



**Enjoy the short stories
And poetry
Some are real
Some fantasy**

STORIES

MY OTHER SELF

I realized I needed to go to the ATM in our building, which I did. On the way back I heard footsteps behind me. I kept walking. Then I heard a voice saying,

“Keep going to your apartment.”

I was about to turn around when the voice said,

“Don’t turn around. Your other self is behind you.”

I kept walking. I got to my apartment door. I turned around and there she was, my ‘other self.’ She looked exactly like me.

“Hello,” I said. “My name is Anne.”

“Hello,” said my other self. My name is Anne.

She even sounded exactly like me

“Well,” said my other self. “We don’t belong together. One of us must leave for the moon by tonight.”

“And what’s on the moon,” I ask.

“A colony of other selves,” she said.

“I’d love to go,” I said. “I’m tired of everything here on Earth.”

“It’s a deal,” we said.

We enter the apartment.

“There’s a lot of food in the refrigerator,” I said. “But let’s order a pizza for lunch anyway. We can have it with the diet soda I have. Diet soda is poison, but it’s good.”

“Great,” said my other self.

So, we ordered pizza and we ate and we talked. At five o’clock my other self said,

“It’s getting late. You’d better be going.”

“OK,” I said.

My other self went to the window, opened it wide and made some hand signals. In about ten minutes it came through the open window – the moon-mobile. It looked like a motor scooter.

“This is for you,” said my other self. You’ll fly through the sky to the moon. It will take about ten minutes. And here on the moon-mobile is a helmet for you to wear. Are you ready?”

“Yes, I am,” I said nervously.

“Great!” Get on the moon-mobile and put on your helmet.”

And I did. My other self put the moon-mobile facing the open window and pushed.

I’m off!

I’m off to the moon with the stars overhead. After about ten minutes, BOOM.

I've arrived.

"Hi, Anne."

"Hi, Helen," I say. "How did your new donuts work out?"

"What new donuts? I work in a butcher shop," says Helen.

"Oh," I say. "You must be Helen's other self."

"Oh, and you must be Anne's other self. You will find everyone's other self here.

"Ring..."

"There's my alarm," I say. "Time to get up."

Wow! What a dream. And it all started with needing to go to the ATM. That's what I have to do.

The End

NOW WHAT?

Chapter 1

“But I don’t want to go to a four-year college. I want to go to a two-year college,”
I say to Mom.

“Alice,” Mom says to me, “You’ll only be half-baked.”

I finally went to a four-year college, The University of Vermont. My cousin told me about this school and that it is a school with real college life. I entered my freshman year in 1960. I lived in a dorm and it really was lots of fun. But there were certain unwritten laws I was supposed to obey – but I didn’t. And that meant one thing – trouble.

My father lay down the laws: Find a nice Jewish boy (I’m Jewish), finish college and graduate school, having studied to be a teacher, get married to my college sweetheart, have two children, sit in a chair with my hands folded in lap and smile. I wanted none of that. And I had trouble in school. My marks were bad. And my college sweetheart was not Jewish. End result, my parents took me out of school.

Now what?

I said to my father, “I’d like to go to secretarial school. I’ll get a job as a secretary. I’ll do typing, shorthand and clerical work.” (This was before the computer age when secretarial work for women was popular.)

My father sent me to secretarial school. I graduated and got a job with an insurance company. Well, I didn't do so well and was fired. I then got a job with a temporary agency. They sent me to work at a bank, where I remained.

They served lunch in the bank. We could not go out at lunchtime. We would sit around at tables and eat and talk. According to some of the women, "You get married or you have a career, one or the other." (This was in the 1960's.)

I started thinking. I want to be independent. Don't want any guy telling me what to do. I like kids but not 24/7. I think I'd like to work for myself. I'd like to do more painting. And I will do more painting. I'd like to do more writing, especially poetry. And I will do more writing, especially poetry. But what do I do if I don't make enough money? Hey – I'll do what I'm doing now – secretarial work.

