, shoplifters, and pilferers;

Takers, so inconsiderate, vile, vicious, greedy selfish, insensitive, untrustworthy, and parasitic—

The scourge of our human race.

TIME AS BAROMETER

Time gives life as it so takes life—
A thief of youth and its vibrant energy;
A thief of physical beauty, an active mind,
And a good memory—
Images once valued in youth, but now
Damaged paint on a fading canvas of the past.

A baby born as future's hope to recapture
Youth and continue life;
A grandparent's smiling eyes upon a
Youthful face of life continued as time steals
To death's opening door;
Yet hope of one's future on Earth still lies
With life continued in newborn skin and
The birth of newly born kin.

BOYS AND GIRLS: MEN AND WOMEN

Boys and girls are different—
In some ways;
Men and women are different—
In some ways;
Most boys are like other boys, but
Some boys are more like girls
Than most other boys;
Most girls are like other girls, but
Some girls are more like boys
Than most other girls;
Some boys and men are like other
Boys and men although they may like
Their kind;
Some girls and women are like other
Girls and women although they may like
Their kind;
It's the way things are;
It's the way things have been over eons
Of God's earthly time and making.

EPITAPH

*And one spoke about being remembered
after life on Earth:*

I wish to be remembered
As one who accomplished very much
Of good in my lifetime that benefited
Myself, my family, and many others.

I wish to be remembered
As one who could have thrown away
The gift of talent to me from God—
As one who could have hidden the light
Of talent within me from the world,
But I did not do so.

I wish to be remembered
As one who deferred much pleasure
In order to grow, create, and serve as
The way to true fulfillment and happiness.

I wish to be remembered
As one who avoided self-destruction and the
Unnatural destruction of others and things.

STOP THE HATING

Stop your hating on people whom
you see as different from you.

Stop your hating on people who are
different from you in religion, race,
social class, educational level, nationality,
image, style, identity, orientation,
affiliation, or cultural ways.

Stop your hating on people who
will not do what you want them to do.

Stop your hating of the whole world,
just because one person or a few persons
hurt you, bullied you, disappointed you,
or abandoned you.

Stop your hating before it turns to rage
and violent destruction.

ASSUMPTIONS OF CONSTANCY

- We often assume that things will be the same and nothing much will change—
- We often assume that things will be the same forever or for as long as we wish;
- We often assume that we can remain on our job and retire in old age or stay on our job as long as we wish;
- We often assume that we will remain married to the same person until “death us do part”;
- We often assume that our parents will die in old age before us and that we will die in old age before our children die;
- We often assume that we will not contract a debilitating or life-threatening disease or condition that could change our life and lifestyle or even take our life;
- We often assume that we will not have a serious accident during our lifetime that could permanently disable us or even take our life;
- We often assume that we will never be financially challenged, poor, bankrupt, or even homeless;
- We sometimes assume that it is not important to be mindful of the moment, to be very careful in our daily lives, and to plan well for our future.

WHEN SPIRITS CAME TO ME

When spirits of earthly life before
Came to me, I heard them and
I heeded their wish to be heard—
Yes, to be heard and spoken for through
The voice of my writing pen.

When spirits of my family ancestors
And ancestors of the human race
Came to me, I listened and I wrote
Their wishes and words through me;
I listened and wrote their words as
God's words through me.

When spiritual thoughts came in my dreams,
As in my wakened state, I heard, and I wrote
As fast as my pen could record their messages
Through me;
I wrote down the messages immediately for
Fear that they would be forgotten and lost to the
World forever.

TALKING FACES

Talking faces who want you
To think that they know it all—who
Want you to think that they're in control;
Talking faces who want you to
Follow their lead or follow their mind
Or follow their body.

Talking faces—
Watch their words and watch their
Behaviors for discrepancy between what
They say and what they do;
Talking faces; yes, ask questions when
You doubt or see inconsistencies between
The said and the done or not done.

Talking faces—
Watch carefully their eyes, forehead,
And lips for nonverbal signs of deception
Or doubt in what they espouse to you;
Talking faces, not always to be trusted
As true, genuine, responsible, and honest.

Talking faces—
Watch what they profess to believe and
How they live their lives and relate to
Others—what they promise and whether
They tend to keep their promises.

Talking faces—
Not always to be trusted.

WHAT DO YOU DO WITH A MOMENT?

What do you say
In a moment of greeting,
In a moment to say good-bye,
In a moment of opportunity for apology,
In a moment of loss of a valued possession
Or loss of a dear loved one
Or a loved one of a friend?

In a critical moment of romance,
In any moment of opportunity to
Say what you really feel and think,
Say it in and from your right mind;
Say it from a heart of good intent and honesty;
Say it in the right way.

Also, what do you do in a moment
When you should sometimes say nothing—
But listen;
When you should say nothing or
Do nothing except to be there
For one who needs your presence?

TAKING THINGS FOR GRANTED

Yes, we often do it—
Every day without conscious
Thought of our gifts in life;
Without conscious thought of our
Blessings;
Yes, we often think or take
Things for granted;
We often take people for granted—
Focusing *on* if not brooding *over*
What we don't have,
Rather than being thankful for what we do have
Or what we've been blessed to have had.

NOSTALGIA V

What would you give up to again enjoy
One moment of joy and fulfillment that
Has been lost forever from this earthly world,
Except in memories of a loved one now passed?
Would you give up all of your jewels and gold
To have a parent in this life once more—
To enjoy his or her presence at dinner, in church,
Or on a special holiday or occasion?

What would you give and how much to again
Have a daughter or son back in earthly form—
One who passed away prematurely by disease,
Violence, or accident?

What would you do to hug a newborn baby
Whom you only hugged once or twice after
Birth before it passed on and beyond this world,
Or an unborn child whom you never got to hold
Or never chose to have and hold?

And what would you do and give in and of
This earthly world to join family again in the
Spirit world forever?

A PLACE OF YOUR MAKING

Have you chased a dream of others instead of
creating your dream?

Have you chased a false love and rejected true
love sent by God?

Have you, at times, failed to accept opportunities
that would have made you better, and, at
times, chosen opportunities that made you
worse?

Have you lavished yourself much with pleasure
instead of pursuing meaning and purpose in
life?

Have you held on to hope without personal effort
toward achieving a goal or satisfying a need?

Now, you sit in a place of your making;

Now, you sit in a place of despair;

Now, you stand in a valley alone—a valley of
regret;

Now, you stand alone with no hope or
expectation for help from those you once
helped—your family members and so-called
friends.

Is it too late to become that which you can be?

