

DANI HARDER

MEMORIES OF A LIFE WELL LIVED



"You only have one life. Make it a good one."
Dani Harder, 2001

A Tribute to Dani Harder; Independent Studies, Frontier College, 2002

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MEMORIES OF A LIFE WELL LIVED

June 7, 1974 to October 11, 2002

A Tribute to Dani Harder

Independent Studies, Frontier College, 2002



(An excerpt from) **STOP ALL THE CLOCKS BY W. H. AUDEN**

*Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone.
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.*

*Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead
Scribbling on the sky the message [She] is Dead,
Put cr pe bows round the white necks of the public doves,
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.*

*The stars are not wanted now, put out every one;
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun;
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood.
For nothing now can ever come to any good.*

Copyright: WH Auden: Twelve Songs IX
First published as "Song IX" from 'Twelve Songs' (1936)

**EVALUATION OF INDEPENDENT STUDIES
VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE**

Name: DANI HARDER Date: APR 03 RD 20
Dani Harder

Please answer these questions.

1) Why are you here (in Independent Studies)?

I WORK HERE

I work here

2) What are you getting out of your experience volunteering with our program?

SATISFACTION

Satisfaction

3) What do you need from us to help you in your work here?

MORE IDEAS ON HOW TO TEACH

More ideas on how to teach

Dani's evaluation of her experience as a volunteer tutor, 2001

INTRODUCTION

"A traditional Buddhist folk tale from Vietnam provides a simple illustration, a metaphor for the difference between heaven and hell.

In hell, everyone is given an abundance of food and then given chopsticks a yard long. Each person has all the food they need. But because the chopsticks are too long, the food never reaches their mouths.

In heaven, the image is exactly the same: everyone is given an abundance of food, and chopsticks are also a yard long. But in heaven, people use the chopsticks to feed each other."

from: "Queer Dharma", editor Winston Leyland, 1998

Feeding each other. This image and accompanying quote came to mind when I thought about Dani Harder. For almost three years, Dani was a volunteer tutor in the Independent Studies program at Frontier College, where she acted as a classroom teaching assistant helping students in our three literacy classes to learn. Dani took her job very seriously and was very gifted at teaching. Her teaching took many forms. She literally provided instruction in spelling or reading; but more than this, she provided something else.

Dani's presence was itself instructional and remarkable. She lived her life with courage and determination, with passion and compassion, with strength and with joy. Dani fed everyone who met her a meal that had nothing to do with food. She fed us a gift. A gift of understanding and humility. Understanding of how extraordinary the

diversity of human possibility can be. Humility in the face of our own vulnerability. This book is a tribute to a life well lived. Thank you, Dani Harder for making our lives so much richer through your own. I am honoured to have known you. Rest well.

David Greig

Manager, Independent Studies, Frontier College



Memory of Dani

Dani is one of the many people who have given their time and their personal gifts to serve others as a tutor with Frontier College. She knew the power of ideas, language and literacy could overcome isolation and fear. She shared her gifts with grace and humour; she taught all of us well.

John O'Leary

President, Frontier College

DANI'S WORDS

DANI'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY, 2001

My name is Dani Angela Harder, but that isn't fully true. I've been tricky people for many years. My first name is Angela, but I liked Dani much better so I switched them.

I remember one day when I was one year old, "A big dog gave me a scare." It was the summer times and I will never forget it because I still don't trust dogs. "Upset."

A sad time in my life was when my grandmother died. I was really sad, but my brother made me feel better by giving me a hug.

I have many special people in my life. One who I would like to mention is Adrian. I met Adrian about two years ago at Frontier College. We are both tutors at the college and hit it off right away. I love his whole self, his hair, his eyes, his voice, and his humour.

I have many strengths, but I am too modest to talk about them.

"You only have one life. Make it a good one!"



Dani in the Independent Studies class, 2001

**ADVOCACY: THE RIGHT TO LIVE IN THE COMMUNITY
BY DANI HARDER**

"It's important to me to make my own decisions about my life. I'm 27 and very capable."

"I'm a person, too. I have a right to make my own choices."

