

The Cardinal's Song  
By Steven Sweeney

Finally I've found you  
Up on the distant shore  
Now many miles behind me  
Seeming still not yet a chore

So I won't be discouraged  
And I won't sit and pout  
I'll think of how you taught me  
That's not what we're about

I'll listen for your whisper  
Or to feel your gentle touch  
Whether high up in the canopy  
Or deep down in the brush

Searching hard to find you  
Or a magic treasure chest  
That contains a kind of genie  
Who grants a wish at my behest

And if he might, and if there was  
I would not hesitate  
To ask of him for one more day  
Then just one more to waste

If I could have another sunrise  
I'd trade at least a thousand  
If I had to swim an ocean's length  
Or climb the grandest mountain

I'd do it all and even more  
To show what you mean to me  
I'd do everything I can  
To be the man you hoped I'd be

From womb to rest you were my favorite  
I said I loved you most  
I boasted how we traveled so  
About from coast to coast

How you made a man who's honest  
Then you showed him to be strong  
Yet it's better said than done

When your best friend's long and gone  
But looking back, if I could change things  
I might only change the sum  
Of the quiet misty mornings  
Which await the cardinal's hum

For even though I've few regrets  
And I'd do the same again  
I can't help but wave across the shore  
And remember when

When skies seemed a little bluer  
When the grass just a brighter green  
When it seemed like we had the world  
Waiting to be seen

So we'll go along together now  
You there right by my side  
And when I hear the cardinal's song  
In my heart you will reside

The Faithful  
By Steven Sweeney

For all we are  
For all it's worth  
For all that we give thanks  
The Patriot who shows His worth  
Is One above the ranks

To Him we owe our very peace  
Our little slice of life divine  
Everything we hold most dear  
Our values, health and family vine

Not just the vine but firm roots too  
Make both our treasure and each breath  
A blessing and acknowledgment  
To know the One who wagered death

So when to cast a simple thought  
Of Whom to which we owe this grace  
We do so in highest regard  
And recognize the Noble Ace

Who gave to us great sacrifice  
Who dared to put it on the line  
Who thought of self only last  
Who in no brighter virtue shines

The struggle of uncertain future  
The perilous journey thus far trudged  
Fuel the hope that victory's nearer  
Thrusting fate upon the judged

And for all His hurt and cost and pain  
Today we thank the Warrior  
For all it is we have to gain  
To He the Gallant Courier.

He who delivers us from hardship  
In Whom we trust with all we are  
To the Few who shape our destiny  
The Captains forging shorelines far

To Them we bid a thankful nod  
A tip of our solemn cap

To Those who heard the Nation's call  
To They who charged the raging clap

To He who even danger fears  
To He the Courageous Spartan  
To He who history holds ever dear  
To the One never forgotten

This and more for God and Country  
Risking all to keep us safe  
Gratitude and eternal glory  
Go to the soldier free and brave.

Persist  
by Steven Sweeney

When the sky is dark and gray  
And no more does sunshine pour  
It becomes so easy to slip away  
To create of lesser, more

To wander aimless in time and space  
Or even into self  
To forget what's just above the clouds  
And lose sight of our great wealth

Which lies not in silk lined pockets  
It's not found in coin or gold  
But rather in our kin and health  
In the nuance of the fold

In the small of little victories  
In all the simple things  
We find what is most dear to us  
The joy achievement brings

To be happy and most content  
Is but God's greatest gift  
Persevere and know true victory  
And too great will be no rift

Yet sometimes we must look upward  
In the hour of life exposed  
We must know Him and His love  
To keep the course composed

We must seek never a ending patience  
And strive resolve divine  
We must aim but always higher  
To tend the flower and the vine

We must try to be strong always  
View the glen as green and blooming  
We must maintain our steadfast focus  
To mount every challenge looming

So go forth with unshaken fervor  
But most of all with purpose  
Never ever think surrender

Have conviction straight and furious

Be ever vigilant and zenith bound  
Ever able with tools a plenty  
Be ever grateful but firm on ground  
Ever stable with the support of many

Then if you know just where to look  
If you can find this peace  
Forever will you know a path  
No foe shall bring defeat

And you will be made whole again  
Your armor battle ready  
Prepared to face the coming storm  
Your sword light, sharp and steady

Only then will dark skies pass  
Will gray cease from plains above  
To address the root and pluck it  
In thyself to trust and love

But know this when night is nearest  
You will never be alone  
Always in your corner loyal  
Both God, and I your stone

Count on us at any moment  
We will come whenever called  
To help strengthen your defenses  
To remind of lessons auld

To predict that storms will pass  
In the face of fear, be brave  
Don't give up on dreams of glory  
Fight until you hit the grave

Just know when it's dark and cloudy  
That light somewhere exists  
We owe this much to us and Him  
Persist. Persist. Persist.