When I told my mother that I want a career and that I didn't want to marry, she had a fit saying,

"You will just be running around with men."

"So, what's wrong with that?" I think to myself.

Now what?

Next thing I know they're trying to marry me off. At first, I didn't understand. My date brought me home and left. Then I'm hearing, "He's so poor. Look at his clothes. They are worn thin."

At first, I didn't understand. "That's his problem," I'm thinking. Then I realized, they want to marry me off to the highest bidder.

Chapter 2

Soon I meet my to-be-husband. I had called my girlfriend, Jacki.

“Hi Jacki,” I said. “There’s a dance downtown at the Universalist church and it’s only \$2.00. And first there’s a jazz concert. Do you want to go?”

“Sure,” she said.

So, we go. But as usual, I’m late. And I miss the jazz concert.

Jacki meets me at the door, saying to the greeter,

“She should get in for \$1.00, not \$2.00, because she missed the jazz concert.”

Then, it happened. I meet Ben. I had just entered and he was just leaving. He sees me.

“Hello, my name is Ben”

“I’m Alice,” I say

“Would you like to dance?” says Ben.

“I’d love to,” I say.

“I’ll pay her \$2.00,” says Ben and he does.

Then we go to dance a slow dance on the dance floor. He dances as if he fell madly in love with me.

"I never thought I'd meet someone at a church dance," I say.

"This is a Universalist Church," says Ben. "Almost everyone here is black and/or Jewish."

"Oh," I say.

"What do you do for a living?" Ben asks

"I'm a secretary and I go to school at night. What about you?" I ask.

"I'm a psychiatrist. I'll be leaving New York and going to California soon, where I found work at a large psychiatric hospital."

"Oh," I say. "I hope you like it."

"I think I will," says Ben. "What about your job? Do you like being a secretary?"

"It's a living. I also paint. I show my paintings in shows sometimes. I haven't sold anything yet, although I did have three offers."

"Is that what you're taking in school, painting?" Ben asks.

"Yes, among other things."

"Where do you go to school and when do you finish," Ben asks.

"I go to Empire State College. I'll finish in about two years. Then I'll get a masters, but I'm not sure in what, probably teaching art."

"Well, the music stopped," says Ben. "Let's get something to eat here." And we do.

“Where do you live?” asks Ben.

“I live in Queens with my parents. The rent is cheaper there and I’m saving up money for school. Where do you live, Ben.”

“In the Bronx, near the Grand Concourse,” he says.

Meanwhile, we are looking at the food they are serving. It’s mainly cupcakes and soda, which was fine with us. We each take a cupcake and soda and sit down.

“Ben, are you excited about your new job?”

“Yes, I am. I start in about two months.”

“I love the painting I do. I’ll only teach if I need the money.”

“I’d love to see your paintings,” says Ben. “After we dance a little more, I’ll take you home and you can show them to me.”

“OK,” I say.

After we finish eating and finish dancing, we go over to Jacki. We talk a little and then say good-bye to her.

Ben then drives me home. When we reach my house he sees the sign on a pole next to my house saying my father’s name with an MD after it.

“I didn’t know your father was a doctor,” says Ben.

We go inside. However, my parents are not home. We go in my room and I show Ben some of my artwork. He loves my paintings. They are mainly pastels and acrylics. After a while we say good-night and Ben goes home.

So, that's how I met my husband-to-be. However, I had work and I had school. And as much as I wanted to see Ben, school and work came first. Then I realized, I had enough money at this point that I could quit work and take more courses in school. So, I decided to do that as soon as I finish this semester.

When my parents met Ben, they were thrilled with him. They did not like the idea that I put school first. And neither did Ben. This was all making me very upset. The only thing that calmed me down was painting. I was in my own world when I was painting. And it was a world that I adored.

