

# Eddies in the Stream



Poems  
by  
Linda Stitt

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**Aeolus House**

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## **Linda Stitt's Previous Books**

Reflections from a Dusty Mirror  
What Do You Feed a Unicorn  
Yesterday's Poetry  
It Was True at the Time  
Insights and Outlooks  
Adjust Your Set  
Passionate Intensity  
the fretters of i  
With a Will  
Acting My Age  
Talking to Myself  
This is how it is

**with Charlene Jones and Cecilie Kwiat**  
Uncritical Mass in Consort

**with Charlene Jones**  
Bliss Pig and Other Poems

**with Joe Fromstein**  
Love Play: A Conversation in Rhyme



## Publisher's Note

It was a privilege and a delight to have published three of Linda Stitt's previous books and be the editor of another. I also had the good fortune to have been an admirer of Linda's poetry, both written and performed, for almost thirty years. She became a very dear friend as well.

I will not praise Linda's poetry here. It will speak for itself. I will just note, with considerable amazement, that I fully expect readers of this book who are acquainted with Linda's poetry to agree with me that what is on these pages has lost none of the charm and flair and enlightened vision that shines through every poem.

As with the other books I worked on with her, Linda initially showed me the poems she had written since her last book and asked me whether I thought there was enough material suitable for a new one. Without hesitation I always said yes. This time, it was in the winter of 2019. Linda's intention was for the book to come out in the fall of 2020. I told her that would be fine.

Linda was in her 88th year and had retired at the end of 2018 from co-hosting the popular Words and Music salons which were taking place every month at the Tranzac Club in Toronto. Though frail, she was still able to perform her poetry there, as a beloved guest star, throughout 2019 and in the early months of 2020.

Before I was ready to begin my work on *Eddies in the Stream*, Linda had another request. She had run out of copies of her 2003 book *Passionate Intensity*, and, since there was still a demand for it, she asked if I could produce a new edition. I was happy to do so.



Then in early May, when my work on *Passionate Intensity* was well underway, Linda emailed me asking that I phone her. She had been taken ill and was told she had only a few weeks to live. I was able to get that book printed in time for her to see it and tell me that she was pleased. Sadly, there was not nearly enough time for her to see *Eddies in the Stream*.

Linda told me she wanted both of these books (as well as her previous publications) to be given out to her friends at her celebration of life.

Linda wrote two more poems in her final days. She asked that the wryly-titled "Thanks for All the Fish" be placed at the very end of this book. It was written after her final trip home from the hospital. "Final Wish," which I put next to last, was found on Linda's writing desk just after her death by her friend Margo Kendall.

Based on my experience in selecting and arranging Linda's poems for other books, I was confident that the editorial decisions I'd make for this one would have had her approval. Besides which, Linda's daughter Paula Stitt, who designed the covers of all of her mother's books from my press (and several others), would be checking the proofs, as would Margo Kendall, who was very familiar with Linda's poetry. I am most grateful to Paula and Margo for their support for my efforts and for their vital contributions to both the cover and inside text of this book.

*Allan Briesmaster, August 2020*

## **Dedication**

To all who come across this book  
I hope you find something of yourself  
in here

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**GRATEFUL ALL THE WAY**



## NO RUSH

One of these days  
I'll get around to being old.  
Not that I'm not  
already tired and wrinkled,  
but that's just the body.

My heart is still  
in the springtime of my youth,  
the midsummer of my joy.

Grace grows in my kuti,  
in the light of lovingkindness.  
The energy of the mantra  
rejuvenates my spirit.

I am busy right now  
with the Buddha and the breath  
and one of these days,  
when I find the time,  
I'll get old.



## GRATEFUL ALL THE WAY

I'm old,  
not just quite old  
and not yet very, very old:  
perhaps somewhere around really old,  
depending on what's for supper.

If it weren't for the body  
I'd be ageless.

And it's all interesting, all the time.

And although it's all about a planet in suffering,  
it's all as it should be.

I trust in a loving universe  
to permit me not to act my age.

