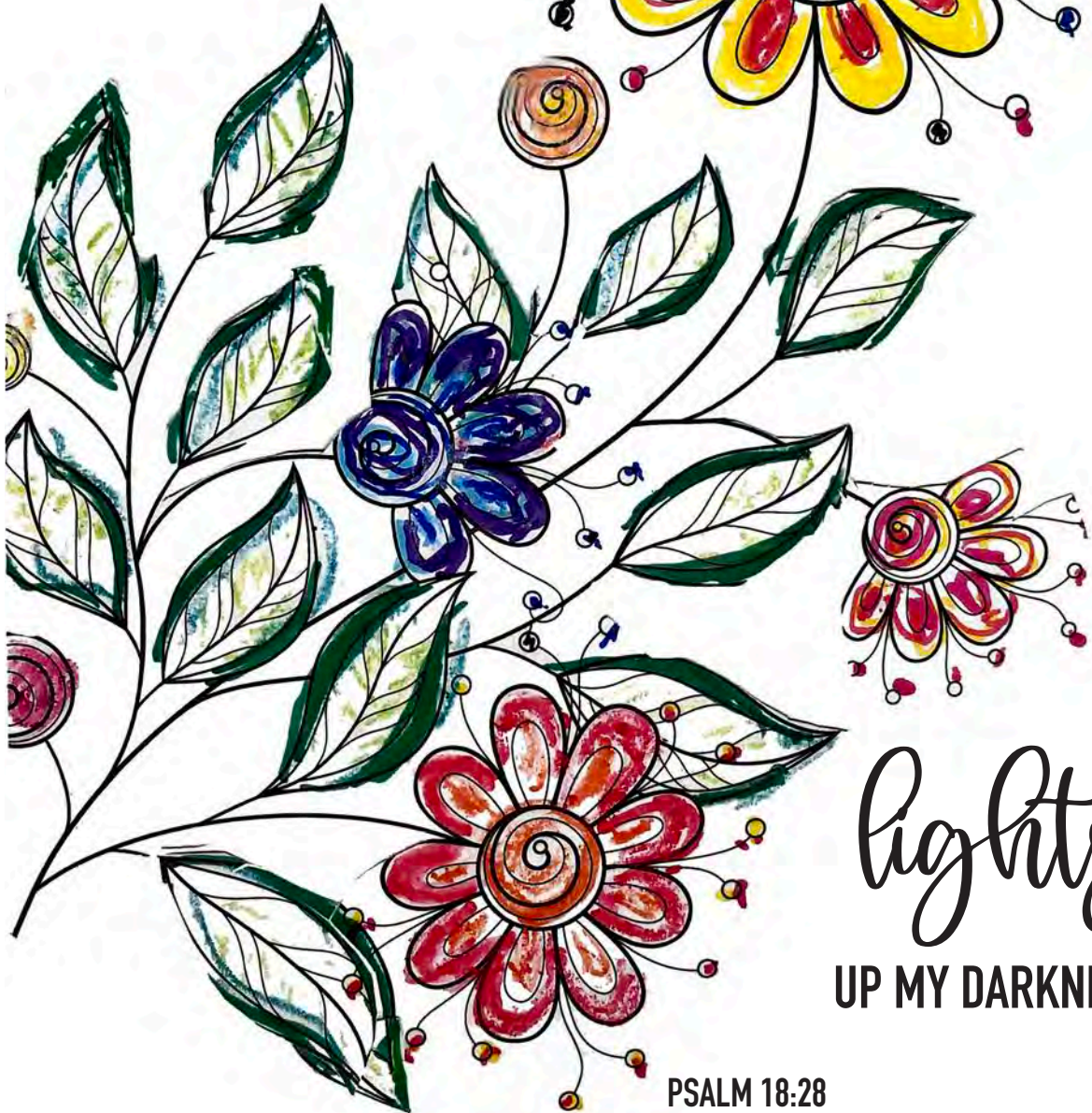


Wonderous
Creator



lights

UP MY DARKNESS

PSALM 18:28



dedicated to

KATHLEEN DENISON

She has been my spiritual companion
for more than ten years.

