

***POEMS
ON
LOVE AND LIFE***

By

Frederick Douglas Harper

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Second Printing

PREFACE

Poems on Love and Life by Frederick Douglas Harper was first published in 1985. The initial publication was highly successful for a book of poems, selling out the first printing of more than 4000 copies of both hardbacks and paperbacks. In Washington, DC alone, more than 25 bookstores either stocked *Poems on Love and Life* or placed special orders from the publisher for customers. After being out of print for three years, *Poems on Love and Life* is now back in print, this time with 1stbooks Library as its publisher. As the world's leading print-on-demand publisher, 1stbooks Library has published *Poems on Love and Life* in hardback, paperback, and electronic version. This book is basically the same as the 1985 edition, except three short poems that appeared in the first edition have been deleted from this printing and a few words have been substituted or rearranged in several poems to make the poems more consistent with today's language and perceptions.

In 1968, Harper wrote his first poem, "Death of a Hero." Included in this book, this poem was written on the day of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King and addressed his death and life. After the writing of his first poem, Harper intermittently wrote poems and simply filed them away, making no attempt to publish or promulgate his poetry. In 1984, he decided that he wanted to write and publish a poem book during his lifetime, and, thus, he began to write additional poems to accompany the 25 he had already handwritten and filed away. This intense and dedicated writing effort resulted in the classic and beloved *Poems on Love and Life*, which contains more than 100 poems plus numerous brief inspirational quotations.

Since the initial publication of *Poems on Love and Life*, 19 years ago, the author has received numerous letters of appreciation and commendation

from its readers. Based on responses of readers, the most popular title in *Poems on Love and Life* has been “A Wedding Pledge”—reprinted in this second printing. This poem has been used in more than 5,000 wedding ceremonies. One justice of the peace received the author’s permission to use “A Wedding Pledge” regularly for marriage ceremonies that she performs. Moreover, this poem has been reprinted in various magazines and used in wedding ceremonies in numerous countries, including the Bahamas, the United Kingdom, Israel, the Netherlands, Nigeria, and South Africa. Other well-loved poems from this volume include “Love Me Not With Words Only,” “Advice to You My Child,” “Thanks Today,” “A Humble Prayer,” “Let Us Write a Script in Our Hearts,” “Live Long, Live Well,” “Thanks Mother,” and “Help Me To Help Myself.”

Poems on Love and Life is one of the most significant love-poem books of the last 200 years. It will continue to influence people’s lives in positive ways and should stay in print and in the hearts of readers for generations to come.

For information on other poem books by Frederick Douglas Harper, go to <http://www.1stbooks.com>.

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AN INSTRUMENT OF THY SONG

Let me be an instrument
 Of Thy song,
Let the oceans roar, the moon glow,
 The sun shine,
Let me be an instrument
 Of Thy time,
Sing, sing, sing
 Thy song through me,
Let me hear, let me adhere,
I will be an instrument
 Of Thy symphony, Thy chorus;
I will be, if Thou will let me be—
 Continue to be,
Thy instrument of music,
Thy instrument of joy.

Frederick Douglas Harper

NOSTALGIA I

When the night light was bright,
We stood underneath looking at our feet;
You touched me—oh so gently with your breath,
And I felt within me a leap of warmth
 Corralled by my own tremor of shyness.

When the night light was bright,
 Oh how I remember the cool breeze
 Of midnight air that swept us homeward;
You touched my hand with your fingers,
 And there we clutched in stride—
 Onward, homeward; yet so slowly we paced.

When the night light was bright,
 Our youth tormented us without
 Conscious thought of time passing.

When the night light was bright,
 We were in the dark privacy
 Of each other's world;
Nothing beyond penetrated our attention
 Thereof fixed.

When the night light was bright,
 We thought it would shine forever,
 For us.

LET US WRITE A SCRIPT IN OUR HEARTS

Let us write a script in our hearts,
And let us play it out from
 Moment to moment in spontaneity;

Let our needs be felt and realized,
 Our drives reduced,
 Our anxieties subdued,
 Our depression minimized;

Let us enjoy our others and
 The worlds around us as we encounter;
Let us enjoy our own selves;
Let us eat, rest, explore, and talk
 In the presence of each other's
 Comfort, good company, and security;

Let us write a script from moment to moment
 In our hearts and
 In our lives.

Frederick Douglas Harper

WHEN TREES WERE GRASS

When trees were grass,
We stood low and little but free;
We walked and ran as free spirits,
In rain-made puddles and hot pulverized sand,
While sensations of joy pulsated us with laughter;
Often, we ran forever and ever under the light of the moon,
 Into the warmth of the sun, or
 Against refreshing bursts of wind—
Knowing no time except bedtime;
When trees were grass, we shared no concept of future—
 The future was the present, except for
 Anticipated joys not to exclude Christmas;
Our perennial pastimes were eating, playing,
 And manipulating our little worlds;
When trees were grass,
 We stood low and little but free;
As children, we never expected to become adults.

I'M IN LOVE

I'm in love,
I'm in love,
I'm in love
 With my son.

Oh gift of God,
 How sweet,
 How joyful,
 How refreshing.

Oh light of God,
 My son,
I'm in love.

To hold him,
 Is to hold Thy holy trust;
To kiss his little lips,
 Is to feel the creation of
 Thy gift.

Oh light of day of night,
Oh light of my life,
 My son, my love.

Frederick Douglas Harper

IS ANYBODY COMMITTED?

Sometimes, it seems

Ain't nobody committed to nothing;

Ain't committed to volunteer work,

Ain't committed to paid work,

Ain't committed to marriage

Ain't committed to divorce,

Ain't committed to others,

Ain't committed to self,

Ain't committed to health,

Ain't committed to values and beliefs,

Ain't committed to meaning,

Ain't committed to something,

Committed to nothing;

Ain't committed to commitment.

WE SAW WITHIN EACH OTHER'S EYES

We sat alone,
We drank wine,
We intellectualized about nothing.

Then we saw within each other's eyes
 The nature of our true being,
Then we realized our gender,
Then we communicated our nonverbal
 Desire to move toward our other.

Our instruments of vision touched in softness
 Suppressing our eagerness,
Our tools of manipulation searched
 The pleasures of our curiosities,
We slowly lost the control of our rational
 Being to the passion of our desires,
We shed ourselves of that which hid our
 True selves from the honey of each other's fruits.

Frederick Douglas Harper

WE CAN: A MESSAGE TO HUMANKIND

We must believe in ourselves; and we must get others
To believe in themselves if we are to make a difference;
Whatever we want to do, let us do it now;
What we choose to do, let us do it well;
Let us build new bridges that will lead us to
Destinies unforeseen.

We can do so much, to have done so little;
We can do anything, we can do everything—
If we only believe.

We can run 150 miles nonstop,
We can catch a speeding bullet in our teeth,
We can leap the width of a flowing river,
We can climb the tallest building like a mountain,
We can stop our heartbeat by concentrating
On a single thought,
We can die and come back to life.

We are human being, a phenomenal machine;
If we can do all these things,
We can help another person.

LOVE ME NOT WITH WORDS ONLY

Great, how sweet the sound of your voice
In accolade and promise,
The twinkle and glitter of your mirror's eye
Complement the timbre of your utterance,
Your vibrations bring warm news to my ear,
Good news I like to hear,
But oh how transient the sounds, though sweet;

Love me not with words only,
But with your good deeds;
Let me know that you care for me—
Through action, effort, and sacrifice;

Let us share time, let us eat—
Eat under the shade of a summer's tree,
Dance in the spotlight of the public's eye,
Hold hands in strides of step and time;

Let us care for our lives and even that of another;
Let us work together, plan together, play together,
Laugh together, meditate together, sacrifice
Together, hurt together, and feel good together;

Love me with your complete feelings, actions, and
Thoughts,
And love me not with words only.

Frederick Douglas Harper

BRIGHT EYES

Rushing in the flow of anxiety
And expectation,
Washing my hands in anticipation,
Hurriedly, I step to him,
To lay my eyes upon his face;
He awaits with outreached eyes,
Open eyes, new eyes, bright eyes;
Eyes of our newborn baby.

CHILD YET TO BE

I pray neither for boy nor girl,
But for child to be
Healthy and happy,
Vigorous and vibrant,
Able to manage own self,
Own surrounding.

I pray neither for boy nor girl,
But for child who can love
Self and earn love and respect
From loved ones and peers.

I pray neither for boy nor girl,
But for a life that can be
Worthy of itself.

