

THE POET

HOW *Memory*
CLINGS TO THE *Heart*

JOSEPH G. LOPEZ, PHD

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THE POET I — *How Memory Clings To The Heart*

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~ DEDICATION ~

This collection of poems is dedicated to my parents, Celia and Jesse, my brothers Jesse and James, my son, Joseph, and grandchildren, Arielle, Julian and Madeline, and to all individuals who have been part of my life and to every person with a kind, generous heart and soul.

“Blessed are the peacemakers.”

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THE POET: HOW MEMORY CLINGS TO THE HEART

~ PREFACE ~

*Every one is a poet for every soul experiences
the human condition of all emotions and expressions
of the heart and mind.*

The full spectrum of feelings and ideas are expressed by poetic thoughts in common yet in unique ways. We are all bonded by humanity and its nature of the past, present and future. For some, poetic thoughts fall as words on a page or as painted brush strokes on canvas. For others, poetry is a song and music that takes flight into the air or an expression of the body form in seamless motion guided by a melodic and rhythmic flow of notes. Poetry may be present in everyday conversation or in the heartfelt spirit revealed in prayer.

The collection of poems in *THE POET - How Memory Clings to the Heart* touches on universal themes of the human spirit, heart and adventurous journey in life. Whether a poem expresses love, loneliness, courage, a declaration of condemnation or social consciousness, the poet manifests a myriad of thoughts and emotions in various concept forms. Poetry provides clarity of thought to the poet and may move clarity to realization and understanding to both poet and reader. The cathartic connection only comes to existence when both poet and reader play their part well, or when the spirit and mind come together in harmony.

It is this poet's desire that the reader enjoy and reflect upon the poetic themes in a personal and universal manner, so as to move the spirit and mind together for greater understanding and meaning of self, others and the world of our shared existence and humanity.

“...His affections and reflections
Must be sorted out
In rhythm notes of a sort
And heard beyond the walls
When ink and page take flight
To distant lands from heart to heart
Compel to express the sentiments
Long endured through the ages
A gift has he like no other
Except for those of the same passion
A life designed to be fully lived without fear
or pause
No choice has he for the part of poet
to play on earthly stage...”

— Joseph G. Lopez, Ph.D.

~ ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ~

Our behavior, spirit, thoughts and beliefs are shaped by all our experiences in life. Life experiences are directly influenced by time, place and events, and particularly by special individuals.

I wish to thank all individuals who have played a significant role in shaping and nurturing my thoughts and emotions. Those ideas and feelings have served as seeds in the development of my imagination and are reflected in the poems. Thoughts breed thoughts that sculpture the imagination. Imagination leads to many wonders and possibilities and is essential to the birth of poetry.

There have been many fine and kind souls to whom I am indebted for their kindness, patience and teachings. I expressed my appreciation to all of them, beginning with my dear parents, my incredible grandmother, my two brothers, the extended family of primos and tios, childhood friends, friends of adolescence and adulthood, teachers in schools, and my special colleagues in public school education who with great dedication serve in the development of young minds.

I thank all those whom I have loved and all who have loved me.

— Joseph G. Lopez, Ph.D.

~ AUTUMN ~

It's Autumn once again
Dressed with all her splendor
One season ends
And another begins
River spring waters flow cooler than before
Journeying to their home once more
The land and wind calls upon the trees
With stretching arms and slight hesitation
They gracefully surrender fruit of leaves
Though silent moments more frequent now
Nature's symphony never ceases
Beauty and elegance in every sound
Glow of sun there still be
No longer fierce striking rays
But gentle warmth to kiss thy face
It's autumn once again
Dressed with all her splendor
One season ends
And another begins
How many more there remain?

~ A WHISPER INTO THE AIR ~

Walking a different way to school and saving time
was good

Better still exploring a different neighborhood
Long shotgun houses with elderly ladies
sitting on rocking chairs

Porches filled with plants and rainbows of flowers
As I walked slowly and passed their homes
They greeted me kindly and always smiled
I enjoyed saying, "Good morning," too

I was six and she was of the same age
Even a child can have an anxious heart
If my timing was good I would see her
Approaching and walking in the opposite direction
to school

She always dressed with care and walked
with confidence

I can still hear our footsteps on the pavement of sand

As the distance between us shorten
I would briefly raise my head and eyes
To see her beautiful face
She understood my shyness
So in her innocent childlike way
Knew how to shelter and hold it with her smile

The sun magically brightened
If I were to see her any given day
The days turned to years
And we continued our separate lives
The world was designed in such an imperfect way

Never to see her again or know her name
Still a mind wonders and seeks to understand
And the heart yearns for a peaceful rhythm of beat

No matter the number of passing years
I can easily recall that beautiful little girl's face
And the quiet, so quiet friendship that was
As her image floats to mind
I whisper into the air,
"May you have had a good and happy life
One filled with love and dignity
Deserving of every child and human being
Dear silent friend of mine."

~ BEAUTY ~

How can you be so far and near
How you weave your magic into the moonlight
and stars

And show your face in the glory of the morning sun
Casting rays of color upon the majesty of land, sea
and all that lives

You are both eternal and transient
Circling and tumbling with the winds of change
Each grand moment lives fully to be followed
by sleep
Until you open your eyes and blossom fully again

Were not words created to pay you homage
Or to satisfy the anxious impulsive heart
and compulsion
For mind's eye to describe that which
can never be justly described
You are not alone whether a breath is here nor there

You were given life and presence
Not for vanity but for one to dream
and reach for understanding
And behold — giving joy and pleasure
to the heart and mind
Wherever you reside in woman, nature,
sound, stone or canvas

Beauty, you comfort and make me restless
I seek not to own you
But surely need you beside me
To wash away the sand from the stone.

~ **BEHOLD** ~

Strange, mysterious and mythical
Bird of ancient and new land
Your story of tongue and written word
Rose as you soared through the sky
Downward to unexpected captured prey
Though you held your liberty before footprints
 in the sand
Your brief moment of shining glory was staged
 by design

Boldly and fiercely perched on the desert plant
 with prey in beak
Giving inspiration to the birth of a citadel universal
One whose life would outlive the conquerors
A haven for revolutionary thoughts
Transcending land, mountain and sea

A history of many cultures blend
Would bring clasp hands
Upon a sword and prayer
And the resonance of words ringing out
 different sounds
Native language of cruel and yet innocents
To those of greater cruelty beyond the body
 blue to eastern tierra

No matter the events of time
The change of seasons and generations
Many survive the trail and test of time
The struggle continues between the dark and light.

~ **HOW MEMORY CLINGS TO THE HEART** ~

How memory clings to the heart
As if it were the only friend in the world
Sailing across a boundless sea of imagery
Brought forth by the winds of desire

For some, the way of life
Journeying a path of circles
Until an awakening of the soul
That calls out and points the way

Still, the moments are sweet and bring comfort
And beckon us to stay
As Calypso and the sirens
Sing temptuously to Odysseus.