I began to wonder if what some of the women said at work was right, "either marriage or a career." And as time went on Ben began to change. I wanted to go square dancing in Central Park, something they used to have. So, I asked Ben if he would like to go. He said, "no."

So, I said, "that's all right. I'll go with Jacki."

Ben got angry and punched me. He punched me hard in the arm, which later left a black and blue mark. When my parents came home, I told them that I'm through with Ben. I want my freedom. And I told them what happened. My mother had a fit. She said I'll never marry and I'm no good.

"You apologize to Ben," she said. "And don't go to that square dance."

I listened to my mother. I didn't agree with her but I listened to her anyway.

Now what?

Chapter 3

Then it happened. Ben was moving to California. He had no problem leaving his apartment because he shared it with his father and Ben could just leave. But first Ben wanted to marry me and he wanted me to accompany him to California. I could do it. I just finished my course in college and I did not as yet sign up for any more courses. Now we could marry.

“Let’s go to your house and tell your parents,” says Ben.

And so we do.

My mother got very excited. “I’ll tell so and so this. I’ll tell so and so that.”

The first thing that came to my mind was, “Now I’ll never get out of it.”

After a few days my mother noticed I wasn’t as happy as I should be for someone about to be married.

“Maybe we should wait with the marriage,” she said. “You and I could visit Ben in California together.”

“Or I could visit him alone.”

“What! I wouldn’t hear of it,” says Mom. “The bride-to-be doesn’t visit the husband-to-be alone.”

“Oh my gosh,” I’m thinking, “This is all I need, to be fighting with my mother all the way to California and back.”

So, I made the mistake of getting married.

The wedding wasn't too big, about one hundred people, friends and family. It was the wedding night that was very interesting. Ben spent the whole wedding night counting the money we received from the guests. That was it. He just counted the money.

Another interesting thing happened. His counting the money and my watching television must have made us hungry. We wanted some wedding cake—it was gone. We remained hungry and found out later that my mother had taken it home and had put it in her freezer.

In spite of everything, our wedding day and wedding night was the best part of our marriage.

Soon we were off to Los Angeles, California, where Ben would work in a psychiatric hospital. The hospital had sent us a list of apartments for rent with a description about them. We chose a two-bedroom apartment with a terrace and it turned out to be a very lovely apartment.

Ben had also taken over a doctor's practice and I, from home, managed it. I kept all the records, did the billing, paid the bills, spoke on the phone, wrote letters, etc. And for this I got paid—zero. So, when I wanted to go to school in Los Angeles, there was no money and Ben would not pay for it.

I was also learning how to cook and Ben was a very fussy eater. Everything had to be perfect and exactly on time.

Then there was the screaming, which was the worst part of the marriage. I suggested to Ben that we go for marriage therapy. He refused. He said the problem was me.

I also thought that maybe we should have a baby. I always wanted a baby. Maybe a baby would bring us together. But then I decided we should wait a while. Everything was just too chaotic at the moment.

Then, Ben thought I should go to a therapist. So, I did. And the therapist thought Ben was the greatest. As for me, I didn't know what to think.

However, we made friends in California. Very often Ben and I and another couple would go to jazz concerts together, which I loved. Also, Ben and I would go through the malls and look at all the store windows. The displays were beautiful, especially at Christmastime. I also enjoyed reading. I remember reading a play by Tennessee Williams. A friend leant me the book.

Ben said, "I read that book and I didn't like it."

But I read the book and liked it. When I told Ben, he was annoyed, saying,

"You mean you read that book even though I said I didn't like it."

Another time I read something Ben did like. It was 'The Picture of Dorian Gray' by Oscar Wilde. It was about a very good looking but very evil man, Dorian Gray. Every time he did an evil act, a picture of him, which he kept in the closet, got uglier. But Dorian Gray stayed very good looking.

It just so happened we were visiting another couple and we were in the living room talking. The lady said to Ben,

“Your wife is very pretty.”

