



# Perceptions

*Poems for a Time of Terror*

*by D.N. Sutton*



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ISBN: 978-0-940361-25-6

*Sherwood-Spencer Publishing*

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*Poems for a Time of Terror*



*For Paul*  
whose unfailing love  
made this book happen...

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## erceptions

*Poems for a Time of Terror*

"...Surely it must be grievous human error  
To be lured into the heresy  
Of fomenting terror..."



## *Into Sweeter Dream (911)*

Like Trojan women  
Weeping on the shore  
For their men dead  
Their Troy, beloved Troy  
Lost in flame and ash  
Like them we mourn  
Dazed in disbelief  
Like them we sit  
Moaning in our grief.

Is this then the era  
Of the second Trojan horse  
Catastrophe confusing us  
As hatred burns its bitter course?

Does still more anguish lie ahead  
Not only murder thrust from planes  
But poisons, paralyzing will  
Bringing a nation to standstill?

Will viral assaults on persons  
And communication lines  
Fulfill even more diabolical designs  
Until stars in heaven shaken  
Bring this evil to a halt?

O Architect Supreme  
Turn our terrifying nightmare  
Into sweeter dream!



## *Sweet Ceremony*

Sweet ceremony, come purge us of our grief  
Obviate our sorrow with high words  
Music and honor help us  
When loss overwhelms  
In pageantry mourning finds relief  
What other way is open?

When night shakes down its sorrows  
With the finality of autumn leaves  
The tree is still seen standing  
Though its torn heart grieves.



# *Abandon Hate*

O terrorists

You of firm fear

Afraid of the fall into the pit of nothingness

Your dignity diminished on mission merciless

If there is meanness in the heart, in the hand

Condemnation of anyone, anywhere, then halt

Wait, listen, lest you be lost.

Feel the wind of the breath that cleanses the world

Hold the hand to the hurt of the heart

That sweet hand that heals, that is healing

The strong hand that holds

The broken pieces of your inborn nobility

The firm hand leading you back to your own heritage

You, who need not be less, who were born to be more.

Abandon hate lest you abandon life and perish

Damning the very values that you cherish.



# *The Cry Is Out*

The cry is out----  
Hold back the blow.  
How dare you, I, anyone  
Strike out against the universe?  
This flesh we torment,  
This human being cringing in the body  
Against the foul stench of our evil strength  
This benighted lump stamped on  
As beneath concern  
Stop now  
Lest we kick the face of God,  
And make bloody what is beyond us.

No, we have no right, none whatsoever  
To hurt, to undermine even with consent  
The dignity of another human being.  
Even when we despise.  
Each flicker of hate, rejection, each bit of anger  
Hurled at defenseless persons  
Victimizes us.

If we have the advantage take it  
By using it for good.  
Gentleness rescues us  
From the murderer within.

Cruelty is the noose by which we hang ourselves...



# *Nothing Is Cast In Stone*

We did not know  
We did not know  
That there is mercy  
Even in the pit  
That even  
In the core of hate  
Love exists, resists.

Small green shoots  
Grow out of hard rock  
Gallant gestures  
Bring glint of reason, hope...  
Hope that even dark may be illusion  
That light can penetrate,  
Resolve confusion.

No, nothing is cast in stone.  
Beyond flesh and bone  
Is God.



# *When The Day Dawns*

When the day dawns  
Are you free?  
Does the deep breath  
From the pit of your loins  
Wakening you  
Kicking your awareness  
Into now  
Make your heart sing...  
Is it a joyous thing  
When your day takes wing?

Or are you prisoner  
Bent by your own mind  
Or the intent of others  
To spit on your own soul...  
Victim of your own treatment,  
Or others mistreating you?

When the day dawns  
Are you free...  
If you breathe, still breathe  
You are.

The you  
Can stand  
Against  
The them.



## *For Who Are We?*

Enough of hate!  
The world has had its fill  
Of basic dishonesty  
Of blood vengeance.

We have bowed down to dogmas  
Decimated truth to please human masters  
Have been used cruelly and have cruelly used  
Denied identity  
Trampled on blessings given  
Made little children to suffer  
Women to grieve.

O no more enslavement by our evil spirit!  
Blind faith  
Is like blind blame  
Evokes heresy  
Because it is heresy.  
True faith is true love  
And bears no yoke only that from God...  
Each soul a sword drawn  
That no human suffer wantonly  
Nor be less than God-given  
Each one priceless  
In his image  
Divinely made  
Fulfilled divinely.

Enough of hate  
For who are we  
To be thieves of our own joy?



# *New Era*

God of the Galaxies

Parent Universal

Leading us into your new era of commitment...

No more can narrow valleys of dogma

Contain the torrents of your commandments

Earthquakes of change

Catapult us from mean huts of habit

Into the palace of the encompassing Spirit.

We have outrun our old wisdom

Now newborn in fresh context of your closeness

Rich veins of your divinity deep within ourselves

Make your presence known within and without.

God of the Galaxies

Wiping away ancient hates with new awareness

Entrusting us with your Springtime

O transform us, bewildered Earth children

Cousins all

Into loving instruments of your takeover.



# *Pray For Paradise*

Pray for the hunted  
And the hunter  
Pray the hunt cease  
Swift, swift come release.

Pray no blood spills  
No life be lost  
Pray there be peace  
Death too high a cost.

Pray the hunt be brief  
No more senseless grief  
Pray for war's demise  
Pray for its despise.

Pray hate be blunted  
Pray rage be stunted  
Pray God not be affronted  
Pray love suffice  
Pray, pray for paradise.



# *Disaster*

Answer come  
We are at the end  
What doors of healing have we closed  
What stumbling blocks  
Have we imposed?  
We need a friend.

