

Poetry
Should be
fun.

Winter Edition

AMY KITCHENER'S ANGELS WITHOUT WINGS FDN.
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THE DIPLOEMAT

World's most unique Literary Society
where we turn Scribblers into Scribes and Meeting the Muse is a Way of Life

Special
Edition

HOW TO INVENT,
PROMOTE & SELL
A NEW POETRY FORM

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Amy's Continuing Challenge:

CHOP CHOP YOUR WAY TO LITERARY HISTORY
BY HELPING LAUNCH THE CHINESE COUPLET'S
2016 NATIONAL POETIC REVOLUTION
(Details in editorial below)



... FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Meet the new "Chinese Couplet" Champions

How did five poetic women chop-chop their ways to fame if not fortune?

Picking a winner in the world's second known Chinese Couplet Contest was almost impossible, so five inventive poets whose entries tied in excellence were named this year's champions.

I say "known" contests, as this wasn't the only Chinese Couplet contest. You see, back in 2005 my friend Ann Parker and I were playing around with a favorite salutation she uses: *Chop chop*. What did it mean? Suddenly, without any warning, my muse known as Amy Kitchener appeared, insisting I create a three-line poetic form called the Chinese Couplet.

If you have ever argued with your own muse, you know which of you usually prevails. In this case, I argued, "A couplet is two rhyming lines, not three."

Amy and Ann both replied, "Chop chop." Ann spoke the words aloud. Amy impressed them silently in my mind as thoughts. Since Ann and Amy concurred, I got the idea: *two lines rhyme, with a third line using the words chop chop anywhere in the poem*. Poetic history was being remade, unknown to me.

2015 CHINESE COUPLET CO-CHAMPIONS

**Shanna Ferguson
Gillette, Wyoming**

**Mary-Lane Kamberg
Olathe, Kansas**

**Jean Marie Purcell
Eugene, Oregon**

**Frieda Risvold
Des Moines, Washington**

**Kathleen Kull Urban
Alamo, California**

(Their poems appear on pages 2 and 3)

Amy added: *Since chop chop is only two words, the other two lines must also be two rhyming words each. To sustain chop chop cadence, they must be single-syllable words*. The idea then evolved. .

How could six words in three lines conform to the caveat from my inner muse? Amy insisted: *The three couplet lines must tell a story, the reader's imagination filling in with missing adjectives and verbs*. Aha! "Chop chop" could be a literal verb or metaphoric subject in any line!

I took Amy's challenge and asked friends to test the new poetic form by competing in a contest. First Chinese Couplet Champion was actor Jerry-Mac Johnston, Springfield, Mo., whose topic was murder:

*knife wife
chop chop
me free*

No other known contests have featured "our" invention, which lay dormant ten years until Amy recently urged me to revive Chinese Couplets to encourage turning off e-devices and turning our own creative minds back on. If curious about how chop chop inspired the winners, read on! Then write your own 2016 poems. May the muse be chop chop with you.

Wanda Sue Parrott, Editor

Chinese Couplet Winners 2015 “Chop Chop” Awards Competition

Wanda Sue Parrott, inventor of the Chinese Couplet form and 2015 Contest Administrator, served as judge. Out of 46 entries, five were selected as Chop Chop Champions(*) and five were Chop Sticks. Wanda says that inventing a new poetic form is easier than writing one; thus, to only Chinese Couplet Wanda has ever written, good, but to challenge readers to do better and Chinese Couplet Contest.” How do you define lies in the way the poet uses the two words female who has a facelift. Voila! Quick change.

*chop chop
hag's sags
new you*
Wanda Sue Parrott

prove it, she wrote one. Since it is the one and she put it among the winners “not because it is then enter the 2016 World Championship the implicate idea of each winner? The clue “chop chop.” In Wanda’s poem, you are a See further clues to implicate writing on Page 3.

SHANNA FERGUSON

Shanna, a wife, mom, grandma, amateur horsewoman, lousy dog trainer, aspiring writer/poetry dabbler, says, “This is the first contest I’ve won--the first of two I’ve ever entered! I belong to the WyoPoets and Prairie Pens writers’ group in Gillette, Wyoming. Midge Farmer, esteemed facilitator, brought your challenge to a meeting and a few of us became addicted and couldn’t help ourselves!”