I have come to know her to be divinely human.

She wears her feminine spirit with dignity.
She is soft-spoken, compassionate, affectionate,
a gentle and attentive listener
who keeps me open and vulnerable
to my path towards personal transformation,
journeying with a deeply listening heart.



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artist biography

SR. JUDY CAMPBELL, OP
An Artist, Writer, and Poet



I was the oldest of five siblings and an extremely inquisitive and curious child. My father delighted these characteristics; therefore, we spent a great deal of time just gazing and feeling the natural phenomena that the wondrous Creator had bestowed upon us. I felt very connected to life's mysteries. The zodiac signs in the Cosmos intrigued me: they had a relationship with the creatures living on Earth. I became awed by how the wondrous Creator kept everything in the Cosmos in their orbits, in harmony.

The phenomena of nature nourished me and enlivened me to live a very spontaneous, vibrant life: therefore, I lived my life like that of a naturalist. John Muir was a wonderful influence; I spent time and absorbed his nature experiences, backpacking in the high Sierras and all along the California Coastal Ranges. Fishing became an important hobby to nurture my awe and wonder, increasing my profound gratitude for our Wondrous Creator. I have loved and continue to enjoy Nature that has developed my contemplative Spirit.

All these experiences opened my desire for a spiritual guide to keep me vulnerable to live life with deep feeling. I was fortunate to meet Kathleen who became my spiritual director. She understood my spirituality was grounded in my lived experience. My director keeps me vulnerable towards my personal transformation. Our working relationship has nurtured and cultivated a phenomenal bond between the Spirit of creation and myself. I can rest patiently and reverently in my inner sanctuary where the creative Spirit dwells and moves my spirit toward creative expression: an art piece, reflective writing, or a poem emerges. These expressions fill my spirit with a fullness of being and I begin to dance... All of me dances inwardly, blithesomely steeped in a fathomless JOY moving my total being toward fullness of life.



introduction

When the Corona virus descended upon us and cut us off for months from sisters, family, and friends, I became immersed in feelings of doubt, separation, loneliness, illness, and lack of energy.

My poetry during this period expressed these feelings, but also inspired a sense of divine Presence, and the promises of Nature, Earth, the Sun, Breezes, the Trees, and Flowers brought me hope.

As the confinement of the virus diminished, the Spring Milieu provided me with the proper setting I needed to write more fluid poetry. Spring manifested New Life, Rebirth, and Growth: nature born anew; my body and mind awakened and were renewed.

Consequently, I became very relaxed and just leisurely drifted with what thoughts the Spirit of God gave me, living in stillness, which is most like the Divine in Creation. Hence, the poems presented here reflect God's ongoing inspiration to me.

There is nothing more like the Spirit of God
than stillness in creation.
Living in this stillness,
I experience a profound inner freedom,
a lightness of being,
spontaneity that relaxes me,
puts me at ease;
out of this drift with my lived experience
of life – poetry is born.

enjoy!

AFFECTIONATELY,
Sr. Judy Campbell, OP

I Doubted Everything

When the Conora virus cast the deep, thick shadow of darkness throughout the world as never experienced before:

I doubted everything; the power of God,

the rotation of the planets. Will gardens grow in this darkness?
Will Lourdes Creek flow in the current direction?

Was I right? Was I wrong?

Will I be forgiven not living in faith, hope, and love?

Will I ever be able to sing and enjoy life again after this long arduous illness?
I hear birds singing. This world of darkness doesn't seem to inhibit them
nor the brown squirrels. They are playing at the base of the Grand Sequoia Redwood
tree outside my bedroom window.

Can I do better? Or have I imagined my illness has made me tremendously weary?
My spirits have a sense of hopelessness. Will I get better and live once again, in my
soul? Or have I just given up?

Finally, I saw that all my doubting was coming to nothing. That morning I was put
in my wheelchair and rolled myself out into Lourdes' inner garden; the fragrances of
the roses kissed me and I began singing.

Hope entered my soul.



Loneliness

When I listened to the daily NEWS, it gave me a sense of profound separation from my neighbors, as well as a sense of hopeless despair. I was at a loss as to what to do.