“Yes,” said Ben, “but there is a picture of her in the closet.”

No reaction.

After we left the other couple’s house, Ben complains,

“These people are so ignorant. They don’t know literature.”

Then I decided, since I had a few hours a week to read, maybe, if I wanted to, I could spend those few hours painting instead. And I did. I spent two days a week, three or four hours a day, painting. I did pastels at first, then acrylic. And I loved it. I was looking forward to the day that I would return to college and major in art.

Then I realized, that instead, I had enough time to take one college course at a time. The time goes by anyway and one course at a time will add up. And so that’s what I did. It was a lot, but I managed and Ben agreed to pay for it.

I was happy with the studying, but the domestic violence continued. And I don’t think my therapist realized that it was a problem. He kept saying,

“Was it with an open hand or a closed fist?”

“I don’t know,” I say. “It happens so fast.”

And what happens next? I find out I’m pregnant.

Now what?

Chapter 4

Being pregnant was lots of fun and so was wearing maternity clothes. I took off from school and took natural childbirth lessons and I definitely was going to nurse. I knew I would nurse going back to five and a half years old, when my brother was born and my mother nursed my brother. But I got tired easily and I didn't always have the energy to keep going, and so I rested.

But the yelling never stopped. Ben was not happy with me. Fortunately, I had the energy to do what I had to do and I was able to have my groceries delivered.

Then, the big day arrived. I had labor pains. We went to the hospital. The baby was born. And I thought she was gorgeous. Her face was all smashed in on one side, but she was gorgeous. The nurses would bring her in the room and I would say,

"That's my baby."

"No, she's not," they would tease.

"Yes, she is," I'd say. "I can tell by the smashed in face."

"Some mother you are," they would tease."

There was a lot to do taking care of a baby and soon a small child, now named Daisy. Sometimes I felt as if I had two small children, Daisy and Ben. I had no time to paint. Writing poetry, something I also used to do, I composed while nursing Daisy. Then, as soon as I could afterwards, I would write it down in a notebook.

One child is enough for me. I love her, I'm glad I have her, but no more. I want to have a life of my own. Ben used to want more children, but he stopped saying that.

Now what?

Chapter 5

Many years pass and Ben and I are still together. Our daughter, Daisy, is now in high school. But I'm tired of being a human punching bag. I'm thinking of a divorce.

I have a neighbor, Karen. She is divorced with two children. She seems very happy and her children seem very happy. They are now eight and ten years old, two little girls. After the divorce Karen went to school to learn hairdressing and she loves her work.

I think I would like to do something like that. After all, hairdressing is an art form and I am an artist. I could do that or finish college and go to graduate school and then teach art. I'll have to think about all that. Meanwhile, I'll find out who was Karen's lawyer.

Soon, I'm going to Karen's lawyer, Lilly, and I feel as if I'm on my way to freedom.

But then there is a problem. Ben found out I was going for a divorce. He goes and talks to my psychiatrist. Ben was totally against the divorce. After all, I manage his office free of charge and he has a full-time cook. So, I ended up in a mental hospital for five weeks and more medication. I, however, liked the hospital. It was a vacation away from Ben. And in spite of the increase in medication, I was still able to handle school, and being drugged up, I could deal with Ben.

Two years later I graduated college and I then wanted to go to graduate school. As for employment, my first choice was to be an art therapist. Therefore, I needed to

get my masters degree in art therapy. Ben was totally against it. He said it is almost impossible to find a job in that field, which is true. All this was going on while I was still working for Ben. But I wanted to move forward with my education.

I then decided to get an MBA, a masters of business administration. Ben claimed I didn't have the brains for it. So that was out the window.

So, I then decided to see what I could do with my BS degree. I was able to land two jobs, both of which I took one after the other, hated them and was fired from both.

Soon after, Ben wanted to move out of our apartment and into a house. I was totally against it. We were now living in a very nice apartment. True, it needed some fixing up, but it was a large apartment in a good neighborhood. However, that was not good enough for Ben. So, I was then resigned to go along with him.

