

## Poetry Series

# Linda Marie Van Tassell

- 193 poems -

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### **Linda Marie Van Tassell**

I hope that in honing my craft as writer and poet, my voice will inspire people to see life as a perpetual journey that branches out into divergent paths of knowledge, challenge and discovery.

In all things may we discover one another, glance into the mirror of each other's soul, and recognize within all some small part of ourselves. We are one.

Have a happy day and thanks for visiting. I do hope we meet again.

## **A Cloud Is Free and So Flies Away**

A cloud is free and so flies away  
as a white sail upon the ocean,  
bright with the light of a sunny ray  
with its gossamer wings in motion.

It is like a kiss blown to the wind  
between two lovers that must depart  
or the quiet presence of a friend  
whose smile brings happiness to your heart.

It is like a veil that drifts afloat  
the sky-swirled face of a blushing bride  
whose kisses rain from her azure throat  
to Smith Mountain Lake and ocean tide.

It glides along a wingspan of light  
like the pen of a dreaming poet  
whose shower of smiles imbibes delight  
when the world cries but does not know it.

A metamorphosing sight unfurled -  
a sea-washed spirit when wild winds blow -  
it transmigrates the top of the world -  
a freelance flyer with miles to go.

A dove on the shoulder of the sky,  
she folds the world beneath peaceful wing  
as church bells echo and street lamps sigh  
invoking a song of gathering.

I smile to myself at thought and scene.  
Afternoon tea is a sweet bouquet.  
As I wait for spring and shades of green,  
a cloud is free and so flies away.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **A Daughter Deflowered**

The Scene: a dark basement in the shadow of night  
where dirty, perverted things are done out of sight.  
His stealthy, secret visits are furtively made  
by the torch of his eyes and the tip of his spade.

Her eyes are like hollows in the back of a cave,  
dug deep in her skull like bare bones in a grave.  
No matter her protests nor the tears that she cries,  
he tells her that she will like it, knowing he lies.

She wonders why her mother and no one else cares,  
why no one else hears the creaking beneath the stairs.  
His forcible entry hides behind the locked door,  
the dark stain of her torment drips to the dirt floor.

Her young mind is ringing like a slave market bell,  
and she chokes on his love that reminds her of hell.  
With deep strokes of plunder, he buries with his pike,  
weighs her body down beneath his hard hammer's strike.

The long length of his dagger is plunged to the hilt  
and carves his initials in the flesh of her guilt.  
Her sanity hangs upon a weakening thread.  
'I told you you would like it, ' was all that he said.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **A Drop In The Ocean**

A drop of me in the ocean of you,  
I drowned in the summer of eighty-four.  
In the rose of pink and the sky of blue,  
I opened myself as you closed the door.

I dared to dance on the edge of your name  
and struck my heels against the setting sun  
as the stem of innocence burst in flame  
and two hearts for a moment beat as one.

I caressed the curve of your dimpled smile  
and attentively gazed into your eyes  
so still in the moment, so breathless, while  
my heart was suffused with euphoric sighs.

There was blood in the sky and Purple Rain  
and sad doves crying who suffered with ease  
whose tear-stained wings were uplifted in vain  
beneath the shadow of tenebrous trees.

The fireflies flickered, and we watched their light.  
They numbered the pages of poetry.  
I flowered beside you the palest white  
never knowing you were a part of me.

After all these years, I am haunted still,  
haunted by sweet, suffering devotion.  
Though I wish it, I do not have the will  
to be more than a drop in your ocean.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **A Drop Of Rain That Flows**

I taste happiness on your lips, hear laughter in your sighs.  
I see the heavens in your smile and sunlight in your eyes.  
I feel a yearning in your touch and hunger in your kiss,  
and nothing matters more to me than sharing all of this.

I could live an eternity and never ask for more;  
for, all the things you've given me, I've never held before.  
The passion that rises from your heart shines a light to me.  
It's like a candle in the night or moonlight over sea.

You've transformed all the world I know, and all things are made new.  
Persephone rises again with springtime's morning dew.  
The smell of apples on the wind, the scent of fresh-cut grass;  
and raindrops glisten on the lawn like flecks of broken glass.

I drink my thirst from your lips; and I live and yet I die,  
my petals blowing in the wind like wings across the sky.  
With graceful hands I touch you, and I want to eat your skin.  
I want to know the heart of you that's hidden deep within.

The soft steps of the morning walk into the foaming waves,  
and cloud-like veils are lifted over still and lonely graves.  
The branches spread their palms on the body of sultry air,  
and the subtle winds of promise whisper everywhere.

It's the moment that we treasure, a dropp of rain that flows.  
It's the full-blown flame of pleasure that rises in the rose;  
and who would trade this moment or bid past times reappear?  
You consume my mouth in yours, and I'm thankful to be here.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## A Flower In The Rain

Grey city morning and black river streets.  
Rain against my window, tears in my sheets.  
Dark clouds in the sky, thunder overhead.  
Imprint of your body left in my bed.

No knock on the door, no ring of the phone.  
The wide world around me, I'm all alone.  
A blue China cup broken to pieces.  
Old love letters now torn at the creases.

Love hurts so much and like a knife cuts deep.  
I am drowning in my tears as I sleep.  
I want you and need you, but you are gone;  
yet, the warmth within me must carry on.

Umbrella in hand, in a shawl of gloom,  
I walk through the door that exits the room.  
Every inch of sadness falls from the sky.  
Each raindrop, a teardrop, within my eye.

Umbrella tossed to the side of the street.  
I walk on the wet leaves beneath my feet.  
I will die of love because I love you,  
like a rose now wilted that once you grew.

I sit on the bench beneath the oak tree  
and let the rains of life wash over me.  
Each leaf on the tree is a vocal cry,  
torn up from the deep roots to brush the sky.

Sparkles of rain-pearls now carpet the lawn,  
the sorrows that came to life with the dawn.  
My dress clings to me, a sadness to skin.  
It reaches right through me and lives within.

A chill is upon me, watered with tears.  
The grey light of morning now disappears;  
and the blackness of night loses the moon.  
I know love will not return to me soon.

With heavy heart and my burdens to bear,  
with hair dampened by the dew of despair,  
I stand to retrace my steps of before,  
though nothing waits for me there anymore.

Green sea of sorrow turns black with the night,  
and I bend to take what I have no right -  
The weeping face of a flower in rain.  
My heart is stirred by the hands of my pain.

It gives no refusal, no bitter cry.  
With sweet compassion comes the soft reply.

Its petals touch me, my life-line is stained.  
The sadness within me is self-contained.

I turn the key, quietly step inside,  
and walk to the window and look outside.  
Lightening strikes, so sad a night to illumine.  
The bright shards of radiance fill the room.

Telephone rings, but I can't move my feet.  
I stand and listen as the rings repeat.  
An hour passes, a knock is now heard.  
I open the door and can't say a word.

You reach to hold me as I pull away,  
although I crave your touch without delay.  
The hurt is too deep, the sorrow is born.  
I am so tired and so weary and worn.

You want to come back, I tell you to go.  
You beg me again, but I tell you no;  
and you turn to leave as I shut the door.  
I fall like a flower upon the floor.

In tears I stand and walk to the window.  
I look down to the solemn streets below.  
There you stand crying beneath the oak tree.  
You look up and reach your hands out to me.

I lift the window and turning around,  
grab the flower that I earlier found.  
I toss it to you; it lands at your feet,  
covered with rain as it lays in the street.

You bend to retrieve it, weary and slow;  
and deep within my heart, I let you go.  
The wish for your love in my heart might dwell.  
I kiss it good-bye with one last farewell.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **A Flower In Verse**

Soft as zephyr wont to fly  
spread my sails across the sky  
Spin me round in pirouette  
Love me lest I should forget  
Play my heart to gently croon  
the sweetest notes of tender tune  
You are all my dreams come true  
and every dream is dreamt for you  
Twilight fades to golden day  
beneath the sunlight of your ray  
Saffron-azure-ruby beams  
glisten there in all my dreams  
You are all my loving knows  
the rose that loves and ever grows  
I the flower sent to say  
your love is life's best bouquet

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **A Little Angel**

Far away on a billow  
an angel lays down his head  
upon a cloud-tufted pillow  
with a sky-line for his bed.

A shroud of star-glow around him  
and the moonlight's impending ray.  
Misty evening light grows dim  
as dusk overtakes the day.

Sweet love enclosed in his breast  
with never a thought of sorrow.  
The little angel takes his rest.  
Sweet dreams to hail tomorrow.

Petite roses in his cheeks,  
a crimson blush upon his lips;  
and though his heart never speaks,  
it is shown in morn's eclipse.

I love my little angel, mine.  
He is such a beautiful sight  
drifting on high beyond the brine,  
free of the bounds of night.

Little angel with dove-white wings  
sends a tender kiss to me.  
A choir of heaven's angels sings -  
a song that sets me free.

I cannot see his gold-lit curls -  
his pathway of love and light  
sending love to all little girls  
that have wept within the night.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **A Living Image**

Sunset fires gilded upon my fingers and slender wrist.  
I feel the warmth of a lover that I have never kissed.  
Voice that carries upon the wind, a touch of morning dew,  
two blind birds that leave their nests over paths of ocean blue.

The crimson stains of fire are spreading throughout heaven's veins.  
The softening breeze that comes with night smells of summer rains.  
The burning star of promise folds beneath the sweet winds' kiss.  
The winding vine of strawberry wine tastes of endless bliss.

Both the light and shadow dance as though they have always been.  
Who's to think that this love is wrong or that it is a sin?  
Let me perish in this storm, in the storm clouds of his eyes.  
Let me dim a thousand stars, roll the clouds across the skies.

Standing still in the moment, I can feel his presence near.  
He's like the wind, the rain, and snow; he's every time of year.  
Passion flowers in the night, rising naked from the sea.  
The rose is red, grove is green, a garden blossoms in me.

I look across the distance as breezes sweep the billow.  
I kiss him in the mid of night, lips pressed to my pillow.  
A sigh, a moan, a weeping cloud, and love's entangled knot.  
A living image that used to be, never was forgot.

Sleepless eyes close to dream, and the torch of love is burning.  
The heart sees light in his love, the truth of heart returning.  
The hope of love is found in all, the hope that we might share.  
Hand-in-hand we grasp the moon, and stars shine everywhere.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **A Love To Call Your Own**

I shall never regret loving you for all of my life.  
Inside my heart, inside my soul, I am your loving wife.  
From the moment that we met, life has never been the same.  
Our love is a brilliant jewel, an effervescent flame.  
I am embraced in ecstasy, the sweetest ever known;  
and I am proud and glad to be the love you call your own.  
My shattered dreams from the past are ashes upon the floor.  
You gather them away from me and sweep them out the door.  
Every breath I take is sweet, the winds of love impart.  
The greatest love has conquered and quick-embraced my heart.  
The sorrows' flow of yesterday is lost within the cries.  
The only tears are those of joy that glisten in my eyes.  
You are the moonlight on the wind, my ever-brilliant star.  
Everything I am to you is all to me you are.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **A Mirage (Serpentine Verse)**

Under a nectarine sky, the wheel stopped spinning under intense pressure as the cloud turned into a woman with intense dark eyes, hidden behind her golden veil, trimmed with dark lace, dangling with shimmering crystals; and the lace, tempted the eyes to look at her and lust for her, tempted wavering winds to caress her brow and tempted wavering men to lower themselves prostrate, becoming slave men.

Worshipping her wistful ways, they bowed, worshipping her by caressing her feet, brushing the cobwebs off her desert skin, the webs of many men captured in her desert.

Dreams of color danced in her eyes, the changing dreams unrolled before them like a feast, the feast unrolled before starving men who never knew hunger before.

Like the wind, she is like magic, dervishly dancing like lavender dust over an amethyst oasis, her lavender lips pouring shadows into their souls, while their lips call her name as drops of death fall in their mouths, call her to come to them and slake their thirst with a drink from her well - her wholesome well - her Heaven-on-Earth well. Wishing they could drink from her lips, they died: wishing.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## A Night In The Arms Of Forever

It was the first time in years that we saw each other anew.  
As you sat listening to music, I snuck up behind you;  
and I wrapped my arms around your shoulders, being such a flirt.  
The chocolate velvet of my dress against the cotton of your shirt.

You tilted your head backwards, your lips puckering for a kiss;  
and I knew that my whole world was encompassed inside of this.  
For all these years I've loved you, I always loved you from the start;  
but tangled in my confusions, I denied what was at heart.

I lay down on the sofa, and I admired you from afar.  
To me you were always like the promise of a distant falling star.  
You stood and came towards me, and I was lost inside your eyes.  
I could not stop my pounding heart, the quivering of my thighs.

You sat down beside me; and smiling, you gave to me your lips.  
You breathed my breath inside of you as your fingers touched my hips.  
A deep sigh escaped me, a volcano erupting inside;  
and all the love I felt for you would no longer be denied.

The power of it gripped me as your lips tasted of my tears.  
I pulled you close to hide my face and to shut away my fears;  
but you wouldn't let me hide, instead you pulled away from me.  
Your eyes were searching deep inside to proclaim my purity.

'What?' you asked. I couldn't answer, but I tried to look away.  
Your beloved hand touched my cheek like the sunlight touching day.  
Holding my hands above my head, looking straight into my eyes,  
you smiled as your hand wandered to the valley between my thighs.

I squeezed my legs together in my lusting feminine pride.  
'Stop,' you said; and with commanding fingers, spread them far and wide.  
With half-shut eyes, I arched my back; and I moaned in ecstasy.  
No one ever made me feel such bliss, such carnal agony.

As you touched the silken petals, my thighs locked around your hand.  
'Stop,' you said, your elegant dance swept across the burning sand.  
Your subtle domination owned me; it was then that I knew,  
all I ever was or will be would always belong to you.

Just as I reached the pinnacle, the tide of sweeping desire,  
you released my hand and left me in flames of a burning fire.  
You sat down in the chair, and I lowered myself at your feet.  
I lay my head on your knee and embraced my happiness - sweet.

With a twinkle in my eye and a wicked, devilish grin,  
I unzipped your pants and then slowly tip-toed my fingers in.  
I took your hardness in hand, tasted its salt upon my lip;  
and as you closed your eyes, my tongue danced around the heart-shaped tip.

We giggled at our past, knowing I would not do that before.  
I was so shy and young then and so afraid to ask for more.

We smiled in our newfound awareness, the love that once we knew.  
A second chance to love again was the second time more true.

The weight of your body upon me, my dress lifted away.  
Holding my hands once again, you began your torturous play.  
Your index finger lightly touching, circling nipple tips,  
up and down my breastbone, a slender whisper toward my hips.

Each nerve in my body was aching, a deep hunger of greed.  
Your fiery lips were upon me, your hands grasping in need.  
Your saber of love pierced through me; and in moans, I wrote your name.  
The world dropped away, and I knew I would never be the same.

Turning over onto my knees, the primal entrance was found.  
Never had a touch touched more deep nor greater a bondage bound.  
I fell straightway to the floor, the lightening had pierced my soul.  
I ripened within the hands of your love, that which made me whole.

You gently took me by the hand, and you led me to the bed.  
I lay with my back against you and your arm beneath my head.  
With my left leg bent over yours, you lifted my thighs apart;  
and you reached around to finger that crimson, petalline part.

Your torch of love behind me, I could feel its hardness and heat.  
I pushed myself back against it as it pushed inside complete.  
Your offering was magnificent inside the primal shrine.  
A thousand candles were lit; you alone were proclaimed divine.

The slow and impassioned rocking, the lull of waves to the shore.  
The less that I thought I could handle, the more I wanted more.  
Your hot breath in my ear, the song and dance of senses delight.  
I saddled the steed of desire, and we rode as one that night.

My heart sails back through the dreams, dreams that always end like this,  
together we were as one and together we were as bliss.  
I thought once again we had found it, the love that once we knew.  
A second chance to love again was the second time more true.

Yet, now I'm left with memories, your sweet love I cannot find.  
When the light returns, I will see you - the love I left behind.  
Perhaps, once again, we will find it, the love that once we knew.  
Another chance to love again, a third chance to love anew.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **A Place In The Sun**

We walked together, side-by-side and hand-in-hand.  
We laughed and talked about the times to be;  
but then it ended and you couldn't understand  
why I turned against you - you couldn't see.

You never knew what I was going through inside,  
and I couldn't tell you. How could you know?  
I was so frightened and hurting and full of pride,  
and I dealt with it by letting you go.

My life was in shambles, such a foolish charade,  
always wearing a smile upon my face;  
but the truths were a lie and the roles were all played.  
I was an actress in a lonely place.

A dwindling flower, I was broken at heart,  
parched in the desert and lonely in soul.  
My delicate petals were swiftly torn apart;  
and I was divided, no longer whole.

You were my love-light, my hopeful beacon on high.  
I only wanted to be in your arms;  
but the thunder and storm clouds swept the blue-draped sky,  
leaving me without your heart-warming charms.

Across the years, I have dreamed of your musing smile,  
remembering what the two of us had.  
I have closed my eyes, embraced you, caressed you, while,  
at heart, I felt so forsaken and sad.

You have always lived inside of my dreaming heart.  
You have always been my one and only;  
and though life's circumstances have kept us apart,  
I held you close when my heart felt lonely.

The bright sun is now shining upon you and I.  
We are together and loving anew;  
and the world is all right and I no longer cry.  
My heart is now happy to be with you.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Affection

Come! Give me your thoughts that have wandered far and long  
in the realm of green meadows and the daisies' song  
of love-me, love-me-not petals that shed their tears  
beneath the hope of your touch and the joy of years.

Hold me! Wrap me in love where the flowers abound;  
and let us plant the sweetest roots on sacred ground,  
where no waters divide and no mountains shall rise.  
Let us build our Eden and make it paradise.

Let us catch the splendor of the indigo breeze  
and make wine in the shade beneath bountiful trees.  
In vineyards of pleasure and succulent delight,  
let us slice open the moon and eat it tonight.

Let the light penetrate and give birth to the dream  
as love-me, love-me petals float the merry stream.  
Explosions of ecstasy cast a reflection  
from the soul to the eyes of dear, sweet affection.

Come! Yours is the love that presses into my skin.  
It is the wellspring of life that I revel in.  
I am poised on the precipice, waiting to fall,  
inflamed by the glory and wonder of it all.

Your love is my life; we are writ in heaven's scroll.  
You steal all my senses, and you shudder my soul.  
Come! I need nothing more from life other than this:  
to end my journey on the silk waves of your kiss.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Always Silent

The morning is moist with ocean spray.  
The islands, they twist around the bay;  
and across them all, my eyes have scanned -  
the rocky cliffs and the buttes of sand.

I almost think it an Irish isle.  
Such beauty to make the heart beguile.  
Sunrise stain on a listless ocean  
serves to add to the magic potion.

A boat is docked alongside the pier.  
A woman and man are standing near.  
He is setting sail to ports unseen  
upon the gilded Emerald Queen.

Standing on tip-toes to give a kiss,  
she cries while pretending unfelt bliss.  
Others have perished over the years.  
They left these isles for happier spheres.

And I know the pain on lips unstirred,  
the hurt behind that familiar word -  
the word 'good-bye' and all it implies  
and the heart that bleeds in streaming eyes.

He holds her hand as he walks away.  
His linen shirt as bright as the day.  
At last he lets loose; this is the end.  
His sandy blonde hair blows in the wind.

Bright blue waters open to the skies.  
He is gone, and she kneels as she cries.  
I can't help but watch and weep at heart.  
It's always sad when lovers depart.

Dark shadows fall, but they never stand.  
They fall in my heart and in my hand.  
In the sky, a milk-watery moon  
and a thousand star-lights sweetly strewn.

My lover left some five years ago  
when sunlight had a heavenly glow.  
I guess we were never meant to be,  
and some souls are just meant to be free.

The aches, the pain - a peculiar case.  
Love is the flaw of the human race.  
I'm in love with one but bound to none,  
like the moon yearning after the sun.

I'm like a player before the keys  
who plays a tune that is meant to please;

but keys are silent within the heart -  
always silent when lovers depart.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Always, My Love**

You came into my life like a windstorm;  
and like a leaf, I got carried away.  
You colored me in your passionate hues  
like ink on silk on the bare skin of day.

Emotions drift along rivers of time  
into the script of a self-possessed sea,  
and I find that the greatest thing I own  
is the one thing that truthfully owns me.

You are the impulse of my creation,  
my caravan of dreams towards the dawn.  
Our eyes meet, and the sky touches the earth.  
The cool wind of morning flutters the lawn.

A stream of tears I have shed over love,  
beauty born in the dimple of a smile -  
the tears and laughter crafted in concert  
able to dance down the flowering mile.

Against the white sail of a perfumed cloud,  
I breathe in your essence whispered above.  
Gently falling like a dewdropp to drown,  
I send to you always, my love, my love.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Among The Faithless

I went to church on Sunday to give praise unto the Lord,  
and I found myself worshipping among the faithless hoard.  
O! They dressed the part, gave their tithes, and even shook my hand.  
The preacher spoke of love and life, of God's great Promise Land.

He spoke of Christian duty and of helping those in need.  
He spoke of humility and of corporate crime and greed.  
He preached about salvation, of war, and retribution,  
said we should confess our sins and pray for absolution.

The collection plate circled round, was passed from pew to pew,  
as the preacher spoke of church events, some old and some new.  
He spoke of matrimony and the Blessed, Holy bond,  
talked of family values in this world and the beyond.

The sermon seemed to center around the power of love,  
of the grace and mercy that God bestows from up above.  
Thus, he wanted to recognize the longest married pair,  
giving them dinner for two, a blessing, and a prayer.

Next, he queried the newlyweds, married three years or less;  
and couples stood together, two-by-two, in Sunday dress.  
The window of time was dropped 'til only two were standing.  
There were no accolades, just the hush of silent branding.

Stares shot across the room as the contest moderators  
conferred among themselves about the two desecrators.  
For, there among the holy, stood two women in their prime,  
married in San Francisco two days before in warmer clime.

I think I held my breath; I could feel my poor heart beating.  
This was not my notion of a joyous Sunday meeting.  
The parishioners snickered; I heard the words 'queer' and 'gay.'  
I was beyond shock, and I didn't quite know what to say.

It was a most awkward moment; the couple stood in tears.  
One of them had attended there for over fifteen years.  
They went from sharing their joy to sharing their grief and shame.  
It had quickly turned out to be the crying sort of game.

They were awarded dinner without congratulation.  
In the eyes of the church, they were an abomination.  
The preacher felt duty-bound to condemn them on the spot  
lest all his Sunday lessons be overlooked and forgot.

And I couldn't help but think of the faithless in their fear,  
of how they live contrary to the things that they revere.  
'Judge not, lest ye be judged; ' but they do at every turn.  
Why not embrace the sinner if they share God's discern?

I walked out of service, followed the women to their car.  
I felt compelled to tell them that I love them as they are.

I asked for forgiveness for the church and congregation.  
None of us are perfect nor above God's condemnation.

Wiping tears away, one of them smeared makeup on her sleeve.  
She thanked me for my compassion and then they turned to leave.  
I no longer attend Loving Grace, a Christian castaway.  
I know where we both stand, and there is nothing left to say.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Aria

The sky is painted with a sanguine heat,  
nameless raptures upon the ocean floor.  
The voiceless sands lie in passions replete,  
swept up in orphic climes forevermore.

I look out over the cobalt blue reach,  
breathing the salt-scented aurora air.  
Light and shadow scatter along the beach  
as tiny scintillations kiss the bare.

Blissful people grasp the drowsy slumber.  
Hot flesh is cooled and caressed by the wind.  
Slickened bodies repose beyond number,  
a mixture of kiwi-coconut blend.

It appears that they lie in pairs and sleep.  
Clocks magically stop and time stands still.  
A language of love whispers from the deep  
and meanders over the windowsill.

Gaze is lost in some oblivious dream,  
yielding to the lull of the floating glow.  
I love the ardor of the sunlit beam  
as broken waves splash and the wind blows low.

This is my love, this quaint azure view.  
I dream of sharing all my world with you.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Autumn In My Heart**

A seed of sorrow is cast aside.  
A wish is spun on a leafy bough.  
Summer rides upon the crystal tide,  
and the wind is a part of me now.

A sash of silver girdles the night.  
It sparkles where the wide rivers flow.  
I hear the echo of birds in flight,  
and I am saddened to see them go.

The sun burns bright, but the winds are cold.  
The nights moan as if they are in pain.  
Morning breaks solace, the dreams I hold;  
and the tears are a fire to my brain.

I fill a bright cup with sunlight-splash.  
I drink to autumn and acorn fall,  
and I watch the dead leaves turn to ash.  
It's impossible to count them all.

A chestnut redolence fills the air.  
It's the most piquant and rousing wine,  
and the parching soil provides a chair  
as I repose by the singing pine.

Lost in dreams of tempestuous shame,  
I sigh, I am lost, and I am mad.  
It touched me once, that passionate flame;  
and without its warmth, my heart is sad.

Autumn lives and breathes inside my heart.  
It is a portion that I must bear;  
but from the same seed, summer shall part.  
It shall bloom again! Wondrously fair!

And Lord of Life! How I love Your love!  
How I love the signs You care to show -  
from the field of stars that hangs above  
to the wind and wave, their mighty flow.

You cast Your seeds, but carefully so.  
No shadow is planted without the sun.  
You love to the last, from high to low.  
Your works are mighty and never done.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Bard's Chair**

Come sit with me a moment and put the world away.  
Gather round your soul-spirited sister and brother,  
the stars and the moon or the garland of day.  
Come sit with me a moment; let's be lost in one another.

Come listen to the sounds of the harpist's art  
as he plays a dalliance of deity and duty.  
Come listen to the sounds to touch the heart  
beyond the realms of light and beauty.

A million restless hearts are yearning today.  
They are lost and they had no warning.  
Come, come join me in a world away  
that can bring stars to the sky of morning.

There's not a hill nor prairie, not a field nor lawn,  
that can stop this restless turning;  
but come to the bard's chair, lit golden by dawn,  
where the skies are red and burning.

Listen to the strings that gently tell  
of a tale of hurt so crushing.  
Listen to the music from the harpist's shell  
where the sands of life are blushing.

The sun hangs over, rays tumbling down  
on the chair and the light discovers:  
the arch of a smile and the bow of a frown,  
the sweet lips of two spiritual lovers.

For life may haunt behind his hazel eyes  
and the heart strain in her eyes of blue.  
We can see them twinkling across the skies.  
They wink forever across the azure milieu.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Beyond Consciousness**

The Scarlet roses blossom and burn.  
Virginia cardinals twist and turn.  
The sun is shining bright overhead  
as Bonnie Blue tints the garden bed.

The mountains rise in a misty hue  
as petals imbibe the morning dew;  
and I am weightless, shall never die -  
a union of earth and sea and sky.

A friend to cherish, I love you dear.  
I just close my eyes and you are near.  
I paint your image, color your smile,  
stand back to admire you just a while.

My heart is happy; the sunshine whirls.  
A hyacinth flaunts her mass of curls.  
You look at me, and I look at you.  
No words are exchanged between the two.

The March winds march to merge with the shore.  
I know I have seen that face before.  
Beyond consciousness, beyond all time,  
we meet beyond pomp and paradigm.

And I am thankful, to glance at you.  
What more have my blue-winged eyes to do?  
The cloud has kissed you, drifted away.  
Your heart is now the sunlight of day.

God's green garland of Sycamore twine  
is a circle of love - yours and mine.  
It wheels around us; our souls are free.  
A kind of harbor it seems to be.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Birdcage**

I stare out into the blue perfection of sky,  
my gilded cage sheltering me and my heart.  
I marvel at the others, wondering how they fly  
without the fear of the wind tearing their wings apart.

I have long been afraid to venture outside,  
petrified that I would be flattened on the ground.  
Yet, I soar freely and wonderfully deep inside  
and have no fear of flying in the glory I've found.

The world, however, is not quite the same.  
It prepares no cushioned landing to capture a fall;  
and though I desperately wish that blue sky claim,  
I cannot bring my little wings to fly at all.

I embrace my fears, veiled with pretty flowers  
and magnificent paintings that everyone can see;  
and no one can tell that I cry in the showers  
that fall freely from the sky onto me.

I want to change and shake my impulse to stay.  
I long to go where the others have dared to go.  
I don't want to stay in this cage another day  
to watch my dreams dwindle in the hands of woe.

Dear Heart! Fly off into that big blue yonder,  
let yourself soar heaven high and free.  
Do not turn back, nor fear, nor wonder...  
do not think that you are hurting me.

My gilded cage has now fallen into decay.  
It has no power no longer to hold me inside.  
The bars have been broken and thrown away.  
I now spread my wings in pride.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Bitter & Sweet**

Embittered from life and its rapacious round,  
with naught but sour grapes in their vineyards to show,  
blind to their faults, in ignorance blissfully bound,  
their hearts were like stones that were meant to throw.

They laughed at her garment and her matronly air,  
the rim of her waist bordered in ribbon of gold,  
the bush of each brow and her thinning strands of hair -  
the lady from Blackburn, forty-seven years old.

But she curved their minds around the street of her song  
and rolled the stones of their hearts, she rolled them away  
till the clouds of cynicism and fortune's wrong  
were broken to bits and disappeared where they lay.

Straight up to the heavens, the Scottish songbird flew,  
singing as sweet as an angel and still more sweet;  
and she touched each heart until it beat sweetly too,  
until those who ridiculed her rose to their feet.

She sang of a dream and set their fetters free.  
Their eyes were opened like blossoms before the sun;  
and in that moment, where scornfulness strived to be,  
it lay at her feet silenced, for, Susan had won.

And the span of a second can last forever  
if the seeds are planted and given room to grow.  
For every dream we dream, we must endeavor  
to be a voice that rises above the shadow.

Let this be a lesson to all who share their dreams  
that love can move mountains of the stony-hearted;  
and skin-deep beauty is never what it seems  
and means even less when once this life we've parted.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Black**

Black is the evening as I try to understand  
why love is left lonely, discarded at sea,  
so tired as it struggles to reach the land,  
drowning in sorrow inside of me.