Frederick Douglas Harper

A FLOWER

A flower—

How temporal its beauty,
How delicate its petals,
How variegated in colors of
Red, yellow, pink, purple, and white.

A flower—

How simple, how sweet the smell;
A thing of adorability in bloom,
A thing that expresses our
Thought, care, and love.

A flower—

To touch, to share,
To wear in one's hair,
For holidays and special occasions everywhere.

A flower—

That graces our surrounding
And brings happiness and joy
To the sick, the grieved, and the well.

A flower—

To see, to smell, to hold;
A flower, to love
In the moment of our presence.

TECHNOLOGY AND HUMAN DESTINY

When technology sweeps away individual creativity, productivity,
Freedom, and decision-making;
When computers seize the power of human conceptualization,
Logic, ideation, and expression;
When eating is no longer a pleasurable pastime
But a distasteful means to an end;
When love turns to hate, thoughtfulness to callousness,
And consciousness to mindlessness;
When robotic and electronic machines deny human beings the
Right to work;
When nuclear holocaust destroys the genetic integrity
Of life's processes;
When we look but no longer see the beauty of God's
Flowers, trees, birds, land creatures, lakes, and mountains;
When the Earth becomes a ball of smut and confusion;
When nations fail to respect their citizenry, families their
Members, and corporations their workers;
When the speed of travel, the proliferation of variety, and
The greed of pleasurable consumption perplex our day;
When all that is good and natural is lost—
Then, we will be forced again to realize our humanity.

Frederick Douglas Harper

WILL YOU COME WITH ME?

I have sought your image
 Without knowledge of your existence,
My ideal woman you are;
So come with me please—
 Be with me and share your life;

Create life we will, and together
 We'll be trustees of another;
Come with me and I will pick a red hibiscus
 For your hair and the sweet magnolia flower
 As your perfume's fragrance;

I'll promise nothing except to be with you
 And be for you as long as we live
 Under the watchful eyes of the stars.

THE RIGHT TIME, THE RIGHT WAY

I needed someone—

I needed someone special;

My eyes lay upon your face—

In anticipation but doubt;

I was so touched by the softness of your eyes,

The grace of your stance,

The peacefulness of your temperament;

Your presence responded to my need and wish;

You came to me,

At the right time;

You came to me,

In the right way.

Frederick Douglas Harper

SOME AND SOME

Some have and some don't,
Some will and some won't,
Some can and some can't,
Some know and some don't.

Some are and some aren't,
Some were and some aren't,
Some will and some won't,
Some can and some don't.

Some are now,
Some were then,
Some will be later,
Some can be if...

TO HAVE

To have is to miss,
To know is to miss,
To experience the ecstasy of
Sensuality is to suffer the pain
Of absence.

Love comes and love goes,
Choosing carefully in couplets its
Beneficiaries and victims of joy
And pain, of happiness and shame.

But, such is the beauty of things
That come and go; of flowers,
Stars, and theatre lights.

Love comes and love goes;
To have is to hold it precious.

Frederick Douglas Harper

LIFE IS SACRED

Life is a divine creation of God's grand design;
Once conceived, it should not be destroyed
Except by its own decree to abort natality;
Once born, it should not be twisted, cheated,
Or snuffed out except by its own choice to
Deny self and others or by natural circumstance;

Life is sacred, life is precious,
Deserving of respect and owing respect;
Like a flower, let life bloom; like a star, let it shine;
Like a tree, let it seek its place among peers;

Life is sacred, life is precious,
But let no life preempt the integrity
And sacredness of other lives—
For they are also sacred and precious.

**LET ME LOVE YOU IN THE MORNING OF YOUR
WOMANHOOD**

If you let me come into your heart,
I will do wonders with the clay of your
 Parents' making;
Let me touch you in the morning years
 Of your womanhood, and make you
 The better lady you must eventually be;
As I must, let me hold your heart next to
 Mine and stroke your contour to fineness;
Let the warmth of your deepest breath
 Massage the perceptiveness of my ear,
 That I may feel your life grow in my arms,
 And that I may live again through the
 Life of your love;
Let me love you in the morning of your
 Womanhood, that you may become the
 Lady of my night for all occasions
 And all times.

Frederick Douglas Harper

TO SAY “HELLO” IS TO SAY “GOOD-BYE”

To say “hello” is to say “good-bye,”
For that’s the orderly way in which things are;
Faces appear in winter to be lost in spring,
Doors open to be closed,
The sun rises and sets,
Babies come and old folks die,
And all people must laugh and cry;

Night naturally follows day,
As moon the sun;
Boredom steals from life’s excitement,
As hatred from love’s promise;

Say “hello” with enjoyment, excitement,
And appreciation;
Say “good-bye” without anger, grief, or sorrow;

To say “hello” is to say “good-bye,”
Remember, that’s just the way things are.

LOSS OF A CHILD

The loss of a child's presence
Cannot be replaced,
Cannot be forgotten,
Cannot be forgiven.

The loss of a child, whether in death
Or separation, is a loss of innocence,
Hope, spontaneity, truthfulness, cuteness,
And joy;
The loss of a child is a loss of part of
Oneself.

The loss, whether permanent or temporary,
Is piercing to the heart; a wound that never
Heals in full and a pain that comes and goes.

Nevertheless, a joy known is a joy appreciated,
But a joy known is difficult to unknow;
A joy known is a joy enjoyed, though pleasant
Memories remind us of absence.

Frederick Douglas Harper

COOPERATION

Shoes don't walk alone,
Forks don't feed without the cooperation
 Of a mouth,
Women don't make babies without men,
Boys in love hold not their own hand or
 Kiss themselves,
Doctors can't practice in the absence of
 Sickness, and dress shirts are limited
 Without the partnership of neckties,
Weapons do not fire without the assistance
 Of warriors,
And chickens don't commit suicide for
 Dinner's sake;
Without the sun, the Earth will die and
 Birds will cease to fly,
Without mirrors, we wouldn't know our true
 Image;
Cooperation for better; cooperation for worse;
 Without, we cannot.

SICK BIRDS DON'T FLY

Sick birds don't fly,
Sick birds don't cry,
They just stand around and watch.

Sick birds don't fly,
Sick birds don't lie around,
They just stand and sometimes walk
And watch.

Sick birds don't fly,
Sick birds don't cry,
They just stand around alone,
And watch other birds fly.

Frederick Douglas Harper

DON'T BE A SLAVE

Don't be a slave to things,
Don't be a slave to television, or drugs,
Or work,
Don't be a slave to someone else's love,
Or to food or drink,
Don't be a slave to your own fears,
Anger, and hatred,
Don't be a slave to poverty and ignorance—
Escape them,
Don't be a slave to your own culture,
Family, relatives, or friends,
Don't be enslaved by senseless rules or
Mindless conformity,
Feel free and be free;
Just be your slave to your own individuality
And rational thinking; to your own
Personal style and creative self;
However, remember, you don't have to be
A slave in order to experience or
Enjoy some of the things that can
Enslave.

RULES OF LIVING

Listen for your rules;
Listen for your inner voices and
Interpretive mind.

Listen to your body, listen to your “self”;
Sense your moods, your pains, your pleasures.

Listen to your others and learn;
But be watchful of faulty advice and poor
Example.

Listen to your world around you;
Process its dangers, pleasantries, tellings,
And tips.

Listen for your rules, listen for your inner “self”;
Listen, listen, listen, listen;
And act in good choice and appreciation.

Frederick Douglas Harper

WILL YOU LOVE ME IF...?

Will you love me if I'm not,
Or will you just love me if I am;
Will you love me if I should have,
Or will you just love me if I do?

Will you love me if I fail or if
I diminish size in your eyes,
Or will you just love me as I was;
Will you love me if I'm paralyzed,
Damaged, lessened, or embarrassing;
Or will you just love me no more?

Will you love me if I change;
Will you love me if I am changed—
Changed from your ideal of the lovable;
Will you love me if...?

MOTIVES

Fear drives inhibition, flight, and confusion;
Pleasure drives desire, excessive consumption,
 And habit;
Stress and pain drive need to relax, release,
 And reduce tension;
Jealousy drives hatred, anger, and the urge
 Toward destruction;
Greed drives an obsession toward consumption,
 Ownership, and power at great risk;
Thoughts drive ideas and actions, however,
 Sometimes just worry;
Curiosity drives a seeking and searching for
 The assumed or unknown;
Goals, fear of death, love, faith, pride, and
 Meaning drive life.

