

Previously Published Poems

Pressed On
One Night
Breath of Life

Pressed On

Carol Kavanagh

I sailed her close to the wind,
trimmed her tight, ran her hard
until I got the best out of her,
After she turned fifty —
a mutiny. Complaints:
insomnia as persistent
as the halyard's hollow
clang in the dark. Doldrums,
blinding sun, and flashing heat.

Find a port, she said
where we can rest, do repairs
take on supplies. She warned
of our demise if I didn't take heed
And, I didn't. I pressed her on.

Previously published in an anthology, *Writing Menopause*, Jane Hawthorne and E.D. Morin,
Editors, p. 141. Nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

One Night

Carol Kavanagh

One night I took a trip with you.
From Melbourne Australia we drove an old Vauxhall
through swollen lands clinging to high cliffs
At Darwin we boarded a plane to Timor.
There, stranded, thirsty and hot, we hiked
by rutted road over snakes and crocodiles to Adamboua.
Along the way natives came out of huts and offered us
cool drinks for the hot journey.
On Bali you opened a world for me.
I marvelled to see the cattle like deer,
the land in tidy exquisite layers,
to hear the natives chanting.
I lived the cool nights, blazing days, the tropical forests.
I tasted mangoes, bananas, cocoanut milk.
I browned on the shores.
On through Java and strange people we rode again
to Bangkok Thailand where monks strolled by temples
seeking our company to practise their English.
There, we tuned into the tinkling
chimes of the jewelled temples.
We floated on the slow riverboats
and it was like a dream.
Calcutta was teeming and had no train we could catch — only
cows and crying children in crowded streets and
masses of people rushing at us.
When a train finally came we railed to Delhi
where you traded on the black market over counters or behind
curtains in packed market places
This I marvelled at too.
Then the land and people flew by like a bad dream.
There was the Khyber pass where they say bandits still are.
Yes, Afghanistan, Turkey and finally,
civilization and all the things we'd missed
like real Coke and peanut butter.
On Paros we found another paradise like Bali
and renewed ourselves.
Finally, I wanted to go to Europe but you'd been there before,
so we rose from the table
strewn with atlases, pictures and food.

We laughed and I cried a little
and then you said good-bye and went into the cold winter air
of Saskatchewan Canada.

Previously published in *Grain Magazine*, Volume 111, No. 1, 1975

Breath of Life

Carol Kavanagh

Spruce tree limbs
and tiny needle fingers
transpire a trail across
the grassy plain
of my back yard
from the back fence
to the deck where I sit.
Its tendril trail reaches
me, surrounds me.
I breathe in and exhale
a floating stream
to my beloved trees.
I'm in awe of
how we're made one.

Previously published in *The Society*, St Peter's Abby. Volume 11 2014. (Slight revision)