

Poetry Series

C.J. Heck
- poems -

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C.J. Heck(August 10)

CJ Heck is a published poet, writer, and the author of three children's books, a collection of short stories, and a book of adult poetry. She also writes three blogs:

Memoirs From Nam:

Knowing Whispers:

CJ's Writer Thoughts:

CJ lives with her partner, Author Robert Cosmar, in The Villages, Florida. She has three married daughters, eleven grandchildren, and is also a Vietnam War widow.

For more information, interviews, book excerpts, or to invite CJ to your school or organization, please call 352-299-5634, or visit:

Barking Spiders Poetry - CJ Heck Books:

... And His Name Was Doug

and I knew he loved me.
Bigger than life,
he was a man's man
and so at home in his skin.
His legs bowed just a little
creating a sexy swagger
when he walked.

He was ornery as cat dirt
most of the time
smoking non-filtered Camels
he kept tucked in a pocket, or
rolled in the sleeve of a T-shirt,
tanned arm hanging out the side window
cruising his titty-pink and white '57 Chevy
with me, and I knew he loved me.

He could cuss and fight
with the best of them in public.
He was a man's man
and so at home in his skin,
enough so to feel secure
being gentle with me
running his fingers through my hair
while I sat on the floor
between those bowed legs
as we watched TV together
and I knew he loved me.

Then Uncle Sam asked
for his help in Nam.
The army needed medics.
He was pre-med at college
and he never thought to question.
The town sheriff was Dad
and Dad taught him
that a man does what's right.

His name was Doug

and he was bigger than life,
a man's man, so easy in his skin,
ornery yet gentle,
and I knew even my name was
safe in his mouth
because he loved me.

My dear God,
how I loved him too...

C.J. Heck

A Bouncing Kind Of Love

Ever notice how some people
bounce in and out of your life
like a red rubber ball?

Just about the time
your life settles down,
they'll careen back in
with no warning.

I know someone like that
and I never know
which walls he'll glance off of.

I do know
before bouncing out again
he'll almost certainly
leave more dents in my siding,
chips in my protective veneer,
and if I'm lucky,
only a few more
... lovely impressions on my heart

but I'm developing
a very bad allergy
to red latex...

C.J. Heck

A Box For Good Will

As a friend, I had come to help
yet one more time
and I watched as she set
the cardboard box on the floor.
It was labeled for Goodwill,
penned in large block letters.

From deep in the closet,
she brought out an old blue suit.
It had faded over the years,
but I saw in her eyes
the memories still had not.

Softly, she smoothed the sleeves
that dangled flat and empty.
Then she stroked the slack trousers
on the smooth wooden hanger.
Gently, she brushed
the dust from the collar and lapel,
and then I heard her sigh.
Her resolve had melted away.

Again we talked and remembered.
We spoke of long ago,
how the sleeves encircled her
in warm secure hugs,

and the trousers had covered
lean muscular legs,
legs slightly bowed,
legs that loved to dance,

and what she missed the most
-the heart that beat below
the lapel of the old blue suit,
the heart that beat with love for her.

For over thirty years,
the suit had stood sentinel,

loyally guarding both her
and those memories,
and I watched as she carefully
replaced the suit and closed
the closet door.

Through quiet tears
she asked once more
how all of that could ever fit
in a box for Goodwill.

C.J. Heck

A Child's Masterpiece (Children)

Today I found a can of paint.
The paintbrush was there, too.
Mommy must have left it
when her painting was all through.

It was such a pretty color,
I learned you call it 'red'.
It made me think of pretty things
that same color in my head.

I painted rainbows from the sky,
and hearts, and bows for hair.
When Mommy saw it, she got mad
and sat me in a chair.

She told me I was naughty
and to think of what I'd done.
While I thought, she scrubbed and scrubbed
and cleaned off all my fun.

I'll never understand my mom,
why she laughed when we were through...
I only said I wished
the pretty color had been blue.

C.J. Heck

A Cold, Cold Heart

I offered my heart
in the palm of my hand,
a burning nova
to a private world
where love and forgiveness
knew no bounds

tender and trusting,
it beat only for you
so long ago

but hurt fans out
like the surface ripples
on a pond after a pebble falls,
each new hurt
spreading rings ever wider

and with each new ring,
more feelings fade
spreading wider, chilling deeper,
til cold as ice,
they become as stones
bouncing on a frozen pond

their rhythm etched forever
in a cold, cold heart.

C.J. Heck

A Little Riddle (Children)

It comes in many flavors.
It comes in lots of smells.
It can keep a secret
and never, ever tell.

You'll know it when you hear it.
If you look, you'll see it, too.
It's everywhere around outside,
even there, inside of you.

It can turn a sad day happy.
It can turn a mad day glad.
It will even be there
when you've been really bad.

It's something in both day and night,
every second, every minute.
It's right there in your family
and everyone who's in it.

Did you guess my riddle?
Just a few things left to say -
If you want a lot of it,
then give it ALL away!

It's left and right. It's all around.
It's under and above.
I think you've guessed the answer!
It's L - O - V - E love.

C.J. Heck

A Man I Knew

There was a man I knew
and just knowing him
made me think of poetry.

Loving him, I learned
that accepting love
is as important as giving it

and the not-so-subtle difference
between loving lukewarm
and loving red-hot.

Love like that
can make you stupid -
a total-immersion kind of stupid,
but it made me want
to read poetry.

In a different time
and a different place
it might have worked

but it was over
and when the last page was turned
he was only a man I knew

no regrets
just one perfect memory
and because I loved him
I write poetry.

C.J. Heck

A Penny For Your Thoughts

I'm not good at reading silence.
Sometimes what's not said
says way more than what is...

I almost don't want to know.
I'm afraid it'll be hurtful,
but it's something I need to hear.

How about a penny
for your thoughts?

Would five or six cents
spare me lies?

Do two nickels
sweeten the pot,
or perhaps three dimes
for two or three honest thoughts?

Okay, just one then.
I'll even up it to a dollar
for one clear, loving thought,
that's all I want
... it's all I need,
but it has to be the truth.

I would never tell you this,
but you could have me
and everything I own
if, just for once,
you told me the truth.

C.J. Heck

A Poet For A Lover (Adult)

Give me a poet for a lover
whose words stroke me like velvet hands.
Word-tender caresses more reaching
than the caress of a mere mortal man.

A poet's light touch is so gentle.
Word-fingers probe deep every time,
arousing me, haunting me, wetting me,
seducing me, body and mind.

Oh Lord,
give me a poet for a lover.
Lust and fire burn in his heart.
A silver-tongued devil whose words make me ache
to be on my knees in the dark.

Word-foreplay making me want him,
only mind-loved, I want to be free
to feel just one time, my poet inside,
where only mind-lust up to now has loved me.

C.J. Heck

A Poet In The Hereafter

St. Peter met her at heaven's huge gate,
asking who was she and why had she come.
"Why should I let such as 'you' enter in?
I'm busy and there's such a long line."

She held her head proudly and vouched for herself,
told him her heart was honest and true,
then went on to list her other good traits
and sat down for a breather when through.

He stood there just staring, a frown on his face,
then proclaimed, "Access denied! "
Access denied? Stunned, she started to cry
(for the option to heaven is wry) ...

She poured out a story of woe to the man.
"I'm just a poor poet, St. Peter, sir.
I did my very best all of my life
hurt no one did I... maybe once, " she lied.

All of a sudden the gates opened wide.
There was St. Peter moving aside.
"God loves His poetry, " he said with a grin.
"Dear poet, please come right on in."

C.J. Heck

A Ring Of Memory

She found his ring
the other day
where she had put it
safe, away.

Like a key
its lock undone
the ring brought memories
one by one.

'With this ring'
the preacher read,
promises given,
vows were said.

The time was short
to the 'death do us' part
and now his home
was in her heart.

A single tear fell
from her eye.
It always did that,
made her cry.

She kissed the ring,
tucked it back away
and locked up the memories.
No more today.

C.J. Heck

A Treasure In The Attic

Treasures abound in an attic
if you're patient enough
to wade through
the spiders and dust to find them.

I found a picture of Mama there
in an old camelback trunk
crowded with unknown relatives
in musty photo albums,
dried rose bouquets,
and size six shoe boxes
filled with old love letters.

The photo was crackled,
its corners bent, but there she was.
A bandana tied round her head
almost held the wispy curls
celebrating their freedom
in an ocean breeze,
pants rolled up mid-calf,
cuffs barely skimming the water
and she looked so happy.

How I wish I had known her then -
so young and pretty,
living carefree in a world
filled with Daddy,
before children and cancer.

And in a treasure from the attic,
I found the love I had known
that had so shaped me
throughout my life.
How terribly I miss her.

C.J. Heck

A Valentine For An Old Love

In an old shoebox
hidden in the attic,
there rests among
my cherished things,
a Valentine
tied with ivory ribbon.
It was never sent.

The love it represents
is still as fresh
in my mind
as the scent of the roses
he brought me
every Wednesday,
just because it was
the day we first met.

So many miles and years
now lie between us.
The youthful he and I
have long since moved on,
and he'll never know
the regret I've felt
for what might have been
had I been free to love again.
The pain of that loss is
still fresh in my heart.

I'll always love him.
I'll always care.
He's forever here
in my heart
and one more time
I wonder...
what might have been
had I put a stamp
on my Valentine
and dropped it in the box.

This Valentine's Day,
as on so many others,
I send out this wish
from my heart to his:

"For what we had,
I wish you love."

C.J. Heck

A Word From Mr. Brown (Children)

Our neighbor, Mr. Brown,
came over yesterday.
He was yelling at my daddy
about the pothole in our lane.

'Surely the city should fix it!
Surely they know it's there.
It's the widest, deepest pothole!
Surely the city must care! '

I know Mr. Brown was angry,
and he's really a very nice man,
but why'd he call Daddy Shirley?
Some things I don't understand...

C.J. Heck

A Writer's Role

This truly is the mark of greatness,
but have all the noble poems
been written by classical masters
and the gifted poets of today?

Are there meaningful works
still left to pen,
not merely big words
from our swollen egos
spilling their contents
at the whim of a moment,
nor with the simplistic meanderings
of joy, or grief or love?

To answer my own question,
I say write on, dear poets.
Allow not your words
to decay unwritten
in the brilliant minds of today
where they'll lie barren and unread
only to wither and crack and parch
as clay in the desert.
I do believe there are jewels
left to be written.

But if we must write,
it should be for the future,
for the common man
who will gain most from
these words he cannot write.
We have an obligation
to write in a way
that he may glean what he can
from writings of poetic merit,
not stumble through
obscure words which are,
to him, as bird droppings
on a splintered windowsill,
left to die in obscurity

gathering nothing but dust.

If we must write,
let us write for those who are unable,
so the future might find our words
alive and fertile, their tilled soil
begun as thoughts and feelings
first seeded in keen minds,
then sown into black and white,
rich and green and lush,
to live on in future hearts and minds
even as we crumble, ashes to ashes,
and blow away, dust to dust.

May we always write
not to say what we can all say,
but what we are unable to say
- not for the now, but for forever.

C.J. Heck

Afterglow

Lying in bed, holding off reality,
I'm caught in the cozy place
between dream and fantasy.

Heart slowing back to a walk,
I'm wondering,
does it get any better than this?

A lingering taste,
the man-woman scent
hovering in the air,
is it any wonder
the mind's eye is still open,
watching what is past?

How astonishing, the way the brain
lays a path to a woman's senses
so they remain heightened and alive,
though the moment is now
only a sweet memory.

His body, all warm and sensual,
enfolds this one
as he sleep-sighs here,
next to me in the afterglow.

C.J. Heck

All By Myself (Cj & Rusty For Children)

I gotta play by myself today
cause Mommy is cleaning and mopping.
Then she'll be calling a sitter
for when she goes grocery shopping.

The sitter, she's really boring.
She's always on the dumb phone,
or painting her nails or combing her hair
so I guess I'll be playing alone ...

I think I will get out my play dough
and make a spaghetti pie.
Or maybe, I'll feed all my dollies
so they won't be fussy and cry.

At two, I'll watch my TV shows.
Till then, I'll build with my blocks.
When I'm done, I'll pick them all up
(if I can get 'em all back in the box) .

Maybe after, my secret friend and I
will draw a picture or two
with all my favorite crayons,
specially the reds greens and blues.

I really like my toys and games
and my other good stuff ... but gee,
I think ALL playing is funner
when Mommy is here beside me.

C.J. Heck

An Innocent Voyeur

An old man glances through a window
to one in the building below.
Through slats awry in seduction's haste,
candlelight strobes
on sweat-glistened bodies.

He watches, transfixed,
at the images through the blinds,
his eyes too frozen to obey.

(Turn your head! Go to bed!)

Two bodies loving, unaware
of the innocent intrusion.

He watches, aroused,
passion rising in two rooms now.
A goddess bent over a sofa,
Adonis behind
in the flickering light.
A conqueror, a conquest,

and memories of his own youth
rekindle and burn
and the old man cries.

Bittersweet images
through the blinds
and he cries.

C.J. Heck

Anatomy Of A Poet

Go in through the eyes of a poet
deep into her alphabet mind.
Ideas like flotsam and jetsam
dodge poetry fragments and lines.

Beware the dark shadows of memory,
knife-sharp and bloodied by time,
or gentle, orgasmic and sensual,
swirling eddies, some without rhyme.

Softly notice the spirit in hiding.
Tiptoe past the bruised heart mending there,
knitting poems, pearls strung on a necklace,
unfinished jewels everywhere.

Take note on your tour of this poet
the outside no different you see,
but inside, my God, a passionate abyss,
the poet, the woman, the me.

C.J. Heck

Angel In My Pocket (Children)

There's an angel in my pocket
who is watching over me,
just a little voice down deep inside
that I can hear, not see.

I wish that I could let her out
so that everyone could see
'cause we have the greatest secrets,
many things she shares with me.

She whispers little things to do
to make my parents glad
and tells me when there's something
that I want to do that's bad.

Oh I wish that I could see her
not just hear her talk to me...
it's just a little voice down deep inside
that I can hear, not see.

C.J. Heck

Angels All Around Me (Children)

Angels all around me.
Angels high above.
Pretty angels everywhere
guarding me with love.

Angels at my bedside
help me start my prayers
while other angels hurry
mom and daddy up the stairs.

When it's time to say night-night
the angels' jobs aren't through.
When I close my eyes to sleep,
they watch me all night, too.

Angels all around me.
Angels high above.
Pretty angels everywhere
guarding me with love.

C.J. Heck

Baby Brother (Children)

My baby brother falls a lot.
I see how sad he feels.

Why don't baby brothers
come with training wheels?

C.J. Heck

Baby's First Christmas (Children)

So, this is Christmas morning...
everyone is here.
I don't really understand it
cause it isn't very clear,

but Mom and Dad are happy,
there's pretty ribbons everywhere,
lots of things that they call presents
and even paper I can tear.

They keep showing me this new stuff,
balls and books and even soxes...
they don't seem to know how fun it is
just playing with these boxes.

C.J. Heck

Bad Dreams (Children)

In my dream, I heard a tiger
so I hid behind a tree.
I was frightened he would eat me up
'cause he roared and roared at me.

I woke up scared and sweaty,
thought I'd sleep with Mom and Dad,
but when I went in their room,
Dad was snoring really bad.

I climbed between them anyway
with the blanket pulled up tight.
I closed my eyes and wished real hard.
No more tigers, not tonight!

I remembered what my daddy said,
that your bed is like a book.
If the page on the right is scary,
turn left and take a look.

I turned to my left and fell asleep.
The tiger wasn't there...
but in its place, and growling L O U D
was a big old grizzly bear!

This time, I woke up shaking!
That really scared me bad!
I had turned both left and right
and they were the only turns I had!

Daddy's snoring like a buzz saw.
How will I go to sleep?
I'm not too good at counting yet
or I'd count myself some sheep.

I thought about his snores some more...
hmmm, Daddy sounds just like a bear.
On second thought, a tiger, too,
so I got out of there.

I closed their door behind me,
then I tiptoed quietly,
and shut the door to MY room, too.
No more roaring snores for me!

C.J. Heck

Barefoot

Barefoot and holding hands,
we walked the water's edge.
I remember looking down
at our hands. I couldn't tell
where your fingers stopped
and my fingers began
and how good that felt.

Pants rolled up mid-calf,
we flirted with the waves
and then you wrote my name
in the sand with your big toe
and we laughed until we cried.

We talked about you, and me,
and whispered of the brand new us.
The colors of the sunset
had blended the blue-green
of the water right into the sky
by the time we packed up our things
and put on our sandy shoes
to leave, and I had never felt
such joy and sweet abandon.

Sometimes at night
when sleep is a stranger
and the covers are pulled up chin-tight,
I think of that day on the beach,
how we talked of you, and me,
and the brand new us,
and the reckless abandon.
I can't go barefoot now
without thinking about you.

We never talked about
the things that could get in the way
and how to push them aside.
We never gave a thought
to how it might someday end.

C.J. Heck

Barfly: Woman In A Bar

a broken neon sign flashed Mel's
atop a small darkened bar
on the edge of town

the air heavy with stale smoke and beer
blended faintly with the odor
of dried spit on unclean bodies

she sat at a small table alone
pondering the world's problems,
two drinks past seeing
beyond the unkempt nails
on the chipped Formica in front of her

the lines in her face
were knit as if by a palsied hand
dropping stitches
where a pox scar decided to roost

for her this was home,
at least until tonight's john
with an empty glass
and full libido swaggered up
and invited her to the nearest no-tell motel

life sucks
but it was her life
and feeling in control,
a spider in her web,
she threw back another drink
and waited

C.J. Heck

Barking Spiders (Children)

The barking spiders all march in
just past dinner time.
Some big, some small, they come to call
floating on the wind behind.

Each is clearly noticed,
although they can't be seen.
You're positive they're there, though,
'cause your nose is very keen.

You know you can't outrun them
and a net won't get them caught.
Your friends laugh 'cause they're funny,
but your mom yells 'cause they're not.

So open all the windows!
Crack the vents, real fast!
'Cause these aren't normal spiders -
BARKING spiders are just gas.

C.J. Heck

Barking Spiders At My Party (Children)

Hush now, barking spiders,
please don't make a sound.
I'm at my birthday party.
I don't need you guys around.