Frederick Douglas Harper

NOSTALGIA II

Time gone,
Time changed,
Space and energy transformed;
Time gone,
Time changed,
Images unbroken.

NOSTALGIA III

He was big, I little;
 But both men in our sights;
We worked together and played together,
 At day and night.

I remember, and will forever, his
Kindness and love, though only a small child;
Together, we shared time:
 Walking in the corn field,
 Feeding chickens and the hog,
 Driving a mule-driven wagon.

I watched him pray in church, drive his car,
 Work at two jobs, plant and harvest,
 Make old-fashioned wine, and care for
 His wife and offspring of eight.

I, a child of seven, was by his side when he
Died so peacefully, so courageously on a small
Bed alongside a sun-lighted, open window.
Granddad, I will always miss you;
Granddad, I will always love you.

Frederick Douglas Harper

LOVE YOUR CHAIN

Love the links in your chain,
For a broken chain has no purpose;
Love your parents, love your children;
For they are strong links of proximity.

Love your grandparents,
Love your grandchildren,
Love your sibling too;
For they are also important links
To a strong chain.

Most of all, love your link;
Love yourself—
Love all links in your chain
For a broken chain has no purpose.

MONGOOSE

Their steps are quick and low,
Fastly scooting they often go,
Minding their own business of the day;
A friend of man and woman they are,
Kindly and cute animals by far;
Mongooses, how beautifully they stroll
 Along;
Mongooses, how beautifully they stroll
 Alone;
Their brown coat glistening in the sun,
Creatures of charm on the run.

Frederick Douglas Harper

I LONG FOR YOU

Please, relax now,
I long not for the revelation
Of the privacy of your temple,
But for the company of the
Whole of you; to be with you,
Anytime and anywhere.

I long for your respect, for the
Energy of your existence to make
Me the better for your most
Worthy appreciation and happiness.

Please now, know my cause and motive,
For they are true to you;
Sincerely, I long for your heart,
Your soul, your inspiration, your
Presence, your natural warmth.

FINE WOMAN

Fine woman of svelte neck, straight back,
And sturdy hips—let me
Watch your stance and poised presence
Among others; let me breathe the energy
Of your elegant space.

Fine woman of creamy texture and
Tanned hue, I secretly watch you—and
Patiently await my turn of acquaintance,
To feel the peace of your calm temperament
And visualize up close the form of your
Lovely essence.

Speak to me, speak with me, and let my
Total attention for you be yours on this
Special night of ours. Let us dine under
The stars of this resort and smile for each
Other as night grows old to morning's birth;
Let us breathe of each other's air, and be
One in the moment of our private selves
And space.

LOVE GONE SOUR

What about the woman who left her husband and took

All possessions including the toilet tissue—

Love gone sour;

What about the man who brutally beat his wife because

She simply demanded his affection and gentle touch—

Love gone sour;

What about the woman whose butcher lover's supply of

Pilfered meat was returned by her husband to the

Rightful owner at the expense of the butcher's job

Love gone sour;

What about the man who refused to buy food in order

To starve his wife out of the house—

Love gone sour;

What about the woman who changed the door locks

During the husband's business trip; and, upon his return,

Refused to allow him access to his house, furnishings,

Son, or her—

Love gone sour;

What about the two men who conspired to kill each other's

Wife and collect life insurance—

Love gone sour;

“For better or for worse, for richer or for poorer,

To love and to cherish, till death us do part”;

Love gone sour.

THANKS TODAY

In case I am not here tomorrow,
I say thanks today;
Thanks for good family, friendships,
And all kindness to me;
Thanks for well-wishers and supporters
Along my path;
Thanks for life's beauties of land, sea,
And air;
Thanks for the many smiles, encouraging
Words, and helping hands;
Thanks for all gifts and expressions of
Love;
Thanks for the universal God and
Benevolent spirits that watch over me;
In case I am not able to be here tomorrow,
I say thanks today.

Frederick Douglas Harper

WHAT IS MY VERDICT?

Person: God, I have come face to face with your presence;
What is my verdict?

God: This is the first time you have acknowledged my
Existence. Your verdict has been decided by your
Life and choices, and now your end on Earth has come.

Person: Must truth be mine of now or can I enjoy a reprieve
Of stay on this Earth for just one bit longer?

God: Your destiny was not of its order, but of your choice.
Your work is done, and Earth is no longer in need of
You; neither am I. Your work was of your own selfish
Interest, and to stay longer is to serve that interest—
And not mine, which is for your good service, good will,
And respect for all life.

LOVE AND LIFE

Love of life,
 Life from love;
Love of life,
 Love with life;
Life is love,
 Love is life.

Give life, life grows;
Give love, love grows;
Living is loving,
 Loving is living.

Love while living,
Love the yet living,
Love is living;
Living is loving,
 Loving is living.

To live is to love,
To love is to be alive;
Be alive and love.

Frederick Douglas Harper

THE SENSES OF MY LOVE

What I can see, I have often loved;
What I can hear, I have often loved;
What I can touch, I have often loved;
What I can smell, I have often loved.

I have known the beauty of flowers,
Music, birds, foods, people, trees,
Rivers, oceans, mountains, and other
Artistic creations of God and humankind.

Things of beauty I have known,
I have also loved—
Especially when I have paid
Attention to sense their world around me.

EACH IS A WORLD

In times of displeasure, we often thunder
 In anger and lash out as lightening;
Our tears of self-pity, suffering, and joy
 Frequently rain on our many faces;
Like volcanic ash, the honey of our hormones
 Often flow us to awakening;
While calmed by snows of relaxation, we
 Can be depressed by visits of dark clouds;
In excitement and fear, the winds of our
 Breath do pump us for action, while
 Emotional earthquakes can shake our peace;
Each of us is a world unto himself;
Each of us is a world unto herself;
And, on every side of each world,
 Sunshine must sometimes smile.

Frederick Douglas Harper

MEANING OF LIFE AND DEATH

To live is to say "Hello,"
To die is to say "Good-bye";

We don't know how long we will have
 To say "Hello,"
We don't know when we may have
 To say "Good-bye";

So, while here on Earth,
 Be the best guest that you can;
And your company will be forever
 Appreciated.

LIVE LONG, LIVE WELL

There are many rules to the good life,
 Among them is avoiding danger and strife;
Also, it's more than wise,
 To maintain regular exercise;
Swim, or run, or walk each week,
 While watching daily how much you eat;
Lower your diet in salt and fat,
 And drink healthy liquids to keep your
 Inside wet;
Sing, dance, laugh, and enjoy good play,
 But work, rest, and relax each day;
Live long, live well,
 Minimize your hurry and stress;
Live long, live well,
 Keep your body at its best.

CLASS

Don't gloat in victory, or pout in failure;
Don't brag of your conquests and possessions;
Be considerate to the less fortunate and
 Graceful with the defeated;
Suffer you must, but without a murmur of
 Complaint;
Choose well in your taste and avoid ostentation,
 Showmanship, and buffoonery;
Let your actions, achievements, and accompaniments
 Speak for you at the expense of your mouth;
Do and acquire what you like and not things
 You value highly for their impressions on others;
 And if they impress others, then let it be;
Stay in synch with your energy and mood,
 While remaining polite, respectful, and responsible;
Listen well to your conscience and follow
 The moral dictates of your natural way;
Although not perfect, try to do as many of these
 As often as you can and will;
If so, you will earn an air of distinction and class
 That birth, money, power, and status alone
 Cannot bestow.

HOPE FOR HOPE

Hope that you will always have hope for your
Expectations and dreams;
To hope for naught is to be hopeless of trust
In yourself and your humankind;
To hope for naught is to be hopeless of trust
In a superior order of faith.

If defeated by yourself, try again when in a
Better mood;
If you fail in one arena, try in another;
If you fail at one task, try again or plant your
Foot to another.

Keep your confidence, self-reliance, and optimism;
Hold on to the strong rope you are, when your
Hands are burning and your
Arms numb from fatigue;
Rest along the mountainside, and climb once more
When fresh.

Hope for hope,
For without it, your spirit will die;
Hope for hope,
For without it, your dream will die.

Frederick Douglas Harper

EARTH AND TREE

The soil said to the tree:

“From me you sprang
And I shall nourish your
Body and safeguard your
Roots.”

The tree replied to the soil:

“I have grown full from
The seed of your crust,
And thus will protect you
From the heat of the sun
With branches broad that
You may one day nourish
The children of my seeds.”

NO COLOR, NO SHAPE

No color, no shape they have;
Both essential, but taken for
Granted in their abundance.