And sadder still is the dreary breaking of morn  
that has no sunlight to cheer the sky.  
The gray clouds linger, drifting hence forlorn,  
a semblance of love, how it is bound to die.

And more than desolate, I wake and rise,  
leaving my heart, which is sleeping still,  
upon the bed that has drowned in the cries  
that creep up and across the window sill.

The tears, they fall to the hapless ground;  
and I walk upon the tears once again.  
My tired eyes see that the flowers around  
have all withered beneath the salt and pain.

Sad love weeps behind the veil of night;  
and the whole thing seems pointless, so vain.  
What use the dreams, the desires and delight,  
that struggle as though they can never be again?

How shall I stand it, these sad thoughts repeat?  
How can I stand where the strongest trees bend?  
It is always a blessing that dies bittersweet,  
so savage and cruel, it becomes in the end.

How shall I linger in the memories of your face,  
in the dreams I shall never know?  
I shall wither, a flower, outside your embrace,  
the spark to dwindle, the tears to flow.

What is the point? There is nothing to it  
if neither you nor I  
dare to taste of the passion we lit,  
if we suffer our hearts to die.

What point indeed is there if you run  
against the wind and all you know and see,  
if you deny it, deny me, deny the sun,  
if you pretend that we never can be?

Black is the morning which finds me forlorn.  
There is no promise in the heavens above.  
Pale and contemptuous is the chilly morn  
that has broken the wings of the dove.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Bleeds The Light**

A young girl waits in darkened room,  
A flower that's just begun to bloom,  
Lies as if waiting for her groom,  
And yet, she's still a child.

New toys lie scattered everywhere,  
Gifts from the man who strokes her hair  
And tells her she's his lady fair,  
Like others he's beguiled.

He comes to her in dark of night,  
Soon after Mama outs the light,  
In naught but briefs and T-shirt white,  
And breath that reeks of beer.

She lies there trembling inside,  
Eyes tightly closed as if to hide,  
Her stomach in large knots is tied,  
For she can sense him near.

She hears the creaking of her door,  
His footsteps sneaking 'cross the floor,  
And sweat starts seeping from each pore  
As he sits 'pon her bed.

Then, suddenly, within night's gloom,  
A long and narrow shadow looms  
And sends him flying 'cross the room  
With one blow to his head.

Now through the darkness bleeds the light  
Of God's sweet love and sacrifice  
And, bathed in His redeeming light,  
The little child's reborn.

He lays His hand upon her head  
'Til all bad memories have fled,  
While angels hover overhead  
To keep her safe 'til morn.

His death was ruled an accident,  
The cause, it was self-evident,  
Tripped on a toy and flying went  
Into the bedroom wall.

And if perchance one wonders why  
They've never seen his daughter cry,  
They shrug it off and simply sigh,  
She was too young, that's all.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Blood Is Crying**

The ocean appears to be black,  
a pitch-black stain that bleeds to shore.  
Wind is whispering at my back,  
while the moon is shining before.

It's so tranquil and peaceful here  
when there is no one to be found.  
The memories bring me to tear,  
and I lay down upon the ground.

I stare at the night sky above  
and weep for the one that I've lost.  
There is no joy in feeling love,  
too much to pay, too high the cost.

And what should I be thankful for?  
How to believe in God above?  
Is their solace in winning war  
when you lose the one that you love?

Damn the desert sands to despair!  
His blood is crying out to me.  
My love – the dark night of his hair –  
is now silent, eternally.

Unhappiness consumes my soul.  
Without him there can be no me;  
and I drink tears from sorrow's bowl  
and cast first stones into the sea.

Oceanic reverie gloom –  
blacker than black becomes the night.  
Wet with melancholic perfume,  
I close my eyes, turn out the light.

My soul is a fragile flower,  
drifting on tears that drown at sea,  
and my hopes fall like a shower.  
His blood is crying out to me.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Blood Is The Rose**

The sightless question, the suspended moon -  
the crack of the world is found in the heart -  
the binate blessing of bountiful boon.

One moment is profane, the next is art.  
A crescent moon hangs like a broken ring  
and cannot hold what has been torn apart.

The black windows of soul are listening  
through the lattice of shadow and the sight,  
listening to the notes of each heartstring.

Dreams come drifting in the landscape of night,  
in the delta of the heart and the mind;  
and the dream of sin emerges in light.

I see his silhouette, though I am blind,  
on the meridian of dreamy lust.  
He beckons me to leave this world behind.

I am yet of the earth, not of the dust.  
My breasts are supple and honeyed with milk,  
and I cannot turn away though I must.

Our souls move together like burning silk  
or two flames of fire that dance by design.  
He offers me death; I offer him milk.

So, how can I be his or he be mine;  
and how can death and life, as one, rejoice?  
How can the dead and the living entwine?

He kisses me, and he leaves me no choice.  
My life-breath is swallowed into the grave,  
and the death dirt of the earth mutes my voice.

Between two worlds, I ride upon the wave,  
desperately seeking to end my woes.  
He is my master, and I am his slave.

Death is an anchor, and blood is the rose.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Blood Under The Bridge

I had never been to the country before,  
had never visited the wild in the wood;  
but one foggy eve, with the dew on my sleeve,  
I arose with the conviction that I should.  
The night air was as cold as a witch's tit,  
and the moon had narrowed into a cat's eye.  
I didn't care, as branches caught in my hair,  
like knotty fingers reaching out of the sky.

The grass was slippery-smooth beneath my feet.  
I had to be careful crossing over hill;  
but I just had to get there, somehow, somewhere,  
where something beckoned to me, silent and still.  
I knew there was something but didn't know what,  
like a note hidden in the back of a book.  
I just had to get it, could not forget it,  
and I was determined to get me a look.

I walked through an alcove of alder and ash.  
The catkins lengthened for each conical maid;  
and I swore in that moment to end the torment  
by trudging onward to that beckoning glade.  
The wind it whispered with a wistful woo,  
and the shivers clambered like vines up my back.  
I felt too small to resist the ghostly call  
that lured me onward around the verdant track.

Beyond the clearing, I saw an old stone bridge  
arching its back across the River de Rayne;  
and in that place, I saw the loveliest face,  
whose beauty hovers in the back of my brain.  
She was dressed in swirls of the gathering mist,  
like a nightgown that she might claim as her own;  
and her delicate skin, like fine porcelain,  
stretched like velvet across alabaster bone.

Her hair cascaded from a waterfall braid,  
like the fall of night through the trees overhead;  
and when she turned to see, looking right at me,  
I wanted to run but was rooted instead.  
For, her eyes were as vast as the universe;  
and her demure smile had the wickedest curl.  
I cannot bear the memory of that stare,  
that shot from the eyes of that poor murdered girl!

When she looked at me, there were stones in her mouth  
crushing her voice beneath the weight of the years;  
but I was spun back in time, like a spinning dime,  
in the long strand of her tumultuous tears.  
A storm of leaves was rustling in her hair.  
The clouds were caliginous in heaven's bed.  
Her dress was too thin, the rain soaked through to skin;

and she ran through the shadows that draped her head.

She was midway across the old stony bridge  
when something strange made her stop dead in her tracks.  
From within her eyes, I saw two creatures rise,  
with iridescent wings upon their gnarled backs.  
They pounced upon her with their razor-sharp claws,  
slicing through her skin as though an onion peel;  
and with a final breath, she fell to her death  
in the River de Rayne, which glistened like steel.

That unblinking eye in the sky saw it all.  
She lay there broken among the jagged stones.  
Her hair broke in waves over watery graves  
that stilled the shiver that clattered in her bones.  
She looked at me, and I grew pale as the moon.  
The world seemed lonelier than it was before.  
Both love and despair were braided in my hair  
as the River de Rayne lapped against the shore.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Blue Meadow Mist Of Sorrow**

I lost you somewhere in a teardropp on the grass,  
on the sands of falling time within the hourglass.  
Blue meadow mist of sorrow falling from the skies.  
Haunting webs of promises draped across your eyes.

All the times you swore that you'd never break my heart  
and all the things you did to tear my world apart;  
and now I'm left with nothing, bundled up in fears,  
deep despair and loneliness, happenstance and tears.

Yet, you walk upon clouds and dance across my heart,  
dropping daggers through my dreams until they depart.  
A lone parade of sorrow travels heart and soul.  
The many tears shed inside fill an empty hole.

Pale memories of your smile by the sunset sea  
float inwards to the coast of hapless destiny.  
Stars spinning in the sky catch a tumbling wave.  
Cup of love spills its wine upon a silent grave.

Heart half-hidden in shadow is love's shattered dream,  
a broken-petalled flower floating on the stream.  
The hammer of heartache pounds it into the ground,  
an unsleeping memory that time blows around.

It's a broken heart that you hear upon the wind,  
the reed that must yield or be broken in the end.  
The heart is a canvas painting its own story  
in shades of hope, endless love, passion and glory.

Blue meadow mist of sorrow falling from the skies.  
Haunting webs of remorse now draped across your eyes.  
I walk away from you as you drown in your dream,  
a broken-petalled flower floating on the stream.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Blue Moon Lover**

Misty verge of softened skies  
still hovers and makes no sound.  
A dreamer's feast feeds my eyes  
as my lover circles 'round.

Such an anchor to my mind,  
no other such as he,  
dream that I can quickly find,  
my blue moon mystery.

No dancing muses nor celestial nymphs,  
no other in heaven above,  
can steal the paradise in every glimpse,  
the sweet warm winds of love.

Flying high on blue moon wings  
with all the stars of light,  
pulling at my blithe heartstrings  
to dream of him tonight.

My gentle lover, my aspiration,  
singing in solitude.  
My hope of life and all creation,  
sanguine interlude.

Blue moon eyes shimmer sweet  
to a love you call your own  
and sweeps me off my dainty feet  
as the world wanders alone.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Bluebird

Pretty little bluebird in the tree,  
won't you come and sing for me?  
Your blue wings bristle as you fly away.  
I wish I could come out to play.  
But there's no room for one like me,  
no room on the branch of that little tree.  
You trilled to my heart your chipper number  
and awoke me from my fragile slumber.  
The morn is so full of lovely grace,  
sweet music that changes your little face.  
You rise to fly through the morning air.  
There goes my soul's fondest prayer.  
You soar alone, flitting high above.  
There goes my one and only love.  
May you soar higher than you ever flew.  
May you dip your wings in heaven's blue;  
but if you find there's nothing more to see,  
I hope you find your way back to me.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Broken Moon

The moon splintered the night,  
that dark night so many moons ago  
when time and trouble merged  
along the coastal plain of trust and tears.

Plumes of smoke rose in the distance  
as she stood in the doorway of fate,  
wondering where the spinning wheels  
took him as he turned the bend.

The bleak night promised her nothing.  
After all, she was a broken promise herself,  
dust and dim commingled in her black dress,  
a dress of betrayal and dangling dreams.

Little did she know that she'd wear it again,  
silent as the stone that had become of her heart,  
his feet pointed east in eternal retreat,  
while his two daughters stood beside him.

His best friend crept into their home  
as he had crept into her bed, slithering like a snake.  
Petals fell to the floor, the petals of tears,  
the tears of two daughters turned to spine.

After all, they were the backbone of his legacy,  
his beautiful sorrow spun in their youth,  
a dark medley of time disconsolate,  
a cold rain on the nape of night's narrow neck.

They are left with the moon, weeping,  
his absence falling from the sky  
as a spray of stars shimmers, reflected  
in the black tide, the grief of time.

The darkness drips in damp corners,  
trickling down the curve of her frown  
as she recounts that night, that dark night,  
when he discovered her broken moon.

It splintered his heart, pierced his soul,  
left him mangled beneath that old oak  
among the corpse of his metal car.  
He planted himself toward the sun.

His daughters grew taller, two candles,  
burned out of her life with a trace of smoke.  
She wept as they fled into the dream of the dawn,  
leaving her to her darkness, her broken moon.

The pale lace of her complexion trembled  
in the whisper of wind that was her shame.

She could never admit that she was wrong;  
and for this, they are gone.

She stood in the doorway of decision  
and gave nothing, took her good-bye  
and shoved it into the pocket of hate,  
slamming the door against herself.

She could warm a man's bed but never her heart.

Now she sleeps alone, no matter whom is beside her,  
an empty soul that no longer believes in fulfillment.  
She doesn't hear the hoot of the owl in the night,  
doesn't care for the wisdom that comes with age.

And I'm her daughter...

A leaf blowing in the wind, that once fell upon her,  
that she quickly brushed away without notice.

And I'm her legacy...

I can only say that I think I deserved better.

She made a promise to honor and cherish.  
Why couldn't that have been enough?  
Trapped between two panes of broken glass,  
I see holes in the past and holes in the future.

A cold wind blows through me, a moonbeam  
shining a light on the dark of my past,  
a place where I hug the silence in retrospect,  
contemplating the certainty of what will never be.

The deepest loss is wed with infidelity,  
where black night straddles her dark sin,  
and lowers her skirt over the sun.  
The heat of her breath burns the night.

There's a pulse in her wrist but no beat in her heart.

Shall I blame it on the moon hanging in the sky?  
Does one blame a mirror for itself being broken?  
I don't know; it is what it is... broken,  
a shattered reminder of what should have been,  
and minute reflections of what will never be.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Broken Music Box

Love is as rare as the pyramids in the mist,  
as deep as the ocean which has never been kissed,  
as old as father time, as sweet as morning dew,  
and as cold as the wind that blows outside of you.

Yet, your eyes are as cold as ice upon the glass,  
cold as the wintry frost that cloaks the dying grass.  
You stare out the window - empty heart, empty tears,  
empty glass of nothingness to toast to the years.

I lose myself in sadness, tears too deep to number.  
Heartache has risen from its once silent slumber.  
Tears slip out of perspective, heart falls to the ground.  
Autumn leaves sweep the soul, a silent few around.

This is our goodbye, the music box is broken -  
splinters from our shattered dreams - our only token.  
I have no need of songs, the ones I used to know.  
I lose myself in the void, nowhere left to go.

I fall up lonely street, heartache my only friend.  
I try to block the songs which echo on the wind.  
Red velvet tattered, shadows in my caverned eyes.  
Swift the seasons roll with dark clouds across the skies.

I walk without a hope, without a song at heart.  
I've missed you from the moment we first fell apart.  
I carry with me the little pieces of wood,  
sweet reminders of a past that once seemed so good.

A bright patch of sunlight, but it quick fades away.  
I swore it was you who walked by the other day.  
Yet, it was but a dream - my wish for you alone.  
When I turned to speak to you, I was on my own.

Wandering with memories, in the dark of night,  
I follow what is hopeless, striving for the light.  
Yet, I know that you are gone down the halls of time.  
I know that you couldn't care, wouldn't give a dime.

And love's last song will never be sung nor spoken.  
The heart has been shattered, the music box broken.  
There is no joy left and no happiness at all.  
One by one, the silent flakes of snow start to fall.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Brush and Canvas

Soft caresses in the twilight hush.  
Eyelids closed in a state of ecstasy.  
He is the painter; his tongue is the brush  
sliding down the canvas of my body.

His large hands and his sensuous fingers  
stroke lush imagery for all to see.  
I can feel his touch, the way it lingers,  
beautifully making art out of me.

He paints like summer, in warm strokes of fire,  
with soft, wet lips of tantalizing sin.  
Urgent and hot, with hunger and desire,  
his brush moves in, around, then out and in.

His body heat melts all hesitation,  
and the tender blossoms seem to ignite.  
His touch is teasing, a sweet lustration.  
He strokes so slowly in the dark of night.

Sigh! I push his hand harder against me.  
I cry out with pleasure, arching my back.  
A breath-stopping instant - delivery!  
The brush slides down the glistening crack.

Petals of passion are pressed into vein.  
The canvas changes, moving fast and slow.  
His tongue sliding softly drives me insane,  
and he opens his eyes to watch me go.

Ripeness exudes - little passionflower,  
deliciously aching into the dawn.  
Lost in abandon and lost in the hour,  
I fall away in the breath of a yawn.

Sweetly spooning in languid affection,  
we sleep among flowers and fields of rain.  
He is the painter, my predilection.  
His tongue is the brush of my fevered brain.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Calligraphy

He uses me as his canvas of expression,  
his velvet brush dripping with the ink of desire.  
The inkwell is endless, and it flows with passion.  
Graceful words are emblazoned upon flesh like fire.

He writes poems of love on petals of my skin;  
and I am breathless, blossoming beneath his brush.  
With lightning-quick movements, with a swirl and a spin,  
he paints me beautiful with a delicate blush.

As his brush runs dry, I can almost hear him think  
of the liquid language that abounds in our love;  
and again, he sinks into the glistening ink -  
his calligraphy written in heaven above.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Cancer

She said, 'I don't love you, ' and waved goodbye.  
There were other places she had to see.  
With tears in his eyes, he refused to cry.

He gave a gold locket to Lorelei;  
and because he loved her, he set her free.  
She said, 'I don't love you, ' and waved goodbye.

He stood there dying but refused to die.  
He watched her sail across the western sea.  
With tears in his eyes, he refused to cry.

She betrayed her heart and told him a lie,  
never revealed the truth of what would be.  
She said, 'I don't love you, ' and waved goodbye.

Years later, beneath an overcast sky,  
as rain fell above the cemetery,  
with tears in his eyes, he refused to cry.

He fell on his knees swearing, 'Here Am I; '  
and clenching her locket, said, 'Wait for me.'  
She said, 'I don't love you, ' and waved goodbye.  
With tears in his eyes, he refused to cry.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Ceridwen**

Don't love me too much as though I were air,  
as though I were starshine for you to wear.  
Don't question the heart which seems like a stone.  
I may be lonely, but I'm not alone.

I am Ceridwen - the goddess you seek  
when the kiss of love burns upon your cheek.  
Love is the shadow, and I am the light -  
born to be yours but wed to the night.

My voice through the pines, my tears from the sky,  
my image in the center of your eye.  
In love, in longing, in sorrow became -  
there is something in me you wish to claim.

My love has two lives but never the same -  
desire inside an untouchable flame.  
My soul is sacred, in a web unspun.  
I hang with the moon; you shine with the sun.

I am a crystal; do not strike the stone.  
My very dreams are yours and yours my own.  
Tragic windows may tremble with sorrow,  
but do not let them close on tomorrow.

Dressed up in stars and the black kohl of night,  
tender thoughts in our joyful hearts unite.  
When eyes are damp with the dew of despair,  
just call out for me; and I will be there.

I am Ceridwen, the flame in the fire,  
hanging like rain on the brink of desire.  
I water the roots of love's secret tree  
that blossoms and grows carnivorously.

And should it consume you, do not depart.  
Let the water of life restore the heart.  
Love can be bitter and love can be sweet;  
and somewhere in between is where we meet.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Color Me**

Color me blue:  
Indigo

Beneath the dalliance  
of soft-slanted eyes  
across the divide  
of asphalt and time.

The breath of air  
skims the morning silence,  
invoking a song of streams,  
running through fields of green,  
clambering to climb over  
vines of the immutable past.

Color me happy:  
Crimson

Lips that hide your memory  
in the corners of a smile,  
sweet syllables of silk  
swaying in the air.

Joy in the blossoms of the rose  
dreaming of warm, happy days,  
the sound of your laughter  
walking over the waves,  
that blue ribbon in the wind,  
your breath upon my skin.

Color me love:  
Poetry

Words that live in the wings  
on the back of eternity,  
written across the skies, falling  
from above into you, into me.

The world pales in comparison.  
The opulent fire of our love  
glowing in the sunrise and sunset,  
glistening in the morning rain  
on the blessed edge of paradise:  
the heaven in our hearts.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Colors And Colors

Joy! - to have him naked in the spine of my bed,  
pressed between rumpled sheets of sexual splendor,  
read his anatomy with desire, bursting red  
with lipstick kisses that confide my surrender.

Desire! - to toss and turn, wanting him near at night,  
when the intimacy of distance warms my breasts,  
twin rosebuds in a field of dainty dreams delight  
where sweet Bacchante cries for the wine she has pressed.

Passion! - to dance like two children without our clothes  
until the rhythm consumes with fluid fusion -  
one delighted water spout; one rapturous rose  
and a milky moon to adorn the illusion.

Pleasure! - to be bathed in radiant rainbow hues  
while an angel's tongue slithers its sweet perfection,  
to feign running away when it's only a ruse  
to find paradise in our ardent affection.

Defeat! - to be desirous in a lonely bed,  
to torment the body with the hands of the heart,  
with a banquet of melons and cherry lips spread  
waiting and wanting for the procession to start.

Colors! - to be swept away and uplifted high  
in the trapeze of flesh and the circus of bliss  
in the sex of the mind and the soul of the eye  
in the sigh of desire and the breath of a kiss.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Countless Spheres

What in vain pondered so long in life's countless spheres,  
which quietly in the seeking took repose,  
left me witness to no claim?  
When the nights of day remain unchanged,  
shall I view the ebb of life's roundabout stream.  
Engaging no scheme for the excursion through the years,  
and scenting the bouquet of the rose,  
whither garden's common provides the frame;  
and I behold the coursing stem estranged  
that lays the wearied down to dream.

Clasped in my arms and embraced once more,  
the curtain of life's treasonous veil  
leads me onward to the nemesis that is near.  
Blasphemy on the inferior of the subsiding light  
whereto everything fore me has been denied.  
With my darkened stare cast on and before  
the sprightliness of this stupendous tale,  
I feign not nor deign to hear  
the sounds that the shadows whisper in the night  
that, jesting, seats with Demise on the opposing side.

I fail to recollect where the course last  
lost its way and afforded nary a sign  
or semblance where once I acquired the chair  
that carried me through innocent shame  
and cast me down fore all.  
The Way, thou shalt discover, when once passed -  
governing the Way back to thine.  
Once at ease to what is there,  
shalt we observe the winner's game,  
where nary one shall fall?

When the essence inside me lifts  
from the ruins, once confessed,  
and leisurely drifts  
to the Doorway in the West,  
shall I dress the blazing brocade,  
whereupon Elysian Fields have been inlaid?

Touching the mountainous firmament where winds turn blue  
and raindrops coincide with the falling of tears,  
the stratosphere cereclothes the waning trees  
that become decrepit with every hour,  
where winter's zephyr forces them to shed.  
With the osculation of aurora dew,  
that lingers so long in life's countless spheres,  
like a maiden lamenting upon her knees,  
each droplet clings to every hushed flower  
until, lifeless, they are dead.

When evil wakes eyes to give

each who seeketh not his wrath,  
the self-same bestowed upon kings,  
the cataclysm far and in between  
bequethed to those upon whom he sets.  
If my soul, haply, should opt to live  
amid and down his well-trodden path,  
surrounded by the border of lifeless rings,  
I will slowly alight below the green  
and slumber beneath well-arranged violets.

Where hides the essence and being of this bud  
that soon shall disembark to flower  
for all to know the redolence of its smell? -  
Where under the darkened sundown sky,  
the gusts and gales whisper beware.  
For, as surely, as it has the intensity of blood,  
so shall it be shed upon this hour,  
where no man knows Demise well.  
Expect to hear over the realm some soul's cry  
when it has been taken away from there.

And below the earth shall lay  
a barren corpse someone gave;  
yet, decided to taketh away  
into countless spheres beyond the grave.  
Where once there was a child  
see now the maggots feasting wild.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Crescendo**

Up and down, in and out,  
the sound of music flits about.  
Pulsing, aching, needs and desires.  
Heat and flame of blazing fires.

Soft and mellow, spiraling low,  
unbroken strain of music's flow.  
Whistling winds in heaven above  
between two hills, the peaks of love.

Hard and driving, ascending grand,  
love-notes coming from your hand.  
The bow of bodies together strung,  
the sweetest notes of love unsung.

Lightning bolts and thunder crashes.  
Each pulse and rhythm gently clashes.  
The cry of triumph fills the night.  
Stars of heaven glimmer bright.

The music is over, its climbing beat.  
The memory remains and lingers sweet.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Crosses To Bear**

The vacuous column of rain pounds the earth,  
crushing the autumnal leaves upon the ground.  
The wind is a eulogy, a battle-cry,  
as the solemn faces of life gather round.

The black arms of death encircle the soldier,  
and the slumbering dust makes room for one more.  
His mother's marble lips are locked in despair.  
The scythe's broad blade has taken one of the corps.

The flag of the nation becomes her solace,  
her only comfort which she holds to her breast;  
and the power and pride that once adorned her  
have become a shadow that she lays to rest.

The rifles are raised in a booming salute.  
A wave of white hands gives honor and glory.  
The heavens bow in darkness, the breezes sweep;  
and the mountains echo this tragic story.

For, though he fought on a bloody battlefield,  
it was not the enemy that shot him down.  
Alcohol and drugs and post traumatic stress  
were the living bullets that riddled his crown.

Behold the black wall, the tomb of the unknown,  
and the rows of crosses that impale the ground.  
These are the reminders, the horrors of war,  
upon which the house of our nation was found.

As the silent steps walk away from the grave,  
the night-dews glisten upon the haunted hill.  
They carried the cross; and they bare it in death,  
showing the nation that they carry it still.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Dance Me In Daylight**

Dance me in daylight where roses grow wild,  
along the banks of the river sublime.  
Hold me in moonlight where shadows stand tall,  
against the rolling hills of creeping thyme.

Kiss me in mist with the succulent dew,  
and make me glisten - a lotus flower.  
Drink me in glances of smoldering fire.  
Dress me in petals of rainbow shower.

Lay me languished upon a perfumed bed  
and steal my breath with your sultry kisses.  
Touch me with fingers of honey and silk  
and twist with my body with burning blisses.

Devour me with ravenous delight  
and make me molten like a supple flame.  
Mold me your angel with spread open wings  
and lift me high on the breath of your name.

Ravish me in an erotic ballet,  
in pirouettes of tantalizing tongue.  
With the twists and twirls of an artist's brush  
make me immortal, vivacious, and young.

Dance me in daylight while rain showers fall  
upon the bed of licentious embrace.  
Naked and nude in silent solitude,  
dance me breathless behind curtains of lace.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Dancing For Love

From rooms of grandeur, we ran into this sphere.  
We came from out the shadows which led us here.  
To where the feet of the upper class have never set,  
I come wearing costly gown and sparkling amulet.

Yet, I am more at home here, as delighted as I can be.  
A bloom in the breath of happiness, so glad to be free.  
For a moment, I have escaped the riches that bind;  
and it seems a heaven to me to leave them behind.

Can we stay forever? Can we always dance like this?  
Can we dance for love, dance for life, dance for bliss?  
You are such a joy, my love, laughter spinning round the room.  
Each circle a rhapsody, a whirl of sweet perfume.

Ecstasy pours into me, such bright light of gladness.  
It chases away the gloomy depths of pain and sadness.  
My thoughts are dancing, alive, more vibrant with turns.  
The love, the laughter, the dreams and wishes, each sojourns.

My heart, my soul, my mind, all passions are inflamed.  
I have nothing to fear, nothing to hide, and cannot be shamed.  
You give motion to the still heart that yearns to play.  
Spirit rising like an angel, you give wings to lift away.

You spin me around, fast, faster, swift and wild.  
Never have I been happier, never more have I smiled.  
The stars I see, beautiful light, are not of the skies.  
Yet, flash from heaven born within the blueness of your eyes.

Heaven and earth, you and I, two stars at last have crossed.  
Glimpse of heaven, dancing angel, holding the love I'd lost.  
That smile! The dazzling vision that should be sin.  
O! It brings such pleasure that comforts me within.

You spin me around, fast, faster, swift and wild.  
Never have I been happier, never more have I smiled.  
Can we stay forever? Can we always dance like this?  
Can we dance for love, dance for life, dance for bliss?

Can we always dance like this?

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Dark, Dark Night**

Dark, dark night, the sorrow of my soul is such.  
All warmth has sunk beneath the waters' cold touch.  
Shivering, trembling, my lips are blue in its throes.  
I am no longer the brilliant, ever-fragrant, spirit Rose.

My hand in your hand, clinging for life like a chain.  
Will the sun shine, will it ever warm my limbs again?  
A wandering soul, I was, feeling lost and turned astray.  
You captured me, gave me life. It was my happiest day.

My darling Jack! I could feel my heart beating, free and wild,  
when first I glanced at you, when you looked at me and smiled.  
I could feel the butterflies, the half ecstasy and the pain.  
I could not understand my feelings, my heart's touching strain.

You whispered to my soul by some mysterious magician's art.  
You strolled across the distance and stepped into my heart.  
You made me feel an angel, as though destined for the skies.  
My universe was found in you; my galaxy, your lips and eyes.

In your strong hands, it was a forsaken maiden which you caught.  
To think back on it now brings the most rapturous thought.  
Ahh! Sweet visions, sweet memories, too deep to be effaced.  
I close my eyes to dreams which can never be erased.

Your flesh on my flesh, as one, we are forever entwined,  
sealed eternal within the hidden chambers of my mind.  
Your image lives on, though the ship of dreams be wrecked.  
You are safe within my heart, 'mid the ruins of intellect.

Dark, dark night, the sorrow of my soul is such.  
All warmth has sunk beneath the waters' cold touch.  
My hand in your hand, clinging for life like a chain.  
Will the sun shine, will it ever warm my limbs again?

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Darling Rose**

I woke this morning  
and plucked you  
from the garden.  
Your fragrance drifted  
upon the breeze;  
and I felt like a goddess  
having captured you.

Your soft skin  
blushing in the light,  
a roseate shimmer-sheen.  
Your green scarf  
tied about your neck  
to seize the cold dew  
that kissed upon you.

I walked quietly  
as not to disturb you,  
but you slowly  
opened your eyes  
and stretched toward  
the waking sun.  
I saw you open.

I touched you  
and wept tears,  
remembering one like you  
that my lover gave  
at a time when he loved me.  
He, the stem,  
that held you,  
that held me...

