

NIGHTINGALE SONGS

A forum for nurses to share their silent moments of reflection on their nursing.

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A LASTING LEGACY

How fleeting the years go by
Swiftly altering the lives we share
Leaving a reflection; a blink in God's eye
Of one's accomplishments for humanity.

Still there comes a moment
A time to pause and recognize
A spirit enmeshed in human content
A goodness from within so bright

That lights the path through life
Creating a sunlit way, brilliant
With gentle kindness a relief from strife
Tomorrow's promise, yesterday's memory.

A legacy wreathed in smiles
Shining from heart and soul
A gift blessed by life's own trials
Becomes the beacon,
The star you leave behind.

Joan M. Bartleman

REFLECTIONS ON "NURSING AS CARING"

Without the light, there is no sun
Until there are two, there is not one

Without knowing, there can be no sharing
Until there is growing, life has no bearing

But let there be light with each day's being
Then caring, feeling will set you free.

Gwen Bussa

NOBODY'S LOVE

My hopes and dreams are but few,
I hope for cure, but dream of more.
I dream of love, to be held
and felt needed, Not needing.

What does it feel like to be in love?
What does it feel like to make love?
What does passion taste like?
Why has God given me life,
But taken away my chances for
loving in my life?

I cannot speak to share who I am.
I cannot walk,
my movements are spastic and my body crippled.
For sure, nobody could fall in love with me!

Although my legs don't work,
And I can't walk or stand,
I can most assuredly feel a soft touch or caress.
Like all women,
I also long for that touch, that caress,
from a special someone.
For sure, nobody could fall in love with me!

Instead, I must celebrate other gifts of life,
A beautiful butterfly, a mobile chair, a caring nurse
and a soothing bath.

Still, I dream I dream

But,

In the end, I can accept my fate and the truth.

The truth is,
My name is Cindy, I have cerebral palsy.
I am an intelligent being.
I will never run or jump,
sing or turn cartwheels,
and, I may never attract love.
But Lord, I do love life!!

Laura M. Rutizer

IN THIS LIFE

For all I've been blessed with in this life
there was an emptiness in me
I was imprisoned by the power of pain
with one kind touch you set me free

let the world stop turning
let the sun stop burning
let them tell me life's not worth going through
if it falls apart
I will know deep in my heart
the only dream that mattered had come true
In this life I was cared for by you.

For every mountain I have climbed
every raging river crossed
you were the treasure that I longed to find
without your care I would be lost

I know that I won't live forever
but forever I'll remember you
If it all falls apart
I will know deep in my heart
the only dream that mattered had come true
In this life I was cared for by you.

Lynn M. Barnes

JUST ONE MORE

My kids say my cigarettes are just nails in my coffin.
The doctor says I gotta quite smoking.

What could he possibly know.

Whew! I'm winded.

I can't breathe.

Help

Me.

I'm

alive.

I can breathe.

I have no control

The machine is breathing.

Tell me how long I will be like this.

God, if I could only have a cigarette!

Karen Sherrerd

I NEEDED THE QUIET

I needed the quiet, so He drew me aside . . .
Into the shadows where we could confide.
Away from the hustle where all day long,
I hurried and worried when active and strong.

I needed the quiet, though at first I rebelled.
But gently so gently my cross He upheld . . .
And whispered so sweetly of spiritual things,
Though weakened in body my spirit took wings
To heights never dreamed of when active and gay;
I needed the quiet, so He drew me away.

I needed the quiet, no prison my bed. . .
But a beautiful valley of blessings instead.
A place to grow richer; in Jesus to hide . . .
I needed the quiet, so He drew me aside.

Ellen Slaymaker

A BRIDGE ACROSS

You were ninety-one and I was forty-eight,
When we first noticed each other, In the close way.

What was the force that drew us together?
Was it the roads we had travelled?
Or the people we had known?
Was it just a common need?
Or, as we often suspected,
was it just a scheme of God's?

A forty-three year span across two generations -
How could we hope to relate:
And yet, as I reflect
over that glorious season of ours,
There are no generation gaps to examine.

It was as if we were suspended in time and space.
Age had no meaning. It certainly wasn't a handicap.

We were just two lives intertwined,
Warming each other's hearts.
Eager and willing to share the news of our days
As we walked out God's plans for our lives.

Mary L. Becerril

NURSES YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND TOMORROW

In hospitals for those who knew no wealth
Nightingale quietly struggled to reclaim wounded soldier's health.
Her tireless efforts saw recovery rates soar.
This was Florence Nightingale during the Crimean War.
A nurse of yesterday opening the door.

