

# *How Much You Matter*

*A Presentation of Poems*

*Cameo Archer*



MCCAA BOOKS • SANTA ROSA



McCaa Books

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## To My Daughters

I call you the sky, radiant and flowing --  
the sunset tinting my eastern hills with pink.  
You hold me to the earth-bosom of my story.  
I name you riches above jade or silk.

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## Preface

As I began to gather these, my little handful of treasures and spoke to Waights Taylor Jr., and thought about why.... Why go that further mile to put them on to pages -- printed, public pages -- that virus fight took over our lives. Everything else stopped, because the fight was non-resistant, (not that the resistance of science stopped. Oh, no.) and that took concentration. We are so used to doing, accomplishing, being with, and everything was to stop, be separate, stay away. So difficult.

But poems kept coming and things kept happening. Nothing causing something. So interesting. And my gathering and integrating continued happening. Mixing the surmisings of a vanished past with a brittle new present. Different categories of recipes?

So I'm not sure of my result here. Whether order or confusion. Certainly there's no contiguous story. Possibly not any progression or regression, either. Every page or poem an event in itself. My take on these interesting times all snarled up with some history. As curious as resurrecting interactions with long neglected cousins, if they even want such an intrusion now. But they're kind. I'm glad. The reconnection feels right.

Which leaves the reception here, poem by poem, to you the reader, to make each piece your own event. Which is best, anyhow.

May you consider, engage, breathe in and know a deeper experience of life!

Cameo Archer

## **The Wanderers**

Night came on. The sunset hues gathered their intensity  
closer to the sawtooth horizon west,  
clearing the space above for a  
line up of the planets: Mercury, Venus, Mars,  
Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, each sporting its  
own personality of light...

The wanderers in an evenly spaced alignment,  
come out brighter than stars against  
the raw edges of the darkening sky:  
their grand gala performance of the centuries.

A calm though brilliant presence, theirs,  
wearing simply the reflection  
of their center.

## Winter Sunshine

In the soft air of winter sunshine--without permission--  
the child fingers through heart shaped leaves.

Carefully pinches off each stem she can  
find that supports a tiny purple face.  
Carries stems, blossoms and fragrance inside.

At the high bedside she holds up  
her two hands grasping their bunched stems.

“Here, Grandmother. Now you have flowers.”

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## Beautiful Written All Over It

Grateful. So grateful. Counting as much of it  
as the grains of sand on a beach. All that  
rich good there to grasp. And the path  
has beautiful written all over it.

It's rained, bringing a refreshed springtime. Bringing out  
the buds of leaves and finely petaled flowers. And our  
backdrop mountains have beautiful written all over them,  
and I am gratefully joining in with song.

The snap shots left in the drawer of wilted memories,  
old fears, dead dreams are just that. Gone.  
Everything is telling me that.

And I take out my colors, my many colors,  
knowing each paint by number day ahead has  
beautiful written all over it. Because

I want it that way and all the time I am  
getting better at mixing and matching all the  
multitudes of hues, and coloring beautiful  
all over the road, the path, the days.

I am making it a dance. Come.  
Join in anytime you like.  
It's never just for me.

## **The Irresponsibility**

Someone cut. The weeds fell away. And there they are.  
All my wounded parts out there in the open,  
tent city along the trail.

Not burnt away. Still trying to be  
without any shelter or comfort.  
But not hiding anymore:

my mirror, displaying my puffy face,  
my unseeing eyes, my blatant unconcern,  
my anger, my fear.

I can't look away.  
The irresponsibility.

If I hide it any longer  
I am the thief.

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## **Unbroken**

Stride by stride, each steady with purpose,  
he continues along the roadside past traffic  
stopped at a light ahead.

Older man. Sturdy posture. Minimal pack. Cat aboard.  
All sepia washed in derelict brown.  
That red-headed woman?  
Who knows what chases him.

Oblivious to rumbling motors dressed  
in bright primaries, when they dash ahead,  
he continues forward with even measure.  
Steadily. Something compelling him.

His companion lies at ease,  
looks comfortable.

## **It's a Headache**

I need to see more than I am seeing,  
Too small a circle I'm holding it all in,  
clutched so tight..

Tiny brain neurons holding on to  
their righteous indignation, their little fears.  
It's all disappeared but that.

Well, no. Because, as the philosopher says:  
if the little finger hurts the entire body  
is in agony.

And yet, even as my old fingers painfully try to  
grasp this wisdom, you turn away.

It's a headache. You don't want my headache.  
Good for you, but what excuse have I  
for clinging to it so frozen fast?

I do not like ignorance.

## Not the End!

Did I ever truly value hearing, seeing, standing, touching? Or,  
did I just allow voice, body and vision to fade, hearing blur, before  
I became aware of how vital, how buff, how alluring the green browns,  
the true blues, winding, twisting, lacing the mountains,  
the infinite cosmos,  
all the light and wonder fit abstractly into my flowers of soul?

Now, suddenly, I've awakening to sheer eternity: vast, hypnotic,  
flooding me with shades and shapes -- seeing the oceans, trees,  
leaves, flowers, weeds, All the wild... Mounds of plate-shoved,  
voluptuous dirt and rock... Related, distinct, distant galaxies... Holes  
that suck you in... And finding they fascinate me fully, just as  
my long used muscles turn flaccid and worn.

How painfully my being has to stretch now, how urgently,  
to feel the beauty, the nurturing, the love it would take  
to be held eternally by this locale, this wondrous universe,  
this beauty: Earth.

Precious Life, interweaver of mighty complexity, generator of  
things absurd, multiple, vast. Utterly extravagant with individuality.  
Myriad, unique, multi tailored from so small to make up so  
multitudinous everything.

Truly annoying that you demand these tearing, expanding changes and  
obeisances to incomprehensibilities. Incongruous whatchamathings  
Make these demands.

You've worn down my zip and balance, my brilliance and wonder  
and delight.

Shaved it bare. Emptied me. And yet...

How can I ever, ever, ever let go of my exquisite  
need to know about all the rest of the amazements  
and beauties you are?

Let go my frozen hold on what magnificence could be?  
Let go my greedy, frantic grasp, my thirst for even greater still...  
before that coming, ridiculous drama the ages have  
foretold. My disappearance. My death.