

Echoes of Life

A Collection of Verses from Joy to Sorrow

By

Carlotta McKnight



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Acknowledgment

My first debt is to Justin Sedaris and his team with Parker Publishers. I never believed I could ever put a book into print even though I have been writing most of my life. Justin and a lady named Hazel walked me through each phase, and I never felt alone. Hazel is responsible for the artwork which in my opinion put the book over the top. As a child, I would write and throw things away. Now, I write and keep every word. I am quite prolific. Justin along with his kind professional staff promoted my work to a higher level.

After being contacted by another publisher and misinformed of several negative points of view, I was so frustrated and just ready to stop. Justin and his team encouraged, supported me in such a positive way and we continued as a working team.

Secondly, I would like to extend a special word of gratitude to my daughter, Traci McIlquham, for coming to my rescue when things got tough, and allowing me to use her photo for the cover. My daughter took it in front of our home. Since having Covid, I have little patience and get extremely anxious over the smallest things and become completely exhausted. We were having difficulties with our computer, with my phone, you name it, it was difficult. My daughter sat down and set up a new email address, put all my work over into a PDF folder for me after I just gave up. Also, for the beautiful photo that is on the front of my book. She very calmly worked through one entire day just to fix and complete everything for me. I can never repay her for that assistance.

To my dear friends over the years that have read my work, helped me make changes, worked on titles, I thank all of you. You always made me feel loved and appreciated. I want to thank my dear classmate Cindy Winn Allen Stuckey, author of Shift Café for encouraging me to get a publisher and get these published. She was an inspiration. I cannot forget my dear friends Marcia Worthington and Janine Semmil for staying on me to complete this job. Marcia helped me stay focused and has been by my side for almost 50 years. Both ladies supported me with love and understanding and worked many times on keeping me from defeating myself.

A special thanks goes out to all the friends for reading my material. cheering me on, for making suggestions, and helping me choose titles. I want to extend a loving thank you to my husband

for reading my work many times, and my Special Needs grandson for being my most powerful supporter, and not forgetting the different ones that became subjects for my work, especially my grandchildren and great grandchildren. Zachary has always been my inspiration, and now wants US to write a book about him and his Cerebral Palsy, Special Olympics, and his faith. Hopefully, we will get that done in the near future.

Carlotta.

Dedication

How do I begin to dedicate my book to a particular person when so many people have played an important part in my life in helping me complete this dream? Mostly, I write about love, life, sorrows, grieving, nature, and being able to draw on higher power for strength during each of those times.

My family and friends are a source of strength and much of this work came from the effect others have had in my life, and I have written about some with dedication and a heart full of love. I am devoted to continuing writing, not necessarily this style, but I will be writing. Writing has always been my escape, and has brought me joy over the years.

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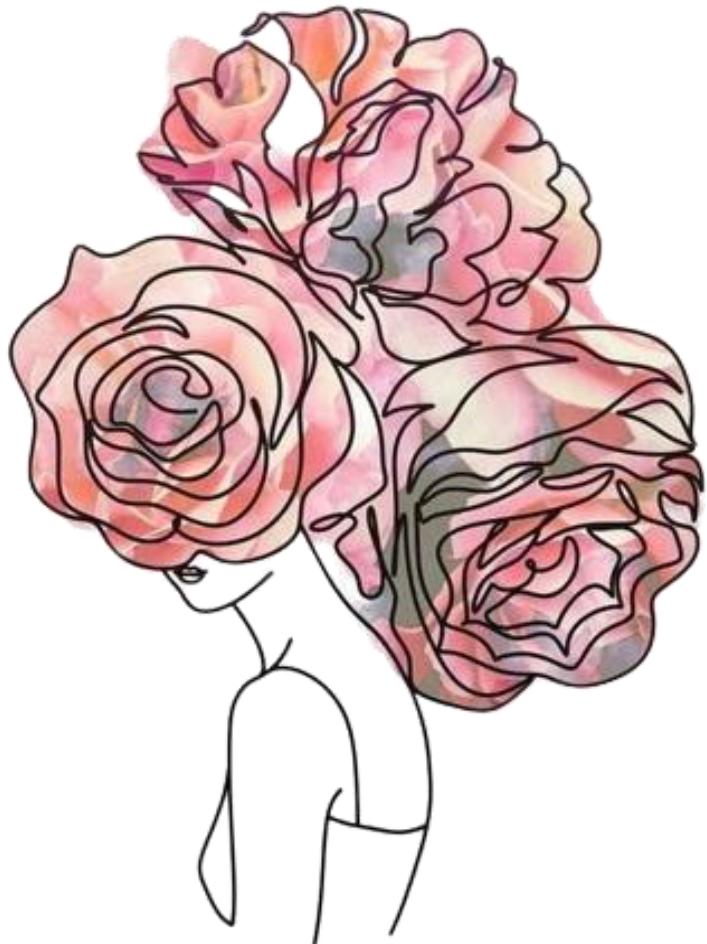
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A Gentle Soul