In morals, accounting, and scientific research Nightingale would flourish.
Clean water, clean hands, fresh air, and healthy foods to nourish.
Compassion, competence, and caring were Nightingale's seeds.
Nurturing qualities of professionalism in those in her stead.
A nurse of yesterday dedicated to lead.

New methods of caring for victims of dreadful disease.
Violence at home; wars in our streets and overseas.
One hundred and forty years later nurses continue to research, practice, and teach.
Computers, capitation, critical pathways to reach.
Nurses of today for knowledge we must seek.

Visions expand beyond our wildest dreams.
Caring in ways yet to be seen.
Caring in settings beneath the seas and in outer space locations.
Nursing pioneers will determine nurse's station.
Nurses of tomorrow, in our midst today, developing our vocation.

Joanne Guimond-Thompson

GRASPING FOR THE MEANING

I am a radio without a speaker;
A receiver with no transmitter.
My mind is a VCR programmed and recording on schedule
But I have no monitor to playback.
I have cerebral palsy.
I have a wonderful personality with jokes to tell,
Emotions to share, Important things to say,
Trapped in a contorted, uncontrollable body.
A blank expression, not a blank mind.
If I could hold the cards,
I would be a great poker player
For a change of expression would never give away my hand.
Another talent wasted.
A nod for yes; and averted downcast stare for no.
My only output.
A lifelong game of "20 Questions"
If you give up I cannot share the answer.
So many just stop playing
And leave me in unspeakable loneliness.
A word board for my wheelchair. It's not much.
Pieces of paper with little stick figures,
Funny faces. Numbers. Letters. . .
Can I read?
Does it matter as long as I know the meanings?
I want so much to communicate my thoughts.
If you will just give my poor eyes and shaking hand a chance
to pick a response.
To grasp for a meaning.
To search for the right word.
I have only so few from which to choose.
I must pick my words even more carefully than you.

I AM NIGHTINGALE'S LAMP

I am her lamp, clean and shining
Buff-polished, sanitized, orderly in tone
Work of health and hope and honesty
Humble maid to heart and bone

I am her lamp, labouring long
Sun til sun, til need is gone,
til brighter light is born
When indigo moon bears deep night of soul
Satin pearl calm, my smiles adorn

I am her lamp, bold and brassy
Hard-eyed, tough-skinned,
voice-of-courage gold
Glinting spirit, search for lost ones
Hand-held strength while truth is told

I am her lamp, softly glowing
Starry eve of daylight dawning,
warmly meet my charge's care
Dance in darkness, evil humours!
I am here, my flame I share

P.D. Gordon

Melanie Morano

EDITORIAL

"Eventually everything merges and a river runs through it." This line from the movie "A River Runs Through It" speaks of the metamorphosis of Nightingale Songs - from a single-page exposition of moments in nursing, to a multiple-page format of varying illustrations of nursing situations, to the addition of the current format of electronic publishing. The two-year hiatus has facilitated rethinking of ways to share Nightingale Songs with all those who wish to participate and share in the experience.

Regardless of the format, Nightingale Songs continues to provide a "forum for nurses to share their silent moments of reflection on their nursing." From experiences of dying, death, and bereavement, to articulating concerns about frustration, depression, and poignant moments of joy and love, this current issue allows the participant readers to share moments in nursing as lived by nurses and those nursed. Calls for nursing and nursing responses clearly underscore nursing expressions in many ways: What are "nails in my coffin, the love I can offer, the quiet I desire, and the buzz of the radio as my search continues," and what are "Nightingale's lamp, for yesterday's nurses today and tomorrow, a bridge to cross, and a wounded dove?" As the river flows meandering through paths both familiar and strange, so will expressions of nursing in Nightingale Songs.

We are cognizant of the contemporary discourse whether or not poetry is singularly the most appropriate way to illustrate moments in nursing: Nightingale Songs appears to yield to this focus. Poetry, however, remains the most accessible and cost-effective medium for Nightingale Songs and the poems shared within this format are the most appropriate vehicle for expressing nursing moments.

Only the concerns of space allocation and cost of printing force editorial constraints. We need your financial support and are grateful for any help you can offer to produce and distribute these moments that touch the heart. Please make checks for financial contributions payable to Marilyn Parker, Editor, so there will not be the added expense of a special account. Nightingale Songs is shared by nurses not only in the USA, but also in numerous countries around the world: We invite nurses world wide to contribute reflections on nursing for publication. Eventually everything merges . .

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DESTINY

Like two soaring eagles that once flew free,
two caged love birds they're destined to be

Fifty years together, wholesome love
one has fallen like a wounded dove

Progeny has flown far away,
two souls remained one, caring each day

Fifty years together, matched in heaven,
she kissed him good-by at half past seven

T. Roloff

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