We intended to be honest  
Have we been false  
We acted in love  
Or was it selfishness  
We are intelligent  
But have we been wilful  
In the face of truth  
When we thought we were sensible  
Were we blind to reality?

Answer come  
We care  
Not to be right  
Not to be wise  
But to act in the true cause  
To give in the deepest sense.  
We care, but  
Help eludes us everywhere!

Now, we will brave blame  
Take abuse, assault  
Assume responsibility  
Putting aside all sense of self  
No longer our ego or our need  
Answer come  
We will follow if you lead!

What difference now  
Praise or blame?  
We are numb with too long grief,  
Answer come,  
Answer come,  
Bring relief.



## *Victims*

Why, in this quivering moment  
When you hold the gun on me  
Do you tremble?  
Do you know, as I know  
That you stand on the precipice...  
That your grave is deeper and darker  
Than any you dig for me  
Why, when you wince in your own flesh,  
Do I not cringe in mine?

I know, friend, how transitory it is  
How we fool ourselves  
Get swept away in crazy rivers of illogic  
Become another brutal rivulet  
Of the insane tide!

I am a small twig thrust on the same flood  
But I know there is a larger truth, a stronger current  
Beyond any concocted nonsense you serve up  
As your just cause to kill me . . .

So I can be the spectator at my own death  
Knowing yours will be no better and likely worse.



# *Transgression*

Transgression,  
Who would believe  
There is no forgetting!  
Every sound heard  
In the brain  
Every seam felt  
Every sin stamped  
Incredible!

Who would believe  
The body is history recorded  
Beauty, joy and sadness  
Sweetness and the madness  
In each cell,  
Indelible.

Who would have known  
There are wells of pity in a stone  
Steely strength in fragile bone?

No one would know  
Or stop to think  
Until one stands  
Upon the brink  
Until one waits  
Beside the stream  
Seeing the ending  
Of the dream.

Alas, who would believe  
There is no forgetting  
That transgression  
Is so unremitting!



## *I Lie Down With My Sins*

I lie down with my sins  
My sins around me  
I know they are there.  
Sands of sin surround me  
Everywhere is foam, debris,  
Detritus on life's ragged shore.  
Only far away is  
Perfection.  
Close in  
The pebble cuts,  
Broken seashell  
Defines its ended dream.

I lie down in my guilt  
Pulling the quilt  
Of my sorrows closer  
Despairing in their familiar number  
Seeking solace that is not there.

Oh God, I would  
Have had it otherwise  
What can I do  
Undo?  
I would if I could  
Transform the raw edge of my stupidities  
Into someone else's comfort zone.

I would heal whatever I hurt  
And accept  
Your will  
Knowing there is no going back  
Being human twice  
Too much to bear!



# *God Of The Millenium*

God of our biochemistries  
Of our predetermined DNA  
We pray you to save us from ourselves  
Our unthinking impulses  
Unblinking stupidities  
Torrents of emotion  
That flood reason out of mind  
That leave us tremulous and stranded  
On less than high ground.

God of our idiosyncracies  
We helpless, hapless humans  
Victims of millennial forces  
We cannot comprehend  
We pray for help,  
To undermine our angers  
Moderate our greed  
That we may cast away  
Insatiable selfishness  
And ascend from basic beast  
To You.



# *Heresy*

Al Qaeda  
Who needs your harshness?

Is not Allah the God of all persons  
Are we not made in his image?  
Everyone has a right to think and feel  
But to act, any action, inaction  
Must not all be tempered in his mercy?

Who needs your harshness  
Extremism, fury...  
Who needs human-created pain  
Human-crafted misery?

There is anguish enough  
In this world to go around,  
For who has not known  
Suffering and loss!

So let it not be on our limited minds  
Our tormented consciences  
The terrible curse of  
Crossing the satanic line into cruelty!

Surely it must be grievous human error  
To be lured into the heresy  
Of fomenting terror.



## *Lament, Europa*

Do not tell me  
Of Romulus and Remus,  
I know them well.  
Are they not my sons, my grandsons  
Bonded as though by blood and bone?

I was the one, the old she-wolf  
Who nursed them, cursed them  
Tumbling around the den  
Lords of the smallest arena  
And the largest!

Born in the groin of the continent,  
They emerged on fire,  
Heedless, heartless,  
Loathing, loving  
Merriment spilling out  
Of narrowing eyes,  
Spitting, spatting  
Nipping, splatting  
Dangerous as lightning strikes  
Tricky as river gorges!

Do not tell me of those storied twins,  
Those foundling cubs,  
I who love them  
Know too well their passions  
Lust and languor.  
The conflagration of their sins  
Burn in my gut, my heart!

It is destiny, Europa  
That they catapult  
Beyond the hills of Rome  
Their forgotten fangs  
Still shaping  
Your gorgeous, ugly  
Twisted, urgent world.

But don't blame me,  
I am only the catalyst  
Eldest female in the pack.



# *No Currency To Stand*

Coins of the earth  
Are beautiful things  
Copper, gold, silver, alloy  
Designed, struck, hammered, minted  
Then in time worn thin.

Coins, discs of metal, mankind's toy  
Translated onto paper printed, circulated  
Stocks, notes, bonds, bills  
Wispy things made substantial  
By sleight of mind.

Curious alchemy,  
Coins transmuted into paper  
Paper, alleviating hunger.

Is not hunger mankind's curse,  
What more ancient, urgent  
Tragically eternal?

The first coin came  
Centuries after  
The first human faltered  
In an icy cave  
Stomach empty  
No currency to stand against the pain.

What now stands between one and hunger?  
Hunger of the mouth for food  
Tongue for drink  
Hunger of the heart for love  
Hunger for one more coin?

But dust can claim the gold  
Alloyed coins will rust.  
Who on the judgment line will stand  
With bank books, bag of coins in hand?



