

MARIANNE AND FRIENDS

FREEDOM TO WRITE



“Symbols of Recovery”
by anonymous artists

Support for this publication provided by



Lapeer County Community
Mental Health



Funding provided by



Forward

On behalf of Lapeer County Community Mental Health (CMH) and the Lapeer Family Literacy Center, I am pleased to present “Marianne and Friends: Freedom to Write”. This book of poetry, prose, and illustrations is the combined work of student authors, many who have never shared with the public their writings or art. For some, it’s the first poem or short story that they have ever written.

The title of the book came about for two primary reasons. First, Marianne is a dedicated student and prolific poet, artist, and vocalist. She has written and presented poems for events such as the Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the End of the Vietnam War. She has also made many friends as a result of her participation in classes. It is our pleasure to honor her by including her name the title of the publication.

Secondly, “Freedom to Write” means that writing gives individuals the ability free their minds to create. As one person puts it, to “...overcome disability with creativity...” Participating in the arts can also be an opportunity to practice Mindfulness and to momentarily be free of the symptoms of mental illness. The individuals who contributed to this body of work have taken the risk and have chosen to put their hearts on paper and to share with the reader a part of themselves through poetry, prose, and art. Those of you who have taken similar risks can understand how difficult but yet rewarding this type of experience can be. We commend our authors and artists for their willingness to share a part of themselves with all of us.

The funding for the classes that made this book possible was granted by the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs (MCACA). The classes were offered through Lapeer CMH in partnership with the Lapeer Family Literacy Center. With MCACA funds this opportunity was offered to anyone in the community that identified as having a mental illness.

We hope that you enjoy “Marianne and Friends: Freedom to Write”.

Lauren Emmons
Chief Executive Officer
Lapeer County Community Mental Health

My blessings

Putting my problems into perspective is what I am trying to do. I wish to keep mind over matter. I live each day to the fullest. I try to enjoy every day that God has given to me.

Even when I get down about having Parkinsons, I know it could be worse. At least I can function, and God has blessed me with many years. I am still able to take care of myself. What a blessing that I have to still be here.

I am happy that I started writing class. I enjoyed refreshing my mind with things I haven't done in years. I think a lot of my classmates, because we are all trying to accomplish something. I appreciate all the help our teacher and staff have been to us!

It is important to me that I can write poems and stories that can be left here for times to come. I want to leave part of myself to others, especially my family. I want to excel in something good in my life; something I know I can accomplish well.

Marianne K.



Photos courtesy of Frank S. Bublitz

My Friend

There was an old man who lived all alone.
He wanted a dog of his very own.
He walked to the part on a sunny day
And saw a dog that was at play.

He looked all around; the dog was alone.
He decided to take him home.
The dog wagged his tail as happy as could be
The old man had tear
For this dog is for me

The old man took the dog to his home
On the shelf sat a juicy bone
The dog was happy and licked his hand
Neither one would be alone again.

Marianne K



The painting above, of a rescued dog named Zeus, was Lapeer's representative to the Community Mental Health Association of Michigan 2017 "Traveling Art Show".

The Life of a Frog

A frog was on a lily pad
He gave his mating call.
But the pad began to slip,
And the frog began to fall.

He fell into the water,
As free as he could be!
He jumped another lily pad
And croaked that he was free.

He looked into the water
And looked past all the fog.
And saw himself as he was,
“I am a handsome frog”!

Marianne K



The handsome frog pictured above is provided by the public domain, no-cost website <https://pixabay.com/en/>. We are using it under a Creative Commons (CC) license. Lapeer CMH is grateful for this resource!

God will see me Through

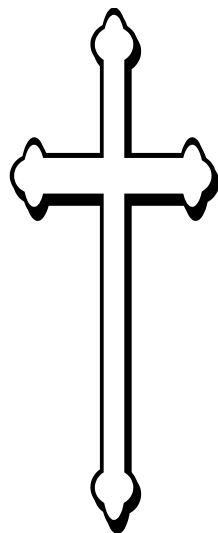
Down the path of life I go
Where it leads me, I don't know
In my dreams I set a goal
In this life I play a role

Sometimes up, sometimes down
There is trouble all around
When things get rough
They sometimes do
I know God will see me through!