All my friends are here.
It's important that you know
you didn't get invited
so I wish that you'd just go.

I'm wearing all my birthday stuff,
shirt, pants and my new sandals.
If you won't go, then please hush up
when I blow out my candles.

C.J. Heck

Barking Spiders In Church (Children)

Those pesky barking spiders
followed me to church Sunday.
I tried to make them stay at home,
but they came anyway.

Then I did something naughty
'cause they were being bad.
When people turned and looked at me,
- I pointed at my dad.

C.J. Heck

Bats (Children)

Bats can hit a baseball.
Girls can bat their eyes.
But the bats I want to talk about
fly with radar in the skies.

Bats are cute and furry.
I think bats are cool
and if I could only catch one
I'd bring it into school.

I'm sure you think they're creepy.
They might even make you scream.
But where would we be without a bat
on scary Halloween?

I know it's hard to like them.
It isn't automatic.
Mom and dad don't mind them though
IF... they don't live in our attic.

C.J. Heck

Beauty Is...

harmony in a sound marriage,
children kneeling in prayer,

a honeymoon lasting forever,
the wonder of sound everywhere,

the fragrance filling a forest,
the glory of God by the sea,

and just knowing, if anyone asked him,
my lover would say it is me...

C.J. Heck

Bed Pages (Children)

Dreams are pictures
in my head
that happen when I'm
in my bed.

I used to have
some scary dreams
and woke my Daddy
with my screams.

Then Daddy told me
what to do
when dreams are scary
and frighten you.

He said my bed
is like a book
with pages left
and right ~~ just look.

If the left page scares you,
turn to the right.
The bad page is gone
for the rest of the night.

I love my Daddy.
He's so smart.
(giggle)
He says I am
my bed's bookmark.

C.J. Heck

Bedtime Prayer (Children)

Now I lay me
Down in bed.

All my prayers
and night-nights said.

Snuggle bunny, teddy bear,
toasty blankie, all are here.

Out with the light
so dreams will come.

Thank you, God.
Now, where's my thumb?

(Night-Night)

C.J. Heck

Beggar Man

You were a gentle soul,
with a stained red plaid shirt,
hat speckled with bird poop,
in saggy-baggy pants that stopped
just above two heelless shoes that were
see-through to feet with no socks.

So many mornings
I walked by your corner,
putting money in your cup
if only to borrow a smile
when I had none left of my own.
I always knew the one you gave
would be the one that found
those I had only misplaced for awhile.

Countless times we shared a lunch,
and so did many others,
hot soup from the deli across the street
or half a tuna sandwich from home,
you shared your wooden pallet
but not once a conversation,
and all the while, you never missed a beat
as you continued to pass out
that glorious smile to everyone
who sauntered by.

I wonder what happened in your life
to make you take up
residence on that corner,
to die cold and alone,
the smiles you apportioned
your only living legacy.

You will be missed by many,
even the shopkeepers who
so often shooed you away.
I hope you knew
what you meant to me

... and I didn't even know your name.

C.J. Heck

Belly Buttons (Children)

Belly buttons look so funny.
Some have lots of hair.

Some are in, some are out...
just a hole that goes nowhere.

C.J. Heck

Between The Covers

Gentle man, you hold me
like a treasured book
as if memorizing every line.

In your hands,
I feel new meaning
breathed into my pages.

Seductive bookworm,
no one has ever read me
quite like you,
nor ever will again.

Passionate reader,
I love how you bookmark
your favorite chapter
between the covers at night...

C.J. Heck

Big Man's Little Man (Adult)

Little man asleep and warm
cannot come to any harm
where he's tucked in carefully
between the sheets where I can't see.

Yet there are secrets I could tell
to wake him up, I know them well.
A warm caress, a hand well-placed,
then slowly, gently, have a taste

till big man's little man arouses me
and grows to fill an aching need.
No more asleep, he's rising now.
His impatience grows to show me how

warm mouth, hot tongue and oh so slow,
yet fast enough because he knows
that big man's little man, while now alive,
will wait til big man parts my thighs

and like a dance that's well-rehearsed,
in a hunger-driven quench of thirst,
his face now seeks and opens wide
where soon the little man wants to hide.

It's my turn now to moan and sigh,
and the tender feelings make me cry
to have him plunge so deep within
that little man melds me into him.

C.J. Heck

Blankies (Preschool)

Blankies are made to be slept with.

Blankies are made to be hugged.

Blankies care when Moms and Dads can't be there

'cause blankies are made to give love.

I sure do miss mine when it's in the wash.

My blankie gets dirty, you see,

'cause everywhere I go, blankie goes, too,

with Mommy and Daddy and me.

C.J. Heck

Breakfast In Bed (Children)

Wake up, Mom and Daddy.
We've got a BIG surprise.
Me and Sissy made you breakfast.
Please, open up your eyes.

Here's the paper from the porch,
Just in case you want to read.
Please wake up and put your glasses on
so you guys can see.

There's cereal with milk on it
and toast with butter, too.
(Sissy scraped the black stuff off) .
We made this ALL for you.

We didn't make the coffee,
but, Mommy, that's okay
'cause me and Sissy found some
in the pot from yesterday.

The eggs look kind of funny,
not like the ones you make.
Ours are way too slickery.
They keep sliding off the plate.

We're sorry there's no muffin,
but there weren't any more.
Well... the one that was left over
got smushed on the kitchen floor.

There used to be a donut, too,
and it was on the plate.
Me and Sissy got real hungry,
but it's the only thing we ate.

When it comes to making breakfast,
there's a lot of work to do,
but we made it just to show you
Mom and Daddy, we love you.

C.J. Heck

Breathless

breathless when I met him
breathless when he left

but the breathless loving in between
ahhh... breathless at its best.

C.J. Heck

Broccoli (Children)

Pipsy loves popsy
and diddly does, too,
but broccoli gags me.
Does it gag you, too?

It's icky and yucky,
a green pile I see,
and Mommy keeps saying
it's so good for me,

not s'posed to be singing,
no more making up rhyme,
pay attention to eating,
or I'll be here a long time.

But broccoli smells
when it lays on my plate.
It's the stinkiest stuff,
the only veggie I hate.

I guess I could scoot it,
some here and some there,
then push it some more ...
ewww, it might fall on my chair,

with little green piles of it
smushed on the floor!
If they think I ate it
they might give me more!

But (sigh) feathery freckles
and little brown beavers
I just can NOT eat it
and my dog, he won't either ...

I told Mommy and Daddy
I just hate broccoli.
I'll eat ANYthing else.
Guess what? They gave me peas!

C.J. Heck

Bubbles Of Trouble (Children)

Grampa says a burp
is just a belly bubble.

Maybe so, I only know,
if it's LOUD you get in trouble.

C.J. Heck

Bumble Bee (Preschool)

Today I saw a bumblebee.
He was on a pretty rose.
I leaned in to look at him
and he stung me on my nose!

I wasn't gonna squish him,
only watch and see ...
but I'll never get THAT close again
to a grouchy grumble-bee.

C.J. Heck

Butterfly's Lesson

Oh Mama look, a flutterby.
(her tiny hand held it out to me) .
She grasped it firmly in her fist,
afraid to set it free.

Lovingly I showed her
one of life's most painful tests.
Sometimes the ones we love the most
we hurt more than the rest.

The butterfly was still alive
although its wings were bent.
This tiny miracle of grace,
its rainbow all but spent.

The magic dust was there to see.
Tears welled up in her eyes.
I hugged her to me and explained
that real love never dies.

We spoke that day of letting go,
of holding love less tightly.
To hold it gently in our hearts
shows love much more when lightly.

That day when she was very small,
we more than mourned a butterfly.
We shared a magic, tender moment.
I'll always thank the flutterby.

C.J. Heck

Bytes Out Of Lives

Lonely spouses sit, unaware,
as bytes are stolen from their lives.

Little black words
race across a white screen
where faceless people sit,
all alone, yet not alone,
each with empty space to fill.

Silent words reach out
and gently pull them in.
Hollow little word worlds
where things are shared
that shouldn't be.

Hearts fill with promise.
Fingers spell out hope.
Minds begin to justify
two wrongs into a right
until each soul offers up
what belongs to someone else
in the little black words
racing across white screens.

With each new keystroke,
lust and fantasy are painted
on stark computer palettes.
Chasms at home widen.
Marriages wither and die,

and with each new letter
inside the little black words,
the gulf between them
grows just a little bit wider
for spouses sitting unaware
as bytes are stolen from their lives.

C.J. Heck

Chicken Pox (Children)

Today I had a fever
and I didn't feel so good.
Daddy took me to the doctor
to get me better if he could.

The doctor looked at me and said,
'It's only Chicken Pox.'
How come there's such a fancy name
for plain ol' itchin' dots?

C.J. Heck

Children Of The Rainbow (Children)

I talked to Grammy yesterday
about a girl I know.

Her skin's a different color
but I like her, even though

the other children tease her
and it makes her run away
because she looks so different
and they never let her play.

I think she looks just beautiful!
Her skin is chocolate brown.
She's the nicest girl I've ever met
and it's sad to see her frown.

Grammy held me on her lap
and told me she was proud.
She said that's what's important
and then my gram allowed

that children are life's rainbow,
black and yellow, red and white,
but the colors aren't what matter,
it's what's down deep inside.

I asked her if that's what it means
when we say we're colorblind.
She smiled and said it should mean that
in all hearts and in all minds.

C.J. Heck

Choices

Life is full of crossroads,
the hard lefts or rights,
and little pathways
of curves, this way or that.

Each way has its own set
of bumps and potholes
and the occasional hairpin turn.

I've wondered at times
how my life might have differed
had I taken a different route.

Lord knows,
I could have used
a few more straight stretches

but at least I made choices,
some good, some not so good.

How sad for those
who merely hitchhike along
never daring to choose at all.

C.J. Heck

Christmas At Mel's

Sadie slumped in the chair
at her favorite table at Mel's.
Merry Christmas. Yeah, so what?
Six empty glasses were lined up
in front of her on the chipped Formica.
The glass that was still in her hand she
studied with the same intensity
a demented gypsy might upon seeing
her favorite crystal ball suddenly deflated.

The lines in her face met in an intricate pattern
just above her penciled brows as she pondered
her situation through the booze fog.
Damn barkeep. Damn twinkle lights hurt my eyes.
He had to put twinkle lights in here
as if anyone wants to see the graffiti better,
she cackled to herself. She watched the room
with its new look, blink red, then green, then yellow
through the gently swirling cigarette smoke.

She threw back another drink.
Made her want to puke, that's all it did.
Who cares if it's Christmas Eve?
Every day is the same to me, she thought.
Just a workin' woman tryin' to make a buck.
Bad enough, everywhere you go bells ringin'
on corners, snow and slush in every step,
and all that fancy decoratin' to remind you you're alone.
Mer-ry Christ-my-ass.
Cash registers ringin' big time, too,
she thought with a bitter smile.

Damn. Business was slow this time of year.
Every john she knew was home
playing Santy Claus with the kiddies
and Husband Of The Year with the wife.
What a joke, she thought. What they really want,
I give 'em. What they really need, I give 'em.
They're all the same. What a friggin' joke, she thought.

Yeah, only the joke's on me.

She raised a finger at the barkeep for another drink.

A shadow fell through the swirling smoke
to settle eerily on the table, blinking through
the empty glasses in front of her.

She looked up to see one of her regulars standing there.

Finally! She thought to herself. 'Bout time, too.

Already a plan had formed in her mind

to do him fast and then get some shut-eye.

She gave him her best crimson smile.

The john leaned down and handed her a folded bill.

With a sad smile he said, 'Go home, Sadie.

This one's on me, and, Merry Christmas to you.'

Then he turned and walked back through

the swirled and blinking smoke and out

into the street with her staring slack-jawed

at the closing door behind him.

Damn. If that don't beat all.

As she unfolded the fifty dollar bill,

she pushed back her chair, got up

from the table and for the first time in years,

Sadie's face softened into a genuine smile.

C.J. Heck

Cold Champagne Dreams

Much as an artist
treasures his oils,
she holds tight to her
cold champagne dreams.

Secret visions that warm
on the coldest of nights
never shared in the light of day,
but in sleep, cherished, guarded
and looked forward to
from a time
nothing else has replaced.

She savors those moments
locked tightly away,
where only the night
holds the key
to unlock the memories
hidden within, marking time
in the day's warm beer life.

Her cold champagne dreams
full of roses and love
missing moments spent
safe in his arms
where kisses they shared
even now linger on
after much time has gone by.

Tearful eyes shut tight
as a clam in the sea
she pleads,
no more memories tonight
for nothing is worse
than death claiming a love,
more than passion lies dying inside,
only allowing the want
and the impossible need
to bubble up in

her cold champagne dreams.

C.J. Heck

Come To Me

Come to me, come to me, sweet love,
in spring when daffodils bloom
and the ice floes melt into clear clean streams
by our soft bed of moss in the glen.

Come to me, come to me, sweet love,
in the heat of the summer sun,
where trees bow their heads in a canopy
shading us on the soft grassy lawn.

Come to me, come to me, sweet love,
as fall's rich scents fill the air
where brilliant leaves whisper above us
and crunch neath our blanket below.

Come to me, come to me, sweet love,
as crisp winter snows swirl outside
and the glow from the fire is matched by our own
on the rug, come to me, sweet love.

C.J. Heck

Crying (Children)

I cry when I am hurting
and sometimes when I'm sad.
I cry when I get punished
'cause I've done something bad.

I cry when I am angry
(that means when I'm mad) ,
but grownups sure are funny...
Mommy cries when she is glad.

C.J. Heck

Daddy's Boots (Children)

Daddy left his boots for me
and here I have to stay
'cause Daddy is a soldier,
I'm in charge while he's away.

In Daddy's boots I can pretend
that now I am the man
who does the things that Daddy does
as only Daddy can.

I help with little brother,
I help with folding clothes,
I help to set the table,
and I hope Daddy knows

that every day I wear his boots
so I'll feel close to him
and I try to keep Mom happy
till he comes home again.

I know that he's protecting us.
That's what soldiers do,
but his boots are way too big for me
and my job, being him, is too.

Mom, when is Daddy coming home?
I miss him all the time.
She said Daddy would be proud of me
and his boots... fit me just fine.

(For my grandson, Will Jr., with love. His daddy is in Iraq)

C.J. Heck

Dancing Fairies (Children)

On warm dark nights I think I see
beneath the weeping willow tree,
the fairies dancing in the grass
on tiny feet that fly so fast.

The music is the wind that blows
while fairies spin on bare tiptoes,
and fireflies jewel up the night
reflecting fairies in their light.

Round and round the fairies dance!
On bitsy feet they skip and prance
through tiny dew drops to and fro,
til morning comes, and then they go.

I wonder where the fairies live
and do they know what fun they give
to little girls and boys that see
beneath the weeping willow tree?

C.J. Heck

Dear Diary,

I think I'm suffering from
breathing memories,
and I think it's pure and simply
the ABC's of olfactory.

Damn. It has to be.
Nothing has ever made me
come more unglued.

It was a she-thing, he-thing.
Biological or chemical - maybe.
Raw. Yes, that was it,
raw and animalistic somehow.

I'll tell you what,
my eyes could go,
my ears along with them,
but the nose knows.
That him-scent traveled nerves
I had been unaware of
until I breathed him in.

Diary,
there was a direct line,
right here inside of me,
miles and miles of it, maybe,
and it was connected to the Y.

My Y.

It made me all tingly, wet, ready
and aching to have him fill me up,
all from that heady scent of his.

Damn that scent!
... miss that scent.

C.J. Heck

Dear God... (Children)

Dear God,
I dreamed I came to Heaven
to have a talk with You.
I climbed right up some puffy clouds
til Heaven was in view.

It looked just like a castle!
It was high with many floors
and it seemed a million windows
overlooked the one huge door.

The door was gold and silver
and bright lights shined within.
Two boxes hung suspended there,
"Take a Prayer" and "Leave a Sin".

Everywhere around me,
I saw people with white wings
and when I pushed the doorbell,
I heard angel voices sing.

Then the big door opened.
The kindest man stood there.
He said he'd be my tour guide
and to follow him upstairs.

Right inside the great big door,
I saw a handmade sign.
The lettering was very old
on wood of weathered pine.

The message was so simple.
It said only, "Welcome Home"
but that was enough to tell me,
here you'd never feel alone.

Each floor throughout the castle
was filled with happiness.
From the bottom to the top one,

I saw nothing but kindness.

Angels standing near the windows
stopped to hug and welcome me.
Others passing in the hallways
smiled and whispered quietly.

Each room on every floor there
had a sign above its door,
carved in ancient lettering
which said, "Always Room For More".

When my tour was finished
and it was time to go,
I still had some questions left
that weren't answered though.

Do just good kids go to Heaven?
Sometimes, I do naughty things.
Am I still a good girl, too?
Will I have angel's wings?

My tour guide hugged me gently.
He said he thought I would
'cause Heaven has so many rooms
and every child is good.

When I left the castle
and turned to wave goodbye,
an angel told me You had been
my Heavenly Tour Guide.

C.J. Heck

Dear Mommy Up In Heaven (Children)

Dear Mommy up in heaven,
you're always in my mind.
I wish that you could tell me
why you left so much behind.

You left your bunny slippers,
fuzzy pink with big long ears,
and when Daddy holds your picture
he's sad and cries real tears.

Your clothes are in the bedroom,
you left your perfume, too,
and when I need you close to me
I go there - it smells like you.

You must hum a lot in heaven.
Daddy says he thinks you might.
Sometimes I think I hear you
when I shut my eyes real tight.

I miss your hugs and kisses,
you took most of them with you,
but I'm glad you made me save some
in my jammy pockets, too.

Me and Daddy miss and love you
and we don't mean to make a fuss.
I guess you loved us both so much
that you left your stuff for us.

C.J. Heck

Dear Santa... (Children)

You always bring me many things,
my little sister, too,
things we love to play with
and so many things to do.

I see you in big limos
waving at us in parades.
I see you in the shopping malls
and even in arcades.

I see you on the corners
where you're ringing little bells.
I see you talking on TV
advertising big hotels.

It makes me have to wonder
if you're really really there,
or are you just too busy now
with all those things to care?

