



JANUARY DAY

I went in search of the sun this morning—
And found it where the two small creeks join
To make the river.
I found it above the mists
And over white-green water.
I found it in a sky of incredible blue.
It had already dried a log
For me to sit upon,
My friend, the sun.
And as I sat
Speaking silently to my friend
Of Winter's dark and damp,
She spoke quietly back to me
Of Summer times and warmth—
And before I knew it,
My heart was full of
Sunshine!

Prose and poetry combine for 'My Song'

by Sue Lafky
Post editor

"I could never be a bystander as far as life is concerned," says Connie Warnock of Brightwood.

"I don't believe in not speaking your piece. I believe in getting up on your soapbox."

You might say that Mrs. Warnock's "soapbox" was transformed into prose and poetry for her recently published book, "My Song."

The 36 works—one written for each year of her life—"grew out of personal changes" and opened up what she called "a Pandora's box emotions" in her.

Her audience includes "other women of my age and situation who grew up in similar circumstances," she says. "By voicing all this I can reach them and offer either a crying towel or a helping hand."

In "My Song," published by Vantage Press of New York, Mrs. Warnock uses her poetic gift to explore the relationships between woman and man; parent and child; humans and lower animals; friends; and lovers.

Mrs. Warnock, now 38, said she grew up in a time when "little girls like me had a short career, got married and devoted themselves to a family."

The "devoting themselves to a family" part was nebulous, she says. "Nobody says for how long."

She's hardly against motherhood and being a wife. She notes with pride that her two children, Lacy (13) and Christopher (8) "resemble" themselves. And she also realizes that there is a fine balance between experiencing personal growth and still maintaining family life.

"If you turn your back there are more problems rather than less."

Her second book, at the urging of a friend, is shaping up as a treatise on what women can do when they come to the point when the challenge and

growth are gone. From experience, she has developed some thoughts on the 10-15 years of a woman's life which are devoted to family.

"Your experience is suddenly limited by your family and the rapid growth rate stops," she reflects on life at home. "This is where the trouble begins."

The problem Mrs. Warnock faced in her 30s, with husband and children to think about, "was purely and simply an identity crisis."

"We have one life and it doesn't meet all our needs," she says of motherhood. "And if we can't hire a governess, we work out a compromise."

Mrs. Warnock's compromise consists of taking time to get out and into the mainstream of life.

"I would advocate the value of mini-adventures at the age of 38," she says. "Getting back into the world."

That can be done through a hobby, through writing of some kind or work outside the home.

Mrs. Warnock had never stayed in a motel by herself until she attended a Pacific Northwest Writers Conference at Pacific Lutheran College in Seattle.

"I discovered that I enjoy being by myself."

Now she takes occasional "mini-adventures" of her own to the beach or to be with a friend.

"Sometimes it's with the pretense of writing, but actually it's experiencing life."

She has the support of her family in the venture. "I've decided my husband is a remarkable man," she says. "He not only has accepted it, but feels it's healthy."

When Mrs. Warnock leaves for a weekend break, her husband, Craig, "always does something special with the kids."

And, she adds, "believe it or not, I could whip the house back into shape after the weekend in one mor-

ning—even though it looked like a disaster."

Neither the children or family pets starved in her absence.

"You have to take chances," she says with a smile, "even though little ones."

Raised in the Alameda neighborhood of Portland and the daughter of two dedicated teachers, Mrs. Warnock received her bachelor's in education from Portland State University and taught elementary school. She "retired" from teaching to spend time with her family.

Her writing career started three years ago this fall, and she started the poems found in "My Song" in December of that year. She completed the project in six months and asked a neighbor, Sharon Hagan (who now lives in Gresham) to do the illustrations.

Mrs. Warnock's poems are intensely personal. "You could say that my life, literally, is an open book."

The book was a product of the beginning of self awareness for Mrs. Warnock. "This wasn't an easy book to write."

One of her poems talks about a young man "who wears his heart on his sleeve. The same might be written about the poet."

"I feel things strongly. Other people do too. I just think they sit on it," she says.

"Children feel free to express these things," she continues. "As we get older we're taught by society that this is not the most cool way to be."

She thinks of her own children as "two small people I live with."

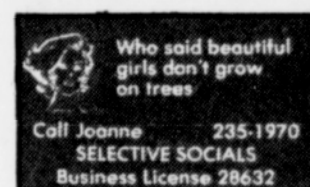
She adds: "I struggle daily to allow them to be individuals."

Mrs. Warnock and her family live between Salmon River and a small creek on property off Truman Road. Her affinity for the mountains is evident in her poetry.

"I'm deeply affected by the physical beauty of my surroundings up here."

Right now her books are available at Bowman's and The Book Place in Welches.

Her goal is to continue growing with her writing.



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