## AHA

Getting old  
is a whole new territory for me,  
a strange landscape,  
a different perspective.

As the fetters loosen,  
layers of ignorance fall away  
to reveal a core  
of love,  
bliss and gratitude.

Despite the burden of the body,  
I have never been so free.

The golden years  
were never about the flesh.

## **2:17 AM**

I had a dream this night,  
a collage,  
which spoke of art and agape,  
swirling colours and candle wax.

It borrowed bits  
from rainbow ink and camel-hair brushes,  
multi-hued pencils and porous, white paper,  
unrealized aspirations,  
creativity and rapture  
and unfathomed talent.

It discovered places  
hidden in the soul  
and a heart bursting with joy.

I awoke to a new world  
of possibility and euphoric hope,  
of boundless gratitude  
and a reason for being.

## PNEUMONIA

Applesauce, yogurt,  
yogurt with applesauce,  
toast with jelly atop the butter beneath,  
chicken soup with stars and rice,  
these I can eat without my teeth.

As nurse nurses  
and caregiver hovers,  
between the sheets  
and under the covers  
I lie with appetite diminished  
but clean my bowl until it's finished.

I always wanted to be thin  
but scrawniness was not my whim.

It was touch and go  
for a little while there  
but I escaped death by a hair.

I'm mildly astonished to discover  
I'm a tough old crone  
and a long life lover  
and I think, perhaps,  
I shall recover.

## THE BROKEN NOSE

*for Donna Langevin*

The broken nose, ah yes,  
I had almost forgotten until your poem.

And now I remember the moment of unawareness,  
the malevolently placed cement curb,  
the broken tooth,  
the smashed face,  
the baptizing of the concrete with crimson,  
the taxi ride to Mount Sinai,  
the cabbie's concern as the red tide threatened his upholstery,  
the brief sojourn in Emergency,  
the doctor who viewed the X-ray and said  
It's broken.

Oh shit, I said.  
He slapped on an adhesive strip and offered,  
I can drill it out from the inside and remove the bump.  
Don't touch me, I said.  
I think I said it more than once.  
Don't touch me. Don't touch me. Don't touch me.

I returned home to countenance the world  
with a jagged smile  
and a purple radiance,  
resembling a battered fish stick.

The tooth was repaired.  
A scarred and dented proboscis,  
slightly awry,  
is, with every glance in the mirror,  
a reminder to be mindful.

## THE OLD GRAY MARE

This body is weary  
and I am growing weary of this body.  
It's not just the discomfort,  
it's the lack of ability,  
the failure of irreplaceable parts,  
the loss of invulnerability.

I try for calm acceptance,  
realizing that this form  
is my springboard to awakening,  
my vehicle for transcendence.

I treat this body more gently now,  
with greater awareness.  
I do not enter it in marathons  
or weightlifting contests  
or any Olympic events.

I keep it reasonably clean,  
clip its toenails regularly,  
water it consistently.

I pamper it with cannabis and chocolate  
and trust it will carry me  
to the end of ignorance.

## WENT TO THE DOCTOR TODAY

Not a lot of meat  
left on these bones,  
not a lot of muscle  
left on these limbs,  
not a lot of pages  
left on this calendar.

But enough,  
enough to keep the vehicle  
in service,  
to chant a lot more mantras,  
and sit a while in silence.  
Enough to write a few more poems  
just to assure you  
that it's all okay,  
so far.

Nothing imminent,  
just the gradual workings  
of impermanence.

Whatever arises  
there's not a lot to do about it,  
just say thank you  
and live what's left  
in love.

## IMPROVEMENT INDICATED

Here I sit,  
trying to be placid,  
while my mind cavorts  
like a spider on acid,  
like a moth in its ardour,  
like a monkey on meth,

I've got to try harder  
at watching my breath.



## SONG WITHOUT MUSIC

This body's not as cozy  
as it used to be  
So I'm living on love  
and THC  
and hugs  
are my very best remedy.