See, I have a best friend, Tommy,
and I'm sending his address
so this year you won't miss his house,
'cause Tommy, he's the best.

Please, Santa, take some time off
from those other things you do
and this year, visit Tommy's house?
He needs some presents, too.

C.J. Heck

Death Of A Marriage

I've given it my best.
The years frown back
from the mirror
to show me just how long,
until at last
I have to concede finality.
It's over,
and I was the last
to know.

In spite of the realization,
it still hurts.
I'm told feelings are
hardest to let go of,
I suppose because
we've worn them
for so long.

Yet everyone knows
nothing is all bad.

The good was good,
but when the bad stretches
arrive more often,
stay longer
and hurt twice as much,
I finally see
the only time I'm happy
is when I'm alone.

The bad overshadows
anything good
and I see things
for what they really are.

Today, I stood in the yard
with my arms outstretched.
I had to see if he began
where my fingers ended,

- the way he used to,
but there was nothing there,
only air.

Then I checked my arms.
There must be needle tracks ...
hell, he was like
an addiction,
but there were none.

When did the wrongs become
a way of life?
Apologies can no longer reboot trust
and there's no going back.
In sad resignation
I've discovered I'm out of
last chances to give.

Feelings truly are
the hardest to let go of
and it really is
because we have a past,
and I ache knowing
there can be no future.

Nonetheless, I hate losing.
I loathe having failed at something
I've poured so much of me into
for so long ...
but you just know,
and there in the
midst of the knowing
lies the death of a marriage.

C.J. Heck

Do I Remember You?

Do I remember you
from so many years ago?

The man with a gentle touch
and loving hands,
the softest shoulder
to cry upon...

budding passion,
almost lovers,
undermined and rent by fate...

So many miles away...
the years have passed,
our mirrors echo
youthful faces all aglow,
lives lived on tandem shores.

As silent arms reach through the ages
spanning years from then to now,
unseen fingers ply the keyboard
filling in the time between.

Love and memories come flooding
into present from the past
and I cry from just one letter.
Yes, I do remember you.

C.J. Heck

Dreaming (Children)

Did you ever wonder about dreaming?
How the pictures get in your head?
Why they're only there when you're sleeping?
Why they're only there in your bed?

You can fly anywhere that you want to.
You can soar above houses and cars.
You can even go higher than that, if you want,
way, way up to the moon and the stars.

You can be someone great, someone special
who has magical powers to use
to save your brother from monsters -
or NOT save, if that's what you choose.

Dreaming is different from movies.
You don't get dressed up and go out.
And a dream can be different every night -
you make up what the dream is about.

It's too bad dreaming's for bedtime,
but I guess that's just how it must be.
If we walked around dreaming in daylight,
why would we ever need sleep?

C.J. Heck

Feelings (Children)

Mom, why would kids say stuff to hurt me,
most especially, when they're not true?
Don't they even care about feelings?
Can't they think first, before they hurt you?

She said those that do that are unhappy,
they're very angry deep down inside,
but they just don't know how to fix that,
so they pick on kids smaller in size.

Mom said life is too short to stay angry.
If you let it, angry gets bigger each day!
But happy grows faster than angry can,
so be happy, it's better that way!

Mom said just stand up for my feelings,
but do it nice, and don't get all mad.
I try, but it sure isn't easy,
being nice when they've made me so sad.

C.J. Heck

For My Love

I'll hum for you a melody
no words, for words can't say
the love I feel will sing in notes
where words get in the way.

I'll paint for you a work of art,
no brush or paint will do.
I'll use a rainbow from the sky
to make the love shine through.

I'll write for you a sonnet
with neither pen nor line.
The rhythm is my heart beat
and feelings need no rhyme.

I'll give to you one memory,
for memories are true.
They need no words, or brush, or pen,
to always be with you.

C.J. Heck

Forever Won'T Be Enough

Tell me once more you love me.
Hold me again like you care.
Let me reach for you in the darkness
and please, please, find you there.

Let me want you deep inside me
and know you want that, too.
Let's make love all night
and in morning's light,
if we want to, begin again.

Let me see your smile
to return with my own.
God, let's laugh out loud!

May my name be the last word
you breathe at night -
in this life, now, today.
Someday may never come,
and forever won't be enough.

C.J. Heck

Front Porch Of Forever

Only in dreams
where I feel safe and warm and free
do I long for the one
who will complete me.
I know he's there, I feel him.
All the way down
to my open heart
and waiting soul,
I feel him.

He is the one who is.
He is the one
who could love me,
knowing my weaknesses,
not pointing them out
to chide me because of them.
He is the one
who could love me
in spite of them.
He would be my strength
as I would also be his.
He would make me whole.

He is the one who is,
the one who would
join his heart with mine,
not make me hide in his shadow
or tell me who I should be.
He would never want me to lose
the person I already am.
He would steady me
when I stumble on life's road.
and give me his hand
not his disdain
for not seeing the bumps in the road.

If you are the one,
you have the ability to forgive,
but more important,

you own the ability to forget.
You'll freely offer trust
because we've both known vulnerability
and we each are worthy of trust.

If I ever awaken to find you there,
take my hand. Walk with me
into tomorrow, our youthful yesterdays
the stepping stones to carry us
through months into years
to sit side by side, hand in hand,
in our chairs on the front porch of forever.
I know you're there. I feel you,
... but only in my dreams.

C.J. Heck

Full Circle

A little girl clops in mommy's heels,
her dress, a floppy hat.
The borrowed pearls she's chosen
dangle halfway down her back.

Her face a shining rainbow,
ruby lips, cheeks tinted pink,
blue splashes on both eyelids,
powder snowflakes in the sink.

She'll go twirling in a ballroom,
a princess with her knight.
Or better still, be mommy
out with daddy Friday night.

In a child's imagination
everything is crystal clear,
yet the truth beneath the surface
is revealed in mommy's mirror.

That little girl is all grown up,
clothes and shoes are now my size...
but the mirror of maturation
is in my daughters' eyes.

C.J. Heck

Fuzzy Caterpillar (Preschool)

Fuzzy caterpillar
with your million-jillion feet,
how do you know which foot should go
as you're walking on that leaf?

You make it look so easy,
right-left-right, the way you do,
sometimes MY feet get tangled up
and I have only TWO.

C.J. Heck

Glad (Children)

Being glad is simple
and sometimes glad is great.
Sometimes glad is liking
almost everything on my plate.

I feel that way with birthdays.
Birthdays make me glad.
I like writing "I love you"
in cards for Mom and Dad.

But sometimes glad is hard to find,
like when angry came last week.
Glad was no where, pushed away,
and sad ran down my cheek.

Angry didn't stay too long,
that's good cause it felt bad...
when it was gone, then it made room
to put back my friend, glad!

C.J. Heck

Grandma's Apron (Children)

Grandma's gone but not forgotten,
that's her apron hanging there.
It still hangs in Grampa's kitchen
sometimes he looks at it and stares.

When Grandma wore her apron
it was magical to see.
The pockets held such treasures
for the grandkids just like me.

Saw it shine up Grampa's fender once,
just as pretty as you please,
and it wiped my brother's cheek off
one time when he sneezed.

It took cookies from the oven
and it rushed to wipe a tear.
Got a grain of sand out of your eye,
and made a lap for the stories we'd hear.

It wiped spills up from the countertop
when she was baking pies,
a symbol of her love and care
and it showed, too, in her eyes.

Sometimes I'm sad to look at it
when I see my Grampa stare.
Grandma's gone but not forgotten.
That's her apron hanging there.

C.J. Heck

Grampa's House (Children)

I love to go to Grampa's house.
He lives far, far away.
It's hard to sit still in the car
and it takes us two whole days.

My Grampa's fun is different.
He doesn't run and play.
But grampa's fun is special fun
and I love him best that way.

My Grampa tells me stories
when I sit on his knee
about the games and things he did
when he was small like me.

Sometimes he takes me fishin'
in a boat out on the lake.
We sing songs and then I giggle
at the bird sounds Grampa makes.

My grampa knows the names of things
like trees and plants and such.
He shares the stuff he knows with me
and I love him, oh so much.

I wish Grampa lived next door to me.
he lives so far away...
But I love to go to Grampa's house
though it takes us two whole days.

C.J. Heck

Growing Things (Children)

Daddy planted grass seeds
and up popped new green grass.
When mommy planted flower seeds,
pretty flowers came up fast.

I don't understand it.
I planted my seeds too.
My spot has lots of sunshine.
I watered, but nothing grew.

I guess it's something grownups know,
maybe kids just can't plant seeds,
'cause the bird seed that I planted
didn't grow any birds for me.

C.J. Heck

Half Past Five

There's a sewer drain
on Peck's Corner in town,
and at half past five
the streetlamp flickers on
at dusk and near where
gentlemen routinely take a leak
after leaving the Raven Pub.

They've been doing it
for years, No one
bothers to notice.
Of course, the smell of piss
assaults the nostrils,
which in turn, inform the brain
but only the vermin care
... and there were plenty
of them near the sewer drain
on Peck's Corner.

I saw the body there
at half past five on Monday.
The clock in the tower
told me it was so,
and when I called,
that's what I told the authorities.

His head was in his lap
the legs askew
and bent at impossible angles,
the arms down,
elbows facing out,
hands on top of the head,
in his lap,
just above the flaming red hair
and he was sitting in a pool
of his own blood.

His mouth was frozen
in a scream no one will hear,

but the eyes, the eyes.
I will never forget the eyes.
The vermin had eaten his eyes.

Will anyone ever know
the horror they saw
just before half past five...

C.J. Heck

Happily Ever After

Sometimes you have to use
a little mental floss.

Clear out the cobwebs
and live happily ever after
every now and then.

Watch the sun set in the water
from a wooden swing on an empty beach.

Roll up your pants and skip barefoot
through the waves and gather
sand dollars in your shoes.

Hear a child's prayers at bedtime
- and really listen.

Take on a dare
just for the fun of it.

Don't grow up -
grow down a little.
Life doesn't have to be so serious.

Puddles are there for splashing
and mud is for making mud pies.

We all need to live
happily ever after
every now and then.

C.J. Heck

Healing Memory

the love I am
came with me
like a shadow
on my heart
love flows in
and out
and through me
of this love
I am a part
it whispers
to my soul
it awes and
fuels my wonder
and I seek
that memory
of why
I came
thus under
this is what
my soul agreed
help souls be
more aware
allow the
healing energy
to flow from
my soul
into theirs
waiting,
waiting,
waiting,
I can feel
and I can see
vibrations
growing stronger
for the healing
memory
something's coming
something
wonderful

is coming

C.J. Heck

Help! Monsters! (Children)

Help!

Monsters in my closet!

Monsters in the hall!

Monsters underneath my bed!

Monsters in the wall!

Monsters 'hind my bedroom door!

They're in the bathroom, too!

They might be ugly green ones,
maybe, even red or blue!

My bed feels like an island

With monsters everywhere!

... til Mommy says goodnight to them,
then they all just disappear.

C.J. Heck

His Hands

His hands should have
their own identity,
a name perhaps,
befitting each vocation
they enjoy.

Skillful hands -
finely tuned, they hold every tool
with equal panache.
Each callous earned, a trophy,
yet self-aware, they're gentle
as they browse my every curve.

Comical hands -
the right one scraping whiskers,
razoring down a field of white
revealing trails of pink-skinned angles.
I laugh at the silly poses
skewed by the left
so the right won't miss a spot,
my just reward, a foamy kiss.

Angry hands -
his driving hands,
hands that slap the wheel
as assholes go too slow
or cut in front,
directionals up their butts
with their heads.

I'm glad the angry hands
are only known to live in cars.

Those hands...
I love his hands.

(Note: To hear 'His Hands' read by Poemhunter's own Max Reif, go to:

Homeless Man

Homeless man I watched you
line a deserted doorway,
your Maytag boxes cardboard monuments
in Fed Ex labels
and signs pointing 'This Side Up',

stark reminders of what is,
and what could be,
but for the grace of God.

I wondered if I wished hard enough,
a Fed Ex truck might spirit you away
on a magic carpet ride
to where you wouldn't be invisible
for those who take the time
to look and really see

to where someone would offer
you a job with no Catch 22,
first telling you to shower
and have clean clothes,
and you with no money for either
without a job.

I wished. I prayed.
But for the grace of God go I.

C.J. Heck

Hot Summer Love

Ahhh summer,
when the nights are hot
and love is even hotter.

There are memories
of a summer like that
down in the Florida Keys,
a whole block of time I call
the loving days,

racing our jet skis with the wind
to the outer islands for shells,
then docking at a tiki bar
for buffalo wings and
icy Coronas with lime.

But it was the nights...
I miss the nights the most,
when the perspiration was there
before the passion even began,
and the only thing that cooled after
was a dip in the emerald Gulf
and maybe a frozen marguerita, or two,

and overhead in the night sky,
heaven's own stars shimmied
like diamonds strip-dancing
on the surface of the water.

Hot summer nights
in the loving days,
when the nights were hot
but love was even hotter.

C.J. Heck

How Many? (Children)

Mommy, how many fish in the ocean?
How many peas in a pod?
How many steps up to Heaven
would there be if I went to see God?

How many kisses are too many?
How many bees in a swarm?
How many teeth will fit in my mouth?
How many snowflakes in a storm?

If it takes one night to count fireflies,
would it take two nights to count stars?
How many roads can there be in a mile?
How many miles is too far?

How many hairs are on my head?
Why did Daddy's hairs all fall out?
If I count all day long then get tired,
how many numbers am I able to count?

How many rocks in a mountain?
How many shells on a beach?
How many hugs am I missing
'cause Grammy lives where I can't reach?

How many bricks in that building?
How many leaves in a tree?
How do you count how old someone is
if you only can count what you see?

When I get big, I'll be a teacher.
I'll show kids how to count every way.
Mommy, if I do teach them counting,
how many kids can I teach every day?

I wish I could know every number.
I'm gonna try - it's fun to do!
There are so many things to be counted...
but only one me and one you.

C.J. Heck

Hugs (Preschool)

Hugs come in different sizes.
Hugs feel different, too.
There are sad hugs when you're crying
(that's when nothing else will do) .

There are happy hugs for laughing.
There are hugs for scary, too.
But the hugs that I like best of all...
are hugs for I Love You!

C.J. Heck

Hypocritical

Hypocritical:
to proclaim a Godly self,
yet write hate in verse.

(Senryu 5/7/5)

C.J. Heck

I Am A Lady

First and foremost,
I am a lady,
but I am so much more.

I am capable of great insight
and quiet wisdom,
undying devotion and love.
I am willing to give
more than receive
as long as it doesn't
become habit and you
take and take
and never offer
anything in return.

I am a lady.
I am more than a receptacle,
a body to be viewed
and screwed at your leisure
with no thought
to what goes on
above my neck.

I'll not be
your window dressing,
nor the bobble-headed doll
who nods in agreement with
everything you say and do.
I am a lady.

I've heard it said
that to kiss a man
when he wants
to be kissed
is like scratching a place
that doesn't itch,
but I can guarantee you
that I'll always have
an itch

... and not just for kisses,
but only if I am loved
and the love is shared
with respect, kindness,
honesty and faithfulness.
Rest assured,
it will all be returned
to you ten-fold,

because you see,
once the bedroom door
closes and the passion
rages in my blood,
I don't have to be
a lady any more.

C.J. Heck

I Am Me. I'M Matty

I've got this thing called autism
that can lock you up inside
but I am me, I'm Matty,
and I'm learning not to hide.

The state was slow to test me.
Mommy made them walk the line.
They said I might not talk
so mommy taught me how to sign.

There's nothing slow about me.
Everywhere I go, I run.
I'm always on my tiptoes
and I flap my arms when I have fun.

I love climbing and pretending,
I know movies word for word,
and now that I have learned to talk
I repeat things till I'm heard

I'm just like any other boy
in many, many ways
but I like things to stay the same
so I won't melt down today.

I have this thing called autism
but I am Matty. I am ME.☐
I'll unlock my world inside
'cause my mommy holds the key.

(For my grandson, Matthew. I love you, Matty)

C.J. Heck

I Can Fly! (Children)

A long time ago, a little girl
believed that she could fly.
She saw the movie, 'Peter Pan'
and decided she would try.

She thought her happy thoughts,
let out a rooster's crow,
and as she shouted, 'I believe! '
she crashed to the floor below.

She woke up in a hospital.
Mom and dad were by the bed.
It took six stitches to sew up
where she had conked her head.

The little girl learned a lesson.
Be careful in what you believe -
some things will always be pretend.
The little girl? Yeah, it was me.

C.J. Heck

I Can Think Of You Now Without Tears

I'll never understand
why you couldn't wait,
but time brings an acceptance
and with it, a richness for having loved
and having been loved.

I will always be indebted to you
for what you gave me.
Your heart breathed life into mine
when I thought all was lost,
and I'm me, because there was an us.

I miss your warm breath on my nape,
your tender whispers in the night,
but now it's a new touch that thrills,
and it's his eyes that overflow with love.

They see the me you were first to find,
but he reaps what you so gently sowed.
I'll never forget what we had, but
I can think of you now without tears
for another has taken your place.

C.J. Heck

I Love Bugs (Children)

I love teeny tiny ants
and itchy bitsy fleas,
spiders, big and little,
and grouchy grumble bees,

butterflies that flutter by
and beetles when they run
from marching caterpillars.
I think bugs are fun.

Skeeters like to bite me,
but lightning bugs, they don't,
and flies that get inside the house
could bite, but they won't.

Silly racing centipedes
and slow and slimy slugs
are my very special favorites.

I
love
bugs.

C.J. Heck

I Remember Mama

I remember Mama
blowing chewing gum bubbles
to entertain us
while she ironed.
I was too young for school
Sesame Street wasn't invented yet
the rain was pouring outside
and I was awed.

I remember Mama
sewing at her machine into the night
when she had to get up early for work
patching a favorite pair of cutoffs
just one more time
or putting pockets on pants
because my little brother adored them
and I still hear her words
'There's all kinds of ways to say
I love you.'

I remember Mama
teaching us that beauty on the inside
was more important than on the outside.
'A kind word to a stranger
might be the only kind word
that person heard all day'
... and how good it felt
finding out she was right.