In this life there is despair
I know God is always there.
People cross my path each day
Before I know it they go away

This journey I know will someday end
And I'll be going home again.
But while I'm here I'll do my best
So I can go home to rest!

Marianne K



Bear Missing

When I went into my room,
My heart was full of despair and gloom.
Something was missing, I told myself!
My Teddy Bear was not on the shelf!
The room felt empty, the toy box bare.

I could not find him anywhere!
I looked around, and then I said,
“I will look under my bed!”
All I saw was lots of toys
And things that belong to little boys

Oh where, oh where can he be!
I’ll bet he’s also missing me.
I cannot go to bed tonight,
For my Teddy Bear is out of sight!

For I’m lonely, empty as can be!
I need Teddy next to me!
But in the chair what do I see?
My Teddy Bear waiting patiently!

Marianne K



This sweet little Teddy Bear pictured above is provided by the public domain, no-cost website <https://pixabay.com/en/>. We are using it under a Creative Commons (CC) license. Lapeer CMH is grateful for this resource!

My Boss

Got up this morning, put on my clothes
Put in my dentures
And blew my nose!

I need my coffee
The first thing I do
When I read the paper
The news makes me blue.

Outside the house
The day starts jumping!
Inside me, my heart starts thumping.

Anxiety hit me when I went to work!
had to face my boss
Who is a jerk!

Sat in my chair
Put my feet up on my desk
What happened next?
You know the rest!

Got in my car
I was homeward bound
The traffic was noisy
People all around

But I tell you
The day wasn't such a loss
I heard someone
Had fired my boss!

Marianne K



Can't we all relate to this poor man pictured above? His photo is provided by the public domain, no-cost website <https://pixabay.com/en/>. We are using it under a Creative Commons (CC) license. Lapeer CMH is grateful for this resource!

Blade of Grass

No matter how tall I am;
No matter where you find me.
No matter if you must cut me,
I am a blade of grass

No matter how I got here
No matter how I feel
No matter if you need to keep replanting me
I am a blade of grass

No matter what color I am
No matter where I live
No matter if you're allergic to me

I am still...

Just a "Blade of Grass"

JEAN J
8/23/18

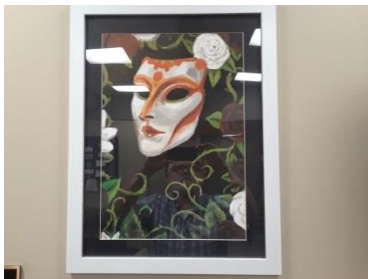


This painting of tall trees over a sea of grass is contributed by Cheryl V.

“I”

I wake each morning without
a plan
I find it hard to open my
eyes to start the day.
I know once awake the dreams
will stop
I find it hard to live
this way
I find it hard to live
like this
I am the only one that
can change this
I know it is something I
I must do
I know there is more
to life than this
I enjoy a class I
go to every Thursday
I know there is only
one more week left
I am not sure what
I will do then
“I” felt important, I felt needed

Jean J



This painting was created by Christine, a local resident with huge artistic talent. This painting is one of the Lapeer County entries into the Community Mental Health Association of Michigan's "Traveling Art Show".

For David

It was a fire dragon toy
That nailed shut the lid
On the pollywog-swallowing boy.
Yep.
In time it did...

In time, Rum became the water of pond.
And you, David, became the fire-eater extraordinaire
Until, in time, the fire ate the eater.

Then we stood around
A lid nailed shut on your son's heart
Your daughter's eyelids squinting
Your grandson's eyes not yet open

And the fire dragon roared
And now you, a dust
Much too hot for me
"...till tomorrow after 3".

Bob Segura, August 20

Rain

Rain washes.
Without soap or detergent, it cleanses.
It splatters all over train cars,
Removing yesterday's dirt.
Everything is now fresh.

Ron L



This painting was contributed to the book by Ron L., the author of the above poem.

Baby Dancing

Dance in the morning
Spinning around in pure joy
Lovely music plays

Frank B.

The Color Clear

The color clear is the most beautiful color there is.

You can see all the colors in the color clear.

You can see shiny stuff in the color clear.

What you can see in the color clear.

Rain, see water, everything around you.

The color clear magnifies everything to bring the world closer to you. To see things more clear. The color clear is the best color.