Often invisible and disguised;
However, their absence can
Be known and felt.

Their existence is necessary and
Sacred for all times—
Not to be misused, abused,
Or contaminated.

No color, no shape;
Our need for them cannot wait.

Frederick Douglas Harper

I'LL NEVER GET SO FAR

I'll never get so far that I'll
Forget those who helped me to become,

I'll never get so far that I'll
Forget those from whom I've come,

I'll never get so far that I'll
Forget my God, the great spirits, and
My people,

I'll never get so far
That I will simply forget.

WHAT COLOR ARE YOU?

Are you blue; calm, just, fair, and balanced?
Are you red; often fiery, spicy, and angered?
Are you pink; hot, impulsive, and sensual?
Are you brown; low-keyed, matter-of-factly, and
Often unmoved?
Are you green; vibrant, lively, and optimistic?
Are you black; often gloomy, energyless, and depressed?
Are you yellow; easygoing, accommodating, but often
Anxious and fearful?
Are you purple; sometimes bitter, sometimes resentful,
And often determined?
Are you gray; directional, ambitious, and authoritative?
Are you white; obsessed with purity, cleanliness, order,
And morality?
Or, are you a rainbow;
Or, a combination of colors of varying luminance;
Or, are you one color that changes in its shade or hue?
What color are you?
What colors are you?
What mood or moods are you?
Know your color, know yourself.

Frederick Douglas Harper

WATCH YOUR MOUTH

Live long, live safe,
Use your mouth sparingly and with grace;
Kiss only when it counts,
And eat food in small amounts.

Live long, be safe,
Avoid excessive chemicals lipped through the face;
For tobacco and alcohol can diminish your health,
And in the end can pose threat to your wealth.

Live long, live safe,
By rarely mouthing off in haste;
Please, I tell you, if you can,
Use your mouth sparingly and with grace.

A WEDDING PLEDGE

In this, my left hand, I take you as my wife/husband
And hold sacred your life and welfare as long as we
Choose and hold each other;

With my right hand, I promise to work for you,
With you, and for life we may create as one;
In both hands, I cup and nourish the trust we place
In each other as persons and in ourselves as a
Partnership in life.

With this heart, I set forth my allegiance to a sensitivity
For your feelings, and pledge to put no other person's
Needs or wants before your own;

With will and determination, I shall do my best to remain
Patient with your weaknesses as well as your personal
Changes over the years, and I will hold in confidence that
You will do likewise with me;

With this, my head, I will think of you wherever I am
And whenever I can as thoughts of concern for you and
Shared experiences with you.

I pledge at this moment to do all I can:

To help minimize your pains and maximize your happiness,
To forgive you for inadvertent errors of human frailty,

(continued)

Frederick Douglas Harper

To respect you as a person and as my wife/husband,
To be open with you about my thoughts and feelings,
To touch you each morning and kiss you each night,
To trust in your words and actions,
To be kind, courteous, and considerate to you,
To respect your right to freedom, solitude, and
 Individuality,
To commit myself totally to you and our relationship.

Furthermore,
I will try my best not to hurt you in any way or discredit
 You before peers or yourself;
I will encourage your personal growth and internal peace,
I will allow no person to conspire to alienate my love for you;
 Neither will I allow myself to be blinded by false
 Feelings for another or life's many luring excitements;
I will talk with you, walk with you, and persevere with you
 Through tests of time and condition;
I will pray with you, hope with you, struggle with you,
 And suffer with you in your hardships;

Most of all, I will love you, without condition, for as long
 As I can and as long as you want me to—
 Hoping and trusting it will be forever.

IMPORTANT THINGS IN LIFE

The most important TIME in your life is now;

The most important QUESTION in your life is,

“What are you going to do now and

In the future?”

The most important ACTION in your life is

Thinking;

The most important PERSON in your life is you;

Therefore, don't procrastinate;

Know what you are going to do,

Think things through,

And love yourself in order to love another.

Frederick Douglas Harper

OLYMPIAD WOMAN

Stomach so flat, muscles toned and flexed;
An instrument of beauty you are.

Movement of grace, in timing and space—
You flow through the air with ease and
To please.

I love your presence, I love your skills,
I love your discipline for sacrifice.

Oh diver, oh gymnast, oh runner how sweet—
A joy to my eyes in this Olympic meet.

HELLO, I LIKE YOU

Person 1 speaks:

“Excuse me please;

Hello,

I saw you;

I like you;

Would you care to talk?”

Person 2 speaks:

“You are excused,

But not from my presence;

Hello, too;

I also saw you; and sure,

I would like to

Talk to you too;

Because, I too like you.”

Frederick Douglas Harper

LIE DOWN

Lie down and feel yourself in our presence;
Let the ocean roar in the peacefulness of
Your ear;
Let the sand tickle your back and the sun
Wash your face.

Let us think of nothing except our feelings
For ourselves and this little world's
Moment.

Lie and let life's air bring meaning to our
Souls that we may breathe such
Memories forever.

LOVE HAS COME

He came into her so gently, as he did
 To her;
Her presence was with courage but deep
 Exhilaration of an experience
 Never felt;
They were one in ecstasy atop a mountain,
Together, they realized a shyness and the
 Downhill awkwardness of separation;
 However, a deep fulfillment of a dream
 Anticipated and complete;
They relaxed, she on his arm and he against
 The softness of her;
Her breath whispered to his ear,
 “I love you”; and he replied,
 “I love you too.”

Frederick Douglas Harper

I WANT YOU

We sat juxtaposed for a purpose other
 Than the unforeseen;
Our eyes touched out of courtesy, but
 Quickly locked from the magnetism
 Of our own sensual vibrations;
We trembled and struggled to control and
 Sequester our feelings for the other;
Our bodies filled each other's eyes in
 Subtlety and brevity between interludes
 Of trying to look unassuming;
Our gender's scent betrayed the truth of each
 Other's desire to our deep breath's yearning;
Our skin flinched and our muscles tensed
 As we waited for separate buses,
 Hoping they would, this time, be late;
We parted so painfully, knowing that
We must see each other again, but
Wondering so desperately
 “How” and “when.”

WE LAY

We lay, back first, with eyes toward
The stars; thinking of nothing
Except the moment of our appreciation.

The grass beneath cushioned our relaxation,
While darkness of the night shielded
Us in anonymity.

The cool air of evening helped our shared
Presence to erase regrets of the past
And worries of the future.

We lay calmly, serenaded by our own
Breaths of life and comforted by our
Selfish thoughts of each other.

We lay alone as two; but really as one—
Together for each other,
Together in the world,
Together against the world.

Frederick Douglas Harper

LIVING AND LOVING ARE ARTS

Living is an art, loving is an art;
Both take thoughtfulness and not just thought,
Learning and not just performance,
Compassion and not just passion,
Care and not just concern.

To live is to love life; to love is to live life
With patience, respect, appreciation,
Excitement, energy, and good feeling.

Living is loving self, loving others, and loving life;
Loving is living with self, living with others, and
Living life in great appreciation.

THE FRONT SEAT OF A CAR

Kids sometimes ask profound questions of curiosity
While riding in the front seat of a car;

For example,

“Where do babies come from?”

Or, “How would you protect me from a bad guy?”

Or, “Did you have another kid before me and
Mom came?”

Also, kids often ask simple questions of need or want
While anywhere in the house;

For example,

“Dad, could you please give me a cookie?”

Frederick Douglas Harper

I'M GLAD I MET YOU

Gee, I'm glad I met you;
Together, we have made each other better;

We have shared each other,
And have realized our sensations;
We have experienced reality,
And have grown together in knowledge;
We have encountered each other's worlds,
And have mutually shared our feelings;

Our joys have been increased and our pain
Minimized by the mere presence of our other;

Gee, I'm glad I met you;
Let us remember all the good and pleasant things
We have shared together,
And let us reserve a space in each other's
Heart for all those special moments and memories.

THE IMPORTANCE OF IMPORTANCE

It's not so important to be liked,
 But to like yourself;
It's not so important to be good,
 But to be better;
It's not so important to receive respect from others,
 But to earn respect for yourself;
It's not so important to spend money on a person,
 But to spend quality time with a person;
It's not important to be important,
 But to be appreciated.