I have known loneliness. I have befriended loneliness. But isolation mandated during the pandemic of 2020 is not at all beautiful.

Oh, Mother Earth, you comfort me in so many ways.
Through nature, your arms never withhold.
You wrap your arms around me, keeping me safe.

I observe the fluorescent-colored hummingbirds sucking nectar from magenta dancing fuchsia.

The spring songbirds serenading us, giving us hope that I, too, may sing again.

Your roses open with the caring morning sun; the daffodils stand tall on their slender stems, swaying and dancing in gentle breezes.

Oh, Mother Earth, you make your motions of tenderness visible.
They breathe a delightful harmony with everything of your Earth.
Therefore, isolation and loneliness vanish.



Nature's Moments of Tenderness



The emergence of a long stem, purple, white flag iris, with a yellow throat courted by the spring sun to rise up from an autumn compost pile –

Twin spotted fawns rubbing their mother's nose –
kisses of affection –

A black-white skunk flashing its skunk splendor across
Lourdes' meadow –



Brown squirrels with golden-tipped ears, romp, playing
tag, scurrying up and down the Sequoia Redwood –

Fluorescent, multi-colored hummingbirds fleet around the red/purple fuchsia bush
in the garden, pausing momentarily, inserting their long, pointed beaks into the
center, sucking nectar –

Yellow and black-striped garden bees buzzing around the
yellow orchid plants, serenading me into mellowness –



The very large black ants marching to a cool spot to rest from their labors in their
homes –

Millions of stars twinkling good night . . . grant me deep peace.

The graceful sunset, gracefully submerging into the depth of the world provides the
assurance that all will be well –

The vibrant sun rises, greeting the universe, tell me
another day has been given for us to welcome –

Blue birds, feeding their open-mouthed fledglings, tell me there is hope for humanity.

These few moments of tenderness inspire me to live
tenderness, day by day, all through the year.

Praying

I have no need to focus on a concrete object.

I pay attention to my felt presence of God, Jesus, Mary, and the Holy Spirit.

A medley of few words well up within me.

I do not try to elaborate.

“This is not a contest but the doorway into

Thanks and a silence . . .

in which another voice may speak.” (Mary Oliver)

Then I begin to drift.

Drifting is like clouds that may seem weightless,

but, of course, are not! Are they really important?

I mean terribly important?

Just think about what your drifting encounters

are trying to say to you.



Drifting

I was enjoying everything: the spring rain, sunshine,
wherever it was taking me.

I didn't intend to start thinking about God;
it just happened.

How God, or the gods, are invisible,
quite understandable.

But holiness is visible, entirely.

It is wonderful to drift along like
thought . . . not the usual intention
to reach an answer
but merely drifting

Like clouds that only seem weightless
but of course are not.

They are really important
I mean terribly important.

Anyway, this was my delicious way,
just sitting in the spring sunshine,
observing the frisky brown squirrels playing,
inhaling the fragrances of many flowers in
Lourdes Garden.

What was all of this actually saying to me?



Can You Imagine?

For example, what the trees do . . . the Sequoia Redwood, the flowering dogwood, the fruit trees, the forest pine . . .

Not only in lightening my storms or the watery dark of a summer night,

Or under the white nets of winter, but NOW, NOW and now

-whenever we're not looking; surely you can't imagine

they don't dance from the roots up, wishing to travel a little,

not so much as wanting a better view, or more sun, OR,

just as avidly,

more shade. Surely you can't imagine they just

stand there, loving every minute of it;

the birds of the empty nest, the dark rings

of the years slowly and without a sound

thickening, and nothing different

unless the wind,

and then only in its own mood, comes to visit. Surely you

can't imagine patience and happiness like that.



Softest of Mornings

Softest of mornings, hello . . .

And what will you do today? I wonder to my heart . . .

And how much honey can the heart take, before it breaks?

This is trivial or nothing; a snail climbing a trellis of leaves of
the blue trumpets of flowers.

No doubt clocks are ticking loudly

all over the world. I don't hear them;

the snail's pale horns extend and wave, and that, as
her finger body shuffles forwards, leaving behind the silvery
path of her slim passage . . .