I remember Mama
telling us to hold onto our dreams.
Make them happen and never say 'I can't'
and how funny I thought it
when she said
the world was our watermelon
and all we had to do was
grab it and take a bite.

I remember Mama

who taught us best by example
with her unconditional love.
Love isn't love until it's given away
and it's in the giving that we know
it truly does come back ten-fold.

I remember, Mama.

C.J. Heck

I Remember Then

I remember many things
about those days and you.

I remember staring into brown eyes
as though I couldn't get enough of them,
then burning the love I saw there
into a memory to keep for all time.

I remember how with you,
total silence could be so comfortable,
and how it was the only time
in my life I ever felt that to be so.

I remember how safe I felt with you.
Even the way you said my name
was different from how others said it
and I remember feeling
that even my name
was safe in your mouth.

I remember how sometimes
we made love all night
and stayed in bed all day,
then skinny dipping
to cool down
all the secret places
our lovemaking heated up.

I remember lying in your arms
in the afterglow and thinking
how profound it was,
the way the brain hitched a ride
when the body did all the work.

You were my miracle
in our own short season,
and it makes me remember
the last time I saw you

because I will never forget
the pain of my loss.

C.J. Heck

If I Could Choose

If I could choose my place to die,
it would be there,
my head in the cradle of your shoulder,
bodies entwined,
my hand caressing the soft fur on your chest.

If I could choose my last minute,
it would be there,
your soft whispers of love in my ear
while I breathe you in,
lost in the awe of us.

If I could choose where to take my last breath,
it would be there,
hearts matching rhythms,
eyes mirroring the wonder
of what we'd just shared.
If I could choose.

C.J. Heck

If I Told You Through My Mind

'I love you ...'

can you sense my thoughts
if I send them
across a crowded world

or in your dreams,
while I lay here inept at sleep,
your head making its familiar dimple
in the pillow wherever you are ...

do you ever reach out
with your own thoughts
when you need me
and I'm not there ...

would you hear me
if I whispered

'I want you...'

through my mind.

C.J. Heck

If Only A Minute

Sweet heart, if I only have a minute
to say goodbye to you,
let me whisper what I'm thinking
when my time on earth is through.

I'll tell you how I've loved you
and how happy I have been,
please, don't think of me as leaving,
for I know we'll meet again.

We'll hold each other close once more
and I'll kiss away your tears.
We'll talk of precious things we've shared
through all our loving years.

When my time with you has ended
and He calls for me to come,
Just know, I've always loved you.
Please take care of everyone.

C.J. Heck

I'M Not Talking (Children)

I'm just going to sit here.
I won't say a word.
I'll be like the children
who are seen and not heard.

If I talk I'll say something
I know I'll regret,
'cause I'm so mad at Sissy,
I may never forget.

She broke all my crayons,
then she threw them away,
and she blamed me for spilling
her milk yesterday.

I keep thinking about
what I learned when just small:
either say something nice,
or say nothing at all.

If I say what I want to say,
I might be heard,
so I'm just going to sit here
and not say a word.

C.J. Heck

In Search Of Sleep

Sleep, you ornery rascal,
why is it you elude me?

Like a crush, you tease the senses,
you taunt me with your charms.

Needing you, I'm bribed and baited,
much smitten with desire.

Your allure in awkward places
has me always hiding yawns.

You deflower me in a movie,
you corrupt me on my couch.

Should you take up prostitution,
might I gladly buy some time?

Sleep come take me lying down,
not driving in my car!

Then sighing in depravity,
again I call from bed -

Sleep, you naughty pervert,
I want you, take me now!

C.J. Heck

Insomniac Sadness

Walls of night surround me
crowding hard and closing in.

Tonight's sleep
yet another failed marathon,
alone except for the clocks
whose beats break my silence.

The stage is set, the actors here
but a heart's reel of film
shows only reruns on a lonely night.

Maddening clocks! All-knowing,
counting out their beats,
each slow as a tear,
loud, yet oddly a whisper.

I'm sorry to intrude,
yet I'm awed by their blending
of my insomniac sadness
into their nightly concerts.

The ticking, tocking,
at once both friend and foe.

No way to forget,
yet so afraid I might,
and feeling quite alone.

C.J. Heck

It's All In A Song

I can't remember
the last time I heard that song
but I do remember
I cried then, too.

It's not a sad song
but the tears fall just the same,
as though yesterday was
caught in my throat and
today is gum stuck to my shoe.

I wanted to yell
at the guy in the car
to roll up his window
and have a heart,
because he was breaking mine.

I only walk down this street
every now and again

please God, someone tell him
tomorrow would be
a kinder day to drive along
playing that song.

C.J. Heck

Just Passing Through

There's a day that lingers in my mind
and I can still taste the gritty dust
blowing hot on a summer day

I had stopped for gas at a truck stop,
nowhere important,
just going from here to there
but there he was
by the side of the road
and walking toward me
in run down leather boots
the wind in his hair
the sun on his face
and squinting through ice blue eyes

When he caught me staring
he touched a finger to the hat
cocked slightly to one side
and threw me a wink
and then a crooked smile

He was tall
the long legs
propelling him in bowed strides
that reinvented the swaggery strut
and as he passed by
my eyes were drawn to the tight jeans
and the perfect ass that filled them

He wasn't Marlboro Man handsome
but rugged and muscular
and perfectly packaged in a plaid shirt
with little pearl snaps
and rolled up sleeves

my emotions ran high
and I'll never forget that day
by the side of the road
when I fell in lust

with a stranger I never met,
someone just passing through

C.J. Heck

Kangaroos (Children)

Be glad you're not a kangaroo
and you're a girl or boy...

'cause all the little kangaroos
are named the same thing, 'Joey'.

C.J. Heck

Lemonade Stand (Children)

Get your ice cold glass of lemonade!
Hurry, before it's gone.
We made it just this morning.
See the table that it's on?

We promise that you'll like it
and there's sugar in it, too -
not like it was the other day
when mom and dad said Ewww.

Get your ice cold glass of lemonade!
Boy grownups sure are funny -
they smile a lot at little kids
who are trying to make money.

Thank you, maam, and thank you, sir,
you've helped us out a bunch.
Sissy, let's go make some more.
It's almost time for lunch.

Get your ice cold glass of lemonade!
Only fifteen cents a glass!
We've got to make more money
and we've got to make it fast.

Daddy said it wouldn't work,
that people wouldn't stop.
They'd hurry right on past us
and then they'd laugh a lot.

One last glass of lemonade!
This was so much fun!
Let's get this table put away
and then we've got to run.

Sissy look! It's snowing!
But that will be all right...
now we have money for presents
and Santa Claus comes tonight.

C.J. Heck

Letter From Heaven (Children)

Mommy, Daddy, how I miss you
and I know you're missing me.
There are windows here in heaven
and every day I look and see

my toys all in the toybox
and my dolls up on the shelf
but I can't pull them in my wagon now
nor hold them to myself.

My little rocker's empty
and your arms feel empty too.
I can see the sadness in your face.
Mommy, Daddy, I love you.

My music box is quiet
but I don't need to hear it play.
Mommy, Daddy, it's not needed now -
angels here sing every day.

Please don't worry that I'm lonely,
there are children everywhere.
We are all His little angels
and there's so much love up here.

Mommy, Daddy, please don't cry for me,
heaven's such a lovely place.
God says you did your very best
and your love shows in my face.

Mommy, Daddy, when you need me
just look up and say a prayer.
I will see you through the windows
and I'll hear your voice up here.

C.J. Heck

Life Goes On

memories are like
a child's jack-in-the-box,
bound to pop up
when we least expect them

when they do,
sometimes we cry
sometimes we smile
sometimes we heave a sigh
but it's okay

they simply look for validation
and we must give them that

only then will they
diminish in size
so we can put them back,
close the lid with care,
... and life goes on.

C.J. Heck

Little Ants (Children)

Little ants marching in single file
crossing my smooth window pane.
How do they know who to follow?
Do they each have their own name?

Where are they going in such a rush?
Have they nothing else better to do?
I watch them, my nose to the window,
and it looks like they're watching me, too.

In my world, everyone's different
and most people go their own way.
In their world, they follow a leader
and the little guys all look the same.

I like making choices in my life
not following someone all the time.
I wouldn't like living in their world.
Are they wondering if they would like mine?

C.J. Heck

Little Boys And Jelly Beans (Children)

I love jelly beans,
all but the black ones, they're yucky.

Red ones trade best.
Orange is good.
Green tastes even better!
(all but the black ones, they're yucky) .

White is like vanilla.
Sissy likes the white.
Purples bite, but I still like,
all but the black ones, they're yucky.

I like pink, but it's for girls.
Yellow is my favorite.
I love jelly beans,
all but the black ones, they're yucky.

C.J. Heck

Little Boy's Note To Mom (Children)

Dear Mom,
I know we're going shopping
to buy new clothes for school,
but please just go without me.
I trust your taste, it's cool.

See, part of clothes is... (shhh) ... underwear.
I don't wanna take the chance
that any girls might see me
in the aisle near... (shhh) ... underpants.

I'll go if we buy other things,
no one would even care,
but please don't make me stand around
while we buy... (shhh) ... underwear.

Girls remember stuff like that.
They'll tease me bad, it's true!
If we're going for... (shhh) ... underpants,
please don't make me go with you!

C.J. Heck

Little Boy's View On Kissing (Children)

I like to kiss my mommy,
sometimes my daddy, too.
My brother kisses everything,
'cause that's what babies do.

I draw the line at kissing
with Mom and Dad - that's cool,
but I run as fast as I can go
when the girls chase me at school.

C.J. Heck

Little Boy's Wish (Children)

When I grow up I want some hair
just like my Uncle Paul's.
It's yellow and it's curvy
and he has it kinda' long.

I'd rather look like Daddy
and not like any other...
but my Daddy's head is bare on top
just like my baby brother's.

C.J. Heck

Little People

Footsteps on the staircase
handprints on the walls
tiny fingers dripping things
up and down the halls.

Voices all in unison
calling out my name
arguing and pointing
and saying who's to blame.

Dishes in the sink
couch cushions on the floor
clean and dust, then fall in bed
tomorrow will bring more

Those times are etched in memory
the children now are grown
but I'll gladly have it all again
when the grandkids all come home.

C.J. Heck

Little Sister's Word (Children)

Little sisters are adorable.
We've tried to tell ours, though...

you can have a lot of 'clothes',
but one dress is not a 'clo'.

C.J. Heck

Looking Back...

There comes a time in life
when we all look back.
We realize the goals we've met
have turned out to be more important
than goals not met.

We see unattained dreams
that are still within our reach,
and find the time to go after them.

In looking back, we tend to view love as
'is that all there is? '
For the lucky few, it is forever.
Our children raised, and grandkids growing,
we recognize in them our second chance.

There comes a time for all of us
when happily ever after
seems less important in the long haul.
We've come to learn our real security lies
in happily every now and then.

Over time, we've accepted the me 'as is'
as being pretty damn good, considering,
and at last, we recognize the true wisdom
of allowing ourselves the gift of contentment.
There comes a time for us all.

C.J. Heck

Lost In Awhile Ago

It's a warm summer night,
warmer still where she is,
lost in awhile ago.

His body spooned behind,
feathery sleep sounds in her ear,
with echoes of other sounds
from moments before.

The gentle breeze feels nice,
it cools the lusty beads
pearled across her forehead,
making skin feel like skin again.

A warm summer night,
inside her as well.
Eyes closed she smiles,
lost in awhile ago.

C.J. Heck

Love At First Sight

I've never believed
in love at first sight.
I've never had it happen,
so it never occurred to me
to give it space in my mind.

But I did see someone once
across a crowded room.
He was handsome
in a rugged sort of way
yet acutely aristocratic
with those bedroom eyes
and just a hint of vulnerability
to make him real.

And clothes really do make a man.
It was easy to imagine
what I might find
beneath his dapper wrapper...

I still don't believe
in love at first sight,
but I do believe in lust.
It's a wonderfully private thing.
No one gets hurt
and who the hell's to know?

C.J. Heck

Love In Words

Naive little things, words,
yet so effective when strung together
breathing romance
and fading loneliness

between the lines
with words in pastel strokes
joined in just the right way.

A writer's thoughts
whether fact or fiction
become another's hopes,
and the words find their way
to a reader's heart as surely
as petals dropped in a forest
mark the way home again.

I love you's bloom, only to fade
by truths revealed in even more words.

Can we fall in love through poetry?
I believe we can,
through the pure naivete of words.

C.J. Heck

Love's Wings

A butterfly fluttered by,
one of life's tiny miracles,
a rainbow all within itself,
riding the wind,
peaceful and free.

It reminded me of love.
If you find it,
hold it gently
to your heart.
Squeeze it tight,
or chafe its wings,
it too will die

and so it is with me.
Hold me close
with open arms.
Only then will I feel
free to be with you.

C.J. Heck

Makin' Up Stuff (Children)

My mommy is a writer.
She has stories in her head.
I hear her typing late at night
when I am in my bed.

I like to read the things she writes,
well, the kids' stuff anyway.
The other stuff's too old for me,
but I can read that, too, someday.

She calls me her inspiration
for the poetry she writes.
I guess that means I'm pretty smart
for someone just my size.

Boy, grownups sure are funny.
I don't understand, sometimes.
I like to make up stories, too...
but they call them little white lies.

C.J. Heck

Mama, Am I Pretty? (Children)

Mama, am I pretty?
'Why do you ask', she said.
She held me gently to her,
and kissed me lightly on my head.

'Your clothes are neatly ironed.
Your face and hands are clean.
You're such a sweet child, little one,
what does your question mean? '

Mama, am I pretty?
I really need to know.
Am I pretty like the other girls
at school where we all go?

'You have a very loving heart,
You're gentle, kind and good.
Your friends all think the world of you,
anybody would.'

But, Mama, am I pretty?
Sometimes kids point or stare.
I've got these real thick glasses
that I wish I didn't wear.

Mama said my time would come,
be patient and I'd see.
The things that really matter
were there, inside of me.

But, Mama! Am I pretty?
(I didn't mean to shout) .
Then Mama smiled and told me,
'Sweetheart, yes, inside and out.'

C.J. Heck

Me, I'M... Public? (Children)

One day when we were shopping,
I really had to pee,
so Mom and I went looking
for a restroom just for me.

We walked and looked around the mall,
past almost every store,
and then we looked and walked around
the mall a little more.

Then Mommy stopped and pointed.
'There's a restroom... over there! '
I looked and didn't see it,
so I asked her, 'Show me, where? '

Again she stopped and pointed.
'See that sign above the door?
The sign says Public Restroom.'
So we ran across the floor.

When we opened up the restroom door,
there was such a long, long line.
I REALLY had to go by then,
and I was running out of time.

I wondered ... then I asked my mom,
'Can WE go here? It's Public.'
She smiled and giggled, then laughed out loud
when I asked her, 'Aren't we Catholic? '

C.J. Heck

Me, Myself And I (Children)

My daddy calls me Will-dog.
PaPa calls me chief.
I'm always baby brother
to my sister - oh, good grief!

My Nana calls me punkin'.
Mama calls me little man.
I'm boo-boo bear to Grammy,
geez, I wonder WHO I am.

The mailman says, "Hey, sport! "
Auntie calls me precious lamb
and when I act real silly,
MiMi says I'm quite a ham.

I guess it's like my sneakers.
Some call them tennis shoes.
Both names mean the same thing.
It doesn't matter which I use.

Or maybe like a puppy dog,
some people call them hounds.
It doesn't really matter,
'cause they both make barking sounds.

Maybe it's not so awful
they don't all call me the same.
I feel kinda-sorta special
that I have so many names!

C.J. Heck

Me'N Pigs (Children)

I like pigs,
they're a lot like me.
They play in
all the mud they see.

And pigs are funny
and pigs are cute,
(but I'm not bacon
in a pink skin suit) .

One end is curly,
one end is flat,
and the in-between
is short and fat,

and when pigs talk
to other boars,
they sound like Daddy
when he snores.

Some pigs are black.
some pigs are pink,
and sometimes pigs
can really stink,

but that's okay,
'cause I can, too.
I still like pigs.
Tell me, do you?

C.J. Heck

Mike's Bike (Children)

There once was a monkey named Mike
who headed out west on his bike.
He soon was stopped cold
with no token for toll
and the tollkeeper said, "Take a hike."

But the monkey named Mike didn't hike
and took a new route with his bike.
When one tire went flat,
a mechanic saw that
and told Mike his bike found a spike.

The mechanic then fixed the bike
and said to the monkey named Mike,
"Hey, Mike, you should FLY
and never again try
to ride your bike, Mike. See the spike? "

C.J. Heck

Missing Him...

Whisker droppings in the sink,
moustache trimmed just so.
Spots of water on the mirror,
always in a rush to go.

Lazy bubbles on the shower door,
toothpaste squeezed in the middle.
Trash bags waiting by the door,
clothes picked up, just a little.

Seat left up on the toilet
like a dragon waiting to bite.
Remembering is bittersweet,
little flaws have become giant sighs.

C.J. Heck

Moments In Time

Our most tender moments
are flash-frozen and
locked away by an
efficient mind to suspend,

waiting patiently,
like fruit in a gelatin salad.

I find it astonishing
how easily the senses
can pick that lock,

and once freed,
how quickly those same moments
are breathed back to life.

Today in a crowd,
I caught the scent of his cologne ...

C.J. Heck

Mommy Angel (Preschool)

Dear God,
Do You grow any flowers in heaven?
Maybe sweet roses that might be red?
Could I ask you please to pick some
and lay them on my Mommy's bed?

Do You have a piano in heaven?
If they want to, can the angels play?
Mommy played such pretty songs
on our piano here every day.

I hope there are no mops or brooms,
and Mommy angel can get some rest.
At our house Mommy worked so hard
to make everything look its best.

Dear God,
In heaven, do You have angel children?
Mommy had so many hugs to share
and I'm sad she might get lonely
with no children, like me, to hug there.

How about soft little white kittens?
Do You have some of those up there too?
I gave Mommy one here for her birthday
but she couldn't bring him to see You.

Only one more thing I need to ask you.
It's for sad Daddys and sad kids like me.
Are you ever going to get cell phones?
If you do, can Mommy angel call, please?