Frederick Douglas Harper

THE ICONOCLASTS COMETH

Our world is at peace; our way is of happiness
And content—
But let us beware, for the iconoclasts cometh;
Their intent is to hurt the world as they, themselves,
Have been hurt,
To destroy as many as possible, as soon as possible,
For as long as possible;
The iconoclasts come to destroy the icon—
Whether an image, an idea, a belief, or a life;
Let us beware of the icon breakers, for their
Role is to hurt our little world
And the big world in which we live.

EVERY CHILD HAS A RIGHT TO SMILE

A child is so precious and impressionable;
 A gift to our lives,
 A gift to our world;
Developing in time like a flower from a seed.

A spontaneous smile, how sweet, how innocent;
A prance in the rain or a puddle;
A tiny face that looks at the sun to vacuum
 Its rays.

Don't let it suffer unnecessarily for a moment,
 Except as nature calls;
Don't let that smile turn to a frown of daily
 Despair and hopelessness.

So little, so helpless, with unblossomed potential;
A bud so tender in our sight;
Let us nourish its growth and joys,
To maintain it right to smile in delight.

Frederick Douglas Harper

CAN WE WAIT FOR THOSE WE LOVE?

I'm not complaining, so why are you explaining;

You are late, and I mind not the wait;

We all wait to die,

So why can't we wait for those we love.

I'm not explaining, since you are not complaining;

I am late, and you seemingly mind not the wait;

We all wait to die,

So why can't we wait for those we love.

LOSS

To lose is to have had;
One cannot lose a loved one
Without falling in love,
Or lose a spouse without the experience
Of marriage, or a child without
The creation or adoption of life.

We can lose one's presence,
But never the images of or
Experiences with that one;
We can lose a loved one's presence,
But not our memories of that one—
Not until we lose ourselves.

To lose is to have had;
To lose is still to have.

Frederick Douglas Harper

TREES HAVE PERSONALITIES TOO

Trees have moods and personalities too;
Some point toward the sky,
Some are leafy in a hovering and calm state,
Some are trunky with character from years.

Some trees wither in the sun, or are naked
From malnutrition and dryness;
Others are diseased by life's circumstance or
Damaged by natural hazard and
Human destruction.

Some trees are happy as they sway in the wind,
Exercise their flexible limbs, absorb life's energy
From the sun, and drink from Earth's watery
Nutrients.

Trees have moods and personalities too,
So treat them as you should yourself.

SHINE WHERE YOU ARE

You may not be of national or international acclaim;
You may not have prestigious prizes or awards;
You may not have college, or riches, or power,
Or status—

But you are a potential star,
If you shine where you are;

And as a star,
You may move to higher levels
And a greater luster.

Frederick Douglas Harper

GOD'S PRESENCE

I like to realize God's presence within me;
I like to feel the security of God's presence
Around me.

My prayers are my thoughts of His divine
Presence and good will;
My church of worship of Him is His continual
Presence in my heart.

I want to realize God's ubiquitous grace,
Always, through the good He has
Allowed me to realize within myself.

ADVICE TO YOU MY CHILD

Be true to your eyes, ears, thoughts, and feelings;
Listen to your heart but yield to your mind's best
Judgment;
Be kind and wise in spoken words, for surely your
Words will follow you;
Be not afraid of risks but be cautious of actions
Driven by emotion, confusion, and false friends;
Avoid jealousy of others' achievements and possessions;
Don't live with an insatiable greed for more than
You can appreciate or use;
Don't eat more than your hunger's call or
Drink beyond your thirst's needs;
Listen to spirits that favor you and offend not
Those that oppose you;
Absorb yourself in an activity worthy of your unique
Talent, and develop as many common
Potentialities as you desire and can;
Whatever you do, do it as well as you can;
Live comfortably with your conscience,
And be at peace with your soul;
Be courageous in life, while always respecting
Death's luring and lurking;
Rest when tired and think when you are uncertain;
Be kind to the sacredness of life and respect the
Natural order of the universe;
Follow no one or no thing except your own judgment

(continued)

Frederick Douglas Harper

And your own God's wish;
Love and respect yourself and your family;
Be all you can by developing yourself;
Do all you can in helping worthy others;
And live a quality and meaningful life.

THANKS MOTHER

There is nothing you can say,
 That is enough to thank your mother;
There is nothing you can do,
 That is enough to thank your mother.

A mother is a trustee of God's seed,
 A sacred temple of life;
A mother's touch cannot be duplicated,
 Her comforting voice is never replicated.

A mother's greatest gift is the gift of life,
Her highest status is that of motherhood.
No matter what else a mother might be,
No matter what a mother does—
 A mother is a mother.

Thanks Mom; I love you.

Frederick Douglas Harper

LOVE IS...

- “L” is for laughter shared, lament
Endured, and a life cared;
- “O” is for obedience to another,
Offering of self, overindulgence of
Time spent, and okay’s and ought’s;
- “V” is for the value of sacrifice, vibrations
In common, verification of feelings, and
Vivid joyful experiences;
- “E” is for eagerness, excitement, and
Energy given and received through
Time and effort.

LOVE is—

“L”oving

“O”thers with

“V”erve, vitality, and vow; and with

“E”nthusiasm, expressiveness, and exhaustion.

LOVE is without condition, expectation, or
Anticipation.

LOVE is...

CONFUSION

Do you know who you are,
Or what you want right now,
Or in life?

Do you know what you are,
Or what you will become,
Or even want to be?

Do you know your needs
As separate from those of others?

Can you choose between attractive choices
As well as unwanted choices, or,
Rather, do you wait for their choice
Of you?

Are you uncertain about your status—
Not sure of your role, or just wanting
To be somebody or something else?

Make your choice in time—
Choose your cake, or
Have no cake at all,
Have stale cake thrust upon you, or
Be forced to eat cake from another's dish.

Frederick Douglas Harper

GREETINGS FROM MY BEDROOM WINDOW

Hello, on this beautiful morning,

Dear passerby beneath my windowsill.

Slow down, slow down!

For what reason do you have for hurry

On such a bright, sunny, and wind-cooled day?

I beseech you to heed this moment and

Acknowledge your lovely path as you

Seek your destination.

Slow down, stop occasionally, and listen

To the birds, smell the flowers, waltz with

The cool wind embracing your face;

Slow down and appreciate sensations of the present,

And not thoughts and worries of the day.

Slow down, and live now—

Lest you will never live again.

WHY?

Why is life often created in bed and terminated in bed?
Why do people wear clothes and other animals don't?
Why do women wear dead animal skins on their skin,
And rocks on their fingers?
Why is food exchanged for paper and images projected
Onto paper?
Why do we enjoy gathering power and things under our
Wings?
Why do men and boys kill each other with fatal toys
Of steel and iron while women cry in black?
Why do so many good people die so early while bad ones
Sometimes live so long?
Why do we so very often accept public espousal as gospel?
Why do birds fly, fish swim, deer run, and snakes crawl?
Why do living things duplicate themselves over and over?
Why is everything not the same color?
Why do we have to die after learning how to live?
Why can grown folks get fatter but not taller or shorter?
Why is sugar sweet and salt not when both look the same?
Why is it we often do what others want us to do?
Why, why, why do we often fail to ask "Why" or "Why not?"

Frederick Douglas Harper

BOAT IN NASSAU*

Boat still, boat real,
Boat in orange and blue;
Boat still, boat real,
Boat in my mind.

Peaceful in balance on
 Translucent water;
Sometimes, shimmering in the sun,
Sometimes, swaying to its tie,
Awaiting its daily good-bye.

Boat still, boat real,
Gracefully etched in peeling paints
Of orange and blue;
Boat so beautiful and fine,
An eternal image in my mind.

**Reference to Nassau, Bahamas.*

DO YOU HAVE THE STRENGTH TO BE?

Do you have the strength
 To be that self you really are—
Not to be influenced unduly
 By the worlds of others?
Are you confident to follow your own mind's
 Energy—to be, to act in accord
 With your own interests and needs?

Don't fool yourself by your thoughts and words;
Look into my pen's eye and be truthful
 To the self you really are.

Do you have the wisdom and courage
 To do what you want to do,
 To do what you must do—
 Unfettered by false advice and biased notions?

Simply tell me, do you have the strength
 To be?

Frederick Douglas Harper

THE ROAD TO HAPPINESS

Some people know what they want
 But don't know what they need;
Some people know what they need
 But can't get it;
Some people can get what they need
 If they only knew what they needed;
Some people can get what they need,
 And know what they need,
 But often will not get what they need;
Others usually know what they need,
 Can get what they need,
 And will get what they need;
For those who know, can, and will,
 Happiness is often their companion.

LET ME...