"Why to try to make me live with people I do not know and may not like, just because we're all in wheelchairs"

"I have the right to live in my own apartment, to hire my own attendants and to make my own choices."

"Do you get to choose where you live, who you live with and what leisure activities you do? Why shouldn't I also?"

"In my home, I can develop my own routines, based on my needs and choices."

"I'm tired of staying in the hospital where staff tell me what to do, what to eat and when to go to bed."

"My work at Frontier College is important. I help adults learn to read. My students identify with me because they can see I also have challenges, just different ones from theirs. I run examples for them to keep trying to reach their goals of reading."

"I can continue my work at Frontier College. In an institution it's almost impossible to arrange to get to work on time. There's no place to prepare my lessons."

UNTITLED
BY DANI HARDER

There was a man who was old
He was an artist, so he took some clay to make a mold.
He worked and worked and then he stopped.
As he realized he was getting cold.
He told himself to fold the mold into a barrel made of gold.
His wife then came and offered him a warm cup of tea to hold.
He drank his tea and immediately went bold.



Adrian, Dani and Joey

WORDS ABOUT DANI

*"Welcome to my voice of silence.
Life is a precious shell.
Hold it for as long as you can.
Remember it is only a shell
Which contains the powerful mind.
It says you can do anything,
Be anything.
So say what you will" – Julia Tavalaro*

LOOK UP FOR "YES"

Hi Dani, knowing that you have just slipped into the other room I am writing this letter to you. This quote above has significance for me today as I think about you. Your 'voice' was undeniably powerful and I learned a tremendous amount from you along our journey these past years together.

Although there will be a gaping void to the left of my table in the Boardroom at Frontier College there will continue to be a sense of wisdom and determination that will undoubtedly permeate throughout the room.

You missed but not one day over the last two years; wish I could say the same for myself. The class was missing a certain pizzazz over these past two weeks; that pizzazz was you.

You brought weekly with you to class a thirsty appetite to motivate and teach others the power of the written word. I thank you for your enthusiasm.

You carried with you a determination to have your voice validated. You were a woman who celebrated her disability experience and eloquently taught all of us around you the barriers and triumphs associated with this experience. You passionately contributed to discussions on the rights of people with disabilities. It was you that said, "My work at Frontier College is important. I help adults learn to

read. My students identify with me because they can see I also have challenges, just different ones from theirs. I run examples for them to keep trying to reach their goals of reading". I thank you for your commitment to advocate for the rights of all people.

Your sense of humour delighted us all. It was your 'whoops of delight' that stopped John O'Leary in his tracks (his office being directly above the Boardroom where classes take place) and allowed him the opportunity to reflect on the true meaning of literacy and its teachings. Your humour was contagious and now I have to be your fill in. I do not thank you for this!

Your commitment to challenging the status quo and ask important life questions was commendable. You guest lectured with me at Centennial College and you made a lasting impression for those lucky enough to hear your message. You once wrote that you dreamed of being a teacher. You were a teacher and an inspiration to those around you. I thank you for your insight.

Last but not least "You were the spelling queen, young and sweet, only seventeen...Sorry I digress!



Our Spelling Bee will never be the same without your creative slant to this literacy exercise. I would never have thought up the sentence to describe the word 'life' as "You have only one life, make it a good one". I thank you for your ingenuity.

Dani, your life has been a good one and I am deeply blessed to have had a taste of your humour, passion and joy.

You have left us too soon and I will miss you dearly. Goodnight,

Cathy Berry, Frontier College



"Coincidence is God's way of performing a miracle anonymously"
Anonymous

Coincidence it was to have had the wonderful fortune to have Dani in my life and miraculous it was to have the opportunity to grow and learn together alongside her.

To transform my feelings into words, at this moment, would be magical. I would welcome a taste of this magic as I struggle to find the words to express my deepened sadness over the loss of Dani in my life.

Dani's impact on my life was significant. I can't help but reflect on my son Matt's life in light of Dani's death. The wisdom that Dani gave to me has allowed me to reflect on the contributions Matt offers to others and, at the same time, how vulnerable he is. This reflection is overwhelming. I had so much to give to Dani, and in return, so much more to receive from her.