The world's  
not such a bad place to be  
when there's plenty of love  
and THC  
and they're the things  
sustaining me.

Sooner or later there's pain.  
That's understood.  
Some very close friends  
and some very good weed  
and life's still good.

Given there's love  
surrounding me,  
I'm grateful I'm here  
where I want to be  
with my friends  
and my THC.

## **OBLIGATIONS**

I used to like bananas.  
But when my doctor advised  
that I consume one daily,  
they lost their charm.

Bananas, like marital sex,  
are much less enjoyable  
when compulsory.

## SEIZING THE DAY

Learning to alter my habits,  
change my routine,  
do things differently,  
get out of my rut.

It's not a bad thing.  
It forces me  
to examine my preferences,  
consider my alternatives,  
expand my horizons,  
clean out my attic.

More time to take to mind  
things in detail,  
to pay attention,  
to listen to the silence,  
to get under my skin.

To inhale consciously.  
To exhale with love.

I have been given the retreat  
I've been putting off for years.

## OCCASIONS FOR DELIGHT

I have ongoing occasions for delight.  
Sunsets will do it for me regularly  
and a new green shoot poking up from the dark earth  
is always a moment for rapture.  
Meeting with friends forever gladdens my heart  
and animals at play are opportunities for celebration.

And I am delighted to realize  
a new source of bliss, –  
discovering a second layer in the chocolate box.

**PACKING UP MY TROUBLES IN MY OLD KIT BAG  
AND  
SHUFFLING OFF TO BUFFALO**

*Let me explain that these are just song titles  
and I don't have a kit bag, new or old  
and Buffalo is just a metaphor  
for some place nicer*

Sometimes  
I grow profoundly weary  
of the suffering and the celebrity and the charlatans,  
the earthly justice never found,  
the glitz, the glitter and the glamour of excess,  
the need that founders in futility,  
the down-spiralling future hastened by fools –  
of all of it.

I wish to cling to no thing,  
– only the Three Jewels  
and go where all is still and silent  
but the wind.

## REPLETE

Sitting here,  
high on cannabis, – the holy weed.  
The cat comes by,  
opens my love valve,  
reminds me to say thank you.

I think she's a stoner,  
likes the sensuality  
of my hands cupping her head,  
feeling her silkiness,  
vibrating to her purr.

With three long breaths  
I divorce myself from my fears  
and allow myself rapture.



## DIVERSION





## **CLEARLY**

If I were going to live forever,  
I would have my place repainted  
and my plants repotted.  
I would clean out my fridge  
and my closets  
and drawers I haven't opened in years.

I would go down to my locker  
and dispose of stuff  
I seem not to have needed in decades.

But I'm not going to live  
a whole lot longer  
and I'm going to use the time  
to clear out my head  
and open my heart  
and write poetry.

## DIVERSION

My muse is a temptress,  
a Mara of distraction.

She comes unbidden,  
slips past my breath  
and into my meditation,  
urging me to put down my practice  
and pick up my pen.

Sometimes  
it is difficult  
to keep my mind from poetry.

**SECLUSION  
OR  
THIS IS NOT A POEM**

Safely ensconced on the twenty-first floor,  
hunkering down in secure social distance.  
Chores finished, emails answered,  
the dishes are done and the cat is fed.

Food in the cupboard,  
wine in the fridge,  
weed in the bong.

Free time, blank paper, pen in hand.  
totally prepared for poetry.

But the Muse, it seems,  
is in self-isolation,  
and not making house calls.

## RECALCITRANT

I sat down tonight,  
Had a couple of tokes,  
turned off the TV  
and invited the muse.

She came hastily by,  
popped in for a moment and said  
I can't stay. I have duties elsewhere.  
Wait, I pleaded, Can I make an appointment?  
You know I don't work that way, she replied.  
I will come by when you're hurrying out the door,  
or when you're taking the heating pad out of the microwave  
and heading for bed,  
or when you're sitting in your weary attempt at meditation.