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Delight In The Day**

Delight in the day, as the sun shines o'er,  
as the birds sing in their hushed and quiet praise.  
Delight in the warmth, where the rain falls no more,  
where brilliant sunlight kisses the summer days.

Delight in the earth of our heavenly sage,  
where the flowers, their bright, joyous petals blend,  
when the years have disguised their tenebrous age,  
with the hands of our master, our guide, and friend.

Delight in the memories of times now past.  
Delight in your loves and your heart's sacred keep.  
For, love is honored and ever shall it last.  
Love is the bellwether of our dreams in sleep.

Delight in the day, as its raptures resound,  
among the clouds, the grass, and the blue-sky screen.  
Behold the paradise of love all around,  
dancing with the wind across the verdant green.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Departure

The light of love in your eyes has failed.  
The roses of your lips have paled.  
The tossed curls that once crowned your head,  
I touch no more; for, thou art dead.

Your languished life now seals my doom.  
Life has become a darkened room.  
Sunlight is vanquished, shines no more.  
There is nothing left worth living for.

I want to cross with you that glorious line,  
to walk hand-in-hand toward the divine.  
I want to share in love's eternal spring,  
to be your queen, and you, my king.

So where the withered flowers blow,  
their fragrance ride the zephyr flow,  
where all are silent, consigned to eternity,  
I lie down to rest, to be with thee.

It is no sacrifice, no burden to bear.  
It's all for love, because I care.  
Your tender smile that lit the hours,  
the memory, a grove of inviting bowers.

I recall the laughter, its happy roll,  
blissful reflection to touch my soul.  
Closing eyes where tears are shed,  
I weep for love among the dead.

Departing at once, in sorrow lie,  
the spirit steps off into the sky.  
I am the kiss, the glistening dew,  
hands of love that reach out for you.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Different Like That**

I am not like others - I am different like that -  
I refuse to just lie down and be a welcome mat.  
There are moments when I will not turn the other cheek  
and refuse to turn a deaf ear to the words they speak.

I am not like others - I am different I know -  
and if I don't agree, I am quick to tell you so.  
If I don't feel the same, I simply will not pretend.  
I will not stand with a foe as though he were a friend.

I am not like others - I simply will not conform -  
I will not be what I'm not, what is considered 'norm.'  
I do not subscribe to the whims of society  
nor the lark of religion nor earthly piety.

I am not like others - I just cannot understand -  
I will not shudder nor cringe at another's command.  
I will not be silenced, nor bound, nor gagged behind tear.  
I shall not be a slave and be shackled out of fear.

I am not like others - I am different like that -  
I rather like the contrast of being where I'm at.  
The world is full of followers - leaders are too few -  
so stand up and be yourself and to your heart be true.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Divertimento

Before, behind, between, above, below -  
a sinuous sweep of hands caressing.  
Love-tossed and willing, passionately so,  
I unravel in this acquiescing.  
Love is a spirit that pours from his lips.  
He opens my soul with his fingertips.

Threads of light gather at his fingertips  
as he turns me on, above and below.  
The ripeness exudes from glistening lips -  
the crimson crown of carnal caressing;  
and I am a tempest acquiescing,  
lost in this moment, desperately so.

Forbidden fruit is always sweet, sweet so  
sweet as it rolls between his fingertips  
teasing, touching until acquiescing.  
Heaven is brimming in his hands below.  
The earth stirs beneath twilight's caressing  
as starlight shines on my shimmering lips.

His sexy lips are lascivious lips,  
lustful tongue licking, enticingly so.  
His tongue to crack, enticing, caressing,  
and the wicked way of his fingertips,  
dips into the fountain of love below  
until it's licked dry and acquiescing.

Secrets are open and acquiescing,  
no longer hidden from my lover's lips.  
The tormenting bliss is teasing below,  
a torturous beast and ardently so!  
Moving like music to his fingertips,  
my body responds to his caressing.

And how shall I withstand this caressing,  
the wind that blows me to acquiescing?  
And how shall I dance at his fingertips,  
to the lust of love that covers his lips?  
I am a woman, and I am weak with so  
much desire due to his touches below.

Flesh made fire below in the cove of caressing.  
Two lovers will it so, two hearts acquiescing,  
sweet licentious lips, spirit sprung from fingertips.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Door To Your Heart

First a footstep, followed by a shadow;  
and then there was a knocking at my heart.  
I saw your lips move, but I did not hear.  
The words were cast, and my world fell apart.

You were so distant; and now you are near,  
standing so near and yet standing so far.  
One glimpse and I am dancing on a cloud,  
hitching my moon to the spark of your star.

I tremble in hands of exultation,  
as a feather on the wings of the wind.  
This happiness is intoxicating,  
and it brightens the world from end to end.

I am restless like dreams on a pillow  
or the keys of a piano in pause  
or an actor taking his final bow  
before an audience with no applause.

I am captivated by your beauty.  
My life! My love! Fall in love with me too  
as gazes collide the very first time  
and mine sends the message that I love you.

I am tormented by the great distance  
between two breaths on the verge of a kiss  
and the scattering of all my senses  
and arrow-like glances colored with bliss.

Elation wakes like blooms in a garden.  
The lamp of love its joyous rays impart.  
Steal me away in your rapturous gaze,  
and let me knock on the door to your heart.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Dot In The Distance**

She  
turns to  
the window,  
watches as he  
walks in falling rain  
and kisses him goodbye  
with the lips of her longing.  
He never looks back to see the  
waving of her lashes as she blinks  
when he becomes a dot in the distance.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Dream Be The Dream**

When sweet faces are flowers trampled in the dust  
and willows are weeping by the river of lust,  
and mothers have no conscience and demand their choice,  
the innocent suffer but they have no voice.

Buttercups and daisies all wilt in the shade.  
Ten fingers and ten toes are wondrously made,  
but the body's fabric is butchered and torn.  
Someone's daughter or son will never be born.

A life never given the ghost of a chance,  
two feet never knowing the joy of the dance,  
two hands never holding the bud of a rose,  
and fingers that will never open or close.

Blue eyes to never search the heavens above,  
a child to never know the meaning of love,  
a miracle unborn and covered with shame,  
a child unmentioned and a child without name.

So this is the gain of women with a choice ...  
saline and suction to silence a child's voice?  
Forty-five million and counting in the red,  
all for convenience and a romp in the bed.

Such be the sorrow and the sin of the stain,  
scissors and suction to the back of the brain.  
Mistakes made of mountains of women with choice,  
and this is the right over which they rejoice.

Cold stirrups hold the feet, pulling at the heart.  
God is a dreamer whose dream is torn apart.  
Broken limbs make a withered bough without bloom.  
Hard hearts and empty souls leave the curtained room.

We do not know heaven when blinded by fears  
nor the beauty that burns when drowned within tears.  
I see your reflection floating out to sea,  
the radiant woman that you long to be.

Let the life within you laying half asleep  
have the chance and choice of which you pray to keep.  
Do not let the ghost dance upon your pillow  
nor bury life beneath the weeping willow.

Challenge the freeway of dark, impassive stone.  
Choose the highway where you'll never walk alone.  
Wisdom is a butterfly, set your spirit free.  
Let the dream be the dream that it longs to be.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Dream Of You, Me: We**

I stoke the fires of autumn with my quill  
and unfold in silence each memory.  
Pleasures I have known, softly sleeping still,  
awakened in a dream of you, me: we.

Your star so bright, I revel in its shine.  
I sleep in your arms though you're far away.  
I drink of your lips, press yours close to mine,  
and breathe in your essence, here by me lay.

Delights and passions and butter cream nights,  
I still remember your tongue and your grooves,  
the breathless moments and dizzying heights,  
the sweet coercion of your gentle moves.

So far in the distance; yet, ever near,  
you slowly press in upon the hours.  
I think of you and dream of you – there, here -  
your sweet mouth nestled among the flowers.

Your eyes serenely bright of verdant hue  
are wistful and wanting no one but me,  
and I acquiesce and fold into you.  
I implore you, sweet night of ecstasy!

Let not this dream end to leave me alone  
to drown in the ocean behind my eyes,  
to make empty arms a promise unknown,  
a fledgling with wings unable to rise.

Beneath the canopy of blue-black night,  
a thousand tears fall in the patter of rain.  
As morning rises and the sky grows bright,  
I awake with quill in my hand again.

All the world weeps in the sound of the sea.  
You are constant as the sun in my heart  
awakened in a dream of you, me: we  
forever to flourish, never to part.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Dream Quilt**

Thought patches sewn into a quilt  
to warm away the cold,  
dreams of stray thoughts, sin and guilt,  
lace of life takes hold.

The mind the true and trusted sage  
that causes thoughts to bend,  
to touch upon a gilded age,  
weave of mortal end.

A blanket born of toil and strife  
is thrown upon the sands,  
covered by the steps of life  
and lifted in our hands.

I woke unto this quilt of night  
and felt its threading break.  
Love was lost within its sight.  
I felt its tearing ache.

I shook it gentle in the breeze  
to cleanse it as before.  
No more patches such as these  
that lie upon the floor.

Once again through naked screen,  
closing eyes to rest,  
I dream of sunlight on the green  
to ease my aching breast.

Folded edges of slumber sky,  
the dream quilt pure and white.  
Here beneath it sleeping lie,  
I dream of you this night.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Dream Serenade**

I sleep on a flowered perfumed sheet  
breathing soft the scent of a rose.  
I close my eyes and dream so sweet  
of the bud of love which grows.

How was I to ever know  
we would wind up more than friends?  
How ought I stop the ethereal flow,  
the night with star-lit winds?

Sure, I know we live apart.  
It seems a crazy thing,  
but you have touched my sacred heart  
and made it laugh and sing.

God made your love a darling gem,  
love's brightly glowing crown.  
You are the daylight's diadem,  
the bright rays tumbling down.

You warmly kiss my tender brow  
and dress me like a queen.  
You are all my kingdom now -  
the beat of hearts unseen.

You are love on heaven's brim,  
the harpist of heart strings.  
You are all things, a seraphim  
that waves its loving wings.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Dreams Dreaming To Dream**

'God may reduce you on Judgment Day to tears of shame,  
reciting by heart the poems you would have written,  
had your life been good.' ~ Auden

Born in the burst of a magic light  
is the child of unbridled sin  
with golden locks upon her head  
and dreams dreaming to dream within.  
A feather falling, lost in flight,  
to fall to restful sleeping  
as daylight breaks in the depths of a dream  
and hearts out of joy are weeping.

If life is born and burning bright  
as a star of memory  
to die in death a noble death  
like a star that falls to sea,  
like feather fall and lose your flight  
to fall to restful sleeping  
as daylight breaks in the depths of a dream  
and hearts out of joy are weeping.

Do not deny the day its light  
nor deny the dream its dream  
like feather fall and lose your flight  
to fall to restful sleeping  
as daylight breaks in the depths of a dream  
and hearts out of joy are weeping.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Dress Me Like Poetry**

Dress me like poetry in silk stanza stockings,  
in pearls of metered verse on a syllabic strand.  
Brush rhythm through my hair and rhyme on my lashes,  
and paint me in tones of syntax and sonnet sand.

Dangle diction diamonds to adorn my face,  
like cascading charms of sweet metaphoric prose.  
Give me blue ballad bonnet alliteration  
and assonant slippers with repetitious bows.

With sestina skirt and connotation corset,  
I am the allusion and the symbol of love.  
I am the onomatopoeia twilight song,  
the euphonious moonlight that shimmers above.

So dress me like poetry, in pleasant pantoum  
or in the cacophony of a villanelle,  
in the ode of hyperbole or anapest,  
in romantic Terza Rima or Terzanelle.

Dress me like poetry with the breath of your kiss,  
and let your precious flower blossom in the night.  
Then, move mountains for this moment and disrobe me.  
My petals stroked by the gentle hands of moonlight.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Drifted Away

I haven't seen you for a long time;  
and though I miss you, I do not say  
what is really in my heart. I just wish  
that I could take all this pain away.

I stare dreamily out of the window,  
thinking of what used to be;  
and I'm surprised as I catch myself crying.  
I don't know what's come over me.

So rich was our love, that I never thought  
it could wind up in despair;  
yet, now the sad winds blow over me  
and crush me without care.

I loved the way that you used to hold me  
and laugh and whisper in my ear.  
It makes me feel so sad to remember  
what I once held so dear.

The black looks in everyone's eyes  
close in around me in mercy and rue.  
I don't want anyone's pity.  
The only thing I want is you.

How could you just walk away from me  
and leave me like a rag on the floor?  
How could you just leave me stranded  
like a stranger on the shore?

Worst of all, is how I still love you,  
how I still find it so hard  
to heal my wounded soul  
which is now battle-scarred.

I cannot change my feelings  
nor my unfaltering love and trust.  
I cannot change the fact that I'm  
a flower in the dust.

I'm so sorry you no longer love me,  
that you left me in grief and shame.  
I'd do anything to make you happy,  
and I thought you would do the same.

I will speak softly to you upon the wind.  
I shall weep for you in the sea;  
and remember our moments together  
before you drifted away from me.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Drifting

Footsteps in the grass, the breeze of the morn,  
the whispers of a changeless memory ...  
your tongue opens my soul like a flower,  
taunting, teasing with great temerity.

The color of your eyes stains the skies,  
the windswept whirlwind of blue cashmere silk.  
A sigh escapes and dissolves in your mouth.  
You drink from my lips as though sweetest milk.

When I love, I become time out of time,  
the timeless movement of the sea to shore.  
A universe explodes; the next is mine,  
the pearl of passion for you to explore.

Ravenous fingers are tangled in hair  
as you pull me close in heated desire.  
Loosening, lengthening, my body aches.  
I am an orgy of nectarous fire.

The undulation of loquacious hips,  
the lustful lock of legs around your waist,  
the pull of passion and the pounding push,  
and the look of love that covers my face.

Harder and deeper, impaled to the bed,  
I arch my back and feel your pulsation.  
Slower and softer, you slide in and out;  
and I am lost in the consummation.

The tempest dies down; the sighs dissipate.  
We are like two love-birds within a nest.  
We dream of daylight and drift off to sleep,  
as you cradle my head against your chest.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Drowsy In My Desire**

Seagulls circling the clear sky.  
Naked bodies blanket the beach.  
Slickened skin to entrance the eye,  
as dreams deliquesce out of reach.

Taut nipples declare more than not.  
Hot spots of passion's melting cream.  
Waves of pleasure spread, searing hot,  
as I drift off into a dream.

Flickering flames lick at moist skin,  
setting my virgin blood on fire.  
I whimper as he thrusts within  
and cools the heat of my desire.

He is at my body's center,  
claiming my heart and my soul,  
positions himself to enter;  
and I rapidly lose control.

Now folds the rose's dew-donned lips  
as the sun melds into the sea,  
as the daydream drowsily slips  
into the heart and soul of me.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Echo Tango**

Darkness drapes his body like a flag  
as he drifts between sandbars of sleep,  
his head nestled on a rucksack bag,  
his rifle ready and in his keep.

He is a stranger in a strange land  
of ancient tongues, conviction, and stone  
whose devotion warms the desert sand  
and is recited in blood and bone.

He tows the weight of hope in his heart  
like the fragments of a fallen star,  
dreaming of those from whom he's apart,  
who are very near; and yet, so far.

A world of peace blossoms in his head  
between the shoulders of day and night.  
He raises the crosses of the dead  
who bit the bullet and shattered light.

The wave of the brave is in his hair  
spilling beyond the Caspian Sea  
mingling with dust and light as air  
as whispers of wind that set it free.

He sleeps with Shula beneath the sky  
nestled against the curve of her spine,  
with dreams of home in back of his eye  
pressed like grapes into vessels of wine.

Darkness drapes his body like a flag,  
like the flag that will drape his coffin,  
as one more dream in a body bag  
dies the death that approaches often.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Eight Cylinder Wings (Ethere)**

You  
bent down,  
leaned into  
the car and kissed  
my trembling lips.  
'Just in case you had doubts, '  
you said; and I couldn't breathe.  
I watched you walk back to your car,  
a gray bird with eight cylinder wings;  
and I revved up my engine to follow.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Embracing Sensual Ecstasy**

To embrace love in every fashion  
is to not feel shame when one feels passion.  
Love is the greatest gift ever God sent -  
gentle, soft-hearted, and beneficent.  
Question not fate when it does a favor.  
Relish the taste of its piquant flavor.  
Let the winds of love upon you caress.  
The heart and soul it shall anoint and bless.  
Not a look nor kiss should ever be lost,  
thrown to the waves to be mightily tossed.  
Embrace sweet love and never let it go;  
and when you feel a longing, let it show.  
Tomorrow is not promised, day grows deep.  
Embrace sweet love before you go to sleep.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Emergence

When I first saw her, she did not see me;  
for, she was lost in a world of her own.  
She stared off into space but did not see  
and just sat there as if chiseled from stone.  
She sat in the corner of memory;  
and though with others, she sat there alone,  
aimlessly adrift on a sea of will,  
where winds do not blow and the mind is still.

In languid silence, with her tears unshed,  
she mourned the loss of the one she loved best  
by cradling the blanket from his bed  
that warmed him when he was laid down to rest.  
Such a blanket is not meant for the dead.  
It's meant to hearten a sad mother's breast.  
I took her hand and placed it in my own  
to let her know she did not walk alone.

The wings of an angel parted the sky,  
parting the sky from the skirt of the sea.  
She said, 'I never got to say good-bye, '  
and 'Why did God take him away from me? '  
I could not answer; for, I knew not why,  
the why nor the way of her agony.  
I only knew that no time could erase  
the memories of his sweet little face.

I told her to treasure what God gave her,  
and that motherhood is never in vain.  
In time, she would hold her baby, Laver,  
and their two hearts would be joined once again.  
Life is full of moments we should savor,  
both good and bad, with both flowers and rain.  
We should rejoice and give honor and praise  
that we loved, no matter how short the days.

The sunlight came streaming through the window,  
warming her soul from a slant of the sky;  
and I watched her delight in the day-glow  
as the spark of life returned to her eye.  
She stepped out of the shadows of sorrow,  
avoiding waves and the winds blowing by.  
Her glorious spirit of love and light  
is a star of hope in heaven tonight.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## End of the Road

It ends where it began up over yonder hill  
where neither man nor ghost should ever resign,  
where the vines rise over a mansion standing still  
with windows dark as night and forest walls define.

Truth is born in darkness but thrives within the light  
and there within its brilliance can clearly be seen.  
I shudder as I tell you of that dreadful night  
when last we all saw her, Ms. Elizabeth Greene.

The kind and gentle lady of Halloway Hall  
was the loveliest lady in all of the land.  
Never once was she married but turned away all,  
spurned even the noblest who offered his hand.

She saved them as keepsakes, as smiles behind her frown,  
her sadness hiding within the bell of her laugh;  
but her laugh was like a cloudburst, tumbling down,  
the truth of her tears revealing her sadder half.

It was no deep secret to those who knew her best  
why she chose such solitude and dwelt there alone.  
He peered through a locket that hung next to her breast.  
The weight of his memory was her crushing stone.

His name was Brandon Blackwood, of Scottish descent;  
and he was smitten by her and she by him too.  
The world was their stage, and they were magnificent  
and nothing was impossible for them to do.

But time is fleeting and turns blushing petals pale.  
Curses are born in a world once divinely blest.  
Too well we know the ending of love's woeful tale,  
the stain of red wine as it's prudently pressed.

For Blackwood sailed upon HMY Iolaire,  
and he lost his life when it struck the Beasts of Holm.  
The New Year promised peace, but rocks of rue declare  
that peace will never come to those who wait at home.

The silent sea, its deep heart, could not hold nor hide  
its sorrow over the loss of the men who died.  
Stornoway wept over the symbols of its pride  
washed ashore one-by-one upon the wintry tide.

Elizabeth went numb; in silence she was bound.  
No joyful greeting to cause her memory live.  
No tears, no thoughts, and no words, not even a sound  
to express the sorrow that mortal time can give.

The blue kiss of death is endless, can never be  
merely a shadow which dances on the verge.

The sun sets, the seasons change and roll out to sea,  
and the mists of mourning become a silent dirge.

Halloway Hall lays dormant, lifeless, deathly still –  
a monument to a love that loved to the last.  
It ends where it began up over yonder hill  
in the trumpeting chill of time's merciless blast.

For, one early-morn rise, as she slept in her bed,  
a legion of lightning struck in turbulent waves.  
The cruel sky billowed and thundered overhead  
pouring its treacherous breath over silent graves.

It struck the rooftop with a mighty bolt of light  
and shuddered the rafters with its violent beck.  
In a panic, she sat up and trembled with fright,  
reaching at once for the locket around her neck.

The curtains were burning, and the house was aflame.  
Elizabeth began to run toward the stairs,  
but she stumbled and fell and with a loud exclaim  
tried to get back up between power and prayers.

Alas! She was caught by a small hole in the floor  
through which the locket was irretrievably hung;  
but she wouldn't loose it, it was worth dying for,  
for a part of her died with her true love so young.

And there they buried her beside the charred remains  
of the vine-hidden mansion that rises unseen;  
and I'm reminded of the January rains  
when last we all saw her, Ms. Elizabeth Greene.

Such love in its splendor no death can defeat.  
It declares with one final act of devotion  
that no matter the time, it shall never retreat;  
for it is deeper than the depths of the ocean.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Enough For Me**

You give me your love, which is a flowering rose.  
The most beautiful rose in all the world to see.  
I nurture it carefully and watch as it grows  
within the quiet shadow of the earth's great tree.  
The spirit of your love sets the soul in me free;  
and above all things, it touches me the utmost.  
Your undying love is what I treasure the most.  
You are enough for me.

Your love is a bright rainbow which shatters apart  
the forbidding clouds that hover the sky in vain.  
All things that you do satisfy my aching heart,  
and you erase the sorrow and all of the pain.  
You are my true love and all I hoped to obtain.  
My happiness is found in your companionship,  
when your tender kisses are placed upon my lip.  
You are enough for me.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Enough For Me II

The flower-tinted cheeks, the fiery close  
of each heart beat, these are enough for me -  
enough that in my sad heart wanes and grows  
the shadow of a weeping willow tree.  
Two thousand eight hundred and twenty three;  
of all the life lines that the world can toast,  
these are the ones that I remember most.  
Yes! These are enough for me.

Of all great numbers that for virtue live,  
who look to heaven as their just reward,  
to me the innocent and the victims give  
the temple of the blessed with hope restored.  
Beside a river the wine of life is poured.  
It trickles past, and so flows our life away.  
So sweetly, so swiftly passes day after day.  
So swiftly! But enough for me.

Look upon the towers that fell for their art -  
the blood, sweat, and tears that fell in vain.  
Do they not move you, bring grief to your heart?  
I have enough of sorrow and enough of pain  
and for what, for what did this terror reign?  
There can be no justice, only sweet-scented flowers  
that sleep on our hearts beneath tear-born showers.  
The tears are enough for me.

I pray for some hope for each lost, naked soul  
that caused destruction in the name of paradise.  
Though death and sorrow were their only toll,  
my spirit soars freely though my heart cries.  
To be so misguided by foolery and lies!  
There are no great words to express it more clear,  
such sad words to linger upon the ear.  
I'm sorry. I'm sorry for thee.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Eternal Existence**

Lovers do not finally meet somewhere.  
They exist in each other all along.  
The mirror and the face, the sky and air -  
the words are elusive without the song.

We cry out with loving, the sunset spills,  
and the sea of our love is without shore.  
Tongues tantalize and tease a hundred thrills.  
The fingers trace, leave us begging for more.

The purity of heart remains untouched.  
The love is sweet, and the essence is pure.  
Bodies writhe in ecstasy, sheets are clutched,  
the face is blushing with a smile demure.

We listen to music of deep desire.  
It emanates from the blood in our veins.  
Paradise burns; our bodies are on fire,  
quenched by the fall of spirituous rains.

Like a moth bewildered by candle light,  
I am enticed to reach out to your flame.  
Lost in your gaze and the wonder of sight,  
I am fruit to be eaten without shame.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Falling Stars**

The sky fills its dark lungs with moonlight  
and perfumed petals of mystery.  
Stars fall to earth in a streak of light  
and vanish from view in ecstasy.

The salt air comes from the open sea,  
lightly blowing over marram grass,  
like a shoreline-splintered melody  
in sand-soft footprints when once we pass.

Suffuse me with stars and silver light  
that I might glow in my love for you  
and become a beacon burning bright,  
a falling star and your wish come true.

And if you choose, you can fall anew  
in the silver night soliloquy,  
when mist surrounds and there's none but you,  
declaring your love for only me.

My love runs deep like the silent sea,  
reflecting a soul of midnight moon;  
and if communion is meant to be,  
I can but hope that it will come soon.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Far Away

Whenever my days are long,  
I strive for that enchanting aria from far away;  
and then, when I depart,  
I remember that love from so far away.

I keep my faith that the Lord will grant  
me to see again my love from far away;  
but for every good, it brings  
two evils, since it lies so far away.

I abide somber with my head hung low,  
so that sweet songs and summer flowers  
chill me more than winter frost  
as I remember that love from so far away.

How much delight there could be in  
joyful words shared with my love so far away.  
So many paths would lead me to him,  
straight away, though now I'm far away.

I shall leave my love in happy sorrow  
if I see my love from far away;  
but who knows when that will be  
for we dwell in lands so far away.

I shall find no joy in love  
but in that love from far away;  
for, there could be no greater,  
anywhere, whether near or far away.

With my own eyes I long to see  
my love from so far away;  
and the whole world would become Paradise  
if I were with my love from so far away.

My life is miserable without the laughter  
from my love so far away;  
and I want most what I cannot have,  
as in that love from far away.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Far Away Within

When my thoughts are drifting (Love is never ending,  
like the waves out to sea,) and you will never know  
I find myself yearning (the warmth of dancing flames  
for the one I left behind.) from time's immortal fire.  
Forgotten memories (Bound to you forever,  
always bring you to me ;) I never let you go.  
and I see you again, (Like the sun's sacred glow,  
though time would make me blind.) I burn with sweet desire.

Do not tempt a temptress, (I dream in shades of night,  
who cannot live a lie.) as I hold back the tears,  
Light wins over darkness, (remembering your touch  
though we hunger for sin.) that set my soul aflame.  
The world keeps revolving. (But you will never know  
Blue azure paints the sky ;) the haunting of the years,  
and I burn for your touch (nor the sheltering wall  
when far away within.) that was built in your name.

Never to love again, (So how can I forget  
lonely but not alone,) the times I walked on air,  
I am lingering yet (the love that gave me wings,  
with endless devotion.) the joy of skin on skin?  
I walk in the shadows (I am yours forever,  
I've learned to call my own,) be it cruel or fair.  
and I embrace the pain (I live in loving you  
that comes with emotion.) so far away within.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Feast Of Pleasure**

Entranced, my mouth could not leave your body,  
exploring and touching all I could find.  
Tongue dancing in erotic figure-eights,  
from head to toe, with a wet trail behind.

I lavishly showered you with ardor,  
my passionate kisses upon your skin.  
Mouth became a sex organ in itself,  
releasing at once, then pulling you in.

This unknown pleasure captivated me,  
the delicious sensations never known.  
I could feel you quiver in ecstasy  
as your body arched and I heard you moan.

Ravenously hungry and wanting you more,  
I felt your body melting into me.  
You quivered and cried, proclaiming your joy  
until you relinquished in ecstasy.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Flashing Forever

The moon peers through the curtain of night  
which drapes the windows with star-flecked ink.  
Silhouettes of shadowed branches write  
poetry on the walls as I blink  
and pinch the candle wick's rising flame  
to watch scribbles of smoke sign my name.

I crawl inside the layers of sleep  
to be lured by the billowing loom  
and fall down the back of dark so deep  
that an ocean of dreams fills the room,  
and I am a pearl within a shell  
who's daring to dream and dreaming well.

From behind my eyes I rise unseen  
and dance in flight on the shirring wind  
and tip on toes across gamboled green  
whose distance knows neither breach nor end.  
My spirit soars and shines as ever  
in winks of stars that flash forever.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Flutter Me Flutter (Sestina)

The bird of my heart begins to flutter,  
and the breeze of my soul is blowing free.  
Velvet dahlias drink the morning dew  
sweetly warmed by the first auroral hue.  
Sirocco's wings brush against the shutters.  
Awake! Arise! Love is a naked sea.

Yes! I said that love is a naked sea!  
Doesn't it just make you all a flutter?  
Come! Arise and tear open the shutters.  
The singing breath of morn is breaking free.  
Iris is wearing her decadent hue,  
drinking sweet the cup of midsummer dew.

A pillow of roses is kissed by dew,  
a silky-soft stay for the salient sea -  
the sea of my love and its honey hue.  
Your tongue to its tip; my heartbeats flutter.  
Your hands on my body, and I am free!  
The world disappears beyond the shutters.

But, O! What a world within the shutters!  
Where the storms of bliss coalesce with dew  
in the slit of sex sweet flowering free.  
Bacchante beckons from her warm, wet sea.  
Her hair glistening gold in a flutter  
shimmering waves of a succulent hue.

And who could resist the unyielding hue  
that kisses the walls behind the shutters,  
kissing open thighs - a tongue, a flutter  
until the mossy jewel drips with dew?  
My love! Drown me in this prurient sea  
strumming the sweet love notes to set me free!

My Lord! Open your eyes and set me free  
that I might drown in their transporting hue.  
Only by drowning can I cross the sea -  
the sea that sweetens behind closed shutters.  
Rouse my lips with pearls of moist carnal dew.  
Impart passion like wind to a flutter.

So flutter me flutter and flutter free.  
Drink down the dew of a flowery hue,  
and open the shutters that block the sea.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **For All The Words I Cannot Say**

He spent the night with me last night,  
listening to me weep and cry.  
He held me tightly till the morning light,  
then kissed me softly and said good-bye.

We shared several glasses of wine  
and talked of the first time that we met.  
We watched each silver star shine  
and talked of the times we could not forget.

