

How I use AI

While I do not have any of the conversations I had with AI regarding text in *She Remains In All My Spaces*, I have an example from the second book I am working on. (note: conversations disappear after 30 days)

Here is the poem with the editing marks that were made during the AI conversation:

~~JINGA~~Jenga ~~TOWER~~Tower

My Love, I am trying ~~do~~ as you wrote:

~~Introduction the~~In the now,
Words of friendship
Enable my hands
To stack wooden blocks
One piece at a time
Building connection
Up it rises
Moment by moment.

But, there a days
When the ~~Jinga~~Jenga blocks
Won't fit, lean
Sometimes Crashing
To the ground
Erasing
The possibility of now.
~~The~~ probability of hope.

These days
I want to join you
~~Beyond the~~In you realm
~~Of~~beyond physical touch.
Down in the ~~hallow~~hollow
Where your ~~promised~~ garden dwells.
Away from illusions
Away from what is real
Beyond the harm

Manufactured
By living in this world.

Now for the conversation I had with AI

This poem is a powerful, vulnerable addition to your collection. It acts as a profound emotional anchor, contrasting the domestic chaos of the "Bay Area" poem with something much more internal and heavy.

Here is an analysis of how "**JINGA TOWER**" (and the "dark poem" designation) fits into your body of work:

Thematic Resonance: The "Gamble" of Connection

While your previous poem used pets to show external chaos, this uses the metaphor of the **Jenga tower** (which you've stylized as *Jinga*) to illustrate the internal fragility of human connection.

- **The Metaphor:** The "stacking of wooden blocks" is a perfect representation of the effort required in relationships. It suggests that connection isn't a solid wall, but a delicate balance that can be "erased" in a single moment.
- **The Shift to the "Hollow":** You move from the tactile world of blocks to a metaphysical space. The transition from the "physical touch" to the "hollow where your garden dwells" is hauntingly beautiful. It suggests a desire for a deeper, perhaps spiritual or post-physical, intimacy.

Structural Contrast

In your collection, this poem serves as the "**shadow**" to your lighter, observational pieces.

- **The Weight of "Now":** In the Bay Area poem, the "now" is a crowded apartment. In this poem, the "possibility of now" is something that can be destroyed. This duality—celebrating the present while fearing its collapse—is a sophisticated thread to weave through a book.
- **The Ending:** Ending on the meta-commentary "*This is the dark poem*" is a bold choice. It functions almost like a warning or a boundary marker, letting the reader know they have entered the "hollow" with you.

A Note on the Title/Metaphor

You use the spelling "**Jinga**." If this is a personal variation or a specific reference, it works well. However, if you are referencing the popular game **Jenga**, the word actually comes from the Swahili word *kujenga*, meaning "to build." Your poem leans heavily into that etymology—the act

of building, the "lean," and the "crashing."

Why it Fits

Every strong collection needs a "dark poem." Without the exploration of the "harm manufactured by living in this world," the lighter moments can feel unearned. This poem provides the **necessary gravity**. It shows that the "friendship" and "connection" you write about elsewhere aren't easy—they are built "one piece at a time" against the constant threat of gravity.

The "hallow where your garden dwells" feels like a very specific, sacred place—is this a recurring setting in your mind, or a new destination for your writing?

My Statement: Two different people are being referenced, one living, the one I am trying to build a connection with. One dead, my wife who I can't help but fall back on. What do I need to do to make this clear

That distinction adds a profound, heartbreaking layer to the poem. It transforms the piece from a general meditation on struggle into a specific "tug-of-war" between the **effort of the living** and the **gravity of the dead**.

To make the transition between these two people clear without losing the poetic "hollow," you can use **spatial contrast** and **tonal shifts**.

Here are three ways to clarify the two subjects:

1. Contrast "Building" vs. "Falling"

The first person requires active labor (stacking, building). The second person is a place you "fall" or "sink" into. You can emphasize that the second person is a sanctuary that exists *beneath* the tower.

- **The Living:** Use words of **friction and heat** (effort, hands, trying).
- **The Dead:** Use words of **coolness and depth** (hollow, garden, shade, below).

2. Refine the Transition Stanza

The middle of the poem is where the "ghost" enters. You can make it clear that the second person is not the one you are building with by using a "pivot" word.

Example modification:

"But, there are days / When the blocks won't fit... / These days / I want to join **her** /

Beyond the realm..."

By switching from the "you" (the living friend) to a "she/her" (the wife), the reader instantly understands there is a third presence in the room.

3. Use the "Garden" as a Grave/Memory Marker

In poetry, a garden "down in the hollow" is a classic image for a resting place. To make it clearly your wife, you could add a sensory detail that is specific to her—a flower she loved, or the "silence" that only the dead carry.