And off she went,  
leaving behind only the reminder  
that poetry is not biddable,  
cannot be scheduled,  
will not appear on demand.

Euterpe is, after all,  
the granddaughter of Zeus,  
daughter of Apollo,  
giver of delight  
but only at her own convenience  
and cannot be subpoenaed.

## **DON'T LOOK A GIFT POEM IN THE SCANSION**

Make no attempt  
to second-guess the Muse.  
She won't take kindly  
to correction.  
A work wherein  
the ego gets involved  
is sure to meet  
contemptuous rejection.  
Accept with modest gratitude  
her gift  
and seek no further  
for a poem's perfection.

## VERSUS

Sometimes reflective,  
sometimes didactic,  
sometimes a journal  
of just where I'm at.  
Sometimes I keep them,  
sometimes I shred them,  
sometimes I sweep them  
under the mat.

They all are given. I take no credit  
but, once in a while,  
I get to edit.

## SUNDAY AFTERNOONS AT THE TRANZAC

*for Glen Hornblast*

We are immersed in poetry,  
dissolved in music,  
cocooned in love.

We find joy in the sharing,  
bliss in the harmony,  
delight in the fellowship.  
We are not alone,  
performers and audience  
united in good will.

We are brought to laughter,  
moved to tears,  
finding sanctuary from the madness,  
transported from Gehenna to paradise.

This is community.  
This is home for the heart.  
We have built a fortress  
of lovingkindness.

Join us.  
The gates are wide open.





**ONCE UPON A TIME**



## ONCE UPON A TIME

Alone and isolated,  
panning the stream of memory  
for some small nugget of inspiration.  
Digging through the gravel of time  
for something that glitters  
in the long ago.

And there you are  
who loved me once  
and always  
and warm me still  
from your cold grave.

I buried you back then  
but, mining my past,  
I find you,  
like a jewel in matrix,  
enriching my present,  
soothing my seclusion.

## ON MY HONEYMOON

At an outdoor bar  
on a street in Havana  
a native woman,  
dancing to the rhythm of the drums,  
beckoned me to join her.

I rose eagerly to comply.

**SIT DOWN**, he ordered.

I knew in that instant  
that I had made a terrible mistake.

Inevitably, we parted  
and I have been dancing ever since.

## FONDLY

So he's gone.

Haven't seen him in decades,  
but I loved him well  
and I love him still.

There is an emptiness,  
but no grief.  
With dementia  
he was gone long ago.

And now I am remembering  
how we lived together  
through cockroaches and crabs  
and parted with love  
and aspiration.

I hope he finds in death  
the end of ignorance  
and rests in peace.

## **GONE BEYOND**

I thought I saw you  
on the street today,  
hurried to meet you, greet you,  
throw my arms around you  
and weep tears of overwhelming joy.

But it was a stranger,  
amused by my confusion,  
my profound disappointment  
and not willing to be someone else.

## **NOBODY**

Nobody salts my chocolate,  
nobody stirs my stew,  
nobody catches my obscure witticisms  
quite as well as you.

Nobody runs my gauntlet,  
nobody walks my cat,  
nobody knows what I like and how I like it,  
nobody fixes my flat.

Nobody shakes my cocktail,  
nobody rolls my joint,  
except for you, my perspicacious friend,  
nobody gets my point.

Nobody zips my zipper,  
nobody holds my hand.  
Nobody cooks my kipper  
or tries to understand.

No one else knows how I need to live  
with laughter, love and light,  
so, if you'd like to be my Valentine,  
I won't put up a fight.



## FOR PAULA

First born  
and fairest among women,  
in my eyes.

At the end  
of the long travail,  
you are the prize,  
caring, accepting,  
kind and kindly wise.

I shall go gently,  
for I know  
your love will bear me  
when I choose to go.

**SOLSTICE**



## NOT MY DEPARTMENT

I seem to be developing  
an ever-increasing antipathy  
toward technology.

Please don't try to explain to me  
how to do something on the computer  
or the iPad.  
Don't suggest a smart phone.