Then, it happened. Ben was sick and had to leave his job at the hospital and turn over his private practice to another doctor. Then I, also, was no longer working. I found out all of a sudden that he was sick, but apparently, he had been sick for quite a while. I just didn't know about it. He had hardening of the arteries. And he had been eating all the wrong foods. He just didn't believe it would happen. And I had been eating the same foods Ben had been eating. I just must have been immune to this condition.

Because of Ben's health condition, I started making the right kind of foods for him, which meant eliminating French fries—his favorite. However, his health condition did not stop him from wanting to buy a house. What we needed a house for, I don't know. Our daughter, Daisy, was now in high school. Soon she would be in college and

not living at home. But Ben was adamant about buying a house, so we spent many days looking at houses.

Chapter 6

We looked first at a house nearby. Ben loved it, not I. But I was afraid to say anything. I didn't want another fight. But there was very little closet space in that house. However, there was a large garage. I figured I could put some closets in the garage.

The house bordered on woods. There was a fence separating the backyard of the house from the woods. But the fence was a little bit broken. The owner of the house said that the reason it was broken was that kids play in the woods and they broke the fence. Ben was so excited about this house, not I. I loved our apartment. But I kept my mouth shut.

In the process of doing the legal and financial work needed for buying the house, Ben looks at me and says,

"That broken fence. He said kids broke the fence. What age kids? We don't need teenagers running through our yard. We'd better call this whole deal off before we spend any money."

"Oh," I said.

Was I happy! But I didn't say a word. But you know what was on the other side of the woods—the elementary school that our daughter had gone to.

Now what?

Well, that was the end of that house. But Ben wanted to continue looking.

We went to see another house. Well, what do you know, when we arrived, there was a workman fixing the toilet in the bathroom. However, the house was beautiful. But Ben didn't trust the toilet. Just as well. I love my apartment.

As for the next house, an agent took us there. Another lovely house.

"Look at all these windows," says Ben. "Look at how much light you get."

"Yes," I say, "but who washes all these windows?"

The agent looks at me and says,

"A little man comes in and washes the windows."

"Oh," I say.

Soon afterwards, we went to see another house. I went inside while Ben went into the backyard. It was a lovely house with light beige wall-to-wall carpeting throughout. While I was trying to figure out how to keep this carpeting clean, I hear,

"Alice!"

"Yes," I say going outside.

"This house is dangerous," says Ben.

"Why?" I ask.

"Look at this flagstone path leading to the backyard. Two of these flagstones are loose. Let's get out of here."

"Oh," I say.

“You know,” says Ben when we get into the car, “we don’t need a house. We have a very nice apartment. I hope you are not too disappointed.”

“Oh,” I say.

Now what?

Chapter 7

Life went on as usual. Then Ben had a two-week conference in New York City. I stayed home, happy to have the break in my work. I decided I would spend some time doing an acrylic painting.

I did it and felt wonderful. Ben loved the painting when he came home. It was of a tree in our courtyard. I had done a sketch of it sitting on a bench in the courtyard and then I created the painting upstairs in my apartment. Afterwards, when Ben came home, I was able to find a frame to fit it and then put it on our living room wall. I was so happy.

However, Ben's health was declining and he got bored at recovering at home and decided he wanted a dog.

"Who will walk the dog," I ask.

No answer.

"Oh," I say.

Now what?

Well, we got a yellow Lab. She was beautiful, but I couldn't train her. I took her to "Puppy Kindergarten," but I still couldn't train her. I was picking up after her everywhere, in and outside the apartment. And the neighbors were complaining. Even Ben was also complaining because when I put his meal on the table the dog could

reach it and she ate Ben's meal. I finally was able to give the dog to her teacher at
Puppy Kindergarten. Thank goodness.

Now what?