**Bach rock
chop chop
wrong song black stack
chop chop
peat heat*

Shanna Ferguson

MARY-LANE KAMBERG

Mary-Lane, a native of the Kansas City area, lives in Olathe, Kansas. She is a professional writer/editor/speaker who also coached competitive swimming for 40 years. She is vice-president of Missouri Writers Guild and co-leader of Kansas City Writers Group. She has never invented a poetry form, but has written several books, including *The “I Don’t Know How to Cook” Book*, *I Love to Write Book* and *Seed Rain* chapbook.



**sale fail
chop chop
nice price hair lair
chop chop
less tress*

Mary-Lane Kamberg

JEAN MARIE PURCELL

Jean Marie now lives in Eugene, Oregon. She says she’s 88 “and damn good looking for my age.” Jean was born in San Francisco. She taught mentally challenged kids in the Los Angeles area. She summarizes highlights of her life: “traveled around the world on a freighter, took a job as taxi-dancer for two weeks when financially strapped and invented the Zorro form of poetry.” See page 3.



**late date
chop chop
fat brat fish dish
chop chop
hell smell*

Jean Marie Purcell

**grave cave
chop chop
bone zone hip quip
chop chop
word nerd*

Frieda Risvold



FRIEDA RISVOLD

Frieda Risvold, 86, of Des Moines, a suburb of Seattle, is former Senior Poet Laureate of the state of Washington and inventor of a haiku-inspired three-word form of 17-syllable précis poetry called the “Atom.” Read about her invention on page 3. She is a retired bookkeeper, animal-lover, gardener and genealogist with published articles in print.

KATHLEEN KULL URBAN

Kathleen Kull Urban, Alamo, California, a freelance writer for newspapers, anthologies and children (*Highlights for Children*), is contributor/copy editor of the award-winning cookbook *California Fresh Harvest*. She is a charter member of Tri-Valley Branch of the California Writers Club (she got a Jack London Award for service). She raises pups for Guide Dogs for the Blind.



**book hook
chop chop
write tight bare hair
chop chop
big wig*

Kathleen Kull Urban

POETS AS LITERATURE'S INVENTORS, AUTHORS AND INNOVATORS

Distich: *Strophic verse of two lines usually called a couplet.*

Couplet: *Two successive rhyming lines.*

*(from How to Write Poetry—ballad to Villanelle
By Lee Ann Russell)*

What was the first poem you learned as a child? Probably a nursery rhyme like "One- two, buckle my shoe/three-four, shut the door" or "Baa-baa black sheep, have you any wool?/Yes sir, yes sir, three bags full." Many adult poets began writing because of early exposure to the cadence and count of the couplet.

Origin of the first poem is lost to history, but spinoff forms of poetry invented by countless ensuing poets survive today. They include many forms of the all-time favorite of many, the sonnet, and two of the hardest forms of poetry to write: the Villanelle and the Sestina. Just as hard are implicate poems that make the reader think, since few words are used to say much.

My favorites include forms invented by 20th-Century Poets whose works we now share here in the 21st-Century because these poets are still alive and we are friends in spirit even if we might never meet.

Will their inventions make poetic posterity's posterboard? Perhaps. Let's help them go viral, and even consider becoming today's imaginary Living Poets' Invention Society by creating our own forms. Read on!

How to Get Started


Tell yourself "I'm going to invent a new poetic form" and wait for inspiration to come. Keep paper and pen or pencil handy. It might come as an idea in a dream. When it comes, write it down. Then play with the idea to try it out. Or, practice composing poems invented by others, such as my Chinese Couplet "Chop Chop" poetry form this edition is promoting, and either or both of the two other Chop Chop Champions' (Jean Marie Purcell and Frieda Risvold) poetic inventions on page 4.

Why? Because it's a great way to exercise your mind by turning off your e-devices and turning on your own brain. It's healthful. It's fun.

Just as you learned to read through others' written works, so will you hone your skills as a poet by practicing other poets' challenging exercises. Later, when inspired to invent one or more forms yourself, go for it. Let's start!