Don't talk to me about clouds and apps.  
Spare me the comparisons of tweets and twitters.

There is an empty neighbourhood in my brain,  
which Silicon Valley has not yet populated  
with slick areas  
to which electronic concepts cannot stick.

Bring back cursive script  
and the world will be familiar again.

## SUPERCILIARY SIGHTINGS

I have been observing eyebrows lately,  
    – not men's eyebrows  
      which are, for the most part,  
      woolly caterpillars  
      and unremarkable,  
but women's eyebrows,  
which have become the *de rigueur* accessories  
of current fashion.

They are all perfect parentheses,  
toppled and exactly placed.  
Free from the bony ridges  
which once anchored them,  
they float like wedged parachutes  
unaligned to the ears.

Some are short, unassuming arcs  
and others come one-third full circle.

Most are given to mild expression,  
but a few are vaulted in permanent disbelief  
and some are lifted in ongoing surprise.

None meet in the middle.  
None are skimpy,  
none are bushy.  
In unassuming shades,  
they are hand-tailored and bespoke.  
Some abbreviated, some extended,  
tadpole and sperm-shaped.

Like longbows or recurves  
they are exquisitely arched.  
Loosely or tightly strung,  
their impact can be acute  
or negligible.

No hairs are out of place.  
They are smooth and symmetrical  
and as perfect as dental implants.  
And they don't look false,  
just too good to be true.

## FLOCKING PIGEONS

It's April  
and the pigeons are a-wooing  
at their favourite watering hole.

I am a shameless voyeur,  
watching the males  
with their heads bobbing  
and their chests puffed out,  
    attempting to impress  
    indifferent females  
    by the fanning  
    of their macho tails.

They pursue their prospects,  
strutting their stuff, persisting, insisting,  
bent on conquest.

As I look, one young fellow  
sashays up to the object of his desire  
but she moves away, not interested.  
He desires another,  
resumes his suit  
with machismo blandishments  
and is, once again, ignored.

He persists, determined to have his way  
with someone, anyone,  
and, eventually  
one compliant hen  
succumbs to his advances.

He feeds her a swift, regurgitated meal  
of avian aphrodisiac  
and jumps on her  
with no further foreplay.  
One quick thrust and it's done.

No "Was it good for you?"  
No email addresses exchanged.  
He struts away without a backward glance.

There'll be no flowers,  
no phone calls,  
no keeping in touch with the eggs.

I have experienced  
this kind of relationship,  
a chance meeting,  
– hurried dinner, a quick coitus  
and an abrupt disconnect.  
It is not an occurrence  
I care to repeat.

Dove love,  
in my informed hereafter,  
is strictly for the birds.



## MY FRIEND

She wears her friend  
like a hair shirt,  
a source of constant irritation  
and low-grade outrage.  
She caters to this woman  
despite the frequent effrontery,  
the lack of gratitude,  
the thankless imposition of entitlement.

My friend surpasses the saints  
in patience and compassion.  
She is an example to me  
of forbearance.  
I could never hope to achieve  
her generosity.  
It is beyond my ability.

My friend has a friend  
who taxes friendship  
to the limit.

My friend has a friend  
but her friend has a servant.

## DEPOPULATION

Elbow bumps and fist bumps,  
virtual hugs and air kisses,  
and a pandemic declared.

Warnings and reassurances  
and face masks  
and cancellations.

Is this it?

Is this the biggie  
that will decimate us?

Is this the plague  
that will save the planet?

## **CURE-ALL**

Earth will survive.

The winds will calm  
and the air will be sweet again.  
Bacteria will consume our plastics  
and the oceans will renew themselves.  
The gaping wounds will be covered  
with living soil  
and green will grow once more.

Small things will live  
and evolve  
and all will be new and renewed.

When we are gone,  
the planet will recover,  
over eons,  
from the disease  
of us.

## SOLSTICE

Stand at your window tonight  
and bless this city.

Call on and acknowledge grace.

