

HOMELESS IN PARADISE

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REFLECTIONS:

You don't have to be houseless to feel homeless in your heart

By Wanda Sue Parrott

REMEMBERING anniversaries doesn't necessarily mean celebrating them. If my "Suicide in Seaside" series in May 2015 hadn't included the term "homeless in the heart" to describe the victim's depression, the three columns might have faded into history instead of making it.

Instead, because a person died, a phrase was born.

A host of reactions came from readers who admitted they've also experienced feeling homelessness of the heart. They included veterans, a chef, and a famous American poet who shares her poignant Mother's Day memoir. Yvonne Nunn, of Hermleigh, Texas, who lives on a ranch, is the former Senior Poet Laureate of Texas and 2005 Pissonneteer of the Year.



I AM HOMELESS IN MY HEART

By Yvonne Nunn

Sunday, I celebrated my fifty-eighth Mothers' Day in my easy chair awaiting the expected phone calls wishing me happiness and a good day.

It seems only yesterday the nurse held my little girl up for me. She was crying the kind of cry that frightens mothers and makes them start counting fingers and toes. I reached up from the birthing table, touched her leg and said, "Hello, precious."

She stopped crying and seemed content that I was the force behind all that pushing and the touch of strangers.

What A Ride Motherhood Has Been

Two and a half years later I gave birth to our son. Unlike our daughter, he was a big baby, weighing 10 pounds and he looked like a six-month-old sleeping in an incubator with magnifying walls of glass.

His sister took one look at him and headed for the door. My husband caught her before she got outside the hospital and brought her back to me looking like an abandoned orphan.

She changed that day as we talked about her new brother and how she would need to help me take care of him because she was his big sister who would teach him many things like walking, but he did not have to talk because she did that for him.

Their school days were filled with reading books, writing notes, and hiding report cards at the six weeks intervals. I learned to check on them in their play when quietness flooded the house except for the songs of Pam and Bill, their parakeets.

Now as adults, they tell me of things they did, places they went and people they were with that I have no recollection of. How I wish I had checked on them more often and perhaps tied them to their beds when I napped. Perhaps I would have caught them before they ran to the grocery store, stole some candy, and had their treats behind the garage before that embarrassing telephone call from the grocer.

Recovery Never Comes

Mothers never outgrow the experience of having lives depending on them for survival and they never feel adequate for the job.

When their nest empties recovery from the loss of their responsibilities never comes.

Just yesterday I set the table for four at lunch time and when I discovered it, I brushed away my tears and retrieved two settings.

I still worry about their safety, yet it is me who uses a cane to stabilize my steps.

I sometimes think Mothers, like the man of sorrows, never escape the platitudes of servitude to those she bore nor does she escape the feeling of being lost and lonely when her babies find the footprints of adulthood and leave her in the limbo of feeling unneeded.

Appointments For Visits That Never Come

If I live another year, perhaps I will celebrate Mothers' Day with my husband at a resort for seniors by the pool of stagnant waters waiting for the healing of the troubling ripples.

I don't look for cards anymore since e-mail is such a convenient way to say "Hi Mom" although I sometimes catch myself looking in the mailbox for belated mail for a week following my unique day.

Unlike the song "I Don't Remember Loving You" I might take my crayons and make appointments for visits that seem to never come or wonder who that is sending flowers to my front door. However, after all these years I am not really disappointed that they do not come to visit.

I grow weary cooking meals for these grown-ups I do not find a resemblance to of what they looked like when they lived with me.

I am homeless in my heart. Abandoned.

Seaside's Happy Anniversary

Six months after Seaside City Council's Nov. 10, 2015, approval of \$35,000 for a pilot Veterans Transitional Center program, 16 formerly homeless veterans are living in permanent affordable housing. Refurbishing of six houses on old Fort Ord, if successful, kicks off an end to homelessness among veterans on the Monterey Peninsula. That's an anniversary to celebrate!

See details about VTC at <http://www.vtcmonterey.org/contact.htm>.

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