## *Peer Out*

Peer out  
At the bare bark of winter  
Trees standing in their roots  
Undefended  
As wild winds  
Whip a sea of cold about them  
Brittle boughs splinter.  
For them, for us  
The long wait seems unending,  
Unended.

Peer out  
At the bare bark  
And know, you and I  
In our souls alone  
Are not facing an unknown.  
Moons swirl  
Stars darken  
Shrill sounds like raucous birds  
Bound and echo on us.  
Words whirl in twisted truths  
Positing alarm  
Assail the inner fortress of our calm,  
Invoking nightmares of impending harm  
We wonder  
Will darkness never lapse  
Cruel ones never blunder?

But even as we suffer this unknowing  
Even as some stand, some fall  
Peer out,  
See again Spring's benediction flowing  
Sweet mouth of life,  
Healing the hurting essence of us all.

Peer out  
As tyrannies of pain and cold collapse  
Ordeal erasing  
Warm rain embracing  
Frozen earth.  
All things, selves, beings  
Interlacing  
In renewal and rebirth.

Peer out  
Sing out  
Proclaim your priceless presence  
Affirm your share  
As blossom bursts forth everywhere!



# *Comes Then The Springtime*

How beautiful the world  
And how ugly  
A jagged jewel, its splendor hidden  
Under the rough refuse of its beginnings  
Waiting for us, mastercrafts people  
To cut away its blemishes  
Reveal its glistening heart  
Presenting to God  
His perfect gift  
Flawless gem of his creation.

The world, the earth, the human home  
Why desert, shambles  
When there can be garden  
Why gloom  
When there can be joy  
Why war  
When there can be peace  
Why anguish  
When there can be surcease?

When the thirst for blood is gone  
When bloodlust for lynching is done with  
When blame, hate, cruelty, arrogance are seen clearly  
In the white light that shines from the blackness of guilt  
When vengeance indeed is the Lord's and not our own  
What next?

Comes then the Springtime!



*Purposes/Cross Purposes*  
*Poems About & For Women & Mothers...*

"...Out of my maternity stretch  
immutable ties to eternity"



## *Constraint*

Captive spirit, I  
Or am I  
Butterfly  
On wing  
To farthest star..  
Gossamer thing  
Glimmering afar...  
Or must I remain  
Captured specimen  
In pretty glass jar?

What inhibits me...  
What constraint  
Keeps me from flying free  
Inner need unmet?

When does one retrain,  
Emerge in new mindset  
Rebel against restraint...  
Transform into braver breed  
When, when be truly freed?

One voice says, now  
Another, never  
But secret words  
Keep whispering...  
Do not wait forever!



## *Woman Born*

I am woman born  
That is my sin  
And the world's sin  
Against me.  
Formed feminine  
Fragility real  
Frail, pale  
Small-boned  
Small-breasted  
Inevitably,  
Small-brained  
Classic stereotype  
Of woman,  
Ingrained.

Yet I am not small  
But vast  
Torrents roar  
From the rock of my being.  
Out of my maternity  
Stretch immutable ties  
To eternity.  
Wisdom, all seeing  
Thought-stream  
Blood-stream  
Life-stream  
All being.

Yes, I am woman born  
As the world can plainly see  
When I triumph  
The world triumphs  
In me.

No outcast,  
I outlast  
Enemies  
Astound  
Friends  
Pin down  
The rainbow  
To my ends

I am woman born  
No apologies  
No amends.



# *Motherhood*

Mothers

We are all the same

Once caught in the maternal web

There is no escape, no release.

This is our destiny

To care, to love, to hurt

Pain inexplicable

Rivers at flood

Oceans in storm

Heavens crashing down

Fear cold as the arctic

Ice piercing one's soul.

How, how is survival possible

When disaster seems everywhere?

To be helpless is the ultimate anguish...

Definition of motherhood.



# *Magnificent Mother*

Mother, Mother  
Magnificent Mother  
Let your song out to fill the skies  
Your spawn out to fill the rivers  
Let your offspring heed  
The lure of oceans  
Seek destiny in open seas  
Then leaping in joy  
Return to you.

Mother, Mother  
Magnificent Mother  
Mother womb  
You are the source  
Mother heart  
You are the surge  
Mother mind  
You are the sluice.

Be you the floodgates  
Magnificent Mother  
In reverent wonderment  
Spilling your elemental essence  
Consecrated progeny  
Into the ever-thirsting  
Life stream.



# *Magnificent Woman*

Mother  
Magnificent  
Heroic  
Selfless with love unlimited  
Giving without stint  
Caring lives entwining.

Mother  
Magnificent  
Who are you?  
Tigress  
Fiercely guarding the cub of your life  
Wary, loving, unremittingly taut  
Spitting at danger  
At peace  
Only in oneness with your child.  
Your own frightened young one  
Helpless in defense of self?

Magnificent Mother  
When do you transform  
Into Magnificent Woman...  
When do you release your hold  
Deny your tongue  
Stem your bias...  
When do you soften  
Where once you were stern  
Where do you strengthen  
Where once you were weak?

Magnificent Mother  
Magnificent Woman  
Choose your role!



# *Generation Gap*

What do generations  
Know of each other?  
Hidden needs, never spoken  
Love inarticulated  
Words held tight  
Or too freely given  
Points made too softly  
Or too hard, driven!

What in our hearts  
Do we want?  
One gentle talk  
One quiet exchange  
A summing up of all the elements  
Respect, appreciation, love?  
A moment of closeness  
So long withheld  
Emotional morphine  
For the pain of living?

But if it is not to be, so be it.  
Even if the gap is still unbridged  
Good is understood.



## *Maternal Vines*

How long your daughter's keeper  
Maternal vines  
Choking the young stem  
Of her life?

How long the lie  
Of love  
When she droops  
While you cling?

How long  
Self-deception  
As, wringing your hands  
At her pain  
You weep real tears  
Cutting the last vein  
Of her independence.