Spread  
compassion for the hungry and homeless,  
generosity for all who recognize mutuality,  
gratitude in abundance,  
forgiveness for the apathetic and indifferent,  
even the villains  
whose karma will move them to remorse  
ourselves, for our own sins and shortcomings,  
for kindnesses withheld.

Stand at your window and,  
as the light increases,  
radiate love.



**STILL HERE**



## IN MY 88TH YEAR

I guess you could call it a dark evening,  
– not quite a dark night  
the fear that all is fantasy,  
that bliss is unattainable,  
that karma is just a pseudo explanation  
for the inexplicable.

Accepting the body's pain as unavoidable,  
and the world's madness as undeniable,  
questioning faith as a sugar-tit,  
I descend into the night's darkness  
and find love.



## **ALL IS NOT LOST**

I can't hear with my hearing aids;  
I can't eat with my teeth.  
I can't reach up to the top of the fridge  
or bend to see what's beneath.

Sometimes I can't recall a name.  
I forget the end of a story.  
But once in a while I remember myself  
all the way back to glory.

## BUCKET LIST

Death came by this morning,  
whispered in my ear.  
Come with me, she said,  
come away.  
You are old;  
you are becoming a burden.

Yes, I said, I know.  
I'll be with you shortly.  
I just have one more book to write.

## ISOLATION

A moment of inattention  
and I will spend hours on my knees,  
searching under chairs, sofas, desks, tables,  
for my hearing aids, dentures, phone, glasses,  
key, credit cards.

I am secluded now,  
All by myself,  
– well, me and the cat.

Time now,  
and a good time  
for the practice of awareness.

And a little lovingkindness wouldn't hurt.

## RETIREMENT

I am so busy these days  
with friends and teachers  
and maintenance of the old bod.

And I am distracted  
with sights and sounds,  
with odours and allegories  
and countless stories  
and watching too much news,  
    with mantras and musings,  
    consorting with the muse,  
    doing my best to diffuse  
    the grace I have been given,  
        the ascension.

One of these days,  
I must sit down  
and give death my full attention.

## **STILL HERE**

We are eddies in the stream,  
momentary manifestations,  
emanations of the limitless light.

We come with our cards preloaded.

I thought that I had attained  
to my termination time  
but it appears  
I have only passed  
my best before date.

### THREE FROM MY BEDSIDE TABLE

I mishear,  
misread,  
misgive,  
mistake  
and leave a pile  
of improbabilities  
in my wake.

A couple of things  
and all is right, –  
the flutter of wings,  
the limitless light.

Fear in the future,  
remorse in the past,  
all is impermanent,  
nothing will last.  
Nothing to cling to,  
no why or how,  
freedom in letting go.  
Joy in the now.

## FADE TO BLACK

I think I'm getting ready to go.

The flesh is withering  
and the bones are bending.  
The organs are failing  
and the senses are dulling.  
Weariness informs me.

It's not unpleasant.  
It is, in fact, very interesting  
to watch impermanence  
manifesting in the body.

So I'm practicing letting go,  
letting go my sins,  
my unkindnesses,  
my unworthiness,  
my recalcitrant ego  
and even my virtues  
whatever they may be.

Letting go my attachments,  
letting go my loved ones,  
my poetry, my life.

So, if I don't answer the phone for a couple of days,  
please come over and feed the cat.

## **NESTING IN THE COSMOS**





## NESTING IN THE COSMOS

I am 87, – in my 88th year.

I have gone from senior to elderly to old  
to aged to elder.

The next levels are crone, ancient,  
antediluvian and fossil.

The flesh is disintegrating,  
as all things do,  
and the mind wanders incessantly.

But the heart is at home  
in this body,  
in this place,  
in this universe,  
in this no-thingness.

And, although the flesh is failing,  
the freedom increases  
as things fall away.

Death is always out there,  
sometimes vaguely distant,  
sometimes a breath away.  
imminent and immanent.

And the mind may wander,  
as the mind is prone to do,  
but the heart has found a home  
in love.