C.J. Heck

Mommy's Hands (Children's Prayer)

Dear God,
Mommy's hands are very large
and mine are very small.
The things that Mommy's hands can do
mine can't do at all.

She says when I grow up, though,
my hands will grow with me
then I can do what Mommy does.
Dear God,
grow me, please?

C.J. Heck

Mondays (Children)

I don't like Mondays
'cause Mondays aren't fun days.

My Saturdays are,
and so are my Sundays.

A week with a Monday
is a Monday too many...

If they'd let me change it,
there wouldn't be any.

C.J. Heck

Monkey Me (Children)

Monkey see,
monkey do,
I used to want
to be one, too.

He doesn't have a bedtime.
Bet he doesn't eat green beans!
Monkeys get to play around
the whole day long, it seems.

He doesn't have to brush his teeth
or have to comb his hair.
If he had toys I'll bet his dad
wouldn't make him have to share.

Bet he doesn't 'scuse me'
after each and every sneeze.
And you won't hear him 'thank you'
after every single 'please'.

But Mommy said that monkeys
don't ever watch TV...
that's when I decided
I'd rather just stay me.

C.J. Heck

Monster In A Box (Children)

There's a monster in my house!
It came in a great big box.
Mommy says it isn't so,
but something ate my socks.

I used to have a full sock drawer,
with red ones and some blue.
I even had some white ones,
'cause I wear white socks, too.

There's a monster in my house!
It came in a great big box
and I must make it angry
or it wouldn't eat my socks.

It lives around here, somewhere.
(whisper) Shhhh! I hope it's not around!
'Cause if you ever wake it up,
it makes such awful sounds.

Most times, it says, 'Yum-Yum! Yum-Yum! '
Sometimes, it just goes 'swish'.
But, I know it eats my socks up
without a spoon or dish.

Mom says they're underneath the bed
or spread around the floor.
(well the monster musta' burped 'em there
when she opened up the door) .

There's a monster in my house!
It came in a great big box!
Mom says it's just the washer...
but it's a monster that eats my socks!

C.J. Heck

Mr. 'tato Head (Preschool)

I am really very angry
and I am very really mad.
I can't find my happy face,
it's gone, and now I'm sad.

I was playing that dumb game
called Mr. 'Tato Head,
and my big brother yelled at me.
I don't like the things he said.

I was sticking in two eyes,
then I found a 'just right' nose,
but when I stuck his mouth in
that wasn't where it goes,

so I pulled the mouth back out
and I stuck it back in ... there,
but when I tried to give him ears,
his dumb mouth fell on my chair!

I pushed his mouth in one more time,
then I poked in both his shoes.
(I couldn't find the purple hat,
but that's what I always lose) .

Then the whole thing fell apart!
Everything came all unhooked!
That's when my brother yelled at me ...
"Dork, ya don't use a 'tato that's cooked! "

C.J. Heck

Mr. Calapitter (Children)

Dear Mr. Caterpillar,
I don't mean to bother you,
but I have lots of questions
about your kids and what you do.

After giving all those baths,
and you tuck your kids in bed,
do dollar signs for shoes and socks
get piled up in your head?

They all wear fuzzy winter coats,
guess you don't have to buy
any boots or toasty mittens.
You're such a lucky guy.

Do little caterpillar kids
ever stub their toes?
And if they fall and skin their knees,
where do bandaids go?

Dreaming in their warm cocoons,
is it always a surprise
to suddenly just wake up
as pretty butterflies?

Mr. Caterpillar,
Mrs. Caterpillar, too,
Do you remember all their names?
Mom and Dad can't with just two!

C.J. Heck

Mud Pies (Children)

Today I'm cookin' the dinner.
I stir in all the stuff that I should
'cause I know just how to make it
so EVERYthing I cook tastes good.

I'm smushin' meatloaf without any onions
and veggies without any beans.
See how I squished the smashed 'tatoes?
Right by the macaronis and cheese.

Next I will make ice cream salad.
(Cookin' dinner is really fun work) .
Here's shovels and buckets of jello
and marshmallow pies for dessert.

Uh oh... it's startin' to rain.
Now mom will bring me inside...
The rain sure is wreckin' my cookin'
but rain will make MORE mud outside!

C.J. Heck

Muddles (Preschool)

Splashing-splashing the mud in puddles.
I will name what I made, muddles!
Run and jump my feet go splishy.
Bare toes feel good, squashy-squishy.

Uh oh, muddles frickled my new pants!
I wiped it worse 'cause it's on my hands!
Dripsy-dropsy EVERY place!
It's in my hair! It's on my face!

It's on my shirt, and there, and THERE!
Muddles got me everywhere!
Muddles bubbles in my smell.
Is it in both holes? I just can't tell,

but every twirl I go, it goes!
Ewww, here comes Mommy with the hose.
Mommy said just LOOK at me!
I can't, cause muddles got in my see,

but there isn't muddles in my ears,
and Mommy's yells fill up my hears!
Now dripples are raining down, oh well,
it's raining muddles off my smell.

My poor muddles. Now they're moosh.
I slipped and sat right in the goosh.
Hose raining muddles off my thumb,
raining muddles from on my bum,

now there's nowhere muddles stayed,
'cause the dripples made it go away.
I can't play now, or here OR there
'cause I'm in a corner on a chair,

and Mommy's washing ALL my clothes.
She said why MUDDLES? I'll NEVER know!
Would I still be in all this trouble
if I named it something else, not muddles?

C.J. Heck

My Best Friend (Children)

My best friend had lots of curls
but wasn't like the other girls
who stayed dressed up and always clean.
My best friend wore old blue jeans.

She loved to do things just like me,
like building forts and climbing trees.
She stubbed her toe, and to stop the blood,
we both walked barefoot through the mud.

She could pitch a baseball, make it fly
much faster than most any guy.
And when she ran, her feet had wings!
My best friend could do anything.

All summer long we stayed outside
pretending things and riding bikes
or sometimes wading in the creek
where I fell down and skinned my knee.

One autumn day, I saw her cry.
I felt so sad when she told me why.
The doctors told her she was sick
and she needed treatment, really quick.

Her parents drove her. I watched them go,
and doctors still don't really know
just how to cure the thing she had
that made her sick and feel so bad.

One rainy night she went away
up to heaven where she will stay,
but her memory will never end
'cause I'll always remember
my best friend.

C.J. Heck

My Brother's Feet (Children)

My brother's feet are stinky
and he's hard to sit beside.
Mom makes him take his sneakers off
and leave them. They're outside.

She really shouldn't do that.
It's not something she can hide
'cause he brings the smell right with him
on his socks and feet inside.

EWV! That smell is really awful!
His feet must be nearby.
Gee, my brother isn't home now...
oh my gosh, it's mine!

C.J. Heck

My Imaginary Friend (Children)

My friend, Sherla, was hard to see
for Mom and Dad, not me.
My imaginary friend was all I had.
I'm an only child, you see.

Most times Sherla was really good.
We did puzzles, read, and played.
We made our beds and cleaned our room
ALMOST every single day.

But sometimes Sherla spilled my milk,
sometimes she wrote on walls,
sometimes she told me not to come
when Mom and Daddy called.

I had to have a talk with her
about being a naughty kid,
cause I'm the one who got time out
for all the things she did.

It's different now, I go to school
and I have friends everywhere.
Sherla doesn't come here now
and I thought I she didn't care.

Mom told me Sherla's 'special'
cause only I could see,
but now she lives with someone else
who needs her more than me.

C.J. Heck

My Lady Bug (Preschool)

Hi there little lady bug,
What are you doing on my arm?
Please don't fly away.
I won't bring you any harm.

I'm glad to have you with me.
I was feeling all alone.
Somehow I got all turned around.
I don't know my way back home.

I only took a little walk
behind a pretty butterfly,
but now I'm really scared and lost
and I think I'm going to cry.

Stay here little lady bug,
please don't fly away,
and when my mommy finds me,
come home with me and stay.

I'll let you share my bedroom
and when it's dark at night,
Mommy leaves the lamp on
(monsters hate it when it's light) .

Hey, that sounds like mommy!
It is! She's calling me!
Now you get to meet her.
You'll like her, wait and see.

Lady bug? Where're you going?
I guess to your home too.
Thanks for being lost with me.
Bye lady bug ... I love you.

C.J. Heck

My Nose (Children)

Right smack dab in the middle of my face
a nose is growing in that place.
I think it looks real goofy there,
but I can't move it any other somewhere.

Some are big, but mine is small,
and babies have a bump, that's all.
It isn't nice to lie, I know,
'cause my nose might grow like Pinnocchio's.

With a cold it's stuffy, just because,
near Sissy's feet... you wish it was.
Most times, my nose is a friend to me.
It warns, Mom's cooking broccoli

or other stuff that I won't eat,
like liver (that's a yucky meat) .
Sometimes it works the other way...
Mom made oatmeal cookies today,

and I also like to smell perfume.
The kind Mom wears stinks up a room.
We'd sure be missin', I suppose,
some real neat sniffin' without a nose.

C.J. Heck

My Other World

In sleep, life's constraints
are unbuttoned and unzipped,
then cast off with the rest
of the laundry in the hamper.

My fluffy pillow, a giant sponge,
to sop up any leftover worries
spilling out my ears from my mind.

In sleep, the good guys always finish first,
so it's my number that wins the lottery.

In sleep, I can fly with dragons,
be invisible and cast magic spells.
I can take flying carpet rides
to almost anywhere, reading minds,
seeing through walls, and solving problems
- even my own.

In sleep, there are no wrinkles or gray hair,
and varicose veins are merely beauty marks.
The mirror on my wall says
I'm the fairest one of all
because the genie in my pocket
grants my every wish.

My dream world is my haven.
There I can still believe
in fairy tales and guardian angels,
being in love with happy endings,
and only there,
can I still believe in you ...

C.J. Heck

My Piggy Bank (Children)

I've been busy with my crayons
and it took a real long time.
I wrote a special message
on my paper. It's a sign.

You see, I have a piggy bank.
He stands up on a shelf.
The only money in him
is what I put in myself.

But things will be much different
once the sign goes there, you'll see.
My piggy bank will overflow
'cause my sign says, 'Please Feed Me'.

C.J. Heck

My Shadow (Children)

I have a shadow hooked to me.
Sometimes he's big.
Sometimes he's small.
Sometimes he isn't there at all.

He doesn't seem to like the rain.
(Maybe thunder scares him, too) .
He's gone from me on days like that
'cause there isn't much to do.

But if it's really sunny out,
he doesn't like to hide.
He's hooked right there beside me
and we play all day outside.

C.J. Heck

My Tooth (Children)

The toothfairy took my tooth lath night
and left thome money, too.
But now I can't thay wordth too well
and I don't know what I'll do.

What if my friendth all laugh at me
becauth I thpeak like thith?
What if they won't come over
and thereth no one to play with?

Hey gueth what? My friend juth called.
He loht hith tooth today!
You know what elth? He thoundth like me
and he wantth to come and play!

C.J. Heck

My World (Children)

In my dream, all the oceans are chocolate
that I sail in my gummy bear boat.
The mountain, there, is a chocolate cake
with waterfalls to root beer floats.

Bubble gum berries grow wild here and there.
Tall pretzels are telephone poles.
Potato chips fall like crisp autumn leaves
that I gather in sugar cone bowls.

In my garden, the trees all grow jelly beans
with every color they make, except black.
The leaves on the flowers are little green spoons
'cause the flowers bloom jello cup snacks.

When it rains, the puddles are lemonade
and I swallow sweet drops from the sky.
In the winter, it always snows popcorn
so I make popcorn men seven feet high.

Chocolate chip cookies are stepping stones
under soft cotton candy pink clouds.
The sidewalks are made of red licorice sticks.
It all tastes just as good as it sounds.

If my world could be like my dream,
what an exciting place it would make -
to have all of my favorites everywhere,
but never a bad tummy ache.

C.J. Heck

Naps (Children)

I've tried to tell my mother,
I don't need a nap for me.
Naps are just for babies -
but we just don't agree.

I'm much too big to take one
and I've tried to tell her that
but Mom will never understand
why I don't want a nap.

So, every day I lay here
with nothin' else to do.
Sometimes, I even fall asleep
- and I think she does, too.

C.J. Heck

New Love

Dusty boxes in the yard
for trash pick-up today.
His first love died some years ago,
he's finally throwing things away.

It's time to move along now,
a new love's moving in.
So bittersweet, his feelings,
he thought he'd never love again.

His old love has a new home,
in his memories, she'll stay ...
not the dusty boxes in the yard
for trash pick-up today.

C.J. Heck

Night-Night (Children)

Night-night moon
Night-night stars
Night-night noisy
trucks and cars.

Night-night sand box
Night-night toys
Night-night other
girls and boys.

Night-night mom
Night-night dad
Night-night Boogie Man
who's not bad.

It's time to go to sleep now,
most all my night nights said.
Night-night blankie
Night-night bed.

C.J. Heck

No More Words, Show Me

Words slowly chip away
at the good that was
til they deaden a giving heart.

Plates piled high
with hurtful names,
or full of blame,
pointing angry fingers
with words.

(Clean up your plate,
must eat up the reasons,
all the reasons
why I had to change,
never you)

Finish lines moved
with more words.
I love you's thrown like confetti
as if your 'because' was real.

No more words.
If you love me,
show me.

C.J. Heck

No Tears For Me

No tears for this one,
not for me, that won't do.
I don't pity me,
so I'm asking, don't you.

I'm content wearing my life
I've had a grand view.
I won't waste my life
feeling sorry, feeling blue.

Each makes his own bed,
we're just captains at sea
in our oceans of life
where you can't help but see

that no matter how bad
things at times seem to be,
there are many worse off
than those such as me.

Love, hope and laughter
when scattered about
have a way of returning
to us, there's no doubt.

So no tears for this one,
not for me, that won't do.
I don't pity me,
so I'm asking, don't you.

C.J. Heck

No Wasted Heartbeats

What if we are all born with
a predetermined number of heartbeats
and when they're gone,
we're gone?

Just in case it's true,
I'm not going to waste mine
running down some road
in silly spandex pants and a jog bra.

I'm going to make my
thumping little tickets stretch
to as many years as I can
... especially since at my age,
I've used up so many of them
just getting here.

I'll spread them out,
save them for what's important,
like running away from
something or someone bad.

I also intend to use a lot of them
for making love.
If life really is a journey
and not a destination,

I might as well enjoy myself
along the way...

C.J. Heck

Now I'M Three And I Know... (Preschool)

I know, never touch fire, that's hot,
but I can touch ice, 'cause it's not,
and puppies are soft and kitties are too,
so's most of the stuff moms and dads give to you.

I know, never tell people they're fat,
'cause it will hurt them if I do that,
and rocks aren't for throwing at others
but it's okay to throw pillows at brothers.

I know, daddy says swears I can't say,
and I have to wear clothes out to play,
... 'cause one time I went outside naked
and Mrs. Johnson saw me
and she called Mommy
and Mommy came outside
and got mad and she yelled at me
and I had to sit in a chair
for a whole time out and ...

I know, cookies smell better than cheese,
and to get one, I have to say please,
and how to go pee in the potty,
but not in my pants, 'cause that's naughty.

I know, flowers don't need any feet,
and no dessert if I don't eat my meat,
I've got to blow boogers in tissue,
and don't wipe off where ladies kiss you.

When I wake mommy up, never holler,
pennies are not more than a dollar,
and scissors are never for cutting my hair,
the barber does that (but I hate going there) .

I laugh 'cause it's better than cry,
and you can't squeeze a worm, it will die,
Daddy will laugh if I'm burping,
and Mommy's kiss helps what is hurting,

I know SO many things, now I'm three
and this stuff helps me be a good ME.
I know lots more than I did when I'm two
of the stuff I can do and I can't do.

C.J. Heck

Nuffing On My Plate (Preschool)

I'm sad, I don't like nuffing
that's layin' on my plate.
Maybe it will go away
if I sit here and wait.

I sure don't like this liver
and I never, ever could.
Can't I have peanut butter?
With grape jeddy, that is good.

These mash-ed tatoes are okay
the yucky gravy it is not.
It's like havin' plain ol' oatmeal
and I hate that stuff a lot.

I almost like the green beans
'cause they're green just like my frog.
But no one likes dumb broccoli,
not even Frank, my dog.

Uh oh, mommy said we're havin'
chocolate puddin' for a treat.
(sigh) ... maybe if I hold my nose
stuff won't taste so bad to me ...

C.J. Heck

Ode To Being Five (Children)

I made a paper Valentine
all red and edged with lace.
And on my paper Valentine,
I drew a pretty face.

I painted on two big blue eyes
and then a great big grin
and knew it wouldn't be complete
without a dimpled chin.

I love you, paper valentine,
and just between us two,
I hope someday when I grow up
I'll look as sweet as you.

C.J. Heck

On Writing Poetry

A friend once asked why I write poetry.
Judging by the pinched look on her face,
she might as well have asked why I juggle snakes.

In thinking on the matter,
it's like having a sneeze that won't come.
When it finally does, it just feels good.
A poet understands...

To my friend, I simply said
there are things inside that must come out.
They are uncomfortable where they are,
like having a mosquito bite that you can't quite reach.
When you find someone to scratch it,
it just feels good.

Oops, gotta go.
I feel a poetic sneeze coming on
and it's gonna feel
so good.

C.J. Heck

On Writing Poetry

Take everyday words
beyond everyday talent
and write them alive.

(Senryu 5/7/5)

C.J. Heck

Online Soulmates

She was the yin to his yang.
He was the dot to her 'i'.
When she was black and white,
he was the colors in between.

He finished her sentence.
She felt his thoughts.
They understood from the inside out
because that is how they began.

She was the words, he the notes,
together, an endless song.
He was her real after surreal dreams,
she the pier where he anchored his soul.

He was the rope when all else pulled her away.
She was his lamp in the dark.
Hers were the blue that mirrored the brown
in the looking glass eyes of the heart.

She was the soft to his hard
and when the door had closed,
when all the lights blinked out,
they were both fire and ice

blurring the lines
between the she and the he
until he was time, she the clock,
and together, eternity.

C.J. Heck

Only Child (Children)

I don't have a little brother.
I don't have a sister, too.
It's just me and Mom and Daddy
but there's lots of things to do.

Sometimes we go on picnics
and play ball until it's dark.
Sometimes we play on slides and swings
when we go to the park.