Is it too late to reach deep down and help
yourself?

Is it too late to develop that light of talent from
within?

PAIN IS . . .

Pain is not having when you most need,
Losing one you loved dearly or losing a very
important presence or possession from your
life;

Pain is enduring physical suffering of the body or
enduring psychological distress or constant
mental duress.

Also, healthy responses to pain include:

Walking through a storm until you can find
sunshine;

Turning your pain into expressions of beauty,
strength, love, forgiveness, or fortune;

Communing with God and ancestors as
meditation on your life, purpose, and future;

Praying in thoughts and words for relief, comfort,
and uplift;

Perceiving the painful experience as an
opportunity to build character through
courage, strength, patience, tolerance,
perseverance, and effort.

PUBLIC PARANOIA

What has become of us as a people?
What has become of us in public places?
Where does the suspicion end—
Suspicion of practically everyone?
Being watched by eyes of the vigilant, and
 Recorded by the eye of omnipresent
 Public cameras—cameras that are about
 Everywhere nowadays.
Normal behaviors that are viewed as deviant
 Or suspicious;
Normal people and well-intending people
 Viewed as malicious or as a risk for violence:
Arab Americans pulled off a scheduled flight
 Because several passengers were afraid of
 Them and saw them as possible terrorists;
A school child punished for painting what a teacher
 Perceived as being a handgun;
A man shot and killed in an airport for fear he had
 A bomb in his backpack, which he did not;
A schoolboy sent to the principal's office for being
 Overheard saying that the teacher was pretty;
A Black toddler of five sent to the school director's
 Office for supposedly staring at a White female
Classmate—he said that he was just daydreaming
And happened to be looking in her direction;
Public behavior, where do we draw the line?
Public paranoia, how do we see our world today?
Public paranoia, what have we become as a people?
What is public paranoia and what is realistic fear?

GOD'S SMILE

If you smile and smile much,
It means God is smiling on you;
If you smile and smile warmly,
It means that God is smiling
Through you;
If you serve others and create
To benefit others, it means that you
Are making God smile and
God is smiling on and through you.
If you smile and do much good,
It means that you reflect the face of
God through Her gift of love.

WE CANNOT FORGET HUMAN MASSACRES

We cannot forget, and we should not forget ever:

We cannot and should not forget the devastation and deaths by Mongol Genghis Khan whose warriors swept much of Asia and Europe killing millions.

We cannot and should not forget the millions of Jews who suffered and died in the concentration camps of Hitler's Nazi Germany—starved, painfully tortured, and massacred by gas.

We cannot and should not forget persecuted Black Africans who were brutally punished and killed during the Atlantic Slave Trade and during slavery on plantations in the American hemisphere.

We cannot and should not forget the Cambodian genocide of the 1970s when almost two million people died at the hands of the Khmer Rouge regime led by Pol Pot.

We cannot and should not forget the Genocidal slaughter of more than a half million Tutsis by Hutus in Rwanda in 1994, while the world stood by.

We cannot and should not forget the slaughter of millions of innocent human beings over the centuries based on religious human sacrifices, religious persecution, so-called ethnic or religious cleansing, and myriad attacks on villages and cities motivated by theft and rape of women.

We cannot and should not forget the public slaughter of human beings as entertainment in the Roman Coliseum and other amphitheaters as ordered by Roman emperors and other Roman leaders.

We cannot and should not forget the slaughter of innocent human beings of recent years in East Timor, Guatemala, former Yugoslavia, Argentina, and Chile.

We cannot forget; we should not forget!

HELPLESS CRITICS

There are those who volunteer ill comments
While offering nothing much of good in their
Words or deeds;
There are those who would pick 1000 apples
In search for one rotten apple as criticism of
The harvest or the crop;
There are those who will read a book not
For its value but in search of one error or more;
There are those who ignore positives
In search of negatives to enhance themselves
While trying to devalue the good work
Of others.

A PRAYER OF INVITATION

Dear God, I humbly and respectfully request
The presence of your company always—
To be with me in my work for You as
Expression of my love for You;

I humbly request Your constant presence
To protect me from all angles of possible harm—
From possible harm above me, below me,
To my sides, and around me;

Teach me more to defer pleasure as necessary for
The completion of Your good work through me—
My sacred work for You and for the benefit of others,
Especially for those who are most in need.

Thank you dear God, AMEN

BECOMING

*And one spoke of a path of rebirth and
personal growth:*

I came from a mighty long ways
Over years and months and many
Challenging days;
I came from a mighty long ways—
From being down to being found,
From being poor to having more,
From darkness to light, and
From hopelessness to Godliness.

CREATORS AND PERFORMERS

There are those who create knowledge, and
There are those who teach the knowledge.

There are those who compose music,
And there are those who perform the music.

There are those who choreograph dance,
And there are those who perform the dance.

There are those who write theater and movie
Scripts, and there are those who act out
The characters, the story, and the script.

There are those who coach the athletes, and
There are those who perform in the arena
Of sport and game.

There are those who create, and
There are those who perform or serve.

HINDSIGHT IS . . .

The view is clear when we're looking
Back in time;
The view is 20/20 when we gain more
Information to suggest that our choice was
Beneficial or not beneficial as intended.

For example,
There are those of us who may ask:

Why didn't I walk away from the slot machine
Or blackjack table with the winnings I had
Before losing it all back?

Why didn't I sell my shares of that stock
When big profits were on the table, before the
Price dropped significantly and rapidly?

Why didn't I take the early out with bonus pay
And retire when the offer was made?

Why didn't I accept a date from a fine person who
Liked me much and really cared about me?

Why did I marry the person I did instead of the
Other person I could have or should have married?

Why didn't I apologize before he or she died?

Why didn't I install a home security system
Before the break-in?

Why didn't I go to college for a degree or acquire
Meaningful training to prepare myself for a secure
Career in these economically depressed times?

Why didn't I get sufficient insurance before my
Medical crisis, accident, or the death of my loved one?

ODE TO BUTTERFLY

A special creation you are,
So colorful, graceful, and delicate,
But yet so strong and durable;
Flit, flutter, and elegantly flap your
Colorful and mosaic wings;
Spread your beautiful wings and
Show your myriad bright colors;
Dart and fly here, there, and practically
Everywhere.

From egg, caterpillar, and chrysalis,
You sprang with wings to beauty and
Flight—

Many time migrating for 100s and even 1000s
Of miles, although slight of weight and wing;
Your beauty across species is breath-taking
In shades of solids and multicolors of yellow,
Orange, green, purple, black, bronze,
Red, white, blue, brown, and more.
Butterflies as God's gift to our view, as
God's gift to our global Garden of Eden.