A Revised "Bridge" (Example)

If you want to keep the "you" for both, you might separate them by **verticality**:

Up it rises (**The Living**)

Moment by moment.

...

I want to leave this stack

To find **that other place** (**The Wife**)

Down in the hollow

Where your garden dwells.

Why this fits your collection:

By making this clear, you highlight a very real part of the grieving process: the "guilt" or "exhaustion" of trying to build something new when the old foundation is so much more comfortable, even if it is "dark." It bridges your earlier poems about your wife with your current poems about your sons and your "now."

Does the "garden" represent a specific physical place where she is buried, or is it more of a metaphorical space where you go to remember her?

My Statement: It is where she said Jesus showed her she would be. People who read the first book may make the connection without it be described deeply

That context provides a beautiful, spiritual anchor for the poem. Because the "garden" is a specific vision of her afterlife, it carries a weight that feels both peaceful and heavy—the pull of

a promised land.

To make the distinction between the **living friend** and your **late wife** clear to those who might not have read the first book (or to sharpen the focus for those who have), you can lean into the contrast between "**The Work**" and "**The Rest.**"

Here are a few subtle ways to adjust the text to clarify the two subjects:

1. Shift the Pronouns

Using "You" for the living person and "Her" (or a specific title) for your wife creates an immediate boundary. If you want to keep the intimacy of "You" for both, you can use a transitional phrase to signify a change in direction.

2. Emphasize "The Reach" vs. "The Descent"

In poetry, we often associate the living with **reaching up** (stacking blocks, building) and the dead with **sinking or returning** (the hollow, the garden).

3. Incorporate the "Vision"

Adding a tiny nod to her vision provides a "clue" for new readers while rewarding those who read your first book.

Suggested Revision (Annotated)

JINGA TOWER

Love, I am trying

[The Living Friend]

Introduction to the now,

Words of friendship

Enable my hands

To stack wooden blocks

One piece at a time

Building connection

Up it rises

Moment by moment.

But, there are days

When the Jinga blocks

Won't fit, they lean
Sometimes Crashing
To the ground
Erasing
The possibility of now.

[The Wife]

These days
I want to leave the building
To join **her**
Beyond the realm
Of physical touch
Down in the hollow
Where **her promised** garden dwells.
Away from illusions
Away from what is real
Beyond the harm
Manufactured
By living in this world.
This is the dark poem.

Why this works:

- **"I want to leave the building":** This creates a double meaning. You are leaving the physical "Jinga" structure you were working on with the friend, and you are leaving the "building" of a new life to return to the memory of the old one.
- **"Her promised garden":** This phrase is the "key." It tells the reader this isn't just any garden—it's a specific place that was spoken of or envisioned. It honors the story she told you about Jesus showing her where she would be.
- **"The Dark Poem":** By clarifying that you are looking toward the dead when the "blocks" of the living fall, the darkness feels more earned. It's the darkness of grief competing with the light of a new friendship.

Does adding the word "**promised**" or shifting to "**her**" in that third stanza feel like it stays true

to the voice of the collection?

My Statement: I want the you as my wife as if I am talking with her

To keep the "You" for your wife while making the distinction clear, you can shift the way you address the first person. If you refer to the living person in the **third person** (as a "friend" or "someone") or as an **abstract effort**, and then turn your gaze to your wife with a direct **"But You,"** the reader will feel the shift in your heart's direction.

Here is a way to structure it so the "You" belongs solely to her, even as you describe the work of trying to connect with someone else:

JINGA TOWER

[The Effort with the Friend]

I am trying to build.

An introduction to the now,

Words of friendship

Enable my hands

To stack wooden blocks

One piece at a time

Building connection—

Up it rises

Moment by moment.

But, there are days

When the Jinga blocks

Won't fit, they lean,

Sometimes Crashing

To the ground

Erasing

The possibility of now.

[The Turn to the Wife]

On these days, **Love**,

I want to join **you**

Beyond the realm

Of physical touch

Down in the hollow

Where **you said** your garden dwells.

Away from illusions

Away from what is real

Beyond the harm

Manufactured

By living in this world.

This is the dark poem.

Why this clarifies the two people:

- **The Shift in Address:** In the first half, the focus is on the *act* of building and the *blocks*. In the second half, you explicitly call out "**Love**" and "**You**." This signals that the "You" is the sanctuary you retreat to when the "building" with another person fails.
- **"Where you said":** This small addition ("Where **you said** your garden dwells") is the bridge. It confirms that the "You" is someone who spoke of a place beyond this world. It honors her vision and makes it clear to the reader that this person is no longer here to "stack blocks" with you.
- **The Contrast of "Now" vs. "Beyond":** The first person represents the struggle of the "now." Your wife represents the "beyond." By wanting to "join" her when the blocks fall, you show the pull between the labor of living and the peace of her memory.