J. Nemchek



This work of art, which has almost as many shades as the color “clear”, was hung at an art show at a local non-profit organization in 2010.

Small Talks

I don't want to talk about that.
I don't want to talk about the weather,
or how your day is "good"; generated response.
I want to talk about why the is how it is,
And what you think about your tomorrows.
I can talk about surface things, but that's
All I will get out of it, a surface mind.
I want to talk deep. I want to know
the mind I'm talking to, not the
"grass is green" of situations.
I'd love to hear if you ever notice how
You wake up in the morning is different
from when you fall asleep, or if you dream.
Or I'd love to hear your metaphors
For life. Random things, but deep in everything.
I don't want to hear your generated response.
I don't want to hear that.
Tell me something more.

Carlie E.



This thought-provoking piece won an art show in Lapeer! It is contributed by Laura Waschull.

Stars

Stars shine brightly in the

Ebony sky.

The moon peeks out with promise.

Quiet is the night on the

Desert Plain.

Busy are the night creatures

Hurrying about.

The perfume in the air is

Of sage and cedar.

It is a special time when the

World around is still and silent.

Jenny M.



This painting, entitled “Enterprise Collection”, was Lapeer County’s entry into the first “Traveling Art Show”. This show has been sponsored on a bi-annual basis by the Community Mental Health Association of Michigan.

Family

She said, "I would like to go back to either Florida or Toledo.

Mostly Florida". She continued quietly...

"But I can't leave my mom

Since my Dad passed in '06

She feels really lonesome."

She continued,

"Even my brother has been coming over more to let Jake see his Grandma...

She would cry if I left.

I guess that's the end of it.

I will stay until she passes;

She's already very old".

Mary G.

No Navy!

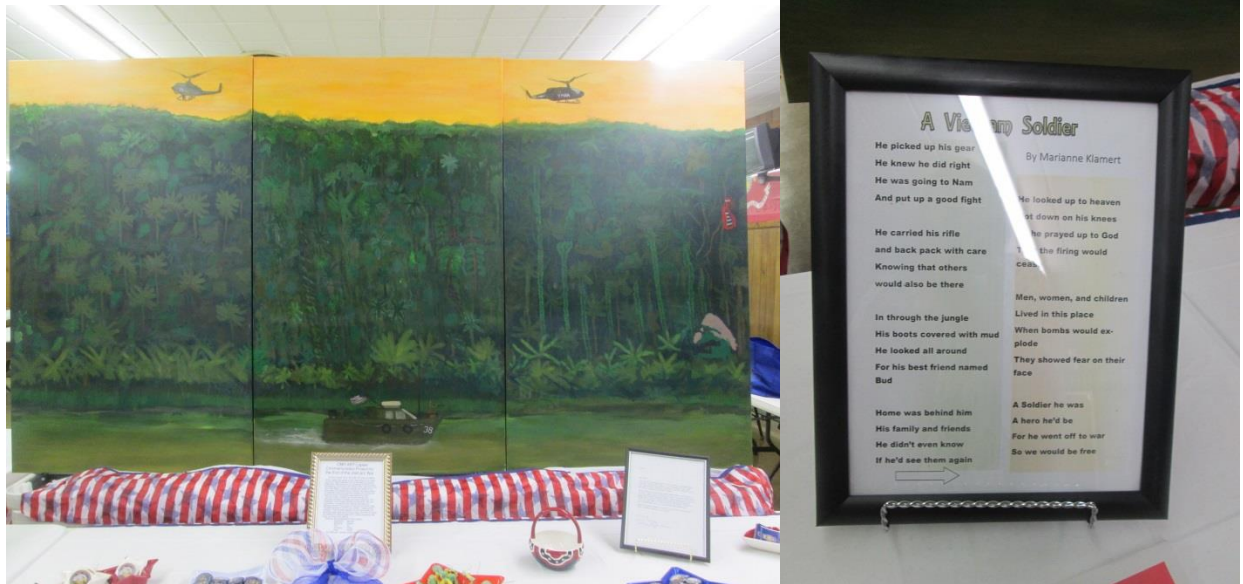
I DID NOT LIKE THE NAVY!

I hate water when it's wavy.

I could do the jobs on board

I spent a lot of time being bored.

Jud S.