GOD BY ANY NAME IS GOD

All Powerful,
Allah,
Almighty Spirit,
Creator,
Divine Being,
Father,
God,
Great Spirit,
Holy Spirit,
Jah,
Jehovah,
King of Kings,
Lord,
Yahweh.
By whatever name,
God is God as
One, Whole, and All.

TIME BRINGS CHANGE

Time surely brings change;
Time surely is change—
Change in our personal world and
Within our organismic self—
Our God-given body so evolving
With time as with life's pieces.

Needs altered over time,
Abilities diminished since youth,
Our world splintered if not shattered;
Yet still, if blessed, we retain precious
Memories of what was—
Pieces of a puzzle once cherished as whole.

Flowers do remain in our
Garden of special people, although
The presence of some loved ones are removed
From our world just as leaves that fall
From trees or flowers that die on a branch.

Valued memories of loved ones retained,
Yet still space remains in our garden
Of life to plant *new* flowers,
And space remains in our heart
To nurture those flowers *sustained* as
Dear to our lives and very being
In this particular time of our life
That remains.

BLIND BEHAVIOR

Blind of mind to see the light;
Blinded by emotions and beliefs and
Void of good sight when others see
The light.
Blinded by twisted values or lack of
Good judgment during a fun-filled night.

Blinded by loyalty;
Blinded by intimate love;
Blinded by addictive substances or drugs;
Blinded by myriad lies from a trusted
One who looks into your eyes.

Blinded by lack of information;
Blinded by fear, hatred, greed, and
Pleasurable sensations;
Blinded by status, fame, riches, and gifts.

Wake up; open your eyes;
Open your mind to truth and reality;
Open your eyes before you choose;
Open your eyes before it's too late.

LIFESTYLE INSTRUCTIONS

Listen if you want to live and live well:

No food, water, or wine after night's nine,
No nighttime fights that can cause sleepless nights,
No tobacco smoke or addictive dope,
No sedentary life that will likely subject you to a
 cardiac surgeon's knife,
No self-incurred distress with limited rest,
No late heavy eating and restless sleeping,
No reckless, vehicular driving or risky-road
 conniving,
No high-risk taking, lies, and faking,
No frivolous spending unless you want to have a
 poor-life ending.
And if you cannot follow these rules strictly, then
 follow them as much as you possibly can.

FOOTBALL, AMERICAN STYLE

An American sport indeed—
Of strength, balance, and speed;
An American sport you best believe,
Player concentration and coaches' strategy.

Athletes as nowadays gladiators
For cheers and jeers from seats filled;
Football stadiums with their energy and fun,
Fans sometimes watching under rain and snow,
But more likely under a clear-day's sun.

Throw long, throw short,
Throw medium to the flat;
Throw across the middle—
Zip, just like that.

Football, an American sport to the
Ecstatic delight of fans at home,
Watching TV in a group or alone;
Watching the sport in restaurants and bars,
Or among cheering fan in other places afar;
Watching hand-held devices with
Anticipatory faces;
Watching at work, in the driver's seat,
Or in other banned places.
Football, an American pastime;
A cherished sport on many a mind.

PRAYER OF THANKS: RESERVATIONS TO HEAVEN

Dear God,
Thank You for my reservations and
Ticket to heaven;
Yes, I've done what You've asked
Of me;
Yes, I've done enough of what You've
Asked of me.

Although you know my heart and deeds,
I submit to You that I have developed
Your talent of light from within me;
I have created programs and writings
For the benefit of those in need;
I have served and helped the least of those
Among the needy;
I've sacrificed to give of myself;
I have followed Your path of good
As shown by my rightful choices and deeds.

But one last thing dear God;
Please hold my reservations,
Because I'm not yet ready for the trip;
For indeed, I have much more work
Here on Your Earth to do.

FEAR ON AN AIRPLANE

People as I, putting on a face of courage
But fearful at times on a rumbling jet airliner
During takeoff;
People as I, putting up a front of unassuming
Behavior, but fearful inside a plane's belly—
Descending to land: dipping, wobbling, and
Shaking in the breeze, wind, or storm.

People as I, acting like take-offs and landings
Are no big thing;
People trying to look calm, collected, and
Indifferent on take-offs, landings, and during
Plane-shaking turbulence in flight;
People acting unafraid but really afraid of
Anything that could happen in flight as before,
Not to mention a God-forbidden explosion.

People trying to act calm and unafraid—
With ears tuned into musical devices,
With eyes closed or openly fixed on print,
Or eyes fixed on a point in open space but
Nowhere particular;
People on a plane, trying to maintain calm
And act calmly in their appearance.

People thinking as consolation that thousands
Of planes take off and land daily, and, statistically,
Flying is a very safe means of travel.

YOU CANNOT TEACH
“THE BLIND” WHO REFUSES
TO SEE THE LIGHT

You cannot teach a “blind” person;
You cannot teach one who cannot
See or refuses to see the shown.
You cannot teach a “blind” person;
You cannot teach one who cannot
See the light or refuses to see the light—
The shown light of others,
The potential light within others, and
The light of God within self.

FREEDOM'S WAY

No man should own any woman,
No woman should own any man, and
No parent should own any child.
No person should own another,
And no religion or institution
Should own any believer or member.

We are all children of our ancestral lineage;
We are all members of one human race;
We are all children of the Universe;
We are all children of the one Great Spirit
Of us all.

A SMILE

You spoke to me with your smile,
And I knew it was ok—
Ok to say “Hello,”
Ok to enter your space,
Ok to say “I like you.”

You spoke to me by your smiling
Presence and made me whole
And full of happiness.

You spoke to me with your smile,
And I heard and heeded your call—
I heard you and heeded your call
As our call for and to each other.

DECISION-MAKING QUESTIONS

Ask yourself,

What are my advantages and disadvantages
If or if I don't make this choice?
What are the consequences of my decision to
Act or not act on a problem or issue?
When should I cut my losses and get out of
A relationship of any type?
When should I leave a party or social event, or
How much longer should I stay?
Even more, how should I use my time and with
Whom?
Should I take another job, and, if so, what or when?
When should I apply for a job promotion?
When should I retire from my job?
When should I cut my losses and sell a stock or
Get out of a financial investment?
When should I take my gains and sell a house,
An antique, gold, silver, or another asset of value—
Or should I just not sell at all and just hold on?
When should I keep my mouth closed, and
When should I speak up?