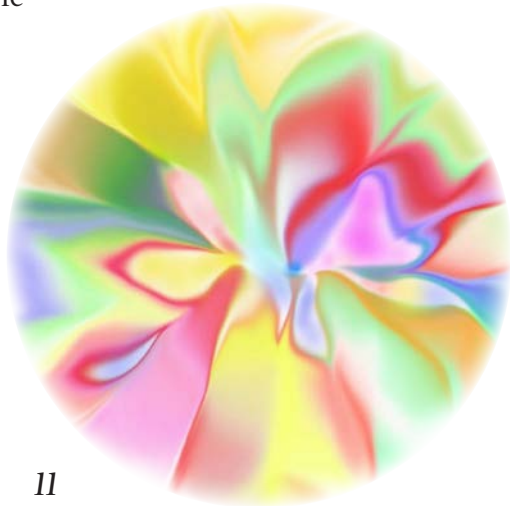


High Voltage

~Encounter with Divine Spirit~

You stupefied me; You unnerved me;
You made my body turbulent,
becoming paralyzed; I faint, go limp.
I am unable to animate myself into action,
to dispel gazing out of myself.
There is no sense of aliveness in me,
although my warm blood begins to flow
through body beautiful.
A joyful jubilancy rushes rapidly in me,
becoming very conscious that I am
ultra-sensitive to LIFE as never felt before.
Divine Spirit presents her FELT presence to me.
For the first time, I feel you, Divine Spirit, are illimitable.

And, O, Divine Spirit, you love me unconditionally.
From awesome Love, you have given me silent stillness,
a boundless abyss in my soul.
Therefore, I can privately, without disturbance,
explore the wonders of your universe, O, Divine Spirit,
Whispering your designs for creating the
New face for the universe.



California Golden Poppies

Throughout our California Golden State
You can be found, living in communities, in clusters
in open spaces, in grassy fields, . . . as well as
glorifying residential areas.



Your two-inch reddish-orange.
 bowl-shaped blossoms, with four setting petals
 adorn you majestically . . .
 on an eighteen-inch slender bluish stem,
 dancing with the rhythm of the breeze . . .
. . . surrounded by bluish leaves divided into segments
 providing a fullness.

You have an awesome relationship with the sun.
 At dusk, when she sets in the depths of our Earth
 you close your petals and sleep as we do;
. . . and you do the same with inclement weather
 while I, too, lose my energy.

O, Golden Poppy, you illuminate God's
 magnificence in nature so profoundly
that I am stupefied to learn that you are
 so poisonous!



Whisperings

O, Divine Spirit, I am awed at how you communicate sensitively with me . . .

Rushing creative whispers into my body,
manifesting diversity of nature, in your inspirations.

You whisper the sounds, flowing streams, waters rushing
downward through lush green meadows, granting tranquility of soul.

The gentle cool breeze sweeping over Earth,
announcing “It’s Spring.” Trees, dogwoods, fruit trees,
bulbs . . . wear the primary colors.

Harsh brisk winds blow the trees and foliage, making all to
dance vibrantly, shaking the crisp autumn leaves from their
homes, floating, swirling, twisting softly to the ground.

The quiet stillness of winter blankets Mother Earth with colour –
reds vibrantly rippling Life of Christmas across our Earth.



In the Lourdes Rose Garden *~An American Gold Finch~*

A small yellowish gold finch,
wearing a black crown crest,
flew onto the rim of our concrete bird bath,
nestled among three ruby red rose bushes.

She dipped her yellow beak into the water's edge,
sipped, raised her yellow head high
into the azure blue horizon
enabling the sip to trickle down her throat.

She pauses, side steps six inches to the left,
stops; . . . again sips, raises her head
for the sip to trickle down her throat;
She pauses, she says to herself . . . “My, that was
refreshing!” Then, into the middle of the bird bath
she plunges.

She rolls, flutters, straightens her wings,
aerating her feathers.
She stops, returns to the rim to rest,
allowing the incandescent sun
to dry her feathers.

Resting in the incandescent sun,
her slender body standing so erect,
exemplified the feminine Spirit,
wrapped in simplicity, in graceful elegance
beaming Awe and Wonder.