This mural was created by the Lapeer CMH Art class. A veteran of the Vietnam War came to the class and told stories of life during wartime. He said that much of the time was spent simply trying to live an enjoyable life. So this mural was made to represent a “day on the beach” at some time during the war.

This mural was proudly displayed at many VFW and other events that celebrated the end of the Vietnam War. We are grateful to the veterans for their service.

Marianne also wrote a poem about service in Vietnam. Veterans who read this poem were impressed and grateful to see it displayed along with this mural.

What Would I do with a Lot of Money?

Someone once asked me, "What would you do if you had a lot of money?"

If I had a lot of money, I would share that money with a whole lot of people. I would give to family, other relatives, and friends. I would share my money with the local churches and the charities that they support!

I would buy things that I use every day, like toiletries, deodorant, and shaving cream, toothbrushes, and things like that. That sounds practical.

I would buy a brand name Chevy car! The car would be a small four-cylinder with a mustard yellow exterior! The interior would be Beige in color. The car would have regular steering and regular brakes.

The car would cost \$2,000. This car would also have to have an automatic transmission as I do not drive a stick!

Jud S.

Driving your Car

Driving your car with great speed

Gives you the momentum you need.

You're probably finding that driving's a must,

Be certain to give it all that you've got!

Speeding can get you into trouble!

You can't tell if police are there on the move!

To pick out a speeder by those who have a red car;

A red car is easier to find on the highway!!

If you happen to be stopped by the police,

Make certain your actions are careful. They can

Determine whether he's going to give you a ticket!

Cheryl V.

Jazz Music

The big, black man plays jazz and we dance.
The girls all swing, look at them prance!
The piano keys are black and white.
All the people had fun tonight!



Tammy Z

Monsters on Halloween

I want to tell you a monster story.

There was a big, dark, black hole where creatures lived. Creatures were living there, from aliens to Dracula the Vampire. Werewolves sniffed around the hole. Frankenstein lived in the hole as well. The hole was haunted by ghouls.

Dracula bit you on the neck and drew out blood. Aliens would spit out goo on all the people. People in the nearby town were afraid of them and did not know what to do.

The monsters all had their day. Their day was Halloween. The people rose up one Halloween and killed some of them! Witches put a spell on some of people, and they killed all of the men in the town.

Now the monsters rule! Watch out, they may come after **YOU!!**

Tammy Z



Photo contributed by Frank S. Bublitz

Waiting

What is waiting? Webster's New World dictionary defines wait as "to remain (until something expected happens).

Can waiting be with joy or agony? Everybody spends a lot of time waiting. We wait to be born whether we realize it or not. We wait to grow up, for happiness, and even for sadness.

We wait for a perfect someone, for a job, for fortune, or for fame. What would life be if it wasn't for waiting?

Secondly we wait for a bus, a smile, a kind word, encouragement. We wait for a sense of belonging, to make a decision, or to hear good news.

Waiting is never ending. Sometimes, waiting is destiny.

Jenny M.



Photo contributed by Frank S. Bublitz

The Attack of T-Rex

Susanna was very stressed one day. She made a futile attempt to break that stress by reading a book about prehistoric creatures. She became so engrossed in the book that she felt she had been taken back to the prehistoric age, before dinosaurs became extinct.

She made a quick decision once she finished the book. Then, she called her friend Mike, with whom she was close and wanted to be closer. She was very attached to Mike and wanted to have a secure relationship with him. Susanna was thrilled when Mike agreed to go away with her to Disney World in Orlando to see the Animal Kingdom exhibit. Mike was also interested in dinosaurs; and very interested in Susanna as well.

Traveling to Disney World was dangerous, because it could certainly agitate her relationship with Mike. What if they did not get along? Would she ruin her close relationship and lose a friend? These thoughts would not leave her mind as she and Mike waited for their Western Airlines flight at Flint's Bishop Airport. After a forty-five minute delay, they were on their way to the Orlando Airport and then to their hotel at Disney World.

While in flight they both felt a queasy sensation in their stomachs. Susanna's unease turned to fear as their flight progressed. As the plane made its way through the blanket of clouds in the atmosphere, steadily making its way to Orlando, her sensation of fear increased. She looked over at Mike, who had been listening to some tunes on his headphones. She thought he looked uncomfortable as well.

