Evolving Happiness: God and Humanity in My Little Book of Poems

Written and Revised by David Joseph Marcou.
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Dedicated to My Parents,
David A. Fitzgerald Marcou and Rose C. Muskat Marcou,
In Honor of Their 65th Valentine Wedding Anniversary (2015),
and to the Amarneks and Sims, with All Decent Love.

Printed by DigiCOPY of La Crosse, WI in January 2015.

Rose C. and David A. Marcou Chat with Grandchildren in La Crosse at Christmas time 2013, Photo by David Joseph Marcou.
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Travels, Then Home

Next to Mother Teresa’s personal letters to me,
And my British and Korean Photos and Memoirs,
And the birth of my Korean-American son,
My greatest thrills resulting from travel
Are 1250 photos I took in one 8-hour New York City day,
And my 4 week-long visits to Washington, DC,
Photographing and making terse notes as I traveled.
DC was nice in February 2012 with the Smithsonian’s
National American History Museum’s group-display including
My Barack Obama and Mike Huckabee photos.
In the end though, I always like to come home –
La Crosse, Wisconsin, where my son and I
Were both born -- God’s Country USA.
Mississippi Stick (1977-1978)

I am
Yet supposed to be
Could have been
Fail to be
Who consoles the two,
Me and the self...
And why strain three of us,
Two do most else.

Anti-nation...
Your autonomous grid
Fits me
To misappliance
Yet partway recovers me
(Flak-caught-am by you?)
Through all-syncopate destiny
I sin ample not all
So wish-blanket me
In a sham-cocked weave
Who do weep...

I-as-you appraise penitence
Its unleavened, unripe regard
For ethical ease,
Murky please,
And scream.
Here do I release above
You?

Am not and too content
    With one apathy
But cannot sustain
On only selfless fidelity
So let it be
Now is a time...

My muddy-go-round
    Heart
Reminds here
And retines here
This single victual
Whose larynxed odor,
A mumble-peg frost
Lulls now.

(My first wife knocked me down metaphorically, not physically. We divorced in 1979, and I got up again.)
The Spirit of Abraham and Christ, an Easter Saturday Poem
by David J. Marcou.

Compared to Christ, who gave his life,
So many might live beyond their lives,
This man named Abraham,
Was not, in a sense, above onset of klan,
But his memory is like no other American’s
When relating to longevity’s scan.
Today, Holy Saturday, April 11, 2009,
Seems an apt time to recall
What God gave our land,
When many men stood tall,
And neglected us not at all.
Let’s hope the work of our present age
Does not only our nation proud,
But the world as we know it.
The Spirit of Abraham and Christ no doubt,
Are strong enough now and forever,
And thus we will not quit our endeavors.

Matthew, Son of Hopes and Dreams (ca. 1997)
Born in the Year of the Rabbit,
When the Sun gave rise to Hopes and Dreams,
You were and are a Gift from God, and will always be.

Every day, I regard your visage with faith,
Because you have given me more than I ever had before.
Yes, my parents, your US grandparents, have been fair enough,
We are thankful for that and even more…
For until I saw you walk and talk for the first time,
I never realized what I have been to my own parents.
I am no greater than any other son-man;
I have gone no further in my life than my parents, perhaps.
But we will go further than we have, because they and you
Are as dear to me as cool rain on a summer’s day.

This morning a woman laughed loudly
As I sorted photos on a sidewalk…
But I kept on sorting,
Because you were in those photos.
I love our pics, representing, and taken by, each other.
I love You, Too, My Son of Hopes and Dreams.

You were born in our hometown, La Crosse,
On Wednesday, September 23, 1987,
The autumnal equinox –
When daylight and darkness seem equally apportioned.
And I am grateful for the Power upstairs
That lent a helping hand when
The time came for me to give you your name.
Matthew Ambrose Marcou: Be good, clear, strong and wise,
Always! And give God and Humanity their due.
Always and everywhere be grateful
For everything God has given us,
For love changes everything…

Be unafraid, then, of the chills from others you will sometimes encounter,
And smile like your poem’s Happy Snowman,
Twice trumpeting, for God
And for Life, all the greatness you are heir to.
We may not spring from Kings and Queens,
But we do have “Royalties” in our blood,
Call them Joliet or Marcou or Amarnek or Sim or Fitzgerald or Muskat or Brunner,
All Hopes and Dreams good folks inspire and are inspired by.

Good Son, give us God-Loving memories to enjoy, always,
And preparing for added glorious dawns ahead,
Include not only us but our continuing offspring,
Forever and ever, Amen!

My Grandparents

I loved my grandparents.
Maybe that’s a sin…
Today it’s hard to tell
What actually is “in”.

But I wanted to say it
Before I forget the day
When they stood up for me
And let me have “my way”.

Kindly I recall
The nights I spent with them,
Waking up so early
For Masses at 5 AM.

And visiting them in the country
Where beauty was all around –
The distance easily eclipsed
Between warmly then and now.
I cannot forget them;
They won’t let me forget them,
And I recollect them today
In a kindly, Midwestern way.

*Moment*

Distilling my aunts’ talk is
Like walking end-to-end
Down the choirloft stairs
At a midnight mass
In memory of the past.

*Birdsong*

I saw a little bird
All ripe upon the bough
And wondered at its circumstance
Its reason and its law.

Till raindrops closely came
And told me that I must
Investigate no longer
My fervor lacking trust.

Oh what one might be
If one could choose the day
Asking only simple things
And prevaricate away.

*Musings*

All around the world, you see,
There is no thing so dastardly
As a poem unkempt, so saith Frost:
“’Ere rhyme is missed, the soul is tossed.”

*Dispatch (1978-80)*

After a week of unbridled prayer,
A monk of Sanskrit persuasion
Disembarked from his chamber of
Limpid antiquity.