Chapter 8

With all that was happening, so was the screaming and punching. The apartment was neat except for Ben's study, which was the largest of the two bedrooms. And I was fortunate to have a lady who cleaned half a day every two weeks. And when I wanted some air and a change of scenery, I could just sit out on my terrace for half an hour.

Out of the blue Ben asks me to go to the doctor with him. So, I did. Ben, when called, goes onto the doctor's office. When he comes out, the doctor wants to see me.

Apparently, Ben's been having mini-strokes, something I did not know. The doctor wants Ben to go to physical therapy at a hospital near us, but I should take him. Ben should not drive.

Wow! That hit me like a ton of bricks. We only had one car because that's all we needed. Ben usually was the one who drove. As for me, I didn't like driving, but I could do it. So, I did.

Then the day came for the physical therapy and I drove. We got to the hospital and all was well. As Ben was walking to the hospital room—it happened! He collapses! A stroke!

That was it. He was no longer allowed to leave the apartment. The physical therapists would come to him.

I soon noticed a change in Ben. He didn't scream at me so often and he stopped punching me. The physical therapists came over twice a week. Although they worked with him, I could see him declining. He lost his ability to write. Then he lost his ability to speak.

The physical therapists were with him for six weeks. They showered him and shaved him. I realized that after six weeks, I would be doing that.

As for shopping and my therapy, I couldn't do either. The therapy I soon started again over the phone. As for meals, I would call the restaurants and they would deliver. The only time I left the apartment was once a week for about twenty minutes to go to the ATM in the building.

What a life! Things change so quickly. Next thing I know, Ben must go into a nursing home. Up until the nursing home our insurance paid for everything. It would also pay for the first three months of the nursing home, but not afterwards.

I visited Ben every day. I would feed him his lunchtime meal. He couldn't talk, he couldn't write and he couldn't participate in any of the activities. All he could do was sit in a chair.

He had a doctor who visited him every day. But there was no improvement. And every day was worse than the day before. I asked the doctor,

"Is Ben ever going to get better?"

"No," he said.

That meant one thing to me. Two days later I went to the funereal home to make the necessary arrangements. And I continued seeing Ben every day. Our daughter, Daisy, now in college, was visiting him once a week.

Seven weeks after Ben had been in the nursing home, my family from New York was planning to visit us. When the phone rang in the evening, I thought it was they. It was the nursing home.

“Ben passed.”

Now what?

My family and Ben’s family came in from New York. It was a lovely fall day, so we had a graveside funereal service. They had all made reservations at a motel nearby and those who could stay for a while, stayed for a few days. This was a perfect time to catch up on all the family gossip.

After everyone left, I was alone. It actually felt good to be by myself. I planned on going back to my painting. I knew I would enjoy it.

Now what?

The End

MERMAIDS AND MERMEN

Chapter 1

Our river

Our stream

Flowing gently

In my dream

The river flows gently over my tail, waking me up. I open my eyes. I decorated this room in our underwater cave so beautifully. And I'm in love, in love with a human. My big sister, Roz, says it's puppy love.

I leave my cave and swim to the surface. And there he is, Joel. "Hi, Judy," calls Joel, waving as I swim over to him.

"Hi, Joel."

The music of the harp starts playing.

"It's Suzi," screams Joel. "Go back, Judy! She's after you!"

I swim back to our cave. I meet Roz.

"Quick, Judy," says Roz.

We enter and close the door to our cave. We are safe. We no longer hear the harp.

“I hope Joel is OK,” I say. “I hope that music doesn’t lure him into the water. So far, he manages to leave the river and go home.”

“Suzi is so evil,” says Roz. “She’ll lure anyone she dislikes to their death with the music of her harp. And she’s after you, Judy, because she fancies your boyfriend, Joel.”

Meanwhile, Joel goes home. He says to himself,

“Why did I have to fall in love with a mermaid? I know why. Because Judy is the most beautiful of all mermaids. And that evil mermaid, Suzi, is dangerous.”