Please now, bother me not,
 Just let me be as I am;
Let me breathe my pace and
 Avoid your race;
Let me hurry not to exasperation
 And jittery.

Let me do as I may
 On each ensuing day,
Because that's the way I am.

I'll do what I want,
 And you can do what you want;
And we still can be friends—
Especially, when we do what
 We both want.

Frederick Douglas Harper

ASK

Ask, and you will be fulfilled;
Ask, and you may be fulfilled;
Don't ask, and you are sure
Not to be fulfilled.

Ask, for there are only two consequences:
Yes or no;
Don't ask and there is one consequence:
Nothing or status quo.

We ask to meet, to marry, to work;
We ask to know, to find, to receive;
We ask for opportunity and advancement.

Ask, and you will be fulfilled,
Ask not, and you will be as you are;
However, don't ask for everything;
Don't ask for anything.

THE INDIVIDUALITY OF A ROCK

Why is the Earth round

As with all the planets?

Why is the moon round

And our heads too?

Why are cantaloupes, tomatoes,

Cherries, and oranges round?

Why do we go around ourselves

In daily cycles and monthly cycles,

And on top of the Earth?

Why do we go around

On merry-go-rounds to be merry?

Why are basketballs, baseballs,

Golf balls, and tennis balls round?

Why are all these things round,

When a rock is not?

Why does each rock have to be

So different?

Frederick Douglas Harper

“WHY IS IT SO HARD TO BE A KID?”

“Why is it so hard to be a kid?”

So my son says;

“To get bruises and nicks,
To not do what you want,
To fight off bigger kids.”

“Why is it so hard to be a kid?”

So my son asks;

“Well, my son,” I tell him,
“It’s hard for you to be a kid, because
It’s so hard for parents to be adults.”

ALOHA

The ocean roars three at day and three at night
As surfers ride to sight, and beach strollers stride
 In hand to the reflection of moonlight;
The taste of fresh pineapple awaits your morning bite
 At dawn's peek of new sunlight;

Bright flowers and lush green tropical plants line the street,
Only to be interrupted by inexpensive, quick places to eat,
 And the poshness of resort hotels galore;
The streets are constantly beat by the exciting steps of
 Thousands of pounding tourist feet,
Diamondhead cuts and paints its profile across the blue sky,
A backdrop of mountainous character oh so high;

Airport crowds frequently gate for jumbo jets that await;
And, as hundreds look down on the islands while being
 Whisked afar, they retain pleasant thoughts of Hawaii,
 "Aloha."

Frederick Douglas Harper

IF YOU ARE ANGRY

If you are angry,
Don't curse the empty spaces, or damage
Things or self, or hurt somebody;
Don't retaliate, or mayhem, or kill—
Just because you've been hurt.

If you are angry, don't pout, or blame,
Or resist understanding and clarification;
If you are angry, try not to be angry
In order to do right and just for you.

If you are angry, just close your eyes
And breathe deeply and slowly;
If you are angry, just try to cool down
And think straight.

EVERYONE IS SPECIAL

Everyone is special at something,
Everyone is special for something;

Anyone can be a star in one's own world,
One's own constellation,
One's own galaxy;

Therefore, seek stardom and find your star,
Find your star and be a star—
And thus shine in your own light;
Find your star and shine for you;

Remember, everyone is special at something,
Everyone is special for something;
And you are special too.

Frederick Douglas Harper

OUR LAST NIGHT TOGETHER

On a moonlit night, we stood
Under the privacy of a backyard tree,
Never once with the courage to explore the pit
Of our youthful volcanic desires on this last night;

We stood and stood in caress on the eve
Of the moving truck's coming, and counted
So painfully our last minutes of evening,
Ever together;

She placed her miniature cross and chain in my hand
As a symbol of remembrance; only to watch me
Clutch passionately before losing it to my jeans's pocket;

One last hug, one last fumbling kiss
As her father called, "bedtime";
Reluctantly, she walked away, shielding
The treacherous door from the night light's torment;

I remember dearly, her back showed well in the moonlight
As she turned to give me the last image of her face.

WAITING FOR NOTHING

Please, please, please—
My friend,
Don't stand there at the starting blocks
With an empty heart and worry on your mind,
Because no one yet has been carried to the finish line;

Accomplishment is yours, only if you put
Your head to it and your heart in it—
The body will follow;

Place your scope on the goal,
Set your hands to the dust,
And kick with all your might;
For victories will never come
By standing around waiting to be carried—
Standing around, "waiting for nothing."

Frederick Douglas Harper

“I”

I am,
I give,
I receive,
I live.

I am,
I give,
I love,
I live.

HOW WE WISH

Have you ever wished to fly to freedom as birds—
Or gracefully float as ships in the ocean's vast solitude?
Have you ever wished you could
Scream in an endless desert,
Relax when you had to work,
Beat self-imposed anger from the core of your chest,
Cry for hours in the privacy of a closet,
Relieve tension on the grassy sideline of a desolate highway?

Have you ever wished to be free of another's love
Who did not love you,
To be free of irrational, man-made laws and practices,
To share a self-created talent or product with the world,
To live one hour and die the next?

Have you ever wished you could make your body
Do your wish when you wished?
Have you ever wished you did not have to experience pain
Or, even more, anticipate it?
Have you ever wished some people would stop telling you
What to do all the time and others would just tell you
What to do sometimes?
Have you ever wished you were pretty or not pretty at all?
Have you ever wished that so many people would not give
You the attention for the reasons they did, and that
Others would give you just the little attention you
Expect and deserve?

(continued)

Frederick Douglas Harper

Have you ever wished you had money to do what you want
Or simply self-impoveryshed freedom to do what you can't?
Have you ever wished you were not human at times—
Or have you ever just wished that you could not wish?

TREES OF MAINE

Elegant they stand in Maine of the USA;
Tall and straight they grow
 In pine, fir, and spruce;

Welcome and farewell they bid, through branches
 So broad and orderly in symmetry,
 So robust and serene in character;

Trees, trees, and more trees,
Carpeting great acreage in a mosaic
 Of variant shades of green;

Trees, trees, and more trees,
Against God's glistening sun, rolling clouds,
 And calm blue skies;

Trees of Maine, I accept your heartening
 Presence and message;
Trees of Maine, I wish you a happy
 And long stay.

Frederick Douglas Harper

JAMAICA

There is something special about
 Jamaica;
Its people are proud and warm;
 They welcome, they give
 Through their faces;
 They exude confidence
 In their strut and movement;
 Their penchant for achievement
 And hard work permeates their spirit;
The green mountains in their lush posture
 Keep watch over clear blue beaches
 That serenely nourish white shores;
The sunset at dusk and sunrise at dawn
 Serve as a curtain to the backdrop
 Of colorful flowers and jade-green plants;
Jamaica is something special;
You can leave it but you can't forget it;
You can't forget
 The upbeat of its music and dance,
 The aroma and taste of its mountain-rich coffee,
 Its beautiful people of many hues and moods,
 Its fresh country air and bathing sunshine, and
 Its tasty native foods;
Surely, there is something special about
 Jamaica.

PLANNING TO LIVE

We have to plan as if
 The world will be here in the future;
We have to plan as if
 We will not die tomorrow;
We have to plan as if
 We are committed to something,
 No matter how small or large;
We have to plan
 For no one will plan for us;
We have to plan
 To determine our destinies,
 Or our destinies will be determined
 For us.

Frederick Douglas Harper

A HUMBLE PRAYER

My God, all praise to Thy Great Spirit and presence.

My God, all thanks for what I have experienced in Thy
Sacred space and time.

Let me continue to be in harmony with my energy;

Let the remaining course of my life run the divine
Destiny of good will;

Let my continual thoughts of Thy presence and creations

Be witness to my prayer;

Let my good deeds, wherever, be testimony to my faith;

From day to day, give me:

The patience to listen,

The wisdom to understand,

The unselfishness to defer my own needs,

The insight to realize my potential and purpose,

The will power to be growthful and productive,

The courage to face unknowns,

The thoughtfulness to give and humbly receive,

The capacity to love and be loved,

An openness to accept my human vulnerability,

A habit toward responsibility,

A penchant for hard work,

A respect for self and all that is sacred and good,

The strength to control destructive urges,

The ability to be modest in the face of good fortune,

And the propensity to be at peace with myself.

AMEN.

“I’M A MOTHER”

In concern for her health

I rushed to her room.

I paused in the doorway, searching

For her silhouette in the partly

Darkened space.

She quickly came into view,

Weakly clutching the bed rail

In a lean toward my presence.