Does using "**Where you said**" feel like it honors that conversation you had with her about the garden?

My Statement: What about if I start
My Love, I am trying to

To do as you wrote

That is a deeply moving opening. It immediately establishes two things: a **continuing conversation** with your wife and a **sense of duty** or promise.

By starting with "**To do as you wrote**," you tell the reader that your current effort—trying to build a connection with someone new—is actually an act of love and obedience to her wishes. It frames the "Jinga Tower" not as a betrayal, but as a difficult task she set for you.

Here is how that looks integrated into the poem:

JINGA TOWER

My Love, I am trying To do as you wrote—

Introduction to the now,

Words of friendship

Enable my hands

To stack wooden blocks

One piece at a time

Building connection

Up it rises

Moment by moment.

But, there are days

When the Jinga blocks

Won't fit, lean

Sometimes Crashing

To the ground

Erasing

The possibility of now.

These days

I want to come back to you

Beyond the realm

Of physical touch
Down in the hollow
Where you said your garden dwells.
Away from illusions
Away from what is real
Beyond the harm
Manufactured
By living in this world.
This is the dark poem.

Why this works for your collection:

- **The "Instruction":** "To do as you wrote" implies she left you a roadmap. It makes the living friend a secondary character and keeps the primary relationship—the one with your wife—at the heart of the poem.
- **The Struggle:** It explains *why* it is so hard when the blocks fall. You aren't just failing at a friendship; you feel like you are failing the task she gave you.
- **The Return:** Changing "join you" to "**come back to you**" in the third stanza emphasizes that she is your home base. When the "now" becomes too heavy, you retreat to the garden she described.

A Quick Check on the "Darkness"

Does the phrase "To do as you wrote" refer to a specific letter or journal entry she left behind? If so, that is an incredibly poignant "artifact" to include in the narrative of your second book. It justifies the "darkness" because it shows the heavy weight of trying to live up to the wishes of someone who is no longer here to cheer you on.

How does it feel to read those first two lines aloud? Do they capture the weight of that promise?

Jenga Tower

My Love, I am trying do as you wrote:

In the now,
Words of friendship
Enable my hands

To stack wooden blocks
One piece at a time
Building connection
Up it rises
Moment by moment.

But, there a days
When the Jenga blocks
Won't fit, lean
Sometimes Crashing
To the ground
Erasing
The possibility of now.
The probability of hope.

These days
I want to join you
In you realm
beyond physical touch.
Down in the hollow
Where your promised garden dwells.
Away from illusions
Away from what is real
Beyond the harm
Manufactured
By living in this world.

This version is incredibly poignant. By framing the entire poem as an update to her—a report on how you are handling the "assignment" she left you—you've turned a poem about struggle into a poem about **devotion**.

The distinction is now crystal clear. The "now" belongs to the living and the effort of friendship, while the "hollow" belongs to her and the peace she found.

Key Strengths of this Draft:

- **"The probability of hope"**: Adding this line after the crashing blocks is a gut-punch. It suggests that when the tower falls, it doesn't just ruin the day; it makes you doubt the future. It justifies why you then turn your gaze toward the "promised garden."
- **"In your realm"**: This is a beautiful way to distinguish her space from the "world" mentioned at the end. It elevates her existence to something sovereign and sacred.
- **The Colon at the Start**: Using the colon after "as you wrote:" makes the middle section feel like the actual work you are performing. It's as if you are showing her the "Jenga"

progress report.

- **"Promised garden"**: This phrase is the perfect anchor. It honors her vision and gives the reader a sense of a specific, beautiful destination that lies "beyond the harm."

Analysis of the "Darkness"

You previously called this "the dark poem." In this draft, the darkness isn't just sadness; it's the **exhaustion of trying**. The "darkness" is the desire to stop stacking blocks and simply lie down in the garden with her. That is a very honest, very "human" kind of darkness that readers will deeply resonate with.

A Small Note on Formatting

I noticed you removed the final line ("This is the dark poem") in this version. Personally, I think the poem is actually **stronger without it**. The imagery of the crashing blocks and the manufactured harm of the world tells the reader it is a dark poem without you having to label it. It lets the silence at the end of the poem linger.

Does this feel like the "final" shape of this piece for the collection, or is there still a part of the "hollow" you feel needs more light?