The next day Joel is walking along the beach further out than usual. The beach is very rocky with rocks all over the sand. He was looking down, stepping on the rocks. Then he looks up. There she is, sitting on a large rock in the water, the most beautiful mermaid he had ever seen, Judy.

“Hello,” says Joel.

“Hi,” says Judy.

“May I visit you here sometimes? Will you be here tomorrow at this time? It’s three o’clock,” says Joel, looking at his watch.

“Yes,” says Judy, “and there is a lot we can do. I can turn you into a merman and you can visit me underwater water in my beautiful cave.”

“Yes, I’d like that,” says Joel.

"It's a date," says Judy, then dives off the rock and swims under the water.

Little did they know they were being watched by Suzi, who was hiding in the bushes.

The next day Joel is back on the beach going to where he was the day before. It's three o'clock. Joel is walking on the rocks, when he hears the most beautiful music. He looks up to the large rock in the water and there is Suzi, playing the harp. The music from the harp puts Joel in a trance. He can't take his eyes off Suzi.

"Come with me," sings Suzi.

Joel follows her as she jumps off the large rock and dives into the water. He swims with her. He has become a merman.

Suzi plays the harp swimming to her cave. Joel follows her. They get to her cave and they enter. In the cave is a jail cell.

"Go inside the jail cell," sings Suzi, still playing the harp.

Joel does so.

Suzi puts down the harp and locks the jail cell door.

"You are now mine," says Suzi.

Chapter 2

“Roz,” sobs Judy, “I can’t find Joel anywhere and I’m getting very bad vibes.”

“I’ll help you look for him,” says Roz.

“You won’t find him,” says Suzi, who appears out of nowhere and then disappears.

“Oh, Roz, what should we do?”

“We’ll start swimming throughout the river,” says Roz. “We’ll find him.”

And they look everywhere, including every crack and every cave.

Then they find and enter THE cave.

“What are you doing here,” screams Suzi. “You are on my property. Get out!”

“You are keeping Joel illegally on your property,” screams Judy.

“You can’t prove a thing,” says Suzi. “Now get off my property.”

Roz and Judy leave. They come back with the sheriff and an order to let him in.

“Why of course,” smiles Suzi.

The sheriff enters the cave as Suzi starts playing her harp. She plays and plays and smiles and smiles. The sheriff also smiles and smiles. He kisses Suzi on her neck and doesn’t even notice the jail cell with Joel inside. Suzi stops playing the harp for a very short period of time, just enough time to open the jail cell, push the sheriff inside

and lock the cell. Then back to the harp. Joel and the sheriff end up hugging each other.

Outside the cave you do not hear the harp

“What’s taking so long?” says Judy.

“I don’t know,” says Roz.

They knock on the cave door. No answer. They try to open the cave door. Nothing happens. It is locked.

“Let’s go to the mermen cave,” says Roz. “Maybe they can help.”

They go to the mermen cave and talk to Melvin the merman who says,

“Let me talk to Suzi.”

So, the three of them swim to Suzi’s cave and ring the bell. Suzi opens the door with her harp in her other hand and pulls Melvin into her cave and slams the door shut on Roz and Judy.

“Now what?” says Judy. “As soon as the guys hear the harp, that’s it.”

Meanwhile, inside the cave, Suzi plays her harp. In the jail cell are Joel, Melvin and the Sheriff. The three men are mesmerized by the music.

“Judy,” says Roz, “let’s look around the cave outside and see if there are any cracks that we can look through and see what’s going on.”

And so they look and look around the outside of the cave. Well, what do you know, they find a small window mostly hidden by a bush. They look through the window.

Suzi is in the jail cell with the three men. She is playing the harp and the men are all around her kissing her.

“What can we do?” says Judy.

“Maybe,” says Roz, “if we can break this window and fit through it, we can save the prisoners.”

“But Roz,” says Judy, “what if we succumb to the music also?”