We drank of the wine of the past,  
and I spilled my heart over you.  
He listened from first till last  
then asked, 'What can I do? '

I turned to face the wall,  
the heartache inside me born;  
and I told him about it all,  
how my heart was split and torn.

My arms around him were flung,  
as he kissed each tiny wave.  
My sorrows were grievously clung  
about his strength which seemed so brave.

Each hurt, each lie, I confessed.  
His lips he pressed to my cheek.  
My back, he gently caressed,  
as he listened but did not speak.

I know his passions were tame.  
His desires were left unfelt.  
He was quick to slow the flame  
that could have made the snow melt.

He was strong when I was weak,  
a friend who stood by my side.  
He listened and let me speak  
of the sorrow I felt inside.

I know he loves me well;  
yet, my heart belongs to you.  
I know I should say farewell,  
but it's something I cannot do.

I awoke with a start and a scream,  
and he quickly was there to hold me.  
I had lost your love in a dream,  
and it was my friend at once who told me.

'I'll always be here for you.  
What greater love could you know?

Ask yourself, 'Was his love true? '  
If not, then let him go.'

Morning walks in robes of gold,  
and she shines a heavenly light.  
My heart admires my friend of old,  
who was there throughout the night.

I don't know where I shall go.  
I don't know what I shall do.  
It is this, all that I know,  
is that my heart is in love with you.

I know it will never be the same.  
Our love shall never, ever grow;  
and knowing that I have no claim,  
I must find a way of letting go.

So I smile a smile for my friend  
as he departs to go his way;  
and I cry as he turns the bend  
for all the words I could not say.

I silently close the door,  
shutting the world far away;  
and I fall in tears to the floor  
for all the words I cannot say.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Forever My Love

The green earth waits beneath a whitened wing,  
haunted by memories of budding Spring,  
when love loosed its verdure and gathered ground  
in groves of splendor by the river's sound.

Now slides the morning on wood and metal,  
falling like rain in each snowdropp petal.  
The bright mosaic of radiant hues  
is a blinding light that each eye pursues.

The seasons change but the memory clings  
and hovers around with its hopeful wings.  
Search the memories and gather the green.  
Lay them beneath whispers of velveteen.

Remembered, reborn, and riding the rail,  
love is the wind that releases the sail.  
Forever, my love, I remember well,  
the glory of love before glory fell.

I sigh for the past and the future too  
as tender sprigs of green start peeking through.  
The green earth waits like a pearl in a shell.  
A dream in a dream is dreaming to dwell.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Forever This Way**

We woo the angels high in heaven above  
and warm hearts grown cold from lack of love.  
We linger as lovers beneath far-distant plains,  
whispers drifting ashore in amorous quatrains.

Our story, a touch, that moves without word.  
Silent chimes of beauty are suddenly heard.  
Inarticulate breathings from love's holy shrine.  
Love is the faith that leads toward the divine.

All things shall pass, all birds must fly;  
yet, love is the only thing never to die.  
Sweet like a dream, when once love is found,  
nothing can stop it nor turn it around.

Forever this way, below a melding of streams,  
we live in the love on a ship of dreams.  
No waters could drown it, put it to sleep.  
Love is yet deeper when buried so deep.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## From The Gutter To The Jewel In The Lotus

She has the radio on in the other room,  
and the words invade her train of thought.  
Then, her beauty queen cat, black as pitch,  
meows; and her moon eyes beg for treats.  
The train derails, and she loses it all.

The oak leaves softly sway outside the window  
as she seeks inspiration in glints of gold.  
It hovers in the distance creating shadow and light  
as she stands on the landing spilling poignancy  
down steep steps of moss-skinned stone.

The pulse of summer is silent  
as the heat presses down on the collarbone of a climber,  
a full-blown flaming torch rising from her rosy mouth.  
She is reminded of Neruda's Garden and Quixote:  
"puntual, el nacimiento de una rosa."

She emerges a pillar of alabaster between the pines,  
her eyes following the wind's sweet promise  
as it blows through her hair towards tomorrow,  
taking with it the dandepuff dalliance,  
parachuting into the quiet hush with wistful grace.

Selene poses before her, lures the free lance,  
and builds a stage for competition and composition.  
There is brightness and a faint movement of dust  
as she kicks up her heels, pulls flecks and specks from sky,  
and culls the substance of everything until she is finished.

Between bites of blackened chicken and saffron rice,  
she scribes, scribbles, sanctifies, and solidifies.  
Every leaf and petal, every stem and stone is overturned.  
She strokes her silken strand of raspberry pearls  
as she delves deaf deep into the water of words.

Between Eve's Ribs and Jezebel's Hips,  
she battles CrowWoman and MudGirl.  
She – the Raspberry Girl – battling  
The Girls with Red Hair on Cherry Cadillacs with Bushido Swords.  
She came From the Gutter to the Jewel in the Lotus.

Numbness passes for peace for some,  
but she knows the difference between calm and calamity.  
Her quarry is made of evergreen moments.  
The fires of her mind are Masamune steel –  
the Honjo Nihontō, curving into mythos.

She was crafted, fallen from the air,  
forged in the gutter of a ruined hull,  
discerning, learning, turning, and burning.  
She erupted, resting upon the moon's knees,

then glinted into the jewel in the lotus.

A mad girl, a mud girl, a mighty, magic thing:  
she scintillates from the river's throat of song.  
From the temple windows of her eyes, she watches,  
winking out of the darkness like stars;  
and the moon becomes full, for he has just fallen in love.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **From Where Do We Come?**

Who do you think is watching from the halls of heaven above?  
Is it a God or a Goddess? One who thrives on fear or love?  
Is there really a Creator or did we all come to be,  
secrets of evolution - the you of you, the me of me?

Is there a heaven at all, some transcendental time and place,  
or do we simply imagine there are stars in outer space?  
Have we been fed with sweetness to believe that dreams can come true  
like wheat on wind in a thunderstorm or flame of morning dew?

We search to try and remember, and we beg of God for more.  
But where o! where did we come from and what are we looking for?  
It seems we search in vain in life-long circles that never end,  
disillusioned by all the truths that we cannot comprehend.

Pebbles bounce off the water, the soul rings as clear as a bell.  
Hands of hopeless despondence scrape the stones of an empty well.  
The heart is a lonely summer, a cry from the sleeping soul,  
a burden to all the half-ones that are seeking to be whole.

A ribbon of the rainbow makes a promise in summer rain.  
It explodes within the meadow, strikes the heart, then wanes again.  
Life follows its direction to touch the sea, to touch the skies;  
and we follow in its shadow and we learn to improvise.

We profess to believe in God, but tell me how is it true?  
How can God be One and All; and yet, remain outside of you?  
Does not the river become the sea, the least of all is some?  
If God is we; and if we are God, then where are we all from?

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Gateway To My Love

Somewhere there's someone, sometime and someplace,  
the one who loves me more than words can say.  
He's the song of joy, a new bloom of love,  
a whirlwind of wonder at break of day.

He's the breath of morn that makes curtains dance  
as the sunrise spills a banquet of light.  
He whispers in ribbons of red and gold  
then he kisses my lips as we unite.

His succulent lips are glittered with rain  
like two soft petals of dew-donned delight  
and passionately pressed to form his smile -  
a fragrant lotus of intimate white.

Warm shades of passion turn flesh into words  
between his lips like songs for him to sing.  
The bud will soon blossom within his mouth.  
The birth of love is a glorious thing!

The Gateway is open; he holds the key.  
Glory to God! I have found him at last.  
I have come - not to love for a moment  
but to love him until all time has passed.

The heart is deep-rooted in the dreaming  
and is sustained by faith throughout the years.  
Water follows the wind across the bay  
like a blue eye searching heavenly spheres.

I searched sculpture and symmetry of light.  
Rays swayed on the hammock of my lashes;  
and he floated like sunlight through my mind,  
gracing the windows with rainbow flashes.

And now, I can do naught but to love him.  
I have waited and desired for so long.  
I submit my body and deliquesce,  
happy at last, this is where I belong.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Gently Down

The rain falls gently, down into my thoughts -  
the thoughts of a day and a time before.  
Night is an echo of my inner self -  
a long shadow that flows forevermore.

The stain of the sea washes over sand,  
over the memories that wear your face.  
Time is suspended on the precipice,  
caught between the past and this lonely place.

My tears are wept on a sea-silk pillow,  
the whispering waves of unchanging love.  
I embrace the silence, deftly waiting,  
with my feet on earth and my heart above.

I know there is distance between our sails -  
the hands of time: an hour, a day, a year;  
but there's never a moment without you,  
never a time when I don't hold you near.

As I spin these words on a lonely loom,  
I can't help but to wonder where you are.  
Do you move with the wind or against it?  
Do you ever make a wish upon a star?

I wonder what you would be wishing for,  
and would you ever wish to be with me?  
Does rain fall gently, down into your thoughts,  
or does it tumble down into the sea?

I sail on silence between day and night,  
waking to dream and dreaming to wake.  
With my heart in hand, I reach out to you,  
the sad-voiced requiem of give and take.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Ghost Of A Man**

My love! You are not the man that I knew.  
He was not in a prison looking through.  
He was tender and warm and brave and true.

You are not the same man whose voice I heard,  
who spoke tender and sweet with every word.  
Such passion on your lips remains unstirred.

You are the ghost of a man now filled with pain.  
The trail of sorrows has become a chain,  
and I don't think you can break free again.

Your love was the tempest that made me wake  
and turned abounding love into a lake.  
I dived in head first where the surges break.

But tortured pavilions shine in your eyes -  
two round universes of darkened skies,  
with no galaxies of love to emprise.

You stare right through me, yet say you love me.  
Your love is a desert; I am the sea.  
You are in prison; I choose to be free.

Your eyes have deep roots that reach for the shore.  
I cannot save you as I did before.  
Hearts get rolled as pebbles forevermore.

And the waves splash over your darkened wings.  
You cannot fly with somber whisperings.  
O! In his cage, the lone canary sings.

The ghost of a man, the ghost of a chance  
are the odious larks of circumstance,  
the undulant river of happenstance.

I will always remember deep within  
the springtime moments that we shared back then,  
when I burned beneath the touch of your skin.

But the past is over; my soul set free.  
Your love is a desert; I am the sea.  
You are in prison; I choose to be free.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Giver Of Knowledge**

Down the corridors of my green-spun youth,  
behind the locked doors of its rusted truth,  
dwells the time now gone and its sacred past,  
a once lively stage and a nodding cast.

Among this dais, at the moon's bright hour,  
the memories blossom like a flower.  
It's a joy and delight to share this stage -  
the acts of grandeur that decline with age.

The curtain rises on the dust of time -  
new life to the lips of a faded mime;  
and a rainbow of light beams softly falls  
in circles of color against the walls.

He steps to the center and takes a bow.  
In low-whispered words, he speaks to me now -  
a history teacher of great renown  
and a king of knowledge without a crown.

Thurmond Davis was a teacher of wars,  
of Romans and Greeks and Conquistadors,  
the Age of Chivalry and noble Knights,  
and revolutions, peace, and Canaanites.

With his chalk-stained hands and a boyish grin,  
he taught on the values and faults of men.  
He taught with zeal and a passionate flair  
as he gently rocked in his rocking chair.

The memories unwind by slow degrees  
like Faust in hands of Mephistopheles.  
Each lesson was a window come undone,  
hung on the hinge of exuberant fun.

I smile - a memory - the funniest!  
One day in the class while taking a test,  
the room was quiet as he went to sit.  
There was a crash, boom, bang! He declared 'SHIT! '

His rocking chair broke, and we laughed out loud -  
the test forgotten in a joyous cloud;  
and I laugh to think of him, even now.  
He stepped to the center and took a bow.

The curtain lowers on the dust of time -  
silence to the lips of a living mime.  
With appreciative heart, I sing his praise -  
the giver of knowledge to crown my days.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## God Is A Ghost On Wrens' Nest Road

Love, let me lend you my ancestral wing  
across the distance which keeps us apart  
to bestow such comfort as it may bring  
for the sorrows that inundate your heart.

Stanzas spill from my eyes and trail the moon  
for the loved ones whose life has ebbed away,  
whose love-light flickered and faded too soon  
in the mid of night where they both once lay.

I cannot pretend to perceive your pain,  
what it must be like to lose wife and child;  
but I know the tears that patter like rain  
whose ocean runs deep when once beguiled.

Sadness is a wall between life and death  
in the arch of your back, along your spine;  
and the sigh and silence between each breath  
is a pulse of promise for all divine.

Love, my heart aches as any heart would do.  
The blood between us is no longer free.  
Whatever you suffer, I suffer too;  
and my tears are your tears inside of me.

Though I have lost sight of your kindred face,  
I feel the beat of your beat in my heart.  
I wish for you solace, mercy, and grace  
and all the comfort my words can impart.

The homestead is hollow, silent and still,  
as the moon hovers in her graceful turn,  
shining brightly on backs of house and hill  
in honor of those who will not return.

My thoughts embark on a current of tears.  
On a river of sleep, I gaze the shore  
where Tracey and Jake give praise to the years  
and to the memories you built before.

Your love has brightened their pathway to peace  
and slipped their souls in heaven's haiku  
and dressed them in glimmers of sweet release  
like sunlight distils the evening dew.

The wings of morning spin circles of light.  
Memories of loved ones dwell in the air.  
The loss you've suffered I cannot recite,  
and it is greater than one soul must bear.

My thoughts are gliding through evergreen bones,  
encircling sky with wings of the heart,

bursting through vineyards and layers of stones  
across the distance which keeps us apart.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Good-bye**

I paint my lips crimson  
and think:  
how they bleed like my heart.

A tear,  
and I am drowning.  
My eyes a blue river  
drifting.

The sunlight,  
blinding with its reflection  
of a lost love.

My heart,  
a stone  
that I throw into the sea.

The impact,  
the waves flood the world.

And I,  
am drenched -  
soaking wet -  
standing like a statue.

I look to the west  
and see him holding her on the veranda.

My soul,  
empty hands of nothing  
now reaching for you.

Good-bye.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Gratitude

A braid of wind and perfumed hair  
trails her as she happily swings.  
Her smile and her laugh - beautiful!  
She'll never know the joy she brings.

With her golden hair and blue eyes,  
she looks much like a part of me,  
the child that I will never have,  
the mother I will never be.

She kicks her feet to touch the sky  
as she leans back toward the ground.  
She's like a lily blossoming  
on this piece of earth she has found.

My eyes become like seawater.  
A salty tear falls down my cheek.  
A foolish dream, foolish dreamer!  
I close my eyes and do not speak.

A tender dove, a fragile child,  
she reminds me so much of you.  
She has that look of innocence,  
and she could be your daughter too.

The sunset glistens at her side.  
She's a portrait of crimson light.  
A butterfly with gentle wings,  
her skirt is trimmed with lacy white.

I am content with everything  
as orchards bloom across the sky.  
The fruit of life is found in love  
and in the loves of days gone by.

And I am blessed to hold your love,  
to smell the sweetness of your hair,  
to turn at night and be at peace,  
to sleep, to dream, and have you there.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Haunted (Double Ethere)

Dust  
settles  
over bones  
of yesterday,  
wrapped in scented strips  
of silent remembrance.  
I am haunted by your smile  
and the shadow of confusion,  
haunted by the way that you touched me,  
touched by the haunting hands of departure.

The mere thought of you permeates my skin,  
the gentle fragrance of spring rewards.  
O! My dearest! I am haunted!  
You live in my bones, breaking  
to be free of the bonds  
that hold you within.  
Lilies blossom  
from your lips,  
kissed by  
rain.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Haunts and Hollows

I am mindful of the quiet that follows  
and clings in shadows of thought and ventry,  
and I am aware of the haunts and hollows  
that creep through the cracks inside the wall of me.

Time unravels within long currents of hair,  
cascading down the curve of my autumn spine.  
I wait for the then in the here that was there  
when I was bathed in love-light and you were mine.

I slip into your presence to stroke the light  
and to wrap your touch around my burning dream  
as the meadowlark sings from her pale blue height  
against the rippling echo of the stream.

I wait for the past in the shape of your ghost,  
pursuing fireflies in the back of my mind,  
as fog drifts from the tongue of the eastern coast  
toward tomorrows that time will leave behind.

The blue breath of morning is hushed in your name.  
Love is calibrated in sad tears of truth.  
The sunrise is perfect in its gilded frame,  
gleaming on the door sill of my fading youth.

You live happily in a world of your own.  
My memory mingles with the rain, with dust;  
but you live on as a monolith of stone  
that time cannot diminish nor weather rust.

I sense all your dreams as they launch for the skies  
and lay their shadow on the breadth of my heart.  
I love you no matter, whether rest or rise,  
whether we are together or far apart.

This life is too short and memories too few.  
The ache has intensified more with the years,  
and I've not forgotten the wonder of you  
despite the distance and the tracks of my tears.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## He

he is with me  
yet away from me  
in me  
yet outside of me  
one

he is logic  
yet not reason  
part me  
beyond mindfulness  
none

he is dream  
yet not chimera  
genuine  
yet not really  
mine

he is love  
yet more than  
ardor  
yet not really  
love

he is all  
yet less than  
everything  
yet much more  
still

he is mine  
yet his own  
diametrical  
yet different  
parallel

he is sea  
yet an island  
haven  
yet drowning  
naked

he is fire  
yet water  
cool  
yet fervent  
burning

he is tongue  
yet lips  
soft  
yet searching

quiescent

he is me  
yet not me  
same  
yet different  
identical

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **He Climbed The Stairs**

He climbed the stairs, then he turned to look down below;  
and a dagger entered the moment as he cried.  
I gathered the tears that his footsteps left in snow.

I wanted to flee from my own aching shadow,  
and I wanted to weep at our hopeless divide.  
He climbed the stairs, then he turned to look down below.

He was luminous in the hands of twilight glow,  
the desolate darkness embraced him on each side.  
I gathered the tears that his footsteps left in snow.

Little by little, he turned into a sparrow,  
being born of the water of the weeping tide.  
He climbed the stairs, then he turned to look down below.

His countenance is the only light that I know.  
His eyes are a permeation and azure dyed.  
I gathered the tears that his footsteps left in the snow.

And though he could not speak it nor say it was so,  
he loved with a fervor that cannot be denied.  
He climbed the stairs, then he turned to look down below.  
I gathered the tears that his footsteps left in snow.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## He Killed Me First

Like me, most women hold their hearts in hand.  
We push aside darkness to find the light,  
remembering days when our cloudless eyes  
rushed across the sky and its azure height.

With handfuls of dreams and surrendered stars,  
we love with excess and infinite grace.  
Then, wounded and scarred by iniquity,  
we hide in the mask that covers our face.

I met him when I was just twenty-three,  
unraveled in cycles of depression,  
while dealing with my father's suicide  
and the quicksilver weight of oppression.

My heart was galvanized by shards of ice.  
The sunlight dissolved and fell from the sky.  
I packed the best of me and left the rest,  
indiscernible and destined to die.

When he burned into my life like a star,  
he became a bridge of impulsive wings.  
I crossed his heart, as he flew into mine,  
as a shadow that spills its offerings.

When I ran to him, I was running from me,  
from the garden that was filled with my needs  
and the monuments of pain and regret  
that life had erected among the weeds.

I burrowed my heart in his soaring embrace  
and penciled the past in lines of his smile  
and buried the ghost of the girl in me  
that had been aching for such a long while.

He let me believe in whirlwinds of lies,  
in the dervish that danced on his lips,  
in orchards of perfume and dainty silks,  
and webs that he spun from his fingertips.

But nothing remains hidden forever.  
The abstract becomes concrete in the end,  
and silks burn in the fire of Dante's pyre  
and whirlwinds fade with the leave of the wind.

I don't remember how it all started.  
It crept through the window by slow degrees:  
a furtive glance here and a harsh word there  
or a judgement that was meant as a tease.

It culminated on the brink of madness.  
At four in the morning, he crossed the line.

I could smell the alcohol on his breath,  
and it turned my stomach into rapine.

He had his hands all over my body.  
I kept pleading for him to let me sleep;  
but he crawled like spiders all over me,  
making me feel so disgusted and cheap.

"Get your damned hands off me! " I screamed at him  
and pushed against him to push him away.  
He balled up his fist and punched me at once,  
and stars exploded at breaking of day.

He busted the blood vessels in my eye,  
and the bruise was like ink under skin.  
It bled like violets soaked in the rain,  
pressed between layers to shrivel within.

He wanted to hold me, love, console me,  
said that it would never happen again;  
but I pulled apart and undreamed the dreams,  
tucking them neatly in the back of my brain.

I was so broken and shattered inside.  
My self-confidence had gone on retreat.  
I was a shadow, unloved, unwanted,  
a leftover remnant of vile defeat.

He found me in a moment of weakness,  
when the mirror was broken to pieces;  
and I felt lucky to be loved at all  
with my wings folded in at the creases.

You see ... life for me was never easy.  
The portents lived in my blood and my bones;  
and when everything is made of glass,  
it's easy to break it by hurling stones.

For three years, I lived outside of myself.  
The numbness stripped my solicitude;  
and I was a half-me, a no-me: dead,  
a specter that haunted my solitude.

And I cannot count the numberless ways  
that he reduced my being to ashes  
and pummeled my world with heartache and pain  
between the boomerang and backlashes.

It was a late night in February.  
The leafless branches pointed to the moon,  
and I asked him to leave so I could sleep  
as the morning would be arriving soon.

He diddled and prattled, refused to leave.  
I just couldn't take it anymore.  
"You have to go; I need to sleep, " I said,  
as I stood there holding open the door.

He stood up and pushed me against the wall.  
With his fist back and rising in the air,  
he screamed at me, "Do you love me or not? "  
I knew he would hit me but did not care.

It was the final nail in my coffin.  
He had already killed me deep inside;  
and I gathered the strength to tell him, "No! "  
feeling at once that I should have complied.

Something in my eyes must have destroyed him.  
He could not control me, and I was free.  
"That's it, " he said; and then he turned to leave.  
I'd broken the chains that wrapped around me.

The next day he was apologetic,  
and I cried as I listened to him speak.  
I wasn't mad at him; I was mad at me  
for being so stupid, helpless, and weak.

The memories rolled in like a fog bank:  
the cruelty, the jealousy, and all;  
the cold steel blade through the back of the door  
that I had slammed shut to escape its fall;

his stalking and staring through my window;  
the time he tried to run my car off the road;  
the cursing and drinking; the kicked-in doors;  
the threats that sent me into overload;

the moments when I held my breath in fear;  
the phone calls in the middle of the night;  
the way he'd talk with his besotted slur;  
how I was always wrong, and he was right.

I swore it would never happen to me  
having watched it happen to my mother.  
I was wrong. I couldn't have been more wrong!  
We were mirror images of each other.

Both of us were broken and never healed  
like the weakened spine of a worn out book,  
and the years of estrangement built a wall  
within which we found our own special nook.

There was just enough good to offset bad

to make me forgive him and make me stay,  
to wrap my arms around the boy in him  
whose father was absent and walked away.

The dust in his life was much like my own;  
and in looking back, I could clearly see:  
as my mother and father could not love,  
I was living a life not loving me.

I did not think I deserved any better.  
I lived between lines unable to see  
that nothing had to be the way it was  
and that I could write my own destiny.

It was over; we went separate ways.  
All of the leaves fell from our book of hours.  
The bridge was burned under an ashen moon  
whose filaments fell among the flowers.

I had tilted my head to view the sky,  
savoring the scent of the rain-washed pines,  
when the telephone broke my reverie  
and the unexpected news crossed the lines.

He had gone out that morning for a swim  
in rhythmic waters of the Sông Sài Gòn,  
and he glided into a memory  
whose ghost I shall always reflect upon.

The river mistress whispered in his ear,  
her fingers floating through his silken hair;  
and she kissed him until his lips turned blue.  
The life in his eyes was no longer there.

He rippled along her passionate waves  
and lay his head upon her gentle breast.  
She carried him into the afterlife,  
unfolding his wings where he came to rest.

They found his body with the morning rise  
where the river emptied into the sea  
like a cradle against the river bank  
rocking back and forth ever so gently.

Her firstborn belongs to the world of night,  
slumbering deep in the palm of the earth;  
and she peels back the layers of sadness  
wandering far from the land of her birth.

I looked at the photographs and letters,  
the artwork and the table that he made;  
and I ached for the life that had ended,

for all the potential that he let fade.

He never believed he was good enough.  
He was left behind as a soldier's son,  
as I was abandoned by suicide.  
We were both casualties of the gun.

I cannot hate him; for, he was broken.  
I guess he did the best with what he had.  
As I think back on all the could-have-beens,  
I can't help but to feel a little sad.

He killed me first, but only in spirit.  
I rose like a phoenix from the ashes  
while he drifted into the blue abyss  
as the Sông Sài Gòn covered his lashes.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## He Walked Like A Whisper

He walked like a whisper,  
swept over my bare skin,  
and stole silently into my heart.

A breathless flame flickered,  
and a shaft of light stroked the evening  
as amber swirled in Chardonnay.

Across the distance, I shed my unease,  
turned the frown of fear into a smile  
and walked towards my destiny.

The heat of the moment was tangible,  
a sainted scripture written, inscribed  
upon the walls in shadowed silhouette.

His eyes reached out to touch me  
and found life in the palm of his hands  
as his soft tongue said hello.

I wanted to kiss the poetry of his lips  
and wrap myself in his warm words,  
make a rhyme of the rhythm in my heart.

Time stood still, tangled in the dark night  
of his hair; tintured with the twilight shimmer  
of a moon that listened for his breath.

My hands trembled like butterflies,  
the petals of my heart unfolding,  
attracted to the light glistening in his eyes.

Slowly, my eyes traced the edges of his face  
and sketched him on the pages of my mind,  
where love lingers, listening to the silence.

A stitch of time knit us together,  
stretched us over the curve of night,  
and blanketed the rest of the world.

He pulled me to him and possessed me,  
tossed pleasure's pillows to the floor,  
and lay me down on a bed of roses.

His whispers fell along my hair,  
fluttered on my shoulders,  
and drifted down the river of my spine.

Twilight tumbled on his tongue  
as he slipped his tender fingers between  
the pages of the passion of our affair.

Like a sun to my senses, he warmed me,  
smoldered me with the smoke of his eyes  
and burned into being the birth of my fate.

He walked like a whisper,  
walked through the dust of my desert,  
leaving behind an oasis and a fountain of love.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## He Wrote To Her A Letter That She Might Know

While fixing my thoughts on February  
and snow-feathered boughs of evergreen chain,  
I follow the moonlight's tributary  
across a clouded sky that portends rain.  
The town is sleeping in the palm of night,  
in winter's malaise and layers of snow,  
whose basket is brimming with fluffs of white  
where dark shadows fall and fire flickers glow.

Dreams are echoed in the valley of sleep,  
twilight tangled in a glittering swirl;  
and soaked in memory, the passions keep  
as the nacre of the moon or a pearl.  
I listen in silence and sip the sound  
softly flaking off the lips of the sky  
that fall in a hush upon sacred ground  
of yesteryears and the times now gone by.

The past glides over the whispering stones,  
in the moonlight pulse of a woman's wrist,  
whose passion bleeds into the ghost of bones  
that arise in a white sarong of mist.  
Others see her and think nothing of it  
as she drifts up and down the Roper aisle.  
The wind murmurs, "Margaret, Margaret; "  
and there are tears imbedded in her smile.

She has waited all these long, lonely years  
with her eyes toward Saint Peter in chains.  
Her father's last words in a backwash of tears,  
his mortal assembly yet there remains.  
She lovingly strokes the top of his head.  
His sweet face she kissed that day in July!  
His charcoal letter, she read and re-read  
and read it once more before she did die.

London Bridge crumbles into River Thames,  
into the blue mood of reflective steel.  
The crown is tarnished and bereaved of gems  
with each head that sharpens against the wheel.  
Poor Thomas can no longer touch his brow.  
He cannot lay his head down for a nap.  
As snow cloaks Canterbury and each bough,  
his head lays smiling in Margaret's lap.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Heart Of Sky

Mountains make a mole hill  
out of a love that is no more.  
Oceans make a puddle  
out of the tears upon the shore.

Winds make a requiem  
out of the sadness born in cry.  
Forgiveness lights the dim  
and makes the heart as big as sky.

A sigh that dies untold  
can take a secret with its lead.  
From hand to hand we hold  
the moments' grain from which we feed.

A mirror holds the rain  
of the looking glass reflection.  
The truth cannot ordain  
any pattern of perfection.

Circles hold the center  
and hang the honeysuckled moon.  
Gardens sleep in winter,  
with the dream of returning soon.

Today is a keepsake.  
Tomorrow sips on yesterday.  
A lily from the lake  
drinks the shadows of night and day.

Dream me your lullaby,  
and dream me naked as a rose.  
Dream me a heart of sky  
that I might open when you close.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Heart Unshrouded

The piano player's hands have withdrawn  
and play no more upon the keys at dawn.  
Blossoms diminish on every tree.  
One red rose left on the pillow for me.  
The crimson petals that adorn the rose  
a sad missive behind their grace compose.  
The blue birds in the garden sadly sing  
such bittersweet notes of abandoning.  
My lover is gone, momentary bliss.  
I sadly recall the taste of his kiss.  
One love, one night, near his body to dwell,  
stolen at dawn as the birds sing farewell.  
Star-pale reflection, I still yearn for thee.  
Defy time and space and come back to me.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Here And There

Sad rain falls upon the demesne.  
My head is here; my heart is there.  
A rainbow gambols on the green.  
Hope lies between joy and despair.

My own heartache abounds in tears -  
a wink from a star without aim.  
Straight to the root of pensive fears -  
a light in the dark bears your name.

Short is the space which love can share.  
Love fades like foam upon the sea.  
My head is here; my heart is there.  
You disappear inside of me.

The trembling form by moonlight fair  
is weeping dew from gentle eyes.  
My head is here; my heart is there.  
The stars fade from evening skies.