When he discovered that
The world had caught the 5:25
For Parfrey,
He called up an attendant
And was overheard to say:
“Bring me one bullet
And one hostage –
I see they want to fight fire with me!”
The Pact (Early 1980s)

And now all there is… is a careening
Figment of your fates, and in this
Earth-Fade energy: s soliloquy on life/
One intrigue of despair –
For that which held the parting also held the day, but could not hold…
Yet, always, always, there is a faith.

(David Marcou wrote this poem after hearing on the radio of a double suicide in Madison. The first names of the couple were Michael and Danielle. A couple by those names used to live next door to David and his first wife in Madison; and the poet has long wondered if the suicides weren’t that couple.)

That Until

That until I sang the sea
I did not think what music should be
That until I contained the fire
I sense none of what flame would be
That until I reclaimed the hurt
I failed to recall what balm could be.

Limits Still (Early 1980, soon after buying my first 35mm camera)

There is a line of Berryman’s I
Cannot recall, yet will.
A nearby road apart from my trail,
Yet a part still.
A mirror that watches over,
Yet more to see…
There are few doors I would close
Til the end of time.
And in these shards of ages
Askew in my library,
There are those I must fuse to see.
November I entered my thirtieth year;
Death can have no more of me.

What Walter Lippmann Once Discerned

There is an island, and, to be sure, it’s in the ocean,
Where in 1914 a handful of Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Germans all lives. No cable reached that island,
And the British mail steamer came but once every sixty days.

In September, that ship had not yet come, and the islanders
Were still talking about the latest newspaper.
That paper told about the upcoming trial of Madame Caillaux,
Who was being tried for the shooting of Gaston Calmette. 
Thus, it was with more than the usual eagerness that 
The whole colony assembled at the quay 
On that arrival day in mid-September.

It was on the quay that the captain would announce 
The verdict: Had Madame Caillaux done the dirty deed or not? 
What the mixed band learned, though, was something quite different. 
Little did it matter, then, if the French lady had sinned.

They learned that for six weeks now, those of them who were 
French and English should have been doing battle 
With those of them who were German. 
For six strange weeks, they had acted as if they 
Were friends, when in fact they were, most assuredly, enemies.

Oh, what wars do exact from us unknowingly, 
And what high times we might enjoy without them.

A Man and a Woman

A man is at a loss for words, until he meets 
The woman he loves; then he is quite speechless.

The King Is Dead

The King is dead. 
The wind and the rain 
Had beat upon the casket 
For seven long days 
And the new Elizabethan 
Age had begun. 
And to accent this, 
Edmund Hilary had 
Climbed Everest – 
Up more than 28,000 
Feet he had gone: 
The event was marvelous; 
It cured the Queen 
Of her nervousness, 
And made all of Britain proud. 
The world is proud, 
Proud to be the possessor of such valiancé – 
And on a good day Sir Edmund still 
Climbs. Days of yore, days of glory!

A Person’s Integrity and Glory

Measure a person’s worth 
Not by the shoes in which they walk, 
But by the walk of their shoes.
Measure a person’s calling
Not by the body-wishes they once spawned,
But by the scope of their mind’s eye.

Measure a person’s focus
Not by the size or brand of their lens,
But by the way they look to heaven.

Measure a person’s charms and images
Not by the shades that get them “high”,
But by the illumination of their dance.

Measure a person’s times
Not by those instances when they lost track of all time,
But by the full context and heart of their dreams.

Measure a person’s logic
Not by the square of the hypotenuse,
But by the good sense that goes into their logic.

Measure a person’s God
Not only by the effect He/She has on human institutions,
But also by the Perfect Divinity He/She offers to them.

Measure a person’s gracefulness
Not only by the shape of their legs, hips, and breasts,
But also by the sacrifice their God endures for them.

Measure a person’s end
Not simply by “How far they’ve gone,”
But also by the reasons for their beginning.

Measure a person’s best reach
Not only by the circumference of their hand,
But also by the power of their prayers.

And measure a person’s heaven
Not simply by the tone of threats re-enacted in hell,
But rather by the sound of their rehearsals for eternal life.

Finally, measure a person’s integrity
Not by the fears that propel it,
But by the courage that sustains it…
For all can be saved if we try –
No doubt we do not lie –
Thus do we reveal glory’s true secrets,
Both here and on high.
Meditations (1977-80)

Wind in the sandbar  
A river eastward drifting  
Its politick, the ripples.

Playful are the crows,  
Renewed by some discontent.  
They sense/  
As every wisp of grass that  
Ekes eternity in sand –  
Armed turbulence,  
Convening hover everywhere.

One slight yet trusting sprout  
Rises to dispute it, and  
Grapples breeze after  
First being struck behind.

Abed, a teeming hermit,  
His memory too alive,  
Pens notes to literary friends:

“Is it strange that the world  
Smells tumult in the barking of  
A dog, as if the corpse were up?  
From invasion to creation,  
The honk of geese goes on.  
Its mate is ancient:  
Low clouds that covet only time.  
The congruous blur of rhythm.  
A tattered strip of blue.  
The last, shot up and down, no  
More adrift, only advancing…

“I see loose husks shivering  
Earthward daily around me.  
And yes, eyes are watching.  
By ones and twos, inland and  
In their blinds, recollecting  
Signs. Who chooses to be?...

“In blood-eddies I recall  
The wind and its drive.  
It knows its course…

“Maybe this is endgame –  
Endless phases writ large  
Beyond pain. And who doesn’t  
Secretly rejoice?  
You would, and so might I,
If we could. But then who
Would there be
To stop us?”

On Closet Dreams

Whoever woke me yesterday
Half-way up the roof
Must have known New Haven
Like the back of a hand.
But when the member of my
Wedding came with half-laced gloves
On, like Twain’s saint,
Rebuking only temples of air,
I couldn’t climb any higher.
The fail-safe firmament was
Undone. And like a half-flung
Rainbow of heartstring and
Switches off the reasoning tree –
It was condensed, no more concussed.
Letting go of me, I sense
Beneath two all-too delible
Feet, patches of the grey-gosling
Membranes of forget-me-not
An uncomely web of feel-think,
(To be reconciled…) The vigil is broken.

