

## LOVE FROM MARY

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### PROSE

#### EMAIL 2004

Hi, I've had the first chemo. and am surviving, a little easier than I thought I would. My tongue is raw from the paint stripper wh. gets me about day 7-10, when I avoid anyone so as to avoid infections. Can be quiet, so I enjoyed your Bush laugh. The more laughs the better. I am basically resting, except tonight when I am answering emails, 1st. time in weeks. Gil has just about cleared the garden, and cleaned the house, I was getting behind after 4 years of not doing housework. Mick's bro. wife & daughter were here today fixing the trailer- a long term job, it's taken a couple of years, more like 4! Duncan's moved home to be carer, have cheap rent, use the car, & cook for me occasionally. No really, he's a good nurse when asked. My back is very achey, feels like it's broken. I take morphine-I'm not a stranger to drugs these days, pain killers, anti-depressants, vit. C, multis vits. fungicide for my mouth for the next few days, drink 10 glasses of water, and lie round on my back, and meditate x 3 hrs. drink carrot juice x 3 each day, salads. I sometimes paint, have visitors, talk on the phone. At first it was huge, but now I'm more tired and can't do too much. Anyway, Michaels' coming over in a few weeks, & life's ok. on a sunny day. Mick's bearing up well.x Mary

## **BREAST CANCER**

On a good day it is a cruel fable told to me,  
On a bad day, a black abyss, beckoning me in.  
To seek respite from my mind, I paint, I write, I sing,  
I walk in the bush on my mountain in Spring.

Here in the afternoon, I paint free from injury.  
Minutes from my homely door, trees grow unfettered, free.  
They bend to the frosts, thunder, sunshine and snow.  
Despite the wild weather, tiny stars and lichens grow.

Each Spring bloom wildflowers, cream Dolly Bush,  
Yellow Eggs and Bacon, Blue Love, white Irises,  
Golden native Flax Lilies, mauve Orchids delicate,  
Native white Clematis hanging bride-like in the trees.

Five years ago, a huge bushfire took my wild mountain  
I photographed this Reserve, a black charred ruin,  
Not a plant to be seen, rocks broken, animals lost.  
Today lush wilderness cascades down to the Derwent.

Along Truganinni Track bushland regenerates,  
Some seeds need fire to begin to germinate.  
You can take the woman away from her bushland  
But you can never take away the wilderness within.

## **PROSE**

### **CANBERRA NOVEMBER 2004.**

I completely believe that I am loved so much by my sisters. Seems that I am inspired to make fashion things again, Great! So I am living, laughing, loving again. I am so lucky. We had a lovely day, starting with a walk, breakfast, shop, art gallery, lunch, gallery, home, rest, chat, dinner, TV. relax, discussion. Lovely! All lovely, and they gave me clothes, (shirt and skirt). I feel best in my clothes. All of us are funny now. I have got over what we should be- we are whAt we are. I can sense this in myself, realizing. Coupla days. Thank you God!

## **FRAGILE BODY 2004**

I have a fragile body,  
More fragile than I know  
Maybe I want some sympathy  
I just want you to know.

I've done my best, avoided rest,  
And now it's catching up.  
My lung aches so, my armpit too,  
Perhaps I'm breaking up.

Pray God, I last some more time,  
To Christmas and birthdays.  
I've let my siblings off my chain,  
Don't expect more intimate ways.

Maybe I've lived in past desires,  
Yearning for something more,  
But recognize our own lives now,  
There's really nothing more.

Striving to be outside myself,  
More than I really am,  
Trying to avoid sad humanness,  
Trying for élan.

Comes at a great price for me,  
I avoided body warnings,  
Rest, rest and rest some more,  
The truth was slow in dawning.

I've wanted to make you proud of me,  
By striving all I can,  
To paddle the long boat faster, louder,  
I got caught up. I ran.

I never found how to be weak,  
How to delicately hold  
Myself in quiet contemplation,  
Until I've grown old.

Please God, I've really done my best,  
I've strived to make you happy,  
Did I know my happiness?  
At times I felt unhappy.

Dwelt on loss, regret and past times too,  
Forget them, they're no future,  
Pointless wanting old times new,  
Please bring me just to now.

This moment happiness can be  
It doesn't have to look right  
In the final course of life and death  
My values are alright.

I know I'm different from you  
You're different from me  
We live in God's love every day  
There's no right way to be.

### **I HAVE IT**

I have it.  
I feel stronger, professing my faith.  
I'm pleased I am 95.  
I have my physical sex body,  
my bushland and community.  
I have my own voice  
It took years until  
I took me back  
I gave up lots-  
But now I have the prize  
I know my life of laughter.