## FREE LOVE

Just because I tell you that I love you,  
doesn't mean you have to love me in return.

No obligation,  
I'm not soliciting a response.  
I don't require a reply.  
Don't worry, you're committed to nothing.  
I don't want a thing.  
It's enough for me to love you,

But if you feel inclined to love me back,  
that's okay too.

## LOVE AS A VERB AND A NOUN

If it weren't for poetry  
I'd be just sitting around  
waiting to die,  
because poetry is all that I do,  
all that I want to do,  
– just sit around  
and take down what's given.

Nowhere I want to go,  
– though I go happily,  
nothing I want to see  
but my own aspiring depths,  
nothing I want to achieve  
but to share with you  
what I am learning of love.

## HERE AND NOW

You can't just flirt with the universe,  
with a smile here  
and a wink there  
and a seductive glance  
over your shoulder.

You can't stay in touch  
but not committed.

You've got to give it your all,  
withholding nothing.  
You can't keep a wisp of yourself apart.  
You can't look at another,  
there is no other.

There is nothing more to desire  
and nowhere else to go.

## HOMeward BOUND

We are eddies in the stream,  
impermanent,  
yet part of the eternal potential,  
    brief entities  
    that flow back into the undifferentiated.  
We manifest for moments  
and return to the full emptiness.

For a little while  
we give voice to the ineffable,  
form to the featureless,  
expression to the divine.

We shall be subsumed  
into the totality,  
undistinguished from the one.

## NAMASTE

Despite your faults,  
your deeds, your doubt,  
your clinging to's,  
your fallings out,  
the loss of what you might have been,  
the sorry mess you find yourself in,  
– not even to mention  
original sin,

don't let unworthiness  
deter Thee.  
Thou art here  
and Thou art worthy.

## **ON WITH THE JOB**

Drop your defences,  
crack your shell,  
demolish your fences,  
ring your bell.

Let the reality  
open your heart  
to boundless totality.

We are a part  
of the multi-named nameless.

Be bold and be shameless  
in being a beacon  
of love.



## PASS IT ON

Sometimes  
bliss flows through me  
like liquid honey light  
and my heart bursts  
with ecstatic pain.

I cannot contain the energy.  
It is not mine to accumulate  
but to pour forth,  
to broadcast,  
to affirm,  
to exude,  
to touch your inner core,  
that you may realize  
your own capacity for joy.

## PLAN OF ACTION

Pray without ceasing,  
says the scripture.

Pray by all means,  
but prayer is not enough.

Get up off your zafu.  
Let love drive you out  
into the street.  
Roll up your sleeves  
and work for peace,  
for freedom and justice  
and compassion for all beings.  
Protest and demonstrate  
and sign petitions,  
write to newspapers,  
speak out against wilful ignorance,  
rebel against greed.

Join hands, open hearts.

Let's get this show on the road.

## **REJOICE, REJOICE, YOU HAVE NO CHOICE**

*as my teacher said*

Once the aspiration arises,  
there's no getting away from it.

It has poked a hole in your shell  
and, like it or not,  
you're going to have to hatch,  
to be born into the light of totality,  
the love of the Great Mother,  
the wisdom of the Holy Father,  
the realization of the One  
that we are.

## RIGHT VIEW

Look.

Open the eyes of your heart  
and regard the garden.

Look with wisdom,  
withholding judgement;  
look with acceptance  
at what is  
and set aside  
what should be.

See the coming into being  
and the decay,  
the arising  
and the passing away.

Look deeply  
into the essence  
of all manifestation;  
look at the commonplace,  
it needs no change  
or alteration.  
Every thing is imbued  
with the beauty of creation.

That which is seen  
with love  
is lovely.

## **SAFETY FEATURE**

Love is like bubble wrap.  
It doesn't stop you  
from bumping into things,  
but it keeps them  
from hurting.

**YOU DON'T ALWAYS GET WHAT YOU WANT  
(BUT YOU GET WHAT YOU NEED)**

I'm not a big fan of suffering.  
I pray for all beings to be well and happy.  
But suffering is inevitable  
and it's an antidote to complacency.