My Temperature’s Up

My temperature’s up -- my what a crime;
I hardly had supped, when it turned on the dime.
And before I knew what, it gave into rhyme.
As I grow older, there proves time for chimes.

For Matthew (5-28-88, plus minor edits since)

Your chubby cheeks were round,
Like Cheerios. But no more:
You’re growing up!
And what a growth it’s been.
Looking everywhere and
Touching everything.
Tomorrow you will be a man,
And then I will have to face you and talk with you –
Man-to-man. I hope we greet
Each other with smiles and handshakes – warm, open
Smiles, and handshakes.
If you remember me then
As I am now, you will
Remember I kissed your cheeks
Fondly then – as our poems will now, and always.
Some Things I Hope Matthew Already Knows

Be good, be kind
And never be blind.
Have a great life,
And don’t forget your wife.
Listen to your children, and understand their heaven.
Do your best for all, especially Jess and all leaven,
For today is life to be worked and played,
Today and tomorrow, the song of joy en route to acclaim.

On Sincerity

Sincere hearts will
Find their way home,
It is said.
But what of the insincere?
Will they never know home?
It is said, home is where the heart
Is. Why not say something else?
The heart is where the home is.

That Day in Spain (1991)

The Ramblas excites today just as
Then… The bustling vendors,
The ready customers, the splendid
Architecture – all cinch that
Day for this dreamer who
Serenaded Spain with duck-talk and
A hesitant first wife. How
Could I forget that? But there was
A reason for the frenetic sweep
Of hirsute legs down the path of
That lane. The aftermath would
Prove its merit, and I will
Long recall the furiosity
The feints of that day
Have taught. 1974 was a
Very good year for me --
But not til 1986. Riddles and
Rhetoric? Perhaps. But the
Test will go on, and
I will persist in contending.

The Thinker, Madison (5-28-88)

1980 was another year in your
Fathomless life. Or is the position of
Your time-worn hands a sign to me?  
Perhaps you were about to pass on  
Your wisbons. One of them was your  
Way of moving through a day  
Without having to look for the  
Cameras. Or were you looking  
After all, kind old man  
With the freckled face?  

_For Me_  

David, you have the strength within  
You to hold onto this life decently. You will  
Be a success because you have faith in yourself and  
In the God Who commands our world. (5-28-88 & 12-14-96)  

_A Formed Conceit_  

A pear-tree  
Come-wild  
Forgets herself and  
Her promise  
Delivering only  
Ripe imperfection to  
Blades at her feet,  
Sweeping overgrown  
Blades  
Knifing woman in  
Her limbs  
So creaturely;  
While above  
Three birds  
Mime a Flirtation  
With inch-long thorns  
Snapped without  
Thought  
By dreamy wings  
For the rain  
From ancient girths.  

_Namdaemun_  

Namdaemun/is like a perfume,  
If bottled right/not uptight.  
She sings and hums  
All the day long,  
But at night and just before dawn,  
She reveals all her charms –  
Like a great lady’s interested song.  
Have you noticed her aroma  
During such times of yore?
All the splendor of flowers,
And still-bright-eyed working girls,
With the way to their souls expressed in swirls,
Of ginger starts,
And silken hearts.

_Inchon Harbor_

Your history, like your winds,
Hums with the remembrances
Of tours of other countries,
And expeditions back to your own.
I see you, for instance,
On the days when the ojinga
Is being prepared for delivery
To a mainland that waits
In eager anticipation for
Snacks of dried squid with peanuts:
And I see you on the days
When the seaweed is ripe
For the taking and the making.
Kim has many meanings, then,
As does saram, and the sea.
I also see you on days like
The day on which you set the
Stage for a famous battle.
South Korea was saved as a result
Of your circumspect generosity.
Thank you, then, oh Inchon Harbor,
For what you have given and
Continue to give the Korean people,
For what you have given all the world’s people.
Thank you for your bravery before death.
Thank you for the strength of your tides.
Thank you for the home you give so many.
Thank you for being you, oh harbor most fair!

_Heartbreaker_

They said about Lil:
“No way in hell that she will.”
But before long, she and him
Were doing the light-fandango-slim.
Next day he got up thinking: MORE… ROAR…
But she had already slipped out the backdoor!

_Aggie Lived and Died for Our Love_

She came from south-central Wisconsin,
And spoke with a trace of an Irish accent,
Even though her people had arrived in our state decades before.
Her name was Agnes Mary Fitzgerald at first; Later she became Agnes Marcou…. She was my father’s mother, and She loved my parents like a saint. She was a beautiful soul, Who expelled loud salesmen from her husband’s store Like a barking dog expels Small children from a yard. And yet, She never cursed; she merely changed The tone of her voice, and spoke volumes. If I would have only known what she meant to me then, I would have run up to her and kissed her thin, wiry brows, And made her feel more than ever the love of a small child. Which I was, of course, even though I didn’t think I was. Thank God, Agnes prayed, because I saw her often with her rosary, and somehow I soon understood what it meant to her to be near God. I realize now that she was nearer to God Than I might ever (but still hope to) be, Even as she sat so still at twilight, Mumbling her Our Fathers, Hail Marys, and Glory Bess. Thank you, Agnes, for your spirit and your claim on me. Thank you for being a Good Mother to my Dad, A Good Mother-in-Law to my Mom, And a Good Grandmother and Friend to a small boy then.