Continued—INVENTORS, Page 4

FIRST CHINESE COUPLET CHAMPION SEEKS BASEBALL-THEATER PLAYS

Actor-playwright Jerry-Mac Johnston, whose chop chop murder poem appears on page 1, is a festival-winning playwright and poet currently seeking short 1-through-20-minute scripts to accompany his play "DUGOUT  MEMORIES" to make up a complete evening of baseball-theme plays. No deadline has been established yet. There are no restrictions about content except each play must have a baseball theme. Contact baseball-theater inventor Jerry--Mac Johnston with ideas, questions or submissions by e-mail at wurdriter@gmail.com.



Lee Ann Russell

Award-winning
Poet,
Photographer and
Author

How to Write Poetry

Ballad to Villanelle

Lee Ann Russell's penultimate *ars poetica* compendium is an invention containing flip pages that stay open for easy-to-follow instructions on writing previously invented poetic forms, ranging from the 39-line Sestina invented by Arnaut Daniel (circa 1200) and 19-line Villanelle invented by Jean Passerat in the late 15th or early 16th century to Wanda Sue Parrott's 20th century 14-word Pissonnet. It contains 182 pages, 441 definitions, 205 poetic forms, 100 examples and 72 famous poets' life spans. If you want to win contests by writing pre-existing poetic forms, or invent your own, this book is a gift you deserve to give to yourself. Now through March 2016, it is available at a special discount price of \$22 per copy (incl. postage and handling). Make checks payable to and order from: Lee Ann Russell, 1004 N. Rogers Ave., Springfield, MO 65802.

Top Winners of the 2016 Chinese Couplet Championship Awards will receive copies of this book.

How to Kick Off, Promote and Sell Your Idea

Start introducing your new form with help from a few local poets—members of a critique group, class or writing club. Hold a special event at which everyone writes samples. Either publish the best of the poems, one per person, in a little chapbook or give an award for the best poem—say \$5 and/or a certificate. In other words, get a few examples by others to add to your own collection. **Then, go public.** Run a public contest via the internet, or enlist our aid to announce your event and publicize your new poetry form. Send rules to other writers' groups by looking them up on the internet. Start a blog and send a link to e-addresses of everyone who responds. Send e-mails asking others to help by publicizing your creation on Facebook, Twitter and other social media. **In other words, campaign!** To help you sell your idea, here is an example of an excellent campaign Missouri writer Linda Fisher is running to win \$1000 for her "Early Onset Alzheimer's" blog at www.lsfisher.com. Help her win by voting, while also learning from her example of the effective way to run a great consistent campaign using social media. Good luck, and may the Muse be with you.

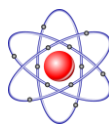
INVENTORS—Continued from page 3

THE ATOM by Frieda Risvold

Back in 2008 we gave Frieda Risvold the Best New Poetry Inventor Award because she created a new form inspired by the haiku/senryu three-line syllabic configuration 5-7-5. Instead of syllables, her Atom uses letters per line:

Line	# of Letters	Rhyme Scheme
1	5	none
2	7	none
3	5	none

Usually an Atom stands by itself, but sequences of Atoms can be combined—it is a poet's choice type of condensed format that can be written as free verse or rhyme.



EXAMPLES OF The Atom

teach
honesty
daily

sauce
subject
spicy

share
process
early

Frieda Risvold

THE ZORRO by Jean Marie Purcell

The Zorro by Jean Marie Purcell is a basic four-line, 26-syllable stanza comprised of two or more stanzas about poet's choice of subjects that follow this pattern:

Line	# of Syllables	Rhyme Scheme
1	4	a
2	6	a
3	4	b
4	12	c
5	4	d
6	6	d
7	4	b
8	12	c

If three or more stanzas are included, the first two lines end as a couplet with new rhyme scheme (ee, ff, etc.) or may repeat stanzas 1 and 2. Lines 3 and 4 remain b and c.



EYES

They like to flirt.
Slyly they can divert
the curious
and intimidate, if to stare and
share's their goal.

To self cleanse they
Tear up, same as they may
When furious.
Naïve Bush looked into Putin's
and saw his soul.

LEGS

Sources of stride;
Shapely, causes of pride.
Lame or lanky,
Disdaining foliage, girls
denude them of hair.

Examples of the Zorro

Since they propel,
If things aren't going well
and you're cranky,
all's awry. They'll help you
get the hell outa there.