A new woman she was with a face of

Joy and pride never to be forgotten.

She said to the father of her new baby,

“I’m a mother.”

Frederick Douglas Harper

PUSHER WOMAN

Aren't some women tired of pushing;
Pushing infants to birth,
Pushing babies in the carriage,
Pushing children in school,
Pushing men in their careers,
Pushing grocery carts in the market?
Aren't some women tired of pushing
And not being pushed?

WHATEVER HAPPENS TO ME...

Whatever happens to me,
I will try to do what is right;
I will love the flowers and the sea,
The birds and land animals,
And all that is sacred in life and beauty;

Whatever happens to me,
I will try to avoid bitterness,
Anger, self-hatred, and destructiveness—
Feelings that alter the possibilities for good, and
Actions that upset the natural order of things;

But, I will not allow others and things
To violate my human rights,
To infringe upon my self-respect,
To unjustly suppress my freedom and growth,
To decimate the integrity of my organic self;

Whatever happens to me,
I will seek what is naturally right and good,
And resist what is wrong and destructive.

Frederick Douglas Harper

A FRIEND

A friend is

Special for you

And not against you;

Being a friend is in

One's state of mind,

One's state of action—

That special one who thinks and acts

For another's happiness,

For another's welfare;

Being a friend is giving of self

With joy;

Being a friend is receiving from another

With appreciation;

Being a friend is wanting to be a friend.

THE RIGHT TO THINK

Each person has a right to think
 And not be thought for;
To think about life,
To think about death,
To think about self,
To think about purpose.

The moment is yours in silence;
The moment is yours within the privacy
 Of your mind;
Not to think necessarily of others or things
 But of you,
 Your existence in space and time.

Each person has a right
 To be alone with one's self,
 To think unmolested thoughts;

Each person has a right,
Each person has a choice,
 Simply to be that self which one is.

Frederick Douglas Harper

ODE TO MRS. COOK*

Oh, Mrs. Cook, Mrs. Cook,
 Whence forth are thou?
Remember Us, remember Us please;
Remember Us, and accept our gift so gently;
Remember Us, for we will always know you,
 Forever in our hearts, in our minds,
 And in our lives;

You taught Us how to compete with laughter,
 With enthusiasm, with curiosity;
You lighted our hearts with your smile;
You taught Us to seek love and appreciation
 And to abscond bitterness and greed;
You never allowed Us to feel failure;
You taught Us how to teach ourselves,
 While giving Us the desire to grow
 And participate;

Now I sit in utter remembrance of a dream,
I cry out in the silence of the night,
I choke and tense in holding back tears of joy
In sweet memory of one who loved so dearly;

Mrs. Cook, please remember Us.

**Mrs. Cook was a master teacher of my sixth-grade class. "Us" was that class. Mrs. Cook died in an automobile accident some years later during my college years.*

DEATH OF A HERO

My heart falls fast and low
Like Galileo's weights
From the Tower of Pisa;
What news has been brought to my ears
Through that miraculous instrument of Bell;

I slump in my chair,
My breath is deep and rapid;
Pain, fear, anger, and shock
Rush to my viscera like
Mad dogs to a lone bone!

Can it be true, can it be true, can it be true?
The hope is gone, the spirit is gone,
The dynamo of the people is gone,
Taken away by the guided missile of man;
The King is gone, the King is gone,
The King is gone;
Dr. Martin Luther King is dead.

Frederick Douglas Harper

I NEVER SAW

I never saw a woman who
 Loved her baby son so much;
I never saw a man who
 Loved his baby son so much;
I never saw parents who
 Loved their baby son so much;
I never saw—until I saw ourselves.

WISHFUL SLEEP

My thoughts come to fruition at early morning
 When I'm alone with my mind,
Bursting to my awareness like blood to an open wound;
I long for sleep, but sleep I cannot find,
For thoughts become the master of my mind
 And mind the master of my body;
Born to be but fearing to become an ever
 Searching organic system of truth;
Truth that eludes the self like a ray of light
 Or a vibration of sound,
Truth that eludes the mind as a phantom of
 Ephemeral cognitive stimulation;
What nature then is the makeup of a person such as I,
A human system or a system of competing systems,
A balance or an imbalance of thoughts and feelings,
 Of calm and storm, of passivity and activity?
Oh, how I long to shut out those stimulating thoughts,
Just to cut off that neurological energy;
Oh, how I long for internal peace,
 To temporarily rest my weary body—
Just to sleep for a little while.

Frederick Douglas Harper

THE ESSENCE OF GOD

God created the universe, the stars,
The Earth, and all thereof;
God is the universe, the stars,
The Earth, and all thereof;
God is matter, energy, and motion;
God moves in us and is we;
God is all that is truly supreme
In time and in all space;
God has no beginning and no end—
God is infinity.

GET UP MIGHTY PERSON

You are no more
 Than what you become;
You are no less
 Than that you fail to be;
You are guaranteed
 Only what you get.
So get up; raise your body to its full length—
 Stretch and realize,
Get up mighty person,
Get up one of various hue or circumstance,
Get up you woman, get up you man,
Get up mighty person—you can.

Frederick Douglas Harper

HELP ME TO HELP MYSELF

Oh God,
Whoever or whatever you may be,
Hear me with my plea;
Am I worthy of the air I breathe,
 The space I occupy,
 And the protoplasm of which I am made?
Am I worthy of the attention
 Of those whom I serve?
Help me to help myself to do all
I can, when I can, with whom I can
For the betterment of myself
 And my humankind;
And if I fail, let it be because of me,
 And let me live with my shame;
And if I succeed, let it be because of me,
 And let me live with my pride.

GOD IS...

God is everything—
Time and space.

God is the infinite evolution of things—

Things ever changing.

God is things changing over time

And in space.

God is everything—

Everything is God.

God is life—

Life is God.

God is we.

Frederick Douglas Harper

WHEN I RUN

When I run, it is a metamorphosis;
When I run into the sun, its rays
 Caress my face;
When I run into the cold wind, the tears
 Flow and wash my cheek;
I run for the grass, the trees, the universe;
I run for the birds and their song so sweet;
Oh, when I run, I run for me—
 And all that is divine in movement;
When I run, I flow through the space of time
 Occupied by so many for so long;
Oh, when I run, I run.

JOGGING WITH GOD

I have jogged through the nostrils of God
With the breath of His wind refreshing my face.

I have brushed gently through the hair of His
Leaves in spring.

The thunder of His voice has spun me homeward;
The sunlight from His eyes has shone the way.

Oh, Great Spirit of all spirits,
I am with You;
Now, forever, to the end.

Frederick Douglas Harper

VALEDICTION

Farewell or good-bye,
Forever or for a day;
Look we must in eyes we may
Never see again;
Embrace we should of shared pains
And joys, and of an image removed.

Farewell or good-bye,
Forever or for a day;
In the midst of thoughts and words
Of apology, regret, good wishes, and
Opportunities missed.

Farewell or good-bye,
Forever or for a day;
With thoughts gone unshared,
With feelings gone unbarred.

THOUGHTS ON LOVE AND INSPIRATION

The key to success is wanting to succeed; the key to failure is wanting to fail, if not allowing yourself to fail.

««««

People don't make love; love makes people—or at least it should.

««««

The last lap always tests the best runners.

««««

Some people never arrive because they never take off.

««««

He or she who tries to get everything at once, often ends up with nothing.

««««

Once a person ceases to be, that person no longer is.

««««

We must do what we must do as much as we love those who love us.

««««

If you want to be great at anything, you have to work at that thing only.

««««

Never succeed; only achieve.

««««

I dare you to be different; I dare you to be better.

««««

You are as tall as you want to be and as short as you let yourself be.

««««

There are at least two types of people: those who make things happen and those who let things happen.

««««

Frederick Douglas Harper

It's important that we do primarily what we want to do and not just what we feel we have to do.

««««

You can do it if you want to.

««««

Many love to ride, but few are willing to drive.

««««

You won't get it if you don't ask for it; you won't get it if you don't go for it.

««««

One of my greatest joys is to see a spontaneous and genuine smile in my presence.

««««

The best runners run fastest at the end.

««««

Being introduced as a speaker is like looking into a mirror of your past, and asking yourself whether the reflection is giving you more justice than you deserve or feel you can live up to.

««««

You *can* if you *will*.

Confidence is knowing there is nothing between you and your goal except time.

««««

There are many lovable qualities in people besides their physical attributes.