Sturdy Vignette

I spied a genuine scene on Christmas morn: A tiny child with tears in her eyes. They were tears of joy, not accompanied by sighs. To be sure, she had on her gentle, white form – A robe bejeweled by crimson-crowned stones. If Santa had been there, from her not a word… Just the true persuasion of a trusty chord, And the dewy reminder of a handsome tome. For in her grasp was the Bible of old. It was marked by a tear on a standard psalm. Number 23 was the one, by now you know it all. It begins simply and eloquently, The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want…

Family Memories, Dreams, Images, and Ways (7-29-97 & Early 1998)

I recall my brother Dennis Anthony as “Denny”. All day long he could shine his penny. I recall my brother Daniel James as “Dan-the-Man”. Like Denny once did, he ran with a plan. I recall my brother Thomas Ambrose as “Tommy”.

I recall my brother Dennis Anthony as “Denny”. All day long he could shine his penny. I recall my brother Daniel James as “Dan-the-Man”. Like Denny once did, he ran with a plan. I recall my brother Thomas Ambrose as “Tommy”.
He managed the girls, and should have been called “Sonny”.

I recall my sister Diane Marie as “Sis”.  
She knew how to keep us all in stitches.

I recall my sister Lynette Rose as “Lynny”.  
She grew up well because of that shimmy.

I recall my sister Mary Catherine as “Katydid”.  
She promised to learn to cook without lids!

I recall my mother, Rose Caroline, as “Mom”.  
She would do almost anything to defuse a bomb.

And I recall my father, David Ambrose, as “Dad”.  
He made us all laugh with his jokes so “bad”.

I even recall me as one of the boys,  
And how I dreamed of buying my kids toys.

It wasn’t long before we all grew up;  
What a hell of a way, hey, to get “stuck”!

“Butch”

At seventy and then  
Stoking midnight fires at 3AM  
Slaking tar-tops  
Shoveling starry-walks  
Sipping often at  
Doubles of short-order urn,  
All against the turn,  
Ingesting tobacco heaven at  
The drop of a hat,  
Tickling thirteen-year-old dreamers,  
The deadly passion,  
Cultivating thumbed-over books so  
Friends might shine in  
Some non-extraction haven  
Of the mind.

All partly why she  
Gazed at me, I suppose,  
Over pocketsful of bead,  
Saint out of time  
Yet seen.  
No match was she and  
Too matched for an  
Aging young man who  
Was remembered today,  
Shop closed now
As he stood/
Amazed, only half-bled,
At eighty and then.

Raiment

Her raiment was
Magnificent: bright
Orange, red, yellow,
Green and blue. It was
Too much to ask
That she be true.
Too much, but I asked,
And she is true.

I Met Two Men in 1981 (1990s & 2014)

I met a man named Hardy,
And he was rarely tardy.
He won a Missouri award in 1951,
Just after the “last great civil war” had begun.
He won a few other great prizes, too,
For he was a photojournalist, tried-and-true.
And he was undoubtedly best
At “climbing the wall” to pass the test.
Mainly I recall him now, because his heart
Was as big as Humanity’s from the start.
Yes, Hardy was his name,
And Courage of the Eagle-Eye was his fame.

I met a man named Cameron,
And he was Hardy’s don,
For he had a mind that wouldn’t quit,
And a pace-made heart that eventually did.
Cameron was a foreign correspondent without compare;
He went everywhere, it seemed, on a dare.
And after he’d ranged the world for his editors,
He came back to London to share his ideas about his tours.
Mainly I recall him,
Because his first name was Jim.
But his last name was Cameron,
And about Jim and Hardy, I must go on.

Hardy and Cameron were a pair
Of journalists who were quite rare.
You see, they did things cockeyed at times,
But in the end, things came out in rhymes.
Cameron said you either learned to work with Bert,
Or you took him out to shoot him full-hearty.
I got to know them both in 1981, long after
They had come through many a disaster.
I recall them now, because they gave
Their fine stories to a youth named “Dave”.
Albert and James were their Christian names,
And upon this poet, they will long have their claims.

Hardy and Cameron came through
The most dangerous of assignments via a crew
Of priests, soldiers, citizens, athletes, celebrities and more,
For they knew who back home was “minding the store”.
From the early decades of the 20th century, almost to the next,
They plied their trades, for Picture Post and the rest.
No doubt, they were British, but I’d advise you, too,
To take up their cause when all books become due.
Have you never recalled a pair like them –
Two free spirits who just came round again?
Bert Hardy and James Cameron were their names;
And in heaven, at last, they have truly reclaimed fame.

_The Rhythm in the Rain_

It is cloudy now –
Don’t know if a storm
Will come or if it
Will clear soon –
Just know that the
Storm, if it comes,
Will be over in
A matter-of-fact
Period of time. It
Will come and go,
Then, and the
Merrymakers will
Have the chance
To breathe in the
Sunshine once again.
On the peninsula,
That is what we live
For, not the storm.

_Jazz-Talk_

Like the cool, cool crystal cool
Of the horn that goes by Shepp
See I above the spendthrift light,
A denial all too kept.

_My Son’s Eye and Pen-Chant (1996-1997)_

My son has a beautiful eye –
His photos truly touch the sky.
And his pen-chant isn’t shabby either,
For I’ve seen it form sounds like a zither.
Have you ever seen a boy grow up
Before your very eyes can fully sup
On his courageous, comical stew?
Geez, what he can do!

Matthew’s eye reminds me of a Hardy –
And in that view he isn’t tardy.
He waits until he sees something clear there;
Then he trips the shutter beyond compare.

Matthew’s Pen-chant is also fair;
It covers the paper with words so rare,
That yesterday’s feelings rise like a song,
And days of yore grow fully strong!

*Ordinary, Humble Work*

My teacher wrote to me the other day,
That I needed no more education, in his way.
He said I needed ordinary, humble work,
And with the latter, came a smirk.
Until I thought of Jesus and what He did,
And suddenly my thoughts were fully rid
Of arrogant temper and mighty misdemeanor.
Today, I labor plainly, and am happy more.
Labor hard, labor long, if you must;
And think only heavenly thoughts about the dust.