## **MARSHLAND**

This grey place  
Bird marsh  
Cock crows  
Bach Cantata  
Casablanca Cassata  
Musty swamp smell.

Magpie chortles like a hurdy girly  
A boatshed perches squat  
Amongst gums,  
Sheltered, shallow.

What do I do? How do I feel?  
My mind is quickly leaving me behind.  
I give up. I give up. I give up  
Thoughts of income management.

Perhaps I need to leave Australia  
To view my landscape  
My bush heritage  
And cold, grey, sometimes drought ridden,  
Often wet, misty land.

How do I love thee?  
Let me count the ways.

(Drawing accompanies this poem.) 23.1.04

## **PLEASE GOD-**

My head swims, although I am free of the fever, getting over flu'.  
My back aches, although not my broken? rib.  
My left eye is irritated, although not devastated.  
Today is pleasant, although cool air breezes through.  
Mick loves me although sometimes I do not realize this.  
This virus is in my head now, although I remember the hospital,  
I could not move or even sit up unassisted.  
Please God help me, although you are totally crazy...

## SINGING OF THE SCENTED GRASS

I sit beside the window, watching the morning sun  
The garden below is empty, then a single bird  
Hopping across the path, interrupts my view.  
Memories rise joyfully.  
What did we do as children?  
Did we explore the bush?  
Did you give me feathers of your wisdom  
Or only the comfort of your body  
In the scented, warm wilderness.

## THE MASTER SAID

“With coarse rice to eat, with water to drink, and my bended arm for pillow-  
I still have joy in the midst of things.”

I have listened in silence Master Kong  
To many voices down the days  
Rarely heard words I wanted to hear.

I listen now in silence, lying alone  
To trees moving in the wind  
And the music of the sea, striking land's edge.

I have waited in silence lying in sleep  
To see in dreams the answers I seek  
And still I wait Master Kong, expecting little.

I wait now in silence by the sea's edge  
Dreams and cherished hopes  
Like amoeba multiplying in the shallows.

I am ready at last to live  
With bent arm only for my pillow  
To allow the softness of the delicate air  
To live in me strong as stone.

Time's continuous changes  
I feel when artificial coverings  
Are discarded and known in this way.

Warmly welcomed,  
My ever new soul  
Is cradled by the silky smooth flesh.

Thanks to **Inuyu**.

## REAL WEALTH

She sings as she over the mountain  
And deep down into the valley.

“Rocky road,  
Deep Fern Gully,  
Tall Trees  
Native Clematis.”

Across the bridge and twenty k. along  
She finds  
Soft green velvet  
Covers low bole,  
Lichen filled and pale,  
Decaying ferns brown and old  
Surround a tall tree.

She lies against the fence to view  
The surrounding forest.  
Sunlight glints on tree tops  
Surprisingly.

Green fronds lie on pebbles  
Myrtle leaves pattern tiny dots  
And still blue sky allows shafts of sunlight  
Through.

A branch has fallen  
And bounced off a fern taking  
Leaves and myrtle branchlets

Brown toadstools the size of milk bottle caps  
Cover the end of a green log  
Adding to the fungus smell  
Doing their fungus work.

Shafts of warm light shoot from a pale sky  
Ahead the dead fern fronds hang down  
Like a New Guinea head dress.  
The rich brown looks golden like a rusty wheel.

As thick green silence descends  
She is aware of forest sounds-  
Water rushing,  
Drips,  
The occasional leaf fall  
Of a nature spirit.  
And the pungent, damp, cold odour.

The ground fills with  
Lichen patterns,  
Puff balls, toad stools,  
Leaf mulch, brown bark,  
Tiny yellow leaves.

Under drifts of lichen hang  
Frisly ferns,  
Quiet space,  
Looping bows  
Fern trees, moss  
Silence  
Awesome.

Here the spirits of the forest dwell  
In quiet reserve  
Observing energetic humans  
Moving below,  
While they peacefully wait.  
Wait for what?

Log trucks hurl along the muddy road.  
She turns on the car lights  
Around a slippery corner  
In case she comes upon one  
Unexpectedly

The feat of clearing this land appears ridiculous  
To a person who has been familiar  
With this no man's land  
Her whole life.  
Why could one person decide to do away  
With the heritage of others?

She thinks about poverty,  
Poverty of the spirit.  
After seeing the wealth of goods in the country store  
It is apparent you can live in luxury  
Forever.

