

...GRANDMOTHER, HOW SHALL I CARRY YOUR NAME?

Mamie Davis Hilliard

On the daybed in the corner of your big dining room
like manna from heaven, my baby bottle full
my very first memory, drinking milk, warm and sweet.

Grandmother, I am child of your child,
the family tree branches and branches and branches.
Now I am great-Grandmother...

Your hand reaches down, I stretch my hand up.
A blessing falls and fills me, warm and sweet like milk.
Story Teller, the legacy you pass to me.

Childhood visits to your large antebellum home
memory maps my way. I know this place:
the smell of purple lilacs along your path;

the back and forth rhythmic creaking of your rocking chair;
Backgammon board open, ready, but never on Sunday.
Recollections make me smile. This is you.

Every night beside your bed we kneel and pray.
You, in long white muslin gown, matching cap.
I, plaid pajamas, blonde pigtails, sunburned face.

You engage Jesus like an old friend.
Your words, out loud, on bended knee, cradle me.
I will make your friend my friend, Grandmother.

Mamie Davis Hilliard is an ordained Disciple of Christ minister who found a home in Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Swannanoa Valley, in Black Mountain. A long time Army wife, mother of three, grandmother and great-grandmother.

Mamie's grandmother appeared as muse and encouraged me when Mamie enrolled in OLLI in 2015.

UNTITLED

Bonnie Laww

Have you dreamed of crickets at dusk,
of childhood's hide and go seek on long summer nights,
and fireflies caught in delicately cupped hands?
Do you remember believing in all things possible?

For her bio, **Bonnie Laww** sent us the following: "Writing, when it comes, takes precedence over all else. Consent has never been an issue, rather I just find myself writing, and in the act of writing, I find myself."

Bonnie chose "Untitled" because at this time of collective uncertainty, and much anxiety, it's a little reminder of the awe, wonder, hope and playfulness that resides within us all.

The three poems that follow were sent to us by David Nelson, a regular member of the Monday Poetry SIG, who has returned to the UK.

HANDS Carol Ann Duffy

We clap at the darkness. I hearken for the sound
of my daughter's small hands,
but she is miles away... though I can see her hands
when I put my head in my own.

(In UK on Thursday at 8pm, we open our doors and windows and applaud the people in the health service)

GARDEN Andrew McMillan

in the beginning
the dead like the first flowers
for Adam were few
enough to name them
but soon they grew too many
the vast fields of them

CRANES LEAN IN Imtiaz Dharker

Cranes lean in, waiting for an all-
clear
that will not come.
Forehead pressed to glass,
phone at my ear, I learn
to sail on your voice
over a sadness of building sites,
past King's Cross, St Pancras,
to the place where you are.
You say nothing
is too far, mothers
will find their daughters,
strangers will be neighbours,
even saviours will have names.
You are all flame
in a red dress.
Petals brush my face.
You say at last
the cherry blossom
has arrived
as if that is what
we were really waiting for.

David Nelson, who frequently shared the work of other poets with the OLLI Poetry Lovers' SIG, offers the following as a biographical note:

How does it happen that someone who is no poet, offers poems for poets to enjoy?

I enjoyed the poetry content of my English classes at school, then a few years later was thunderstruck by a radio performance of Dylan Thomas's *Under Milk Wood*. My first real job was in Birmingham. A technician in the department where I worked introduced me to the diaries and verse of one Keith Douglas, who proved to be one of the finest British poets killed in WWII. I learnt to love his verse and to read it out loud.

I came to the States a lover of poetry, and an accomplished reader, able to turn my voice to a range of British accents, and I was delighted to be accepted as just a reader in a group of real poets.

David's selections were submitted for reasons that should be self-evident.