*Comes a Time*

Comes a time when we must
Develop further or lose His trust.
He gives us all and we should thank
The Lord’s full blessing in its rank.
I once had a dream that Jesus came
Into our world without a stain.
And when I awoke, I was amazed to find:
Indeed, he had lived and died for mine.

*If It Had Been a Struggle*

If it had been a struggle,
I no longer carried my cudgel.
For He above had raised my aim,
Made me whole to feel again.
From time to time, I think it must
Have been hard on Jesus to sit with us.
But when I remember His calling,
I know he wasn’t stalling.
“Pen-Chant”

Lord, My God, Rise Once Again,
For In This Cursor, I Feel Your Plan.
Give Rest Not To Me Til I Am Full-Writ,
For Praising Your Name Is The Reason I Now Sit.
Do Not Let Me Rise Til I Have Done You Proud.
And Give Me Freedom Only After I Touch Holy Ground.
That Ground Will Be Blessed Whereon I Can Shine,
By Raising A Toast To Ink That Can Climb!

A Sort of Rapping Say– By David Joseph Marcou.

Grandma upstairs cooking up some gore,
Grandpa downstairs manning the store.
Grandma raps on pipes, “Come up and eat, Butch”.
Grandpa raps on pipes, “Be right up, Toots”.

Grandpa exits store, clerk Pauline takes over.
Grandma serves up steak, and a four-leaf clover.
Grandpa chows down, on potatoes and corn too.
Grandma does same, when time’s right for two.

Grandma smacks Grandpa, but always on the sly.
Grandpa smacks Grandma, but again on the sly.
Grandpa enters store, rapping when phone’s for Aggie.
Grandma raps back in a minute, “Your turn, Davy.”

Grandma upstairs rapping out a life riven,
Grandpa downstairs knocking out a living.
Grandma and Grandpa rapping all day.
Makes for some family history, a sort of rapping say.

My Grandparents: Four Great Souls

David Ambrose Marcou, Sr. was a decent shopkeeper,
An excellent shot, a good friend, and a remarkable human being.
He paid his bills.
He allowed people credit where there was no profit in it.
He worked hard to make a living for his family of seven.
And he let me sleep in his trustworthy bed
When I was a small child.
He had some faults, no doubt,
But why remember those minor failings?
He was a Nobel Grandfather and Pathfinder in my New World,
And I repay God and him by recollecting his love today.

Roman Alex Muskat was a Great Man, too.
He had his own theories about history,
It’s true, but he also
Wrote business letters in our home,
Said grace with us before Sunday dinners,
And let us kids be kids when he could.
I will also remember those down-to-earth eyeglasses
And his hard-working laments about life.
He was gifted at many things,
And he knew how to make us all more sensible.
Thank God, then, for Roman.

Ida Rose Brunner Muskat was a saint,
And she liked to get things done.
She knew how to pray, sing, talk, cook, sew, garden, wash clothes and
people, raise kids, milk the cows,
and greet people, always.
She had a way with fudge frosting, too,
And as a little tyke, I loved to spoon it down like
There were no tomorrows,
Whenever I had the chance.
Her roast chicken and pot roast were super, too….
Man, could she cook!
Thank God, she lived long enough for me to remember her now.
I am grateful all my grandparents lived long enough to imbibe their spirit.

Finally, Agnes Mary Fitzgerald Marcou has been recalled by me
Often, but one more time is important here.
Agnes was the most God-fearing, God-loving soul
I’ve ever known, and that’s saying a lot because
All my early role models were that way.
More than that even was the way she let her “humanness”
Lead her to God. There is a play called “Agnes of God”,
I believe. Well, her life-story could have been named that.
She was my father’s mother, in all her Irish-Americanness,
And love of this “wretched world”.
If I never see Heaven, then I will not see “Aggie” again,
Because that is where she is and will be, for eternity.
I pray that I’ll see all of my grandparents again, then.
And I thank God for letting me know them awhile on earth first.

*When the Shaggy Mist Calls*

Far from those never-forgotten shores,
I cry out in my infirmity for Yours.
In Your turn, You also cry out to me, for mine.
And What or Who are You, my Fate Sublime?
You are that Ever-Green State,
That Inescapable Destiny, of late.

Last night, as I sat on the stones,
I heard Your perilous, primitive tones.
Why did You not compel me then —
Over the ocean and through the glens?
When I was less Your age, yet memorable,
I profited from You, as I resembled
The never-forgotten leaves of Your book.
From Dublin to Belfast we have looked.
And what a book You have written,
It’s far, far more than I’ve so far bitten.

Give me time to make amends with my life,
And give me the faith to face all strife,
Before I go to meet my Maker,
And step lively onto God’s Green Acre.

Heal my wounds, then, already,
As I prepare to be steady
For His Almighty Judgment Day.
For Peace and Justice are newly-borne today…
And do not call so boldly this morning,
Whilst I come up through Thy suborning.

Wherefore, then, dost Thou call me?
And wherefore shall I come to Ye?
Call me, Oh Ireland, to Thee?
Call loud and louder, me to thee?

Take me when Thou think it best;
Take me for my long-forgotten rest;
And give me the breath of life again.
The Lord Above only knows how to offend,
Such that nothing is taken as offense. Bend
Me to Your wishes, Almighty Ireland.

Time may have at us all, then,
But He will not take offense,
As thou calls us, Oh Shaggy Mist on Fen;
Come clear to us, then, Almighty Ireland!

_A Few Thoughts About My Family and All Families_

It is my belief that every family has glories. It is my belief that every family has roots. It is my belief that every family has dreams.

When my Father tells his stories, we all know how a “short man” creates the tallness of wisdom, crazy as that seems sometimes.

When my Mother tells her stories, we all know how a strong woman stands with a family that is forever grateful.