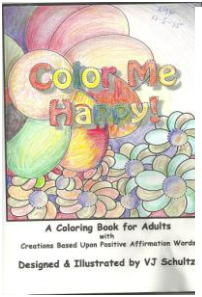
LIPS: HISTORICALLY FAMOUS AS AGENTS OF BLISS

'Twixt lips and cup
what passes may disrupt
old adages.
Without which we couldn't vent
our need to whistle.

Tellers of lies,
agape, may let in flies.
Gossip's cages.
Our body's main fount, is
information missile.

Jean Marie Purcell

THE POETS' PAGE



Coloring Book for Adults by VJ Schultz--Vera-Jane Goodin Schultz, co-founder and Judge of the National Annual Senior Poets Laureate poetry competitions for American poets age 50 and older, produced *Color Me Happy* as a philosophically uplifting coloring book for adults. It is full of positive affirmations and fascinating designs for crayon or colored pencil. Available through Amazon.com. She reports it is selling remarkably well. (Adult color books are the rage, according to a recent NPR report.)

Congratulations. Poet Dennis Maulsby won 1st Place fiction at the Montezuma All-Iowa Writers' Conference in Sept. with "The Night of the Pooka," a spooky tale about a retired priest in Winterset, Iowa, who is thrust into a supernatural happening more consistent with the rocky hills of his native Ireland than the cornfields of the Midwest. A Celtic shape-shifter, a wraith, familiar from his grandfather's stories, has appeared among them. He must decide what action to take to protect his new flock. Read online at <http://www.bellaonline.com/review/issues/fall2015/f008.html>.

CALL FOR 'PENCIL MARKS' SUBMISSIONS

We Do accept previously published work with appropriate credits, so share something you've done: poetry, photographs, copies of artworks, short-short stories, creative essays, articles on art or artists or writing and writers, book reviews, and anything else is of interest to our readers. I am especially looking for prose and for visual submissions, since our backlog has pretty much exhausted. Details from editor/publisher **Donna Marbach**, dmarmarbach@gmail.com.

California Writers Club Sacramento Branch 2016 Short, Short Story Fiction Contest

Postmark deadline Fri., 4/1/16.

Open to all writers. Fiction story length is 750 words maximum. For details on awards, entry fees, submissions and manuscripts, see <http://www.cwcsacramentowriters.org/>. Contest Chair is Jo Chandler at jochandler3@yahoo.com.



THE 2016 NATIONAL CHINESE COUPLET CHOP CHOP CHAMPIONSHIP CONTEST

As inventor of the Chinese Couplet, I would be delighted if this tiny poetic form should go viral—like around the world so it becomes an international phenomenon. However, to realistically launch it into literary space, the 2015 Chinese Couplet Contest winners and I will present a National Chop Chop Championship Contest in which I serve as Contest Administrator and they serve as the Panel of Judges. Here is how it will work. I do the publicity. The panel will choose at least one winner from each state represented. State winners get certificates and their entries advance to the national level, from which the best overall winner is named Chop Chop Champion. He/she will win a minimum of \$100. Two Chop Sticks will each win a minimum of \$50. Prizes may be increased at the panel's discretion depending on how total fees received. If there is any money left in the pot after awards are made, judges will divide the balance in a six-way split.

Wanda Sue Parrott

HOW TO ENTER

WRITE A CHINESE COUPLET--Following examples of winners shown on page 2, and descriptions on page 3, write a three-line, six-word poem that implies a mini-drama is enacted. No titles or punctuation are allowed. Two lines must be rhyming single-syllable words, and a third line is "chop chop" which can appear at the top, bottom or middle of the poem. The trick is to make "chop chop" count, not just serve as a filler. Think of the three lines as being like a sentence structured as subject, verb and object. Line structure:

(Example: chop chop is metaphor for cosmetic surgery.)