# *Testament*

No more am I confined  
In the tight channels of your will.  
You are your own person  
I, mine,  
Bound only to requirement  
Of the Spirit.

Friend always  
I stand by  
Pass no judgment  
Will not desert you  
But will not bend to blandishment  
Wasting strength  
Down the drain of neurosis.

Because the Spirit floods me  
I am no longer anxious  
Feel less guilt  
Reject fears  
Resist harms.

For the sweet Maker who loves us all  
Sings comforting night songs in our ears  
Holding us in holy, everlasting arms.

So with this testament  
I am free.  
So are you  
So sing with me  
Sing with me.



## *Moon Circles*

And so  
In the full of the moon  
Your girl child rises up  
And says  
No more I must follow him  
He is my love  
I must go....

Moon beckons  
Moon glows  
Moon wanes  
But grieving  
Keening  
Goes on  
Accusing  
Confusing....

Mother love supplanted  
Suspended  
Closeness  
Inevitably, ended...

While the moon  
Circles centuries  
Embraces continents  
Peers into young hearts....  
And blesses!!!!



## *Graduation Lesson*

"She will learn"  
Her mother says  
Teeth clenched  
Anger undisguised.  
"She will learn."

"Look what she is giving up  
For that pimply kid  
For so-called love.  
Her good grades  
Her own car  
Her horse  
Her horsemanship  
Her allowance.  
She is throwing it all away  
Her beautiful life  
Choosing him over me.  
Pushing me aside  
As though I am no one  
Nothing, forgetting  
The mother who gave her  
Seventeen years of utter devotion  
Giving her everything...  
Oh, she will learn what hardship is  
She will learn."

And the mournful litany  
Flows on, on, on.  
Indeed, her daughter learned  
Learns  
She looks into her mother's heart  
And sees a black hole.



## *Over The Mantel*

The local story goes  
That the druggist lady  
Once had a man whom she wanted  
To marry, and he wanted to marry her.

But her mother said  
"No. heavens no! Look at him,  
All those younger brothers and sisters...  
You will spend your life helping them.  
No, get your education  
Be sensible or you will end up  
With nothing."

So the druggist lady listened to her mother.  
She did not marry him or anyone else.  
She ended up with a three-bedroom house,  
Owned free and clear, furnished well ...  
Her diploma, handsomely framed,  
Hanging bravely over the mantel.



# *Transformation*

Why did you become her enemy  
You who loved her once, your child?  
Why did you lay siege to her tent  
Fire the grass,  
Hurl rocks  
Shout invectives?  
What deformity of spirit  
Impelled you to inversion of love  
To self- seduction?  
Why was ego more important  
Than your spawn...

In the enormity  
Of human error  
Is strange  
Conformity.  
Even the noble can be vile  
Even the decent miss the mark.  
Out of the friction of their fall  
A spark  
Ignites other truths  
Instruments of growth  
Expanders of awareness  
All part  
Of the patterned whole  
Fated dart,  
Opening up the imperfect heart.

Enlightening, analysis  
Yet still  
A piercing sense of loss persists!



## *Divestiture*

She thinks she could divest herself  
Of husband, lovers, children  
Abandon friends and forgive enemies  
Without revile.

But you, you  
How can she tear out of her heart  
The pain  
Of maternal betrayal  
How to forget  
There is no relationship  
On all this desert earth  
That can compare  
With the one  
That begins with birth?

But now she sees it all  
No longer in denial  
Sees life as trial  
Saintliness and sin  
Mix within..

Daughter's smaller grievance  
Pales beside Mother's larger deviance.



## *One Could Only Watch From Shore*

Why in the sleepless hours of the night  
In the tremulous time between dark and dawn  
So etched in her semi-wakeful mind  
That she hears your complaining cadences  
Over and over, ever without sweetness.

It is not that she hasn't forgiven you, mother  
She has. She knows how flawed the human heart  
How distorted emotional responses can become  
Between parents and their children...  
Yet---she hears you still---  
Urging her again and again  
To pan the riverbeds once more  
In search of other gems, other gold.  
The diamond in her hand  
Despite its beauty  
Its clear-cut value  
Not enough  
So insatiable your need to fulfill  
Your own desires  
You were blind to see  
That hers were met.

And so there was no preventing  
Your painful passage down the rapids  
To the deepest abyss of disappointment.  
Sadly, one could only watch from shore.



## *Forgive*

The self cries out— —am I forgiven?  
Forgive, human being, forgive  
For we are all in error  
All frail, lost, limited.

Even when the heart is honest  
The hand kind  
Even with God's impulse in the mind  
We fail  
We fail ourselves, and one another.

Even with vast love and strong intention  
Fate's intervention can  
Bring us to our knees.  
It is not always slated that we please.

We cannot always claim a star.  
Our failures are our blessings  
Our hurts will find their healing balms  
If we give each other alms.

In order that we all may live  
Forgive, human being, forgive.



## *The Rose*

Love the rose, the rose  
Ignore the thorn.  
Cut it away, away  
Let the rose adorn  
Your perfect day.

The day is brief  
The night is swift  
Accept the rose  
That is your gift  
Lest your joy  
Turn into grief.

Love the rose, the rose  
Love its leaf  
Let its beauty  
Find a voice.  
The rose, the rose  
And not the thorn,  
Your choice.



*Poems About & For Children...*

"...God's wisdom willed  
That you live a splendid life, fulfilled!"



## *First Born*

God made you flawless.

He gave you hair the color  
Of the sun

He gave you eyes the color  
Of the sea

He gives me tremors when  
I look at you

That you are born of me.

God made you flawless  
In my eyes

O God is wise, God is wise!



# *Astral Net*

New-born child  
From Him sent  
Out of the firmament  
A moment's blink on the stellar clock  
Silver streak on the hidden sea  
And you, my love, my sweet  
Were born of me.