This past summer it was often just the two of us, at Frontier College, attached at the hip, so to speak. She would often call my name in class and offer words of encouragement; how reassuring this was. The word 'girlfriends' comes to mind. Outside the College we spoke together with community groups and colleges about the significance of literacy in the lives of people with disabilities. The word 'professionals' comes to mind.

Dani meant so much to me. As I look over and see the void next to me in the classroom, I painstakingly have come to realize that this really has happened. Dani has died. This feels very long.

But perhaps... It is just the beginning. Love to you always, Dani

Susan Macdonald, Frontier College



For Dani

*"Each friend represents a world in us,
a world possibly not born until they arrive,
and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born."
Anais Nin*

You are an inspiration! An extraordinary gal! Thank you for your friendship and for opening up a "new world for me". Your spirit for living, learning, and teaching lives on in each of us. Thank you!

Angela Bisby
Independent Studies
Frontier College



In Memory of Dani Harder

by Mimi Wong

Cathy Berry introduced Dani to us last year and I was so surprised that Dani is one of our volunteer tutors at Independent Studies class. I thought she was one of the students. Cathy told us Dani was really strong at the spelling and how helpful for the class.

This is the first time I knew anything about Dani. From that day, I started to say good morning to her and she always gave me a nice smile.

I remember Dani came to Frontier College Annual General Meeting 2001 last year at Cecil Community Centre. She danced and laughed. She had fun on that day. We were really enjoyed to watch her dancing. She was really good for dancing, I swear.

Janice, my daughter who is 5 years old now, came to Frontier College with me in May. Janice played with Sandra in the reception area. Dani was watching them and smiled. I felt that Dani was so enjoy for watching them playing. I thought she must love kids. Janice asked me about Dani when we went home. I told her Dani was a nice, clever, helpful and strong woman. She loves reading and helping people to read. She was the best tutor and best friend of her students. Janice told me she likes Dani and wanted to talk to her. I feel sorry to Janice that I can't let her to meet Dani again now.

I still have the writing from Dani about herself. I am going to tell my family and all my friends the story of Dani Harder. I hope they know that how lucky we are. We have to thanks God (any God you believe) that gave us all the good things. Thank you God gave let Cathy Berry met Dani or we couldn't meet Dani. Thank you Cathy for introducing Dani to us. I didn't talk to Dani a lot but in my heart she is my friend. Let's prayer for Dani and her family. I hope more people can read the story of Dani and this world will be very peaceful.

Dani, you're always in my heart. I never forget you. I will always remember you smile, your laughing and your dancing.

This is the song what I love and I want to share with Dani (I know you can hear it) and her family.

Amazing Grace

*Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost but now am found
Was blind but now I see*

*'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed*

Through many dangers, toils and snares

*I have already come
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far
And grace will lead me home*

*How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds
And drives away his fear*

*Must Jesus bear the cross alone
And all the world go free?
No, there's a cross for ev'ryone
And there's a cross for me*

Mimi Wong, Frontier College



Dani,

What can I say about you, you are an angel in civilian clothes, a disguise to those around you, a mystery to those who cherish you.

You are a teacher, a friend, and a laughing buddy to all. You are the sunshine on a gloomy day, you are yourself and for that I'm pleased and overjoyed to say that I have known you.

You have touched so many lives with your sense of humour, your stories, and your smile. You have taught me patience, integrity, and self-respect, you have taught me to dream the impossible dream, to reach for every star in the sky and to just smile when life passes by.

You have left us with tears in our eyes and warmth in our hearts. You have left so many people to carry out the love and strength that you

have inspired us to feel and with that your memory will be forever remembered, in our hearts and in our souls.

Dani you will be missed but never forgotten, from this life to the next. "You only live one life, make it good." Thank you Dani for your strengths. You're in my heart,

Alana Bazijanec

Tutor, Frontier College



Karen and Family,

I have just returned from a marathon of workshops and have been stunned into silence by Dani's passing. She was a remarkable young woman. Her eyes were so full of life. I am deeply sorrowed and grieve with you.