A Different Kind of Easter  
By Steven Sweeney

As I sit on Easter Sunday  
With thoughts of days gone by  
This the first in quarantine  
The rules steadfast complied

But this year seems a little different  
With dreams of loved ones past  
So easy to self-isolate  
To feel hard winds against the mast

To exist as only one alone  
On a sea rough, loud and dark  
Not a light up in the endless sky  
A solitary Ark

Just as Noah did before us  
Against all mounting odds  
Just as David fought for his and more  
Against men resembling Gods

We look to valiant heroes  
Who better than ourselves  
Always know to keep on fighting  
In them true greatness dwells

And then we can remember  
Of how we must now act  
To tame the headwinds blowing  
To keep alive the pact

To what are we beholden?  
What are the terms you ask?  
We must remain in virtue golden  
We must keep steady on the task

To seek and to acknowledge  
Our single greatest strength  
Our own forthright willpower  
To go the distance full in length

So go forth with ardent fury  
No excuses and no fuss  
Do what must be done unflinching

Grip the wheel with intent purpose

And you will find but soon enough  
Indeed you are not alone  
There are angels looking out for you  
There is hope yet to be sewn

Who whisper ever gently  
Upon your hardened ears  
Don't worry, keep on going  
In no challenge shall you fear

They will say in soft tone waves  
Please just don't give up  
And you will soon find distant shores  
A place where joy erupts

Like a never-ending geyser  
Like a cup now runeth over  
In yourself you'll see a different view  
A true divine makeover

You'll find that troubles weighing  
Is now opportunity abound  
You'll find a healthy balance  
A fresh and sturdy ground

Then you will start to view again  
Fruit and flowers bright to blossom  
In with new found encouragement  
Out with the old and rotten

Forward will the ship be steered  
Direct for ports a yonder  
Where refuge lies through fog and rock  
To paths deserving of a wander

Where you will strive and live again  
Where you can be your best  
Where you can build on new horizons  
And a comfortably high perched nest

And you will know true happiness  
You will know you're not alone  
To take the good and sacrifice  
What serves you best now shown



The fog no longer present  
Now the winds you do embrace  
In angels do you trust again  
A heart full of love and grace

But never think the battles over  
Herein lies not end of story  
Resolve to keep on upward  
And reach eternal glory.

A Love Story  
By Steven Sweeney

It came to me that summer day  
The moment my eyes met hers  
Seemingly in just an instant  
All my questions had answers  
You might say I had a premonition  
Doubt ceasing from a restless mind  
That I had known this soul I found  
Throughout the whole of time

From dinner trips to picture shows  
The best of life in fine endeavors  
A gentle touch to a warm embrace  
To a love that lasts forever  
Yet deep inside I thought of how  
I'd met this one before  
A perfect pair, like two in one  
She cured my world's heartsore

When destiny brings your other half  
When comets in space collide  
It is not controlled or less than fate  
But a bond without divide  
A feeling unlike any other  
The instant loss of doubt in mind  
That no ocean is too rough or grand  
Or cliff too steep to climb

If there's just one thing I know for sure  
If it was only death, or you  
I would spend my life to find a way  
To make our rendezvous  
I would never quit until the day  
That I could make you mine  
No effort too great to fit the cause  
To be in your sunshine

So my love, to you, I vow  
To never let you down  
To give my heart for all it's worth  
To be the first to drown  
But should we not and stay afloat  
As God would have it so  
I will give to you my whole life

And work to make yours grow

And when we are old and tired

When all the world is Ours

I'll hold your hand, and kiss you slowly

Beneath a million stars

What It Means To Be Family  
By Barbara Kelling

Being Family  
means sharing celebrations when good times abound  
and having arms to hold you when tears fall.

Being Family  
means you belong somewhere special  
when you're known and loved just as you are,  
and where you're encouraged to become the person you still hope to be

Being Family  
means that every season of the year you have a place to call home,  
a place of your own, where they hold you forever close to their hearts

From Christmas Letter 1992

As years go by and circumstances change our lives, let us never forget that as a family we must always give each other the deepest of understanding, the love and warmth of companionship and generous support in all things.