CLIMATE CHANGE, HUMAN CHANGE

Youth killing youth;
Youth befriending youth;
Adults killing children;
Adults protecting and loving their young;
Land going dry;
Forestland burning crisp;
Tornadoes and hurricanes blowing away
Homes, schools, houses of worship, and lives;
Heavy rains flooding cities and towns;
Foods modified with chemicals and additives,
And by genetic engineering;
The global environment and the natural way
Of life modified by humankind;
Countries and regions warring against
Each others;
It's not too late for us to step outside of our
Bodies and see ourselves as one human race that's
So much dependent upon and in need of each other—
So very much interdependent.

GIVERS AND TAKERS

There are those who often give, and
There are those who often take;
There are those who ask and
Who are granted and given;
There are those in need who,
When given, accept graciously
With much appreciation;
There are those who, when given,
Ask repeatedly for more and more
Until the giver perceives the selfish
User within the beggar;
There are those who give pleasure
To another but in turn expect the world
From the pleased;
There are those who would lend you
A dollar and turn around to ask you
For a loan of 10 dollars, or those who
Would give you a crumb and ask for a cake;
There are those who are full of verbal
Promises, but void of following through
On their promises.

IF HUMANS ALL DIE

If humans all die,
Animals in the wild will multiply;
If humans all die,
Satellites up high will fall to Earth
From the sky;
If humans all die,
Pets trapped in homes without food and
Water will have to say goodbye;
If humans all die prematurely before
The time to die,
It will be because they have not planned
To survive as God's chosen species—
How sad; my oh my.

FAKE

And one once said:

I'm just tired of the unreal—
Tired of fake things;
I'm tired of refined foods
And frozen foods;
I'm tired of imitation ice cream,
Fake crab meat, and tasteless,
Once-frozen shrimp;
I'm so tired of fake eyelashes and
False fingernails;
I'm tired of false hair and silicone implants:
Extensions in the hair and enhanced derrières,
Enhanced chest that's out of proportion with
The rest;
I'm tired of chemically treated foods or food
Picked before it's ripened on the vine or tree;
I'm tired of unnaturally ripened tomatoes—
Picked green and ripened on the truck or on the
Shelf in the store.
I'm just tired of things that are not real—
Things that are not as good as the real,
Things that are not made and presented naturally
And timely by the hands of God.

WAGONS AND BASKETS

Load your own wagon;
Fill your own basket;
Don't load your dreams
Into a wagon pulled or
A basket carried by another.

Load your own wagon;
Fill your own basket;
Pull your own wagon;
Carry your own basket.

YOUR BODY, YOUR MIND

It's your mind;
It's your body;
So why do you allow
Someone else to manipulate
Or control your mind and body?
Step up to the plate;
Step up to reality;
Take control now—
Take control of your mind;
Take control of your body;
Take control of yourself;
Take control of your life;
Take control on this day;
Take control for tomorrow;
And for the future of others.

THE ULTIMATE PROFESSIONAL

Listen:

Prepare much for what you do;
Work hard and well at what you do;
Manage your mental toughness, focus,
And discipline;
Endure a long career at a high level of
Performance;
Don't busy yourself with negative workplace
Talk about your supervisor or fellow employees;
Do show up for work on time, leave on time or
After time;
Come to work regularly and do your work
Excellently according to your job description
And any special requests or volunteered tasks;
Be kind and considerate to others, and,
If you can, avoid those who can harm you or
Dampen your day;
Don't be tempted and thus take what is not yours;
Don't engage in indiscretion that can
Bring you down or get you fired;
Always do the right thing;
Always do the ethical thing.

SPRING COMETH

The sun is shining through more
Often to brighten the days;
Leaves of green are pushing from
Branches of trees once asleep;
Birds can be heard chirping and
Singing in the trees and bushes;
Dog walkers are in the park,
On the scenic trail, and on neighborly
Sidewalks more often and much longer;
Joggers and walkers frequent even more the
Awakening parks, and lovers sometimes
Stroll hand in hand.
Restaurants teem with smiling faces that
Welcome the rising temperature of change.
Spring's coming is in the air—
The spirit of spring is in the air.
It's on the doorstep of a new and
Welcomed season of awakened life
And of life's Divine creations.

A CALL TO THE ANCESTORS

Mary Elizabeth Williams Harper, my dear great grandmother, young bride in your teens and bearer of 16 children; strong woman, kind and peaceful spirit of God you are, I honor you and humbly call upon you to protect me more and inspire from me the light of God's talent even more.

§

Charlie Calvin Harper, Sr., son of a preacher, deacon in the church, family man of eight children and three jobs, I feel your spirit forever in my heart and recall nostalgic memories up to your death during my 7th year of life. As my grandfather and father of my mother, you taught me how to become a man by your example as a man; therefore, I honor you and humbly call upon you to protect me more and inspire from me the light of God's talent even more.

§

Reatha Mae Harper, my dear and beloved mother, you gave me your smile and your intelligence, as you were salutatorian of your high school graduating class and loved by many for your warm smile and your interest in and care for others. I honor you and humbly call upon you to protect me more and inspire from me the light of God's talent even more.

§

Daniel Emmett Hughes, Sr., as grandfather and father of my father, I can feel your struggle to gain respect and attention for your writing during a time of racial abuse and racial

segregation when you had to work at the U.S. post office regardless of a college degree, because many professional jobs were closed to Black Americans. As you were, I am a writer and thinker who care much for the welfare of others, especially the oppressed and the poor. I honor you and humbly call upon you to protect me more and inspire from me the light of God's talent even more.

§

Frederick Douglass, as my namesake, I can feel your struggle to gain freedom from slavery and to acquire an education against the odds. As you were, I am a writer, thinker, and speaker who care much for the welfare of others, especially the oppressed and the poor. Therefore, as an ancestor of the human race and a descendant of Africa, I honor you and humbly call upon you to protect me more and inspire from me the light of God's talent even more.

§

Ludwig van Beethoven, you were born on my musical son's birth month and day and you died on my birth month and day; thus, I have felt your spirit through your music and as an ancestor of the human race, so descended from the first humans of mother Africa. Therefore, I honor you and humbly call upon you to protect me more and inspire from me the light of God's talent even more.

§

To the ancestral spirits of God who have come to me and through me to bring ideas and words for my writings and safety for my very being, I can feel you, and I appreciate your presence and spirit. Therefore, I honor you and humbly call upon you to continue to protect me more and inspire from me the light of God's talent even more.