“Let’s first break the window,” says Roz.

They take rocks and throw them against the window. Nothing happens. Roz takes her spear and bangs it against the window. Nothing happens.

As soon as Suzi stops playing the harp, the men start fighting with each other. Suzi runs out of the jail cell and locks the door.

“Roz,” says Judy, “Suzi is guilty of kidnapping but there is nothing we can do as long as she plays her harp.”

“Look,” says Roz, “Suzi is leaving the cave. Let’s follow her and see where she is going.

“Quick,” says Roz, “let’s take some leaves from this bush and stuff them in our ears so we don’t hear the harp.”

And so they stick the leaves in their ears and follow Suzi.

Suzi goes to a high school. She sits in a class and she starts playing the harp for the boys and girls. Then, she returns to her cave playing the harp. All the boys and girls follow her. They enter the cave. They enter the jail cell. Suzi locks them all into the cell. There are five boys and five girls with Joel, the sheriff and Melvin. Roz and Judy watch this through the window, pulling out the leaves from their ears.

“Judy,” says Roz, “she will be able to take over the whole mermaid and merman community. This must stop now!”

Roz and Judy go to speak with the town president and some people from the governing body of the town. Roz tells them the whole story. What happens? They laugh.

“You mean,” says the president, “that we will all be conquered and ruled by a lady with a harp!”

“Ha ha ha ha.”

As they are laughing, Roz and Judy look out the window. There is Suzi walking with her harp.

The End

POETRY

The Wide World Cake, My Wish

The whole wide world

Is one scrumptious cake

Not to be eaten

But to enjoy for beauty's sake

And what about the icing

The icing sweet and pretty

It makes up our different cultures

In each country, town and city

My Life

Don't worry about that deep dive

That happened so long ago

Think whom you want to be

And then you will make it so

We all have our misfortunes

But change won't let them last

As long as we keep moving forward

And leave past in the past

What do I want

For the rest of my life?

Peace and friendship

Don't want any strife

Just want to relax

To paint and to write

To be with my friends

What a delight!

Don't want a life

Where there's stress anymore

Just want to live

The life I adore

Tranquility

Why can't I accept

A peaceful life

Why can't I retire

At 81 without strife

I've done all the things

That I must do

Why can't I relax

And accept this as true

I just must learn

To be firm with me

I, too, deserve

Tranquility

Me

I just found out

What I'd never thought I'd be

I found I'm helping someone

Just by being me

He enjoys my paintings

They help him feel right

My fiancé too, loves the work I do

I find all this a delight

Going

Where am I going?

I know not

Why can't I be happy

With what I've got?

I have food to eat

A lot of it too

A roof over my head

And friends who are true

I love where I live

I love my home

So why do I need

To bitch and moan

I've a fiancé

Who means the world to me

So, what is my problem?

I just don't see

Where am I going?

I know not

Why can't I be happy

With what I've got?

Feel Better

I feel better

When I write

I do also some painting

What a delight

I keep at it

Rain or shine

When writing and painting

All is fine

Hope you find

Your blessings too

And we'll all be happy

With happiness true

Just Relax

Sometimes I get confused

As to whom I need to be

So, I just relax and breath in deep

I'm happy to be me

So Many Things

There are so many things
That I must do
Before the day
Passes through

The very first
And number one
My New Year's promise
Have fun! Have fun!

Fun with family, friends
And fun alone
And don't forget
You can use the phone

Then you will feel
You've accomplished your case
And everything else
Will fall into place

Dream

What were we put on this

Earth to do?

What does everything

Mean?

I don't know why

We live and we die

But all we can do is

Dream

Dream, dream

Of beautiful things

And how we can

Live so well

You dream well for me

I'll dream well for you

And we'll live a life

Kind and true

The End

So many things

To think about

What will die

And what will sprout

I hope you enjoyed

This book, my friend

From the beginning

To the end

The End