One thought is to remind you, Mathew and Luke that you helped to give Dani a rather remarkable life. And because you battled so hard with her to be fully free, she was. Freedom is more a state of mind than a physical reality, and Dani was already free of most constraints because you had already decided and begun the lifelong battle for full citizenship. Congratulations. Many people put in many decades and never live. Dani lived, loved it and made a huge contribution.

Her leadership was evident in many locations, but at Frontier College the spell queen was an all star. Again, many wait a lifetime without ever knowing they have made a difference.

Dani made a difference. She had a good life. It was just too short.

Jack Pearpoint

former President, Frontier College



To Dani Harder, A Hero -- My Apology

by Judith Snow

on the occasion of Dani's funeral Oct. 16, 2002

Last Friday I got a phone call from a friend to tell me that Dani Harder had died of pneumonia. I was stunned. As my emotions tumbled through me I began to wonder why I was having such a strong reaction. I was not close to Dani. I had been with her perhaps five times in our lives. Yet I felt as if I had been personally stricken. I felt for Dani, I felt for her mother Karen who would be devastated, I felt for her friends and family -- but I was and am feeling much more than this empathy.

Dani was a young woman, not yet thirty. I knew her as a person who used an augmentative communication device -- one of those boxes with a funny computer voice. I never heard Dani's box say anything that made any sense, so for me Dani was someone with a silent or silenced voice. I figured that either she had very little to say, or she hadn't yet found or been given the way to articulate her own words. I blamed the box.

I knew Dani as someone who was represented by someone else. Her mother, Karen, would speak and write frequently, glowingly and intensely about Dani's dreams for her own home, her own assistants, an education, her own life. Dani's story and opinions were shared with me by a variety of people from a variety of groups and services aiming to help people who use augmentative communication. Once or twice I heard her personal assistants express Dani's preferences on her behalf. I understand this "speaking for" or "advocating" conversation very well and I participate in it fully and often. I never spoke, woman to woman, with Dani, yet I felt I had a good idea of who she was.

Karen told me often that I had made a big difference in Dani's life. She and Dani had come to my kitchen once and I had encouraged them to

not wait to get into university, but to find a way to get her into a course on the spot -- that day if possible! Dani had gone on to take a course at Ryerson. Dani also showed up at some events I was running -- workshops on rights, on support circles and on community participation. She didn't show up pretty often as well -- held back by Wheeltrans inflexibility or hospital indifference.

I thought I knew Dani. I knew that Dani was trapped in a children's chronic care facility. For years the Harder family and their support circles had massaged and pummeled at our intransigent provincial health system. The simple idea that if enough money were put in Dani's hands she could be a fully contributing citizen seemed never to penetrate the minds and policies of politicians and bureaucrats. Never mind that the required sum of money would be less than what is spent mindlessly on the chronic care prison. I participated at arms length in Dani's struggle. I never visited Dani. Since I left chronic care myself in 1979 I find it difficult to go into those places.

Last weekend I thought my deep sadness and upset were mainly related to my own fear and frustration. I fear that I will lose my own home and personal assistance to this pigheaded, self-serving government. I fear my own life will be snatched away mid-flight by a relentless virus. I fear that my own voice, articulate as I am, will be lost in the ever so impersonal disability/advocacy conversation that floods our corner of the world. I am continually frustrated by the seemingly endless journey toward building a world where everyone's abilities and gifts will be welcomed for the contributions that they are. I asked again and again, why couldn't we open Dani's cage?

Yet I knew somehow that my sorrow, anger and fear really came from another place. This morning I found that place. And throughout Dani's memorial celebration I became even more aware of the source of my distress.

I'm ashamed that I never let myself know Dani. I never said "Thank you!" for the gift she was to me -- and to so many others.