When my brother Dennis tells his stories, we all know how easily he creatively humors all sorts of characters, all kinds of people.
When my brother Dan tells his stories, we all know we come from and produce stock who work all their lives, without great fame perhaps, wealth, or disdain.

When my brother Tom tells his stories, we all know that we have red blood in our veins – the kind that keeps America strong and fresh.

When my sister Diane tells her stories, we all know that we share a tenacity that only tigers can claim and a good will that only saints are heir to in this world.

When my sister Lynn tells her stories, we all know how much we miss the times when all youngsters had a way of making more sense of things than grownups.

When my sister Mary Kate tells her stories, we all know how much we love youngsters today, especially when they have acquired a certain refinement.

And in the end, when my son, Matt, his wife, Jessica, and their parents, grandparents, in-laws, offspring, cousins, aunts and uncles, and all our family and friends have told their stories, we all know how much genius can be had from all the children and grandchildren of this and every family.

My Son, A Man for All Seasons
(Nov. 30, 2010 with Updates in December 2014)

I know you don’t often go to church, if ever. I know you don’t refrain from swearing, in every instance. I know you don’t always agree with your old Dad’s goals for you. However, I do know you are the best and most decent Son, Any Father could ever want. From your early morning risings, these days, And your varied positive service to our country, To your endeavors in the sciences -- To the times you still enjoy with family and friends, Many of whom have served our country similarly.

It used to be you and I spent a lot of time with your grandparents. These days, we still enjoy visiting with you, on those occasions When you and your loving wife, Jessica, visit La Crosse. But believe me, Matthew, and this is from the heart: You could never be loved more than we love you and Jess. And it should go without saying – We are very proud of the career paths you’ve chosen, Though we want you to be safe-enough and Healthy-enough, on the main path, as well, And soon-enough have children of your own, The way your Mom, though somewhat distant, and I, have you.
God be with you, and with us all, always, Matt and Jess –
And keep us posted, whenever you can.
Our best to Edison too, the Man.
He must be a Sweet Pup, I’d guess.

New Day: Reflecting on January 20, 2009 in 2010 – A Poem for the
Rebirth of a Nation.

It won’t be even close to easy for some;
It will be easy as pie for others.
It’s all about the New Day,
About the Rebirth of a Nation,
The American Nation,
Reborn in its Early Middle Age,
As it remembered again,
How to rediscover
Innocence.

The Nation’s Capital was abuzz;
The Old President was departing,
The New One emerging triumphant,
For his victory lap,
Though He seems to know how
To put aside childish things.

The speech was strong and supple throughout,
Though I don’t know it had one punchline,
Like JFK’s surely had,
It did resound to the assembled multitudes:
The largest throng ever gathered on the Mall,
And beyond.

With the flags flying
Full in the cool, cool breeze, and
Ms. Alexander reciting from her everyday,
Yet stirring poem,
And the musicians playing from ‘Simple Gifts,’
An abiding Shaker hymn that Aaron
Once resurrected in his precocious way.

The young and old were there,
And more than a million in-between, as well.
Red, Yellow, White, and yes, to be sure, Black,
All standing in the bracing cold,
Looking to the New Man,
With tremendous, warm
Hope in their eyes and hearts.
Not all had voted for Him, of course,
But He’d still won, and he’d
Met with the Man he’d
Vanquished, and the Man he’d succeeded.

His wife and daughters were alongside Him,
His mother-in-law, as well,
And the preachers did the ceremony proud, too.
The Marine Band played splendidly,
And the Jets flew by, High,
And Diane Feinstein introduced everyone and everything well.

Joe Biden brought his Family, and his
Family Bible, a Big Book,
And Barack swore his oath on Abe Lincoln’s,
Despite John Roberts’ (and Dick Cheney’s) subtle challenge.
It couldn’t have been finer...

And, yes, a Nation is continuing to be Reborn.
Thank God, it is, and for ages to come, we Hope it will Be,
From 2009’s Inauguration, Forward,
Just in Time, Until the End of Time,
And Always a Song in Our Red-White-and Blue Hearts....

Four Pauls (ca. 1998 and Dec. 17, 2014)

We used to watch Paul Hornung score TDs, FGs, and PATs Sundays.
It was great sport, and it still conjures up
Memories of days when sport had a familiar ring to its name.
Today, three other Pauls have been added to PH’s reign:
Paul Frederick, who’s grown up in decent shape,
After earning his karate black belt at age 10, and going
Through a rough patch as a young adult.
Today, PF works a good job adeptly, and
Has a decent, talented younger sister too, Katie.
And Paul Chryst (Thank You, Barry!),
Who takes over today as
UW’s football coach, Madison’s St. Paul,
With, we hope, some of passionate Saul in him still.
We hope the Badgers continue to win big-enough,
Because their skills, work-ethic, and integrity are true.
And Biblical St. Paul, who gave Humanity
The finest words on the subject of Love ever written
Save for Jesus Christ’s.
Love redeems always,
And we thank God and Humanity (including all Pauls) for that.
Above the Fray (ca. 1998 and Dec. 17, 2014)

Above the fray, I saw a cloud,  
Where upon it sat Our God Most Proud.  
If I could see that Figure Sublime  
Again today, I would fully rhyme  
All the indignities of mortal existence,  
All the sorrows of human subsistence.

Did you ever know the Power of God,  
Complete in the form we call “Mod”?  
On this green earth, there is  
Plenty to grow and resist,  
And yet when we’re done on this earthly terrain,  
The Lord can accept us in His firmament train.

That includes you, Aunt Deb and Uncle Larry,  
Great Aunt Rosina, and Nephew Tony,  
And all our Dearly Departed, past, present, and future,  
With Great Love and Eternal Remembrance full-spoken.

The Nature of Our God

Our God is kind, Our God is righteous,  
Our God is blended, Our God is not silent.