SABOTAGERS OF CONVERSATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Have you ever talked to a person who consistently made an effort to make a case or attack your point, but, then, when you began to talk, you felt that the person was not listening but rather looking around, thinking about something else, acting impatiently, and then suddenly verbally attacking you again about something that didn't matter much?

Have you ever tried to talk and a person kept interrupting you to prevent you from answering a question, making your point, or just explaining yourself—just loudly drowning out your speech, because the person didn't want to hear your viewpoint or, rather, the truth of your revelation?

Have you ever felt or simply known that a person was criticizing, analyzing, contesting, or cross-examining every declaration, affirmation, or word that came from your mouth—regardless of what you said or tried to make things better for that moment?

Have you ever felt frustrated because a person in the conversation simply kept blaming you for any and everything, and, then, when you silently retreated from the game playing, accused you of being silent or not talking just because you chose to disengage from such combative conversation or switch the subject to avoid further argument or tension?

Have you ever sat face to face with another person and been accused of doing something that the accuser was often guilty of doing, such as controlling, monopolizing, ignoring, lying, and blaming?

Have you ever sat face to face in a tension-filled argument about nothing of worth and wondered how you could turn the conversation from negatives about the past into positives about the moment or the future?

Have you ever said to yourself during such stressful conversations that this person has a problem, is angry, is not allowing us to enjoy the moment, is placing all the blame on me, and is accepting no blame for self?

Have you ever felt like you had taken enough of an argument and you just felt like walking out of the restaurant and leaving the person, or walking away and leaving a person's home, or asking the person to leave your home, but then you thought, "That wouldn't be right. I should try to be even more patient and tolerant, accept additional responsibility for wrongful behavior on my part, and apologize only as appropriate"? Yet, you find nothing you say or do can change the dialogue, because it's not about you.

Then upon parting company after an argument, unlike previous ones, you ask yourself, "Should I try again to make this work?" Or "Will this relationship work, regardless of what I do?"

PEOPLE EN ROUTE

People moving about everyday
En route to destination or for purpose—
But sometimes en route to nowhere;
People pushing babies in carriages;
People walking dogs or rather dogs
Walking people;
People walking in the park with no
Destination but for purpose of health
And enjoyment of the park and
Sometimes even for filtered sunlight
Through lush trees of green;
People walking into a supermarket and
Around the supermarket, often trying
To make up their minds, or rushing to
Get ahead of the day and not get behind;
People of mosaic faces encapsulated in
Cars, buses, trucks, and planes—
Oblivious to worlds beyond their spaces;
People acting like people, doing what
People frequently do;
People acting like people, sometimes alone,
Sometimes together as a couple or group—
Conforming to the herd en route to somewhere
Or en route to nowhere;
People often conforming like a herd or like
Wildebeests—sometimes with little to no
Thought about what they do, who they are,
Or where they are going.

NOT MEANT TO LAST

As much as we wish,
 As much as we desire,
 As much as we may beg and plead
 For perpetuity of that we know and value,
 Some things are not destined to last—
 Simply not meant to last.

Some people, experiences, and events
 Come into our lives for purpose at a
 Significant time or season in our life;
 Some people, experiences, and events
 Are *God-sent* to our lives for purpose
 During a significant time in our life;

Some possessions are not meant to be
 Kept or hoarded forever or until the end
 Of our life on Earth.

Realize that few to no things last forever
 In the form and essence that we wish or value—
 The excitement of romance can wither;
 Marriage changes with time;
 Valued jobs can be devalued or even taken
 From us;

Regular financial income can decrease or
 Stop altogether;

Health can diminish and sometimes decline
 To death's door.

Therefore, value what you have for the time that
 You are blessed to have it;

Protect what you value for the future,
 But accept its loss as necessary or as is,
 And choose to move forward with your life.

A PRAYER FOR STRENGTH, II

*Heavenly Mother of creation of all things as with all life,
please hear my prayer and plea:*

Continue to grant me a spirit of good and the strength
from within me to do good things.

Lift me always and at every moment to a way of right
and good.

When in the valley of despair and with challenge, lift
me up and take me to a better place for myself and
others.

Grant me the courage, wisdom, and will to do your
work for the least of your children as with those in
the most of need.

Please hear me now in my words to you as in my daily
thoughts of this prayer to You.

AMEN

CHOOSING MARRIAGE

For *some* men to accept marriage,
It has to be the right time and the
Right woman who is willing.

For *some* women to accept marriage,
It has to be an “acceptable” man who
Can convince her that it’s time to
Marry and that she should marry him.

For *some* men to accept marriage,
They must find a willing woman with the
Right image, values, and lifestyle.

For *some* women to accept marriage,
They must find a willing man with
The right job, financial security, and
Societal status.

For *some* persons to get married, they
Must have the right time for them to
Marry and the right person—
A person who they feel will make a
Good partner and a good mother or father.

DON'T BE FOOLED, DON'T BE A FOOL

Beware of those who:

Promise much but don't follow through to fulfill their promises;

Say, "I love you," but don't show love in their behaviors or actions toward you;

Ask you for a loan and promise to pay you back by a given date, but don't pay you back;

Express an interest in you, but do not demonstrate an interest in you, your family, or in what you're about;

Promise to marry you, but cannot agree on a date for the wedding; then change their mind altogether about marrying you;

Ask you as employer for advanced pay, then quit the job and you never see them and the owed money again.

***Note.** This poem came to me while I was on the floor doing weight exercises at my health and fitness club. I borrowed a sheet of paper and a pen from a person at the front desk of the club and went to the locker room to write the draft for this poem before losing it forever from my memory.*

THANATOPHOBIA

(Fear of Death)

We're living in a new day and time when:

People are afraid of public places and crowds, for
 Fear that they may be injured or get killed by
 An act of mass violence;
 Some people are afraid of movie theaters, because
 Of fear that they may get shot,
 Because it has happened before;
 Some students are afraid to go to college or school
 Classes because of fear that they may get shot,
 Because it has happened before;
 Some parents are afraid to allow their young children
 To go to school, because they may get shot,
 Because it has happened before;
 Some passengers are afraid to ride on an airline,
 Because it might be blown up,
 Because it has happened before;
 Some diners are afraid to eat out at a restaurant,
 Because of fear that they could be shot,
 Because it has happened before;
 Some members are afraid to go to their fitness club,
 Because they very well could be shot,
 Because it has happened before;
 Some parents are afraid for their children to go to
 Summer camp, because they could be shot,
 Because it has happened before;
 Some drivers are afraid to pump gas at a service station,
 Because of fear that they could be shot by a sniper,
 Because it has happened before;
 We're living in a dangerous world of violence—
 How much is phobia and how much is reality?