I imagined that Dani's life was very different from what it truly was. While I imagined that Dani was in a prison, Dani had let herself out of her cage. While I imagined that Dani was struggling for a voice, she was speaking, teaching and reaching out everywhere. While I imagined that Dani's gifts were buried by hospital and bureaucracy, she was making a big difference in hundreds of people's lives. The appearance of Don Herron, a great Canadian author and celebrity,

says it simply. He came to give a heartfelt tribute and a farewell blessing to the young woman who had touched him deeply. Dani lived freely and completely, and the evidence is everywhere.

Dani Harder is a hero. She conquered circumstances where others would be defeated. She created a pathway for her life where none existed. She loved where others would give into fear, hate and self-pity. She didn't wait for a revolution, she didn't just fight for a revolution -- she was a revolution.

I apologize to Dani's spirit, to Dani's friends and family, to myself and to the past. I apologize for missing the opportunity to recognize Dani's great victory until after her death. I apologize for never saying: "Good on you! and Thank you!" to Dani in person. I promise to take notice of the heroes in my life from now on.

Dani, your spirit now brightens all of heaven and the whole world. Thank you for being you.

Judith Snow



I'll always remember Dani's smile. It would light up a room. Her presence at Frontier College was a welcome one. She showed her enthusiasm with a hearty "Good job!" directed at students. Despite her outgoing personality, Dani was sometimes shy. I think she actually blushed once when I asked to speak more often because I liked the sound of her voice. I enjoyed her spontaneous whoops of joy and laughter. In life, she was brave and unafraid to show emotion. I am genuinely saddened by news of her death.

Ron Csillag

Tutor, Frontier College



Dani surrounded by friends at Frontier College, June 2002



Dani,

I loved to see her eyes light up when Adrian came into the room. I looked forward to her spelling bees. I was amazed at how insightful her comments were about each member of the class. She taught me a lot.

Linda Scott

Tutor, Frontier College



She was a unique person. She had a gift to enthuse everybody to learn and use her intelligence to make it work. She had a joyful spirit that you would want to know her. She had a wonderful sense of humour. She will be missed.

Robert Lesser



I came to Frontier College on October 4, 2001. I met Dani at Frontier College. Dani liked coming to Frontier College. That's how me and Dani met. I was happy to meet Dani. She will be missed.

David Booker



I met Dani in 1999. She makes my heart melt. She was a beautiful person. She was very popular and I really enjoyed working with her. I am glad I got to know her a little. I went to her brother Matt's house for a barbeque. I had a beautiful time and felt I got closer to Dani. I want to thank Dani's family for having me over. I miss you and I love you.

Irene Hatos



Matt's words selected with Dani in mind...

Writer	I for Independence
Wish	Isn't He wonderful
Fun	Hope
You can do it	Laughter

Matt Macdonald



I feel sad. Her family will miss her. I only met her once.

Robbie Cole



Dani, You are my tutor and my best friend. I miss you. Someday I will see you again in Heaven.

Joey Pappa



Dani receiving an award for volunteer service at Frontier College, 2002



Last Friday, Dani Harder just past away on October 11, 2002 at the age of 28. I found out Monday, October 14 after I heard the message on the tape, voice of Susan Macdonald and Richard Stafford. The funeral service was held on Wednesday October 16, 2002. Cathy Berry, Susan Macdonald, Emma, Dee and her daughter were there. Dani's parents and Dani's brothers were there.

Dietmar Pannier



For Dani,

*When she was here she made us happy and I'm going to miss her.
God is going to help her. Love,*

Debbie Jackson



Dani was a tutor. Dani, I miss you and I care about you. I miss her sense of humour. I would like to meet her again in heaven. I think a book should be dedicated to her.

Rodney Beals



Dani Harder died on Friday. It makes me feel sad. The funeral was on Wednesday. I like Dani. Dani likes me. She smiles. She is teaching spelling.

Ross Crockett



Dani's good friend, Joey Pappa, with Dee with Dani, 2002



She is always on the ball. Smiles a lot and compliments other people from Frontier College. She makes me realize that I'm no different from anyone else. "Be happy who you are."