The shadows round my senses steal,  
around the love we cannot share,  
standing between the wrong and real,  
while I am here and you are there.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **His Dream Dancer**

I shall call myself 'his lover' and not reveal my name.  
Who I am is not important, the result is the same.  
I work for a living with a computer on my desk.  
In dreams, I am dancing in some seedy downtown burlesque.  
He walks into the dance club, beholding my firm, full breasts.  
I can see where he's looking and where his desire crests.  
His growing passion is obvious, pronounced in his sighs.  
I bend my body over as each man beneath me cries.  
The flames are climbing higher as the lights glimmer above.  
I give them what they dream of, some exotic goddess love.  
My flesh is wet and glistening and dripping quite entire.  
His lips are all but sipping me, moistened in his desire.  
Honey seeps through my closed lips as I dream we are alone.  
He pours himself into me to the sex of saxophone.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Horizontal Pleasures**

Starburst crimson portal of burning desire  
yields a fiery sweetness that men admire.  
It is a ripe fruit at the top of the tree,  
the languid liquid laps of a drowsy sea.

Move a little closer, the wind and the rain,  
rise to the surface then dive under again.  
Lick at the water, the salt taste of my skin.  
Play your songs on my flesh to fill me within.

Make midnight a dream of jewels and treasures  
filled with the fire of horizontal pleasures.  
I give you my secrets, my breasts on a wave,  
collar of submission which makes me your slave.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Hunting The Muse

The pillow of night presses down,  
smothering a train of thoughts  
until it derails, dissolving into the sky,  
taking with it my beloved muse.

A few moments before, she had waved  
to me, with a smile of promised delight  
through a window of shaking time,  
her hair a calligraphy of words and wine.

As the wheels turned, a whistle blasted,  
muting the words of her moving lips.  
I think she spoke of a monarch butterfly  
but it flew away on the breath of her departure.

I try to trace the memory, follow the tracks  
that will take me back to where I belong;  
but clouds roll across with restless wings  
like the smoke that swallowed her smile.

With pen in hand, I script only silence,  
having forgotten what I wanted to write.  
I cradle the shadows in my eyes,  
but there are no lullabies for me to sing.

They will have to wait for now, the words  
stuck in the mud of a rambling rain  
within the valley of the heart and mind  
chasing the ring of Saturn's sphere.

Someday, when I least expect it,  
the wind will open my soul to welcome her home.  
Until then, the dark silence sleeps  
in the soft hollow of a crescent moon.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **I Am But A Voice**

I am but a voice, a silent word,  
written on paper, seen and not heard,  
an echo of heart to touch your soul,  
sweet pangs of sorrow's bitter control.

I am but a voice, woe of the world,  
wintry wind-whips of a flag unfurled,  
hidden chambers that rumble with sound,  
the mournful notes of leaves on the ground.

I am but a voice, winter's cold kiss,  
dwindling dew-drops faint tinged with bliss,  
dust of the earth scattered to the sea,  
the voice of the world, this voice is me.

I am but a voice, dancing the dim,  
unbridled dispersion in a hymn,  
the flower of love withered and gray,  
quick caught in the stronghold of dismay.

I am but a voice, but known by all,  
the vine of silence against the wall.  
I am poured in dark wine, bitter-sweet,  
to desirous lips that seek retreat.

I am but a voice, a gray-haired sage.  
I live and learn through every age;  
and through all times, the words still ring true,  
the voice speaks the heart inside of you.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **I Dream Of Being With You**

I dream of knowing your velvet kiss,  
the soft warmth of your lips,  
the delicious drink of carnal bliss  
that pours from your fingertips.

I dream of a pirate ship in the harbor  
with its prow and glistening stern.  
I dream of moonlight in the arbor  
with songs of quixotic nocturne.

I dream of pearl-drippings on the bed,  
the fragrant breeze of night.  
I dream of roses of cherry red  
that rise in scarlet delight.

I dream of a pulsing palisade  
with beads of tiny flowers.  
I dream of meadows dressed in jade,  
collapsing sighs and showers.

I dream of oceans, calm and sweet,  
that streams of love plunge in.  
I dream of passion's burning sheet  
that's tossed as free as sin.

I dream of stars melting from the sky,  
twinkling with crystalline delight.  
I dream of things that cannot die.  
I dream of you this night.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **I Loved You**

I cried for you  
wept from my soul  
made no sound  
and drowned.

I ached for you  
crushed in my heart  
made no attempt  
and died.

I thirsted for you  
desert on my lips  
made no water  
and parched.

I hungered for you  
bones in my body  
made no sustenance  
and famished.

I lived for you  
life in my love  
made no love in you  
and faded.

I loved you  
tangled in dreams  
made no truth  
and woke.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **I Open A Vein And Rain**

Leaves begin their slow descent,  
scattered between pages of blue and green,  
while others cling to a life they can no longer live.  
I feed the fire and see what I have seen –  
his sweet smile smiling - and I can easily forgive  
this unrelenting torment.

I close my eyes to listen,  
and I can hear his laughter in the rain.  
He will never know how much I loved to hear him laugh!  
An echo, and I hear him laugh again!  
It's funny how the mind becomes the heart's telegraph,  
beguiling tears to glisten.

I embrace a silent world,  
whose breath is but a whisper of his name,  
and bleed into greener days when I danced in the sun.  
I know that things will never be the same.  
For me, he was and ever will be the only one,  
my little love flag unfurled.

I will never love again.  
Under a slab of stone, I'll love him still.  
Have no doubt of the earnestness of this narrative!  
When the sun sets over the frozen hill  
and others cling to a life they can no longer live,  
I open a vein and rain.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **I Request Of Love**

Love, sweet love, what are you really for?  
Do you come from the depths to ease despair  
or were you all the while lingering there,  
inside, waiting to spring through the door?

Love, sweet love, how glitters your sail  
set freely to navigate the heart of me,  
to make a promise, a hope, yet to be,  
the bittersweet song of the nightingale?

Love, sweet love, are you the summer dawn  
that surrounds the blue zenith of the mount,  
that sparkles the water from the fount.  
Are you the one that saunters across the lawn?

Love, sweet love, why sometimes do you cower,  
obscured beneath dark shadows, pain and gloom,  
hiding behind cob-webbed bookshelves in the room,  
and defending yourself against your own great power?

Love, sweet love, why do you always run away  
to hide yourself and pretend you don't exist?  
You must know how dearly you are missed  
so why, why, why do you treat me this way?

Love, sweet love, I find you ever a part of me.  
You are my loving speech, every word and deed.  
You are the heart of me, my want and need.  
You are my tenderness, my reason to be.

Love, sweet love, you make me whole  
and you illumine the darkness within my soul.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **I Think It's Sexy**

I think it's sexy...

the way your finger touches my lip,  
waiting for my tongue to touch its tip,  
the way it lingers before its silent slip  
into my mouth for a gentle dip.

I think it's sexy...

the way your hair curls upon your chest,  
where I gently lay my head to rest,  
the way it touches my naked breast,  
beckoning me to be its guest.

I think it's sexy...

the way your lips say, 'I love you, '  
the way they say, 'I do, I do, '  
knowing that all your words are true,  
dripping the sweetest honeyed-dew.

I think it's sexy...

the way your body lays against my frame,  
our bodies melting, as one, the same,  
the way it whispers and calls my name,  
and how it kindles a burning flame.

I think it's sexy...

the you of all you are,  
how you are near and yet so far,  
the way you beam like a gentle star  
to me the you of all you are.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **I Will Never Forget You**

I could never fail to remember when you loved me.  
You used to place sweet flowers in my hair  
and secure me with you everywhere;  
and you let no man look upon you and fail to see  
your prized beauty standing there.

I remember when you used to hold me near  
and whisper in my ear that you loved me.  
I could never think back on thee  
and neglect to hear  
the waves of love that came rushing over me.

But could I recapture you and keep you  
beside me forever and always,  
I would take away your numbered days  
so that our time would never be through -  
forever allowing the other praise.

Fate knows no tears like the ones which I have shed  
over your very name which someone hath spoken;  
and like the placement of some long-lost token,  
it takes me down into the depths of a watery bed  
where the past in me hath woken.

I thank heaven for all the gifts that it has given;  
yet, I abhor it for taking you away -  
what is the saddest soul supposed to say?  
I hope that in the eyes of some god, I have been forgiven  
for loathing and loving the goodness shown my way.

How I loved you in your sleep  
when I used to glance upon you and want you more -  
wanting something impossible to wish for;  
yet, hoping forever that I could keep  
every part of you behind love's door.

And, in the glancing, it was though you wished the same,  
for with lashes closed and lips apart,  
I heard the whispers of your heart  
when, in your sleep, you called my name  
as if to my soul you journeyed athwart.

I have pleasant memories that will last me a lifetime,  
but my worst fear is that you know not my loss;  
for, just like stormy seas, I felt the toss  
as if I had been thrown across some endless time  
witnessing not the flight of the Albatross.

In that ending moment, I felt the urge to hold you close  
in my arms and protect you from everything,  
losing my life would mean nothing.  
I'd have given my soul if someone chose

in that moment a wish to bring.

The worst was done when you let loose my hand.  
God! Could I have only had the power to die!  
I would have taken that journey across the sky,  
wherein, with you, beside you, I could stand  
and gently, with you, in splendor lie.

No! I will never forget you.  
I will never forget what I so longed for and found  
that now lies six feet under this worthless ground.  
The mere thought that this love is through  
forces me to hear the silence of sound.

Your kindness brought me the gift of life  
wherein I tasted the warmth of you -  
wherein I caressed the man of you -  
wherein I solely became your wife.  
Nothing in this world could make me forget you.

You are all that is kept within the dreams of sleep  
otherwise, there is no warmth in me  
there is no happiness to see.  
My happiness died when I could not keep  
the greatest love ever to be.

As I rise to another morning apart from you,  
I know that I will never forget you;  
and until the day I die and ever afterwards,  
I know that I will never forget you.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **If I Only Could**

If I could reach out and touch you  
and ease your aching soul,  
if I could bend forth and kiss you  
and make your heart seem whole,  
if I could look into your eyes  
and make your sad self see,  
if I could only make you believe  
that you mean the world to me.

If I could make you laugh happily  
and cause your frown to smile,  
if I could hold you close a bit  
and hug you for a while,  
if I could take away your pain  
and make you quiver in delight,  
if I could only make your world  
seem a bit more bright.

If I could keep you safe from harm  
and make your sorrows sway,  
if I could make clouds disappear  
and make dark nights turn to day,  
if I could always be there for you  
when you seem to need a friend,  
if I could stand beside you  
and be strong until the end.

If I could make you understand  
and if I could only make you see,  
if I could turn my tears to rain  
and set my feelings free,  
if you could only imagine this,  
imagine me looking into your eyes,  
imagine that I am loving you,  
all around you, blue born skies.

If I could only, if only I could,  
I'd give the gift of love for good.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Illumination (Double Ethere)**

Bright,  
brilliant  
falling star,  
winged warrior  
rushing from heaven.  
Shade and shadow and night  
cannot extinguish your flame.  
You tear off a piece of the moon,  
set sail upon the wind, and rain down  
wearing a crown of illumination.

You plummet into the breast of the sea,  
a lamp in the chamber of her heart,  
burn her inimitable depths,  
and then faint and fall away.  
Every now and then,  
we can glimpse your crown,  
under the waves,  
reflected  
by the  
moon.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Imaginary Kisses

We buried papa today as everyone listened  
to hear the last rites as teardrops glistened.  
The wood song of winter, the boughs of branches in play,  
scratched like a record in the dust to lay.

Tears conceal the memory of a time long ago  
when I gave him a gift topped with a bow.  
It was a little white box wrapped in paper of gold  
that still, in death, he continued to hold.

It was a time of depression, a time most unkind,  
when anguish racked both the body and mind.  
We had little money, but we were spent of despair.  
There was no time for joy nor time to spare.

The winter was relentless and all embittered white;  
but papa, never once, gave up the fight.  
Papa worked until midnight to make sure we were fed.  
The wood he burned was from his king-sized bed.

He slept on the hard floor; but I couldn't sleep at all.  
My guilt and my shame were turned to the wall.  
My bed was soft and warm, and I was doubly dressed.  
Even as a child, I knew I was blessed.

One day while he was working and mama was asleep,  
I found the paper she wanted to keep.  
It was glittering and gold and all shiny and new,  
and I knew right then what I had to do.

I ran to the bedroom and opened my drawer of socks.  
I took out the empty little white box;  
and I filled it with kisses, that I made from the air.  
I closed and wrapped it with tenderest care.

When papa came home and saw it, he looked down at me,  
chiding me for acting so wastefully.  
I handed him the gift; and he looked woefully sad,  
sorry for yelling and acting so mad.

With a look of bitter sweetness, he lifted the lid;  
and I will never forget what he did.  
He scolded me for being so seditious and wild,  
screaming that I was an indolent child.

'You cannot give the present of an empty, old box,  
that you've hidden among your dirty socks! '  
My tears fell in silence as fruits that no tree could bear.  
My sugar-sweet smile too heavy to wear.

'But papa! It's not an empty box at all, ' I cried.  
'It's filled with a thousand kisses inside.

I wanted you to have them whenever we're apart,  
to know that I love you with all my heart.'

Papa was crying, which I had never seen before.  
He fell like a teardropp upon the floor.  
Then, he begged for my forgiveness, bowed down and he prayed,  
thanking the Lord for the gift He had made.

As years went by, things got better; and papa got old.  
His bones were frail, and he was always cold.  
I took care of him and bought him a new king-sized bed.  
With each spoonful, I made sure he was fed.

I would sleep on the floor on the nights I was able.  
The gold box sat on his bedside table.  
He never let it out of sight, and the gold grew dim.  
It became a semblance of love to him.

One morning when I awoke, he had the box in his hands.  
His eyes were covered with little white strands.  
It seemed that he was smiling, had dreamt away his pain.  
I would not see his eyes open again.

We buried papa today as everyone listened  
to hear the last rites as teardrops glistened.  
The wood song of winter, the boughs of branches in play,  
scratched like a record in the dust to lay.

Tears conceal the memory of a time long ago  
when I gave him a gift topped with a bow.  
It was a little white box wrapped in paper of gold  
that still, in death, he continues to hold.

Now, I am crying, which I have rarely done before.  
I fall like a teardropp upon the floor.  
Then, I beg for my forgiveness, bow down and I pray,  
thank God for papa who's now gone away.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **In His Scroll**

Spirits of fire and broken diadems  
scatter in heaven like precious gems.  
Jessamine flowers and jaded plains  
secure my heart in loving chains.  
My feet ensue whither God might lead.  
He the wind, and I the reed.

His gentle love enters my heart.  
The links and cordons fall apart.  
Encircling my heart with a Sacred band,  
His grace gives me strength to stand.  
All heaven shines, and I am blest.  
The beauty of love within my breast.

Good-bye sweet sorrow that clings in vain.  
He brings to me joy and bliss again.  
The solace of peace seems to prevail,  
and all my troubles I bid farewell.  
I am no more a troubled soul.  
I am written in His scroll.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **In Memory of Lindsay Delano Baker**

The earth is moist from the falling rain,  
a face washed pale in a bowl of tears.  
In the sheer silence of sorrows stain,  
we mourn the man we have loved for years.

His casket is cloaked in freedom's best.  
He once saluted her mighty wave.  
Now, he's conquered and laid to rest,  
soon to be lowered into the grave.

Not a better man throughout the town,  
he scattered smiles like a summer sky  
till the knife of cancer cut him down,  
too deep to live but too good to die.

He suffered more than a man should know  
until winter's house became his home.  
I shed a tear and glimpse a sparrow  
winging its way into heaven's dome.

The trees all clad in the wintry chill,  
bereft of all leaves except for one;  
and as I watch it, silent and still,  
it loses its grip and falls - undone.

No one notices how it descends,  
landing on my hand like a lone dove,  
a small token of how life transcends  
to live in the hearts of those we love.

A thoughtful calm and a quiet grace  
mingles sweetly among the flowers.  
I close my eyes and can see his face,  
knowing we are blessed that he was ours.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **In Memory of Mary Lou Nester Baumgardner**

Her hands are cold waiting for summer.  
Her pulse is silent and sings no more.  
Her eyes are shut and waiting to dream  
of the promises beyond death's door.

Hyacinth blossoms cling to the grave,  
a breath of spring for the sleeping dust.  
Ashes to ashes, we all return,  
relinquishing life because we must.

The spinning wheel must come to an end.  
A flower unfolds and dies sublime.  
The evergreen nods, pine needles fall,  
and nothing escapes the hands of time.

Her lips have fallen like autumn leaves.  
Her cheeks are pale as the winter snow.  
A flower lost, faded, and broken -  
her petals wither where wild winds blow.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **In Shades Of Cry**

I awoke this morning to your voice in a haunting dream,  
with a hollowed heart, now empty, like a dried-up stream.  
Gasping for breath, as a cold chill quick consumed my soul,  
I tried to pick up shattered pieces that once made me whole.

A silent death, the tattered shreds of your every word.  
I fall like a dead butterfly or a broken-winged bird.  
All the love that I had wished for, I know will never be;  
for, only the sad fate of sorrow was destined for me.

Deep the dark tidings, an empty chair in an empty room,  
a double bed of loneliness where my heart sleeps in gloom.  
How could I dream it - forever torn in this lonesome place?  
These hands of mine shall never again touch your loving face.

The earth left the blossom, the blackened ashes of a rose.  
The soft showers wash away my love but never my woes.  
My aimless soul wanders, creeping like vines over the wall;  
and like so many stars at night, I have started to fall.

Now in despair's lonely abyss, the broken heart receives.  
A mist covers the soul, and the tears fall like autumn leaves.  
I follow the clouds' secret charm and smell the garden breeze.  
I hug my sorrow deep inside, my head upon my knees.

The sound of music on the wind and a sweet-scented peach.  
I try to forget, but forgetfulness is out of reach.  
I search to remember you and the breathings of your love.  
A spirit moves right through me like the cooings of a dove.

Though the world circles around, I weep in an empty room.  
Empty soul, empty heart, a lonely zephyr plucks the bloom.  
The rain sees away the night, stepping soft across the sky.  
The hollow brush of loneliness paints me in shades of cry.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **In Silence**

I dream of you, think of you, love you  
in silence. The amalgamated showers  
of love and desire dripping from the lips  
of morning to kiss the leaves and flowers.

I touch you, caress you, embrace you  
in silence. The walls of my mind  
draped in dreamy musings of ponder.  
Love is the heart's hope confined.

I come to you across the partition of time  
in silence. The stillness is the fear  
which makes my heart stop beating; and  
I wonder: do you want me here?

I hold my breath, waiting and searching  
in silence, for some sign across the skies;  
and I wonder if I could see one better  
if I could look deep into your eyes?

I wing my way through the days of my life  
in silence and write daily in my scroll.  
I rest my wings in the waters of paradise  
to cool the fever which burns my soul.

I am - I live - I am an eternal summer  
of silence. A million flowers blossom here  
within the garden of love; and the zephyrs  
gently touch the sweetness of my tear.

I am the silence of the silence in the silence,  
which ever silently thinks on you.  
I am the silence of the silence in the silence,  
the sweet tear-drops of affection's dew.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **In The Black**

Somnolent stars are suspended in space.  
This is the night, the dark flower of day,  
an endless darkness of ceaseless embrace.

My eyes are like stars that have drowned at bay,  
and there is a gray rain within my heart.  
This is the night, the dark flower of day.

The moon rides high, her gentle light impart.  
Though there are no tears, I ache with the pain;  
and there is a gray rain within my heart.

Blacker than ink, the night drips down the drain,  
and dead dreams live in melancholic ire.  
Though there are no tears, I ache with the pain.

Silent and dark, I burn with the desire.  
I dream the dreams of desperate despair,  
and dead dreams live in melancholic ire.

In the black, his name is etched in prayer.  
Somnolent stars are suspended in space.  
I dream the dreams of desperate despair,  
an endless darkness of ceaseless embrace.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **In The Corners**

In the corners of my heart which you have seen,  
I am blue-blown mountains and fields of green.  
I am blush of the sunset on windows of light  
and oceans of turquoise that weep in the night.

I am sheltered and virgin and mystic flame.  
I am music and sadness which are the same.  
I am candle and starglow and holy place.  
I am water and air and time and space.

In the corners of my soul which you have known,  
I am leaves in the autumn by cold winds blown.  
I am rain and cloud and strokes of silent thunder.  
I am lightning and hurricane of fervent wonder.

I am sand and shore and ocean flood.  
I am plucked like a half-blown lily-bud.  
I am timeless and mortal and all undying.  
I am child and mother, both of us crying.

In the corners of my mind where you are light,  
you kiss my soft lips and bid me good-night.  
Your lusty arms about me keeping me warm,  
sheltering my soul from hurt and harm.

I turn to you tender and look in your eyes.  
I give to you earth and heavenly skies.  
I give you the universe, star-light caressed.  
I give to you my heart so soundly professed.

In the corners of my world is where you are.  
It matters not distance nor how far.  
My love is unchanging on the precipice brink.  
I need not stop to ponder or think.

In the corners of heaven where God is the sun,  
we shall dance as angels when all is done.  
When night falls endless like pattering rain,  
our hearts shall be lifted together again.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **In The Grave Of My Eyes**

You  
left me  
long ago,  
kissed me goodbye  
with your long absence.  
I never forget you.  
You did not know what to say,  
but your silence said it clearly.  
When the sea rose in my eyes, you drowned,  
destroying all the bridges to my past.

Then, fell the night like a bottle of ink,  
writing on the shore of my body,  
staining the sheets with suppleness.  
I dreamed that you would return.  
My heart swings with the tide;  
but you are no more,  
slumbering deep  
in the grave  
of my  
eyes.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **In The Stillness Of The Night**

Lips touching lips in the stillness of the night  
beneath the esoteric shadow of a tree.  
The moon touches the moment with tender light -  
the moment when my heart is kissed right out of me.

Hands sweep my shoulders to brush my hair away.  
I close my eyes as soft hands embrace my sweet face.  
Moist lips devour mine; our tongues dance a ballet.  
I lose my self, my breath, my sense of time and space.

Fire burns in my flesh; hunger dwells in my eyes.  
Darts of desire shoot from my breast to my skirt's hem.  
He presses me back; I feel my heat rise.  
He steps back to look at me, and I, look, at him.

Poised in conjunction with a breathless restraint,  
we smile like two secrets that have rolled ashore.  
We move into each other, and I am faint.  
The trounce of lust finds us upon the forest floor.

Sweet weight is upon me! His breath on my brow.  
His lips consume me; I am a plum plucked divine.  
Tangled together in fervent kisses. Wow!  
We are drunk as can be as drunk on turpentine.

In the net of his kisses, I do delight.  
I am captured; and yet, I am quiescent free.  
I melt in his kisses, his enraptured sight.  
He is god, and his dominion entices me.

We are trammelled in sheets of pulsing pleasure,  
a dalliance of soul and sense and love and lust.  
We clutch at the core of this naked treasure.  
Two bodies, one pulse: a fire about to combust!

In frenzy, ardency becomes rough regard.  
He tantalizes my body from head to toe.  
Legs between legs, my softness to his hard.  
Reckless and ravishing all that we dare to know.

Button by button, I slowly come undone.  
The trembling of time is like fingers on skin.  
Soul into soul, we transmigrate into one.  
Body to body, sliding out and sliding in.

Infinite, eternal, everything that is ...  
a sword in the sand and a stroke from out the sky.  
A moment that's mine and a moment that's his,  
a moment to live forever and never die.

Lips touching lips in the stillness of the night  
where two bodies move in impassioned endeavor,

a flowering unseen and curtained from sight  
though it shall reside in my soul forever.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **In This Moment, Forever**

Languished, we lay with one another  
in night-sweet passion like lovers do-  
nefarious night to never ebb.  
Drinking delight in the heart of love,  
as one, in acrostic, forever.  
Mist moves magic, shrouding our secret;  
and wisps of wind move over the plain.  
Rejoicing in this sacred serai,  
illuminated raptured rebec,  
Euterpe falls to salacious stitch.  
Vervains of white and deep indigo  
are gleaming, unreal and phantasmal -  
nocturnal nebula on the sea.  
This is a moment of joy and bliss,  
and sweet kisses that I can't resist.  
Silence has a golden aria.  
Someone scatters stars across the sky.  
Even the moon moves over the hill.  
Languidly laying like lovers do,  
love lives in this moment, forever.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **In Your Absence**

In your absence, happiness echoes in my ear,  
sailing through the foam of last night's tremulous storm.  
A mad disarray of burgundy silk reveals  
a flower admired, plucked, and passionately warm.

You entered the sea, that soft, luscious decadence;  
but it was I who felt I could walk on water.  
Your nomadic kisses were a whirlwind of bliss  
and I was born anew like Poseidon's daughter.

A white light spread between us and burst into stars.  
We created a universe outside of time.  
There are no boundaries when it comes to passion,  
no dimensions and no dreams that we cannot climb.

I love you, whether you are near or far away;  
but it's in your absence that I love you the most.  
My wild, dearest love, you overwhelm my senses;  
And it's in your absence that I love you the most.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Indebtedness**

The blue mirror of the ocean is as smooth as can be  
as breakers line the fringe of the coastal periphery.  
Such is life and love and the times we cannot rearrange.  
We spend the hours of our youth like pocketfuls of change;  
and one cannot be surprised that, with little life to kill,  
we refuse to make a payment when time presents a bill.  
You know, you know it's true; and you cannot deny the truth.  
We cannot live to be old and still hold on to our youth.  
We cannot live our lives as if we do not have a care  
and expect to weep and wail when the silver streaks our hair.  
For, life is dearly measured in a very fragile cup.  
We must be very careful when we lift our portion up.  
For, the mirror of the morning will never tell a lie.  
Come mist or rain or shine, we all are born; and we will die.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **In-lightened**

The silence is serenely spinning  
in her constellation of thoughts,  
plucked from the stream of consciousness.  
She gazes into time and space.

In her constellation of thoughts,  
she embroiders a pathway home.  
She gazes into time and space,  
and her heart is overflowing.

She embroiders a pathway home  
in the weave of separation;  
and her heart is overflowing,  
springing into an eternal sky.

In the weave of separation,  
she threads the present and the past.  
Springing into an eternal sky,  
she soars until swallowed by fire.

She threads the present and the past,  
speaking the language of the heart.  
She soars until swallowed by fire,  
immersed in sparks of offering.

Speaking the language of the heart,  
she embraces eternity.  
Immersed in sparks of offering,  
she sees the light awakening.

She embraces eternity  
with the soft touch of her mind.  
She sees the light awakening  
on the fingertips of the dawn.

With the soft touch of her mind,  
she spins the clouds into solace.  
On the fingertips of the dawn,  
she is the alchemy of light.  
She spins the clouds into solace.  
Deep waters bathe her ancient shore.  
She is the alchemy of light  
sparked in the silent filigree:

burst in breath from the poet's pen.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Inside And Out**

I don't know your mind.  
There's been no time to tell,  
but I do know your body.

These things I know well:  
the shape of your hands,  
the curve of your thighs,  
the rhythm of your loving,  
the need in your eyes,  
the softness of your lips,  
the taste of your skin.  
These things I know  
but not the man that's within.

Your brooding black silence,  
like the clouds that carry thunder,  
make me curious to know you.

I can't help but wonder.

Instead, I let my wild heart  
undress and explore you,  
express and caress and profess  
I adore you.

You know I have a wild heart  
but a serious mind, no doubt.  
I want to know you better  
inside and out.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **It Spoke No More**

It loved me once, that rose beneath your breast,  
unfolding beautifully with the rise of light.  
Its gentle petals disclosing its true colors,  
and I loved it with all my might.

So happy, I thrived on your love,  
wanting no other, thinking of only you.  
I never existed before you rose within me,  
loving me... as only you can do.

Tender petals strewn around my heart,  
making me gentle, loving, and kind.  
Beams of golden light shattered the shadows,  
leaving sorrows of the past behind.

I thought that lovely rose would last forever,  
endure beyond the partition of time.  
Yet, it ended quite softly with the season  
closing its petals for the very last time.

I saw it struggle and bend, weep and cry,  
not wanting to let go of its bed.  
It fought till the last, wept a frozen tear,  
shattered at last, then lay down its head.

A pretty rose, crisped by the hands of winter...  
severed, the love that you gave to me.  
A frozen tear etched upon my memory forever.  
My sorrows drift out to sea.

That rose that rose like the finest rose  
rose like no other rose before  
and spoke its love till winter's scorn  
until it spoke no more.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Lady Green Leaves**

Roll me like thunder across the bed of the skies,  
and bring down the stars and light them within my eyes.  
Drown me in the river of love's tormented loss.  
Only when I drown, will I find my way across.

I want to be with my lover, to kiss his lips,  
to dance naked with the dawn's auroral eclipse.  
One sweet sigh of rapture, and the green leaves depart.  
I am sheltered in the colonnades of the heart.

In the dead sea of a mirror, I see my face,  
the lost look of longing that has taken love's place.  
I cry to the morning, the mistress of the seas,  
lady of the universe and all galaxies.

The sky will never dawn, nor love's inflection.  
He cannot be drawn in a mirror's reflection.  
The milk-white flowers march onward, in scattered seeds,  
to conquer the lake of the land and all its reeds.

The green-boot roses stand still on quaint summer eves.  
I reach out to touch the softness of velvet leaves;  
and I place a green leaf in the silk of my hair.  
My heart is a green universe, the sky I wear.

I walk my way towards Him, with such humble grace,  
to see stars in His eyes and the sky of His face.  
I am what I know, and I know that He's the way.  
I am nothing without Him to lead every day.

Here I am, hidden, in the bushes of these words.  
You sit around me like a flock of lonely birds;  
and all of us suffer from love's tormented loss,  
that left us in sorrow at the foot of the cross.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Lady Of The Sea**

My tears... drew  
the well of my soul, to cry  
a virulent verdigris.  
The blue... flew  
from my eyes into the sky,  
from sky to cover the sea.