And, if life is just fine,  
there's no incentive  
to look elsewhere.

So I have to be grateful  
for the suffering  
because  
if the rut had been  
at all comfortable  
I'd still be there.

## SEASONS' GREETINGS

In April each green sprout  
bids us rise toward the light  
and all of August's blossoms  
remind us to unfold.

The winds of Autumn  
spur us into motion  
and every snowflake  
summons us to awaken.

Pay attention.

There is no moment  
when the universe is not calling us  
to claim our birthright,  
to transcend avarice and ill will,  
to put an end to ignorance  
and open to the love  
that is our nature.

## TOGETHER IN DISTANCING

Is this it?  
Is this what it takes  
for the great awakening?

I see us, at last,  
rising to our potential,  
uniting in compassion  
to step forward,  
step up, step out  
and say I can give this,  
I can do that.

Is this the lesson  
that we have heretofore refused  
and now hasten to learn?



## UNFETTERING

Give me lovely sights,  
delightful sounds,  
exquisite odours.  
Give me delicious taste,  
rapturous touch.  
Give me dreams and fantasies  
and guileless playgrounds of thought.

I am bound by the senses.  
confined by the mind.

You must give it all up,  
she says,  
even the love.

Love will direct me,  
I say,  
and accompany me to the gate.

I shall walk through.

## LAST POEMS



## FINAL WISH

There's not much I can do  
About my karma  
I came with it  
And I'm living it  
And doing my best to love  
What arises.  
And I'm trying to make sure  
That whoever is reborn  
Will have the foundation  
To awaken speedily  
And be free from suffering.

## THANKS FOR ALL THE FISH

May again,  
my favourite month.  
I've lived to see another May,  
another few glimpses  
of the scilla  
along the Rosedale Valley Road  
and the gently misting  
of green on the tree tops.

I have passed through generous gardens  
and the rhododendrons at the front door  
are in full blossom.  
I will live for moments of sheer bliss  
in the matrix of contentment.

I shall see  
dawns reflected  
in cater-cornered windows  
and speak my love and farewells.

I shall have time to wallow in gratitude,  
time perhaps for another whiff or two of jasmine  
and, maybe, even gardenia.

I look forward,  
if I may presume to do so,  
to freedom from the computer  
and the cell phone  
and all once-required trivialities.

I shall have time  
to annoy the cat,  
who only hangs out with me  
for the drugs.

Time to create  
the doobie-snuffers  
I have been intending for years.

Time to be gobbled by time,  
to be swallowed by grace,  
to be digested by understanding.

But, I shall try  
not to inconvenience you  
with dilly-dallying.  
I'm dying as fast as I can.

May all beings be well and happy



## **Eddies in the Stream**

Linda Stitt

Throughout this, her twelfth and final book of poetry, Linda Stitt's voice again resounds with the sparkling wit and luminous wisdom that has distinguished all of her previous work. She treats her own physical frailty with candor and engaging humour. She confronts the loss of friends and lovers with affectionate remembrance and forgiveness.

She reflects on spiritual matters with a combination of care and detachment informed by her Buddhist path.

With undiminished strength and verve, the poems on these pages scorn what is contemptible, are charmingly attentive to dailiness, and cherish what is genuinely precious.

Inspiring both by their courageous acceptance of the unavoidable and with their impassioned calls to love what is lovable, these poems crown a beloved poet's life-achievement in her art.

*Born in Huntsville, Ontario, Linda Stitt was educated in Georgetown and Toronto and lived in Thunder Bay for many years. She returned to Toronto in 1978, working at a series of odd jobs until "forced" by friends to come out of the closet with her poetry in 1982.*

*She went on to write ten books and co-author three others, while for some 30 years frequently performing her poetry across the province.*

*For several years, until 2019, she co-hosted a monthly words and music salon in Toronto that featured many talented local writers and singers and had a devoted following.*



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