RIGHTS OF WOMAN AND GIRL

Woman is the emissary of God's creation and spirit;
She is the temple, bearer, and trustee of God's sacred life.
Man is her partner in creating and caring for child.
Man is her partner in working for a healthy and
safe family, village, community, country, and world.

Woman in childhood or youth should be protected,
adorned, and developed—not selfishly used and abused.
No girl should be forced into pleasure for another, and
no woman should be taken with pleasure without her
consent with man, as woman should have the same right
as man to choose.

No woman should be flogged in public for wanting to do
what men have the right to do in the same culture.
No girl should be shot or killed for pursuing an education
that boys are privy to and often take for granted.
No man has a right to beat or violently abuse his wife at will.
No man has a right to own a woman as his property of
pleasure, his domestic house slave, or sex service worker.
No man or his family has a right to kill his wife just
because he doesn't want her anymore, or because
her family's dowry was perceived to be insufficient.
No man or men have the right to deny women the same
God-given rights and privileges that they enjoy.

A WORKER'S PRAYER

Great Spirit of all, hear our daily call;
Great Spirit of all, help us as workers
To do our best every day to create and to serve—
Never once or much to fail or fall in what we do.

Help us dear God to go to our jobs or assume
Our work each day with an attitude to create or serve
For the good of the consumer or for the good of the
Public or for others whom we may serve.

Make us meticulous and vigilant in our work
To create products of value and worth,
To deliver quality services much needed by
Our fellow humankind.

DON'T FEEL SORRY FOR YOURSELF

Don't feel sorry for yourself
If your mood or energy is down,
Or your fate turns to worse;
Just lift yourself as best you can and
Move forward and not backwards.

Don't feel sorry for yourself
If you've lost someone or something of value;
Rather, seek someone or something else
Of value and meaning in time.

Don't feel sorry from within,
But choose now the strength to act and turn
The good bend.

Climb now the challenging mountain,
Rejoice at the peak, and descend with
A feeling of deep fulfillment;
Tense your drained muscles all over and
Feel the relaxation and new energy from toil
And prepare yourself for challenge once more.

SWEET AND SOUR OF SUCCESS

When you become highly successful, there will be people who say that they knew you “when.”

When you become highly successful, there will be people who will claim that they helped you back then.

But if or when your success is tarnished and you happen to fall from grace, not necessarily of your making, there are some among those who said they knew you when will say that they never knew you and may even volunteer to say that they had nothing to do with you.

C'est la vie.

DEATH'S HARKENING

And an aged one spoke:

I'm of an age now
When I know people who die—
People of my age or less but those
Often older than I.

And with each ring of the tolling bell,
I often wonder what's next as God's
Future for me will foretell.

I wonder when my time will come,
But I wonder more of remaining time
For God's good work of me to be done.

And look me now upon the edge of
Heaven's horizon, I look back with joy
At my children's and their children's
Talents rising.

BLUFFING AND BLUFFERS

Yes, there are those human beings who blow a lot of hot air, but do not follow through on their claims or promises.

For example, there are those who may say, "I'm going to quit this job—I'm not going to take it anymore," but they never follow through.

There are those who may say, "I'm getting a divorce—I'm not going to take this abuse anymore," but, they never follow through.

There are those alcoholics who may say, "I can quit drinking tomorrow," but they don't follow through—rather, they often continue to drink heavily until a crisis occurs or until alcohol kills them.

There are those with obesity who may say, "I'm going to stop my addictive and unhealthy eating habits and lose weight," but they never follow through with a new and healthy eating lifestyle and may even die prematurely from illness or diseases related to their obesity.

SEARCH ENGINE

Searching, searching, searching
for something:

People searching for something all the time;
motivated to find for their needs, satisfaction,
and personal gratification;

People as search engines:

Searching for a date or mate;

Searching for a person for marriage,

Searching records for family ancestry,

Searching for food in a store or refrigerator if
not hunting in the wild or the water for food;

Searching for a restaurant in the hometown
or on a highway traveled;

Searching for furniture or items for the home;

Searching for a job—part-time or full-time;

Searching the Internet for information or images;

Searching one's mind for an answer to a question,
fulfillment of a need, or solution to a problem.

Searching, searching, searching:

Animals searching for food for survival;

Sharks searching for salmon, bears searching for
salmon, salmon searching for small fish and shrimp,
snakes searching for small frogs, and giant frogs
searching for snakes to devour.

Searching, searching, searching:

Plants searching for essentials of survival—

Roots of plants searching for water and nutrients;

Leaves of plants searching for sunshine.

FUTURE OF HUMANKIND

As a human race, our future is extinction as in the case of 98% of all species that ever lived on planet Earth. Our task as one species is to avoid premature extinction—to extend our existence here on Earth and possibly elsewhere in the Universe.

As a human race, our future challenge is to cease fighting each other as countries, ethnicities, religions, and individuals, but rather to live harmoniously and cooperatively to enjoy Earth as God's Garden of Eden and to make Earth a better place on which to live.

Our future is to learn not only how to survive, but how to survive well and long as one human race, helping each other for each other.

DIVINE WILL

Marriage for life or until “death us do part”
May be a couple’s expectation, but
Divorce may be God’s plan for Divine purpose.

Living to old age may be an individual
And family expectation, but earlier death of life
On this Earth may be in the Divine script.

Expectations for you to become a lawyer
May be your father’s or mother’s plan,
But God may have another script or
Mission for your life.

Above all else, listen to your heart;
Listen to your spiritual thoughts;
Listen to the light of God-given talent
From within you and God’s path of life
For you.
Listen for your Divine mission in life—
Your purpose in life.

DR. FREDERICK DOUGLAS
HARPER A CELEBRATORY
POEM FOR YOUR 2013
HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Guest Poet, Frances Yvonne Hicks, Ed.D.

Get ready—

Now that the road trip is over
Now that the dinner is done
You've returned to your home in Virginia
A blessed and comfortable one

You've had time to count your life's blessings
You've had time to reflect on the cheers
You've had time to remember joy, sorrow, and milestones
That you have witnessed over the years

You've had time to get so much needed rest
Save strength for your birthday next year
Before you know it twelve months will have passed
Headlining another day to revere

Your faith is strong in your spiritual sphere
And among the many reasons you are still here

I could write many things about you
But just to name a very, very few
You're a Dad, a scholar, a friend, a counselor,
A mentor and humanitarian, too
An editor, an author, and fraternity man, a "QUE"
Dear Fred, I would say that's you!