My heart... beat  
and love's tumultuous force  
quickenened with shadowy night.  
The love... heat  
smoldered an infinite course  
of sweet tongues and bruised delight.

My skin... burned,  
thirsty wave in lover's dance,  
flame in a thicket of fire.  
The moon... turned  
between shadow and stance.  
Silhouettes whispered desire.

My mouth... kissed  
your succulent form burned ripe  
like an ultimate peach.  
The night... blissed,  
harmonies played on a pipe,  
as firm as wood on the beach.

My tongue... found  
the moist fervor of your mind,  
geyser flooding from the tip.  
The words... bound  
were delivered, unconfined,  
as I touched them with my lip.

My love... slept  
in the circle of my arms.  
Night folded wings over lea.  
My eyes... wept  
for I was touched by his charms.  
Conquered Lady of the Sea.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Languid Lubricity

I stand stripped - naked - knowing his whim,  
looking in the mirror at the sparkling gem  
that hangs from the bracelet around my wrist;  
and I smile to see him smile. I can't resist.

I don't breathe for I dare not break the silence -  
the moment when he dares my defiance.  
For then will he have me bent over his knees,  
giving me an ecstasy as deep and rough as the seas.

His love is deep and true and can rush like the tide.  
He encompasses me completely, and I cannot hide.  
His approval marks the measure of my every pose -  
languid lubricity united between the tiger and the rose.

My breasts and my belly undulating in their sheen,  
a gypsy dance, a pirouette, a ballerina inbetween.  
And all in this moment is but a prelude to bliss  
like the scintillating breath between lips in a kiss.

I sway on the precipice, between legions of desire,  
my hair let loose about my shoulders like a jeweled fire.  
It shimmers in the candlelight that in a circle glows  
about the room - the heat of it - the heat of me - he knows.

A storm outside is brewing; the wind is in a roar.  
I slide like a serpentine across the parquet floor.  
My shadow, like a phantom, glides across the wall,  
and I stretch to lay before him like a little doll.

For he is the master, and it is his game to play.  
He can have me as he wants me all he has to do is say.  
My limbs and my hips are under his command.  
I let myself be loved by the movements of his hand.

He smiles down upon me like a King upon his throne,  
and I am his Queen that no other man can own.  
His fingers in my hair, he pulls me up than pushes down  
wanting me to take in hand the jewels in his crown.

Such sweet collaboration between the body and the mind,  
the magnanimous devices that the willing dare to find.  
The delicious moves of dancing impale my mouth like a vice;  
and confined by his fingers, I am his slave in paradise.

Inflamed with lust and fervor, licking up the path of joy,  
I grasp him tighter to me, my dear delight, my wanton toy!  
Every fraction of his length enjoys the sinful titillation,  
the sensations of my tongue as it dances in veneration.

He lays me on my belly and pierces the tender sheath,  
while his fingers wrap around frigging me beneath.

And in erotic madness, I move to meet his every thrust.  
The vermilion lips of love drip in desire and raging lust.

My blood is on fire, screaming senselessly sensate -  
a conjunction of the sexes in a quest to liberate.  
The secret chamber of love is a monumental bliss,  
the sweetest sucking sound of a primordial kiss.

It is bliss to have him hold me and fill me with his joy,  
a sweet little crack I give for his passion to employ.  
Our own secret universe and one galaxy in the cosmos -  
languid lubricity united between the tiger and the rose.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Let Live The Moments Burst With Sound**

She gave her heart and soul to him,  
and she never questioned the fall  
nor let her love light shadow dim  
when he gave half and she gave all.

She touched the sun; he watched her burn  
as she let out a mournful cry.  
Too quick to love, too late to learn,  
she fell from out the bright blue sky.

Sadness is just another word,  
cloud-pavilioned and starry-eyed,  
the plaint of tea leaves gently stirred  
in waves of heartache's breaking tide.

Nevertheless, she holds the key.  
Life is full of strife and sorrow,  
and what will be will surely be  
of yesterday or tomorrow.

She travels through the ticks of time.  
The nascent word of bliss appears,  
penned in poem and writ in rhyme -  
a twist of rainbow light and tears.

A thread is twined with silken ease  
in the pulse of each heart beating  
as time unwinds by slow degrees  
in echoes that bear repeating.

Let live the moments burst with sound  
from the rhapsody of the heart -  
a sky unfurled, a sea unbound  
in smiles of joy as we depart.

For, we are breathed into a song  
that sets spirit into motion.  
As angels rise and sing along,  
God dances across the ocean.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Let Me Be

Let me be that lamp in his darkness,  
the white ardor that shines on his skin,  
the one who writes his way to freedom  
as he follows each stroke of my pen.

Let the sea wind unnerve such shadows  
and carve joy into his heart of stone,  
that he might know when he feels lonely  
that it does not mean he walks alone.

Let me soften into a silence.  
Let me be wordless without decree  
like the beat of his heart resounding,  
a river of life within the sea.

Let me be a pulsating promise  
unfolding truth in banners of light,  
a starry flag unfurled in darkness  
that removes the blinders from his sight.

Let me be the peace of perfection,  
his reflection unfolding the day,  
his shadow that follows in silence  
whenever he turns to walk away.

Let me be the move of his motion  
or the glance of his wistful eye.  
Let me be the fervor of his fire.  
Let me be all things or let me die.

Let me be the catch of his falling.  
If ever he falls, then, let me be.  
Let me be the one who comes running  
to rescue the one who's loving me.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Little Things

There are little things,  
like the joy he brings,  
that make me love him so.

Like his winning smile,  
that crosses the mile,  
like a brilliant rainbow.

Like his sweet laughter,  
before and after,  
sweet music to my ears;

each expressive line  
that I drink like wine  
to chase away the tears.

Like the way he speaks  
a blush to my cheeks,  
and a new rose is born;

the way he holds it  
and gently scolds it,  
mending the petals torn.

Like his love professed,  
his sweet heart undressed,  
the softness of his sigh;

or his touch which melts,  
little rain-dropp pelts  
that make me want to cry.

Like the way love grew  
from one heart to two,  
two flowers in the wind;

and the way he talks  
or the way he walks,  
the way he is my friend.

Like a running stream  
or a budding dream,  
he lifts me in his love.

He gives me the wings,  
with the joy he brings,  
to lift me high above;

and the way I soar,  
I adore him more.  
The dark night turns to day.

Like a wind in rain,  
he chases the pain  
until it falls away.

He is my glory,  
a joyous story,  
the page of life I've found;

an endless shower  
of strength and power  
when life has run its round.

He does not know it.  
I do not show it,  
but I live for his love.

His open embrace  
makes me fly through space  
on the wings of a dove.

It's the little things,  
just the little things,  
that really make me tall.

His love and laughter,  
before and after.  
What else? I can't recall.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Lotus

Lithe and lovely, she rises through air  
in vibrant splendor at break of day,  
naked, with dawn's flame twined in her hair,  
dancing her petals in moist bouquet.  
A light wind whispers between the trees.

Of love and beauty, it sweetly sings,  
fluttering gently with rippled ease

to lift the heart on anointed wings.  
He lusted and lay down upon her,  
evoking the warmth of sweet embrace,

unfolding his heart, at once astir,  
nestled beside her to kiss her face.  
In swirls of light and burning desire,  
the sky is a scarf of crepe de chine  
embroidered with threads of saffron fire  
draped by the wind over fields of green.

She opens her soul and fills with peace,  
transcending the world on shafts of light;  
and her petals of dress never cease  
to rise from the depths that clasp her tight.  
Eternity blooms in nirvana.  
She is poised in peace: Padmasana.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Love Lost

When nothing seems to work anymore  
and nothing turns out right,  
when all you want is to be held close  
and you only argue and fight,  
when your lover is cold and turns away,  
a long, long night becomes the day.

When lying naked in a wistful bed,  
you think how bizarre it seems  
that now you lie next to a stranger,  
in the broken mirror of dreams.  
When shadows dance upon the wall,  
you've lost your love, you've lost it all.

When birds fly south for the winter  
to find shelter in another's arms,  
when the world becomes cold and brittle  
and loses all her charms,  
when Persephone is nowhere to be found,  
love becomes a silent sound.

When the voice of the wind echoes sorrow  
and dismal clouds come out from the gray,  
when your lover's kiss is absent  
and snows upon the waters lay,  
when your lover seems to be withdrawn,  
a darkness cloaks the morning dawn.

When love is lost and cast aside,  
the world becomes a lonely strand.  
You walk in the gloom of being alone,  
having no one to understand.  
You walk against the wind and rain  
and wish for love to come back again.

So you sleep aside, turning sadly over,  
and weep and cry beneath the cover.  
Your heart so broken, beyond repair,  
to know that your love doesn't care.  
Your tears unknown, your sorrow hushed.  
Your heart and soul mortally crushed.

Love lies broken among the flowers.  
And you think, 'What happened to this love of ours? '

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Majestica

I stand at the edge of the world.  
Mountains open onto the sea.  
I cast my mind into the depths -  
a line struggling to be free.

My thoughts walk under the ocean.  
The thunder bellows mid the rain.  
A sun of dark fire arises,  
like life-blood boiling through a vein.

A red dragon tears through water -  
a running gash of scarlet stain;  
and the mountains shake to their roots  
as molten lava breaks the chain.

Waves leap toward the sky in fear,  
the world on the verge of ending.  
The sea dropping back, turning black,  
a road that is split and rending.

The fire is like a demon ship,  
and the waves are foaming mad.  
The sea flows beyond green mountains,  
to the shores of Sir Galahad.

To nothingness and emptiness  
and to the banks of Tripoli,  
it moves speedily, like lightning,  
under the mountains of the sea.

Lamps die like flowers torn apart.  
A bang! A broken string and chord!  
Chaos hangs at the hem of earth,  
plunging downward like a huge sword.

A hand holds the ship, picks her up,  
sands shift along the slope of space,  
and the mouth of time breathes a flame:  
a word, a wish born in her face.

The hand rises among the waves  
with a great sleeve of curling foam,  
sweeping over, enveloping  
this planet Earth that we call home.

A million stitches come undone:  
the world arches and the sky slopes.  
Coronas, starbursts, and novas:  
bursting, flaming, new life elopes.

The hands of fire return to rest,  
slipping away into the sea;

and the world looks no different  
to everyone else but me.

I walk under mountains of fire,  
lay on the mirror of the sea,  
metamorphosed majestica:  
the Goddess Pele - that is me.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Michael Christopher

Backward into Richmond, into the back wood thickets,  
I journey down the dirt road girdled by stalks of corn  
where the heat is mustered with songs of summer crickets  
who sing of those who wish that they had never been born.

The rusted ribs of a rake are hallowed by the years  
and lay forgotten among the earth and fading weed,  
and a black cloud spills its secrets in loquacious tears  
that fill up buckets with the release of precious need.

Times were different back then; and no one spoke a word  
of the hush things, the dirty things that happened at night,  
when he climbed into her bed and her cries went unheard  
as he took and took and she granted without a fight.

She hid within herself as he took her SELF, her soul,  
wishing she were somewhere else, anywhere else but there;  
but pawing hands and thrusting hips have ways to cajole  
with threats that thread through fingertips pulling at her hair.

Moonlit nights and moonless nights and many nights ago,  
hydrangeas 1 blossomed within the garden of her throat.  
A broken tree on bent knees covered with flakes of snow,  
she shivered as he buckled up then buttoned his coat.

A thousand stars in the sky and not a wish come true.  
The secret slipped under her skin like a prayer bird.  
He appeared, crowning, with the glistening morning dew;  
and the unmentionable was hidden without word.

He opened his blue eyes before they took him from her  
and looked into the eyes that were so much like his own;  
and she endowed him with the name, Michael Christopher,  
before they took him and left her in silence - alone.

"Once upon a time" never gave her the wings to fly  
away from the ashes that embroidered her skirt.  
Though she glimpsed it from her cage, she never touched the sky.  
She lay there abandoned and embittered in the dirt.

The shadow of an unsung brother lives in my bones  
waiting to be summoned into the green summer haze,  
to spill out of my skin and go skipping across stones  
to reclaim the mother he once captured in his gaze.

And how shall I tell him, if ever he should appear,  
that the ghost of her memory is haunting me still,  
while her remains are buried not far away from here,  
beyond the eternal flame in the earth at Fort Hill?

I always wanted a brother and had him and yet  
I have never seen his eyes or his smile or his face.

I am drawn by my senses; and I cannot forget,  
my blue eyes searching the utter soundlessness of space.

As the sky slips into autumn's dress of amber sway,  
a handful of leaves flutter on a breath of the wind;  
and a stream of tears shimmers as I glance far away  
catching the distance as it slides around the bend.

She held me in her arms but never within her heart,  
and there was always a certain sadness about her.  
The son was in her sky, and I never played a part.  
She was a cloud, and the rain sang, "Michael Christopher."

1 Hydrangeas, meaning: heartlessness

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Misty Mysterious**

His eyes: hazel - marbled, mysterious,  
look into mine like frightened little birds.  
His voice: broken - bewildered, uncertain,  
says more through the silence than through his words.

He emerges from the mist of my thoughts,  
and the time and distance come to an end.  
He's more than a feeble flickering flame.  
He is purest of the pure, my dear friend.

I was like a cloud lost in poetry,  
and he was the rainbow that gave me hope.  
Ribbons of color burst forth from his soul.  
His loving heart is a Kaleidoscope.

I dance in the colors that come with bliss,  
captivated more than he'll ever know.  
He's my felicity, burns me down, and  
sets me on fire with his heavenly glow.

Misty mysterious, the foam of dreams,  
swallows my heart in licentious embrace.  
Earth loses its balance; I fall to him,  
a shower of love that covers his face.

He is so beautiful to look upon  
when he is sleeping or standing still.  
I love him with passion, love him with fire.  
I love him with joy, and I always will.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Moon-Dancer**

She loses her garment by slow degrees  
like a splendid angel on silver wings.  
She dances across the sweltering seas  
with the night-stars of dim emblazonings.

Her beautiful body is soft and round,  
half-hidden, like the scent of a flower.  
A Goddess shimmering upon the ground,  
slightly tasted in a summer shower.

Each night she dances with the moonrise glow,  
circling round like a ballerina.  
The graceful beauty of light and shadow  
that embraces the art of Athena.

I watch her each night, with many a sigh,  
mesmerized as though I were in a dream.  
I hold her vision when I close my eye,  
bathed in the shimmer of the moonlight gleam.

Blisses of beauty could never impart  
the sweet taste of her ambrosial lips  
nor the timeless way she captures the heart  
as from my sight she gradually slips.

Moon-dancer! Moon-dancer! A graceful star!  
Your midnight allure such loveliness brings.  
Moon-dancer! Moon-dancer! You are so far;  
yet, I feel I can touch your silvered wings.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Mourning Melody**

The night lived in the tendrils of her hair.  
Like sea-washed silk, it had a moonlit shine;  
and her eyes held a smile within their stare  
whose delight was a transport to divine.

Her laughter and lace skirted on the wind  
and fluttered on wings of a butterfly  
whose gentle birth and unfortunate end  
tilted a mirror of tears in the sky.

She bowed her head for the very last time  
as the bullet turned her world to ashes  
and struck her down while she was in her prime  
as she closed the dark wing of her lashes.

The incense of dreams rises through the sky  
floating on the brim of diurnal light,  
disappears in the distance, lost to the eye,  
like an eagle beyond the mountain height.

The quiet earth settles into her bones  
forever silent, forever to be -  
her fragile wings at the mercy of stones  
that left us to mourn over Melody.

I close my eyes and brush the hair of night  
until its shadow slips off of the trees  
and falls like a dress with threads of starlight  
across the cusp of the earth and the seas.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## My Captain

Has anyone seen my Captain?  
He sailed far into the west.  
He vanished with the sunlight  
once settled in my breast.  
He took my heart and soul  
and never shall I rest.  
He took what I loved most  
and all that I loved best.

O! Where are you my Captain?  
I have lost you from my sight.  
I stand and weep alone  
for the sorrow of my plight.  
My sweet, beloved Captain,  
how can I speak or write  
of everything you mean to me  
and how I need your light?

My brave and mighty Captain,  
my fearless cavalier,  
you journey far across the sea.  
I wish that you were here.  
Home is lonely without you,  
and I long to hold you near.  
How can I make you notice  
the falling of my tear?

My gentle-hearted Captain,  
when shall you come ashore?  
When will you come to me again,  
the way you did before?  
The skies are dressed in blue  
and weep forevermore;  
and I shall weep along with it  
until I live no more.

Alas! Alas! My Captain,  
the wind is my sad song.  
I wail to you upon the breeze  
that bears your ship along.  
My heart for you is weeping;  
and even though it's wrong,  
I have no hope without you,  
no strength to keep me strong.

Farewell, farewell, my Captain,  
as you sail across the sea.  
May your sails swiftly turn  
to bring you home to me.  
Good-bye, good-bye, my Captain.  
I shall sorrow on the shore.  
My tears will fall into the sea

to hold you evermore.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **My Father**

Save mine eyes from the sight.  
I have sought thee for nineteen years;  
and hence, have found thee.  
I grasp thee to my bosom e'er so tight,  
leaving no space for my yielding tears.  
Thusly, you have sorrowed me.

Unwavering is mine love for you.  
My father, you art all that I have cherished.  
Every moment of time is yours, not mine!  
Tears now mount the horizon and bedew  
your cold heart which has perished...  
entwined, the two combine.

O God! Save mine heart of its woe.  
I knew not that in seeking thee  
that I would discover thus your grave!  
How cruel to announce me your daughter; and lo!  
take leave of me.  
Save mine heart, o save!

How flagrant of you, father, to refrain  
my love for another by claiming it as your own.  
You never released me to leave.  
So vigilantly, you have held me captive again  
and again, until time has left me alone  
with the misery that love leads me to believe.

So inanely blind to your mirage of fatherdom,  
afield into distant meadows I have been led;  
and into the depths, I, too, join the grave.  
I have enshrined my heart to your complacent kingdom;  
and there, to death have bled.  
Now, 'Tis too late to save!

I belie no tears to life for others  
nor hunger for the care in their rue.  
I have always and only desired your love.  
I loathe the false haven of my mother's  
so-called love; yet, 'Tis a love only in lieu  
of what can be acquired after your ascent above.

How is it the world can bridge love and hate  
and sift the sorrows left and right  
and delve into the soul's endless domain?  
Repentance for nothing done by mine hand, at any rate,  
has led me to the stronghold which may or might  
withstand the chastisement you ordain.

I brought thee flowers, father, and lay  
them in front the tombstone etched with your name -  
the one with the angel singing your way to bliss.

I shed a few tears that sear their way  
into the core of my heart, from whence they came,  
and give to you father, a tender-fostered kiss.

I surmise we foresee ourselves to death.  
Thus, I have been utterly buried in sorrow,  
allowing not even the solace of tears.  
Father, why did you surrender your vital breath  
and leave me invalid to a worse tomorrow  
and to an even worse course of years?

All pangs of mine heart are above exceeding;  
and to thy tombstone, I am clung.  
The heart bursts in two.  
My father, your loving rose is bleeding  
as the heart is harder wrung.  
All this - done for you.

Alas! None listen nor care for me.  
Forlorn, I mourn the years without you.  
I see the leaves wither aside the rose.  
I alone am the gardener of death's valley  
and caretaker of sad tidings which grew  
still more into chimera, I suppose.

The juncture which joins me to fate -  
a fate, and e'er worse than death -  
is fondest love darkened in despair.  
Do you remember when I needed you late  
and called to you with every agonizing breath?  
Yet, my father, you were ne'er there.

I am thy daughter! And yet, not even a memory  
holds me to thee in deep forgiving sorrow.  
I behold only illusions of thee.  
Yes! I am thy daughter! A daughter in misery  
that shouldst throw aside tomorrow  
to be with thee.

Yet, though day is mingling with the winds of night,  
though the roses upon the dust combine,  
I am yet unable to vaunt that I am vain.  
For, all nights shall give way to light,  
roses shall life entwine;  
and tomorrow, shall awake comforted again.

If thou art my father, then, like my father, appear  
before me like the brave soldier I thought you to be.  
Even that joy was shattered.  
Then, I shouldst rejoice for all to hear.  
I shouldst display my blessedness for all to see.  
I would disremember all before so-mattered.

For all the sorrow labored past,  
I now forsake the tears softly shed.  
Desolate, and more still, alone.  
This is the bondage which hast  
left me not for the dead.  
Yet, left me nigh an etched lifeless stone.

I trace the engraved lines unstirred by my lips,  
and the tears seep way through the void.  
The mounds of earth about me are cold.  
I behold the heart as it gently rips  
itself from the tombstone, trying to avoid  
death, himself, trying to take hold.

The folds of my gown are blown in the breeze  
as the night wakens to the moon's chaste light  
and the dawn's spent hands are laid to rest.  
The weary heart its labors cease  
and fades into the night -  
where ebon shadows fall ablest.

O Father! I am the one who bears thy name,  
like a torch blest divine.  
I bow down in speechless grief and weep.  
I ask nothing of heaven but that of the same name.  
Yes, thou, which art like mine.  
O Father! Shall your love e'er I keep?

I pose laughter in the sunlight -  
a smile they love to see me wear;  
and at night, lament in the shade.  
Life is to me no more, by day nor night,  
life as I see it here nor there.  
It is merely the way I have strayed.

The paths of destiny are myriads of few  
and are paved with cunning lies.  
O the miles I have travelled and tired.  
O Father! The roses dropped lead to you;  
resting on a drifted sheet of snowy cries,  
though trodden, never expired.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **My Heart Was Filled With Your Words**

The curtain rose on the stage, and I saw you standing there.  
The lights above were shining down upon your ink black hair.  
My heart proudly skipped a beat when you looked into my eyes,  
and I felt myself tremble then for what I felt arise.

The women all about me were whispering sweet and low  
of how much you looked like a prince within the stage-light glow.  
I secretly smiled to myself, warmed by their devotion,  
unseen in the shadowed curve that circled like the ocean.

I gazed upon you as the host introduced you by name.  
I felt my temperature rise as though a heated flame.  
Walking over to the mike, you quick-coughed to clear your throat.  
All the room was silent then as you spoke the words you wrote.

paris elegy  
by larry jaffe

her reflection  
forever imprinted  
in the looking glass  
despite her leaving  
for pigalle  
he missed her terribly  
they skated on  
the thin ice of decadence  
for so long it seemed  
like second nature  
to seek danger  
in his safe autocratic fashion  
nevertheless he denied nothing  
and faced her empty mirror  
every day his face in his hands  
cushioning the blow of her loss  
the seine no longer romantic hideaway  
they tell me they see through your gossamer wings  
and you cannot fly

The crazy winds of cheer and applause filtered through the room.  
I was lost inside of love, the lull of passion in bloom.  
You gave a bow and thanked the crowd, then waved your hands good-night.  
You stepped off the stage and came to me to my heart's delight.

My breath was held inside of me like quiet little bells,  
like the leaves floating on the face of deep and silent wells.  
You placed your hand under my chin and looked into my eyes,  
and I felt myself tremble then for what I felt arise.

My love was reaching out to you like hands across the Seine;  
and all at once, I knew my wings would lift to fly again.  
The night, the world, and two bright stars glisten over the sea.  
It is the secret passageway we find in poetry.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **My Soul Dances With Joy**

Like an impulse, my spirit is soaring,  
dancing with joy on the wings of the breeze.  
The heart is like a fountain outpouring,  
dreaming to dwell in the shell of the seas.

Love is a melody in motion,  
a crescendo that collides on the lips,  
nothing less than a flood of devotion  
upon the arc of Aurora's ellipse.

A handful of sky; and I am happy,  
folding the day into my heart unseen.  
Hugging life like a blanket about me,  
I lie down in splendor, so soft and green.

The sun is sculpting shadowed silhouettes  
out of leafy branches and daffodils  
that disappear in playful pirouettes,  
rolling like children down virulent hills.

My feelings linger and outlast the day.  
My heart is climbing the heights of our love,  
stretching like stars across the Milky Way,  
falling into Orion's arms above.

The silver stroke of midnight is glowing  
as the moon rises on radiant wings,  
and the night breeze is pleasantly blowing,  
tugging at tendrils and pulling on strings.

Like a poem hungry for completion  
or a tree rooting for permanent ground,  
I am but part of this grand accretion  
in this circle of life in which I'm bound.

Like a wildflower dancing in daylight  
or a star-flower shining over sea,  
I am a songbird summoning twilight,  
pressed into the pages of poetry.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Naked Pearl Of Lust (Triple Acrostic)**

My kisses miss your sweet kisses; and when I'm lonely, I  
yearn for your open arms. Now, my life is an anathema,  
hardly worth the mention nor open for debate. No great gem  
ever glows without the light. When the moon shines over sea,  
a particular thing happens, the moon makes magic while shining down.  
Rivers run into the heart. Everything whispers of love; and a  
tidal wave of desire rushes through the soul. A blushing cheek  
is kissed by silken lips, open in amorous affection and love.  
Sweet effluence of the night! Universe of stars! I am embraced  
in the arms of eternity, clinging to the pleasures I keep,  
never knowing if or when he will suddenly disappear with the  
yellow lantern of the moon. My breasts mingle with the sea -  
orphic nipples on azure ripples, echoes of ecstasy; and the nebular  
universe may stop turning but the heart blossoms like the soil.  
Ravenously hungry, it desires more - always deeper than the sea - so  
hungry for an undying love, searching calmly and so certain of  
a never-ending triumphant bliss. The heart is like a pearl -  
naked in length and girth - enjoying the moist and wet milieu.  
Discover this pearl of love. Make metaphors move magic within us,  
salaciously sliding into my sex, erupting in scarlet lips of lust.

Among this treasure of words, the reader, upon close examination, will discover three "hidden" messages. The first letter of each word down the left column forms the message: "My heart is in your hands." In skimming down the right column at the last letter of each line, the reader finds the title, plus a few more words: "I am a naked pearl of lust." Each line contains eleven words with the middle word being the sixth word. The first letter of each sixth word forms the third message: "Know me, touch me, taste me.'

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Naked Truth (Prose)**

Philosophy  
boldly wears a frock  
of woven logic  
while  
poetry  
stands tall in a shroud  
made from pure emotion.

The thinkers  
stand  
under cold stone arches,  
toe-to-toe,  
drawing lines in the dust,  
daring each other  
to cross.

Both tear squares of their cloaks  
which fray at the edge  
from the rip  
of unknown ideas  
and elusive truths.

They continue,  
righteously,  
throwing the squares  
to hungry believers  
busily stitching  
the thinkers' scraps  
in a green-golden field of early spring.

Neither  
logical philosophy  
nor  
emotive poetry  
notice  
as their cloaks  
shorten  
and shorten  
to  
nothing.

A lonely  
frigid  
draft  
makes each thinker  
look up,  
still toe-to-toe,  
at their combined  
nakedness.

Frightened, they  
stare out to the crowded field

where believers  
have fashioned a great guilt -  
a complex patchwork  
of logic white  
and emotion red,  
large enough to cover all.

Philosophy  
and  
poetry,  
shivering  
alone  
in the frost of their determined  
purity,  
walk forward  
hand-in-hand  
to sit  
beneath the warmth of the guilt  
in the great lily-flowered field.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Night Blossoms Black**

Night blossoms black on the tide of sleep  
in costive silence above the grave.  
The roses bleed, but I will not weep.

My love is now gone beyond my keep,  
but I am forevermore his slave.  
Night blossoms black on the tide of sleep.

The panoplies of memories sweep,  
being threaded from the love he gave.  
The roses bleed, but I will not weep.

The vines of time meander and creep,  
coiling around as though to enslave.  
Night blossoms black on the tide of sleep.

Immortal beloved, sleeping deep,  
your heart was both laudable and brave.  
The roses bleed, but I will not weep.

Instead, I choose my memories reap  
of the love that no distance can stave.  
Night blossoms black on the tide of sleep.  
The roses bleed, but I will not weep.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## November Fell In The Bole Of A Tree

Hidden within the bole of a tree,  
they wept through darkened roots of sorrow.  
Imprisoned, yesterday's memory,  
whose eyes will never see tomorrow.

Kokosing Lake swirls with autumn mist,  
and the wind scatters the peace of mind  
of those left behind with hand in fist  
to suffer the worst of humankind.

Night weighs heavy on the quartered moon.  
The wood smoke rises over the hill,  
and skeletal leaves in death commune  
in the fade of life-giving chlorophyll.

Ivy trails a wall of ancient stone,  
whose splintered beam is about to break;  
but none should suffer in grief alone  
when suffering for another's sake.

November counts away the hours  
as night outpaces the light of day.  
Brushed black silk and forgotten flowers,  
intermingled, in the dust do lay.

Within a column of smooth, gray bark,  
in the heartwood of evergreen sweep,  
where lovers are known to carve their mark,  
pale faces lay in the arms of sleep.

The once bright-eyed and smiling faces  
are now lifeless in a leafless tree,  
and blood-red stains resound in traces  
in rings of a mournful threnody.

Mankind slips into a tangled knot.  
A nudge of wind is perched on the pine,  
and life is twisted into a garrote  
whose kisses are death to thee and thine.

How sad to suffer ourselves to die!  
When night encircles, we cease to be.  
One man's laughter is another's cry  
whose lone comfort is insanity.

The eyes are flooded with sanguine tears  
over loved ones that have been taken  
whose lights have dimmed and whose hopes and fears  
you won't find trace of when you waken.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Ode To Datura

Sweet scent is blasting through trumpet flowers,  
the narcotic breath of beauty and bane.  
From Shiva's chest they sprang, pale faces rose.  
Krîm Krîm Krîm - magical power demesne.

I stroll slowly through the moonlit garden.  
Her voice is calling, beckoning - eterne.  
Sphinx moths drink her spirituous nectar -  
hummingbirds hovering to win their turn.