««««

True self-esteem comes from self-respect and earned achievement; it cannot be purchased or acquired undeservedly.

POEMS ON LOVE AND LIFE

««««

Reading and traveling are surely routes to self-enlightenment.

««««

Keys to achievement and success are self-discipline, organization, hard work, single-mindedness, creativity, and at least average talent.

««««

There are those who succeed by being loyal to those who give them success.

««««

The greatest love is the love of a lost love—so take not for granted those whom you profess to love.

Frederick Douglas Harper

THOUGHTS ON LIVING

We do today what we did yesterday, and will often do tomorrow what we do today.

««««

Jealousy is a mother of hatred, and hatred is often the mother of destruction.

««««

Don't wait for things to happen, make them happen.

««««

We cannot afford to wallow in the quagmire of self-pity, hopelessness, and wishful euphemisms.

««««

Life is sometimes like a jungle, but all animals don't bite.

««««

We have made the Earth angry and now we must love it.

««««

What I want to do, I can't afford to do; and what I can afford to do, I have already done or no longer want to do.

««««

A prime question in life is "What can we do and what should we do?"

««««

People usually talk to people about other people instead of talking to the people about whom they talk.

««««

You are only guaranteed what you get.

««««

You find yourself, when you find your harmony with the universe.

««««

POEMS ON LOVE AND LIFE

A tree that dies without planting its seed, dies forever.

««««

Life comes and life goes, and each must do his or her best.

««««

I don't want to be good, I want to be better.

««««

Human beings will one day know the origin of their being and the fate of their destiny.

««««

The seed should be greater than the tree.

««««

Don't just do things for children; do things with them.

««««

Survival is a skill; growth is a sophisticated skill.

««««

It's not what type job you have; it's how well you do it.

««««

Those who have a disrespect for life will surely find affinity with death.

««««

No government will ever be ideal because no group of leaders who run any one is ideal.

««««

The greatest gift is to give; for through giving do we acquire that renewed source of energy to give again.

««««

Nobody can be truly used unless that person submits to use.

««««

If you can't deal with it, don't deal with it.

Frederick Douglas Harper

««««

It is not so important to feel important, but more important to feel appreciated.

««««

That which is right is that which is natural and inoffensive to the environment and the organism.

««««

Many people are great, but few achieve greatness.

««««

People can live with humility but not necessarily with humiliation.

««««

You can't do wrong by doing right.

««««

Never allow a person to get control of your property or your mind.

««««

All people are stupid, but at different times.

««««

The goal of marriage is not to have a happy marriage, necessarily, but to be happy in marriage.

««««

Happiness often comes by doing things you want to do; not doing things you don't want to do, and not worrying about things you can't do.

««««

You have to be busy to keep busy.

««««

Today is yesterday's future

POEMS ON LOVE AND LIFE

««««

A purpose in life is to help people without allowing those you help to hurt you.

««««

Everything gained must one day be lost.

««««

Some people you help and like, some people you help and don't necessarily like, and others you simply avoid.

««««

It is not so important what you have but what you have had; for to have had is often worth knowing.

««««

There are those who have no taste except the taste in their mouth.

««««

My highest purpose is to realize the good and potential within myself.

««««

It's easy to criticize, but it's difficult to perform.

««««

To be preoccupied with life is to be aware of possible death.

««««

You eat dessert when you want to and not when it wants to be eaten.

««««

Many look out for themselves while giving others the impression that they care.

««««

Loss of affection is not just a personal experience, it is a human experience.

««««

Frederick Douglas Harper

If one wants to do something for so long without getting the opportunity to do it, that person can stop wanting.

««««

The freedom given to some to impose on the freedom of others, preempts the freedom of those imposed upon.

««««

Persons tend to pursue a line of pleasure until a crisis comes about to interrupt it.

««««

Life is like a flower; some are picked prematurely, some blossom fully, and some bear no fruit.

««««

One of the worst feelings is to live in fear. In order to overcome fear, one has to accept the possibility and inevitability of death. Death is a natural phenomenon; however, it should not be embraced.

««««

The most precious things you can give a child are pleasant memories.

««««

Human beings often lie to protect themselves, enhance themselves, or keep from diminishing themselves in the eyes of others.

««««

You have one life; you have to live it right. And if you die tomorrow, you can say I have done my best.

««««

Human beings have the capacity, but not necessarily the trust, integrity, and will power to survive as a species.

POEMS ON LOVE AND LIFE

««««

Free your mind and your body will follow.

««««

Too much physical pleasure can become captor of the human will.

««««

Every human body is in need of washing out as well as washing off;
therefore, exercise and sweat.

««««

Just as a flower, each life blooms only once.

««««

Treat true love with kindness although caution, for it seldom visits your
doorstep.

««««

To be at peace with yourself requires keeping your body chemicals and
temperature in balance, while roller coastering patiently through your daily
and monthly cycles.

««««

Improve your life by simply improving your attitude.

Frederick Douglas Harper

THOUGHTS ON SPIRITUALITY

Pray with your thoughts and deeds and not just your words.

««««

God exists because we exist as a miracle of His creation.

««««

The essence of religion is appreciation for that which we know and faith in and respect for that which we do not know.

««««

God, help me to be an instrument of Thy song.

««««

I am here as a minute creation of God; God is everything, and I am just one thing.

««««

A woman is God's most sacred trustee and temple of life.

««««

As much as you have blessed others through Him, you will be blessed by Him.

««««

If the word of man or woman is truly moved and enacted by the spirit of God, then it is God Who speaks.

««««

Live your religion and always carry your church in your heart.

««««

I cringe when I think of the minuteness and ephemerality of my own existence. However, it makes me more cognizant of my role and destiny to do what I can for the brief period of my existence on Earth.

««««

POEMS ON LOVE AND LIFE

The source we must respect; however, it is the spirit to which we must pray.

««««

If one causes the other, then what causes the one that causes the other?

««««

God only guaranteed life; the rest is up to you.

««««

Go out from here with your head up and your eyes open. Let the sun shine on your face, and see the light.

««««

Death is the birth of transformed spiritual energy.

««««

Live not necessarily according to the laws and mandates of humankind but to your own good conscience, because to know right is naturally to do the right thing.

««««

Make time to be with yourself in order to meditate on your life's purpose, role, meaning, and priorities. Listen to yourself above all others.

««««

The stars, the planets, the ocean, the flowers, the animals, and all the creations of beauty and great wonder bear witness to the grace and the presence of God.

««««

All churches and temples must house the voices and scriptures of good thought and good service toward all life and sacred beauty.

««««

By example, teach your children the way of right, and trust that they will find the path of goodness, growth, fairness, and nondestructiveness.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Frederick Douglas Harper has authored more than 300 published poems. His poems have appeared in *Essence* magazine, *Imagen* (a Spanish-language magazine), *Signature Bride: Bridal Magazine*, *Calendar of Black Children* (published by the National Black Child Development Institute), academic books, and various poetry anthologies.

Harper has authored four books of published poetry, that have been sold throughout the USA and in numerous other countries. In addition to his classic *Poems on Love and Life* (first published in 1985), his other poem books include *Romantica: On Peace and Romance* (1988), *God's Gifts: Spiritual Writings* (2003), and *Love Poems of Frederick Douglas Harper* (2003). Harper has received hundreds of letters of appreciation and

commendation on his poetry from readers of his work, including letters from public figures such as Lionel Richie, Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee Davis, and Renee Poussaint (national network news commentator).

As an international scholar and professor of counseling, Harper has authored more than 100 academic publications, including college textbooks, journal articles, and book chapters. In addition, he has served as a school teacher, professional counselor, university administrator, president of professional associations, and editor of two international scholarly journals. Harper has conducted numerous workshops on “love,” “spirituality,” and “quality lifestyle,” and he has presented hundreds of motivational speeches and scholarly presentations throughout the world, including speeches and lectures in Argentina, France, Greece, India, Ireland, Sweden, and the Netherlands.

Harper’s most popular poem, “A Wedding Pledge,” has been recorded on CD, recited in more than 5,000 weddings, translated into other languages, and reprinted in magazines. His poems have been read by Nap Turner on WPFW Radio, 89.3 FM, in Washington, DC for more than 15 years, alongside the poetry of the famous Langston Hughes.

An extraordinary and highly spiritual human being, Frederick Harper has jogged more than 33,000 miles in 119 different cities throughout the world, and he has inspired many people through his writings, teachings, and public speaking. Harper is father of two sons, and he is a member of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity and numerous professional associations and honorary societies.