Once, when I came upon the Lamb,  
It occurred to me to abandon His Plan.  
But after a period wherein I was tested,  
The Lord said to me, “Do not be bested.”

Our God is rich, Our God is serene,  
Our God is unflinching, Our God is our dream.

As I sit watching the Lord on His cross,  
I begin to realize no simple dross  
Exists in His life, to be sure;  
Instead He takes up the cost, to endure.

Our God is public, Our God is private,  
Our God is endemic, Our God is defiant.

I know that He will continue to rise  
On the days I give my sins surprise.  
In other words, the Lord will come again  
Every day that I transcend spiritual pain.

Our god is obliging, Our God is surviving,  
Our god is sublime, Our God is defining.
In AD 10,000, the Lord will still rise in our name
For he rises forever for each of us same.
If nothing else be sure in this woeful world round,
It is certain Christ does not lie in the ground.

Thanks Be to God the Father,
And to the Holy Ghost!
And Thanks Be To The Father’s Son,
Christ the Lord God Most!

Heaven’s Ghost

One day in Heaven, while I was out walking,
A spirit, behind me, came stalking.

What it was I could not fully tell,
Yet I recognized that this could be a knell.

What should I do? Where should I go?
For it appeared to me that God was no more.

I searched and I searched for a place to stray,
But the spirit pursued me, verily that day.

I ducked under clouds, and scattered some rain,
Then I arose toward the Sun and its splendid reign.

But everywhere I went, that spirit did follow.
No more did I have faith; suddenly I was hollow.

And when I had run out of places to hide,
I knew that that spirit was about to espy ---

My soul in its entirety, my shimmer ahead,
The slammer was endless, my perfect dream seemed dead.

When what do you think happened at that moment most dread?
The Holy Spirit flew past me, boosting me instead.

And there above all sat I with our God;
The end of my pain followed from a sprint on His sod.

After Awhile, Plainsong

It behooves each man, woman, and child
To make amends with God and Humanity
A little, just before He makes their wild,
Roving eyes and minds tame again, for posterity.

This author remembers when he was seven, and
The world called him “rational” for the first time.
What a ball of wax that was, and what a contentment
Is his now that he makes his confessions somehow rhyme.

Nowadays, he has come a little further overall,
But after pulling as much stuff as he did
In the intervening years of a life somewhat tall,
He has begun confessing again his false bids.

Yes, he grew up knowing right from wrong;
Yet in-between he stole, cheated, and swaggered a bit,
For no decent reasons at all, overlong;
Still, the Lord did not strike him with a dagger or stick.

Instead, God gave him all the chances he needed
To repent and sing a song of praise once more,
Just before his wildness got to what needed to be heeded:
The everlasting mercy and grace that flows from remorse.

He had wooed his viewers and readers,
With a change once accompanied by “horn”,
For almost too long, Dear Reader,
To be taken seriously or full-borne.

Then, one day he awoke from his moral torpor
To see that there was and is a reason
For all life, and even more,
This reason does not require treason or gore.

It “demands” the simple putting of words
Together in a song to the Creator of everything,
The Greatest of Us All, the Maker towards
Whom none of us need slink, or plink.

The song has become a truth-song,
A vigorous lament no more;
A faithless cant before, it once was too strong,
Now it is plainsong, forever more.

And the confessions of this author
Are more rhymed and complete than
He once thought likely, or
Even possible, from his aging hands.

Yes, he’s gone round the block. And yes, he’s sinned.
But he is on the pathway now to the Real Heaven.

“When Facts Get in the Way” (12-21-14)

CBS’s Official Royals Watcher declaimed several times,
In his report on the Christmas Truce of 1914:
“When facts get in the way” –
Referring to some “mythmaking” he didn’t think was true,
Like the soccer game between German and British troops.
He said there were no first-person eyewitness accounts surviving.
I’m not sure HE’s really surviving, morally.
He was implying throughout his report that the
Worst of the war was ahead and that it was fated to occur.
I don’t agree with you or the British Royals about that,
Who realize they need to defend their sometimes dubious claims on the past,
To keep British citizens in-tow.
I agree with the British author of “1914”, James Cameron,
That the people who needed to be listened to in future,
Were the ground troops on both sides,
Who disobeyed their commanders’ orders for one week in 1914,
And held the Christmas truce nonetheless.
If the truce would have continued indefinitely, there might never
Have been the bloodshed of the rest of that war,
And of World War II as well.
Mr. Phillips, when facts get in the way,
You stand on the side of Royal historians;
I stand on the side of everyday troops and people who
Don’t deserve to die in dubious causes.(12-21-14).

The Christmas Star, Or Evolving Happiness (12-6-96)

It came upon a midnight clear,
This flaming “coal”, and truly dear;
And when it came to us on high,
We distinguished it by its tie –
To things we had before all known:
Revolutions in the spirit grown,
A virgin’s troth to steady carpenter,
A birth unblemished by too-rigid doctor.

Yet, on that auspicious night,
When His star burned bright,
No one came close to telling us all
Of the pure beauty that shone from a simple stall.
It came clear that King Herod’s door was ajar.
The old king killed many sons that night,
But the One that he didn’t sight
Was the One that would someday die and rise again,
The One that would be ours, in spite of our sin.

Mary and Joseph knew their Son to be great,
But the work of God Above did not yet sate
The bodies and minds of many kinfolk,
Or the light and dark of their talk amid smoke.
Yet suddenly, how the angels and shepherds did sing,
Once they came to know their King.
Hence, on the 25th day of December each year,
We celebrate the birth of an eternal star so sheer,
That Heaven cannot hold it alone by day,
And by night, the former must give in to its play.
Truth be told, on each eve before:
God-Man-Spirit Begins Reemergence, Forevermore.