Andreas Prinz



I am going to miss you doing the spelling. I am going to miss Dee. I would help you with your wheelchair by pushing you into the classroom. You were always happy. You always called Joey's name when he wasn't here. Love,

Michel Brunet



Oct 15,2002

I am going to miss Dani. Dani had a good sense of humour she made me laugh when I read to her. I liked to hear her say 'excellent'. I liked to hear Dani's voice on her talking board. She helped me to learn to

read. I hope Dani's family is feeling better soon and that they take care. Love,

Jennifer Albino



Evaluation of tutor Dani Harder by Cathy Berry, June 2001

Dani Harder was an invaluable tutor/assistant to the literacy classes that were offered weekly at Frontier College through the Independent Studies program. She proved to be very reliable in that she participated weekly with enthusiasm and commitment for all classes. Dani supported a variety of students to work on their reading, writing and communication skills.

Dani was very eager to participate in a variety of ways. She took leadership in the classes that were focused on the rights of people with disabilities. She often said many words of support to students who were expressing their concerns for the way people with disabilities are treated in our society.

Dani took an active role in teaching the class a lesson on poetry. Dani brought in some of her favourite childhood poetry and read and discussed them with students. As a preparation for the class, Dani types her poems into her computer so that she could read the poetry to the class independently. To tie in a further element of literacy she supported students to individually write a sentence on humorous poetry. She taught this class with great enthusiasm and a great sense of pride.

Dani demonstrated great confidence in her interactions with the students, tutors, and instructor. Over time, she took on more responsibility as she gained confidence in herself. She participated in reading circles, poetry readings, math games, class discussions, and one on one tutoring.

Dani is a very determined person and seems to want to challenge herself and try new opportunities. Tutoring at Frontier College enabled her to work towards her personal goals.



Summary of Dani Harder's achievements as a tutor in the literacy class, April 9, 2001 by Cathy Berry

Dani consistently participated with full attention and concentration throughout the planned lessons of the week. She came prepared weekly to read with students and do the spelling quizzes as planned. She recalled the tasks assigned to her as an assistant to the class and followed through with all work. Dani thrives on a session filled with a variety of teaching strategies.

Dani prepared some well thought out lessons and prepared sentences to accompany the dictated words. These were short-term goals that Dani identified for herself at the outset of the class and was able to successfully accomplish these goals.

Dani wrote a story that she used to read to the class and to staff at Frontier College about her disability and the appropriate way to support her. She is a great self-advocate who is confident to speak her mind on a variety of topics. Dani has demonstrated that she can be very motivated and can create some thought provoking questions for students based on their personal stories. Perhaps Dani can continue to persevere and motivate herself to create other opportunities for herself to become further involved in teaching and supporting the students in the class.

Dani's computer tends to be a technological nightmare for her. Some days the machine is broken and Dani feels as though she has no means of to communicate her wishes. This is difficult for her. Dani does have a communication board that she can also incorporate to get her ideas and messages across to others. This might be able to be

used more often should the need arise. Dani is exceptionally proficient at telling others what she wants. This is done by looking up for yes, shaking her head sideways for no and using her computer to talk for her.

Dani is a very confident woman who has had many life experiences and a caring supportive family. She is very confident in her abilities however often indicated that she is afraid and worried to take new challenges. Coming to Frontier College as an assistant was a real challenge for her and she was very unsure of her abilities. After taking the position she felt very proud of her accomplishments and verbalized her sense of pride.

Dani realizes that the more opportunities presented to her and the more opportunities she initiates the more confidence and self-esteem she will achieve. She does believe that she needs to push herself to try new situations.

Dani is interested in writing a memoir and is currently trying to think through the process to get it off the ground. With gentle support, she is beginning to visualize her larger story and seems ready to begin writing her story this next session. Given the time Dani can accomplish most tasks assigned to her and think through the best possible approach to complete the task.

Dani consistently attended both the Monday and Wednesday classes without exception. She came prepared to class and always brought her teaching assignments that she was to accomplish for the day. Dani is a very reliable, dedicated teaching assistant.

Dani is a very social person and likes both large group activities and small group exercises. She always gave positive encouragement to the students and is an excellent listener. She demonstrated great patience and was always willing to support the instructor.