We can go and see a movie,
other days go to the beach
where I can get sand dollars
and Daddy helps when I can't reach.

I wish I had a brother.
I'd like a sister, too,
but it's me and Mom and Daddy
and there's lots of things to do.

C.J. Heck

Our New Baby (Children)

We're gonna have a baby!
Daddy told me yesterday.
A baby brother or a sister,
Mommy's growing it each day.

It's right there in her tummy.
Can you see it? It's right there.
I can hold my hand and feel it move
'cause Mommy doesn't care.

I wonder, does it like the things
that Mommy has to eat?
All those yucky vegetables?
All that hard to chew up meat?

I hope that it comes out of there
before I get too old...
Uh oh, Mommy's eating ice cream.
Will that make the baby cold?

C.J. Heck

Painting Feelings (Children)

How do I paint happy?
How do I paint sad?
How do I paint angry,
when someone makes me mad?

How do I paint feelings?
They're not somethin' that you see.
And yet, they're so important
in my pictures about me.

Today I thought about it.
I think what I will do -
is paint what feelings stand for.
It's easy I think, too.

When I'm feelin' happy,
I'll paint the sky bright blue.
If sad is what I'm feeling,
then the tears I'll paint are, too.

If what I feel is angry,
I'll paint my mouth a great big 'O',
'cause Mommy says 'bout angry,
'Get it out, then let it go.'

C.J. Heck

'Partment (Children)

I wish I had a puppy...
wish I had a kitten, too,
but Mommy says our 'partment
is too small to have a zoo.

She said someday when we move
I'll get to have my wish,
but just for now be happy
with old Harold, he's my fish.

But old Harold seems so lonely,
he just swims around all day.
He can't chase a ball inside with me
and he can't go out and play.

I wondered if he's sad
'cause he is all alone...
but every time I ask him
his mouth keeps saying 'no'...'no'...'no'.

C.J. Heck

Peace Be With You

The man was seated in a pew,
sandwiched between
his wife and children,

head bowed,
all piety and innocence
on his face
mouthing the words
to the preacher's prayer.

Were his thoughts with God
I wondered, or the woman
I saw leaving his car
following a passionate kiss
the day before.

(I was again reminded
not to judge, lest I be judged)
and I'm sure not perfect.

It's said that heaven
has many rooms
- maybe even one for him.

As for me, when the time comes,
I believe I'll request another floor.

Peace be with you.

C.J. Heck

Pedal Pushin' (Children)

Mom's car has three foot pedals.
I think I'm gonna ask her -

Since daddy's car has only two,
does her car pedal faster?

C.J. Heck

Perfection

I'm coming, my love.
I can hardly wait to see you again,
high on wonderful feelings
as I am...

your magnificent body
molded to perfection,
as if for my eyes only...

inhaling your rich scent,
my body melded with yours,
feeling your power and strength
as we move as one ...

now, if the damn salesman
will only come down another thousand,
or maybe give me a little more
for my trade-in...
you'll be mine

C.J. Heck

Permagosh (Children)

Mommy's on the couch.
Daddy's in his chair.
I'm sitting in a corner on a stool...
they put me here

'cause I did something naughty
that I'm not supposed to do.
I invented Permagosh
mixing things with their shampoo.

First, a real long worm of toothpaste,
then then a cloud of shaving cream,
then two glugs of mouthwash
('cause I like the color, green) .

I stirred it in a mixing bowl.
Boy, it smelled real good!
It was even looking better
than I ever thought it would.

... could it be a cure for cancer?
... take the itch from skeeter bites?
... or maybe heal a sunburn
when it hurts to sleep at night?

Two shakes of baby powder
made it way too hard to stir,
so I added Mommy's perfume.
Permagosh smelled just like her!

Then the bowl tipped over...
Permagosh was on the floor,
and when I turned around,
Mom and Dad were by the door.

Now Mommy's on the couch.
Daddy's in his chair.
I'm sitting in a corner on a stool...
they put me here.

C.J. Heck

Playin' Cowboy (Children)

I love to be a cowboy
and ride my horse around the room.
He's black and white and he won't bite
(he's really Mommy's broom) .

I shoot my guns at bad guys
when I ride down the trail.
(they're really just my dog and cat
and my closet is the jail) .

I ride and rope wild horses, too,
and bring them to my camp
(it's really just the 'lectric cord)
...uh oh, I broke a lamp!

Oops! Here comes the Sheriff
and it looks like he is mad!
I'd better clean this mess up!
('cause the Sheriff's really Dad) .

C.J. Heck

Pockets (Children)

I think of all the things I have,
I like my pockets best.
Pockets hold just everything
and they give your hands a rest.

I never know just what I'll find,
what special things I'll see
to put inside my pockets ~~
these are treasures, just for me.

When Mommy's doing laundry though,
she says sometimes it's scary
finding rocks and frogs and beetles
and my spiders that are hairy.

C.J. Heck

Pretty Flower (Children)

I found a pretty flower,
food for bees and butterflies.
But when I gave it to my mom,
it put tears in Mommy's eyes.

Why are mommies like that?
Pretty things can make them cry
just like a very sad thing.
Some day, will I know why?

She said as we get older,
things don't all make sense...
but tears from pretty flowers
are most welcomed precious guests.

C.J. Heck

Puddle Stompin' (Children)

I like saying, spring has sprung.
I like the way it sounds.
And spring brings with it lots of rain,
(God's wringing out his clouds) .

Yay, rain means puddle stompin'!
After rain, they're everywhere.
No shoes or socks, I'm barefoot!
I get wet, but I don't care.

I don't think Mommy likes it
'cause I get muddy (ewwww) ,
but puddles just can't help it,
somehow mud gets in there, too.

Uh oh... here comes Mommy.
Hey, look at Mommy run!
Mommy's puddle stompin', too?
Now it's REALLY fun!

C.J. Heck

Purple Slurple (Children)

Hey, let's make a purple slurple.
It's good, I can show you how.
I won't spill like when I was little,
I'm six, I can make it now.

You can get out the glasses
and then add some lumps of ice.
I'll get all the other stuff out.
Thanks for your help, you're nice.

We'll glug six times with 7-Up,
add four shakes of sugar on top,
then stir with a big wooden spoon
and mix it in with the soda pop.

Then we'll add the grape juice.
That's what makes the slurple purple.
But be careful when you drink, go slow,
or your tummy makes a GREAT BIG burple!

C.J. Heck

Rhythms

There is no touch like your touch,
backed as it is by love.
God's own rhythms are brought to mind:

the mounting arc of an ocean wave
in its eager steady rise
and the exquisite explosion in its plunge.

a volcano blows and lava flows,
the ashes softly flurry down
to blanket earth's bed.

a swelling surge of lightning,
its jagged bolt thrust deeply in the ground,
the resounding thunder a herald of its rapture.

every sunset is nature's afterglow,
and in your arms
like a brand new dawn,
a memory is born each time
your touch warms again.

C.J. Heck

Rockin' The Boat

Fishin' is a lot like marriage.
Both are great things to be doin'
and the rewards are
well worth the time spent...

but you can sure get into
a lot of trouble with either of 'em
by rockin' the boat.

C.J. Heck

Rules (Children)

Parents sure have lots of rules,
things to do and not do.
I'll be glad when I get big
and growing up is gone through.

I won't need a dentist
or a barber for my hair,
and I'll go buy a chocolate cake
that I won't have to share.

Maybe, I'll stay up all night,
eat junk and watch TV.
If I want, I'll sleep all day.
No more rules for me!

"How will you get up for work?
You might get fired", Mom said.
"You won't make any money
by sleeping late in bed."

Why would I need money?
Who needs money anyway?
Rules are bad. When I grow up
I'll do fun things all day.

How would you pay your rent?
How will you buy a car?
How would you buy your big-boy clothes?
(you'll be bigger than you are) .

You'll have to buy the food you eat.
You'll have to have a phone.
How will you pay the heating bill?
'Cause surely you'll buy a home.

I hadn't thought of all of that.
I can't do that stuff.
It doesn't sound like fun at all
and I don't know enough.

Mom said as I get bigger,
the rules get bigger, too,
but when we start at my age,
growing up is fun to do.

She said people grow like houses,
step by step and brick by brick.
That's the way we all grow up
and having rules is part of it.

C.J. Heck

Say 'Cheese' (Children)

I'm not afraid of thunder storms.
I've figured it out, you see.

I even smile when lightning comes
'cause God's taking a picture of ME.

C.J. Heck

Scaredy Cat (Children)

I guess I'm just a scaredy cat ...
I am afraid of everything.
Sometimes I almost jump a mile
when I hear a telephone ring.

It's even scary in my room
so I've got to have a light.
Who knows, there might be monsters
under my bed at night!

When daddy drives across a bridge
I always hold my breath
just in case the bridge fell down
I wouldn't be drowned to death!

Stick my hand inside a box?
First tell me what is in it!
Wait, my sister's yelling ...
I'll be back in just a minute.

I guess I'm braver than I thought.
Sissy made me sit beside her.
She said I was a hero
'cause I smushed a big black spider!

C.J. Heck

Schlossenfuss (Children)

Poor Schlossenfuss with his hair amuss,
it always was so frizzy.
His mother couldn't help him
'cause she always was so busy.

He'd comb and comb in his room at home
but the frizzies only spread
and then got much more tangled up
by the time he went to bed.

His father rushed to buy a brush
but still without a doubt,
poor Schlossenfuss now combed AND brushed
but still they won't come out.

Poor Schlossenfuss with his hair amuss...
we don't know what to do.
The barber says to shave it off...
Oh no! Should he? Would you?

C.J. Heck

Scissors (Children)

Today I found some scissors
by my Mommy's sewing chair.
I learned scissors can cut paper
and scissors can cut hair...

I learned scissors can cut many things,
lots of things you shouldn't oughta.
But the best thing that I learned today
is scissors can't cut water.

C.J. Heck

Seaside Memories

when I miss him most
I walk to the beach
the memories are always clearer there
on the sun-warmed sand
where the wind's fingers play in my hair
and I can allow myself to remember

love had been
so like the sea and its waves
but waves of thunderous heartbeats
uncontrollable as an undertow
and we, just as powerless in its grip

each crest higher than the last
building to a final peak
then slowly down again
the rolling currents teasing
our own bodies home
to neap tide
our passion also spent

now I welcome low tide shadows
not those on sand
but here inside a memory.

C.J. Heck

Secret Room

A little room within my heart
has a door that wears a star
with a weathered name emblazoned there.
This is where you are.

It's not a large room, tucked away,
but where my soul can see
just where it is in case I need
a precious memory.

The door is safely closed now
for a time that's yet to come,
but when and if it does,
the door will melt away, my love.

C.J. Heck

Sleepytime Prayer (Children)

God bless my bedroom
God bless my bed
God bless the pillow
where I lay my head.

God bless my mommy
bless my dad, too.
They chased away monsters
that live in my room.

God bless my brother
bless my dog and my cat
and, OK, my sister
even though she's a brat.

Thanks God, and Amen
Now, up off my knees.
Wait! I forgot somethin'
God bless me too, please.

C.J. Heck

Somewhere In The Night

Somewhere in the night
you lie on your own bed
tucked in with your thoughts,
your head making its
familiar dimple in the pillow

where I loved to bury my face,
your him-scent as fresh there,
as it was when you owned it.

Somewhere in the night
I know you think of me
and you wonder where I am,
if I ever think of you,
and in between, you wrestle
with the could be's and
might have been's the same as I.

How I wish the morning
would come and bring a day
so fastly speeding, fully charged
and ever short with much to do.

Somewhere in the night
where the minutes slow and
every second lingers longer,
your gentle spirit is by my side
in the place where love goes
when it won't fade out
and never sleeps.

C.J. Heck

'Special' Brother (Children)

My brother's in a wheelchair
and he can't jump or run
but I can throw a ball to him
to catch and we have fun.

He can't do a lot of things
that other kids can do.
He needs help getting dressed
and he can't tie his shoes.

Mommy told me it's called 'special'
when a child is born that way.
I said I could have told her that...
My brother's special every day.

C.J. Heck

Still

Love, the way you loved me ...
I still feel your body over mine.

I still feel your lips nibbling kisses,
warm and glowing little snail trails,
up and down my thighs.

I still feel your hands gently teasing,
knowing all my secret places,
and I sigh.

Love, how you loved me ...
I still feel your body spooned behind
as tender whispers echo softly
upon my neck into the night.

Slumber deep, tender love,
while I linger a little longer
where we were.

C.J. Heck

Stinkers And Gems

Sometimes I write a real stinker.
Sometimes I write a nice gem.
More often than not, it's a mixture of both
that somehow escapes through my pen.

I know what to do with the good ones
and the stinkers will all crash and burn,
but what to do with the ones that are both
is something that I can't discern.

Right now they all go in drawers
male and female, they must multiply.
When I open the drawers, it seems there are more
than I recall putting inside.

I hope there's a poetry storehouse.
If there is, I must go today.
I've run out of drawers, and some smell pretty bad
yet they're too good to just throw away.

C.J. Heck

Stupid Tongues (Children)

I know our tongues have jobs to do,
licking lips or tasting food.
They also help us say our words
and see if our teeth are smooth.

After that, a tongue gets stupid,
stupid, stupid tongue...
Tongues don't seem to listen
and tongues act really dumb.

When we have a sharp loose tooth,
we tell our tongue to stay away
because it's really sharp right there
but tongues just won't behave.

Your tongue gets sore and it hurts to talk.
Your brain says, 'Tongue, don't take that walk! '
but tongues won't listen (or tongues don't care) ,
and pretty soon it goes back there,

the more it does, the more it hurts.
It just won't listen and I don't know
why it sneaks right back
when your brain says 'No'.

I know my tongue is helpful
and I'm glad I do have one...
but why are tongues so stupid?
Why are tongues so dumb?

C.J. Heck

Sweet Child (Children)

Little pixie cheeks,
pixie little ears,
little pixie eyes that
swell with pixie tears.

Little pixie nose,
pixie little chin,
a little pixie mouth with
a pixie little grin.

Little pixie hands,
pixie little feet,
a little pixie heart with
a pixie little beat.

Little pixie fanny,
a pixie tummy, too.
I know them all
and love them all
for they belong to you!

C.J. Heck

Tall And Small (Children)

When I stand next to my daddy,
I am very very small.
Next to my baby brother,
I am very very tall.

Tall... small... hey!
I made a rhyme!
I can be two different sizes
but I'm still me all the time.

C.J. Heck

Taps For My Soldier

A gentle breeze chatters the leaves
as birds sing their greetings.
The sun shines, a day like any other,
and yet like none before.

Two mirrored rows of uniforms
lined up like blue dominoes,
white gloves holding rifles at the ready.

One lone bugle cries.
Twenty-four notes,
each note slow as a tear,
blankets ears and heavy hearts.

In the silence between,
nature holds its breath.
Gone is the wind.
Gone are the bird songs.
Gone is her hold on composure,
all lost in the bugle's lament.

Solemnly a soldier approaches,
white gloves present a tri-fold flag,

and in one final mournful note,
legions of silent voices unite
to call a comrade home
and a young wife weeps.

C.J. Heck

Teddy Bear (Children)

My teddy bear was getting old.
I showed him to my dad.
The threads that made his mouth were gone.
My teddy bear looked so sad.

His round dark eyes were crooked.
His button nose hung down.
It made me cry to look at him,
my teddy bear, soft and brown.

A jagged hole showed stuffing
poking through along one side.
I had to hug him gently,
so it wouldn't grow more wide.

When Dad showed him to Mommy,
She fixed him up like new.
His button nose was tight again.
His mouth was smiling, too.

His eyes were side by side now
just like they used to be
and when I sat and talked to him,
he looked right back at me.

She pushed the stuffing in again
then sewed the hole with thread,
and when I went to sleep last night,
he was with me on my bed.

You know that someone loves you
by the little things they do.
Sometimes it means much more
than even saying "I love you."

C.J. Heck

Ten Little Piggies (Preschool)

Ten little piggies
all in a line.
Mommy told me
they're ALL mine.

One by one
each has a name,
and a place to go.
I love this game!

When they get touched
the piggies wiggle.
When Mommy kisses,
it makes me giggle!

When we're all done
they go in a sock.
hmmm... how many piggies
have a mom and dad got?

C.J. Heck

The Adonis

Young god, head held high,
proud mane blowing
in the city's dirty breeze,

clothes just enough rumpled
to make a woman believe
you just climbed out of a quickie
or stepped off of page 42
in this month's GQ.

Do you mind that I turn and look
as you walk by?

No, of course not.
You don't see me as a threat.
You don't even see me at all.

But give me ten more years...
then I'll be old enough
to reach over,
give your butt a squeeze and say,
mmm... nice buns...

C.J. Heck

The Affair

She bathed in the love
he showered on her,
the tiny droplets like blood
staining the holy threads
that bound her to another ...

The husband mourned his loss
and regret burned holes in his heart
for all the knots he had tied
in those same holy threads.

He imagined her basking
in her lover's smile
and cried as she ate forbidden fruit.
He waited, his eyes to heaven
numbed to the pain he bore,

his self-respect shelved,
his deep guilt bared
for the wanting,
for the return
he hopes will come.

Holy threads that bind her to him,
holy threads to stretch and bend,
holy threads that with forgiveness
beg to pull her home.

C.J. Heck

The Barking Spider Mystery (Children)

Hey! Is that a barking spider?
(s n i f f) Yep, that's surely what it is...
I'd like to know who did that.
Was it Mommy, Daddy or Sis?

I don't think it was Daddy ...
he makes funnies when he passes gas.
He tells us to pull on his finger
and then, he giggles and laughs.

I don't think it was Mommy ...
she was feeding Petie, the cat.
Besides, she always gets angry
when me, Dad and Sissy do that.

I guess that leaves me and Sissy...
and blaming ME wouldn't be fair,
cause when I walked in the room,
the barking spider was already there.

But Sissy couldn't have done it ...
I stood in the room right beside her.
When I passed the chair in the kitchen
is where I sniffed the barking spider.

I've solved the stinky-poo mystery!
It was hard, but I found the rat ...
I think maybe we should put Petie out.
The barking spider came from the cat.