(Longtime TV/Radio correspondent Richard C. Hottelet died recently. He told his students at George Washington University, “Play it straight, do not tell them what you think. Do not tell them what you feel. Just tell them what you know.” It does pay to be mainly objective when reporting about people and events, but sometimes your views have to become a bit subjective to express what you know best, and thus find truths.)

My mom was born in Dane County, WI, on January 18, 1931. Her parents were farmers.
My dad was born in Buffalo County, WI, on April 14, 1931. His parents were grocers and meat-cutters.
Mom and Dad were as perfectly matched as any couple I’ve ever seen.
Their early years were somewhat quarrelsome, raising 7 rambunctious kids.
They both worked hard every day, though Dad drank and smoked a bit then.

In April 1987, five months before my son’s birth at Gundersen-Lutheran, Dad was having a heart bypass done at that same hospital.
He gave up smoking and drink then,
And Mom and Dad have been on the same page ever-since,
Praying and working to make their family, friends, and their share of the world, better.
Both of them still want to live a while longer,
Hopefully to see my son and his wife’s kids too, when they are born.

I photographed Mom and Dad’s Golden Valentine Wedding Anniversary activities.
They re-pledged their devotion after Mass to Fr. Roger Scheckel At St. James Church, where they’d been married in 1950. And WXOW-TV interviewed them in their home then.

I photographed Mom and Dad again at the family meal At Old Country Buffet, for their 60th Valentine Wedding Anniversary. Again, WXOW-TV covered the event.

Both times, I wrote guest columns for the La Crosse Tribune. I intend to do that for their imminent 65th Valentine Wedding Anniversary too.

Our family is so proud of Mom/Grandma and Dad/Grandpa That it’s impossible to say it fully accurately in a few words.
Just know you two that we all love you, with all our hearts,
And we hope you enjoy many more Valentine Wedding Anniversaries to come.
Thank you, Mom and Dad, for all the positives
You have given us and continue to inspire us with.
And may God continue to bless our family,
As He/She has done for all these years.
Amen, and Thank You God, too.

End-Note for *Evolving Happiness: God and Humanity in My Little Book of Poems*

My parents celebrate their 65th Valentine Wedding Anniversary in 2015. Rose C. and David A. Marcou have inspired me to write, photograph, edit, and travel, and I’m grateful. I’m grateful for their inspiring my son and his wife, too. I’ve lived and worked in London, Seoul, Iowa, Missouri, and Wisconsin. I’ve also photographed in and written about Manila, New York City, and Washington, DC, the latter two cities aided by my brother Tom and his wife, Joy. I’ve friends in Wausau (the Charles and Christine Freiberg Family), Overland Park (David W. Johns), Seoul (the Mr. and Mrs. Yi Do-Sun Family), and elsewhere. These also include the Richard and Dorothy Lenard Family, John and Dee Medinger, Dale Barclay, Mark and Jean Smith, Richard Dungar, Roger Chase, Linda Raisbeck, Portia Lee Armstrong, Mark Felker, Mike Larsen, Jerry Anderson, Rich McCowen, Larry Krause, Jane Alberts and Clio Murphy and staffs, Roger Grant, Veita Jo Hampton, Matt Butson, Ray Burke, Wm. Callahan, Jon Tarrant, our relatives generally, my niece and nephew (my godchildren) Jaime Thompson and Stephen Marcou, my niece Robyn Skifton (I was her confirmation sponsor), and Matt’s godparents, Dan and Vicki Marcou.

Health and spiritual workers have also helped me and mine, as have the residents and administrators of Becker Plaza in La Crosse. When I lived in Seoul, I met and photographed Mother Teresa in Anyang, Korea in 1985. She’d send me 18 personal letters that are now part of the “mosaic of documentation” relating to her canonization review. I’m also thankful to the archivists (including Anita Doering, Helmut Knies, Jon Nelson, Andy Kraushaar, Clare Freestone, Helen Trompeter, David Haberstich, Heather Shannon, Doug Litts, Ann Shumard, and Sue Schuermann), teachers (including the FSPA’s and the Missouri Group), universities and schools, churches and their ministers, students, caregivers, artists, athletes, printers, publishers, actors, play-directors, employers, sponsors, booksellers, poets, playwrights, non-fiction and fiction authors, book critics, subjects, viewers, readers, and photographers of this world, who have been very, very good to me. I’ve photographed and written about many famous people over the years so far, but I’ve learned how to do those things decently by doing them well first with everyday people as subjects and peers. People are people, and sometimes they’re not nice, but if you stay as positive as possible with them and love your work, things usually conclude well-enough. Oh, and God has been very decent to me and mine, too. Thank you all!

Some of the Poems In This Booklet Were Begun in 1977-78, and the Writing/Revising for All Poems Here Was Concluded in December 2014. I wrote poetry in grade and high school too, and two of my first gingerly attempts at poetry-writing were published in the Aquinas High School student newspaper ca. 1966-1967. I don’t know if I had any poems published before that. The manuscript and photos for this booklet were originally sent to DigiCOPY of La Crosse, WI, Saturday, Dec. 27, 2014, for publication soon after.—By David Joseph Marcou, Poet and Main Photographer.
Smiling Face in Sky over Oshkosh Fly-In,
Photo by Matthew A. Marcou.

Elderly Man Walking with Cane in Misty Predawn,
Photo by David Joseph Marcou.
Brief Bio About This Booklet’s Poet and Main Photographer:
David Joseph Marcou has written a wide and deep variety of works, and has taken more than half a million photos too. His poetry has been published sporadically throughout the years; this is his first personal book of poems, his 82nd book overall. Born in November 1950, David has been a writer since age five, and a steady photographer since age 29. His son and daughter-in-law write too, and take photos and create various great art forms along the way. Matt and Jessica have a dog, Edison, who is, so far, the head of their household. That will change a bit when their human kids start appearing. Let’s hope the latter happens soon-enough for many of us good people to be still alive, to enjoy those kids/grandkids with them.