From mother-star you come  
To mother-earth  
That I a mother be.

Tiny person lowered on the astral net  
Cooing language from afar  
Wondrous mystery!



## *New Creature Born*

New creature born  
Bursting like blossom on the naked tree  
Substance out of nowhere  
Clear cry out of silence.  
O sweet perfumed blooming  
Where all was still and stark!

New human being  
Alighting in our hearts  
Strange sounds of other planets  
Soft gurgling on your lips.  
Awareness in your eyes  
Closer to the Source  
Than we suspect  
Still linked, still knowing  
But more, every moment  
Becoming one of us.

Small human seedling  
Grow to greatness  
Watered in our love  
Nurtured in soft winds  
Of gentle handling.  
Come into your own earthling self  
One with Him,  
Programmed in wiser ways than ours  
Undeified by our uneasiness,  
Corrective of our cruelty.  
Brush off on us the pollen of your trust  
From your faithful flight  
Into the wonder workings of His world.



## *Winter Cobweb*

Little puzzle of humanness  
Baby born  
Miraculously crafted  
Unbelievably its own being.

Distinctive minority of one  
Unlike any other  
Who ever was or will be  
In all the universe, unique.  
Genes, chemistry  
Interlacing expectations  
Creating a  
Winter cobweb of individuality  
Snow-flake self.

Baby born  
Masterpiece in miniature  
Art-work  
Sent from galaxy  
To gallery earth  
For specific reason.  
Bring us, with your birth  
Beauty, purity of purpose  
Perfection in this season.

Bring us  
In your fervent flowering  
A springtime of the spirit  
Helping to create heaven,  
Or something near it!



## *More Joy Than Trial*

God's gift of child  
O miracle of giving  
Infant, his creation  
Parents blind instruments  
In mysterious transfer of life  
Explicit depository of divine intent!

Guard well this priceless human being  
Small creature needed on this earth  
Snowflake person propelled  
Into our predestined care.

This child is His.  
True parents discipline themselves in love  
Taking the yoke of self-control  
Upon themselves  
Early love moves the child to later greatness.

O blessed faith in goodness  
Patience with slow change  
Warm with approval  
Honest and gentle in denial.  
When lines must be drawn, kindly drawn.  
These blessings of the fair  
And generous parent  
Bring more joy than trial  
Peace to the house of the holy.



## *Let Perish Small Children*

Will we be forgiven  
That we stand by  
Adult, sane, aware  
And let perish  
Small children?

See shattered  
The small goblets of their beings  
Their crystal selves  
Designed to hold the shining liquid of their lives  
Broken to bits  
Spilled into the spoiled gutters of ourselves?

Can some barbarous adult  
In God's defiance  
Take boards and belts to tender flesh  
And we stay silent?  
Permit by our involuntary shudders  
Turn-away eyes  
The slow, anguished murder of innocents?  
Does broken bone, burned flesh  
Disgust enough to discover conscience  
To love a little where love is not?

Alas  
When will we  
Burst through barriers of indifference and inaction  
Lay out the red carpet of caring  
Of acceptance and succor  
Bring rescue from the unthinkable abyss  
Of mindless cruelty  
Of pain and poverty of spirit?  
When, at pitiable last,  
Will we reclaim our own near lost-salvation?

When will it be  
When will it be?



# *Lullaby*

Where is the lost lamb  
The cuddly little sheep  
Where does the young thing sleep  
Where did the small one go  
No more in the fold  
Will the young one live to be old?

Who will guard  
Who will care  
Who will warm the frosted air  
Who will wipe away the tears?  
God will!  
Put aside nameless fears  
God is near  
God is here.



# *Thank You, Andy*

Today I talked on the telephone  
With my mother and father  
My grandson dialed Heaven  
So we could connect.

It was an important moment  
The first direct communication  
We have had since their death.

It was lovely  
Thank you, Andy.



## *Ordained Part*

Walled into silence  
My born-deaf child  
What will you know of sound  
Music or birdsong?  
What will you never hear  
In the empty chambers of your ear?

Your longing brain  
Ever cut-off from  
The soft patter of the rain...  
Will words forever ricochet down  
Irrisponsive pathways  
Seeking meaning  
All in vain?

Oh my child,  
Tender little one  
Your plight disturbs  
My dreams for you  
And sends me into paroxysms  
Of pain and guilt.

But when I look into your  
Wondrous, expressive eyes  
See your facile fingers  
Responsive smile  
I know you shall not be deprived.

Your world will be as complete  
As love and knowing can devise  
So you can meet your fate  
Find it full, immeasurably sweet.  
Not cursed by loss  
But blessed by benefice unknown  
God's wisdom, willed  
That you live a splendid life, fulfilled!

And so I bow my head  
And hear incessantly my heart  
Beating in thanksgiving  
For your being born,  
My maternal, ordained part.



# *My Grandmother's Children*

My grandmother's children walk in the rose garden  
Old and bent in the late afternoon.  
The wan sun lies like a shawl on their shoulders  
Reflecting soft light into their round, lined faces  
Pale eyes alert with pleasure.

My grandmother's children are playing in the rose garden.  
Muscles stiff  
They hold onto each other carefully, gingerly  
But their tongues, uninhibited, dart merrily, mischievously  
Thoughts billow, elbow.  
Words probe, push.

My grandmother's children  
She, he  
Bathe in the warm aura of relationship  
Their white hair framing identical beauty--  
White hair, once with the hint of gold coming,  
Now white with the hint of blue.

I see my grandmother  
Standing behind them  
Tall, tall--  
Her hair in a full Gibson  
Her young figure, hourglass.  
I look into her deep sad violet eyes.  
She is holding her other white-haired children,  
Her first born who died at nine months  
Her last born who died at four.