Work completed by Dani over the term:

- completed a collage to assist with writing a biography
- participated in a reading of a script and a follow-up discussion of relationship building
- wrote a story and submitted it to the Bread and Roses writing contest
- gave two spelling quizzes to a small group of students
- listened to students read their stories

- compiled questions based on the students' stories and asked the students the questions
- read an article about Anne Murray and wrote a story based on the facts of the story
- reviewed a movie called *Heather Rose Goes To Cannes*
- critiqued pop/classical music and wrote a paragraph
- helped students play consonant bingo
- brought in resources that were helpful for students to read



Dani and her mother Karen, 2001

A HERO



I do not know Dani. People say she is a hero. **Collette Alami**



TWO POEMS ABOUT LOSS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF DANI HARDER

CASTLES IN THE HAND



I carry my castles in my hand
and work on them the best I can.
Can I work through them,
Or will I arrive at the other side
in pieces,
Patched,
and barely breathing?

I serve
at the incubator of dreams,
Where I wear my bondage
like a tight chemise.
I built the life that made me
what I am.
But it split me open,
and then was gone.
I have the freedom to do,
and the freedom to fail.
This travail leads me on

to seek new lives.

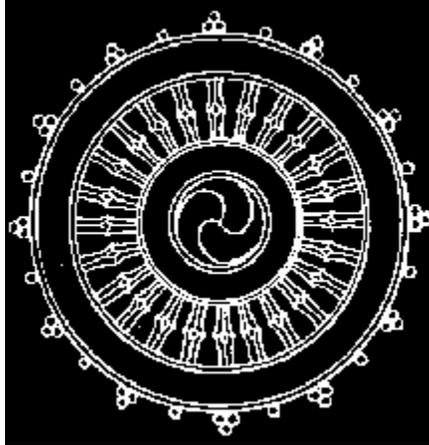
With the master of ceremonie
I shoot the breeze
"Who is this being,
if you please?"

If the Lords of Karma
can find steeds to please them,
So I can win a rhyming game
with time, This one time,
and claim this life as truly mine.

But here are my trademarks,
which I have neither traded
nor unmarked.
They announce themselves
in the storehouse of the planets,
And crack like fractals
everywhere,
Like eggs,
within the womb of time.

from: "2000 Poems"
Buddhist Poems by Paul L. Dolinsky

CYCLE



perhaps it's a dream

in which you rush
headlong and helpless
your body resembling
the corpse of a dead mosquito
falling from the warm air
into a freezing stream
that draws you onwards
in enveloping rapids
of harsh foam

in which you move
toward an outcrop in the water
where a jagged rock juts up
catches your body
and lays it like glistening moss
upon the exposed surface
of frozen stone

in which you rest
momentarily above the water

an accidental respite
from the river's torrent
a brief and frightened repose
in the cold palm
of heartless rock

in which you build
your house, your web
a castle of dreams
to dwell in for as long as you can
clinging, waiting, hoping
while all around you
the fury and frenzy
inexorable forwardness
of rushing water

in which you watch
as the structure collapses
a house of cards
a figment of your imagination
where once again you appear
as a flattened insect
the body of a dead mosquito
forced to rejoin the stream
the insistent beckoning
of necessary tomorrows

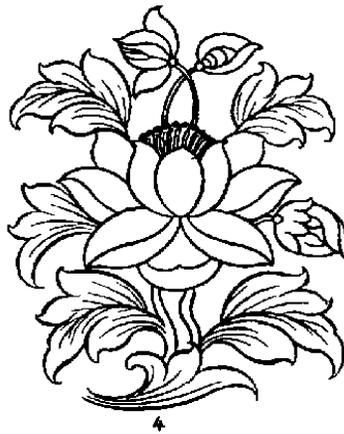
in which you push yourself
unwilling, overwhelmed
crushed, cracking and scarred
by perpetual flow
sorrow and fleeting
ghastly icy sadness
of temporal pulse

perhaps it's a dream

from: "Bone Meal", David Greig, 1999



Digital Image of Dani by David Greig, 2002



Sacred Lotus

Notes and Reflections