C.J. Heck

The Best And Worst Of Me

you've seen me
at my worst
and still you love me

maybe you love me
in spite of myself
knowing my faults
and how I wish
I didn't own them

but it's all relative
considering
you've also seen me
at my very best
and still you love me

you seem to know
it's the reflection
I see in your eyes
that compels me
to rise above
like cream
and be my best
more often

it's that
and everything

you know me
and love me

I love you
all the more
for that

C.J. Heck

The Birthday Wall (Children)

In Daddy's bedroom down the hall,
there's a special place, The Birthday Wall.
Every year about this time,
he hugs me then he draws my line.

We look at where I used to be
when I was small and only three.
Much higher, then, the one for four,
then five, then six, and now one more.

On the wall two names I see,
my little sister's, then there's me.
Sissy's line comes to my nose.
To look at mine, she's on tiptoes.

Sometimes when I am feeling small,
I go down to see The Birthday Wall
to see how big I'll be next time
Daddy hugs me and he draws my line.

C.J. Heck

The Breakfast Child (Preschool)

Early this morning, I spilled my milk.
It dripped on the kitchen floor,
and when I tried to wipe it up,
I slipped and I spilled some more!

Then the cereal box tumbled down
and Cheerios went everywhere.
Little O's in the milk on the floor.
Little O's stuck in my hair.

Oh geez, I thought, what a big mess...
Daddy and Mommy will be so mad!
Oops ... I slipped and I fell in it, too,
and then I felt really bad.

Then Mommy and Daddy came in,
but they were laughing at my mess!
They said I looked really funny
sitting IN my own breakfast.

C.J. Heck

The Burning Letter

Wading through morning's harvest
of the mail reaped the usual
bills, flyers and junk ads.

Then I spotted the familiar lazy scrawl
on the table before me.
After all these years...
a pearl among the cow pies.

I marveled at how the letter felt,
tucked into the pocket
of my bluejeans,
first halved, then quartered,
where misbehaving hands and mind
breached ceremonial rules,
not to touch
and not to want to open.

I was unable to ignore it
or throw it away.
I'm not sure how long
I walked around with it there.
I only know
it began to burn and blister
and scorch my self-control

and not until I saw the jeans
in the machine, letter and all,
twisting and turning in soapy water
was I even aware of what I'd done
to find peace.

C.J. Heck

The Carrousel

I love watching a carrousel,
like a giant children's top
spinning loveliness around
in a blur of colors,
a colossal pirouette of prancing ponies,
faster, faster, in the joyful music.

Oom-pah-pah
Oom-pah-pah

Up and down the ponies canter,
their tireless stampede
a flurry of wooden strides
as though each stallion
is vying for the lead
as they caper to the cadence of cymbals
in the hurdy-gurdy's melody:

Oom-pah-pah - clang!
Oom-pah-pah - clang!

It suddenly occurs to me,
you and I have become
so much like the carrousel I love
but our spinning is out of control
and all out of synch
with less ups, more downs,

Oom-pah-pah - clang!
Oom-pah-pah - clang!

round and round going nowhere,
and unlike the bold wooden steeds
whirring by in a brilliant blur,
I no longer see the blur
of where you begin and
where I end.

Oom-pah-pah - clang!

Oom-pah-pah - clang!

Where we've been is colored
only by your lying deception
and the cymbals are
merely a metaphor for hurt.

Where we're going
is no longer a question mark
and I'll never look at a carousel
in the same way again.

Clang - clang - clang

Stop.
I want to get off...

C.J. Heck

The Changeling

At dawn I looked
with eyes wide open.
The brown of his hair had
snow-stormed to wintery grey

crowded out to God knows where,
to join a master work
in perfect granite,
the finite features
raisined to roadways
buckled into nose and cheek and brow.

Somehow spared by nature's cruelty
were steel blue eyes
that walk my dreams
and lips that taunt and tease.

Where was I when all this happened?
Here, a changeling, too,
and robbed as well?

Today
when morning kissed my eyelids,
I felt blessed
it reached across
to touch his, too.

C.J. Heck

The Child Within (Children)

Down inside this grownup
lives the child that used to be.
When I look in my mirror,
she stares right back at me.

Now that I'm a grownup,
it's an older face I see,
but the child's still there, just hiding,
way down deep inside of me.

Sometimes we work together,
that little girl and me.
She comes up from her hiding place
and we write poetry.

I like being grownup
and I wouldn't wanna swap.
Well... maybe a little younger face
with no grey hair on top.

C.J. Heck

The Climbing Adventure (Preschool)

Climbing-climbing up the rock
through the woods, my hands are locked
on the rope so prickly-prickly
past the pine tree, tickly-tickly.

Climbing-climbing, higher-higher,
muscles feel like they're on fire!
Through the dry leaves, rustle-rustle,
feel the wind push, hustle-hustle.

A long long way to the tippity top.
Hold on tight or flippity flop!
One foot here, then one foot there,
(wish steps in rocks were everywhere) .

Huffing-puffing but not quite there.
Look out! There's a grizzly bear!
Shhh-shhh use tippy-toes.
He's turning now. See, there he goes!

Uh oh, snakes beside me, sliding-gliding!
Nowhere to go for hiding-hiding!
Danger-danger! I can see
the snakes are slithering after me,

but no, they're going in the ground
through those holes going down-down
Oh no, growling-growling from behind!
If I turn, what will I find?

A grumpy-grumpy scary thing?
I wish I brought a bell to ring!
It's getting dark and hard to see
the something else that's chasing me!

Oh my gosh ... I'm at the top.
I guess for now, I'll have to stop.
That was fun, I love pretending ...
but I wish the stairs were never ending!

C.J. Heck

The Clown (Children)

The day the circus came to town,
my favorite was the circus clown
with his great big shoes
and funny clothes,
a painted face,
and a big red nose.

A giant smile was painted there,
with children laughing, everywhere.
I wondered as I
looked at him,
was he frowning 'neath
his painted grin?

Now when I am feeling down,
I think about that circus clown
with his great big shoes
and funny clothes,
a painted face,
and big red nose.

I put a smile on, anyway
and soon, my frown just fades away
like the day the circus
came to town
and I learned it watching
the circus clown.

C.J. Heck

The Cookie Jar Adventure (Preschool)

Wakey-wakey from our beds,
thoughts of cookies in our heads.

Mom and Daddy's eyes are closed.
They are sleeping. They won't know.

Hurry-hurry, on the double,
if they wake, we'll be in trouble.

Blankies, pillows, on the floor.
Squeaky-squeaky goes the door.

Shhh, shhh, tippy-toe.
To the kitchen we will go.

Sneaky-sneaky down the hall,
bare feet creeping 'long the wall.

C'mon, Sissy, it's not far,
there it is, the cookie jar!

I can't reach it, I'm too small.
Get a chair to make us tall.

Shuffle-shuffle, scooty chair,
pushy-pushy, almost there.

Clinky-clinky goes the top,
hold it tight, or it will drop.

Giggle, giggle, tee-hee-hee,
two for you, and two for me.

Uh oh, Sissy, turn around...
Mom and Daddy. We've been found.

Peeky-peeky, Mom and dad,
are you angry? Are you mad?

Whisper-whisper, over there...
they want to know if we will share!

C.J. Heck

The Eee Arr (Preschool)

Oooo, today I got some stitches!
Well ... that's not exactly true.
It's kinda sorta like 'em though.
It holds my skin together too.

Mom took me to the EEE ARR
'cause my blood was everywhere!
It was on my shirt and pants.
See? It's still right here ... and there!

My blood was almost gone!
Well ... that's not exactly true.
But still, it really scared me
and it woulda scared you, too!

(shaking head) ... Daddy always told me,
don't pet dogs that you don't know.
All dogs aren't like our Frankie.
If you don't know em, let em go.

But this big dog was really nice!
Well ... that's not exactly true.
He pretended that he liked me,
but he growled some at me, too.

I think I shoulda let him go
just like daddy said to do.
Then I never woulda hadda go
to the EEE ARR to get glued.

C.J. Heck

The Grateful Stone (Children)

I have a little treasure chest
and only one thing is inside.
It's a very special treasure
and I found it at low tide.

To me it's really special.
I call it my grateful stone.
It showed me prayers work.
It's a sign I'm not alone.

My grampa had a heart attack
while we were at the beach.
He lives so far away,
so far away and out of reach.

Mommy had her cell phone
and the doctors called her there.
When I saw my mommy cry,
I knew I had to try a prayer.

I closed my eyes and talked to God.
Please let Grampa be okay.
Don't let Mom lose her Daddy
'cause we can't get there, no way.

When I opened up my eyes
and looked down on the ground,
I saw a shiny little stone,
smooth and white and oh so round.

I put it in my pocket
and I rubbed it two whole days,
praying Grampa would get better
if only God could find a way.

Then mommy's cell phone rang.
They said Grandpa could go home...
That's why I have a treasure chest.
It's for my grateful stone.

The Great-Gramma Mystery (Children)

I was with great-gramma.
We weren't walking fast at all,
so something scary found us
when we shuffled down the hall.

Every time she took a step,
I heard a spooky sound.
When we stopped I couldn't hear it.
It was quiet all around.

I looked to our left,
and then I looked to our right,
but we were all alone,
not a monster was in sight.

Maybe it was gone now
so I guess it's safe to go.
(I wish she would go faster
Great-gramma walks SO slow!)

I told great-gramma we should run
'cause the monster could come back.
Great-gramma said that she's too old
and running hurts her back.

So we started walking slow again.
Sure enough, the sounds were back!
With every step great-gramma took
I could hear the thing attack!

And then I started giggling ...
Hey, I know what's chasing us!
Great-gramma don't walk faster
It's barking spiders with hiccups!

C.J. Heck

The Key (Children)

I have a key in my pocket.
I found it just yesterday.
This key must be for an adventure.
What does it go to? Who can say?

Could be, it opens a treasure chest
stuffed full of diamonds and gold,
and maybe it's buried in MY yard
by fearless pirates, scary and bold.

Or maybe it opens a journal
with it's secrets locked up for years,
and if I find it and read it,
I'll be famous and people will cheer.

I guess it could fit in a sports car.
I'd be too young to drive it right now,
but I'd hide it away till I'm older,
when I drive it, my friends will say WOW.

What if it unlocks a castle
with hungry crocodiles out in a moat?
I could paddle around and feed them
from my safe castle-guarding boat.

My adventures can go on forever
... if I just hang onto this key.
I don't have to know what it opens.
It's more fun just makin' believe.

C.J. Heck

The Lighthouse (Children)

There's a lighthouse on an island
built on boulders in the sea.
A home to no one anymore,
and it's beautiful to me.

The waves come crashing, sending spray.
their salty drops rain down
blessing me and other people
and the buildings in the town.

The lighthouse wakes at evening time
and its beacon comes around
protecting all the ships out there
so they don't run aground.

I sit and send my wishes
way up high on seagull wings
and then pretend that they'll come true
on notes the lighthouse sings.

That lighthouse must be magic.
I hear it call to me
from its bed of boulders
on an island in the sea.

C.J. Heck

The Money Tree (Children)

I dreamed I grew a money tree
outside in my yard.
My job was to care for it
and I worked very hard.

I saw that it was watered.
It grew so straight and tall
and when the money ripened
I picked it in the fall.

The flowers were green dollar bills,
the seeds inside were coins,
and others grew and glittered
where all the branches joined.

On windy days I stood below
and held a great big bucket.
Other days I climbed right up
to find one ripe and pluck it.

People say that money
doesn't really grow on trees.
I know. I only wish it did
just like in my dreams.

C.J. Heck

The Naivete Of Words

Simple little things, words
yet so effective
when strung together in poems

breathing romance
fading loneliness
and all between the lines

with pastel strokes
joined together
in just the right way.

a writer's thoughts
whether fact or fiction
become another's hopes.

words find their way
to a reader's heart
as surely as petals
dropped in a forest
mark the trail back home.

I love you's bloom
only to fade
by truths revealed
in even more words.

can we fall in love
through poetry?

I believe so
and all through the naivete
of words.

C.J. Heck

The Nearness Of You

You were there
and not quite here
in my dreams
and in my heart
out of reach
and out of focus
as we hid
within our souls
aware of love
afraid to trust
when the years
all fell away
but love brought
us together
we found an us
within a stare
You were there
just not quite here
as we breathed
each other in
finding home
inside a cuddle
in the flowing
energy
hidden hurts
to be forgotten
egos put aside
I hold your heart
in both my hands
as you are also
holding mine
both awake and
brought together
by the universe
with love
no more alone
nor out of focus
you were there
and now you're here

C.J. Heck

The Oatmeal Armpit Band (Children)

Would you like to make some music?
We'll play whatever we can.
Anything's okay if you wanna play
in the Oatmeal Armpit Band.

I drum spoons on an oatmeal box.
My brother strums rubber bands.
Anything's okay if you wanna play
in the Oatmeal Armpit Band.

Daddy burps his armpits.
(If you watch, you'll understand) .
Anything's okay if you wanna play
in the Oatmeal Armpit Band.

Sissy plays a xylophone.
You can play, I know you can!
Anything's okay if you wanna play
in the Oatmeal Armpit Band.

Mommy clangs some pot lids.
Would you like to clap your hands?
Anything's okay if you wanna play
in the Oatmeal Armpit Band.

Some kids snap their fingers.
Or here, come bang some pans!
Anything's okay if you wanna play
in the Oatmeal Armpit Band.

Maybe you could make loud pig sounds
or a kazoo, now that's a plan!
Anything's okay if you wanna play
in the Oatmeal Armpit Band.

It doesn't matter what we use.
We'll play whatever we can!
Anything's okay if you wanna play
in the Oatmeal Armpit Band!

C.J. Heck

The Old Folks

While sitting on a park bench reading
I overheard a man nearby
talking with his grandson.

The grandson asked why there were
so many old folks in the park every day.
The grandfather told him perhaps they were
just too alone at home to stay there.

Maybe they needed to be with other
old folks where they could share old jokes
or play a game of bocce ball
as they live in the park till dark.

Maybe remembering names
became a game to ignore their pain
and the daily checkers games felt sane.

Maybe to make time fly they antagonize
or criticize, sometimes even acting wise
till twilight comes to bring the night.

Then they wave goodbye,
and God forgives the little white lie...
that they look forward to tomorrow.
Then they go home again
and back into the past, alone.

The grandson nodded.
Then he asked the grampa
how he knew so much.

The grampa was quiet for awhile.
Then he told the boy
when you got to be his age,
there were some things
you just know.

The Playhouse (Children)

Mommy, come inside our little house.
Me and sissy worked all day.
We made a door and window,
come on in and you can play.

Me and sissy can scoot over
so you have a place to sit,
and thanks for bringing pans and spoons
so we can work on it.

Over here we made a kitchen,
over there, a living room.
We never have to clean it,
we don't even need a broom.

We don't have a bedroom,
so no beds we have to make.
Uh oh, sissy look outside!
Do you see those big snowflakes?

I guess that it will be okay,
our whole house is made of snow.
We scooped it from a snowdrift
and now our house will grow!

C.J. Heck

The Price Of His Toys

The moments are rare,
but when the mower is silent
and the hammer and nails
have joined the drill
and other tools in the garage,

my eyes can get hell bent
on persuading the rest of me
they see not a man enjoying
his golden years, but the child
the man once was.

It's a brief insight -
but when I'm allowed to see,
it's a treasured glimpse
into a life I wasn't privy to share.

Today on the lawn
I saw a young boy,
a precocious lad of perhaps six.
His hair was tousled,
both barefoot and shirtless,
tying rags to the tail of a kite
then running with the wind,
delight oozing from every pore.

Then just as quickly
the vision was gone.
I was left staring in awe
at my gentle giant,
so comfortable in his old skin
and merely flying a kite
with our grandson.

Once more I am reminded,
there is no difference
between a man and a boy
- only the price of his toys.

The Quarter (Children)

One day I found a quarter.
It was right there on the floor.
I put it in my pocket
just in case I found some more.

My Daddy took me with him
and I took my quarter, too.
We went to do some errands
then we were going to the zoo.

I could buy my Daddy something,
something special for the yard.
Or maybe somethin' fun to do
cause he works very hard.

We walked down to the corner
and we saw a blind man there.
He was sitting in a wagon
with a rag tied in his hair.

His clothes were kind of ratty
and his face was sort of sad,
but he said hello to everyone
just like he's really glad.

I looked up at Daddy.
He saw the blind man, too.
I put my quarter in his cup
and the blind man said, 'Bless You! '

I'm glad my Daddy wasn't mad
I gave away my money.
He said he was real proud of me.
Boy, grownups sure are funny.

C.J. Heck

The Rainbow (Children)

Today I saw a rainbow
with bright colors in the sky.
I couldn't see its start or end,
just its middle, way up high.

Mom said that it's God's promise,
that the world will still go on,
and He always will forgive us
though sometimes we do wrong.

I guess I understand it
and I'm glad He thinks that way.
I just wish He'd paint His rainbows
up there every single day.

Gee, Great Grampa was an artist.
We have his paintings everywhere.
He died a long, long time ago.
Is he helping God up there?

That rainbow sure was pretty
and they mostly look the same,
but Great Grampa should tell God...
He should always sign His name.

C.J. Heck

The Return

The weathered building still stood,
its lemon-yellow facade
now only a faded patchwork
of condemned signs
and boarded up windows.

It was the first time
I had ventured back there
since losing you.
Steeling my heart
with a deep breath,
I opened the door
and walked inside.

The rickety stairs were higher
than I remembered.
Now, years later,
the trip up
was almost as difficult
as the trip back
in time.

In broken ruins thick with dust,
thicker still with memories,
past and present collide
and pain and sorrow
pass in tears of liberation.

It was right to return.
Some days are diamonds,
some days are dust,
and some days

can never be
anything but both.

C.J. Heck

The Role Of A Writer

To say what others cannot
is truly the mark of greatness.
But have all the noble poems
been written by classical masters
and the gifted poets of today?

Are there meaningful works
still left to pen,
not merely big words
from our swollen egos
spilling their contents
at the whim of a moment,
nor with the simplistic meanderings
of joy, or grief or love?

To answer my own question,
I say write on, dear poets.
Allow not your words
to decay unwritten
in the brilliant minds of today
where they'll lie barren and unread
only to wither and crack and parch
as clay in the desert.
I do believe there are jewels
left to be written.