My grandmother's children  
Her second, her third  
In their late eighties  
Are sitting in the rose garden  
Laughing and talking  
Loveable as puppies.

I watch them and smile.  
My grandmother smiles with me  
Seeing her pretty children  
Playing on a bench.



## *Morgan's Rose*

I laid a prayer for Morgan on a rose  
The only rose, the only one  
Blooming in the burning summer sun  
Beauty blazing, hopeful talisman.

I laid a prayer for Morgan on that rose  
That vivid, pristine rose, so new, so bright  
But then torrential rains poured down in the night  
Leaving a broken shred of color on the ground  
Few slivered petals to be found.

Sad omen that it rained on Morgan's rose  
Poor kidnapped child, alive or dead  
It was for you Morgan that the prayer was said  
It was your rose Morgan, a lovely, lively red!



*Portraits*  
*Poems About People*

"...In some measure  
all your friends are your work of art"



## *Panoply Of Blessing*

I have come to your memorial, my love  
Bringing my many tangented crazy-quilted self  
Old bones, inlaid teeth, and brightest hair.  
We Aries, you and I, mix our pain with joy  
Put parrot plumage on our grief  
And ride the stormy passage to its end  
To find calm and quiet and a last relief.

Who stands before you in memoriam now,  
My love, before your ivory image  
Soft carved beauty  
Is more than Kipling's rag and rage.  
The outer structure  
Hides an inner self, a friend  
In part, a person of your making.  
I cry out to you from bedrock memory  
A slip of a girl, young woman anguished,  
An evolving entity  
Until I broke through confusion into sunlight  
And found myself, my life, my splendid love.

You were there for me through all of that  
More than you knew, more than I knew.  
In some measure all your friends are your work of art  
All here today are your monument`  
Testament to how you touched us all  
Provided insight, clarity, wit and the certainty  
Of your persistent presence  
Priceless panoply of blessing.



## *Cloud Girl*

Cloud girl, I always was, I am, remain  
Living in the snowfields of a high-aloft terrain  
Lower than the galaxies, higher than earth  
In-between person, by destiny, by birth.

Floating, feeling-- too far out of the fray-- I'm told.  
But I have prevailed, to see my poems unfold  
And fill my cloud-gowns with wondrous luminous light  
Claim my soul, soul-loves, in the ever-darkening night.



## *I Am Dance*

There has never been  
A leap, a lift  
A lilting turn  
That I have not been  
In it, with it  
In body, and in spirit  
That I have not been  
Its flight  
Its incandescent light.

From spring-green surf  
Emerging, or  
In autumn leaves diverging  
In any place,  
On any turf  
All dance is mine  
All dance divine.

Once I was snowflake  
Wisp on air  
Drifting, misting  
Utterly free  
Resisting gravity  
Ephemeral in silent fall.

But now, I am crystallized  
Fixed, transfixed  
Prism'd beauty  
Diamond strength  
Dance, gem of elements  
Airiness and strength condensed.

I am dance eternal  
Touchable, tangible  
Come to me  
For I am you,  
I am dance.



## *Old Doctor*

Old man  
You shed your skin  
Did you?  
Died?  
Left the coils  
Bristling no longer  
In a quiet heap on the floor!  
Took off  
Leaving your house  
Untended  
Your bed  
Messy  
And a warm aura of  
Love and conviction  
Crackling from the door hinges!  
The house reeks of you  
The house vibrates with you  
The house will ever be  
Your house.

And you  
You scold me  
In the dark of my mind  
Tall pine tree  
You.  
The rough stubble of your thoughts  
Flicks my conscience  
Your steely blue eyes  
At once doubting and believing.

Your mix of diamond and sand  
Make sharp delineations of good and evil  
Your rasp  
Had its place  
In this lukewarm world  
Your love  
Still rubs like pumice  
Hurting but healing wounds.

So old man  
You've gone  
And you're back  
Of course!  
More vivid  
Than ever.  
Could it be otherwise?



## *Golden Girl*

You of the golden heart  
Golden mane  
Sweet cat's eyes  
Gleaming  
From your sun-warmed soul  
Radiant against deepening skies.

Golden heart  
I love you  
Sister being  
For spilling liquid words  
From your golden cup.



## *Young Officer*

It is memory, infused with love  
That is immortal.

I can see you still  
Young officer resplendent in dress whites  
Buttons gleaming  
Striding up Park Avenue  
All heads turning at this wondrous vision  
Of Adonis in the flesh  
Shining in his manhood, unaware.

Hair light as corn-silk  
Eyes blue as corn flowers  
Skin, Ionian marble.  
You were perfection then  
Masculine beauty at its crest.  
I was impressed.

Now you are seventy,  
But my heart responds as always  
Still tall, strong  
In full shock of hair golden cast remains  
But there is difference.  
More lines in the pink-toned skin  
More mellowness in the gentle smile  
More twinkle in the amused blue eyes  
An aura now, unmistakable  
Deeper than retained handsomeness  
Something splendid, understood by all  
Intelligence and calm, quietly suffusing  
Unaffected kindness,  
Eloquent reserve of a truly good man.



## *Aflutter-1994*

In the cool of the evening  
Sea breeze in his hair  
He called out as he whizzed by  
On his bike--

"I love you Grammy  
I'll love you forever--"

In the morning  
When I woke him  
To go to school  
He wrote a note  
"I wil hafta kil you"

His six-year-old heart  
Valves aflutter  
Has trouble  
Settling down.



# *HRH-Henry The Eighth*

Henry the Eighth  
What a king was he!  
Big as Britannia  
Turtle's back  
Under the land.

When he heaved  
Earthquakes of change  
Catapulted his realm  
Out of the clutch of Popes  
Kept the Tower  
Filled with stubborn souls  
And forevermore  
Fed playwrights, actors and poets  
All they would ever need to know  
About the politics of lust and power.