Dedicated to Becky

Today she is a gentle soul, my sister,
Seeking only the stillness of the woods
Or a gentle stream to toss a leaf into
And watch it flow from her.
A lady she is, dressed in a flowing skirt;
Slender she is, with a gentle smile.
Today, she is a mother,
Stooping to clean a running nose,
Loving, yet firm,
Helping her child learn of nature so true;
Leaving her housework for another day.
This gentle soul will evolve with each day,
Today, she is a hunter, reflecting to
The days the Indians roamed the earth.
She adorns herself with camouflage,
Off she heads with the shotgun,
Up and over her shoulder,
Often, she has the feeling of being the
hunted;
But today, she is the hunter in control,
Just waiting and watching in the stillness,
Of the woods and the quiet nature brings.
Tomorrow, she will be a friend, lending a hand,
A loving daughter, sister, wife, grandmother,



But today she is hunting and her spirit is free.
As she gently, quietly slips through the woods,
Like a lone Indian from long ago,
Searching for that buck she would like to kill,
Yet, she is a gentle soul, my sister,
When tomorrow comes she will
Adorn herself with a trucker's pride
And off she will go to the open hi-way,
Peace filling her soul as she cranks
Her radio to the music of Merle Haggard with pride.
She herds her big semi with grace and dignity, As
a shepherd would one of his flock.
Today she is a lady, my sister, and a trucker at heart.

A Moment with God

After a clear star-filled night,
I awoke to the beauty of a red sunrise, Bringing great color to the sky.
It was as if it was saying,
A new gift of dawn is here just for you;
Spring is almost here, and signs of it a little early
But the heart is warmed by thoughts of Everything
coming to life once again.
Slipping outside, I could hear the birds
Singing a melody more beautiful
Than any human choir could ever sing. I felt a
brisk breeze blow through my hair, Reminding me
winter was still around.
I turned my face to the warming sun,
Capturing all the wonderful colors Rising quickly
above the earth.
The sky was engulfed with beautiful colors,
So privileged was I to have this moment,
To experience this original work of art by God,
Knowing it would never be captured by the human
eye
Exactly as it was this morning. I whispered, Thank
you, Lord,
For sharing this special moment.



A New Year

May your New Year be filled with inspiration ,
With magical energy calling you to be the best you can be;
May you allow others to encourage you
In helping you to find your own path,
To be able to do this, we must learn to love ourselves,
We should be able to gather ourselves up in our own arms
Just as we would gather others.
If we don't love ourselves we cannot possibly love others;
Once we love ourselves we can then have room in our hearts for others
Our souls cannot possibly see into another's aching heart
When we do not have a love for ourselves;
When we learn to love ourselves, our souls



Will then interact and we will be able to love Others

in the way they need to be loved.

So, as you go forward this New Year,

Search your own heart, learn to love you, and then

Reach out to others once you make room for them.

A Perfect Day

Lord, help me have a normal day,

Allow me to learn from you, Fill my heart

with love, and compassion, Engulf me in

memories of the past. You have graced me

with opportunities in life That only a master

of creation could give.

I have visited cities created by man

Filled with architecture built to perfection.

Put there by the man you created in your image,

I have seen the work of many a great artist,

Listened to many musicians with talent a gift from you,

I have heard nature's orchestra of the woods,

Birds chirping, snapping twigs, and just the stillness there.

I have visited the snowcapped mountains,

Felt the hot desert beneath my feet,

I have walked the ocean's edge,

Heard the roaring sounds of lapping waves,

A place to release my innermost feelings, To

the ocean breezes to be carried away, To

unknown places far and wide.

My breath was nearly taken away.

When I stood on the canyon's edge,

In awe of the vastness of its beauty

And the awesome stillness that filled the air.
I whispered, Lord, you are really here,
And You whispered; I am here. Thank
you, Lord, for giving me
More than a normal day; it was perfect.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Carlotta, at the age of seventy-three, stands as the eldest among seven siblings, raised in the countryside within the confines of a conservative faith. Her journey into writing began in childhood, a secret endeavor, as she fearfully discarded her works to keep her thoughts hidden from the world. Her educational journey in a quaint Indiana school introduced her to Ruby Nay, an exceptional English teacher who saw potential in Carlotta beyond the conservative horizons, assuring her that a vast world awaited her discovery.

Adulthood brought new adventures and with it, a pivotal trip to the ocean alongside her sister to visit her brother and his family. This experience rekindled her passion for writing, leading to the creation of "Ocean Secrets," her first published work. That solitary day by the ocean

marked the beginning of Carlotta's path toward healing. Embraced by the gentle ocean breeze, she experienced a profound spiritual awakening, using the elements—the ocean, sands, wind, and its inherent beauty—as conduits for releasing her pent-up sadness.

Over time, Carlotta's writing became a therapeutic tool, aiding her in mourning her past and navigating her future. She grew to embrace and respect nature, drawing inspiration from its bounty. Carlotta's writings are not just expressions of personal growth but also testaments to the transformative power of nature and the enduring strength of the human spirit to overcome and evolve.