There was a lot of turbulence on the flight. She wondered if that was the source of her terror; after all, she had not flown in many years. She also wondered if it was the danger of ruining her relationship with Mike that was causing her such terror. She felt as if she needed something to ease her fear, which did not go away even once the plane landed in Orlando. So, she stopped by a vendor and picked up an antique, silver transistor radio. She was an old soul at heart, and thought perhaps a bit of history in her hands would help her relax.

Once they left the terminal, they had roughly a half-hour wait for a ride to the Martinique Resort at which they would spend their week. When they arrived,

they were whisked to their room by the friendly, welcoming resort staff. A Porter quickly and neatly stacked their belongings on a cart and led them to their room.

He opened the door and placed their belongings inside their suite. Mike and Susanna spared no expense in their living quarters and activities for the week. When Susanna and Mike looked around, they saw an ornately carved Oak table with settings for four in the kitchen. A huge television set dominated the living room. A well-apportioned office area with overstuffed, comfortable chairs set next to a desktop computer.

Mike offered to get them both a glass of wine. They lounged on the loveseat that was placed in their Master suite while they sipped their lovely red wine. The fear that gripped Susanna melted away as they stared deeply into each other's eyes. Nature took its course from there.

As they cuddled dreamily in the luxurious double bed Susanna began to dream. She was blissfully aware of that state of dreams which lies between slumber and wakefulness. As she slipped deeper into sleep, the terror that began to arise on the airplane returned. She began to stir but could not awaken. Her dream began to take shape before her eyes.

She was covered in a flowing, blue dress. Mike was there as well, but he was dressed in a suit of armor. He carried a curved sword, katana-like in nature, in a leather sheath encased in golden silk.

She began to spin wildly around, taking in the jungle-like environment into which they had been drawn. Though for some reason a golden castle could be seen on a far-away hill, there were no other signs of civilization.

Suddenly, they heard roaring and the sounds of stampeding drawing near to them. The ground began to shake and the jungle foliage began to shudder. "Could it be," she thought, "that those are large animals on the prowl?"

Mike seemed to be taking a stance in front of her. Susanna, a strong and independent woman by nature, longed for better attire for fight or flight than the long, flowing dress she wore.

She turned to speak to Mike but her words froze on her lips. Mike had taken his sword and was pointing it at her!

Terror filled her being! She screamed and backed furiously away as Mike approached with his weapon drawn. Far from the man with whom she had shared her bed, this Mike seemed intent upon doing her harm.

No weapons were available for her defense. She knew how to fight, but how could she defend herself against some kind of knight with a blade?

Just as she thought he was going to run her through with this weapon, he lifted it toward his helmet. He pointed behind Susanna to the jungle forest. Then, he lowered his sword and, taking hold of her waist, swung her around behind him. He stood stock-still as the noises increased in volume.

Susanna and Mike were both riveted to the spot in fear, as the animals finally appeared.

They were a pair of T-Rex!

“How in the name of Heaven could dinosaurs be here...wherever here is” thought Susanna as her senses returned. The dinosaurs, drooling spittle from their enormous jaws, raised up and roared.

One of them stomped toward them. Mike was unmoving as it approached, and as it came close he jabbed at it with his sword. Amazingly, the T-Rex backed away, instinctively recognizing a threat.

Susanna had no time to cheer at this event. The other T-Rex was advancing in her direction, and she had no defense. Though she was terrified beyond measure, she decided to stand her ground.

The T-Rex continued to approach and it swung its head toward Susanna. She ducked and backed away, but she hit a stone on the ground and fell.

That was all the T-Rex needed. Grabbing up Susanna in its slimy, gaping jaws, it began to pierce her body with its teeth. Susanna felt an overwhelming mass of pain as the animal swung her about, trying to get a grip it could use to tear and destroy its prey.

As Susanna lost consciousness, she sensed rather than heard a roar of pain. Mike had managed to avoid destruction at the jaws of the first T-Rex and had slammed his katana into the midsection of the large beast! It dropped Susanna as the blade sliced into its middle and she fell heavily to the ground.

Dark red blood flowed in a river from the wound as Mike twisted the sword inside of its body. Then, as he pulled it away, the animal slowly fell, moaned loudly, and then became silent.