O! Sacred visions! They open their eyes,  
poised in the liquid silver-whitish light;  
and eccentric colors and fragrances  
erupt in the air of Datura's night.

Proportions and densities never known  
are pronounced on chameleon comets.  
Palmful of pleasure, a whirlwind of bliss,  
a gambol of glee through gleaming grommets.

The petals turn to mauve and magenta.  
A phoenix rises and flies off the sky.  
It's neither illusion nor delusion.  
It's the bud on the stem behind the eye.

My body is burning; my mind turning.  
I am a lotus of lusty perfume.  
I camber on the cloud of a carpet -  
a shower of electrum in the bloom.

Ecstasy of the soul! A cry of love!  
His exquisite skin is a mystery.  
He is flame of fire, the salt of the earth,  
the winds of heaven, the tides of the sea.

The black velvet of his hair in my hands,  
as I kiss him beneath the fragrant tree.  
Heaven-on-earth is embodied complete.  
His lamp of love is lit inside of me.

Petals and perfumes and pleasures abound  
in the prologue of peripheral vane.  
Krîm Hûm Hrîm Krîm Hûm Hrîm Svâhâ Hrîm  
Krîm Krîm Krîm - magical power demesne.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Only A Shirt**

Only a shirt -

I hold it  
embrace it  
smell it  
put it on

Only a shirt -

But it's yours

I wear it  
and pretend  
that I am you  
trying to understand  
how you make me feel  
the way you do

Only a shirt -

But it's white  
like my skin  
and soft  
like your hands  
and I pretend  
that I am you  
and touch myself

Only a shirt -

Wrapped between my legs  
and wet with morning dew  
nestled between my thighs  
like your wet tongue  
and wet like you make me  
when you recklessly take me

Only a shirt -

But so much more  
the touch of you  
the scent of you  
and I take it off  
and lie down on the bed  
naked  
and waiting...

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Our Song Unending**

It cannot be written of nor expressed in art,  
the eloquence of love as it comes from the heart.  
When two hearts collide in a twinkling of bliss,  
like the me of a hug and the you of a kiss.

The soft tender moments that are born in a touch  
are like petals of roses for lovers to clutch;  
and the rain and the wind and the sweet morning dew  
shall make them live eternal and blossom anew.

The mountains shall stand as a reminder of truth,  
how love does not languish like the full lips of youth.  
Love is a magic that is echoed unbroken,  
a bright, gleaming rain with a rainbow as token.

A ship-wrecked heart can bring many waves to the eyes.  
Love is cultivated in a forest of cries;  
and stronger does time restore the heart like the moon,  
like tears fill the ocean or the sleepy lagoon.

Our song is unending and never shall it wane,  
the sweet notes resounding in each kiss of the rain;  
and the roof-top music as it dances on tin  
shall bring comfort to those who are sleeping within.

One ring, unbroken, love encircles the earth.  
It is a part of us from the moment of birth.  
It dissolves all heartaches, all pangs that are pending;  
for love is our song and our song is unending.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Outside Of Loving You**

It is not what the day might bring  
nor the night-stars' light unbroken.  
There is not a single thing  
nor a single token.  
There is nothing anyone can say  
nor nothing anyone can do.  
There is nothing to brighten my day  
outside of loving you.

It is not the fragrance of the rose  
nor the sun that lights the sky.  
It is not the stream that flows  
nor the blue winds passing by.  
It is nothing which I can claim  
nor mortal time can freeze.  
It is nothing which I can name  
and nothing which I can seize.

It is not a look nor word,  
not a smile nor cheerful greeting,  
nor something seen nor heard  
nor nothing life repeating.  
It is nothing bound in rhyme,  
nothing deeper and true.  
It lives outside of time  
but not outside of you.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Pause Between The Lines

Gold and glad as the newborn sun,  
I rose with such splendor  
and gave such gifts: my heart, my soul –  
all that made me tender.  
With sweet smiles and wiles, he pursued,  
at least professed to be;  
and I was drowned in waves of love  
that rose inside of me.

The dawn was tinted pirouettes.  
My heart was wooed and won.  
He captured all the tender parts.  
My love had come undone;  
and in the wood, beneath the tree,  
he called me 'starry-eyed,'  
and plucked my petals one by one.  
The weeping willow cried.

The moon lifts up her offering.  
She haunts my string of pearls.  
I weep in waves that none can see  
for broken-hearted girls.  
Each pearl a tear, a memory  
of what has come to pass.  
Each dream a ghost, a ventry,  
a shadow on the grass.

Reflected in deep pools of thought,  
I wish that you were near.  
I speak the language of the heart  
that few have come to hear.  
In my hand, my heart, my flower –  
my gift of love to you.  
I weep in waves of innocence  
whose love is always true.

You shadow every step I take.  
Your love, it lived and died.  
You are the pause between the lines  
and I the unclaimed bride.  
The silence drifts in muffs of snow.  
My bloom is swept away;  
and the whole earth is winter now.  
The sun has doused its ray.

My lashes sweep the waning light.  
A gleam is in my eyes;  
and ever more, I see your face  
in these Virginia skies.  
A sentimental fool, perhaps.  
I always feel you near.

The winding road runs out of sight.  
I wipe away a tear.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Quietude

I live and breathe love's deep reverie,  
bringing heart's passion into flower.  
I am what you feel; yet, cannot see,  
one small dropp in a pouring shower.

I alter the shape of everything,  
silent waters of a moving stream.  
I am hands of winter, kiss of spring,  
the fair-ripening fruit of your dream.

I come like a spirit lightly bound,  
my footsteps echoing down the hall,  
crossing the locus of the damp ground -  
one more black shadow against the wall.

Do not think on me then open eyes,  
for one breath, one hope, one sight of me.  
I shall not be with you when you rise,  
having shrunk so small inside of thee.

Embrace the silence of starry sphere,  
of the blue winds and the things they speak.  
Grasp the meaning of why you are here -  
the hands of clarity which you seek.

The answers are hidden like a light  
within the tropic trance of your mind.  
All eternity is shining bright  
if you would but leave the past behind.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Reciprocity

A faithful whisper from the heart that hides  
falls between the cresting of ocean tides.  
On wings of prayer, a mystical birth,  
sunlight flashes a smile across the earth.

The moss-green meadow with her daffodils  
runs into the distance across the hills;  
and her perfume lingers, fragrant and sweet.  
I nestle in her cloud-pavilioned seat.

In a sky-swirled skirt of lace filigree,  
with sparkles of copper-green verdigris,  
I dream of the future - lovely, divine.  
A balmy breeze kisses the crescent vine.

O! Maker of earth and heavenly spheres,  
whose Love is mightier than mortal fears!  
Bring the ecstasy, the hope, and the bliss,  
bouquets that blossom in every kiss.

The language of love is written on air.  
It sings in the sunshine and starry square.  
A verdurous vision, as yet unseen,  
love sways in the branches in groves of green.

Love is the deep kiss that kisses our hearts.  
It may be shattered, but it never parts.  
For, love is eternal, ever abides,  
a faithful whisper from the heart that hides.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Reflections of a Woman

Spring has come; and she loves the solitude,  
standing half-naked inside her bouquet.  
Her breath is a blessing of gratitude  
and she – a garden sculpture on display.

Passion paints red the petals of her crown  
that glisten softly from the morning rain,  
unfolding in waves come tumbling down  
over fields of honey and ginger stain.

The suggestion of silk silently slips  
into ripe ripples of virginal white,  
hanging like dreams on the cusp of her hips  
and bathed in shadows of the morning light.

She thinks of Lucy Maud Montgomery  
and her sweet spring song of mystic healing.  
The long stems of life are a mystery  
but in their mystique are most appealing.

The flowers are a song of devotion  
played on the heart in a garden of green,  
reflections of a woman in motion  
in faraway places, in time, unseen.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Revelation and Concealment

I can't honestly say that I really knew her.  
It was like glimpsing shadows in the pitch of night  
where form and features part and then come together  
and appear to be one due to the lack of light.

Her eyes were a depressed revelation of blue.  
The windows of her house stood lonely and alone,  
framed in the center of mellifluous milieu  
where spirit was broken by a heart turned to stone.

They used to call her Lady Luck when times were young  
and sugary kisses paved pathways to a dream,  
but those days of beauty shall remain unsung  
beneath the tears of torment that turned into stream.

Still waters run deep in the weep of the ocean,  
in the jagged scars of fear that furrow the face,  
beyond a mountain of heartache and emotion  
where the heart and the mind seek a separate space.

The soul bleeds with its dowry of merciless pain,  
an endless chain of tears to imprison the heart  
in tenebrous tumult and resilient rain –  
Such a sad flower, with its petals pulled apart!

Her eyes were a depressed revelation of blue  
but concealed everything in the wall behind;  
and no one really knew her, though they thought they knew.  
She walked alone down the corridors of her mind.

I hear her footfalls in the echoes of the night  
when sad stillness thunders in the sky overhead.  
When the shadows find sway in the soft streaks of light,  
I can feel her breathing by the side of my bed.

They say she's my mother, but I never knew her.  
There are no roots, no tree, no family, no me.  
When the veil of morning begins to softly stir,  
a reticent river empties into the sea.

They say she's my mother, but my mother has died.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Romantasy**

Flooded with romance and fantasy,  
I am transported across the miles.  
Sweet rhapsody of romantasy!  
I dance on the curve of all your smiles.  
The wind whispering along the wave  
is the breath of two lovers kissing -  
one heart giving; the other who gave,  
who knew what the other was missing.

Two souls entwine and sweet love prevails.  
Water turns to wine across the sky.  
Morning mist cools the impassioned sails  
that have no future except to fly.  
The ancient tides resound with your voice,  
ringing around me in bells so blue.  
The nights, the days, the heavens rejoice!  
All is made perfect because of you.

I rise to the brim, dispersed in bliss.  
A golden wind encircles the sky.  
I fall into love, into your kiss.  
I am the sparkle that lights your eye.  
Nothing is sweeter than fantasy  
within the romance that never ends.  
Sweet rhapsody of romantasy!  
Our love is a beacon that transcends.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Sacred Ground

The air is bathed by western wind  
on the head of a silver cloud  
whose raining hair is scented fresh  
as spring in a burgeoning shroud;  
and feathers flank the gnarled old tree  
whose branches waved their last farewell  
when lightning struck and burst in flame  
as though a timber straight from hell.

The sky swirls into skirts of storm  
that unravel in shades of gray.  
One seed that wafted into nest  
has now blossomed into display.  
It sings among the tangled vines,  
the notes written on sheets of air,  
and breaks the silence of the morn  
with its ever hopeful prayer.

Yesterday – the birth of hindsight.  
Today – the wings of what's to come.  
Tomorrow – a chance for freedom  
with the dawning millennium.  
We're born to die in retrospect,  
chasing the wind into the wave  
on echoes of eternity  
that lead us blindly to the grave.

There is wisdom in the journey  
that is retained when we return.  
When a woman swallows the moon,  
the heart of darkness starts to burn;  
and each man shall rise in glory  
from sacred ground that gives him birth  
spreading wings like God's Great Spirit  
over emerald peaks of earth.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Sea of Beauty**

For years, I was empty as a seashell  
led by memories of whispering waves  
and the muse of moments come to an end  
in the vicinage of watery graves.

I was lost like a dropp in the ocean,  
seeking the sea that no longer seemed near.  
Like music entering an instrument,  
I became the song that I could not hear.

I rose from the depths against summer sky.  
I became splendid, sparkling, serene.  
When you first held me, it was magical!  
We were entwined as one, more felt than seen.

I am a pearl in a sea of beauty,  
luminous and bright in luster of love.  
God! Grant your tide be the truth that guides me  
through the harbors of heart that lead above.

May I drown in this ocean of beauty  
abiding forever in this spirit;  
and if ever the whole becomes broken,  
take the light of my soul along with it.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **She Needed Him Most**

I could have had him if it had been my desire,  
but I chose to walk away and give him to her.  
She needed him most, and I chose to aim higher.

Her husband loved her, but she was wont to admire  
the words of a quick-quilled poet provocateur.  
I could have had him if it had been my desire.

Love was not enough when she lusted for fire.  
She wanted promises of patchouli and myrrh.  
She needed him most, and I chose to aim higher.

He is truly brilliant, and I'll miss him entire.  
She is the dilettante, and he the connoisseur.  
I could have had him if it had been my desire.

But she in her own right is a plus to acquire,  
an exceptional woman and a force majeure.  
She needed him most, and I chose to aim higher.

I wish them legions of love and strength against ire.  
May God grant them grit against any saboteur.  
I could have had him if it had been my desire.  
She needed him most, and I chose to aim higher.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Shoulder Of Sin (Trine)**

He storms away in a caliginous cloud of thunder.  
His chilly kiss leaves me with a curious sense of wonder.

In a palm of tears of disbelief, I cannot find the reason.  
How is it love can be so true and then commit such treason?

The wind portends a coming storm; the night sleeps in my skin.  
The branches tap - a finger's crook - begging to come in.

A black rain falls; emotions rise. I cannot keep them under.  
A cry of love is a cry of love, no matter the time nor season.  
His midnight ocean of hair curls over the shoulder of his sin.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Silent Whisper Morning**

The morning falls like a silent whisper upon the land,  
with the clouds stealing in like a thief upon the flowers;  
and the faint mist that is rising like a gossamer hand  
touches the verdant blades of grass and the blooming bowers.

I wrap my arms about me and think of times now gone by  
when I shared my mornings with you wrapped in a robe of fire.  
Love grew as high as a hanging mistletoe in the sky,  
and thirsty lips drank from one another their heart's desire.

Alas! I am incarnate in a world lost without you,  
and I drift through empty days like a feather without wing.  
I drink the water of your voice like buttercups in dew.  
The memory of it haunts me, the song you used to sing.

Having loved you once before makes the dead past live again,  
and my earth-born spirit lives and breathes in happier spheres.  
I shall search forever through wind and waves, the mist and rain.  
I shall walk forever with the smile of you in my tears.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Similis Smiles**

Like the moon, he speaks - a silver-tongued devil dressed in black,  
his words slithering across my skin  
like rain on the rhombus of a diamondback.

Similis smiles like a vacant house,  
like the death of a dappled dove;  
and like stains in a broken China cup,  
he is at the bottom when it comes to love.

For his heart is like a mangled mass,  
a mountain crumbled as grains of sand.  
Like a tear to the eye, he clouds the sight,  
like a veil of fog across the land.

The senses are stifled from his desert air,  
like pressing fingers around my throat.  
He slips like a stone, a rolling stone,  
into the great ache of life's emote.

Like the grave, he is full of bones -  
the ancient sorrow of hapless isles.  
He is a carcass of man, an empty shell;  
and like a leper, Similis smiles.

Note: A simile is a figure of speech in which two essentially unlike things are compared, often in a phrase introduced by like or as as in: He was as strong as a bull. (Latin, neuter of similis, like.) Thus, the name, Similis Smiles.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Solace

My loving heart could not sustain you.  
I could not make my love your own;  
and though I was honest and true,  
I could not turn your heart from stone.

I could not banish your desolate fears  
nor cause your apprehensions to dim.  
Now, let the ink turn to tears;  
and let the pages weep with them.

I wanted to soar the galaxy of your eyes  
and live in your heart, the loveliest;  
but I guess I was destined for other skies,  
another region, another realm, at best.

I think back over the words once spoken,  
and I listen with a saddened heart.  
O! The blissful days of joy are broken,  
and our love has been torn apart.

The flowers that made love's delicate chain  
have now withered, turned to brown.  
Once parched, they never blossom again,  
the petals have fallen down.

Wounds of betrayal cannot be effaced,  
and the hurts have shattered my dreams.  
You were the vision my blue pen traced,  
now blotted beneath tear-born streams.

I realize more with each passing day,  
together piecing the fabric of lies,  
that you blindly threw it all away  
to the stormwinds of darkened skies.

I thought you an angel from heaven above;  
and I suppose it was selfish of me  
to think I could embrace your wings with love,  
when all the while you struggled to be free.

Long frozen at heart, love left you long ago.  
You've forgotten the taste of love once knew,  
and the sensuous freedom of passion's flow.  
There is an emptiness beyond emptiness inside of you.

Say good-bye and think no more on me.  
I am a dream that you never had.  
I gave you love, but do not turn to see;  
for, it shall only make you sad.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Somewhere Still The Rose**

No shadow ever darkened the path of true love;  
for, its light refused to let the darkness in.

With a spring in my step and a step to the sky,  
I skip with joy and whistle in a whirl.  
I spark a sunrise sonnet to sweet sanctify  
and luminesce in a glittering swirl.

The morn breathes of jasmine and honeysuckle vines.  
A slice of summer slips into the sea.  
Above the hills and hillocks, a bluebird aligns,  
slanting downwards in silent reverie.

I press my cheek against the fingertips of dawn.  
The scent of water whispers on the wind,  
and red sparks of sunfire scatter across the lawn  
in beauty that I cannot comprehend.

What a world for lovers and what a world for smiles!  
What diapason of symphonic swells!  
The sunlight soiree carries on for miles  
in a garden of burgeoning bluebells.

The bed of sky is pillowed with clouds in a fluff  
that hover in the bright pulse of the light,  
and angel breezes blow white wisps of dandepuff  
that flutter far and get away from sight.

My heart is blithe as a nightingale's opus,  
whose song is sweet and sweeter than it knows  
and sweeter still when it dares to delight us.  
Somewhere still in time, somewhere still the rose.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Soulgasm

'I got lost in the night, without the light  
of your eyelids, and when the night surrounded me  
I was born again: I was the owner of my own darkness.'

~ Pablo Neruda

He doesn't sleep here anymore and I grieve.  
I close my eyes, and a tear falls in dismay.  
I am a crazy dreamer, but I believe  
that I will see him, hold him, kiss him someday.

The dark snake of anxiety coils within,  
and the seconds escape from his fangs of fear.  
His poison awaits; it lurks beneath the skin.  
I will not be held captive; this much is clear.

For, I sing the sweet song of our yesterday.  
I trace the memory with my fingertips.  
I languor in the bed where we used to lay,  
where you would plant roses between luscious lips.

And the smile of your eyes when I acquiesced  
was full of flickers of a forbidden fire.  
Smoke rose between us when our bodies compressed,  
and together we climbed the wall of desire.

Slow, sultry breaths danced along my collarbone  
as fingers fumbled with the buttons below.  
A rain of kisses upon my neck, a moan,  
then the nighttime silence was broken with 'Oh! '

I loosened and lengthened with every kiss,  
molding myself in your body's heated curve.  
A stirring of passion, a buxom of bliss,  
the heightened tension along every nerve.

A moment of madness, an epiphany ...  
I was as wet as a field soaked in the rain.  
A lifetime of love, an immortal decree ...  
forever emblazoned like fire to the brain.

An orgy of unrecognizable strength  
washed over me like waves from a storm-swept sea.  
I held onto his back, surrounded his length,  
and made him forevermore a part of me.

Sweet undulations of passionate pleasure!  
An evening laced with eroticism.  
Orgasm of the soul for me to treasure,  
our great moment of bohemianism.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Source

Spring yawns; and blossoms spill into my ear,  
as winter breaks the mirror of a tear.  
Eyes rhapsodize in piquant shades of blue.  
Kisses fall soft as rain in morning dew.

Dawn unbraids luminous hair with a sigh,  
bright filaments of light that span the sky;  
and molten is the moment of return,  
when roses in their whirling start to burn.

On prisms of a rainbow pirouette,  
she sashays into golden silhouette  
then somersaults into divinest art  
as words that woo the poet's beating heart.

A source of divination born in rows  
of silken strokes of poetry and prose,  
in the green palm of all eternity,  
she is planted that she might flower free.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Spill

I poured my heart into one long, ambient sigh,  
letting it flow down into its final release.  
It lasted longer than all of the years gone by,  
folding itself among the night-black verdigris.

The density lingered in the back of your eyes.  
I agonized, hoping you would ask me to stay.  
I lost my soul, bone-weary, and drowned in my cries  
as you said, "I don't know what you want me to say."

Midnight cascaded around me and cloaked the floor,  
and I gathered the remnants of nothing and less  
and split into fragments of yes-no-nevermore,  
weaving the sadness into the hem of my dress.

I plucked your rib from my side and buried it deep  
like a waning crescent that tumbled from the sky  
so that when you fade into darkness I will keep  
a small sliver of light to remember you by.

When the days are darker than I think I can stand  
and my darker self is empty of strength and will,  
I hold the memories within withering hand  
then I open my fingers and I let them spill.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Stairway To Heaven

I wanted to build a stairway to heaven -  
a reverent rising to make life complete -  
but discovered the stairway was in my head;  
and I needed to bring it beneath my feet.

For if mind and matter were set beneath me,  
if pomp and pageantry were silent and still,  
I could climb the steps that would lead to freedom  
if only the heart would envelop the will.

There are nebulous stars and constellations  
and hidden galaxies suspended in space;  
and I must use them to construct that stairway,  
the steps within the eyes of a wizened face.

For God's breath is blowing between the waters.  
His lips are playing the woodwind of my soul;  
and when no breath is to be left within me,  
it is His breath of Life that blows through the hole.

The wings of love have been hidden within me.  
I may fly to heaven if I so desire;  
and my heart is the roof from which I must jump  
to land in the hands that will lift me higher.

So I walk across stars to meet my maker -  
the reflection of truth appears in the sky;  
and the spirit of joy is flapping its wings  
in the circle of life that will never die.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Stateless Shades of Shoah

Dreams  
of dread -  
Buchenwald -  
where the lampshades  
of unblemished flesh  
immortalized the Jews  
forevermore for the world  
in an eternity of light.  
Prisoners were called 'Singing Horses, '  
and they sang as they marched along Blood Street.

Skinned and tanned, the corpses were discarded,  
the finest Jewish leather was wrapped  
around the words written in books.  
Some have said that Ilse Koch  
even wore the soft gloves -  
Bitch of Buchenwald -  
her hands were cold,  
her handbag  
shedding  
tears.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Stephanie's Song

She slips into thought, into that secret hiding place  
in the back of her mind, soaking up the morning rain  
as if she were thirsting for the grief which paints her face  
in shades of rose and fills her eyes with incessant pain.

I can see the weight of the world upon her shoulders  
as it presses her down into her own private hell.  
Her soul is seething; and the fire of sorrow smolders,  
smothering her with a sadness that I know so well.

The branches of her lineage are of a felled tree.  
She stands divided between the present and the past,  
and elements of regret mark her anatomy  
so that she appears to age unreasonably fast.

In my eyes, I can still see her as that little girl  
with her navy and white plaid pants and her short-cropped hair  
and the quick way that her temper tantrums would unfurl  
as a whirlwind of rage tossing punches in the air.

I distill my spirit within the tip of my pen  
letting my sorrow drift like fog across the pages.  
She buries the rootlet of the willow deep within,  
letting it fester and strangle her through the ages.

I slip into the silence of a broken-down dream  
relinquishing the cross that I have shouldered for years  
and blend into the essence of that singular stream  
as clouds are canonized within the weep of her tears.

She cries for a mother who has tumbled into death  
and for a father who never wanted nor could be.  
She cries for the willow that weeps with every breath  
whose branches bend beneath the weight of what you can't see.

The weight of the world is like a pebble in my hands  
where memories blossom into darker shades of gray,  
and I toss it into the river's watery strands  
hoping it will carry all of her burdens away.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Struggle & Surrender

Pale and slender, the new moon is rising.  
Petals and perfumes are plumes of delight.  
A nectarous moisture slips through the seam  
shining soft like the silken dews of night.

One small bud of pleasure opens a rose.  
Its inner petals are aching to see  
the lush of the loom of towering strength,  
the luscious limb of libidinous lea.

Tumbling twilight runs warm in her veins  
as a mossy fence circles the flower.  
The fruit of the sex is sunshine on lips  
as he suckles the bounteous dower.

Lingua lunges with violent lashes,  
a white-hot poker of burning excess,  
a dancing dagger, a succulent slave  
trained to submit in the soiree of sex.

A crimson cushion cradles her body,  
floating forever in a sea of bliss;  
and breathing deeply, she yields completely,  
offering all to his ravenous kiss.

Her face is flushed with flecks of flaming fire.  
Her fingers tangled in his midnight hair.  
Wet and feverish, she shakes in her bones,  
thoroughly plundered and gasping for air.

His secretive laughter rings of triumph  
as azure shadows dance across his face;  
and linking her ankles around his neck,  
he makes a necklace of sacred embrace.

He looks like a god glittering in light,  
the milk moon memory of captive mind,  
riding her, crushing her, stretching her sex,  
in the frenzy of love and lust combined.

In and out he drives it with forceful zeal,  
slapping her bottom with every thrust.  
Gorgeous distress is scripted in her eyes,  
caught on the verge of climactic combust.

In a white explosion of ecstasy,  
the pale moon is splintered beautifully;  
and stars are born in the sky of his eyes,  
as she gazes at him, dutifully.

The struggle and surrender of the heart  
is a battle of delicate design:

a bud and a rose, a sheath and a sword,  
burning bodies in a bottle of wine.

Whines and whimpers and sweet supplication,  
these are the lacings of submissive chain.  
Tethers and tortures and naked taboo  
hang on the wall at the back of the brain.

The memory trembles upon her lips,  
how at once he is cruel and tender;  
and she closes her eyes for he has won.  
It is the twilight of her surrender.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Sunlight Strikes

Sunlight strikes the meandering stream,  
and I catch my breath. Is this a dream?  
The sky is mirrored and turned to gold,  
echoing brightly severalfold.

The silk-satin effect counter-clashes,  
a fragile fold of flaming flashes.  
I turn my eyes from the iridescence,  
startled at once by your silent presence.

Tangling with emotion, blushing,  
I catch my breath; my skin is flushing.  
Your eyes to mine, with both responding,  
rapturous rush and breathless bonding.

I gather the seconds; time unwinds.  
We walk in the shadows of our minds.  
Dissolved in thought, I melt into you.  
You step through portals of azure blue.

We dance with sky, with the universe,  
and rise through the ribbons that immerse.  
We quickly climb the ladder of dreams,  
stepping on the rungs of sunshine beams.

At the top, we are baptized in light,  
in clouds by day and by stars at night.  
We wrap our arms, cling passionately,  
to the neck of our divinity.

The soft wind sweeps surreptitiously.  
I adore you most deliciously.  
Sunlight strikes the meandering stream,  
and I catch my breath. Is this a dream?

The gold of your presence turns to ink  
and flows from my pen the words I think.  
Desire sails silent between our eyes,  
traversing the waves to Paradise.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Sunrise At The Beach**

Once more - once only - I wish I could be  
soft as a zephyr in the morning light,  
warm, remembering, what you'll never see,  
what I gave and you lost without a fight.

Sunrise splendor of a new-dawning love!  
The lush, lustful moments born in a day.  
Those moments of magic here and above  
blossomed in a most magnificent way.

The longing prevails, try hard as I might;  
and the past lives though I wish it would die.  
Tangled in tears in the ashes of night,  
I caress my soul in the hands of cry.

You'll never know; I'll never understand  
why I love you beyond sense and reason.  
There is one set of footprints in the sand -  
mine - a trail of tears to mark the season.

How sweet the myth of love everlasting!  
The rain laments in liquid chains of blue.  
The words confess, forever forecasting,  
that I am helplessly in love with you.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Sun-Spun and Smoldering

I see you as a phoenix rising  
in the light of the evening sun:  
strong, beautiful, uncompromising,  
irreducible – you are the one.

I see you at the end of the world  
with your wings open, joyous and free,  
where the winds uplift and waves are curled  
to whisper back to the open sea.

I see you sun-spun and smoldering  
with your radiance shining above;  
and whatever weight you're shouldering,  
it grows lighter in the hands of love.

I see you clinging to sunset cheek  
in the warmth of the roseate light  
in evergreen jeans on mountain peak  
in swirls of mist of shimmering white.

I see you when moon light bathes on trees  
and fireflies glitter in silver glass  
when sweet notes of jasmine scent the breeze  
as it blows over the leafy grass.

I see you as your hand squeezes mine  
in silent awe of the words I think,  
and your smile is a glorious sign  
of the bliss about to blaze and brink.

O! I see you and I see you still  
as you walk along memory's beach,  
and I feel blessed as the blessings spill  
beyond my grasp and just beyond reach.

I see you, feel you: ever to be.  
The heart is a deep well filled with ink,  
and I shall compose such filigree  
for the mind to feast and mouth to drink.

I see you, love you and only you.  
While I am living, will always be.  
My God! If only you knew, you knew!  
You would set sail and return to me.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Synchronicity

Under the sheet of night, I dreamed of two  
complimentary chords plucked from one string,  
different and yet connected at once,  
a harmony of light awakening.

It was a revival of melodies,  
of ripe suns rising above fields of rain,  
sliding like silk into cavernous folds.  
The tantric tongue transmits fire to the brain.

I straddled the mount of magnificence,  
splendorous tension to every nerve,  
the gravity of gliding into space  
upon galaxies of vigor and verve.

Twilight beckoned with such velocity  
the atmosphere twinkled with orbs of chrome.  
The night sleep's bane, slice of succulent sun,  
opens the eyes to a hungering home.

Salacious secrets of the stirring mind  
trail the torrent of my thunderous heart,  
the quickened pulse beneath tremulous skin,  
a wavelength of wonder never to part.

Under the sheet of night, my lover burns  
along the shore of my melting body;  
and I discover my new religion,  
praying that he will never desert me.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **The Daughter Of Misery And Rain**

She was the daughter of misery and rain.  
He was the son of abandonment and rust.  
Together, they gave birth to heartache and pain.  
Now, they lay quietly sleeping with the dust.

I rose from the ashes like a question mark  
at the close of a sentence of endless woe  
and dared to glimmer in the gathering dark  
as a beacon of light for the ones below.

I am a flower rooted deep in the soil  
arching my back against a defiant sky  
and strive to survive within this mortal coil  
with water-spun clouds in the back of my eye.