Oh, Spirit of God, graceful elegance
beaming Awe and Wonder,
You breathed a mighty first gift
for us all.



More Than Enough

The first lily of June opens its red mouth
all over the garden path where we walk;
Multiflora Rosa climbs trees, cascading;
White and pink blossoms, in gentle breezes,
carrying the scent, drifting
like colored mist.

The multi-colored daisies are spreading
their creamy crops of flowers in the meadow,
a season of joy for the bees;
the green will never again be so green,
moving so purely and lushly.

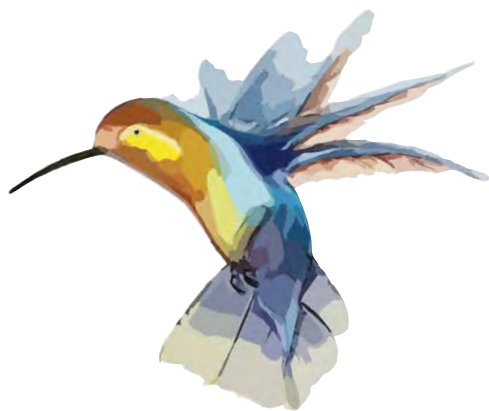
New grasses, lifting their wheaty seedheads
into the wind. Oh, rich fresh wind of June,
we stagger into you, encased in pollen,
trying to breathe freely in our garden.



Awakening

Singular in this world, exactly itself,
a hummingbird awakens
in its nameless nest, in a nameless wood.

What a moment to ponder
that agonizing slight moment
when the still bird is giving birth,
stirs in that mystery of shy happiness
across the careful nest . . .
when that particular creation
in that particular tree
in that particular wood
rises to enter the unfolding light.



Listening Heart

The unnameable God acts within every moment
and creates the world with each breath;
speaks from the center of the universe
in silence beyond all thought,
mightier than the crash of a potential thunderstorm,
a voice silently heard in the depths
of a deeply listening heart.



One recognizes the miracle given to us, to live a new day,
by One whose heart opens to all doubters with love,
whose light is for the righteous
and joy for the pure of heart.

Beautiful Changes

In my imagination I visit my favorite autumn spot
in Yosemite Valley.
I wade in a fall meadow stream. It is lined with effulgent
Queen Anne's Lace,
flooding my senses with potent fragrances,
lying like lilies on a water garden.

I turn into golden wheat fields,
and find a cobalt blue lake;
the steadfast stems of many early autumn blossoms in the Valley
open my mind to the blue-bonnet lupine.
These magnificent autumn changes are silhouetted on the forest floor. . .
making the foliage seem longer and greener . . .
to be a deeper green and more vivid than anyone noticed.
I become very aware of being God's Beloved.

My hands pick wild roses, wrap them in sage;
this embraces not only me,
as my heart pulsates with these beautiful changes.

Inside, my kind, compassionate ways emerge
and savor each moment of autumn
bringing me back to wonder.



QUIET TIME

In the coolness of every evening, I spent quiet time
sitting on Lourdes' front porch,
sipping a cup of hot green tea with a slice of lemon
just to listen for the sounds of creatures calling.

On this one late moonless evening I heard a long screeching sound.
At its conclusion, two owls entered the space
and were calling, "Hoot, hoot, hoot."
No car driving on Locust Avenue.
No barking dogs.
Just two owls communicating, "Hoot, hoot, hoot, hoot"
to each other.

I felt their presence in the woods,
between the redwood and dogwood trees on the woods' edge.
In my heart I felt the owls were hooting . . .
how good and precious they were to one another.
In the cool of this late moonless evening, a still calmness
permeated the woods.

Tranquility filled my heart and soul; I went to bed and rested
peacefully through the night.





acknowledgements

It is with deep gratitude that I thank Sister Carla Kovack for recommending the printing of this collection of poetry on the occasion of my 60th Jubilee. I am grateful also to Eileen Mize, Tiana Yanez, and to Sisters Gervaise Valpey, Judy McDonnell, Maureen McInerney, and Susannah Malarkey for editing, typing, and printing this booklet.