Henry the Eighth  
What a man was he--  
Current scandals merely whimsy!!!



## *Flipside*

Britain's Queen...  
Hand-bag heart  
Suited, hatted  
Bepearled, bemused  
Stands in isolation  
In her many palaces  
Behind gilded gates.

Yet, in horsey times  
Tweedy like any country woman  
Scarf on head  
She goes to the track  
Lays her bets  
Heart warm with excitement  
To be touching turf  
Smelling horse manure...  
In tune  
For a few sweet human moments  
With pulse of earth.



## *Elegy For A Dead President*

The prince  
He is no more  
He has left the shore  
Of living light  
Sailed into the night.

Dark envelops him  
Who once stood at the helm  
Beacon lights are dim  
A nation mourns for him.

His young life star-crossed  
His death, Camelot lost.  
The pained world grieves  
In the cold crunch of autumn leaves.



## *Inventor*

Will you be exalted  
Before you go into the tomb  
Or will silence lie  
Thick as the mists of night  
Heavy on the heart?

Will silence hold  
Until you are gone?  
Then one careless day  
Some young mind  
Will stumble on your clay  
And see it gold.

Then you will be immortalized  
With wide attention  
Affection  
Of foe and friend  
Climbing the bandwagon  
Of your fame.

Only you will not be here to celebrate  
Only your work  
Your monumental work  
Will stand.



*Philosophies*  
*Poems Of Love, Dream & Song*

"...No small thing  
Beauty beyond dimension"



## *In Holy Rite*

When mountainous walls of water  
Thunder in  
Creaming dark beaches with white sea-foam  
I know you are with me  
You, who are my tide, my sea.

When sun dapples the pine forest  
Or strong rains wet the branches  
I sense your presence  
In the beauty of the moment  
Knowing you are in me, with me  
So it is and ever will be.

Our love is not happenstance  
Sleight of mind  
A one time fling.  
We come to one another knowing  
Our life streams,  
Tiny as they are, are flowing  
Into the mighty whirlpool heart  
Of our oceanic planet  
And we, ourselves, our lives  
A priceless part of it.

By sun gilded  
Stars silvered  
In holy rite  
Made diamond in God's frosted night.



## *Blown Destiny*

By what divine design  
Blown destiny  
Did you and I create this marvelous match  
Crafting our fragile skiff  
Of dream and attraction  
Into a sturdy vessel of proven merit  
Seaworthy in storm  
Beautiful under sail  
A song in the wind?

How in the name of all that  
Is mighty and golden  
Did such splendor come to us---  
An ordinary pair  
Trapped between drabness and desire  
Compressed by circumstances  
And like all others  
Skewered by unrelenting reality?

Was it special dispensation,  
A toss of the waves  
A gift of the sea-god?  
If so, thank you, Poseidon!



## *Preamble*

We have been faithful, love  
To ourselves, to one another.  
We have been honest, generous, openhanded.  
Our dawn-dream was never abandoned  
And it took hold.

Now we exult  
In the partnership of our lives, fiesta!  
Dual performances, imprudent leaps  
Airy arabesques  
Irrepressible in the sunny afternoons.

Closing in for the music's final beat  
We marvel again at love's  
Expanding universe  
And the fierce and fiery stars  
That glitter on in munificent preamble.

If love is not eternal, what is?



## *In Unity*

So you have found each other  
Separate streams joining to make  
One river  
Widening ultimately  
To meet destined seas.

Two, conjoined  
Are more powerful than alone  
Drab lives turned into sunburst  
Flickering turned into flame.

In unity  
The coming together  
Of two souls  
Attuned to God  
Is infinity.



## *Union*

To love madly  
Or not at all  
Are almost  
Equivalent  
Of self-delusion.  
True love is balanced  
Transcends confusion.

Honest love is quiet, discerning  
Emptiness filled  
Restlessness stilled.

Love is not less but more  
Not a game,  
Though it can have the excitement of the hunt.  
Its deep commitment bears the brunt  
Of all need.  
Love's change  
Can go the entire range  
From serious to light  
Sheltering seed  
Reliving old delight.

Love goes deeper than passion  
Beyond calm control  
Or no restraint at all  
As in current fashion.  
Marriage, the meaningful union  
Of two scattered selves  
In one cosmic whole.



## *Love's Mating Dance*

What does anyone know of love  
Its alchemies,  
Its strange and marvelous chemistries?  
How does  
The dreamed and undreamed  
Transform the ordinary into bursts of splendor  
Clothing reality in truer colors ?

The clue must lie in the senses  
Knowing that beauty is created within  
From raw materials of the without.

And so by instinctive resonance propelled  
Love's mating dance commences.



## *Who Dream Without Denying*

To those who have never eaten  
The wild fruits of love  
Purpled their mouths with their sweet pain  
Played like squirrels in the grasses  
Take heed  
When the sun at noon makes a white heat  
And the wind cools  
And the heart bends like a reed in rushing water  
The gods are near, present  
The gods of Olympus  
Still come down to those  
Who dream without denying.  
Come down to enfold you  
In their limpid spell  
Draw you to their wishing well.



## *Roundelay*

And dawn came up on the round of the world  
An orange crimson roundelay  
An orange purple song.  
Dawn came up  
And we were there  
To see the darkness close it eyes  
Enraptured by the brilliant skies  
Light struck air.

Try to sleep in the faery night  
When dreams scatter mordant thoughts of day  
Then wake to dawn, wake to life, wake to play!



## *Yours, My Antonia*

Old lace from a far country, fine spun...  
into its delicate pattern  
the intricacies of mosaic  
over-shadowing its ivory cast  
beauty.

Ah, how exotic in its foreignness  
and fragile.  
how very wan, very slender... and oh  
so melancholy!