Line 1—Introduces the subject (problem or challenge)

Line 2—is as the verb (drama/action taken to solve it)

Line 3—is as the object (resolution/outcome to problem)

chop chop

hag's sags

new you

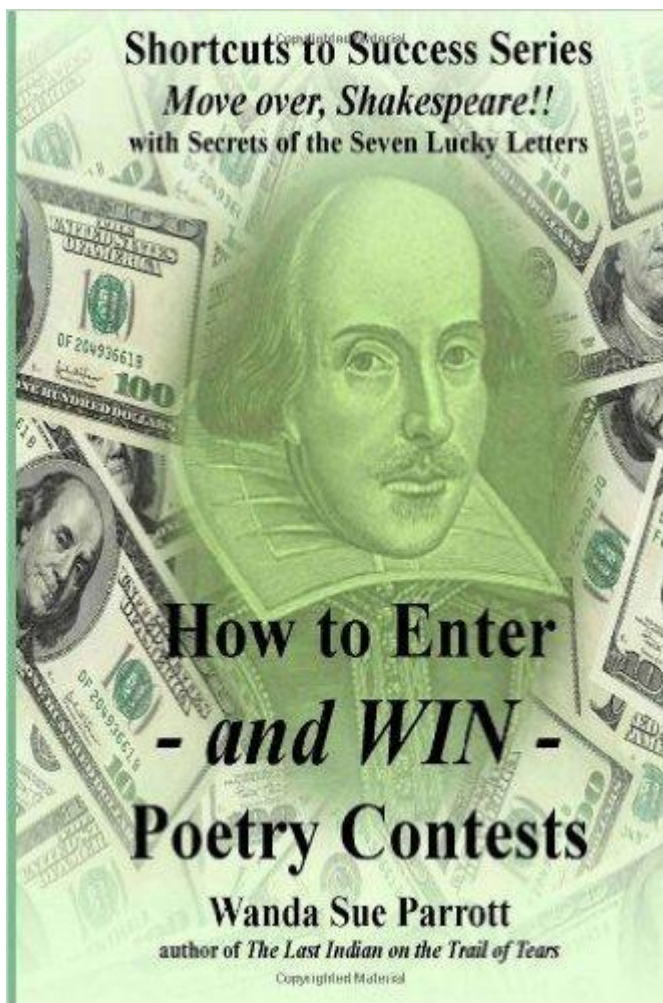
ENTRY FEE: \$5 per page—no limit to number of pages allowed

AWARDS: \$100/\$50/\$50

DEADLINE: May 15, 2016

HOW TO SUBMIT (no electronic submissions)—Type between one and ten Chinese Couplets on an 8-1/2 x 11 in. white page. Put your name and contact information, including e-mail, in upper right corner and send one copy with \$5 per page entry fee via snail mail. Send check payable to Wanda Sue Parrott Literary Fund to: Chinese Contest, Post Office Box 1821, Monterey, CA 93942.

Winners will be notified by e-mail and announced in the June 2016 edition of *The Diplomat*.



WHETHER YOU'VE DECIDED TO INVENT YOUR OWN POETRY FORM, OR JUST ENTER CONTESTS

READ THIS BOOK!!!

Your chances of winning writing contests will increase dramatically by using the tips given in this booklet. (See sample EXCERPT below.)

These hints—as well as the step-by-step instructions included here—are highlights of advice gleaned from the author's 21-year career as co-founder and contest administrator of the National Annual Senior Poets Laureate Poetry Competition for American poets age 50 and older, co-founder of the Annual White Buffalo Native American Poet Laureate Contest, writing instructor helping her students become published writers and poets at Ozarks Technical Community College in Springfield, Missouri, and as winner in countless contests she entered under numerous pen names over the past half century.

\$13

ORDER FROM amazon.com: **HOW TO ENTER AND WIN POETRY CONTESTS** by Wanda Sue Parrott



HOW TO ENTER POETRY CONTESTS (Excerpt from Section 1)

Planning to enter a poetry contest or give one? Heed this advice by Lee Ann Russell, author of *How to Write Poetry—Ballad to Villanelle*, who makes money with her award-winning poems. In spring 2011, Lee Ann's poem "Last Call," won seventh place out of 2,700 entries, and publication, in the *Sixth Annual Writers Digest Poetry Collection*. **Tips include:** 1) Read poetry—write poetry. 2) Always date your work. 3) Join a writer's organization and a critique group. 4) Be thick-skinned and learn from constructive criticism. 5) Send for contest guidelines in *The Writers' Market* or *Poets' Market* and monthly poetry magazines. 6) Follow all the rules exactly according to the subject or theme, form, length, etc. Poems are rejected for infractions. 7) Honor the contest deadline. 8) Pay the correct entry fee. 9) Use correct spelling and grammar. 10) Keep a copy of the submission. No entries are returned. 11) Do not show author identification on the entry. 12) Keep writing entries in a separate file and note contest name, date and award. 13) Do not fall for contests advertising "You, too, can be a \$10,000 winner." 14) If in a local or regional contest, you will probably receive info the next year. 15) Learn new forms and continually create new poems. . . it is a good idea to have a variety of poems at all times. 16) Ninety-nine percent of contests require unpublished submissions. Read guidelines carefully and be aware if winning poems will be published later and whether or not you are agreeable.