Using your time and talents
Helping many others succeed
Showing how faith, education, and character
Are just the things they need

I could pen many other verses
About how you've spent your years
Acknowledging right up front all the blood, sweat, and tears

You started with a master plan
Laid out to you by another's Hand
Revealing and suggesting your talents would be used
To uplift people and reject all kinds of abuse

Not wallowing in the challenges that did not go your way
But cherishing the lessons learned at the end of the day

Understanding the important things and how to weed out
doubt
Showing patience through it all, I think patience carries clout

Checking in on all concerned
Every step of the way
Making sure that they were becoming "whole"
No matter, come what may

Pulling out the positive when some things seemed unfair

Listening to all details, helping to clear the air

Arriving at conclusions when all things fall in place

WHILE

Maintaining the strength of conviction

And measuring up the course

Recognizing the consequence

Leaving no room for remorse

Your broad-based and inclusive nature

Give you reason to take pen to paper

To write and express beyond measures

Exactly what your inner being treasures

The rendering of your mind, heart, and soul

About faith and love and other goals

Like children, (s)heroes, and those gone before

The body politics, and, yes, there is more

Humankind, the Universe and all about creation
Scholarly activities, civil rights, our earth and nation

Making real sense of the obligations we bear

Preserving the earth and the Universe we share

Having respect for the code of life, that's a must

Protecting the things on Earth that sustain us

AND

Ensuring that there is an "us" to sustain

Starting right now so there will be no blame

Or fear or shame

And all out efforts to preserve earth's space

A world without end; time will not erase

Heeding the signs that the elements proclaim,
 i.e., of over-use, mis-use, climate change,
 And acid rain
 Over time, our resources may become rare
 Of this you too caution, "use with great care"

Always giving honor to your ancestors
 Reflecting proudly from wince you have come
 You've not wasted a minute in accomplishing your goals
 Yes, dear friend, YOU HAVE WON!!

Ms. Dorothy and I, we're applauding
 As you very well deserve
 Our wishes for a *Happy Birthday*
That's right, we have happily observed

Wait, there is more; a song—remember this one?

Thank you for being my/our friend
 Going down the road and back again
 Your heart is true
 You're a pal and a confidant.

If you threw a party, invited everyone you knew
 You would see the biggest gift would be from me/us and
 The birthday card would say,

"Thank you for being our friend, Fred."

THE END

***Note.** Frances Yvonne Hicks has been a constant and loyal friend of mine for 43 years. We both are from Jacksonville, Florida and worked in Washington, DC over most of our professional years. Her mother, Mrs. Dorothy Hicks, who is age 93 now, was kind enough to call me regularly for work as a substitute teacher at her public school when I was a financially struggling senior in college for which I remain very much appreciative.*

THOUGHTS

Pain can hone the spirit of good within us.

§

As you walk the destined path of your life, you should pay attention to see your way and find your way.

§

Keep learning and growing, and you will continue to stay on the right path and end up in the right places.

§

Nobody is perfect, but if we continue to be and do good things in every way, we will be blessed by One that is perfect.

§

When you feel you've pursued a path of right and done much of what you could do and are destined to do, then and only then will there be no regret at the end and no anger at the end—but rather there will be a sense of peace and fulfillment.

§

If you always do what others expect of you, then you are not you; you are they.

Some people are too busy to help others or too busy to be helped by others.

§

§

Our hindsight may be our last sight.

§

To a great degree, we are what we believe.

§

As much as others may dislike it, we are who we are, and we are what we have become.

§

When you allow some people to come into your home, you allow their human network and their problems to come with them.

§

Once you change the form and properties of that which was, it no longer is.

§

Those who project confidence do not necessarily have confidence within.

§

The greatest persons often create for performance and not perform from creation.

§

God was with me when I knew not better. I'm now with God, because I now know and do better.

§

Although always red, red delicious apples are not always delicious.

§

Sometimes, loneliness breeds fear, and sometimes fear breeds loneliness.

§

Let a boy become a man, while showing him a valued or positive role model of a man.

§

As a human race, we are intelligent, but we just have not been intelligent enough to see the need to save ourselves as a species.

§

Those who give without expectation are not always given to in return, but they very often receive gifts of value without expectation.

§

After years of routine work, retirement should be a time to evaluate, reflect, and introspect. Also, it should be a time of peace, freedom, enjoyment, and meaningful activity as you choose.

§

Although time passes, the constancy of music appreciation remains, because music is a cornerstone of civilization, culture, and humanity.

§

With some job situations, it's good practice to watch your back and document your tracks.

§

Unfortunately, there are some people who are much more focused on helping themselves than helping others.

§

Fate is what we accept; destiny is what we determine through our free will and chosen actions.

§

As human beings, are we grand; are we special among God's earthly species? If so, we must ask ourselves, "Why can't we live in harmony with Earth and each other, and what are we doing to save ourselves from premature extinction?"

§

Some people are wiser on their feet than on their seat, and some are wiser on their seat than on their feet.

§

Those who spend much time criticizing others are likely to find no time to criticize themselves.

§

If God gives us a new life by saving our life, we must give back the fruits from the new life that has been given to us.

§

As a human race, if we don't change our ways of living, we may very well prematurely die out as a species.

§

A great career comes with doing the best you can for as long as you can with what you've been blessed to do well.

§

Just because one sounds desperate, it doesn't necessarily mean that the person is desperate.

§

Beware of those who give you crumbs and eventually ask you for a cake.

§

It's fine to aspire to do great things as long as they are great and good things.

§

We often don't appreciate the value of freedom and peace until we retire from a job.

§

We can spend a lifetime earning money, and, once we retire, we can spend the rest of our life trying to protect the money we have earned.

§

Greatness comes with people focusing on, developing, and using their God-given talent and not on excessive time spent promulgating their intentions, goals, and past achievements.

§

You only have time if you use well the time that you have.

§

Things get better when we choose to make them better and then act wisely on our choices.

§

We should not just live to survive well, but, even more, we should live to achieve and serve well.

§

Time reveals purpose for those who listen and adhere by choice to their destined path.

§

We cannot and should not depend too much on our adult children to satisfy our emotional needs.

§

More is not better than less if the value of less is greater than the value of more. More is not better than less if you perceive that the value of less is greater than the value of more.

§

Comedians and poets are alike in a way; they make people think about themselves and their world.

§

It's more important to do important things than to be important or feel important.

§

A goal that is higher than national security is security of the human race from possible extinction.

§

Schools cannot and should not be a place where children fear to come, and school should not be a place where children are hungry when they come.