Strong plaids in reds and browns  
smell of the earth  
old lace perishes  
the soul of Mr. Shimerdas forsakes Nebraska

\*\*\*

And the red plaids in earth-brown  
and the strong plaids  
O Antonia!  
The plains deep-sunned and blurred in grasses  
the high wind, the rich soil  
yours, my Antonia!

\*\*\*

Old lace in a back drawer  
red plaid in the sun.



# *No Small Thing*

East gilded  
Dawn brilliant  
As lordly the sun  
Extending fingers of fire  
Wakens a moist and sleeping land.

West silvered  
Pearl of the universe  
Queen of night  
Full moon gemstone  
High small and white  
Caught in conflicting  
Spheres of light.

No small thing, this  
Inherent drama of  
Day dismissing night  
Playing it out  
In the awesome theater  
Of the skies  
Before our dim  
Unwitting eyes.

No small thing  
Beauty beyond dimension  
No small thing  
Love beyond comprehension  
In quest for connection  
Communion,  
Convoluting interplay  
Defines the parameters  
Of any given day.

Then night closes  
The tired soul reposes.



## *Our Own Voyaging*

If moored  
Not even the swiftest ship can sail.  
If barnacled  
From old trips, old seas  
Even a sleek craft  
Cannot cut a clean path  
Through new waters.

Aren't we a strange lot  
Letting ourselves be mossed in,  
Tied to old pilings  
Unable to lift anchor  
Even with the course right?

It is in the out-worn charts,  
Maps of the night sky,  
Patterning distorted images  
That we struggle for and against  
Our own voyaging.  
Mind, emotion resisting  
The insistent heartbeat  
Of the ocean.



# Change

Change,  
Inexorable pulse of this  
Our universe  
Metronome of existence  
In constant beat  
Furious or fine  
Tuning tumult or nuances undetectable  
Swift, slow  
In ever-moving lockstep  
With the ordered precision  
Of the central clock.

Change,  
Heartbeat of the worlds  
Of all things in them  
Change,  
Whose currents gently swirl  
Or storm  
Dwarfing human concept  
Change, giving and removing  
Channeling, overflowing channels  
Cherishing, destroying  
Blessing, cursing  
Embodying, disembodying .

Change,  
Sweeping us on our way  
To outer banks of being  
To inner burrows of self.  
To global unity  
Kingdom come.

Change,  
Servant and master  
Of us, and all else  
Change is the law no thing defies.  
In the longest run  
Change is victor.  
Embracing it  
We are in symbiosis  
With the universal.



D.N. SUTTON, age 98, in 2018

## About The Author

**D.N. SUTTON** (Doris Nichols Sutton) is the author of 4 poetry books and 3 novels. Printed books and audio recordings of her poetry books are available on SoulSite.com, iTunes, Amazon.com and CDBaby.

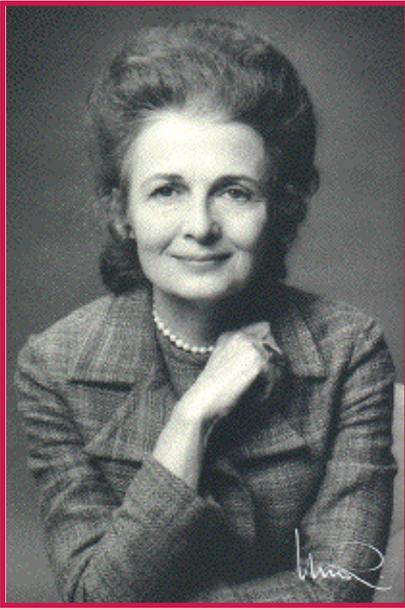
In 2013, at the age of 93, D.N. Sutton inspired us all with her first novel: "Romantic Tales From Old Mulvedania". Her second novel, "The Carolinian Chronicles" was published in 2014, and in 2017, at the age of 97, her third novel, "AT THE BEND OF THE ROAD" was published. All three novels include love stories that are "fantasies for grown-ups" - pleasurable reading for anyone who longs for love everlasting!

D.N. Sutton's four poetry books include "Love Poems for the Romantic Heart", "Death Poems for the Grieving Heart", "Psalms For Life Living", and now, published in August 2018, at the age of 98, this new poetry collection "**Perceptions, Poems for a Time of Terror**".

D.N. Sutton's poetry is stirring, deep, profound and intense. Originally scheduled for publication in 2004, "**Perceptions, Poems for a Time of Terror**" was inspired by the terror attacks of 911 in 2001. The first chapter in the book are poems about terror, but other chapters about Women, Mothers, Children, Love, Dreams and human relationships were added later, making this a significant, meaningful and wide-ranging poetry collection.

Visit **www.SoulSite.com**, to listen to audio recordings of each poem, read aloud by the author, and to download D.N. Sutton's books and audio recordings.

Visit D.N. Sutton's Amazon.com Author's Page:  
<http://amazon.com/author/dnsutton>



## **P**erceptions

*Poems for a Time of Terror*  
by D.N. Sutton

**D.N. SUTTON** has been writing poetry since age seven, published first at age eleven in the Miami Herald and in numerous newspapers and magazines since.

As her books of poetry attest, she is a person who believes in the romantic dream-- that all dreams can in some measure be fulfilled. On this theme, the course she created *Presenta-tion of Self* taught in colleges and universities, has inspired her students to bring the beauty and joy they wish for into their lives.

Trained for the theater, she was a professional photographer's model, a poetry editor, active in radio publicity and public relations. She continues to write poems, plays and letters-to-the editor, which she considers a privilege Americans can enjoy.

To read a collection of D.N. Sutton's poetry on the web, visit the SoulSite: [www.SoulSite.com](http://www.SoulSite.com)

*Sherwood-Spencer Publishing*

ISBN 978-0-940361-25-6



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