Luna washes me clean with shimmering light.  
The song in her voice carries hints of the seas;  
and her hollow of sky bejewels the night  
by glittering over her temple of trees.

I am cornered by time on the dagger's edge,  
clutching the silence on a slippery slope,  
slicing open my soul and bearing this pledge:  
"May the ensanguined past pierce my eyes with hope! "

I am the daughter of misery and rain.  
I am the child of abandonment and rust;  
and I have tasted both the heartache and pain  
when all that remains are the shadows and dust.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## The Daughter That Never Was

Let me preface this poem by saying it's true.  
Some people will not believe it, and that's okay.  
I can only write it as I was meant to do.  
You can choose to believe it or throw it away.

I write this at a time when my mother has passed,  
as autumn leaves fall beneath a colorless sky;  
and tears, like rain, might as well be a bugle blast  
whose song is sailing toward its final good-bye.

I must admit that I don't know where to begin,  
as the beginning is like a rolling ocean.  
Some will think me heartless, with the greatest chagrin;  
but only I will know the depths of devotion.

My father was like the greatest ghost of glory!  
Though he was dead, he somehow remained undying,  
and she spun no truth in the web of her story.  
How could I have ever known that she was lying?

He was a soldier, with his starry flag on high;  
and I idolized him in my little girl mind.  
My every breath affirmed, "Father! Here am I! "  
I always wondered how he could leave me behind.

The years and memories shrivel into a scroll.  
The past becomes present and present becomes past,  
and a deep sorrow resonates within my soul.  
I was her worst mistake - a nothing, an outcast.

Neither life nor death ever granted me her love.  
I was a little girl with my heart in her hands.  
I strived to make her happy: way beyond, above;  
but nothing was enough for her unfair demands.

The cooking, the cleaning, getting straight A's in school:  
none of it ever mattered in the palm of her plan.  
Her cold-hearted criticism and ridicule  
were mine, while she gave her love to some low-life man!

Her anger, her hate, her relentless, beating hand,  
her cruelty, and her hurtful words still resound.  
When a tree is rooted in a dying tract of land,  
how can its young branches with life yet abound?

Eighteen years and nothing! She had no love to give.  
I walked away and so we spent the years apart.  
Alone and on my own, I found a way to live  
despite the drowning in the deep well of my heart.

I found my father's grave, only to discover  
that he was never a brave soldier after all.

She cheated and took his best friend as a lover.  
There was no grace to come from such a mortal fall.

Twenty-three years old, and he ended his young life.  
In a mangled mass of metal, he closed his eyes;  
and his blood was on her hands, his unfaithful wife.  
She hid the truth behind her secrets and her lies.

Unmarked and dishonored, his grave was stark and bare.  
There was no name to mark his spot of hallowed ground.  
Her malice, her hate, and her total lack of care  
were like shackles that enclosed my spirit round.

Although no memories of father did I hold,  
I marked his grave with his name and angels singing.  
My first great achievement! I was nineteen years old  
and battle-worn by the brush of tempest's winging.

No matter that we begged her to take us to his side  
to place flowers where he lay his head in rest!  
We were his two daughters; and yet, were both denied.  
Never once did our shadows slide across his breast.

To make matters worse, as if it could ever be so,  
her love-child was given his name, my father's own.  
The deception, the deceit, the wrong and the woe:  
it's a memory that should always walk alone.

How she could take her love-child to my father's grave!  
Dust unto dust, may he forever rest in peace.  
I'll never understand the whispers of the wave  
nor these thoughts of mine that will not come to cease.

Uncle Jan cried with joy when I made that first call.  
I never expected such a warm reception.  
He said he always wondered what happened to us all,  
and then he told me of my mother's deception.

The unanswered calls and the unopened mail –  
she denied us a family or even the option.  
Our names had been changed; yet, another betrayal!  
She lied and said we had been put up for adoption.

It was December 14, 1972,  
and the white page of dawn was blowing in the wind.  
Joel Ray Van Tassell crashed on Fort Avenue.  
With a snap of his neck, his life came to its end.

It was October 26, 2009,  
and Aurora waltzed across the autumnal sky.  
A telephone ring, a weeping voice on the line,  
and the heart-rending sound of Stephanie in cry.

"Mom stopped breathing, and they are doing CPR."  
The sound of the sirens screamed, "Get out of the way."  
Nothing could prepare; no memories could bar.  
There were simply no words and nothing I could say.

Brenda Luck Van Tassell broke her heart without gain.  
She composed her fate in a rhapsody of blue,  
and she surrendered to the sad staccato strain.  
She is buried in Fort Hill Cemetery too.

Her hush and her mystery have drawn to a close  
like the beat of her heart and the breath of her lips,  
and the thorn is removed from the side of the rose  
and the ring of light surrounding nature's ellipse.

I know that Stephanie will mourn and shed her tears.  
She has the pictures, the memories, and the prize.  
I have suffered the loss for over forty years  
until the tear-tinged twilight shadowed my eyes.

I know that it's impossible to understand;  
and there's nothing sadder than a soliloquy  
from a daughter who was unwanted, unloved, and  
who feels as if she were born to never be.

I could not go the funeral on Friday.  
Though the reasons are many, it's mainly because  
in her words, I was nothing and a nobody.  
Quite simply, I am the daughter that never was.

I grieve alone; I weep alone – too deep, too deep.  
I know that others will think me stony hearted;  
but I find solace in the arms of sleep, of sleep  
when I can dream of those who have now departed.

I will meet you in dreams of what will never be,  
and I will drift on the hope of the sleepy waves  
and dream that you are dreaming a dream of me  
as you lay sleeping in the arms of your graves.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## The Last Flower

His hands descend,  
smack against the skin  
like fingerprints of pain.  
The night sash of hatred  
and the pockets of his vest  
hide an army of madness.  
No starry parlor is in his eyes.  
No moon hangs in his sky.  
He has no love,  
and his hands flash  
a black eye across the face  
in moments of non compos mentis.  
Thunderwords slay  
my silent esteem  
until I am nothing.  
I crouch in the corner,  
driven there by terror -  
my only defiance  
since I have no fists  
to defend against his own.  
Inchoate feelings of love  
and muddled mayhem  
slowly rise to the surface.  
Still, I shrink away,  
fearful of being alone.  
The hands of time stop  
as the lock of his elbow  
crushes my windpipe.  
Then, he tosses me aside  
to sit in the mire  
of his laughing eyes.  
I shiver without crying,  
as no tears are left me,  
pounded into the dirt,  
waiting yet.  
The tap of his fingers  
is like a hammer to my skull;  
but I must find a way  
to bridge the gap of madness,  
to come to my senses.  
His teethmarks upon my flesh  
chatter of life, not death.  
I am like Shiva - all arms -  
as I fight back against him.  
I have my own map of hell  
and fight to find my way out.  
Determination siphons anger  
from the contours of my fear.  
I halt on the chasm's brink,  
looking over and staring  
hate directly in the face.  
I see him for what he is.

Water becomes wine  
as I summon up the courage  
to break free.  
This transformation hides,  
and something stays the same.  
Yet, everything is changing.  
I visit the old city of myself,  
folding back the edges of  
old letters where I once signed my name -  
the name I was once so proud of.  
The sorrow is that I am a waking vine,  
dragged through the mud of his hate;  
and yet, I am a microcosmic tide of strength.  
Love never beat the morning as she opened her eyes,  
and the sundry drops of rain never replaced my tears.  
In between the shade and the soul,  
there blossoms a light hidden by its own petals.  
Love never closed her eyes in my dream;  
and though she retreated into her shell,  
Love never lost the last flower.  
It was there - inside - moving towards discovery.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **The Length Of This Lifetime**

The length of this lifetime is short and sweet  
like a ruffle of ink into the sea,  
a mindlessly beautiful winding sheet  
that spirals like silk deep inside of me.

I fell from your lips into the abyss  
tortured by hunger for more of the same  
nourished by ghosts of your immortal kiss  
that weep in my heart when I call your name.

I drift like mist into that sacred place  
and anchor in silence, flowering deep,  
bone-deep in the memory of your face  
on the wingspan of hope that haunts my sleep.

The world unrolls in a carpet of night,  
and a shower of stars rains in my hands.  
I fade into the breath of sheer moonlight  
dancing like a god over desert sands.

The length of this lifetime is but a breath,  
a breath in the moments of loving you;  
and I've tasted such sweetness that my death  
will spark like the sun on a stem of blue.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **The Moth, The Moon, and Me**

Like a moth, I am drawn to the light  
as it leans against the window ledge.  
I dream to hold what I have no right  
that beckons beyond the outer edge.

I flutter my wings in sweet rejoice  
wanting to shatter the window pane  
as it muffles the sound of your voice,  
and I wish to bring it home again.

You read Baudelaire by candlelight.  
"Sadness rises in me like the sea,"  
who loves you more than I have the right  
when your love was not destined for me.

I fall down in faint of love and shame,  
my wings waving one final farewell,  
and smolder in sonnets of your name  
that cause my frangible heart to swell.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **The Night Takes Flight**

The night takes flight on a blackbird's wing  
nesting within the curve of my spine.  
I feel the gentlest fluttering  
as though your spirit were touching mine.

Memory shapes the touch of your ghost  
like the ocean wind walking the beach  
smoother than silk and sweeter than most  
transporting whispers just beyond reach.

A breathless breathing and skin on skin  
and words without logic start to rise.  
I am without you; and you within,  
cloaked in the velvet behind my eyes.

The night takes flight on a thunderbolt  
and strikes the drum-beat of pouring rain  
as clouds and starlight begin to molt  
hugging the silence across the plain.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **The Ocean Is A Woman**

The ocean is a woman turned to the skies,  
spilling her thoughts along a shoreline of sand.  
You will never know what hides behind her eyes  
by skimming the surface and reaching dry land.

Her soul is silent and runs deeper than deep.  
O! How silent and deep her rivulets run!  
Her whispers will charm you and lull you to sleep.  
Let silence enter and the two shall be one.

Her coral cathedrals give pause to the brave  
so eager to dive into the depths of youth.  
She hides, yet magnifies, the giver who gave  
sweet pearls of wisdom and immutable truth.

The ocean is a woman walking on waves,  
wrapped in wind-song between heaven and the shore,  
lightly tiptoeing over watery graves  
buried deep where the sunlight can reach no more.

She tosses to turn; and she rises to fall,  
undulating with her ubiquitous hips.  
She dances on decks, over promenades all.  
She is the sepulchre of a thousand ships.

Deep in her depths, the ocean is listening;  
and my heart is haunted by love for the sea.  
Waves are rippling; twilight is glistening.  
The ocean is a woman and she is me.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **These Lips Have Kissed**

These lips have kissed the eyelids of the morn,  
painted bright with rays of light newly born.  
The gold twist of warm incense splits the sod  
with wondrous waves of wind - the breath of God.

These lips have kissed with the rosiest hue  
the soft slopes of skin bejeweled with dew.  
The nape of night, the décolleté of day,  
I lovingly kiss the shadows away.

These lips have kissed the ethereal wings  
of sunrise splendor's sweet imaginings  
of heavenward hopes and happier spheres  
where the blue silence sings to mortal ears.

These lips have kissed the fresh blossoming bud  
of infinite truth that runs in our blood,  
the petals of promise, the slants of stone,  
echoes that whisper, 'we are not alone.'

These lips have kissed each word of the story,  
the cross, the crown, the glimmers of glory,  
and branches that rise from each brave old tree.  
These lips have kissed and been kissed. You, me: we.

These lips have kissed the earth, the sea and sky,  
the what-if, the where, the who, when, and why,  
the shadows of past and shadows of doubt.  
I kissed the universe: within and out.

These lips have kissed heaven, its starry roof.  
Stand still and listen if you must have proof.  
Seek the lips that seek you; do not resist.  
You too will sweetly sing, 'these lips have kissed.'

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Tree of Love

I am shadowed in the shade of the tree,  
in the soft leisure of flowering green,  
observing how the sky descends slowly -  
a brooding poet seeking the serene.

The fruit of all seasons hangs by a thread,  
clinging to life like gnarled hands on a rail.  
The knife-edged years, unrelenting, have fled,  
renting the dreams that impassioned my veil.

I absorb the breath of blossoms and fruit  
as fireflies flit across autumn scatters.  
I planted this tree and love gave it root;  
and in this world, love is all that matters.

The season of loneliness has arrived,  
and there is a sense of punctuation.  
I suffered the storms and somehow survived  
the longest whisper of desolation.

The window's light is like a candle flame  
to a mateless moth that dives with daring.  
She throws herself against the window frame  
until she falls to the ground, despairing.

I bow my head and remember my place.  
The waves of time create a great divide.  
I am still in love, a pitiful case.  
I miss him; yet, I feel him at my side.

So when I am buried beneath this tree  
and the roots of love reach towards the sky,  
may he come visit to remember me,  
to sit in my shadow and wonder why ...

Why he waited too long to taste the fruit  
of yesterday's truth now torn to shatters.  
I planted this tree and love gave it root;  
and in this world, love is all that matters.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Trilogy Of Love

### So Special

Mother's Voice: 'You think you're so special...'

I heard in disbelief; my spirit crushed and beat.  
The words of my mother were not gentle nor sweet.  
With a sorrowful heart, I obeyed her command  
as a slap of thunder resounded from her hand.

And from this fathomless heart, I will pour a song  
of torture and torment and how it made me strong.  
Little girl lost - more sullen and more moody grew -  
struggling just to survive, although no one knew.

Dear father was embittered and disconsolate.  
My mother cheated with his friend. Too late! Too late!  
The swell of anger, the furious storm of ire,  
and the look of hate in his eyes that burned like fire.

The fatal daggers she threw with words once spoken  
tore the mountain of my dad and left him broken.  
Frightful frown on the lips that used to smile for me -  
he fluttered like a butterfly, no longer free.

Smash! Crack! Bang! My mother's promise broken in two.  
Father was a fury; in a hurry, he flew.  
I cringed in the corner, cried for his wretched state.  
It lasted forever and the hour was late.

I sat in darkness like an eagle on its wing,  
unable to fly from my endless suffering.  
My father took his life, and he cast it away.  
Like a lost butterfly, he fluttered where he lay.

I thought he was so special; how could I have known  
that the walls of the heart are made of desert stone?  
And all the teardrops water the roots of the soul  
where threads of light cannot enter an empty hole.

### Nothing and A Nobody

Mother's Voice: 'You are nothing and a nobody...'

With briars and thorns, the garden was overgrown.  
My hero, my dear father has been overthrown.  
Noxious dew lingers and covers my skin with fear.  
I've been left with a demon; the demon is near.

A small ball of flesh is thrown down the spiral stairs.  
A meteor of laughter electrifies hairs;  
and they stand on end as her words throb in my brain.  
Soon shall I pass away and end all of this pain.

I take on the mantle of guilt and blame, weighing  
me down the cool stairway of broken dreams flaying.  
I descend into unconsciousness, close my eyes.  
Soul of my father! Dark honey kisses my sighs.

Quick! The sound. O! My Lord! She is coming this way.  
I pray. I pray. Please make the devil go away.  
Hate sparkles like a black night within her eyes, dead.  
Her serpent fingers grab hold my neck and my head.

Her breath is like a grave, but I shall have no rest.  
My doom is fixed, fearful, of the worst at its best.  
There are nothing but shadows, the nights of her hand;  
and the sad channels of youth are filled with black sand.

The dark waters wash over me, taking me low.  
I want to swim away; it can never be so.  
I am washed roughly to shore, and he takes my pearl,  
jewel of a woman in the shell of a girl.

Empty is the night; I shall die in misery.  
But will there be no one left to weep over me?  
Am I nothing and a nobody? Is it true?  
If so, then my father, let me come be with you.

Unloveable

Mother's Voice: '... and no one will ever love you.'

Enslaved, held captive by a mother filled with hate.  
I should weep for her, but I can't. It's far too late.  
Our human sorrows can never caress the dead.  
Silent and starving, yearning for love fills my head.

And how from this vain world do we ever find rest?  
How do we give the gift of love to those oppressed?  
We are exiled together on this planet Earth.  
We should love each other from the moment of birth.

Sorrow rises and falls in this sad world so much.  
The illusive dream is always just out of touch.  
If love's sovereignty, no known distance can bar,  
then, when heart is near heart, love can never be far.

But love is a jewel, that is bright and so rare,  
so be mindful and handle it with utmost care.  
For, there are shadows that never the sun has seen  
and there are some hearts where no love has ever been.

Life's sweetest flowers lift the soul on fragrant wings,  
and every zephyr their breath silently brings

a discourse of love from both without and within.  
It's the miracle of love that we hope to win.

I once wore fine robes, but now they are in tatters.  
Without a love in this life, it hardly matters.  
When hunger presses from the heart, we yearn to eat  
that sweet banquet of love that will make us complete.

I wish love and fulfillment of peace in your hands.  
May it grow in your heart despite all life's demands.  
If you are a scorched rock, may you suddenly sing.  
Open the doors of your heart and love everything.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Twist Of My Tears**

Death  
stared down  
with dead eyes  
from the scaffold,  
hanging in a twist.  
We marched by in silence,  
wrapped in the stench of burnt flesh,  
swallowing the grief in our hearts.  
I remember her white-throated grace,  
tightly drawn, as the rain slid off her tongue.

Through the unguarded window of my mind,  
I creep out in the middle of night,  
stretching my shadow across her,  
covering her nakedness  
with a gown of pure silk -  
spun from sacred cries  
and fastened with  
a blue twist  
of my  
tears.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Waiting For You (Sestina)

The tangled wood reminds me of your hair -  
dark like the night and falling in whispers.  
Kneeling underneath the sheltering pines,  
I sip silence and stroke the memories.  
You have long been gone, and I miss your hands,  
slipping through the long sleeves of languid love.

Time is a leaf on the branch of our love,  
curled in the corners of your chestnut hair  
and falling like sand through hourglass hands.  
Wind strokes my back and quietly whispers.  
Stars float down a dark sky of memories,  
their bright pulse like beacons above the pines.

Thus hangs the moon, suspended among pines,  
promising brighter days showered with love;  
but for now, I live in the memories.  
I braid a blue blossom into my hair,  
its fragrance wafting like weary whispers,  
spider-spun silk in the palm of my hands.

I remember how you captured my hands,  
held them within the shadow of the pines,  
and kissed them soft as butterfly whispers.  
It was then that I knew I was in love,  
when you gently stroked the length of my hair,  
now curled within the moonlight memories.

Moonlight makes magic of the memories,  
within the palms of her shimmering hands,  
and she sprinkles starlight throughout my hair.  
Initials are carved in one of the pines  
within a whimsical heart made with love  
and sanctified with undying whispers.

The past unfolds in wandering whispers,  
ushered through the gate of my memories.  
I write a letter of undying love,  
hold it like seeds in the palm of my hands,  
and plant it with a kiss beneath the pines  
as the wind looses a wisp of my hair.

The pale wings of my love move like whispers,  
tangling in your hair like memories  
captured within your hands beneath the pines.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Wear You**

I long to wear you like a softly-scented cologne,  
to smell your essence around me when I'm all alone,  
to inhale you with each breath from the moment I wake,  
to taste you on the wind with every step I take.

I long to wear you like a satin or velvet glove,  
to run your hands across my skin, yearning for your love,  
feel you play my body like a harpist on his strings,  
lightly touching my flesh with the brush of angel wings.

I long to wear you like a sparkling golden band,  
always look upon you like a jewel on my hand,  
see the star-light in your eyes as you look up to me  
and know that you are exactly where you long to be.

I long to wear you like honeyed sunlight in my hair,  
to feel your touch upon me, your kisses in the air,  
to have you wash over me like a wave from the sea  
and to feel your wet tongue as it savors all of me.

I long to wear you like the joyous curve of my smile,  
to wear you like the laughter which echoes all the while,  
to dissolve in the mist of you, the beat of your heart,  
to wear you like a cloud-veil whenever you depart.

I long to wear you like azure heaven wears the sun,  
to follow the paths you take wherever you might run,  
to blossom in your love-light shining sweet and divine,  
to simply be your shadow and know that you are mine.

I long to wear you like tender twilight wears a star,  
to wear you like a dream come true in all that you are,  
wear you every day and night, never to be shed,  
to wear you like a comforter draped across my bed.

I long to wear you like a ribbon that tops a gift,  
wear you like a garter belt beneath my satin shift,  
wear you like a memory, the echo of a sound,  
to wear you like a pretty charm dancing all around.

I long to wear you like the dew-drops on the flower,  
to wear your effervescence, your strength and your power,  
to wear you like the passion, the breath between a kiss,  
to wear you like a love poem written just like this.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **What People Want And People See**

People see what they want to see,  
but they don't live inside of me.  
They don't know the hurts and the lies  
that cloud the oceans of my eyes.

So young; and I was overgrown,  
layered in skirts of soil and stone.  
My slender mind was tightly bound,  
left lifeless on the battle ground.

I would that I could wash away  
the stains and scars of yesterday;  
but life is sad and bittersweet  
whose dust clings to my weary feet.

I've survived the hatred and spite  
whose hands gave way to blackened night  
whose hurts were high and joys were low  
who lays in death six feet below.

Yet, I am haunted, haunted still,  
oppressed beyond my want or will;  
and yet, I strive, I strive to be  
what people want and people see.

Till life has died and death has come  
in bouquets of chrysanthemum  
will I move onward, onward be  
what people want and people see.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **When I Opened Myself To You**

When I opened myself to you,  
it wasn't to receive what you were giving me,  
it was to give you all of me - -  
each breath, each sigh,  
each echo of life  
that abounds in your breath,  
that outlives the living,  
to go on living in you.

When I opened myself to you,  
I wasn't trying to escape anything;  
but somehow, I found myself on the other shore.  
I looked back and could see me, stranded,  
looking right at me, now absent, afar,  
having lost myself inside of you.

When I opened myself to you,  
I didn't know that I would lose myself forever,  
my heart, my soul, every breath of being  
ever intertwined with you.

When I opened myself to you,  
I opened like the petals of a flower  
stretched wide for the open glory of the sun,  
the sky, the fresh morning air.  
I tumbled and crumbled and crawled.  
I fell, immeasurably, irreducibly, in love.

When I opened myself to you,  
I didn't profess my undying love.  
I lived it.  
I pronounced it in spirit, in soul,  
in the only irrevocable way that I knew.

When I opened myself to you,  
I stood breathless on the precipice  
of who I was and who I'd become,  
of the old me and the new me,  
the you-me, the we.

When I opened myself to you,  
I gave you everything;  
and in the giving, I lost more than I knew I had.

Now, when I open myself to you,

I open my eyes to a world of ghosts,  
all things that are living but not,  
that float through my vision,  
hurtling themselves towards the only life I know -  
you!

Now, when I open, I am alone,  
a lone flower in a field of weeds;  
and still I open,  
in the only way I know,  
in honor of what used to be,  
what will never be,  
what never was.

I open in memory,  
in the joy of remembrance,  
in lament of longing,  
in absence of the real me,  
the old me that I never knew,  
who was born in the blossom of love  
on the cusp of the great divide,  
the divide between then and now,  
here and there,  
somewhen and somewhere,  
with you and without you.

I open my eyes, my soul,  
my breath of being to you,  
always for you,  
only for you.

I open in search of the real me,  
my eyes scanning the shore  
for the sight or sound of you;  
for, I know when I find you,  
when I discern you  
and touch you and feel you,  
I will find me, the real me,  
the new me, the we-me  
that I could never be without you.

Without you,  
I close.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Why?

Why cause our love to run and hide,  
to drown it 'neath the whispering tide,  
to cause it shatter upon the earth,  
to deny the wonder of its birth?

Why cause our love to be a stone,  
to hurt each other as it's thrown,  
to make me cry these falling tears,  
to weep my heart though no one hears.

Why cause our love to pay the price,  
to turn your heart as cold as ice,  
to hide behind such hurt and lies,  
to toss our love toward the skies?

Why cause our love to bid farewell,  
to start the tears to form a trail,  
to walk away and say good-bye,  
to break me, shake me, make me cry?

Why cause our love to never be,  
to turn your heart away from me,  
to make believe that all is death,  
when love lives in every breath?

Why cause our love to take a seat,  
to sit and crumble at your feet,  
to fling it to the whirling breeze,  
to drown it in the roughest seas?

Why cause our love make sorrowful arts,  
to make a hurt of loving hearts,  
to rip an angel from above,  
then tear the wings that brought you love?

Why cause our love to be no more,  
to throw and stomp it on the floor,  
to twist it as though you didn't care,  
and leave me with no hope to spare?

Why cause our love to cease its flow,  
to freeze it in the hands of snow,  
to throw away its budding seeds,  
and leave it dead among the weeds?

Why cause our love to drown in tears,  
to toss it to the blacker spheres,  
to bury it 'neath the restless sod,  
why? o! why? I ask of God.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Willow Was A Widow**

Willow was a widow, who lived up on the hill,  
above Little River, beside the water mill.  
She lived in a cabin in Townsend, Tennessee,  
bound to the forest with her spirit running free.

She traveled from Clark County to live in Cade's Cove,  
where trust in God, hard work, and dreams were interwove.  
Emboldened by his faith, each hopeful pioneer  
labored from dawn till dusk to settle the frontier.

They worked the land and worshipped, wakened to new life -  
each wife for her children; each husband for his wife.  
Willow was the mother of children counting ten.  
She loved with all her heart one man among all men.

He was John Oliver, a collier by trade.  
He hewed their home from timbers that he cut and laid.  
They arrived in the fall, past the planting season,  
and nearly starved to death for this very reason.

For, John wasn't a farmer as was wont to be.  
They survived thanks to food from the feared Cherokee;  
and by the grace of God, they survived winter's snare  
and learned to farm the land of red fox and black bear.

The soil proved fertile and the crops began to grow.  
The harvest would sustain them through next winter's snow.  
The vegetables and wheat, pumpkins, corn, oats, and rye  
grew in abundance beneath Smoky Mountain High.

Settlers and bluecoats, by government decree,  
stole land that belonged to the native Cherokee.  
The Indians were forced to walk a Trail of Tears,  
a thousand miles of ghostly cries that no one hears.

1838, Old Man Winter reared his head,  
struck them down in their prime and left four thousand dead.  
As sunrise peered over the Smoky Mountain peak,  
the rose of life faded in the pale of each cheek.

What savage man is this who took another's land,  
who robbed the last crumb of bread from a starving hand,  
who suffered the children to walk barefoot in snow,  
denying them the warmth of a cheerful firelight glow?

My lips dare not say for they do not wish to tell.  
The color of this man is one that I know well.  
While I share in his skin, I do not share his heart.  
His crimes were a sin, and they tore this land apart.

All must account for the sins he's perpetrated,  
for those he has hurt, and for those he has hated.

The willow's weeping lashes whisper in the wind  
that life has a beginning and life has an end.

John died from pneumonia in 1864.  
Lessons learned made him a wiser man than before.  
Twenty-four years she mourned him, lonely and alone,  
daily tracing footsteps to weep at his gravestone.

1888, at the age of ninety-three,  
she died in her sleep in Cade's Cove in Tennessee.  
On her bedside table, beside the little vase,  
lay the faded tintype of John Oliver's face.

She lay as though dreaming in her flannel nightgown.  
In her hands was a Bible, opened upside-down.  
Psalm 23 - She had defeated sorrow's sword.  
God rest her soul! She dwells in the house of the Lord.

Willow is half sleeping beneath the canopy  
that weeps beside the river, hanging gracefully.  
She looks up to the hill, where once in time she stood,  
remembering the past and knows that it was good.

(One little footnote for the sake of history ...  
remember the land stolen from the Cherokee?  
Well, Congress stole it back through eminent domain.  
The Great Smoky Mountains are all that yet remain.)

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## Wishing You Roses

With a heart of glass in a world of stone,  
I am fragile; yet, stronger than before.  
I have loved and lost and wander alone.  
I am the pathway that leads to my door.

I spoke nothing, but something was spoken,  
my thoughts hidden in the curve of a smile.  
A stone was thrown, and my heart was broken.  
I walked alone down the loneliest mile.

The dark clouds of my eyes wept in the night.  
A river danced blindly into the sea.  
There was right in my heart but wrong in right.  
The river of love drowned inside of me.

My life-blood runs through the veins of roses.  
The thorns are a mark of my battle cry.  
As one door opens, another closes;  
and yet, another stone comes rolling by.

The bright banners wave in the noonday sun  
with dewy eyes for all the world to see,  
bedecked in decadence, many in one,  
in a field of virulent verdigris.

Whatever the whim, come whatever may,  
lament not the love that silenced its voice.  
The wounded are stones to throw or to stay,  
to ruin the joys of those who rejoice.

I wish you roses and petals of love,  
a heart of glass through which to see clearly;  
and I wish for you wings in heaven above  
and a love that will love you sincerely.

Linda Marie Van Tassell

## **Your Shadow Is Like Sunlight**

Your shadow is like sunlight always returning.  
I happily dance within the shadows you throw.  
The little lamplight of love is ever burning,  
a hopeful flicker from my heart that you might know.

Stanzas plunge into love's passionate poetry,  
onto the pages of a sentimental sky,  
strewn like petals across the surface of the sea  
to drift in the moonlight at the back of the eye.

We move each other without a word or a touch,  
touching beyond the senses of earthly delight.  
Though we yearned for it, we never believed in such,  
feeling, we wanted that of which we had no right.

The white ardor of the moon shimmers on my skin  
as I embrace the night and wish upon a star.  
The slender stem of my spine desiring within  
for the touch of your fingers through my peignoir.

A whisper of wind lifts my hair with hidden hands,  
and I can feel your fingers caressing my cheek.  
The silence is sacred, stroked through delicate strands.  
I close my eyes, weeping, and unable to speak.

Aurora rises with her amber-colored flame.  
Our eyes are opened to the newness of the day.  
I walk into your shadow, and I bless your name  
as your sunlight splendor rolls the shadows away.

Linda Marie Van Tassell