§

Those who express an interest do not always show an interest.

§

Fear, anger, suspicion, jealousy, selfishness, hatred, and mistrust are surely some of the scourges that impede true happiness.

§

We should live on Earth as one human race for each other.

§

Getting old is learning that you have to work even harder to maintain health and just as hard to avoid health-care fraud and unnecessary health procedures.

§

People can surely die when they cease to care about living.

§

Some things you apply to do, and some things you are asked to do as an honor.

§

It matters not so much your status in life but rather how you live your life.

§

If you follow a rightful path of personal growth and giving, certainly spirit energy of good and ancestors of good spirit will find you and lift you in your purpose and mission.

§

Beware of sound and sight, because a snake unseen in the bush or grass can certainly strike and bring you down.

§

Those who text and talk too much often pay little attention to the world around them and to the needs of others, and they tend to pay even less attention to their own needs.

§

Sometimes, it takes more than one encounter to accurately judge the spirit of a person.

§

Those who profess to be spiritual leaders and spiritual role models of a high order should willfully divest themselves as much as possible from earthly pleasures and treasures.

§

Courage can sometimes lift you to a higher place and purpose in life, and courage lacking in logical thinking can sometimes get you killed.

§

The Universe could not have evolved from a vacuum. There had to be something before it and some things related to it. Seemingly, nothing stands alone in its existence except for the dimension of existence and energy that is God as all things.

§

Just as there are many galaxies and stars in our Universe, there are also likely to be many universes that exist.

§

Matter shapes energy and energy shapes matter across a number of combinations and permutations of possible creations and conditions. An example of this is as Earth changes over time, we have seen the creation of new species and new geographic conditions, and we have also seen the mass extinction of species.

§

Romance is so beautiful, that is, while it lasts.

§

You can bring out well the light of talent from within you. A good motivating partner can help you bring out even better the light of talent from within you. And God and the spirit of ancestors can raise you highest in bringing out the very best of the light of talent from within you.

§

Diverse human experiences with one's eyes open to such experiences bring wisdom.

§

A break of a thread can breach the strength of the fabric. Likewise, the untimely death of a loved one can very often test the strength and togetherness of the family.

§

Predators need prey, and predators can sometimes be prey of predators.

§

God did not only create life per se, but also created *the conditions* for various forms of life to be created over eons of time.

§

If you're looking hard enough for something, you will sometimes find it within your mind.

§

Don't criticize what you agreed to buy, and don't criticize what you have willfully accepted as yours.

§

Take many photos of youth and young adulthood, because physical beauty does fade, fall, and falter, yet the beauty of an image can be preserved in a photo, and the beauty of one's good spirit can prevail indefinitely.

§

Some people are so busy looking that they can become blind to the apparent before them that is or can be theirs.

§

It matters little or less as to what people say of good to you and about you, but, rather, it matters much or more what people do of good with and for you.

§

If you wish so much to hear the said, you may hear what you think you heard when what's said is not as you perceived it.

§

A politician who argues, "Yes, I said that, but it's not what I meant; I simply misspoke," is like a child who's caught with his hand in the cookie jar who says, "I'm not getting a cookie."

§

A leader who is not sure about his or her cause or direction can be manipulated by the loudest and most persistent among followers of the flock.

§

In time, some medications can cure or treat the disease, but they may, at the same time, kill the body due to side effects.

§

As human beings, we can go blindly, arrogantly, and prematurely to our extinction if we don't wake up in time and plan for survival.

§

An ultimate question of human beings is, "Why are we here on Earth, and how long will we be here as a species?"

§

When in fear, we can sometimes convince ourselves to believe and do almost anything. When with greed, we can sometimes convince ourselves to believe and do almost anything.

§

As parents, it is our duty to sacrifice for the development of future generations—our children and their children. In doing so, we can make the world a better place for all life.

§

Countries that do not voluntarily change are eventually forced to change—sometimes violently forced.

§

Countries of power must change before they are changed.

§

A poet often says what people already know, need to know, and even fear to know.

§

Retirement is doing what you want to do when you want to do it, that is, as your finances and prerogative allow.

§

Both creation and destruction may very well be partners in the engineering and perpetuity of life.

§

If your mind with mouth causes you frequently to offend others, then you should try to limit offensive thoughts of the

mind or minimize the mouth primarily to eating and drinking during social discourse.

§

We can willfully choose to change our behavior for the better, or we can procrastinate and allow events and circumstances to mold our behavior and our future.

§

There are those who degrade themselves and allow themselves to be degraded by others to such a low point that they no longer care about life or living.

§

For those who argue that they don't have time, they often find time to do what they choose or want to do.

§

Just because a person acts interested in you, it doesn't mean that the person is interested in you as a human being, but such persons may very well be interested in what you can give them or do for them.

§

Follow your mind and heart, because it may be the spirit of God that is speaking to you.

§

We cannot claim that which we have not claimed; ergo, profits cannot be claimed unless a profitable stock is sold, and a loved one cannot become a spouse if one does not propose marriage or accept another's proposal for marriage. Sometimes, waiting for more or better results in less or nothing.

§

Those who talk much too much tend to be the same people who listen much too little.

§

There are those who have a habit of advising others on what to do about their life, yet these volunteer advisers have a habit of not following their advice.

§

You don't rightfully achieve greatness, but, rather, it is bestowed upon you for extraordinarily exceptional achievements or good deeds.

§

If animals could talk, they would tell us humans about our wrongdoings and mistakes. Although animals don't talk in our way, we very often fail to perceive their communication to us.

§

A big mouth can cause people to love you or dislike you. It often depends on what and how much come out of your mouth or how much goes into your mouth.

§

Take care of your bones with regular exercise, regular sunshine, and proper nutrition, and your bones will likely carry you through life and old age.

§

Sometimes, freedom from the demands of others is necessary to find and develop the self and the light of God's talent within us.

§

Praying in a house of worship is fine, but praying daily in your thoughts and whereabouts is spiritually Divine and rightful.

§

Religion is taught, spirituality is given directly from God and ancestral spirits.

§

Those who spend an inordinate amount of life's time playing games to try and fool others will eventually lose much if not all.

§

We can help make the whole world better by teaching our children rightful living by our good example, and thus praying that they will learn from such and role model the same with their children.

§

There are some who don't hear the cry of others, don't feel the pain of others, and don't sense the needs of others, simply because they are preoccupied with their own pain and needs.

§

Friendship is not simply announced upfront or upon acquaintance as a fait accompli; it is developed and earned over time, effort, and sincerity.