For more tips, order *How to Enter and Win Poetry Contests*. Its Shortcuts to Success really work.



*Celebrating the Life
of Poet-Prophet-Friend
Lee Ann Russell*

January 9, 2016

Dear Lee Ann:

Your e-mail advising of the diagnosis you received last week touched me deeply. I recall the dull shock when my beloved companion and webmaster Al Baker shared his prognosis, followed by months of chemotherapy, radiation and slow retirement from what he loved most: working the computer and running our website. Our website remains relatively unchanged since Al went away on June 20, 2014.

There was so much I did not say to him, and I don't want that to happen again. So here is, in essence, my celebration of the successes I have enjoyed in my life because of the love, friendship, encouragement and guidance you have given me during our 25-year friendship. Browning summed it up in these lines:

*I love you, not for what you are
But for what I am when I am with you. . .*

First, shortly after you and I met in Springfield Writers' Guild in 1989, when I moved to Missouri to care for my elderly parents, you suggested I enter the guild's annual creative writing contest. I did, and found myself hooked. You then kept encouraging me with my poetry.

You actually referred to me as a poet. Me? A doodler, perhaps, but not a poet! But you were prophetic, as poets can be. I wound up teaching poetry at Ozarks Technical College, won a lot of awards as a poet, and ultimately co-founded the National Annual Senior Poet Laureate Poetry Competition for American poets age 50 and older, and ran it for 21 seasons.

Second, this newsletter, which is now Number 1 of Volume 15 and is e-mailed to around 5,000 readers, is directly attributable to you. Had you not urged me to enter contests, I would never have invented a few forms of my own. One is the Pissonnet, another is the Story Stanza, and yet another is the Chinese Couplet. I launched them all in this newsletter. Whoever would have predicted I would invent poetic forms? Only one person. Lee Ann Russell.

Third, although you probably don't realize it, your influence has touched thousands—maybe hundreds of thousands. You, I, we—all who are guided by the Muse—bring others to laughter, joy, tears, sorrow and truth. Your book deserves to be listed on the Poetic Posterity Posterboard. I hope this edition kicks it off to stardom that shines with the essence of You. I hope, too, you publish more of your poems than have been published because you reserved them for contests, of which you won hundreds.

Fourth, you are a philosopher who believes in celebrating our own lives while we are present, conscious and able to do so. In utmost respect and awe, I remind you of your wonderful message that won for you the 7th place award and publication, out of 2,700 entries, in the *Sixth Annual Writers Digest Poetry Collection Anthology*.

Poets are philosophers. Are poets also prophets? Our hearts hold such secrets and time tells their truth.

Love, thanks, and may the Muse ever be with you.

Wanda

(Cards may be sent to Lee Ann Russell at 1004 N. Rogers Ave., Springfield, MO 65802 or LAR1111@sbcglobal.net. Continued on page 8)



LAST CALL

(Courtesy 2011 *Writer's Digest Poetry Collection Anthology*)

You're invited to my funeral
on the nineteenth day of June.
I'll be anxiously awaiting
all my family's lack of gloom.
Bring an anecdote or story
or a poem you can share,
and we'll celebrate the life of me
while I am still aware.
Bring some pretty, fragrant flowers
and a handkerchief of blue.
We will sing some hallelujahs;
snap a photograph or two.
I have lived a happy lifetime
with some hard times interspersed;
I am not expecting heaven,
nor eternity, rehearsed;
I just want to have a party
filled with loving sentiment –
an obituary written
long before my life is spent.
I don't want to have my funeral
when I've gone ahead and died,
'cause I'll hear the organ music
and how people mourned and cried.
I'll be standing there to greet you
with a handshake and a hug,
and we'll talk about our friendship
long before my grave is dug.
I'll be waiting by the casket
for the stories we can tell,
and we'll celebrate my living
as you laugh and wish me well.

Lee Ann Russell