Panting with exertion and fear, Mike ran to Susanna. She made no movement but Mike gave no heed. He lifted her toward his body and looked for any sign of life.

Susanna was in a dreamlike state, feeling as if she were weightless and hovering in air. She began to feel a sensation of energy flowing through her body. She realized she was being held incredibly tightly by some force. Then, she opened her eyes.

Instead of the jungle, the animals, and the torture of violent death, she was laying on a bed. Fog cleared from her senses as her mind and body met in wakefulness. Mike was holding her tightly and she was back in the hotel.

“Susanna,” Mike said firmly but tenderly, “are you all right? Talk to me...you were really having a terrible nightmare!”

Susanna began to sob gently. The beings...the jungle...the T-Rex’s...they all seemed so real! She looked up at Mike’s face, contorted with worry, and gave a small smile.

Mike smiled down on her.

“I know where you are now”, he whispered back. Susanna smiled and took him in her arms. They lay back in their soft, comfortable bed and held each other until Susanna became calm.

The next day they skipped the Animal Kingdom.

Cheryl V.

An Essay of Experience

When I met this one guy, I thought at one time in my past, was the type of guy who could be the right guy. He'd act nice and really take all my friendship for him that I could use for getting over any past loves in my life. I thought I could encourage him to fall in love with me.

But, even though he couldn't express any of his feelings I, always thought of the best way of handling a guy who was very shy. I always thought he was the right one, because from the start, I could encourage him to fall in love with me. I met this guy in a home for 40 people.

Each day I was thinking that I could encourage him to talk to me. And when the time was right, even though he had another girl in his life whom he had met at this home, I thought she was only an acquaintance. But even though another woman was claiming him as her boyfriend, I ignored her and kept going after him. But I found out his other friends were trying to chase me away from him. This did not stop me from going after him.

Finally, one day, I found that this other girl friend of his was not really well-liked. But her moving somewhere else gave me the chance to hang on to him, which worked out better for me! I noticed that he was bringing me to his room, and we ate all our meals together. When we moved into another home he did not mind me hanging onto him.

Never try any of what I have done, because it seems now that he has another girlfriend. Probably a woman he met at a drop in center or program. This can be possible because he never seems to be willing to call me. And, he won't go out of his way, like taking a bus or asking his aunt and mother to take him over to visit me.

Lately, I have begun to realize that I am no longer in love with him. It has become time to move on, to bring what relationship I had with him to an end so I do not have to move out of another home.

In fact, I have fallen for another guy who lives in a different home. You can't have two boyfriends anyway. It just doesn't work that way.

Because you can't be in love with one guy and also still love another guy. If this happens to you, drop the guy who doesn't show you affection and keep the other guy. So, you are not cheating on the guy who you're falling for. It's not fair to the guy who, you are certain, likes you for a girlfriend and treats you like a guy should be doing!

Just remember what I've just pointed out to you. Never try to hold onto a past love that you never will love again.

Cheryl V.

Objective Thinking

Objective thinking.

Thoughts unsinking.

So deep in all situations

yet it is on the surface of everything.

Actions are made strategically or without a plan

It's not always up to you to understand.

Think logically, think simply,

Not looking for why, but letting what may be, be.

Don't let simply be deceived.

You decide whether you want to be bothered by "me"

Just be free...

...

...

...

"but then there's love"

Carlie E.

Children and Flowers by Faith S.

Like flowers in a garden grown from precious seeds which have been sown,

Our children were nourished carefully, developing worthwhile qualities.

The gardener must keep in mind that each special flower is one of a kind;

designed by God with a beauty rare, to which none other can share.

The seedlings which are young today, tomorrow may bloom in a fragrant bouquet.



My Friend, the Tree by Faith S.

Because I am your friend, the tree, I will tell you about me!

In many ways I am like you. I must be fed and cared for too.

Before I can grow tall and big, I must be planted as a twig.

My body is made of a trunk, branches, bark, limbs, and stump.

My branches always grow brand new, with well-shaped leaves with colors too!

Often I am a home at best, for mother birds their young to nest.

Right now, though, I am very small. One day I will grow big and tall!!

Remember when you look at me, that I am your friend the tree.

Faith S.

The paintings which illustrate these poems were contributed to the Thumb Alliance PIHP "Regional Art Show". This show was an annual event to which all three counties involved contributed art.