Her writers return to town  
Autumn cold fogs windscreens  
Darkness descending.

But they have witnessed luxury  
Beyond imagining  
In the forest  
Of the Styx.



## **EMBOIDER**

Embroider  
More than the sum of her parts  
She exceeds the limit.  
Greater than the resulting number  
She is more than meets the eye.  
Don't judge her by appearances  
Explore magic of the unknown.  
Feminine mystique.  
What is feminine mystery?  
Life, wisdom, fertility, love,  
Connection, matrix,  
Background, everything, God,  
Her,  
You,  
Me.

## STEP MOTHER

There was a steel cage around your heart  
You saw through a barrage of metal  
Protecting your blinkered vision  
Into a sad and sorry distance of "Traumerei"  
Like a child you hoped the pot of gold  
Was waiting at the end of Rodney's Rainbow-  
Dinner parties and a beautiful home.

But like your shy child statue  
You were unmoved by real flesh and blood  
In your heart you were the needy child  
The cuckoo in the nest and we had to go.  
One by one you turfed us out  
"Do not darken your doorstep again!"

But I refused to leave forever, and I returned  
When I was a child who was the adult?  
It wasn't you, it became me.  
"Don't cry" you demanded seeing the house ashes.  
Illness? You stayed away.  
Housework? Mrs. Blindell, Mr. Mac, the cleaner.  
You were conspicuous by your absence.

It was as it was.  
You were you  
Uneducated but powerfully  
Acting from need as we all do.  
Your therapy was art, gardening, the dogs.  
To you animal nature came first.  
None of this vague "community" crap  
Waste of time and money, your money.

So why did you leave me any?  
Was there a tiny glimmer of recognition?  
A speck of companionship, understanding, love  
Family connection, generosity?  
You were driven by need  
Especially when you remembered to be cruel.  
Nevertheless, I thank you for your money. Thankyou.

## **I AM REMINDED OF GOD'S LOVE**

I am reminded of God's love  
In whose breath I breathe.  
Who holds the whole of me,  
My soul and body while I live.

I'm only answerable to God  
God is my answer to everything  
To any questions, fights I have  
In God's love and name I sing.

God moves through me, I have no choice  
My pain tells me I hear your voice  
God wills that I should live and die  
I'm loved in life, in God I lie.

Tonight God is so close to me  
So quiet and peaceful I'm pleased to be  
Resting in your arms and near,  
Comfortable, comforted in me.

Why had this happened to me I ask?  
So bizarre, a tortuous task,  
To lead me to God, to know my maker'  
Who made me, every detail, every marker.

Even my writing is God's work,  
My sewing, singing, gardening, home  
Singing, playing, loving being,  
In every meal, my times alone.

## **REIKI**

I Reiki and farewell you all,  
Without favour  
All my dear friends and family,  
Lovers, beings in my life.  
Farewell, I let you go.  
I am in God's hands.  
Looks like I won't be travelling  
To visit you, even tho' I wished I could.  
Looks like, feels like I am too fragile.

What am I learning?  
Yet again to look inside.  
Look inside, deep dark, golden light.  
Peace, me, eternal space,  
In which the world turns.  
All that we know today  
Is only part,  
A colourful part, of Everything.

I have been led to know,  
That I am  
Part of the eternal,  
A tiny part.  
Thankyou God,  
For my everyday,  
For the bird singing.

Reiki and let go,  
Release the anxiety of attachment  
To any one person.  
I am being trained. Fast.  
Know that while we are unique  
We could have been another person.  
There but for the grace of God, go I.

I am surprised.  
I am not so upset.  
I have gone through so much pain  
And treatment that I am somewhat inured  
To the prospect of more.  
More pain, more treatment,  
And yet I am so fortunate  
To even have this much.

## **GIFT OF LIFE, .A SONG.**

I now have the gift of life  
This moment I have got the gift  
I have always been blessed  
Tho' fear of death o'er shadowed me.

This moment is the gift of life  
My grandmother she walked down to the shop  
For billy milk and talking with her friends  
She well knew the gift of life.

When a life it passes on  
We see what the contrast is  
To share love and enjoy the now  
That really is life's only gift.

A pause by the glittering sea  
The gulls walk and rest on the sand  
We meet and drink in "Citrus Moon"  
What more but share the gift of life.

I have got the gift called life  
I have got life in my hand  
Thankyou for my blessed life  
Showering o'er me, ain't life grand.

I breath, I sing, laugh with my friends  
Dwell in each hour as best I can  
When you know the thing called life  
You drink mint tea and make your plans.