But if we must write,
it should be for the future,
for the common man
who will gain most from
these words he cannot write.
We have an obligation
to write in a way
that he may glean what he can
from writings of poetic merit,
not stumble through
obscure words which are,
to him, as bird droppings
on a splintered windowsill,

left to die in obscurity
gathering nothing but dust.

If we must write,
let us write for those who are unable,
so the future might find our words
alive and fertile, their tilled soil
begun as thoughts and feelings
first seeded in keen minds,
then sown into black and white,
rich and green and lush,
to live on in future hearts and minds
even as we crumble, ashes to ashes,
and blow away, dust to dust.

May we always write
not to say what we can all say,
but what we are unable to say
- not for the now, but for forever.

C.J. Heck

The Sandman (Children)

Daddy said to Mom and me,
'Good night, I'm going to bed.
I'm sleepy and the Sandman
has been dancing on my head.'

(I don't think I like this Sandman.
Why'd he do that to my dad?)
and then I asked my mommy,
'Is the Sandman someone bad? '

Mom smiled and said, 'Don't worry.
The Sandman's just pretend.'
...but I'll sleep with one eye open
just in case he comes again.

C.J. Heck

The Snowman (Children)

Snow was flaking all around
then gently piling on the ground.

Just tiny puffs when floating free,
but stuck together, I could see

it's like one voice that singing for us
or a lot, like in a chorus.

I rolled some up and stacked it high
to make a happy snowman guy.

I'm glad it's that way just with snow
and that's not how we children grow,

'cause on a warm and sunny day,
my snowman slowly melts away.

As he melts, he gets so thin.
I wish, like me, that he had skin.

C.J. Heck

The Unwritten

My sentiments trickle in bits and pieces
to dangle like soap on a rope,
hanging around, but out of reach
till the right words come
to breathe them to life.

Precise and unexpected,
at times they fit,
chosen as I might choose
the flawless petals
of a perfect rose,

the words to be glued
in that same perfection
into absolutes, those hoped-to-be
unblemished poems
from a blemished heart and soul,

a writer's humility
for a reader's pleasure.

C.J. Heck

Thoughts During An Unsleep...(Adult)

Two o'clock in the morning,
he's snoring like a buzz saw,
while my mind is full of the day
again.

gotta get some sleep

it's just out of reach,
beyond those thoughts
there

I can almost feel it,
almost taste it

no, slipping away again

funny, you get so close

damn brain
can't turn it off

it's late,
have to close my eyes,
much to do tomorrow.

think of love...
comforting, warm and fuzzy,
mmm... sensuous, too,

like making love
in the morning
hell, like making love at night,
at noon,

damn,
any time

the way he feels, deep inside,
that hard slow pace,

then the faster...

oh man,
how about when he just stops?
how that makes...

stop it!
enough already
gotta get some sleep!

then again,
I could just roll over
and wake him up...
I know just what to do.

C.J. Heck

Thunder Snow

This morning as I awoke
and rubbed my eyes,
I sat up, startled by a sound
I had never heard in January.

I pulled aside the curtains
and looked out my window.
It was snowing.
It was too warm to snow,
nearly sixty degrees,
but it was snowing.

And then I heard it again.
Thunder.
I had heard of this phenomenon
but never before
had I experienced it.

I watched as a single flash
backlit the skeletal maples,
oaks and white birch.
In that brief instant,
I'm sure even the birds
stared up in awe and wonder.

In one brilliant streak
from the sky to the ground,
under dawn's waning full moon,
amidst thunder and snow,
I suddenly realized,
it was a heavenly exclamation point.
God had spoken.

C.J. Heck

Time To Remember

What is the risk
of living in the now?
Yesterday is gone,
tomorrow may never come,
but we do have now.
Breathe in, breathe out,
there's so much good
to be done today.
Hearts to open,
and love to feel,
so many gifts to share.
Breathe in, breathe out,
feel the magic,
hear the whispers.
Shhhhh, they're there
if you dare to hear
with an open heart.
Breathe in, breathe out,
it's time to remember
the love and who we are.
All of the answers
are here inside,
if we'll only stop,
shut down the mind,
and be in the silence.
Shhhh,
hear the whispers,
meet me in the now.
Breathe in, breathe out,
and listen with your heart.

C.J. Heck

To A Baby Firefly (Preschool)

Little baby firefly
when your night is through
does your mommy tuck you in
and tell you she loves you?

Does she kiss your forehead
and say in morning's light...
'Day-day little sleepyhead,
close your eyes, put out your light.'

C.J. Heck

To A Snowflake: (Children)

Hello little snowflake!
Where are all your friends?
Should I expect a lot of them
before the morning ends?

I love it when you come to me
and you all fall down together,
and I get dressed to visit you,
toasty warm in cold, cold weather.

It's fun the way you all pile up
outside in my back yard,
and I can roll you in a ball
to make a snowman, it's not hard.

Or maybe, I will build a fort.
All my friends will come and play,
and if you plan to stay awhile,
I'll come outside every day.

Sometimes I make snow angels,
and their legs and arms look puffy,
but I can only do that
if you come down light and fluffy.

Could I ask you guys a favor?
White is fine, but nothing's duller...
Could you all do one thing, just for me?
Come down in LOTS of colors?

C.J. Heck

To Be One

In thinking on the matter,
feelings of lust and love
can't originate in the heart.
A heart is merely a muscle.

The sensuality and
sultry want
of another human being,
must come from
a more spiritual place,
a central core,
somewhere deep within.

Passion felt is wonderful.
It's like wanting
a vast, impossible
total body merge.
Like a blue clay
smushed
with a pink clay,
love and lust being
the resultant color.

Making love is
the closest thing we have
to total oneness.
True intimacy is, well,
the penultimate
SMUSH.

C.J. Heck

To Dine On Love

we dine at times
in orchid splendor
with pheasant under glass
fine china
lace
a rare aged wine
and whisper in candlelight

we dine at times
on dandelion picnics
an indian blanket on the grass
radio crooning love songs
to beer and paper plates
playing 'loves me-loves me not' in the stars

we dine at last and after either
in blood-red roses style
the props are gone
not needed now
we feast upon each other
till sleep excuses us from the table

C.J. Heck

To The Boogie Man: (Children)

I used to be afraid of you,
heard you eat up girls and boys.
I didn't want the lights turned out
and I was scared to play with toys.

Then Mommy asked you over.
She told me you're just sad.
You have no one to play with
and you aren't really bad.

You never come to dinner.
We still set a place for you,
a plate, a spoon, a glass for milk,
just in case you do.

C.J. Heck

Toe Jam (Children)

Can anybody tell me
what's that stuff between my toes?
My daddy says it's toe jam
but I don't think he really knows.

It's icky and it's fuzzy
and I think I'll tell my dad...
I wouldn't put it on my bread
if it was the only jam we had!

C.J. Heck

Touch Me (Adult)

let me feel your body quicken
a sensual journey we will make
to explore each other's inner curves
and all our outer planes

make our senses come alive with it
we'll breathe each other in

so touch me, wake me, take me,
make me cry with sweet desire
show me why I was made woman
make me scream with skin on fire

let me taste you deeply, fully,
and set your soul ablaze
I want you, need you, have to see
the passion in your face

touch me, let me feel you
fill me up and set us free
to soar to heights we've never been
and again, may never see

I ache to feel your heartbeat
echoing above my own
as love explodes, imploding
our two bodies into one.

C.J. Heck

Trading Places

holding her in the afterglow
where words were
never really needed,
he was fond of whispering
that it was all her

then he would smile and add
that he merely
followed her lead

if only heaven would allow her
one wish,
one clear and stunning wish,
she would use that wish
to trade places
just one time
when they made love

then she could know
what it feels like
to be him
and he could experience
in that one time
the joy it was to be her

and he would see, first hand,
why she always answered
that it was all him

C.J. Heck

Uh Oh... (Children)

Uh oh, when Mommy's on her knees
in front of me it's clear,
she has something that she wants to say
that I won't want to hear.

(Did I hit my sister?
Did I maybe tell a lie?
Did I forget to make my bed?)
This time, I don't know why.

At least she doesn't stand and yell
the way some grownups do,
or get right in my face
to tell me what to do ...

(Did I spill my milk?
Did I do bad in school?
Did I forget to clean a mess?
Did I somehow break a rule?)

Sometimes, I know what I did wrong
and I tell her, there and then.
It helps to say I'm sorry
and I won't do that again,

but this time, I don't have a clue
to what I might have done.
Hey ... I just got a hug and kiss!
This time it was just for fun!

C.J. Heck

Understanding Miss Muffett (Children)

Hey, Mommy, what's a tuffet?
Do we have a tuffet, too?
Little Miss Muffett sat on one.
What does a tuffet do?

What's that stuff she's eating?
The words say: curds and whey.
It looks like lumpy oatmeal.
Does she eat that every day?

Why'd she take off running
When the spider sat beside her?
Ohhh... I'll bet I know...
It was a big old BARKING spider!

C.J. Heck

Unopened Letter

A letter came a week ago.
It's mutely resting between
the potted ivy and car keys
marking time on the table
in the foyer.

It's unopened, of course,
but I know what it says -
I just can't make myself
read the words.

I know they're angry.
I know they're designed to ask
in yet one more way
for what I don't have to give.

I've walked by it
a thousand times,
even held it a few.

Maybe if left unread
the words will somehow change
and say what I need most to hear.

C.J. Heck

Visiting The Chippendales

When I turned forty,
my friends took me
to see the male strippers.
I never knew there was a place
you could go where
there was so much action
without
any
action.

We were but small dots
in a sea of female faces
distorted by the strobing
pulsating lights set to music,
sexy, seductive and loud,
but it had to be loud
to be heard
above
the
screaming
(BOOM ta da BOOM ta da BOOM)
"Take it off! Take it off and throw it here! "
(BOOM ta da BOOM ta da BOOM)
"Shake it, Ooo baby!
Take
it
off! "
as a tan and lumpy-muscled
young man humped and ground
a well-packed G-string
in the woman's face
two
seats
down.
I remember thinking
ho-ly shit, what if I'm next...
mama always told us
to look but don't touch
but somehow, the not touching
was easier when

I
was
five.

C.J. Heck

Waiting (Children)

Waiting is a funny word.
It really puzzles me.
If you wait for something really good
it takes forever, don't you see?

Like Christmas or your birthday
you can hardly wait at all
as you mark the days and weeks off
on the calendar on the wall.

But if it's something you don't like
and you don't want to do ~~
the waiting goes so doggone fast
it just sneaks up on you!

C.J. Heck

Waiting For A Greyhound

Red-coated lady
waiting for a bus,
hat pulled down
to hide a swelling
monument of love,

handbag gripped two-fisted,
leaving only the sleeves
to wipe the sadness
from your eyes.

So much misery
there on your dingy bench
and I feel your sadness.

What happened
to make your life fit
inside a suitcase

and why is it the only thing
between your legs
at two a.m.?

Maybe wasting minutes
feels better here
with your suitcase between,
instead of him.

It's merely speculation
on my part,
but I suppose yesterday's hopes
and tomorrow's dreams
die just as easily
in a one-way ticket

and anywhere's a better place
than where you were.

Greyhounds may be late

but they don't punch or yell.

C.J. Heck

We Need To Get Away

Have I told you lately
how good you smell
when the shower
finally spits you out?

I can't remember the last time,
but it doesn't surprise me,
considering how much time
we actually spend together
these days.

I do know I remember
how intense we used to be.

We need to get away somewhere,
just the two of us,
before the ruts get any deeper
in this marital highway.

Let's go,
before 'talking dirty'
really means:
'If you have a light load going in,
don't forget my pj's
on the back of the bedroom door...'

Before 'wanna catch a quickie? '
really means:
'I'm pooped. Wanna take a nap...? '

Before 'Oh God, I'm coming! '
actually means:
'Don't nag, I'm almost ready!
Go and start the car...'

Let's go somewhere, while
'Honey, that was fantastic! '
still means more than
a Sunday Scrabble win...

It's not too late.
I still remember.

C.J. Heck

What Do I Wanna Be? (Children)

I wish I was a grownup.
They know what they want to do.
When I get bigger than I am,
will I know what I want too?

I could be a teacher like Mr. Brown,
grading papers all day long.
When little kids learn all he knows,
then the next year, they move on.

It would be fun to be a trash man,
dumping out the garbage cans.
I love to get real dirty
and I hate to wash my hands.

I could be a policeman 'n wear a badge,
chasing bad guys all day long.
I could make 'em have a Time Out
for stuff they did that's wrong.

I'd really like to be a priest
'n teach people 'bout God's lessons,
'cept they'd say stuff I shouldn't hear
when I have to do confessions.

Or I could be like Daddy,
building houses everywhere,
but I wouldn't like to go up high
on a ladder way up there.

When you get to be a grownup,
how do you know what you wanna be?
I guess just for now, I'll be happy,
being a neat little kid like me.

(from a little boy's point of view)

What To Do About You

Do I know you?
Sometimes I'm sure I do,
- at times, even better
than you know yourself.
Other times, I'm sure
I don't know you at all.

Something is happening,
I will agree.
Your words have caught me up
in something big
and we've made a real connection
here in a short time.

Do you know me?
You think you do.
You've read parts of me,
those I've sheared off
to rhyme or not rhyme,
but is that knowing?

One thing I know for sure,
your wants and desires
scare the hell out of me
and my instincts tell me
to run and not look back.

Where do we go from here?
... what to do about you.

C.J. Heck

What's A Dad?

A dad is a like an oak tree,
with his feet firmly planted
in the soil of our birth.
He's the solid hardwood
we all aspire to be,
strong, trusting, kind,
and the one who will always
be there for us.

His long arms are
like protective branches
reaching wide
around his grove of seedlings
and anyone standing
in his shade
feels safe and secure
and loved.

A dad's trunk may widen,
his leaves above
may pale and thin,
but he will always be
our mighty yet gentle oak,
the creator of our forest,
and eternally loved.

C.J. Heck

When I Finally Close My Eyes

When I close my eyes
for the last time
I want to have lived,
really lived.

I want to know I've tasted
the smorgasbord of life.
I want to have relished the good
and spat the bad back out,
knowing at least I tried it.

When I'm done here,
I don't want to wonder
if someone caught
the kiss I threw,
I'll know.

I don't want to leave
with a heart as empty
as my pockets.

I want to know without a doubt
I've left something of me behind,
something that's good, not regret
for never making a difference.

When I close my eyes
for the last time,
I would like someone to remember
... I was here.

C.J. Heck

When It's Over, You Just Know

You don't always know
how you know.
It comes slowly, the awareness.
With the certainty and final resignation
of a child learning there's no Santa Claus,
you just know.

The breakfast table, once a venue
for long dreamy stares
and coffee-flavored kisses,
becomes a silent stage
for reading the news,
eating breakfast, and
you just know.

The smell of his shirt
when you'd bury your face there,
the feel of his hands on your body
as if they had a life of their own
all silently slip to a place
wherever memories go
to gather dust, and
you just know.

You miss the nights,
how his body and yours
breathed and moved as one.
... maybe it's those nights
and how they were
that give the knowing life, and
you just know.

Like ocean waves upon the sand,
love recedes
with all the other yesterdays
and you would trade
all your tomorrows
to have it back, but
you just know.

C.J. Heck

When Love Is Gone

I watched in silence
as the elderly woman
tucked a tender missive
under the vase
on a flat headstone.

As our eyes met,
I felt her thoughts.

Wheels of time keep churning,
turning days and months to years
till the days become a lifetime
and still we miss the ones
who are gone.

Like a bucket with a hole
the sands of love sift through,
the cold granite at our feet
belies the warmth yet in our hearts,
while the words etched below,
like dry ice, burn the soul.

After the old woman left,
I felt compelled
to read her words:

'I will always love you.
I hope you like the roses'

C.J. Heck

When Mommy's Sick (Children)

Mommy's sick in bed today.
Doctor says she has the flu.
Sissy's got a stuffy nose
and she might get it, too.

When Mommy's sick it makes us sad
she doesn't feel so good.
She's having juice and medicine
like the doctor said she should.

It's not the same when Mommy's sick,
our hugs are all sick, too,
and kisses for our boo-boo's
also have the flu.

Our sads are even sadder
so our happy's aren't as glad
and when we're being naughty,
that even feels more bad.

Let's get her better, Sissy!
Get some more juice in her
'cause I remember something else,
ewwww... Daddy's cooking dinner...

C.J. Heck

Windows In Heaven (Children)

I know sometimes that clouds bring rain,
in wintertime it's snow,
and spring is good because it makes
the pretty flowers grow.

I know that God is everywhere
and angels all have wings,
that dogs can't talk and bunnies hop
I know so many things.

But why do daddies go away?
It makes kids and mommies sad.
Are there windows up in Heaven?
Did I do something bad?

My Mommy said it's not like that...
that children all are good.
Sometimes daddies just can't stay
even though we wish they could.

She said Daddy loves me most of all,
not to think he doesn't care
... and he sees me from the windows.
God just needs him more up there.

C.J. Heck

Wrinkles And Grey Hair (Children)

Mommy's getting wrinkles.
Daddy has grey hair.
It wasn't very long ago
when those things weren't there.

Wish I could smooth the wrinkles out
and darken Daddy's hair
to stop the changes going on.
It makes me feel so scared.

Grampa, does it mean they'll die?
They have wrinkles and grey hair!
I never used to worry
before those things were there.

Grampa said to look at him.
There were lots of wrinkles there,
and on his head, a snowstorm
was the color of his hair.

'Wrinkles only come to point
where smiles were, here and there.
It's your mommy's turn to get some
for the happy times you've shared.'

His white, and Daddy's grey hair
well, it was there to show
who had lived the longest time
so everyone could know!

Grampa said it's part of life.
We love, we learn, we live.
We earn grey hair and wrinkles,
they're prizes only God can give.

C.J. Heck

Yes And No (Children)

I like words like 'yes' and 'no'
they mean just what they say.
They either mean you can or can't
do what you want today.

Other words like 'maybe'
or even like 'we'll see'
make me feel like crying
'cause that isn't answering me.

'Someday' isn't too bad
'cause it still means we will...
but 'later' is even better
'cause it's waiting just until.

C.J. Heck